Antipassive in Blackfoot

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Introduction

A good deal of Algonquian verbal morphology can be understood only within study of syntax. Here I discuss just one feature of Blackfoot verbal morphology which, even in the context of discussion of syntax, can be viewed as an anomaly. The purpose of this paper is to show how the attendant facts can be accounted for within universal grammar.

The Problem

A large number of logically transitive verbs are intransitive (AI) as evidenced by their inflection. Thus in (1)-(3) the verb inflection "cross-references" only the subject:

(1) Nît-ohpommaa ʃ'ksisako-i.
    1-buy(AI) meat-nonpartic
    'I bought meat.'

(2) Ki-käta'-ya-ɪssiiststaki-hp istotoôhs-i?
    2-quest-dur-wash(AI)-clothes-nonpartic
    nonaffirm
    'Do you wash clothes?'

(3) A-ɪsstsipisaaki-wa ponokaômitaa-i.
    dur-whip(AI)-3 horse-nonpartic
    'He whips horses.'

There are transitive (TA and TI) counterparts to such verbs which contain the same roots; compare (4)-(6) with (1)-(3), respectively:

(4) Nît-ohpommat-oo'pa ʃ'ksisako-yi.
    1-buy(trans)-3in.sg meat-partic
    'I bought the meat.'

(5) Ki-käta'-ya-ɪssliststst-oo'pi k-istotoôhs-istsi?
    2-quest-dur-wash(TI)-3in.pl your-clothes-pl
    'Do you wash your clothes?'

(6) Omiiksi ponokaômitaa-iksi a-ɪsstsipis-iïwaiksi.
    those horse-pl dur-whip-3:4pl
    'He whips those horses.'

In (4)-(6), the verb cross-references person, number and gender of both subject and direct object.

The primary factor which determines whether such verbs
are transitive or intransitive is the referential status of the direct object: in (1)-(3) the direct object is non-particular or non-referring, whereas in (4)-(6) the speaker has a particular referent or set of referents in mind for the object (Frantz 1971). The same stems are used if the direct object is totally unspecified, as in (7)-(8):

(7) Nítohpommaa. 'I made a purchase.'

(8) Kikáta'yaafiisiiststakihpa? 'Are you washing?'

On the other hand, if the direct object is particular in reference but clear from context, the transitive stem is used, as in (9)-(10):

(9) Nítohpommatoo'pa. 'I bought it.'

(10) Aísstsipisiwiwaiksí. 'He whips them.'

In summary, the bulk of logically transitive roots have both transitive and intransitive stems, the former occurring when the direct object is particular in reference, and the latter when the direct object is unspecified or non-particular in reference.

Framework for Discussion

The remainder of this paper will utilize the Relational Grammar (RG) framework. RG views sentences as relational networks involving universal grammatical relations (GR's), including relations between relations. Of greatest relevance here are the relations nominals can bear to a predicate governor. These are of two types: term relations and non-term relations. The former set has only three members: Subject (1), Direct Object (2), and Indirect Object (3). Non-term relations include Place, Benefactee, Goal, Source, Comitative, Instrument, etc. In this paper I will schematically represent relations by labelled arrows between predicates and their dependents. E.g., network (11) expresses the GR's of sentence (12):

(11) THROW

1

MAN

2

STICK

Goal

(12) Om-a nínnaa-wa itáp-aapiksi-ma
    that-3 man-3 toward-throw(TI)-3:in.sg
    miistsís-i om-i imitaá-yi.
    stick-partic that-4 dog-4
    'The man threw the stick to that dog.'

An important "law" of RG is that only terms trigger verb agreement. Thus the verb of (12) reflects person, number, and gender of 'man' as 1, and of 'stick' as 2, but not of 'dog' (Goal). So, e.g., pluralizing 'stick' affects verb
inflection as in (13), but pluralizing 'dog' has no effect on the verb; compare (14) and (12):

(13) Oma nínaawa itápaapiksim-i miistsíistsi omí imitaāyi. 'The man threw (the) sticks at that dog.'

(14) Oma nínaawa itápaapiksim-a miistsísi omíksi imitāaiksi. 'The man threw (the) stick at those dogs.'

Networks may involve more than one 'level' of sets of relations. Thus (15), the network for (16), involves a revaluation between successive levels in that a Goal has 'advanced' to 2:

(15)

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1
GO

1
DOG 2
MAN

Goal
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(16) Om-a imitāā-wa itap-āats-iiwa om-í nínaa-yi. that-3 dog-3 toward-go(TA)-3:4 that-4 man-4 'That dog approached that man.'

Compare (17), which is a simpler network, showing the relations of (18):

(17)

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1
GO

1
DOG 2
MAN

Goal
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(18) Om-a imitāā-wa itap-oō-wa om-í nínaa-yi. that-3 dog-3 toward-go-3 that-4 man-4 'The dog went toward that man.'

