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Compiled by Nile Thompson

24th International Conference on Salish and Neighboring Languages
August 16-19, 1989 at the Steilacoom Tribal Cultural Center, Steilacoom, WA

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**WHEN PATIENTS ARE TOPICS:**

**TOPIC MAINTENANCE IN NORTH AMERICAN INDIAN LANGUAGES**

M. Dale Kinkade
University of British Columbia

Topic is a notoriously vexing concept to define. 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, Givon 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, Chafe 1976b and 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 pronouns and topics (in topic maintenance situations) can certainly occur in non-initial position. They also claim that "subjects are essentially grammaticized 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'.

Givon 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 clitication), 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, Givon 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 leftmost 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] point it may be totally new topic . . . re-introducing topic . . . And such discourse contexts often

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1 I thank Bob Levine and Bill Jacobson for useful discussion of some of the subject matter of this paper.

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*Author's Signature*
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 focused 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 the one in which I am proposing here. I also do not wish to imply that the systems I will describe have as their role—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) topical markers, (3) obviative, and (4) topical objects. 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 Jacobson (1983:153):

"With obviation the markers are referential—i.e., 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 depersonalization; 1983b:64). It is quite possibly the default device for this function (at least in those languages that have passive structures), and may be the

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 passives 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 [1987:526]), and lexical systems (under which he includes gender, honorifics, and fourth-person systems).
not in focus.

The domain of such active/passive switching to keep a given person in focus is not immediately apparent. The second Kalapalo examples 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 Delli 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 1971). This means that passive constructions in Lushootseed need not mark 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

tap ni-'now
'and looked'
'o nesk'ecok 0
'and went back.'
'o ga'm
'He said,'
'o gi\l
'He was told',
'x\es\i 0 ga'm
'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 (or '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 chok-f-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 oska-y-o-k sonka-li-t-o-k on\am-o
'I used to smoke and I still smoke' (oska- is an auxiliary)
[Davis and Hardy 1988:295]

(7) Am-anhtaasi-y-o-k ittafooloka-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-Aztec (Huichol, Papago, Hopi, Tsimanabala, Chemehuevi, Shoshone, Northern Paiute), Washo, Yokuts (Yawelmani, Wilkchami, Tachi, Chukchansi, Gishbowi, Yuki (Yuki), Yuman–Cochil (Dieguero, Cocopa, Northern Cochil), Zuni, and Eskiimo (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-sex (DSD) and same-sex (SS) markers' (Jacobsen 1983:160). A few languages indicate only that subjects 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" (1983:8). It should be clear that switch reference can easily serve this purpose, since its explicit function is to indicate that subjects (and hence 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 Pielades constellation. The pronominal forms are all 3, referring to a 3s agent and a singular object. It is primarily through the use of g\d and n\a that the potentially confusing identities of the agents are kept straight" (Watkins 1979:39).

(8) 4-d\g-\g\a 5hak\d\d\h 3-k\d\t\h\h 4 k\d\l 0\d\h\h\h\h 4 3-d\g\d\p\d\n\a (wood/within bear [3\x,]=met/hys/pi) DIFF neck/around [3\x,]=grab/hys/pi SAME
[3\x,]=tongue-wipe/hys/imph
'she, met a bear, in the woods is, grabbed her, around/the neck and licked her, (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. 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 (laubelled proximate and obviative). This is then an ideal tracking system, since in theory it is possible to keep at least two nominants 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 sentence, one is marked as obviative by special inflections. The non-oblative noun or pronoun, called the proximate, is the normal unmarked form used when there is only one such entity in a given context. The obviative is the more prominent, the "hero of the discourse", and the obviative the least 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·hkomečki, mehteno·h·meko we·pi·kananakawičini m[a]mi·si·hahi, e·h·po·ni·nowi·wa·či, a·kiw·he·pi apiy·nehka taši·kakan·neti·wa·či, i·ni·meko, a·nićini·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 on. And they [P] do not keep on conversing. As soon as they [O] say, "O noachi," 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."

