Referential hierarchies in three-participant constructions in Blackfoot:
The effects of animacy, topicality, person, and specificity.

This paper is a case study on the expression of three-participant constructions in Blackfoot, a severely endangered Algonquian language spoken by approximately 5,000 people in Alberta (Canada) and Montana (USA) (Frantz 2009; Frantz & Russell 1995; Taylor 1969).

We will concentrate on the interaction between referential properties of arguments – in Blackfoot these include animacy, topicality, person, and specificity (e.g. Bliss 2005; Genee 2009; Ritter & Rosen fc.; Ritter & Wiltschko 2008 fc.; Zúñiga fc.) – and the classification of Blackfoot verbs. As is well-known, in Blackfoot, like in other Algonquian languages, verbs fall into classes according to the animacy of their S (for intransitives) or P (for transitives) argument (e.g. Bloomfield 1946; Goddard 1990; Wolfart 1973).

Algonquian languages are usually claimed to express three-participant events of the basic 'give'-type by means of a construction with a transitive animate (TA) verb, with the Agent (A) and the animate Recipient (R) indexed on the verb, and direction marking also based on A and R, as in example (1) from Ojibwa (cf. Dahlstrom 1991, 2009; Klaiman 1991; Cowell & Moss 2008).

(1)   *Ni-gii=miiN-aa*   *aw*   *akiwenziiny*   *asemaa-an*
         1SBJ-PST=give-3AN.OBJ   that   old.man   tobacco-3'
         'I gave the old man tobacco' (Rhodes 2010: 495)

The Blackfoot data suggest, however, that an alternative pattern, showing agreement with A and Theme (T) rather than A and R, is also possible. Blackfoot has at least two verbs expressing transfer of possession. As expected, one of them, *ohkot* 'give (something) to', is a TA verb with secundative alignment of agreement, and direction marking also based on A and R, as illustrated in example (2).

(2)   *nitohkotawa*
         nit-ohkot-a:-wa
         1-give.to(TA)-DIR-3SG
         'I gave (something) to her' (Frantz & Russell 1995:142)

The other verb, *á'pihka* 'give (away), sell', is a TA verb as well, but rather has indirective agreement and direction marking based on Agent and Theme (T), as illustrated in example (3).

(3)   *ákaa'páíhkaiiwa óta'si*
         áka-a'páíhka-ii-wa   w-óta's-yi
         PERF-give.away(TA)-DIR-3SG   3-horse(AN)-3'
         'he (PROX) has sold his (PROX) horse (OBV)' (Frantz & Russell 1995:18)

An inanimate T requires the use of a derived TI stem *á'pihka-htoo* 'give (away), sell', reinforcing the orientation of this verb root toward the T rather than the R, as shown in (4).

(4)   *ákaa'paihkahtooma kisóka'simi*
         áka-a'paihka-htoo-m-wa   ki-asóka'sim-yi
         PERF-give.away-IN.P-TITH-3SG   2-jacket(IN)-IN.SG
         'he has sold your (SG) jacket (IN)' (Frantz & Russell 1995:18)

From the point of view of Blackfoot grammar, both verbs are monotransitive. Overt expression of an inanimate T with *ohkot* does not require any agreement marking on the verb: the T is simply added, as shown in (5).

(5)   *nitsíppitáakiissini kítohkoto*
        nit-ippita-aakii-hsiN-yi   kit-ohkot-o:
        1-old-woman-NOM-IN.SG   2-give.to(TA)-DIR
        'my old-woman's age I give to you' (Genee 2009:938)

On the other hand, overt expression of an animate R with *á'pihka* triggers a deictic element such as *ípoohs(ap)* 'hither' in the verb form, as in (6), which is absent when the R is left unexpressed. Note that, here too, the verb does not show agreement with R.

(6)   *kiksíssta kitsípoohsá'pihkaoka niistóyi*
        k-iksísst-wa   kits-ípoohs(ap)-á'pihka-ok-wa   n-iistó-yi
        2-mother-3SG 2-hither-give.away(TA)-INV-3SG   1-PRO-3'
        'your (SG) mother gave you (SG) away to me' (field notes, summer 2010)

In our presentation, we will show which other lexical verbs, apart from *á'pihka*, are used to express three-participant events and trigger indirective alignment of agreement. For this verb class, as well as for the presumably 'more typical' verb class with secundative alignment, we will discuss patterns of co-occurrence with various constellations of referential argument types. We will also discuss in more detail the distribution and function of deictic verbal elements in three-participant constructions.

This paper will make an important contribution to the workshop by presenting fieldwork-based data from a language whose grammatical relations are heavily influenced by referential hierarchies, but whose three-participant constructions have to date not been studied in any detail.

Abbreviations
1   first person
2   second person
3   third person
3'   third person obviative
A   agent
AN   animate
DIR   direct
IN   inanimate
INV   inverse
NOM   nominalizer
OBJ   object
OBV   obviative
P   patient (primary object)
PERF   perfective
PRO   pronoun
PROX   proximate
PST   past tense

R	recipient
SBJ	subject
SG	singular
T	theme
TA	transitive animate
TITH	transitive animate theme suffix

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