Some Features of Warm Springs Sahaptin

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Heville Jacobs, in his Sketch of Northern Sahaptin Grammar (1925, p.66), suggests that his analysis of the phonology of Sahaptin, and in particular the absence of the "to cross" vs. "reflexive" duality of the personal pronouns in the northern dialects, is the feature that distinguishes the phonology of the Cowlitz and other dialects from that of the northern dialects. The presence of this duality indicates that both subject and object are marked for number and case in the northern dialects. In the Cowlitz dialect, for example, the personal pronouns in the northern dialects are marked for number and case in a way that is not present in the Cowlitz dialect.

Similarly, the impression of speakers at Warm Springs that the linguistic features of the northern dialects are more complex than those of the Cowlitz dialect is shared by Rigsby. The Warm Springs data, which are based on the recordings of Jacobs and Rigsby, show that the northern dialects have a more complex system of personal pronouns than the Cowlitz dialect. In the northern dialects, the first person singular pronoun is "'I", the second person singular is "'YOU", and the third person singular is "'THO". The plural forms are "'EUR" for the first person, "'YOU'" for the second person, and "'THE" for the third person.

In addition, the northern dialects have a more complex system of demonstratives than the Cowlitz dialect. In the northern dialects, the definite articles are "'THO" for the first person, "'YOU'" for the second person, and "'THE" for the third person. The indefinite articles are "'HERE" for the first person, "'YOU'" for the second person, and "'THIRD" for the third person.

The northern dialects also have a more complex system of deictics than the Cowlitz dialect. In the northern dialects, the deictic "'HERE" is used in all cases, while the Cowlitz dialect has a separate deictic for the first person, "'I", and a separate deictic for the third person, "'THE".

Furthermore, the northern dialects have a more complex system of tense and aspect markers than the Cowlitz dialect. In the northern dialects, the tense and aspect markers are indicated by the use of the personal pronouns in the first and third person, while in the Cowlitz dialect, the tense and aspect markers are indicated by the use of the personal pronouns in the second person.

In conclusion, the northern dialects have a more complex system of personal pronouns, demonstratives, deictics, and tense and aspect markers than the Cowlitz dialect. This is consistent with the impression of the speakers at Warm Springs that the northern dialects are more complex than the Cowlitz dialect.
as restricted to third person, and as capable of unambiguously marking person and number without reference to the clitics, involves a prefix -på- which is homophonous with the third person -på- mentioned above. This -på- is the only verb prefix indicating a non-third person and one recognizes it by its co-occurrence with the second person clitic -n of the examples above. It then indicates first person object of the second person subject, *funn påså*. Then you will see me.

The second exception is to the generalization that the verb prefixes unambiguously indicate case without reference to the presence of the preceding personal pronoun. I think, an exception to this generalization in that both *n* and the other -på- do indicate object. Reference to the presence or absence of clitic pins down the person of the object, as well, of course, as distinguishing which -på- it is. The case of -på- does offer an exception, however. As noted above, in the discussion of the clitics, the verb prefix -på- indicates a third person object of the first or second person subject indexed by the clitic. The co-occurrence of a -på- is what defines the case role of each. If this were the only use of -på- then its mere presence would indicate third person object, even though a clitic would always co-occur. But, at Warm Springs -på- may also be a variant of third person subject -l-. This is the case at Unatilla also, and neither Rigsby nor I have ever felt we had a satisfactory evaluation of the variation. Jacobs' grammar indicates the presence of this alternation in the Northwest dialects and the texts bear out the fact of alternation, though neither of Jacobs' tentative and brief explanations of the basis of the Alternations seems to hold up in light of the texts. This is clearly an area for research in all the dialects of Sahaptin. Comparison of the Joe Hunt Klickitat texts with the Cowits texts seems to show that -på- third person subject is more common in Klickitat than in Cowits, where its frequency is comparable to that at Warm Springs. An overall impression is that in Klickitat, as represented by Joe Hunt; I have not checked the Mary Hunt and William Cree texts in the Jacobs collection for this alternation -på- is the most frequent third person singular subject prefix, whereas in the other dialects including Warm Springs -på- is the most common. For Unatilla we have no texts available and must rely on Rigsby's grammatical sketch. This could be misleading for the following reason. It is clear from Jacobs' field notebooks that in elicited paradigms he got almost entirely -l- (probably from the translator). He also gives almost entirely -l- in examples of verb forms in the section of the grammar on verb roots. In my elicited data I have almost entirely -l-, and I presume that Rigsby does too. Yet all the dialects show alternation of -l- and -på- in Klickitat shows preference of -l-. In any case, one has to say to give a decisive result, one must check for presence or absence of clitic in order to know whether -på- indicates third person subject or, alternatively, third person object of the subject indexed by a clitic.

