

## Chapter 10

### Inverse verbs and other syntactic issues

This last chapter covers three syntactic issues not dealt with so far. The first two sections describe biclausal syntactic phenomena reminiscent of the English constructions of raising to object and tough movement: copying to object in 10.1. and the Meskwaki analog of ‘tough movement’ in 10.2. In each construction the matrix verb is inflected for an argument which bears no semantic relation in the matrix clause, but instead functions as part of the complement clause.

The final section considers the controversy over the syntactic status of inverse verbs—are they a type of passive verb, as has been claimed for cognate forms in other Algonquian languages, or are they active verbs? A similar problem arises with transitive verbs inflected for an unspecified subject: are they syntactically agentless passives or are they part of the active paradigm? 10.3. describes the syntax of both types of verbs and examines the usefulness of copying to object, tough movement, and constructions described in earlier chapters as tests for grammatical relations in Meskwaki.

#### 10.1 Copying to object

This section describes the COPYING TO OBJECT construction, which has been seen numerous times in examples in the preceding chapters. The term ‘copying to object’ was coined by Frantz 1978, describing the cognate construction in Blackfoot.<sup>1</sup> The Algonquian construction is similar to the English phenomenon known as RAISING TO OBJECT in that certain matrix verbs may take an object which bears no thematic relation to the matrix verb but instead plays a role in the complement clause. The pair of elicited examples below illustrate, first, a sentence in which copying to object has not applied, and second, the same sentence with copying to object.

- (1) nekehke·neta            e·hkakano·neti·hači  
 know 1–0/ind.ind      converse.with 2–3/aor  
 ‘I know you have been talking to him.’
- (2) kekehke·nemene      e·hkakano·neti·hači  
 know 1–2/ind.ind      converse.with 2–3/aor  
 ‘I know you have been talking to him.’<sup>2</sup>  
 (lit. ‘I know you [you have been talking to him].’)

---

<sup>1</sup> The copying to object construction is also found in Plains Cree (Dahlstrom 1991:67–76) and Ojibwa (Rhodes 1976:109, Rhodes 1994:438–440; Rhodes calls the construction ‘raising’). 10.3.2. briefly reviews the syntactic constraints on copying to object found in Plains Cree and Ojibwa.

<sup>2</sup> The example in (2) is adapted from the following textual example:

- (i)    ki·hpene=ke·h    kehke·nemena·ne            [na·hka kakano·neti·hate]  
 in.the.event=but know 1–2/subjct            again converse.with 2–3/subjct  
 ‘If, however, I find out that you have been talking to him again,’ A77C

The inflection on the verb of the complement clause is another example of the ‘attraction’ of subjunctive inflection discussed in 5.6.

The inflectional affixes in (1) and (2) have been underlined to highlight the effects of copying to object. In (1), where no copying to object has occurred, the form of the verb stem is *kehke-net-* ‘know’ TI, inflected for a first person singular subject and an inanimate object. In (2), where copying to object has applied, the matrix verb is inflected for a first person subject and a second person object; the second person object is coreferential to the subject of the complement clause. Since the matrix verb has an animate object the TA form of the stem must be used: *kehke-nem-* ‘know’ TA. Notice, however, that the form of the complement clauses in (1) and (2) is the same. The second person argument in (2) is expressed twice: as object of the matrix clause and as subject of the complement clause. In this respect copying to object differs from English raising to object. In English, the raised argument is expressed only as object of the matrix verb and does not appear in the lower clause; instead, an infinitive complement is used in the lower clause (e.g. *I believe him to be a genius*). In Meskwaki, however, there are no infinitive verb forms so it would be impossible for the second person argument in (2) to not be expressed in the lower clause of the sentence.

Another difference between English raising to object and copying to object as found in Meskwaki is that English allows only the subject of the lower clause to be raised but Meskwaki places no syntactic constraints on the copied entity.<sup>3</sup> For example, the object of the lower clause may be copied to be object of the matrix clause:

- (3) nekehke·nema·wa      e·hkakano·neti·hači  
 know 1–3/ind.ind      converse.with 2–3/aor  
 ‘I know you have been talking to him.’  
 (lit. ‘I know him [you have been talking to him].’)
- (4) netaka·wa·na·wa=koh      wi·hne·waki  
 want 1–3/ind.ind=certainly      fut.see 1–3/aor  
 ‘I do want to see him.’ A131A  
 (lit. ‘I want him [I see him].’)
- (5) we·či–ša·kwe·nemena·ni      e·hki·wi–aya·wišimehki  
 from–be.unwilling 1–2/part/obl      around–advise.O.to.do.things 3–2/aor  
 ‘why I was unwilling for him to go around advising you’ N28JK  
 (lit. ‘I didn’t want you [he go around advising you].’)

(3) is an elicited example while (4) and (5) are textual examples; in each, the object of the lower clause has been copied to be object of the matrix verb. It will be argued below that the copying to object construction in Meskwaki is sensitive to pragmatic relations rather than to syntactic relations: the copied object must be the topic of the subordinate clause.

<sup>3</sup> This is true of Meskwaki but not of Plains Cree or Ojibwa; see 10.3.2. Blackfoot, however, may be like Meskwaki in this regard; among the examples given by Frantz 1978 is one with object-to-object copying:

(i) nít–ssksino–ok–a      kínna      kit–akomímm–ok–ssi  
 know 3–1      your.father      love 2–1/conjunct  
 ‘Your father knows you love me.’ (Frantz 1978) (lit. ‘Your father knows me [you love me].’)

We saw in 5.6. that some complement clauses in Meskwaki bear the grammatical function of Comp and others function as an oblique argument of the verb. The above examples of copying to object all contain Comp clauses; the next examples show that copying to object may apply to an oblique clause as well:

- (6) [OBL wi·hto·hki·yani] ketene·nemene  
 fut.wake.up 2/aor think.thus 1–2/ind.ind  
 ‘I think you should wake up.’ W106M
- (7) a·kwi [OBL wi·hse·kiha·wa·či] ine·nema·wa·čini  
 not fut.scare 3p–3’/aor think.thus 3p–3’/neg  
 ‘They (prox) do not intend to scare them (obv).’ K2J

In (6) the second person subject of the lower clause has been copied to be object of the matrix verb *ine·nem-* ‘think, intend’ TA and in (7) the object of the lower clause is copied to be object of the matrix clause.

The next example contains two embedded clauses, in each of which copying to object has applied. The highest verb takes a Comp clause in which the subject has been copied to be object of the matrix verb. The verb of the Comp clause itself takes an oblique clause; here the object of the oblique clause is copied to be object of the next higher verb.

- (8) mehto·či=meko nekehke·nema·wa  
 like=emph know 1–3/ind.ind
- [COMP [OBL wi·hkomisahiči] e·hine·nemiči  
 fut.swallow 3–1/aor think.thus 3–1/aor

‘It was just as if I knew that he intended to swallow me.’ W8G  
 (lit. ‘I know him [he intends me [he swallow me]].’)

In the examples so far we have seen that either the subject of the lower clause or the object of the lower clause may undergo copying to object. However, copying to object in Meskwaki is not constrained to apply to only subjects or objects of the lower clause: the entity which is copied to be object of the matrix verb need not be an argument of the lower verb at all. For example, in the next sentence the possessor of the object of the lower verb has undergone copying to object:

- (9) mo·hči=mekoho ine·nemenā·kwe  
 even=emph think.thus 3–2p/subjunct
- [wi·hnesa·či ki·hka·nwa·wahi,]  
 fut.kill 3–3’/aor your.pl.friends.obv

‘So, even if he intends to kill your friends,’ O94H  
 (lit. ‘he intends you [he kill your friends].’)

((9) is an example of the rare word order mentioned in 8.5, where an oblique argument appears to the right of the verb.)

In the next example, repeated from 8.7, the copied entity is the overt topic of the lower clause, but is not an argument of the lower verb.<sup>4</sup>

(10) nekehke·nemekwa  
know 3-1/ind.ind

[<sub>TOP</sub> ni·na] e·hpwa·wi- ke·ko·hi -ašenoniki]  
I not- anything -disappear 0'/aor

‘He knows that as for me, nothing is missing.’

Note that copying to object, usually an optional construction, is obligatory in (10):

(11) \*kehke·netamwa  
know 3-0/ind.ind

[<sub>TOP</sub> ni·na] e·hpwa·wi- ke·ko·hi -ašenoniki]  
I not- anything -disappear 0'/aor

‘He knows, as for me, nothing is missing.’

A further surprising fact about copying to object is that the matrix object need not be an exact copy of any NP or pronominal entity expressed in the lower clause. In the next example the matrix object corresponds to a conjunction of the subject and the second object of the lower clause:

(12) kehke·nemenakwe [e·hwa·wi·hpe·tenoyani ni·yawī]  
know 3(p)-21/subjunct redup.get.into.O2's.bed 2/aor me

‘If they knew [about us (incl)] that you have been getting into bed with me,’ W569

The matrix verb in (12) is inflected for a first person inclusive plural object, but neither argument in the lower clause is first person inclusive plural. Rather, the subject of the lower verb is second person singular; the second object of the verb is first person singular (expressed by the body pronoun *ni·yawī* ‘me’). The combination of the two participants in the lower clause is equivalent to the matrix object, but strictly speaking no syntactic coreference holds.

How can we explain what is going on in all the examples seen so far of copying to object? The key is example (10), in which the matrix object corresponds to the overt topic of the lower clause. We can extend this correspondence to all the other examples of copying to object: in

<sup>4</sup> The subordinate clause in these examples is adapted from the following textual example, discussed in 8.2:

(i) [<sub>TOP</sub> ni·na]=ke·hi [<sub>S</sub> a·kwi ke·ko·hi ašenokini]  
I=and not anything disappear 0/neg  
‘As for me, nothing is missing’ R146.10

Meskwaki, copying to object signals what the topic of the complement clause is. The topic may be realized overtly, as in (10), or it may be realized only by the pronominal inflection on the matrix verb. The relationship between the topic and the lower clause is the familiar pragmatic relationship of aboutness, as discussed in 8.2. for topics in matrix clauses. Just as with matrix topics, the topic of a subordinate clause is often coreferential to an argument of the lower verb, but need not be. Moreover, if the topic is coreferential to an argument of the lower verb, there is no syntactic restriction regarding which argument it must be.

Since copying to object indicates the topic of the lower clause the matrix verbs which have undergone this process may be glossed as ‘know about’, ‘think about’, ‘want regarding’, etc., to convey the pragmatic effects of the construction. Lexical entries for the basic form of the matrix verbs seen in the examples above and for their copying to object forms are given below:

- (13) Matrix verbs with no copying to object
- a. išite·he·- ‘think <S OBL>’
  - b. ša·kwe·nemo- ‘be unwilling <S COMP>’
  - c. kehke·net- ‘know <S COMP> OBJ’  
OBJ GEND = inan
  - d. aka·wa·t- ‘want <S COMP> OBJ’  
OBJ GEND = inan

As shown in (13), a verb may be subcategorized for a subject and a clausal oblique argument (13a), for a subject and a Comp (13b), or for a subject, a Comp, and an expletive object (13c–d).<sup>5</sup> (13a) and (13b) are Animate Intransitive stems, since they are not subcategorized for an object, while (13c) and (13d) are Transitive Inanimate. All of the verbs in (13) may undergo copying to object, producing Transitive Animate stems with the following lexical entries.