In (18) 'man' is not a term and thus does not trigger verb agreement, but in (16) 'man' is the final 2, as well as the initial Goal, and so does trigger verb agreement."

Another important concept in RG is that of chômeage (and the derivative non-term relation chômeur). By a law of RG, no two nominals can bear the same term relation on a given level. Thus if a revaluation rule assigns term relation R to a nominal X on level Li, and a different nominal Y bears R on level Li-1, then Y is assigned the chômeur relation on Li. In other words, a chômeur is a nominal which has had its "earlier" termhood usurped by another nominal on the next level. I will illustrate first with English passive, then with what I tentatively consider to be a case of necessary passive in Blackfoot.
I was hit by a stick.

'Stick' is the initial 1 of (20), as labelled in (19). But the speaker is final 1, thus making 'stick' a 1-chômeur (I). The preposition by of (20) 'flags' the 1 status of a stick.

Network (19) may also indicate the GR's of Blackfoot (21):

(21) N-ōmoht-awayáki-oookoo omí miistísís-i
I-instr-hit(TA)-pass that:in stick-partic
'The stick hit me.'

But in Blackfoot there is no non-passive counterpart to (21) such as the non-passive A stick him me of English. Blackfoot does not allow inanimate gender nominals to be final subject of transitive verbs. Consequently, the initial 2 advances to 1, and 'stick' is a final 1. It is very common for languages to mark l's in the same way as Instruments. However, Blackfoot uses no preposition or case markings, but instead registers the involvement of certain non-terms in the verb. Thus in (21) the verb includes "preverb" omoh-, the usual preverb for registration of an Instrument or Means. In fact, (21) is ambiguous as to whether 'stick' is an initial 1 or initial Instrument; in the latter case (21) would be translated 'I was hit with a stick.', and the network would be as in (22):

(22) HIT
1
Instrument

Unspecified

1
Instrument

Unspecified

Actualized, it is not at all clear that (20) is a true passive in either of its meanings. An alternative analysis posits a "silent dummy" as final 1 of (20). There is some evidence for this analysis, as the non-affirmative ending for verbs such as that in (21) is the same one usually called for if 3rd person singular is involved (Unlenbeck 1938.149-151) as either final 1 or 2:

(23) N-ōmoht-awayáki-ookoo-waatsiksi miistísí-si
I-instr-hit-inverse-?-3:nonaffirm stick-nonpartic
'I was hit with/by a stick?'
This supports the dummy analysis over the passive analysis in that under the dummy analysis the verb remains transitive and will be inflected for the most neutral person category (3 sg) rather than agree with the dummy. Under either the passive or dummy analysis, 'stick' is a final 1.

**Antipassive**

The intransitivity of the verbs in (1)-(3) and in (7)-(8) can be accounted for if only specified, particular 2's "count" as 2's for purposes of verb agreement. Given that final 1's and 2's trigger verb agreement in Blackfoot, and under the hypothesis that semantic roles map directly and universally onto initial grammatical relations, then the networks for (1)-(3) and (7)-(8) must involve revaluations, so that the initial 2's are not final 2's. Such a revaluation rule has been discussed by Paul Postal (1977) and David Johnson (1976) to account for similar phenomena in a wide range of languages. Both Postal and Johnson claim that a 2 may be demoted to a 2-chômeur.

A particularly clear case is that of Eskimo, as the following evidence from Seiler (1976) illustrates.

(24) aŋuti-м aŋviq qiniŋ-aa
    man-erg whale see-3:3
    'The man saw a (particular) whale.'

(25) aŋun aŋviŋ-mik qiŋiq-tuŋ
    man whale-instr see-3
    'The man saw a whale.'

In (24) the 2 is a particular whale, and the clause is transitive as indicated by the ergative case suffix on 'man', and by the transitive verb agreement with person and number of both 1 and 2. In (25), on the other hand, 'whale' is not a final 2 so the clause is intransitive. Of particular interest is the presence of the instrumental suffix -mik on 'whale' in (25). Seiler (1976) amply demonstrates that all 2's are marked with the instrumental case in Eskimo. Compare (26) and (27); the latter involves advancement of an initial indirect object to 2, so the initial 2 is a final 2. The 2 in (27) has the instrumental suffix.

(26) miiyu-um mani-ch aŋut-mik-nun qaitch-ai
    Miiyuk-erg money-pl man-her-to give-3:3pl
    'Miiyuk gave the money to her husband.'

(27) miiyu-um aŋut-riŋ maniŋ-nik qaitchu-uti-gaa
    Miiyuk-erg man-her money-instr:pl give-ben-3:3
    'Miiyuk gave her husband (the) money.'

