

Lingít Yoo X'atángi

Parts of Speech

Parts of Speech

basic nouns

common nouns

Words which refer to people, places, things, ideas, or concepts, whose members may act as any of the following: subjects of the verb, objects of the verb, indirect object of the verb, or object of a postposition. In Tlingit, the starting point for thinking about a noun is that it is called *a saayí* – its name. These nouns can be possessed, causing them to take on a possessive suffix (*-i/-í, -u/-ú, -yi/-yí, -wu/-wú*).

compound noun

A noun that is made up of two or more existing words or elements. When forming compound nouns, the tendency is to shorten long vowels and lower high tones, except for the final word.

verbal noun

Verbal nouns are formed by slightly altering a verb, most commonly by adding a relational suffix (*-i/-í, -u/-ú, -yi/-yí, -wu/-wú*) or by linking it to an independent partitive pronoun – *aa* the one(s).

borrowed noun

A noun borrowed from another language, most commonly a neighboring language, Chinook Jargon, or a European language. These are often Tlingitized by shifting sounds that are not in Tlingit to the nearest equivalent.

Parts of Speech

proper nouns

Proper nouns cannot be possessed and therefore do not take on suffixes.

placename

The name of a place, which is often a compound noun or verbal noun. Knowledge of placenames helps to greatly understand the Tlingit language, especially oratory.

region name

Lingít Aaní (Tlingit Land) is divided into large areas which contain clans and houses. These areas have names ending with *-Kwáan* (people of –).

clan name

The names of clans often contain placenames, features of a particular land, house names, or borrowed nouns which help identify where and how that clan may have come into being.

personal name

The names of people are often hard to interpret, because they may be words made for a specific purpose, be is an extremely contracted form, or be very old with the meaning somewhat lost.

Parts of Speech

pronouns

Tlingit has 64 pronouns, many of which are identical in sound but not always in placement. It is a journey to learn how to use these correctly, but that is the same in English (who or whom?). A pronoun is a word that can function by itself as a noun phrase and that refers either to the participants in the discourse (ex: I, you) or to someone or something mentioned elsewhere in the discourse (ex: she, it, this).

independent pronoun

These are not specifically tied to a grammatical function. They may be used to specify or locate a person, animal, or group. These are the only pronouns that have high tone marks.

possessive pronoun

These are used to show a relationship between things, including ownership («haa aaní» – “our land”), kinship term origination («du éesh» – “her/his father”), the link to a relational base («ax xáni» – “next to me”), and conjugation of certain verbs («du toowú sigóo» – “s/he is happy”).

Parts of Speech

pronouns

object pronoun

In a verb phrase, the object is impacted by the verb, and is not the subject. Object pronouns in Tlingit have been standardized with the following rule: one letter pronouns are in the contraction part of the prefix, meaning they are attached to the verb, and pronouns with more than one letter are in the precontraction part of the prefix, meaning they appear in front of the verb as a separate word. The exceptions are: the 1st person alternative form «xaa-» that is optional when the first letter of the verb is «t» or «d»; and the alternative form of the 4th person «ku-» as in «sh tóogaa xaaditee» (i am grateful). Even though this is how we write it, all open object pronouns will affect conjugation in the preverb.

subject pronoun

In a verb phrase, the subject is the agent in the verb. It is the one who performs the action. These appear in the verb prefix, immediately before the classifier and after all other prefixes.

postpositional pronoun

Many Tlingit verbs involve motion, and grammatically things do not move towards pronouns. In addition to motion, there are also concepts that act like motion verbs. For example, the phrase i eedé kakkwanéek translates to “i will tell you” but the grammar is functioning closer to “i will tell it towards you.” Tlingit handles this with a special type of pronoun that combines three things: possessive pronoun, empty base, and directional & locational suffix.

Parts of Speech

relational nouns & suffixes

kinship term

Tlingit kinship terms are rooted in the matrilineal clan system. Because of this, it is important to understand the traditional Tlingit way of looking at family, friends, and in-laws. Often we see the word friends translated in Tlingit as ax xoonx'i yán (my clan relatives, friends). This term would not include those from the opposite clan, who generally are ax kaani yán (my in-laws) and can also have specific relationships which are dictated by clan genealogy. These terms are fluid, and are not determined only by lineage. If two people grow closer to one another through friendship or marriage, they may choose to use a kinship term for one another instead of calling each other by name.

