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Topic is a notoriously vexing concept to define.[1] It has been widely discussed, but there seems to be little agreement as to what it is, although most contemporary writers agree that it is a discourse phenomenon (for example, see Chafe 1976b, Li and Thompson 1976, Givón 1983a,b). Even though it is considered to be a function of discourse, it is usually discussed in terms of individual sentences, with the implication that what is of interest is only how a new topic is introduced. It is also usually implied that topic and subject (or agent, although discussion is usually in terms of subject) are ordinarily co-referential, and other uses of topic are ignored. However, it is also clear that not all treatments of topic are talking about the same thing.

My treatment of topic in this paper will be strictly in terms of discourse, meaning that I will be dealing with sets of sentences, or at least with the implication of sets of sentences. This is not to deny that any and every sentence may have a topic, but to stress that there may be a discourse topic that is independent of a sentence topic. More specifically, I am interested in what happens to a topic as a speaker moves through a block of discourse. The topic may be maintained for some time, even though various new subjects or agents enter the discourse such that the topic may be relegated to other thematic and syntactic roles. Most commonly in speech topics, subjects, and agents are the same entity; it is well known, of course, that agents can take on roles other than subject, as when passivization occurs and the patient (or whatever) becomes the subject. Since this use of the term 'topic' may appear to be at variance with other usages (although my usage seems to be implied elsewhere), a little further explication may be useful.

There are two recent volumes intended to give extensive treatment of topic (Li 1976, Givon 1983a). In one of these (Li 1976), subject gets more and better coverage than topic; the latter receives some specific attention in rather narrow terms or in diachronic terms; however, Li and Thompson 1976 attempt more general coverage. The latter is an attempt at a typology, and is successful in its own terms. Unfortunately, its terms are not mine, and the use of topic there clearly will not fit my usage here. Li and Thompson seem to be contrasting topic with comment, whereas I want to use topic in a broader way. Their usage seems to refer to what might be called "*new* topic" or "*immediate* topic". This is then discourse oriented only in that it deals with topic change, whereas I wish to discuss topic maintenance as well. Furthermore, some of their claims are blatantly contradicted when topic is viewed in a broader context. For example, they say, "it is worth noting that the surface coding of the topic in all the languages we have examined always involve the sentence-initial position" (Li and Thompson 1976:465); examples below will show that *pronominalized* topics (in topic maintenance situations) can certainly occur in non-initial position. They also claim that "subjects are essentially grammaticalized topics" (1976:484), but this cannot be taken to mean either that this is the only source of subjects or that topics can only be subjects.

A more useful approach to the matter is given by Chafe 1976b. Instead of assuming only subjects and topics, Chafe suggests a number of roles ("statuses", in his terms) for nouns based on "syntactic and cognitive considerations" (1976b:29). These roles, as indicated in the title to his paper, are givenness, contrastiveness, definiteness, subjects, topics, and points of view. When he gets to topics, however, he does not give the sort of succinct definition that he gives for his other roles, realizing that the notion has been used in widely different ways. Yet of his "statuses", topic is closest to my notion of topic here. His categories are useful, though, in identifying some of the different ways in which others have used the term 'topic'.

Givón 1983a,b also attempts a typology of topic marking in the form of a scale of topic continuity (1983b:56). This scale (dealing with such things as stress/emphasis, dislocation, and clefting), however, has little to do with the sort of topic to be dealt with here, and in fact corresponds to Chafe's contrastiveness status. Nevertheless, Givón has a number of useful things to say about topics (1983b:54):

> "In general, thematic paragraphs in discourse are organized so that one *nominal* tends to be the *recurring topic* or *le[f]t motif* of the paragraph. That is, it tends to appear in each successive *foreground clause* of the thematic paragraph. However, at different points within the thematic paragraph it has *different continuity values*. . . .[A]t that point it may be totally-*new* topic. . .or a returning topic. . . .And such discourse contexts often

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condition different syntactic coding of the definite topic. Finally, any topic--returning, first-introduced or continuous--may appear in contexts where *other topics* may be present in the same verbal clause or its immediate discourse environment . . .All these considerations are extremely relevant for understanding the functional domain of topic continuity in discourse, as well as the various syntactic devices used to code various points on this domain" (italics in the original).

It is the recurring topic that will be treated in this paper, not topic in the sense that Givón usually uses the term, which equates it with participant (Givón 1983a).

The aspect of topicality I will be dealing with is how participant role is maintained in discourse. The immediate impetus for this paper was an attempt to understand the Salishan construction which I call "topical object", how it is related to switch-reference and obviative constructions, and why these three are often and easily confused.

Although a topic is commonly simply the subject of a sentence, many situations arise in which something else must be focussed and made subject; what happens to the topic then? From one perspective, there are as many as five types of systems used to keep track of participants in North American Indian languages. I do not doubt that other such systems exist, nor that there are other ways to organize these systems than that which I am proposing here. I also do not wish to imply that the systems I will describe have as their sole--or even necessarily primary--function the marking of a topic or keeping track of participants. Some of the participant tracking systems I will mention have been given considerable attention, and need not be discussed in detail here. There has, however, been some confusion about some of them, particularly the more unusual ones, and I will discuss them in more detail.

There would appear to be at least four grammatical systems adapted (or adaptable) to participant tracking in use in North American languages, and there is one example of a possible fifth system. The four systems, in the order in which they will be discussed, are (1) passives, (2) topic markers, (3) obviatives, and (4) topical objects.[2] The first three are familiar categories, the fourth is not. The specific mechanisms used for these systems may be quite different--so much so that others may not wish to consider them a subset of some single, more general category. This appears to be the case for Jacobsen (1983:153):

"With obviation the markers are referentially, if not structurally, part of the series of pronouns, whereas with switch-reference the markers are suffixes or conjunctions, used alongside of whatever pronouns are otherwise present. More important, with obviation, the proximate and obviative (also often referred to as third and fourth person, as in Navaho) are assigned to two different third person referents in a stretch of discourse according to their relative centrality or importance, whereas switch-reference signals a change of referent in terms of sequential (or hierarchical) ordering, whether within the third person or from one person to another. Obviation represents thus an extension of the traditional category of person, but refers not only to a non-participant in the speech act, but to relative ranking of participants in the text. Switch-reference, on the other hand, refers mechanically to sequential identity of participants or its absence."

## Passives

Passivization is one of the most familiar of grammatical categories, and has received much attention. It occurs widely, and takes many forms, yet it has never been possible to state what it is that all passive systems share (Siewierska 1984). The use of passive in place of active structures serves many pragmatic functions, only one of which is to track the participants in discourse (others suggested by Givón are agent suppression and detransitivization; 1983b:64). It is quite possibly the default device for this function (at least in those languages that have passive structures), and this may be the

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[1] Gender marking might appear to be another such system, but gender marking is not primarily a discourse function (although it can, of course, be very useful in tracking referents through a discourse passage). Gender as a topic tracking system would inevitably break down whenever two referents have the same gender. For a typology of discourse coreference systems see Van Valin 1987. Van Valin's classification is broader than mine, and is useful in showing how the systems I discuss here can be related in a wider context to switch reference. Van Valin discusses four types of discourse coreference mechanisms: switch function (which includes peassives and antipassives), switch reference, an "inference" (1987:520) system (which, as Van Valin himself points out, is not a system at all, but the lack of one [1987:528]), and lexical systems (under which he includes gender, honorifics, and fourth-person systems).

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reason that participant tracking is not specifically discussed in many grammars (another being that grammars rarely treat discourse beyond the sentence level). It is clear, however, that passivization is well suited to keeping a participant in topic position.[3] Since the topic is commonly the syntactic subject of a clause, an object can be made topic by moving it into the subject position through passivization, while leaving thematic roles unchanged from whatever the discourse situation requires.

It is not possible at this time to provide a complete catalogue of American Indian languages that use passivization for the purpose of participant tracking. To complicate matters, it need not be used for this purpose to the exclusion of other systems; Upper Chehalis (Salish), for example, uses both passivization and topical objects. In general, however, Salishan languages most commonly use passivization alone. This was shown clearly for Kalispel by Paul Kroeber 1987. Other examples from Kalispel (different from the ones cited by Kroeber) follow. In a story in which Rabbit goes to get a woman to help his old grandmother and to be his wife, we find:

(1)  u člcis
            '[And] he came up to her,'
     u qˀəlqˀélstəm,
            '[and] she talked to him.'
     cúntəm:  ". . . ."
            'and said: ". . . ."'
     cúis:  ". . . ."
            'He answered: ". . . ."' [4]
                    (Vogt 1940:84-85)

(I omit the direct quotations as irrelevant, since they change to first and second person and have nothing to do with the topic continuity. Bracketed material was omitted in Vogt's translation.) The first and fourth lines here are active, the second and third passive. A narrower translation of these passive lines would be 'he was talked to' and 'he was told'; thus all four lines actually have the same subject, 'he (Rabbit)' (gender is not indicated in Kalispel, so the he/she difference is supplied by Vogt). This keeps Rabbit in focus, even though the woman is the agent in the two middle clauses. Then the focus shifts to the woman as she is spoken to by her companions:

(2)  hói  ˀác'əxstəm  liˀé  tsxcxcúts
            '[Then] her companions watched them,'
     u cún séuntəm:  ". . . ."
            'and said to her and asked her: ". . . ."'
     cúis:  ". . . ."
            'She said: ". . . ."'
                    (Vogt 1940:84-85)

The companions as agents are given passive constructions, leaving the woman as subject (and in focus); an active clause follows when the woman is both agent and subject. In each of these passages, then, the same person is in focus, and this focal status is maintained by passivization to keep that person as subject of the clause.

In the Kalispel examples given here, and in much other Salishan narrative, the primary function of passives appears to be to maintain a particular person in a focal position in successive clauses, whether that person is the agent or patient. Argument marking here is exclusively by means of pronominal affixes or clitics; any lexical arguments present are essentially in apposition to these pronominal markers, and are not necessary in the discourse except to introduce new arguments. This is true at least of transitive predications; since passivization will not apply (in most Salishan languages) to intransitive predications, these may have to have a lexical argument to make it clear which argument in the discourse sequence is subject when it is

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[3] Analogously, ergative languages could use the antipassive to keep an *agent* of a transitive clause in topic position (Dixon 1980:464), although it is not clear that the antipassive is regularly used to track topic continuity in the way that other systems discussed here do.
[4] Third person transitive subject is marked by -s; the passive marker is -m. In cúis the i is from underlying n.

The domain of such active/passive switching to keep a given person in focus is not immediately apparent. The second Kalispel example above follows immediately after the first; Vogt has them in successive numbered sections of his prose rendition of the text (that is, my 1 ends one numbered section and my 2 begins the next). I suspect that the change to a new focus would correspond to a verse or stanza change in the type of verse analysis of texts practiced by Dell Hymes and others, and that this change of focus is one of the signals of change of verse.

A further complication does arise in certain Central Salishan languages, however. In Lushootseed (and probably in other nearby languages as well), the use of two lexical arguments (one as agent and the other as patient) is not allowed when both arguments of a transitive predicate are third person; rather, only the patient may occur, and if there is only one direct argument present, it will be interpreted as patient. The only way to express the agent in this case is to passivize the construction, making it intransitive, and then add the agent as an oblique argument (since the patient has become subject; see Hess 1973). This means that passive constructions in Lushootseed need not be marking topic maintenance, but may be used simply because there is no alternative when a transitive stem is used and it is necessary or desirable to mention the agent. The interaction of this constraint on number of arguments allowed and participant tracking in Lushootseed requires further investigation.

A second, randomly-chosen, example of the use of passive for participant switching is from Yurok, from a story entitled "Wohpekumew and the Salmon":

(3)  so nes wohpekumew
        'Wohpekumew came'
     ʔap ni·ʔnoʔw
        'and looked'
     ʔo nesk°ecok'°
        'and went back.'
     ʔo gaʔm  ".  .  .  ."
        'He said, ".  .  .  ."'
     ʔo giʔ  ".  .  .  ."
        'He was told, ".  .  .  ."'
     k°esi ʔo gaʔm  ".  .  .  ."
        'And so he said, ".  .  .  ."'
                    (Robins 1958:162–163)

The line division here is mine; note that each line contains one predicate (and again I have suppressed the quoted material). All but the next-to-the-last verb is active voice, with Wohpekumew as agent, and the one time he becomes patient the passive voice (of 'say, tell') is used.

## Topic Markers

A rather straightforward way of keeping track of discourse topics is to use an affix that specifically marks the topic. Although such a device is in principle very simple (and perhaps obvious), it does not appear to be used widely in North American Indian languages. Examples are available from Alabama (Davis and Hardy 1988), where a suffix -y(a) can be attached to a subject or object noun, to an auxiliary, or even to a verb.

(4)  Roy-ka-ya chokf-o-n ibi-ti
        'Roy killed a rabbit'
                    [Davis and Hardy 1988:289]

(5)  Piano-y-o-k pasli-li-ti
        'I dusted the piano'
                    [Davis and Hardy 1988:285]

(6)  Sonka-li-hch-oo-t óska-y-o-k sonka-li-t-o-k onáám-o
        'I used to smoke and I still smoke' (óska- is an auxiliary)
                    [Davis and Hardy 1988:293]

(7)  Am-anihtaasi-y-o-k ittafolooka-li
        'I'm young and I'm married'
                    [Davis and Hardy 1988:292]

Information on the discourse function of this affix is not available, but it is clearly admirably suited to keeping track of a topic across a sequence of sentences, regardless of thematic or syntactic roles. As such, and with its use on noun subjects or objects, it has much in common with obviation. Lacking further information on the use of this suffix in Alabama, or comparable examples from other languages, this device for topic marking will not be discussed further here.

