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OBVIATION ACROSS CLAUSE BOUNDARIES IN KUTENAI

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Abstract. Kutenai has an obviation system reminiscent of the system found in Algonquian languages in which at most one third person nominal in a clause is proximate and others are obviative. Although the behavior of proximate nominals within clauses and within texts reflects a special status for proximates, as having some sort of "higher rank" than obviatives, there are no restrictions across clause boundaries within sentences that require that the proximate be higher in the sentence than proximate nominals.

0. Background

In a number of previous papers (Dryer 1991, 1992, 1994, 1996), I have discussed the mechanisms of obviation in Kutenai as they apply within clauses and across sentences within discourse. In this paper I examine the intermediate possibility, of obviation within sentences but across clause boundaries. I will argue that there is no evidence of any syntactic conditions governing obviation across clause boundaries apart from those that also apply within clauses. These two conditions are first, that there can be no more than one proximate per sentence and, second, coreferential nominals must agree in obviation. In particular there is no evidence of any conditions reminiscent of "binding" conditions, no conditions by which proximates are preferred in higher positions than obviatives.

I will first summarize the basic properties of obviation within clauses in Kutenai and some other basic aspects of verbal morphology. Within clauses in Kutenai, the assignment of proximate and obviative is governed by the following principle. Among the third person nominals in a clause, the proximate nominal will be the highest third person nominal on the following hierarchy.

(1) subject > primary object > secondary object, oblique

For current purposes, I define subject and primary object in terms of the system of pronominal marking on verbs. Subjects are associated with pronominals for first and second person, and with additional verbal suffixes for first and second person plural. These are illustrated in the following examples.

(2) a. hin qa=ni
   2 talk-INDC
   "You (sg.) talked."

b. hu qa=na+a=n=ni
   1 talk-1PL-INDC
   "We talked."

Objects are associated with verbal suffixes for all combinations of first and second persons, singular and plural. These are illustrated in the following examples, where the subject is third person.

Kansas Working Papers in Linguistics 22:2, pp. 33-52
(3) a. wuKat-ap-nil
   see-INF-INDIC
   'He/she/they saw me.'

   b. wuKat-iski-nil
   see-2-PL-INDIC
   'He/she/they saw you (pl.).'

   Third person participles in Kutenai are not normally indicated on the
   verb. This is true for both third person singular and plural, which are never
   distinguished in Kutenai verb forms. This is illustrated in the examples in (3) for
   third person subjects of transitive verbs. The examples in (4) illustrate this for
   third person subjects of intransitive verbs.

(4) txa-nil
   talk-INDIC
   'He/she/they talked.'

   The examples in (5) illustrate this for third person objects.

(5) nu wuKat-i
   1 see-INF-INDIC
   'I saw him/her/them.'

   There is one situation in which verbs inflect for third person, namely when
   the subject of the verb is oblique. This is illustrated in (6).²

(6) qa. takunak-nil ni? watal
   PCL fall-out-OBV  tongue-3PASS the frog
   'The Frog's [pron] tongue [obj] would come out.'
   (Tape 126, Side B, line 125)

   Secondary objects and obiterms (which are difficult to distinguish in
   Kutenai, and which may be best viewed as a single category) are not marked
   on the verb and must be indicated by separate nominals. Only in fairly unusual
   circumstances does this arise with first or second persons. When it does arise,
   independent pronouns are used, as in (7).³

(7) nimunqis, k-ogkaki n-tei-nil cxat-i-mu
   SUBJ-black bull  INDIC-be-INDIC:brother-MUTAL
   'Jim and Black Bull were brothers.' (Tape NS 7, Story 3, line 103)

   The example in (8) illustrates a clause where the subject is third person
   and thus is proximate, but where the object is oblique.

(8) nipi-nil swat-s xaxos
   INDIC-kill-INDIC panther-OBV skunk
   'Skunk, [pron] killed Panther [obj].'

   (Book Text 26: Skunk and Panther, line 25)
According to the hierarchy in (1), if the subject is first or second person, then the primary object will be proximate and all other nominals will be obliative, as in (9).

(9) qapsin-s 1-in-si ʔapakalit hamat-kiq-kišt
    why-OBV SPOKER-2-ASP FROM give-BENEF-3PL
"Why [obj] are you people giving it [pro] stuff [obj]?"
    (Tape NS-7, Story 2, line 12)

The example in (10) illustrates a case where both the subject and primary object are third person and where an oblique or secondary object is thus proximate.

(10) qapsin tîn k-iš bîq ʔitkat-ap-lišt
    why only SPOKER-2 ASP look-at-NEG-IND 3PL.
"Why [pro] are you looking at me?"
    (Boas Text 63: Coyote and Deer, line 44)

Contrast the proximate form of qapsin ‘why’ in (10) with the obliative form qapsin in (9) above.

There are two kinds of situations which do not adhere to the hierarchy in (11). First, in the inverse construction, it is the object that is proximate, while the subject is obliative, as in (11).

(11) wukal-aps-l pekiš yilkat-s
    see-INR-INDC woman man-OBV
    ‘The man [obliative] saw the woman [proximate].’