- (14) Matrix verbs with copying to object
- a. ine·nem- ‘think about <S OBL> OBJ’  
OBJ GEND = anim  
OBJ = OBL TOP
  - b. ša·kwe·nem- ‘be unwilling regarding <S COMP> OBJ’  
OBJ GEND = anim  
OBJ = COMP TOP
  - c. kehke·nem- ‘know about <S COMP> OBJ’  
OBJ GEND = anim  
OBJ = COMP TOP
  - d. aka·wa·n- ‘want regarding <S COMP> OBJ’  
OBJ GEND = anim  
OBJ = COMP TOP

After copying to object applies, the copied entity functions as an object in the matrix clause. If there is an NP expressing the copied entity, it appears in the normal position for matrix objects.

---

<sup>5</sup> OBJ is written outside the angled brackets in (13c–d) to indicate that it is not associated with a thematic role (Bresnan 1982).

For example, in the following examples where the matrix verb takes a clausal oblique, the NP is clearly part of the matrix clause, not the oblique clause:

- (15) ka·ta [wi·hwa·pamači] ine·nemiye·kani neniwaki  
 not fut.look.at 2–3(p)/aor think.thus 2–3(p)/proh men  
 ‘Don’t think of looking at the men.’ W976
- (16) ka·ta [wi·hne·se·hači] ine·nemiye·kani no·sa  
 not fut.cure 2–3/aor think.thus.of 2–3/proh my.father  
 ‘Don’t think of curing my father.’ R176.17

With complement clauses bearing the Comp function the position of the NP is harder to determine: as explained in 8.6, objects and Comp may appear in either order relative to each other when both are to the right of the verb. It is often difficult to tell whether a given NP should be analyzed as being a matrix object or whether it is part of the Comp clause. In the next example, however, the NP is to the left of the S-initial particle *na·hina·hi* ‘when’, so it must be analyzed as being the object of the matrix clause, not part of the lower clause:

- (17) ke·hke·nema·ta owiye·hani [na·hina·hi wi·hnepeniči]  
 know 3–3’/part/3 someone.obv when fut.die 3’/aor  
 ‘the one who knew when someone would die’ M16C

Copying to object is nearly always an optional construction; we have seen no cases in which it is ungrammatical to apply copying to object, and only one case in which the failure to apply copying to object produced an ungrammatical sentence (11). It is worthwhile, however, to investigate the circumstances in which copying to object is likely to occur, to better understand the pragmatics of this construction. First of all, if the subject of the lower clause is disjoint in reference from the subject of the matrix clause, the lower subject is likely to be copied to be object of the matrix verb:

- (18) a·kwi=ča·h=meko aka·wa·nena·nini [wi·hketeminawiyani]  
 not=so=emph want 1–2/neg fut.bless 2–1/aor  
 ‘But I don’t want you to bless me.’ M19E
- (19) a·kwi kehke·nemenakowe [wi·hiši–mehkamowe·kwe·ni]  
 not know 1–2p/neg fut.thus–find 2p–0/int.part/obl  
 ‘I don’t know how you could find them (inan).’ W1007

If the subject of the complement verb is coreferential with the subject of the matrix verb and the complement is transitive, the object of the complement is usually copied as object of the matrix verb:

- (20) we·či–na·natawe·nemenakowe [wi·hne·wonakowe]  
 from–redup.want 1–2p/part/obl fut.see 1–2p/aor  
 ‘why I have been wanting to see you (pl)’ W142

- (21) ni·na=kohi kemenwe·nemene [wi·howi·hta·wemena·ni]  
 I=of.course want 1–2/ind.ind fut.have.O.as.brother-in-law 1–2/aor  
 ‘I want to have you for my brother-in-law.’ R184.33-4

As a consequence of the object-to-object copying, the matrix verb and the lower verb are inflected for the same combination of subject/object features.

The instances in which no copying to object occurs usually exhibit coreference between the subject of the complement verb and the subject of the matrix verb, and do not contain an object:

- (22) nenatawe·neta [wi·hwe·ta·se·wiya·ni]  
 want 1–0/ind.ind fut.be.a.warrior 1/aor  
 ‘I want to be a warrior.’ M16J

- (23) i·noki=ke·h ketaka·wa·ta=meko  
 now=but want 2–0/ind.ind=emph
- [nekotah wi·ha·yani ahpeneči]  
 somewhere fut.go 2/aor all.the.time

‘But now you want to go places all the time.’ A79E

Likewise, when there is overlapping reference between the subject of the higher verb and the subject of the lower verb, and the lower verb is intransitive, no copying to object occurs:

- (24) i·ni=ča·h e·htaši–kehke·netama·ni [wi·hne·nepo·hiyakwe]  
 then=so prog-know 1–0/aor fut.redup.die 21/aor  
 ‘So then I knew that every one of us (incl) will die.’ W176

- (25) i·ni e·hki·ši–kehke·netama·ni [e·hpi·htamatameki]  
 then perf-know 1–0/aor feel.so.much.pain X–0/part/obl

e·hno·še·ki  
 give.birth X/aor

‘Then I had learned how much pain one feels in giving birth’ A144B

The first person matrix subject in (24) is included in the set denoted by the subject of the lower clause. In (25), the unspecified subject of the lower verb is understood to include the first person subject of the matrix verb.

Since the lower verb in (22)–(25) is intransitive, there is no object available for the sort of object-to-object copying seen above. If the lower subject of (22)–(23) were copied as object of the matrix verb the matrix verb would be reflexive, since the object would be coreferential with the subject. Such reflexive verbs are indeed possible, as the following example shows:

- (26) na·hka ki·ši-kehke·netisokini [e·hačihkwiki]  
 again perf-know.self X/iter be.pregnant X/aor  
 ‘And whenever one has learned that one is pregnant,’ A103A

In (26) the unspecified subject of the lower clause is copied as object of the matrix clause. Since the subject of the matrix verb is also unspecified, this results in a reflexive form of the matrix verb stem (7.1.2). However, ordinarily copying to object does not occur if the copied object would be coreferential to the subject of the matrix verb. We may conjecture that it is the special circumstances of being pregnant that makes this possible in (26), since one can be pregnant without being aware of it at first.

## 10.2. Tough movement

In this section we will examine some aspects of the syntax of two pairs of verbs in Meskwaki: *sanakesi-* ‘be difficult’ AI and *sanakat-* ‘be difficult’ II; and *we-činowesi-* ‘be easy’ AI and *we-činowat-* ‘be easy’ II.<sup>6</sup> The construction in which the AI forms of ‘be difficult’ and ‘be easy’ appear is reminiscent of the English syntactic construction known as tough movement, in that the subject of the matrix verb is coreferential with an argument of the verb’s clausal complement.<sup>7</sup> The Meskwaki construction, however, differs from English tough movement in two important ways: there is no gap in the lower clause, and the subject of the lower clause may undergo tough movement. (Although I do not believe a movement transformation is involved in the Meskwaki construction, I will speak of an argument ‘undergoing tough movement’ as shorthand for saying that this argument functions both as subject of the matrix verb and as an argument within the verb’s clausal complement.)

Examples of English tough movement are given below.

- (27) a. It’s difficult to make you angry.  
 b. You<sub>i</sub> are difficult to make Ø<sub>i</sub> angry.
- (28) a. It’s easy to make you angry.  
 b. You<sub>i</sub> are easy to make Ø<sub>i</sub> angry.

In both (27) and (28) tough movement has applied to the (b) sentences, but not to the (a) sentences. That is, in the (b) sentences the object of the lower clause appears to have been moved to be the subject of the higher predicate, leaving behind a gap which is understood as coreferential to the subject of the higher predicate. In the (a) sentences, on the other hand, the higher predicate takes an expletive subject.

<sup>6</sup> Much of the material in this section first appeared in Dahlstrom 1994a.

<sup>7</sup> A description of tough movement may be found in McCawley 1988:99–103; McCawley points out that only certain English predicates allow this construction *tough, hard, impossible, simple, a breeze, a bitch, ...*, all allow tough movement, but not *possible, unusual, ...*



We will begin our discussion of tough movement in Meskwaki by considering the II verb *sanakat-* ‘be difficult’. *sanakat-* may be predicated either of a proposition, expressed by a clause, or of an entity, expressed by an NP or by pronominal inflection on the verb. If predicated of an entity, it describes that entity as being a difficult thing, as in the following textual examples.

- (29) pe·hki=ke·h=ye·hapa            sanakato·hapa            nepo·weni  
 really=and=I.conclude            be.difficult 0/emph.pres            death  
 ‘Surely death is a very difficult thing’ W176
- (30) neniwa=‘pi ke·htena=meko    ki·ša·koči–sanakateniwi            išawiweni  
 man=quot truly=emph            extremely–be.difficult 0’/ind.ind            ceremony  
 ‘As for the men, it’s said, the ceremony is indeed extremely difficult ...’ R236.24

*sanakat-* may also be used with a clause as its argument, to assert that it is difficult for someone to do something. In the following example *sanakat-* is inflected for an expletive inanimate subject.

- (31) [peteki            wi·hiši–keteminawe·kwe]    sanakatwi  
 back            fut.thus–bless 2p–3(p)/aor    be.difficult 0/ind.ind  
 ‘It is difficult for you (plural) to bless them backwards’ W475

(31) is taken from the long text about the culture hero Wisahkeha. In this rather metaphysical passage Wisahkeha is telling the other spirits about the world and the people he will create. In this world, time will go forward, not backward, so when the spirits bless a person, their blessing will take effect in the future. The sentence in (31) is Wisahkeha telling the spirits that in general, they will not be able to bless people retroactively.

In the use of ‘be difficult’ with a clausal complement, a choice of syntactic constructions is available. One option was illustrated in (31), where *sanakat-* takes an expletive subject. The other option is to take an argument from the clausal complement of *sanakat-* and make it the subject of ‘be difficult’. The following examples illustrate the two options:

- (32) sanakatwi            wi·ha·hkwe·heneki  
 be.difficult 0/ind.ind    fut.make.angry X–2/aor  
 ‘It’s difficult to make you angry’
- (33) kesanakesi            wi·ha·hkwe·heneki  
 be.difficult 2/ind.ind    fut.make.angry X–2/aor  
 ‘You are difficult to make angry’
- (34) sanakatwi            wi·hkano·neči  
 be.difficult 0/ind.ind    fut.talk.to X–3/aor  
 ‘It’s difficult to talk to him’

- (35) *sanakesiwa*                      *wi·hkano·neči*  
 be.difficult 3/ind.ind    fut.talk.to X-3/aor  
 ‘He’s difficult to talk to’

In (32) and (34) the verb of the higher clause is the II verb *sanakat-* ‘be difficult’. In (33) and (35), on the other hand, the verb of the higher clause is formed from the AI stem *sanakesi-*.

