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# Subject and Inverse in Kutenai

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**1. Introduction.** A number of American Indian languages possess two ways to express semantically transitive clauses with two participants, the two constructions differing as to which of the two participants possesses a grammatical status which may or may not be that of subject, but which is clearly in some sense *primary* in a way that subjects are. Examples of pairs of sentences from a number of such languages are given in (1) to (5).<sup>1</sup>

## (1) Ojibwa (Rhodes 1976: 202)

- a. aw nini w-gi:-wa:bm-a:n niw kwe:w-an  
that man 3-PAST-see-DIRECT,ANIM,OBV that,OBV woman-OBV  
The man saw the woman.
- b. aw kwe: w-gi:-wa:bm-igo:n niw ninw-an  
that woman 3-PAST-see-INVERSE,ANIM,OBV that,OBV man-OBV  
The woman was seen by the man.

## (2) Cree (Dahlstrom 1986: 52-53)

- a. wa-pam-e--w  
see-DIRECT-3  
he [proximate] sees him [obviative]
- b. wa-pamik  
/wa-pam-ekw-w/  
see-INVERSE-3  
he [obviative] sees him [proximate]

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<sup>1</sup> The abbreviations used in glosses in this paper include the following. (Entries in parentheses are used only in the non-Kutenai examples in (1) to (5).)

(A, B	(see footnote 2))	OBJ	object
(ANIM	animate)	OBV	obviative
ASP	aspect	PTCL	particle
(CL	classifier)	PL	plural
FUT	future	POSS	possessive
HABIT	habitual	PRED	predicate
IMP	imperative	(PRES	present)
INDIC	indicative	SG	singular
IO	indirect object	SUBOR	subordinate
MIL	(see the appendix)	(THM	thematic prefix)
NEG	negative	TRANS	transitive
NOM	nominalization	3	third person

(3) Koyukon Athapaskan (Thompson 1989: 5)

- a. John yi-nee-l-'aanh  
3,OBJ-THM-CL-see  
John is looking at him/her. [direct]
- b. John bi-nee-l-'aanh  
3,OBJ-THM-CL-see  
John is looking at him/her. [inverse]

(4) Cherokee (Cook 1979: 171-172, cited by Scancarelli 1986: 81)<sup>2</sup>

- a. Ca:ni a:-ko:hwthiha Ci:mi  
John 3SG,A-see,PRES Jim  
John sees Jim. [direct]
- b. Ca:ni u:-ko:hwthiha Ci:mi  
John 3SG,B-see,PRES Jim  
John is seen by Jim. [inverse]

(5) Nootka (Whistler 1985: 228)

- a. čuqšil-ibt-ʔa Bill ʔu-yuq John  
spear-PAST-INDIC,3 Bill OBJ John  
Bill speared John.
- b. čuqšil-ʔi-t-ibt-ʔa John ʔuxʷi-t Bill  
spear-PASSIVE-PAST-INDIC,3 John by Bill  
John was speared by Bill.

For a number of these languages, there is debate in the literature as to whether or not the two constructions should be considered instances of a contrast between active and passive, and whether the participant bearing primary status should be considered a subject or not. In Algonquian languages, for example, where the two constructions are traditionally called *direct* and *inverse*, both positions have been taken on the question, at least for different languages. Rhodes (1976) argues that the inverse construction in the Ojibwa example in (1b) is a passive structure and that the noun phrase that is the object in (1a) is the grammatical subject in (1b). Conversely, Dahlstrom (1986) argues that the inverse construction in Cree, as in (2b), is not a passive and that (2a) and (2b) do not differ in their grammatical relations.

The purpose of this paper is to discuss a similar contrast in Kutenai, a language generally viewed as a language isolate that is spoken in southeastern British Columbia, northern Idaho, and northwestern Montana. The pair of sentences in (6) illustrate the contrast.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> The abbreviations 'A' and 'B' in (4) stand for two sets of pronominal prefixes that occur on verbs in Cherokee. With intransitive verbs, the contrast between the A set and the B set partly corresponds to the contrast between agents and patients, but is much more complicated.

<sup>3</sup> The examples cited in this paper are of four types and are annotated accordingly. Some of the examples are from texts, either ones published in Boas (1918) or ones collected by Lawrence Morgan and transcribed and translated by Elizabeth Gravelle. Examples from texts of the latter category are identified by tape number. The examples from these texts are annotated accordingly. The remaining three types of examples cited are ones produced in elicitation (marked E), ones presented for judgment (marked J), and a few simple ones constructed by

- (6) a. wu-kat-i      palkiy-s      titqat'  
          see-INDIC   woman-OBV   man  
          The man saw the woman. (A)
- b. wu-kat-aps-i      titqat'-s      palkiy  
          see-INVERSE-INDIC   man-OBV   woman  
          The man saw the woman. (or The woman was seen by the man.) (A)

I will use the terms *notional subject* and *notional object* to refer to the two participants in transitive clauses, these terms being understood to be tied to the semantic relationship of the participant to the verb, independent of its grammatical properties. Thus *titqat'* 'man' is notional subject in both (6a) and (6b), while *palkiy* 'woman' is notional object. The two sentences in (6) differ in that the notional object *palkiy* 'woman' bears a suffix -s in (6a) but not in (6b) while the notional subject *titqat'* 'man' bears this suffix in (6b) but not in (6a). This suffix is glossed 'obv' for 'obviative', following the terminology of Garvin (1948, 1958) and similar terminology for an analogous category in Algonquian languages. I will refer to a third person nominal that is not obviative, like *titqat'* 'man' in (6a) and *palkiy* 'woman' in (6b), as *proximate*, again following Algonquian terminology. The distribution of proximate and obviative in Kutenai can only be understood from a discourse perspective and is rather similar to the analogous distribution in Algonquian languages (cf. Dahlstrom 1986, Goddard 1990). Namely, the referent of a proximate nominal is, loosely speaking, the more topical or central participant in the surrounding discourse, while the obviative nominal is less topical and less central. A more detailed account of the use of proximate versus obviative in discourse awaits a study of text materials (though see Garvin 1958), and I will not discuss the discourse significance of the contrast in this paper, though I will observe a number of properties that manifest themselves at the sentence level.

