

EAST CREE RELATIONAL VERBS¹

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Bloomfield (1928) has described what he calls a relational construction in Cree, a construction he claims is restricted to this Algonquian language only. The construction presents various problems which are addressed in this paper: Do relational suffixes increase the valency of verbs? How are relational verbs different from applicative verbs? In which contexts are relational verbs used? The East Cree data show that relational verbs do not license overt NP arguments in the syntax, that they are obligatory in disjoint reference contexts involving possession, that they are used to indicate the presence of third-person discourse participants, and that they have a close relationship with the grammar of obviation.

[KEYWORDS: relational verbs, East Cree, Algonquian, disjoint reference, obviation, possessive, discourse, valency, applicative]

1. Introduction. The goal of this paper is to examine the syntax and semantics of what has traditionally been called in the Algonquian literature, the “relational” verb construction (Bloomfield 1928, Ellis 1971, Wolfart 1973, and Junker and Blacksmith 2001). An East Cree example is given in (1*b*).²

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² The following abbreviations and notations are used in this paper: Persons: 1 = first person; 2 = second person, 3 = third person animate; \emptyset = third-person inanimate; 3' = third-person animate obviative; \emptyset' = third-person inanimate obviative. Verb classes: VTA = verb transitive animate; VAI = verb animate intransitive; VII = verb inanimate intransitive; VTI = verb transitive inanimate; VTI2 = VTI with AI morphology (pseudo-transitive). Finals: TI = transitive inanimate final; TA = transitive animate final; AI = animate intransitive final. APPL = Applicative, CAUS = Causative; DIR = Direct; INV = Inverse; OBV = Obviative; PASS = Passive; PL = Plural;

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(1a) *Wâpahtam.*

see.TI.3

‘S/he sees it’.

(1b) *Wâpahtam-w-e-u.*

see.TI.3-RELATIONAL-TA theme sign (DIR.3>3’)-3

‘S/he sees it (in relation to him/her)’.

The relational construction presents understudied problems which are addressed in this paper. Namely, do relational suffixes increase the valency of verbs? Is this valency increase limited to third persons? How are relational verbs different from applicative verbs? In which contexts are relational verbs used? I shall show that the relational verbs are obligatory when there is disjoint reference between a subject and the possessor of an object or a locative and that they are used in indexing a subject of a complement clause or, in more pragmatic cases, simply for acknowledging the presence of another discourse participant. In addition, several other interesting phenomena are examined: the close relationship between obviation and relationals, the marking of an obviative possessor on locatives, and the fact that an understanding of “discourse participants” is central to an analysis of the verbal morphology.

In **2**, I examine the major characteristics of the East Cree language necessary for the present discussion. In **3**, I describe how “relational” verb forms are found in two classes of verbs for all verbal paradigms, showing also that they differ from other valency-increasing constructions (e.g., applicative constructions) in that they do not license overt syntactic arguments. In **4**, I demonstrate that relational verbs are disjoint reference devices, often used for expressing possession. Since East Cree marks obviative on inanimate nouns, I am able to show how obviation interacts with the relational construction. In **5**, I examine complex sentences and provide more evidence for the syntactic properties of relational constructions, as well as for what I describe as an underlying semantic principle for “acknowledging the presence of another.” I conclude that an approach that consists of looking first at

PROX = Proximate; REL = Relational; we (incl.) = we inclusive (you and me, and possibly them); we (excl.) = you exclusive (me and them, but not you); you (pl.) = you plural.

In the interlinear glosses, a hyphen is used to indicate separate morphemes and a period indicates fused morphemes or morphemes that are not relevant to the present analysis and are thus presented together. Following the theme signs indicating direction, the > indicates who acts on who or what. For example, 3>3’ indicates that a third-person animate proximate is acting on a third-person animate obviative.

East Cree uses a syllabic writing system. Here, I use the standard roman orthography developed in parallel to this syllabics system by MacKenzie et al. (2003). Vowel length is indicated by ^ for long vowels.

the meaning of some syntactic constructions, and then at their syntactic effects, allows us to obtain significant insights into how this language works and reveals that Algonquian grammar is governed by various underlying semantic principles which are part of the competence of a Cree speaker.

2. Background on East Cree. East Cree is an Algonquian language spoken on the Eastern Coast of James Bay in Northern Quebec, Canada. There are approximately 13,000 speakers and two major dialects, the Northern and the Southern. The data discussed in this paper are from the Southern dialect; but no major difference is expected between the two dialects with respect to the issues under discussion here, nor in neighboring Western varieties of Cree (e.g., Moose Cree) or Eastern languages (e.g., Naskapi or Montagnais).

East Cree is a nonconfigurational (Hale 1983), polysynthetic (Sapir 1921), head-marking (Nichols 1986) language.³ Every inflected Cree verb can constitute a grammatical sentence by itself. Such verbs contain pronominal affixes cross-referencing optional full nominals that appear in a relatively free word order (for a discussion, see Junker [forthcoming]). Thus East Cree is a pronominal argument language, in the sense of Jelinek (1984).

Cree nouns fall into two classes, animate and inanimate. This gender distinction is a principal means of classifying for verbs. Following Bloomfield (1946), Cree verbs can be divided by their morphology into four classes,⁴ according to the gender of the subject, for intransitive verbs, and the gender of the object, for transitive verbs (see also Wolfart 1973; 1996), viz.: intransitive verbs that take an inanimate subject (Verb Inanimate Intransitive or VII), intransitive verbs that take an animate subject (Verb Animate Intransitive or VAI), transitive verbs that take an inanimate object (Verb Transitive Inanimate or VTI), and transitive verbs that take an animate object (Verb Transitive Animate or VTA). Examples are given in (2).

- (2) *Wâpân* (VII) 'It is dawn' (inanimate)
Wâpû (VAI) 'She sees' (animate)
Wâpahtam (VTI) 'She sees it' (inanimate)
Wâpameu (VTA) 'She sees him' (animate)

Obviation is another characteristic of Cree. In any discourse segment, one third-person argument must appear in the unmarked Proximate form; all other third-person arguments appear in the obviative. Obviation operates

³ For a full description, see the *Interactive Reference Grammar* by Junker et al. on the East Cree language web site (www.eastcree.org) and references cited under *Resources* there.

