

**Hul'q'umi'num' Numeral Classifiers:
A Study in Salish Language and Culture**
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Most Salish languages have 100—200 lexical suffixes:

- human/relational terms (*people, children*)
- cultural items (*canoe, net, house, clothing*)
- basic physical/environmental concepts
(*earth, fire, water, wind, tree, rock, berry*)
- body parts (*hand, foot, heart, nose*)

Verbal uses of lexical suffixes

qws=ey'un	go.into.water=net	'set a net'
suw'q'=iw's	seek=body	'search for a lost person'
lhst'=ul=qun	cut=hair	'shear wool'
p'tth'=ul=muhw	wring out=breast	'milk a cow'
q't=athun	go along=mouth	'walk along (a shore etc.)'
q'ut=nuts	go along=bottom	'go around end of lake'
q'a'=shin=t	add=foot-tr	'accompany s.o.'
q'p=as-um	gather=face-middle	'assemble, gather face to face'

Two uses of lexical suffixes (Gerdts & Hinkson 1996)

Classifying lexical suffixation

nem'	kwahw=uw't-hw=t	thu	lelum'.
go	knock-house-TR	DT	house
'Go knock on the house.'			

Classifying lexical suffixation

nem' ch	shqu=t	hw=xt'akw'=us=t	tthu	shts'uluhwus.
go	2.SUB	end-TR	PR-carve=face-TR	DT mask
'You finish carving the mask.'				

The grammaticalization cline: (Gerdts and Hinkson 1996)

noun > compounding lexical suffix > classifying lexical suffix > numeral classifier

Numeral classifiers

Lexical suffixes are used as numeral classifiers in Salish languages. Of the approximately 120 lexical suffixes, around 30 are used as classifiers. They attach to numerals and quantifiers but not to articles or demonstratives.

Classifying Suffix:

lhq'etss=umutth'	shelh
five=long	road
<i>'five roads'</i>	

sortal:

lhihw=uqun	xthum
three=container	box
<i>'three boxes'</i>	

mensural:

lhihw=uqun	sqewth
three=container	potato
<i>'three sacks of potatoes'</i>	

Not all suffixes that appear on numerals are classifiers.

Compounding Suffix:

t-hw=lhihw=shun 'ul'	tthu	snuhwulh.
only-three=foot	only DT	canoe
<i>'The car only has three tires.'</i>		

Key questions

What gets classified?

What numeral classifier is used to classify a particular noun?

How does this relate to the meaning of the noun?

Where do numeral classifiers come from?

Some things are not classified.

Some suffixes never appear as numeral classifiers.

Four key elements of material culture

=*uw't-hw* “house”

=*uwulh* ‘canoe’

=*eel'wus* “paddle”

=*ulwut* “blanket, garment”

HOUSE

theew't-hw ~ *thi lelum'*

thi + *uw't-hw*

CANOE

xuthin=*uwulh* snuhwulh 'i tetsul.

four=canoe canoe AUX arrive

'Four canoes arrived here.'

CANOE > AUTOMOBILE

kw'in=*uwulh* snuhwulh ni' 'un'nehw

how.many=canoe canoe AUX stopped

ni' 'u kwthun' lelum'?

AUX OBL DT.2POS house

'How many cars were parked in front of your house?'

CANOE > CONVEYANCE

This suffix is also used when counting other vehicles, including wagons, buggies, planes, trains, trailers, scooters, bicycles, and skateboards.

CANOE > VESSEL

'um'i-stuhw xuthin=*uwulh* la'ul'thun

come-CS four=canoe plate.PL

'i' thum=*uhwulh* qwthalus!

and two=canoe platter

'Bring four plates and two platters!'

SHAPE & FUNCTION

Most inanimate objects are classified on the basis of their shape or function.

- The key parameters are dimension (flat vs. spherical) and consistency (rigid vs. flexible).
- Secondary features are size and length.

Classifying Loops and Cylinders =*alus*:

t-hw=yusul=alus-stuhw ch tthun' syaays 'i' 'uy' .
 one-two=loop-CS:3OBJ 2SUB DT:2POS work and good.

"It will be better if you do two more rounds in your knitting."

Classifying Loops and Cylinders =*alus*:

yusul'=alus tthun' xul'tun.
 two=loop DT:2POS pen
 'You have two pens.'

kw'in=ulus tthu luplash?
 how.many=loop DT board
 'How many boards are there?'

Classifying Long Objects =*emutth'*:

lhq'etss=emutth' shelh
 five=long road
'five roads'

Classifying Long Objects =*emutth'*:

lhihw=emutth' qwlhey'
 three=long log
'three logs'

Classifying Long Objects =*emutth'*:

xuthun=emutth' kwthu qequn'

four=long.object DT house.post
'four house posts'

Mandarin

san 'three' hua 'flower'

zhi = elongated objects
 san zhi hua 'three flowers'
 (flowers on their stalks)

duo = round objects
 san duo hua 'three flowers'
 (flower part of the plant)

Summary

Specific lexical suffixes classify key elements of the culture, including people, fish, waterfowl, plants, houses, and canoes.

Most inanimate objects are classified on the basis of their shape or function.

Some things are not classified (counted with plain numerals).

New items get added to the system according to their shape or function.

The lexical suffix =*as* originally meant 'face'

sh=lhul'p'=us 'facial wrinkles'

PR=wrinkled=face

hw=lhaqw'=us=t 'slap him/her on the face'

PR=slap=face-TR

sh=yat'qw'=us-um' 'face cloth'

PR=rub=face-middle

kw'u'=as 'facing up'

climb=face

FACE > ROUND OBJECTS

liim=us 'April' [cf. *sliim* 'sandhill crane']

lhum'ts'=us=t 'pick them (berries)'

thith=us 'big rocks'

qw'umxw=us=-t 'wind it (wool) into balls'

wawa' ni' yusa'l=us lhqel'ts' 'i'
 perhaps AUX two=round moon and

tl'e' wulh nem' tsam.
 again already go go.up.

'It was maybe two months later and he again went up into the mountains.'

FACE > ROUND OBJECTS > COINS > MONEY

tskw'sh=as i' kw' lhq'atss=us
 twenty=round and DT five=round

u tthun' telu?
 Q DT:2POS money

'Do you have twenty-five dollars?'

CONCLUSION

- Salish lexical suffixes have their origin as nouns.
- They derive their classificatory functions through semantic extension.
- Because body part lexical suffixes are especially prone to semantic extension, they are excellent sources for classifiers.