In Chapter 5, we saw that the semantic distinction between applicative suffixes and transitive suffixes is not always clear. In fact, applicative suffixes, especially relational suffixes, are used frequently as transitive suffixes. In this chapter we look at transitive marking in more detail. In section 6.1, we show that the function of transitive markers is not straightforward; in some cases they function like applicative suffixes. In section 6.2, we talk about transitive marking and object pronouns in applicative constructions. There are two sets of object pronouns in Salish, and they are for the most part selected based on which transitive suffix appears on the verb. However, the selection of objects in applicative constructions is quite complex, because verbs in applicative constructions sometimes take transitive marking and sometimes do not. We speculate on possible explanations.

6.1 Transitive suffixes used as applicatives

In Salish languages, both transitives and applicatives are morphologically marked on the predicate. However, semantically, the difference in function between applicative and simple transitive suffixes, and between applicative and causative suffixes seems to be very blurred in some cases. Applicative suffixes can be used for transitive or causative functions, and transitive or causative suffixes can be used for applicative functions.

6.1.1 General transitive suffix used as applicative

As discussed in section 5.2, it is fairly common for relational suffixes to be used in simple transitive constructions in which the object is a theme nominal, as in the following Lilooet examples.
This function is attested in fifteen languages and in all of the branches of Salish. However, the use of redirective suffixes to refer to a theme nominal is extremely rare. Only two examples (one each in Lillooet and Cowlitz) are attested.

Since relational suffixes attach to intransitive predicates and increase syntactic valence, their function as simple transitive suffixes is a natural development. On the other hand, redirective suffixes attach to transitive predicates, so it is not a natural development for them to be used to increase valence, since Salish clauses are limited to at most two arguments.

The opposite situation also holds: the transitive suffix functions like an applicative. Although a thorough discussion of transitive suffixes is outside the scope of this work, it is clear that many Salish languages use the general transitive suffix in clauses where the direct object is a non-theme nominal. Sometimes the general transitive suffix functions like a relational applicative; that is, it derives a transitive verb from an intransitive verb. For example, observe the intransitive motion verbs and speech act verbs in (2a)–(5a) and their transitive counterparts in (2b)–(5b), in which the direct object is a goal.

(2) Halkomelem (Gerdzs and Hukari 2000)
   a. ícém
      ‘swim along’
   b. ícim-әt
      swim-tr
      ‘swim after it (to get it)’