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

(10) ma·ne·ke·hi·pimo·meko neseko·ki i·niye·ka pe·minehkawa·čikl ašañ·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 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 1951 [1960] 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) takugamiuk i lissarən

[when he met him, he (a) recognized him] (indexing as in Kleinschmidt)

[Kleinschmidt 1968:91, Swadesh 1946:40]

(12) kivvaata uningmani isirungngilaa

[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. The obviative, however, can occur with non-subordinate verbs. In the following example, the obviative is used in a clause with an obviative subject, while the obviative subject of the preceding clause is omitted.

(13) kivvaata uningmani isirungngilaa

[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]

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(14) kivvaata uningmani isirungngilaa

[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]

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(15) kivvaata uningmani isirungngilaa

[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. The obviative, however, can occur with non-subordinate verbs. In the following example, the obviative is used in a clause with an obviative subject, while the obviative subject of the preceding clause is omitted.

(16) kivvaata uningmani isirungngilaa

[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. The obviative, however, can occur with non-subordinate verbs. In the following example, the obviative is used in a clause with an obviative subject, while the obviative subject of the preceding clause is omitted.

(17) kivvaata uningmani isirungngilaa

[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. The obviative, however, can occur with non-subordinate verbs. In the following example, the obviative is used in a clause with an obviative subject, while the obviative subject of the preceding clause is omitted.

(18) kivvaata uningmani isirungngilaa

[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. The obviative, however, can occur with non-subordinate verbs. In the following example, the obviative is used in a clause with an obviative subject, while the obviative subject of the preceding clause is omitted.
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 obivative 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 obvivatives in the Algonguian 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). A simple example is the following from Upper Chehalis:

(13) a. tít q'ý̓utes, hóy n ta ʔə̨tstwali.
   'He called her and she saw the one who called.'
   (Boas 1933:109)

b. tít q'ý̓utes, hóy n ta ʔə̨tstn.
   'He called her and she saw it.'
   (Boas 1933:109)

The second sentence has the usual transitive construction with third person object/transitive marker (−t) and subject (−n) (imperfective aspect). The first sentence ends, however, in −wall, 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). This is not quite enough, however, because the use of −wall 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 −wall, 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 a topic with a lower referent.

I thank Irma Goddard for his persistent 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 Thomasen and Kaufman 1988 (although their usage does not necessarily imply agreement with the earlier analyses).

These and the Tillamook examples later are retranscribed to agree with my usual usage for Colonial and the Tsimshian languages. The (b) sentence can also mean 'He called her and he saw her.'

This is in the perfective aspect, and so does not match the b example exactly; the ending would be −t-wa1n 'in the perfective, where the −t- is 'transitive'.

'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 wa marker 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 −wall.

(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 −l) to a transitive stem, i.e. immediately following the transitiveizing 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 transitiveizing 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 Cowitz, 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 Cowitz, and in Colonial, however, all third person transitive do have a subject suffix (which would not be present in a passive). Since the only thing that ever occurs between a transitive 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 ʔə̨xə̨q'ù t stąmwalinitt sə̨q'ayə̨yəl.
   'And all pass the child.'
   [FRB: BwPC]
(15) *acwâ• x q'acwâ•'yâ k'âl' kkil'yâ's lx.
'Chipmunk lived with his grandmother.'

k'a * q'acwâ•'yâ's cnu'nâ'wx.
'And Chipmunk was running around'

*acyú•pa',
'playing'.

'a k'a kiks wa' syâya?'
'and he found serviceberries'

t'll wa q't'q.
'already ripe.'

*ica ra'ína•••'wx;
'So he ran back.'

'aiklc ra'atu kkil'ya's,
'he got back to his grandmother.'

k'a cû's, 'hâ'nêm••• kn'ignû's?'
'and he says to him, "Oh, my, I'm hungry.'

k'a cûntus, 'stâ••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 "Not'"), 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) *1. stâm wa' maxâ. .
'What is it, I wonder?'

k'a' våw
'Well'

't'll wa' mat syâya' sp'l'qmfx.
'it must be serviceberries are getting ripe.'

t'lcl k'a cû's, . . . .
'So then and she says to him, . . . .'

Grandmother is now the topic, so cûs 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 cûntus when Chipmunk speaks to her, and finally this, at the end of this section with Owl as topic:

(17) *1 kkil'na'ancû't.
'So she covered herself with dirt'

'aiatu k'am' wa' snâ'tûmsms ksk'ût,
'except only her eye on one side.'

k'a * ac'â'c'estus wa' 'atu q'acwâ•'yâ's;
'And he was watching her, that Chipmunk.'

