

The sound in the sky of cranes approaching: II verbs with animate adjuncts in Meskwaki

Meskwaki inanimate intransitive verbs describing sounds and sights sometimes take animate adjuncts referencing the creatures engendering the sounds or featuring in the tableaux. In these constructions, the subjects of the II verbs are coindexed with their adjuncts: they agree in proximacy. In other words, when the inflection of the verb is inanimate proximate, the adjunct is animate proximate; when the inflection of the verb is inanimate obviative, the adjunct is animate obviative. Consider the following examples:

- (1) e·h=wi·škwe·we·kah-ki me·yo·-čiki neme·s-aki meše=mekoho e·šiki·čiki.
AOR=be.great.noise-0/CONJ weep-3s/PPL(PRXpl) fish-PRXpl freely be.so-3s/PPL(PRXpl)

And there was a great noise of fishes of all kinds weeping.

(TM ms. 2959 p.648 I.K. Text by Alfred Kiyana. English translation by Horace Poweshiek.)

- (2) e·h=na·ni·sehkwe·-ki ne·hкот-akiki mehtose·neniw-aki ki·šetone·mo·či.
AOR=1RED-be.a.shout-0/CONJ agree.with-3s-0/PPL(PRXpl) person-PRXpl finish.speaking-3s/CC

A roar of assent went up from the people after she finished speaking.

(TM ms. 2688 p.18 I.F. Text by Alfred Kiyana. English translation by Ives Goddard.)

- (3) aškači·meki·hi e·h=pye·či-keta·wanete·-niki ne·topa·h-ahi,
a.little.later AOR=hither-be.an.en.masse.emerging-0'/CONJ person.on.warpath-OBVpl

e·h=pi·te·ya·hkwi·-niči.
AOR=enter.the.woods-3'/CONJ

A little later they saw a large party of warriors come into view and enter the woods.

(TM ms. 2764.10 p.5 ll.MN. Text by Alfred Kiyana. English translation by Ives Goddard.)

- (4) ke·htena='pi kapo·twe e·h=pye·twe·we·kate-niki ahpemeki ateča·hkw-ahi.
truly=HRSY at.some.point AOR=be.approaching.noise-0'/CONJ up aloft crane-OBVpl

Sure enough, they say, soon there came the sound from the sky of cranes approaching.

(TM ms. 2677.2 p.38 I.H. Text by Jack Bullard. English translation by Lucy Thomason.)

I propose to discuss some of the implications of these constructions.