In so-called configurational languages such as English, grammatical roles can be defined structurally, and patterns of agreement can most often be described according to these structural relations. In the Algonquian languages, on the other hand, grammatical roles are not as straightforwardly structural, and agreement patterns are more difficult to describe, requiring reference to various types of semantic relations, such as person, animacy, and the like. In this paper, I address one particular agreement pattern, namely object agreement, in Blackfoot (Plains Algonquian: Southern Alberta and Northwestern Montana).

The main question that this paper seeks to address is: what are the criteria for object agreement in Blackfoot? As in other Algonquian languages, in simple monotransitive clauses the direct object controls agreement, but in ditransitive clauses it is the indirect object that acts as the controller. In fact, as I demonstrate first, a wide range of objects, bearing a variety of thematic roles, can control object agreement in Blackfoot. Next, however, I provide evidence that agreement with oblique (i.e., non-thematic) objects is restricted by a particular semantic property of the objects, namely SENTIENCE. Sentience refers to semantic animacy, and only semantically animate, or SENTIENT, objects can act as controllers in non-thematic contexts. This restriction on object agreement is accounted for in a syntactic model of agreement. Here I argue that sentience is a

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1. Data are from the author’s fieldwork on Siksiká Blackfoot. Many thanks to Rachel Ermineskin for sharing her language with me, to Jen Abel and Betsy Ritter for both their insight and their help with fieldwork, and to the anonymous reviewers for the time and effort they spent evaluating this paper. All errors are my own.

Abbreviations: 1, 2, 3 = 1st, 2nd, 3rd person; DIR(ect), INV(verse); PROX(imate), OBV(iative); SENT(ient), NON-SENT(ient); ANIM(ate), INAN(imate); ACCOMP(animent); ASSOC(iative); BEN(efactive); CONJ(unct); CONN(ective); DEM(onstrative); DUR(ative); INSTR(umental); NF = non-factive; NONSPEC(ific); POSS(essive); PST = past tense; PL(ural); PURP(osive).
grammatically active feature in Blackfoot, and that with respect to object agreement, the feature [Sentient] fulfills a role similar to that of accusative case in its ability to licence objects.

Finally, I turn to two exceptional cases of (non-)object agreement in Blackfoot. First, unlike other oblique objects, locational DPs cannot control agreement in Blackfoot, and I argue that this is because they have inherent case, and therefore cannot check the [Sentient] feature on the verb. The second exceptional agreement pattern is cross-clausal agreement, which is not subject to a sentience restriction. This, I argue, is because the controller in cross-clausal agreement is a discourse topic, and as such, is licensed by its contribution to the information structure of the clause.

OBJECT AGREEMENT IN BLACKFOOT

As in the other Algonquian languages, there are four verb classes in Blackfoot: transitive animate (TA), transitive inanimate (TI), animate intransitive (AI), and inanimate intransitive (II). In this paper, I will focus on the first two types, TA and TI, which agree with both the subject and the object in animacy, person, and number. Examples of this agreement pattern are given in (1) and (2):

(1)  Anna náissiksipiíwa anni póókaayi.
    ann-wa na-i-siks-ip-yii-wa ann-yi pookaa-yi
    DEM-PROX PST-CONN-bite-TA-DIR-PROX DEM-OBV child.ANIM-OBV
    ‘It (the dog) bit the child.’

(2)  Anna náisikstsima anni i’ksisakoyi.
    ann-wa na-i-siks-tsi-m-wa ann-yi i’ksisako-yi
    DEM-PROX PST-CONN-bite-TI-3:IN-PROX DEM-OBV meat.INAN-OBV
    ‘It (the dog) ate the meat.’

The verbs in (1) and (2) agree with their respective objects in animacy, person, and number. Animacy agreement is realized morphologically in the form of the verb class finals. In (1), the TA final -ip reflects the animacy of

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2. Frantz (1991, p. 41) notes that “intransitive” (AI/II) verbs may also take objects, but they are always non-specific; this class of verbs are sometimes referred to as “AI+O” verbs (Goddard 1979). TA and TI verbs always take specific objects, and only these trigger overt agreement morphology.

