External possession, obviation, and kinship in Umatilla Sahaptin

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Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation

Umatilla is a dialect of Sahaptin, a language of the Southern Plateau region of the Pacific Northwest of the United States. Sahaptin and Nez Perce together comprise the Sahaptian language family. Both Sahaptin and Nez Perce are head marking and dependency marking languages in which word order serves a wholly pragmatic function. This paper describes the interaction of external possession and obviation with regard to kinship terms. The paper is purely descriptive.¹

1 Argument structure. ²

1.1 Pronominals and pronouns.

The verb in Umatilla Sahaptin agrees variously with core grammatical relations.³ A third person nominative subject expresses this agreement via pronominal prefixes, i- if singular (as in 1) and pa- if plural (as in 2):⁴

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¹ I wish to thank Inez Spino Reves (Twáway), the last completely fluent speaker of Umatilla, for graciously supplying the data for this paper. Published Sahaptin grammars include Jacobs (1931) and Riggsby and Rude (1996), and published Northwest Sahaptin texts are to be found in Jacobs (1929, 1934, 1937). For the relationship between Sahaptin and Nez Perce, see Aoki (1962, 1963, 1966a, 1966b); Riggsby (1965); Riggsby and Silverstein (1969); and Rude (1996, 2006). Sahaptian is further connected to Plateau Penutian, which includes Klamath (Aoki [1963]; Rude [1987]) and Molala (Pharis [2006]), and which in turn is reputed to be part of Macro-Penutian (DeLancey and Golla [1979]; Mithun [1999]). See also Rude (2000) for some Uto-Aztecan-Plateau grammatical comparisons. Hargus & Beavert (2001, 2002a, 2002b, 2005, 2006a, 2006b) treat phonology in the related Yakima Sahaptin, and Rude (1991a, 1997b) deal with grammatical reconstruction. See Givón (1984, 1990) for a typological-functional description of grammar.


³ This is core as opposed to oblique grammatical relations (as in Relational Grammar, for which see Perlmutter [1980], Perlmutter, ed. [1983], and Perlmutter and Rosen, eds. [1984]); actant as opposed to circonstance grammatical relations (as in Tesnière [1988]). These are the syntactic primitives (S, A, O) in Dixon (1994).

⁴ Abbreviations used in the paper. 1: first person, 2: second person, 3: third person, ACC: accusative, ALL: allative, APL: applicative, ASP: aspect, ASSOC: associative, BEN:
(1) a. Ḣ-wîn-ša-m-š
   3NOM-go-ASP-CSL-PRS
   ‘he/she/it is coming’

   b. Ḣ-wîn-ša-m-š wînš
   3NOM-go ASP-CSL-PRS man
   ‘the man is coming’

(2) a. pa-wîn-ša-m-š
   3NOM.PL-go-ASP-CSL-PRS
   ‘they are coming’

   b. pa-wîn-ša-m-š awînšma
   3NOM.PL-go-ASP-CSL-PRS men
   ‘the men are coming’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Person Exclusive</td>
<td>=naš (=aš, =š)</td>
<td>=nataš (=ataš=taš)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Person Inclusive</td>
<td>=na</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Person</td>
<td>=nam</td>
<td>=pam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complex</td>
<td>=maš</td>
<td>=mataš</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Second position pronominals.

First and 2nd person core arguments are obligatorily coded by the second position pronominals listed in Table 1 and illustrated in example 3. Independent personal pronouns (Table 2) generally impart an emphatic sense as in 4.

(3) a. wîn-ša-m-š=naš
     go-ASP-CSL-PRS=1SG
     ‘I am coming’

   b. wîn-ša-m-š=nam
     go-ASP-CSL-PRS=2SG
     ‘you are coming’

(4)  a.  ín=aš wína-ša-m-š
    I=1SG go-ASP-CSL-PRS
    ‘I am coming’

        b.  ím=nam wína-ša-m-š
          you=2SG go-ASP-CSL-PRS
          ‘you are coming’

The 2nd position pronominals (Table 1) are indifferent to case, such as =naš ‘I, me’ in 5. Case is determined by the 3rd person pronominal prefix (nominative i-versus obviative ₂⁻). Independent pronouns, such as the accusative paanáy and ergative pínim, are optional.

