

## Chapter 4

### Verb inflection: The independent indicative

Verbs in Meskwaki are inflected for features of both subject and object; verbs in relative clauses are additionally inflected for features of the head of the relative clause. The grammatical features in question are the same categories described in the previous chapter on noun inflection: person, number, gender, and obviation. The inflectional affixes function as personal pronouns for ordinary anaphoric and deictic reference, while the independent personal pronouns, described in 3.7, bear specialized discourse functions or fill in gaps in the system of verb inflection. Third person inflectional affixes may also function as agreement with external NP subjects or objects.

The system of verb inflection is so complicated and so fundamental to the entire language that both this chapter and the next are devoted to the topic. The complexity of the system is of two different sorts. First, there are twenty-six distinct paradigms (sometimes called *MODES*) in which a given verb stem may be inflected.<sup>1</sup> The choice of inflectional paradigm depends both upon syntactic factors (e.g. main vs. subordinate clause) and semantic/pragmatic factors (e.g. mood, tense, aspect, negation, evidentiality). That is, the inflectional affixes on the verb encode not only features of the subject and object, but also syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic features of the clause or utterance. Chapter 5 discusses the functions of the various inflectional paradigms in detail. The present chapter gives the complete set of forms for one paradigm, the independent indicative, used for positive main clause assertions. (For the other paradigms, see the appendix.)

The second type of complexity resides within each inflectional paradigm: the component morphemes combine in an unusual and intricate way to convey the grammatical features of subject and object.<sup>2</sup> An example from the independent indicative will be given here to illustrate this. The verbal inflectional affixes are organized in a template, but (as will be seen in section 4.5) the template does not have specific slots for subject and object. Instead, there is a prefix position (in the independent indicative) for nonthird person morphemes, and suffix positions for third person morphemes. Transitive verbs involving one third person and one nonthird person argument have both a prefix and a complex of suffixes encoding these arguments. A separate suffix, known as a *THEME SIGN*, disambiguates which argument is subject and which is object. The role of the theme sign is illustrated by the following pair of independent indicative forms; the theme sign is in boldface.

- (1) a.   newa·pama·wa       'I look at him'  
      /ne-wa·pam-**a**-w-a/  
      1-look.at-**dir**-3-sg
- b.   newa·pamekwa      'he looks at me'

---

<sup>1</sup> Elsewhere (e.g. Dahlstrom 1988) I have said that Meskwaki has eighteen paradigms; the higher number given here is a result of counting all the conjunct paradigms containing the past tense/irrealis suffix *-ehe* as being separate paradigms, considering the future imperative to be distinct from the prohibitive, and including all the incomplete paradigms (e.g. prioritiv, independent assertive) in the count.

<sup>2</sup> G. Anderson 1996 argues that Meskwaki belongs to an 'animate type' of system, parallel to the accusative, ergative, and active types.

/ne-wa·pam-**ekw**-w-a/  
1-look.at-**inv**-3-sg

The stem in each verb is the same, *wa·pam*- 'look at'. Both verbs contain the prefix *ne*-, indicating first person, and the suffixes *-w* and *-a*, indicating a singular third person animate argument. The only difference between the two verbs is in the choice of theme sign: (1a) contains the DIRECT theme sign *-a-*, while (1b) contains the INVERSE theme sign *-ekw-*. The way in which the theme sign links the person/number features to the appropriate grammatical function is explained in 4.5.<sup>3</sup> Note that the verb containing the inverse theme sign is active, not passive (i.e., (1b) is not equivalent to 'I was looked at by him'.) See 10.3. for discussion of the controversy over the syntactic status of inverse verbs and arguments that inverse verbs in Meskwaki are active, not passive.

The present chapter is organized as follows: first, the division of verb stems into classes according to the gender of one of the verb's arguments is described in 4.1, then the independent indicative paradigm is presented for each of the stem classes. Inanimate Intransitive inflection is described in 4.2., Animate Intransitive inflection in 4.3., Transitive Inanimate in 4.4., and Transitive Animate, the most complex, in 4.5.

*4.1. Stem classes.* Every verb stem in Meskwaki belongs to one of four stem classes, depending upon its valence and the gender of one of its arguments. The stem class not only affects the shape of pronominal affixes attached to the verb stem but also restricts the set of valence-changing derivational suffixes which may combine with the stem (ch. 5). The ANIMATE INTRANSITIVE (AI) and the INANIMATE INTRANSITIVE (II) classes both contain verbs subcategorized for a subject but not for a first object; in the Animate Intransitive the subject is of animate gender while in the Inanimate Intransitive the subject is inanimate. In the other two classes it is the gender of the first object that determines the classification of the stem: TRANSITIVE ANIMATE (TA) for verbs subcategorized for an animate first object, and TRANSITIVE INANIMATE (TI) for verbs subcategorized for an inanimate first object. The subjects of both Transitive Animate and Transitive Inanimate verbs are normally animate; there are special inflectional affixes to indicate inanimate subjects, as discussed in 4.4. and 4.5.

The classification of verbs into stem classes is sensitive only to subjects and first objects, ignoring the presence or absence of the other types of arguments: second object, oblique, Comp, and secondary predicate. For example, the ditransitive stem *mi·n-* 'give' belongs to the Transitive Animate class because it has a first object (the recipient) and the first object is animate. A verb such as *ahpe·nemo-* 'depend on', on the other hand, is subcategorized for a subject and a second object, but no first object. It therefore belongs to the Animate Intransitive class, because it does not have a first object and its subject is animate.<sup>4</sup> There is a large class of verbs referring to weather or temporal phenomena which have no semantic arguments yet are inflected for a subject. For example, *kemiya-* 'rain' is classified Inanimate Intransitive and inflected for an inanimate singular subject, even though semantically it takes no argument at all. This phenomenon is parallel to that of expletive pronouns in languages like English or French: the verb requires a subject even if no

---

<sup>3</sup> Similar morphological patterns in other Algonquian languages have received various theoretical treatments: for example, S. Anderson 1992, Halle and Marantz 1993, and Steele 1995, all on Potawatomi.

