

SUBJECT AND OBJECT IN NEZ PERCE (rev.)

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0. Introduction.¹ In Nez Perce there is a three way distinction in the syntactic function of NP's. The subject of a transitive verb suffixes nim (which also marks the genitive), the subject of an intransitive verb is unmarked, and the object of a transitive verb suffixes ne. Nez Perce is of special interest to syntacticians and typologists, not only because of this three way distinction, but also because transitivity, case marking, and word order are governed by differing semantic and pragmatic criteria. This paper is intended as a brief description of some of these criteria with reference to simple sentences. Basic uses of verb and NP inflections will be shown first,² and then certain restrictions on the use of these inflections will be considered.

In this paper the term ergative (ERG) means simply the subject of a transitive verb, nominative (NOM) means the undifferentiated subject of either a transitive or intransitive verb, and accusative (ACC) means the syntactic object of a transitive verb. This use of ergative does not imply that Nez Perce has a corresponding absolutive case, but merely that an inflection marks the syntactic subject of a transitive verb. S symbolizes the subject of an intransitive verb.

1.0 Verb inflection. Separate morphemes index person and number in the verb, as can be seen in Table 1.

pé	Third person ergative and accusative (1,2ERG)
?e	1. First or second person ergative (1,2ERG)
	2. First or second person accusative (1,2ACC)
	3. Third person possessed intransitive subject (3S)
Ø	First or second person intransitive subject (2S)
hii	Third person nominative (3NOM)
pe	Nominative plural (NOMPL)
nées	Accusative plural (ACCPL)

Table 1. Syntactic functions of verb agreement prefixes

The prefix ?e indexes first or second person for both the ergative and accusative cases.³ The ergative pé (third person) and ?e (first or second person) and the nominative hii (third person) are obligatory markers. But ?e as accusative (first or second person) seems to be an optional marker. The plural markers pe and nées are apparently obligatory whenever plurality is not marked directly on the associated NP. Although ?e, pé, etc. are listed in this paper with an e, because of vowel harmony they actually occur in verbs as either ?e or ?a, pé or pa, etc. (Appendix B).

1.1. Person agreement. Table 2 displays the subject/

	Intransitive	Transitive objects (non-recursive)		
Subject		1 person	2 person	3 person
1 person	Ø-	---	(?e)?e-	---
2 person	Ø-	(?e)?e-	---	---
3 person	hii-	(?e)hii-	(?e)hii-	---

Table 2. Person indexing in the Nez Perce verb

object person agreement markers paradigmatically. The horizontal rows represent the person of the subject; the vertical columns indicate the person of the object, if any. Note that there are several potential sources of ambiguity here; some of them are resolved by sectional suffixes, cf. examples (5) and (6).

1.2. . Transitive prefixes. As can be seen in Table 2, pa and pe occur exclusively with transitive verbs. The single morpheme pe indicates simultaneously a third person subject and a third person object, as in examples (1) to (3).

(1) pipla?-nim pe-'ewi-ye wewukiye-ne
pipla?-ERG 3ERG-shoot-PAST elk-ACC
 'Tipla? shot an elk'

(2) e-yoxo?-ce piilept lekiin-ne
 ERG-await-PRES four o'clock-ACC
 'He/she is waiting for four o'clock'

(3) saaga pa-ko-saaga
 already 3ERG-go-PAST
 'He/she already did it to him/her'

The prefix pa serves three functions. The following three examples illustrate its use in referencing a first or second person accusative. See Table 4 for independent pronouns.

(4) pimené ?e-hii-yoxo?-cix
 you+ACCP 2ACC-3NOM-await-PRES+NOMPL
 'They are waiting for you all'

(5) ?e-?e-yoxo?-nu?
 I, 2ACC-1, 2ERG-await-FUTURE
 'I will wait for you' (the most natural meaning)

(6) ?e-?e-yoxo?-nu?kum
 IACC-2ERG-await-FUTURE+hither
 'You will wait for me'

The prefix ʔe serves three functions. The following examples illustrate its use in referencing a first or second person object.

