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ABSTRACT

The Bella Coola suffix "-m" has been analyzed in the literature as two or even three separate morphemes, based on the variable effects it has on the transitivity of its base. The segment is argued for here as a single morpheme with a unified meaning, specifically as a marker of a special case of one definition of the middle voice, referred to as the "non-unitariness" of event-participants. The cross-linguistically unusual "transitivizing" uses of "-m" are shown to fall out from the presence of a second, individual entity in a semantically typical middle clause, independent of the application of the middle-marker itself. Contains 17 references. (Author/MSE)

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UNITARINESS AND PARTIAL IDENTIFICATION IN THE BELLA COOLA MIDDLE VOICE*

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Abstract: The Bella Coola suffix *-m* has been analyzed in the literature as two or even three separate morphemes, based on the variable effects it has on the transitivity of its base. In this paper, I argue for *-m* as a single morpheme with a unified meaning—specifically, as a marker of a special case of Kemmer's (1993) definition of the middle voice which I will refer to as the "non-unitariness" of event-participants. The cross-linguistically unusual "transitivizing" uses of *-m* are shown to fall out from the presence of a second, individuable entity in a semantically typical middle clause, independent of the application of the middle-marker itself.

1) Bella Coola *-m*

One of the most interesting of the verbal affixes in Bella Coola,[1] a Salishan language from the central coast of British Columbia, is the suffix *-m*, which is most likely a reflex of the Proto-Salish **-m* that appears in some form or another in almost every language of the family. Because of the many and varied uses of this morpheme in Bella Coola, some researchers have posited that *-m* represents two (Davis & Saunders 1984) or even three (Nater 1984) separate morphemes, based in part on the varied effects it has on the transitivity of its base, in some cases rendering a transitive verb intransitive and in others apparently transitivizing intransitive (even nominal) stems. More recent work (Davis & Saunders 1989, 1997), however, has argued for *-m* as a single morpheme with a unified meaning, one that cuts across issues of syntactic transitivity, and in the paper that follows I lend some support to that position and argue for *-m* as a marker of middle voice as defined by Kemmer (1993), the wide range of uses and variable effects on transitivity it has being typical of the behaviour of the middle marker in many languages. In particular, I will argue that the Bella Coola *-m* serves as a marker of a special case of Kemmer's definition of the middle voice that I will refer to as "non-unitariness" of participants, a concept that will be outlined in Section 2 below. Section 3 will enumerate uses of *-m* which are typical cross-linguistic middle forms and Section 4

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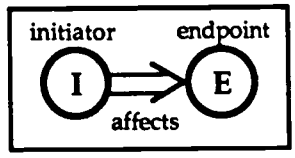
of this paper will examine another set of uses of *-m* in transitive and transitivized clauses, some of which do not have parallels in the data in Kemmer (1993).

2) The Middle Voice

Traditional characterizations of the middle voice define it as a verb form which "serves to express that the subject is acting on herself/himself (reflexive) or for herself/himself" (Trask 1993: 171). Such definitions, however, do not entirely account for the behaviour of the middle morpheme in a great many languages and recently, based on extensive cross-linguistic comparison, Kemmer (1993) has put forward a different definition of the middle voice, one based on what she characterizes as the "relatively low elaboration of events". For Kemmer, an event can show low elaboration in one of two ways, the first and most typical being the failure of a clause to make a clear distinction between two-event participants, a characteristic Kemmer refers to as "low-participant distinguishability." According to Kemmer, the middle voice lies, along with the reflexive, at an intermediary position on the scale of semantic "transitivity" (as outlined by Hopper & Thompson 1980) between events that distinguish only one participant (prototypical intransitives) and those that distinguish two participants (prototypical transitives); the fully transitive event has two distinct, highly individuated participants which Kemmer refers to as the "initiator" (≈ "agent") and the endpoint (≈ "patient" or "theme"), and can be represented schematically as in the diagram in (1).

(1)



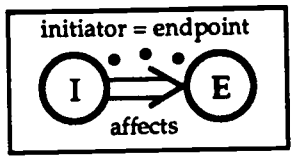
(based on Kemmer 1993: 50)

Event participants are shown here as circles, while the arrow between them represents an interaction originating with the initiator and terminating at the endpoint, typically effecting in that endpoint a change of state.

At the opposite end of this scale lie prototypical intransitive events which have only one participant that is conceived of as neither initiator nor endpoint, while somewhere between prototypical transitive and intransitive events lie reflexives and middles. Many languages fail to differentiate between these two types of clause and grammaticalize the mid-portion of the transitive-intransitive continuum with a single

marker; other languages, like Bella Coola, do make a distinction and fall into a class that Kemmer designates "two-form languages". In two-form languages, reflexives typically represent fully transitive events in which the initiator and the endpoint are treated morphosyntactically and conceptually as if they were separate entities whose full identity with one another is indicated by the use of a reflexive marker (commonly a pronoun, or a historical reflex of one). This type of schema can be represented as in (2), where the dotted arc signifies coreference:

(2)



(based on Kemmer 1993: 71)

According to Kemmer, reflexive clauses in two-form languages are syntactically transitive clauses, and the endpoint is treated as it if were independent from the initiator, thereby maintaining the distinguishability of event-participants which fill different semantic roles in the clause. In middle forms, on the other hand, distinguishability of event participants is not maintained in that the endpoint is not treated as a completely separate entity from the initiator and the middle marker does not have the same morphosyntactic status of full NP or pronoun usually accorded to the reflexive morpheme, resulting in a reduction in the semantic (and often the syntactic) transitivity of the clause. Kemmer represents such situations as in (3).

