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Is There a Nominal Predicate in Plains Cree?

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1. Introduction

This paper looks at the existence of nominal predicates in Plains Cree. In English, the nominal predicate occurs with an explicit copular verb like *be*. However, in Plains Cree, the nominal predicate is not obvious because the copular verb is not found. According to Blain (1999) and Déchaine (1997), a structurally dependent word order carries out the close interpretation of the copular construction in Plains Cree and the nominal predicate always comes before the subject in the copular construction (the nominal predicate hypothesis). As an example, the first occurring nominal expression (mostly a lexical noun) is construed as a predicate while the next nominal expression (mostly a demonstrative) is as a subject in verbless clauses in Plains Cree (as in example 1a). Even though a lexical noun and a demonstrative occur in reverse order in verbless clauses, this reversed order could not be interpreted as the copular construction (1b):

1. a. [môhkomân-a]-$_{PRED}$ [ô-hi]-$_{SUBJ}$
      knife.NI-0p   this-0p
      'These are knives'
   b. [ô-hi]-$_{DEM}$ [môhkomân-a]-$_{NOUN}$
      this-0p   knife.NI-0p
      'These knives'

(Déchaine 1997:105)

By virtue of the nominal predicate assumption, example (1a) consists of two independent DPs[1] (the nominal predicate and the subject) while the construction of [DEM, noun][2] forms a single DP in example (1b). For that reason, the fixed word order [noun, DEM] seems to be a crucial factor for the nominal predicate hypothesis. Upon closer examination of the DP constructions in Plains Cree, we find that the word order between the demonstrative and the noun is not completely pre-determined. Both [DEM, noun] and [noun, DEM] are syntactically same DPs:

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[1] Abbreviations : DP (determiner phrase), NP (noun phrase), DEM (demonstratives), PRED (predicate), SUBJ (subject), NA (animate noun), NI (inanimate noun), TI (transitive-inanimate goal), 0p (inanimate noun-plural), 0s (inanimate noun-singular), NOM (nominative), ACC (accusative), GEN (genitive), PAST (past tense), DEC (declarative).

[2] The square bracket in this paper indicates the fixed word order of constituents inside the square bracket. For instance, [DEM, noun] means that the demonstrative comes before noun.

2.   a. ni-wâpahtê-n   [môhkomân-NOUN ô-ma-DEM]DP
          I-see.TI-0s   knife.NI-0s   this-0s
          'I see this knife'

      b. ni-wâpahtê-n   [ô-ma-DEM   môhkomân-NOUN]DP
          I-see.TI-0s   this-0s   knife.NI-0s
          'I see this knife'

(Déchaine 1997:106)

In example (2), the lexical noun and the demonstrative inside DP occur without any determined order. Interestingly, the order of [noun, DEM] as a DP appears as the same form as the nominal predicate construction. In this case, it is not clear whether [noun, DEM] indicates a copular construction or a single DP. One thinks that [noun, DEM] in example (2a) is considered as the copular construction and is possibly translated as the following; *'I see that this is the knife.'*

       In this paper, I examine the existence of nominal predicates with two perspectives; (1) whether or not the copular construction in Plains Cree is determined by the fixed word-order [noun, DEM] (2) and whether or not demonstratives in Plains Cree serve the same function in [noun, DEM] and [DEM, noun]. In section 2, I review previous discussions - mainly in Déchaine (1997) and Blain (1999) - based on essential observations of the nominal predicate hypothesis. In section 3, I evaluate the features of demonstratives in Plains Cree and I propose that demonstratives in Plains Cree have two different functions: first as determiners, and second as "discourse markers"[3]. In section 4, if assumed that there is not a fixed word order to denote the copular construction in Plains Cree, I explore where the meaning of the copular construction may come from. In section 5, I reexamine potential examples found in the nominal predicate construction. In addition, I demonstrate that the notion 'equational sentence' (Bloomfield 1958, 1962, Wolfart 1997, Ahenakew 1987) is valid in some cases in Plains Cree.

2. Observations of the Nominal Predicate construction in Plains Cree

From the works of Déchaine (1997) and Blain (1999), which advocate the nominal predicate hypothesis in Plains Cree, we can make the following observations:

    3.   Observations in the Nominal predicate hypothesis
        Plain Cree Copula Construction ([Noun]-PRED [DEM]-SUBJ in verbless clause)
        (1) The lexical noun is the predicate.
        (2) There is a fixed word-order between the predicate and the subject.
        (3) Lexical nouns and demonstratives have the same phrasal structures.