- (7) ʔe-hii-yóxo?-cix
 you+PL+ACC 2ACC-3NOM-await-FRES+NOMPL
 'They are waiting for you (plural)'
- (8) ʔe-ʔe-yóxo?-nu?
 2ACC-1,2ERG-await-FUTURE
 'I will wait for you' (the usual meaning)
- (9) ʔe-ʔe-yóxo?-nu?kun
 ACC-2ERG-await-FUTURE+hither
 'You will wait for me'

A second syntactic function of ʔe is to agree with a first or second person ergative NP, as can be seen in (8) and (9) above, and in (10) to (12) below. (Note that ʔe → ʔew / __?, h)

- (10) ʔew-ʔni-me walc
 2ERG-give-PAST+hither knife
 'You gave me the knife'
- (11) ʔew-ʔni-ye wóolac-na
 1,2ERG-give-PAST Woolac-ACC
 'I/you gave it to Woolac'
- (12) wáaqa ʔiin ʔe-síwe-ce
 already I 1ERG-cut-PRES
 'I am already cutting it'

1.1.2. Intransitive prefixes. The third syntactic function of ʔe that we will consider is its agreement with a possessed third person subject of an intransitive verb. Compare the following.

- (13) háama hii-kóomay-ca
 man 3NOM-hurt-PRES
 'The man is injured'
- (14) háama-nim húusus ʔa-kóomay-ca
 man-GEN head 3S-hurt-PRES
 'The man's head hurts'

- (15) ?áinim ?é-we-s tíi?mes
 my 3S-be-PRES book
 'It is my book'

- (16) háama-nim ciqáamqal pé-kenip-e wóolac-na
 man-GEN dog 3ERG-bite-PAST Woolac-ACC
 'The man's dog bit Woolac'

Intransitive verbs are unmarked for agreement with first or second person subjects. The prefixes ø and ?e determine transitivity even in imperatives, cf. examples (19) and (20).

- (17) ?áin ø-wé-s sooyáapoo
 I 1S-be-PRES white man
 'I am a white man'

- (18) áalawí ?áin ø-kúu-se
 if you 2S-go-PRES
 ?áin-ku? taye ø-ki-yú?
 I-also surely 1S-go-FUTURE
 'If you go I will surely go too'

- (19) ø-ciklái-n (20) ?e-sepé-wii-n
 2S-return-IMP 2ERG-CAUSE-cry-IMP
 'Go home!' 'Make him/her cry!'

The prefix hii references in the predicate third person nominative subjects as long as there is no third person object.

- (21) típsa?s hii-we-s nimíipuu
 Tipsa?s 3NOM-be-PRES Nez Perce
 'Tipsa?s is Nez Perce'

- (22) hii-ki-ce wewúkiye-nim
 3NOM-see-PRES elk-ERG
 'The elk sees me(you, us)'

- (23) mée hii-háama
 where 3NOM-man
 'Where is the man?'

- (24) teplép-pe hii-we-s
 Lapway-in 3NOM-be-PRES
 'He is in Lapway'

1.2 Number agreement. The aspectual suffix often encodes direction ('hither' or 'thither') as well as number agreement with a nominative subject. Compare the following.

- (25) ʔew-ʔni-se
1,2ERG-give-PRES+NOMSG
'I am giving it to him/her/you'
- (26) ʔew-ʔni-siix
1,2ERG-give-PRES+NOMPL
'We are giving it to him/her/you'
- (27) hii-wii-ce (28) hii-wii-cix
3NOM-cry-PRES+NOMSG 3NOM-cry-PRES+NOMPL
'He/she is crying' 'They are crying'
- (29) qoʔc hii-wece-siga kaa hii-kúu-ye
still 3NOM-dance-IMPERF+NOMPL and 3NOM-go-PERF
'They were still dancing when he/she left'

When singular and plural forms of an aspect are available then number agreement with the subject is obligatory. For those aspectual suffixes that do not encode number the prefix pe agrees with a plural subject. The third person ergative pé and the nominative plural pe are distinguished by position, co-occurrence, and stress.

