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## A Morphosyntactic Analysis of Hə́ŋqə́míŋə́m: Pronominal Argument Hypothesis, Clitic Behavior, and the Syntactic Representation of Non-Colonizer Languages

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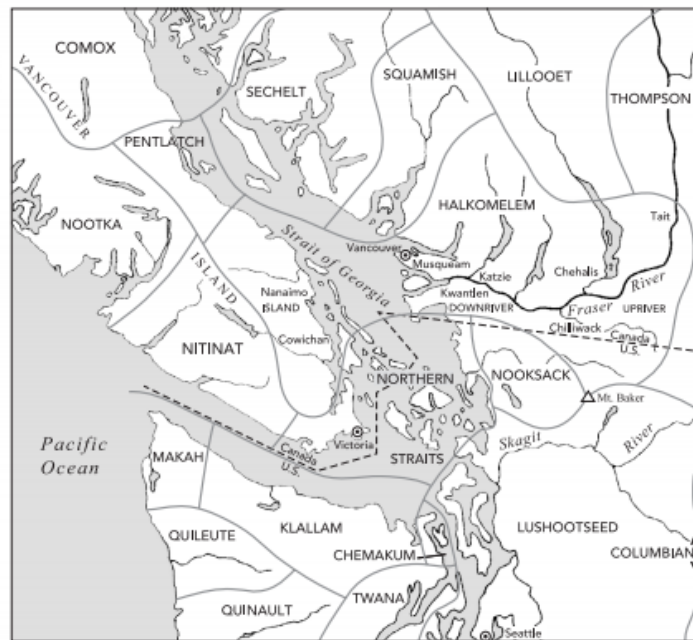
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**A Morphosyntactic Analysis of Hǎnǎmǐnǎm: Pronominal Argument Hypothesis, Clitic Behavior,  
and the Syntactic Representation of Non-Colonizer Languages**

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Under the Direction of Dr. Kristin Denham  
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## Background

Halkomelem is the anglicized name given to the Salish language spoken primarily in British Columbia, Canada. There is no overarching non-anglicized name—thus, why Halkomelem remains in use in general contexts—but I will use the dialectal names where possible. The Upriver dialect (Halqeméylem), the Island dialect (Hulqumínum)<sup>1</sup>, and the Downriver dialect (Hənqəminəm)<sup>2</sup>—which will be examined here—are each spoken in the area outlined below as the ‘Halkomelem Territory’.



Map 1 *Halkomelem Territory*

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Currently, there are less than 200 L1 speakers<sup>4</sup> of Hənqəminəm. The X<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əyəm community (anglicized Musqueam) is the most populous group of speakers belonging to the Downriver dialect and use the terms X<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əyəm and Musqueam in various contexts. However, as both terms can refer to the language, community, and the governing body of the Musqueam Indian Band, they are difficult to isolate as a linguistic label.

<sup>1</sup> Yinka Déné Language Institute, 2006

<sup>2</sup> “Home - Musqueam Indian Band.” *Musqueam*, 19 May 2021

<sup>3</sup> Suttles xxiv

<sup>4</sup> Ethnologue

X<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əyəm is the most studied variety of the Downriver dialect and many of my examples come from X<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əyəm. However, because there is a distinct lack of research surrounding the degree of variation between X<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əyəm and other varieties of Hənqəminəm, these varieties are often argued to be subdialects rather than distinct languages. Due to this, I will use the term Hənqəminəm (specified as Hənqəminəm X<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əyəm when necessary).

I acknowledge that I am an outsider to the Hənqəminəm and X<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əyəm communities. I also acknowledge that many of my sources are written by outsiders as well.

### **Language Overview**

Hənqəminəm is considered a head-initial language, meaning that most phrases are verb-first followed by noun phrase/s (NP/s). Each verbal predicate can be a bare root or a derived/inflected form (including forms with affixes). These predicates can be expanded with ‘particles’ (which will be addressed later), auxiliaries, adverbs, and complements for some verbs<sup>5</sup>.

(Aux) (Aux) (Adv+) Head (Adv+)

Hənqəminəm can be argued to be a polysynthetic language or a semi-polysynthetic language due to the grammatical marking which occurs on the verb. Throughout this examination, it is important to note that much of syntactic theory and forms of syntactic representation have been built on the foundation of highly analytic languages like English and may not be able to accurately represent a language like Hənqəminəm.

