

1 Introduction

In Montana Salish¹, core arguments may be unmarked (1a-b) or preceded by an oblique particle *t* (2a-c)²:

(1) Unmarked arguments

- a. \emptyset *téšlš* **Qeyqeyší**
3SBJ get.up Qeyqeyší
'Qeyqeyší got up.'
- b. *wíč-is* **sx^wélmn**
see-TR.3OBJ.3SBJ Devil
'He saw the Devil.'

(2) Oblique arguments

- a. *čtíp-nt-Ø-s* *sné* **t** **Čoní**
hunt-TR-3OBJ-3SBJ cow.elk OBL Johnny
'Johnny hunted a cow elk.'
- b. *čn=* *wíč-m* **t** **qxmín**
1S.SBJ= see-ANTIP OBL antler
'I saw an antler.'
- c. *x^wíč-ši-t-Ø-s* *Malí* **t** **pus** **t** **Čoní**
give-APPL-TR-3OBJ-3SBJ Mary OBL cat OBL Johnny
'Johnny gave Mary the cat.'

Distributional patterns of oblique marking and agreement are shown in Table 1³. Oblique arguments are boxed. Agreement controllers are shown in bold. Agreement morphemes in the predicate are labeled with the grammatical function of their controller.

Bare Intransitive	SBJ V	DP_{SBJ}	
Antipassive	SBJ V-ANTIP	DP_{SBJ}	<i>t</i> DP _{OBJ}
Transitive	V-TR-OBJ-SBJ	DP_{OBJ}	<i>t</i> DP_{SBJ}
Ditransitive	V-APPL.TR-GOAL-SBJ	DP_{GOAL}	<i>t</i> DP _{THEME} <i>t</i> DP _{SBJ}

Table 1: Distribution of Oblique Arguments

Two important generalizations can be derived from the table above:

- There is at most *one* unmarked overt argument in a clause (and that argument will be closer to the verb than any other).
- There is only one type of oblique argument that controls agreement on the verb: the transitive subject.

¹This work would not be possible for without help from many corners. First, I would like to thank the Salish and Pend d'Oreille Elders of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Reservation for making their language open to me. Second, I would like to thank Sally Thomason for making her extensive corpus of Montana Salish fieldwork available to me. All data in this talk comes from field notes or texts collected by her. Third, I would like to thank all those who have listened to ideas and given me feedback, especially Line Mikkelsen, Donna Gerds, Peter Jenks, Christine Sheil, Melanie Redeye, and Amelia Blevins.

²I use the following glossing conventions: 1 'first person', 2 'second person', 3 'third person', AGR 'agreement', ANTIP 'antipassive', APPL 'applicative', DEM 'demonstrative', DET 'determiner', EMPH 'emphatic', FUT 'future', INTR 'intransitive', NOM 'nominative', OBJ 'object', OBL 'oblique', POSS 'possessor', P 'plural', SBJ 'subject', S 'singular', TR 'transitive'

³Oblique nominals also function as adjuncts. These include locatives and temporal adverbials and instruments. I will leave them aside in this talk.

This pattern of oblique marking is interesting from both an Salish-internal typological viewpoint, and from a theoretical viewpoint:

- **Typological:** All Salishan languages have an oblique marker. Outside of the Southern Interior⁴ branch of Salish (to which Montana Salish belongs), oblique marking is in complimentary distribution with agreement (Kroeber 1999). This makes agreeing oblique transitive subjects in Montana Salish distinct.
- **Theoretical:** We do not expect an argument bearing an oblique case to trigger agreement with the predicate (Chomsky 2000, 2001, Markmann 2009, a.o.).

In today's talk, I'll explore the following questions:

1. What determines which overt arguments are marked with oblique?
2. Why does only one type of oblique argument trigger agreement?

In a nutshell, I will argue the following:

1. Oblique marking results when an argument DP cannot be licensed in another way
2. Case licensing and φ -agreement are *two distinct processes*.

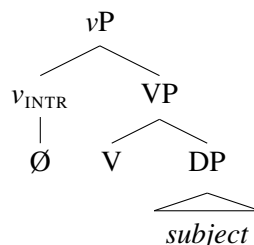
2 Background

2.1 Transitivity

As in other Salishan languages, transitivity is marked overtly on the verb. Structurally, I take the locus of transitive morphology to be v .