(5)  a.  á-qínu-ša=aš
     (paanáy)
     OBV-see-ASP.PRS=1SG 3ACC.SG
     ‘I see him’

        b.  i-qínu-ša=aš
            (pínim)
            3NOM-see-ASP.PRS=1SG 3ERG.SG
            ‘he sees me’

Table 2. Personal pronouns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
<th>Dual</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st person</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nominative</td>
<td>in</td>
<td>náma</td>
<td>napiiní / nápiin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accusative</td>
<td>ina / ínáy</td>
<td>náamaní / naamanáy</td>
<td>napiinamanáy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genitive</td>
<td>inmí</td>
<td>naamí</td>
<td>napiinamí</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd person</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nominative</td>
<td>im</td>
<td>imáy</td>
<td>imiini</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accusative</td>
<td>imanáy</td>
<td>imaamanáy</td>
<td>imiinanñamanáy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genitive</td>
<td>imíin</td>
<td>imaáníi</td>
<td>imiíami</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd person</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nominative</td>
<td>pín</td>
<td>pmáy</td>
<td>piíni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accusative</td>
<td>paanáy</td>
<td>paamanáy</td>
<td>piinanáy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genitive</td>
<td>pinmíin</td>
<td>paamíin</td>
<td>pipamiín</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ergative</td>
<td>pínim</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associative</td>
<td>napiní</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

First to 2nd person transitivity is marked by the complex pronominals =maš and =mataš.
(6) a. āṇu-ša=maš
   see-ASP.SG=1/2SG
   'I see you (sg.)'

b. āṇu-ša=mataš
   see-ASP.SG=1/2PL
   'I see you (pl.)'

And 2nd to 1st person transitivity is marked for 2nd person plus the inverse prefix pa:-

(7) a. pa-āṇu-ša=nam (ináy)
   INV-see-ASP.PRS=2SG I ACC.SG
   'you see me'

b. im=nam pa-āṇu-ša
   you=2SG INV-see-ASP.PRS
   'you see me'

1.2 The direct-inverse contrast.

Direct transitive action with 3rd person participants requires nominative pronominals, singular i- and plural pa- as in 8, whereas the pragmatic inverse (with topical O) prefixes pa- as in 9:

(8) a. i-āṇu-ša paanáy
   3NOM-see-ASP.PRS 3 ACC.SG
   'he sees him'

b. pa-āṇu-ša paanáy
   3NOM-see-ASP.PRS 3 ACC.SG
   'they see him'

(9) a. pa-āṇu-ša (paanáy)
   INV-see-ASP.PRS 3 ACC.SG
   'he sees him'

b. pata-āṇu-ša (paanáy)
   INV.PL.-see-ASP.PRS 3 ACC.SG
   'they see him'
Table 3. Person hierarchy for direct and indirect transitive action

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Direct:</th>
<th>⊂</th>
<th>⊂</th>
<th>⊂</th>
<th>⊂</th>
<th>⊂</th>
<th>⊂</th>
<th>⊂</th>
<th>⊂</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inverse:</td>
<td>⊃</td>
<td>⊃</td>
<td>⊃</td>
<td>⊃</td>
<td>⊃</td>
<td>⊃</td>
<td>⊃</td>
<td>⊃</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Nouns are case marked accusative (with -na) in both direct 10a and inverse 10b constructions. The agent in the inverse is case marked with the associative suffix -in. An example with -in serving the associative function is included in 10c. It requires plural subject-verb agreement, in this instance with 3rd person nominative pqa-

(10) a. i-ⱥɨɨ-ša wɨɨn-nd na tiylaaki
3NOM-see-ASP man-ACC woman
'the woman sees the man'

b. pɨ-ɨɨ-ša wɨɨn-nd na tiylaaki-in
INV-see-ASP man-ACC woman-ASSOC
'the woman sees the man'

c. p-a-ɨɨɨ-ɭ-ɨɭ-ɭ tɨɭ-ɭ-ɭ-ɨɭ-ɭ-ɭ
3NOM-arrive-ASP man woman-ASSOC
'the man is arriving with the woman'