Acâ'c'ësteus,
'[because] he was watching her.'

lût ya'bt' kail'na'ancût.
'[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 Leo Metcalf in 1935). 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 l6s - 'refuse, turn down', then remembers she left out Chelan, and uses a passive of l6s-

(18) *acn06't smîyây.
'Wherever Coyote went'

k'a' wa' lci'âl ntitlyâx nîlls.
'and from there (Chinook) salmon went upriver.'

'tl'c1 cnô••• yû' tl' nspîlm.'
'From there he came to Nespelem.'

nspîlm sk'ânt.
'Nespelem Falls.'

'l ci'âl stâm' lûstus wa' saní . . . . .
'Ah, from there he tried... they turned down that...'

'l kkh'âm' n'âni ca'lân.
'Oh, I passed up that Chelan.'

ca'lân lûstn.
'At Chelan he was turned down.'

k'a' *ica lût l ca'lân ta' ntitlyâx.
'and there at Chelan there are no salmon.'

Then she returns to Nespelem Falls, again using passive lûstn; 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) *âni skînt x'ut' acâ'qâ'tum nâ . .
'Rock got paid by the Indians . . .'

k'a' höy stâm
'The Indians . . .'

*x'ut' skînt . .
'and then something' 

k'a' ya'stô skînt . .
'and all the Indians . . .'

stâm' sâ'qhtm
'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 fatally desecrated him instead of paying him, the following sequence occurs (Coyote is topic).
Here 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 -wai- or -wal-, with no vowel reduction) in a wider variety of constructions than does Columbia. An easy place to find examples in Columbia is in congratulatory interchanges, with 'H 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, self, 'talk to') is used, as in the following: when Bluejay is speaking to his older sister, and he is:}

(23) hóy kótn t p'ayÁ·kÁ·
'And so Bluejay says,' 
"sësti 'ruk'na tít manô-më." 
'Your children are indeed nice.'
cótnwal tác yÁ·yém's,
'His sister says to him,' 
"'ansaváctn."
'They are your nephews.'

[TLC: B5]

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 cótnák, 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 one or two lines from the relevant points, and omit the actual quotations and other material carrying the narrative forward):

(24) kÁ·xÁ·misÁ·n t sptálin.
'He comes to Rock.'
cótn'Á·n tít 'ál's tát sptálin, ....
'Rock comes to Rock.'
cótn'Á·n t sptálin, ....
'Rock says,'
kÁ·xÁ·misÁ·n t cáli.
'He comes to Fire.'
sÁ·wleyn, ....
'He asks him,' 
kÁ·xÁ·misÁ·n [t] sÁ·cílyq,
'He comes to Wind.'
cótn'Á·n [t] sÁ·cílyq, ....
'Wind says,' 
kÁ·xÁ·misÁ·n t cá-pÁ·s,
'He comes to Creek.'
cótn'Á·n tít 'icá-pÁ·s, ....
'He says to the Creeks,' 

(20) 'i· smiyÁ·w-cót
'So Coyote says,'
"hóy y t'il·l' aysyÁ·kÁ·
'And then indeed tomorrow' 
cótnÁ·nt m'x yÁ·yaÁ·stÁ·
'then we will all move,' 
pÁ·knÁ·nt yÁ·ni t'wuÁ· sptÁ·ót,
'W'll dismantle our houses,' 
'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.
The only transitive forms here are 'ask' the several instances of 'come to'; an object of cùtna'xn is indicated by using a preposition (t'ála or t). 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) cùtna'xn tac t'ála yá-y'ñ's, "..."
  'He [Bluejay] tells his sister, ...'
  hóy n cùntsl, "..."
  'And so then he is told, ...'
  hóy cùntsl tanin I tac yá-y'ñ's, "..."
  'And so he is told now by his sister; ...'

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:

(26) wi n 'it n'k'6wa'itántim tac yá-y'ñ's, "..."
  'While Beaver talks to her,'
  vútá qíns 'fik'twálinn tit sq'ayá-yí.
  'then the boy wants to go to him.'