       In this section, I examine each observation considering the pros and the cons for each. According to Blain (1999), both the lexical noun and the demonstrative in the nominal predicate construction are independent DPs. In order for Blain to make a claim for the existence of nominal predicates in Plains Cree, the lexical noun should be an

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[3] "Discourse marker" is a similar concept of the factitive *ôma* 'that' in Ahenakwe (1987).

independent DP as well as the demonstrative. Blain mentions the evidence for lexical nouns and demonstratives being in the same category (DP) as follows:

…There is no visible difference between the form of the predicate DP and the nominal head in the NP because of the absence of definite and indefinite articles in Cree and because the complement of the head N^0 in the predicate DP is null... (Blain 1999: 13)
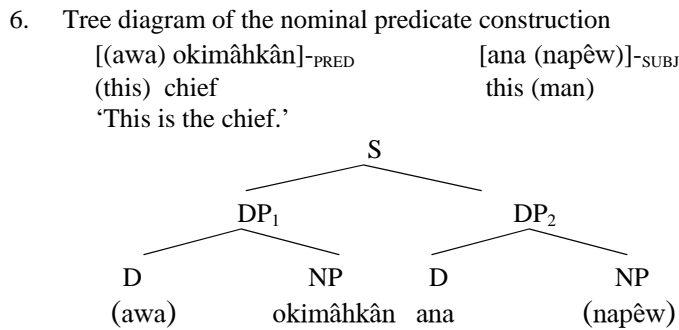
In her words, a lexical noun unmarked by the definite article (the head of DP) is a type of DP in Plains Cree because the determiners are often absent without any syntactic reason. Therefore, two possible DP forms may be tolerable in Plains Cree such as [determiner noun] and [noun]. The following example carries the evidence for her claim:

4. [okimâhkân]-PRED   [ana]-SUBJ
    chief. NA   that
    'That is the chief.'   (Blain 1999: 12)

In example (4), *okimâhkân* 'chief' as one of DP constructions occurs without the determiner. In the parallel line of thinking, when the demonstrative occurs after the lexical noun, she implies that it acts as an independent DP construction (as a pronoun). For instance, *ana* 'that' in example (4) can be defined as the pronoun and behaves as an independent DP in Plains Cree. It seems to be vital that the nominal predicate construction consists of two independent DPs in order for each DP to play its role (such as the predicate role and the subject role) in the copular construction. As for observation (3), we can see from the examples given in Blain's paper, that further evidence is needed to prove whether or not the lexical noun and the demonstrative act as an independent DP. If both the lexical noun and the demonstrative are independent DPs, then the following hypothetical examples would be expected:

5. a. ?[okimâhkân]-PRED   [ana   napêw]-SUBJ
        chief   that   man
        'That man is the chief.'
    b. ?[awa okimâhkân]-PRED   [awa]-SUBJ
        this   chief   this
        'This is the chief.'

Example (5a) would be evidence that *ana* 'that' in example (4) functions as an independent DP because *ana napêw* 'that man' in example (5a) occurs in the same position as *ana* 'that' in example (4). Therefore these two phrases are interchangeable. In addition, *ana* 'that' in example (4) is able to stand as an independent DP. Example (5b) would demonstrate that the lexical noun as a DP, whether or not it has the determiner *awa okimâhkân* 'this chief', can be replaced by *okimâhkân* 'chief' in example (4). Such examples would demonstrate that observation (3) is accurate; that the lexical noun and the demonstrative in the nominal predicate construction are instances in the same grammatical category (DP).

6. Tree diagram of the nominal predicate construction

     [(awa) okimâhkân]-$_{PRED}$ [ana (napêw)]-$_{SUBJ}$

     (this) chief   this (man)

     'This is the chief.'

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                        S
               /                 \
           DP₁                    DP₂
          /    \                  /    \
        D       NP              D        NP
      (awa)   okimâhkân      ana      (napêw)
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Examples (4) and (5) may be structurally constructed as in the above tree diagram if we maintain Blain's claim. However, observation (3) faces a challenge in vernacular Plains Cree, where it is not clear which demonstrative is a determiner or a pronoun. Based on example (2), the demonstrative in Plains Cree can freely occur before or after the noun in the DP construction. Cross-linguistically, pronouns cannot co-occur with the nominal expression inside the DP construction. Therefore, in the construction of [noun, DEM], the demonstrative is possibly said to be a pronoun or a determiner. I postpone the decision whether demonstratives in Plains Cree are pronouns or determiners.