(3)

(based on Kemmer 1993: 71)

In such events the endpoint can represent some portion of the initiator, typically a body part, or initiator and endpoint can be conceived of as separate portions of a common whole, as in cases where the will of the initiator acts in some way so as to have an effect on the initiator's body. Either case falls under the heading of what I will refer to here as "partial identity", wherein an event-participant is broken down conceptually into two subcomponents which are identified with one another as being parts of a single, "non-unitary" entity. While Kemmer does not take up this issue in any detail, I will argue that in Bella Coola it is this notion of non-unitariness that makes for the crucial distinction between middle and one-participant events, the middle employed in events involving a single, non-unitary entity or where there is partial identity between the initiator and another event-participant.

3) Canonical Middle Uses

An examination of the various occurences of the Bella Coola *-m* reveals that the bulk of these represent fairly standard cross-linguistic uses of the middle voice as outlined by Kemmer (1993). These uses fall roughly into four categories: middles of body action, grooming, and speech, middles of body posture, non-translational, and translational motion, middles of cognition and emotion, and mediopassive/spontaneous event middles. In the first of these groups, verbs are built on transitive roots and involve one or more suffixes denoting an affected body part, as in (*-m* is underlined here and in subsequent examples):

(4) (a) ʔic+uɬ+ank+<u>m</u>+s+k^{w}+ma+c̓n ɬax̌
rub+body+front+[md]+[qtv]+[dub]+[impf] that·one
'he must have rubbed his stomach'
(Davis & Saunders 1980—henceforth, BCT—168, line 99)

(b) ɬuc̓+uuɬ+<u>m</u>+k^{w}+su+c̓ iɬ
uncover+body+[md]+[qtv]+[expb]+[perf] she
'she undressed again'
(BCT 137, line 95)

The affected body part surfaces as a "lexical suffix"—an affix common in Salish languages which has the semantic content of a full noun but no cognate independent form. When *-m* is present in the clause, the expression becomes intransitive and the lexical suffix refers to the affected body part of the subject, whereas when *-m* is absent the clause is transitive and the lexical suffix is taken to be a part of the direct object. This is illustrated by the forms in (5).

(5) (a) cp+ak+<u>m</u>+c
wipe+hand+[md]+1s
'I am wiping my hand'
(Davis & Saunders 1973: 238)

(b) cp+ak+cinu
wipe+hand+2s-1s
'I am wiping your hand'
(Davis & Saunders 1973: 232)

According to Kemmer (1993), body action and grooming expressions such as those in (4) make use of the middle to indicate a low degree of "participant distinguishability"—that is, the middle morpheme serves

to indicate that the grammatical subject is in some way both initiator and endpoint of the event in question. The presence of *-m* in (5a) also serves as a mark of partial identity between endpoint and initiator, while its absence in (5b) forces an interpretation of the event where initiator and endpoint are clearly separate, the lexical suffix being associated not with the subject but the direct object of a transitive, two-participant, clause.

The next category of Bella Coola middles comprises two groups of stems, the first containing verbs denoting body postures and non-translational motion. Many such verbs are deponents (that is, they have no non-middle form), while others come from either transitive (6a) or intransitive (6b) roots:

(6) (a) ƛ̓ap+s+k^{w}+c̓ ta+nanmk̓+tx̌ s+ka+liq̓^{w}+m+s
go+3s+[qtv]+[perf] D+animal+D np+[irr]+roll+[md]+3s
'the animal began to roll'

(BCT 196, line 36)

(b) ʔax̌c+m+a+k^{w}+c̓ s+q̓ux̌+lx+aw
lying·down+[md]+3p+[qtv]+[perf] np+tired+[inc]+3p
'they went to bed tired'

(BCT 90, line 31)

Once again, as in the previous two middle uses, stems such as these represent the construal of the action as one where the endpoint of the event is the initiator's body, thereby representing a decrease in the distinguishability of the event participants. The notion of non-unitariness seems not to be especially important in these cases, although—as we shall see in the discussion of verbs of translational motion and mediopassive/spontaneous-event middles—the reading of such clauses as events rather than states may be an argument for the single-participant's will or some other property of that participant being construed as the event-initiator.

Closely related to the notion of non-translational motion is that of translational motion. These represent an especially frequent use of *-m*, the bulk of their attestations being of three stems—*łx̌^{w}m* 'flee', *cik^{w}ałm* 'start walking' (lit. 'start-foot'), and *q̓^{w}x̌^{w}* 'move'. Kemmer argues that the appearance of the middle morpheme on motion verbs is a result of the complete indistinguishability of participants in that the initiator of the event is itself the endpoint of that event, at least in the sense that the initiator's body is set in motion by the initiator itself. While this may seem to justify the occurence of the middle-marker in only a triv-

ial sense (that is, such events are not construable with more than a single participant) some support for Kemmer's position can be found in the Bella Coola data in that middle forms seem only to apply to the motion of animate (volitional) objects. In such situations it could be argued that the motive force behind the event is the will of the moving entity, which may then be construed as an initiator of the event, the mover's body or entire being thus becoming a conceptual endpoint of the interaction. Seen in this way, the single participant in such an event can be seen as a non-unitary entity in precisely the same way the initiator/endpoint of a body action or grooming event is perceived—although in the former case the part affects the whole, while in the latter the whole affects a part—and in this way a one-participant event can be construed as having both an initiator and an endpoint.