The two sentences in (6) differ, not only in the distribution of the obviative suffix but also in the presence of a suffix -aps in (6b) which is absent in (6a). The function of this suffix can be characterized, at least in the majority of its uses, as that of indicating that the proximate participant is the notional object and that the obviative nominal is the notional subject, the reverse of what is found in sentences like (6a) in which this suffix is absent. Again following terminology from Algonquian, I will refer to (6a) as a *direct* clause, and to (6b) as an *inverse* clause. The question being addressed by this paper can now be formulated more precisely: is the inverse construction a kind of passive? Is the notional object in an inverse clause the grammatical subject, or is it the grammatical object, as it is in the corresponding direct clause? And is the notional subject in an inverse clause the grammatical subject, as it is in the corresponding direct clause, or is it something else? Or equivalently, do direct and inverse clauses differ in their grammatical relations, or is the assignment of grammatical relations the same in the two kinds of clauses, with the only difference being one of the assignment of proximate and obviative? I will argue in this paper that the inverse construction in Kutenai is a kind of passive construction, that

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myself by analogy to examples in texts and elicitation (marked A). Where possible, I cite text examples, since I assume these to be the only truly reliable data. I also assume that elicited examples are more reliable than examples judged acceptable and examples constructed by myself. While text examples are most reliable, examples of the other three sorts are often better examples for illustrating the points being made, and such examples are only given on the assumption that analogous (though perhaps more opaque) examples from texts could be provided. For this reason, I will in many places in this paper provide both kinds of examples, some of types E, J, or A for clarity, and some from texts to show that the construction illustrated is actually used.

direct and inverse clauses *do* differ in their assignment of grammatical relations, and that the notional object *is* the grammatical subject in an inverse clause.<sup>4</sup>

The two sentences in (6) also differ in their word order but this is **not** a crucial difference. While Kutenai allows some freedom of order, the language is verb-initial in the sense that nominals normally follow the verb and the most common order in direct clauses is VOS. SVO and VSO order are also found in texts. The majority of examples with lexical subject and object cited below are SVO, but this is only because this is the most common order given in elicited data, presumably because of the SVO order in the English sentences given for translation. In elicited data, VOS order is occasionally used and the order V-NP is more commonly given in elicited data for clauses containing a single lexical nominal, regardless of the status of the nominal. A more careful study of the distribution of different orders, both in direct and inverse clauses, both in terms of the frequency of different orders and the discourse factors governing their distribution, awaits further study. The examples in (7), however, illustrate some of the different orders found in texts for clauses in which both the notional subject and the notional object are lexical.<sup>56</sup>

(7) a. VOS

n-ʔitkin-i                      waʔknaʔ-s    watak

<sup>4</sup> The thesis of this paper is consistent with the position of Garvin (1948, 1958), who describes what I am calling the inverse construction as a passive. Lawrence Morgan (1991) and Rude (1990) have both questioned analysing this construction as a passive.

<sup>5</sup> Except for some examples from texts in Boas (1918) cited later in the paper, the examples cited from texts come from a body of texts collected by Lawrence Morgan and transcribed and translated by Elizabeth Gravelle, a native speaker of Kutenai. These texts are identified by tape number and story number within the tape, with line number in the transcribed version. These stories, with story-teller, and informal title for story are as follows. (Rosalie McCoy, Anne Pierre, and Abraham Shottanana were monolingual speakers of Kutenai.)

Tape 20, story 2	Catherine Gravelle (Tobacco Plains)	Chickadee, Frog, Wolf, and Elk
Tape 21, story 1	Rosalie McCoy (Tobacco Plains)	Fool Hen, Hawk, and Weasel
Tape 71, story 2	Anne Pierre (Tobacco Plains)	Monster With Seven Heads
Tape 71, story 1	Anne Pierre (Tobacco Plains)	Coyote and the Maidens
Tape 126, side A	Moses Joseph (Lower Kutenai)	Coyote and Fox
Tape 126, side B	Moses Joseph (Lower Kutenai)	Frog and Turtle
Tape NS7, story 1	Anne Pierre (Tobacco Plains)	About Coyote and Quʔapdiʔ
Tape NS21, story 3	Abraham Shottanana (Tobacco Plains)	Story about man who might have been whitehead
Tape NS21, story 5	Abraham Shottanana (Tobacco Plains)	True story, referring to Blackfeet and Akmu

The texts from Boas (1918) from which examples are cited are as follows:

Boas Text 9	Paul (Upper Kutenai, lived near St. Eugène Mission)	Coyote and Star
Boas Text 23	Paul	The Frenchman and His Daughters
Boas Text 32	Angi McLaughlin (Lower Kutenai)	Chipmunk and Owl
Boas Text 48	Mission Joe and Felix Andrew (Upper Kutenai)	The Animals and the Sun

<sup>6</sup> The Kutenai forms cited in this paper are more abstract in one respect than what I assume to be the surface phonemic representation. Namely, verb forms, like the first word in (7a), which begin with either the prefix *n-* 'PRED' or the prefix *k-* 'SUBOR' and which precede a verb stem beginning with ʔ are actually pronounced with an initial *nʔ-* or *kʔ-*. I.e. the forms cited undergo a coalescence rule whereby the *n-* or *k-* combines with the ʔ to form a glottalized *nʔ-* or *kʔ-*. The forms are cited in this pre-coalescence fashion because of the difficulty placing the hyphen between the prefix and the verb stem.

PRED-make-INDIC jerky-OBV frog  
Frog made jerky. (Tape 20, story 2, line 89)

b. VSO

taxa-s      ɕ'inaɪ    ?iɕ'kiɪ-ni      kyaq̃nukaʔt    nuʔkɪanana-s  
then-OBV    go      search-INDIC eagle      pine.pitch-OBV  
Then Eagle went in search of pine pitch. (Tape 21, story 1, line 70)

c. SVO

taxa-s      skinkuɕ    piʔak-s      sakɪɪ    sahtit-ni      k-ʔukiʔ-s  
now-OBV    coyote      already-OBV ASP      married-INDIC    SUBOR-one-OBV  
  
swin-ʔis-is      nasuʔkin-s  
daughter-3,POSS-OBV    chief-OBV

Now Coyote was already married to **one** of the chief's daughters.  
(Tape 21, story 1, line 177)

**2. Subject and Object.** The notions of subject and object are most clearly reflected in the verb morphology in Kutenai. Subjects are characterized by a set of morphemes, some of which are either proclitics or prefixes and some of which are suffixes. The ones which are proclitics or prefixes I will represent here as separate words, following the practice of Gravelle and Morgan (1979) rather than that of Garvin (1948), who treats them as prefixes, though I do not know of any convincing evidence at this time for choosing between these two approaches. The forms in (8) illustrate these subject morphemes.

- (8) a. hu      ɕxa-ni  
1,SUBJ    talk-INDIC  
I talked.      (E)
- b. hu      ɕxa-naɪaʔ-ni  
1,SUBJ    talk-1PL,SUBJ-INDIC  
We talked.      (E)
- c. hin      ɕxa-ni  
2,SUBJ    talk-INDIC  
You (sg.) talked.      (E)
- d. hin      ɕxa-kiɪ-ni  
2,SUBJ    talk-2PL-INDIC  
You (pl.) talked.      (E)

*hu* in (8a) and (8b) indicates a first person subject, regardless of number, while *hin* in (8c) and (8d) indicates a second person subject, again regardless of number. First and second person plural are indicated by the use of the suffixes *-(n)alaʔ* and *-kiɪ* respectively, as in (8b) and (8d). The same morphemes occur with transitive verbs with a third person object, as in (9).

