

Parallel Layered Diachrony in Dependent Marking

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The languages indigenous to North America are generally known for their head-marking structures and often complex verb morphologies. But there are some with dependent case marking surprisingly similar to that of European languages. Most of these are from a recognized linguistic area centered in California, representing a variety of unrelated families and isolates: Shastan, Chimariko, Paliainhnan, Maidun, Wintun, Wappo-Yuki, Pomoan, Utian, Yokutsan, Yuman, Klamath, Sahaptian, Kalapuyan, Siuslaw, Takelma, Alsea, and Chinookan. Most have long been spoken in small communities, where exogamy and multilingualism were the norm, but speakers have been careful not to mix languages or borrow vocabulary. As a result there is little shared substance across genealogical lines, but extensive parallel phonological, morphological, syntactic, and lexical developments. Several languages show reanalysis of alignment patterns under the influence of neighboring languages, for example, and sets of ‘instrumental’ verb prefixes and locative/directional verb suffixes are widespread.

Nominal case distinctions in these languages typically include locative, allative, ablative, instrumental, and/or comitative markers, but the forms do not match across family lines. Markers within the languages vary in their attachment: some are suffixes, some enclitics, and some postpositions. Those with the most general meanings tend to be the most compact tightly attached, expected semantic and phonological effects of later stages of grammaticalization. Among the Central Pomo markers, for example, are general locative suffixes consisting simply of vowel length (q^ha ‘water’, q^ha- : ‘in the water’) or a single consonant ($\check{c}a$ ‘house’, $\check{c}a-w$ ‘in the house, indoors’). These are cognate across the family. An allative is similarly compact ($q^ha-:l$ ‘into the water’, $\check{c}a-:l$ ‘into the house’), also cognate across the family. An instrumental suffix $-wi$ ($ha-wi$ ‘with the mouth’) is shared across just a branch of the family. Somewhat larger and less tightly bound markers include $=q^ha\check{c}$ ‘toward’ ($\check{s}o=q^ha\check{c}$ ‘eastward’). There are also postpositions which occur with case-marked nouns ($\check{c}a-w wn\acute{a}$: ‘on top of the house’).

There are no deep philological records attesting stages in their development, but the modern languages contain hints of certain developmental processes. Givón (2011: 108) lists some postpositions in Ute, a Uto-Aztecan language, clearly derived from case-marked nouns, such as *qovaava* ‘in front of’. These follow nouns in the genitive case: *Kani qovaava wini* (house.GEN face-LOC stand-IMM) ‘S/he is standing **in front of** the house’. He also lists noun suffixes descended from verbs, such as an ablative $-mana$ from the verb *mana-* ‘leave’. Evidence of development can be seen in another Uto-Aztecan language, Hopi. Some forms are used as both adverbs and postpositions: *Ang taynuma* ‘She’s looking **around**’, *paasat ang* ‘**along** the field’ (Hopi Dictionary Project 1998: 23). And some postpositions have suffix doublets: *paasat angqw / pasngaqw* ‘**from** the field’ (Hill and Black 1998: 874).

Wappo, a language neighboring the Pomoan languages but unrelated to them, contains basic locative, instrumental, dative, benefactive, genitive, and comitative case suffixes, but also a number of more specific complex forms. Radin (1929: 138-9) identifies likely sources of several elements in these complexes, among them *pe-* ‘foot’ in suffixes $-p\acute{e}-huma$ ‘under’ and $-pe-l\acute{e}wa$ ‘at bottom’. A suffix $-pi$ occurs on its own meaning ‘away from’ or as part of some longer forms: $-uh-pi$ ‘off’, $-u-pi$ ‘out of’. Some forms occur as adverbs on their own, like $\check{r}op^h$ ‘down, below’, and also in complex suffixes like $\check{r}op-wela-pi$ ‘down under’ (down-toward-from). Radin notes that ‘it is exceedingly likely that some of the nominal suffixes are really recently fused adverbs.’

Such developments do not of course occur in a vacuum. As noted, languages throughout this area contain sets of what have been termed ‘instrumental’ prefixes and locative/directional suffixes. Connected speech shows that choices between nominal and verbal expression is not random, but, rather involve both existing lexicalizations and the point of the message.

In sum, traces of recurring pathways of development of the modern postpositions, case suffixes, adverbs, new postpositions, and new case suffixes, can be seen throughout the area, though without deep philological records, the degree to which they have been stimulated by contact cannot be determined with certainty. We still have much to learn.