

**Topic, Focus and other Word Order Problems  
in Algonquian**

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ALGONQUIAN LANGUAGES are of the so-called 'free word order' or non-configurational type. Word order is not used to distinguish subjects from objects; indeed, it is hard to identify any single order as representing the basic order of constituents (cf. Mithun 1987 on other such languages). In Algonquian languages, the problem of word order is particularly complex: not only are almost all permutations of a verb and its arguments grammatical, but the arguments (and sometimes the verb itself) may also be syntactically discontinuous (Dahlstrom 1987). That is, part of an NP argument may appear before the verb and the remainder after the verb. In many Algonquian languages, compound verbs may also be discontinuous, with one or more constituents intervening between a preverb and the remainder of the verb. The two types of discontinuity are illustrated below with examples from Fox (and with the inflectional affixes in (2) printed in boldface).<sup>1</sup>

(1)

*neswi e·h=ayo·wa·či nakamo·nani*  
three use 3p-0/aor songs

'They sing three songs' O25L

(2)

*neki·ši- te·pi tasenwi -kano·na·wa*  
perf- enough so.many.times -speak.to 1-3/ind.ind

'I have spoken to him enough times' R70.8

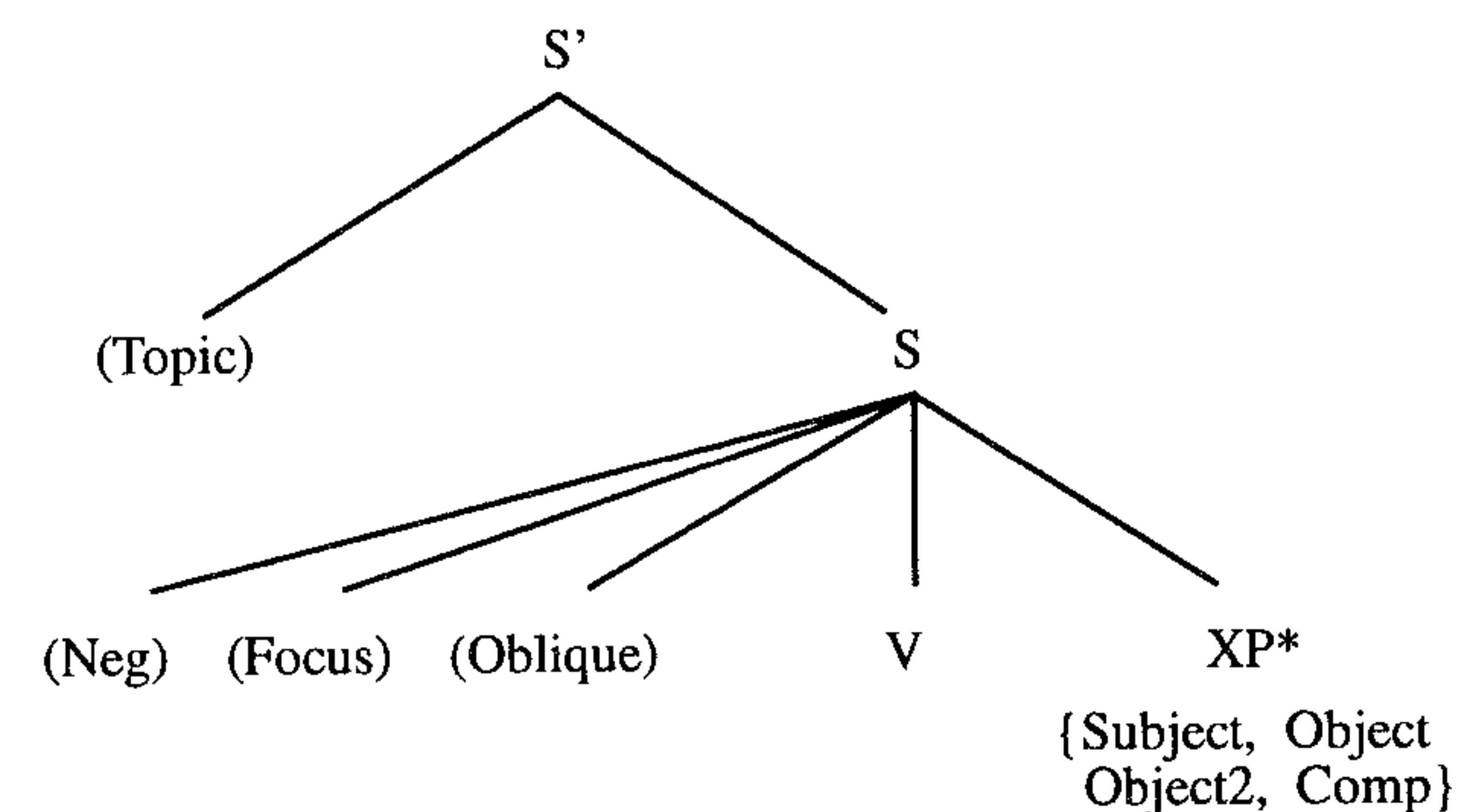
In (1) the object of the verb is expressed by a discontinuous NP: the quantifier *neswi* 'three' precedes the verb and the head noun *nakamo-nani* 'songs' follows the verb. (2) contains a discontinuous compound verb. The perfective preverb *ki-ši-* appears at the left edge of the clause, bringing along the first person inflectional prefix *ne-*. The righthand piece of the compound verb consists of the verb stem *kano-n-* 'speak to' plus the inflectional suffixes *-a-wa*. Intervening between the two pieces of the verb is an adjunct phrase specifying the number of times the subject spoke. One piece of evidence for considering the preverb to be part of the verb in (2) is the pattern of inflectional morphology. The separated pieces of the verb are inflected as if they formed a single grammatical unit: compare the inflection on the simple verb *nekano-na-wa* 'I spoke to him'.

In this lecture I will show that much of the apparent complexity in one Algonquian language, Fox, can in fact be understood in terms of a template for word order which makes reference to both discourse functions and syntactic functions. Although the examples will be taken from a single language, I believe that many of the results obtained for Fox may be applied to Algonquian in general. The word order template discussed here was first proposed in Dahlstrom 1993, which discusses the syntactic and discourse-functional differences between topic and focus in Fox. The material presented below builds on and expands the arguments in Dahlstrom 1993; most significantly, the distribution of at least some discontinuous constituents will be shown to be sensitive to the word order template. In other words, the lefthand piece of the discontinuous NP or compound verb occupies a specific position on the template.

