SOME AGENT HIERARCHIES IN UPPER CHEHALIS

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1. The intent of this paper is to present some information on agent hierarchies in Upper Chehalis.[1] Because of the nature of the data on this language, this information is almost certainly only fragmentary, but perhaps worth looking at in relation to other studies of hierarchies in nearby Salishan languages (Jelinek and Demers 1983; Gerdts 1983). Since the hierarchies in Upper Chehalis are apparently quite different from those in the languages to the north (Lushootseed, Lummi, Halkomelem, Squamish), further studies will be in order to try to understand how these various patterns came about, and why they differ from language to language, even when the languages are quite closely related. Among other things, the hierarchies in the languages north of Upper Chehalis seem to have a relationship to ergativity in those languages; that is not the case in Upper Chehalis.

Studies devoted specifically to hierarchies in language seem to be relatively recent (besides the references above, see particularly Silverstein 1976, Zwicky 1977, and, for a recent study of Algonquian hierarchies, Jolley 1983). I know of none from the early sixties when I was doing field work on Upper Chehalis, and when it would have been possible to elicit specific pertinent information. Since this was not possible at the time, I must now rely on my field notes (which concentrate on other topics) and on texts, and some information on hierarchies may thus have to be only inferential. Much remains to be done on Upper Chehalis texts; Boas left some 580 pages of texts, but only published a third of one story. My own collection of texts is much smaller. There is undoubtedly a vast amount of syntactic information recoverable from these texts, but that remains to be done.

I have noted two agent hierarchies in Upper Chehalis, one having to do with second person objects, and the other with third person. I see no connection between the two.

2. The first of these hierarchies is a prohibition on the coocurrence of a second person object suffix (singular or plural) with a first plural subject. This restriction applies in both aspectual sets of person markers, where continuative aspect subjects are suffixes and non-continuative aspect subjects are enclitics; object suffixes precede both types of subject markers. The following table of Upper Chehalis object and subject markers is included to facilitate recognition of these components in example sentences given later.

		objects		subjects		possessive
		continuative	non-continuative	cont.	non-cont.	
1st sg	-cal-, -mal-	-c , -mš	-anš	čn	n-
2nd sg	-ci- , -mi-	-ci , -mi	-š	č	?a-
3rd	-t- , -y-	-n , -xʷ	-n	(zero)	-s
1st pl	-tul-, -mul-	-tulɬ, -mulɬ	-stawt	čɬ	-čɬ
2nd pl	-tul-, -mul-	-tulɬ, -mulɬ	-alp	čalp	-nalp
3rd pl	-t- , -y-	yamš (or = 3rd)	-iɬt	yamš	-s

Third person object is also rarely -l-/-ɬ, and in causatives is -stw- or -tw-/-xʷ.

Table 1. Pronominal Markers

When the second person-first plural sequence is called for semantically, we find instead a third person object suffix, and second-personness is indicated by a syntactically coreferential object complement.
1. sƛ'á·l'stustawt tit nǝwi 'we are looking for you'
2. ?it ƛ'á·lixʷ čɬ tit nǝwi 'we looked for you'
3. ?it máyxʷ čɬ tit nǝwi 'we took you in'
4. ?it máyxʷ čɬ tit ?ilápa 'we took you (pl.) in'
5. smáytustawt tit ?ilápa 'we are taking you (pl.) in'
6. ?it ?axǝn čɬ tit ?ilápa 'we saw you (pl.)'
7. ?amu ɬ c'ǝčn čɬ tit nǝwi 'if we defeat you' (Boas; my informant would have said c'ačǝn)
This restriction appears to be total--I have come across no examples whatever of a first plural subject preceded by second person object suffixes. But other constructions involving second person are variable. I find a number of instances of avoidance of second person objects with first singular (8) or third person (9, 10) subjects, and one avoidance each of a first plural object with a second singular (11) or plural (12) subject.
8. ?it ƛ'á·lixʷ čn tit ?ilápa 'I looked for you (pl.)'
9. sƛ'á·l'stwn tit ?ilápa 'he is looking for you (pl.)'
10. ssáwlayn tit ?ilápa 'he is asking you (pl.)'
11. ssáwlayš tit ?iním 'you are asking us'
12. ?it ƛ'á·lixʷ čalp tit ?iním 'you (pl.) looked for us'
But these constructions are inconsistent, and second person affixes are usually used. Thus the completive aspect form of sentence 9 was given as sentence 13, and sentence 14 is exactly parallel to sentence 8.
13. ?it ƛ'á·l'stumulɬ 'he looked for you (pl.)'
14. ?it sáwlamulɬ čn 'I asked you (pl.)'
And parallel to sentences 11 and 12 we find sentences 15 and 16.
15. smáytomolš 'you are taking us in'
16. ?it ƛ'á·l'stumulɬ čalp 'you (pl.) looked for us'
I have observed no similar avoidances of other persons, so second person seems to be in the weakest position in hierarchies.