Table 4. Core noun cases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Nonhuman</th>
<th>Human</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Absolute</td>
<td>Singular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Ø</td>
<td>-Ø</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accusative</td>
<td>(-nda)</td>
<td>-nda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genitive</td>
<td>-ndm</td>
<td>-ndm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ergative</td>
<td>-ndm</td>
<td>-ndm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associative</td>
<td>-ndm</td>
<td>-ndm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The analysis as direct versus inverse can be justified on functional and semantic grounds. The prefix pɨ- marks a semantic 2nd to 1st person transitivity as well as a pragmatic 3rd person to 3rd person topic transitivity—this according to the person hierarchy in Table 3 above. Also, in the inverse the semantic patient is case marked accusative, and the agent is never completely suppressed. Following are examples of speech act participant/3rd person transitivity. Ergativity is split in Sahaptin such that the ergative noun case (Table 4) only

5 See Rude (1994).
suffixes to 3rd person singular subjects when the direct object is a speech act participant 11b.

(11) a. á-qínù-ša=aš wínš-na
   OBV-see-ASP.PRS=1SG man-ACC
   ‘I see the man’

b. i-qínù-ša=aš wínš-nim
   3NOM-see-ASP.PRS=1SG man-ERG
   ‘the man sees me’

1.3 The obviative pronominal.

I label á- “obviative” for want of a better term. It is in Umatilla a special 3rd person absolutive pronominal that codes the object of a transitive verb (when the subject is a speech act participant) and the subject of an intransitive verb (when it is an external possessor). In Klickitat Sahaptin it is more clearly an obviative pronominal where i- typically marks the topic and á- a secondary topic or fourth person—see Rude (1988). For example, the referent of obviative á-lów- is repeated with the subject in the inverse of a following clause (as in 12), whereas the referent of nominative i- is repeated with the object in the inverse of a following clause (as in 13).

(12) a. áw-ayk-a Pěiimya pá-wiiljip-a kúpkup-pa
    OBV-sit-PST Wildcat INV-scratch-PST back-LOC
    ‘Wildcat, sat up, he scratched him on the back’
    (Jacobs 1929:189:18-19)

b. áw kúuk á-liwati-ya Ŋkaaláasya kúuk pá-twapati-ya
   now then OBV-be.angry-PST Raccoon then INV-chase-PST
   ‘now then Raccoon got angry, then he chased him’
   (Jacobs 1929:189:10-11)

(13) a. Mísílýáy j-waĉ-a ikísiks iwinš páʔ-ínn-a miyáwaχ-in
    Woodpecker 3NOM-be-PST small man INV-say-PST chief-ASSOC
    ‘Woodpecker, was a small man. The chief said to him…’
    (Jacobs 1929:175:18-19)
2 Internal versus external possession.

2.1 Intransitive subject.

The possessor of an intransitive subject may be internal or external to the noun phrase. The following are examples of internal possession. Note in each instance the 3rd person singular subject-verb agreement (via \(-i\)) is with the head noun whatever the person of the possessor.

(14) a. \(\text{i-winánn}-\text{a inmí küsí}\)
\(3\text{NOM}-\text{run.away}-\text{PST my horse}\)
‘my horse ran away’

b. \(\text{i-winánn}-\text{a imín küsí}\)
\(3\text{NOM}-\text{run.away}-\text{PST your horse}\)
‘your horse ran away’

c. \(\text{i-winánn}-\text{a pinmín küsí}\)
\(3\text{NOM}-\text{run.away}-\text{PST his/her horse}\)
‘his/her horse ran away’

Sahaptin has contrastive constructions whereby a possessor is advanced to core argument status, i.e., as an external possessor. With a 1st or 2nd person possessor this advancement is accomplished through agreement via a 2nd position pronominal (Table 1), and with a 3rd person possessor (singular or plural) it is via the obviative prefix \(-a\) (15c). There is one anomaly: 2nd person possessors are coded by the complex pronominals \(-aš\) and \(-mataš\), not the expected \(-nam\) and \(-pam\). Independent possessive pronouns (as also possessor nouns) retain their genitive case marking.

