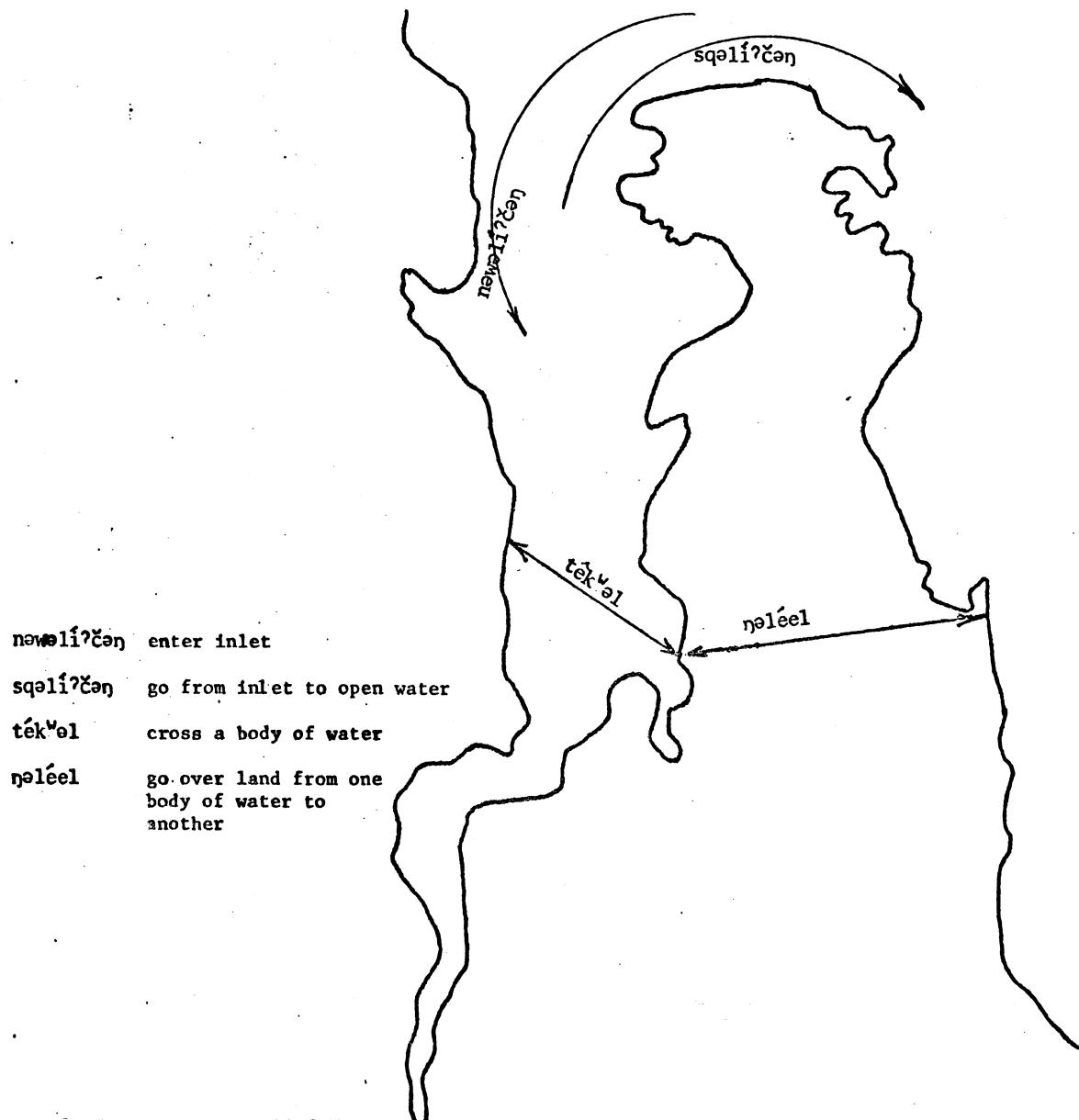


Figure 8 illustrating ancillary direction terms based on the general water orientation of Saanich culture.



