

## External possession, obviation, and kinship in Umatilla Sahaptin

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Umatilla is a dialect of Sahaptin, a language of the Southern Plateau region of the Pacific Northwest of the United States. Sahaptin and Nez Perce together comprise the Sahaptian language family. Both Sahaptin and Nez Perce are head marking and dependency marking languages in which word order serves a wholly pragmatic function. This paper describes the interaction of external possession and obviation with regard to kinship terms. The paper is purely descriptive.<sup>1</sup>

### 1 Argument structure.<sup>2</sup>

#### 1.1 Pronominals and pronouns.

The verb in Umatilla Sahaptin agrees variously with core grammatical relations.<sup>3</sup> A third person nominative subject expresses this agreement via pronominal prefixes, *i-* if singular (as in 1) and *pa-* if plural (as in 2):<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> I wish to thank Inez Spino Reves (*Twáway*), the last completely fluent speaker of Umatilla, for graciously supplying the data for this paper. Published Sahaptin grammars include Jacobs (1931) and Rigsby and Rude (1996), and published Northwest Sahaptin texts are to be found in Jacobs (1929, 1934, 1937). For the relationship between Sahaptin and Nez Perce, see Aoki (1962, 1963, 1966*a*, 1966*b*); Rigsby (1965); Rigsby and Silverstein (1969); and Rude (1996, 2006). Sahaptian is further connected to Plateau Penutian, which includes Klamath (Aoki [1963]; Rude [1987]) and Molala (Pharis [2006]), and which in turn is reputed to be part of Macro-Penutian (DeLancey and Golla [1979]; Mithun [1999]). See also Rude (2000) for some Uto-Aztecan-Plateau grammatical comparisons. Hargus & Beavert (2001, 2002*a*, 2002*b*, 2005, 2006*a*, 2006*b*) treat phonology in the related Yakima Sahaptin, and Rude (1991*a*, 1997*b*) deal with grammatical reconstruction. See Givón (1984, 1990) for a typological-functional description of grammar.

<sup>2</sup> See Rude (2009) for a description of argument structure and transitivity in Sahaptin, and Rude (1988, 1994, 1996, 1997*a*) for studies of the pragmatic context of the Sahaptin voicing constructions. Rude (1992*b*) deals with word order in Nez Perce. Word order in both Sahaptian languages serves a pragmatic function.

<sup>3</sup> This is *core* as opposed to *oblique* grammatical relations (as in Relational Grammar, for which see Perlmutter [1980], Perlmutter, ed. [1983], and Perlmutter and Rosen, eds. [1984]); *actant* as opposed to *circonstance* grammatical relations (as in Tesnière [1988]). These are the syntactic primitives (S, A, O) in Dixon (1994).

<sup>4</sup> Abbreviations used in the paper. 1: first person, 2: second person, 3: third person, ACC: accusative, ALL: allative, APL: applicative, ASP: aspect, ASSOC: associative, BEN:

- (1) a. i-wína-ša-m-š  
3NOM-go-ASP-CSL-PRS  
'he/she/it is coming'
- b. i-wína-ša-m-š wínš  
3NOM-go ASP-CSL-PRS man  
'the man is coming'
- (2) a. pa-wína-ša-m-š  
3NOM.PL-go-ASP-CSL-PRS  
'they are coming'
- b. pa-wína-ša-m-š awínšma  
3NOM.PL-go-ASP-CSL-PRS men  
'the men are coming'

Table 1. Second position pronominals.

	Singular	Plural
First Person Exclusive	= <i>naš</i> (=aš, =š)	= <i>nataš</i> (=ataš/=taš)
First Person Inclusive		= <i>na</i>
Second Person	= <i>nam</i>	= <i>pam</i>
Complex	= <i>maš</i>	= <i>mataš</i>

First and 2<sup>nd</sup> person core arguments are obligatorily coded by the second position pronominals listed in Table 1 and illustrated in example 3. Independent personal pronouns (Table 2) generally impart an emphatic sense as in 4.