Next, in previous studies (Déchaine 1997, Blain 1999), the fixed word-order seems to be significant in order to hold to the nominal predicate assumption. When the lexical noun precedes the demonstrative, only this order permits us to interpret the lexical noun as the predicate and the demonstrative as the subject in the nominal predicate construction such as [noun-$_{predicate}$, DEN-$_{subject}$]:

7. a. ana   ni-sîmis   …Vb…

        that   1-younger.sibling

        'That younger sibling of mine …Vb…'

         =/= ' That is my younger sibling'

       b. ni-sîmis   ana

         1-younger.sibling   that

        'That (one) is my younger sibling'

        Only the predicate-initial ordering **7(b)** constitutes a nominal predicate.

                                  (Blain 1999: 15)

In example (7a), [DEM, noun] is a DP because there is the verb in the clause and the demonstrative comes before the noun. On the other hand, in example (7b), the lexical noun precedes the demonstrative and there is no verb in the clause. Therefore, example (7b) may be interpreted as a copular construction in Plains Cree. Concerning DP construction in Plains Cree, there is no strict order between the determiner/demonstrative and the noun. Both [DEM, noun] and [noun, DEM] are grammatical DP constructions in Plains Cree:

8. a. ni-wâpahtê-n   [môhkomân   ôma]

       1-see.TI-0s   knife.NI   this-0s

       'I see this knife'

b. ni-wâpahtê-n   ôma   môhkomân
   1-see.TI-0s   this-0s   knife.NI
      'I see this knife'

Even though [noun, DEM] in Example (8a) has the same order as [noun-Predicate, DEM-Subject] in a nominal predicate construction, [noun, DEM] cannot be read as the copula construction in terms of the nominal predicate assumption. However, in example (8a), we cannot confirm whether it is one single clause or two clauses. As I mentioned before, example (8a) may be interpreted as two clauses if faithfully following the nominal predicate hypothesis. As a result, the fixed-word order in the nominal predicate construction seems to be challenged. Moreover, the following examples directly conflict with the fixed word order in the nominal predicate construction.

9. [namoy   âna   kîwa].   kisîm   ana. [4]
    not   that(3) your(2)-wife(3) your(2)-younger-sister(3) that(3)
       'She is not your wife. She is your sister.'

In example (9), two copular sentences are layed out. In the second sentence *kisîm ana* 'She is your sister.', the lexical noun and the demonstrative are present in the same order [noun, DEM] as the nominal predicate hypothesis. On the other hand, in the first sentence *namoy âna kisîm* 'She is not your wife.', the demonstrative comes before the noun but the clause still is interpreted as a copular construction. The order of the lexical noun and the demonstrative in the first sentence does not obey the nominal predicate hypothesis and this example works as counterexample; the fixed word order is not always true in the nominal predicate construction in Plains Cree.

10. [êyako]   [pêyak   âcimôwin]
    this-one(0)   one   narrative (0)
       'This one is one narrative'

In example (10), the subject *êyako* 'this one (0)' precedes the predicate *pêyak âcimôwin*
'is one narrative (0)'. If the preceding DP always behaves as the predicate in the copular construction, example (10) would presumably be interpreted as 'One narrative is the one'. In fact, the preceding DP *êyako* 'this-one (0)' is not the predicate, so example (10) also illustrates that there is no fixed word order in the nominal predicate construction.

Next, I will discuss observation (2): the lexical noun can be interpreted as the predicate rather than the subject in the copula construction. According to Blain (1999), "cross linguistically, a deictic DP is the prototypical subject and best illustrates any

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[4] In Wolfart (1996), the first *âna* 'that' is marked with the long vowel /*â* /, but the second *ana* 'that' has a short vowel. Between *namôya* 'not' and *ana* 'that', external sandhi is applied. Therefore, the final vowel /*a*/ in *namoya* 'not' drops and the first vowel /*a*/ in *ana* 'that' becomes the long vowel /*â*/.

ordering restrictions in a language." Therefore the demonstrative is mostly bound with the subject and the lexical noun with the predicate in the nominal predicate construction. The following hierarchy which reflects the relative comparison between two nominal expressions in a copula construction is suggested by Blain:

11. Hierarchy of Reference (adapted for Cree):
    Deictic > Descriptors and name > Indefinites
    [Subject]--------------------------→ [Predicate]
    more referential   less referential

(Blain 1999:14)

Regarding the hierarchy (11), the demonstrative seem to be more easily realized as the subject than the lexical noun because it is more referential than the lexical noun in the nominal predicate construction.

