

Underlying //ə//, usually lost in unstressed syllables, is retained under stress; in order to see this basic pattern we may look at STATIVE and IMMEDIATE forms based on weak roots with obstruents:

√sək 'stick-like object strikes' : ʔes-sák 'struck' (STATIVE), sək-t
'just now struck' (IMMEDIATE), dim. sá[s]k-t
√kəɬ 'disengage' : ʔes-káɬ 'detached', dim. ʔes-kə[k]ɬ

Parallel to these forms we find from roots involving //əy//:

√səy 'strands twist together' : ʔes-síy 'twisted together', dim.
ʔes-sá[s]iʔ (-iʔ < ý)
√zəy 'flow' : zíy-t 'now flowing', dim. zá[z]iʔ-t
√sʷəy 'burn' : ʔes-sʷíy 'burned', dim. ʔes-sʷó[sʷ]iʔ (//ə// → ó/ __uvular)

With roots involving glottalized //ý// there is a further complication, there being no contrast between ý and ʔ after i (forms here are written consistently iʔ):

√kʷəy 'slant toward sun or fire' : ʔes-kʷíʔ 'slanted...', dim. ʔes-kʷú[kʷ]iʔ
(//ə// → ú/ __rounded velar)
√pəy 'belowt' : ʔes-píʔ 'lost', dim. ʔes-pá[p]iʔ

For the most part stems involving //í// form diminutives as we should expect, the í surfacing appropriately; e.g.

√míx 'mix' : ʔes-míx 'mixed', dim. ʔes-mí[m]x
√tíkʷ 'transport fire' : ʔes-tíkʷ 'fire made from another fire', dim.
ʔes-tí[t]kʷ
kíx 'elder sister', dim. kí[k]x 'dear elder sister'

But in cases where //y// or //ý// follows //í//, diminutives nearly always show á:

cíykst 'five' (PIS *cílakst), dim. cá[c]iʔkst 'five animals'
qʷc-íyx 'make a move' (AUTONOMOUS //-iyx// < PIS *-ilx), dim. qʷc-á[c]iʔx
səxʷsəxʷ-íʔt 'grizzly cub' (//-iyt// 'young offspring' < PIS *-ilt),
dim. səxʷsəxʷ-á[xʷ]iʔt (//ə// → á/ __rounded velar)
kʷm-íʔmeʔ 'small' (//-íʔCe//, creating a few shape/size words),
dim. kʷm-á[m]iʔmeʔ

A few diminutives show í in such forms, or alternates with á or í:

kʷíʔeh-í[h]iʔt 'salmon trout', a diminutive based on kʷíʔe(h) 'spring salmon' with //-iyt// 'young offspring' (immediate base *kʷíʔeh-íʔt not recorded)
cm-íʔmeʔ 'small (pl.)', dim. cm-í[m]iʔmeʔ ~ cm-á[m]iʔmeʔ

SUBJECT AND OBJECT IN NEZ PERCE

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O. Introduction.¹ In Nez Perce the verb agrees with both subject and object, and there is a three way distinction in the function of NP's. The subject of a transitive verb suffixes nim (which also marks the genitive), the subject of an intransitive verb is unmarked, and the object of a transitive verb suffixes ne. For this reason Nez Perce is of special interest to syntacticians and typologists, especially since transitivity, case marking, and word order are all governed by differing semantic and pragmatic criteria. This paper is intended as a brief description of some of these criteria with reference to simple sentences. Verb and NP inflections will be dealt with first,² and then some of the splits in the use of these inflections will be considered.

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

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

pé ({(ʔe)}{hii}) (pe) (nées) Stem (Suffix)			
ACC	ERG/NOM	NOM	ACC
Person	Number	Aspect Number (NOM) Direction	

Figure 1. Inflectional slots in the Nez Perce verb

Note that ?e indexes first or second person for both the ergative and accusative case.³ The ergative pé (third person) and ?e (first or second person) and the nominative hii (third person) are obligatory. But ?e as accusative (first or second person) and the plural pe and nées seem to be optional, used only for emphasis or counterassertion. Some aspectual suffixes agree with a nominative plural subject. When this is the case, the nominative plural prefix pe cannot co-occur. Although ?e, pé, etc., are listed in this paper with an e, because of vowel harmony they will actually occur in verbs as either ?e or ?a, pé or pá, etc.

1.1. Person agreement. Figure 2 should help clarify subject/object person agreement in the Nez Perce verb. The horizontal columns represent the person of the subject, the vertical columns indicate the person of the object.