The third set of cross-linguistically typical middle uses in Bella Coola is that of verbs denoting events of cognition or emotion such as:

(7) (a) ʔix+lq̓+m+aw al+a+ka+c̓kta+tu+t
[dist]+think+[md]+3p P+D+happen+[caus]+3s-3p
ta+nanmk̓+tx̌
D+animal+D
'they thought about what to do to the animal'
(BCT 21, line 158)

(b) nu+na+nix+ik+m+iɬ+c̓ wa+axʷɬ
([in]+forget+[l.o.c.]+inside+[md])+3p-1p+[perf] D+some
ʔal+a+axʷɬ a+smsma
P+D+some D+story
'we forget some parts of the stories now'
(BCT 87, line 4)

Verbs of cognition and emotion fall under the heading of middle because of the inseparability of the initiator and the endpoint of the event, in that the endpoint is, in effect, the initiator's mind. Such expressions are distinct from simple intransitive events in that they may involve more than a single participant as in (7a), where the initiator thinks about an abstract, reified event, or in (7b), where the initiator can not call to mind details of a particular story.

Like some of the other verb forms considered so far, middles of cognition may be formed on transitive stems, although in these cases the distinction between a transitive form such as *ʔlq̓* 'think about [sth]' and *ʔlq̓m* 'think [about sth]' is not always clear. In these cases, the choice to the transitive form seems to depend on the degree to which the sec-

ond participant is perceived as a separate entity, or the degree to which it is individuated from the initiator as something that exists and can be interacted with (at the moment of the event) in the real world. Consider, for instance, the sentences in (8):

(8) (a) ʔlq̓+tis wa+ʔamatalaaxˇt+s+c
think+3p-3s D+parents+3po+D
'she thought of her parents'

(b) ʔix+ʔlq̓+m+ap ʔull+a+ka+umat+aɬ+ap
[dist]+think+[md]+2p P+D+[irr]+be·located+foot+2p
'you guys had better think of where you are going'
(Davis & Saunders 1989: 133 – 134)

In sentence (a), the initiator turns her mind to completely separate, individuated entities, which become the syntactic direct object of the clause; in (b), the initiators turn their minds to an abstract event (or, to be more exact, the nominalization of an abstract event, representing their potential destination) which has no existence outside of their mental activity and thus does not constitute a individuable entity. Because the semantics of such mental processes as "forgetting", "figuring out", and "realizing" may be bound up in the initiator's interaction with individuable aspects of external reality, it is not surprising that such events turn up in transitive clauses such as (8a) and (7b). Note that according to Kemmer (1993), the endpoint of the mental process in such interactions is not the external entity itself, but is rather the initiator's mind. Seen in this way, the stimulus is clearly not an endpoint of the interaction but an intermediary link between initiator and endpoint; such processes identify initiator and endpoint without designating them as a unitary entity (the thinker is not the thought)—hence, the presence of *-m*—and, as noted above, whether or not the stimulus is realizable as a direct object in a transitive clause seems, in Bella Coola, to be a function of the degree to which it qualifies as an external, autonomously-existing entity. The notion of the middle appearing in clauses with a direct object which is not, in fact, the semantic endpoint of the event will be taken up below and again in the context of the transitivizing uses of *-m*.

Across languages, one of the more interesting uses of the middle voice is in the formation of mediopassive constructions, exemplified by Spanish expressions such as *aqui se venden libros* 'books are sold here'. According to Trask (1993), the mediopassive is defined as a construction in which a transitive verb is used intransitively and the affected semantic participant appears in subject position, with no agent

expressed (or expressible) in the clause. In Bella Coola, this gives us pairs of sentences such as those in (9):

(9) (a) p̓s+ic ti+stn+tx
bend+3s-1s D+stick+D
'I'm bending the stick'

(b) p̓s+m+ø ti+stn+tx
bend+[md]+3s D+stick+D
'the stick is bending'

(Davis & Saunders 1989: 133)

It should be noted, however, that in spite of the fact that Davis & Saunders choose to gloss the bulk of the instances of *-m* in BCT as "mediopassive", in reality there is only a single instance of *-m* in the texts that conforms to the standard definition, *smsma* 'tell story' > *smsmam* 'be told (story)'. In addition, Nater (1984) lists three verbs with *-m* which seem to be mediopassive—*x̌up* 'insert [sth]' > *x̌upm* 'sink (in mud)', *plik* 'tip over [sth]' > *plikm* 'capsize', and *sx*^{w} 'burn [sth]' > *sx*^{w}*m* 'be burning'. This seems to indicate that the class of mediopassives in Bella Coola is rather small—a conclusion that is not altogether surprising, as the definition of mediopassive depends on the inherent transitivity of the verbal root, whereas a great many roots in Bella Coola are inherently stative and/or intransitive.