3. Demonstratives and DP constructions in Plains Cree

In the previous section, I present some challenges to the nominal predicate hypothesis in Plains Cree. Especially, observations (2) and (3) seem to call for further examination. In this section, I examine the features of demonstratives in Plains Cree in the respect of their syntactic status. The demonstratives in Plains Cree are shown in the following table:

12. Demonstratives in Plains Cree

			(another)	(this)	(that)
Animate	Prox	Sg	kotak	awa	ana
		Pl	kotakak	ôki	aniki
	Obv		kotaka	ôhi	anihi
Inanimate	Sg		kotak	ôma	anima
	Pl		kotaka	ôhi	anihi

(Wolfart & Carroll 1981:52)

In English, demonstratives such as *this* and *that* denote the conceptual distance between the speaker/hearer and objects, while determiners such as *the* and *a/an* mainly convey the referential status of noun phrases. As a result, two separate items are used for denoting the conceptual distance and the referential status in English. However, demonstratives in Plains Cree function differently from those in English. They operate two functions together: denoting the conceptual distance and the referential status. With respect to syntactic position in English, demonstratives and determiners always are placed before the noun in DP construction. However, demonstratives in Plains Cree occur freely before or after a noun, as in example (8). According to Cyr (1993), demonstratives in Plains Cree are divided into two grammatical categories depending on the place where they occur: a determiner in case of the construction [DEM, noun] and a demonstrative in case of the construction [noun, DEM]. The construction [DEM, noun] expresses definiteness and this demonstrative occurs with "all referential definite nouns, proper nouns, unique beings, some abstract noun and some generic uses of concrete nouns, most of possessives (except body parts) and locatives." The occurrence of a
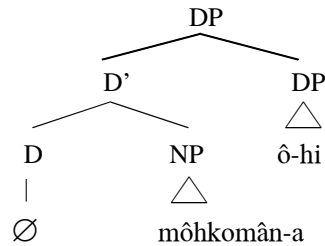
demonstrative seems to rely on the referential status of the noun in the construction [DEM, noun], and the demonstrative acts as the determiner in English. It is also quite common that a lexical noun appears without its determiner in Plains Cree. In this construction, the status of the lexical noun is less referential than the lexical noun with its determiner, and this lexical noun is similar to the DP marked with the indefinite article in English. Demonstratives in Plains Cree primarily function as determiners like the definite article *the* in English and the noun without these determiners indicates an indefinite phrase like the noun with the indefinite article *a/an* in English.

According to previous literature (Wolfart & Carroll 1981, Ahenakew 1987), demonstratives in Plains Cree function as pronouns in the same way that demonstratives in English also function as pronouns. However, demonstratives in these two languages are also tremendously dissimilar. When the demonstrative functions as the pronoun in English, this demonstrative is obligatory as the grammatical argument; in Plains Cree the occurrence of demonstratives is always optional in a clause. In addition, demonstratives are bound with their antecedents in Plains Cree. I point out here that demonstratives in English are syntactically bound but demonstratives in Plains Cree are bound pragmatically even though demonstratives in both languages possess semantically similar meanings. When demonstratives in Plains Cree do not play a determiners role, they seems to denote "discourse/ conceptual distance" in a clause. When demonstratives function to denote "discourse/conceptual distance" , I refer to them as a "discourse marker" that is in some sense similar to a demonstrative of its counterpart in English, but not always. In addition, the notion "discourse marker"[5] includes the demonstrative pronouns and the demonstratives themselves in Plains Cree. Therefore, I assume that demonstratives in Plains Cree have two different functions: as a determiner like the determiners in English and as a "discourse marker" which expresses the conceptual closeness between the speaker/hearer and a noun. I also point out that "discourse marker" seems to be an adjunct and it is not the head of DP. Finally, in a parallel line of thinking, I suggest that [DEM, noun] is a definite expression and [noun, DEM] as an indefinite expression is another form of DP with a "discourse marker":
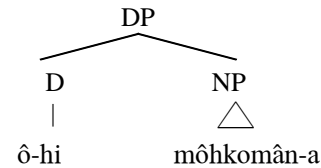
13. a. [[môhkomân-a]-DP   [ô-hi]-DP]:DP
        knife.NI-0p   this-0p

     b. [[ô-hi]-D   [môhkomân-a]-noun]:DP
        this-0p   knife.NI-0p
        'These knives'