- (9) a. hu      wu-kat-i  
1,SUBJ    see-INDIC  
I saw him/her/it/them.      (E)

- b. hu        wu·kat-alaʔ-ni  
 1,SUBJ see-1PL,SUBJ-INDIC  
 We saw him/her/it/them. (E)
- c. hin        wu·kat-i  
 2,SUBJ see-INDIC  
 You (sg.) saw him/her/it/them. (E)
- d. hin        wu·kat-kiʔ-ni  
 2,SUBJ see-2PL-INDIC  
 You (pl.) saw him/her/it/them. (E)

A different set of morphemes is used to indicate first and second person objects, illustrated in (10).

- (10) a. wu·kat-ap-ni  
 see-1SG,OBJ-INDIC  
 He/she/it/they saw me. (E)
- b. wu·kat-awas-ni  
 see-1PL-INDIC  
 He/she/it/they saw us. (E)
- c. wu·kat-is-ni  
 see-2,OBJ-INDIC  
 He/she/it/they saw you (sg.). (E)
- d. wu·kat-is-kiʔ-ni  
 see-2,OBJ-2PL-INDIC  
 He/she/it/they saw you (pl.). (E)

Except for the suffix *-kiʔ*, which is used to indicate a second plural subject or object, the object suffixes in (10) are distinct from the subject morphemes in (8) and (9): *-ap* indicates a first person singular object, *-awas* a first person plural object, and *-is* a second person object (either singular or plural).

When both subject and object are nonthird person, the morphemes of (8) to (10) combine, as shown in (11).

- (11) a. hu        wu·kat-is-ni  
 1,SUBJ see-2,OBJ-INDIC  
 I saw you (sg.). (E)
- b. hu        wu·kat-is-kiʔ-ni  
 1,SUBJ see-2,OBJ-2PL-INDIC  
 I saw you (pl.). (E)
- c. hu        wu·kat-awas-ni  
 1,SUBJ see-1PL,2-INDIC  
 We saw you (sg. or pl.). (E)
- d. hin        wu·kat-ap-ni  
 2,SUBJ see-1SG,OBJ-INDIC  
 You (sg.) saw me. (E)

- e. hin        wu.kat-awas-ni  
       2,SUBJ    see-1PL-INDIC  
       You (sg./pl.) saw us.    (E)
- f. hin        wu.kat-ap-kił-ni  
       2,SUBJ    see-1SG,OBJ-2PL-INDIC  
       You (pl.) saw me.    (E)

Except for the forms in (11c) and (11e), **in** which one of the two participants is first person plural, the forms in (11) are predictable from those in (8) to (10). Both (11c) and (11e) involve the suffix *-awas*, which occurs in (10b) above as an indicator of a first person plural object. The only fact about (11e) that is at all unexpected is the absence of the second person plural suffix *-kił*. The form in (11) that is least expected is the one in (11c), with *-awas*, which otherwise indicates a first person plural object, but is **here** indicating a first person plural subject. Nor does (11c) contain any morpheme that otherwise indicates second person or second person plural.

Except for the anomalies in (11c) and (11e), however, the verbal paradigms in Kutenai exhibit fairly straightforward indications of first and second person subject and object. However, third person is, with one exception to be noted below, never indicated on the verb in Kutenai, either with subjects or with objects. This is shown for third person objects in (9) above and for third person subjects in (10), as well as by the examples in (12).

- (12) a. txa-ni.  
           talk-INDIC  
           He/she/it/they talked.    (E)
- b. wu.kat-i.  
           see-INDIC  
           He/she/it/they [prox] saw him/her/**it**/them [obv].    (E)
- c. wu.kat-aps-i.  
           see-INVERSE-INDIC  
           He/she/it/they [obv] saw him/her/**it**/them [prox]    (E)

Unlike some languages in which the **inverse** construction interacts with a person hierarchy, what I am calling the inverse construction **in** Kutenai is restricted to transitive clauses in which both participants are third person. As a **result**, although the verbal morphemes in (8) to (11) provide a clear diagnostic for subjects and **objects** in clauses containing a first or second person participant, the absence of any indication **on** the verb of subject and object for third person means that these morphemes provide no basis for **determining** the status of subject and object in inverse clauses. In section 4 below, however, I **will** discuss situations in which the verb is inflected for a third person obviative subject.

It should be noted that although there **is** a question of whether the inverse construction is a passive, there is a separate construction **in** Kutenai which is uncontroversially a passive construction, a morphologically intransitive construction involving a distinct suffix *-ił*, as in (13).

- (13) a. hu        wu.kat-ił-ni  
           1,SUBJ    see-PASSIVE-INDIC  
           I was seen.    (E)
- b. hin        wu.kat-ił-ni  
           2,SUBJ    see-PASSIVE-INDIC  
           You (sg.) were seen.    (E)
- c. wu.kat-ił-ni



see-PASSIVE-INDIC

He/she/it was seen / They were seen. (E)

Unlike the inverse construction, the *if*-passive can occur with first or second person participants, as in (13a) and (13b). But also unlike the inverse construction, the notional subject is never expressed in the *if*-passive.

**3. Proximate and Obviative.** Before discussing the evidence that inverse clauses are passive, it is worth summarizing some basic facts about the distribution of proximate and obviative. First, it is noted above that the proximate:obviative contrast is essentially a discourse-based contrast, the proximate element being the more topical. One manifestation of this at the clause-level is that the choice between direct and inverse is predictable if the two participants are human, and one of them is pronominal, the other lexical: namely, the pronominal participant (which is not realized overtly) must be interpreted as proximate and the lexical participant must be obviative. Thus, if the notional subject is lexical and the notional object is pronominal, the inverse construction is strongly preferred, as indicated in (14).<sup>7</sup>

(14) a. ??wu·kat-i    mahi  
          see-INDIC Mary  
          Mary [prox] saw him [obv]. (J)

b.   wu·kat-aps-i            mahi-s  
      see-INVERSE-INDIC Mary-OBV  
      Mary [obv] saw him [prox]. (or He was seen by Mary) (J)

Conversely when the notional subject is pronominal and the notional object is lexical, the inverse construction is strongly dispreferred, as shown in (15).<sup>8</sup>