(15) a. \(\text{winánn}-\text{a}=\text{aš (inmí) küsí}\)
\(\text{run.away}-\text{PST}=1\text{SG my horse}\)
‘my horse ran away’

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6 See Rude (1999) for a description of external possession in Sahaptin and Nez Perce. For a description of the phenomenon in Nez Perce with comment on its pragmatic function, see Rude (1986).
A plural head noun effects plural subject-verb agreement with internal possessor, as in 16a, but not with external possessor, as in 16b.

(16) a. pa-wiyánawi-ya inmí-ma tanán-ma
3NOM.PL-arrive-PST my-PL person-PL
'my people arrived'

b. wiyánawi-ya=aš (inmí) tanán-ma
arrive-PST=1SG my person-PL
'my people arrived'

2.2 Transitive object.

The internal-external contrast is effected in the direct object of a transitive verb via the applicative.\(^7\) An oblique benefactive argument is case marked with -ay/-ayi, as in 17a (with human referents the nominal is first put in the genitive before inflecting for the oblique cases). There is concord in accusative case marking, as in b, between the head noun and its internal possessor. In the applicative in c the verb suffixes -ay/-ayi and the grammatical direct object is ambiguously a benefactive or external possessor.

(17) a. pa-?ání-ya inmí-yav ȟapiłní-na
3NOM.PL-make-PST mine-BEN knife-ACC
'they made the knife for me'

b. pa-?ání-ya inmí-na ȟapiłní-na
3NOM.PL-make-PST mine-BEN knife-ACC
'they made my knife'

c. pa-?ání-yav-[ya=aš] (ináy) ȟapiłní
3NOM.PL-make-APL-PST=1SG me knife
'they made me the knife' or 'they made my knife'

\(^7\) See Rude (1991b) for a study of the historical development of the applicative and related constructions in the Sahaptian languages.
Table 5. Kinship term possessor accessibility. 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Inaccessible</th>
<th>Accessible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘my father’</td>
<td>natútas</td>
<td>inní pšít</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘your father’</td>
<td>tút</td>
<td>imún pšít</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘his/her father’</td>
<td>pínšít</td>
<td>pínmiin pšít</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3 Kinship terms. 9

Kinship terms have special forms—often suppletive—for singular possessors that are inaccessible to external possession—see Table 5. The paradigm with cases is given in Table 6. Internal possession is expressed as in 18a and 18b. An example of external possession is given in 18c.

(18) a. i-wiyánawi-ša natútas
3NOM-arrive-ASP.PRS my.father
‘my father is arriving’

b. i-wiyánawi-ša inní pšít
3NOM-arrive-ASP.PRS my father
‘my father is arriving’

c. wiyánawi-ša=aš (inní) pšít
arrive-ASP.PRS=1SG my father
‘my father is arriving’

Table 6. Declension of ‘father’. 10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>‘my’</th>
<th>‘your’</th>
<th>Proximate</th>
<th>Obviative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vocative</td>
<td>tút different</td>
<td>natútas</td>
<td>tút</td>
<td>pšít</td>
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<tr>
<td>Absolute</td>
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<td>tútín</td>
<td>pšítin</td>
<td>pínšítin</td>
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<tr>
<td>Associative</td>
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<td>tutáp</td>
<td>pšítmí</td>
<td>pínšítmí</td>
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<td>Ergative</td>
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<td>tutaamí</td>
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<td>pínšítmaí</td>
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<td>tutáap</td>
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<td>pínšítna</td>
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<td>Accusative 2</td>
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<td>pínšítpa</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8 Historically as also currently in other dialects tút ‘your father’ is išú (with i- ‘your’).
9 See Rude (1989) for a preliminary description of the grammar of kinship terms in Sahaptin.
10 In Northern Sahaptin the ‘your’ forms are distinguished for ergative (tután) and accusative case (tutáap). In Northeast Sahaptin the senior vocative ends with the glottal stop (páša ‘grandfather!’) and the junior vocative without (páša ‘grandson!’).
The two varieties of internally possessed objects are given in 19a and 19b; 19c provides an example of external possession.