## Switch Reference

Studies have shown that switch reference is an important category in a large number of American Indian languages ever since Jacobsen recognized and introduced the concept in 1961 (Jacobsen 1967). Switch reference has served as the theme of at least two volumes and one symposium (Munro 1980 and Haiman and Munro 1983); the latter volume includes a fine survey and typology of switch reference systems in North American Indian languages (Jacobsen 1983). Jacobsen catalogues as many as 14 language families or isolates where the phenomenon is found: Kiowa-Tanoan (Kiowa), Klamath, Maidun (Konkow, Maidu, Nisenan), Muskogean (Chickasaw, Alabama), Pomo (Kashaya, Eastern, Northern, Southeastern), Seri, Tonkawa, Uto-Aztecan (Huichol, Papago, Hopi, Tübatulabal, Chemehuevi, Shoshone, Northern Paiute), Washo, Yokuts (Yawelmani, Wikchamni, Tachi, Chukchansi, Gashowu), Yukian (Yuki), Yuman-Cochimí (Diegueño, Cocopa, Northern Cochimí), Zuni, and Eskimo (Yupik) (Jacobsen 1983:155– 161). Jacobsen further shows that switch reference sometimes occurs in two separate systems in a language (depending on clause type), and with up to six or seven "other categories associated respectively with the different-subject (DS) and same-subject (SS) markers" (Jacobsen 1983:169). A few languages indicate only that subjects are different or only that subjects are the same; most mark both, although they may not make the same number of distinctions for both.

Switch reference systems are not (primarily) participant tracking devices, although Haiman and Munro recognize this role when they say, "functionally, switch-reference is a device for referential tracking" (1983:ix). It should be clear that switch reference can easily serve this purpose, since its express function is to indicate that subjects (and hence often topics) are the same in consecutive clauses or they are not. The following example from Kiowa shows how a topic/agent in the first clause can become patient in the second and third clauses while remaining topic. This is accomplished by using the 'different subject' marker when the switch is made between the first two clauses. The 'same subject' marker is then used between the second and third clauses to indicate topic (and changed subject) maintenance. Watkins' comment about this example is that it "involves two participants, a girl and a bear, from a story about the origin of the Pleiades constellation. The pronominal forms are all Ø, referring to a 3s agent and a singular object. It is primarily through the use of gɔ and nɔ that the potentially confusing identities of the agents are kept straight" (Watkins 1979:39).

(8)  á·dɔ·gyà ɔnhá·dè Ø=k'ɔ·téhèl nɔ k'ɔl Ø=tê·hèl gɔ Ø=dén-p'í·nê
      (wood/within   bear   [3s₁-s₂]=meet/hsy/pf  DIFF   neck/around   [3s₁-s₂]=grab/hsy/pi   SAME
      [3s₁=s₂] =tongue- wipe/hsy/impf)
        'She₁ met a bear₂ in the woods and it₂ grabbed her₁ around/by the neck and licked her₁ (clean of paint).'
                    (Watkins 1979:39)

There is undoubtedly much more to be learned about how various switch reference systems work and the variety of functions (syntactic and discourse) they can serve. An example of the sorts of things to be explored is the following from a survey of switch reference in Yuman and some neighboring languages by Langdon and Munro (1979:332):

"The data discussed above confirm that the identity conveyed by the switch-reference mechanism is not simply that of overt grammatical subject. But there is no other simple alternate characterization of the controlling factor. It might be suggested that the identity or non-identity reflected

by the switch-reference morphemes in not of subject but of agent--a more semantically based category--which is overtly distinguished from that of subject in a number of languages. But there are many Yuman sentences with stative verbs (semantically agentless) in which the switch-reference markers may nonetheless appear."

Langdon and Munro also acknowledge that topic may play a role in the use of switch reference in Yuman, but do not explore this possibility in this article.

Further examples of switch reference will not be given here, since relevant material is readily available elsewhere.

## Obviatives

Obviative systems have been known to exist in North American Indian languages much longer than we have been aware of switch reference. Yet they have been reported for very few language families: Algonquian, Kutenai, Wintu, and Eskimo.[5] However, the fact that obviation occurs in all Algonquian languages actually makes this a very widespread category. In essence, what obviatives (sometimes called fourth person forms) do is to provide different markings for two nouns in a sentence which have different roles there, and keep track of these two nouns by using distinct pronouns for the two (labelled proximate and obviative). This is then an ideal tracking system, since in theory it is possible to keep at least two nominals distinct at all times. For discourse topics, however, the matter is usually more complicated, and change or maintenance of the proximate/obviative marking is often used to demarcate discourse units.

One of the best treatments of the obviative in discourse is Goddard 1984 where we are given specific details on how the category is used in Fox (Goddard 1984:273):

"Basically the way the obviative works is this: If there are two animate third persons (nouns or pronouns) in the same context one is marked as obviative by special inflections. The non-obviative noun or pronoun, called the proximate, is the normal unmarked form used when there is only one such entity in a given context. The proximate is the more prominent, the "hero of the discourse", and the obviative the less prominent. Verbs are inflected to show agreement with obviative and proximate subjects and objects, as appropriate, and in this way subjects and objects are kept straight and different participants in a section of narrative may also be kept distinct."

An example of the use of obviation to keep track of referents can be seen in (5).

(9)  o·ni  wi·hkomečiki,  mehteno·h=meko  we·pi-kanakanawiničini
     m[a]mi·ši·hahi,  e·h=po·ni-nowi·wa·či.  a·kwi·ke·hi·pi  ayi·nehka
     taši-kakano·-neti·wa·čini.  i·ni=meko,  "o·=no·či,"  e·ničini=meko,
     e·h=po·ni-kanawiči owi·ye·ha.
           'Now as for the guests [P], whenever the attendants [O] merely start to give their
           speeches, they [P] stop going out. And they [P] do not keep on conversing. As soon as
           they [O] say, "o nochi," anyone [P, hence of the guests] stops talking.'
                     (Goddard 1984:276)

Goddard explains this text as follows (1984:276):

"This segment of the text concerns the obligatory ceremonial behavior of those invited to the sacred-pack ceremony and begins with a topicalizing reference to the invited guests in the proximate. In the first verbal clause the ceremonial attendants are referred to in the obviative. Throughout the passage the guests and the attendants are kept distinct by the use of proximate verbal inflections for the former and obviative inflections for the latter."

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[5] My list is shorter than that given by Jacobsen 1983 because of the distinction I make between obviatives and topical objects. It is not altogether clear that Wintu belongs here; see Jacobsen (1983:180-181). Eskimo languages may not all use obviatives (see below).

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An example in which the proximate marks a patient and the obviative an agent is the following:

(10)  ma·ne=ke·hi=pi=meko  neseko·ki  i·niye·ka  pe·minehkawa·čiki  aša·haki
      ihkwe·wani.
           'And they [O] killed many of those Sioux [P] who were chasing the woman [O].'
                     (Goddard 1984:275)

About this he says (Goddard 1984:276):

"In this sentence the first obviative refers back to a herd of buffalo mentioned in the preceding context, where it is obviative. The verb 'to kill' is inflected for a proximate plural object and morphologically could have either an obviative or a second obviative as subject, but the position of 'woman' at the end of the sentence probably rules out taking it as the subject. The verb 'to chase' is inflected for a proximate plural subject and an obviative object."

This is a clear example of the use of the obviative and proximate to maintain topicality. Goddard also gives examples where there are shifts in topic with a preceding obviative becoming a proximate in the new sentence; these he identifies as marking important shifts in the discourse where an old topic may drop out of the narrative (at least for a time). Thus the use of these markers serves the twofold function of keeping track of topics and of indicating divisions between discourse units.

Greenlandic Eskimo has also been said to have an obviative-like system by means of which two third person referents can usually be kept apart. Two third persons are distinguished in possessive suffixes on nouns and in subject and object suffixes on subordinate verbs. In the following two sentences (from Kleinschmidt 1851 [1968] as restated by Swadesh 1946), the second (indicative) verb does not distinguish the first from the second third person, but the first verb (both conjunctive) has different suffixes (underlined) depending on the coreferentiality of the subject and object (orthography is modified to agree with standards proposed by Canadian Inuit).

(11)  takug<u>amiuk</u> ilisaraa
           'when he (a) saw him, he (a) recognized him' (indexing as in Kleinschmidt)
                     [Kleinschmidt 1968:91, Swadesh 1946:40]

(12)  kivvaata urning<u>mani</u> isirkungngil<u>aa</u>
           'when his servant (b) came to him (a), he (a) ordered him (b) not to come in' (indexing
           added)
                     [Kleinschmidt 1968:91, Swadesh 1946:41]

The object can be 'proximate' "only in the case of a subordinate verb, and then only when the subject of the same verb is identical with the object of the immediately superordinate one" (Swadesh 1946:41), suggesting tighter constraints on usage of these affixes than occur in Algonquian languages. In Greenlandic Eskimo, both third persons can occur in combination with first and second persons.

Based on these examples, and others like them, the Greenlandic Eskimo system strongly resembles the Algonquian obviative; however, it is open to other interpretation. Woodbury (1983) argues that the similar inflectional system of Central Yupik Eskimo is better considered an instance of switch reference. He bases this on examination of texts, and examples he cites back up his analysis as switch reference. However, Kalmár (1979) specifically states that "(f)ourth-person suffixes are *not* used to show that a subordinate verb has the same subject as a matrix one" (1979:26) in North Baffin Island Inuktitut. Further study of discourse in the Eskimo languages is clearly needed to determine just how the third and fourth person pronouns function. Needless to say, they may function differently in different languages, and it is possible that eastern Inuktitut dialects have been influenced by neighboring Algonquian languages.

The obviative in Kutenai is certainly very different from the obviative in Algonquian. There is even some question whether the relevant inflections should be called obviative; Garvin says of it that "the grammatical category has by Boas been called OBVIATION, by false analogy with a grammatical category in Algonquian" (1958:1). Nevertheless, my general impression is that it fits this category. There are problems with this identification, however. One is that Garvin's examples

are sentential (although all are taken from texts), and lack the necessary discourse context to see the full role of the relevant suffixes. The other is that there are two different obviative suffixes, one an "obviative for third person and first person plural" and the other an "obviative for first and second person" (Garvin 1958:5). What does or can it mean to have an obviative of any person other than third? The whole point of obviative is to distinguish between two third persons. If, however, these obviatives are marking discourse continuity and shifts and topics in non-agent roles, then their use is comprehensible within the category of obviative. It does seem clear that Garvin does not consider these suffixes as obviatives in the Algonquian sense, even though he keeps the terminology. In his summary, he gives the following explanation of their function (Garvin 1958:31):

> "Obviation serves to differentiate subject from object . .; primary object from secondary object . .; and primary subject from secondary subject . . .Summarizing these three relations, we can say that obviation refers to the relation between a more immediate and a more remote unit, that is, a relation of MARGINALITY."

In discussing agreement and disagreement in Kutenai, Garvin recognizes a switch reference function for the latter: "disagreement. . .indicates an impending switch in the emphasis of the narrative by marking the anticipated primary subject" (Garvin 1958:31). This seems to be a result of its functioning to distinguish primary and secondary subjects and objects, rather than being its basic role. Further investigation is clearly needed to gain a better understanding of these suffixes in Kutenai.

### Topical objects

Both this concept and the label I attach to it are poorly known. The morphological markers that I am calling 'topical objects' are special object inflections used to keep track of a topic when it is not an agent/subject, and specifically when it is the patient (or the like) of a transitive construction (which in its default role would be a direct object).[4] A simple example is the following from Upper Chehalis:

(13) a.  tit q'iyúts, hóy n ta ʔə́xtwali.
         'He called her and she saw the one who called.'
     b.  tit q'iyúts, hóy n ta ʔə́xtn.
         'He called her and she saw it.'
                 (Boas 1933:109)[7]

The second sentence has the usual transitive construction with third person object/transitive marker (-t-) and subject (-n) (imperfective aspect). The first[8] sentence ends, however, in -wali, which is used when the object of the second clause is the same entity as the subject of the first clause (with, of course, different subjects of the two clauses).[9] This is not quite enough, however, because the use of -wali is determined primarily by its discourse function, and that is to show when a *topic* has become the object (or, rather, patient). To complicate matters, the passive can also be used for roughly the same purpose in the Salishan languages that have topical objects. Yet another function of -wali, to be discussed in greater detail in the last section of the paper, is to allow a referent higher on an agent hierarchy (i.e. a human) to be used as object with a lower referent

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[4] I thank Ives Goddard for his persistant refusal to accept my comments about obviatives in Salish as pertaining to true obviation. He was, of course, right, and my usage was wrong; it has forced me to figure out what was actually going on in Salish. I was in good company, however; Boas 1929 referred to the comparable Sahaptin construction as obviative (although Jacobs 1931 was dubious and labelled it a "so-called" obviation distinction), and Edel 1939 used the term for the Tillamook suffix. Boas' usage has been used by (among others) Jacobsen 1983 and, most recently, by Thomason and Kaufman 1988 (although their usage does not necessarily imply agreement with the earlier analyses).
[7] These and the Tillamook examples later are retranscribed to agree with my usual usage for Columbian and the Tsamosan languages. The (b) sentence can also mean 'He called her and he saw her.'
[8] This is in the perfective aspect, and so does not match the b example exactly; the ending would be -t-wal-n in the imperfective, where the -t- is 'transitive'.
[9] Boas' own explanation, "when the object of an antecedent clause is the subject of the subsequent clause. . . .when the object of the subsequent clause is not the same as the subject of the antecedent clause, the wale form is not used" (Boas 1933:109), is misleading; coreference of the object of the first clause and the subject of the second is irrelevant and not necessary for the occurrence of -wali.

(i.e. a non-human) as subject.

Superficially these topical object constructions resemble passives, but they are quite different. Topical object constructions and passive constructions (may) differ at both the word and sentence level. Salishan passives are ordinarily created by suffixing a passive marker (usually -m, sometimes -t) to a transitive stem, i.e. immediately following the transitivizing suffix. The subject (patient) is indicated by a subject enclitic, which is often zero for third person. These forms are intransitive, and can be accompanied by no more than one lexical argument, which is the subject (patient). (Transitives too are usually accompanied by only one lexical argument, this time the object (patient), although there is no case-marking to distinguish subject and object roles; this is done solely by co-referentiality with person markers on the predicate.) Topical object constructions have the topical object suffix immediately following the transitivizing suffix, but in turn are followed by a subject suffix or clitic. In Lushootseed and Tillamook, and in the perfective aspect forms of Upper Chehalis and Cowlitz the third person transitive subject marker is again zero, so there is at this point no formal way to distinguish these constructions from passives. In the imperfective aspect of Upper Chehalis and Cowlitz, and in Columbian, however, all third person transitives do have a subject suffix (which would not be present in a passive). Since the only thing that ever occurs between a transitivizing suffix and a subject suffix is an object suffix, the topical object suffixes must also be object markers. There is also more freedom of occurrence of lexical arguments following topical objects; they may freely be either the agent (subject; see 46 below) or patient (object; see 45 below), or (at least in Upper Chehalis) both may be present under limited circumstances. This possibility may be limited to sentences in which the subject is a demonstrative, question word, or quantifier.