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

(28) cùtna'xn tit q'mayí, "..."
  'The girl thinks,'
  rál'q'súwálinn tanin tit pása. 'The ogre takes her along now,'
  t'útwálinn tit pása' šal t sáltas. 'The ogre brings her to his house,'
  wé-nál'sítti rál t sáltaswál's. 'They stay in their house,'
  wi tit t'á-wó-líq wi n'k's cak'ótwal'tac t cúlis. 'And One-Leg always makes love to her with his leg,'

In spite of the fact that there is very heavy emphasis on the new subject, wall 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'ón (Silas Heck’s rendition of X'ónéx'one) 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) hóy x'ónqítn tanin x'ónq'ú tit swaq'qíx,'tit q'áxå,
  'And so now they are gathering, all the frogs,'
  tit q'áxå,
  tit x'ónq'tám tit x'ónq'sa'q t q'íslín,
  'everything that has an ugly voice for singing,'
  x'ónq'sa'q hó x'ónq'twálí x'ónq'sa'q x'ónq'sa'q hó x'ónq'sa'q.
  '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 'Moon', 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) may cawc'wa wak til aw. 
'He just lay down on the Trail.'
ho' n y都说tawalinn til sq'sawrn, 
'And so the Fire caught up with him.'
łâmsanq p'òltm. 
'Along the way everywhere.'
h'w taqâ sq'sawrn til awk'ab. 
'And so now Moon sweated.'
mîta bâm kâq'khin. 
'It was not very long.'
ta čâwanis. 
'the was laying down.'
h'w n tânwali til sq'sawrn, 
'And Fire went past him.'
tâx'o' til tânwali til sq'sawrn, 
'Although the Fire went past him.'
wi q'so. 'canin til awk'm. 
'He almost died.'
wâk'sn til sq'sawrn. 
'Fire went on.'
ûc'cawmîn til awk'â. 
'Moon stood up.'

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.

(32) wâksan tânîn til awk'â. 
'Moon goes inside now.'
š'qulawâ. til k'caw ('aw. 
'When Witch cooks.'
'at til š'qulawâ. til k'cawh. 
'And first she always plays with him.'
laš'laš'awâ. til. 
'They laugh.'
q'wilwanîn tanîn til awk'â. 
'Moon becomes happy now.'

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) cûntwalla til q'may. 
"..."
'the girl said to him. 
..."
cûntnal n t awk'â. 
..."
'Moon says (to her). 
...

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.

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.

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.

(33) wâksan tânîn til awk'â. 
'Moon goes inside now.'
š'qulawâ. til k'caw ('aw. 
'When Witch cooks.'
'at til š'qulawâ. til k'cawh. 
'And first she always plays with him.'
laš'laš'awâ. til. 
'They laugh.'
q'wilwanîn tanîn til awk'â. 
'Moon becomes happy now.'

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) h'w taqâ sq'sawrn til awk'm. 
'And so now he talks to his heart.'
k'qawñtawalinn til sq'asâmns. 
'This own heart answers him.'

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
usual 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, 'walli is used.'
In the instance where the object is marked by 'n', it cannot refer to the old woman, or it would have
to be 'wall 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 imperative aspect is marked with 'lili'; this ending indicates a plural object after the topical
object suffices. In perfective aspect an enclitic awk'â (also occurring sometimes as yamâl or yamâ't) 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 object.
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

-- End of Document --
The topical object in line 3 refers back to Bee and oddity here is that the following line refers however, since 'he saw them' is 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 kóánmisit tit sōktxn' n ánl t kálts.
   'And they reached Bear at his house.'
   kóánmisit tit sōktxn' n ít t ó-c's sq'íací.
   'And they reached Bear one day.'
   s'ítgywałíx yamá tit sōktxn',
   'Bear saw them.'
   n ta-lás'lagawm.
   'And he laughed.'

The subject 'they' of the first line is topic throughout the passage. The second line refers back to 'people' would not be 'they' as topical object The subject of the fies a different subject (the enemies), and again has no plural inflection. ing anention in the first line, with a plural marker on 'enemies'. The third line has 'enemies' as begins a new verse, and still has 'they' as subject (and topic), but no plural marker is used.

The next passage involves plural subjeclS and objeclS. Again topical objeclS dependen the role of the topical object occurs in successive lines referring to the same topic, yet must be subject in one and object in the next, is different.