### **Radical Head Marking**

Radical Head Marking is a term introduced by Nichols in 1986 and used by many linguists studying languages in the Salish language family. Many use it as a descriptor for a specific type of polysynthetic language in which all participants of a predicate are marked on the verb and a single

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<sup>5</sup> Suttles Chapter 3

predicate constitutes a full clause<sup>6</sup>. However, this term is sometimes used not as a descriptor and instead as a claim for syntactic structure. The distinction between these two uses is often unclear.

As a descriptor, Radical Head Marking refers to a language in which the arguments (the required elements of the verb such as a subject/object/etc) of a predicate are marked (obligatorily) on the head of the predicate by agreement morphemes or agreement markers like clitics or affixes. These can surface as a null agreement marker. Radical Head Marking languages also classify non-pronominal, lexical arguments as optional. Given this definition, many assume that missing arguments are empty pronominals (*pro*)<sup>7</sup>. In syntactic theory, *pro* is assumed to be an implicit, unpronounced pronoun.

### Ex. 1

- a. T'iq(=Ø).<sup>4</sup>  
arrive(=3SU)  
'S/he came.' (More literally: *pro* came.)
- b. Áts'x-en-(Ø)-as.  
see-TRA(-3OBJ)-3ERG  
'S/he saw him/her/it.' (More literally: *pro* saw *pro*.)<sup>8</sup>
- c. c̣éwəθəs ce?  
c̣éw-ət-S-əs ce?  
help-TR-1sOBJ-3sOBJ FUT  
'He will help me'<sup>9</sup>

Above in (1a), a single instance of a null pronominal marking (empty *pro*) is shown in a Staimcets phrase. In (1b), both the subject pronominal and the object pronominal are empty. While Hə̀nq̣ə̀mĩ̀nə̀m often marks the argument on the head of the predicate (1c), the term Radical Head Marking functions here only as a descriptor. This does not make any assertion about the syntactic structure of the language and merely serves as a starting point for syntactic hypothesis.

### Pronominal Argument Hypothesis

<sup>6</sup> Davis pg 2

<sup>7</sup> Davis pg 3

<sup>8</sup> Davis pg 3 examples 1 and 2

<sup>9</sup> Adapted from Suttles pg 32 example (r)

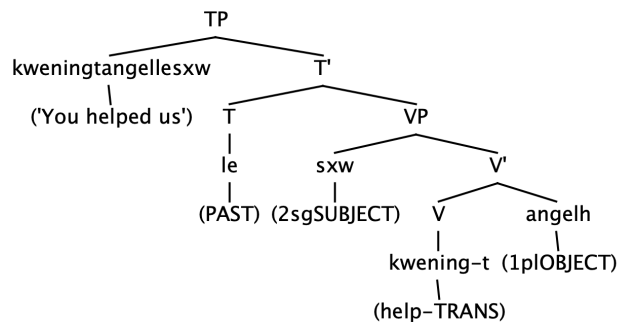
First proposed in 1984 by Jelinek<sup>10</sup>, the pronominal argument hypothesis (PAH) is a framework for the examination of nonconfigurational languages. For the purpose of this analysis, a nonconfigurational language is defined as a language with a free/flexible word order. In this nonconfigurational language framework, pronominal affixes function as syntactic arguments. Noun phrases then function as adjuncts to the pronoun-based clause which would be considered complete without them<sup>11</sup>.

As this analysis is an attempt to describe the morphosyntactic structure of Hə̀nqə̀mĩ̀nə̀m, the PAH appears to be a good starting place. Many other Salish languages are or can be argued to be PA languages including: Lhaq'temish (Lummi)<sup>12</sup> and St'at'imcets (Lilloet)<sup>13</sup>.