(14)  wi x°áq°u t stánwalinn tit sq°ayáyʔ.
         'And all pass the child.'
              [FB: BvrPG]

These facts, taken together, make it clear that topical object constructions are not merely a type of passive.

The topical object as a grammatical device does not appear to be widespread among American Indian languages; it does occur in at least six Salishan languages and in Sahaptin; I will suggest below that it (or something like it) also occurs in Keresan, at least two Caddoan languages, and in several Athabaskan languages. Because of this limited occurrence I will give a considerable number of examples, beginning with Salish.

### a. Columbian (Salish)

The use of topical objects in Columbian appears to be less complex than in other Salishan languages. Examples are rather easy to find, and occur in most narrative texts (I have few conversational texts, and have the impression that it is less likely to occur in them). Not all texts contain examples, and one speaker failed to use any in the three texts she recorded for me. This is probably idiosyncratic, since there should have been no dialect difference between her and some of the other speakers from whom I have texts. The inflection is not obligatory; a passive can be used in its stead, and as far as I can tell the distinction is primarily stylistic (I will give an example below where probably only the passive is possible). Examples I cite will be taken from texts. Sentences with topical objects can be elicited (note the example from Boas above), but only in carefully devised frames, and since they are discourse markers, their natural domain should be expected to be in continuous text.

My first examples are from a story told by Margaret Piatote about Chipmunk, his grandmother Snowshoe Hare, and Owl (the ogress). It is a very popular story among the Columbians, and I have three renditions of it from three different speakers. In Mrs. Piatote's telling, there are some 44 transitive predications, and some dozen of them use a topical object. There is not a single use of passive in this rendition. In the first scene of the story, Chipmunk has just found that the serviceberries are ripe, and runs back to tell his grandmother:[10]

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[10] The morphophonemics of this suffix in Columbian are as follows: the base form is -wá- when stressed; when unstressed, the vowel is deleted and the w becomes u because it is now between consonants. The transitive marker (-t-) is lost between n and s (third person subject), then (by a more general rule) the n is lost before s. Thus cúntus has both the n and the t while cús has lost them both. As before, I will generally omit the content of direct quotations, since these usually involve first and second

(15) ʔacwá··x qʷʔəc'w'áy'aʔ k'al' kkíy'aʔs lx.
'Chipmunk lived with his grandmother.'
k°aʔ qʷʔəc'w'áy'aʔ cnuʔnáw'lx
'And Chipmunk was running around'
ʔacyú··p'aʔ,
'playing,'
ʔa k°aʔ kkícs waʔ syáyaʔ
'and he found serviceberries'
t'íl' waʔ p'íʔq.
'already ripe.'
ʔíca ʔalná··w'lx;
'So he ran back;'
ʔalkíc ʔaʔu kkíy'aʔs,
'he got back to his grandmother,'
k°aʔ cús, "haʔám··, kn tqnúx°."
'and he says to her, "Oh, my! I'm hungry."'
k°aʔ cúntus, "stá··m'. . . ."
'And she says to him, "What is it?. . . ."'

Both 'says' are active voice, both have a third singular object followed by a third singular subject (gender is not a category in Columbian, and is not indicated in pronominal inflection in the Salishan languages where it is present). A topical object suffix is used in the last line because Chipmunk is still the topic. The next four exchanges are not introduced (that is, consist simply of the quotations and the comment that Chipmunk shook his head while saying "No!"), and the fourth implies a change of topic to the grandmother (and a new stanza begins here) because she begins to figure out what Chipmunk wants instead of just asking him. Her deduction is followed by:

(16) "ʔí· stám' waʔ max°.
'"What is it, I wonder?"
k°aʔ ʔáw
'Well'
t'íl' waʔ mət syáyaʔ sp'iʔqmíx."
'it must be serviceberries are getting ripe."'
tl'cí k°aʔ cús, ". . . ."
'So then and she says to him. ". . . ."'

Grandmother is now the topic, so cús is used, and she remains topic through this and the following stanza, in which she instructs Chipmunk about bringing the berries back so that they can pray over them (first fruits) before they eat them.

A little later, after Chipmunk has been making fun of Owl, she appears and is the topic for nearly two whole scenes (some 40 lines). In this section, there is a series of five transitive predicates with Owl as subject (she is mending [her shoes], she eats [children], she puts on [her shoes], she listens for him, she gets near him), followed by five with Chipmunk as subject and Owl marked with a topical object suffix. Twice we get cúntus when Chipmunk speaks to her, and finally this, at the end of this section with Owl as topic:

(17) ʔí klíq'naʔancú···t
'So she covered herself with dirt'
ʔaʔu k'am' waʔ snaʔúsmns ksk'°út.
'except only her eye on one side.'
k°aʔ ʔac'ác'xstus waʔ ʔaʔu qʷʔəc'w'áy'aʔ;
'And he was watching her, that Chipmunk;'
cmistwás,

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[10](cont'd) person pronouns, and are not involved with topic continuity.

'he knew [it].'
ʔac'ác'xstus,
'[because] he was watching her,'
lút yaʃtú kalíq'naʔancút.
'[that] she wasn't all covered with dirt.'

Here there are topical objects in three successive lines. The pattern continues throughout the story.

Most stories use both topical objects and passives. In a story told by Nellie Moses Friedlander (recorded by Leon Metcalf in 1953), Coyote is conducting the salmon upriver after having liberated them from a dam at Celilo. He leaves salmon in each tributary (Yakima River, Wenatchee River, Entiat River, Methow River, Okanogan River, Sanpoil River, Spokane River, and certain creeks) where the local people give him a beautiful girl as a wife; where they refuse him a wife (Chelan River, Nespelem River) he builds falls so no salmon can ascend that stream. In telling the story, Mrs. Friedlander got the streams out of order, and got all the way upstream to Nespelem Creek when she realized she had omitted the Chelan River some 40 or 50 miles downstream. In the following passage, she first uses a topical object on lús- 'refuse, turn down', then remembers she left out Chelan, and uses a passive of lús-.

(18) ʔacnóx°t smiyáw
'Wherever Coyote went'
k°aʔ waʔ lciʔáł ntitiyáx nʔílx.
'and from there (Chinook) salmon went upriver.'
tl'cí cnó···x°t k'l nspílm.
'From there he came to Nespelem.'
nspílm sk°ánt.
'Nespelem Falls.'
ʔá· lciʔáł ʔám'n' lústus waʔ ʔani. . . .
'Ah, from there he tried. . .they turned down that. . .'
ʔá lkʌ'ám'n ʔani cəl'án.
'Oh, I passed up that Chelan.'
l cəl'án lústm,
'At Chelan he was turned down,'
k°aʔ ʔíca lút l cəl'án taʔ ntitiyáx.
'and there at Chelan there are no salmon.'

Then she returns to Nespelem Falls, again using passive lústm; she uses the same passive forms twice more, in the only remaining topic switches in the narration. Because the topical object and passive are used here in identical circumstances, I assume that the difference is stylistic.

This is not to say the the use of the passive is entirely stylistic. A story of Coyote and Rock told by Mose Simon (see Kinkade 1978) begins with passives as follows:

(19) ʔani skínt xʌ'út ʔacxáq'stm na. . .
'Rock got paid by the Indians. . .'
k°aʔ húy stám'
'and then something'
k°aʔx yaʃtú skínt. . .
'and all the Indians. . .'
stám' xáq'ntm.
'he was paid something.'

No topic switch can be involved here since a topic has not really been introduced yet, although the people are topic in the subsequent clause. (There is also the possibility of ambiguity with these forms; the ending -tm can be either passive with a third person subject or active with a third person object and first plural subject. The latter usage would seem unlikely in this context, although it might be possible if the narrator included him among the Indians who paid Rock.) Later, when Rock is chasing Coyote for having foully desecrated him instead of paying him, the following sequence occurs (Coyote is topic).

(20) ʔí· ntərʹqpncút smiyáw.
'So Coyote took off running.'
kλʹílx xərʹxərʹúlʹəxº.
'He ran up a rough hill.'
cí ciʔáɫ xλʹút
'Up through there by Rock'
kxápntm̲,
'he was chased,'
húy kasxə́lqʹntm̲.
'and then was going to get clobbered.'
hú··y kºaʔ ʔáyəxºt tʹíʔ.
'And then and he got tired indeed.'
hàmpmncút smiyáw.
'Coyote dropped over.'
hú·y cmál' xλʹút
'And then, then Rock'
λʹóxt cí ciʔáɫ xλʹút.
'Rock ran fast up through there.'
húy kanakíckn'tm̲,
'And then he was going to be caught up with,'
ʔí· nakʹórm.
'so he swam.'

Voice is switched three times in this passage. Coyote is topic throughout; in the fourth, fifth, and tenth of these lines, however, Rock is the agent--he is going to chase Coyote, clobber him, and catch up with him. These switches are accomplished by using passives. A little later, Coyote takes refuge in a badger hole.

(21) náwʹlx.
'He ran.'
wíkɫc waʔ yəxºyxºútxn stxºúls.
'He saw Badger's house.'
lcí nqənmúlʹəxº.
'Right there he dove into the ground.'
nakíckn'tus waʔ xλʹút.
'That Rock caught up to him.'
kínt'pápntm̲.
'He blocked the entrance.'

Here again Coyote is topic throughout, and again Rock is subject of the last two lines. However, in the fourth line a topical object is used, while in the fifth there is a switch to passive (in spite of my translation). This again suggests that the difference is stylistic.

A final example from Columbian shows why some care must be taken with the -tm ending.

(22) ʔí· smiyá··w cút,
'So Coyote says,'
"hú··y tʹí··lʹ ʔayʹkºáṣt
"And then indeed tomorrow'
cíʔ kt ʔí··m'x yaʃʹyaʃʹtú.
'then we will all move.'
p'ə́λ'ntm ʔani tʹəxº stxºúlt,
'We'll dismantle our houses,'
kasʔím'xəxº."
'(we're) going to move."'

There is no topic switch here, but one form within Coyote's speech ends in what looks like a passive.

This, however, is an instance of the 'we-him' inflection. The distinction between the two inflections, as is usually the case, is kept clear through context.

**b. Upper Chehalis (Salish)**

Upper Chehalis appears to use topical objects (which appear as -wal- or -wali, with no vowel reduction) in a wider variety of constructions than does Columbian. An easy place to find examples in Columbian is in conversational interchanges beginning with 'X said to Y' then 'Y said to X'. Of over 120 examples of the topical object in Upper Chehalis, only 5 occur in such an interchange, and another five when another root pertaining to talking ('answer', 'ask', 'tell', 'talk to') is used, as in the following,[11] where Bluejay is speaking to his older sister, and he is topic:

(23) húy cútn t p'ayə́kʹº,
'And so Bluejay says,'
"xə́sti ʔukʹºa tit manó·mš."
"'Your children are indeed nice.'"
cúntwaln tac yáyn's,
'His sister says to him,'
"ʔanssawáctn."
"'They are your nephews.'"
[TLC: BJ]

Turns at talking in Upper Chehalis may more often indicate a change in topic, however (and regularly at least a new verse), and may use the same form of the word as the conversation moves back and forth. This form is very commonly the intransitive cútnaxn, and a subject is used with it to make clear who is talking. In "Daughters of Fire" (see Kinkade 1983), as Moon is fleeing Fire, he successively asks Rock, Lake, Wind, Creek, and Trail for help, and is turned down by all but the last. No topical objects are used for any of these exchanges (I cite only one or two lines at the relevant points, and omit the actual quotations and other material carrying the narrative forward):

(24) kºáxºmisn t spatáln.
'He comes to Rock.'
cútnaʔxn tit ʔáls šʔaɫ spatáln, "·····"
'The chief says to Rock, "·····"'
cútnaʔxn t spatáln, "·····"
'Rock says, "·····"'
kºáxºmisn t cál'ɫ.
'He comes to Lake.'
sáwlayn, "·····"
'He asks him, "·····"'
kºáxºmisn [t] sɫə́čiyq. ···
'He comes to Wind. ···'
cútnaʔxn [t] sɫə́čiyq, "·····"
'Wind says, "·····"'
kºáxºmisn t cá·pš.
'He comes to Creek.'
cútnaʔxn ɫ tit ʔicá·pš, "·····"
'He says to the Creeks, "·····"'

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[11]Upper Chehalis examples are taken from four sources: my own fieldnotes (where texts are from Silas Heck); Thomas Lee Collord 1959 (also obtained from Silas Heck); tape recordings made by Leon Metcalf in 1951-55 (where the one example I cite is from Murphy Secena); and transcriptions made by Franz Boas in 1927 (I cite one example by Blanche Pete [Dawson], two by Marion Davis, and all the rest from Jonas Secena). The specific text cited is coded in brackets after the example. To aid in understanding the examples, the following suffixes are relevant: -n '3d subject, imperfective'; Ø '3d subject, perfective'; -s or -ns '3d possessive' (ordinarily the subject in a subordinate construction); -iɫt(i) '3d plural subject, imperfective'.

cútna'xn [t] cá·pš, ".  .  .  ."
    'Creek says, ".  .  .  ."
k°áx°misn t šéw'ł.
    'He comes to little Trail.'
cútna'xn t łuk°áł, ".  .  .  ."
    'Moon says, ".  .  .  ."
cútna'xn tit šéw'ł, ".  .  .  ."
    'Trail says, ".  .  .  ."
            [FB: DF]

The only transitive forms here are 'ask' the several instances of 'come to'; an object of cútna'xn is indicated by using a preposition (š'ał or ł).