<sup>4</sup> Algonquianist terminology for two-place AI verbs like *ahpe·nemo-* 'depend on' includes 'transitivized AI verb (AI + O)' (Goddard 1979a:37), 'AI verb with implied goal' (Bloomfield 1946:95), 'AI verb with pseudo object' (Bloomfield 1957:33), and 'pseudo-transitive' (Voorhis 1971:67).

semantic argument is associated with the subject. In Meskwaki, the subject of such verbs is expressed by pronominal inflection on the verb, not by an independent pronoun as in English or French. However, the phenomenon is the same -- a mismatch between syntactic and semantic requirements -- regardless of the morphosyntactic means of expressing pronominal subjects.<sup>5</sup> The subject of weather and time verbs in Meskwaki will accordingly be considered an expletive subject. All verbs taking an expletive subject belong to the Inanimate Intransitive class.

In a parallel fashion, other verbs are inflected for an inanimate object even though no semantic argument is associated with the object. Such verbs will be considered to take an expletive object. *a-hkwamat-* 'be sick' is an example of this type: semantically, it takes a single argument (the person who is sick); syntactically, it requires both a subject and an object. Like expletive subjects, expletive objects are inanimate, placing such verbs in the Transitive Inanimate stem class.<sup>6</sup>

Some verbs which take a Comp argument belong to the Animate Intransitive class: for example, *anwa-či-* 'be willing to', *kočawi-* 'try to', and *ša-kwe-nemo-* 'be unwilling to'. Other verbs taking a Comp argument are classified Transitive Inanimate, including *aka-wa-t-* 'desire to', *a-nwiht-* 'be unable to', and *kehke-net-* 'know'. The division of Comp-taking verbs into the two classes is here attributed to the presence or absence of an expletive object in the verb's subcategorization frame. An AI stem such as *ša-kwe-nemo-* 'be unwilling to' is subcategorized for a subject and for Comp. It is classified Animate Intransitive since it does not have a first object, and its subject is animate. With *kehke-net-* 'know', on the other hand, the subcategorization requirements may be represented as subject, (expletive) object, and Comp. It is classified Transitive Inanimate since it is subcategorized for a first object, which is inanimate.<sup>7</sup>

In discussions of Algonquian languages, verb stems are often given in pairs -- AI and II; TA and TI -- for actions or states that could involve an argument of either gender. For example, the discussion of II inflection in 4.2. uses the stem *mi-škawa-* 'be strong' to illustrate the various endings, and 4.3. uses the AI counterpart, *mi-škawesi-* 'be strong', in the examples. Notice that this pair of stems displays a morphological as well as lexical-semantic similarity. As explained in chapter 6, most verb stems in Meskwaki may be broken down into two (or more) component morphemes: here the two stems share the same initial morpheme, *mi-škaw-* 'strong', but have different final morphemes. *-a-* is an II final for stative verbs, and *-esi-* is an AI stative final. It is the stem-final morpheme which determines the classification of the stem.

Transitive Animate and Transitive Inanimate stems likewise come in pairs: for example, *ta-keškaw-* 'touch with the foot' TA and *ta-kešk-* 'touch with the foot' TI. The former is used if something animate is touched, the latter for something inanimate. The common initial morpheme here is *ta-k-* 'touch' combined with the final *-eškaw-* 'by foot' TA or *-ešk-* 'by foot' TI. Another pair is *ča-kam-* 'eat or drink up' TA, *ča-kat-* 'eat or drink up' TI, formed from the initial *ča-k-* 'all' plus the final *-am-* 'by mouth' TA or *-at-* 'by mouth' TI. There is one suppletive pairing of stems: *amw-* 'eat' TA/*mi-či-* 'eat' TI. All other stem pairs share a common initial. See chapter 6 for more discussion.

4.2. *Inanimate Intransitive.* In this section I will first illustrate the full range of inflectional possibilities for Inanimate Intransitive stems, using *mi-škawa-* 'be strong' as an example, and then

<sup>5</sup> See Kathman 1993, 1994 on Abkhaz and the general issue of expletives in inflectional morphology.

<sup>6</sup> Algonquianist terminology for one-place TI verbs like *a-hkwamat-* 'be sick' includes 'objectless TI (TI - O)' (Goddard 1979a:41), 'TI with formal goal' (Bloomfield 1946:95), 'TI with formal object' (Bloomfield 1962:46), 'pseudo intransitive' (Bloomfield 1957:34), 'pseudo AI' (Goddard 1967:67 and Voorhis 1971:67).

<sup>7</sup> The separate phenomenon of copying to object (similar to raising to object in English) may apply to Comp-taking verbs of either type, producing a Transitive Animate stem. See 10.1.

give the more restricted possibilities for verbs taking an expletive subject. Finally, phonological processes associated with II inflection will be discussed.

An II stem such as *mi·škawa-* 'be strong' which takes a nonexpletive subject may be inflected for a singular or plural, proximate or obviative subject.

- (2) a. *mi·škawa-w-i* 'it is strong'  
be.strong-0-sg
- b. *mi·škawa-w-ani* 'they are strong'  
be.strong-0-pl
- c. *mi·škawa-ni-w-i* 'it (obv) is strong'  
be.strong-obv-0-sg
- d. *mi·škawa-ni-w-ani* 'they (obv) are strong'  
be.strong-obv-0-pl

All the II endings contain the suffix *-w*, which marks inanimate third person in the independent indicative.<sup>8</sup> *-w* is followed by a suffix marking the number of the subject: *-i* for singular or *-ani* for plural. Note that these suffixes are homophonous with the inflectional number suffixes on inanimate nouns (3.1). The proximate/obviative distinction (3.3) is marked overtly on II verbs. Verbs with obviative subjects bear a suffix *-ni-* (occurring to the left of the third person suffix *-w*) while verbs with proximate subjects are unmarked.

Verbs taking an expletive subject include those referring to weather phenomena (e.g. *kemiya-* 'rain', *mehpo-* 'snow', *awan-* 'be foggy', *naha-win-* 'be warm weather'), seasons (e.g. *pepo-* 'be winter', *ni-pen-* 'be mid-summer'), and time of day (e.g. *wa-pan-* 'be dawn, morning', *na-wahkwe-* 'be noon', *pehkote-* 'be night'). Such verbs are inflected for an inanimate singular subject, which may be either proximate or obviative.

