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

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"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

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

Diagrams:

- [PRED] =PROX] (Direct)
  1
  2
  3

- (--)OBV (Inverse)
  2pl
  3

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

$1_{sg/pl} > 2_{sg} > 2_{pl} > 3$

**Direct**

- *ew-na* $=\emptyset$ --as
- *hold-DR* $=1_{sg}$ --3n.ab

'It held it.'

**Inverse**

- *ew-kay* $=\emptyset$ --as
- *hold-INv* $=1_{sg}$ --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

$ew$-$na$ = $\emptyset$
hold-$DR$ = 1sg
'I held (you).'

Inverse

$ew$-$kay$ = $\emptyset$
hold-$INV$ = 1sg
'(You) held me.'
The person hierarchy

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

Direct

\[\text{ew-na} = \emptyset \quad \text{--y'bi}\]
\[\text{hold-DR} = 1sg \quad \text{--2pl}\]

'I held you (pl).'

Inverse

\[\text{ew-kay} = \emptyset \quad \text{--y'bi}\]
\[\text{hold-INV} = 1sg \quad \text{--2pl}\]

'You (pl) held me.'
The person hierarchy

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

Direct

ew-\textit{na} =nkweł --as
hold-\textit{DR} =2pl --3n.ab
“You (pl) held it.’

Inverse

ew-\textit{kay-a} =nkweł --as
hold-\textit{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.
1. Scenarios with a **human actor and an inanimate undergoer** are **always** expressed with the **direct** construction.

   **Direct**
   
   \[
   \text{ew-}na='ne \quad os \quad \text{wa:ka:di} \\
   \text{hold-DR=}3f \quad \text{ART.n.pst} \quad \text{lasso}
   \]
   
   'She held the lasso.'

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

   **Inverse**
   
   \[
   \text{ew-}kay-a='ne \quad os \quad \text{alamre} \\
   \text{hold-INV-LV=}3f \quad \text{ART.n.pst} \quad \text{wire}
   \]
   
   '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'ya
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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>os</th>
<th>kori:di</th>
<th>[di']</th>
<th>ew-na=us</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ART.n.pst</td>
<td>stick</td>
<td>REL</td>
<td>hold-DR=3m.ab</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

'the/a stick that he held'

Inverse

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>kis</th>
<th>kwe:ya</th>
<th>[di']</th>
<th>jema'</th>
<th>yey-kay-a=u</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ART.pl.ab</td>
<td>woman</td>
<td>REL</td>
<td>also</td>
<td>want-INV-LV=3m</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

'(the) women who want him, too' (= "women by whom he is wanted")

Relativization of PROX (only direct construction): antipassive

kwey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>kis</th>
<th>juyeni</th>
<th>[di']</th>
<th>kwey</th>
<th>yey-na</th>
<th>(n-a'ko)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ART.pl.ab</td>
<td>person</td>
<td>REL</td>
<td>DETRANS</td>
<td>want-DR</td>
<td>(OBL-PRO.n)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

'(the) people who want (that)'

15
Cletfting

Movima cleft: free pronoun + verb=PROX

### Direct

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>asko</th>
<th>yey-na='ne</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PRO.n.ab</td>
<td>want-DR=3f</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

'That is what she wants.'

### Inverse

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>os</th>
<th>alamre, asko</th>
<th>ew-kay-a='ne</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ART.n.pst</td>
<td>wire</td>
<td>PRO.3n.ab</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

hold-INV-LV=3f

'The wire, that was what withheld her.'

### Clefting of PROX (only direct construction): antipassive

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>i'ne</th>
<th>kwey</th>
<th>yey-na</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PRO.f</td>
<td>DETTRANS</td>
<td>want-DR</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(n-a'ko) (OBL-PRO.n)

'She is the one who wants (that.)'
**Wh-questions**

**WH-questions:** Wh-predicate ART verb=PROX

**Direct**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>tēla</th>
<th>kos</th>
<th>dewaj-na=nkweł</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>what_is</td>
<td>ART.N.AB</td>
<td>see-DR=2PL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

‘What did you (pl.) see?’

**Inverse**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>tēla</th>
<th>kos</th>
<th>tarał-kay-a=nkweł</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>what_is</td>
<td>ART.N.AB</td>
<td>heal-INV-LV=2PL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

‘What healed you (pl.)?’

**Questioning PROX (only direct construction): antipassive**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>eːłe</th>
<th>kaw</th>
<th>nokwa</th>
<th>vel-na</th>
<th>(n-a'ko)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>who_is</td>
<td>VALDECR</td>
<td>FUT</td>
<td>watch-DR</td>
<td>(OBL-PRO.N)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

‘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

Inherently: prominent → =PROX → non-prominent

Induced prominence: antipassive → OBV → simple
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