A rather more robust class of uses of the Bella Coola *-m* corresponds what Kemmer (1993) designates "spontaneous events"—that is, events which seem to take place without any overt agent or agency. These stems offer a non-middle/middle contrast where the unmarked form has an essentially stative reading, and the marked form has an event-reading, reflecting a "spontaneous" or agentless change of state, as (10):

(10) (a) xm+ø
broken+3s
'it's broken'

(b) xm+m+ø
broken+[md]+3s
'it broke'
'it's breaking'

(Davis & Saunders 1989: 134)

For Kemmer, such verbs represent a rather marginal use of the middle voice, falling under the heading of the middle because they fail to dis-

tinguish two participants involved in an event. Like middle-marked verbs of transitional motion, these forms seem to conform to the middle prototype in a trivial way, and the question arises of why such verbs—which represent prototypically non-volitional, single-participant events—are not simply realized as intransitive clauses, perhaps with the appropriate aspect-marking to distinguish stative readings from events. Nevertheless, it could be argued that such stems admit of the same type of analysis given previously for verbs of translational motion, in that the grammatical subject of the sentence can be analyzed as being in some way non-unitary. According to van Oosten (1977), mediopassive expressions such as "the book is selling like hotcakes" reflect a certain degree of subject-agency in the sense that "the properties of the patient subject bear responsibility for the action of the predicate in a way that properties of the agent subject normally do" (cited in Davis & Saunders 1989: 134). While the verb in (10) is not in the mediopassive (its unmarked form not being transitive), it may be the case that certain relevant properties of the grammatical subject are considered to be the initiator of the event because they are in some way responsible for the event's taking place in a way that the subject as a whole is not. Thus, the initiator/endpoint becomes an entity which is non-unitary but which is at the same time not separable into two individuable participants.[2] This construal of the single event-participant as a non-unitary entity also seems to explain the event-reading conferred on these stems by *-m*, in that the subdivision of this participant allows for the event to have both an initiator and an endpoint, avoiding the stative reading that seems to come with having a single, unitary participant in the clause.

The final cross-linguistically ordinary use of *-m* is to derive verbs denoting frequent, culturally important activities. This group can be formed on nouns and on transitive verbs, the result being an intransitive expression with a highly specific, lexicalized meaning, as in (11).

(11) ʔʌap+aw s+ka+saxʷa+m+aw aɬ+tx̌ʷ
go+3p np+[irr]+dipnet+[md]+3p P+then
'they went drag-seining then'

(BCT 62, line 36)

These forms resemble certain middles which are mentioned only in passing in Kemmer (1993) dubbed "object-deletion" or "anti-passive" uses of the middle marker; according to Kemmer, such constructions are middles in "certain Australian languages", Georgian, and in Russian sentences such as the example in (12):

(12) sobaka kusa+jet+sja
dog bite+3s-present+[md]
'the dog bites'

Kemmer argues that such middle uses are covered by her definition of the middle-marker as designating "low elaboration of events" in the sense that, while a sentence such as (12) clearly has some kind of affected semantic endpoint, the identity of this endpoint is left completely unelaborated, making this type of construction the converse of the mediopassive, in which it is the semantic agent rather than the affected participant that is removed from the clause.

Object-deleting uses of the middle are also found in Bella Coola in contexts other than the "cultural activity" verbs shown in (11). In BCT there are a fair number of instances of detransitivized forms derived from transitive stems, appearing in sentences such as

(13) (a) wnc̓+m+a+kʷ ʔaɬ+txʷ
kill+[md]+3p+[qtv] P+then
'they killed some then'

(BCT 223, 181)

(b) ... ʔal+a+kix̌ʷ+m+ø ʔaɬ+tu+knum+aw+txʷ
P+D+gnaw+[md]+3s P+D+dried·fish+3p+D
'... at [the one who] gnaws at their dried fish'

(BCT 63, 48)

Sentence (a) shows the transitive verb *wnc̓* 'kill [sth]' as an intransitive middle form in a clause which has no overt object; (b), on the other hand, shows another detransitivized form, *kix̌ʷm* 'gnaw', which has an overt, albeit oblique, object.

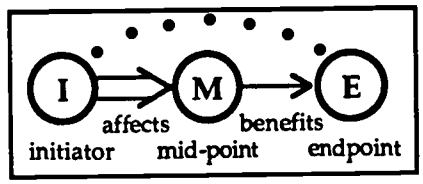
Like the activity verbs illustrated in (11), these detransitivized forms appear to belong to Kemmer's class of "object-deletion" middles in that they allow for an indefinite or unelaborated semantic patient, as in the example in (13a). However, unlike the Russian example in (12), detransitivized middle forms in Bella Coola do allow for an optional oblique object introduced by a preposition, as in (13b). This is an important point which relates some uses of the Bella Coola *-m* to its cognates in other Salishan languages. Consider the following middle form from Lushootseed, a Coast Salish language of northwestern Washington State, based on the intransitive stem *q̓ʷəl* 'ripe, ready to eat':

(14) ʔu+q̓ʷəl+b tsi luƛ̓ ʔə ti sʔuladxʷ
[pnt]+ripe+[md] D*f* old P D salmon
'the old woman roasted herself the salmon'

(Hess 1993: 43)

The principal function of the morpheme *-b* in Lushootseed is to increase the valency of the verb root by one and to shift the semantic role of the grammatical subject from that of affected participant to that of causative agent. This function has been related to that of the middle voice (Hess 1993, Beck 1996) in that in this use the verb serves to express the action of the initiator/subject in its own self-interest, thereby conforming to traditional characterizations of the middle voice such as that offered by Task (1993). Definitions of the middle voice in terms of "subject-affectedness" are also noted by Kemmer (1993), who argues that such uses conform to her definition of the middle as marking "relatively low elaboration of events" in that subject-affectedness can be equated to an identification of the initiator/subject with the endpoint of the event. This point becomes a bit clearer when the middle use in (14) is compared with what Kemmer defines as the "indirect reflexive" construction, an English sentence such as "he bought himself a hat", shown schematically in (15).