- (30) hii-wii-ciga (31) hii-pe-wii-ne
3NOM-cry-IMPERF+NOMPL 3NOM-NOMPL-cry-PERF
'They were crying' 'They cried'
- (32) kaa ʔitú ʔ-pe-kúu-ye
and what 2S-NOMPL-do-PAST
'Then what did you guys do?'
- (33) kaa ʔitú pé-kuu-ye
and what 3ERG-do-PAST
'Then what did he/she do to him/her?'
- (34) hii-pe-wecé-yuʔ (35) hii-pe-héx-ne
3NOM-NOMPL-dance-FUTURE 3NOM-NOMPL-see-PAST
'They will be dancing' 'They saw me/you'

A plural object is indexed in the verb by nées. Verbs with nées must be subject marked with pé, ?e, or hii. The order of verbal person inflections is object-subject, as already seen in examples (4) to (9). But the order for number markers is subject-object, as shown in examples (38) and (39) below.

- (36) wéet ?a-náas-miçi-sa
 QUESTION 2ERG-ACCPL-hear-PRES
 'Do you hear them? (possibly us)
- (37) wóolac-nim pe-néec-?ni-ye tii'mes
 Woolac-ERG 3ERG-ACCPL-give-PAST book
 'Woolac gave them a book'
- (38) kaa konáa hii-pe-nées-hex-ne
 and there 3NOM-NOMPL-ACCPL-see-PAST
 'Then they saw us there'
- (39) kaa konáa pe-pe-nées-hex-ne
 and there 3ERG-NOMPL-ACCPL-see-PAST
 'Then they saw them there'

$\left\{ \begin{array}{c} \text{pé} \\ (\text{?e}) \left\{ \begin{array}{c} \text{?e} \\ \text{hii} \end{array} \right\} \\ \emptyset \end{array} \right\}$			(pe) (nées) Stem (Suffix)	
ACC	ERG/NOM	NOM	ACC	Aspect
				Number (NOM)
Person		Number		Direction

Table 3. Inflectional slots in the Nez Perce verb

2.0 Conditions on case markers. In this section we will discuss briefly some criteria that decide transitivity and case marking in Nez Perce simple sentences. These criteria include person, number, possession, whether the object is effected or affected, totally or partially affected, inanimate or human, and whether the subject is new or old information.

Unmarked	Ergative/Genitive	Accusative
'I'	² inim	² ine
'you'	² imim	² ime
'he/she/it'	² ipnim	² ipné
'we'	núunim	núune
'you(PL)/they'	² iméem	² imené

Table 4. Independent pronouns

2.1. Person. The non-third person ergative verbal inflection [e.g. of course, specifies a verb as transitive. The third person ergative pé, however, is used only if the object is also third person. Thus verbs with third person subjects are undifferentiated as to transitivity unless the object happens also to be third person. The referencing of ergative subjects in the Nez Perce verb is thus split by person, since third person subjects with non-third person objects do not have ergative agreement. NP's, however, are quite the opposite. Both ergative nim and accusative ne mark third person, but while first and second person independent pronouns have accusative forms, they do not have ergative forms (such forms serve only as genitives). The following examples show that when a transitive verb does not specify an ergative subject the NP does, and when the NP is not marked ergative a transitive verb is. These different conditions on the ergative marking of verbs and NP's thus complement each other. (Note that hi 'say, tell' has allomorphs ə and h, and is transitive only with a human object.)

- (40) wóolac hii-hí-ce táʔc méywi
 Woolac 3NOM-say-PRES good morning
 'Woolac is saying "Good Morning"'
- (41) wóolac-nim pé-Ø-ne táʔc méywi
 Woolac-ERG 3ERG-say-PAST good morning
 'Woolac told him/her "Good Morning"'
- (42) wóolac-nim hii-hí-ne táʔc méywi
 Woolac-ERG 3NOM-say-PAST good morning
 'Woolac told me/you "Good Morning"'
- (43) ʔiin ʔew-í-ne táʔc méywi
 I 1ERG-say-PAST good morning
 'I told him/her/you "Good Morning"'

2.2. Number. NP's are not case marked when they are made plural either by verbal agreement or the plural suffix me. The plurality of subjects seems always to be indexed in the verb, either by suffix or the prefix pe. But example (45) shows that nées normally does not occur when the object NP is marked plural.