⁴ There are some exceptions to the four-way classification of verbs, e.g., verbs that exhibit VAI morphology but allow objects (pseudo-transitive) verbs that exhibit transitive morphology but only allow clausal complements ("pseudo-intransitive"). For a good discussion, see Valentine (2001).

over medium-sized discourse units (see Goddard 1990 and Russell 1991). The more central third person is Proximate, while the remaining, less central third persons are obviative. Proximate shifts in a story allow for dramatic effects that are difficult to convey in English translation. The Proximate is also the form used when there is only one third person in a context, for example, when there is a first or second person and a third. Rather than saying that the unmarked Proximate encodes a topic, Russell (1996) suggests that it may be more appropriate to view the marked obviative as marking nontopicality.

When both the subject and object are third person, one of them normally takes the obviative form in Algonquian languages. East Cree differs from Western varieties of Cree in that it exhibits obviative marking not only on animate nouns but also on inanimate nouns, as discussed in Junker and Blacksmith (2001). Examples of proximate and obviative forms for animate and inanimate nouns are shown in (3) and (4) respectively.

(3) ANIMATE 'man' (Junker and Blacksmith 2001:258)

	PROXIMATE (3)	OBVIATIVE (3)
SINGULAR	<i>nâpeu</i> man	<i>nâpeu-h</i> man-OBV
PLURAL	<i>nâpeu-ch</i> man-PL	<i>nâpeu-h</i> man-OBV

(4) INANIMATE 'knife' (Junker and Blacksmith 2001:259)

	PROXIMATE (∅)	OBVIATIVE (∅)
SINGULAR	<i>mûhkumân</i> knife	<i>mûhkumân-iyû</i> knife-OBV
PLURAL	<i>mûhkumân-h</i> knife-PL	<i>mûhkumân-h</i> knife-OBV

Examples showing the use of proximate and obviative forms in sentences with animate and inanimate objects are given below. The examples in (6) and (9) show that ungrammatical sentences arise if both third persons are proximate. The examples in (7) and (10) illustrate that when only one argument is third person, it is proximate rather than obviative. Plural examples are used for animate objects because the contrast is phonetically clearer.

ANIMATE OBJECTS:

- (5) *Wâpam-e-u* *napeu-h*.
 see.TA-DIR.3>3'-3 man-OBV(PL)
 'S/he (PROX) sees men (OBV)'.

- (6) * *Wâpam-e-u napeu-ch.*
 see.TA-DIR.3>3'-3 man-(PROX)PL
 'S/he (PROX) sees men (PROX)'.
 (7) *Ni-wâpam-â-u-ch napeu-ch.*
 1-see.TA-DIR.1>3-3 man-(PROX)PL
 'I see men (PROX)'.

INANIMATE OBJECTS:

- (8) *Wâpahtam mûhkumân-iyû.*
 see.TI.3 knife-OBV
 'S/he (PROX) sees a knife (OBV)'.
 (9) * *Wâpahtam mûhkumân.*
 see.TI.3 knife-(PROX)
 'S/he (PROX) sees a knife (PROX)'.
 (10) *Ni-wâpahten mûhkumân.*
 1-see.TI.1 knife-(PROX)
 'I see a knife (PROX)'.

In some special circumstances, discussed below, there can be null marking of obviation on inanimate nouns, called "covert obviative." Let us now take a closer look at relational forms.

3. Relational verb forms: third persons only and discourse valency-increasing only. The relational verb form is found in all paradigms of the transitive inanimate verb class (VTI) as well as in the animate intransitive verb class (VAI). As Ellis (1971) reported for Western Cree, it is attested in all three modes: conjunct, independent, and imperative. The same holds for East Cree. The relational in East Cree consists of one morpheme, *-w*, suffixed to the third-person singular form (stem + third-person TI theme sign) of the indicative independent for VTI verbs, and to the stem only of VAI verbs.⁵ In the independent indicative, as illustrated in (11), (12) and (13), the relational morpheme is then followed by a VTA theme sign (*-â-* for first and second persons and *-e-* for third persons) and person inflection. (For other tenses and modes, see MacKenzie, Moar, and Wiskheychan 2003.)

VTI:

- (11a) *Wâpa-ht-am.*
 see-TI final-TI theme sign(3>∅)
 'S/he sees it'.

⁵ Third-person independent VTI forms do bear overt third-person suffixes. The form *wâpaht-am* ends with the theme sign *-am*, which encodes a third-person participant. Compare *ni-wâpaht-e-n* ('I see it'), where the theme sign is *-e-* and the personal ending *-n*. AI verbs, being intransitive, do not bear a theme sign.

- (11b) *Wâpa-ht-am-w-e-u.*
 see-TI final-TI theme sign(3>θ')-REL-TA theme sign (DIR.3>3')-3
 'She sees it (in relation to him/her)'.

VTI2:

- (12a) *Pâhkupayiht-â-u.*
 dry-AI final-3
 'S/he dries it'.
- (12b) *Pâhkupayiht-â-w-e-u.*
 dry-AI final-REL-TA theme sign (DIR.3>3')-3
 'She dries it (in relation to him/her)'.

VAI:

- (13a) *Ni-nip-â-n.*
 1-sleep-AI final-1
 'I sleep'.
- (13b) *Ni-nip-â-w-â-n.*
 1-sleep-AI final-REL-TA theme sign (DIR.1>3)-1
 'I sleep (in relation to him/her)'.