This is not to say that Upper Chehalis cannot use 'say' or 'tell' transitively in conversational exchanges. The next-to-last example above (16) is a partial instance (only one of the 'says' is transitive). More commonly, however, the passive seems to be preferred in these instances, as in the following from "Bluejay and His Sister" (Kinkade 1987):

(25) cúntn tac yá·yn's, ".  .  .  ."
    'He [Bluejay] tells his sister, ".  .  .  ."
húy n cúnstš, ".  .  .  ."
    'And so then he is told, ".  .  .  ."
húy cúnstš tanin ł tac yá·yn's, ".  .  .  ."
    'And so he is told now by his sister , ".  .  .  ."
            [MDK: BJS]

Later in the same story, a topical object is used on 'tell' immediately after a passive has been used. Just before these two lines, Bluejay has kicked away some skulls rolling about his feet.

(26) wi n 'it nk°s pǝk°łšitm ł tac yá·yn's,
    'And he was spoken roughly to by his sister,'
cúntwali, ".  .  .  ."
    'she told him, ".  .  .  ."
            [MDK: BJS]

The topical object is used most commonly simply to indicate the topic when it is in a patient role. A very simple example is the following:

(27) tiws xáwq'mitn t łǝq'ƛ'č
    'While Beaver talks [to her]'
'ítu qíns 'ík°twalinn tit sq°ayáył.
    'then the baby wants to go to him.'
            [FB: BvGrl]

In a more extended example, the ogre One-Leg kidnaps a girl and impregnates her in his own special way.

(28) cótnaxn tit q'ámaył, ".  .  .  ."
    'The girl thinks, ".  .  .  ."
'asúwalinn tanin tit pǝsa'.
    'The ogre takes her along now.'
t'útwalinn tit pǝsa' šał t xáłts.
    'The ogre brings her to his house.'
wé·naxiłti 'ał t xáłtsawmš.
    'They stay in their house.'
wi tit t'é·tč'iq wi nk°s cak°útwali tač t cúlis,
    'And One-Leg always makes love to her with his leg.'

'ǝyu tač t snawáysts cúlis.
    'only with the end (toes) of his foot.'
q'íc'x q'isyúsmswalis.
    'Thus he works on her.'
'ǝyu čá·'ła t sq'ítači
    'Just three days'
n nǝx°ƛ'acn.
    'and she is pregnant.'
míłta laws qǝxáłtq°x°
    'It is not many days'
n má·'mitn.
    'and she gives birth.'
xáx°
    'Quickly'
n mánstwalinn tit pǝsa
    'and the ogre makes in her a child'
tač t snawáyis t '6·'c's tu 'ał tit cúlis.
    'with the end of one of his legs.'
            [FB: WrldMd]

The girl is topic throughout this passage, but One-Leg becomes subject five times, calling for a topical object. When she is subject (or when they both are), no special marking is needed (although these instances are intransitive; a plural subject marker is used in one case, and in two others there can, after all, be no question about which of them is pregnant and gives birth).

The preceding examples may suggest that the new subject that occurs when a topic becomes patient must be the object of a preceding clause. That this is not the case is seen in the following example. X°ǝnéx°ǝne, the Coyote-like creator/trickster figure of the Upper Chehalis, has been repeatedly tricking Witch into giving him some of her camas, and when this passage begins, Witch is in focus.

(29) húy túl'alimitn čsa t k°cx°é.
    'And then Witch starts out again.'
k°x°áwn šał tit smániči.
    'She gets to the mountain.'
téxca t x°ǝnéx°ǝne.
    'There is X°ǝnéx°ǝne.'
'ac'á·maq'twali.
    'He is waiting for her.'
            [FB: X°ǝnéx°ǝne]

In spite of the fact that there is very heavy emphasis on the new subject, -wali shows that he is not yet topic. Neither focus nor left dislocation (which is, in effect, what has happened here) will accomplish this; there must be a discourse break.

Even heavier interference makes no difference. In the next passage, X°án (Silas Heck's rendition of X°ǝnéx°ǝne) is pretending to be a shaman in order to have sexual intercourse with a chief's daughter and to recover his penis which he had lost in a previous encounter. He is inside a mat house, and has called on his friends to make noise to hide the sound of his own activities.

(30) húy x°úq°itn tanin x°áq°u tit swǝq'íq',
    'And so now they are gathering, all the frogs,'
tit q'°ás,
    'the Crane,'
tit x°ǝq°tám tit xǝsxasáq t q'isíln',
    'everything that has an ugly voice for singing,'
cǝniáwmš ƛ'a sk°áwaqtwaln łúnaqts tat sǝxtk°lals.
    'they will join in the spirit song of the shaman.'

Even though 'all the frogs', 'the Crane', 'everything. . .', and an emphatic 'they' are all specified here, an earlier topic persists, namely x̌°ə́n, here specifically referred to as a shaman.

Another extended passage (again from "Daughters of Fire") has several intransitive forms occurring between and around instances of topical objects, with no confusion about what is topic, even though Moon is not always subject.

(31)  məy cə́k°wn šał tit šə́w'ł.
              'He just lay down on the Trail.'
  húy n yə́čaptwalinn tit sq'°ə́t'wn.
              'And so the Fire caught up with him.'
  lə́mstaqn p'ə́tlm'.
              'It blazed everywhere.'
  húy ʔaqa x̌°ə́lwn' t łuk°ə́ł.
              'And so now Moon sweated.'
  míłta lə́ws λ'ə́qłnł
              'It was not very long'
  ta čə́wanis,
              'he was lying down.'
  húy n tə́nwalinn t sq'°ə́t'wn.
              'and Fire went past him.'
  tə́x°l ʔit tə́nwali tit sq'°ə́t'wn,
              'Although the Fire went past him.'
  wi q'°ó·ʔcanin ł ʔə́tmn.
              'he almost died.'
  wə́k°sn t sq'°ə́t'wn.
              'Fire went on.'
  ʔúcx°mitn t łuk°ə́ł.
              'Moon stood up.'
              [FB: DF]

The third line could have Fire as subject, but is more likely an existential expression; in any case there can be no doubt that Moon is not subject. The last two lines are also intransitive; again no problems arise.

Another instance of such topic persistence, even with heavy emphasis on a new subject can be seen in the following, where Witch gets considerable emphasis in the second and third lines, is the subject of the fourth, and co-subject of the fifth.

(32)  wə́ksn tanin t łuk°ə́ł š ʔə́ctš.
              'Moon goes inside now.'
  sʔúlawštn t k°cx°ə́.
              'Witch cooks.'
  ʔał t sʔúlawšs t k°cx°ə́,
              'When Witch is cooking.'
  wi x̌ə́was nk°s šə́w'stwali.
              'and first she always plays with him.'
  lax°lax°ə́wiłti.
              'They laugh.'
  q'°ulínwatn tanin t łuk°ə́ł.
              'Moon becomes happy now.'
              [FB: x̌°ənə́x°əne]

The naming of Moon at the beginning of this section, the use of a topical object in the fourth line, and renaming him in the last line all make it clear that he is topic throughout.

Sometimes a topic may be present over a fairly long stretch of discourse, and new information has occurred so frequently or to such an extent that it is desirable to restate the topic. This is often done with an intransitive predicate (although this may not always mean a new topic). In the following, Moon (the transformer) is topic, although he has not been mentioned by name for a while:

(33)  cúntwalix ʔu tit q'ə́maył, ". . . . ."
           'The girl said to him, ". . . ."
  cútnaxn t łuk°ə́ł, ". . . . ."
           'Moon says (to her), ". . . ."
           [FB: x̌°ənə́x°əne]

(The -x here indicates 'definite'.) Moon is mentioned again, and can continue as topic.

Most of the time a subject will, in the nature of things, be human (or in texts at least an anthropomorphized animal or object). Occasionally, though, circumstances put a non-human entity into subject position. Upper Chehalis, however, does not allow a non-human subject to have a human object, and avoids it by using a topical object for the human object. (This point will be given further consideration below.) The following examples show how this works, although in both cases normal topic marking and subject switching occurs, so it is not obvious that any hierarchical constraints are being avoided.

(34)  húy ʔə́qa x̌ə́wqˈmitn šał t sq'°ə́lms, ". . . . ."
           'And so now he talks to his heart, ". . . ."
  k°ə́waqtwalinn t scaníyas sq'°ə́lms, ". . . . ."
           'His own heart answers him, ". . . ."
           [FB: x̌°ənə́x°əne]

(35)  "wi cic ʔacnə́wł wi tə́ysxmł.
           "And the old woman is blind.'
  wi lə́·ʔ tit q'istə́nwalis tit q'əyó·q'°.
           'And the cradle passes far from her.'
  wi ʔiλ'ə́q'° čł
           'And enough we'
  q'ał ʔacłíwx° tu ʔał tit q'əyó·q'°,
           'can have it pulled out of the cradle.'
  n q'ał t'a tə́nwalinn."
           'and then it can pass her."'
           [FB: x̌°ənə́x°əne]

In the first of these examples, 'heart' has become subject in the second line; in the second example 'cradle' has become subject in the second and fifth lines. The second example is the quoted utterance of one of the characters, showing a rather uncommon instance of a topical object used in direct speech. It is also unusual in that it has a third subject introduced--'we'--and a second patient/object that is not co-referential with anything else in this passage. The object of 'pulled' in line 4 is the baby the old woman is rocking, and which the speaker is in the process of kidnapping. At no time, however,is there any confusion about who is doing what or to whom. The old woman is topic throughout; when she is object, -wali is used. In the instance where the object is marked by -x°, it cannot refer to the old woman, or it would have to be -wali again, and the subject is not in doubt either; it is not the topic--the old woman--but 'we'.

The tracking of plural arguments is particularly interesting. Upper Chehalis has a large number of ways of indicating plurality, both in pronominal markers and in lexical arguments. Third person plural subject in imperfective aspect is marked with -iłt(i); this ending indicates a plural object after the topical object suffix. In perfective aspect an enclitic awmš (also occurring sometimes as yawmš or yamš) indicates third plural intransitive subject, transitive object, or possessor. As possessor in a dependent (nominalized) construction, it can refer again to an intransitive subject or a transitive object, and, rarely, a transitive subject. Besides these inflections, plurality of subject or object may also remain unmarked when the plurality is clear from the context. The use of topical objects often helps to eliminate the confusion that might appear to be

present because of this multiplicity of functions of these plural markers.

Bee and Ant are the topic in the following passage (and the referent of 'they') from a story of a contest to determine the length of days and nights (see Kinkade 1984a).

(36)  n k°áx°misiɬt tit sčátx°n' šaɬ t xáɬts.
    'And they reached Bear at his house.'
    k°áx°misiɬt tit sčátx°n' ʔaɬ t ʔó·c's sq'ítači.
    'And they reached Bear one day.'
    sʔáxtwalis yamš tit sčátx°n',
    'Bear saw them.'
    n ta-láx°lax°awn.
    'and he laughed.'
        [FB: B&B]

The topical object in line 3 refers back to Bee and Ant, and the plural suffix also refers to them. An oddity here is that the following line refers to Bear, yet Bear is not explicitly stated as the subject, and would not be topic at this point. It may be that 'Bear' in the preceding line is *taken* as the subject of 'laugh', however, since 'he saw them' is dependent, and cannot be the main predicate of this sequence.

The next passage involves plural subjects and objects. Again topical objects keep everything straight.

(37)  wi sʔáxts awmš ʔu t qáxɬ sšam'álax°
    'And they see many people,'
    ɬ t q'ačá· t sné·qmas tač sqáxtns tit tax°ásns awmš,
    'so many little black spots from the number of their enemies,'
    wi scúytwalis ʔu awmš.
    'and they come after them.'
    ʔík°atiɬti ʔu yáčmš,
    'They come near to them.'
    ʔɬɬapitiɬti.
    'they shoot them.'
    wi st'úwn . . . .
    'They come . . . .'
    wi t'a syəc'áwn š ɬáλ'pm' t núk°.
    'The others go back down.'
    wé·naxiɬti šán'x ɬ t λ'áqɬnɬ.
    'They stay there a long time.'
    wi ʔaɬ t pé·tq°ix°u,
    'And in the morning,'
    ʔítu cítwaliɬti tanin tit tax°ásns awmš.
    'then their enemies attack them.'
        [FB: Snwbrd]

The subject 'they' of the first line is topic throughout the passage. The second line refers back to 'people' in the first line, with a plural marker on 'enemies'. The third line has 'enemies' as subject, the original 'they' as topical object. The subject of the fourth and fifth lines reverts to the original 'they'. Line 6 begins a new verse, and still has 'they' as subject (and topic), but no plural marker is used. Line 7 specifies a different subject (the enemies), and again has no plural inflection. Line 8, without overt subject specification, reverts to the original 'they' as subject, and line 10 again has 'enemies' as subject and 'they' as topical object. First appearances of ambiguity as to which group is subject in which lines disappear by paying attention to the role of the topical object.

Another case where awmš occurs in successive lines referring to the same topic, yet must be subject in one and object in the next, is the following.

(38)  λ'a t sxáɬčm t ʔílamš,

    'The people will have houses,'
    wi ɬ t wák°sn t sλ'á·xanmitn,
    'and they will go hunting,'
    wi ɬ t q'alám awmš λ'apayámc ɬ t λ'óšλ'š.
    'and they will camp under the trees.'
    míɬta t wá· tuɬ ʔupáwalis awmš.
    'No one will eat them.'
        [FB: X°ənéx°əne]

No plurality is indicated until the third line, and its continuance in line 4 leaves no doubt that the topic is still 'people', although 'it' is object. (The dependent form of 'eat them' is obligatory after a negative.)

Even in the following case plurality used with a topical object carries the topic through.

(39)  wi sʔíɬniɬti ča cic q°cx°é.
    'And they eat with Witch.'
    wi cáni cic q°cx°é wi ʔáy t sxáwqᵐnstwalis awmš.
    'And she, Witch, talks to them kindly.'
    winn t'a ʔáy t sʔíɬnstwalis awmš.
    'She feeds them well.'
        [FB: X&Crn]

The second line here has very heavy emphasis on Witch. Normal word order would have the subject after the main predicate, yet here there is not only left dislocation of the subject, but a pleonastic emphatic pronoun as well. Even all this does not suffice, however, to make Witch topic, as made clear by the topical object in this and the following lines.

The use of topical objects is very useful in dependent clauses of various sorts. These constructions obviate the use of some of the types of constructions found in English, and which are translated most naturally into just these English constructions--things such as infinitive clauses or relative clauses. Some may simply equal English subordinate clauses, as in the following, where Rabbit is the topic and the subject of the second line.

