Samish Reflexives: A Question of Control

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Little research has been done regarding the status of Samish reflexives and their relationship to other Salish reflexives. This paper will argue that Samish reflexives behave and pattern similarly to closely related Salish languages. Two surfacing types of reflexives ('plain' and limited control) will be established as will two available situations for each type to occur ('core' and grammaticalized, with a possible inchoative reading.) It will also be argued that Samish reflexives, like related Salish language reflexives, are derived from a transitive marker. McGinnis (2022) and Legate (2014) are referenced as possible syntactic representations of Samish reflexives in which reflexive suffixes (called anaphoric clitics by McGinnis) morphologically realize onto a Voice head or into the Spec position of VoiceP.
Keywords: Samish; Northern Straits Salish; reflexives; limited control; transitivity

1 Introduction

Via comparative analysis, it is clear that Samish reflexives behave and pattern similarly to closely related Salish languages. Both 'plain' (non-limited control) and limited control reflexives will be established and described within two unique contexts ('core' and grammaticalized, with a possible inchoative reading). Samish reflexives, like related Salish language reflexives, are derived from a transitive marker and will be broken down as such. Both McGinnis (2022) and Legate (2014) are referenced, suggesting that reflexive suffixes (called anaphoric clitics by McGinnis) morphologically realize onto a Voice head or into the Spec position of VoiceP.
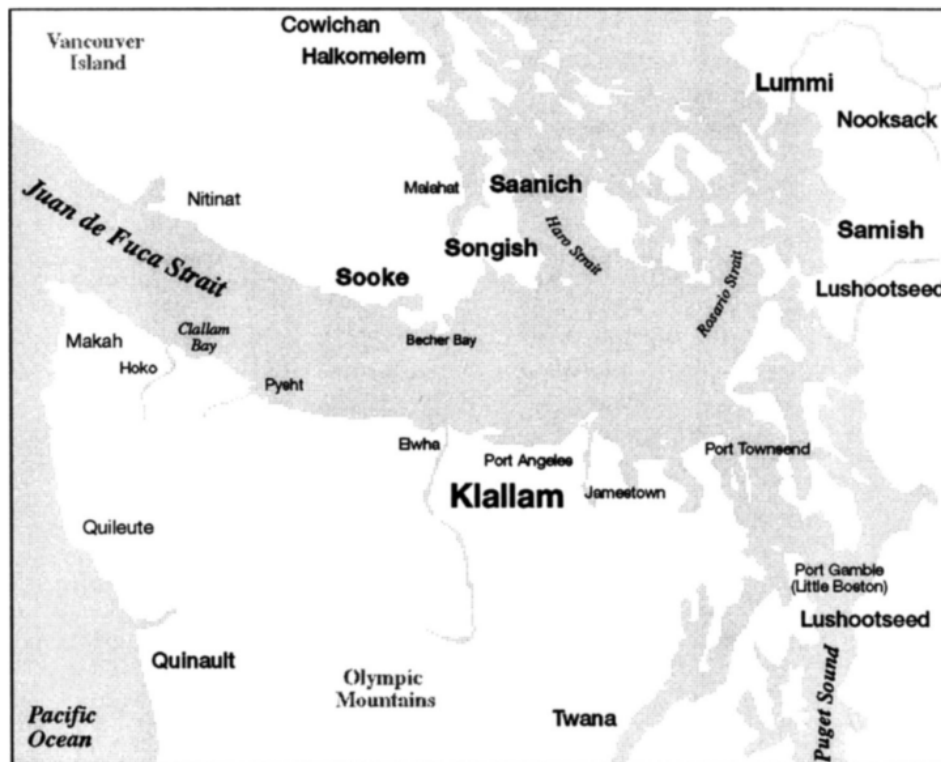
1.1 Language Background

Cowichan
Halkomelem

Vancouver Island

Lummi

Nooksack

Nitinat

Malahat **Saanich**

Samish

Juan de Fuca Strait

Songish

Haro Strait

Sooke

Rosario Strait

Lushootseed

Clallam Bay

Becher Bay

Makah

Hoko

Pysht

Elwha

Port Angeles

Port Townsend

Klallam

Jamestown

Quileute

Port Gamble (Little Boston)