The same syntactic opposition is also available with ‘be easy’:

- (36) *we·činowatwi*                      *wi·hanehkawoči*                      *i·na*    *ihkwe·wa*  
 be.easy 0/ind.ind                      fut.get.to.know X-3/aor                      that    woman  
 ‘It’s easy to get to know that woman’

- (37) *we·činowesiwa*                      *wi·hanehkawoči*  
 be.easy 3/ind.ind                      fut.get.to.know X-3/aor  
 ‘She’s easy to get to know’

The verb of the higher clause in (36) is *we·činowat-* ‘be easy’ II, inflected for an expletive subject. In (37), on the other hand, the higher verb is formed from the AI stem *we·činowesi-*, inflected for a third person proximate singular subject.

The Meskwaki opposition illustrated in the above pairs of sentences is similar to the English tough movement opposition in that an argument of the lower clause may optionally be expressed as subject of the higher clause. In (33), for example, the second person object of the lower verb ‘make angry’ is also expressed as subject of the higher verb ‘be difficult’. This necessitates the use of the AI form of the verb in the higher clause, since it has an animate subject. Another similarity between the Meskwaki opposition and English tough movement may be mentioned here. Tough movement in English is restricted to only a handful of predicates (see footnote 7); in Meskwaki, this syntactic phenomenon is lexically restricted as well. I have found no other verb besides ‘be difficult’ and ‘be easy’ which participates in this construction.

One major difference between the English tough movement construction and the Meskwaki counterpart involves the realization of the ‘moved’ argument of the lower clause. In English, there is a gap corresponding to the extraction site of the moved element (represented by the null set symbol in (27b) and (28b)). In Meskwaki, though, there is no gap: in both (32) and (33), for example, the lower verb is inflected for an unspecified subject acting on a second person singular object. The object inflection in (33) is a pronominal copy of the second person subject of the higher verb. Likewise, the pairs of sentences in (34) and (35), and (36) and (37), show that the Meskwaki counterpart to tough movement must be considered a copying operation, rather than movement.

All of the above illustrations of tough movement in Meskwaki contained an unspecified subject in the lower clause. Tough movement applies much more generally, however: for example, the subject of the lower clause may be a specific third person or nonthird person.

- (38) we·činowatwi            wi·hanehkawakwe  
 be.easy 0/ind.ind        fut.get.to.know 21–3/aor  
 ‘It’s easy for us (incl.) to get to know her’
- (39) we·činowesiwa        wi·hanehkawakwe  
 be.easy 3/ind.ind        fut.get.to.know 21–3/aor  
 ‘She’s easy for us (incl.) to get to know’
- (40) sanakateniwi        wi·ha·hkwe·hehki  
 be.difficult 0’/ind.ind   fut.make.angry 3(p)–2/aor  
 ‘It’s difficult for them to make you angry’
- (41) kesanakesi            wi·ha·hkwe·hehki  
 be.difficult 2/ind.ind   fut.make.angry 3(p)–2/aor  
 ‘You are difficult for them to make angry’

The opposition between (38) and (39), and between (40) and (41) is similar to that already seen above: the object of the lower verb may optionally also be expressed as subject of the higher clause. In both (39) and (41), where that option is taken, the matrix verb must appear in the AI form of ‘be easy’ or ‘be difficult’.

The expletive subject of (40) requires some comment. It is inanimate obviative, while the expletive subject in previous examples is inanimate proximate. An expletive subject of the matrix verb is marked obviative if the subject of the lower clause is third person, as in (40). But if the lower clause contains a third person object, this third person does not trigger obviation on the expletive subject of the higher verb. Instead, the expletive subject remains proximate, as can be seen in the elicited examples (34), (36), and (38), and the textual example (31).<sup>8</sup> As explained in 3.3, the syntactic domain of obligatory obviation includes the subject of a complement clause but not the object.

So far we have seen examples where tough movement applies to copy a nonthird person or proximate third person object of the lower clause as subject of the matrix verb. Other categories of arguments may also undergo tough movement, including obviative third person and inanimates. The following pair of examples illustrates tough movement applying to an obviative object of the lower clause.

- (42) we·činowatwi            wi·hapahapahe·nihemeči        otapeno·hemwa·wani  
 be.easy 0/ind.ind        fut.make.laugh X–3’/aor        their.child.obv  
 ‘It’s easy to make their child laugh’
- (43) we·činowesiniwani    wi·hapahapahe·nihemeči  
 be.easy 3’/ind.ind        fut.make.laugh X–3’/aor  
 ‘He (obv.) is easy to make laugh’

<sup>8</sup> The theme or patient argument of an unspecified subject verb is an object, as will be shown in 10.3.4.

With inanimate arguments, it is sometimes hard to tell if tough movement has applied. Recall that one consequence of tough movement applying to animate arguments is a change in the shape of the matrix verb stem: the AI form must be used if an animate third person is made subject. With inanimates, however, the II verb stem will be used in both syntactic variants: if tough movement does not apply, the matrix verb will be Inanimate Intransitive with an expletive subject, and if tough movement does apply to copy an inanimate argument as subject of the matrix verb, then the matrix verb will be Inanimate Intransitive to agree with the gender of its subject. To find a clear morphological difference between the two syntactic variants, then, we must turn to plural inanimate arguments, which trigger agreement for number when subject of an intransitive independent indicative verb.

(44) *we·činowatwi*            *wi·hmehkameki*            *ahte·himinani*  
 be.easy 0/ind.ind        fut.find X-0/aor        strawberries  
 ‘It’s easy to find strawberries’

(45) *ahte·himinani* *we·činowato·ni*        *wi·hmehkameki*  
 strawberries be.easy 0p/ind.ind        fut.find X-0/aor  
 ‘Strawberries are easy to find’

*ahte·himinani* ‘strawberries’ is inanimate plural. In (44), where tough movement has not applied, the matrix verb is inflected for an expletive subject—inanimate proximate singular. In (45), on the other hand, *ahte·himinani* has been made the subject of the matrix verb, reflected by the plural agreement on the verb.

Since Chomsky 1977 tough movement has been considered to be a variety of topicalization or wh-movement.<sup>9</sup> The most important motivation for considering tough movement a type of topicalization or wh-movement is that the distance between the subject of the ‘tough’ predicate and the coreferential gap is unbounded: the gap need not occur in the very first clause down; instead it may be two, three, or more clauses down in the tree structure. In this, tough movement is similar to wh-question movement or topicalization, both of which display long distance dependencies between the moved item and the coreferential gap. Consider the following English examples:

- (46) a. This book<sub>i</sub> is difficult [to persuade the students [ to read  $\emptyset_i$ ]]  
 b. Which book<sub>i</sub> did [the teacher persuade the students [ to read  $\emptyset_i$ ]]?  
 c. This book<sub>i</sub>, [the teacher persuaded the students [ to read  $\emptyset_i$ ]]

(46a) shows that a long distance dependency is possible for tough movement in English; (46b) and (46c) show that it is comparable to the long distance dependencies of wh-movement and topicalization, respectively.

In Meskwaki also there may be a long distance dependency between the subject of the ‘tough’ predicate and the coreferential element in a lower clause, as seen in the following example.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> The analysis of English tough movement nevertheless remains problematic for syntactic frameworks in general.

<sup>10</sup> Note that in Moose Cree even constructions corresponding to NP movement in English exhibit long distance dependencies (James 1984).

(47) we·činowatwi [wi·hanohka·neči apeno·haki  
 be.easy 0/ind.ind fut.give.O.job.of X-3(p)/aor children

[wi·hnatone·hamowa·či ahte·himinani]]  
 fut.look.for 3p-0/aor strawberries  
 ‘It’s easy to get the kids to look for strawberries’

(48) ahte·himinani we·činowato·ni [wi·hanohka·neči  
 strawberries be.easy 0p/ind.ind fut.give.O.job.of X-3(p)/aor

apeno·haki [wi·hnatone·hamowa·či]]  
 children fut.look.for 3p-0/aor

‘Strawberries are easy to get the kids to look for’

In (48) the subject of ‘be easy’ is ‘strawberries’, which is coreferential to the object of the clause two levels down.

So far, the Meskwaki analog to tough movement looks rather similar to the English construction. But there is one very surprising difference. In the English tough movement construction, there is a constraint blocking the subject of a lower clause from undergoing tough movement. But in Meskwaki, subjects of lower clauses may also undergo tough movement.

(49) nesanakesi wi·hkano·naki  
 be.difficult 1/ind.ind fut.talk.to 1-3/aor  
 lit., ‘I am difficult for me to talk to him’  
 (=‘It is difficult for me to talk to him’)

(50) kesianakesipena wi·hanehkawakwe  
 be.difficult 21/ind.ind fut.get.to.know 21-3/aor  
 lit., ‘We (incl.) are difficult for us to get close to her’  
 (= ‘It’s difficult for us to get close to her’)

In (49) and (50) the first person subjects of ‘be difficult’ are coreferential with the subjects of the lower clauses.

A lower subject may also undergo tough movement if the matrix predicate is ‘easy’:

(51) kewe·činowesipena wi·hanehkawakwe  
 be.easy 21/ind.ind fut.get.to.know 21-3/aor  
 lit., ‘We (incl.) are easy for us to get to know her’  
 (= ‘It’s easy for us to get to know her’)

- (52) kewe·činowesipena wi·hnehkamakwe ahte·himinani  
 be.easy 21/ind.ind fut.find 21-0/aor strawberries  
 lit., ‘We (incl.) are easy for us to find strawberries’  
 (=‘It’s easy for us to find strawberries’)

So far we have seen subjects of transitive verbs undergoing tough movement. Subjects of intransitive verbs may also undergo tough movement:

- (53) nesanakesipena i·noki wi·hna·kwa·ya·ke  
 be.difficult 1p/ind.ind now fut.leave 1p/aor  
 ‘We (excl.) are difficult for us to leave now’  
 (=‘It is difficult for us to leave now’)
- (54) čačawi·hi kesanakesi wi·hnepa·yani  
 sometimes be.difficult 2/ind.ind fut.sleep 2/aor  
 lit., ‘Sometimes you’re difficult for you to sleep’  
 (=‘Sometimes it’s difficult for you to sleep’)

Third person subjects may also undergo tough movement:

- (55) sanakesiwaki wi·hnepa·wa·či  
 be.difficult 3p/ind.ind fut.sleep 3p/aor  
 lit., ‘They are difficult for them to sleep’  
 (=‘It’s difficult for them to sleep’)
- (56) sanakesiwa wi·hkano·šiči  
 be.difficult 3/ind.ind fut.talk.to 3-1/aor  
 lit., ‘He’s difficult for him to talk to me’  
 (= ‘It’s difficult for him to talk to me’)

Both proximate and obviative third person subjects of the lower clause may undergo tough movement. Consider the following set of sentences involving proximate and obviative NPs. The first pair of sentences illustrates the unexceptional application of tough movement to the object of the lower clause:

- (57) ma·haki še·škesi·haki sanakesiwaki  
 these young.women be.difficult 3p/ind.ind
- [wi·hkano·nekowa·či i·nihi oškinawe·hahi]  
 fut.talk.to 3’-3p/aor those.obv young.men.obv

‘These girls (prox) are difficult for those guys (obv) to talk to’

(58) i-nihi            oškinawe-hahi            sanakesiniwahi  
 those.obv        young.men.obv            be.difficult 3'p/ind.ind

[wi-hkano-na-wa-či    ma-haki            še-škesi-haki]  
 fut.talk.to 3p-3'/aor these            young.women

‘Those guys (obv) are difficult for these girls (prox) to talk to’

In (57) the proximate NP ‘these girls’ is the subject of the higher clause, and also the object of the inverse verb of the lower clause. In (58) the verb of the lower clause is the direct counterpart of the verb in (57). The obviative NP ‘those guys’ is both subject of the higher clause and the object of the lower clause. Both (57) and (58) illustrate the usual pattern of tough movement where there is coreference between the higher subject and a nonsubject argument of the lower clause.