**Ex. 2**

Lhaq'temish (Lummi)<sup>14</sup>

kweningtangellesxw  
 kwening-t-angelh-le-sxw  
 help-TR-1plOBJ-PAST-2sgSUBJ  
 'You helped us'



Above in (2), a phrase from Lhaq'temish (Lummi) is glossed and diagrammed. In Lummi, it has been argued that the “agreement markers” attached to the complex verb are actually the arguments (=Determiner Phrase (DP)/Noun Phrase (NP)). All other NPs, adverbials, etc. are adjuncts to the DP/NP-based phrase. A sentence can consist of just a complex verb with these markings and no other words, and there are no invisible constituents like ‘pro’ which take the place of arguments. This, as well

<sup>10</sup> Jelinek 1984

<sup>11</sup> LeSourd pg 1

<sup>12</sup> Jelinek and Demers pg 698

<sup>13</sup> Davis pg 3

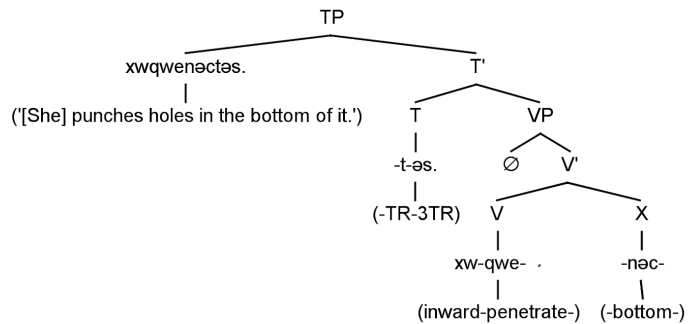
<sup>14</sup>Jelinek and Demers pg. 707, Denham 2021

as the presence of null pronouns, has further implications within syntactic research that do not pertain to Hə̀nq̄əmiṇə̀m and thus will not be explored here.

In PA languages, all of the core arguments of the complex verb/clause are initially separate and then raise together to form a single clausal unit. Therefore, the PAH is often applied to polysynthetic languages, which Hə̀nq̄əmiṇə̀m can be argued to be.

**Ex. 3**

Hə̀nq̄əmiṇə̀m  
 xwqwenə̀ctəs  
 xw-qwe-nə̀c-t-əs  
 inward-penetrate-bottom-TR-3OBJ  
 '[She] punches holes in the bottom of it.'



Initially, both Lhaq'temish (Lummi) and Hə̀nq̄əmiṇə̀m appear to very similar in structure. As seen above in (2) and (3), both languages are able to mark verbs, subjects, objects, and transitivity in a single, complex verb. Both also raise that complex verb, theoretically, to the Tense Phrase (TP) level in a syntactic tree. This is suggest that, like Lhaq'temish (Lummi), Hə̀nq̄əmiṇə̀m could be accurately described by the PAH.

When determining whether or not a language is a PA language, there are a multitude of tests which can be used. First, PA languages exhibit obligatory argument morphology on the verb. Therefore, the argument (DP/NP according to PAH) must be marked on the verb, as below in (4a).

**Ex. 4**

- a. c̣éwəθəs ceʔ.  
 c̣éw-ət-S-əs ceʔ.  
 help-TR-1sOBJ-3sOBJ FUT  
 'He will help me'<sup>15</sup>
- b. nəs m ə́ḳ<sup>w</sup>. (JP)  
 nə-s-[c-]m ə́ḳ<sup>w</sup>  
 my-NOM-make-find  
 'I found it.' (lit. 'It is what I found.')
- c. nəs ʒ̣íʔ ḳ<sup>w</sup> səplíɫ. (AG)  
 nə-s-[c-]ʒ̣íʔ ḳ<sup>w</sup> səplíɫ  
 my-NOM-make-valuable ART bread  
 'I want some bread.' (lit. 'Bread is what I want.')

PA languages also demonstrate an optional presence of independent DPs. Above in (4b), there is no independent DP in the phrase; however, in (4c) an independent DP is seen in 'k<sup>w</sup> səplíɫ' or 'ART bread'. Both (4b) and (4c) are grammatical, acceptable phrases in Hə̀nq̣ə̀mí̀nə̀m which satisfies the optionality component of the test.

Ultimately, though, Hə̀nq̣ə̀mí̀nə̀m cannot be represented accurately with the PAH. While marked, complex verbs can make up an entire phrase in Hə̀nq̣ə̀mí̀nə̀m, bare verbs are allowed to function as predicates in select situations.