#### THE WORD ORDER TEMPLATE

The template for Fox word order is as follows:

(3)



Within the clause, the verb serves as a pivot or reference point for the other constituents. Four distinct positions have been identified to the left of the verb: Topic, Negative, Focus and Oblique. The parentheses surrounding the position labels in (3) indicate that each position is optional.<sup>2</sup> Topic and Focus are discourse functions, which will be described in separate sections below. The Negative position is filled by negative elements such as *a-kwi* 'not'. Oblique, on the other hand, is a syntactic function, subcategorised for by certain verbs. Note that, except for Topic, all the constituents in (3) are daughters of S (see Dahlstrom 1993 for arguments supporting a flat structure). Topic, however, is a sister of the S constituent, dominated by an S' node.<sup>3</sup>

Less is known about the ordering of constituents to the right of the verb. The postverbal position is the unmarked position for subjects, objects, second objects, and Comp clauses (the grammatical function associated with most complement clauses).<sup>4</sup> The notation of 'XP\*' indicates that any number of constituents (including zero) may appear after the verb; a postverbal constituent may be associated with any of the grammatical functions listed in the curly brackets of (3). The question of what determines the relative order of postverbal constituents will be returned to below.

Below I provide examples of each syntactic type of argument (subject, object, second object, oblique, and Comp), showing their unmarked position relative to the verb. As the template in (3) shows, the unmarked position for obliques is to the left of the verb; for all other arguments, the unmarked position is to the right of the verb. Apparent cases of subjects or objects appearing to the left of the verb are, I claim, topic or focus NPs: that is, the NP is placed in preverbal position to serve a particular discourse function.

The text excerpt below illustrates the unmarked position for subject NPs:

- (4)
- o·ni e·h=mesi-=meko -natone·hwa·wa·či* [SUBJ *oškinawe·haki*].  
 and.then all-=emph -look.for 3p-3'/aor young.men
- e·h=mehkawa·či* [SUBJ *wa·koše·ha*],  
 find 3-3'/aor fox
- e·h=pye·či·ni·šiwa·či* [SUBJ *mahkwani*].  
 come-be.two 3p/aor bear.obv
- i·ni=ke·h=meko ma·masa·či e·h=ne·moči* [SUBJ *wi·sahke·ha*].  
 then=and=emph barely breathe 3/aor W

'And then the young men all looked for him [the bear].  
 The fox found him,  
 and he and the bear came together.  
 And at this time Wisahkeha was barely breathing.' W174F-I

Each line of (4) contains a postverbal subject NP, identified by the labelled bracket surrounding it.

The unmarked position for objects – both first and second objects – is also to the right of the verb. The following sentence contains a ditransitive verb followed by a first object and a second object:

- (5)
- nemi·na·waki* [OBJ *nešise·haki*] [OBJ2 *me·šomakini*]  
 give 1-3p/ind.ind my.uncles that(obv).which.I.shot

'I gave my uncles the game which I killed' J252.22

Fox verbs are not inflected for features of the second object. (The second object in (5) is a headless relative clause, formed from the verb stem *mešw-* 'strike with a missile'.)

Complement clauses (Comp) also appear in postverbal position, as in the next two sentences:

- (6)
- e·h=ša·kwe·nemoya·ni* [COMP *wi·h=ašihito·ya·ni*]  
 be.unwilling 1/aor fut=make 1-0/aor
- 'I didn't want to make it.' R300.13
- (7)
- e·h=pwa·wi·kehke·nema·či*  
 not-know 3-3'/aor
- [COMP *i·nahi e·h=awiniči i·nini kehči·kenwa·sowe·wani*]  
 there be.[there] 3'/aor that.obv great-long.tail.obv
- 'She didn't know that that big mountain lion was there.' W16CD

Obliques, expressing notions such as stationary location, goal, source, manner and reason or cause, nearly always appear immediately to the left of the verb:

- (8)
- [OBL *če·winehki*] *e·h=nana·hapiči* *wi·sahke·ha*  
 in.middle sit.down.[there] 3/aor W
- 'Wi-sahke-ha sat down in the center' W49K
- (9)
- [OBL *ahpemeki*] *e·h=ina·piwa·či*  
 up look.[thither] 3p/aor
- 'They looked up' W194P



In the interlinear gloss of verbs subcategorised for an oblique I have added a bracketed word indicating the type of oblique required (*e.g.*, '[there]' for an oblique of location, '[thither]' for an oblique of goal, '[thus]' for an oblique of manner).

Obliques in subordinate clauses also appear immediately to the left of the verb. An example may be seen in (7), where *i-nahi* 'there' is the oblique argument of the lower verb 'be [there]'. Other examples may be seen below in (25), (33), (38), (42), and (44).

We now turn to the discourse functions associated with (non-oblique) NPs appearing to the left of the verb. Topic will be discussed first, followed by focus.

#### TOPIC

The notion of topic is often appealed to in discourse analysis, but its definition remains controversial. I follow Reinhart 1982 in taking the relationship between topic and the following sentence (the comment) to be a pragmatic relation of aboutness. That is, the topic of a sentence is what the sentence is about; topics often correspond to given or old information, but this is not a necessary condition on topichood. In Fox, an NP may appear in the topic position of the word order template to announce a new topic, or to shift back to a previous topic. If the new or shifted topic is pronominal, a pronoun from the emphatic series of personal pronouns is used (Dahlstrom 1988), as in the following example:

(10)

*o-ni* [TOP *wi-nwa-wa*] [S *kapo-twe e-h=nenoh-ta-ti-hiwa-či*  
and.then they at.some.point understand.recip.dim 3p/aor

'And as for them, at some point they understood each other' W35H

The emphatic pronoun *wi-nwa-wa* 'they' here refers to the culture hero Wisahkeha and his little brother, who gained the power of understanding each

other when they were babies. The topic of the previous section of the story was the spirits, who had met in council to decide how to bless Wisahkeha and his brother. The overt topic *wi-nwa-wa* signals the shift to the brothers as topic.