Tlingit kinship terms are listed with the placeholder pronoun «-» (her/his), as in «-tláa» (-'s mother). The pronoun can be replaced by another pronoun or noun. For example: ax tláa (my mother), i tláa (your mother), gooch tláa (wolf mother), and naa tláa (clan mother).

body part

In Tlingit, a body part does not exist without belonging to something. A removed body part would still need a noun or pronoun to attach to, because if your hand was removed you would still consider it your hand. If the disconnected body part is permanently removed, then this is shown by making it an alienated body part, which means adding a possessive suffix.

relational nouns & suffixes

Parts of Speech

plant part & land part

A plant part is similar to a body part, except that it often does not have the same inalienability. The possessive suffix is often built into the plant part. In helping to identify how placenames are constructed, and how to talk about land formations, land parts are marked in this dictionary. They can be possessed, but more commonly stack up with other nouns compound

independent base

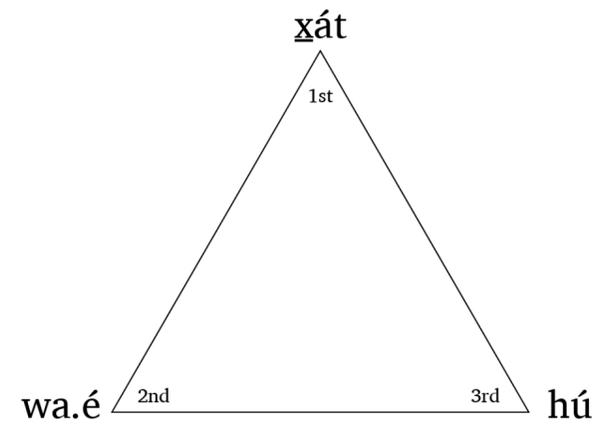
A word that shows the way in which two or more people or things are connected in terms of space and/or location, which may include motion or the conclusion of actions. An independent base relates to a fixed position in the Tlingit universe, does not need a possessor, and can take on a suffix.

relational base

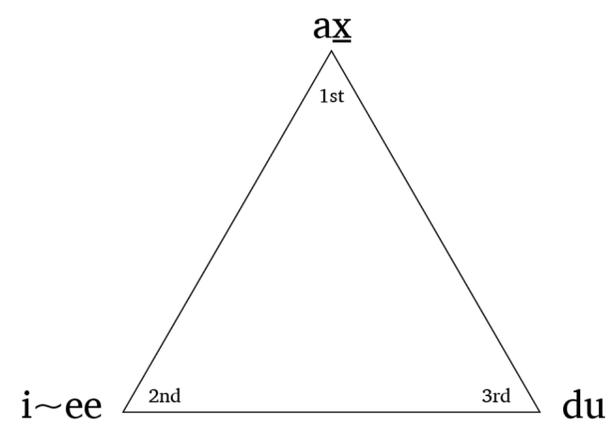
A word that shows the way in which two or more people or things are connected in terms of space and/or location, which may include motion or the conclusion of actions. A relational base notes the relationship between two things and therefore needs a possessor, and can take on a suffix.

relational noun

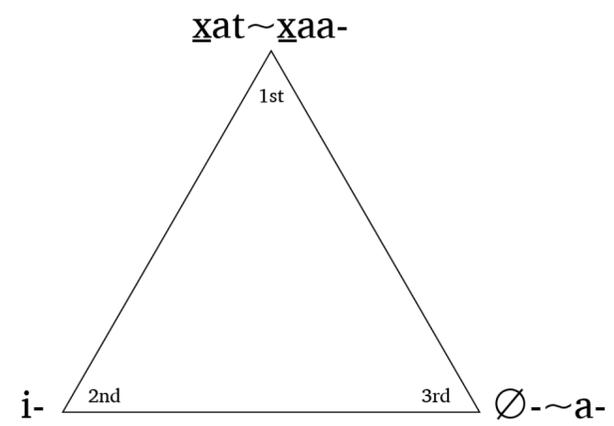
A word that shows the way in which two or more people or things are connected in terms of space and/or location, which may include motion or the conclusion of actions. A relational noun notes the relationship between two things and therefore needs a possessor, but cannot take on a suffix.