- (44) hii-pe-héx-ne wewúkiye(-me)(-*nim)
 3NOM-NOMPL-see-PAST elk(-PL)(-*ERG)
 'The elk(PL) saw me/you'
- (45) ʔe-kí-ce wewúkiye-me(-*ne)
 1,2ERG-see-PRES elk-PL(-*ACC)
 'I/you see the elk(PL)'

2.3. Possessed arguments. When a speaker possesses the object then the verb is treated as intransitive, cf. examples (46) and (47). Subject and object NP's are not case marked if they are possessed. Possession does not affect the use of postpositions other than nim and ne, however, as seen in example (53).

- (46) ʔe-kí-ce xáaxos tewlíikt-ne
 1,2ERG-see-PRES green tree-ACC
 'I see a green tree'

- (47) wa yé ?íinim síkem Ø-heki-ce
 I that my horse 1S-see-PRES
 'and I see my horse'
- (48) ax ciqáamqal-nim pé-kenip-e
 that dog-ERG 3ERG-bite-PAST
 'That dog bit him/her/it'
- (49) ax háama-nim ciqáamqal(-*nim) pé-kenip-e
 that man-GEN dog(-*ERG) 3ERG-bite-PAST
 'That man's dog bit him/her/it'
- (50) ax háama-nim ciqáamqal(-*nim)
 that man-GEN dog(-*ERG)
?íine hii-kenip-e
 me 3NOM-bite-PAST
 'That man's dog bit me'
- (51) oolac pé-x-ne síkem-ne
 Woolac 3ERG-see-PAST horse-ACC
 'Woolac saw a horse'
- (52) oolac pé-x-ne tipsa's-nim síkem(-*ne)
 Woolac 3ERG-see-PAST Tipsa's-GEN horse(-*ACC)
 'Woolac saw Tipsa's's horse'
- (53) alc ?íinim ?iniit-pe hii-we-s
 knife my house-at 3NOM-be-PRES
 'The knife is at my house'

2.4. Semantic conditions. In Nez Perce most two argument verbs, including those involving the senses, are transitive.

- (54) á-méii-ya kiw'kiwí'lec-ne
 1ERG-hear-PAST drum-ACC
 'He/she heard (listened to) the drum'
- (55) oolac-nim pé-nauxsi-ye cúu'yem-ne
 Woolac-ERG 3ERG-smell-PAST fish-ACC
 'Woolac smelled the fish'

There are some two argument verbs, however, which are not treated as transitive. These include the copula wée, enipí 'receive', ?awyáwx 'find', wéwluq 'want something', haníi 'make', etc. One aspect of this

semantic split seems to involve distinguishing verbs that effect (produce) the object from those that affect it.

- (56) háama hii-we-s nimípuu
man 3NOM-be-PRES Nez Perce
'The man is Nez Perce'
- (57) háama hii-wéwluq-se ?ípt
man 3NOM-want-PRES food
'The man wants food'
- (58) háama hi-?npí-se kúus
man 3NOM-receive-PRES water
'The man is receiving water'
- (59) háama hi-?wyáwx-na ?iníit
man 3NOM-find-PAST house
'The man found the house'
- (60) háama hii-tíi?me-ne tíi?mes
man 3NOM-write-PAST book
'The man wrote a book'
- (61) háama hii-hí-ne tá?c méywi
man 3NOM-say-PAST good morning
'The man said "Good Morning"'
- (62) háama hii-haníi-ya wálc
man 3NOM-make-PAST knife
'The man made a knife'
- (63) háama-nim pá-sapiik-a walás-na
man-ERG 3ERG-sharpen-PAST knife-ACC
'The man sharpened the knife'
- (64) háama-nim pé-?nik-e walás-na hiipinwáws-pe
man-ERG 3ERG-put-PAST knife-ACC table-on
'The man put the knife on the table'