Topic NPs in Fox are associated with a number of syntactic properties (Dahlstrom 1993). First of all, if a negative element is present it will follow the topic:

(11)

[TOP *ni-na*]=*ke-hi* [S *a-kwi ke-ko-hi ašenokini*  
I=and not anything disappear 0/neg

'As for me, nothing is missing' R146.10

Second, (11) demonstrates that the topic need not correspond to a co-referential gap or resumptive pronoun in the comment. The context for (11) is that there has been a flood, driving the people out of their homes. When the waters recede the people return to check on their belongings. The speaker of (11) uses the emphatic pronoun *ni-na* 'I' to establish the topic; the following comment is that nothing is missing. There is no gap in the comment S, nor is there a first person singular pronoun in the S which would be co-referential to the topic. The relationship between topic and comment is instead a pragmatic one: the comment must be about the topic.

A third syntactic property of Fox topics is that they are outside the S dominating the comment, as shown in (3). That is, a topic is not only the leftmost element of a sentence, but it is also a sister to the comment which follows. Evidence for this syntactic structure may be seen in the placement of second position enclitics. If a sentence contains an overt topic there are two separate locations at which second position enclitics may appear: after the first phonological word of the topic, and after the first phonological word of the comment. The following sentence is a case where both possible locations for enclitics are used (with the enclitics printed in boldface):

(12)

[<sub>TOP</sub> *i-niye-ka=ke·hi ki-h-kočawičiki wi-h=ča·kiha-wa·či apeno-hahi*],  
those.abs=and ones.who.had.tried fut=kill.all 3p-3'/aor child.obv.pl

[<sub>S</sub> *waninawe=meko='pi='ni e-h=inohinote-wa·či*]  
all.directions=emph=quot=then move.[thither] 3p/aor

'As for those aforementioned ones who had tried to kill all the children,  
they then moved away in all directions, it's said.' W250DE

In (12) the topic NP is *i-niye-ka ki-h-kočawičiki wi-h=ča·kiha-wa·či apeno-hahi* 'those aforementioned ones who tried to kill all the children'.<sup>5</sup> The enclitic *=ke·hi* 'and; but', which often accompanies shifted topics, is attached to the right of the first word of the topic. The comment which follows the topic contains a string of three enclitics, attached to *waninawe* 'all directions', the first word of the comment. If we did not recognise the comment as forming an S constituent it would be impossible to account for the placement of the clitics attached to *waninawe*.

Additional evidence that there is a major constituent break between the topic and the comment comes from adverbial clauses. Such clauses often intervene between a topic and the main clause.

(13)

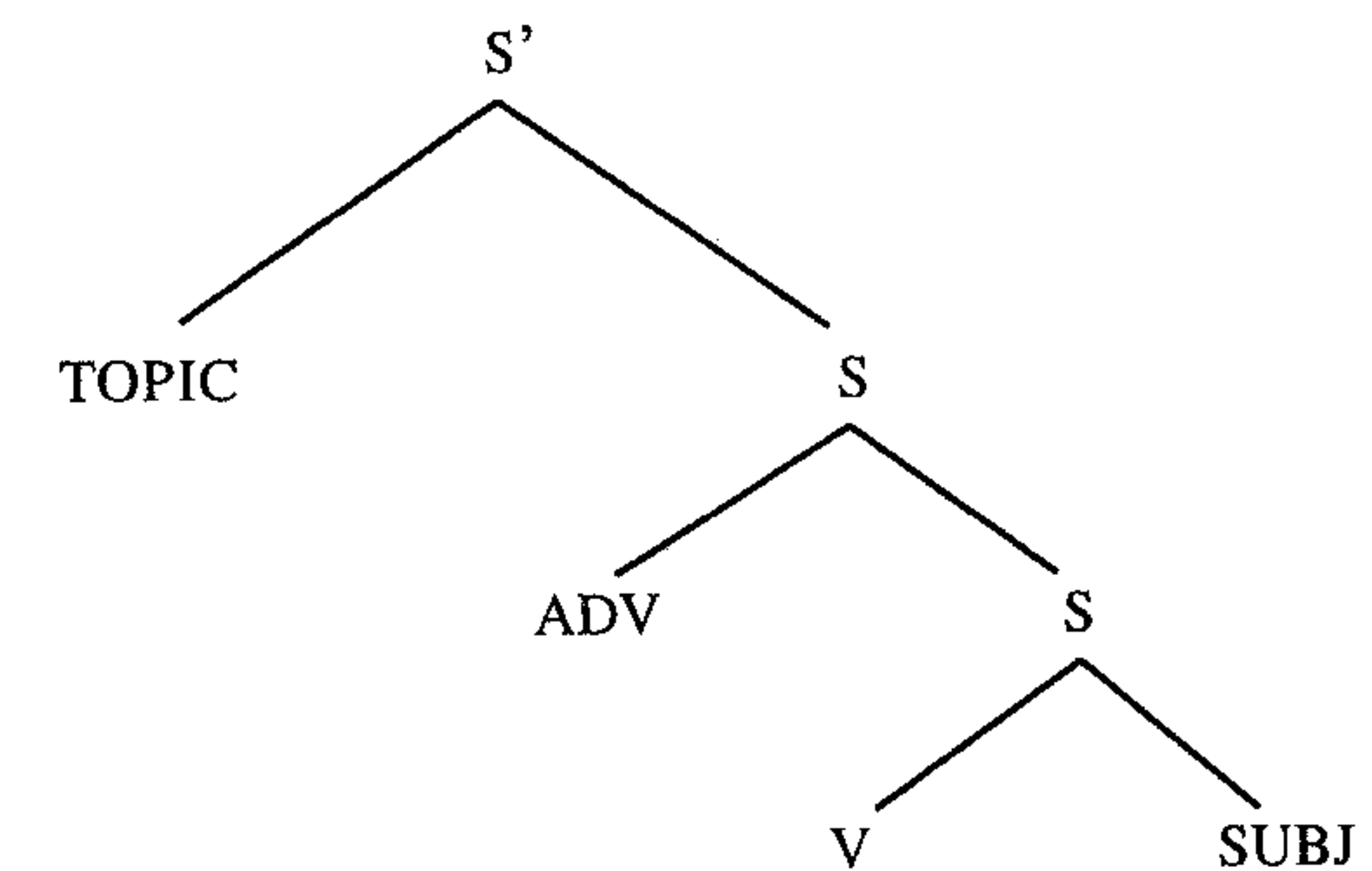
*o-ni* [<sub>TOP</sub> *we-tapeno-hemičiki*] [<sub>S</sub> [<sub>ADV</sub> *ke-tawi-wa-paniki*]  
and.then those.who.have.children almost-be.dawn 0'/ch.conj

[<sub>S</sub> *e-h=pya·niči otapeno-hemwa-wahi*]  
come 3'/aor their.children.obv

'And then as for the ones who had children, when it was almost dawn,  
their children arrived.' W167

The hierarchical structure of (13) is shown below:

(14)



An overt topic is also possible in a subordinate clause. The following is an elicited sentence, formed by embedding the main clause topic construction of (11) as complement of 'know'. (This construction was chosen since *ni-na* 'T' in (11) can be analysed only as a topic, not as a focus.)