### Oblique Objects In Halkomelem

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Certain predicates are semantically transitive but syntactically intransitive in Vancouver Island Halkomelem (hereafter, Halkomenum). Thompson and Thompson note of cognate constructions in the Thompson language that they "...imply effect on some entity."<sup>1</sup> The effected entity may be introduced in Halkomenum by the preposition //ʔə/, forming an oblique complement rather than a direct object. Compare, for example, the following transitive/intransitive sentence pairs, where // -t// is a transitive suffix and both // -m// and // -els// are intransitive suffixes.

1. nem? cən qʷélat t<sup>θ</sup>ə scéítən. *I am going to barbecue the salmon.*  
go      I barbecue art. salmon  
trans.
2. nem? cən qʷélam ?ə t<sup>θ</sup>ə scéítən. *same gloss*  
go      I barbecue prep. art. salmon  
intrans.
3. ni? cən ləkʷáat t<sup>θ</sup>ə scéšt. *I broke the stick.*  
aux. I break art. stick  
trans.
4. ni? cən ləkʷels ?ə t<sup>θ</sup>ə scéšt. *same gloss*  
aux. I break prep. art. stick  
intrans.

As the semantic role of such oblique complements seems analogous to that of direct objects, let us call them *oblique objects*.

Oblique objects of intransitive // -m// suffixed predicates (commonly called *middle predicates* in Salish studies) seem to

occur throughout the language family. While I have not attempted a systematic survey, the construction has been noted both on the coast and in the interior, as evidenced in the following examples. Clallam (Thompsons, 1971, p. 265)

5. q̓eyən st ?ə cə sc̓anənəxʷ. *We barbecued the salmon.*

Squamish (Kuipers, 1967, p. 180)

6. na cxʷim? t-ta smant. *He threw (with) the stone.* (//t-// introduces "nominal secondary relata".)

Lushootseed

7. ?uqʷələb čəd ?ə ti s'uladxʷ. *I barbecued the salmon.*

Thompson (Thompsons, forthcoming)

8. q̓yéwm kt tə spəqpáq. *We're picking Saskatoon berries.* (//te// introduces obliques.)

Shuswap (Kuipers, 1974, p. 78)

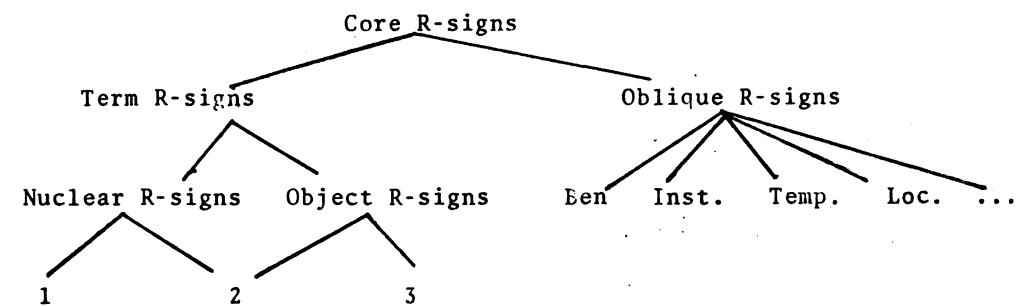
9. m-ckʷnéməs t-cít. *He took the pitch.* (Intransitive, with //t-// introducing the oblique object)

10. m-ckʷénsəs γ-cít. *He took the pitch.* (Transitive, with //γ// introducing the direct object)

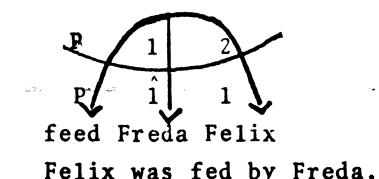
Not only is the construction widespread, but apparently it is often possible to construct transitive/intransitive pairs such as those given above in Halkomenum and Shuswap.<sup>2</sup>