3. In Blackfoot, verb class finals are often suppletive. In such cases, I will gloss the verb stem as a composite of its lexical meaning and its verb class (e.g., bite.TA or bite.TI)
the object \textit{anni póókaayi} 'the child,' but in (2) the final is TI, -\textit{tsi}, because the object \textit{anni i'ksisakoyi} 'the meat' is inanimate. Person agreement is realized in the form of the theme suffixes, which vary depending on the features of both the subject and the object (Frantz 1991, especially chapters 10-12). In (1), the theme suffix is -\textit{yii}, indicating that a third person proximate subject is acting on a third person obviative object, but in (2), the theme suffix is -\textit{m}, which indicates that a third person subject is acting on an inanimate object. In both examples, number agreement is realized on the suffix -\textit{wa}, which indicates that there is a third person singular (proximate) argument. Henceforth, I will focus exclusively on animacy and person agreement as it appears on the verb class finals and theme suffixes.

\section*{Two Types of Primary Objects in Blackfoot}

Because the object that controls agreement in Blackfoot and the other Algonquian languages is not structurally determined, it is commonly referred to as the Primary Object (Dryer 1986). The question of what makes an argument a primary object does not have a simple answer. Primary objects in Blackfoot do not form a uniform class. Instead, they can be grouped into two categories, which I refer to as thematic and non-thematic objects. Thematic objects correspond semantically with direct objects in a language like English. In other words, they unambiguously bear a thematic role of patient or theme. Non-thematic objects, on the other hand, correspond semantically to English adjuncts, and may bear a variety of oblique thematic roles (e.g., non-patient, non-theme). Both of these objects will be discussed in turn below.

\textit{Thematic objects}

In simple transitive clauses with exactly two event participants, the thematic object (i.e., direct object) is selected as the primary object. TA verbs select animate objects:

(3) \textit{Niksi ninaiks áísskonakatsiyaa ni áaatstistaayi.}
\textit{ann-iksi ninaa-iksi a-isskonakat-yii-yaa ann-yi DEM-PL man.ANIM-PL DUR-shoot.at.TA-DIR-PL DEM-OBV}
\textit{aaattsistaayi}
\textit{rabbit.ANIM-OBV}
\textit{‘The men shot at the rabbit.’}
(4) *Nitáapiksistaw ánna pokóna.*

\[
\text{name conveying patient} \quad \text{animate} \quad \text{park} \quad \text{ball}
\]

1-throw.\textit{TA-1:3-PROX} DEM-PROX ball.\text{ANIM-PROX}

'I threw the ball.'

In (3), the \textit{PATIENT} DP \textit{ni áaattsistaayi} ‘the rabbit’ controls object agreement. The verb final is TA, and the theme suffix indicates that there is a third person animate object. In (4), the \textit{THEME} DP \textit{ánna pokóna} ‘the ball’ (which is grammatically animate) similarly triggers third person animate agreement. In both examples, an animate thematic object is the controller.\(^4\)

Inanimate thematic objects may also control agreement, as in (5) and (6) below.

(5) *Nitsóyo’satoop ámo akóópis.*

\[
\text{name conveying patient} \quad \text{anim} \quad \text{cooking} \quad \text{soup}
\]

1-cook.\textit{TI-1:INAN} DEM \text{soup.\text{INAN}}

'I cooked this soup.'

(6) *Nitsipsstipohtóó’pinnaan ánni isttókimaat tsisi.*

\[
\text{name conveying theme} \quad \text{anim} \quad \text{drum}
\]

1-inside-bring.\textit{TI-1:INAN-1PL} DEM-\text{INAN} \text{drum-\text{INAN}}

'We brought the drum inside.'

In (5), the \textit{PATIENT} DP \textit{ámo akóópis} ‘this soup’ controls agreement, which is realized in the TI form of the verb, as well as the theme suffix -’p, which is used specifically for first or second person subjects with inanimate objects. Similarly, in (6), the object \textit{ánni isttókimaat tsisi} ‘the drum’ controls agreement, but here it is assigned the thematic role of \textit{THEME}, instead of \textit{PATIENT}.

In summary, thematic objects are those that are unambiguously assigned a thematic role of \textit{PATIENT} or \textit{THEME}. In simple monotransitive clauses with exactly two event participants, the thematic object controls agreement, regardless of whether it is animate or inanimate.

**Non-thematic objects**

Non-thematic objects do not bear the thematic role of \textit{PATIENT} or \textit{THEME}; most of these correspond semantically to English adjuncts. However,

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4. A reviewer has suggested that the demonstrative \textit{amo} in this example would typically be suffixed with the obviative marker -\text{yi}. However, my consultant often uses \textit{amo} with inanimate or obviative nouns. See also example (10).
unlike English adjuncts, non-thematic objects in Blackfoot can be primary objects, even if there is a thematic object in the same clause. In fact, non-thematic objects obligatorily control agreement when they are present in a clause, instead of the thematic object. Unlike thematic objects, which unambiguously bear one of two (related) thematic roles, non-thematic objects bear a wide variety of oblique thematic roles. In what follows I will detail a series of examples that illustrate the semantic diversity of this class of objects.