(15)

*nekehke-nemekwa* [[<sub>TOP</sub> *ni-na*] *e-h=pwa-wi- ke-ko-hi -ašenoniki*]  
know 3-1/ind.ind I not anything disappear 0'/aor

'He knows that as for me, nothing is missing.'

(The position of the negative preverb in the subordinate clause will be discussed in a separate section below.)

An interesting feature of (15) is that the higher verb must appear in the Transitive Animate form, inflected for an object which is co-referential to the topic of the lower clause. Literally, the sentence reads, 'He knows me, as for me, nothing is missing'. Without such object agreement on the higher verb, the sentence is ungrammatical.

(16)

\* *kehke-netamwa* [[<sub>TOP</sub> *ni-na*] *e-h=pwa-wi- ke-ko-hi -ašenoniki*]  
know 3-0/ind.ind I not anything disappear 0'/aor

('He knows, as for me, nothing is missing.')



FOCUS

The other function associated with (non-oblique) NPs to the left of the verb is focus, which differs from topic not only in discourse function but also in its structural properties. As can be seen in (3), focussed elements appear to the right of the negative position, as a daughter of S. The material to the right of Focus does not form a constituent, unlike the comment following a topic. Consequently we do not find adverbial clauses appearing to the right of focus, nor do we find second position enclitics attaching to the first word following the focus, as we saw with topics. Another difference between topic and focus is that a focussed element always corresponds to a co-referential gap or pronoun in the remainder of the sentence; there can be no focussed counterpart to the topic construction of (11).

The discourse function of focus is also quite different from that of topic. Focus is typically new information asserted against the background of a presupposed proposition. This function can be seen clearly with the emphatic personal pronouns in the following example:

(17)

*a-kwi=na-hkači* [<sub>FOC</sub> *ni-na nešihka*] *ota-hi-nemiya-nini*,  
not=also I alone possess.O2 1/neg

[<sub>FOC</sub> *ki-na e-ye-ki*] *ketepe-neta*.  
you also own 2-0/ind.ind

‘I do not possess them alone, you also own them.’ W244NO

The presupposed proposition in (17) is ‘*x* possesses them’. The focussed elements assert the new information: the first clause asserts that the value of *x* is not *ni-na* ‘I’ alone, and the second clause asserts further that *x* includes *ki-na* ‘you’. The emphatic pronouns appear in the Focus position of the template in (3): in other words, to the left of the verb and to the right of the Negative position.

In question-word questions, all but the question word is presupposed;

likewise, in answers to such questions, all but the answer to the question word is presupposed. In Fox, the question word, and the answer to the question word, appear in Focus position.<sup>6</sup>

(18)

[<sub>FOC</sub> *we-ne-h*] = *ča-h ne-sa-ta* *neto-kima-mena-nan?*  
who=so one.who.killed.him(obv) our.chief.obv

‘Who killed our chief?’ J26.13

(19)

[<sub>FOC</sub> *mana=ča-h ni-hka-na*] *ne-sa-ta*  
this=so my.friend one.who.killed.him(obv)

‘My friend is the one who killed him’ J26.17

The observation of Dik *et al.* 1981 that the function of focus is often used to restrict information holds true in Fox, where restrictive particles such as *še-ški* ‘only’ or *mo-hči* ‘even’ often occur with elements in focus:

(20)

[<sub>FOC</sub> *še-ški=meko kehkeše-wi*] [<sub>OBL</sub> *i-nahi*] *ahte-wi*  
only=emph charcoal there be.[there] 0/ind.ind

‘Only charcoal was there’ W62F

(21)

*a-kwi* [<sub>FOC</sub> *mo-hči nekoti*] *nesakečini*  
not even one kill 1p-3/neg

‘We didn’t kill even one’ N24B

Notice that the relative ordering of preverbal elements in (20) and (21) fits the template of (3): Focus is to the left of Oblique in (20) and to the right of Negative in (21).

Lambrecht 1986:170 and Payne 1987:798, among others, have pointed out that indefinite pronouns and quantifiers often pattern with focus or with

question words. In Fox as well, such elements often appear in Focus position, especially if they are in the scope of negation.

(22)

*a·kwi = 'yo = ke·h = meko = 'pi* [FOC *ke·ko·hi*] *mi·čiwa·čini*  
not=of.course=and=emph=quot anything eat 3p-0/neg

'And, of course, they didn't eat anything at all, it's said' W252K

(23)

*ka·ta = ke·h = na·hkači* [FOC *owiye·ha*] *a·čimohiye·kani*  
not=and=also anyone tell 2-3/prohib

'Don't tell anyone else' W37G

Again, the focussed NPs appear to the right of the negative.

Surprising information may also appear in the Focus position, as in the next example:

(24)

*ke·htena = meko* [FOC *ašewa·pikone·hi*] *e·h = no·ša·taki*  
surely=emph little.squash give.birth.to 3-0/aor

'Surely she gave birth to a little squash' W923

(24) is taken from a long text describing the life of the trickster/culture hero Wisahkeha. In this passage, Wisahkeha's wife goes into labour, but she gives birth to a little squash rather than the expected baby. The contrast here which motivates focussing the NP *ašewa·pikone·hi* 'little squash' is that between the conventional presupposition that a pregnant woman will give birth to a human baby, and the information that it was in fact a little squash that she gave birth to.

Focussed elements in subordinate clauses appear in the same position as those in main clauses. For example, the following examples contain a focussed pronoun and a quantifier, each in the Focus position preceding the verb:

(25)

*wi·h = anwa·či·yani* [COMP [FOC *ki·na·na*] [OBL *i·ni*] *wi·h = išawiyakwe*  
fut=be.willing 2/aor we.incl that fut=do.[thus] 21/aor

'You should be willing for us to do that.' R326.2

(26)

*e·h = kaka·to·nena·ni* [COMP [FOC *ke·ko·hi*] *wi·h = nahihito·yani*  
urge 1-2/aor something fut=learn.to.make 2-0/aor

'When I urge you to learn to make something' R300.24

Note that in (25) the focussed pronoun precedes the oblique argument *i·ni* 'that'.