(15) a.   wu·kat-i    mahi-s  
          see-INDIC Mary-OBV  
          He [prox] saw Mary [obv]. (A)

b.   ??wu·kat-aps-i            mahi  
      see-INVERSE-INDIC Mary  
      He [obv] saw Mary [prox]. (or Mary was seen by him.) (J)

While these constraints manifest themselves at the sentence level, they are presumably best understood, not as facts to be expressed in the syntax of Kutenai, but rather as side effects of the discourse grammar of the language, which specifies (among other things) the rules or principles governing the choice of proximate versus obviative: since the principles governing the use of pronouns entails that the referents of pronominal participants be more central in the preceding

<sup>7</sup> As pointed out to me by Lawrence Morgan, (14a) is acceptable on a reading 'Mary saw it'. (14a) is judged out of context to be unacceptable on a reading 'Mary saw him', though I am aware of a few text examples that are analogous to (14a). As discussed below, the choice of proximate and obviative is also sensitive to the humanness of the participants: it is not possible for the proximate to be nonhuman and the obviative human, regardless of the properties of the two participants in the immediate discourse context.

<sup>8</sup> Lawrence Morgan has pointed out to me that (15b) is probably acceptable on a reading 'It saw Mary', where the notional subject is nonhuman animate, but this needs to be checked.

discourse than the referents of lexical participants, it apparently follows that (14a) and (15b) would rarely if ever have an appropriate discourse context.<sup>9</sup>

Note that both direct and inverse are possible when *both* participants are pronominal, as illustrated in (12b) and (12c) above, as well as the following examples from texts.<sup>10</sup>

(16) a. *taxa-s qaki-t-ni.*  
 thus-OBV say-TRANS-INDIC  
 This he [prox] told them [obv]. (Tape 71, story 2, line 50)

b. *qak-t-aps-i ...*  
 say-TRANS-INVERSE-INDIC  
 He [obv] told her [prox] ... (Tape 71, story 1, line 174)

c. *n-ʔup-it-ni.*  
 PRED-die-TRANS-INDIC  
 He [prox] killed it [obv]. (Tape 126, side A, line 70)

d. *qa ʔupx-naps-i.*  
 NEG see-INVERSE-INDIC  
 They [obv] didn't see him [prox]. (Tape 71, story 1, line 57)

(16a) and (16c) are direct, with proximate notional subject and obviative notional object; (16b) and (16d) are inverse, with proximate notional object and obviative notional subject.

The second observation to be made about obviatives is that the proximate:obviative contrast in general involves third person participants only.<sup>11</sup> Thus contrast (17a), in which the object *nuʔkiy* 'rock' is obviative, with (17b), in which it is proximate.

(17) a. *mafi wu-kat-i nuʔkiy-s*  
 Mary see-INDIC rock-OBV  
 Mary saw a rock. (E)

b. *hu wu-kat-i nuʔkiy*  
 I,SUBJ see-INDIC rock  
 I saw a rock. (E)

The general principle is that there can be at most one proximate per sentence. Sentences with no proximates are of two sorts. One is sentences with no third person participants, only first or second person participants. The second is sentences containing third person participants which are all obviative. Sentences of the latter sort arise only in discourse contexts in which the sentence lacks a reference to the primary participant in the surrounding discourse. Examples of

<sup>9</sup> A weakness in this argument is that it predicts that sentences in which the proximate participant is lexical and the obviative participant pronominal should never arise. However, outside the context of the two participants in transitive clauses, there are examples in my data that violate this principle, where one of the two participants is an oblique or in a different clause. (23c) below illustrates this possibility, where the proximate participant is lexical, the subject of the main clause, and the obviative participant is pronominal, the subject of a subordinate clause.

<sup>10</sup> The inverse suffix *-aps* takes the form *-naps* in (16d). This suffix, like a number of other suffixes in Kutenai, including the so-called indicative suffix *-(n)i*, exhibits an alternation between two forms, one beginning with an *n*, the other without the *n*. The alternation is morphologically conditioned by the preceding morpheme.

<sup>11</sup> There is a construction discussed briefly in an appendix to this paper which Garvin (1948, 1958) analyses as involving first and second person obviatives.

Obviative marking is not restricted to notional subjects and objects, but can occur on other participants as well. The examples in (18) involve intransitive clauses with a proximate third person subject and an obviative oblique, a locative in (18a) and a temporal in (18b).

- The example in (19) involves a transitive clause with a first person subject, a proximate third person object, and an obviative third person locative.

- The examples in (20) involve three third person participants, a proximate subject and two obviative nonsubjects.

- (21) involves the inverse of a ditransitive verb: the notional indirect object is proximate, while the notional subject, the notional direct object, and the adverbial *taxa* 'thus' are all obviative.

(i) hu   wu-kat-miɬ-ni   nuʔkiy-s  
1   see-MIL-INDIC   rock-OBV  
I saw a rock. (A)

192

- (21) nupika-s    taxa-s    sil    hamat-ikε-aps-i    ni?-s    kqattaxa?lein-s  
 spirit-OBV    thus-OBV    ASP    give-IO-INVERSE-INDIC    the-OBV    horse-OBV  
 It was the spirit Nupika [obv] who gave him [prox] the horse [obv].  
 (or He [prox] was given the horse [obv] by Nupika [obv])  
 (Tape NS21, story 3, line 41)

**4. Obviative Subjects.** The examples discussed so far do not involve any verbal affixes indicating third person participants. There is one situation, however, in which the verb does register a third person subject, and that is when the subject is obviative. This possibility can arise in a number of different situations. The simplest of these is a sentence which does not refer to the central participant in the surrounding discourse and which therefore lacks a proximate participant. Because this situation is highly discourse dependent, such sentences rarely arise in elicitation, but they are common in texts. (22) is a sentence from a section of text in which there are five consecutive sentences in which all participants are obviative, in which there is no reference to the character which is the central character in the surrounding text.

- (22) watak-s    la-tiqanmitak-s-i  
 frog-OBV    busy.do.something-OBV,SUBJ-INDIC  
 Frog [obv] was busy doing something. (Tape 20, story 2, clause 107)

The sole participant in (22), *watak* 'frog', bears the obviative suffix -s, and the verb also bears a similar suffix -s, indicating that its subject is obviative.

The obviative subject suffix also occurs in subordinate clauses in which the subject is an obviative third person distinct from the proximate third person subject in the main clause, as in (23).