Postal (1977) proposes demotion of 1 to 2 as the mechanism that causes the initial 2 to be a final 2 in antipassive sentences such as (25). The network for (25) will then be (28):
Since this mechanism is available within this universal framework, it can account for the Blackfoot phenomenon under discussion. So the network for (1), repeated below, will be:

I claim then that verb stems such as those in (1)-(3) and which I have previously called "Pseudo-intransitive stems" (Frantz 1971), are antipassive stems, i.e. stems which are constrained to occur in networks such as (29). Because Blackfoot, unlike Eskimo, does not mark 2's, my claim that antipassive is involved in (1)-(3) has little support other than the fact that it will account for their lack of transitivity. In the next section I present some facts which favour this analysis over one which merely refers to the referential status of the objects in (1)-(3). 8

Causative Verbs

As discussed in Frantz (1971), the "instigative cause" suffix attaches only to intransitive stems. 9 Thus in causative verbs with logically transitive roots, the causative root will attach to what I previously called Pseudo-intransitive stems. That is, the causative of a transitive verb will be made up of the antipassive stem plus the causative root. See (30) and (31) for examples.

(30) K-Ìnn-a kit-ssiiststaki-áttts-ook-a (istotoóhs-your-father-3 2-wash(AI)-cause-inverse-3 i). clothes-non partic

'Your father made you wash (clothes).'
Observe that in (31) we find the antipassive stem despite the fact that the logical object of 'buy' is particular in reference. Thus in causative clauses it is not possible to explain the form of the verb in terms of the referential status of the logical object. The most satisfying account requires that we view causative clauses as involving two initial clauses. Thus the initial relations of (31) are those of (32):

Relational grammar posits a universal rule of causative clause union in which the dependents of the 'downstairs' predicate (in this case BUY) become dependents of CAUSE, and the downstairs predicate loses its governor status (becomes a predicate 'emeritus'). In the union, a downstairs 1 of an intransitive verb becomes the 2 of CAUSE.

My earlier statement that in Blackfoot the causative root is always attached to an intransitive stem is the morphological consequence of a (syntactic) constraint on networks with CAUSE in Blackfoot: causative clause union requires that CAUSE govern an intransitive clause. In cases where this constraint would be violated, Blackfoot satisfies the constraint by the mechanism of antipassive. Thus the network for (31) is (33):
Observe that the downstairs network is identical to (29) (with the irrelevant substitution of nominals GIRL and BERRIES).

Summary
We have seen two situations which require the intransitive form of logically transitive verbs in Blackfoot. The first was where a logical object is either unspecified or non-particular in reference. The second was when attached to the causative root. In a relational grammar of Blackfoot, these facts are accounted for by saying that a single universal rule, antipassive, is governed by either of two factors, one semantic (referential status of the initial 2) and the other syntactic (a constraint on causative clause union.)

NOTES

1 Nowhere is this more admirably demonstrated than in Rhodes (1976).

2 Abbreviations used only in glosses include: 1, 2, and 3 for first, second, and third person; 4 = obviative; dur = durative; quest = question marker; partic = particular; in = inanimate gender; trans = transitive. AI, TA, and TI used as is customary in Algonquian literature. In glosses for transitive verbs, subject and direct object persons reflected in a portmanteau suffix are separated by a colon, e.g., "3:4" = 3 subject, 4 (obviative) object.

3 This is Bloomfield's (1946.94) term for agreement with a nominal.

4 *aat is the result of adding transitivizer -at (seen also in (4)) to root oo - 'go'.
I suggest an alternative analysis below.

Nor am I any longer confident that any Blackfoot transitive verbs with unspecified subject are passives. The evidence I presented in Frantz (1976) for Blackfoot making use of preverb *iito* - 'go' may be invalid, for this preverb may originate in an adverbial clause. The same type of argument for the other languages will go through by substituting preverb 'want', however.

I would like to take this opportunity to list some important errata for Frantz (1976):
(a) In (7) of p.203, substitute suffix -ma for -xpa.
(b) Delete the first full sentence of p.204 and substitute the following: 'Micmac uses either the TA passive stem *(me:toqsik-il)* 'they (in) were hit' or a mediopassive stem *(pema:tasqiqil)* 'they (in) were carried'.
(c) In line 6 of note 2 (p.215), change 'subject' to 'object'.

As Glynn Piggott pointed out in discussion of this paper, I give no evidence against an analysis in which the nominals in question are initial non-terms. Rich Rhodes added that in the mapping of semantic roles onto initial GR's it may be that non-particularity of reference makes certain patients 'undeserving' of initial termhood. But until it becomes untenable, I prefer to go with what seems to me to be the strongest hypothesis: that semantic role alone determines initial GR's.

See note 7.

This is apparently a pan-Algonquian constraint.