(15)



(based on Kemmer 1993: 76)

This construction makes use of the reflexive pronoun to indicate that the endpoint of the event is unitarily identified with initiator; the hat represents an intermediate point (M) in the chain of events, an entity whose purchase had some (indeterminate) effect on the purchaser. In many languages like Lushootseed, the middle marker may be used instead of the reflexive pronoun to indicate identity of initiator and endpoint, although in this language—contrary to Kemmer's claims—the distribution of the middle *-b* is not restricted to situations that "normally" or "necessarily" have an indirect reflexive reading, the morpheme being highly productive across verb stems of divers semantic categories, perhaps as a result of the conceptual separation and partial identification of the initiator's interests from the initiator itself—a typical environment in which to find a middle-marker.

As a result of the identification of the subject—or, rather, the subject's interests—with the endpoint of the Lushootseed example in (14),

the semantic patient is realized as an oblique rather than a direct object, thereby "defocusing" that participant or, in the terms of Langacker (1991), removing it from the "profile" of the verb stem. Given Hopper & Thompson's (1980) observation that one of the primary focuses of a prototypical transitive event is the affectedness of the semantic patient, the detransitivization of a clause that defocuses this participant is a plausible, although not inevitable, outcome. For Bella Coola, Davis & Saunders (1989) note that oblique objects such as that in (13b) show the same kind of reduced saliency that their Lushootseed counterparts do in middles, although the parallel is not complete in that the self-interest reading has been replaced by a more general reading of the event as an activity of the initiator performed on an indeterminate or defocused object. This activity-reading leads Davis & Saunders (1989) to provide "translocative" glosses of transitive verbs affixed with *-m*, glosses which, they argue, show a defocusing of the subject/agent, as in

(16) tx+ak+m+c
cut+hand+[md]+1s
'I'm going to go out and cut my hand'
(Davis & Saunders 1989: 132)

However, in what way the subject of the clause in (16) is defocused is not clear, and it is my own feeling—based on the gloss of this and other examples in Davis & Saunders (1989), as well as on glosses from the contextualized instances in BCT (which are not given as translocatives)—that the effect of such constructions is, in fact, to focus on the subject and the nature of the event as an activity of that subject, the translocative glosses being semantically parallel to such English expression as "to go shopping," "to go fishing/birding", or (in the case of (16)) "to go hand-cutting".[3] The fact that such constructions in the synchronic grammar of Bella Coola surface with *-m* may, in part, be due to historical accident, a result of the erosion of the self-interest reading shown by cognate Lushootseed *-b*; however, it does seem that, at least to some extent, this use of the Bella Coola *-m* conforms to the most abstract characterization of Kemmer's middle voice in that the defocusing of an object represents the reduced elaboration of participants.

4) *-m* and Transitivity

So far, most of the uses of *-m* discussed have represented fairly standard cross-linguistic uses of the middle morpheme to mark partial identity of endpoint and initiator of an event residing somewhere in the intermediate range of the continuum running between one- and

two-participant events. Because one of the principal characteristics of the transitive event across languages is the presence of two highly individuated participants (Hopper & Thompson 1980), events which do not clearly distinguish two-participants—that is, events designated by intransitives and middles—tend be realized as syntactically intransitive clauses, and because of this the middle marker in many languages functions as a detransitivizer, forming intransitive verbs when attached to transitive stems (Kemmer 1993). While most of the Bella Coola data considered up until this point seem to conform to this pattern, there are a relatively large number of instances in the data (based on a proportionally small set of stems) that show middle forms of verbs appearing in transitive clauses, clauses which in some cases appear to have been transitivized by the presence of the *-m* itself. This fact has led some writers (including Davis & Saunders at an earlier phase of their research, at the time of the publication of BCT) to posit separate meanings for the two types of *-m*—a mediopassive or middle meaning for *-m* in its uses as discussed up until now, and a separate transitivizing meaning.

One reason to doubt that the uses of *-m* can be divided neatly along the lines of transitivity, however, is the fact that in many cases the presence or absence of *-m* appears to have no direct effect on the clause's syntactic transitivity: with many stems *-m* seems to allow the formation of both transitive and intransitive clauses, as shown in (17):

(17) (a) tay+is snac ti+pucq̓+tx
pound+3s-3s Snac D+hellebore+D
'Snac pounded hellebore'

(b) tay+m+is ti+pucq̓+tx
pound+[md]+3s-3s D+hellebore+D
'he went to pound the hellebore'

(c) tay+m+ø
pound+[md]+3s
'he went routinely to pound'

(d) *tay+ø
pound+3s

(Davis & Saunders 1989: 120 – 121)