This relational morpheme *-w* has the same distribution as other valency-changing morphemes, e.g., the causative morpheme *-ih* or the applicative *-uw*, as illustrated in (14):

- (14a) *Chischeyihtam.* (Regular)
 know.TI.3
 'S/he knows it'.
- (14b) *Chischeyihtam-w-e-u.* (Relational)
 know.TI.3-REL-TA theme sign (DIR 3>3')-3
 'S/he knows his/her/their . . . (thing)'.
- (14c) *Chischeyihtam-ih-e-u.* (Causative)
 know.TI.3-CAUS-TA theme sign (DIR 3>3')-3
 'S/he makes it known to him/her'.
- (14d) *Ihtûtam-uw-e-u.* (Applicative)
 do.TI.3-APPL-TA theme sign (DIR 3>3')-3
 'S/he does it for him/her'.

However, unlike other valency-changing morphemes, the additional participant coded on the verb by a relational verb form is always an animate third person, never a first or second person. With a relational form, one can talk about sleeping *at his/her house*, but not *at my/your house*. The relational

forms of the AI verb shown in (15) all imply an additional third-person participant.

(15) Animate Intransitive verb forms with corresponding relational forms, Independent Indicative Neutral

Subject Person	Regular verb form	Relational verb form
1	<i>Ni-nipâ-n.</i> 'I sleep'.	<i>Ni-nipâ-w-â-n.</i> 'I sleep at her/his house'.
1p	<i>Ni-nipâ-nân.</i> 'We (excl.) sleep'.	<i>Ni-nipâ-w-â-nân.</i> 'We (excl.) sleep at her/his house'.
2	<i>Chi-nipâ-n.</i> 'You sleep'.	<i>Chi-nipâ-w-â-n.</i> 'You sleep at her/his house'.
2p	<i>Chi-nipâ-nâwâu.</i> 'You (pl.) sleep'.	<i>Chi-nipâ-w-â-nâwâu.</i> 'You (pl.) sleep at her/his house'.
21p	<i>Chi-nipâ-nânû.</i> 'We (incl.) sleep'.	<i>Chi-nipâ-w-â-nânû.</i> 'We (incl.) sleep at her/his house'.
3	<i>Nipâ-u.</i> 'S/he sleeps'.	<i>Nipâ-w-e-u.</i> 'S/he sleeps at her/his house'.
3p	<i>Nipâ-u-ch.</i> 'They sleep'.	<i>Nipâ-w-e-u-ch.</i> 'They sleep at her/his house'.

As discussed above, the argument added when the relational morpheme is present must be third person. To express relationships with first and second persons, other strategies must be used: for a VAI verb, one can add a possessed locative NP⁶ (as in 16); for a VTI verb, one can add a possessed object NP (as in 17) or use a corresponding applicative construction (18).⁷

⁶ An explicit possessed locative NP can of course also be used with third-person referents, but then the relational will appear on the verb if there is disjoint reference. See 4.2 for more discussion.

(i) *Nipâ-u wîchihch.*
sleep.AI-3 3-bed-LOC
'S/he sleeps in his/her (own) house'.

(ii) *Nipâ-w-e-u wîchîyihch.*
sleep.AI-REL-DIR.3>3'-3 3'-bed-OBV.LOC
'S/he sleeps in his/her (someone else's) house'.

⁷ By definition (Dixon and Aikhenvald 2000), an applicative construction increases the valency of a verb, changing an intransitive verb into a transitive one by promoting a peripheral argument to O (Object) status, changing a transitive bivalent verb into a trivalent verb. Brittain (1993) showed for Innu-aimun (or Naskapi), a language closely related to East Cree, that applicative constructions cannot be derived from true intransitive verbs.

- (16) *Ni-nipâ-n chi-ichihch.*
 1-sleep.AI-1 2-house.LOC
 'I sleep at your house'.
- (17) *Ni-wâpahten chi-mûhkumân.*
 1-see.TI.1 2-knife-(PROX)
 'I see your knife'.
- (18) *Chi-kaschisam-uw-in.*
 2-cook.until.tender.TI.3-APPL-2>1
 'You cook it (meat) tender for me'.

How is the relational *-w* different from the applicative morpheme *-uw*? An applicative construction turns regular VTI verbs into VTA or "double-goal" verbs with a benefactive argument, e.g., from VTI *ihîûtam* 's/he does it' to VTA applicative *ihîûtamuweu* 's/he does **it for him/her**'. There are similarities and differences between VTI relationals and applicatives. Despite the difference in spelling, there is no difference in the pronunciation of third-person forms (shown in 19*b* and 19*c*) in the Southern dialect. In the Northern dialect, however, speakers do pronounce them differently. Furthermore, Marguerite MacKenzie (personal communication) confirms that the relational and the applicative are historically different morphemes. The applicative comes from a historical *-aw* which surfaces in the inverse with the allomorph *-â*, instead of the expected *-uw + it/ikw* combination. MacKenzie treats this as vowel coalescence from historical *aw + et/ekw > aw + it/ikw > ât/âkw* (see also 21 below).

- (19*a*) *Kaschisam.*
 cook.until.tender.TI.3
 'S/he cooks it (meat) until tender'.
- (19*b*) *Kaschisam-uw-e-u.*
 cook.until.tender.TI.3-APPL-DIR.3>3'-3
 'S/he cooks it (meat) tender **for him/her**'.
- (19*c*) *Kaschisam-w-e-u wiyasiyû.*
 cook.until.tender.TI.3-REL-DIR.3>3'-3 (3').meat.OBV
 'S/he cooks her/his meat'.

When first or second persons are involved, the relational and the applicative are clearly distinct, both in their morphology and their syntax. Compare the inflection of the VTI verb *kanaweyihtam* 'she looks after it' in its VTI relational, VTA, and VTA applicative verb forms (20 and 21).