Lushootseed

Quinault

Olympic Mountains

Puget Sound

Pacific Ocean

Twana

Table 1. Major Groups and Dialects of Straits Salishan

I. Klallam (KL)	II. Northern Straits (NST)
A. Western (WKL)	A. Sooke (SO)
1. Pysht, Clallam Bay	B. Songish (SG)
2. Elwha	C. Saanich (SA)
B. Eastern (EKL)	1. West Saanich (WSA)
1. Jamestown	2. East Saanich (ESA)
2. Little Boston (Port Gamble)	D. Lummi (LM)
C. Becher Bay (BBKL)	E. Samish (SM$_{VU}$, SM$_{LD}$, SM$_{TB}$, SM$_?$)[4]
	F. Semiahmoo

Adapted from Montler (1999)

Samish is a dialect of Northern Straits Salish which belongs to the Salish language family and is situated within the Coastal Salish branch. It is spoken in the Puget Sound region of Washington State, USA (now Bellingham, Washington), though no fluent speakers have been confirmed, and is primarily used by the Samish Tribe (more broadly: the Samish Indian Nation) (Galloway, 1990; Montler, 1999). Current revitalization efforts are in progress and more information can be found on the Samish Tribe website: https://www.samishtribe.nsn.us/

1.2 Theoretical background

Following Nolan (2017) and Turner (2010), SENĆOŦEN and Halkomelem (both the Upriver and Downriver dialects) will be assumed to be closely related to Samish. This paper seeks to examine Samish reflexives as much as possible given existing data and situate it within current frameworks describing Salish reflexives (Gerdts, 1998; 2000; Kinkade, 1981; Turner, 2010; Wiltschko, 2002). Galloway (1990) provides a word list and phonological/morphological description of the Samish language as well as a line-by-line gloss of the only written Samish story, 'The Maiden of Deception Pass'. Galloway's (1990) data was collected from three remaining Samish speakers prior to 1990 through personal communication (see Appendix 1). However, due to very limited documentation, a large portion of the data examined will be from closely related languages rather than from Samish.

Gerdts (1998) describes the reflexive system of Halkomelem, asserting that Halkomelem has two types of reflexive suffixes: one 'plain' reflexive, and one limited control reflexive. Gerdts (2000) expands on this. It is possible that Samish, as a related language, has these two types of reflexives as well and this paper will seek to determine this. Kinkade (1981) examines the reflexive suffix of Chehalis, a Salish language of the Tsamosan branch, and situates the Chehalis reflexive within proto-Salish. This, combined with Gerdts (1998; 2000) will be used to assume the underlying structure and derivation of Samish reflexive suffixes/clitics addressed later.

For a more general approach to verbal reflexives, McGinnis (2022) and Wood and Marantz (2017) provide a generative syntactic view. McGinnis (2022) is particularly significant if the reflexive markers in Samish express either unaccusative or unergative Voice. Wood and Marantz (2017) provide a similar theoretical approach. Both will be used to situate Samish within these theories.

For the purpose of this investigation, it will be assumed that Samish has at least two reflexive markers: -sət and -áŋət, following Galloway (1990). The verb classes of unaccusative and unergative will be assumed following Burzio (1986). A CP > TP > VoiceP > vP > VP structure will also be assumed following Pylkkänen (2008), Kratzer (1996), Harley (2013), and Legate (2014). Following Gerdts (1998), the reflexive markers in Samish will be assumed to be suffixes rather than clitics.

This paper will argue that Samish reflexive suffixes fall into two categories: 'plain' reflexives and limited control reflexives (Gerdts, 1998; 2000). It will also be argued that, following Gerdts (1998; 2000) and Kinkade (1981), these suffixes are derived from transitive markers in Samish. These reflexives can occur in two contexts, following Gerdts (1998; 2000): 'core' reflexives and 'grammaticalized' reflexives. The ability of these suffixes to attach (as well as what they attach to) will demonstrate a potential Voice they either carry or express. Finally, following McGinnis (2022), it will be argued that Samish reflexive suffixes express unaccusative or unergative Voice. This is a potential contrast to expressing a pronominal element like Det/D.

2 'Plain' reflexives and limited control reflexives

Gerdts (1998) establishes two types of reflexive suffixes in Downriver Halkomelem: a 'plain' reflexive and a limited control reflexive.

(1)   *'Plain' reflexive*   *Translation*
   a. ċə́yxʷθət   'dry self'
   b. ləx̌ʷəθət   'cover self'
   c. laləmθət   'look after self'

(2)   *Limited Control Reflexive*   *Translation*
   a. q̓aynámət   'kill self accidentally'
   b. q̓ʷəqʷnámət   'hit self accidentally'
   c. yəx̌ʷnámət   'manage to set self free'

Adapted from Gerdts (1998)

As demonstrated above, the 'plain' reflexive -θət and the limited control reflexive -námət encode different meanings. The 'plain' reflexive indicates an action on oneself while the limited control reflexive implies accidental action on oneself or a 'manage to' reading (Gerdts, 1998). Wiltschko (2002) establishes very similar reflexive suffixes for Upriver Halkomelem and Turner (2010) does the same for SENĆOŦEN, as seen below.

