

Workshop "Prominence in Pragmatics"

Societas Linguistica Europaea

Leiden, Sept. 2-5, 2015

**“Inherent” vs. “induced” referential  
prominence in Movima**

Katharina Haude  
CNRS (SeDyL)  
haude@vjf.cnrs.fr

# "Inherent prominence"

= Entities that are assumed to be accessible/identifiable in the hearer's mind; entities whose viewpoint is most easily taken (cf. Gildea 2012)

- Speech-act participants
- Human referents
- Discourse topics
- ...

→ Referential hierarchies

Person: 1/2 > 3

Animacy: human > (non-human) animate > non-human

Discourse status: topical (known/given/identifiable) > less topical

## "Inherent vs. "induced" prominence

- "Inherent prominence" is directly reflected in the grammar of transitive clauses in Movima (isolate, Bolivia): one syntactic slot is reserved for the more prominent argument.
- It stands in opposition to the syntactic means used to attract the hearer's attention to a referent (clefting, relativization, wh-questioning): these constructions can only be accessed by the inherently non-prominent argument.
- This illustrates the contrast between two types of prominence:
  - "Prominence" as a property of the discourse referent ("inherent")
  - "Prominence" as a linguistic means (syntactic, prosodic) to attract the hearer's attention ("induced")

# Movima: some background information

- South-Western Amazon (Bolivia)
- Isolate
- Heavily endangered: ~500 adult speakers, no L1 learners
- Fieldwork and description since 2001 (e.g. Haude 2006)
- Annotated spontaneous discourse corpus of >130,000 words produced by ~50 speakers



## Inherent prominence in Movima: basic transitive clauses

A prominent participant is encoded as "PROX"(the internal argument).

→ High-ranking person (1 > 2 > 3)

→ Human (human > non-human animate > inanimate)

→ Discourse topic

[PRED

=PROX]

(--OBV



1

2

3

2pl

3

Morphological marking on the verb indicates semantic roles

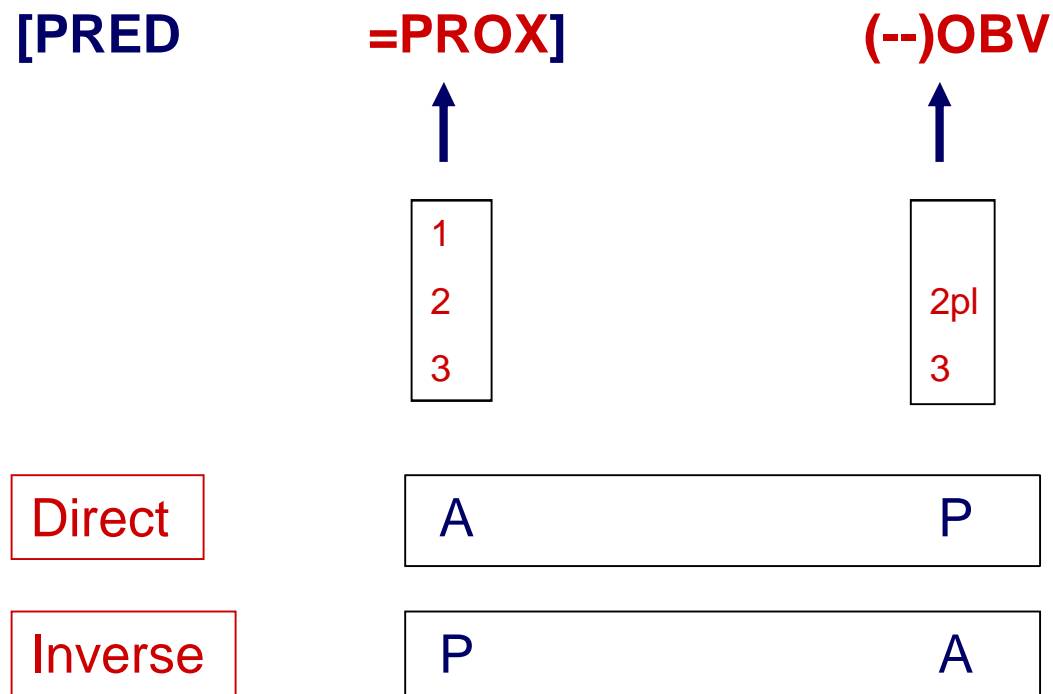
# Inherent prominence in Movima: basic transitive clauses

A prominent participant is encoded as "PROX"(the internal argument).