The same avoidance occurs in dependent constructions, where the

subject is indicated with a possessive affix. Since the first person plural completive subject clitic and possessive suffix are phonologically identical, these constructions differ from those in 2, 3, 4, 6, and 7 in that I leave a space before a subject clitic, and their dependent status is marked by a prefixed s-.[2]
17. mít̓ta t s²axə́nč̓ɫ tit nə́wi 'we didn't see you'
Contrast this with 18 and 19.
18. mít̓ta t ²as²ə́xtulɫ 'you didn't see us'
19. mít̓ta t s²ə́xtuls 'he didn't see us'

2.1. Besides involving a different set of avoidances, there is another aspect of this Upper Chehalis hierarchy which differs from languages to the north. Where those languages resort to passive constructions (Jelinek and Demers 1983, Hess 1973), Upper Chehalis simply uses a third person object with an object complement to indicate second person. I have no evidence that passives are used there for this purpose, but it may be possible. Passives are common in Upper Chehalis, and occur frequently in texts, but I have made no specific study of them to see what restrictions in their usage there may be. Any person can be subject/patient of a passive construction:
20. ²it txʷɫaw'áɫstm 'he was left'
21. ²it txʷɫaw'áɫstm čn 'I was left'
22. ²it txʷɫaw'áɫstm č 'you were left'
23. ²it txʷɫaw'áɫstm čalp 'you (pl.) were left'
I have far fewer examples of passives in the continuative aspect in my Upper Chehalis data, but have no evidence that there are any other restrictions on them. Their construction is different, however; the subject/patient is indicated by an *object* suffix, not a subject clitic, as in non-continuative aspect constructions:
24. sqakʷə́lyanisicalstš 'my teeth are chattering'
25. sx̣ʷə́·²x̣ʷu²icalstš 'I am catching cold'
(These are very peculiar constructions, even for Salish. The passive marker here is -stš, for which I know no cognates. Nearly all my examples of continuative passives have third person subject/patients, where the subject is often zero, but states of health are typically continuative passives as in these examples.)

3. The other Upper Chehalis agent hierarchy has to do with human vs. non-human third person subjects and objects. Here the restriction seems to be that a predication with a non-human subject may not have a human object expressed by one of the usual object suffixes. But again, passive is not the technique used to avoid these constructions. Instead, Upper Chehalis has an obviative suffix which is used in these instances to express a human object. (As far as I know, among Salishan languages only Upper Chehalis, Cowlitz, and Columbian have obviative suffixes.) The obviative suffix is -(t)wal-/-(t)wali, and simply replaces the usual third person object suffix. As an obviative, it is used as a

device to index multiple third persons in a sentence, as in Algonquian. Boas (1933:109) gives clear examples of this usage:
26. tit q'íwts, hóy n ta ²ə́xtn 'he called her and she saw it'
27. tit q'íwts, hóy n ta ²ə́xtwali 'he called her and she saw the one who called'
Such constructions are relatively straightforward, and occur frequently in texts. But the obviative is also used when a human is the object of a sentence with a non-human subject.[3] These constructions always puzzled me until I recently realized that they reflect a hierarchical distinction. Most examples I have are with an animal as subject:
28. ²it x̣áy'twali tat qáx̣a² 'the dog growled at him'
29. sx̓'á·l'stwaln tat qáx̣a² 'the dog is looking for him'
30. ²acqʷántswali tat qáx̣a² 'the dog was afraid of him'
A human object with an indefinite subject also seems to call for the obviative:
31. ²acwé·x̣ cutčn wá· t yáx̣'twaln 'somebody took him home'
32. ²acwé·x̣ t wá· t sq'íwtswaln 'somebody is calling him'
How all this fits together I do not know, and further study of the Upper Chehalis obviative is needed.

4. I draw no conclusions from these data. It seems clear that agent hierarchies in Upper Chehalis are different from those in at least some other Salishan languages. To understand how such differences might have arisen will require much more knowledge about hierarchies in Salish and other languages of the Northwest. More also needs to be known about hierarchies in other languages of the world. The Upper Chehalis system shows some parallels to the Kiksht system described by Silverstein (1976), but the relevance of these parallels is unclear to me, since the Kiksht hierarchy is coordinated with the split-ergative case system of that language, whereas case is scarcely relevant to Upper Chehalis (unless one wishes to view the pronominal markers as expressing case, in which instance the language is strictly nominative-accusative).

FOOTNOTES

1. My Upper Chehalis data were collected from 1960 onward under the auspices of the American Philosophical Society Library, Indiana University, and the National Science Foundation. Forms cited here were obtained from the late Silas Heck.

2. Unfortunately my field notes have no examples of non-dependent possessives with subjects of the type discussed by Hess (1974) 'we are your fathers', 'you are our father(s)'. Perhaps examples will turn up in texts.

3. Note that with an obviative object suffix, a complement, when
present, refers to the subject of the predication. With a regular
third person object suffix, such a complement would refer to the
object, and with an intransitive predicate the complement refers to
the subject; this is the usual Salishan pattern.
a. ʔit ʔaxə́n tit qáx̣aʔ 'he saw the dog'
b. ʔit wə́q'ɬ tit qáx̣aʔ 'the dog ran'
This, as far as I can tell, is as close as Upper Chehalis comes to
ergative-type constructions.

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