

# St'át'imcets independent pronouns-the invisible cleft

Sonja Thoma

University of British Columbia  
*sonja.thoma@gmail.com*

## ABSTRACT

The main claim made in this paper is that independent pronouns in St'át'imcets have DP status across all syntactic positions. St'át'imcets, also known as Lillooet Salish, is a highly endangered First Nations language spoken in southwestern interior British Columbia. Crosslinguistically, pronouns have been analyzed as either belonging to category N or D (Postal 1966, Abney 1987). This current analysis shows that St'át'imcets independent pronouns are not NPs but DPs. Falling out from the DP analysis offered in this paper is the existence of an “invisible cleft” construction with independent pronouns in initial position.

## 1 Introduction

Crosslinguistically, pronouns have been categorized as either N or D pronouns (Abney 1987, Postal 1967). The categorial status of independent pronouns in St'át'imcets across all syntactic categories is unclear to date, although they have been described and documented by linguists (van Eijk 1997, Davis in prep). To my knowledge only one proposal looks at the status of independent pronouns in a principled way (Davis 2003), concluding their D status. However, the area of investigation in that research is limited to pronoun headed relative clauses.

This paper aims to establish the status of independent pronouns across all syntactic positions, but with a focus on their sentence initial occurrence, since the determination of their categorial identity is most challenging there. The independent pronouns under investigation for this research paper are additional to the bound affixal and clitic pronouns in St'át'imcets. They are called independent precisely because they are not affixes or clitics. The independent pronoun paradigm is introduced in Table 1 below. The bracketed plural marker *wi* is optional and can be dropped, especially for 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> person. For 3<sup>rd</sup> person *wi* is only dropped with an unambiguously plural referent.

**Table 1**

St'át'imcets independent pronouns (adapted from van Eijk (1997) and Davis (in prep))

	Singular	Plural
1. Person	s7éntsá	(wi)snímulh
2. Person	snúwa	(wi)snuláp
3. Person	snilh	(wi)snilh

Independent pronouns can be expressed overtly as arguments. All arguments in St'át'imcets, as in all Salish languages, are obligatorily marked on the verb as agreement, so additional, overt arguments are not necessary to form a full sentence. Just a predicate and its pronominal agreement morphology can stand by itself as a grammatical sentence, as illustrated in (1).

- (1) qwatsátslhkan  
 leave-1SG  
 'I am leaving'

Like its other Salish sister languages, St'át'imcets is strictly predicate initial, with members of nearly all lexical categories being able to serve as predicate (2-4). The clitic *t'u7* in (2) is grouped with the predicate, since it encliticizes to it and forms a stress domain with it.

- (2) [záwem t'u7]<sub>PRED</sub> i ts'úqwaz'a]<sub>ARGUMENT</sub><sup>1</sup>  
 fish.with.dipnet-MID so DET.PL fish-EXIS  
 'He catches fish.' (with a dipnet)

- (3) [xzum]<sub>PRED</sub> [i ts'úqwaz'a]<sub>ARGUMENT</sub>  
 big DET.PL fish-EXIS  
 'The fish are big'

- (4) [kúkwi7]<sub>PRED</sub> [ti zácal'qwem'a]<sub>ARGUMENT</sub>  
 Chief DET tall-appear-EXIS  
 'The chief is tall' (lit. The tall one is a chief)

The data in (2-4) also show that the argument is obligatorily introduced by a determiner, whereas the predicate never has a determiner.

The remainder of the paper is organized as follows; the next section shows the problem of determining the status of independent pronouns, since they seem to occur in both NP and DP positions. It is also shown there that they never have a determiner in positions where nominals obligatorily take one. Section 3 proposes that independent pronouns are DPs in all the positions introduced in section 2. In section 4 detailed evidence is presented in support of the DP hypothesis for independent pronouns across all syntactic positions. Finally, section 5 shows a problem the current DP analysis poses and offers a solution.

---

<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise noted, all data come from my own fieldwork.