Inverse clauses in which both arguments are nominal are not frequent, it being much more common for the object to be pronominal, as in (12).

(12) qali-aps-l nim-s pekiš-s
    tell INVERSE-INDC the-OBV woman-OBV
    ‘The woman [obj] told them [pro]’
    (Boas Text 30: The Woman and the Giant, line 36)

Note that in referring to the subject and object in inverse clauses, I will apply these terms in a semantic sense, despite the fact that I have given reasons (Dryer 1991, 1996), for describing what is semantically the object in inverse clauses as the subject. Ultimately, as argued in Dryer (1996), I view this sort of use as terminological and nonsubstitutive. Note that in inverse clauses like (11) and (12) in which what I am calling the subject is obliative, we do not find what is otherwise obliative subject marking on the verb, a fact which provides a reason for saying that this element is not the subject. As illustrated below (and discussed in Dryer 1991, 1996), if what is semantically the object in an inverse clause is obliative (i.e., if both arguments are obliative), then we do get so-called obliative subject marking on the verb, providing a possible argument for saying that what is semantically the object in inverse clauses is the subject. But I will continue in this paper to use these terms in a more semantic sense.
A second phenomenon that does not conform to the hierarchy in (1), though not really an exception to it, is that in noun phrases involving a noun possessed by a third person, the possessed noun must be obviative. The possessor may or may not be proximate, depending on other factors. Possessed nouns are not inflected for their own obviative, but are inflected for the obviative of the possessor. Thus in (13), the possessed noun bears the third person possessive suffix -nis, while in (14), the possessed noun bears both the third person possessive suffix and the obviative suffix.

(13) nεwεxεk-i-ni yεkκομι-s-i
    INDIK-put-INDIK pos-POS
    'He [prox] put him [obj] into his [prox] bucket [obj].'
    (Boas Text 26: Skunk and Panther, line 5)

(14) swa? nεwεmεxεk-i yεkκομι-s-i-r
    panther INDIK-break-INDIK bucket-POS-OBJB
    'Panther [prox] broke his [obj] bucket [obj].'
    (Boas Text 26: Skunk and Panther, line 10)

The obviative status of a noun possessed by a nonthird person can be demonstrated by examples in which it is functioning as subject, as in (5) above or (15), in which we find the obviative subject suffix -s on the verb.

(15) nεqεp-s-i luεnu-s-i tεnεk
    INDIK-exist-OBJ-INDIK wife-POS
    'Chicken Hawk had a wife.'
    (Boas Text 27: The Deluge, line 27)
    (Literally: 'Chicken Hawk’s [prox] wife [obj] existed'.)

Note that although the choice of proximate is grammatically determined with possessive constructions, the possessed nominal being obligatorily obviative, there is no grammatical restriction on whether the possessor or some other nominal in the clause is proximate. In (14) above, for example, the subject swa? 'Panther' is proximate and the noncoreferential possessor of the object is obviative. But the opposite choice is also possible, as illustrated in (16), in which the subject is obviative and the possessor of the object is proximate.

(16) tεxa-s tεlut-i-s-s-i tεkεq-s-i
    then-OBJ seek-TRANS-OBV-INDIK finger-POS
    'Then [lit. obj] stuck his [prox] finger [obj] in.'
    (Coyote and Yawbab Text, line 104)

1. Complement Clauses

Across clause boundaries, there is also some freedom as to what nominal is proximate, constrained by two principles. First, coreferential nominals must agree in obviative; if one is proximate then so must all coreferential ones. Second, as in the case within clauses, there can only be one proximate per sentence. The first of these principles is illustrated in (17), in which the matrix subject is proximate and thus the coreferential subordinate subject must be proximate as well.
(17) qakiʔ?-ni matali k-tsxal kawasxuʔunik.
say:INDIC Mary SUBORD-FUT sing
'Mary [pros] said that she [pros] would sing.' (E)

The second principle is illustrated in (18), in which the matrix subject is proximate and the noncoreferential complement subject is obviative.

(18) qakiʔ?-ni matali k-ʔaqugana-s misalʔ-s
say:INDIC Mary SUBORD-leave-OBV Mike-OBV
'Mary [pros] said that Mike [obj] left.' (E)

The following examples from text illustrate the same two possibilities. The example in (19) illustrates a sentence in which the matrix subject and complement subject are the same, and the complement verb is not inflected for obviation, reflecting the fact that its subject is to be interpreted as coreferential to the matrix subject.

(19) taka-s qakiʔ?-ni tuma k-ʔ tisnii milxa
then-OBV say:INDIC Tommy SUBORD-FUT be the one shoot
'Then Tommy [pros] said he [pros] would be the one to shoot them [obj].'
(Tape 146, Story 2, line 182)

The example in (20) illustrates a sentence in which the matrix subject and complement subject are noncoreferential, and hence the complement subject is marked obviative and the complement verb is inflected as having an obviative subject.