- (3) a. *kemiya-w-i* 'it is raining'  
rain-0-sg
- b. *kemiya-ni-w-i* 'it (obv) is raining'  
rain-obv-0-sg

The choice of the proximate or obviative form for the expletive subject depends upon the syntactic context in which the verb is used. As described in 3.3., proximate is the unmarked third person form; the obviative is only used in contexts in which there are two or more third persons (animate or inanimate). If one wanted to say, "When I arrived, it was raining," the form of the verb 'rain' would be (3a), the proximate form, since there is no third person present in the context other than the expletive subject of 'rain'. If, on the other hand, one said, "When he arrived, it was raining," with the whole sentence in the syntactic domain of obviation (3.3), the verb 'rain' would

<sup>8</sup> As will be seen in 4.3, *-w* is also used to express animate third person in the inflection of Animate Intransitive verbs. We may therefore say that *-w* indicates third person, unmarked for gender. In the morpheme-by-morpheme glosses of inflected verbs, however, I will gloss *-w* as '0' when it attaches to an Inanimate Intransitive stem.

be inflected for an obviative expletive subject, as in (3b), reflecting the presence of another third person in the context.

Many II stems end in a consonant, creating an unacceptable cluster of consonants when the *n*-initial obviative suffix is added. This unacceptable cluster is resolved by deletion, if the stem ends in *n*, or by epenthesis elsewhere.

- (4) a. ki·šikeniw-i            'it (obv) grows'  
       /ki·šiken-ni-w-i/  
       grow-obv-0-sg
- b. we·wenet-**e**-ni-w-i    'it (obv) is nice, pretty'  
       be.nice    -obv-0-sg

The epenthetic vowel in (4b) is in boldface.

The suffixes for proximate singular subject attach to C-final II stems in a straightforward way:

- (5) a. ki·šiken-w-i            'it grows'  
       grow-0-sg
- b. we·wenet-w-i            'it is nice, pretty'  
       be.nice-0-sg

The combination of C plus *w* is an acceptable cluster, so no deletion or epenthesis occurs.

In the proximate plural forms, however, a process of coalescence takes place with C-final stems. The sequence of /w+a/ becomes *o·* in nonfinal syllables following a consonant:

- (6) a. ki·šikeno·ni            'they grow'  
       /ki·šiken-w-ani/  
       grow-0-pl
- b. we·weneto·ni            'they are nice, pretty'  
       /we·wenet-w-ani/  
       be.nice-0-pl

Another phonological process affecting II stems in the independent indicative and independent dubitative is the umlaut of stem-final *a·* to *e·*.<sup>9</sup>

- (7) a. ina·ške·wi            'it falls [thither]'  
       /ina·ška·-w-i/  
       fall.to-0-sg

---

<sup>9</sup> The use of the term 'umlaut' for this process is traditional among Algonquianists. Note that it is distinct from the umlaut processes seen in Germanic and other languages in which a front vowel triggers the fronting of another vowel earlier in the word.

Compare the subjunctive form *ina-ška-k-e* 'if it falls [thither]', where no umlaut occurs.

Umlaut applies to all II stems ending in *a* except those containing the stative final *-(y)a*, such as *mi-škawa-* 'be strong' in (2).

4.3. *Animate Intransitive.* Animate Intransitive stems may be inflected for a subject in any of the person categories. The discussion will begin with the forms for third person subjects, since they show some similarities in form and organization with Inanimate Intransitive forms. We will then take up the nonthird person AI forms and discuss phonological processes associated with AI stems.

Like the Inanimate Intransitive forms, Animate Intransitive verbs in the independent indicative have separate forms for third person singular and plural, proximate and obviative. Two differences may be noted in comparing the forms below to those in (2): the form of the stem itself and the form of the number suffixes.

- (8)
- |    |   |                         |
|----|---|-------------------------|
| a. | mi-škawesi-w-a<br>be.strong-3-sg              | 'he is strong'          |
| b. | mi-škawesi-w-aki<br>be.strong-3-pl            | 'they are strong'       |
| c. | mi-škawesi-ni-w-ani<br>be.strong-obv-3-obv.sg | 'he (obv) is strong'    |
| d. | mi-škawesi-ni-w-ahi<br>be.strong-obv-3-obv.pl | 'they (obv) are strong' |

Like the II set of endings, the third person forms of AI verbs in the independent indicative all contain the suffix *-w*, for third person. If the subject is obviative (8c, d), the suffix *-ni* precedes *-w*. *-w* is followed by a suffix marking the number of the subject: *-a* for proximate singular (8a), *-aki* for proximate plural (8b), *-ani* for obviative singular (8c), or *-ahi* for obviative plural (8d). Like the number suffixes of the II set, these suffixes are homophonous with the inflectional suffixes marking number on nouns (3.2).

Now consider the AI forms for nonthird person subjects.

- (9)
- |    |                                      |                             |
|----|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| a. | ne-mi-škawesi<br>1-be.strong         | 'I am strong'               |
| b. | ke-mi-škawesi<br>2-be.strong         | 'you are strong'            |
| c. | ne-mi-škawesi-pena<br>1-be.strong-1p | 'we (exclusive) are strong' |
| d. | ke-mi-škawesi-pena<br>2-be.strong-1p | 'we (inclusive) are strong' |
| e. | ke-mi-škawesi-pwa                    | 'you (plural) are strong'   |

2-be.strong-2p

- f.      mi·škawesi-pi                      'people are strong'  
           be.strong-X

The nonthird person forms display a number of similarities to the inflection of possessed nouns (3.4). For instance, (9a-e) all contain a prefix: either *ne-* for first person or *ke-* for second person, homophonous with the possessor prefixes. Furthermore, the first person inclusive form in (9d) takes the second person prefix *ke-* rather than first person *ne-*. Forms with plural subjects add a suffix to the stem, while the first and second person singular forms have no suffix. The forms of the AI number suffixes are different from the possessor suffixes, however: the two first person plural forms take the suffix *-pena*, and second person plural takes *-pwa*. There is also a form for unspecified subject of an AI verb in (9f), formed with the suffix *-pi* and no prefix.