## 2 Phenomenon

It can be observed that independent pronouns appear in typical DP positions; (5) shows a pronoun in the same position as the nominal in (3). For nominals it is rather uncontroversial to call this an argument position, it is not clear, however, if independent pronouns in that position are true arguments or realized as adjuncts<sup>2</sup>.

(6) shows a pronoun as the cleftee of a cleft introduced with *nilh*. The cleftee, if a nominal, obligatorily occurs with a determiner (6b), i.e. it is a DP.

- (5) a. tsúnem            **wisnímulh** kwas            mik'iláw'scen  
say-TR-1PL.ERG **we**            DET-IMP-3POSS    fried.bread  
'WE call it mik'ilaw'scen'
- b. tsútwit    **i**        **ucwalmícwa**            kwas            mik'iláw'scen  
say-3PL    **DET** **Indian person-EXIS**    DET-IMP-3POSS    fried.bread  
'The Indian people call it mik'ilaw'scen'.
- (6) a. nilh **snúwa**    ti        nuk'w7anána  
nilh **you**        DET        help-DIR-1SG.ERG-DET  
'It is YOU who I helped.'
- b. nilh **ti pu7y'ácwa**        ti t'ák-a            kátí7  
nilh DET mouse-EXIS    DET go.along-EXIS DEIC  
'A mouse went along.' (Lit: It is the mouse who went along)

Table 2 summarizes this distribution as shown in the examples above. Note that the labels on the brackets throughout this paper are not intended as category labels, but are used for expository purposes.

**Table 2**

Independent pronouns have the same distribution as DP nominals

a. predicate [ <b>pronoun</b> ] <sub>ARGUMENT</sub>	b. predicate [ <b>DP</b> ] <sub>ARGUMENT</sub>
b. nilh [ <b>pronoun</b> ] <sub>CLEFTEE</sub> clausal residue	b. nilh [ <b>DP</b> ] <sub>CLEFTEE</sub> clausal residue

However, independent pronouns also frequently appear in initial position (7a), a typical NP position for nominals (7b). Observe that the predicate cannot have a determiner (7c).

<sup>2</sup> Note that the independent pronouns are doubling the pronominal affixes on the verb. In this paper I am calling this an argument position. It has been argued (e.g. Jelinek & Demers 1994) that at least for Strait Salish, the verbal affixes/clitics themselves are arguments, and overt pronominal arguments are adjoined. Thus a pronominal argument hypothesis (PAH) raises the question if independent pronouns are really arguments or adjuncts.

- (7) a. **snilh** ti            ats'xentáliha            kw sJohn  
       s/he DET            see-TR-TOP-EXIS            DET NOMJohn  
       'SHE saw John' (Lit: the one who saw John is she)
- b. **pú7y'acw** ti    t'ák-a    káti7  
       mouse    DET    go.along-EXIS DEIC  
       A mouse went along. (Lit: the one going along is a mouse)
- c. ti pú7y'acwa    ti    t'ák-a            káti7  
       DET mouse-EXIS    DET    go.along-EXIS    DEIC  
       \*'The mouse is going along'

The determiner on (7c) is ungrammatical under the assumption that *pú7y'acw* is the predicate. It is a well established fact for the Salish language family that predicates never can occur with a determiner. Note that (9c) is grammatical as a relative clause, meaning 'the mouse that went along'. Table 3 summarizes.

**Table 3**

Independent pronouns and predicate nominals

a.	<b>[pronoun]</b>	argument	b.	<b>[NP]PREDICATE</b>	argument ( <b>NPC</b> ) <sup>3</sup>
			c.	<b>*[DP]PREDICATE</b>	argument

In sum, independent pronouns appear in the same positions as predicate and argument nominals, however, obligatorily without a determiner (8-9).

- (8) [qwatsátslhkan]<sub>PREDICATE</sub> [s7ents]<sub>ARGUMENT</sub><sup>4</sup>  
       leave-1SG                            I  
       'I am leaving'
- (9) snúwa [ti qwatsátsa]<sub>ARGUMENT</sub>  
       you            DET    leave-EXIS  
       'You are leaving'

Since independent pronouns seem to appear in both NP and DP positions, unmodified and determinerless, their categorial status cannot be readily determined due to the asymmetries in their distribution pointed out above.