→ High-ranking person (1 > 2 > 3)

→ Human (human > non-human animate > inanimate)

→ Discourse topic



# The person hierarchy

1sg/pl > 2sg > 2pl > 3

Direct

*ew-na* =∅ --as  
hold-DR =1sg --3n.ab  
'I held it.'

Inverse

*ew-kay* =∅ --as  
hold-INV =1sg --3n.ab  
'It held me.'

-affix, = "internal" enclitic, -- "external" enclitic, < > infix; 1 first person, 2 second person, 3 third person, A agent, ab absential, ART article, DETRANS detransitivizer, DR direct, DSC discontinuous, INV inverse, LV linking vowel, m masculine, n neuter, OBL oblique, OBV obviative, P patient, pl plural, PRO free pronoun, pst past, REL relativizer, sg singular.

# The person hierarchy

1sg/pl > **2sg** > 2pl > 3

Direct

*ew-na =n* --as  
hold-DR =2 --3n.ab  
'You held it.'

Inverse

*ew-kay-a =n* --as  
hold-INV-LV =2 --3n.ab  
'It held you.'

-affix, = "internal" enclitic, -- "external" enclitic, < > infix; 1 first person, 2 second person, 3 third person, A agent, ab absential, ART article, DETRANS detransitivizer, DR direct, DSC discontinuous, INV inverse, LV linking vowel, m masculine, n neuter, OBL oblique, OBV obviative, P patient, pl plural, PRO free pronoun, pst past, REL relativizer, sg singular.



# The person hierarchy

1sg/pl > 2sg > 2pl > 3

Direct

*ew-na* =∅  
hold-**DR** =1sg  
'I held (you).'

Inverse

*ew-kay* =∅  
hold-**INV** =1sg  
'(You) held me.'

-affix, = "internal" enclitic, -- "external" enclitic, < > infix; 1 first person, 2 second person, 3 third person, A agent, ab absential, ART article, DETRANS detransitivizer, DR direct, DSC discontinuous, INV inverse, LV linking vowel, m masculine, n neuter, OBL oblique, OBV obviative, P patient, pl plural, PRO free pronoun, pst past, REL relativizer, sg singular.

# The person hierarchy

1sg/pl > 2sg > 2pl > 3

Direct

*ew-na* = $\emptyset$       --y'bi  
hold-DR =1sg      --2pl  
'I held you (pl).'

Inverse

*ew-kay* = $\emptyset$       --y'bi  
hold-INV =1sg      --2pl  
'You (pl) held me.'

-affix, = "internal" enclitic, -- "external" enclitic, < > infix; 1 first person, 2 second person, 3 third person, A agent, ab absential, ART article, DETRANS detransitivizer, DR direct, DSC discontinuous, INV inverse, LV linking vowel, m masculine, n neuter, OBL oblique, OBV obviative, P patient, pl plural, PRO free pronoun, pst past, REL relativizer, sg singular.

# The person hierarchy

1sg/pl > 2sg > **2pl** > 3

Direct

*ew-na =nkwet --as*  
hold-**DR** =2pl --3n.ab  
'You (pl) held it.'

Inverse

*ew-kay-a =nkwet --as*  
hold-**INV**-LV =2pl --3n.ab  
'It held you (pl).'

-affix, = "internal" enclitic, -- "external" enclitic, < > infix; 1 first person, 2 second person, 3 third person, A agent, ab absential, ART article, DETRANS detransitivizer, DR direct, DSC discontinuous, INV inverse, LV linking vowel, m masculine, n neuter, OBL oblique, OBV obviative, P patient, pl plural, PRO free pronoun, pst past, REL relativizer, sg singular.

# Animacy

1. Scenarios with a **human actor and an inanimate undergoer** are always expressed with the direct construction.

Direct

*ew-na='ne*                      *os*                      *wa:ka:di*  
hold-DR=3f                      ART.n.pst                      lasso  
'She held the lasso.'