- Bare root verbs are INTRANSITIVE and have a null v^0 . I assume the Unaccusativity Hypothesis (Davis 1997, 2000), which contends that all roots in Salishan languages are underlying unaccusative⁵.

- (3) $k^w =$ $tiy\acute{e}\check{s}$
 2S.SBJ= crawl
 'You crawled.'

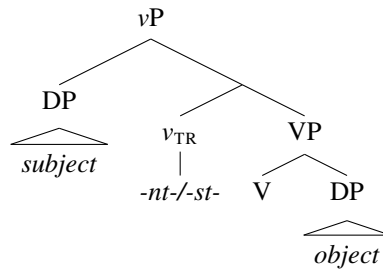


- Verbs with one of the transitive suffixes *-nt-* or *-st-* are TRANSITIVE. The transitive suffixes spell-out a transitive v^0 which introduces an external argument. They also license transitive agreement.

⁴At least Colville-Okanagan (Mattina 2004) in the Southern Interior branch shares this property with Montana Salish.

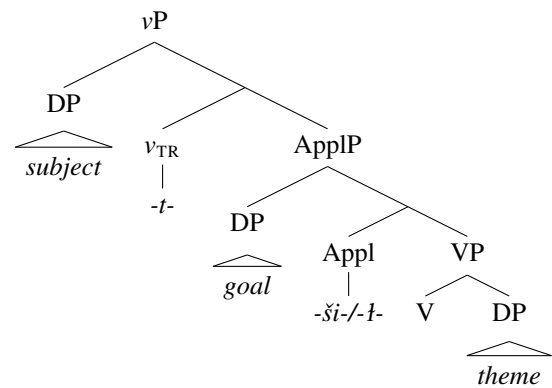
⁵There is nothing crucial in my analysis that rests on this assumption, but it makes the representation of intransitive verbs simpler and therefore I adopt it here

- (4) *wíč-nt-sí-s*
 see-TR-2S.OBJ-3SBJ
 ‘He saw you.’



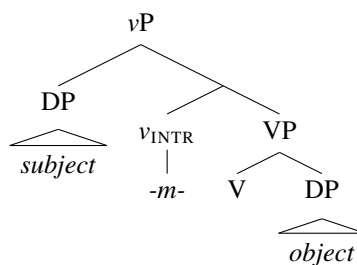
- DITRANSITIVE verbs are derived with an applicative suffix followed by the transitive suffix *-t-*. There are two applicative suffixes, *-ši-* and *-t-*. I take the applicative suffix to be a high applicative (Pylkkänen 2008) between *vP* and *VP* that introduces the goal *DP* in its specifier. In ditransitives, *v⁰* is always transitive:

- (5) *q^wo= x^wíc'-š-t-s t pús.*
 1S.OBJ= give-APPL-TR-3SBJ OBL cat
 ‘He gave me a cat.’



- Finally, I antipassive verbs are derived via a special intransitive *v⁰ -m* that introduces an external arguments but does not trigger agreement. Semantically, the object argument is indefinite and backgrounded.

- (6) *čn= wíč-m*
 1S.SBJ= see-ANTIP
 ‘I see something.’

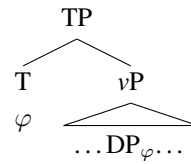


2.2 Agreement

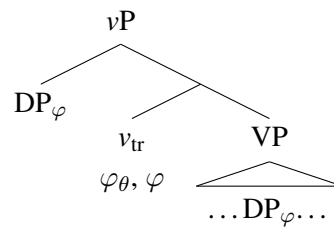
Montana Salish has a rich system of person marking governed by transitivity. There are two sets of subject agreement morphemes, one proclitic⁶ series and one suffix series, and a series of object markers (which mix suffixes and proclitics). A full paradigm of agreement morphemes can be found in the Appendix.

- Intransitive predicates take proclitics to agree with their subject. 3rd person subjects are marked \emptyset . Proclitics spell-out a φ -probe on T that agrees with the subject *DP* (following Davis 2005):

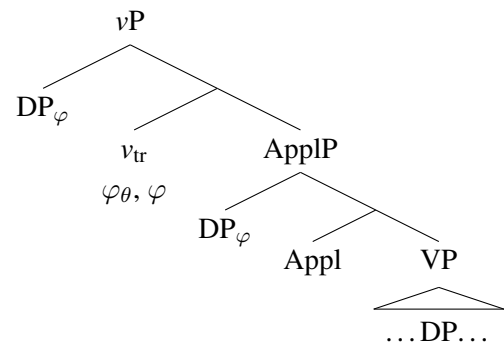
⁶It is not entirely clear if ‘clitic’ is the best characterization of these morphemes, or if they should be treated as separate words. I will simply assume they are clitics here, as nothing rests on this decision. Here I write them as a separate word followed by ‘=’.