Given the generality of the oblique intransitive object construction in Salishan languages, closer scrutiny of it in Halkomenum within the context of a general or universal syntactic theory may be a worthwhile exercise--both for the promise of shedding new light on Halkomenum and putting such theories to test. In this spirit, Halkomenum oblique objects are examined below in the context of relation grammar.<sup>3</sup>

A version of relational grammar along the lines set out by Perlmutter and Postal (1978a) is assumed here. Briefly, grammatical relations such as subject, object and indirect object (noted as 1, 2 and 3, respectively) are theoretical primes, as are the less central oblique relations, given case-like designations in the following diagram (after Perlmutter and Postal, 1978).



In addition, the notion of *stratum* is central, where a basic clause may show various strata of grammatical relations due to revaluation or change in grammatical relationships. We can speak of the grammatical relationships holding in a clause at a particular stratum. For example, an English passive sentence will have at least a subject nominal (1) and a direct object nominal (2) in its initial stratum, but the roles of these nominals change in a later stratum, where the direct object has advanced to subject and the original subject has lost its core status to become a (subject) chomeur (1). This may be represented in a stratal diagram.



Such diagrams describe strata and grammatical relationships, where subsequent linearization rules will presumably determine the actual surface order.

The role of Halkomenum oblique objects within this system is not immediately apparent. In fact, it may turn out that oblique objects are analyzeable as a surface category derived from one of the grammatical roles mentioned above (Core R-signs) but no longer playing a core role (i.e., a "chomeur"). Before examining this possibility, we turn to a brief outline of Halkomenum subjects, objects and oblique objects.

The morphology and syntax of Halkomelem subjects, objects and oblique objects have been discussed in some detail elsewhere (Hukari, 1977 and Leslie, 1979). Briefly, subject and object are signalled respectively by pronominal enclitics and verb suffixes for first or second person (third person being unmarked except for transitive subjects and subordinate clause subjects). Subject and object noun phrases are formally indistinguishable but active transitive sentences normally do not occur with a noun phrase subject if the object is third person (thereby eliminating this potential ambiguity). Oblique objects are introduced by the general preposition //?ə// (which introduces all NPs except subjects and direct objects). Further, there is no oblique object clitic or suffix analogous to the subject and object person markers.

Oblique objects occur with semantically ditransitive verbs as well as intransitives. //?exʷe?‐t// *give/share*, for example, takes a direct object patient (recipient) and an oblique object denoting the thing given.

11. ni? ?éxʷe?təs kʷθə nəmén ?ə kʷθə scééitən.  
aux. give-3 per. art. my-father prep. art. salmon.

*He/she gave my father the salmon.*

Ditransitivity can be introduced morphologically by means of the //‐ic‐// benefactive or indirective suffix, which occurs before transitive //‐t//. A ditransitive oblique object corresponds to a simple transitive direct object.

12. ni? cən yákʷət tθə smént. I broke the rock.  
aux. I break art. rock

13. yákʷəicθàm?š ?ə tθə la?θən. Break the plate for me.  
break-for-me prep. art. plate

As the preposition //?ə// introduces any nonsubject nonobject NP, the data above do not really establish that the two types of oblique objects (intransitive and ditransitive) form one syntactic category. However the relative clause forming strategy for oblique objects suggests that they do in fact belong to one (surface) category. As discussed in Hukari (1977), relativization of subjects and objects requires no special marking devices. Relativization on the oblique object relation requires the presence of a //s‐// nominal prefix on the relative clause verb. As a relativization strategy, this prefix seems to be confined to oblique object relations. (Instrumentals and various other oblique relations require the instrumental/locative //šxʷ‐// prefix.)

14. ni? ct čey?xʷt kʷθə scééitən ni? ?ən?s?exʷe?tal?xʷ.  
aux. we dry-tr. art salmon aux. your-nom.-give-us

*We dried the salmon you gave us.*

15. ni? ʔən̩cə kʷθə scééktən ni? ʔən̩sqʷéłəm. Where is the  
aux. where art. salmon aux. your-s-nom-barbecue. <sup>salmon</sup> you barbecue?