<sup>3</sup> NPC is short for nominal predicate construction (Davis, Matthewson and Shank 2004). In Salish, words from nearly all classes can be predicates, a phenomenon which led to the claim that Salish does not distinguish between nouns and verbs. In NPCs, as the name suggests, a noun is the predicate.

<sup>4</sup> See fn. 2. Since I assume that it does not matter to my analysis if a full scale PAH (Jelinek & Demers 1994) is adopted or not, I will continue to refer to independent pronouns as occupying argument positions in these cases, mainly for ease of exposition.

### 3 Proposal

In this paper I claim that independent pronouns are always DPs, even where they seem to have the same distribution as NPs. The parallel observed in the previous section between nominal predicates and independent pronouns in initial position is superficial; a seemingly predicative independent pronoun is always in a cleft construction, which requires a DP argument, as shown in (9b). Since no DPs can be predicative in the language, I claim that independent pronouns in predicate position correspond to clefted DPs in the cleft construction. The contrastive focus semantics of the cleft construction and the use of independent pronouns in contrastive environments provide evidence that semantically independent pronouns and *niłh*+DP behave alike (see 4.3); this leads to the claim that the cleft particle *niłh* is optionally spelled out, but always syntactically active, supporting the DP pronoun. As further syntactic evidence, coordination tests also show that independent pronouns in initial position behave like DPs, not like NPs.

One objection that could be raised against the ‘hidden cleft’ analysis presented here is an asymmetry in what can follow an NPC and a cleft. I will call, for expository purposes, the string that follows both these constructions ‘the residue’. Clefts allow for the residue to be optionally introduced by a determiner, whereas NPCs obligatorily need a determiner on the residue. Independent pronouns seem to follow this pattern, too, suggesting that a sentence initial pronoun *is* parallel to a NPC. Section 5. spells out this problem in more detail. There I will also propose a solution for this asymmetry, which allows us to maintain the DP analysis for independent pronouns across all syntactic positions. The following section lays out the argument for a DP analysis for St’át’imcets independent pronouns in detail.

### 4 Evidence

Evidence for the DP status of independent pronouns across all syntactic positions can be found in their distribution (4.1), through coordination tests (4.2.), their contrastive semantics in initial position (4.3.) and through selectional evidence (4.4).

#### 4.1 Distribution

In this paragraph I show that independent pronouns have the same distribution as regular, non-pronominal DPs. The data in (10-13) show that independent pronouns can occupy the same syntactic positions as DPs ; it therefore follows that independent pronouns are DPs by distributional identity.

- (10) a.    tsúnem                    **wisnímulh**    kwas                                    mik’ilaw’scen  
           say-TR-1PL.ERG **we**                    DET-IMPF-3POSS    fried.bread  
           ‘WE call it mik’ilaw’scen’
- b.    tsútwit    **i**            **ucwalmícwa**    kwas                                    mik’ilaw’scen  
           say-3PL    **DET Indian person**    DET-IMPF-3POSS    fried.bread  
           ‘The Indian people call it mik’ilaw’scen’.

- (11) a. nilh **snúwa** ti nuk'w7anána  
 NILH **you** DET help-DIR-1SG.ERG-EXIS  
 'I helped YOU (Lit: 'It is YOU who I helped.')
- b. nilh **ti pú7y'acwa** ti t'áka káti7  
 NILH DET mouse-EXIS DET go.along-EXIS DEIC  
 'A MOUSE went along.' (Lit: It is the mouse who went along)
- (12) a. cw7aaz kwas nlig'wts l **wi snuláp**  
 NEG that.there-open PREP-**you**  
 'It is not allowed to YOU FOLKS' (van Eijk:1997:164)
- b. Nilh lhláti7 nst'k'iw'lec **lti k'éth'a**  
 NILH DEIC LOC-NOM-climb PREP-DET rock-EXIS (Matthewson 2005:155)  
 'then I climbed onto the rock'
- (13) a. [**snúwa** wa7 it'em ]  
 you IMPF sing  
 'you who are singing'
- b. [**ti sqaycwa** wa7 k'wezúsem]  
 DET man-EXIS IMPF work-MID  
 'the man who is working'