- (3) a. wína-ša-m-š=naš  
go-ASP-CSL-PRS=1SG  
'I am coming'
- b. wína-ša-m-š=nam  
go-ASP-CSL-PRS=2SG  
'you are coming'

benefactive, CSL: cislocative, DIR: directive, ERG: ergative, GEN: genitive, INV: inverse, LOC: locative, NOM: nominative, OBV: obviative, PL: plural, PRS: present, PST: past, SG: singular.

- (4) a. *ín=aš wína-ša-m-š*  
 I=1SG go-ASP-CSL-PRS  
 ‘I am coming’
- b. *ím=nam wína-ša-m-š*  
 you=2SG go-ASP-CSL-PRS  
 ‘you are coming’

The 2<sup>nd</sup> position pronominals (Table 1) are indifferent to case, such as *=naš* ‘I, me’ in 5. Case is determined by the 3<sup>rd</sup> person pronominal prefix (nominative *i-* versus obviative *á-*). Independent pronouns, such as the accusative *paanáy* and ergative *pínim*, are optional.

- (5) a. *á-ǵínu-ša=aš* (paanáy)  
 OBV-see-ASP.PRS=1SG 3ACC.SG  
 ‘I see him’
- b. *i-ǵínu-ša=aš* (pínim)  
 3NOM-see-ASP.PRS=1SG 3ERG.SG  
 ‘he sees me’

Table 2. Personal pronouns

	Singular	Plural	Dual
1 <sup>st</sup> person			
Nominative	<i>ín</i>	<i>náma</i>	<i>napiiní / nápiin</i>
Accusative	<i>ína / ináy</i>	<i>náaman / naamanáy</i>	<i>napiinamanáy</i>
Genitive	<i>inmí</i>	<i>naamí</i>	<i>napiinamí</i>
2 <sup>nd</sup> person			
Nominative	<i>ím</i>	<i>imáy</i>	<i>imiiní</i>
Accusative	<i>imanáy</i>	<i>imaamanáy</i>	<i>imiinamanáy</i>
Genitive	<i>imíin</i>	<i>imaamíin</i>	<i>imiinamí</i>
3 <sup>rd</sup> person			
Nominative	<i>pín</i>	<i>pmáy</i>	<i>piiní</i>
Accusative	<i>paanáy</i>	<i>paamanáy</i>	<i>piinamanáy</i>
Genitive	<i>pinmíin</i>	<i>paamíin</i>	<i>piinamíin</i>
Ergative	<i>pínim</i>		
Associative	<i>napiiní</i>		

First to 2<sup>nd</sup> person transitivity is marked by the complex pronominals *=maš* and *=mataš*:

- (6) a. qínu-ša=maš  
see-ASP.SG=1/2SG  
'I see you (sg.)'
- b. qínu-ša=mataš  
see-ASP.SG=1/2PL  
'I see you (pl.)'

And 2<sup>nd</sup> to 1<sup>st</sup> person transitivity is marked for 2<sup>nd</sup> person plus the inverse prefix *pá-*:

- (7) a. pá-qínu-ša=nam (ináy)  
INV-see-ASP.PRS=2SG 1ACC.SG  
'you see me'
- b. ím=nam pá-qínu-ša  
you=2SG INV-see-ASP.PRS  
'*you* see me'

## 1.2 The direct-inverse contrast.

Direct transitive action with 3<sup>rd</sup> person participants requires nominative pronominals, singular *i-* and plural *pa-* as in 8, whereas the pragmatic inverse (with topical O) prefixes *pá-* as in 9:

- (8) a. i-qínu-ša paanáy  
3NOM-see-ASP.PRS 3ACC.SG  
'he sees him'
- b. pa-qínu-ša paanáy  
3NOM-see-ASP.PRS 3ACC.SG  
'they see him'
- (9) a. pá-qínu-ša (paanáy)  
INV-see-ASP.PRS 3ACC.SG  
'he sees him'
- b. patá-qínu-ša (paanáy)  
INV.PL-see-ASP.PRS 3ACC.SG  
'they see him'