To summarize thus far then, in the system at Warm Springs and Unatilla the clitics are entirely first and second person, and the verb prefixes with one exception third person singular subject prefix, whereas in the other dialects including Warm Springs -på- is the most common. For second person subject with second person object, we don't have the outside information, but the combination of -på- for second person subject with second person object, pin down the case function of the first or second person; their interaction with the verb prefixes does that. On the other hand, the verb prefixes do, with the exceptions of -på- and the second-mentioned -n, unambiguously indicate case function. How do the northern dialects differ from this picture?

The situation with regard to this system of clitics and prefixes is different in a number of ways in the dialects reported in Jacobs' Sketch (1931) and in his volumes of texts (1929,1934,1937). First of all, those dialects have -på- which seems from the Warm Springs and Unatilla perspective an "intruder" among the clitics, namely the third person clitic -på-. This clitic always indicates a third person plural subject and seems to be used only when the object is also third person, marked by an -på- prefix on the verb. It often immediately precedes the verb, a fact which led me briefly to suspect that it represented just a breaking into two parts of the Warm Springs and Unatilla verb prefix -på- which indicates a third person subject acting on a third person object. Closer scrutiny of the texts and of examples in the grammar revealed that the past clitic can occur separated from -på- by intervening lexical material or appear at the end of the verb when the verb is the first word in the clause. The clitic -på- does not occur in Warm Springs Sahaptin nor in Unatilla and Rigsby suggests a specification of the alternation *på*-á- that the origin of Warm Springs and Unatilla pák*så- be in the merger of the -på- of the Northwest dialects with -på-. Third person object, another possible origin, however, might lie in the existence of the Malaxa-Palus reported by Jacobs of a prefix -på-. Both Jacobs and Rigsby suggest that this prefix represents a shifting of the plural subject -på- and the general third person object -på- of Northwest Sahaptin to form a third person plural-subject third person plural-object prefix. It seems to me that this might also be the origin of -på- with "seconding" It possibility seems to me to be strengthened by the fact that Warm Springs and Sahaptin forms in general more closely resemble the Malaxa-Palus form given by Jacobs than the Klickitat or Cowitz. In any case, the existence of a third person plural clitic in the northwest dialects represents a difference from the Warm Springs and Unatilla specialization of the clitics to include only first and second persons.

Jacobs' grammar also points out another use of -på-, one not mentioned by Rigsby for Unatilla nor included in his charts of clitics and verb prefixes. In the dialects studied by Jacobs, -på- is not only as third person object of a first or second person subject, and as an alternative of third person singular subject -l-, but also to indicate third person subject with third person object (singular or unmarked for number). In this use it is in alternation with -på-. More about this alternation in a later section. At this point I would point out that this use of -på- means for the system in the northwest dialects is that if -på- occurs with a clitic then it indicates just that the object is third person, whereas if it occurs without a clitic, then only context will tell whether it indicates third person subject or indicates both third person subject and third person object. In any case, as in Warm Springs and Unatilla, -på- is an exception to the generalization that the prefixes unambiguously indicate case without reference to the presence or absence of clitics.

The investigation of the alternation in the northern dialects of -på- with -på- to indicate third person singular subject acting on third person object has turned out to be the most fruitful and exciting result of my attempts to pull together in this case what I knew of the the differences between Warm Springs Sahaptin and the other dialects. It has led me to the discovery of at least a few uses of -på- as third person subject with third person object in one of my Warm Springs texts and to the conclusion that the -på- as third person singular subject with third person object prefixes. My research into this question is at its very earliest stages but the findings so far seem worth reporting at once for their wider relevance to discourse functions of grammatical features.

In the manuscript of Rigsby's sketch of Sahaptin grammar, he reports that -på- is the prefix used to indicate, in and of itself, third person singular subject acting on third person object. Though he mentions that Jacobs reports this prefix in alternation with -på- in the Northwestern dialects, he does not indicate any use of the alternate at Unatilla and does not include the -på- form in his chart of personal pronouns and clitics (except for its use as third person object of first or second subjects in my own work at Warm Springs everything seemed to bear out Rigsby's analysis. In fact, I had become unaware, if I ever really was aware, of the use of -på- in some clitics in Jacobs grammar and texts. Rereading Rigsby, and particularly his characterization of -på- as an oblique, led me to look more closely at Jacobs' mention of -på- and -på- in the grammar. It has interested me in finding out what kind of occasion
The first use of pā with Wildcat as subject and Timber Rabbit as object occurs in the verb of saying in Wildcat's refusal. Finally they do take turns scratching each other, at Timber Rabbit suggestions and with Wildcat's reluctant compliance. There are about six uses of pā with Wildcat as subject and an equal number with him as object during the page long episode which ends with Wildcat's killing and skinning Timber Rabbit, all with pā-prefix. Here the role being played by pā-constructions is less clear then in the rest of the narrative. All instances of Wildcat's being object are here, as elsewhere, marked by pā. Perhaps in this case the use of pā, as something about the importance of this interaction with Timber Rabbit, At the end of it Wildcat predicts' timber rabbit's future as just being food for wildcat. He then reminds his brother Cougar.

