Oblique Argument Licensing in Algonquian
Head marking vs dependent marking

Yadong Xu | University of Manitoba | 15 Oct 2021
53rd Algonquian Conference | Carleton University
Grammatical relations can be divided into 2 general categories: core arguments (subject and object) and oblique arguments.

Typologically, grammatical relations are indicated by three means: word order, case marking, agreement.

Grammatical relations in Algonquian are expressed via agreement because word order is free and case marking is missing.

Xu (2020) shows a cross-linguistic cline where different kinds of objects are selectively available for agreement.

This talk extends the variations of availability for agreement to oblique NPs.

Most importantly, a split pattern is shown across 3 languages: the relative root (RR) NPs are selectively agreed with but the locative case NPs are never agreed with.

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</table>
Introduction
agreement: core vs oblique

Types of obliques
- case type
- relative root type

Gradient robustness
- least: Ojibwe
- intermediate: Delaware
- most: Maliseet-Passamaquoddy

Morphological marking
- dependent marking
- head marking
- coexistence of both types
- difficulties

Conclusion
In Nishnaabemwin and the two Eastern languages:
Subject \(\rightarrow\) *central agr’t*;
Object \(\rightarrow\) *theme sign + periph agr’t*

(1) \(\text{wənīlh\text{,} wal lǐ\text{,} m\text{,})xkwal}\) \hspace{1cm} Munsee
\(\text{wə-nihl-a\text{-}w-al ne\cdot l maxkw-al}\)
\(\text{3-kill-3.obj-3s-obv dem bear-obv}\)
\(\text{iHe killed the bear(s) (obv.).i} \) (Goddard 2007:210)

(2) \(\text{nwičohkemnok}\) \hspace{1cm} Maliseet-Passamaquoddy
\(\text{n-wiĉohkem-a-nənw-ak}\)
\(\text{1-help-3.obj-1p-3p}\)
\(\text{iWe help them.i} \) (Sherwood 1983:217)
Oblique NPs cannot be indexed in Ojibwe (Rhodes 2010), Blackfoot (Russell et al. 2012), Meskwaki (Dahlstrom 2010).

Oblique NPs can be indexed in Eastern Algonquian (Delaware and Maliseet-Passamaquoddy):

- characterized by n-endings and periph agr’t

(1) 3→obv

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{wə-V-a-} & \text{-w-al} \\
\text{3 -V-3.obj-3s-obv} \\
\text{iHe Ü him/them (obv.)i}
\end{align*}
\]

(2) 1p→3p

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{n-V-a} & \text{-nənw-ak} \\
\text{1-V-3.obj-1p-3p} \\
\text{‘We … them.’}
\end{align*}
\]

(3) \(pók'amən\)

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{wə-pakam-} & \text{a-n-∅} \\
\text{3-strike-3.obj-N-0s} \\
\text{iHe struck him with it.i} \quad \text{(Goddard 2020:106)}
\end{align*}
\]

(4) \(nØn-wit-aurrayín̓nuuk n̓uhsim̓tf̓ok\)

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{nØ n-wit-ayya-n̓-nənw-ak} & \text{ n-uhsim̓tf̓ok} \\
\text{I 1-with-play-N-1p-3p} & \text{1-young.sibling-3p} \\
\text{iI play with my younger siblings.i} \quad \text{(LeSourd 2020)}
\end{align*}
\]
There are four ways to indicate an oblique argument in Algonquian:

1. **Case suffix** – locative case (PA *-enki)

2. **Relative root (RR)** – a pre-verbal morpheme

3. Unmarked

(5) *wezhho gye gkizhe* Nishnaabemwin
    wezhho-∅ gye gkizhe
    paint.reflx-3s also charcoal.0s
    iHe paints himself *with charcoal.i* (Valentine 2001:659)

4. Stem derivation

(6) *w-gii-daashgawaan mitigoon* Nishnaabemwin
    w-gii- [daa -shg -aw] -aa-∅-an mitigoo -n
    3-past-[split-with.axe -TA ]-3.obj-3s-obv tree-obv
    iHe split the tree with *his axe.i* (Valentine 2001:660)

---

**Case type**

**Relative root type**

- same pattern with RR type
- no NP complements, excluded from disc.
The oblique NP bears the locative suffix, *–enki.