Another similarity between the possessor inflection described in 3.4. and verb inflection may be seen in the treatment of vowel-initial stems. When the prefixes of the independent indicative (or independent dubitative) are added to a vowel initial verb stem, an epenthetic *t* is inserted: *ne-t-a-čimo* 'I tell a story', *ke-t-ota-nesi* 'you have a daughter'. This is the same pattern seen in the inflection of vowel-initial independent noun stems. The strategy used by dependent noun stems (deleting the vowel of the prefix before a vowel-initial stem) is found in one context in verb inflection: when a prefix is added to the future prefix *i-h-* (e.g. *n-i-h-mi-škawesi* 'I will be strong', *k-i-h-mi-škawesi* 'you will be strong'). These strategies for resolving vowel clusters are found not only with AI stem inflection, but also with Transitive Inanimate and Transitive Animate stems.

In comparing the third person set of AI forms in (8) with the nonthird person set in (9), some differences may be noted. The first and second person forms all bear a prefix, while the third person forms do not; the third person endings are complexes of two or three suffixes, while the nonthird person forms either have no suffix at all, or a suffix composed of a single morpheme. However, the organization of the two sets of forms is similar in that the expression of the person feature is separate from that of the number feature. All the third person forms contain *-w*, all the first person forms contain *ne-*, and all the second person forms contain *ke-*. To determine the number of the subject, one must look at the suffixes following *-w* in the third person, or for the presence or absence of a suffix in the nonthird person set. The division of person and number into separate 'slots' is a recurring pattern throughout the independent indicative, as we will see, as is the differential treatment of nonthird and third persons.

It should be mentioned that it is also possible to inflect AI stems for inanimate subjects:

- (10) a.      pemipaho·mikat-w-i                      'it runs'  
                  run-0.subj-0-sg
- b.      pemipaho·mikato·ni                      'they (inan) run'  
                  /pemipaho·mikat-w-ani/  
                  run-0.subj-0-pl

The existence of these forms may be somewhat surprising: in the Inanimate Intransitive section it was stated that II stems are used when the subject is inanimate. Why would there also be inflectional endings for inanimate subjects of AI verbs? The answer is that these endings are used

for verbs like 'run', 'do', 'come', 'fly', 'stop', etc., which ordinarily are only used with animate subjects and which therefore do not have an II counterpart. In most circumstances the lack of an II stem for 'run', for example, is not a problem. In traditional stories about the spirits, however, or in dreams or visions, it can happen that inanimate objects move or fly about under their own power. In such circumstances there is a conflict between the inanimate gender of the subject and the animate gender required by the verb stem. This dilemma may be resolved in one of two ways: either by temporarily shifting the gender of the noun to animate (see 3.2) or by using the special AI endings for inanimate subjects.

The endings given in (10) above may be broken down into a suffix *-mikat-* followed by the inflectional endings from the II set: *-w-* third person, plus *-i* singular or *-ani* plural. (The coalescence rule illustrated in (6) above applies to /w+a/ in (10b), producing *o*.) Note also that *-mikat-* lengthens a preceding short vowel.

AI verbs are subject to phonological processes comparable to those described in 4.2. for II verbs. For example, the umlaut rule seen in (7) also applies to AI stems ending in long *a*, except those with the stem-final morpheme *-ika-pa-* 'stand'. The *a* is changed to *e* when followed by third person independent indicative (or independent dubitative) endings. Consider the following sets with the stem *pya-* 'come': first the nonthird person forms, then the third person forms.

- |      |    |                                    |                   |
|------|----|------------------------------------|-------------------|
| (11) | a. | ne-pya<br>1-come                   | 'I come'          |
|      | b. | ke-pya<br>2-come                   | 'you come'        |
|      | c. | ne-pya·-pena<br>1-come-1p          | 'we (excl) come'  |
|      | d. | ke-pya·-pena<br>2-come-1p          | 'we (incl) come'  |
|      | e. | ke-pya·-pwa<br>2-come-2p           | 'you (pl) come'   |
|      | f. | pya·-pi<br>come-X                  | 'people come'     |
| (12) | a. | pye·-w-a<br>come-3-sg              | 'he comes'        |
|      | b. | pye·-w-aki<br>come-3-pl            | 'they come'       |
|      | c. | pye·-ni-w-ani<br>come-obv-3-obv.sg | 'he (obv) comes'  |
|      | d. | pye·-ni-w-ahi                      | 'they (obv) come' |



come-obv-3-obv.pl

- e.     pye·mikat-w-i     'it comes'  
       come-0.subj-0-sg

The stem in the forms in (11) is *pya-*, with the long vowel of the stem shortened in (11a and b) because it is in word final position. The stem in the forms in (12) is *pye-*, because the third person suffix *-w* triggers umlaut of the stem final *a*. (Note that umlaut occurs even when *-w* is not immediately adjacent to the stem-final vowel, as in (12c-e).) The form in (11) with final long *a* may be taken as the underlying form: in other paradigms, such as the aorist conjunct, the stem has final long *a* throughout.

Adding the *n*-initial obviative suffix to a consonant-final AI stem results in an unacceptable cluster which must be resolved by deletion or epenthesis, just as we saw for the II stems. The strategy used by nearly all AI stems ending in *n* is to delete one of the cluster of two *n*'s:

- (13)   šekišiniwani                 'he (obv) lies'  
       /šekišin-ni-w-ani/  
       lie-obv-3-obv.sg

The other strategy, used by stems ending in all other consonants and by a few exceptional stems ending in *n* (*no-n-* 'suck' and verbs with the final *-ekin-* 'size' (*makekin-* 'be big', *inekin-* 'be so big')) is to insert an epenthetic *e* between the two consonants:

- (14)   če·če·k-e-ni-w-ani           'he (obv) cries out'  
       cry.out -obv-3-obv.sg

For the proximate singular subject forms, however, no epenthesis or deletion is required. The *-w* suffix attaches directly to the consonant-final stem:

- (15)   a.     šekišin-w-a           'he lies'  
          lie-3-sg  
       b.     če·če·k-w-a           'he cries out'  
          cry.out-3-sg

In the proximate plural forms, suffixing *-w* plus the disyllabic plural suffix creates the environment for the coalescence rule illustrated in (6) above to apply:

- (16)   a.     šekišino·ki           'they lie'  
          /šekišin-w-aki/  
          lie-3-pl  
       b.     če·če·ko·ki           'they cry out'  
          /če·če·k-w-aki/  
          cry.out-3-pl

This rule applies only to nonfinal syllables, so the proximate singular forms in (15) are not affected.