(4) and (5) are repeated as (10) and (11), and respectively show independent pronouns in argument position<sup>5</sup> and as the cleftee of an introduced cleft. (12) has an independent pronoun as the object of a preposition, whereas in (13) it is heading a relative clause. As the (b) examples show, nominals in argument or argument related positions are always introduced by a determiner, which means they are DPs. Since independent pronouns can occur in the same syntactic positions, it follows from distributional identity that independent pronouns are DPs in these positions, albeit without an overt determiner.

#### 4.2 Coordination

The problem of independent pronouns in initial position, as introduced in section 2, is illuminated by applying coordination tests; these tests show that independent pronouns in this typical NP position are actually DPs.

Davis (2000) established that coordination tests are valid constituency diagnostics for St'át'imcets. The general rationale behind coordination tests is that a given constituent minimally must be able to combine with another constituent of its kind; X not *only* combines

<sup>5</sup> Note that the independent pronoun is doubling the pronominal affixes on the verb. I am calling this an argument position. It has been argued (e.g. Jelinek & Demers 1994) that at least for Strait Salish, the verbal affixes themselves are arguments, and overt pronominal arguments are adjoined. Thus a pronominal argument hypothesis (PAH) raises the question if independent pronouns are really arguments or adjuncts. Since I assume that it does not matter to my analysis if a full scale PAH is adopted or not, I will refer to independent pronouns as occupying argument positions in these cases, mainly for ease of exposition.

with another category *X*, but it *minimally* has to. (14) shows that an independent pronoun does not coordinate with a (determinerless) NP nominal. (15) however illustrates that coordination with a DP nominal is possible.

- (14) \*snúwa muta7 kúkwpí7 i zácá'qwem'a  
 you AND chief DETPL tall-appear-EXIS
- (15) snúwa muta7 ti kúkwpí7a i zácá'qwem''a  
 you AND DET chief-EXIS DETPL tall-appear-EXIS  
 'You and the chief are tall.'

Since independent pronouns in initial position do not combine with NPs, they cannot be NPs. Since they nevertheless do coordinate with DPs, I conclude that independent pronouns must be DPs in this position.

I also assume that the construction in (15) is underlyingly a cleft. Remember that a sentence initial DP in St'át'imcets is only grammatical in a cleft (16). Clefts are formed with the particle *nilh* and a DP cleftee following it.

- (16) nilh ti kúkwpí7a ti zácá'qwem''a  
 NILH DET chief-EXIS DET tall-appear-EXIS  
 'The chief is tall' (Lit: it's the chief who is tall)

Although a rare occurrence with full NP nominals, the cleft particle *nilh* can be dropped. A transitive sentence (17) with subordinate morphology on the verb shows that the construction is indeed a cleft construction with *nilh* dropped.

- (17) ti syáqts7a muta7 ti sqáyçwa wa7 áts'xenan  
 DET woman-EXIS and DET man-EXIS IMPF see-TR-1SUBJ.ERG  
 lti píktsha  
 PREP.DET picture-EXIS  
 'I see a WOMAN and a MAN in the picture'  
 (Lit: the ones I see in the picture are a woman and a man)

I extend this to independent pronouns, and claim that due to their emphatic nature<sup>6</sup>, the particle *nilh* seems to be dropped freely with them.

In this section I showed that since pronouns in sentence initial position don't coordinate with NPs, they cannot be NPs themselves. Deciding between NP or DP pronouns (Abney 1987, Postal 1967), this leaves as the only option the claim that St'át'imcets independent pronouns are DPs<sup>7</sup>. Since the only way an initial DP can occur in the language is in a cleft

<sup>6</sup> If a language has an extra set of pronouns, this set usually has emphatic use (Eckhardt 2001). St'át'imcets independent pronouns thus can be claimed to be emphatic. I assume that due to that the particle *nilh*, is frequently dropped, since *nilh* itself, introducing focus, is associated with emphasis.