The following pair of sentences, however, involve coreference between the subjects of both clauses:

(59) ma-haki            še-škesi-haki    sanakesiwaki  
 these                young.women be.difficult 3p/ind.ind

[wi-hkano-na-wa-či    i-nihi            oškinawe-hahi]  
 fut.talk.to 3p-3'/aor those.obv            young.men.obv

lit., ‘These girls (prox) are difficult for them to talk to those guys (obv)’  
 (= ‘It is difficult for these girls to talk to those guys’)

(60) i-nihi            oškinawe-hahi            sanakesiniwahi  
 those.obv        young.men.obv            be.difficult 3'p/ind.ind

[wi-hkano-nekowa-či            ma-haki            še-škesi-haki]  
 fut.talk.to 3'-3p/aor these            young.women

lit., ‘Those guys (obv) are difficult for them to talk to these girls (prox)’  
 (= ‘It is difficult for those guys to talk to these girls’)

(59) has a proximate subject of ‘be difficult’ which is coreferential to the subject of the lower clause; (60) displays the same pattern of coreference, with obviative subjects. The examples in this section show that subject-to-subject copying in Meskwaki tough movement is available to all person categories, including obviative third person.

The clausal complement of *sanakat-* or *sanakesi-* may be omitted if the context makes it clear what activity is difficult. The following examples have been taken from texts.

- (61) *kaši=yo=‘na*                      *iši–sanakesiwa*                      *mahkwa?*  
 how=of.course=that.anim      thus–be.difficult 3/ind.ind      bear  
 ‘Why is that bear so hard [to catch]?’ L129

(Context: the people have been trying to kill a bear for four days, but they are unable to catch him.)

- (62) *šewe·na*              *sanakateniwi.*  
 but                      be.difficult 0’/ind.ind  
 ‘But it is difficult [for him to go back into the past]’ W475

(Context: of all the spirits, only the *Keše–Maneto-wa* ‘Great Spirit’ has the ability to go back into the past.)

Notice that the verb of (62) is inflected for an obviative expletive subject, as required by the third person subject of the (understood) clausal complement.

The discussion so far has concerned only intransitive forms of the higher predicates ‘be difficult’ and ‘be easy’. There is also a TI stem that may be used to express the difficulty or ease of doing something. Consider the following sentences:

- (63) *nesanakihto*                      *wi·hkano·naki*  
 have.hard.time 1–0/ind.ind      fut.talk.to 1–3/aor  
 ‘I have a hard time talking to him’
- (64) *kewe·činowihto·pena*              *wi·hmehkamakwe*      *ahte·himinani*  
 have.easy.time 21–0/ind.ind      fut.find 21–0/aor      strawberries  
 ‘We (incl.) have an easy time finding strawberries’

The stems of the matrix verbs of (63) and (64) are *sanakiht-* and *we·činowiht-*, respectively; both are class 2 TI stems.

There seems to be a semantic difference between the ‘tough movement’ construction and the TI form of the matrix verb. Contrast (53), repeated below, with the construction using a TI matrix verb:

- (65) *nesanakesipena*                      *i·noki* *wi·hna·kwa·ya·ke*  
 be.difficult 1p/ind.ind              now      fut.leave 1p/aor  
 ‘We (excl.) are difficult for us to leave now’  
 (=‘It is difficult for us to leave now’)
- (66) *nesanakihto·pena*                      *i·noki* *wi·hna·kwa·ya·ke*  
 have.hard.time 1p–0/ind.ind      now      fut.leave 1p/aor  
 ‘We (excl.) have a hard time leaving now’



According to my consultant, (66), with the TI matrix verb, expresses a more personal feeling: e.g., it's difficult because we hate to go. (65), on the other hand, does not imply anything about the subject's internal state: the difficulty in leaving might be due to us hanging around and talking.

In (63), (64), and (66) the subject of the TI matrix verb is coreferential to the subject of the lower verb. Coreference may also obtain between the subject of the TI matrix verb and the object of the complement clause:

- (67) sanakihto·wa                      wi·hkano·naki  
 have.hard.time 3-0/ind.ind    fut.talk.to 1-3/aor  
 lit., 'He has a hard time for me to talk to him'

In other words, neither the 'tough movement' construction described above nor the construction with the TI matrix verb places a restriction on what syntactic role the coreferential argument in the lower clause may bear.

The initials *sanak-* and *we·činow-* may also be used in other verb stems. *sanak-* is especially productive: two examples are given below of the TI verb *sanake·netamwa* 'he thinks it difficult'. Here *sanak-* functions as a secondary predicate, predicated of the verb's object.

- (68) a·neta='pi    pe·hki=meko    sanake·netamo·ki  
 some=quot    really=emph    think.difficult 3p-0/ind.ind

wi·hmami·ši·hiwa·či  
 fut.be.ceremonial.attendant 3p/aor

'Some, it's said, thought it very hard to be ceremonial attendants.' R256.18

- (69) i·ni=koči    ki·na·na    e·hmehtose·neniwe·hiyakwe  
 that=you.see    we    be.alive.dim 21/part/21

se·nake·netamo·hiyakwe                      mehtose·neniwiweni  
 think.difficult.dim 21-0/part/0                      life

'Life, you see, is something we poor mortals think is pitifully hard' O144E

In (68) *sanak-* 'difficult' is predicated of a clausal argument, while in (69) it is predicated of a nominal argument. (The ablaut rule of Initial Change has applied to *sanake·net-* 'think.difficult' in (69).) This is the same range of arguments found with the simple verb *sanakat-* 'be difficult' II, which may be predicated of either an entity or a proposition.

(68) and (69) contain the TI verb *sanake·netamwa* 'he thinks it difficult', in which *sanak-* is predicated of an inanimate object. *sanake·neme·wa* 'he thinks him difficult' is the Transitive Animate (TA) counterpart. Again *sanak-* is predicated of the object, but here the object is animate. In order for *sanak-* to be predicated of an animate argument, the 'tough movement' construction must apply. That is, the animate object of *sanake·neme·wa* 'he thinks him difficult' must be

coreferential to an argument in an overt or understood complement clause. In the same way, the animate subject of *sanakina·kosiwa* ‘he appears difficult’ must correspond to some element in the complement of *sanak-* ‘difficult’. This is illustrated in the following elicited examples:

- (70) i·na neniwa nesanake·nema·wa wi·hkano·neči  
 that man think.O.difficult 1–3/ind.ind fut.talk.to X–3/aor  
 ‘I think that man is hard to talk to.’
- (71) i·na neniwa sanakina·kosiwa wi·hkano·neči  
 that man appear.difficult 3/ind.ind fut.talk.to X–3/aor  
 ‘That man looks hard to talk to.’

The same phenomenon may be seen in the following textual example, in which the complement clause is elided:

- (72) i·na=ki·na·na taswi me·neto·witehka·soyakwe  
 that.anim=we so.many be.called.manitou 21/part/obl
- wi·hsanake·nema·kwa  
 fut.think.difficult 21–3/part/3

‘That [tobacco (anim.)] is something all of us called spirits will think is hard to get.’ O85F

The argument which undergoes tough movement here is ‘tobacco’, which belongs to the animate gender class in Meskwaki. It is the object of the understood complement clause ‘for us to get tobacco’, deleted here since it is recoverable from the context (cf. (61) above). Since *sanak-* ‘difficult’ is predicated of an animate argument, the TA form of the verb containing *sanak-* is required.

The syntax of the verbs in (68–72) supports the analysis of incorporated secondary predicates given in 6.3.2: the secondary predicate is a separate syntactic entity with its own argument structure. What we have seen here is that many of the syntactic properties described for the independent verbs *sanakesi-* ‘be difficult’ AI and *sanakat-* ‘be difficult’ II are also found with verbs containing the morpheme *sanak-* ‘difficult’ as a secondary predicate. That is, *sanak-* may be predicated either of an entity (69) or of a proposition (68); the proposition may be deleted if recoverable from the context (72); and *sanak-* participates in the ‘tough movement’ construction, in which an argument within the clausal complement of *sanak-* also functions as the subject of *sanak-* (70)–(72). What does this mean for the syntax of Meskwaki? For the independent verbs *sanakesi-* ‘be difficult’ AI and *sanakat-* ‘be difficult’ II, the information regarding subcategorization and participation in tough movement would uncontroversially be stated in the lexical entry for each verb. The fact that the morpheme *sanak-* controls these same properties argues that it, too, should be given a separate listing in the lexicon. Complex verb forms such as *sanake·neme·wa* ‘he thinks him difficult’ must then allow the syntax to have access to their internal morphological structure, treating the initial morpheme *sanak-* as a separate argument-taking predicate with distinct syntactic properties.

### 10.3. Inverse verbs and unspecified subject verbs

The subset of Transitive Animate verbs which contain the inverse theme sign *-ekw-* as part of their inflection are known as INVERSE VERBS. This set contains verbs in the independent order which have a third person subject acting on a non-third person object and, in all orders, verbs with an obviative subject acting on a proximate object, verbs with a further obviative subject acting on a nearer obviative object, and verbs with an inanimate subject acting on an animate object.<sup>11</sup> An example of each type of inverse verb is given below, using the TA stem *ne·se·h-* ‘cure’.

- (73) a.     *nene·se·hekona·na*             ‘he cures us (excl)’  
      b.     *ne·se·hekwa*                ‘he (obv) cures him (prox)’  
      c.     *ne·se·hekoniwani*           ‘he (further obv) cures him (nearer obv)’  
      d.     *ne·se·hekwiwa*             ‘it cures him’

Each of the verbs in (73) belongs to the independent indicative paradigm. The inverse theme sign is underlined in each example. (Verbs with an inanimate subject have a variant form of the inverse theme sign, *-ekwi-*.) As explained in 4.5, the term ‘inverse’ refers to relative positions on the following hierarchy: nonthird > X > third animate proximate > third animate obviative > third animate further obviative > inanimate. For each verb in (73) the object ranks higher than the subject on this hierarchy.