The above phenomena of umlaut, deletion, epenthesis, and coalescence are almost identical to those observed in II stems. The AI set of forms also presents additional problems for consonant-final stems which have no counterpart in the II. For example, the *p*-initial nonthird person suffixes also create unacceptable consonant clusters when attached to consonant-final AI stems. Such clusters are always broken up by epenthesis, for stems ending in *n* as well as stems ending in other consonants.

- (17) a. ne-šekišin-**e**-pena                    'we (excl) lie'  
           1-lie -1p
- b. ne-če·če·k-**e**-pena                    'we (excl) cry out'  
           1-cry.out -1p
- c. ne-nep-**e**-pena                        'we (excl) die'  
           1-die -1p

The fact that the cluster of *p*'s in (17c) is broken up by epenthesis shows that the rule deleting one of two *n*'s in (13) is not a general rule of degemination, but rather is specific to *n*.

Finally, an epenthetic *e* is also added to consonant-final AI stems inflected for first or second person singular subjects. These are the only suffixless forms in the independent indicative, and the *e* is needed to satisfy the requirement that all Meskwaki words end in a short vowel.

- (18) a. ne-šekišin-**e**                            'I lie'  
           1-lie
- b. ne-če·če·k-**e**                            'I cry out'  
           1-cry.out
- c. ne-nep-**e**                                'I die'  
           1-die

4.4. *Transitive Inanimate.* The inflection of Transitive Inanimate stems is similar to that of Animate Intransitive stems. The main difference is that transitive stems, both TI and TA, bear an additional inflectional suffix known as a THEME SIGN. In the TA forms the theme sign plays a pivotal role in linking the person/number features of the inflectional suffixes to subject and to object, as will be seen in the next section. In the TI forms, the theme sign serves only to mark the fact that the verb takes an inanimate object.

The TI stems are divided into three groups based upon the form of the theme sign required by the stem (Bloomfield 1962). Class 1 TI stems take *-a-* ~ *-am-* as the theme sign, Class 2 TI stems take *-o-* as the theme sign, and a few TI stems, considered Class 3, take a zero theme sign. The set of forms for the TI Class 1 stem *wa·pat-* 'look at' is listed below. The theme sign *-a-* ~ *-am-* is suffixed immediately to the right of the stem, and is glossed '0.obj' in the interlinear glosses, indicating an inanimate object. The number of the object is not encoded in the verb inflection. The grammatical features of the subject are expressed by combinations of a prefix and suffixes nearly

identical to those described in 4.3. for Animate Intransitive verbs. (The only difference is that the obviative suffix is *-ini-* rather than *-(e)ni-*.)

- (19)
- |    |   |                         |
|----|---|-------------------------|
| a. | ne-wa·pat-a<br>1-look.at-0.obj                          | 'I look at it'          |
| b. | ke-wa·pat-a<br>2-look.at-0.obj                          | 'you look at it'        |
| c. | ne-wa·pat-a·-pena<br>1-look.at-0.obj-1p                 | 'we (excl) look at it'  |
| d. | ke-wa·pat-a·-pena<br>2-look.at-0.obj-1p                 | 'we (incl) look at it'  |
| e. | ke-wa·pat-a·-pwa<br>2-look.at-0.obj-2p                  | 'you (pl) look at it'   |
| f. | wa·pat-a·-pi<br>look.at-0.obj-X                         | 'people look at it'     |
| g. | wa·pat-am-w-a<br>look.at-0.obj-3-sg                     | 'he looks at it'        |
| h. | wa·patamo·ki<br>/wa·pat-am-w-aki/<br>look.at-0.obj-3-pl | 'they look at it'       |
| i. | wa·pat-am-ini-w-ani<br>look.at-0.obj-obv-3-obv.sg       | 'he (obv) looks at it'  |
| j. | wa·pat-am-ini-w-ahi<br>look.at-0.obj-obv-3-obv.pl       | 'they (obv) look at it' |

The *-am-* allomorph of the Class 1 theme sign is used with third person subjects; *-a-* is used elsewhere. In the first and second person singular *-a-* is shortened to *-a* by the general rule that words end in short vowels. Note that the third person proximate plural suffixes in (19h) are attached to a consonant final morpheme, triggering coalescence of */w+a/* to *o-*.

The inflection of Class 2 TI stems, such as *pye-t-* 'bring', is simpler than that of Class 1 stems because the form of the theme sign is *-o-* throughout the paradigm:

- (20)
- |    |                             |                |
|----|-----------------------------|----------------|
| a. | ne-pye·t-o<br>1-bring-0.obj | 'I bring it'   |
| b. | ke-pye·t-o<br>2-bring-0.obj | 'you bring it' |

c.	ne-pye·t-o·-pena 1-bring-0.obj-1p	'we (excl) bring it'
d.	ke-pye·t-o·-pena 2-bring-0.obj-1p	'we (incl) bring it'
e.	ke-pye·t-o·-pwa 2-bring-0.obj-2p	'you (pl) bring it'
f.	pye·t-o·-pi bring-0.obj-X	'people bring it'
g.	pye·t-o·-w-a bring-0.obj-3-sg	'he brings it'
h.	pye·t-o·-w-aki bring-0.obj-3-pl	'they bring it'
i.	pye·t-o·-ni-w-ani bring-0.obj-obv-3-obv.sg	'he (obv) brings it'
j.	pye·t-o·-ni-w-ahi bring-0.obj-obv-3-obv.pl	'they (obv) bring it'

The long vowel of the theme sign is shortened in word final position, as in (20a, b). The affixes encoding features of the subject are identical to those used with AI stems.

The vast majority of TI stems belong to either Class 1 or Class 2. A few, however, have no overt theme sign and are considered Class 3 TI stems. Since there is no theme sign, the inflection of TI Class 3 is identical to AI inflection. This is illustrated below with the TI Class 3 stem *mi-či* 'eat'.