<sup>7</sup> Proposals exist that further split up DP, such as Déchaine & Wiltschko (2002). They propose phiP, a category that neither behaves like NP nor like DP. See the conclusion for further remarks.

constructions, it follows that initial independent pronouns in St'át'imcets are DPs in an underlying cleft.

### 4.3 *Semantics*

Further evidence for the DP status, as well for the 'hidden cleft' analysis can also be found with uncoordinated pronouns in initial position.

#### 4.3.1 Minimal pairs with identical interpretation

It is possible to get minimal pairs with a pronounced and unpronounced *nilh*, to which the consultant gives identical translations (18). I take this judgment by the consultant as evidence that the structures are identical syntactically, and differ only in whether *nilh* is pronounced or not.

- (18) (nilh) snúwa ti wa7 it'em  
 (NILH) you DET IMPF sing  
 'YOU are singing' / 'It's you who is singing'

The consultant offers both forms and both translations on different occasions. This task was repeated over the course of several weeks, and both forms were consistently treated as identical.

#### 4.3.2 Independent pronouns and contrastiveness

Further supporting evidence for their DP status and the underlying cleft analysis proposed in section 4.2. comes from the contrastive environment in which independent pronouns are used. In order for this argument to become clear, some background information on focusing is required, following immediately below.

For this account, I adopt the theory of focus in Rooth (1996) in which focus divides discourse into a focused portion and an open proposition; focus then selects a value for the variable in the open proposition from a set of contextually salient alternative propositions. As a consequence of this definition, focus for Rooth it is contrastive but not necessarily exhaustive. Exhaustivity means that out of a set of contextually salient individuals, all the individuals are picked out. In English the kind of focus conveyed in clefts is exhaustive (19), whereas intonational focus (indicated by CAPS) on a noun is contrastive but not necessarily exhaustive (20).

- (19) It's John who came.                    ??? And Martin came, too.  
 (20) I am really afraid of GHOSTS!    And of ogres, too.

According to Percus (1997), exhaustivity readings in English clefts, causing the oddness of the remark in (19), is due to an existence presupposition caused by an underlying definite description. (21) shows the mechanism Percus proposes.

- (21) a. It is [John]<sub>F</sub> that Mary saw.  
 b. [<sub>IP</sub> [<sub>DP</sub> the 0 [<sub>CP</sub> Op<sub>i</sub> that Mary saw t<sub>i</sub> ]]<sub>j</sub> [<sub>VP</sub> t<sub>j</sub> is John]]  
 c. [[<sub>IP</sub> [<sub>DP</sub> the 0 t<sub>k</sub>]<sub>j</sub> [<sub>VP</sub> t<sub>j</sub> is John]] [<sub>CP</sub> Op<sub>i</sub> that Mary saw t<sub>i</sub>]<sub>k</sub>]  
 Extraposition  
 d. Definite description: [DP the 0 t<sub>k</sub>] → **it** (=spell out) (Percus 1997:338)

The ‘*it*’ introducing clefts in English is the definite description, forcing exhaustivity through picking out the unique individual X (i.e. the cleftee) of whom the proposition is true. Furthermore English clefts have an existential presupposition. (22) how this works with respect to the example in (21).

- (22) → *existential presupposition*: Mary saw someone  
 → *assertion*: The someone Mary saw is John  
 → *uniqueness/exhaustivity presupposition*: Mary didn’t see anybody else

St’át’imcets clefts are different from English clefts in that they lack exhaustivity presupposition. Example (23) shows that a cleft can be used with *also*.

- (23) nilh sLisa **t’it** ti ats’xenána láku7 tsítwa  
 NILH NOM Lisa **also** DET see-TR-1SGEG-EXIS DEIC house  
 ?It’s also Lisa who I saw in the house

Clefts in this language also lack existential presupposition, which means that they can be used in out of the blue contexts (24) (Davis, Matthewson, Shank 2004)<sup>8</sup>.