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[5] According Ahenakew (1987), FACTIVE *ôma* 'that' is pragmatically bound to the previous referent. For instance, in the sentence *ê-nôhtê-kîwêyân ôma* 'I want to go home', "the *ôma* highlights the action of the verb in about the same way as the demonstrative pronoun when it makes the noun more definite. We call this use of *ôma* FACTIVE." Similarly FACTIVE *ôma*, the discourse marker is bound with the previous referent.

<DP Constructions in Plains Cree>

(13a)   (13b)

```
              DP                                        DP
            /    \                                    /    \
          D'      DP                                D      NP
         /  \      △                                |       △
        D    NP   ô-hi                             ô-hi   môhkomân-a
        |     △
        ∅   môhkomân-a
```

4. Copular constructions in Plains Cree

4.1. Core feature of copular constructions

In the previous section, we recognize that [noun, DEM] is another DP construction.   This awareness implies that [noun, DEM] could not be made up with two separate DPs in the nominal predicate construction in Plains Cree. As a result, we can avoid the assumption that a fixed word order always guarantees the interpretation of copular construction in Plains Cree. If there is no explicit copular verb and no the fixed word order to indicate copular construction in Plains Cree, it is questionable where a viable interpretation of the copula construction in Plains Cree would come from.   Even though a syntactic construction [noun, DEM] does not perfectly guarantee the interpretation of copular construction, [noun, DEM] in verbless constructions is mostly translated into the copular construction. The [noun, DEM] construction may correspond with the core features to be found in the copula construction across languages. According to Blain (1999), the less referential phrase plays a predicate role and the more referential phrase acts as a subject in the copular construction. It seems to be cross-linguistically verifiable; e.g., *'This is a book'* in English (*a book* is less referential than *this*).

Based on the referential hierarchy (p.8-11) with the distinction between given and new information, the new information is less referential than the given information. In addition, regarding the copular construction and the distinction between given and new information, Nicholas (1996:13) states that "subjects of copulas tend to be the given background information in discourse, and it is the predicate they are linked with which supplies the fore grounded, novel information." As a result, the less referential or the new information seems to be more easily to be interpreted as the predicate in the copula construction.

4.2. The origin of the copular construction in Plains Cree

From traditional linguistic literature of Plains Cree, there has been an approach to the copular construction that reflects much more on interpretation than syntactic structure. In this approach, a sentence similar in structure to the copular construction is called an "equational sentence". Ahenakew (1987), following Bloomfield (1958, 1962), also uses the term "equational" in order to describe the construction [noun, DEM] in the verbless

clause. The term "equational" means that a sentence [noun, DEM] equates between two phrases:

> 14. … , konit-âcimowinis   ôma ...
>   '…, this is just a little story,…' (5-1).
>
> <div align="right">(Ahenakew 1987:148)</div>

In Example (14), *ôma* 'this' is regarded to be equated to *konit-âcimowinis* 'just a little story' each other. The sense of "equational" expands from an interpretation of [noun, DEM] to other constructions similar to copular constructions such as [adverb, NP].   In the following example, the second constituent as the full noun phrase (âcimowin ôma) plays a subject role:

> 15. … ,[êkote anima   ohci]   [âcimowin   ôma]…[6]
>   '…, this story is from over there, …' (5-4).
>
> <div align="right">(Ahenakew 1987:148)</div>

However, I am not convinced that example (15) is well-matched to the definition of "equational" because the first constituent seems to be an adverbial expression and the second one is a nominal expression. In addition, the sense of "equational" seems to be quite broad. There seems to be no restriction to the application of the notion "equational" to either the phrase level or the word level. Even though the notion "equational" seems to be meaningful dealing with the copular construction in Plains Cree, we should be watchful when it is applied. Focusing on the word order in [noun, DEM] and the copular construction, Ahenakew makes a crucial observation:

It makes no difference for the sentence as a whole whether the demonstrative pronoun in the second constituent follows or precedes the noun. When ôma precedes âcimowin, it is more emphatic.