The first example is of a familiar type in Algonquian, in which a DP bearing the RECIPIENT thematic role, or an indirect object, acts as the primary object:

(7) Niksissta nitóhkotawa anni issitsimaan.

n-iksisst-wa nit-ohkot-a-wa ann-yi issitsimaan

1-mother.ANIM-PROX l-give.TA-1-3-PROX DEM-OBV baby.ANIM

‘My mother, I gave her the baby.’

Both the RECIPIENT DP niksissta ‘my mother’ and the THEME DP anni issitsimaan ‘the baby’ are third person animate arguments. Thus, from the TA final and the theme suffix alone, it is impossible to distinguish which object is primary. However, the proximate suffix -wa indicates that it is the proximate RECIPIENT object, and not the obviative THEME object that controls agreement. Importantly, an obviative agreement suffix is ungrammatical in this context, because only the proximate RECIPIENT may control agreement.

The sentence in (8) illustrates a similar point, but here it is the non-thematic BENEFICIARY object that controls agreement:

(8) Nitohpómmooka amostsi ksiistsimaanists.

nit-ohpomm-o-ok-wa amo-stsi ksiistsimaan-ists(i)

1-buy.from-TA.BEN-INV-PROX DEM-PL bead.INAN-PL

‘She bought these beads for me.’

Here the BENEFICIARY DP ‘me’ is the primary object. There is no overt pronoun for this object, and it is instead realized by way of the person prefix nit-, in addition to the TA final -o (which indicates that a beneficiary is the primary object) and the inverse theme suffix -ok on the verb. Importantly, the thematic object amostsi ksiistsimaanists ‘those beads’ does not control agreement.
Similarly, in (9), the thematic object is not the primary object, but instead the non-thematic **source** DP is:

(9) *Nitaahkóma' tatayi niksó 'kowaiks amo isttökimaatsis.*

nit-waahkomá'tat-a-yi n-iksó'kowa-iks i amo isttökimaatsis

1-borrow.TA-1:3-PL 1-relative.ANIM-PL DEM drum.INAN

'I borrowed from my relatives this drum.'

The verb class final in (9) is TA, which clearly indicates that the animate source DP *niksó 'kowaiks* ‘my relatives’ controls agreement instead of the inanimate thematic DP *amo isttökimaatsis* ‘this drum.’ In addition, the theme suffix is that which is used for a first person subject and a third person animate object. Finally, the plural suffix *-yi* shows agreement with the non-thematic object, and not the thematic one.

In addition to **recipient**, **beneficiary**, and **source**, non-thematic primary objects may also fulfill other oblique roles, which I refer to as **companion** and **associate**:

(10) *Nitohpóksisawoomaw nitána ...*

nit-ohpok-oksisawoo-m-a-wa n-itan-wa

1-ACCOMP-visit(AI)-TA-1:3-PROX 1-daughter.ANIM-PROX

... *amo aakiy.*

amo aakii- yi

DEM woman.ANIM-OBV

'I visited with my daughter that woman.'

(11) *Nómohpskitaayi anniksi nóhpapíiyhipksi ...

n-omohp-skit-a-yi ann-iksi n-ohpapíiyhip-iksi

1-ASSOC-leave.TA-1:3-PL DEM-PL 1-relative.ANIM-PL

... *ánni issitsimaan.*

ann-yi issitsimaan

DEM-OBV baby.ANIM

'I left the baby with my relatives.'

In (10), the non-thematic DP *nitána* ‘my daughter’ is the primary object. As in (7), both the thematic and non-thematic objects in this example are third person animate. However, the presence of the proximate suffix *-wa* indicates that the companion DP, and not the patient DP, controls object agreement. Interestingly, in this example, a preverb *ohpok-* indicates the semantic relation of accompaniment, and the TA final *-m* is used specifically to indicate that a non-thematic object is the controller.
Similarly, in (11) a preverb *omohp-* indicates an oblique semantic relation, here what Frantz (1991:94) calls “associative.” The TA final and direct theme suffix do not distinguish between the thematic and non-thematic objects, but the plural suffix *–yi* indicates that the plural non-thematic object *anniksi nóhpapítiyihpiksi* ‘my relatives’ is the primary object, instead of the singular thematic object *áníi issitsimaan* ‘the baby.’