The question to be addressed in this section is whether the inverse verbs have undergone a change of grammatical relations similar to that seen in passive verbs. That is, should the verbs in (73) actually be glossed ‘we (excl.) are cured by him’, ‘he (prox) is cured by him (obv)’, etc.? 10.3.1. examines the morphological and discourse-pragmatic motivations for considering a passive analysis of inverse verbs. Note, however, that there is an important difference between inverse verbs and the familiar sort of passive: inverse verbs are transitive verbs, while passives are derived intransitives.

Of the previous work on Meskwaki, Jones 1911:846–847 and LeSourd 1976 analyze the inverse verbs as passive. The phenomenon of inverse verbs, however, is found throughout the Algonquian family and has been the source of much controversy. Rhodes (1976, 1990a,b, 1994; Perlmutter and Rhodes 1988) has been the leading proponent of the idea that inverse verbs involve a change of grammatical relations. In Perlmutter and Rhodes 1988 Rhodes uses the term REVERSAL for the change of grammatical relations which he claims is involved in inverse verbs. Reversal applies to a transitive verb, making the old subject the new object and the old object the new subject. In other words, Reversal is a transitive version of passive: like passive, the theme/patient argument of the verb is promoted to subject; unlike passive, the agent becomes a direct object and the resulting verb is thus transitive. Rhodes has used other labels for this rule in his papers<sup>12</sup> but in the discussion here I will adopt the term Reversal to refer to the hypothesis that there is a change of

---

<sup>11</sup> A variant of the inverse theme sign, *-eko-*, is found in independent order verbs with an unspecified subject acting on a nonthird person object. The unspecified subject verbs will be discussed separately below.

<sup>12</sup> Rhodes 1976 has two rules: regular passive (p. 110) followed by chomeur advancement to object (p. 146). Rhodes 1994 departs from his earlier Relational Grammar framework in favor of Construction Grammar. Here the term ‘inverse’ is used for the reversal of grammatical relations.

grammatical relations involved in the formation of inverse verbs. The term ‘inverse’ will be reserved to denote the subset of Transitive Animate verbs which contain the inverse theme sign.

Rhodes’s data and arguments in favor of Reversal all come from Ojibwa. In Plains Cree, however, Dahlstrom 1991 argues that the Reversal hypothesis is not correct: inverse verbs in Plains Cree are ordinary active verbs.<sup>13</sup> In 10.3.2. we will review the arguments presented in Dahlstrom 1991 against Reversal in Plains Cree, as well as the arguments presented by Rhodes in favor of Reversal in Ojibwa. In 10.3.3. we will see that Meskwaki patterns with Plains Cree in that inverse verbs are active: the Reversal rule does not apply. However, none of the tests developed for grammatical relations in Cree and Ojibwa is applicable to Meskwaki: the arguments regarding the syntactic status of Meskwaki inverse verbs rely on different constructions than those used by Dahlstrom 1991 and Rhodes 1994. The fact that Cree, Ojibwa, and Meskwaki display such different syntactic behavior emphasizes the need for careful investigation of the syntax of each language in the Algonquian family. No syntactic generalizations can be made for the family as a whole.

The syntactic status of Transitive Animate verbs with an unspecified subject has also been controversial. Two examples of such verbs in the independent indicative paradigm are given below:

- (74) a. nene·se·heko·pi                    ‘they (unspec) cure me’  
      b. ne·se·ha·pi                        ‘they (unspec) cure him’

The glosses in (74) treat such verbs as active verbs, in which the patient or theme argument is an ordinary object and the agent is a unspecified subject. Another possibility to consider, however, is that these verbs are actually agentless passives, in which the patient/theme argument is promoted to subject; in this case the glosses of (74) should be ‘I am cured’, ‘he is cured’. Again, syntactic variation is found across the Algonquian family: Dahlstrom 1991 and Rhodes 1994 present evidence that the cognate forms are true passives in Plains Cree and Ojibwa, respectively. In Meskwaki, however, the unspecified subject verbs are active, not passive, as will be seen in 10.3.4. below.

### 10.3.1. The problem of inverse verbs

There are two reasons why inverse verbs look suspiciously like passive verbs: certain patterns in their inflectional morphology and the discourse function of inverse verbs involving two third person arguments. Chapter 4 discussed the morphology of the independent indicative paradigm of verb inflection in detail, including the inverse verbs. I will repeat a few inflectional forms below to illustrate why the morphology of inverse verbs in some ways resembles that of passive verbs.

Consider the following verbs inflected in the independent indicative paradigm, all bearing the second person prefix *ke-*:

---

<sup>13</sup> Dahlstrom 1991 is the published version of Dahlstrom 1986a.

- (75) a. ke-we·wenesi                    ‘you are pretty’  
           2-be.pretty  
       b. ke-pemen-a·-w-a                ‘you take care of him’  
           2-take.care.of-dir-3-sg  
       c. kepemenekwa                ‘he takes care of you’  
           /ke-pemen-ekw-w-a/  
           2-take.care.of-inv-3-sg

The stem in (75a) is *we·wenesi-* ‘be pretty, be nice’ AI. Since the stem is intransitive it is inflected for only a subject, with the prefix *ke-*. The stem in (75b–c) is *pemen-* ‘take care of’ TA, which must be inflected for both subject and object. In (75b) the subject is second person singular and the object is third person singular; in (75c) the subject is third person singular and the object is second person singular. Both (75b) and (75c) bear the prefix *ke-*, indicating a second person argument; the absence of a second person plural suffix tells us that the second person argument is singular. Both (75b) and (75c) bear the suffix *-w*, indicating a third person argument, and *-a*, which marks the third person argument as singular. The only difference between (75b) and (75c) is the form of the theme sign, the inflectional suffix which immediately follows the verb stem in the transitive examples above. (75b) has the direct theme sign *-a-* while (75c) has the inverse theme sign *-ekw-*.

(75c) is thus part of the set of inverse verbs, since it bears the inverse theme sign *-ekw-*. Let us suppose that Rhodes’s rule of Reversal has applied to (75c):

- (76) kepemenekwa                    ‘you are-taken-care-of-by him’  
       /ke-pemen-ekw-w-a/  
       2-take.care.of-inv-3-sg

The gloss in (76) is intended to suggest the transitive nature of the Reversal form. The second person argument is now the subject of the derived verb: consequently we can state that the prefix *ke-* is used to express second person subjects. Moreover, in both (75b) and (76) the suffixes *-w* and *-a* indicate features of a third person object. Note also that the status of the inverse theme sign under a Reversal hypothesis would be different from the analysis given in chapter 4. In chapter 4 the inverse theme sign was taken to be part of the inflectional morphology, identifying which argument was to be interpreted as subject and which as object. Under the Reversal hypothesis, however, the inverse theme sign would be a derivational suffix, marking that the grammatical relations of the clause had changed.

Based upon these few forms, it thus appears that adopting a Reversal hypothesis regarding the syntax of inverse verbs would allow a simpler account of the inflectional morphology of Meskwaki, one in which particular positions are identified as subject or object positions, rather than the complicated account given in chapter 4, in which inflectional positions are associated with person or number features. However, a number of qualifications must be made regarding this apparently simpler account of the morphology. First of all, a relation-changing rule like Reversal must be supported by syntactic evidence that the grammatical relations of the clause have indeed changed: a syntactic rule should not be motivated solely on morphological grounds. As we will see in 10.3.3, the syntactic evidence in Meskwaki argues against the Reversal hypothesis. Second, even under the Reversal hypothesis the account of inflectional morphology in Meskwaki will be



in the discourse context than the agent is. A similar sort of ranking is accomplished in Algonquian languages by means of obviation.

When both arguments of the verb are obviative a distinction must be made between ‘nearer obviative’ and ‘further obviative’. A further obviative agent acting on a nearer obviative patient or theme will also involve an inverse verb form, as in the following example, repeated from 3.3:

- (80) o·sani            aša·hahi            e·hnesekoniči.  
 his.father.obv Sioux.obv.pl kill 3<sup>’</sup>-3<sup>’</sup>/aor  
 ‘The Sioux (further obv) killed his (prox) father (obv)’ MM.1M

Again, the pragmatic flavor of the obviation system could be conveyed by translating (80) with a passive in English: ‘His father was killed by the Sioux.’ However, the fact that some inverse verbs in Meskwaki have a discourse function similar to that of some English passives cannot be used as an argument for the syntactic status of inverse verbs. To resolve the question of whether inverse verbs are a type of passive we need to examine their syntactic behavior.

### 10.3.2. Tests for grammatical relations in Cree and Ojibwa

We will begin our investigation of the syntax of inverse verbs by reviewing tests for grammatical relations developed in Dahlstrom 1991 for Plains Cree and in Rhodes 1994 for Ojibwa. Dahlstrom 1991 uses these tests to argue that inverse verbs in Plains Cree are active verbs; Rhodes 1994 uses the Ojibwa tests to argue that the relation-changing rule of Reversal has applied to the Ojibwa inverse verbs.

There are two constructions used in Dahlstrom 1991 to test grammatical relations in Plains Cree: copying to object and quantifier float. In Cree, the copying to object construction is constrained syntactically: only the subject of a complement clause may be copied to be object of the matrix clause. This is established in Dahlstrom 1991 on the basis of direct verbs, where the mapping between arguments and grammatical functions is uncontroversial:

- (81) nikiske·yima·w            George            e·=sa·kiha·t    okosisa  
 know 1-3/ind.ind        George            love 3-3’/conj his.son.obv  
 ‘I know George (prox) loves his (prox) sons (obv).’ Dahlstrom 1991:72

- (82) \*nikiskeyimima·wa    George            e·=sa·kiha·t    okosisa  
 know 1-3’/ind.ind        George            love 3-3’/conj his.son.obv  
 (‘I know George loves his sons’) Dahlstrom 1991:73

(82) is ungrammatical because the object of the lower clause has been copied to be object of the matrix clause.

The results obtained from direct verbs are then applied to the inverse verbs. When the verb of the complement clause is inverse, the agent of the verb may be copied to be object of the matrix clause, but the patient of the verb cannot be so copied. This is evidence that no change of

grammatical relations is found with the inverse verbs: the agents of inverse verbs behave as normal subjects and the patients of such verbs behave as objects.

(83) *nikiske-yimima-wa* George *e=sa-kihikot okosisa*  
 know 1-3'/ind.ind George love 3'-3/conj his.son.obv  
 'I know that his (prox) sons (obv) love George (prox).' Dahlstrom 1991:73

(84) \**nikiske-yima-w* George *e=sa-kihikot okosisa*  
 know 1-3/ind.ind George love 3'-3/conj his.son.obv  
 ('I know that his sons love George.')