> 16.   a. …[êkotê   anima ohci]   [âcimowin   ôma]…   VD 5-4
>   'This story is from over there'
>   b. [êkotêanima ohci]   [ôma   âcimowin].   VD 5-4
>   '**This** story is from over there'
>
> <div align="right">(Ahenakew 1987:148-49)</div>

According to Déchaine (1997:117) and Blain (1999:12-13), the word order [DEM, noun] seems to be a canonical order of a DP in Plains Cree. However, as we can see above, *âcimowin ôma* 'this story' in Example (16a) can be read as a canonical construction rather than the [DEM, noun].   Therefore, the construction [DEM, noun] as the canonical construction of DP in Plains Cree suggested by Déchaine and Blain is not as clearly defensible. Here, I consider that the initial position of construction implies more emphatic meaning than the canonical order. According to the previous section, new information seems to be less referential and it acts as predicate in copular constructions. I am not sure

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[6] I am not sure that *anima* 'that (inanimate. sg)'can be co-indexed with *[âcimowin ôma]* 'this story (inanimate. sg)'.

whether or not the item placed in the structurally initial position of phrases is directly related to the new information. However, cross-linguistically, it is true that new information is more easily realized at the focus position than the given information. In Plains Cree, the less referential phrase or the new information can be interpreted as the predicate in the verbless construction. According to Reinholtz (1999:208), the initial position of sentence is the focus position rather than the topic position in Plains Cree and usually the discontinued modifier occurs in the focus position. In addition, she states that "… modifier is seen (in the focus position) to provide new and/or contrastive information." I accept here Reinholtz's viewpoint that the initial position of the sentence or phrase is the focus position and usually new information occurs in the focus position. This viewpoint seems to apply to the DP construction in Plains Cree. In the [noun, DEM] construction, the lexical noun is construed at the sentence initial position (the focus position) and it implies that this lexical noun is more likely to be new information. If the lexical noun is the new information, it could be interpreted as the predicate in the DP construction.

In conclusion, I assume that 1) copular like interpretation in Plains Cree comes from sharing a core feature that is found in the copular constructions in other languages, 2) the most outstanding feature in copular constructions is that the less referential item plays the predicate role and the referential item plays the subject role, 3) the less referential item is usually new information rather than given information, 4) In Plains Cree, the sentence initial position is the focus position and the new information occurs in this position 5) and in verbless clauses, the first occurring phrase is usually less referential and it is able to interpreted as the predicate.

5. Sampling

In this section, I discuss all probable constructions related to the copular construction found in the nominal predicate hypothesis and "equational" sentence. Based on previous studies, six different constructions will be mentioned here:

17. Possible clause to be interpreted as copular
    (1) môhkomân
        a knife   [noun]
    (2) [ôma môhkomân]
        this   knife   [DEM, noun]
    (3) [môhkomân ôma]
        a knife   this   [noun, DEM]
    (4) konit-âcimowinis   ôma
        a little-story   this   [nominal phrase, DEM]
    (5) [êkotê   anima   ohci]   [âcimowin   ôma]
        'this story is from over there'   [adverbial phrase, nominal phrase]
    (6) [awa $_1$]   [okimâhkân   awa $_2$]
        this   chief   the   [DEM, nominal phrase]
        'This is the chief'

In examples (17), I assume that example (17.5) is a clause type, and the others (17.1-17.4, 17.6) are DP constructions because we can find at least three distinctive independent words. These 6 examples will be discussed based on the following assumptions:

18. Nominal Phrase in Cree
    (1) There are no nominal predicates in Plains Cree.
        Some constructions can share the core feature of copula construction found
        cross-linguistically.
    (2) Demonstratives conduct two roles in Plains Cree :
            1) Referential (discourse) : determiner
            2) Non-referential (conceptual) : discourse marker
    (3) The initial position in the sentential level is the focused position.
    (4) A demonstrative constructs a nominal phrase with a noun.

I will start with assumption (18.3). Cross-linguistically the syntactic structure does not seem to be independent of the discourse context because the syntactic elements are often influenced by the pragmatic factors in some ways. For instance, case markers in Korean play a role to assign/determine the theta role of nouns, so they can be decided by these roles. However, this tradition does not seem to be always true because case markers are also selected by the pragmatic factors.