- (23) a. qaki?-ni    k-?umaε-s    ni?-s    palkiy-s  
 say-INDIC    SUBOR-laugh-OBV,SUBJ    the-OBV    woman-OBV  
 He [prox] said that the woman [obv] laughed. (E)
- b. qaki?-ni    k-sahan-s, ...  
 say-INDIC    SUBOR-bad-OBV,SUBJ  
 He [prox] said that it [obv] was bad. (Tape 20, story 2, line 24)
- c. taxa-s    qaki?-ni    nasu?kin    k-εxal    mitxa-l-is  
 then-OBV    say-INDIC    chief    SUBOR-FUT    shoot-PASSIVE-OBV,SUBJ  
 Then the chief [prox] said that it [obv] was to be shot. (Tape 21, story 1, line 173)

These examples contrast with those in (24) where the subordinate verb does not bear the obviative subject suffix. Contrast (23a) (with an obviative subject in the subordinate clause) with the similar example in (24a), in which the subject of the main clause is first person so that the subject of the subordinate clause can be proximate, and with (24b) or (24c), in which the subordinate verb lacks the obviative subject suffix and is interpreted as having the same subject as the main clause.

- (24) a. hu qaki?-ni    k-?umaε    ni?    palkiy  
 I,SUBJ    say-INDIC    SUBOR-laugh    the    woman  
 I said that the woman [prox] laughed. (J)
- b. qaki?-ni    k-?umaε  
 say-INDIC    SUBOR-laugh  
 He<sub>i</sub> [prox] said that he<sub>i</sub> [prox] laughed. (J)

- c. taxa-s qalwiy-ni k-ɬaxal ʔik  
 thus-OBV think-INDIC SUBOR-FUT eat  
 He [prox] thought he [prox] was going to eat it [obv]. (Tape 20, story 2, line 97)

A third situation in which obviative subjects can arise is with nouns possessed by third persons. Compare (25a) and (25b).

- (25) a. n-ʔuwi-ni xaʔɬɛin  
 PRED-bark-INDIC dog  
 The dog [prox] barked. (E)
- b. n-ʔuwi-s-i xalɛin-ʔis  
 PRED-bark-OBV,SUBJ-INDIC dog-3,POSS  
 His [prox] dog [obv] barked. (E)
- c. ʔat ɛinyaxa-kuʔ-s-i swin-ʔis-ɛ  
 HABIT go.fetch.water-OBV,SUBJ-INDIC daughter-3,POSS-and  
 His [prox] daughter [obv] would go for water and ... (Tape 21, story 1, line 167)

The first two sentences in (25) differ in two ways. First, the subject in (25b) bears a third person possessive suffix.<sup>13</sup> And second, the verb in (25b) bears the obviative subject suffix. The possessed noun in possessive constructions is always obviative, although this is obscured by the fact that the possessed noun does not bear the obviative suffix (except as noted below). This is perhaps more clearly illustrated by the contrast in (26).

- (26) a. mali wu-kat-i xaʔɬɛin-s  
 Mary see-INDIC dog-OBV  
 Mary [prox] saw a dog [obv]. (E)
- b. mali wu-kat-i xalɛin-ʔis  
 Mary see-INDIC dog-3,POSS  
 Mary [prox] saw her [prox] dog[obv]. (E)

The notional object in (26a) bears the obviative suffix, as we would expect in a direct clause. But this suffix is absent in (26b), where the possessive suffix occurs instead. One might think that the absence of obviative marking in (25b) and (26b) is somehow to be explained phonologically (since both the obviative and third person possessive suffixes involve an /s/) or morphologically (perhaps they both occur in the same morphological slot). However, third person possessive and obviative marking can cooccur, as in (27).

- (27) a. misal wu-kat-i xalɛin-ʔis-is  
 Mike see-INDIC dog-3,POSS-OBV  
 Mike [prox] saw her [obv] dog [obv]. (E)
- b. qakiʔ-ni k-sahan-s, k-ʔup-l-aps mak-is-is.  
 say-INDIC SUBOR-bad-OBV,SUBJ SUBOR-hurt-TRANS-INVERSE bone-3,POSS-OBV  
 He [prox] said that it [obv] was bad, that its [obv] bones [obv] hurt him [prox].  
 (Tape 20, story 2, lines 24-25)

<sup>13</sup> The absence of the glottal stop between the *s* and the *l* in the noun for 'dog' in (25b) (in contrast to the form in (25a)) is due to a phonological rule deleting glottal stops in certain contexts.

- c. *taxa-s      q̣apit    tukin-i                    niʔ-s      ʔaqunaŋ-is-is*  
 then-OBV   all       remove-INDIC    the-OBV   tooth-3,POSS-OBV  
 Then he [prox] pulled out all its [obv] teeth [obv]. (Tape NS7, story 1, line 98)

In these examples, the noun bearing the third person possessive suffix also bears the obviative suffix, unlike the examples in (25b), (25c), and (26b), in which the possessed noun does not occur with the obviative suffix. (26b) and (27a) represent a minimal pair in this regard. The reason that the possessed noun bears the obviative suffix in (27a) but not in (26b) is that the possessor in (26b) is the same as the proximate participant *maŋi* 'Mary', while in (27a) it is not (the subject *misáŋ* 'Mike' clearly being distinct from the possessor, as indicated by the use of 'her' in the English gloss). We can account for these examples by saying that possessed nouns are not marked for *their own* obviativeness but rather for the obviativeness of the possessor. Thus *xaṭcin-ʔis* 'dog-3,POSS' in (26b) is (syntactically) obviative, but is not marked obviative because its possessor is proximate. And *xaṭcin-ʔis-is* 'dog-3,POSS-OBV' in (27a) occurs with obviative marking, not because it is itself obviative (although it is), but because its possessor is obviative.

The examples in (28), with a full possessor, provide further support for this.<sup>14</sup>

- (28) a. *hu            wu-kat-mil-ni    xaṭcin-ʔis      maŋi*  
 I,SUBJ   see-MIL-INDIC   dog-3,POSS   Mary  
 I saw Mary's [prox] dog [obv]. (J)
- b. *misáŋ    wu-kat-i    xaṭcin-ʔis-is            maŋi-s*  
 Mike   see-INDIC   dog-3,POSS-OBV   Mary-OBV  
 Mike [prox] saw Mary's [obv] dog [obv]. (J)
- c. *taxa-s      skinkue    pikak-s                    sakil    saltit-ni            k-ʔukiʔ-s*  
 now-OBV   coyote   already-OBV   asp   married-INDIC   SUBOR-one-OBV,SUBJ
- swin-ʔis-is                    nasuʔkin-s*  
 daughter-3,POSS-OBV   chief-OBV

Now Coyote [prox] was already married to one of the chief's [obv]  
 daughters [obv]. (Tape 21, story 1, line 177)

In (28a), the possessor *maŋi* 'Mary' is proximate, while in (28b) it is obviative, the presence of the obviative suffix on *maŋi-s* 'Mary-OBV' in (28b) providing clear evidence of this. And going along with this difference in whether the possessor bears the obviative suffix is the presence versus absence of the obviative suffix on the possessed noun. In short, with possessed nouns, the presence of the obviative suffix varies with the obviativeness of the possessor, rather than the obviativeness of the possessed noun. However, whether or not a noun possessed by a third person is marked as being obviative, it is apparently obviative syntactically. The presence of the obviative subject suffix on the verb in (25b), despite the absence of obviative marking on the subject noun, is thus explained: although *xaṭcin-ʔis* 'dog-3,POSS' is not marked as obviative, this is only because its possessor is proximate. And here the choice of which participant is obviative is apparently syntactic (as in Algonquian languages; cf. Dahlstrom 1986: 115 regarding similar facts in Cree).