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

(38) k'a t sáičm t 'ílamá,
   'Now ghosts are running'.
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 is-being': this future particle requires a dependent predicate after it ('is-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 normalization that serves as object of the preposition. The next example is similar (Moon is topic).

> həlɪstəm t əčə.

>'He looks for where'

> hà sqəlísəm.

>'he will camp.'

> mələ təxəu t skəsə.

>'it is not yet night.'

> həlɪstəm t qəməty təl saqúɬəwələlə.

>'He looks for a girl who will prepare food for him.'

> təq̓iltən t əčən sələləwələ.

>'He finds one who will help him.'

> [FB: X̱anēxə'one]

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' 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.

> wəx̱lčəmn čəsə t kə'gysə.

>'she drops her mother again'

> sələ hə skənənutə'sə tələax̱ətə'mə.

>'to get the bad ones.'

> əcətəkʷəłəgələlə tələ mənsə.

>'who stole her child.'

> [FB: X̱anēxə'one]

> 'And I guess we'll send somebody'

> təq̓iltən tələ wəələlə.

>'and no one can see him'

> qəs həyə pənə.

>'because he is indeed a monster.'

> [FB: X̱anēxə'one]

The topical object here occurs within another normalization, 'the his-shouting-as-hers', the subject of which is the following 'a Mink', the whole clause is in apposition to the preceding tələx̱ətəs 'this'.

Earlier it was observed that topical objects in Upper Chehalis function somewhat differently from Colonial. They are often used in Colonial 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 Colonial, Upper Chehalis can use a passive for apparently stylistic reasons where a topical object would seem as appropriate.

> cətən, ...

>'He thinks...

> nákəqələ tələ təx̱ələsə tələ pənə.

>'indeed then the monster was right on him.'

> kənənutə'mə.

>'He takes him'

> cu təx̱ələsə.

>'to as to take him along.'

> ḥə kə'qələ kəx̱əq̓əxtə.

>'He is taken uphill.'

> [FB: 5h]

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 ('-tə' 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.

> aćv̱ə-xə təpənə.

>'There is a monster.'

> nəkəkəqələm l tələ təq̓ələx̱ə.

>'he is called Lark.'

> wi tələx̱ət'lə sq̓ələx̱ə.

>'And that Lark.'

> wi mələ tə wə-aq̓ələ təx̱ələsə.

>'and no one can see him'

> qəs həyə pənə.

>'because he is indeed a monster.'

> [FB: X̱anēxə'one]

The topic here is 'monster', and is referred to with a topical object in line 4. Yet in line 2 a passive ('-təm - perfective passive') is used, and his name ('Lark') is the oblique agent.

> wi mələ tə sp̓ələm pənəm̓ pənə.

>'And they don't know when'

> n tə kə'qələm sələn tələ pənə.

>'the monster was coming there.'

> mələ tə sp̓ələlə pənə.

>'it wasn't known what'

> tə wəələlə sələn-

>'he was born from.'

> [FB: WldMd]

Line 3 is passive ('-təm 'dependent passive') because the subject is indefinite. The topic in the last two lines
is 'moosir', but the subject of both is 'what'. The last line is not passive, in spite of the translation; wit wal is a transitive (probably causasivized, 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) sátiilti t t'éy sáwa. 'They make a good door.'

wi ṛacliils 'And inside'

xá tit tám qá÷ qáq čéticačtválalís. 'Then no water can go through.'

wi ṛacliils 'And inside'

sítam t tám qá÷ yáxtválalís. 'Nothing can shake them.'

ták÷l tanin sáwdecimntí. 'Even when it is a gale.'

wi sítam qá÷ sáxčás c sítáiq ṛaclipíalís. 'And the wind cannot go through to the inside.'

The suffix -uli is unquestionably the same as Upper Chehalis -wali; the final -s is probably a possessor suffix. The use of the topical object suffix in Tillamook is similar. Unfortunately, no examples are available. I could easily correct one shor text (or partial text) written down in the nineteenth century by Myron Eells and subsequently corrected by Franz Boas, and one text by Natalie 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.

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 deictic, however. To what does it refer? Logically one would refer to 'they'. This means, then, that the second line means 'no water can go through [the door]' and 'door' bas 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 Columbia 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, these languages are pretty much the same as in Upper Chehalis or Columbia. 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 Mrs. James, when she was a child, and used the following sentence:

51) awal r'wat cilmántni nks č'o1 l'úxstwalilít t stiqtiv. 'Or someone, their children, always bring him a horse.'