- Ojibwe -ing; Unami Delaware -ink; Maliseet-Passamaquoddy -ək

(7) a. mhiing-ingozhinaaziwiggonadnimookajiinyig  
mhiing-ingzhinaazi-w-aggonadnimookajiiny-ig
wolf-LOClook.so-3-3pthesedog-3p
íThose dogslooklikewolves.i (Valentine 2001:664)

b. mux·ologli-pó·s·o·p  
mux·o·l·inkəli-po·si·w-əp-∅
boat-LOCto-embark-3-pret-3s
íHewentaboardaboat.i (Goddard 2021:45)

c. ntepakanəlpecetesəlkatkohkək  
nt·epahkan·n·əlpecetes·əlkatkohk·ək
1·throw·1s-0ppotato-0ppot-LOC
íIthrowpotatoes(inan.)inthepot.i (Sherwood 1983:121)
Relative roots are a closed set of preverbal morphemes that require an antecedent (Bloomfield 1946:120; Wolfart 1973:66; Rhodes 2010).

• *mdaaswi-shi-naanan* ‘15’ is the complement of the relative root *dso-* ‘so many’.

(8) *mdaaswi-shi-naanan dso-bboon'-gizi* Nishnaabemwin

    mdaaswi-shi-naanan       dso-bboon'-gizi-∅
    fifteen                so.many-winter-be-3s

‘He is fifteen years old.’ (Valentine 2001:664)

• The NP-reference of the relative root can be null, *in-* refers to a spatial deictic ‘there’, which is morphologically unmarked in the clause.

(9) *baamaa go ga-zhaami* Ojibwe

    baamaa  go       ∅ gi-ga=iN-yaa-min
    afterwards ptcl there 2-fut=to-go-1p

‘Afterwards we (incl.) will go there.’ (Rhodes 2010:314)
A range of oblique semantics can be expressed by relative roots:

**LOCATIVE**  *-*\(^{-}\text{iN}\)  
(9) \(\text{baamaa go ga-zhaami}\)  \(\text{Ojibwe}\)  
\(\text{baamaa go} \quad \emptyset \quad \text{gi-ga=iN-yaa-min}\)  
\(\text{afterwards ptcl} \quad \text{there} \quad 2\text{-fut=to-go-1p}\)  
\(\text{i} \text{Afterwards we (incl.) will go there.i} \) (Rhodes 2010:314)

**MANNER**  *-*\(^{-}\text{iN}\)  
(10) \(\text{n,,=nəntoli-k˘ıpwi’ın}\)  \(\text{Unami}\)  
\(\text{n,,=nə} \quad \text{nə-oli-ki’spwi’-n-∅}\)  
\(\text{foc=that} \quad 1\text{-so-be.full-N-0s}\)  
\(\text{i} \text{I got full on it.i} \) [lit. I got full that way] (Goddard 2020:105)

**List of RR** (Valentine 2001: 421)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic Form</th>
<th>Written Forms</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/iN/-</td>
<td>/i/-, /in/-, /izh-/</td>
<td>‘to; in such a way’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ond/-</td>
<td>/ond-/, /onj-</td>
<td>‘from, source, reason’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/apiit/-</td>
<td>/apiit-/, /apiich-/</td>
<td>‘extent; particular amount’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>/akw-</td>
<td>‘extent; particular degree’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/daN/-</td>
<td>/dan-/, /dazh-/</td>
<td>‘there, in that location’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/daSw/-</td>
<td>/dasw-/, /dash-/</td>
<td>‘so many; particular number’</td>
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**Blackfoot RR** (Russell et al. 2012)  
Allative \(\text{itap-}\)  
Comitative \(\text{ohp-}\)  
Substitutive \(\text{ohtahtsiwa-}\)
The availability of oblique arguments indexed by agreement varies in 3 languages.