The sentence in (a) is an ordinary transitive clause, marked by the transitive agreement paradigm, as is the *m*-form in (b). The sentence in (c), on the other hand, shows intransitive subject agreement and in this

sentence the meaning of *-m* is clearly an instance of the type of activity reading seen in the detransitivized clauses illustrated in (13) above. According to Davis & Saunders (1989), the semantic distinction between (a) and (b) is a translocative one which serves to defocus the endpoint/direct object (in their terms, the "Experiencer") and lessen its affectedness; Davis & Saunders go on to note that sentences (b) and (c) also seem to have a lessened sense of performance and immediacy, which, as discussed in Section 3, may indicate that we are not dealing here so much with a literal translocative meaning as an activity reading, a "going-pounding". If this is indeed the case, then the function of *-m* in (b) is also clearly related to the detransitivizing use of the morpheme, the crucial difference between (b) and (c) being the presence in the clause of a completely individuated second participant—an important semantic feature of transitivity, according to Hopper & Thompson (1980)—rather than the presence or absence of a particular *-m* (although the presence of *-m* is not completely irrelevant to transitivity, as shown by the ungrammaticality of (d)).

Some further evidence for the relative independence of morphosyntactic transitivity from the presence/absence of *-m* is seen when deponent verbs turn up in transitive clauses, as in (18):

(18) (a) ... s+ʔax^{w}snix+it ti+nunu+ɬx^{w}+uc+m+ø
np+hear+3s-3p D+([agt]+chant+mouth+[md])+3s
'... when they heard someone chanting'
(BCT 44, line 11)

(b) nu+ɬx̌^{w}+uc+m+tim+k^{w}+c̓ wa+x̌ax̌aq̓+ac
([agt]+chant+mouth)+[md])+3p-pass D+goose+D
'the geese are chanted to'
(BCT 52, line 93)

Here, the deponent middle form *nuɬx̌^{w}ucm* 'to make noise, chant' appears in (a) as the only participant in an intransitive clause, the middle-marker's presence being required by the partial identification of the event's initiator (the chanter) and its endpoint (the chanter's mouth, represented by the lexical suffix *-uc*); in (b), the same verb—presumably with the same *-m*, motivated by the same considerations—appears in a transitive clause, showing transitive (or, more precisely, passive) agreement, apparently triggered by the construal of the event as having two-participants. Given the probable identity of the two instances of *-m* in the transitive/ intransitive pair in (18) and the semantic similarity of its uses in (17), it does seem likely that *-m* can be analyzed as a middle marker both in its detransitivizing and its "transitivity-neutral"

use. In the latter case *-m* appears to trigger a reduction in semantic transitivity, which in itself may not be enough to force a syntactically transitive root such as *tay* in (17) to become syntactically intransitive, but which may allow this in clauses lacking other semantic features of transitivity—specifically, the involvement of another, highly individuated participant.

According to Davis & Saunders (1989), the appearance of *-m* in transitivized clauses represents the incorporation of an element which is usually peripheral to the event into the "nucleus" of the "proposition"—that is, the syntactic advancement of a participant in a less-salient thematic role to either syntactic subject or direct-object position in the clause. In effect, *-m* in such uses is said to serve as the mark of the semantic peripherality of an element occupying a syntactic position normally held by a participant in a more salient role. Conversely, in intransitive uses such as those discussed in the previous section, *-m* is used to mark the syntactic ("propositional") peripherality of a semantically "central" or salient role ordinarily realized as nuclear in the proposition (subject or object), but which in detransitivized forms is omitted from the clause altogether. Thus, for Davis & Saunders, *-m* indicates a marked situation with respect to mapping semantic roles to syntactic positions, *-m* appearing in clauses that violate expected pairings of semantically salient roles to syntactically nuclear positions.

As ingenious as this analysis is, it is unsatisfying from a cognitive or functional/typological perspective on a number of counts. The first of these is that it, in effect, reduces the status of *-m* to that of a syntactic process morpheme—that is, it attributes to *-m* no semantic content of its own, but instead posits it as a marker of the occurrence of a particular process in the syntactic machinery which in itself does not seem to have any clear meaning. The upshot of this is that by maintaining that *-m* is a mark of the *continued* semantic peripherality of an event-participant that has been syntactically promoted to a nuclear position (or vice versa), Davis & Saunders seem to be arguing against the position common in the cognitive literature that syntactic promotion of an event participant is in itself a mark of *increased* semantic saliency. If *-m* is the mark of unchanged saliency, what is the semantic effect of object promotion in (18b), and—if *-m* itself has no effect on object-saliency—on what basis can we ascribe to *-m* the apparent change in meaning of the sentences in (17)? A even more serious objection, however, is that any such analysis of *-m* overlooks the fact that, at least in its intransitive and detransitive uses (which account for the bulk of the forms in the data), the meanings of the Bella Coola *-m* correspond to the meanings of the middle marker uncovered by Kemmer (1993) in language

after language. As it turns out, an examation of the uses of *-m* in transitivized clauses shows that many of these, too, can be classified as middles in the same way as other *m*-forms in the language.

One of these parallel uses of transitivizing *-m* has to do with actions that directly affect or pertain to the initiator's body or person, as in (19):

(19) ʔiċama+m+is+kʷ+ċ iɬʔayɬ ta+nanmk̓+tx̌
blanket+[md]+3s-3s+[qtv]+[perf] she D+animal+D
'she had put on the hide of an animal'

(BCT 137, line 90)

The form in (19) indicates an action akin to dressing, in which the endpoint is the initiator's body and the direct object more of an instrument than a patient (*i.e.* 'she blanketed herself with the animal'); the relation to the body action and grooming forms in (4) is obvious, as is the potential historical relation to the self-interest uses of the middle marker in other Salishan languages.