<sup>14</sup> The function of the suffix *-mil* on the verb in (28a) is a complex issue which I will address only very briefly in this paper, in an appendix. Garvin (1948, 1958) describes it as indicating obviative for first or second person.

5. **Obviative Subjects in Inverse Clauses.** The obviative subject suffix on verbs provides us with a test for determining the status of the two participants in inverse clauses. In all other cases, the obviative subject suffix occurs on the verb whenever the subject is obviative. This is true for the intransitive subjects in (22) to (25) above, as well as the transitive subjects in the following examples.

- (29) a. *wu·kat-ap-is-ni*                      *ma-ʔis*  
           see-1SG,OBJ-OBV,SUBJ-INDIC    mother-3,POSS  
           His [prox] mother [obv] saw me. (E)
- b. *maḥi*    *ma-ʔis*                      *wu·kat-s-i*                      *misál-s*  
       Mary   mother-3,POSS    see-OBV,SUBJ-INDIC    Mike-OBV  
       Mary's [prox] mother [obv] saw Mike [obv]. (E)
- c. ... *ʔat*    *la-ḥkin-s-i*                      *qapsin-s*  
           HABIT    bring.back-OBV,SUBJ-INDIC    something-OBV  
           (His [prox] daughter would go for water and when she returned,) she [obv]  
           always brought something [obv]. (Tape 21, story 1, line 168)

In both (29a) and (29b), the subject is possessed by a third person participant and thus is obviative, triggering obviative subject marking on the verb. In (29c), the subject is the daughter of the proximate participant in the preceding text and continues as obviative in the clause quoted.

However, in inverse clauses in which the notional subject is obviative and the notional object proximate, as in (30), the verb does not bear the obviative subject suffix.

- (30) *misál*    *wu·kat-aps-i*                      *maḥi-s*  
       Mike    see-INVERSE-INDIC    Mary-OBV  
       Mike [prox] was seen by Mary [obv]. (J)

If the notional subject, *maḥi* 'Mary', were the grammatical subject in (30), then we would expect to find obviative subject marking on the verb, since it is obviative. But we do not. That constitutes an argument that the notional subject is not the grammatical subject in (30). Further evidence that the notional object is the grammatical subject in inverse clauses is provided by inverse clauses in which the notional object is obviative. Since the notional subject is always obviative in inverse clauses, this situation arises only when both participants are obviative, as in (31).

- (31) *ma-ʔis*                      *misál*    *wu·kat-aps-is-ni*                      *maḥi-s*  
       mother-3,POSS    Mike    see-INVERSE-OBV,SUBJ-INDIC    Mary-OBV  
       Mary [obv] saw Mike's [prox] mother [obv].  
       (or Mike's mother was seen by Mary.) (E)

There are three participants in (31): the possessor participant *misál* 'Mike' is proximate while the two other participants, the notional subject and object, are both obviative.<sup>15</sup> Crucially, the verb in (31) bears the obviative subject suffix. That fact in itself does not tell us which of the notional

<sup>15</sup> An alternative way to express the meaning of (31) would be to make the notional subject *maḥi* 'Mary' proximate and the possessor *misál* 'Mike' obviative. But since the direct is obligatory and the inverse impossible when the notional subject is proximate and the notional object obviative, the clause would be direct, as in (i).

- (i) *maḥi*    *wu·kat-i*    *ma-ʔis-is*                      *misál-s*  
       Mary    see-INDIC    mother-3,POSS-OBV                      Mike-OBV  
       Mary [prox] saw Mike's [obv] mother [obv]. (E)

subject and object in (31) is grammatical subject, since both are obviative, but since inverse clauses in which the notional object is proximate, like (30), lack the obviative subject suffix, it must be the notional object rather than the notional subject that is triggering the obviative subject marking on the verb. In other words, since the notional subject is obviative in *both* (30) and (31), while the notional object is obviative only in (31), and since the verb bears obviative subject marking only in (31), it must be the proximate versus obviative status of the notional object in (30) and (31) that is determining whether or not the verb bears the obviative subject suffix. So it must be the notional object rather than the notional subject that is the grammatical subject in inverse clauses, and hence the inverse is a kind of passive.<sup>16</sup>

Clauses in which both the notional subject and the notional object are obviative are not common in texts, since they arise only when both are distinct from the primary participant in the surrounding discourse. Note that such clauses may be direct, as in (29b), or inverse, as in (31). In the first 33 pages of texts in Boas (1918), I am aware of 7 instances of clauses in which both notional subject and object are obviative. Of these, 5 are direct and 2 are inverse. The examples in (32) illustrate each of these two types.<sup>17</sup>

- (32) a. n-ʔu'p<sub>x</sub>a-ne.      lka'm-uʔ-s      n-ʔi'k-s-e.      a'm-ak-s      ...  
 PRED-see-INDIC child-OBV PRED-eat-OBV,SUBJ-INDIC earth-OBV  
 He [prox] saw a child [obv] eating earth [obv]. (Boas Text 9, p. 17, line 9)
- b. qa-e'f<sub>x</sub>a-naps-i's-ne.      k.ta'wla-s  
 NEG-bite-INVERSE-OBV,SUBJ-INDIC grizzly.bear-OBV  
 Grizzly Bear [obv] had not bitten her [obv].  
 (or She had not been bitten by Grizzly Bear.) (Boas Text 23, p. 36, line 5)