- (24) ni spála7sa **nilh ti plísmena** t’íq áts’xentsas  
 DET NOM-one-3.SPOSS-EXIS NILH DET policeman-EXIS arrive see-DIR-1SOBJ-3ERG  
 ‘Once a policeman came to see me’ (DMS 2004:113)

DMS 2004 note that St’át’imcets NPCs are also used to convey focus, and they share the same characteristics as clefts; they also lack exhaustivity (25) and existential presuppositions (26).

- (25) syáqtsa7 **t’it** ti áts’xenána  
 woman **also** DET see-TR-1SGEG-EXIS  
 ‘I also saw a woman’

*Q; Who do you see in this picture?*

- (26) syáqtsa7 muta7 sqaycwa7 (ti) wa7 áts’xenan lti píktsha  
 woman AND man (DET) IMPF see-TR-1SGERG PREP-DET picture-EXIS

<sup>8</sup> This is, as pointed out by DMS, due to the differing semantics of the determiners in St’át’imcets (Matthewson 1998) and English.

‘I see a woman and a man in the picture’

Note the relevance of this, since the basic question in this paper is if independent pronouns in initial position are NP (and hence NPCs) or DPs (and hence in a cleft).

A phenomenon not mentioned by DMS (2004) is that NPCs and clefts differ semantically in one regard; clefts may be used to convey contrastive focus, while nominal predicates may not. The data in (27) and (28) illustrate this.

*Context: two pictures, one with a sleeping dog, another with a bear climbing a tree.*

*Q: swat ku guy'tál'men (who is sleepy)*

- (27) nilh ti sqáx7a (ti) wa7 guy't  
 NILH DET dog-EXIS (DET) IMPF sleep  
 ‘The DOG is sleeping’ (Lit: It’s the dog who is sleeping)

The consultant prefers the answer (28) over (29) as more appropriate to the question asked. This shows that only clefts, but not NPCs are used in contrastive environments.

- (28) sqáxa7 (ti) wa7 guy't  
 dog (ti) impf sleep  
 ‘A dog is sleeping’ (Lit: the sleeping one is a dog)

Bringing back the discussion to independent pronouns, yet bearing in mind the contrastive use of clefts, the data below shows that independent pronouns are used in contrastive situations without using *nilh* (29,30).

*Context: Bill tells everyone he shot a bear. That’s not true, I shot it and I tell my friend:*

- (29) s7énts ti zuqwnucwstáliha ti míxalha  
 I DET kill-animal-TR-TOP.EXIS DET bear  
 cw7aoz kw snilhts sBill  
 NEG DET NOM-NILH-3<sup>RD</sup>POSS NOMBill  
 ‘I killed the bear, not Bill!’

*Context: Sue is in love with Peter, but Paul thinks Mary likes Peter. Sue says to her friend:*

- (30) s7énts ti amasána kw sPeter, cw7aoz  
 I DET good-TR- 1SG.ERG DET NOMPeter NEG  
 kw snilhts sMary  
 DET NOM-NILH-3POSS NOMMary  
 ‘I like Peter, not Mary!’

It would also be expected that independent pronouns appear with *nilh*, also in contrastive environments. This prediction is borne out (31-32).

*Context: Bill and Joe are in disagreement who saw a bear first.*

(31) s7ents ti kél7a ats'xentáli ti mixálha  
 I DET first-EXIS see-TR-TOP DET bear-EXIS  
 'I saw the bear first.'

(32) nilh s7ents!  
 NILH I  
 'I did!'

To sum up the results of this section, independent pronouns in initial position are used in St'át'imcets to convey contrastivity. They are used contrastively with and without *nilh*. I also showed that only clefts with a DP cleftee can express contrastivity. I thus conclude that independent pronouns are DPs in initial position. They are not really predicates, but a DP cleftee. The cleft particle *nilh* is dropped in speech sometime, but always stays syntactically active, supporting the DP pronoun.

#### 4.4 Selectional evidence

The last piece of evidence I present to support the DP status of independent pronouns is through selectional data. St'át'imcets pronouns select for an NP complement. In most cases the NP is empty. However, the nominal can also be overt (34-36), which leads me to propose that independent pronouns, as DPs, occupy the D head. With this claim I am following Davis (2003), who proposed this for independent pronouns in pronoun headed relative clauses. (33) shows the proposed structure.