#### POSTVERBAL ARGUMENTS

So far we have seen evidence for four separate positions to the left of the verb: Topic, Negative, Focus, and Oblique. The ordering of elements to the right of the verb, however, is not yet completely understood, and in the template of (3) I have used the symbol XP\* to indicate that any number of constituents may appear after the verb, and that they may be associated with subject, object, second object or Comp. Sentences containing more than one postverbal argument are rare (fewer than 2% of the total number of sentences in the texts I have examined). As a consequence, there is not yet enough data on all the different combinations of arguments to state with confidence what syntactic or discourse conditions influence the ordering of postverbal arguments. For example, subjects and first objects appear freely in either order. The following sentences are two sets of minimal pairs, the first with a proximate subject acting on an obviative object, and the second pair with an obviative subject acting on a proximate object.



(27)

“...” *e-h=ina-či* [SUBJ *wi-sahke-ha*] [OBJ *osi-me-hani*]  
say.[thus].to 3-3'/aor W his.y.bro.obv

‘Wisahkeha said “...” to his younger brother.’ W149AB

(28)

“...” *e-h=ina-či* [OBJ *osi-me-hani*] [SUBJ *wi-sahke-ha*]  
say.[thus].to 3-3'/aor his.y.bro.obv W

‘Wisahkeha said “...” to his younger brother.’ W131H

(29)

“...” *e-h=ikoči* [SUBJ *osi-me-hani*] [OBJ *wi-sahke-ha*]  
say.[thus].to 3'-3/aor his.y.bro.obv W

‘His younger brother said “...” to Wisahkeha.’ W221JK

(30)

“...” *e-h=ikoči* [OBJ *wi-sahke-ha*] [SUBJ *osi-me-hani*]  
say.[thus].to 3'-3/aor W his.y.bro.obv

‘His younger brother said “...” to Wisahkeha.’ W85LM

(27) and (29) show that subject may precede object, while (28) and (30) show that object may precede subject.

Though much remains to be worked out regarding the relative order of postverbal constituents, two observations may be made here. First of all, first objects almost always precede second objects, if both are expressed by postverbal NPs. An example of this ordering has already been seen in (5); another is given below:

(31)

*nehtamawi* [OBJ *ko-hkomese-hena-na*] [OBJ2 *ma-hani ki-hče-wani*]  
kill.O2.for 2-3/imp our.grandmother this.obv turkey.obv

‘Kill this turkey for our grandmother’ W189M

The opposite order – second object preceding first object – is rare but not

impossible:

(32)

*ne-na-hi-si-kahamawa-ta* [OBJ2 *anemo-hani nepo-pi*]  
one.who.starts.to.serve.O2.to.them(obv) dog.obv soup

[OBJ *wi-hkoma-čihi*]  
ones(obv).he.invites

‘The one who starts to serve dog soup to the ones he invites.’ B95:20.31

Second, there is some indication that the rightmost position in the sentence is associated with a special discourse function. The final NP often repeats the topic of the passage, bracketing or closing off the paragraph about a certain topic. (We might use the term ‘anti-topic’ for such NPs; cf. Chafe 1976:53 on Seneca and Lambrecht 1981:2 on right dislocation in French.) Two examples in which the final NP seems to have this function are given below:

(33)

*a-kwi wi-to-hkawa-čini* [COMP *i-tepi wi-h=a-niči*]  
not allow 3-3'/neg there fut=go.[thither] 3'/aor

[OBJ *owi-wani*] [SUBJ *i-na neniwa*]  
his.wife.obv that man

‘That man doesn’t allow his wife to go there.’ R310.39

(34)

[OBL *kehčikami-ki*] *e-h=taši-komisahekoči* [OBJ *meši-name-wani*]  
ocean.loc [there]-swallow 3'-3/aor big.fish.obv

[SUBJ *keki-wa-wa*]  
your.pl.mother

‘The whale swallowed your mother in the ocean.’ W266P

The final NP in both (33) and (34) corresponds to what the conversation is

about. In (33) the speaker has been listing a number of reasons why a certain man is a bad husband; the reason in (33) is that whenever there are dances the man doesn't let his wife go to them. Likewise, in (34), the conversation has been about the addressees' mother: Wisahkeha and his younger brother are wondering why they have no mother, and their grandmother explains that she was swallowed by a whale. In both cases the sentence-final NP repeats the topic of the passage as a whole.

#### NEGATIVE PREVERBS

In the examples so far we have seen two independent negative words. *a-kwi* is used to negate main clause assertions (in non-narrative contexts) and yes-no questions; it requires negative inflection on the verb of its clause (cf. (11), (17), (21), (22), (33)). *ka-ta* negates commands, requiring prohibitive inflection on the verb (cf. (23)). A third independent negative word is *awita*, used to negate modal main clauses. It requires potential inflection on the verb. All three independent negative words occur in the Negative position of the template in (3).

In all other contexts, clauses are negated by adding the preverb *pwa-wi-* 'not' to the verb.<sup>7</sup> That is, *pwa-wi-* negates subordinate clauses of all types (complements, adjuncts, if-clauses, relative clauses), as well as negating main clauses in narratives, which contain verbs inflected in the aorist conjunct. The negative preverb may appear in one of two positions: it may either be attached to the verb, in the normal position for a preverb, or it may separate from the verb and move to the Negative position of the word order template. The pair of elicited examples below illustrate the two possibilities:

(35)

*nekehke-nema-wa* [S [FOC *ke-ko-hi*] [V *e-h=pwa-wi-mi-čiči*]]  
 know 1-3/ind.ind anything not-eat 3-0/aor

'I know he didn't eat anything'

(36)

*nekehke-nema-wa* [S [NEG *e-h=pwa-wi-*] [FOC *ke-ko-hi*] [V - *-mi-čiči*]]  
 know 1-3/ind.ind not anything eat 3-0/aor

'I know he didn't eat anything'

In (35), the combination of preverb and verb in the complement clause is treated as a single verb for the purposes of the word order template; the internal structure of the verb is ignored. In (36), however, the negative portion of the verb is placed in the Negative position of the template, preceding the focussed element *ke-ko-hi* 'anything'. The preverb brings along the proclitic *e-h=*, which is part of the aorist conjunct inflection (cf. the inflectional prefix on the preverb in (2)). Both (35) and (36) are accepted as grammatical, but (36), in which the preverb moves to the Negative position, is preferred.