Table 3. Person hierarchy for direct and indirect transitive action

	1 <sup>st</sup> person $\subset$ 2 <sup>nd</sup> person $\subset$ 3 <sup>rd</sup> person topic $\subset$ 3 <sup>rd</sup> person									
Direct:	$\Rightarrow$	$\Rightarrow$	$\Rightarrow$	$\Rightarrow$	$\Rightarrow$	$\Rightarrow$	$\Rightarrow$	$\Rightarrow$	$\Rightarrow$	$\Rightarrow$
Inverse:	$\Leftarrow$	$\Leftarrow$	$\Leftarrow$	$\Leftarrow$	$\Leftarrow$	$\Leftarrow$	$\Leftarrow$	$\Leftarrow$	$\Leftarrow$	$\Leftarrow$

Nouns are case marked accusative (with *-na*) in both direct 10a and inverse 10b constructions. The agent in the inverse is case marked with the associative suffix *-in*. An example with *-in* serving the associative function is included in 10c. It requires plural subject-verb agreement, in this instance with 3<sup>rd</sup> person nominative *pa-*.

- (10) a. *i-ǵinu-ša wínš-na tílaaki*  
 3NOM-see-ASP man-ACC woman  
 ‘the woman sees the man’
- b. *pá-ǵinu-ša wínš-na tílaaki-in*  
 INV-see-ASP man-ACC woman-ASSOC  
 ‘the woman sees the man’
- c. *pa-wiyánawi-ša wínš tílaaki-in*  
 3NOM-arrive-ASP man woman-ASSOC  
 ‘the man is arriving with the woman’

Table 4. Core noun cases

	Nonhuman		Human	
		Singular	Plural	Dual
Absolute	$\emptyset$	$\emptyset$	<i>-ma</i>	<i>-in</i>
Accusative	<i>(-na)</i>	<i>-na</i>	<i>-maaman</i>	<i>-inaman</i>
Genitive	<i>-nmí</i>	<i>-nmí</i>	<i>-maamí</i>	<i>-inamí</i>
Ergative	<i>-nim</i>	<i>-nim</i>		
Associative	<i>-in</i>	<i>-in</i>		

The analysis as direct versus inverse can be justified on functional and semantic grounds.<sup>5</sup> The prefix *pá-* marks a semantic 2<sup>nd</sup> to 1<sup>st</sup> person transitivity as well as a pragmatic 3<sup>rd</sup> person to 3<sup>rd</sup> person topic transitivity—this according to the person hierarchy in Table 3 above. Also, in the inverse the semantic patient is case marked accusative, and the agent is never completely suppressed. Following are examples of speech act participant/3<sup>rd</sup> person transitivity. Ergativity is split in Sahaptin such that the ergative noun case (Table 4) only

<sup>5</sup> See Rude (1994).

suffixes to 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular subjects when the direct object is a speech act participant 11b.

- (11) a. á-ǵínu-ša=aš                      wínš-na  
 OBV-see-ASP.PRS=1SG man-ACC  
 ‘I see the man’
- b. i-ǵínu-ša=aš                      wínš-nim  
 3NOM-see-ASP.PRS=1SG man-ERG  
 ‘the man sees me’

### 1.3 The obviative pronominal.

I label *á-* “obviative” for want of a better term. It is in Umatilla a special 3<sup>rd</sup> person absolutive pronominal that codes the object of a transitive verb (when the subject is a speech act participant) and the subject of an intransitive verb (when it is an external possessor). In Klickitat Sahaptin it is more clearly an obviative pronominal where *i-* typically marks the topic and *á-* a secondary topic or fourth person—see Rude (1988). For example, the referent of obviative *á-/áw-* is repeated with the subject in the inverse of a following clause (as in 12), whereas the referent of nominative *i-* is repeated with the object in the inverse of a following clause (as in 13).