Again, in the ungrammatical (84), the object of the lower clause has been copied to be object of the matrix clause.

A second test for grammatical relations in Plains Cree involves quantifier floating. Subjects of intransitive verbs and objects of transitive verbs allow a quantifier modifying the head noun to appear in pre-verbal position. The following example shows that quantifier float is possible for the object of a transitive verb but not for the subject of a transitive verb:

(85) *nisto nipahe-wak* *mo-swa* *na-pe-wak*  
 three kill 3p-3'/ind.ind moose.obv men  
 'The men killed three moose.'  
 \*'Three men killed moose.' (Dahlstrom 1991:83)

The example in (85) is a direct verb, where the mapping between arguments and grammatical functions is clear. When we turn to inverse verbs, where the mapping between arguments and grammatical functions is controversial, we find that the inverse verbs behave exactly the same as the direct verbs do. The patient argument of the inverse verb allows quantifier float, but the agent argument does not.

(86) *kahkiyaw sa-kihikwak* *ota-nisiwa-wa* *iskwe-wak*  
 all love 3'-3p/ind.ind their.daughter.obv women  
 'Their<sub>i</sub> daughters love all women<sub>i</sub>.'  
 (i.e. 'all women are loved by their daughters.')

\*'All their daughters love the women.' (Dahlstrom 1991:87)

The behavior of floated quantifiers is further evidence for taking the agent argument in both direct and inverse verbs to be the subject, and the patient argument to be the object. In other words, inverse verbs are ordinary active, transitive verbs, involving no change of grammatical relations.

We now turn to a consideration of Rhodes's work on Ojibwa. Beginning in Rhodes 1976, Rhodes has argued for an analysis of inverse verbs in which the mapping between arguments and grammatical functions is the reverse of that of direct verbs: in inverse verbs the agent argument is the direct object and the patient or theme argument is the subject: i.e. inverse verbs undergo what Perlmutter and Rhodes 1988 term Reversal. Rhodes 1994 is the most recent and most detailed



account of the syntactic evidence for Reversal in the Ottawa dialect of Ojibwa. I will summarize and comment on Rhodes's principal arguments from that paper below.<sup>14</sup>

The copying to object construction, used in Dahlstrom 1991 to argue against a Reversal hypothesis for Plains Cree inverse verbs, is used in Rhodes 1994 to argue in favor of Reversal applying to Ojibwa inverse verbs.<sup>15</sup> If we look at sentences in which the complement clause contains a direct form of a transitive verb, the subject of the lower verb may be copied to be object of the matrix clause, but the patient of the lower verb cannot be copied. (I have retained Rhodes's conventions for interlinear glosses here.)

- (87) *ngikenmaag ninwag gii-baashkzawaawaad Maagiiyan.*  
 /ni-gikenim-aa-ag                      aniniw-ag              gii-baashkizw-aa-waa-d  
 1-know-3.anim.obj-3p                  man-pl                  past-shoot-3.anim.obj-3p-3subj

Maagii-an/  
 Marge-obv

'I know that the men (prox) shot Marge (obv).' (Rhodes 1994:439)  
 ('know' is inflected for an object agreeing with 'men')

- (88) \**Ngikenmaa Maagiiyan gii-baashkzawaawaad ninwag.*  
 /ni-gikenim-aa              Maagii-an              gii-baashkizw-aa-waa-d  
 1-know-3.anim.obj              Marge-obv              past-shoot-3.anim.obj-3p-3subj

aniniw-ag/  
 man-pl

('I know that the men (prox) shot Marge (obv).') Rhodes 1994:439  
 ('know' is inflected for an object agreeing with 'Marge')

---

<sup>14</sup> Rhodes 1994 also discusses three other phenomena in connection with Reversal: a ban on inanimate 'ergatives', triggering clause-internal obviation, and word order preferences. However, I find these arguments less compelling than the copying to object test and the triggering of obviation in adjunct clauses. Regarding word order, it seems likely that discourse pragmatic conditions, not syntactic ones, influence speakers' acceptability judgements (see Tomlin and Rhodes 1979 for pragmatic conditions on Ojibwa word order). Specifically, the word order generalizations presented in Rhodes 1994 could be restated in terms of proximate vs. obviative third persons—a discourse-based distinction—without reference to the syntactic role played by the NPs in question. As for clause-internal obviation and the ban on inanimate ergatives, these arguments are circular, merely restating the hierarchical relationships claimed earlier in the paper (p. 432) to determine the distribution of inverse verbs. For example, a verb with an inanimate agent and an animate patient will have inverse morphology; for Rhodes, this also entails that the rule of Reversal changes the inanimate agent into the object and promotes the animate patient to be subject. Saying that there is a ban on inanimate 'ergatives' (here, final subjects of transitive verbs under the Reversal analysis) simply falls out from the person/animacy hierarchy and Rhodes's syntactic assumptions; it is not an independent syntactic phenomenon like copying to object which can be used to test for grammatical relations.

<sup>15</sup> Rhodes 1994 (also Rhodes 1976:109, 117) terms this construction 'Raising' but in the discussion here I will use the term 'copying to object' for consistency with the Meskwaki and Cree discussion.

Like the Plains Cree examples with direct verbs in the lower clause, these examples establish that a syntactic constraint exists on the copying to object construction in Ojibwa: only the subject of the lower clause may be copied to be object of the matrix clause.

When we examine the behavior of inverse verbs in the lower clause of the copying to object construction, we find that the situation in Ojibwa is exactly the opposite from that in Plains Cree. The patient of an inverse verb may be copied, but the agent of the inverse verb cannot be copied. The following sentences illustrate this: they are identical to the sentences in (87)–(88) above, except that the agent ‘men’ is obviative and the patient ‘Marge’ is proximate.

(89) *Ngikenmaa Maagii gii-baashkzogod ninwan*  
 /ni-gikenim-aa Maagii gii-baashkizw-igo-d aniniw-an/  
 1-know-3.anim.obj Marge past-shoot-inv-3subj man-obv  
 ‘I know that the men (obv) shot Marge (prox).’ (Rhodes 1994:439)  
 (‘know’ is inflected for an object agreeing with ‘Marge’)

(90) \**Ngikenmaag ninwan gii-baashkzogod Maagii*  
 /ni-gikenim-aa-ag aniniw-an gii-baashkizw-igo-d Maagii/  
 1-know-3.anim.obj-3p man-obv past-shoot-inv-3subj Marge  
 (‘I know that the men (obv) shot Marge (prox).’) Rhodes 1994:440  
 (‘know’ is inflected for an object agreeing with ‘men’)

In other words, the behavior of the copying to object construction supports Rhodes’s claim that inverse verbs in Ojibwa undergo a change of grammatical relations. The patient of an inverse behaves like a subject and the agent of an inverse verb behaves like an object.

Another argument from Rhodes 1994 concerns obviation (see also Rhodes 1976:108). In Ojibwa, an impersonal verb in an adjunct clause may optionally be inflected for an obviative subject if there is a third person animate subject in the main clause. If the main clause does not have a third person subject, it is ungrammatical for the impersonal adjunct verb to be inflected for an obviative subject. This is illustrated below with direct verbs in the main clause.

(91) *Naagshi(\*ni)g ngii-shamaa.*  
 /naagoshi-(\*ini)-g ni-gii-asham-aa/  
 be.evening-(obv)-3.inan 1-past-feed-3.anim.obj  
 ‘In the evening, I fed him.’ (Rhodes 1994:441)

In the above example the verb of the main clause is direct; the third person patient is therefore the object. Because the main clause does not have a third person subject, the adjunct clause must be inflected for a proximate subject, not an obviative subject. This is indicated by the asterisk on the obviative suffix (in parentheses) attached to the verb ‘be evening’.

The next example contains a construction in which the verb of the main clause is inflected in the conjunct order. In the conjunct order the combination of third person agent and first person patient is expressed by a direct verb, not an inverse verb.

- (92) *Mii-sh naagshi(ni)g mii gii-shamid.*  
 /mii-sh naagoshi-(ini)-g mii gii-asham-i-d/  
 then be.evening-(obv)-3.inan then past-feed-1.obj-3.subj  
 ‘Then in the evening, he fed me.’ (Rhodes 1994:440)

Since the verb of the main clause is direct, the third person agent is the subject of the verb and is able to trigger optional obviation in the adjunct clause.

The above examples establish the syntactic constraint on adjunct clause obviation using direct verbs. Now we will look at what happens when the verb of the main clause is inverse. In the first example below, we have a third person agent acting on a first person patient. This combination, in the independent order, requires an inverse verb. Under Rhodes’s Reversal analysis, the first person patient becomes the subject and the third person agent becomes the object. Since there is no third person subject in the main clause, the verb of the adjunct clause cannot be inflected for an obviative subject:

- (93) *Naagshi(\*ni)g ngii-shamig.*  
 /naagoshi-(\*ini)-g ni-gii-asham-igo/  
 be.evening-(obv)-3.inan 1-past-feed-inverse  
 ‘In the evening, he fed me.’ [Reversal applies] (Rhodes 1994:441)

In the next example, there is an inanimate ‘agent’ acting on an animate third person patient. This is a context which requires an inverse verb; consequently, Rhodes’s Reversal analysis would make the animate third person patient the subject, and the inanimate ‘table’ the object. Since the main clause subject is third person animate, the verb of the adjunct clause may optionally be inflected for an obviative subject.