This rather infrequent use of *-m* is closely related to another middle use that I will refer to as an "instrumental middle". In this highly productive construction, a (usually intransitive) verb is affixed with both *-m* and a lexical suffix representing a part of the initiator's body which serves as some kind of instrument, this combination of a body-part suffix with *-m* causativizing and transitivizing the clause, as shown in the embedded clause in (20), formed on the intransitive *q̓ʷala* 'be no more':

(20) ... si+x̌i+yak+nu s+q̓ʷala+yak+m+tixʷ
np+fast+hand+2s np+be·no·more+hand+[md]+3p-2s
'... that you use them up so fast'

(BCT 114, line 179)

In such clauses the middle marker seems to be performing its familiar function of marking low participant distinguishability, although in such instances, rather than marking partial identity of initiator and endpoint, it marks partial identity of initiator and mid-point or (in this case) instrument, the instrument being part of the initiator's body. Further evidence of this can be seen in the contrast been the sentences in (21), based on the transitive verb *cp* 'wipe [sth]':

(21) (a) cp+ak+cinu
wipe+hand+2s-1s
'I wipe your hand'

(Davis & Saunders 1975: 361)

(b) cp+ak+m+ic
wipe+hand+[md]+3s-1s
'I wipe it with my hand'

(Davis & Saunders 1975: 358)

In the first of these two sentence, the lexical suffix *-ak* 'hand' is taken to refer to the hand of the affected participant which is realized as the direct object; when *-m* is added to the expression, the suffix is interpreted as referring to the hand of the initiator and is given an instrumental role in the event. Thus, *-m* here serves to mark the (partial) identity of the initiator with another event participant, one which is clearly not the endpoint of the event.

Another, less frequent, transitivizing use of *-m* appears to involve the syntactic "promotion" of an oblique object or adjunct to the role of direct object, as illustrated in (22):

(22) (a) smatmx+ø ti+ʔimlk+tx ʔuɬ+ti+ʔimmlkii+tx
friend+3s D+man+D P+D+boy+D
'the man [is] a friend to the boy'

(b) smatmx+m+is ti+ʔimlk+tx ti+ʔimmlkii+tx
friend+[md]+3s-3s D+man+D D+boy+D
'the man took the boy as a friend'

(Davis & Saunders 1989: 124)

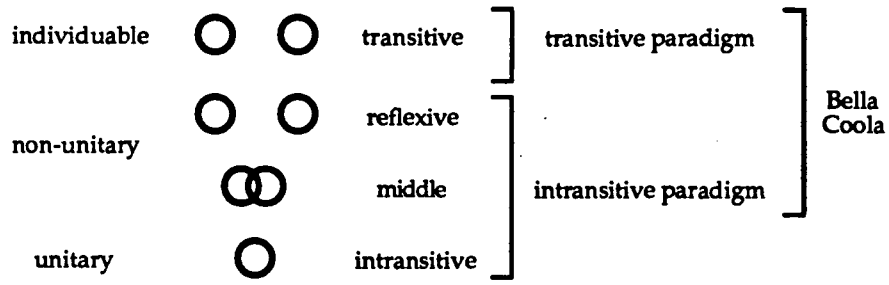
In the first sentence here, the noun *smatmx* 'friend' serves as a predicate nominal in a copular construction, while in the next example the addition of *-m* has created a transitive verb denoting an event, the NP previously contained in a prepositional phrase having been promoted to the status of direct object. While this form may seem roughly to be benefactive, in reality what seems to be at stake in the instances I have of such expressions is the initiator of the event conferring a particular social role or status—in this case, status as friend—upon the second event-participant, as opposed to conferring any specific kind of benefit. Under this analysis, the second participant—a fully individuated entity distinct from the initiator (thereby accounting for the clause's transitivity)—is not in any real sense the endpoint of the event, in that it has not undergone any change of state as a result of the initiator's action: the second participant remains physically unaffected (indeed, in such situations might even be unaware of anything having occurred), the only real change having taken place in the attitude of the initiator—that is, in the initiator's mind. The non-unitariness of the initiator implicit in this reading also motivates the shift in meaning

from that of a stative predicate (noun) to that of a verb denoting an event, as it allows for the construal of an initiator and an endpoint.

5) Transitivity and the Continuum of Unitariness

On the basis of the preceding discussion, it seems a safe bet to conclude that by far the majority of uses of the Bella Coola *-m* are indeed middle uses and that this morpheme conforms closely enough to well-known and widely recognized properties of middle-morphemes in the broad sample of languages examined by Kemmer (1993) that we can label *-m* as a marker of middle voice. Like the middle in language after language, *-m* appears in verbs denoting grooming and other actions directed towards the initiator's own body; it appears in verbs of emotion and cognition, verbs denoting speech events, and verbs of body posture, translational, and non-translational motion; and, as in many languages, it is used to form verbs expressing spontaneous (and a limited number of mediopassive) events. In addition to these standard uses of the middle-marker, which for the most part form syntactically intransitive clauses, Bella Coola applies *-m* to the formation of transitive clauses. The common thread linking all of these uses of *-m* seems to be Kemmer's (1993) notion of "relatively low elaboration of events" and, in particular, the ideas of unitariness and partial identification, wherein a clause fails to fully distinguish one clausal participant from another as a separate, autonomous entity. Unitariness, like Kemmer's participant distinguishability, forms a continuum, as shown in (23).