(40)  táx°l pása q'aɬ qins yucáwali,
    'even if the monster wants to kill him,'
    wi ɬ t x°álx°.
    'he will overcome him.'
        [FB: Rb&Cg]

The conjunction here can be translated either 'even if' or 'although' (and may be a predicate rather than a conjunction). The following two sentences both use topical objects in clauses that are most naturally translated into English using infinitival clauses. The Upper Chehalis constructions are very different, however.

(41)  stálaqapitn tac yá·yn's
    'He calls to his sister'
    λ'a swins ʔit mátwali.
    'to come fetch him.'
    ʔitu č'ísn tat wíɬ,
    'Then the canoe comes,'
    ʔacč'óc'ɬ t nuɬtámš.
    'a person is inside.'
        [MDK: BJS]

(42)  c'áwak'n.
    'He yawns.'
    ʔax°áwn tan ʔaqa tit mák°at
    'Now ghosts are running'

xaɬ sʔáwmtwalns.
'to come after him.'
[FB: BJ,LD]

In the first case, the object from line 1 is not repeated as subject of line 2 (except as a zero subject), although it plays that role there. The first two words in line 2 are literally 'future its-being'; this future particle requires a dependent predicate after it ('its-being'), but then what follows is again independent ('she fetched him'). Subordination is accomplished very differently in the second example. The first word in line 3 is a preposition 'to', and the second word is then a nominalization that serves as object of the preposition. The next example is similar (Moon is topic).

(43) ƛ'álstwn t čá·
'He looks for where'
ƛ'a sq'alóms.
'he will camp.'
míɬta ix°u t sk°ás.
'It is not yet night.'
ƛ'álstwn t q'ámayɬ tuɬ saʔúl'awštwali.
'He looks for a girl who will prepare food for him.'
t'úq°itn t ʔó·c's tuɬ talíčtwalis.
'He finds one who will help him.'
[FB: X°ənéx°əne]

Again the form with a topical object in line 4 is introduced by a preposition, this time one meaning 'for, to', and a translation with 'to' rather than 'who will' would be perfectly reasonable. The relative clause in English is quite natural, however. In other cases such as the following, the only option to a relative clause in the translation is to make new and independent sentences; in a way, that would be closer to the original, since Upper Chehalis uses independent predicates in both instances.

(44) wáylčmisn čsa t k'°úys
'She drops her mother again'
šaɬ ƛ'a sk°anátux°ts tit xásɩt'mš
'to get the bad ones'
ʔacʔik°taqtwali ɬ ta máns.
'who stole her child.'
[FB: X°ənéx°əne]

(45) "wi čən ɬ t túnn čɬ t ʔíwat
"And I guess we'll send somebody'
t q'aɬ k°anátwalinn tit ʔaʔímc."
'who can get your grandchild.'"
[FB: X°ənéx°əne]

In the first of these passages, the topical object in line 3 refers to 'she' (meaning 'stole from her'), and the subject of the line is the object of the preceding line. The second example, from a little later in the same story, is all direct speech. Within this quotation, 'somebody' is subject of the second clause, while the topical object refers to 'grandchild', the recovery of whom is what this whole part of the narrative is about; the preceding subject ('we') has no role in the second line at all. This example also illustrates the use of a lexical argument coreferential with the topical object in the same clause. Most commonly, Salishan languages allow only one lexical argument as a direct adjunct in a clause; in an intransitive clause this will be the subject, in a transitive clause it will be object. With a topical object suffix, however, the lexical argument may be either subject or object, but is more commonly subject, as can be seen in several of the example sentences given here. A final example of translation with relative clause is the following, where a young woman is topic.

(46) húy ʔit k'°pyálcn
'And so she really understands'

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ɬ t k'°ápɬ titxt'ís tit stáltalaqptwalns t cmálqin.
'really what Mink is shouting at her.'
[FB: Mink]

The topical object here occurs within another nominalization, 'the his-shouting-at-her', the subject of which is the following 'a Mink'; the whole clause is in apposition to the preceding titxt'ís 'this'.

Earlier it was observed that topical objects in Upper Chehalis function somewhat differently from Columbian. They are often used in Columbian where other Salishan languages use passives, especially when turns at speaking are specified. It was also observed that Upper Chehalis can use topical objects this way, but usually does not. Like Columbian, Upper Chehalis can use a passive for apparently stylistic reasons where a topical object would seem as appropriate.

(47) cóʔtn, . . . .
'He thinks, . . . .'
náx°ɩuʔ ʔituʔ téxmsvali tit pása?.
'Indeed then the monster was right on him.'
k°anátwaln
'He takes him'
cu ʔasúwali.
'so as to take him along.'
š ƛ'uk'°élš k°áx°tustš.
'He is taken uphill.'
[FB: SBr]

The topic here is Bobcat, who is being pursued by an ogre. Lines 2, 3, and 4 refer to him with a topical object, while line 5, which could do the same, uses a passive (-stš 'imperfective passive') instead. In other cases, the passive serves to downshift a non-topical subject into an oblique position, while keeping the topic of the passage marked by usual means. This downshifting may also be stylistic, of course, but occurs in places in which a topical object cannot be employed.

(48) ʔacwé·x t pása.
'There is a monster.'
nk°s k°acílitm ɬ t sq°ácxa.
'He is called Lark.'
wi titxt'ís sq°ácxa,
'And that Lark.'
wi míɬta t wá· q'aɬ ʔáxtwalis
'and no one can see him'
qas húy pása.
'because he is indeed a monster.'
[FB: X°ənéx°əne]

The topic here is 'monster', and is referred to with a topical object in line 4. Yet in line 2 a passive (-t-m 'perfective passive') is used, and his name ('Lark') is the oblique agent.

(49) wi míɬta ta spúts awmš pənčá·
'And they don't know when'
n ta k°x°áwn šin'x tit pása.
'the monster was coming there.'
míɬta ta spútitt tám
'It wasn't known what'
ta witwali smá·n'm.
'he was born from.'
[FB: WrldMd]

Line 3 is passive (-tt 'dependent passive') because the subject is indefinite. The topic in the last two lines

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is 'monster', but the subject of both is 'what'. The last line is not passive, in spite of the translation; **wítwali** is a transitive (probably causativized, but this is concealed because two successive w's collapse to one) form of **wi**, the copula, meaning 'do, become, make'. A literal translation of the line would be something like 'it did to him birth'.

A final example of the topical object in Upper Chehalis follows to show how it can aid in understanding and translating material that is not quite what it seems.

(50) sá°tilti t °éy šawás.
　　　　'They make a good door.'
　　wínn tan mílta tám t qá·° q'al cáx°twalis.
　　　　'Then no water can go through.'
　　wi °acílals
　　　　'And inside'
　　wi °acc'úq°°al λ'ášλ'š l t xíwicš.
　　　　'and strong sticks are standing.'
　　míltanin t tám q'al yáx°twalis.
　　　　'Nothing can shake them.'
　　táx°l tanin sxawúcinmitn,
　　　　'Even when it is a gale.'
　　wi mílta q'al stx°cáx°s c słáčiq š °acílals.
　　　　'and the wind cannot go through to the inside.'
　　　　　　[FB: X°əné°əne]

There are two topical objects here. The second clearly refers to the strong sticks, and it is reasonable to assume that 'sticks' has become topic in line 4, where it is subject. The first topical object is deceiving, however. To what does it refer? Logically one would expect 'door' to be its antecedent, but the grammar indicates otherwise. The topic of what precedes is 'they', and 'door' has just been mentioned for the first time in line 1. It cannot, therefore be topic, since a topic is not introduced as a direct object. So the topical object must refer to 'they'. This means, then, that the second line means 'no water can go through *onto them*', not 'no water can go through [the door]'.

### c. Cowlitz (Salish)

The examples given to this point from Columbian and Upper Chehalis give extensive, and probably adequate, illustration of the use of topical objects. In fact, they only occur in a few other Salishan languages, and as far as it is possible to tell at this time, their use in these other languages is pretty much the same as in Upper Chehalis or Columbian. The reason that it is not possible to say much more is that the remaining languages that use topical objects are poorly documented, and so few texts exist from them that examples are scarce. Texts are important for examining topical objects, because that is where they show up best; it is not easy to elicit them directly.

The only texts in Cowlitz are a very few pages of ethnographic materials and reminiscences that I was able to collect from Lucy James and her sister Emma Mesplie in 1967. Their quality is somewhat questionable since neither woman had used the language much for many years, and they are interlarded with English words. I did not get them checked carefully, and do not have good translations of them. Nevertheless, I do find three uses of topical objects. In one case, Mrs. James was talking about her family when she was a child, and used the following sentence:

(51) °awəl °íwat cilxmtáni nks c'ól t'úlxstwalilt t stiqíw.
　　　'Or someone, their children, always bring him a horse.'

(I do not know what c'ól is; it is possibly a false beginning for the following word.) The referent of -wal here is clearly 'him', which refers to Mrs. James' father. He was not actually mentioned just before this sentence, and was not the ongoing topic. Nevertheless, she seems to have changed topics at this point, and does mention him immediately after this sentence. The grammar of the sentence is completely in accord with what I have said earlier about Upper Chehalis, except that the word order is a little unusual.

The other two instances are from another reminiscence by Mrs. James, this time about a sick man whom regular doctors were unable to heal, but who was cured by an Indian doctor. The material around the first occurrence is not clear to me (although I see nothing odd about the use of the topical object), and the second follows about three clauses later:

(52) tat pástn táktə mílta t ql-stal'íčtwals.
　　　　'The American doctor could not help him.'

The topic here is the sick man, who was believed to be dying. In the preceding clause, he had been taken to a hospital "here in Yakima". Again the use of the topical object is fully in accord with Upper Chehalis usage (which is not surprising, since the two languages are very similar). Note here the Chinook Jargon word for 'American' and the adoption of the English word 'doctor'.

Besides these few instances of the topical object in Cowlitz I was able to elicit a number of examples of the other use of the same suffix in situations where an agent hierarchy (found also in Upper Chehalis) requires it rather than the regular third person object inflection. This construction will be treated further below.

### d. Quinault (Salish)

There are, to my knowledge, only five texts recorded in Quinault,[11] two written down in 1897 by Livingston Farrand (translations of these texts and several others in English were published in Farrand 1902), and three tape recorded and transcribed by James A. Gibson in 1963. This is not much material to work with, yet I was able to find four certain instances of topical objects, two in one of Farrand's texts and two in one of Gibson's. Neither of the sources is transcribed in such a way that I can convert more than a few words to a phonemic transcription; Farrand's transcription appears to be reasonably accurate, but is not thoroughly glossed, and Gibson's transcription, which is narrowly phonetic, is totally unglossed and untranslated for the relevant text. All four instances of topical objects are conversation interchanges, and use the same form, cúntuli(s) 'he/she said to him'. One example comes from Gibson's transcription of the story of Bluejay's trip to the land of the dead to visit his sister.

(53) g°it °aw °it cút w'ásw'as . . . .
　　　　'Bluejay said, . . . .'
　　g°it °aw °it cúntulis júy . . . .
　　　　'Yuy [Bluejay's sister] said to him, . . . .'

The suffix -uli is unquestionably the same as Upper Chehalis -wali; the final -s is probably a possessive suffix. The use of the topical object suffix in Quinault is clearly comparable with its use in the other languages discussed here.

### e. Tillamook (Salish)

A topical object suffix also occurs in Tillamook, a separate branch of Salish, and is well documented there. Edel 1939 gives 17 examples of the topical object suffix in Tillamook; unfortunately only eight of these are in context, and then usually with most of the context in English. Two of her examples do give both the introducing clause (with the topic marked only by a pronoun) and the clause with the topical object (morpheme divisions are Edel's).

(54) ała í.yu c-yá·w-in
　　　　'Then again she said it.'
　　c-yaw-itáq.l
　　　　'He said to her.'

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[11] I assume that the one other Tsamosan language, Lower Chehalis, also had the topical object inflection. Unfortunately, no examples are available. I know of one short text (or partial text) written down in the nineteenth century by Myron Eells and subsequently corrected by Franz Boas, and one text by Nellie Walker tape recorded in 1952 by Leon Metcalf (but never transcribed). There are no examples of topical object in the Eells-Boas text, and two careful listenings to the Walker recording reveal none, although I could easily have missed one.

(55) da s-č'ak
       'He stopped.'
    k s-tiwat-s da čhšís-gəl
       'His people saw him.'
          (Edel 1939:36)

The suffix has two forms in Tillamook, -gəl and -əgl. Since g is the regular Tillamook reflex of Proto-Salish w, this is clearly the same form as Upper Chehalis -wali.

    Edel was somewhat uncertain about this suffix. She says, "-gəl may be a non-pronominal ending" (Edel 1939:35), although she did recognize that both subject and object had to be third person when it occurs. She says further (1939:35),

    "Lack of subtle distinctions in the translation make a thorough analysis of the meaning of -təql impossible, for in virtually all cases where forms with the regular third person pronoun endings were used alternatively with the forms in -təql, the translations were identical. . . .The best hypothesis which has been offered to explain this form is that it is what we might term an 'obviative' (like *eius* in Latin). In the texts it appears often when a new subject is introduced and the previous subject becomes the object. This form does not occur in every such context. Since there is no fixed subject or object position for the appositional nouns, the -təql helps avoid ambiguity. It is often used when the subject is surprising, as when the tables are turned and the pursued captures the pursuer."

    Texts were collected in Tillamook by three different people; examples of topical objects can be found in all three sources, even though none of the three was able to record very many texts. Franz Boas collected texts from four speakers, representing three original communities (Nehalem, Tillamook, and Siletz; the speech of the first two appears to be nearly identical, and Siletz clearly was not very distinct; Boas 1890). May Edel collected her material in 1931 from a Nehalem woman (Edel 1939); the text she published was checked and re-elicited by Laurence and Terry Thompson in 1966. Melville Jacobs was asked by Boas to try and get some additional Tillamook data for Edel; he did this in 1933, from a speaker from the Garibaldi area.