	Intransitive	Transitive (non-reflexive) Objects		
Subject		1 person	2 person	3 person
1 person	∅	---	(?e)?e-	?e-
2 person	∅	(?e)?e-	---	?e-
3 person	hii-	(?e)hii-	(?e)hii-	pé-

Figure 2. Person indexing in the Nez Perce verb

1.1.1. Transitive prefixes. As can be seen in Figure 2, ?e and pé occur exclusively with transitive verbs. Note that the single morpheme pé agrees simultaneously with a third person subject and a third person object.

- (1) tíipla? -nim pé -?ewi-ye wewúkiye-ne
Tiipla?-ERG ACC+ERG-shoot-PAST elk-ACC
'Tiipla? shot an elk'
- (2) pé-yoxo?-ca píilept lekliim-ne
ACC+ERG-wait for-PRES four o'clock-ACC
'He/she is waiting for four o'clock'
- (3) wáaqa pá-ko-saaqa
already ACC+ERG-go-PAST
'He/she already did it'

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

- (4) ?imené ?e-hii-yóxo?-cix
you+PL+ACC ACC-NOM-wait for-PRES+PL
'They are waiting for you (plural)'
- (5) ?e-?e-yóxo?-nu?
ACC-ERG-wait for-FUTURE
'I will wait for you'
- (6) ?e-?e-yóxo?-nu?kum
ACC-ERG-wait for-FUTURE+hither
'You will wait for me'

As we have already seen in the above examples, a second syntactic function of ?e is to agree with a first or second person ergative subject. (Note that ?e → ?ew / _ ?, h)

- (7) ?ew-?ní-me walc
ERG-give-PAST+hither knife
'You gave me the knife'
- (8) ?ew-?ní-ye wóolac-na
ERG-give-PAST Woolac-ACC
'I/you gave it to Woolac'
- (9) wáaqa ?ín ?e-síwe-ce
already I ERG-cut-PRES
'I am already cutting it'

1.1.2. Intransitive prefixes. A third syntactic function of ?e that we will consider is its agreement with a possessed third person intransitive subject. Compare the following.

- (10) háama hii-kóomay-ca
man NOM-hurt-PRES
'The man is injured'
- (11) háama-nim húusus ?a-kóomay-ca
man-GEN head S-hurt-PRES
'The man's head hurts'
- (12) ?íinim ?é-wee-s tii?mes
my S-be-PRES book
'That is my book'
- (13) háama-nim ciqáamqal(-?nim) pé-kenip-e wóolac-na
man-GEN dog(-?ERG) ERG-bite-PAST Woolac-ACC
'The man's dog bit Woolac'

Intransitive verbs are unmarked for agreement with first or second person subjects.

- (14) ?iin Ø-wée-s sooyáapoo
I S-be-PRES white man
'I am a white man'
- (15) dalawii ?iin Ø-kúu-se ?iin-ku? taxc Ø-ki-yu?
if you S-go-PRES I-also surely S-go-FUTURE
'If you go, I will surely go too'
- (16) Ø-ciklîi-n (17) ?e-sepé-wîi-n
S-go home-IMP ERG-CAUSE-cry-IMP
'Go home!' 'Make him/her cry!'

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

- (18) tiipsa?s hii-we-s nimíipuu
Tiipsa?s NOM-be-PRES Nez Perce
'Tiipsa?s is Nez Perce'
- (19) hii-kî-ce wewúkiye-nim
NOM-see-PRES elk-ERG
'The elk sees me'

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

- (20) ?ew-?ni-se (21) ?ew-?ni-síix
ERG-give-PRES+SG ERG-give-PRES+PL
'I am giving it to someone' 'We are giving it to someone'
- (22) hii-wîi-ce (23) hii-wîi-cix
NOM-cry-PRES+SG NOM-cry-PRES+PL
'He/she is crying' 'They are crying'
- (24) qo?c hii-wéce-síga ka hii-kúu-ye
still NOM-dance-IMPERF+PL and NOM-go-PERF
'They were still dancing and he/she left'

If a plural form of the desired aspect is available it must be used. The prefix pe agrees with nominative plural subjects when no aspectual form is available. Note that the third person ergative pé and the nominative plural pe are distinguished by stress as well as position and co-occurrence.