- (12) a. áw-ayk-a    Pǵíimya pá-wiitǵip-a    kúp̄kup-pa  
 OBV-sit-PST Wildcat INV-scratch-PST back-LOC  
 ‘Wildcat, sat up, he, scratched him on the back’  
 (Jacobs 1929:189:18-19)
- b. áw    kúuk á-liwati-ya                      K̄aaláasya    kúuk pá-twapati-ya  
 now then OBV-be.angry-PST Raccoon    then INV-chase-PST  
 ‘now then Raccoon, got angry, then he, chased him’  
 (Jacobs 1929:189:10-11)
- (13) a. Míst̄lyáy    i-wač-á                      iksíks iwínš pá-ʔinn-a miyáwax-in  
 Woodpecker 3NOM-be-PST small man INV-say-PST chief-ASSOC  
 ‘Woodpecker, was a small man. The chief said to him...’  
 (Jacobs 1929:175:18-19)

- b. k<sup>w</sup>nák    i-twáša-ša                      nĭk<sup>w</sup>ʔt ík<sup>w</sup>in    pá-wiyanawi-yuun-a  
 that.LOC 3NOM-cook-ASP.PRS meat    that.ALL INV-arrive-DIR-PST  
 ‘there he<sub>i</sub> is cooking meat for that place, he came to him<sub>j</sub>’  
 (Jacobs 1929:191:11-12)

## 2 Internal versus external possession.<sup>6</sup>

### 2.1 Intransitive subject.

The possessor of an intransitive subject may be internal or external to the noun phrase. The following are examples of *internal* possession. Note in each instance the 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular subject-verb agreement (via *i-*) is with the head noun whatever the person of the possessor.

- (14) a. i-winanínna-a                      inmí kúsi  
 3NOM- run.away-PST my horse  
 ‘my horse ran away’
- b. i-winanínna-a                      imíin kúsi  
 3NOM-run.away-PST your horse  
 ‘your horse ran away’
- c. i-winanínna-a                      pinmín kúsi  
 3NOM-run.away-PST his/her horse  
 ‘his/her horse ran away’

Sahaptin has contrastive constructions whereby a possessor is advanced to core argument status, i.e., as an *external* possessor. With a 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> person possessor this advancement is accomplished through agreement via a 2<sup>nd</sup> position pronominal (Table 1), and with a 3<sup>rd</sup> person possessor (singular or plural) it is via the obviative prefix *á-* (15c). There is one anomaly: 2<sup>nd</sup> person possessors are coded by the complex pronominals *=maš* and *=mataš*, not the expected *=nam* and *=pam*. Independent possessive pronouns (as also possessor nouns) retain their genitive case marking.

- (15) a. winanínna-a=aš    (inmí) kúsi  
 run.away-PST=1SG my horse  
 ‘my horse ran away’

<sup>6</sup> See Rude (1999) for a description of external possession in Sahaptin and Nez Perce. For a description of the phenomenon in Nez Perce with comment on its pragmatic function, see Rude (1986).

- b. winanínna=maš (imíin) kúsi  
 run.away-PST=1/2 your horse  
 ‘your horse ran away’
- c. á-winanínna (pínmíin) kúsi  
 OBV-run.away-PST his/her horse  
 ‘his/her horse ran away’

A plural head noun effects plural subject-verb agreement with internal possessor, as in 16a, but not with external possessor, as in 16b.