- (94) *Naagshi(ni)g wgii-bzikaagon doopwin.*  
 /naagoshi-(ini)-g o-gii-bizikaw-igo-n doopwin/  
 be.evening-(obv)-3.inan 3.erg-past-strike-inverse-obj table  
 ‘In the evening, the table fell on him.’ [Reversal applies] (Rhodes 1994:440)

To sum up, Rhodes 1994 presents two constructions in which subjects behave differently from objects. This is established on the basis of direct verbs; when we examine the behavior of inverse verbs we find the patients of inverse verbs patterning with the agents of direct verbs, and the agents of inverse verbs patterning with the patients of direct verbs. This is consistent with Rhodes’s hypothesis that the inverse theme sign marks the application of a rule of Reversal, in which the subject and object functions of a transitive verb are reversed.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Rhodes 1994:443 notes that not all speakers of the Ottawa dialect of Ojibwa agree with the grammaticality judgements reported above. For some, copying to object works the same way as it does in Plains Cree, where the agent of an inverse lower verb may be copied to be the matrix object and the patient of the inverse lower verb cannot be. There is also variation regarding obviation in adjunct clauses: some allow the optional obviation to be triggered by a third person agent of a main clause inverse verb and not by a third person patient of a main clause inverse verb. In other words, some speakers seem to treat inverse verbs as if they were syntactically active verbs. However, the variation in the copying to object construction is independent of that in the adjunct obviation construction, resulting in four groups of speakers: a group who use copying to object and adjunct obviation in the ways described above; a group which agrees with the above patterns for copying to object but not for adjunct obviation; a group which agrees with the

### 10.3.3. Tests for grammatical relations in Meskwaki

Let us now consider whether the tests for grammatical relations used in Plains Cree and Ojibwa can be applied to Meskwaki. Both Dahlstrom 1991 and Rhodes 1994 use copying to object as a test for grammatical relations. However, as we saw in 10.1, copying to object in Meskwaki is not subject to syntactic constraints: it is the topic of the subordinate clause which is copied to be the object of the matrix verb. In particular, when there is a direct verb in the complement clause, either the lower subject or the lower object may be coreferential to the matrix object:

- (95) kekehke·nemene      e·hkakano·neti·hači  
 know 1–2/ind.ind      converse.with 2–3/aor  
 ‘I know you have been talking to him.’  
 [matrix object = lower subject]
- (96) aka·wa·ne·wa      wi·hne·wa·či      owi·hka·nani  
 want 3–3'/ind.ind      fut.see 3–3'/aor      his.friend.obv  
 ‘He (prox) wants to see his friend (obv).’  
 [matrix object = lower object]

It is therefore not surprising that either the subject or the object of an inverse verb in the lower clause may be coreferential to the matrix object:

- (97) kapo·twe      mami·nateno·ha      e·hkehke·nema·ci  
 at.some.point M.      know 3–3'/aor
- e·hkoseta·koci      i·nini      metemo·he·hani  
 fear 3'–3/aor      that.obv      old.woman.obv
- ‘Pretty soon Maminatenoha found out that the old woman feared him’ W21JK  
 [matrix object = lower subject]
- (98) o·sani='pi      kehke·nemekwa      wi·hokwisemekoči  
 his.father.obv=quot      know 3'–3/ind.ind      fut.have.O.as.son 3'–3/aor  
 ‘His<sub>i</sub> father<sub>j</sub>, it's said, knew he<sub>j</sub> would have him<sub>i</sub> as a son.’ R46.2  
 [matrix object = lower object]

In other words, the copying to object construction cannot be used in Meskwaki to argue either for or against the existence of a Reversal rule: since there is no syntactic constraint on this construction in Meskwaki, it cannot be used as a test for grammatical relations.

---

above patterns for adjunct obviation but not for copying to object; and a group which disagrees with both of the above patterns for copying to object and adjunct obviation.

The other test used by Dahlstrom 1991 on Plains Cree is quantifier float: subjects of intransitives and objects of transitives allow a floated quantifier, but not subjects of transitives. But for Meskwaki, we have seen in 9.2. that discontinuous NPs of all sorts are possible: determiners or quantifiers may appear separated from a head noun regardless of the syntactic role played by the NP. In particular, a quantifier may appear separated from its head noun not only with subjects of intransitives and objects of transitives, but also with subject of transitive verbs, whether the verb is direct or inverse:

(99) ma·ne=meko=‘p=a·pehe      mayo·waki      mehtose·neniwaki  
 many=emph=quot=always      cry 3p/ind.ind      people  
 ‘It is said many people always cried.’ O18A

(100) wi·sahke·ha      ma·ne=mekoho      e·hne·wa·či      mehtose·neniwahi  
 W.      many=emph      see 3–3’/aor      people.obv  
 ‘Wisahkeha saw very many people.’ W269R

(101) ma·ne=meko      e·hwi·te·ma·wa·či      ma·čiwena·čiki      oškinawe·haki  
 many=emph      go.with 3p–3’/aor      lead 3p–3’/part/3p      young.men  
 ‘Many young men (prox) who were showing him the way went with him.’ N225

(102) o·ni=‘pi      ma·ne=meko      e·hanemi–wi·te·mekoči      oškinawe·hahi  
 and=quot      many=emph      away–go.with 3’–3/aor      young.men.obv  
 ‘And, it is said, many young men (obv) accompanied him.’ O159C

(99) is an example of quantifier float from the subject of an intransitive verb, (100) from the object of a direct transitive verb, (101) from the subject of a direct transitive verb, and (102) from the subject of an inverse transitive verb. As with the copying to object construction, quantifier float does not give us evidence either way regarding the existence of a Reversal rule in Meskwaki.

Another test used by Rhodes 1994 for Ojibwa concerns obviation in adjunct clauses: an impersonal verb in an adjunct clause may optionally be inflected for an obviative subject if the subject of the main clause is third person animate. In Meskwaki, however, the subject of an adjunct may optionally be obviative if either the subject or the object of the main clause is third person. Compare the examples below with Rhodes’s Ojibwa examples in the previous section.

(103) e·na·kwi(ni)ki      netašama·wa  
 be.evening 0(‘)/ch.conj      feed 1–3/ind.ind  
 ‘In the evening I fed him.’

(104) e·na·kwi(ni)ki      e·hašamiči  
 be.evening 0(‘)/ch.conj      feed 3–1/aor  
 ‘In the evening he fed me.’

(105) e·na·kwi(ni)ki      netašamekwa  
 be.evening 0(‘)/ch.conj      feed 3–1/ind.ind  
 ‘In the evening he fed me.’



In (107) the verb stem is *awat-* ‘take’ TI, inflected for a first person singular subject and an inanimate object. Possessor raising in (108) suffixes *-aw* to the stem, creating a ditransitive verb in which the object is understood to be the possessor of the second object. The verb in (108) is inflected for a first person singular subject and a third person animate singular object.

The next pair of examples illustrate possessor raising with an animate possessed noun:

(109) *i·na ihkwe·wa pemene·wa netapeno·hemani*  
 that woman take.care.of 3–3’/ind.ind my.child.obv  
 ‘That woman (prox) takes care of my child (obv).’

(110) *i·na ihkwe·wa nepemenama·kwa netapeno·hemani*  
 that woman take.care.of.O’s.O2 3–1/ind.ind my.child.obv  
 ‘That woman (prox) takes care of my child (obv).’

The stem of the verb in (109) is *pemen-* ‘take care of’ TA; after possessor raising the stem is *pemenamaw-* ‘take care of O’s O2’ TA. The object inflection in (110) agrees with the first person possessor.

Only possessors of a first object can be raised to be an argument of the verb: it is not possible to raise the possessor of a subject with possessor raising, as seen in the next pair of examples:

(111) *nekya pemene·wa apeno·hani*  
 my.mother take.care.of 3–3’/ind.ind child.obv  
 ‘My mother (prox) takes care of the child (obv).’

(112) *\*nekya nepemenamawa·wa apeno·hani*  
 my.mother S’s.O2.takes.care.of.O 1–3/ind.ind child.obv  
 (‘My mother takes care of the child.’)<sup>18</sup>

(111) is the input form: the subject of the transitive verb is a possessed noun. The ungrammatical (112) is an attempt to apply possessor raising to the possessor of a subject, making the first person possessor the subject of the verb and demoting the possessum to second object. As seen above, this is completely ungrammatical in Meskwaki: possessor raising can only apply to possessed objects.

In presenting the syntactic conditions on possessor raising we have used input forms which contain direct verbs ((109) and (111)). Let us now examine the behavior of inverse verbs with respect to possessor raising.

<sup>18</sup> (112) is grammatical only if the *-aw* suffix is interpreted as an applicative (7.2.1): ‘I take care of the child for my mother.’

(113) i·nini            ihkwe·wani    pemenekoniwani            nesi·me·ha  
 that.obv            woman.obv    take.care.of 3''-3'/ind.ind    my.younger.sib

otapeno·hemani  
 her.child.obv

‘That woman (further obv) takes care of my sister’s (prox) child (obv).’

(113) contains a transitive verb where the theme argument is a possessed NP. It is inverse because the agent is further obviative and the theme is nearer obviative. The next example shows that possessor raising may apply to (113), producing a derived ditransitive verb in which the object is coreferential to the possessor of the theme:

(114) i·nini            ihkwe·wani    pemenama·kwa            nesi·me·ha  
 that.obv            woman.obv    take.care.of.O’s.O2 3’-3/ind.ind    my.y.sib

otapeno·hemani  
 her.child.obv

‘That woman (further obv) takes care of my sister’s (prox) child (obv).’

The grammaticality of (114) is evidence that Reversal has not applied in the input form of (113): the possessed theme argument behaves just like an ordinary object with respect to possessor raising.

We will now test whether a possessed agent of an inverse verb may undergo possessor raising. The following sentence contains an inverse verb because the agent is obviative and the theme is proximate:

(115) nekye·ni            pemenekwa            apeno·ha  
 my.mother.obv            take.care.of 3’-3/ind.ind    child  
 ‘My mother (obv) takes care of the child (prox).’

The next example shows that it is ungrammatical to raise the possessor of the agent in (115) to be an argument of the verb:

(116) \*nekye·ni            nepemenamawa·wa            apeno·ha  
 my.mother.obv            S’s.O2.takes.care.of.O 1-3/ind.ind    child  
 (‘My mother takes care of the child.’)

The ungrammaticality of (116) is further evidence against the Reversal hypothesis: the agent of (115) behaves just like the subject of a direct verb in not allowing possessor raising.

In other words, the evidence from possessor raising presented here argues against the Reversal hypothesis for inverse verbs in Meskwaki: the agents of inverse verbs are subjects and their theme or patient arguments are objects. Note also that the phenomenon of possessor raising





consider the interaction of the putative rule of Reversal with any other relation changing process described in chapter 7, Reversal would always have to apply last. The fact that Reversal would follow all other relation changing rules, never feeding any other rule, argues that it is not in fact a relation-changing process like antipassive, applicative, and possessor raising. Instead, the analysis of inverse verbs argued for here treats the inverse theme sign as simply part of the inflectional morphology.

Two other points may be mentioned here which argue against a Reversal analysis of the inverse verbs in Meskwaki. The first concerns the incorporated secondary predicates described in 6.3.2. The functional structure for such constructions represented the incorporated secondary predicate as a XCOMP whose subject is controlled by an argument of the matrix predicate. If the inverse theme sign were a derivational suffix signalling a change of grammatical relations, we would expect to find it appearing on incorporated secondary predicates, allowing the patient or theme argument of the verb to be the controlled subject of the XCOMP. However, the inverse theme sign never appears in this context.

A second point concerns word order. As stated in 8.6, the only syntactically based generalization regarding the relative order of postverbal constituents is that first objects nearly always precede second objects. However, it is not unusual for an inverse verb to be followed by a second object NP and an agent NP, as in the following sentence:

- (121) e·hmi·nekowa·či      na·tawino·ni    i·nini            neniwani  
          give 3'–3p/aor        medicine        that.obv        man.obv  
          'That man (obv) gave them (prox) medicine.' R162.5

If (121) were analyzed according to the Reversal hypothesis, the agent would be the first object of the verb. The word order would therefore be the otherwise very rare  $V > O_2 > O$ . A proponent of the Reversal hypothesis would then have to explain why second objects may precede first objects only when the verb is inverse.