Relativization, then, provides evidence for grouping the two oblique objects into one (surface) syntactic category.

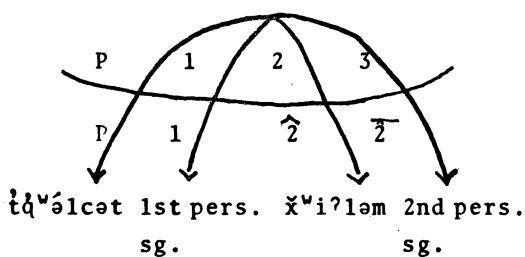
Within the framework of relational grammar, ditransitive oblique objects may be treated as underlying direct objects, maintaining a parallel with simple transitive constructions where the same semantic role is manifested by surface direct objects. Compare again transitive and indirective sentence pairs.

16. ni? cən t̪qʷat t̪θə x̪i?ləm. I broke the rope.

aux. I break/ art. rope

17. ni? cən t̪qʷélcət ʔə t̪θə x̪i?ləm. I broke the rope for him/her.

Supposing transitive oblique objects are underlying direct objects, a likely source for surface direct objects in these constructions is the indirect object relation.<sup>4</sup> 3-to-2 advancement would account for the surface relations, since the promotion of the patient/beneficiary to 2 triggers the demotion of the original 2 to chomeur status ( $\hat{2}$ ), as illustrated in the diagram of sentence (17).<sup>5</sup>

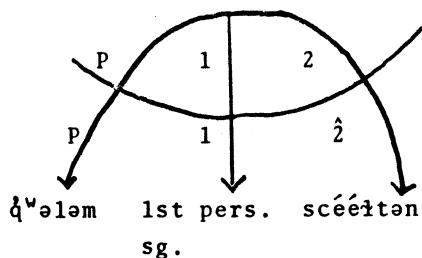


Ditransitive oblique objects, then, are underlying direct objects and surface 2 chomeurs.

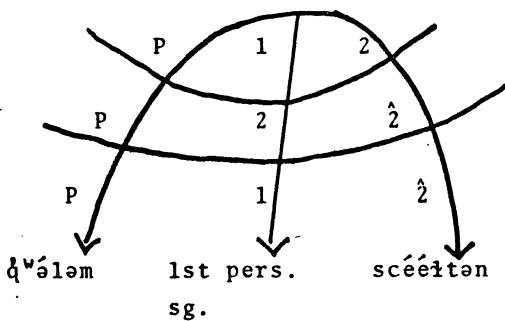
While this analysis of ditransitive oblique objects accounts for their semantic parallel to simple transitive direct objects, it should be borne in mind that these relationships are lexicalized in Halkomenum.<sup>6</sup> Some verbs always inflect for patient objects (as does //ʔexʷe?-t// give or share) and the indirective morphological construction is probably obligatory when a beneficiary is introduced into a transitive construction, making it possible to inflect the verb for the beneficiary. This contrasts markedly with the optional nature of 3-to-2 advancement in English (albeit lexically governed) and one might question whether lexically conditioned obligatory revaluation should be treated as a syntactic process.

Having provisionally assigned ditransitive oblique objects the underlying and surface roles of direct object and direct object chomeur, respectively, we might expect a parallel treatment for intransitive oblique objects--particularly since the two types of oblique objects pattern as one surface category in relative clause formation. More precisely, the fact that they pattern in the same way in relative clause constructions follows if they are both direct object chomeurs (whether or not they are both direct objects in their initial strata).

As intransitive oblique objects correspond semantically to simple transitive direct objects, it seems plausible to derive both from underlying direct objects. However Perlmutter and Postal disallow spontaneous demotion to chomeur status (their Motivated Chomage Law), ruling out simple demotion of the objects as illustrated in the following diagram of the salient elements in sentence (2).