(20) qakiʔ?-ni nasutkin k-tsxal milxa-ʔ-is
say:INDIC chief SUBORD-FUT shoot-PASS-OBV bird-OBV
'The chief said there was to be a bird shot.'
(Literally: The chief [pros] said that a bird [obj] would be shot.)
(Tape 21, line 163)

In tests, it is more common for examples to involve pronominal subjects rather than lexical ones, which in the case of third person nominals in Kutenai are implicit, reflected in the absence of any marking with proximate participants and by the obviative subject suffix with obviative participants functioning as subject. In the examples in (21) and (22), the proximate subject of the matrix clause is implicit, but the nonobviative form of the complement verb indicates that the subject of both clauses are the same.

(21) warna qakiʔ?-ni k-saniskuʔni
say:INDIC SUBORD-sick
'Note, he [pros] said he [pros] was sick.' (Tape 71, Second Part, line 308)

(22) qakiʔ?-ni xma-k mat-ʔ-is
say:INDIC hypothe-SUBORD beat-2PL
'He [pros] said he [pros] could outrun you.' (Tape 126, Side B, line 28)
But in the examples in (23) and (24), the fact that the subordinate verb is inflected for an obviative subject indicates that its subject is distinct from the matrix subject and is to be interpreted as something from the preceding text distinct from the proximate participant.

(23) qaki?-ni k-sahan-s
    say-INDIC SUBORD-base-OBV
    ‘He [prox] said it [obv] was hot.’ (Tape 20, Second Part, line 24)

(24) lexa-s qalwiy-ni ṭunak k-qaqapp-s
    then-INDIC think-INDIC hawk SUBORD-be.true-OBV
    ‘Then Hawk [prox] thought it [obv] was true.’ (Tape 21, line 17)

The notion of reference applicable to the notion of cocurrence includes apparently semantically empty subjects of zero-valence verbs like wakulukut ‘rain’. Contrast, for example, the example in (25), in which the matrix subject is first person, and the complement verb is not inflected for obviative subject, with the example in (26), in which the matrix subject is third person and the complement verb is inflected for obviative subject.

(25) hu qalwiy-ni k-waššqulul
    1 think-INDIC SUBORD-tan
    ‘I think that it [prox] rained’ (E)

(26) qalwiy-ni k-waššqulul-s
    think-INDIC SUBORD-base-OBV
    ‘He [prox] thinks that it [obv] rained’ (E)

A number of the examples above illustrate instances in which the noncoocurrenceality of the subjects in the two clauses can be inferred from the fact that the matrix subject is proximate and the complement subject is obviative. But the opposite situation, in which it is the matrix subject that is obviative and the complement subject that is proximate, while less common, is also possible. The two sentences in (27) and (28) differ only as to which of the two nominals, the matrix subject or the complement subject, is proximate.

(27) qaki?-ni maši k-qawiš-s
    say-INDIC Mary SUBORD-base-OBV
    ‘Mary [prox] said that he [obv] danced.’ (E)

In (27), the matrix subject is proximate, as indicated by the lack of obviative marking on both the subject maši ‘Mary’ and on the verb qaki? ‘say’, while the complement subject is obviative, as is indicated by the obviative subject suffix -s on the complement verb qawiš ‘dance’. In (28), in contrast, the matrix subject is obviative, as indicated by obviative marking on both the matrix subject maši ‘Mary-obv’ and on the matrix verb qakiši ‘say-obv’, while the complement subject is proximate, as indicated by the absence of obviative marking on the complement verb kawiš ‘dance’.
The choice between the two forms in (27) and (28) is determined by the same sort of discourse factors that in general determine the assignment of proximate. Both of these sentences were provided by a native speaker in a elicitation situation in response to the English prompts 'Mary said that he danced', the form in (27) first and that in (28) second. Thus (28) is not simply a sentence that is judged acceptable. Furthermore, (28) is particularly natural since the matrix subject is an overt noun phrase while the complement subject is proximal. There is in general a preference in any situation in which one nominal involves an overt noun and the other nominal for the proximal use to be the one chosen as proximate. The reasons for this are not syntactic but simply reflect the fact that the discourse conditions in which proximal reference occurs are similar to those favoring proximate choice: a proximal reference occurs only when the referent is highly accessible in the preceding discourse, while overt noun phrases are more often used when their referent is somewhat less accessible. For this reason, (28) is a very natural way to express the meaning in question. The form in (27) would be natural in a discourse context in which the referent of the matrix subject is going to play a major role in the subsequent discourse, or in which the referent of the complement subject was already obviative in the preceding discourse.

The next set of examples to be discussed are examples from texts analogous to the example in (28), with an obviative matrix subject and a proximate complement subject. The example in (29), for example, occurs in a discourse context in which the referent of the complement clause is referred to in the immediately preceding discourse and is proximate there, while the referent of the matrix subject, the nupika (analogous to Algonquian miwite), is not referred to in the immediately preceding text and was obviative when last referred to, about ten clauses previously.