More examples of *pwa-wi-* in the Negative position can be seen in the following clauses taken from texts:

(37)

*ke-htena* [NEG *e-h=pwa-wi-*] [FOC *owiye-hani*] [V - *-ki-wita-niči*]  
 sure not anyone.obv stay.around 3'/aor

'Sure enough no one was around' W109E

(38)

[NEG *pwa-wi-=ke-h*] [OBL *e-šimečini*] [V - *-išawičiki*]  
 not-=and things.they.are.told those.who.(don't)  
 .do.[thus]

'Those who do not do the things they are told to do ...' R316.22

In (37), a narrative main clause, *pwa-wi-* occurs to the left of a focussed

element; in the relative clause of (38) *pwa-wi-* occurs to the left of an oblique (itself a headless relative clause).

Another semantically negative preverb, *po-ni-* ‘stop, cease’, may also move to the Negative position:<sup>8</sup>

(39)

[<sub>NEG</sub> *e-h=po-ni-=mekoho*] [<sub>FOC</sub> *owiye-ha*] [<sub>OBL</sub> *ke-ko-hi*] [<sub>V</sub> -*išihiši-kanawiči*]  
 cease-=emph            anyone            any.way            [thus]-speak 3/aor

‘Everyone ceased speaking in any way.’ B105:64.6-7

In (39) both a focussed NP and an oblique intervene between the preverb and the verb.

THE PREVERB *oči-* ‘FROM’

*pwa-wi-* ‘not’ is the preverb most frequently found separated from its verb.

Another preverb which often occurs apart from its verb is *oči-* ‘from’, when used in oblique-headed relative clauses. (The preverb often has the form of *we-či-*, as explained below.) We will see that *oči-* may occupy the Topic position of the word order template, but first some background information on relative clauses is necessary.

Relative clauses in Fox are formed by inflecting the verb of the relative clause as a participle (Goddard 1987). The ablaut rule of initial change applies to the vowel of the first syllable of the verb. Conjunct suffixes indicating subject and object are added to the verb, plus a final suffix indicating the head of the relative clause. For example, *we-či-kano-naki* ‘the reason why I spoke to him’ contains the verb stem *kano-n-* ‘speak to’, compounded with the preverb *oči-* ‘from’, which adds a requirement for an oblique argument expressing source, cause, or reason. If a relative clause whose head is co-referential to the oblique expressing reason is to be formed (*i.e.*, ‘the reason why ...’) then the compound stem *oči-kano-n-* ‘speak to for

such a reason’ is inflected with initial change (changing the *o* of the preverb to *we-*), the conjunct suffix *-ak-* (first singular subject, third singular object), and the final suffix *-i*, indicating that the head is co-referential with the oblique argument.

Relative clauses of this type, where the head is co-referential to an oblique expressing reason, frequently appear as discontinuous verbs, with the preverb *oči-* on the left and the remainder of the verb on the right. Unlike the negative preverb *pwa-wi-*, however, which may fill the Negative position of the template, *oči-* occupies the Topic position. This may be seen in the following example, where an adverbial clause intervenes between *oči-* and the rest of the verb:

(40)

*na-hkači* [<sub>TOP</sub> *we-či-*] [[<sub>ADV</sub> *ni-miwa-čini*] [<sub>V</sub> -*wa-wawa-wa-kahamowa-či*]]  
 also            why            dance 3p/iter            (why).they.whoop

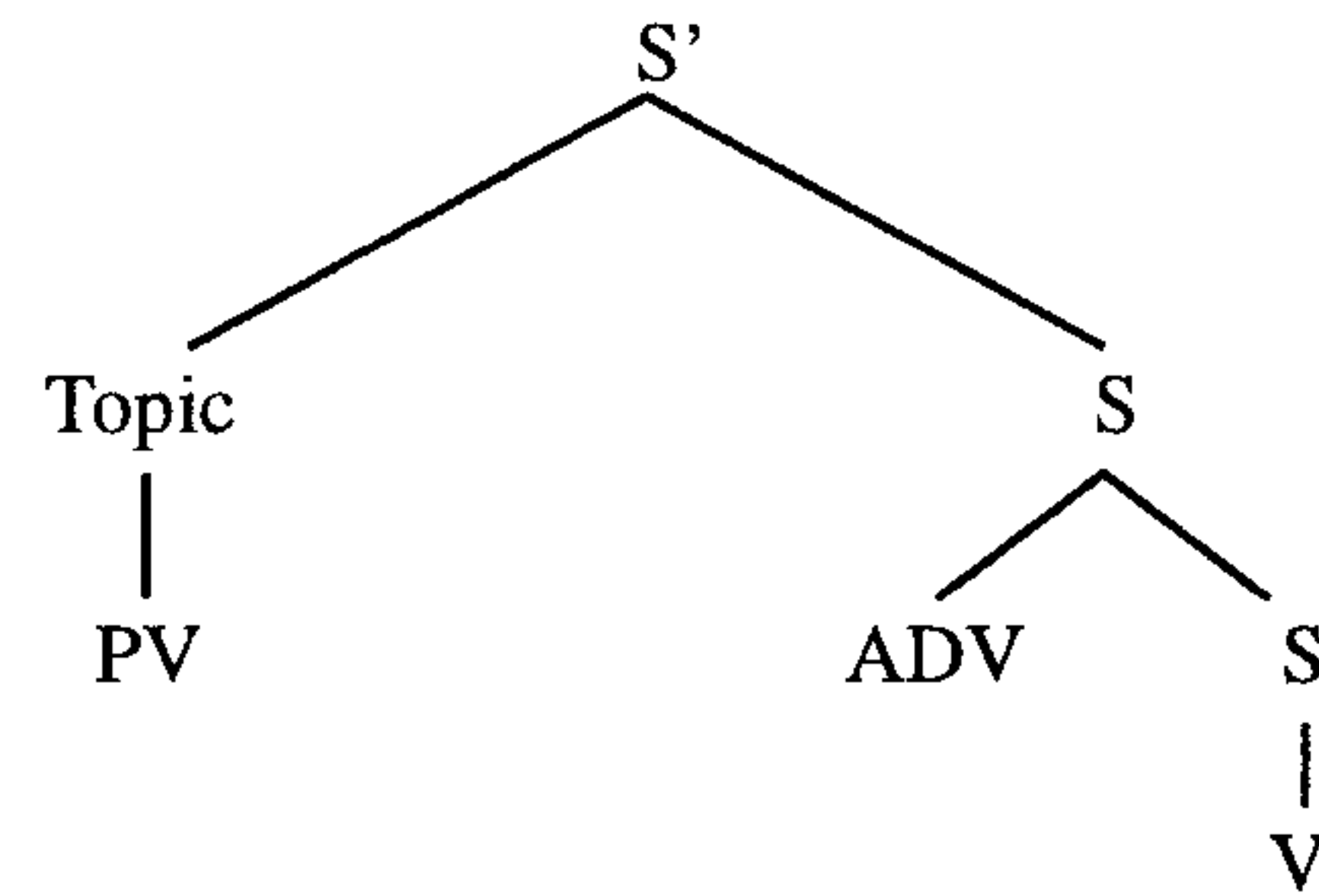
‘And the reason why, whenever they dance, they whoop’ O118D