(7) **Intransitive pattern:** SBJ= V

- Transitive predicates take an object suffix followed by a subject suffix after the transitive suffix. 3rd person objects are marked \emptyset .
- Following Wiltschko (2006), I take subject suffixes to be an instance of thematic agreement. When the transitive subject is merged and θ -marked by v_{tr} , it triggers φ -agreement on v . Object suffixes spell-out another φ -probe that agrees with the object when it v is merged:

(8) **Transitive pattern:** V-TR-OBJ-SBJ

- Ditransitive predicates also take an object suffix and a subject suffix. Here, however, the object suffix reflects the φ -features of the goal argument, and not the theme. This is because the goal is introduced by Appl⁰ above the VP, meaning the goal intervenes for φ -agreement:

(9) **Ditransitive pattern:** V-APPL-TR-GOAL-SBJ

2.3 Word Order

Montana Salish is generally predicate initial. I assume that verb initial word order is derived by head movement of the verb along the clausal spine to a high position. Tentatively, I propose that this position is Asp⁰, which I take to occur below T. This is shown in (10)

(10) [TP T [AspP V + v + Asp [vP SUBJECT [t_v [VP t_V OBJECT]]]]]

In transitive clauses, the default word order is VOS when there are two overt arguments. I will return to how this is derived below.

3 Obliques and agreement

Only one type of oblique argument, the transitive subject, triggers agreement on the verb, as seen clearly in Table 2:

Bare Intransitive	SBJ V	DP_{SBJ}		
Antipassive	SBJ V-ANTIP	DP_{SBJ}	<i>t</i> DP _{OBJ}	
Transitive	V-TR-OBJ-SBJ	DP_{OBJ}	<i>t</i> DP _{SBJ}	
Ditransitive	V-APPL.TR-GOAL-SBJ	DP_{GOAL}	<i>t</i> DP _{THEME}	<i>t</i> DP _{SBJ}

Table 2: Distribution of Oblique Arguments, again

This is not the case outside of Southern Interior Salish, where agreement and oblique are in complementary distribution. For example, in Island Halkomelem, transitive subjects may not be marked with oblique and trigger agreement (Donna Gerds, p.c.):

- (11) *niʔ q'ay-t-əs ʔə t^θə-nə sqeʔəq t^θə yəx^wəleʔ
 AUX kill-TR-3SBJ OBL DET-1S.POS younger.sibling DET bald.eagle
 ‘My younger brother killed the bald eagle.’

Transitive subject agreement is not some form of ‘default’ agreement: When the transitive subject is a full 1st or 2nd person emphatic pronoun with oblique, the verb still takes full φ -agreement reflecting that argument:

- (12) a. t anwí m k^wu= k^wɪqéyx^w-nt-x^w
 OBL 2S.EMPH FUT 1S.OBJ= protect-TR-2S.SBJ
 ‘You’ll protect me.’
- b. m ci nk^wuʔ t q^woyʔé m k^wé-nt-Ø-n
 FUT DEM one OBL 1S.EMPH FUT take-TR-1S.SBJ
 ‘I’ll take another one.’

So, oblique transitive subjects in Montana Salish clearly enter into full φ -agreement with their verb. This brings me to the following conclusion:

Whatever process is determining the distribution of oblique *t* on argument DPs must be separate from the process which determines agreement.

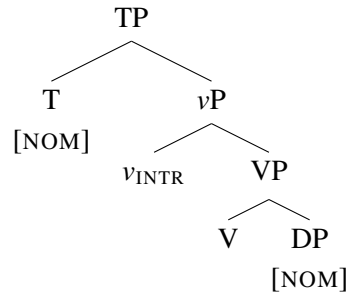
4 The Proposal

1. Case licensing and φ -agreement are *two distinct processes* in Montana Salish.
2. There is only one structural Case, [NOM] on T which is assigned to the highest DP in a clause.
3. Transitive v^0 has an EPP feature linked to its φ -probe, forcing movement of the internal argument to above the external argument.
4. Oblique t is an K^0 carrying intrinsic Case (Halpert 2012). Being intrinsically licensed, it allows oblique arguments to occur in locations that would otherwise not be structurally Case licensed. Being part of the nominal extended projection, it is invisible for purposes of agreement.