(19) a. i-qínú-shá natútasa-an
3NOM-see-ASP.PRS my.father-ACC
‘he sees my father’

b. i-qínú-shá inmí-na pšít-na
3NOM-see-ASP.PRS my-ACC father-ACC
‘he sees my father’

c. i-qínw-ayi-shá=náš (ináy) pšít
3NOM-see-APP-ASP.PRS=1SG me father
‘he sees my father’

The prefix pín- ‘his/her’ serves an obviative function—compare a and b in example 20.

(20) a. i-wiyánawi-ya (pinmiin) pšít
3NOM-see-PST his father
‘his (his own or someone else’s) father arrived’

b. i-wiyánawi-ya pin-pšít
3NOM-see-PST OBV-father
‘his (someone else’s) father arrived’

The accusative suffix -pa marks kinship terms when a 3rd person possessor is corefrential with the subject in 21a. This sense is similarly expressed via concord between head noun and possessor with the regular accusative -na in 21b. The obviative sense (someone else’s) is expressed with pín- (in 21c) or the applicative (in 21d). Only in 21d is the possessor external.

(21) a. i-qínú-shá pšít-pa
3NOM-see-ASP.PRS father-ACC
‘he sees his (own) father’

b. i-qínú-shá pínmí-na pšít-na
3NOM-see-ASP.PRS his-ACC father-ACC
‘he sees his (own) father’
c. i-quínu-ša pín-pšt-na
   3NOM-see-ASP.PRS OBV-father-ACC
   'he sees his (someone else’s) father’

d. i-quínu-ayi-ša (paanáy) pšt
   3NOM-see-APL-ASP.PRS him father
   'he sees his (someone else’s) father’

The following are examples with multi-level possessors where the head noun remains the grammatical subject. Note the obviative sense provided by pín- ‘his/her’ in 22b.

(22) a. i-wiyánawi-ya (pínnim) pšt-mí xáy
   3NOM-arrive-PST his father-GEN man’s.brother
   ‘his (own or someone else’s) father’s brother arrived’

b. i-wiyánawi-ya pín-pšt-mí xáy
   3NOM-arrive-PST OBV-father-GEN man’s.brother
   ‘his (someone else’s) father’s brother arrived’

In 23 the object consists of two nouns joined by a conjunction. In a the accusative -pa specifies the subject as possessor. In b, however, obviative pín- teams up with -pa to make the other member of the coordinate noun phrase the possessor.

(23) a. i-quínu-ša pśínisa-an ku pšt-pa
   3NOM-see-ASP.PRS girl-ACC and father-ACC
   ‘he sees the girl and his (own) father’

b. i-quínu-ša pśínisa-an ku pín-pšt-pa
   3NOM-see-ASP.PRS girl-ACC and OBV-father-ACC
   ‘he sees the girl and her father’

The proximate-obviative contrast also obtains in the semantic ergative in 24 and pragmatic inverse in 25.

(24) a. i-quínuša=nuš (pínni-nim) pšt-nim
   3NOM-see-ASP.PRS=1SG his-ERG father-ERG
   ‘his (own or someone else’s) father saw me’
b.  i-‘qinuša=aš  pín-pšt-nim
3NOM-see-ASP.PRS=1SG  ERG-father-ERG
‘his (someone else’s) father saw me’

(25) a.  pé-‘qinuša  (pinmi=in) pšt-in
INV-see-ASP.PRS his-ASSOC  father-ASSOC
‘his (own or someone else’s) father sees him’

b.  pé-‘qinuša  pín-pšt-in
INV-see-ASP.PRS OBV-father-ASSOC
‘his (someone else’s) father saw him’

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