

The cline of the peripheral agreement and the connection of *n*-formatives to objects

Algonquian verbs have several slots for agreement. But the majority work on Algonquian morphosyntax, regardless descriptive or theoretical, are attracted to research FINALS, THEME SIGNS or CENTRAL AGREEMENT, leaving FORMATIVES and PERIPHERAL AGREEMENT receiving the least attention. In this paper, first, I present the cline of the peripheral agreement in indexing the object in four Algonquian languages. Second, I regard the formative morpheme *-n* present in Delaware TA+O, AI+O, and TI verbs not as a coincidence but a crucial piece of evidence about their common status as an object argument.

In terms of the cline, the four daughter languages (Delaware, Ojibwe, Oji-Cree, Plains Cree) fall into an inclination in the sequence of four verbs classes: TA, TI, AI+O, and TA+O. As summarized in (1), all four languages show object peripheral agreement in TA verbs. Ojibwe starts singling out TA+O verbs with regards to marking the peripheral agreement. As for Oji-Cree, the cut-off appears in AI+O and TA+O forms. Lastly, Plains Cree never participates in the peripheral agreement in the rest of three verbs, thus resulting in the number of the object always neutralized in TI, AI+O and TA+O verbs.

(1) Summary of the patterning of the peripheral agreement marking

	TA object	TI object	AI+O secondary object	TA+O secondary object
Delaware	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ojibwe	✓	✓	✓	×
Oji-Cree	✓	✓	×	×
Plains Cree	✓	×	×	×

Secondly, in Delaware where the peripheral agreement is present in AI+O and TA+O verbs, I argue that the formative *-n* reveals a deeper status about the secondary object. This morpheme *-n* usually is closely tied to the inanimate object (found in all TI verb inflection). As seen in (2), despite the secondary object being animate, Delaware TA+O and AI+O verbs share the *-n* morpheme with the TI verb, rather than *-w* morpheme with the TA verb.

(2) Delaware (examples from Goddard 1979, 2017, formatives boxed, **peripheral agreement** bold)

a. TA+O	b. AI+O	c. TI	d. TA
nə-mí-l-a- -n -a	nə-waní- -n -a·k	m-pén-am- -ən -Ø	nə-mi-l-á- -w -ak
1-give-3OBJ-n-3'	1-forget-n-3p	1-look.at-0OBJ-n-0s	1-give-3OBJ-w-3p
'I gave him (obv) to him'	'I forgot them (anim)'	'I looked at it (inan)'	'I give to them (anim)'

I attribute the morphological realization of formatives as *-n* or *-w* to *Cases* (Chomsky 1981). As canonically assumed, the DO/theme is assigned the [ACC] Case whereas the IO/goal gets the inherent [DAT] Case. Accordingly, as schematized in (3), *-n* is spelled out if the object is ACC or *-w* is spelled out if the object is DAT. The *-w* formative for TA theme may seem unexpected, but it can be easily explained if we follow Quinn (2006) to treat TA goal and theme sharing *-w* as a result of *dative-accusative syncretism*.

(3) TA+O	goal theme	theme
TA		theme
TI, AI+O	-w ↔ [DAT]	-n ↔ [ACC]

To sum up, the variation of the peripheral agreement for different verb classes shown by Algonquian daughter languages maps out a diachronic change; and the mismatch of animacy in use of the *-n* formative reveals that *-n* is not really about animacy but about argument configuration.

References

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