(I do not know what č'o1 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 táktu mítta t qí-stalí'twálalís. '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, 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 unglotted and untranslated for the relevant text. All four instances of topical objects are conversation interchanges, and use the form, q'awlulás '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'i taw r'it c'ot wás'wás. . . . .

'Bluejay said...' . . . .

g'i taw r'it c'utulís j̣øy . . . . . .

'Yuy [Bluejay's sister] said to him...'

The suffix -uli is unquestionably the same as Upper Chehalis -wall; 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 Salishan 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) a1a i.yu c'yá-w-w-in 'Then again she said it.'

c-yaw-1tšáz. . . .

'He said to her.'
Edel was somewhat uncertain about this suffix. She says, "-gal 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 -t/sgf1 impossible, for in virtually all cases where forms with the regular third person pronoun endings were used alternatively in the forms in -t/sgf1, 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 etsu 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 -t/sgf1 helps avoid ambiguity. It is often used when the subject is surprising, as when the tables are turned and the pursued captures the pursuer."

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 example is a straightforward type of conversational interchange. This passage is taken from a text about Quatch'la obtained originally by Edel from Clara Pearson in 1931, and re-elicited and transcribed by Larry and Terry Thompson from Minnie Scovell in 1961.

(56) c/yawin. He said,
    "anfi c/yawin-s,
    "You told me.
    g/a /na-n-§ /asis wa b(a)§ay.
    You go get on old person—it will be all right."

c/yawin-t-§ga1 g/§u de /c-t/awin-a.
    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/rha-nax1 jic /cag°,§s-si di§ /t'en /t'li§hihu(*).
    He caught his wife and the big man.
    da c/g°,§s(2)-t-x° da§ /t'li§hihu(*).
    He killed the man.
    3'i /yuw-ét(2)-wan.
    and he died.

dal wa c/k'an-en jic /cag°,§s-s.
    He took back his wife.

jic /cag°,§s-s te c/rha-wi(n)-t-§ga1 tx°at an s/tiw-t-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) jalc s/wiləc la c/yahis-u /náx-na-éet.
    The woman looked up at the smoke hole.
    tu... da /vác'yi.
    Oh! A snake!
    dal wa c/qayet-wi(n)-t-§ga1.
    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) ta wa s/náx-s/n(i)§ jik di§ /t'li§hihu(*)
    The men reached home.
    la wa de §-1'/yi-n-n jalc s/wiləc.
    and they found the woman.
    q'il c/ya /cag°,§s-§-g°,§ di§ s/náx-s-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 passage presented here pertain to Ahaqs' efforts to assign headgear appropriate to each animal (Jacobs translates this headgear as "crown").

(60) /a:a:q:s c/sgi:n, /h'a:si-5.
Ahaqs said, "You there!"

qe'-/a:q-ni/-is a c/sga'ta:x\'.
That crown isn't becoming to you.

x'i di'c /i:la'ul-i/-aqatu'a /t/sg-n-a\'.
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 as 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) di'c /si'y:w a wa n/-tak'i-\'a:qan-wi/en /ca:n\'/ /a:qat\'a:x\'.-s.
Grizzly put back on his head his own crown.

di'c /si'y:w /\'a:qan-ul i/\'i:la'ul /a tiw\'at na\'x\'.-a\'ay\'a-wi/(n)-t-a\'.
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 the reciprocal suffix in line 4. As Edel points out (1939:35), the reciprocal and topical object--straight, that is, for the same episode, Grizzly is more clearly topic. The man in line 5 was introduced as object in line J (of 56). As Edel points out (1939:35), the reciprocal and topical object are identical in form; in fact, they treat them as the same suffix.

(62) la wa s/cly k s/ti\'at da /q'ila=-\'u:cin.
The people returned from Yaquina (Newport).

q'il s/cali/-il u k t/na:qigal\'i\'.
The man is found.

Then they ran to the Siletz tribe.
c/-ya/-t\'a/-a\'.
They caught seals.

q'il na\'cay ta /c-han-s/h\'a:ha-t-a\'.
That man is killed.