Table 1. '*Plain' Reflexives vs. Limited Control Reflexives*

Language	'Plain' Reflexive	Limited Control Reflexive
Downriver Halkomelem	*-θət*	*-námət*
Upriver Halkomelem[1]	*-thet*	*-ɬómet*
SENĆOŦEN	*-sət*	*-aŋət*
Samish	*-sət / -nəxʷ*[2]	*-áŋət*

Adapted from Gerdts (1998), Wiltschko (2002), Turner (2010) and Galloway (1990) respectively

The sound changes and interlanguage variation seen in the table above are expected, following Kinkade (1981) as a natural development from Proto-Salish reflexive markers that have been proposed. This results from the way that reflexive suffixes in Salish languages are derived, which will be addressed in the next section.

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[1] Note that Kiyota (2007; 2008) and Turner (2010) suggest that the control distinction made between the two reflexive suffixes is a matter of valency.

[2] Note that the Samish reflexive -nəxʷ is assumed to be an alternate form closer to the Proto-Salish reflexive proposed by Kinkade (1981) but is not included in this analysis because it does not appear in the available data.

2.1 Derived from transitivity

As Kinkade (1981) suggests, the sound differentiation between Halkomelem 'plain' reflexives and the more southern Salish languages is expected due to their respective transitive markers. Wiltschko (2002), in particular, argues for the derivation of reflexive suffixes from transitive markers, using Upriver Halkomelem as an example.

(3)   *Derivation of Reflexive Suffixes from Transitive Markers in Upriver Halkomelem*

     a.

     b.
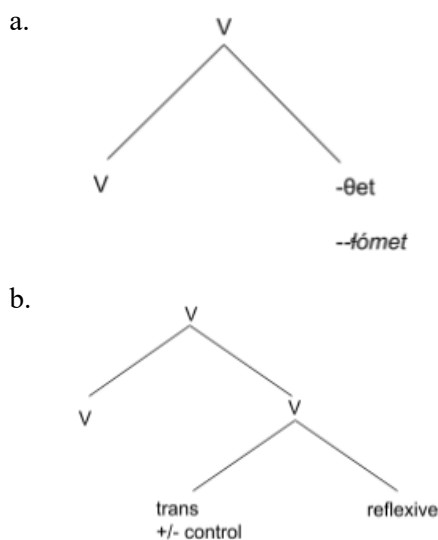
       (3a) above demonstrates the preliminary structure Wiltschko proposes for Upriver Halkomelem reflexives. Reflexive verbs, according to Wiltschko, are derived from the verbal root and a reflexive suffix. However, this reflexive suffix can be further broken down into a transitive marker (which carries a level of control) and another reflexive element as shown in (3b).

       Below, examples (4) and (5) demonstrate different levels of control in Upriver Halkomelem.

(4)   iyó:qthet
     iyó:q-   -th-   -et
     change   *TRANS*[3]   *REFL*
     'change oneself'
     Level of Control: Full Control

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[3] For the purpose of these glosses, the following abbreviations are assumed: TRANS – transitive, REFL- reflexive, and DET – determiner.

(5) kwˈemłómet
     kwˈem-   -łóm-   -et
     raise   *TRANS*   *REFL*
     'I raised myself'
     Level of Control: Limited/No Control

<div align="right">Adapted from Wiltschko (2002)</div>

Therefore, in (4) the breakdown of these components for a 'plain' reflexive in Upriver Halkomelem is demonstrated. The 'plain' reflexive in these languages, which has full control, is derived using the [+control] transitive marker -θ/th for Halkomelem and -s for SENĆOŦEN and Samish which then combines with a reflexive marker -ət/-et depending on the vowel system of the given language. Gerdts (1998) notes that the transitive suffix -t (represented here as -θ/th to account for sound changes) implies "control by an animate agent".

In (5), the limited control reflexive (called "no control" by Wiltschko) is derived using the [-control] transitive marker which appears as -n/-l (represented here post-phonological processes) and combines with the reflexive marker -ət/-et. Gerdts (1998) also asserts that the limited control transitive suffix (though its form varies from language to language) implies "a lack of control," an "unintentional" or "accidental" reading, or that the action was "done with great difficulty." Thus, reflexive markers in Samish are given their different domains of control due to the transitive suffixes used to derive them. Note that the nasal consonant described here as part of the limited control transitive marker likely has a shared underlying phoneme despite phonological differences in the surface forms.