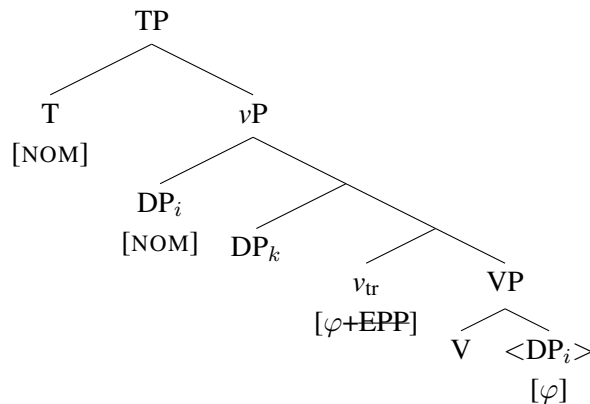
4.1 Case licensing the unmarked argument

The proposal derives the distribution of the unmarked argument in the manner shown in (example range):

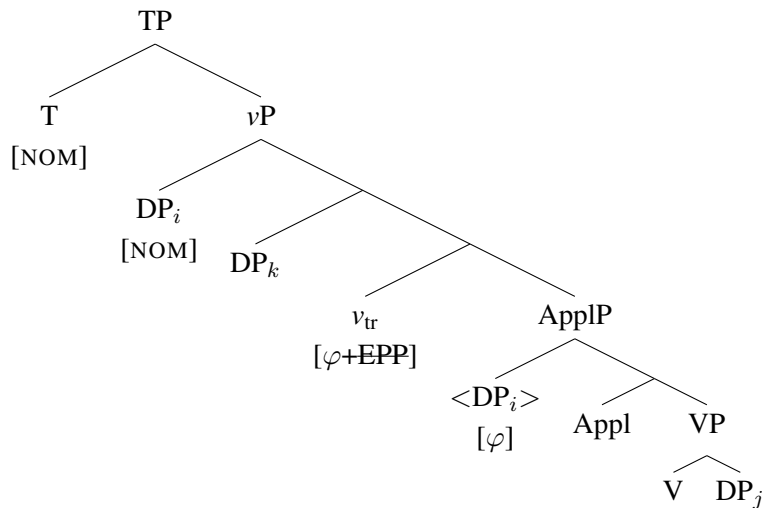
- (13) **Intransitive:** Sole argument DP gets NOM from T



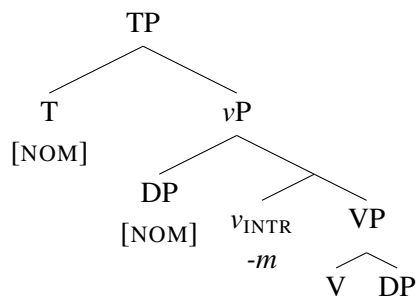
- (14) **Transitive:** Object Shift yields VOS word order and lets T assign NOM to transitive object



(15) **Diransitive**: Goal undergoes Object Shift and receives NOM from T



(16) **Antipassive**: Object does not shift, T assigns NOM to the subject



In the antipassive, the internal argument receives an indefinite or backgrounded interpretation (Thomason and Everett 1993). This is consistent with the lack of object shift, which is usually correlated with a specific/definite interpretation (Bošković 2004).

Table 3 summarizes the interaction of the type of v^0 present in a clause and which argument receives [NOM]:

	Type of v^0	φ +EPP?	[NOM] assigned to
Bare Intransitive	v_{INTR}	no	Subject DP
Antipassive	v_{INTR}	no	Subject DP
Transitive	v_{TR}	yes	Object DP
Ditransitive	v_{TR}	yes	Goal DP

Table 3: Assignment of NOM and v interactions

This analysis captures three important generalizations:

- Because there is only one Structural case available in a clause, there will be only one unmarked DP.
- Because [NOM] is always assigned to highest DP under TP, the unmarked DP will always be the closest to the verb after it raises to Asp⁰.

- Because raising of the object DP to Spec,vP is correlated with the presence of object agreement, transitive subjects will never be able to receive [NOM].