2. Scenarios with **inanimate actor and an animate/human undergoer** are always expressed with the inverse construction.

Inverse

*ew-kay-a='ne*                      *os*                      *alamre*  
hold-INV-LV=3f                      ART.n.pst                      wire  
'A wire withheld her.'

3. Scenarios with **animals acting on human** or equally-ranked participants are more often expressed with the direct construction (Haude to appear)

## Discourse status

- Topic > less topical
  - evident from the frequent use of a pronoun for PROX and an NP for OBV

### Direct

*Jo'yaj os rulrul, tet<a>poja=as os pa:kona:na'a*  
 arrive ART jaguar frighten<DR>=3n.ab ART fox

'The jaguar arrived, it frightened the fox.'

### Inverse

*Jayna wele:te us oveniwankwa [...],*  
 DSC climb ART young\_man

*jayna julra-kay-a=us is so:te*  
 DSC win\_over-INV-LV=3M.AB ART other\_person

'Then the boy climbed up (because) he had been outwon by others.'

# "Induced prominence"

- Particular constructions render a discourse referent prominent:
  - Relativization
  - WH-question
  - Clefting
- These constructions establish or increase the identifiability of a referent
- They are *reserved* for the argument that is coded as non-prominent (i.e. OBV)

# Relativization

Headed relative clause: NP [*di'* verb=PROX]

Direct

*os*                      *kori:di*      [*di'*]      *ew-na=us*  
 ART.n.pst              stick          REL          hold-DR=3m.ab  
 'the/a stick that he held'

Inverse

*kis*                      *kwe:ya*      [*di'*]      *jema'*      *yey-kay-a=u*  
 ART.pl.ab              woman        REL          also          want-INV-LV=3m  
 '(the) women who want him, too' (= "women by whom he is wanted")

Relativization of PROX (only direct construction): antipassive

*kwey*

*kis*              *juyeni*      [*di'*]              *kwey*                      *yey-na*      (*n-a'ko*)  
 ART.pl.ab      person      REL                  DETRANS                  want-DR      (OBL-PRO.n)  
 '(the) people who want (that)'

# Clefting

Movima cleft: free pronoun + verb=PROX

Direct

**asko**                      *yey-na='ne*  
PRO.n.ab                      want-DR=3f  
'That is what she wants.'

Inverse

*os*                              *alamre,*      **asko**                              *ew-kay-a='ne*  
ART.n.pst                      wire              PRO.3n.ab                      hold-INV-LV=3f  
'The wire, that was what withheld her.'

Clefting of PROX (only direct construction): antipassive

*kwey*

**i'ne**      **kwey**                              *yey-na*                              (*n-a'ko*)  
PRO.f      DETRANS                              want-DR                              (OBL-PRO.n)  
'She is the one who wants (that.)'



# Wh-questions

WH-questions: Wh-predicate ART verb=PROX

Direct

**léla**      *kos*      *dewaj-na=nkwet*  
what\_is    ART.N.AB    see-DR=2PL  
'What did you (pl.) see?'

Inverse

**léla**      *kos*      *tarat-kay-a=nkwet*  
what\_is    ART.N.AB    heal-INV-LV=2PL  
'What healed you (pl.)?'

Questioning PROX (only direct construction): antipassive

*kwey*

**e:te**      **kaw**      *nokwa*      **vel-na**      (*n-a'ko*)  
who\_is    VALDECR    FUT      watch-DR    (OBL-PRO.N)  
'Who is going to look after (it)?'