According to Wiltschko (2002), these reflexive suffixes are in complementary distribution with object suffixes, which suggests an intransitive predicate. In Upriver Halkomelem, this is further supported by the fact that a reflexive interpretation is excluded when a transitive suffix is present[4], as seen below.

(6) th'exxáltes te Strang
     th'ex-xál-t-es   te   Strang
     wash-foot-TRANS-3S   *DET*   *Strang*
     'Strang washed somebody's feet.'
     *Strang washed his own feet.

3   Core and grammaticalized reflexives

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[4] Note that Gerdts (2000) accounts for the complementary distribution of reflexive suffixes with a constraint stating that the 'plain' reflexive in Downriver Halkomelem "can only refer to a THEME nominal" (pg. 144). Gerdts does not apply this constraint to the limited control reflexive because it can reportedly "co-occur with applicative suffixes and lexical suffixes". Because there is not enough Samish evidence to support this constraint, it will not be considered evidence but will be addressed in the discussion section.

Gerdts (1998, p.1) asserts that each type of reflexive suffix can occur in one of two situations: 'core' and 'grammaticalized'. These terms are Gerdts' and are defined below:

Core ['plain' or limited control] reflexive: "used in constructions in which the patient (or other suitable argument) is semantically coreferent" to the subject of the clause.

Grammaticalized ['plain' or limited control] reflexive: "suffixes that do not affect argument structure," carry a more aspectual meaning, and are used in constructions where no argument is semantically coreferent to the subject of the clause.

Gerdts also notes that core reflexive suffixes occur only on process unaccusatives[5] while grammatical suffixes appear on other verb classes— including unergatives.

Turner (2010) extends this to SENĆOŦEN as well. Following Turner's analysis, 'core' reflexives (both plain and limited control) pattern with unaccusative verbs. Within the category of 'core' reflexives, plain reflexives (called control reflexives by Turner) read as accomplishments, while limited control reflexives carry an achievement meaning. This, combined with Gerdts (1998), establishes a strong foundation for the hypothesis that Samish reflexives will pattern in the same way.

Both Montler (1986) and Gerdts (2000) argue for a possible inchoative reading when a control reflexive is attached directly to the root of an unaccusative verb (mainly statives, according to Gerdts, 2000). Below, Table 2 demonstrates this inchoative meaning of a reflexive suffix in Downriver Halkomelem.

Table 2. *Inchoative Meaning of Reflexive Suffix in Downriver Halkomelem*

Root	Translation	Reflexive	Translation
ʔayəm	ˈslowˈ	ʔayəmθət	ˈget slowˈ
θi	ˈbigˈ	θiθát	ˈget bigˈ
q̓i:ləm	ˈoldˈ	q̓i:ləmjθət	ˈget oldˈ
scəẃét	ˈadept, cleverˈ	scəẃátθət	ˈbecome cleverˈ

Ex. 15 from Gerdts (2000)

This analysis is significant for the argument proposed by McGinnis (2022), which suggests that reflexive clitics/affixes express unaccusative or unergative Voice. If the reflexive being analyzed does not have either unaccusative or unergative properties, however, does that suggest that reflexive clitics can express other Voice aspects? Could they carry an unaccusative meaning?

Turner (2010) suggests that these inchoative reflexives involve "inchoative activities" which is related to McGinnis' (2022) claim that reflexive clitics demonstrate syncretism with inchoatives and unergative activity predicates—thus,

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[5] Note that state verbs have been excluded from this analysis due to lack of data.

it is possible that inchoative activity predicates are also potentially grammatical in some languages. This will be addressed in the Discussion section.

Gerdts (2000), however, also addresses this potential issue by examining the underlying structure of these particular reflexives. Unlike those previously described, Gerdts argues that the inchoative reflexives in (6) cannot be broken down the way Wiltschko (2002) approached non-inchoative reflexives. Instead, they are reanalyzed (7a-c).