    Most occurrences of topical objects in Tillamook conform to patterns already seen above in Upper Chehalis. There are a few different usages, however, although these do not appear to represent major functions or anything not understandable within the framework given so far. The first textual example is a straightforward type of conversational interchange. This passage is taken from a text about Gatch'elaw obtained originally by Edel from Clara Pearson in 1931,[13] and re-elicited and retranscribed by Larry and Terry Thompson from Minnie Scovell in 1966.[14]

(56) c/yáwin,
       She said,
    ʔəw /tk'ᵒ-ə́n-ə.
       "Put it back!
    (x)čés ki /ic-əw n●/ʔə́n-š c/ʔécx°əy?
       Why did you bring back that dead person?"

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[13] This passage is not taken from the part of the text printed in Edel 1939, although half a dozen instances of the topical object do occur there.

[14] My transcriptions of Tillamook follow those of the Thompsons, and were carefully checked by Terry Thompson. A virgule in the transcription marks the beginning of the root of that word, and a bullet indicates reduplication. Early Tillamook materials are extremely difficult to use, and the Thompsons were never able to check large amounts of this early material. For this reason, many of my transcriptions are unavoidably uncertain. Errors that remain in these retranscriptions are my own. Except for the Thompson retranscription, I have also modified translations to agree better with the original syntax; in no case does this affect the meaning.

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c/yáwin,
       He said,
/ʔənkíʔ c/yawìn-š,
       "You told me,
gᵒu /nəʔ-ə́n-š kᵒ /sisín wał h(ə)ʔə́y.
       You go get on old person--it will be all right."
c/yawi-t-ə́gᵒəl gᵒu de /cł-əwín-ə.
       She told him to take it back.

The first two occurrences of 'said' do not reflect any topic change because they are intransitive forms, as is the 'say' within the second quotation in line 5. The same root at the beginning of line 7 is transitive, however, and uses a topical object to indicate that the reference is to the immediately preceding speaker.

    Another straightforward example comes from one of the texts collected by Jacobs. His informant was Ellen Center, and the story is labelled by Jacobs "Created person series".

(57) da c/ʔəhə-nə́xᵒ jic /čəgᵒə́š ʔi diš /tén /t'iyə́lhu(ʔ).
       He caught his wife and the big man.
    da c/gᵒə́ʔ(ə)š-t-xᵒ dəč /t'iyə́lhu(ʔ),
       He killed the man,
    ʔi /yuq- é(w)-wən.
       and he died.
    dəł wa c/kᵒən-én jic /čəgᵒə́š-s.
       He took back his wife.
    š jic /čəgᵒə́š-s łe c/ʔəhə-wi(n)-t-ə́gᵒl txᵒəł ən s/tiwát-s.
       And his wife took him along to her people.

The husband is topic throughout this passage, although he is not subject all the time. In line 3, the "big man" who is killed is subject, and this line appears to be closely connected with the one that precedes it. In the last line, the wife is subject, but the topical object suffix on the predicate shows that she has not become topic.

    In another of the texts Jacobs collected, this one entitled "The boy who looked like a snake", two interesting topical objects occur. The first is near the beginning of the story, when the snake is introduced.

(58) jəlc s/witéc ła c/yəhís-u /niš-/nəʔ=éłeł.
       The woman looked up at the smoke hole.
    ʔu·· da /wác'iʔ.
       Oh! A snake!
    da /qayet-wi(n)-t-ə́gᵒl.
       He crawled down on her.

It is not clear here whether the second line is intended to be an exclamation by the woman or by the narrator. In any case, it does not introduce a new topic, since the topical object suffix in the next line clearly refers back to the woman of line 1. At the very end of this story, the following three lines occur.

(59) ła wa s-nə́●/n(i)š jik di●/t'iyə́lhu(ʔ)
       The men reached home
    ła wa de š-ł●/yíł-n-n jəlc s/witéc.
       and they found the woman.
    q'it c/ya-/čəgᵒə́š-əs-qᵒəl diš s/nə́xᵒs-u.
       Then the eldest one married her.

Throughout this passage, the overriding topic has been the woman, although her topicality was suspended in favor of the men in the first two of these lines. She is retopicalized in the second line, and then referred to by the topical object in the third line when the "eldest one" becomes subject.

Another of the texts collected by Jacobs is called simply "Ahaqs" (after the protagonist). The passages presented here pertain to Ahaqs' efforts to assign headgear appropriate to each animal (Jacobs translates this headgear as "crown").

(60) /ʔahaqs c/yáwin,
    Ahaqs said,
/haʔśy-š.
    "You there!
qeʔ-/ʔśy qe /ɬəq-niʔ-is ʔa c/ʔačətáx° .
    That crown isn't becoming to you.
x°i dič dəl●/t'əl=éstu ʔa /ɬəq-n-śqˀl .
    It only fits that elk."

Here Ahaqs is speaking to Grizzly, who would thus seem to be topic. However, the topical object suffix clearly does not refer to Grizzly, but rather to Elk, who is introduced here is a foregrounded reference in line 3. This is not the way topics are usually introduced, and so I would consider this usage somewhat unusual. Further on in the same episode, Grizzly is more clearly topic.

(61) dič /síyu ɬa wa n-/tək'°i=qśn=win /cəníɬ /ʔačətáx°-s.
    Grizzly put back on his head his own crown.
diš /síyu /wətáhəɬ jik s/tiwát nax°●/nax°=ayeša-wi(n)-t-śqˀl .
    All the people are afraid of Grizzly.

This topical object clearly refers back to Grizzly, who is not only subject of both sentences, but has been foregrounded in both.

As a final example of the topical object in Tillamook, I quote the following passage from a partial text in the Boas corpus. This text is of interest for a number of reasons, the main one of which is that it was an effort by Boas to get the same material in two dialects of the language. Boas' transcription consists of two parallel lines, the first of which is Nehalem dialect, and the second Tillamook proper. I cite only the first here. For present purposes, the passage is also of interest because of the complex topic switching that occurs. It is kept straight both by the use of passives (as in line 6, marked by the -u after transitive -t-) and a topical object--straight, that is, for the Tillamook speaker, because it is not entirely clear through the word by word translation provided by Boas. A final point of interest is the presence in this sequence of a reciprocal suffix in line 4. As Edel points out (1939:35), the reciprocal and the topical object are identical in form; in fact, she treats them as the same suffix.

(62) ɬa wa s/cíy k s/tíwat də /q'iləʔ=úcin.
    The people returned from Yaquina (Newport).
q'it s/čəlj-íl-u kɬ /načigálču.
    Then they ran to the Siletz tribe.
c-ya-/t'əʔ=śqs.
    They caught seals.
q'it cśʔəy ɬə c-han-s/hʔəha-t-ágˀəl.
    Then there they fought together.
han-s-yi●/yág-u t /higí s/tíwat.
    They catch a man by the hair.
da c/gˀəʔśš-t-u.
    He is killed.
q'it da wa-c/ʔəhə-il-u ɬa č s/tíwat.
    Then they take that man along.
q'it čəl●/čalj-íl-u ɬa k s/tíwat.
    Then the people run after him.
čəl●/čalj-íqˀəl k s/ʔaláč'=uš.
    The Nehalem run after them.
čəl●/čalj-íl-u kɬ /načigálču.
    They pursue the Siletz.

It is a little confusing here who is pursued and who is pursuing. Given the order of events, and the assumption that Tillamook is like Upper Chehalis in using a lexical argument as a subject of a transitive predication that has a topical object, it seems most likely that the Nehalem are the subject of the next to the last line, and continue as subject of the following line (although if this next predicate has a middle voice suffix, it would be intransitive, and the Siletz would have to be subject). Indeed, the Siletz clearly become topic (and subject) in the first line following this passage, and then are kept as topic by passivization in the subsequent line. To whom does the topical object refer then? To the Siletz, who are referred to in the line preceding the occurrence of the topical object as "the people" (although these are not the same people designated in the first line of this passage). That this has become topic makes sense because the use of "then" at the beginning of this line suggests that a new verse may begin here. Up to this point the Nehalem ("the people" of line 1) are the topic. In line 6, "man" may be a temporary topic, as suggested by the passive inflection. It may be that in Tillamook passive can be used to designate a temporary topic this way, or is designating a secondary topic. This same man is treated in a similar way in the lines following the passage given in 55 while the Siletz are topic:

(63) da /s(i)q'=agás-u kɬ /načigálču cśʔəy.
    The Siletz go across there.
da ɬ /ʔhə-win-əhá-t-u.
    They are not caught.
da s/ƛ'əʔ-át-u ɬa ʔač s/tíwat.
    That man is looked for.
c da /yiɬ-ít-u.
    He is found.
da c/gˀəʔśš-t-u.
    He is killed.
q'it da cu ʔ●/nśʔ-ən (ɬa) ɬa č s/tíwat-agás.
    Then their folks go to get him.
da wa c/ʔəhś-wi(n)-t-u ɬa č s/tíwat.
    The man is taken along.

Again after being introduced as object in line 3 (of 56), "man" is temporary topic by passivization in lines 4, 5, and 7. Throughout 55 and 56, however, it is the Nehalem and the Siletz who are of primary importance. If this is the correct analysis, this use of a topical object suffix for a primary topic and the use of passivization for a secondary topic within a passage dominated by a primary topic may be unique to Tillamook; it does not seem to be the way these inflections are used in Upper Chehalis.

**f. Lushootseed (Salish)[15]**

Few instances of topical objects have been found to date in Lushootseed, and they are the only occurrences reported for any of the large Central Salish branch of the family. This usage is apparently residual in Lushootseed, and no longer used by any living speaker. The six examples noted are all in recordings of Susan Sampson Peter (then in her mid-eighties) made by Leon Metcalf between 1950 and 1955. Other speakers recognize and accept this usage, but do not use it themselves.

In general the Lushootseed examples suggest that the norm for use of the topical object suffix -əgˀi there is just as in the other languages--to indicate that an argument is still topic even though it has become a patient rather than an agent.

(64) t'əl'qayd tiʔəʔ qəlx ʔal tsiʔəʔ yiyəq'ˀus
    'He soaked these salmon eggs in a small basket
  stabigˀstəqˀi ʔə tsiʔiɬ kiaʔs.
    'which his grandmother had set aside for him.'

(65) diʔucidəxˀ tiʔiɬ gˀiləšəʔ kˀisʔaʔs.

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'Across the water is where G°iləšə⁷ is.                                    28
⁷aləx° ti⁷iłə bədəx°uyayustəq°id.
     'That is where they have him working.'

In a longer passage, Bobcat is topic and is subject until his child is introduced.

(66) di⁷ł k°i sk°ədá⁷əti ⁷ə ti⁷ə⁷ p'əč'əb ti⁷ə⁷ sqq'°us ʎ'əsəsłag°ids.
     'All of a sudden Bobcat took a small canoe mat for his sleeping mat.'
⁷al[d] k°ədi⁷ ⁷ajalus ʎ'ədəx°əsg°ədils, papčawils.
     'He put it in a beautiful place to sit on, to loll about on.'
⁷əsk°ədad ti⁷ə⁷ sqəlik°s, p'əč'əbulic'a⁷s
     'He had taken his blanket, his bobcat blanket.'
g°əl ləg°ədil ⁷əx°čag°us.
     'And he sat facing the water.'
di⁷ł k°i (s)šudəq°i⁷ ⁷ə ti⁷ə⁷ č'ač'as.
     'All of a sudden the child saw him.'
"diłəx° bayə⁷.
     '"That's Daddy.'
diłəx° bayə⁷."
     'That's Daddy."'
dił ti p'əč'əb ti ⁷ucut(t)əb ⁷ə ti⁷ə⁷ sqaqag°əł.
     'It was Bobcat whom this noble child spoke of.'

The last line of this passage again has the child as agent, but this time the topicality of Bobcat is main-
tained by passivization (-əb) and making him subject.

     Mrs. Peter used topical objects in conversation as well as in folktales, as in the second example
above, and in the following where the topic is formally ti⁷ə⁷ di⁷ə⁷ 'this' and refers specifically to the
tape recorder that Mr. Metcalf was using to enable Lushootseed elders to send messages to friends.

(67) ʎ'al' b(ə)as⁷istə⁷ ti⁷ə⁷ di⁷ə⁷
     'This is also like that.'
tux°əx° ti⁷ił dsluucbicid k°i cəx°(h)iiłbicid.
     'It's just that I've listened to you is the reason I am happy about you.'
⁷u· matał cick'° čəd ⁷uhiił dx°⁷al dəg°i ⁷a k°i dsəsluucid.
     'Oh Martha, I am so happy about hearing you.'
⁷al słčiltəq°i ⁷ə ti⁷ə⁷ Leon Metcalf ti⁷ə⁷ ʎ'əsug°adg°əd čəł,
sux°udx°udčəł.
     'When Leon Metcalf arrived with what we use for talking.'

Note here also the intermingling of direct address (using 'I' and 'you') while talking about the tape re-
corder.

     Again the suffix is cognate with the Upper Chehalis form with a regular shift of w to g°; the
loss of al is not expected, particularly since it is retained in the Lushootseed reciprocal suffix -ag°əl.
Reshaping of both suffixes may have occurred to make them more distinct, unlike Tillamook where they are
indistinguishable.

**g. History of the topical object in Salish**

     Where does the topical object suffix come from? It must be a very old suffix in Salish, and should be reconstructed
for the whole language, since it occurs in three branches of the family, and in members of those branches that are geo-
graphically separated from other languages with the suffix. That is, Columbian is an Interior Salishan language of eastern
Washington, the four Tsamosan languages are in southwestern Washington (with Lushootseed and the Cascade Mountains
on the one hand and unrelated Sahaptin on the other separating them from Columbian), and Tillamook is beyond
Chinookan languages on the Oregon coast. Based on the forms cited earlier, the most likely Proto-Salishan reconstruction
would be *-wali.

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There are complications, however. Edel was unable to distinguish the Tillamook topical object suffix
from a reciprocal, and assumed that the reciprocal usage was just an extension of its regular use (Edel
1939:35). In Upper Chehalis, the reciprocal is -wal- in imperfective aspect and -uš in perfective aspect.
Cowlitz has variously -(a)wal-, -awl(l)-, or -(a)wlx, sometimes with glottalization of one of the
resonants. Quinault has -tulalx° (Modrow 1971). In Columbian there are two reciprocal suffixes, -wax°
and -wap 1x.