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- 3.1 Ojibwe (Nishnaabemwin)
- 3.2 Delaware (Unami)
- 3.3 Maliseet-Passamaquoddy
Oblique NPs are not indexed in neither types in Ojibwe.

• Case type

(11) *mhiinging zhinaaziwag gonad nimookajiinyig* Nishnaabemwin

mhiing-\textipa{\textit{ing}} zhinaazi-\textipa{\textit{w-ag}} gonad nimookajiiny-\textipa{\textit{ig}}

\text{wolf-LOC} look.so-3-3p these dog-3p

\textit{iThose dogs} look \textit{like wolves}.i (Valentine 2001:664)

• Relative root type

(12) a. *mdaaswi-shi-naanan dso-bboon'-gizi* Nishnaabemwin

\text{mdaaswi-shi-naanan} \hspace{1cm} \text{dso-bboon'-gizi-∅}

fifteen \hspace{1cm} \text{so.many}-winter-be-3s

\textit{iHe is fifteen years old}.i (Valentine 2001:664)

b. *baamaa go ga-zhaami* Ojibwe

\text{baamaa} \hspace{1cm} go \hspace{1cm} \textit{∅} \hspace{1cm} gi-ga=iN-yaa-min

\text{afterwards ptcl} \hspace{1cm} \text{there} \hspace{1cm} 2-fut=\text{to-go-1p}

\textit{iAfterwards we} (incl.) will go \textit{there}.i (Rhodes 2010:314)
In Delaware, no agreement for the case type; agreement allowed for the RR type.

- Case-type: not indexed by agreement

\[(13)\]  
\[
\text{mux'ó·link li-pó·s·o·p} \quad \text{Unami}
\]
\[
\text{mux·ó·l·ink} \quad \text{əli-po·si·-w-əp-∅}
\]
\[
\text{boat-LOC} \quad \text{to-embark-3-pret-3s}
\]
\[
\text{‘He went aboard a boat.’ (Goddard 2021:45)}
\]

- Relative root type: definite oblique NPs indexed by n-endings and null periph agr’t.

\[(14)\]  
\[
\text{a. } n,,=nə\text{nǐli-}\text{k̂̚spwi·n} \quad \text{Unami}
\]
\[
\text{n,,=nə} \quad \text{nət-əli-ki’spwí’-n-∅}
\]
\[
\text{foc=that} \quad \text{1-so-be.full-N-0s}
\]
\[
\text{íI got full on it.i [lit. I got full that way] (Goddard 2020:105)}
\]
\[
\text{b. } n,,=ni\text{któnta-pən‘-lənə·n} \quad \text{Unami}
\]
\[
\text{n,,=ni} \quad \text{kət-ənta-pənaw-əl-ən-e·n-∅}
\]
\[
\text{foc=that} \quad \text{2-somewhere-look.at-2.obj-N-1p-0s}
\]
\[
\text{íThatis where we} \text{ (incl.) watched you.i (Goddard 2021:73)}
\]
M-P displays the same pattern with Delaware, but with no restriction to definiteness.

- **Case-type:** not indexed by agreement

\[(15)\] \textit{ntepahkanəl pəcetesəl katkohkək} \\
\textit{nt-epahka-n-əl pəcetes-əl katkohk-ək} \\
\text{1-throw-N-0p potato-0p pot-LOC} \\
‘I throw potatoes (inan.) \textit{in the pot}.’ (Sherwood 1983:121)

*note: periph agr’t not agreeing with 3s ‘pot’ but with 0p ‘potatoes’

- **Relative root type:** oblique NP indexed by \textit{n-endings} and \textit{periph agr’t.}

\[(16)\] \textit{nil n-wit-ayyanénuuk nuhsimísok} \\
\text{nil n-wit-ayya-né-nənw-ak n-uhsimís-ok} \\
\text{I 1-with-play-N-nənw-3p 1-young.sibling-3p} \\
‘I play with my younger siblings.’ (LeSourd 2020)
Put together, the relative root NPs can be indexed by agreement while the case type cannot be indexed by agreement.

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Q: Why do the two types behave differently?

Proposal: they represent different morphological markings.