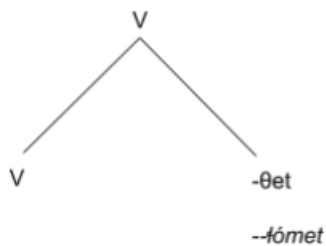| (7)		*Reanalyzed Reflexive*	*Translation*
	a.	[[[ʔayəm] t] sat]	[[[slow] transitive] reflexive]
	b.	[ʔayəm [t + sat]]	[slow [transitive +reflexive]]
	c.	[ʔayəm [θat]]	[slow [inchoative]]

Ex. 16 from Gerdts (2000)

Here, they do not have a reflexive or transitive meaning as in (7ab). Instead, they combine and are reanalyzed as a strictly inchoative suffix, as in (7c).
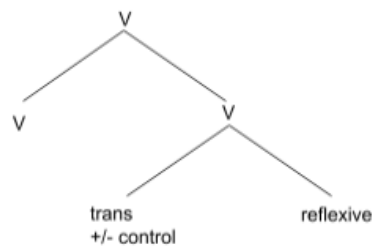
4   Discussion

Thus far, Samish reflexives have been argued to pattern very similarly to reflexives in Upriver Halkomelem, Downriver Halkomelem, and SENĆOŦEN. Two distinct categories with two distinct readings have been established: 'plain' reflexives and limited control reflexives. These two types attach to different verb types, as described, and have been argued to be derived from transitive markers in each respective language. Samish reflexives, then, can be tentatively decomposed into the following structures. Recall that the forms shown in italics are post-phonological processes.

(8)   Decomposed Samish Reflexives
   a.   'Plain' Reflexive
         -sət

b. Limited Control Reflexive
   -áŋət

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              V
             / \
            /   \
           V     V
                / \
               /   \
              /     \
            trans   reflexive
          +/- control
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Due to the complementary distribution of reflexive suffixes and object suffixes argued by Wiltschko (2002), an intransitive predicate is assumed. Therefore, the intransitive nature of the resulting reflexive verb is expected.

As Gerdts (1998) and Turner (2010) suggest, there are two uses for each type of reflexive: a 'core' use and a 'grammaticalized' use. The 'core' use patterns as expected in each related Salish language and appears to pattern similarly in Samish, though the data is insufficient to make a firm claim. The inchoative meaning that appears possible for grammaticalized reflexives is reanalyzed as an inchoative reflexive and does not relate to the overarching question of whether Samish reflexives can be argued to express Voice.

This inquiry faces many limitations. First and foremost, the lack of documentation and absence of current speakers. Because no new data can be elicited, research is limited to the data that has already been collected and at the discretion of the practices of those collecting it. Errors in transcription are possible. For Samish specifically, distribution of reflexives in the available corpus was also a large issue. As seen in the attached Appendix (1), the three speakers studied by Galloway (1990) produced the 'plain' reflexive almost exclusively and once produced the limited control reflexive in alternation with the 'plain' reflexive. Therefore, there is only one 'true' example in the data of the Samish limited control reflexive which is not sufficient to establish a pattern. There is also a large amount of vowel variation in Samish, as in most Salish languages, which results in many different surface forms for the same suffixes and can make distinguishing these suffixes in the data quite difficult.

If the Samish reflexive system could be shown to closely resemble the reflexive systems of Upriver Halkomelem, Downriver Halkomelem, and SENĆOŦEN as they have been described, then it is reasonable to argue that reflexives would pattern similarly to the Icelandic reflexive suffix -st (McGinnis, 2022). According to McGinnis, reflexive clitics (called anaphoric clitics by McGinnis) demonstrate syncretism with both object pronouns and "non-anaphoric clauses" like "inchoatives and unergative activity predicates". Following Legate (2014), Samish reflexives would have a structure similar to the following:

(9)   Samish Reflexive Structure
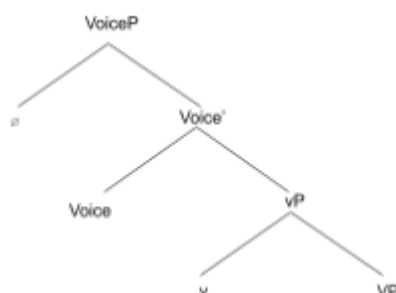
Following McGinnis (2022), Samish reflexive suffixes (called clitics by McGinnis) would not be pronominal and would instead be represented with a Voice head, as in (9). Given the cross-linguistic, generalized relevance of McGinnis' Voice head analysis for reflexive clitics/suffixes, Samish would then possibly fit in a similar analysis. The reflexive suffixes of Samish would be represented with a Voice head. McGinnis suggests that "the subject of an unergative or transitive clause is generated in spec-vP, while the subject of an unaccusative or passive clause can be generated as the complement of V/√." However, there is not enough data to evaluate this claim in relation to Samish reflexives.