(I have glossed the preverb as ‘why’ in (40) and below, as a reminder that the head of the relative clause is co-referential with the oblique argument associated with *oči-*.)

In the discussion of topics, it was noted that adverbial clauses often intervene between a topic NP and the main clause, reflecting the major constituent break between the topic and the comment. Such clauses are not found between focus NPs and the remainder of the S. We can therefore posit the following hierarchical structure for (40), similar to that given for (14):

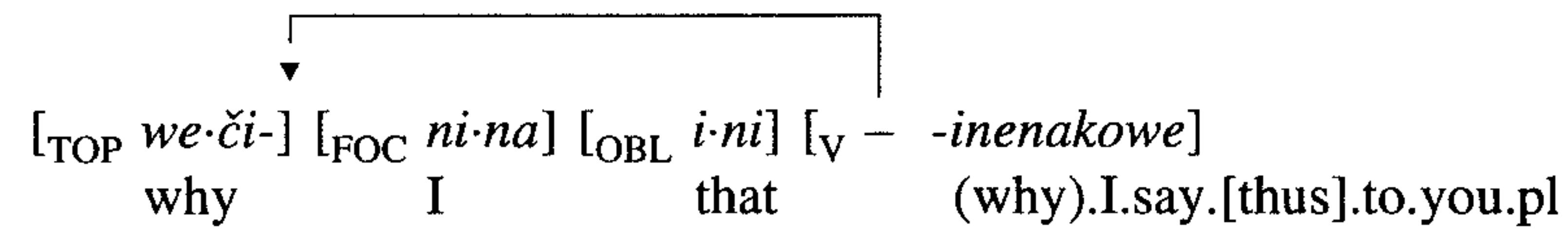


(41)



*oči-* may appear to the left of both the Focus position and the Oblique position, as we expect if it occupies the Topic position:

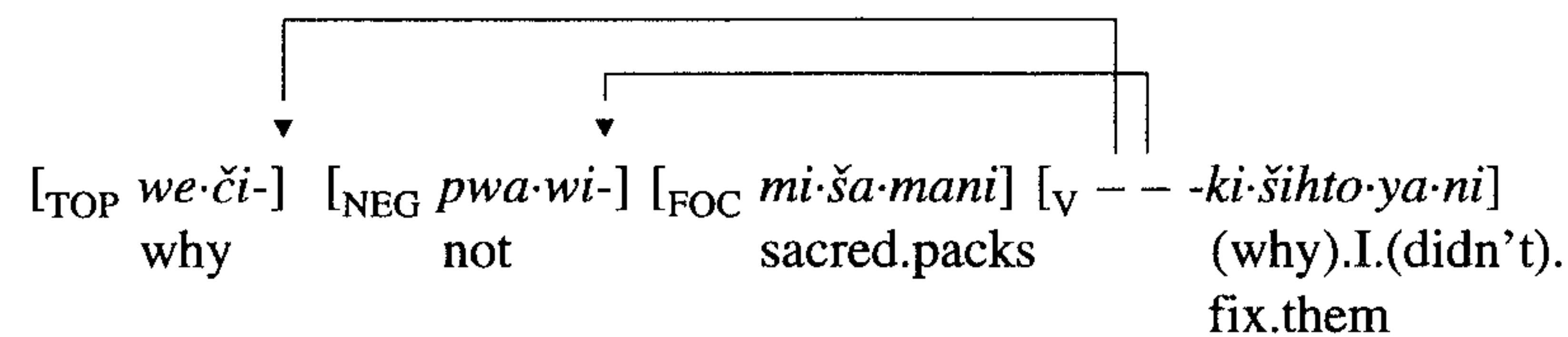
(42)



'why I said that to you' W114

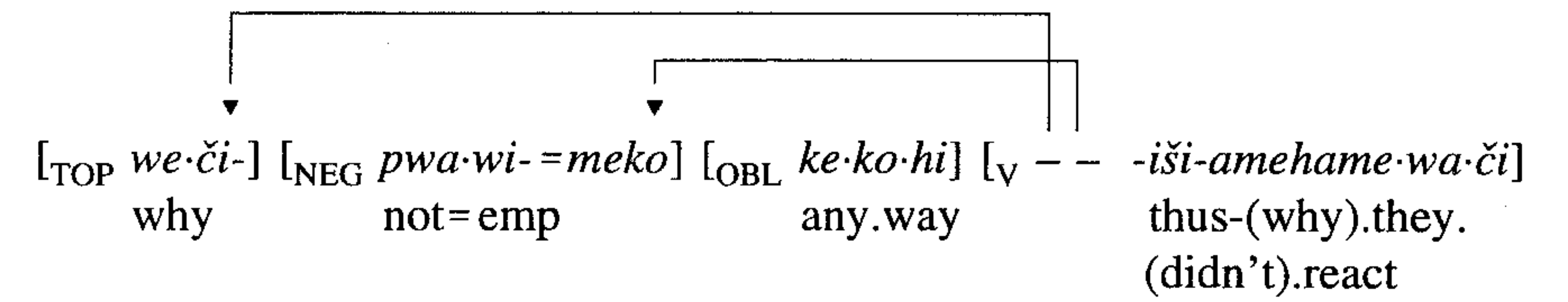
More than one preverb may be separated from the verb. In the following examples *oči-* is in the topic position and *pwa-wi-* is in the Negative position:

(43)



'why I didn't make sacred packs' N24M

(44)



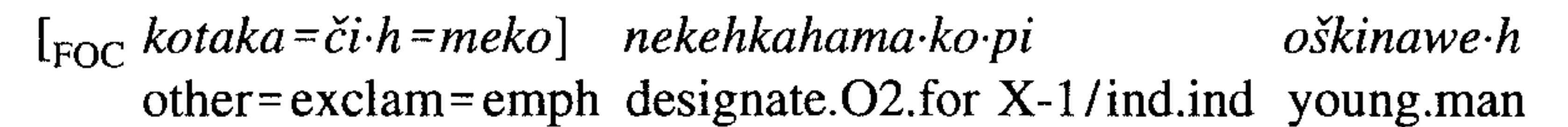
'why they did not react in any way' N24G

In (43) a focussed NP intervenes between the negative preverb and the remainder of the verb, while in (44) an oblique intervenes between the negative and the verb.