In summary, primary objects in Blackfoot can be classified into two categories. Thematic objects unambiguously bear a PATIENT or THEME thematic role, and correspond semantically with English direct objects. Non-thematic objects may bear a variety of thematic roles, including RECIPIENT, BENEFICIARY, SOURCE, COMPANION, and ASSOCIATE. Roughly speaking, these correspond semantically with English adjuncts, but unlike adjuncts, they obligatorily control object agreement, even if a thematic object appears in the same clause.

**THE SENTIENCE CRITERION**

Although non-thematic objects appear not to be restricted in terms of their thematic roles, they are restricted by a different type of semantic property, namely animacy. In each of the examples of non-thematic objects given above, the primary object is animate, and this is because inanimate non-thematic objects cannot control agreement. A contrastive pair illustrating this fact is given in (12) and (13).

(12) *Nitááhkonomoawa anna issitsimaan amiksi si’káániksi.*

nit-waahkan-*omo-a-wa* ann-wa issitsimaan am-iksi si’kaan-iksi
l-sew-TA.BEN-1:3-PROX DEM-PROX baby.ANIM DEM-PL blanket.ANIM-PL
‘I sewed those blankets for the baby.’

(13) *Nihtááhkanaayi amiksi si’káániksi anni dkinsin.*

n-iht-aahkani-*a-yi* am-iksi si’kaan-iksi ann-yi akssin
l-PURP-sew.TA-1:3-PL DEM-PL blanket.ANIM-PL DEM-OBV bed.INAN
‘I sewed those blankets for the bed.’

5. Following Frantz (1991: 106-107), I have analysed the TA final *–m* as attaching to an AI verb stem. H.C. Wolfart (personal communication) has suggested that associative verbs such as *ohpóksisawoom* are TA stems that are secondarily derived from AI stems. Whether these verbs are secondarily derived stems or not does not affect the claim that COMPANION DPs (and not PATIENT/THEME DPs) control agreement with TA associative verbs. See also example (16).
In (12), the animate non-thematic object *ana iissitsimaan* ‘the baby’ controls agreement, as evidenced by the benefactive TA final -*omo*, and the direct theme suffix -*a*, and most importantly the third person singular proximate suffix -*wa*. In contrast, in (13), the non-thematic inanimate object *anni ákssin* ‘the bed’ does not control agreement, but the thematic (plural) object *amikki si’káániksi* ‘those blankets’ does instead.

One might argue that the non-thematic objects in (12) and (13) differ not only in terms of animacy, but also in terms of thematic role, with *anna iissitsimaan* as a beneficiary and *anni ákssin* as a purposive DP. However, in (14) and (15), the animacy contrast is even more compelling, as both non-thematic objects bear a **SOURCE** thematic role:

(14) *Nitohpómmowawa óma aakiikoan ámostsi asoká’šiistsi.*
    nit-ohpommo-a-wa om-waaakiikoan amo-stsi
    1-buy.from.TA-PROX DEM-PROX girl.ANIMDEM-PL

    asoka’šim-istsi
dress.INAN-PL

‘I bought from that girl these dresses.’

(15) *Nitsítophpommatoo’piyaaw amostsi asoka’šiistsi ...*
    nit-it-ohpommatoo-‘p-yawa amo-stsi asoka’šim-istsi
    1-there-buy.TI-1:INAN-PL.PRO DEM-PL dress.INAN-PL

    ... omi iitaohpommao’pi.
om-(y)i iitaohpommao’p-yi
    DEM-OBV store.INAN-OBV

‘I bought these dresses from the store.’

In (14), the non-thematic **SOURCE** DP controls agreement, but in (15), it does not. The critical difference between these two objects is that *óma aakiikoan* ‘that girl’ in (14) is animate, and *omi iitaohpommao’pi* ‘the store’ in (15) is inanimate. In other words, primary objects can be non-thematic only if they are animate.

In fact, however, the restriction on non-thematic primary objects is even more specific than that. It is not simply the case that non-thematic primary objects must be grammatically animate, but they must be semantically animate, or more accurately, **SENTIENT**. Sentience refers to real-world or semantic animacy, or the ability to sense, perceive, and respond (Hanson 2005; Speas & Tenny 2003). Sentience is a property that can be ascribed to any thinking, feeling entity, such as human beings, some ani-
mals, and perhaps deities. Importantly, however, grammatically animate objects such as instruments, tools, or plants, are unlikely to be conceived of as sentient. The distinction between grammatical animacy and sentience proves important in determining the criteria for primary objecthood in Blackfoot. Non-sentient non-thematic objects cannot control agreement, even if they are grammatically animate. This is demonstrated in (16) and (17) below.