(20) Transitive Inanimate verb forms with corresponding Relational forms, Independent Indicative Neutral

Subject		
Person	Regular VTI	Relational VTI
2	<i>Chi-kanaweyiht-e-n.</i> 'You look after it'.	<i>Chi-kanaweyihtam-w-â-n.</i> 'You look after her/his . . .'.
1	<i>Ni-kanaweyiht-e-n.</i> 'I look after it'.	<i>Ni-kanaweyihtam-w-â-n.</i> 'I look after his/her . . .'.
3	<i>Kanaweyiht-am-(u).</i> 'S/he looks after it'.	<i>Kanaweyihtam-w-e-u.</i> 'S/he looks after his/her . . .'.
2p	<i>Chi-kanaweyiht-e-nâwâw.</i> 'You (pl.) look after it'.	<i>Chi-kanaweyihtam-w-â-nâwâw.</i> 'You (pl.) look after his/her . . .'.
21p	<i>Chi-kanaweyiht-e-nânû.</i> 'We (incl.) look after it'.	<i>Chi-kanaweyihtam-w-â-nânû.</i> 'We (incl.) look after his/her . . .'.
1p	<i>Ni-kanaweyiht-e-nân.</i> 'We (excl.) look after it'.	<i>Kanaweyihtam-w-â-nân.</i> 'We (excl.) look after his/her . . .'.
3p	<i>Kanaweyiht-am-uch</i> 'They look after it'.	<i>Kanaweyihtam-w-e-uch</i> 'They look after his/her . . .'.

(21) Transitive Animate verb Regular and Applicative forms, Independent Indicative Neutral (singular forms only, for brevity)

Subject		
Person	Regular VTA	Applicative VTA
Local		
2>1 (direct)	<i>Chi-kanaweyim-in.</i> 'You look after for me'.	<i>Chi-kanaweyihtam-uw-in.</i> 'You look after it for me'.
1>2 (inverse)	<i>Chi-kanaweyim-it-in.</i> 'I look after you'.	<i>Chi-kanaweyihtam-â-t-in.</i> 'I look after it for you'.
Mixed direct		
2>3	<i>Chi-kanaweyim-â-u.</i> 'You look after him/her'.	<i>Chi kanaweyihtam-uw-â-u.</i> 'You look after it for him/her'.
2>3'	<i>Chi-kanaweyim-im-â-yûh.</i> 'You look after him/her (the other)'.	<i>Chi-kanaweyihtam-uw-â-yû.</i> 'You look after it for him/her (the other)'.

1>3	<i>Ni-kanaweyim-â-u.</i> 'I care for him/her'.	<i>Ni-kanaweyihtam-uw-âu.</i> 'I look after it for him/her'.
1>3'	<i>Ni-kanaweyim-im-â-yûh.</i> 'I look after him/her (the other)'.	<i>Ni-kanaweyihtam-uw-â-yû.</i> 'I look after it for him/her (the other)'.
Mixed inverse		
3>2	<i>Chi-kanaweyim-ikw.</i> 'S/he looks after for you'.	<i>Chi-kanaweyihtam-â-kw.</i> 'S/he looks after it for you'.
3'>2	<i>Chi-kanaweyim-im-ikwh.</i> 'S/he (the other) looks after you'.	<i>Chi-kanaweyihtam-â-kuyûh.</i> 'She (the other) looks after it for you'.
3>1	<i>Ni-kanaweyim-ikw.</i> 'S/he looks after me'.	<i>Ni-kanaweyihtam-â-kw.</i> 'S/he looks after it for me'.
3'>1	<i>Ni-kanaweyim-im-iku-yûh.</i> 'S/he (the other) looks after me'.	<i>Ni-kanaweyihtam-â-ku-yûh.</i> 'S/he (the other) looks after it for me'.
Nonlocal		
3>4 (direct)	<i>Kanaweyim-e-u.</i> 'S/he looks after him/her (the other)'.	<i>Kanaweyihtam-uw-e-u.</i> S/he looks after it for him/her (the other)'.
4>3 (inverse)	<i>Kanaweyim-iku-u.</i> 'S/he (the other) looks after him/her'.	<i>Kanaweyihtam-â-ku-u.</i> 'S/he (the other) looks after it for him/her'.

Morphologically, the applicative construction is a real VTA verb, with personal inflectional suffixes of VTA verbs. The relational first- or second-person suffixes, on the other hand, look more like TI/AI inflection. The applicative can have inverse forms, like any VTA verb. The relational, on the other hand, has no inverse constructions at all.⁸ Compare the valency-increasing causative and applicative verbs in (22) and (23), which can be in the direct or the inverse, with the relational verb in (24), which can only be in the direct:

- (22a) *Ni-chischeyihtam-ih-âu.* (Causative Direct)
1-know.TI-ÇAUS-DIR.1>3
'I make it known to him/her'.

⁸ Note that because the relational and the applicative (direct) paradigms are pronounced the same for third persons by Southern speakers, it is always possible to elicit applicative inverse for those verbs which have both VTI relational and VTA applicative forms (see 28 and 29 below).

- (22b) *Ni-chischeyihtam-ih-ikw.* (Causative Inverse)
 1-know.TI-CAUS-INV.3>1
 ‘She makes it known to me’.
- (23a) *Ni-kaschisam-uw-âu.* (Applicative Direct)
 1-cook.until.tender.TI-APPL-DIR.1>3
 ‘I cook it for him/her’.
- (23b) *Ni-kaschisam-âkw.* (Applicative Inverse)
 1-cook.until.tender.TI-APPL-INV.3>1
 ‘S/he cooks it for me’.
- (24a) *Ni-wâpahtam-w-ân.* (Relational Direct)
 1-see.TI-REL-DIR.1>3
 ‘I see it, in relation to him/her’.
- (24b) **Ni-wâpahtam-w-îkw.* (*Relational Inverse)
 1-see.TI-REL-INV.3>1
 *‘S/he sees it, in relation to me’.

Another difference between the relational and other valency-increasing constructions is that although the relational does morphologically express another argument (the TI relational has TA theme signs like a TA verb), it does not syntactically license overt arguments. Applicative and causative constructions do allow an overt NP to refer to the beneficiary of the event (as in 25 and 26), even if the other object is implicit (‘it’).

- (25) *Mary ni-kaschisam-uw-âu.*
 Mary 1-cook.until.tender.TI-APPL-1>3
 ‘I cook it for Mary’.
- (26) *Mary ni-chischeyihtam-ih-âu.*
 Mary 1-know.TI-CAUS-1>3
 ‘I make it known to Mary’.