(33)

	DP	
	^	
	D	NP
	snilh	Ø
	snúwa	
	s7éntsá	

(34) **snimulh** **syeqyéy'qts7a** tsícwkalh q'wezílč  
 we woman:REDUP-EXIS go-1PL dance  
 'Us girls went dancing'

(35) **núwa qecwqícw** syéy'qtsa7 síma7 ts7a  
 you wild:REDUP girl:REDUP come DEIC  
 'You silly girl, come here!'

(36) **Nilh wisnímulh smelhmém'lhats** wa7 q'welaw'entáli iz'  
 NILH we woman:REDUP IMPF pick.berries-TR-TOP DEM.PL  
 'I was us girls who picked them'  
 (Matthewson 2005: 455)

I showed in this section that independent pronouns are DP pronouns, occupying the D head of a structure that tends to have an empty NP complement. However the prediction is that this complement can be filled. The data presented above shows that this prediction is borne out; hence, independent pronouns are determiners, occupying D.

## 5 A problematic asymmetry

In this section I would like to address a potential problem for the DP analysis of independent pronouns across all syntactic categories. There is an asymmetry in pronoun clefts vs. nominal clefts. The data below lays out full nominals as predicate and in a cleft (37, 38), and independent pronouns with and without *nilh* (39, 40). The (a) examples show the residue following the nominal introduced by a determiner, whereas the (b) examples show the determiner can only be dropped for a cleft.

- (37) a. sqaycw [**ti wa7 q'wezilc**]  
 man [det impf dance-aut]  
 'The man is dancing'  
 (Lit: the dancing one is a man)
- b. \*sqaycw [**wa7 q'wezilc**]  
 man [impf dance-aut]  
 speaker comment: not a good sentence
- (38) a. nilh ti sqáycwa [**ti wa7 qwezilc**]  
 nilh det man [det impf danceaut]  
 'It's the man who is dancing.'
- b. nilh ti sqáycwa [**wa7 q'wezilc**]  
 nilh det man [impf dance-aut]  
 'It's the man who is dancing.'
- (39) a. snúwa [**ti wa7 ít'em**]  
 you [det impf sing-mid]  
 'You are singing' (lit: It's you who is singing)
- b. \*snúwa [**wa7 ít'em**]  
 you [impf sing-mid]  
 comment: not a complete sentence (lit: 'you who is singing'=relative clause)
- (40) a. nilh snúwa [**ti wa7 ít'em**]  
 nilh you [det impf sing-mid]  
 It's you who is singing
- b. nilh snúwa [**wa7 ít'em**]  
 nilh you [impf sing-mid]

## It's you who is singing

The immediate question arising when comparing the nominal (37-38) to the independent pronoun constructions (39-40) is: Why, if an initial pronoun is always in a cleft, as claimed in this paper, does it behave differently with an overt vs. dropped *nilh*? Specifically (39) shows this, and poses a problem for the account given here; (39) a and b should behave identically, i.e. just as (40), if the 'invisible cleft' analysis offered in this paper is correct. The table below summarizes the problem, and shows that independent pronouns without the particle *nilh* seem to behave parallel to NPCs, both being unable to drop the determiner on the residue.

**Table 4**Asymmetry in independent pronoun residue with and without *nilh*

	determiner precedes residue	no determiner precedes residue
NPC	Y	*
Nominal cleft initial pronoun	Y	Y
(=Pronominal cleft w/ invisible <i>nilh</i> )	Y	*
Pronominal cleft	Y	Y

I propose the following solution to this problem: I assume that St'át'imcets speaker avoid the possibility of garden-path processing of the sentence type in (39b). I assume hence that the determiner on the residue serves to disambiguate between a full sentence and a pronoun headed relative clause. A similar strategy is employed in English, where, presumably for the exact same reasons, it is ungrammatical to drop the complementizer in sentences such as "the man \*(that) saw me"<sup>9</sup>.