     The fact that all three branches of the family show phonological similarity between the two suffixes
cannot be accidental, and the similarities suggest that the topical object is somehow derived from the recip-
rocal. If so, it is difficult to make a semantic connection that would result in this derivation. However,
when put this way, the question is backwards. If one considers that the reciprocal might be derived from
the topical object, things fall into place. If X sees Y and Y sees X (regardless of the topic status of X),
then they see each other.

     The Columbian topical object and reciprocals create a minor paradigm. The second reciprocal, -wap
1x is probably an analogical creation. If the final consonant of -wax° were taken to be the transitive
second singular subject suffix (which has this shape), then replacing it with the second plural subject suffix
(-p) creates the second reciprocal (which has a third plural clitic appended). The topical object must be
followed by third person -s. Put together, these form the following set:

(68) -wa-x°       'reciprocal'
     -wa-p 1x     'reciprocal'
     -wa-s        'topical object'

This would isolate -wa-as a morpheme, perhaps meaning something like 'other person'. This probably does
not represent the Proto-Salishan situation with the reciprocal and topical object suffixes, however, but rather
local developments.

     Since it seems certain that there is a connection between the topical object and the reciprocal
suffixes in Salish, it is useful to look at the reciprocal in other Salishan languages (where no topical object
has been reported) and see what can be made of this suffix there.

     Reciprocal suffixes in the various languages are remarkably consistent. At most three different forms
are represented, although it is more likely that the aberrant forms are reshaped from the basic form since
they are only partially different from it.[14] Correspondences, and hence reconstructions, are pretty straightfor-
ward. Several of the suffixes given in footnote 10 show an initial t; this is merely the transitive marker,
and other transitive markers sometimes occur in its place (and I could have omitted it in all instances here;
in spite of the presence of a transitive marker, all reciprocals in Salish are intransitive). The Interior
Salishan forms (except for one of the Lillooet forms that is borrowed from the coast) can be reconstructed
as *-wax°; Coeur d'Alene must have delabialized the final x for some reason. The Central Salish forms
can be reconstructed as *-awal, which Tillamook also fits; the reflex of the w is frequently missing, and
at other times developed to q° then sometimes devoiced to k°. Sechelt and Sliammon devoiced the final
l. Squamish, Sooke, and Clallam changed it to y. Squamish and Sliammon have an alternate form ending in
s rather than l and Bella Coola has an m where other languages have w; I assume these are somehow
related to the rest of the forms. These reconstructions for Interior Salish and Central Salish do not match
very well, but all falls into place when we see the Proto-Tsamosan form, which has both the final x°
found in the interior and the final l found in Central Salish: *-awalx°. These taken together can be

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[14] The specific suffixes are as follows: *Interior Salish:* Coeur d'Alene -twiš, -tweš. Kalispel
-uwé(x°), Spokane -wé⁷x°, Columbian -wáx°, -wáp 1x, Colville -nwix°, -nwáx°. Shuswap
-wéx°, -wśx°. Thompson -wáx°. Lillooet -wal', -w'áx°; Bella Coola -max°; *Central Salish:*
Sliammon -awł, -ígəs, Pentlatch -wal, Sechelt -áwəł, Squamish -way, -ay', -nəw'as,
Cowichan -təl, Chilliwack -təl, -í·təl, -tá·l, Nooksack -tuwél', -swél', Samish -əl',
Songish -śk°əl, -śwəl, -əl, Saanich -ək°él-, -ək°əl, -əwel, -tál, -təl. Sooke
-śk°i(⁷), -áy(⁷), -i(⁷), Lushootseed -ag°əl, -əg°əl. Twana -wəl; Tillamook -śg°əl,
-śg°l, -əg°l, -g°l; *Tsamosan:* Quinault -tulalx°, Lower Chehalis *no data,* Upper Chehalis
-wal-, -uš, Cowlitz -(a)wal-, -(a)wl-, -(a)wlx.

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reconstructed as Proto-Salish \*-awalx°.[17]

This does not quite match my reconstruction of the topical object (\*-wali). The presence of the first vowel of the reciprocal and its absence on the topical object is of little significance, given the few languages from which to reconstruct the latter and the propensity of Salish to lose vowels. The final x° is more interesting. If the two suffixes really are related, then this is indeed probably the second singular subject suffix (just as Columbian seems to interpret it). If this is not the case, then the modern similarity of the forms is the result of convergence.

**h. Sahaptin**

Having documented the topical object for Salish, it remains to see where else this, or any similar, construction occurs. One place is Sahaptin. What appears to be identical usage occurs there, although the affixes are different, and case marking on nouns (when they are present) adds additional complications. The most obvious difference is that the Sahaptin marker is a prefix—Sahaptin prefers to prefix pronominal markers, whereas Salishan languages generally suffix them. Jacobs 1931 identifies one pá- as third person singular accusative, contrasting with the more usual á-. It is this, but what he says next comes close to explaining what is really going on (1931:145):

"When it is desired to indicate as object one of two persons or things referred to a so-called obviation distinction may be made; the mechanism employed is apparently entirely different from the obviative process of Kutenai and Algonkin. The element pá- indicates that the former or first of two persons or things is the person or thing object of the verb action; the second or latter of the two persons or things is subject of the verb action and invariably appears as subject noun or pronoun with syntactic nominative -i·n suffixed."

At this point Jacobs gives nine examples of the use of the prefix, but only the first contains the preceding verb (clause) as well as the one with pá-:

(69) ku'iwínana,
　　　'and he went.'
　　　kupá'əna spilyáyi·n
　　　'and Coyote told him'
　　　　　　(Jacobs 1931:145)

Additional examples are very easy to find in Jacobs' texts. The following is from one of the texts in Jacobs' Sahaptin grammar (1931), although I am using the slighlty revised version in Jacobs 1934 (apart from some trivial orthographic differences, the 1934 version includes the repetion of a word omitted in the 1931 version and the punctuation makes better sense; I also modify Jacobs' orthography to accord with current practices).

(70) spilyáinan páwxɛ·nma miyáwəxin x°ɛ́·mičnik íčən ti·čámyau.
　　　'The chief sent coyote from above to this land.'
　　　á'an páwxɛ·nma wát'ui,
　　　'He had sent crow first.'
　　　pášapaq'inwatama tí·nma míš-pawá,
　　　'he had him come to see how the people were,'
　　　paqáwa.
　　　'(how) they were then.'
　　　kuk iwiyánawiya k°ə́n á'a,
　　　'When that crow arrived.'
　　　ku-iq'ínuna tí·nmaman payá'əša,
　　　'he saw people lying about,'
　　　ánaš.
　　　'dead.'

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[17] This does not agree with the reconstructions given by Hoard 1971. As I show here, Hoard's two forms can be collapsed into one.

ku-iwínana ku-itk°átɛ·niya áča·š,
　　　'He went and ate their eyes.'
áu iwínana,
　　　'and then he went on.'
k°áxi itúxna x°í·mičan,
　　　'and went above again towards home.'
miyawəxnmíkan.
　　　'to the place of the chief.'
ku pášapniya,
　　　'He asked him.'
"míšnam áq'inušana?"
　　　'"How did it appear to you?"'
áq'inušana šiyóx.
　　　'It seemed to him to be pretty good.'
ku pá'əna,
　　　'But he said to him.'
"ú····, čául
　　　'"Why, no!'
átk°atɛ·nišanam áča·š.
　　　'You have been eating their eyes.'
kunamat wiyátamaika.
　　　'Very evidently you have been doing ill.'
kunam txáušxta,
　　　'You are finished.'
aukɛ́lnam wənápta kútkutš."
　　　'that is as much work as you will obtain."'
áu ɔ́·k itxáušxna
　　　'Then he ceased right there.'
páuxɛ·na miyáwəxin.
　　　'the chief let him go.'
itxánana á'a,
　　　'He became a crow.'
itxánana čmúk á'a.
　　　'he became a black crow.'
　　　　　　(Jacobs 1937:205)

This is a Coyote story, and Coyote (with an accusative ending) is the first word. He is also apparently topic at this point, and the first pá- refers to him. This unexpected first introduction of a topic in an object role may be strictly pragmatic: this is a Coyote story, therefore Coyote is understood to be topic until otherwise specified. The second line introduces Crow (á'an), and Crow is the topic of the rest of this passage. Five times, however, when the chief is subject of a clause (lines 2, 3, 12, 15, and 22) Crow is designated by the topical object (note that the pa- in lines 4 and 6 is a different prefix). This ensures that there will be no problem in knowing who does what to whom, and who is in focus at any time.

This is not the only third person subject-object prefix in Sahaptin, the other being á-, and it is this prefix that marks ordinary transitives when the object is not topic. Jacobs' remarks (given above) show that he was aware of the difference, although perhaps not fully cognizant of the long-range discourse properties of pá-. Note that he speaks of a "so-called obviation distinction"; Jacobs realized that this Sahaptin affix functioned rather differently than does a true obviative. Boas, however, seems to have misunderstood the situation in Sahaptin (1929:3).

"Many American languages draw a clear distinction between possession by the subject and possession by another person, like the Latin suus and ejus. A small group, including the Eskimo, Algonquian, and Kutenai, express these relations by special verbal forms, the socalled obviative of the missionaries who wrote on Algonquian, the fourth person of Thalbitzer. The phenomenon is most pronounced in Kutenai, for even in the case of the simple transitive verb with third person subject and nominal object the presence of the two third persons is indicated by the obviative suffix following the nominal object. It is

interesting to note that the western Sahaptin languages, which as a whole group adjoin the Kutenai, make the same distinction for the subject of the sentence for sentences containing only one third person and those in which the sentence contains two third persons. In both Kutenai and western Sahaptin there is a differentiation between the forms in a sentence like, 'the man saw me', and 'the man saw the woman'. In Kutenai the difference is found in the subject, in Sahaptin in the subject. In some of the Sahaptin dialects this trait is found only in the pronoun, not in the noun. The general usage, in the group of languages just discussed, is alike notwithstanding the difference of devices used."

This suggests that Boas understood the functioning of obviatives in general, although it is rather curious that he states that the Sahaptin "adjoin the Kutenai", when he must have known that there are Salishan groups between them. Unfortunately, it is Boas' claim that is repeated, not Jacobs' more cautious one.

Virginia Hymes, in an unpublished paper (Hymes 1984), did realize the importance of the topical object prefix in Sahaptin discourse. At first she suspected that pá- was used to keep track of turns at talk. She came to understand its more general use by analyzing one of the texts published by Jacobs about Cougar and his four younger brothers, Wildcat being the youngest (Hymes 1984:233):

> ". . .Wildcat seemed to be the chief recipient of the obviative pá-. Whenever he was object of someone's action the pá- was used, whereas if another character was object of a third person subject á- was used. . . .[T]hough Cougar is the first introduced, and though he carries all the action up to the first use of pá-, that first use of pá- is not when he first becomes object of third person subject, bur rather when he first speaks to Wildcat. Until then Wildcat has been mentioned only as last in the list of Cougar's four younger brothers. This mention of him and the use of the obviative in the verb of Cougar's speaking to him apparently singles him out as the one to count as "first." And indeed for the rest of the story, with a limited number of exceptions, all other uses of pá- in the text to mark third person subject with third person object involve Wildcat as object. Furthermore whenever he is object of the verb with a third person subject pá- is used. To this latter, there is just one exception in this rather long narrative. . . ."

This prefix in Sahaptin is thus virtually identical in function to the Salishan topical object.

Given this similarity in different language families but in neighboring languages, the question of origins arises. It seems unlikely that such an unusual function was developed independently. Sahaptin has only one (close) relative, Nez Perce. Nez Perce does have cognate prefixes (Aoki 1970, Rude 1986), although their function is different, and they cannot be interpreted as topical objects. They are similar enough in function that it would not be difficult to conceive of a change of function in either direction--Sahaptin to Nez Perce or Nez Perce to Sahaptin. As discussed above, the Salishan suffixes must go back to Proto-Salish, given their distribution. Therefore it is more likely that Sahaptin was the borrower--not of the specific affix, but of the function. It already had a special third person subject-object prefix; it only remained to modify its function. What is more, there was other support in the language. Recall that the Salishan topical object is related to the Salishan reciprocal. As it happens, the Sahaptin reciprocal prefix is pápa- (Jacobs 1931:145); surely these similarities are too great to be accidental. The connection between the topical object and reciprocal is further substantiated in the way the former is used (Hymes 1984:234):

> "The first use of pá- 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. . . .There are about six uses of pá- with Wildcat as subject and an equal number with him as object. .which ends with Wildcat's killing and skinning Timber Rabbit. . . .Perhaps in this case the use of pá- pretty much reciprocally is indicating something about the importance of this interaction. . ."

### i. Keresan

My remaining instances of topical objects are considerably less certain, and what I am suggesting is of necessity tentative and in the nature of restatements. Two other language families (at least) in North America have pronominal categories that seem to resemble the Salishan and Sahaptin topical objects more than they resemble other similar systems, although,

like Sahaptin, they have been differently categorized. The first of these, because it seems the more likely, is Keresan.

Although the two available Keresan grammars represent different dialects, the facts seem to be the same. The language marks subject-object combinations with a single prefix for each combination, and has two different third person subject-object forms. Davis describes them as follows (1964:75):

> "In some, but not all, transitive verbs a fourth person subject with third person object is recognized which is distinct from the third person subject with third person object:
>
> | g-áku | he (third person) bit him |
> |---|---|
> | c'-áku | he (fourth person) bit him" |

This does not clarify matters a great deal, and Davis' further remarks on these prefixes pertain to another function to which I will return later. Miller tells us more (1965:124):

> ". . .transitive verbs distinguish an obviative person in which the third person subject and third person object roles ('he. . .him') are reversed ('the other one...him'); the central figure of discourse is the object, and a secondary figure is the subject."

He then gives an example from a text about the War Twins (although he gives only the one word, his translation provides the referents).

(71) da'áyáita
       'he (their father) painted them (the two War Twins)'
       (Miller 1965:124)

Miller's description fits my notion of topical object quite well, and an examination of texts in Miller 1965 seems to confirm this conclusion. I cite no further examples here, however, because of my uncertainty about most aspects of Keresan grammar and the extremely complex morphophonemics in the language which make it difficult to identify safely the relevant prefixes.