- (25) hii-wîi-cíga (26) hii-pe-wîi-ne
NOM-cry-IMPERF+PL NOM-NOM PL-cry-PERF
'They were crying' 'They cried'

- (27) pé-kúu-ye (28) Ø-pe-kúu-ye
ACC+ERG-go-PAST S-NOM PL-go-PAST
'He/she did it' 'We/you went'
- (29) hii-pe-wecé-yu? (30) hii-pe-héx-ne
NOM-NOM PL-dance-FUTURE NOM-NOM PL-see-PAST
'They will be dancing' 'They saw me/you'
- (31) pe-pé-?ewi-ye háama-na
ACC+ERG-NOM PL-shoot-PAST man-ACC
'They shot the man'

The accusative plural is indexed in the verb by nées.

- (32) wéet ?a-náas-míci-sa
QUESTION ERG-ACC PL-hear-PRES
'Do you hear them?'
- (33) wóolac-nim pe-nées-?ni-ye tii?mes
Woolac-ERG ACC+ERG-ACC PL-give-PAST book
'Woolac gave them a book'

pé-	Third person ergative + third person accusative
?e-	1. First or second person ergative
	2. First or second person accusative
	3. Third person possessed intransitive subject
Ø-	First or second person intransitive subject
hii-	Third person nominative
pe-	Nominative plural
nées-	Accusative plural

Figure 3. Syntactic functions of verb agreement prefixes

2.0 Transitivity. In this section we will discuss briefly some criteria that decide transitivity and case marking in Nez Perce simplex sentences. These criteria include the person of both subject and object, singular versus plural, whether the object is effected or affected, totally or partially affected, inanimate or human, and whether the subject is new or old information.

2.1. Person splits. The non-third person ergative verb inflection ?e, of course, specifies a verb as transitive.

Unmarked	Ergative/Genitive	Accusative
ʔin 'I'	ʔinim	ʔine
ʔim 'you'	ʔimim	ʔime
ʔipí 'he/she/it'	ʔipnim	ʔipné
núun 'we'	núunim	núune
ʔimé 'you(PL)/they'	ʔiméem	ʔimené

Figure 4. Independent pronouns

The third person equivalent pé, however, is used only if the object is also third person. Thus verbs with third person subjects are undifferentiated as to transitivity unless the object happens also to be third person. The referencing of ergative subjects in the Nez Perce verb is thus split by person, since third person subjects with non-third person objects have no ergative agreement. NP's, however, are quite the opposite. Both ergative nim and accusative ne mark third person, but while first and second person independent pronouns have accusative forms, they do not have ergative forms (such forms serve only as genitives). In the following examples note that when a transitive verb does not specify an ergative subject the NP is marked ergative, and when the NP is not marked ergative the verb specifies an ergative subject. Note that hi 'say, tell' has allomorphs ∅ and i, and is transitive only with a human object.

- (34) wóolac hii-hí-ce táʔc méywi
Woolac NOM-say-PRES good morning
'Woolac is saying "Good Morning"'
- (35) wóolac-nim hii-hí-ne táʔc méywi
Woolac-ERG NOM-say-PAST good morning
'Woolac told me/you "Good Morning"'
- (36) wóolac-nim pé-∅-ne táʔc méywi
Woolac-ERG ACC+ERG-say-PAST good morning
'Woolac told him/her "Good Morning"'
- (37) ʔin ʔew-i-ne táʔc méywi
I ERG-say-PAST good morning
'I told him/her/you "Good Morning"'

2.2. Number split. NP's are not case marked when they are made plural by either verbal agreement or the NP plural suffix me.

- (38) hii-pe-héx-ne wewúkiye(-me)(-*nim)
NOM-NOM PL-see-PAST elk(-PL)(-*ERG)
'The elk (PL) saw me/you'
- (39) ʔe-kí-ce wewúkiye-me(-*ne)
ERG-see-PRES elk-PL(-*ACC)
'I/you see the elk (PL)'

2.3. Semantic/pragmatic splits. In Nez Perce most two argument verbs, including those involving the senses, are transitive.

- (40) pá-mčíi-ya kiwʔkiwíʔlec-ne
ACC+ERG-hear-PAST drum-ACC
'He/she heard (listened to) the drum'
- (41) wóolac-nim pé-nuuxsi-ye cúuʔyem-ne
Woolac-ERG ACC+ERG-smell-PAST fish-ACC
'Woolac smelled the fish'

There are some two argument verbs, however, which are not treated as transitive. This semantic split seems to separate verbs that effect (produce or make) the object from those that affect it, etc.⁴ Compare the following.