(29) las-sa n-umika-s i ni-s s nupika-s pal qa
then-OBV for-Know-OBV-INDIC the-OBV nupika-OBV give not

Then the nupika (obv) knew that he [prox] was not

second-hand [obv]." (Tape 126, Side A, line 86)

The example in (30) is analogous with one difference. Here, the subject of the matrix verb is obviative to the object of the complement-clause. But it is otherwise analogous, with the matrix subject obviative and the complement subject proximate.

(30) k’umika-s ni-s k-vahani kwil-nya
say-KNOW-OBV the-OBV S城orKANG-GEN-INDIC

he [obv] knew that they [prox] were angry at him [obv]." (Beau Test 6/7, Wolf, line 10)
Here the referents of both the matrix subject and the complement subject are mentioned in the immediately preceding discourse, and the sentence in (30) continues their respective roles as proximate and obviative from the preceding discourse. From this, we can understand why the preceding discourse determines the fact that the matrix subject here will be obviative and the complement subject proximate.

In situations like that in (30) in which the matrix subject is nominal to the complement object, there exist discourse context aside, a second syntactic way to express the meaning in question. The pair of elected examples in (31) and (32) illustrate the two possibilities, in (31) with the matrix subject proximate and the complement subject obviative, in (32) with the reverse situation.

(31) ma+î qawîyî-n ‘n k-wukal’-âps
Mary [PROJ] thinks that her [OBJ] saw her [PROJ].

(32) ma+î-s qawîyî-s ‘n k-wukal.
Mary [OBJ] thinks that her [PROJ] saw her [OBJ].

The example in (32) is analogous to the text example in (30). The example in (31) expresses the same basic meaning as that in (32), but with the matrix subject proximate and the complement subject obviative. Note, however, that this entails that the complement object be proximate, since it is referential to the matrix subject, and hence that the subordinate verb in (31) must be inverse, since its subject is obviative and its object proximate.

The text examples in (33) and (34) are analogous to (32) in that the matrix subject is proximate, the complement object is referential to the matrix subject, and hence proximate as well, and the complement subject is thus obviative, so the complement verb is an inverse. The assignment of proximate and obviative in (33) is somewhat surprising in that the two participants here have the reverse status in the immediately preceding text, the Kayokwe being obviative and the old man proximate, but the subsequent text suggests that this sentence involves a shift of point of view from that of the old man to that of the Kayokwe, and the shift requires that both participants be represented by overt noun phrases in (33), despite their prior being referred to in the immediately preceding text. This sentence is thus somewhat analogous to a paragraph-initial sentence in English.

(33) kuyukwe qawîyî-ni enki tayam-âsa ni ‘n sikuqanâ’n-s
Kayokwe think-PROJ FLY kill-INVERSE the-OBV old-man-OBV
‘The Kayokwe [PROJ] thought that the old man [OBJ] would kill them [PROJ].’

The example in (34) differs in that here syntactic factors dictate the assignment of proximate and obviative, since the complement subject is possessed by a nominal that is referential to the matrix subject and hence it would not be possible for the complement subject to be proximate. As a result, the complement verb must be inverse.
The possibility of a higher clause with an obviative subject and its complement clause with a pronoun subject can also arise in cases in which there are two levels of embedding, in which the complement of the main clause itself contains a further complement. The text example in (35) illustrates this possibility.

(35) qa'iwi-y-ni k-šašt qa'iwi-y-s kuyuči-s k17-in.
Think INDIRECT SUBORD-FUT think INDIRECT Kuyokwe-OBV SUBORD-HE
He [pros] thought that he would think that it was he [pros].
(Boos Text 72, line 65)

In (35), we have three verbs, the main verb qa'iwi-y-ni ‘think’, its complement verb qa'iwi-y-s ‘think’ (in nonindicative obviative form), and the lower verb kšašt ‘be’, which is the complement of the lower of the two verbs meaning ‘think’. Here, the subject of the main clause is contextual in the subject of the most deeply embedded verb while the subject of the intermediate verb is different (kuyucic ‘Kuyokwe-obj’). In this case, the subject of the highest and lowest verbs are pronominal, while the subject of the intermediate verb is obviative. But the relation between the intermediate clause and the lowest clause is analogous to the situation illustrated in (28), (29), and (30) above, with the subject of the main verb obviative and the subject of the subordinate verb pronominal.

Another situation in which the matrix subject can be obviative and the complement subject pronominal arises with the indefinite subject construction. The indefinite subject construction is characterized by a distinct verbal suffix -(e)nam, simple examples of which are illustrated in (36) and (37).

(36) tuxa-s sukakati-nam-ni
Then-OBV many-INFL SUB-INFL
‘Now there were a great number of people there.’
(Coyote and Yawukyaram Text, line 369)

(37) n'naanxam-nam-ni qaky-am-ni
Indirect-outcome INDIRECT SUB-INFL say-INDF SUB-INFL
‘They came out and said’
(Boos Text 63, Coyote and Deer, p. 51)

The example in (36) illustrates one stage of the indefinite subject construction, one corresponding to the English use of the noun ‘people’. The example in (37) illustrates what is probably the most common use of this construction, where an actual group of people are denoted, but the exact makeup of the group is vague and where the identity of those in the group is unimportant in the discourse. In (37), this group of people are the inhabitants of a town who are mentioned a number of times in the preceding text. As the example in (34) illustrates, the referent of the indefinite subject suffix is often understood to be the same across a
sequence of clauses in discourse. The indefinite subject construction is only used with intransitive verbs, the passive construction filling this role with transitive verbs in which the "semantic subject" is indefinite in the sense associated with the indefinite subject construction.