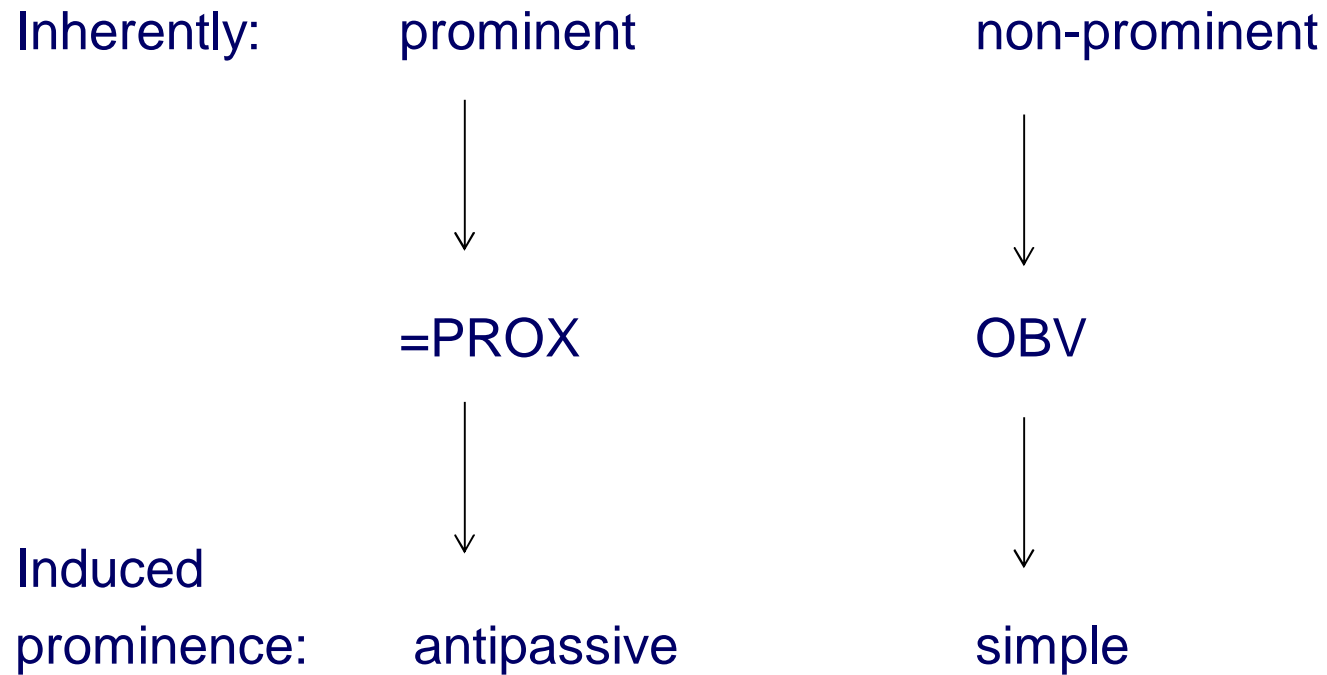
## Summary: prominence in Movima

"Inherent prominence" is related to properties of the referent (person, animacy, discourse status). In Movima, the inherent prominence of an argument's referent determines how the argument is encoded in a simple transitive construction (PROX or OBV).

Prominence can also be "induced" by special, pragmatically marked constructions such as relativization, clefting, and Wh-questions.

"Inherent" and "induced" prominence exclude each other in Movima: only an argument that is inherently non-prominent (and hence encoded as OBV) can receive induced prominence. For a prominent argument (encoded as PROX), a detransitivizing operation has to be used.

## Summary: prominence in Movima



# Conclusions

- Movima shows a contrast between topicality and syntactic subjecthood (cf. Keenan 1976; Aissen 1999); this is because the constructions that identify a subject (see Bickel 2011) in Movima have the function to make a referent identifiable.
- The distinction between the two types of "prominence" (parallel to topic/focus, background/foreground, etc.) should be made more explicit in the theoretical discussion.

## Solopaye - Thank you!



## References

- Aissen, Judith. 1999. Markedness and subject choice in Optimality Theory. *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory* 17: 673-711.
- Bickel, Balthasar. 2011. Grammatical relations typology. In *The Oxford Handbook of Grammatical Relations*, eds. Jae Jung Song, 399-444. Oxford: OUP.
- Gildea, Spike. 2012. The referential hierarchy and attention. *Faits de Langues* (39) (special issue *La Saillance*, eds. Katharina Haude and Annie Montaut): 33-47.
- Haude, Katharina. 2012. Saillance inhérente et saillance discursive en movima. *Faits de Langues* (39) (special issue *La Saillance*, eds. Katharina Haude and Annie Montaut): 169-180.
- Haude, Katharina. To appear. Animacy and inverse voice in Movima: a corpus study. *Anthropological Linguistics*.
- Keenan, Edward L. 1976. Towards a universal definition of "Subject". In *Subject and Topic*, Charles N. Li (ed.), 303-333. New York: Academic Press.