Postal (1977) is confronted with precisely this situation in his analysis of antipassive constructions, where he claims the underlying subject is also the antipassive subject and the underlying object is a surface chomeur. In avoiding spontaneous demotion to chomeur status, he posits an otherwise unmotivated demotion of the subject to 2, as illustrated for our data (sentence 2) in the following diagram.



The revaluation of 1 to 2 has a domino effect, triggering the demotion of the underlying 2 to  $\hat{2}$ . The new 2 must be promoted back to 1, as every sentence must have a subject in its final stratum (whether or not one is acoustically present).

In addition to the fact that this 1-to-2 demotion has no independent motivation (either in Postal's discussion of antipassives or in our Halkomenum data), it assigns direct object status to agents (albeit not in the final stratum), and Halkomenum agents are never objects. While 1-to-2 demotion is an analytic artifact

which weakens the empirical content of the Motivated Chomage Law, let us accept it here for the purpose of discussion. In either analysis, Halkomenum intransitive oblique objects are then object chomeurs, which accounts for the surface identity of the two types of oblique objects.

It was noted above that 3-to-2 advancement in Halkomenum seems to be more of a lexical relationship than it is in English. One might also object that the relationships posited above for Halkomenum intransitive oblique objects can be lexicalized (in contrast to languages with a productive, marked antipassive). Roots which take agent subjects cooccur with oblique objects and do not require intransitive // -m // or // -eis //.

- 18. ni? cən səw?q ?ə k<sup>w</sup> syaays. I looked for work.  
aux. I seek prep. art. work

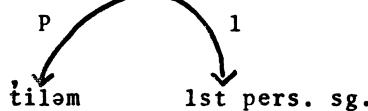
- 19. ni? cən ?éitən ?ə k<sup>wθə</sup> scééitən. I ate the salmon.  
aux. I eat prep. art. salmon

Further, // ?éitən // eat does not cooccur with the transitive suffixes, hence the object (if expressed) must be oblique, making our putative antipassive a necessary condition for lexical insertion.

Despite the reservations noted above, this analysis of oblique objects captures systematic relationships holding among transitive direct objects and the two types of oblique objects. It can be further extended to nonagentive intransitive subjects if we assume they are underlying objects in intransitive constructions. Following Perlmutter and Postal (1978b), an intransitive construction may be either *unergative*, having no object, or *unaccusative*,

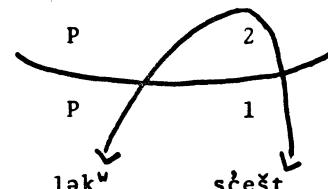
having no subject. Intransitive verbs cooccurring with agent or experiencer nominals have unergative underlying structures while others occur in unaccusative underlying strata. It would appear that the vast majority of root verbs in Halkomenum determine unaccusative underlying strata, however there are also intransitive morphologically complex verbs such as //t̪ilem// sing which take agents, never occur in morphologically simpler forms and have no implied objects. They may form the bulk of Halkomenum unergative-determining verbs. The unaccusative and unergative relationships are diagrammed below, where an underlying unaccusative stratum must undergo 2-to-1 advancement.

## UNERGATIVE



20. ni? cən t̪ilem. I sang.  
aux. I sing

## UNACCUSATIVE

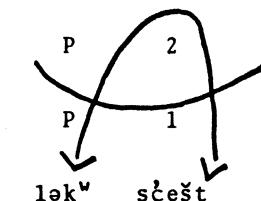


21. ni? lek<sup>v</sup> t<sup>θə</sup> sčešt. The stick broke  
aux. break art. stick

This completes the description of a highly systematic relationship between intransitive (nonagentive) subjects, transitive objects and the two types of oblique objects within a relational model. The following examples review the relational networks posited above.