#### DISCONTINUOUS NPS

Finally, some observations may be made regarding the position of discontinuous arguments of verbs. For at least some discontinuous NPs the lefthand portion of the NP seems to be in focus position. The discontinuous second object in the example below is contrastively focussed:

(45)



*wi·h=ona·pe·miya·ni*  
 fut=have.O2.as.husband 1/aor

'It turned out another young man had been designated for me to marry!' R310.28

*kotaka* 'other' precedes the verb, while the head noun *oškinawe·h[a]* 'young man' is to the right of the verb. In the previous context, the speaker had been talking about the man she was in love with and hoped to marry; (45) expresses her shock at learning that her mother had arranged a marriage with another man.

The next example displays an interesting parallel structure, with a discontinuous NP in each clause.

(46)

“<sub>[FOC]</sub> *še-ški mani* | *ki-h=awato-pena*      *či-ma-ni*” *e-h=iyowa-či*  
 only this      fut=take 21-0/ind.ind canoe      say.[thus] 3p/aor

↓  
<sub>[TOP]</sub> *we-či-* | <sub>[FOC]</sub> *i-ni* | - *awatawoči*      *oči-ma-ni*  
 why      that      (why).X.took.his.O2 his.canoe

‘Because they said, “Let’s just take this canoe,”  
 is why that canoe of his was taken’ M13

In the first clause of (46) the object is discontinuous, with *mani* ‘this’ before the verb and the head noun *oči-ma-ni* ‘his canoe’ after the verb. Notice that *še-ški* ‘only’ appears with the preverbal demonstrative pronoun, supporting the idea that the lefthand portion of discontinuous NPs are in Focus position. The second clause of (46) also contains a discontinuous NP, here functioning as the second object of the verb. (Possessor raising has applied to the verb of the second clause; the verb is inflected for a first object agreeing with the possessor, and the possessed item is the second object.) Note also that the verb of the second clause contains the preverb *oči-*, here separated from the verb and appearing in Topic position. The lefthand piece of the discontinuous NP occurs between the preverb and the verb, as we expect if it occupies the Focus position.

I hope to have shown in this lecture that word order in Algonquian is more regular than it may at first appear, once we recognise the existence of a word order template combining discourse functions such as topic and focus with syntactic functions such as oblique. An unusual feature of Algonquian languages is their frequent use of discontinuous constituents, especially the

separation of preverbs from verbs. However, even the distribution of such split constituents seems to be constrained by the word order template. Though more remains to be done in working out the complete system of word order conditions in Fox, I hope that the proposals made here for Fox will shed light on word order problems in other Algonquian languages as well.

NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Nearly all the examples in this paper are taken from texts. Abbreviations for text sources are: B95: Michelson 1930; B105: Michelson 1932; J: Jones 1907; M: Kiyana 1912a; N: Kiyana 1912b; O: Kiyana 1914; R: Michelson 1925; W: Kiyana 1913. Examples without citation are from my field notes; I am grateful to Adeline Wanatee for providing these examples.

In the interlinear glosses of verbs the gloss of the stem is given first, followed by features of subject and object (separated by a dash) and finally the paradigm of verb inflection. For example, the formula '1-3/ind.ind' in (2) should be read as 'a first person singular subject acting on an animate third person proximate singular object in the independent indicative paradigm'. The symbol 21 is used for first person inclusive plural, 0 for inanimate third person, and X for unspecified subject; 3' and 0' indicate obviative animate and inanimate third persons. The abbreviations for verb paradigms used here are *ind.ind* for independent indicative, *aor* for aorist conjunct, *iter* for iterative, *neg* for negative, *ch.conj* for changed conjunct, *proh* for prohibitive, and *imp* for imperative; see Bloomfield 1994 for the paradigms. The aorist conjunct is the most common paradigm in these examples: it is used in main clauses in narratives, and in subordinate clauses in both narrative and non-narrative contexts.

Other abbreviations used in the interlinear glosses are *abs* for absentative demonstrative pronoun, *dim* for diminutive, *emph* for emphatic, *exclam* for exclamation, *fut* for future, *perf* for perfective, *quot* for quotative, and *recip* for reciprocal. Reduplication is not indicated in the glosses.

<sup>2</sup> Actually, the V position could also be thought of as optional; equational sentences contain a zero copula.

<sup>3</sup> Compare the structure proposed for Mayan languages by Aissen 1992,

with the same linear order for Topic, Neg, and Focus, but in a binary branching structure, not the largely flat structure argued for here. See also Sadock 1990, in which Yiddish word order is handled by a 'surfotax' component.

<sup>4</sup> The inventory of grammatical functions is that of Lexical Functional Grammar (Bresnan 1982). Some complement clauses in Fox function as obliques, especially directly or indirectly quoted speech and thought.

<sup>5</sup> The absentative series of 'that' demonstratives is often used to re-introduce a previously mentioned character into a narrative.

<sup>6</sup> Focus may also be expressed by equational sentences, where the focussed element is equated to the presupposed element. Here we may take the focussed element as appearing in the regular Focus position, the presupposed part as corresponding to one of the postverbal positions: in other words, as if the two halves of the equation were on either side of a null verb.

<sup>7</sup> This is a slight overstatement: there is also a negative second-position enclitic =*ihi*, used in exclamatory main clauses for statements that are obviously false. For example, the following was said of an old woman:

*meči = 'h = we · na · = 'na          apeno · hiwa!*  
 quite = not = in.fact = that.anim    be.child 3/ind.ind

'After all, she is not a child!' W129N

<sup>8</sup> I suspect that aspectual preverbs, such as the perfective preverb in (2), may also occupy the Negative position, but more examples are needed before this can be confirmed. If so, the position is one occupied by semantic operators of all types, not just negative operators.



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