Indefinite subjects can be proximate or obviative. The examples in (36) and (37) involve proximate indefinite subjects, there being no major human referents in the discourse context competing for proximate status. When indefinite subjects compete with a clearly defined human referent for proximate status, the indefinite subject (almost?) always loses, and is thus obviative. This often happens in sentences containing more than one clause, and such sentences thus are one case to examine obviation operating across clauses. If there is a more clearly defined human referent in the sentence, it will normally be proximate and the indefinite subject will be obviative. Example (38) illustrates this with a proximate matrix subject and an obviative complement subject.

(38) łaa-s  k'apxa  miihái
dom-OVB SUBORD-know  boy
  tuxa  k-q  buk  haqapá+ni-nam-ís
  almost SUBORD-LOC finish  talk-INDEF:SUBJ:OBJ
  "Then the boy knew that the conversation was about over."
  (Literally: Then the boy [pros] knew that the people [obj] were almost
   finished talking.)
  (Tape 71, Second Part, line 221)

In (38), the indefinite subject is the complements subject, but in other cases it is the matrix subject. In such cases, following the principle that indefinite subjects lose out for proximate status to more clearly defined human referents, the matrix subject is normally proximate and the subordinate subject obviative. Examples illustrating this are given in (39) and (40).

(39)  qae+wý-nam-ís  k-qešk  qa  ṣuqš-iːŋ
  think-INDEF:SUBJ  SUBORD-LOC not  kill PASS
  they thought that they would not kill him.
  (Literally: they [obj] thought that they [pros] would not kill him [pros])
  (Bear Test 72: Pink Coat, line 74)

In (39), the subordinate clause is grammatically passive, but its agent is understood to have the same referent as the subject of the matrix clause. The use of the passive construction, where the agent is interpreted to be the same as the indefinite subject in a preceding clause is actually very common in texts. The example in (40) is similar except that here we have two levels of embedding, the main clause subject being an obviative indefinite subject, the intermediate subject being proximate, and the lowest subject being obviative, but distinct in reference from the main clause subject.

(40)  qacy-am-ís-ní  k-qáki  k-qí  qéqáp-s
  say-INDEF SUBORD-INDIC SUBORD-say  SUBORD-not be-so-OVB
  "They [obj] say the [pros] said it [obj] was not so."
  (Tape 127, Last Part, line 99)
The next set of examples illustrate cases in which both the subject of the matrix clause and the subject of the complement clause are objective. Since more than one nominal in a sentence can be objective, some of these examples involve cases in which the subjects of the two clauses are coreferential, while others involve cases in which the subjects are not coreferential. Consider first a case of the former sort, given in (41) in which the subjects of the two clauses are coreferential.

(41) qa-wiyi-s i tu-matnat wi-kamu-naps kiystery skinkut-s
think-OBV-INDIC make-fan-of-family.of (7)-INV Coyote-OBV
"Coyote thought he would make fun of his family."
(Tape NS.7, Story 3, line 79)

In (41), the proximate nominal is the object of the complement clause, while both subjects refer to Coyote and are objective. Note that the complement verb here is inverse, since its subject is objective and its object is proximate.

The next example involves a case in which both subjects are objective but are not coreferential. In (42), there are four referents, one proximate and three objective. The possessor of the complement of the copula verb is proximate, while the matrix subject, the complement subject, and the complement of the copula in the complement clause are all objective.

(42) n-upxe-si ci-n yi-s ki-tilin-s si-li-s
INDIC see-OBV INDIC only that-OBV SUBORD-see-OBV that/ke/PASS
"They [obv] saw that they [obv] was only his [prox] blanket [obv]."
(Buss Text 72, line 66)

2. Adverbial Clauses

The principles illustrated so far with complement clauses also apply to subordinate clauses serving an adverbial function. In (43), the matrix subject is objective, the sole role of the proximate participant being that of object in the subordinate clause (which is thus inverse).

(43) tax-a-s fat qa-lik-si "sak sak sak"
then-OBV IMPERF that-OBV SAY-INDIC 3-s
"Then they said ‘sak sak sak’ when they [obv]。“
(Buss Text 72: Pine Cone, line 23)

Subordinate clauses serving as adverbial function often occur as nominals, consisting of a determiner plus a clause, as in (44).

(44) tax-a-s ni?-s k-aigananuq+ku7-naps
then-OBV the-OBV SUBORD-carry-across-on horseback-INV
"Then when he [obv] packed her, [prox] to the other side, she [prox] took off running."
(Chief and Ogawa Text, line 234)
In (44), the subordinate clause is nominalized, consisting of the determiner ni's 'the-obj' plus the subordinate clause khaqgarakpikhunaps. Note that the determiner is marked oblique, indicating that this nominal consisting of the subordinate clause is oblique.