- Case type: dependent marking
- Relative root type: head marking

Implication: distinct morphological markings have a profound consequence on argument licensing.
Nichols (1986): two ways for indicating grammatical relations, the argument is either expressed on the head as affixes on a verb or as a dependent constituent (a case-marked NP).

**Head-marking schema:**

- NP1  NP2  NP3  V-AFF1-AFF2-AFF3

**Dependent-marking schema:**

- NP.case1  NP.case2  NP.case3  V
The case type oblique displays dependent marking:

(17) a. mhiing zhinaaziwag gonad nimookajiinyig
    Nishnaabemwin
    mhiing-ing zhinaazi-w-ag gonad nimookajiiny-ig
    wolf-loc look.so-3-3p these dog-3p
    ‘Those dogs look like wolves.’ (Valentine 2001:664)

b. mux·ó·link lí-pó·s·o·p
    Unami
    mux·o·l·ink əli-po·si·w-əp-∅
    boat-loc to-embark-3-pret-3s
    ‘He went aboard a boat.’ (Goddard 2021:45)

c. ntepahkanəl pəcetesəl katkohkək
    Maliseet-Passamaquoddy
    nt-epahka-n-əl pəcetes-əl katkohk-ək
    1-throw-1s-0s potato-0p pot-loc
    ‘I throw potatoes (inan.) in the pot.’ (Sherwood 1983:121)

**Dependent-marking schema**

- NP.case1   NP.case2   NP.case3   V
The relative root type follows exactly the head-marked pattern:

(18) a. baamaa go ga-zhaami  
       baamaa go  ɔ  gi-ga=iN-yaa-min  
       afterwards ptcl there  2-fut=to-go-1p  
       iAfterwards we (incl.) will go there.i (Rhodes 2010:314)

b. n.,=nə ntōli-k̓spwi’n  
    n.,=nə  nət-əli-ki·spwi·-n-∅  
    foc=that  1-so-be.full-N-0s  
    iI got full on it.i [lit. I got full that way] (Goddard 2020:105)

c. nØn-wit-ayyanÍnuuk nuhsimìok  
    nil  n-wit-ayya-ne-nənw-ak  n-uhsimis-ok  
    I  1-with-play-N-nənw-3p  1-young.sibling-3p  
    iI play with my younger siblings.i (LeSourd 2020)

Head-marking schema

- NP1  NP2  NP3  V-AFF1-AFF2-AFF3
• Can both types of markings coexist in the same clause?
• Yes, it’s quite common. English “he writes me a letter” shows a hybrid of dependent marking (he.NOM/me.DAT/a letter) and head marking (agreement -s).
• Both types can co-exist in Algonquian.

(19) a. adaawewigamigong bi-onji-batoo
    adaawewigamig-ing bi-onji-batoo-Ø
    store-LOC here-from-run-3s
    ‘He’s running here from the store.’” (Valentine 2001:314)

b. mux·ó·link lì-pó·s·o·p
    mux·ó·l·ink əli-po·s·i·w-əp-Ø
    boat-LOC to-embark-3-pret-3s
    ‘He went aboard a boat.’ (Goddard 2021:45)

c. ’toloqaphal oloqiw qospemok
    ’t-oloq-aph-a-Ø-l oloqiw qospem-ok
    3-that.way-track-3.obj-3s-obv that.way lake-LOC
    ‘She tracked him (obv.) toward the lake.’” (Bruening 2001:53)
The Maliseet-Passamaquoddy examples in (20) provide clear evidence that the locative case NPs are prohibited from being indexed.

(20) a. *məwin kwəssəyotan məcəyehswəwəl wik ✓*

|məwin | w-kəssəyota-n-∅ | məcəyehswəw-əl | wik |
bear | 3-move.in-N-0s | Partridge-obv | house.0s |

*iBear moved in into Partridgeis house.*

b. *məwin kwəssəyotan məcəyehswəwəl wikək ✗*

|məwin | w-kəssəyota-n-∅ | məcəyehswəw-əl | wik-ək |
bear | 3-move.in-N-0s | Partridge-obv | house-LOC |

*iBear moved in into Partridgeis house.*

(Sherwood 1983:122-123)

c. *məwin kəssəyota məcəyehswəwəl wikək ✓*

|məwin | kəssəyota-w-∅ | məcəyehswəw-əl | wik-ək |
bear | move.in-3-3s | Partridge-obv | house-LOC |

*iBear moved in into Partridgeis house.*

Case marking and agreement are incompatible in Algonquian for licensing NPs.
There’re complications in Eastern languages, which are difficult for judgement.