A relational construction, on the other hand, does not license an overt NP referring to the argument added by the relational morpheme. Sentences like (27a) and (27b) are ungrammatical because the argument added by the relational morpheme is expressed as an unlicensed NP. In (27c) and (27d), the NPs are licensed: the NP ‘his/her knife’ is licensed by verbal inflection for inanimate object (27c), while the NP *Mary* is licensed only as possessor of *muhkumân* ‘knife’ (27d) by nominal inflection (the pronominal prefix *u-*). (27a) and (27b) are unacceptable because verbal inflection alone cannot license the NP *Mary*.

- (27a) **Mary ni-wâpahtam-w-â-n.*
 Mary 1-see.TI-3-REL-DIR.1>3-1
 *‘I see it, in relation to Mary’.
- (27b) **Mary ni-nipâ-w-â-n.*
 Mary 1-sleep.AI-REL-DIR.1>3-1
 *‘I sleep, in relation to Mary’.
- (27c) *U-muhkumân ni-wâpahtam-w-â-n.*
 3-knife-(PROX) 1-see.TI.3-REL-DIR.1>3-1
 ‘I see her/his knife’.
- (27d) *Ni-wâpahtam-w-â-n [Mary u-muhkumân].*
 1-see.TI.3-REL-DIR.1>3-1 [Mary-PROX] 1-knife-(PROX)]
 ‘I see Mary’s knife’.

A final difference between applicative and relational constructions in East Cree is that although both are built on VTI verbs, applicatives allow one of their objects to be of either gender, while relationals take only inanimate objects. Note the contrast between (28) and (29).

- (28) Applicative
- (28a) *Chi-kanaweyihtam-uw-â-u utâpânâsku-h.* (animate object)
 2-look.after-TI-3-APPL-DIR.2>3-3 3.sled-OBV
 ‘You look after her/his sled for him/her’.
- (28b) *Chi-kanaweyihtam-uw-â-u utut.* (inanimate object)
 2-look.after-TI-3-APPL-DIR.2>3-3 3.canoe
 ‘You look after her/his canoe for him/her’.
- (29) Relational
- (29a) **Chi-kanaweyihtam-w-â-n utâpânâsku-h.* (animate object)
 2-look.after-TI-3-REL-DIR.2>3-2 3.sled-OBV
 *‘You look after her/his sled’.
- (29b) *Chi-kanaweyihtam-w-â-n utut.* (inanimate object)
 2-look.after-TI-3-REL-DIR.2>3-2 3.canoe
 ‘You look after her/his canoe’.

In other words, applicatives are double-goal verbs, with a focus on the (animate) object denoting the beneficiary of the event. Their other object can be either animate or inanimate. They result from derivational morphology.⁹ Relational verbs are one-goal verbs, resulting from inflectional morphology,

⁹ There is morphological evidence, first pointed out by Wolfart (1973:61) for Plains Cree, that while applicative verbs “are subject to further derivation, relational forms, by contrast, do not undergo further derivation; that is, they close the construction.” Parallel to his Plains Cree examples, the East Cree applicative verb *kanaweyihtamuweu* (VTA) ‘s/he keeps it for him/her’ can be further

where the person affected by the event is in the background. While all VTI verbs can take relational inflection, there are many VTI verbs that do not undergo applicative derivation, e.g., the verb *miyâhtam* ‘to smell’ in (30). The homophonous third-person form can have only the relational, not the applicative, interpretation.

(30a) *Ni-miyâhtam-w-â-n usit-h.*
1-smell.TI.3-REL-DIR.1>3-1 3.foot-PL

‘I smell his feet’.

(30b) **Ni-miyâhtam-uw-â-u.*
1-smell.TI.3-APPL-DIR.1>3-3

*‘I smell it **for him**’.

(30c) *Miyâhtam-w-e-u.*
3-smell.TI.3-REL-DIR.3>3’-3

‘S/he smells it (his/her. . .)’.

(30d) **Miyâhtam-uw-e-u.*
3-smell.TI.3-APPL-DIR.3>3’-3

*‘S/he smells it **for him/her**’.

These facts lead me to conclude that the TI relational is not a real ditransitive verb, nor is the AI relational a real transitive verb, although they appear so morphologically. A TI relational is still transitive (inanimate) and an AI relational is still intransitive. The relational construction does not increase the syntactic valency of verbs. Rather it registers the presence, in the universe of discourse, of additional third-person participants. The relational data thus suggest the existence of a direct relationship between verbal morphology and discourse referents that is not mediated by the more familiar syntactic combination of verbal predicates and overt NPs.

4. Relational verbs: for disjoint reference only.

4.1. TI verbs. If we contrast relational verb forms with regular verb forms, we notice that TI relational verb forms are obligatory when there is disjoint reference between the subject of a transitive clause and the object’s possessor (see Junker and Blacksmith 2001). The knife in sentence (31), for instance, must refer to someone else’s knife, not one’s own. A regular verb form (like 32) cannot be used.¹⁰

derived into a reflexive verb *kanaweyihtamâsû* (VAI) ‘she keeps it for herself’. This supports the view that applicatives are the result of derivational morphology. No such derivation can be found after a relational verb, thus confirming that the relational is part of inflectional morphology.

¹⁰Clarke (1982) reports that a sentence like (32) is acceptable in Montagnais. However, such constructions are not acceptable in East Cree. Disjoint reference between a third-person subject and the third-person possessor of the object is indicated by a sentence like that in (31), with a relational verb form. Since Clarke was not discussing the relational, but rather obviation marking of inanimates, these facts should be double-checked specifically for the relational in Montagnais.

- (31) *Wâpahtam-w-e-u u-mûhkumân-iyû.* (Disjoint reference)
 see.TI.3-REL-DIR.3>3'-3 3'-knife-OBV
 'S/he sees his/her (someone else's) knife'. ('Peter sees John's knife'.)
- (32) **Wâpahtam u-mûhkumân-iyû.*
 see.TI.3 3'-knife-OBV
 *'S/he sees his/her (someone else's) knife'. ('Peter sees John's knife'.)