3. "Headless" Relative Clauses

The final type of clause I will discuss is that of relative clauses. Relative clauses are not common in Tson, except for headless relative clauses, in which the structure is Det-S, where the relationship NP (or DetP) is nominal to a "pronominal" element in the relative clause. In (45), the element in question is oblique subject in the relative clause, as indicated by the oblique subject suffix on the verb, and oblique object in the matrix clause.

(45) Tesa-s miyax-ni ni? s snaqyoc-s
Then-OBJ chase-INDC the-OBJ roll-OBV
[He [pron] ran after that which was rolling [obj]].
[literally 'Hei [pron] ran after the [pro] that [obj] was rolling' or 'Hei [pro] ran after the thing [obj] such that [pro] was rolling'.
(Coté and Yawukiyam Text, line 44)

Once again, the general principle that concomitant nominals in different clauses must agree in obvation is satisfied here, the element being obative in both clauses. Note that in these cases the concomitant might be viewed as arising from quantifier binding, the structure of the NP being something like the x such that x was rolling', though the Kuten structure is more superficially simply 'the [it was rolling}'. In discussing these, I will refer to the Det-S as the matrix clause nominal. In this example ni's snaqyooc the [it was rolling] and the possibly pronominal reference in the relative clause (the 'it' in the gloss 'the [it was rolling]') as the relative clause nominal.

In (45), the nominal containing the relative clause is obiative. But it can also be proximate. In (46) for example, the matrix clause nominal is the sole nominal in the matrix clause and is proximate.

(46) Ral yunqas-ni k-aqag-awiyqai-s
Many-INDC pick-buckw. OBJ
[There were many who picked buckweeters].
[literally 'the ones [pron] such that they [pro] picked buckweeters, [obj] were many'.
(Boas Text 27: The Deluge, line 26)

The example in (46) also illustrated the possibility of the determination being absent.

In (47), the matrix clause nominal is proximate and subject, with an underived obiative object (and thus an exception to the tendency for pronominal elements to be the preferred choice for proximates), and the relative clause nominal is also proximate and subject, with the complement of the copula verb obiative.
Relative clauses sometimes involve a type of syntactic nominalization (by which I mean a nominalization that results in a nominal or noun phrase, not one that involves a noun, analogous to gerund constructions in English) that involves a combination of a proclitic ya- as the verb complex and a suffix (or enclitic) -ki, as in (48), both glossed ‘NON-.

(48)  ekal samarluyi-ni mana-niski4 nits-s hu

‘Your mother [prox] will be angry because of what [obj] I did to her [prox].’

Nominalizations involving ya- and -ki are most commonly used where the element in the relative clause that is coreferential to the nominal itself is not functioning as a syntactic argument (a subject or primary object) in the relative clause. In (48), for example, it is functioning as a secondary object of the ditransitive verb qakin ‘do to’ whose argument structure is ‘A [subj] does B [secondary obj] to C [primary obj].’

The example in (49) is a second example of a headless relative clause involving ya-ki nominalization though here it is the subject in the relative clause that is involved.

(49)  xa-s k-upxa nits-s ya-qasin-nut-aps-ki

‘Then she [pro] saw the one [obj] who had been after her [prox].’

In (49), the matrix clause nominal is obviative, again the object of a direct transitive verb, while the coreferential relative clause nominal is obviative, serving as the subject in the relative clause. Since the subject of the matrix clause is proximate and is coreferential to the object of the relative clause, the latter is proclitic as well, and the subordinate verb is inverse as a result.

The example in (50) is a fairly rare type of example of a verb involving an inverse verb both of whose arguments are obviative.
(50)  ꦪꦶꦏꦴꦤ꧀ꦠ꧀ ꦱꦸꦥꦸꦱ, t k-鹭 t ꦧꦶꦁ꧀-ꦩꦺ
ILBIROD-subject see, and SUBORD-PRTB ask-INSTR
y-a-ꦱꦤ꧀-ꦥꦺ-ꦱ-ꦏ-ꦱ-ꦶ-邳
SBJ-own-INVREC-OBV-NOM
'When he [pro] got there and started asking about the one [obj] who owned her [job].'
( Literally: 'When he [pro] got there and started asking about the one [obj] such that the [obj] owned her [job].')
(Tape 21, line 33)

The use of the inverse in the subordinate clause in (50) is apparently motivated by the fact that although both arguments are objective, the object is recoverable from the preceding text while the subject is not, and hence in some sense more topical.

Contrast this with the example in (51), in which again both arguments in the relative clause are objective, but in which the verb is direct rather than inverse.

SBJ-2PL-subj be-OBV grass-OBV SBJ-3PL-make-OBV doe-OBV
'i was grass that he had made into a deer' (literally: 'that one [obj] such that he [obj] had made it [job] into a deer."
[obv] was grass, [obj]'"
(Basas Text 67, Wolf, line 8)

The proximate element does not occur in this sentence but is referred to in the surrounding text.