(23) The continuum of unitariness



At the lower end of the continuum we have events with a single, unitary participant and at the other extreme we have a two-participant event involving two highly individuable (and in themselves unitary) participants. The centre portion is divided between reflexives—with two individuated, unitary participants that are coreferential but otherwise distinct—and middles, in which some event-participant is conceived of as a non-unitary whole, parts of which fill distinct semantic

roles in the clause. Typically, one of these semantic roles is that of initiator but—in Bella Coola, at any rate—the role with which the initiator is partially identified need not be the semantic endpoint, but can be an intermediary point such as an instrument or the stimulus in an event of cognition. Another interesting feature of Bella Coola is that the minimal criteria for the occurence of the transitive agreement paradigm with a stem seems to be the construal of the event as having two fully individuable participants rather than the realization of a particular semantic role as the endpoint of the event; the result of this is the frequent appearance of the Bela Coola middle-marker in syntactically transitive clauses, a cross-linguistically unusual example of the varied and innovative uses of the Bella Coola *-m*.

NOTES

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1 Bella Coola is a predicate-initial language, the sentence predicate showing either intransitive subject or transitive object-subject agreement with its arguments (any or all NPs being omissible), as in:

(i) (a) ksnmak+s/ø
work+3s
'[he/she] works'

(b) k̓x+is ti+ʔimlk+tx ci+xnas+cx
see+3s-3s D+man+D D+woman+D
'the man sees the woman'

As indicated in (a), the agreement marker for third-person singular intransitive subject has two allomorphs, the ø variant being more common in simple matrix clauses; like other Salishan languages, Bella Coola allows nouns to serve as intransitive predicates (giving a reading of "to be a ..."), and in these cases the noun appears sentence-initially,

bearing the ordinary intransitive agreement suffixes. The transitive agreement paradigm exemplified in (b) consists of a set of portmanteau morphemes which historically followed object-subject order and will be rendered this way in interlinear glosses. Verbs that appear in context with the transitive agreement paradigm will be glossed with an indefinite object ([sth] or [s.o.]). The circumfixes appearing with the nouns in (b) have a deictic function as well as marking a masculine/feminine/plural distinction.

The abbreviations used here are as follows: 1 = first person; 2 = second person; 3 = third person; agt = agent; caus = causative; D = deictic; dist = distributive; dub = dubitative; expb = expectable; *f* = feminine; impf = imperfective; in = internal; inc = inchoative; irr = irrealis; l.o.c. = lack of control; md = middle; np = nominalizing prefix; P = preposition; p = plural; pass = passive; perf = perfective; pnt = punctual; po = possessive; qtv = quotative; refl = reflexive; s = singular; s.o. = someone; sth = something.

[2] Alternatively, the non-unitariness of the participant could be one of construal over time—that is, the fact that the grammatical subject is not the same at the beginning and at the end of the described event may result in its being construed as a non-unitary entity.

[3] This also seems to tie in to an observation made by Nater (1984) that transitive verbs affixed with *-m* 'always' have a present progressive reading. In actual fact, many such examples in BCT appear as past time events or with perfective aspect marking, but it may nevertheless be true that the "progressive" sense that Nater picked up on lies in the "activity" as opposed to "event" reading of stems in this construction.

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OBVIATION ACROSS CLAUSE BOUNDARIES IN KUTENAI[1]

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Abstract: Kutenai has an obviation system reminiscent of the system found in Algonquian languages in which at most one third person nominal in a clause is proximate and others are obviative. Although the behaviour of proximate nominals within clauses and within texts reflects a special status for proximates, as having some sort of 'higher rank' than obviatives, there are no restrictions across clause boundaries within sentences that require that the proximate be higher in the sentence than proximate nominals.

0. Background

In a number of previous papers (Dryer 1991, 1992, 1994, 1996), I have discussed the mechanisms of obviation in Kutenai as they apply within clauses and across sentences within discourse. In this paper, I examine the intermediate possibility, of obviation within sentences but across clause boundaries. I will argue that there is no evidence of any syntactic conditions governing obviation across clause boundaries apart from those that also apply within clauses. These two conditions are first, that there can be no more than one proximate per sentence and second, coreferential nominals must agree in obviation. In particular there is no evidence of any conditions reminiscent of 'binding' conditions, no conditions by which proximates are preferred in higher positions than obviatives.

I will first summarize the basic properties of obviation within clauses in Kutenai and some other basic aspects of verbal morphology. Within clauses in Kutenai, the assignment of proximate and obviative is governed by the following principle. Among the third person nominals in a clause, the proximate nominal will be the highest third person nominal on the following hierarchy:

(1) subject > primary object > secondary object, oblique

For current purposes, I define subject and primary object in terms of the system of pronominal marking on verbs. Subjects are associated with proclitics for first and second person, and with additional verbal suffixes for first and second person plural. These are illustrated in the following examples.

(2) a. hin ¢xa-ni
2 talk-INDIC
'You (sg.) talked.'

b. hu ¢xa-na‡a?-ni
1 talk-1PL-INDIC
'We talked.'

Objects are associated with verbal suffixes for all combinations of first and second persons, singular and plural. These are illustrated in the following examples, where the subject is third person.

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