(16) Nitohpókaahkanaakimaw nitána.
    nit-ohpok-waahkanaaki-m-a-wa n-itan-wa
    1-ACCOMP-sew(AI)-TA-DIR-PROX 1-daughter.ANIM-PROX
    ‘I sewed with my daughter.’

(17) Nómohtaahkanaaki ánna aotonáóksi.
    n-omoht-waahkanaaki ann-wa atonaoksis
    1 INSTR-sew.AI DEM-PROX needle.ANIM
    ‘I sewed with this needle.’

In (16), the typically AI verb waahkanaaki has an accompaniment preverb ohpok- as well as a TA final –m. These, in addition to the direct theme and proximate agreement suffixes, indicate that the sentient non-thematic DP nitána ‘my daughter’ is the primary object. In (17), on the other hand, the same AI verb bears none of this telltale agreement morphology, indicating that the non-sentient non-thematic DP ánna aotonáóksi ‘this needle’ is not a primary object. Thus, primary objecthood in Blackfoot is subject to a “sentience criterion,” by which only sentient DPs may act as controllers if they are non-thematic.

A SYNTACTIC MODEL OF OBJECT AGREEMENT

In the two preceding sections, I detailed the conditions on object agreement: The first criterion is sentience; sentient objects control agreement, regardless of their thematic role. The second criterion, as a “last resort” or default, is thematic role. If there is no sentient object (thematic or non-thematic), then a non-sentient thematic object can control agreement.

In this section I sketch out a syntactic model of object agreement in Blackfoot, based on these criteria. There are three key ingredients for such a model:

First, as suggested in other works on Blackfoot syntax (Bliss 2005; Ritter & Rosen 2006), the prevalence of sentience in determining pri-
mary objecthood entails that [Sentient] be recognized as a grammatically active feature in Blackfoot, and be further recognized as distinct from the feature [±Animate].

Second, because non-thematic primary objects can bear a variety of thematic roles, it is clear that they are not licensed by accusative case, as are direct objects in a language like English. Instead, given the restriction that non-thematic primary objects are sentient, a plausible alternative is that these types of objects are licensed by the feature [Sentient].

Third, given the differences observed between thematic and non-thematic primary objects, I contend that primary objects in Blackfoot do not form a uniform class, but instead have different syntactic permutations based on their thematicity.

These three proposals form the core of the syntactic model of Blackfoot object agreement presented here. With respect to its application, I am adopting a Minimalist framework, in which verb agreement is conceived of in terms of the valuing and checking of the uninterpretable features of a head by the interpretable features of an argument. Specifically, regarding Blackfoot object agreement, my claim is that the head that licenses sentient primary objects is a functional head (which for simplicity’s sake I refer to as Sent), and that the feature that is checked on this head is [Sentient].

Thematic objects

Following standard assumptions, I treat thematic objects as being merged in VP. Beginning first with non-sentient thematic objects, because they do not have a [Sentient] feature, I assume that they do not project SentP. Only the [±Animate] feature needs to be checked. The morphological realization of [±Animate] is in the form of the verb class final, which

6. Ritter & Rosen (2006) refer to this feature as [Pers(on)].
7. This is supported by Ritter & Wiltschko’s (2004) claim that there is no tense (or case) in Blackfoot, and builds on their (2005) claim that events are anchored to the discourse via the participants, rather than by tense.
8. In particular, I am assuming Baker’s (1988, 1996) Uniformity of Theta-Assignment Hypothesis, or UTAH. Under this hypothesis, there is a direct mapping between thematic role and structural position. For example, PATIENT and/or THEME DPs are merged VP-internally, and non-PATIENT/THEME DPs are not.
9. The spell-out of the theme suffixes is more complex, determined by features of both the subject and the object. An analysis is not provided here, but see Bliss (2005) for a feature-based account.
is immediately adjacent to (or, as is often the case, suppletive with) the verb stem. Thus, I treat V as bearing a \([u\text{Animate}]\) feature, which can be checked by the thematic object in Comp, VP. This is schematized in (18).