(21)	a.	ne-mi-či 1-eat	'I eat it'
	b.	ke-mi-či 2-eat	'you eat it'
	c.	ne-mi-či-pena 1-eat-1p	'we (excl) eat it'
	d.	ke-mi-či-pena 2-eat-1p	'we (incl) eat it'
	e.	ke-mi-či-pwa 2-eat-2p	'you (pl) eat it'

f.	mi·či-pi eat-X	'people eat it'
g.	mi·či-w-a eat-3-sg	'he eats it'
h.	mi·či-w-aki eat-3-pl	'they eat it'
i.	mi·či-ni-w-ani eat-obv-3-obv.sg	'he (obv) eats it'
j.	mi·či-ni-w-ahi eat-obv-3-obv.pl	'they (obv) eat it'

Other examples of Class 3 TI stems include *awi-* 'have' and *na-t-* 'go after, go to get'. Consonant-final TI Class 3 stems require the same epenthesis of *e* found with consonant-final AI stems (cf. (14), (17), (18)).

Since the inflection of Class 3 TI stems is identical to AI inflection, how can we tell if a given stem is TI Class 3? First of all, these stems behave syntactically like other TI stems in that they always take an object of inanimate gender. Second, there may be a lexically related intransitive stem which contrasts with the TI class 3 stem. For example, the stem *wi-seni-* AI 'eat' is used to express the intransitive activity of eating, not *mi·či-* TI 'eat'. Third, most TI stems will be morphologically related to their TA counterpart. Compare *na-t-* TI 'go after' with *na-n-* TA 'go after'.

TI stems may also be inflected for an inanimate subject acting on an inanimate object, using the suffix *-mikāt-* seen above in the AI section. The relevant suffix complexes for Class 1 TI stems are given below.

(22)	a.	-amo·-·mikāt-w-i 0.obj-0.subj-0-sg	'it ... it'
	b.	- amo·mikato·ni /-amo·-·mikāt-w-ani/ 0.obj-0.subj-0-pl	'they (inan) ... it'

Note that the form of the Class 1 theme sign here is *-amo·-*, rather than plain *-am-*. This allomorph shows up in another part of the inflectional system as well, preceding the prohibitive/future imperative suffix *-hk-*: *-amo·hkani* 2-0/future imperative (see the appendix).

**4.5. Transitive Animate.** Transitive Animate verbs are the most complicated part of the inflectional system, since the full range of person features is found with objects as well as with subjects.<sup>10</sup> As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, the TA theme signs -- especially the direct theme sign

<sup>10</sup> Transitive Animate verbs containing the diminutive suffix have a different pattern of inflection. See the appendix for the full set of forms.

and the inverse theme sign -- play a pivotal role in TA verb agreement.<sup>11</sup> The direct theme sign is used when a nonthird person subject acts upon a third person object, or when a proximate third person subject acts upon an obviative third person object. The inverse theme sign is used in the opposite situations: when a third person subject acts upon a nonthird person object, or when an obviative third person subject acts upon a proximate third person object. Inflection of transitive verbs in Algonquian languages is often described as being sensitive to a hierarchy of person. On this hierarchy first and second persons are of equal rank and ranked highest, followed by proximate third person, then obviative third person, and finally the 'further' obviative (3.3).

(23) nonthird > 3 > 3' > 3"

The direct theme sign is used when the subject outranks the object on the person hierarchy, and the inverse theme sign is used when the object outranks the subject on the person hierarchy.

The discussion below will begin with direct and inverse forms. Next, the forms in which both subject and object are nonthird person (of equal rank on the person hierarchy) will be taken up. Such forms contain either the theme sign indicating first person object or the theme sign indicating second person object. There is also a set of forms used to express unspecified subject, and another set of forms for inanimate subject.

We will begin by comparing a few direct forms with their inverse counterparts, using the TA stem *wa·pam-* 'look at'. The direct forms all have a singular nonthird person subject and a third person object; the inverse forms have a third person subject and a singular nonthird person object.

- |      |    |   |    |   |
|------|----|---|----|---|
| (24) | a. | ne-wa·pam-a·-w-a<br>1-look.at-dir-3-sg<br>'I look at him'                     | b. | ne-wa·pam-a·-w-aki<br>1-look.at-dir-3-pl<br>'I look at them'                        |
|      | c. | ke-wa·pam-a·-w-a<br>2-look.at-dir-3-sg<br>'you look at him'                   | d. | ke-wa·pam-a·-w-aki<br>2-look.at-dir-3-pl<br>'you look at them'                      |
| (25) | a. | newa·pamekwa<br>/ne-wa·pam-ekw-w-a/<br>1-look.at-inv-3-sg<br>'he looks at me' | b. | newa·pameko·ki<br>/ne-wa·pam-ekw-w-aki/<br>1-look.at-inv-3-pl<br>'they look at me'  |
|      | c. | kewa·pamekwa<br>ke-wa·pam-ekw-w-a/<br>2-look.at-inv-3-sg<br>'he looks at you' | d. | kewa·pameko·ki<br>/ke-wa·pam-ekw-w-aki/<br>2-look.at-inv-3-pl<br>'they look at you' |

Some aspects of the verb inflection in (24) and (25) are familiar. For example, the prefix *ne-* marks first person and the prefix *ke-* marks second person, just as we saw in the AI and TI forms. Note, however, that in the TA *ne-* and *ke-* may be used either for a first or second person subject, as in

<sup>11</sup> In many Algonquianist discussions, the direct theme sign is labelled theme sign 1, the inverse theme sign theme sign 2, *-i* (first person object) theme sign 3, and *-en* (second person object) theme sign 4.

(24), or for a first or second person object, as in (25). Another familiar pattern may be seen in the complex of suffixes: *-w* marks third person, and the suffix following *-w* indicates the number of the third person argument (*-a* for third person singular, *-aki* for third person plural). But again, note that these third person suffixes are associated with the object in (24) and with the subject in (25). The only morphological difference between the set of forms in (24) and those in (25) is the choice of theme sign: *-a-* in (24) and *-ekw-* in (25). It is the theme sign which tells us which features are associated with subject and which with object.