If a human goal is intended then the verb becomes transitive. Dative objects are case marked with the accusative suffix ne and benefactive goals with the benefactive suffix ?áyn. Here haníi 'make' requires a suffix (?ení 'give?').⁴

- (65) ama-nim pé-[?]tiime-ne wóolac-na
 1-ERG 3ERG-write-PAST Woolac-ACC
 'he man wrote to Woolac'
- (66) ama-nim pé-[?]-ne wóolac-na
 1-ERG 3ERG-say-PAST Woolac-ACC
 'he man told it to Woolac'
- (67) ama-nim pé-[?]ni-ye wóolac-na
 1-ERG 3ERG-give-PAST Woolac-ACC
 'he man gave it to Woolac'
- (68) ama-nim pá-[?]nya-[?]ny-a wálc wóolac-[?]ayn
 1-ERG 3ERG-make-for-PAST knife Woolac-for
 'he man made a knife for Woolac'

To show that the object is totally affected ne is
 omitted. Compare the following.

- (69) -hip-e nukú-ne
 1-ERG-eat-PAST meat-ACC
 's/he ate (some of) the meat'
- (70) -hip-e la[?]ám[?] nukú-ne
 1-ERG-eat-PAST all meat-ACC
 's/he ate (one each of) all the (kinds of) meat'
- (71) -hip-e núkt
 1-ERG-eat-PAST meat
 's/he ate the meat (all of it)'
- (72) -hip-e la[?]ám[?] núkt
 1-ERG-eat-PAST all meat
 's/he ate all the meat'

2.5. agnotic conditions. A third person ergative NP
 is usually marked with nim only if it involves new
 information, as for example in answer to ?eslinim
 'Who?' or in counterassertion.

- (73) pla[?]-nim pé-hip-e nukú-ne
 pla[?]-ERG 3ERG-eat-PAST meat-ACC
 'ipa[?] ate the meat'
- (74) pla[?] pé-hip-e nukú-ne
 pla[?] 3ERG-eat-PAST meat-ACC
 'ipa[?] ate the meat'

- (75) wéetuu tipsa's-nim pé-hip-e
 no Tipsa's-ERG 3ERG-eat-PAST
 'No, Tipsa's ate it'

3.0 Word order. Word order is conditioned by aspect. If only one NP argument is present word order seems very free. But when two arguments are present then only SVO and SOV are permitted. For past aspects SVO is obligatory, but for non-past either SVO or SOV are permitted. Older speakers, however, seem to prefer SOV.

- (76) tipsa's-nim pé-hip-e nukú-ne
 Tipsa's-ERG 3ERG-eat-PAST meat-ACC
 'Tipsa's ate the meat'

- (77) tipsa's-nim nukú-ne pé-hip-se
 Tipsa's-ERG meat-ACC 3ERG-eat-PRES
 'Tipsa's is eating the meat'

Footnotes

I want to thank Zelma and Anton Minthorn for providing the bulk of the data for this paper, and James Ward for his many helpful suggestions. Haruo Aoki's Nez Perce Grammar (University of California Press, 1970) has been of immense value.

²Compare Aoki, pp 105-108, for verb inflection, and pp 71-80, for substantive inflection. In this paper I do not discuss particle inflection (see Aoki, pp 127-131), or the reciprocal and reflexives (pp 90-92).

³Aoki p 196, describes ?e as the "third person object prefix" when the subject is either first or second person. My informant prefixes ?e to all transitive verbs with first or second person object, regardless of the person of the object. This particle is occasionally suffixed: stewise?ée 'I love you', hikciiga?ée 'I saw you'. My informant also allows ?e to be prefixed both to itself and to hii (third person nominative), and such uses ?e agrees with a first or second person object. This paper does not attempt to distinguish Aoki's "pronominal particle" ?ée (see Aoki, pp 127, 131, and 137) from his "third person object prefix" ?e (p 196).

⁵See Aoki, p 98, for the benefactive verbal suffix.