

## Two types of oblique arguments in Eastern Algonquian and their implications on Case

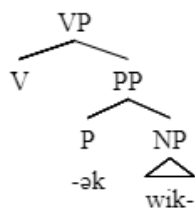
**Context.** Goddard (2020) showed that the definite oblique argument in Unami Delaware triggers agreement on the verb, informed by the appearance of the set of suffixes known as N-ENDINGS (Goddard 1979:103-106) and PERIPHERAL ENDINGS (Goddard 1979:38). In this paper, I discuss two types of oblique arguments using the data from Eastern Algonquian languages (Unami Delaware and Maliseet-Passamaquoddy): the type that NPs bear a locative case (PA *\*-enki*, case type hereafter) and the type that NPs are selected by a small set of preverbs known as RELATIVE ROOTS (Rhodes 1990, 2010; RR type hereafter). In Eastern Algonquian, these two oblique arguments behave differently in participating in agreement. The RR type can trigger agreement indicated by the n-endings and the peripheral endings on the verb while the case type cannot.

**Data.** The case type is exemplified by the Maliseet-Passamaquoddy noun *wik* ‘house’ in (1) which is marked with the locative suffix *-ək*. The RR type in (2) illustrates a comitative oblique in which the relative root *wit-* ‘with’ selects *nuhsimísok* ‘my younger siblings’ as its complement. Focusing on the verb inflection, the verb agreement in (1) is not with the oblique argument but with the subject. In contrast, the RR oblique in (2) triggers agreement because of peripheral suffix *-ak* and the n-ending *nénənw*.

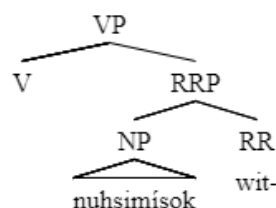
- (1) məwɪn            kəssəyotə-w-∅            məcəyehsəw-əl            wik-ək  
 bear                move.in-3-3SG            Partridge-OBV            house-LOC  
 ‘Bear moved in into Partridge’s house.’ (Maliseet-Passamaquoddy, Sherwood 1983:123)
- (2) nɪl            n-wɪt-ayya-nénənw-ək            n-uhsimís-ok  
 I                1-with.RR-play-1PL-3PL            1-young.sibling-3PL  
 ‘I play with my younger siblings.’ (Maliseet-Passamaquoddy, LeSourd 2020)

**Proposal.** I propose that these two types of oblique arguments represent the distinct morphological markings used for expressing grammatical relations (Nichols 1986): the case type reflects the dependent marking while the RR type reflects the head marking. Furthermore, I argue that the variability of the oblique arguments for verb agreement can be captured by different Case assignments (Chomsky 1981). Namely, the dependently marked locative Case is licensed by means of lexical Case, assigned Case via P as in (2a), whereas the head marked RR type is licensed by virtue of structural Case, receiving Case from V as in (2b).

(2) a. Case type oblique: lexical Case



b. RR type oblique: structural Case



Regarding their distinct behaviors on agreement, the inability of the case type giving rise to agreement is due to the fact that PP is a phase in generative syntax (Abels 2012:202-220; Bošković 2014) and prevents its internal argument from taking part in Agree (Chomsky 2001). However, the RR obliques are accessible for agreement due to not being deactivated by the PP-shell.

**Conclusion.** Verb agreement in Eastern Algonquian languages can index the oblique arguments, but an important restriction is revealed: case marking blocks it. This paper offers a novel analysis in connecting differential availability of agreement with oblique arguments more profoundly with the way that they are derived in the grammar.

## References

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