(18) \[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{vP}
\end{array}
\begin{array}{c}
\text{SUBJECT}
\end{array}
\begin{array}{c}
v'
\end{array}
\begin{array}{c}
v
\end{array}
\begin{array}{c}
\text{VP}
\end{array}
\begin{array}{c}
V'
\end{array}
\begin{array}{c}
V+\text{Final}
\end{array}
\begin{array}{c}
[\alpha\text{Anim}]
\end{array}
\begin{array}{c}
\text{PRIMARY}
\end{array}
\begin{array}{c}
\text{OBJECT}
\end{array}
\begin{array}{c}
[\alpha\text{Anim}]
\end{array}
\]

In (18), the non-sentient non-thematic primary object appears in its merge position in the complement of VP. It has no \([\text{Sentient}]\) feature, and thus, SentP is not projected. This object, although non-sentient, may be either grammatically animate or inanimate. The \([\pm\text{Animate}]\) feature of the object values and checks the \([u\text{Animate}]\) feature on V. If the feature is valued as \([+\text{Animate}]\), the verb class final is spelled out as TA, and if the feature is valued as \([-\text{Animate}]\), it is spelled out as TI.

Sentient thematic objects are only slightly more complex. Like non-sentient thematic objects, I assume they are merged in V, but because they have a \([\text{Sentient}]\) feature, I analyse them as moving to Spec, SentP to check the \([u\text{Sentient}]\) feature on Sent. This is diagrammed in (19).

(19) \[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{vP}
\end{array}
\begin{array}{c}
\text{SUBJECT}
\end{array}
\begin{array}{c}
v'
\end{array}
\begin{array}{c}
v
\end{array}
\begin{array}{c}
\text{SentP}
\end{array}
\begin{array}{c}
\text{PRIMARY}_i
\end{array}
\begin{array}{c}
\text{OBJECT}
\end{array}
\begin{array}{c}
[\text{Sent}]
\end{array}
\begin{array}{c}
[+\text{Anim}]
\end{array}
\begin{array}{c}
\text{Sent'}
\end{array}
\begin{array}{c}
\text{V+TA}_{ii}
\end{array}
\begin{array}{c}
[u\text{Sent}]
\end{array}
\begin{array}{c}
[+\text{Anim}]
\end{array}
\begin{array}{c}
\text{VP}
\end{array}
\begin{array}{c}
V'
\end{array}
\begin{array}{c}
t_{ii}
\end{array}
\begin{array}{c}
t_i
\end{array}
\]
In (19), the primary object merges in Comp, VP, but moves to Spec, SentP to check the \([u\text{Sentient}]\) feature on Sent. In addition, in order to value and check its \([u\text{Animate}]\) feature, V moves to Sent, and the verb class final is spelled out as TA.

**Non-thematic objects**

Descriptively, the key difference between thematic and non-thematic objects is that the latter – but not the former – are restricted on the basis of sentience. In order to capture this observation, I proposed that the feature \([\text{Sentient}]\) licenses non-thematic primary objects. With respect to the model I have adopted, what this means is that non-thematic objects have a different merge position than thematic objects. In particular, I propose that non-thematic primary objects are merged in SentP.\(^{10}\) This is schematized in (20).

\[(20)\]

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{vP} \\
\text{\hspace{1cm}SUBJECT} \\
\text{\hspace{1cm}v} \\
\text{\hspace{1cm}SentP} \\
\text{\hspace{1cm}V+TA,} \\
\text{\hspace{1cm}[u\text{Sent}] } \\
\text{\hspace{1cm}[+Anim]} \\
\text{\hspace{1cm}V'} \\
\text{\hspace{1cm}t_i} \\
\text{Themetic Object}
\end{array}
\]

In (20), there is a thematic object in Comp, VP. Importantly, however, the thematic object does not control agreement. Instead, the primary object is merged in the Spec of SentP, and it checks the \([u\text{Sentient}]\) feature on this head. As in (19), V moves to Sent to check and value its \([u\text{Animate}]\) fea-

\(^{10}\) It is an open question how the various thematic roles are assigned to the arguments that can appear in Spec, SentP. For some types of objects (i.e., beneficiary, companion, associate) the preverb and/or verb class final signals the thematic role, yet for others (i.e., recipient, source) no overt morphological cue is given. Taken together, this seems to suggest that the selectional requirements of the verb complex (lexical stem and/or preverb and/or final) determines the thematic role of these types of primary objects.
ture, and the verb class final is spelled out as TA. Crucially, in (20), the non-thematic object in Sent controls agreement, not the thematic object in V.

**TWO EXCEPTIONAL CASES**

Having detailed the conditions on primary objecthood in Blackfoot and considered how this can be represented in a formal syntactic model, I now turn to the exceptional cases of agreement and non-agreement that, at first glance, appear to pose significant challenges to the model I propose above.