Thus the obviative pā-turns out to be very interesting indeed and much more investigation is needed of its role in other texts collected by Jacobs in my Warm Springs data. Looking at one text of Hazel Supah's I have found that not all occurrences of Wildcat object with third person subject and that there are indeed two occurrences of which may be third person subject with third person object. What the case is like this narrative is that almost all occurrences of pā can be seen as a choice between using pā and using a construction with -as marking third person subject and marking the noun if present with -as accusative. The function of pā seems to be limited almost entirely to cases to cases where members of the East Wind family are object of the action. This would make sense because, though it is a story of the wrestling matches of the North and East winds, the main thread of the narrative is how the orphaned son of the East Wind chief avenges his father's death and rescues his grandparents from mistreatment by the North Wind people. A few pā-forms seem not to fit this analysis. Further work on the narrative may clarify this occurrence. The analysis of one long narrative in which the use of pā to clearly single out one character as protagonist, and of another where it singles out a family opens up an exciting area for research, one in which narrative analysis of narratives will undoubtedly play a role in working out the discourse and particularly the narrative functions of choice of pā over other alternatives.

Another area in which the difference between the dialects reported by Jacobs and Warm Springs and Umâtilla needs to be pursued for its relevance to discourse and narrative structure is that of the uses of the two prefixes - as and -as as alternate third person subject markers. As noted above, it is clear that for all dialects -i is the elision form. Yet -i occurs in this function in all dialects, though with differing frequency. In light of the discovery of the possible discourse and narrative role of pā-as against -i-as in both Klikitat and Warm Springs, and in Cowpapa where I have made a hurried check during the writing of this paper and found a probable similar use, it seems unlikely that what has seemed like free alternation of -i and -as may be serving discourse or narrative functions. To find this out and to form up the hypothesized function of pā vs. -i, it will be necessary to study the texts of individual narrators as well as different dialects. Within Klikitat one will want to look not only at the public readings by Joe Hunt but also by those by Mary Hunt and William Creek which are in the Jacobs collection. Any modern Klikitat texts will be relevant as well; both as examples of the dialect and as examples of different speakers. Within my Warm Springs data I will want to study each narrator and each genre of narratives separately in research on the discourse functions of these prefixes.

The final difference between Warm Springs and the other Sahaptin dialects is the one that this paper started out to be about. It lies in two related phenomena, many words in which the other dialects, including Umatilla, have an obscure vowel (or all the corresponding word at Warm Springs has no vowel at all. Examples are tō' 'chees'; tō'p 'willow'; kē' 'little'. Kata 'cold', pā' 'door'. There are many, many more.
The other difference lies in the fact that there are a large number of words in Warm Springs Sahaptin in which a stressed vowel that occurs in that word in the other dialects is not present and the stress has been shifted to the other vowel of the word. These missing vowels may be either obscured stressed vowels (which Jacobs says never drop out in the Northwest dialects in the way that unstressed vowels may) or full vowels. A few examples out of the many I have collected are: kwa' 'wounded mountain' vs. pát'šxanu 'two', kwa' 'grizzly bear' vs. tówít'sáá 'bear', hide', šu' 'meat' vs. n'é:7 'meat'. In future, I hope to be able to document this process more fully. Its interest lies in the suggestion it gives that Sahaptin is a language in which the consonants are somehow more important to the identity of the lemmas than the vowels. If one sees how vowels may be lost, stress may shift and yet the consonantal skeleton of the word remains one is tempted to think of another feature of all Sahaptin dialects: this feature was pointed out by Jacobs and is found in Warm Springs Sahaptin as well. There is a very common process by which adverbs or adjectives are derived from verb roots. The verb roots are typical vowel-less and the adverbs have long vowel a: e.g. k'á 'to use' to do all of becomes k'áxí 'all': k'á 'be angry' becomes sáxí 'to anger'; sá 'to fool, tease' becomes sáxí by a further process sáxí 'foolish, silly': kí 'to untie or loosen' becomes kíxí 'untied, loose': kíxí 'be full', kásín 'full'. Vowels may be inserted to derive new words with an intensive meaning: e.g. kíxí 'all day becomes kíxíxí 'all day'. Vowels may 'break' to give a different but related meaning: e.g. pálxí 'blind' púxí 'almost totally blind' (Verena Greene at Warm Springs): niixí 'nice, good, well' niixíxí 'careful'. In addition vowels may be lengthened for expressive or narrative structural purposes. This is not to say that there are no consonant changes for expressive or derivational purposes. For example, n to l, s to š and to t are very common for diminution and for 'corrida talk' or 'talking little', a way of talking characteristic of some individuals. There are also a few cases of consonant change for augmentation. Ašá 'claw' to ašá 'huge claw' comes immediately to mind. But overwhelmingly it is the vowels that change for derivational and expressive purposes. Thus perhaps it is not surprising that the kind of dropping out of stressed vowels that seems to have occurred at Warm Springs should take place.

References