The example in (52) is another example in which both nominals in the relative clause are objective.

SUBORD-see like-OBV NOUN-3PL-be-like-OBV-NOPL main-OBV
'saw what the men were like'
( Literally: 'he [pro] saw the thing [job] such that the men [obj] were like it [obj]'"
(Tape NOS 26, No. 2, line 13)

In (52), both the subject and the understood pronoun complement in the relative clause are objective.

It should be noted that one sometimes finds what are apparently instances of the same relative clause construction in which there is no determiner, but in which the ya-ki nominalization is used, as in (53).

SBJ-NOM say-INSRC SOKAS-in that way do-NOPL Wolf
'i will tell you what [obj] Wolf [pro] did long ago [obj]'"
(Basas Text 67: Wolf, line 1)
4. "Headed" Relative Clauses

The examples above all involve so-called headless relative clauses. Less common in texts are relative clauses with heads. Kutenai employs so-called internally-headed relative clauses, where the structure is exactly the same as that of so-called headless relative clauses, namely Det + S, except that the relative clause nominal in the relative clause is an overt nominal rather than being pronominal.

(54) nǐʔ-s ma k-wukat paaxíy-s misaʔ  the-OBJ ASP SUBORD-see woman-OBJ Mike
  nʔ-ip-s-t  INDIC -die-OBJ-INDIC

'The woman that Mike saw died.' (E)
(Literally: 'The [OBB] [Mike [PROX] saw the woman [OBB]] [died].' or 'The one [OBB] such that Mike [PROX] saw the woman [OBB] died.')

The matrix subject in (54) is everything preceding the last word, ñp̃isi 'die', which is the matrix verb. The matrix subject consists of the determiner ñl̃s 'the-OBB', followed by ma k-wukat paaxíy-s misaʔ, which is well-formed as a clause in the subordinate mood meaning 'Mike saw the woman'. Hence a literal translation would be 'the [Mike saw the woman] died'. The obviation system provides a way of indicating what is the so-called 'head' in the relative clause, in other words which nominal in the relative clause corresponds to the head in the English translation, or more accurately, which nominal in the relative clause is coreferential to the nominal in the matrix clause. In (54), the matrix nominal is subjective, as indicated both by the objective form of the determiner ñl̃s and by the objective subject form of the matrix verb ñp̃isi 'die'. Hence the so-called 'head', the nominal inside the relative clause coreferential to the matrix nominal, must be objective as well, and since the sole objective nominal in the relative clause is paaxíy-s 'woman-obl', it must be the 'head'.

Compare (54) to (55), in which the matrix nominal and the coreferential nominal in the relative clause are pronouns.

(55) ñl̃ paaxíy-s ma k-wukat misaʔ-s ñʔ-ip-ñt  the woman ASP SUBORD-see Mike-OBJ INDIC -die-INDIC

'The woman that saw Mike died.'
(Literally: 'the one [PROX] such that she [PROX] saw Mike [OBB] died'.) (E)

Because of the position of the nominal paaxíy 'woman', (55) is less obviously an internally-headed relative clause, but I believe that it is probably best understood as one in which the nominal paaxíy 'woman' is fronted within the relative clause, the word order most likely reflecting the fact that this is an elicited sentence with somewhat complex structure whose order mirrors the order in the English as an artifact of the elicitation situation. Most instances in texts of relative clauses with an overt 'head' employ the typical predicate-initial order of Kutenai.
The following examples illustrate examples of relative clauses from texts. They reflect the same basic principles that coreferential nominals must agree in obviation across clause boundaries, but that otherwise there are no syntactic restrictions on the assignment of obviation.

(56) sit haieties-mu-né ni7-s k-ìa ?aymaxu
   cuppaj?i-s
   AMP scare-INDIC the-OBV SUBORD-back carry-two
deer-OBV
   "he scared them with the two Deer he was carrying"
   (LITERALLY: heQ [prox] scared them [obj] with the ones [obj] such that
   heQ [prox] was carrying two of deer [obj])
   (Boas Text 66: Coyote and Deer, line 42)

In (56), the proximate participant is denoted by the subject of both the matrix and relative clauses, while the obviative participant is object of both clauses.

The following example is one in which the proximate nominal is in the relative clause and the only nominal in the matrix clause is obviative.

(57) n-angil-s-i ni7-s k-mitva
   INDIC go-distance before-dying-OBV INDIC the-OBV SUBORD-shoot
cuppaj?i-s
deer-OBV
   "The deer [obj] that he [prox] shot went a distance before dying."
   (LITERALLY: the [the shot the deer] went a distance before dying) or "the one
   [obj] such that he [prox] shot the deer [obj] went a distance before
dying"
   (Gravelle & Morgan 1978/1989, page 109)

It is clear that the nominal ni7-s kmítva cuppaj?i 'the [the shot the deer]' refers to the deer and not to the one who shot the deer, since the determiner ni7-s 'the-OBV' is marked obviative and the matrix verb nangil-s-i is marked as having an obviative subject, which means that the so-called 'head' in the relative clause must be obviative, and the nominal cuppaj?i 'deer-OBV' in the relative clause satisfies this, while the understood subject does not, since it is proximate, as indicated by the absence of obviative subject marking on the subordinate verb kmítva 'shoot'. I assume, though I do not have the actual data for this, that if the determiner and the matrix verb were proximate in form, then the sentence would have meant 'the person who shot the deer went a distance before dying'.