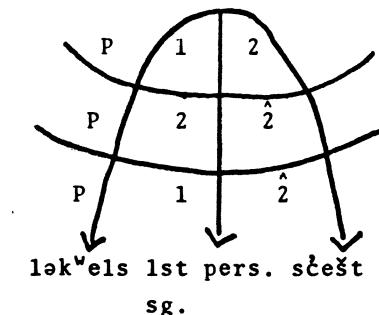
## INTRANSITIVE (UNDERLYING UNACCUSATIVE)

21. ni? lek<sup>v</sup> t<sup>θə</sup> sčešt. The stick broke.



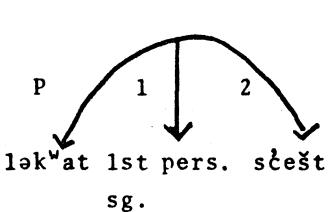
## INTRATRANSITIVE OBLIQUE (UNDERLYING TRANSITIVE)

24. ni? cən lek'els t<sup>θə</sup> t<sup>θə</sup> sčešt. I broke the stick.



## TRANSITIVE

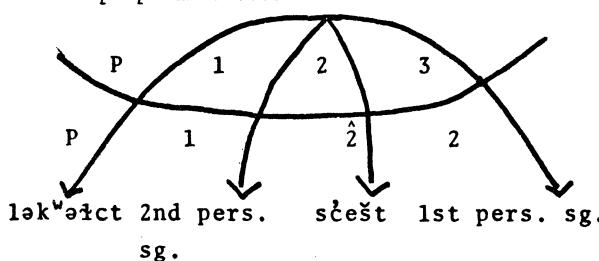
3. ni? cən lek'át t<sup>θə</sup> sčešt. I broke the stick



## DITRANSITIVE OBLIQUE

22. lək'əicθám?š ?ə tθə sčěst. Break the stick for me.

break-for-me prep. art. stick



Rather than attempting to explore all possible alternatives, I have put forward here what strikes me as the most plausible analysis compatible both with Perlmutter and Postal's assumptions (or laws) and with the data of Halkomenum. Of course numerous alternatives are available within roughly the same model. For example, if we drop the assumption that agents must be underlying subjects, surface agent subjects could be derived from underlying oblique agentives (and we would then abandon underlying unaccusative strata). This can be countered by noting that agents generally tend to be subjects in languages and, in particular, agents in Halkomenum are always subjects (except in passives).

Reservations were expressed above concerning the *ad hoc* nature of 1-to-2 demotion in Postal's antipassive analysis (our intransitive oblique objects) in preserving the Motivated Chomage Law.

This remains an issue which extends beyond the scope of this

paper. (For example, Halkomenum passives may involve the spontaneous demotion of agents, since there is no apparent advancement to subject.)

Reservations were also expressed concerning the apparent indifference of relational grammarians to the distinction between syntactic and lexical relations. This may be more a matter of style than substance. Relational grammar does not seem in principle incompatible with a model of the lexicon in which a particular relational network is, as a condition on lexical insertion, either an inherent, ideo-syncretic property of a morphologically primitive word or a property derivable through morphological (word-formation) rules. The monomorphemic verb //səw?θ// seek, for example, permits a (surface) agent subject and an oblique object, while the complex form //lək'ə-a-els// break takes the same elements because of the suffix // -els //.

## Footnotes

- 1 Laurence C. Thompson and M. Terry Thompson, "The Thompson language" in The Handbook of North American Indians 16, forthcoming.
- 2 Obliques are not necessarily marked. Apparently the preposition //ʔə// is not employed for this in the Chilliwack dialect of Halkomelem (cf, Galloway, 1977).
- 3 As a general disclaimer, I must emphasize that this is offered only as an exploratory exercise. Further, in keeping with the model, I assume here that the categories verb and noun phrase or nominal are universal.
- 4 Or, possibly, they are benefactives (an oblique relation).
- 5 By Perlmutter and Postal's Stratal Uniqueness Law (1978a), a stratum cannot have two nominals bearing the same R-sign. Presumably the original 2 automatically becomes a chomeur unless otherwise specified.
- 6 By "lexicalized", I mean that the relational network is obligatory for the lexical item and does not follow from the morphology.

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