Regular verb forms can be found in possessive contexts, but only when there is coreference between the subject of the transitive sentence and the object's possessor. Compare (33) to (31) above. (The absence of the obviative suffix in 33 is discussed below.)

- (33) *Wâpahtam u-mûhkumân.* (Coreference)
 see.TI.3 3-knife-(OBV)
 'S/he sees his/her own knife'.

A relational verb form, on the other hand, cannot be used for coreference:

- (34) **Wâpahtam-w-e-u u-mûhkumân.*
 see.TI.3-REL-DIR.3>3'-3 3-knife-(OBV)
 *'S/he sees his/her own knife'.

It is worth noting that the object *u-mûhkumân* in (33) does not carry an obviative suffix. However, a subsequent verb in a relative clause (as in 35) shows obviative agreement with such an NP. Contrast the inflection of the relative clause's verb *pîkupay-* 'be broken' in the sentences below. In (35a) it is inflected for an obviative subject, but not in (35b) or (36). If the object *u-mûhkumân* were proximate, (35b) should be acceptable. I thus conclude that such an NP is not proximate but rather has covert obviative marking.

- (35a) *Wâpahtam u-mûhkumân kâ pîkupay-iyich.*
 see.TI.3 3-knife-(OBV) preverb be.broken.II-Ø'
 'S/he sees her/his own broken (OBV) knife'.
- (35b) **Wâpahtam u-mûhkumân kâ pîkupay-ihch.*
 see.TI.3 3-knife-(PROX?) preverb be.broken.II-Ø
 *'S/he sees her/his own broken (PROX) knife'.
- (36) *Ni-wâpahten ni-mûhkumân kâ pîkupay-ihch.*
 1-see.TI.1 1-knife-(PROX) preverb be.broken.II-Ø
 'I see my own broken knife'.

As seen above, obviative marking differs in coreference and disjoint reference third-person contexts. For disjoint reference (as in 31 above), the ob-

ject noun bears the *-iyû* singular inanimate suffix. For coreference, if the subject is a third-person proximate (as in 33 and 35*a* above), the object does not have the *-iyû* suffix but is nevertheless a covert obviative. It could be argued that the *-iyû* suffix marks an obviative possessor. Support for this analysis comes from coreference contexts when the subject itself is obviative. The possessed object then carries the overt obviative suffix *-iyû*, but only if the subject is obviative, as shown in (37).

- (37) *Wâpahtam-iyû u-mûhkumân-iyû kâ pîkupay-iyich.*
 see.TI.3 3'-knife-OBV preverb be.broken.II-Ø'
 'S/he (the other) sees his/her own broken knife'.

However, *-iyû* is also used for obviative marking of inanimate singular nouns in all other contexts. I return to this *-iyû* suffix after looking at AI verbs.

4.2. AI verbs. Animate Intransitive verbs, which also have relational verb forms, provide additional evidence that the Cree relational does not permit coreference. A regular verb form must be used (as in 38), if the subject of the verb is coreferent with the possessor of the locative NP ('his/her own bed'). The relational must be used when there is a disjoint reference interpretation (as in 39).

- (38) *Nipâ-u u-nipewin-ihch.* (Coreference)
 sleep.AI-3 3-bed-LOC
 'S/he sleeps in his/her (own) bed'.
- (39) *Nipâ-w-e-u u-nipewin-iyi-hch.* (Disjoint reference)
 sleep.AI-REL-DIR.3>3'-3 3-bed-OBV-LOC
 'S/he sleeps in his/her (someone else's) bed'.

Note the insertion of the *-iyi* morpheme before the locative suffix in (39). This morpheme indicates that the possessor (of the bed) is different from the subject of the sentence. This was first reported as vowel lengthening by Junker and Blacksmith (2001). Since then, the Cree have proposed an orthographic change that spells out their intuition that this *-iyi* is the obviative *-iyû* morpheme after insertion. Other examples are given in (40) and (41).

- (40) *Apu-u u-tehtapûn-ihch.*
 sit.AI-3 3-chair-LOC
 'She sits on her own chair'.
- (41) *Apu-w-e-u u-tehtapûn-iyi-hch.*
 sit.AI-REL-DIR.3>3'-3 3-chair-OBV-LOC
 'She sits on someone else's chair'.

Recall that I hypothesized that the suffix *-iyû* in East Cree could have two distinct functions: as an obviative inflectional suffix for inanimate nouns and as an agreement suffix showing an obviative possessor. The former use is not found in Western varieties of Cree, whose inanimate nouns do not inflect for the obviative (Wolfart 1973). It is attested in Western James Bay Cree, East Cree, and Montagnais, however (Cowan 1984). The latter use corresponds cross-linguistically to the cognate *-ili/ini/yi* suffix used to indicate agreement with an obviative subject or possessor in other varieties of Cree, and elsewhere in Algonquian.¹¹ But is the *-iyi* suffix marking the inanimate possessum or the possessor as obviative?

A possible test, suggested by a reviewer, is whether the suffix normally marking animate nouns as obviative occurs with the locative suffix (see 3 above). If it does, one could then conclude that there is obviative possessum marking on locative nouns. However, when an animate noun in the locative is possessed by an obviative possessor, what appears before the locative suffix is not the *-h* one would expect for animate obviative marking, but the same *-iyi* suffix, as shown in (42). Compare this with the inflection of the animate noun ‘sled’ in (43), where it is inflected for obviative, and in (44), where it is in its regular locative form used for coreference.

- (42) *Utapânâskw-iyi-hch apu-we-u. (utapânâskuyihch)*
 3'.sled-OBV-LOC sit.AI-REL-TA.3>3'-3
 ‘He is sitting on her sled’.

- (43) *Wâpam-e-u u-utapânâskw-h. (utapânâskuh)*
 see.TA-DIR.3>3'-3 3-sled-OBV
 ‘He sees his sled’.