<sup>16</sup> Morgan (1991) provides an alternative analysis of the inverse suffix under which the analysis of this paper does not go through. The analysis in this paper follows Boas (1927), Garvin (1948), and Mast (1988) in treating the inverse suffix *-aps* as a single morpheme. Morgan treats *-aps* as a sequence of two morphemes, *-ap*, which he refers to as the higher ranking object suffix, essentially equivalent to calling it an inverse marker, followed by *-s*, the obviative subject marker. Hence under his analysis (30) *does* contain the obviative subject marker, consistent with the position that the notional subject in an inverse clause is also grammatical subject and that inverse clauses do not involve a change in grammatical relations. Morgan's analysis of forms like those in (31) in which the verb occurs with *-apsis* is that they contain two occurrences of the suffix *-(i)s*, the second one corresponding to the *-s* in forms with just *-aps*, indicating that the (notional) subject is obviative and the first one with the different function that it 'modifies' the suffix *-ap*, indicating that that object in these clauses is obviative as well as the subject. I find this analysis improbably abstract in a number of ways. First, though not fatal to the analysis, the suffix *-ap* would always be followed by the obviative suffix *-s*. Whenever such an analysis is posited, the question arises what would lead speakers to segment the sequence in that way. Under Morgan's analysis, the suffix *-ap* is like English *cran-* in *cranberry*, except in two ways. First, *ap-* is followed by a single segment *-s*, unlike the longer sequence *-berry* in *cranberry*. Second, in the forms with *-apsis*, what would be the first occurrence of the obviative suffix *-s* would have a very different function from its function in any other verb forms in the language, since only there would it be indicating the obviativeness of something other than a subject. But since this use of *-s* on Morgan's analysis is always preceded by *-ap*, and since *-ap* on his analysis is always followed by the suffix *-s*, both components of *-aps* on his analysis are somewhat analogous to English *cran-*. His analysis is to be compared with the far simpler and less abstract one assumed here (and by Boas, Garvin, and Mast), based on sets of forms like the following:

wu-kat-i	wu-kat-s-i	wu-kat-aps-i	wu-kat-aps-is-ni
see-INDIC	see-OBV,SUBJ-INDIC	see-INVERSE-INDIC	see-INVERSE-OBV,SUBJ-INDIC

(The alternations *-s* - *-is* and *-i* - *-ni* are otherwise well-attested in the language, and must be taken care of under any account of these forms.) While it seems possible that *-aps* was historically a sequence of two morphemes, it seems unlikely that speakers of the modern language would analysis it that way.

<sup>17</sup> The examples from Boas are cited in his orthography.



In (32a), both participants of the complement clause are obviative, distinct from the proximate subject of the main clause. In (32b), the second participant (glossed 'her') refers to the daughter of the primary character in the surrounding text, so again both participants are obviative.

More common are clauses like those cited earlier in the paper in which one of the participants is proximate, the other obviative. In such clauses, the subject is proximate and the other participant is obviative. Furthermore, for such clauses the choice between the direct construction and the inverse construction falls out of the factors determining the choice of proximate versus obviative: if the notional subject is proximate, then the direct construction is used, but if the notional object is proximate, then the inverse construction is used. But for clauses like those in (29b), (31) and (32), in which both participants are obviative, clearly other factors must be playing a role in determining the choice.

One factor that seems to play a role in the choice, independent of obviation, is the animacy or humanness of the participants. In the following example, in which the notional subject is nonhuman and the notional object human, the direct construction, given in (33a), is judged odd and the inverse construction, given in (33b), is preferred.

- (33) a. ??xaʔlɛin n-ʔiʔx-ni paʔkiy-s  
           dog      PRED-bite-INDIC      woman-OBV  
           A dog [prox] bit a woman [obv]. (J)
- b. paʔkiy n-ʔiʔx-naps-i xaʔlɛin-s  
           woman PRED-bite-INVERSE-INDIC dog-OBV  
           A dog [obv] bit a woman [prox]. (or A woman was bitten by a dog.) (E)

Given the English sentence 'A dog bit a woman' out of context to translate into Kutenai, my consultant responded with the inverse sentence in (33b). She described the direct version in (33a) as 'sounding like English' and has commented on similar examples as sounding odd because 'people are more important than animals'. There are two possible analyses by which one could account for the oddity of examples like (33a). One possibility is that the relative animacy or humanness plays a role in the choice of proximate versus obviative: according to this approach, if one participant is human and the other nonhuman, the human participant must be the proximate and the nonhuman participant the obviative. A second possibility is that the relative humanness governs the choice of what is subject: according to this approach, if one participant is human and the other nonhuman, the human participant must be subject. Both analyses would account equally well for the contrast in (33), since in these examples the subject is proximate and the nonsubject is obviative.

The two analyses make different predictions, however, for clauses like those in (29b), (31) and (32), in which both participants are obviative. The analysis that links the animacy contrast to the choice of subject predicts that the same contrast as that found in (33) should be found in clauses in which both participants are obviative. The analysis that links the animacy contrast to the choice of proximate predicts that animacy should play no role in the choice between direct and inverse when both participants are obviative. The evidence supports the first of these two analyses: (34a) is judged odd compared to (34b) in precisely the same way that (33a) is judged odd relative to (33b).

- (34) a. ??misáʔ qakiʔ-ni xaʔlɛin-s k-ʔiʔxa-s maʔi-s  
           Mike say-INDIC dog-OBV SUBOR-bite-OBV,SUBJ Mary-OBV  
           Mike [prox] said that the dog [obv] bit Mary [obv]. (J)
- b. misáʔ qakiʔ-ni maʔi-s k-ʔiʔx-naps-is xaʔlɛin-s  
           Mike say-INDIC Mary-OBV SUBOR-bite-INVERSE-OBV,SUBJ dog-OBV  
           Mike [prox] said that the dog [obv] bit Mary [obv].  
           (or Mike said that Mary was bitten by the dog) (J)

**6. The Notional Subject in Inverse Clauses.** The evidence in the preceding section argues that the inverse construction in Kutenai is a kind of passive, in that the notional object is the grammatical subject. But this leaves unaddressed the question of the status of the notional subject in inverse clauses, except that it is not the grammatical subject. Passive constructions in other languages generally involve detransitivization, or at least a decrease in valence from the corresponding active clause. It is far from clear, however, that the inverse construction in Kutenai is in any way intransitive. The question is whether the notional subject in an inverse clause is like an oblique (or a *chômeur* in Relational Grammar) or whether it is still a syntactic argument of the verb, and thus somewhat analogous to an object. Under the former possibility, the inverse would be a conventional passive. Under the latter possibility, the inverse would involve a kind of subject-object reversal, something that Perlmutter and Rhodes (1988) have proposed for inverse clauses in Ojibwa. In Ojibwa, however, the transitive nature of inverse clauses is unquestionable; what is a matter of debate is whether they involve a change in grammatical relations. For Kutenai, the evidence presented here points more unequivocally to the conclusion that inverse clauses do involve a change in grammatical relations. What is less clear is whether they are transitive.

One property of the inverse construction in Kutenai which makes it quite unlike passive in most languages is that it requires a notional subject, even one that is not realized phonologically. In the absence of an overt notional subject, an inverse clause is assigned an interpretation whereby the notional subject is interpreted anaphorically, as referring to something recoverable in the immediately preceding discourse context, though something distinct from the referent of the proximate participant. This is illustrated by the following examples from texts.