- (42) háama hii-we-s nimípuu
man NOM-be-PRES Nez Perce
'The man is Nez Perce'
- (43) háama hii-tíiʔme-ne tíiʔmes
man NOM-write-PAST book
'The man wrote a book'
- (44) háama hii-hí-ne táʔc méywi
man NOM-say-PAST good morning
'The man said "Good Morning"'
- (45) háama hii-haní-ya wálc
man NOM-make-PAST knife
'The man made a knife'
- (46) háama-nim pá-sapiik-a walás-na
man-ERG ACC+ERG-sharpen-PAST knife-ACC
'The man sharpened the knife'
- (47) háama-nim pé-ʔnik-e walás-na hiipinwées-pe
man-ERG ACC+ERG-put-PAST knife-ACC table-on
'The man put the knife on the table'

If a human goal is implied then the verb becomes transitive. Dative objects are case marked with the accusative suffix ne and benefactive goals with the benefactive suffix ?áyn. Here haní 'make' takes a suffix to become (ha)ny-a?ny.⁵

- (48) háama-nim pé-tii?me-ne wóolac-na
man-ERG ACC+ERG-write-PAST Woolac-ACC
'The man wrote to Woolac'
- (49) háama-nim pé-Ø-ne wóolac-na
man-ERG ACC+ERG-say-PAST Woolac-ACC
'The man told it to Woolac'
- (50) háama-nim pé-?ni-ye wóolac-na
man-ERG ACC+ERG-give-PAST Woolac-ACC
'The man gave it to Woolac'
- (51) háama-nim pá-nya?ny-a wálc wóolac-?áyn
man-ERG ACC+ERG-make+for-PAST knife Woolac-for
'The man made a knife for Woolac'

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

- (52) pé-hip-e nukú-ne
ACC+ERG-eat-PAST meat-ACC
'He/she ate (some of) the meat'
- (53) pé-hip-e la?ám? nukú-ne
ACC+ERG-eat-PAST all meat-ACC
'He/she ate (one of each of) all (several kinds of) meat'
- (54) pé-hip-e núkt
ACC+ERG-eat-PAST meat
'He/she ate the meat (all of it)'
- (55) pé-hip-e la?ám? núkt
ACC+ERG-eat-PAST all meat
'He/she ate all the meat'

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

- (56) tíip̄a?-nim pé-hip-e nukú-ne
Tiip̄a?-ERG ACC+ERG-eat-PAST meat-ACC
'It was Tiip̄a? that ate the meat'
- (57) tíip̄a? pé-hip-e nukú-ne
Tiip̄a? ACC+ERG-ate-PAST meat-ACC
'Tiip̄a? ate (some of) the meat'
- (58) wéetuu tíip̄a?s-nim pé-hip-e
no Tiip̄a?s-ERG ACC+ERG-eat-PAST
'No, Tiip̄a?s ate it'

Neither transitivity nor case marking seem to involve any splits with aspect. Word order, however, does. If only one argument is present word order is very free. But when two arguments are present then only SVO and SOV are permitted. For past aspects SVO is obligatory, but for non-past either SVO or SOV are permitted. Older speakers, however, prefer SOV.

- (59) tíip̄a?s-nim pé-hip-e nukú-ne
Tiip̄a?s-ERG ACC+ERG-eat-PAST meat-ACC
'Tiip̄a?s ate the meat'
- (60) tíip̄a?s-nim nukú-ne pé-hip-se
Tiip̄a?s-ERG meat-ACC ACC+ERG-eat-PRES
'Tiip̄a?s is eating the meat'

Footnotes

- ¹I wish to thank Zelma Minthorn and her husband Anton for providing the bulk of the data for this paper. Haruo Aoki's Nez Perce Grammar (University of California Press, 1970) has also been of immense value.
- ²Compare Aoki, pp 105-108, for verb inflection, and pp 71-80, for substantive inflection. In this paper we will not discuss particle inflection (see Aoki, pp 127-131), or the reciprocal and reflexives (pp 90-92).
- ³Aoki, p 196, describes ?e as the "third person object prefix" when the subject is either first or second person. My informant prefixes ?e to all transitive verbs with first or second person subject, regardless of the person of the object. My informant also allows ?e to be prefixed both to itself and to hi (third person nominative), in which cases this use of ?e agrees with a first or second person object. This paper will not discuss the pronominal particle ?ee (see Aoki, pp 127, 131, and 137).
- ⁴Perhaps it could be said that to 'make' or 'produce' is to 'cause to be or exist'. In Twi 'make' and 'be (+NP)' are expressed by the same verb ye, as in Kofi ye abarimaa 'Kofi is a man' and Kofi ye efie 'Kofi built (made) a house'. Could it be that Nez Perce captures this generality by treating the transitivity of make verbs the same as exist verbs?
- ⁵See Aoki, p 98, for the benefactive verb-suffix.