First, the inflection of the subordinative uses the n-endings and lacks periph agr’t.

- The n-endings and null periph agr’t in (21a) is an illusion of the subordinative.

(21) a. *N-qecimulkun Tolitoli n-toli-nomiyan Malikonsok* Passamaquoddy

\[\text{N-qecimul-ku-n  Tolitoli  [CP n-toli-nomiy-a-n Malikons-ok]}\]
\[\text{1-ask-inv-1s  T.  1-there-see-3.obj-N/sub  M-LOC}\]
\[\text{íTolitoli asked me to meet her at Mulliganis.î (Bruening 2001:168)}\]

b. *n,, ̓t̓əl̓əmskə'-n* Unami

\[\text{n,,  wət-aləməskə-}-n\]
\[\text{then  3-depart-N/sub}\]
\[\text{íThen he departed.î (Goddard 2020:109)}\]

- Is (22) an illusion due to the subordinative? Or is it optional to index loc NPs in Pass?

(22) *’-tol-acqim-a-n-Ø akom-awti-k*

\[\text{3-there-drag-3.obj-N-0s  snowshoe-path-LOC}\]
\[\text{‘He drags it (anim.) to the snowshoe path.’} \text{(Bruening 2001:50)}\]
Second, some verb inflections (TA+O and AI+O) use n-endings by default.

- **TA+O**: the theme is indexed by n-endings and periph agr’t.

(23) *nkissəmanəl piksək pəcêtesəl* Maliseet-Passamaquoddy
    n-kissəm-a-n-əl piks-ək pəcêtes-əl
    l-feed-3.obj-N-0p pig-3p potato-0p
    iI feed *potatoes* (inan.) to the *pigs* (anim.).i (Sherwood 1983:125)

- **Previous examples, cf. (15) and (19c),** provide the evidence prioritizing the (primary) object over the locative case NP as periph agr’t -l indexes ‘him.obv’.

(19) c.  ’tologaphal oloqiw qospemok Passamaquoddy
    ’t-oloq-aph-a-Ø-l oloqiw qospem-ok
    3-that.way-track-3.obj-3s-obv that.way lake-LOC
    ‘She tracked *him* (obv.) toward the lake.’ (Bruening 2001:53)

- **However, when the oblique NP isn’t case marked, is it agreed with or not?**

(24) *Tama k-tli-kisi-pcitahka-n-Ø tatwikhikon* Passamaquoddy
    where 2-there-perf-send-N-0s letter.0s
    iWhere did *you* send a letter?i (Bruening 2001:148)
This talk further the findings on the cline of peripheral agr’t to oblique arguments.

- Ojibwe never agrees with oblique NPs;
- Delaware agrees only with definite ones;
- Passamaquoddy agrees with oblique NPs with no definiteness constraint.

Looking closer, an incompatibility of case and agreement is observed for licensing oblique NPs:

- As long as the NPs bear a locative case, they are never indexed by agreement.

Looking forward, the cross-linguistic behaviors of the two types of oblique NPs suggest differential treatments.

- Previously, Kim 2020 has proposed for Blackfoot that the relative root type of obliques are PPs which are merged late in the narrow syntax.
- Contra Kim 2020, this paper points out that the relative root obliques cannot be simply treated as PPs. Therefore, the successfully analysis must be able to capture the differences of the two types in their (un)availability for agreement.
THANK YOU!

Special thanks to members of the Algonquian reading group at U of M for their comments and suggestions: Will Oxford Tiffany Prieb Jila Ghomeshi Zlata Odribets Kuntala Parama

xuy34569@myumanitoba.ca
Key References