- b. *pał mat-aps-i.*  
PTCL leave.behind-INVERSE-INDIC  
He [obv] outran him [prox]. (Tape 126, side B, line 13)

The proximate participant in (35a) (a chipmunk) is proximate in the preceding clause. The obviative participant is referred to three clauses back, but it is an owl which the chipmunk is talking to, and thus quite recoverable in the context. Similarly, the proximate participant in (35b) is referred to in the preceding clause, while the obviative participant is referred to three clauses back.

This property of allowing a phonologically null notional subject that is interpreted anaphorically is not one shared by the notional subject in passive clauses in other languages: at most, the notional subject will occasionally be recoverable by inference. In Kutenai, an inverse clause lacking an overt notional subject is apparently *always* interpreted anaphorically. Since this is generally a property associated with syntactic arguments of the verb, this property of inverse clauses provides a possible argument that they are transitive.

On the other hand, the language has a distinct passive construction that is used when the notional subject is to be interpreted as indefinite and unspecified, namely the *it*-construction. Contrast (36a) with (35a) above. (35a) uses the inverse construction while (36a) uses the *it*-passive. (35a) is interpreted as having an anaphoric notional subject, something referred to in the immediately preceding text. (36a) is interpreted as having an indefinite and unspecified notional subject.

- (36) a. qatwiy-ni      k-ɬxaɬ      ʔup-it-it.  
           think-INDIC    SUBOR-FUT    die-TRANS-PASSIVE  
           He [prox] thought that he [prox] would be killed. (J)
- b. ʔat-it-ni                      ʔakmu.  
           name-PASSIVE-INDIC  
           He was called Akmu. (Tape NS21, story 5, line 19)

The existence of a passive construction that is used when the notional subject is indefinite and unspecified might be taken as an explanation of why the notional subject is always interpreted anaphorically in inverse clauses when it is not present phonologically. Despite this, the Kutenai inverse is still unlike passive in other languages in even allowing an anaphorically interpreted null participant. But I will leave unanswered the question of the status of the notional subject in inverse clauses.

**7. Conclusion.** The construction in Kutenai that I have referred to here as an inverse construction is a kind of passive in the sense that there is evidence that the notional object in inverse clauses is the grammatical subject. The evidence that I have provided for this is based on the fact that the notional object triggers obviative subject agreement in inverse clauses in which both participants are obviative. The conclusion that the inverse involves a change in grammatical relations remains somewhat tentative, however, in the absence of further arguments. The current evidence is also indeterminate with respect to the question of whether inverse clauses are transitive or not. These two observations point to the need for further research on these questions.

## Appendix: The Suffix *-mil* and Nonthird Person Obviation

My claim that the obviative:proximate contrast involves only third persons deserves at least brief comment since it contradicts the claims of Garvin (1948, 1958), who analyses the suffix *-mil* in examples like those in (37) as indicating a first or second person obviative.

- (37) a. hu                      wu-kat-mil-ni      xaɬɛin-ʔis      misál  
           I,SUBJ    see-MIL-INDIC    dog-3,POSS    Mike  
           I saw Mike's [prox] dog [obv].      (E)

- b. ma<sub>g</sub>ts      at      qa`qanap-mi<sup>1</sup>-ke<sub>1</sub> ne<sub>1</sub>s      ya-`qaqana<sup>1</sup>-ke      ski<sup>1</sup>n-ku-ts  
 NEG,IMP    HABIT    do-MIL-2PL                    the-OBV    NOM-do-NOM      coyote  
 Don't do what [obv] Coyote [prox] has done. (Boas Text 48, p. 66, line 77)

I will leave the function of this suffix largely unaddressed in this paper, partly because I am undecided at this time what the proper analysis of it is and partly because it does not interact with the inverse construction, the primary focus of this paper. Garvin himself notes that what he describes as nonthird person obviation operates rather differently from third person obviation.

It should be noted that the presence of the suffix *-mi<sup>1</sup>* on the verb in the examples in (37) is linked to the fact that the *object* is obviative. If the object were proximate, as in (38), then *-mi<sup>1</sup>* is not used.

- (38) hu<sup>1</sup>      wu-kat-i    xa<sup>1</sup>ʔɛin  
 1,SUBJ    see-INDIC    dog  
 I saw a dog [prox]. (E)

Note that (37) without *-mi<sup>1</sup>* is unacceptable, as shown in (39a), and (38) with *-mi<sup>1</sup>* is unacceptable, as shown in (39b).

- (39) a. \*hu      wu-kat-i    xa<sup>1</sup>ɛin-ʔis      misáʔ  
 1,SUBJ    see-INDIC    dog-3,POSS    Mike  
 I saw Mike's [prox] dog [obv]. (J)
- b. \*hu      wu-kat-mi<sup>1</sup>-ni    xa<sup>1</sup>ʔɛin  
 1,SUBJ    see-MIL-INDIC    dog  
 I saw a dog [prox]. (J)

It should be clear that one cannot consider *-mi<sup>1</sup>* to be indicating a nonthird person obviative in (37) in the sense that nonthird person participants compete for proximate status with third person participants the way third person participants compete with each other. If that were the case, then (38) would contain two proximate nominals, the first person participant (since the verb does not occur with *-mi<sup>1</sup>*) and the dog. Nor would we be able to account for the unacceptability of (39b). One way to account for the distribution of *-mi<sup>1</sup>* in these examples would be to say that *-mi<sup>1</sup>* indicates a nonthird person subject and an obviative object. That it is the obviativeness of the third person object, rather than of the nonthird person subject, that is apparently crucial to the use of *-mi<sup>1</sup>* is indicated by the following example, in which the object is obviative.

- (40) hu      wu-kat-mi<sup>1</sup>-ni    xa<sup>1</sup>ʔɛin-s  
 1,SUBJ    see-MIL-INDIC    dog-OBV  
 I saw a dog [obv]. (J)

Contrast (40) with the unacceptable (39b), the sole difference being that the object is obviative in (40). (40) is an example of a sentence without a proximate and would only occur in a discourse context in which the proximate nominal in the surrounding discourse was not mentioned in this particular sentence. When asked whether (40) was grammatical, my consultant responded affirmatively, saying one might use it in a story if one were saying that one saw a dog, but 'he' didn't, the implication being that one could use (40) in a discourse context in which one was talking about someone else not mentioned in this particular sentence.

The examples cited here do not cover the range of situations in which *-mi<sup>1</sup>* is or can be used, nor have I addressed the specific account of *-mi<sup>1</sup>* proposed by Garvin (1958) (which is consistent with the examples cited here). A complete account of this suffix requires further study.

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