Thus the seeming asymmetry is explained by disambiguation. If *nilh* is present, the sentence cannot be mistaken for a relative clause, and the determiner can be dropped. If *nilh* is unpronounced, the possibility exists for mistaking the utterance for a relative clause, for which reason the determiner stays on. I leave it up to future research to explore this asymmetry in more detail.

**6 Conclusion**

In this paper I showed that independent pronouns across all syntactic positions are DPs due to their distribution. They are also DPs in initial position, which was shown through coordination and their use in contrastive environments; contrastiveness in St'át'imcets is expressed through clefts alone, not by NPCs. Hence seemingly "bare" independent pronouns are used in initial position in contrastive environments, which means that they cannot be NPs, (i.e. the equivalent of a NPC). Instead independent pronouns in initial position correspond to the clefted DPs in clefts. As a consequence for "bare" initial pronouns this means that the

<sup>9</sup> Thanks to Henry Davis and Hotze Rullmann for pointing this out. Note that some determiners in St'át'imcets can serve as complementizers.

cleft is there, yet the particle *nilh* is dropped. Selectional evidence further established that independent pronouns are D.

Further investigations of St'átimcets independent pronouns will have to include a closer examination of the cleft construction, and more specifically the cleft particle *nilh*. Also the asymmetry in the possible residues following cleft vs. nominal predicates, presented in section 5, raises questions about the syntax of the cleft construction and warrants further investigation.

Finally, accounts exist that hold an analysis of pronouns doesn't necessarily have to revolve around the two categories, D vs. N; ever since the DP hypothesis for pronouns (Abney 1987), DP has been split up into further functional categories. In the spirit of analyses that favor functional projections contained in DP, several proposals have been made as to what categories are contained under D. One such approach that proposes intermediate functional projections is Déchaine & Wiltschko (2002). They propose phiP, a projection that neither behaves like NPs nor like DPs, and can serve both as argument and as predicate. The imminent question arising is if St'át'imcets independent pronouns can be accounted for with a phiP analysis. Future research will have to establish this.

### Acknowledgments

I'd like to thank Laura Thevarge for her patience and good humor in teaching her language. I also owe many thanks to my committee (Hotze Rullmann, Henry Davis and Martina Wiltschko) and to Lisa Matthewson.

### References

- Abney, S. 1987. The English Noun Phrase in Its Sentential Aspect, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, MIT
- Davis, H. 2000. Coordination and Constituency in St'at'imcets. in Gessner, S. & S. Oh (eds.) UBCWPL Vol. 3:40-77.
- Davis, H. 2003. Some crazy relatives in St'át'imcets (Lillooet Salish), Presented at the University of Washington, March 7.
- Davis, H. In prep. A Teacher's Grammar of Upper St'át'imcets.
- Davis, H., L. Matthewson, & S. Shank. 2004. Clefts vs nominal predicates in two Salish languages. In: D. Gerds et al. (eds.) Studies in Salish Linguistics in Honor of M. Dale Kinkade, eds., University of Montana Press.
- Déchaine, Rose-Marie, and Wiltschko, Martina. 2002b. Decomposing Pronouns. Linguistic Inquiry 33:409-442.
- Eckhardt, Regine. 2001. Reanalyzing selbst. Natural Language Semantics 9,4. 371- 412.

- Jelinek, E. & R.A. Demers .1994. Predicates and pronominal arguments in Straits Salish. *Language* 70, 697 – 736.
- Matthewson L. 2005. *When I Was Small – I Wan Kwikws. A Grammatical Analysis of St'át'imc Oral Narratives*. UBC Press. Vancouver.
- Percus, O. 1997. Prying open the cleft. *NELS* 27, 337-351.
- Postal, P. 1966. 'On So-called Pronouns in English', in D. Reibel and S. Schane (eds.), *Modern Studies in English*, Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 201–223.
- Rooth, M. 1996. Focus. In: Lappin, S. (ed.) *Handbook of Contemporary Semantic Theory*. Oxford: Blackwell, 271-297.
- van Eijk, J. 1997. *The Lillooet Language. Phonology, Morphology, Syntax*. Vancouver: UBC Press.