In conclusion, we have seen in this section that there are many syntactic properties shared by both subjects and first objects in Meskwaki, and which therefore make it difficult to find reliable tests for grammatical relations in this language. In particular, tests which have been devised for other Algonquian languages are not applicable in Meskwaki. The phenomenon of possessor raising, however, applies only to first objects, not to subjects, and can therefore be used to argue against the Reversal hypothesis for inverse verbs in Meskwaki. Moreover, rejecting the Reversal hypothesis leads to a simpler account of the interaction among relation-changing processes (no extrinsic ordering is necessary), explains why inverse verbs do not feed the control of XCOMP subjects in secondary predicate incorporation, and provides a simpler account of the relative word order of first and second objects.

#### 10.3.4. Verbs inflected for an unspecified subject

Now that we have established that inverse verbs in Meskwaki are ordinary active verbs, we may turn to the problem of Transitive Animate verbs inflected for an unspecified subject (glossed 'X' in

interlinear glosses). The question to be answered is, are these verbs really agentless passives? That is, has the theme or patient argument of such verbs been promoted from object to subject by a rule of passive, or is the theme/patient simply an object of an active verb? Such verbs in Meskwaki are often translated in English with agentless passives. However, as we argued in 10.3.1. regarding the similarity of some inverse verbs and some English passives with expressed agents, discourse functional similarity across languages cannot be used as an argument regarding the syntactic status of a particular construction. We must look for syntactic evidence to decide whether the unspecified subject verbs are passives.

As a point of departure we may look again at syntactic investigations of the cognate forms in other Algonquian languages. Dahlstrom 1991 on Plains Cree and Rhodes 1994 on Ojibwa both conclude that the unspecified subject forms in those languages are in fact passives. (I will call the Cree and Ojibwa verbs UNSPECIFIED AGENT forms to reflect the operation of Passive in these languages.) In both Plains Cree and Ojibwa the theme or patient argument of such a verb in a subordinate clause may undergo copying to object as illustrated below, first for Cree and then for Ojibwa.

(122) *nikiske·yima·wak e·=ki–se·kiihčik*  
 know 1–3p/ind.ind perf–scare X–3p/conj  
 ‘I know they were scared.’ (Dahlstrom 1991:74)  
 (‘know’ inflected for object agreeing with ‘they’)

(123) *Ngikenmaa gii-baashkzond.*  
 /ni-gikenim-aa gii-baashkizw-ind/  
 1-know-3.anim.obj past–shoot–3.anim.pass  
 ‘I know that he was shot.’ (Rhodes 1994:439)  
 (‘know’ inflected for object agreeing with ‘he’)

As explained in 10.3.2, only subjects of lower clauses in those languages can be so copied.

Additionally, in Ojibwa if a main clause contains an unspecified agent verb with a third person animate theme or patient, the theme/patient may trigger optional obviative marking on the subject of an adjunct clause:

() *Naagshi(ni)g gii-baashkzwaa.*  
 /naagoshi-(ini)-g gii-baashkizw-aa-w/  
 be.evening-(obv)-3.inan past–shoot-pass-3.subj  
 ‘Then in the evening, he was shot.’ (Rhodes 1994:440)

As we saw in 10.3.2, this is another property of subjects in Ojibwa and is thus further evidence that the unspecified agent forms are agentless passives.

Let us now consider the behavior of unspecified subject verbs in Meskwaki. As already explained in 10.3.3, neither copying to object nor obviation in an adjunct clause can be used as tests for grammatical relations in Meskwaki: both subjects and objects in Meskwaki may be copied to object and either may trigger obviative marking on the subject of an adjunct clause. However, a different aspect of obviation in Meskwaki may be applied as a test for grammatical relations to the

unspecified subject verbs. Recall from 3.3. that if either the subject or object in a matrix clause is third person, and the subject of the complement clause is third person, then obviation is obligatory: either the matrix argument or the lower subject must be obviative. This can be seen in the following sentences:

- (125) *ihkwe·wa*      *ša·kwe·nemowa*                      *i·tepi*   *wi·ha·niči*  
 woman              be.unwilling 3/ind.ind                      there   fut.go.thither 3'/aor
- apeno·hahi*  
 children.obv

‘The woman (prox) doesn’t want the children (obv) to go there.’

- (126) \**ihkwe·wa*      *ša·kwe·nemowa*                      *i·tepi*   *wi·ha·wa·či*  
 woman              be.unwilling 3/ind.ind                      there   fut.go.thither 3p/aor
- apeno·haki*  
 children

‘The woman (prox) doesn’t want the children (prox) to go there.’

In the grammatical (125), the subject of the lower clause is obviative; in the ungrammatical (126) the subject of the lower clause is proximate.

If, however, the object of the lower clause is third person and there is a third person in the matrix clause then obviation is not obligatory: it is possible for both the matrix argument and the lower object to be proximate, as in the following example.

- (127) *nekya*              *ša·kwe·nemowa*                      *wi·hne·waki*   *i·na*   *neniwa*  
 my.mother              be.unwilling 3/ind.ind                      fut.see 1–3/aor   that   man  
 ‘My mother (prox) doesn’t want me to see that man (prox).’

Now let us see what happens when the verb of the lower clause is an unspecified subject verb, the patient argument of the lower verb is third person, and there is a third person argument of the matrix verb. If the patient argument in the lower clause is the subject of an agentless passive, it should behave like the lower subjects in (125) and (126), with obligatory obviation. If, on the other hand, the unspecified subject verb is an active verb, then the patient argument is an object and should be outside the domain of obligatory obviation, like the object in (127).

- (128) *ihkwe·wa*      *ša·kwe·nemowa*                      *wi·hneškimeči*      *apeno·haki*  
 woman              be.unwilling 3/ind.ind                      fut.scold X–3(p)/aor   children  
 ‘The woman (prox) doesn’t want them (unspec) to scold the children (prox).’

What (128) shows is that the patient argument of an unspecified subject verb behaves like an object: obviation is not obligatory.

The objecthood of the theme or patient argument of an unspecified subject verb is also evident in the possessor raising construction. As stated in 7.2.2. and 10.3.3, possessor raising applies only to objects. If an unspecified subject verb has a possessed theme or patient argument, that argument may undergo possessor raising, as in the following textual example (repeated from 9.2).

- (129) *we·čiči- i·ni -awatawoči oči·ma·ni*  
 from- that -take.O's.O2 X-3/part/obl his.canoe  
 'the reason why they (unspec) took that canoe of his' M13

The verb stem of (129) is *awataw-* 'take O's O2' TA, inflected for an unspecified subject acting on an animate third person object. The object agrees with the possessor of 'canoe'.

Finally, we may mention an additional syntactic difference between Ojibwa and Meskwaki involving preverbs and unspecified agent verbs. According to Rhodes 1994, when the Ojibwa preverb *bi-* 'come [in order to]' is combined with an unspecified agent verb, it is the patient or theme argument of the verb who is understood as coming.

- (130) *Ngii-bi-shamgoo.*  
 /ni-gii-bi-asham-igoo/  
 1-past-come-feed-pass  
 'I came to be fed.' (Rhodes 1994:443)

In Meskwaki, however, similar preverb-verb combinations are interpreted as the unspecified subject coming to perform some action. This is illustrated below with the preverb *pye·čiči-* 'come [in order to]' plus the transitive stems *wa·pam-* 'look at' TA, *ašam-* 'feed' TA, and *a·čimoh-* 'tell' TA.

- (131) a. *pye·čiči-wa·pama·pi* 'They (unspec) came to see him.'  
 b. *pye·čiči-ašama·pi* 'They (unspec) came to give him food.'  
 c. *pye·čiči-a·čimoha·pi* 'They (unspec) came to tell him.'  
 d. *nepye·čiči-wa·pameko·pi* 'They (unspec) came to see me.'  
 e. *nepye·čiči-ašameko·pi* 'They (unspec) came to give me food.'  
 f. *nepye·čiči-a·čimoheko·pi* 'They (unspec) came to tell me.'

The interpretation of the preverb *pye·čiči-* 'come' in Meskwaki may be stated simply: the subject of the verb the preverb combines with is understood to be the one who comes. In Ojibwa, where the unspecified agent forms undergo a syntactic rule of passive, (130) looks like it should be explained the same way: because passive has applied, the theme argument of 'feed' becomes the subject and is thus interpreted as the one who comes.

Such an analysis of the Ojibwa preverb runs into trouble, however, with inverse verbs. When *bi-* is combined with an ordinary transitive verb, either direct or inverse, the one understood as coming is the agent of the verb.

(132) *Ngii-bi-gnoonaa.*  
/ni-gii-bi-ganoon-aa/  
1-past-come-converse.with-3.anim.obj  
'I came to talk to him.' [direct verb] (Rhodes 1994:442)

(133) *Ngii-bi-gnoonig.*  
/ni-gii-bi-ganoon-igo/  
1-past-come-converse.with-inv  
'He came to talk to me.' [inverse verb] (Rhodes 1994:443)

The interpretation of these examples is problematic for Rhodes, since he analyses inverse verbs as undergoing Reversal. If the interpretation of *bi-* is sensitive to the subject of the verb, (133) ought to mean 'I came to be talked to by him', which is not correct. Rhodes 1994:444 concludes instead that the interpretation of this preverb is sensitive to the 'first available subject': i.e. the agent of the verb, if there is one; otherwise the subject of the verb.<sup>19</sup>

In conclusion, we have found no evidence for passive applying to the unspecified subject verbs of Meskwaki: in terms of obviation and possessor raising, the theme or patient argument of such verbs behaves just like objects of ordinary transitive, active verbs. In arguing for the syntactic status of unspecified subject verbs in this section and that of inverse verbs in the previous section, we have compared Meskwaki to two other Algonquian languages, Cree and Ojibwa. The findings of these two sections are that the three Algonquian languages exhibit three distinct syntactic patterns. In Ojibwa, inverse verbs undergo a syntactic rule of Reversal and unspecified agent verbs undergo Passive; in Cree, there is no Reversal rule but unspecified agent verbs undergo Passive; in Meskwaki there is neither a Reversal rule nor a Passive rule. We have also seen that the copying to object construction works differently in Meskwaki from the cognate construction in Cree and Ojibwa, and that the conditions on obviation in Meskwaki are distinct from those found in Ojibwa. The variation seen across this subset of languages in the Algonquian family emphasizes the need for syntactic investigations to be carried out on every Algonquian language.

---

<sup>19</sup> A more perspicuous analysis of the Ojibwa examples might be that the highest ranking thematic argument is understood as the one who comes; in other words, no reference need be made to grammatical relations. Note also that the pattern seen with verbs containing *bi-* does not apply to all preverbs in Ojibwa. For example, the preverb *booni-* 'stop, cease' is interpreted as having a subject coreferential with the agent or experiencer of the verb it combines with. It cannot be used with an unspecified agent verb: \**Ngii-booni-gnoon'goo* ('They (unspec) stopped talking to me'), Rhodes 1994:441. The Meskwaki cognate, however, freely combines with unspecified subject verbs: *nepo-ni-wa-pameko-pi* 'They (unspec) stopped looking at me.'