**Ex. 5**

- (a) θí.  
 big  
 'It's big.'
- (b) ʔé·nθə.  
 be.I  
 'It's me.'
- (c) n é́m̄.  
 go  
 'Go!'
- (d) n é́m̄ ɫə.  
 go PER  
 'Go!'
- (e) n é́m̄ ɔ́ə.  
 go QUOT  
 'He is said to be going.'
- (f) n é́m̄ cən ceʔ.  
 go I FUT  
 'I'll go.'

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<sup>15</sup> Adapted from Suttles pg 32 example (r)

<sup>16</sup> Suttles pg 272 example (h)

<sup>17</sup> Suttles pg 272 example (i)

<sup>18</sup> Suttles pg 31 example (a-f)



As seen above in (5c), a bare verb can function as a predicate when in imperative/command form. A small number of verbs can function as a predicate on their own (5a) or with a pronominal marker (5b). However, phrases like (5e-f) are much more common. The attached particles seen in (5e-f) have been labelled particles, second position particles, and clitics. They are not free words, nor are they affixes—which follows typical clitic behavior. Therefore, for the purpose of this analysis, they will be called clitics.

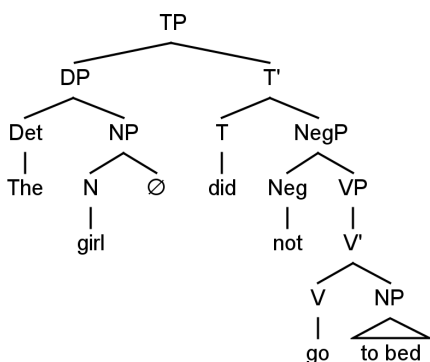
These clitics do not fit the PA description nor does the allowance of bare verbs. Because these two fundamental differences are present, it is not necessary to conduct further tests for the PAH.

### Clitics

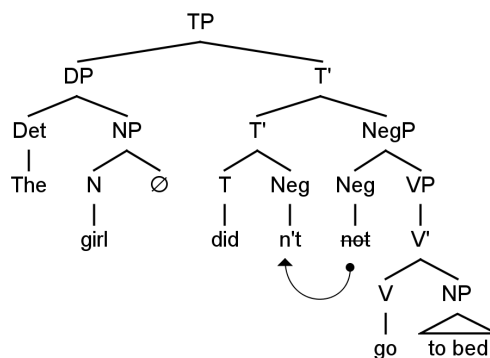
As briefly mentioned before, a clitic functions as something between a free word and a bound affix. Clitics add grammatical information to the predicate and can be defined by their closeness to said predicate. Below in (5), two syntactic trees are presented for the English sentence: The girl did not (didn't) go to bed.

#### Ex. 6

a.



b.



This example is included to demonstrate the difficulty of representing clitics and their movement in a syntax tree. Even in a basic phrase from an analytic language, the cliticization of a clitic is difficult to

describe. In this representation (6b), this also leaves the NegP without a head. It is unclear whether clitics can function as heads of phrases or if they belong to their own phrase type. English, however, has very few clitics comparatively. Because of this scarcity, representing clitics in syntactic structure has not been prioritized or resolved.

Hə̀nqəm̀iṇə̀m̀, in contrast, has four defined types of clitics. Among these four types, there are two ‘inner’ types and two ‘outer’ types. These inner/outer types are determined by their closeness to the predicate and their mobility, as inner clitics are typically only mobile within the NP and outer clitics are mobile within the entire clause. Inner clitics are also much more phonologically integrated than outer clitics<sup>19</sup>, which can aid in the classification of ambiguous clitics. Below, these four types have been further described.

<b>(Inner) Proclitics</b>	<b>(Inner) Enclitics</b>	<b>(Outer) Pre-Predicate Clitics</b>	<b>(Outer) Second Position Clitics</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Occur or attach before the main verb</li> <li>- Precede second position clitics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Occur after the first appropriate host</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Attach before the predicate or adverb</li> <li>- Not hosted by subordinators or space/time auxiliaries</li> <li>- Can host (inner) enclitics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Occur after appropriate first-position host</li> <li>- Hosted by subordinators or space/time auxiliaries</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mobile only within the NP</li> <li>- More phonologically integrated</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mobile within the phrase/clause</li> <li>- Less phonologically integrated</li> </ul>	

While each type of clitic is found in Hə̀nqəm̀iṇə̀m̀, (outer) second position clitics are the largest and most commonly used set. It is worth noting that this is a closed set of roughly 20 clitics (some are still

<sup>19</sup> Gerdts and Werle pg 284

in debate<sup>20</sup>) and includes: person markers like 1SG/1PL/2SG/etc and tense/mood markers like past/fut/rog/imp. Second position clitics also attach information such as the degree of certainty or the relationship of new information to old information<sup>21</sup>.