In the Animate Intransitive section it was noted that the prefix position is used for nonthird person, while third person is marked by a suffix *-w*, followed by an additional suffix encoding the number of the third person argument. The same pattern may be seen in the inflection of the TA forms above. A nonthird person argument -- either subject or object -- will be encoded by a prefix. Likewise, the suffix *-w* encodes a third person argument, either subject or object. The suffixes *-a* and *-aki* indicate singular or plural number of the third person argument. The position of an affix thus depends upon grammatical category (person vs. number) and upon the distinction between nonthird and third persons. The syntactic distinction of subject vs. object does not influence the position of inflectional affixes in Meskwaki.

We will now consider a few more forms: those with plural nonthird person subjects and a third person object.

- |      |    |                                       |                              |
|------|----|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| (26) | a. | ne-wa·pam-a·-pena<br>1-look.at-dir-1p | 'we (excl) look at him/them' |
|      | b. | ke-wa·pam-a·-pena<br>2-look.at-dir-1p | 'we (incl) look at him/them' |
|      | c. | ke-wa·pam-a·-pwa<br>2-look.at-dir-2p  | 'you (pl) look at him/them'  |

Here again we encounter affixes which are familiar from the discussion of AI forms: the first person plural exclusive is formed with the combination of *ne-* *-pena*, the first person inclusive plural with *ke-* *-pena*, and the second person plural with *ke-* *-pwa*. Note too that all three forms in (26) contain the direct theme sign *-a-*, appropriate since the subject outranks the object on the person hierarchy. However, the forms in (26) do not contain the third person suffix *-w*, nor do they bear a suffix indicating the number of the third person object (hence the glosses are vague regarding the number of the object). We may therefore conclude that the plural nonthird suffixes *-pena* and *-pwa* occupy the same slot on the inflectional template as the third person suffix *-w*. Furthermore, *-pena* and *-pwa* take precedence over *-w*: *-w* may only appear when there is no other suffix competing for that position. Finally, the choice of *-pena* or *-pwa* precludes adding a third person number suffix.

Note that while the number of the third person object is left vague in the forms of (26), the person and gender of the object is unambiguously third person animate. The form of the stem, *wa·pam-*, specifies the gender of the object, and the choice of theme sign, *-a-*, entails that the person of the object is third.

Now consider the inverse counterparts to the forms in (26).

- |      |    |                  |    |                    |
|------|----|------------------|----|--------------------|
| (27) | a. | newa·pamekona·na | b. | newa·pamekona·naki |
|------|----|------------------|----|--------------------|

	/ne-wa·pam-ekw-ena·n-a/ 1-look.at-inv-1p-sg 'he looks at us (excl)'		/ne-wa·pam-ekw-ena·n-aki/ 1-look.at-inv-1p-pl 'they look at us (excl)'
c.	kewa·pamekona·na /ke-wa·pam-ekw-ena·n-a/ 2-look.at-inv-1p-sg 'he looks at us (incl)'	d.	kewa·pamekona·naki /ke-wa·pam-ekw-ena·n-aki/ 2-look.at-inv-1p-pl 'they look at us (incl)'
e.	kewa·pamekowa·wa /ke-wa·pam-ekw-wa·w-a/ 2-look.at-inv-2p-sg 'he looks at you (pl)'	f.	kewa·pamekowa·waki /ke-wa·pam-ekw-wa·w-aki/ 2-look.at-inv-2p-pl 'they look at you (pl)'

There are two differences between (26) and (27), in addition to the form of the theme sign. The form of the nonthird person plural suffixes is different, and the number of the third person argument is specified. The suffixes marking nonthird person plural are not the *p*-initial suffixes seen in the AI, TI, and TA direct forms, but rather are homophonous with the plural suffixes found in possessor inflection (3.4).<sup>12</sup>

The independent indicative lacks, for the most part, forms for nonthird person subjects acting on an obviative third person subject, or vice versa. (The only exception is for an unspecified subject acting on an obviative object, listed with the unspecified subject forms below.) Such forms exist in the conjunct order paradigms, however.

The examples of direct and inverse forms discussed so far all involve one third person argument and one nonthird person argument. The direct/inverse opposition is also found when both subject and object are third person. Consider first the direct set of verbs with two third person arguments.

- (28) a. wa·pam-e·-w-a  
look.at-dir-3-sg  
'he (prox) looks at him/them (obv)'
- b. wa·pam-e·-w-aki  
look.at-dir-3-pl  
'they (prox) look at him/them (obv)'
- c. wa·pam-e·-ni-w-ani  
look.at-dir-obv-3-obv.sg  
'he (obv) looks at him/them (further obv)'
- d. wa·pam-e·-ni-w-ahi  
look.at-dir-obv-3-obv.pl  
'they (obv) look at him/them (further obv)'

<sup>12</sup> Proto-Algonquian had two sets of independent indicative inflection for transitive verbs: absolutive and objective (Goddard 1967). The *p*-initial suffixes in Meskwaki derive from the PA absolutive endings and the endings in (27) derive from the objective set.



The form of the direct theme sign in (28) is *-e-*, rather than *-a-*.<sup>13</sup> The suffixes following the theme sign encode person, number, and obviation features of the subject of the verbs in (28). Features of the object are not explicitly marked by the inflectional suffixes in (28), but we know that the object must be third person and obviative. We know that the person of the object is third, because a nonthird person would be marked overtly by the verb inflection. Furthermore, since the direct theme sign is used, the object must rank below the subject on the person hierarchy. Consequently the object of (28a, b) must be obviative because the subject is third person proximate. In (28c, d), where the subject is third person obviative, the object must be third person further obviative.

Now consider the inverse counterparts to (28):

- (29) a.    wa·pamekwa                    'he/they (obv) looks at him (prox)'  
           /wa·pam-ekw-w-a/  
           look.at-inv-3-sg
- b.    wa·pameko·ki                'he/they (obv) looks at them (prox)'  
           /wa·pam-ekw-w-aki/  
           look.at-inv-3-pl
- c.    wa·pamekoniwani            'he/they (further obv) looks at him (obv)'  
           /wa·pam-ekw-ni-w-ani/  
           look.at-inv-obv-3-obv.sg
- d.    wa·pamekoniwahi            'he/they (further obv) look at him (obv)'  
           /wa·pam-ekw-ni-w-ahi/  
           look.at-inv-obv-3-obv.pl

The pattern of inflection in (29) is the mirror image of that seen in (28). All forms contain the inverse theme sign *-ekw-*. The suffixes following the theme sign encode number and obviation features of the object of the verb. The features of the subject are not marked explicitly, but the choice of theme sign entails that the subject must rank below the object on the person hierarchy. The subject is therefore obviative in (29a, b) and further obviative in (29c, d).