The example in (58) is analogous: the fact that this nominal refers to the tail is clear from the fact that the determiner is obviative and the nominal for tail in the relative clause is obviative.

(58) ni7-s k'iyaki k'inet latineqmatna-s
   the-OBV SUBORD-put up chicken hawk tail-OBV
   'Then they watched [the tail [obj] that Chicken Hawk [prox] had put up].'
   (LITERALLY: the things [obj] such that Chicken Hawk [prox] had put up the
tail [obj])
   (Boas Text 277: The Deluge, Line 134)
The example in (50) involves two relative clauses, one embedded within the other, although this example, like the occasional example in texts, violates one of the principles I have described in that it contains two proximate nominalis, the matrix subject ʔaqɪmənkiʔ ‘Indians’ and the embedded nominal niʔtɪqat ‘the man’.

(50) ʔaqqaʔʔ-ni ʔaqɪmənkiʔ niʔ-t s ya-qakiʔ-ti
be-that.way-P3SG Indians the-OBV NOM-say-NOM
niʔ k’upsnəm niʔ tɪqat
the SUBJ-OBV be.on.way the man
‘Indians are like what the man who was on his way said’
(Literally: ‘Indian(s) [prox] are like the [the man was on his way] said if’ or ‘Indians [prox] are like the things [obj] such that the one [prox] is on his way said in [obj]’)

(NG,21, Story 10, line 38)

Apart from this anomaly, the nominal niʔ tɪqat ‘the man’ in (50) is functioning as the subject of the more deeply embedded verb k’upsnəm ‘be on his way’ with the resultant meaning ‘the man was on his way’, which combines with the determiner niʔ ‘the’ to form a nominal whose free English translation is ‘the man who was on his way’ and whose more literal translation is ‘the [the man was on his way]’. This nominal in turn serves as the subject of qaʔiʔ ‘say’, yielding a clause meaning ‘the man who was on his way said it’, which is then nominalized with ya-k1 and combined with the determiner niʔʔ to form a nominal whose free translation is ‘what the man who was on his way said’ and whose literal translation is ‘the [the man was on his way] said it’. The fact that the determiner niʔʔ is obviative in (50) makes it clear that the meaning is ‘what the man who was on his way said rather than the man who was on his way who said it’.

5. Conclusion

The many examples discussed here are primarily intended to illustrate a negative conclusion that there is no evidence of any syntactic conditions governing obviation across clause boundaries apart from those that also apply within clauses, that there can be no more than one proximate per sentence and coeferential nominalis must agree in obviation. In particular there is no evidence of any conditions reminiscent of ‘binding’ conditions, no conditions by which proximateis are preferred in higher positions than obvatives.

NOTES

1 I will use the commonly used name “Kutenai” throughout this paper. The name used by speakers of the language in Canada is “Kumaski”. The research for this paper was supported by Research Grant 410-88-0257 from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and by the National Science
Foundation Grant # 9120438. I am indebted to Elizabeth Gravelle, a native speaker of Kutenai, for transcribing and translating the texts from which examples are cited here, and to Lawrence Morgan both for discussion and for making various of his materials available to me. See Morgan (1993) for a detailed description of the phonology and morphology of Kutenai.

The examples cited in this paper are of four types and are annotated accordingly. Some of the examples are from texts, either ones published in Boas (1918) or ones collected by Lawrence Morgan and transcribed and translated by Elizabeth Gravelle. Examples from texts of the latter category are identified by tape number. The examples from these texts are annotated accordingly. The examples from Boas (1918) have been converted to the modern orthography by me. Both types of text examples may contain some errors because some forms I have not had the opportunity to check. The remaining two types of examples cited are ones produced in elicitation (marked E) or ones prescribed for judgment (marked J). Where possible, I cite text examples, since I assume these to be more reliable data. I also assume that elicited examples are more reliable than examples judged acceptable. While text examples are most reliable, examples of the other sorts are often better examples for illustrating the points being made, and such examples are only given on the assumption that analogous (though perhaps more opaque) examples from texts could be provided. For this reason, I will in many places in this paper provide both kinds of examples, some of types E or J for clarity, and some from texts to show that the construction illustrated is actually used.

The fourth word in (7), represented as tê mission, involves the combination of the intransitive prefix tê- with the verb stem -ish 'be'. When the prefix tê- (or the subordinate prefix k-) combines with a stem beginning with /i/, the result is a negative consonant tê (or kê). I represent this as the hyphenation for morpheme boundaries by placing the negative symbol - above the hyphen, conveying that morphologically it goes with the stem that follows while phonetically it goes with the consonant that precedes.

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