Both second position clitics and (inner) enclitics attach to an ‘appropriate host’<sup>22</sup>. While inner proclitics and outer pre-predicate clitics attach to the main verb or the predicate, second position clitics and enclitics attach to much more specific hosts. Second position clitics always attach to the first position host (which can be a verb, adverb, AUX, etc) and thus occurs in the second position. Enclitics—such as the 2PL marker—attach similarly to second position clitics but, due to their ‘inner’ nature, precede any co-occurring ‘outer’ clitics unless that outer clitic is its host. In a hypothetical DP with both an enclitic and a second position clitic, the enclitic appears after the noun—not the determiner—while the second position clitic attaches after the determiner.

**Ex. 7**     **təw=əl** plet **ce?** tθə meqe? ?i? yeł-s qəlet ct kwš-em.  
**DLM=PST** thick **FUT** DT snow CNJ SEQ-N again **1PL.SUB** count-MID  
 'We'll wait until the snow is thicker before we start counting again.'<sup>23</sup>

Above in (7), there are three clitics attached to a single verb. The clitic closest to the head ‘=əl’ marks for PST and is an enclitic as opposed to a proclitic. This classification would typically be made using phonological integration; however, this case is not debatable because, though both attach before the main verb, the enclitic is also hosted by the pre-predicate clitic ‘təw’ (DLM). Pre-predicate clitics are the only type of clitic that can host other clitics. Finally, there is a third clitic of ‘ce?’ which marks for FUT and is a second position clitic. If the pre-predicate clitic was not present, the inner enclitic would attach between the verb and this second position clitic. Note that second position clitics have a strict order in which they appear when multiple co-occur.

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<sup>20</sup> Suttles pg 33

<sup>21</sup> Suttles pg 34

<sup>22</sup> Gerdts pg 250

<sup>23</sup> Gerdts pg 259

Table 16.1

Order of second-position predicate particles											
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
-ət	ʔə	yəx <sup>w</sup>	cən	čə	ceʔ	ʔal	mə	k <sup>w</sup> ə	k <sup>w</sup> t	waʔ	ʔaʔa
‘past’	ROG	INF	‘I’	QUOT	FUT	‘just’	CERT	‘then’	‘yet’	PRES	ROG!
			čx <sup>w</sup>	ʔe·	tə	ʔewət	čtwaʔ	qə			
			‘you’	PLPR	PER	REAS	SPEC	EMPH			
			ct			yət		θət			
			‘we’			EXP		ADV			
			ce·p								
			‘you’								

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It is possible that these outer clitics are argumentizing clitics. The argumentizing nature of these ‘particles’ lead to the original appearance that Həñqəmiñəñ follows the Pronominal Argument Hypothesis.

### Conclusion

Despite the descriptor of Radical Head Marking and the initial appearance of Pronominal Argument features, Həñqəmiñəñ does not fully fit into either framework. Though affixes can be syntactic arguments which can fit into a syntactic tree, the extensive clitic network of Həñqəmiñəñ has no obvious way of being represented accurately using tree diagrams. If the clitics can function as heads of their own phrase, it is still unclear how this can be represented.

While these two existing frameworks cannot describe Həñqəmiñəñ accurately, a description of clitic types and behavior in Həñqəmiñəñ is possible. Həñqəmiñəñ exhibits four clitics types: (inner) proclitics, (inner) enclitics, (outer) pre-predicate clitics, and (outer) second position clitics. These clitics function as markers of grammatical information similarly to agreement morphemes or agreement affixes but are much more mobile within the phrase/clause.

Due to the polysynthetic nature of Hə́nqə́mínə́m, it would be difficult to represent a phrase within the constraints of X-bar theory. This examination has also highlighted the tendency of current syntactic theory towards analytic language description. Hə́nqə́mínə́m remains a severely understudied and under-described language, but non-colonizer languages in general also require further research and study.

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