The forms above are a complete listing of all the direct and inverse TA forms. There are also forms used for second person subjects acting on first person objects, and vice versa. These are considered neither direct nor inverse: the two nonthird persons are of equal rank in the person hierarchy. The theme sign *-i-* is used when the object is first person,<sup>14</sup> and the theme sign *-en-* when the object is second person.

- (30) a.    ke-wa·pam-i                b.    ke-wa·pam-i-pena  
           2-look.at-1.obj            2-look.at-1.obj-1p

<sup>13</sup> Goddard 1979a:115 analyzes this *-e-* as underlying *-a-* which has undergone the same umlaut process seen in (most) *a-*-final AI stems when followed by third person endings, and argues that there are two separate *w*'s, one which triggers umlaut (as in (28)) and one which does not (as in (24)).

<sup>14</sup> The theme signs are glossed with only a feature for object, because of their distribution in the conjunct order paradigms.

- |         |   |    |   |
|---------|---|----|---|
|         | 'you (sg) look at me'   |    | 'you (sg/pl) look at us (excl)'   |
| c.      | ke-wa·pam-i-pwa<br>2-look.at-1.obj-2p<br>'you (pl) look at me'                  |    |   |
| (31) a. | ke-wa·pam-en- <b>e</b> <sup>15</sup><br>2-look.at-2.obj<br>'I look at you (sg)' | b. | ke-wa·pam-en- <b>e</b> -pena<br>2-look.at-2.obj- -1p<br>'we (excl) look at you (sg/pl)' |
| c.      | ke-wa·pam-en- <b>e</b> -pwa<br>2-look.at-2.obj- -2p<br>'I look at you (pl)'     |    |   |

Two points should be noticed about (30) and (31). First, the prefix is the second person *ke*-throughout the two sets, whether the second person is the subject or the object. Second, the suffix *-pena* is used if either the subject or object is first person plural ((30b), (31b)). The appearance of *-pena* precludes any other suffix appearing in that slot, so the number of the second person argument is left unspecified in (30b) and (31b). If the number of the first person argument is singular, then it is possible to use the suffix *-pwa* to indicate a second person plural subject or object ((30c), (31c)). If both the first person argument and the second person argument are singular, then no inflectional suffix appears to the right of the theme sign.

TA verbs also have special inflected forms for an inanimate subject acting upon an animate object:

- |         |  |                         |
|---------|--|-------------------------|
| (32) a. | ne-wa·pam-ekwi<br>1-look.at-0.subj         | 'it looks at me'        |
| b.      | ke-wa·pam-ekwi<br>2-look.at-0.subj         | 'it looks at you'       |
| c.      | ne-wa·pam-ekwi-pena<br>1-look.at-0.subj-1p | 'it looks at us (excl)' |
| d.      | ke-wa·pam-ekwi-pena<br>2-look.at-0.subj-1p | 'it looks at us (incl)' |
| e.      | ke-wa·pam-ekwi-pwa<br>2-look.at-0.subj-2p  | 'it looks at you (pl)'  |
| f.      | wa·pam-ekwi-pi<br>look.at-0.subj-X         | 'it looks at people'    |
| g.      | wa·pam-ekwi-w-a<br>look.at-0.subj-3-sg     | 'it looks at him'       |

<sup>15</sup> The theme sign in (31) must be followed by an epenthetic vowel in the independent indicative.

- h. wa·pam-ekwi-w-aki 'it looks at them'  
look.at-0.subj-3-pl

All the inanimate subject forms contain the theme sign *-ekwi-*, which is clearly related to the inverse theme sign *-ekw-* used with animate subjects ranked lower than the object.<sup>16</sup> The inanimate subject is outranked by all the animate persons on the person hierarchy, making this variant of the inverse theme sign appropriate. Person and number features of the object are expressed by affixes identical to those found with AI verbs. Note in particular that the suffix *-pi*, used with unspecified subject in the AI set of forms, here expresses an unspecified object in (32f).

Finally, there is a set of forms for unspecified subject acting on animate objects:

- (33) a. ne-wa·pam-eko·-pi 'people look at me'  
1-look.at-inv-X
- b. ke-wa·pam-eko·-pi 'people look at you'  
2-look.at-inv-X
- c. ne-wa·pam-eko·-pena 'people look at us (excl)'  
1-look.at-inv-1p
- d. ke-wa·pam-eko·-pena 'people look at us (incl)'  
2-look.at-inv-1p
- e. ke-wa·pam-eko·-pwa 'people look at you (pl)'  
2-look.at-inv-2p
- f. wa·pam-a·-pi 'people look at him/them'  
look.at-dir-X
- g. wa·pam-em-a·-pi 'people look at him/them (obv)'  
look.at-obv.obj-dir-X

The choice of theme sign with unspecified subject forms of TA verbs is unusual. If the object of the verb is nonthird person, a variant of the inverse theme sign is used (*-eko-*, rather than the regular *-ekw-*). But if the object of the verb is third person, the direct theme sign *-a-* is used. The suffix *-pi*, expressing unspecified person, follows the theme sign when the object is first or second person singular ((33a, b)) and when the object is third person ((33f, g)). In the forms for a plural nonthird person object ((33c-e)), however, the presence of the suffixes *-pena* or *-pwa* preclude the appearance of the unspecified person suffix *-pi*.

The pattern of theme signs in (33) is as if the unspecified person ranks between the nonthird persons and the third persons on the person hierarchy (as observed by Goddard 1979a:83). Furthermore, we saw in (32) that inanimate subjects always take a form of the inverse theme sign.

<sup>16</sup> The morpheme *-ekwi-* is a Meskwaki innovation (Goddard 1967); other Algonquian languages use the regular form of the inverse theme sign for inanimate subject forms.

We may thus revise the person hierarchy given above in (23) to include the unspecified person (X) and inanimate third person (0):

(34)  $\text{nonthird} > X > 3 > 3' > 3'' > 0$