### j. Wichita (Caddoan)

Wichita has what appears to be the equivalent of topical object marking, but does it by using a special inflection for the subject when the object is topic. Otherwise, both subject and object are usually zero (or may be; subjects cause certain tense prefixes to take special shapes). Rood identifies this special prefix as iy- 'indefinite person' (Rood 1976:19). One might wonder why this prefix is classed as a subject rather than an object since the two may occupy adjacent prefix slots (subject then object). The reason is that there is a preverb (of 'come') or a possessive prefix that can follow the subject or precede the object (for example, when further marked as dative).

In spite of the fact that it is the subject that is marked, it is the object that is significant. Rood's explanation is as follows:

> "[There is] the possibility that a third person noun may be present in the sentence but outside the present field of interest of the hearer. This form has been glossed 'indefinite subject' in the examples, but the real meaning is that the attention of the speaker is focused elsewhere. If the subject of a sentence is expressed by a noun root in the surface structure, the noun is almost always in focus. In other cases, i. e., when pronouns only are used in English, the verb may show that the subject is either in or out of focus. The form containing the out of focus agreement feature has at least two idiomatic functions: one indicates non-singular subject, and one translates the English passive." (Rood 1976:117)

> "The out-of-focus reference of the subject is thus clearly shown not to be an obviative of the type familiar in Algonkian. It seems rather to have the function of showing that the object of our attention is the grammatical object of the verb rather than the subject . . .The use of out-of-focus subject morphemes has the double implication of 'subject out-of-focus' and 'object in focus'." (Rood 1976:118)

I would prefer 'topic' to Rood's 'focus', but otherwise his description matches the facts of Salish and Sahaptin rather well. Even his statement that "it proves to be nearly impossible to elicit enough short utterances which will offer corroborating evidence for this thesis" is true of Salish (as well as of Kutenai, of which Garvin notes that it is "quite difficult to elicit obviative forms separately; Garvin 1958:8), and it is obvious why this is so: the topic that is focussed as object must occur in a preceding sentence (or clause). Rood continues (1976:118-119):

> "Nevertheless, it would seem that the true implication of 'out-of-focus subject' is 'grammatical object is the focus of attention.' Such a gloss would explain the use of this verb form for passive, for plural (but indefinite) subject, and for the story situation just described. Perhaps the confusion in translation situations results from the fact that word order also enables differentiation of subject and object, and since this device is closer in surface structure to English surface structure, the English sentence calls it forth first. Also it should be noted that in an isolated sentence given for translation, the Wichita speaker has no way to tell which English noun should be in focus."

That it is the subject that is being deemphasized is corroborated by an additional comment on the matter (Rood 1976:119):

> "I have occasionally elicited a form with the morpheme ʔyar in a surface structure position not normally occupied by a pronominal referents [sic]. This form is translated as though it indicated an out-of-focus object."

The following is an example given by Rood from "a story in which a young man goes to sleep on a hilltop and a young woman comes to visit him" (1976:117).

(72) ka:hi:kʔa kiya:sʔa:ki:ʔi.
    'It was a woman.'
    éʔiya:kíʔi::sʔa.
    'She came to see him.'
    eʔikiwa:ri.
    'She told him, ". . . ."'
    (Rood 1976:117)

Both the second and third lines contain an 'out-of-focus' subject (they are different as a result of the complex morphophonemic developments in Wichita): iy- in the second line and i- in the third.

### k. Pawnee (Caddoan)

Pawnee has the same construction, although Parks describes it differently, and labels it (wrongly, if my interpretation here is correct) switch reference (1976:164-165):[11]

> "In the third person of active transitive verbs there is, however, a separate morpheme which indicates an indefinite third person as well as a change in subjects, a switch-reference. . . .The form of the switch-reference morpheme is -ir-. It is used in discourse when there is a change of third person subjects--when a second, or new, third person subject is introduced into the conversation or narration, or when attention is being focused on a third person object. The second third person does not have the listener's attention focused on him, and this morpheme serves to bring him to the fore."

It shares other features with Wichita: "Frequently -ir- represents an indefinite or unspecified third person. In such cases the verb is translated into English with the passive" (Parks 1976:165).

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[11] This was also noted also by Jacobsen: "Although Parks. . .refers to this as the switch-reference morpheme, it appears from the brief description that the change is one of topic or subject-matter rather than of grammatical subject. This is hence closest to a kind of obviation. . ." (Jacobsen 1983:181).

I repeat one example from Parks:

(73) /pi:ras+kis kur+ra+uks+kusis+a:r+i he-ru ar+ri+at+Ø pi:ras+kis he ar+ri+ir+ut+paks+u:rukuk+Ø pi:ta/ > pi:raski kuhrukskusisa:ri heru ahriat pi:raski he ahritpaksu:rukut pi:ta
    'A boy was playing; . . .then the boy went, and a man grabbed his head.'
    (Parks 1976:165)

Again the resemblance to the Salishan topical object is striking.

A third Caddoan language, Caddo, also has third person pronominal prefixes with special functions, that of indefinite subject (yi-) and indefinite object (yu-) (Chafe 1976a:66). Since 'indefinite' is one of the functions of the prefix in Wichita and Pawnee, and since these bear a strong resemblance to the Wichita prefix (iy-), it will be interesting to see if Caddo also has a topical object function.

### l. Athabaskan

Although available data are not entirely clear on the question, some Athabaskan languages also appear to have topical objects. The best information is on Navajo; other Athabaskan languages probably have analogous constructions. Navajo has three kinds of third person marking. One is a straightforward third person marked by zero affixation for subject and yi- for object. Another has a number of functions including disjoint reference, impersonal constructions, and a lowest level on the agent hierarchy. This third person has occasionally been labelled obviative, but is distinctly unlike the Algonquian obviative, and is perhaps better designated by yet another label given to it, fourth person. The third kind of person in Navajo is that of the object bi- as it contrasts with yi-. This yi-/bi- alternation has received considerable attention, but these treatments have concentrated on its use in the agent hierarchy. It does apparently have another function, however, and that is to keep track of topics; in this use it appears to function very much like the Salishan topical objects. It is not clear whether the hierarchical or the topical object function is primary. Because there is little data available on the use of bi- as a topical object, no examples will be given here.

### Other Systems

The four systems discussed so far to keep track of topics, especially when one becomes a patient, exhaust neither the logical possibilities nor the systems used for this purpose in North American languages. How much additional variety there is I do not know; Lakhota uses a system that I am unable to categorize, and one system that may not occur in North America is attested in Africa.

One of the differences between Lakhota (Teton Dakota) and other Dakota dialects is its use of a conjunction čha to keep track of arguments. This is not its sole use, as amply attested by Boas and Deloria (1941:146-147), although I do not understand all its functions. Nor do I find its use to mark topics entirely clear. Van Valin 1985 gives the following examples in which ną is used when the subject of the two clauses is the same, and čha when the object of the first clause is subject of the second, while the first subject (which is presumably the topic) becomes object.

(74) mathó ki wašíču ki wayáki ną kté
    'The bear saw the whiteman and killed him (the whiteman).'
    mathó ki wašíču ki wayáka čha kté
    'The bear saw the whiteman and so he (the whiteman) killed it (the bear).'
    (Van Valin 1985:380-382)

This is not simply switch reference. With ną the subject of the two clauses must be coreferential. With čha, not only are the subjects not coreferential, but "the actor of the first clause must be the undergoer of the second" (Van Valin 1985:382). This is, in effect, the function of the topical object of Salish. However, the Lakhota conjunction is very unlike the topical object in that it is not a pronominal marker at all.

Examples from Boas and Deloria show that, at least on the sentence level, čʰa can create some complex sentences reminiscent of those seen for Upper Chehalis. There is a major difference, however, which raises questions even about the similarity of this conjunction to topical objects. In some cases, it is the object of the first clause that must be the subject of the second; the second verb can be intransitive, thus precluding any indexing of the first subject in the second clause.

(75) wičʰáša wa nuwá čʰa wayáke'
'he saw a man swimming'    (man a swim and see)
(Boas and Deloria 1941:147)

If the clauses are reversed so that the second verb is transitive and the first intransitive, then the subject to object coindexing occurs.

(76) nuwá čʰa wičʰáša wa wayáke'
'he was swimming, and a man saw him'    (swim and man a see)
(Boas and Deloria 1941:147)

These differences in coindexing of subjects and objects raise a number of questions about the actual role of čʰa. While it remains to be seen how this conjunction functions in texts, it certainly shares properties with other devices for keeping track of topics, and further study is warranted.

Systems examined so far do various things to maintain topicality when a topic becomes a patient. Passive systems promote the patient to subject, a natural topic position. Switch reference specifies that successive subjects are or are not the same, so that when they are not the topic role can be reassigned. Obviative systems index each of two nominals and further reference maintains this indexing; thus whatever was topic in the first place can be consistently tracked in subsequent sentences. Topical object systems provide a special object suffix to mark a topic (or, as in Caddoan, a subject suffix marked to suppress the subject in order to stress the object).

Other systems are possible; one such is discussed by Bresnan and Mchombo 1987 for the Bantu language Chicheŵa. Here there are two series of anaphoric pronouns. One is a set of object markers "used for anaphora to a topic, and the independent object pronouns, used to introduce new topics or for contrast of arguments" (Bresnan and Mchombo 1987:764–765). Although their use of 'topic' is freer than mine (for them either a preceding subject *or* object can be topic), the presence of two sets of pronominal forms allows topics to be kept distinct from non-topics. In spite of these authors' claim of a discourse function for the two sets of pronouns, their examples show only sentential use. These pronouns would seem well suited, however, for use in texts. Further study may show them to be even more like either obviatives or topical objects.

### Agent Hierarchies

There is what I consider an unexpected and unexplained correlation between these topic marking systems and the involvement of the same morphemes in agent or animacy hierarchies. The ability to distinguish two third persons clearly lends itself to hierarchical use, but I see no particular reason why this *should* be so, yet it is the case in several of the languages discussed here. Part of the reason may be that persons higher on any hierarchy are simply more likely to be topics than persons below them.

Among languages with obviatives, agent hierarchies are general in Algonquian languages (called "quasi-universal" by Goddard [1984:277]; see also Zwicky 1977), where proximate forms are required for nominals higher on the hierarchy. It is not just the obviative markings that reflect these hierarchies, however; the distinction between direct and inverse markings is also involved (for a clear treatment of direct/inverse marking, see Wolfart [1973:24] on Plains Cree). For Navajo Witherspoon 1980 explains certain gaps involving the alternation between yi- and bi- as reflecting a hierarchy of control. In Kutenai, the obviative for first and second persons (-miɬ) has as its primary function the ranking of a third person object, using an obviative when the object is animate and an absolute when it is inanimate:

"(T)he nonthird-person implicit subject. . .stands in the obviative if the object contains reference

to an animate being, or if such a reference can properly be interpolated." (Garvin 1958:13)

"The referents of the third-person forms are animate beings when the first person form is in the obviative, inanimate when the first-person form is in the absolute." (Garvin 1958:18)

Garvin also remarks that as a secondary function "the placement of the obviative is the formal mark of a referential category of ANIMATENESS, which is not otherwise formally marked" (1958:32).

Topical object systems use these affixes specifically in hierarchies. In Keresan, "less commonly the obviative is used to indicate that 'the other one' is the subject of a verb that has an inanimate object" (Miller 1965:124); Davis calls the topical object 'fourth person' and says that it "is used when the subject of the action is obscure, as when the speaker is telling of something that he himself did not observe. It is also used when the subject of the action is inferior to the object, as when an animal is the subject and a human being the object" (Davis 1964:75–76). The Upper Chehalis and Cowlitz topical object suffixes are also used in this last situation (see Kinkade 1984b). This actually made it rather easy to elicit examples of them for paradigms, since all that was necessary was to ask for a sentence with an animal as subject and a human as object. This use of topical objects is apparently not particularly common in texts, however; the only examples that I have found (see examples 27 and 28 above) could equally well be instances of the topical object itself. I have no information on the possible existence of agent hierarchies in Quinault or Tillamook, and no evidence for one in Columbian.

A related pattern of using a topical object for distinguishing one group of referents from another is that found in Caddo, where, according to David Rood,[19] the "indefinite form is also used for second person when speaking to in-laws". Rood also notes that this "avoidance pattern" is not found in the other Caddoan languages.

Agent hierarchies are not limited in Salish to the languages with topical objects. They have been well reported for several of the languages to the north of Upper Chehalis. Jelinek and Demers 1983 discuss them in Lushootseed, Lummi, and Squamish, and Gerdts 1988 treats them at length in Halkomelem. In all these cases, restrictions on ranking can be overcome either by using ergative marking or by using a passive construction. As we have seen, passivization is one of the devices used in discourse to topicalize a patient. It has been one of the unexplained oddities of Salish that hierarchical restrictions were overcome in such different ways--by passivization in Central Salish and topical objects in Tsamosan. That problem is now resolved: the device used is whatever a language uses to topicalize an object.

The use of a topical object affix in an agent hierarchy provides one final parallel between the systems in Salish and Sahaptin, and makes the borrowing of this system into Sahaptin even more remarkable. As far as I know, Sahaptin has not been noted as having an agent hierarchy, yet inflection for the combination of first and second persons in transitive forms suggests the possibility of one. Forms with first person subject and second person object are the same as forms with second person subject and first person object except in two respects. In each, the subject is indicated by the usual first or second person transitive subject pronoun. The first or second person object is not specifically indicated; the two are distinguished by the use of the topical object prefix when second person is subject and first person is object. This is exactly what might be expected if Sahaptin has an agent hierarchy: first person should be higher on the hierarchy, so that a second person dominating a first would require special marking. Although the part of a hierarchy being marked is different from Salish (first vs. second person as opposed to human vs. non-human third person), it is significant that it is the topical object affix that is called into play when an agent hierarchy might otherwise be violated.

Hierarchies in Salish still warrant a great deal of study. They have not been noted for any Interior Salishan language, nor for several coastal languages, although this does not mean that they are not there. The same is true, of course, for other American Indian languages. It will be interesting to see if there is a general pattern of associating such hierarchies with topical patients. If this should prove to be the case, then an explanation for this association must be sought.

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[19] In a letter to me dated December 9, 1988.

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