*Locational DPs*

Although non-thematic objects can bear a wide variety of oblique thematic roles, including RECIPIENT, BENEFICIARY, SOURCE, COMPANION, and ASSOCIATE, there is one particular type of oblique DP that cannot act as the primary object, namely locational DPs. Whether they are sentient or non-sentient, locational DPs cannot control object agreement.\(^{11}\) This is exemplified in (21) and (22) below.

\begin{enumerate}
\item[(21)] *Nitsitapohkipista kiksissta.*
\begin{tabular}{lll}
  nit-itap-ohkipista(a) & k-iksisst-(w)a \\
  1-toward-drive.a.team.AI & 2.POSS-mother.ANIM-PROX \\
\end{tabular}

\hspace{1cm} 'I drove (a team of horses) to your mother.'

\item[(22)] *Nitsitápohkipista Mohkinsstsis.*
\begin{tabular}{lll}
  nit-itap-ohkipista(a) & Mohkinsstsis \\
  1-toward-drive.a.team.AI & Calgary.INAN \\
\end{tabular}

\hspace{1cm} 'I drove (a team of horses) to Calgary.'
\end{enumerate}

In both (21) and (22), the verb class final is AI, because there is no primary object. In other words, neither the sentient locational DP *kiksissta* 'your mother' nor the non-sentient locational DP *Mohkinsstsis* 'Calgary' can control object agreement. Syntactically, locational DPs, whether they are sentient or non-sentient, are adjuncts, and as such, they cannot value and check the \([uSentient]\) and \([uAnimate]\) features on Sent and V. This is schematized in (23).

\(^{11}\) A possible exception might be found with the TA verb *ohtowaaat* 'approach' (Frantz & Russell 1989: 151). However this has yet to be confirmed with my consultant.
In (23), the locational DP is in an adjunct position. The thematic object in Comp, VP values and checks the \([u\text{Animate}]\) feature on V. Although under this analysis, the derivation converges, it is unclear why locational DPs are adjuncts, and other oblique DPs are controllers.

I propose that locational DPs differ semantically from other oblique DPs. Locational DPs have the same interpretation whether they are sentient or non-sentient. In (21) and (22), both *kiksissta* and *Mohkinsstsis* bear a LOCATION or GOAL thematic role. Comparatively, other oblique DPs typically differ in their interpretation depending on whether they are sentient or non-sentient. Recall from (16) and (17) that the oblique DPs in 'I sewed with my daughter' and 'I sewed with this needle' differ syntactically, with the former but not the latter acting as a primary object. Importantly, they also differ semantically; 'my daughter' is a COMPANION, and 'this needle' is an instrument. In short, the semantics of locational DPs is different from that of other oblique DPs, and my suggestion is that the reason why locational DPs cannot act as controllers is due to their semantic interpretation.

I treat [Sentient] as analogous to structural (accusative) case, in its ability to licence arguments. Locational DPs, which have a static interpretation regardless of their sentience, can be analysed as bearing inherent locative case. This inherent case feature prevents them from being merged in Spec, SentP. As locative case-marked DPs, these types of DPs are merged as adjuncts.
Cross-clausal agreement

The other exceptional case of object agreement is a phenomenon known as cross-clausal agreement, or CCA.\(^{12}\) In CCA, a subject or object of a subordinate clause acts as the primary object in a matrix clause. Not surprisingly, the syntactic properties of CCA differ from those of monoclausal object agreement. The first of these differences is that, unlike monoclausal object agreement, CCA is optional. This is shown in (24) and (25).

(24) \[ \text{Nitsiksstataw na John mǎāhksikkohsssi amo atsinayi.} \]
\[
\begin{align*}
\text{nit-iksstat-a-wa} & \quad \text{John m-aahk-sikkohsi-hsi amo atsinayi} \\
1\text{-want.TA-1:3-PROX DEM John 3-NF-melt.TI-CONJ DEM fat.INAN}
\end{align*}
\]
'I want John to melt this fat.'

(25) \[ \text{Nitsiksstaa na John mǎāhksikkohsssi amo atsinayi.} \]
\[
\begin{align*}
\text{nit-iksstaa} & \quad \text{John m-aahk-sikkohsi-hsi amo atsinayi} \\
1\text{-want.AI DEM John 3-NF-melt.TI-CONJ DEM fat.INAN}
\end{align*}
\]
'I want John to melt this fat.'