- (44) *U-utapânâskw-uhch apû. (utapânâskuhch)*
 3-sled-LOC sit.AI-3
 ‘He is sitting on his (own) sled’.

The fact that *-iyi* appears on an animate noun in (42) proves that, when found on locative nouns, this suffix indicates agreement with an obviative possessor, not obviative marking of the possessum.

So far, we have seen that relational verb forms differ from applicatives and other valency-increasing constructions in several respects: (1) they only indicate additional third persons; (2) these third persons are not syntactically licensed as overt NPs by the inflectional morphology of the relational verb forms; and (3) they are used for possessors in disjoint reference cases. Do such constructions exist in other (non-Algonquian) languages? Typologists have identified constructions called “Possessor Raising” or “External Pos-

¹¹ I thank the reviewers for bringing this to my attention.

session Constructions” (henceforth EPCs) that seem similar to the Cree relational constructions. Payne and Barshi (1999:3) define EPCs as follows: “Core instances of External Possession are constructions in which a semantic possessor–possessum relation is expressed by coding the possessor as a core grammatical relation of the verb and in a constituent separate from that which contains the possessum.”¹² In EPCs, the possessor occupies a core syntactic position—subject, object, or indirect object—by being an argument of a transitive, intransitive, or ditransitive predicate. How do Cree relational verb forms fit this definition? They do encode a possessor of the theme of a VTI verb (as in 45) and of the locative of a VAI verb (as in 46) directly onto the verb, indicating that the verb has another animate object.

(45) *Ni-wâpahtam-w-ân.*

1-see.TI.3-REL-1

‘I see it, in relation to him/her (his thing)’.

(46) *Ni-nipâ-w-ân.*

1-sleep.AI-REL-1

‘I sleep, in relation to him/her (in his bed)’.

However, there are restrictions on this additional animate object: it must be third person only and not syntactically licensed. EPCs are not limited to third persons in other languages, so in this regard the data from Cree do not conform to the definition given above. Furthermore, as we shall see in 5 below, Cree relationals are not limited to possession contexts. Bloomfield was correct in characterizing Cree relationals as peculiar constructions (1928:429). Indeed, Cree relationals do not seem to have any exact equivalents in other languages.¹³

¹²EPCs contrast with the more familiar internal possession constructions (IPC), where the possessor is coded on the possessed item, e.g., with a possessive determiner (*i*). In (*ii*), the possessor of the hands is not coded by the determiner of the hands, as in (*i*), but rather as a core grammatical participant, an indirect object, coded by the reflexive pronoun *se*.

(i) *Elle lave ses mains.* (IPC)

‘She washes her hands’.

(ii) *Elle se lave les mains.* (EPC)

she herself washes the hands

‘She washes her hands’. (Junker and Martineau 1987)

¹³Wolfart (1973:60) remarks on the existence of an indefinite actor form for the AI relational in Plains Cree. He observes that this form is one of the ones most frequently found in texts. In East Cree, there are indefinite actor form alternations that mirror the regular/relational form alternations, but, unlike Plains Cree, their morphology is quite different from the relational, involving a *-yû* suffix, reminiscent of the obviative subject forms. (1)–(4) below are from MacKenzie, Moer, and Wiskheychan (2003), where they are listed with regular forms, not as relationals. Equivalents of the (*a*) forms below are attested and discussed by Wolfart (1991) for

5. Other uses of the relationals. So far, we have only seen examples of the relational forms used with possessed nouns: relational forms used to refer to the third-person possessor of the object of a VTI verb or the locative complement of an AI verb. This seems to be their prototypical use. In this section, I consider other uses of the relational, for presentative interpretations and in complex sentences.

5.1. Presentative interpretations: ‘to do it in the presence of someone else’. In addition to third-person possessor roles, other uses of the relational can increase the number of discourse participants in an event. The sentence in (47a) implies the existence of another third person in addition to the subject of the sentence. Several of my consultants have suggested that an easy way to imply this would be through the use of a negative: ‘I see a stick but

Plains Cree and Western James Bay Cree. Montagnais equivalents of both the (a) and (b) forms are listed, without translation, as Indefinite and Indefinite obviative respectively by Baraby (1998). In East Cree, the (b) forms all have what appears to be an obviative or obviative possessor suffix, *-(i)yû/-yih*, and are glossed by bilingual speakers like relational forms, to indicate the presence of another discourse participant. Overt NPs must be obviative in the (b) forms (locative-obviative for VAI and obviative for VTI).

VAI:

- (1a) *Nipâ-nû.*
 sleep.AI-Impersonal
 ‘It is being slept’.
- (1b) *Nipâ-nû-yû.*
 sleep.AI-Impersonal-yû
 ‘It is being slept (at someone else’s house)’.
- (2a) *Ishka nipâ-nû-wâ.*
 Preverb sleep.AI-Impersonal-Subjective
 ‘It seems that it is being slept’.
- (2b) *Ishka nipâ-nû-yû-wâ.*
 Preverb sleep.AI-Impersonal-yû-Subjective
 ‘It seems that it is being slept (at someone else’s house)’.

VTI:

- (3a) *Kanawâpahtâ-kanû.*
 look-TI-PASS
 ‘It is being looked at’.
- (3b) *Kanawâpahtâ-kanû-yû.*
 look-TI-PASS-yû
 ‘It is being looked at (while s/he is there)’.
- (4a) *Chipah kanawâpahtâ-kanûh-panach.*
 Preverb look.TI-PASS-Indicative Preterit
 ‘I should be looked at’.

s/he does not', as shown in (47*b*). But the implication could also be made spatially: 'I see a stick over at his place, where he is standing'. Compare (47*a*) to (48), a sentence containing a regular verb form that does involve such an implication.

- (47*a*) *Ni-wâpahtam-w-â-n* *mistikû-yû*.
1-see.TI.3-REL-DIR1-3-1 wood-OBV

'I see a stick (but s/he does not) / (over at her/his place).'