If further research could be conducted, a more varied and detailed data elicitation task would be valuable. Investigating the position and restrictions on Samish reflexives, especially in contrast to those established for related Salish languages, would also contribute to the overall knowledge of the field.

5   Conclusion

In this investigation, Samish reflexives have been established as surfacing and behaving very similarly to reflexives in related Salish languages such as Halkomelem (both Upriver and Downriver dialects) and SENĆOŦEN. Like these languages, Samish appears to have two categories of reflexive suffix: 'plain' and limited control. The former indicates an action on oneself, while the limited control reflexive implies accidental action on oneself or a 'manage to' reading (Gerdts, 1998). Both reflexive suffixes are derived from a transitive suffix of the given language which gives them their various levels of control. Each attaches to process unaccusatives, but 'plain' reflexives also attach to statives, and limited control reflexives also attach to unergatives. Gerdts (1998) establishes two distinct situations or environments for each type of reflexive: 'core' and grammaticalized. These each have been demonstrated to exhibit their own distinct properties and

behaviors, as discussed previously. An inchoative meaning is also possible, though, with a reanalyzed suffix.

Given the theory proposed by McGinnis (2022, p. 1) and the data presented previously (as well as in Appendix 1), it is possible that Samish reflexives are best represented with a Voice head which can express Voice. The data is insufficient at this time to firmly support or discredit this theory, but the possibility of its application is result enough.

Obtaining new data is not currently possible. However, reanalyzing the data to form a general picture of Samish Voice expression could prove beneficial. Additionally, a subsequent investigation into the structure of non-reflexive transitives could provide useful information about the distribution or restrictions surrounding the two reflexive transitive markers discussed previously.

6   About the author

As a current Master's student studying linguistics at the University of Victoria, my research is supported by my supervisor Dr. Martha McGinnis. I received my Bachelor's degree in Linguistics from Western Washington University and completed my Honors Capstone project on the application of the Pronominal Argument Hypothesis to Hul'q'umi'num' clitics.

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Appendix A – from Galloway (1990)

Bail oneself	LD qʷə́lə**st**
I scared myself	seẏsiẏn**áŋət**sən
Get scared	sé</br>ẏsiẏ
Make oneself even (canoe)	ləq̓ə́**sət**
Take/taking care of oneself	VU/LD leŋə**sát**
Take care of yourself	VU leŋá**sət**sxʷ, LD le**ŋást**sxʷ]
Take care of oneself	VU leŋá**sət**, LD le**ŋást**
Brush oneself off	VU pxʷí**sət** LDpxʷí**st**
Move oneself	VU ʔə́čəq**sət**, LD ʔə́čəq**st**
Tip oneself over (canoe)	VU kʷə́ɬə**sət**, LD kʷə́ɬə**st**
Turn oneself over	VU čə́ləw̓**sət**, LD čə́ləw̓**st**

*Note that VU (Victor Underwood) and LD (Lena Daniels) are the abbreviated names of the speakers who provided the given data.

Appendix B – Supplemental Definitions

Coreferent[6] - "In generative grammar, coreferentiality is present when different noun phrases have the same extralinguistic reference."

Inchoative[7] - "Aspect of a verb or verb phrase. Inchoatives belong to the non-duratives (durative vs non-durative) and indicate the inception or the coming into existence of a state or process, e.g. to bloom, to wilt."

Reflexivity[8] - "Property of syntactic constructions where two arguments of an action or relationship described by a single predicate have identical reference."

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[6] Bussmann, H. (1996). Routledge dictionary of language and linguistics. Routledge.
[7] Bussmann (1996)
[8] Bussmann (1996)

Transitivity[9] - "Valence property of verbs which require a direct object, e.g. read, see, hear. Used more broadly, verbs which govern other objects (e.g. dative, genitive) can also be termed 'transitive'; while only verbs which have no object at all (e.g. sleep, rain) would be intransitive."

Unaccusative[10] - "A certain class of intransitive verbs in nominative languages such as German, Dutch, Italian, or French that are often analyzed as syntactically unaccusative or ergative. The terms unaccusative or ergative have been justified by a very broad definition of ergativity (ergative language): the subjects of the ergative intransitive verbs share some properties with the objects of transitive verbs."

Unergatives[11] - In syntax, unergative verbs are characterized as verbs with an external argument.

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[9] Bussmann (1996)

[10] Bussmann (1996)

[11] Burzio, L. 1986. Italian Syntax, Reidel, Dordrecht.