Then they fought together.
h\'a\'si/-y:ag\'u/-t u /ha\'si s/ti\'at.
They catch a man by the hair.

d a c/ga\'a\'\'i/-t\'a/-u-u.
He is killed.

q'il da wa/-c/-h\'a:ha-il u ta c s/ti\'at.
Then they take that man along.

Han-s/yi/-y:ag\'u/-t u /hi\'gi\'i s/ti\'at.
They catch a man by the hair.

Then they run after him.

d a c/ga\'a\'\'i/-t\'a/-u-u.
He is killed.

Then they run after him.

cali-/cAli/-il u k s/ti\'at.
The Nehalem run after them.

q'il s/cali-/cAli/-il u k t/na:qigal\'i\'.
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 case that these inflections are used in Upper Chehalis.

I. Lushootseed (Salish)\(^{14}\)

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 -a\'g\'i 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\'ol\'g\'ayt ti\'t\'a qalx /\'al t\'si\'a\' /yiy\'aq\'u\'ui.
"He soaked these salmon eggs in a small basket"

Stabiq's\'at\'a /\'a \'t\'si\'il \'kin\'a.
"which his grandmother had set aside for him."

(65) di\'u\'u\'idd\'a\' /\'i\'l\'i/ g\'ii\'a\'a \'k\'in\'a\'a.

\(^{14}\) All information on Lushootseed, including examples, was generously provided by Thom Hess in a letter dated December 8, 1988.
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 \(-\text{waw}\) in imperfective aspect and \(-\text{us}\) in perfective aspect. Cowichan has \(-\text{alw}\) and \(-\text{awl}\) (Edel 1939:35). In Columbia there are two reciprocal suffixes, \(-\text{wax}\) and \(-\text{wp}\).

The fact that all three branches of the family show phonological similarity between the two suffixes cannot be accidental and the similarity suggests that the topical object is somehow derived from the reciprocal. 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 see each other.

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

\[(-\text{wax})\] reciprocal
\[(-\text{wp})\] topical

This would isolate \(-\text{wax}\) 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. Correspondences, and hence reconstructions, are pretty straightforward. Several of the suffixes given in footnote 10 show an initial \(-\text{t}\); 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 Salish forms (except for one of the Lillooet forms that is borrowed from the coast) can be reconstructed as \(-\text{awal}\) which Tillamook also has; the reflex of the \(-\text{w}\) is frequently missing, and at other times developed to \(-\text{w}\) then sometimes devolved to \(-\text{a}\). Sechelt and Sliammon devolved the final \(-\text{a}\) Squamish, Sooke, and Chalil changed it to \(-\text{a}\) Squamish and Sliammon have an alternate form ending in \(-\text{a}\) rather than \(-\text{al}\) and Bella Coola has an \(-\text{a}\) where other languages have \(-\text{a}\); 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-Tsimshian form, which has both the final \(-\text{a}\) found in the interior and the final \(-\text{aw}\) found in Central Salish: \(-\text{awal}\) \(-\text{aw}\) these taken together can be

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\[(-\text{wax})\] \(-\text{wp}\) \(-\text{s}\) reciprocal

\[(-\text{wax})\] \(-\text{wp}\) \(-\text{s}\) topical

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\[\text{The specific suffixes are as follows:}\]

Interior Salish:
- Cowichan \(-\text{aw}\)
- Cowlitz \(-\text{aw}\)
- Upper Chehalis \(-\text{aw}\)
- Sliammon \(-\text{aw}\)
- Twana \(-\text{aw}\)

Central Salish:
- Upper Chehalis \(-\text{aw}\)
- Cowichan \(-\text{aw}\)
- Upper Chehalis \(-\text{aw}\)
- Cowlitz \(-\text{aw}\)
- Upper Chehalis \(-\text{aw}\)
- Cowichan \(-\text{aw}\)
- Upper Chehalis \(-\text{aw}\)
- Upper Chehalis \(-\text{aw}\)
- Upper Chehalis \(-\text{aw}\)

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\[\text{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 geographically separated from other languages with the suffix. That is, Columbian is an Interior Salishan language of eastern Washington, the four Tsimshian 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 \(-\text{aw}\).}\]
This does not quite match my reconstruction of the topical object ("*wall*). 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 *k* 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.