- (47*b*) *Ni-wâpahtam-w-â-n* *mistikû-yû* *mikw* *namui* *wâpahtam*
1-see.TI.3-REL-DIR1-3-1 wood-OBV but not see.TA.3

wî.

3emphatic

'I see a stick, but s/he does not'.

- (48) *Ni-wâpahten* *mistikw*.
1-see.TI.1 wood

'I see a stick'.

In (47*a*), a third-person participant is introduced into the discourse by the relational form. Note that this participant must be in the third person. For the sentences to be felicitous, a context must be constructed to accommodate this other person in the discourse. Thus, following the Algonquian rule of obviation, which requires that one and only one third person be proximate, the object *mistikw* is marked obviative and the additional person introduced in the discourse is a proximate third person.

5.2. Complex clauses. Let us begin with an interesting example that illustrates the use of the relational form in an Animate Intransitive verb.

-
- (4*b*) *Chipah* *kanawâpahtâ-kanûh-yih-panh*.
Preverb look.TI-PASS-**yih**-Indicative Preterit

'I should be looked at (while s/he is there).'

Note that these forms are different from the better-known obviative subject forms, which also have the *-(i)yû* suffix:

- (5*a*) *Nipâ-yûh*.
sleep.AI-3'

'His/her . . . (child) sleeps'.

- (5*b*) *Kanawâpahtam-iyûh*.
look.TI-3'

'His/her . . . (child) looks at it'.

A full study of the indefinite actor paradigms and their "relational" forms must await more documentation work and is beyond the scope of this paper.

- (49) *Aniyâ ni-kâwî ni-ka tipâchimu-w-ân e chî*
 the-late 1-mother 1-fut tell.AI-REL-DIR1>3-1 preverb past
tipâchimushtût. (Cooper 1979:3)
 tell.AI.1

‘My late mother, I will tell her story, how she told it to me’.

This example shows the relational verb form *nika tipâchim-w-ân*, from the animate intransitive verb *tipâchimû* ‘to tell a story’. When *tipâchimû* is used, it means, presumably, that the story is one’s own, which correlates with the cultural view that the telling of a particular story belongs to its storyteller. Literally, the verb (being intransitive) means ‘to narrate’. The relational form conveys here that the story told is someone else’s story—in this case, the mother’s—and this person is the subject of the embedded clause. So the main verb literally means ‘to story from someone else’. The meaning here is still close to that of a possessor role, but, unlike in the examples in 3 above, there is no possessed argument in (49). Syntactically, the NP *aniyâ nikâwî* ‘my late mother’ is only licensed by the embedded verb. If the embedded clause is removed, the relational on the main verb is not sufficient to license the NP syntactically. (50) is ungrammatical; speakers perceive it as incomplete. This confirms what was observed previously: that the relational indicates discourse participants in the event, not syntactic arguments.

- (50) **Aniyâ ni-kâwî ni-ka tipâchimu-w-ân.*
 the-late 1-mother 1-fut tell.AI-REL-DIR1>3-1

‘I will tell her story, my late mother’.

Clarke and MacKenzie (forthcoming) report that the subject of an embedded verb triggers the appearance of a relational on the main VTI verb in Montagnais. They give the following example:

- (51) *Ni-minuenitam-u-ân tshé tshîtûte-t.* (Montagnais)
 1-be happy.TI.3-REL-1 preverb leave-3

‘I’m happy (in relation to her) that s/he’s leaving’.

The same is true for East Cree, except that the presence of the relational on the main TI verb is optional:

- (52) *Ni-miyeyihtam-w-ân che chistuhte-t.*
 1 be.happy.TI.3-REL-1 preverb leave.AI-3

‘I am happy (in relation to her) that she is leaving’.

- (53) *Ni-miyeyihten che chistuhte-t.*
 1-be.happy.TI.1 preverb leave.AI-3

‘I am happy that she is leaving’.

Full NPs in these sentences indicate that possession of the embedded subject is optional as well. Both (54) and (55) are acceptable.

- (55) *Ni-miyeyihtam-w-ân che chistuhte-t û napeu.*
 1-be.happy.TI.3-REL-1 preverb leave.AI-3 this man(PROX)

‘I am happy (in relation to him [the man]) that the man is leaving’.

- (55) *Ni-miyeyihtam-w-ân e mîchis-yich u-t-awâshim-h.*
 1 like.TI.3-REL-1 preverb eat.AI-3’ 3-child-OBV

‘I am happy (in relation to the child) that his/her child is eating’.

This optionality can easily be explained by the fact that relational verbs do not license syntactic arguments; rather, they register the presence or salience of discourse participants. In all of the examples, the relational indicates the presence of another third-person participant in the universe of discourse—a participant who is, presumably, affected by the event taking place.

All examples presented in this section show that the relational’s role is to indicate that there is another third-person present who could be (at least somewhat) affected by the event denoted by the verb. So what the relational marks could be called is an “increase in discourse valency.”

6. Conclusion. In this paper, I have considered both the meaning of certain constructions and their syntactic effects. This approach has allowed important insights into how East Cree works. Relational forms are third-person discourse valency-increasing devices. They are used only for third persons and are always found in obviation contexts involving disjoint reference possessive constructions or the presence of another person in a discourse segment. Relational verb forms are distinctive in that they are morphologically marked for valency increase but, unlike other valency-increasing constructions, they are limited to third persons and do not permit overt syntactic expression of additional arguments. This discovery challenges the traditional view of valence as being a syntactic rather than a discourse phenomenon. The relational verbs suggest that an understanding of “discourse participants” is central to an analysis of the verbal morphology. Further, there seems to be a direct relationship between verbal morphology and discourse referents, and this reference tracking must include some access to the discourse participants. This points us to a potentially fruitful area of study not as yet examined sufficiently—the semantics of grammar. Relational verbs seem to manifest a semantic principle that is fundamental to how the Cree language is organized and that is part of the semantic competence of every Cree speaker: one could call it “a requirement to acknowledge the Other.” This manifests itself as obviation and in relational constructions. Future research should inves-

tigate whether other Cree constructions also appear to respond to such a semantic requirement.

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