4.2 Oblique licensing

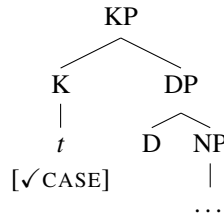
After [NOM] has been assigned by T, in clauses with more than one DP, there will be at least one DP left caseless. The DPs in question are shown in (17):

- (17) a. **Transitive:** $[_{TP} T [_{vP} DP_{i[NOM]} [\boxed{DP_{[CASE: _]} } [v_{tr} [_{VP} V <DP_i>]]]]]$
- b. **Antipassive:** $[_{TP} T [_{vP} DP_{[NOM]} [v_{intr} [_{VP} V \boxed{DP_{[CASE: _]} }]]]]$
- c. **Ditransitive:** $[_{TP} T [_{vP} DP_{i[NOM]} [\boxed{DP_{[CASE: _]} } [v_{tr} [_{ApplP} <DP_i> [Appl [_{VP} V \boxed{DP_{[CASE: _]} }]]]]]]]$

There is no other head to assign these DPs structural Case, and they must therefore be licensed in some other way. I contend that the role of oblique t is to license these caseless DPs.

- I propose that oblique t is a K head that acts as an *intrinsic* Case licenser (Halpert 2012)⁷.
- Oblique arguments are merged into the syntax as a KP, with intrinsic Case here shown as [\checkmark CASE]. This licenses the DP complement of K.

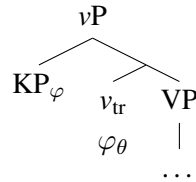
(18) **Oblique KP:**



- Because they are intrinsically Case licensed, oblique arguments may appear in positions that are otherwise unable to be structurally licensed.

Since the KP is part of the extended nominal projection (Bittner and Hale 1996), I assume that the φ -features of the DP below it percolate up to the KP layer, making the KP visible to φ -agreement processes if needed. This means that a transitive subject KP can still agree with transitive v^0 when it is merged and θ -marked:

(19) **Agreement with KP:**



So, under this analysis we capture the fact that oblique arguments occupy a variety of structural positions. At the same time, we capture the ability for the oblique transitive subject to trigger full agreement on the verb.

⁷Similar proposals have been made for Okanagan (Lyon 2010) and for Halkomelem (Thompson 2012)

5 Conclusions

In Montana Salish there are certain arguments that are marked with an oblique particle *t*. This particle is also used in some types of adjuncts. I have argued that *t* plays a role in *argument licensing*:

- There is only one structural Case, [NOM], available per clause in Montana Salish.
- DPs that cannot be licensed by [NOM] are instead licensed by *t*, which I have argued is a K^0 that cares intrinsic Case.

I have also argued that φ -agreement and argument licensing must be kept separate in Montana Salish, as oblique marking and agreement on the verb are not in complementary distribution:

- Transitive subjects are marked as oblique yet they still agree fully with a transitive verb.
- If φ -agreement resulted in argument licensing, then we would not expect to see *t* on transitive subjects.

This is contra claims in the literature that φ -agreement between a head and an argument DP results in licensing of that DP (Chomsky 2000, 2001). They cannot be two sides of the same coin.

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Appendix: Agreement Morphemes

There are four series of person markers in Montana Salish. They are:

- A proclitic series marking intransitive subjects
- A suffix series marking transitive subjects
- A mixed proclitic / suffix series that marks transitive objects
- A possessor series

These four series are shown in Table 4, below:

	Proclitic	Tr. Object	Tr. Subject	Possessor
1S	<i>čn=</i>	<i>k^wu=/q^wo=</i>	<i>-en</i>	<i>in-</i>
2S	<i>k^w=</i>	<i>-sí/-úm-</i>	<i>-ex^w</i>	<i>an-</i>
3S	<i>Ø</i>	<i>Ø</i>	<i>-es</i>	<i>-s</i>
1PL	<i>qeʔ=</i>	<i>qeʔ=...-łul-l-</i>	<i>qeʔ=...-łul-l-</i>	<i>qeʔ=</i>
2S	<i>p</i>	<i>-łul-m-</i>	<i>-ep</i>	<i>-mp</i>
3S	<i>Ø</i>	<i>Ø</i>	<i>-es</i>	<i>-s</i>

Table 4: Agreement Morphemes