**b. 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 *pa* as third person singular accusative, contrasting what he says next comes close to what *si* in *marung* (Jacobs 1929:3). The phenomenon is most pronounced when the two third persons is indicated by the obviative suffix following *ku*e'ana*. The element *pa* 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—*in suffix.

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 *pa*:

(69) ku'iwínana, 'and he went,'

kug'ana spílyáyi'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 slightly revised version in Jacobs 1934 (apart from some trivial orthographic differences, the 1934 version includes the repetition 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) spílyáni'n pa-xe-nma miýáwa'nix *é'ti-mič'nič fćan ti'c'łamya.

'the chief sent coyote from above to this land.'

ku-iq'unma paqáwa

'the chief let him go.'

ku-ik'éxa'ma ku-ik éxa,

'he saw people lying about.'

Ánáx.

'dead.'

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

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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 *pa* refers to him. This unexpected first introduction of a topic in the 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 (*Ako'at*). 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 *pa*. Note that he speaks of a "so-called obviative distinction"; Jacobs realized that this Sahaptin suffix functioned rather differently than does a true obviative. Thus, 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 *eius*. A small group, including the Eskimo, Algonquian, and Kutenai, express these relations by special verbal forms, the so-called obliative 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 obliative 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 object, 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 Bous understood the functioning of obliatives 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 Bous' 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 pâ~ 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 obliative pâ~. Whenever he was object of someone's action the pâ~ was used, whereas if another character was object of a third person subject it was used. ... [Though] Cougar is the first introduced, and though he carries all the action up to the first use of pâ~, that first use of pâ~ is not when he first becomes object of third person subject, but 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 obliative 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 pâ~ in the text mark third person subject with third person object involving Wildcat as object. Furthermore whenever he is object of the verb with a third person subject pâ~ 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 Sahaptin reciprocal prefix, the first use of which appears to be object of Wildcat's refusal. Finally they do take turns speaking to each other. . . . There are about six uses of pâ~ 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 pâ~ pretty much reciprocally is indicating something about the importance of this interaction.

J. 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 focus 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:

\[ g-\acute{a}ku \quad \text{he (third person) bit him} \]
\[ c-\acute{a}ku \quad \text{he (fourth person) bit him} \]

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 obliative 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 reference).

\((71)\) da\-\acute{y}ita

\[ 'he (their father) painted them (the two War Twins)' \]

(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.

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 1- '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 person' 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 to the subject is thus clearly shown not to be an obliative 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 -iy- in a surface structure position not normally occupied by a pronominal referent [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) kashik'ya kiya:a:t'ki:i.t.
   'It was a woman.'
   e'jikwi:ra.
   'She came to see 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):

"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 -iy-; it is used in discourse when there is a change of third person subject--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--iy- represents an indefinite or unspecified third person. In such cases the verb is translated into English with the passive" (Parks 1976:165).

I repeat one example from Parks:

(73) /pi:raski kur+ra+uks+kus+ar+i he-ru ar+ri+at+0 pi+raski he ar+ri+ir+ut+paks+uruk+0 plita/ > pi:raski kuhrukkususar:i he ru ahrirat pi:ras+kiski he ar+ri+ir+ut+paks+uruk+0 plita
   '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.

...
Examples from Boas and Deloria show that, at least on the sentence level, čʰɑ can create some complexities reminiscent of those seen for Upper Chehalis. There is a major difference, however, which raises questions even about the similarity of this construction 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) wičʰɑšɑ wɑ nũw čʰɑ way̓ɑk’e
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) nũw čʰɑ wičʰɑšɑ wɑ way̓ɑk’e
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 čʰɑ. 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 topical 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 topic in the first place 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.

Hierarchies are possible; one such is discussed by Brennan and Mchombo 1987 for the Bantu language Chichewa. 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" (Brennan 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 pronoun 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 indirect markings is also involved (for a clear treatment of direct/indirect marking, see Wolfart [1973:34] on Plains Cree). For Navajo Widdopponon to 3m - as reflecting hierarchy of control in Kutenai, the obviative for first and second persons (3m i t) 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, or 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 Cowichan topical object suffixes are also used in this last situation (see Kinkade 1984). 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 Columbia.

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, 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 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 Gerds 1988 treats them at length in Halcione. In all of these cases, restrictions on marking 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 Tsxosan. 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. 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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