- (16) a. pa-wiyánawi-ya inmí-ma tanán-ma  
 3NOM.PL-arrive-PST my-PL person-PL  
 ‘my people arrived’
- b. wiyánawi-ya=aš (inmí) tanán-ma  
 arrive-PST=1SG my person-PL  
 ‘my people arrived’

## 2.2 Transitive object.

The internal-external contrast is effected in the direct object of a transitive verb via the applicative.<sup>7</sup> An oblique benefactive argument is case marked with *-ay/-yay*, as in 17a (with human referents the nominal is first put in the genitive before inflecting for the oblique cases). There is concord in accusative case marking, as in b, between the head noun and its internal possessor. In the applicative in c the verb suffixes *-ayi/-yayi* and the grammatical direct object is ambiguously a benefactive or external possessor.

- (17) a. pa-ʔaní-ya inmí-yay ʔapiłmí-na  
 3NOM.PL-make-PST mine-BEN knife-ACC  
 ‘they made the knife for me’
- b. pa-ʔaní-ya inmí-na ʔapiłmí-na  
 3NOM.PL-make-PST mine-BEN knife-ACC  
 ‘they made my knife’
- c. pa-ʔaní-yayi-ya=aš (ináy) ʔapiłmí  
 3NOM.PL-make-APL-PST=1SG me knife  
 ‘they made me the knife’ or ‘they made my knife’

<sup>7</sup> See Rude (1991b) for a study of the historical development of the applicative and related constructions in the Sahaptian languages.



Table 5. Kinship term possessor accessibility.<sup>8</sup>

	Inaccessible	Accessible
‘my father’	<i>natútas</i>	<i>inmí pšít</i>
‘your father’	<i>tút</i>	<i>imín pšít</i>
‘his/her father’	<i>pín pšít</i>	<i>pínmín pšít</i>

### 3 Kinship terms.<sup>9</sup>

Kinship terms have special forms—often suppletive—for singular possessors that are inaccessible to external possession—see Table 5. The paradigm with cases is given in Table 6. Internal possession is expressed as in 18a and 18b. An example of external possession is given in 18c.

- (18) a. *i-wiyánawi-ša natútas*  
 3NOM-arrive-ASP.PRS my.father  
 ‘my father is arriving’
- b. *i-wiyánawi-ša inmí pšít*  
 3NOM-arrive-ASP.PRS my father  
 ‘my father is arriving’
- c. *wiyánawi-ša=aš (inmí) pšít*  
 arrive-ASP.PRS=1SG my father  
 ‘my father is arriving’

Table 6. Declension of ‘father’.<sup>10</sup>

	‘my’	‘your’	<i>Proximate</i>	<i>Obviative</i>
Vocative	<i>túta</i>			
Absolute	<i>natútas</i>	<i>tút</i>	<i>pšít</i>	<i>pín pšít</i>
Associative	<i>natútasayin</i>	<i>tútín</i>	<i>pšítín</i>	<i>pín pšítín</i>
Ergative	<i>natútasanim</i>	<i>tutáp</i>	<i>pšítnim</i>	<i>pín pšítnim</i>
Genitive	<i>natútasanimí</i>	<i>tutaamí</i>	<i>pšítpmí</i>	<i>pín pšítpmí</i>
Accusative 1	<i>natútasaaan</i>	<i>tutáp</i>	<i>pšítna</i>	<i>pín pšítna</i>
Accusative 2			<i>pšítpa</i>	<i>pín pšítpa</i>

<sup>8</sup> Historically as also currently in other dialects *tút* ‘your father’ is *itút* (with *i-* ‘your’).

<sup>9</sup> See Rude (1989) for a preliminary description of the grammar of kinship terms in Sahaptin.

<sup>10</sup> In Northern Sahaptin the ‘your’ forms are distinguished for ergative (*tutám*) and accusative case (*tutáp*). In Northeast Sahaptin the senior vocative ends with the glottal stop (*púšaʔ* ‘grandfather!’) and the junior vocative without (*púša* ‘grandson!’).

The two varieties of internally possessed objects are given in 19a and 19b; 19c provides an example of external possession.