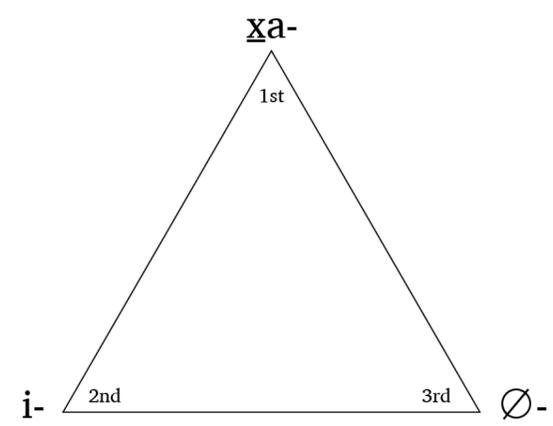
independent



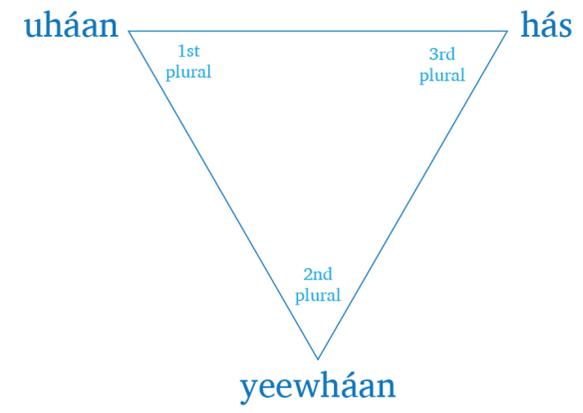
possessive



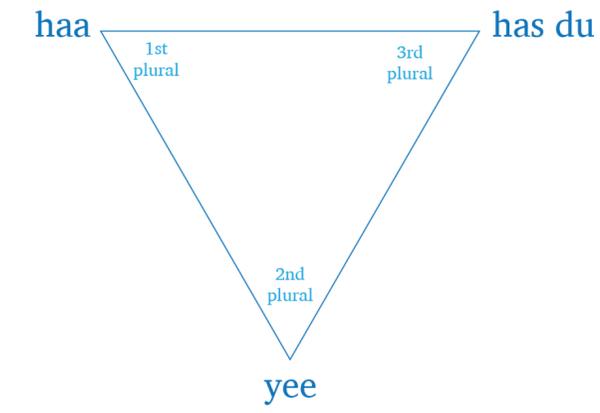
object



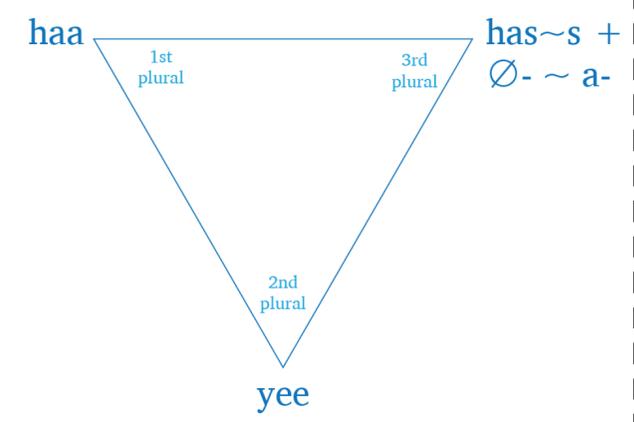
subject



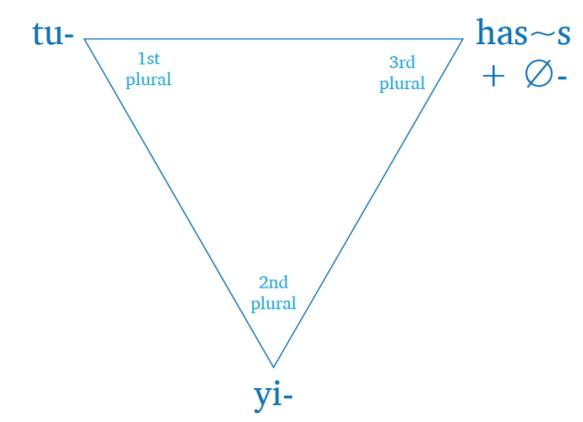
independent



possessive



object



subject

- jigeendataan – to really have courage, when overwhelmed (putting thumb & hand in mouth to stop from crying)
- ji-ga-na-i-da-√taan
- ji-ga-i-da-√taan – take yourself by the hand; lead yourself