In (24), the subordinate subject \(\text{na John}\) controls object agreement on the matrix verb. The matrix verb class final is TA, and the theme suffix indicates that there is a first person subject and a third person object. In (25), on the other hand, there is no CCA. The verb class final is AI, indicating that there is no primary object.

The other important property of CCA is that, unlike monoclausal object agreement, it is not sensitive to the sentience criterion. Non-sentient arguments in a subordinate clause can trigger CCA, just as sentient ones can (example from Don Frantz, personal communication):

(26) \[ \text{Nitsiksstatawa anna isttoan kaahkohkokkssi.} \]
\[
\begin{align*}
\text{nit-iksstat-a-wa} & \quad \text{anna (w)a isttoan k-aahk-ohko(t)-(ok)-hsi} \\
1\text{-want.TA-1:3-PROX DEM-PROX knife.ANIM 2-NF-give.TA-INV-CONJ}
\end{align*}
\]
'I want this knife for you to give it to me.'

My consultant’s reactions to this example are as yet inconclusive, but assuming that (26) is grammatical, then the non-sentient (but grammatically animate) object \(\text{anna isttoan} ‘\text{this knife}’\) acts as a controller. Impor-

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12. The term ‘cross-clausal agreement’ (CCA) is due to Branigan & Mackenzie (2002), who discuss the same phenomenon in Innu-aimün. CCA has also been referred to as ‘raising-to-object’ (Bruening 2001) and ‘copy-to-object’ (Dahlstrom 1991; Frantz 1978)
tantly, it is a non-thematic non-sentient controller, which, as I have demonstrated, does not appear in monoclausal contexts.

I propose that the reason why cross-clausal controllers are not subject to the sentience criterion is a pragmatic one. Recall that CCA is optional. The sentences in (24) and (25) have the same propositional content; they can both be translated as ‘I want John to melt this fat.’ However, they differ pragmatically. As is widely attested for a number of Algonquian languages, the argument that triggers CCA is a discourse topic (Branigan & MacKenzie 2002; Bruening 2001; Dahlstrom 1991).

The role of pragmatics in CCA distinguishes it from monoclausal object agreement. Monoclausal primary objects are licensed by their contribution to the event structure (i.e., their sentience and/or thematic role). Cross-clausal primary objects, on the other hand, are licensed by their topicality, or their contribution to the information structure. This fundamental difference accounts for the fact that sentience does not play a role in CCA.

The syntactic analysis I adopt for CCA is fashioned after that which is advocated by Branigan & MacKenzie (2002). In particular, I suggest that, as topicalized DPs, cross-clausal primary objects appear in Spec, CP of the subordinate clause. From this position, they can control object agreement in the matrix clause. This is diagrammed in (27).

(27) `vP
   /   \
  AGENT v’
   /   \ v VP
      /     \ V’
      /       \ V+Final CP
          [a,Anim] DP
             \[Anim\] C C’
                \ vP
                   t_i ...

In (27), the subordinate subject (or object) moves to Spec, CP to set up a topicalization structure. From this position in the left clausal periph-
ery, the topic DP can value and check the \([uAnimate]\) feature on matrix V.

Importantly, non-topical DPs (such as \(na\) John in (25)) do not move to the CP layer, and as such, they cannot value and check any uninterpretable features in the matrix clause. This analysis recognizes the privileged status of topics in Blackfoot syntax. Precisely because of their contribution to the information structure, topic DPs can control agreement across clause boundaries.

**CONCLUSION**

Blackfoot has three distinct types of primary objects. First are thematic primary objects. These correspond semantically to direct objects in English, they unambiguously bear a \(PATIENT\) or \(THEME\) thematic role, and they may be sentient or non-sentient. I have analysed these as being merged in Comp, VP and moving to Spec, SentP if and only if they are sentient. Second are non-thematic. These objects correspond semantically with English adjuncts, and bear a variety of oblique thematic roles. Importantly, non-thematic primary objects are obligatorily sentient. To capture this restriction, I have analysed them as being merged in Spec, SentP. Third are the cross-clausal variety. These may bear a variety of thematic roles, may be sentient or non-sentient, and act as a discourse topic in a subordinate clause. I treat these as moving to Spec, CP of the subordinate clause to set up a topicalization structure, and from this position they check the \([uAnimate]\) feature on matrix V.

I have demonstrated that sentience plays an important role in object agreement in Blackfoot. I have argued that sentience in Blackfoot is analogous to structural case in a language like English in its ability to license arguments. In this respect, languages like Blackfoot and English differ, not so much in the architecture of their respective grammars, but rather in the types of features that are grammatically active in these languages.

**REFERENCES**