- (19) a. i-ǵínu-ša natútasa-an  
 3NOM-see-ASP.PRS my.father-ACC  
 ‘he sees my father’
- b. i-ǵínu-ša inmí-na pšít-na  
 3NOM-see-ASP.PRS my-ACC father-ACC  
 ‘he sees my father’
- c. i-ǵínw-ayi-ša=aš (ináy) pšít  
 3NOM-see-APP-ASP.PRS=1SG me father  
 ‘he sees my father’

The prefix *pín-* ‘his/her’ serves an obviative function—compare a and b in example 20.

- (20) a. i-wiyánawi-ya (pínmín) pšít  
 3NOM-see-PST his father  
 ‘his (his own or someone else’s) father arrived’
- b. i-wiyánawi-ya pín-pšt  
 3NOM-see-PST OBV-father  
 ‘his (someone else’s) father arrived’

The accusative suffix *-pa* marks kinship terms when a 3<sup>rd</sup> person possessor is coreferential with the subject in 21a. This sense is similarly expressed via concord between head noun and possessor with the regular accusative *-na* in 21b. The obviative sense (someone else’s) is expressed with *pín-* (in 21c) or the applicative (in 21d). Only in 21d is the possessor external.

- (21) a. i-ǵínu-ša pšít-pa  
 3NOM-see-ASP.PRS father-ACC  
 ‘he sees his (own) father’
- b. i-ǵínu-ša pínmí-na pšít-na  
 3NOM-see-ASP.PRS his-ACC father-ACC  
 ‘he sees his (own) father’

- c. i-ǵínu-ša                      pín-pšt-na  
 3NOM-see-ASP.PRS OBV-father-ACC  
 ‘he sees his (someone else’s) father’
- d. i-ǵínw-ayi-ša                      (paanáy) pšt  
 3NOM-see-APL-ASP.PRS him                      father  
 ‘he sees his (someone else’s) father’

The following are examples with multi-level possessors where the head noun remains the grammatical subject. Note the obviative sense provided by *pín-* ‘his/her’ in 22b.

- (22) a. i-wiyánawi-ya    (pínmín) pšt-mí    ǵáy  
 3NOM-arrive-PST his                      father-GEN man’s.brother  
 ‘his (own or someone else’s) father’s brother arrived’
- b. i-wiyánawi-ya    pín-pšt-mí    ǵáy  
 3NOM-arrive-PST OBV-father-GEN man’s.brother  
 ‘his (someone else’s) father’s brother arrived’

In 23 the object consists of two nouns joined by a conjunction. In a the accusative *-pa* specifies the subject as possessor. In b, however, obviative *pín-* teams up with *-pa* to make the other member of the coordinate noun phrase the possessor.

- (23) a. i-ǵínu-ša                      pínisa-an ku    pšt-pa  
 3NOM-see-ASP.PRS girl-ACC    and father-ACC  
 ‘he sees the girl and his (own) father’
- b. i-ǵínu-ša                      pínisa-an ku    pín-pšt-pa  
 3NOM-see-ASP.PRS girl-ACC    and OBV-father-ACC  
 ‘he sees the girl and her father’

The proximate-obviative contrast also obtains in the semantic ergative in 24 and pragmatic inverse in 25.

- (24) a. i-ǵínuša=aš                      (pínmíi-ním) pšt-ním  
 3NOM-see-ASP.PRS=1SG his-ERG                      father-ERG  
 ‘his (own or someone else’s) father saw me’

- b. i-ǵínuša=aš                      pǵn-pšt-nim  
 3NOM-see-ASP.PRS=1SG ERG-father-ERG  
 'his (someone else's) father saw me'
- (25) a. pá-ǵinu-ša              (pǵnmíin-in) pšít-in  
 INV-see-ASP.PRS his-ASSOC father-ASSOC  
 'his (own or someone else's) father sees him'
- b. pá-ǵinu-ša              pǵn-pšt-in  
 INV-see-ASP.PRS OBV-father-ASSOC  
 'his (someone else's) father saw him'

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