19. Chelsu-ka   Jinhee-ey/lul   phal-ul   ttayli-ess-ta.
    C-NOM   J-GEN/ACC   arm-ACC   hit-PAST-DEC
        'Chelsu hit Jinhee's arm'

In example (19), the possessor *Jinhee* can optionally be marked with the genitive case marker or the accusative case marker. In general, the possessor in the possessive construction cannot be marked with the accusative case marker. In example (19), the possessor is "Aboutness Topic" and it can be marked with the accusative case marker (Bak 2004). Most published data in Plains Cree are based on narratives. The narrative text should be closely related to the discourse contexts. Here, I point out that the notion "equational" is valid in the interpretation only at the clause level such as example (17.5). The predicate reading or non-predicate reading seems to be dependent on the item being the referential degree or the item being the new information in the verbless construction.

Next, I will discuss assumption (18.2). Here, I re-emphasize that [noun, DEM] or [DEM, noun] is the same constituent in Plains Cree, and it is not a clause type.

20. a. ni-mis   awa
       I-sister   this
       'my sister'
    b. môhkomân   ôma
       knife   this
        'This is a knife' (lit. this knife)

Even though example (20b) is able to be interpreted like the copula construction, I regard this construction as a single DP. As I mentioned before, *ôma* 'this' does not seem to be a pronoun because [noun, DEM] like example (20a) is a single constituent. If we compare

example (17.1) and example (17.2), determiners may exist in order to indicate definiteness; as argued by Cyr (1993). If a noun is presented without demonstratives, it can be interpreted as an indefinite expression while a demonstrative which precedes a noun can be understood as the determiner. Here, I am assuming that demonstratives are determiners to indicate definiteness/referentiality when they occur before a noun. The unmarked case (no demonstrative before the noun as in example (17.1) denotes indefiniteness. However, the demonstrative in Plains Cree often occurs after the noun like example (17.3). In this case, I assume that the demonstrative is not the determiner at all, but it plays a role to reflect the conceptual closeness between the speaker/the listeners and the entity in the discourse as a discourse marker. In general, the demonstrative represents the physical or conceptual distance in the real-world circumstance. In Plains Cree, the demonstrative can impose the notion "conceptual closeness". The following example illustrates this conceptual distance:

21. …mâk   ôta   ôma   Hobbema   ê-ay-atoskêyân.
    but   here   this   Hobbema   CONJ-?-work.VAI-1
       'I have been working here at Hobbema'

                                                    (Ahenakwe & Wolfart 1991:1)

In example (21), the demonstrative *ôma* 'this' as a clitic adds emphatic meaning to *ôta* 'here'. This *ôma* 'this' does not have the function of a demonstrative, but it underlines the conceptual relationship between the speaker/hearer and 'place'. According to Blain (1999), in the construction [noun, DEM], the noun and the demonstrative should have obviation agreement and this obviation agreement motivates the lexical noun to come before a demonstrative. However, this obviation agreement sometimes seems to malfunction. The demonstrative does not agree with the noun in obviation as follows:

22.   o-pawâkan   âna
       3-dream=spirit-0   that-P
       'that one's dream-spirit'
                                                    (Wolfart 1996:431)

In example (22), the demonstrative *ana* 'that (prox)' is the proximate but the lexical noun *o-pawâkan-a* 'that one's dream-sprit' is not the obviative. If the obviation agreement works properly, the proximate form *ana* 'that (prox)' would be changed to the obviative form *anima* 'that (obv)'. This evidence shows that the demonstrative [noun, DEM] is a sort of particle and is not involved in the syntactic construction. I here point out that this demonstrative *ana* 'that (prox)' only works as a 'discourse marker'. As a result, I assume that demonstratives in examples (17.3-4 and 6) are grouped as 'discourse markers'. In these examples, the noun is usually understood as indefinite. In other words, the noun or [noun, DEM] is less referential. I here assume that this whole DP [noun, DEM] can be

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7 *o-pawâkan âna* '3-dream=spirit-0 that-P' is applied external sandhi. In fact, the sentence is like *o-pawâkan-a ana.*

interpreted as being similar to a predicate in the copula construction, and the demonstrative in this construction indicates that the noun is in the conceptual range between the speaker and the addressee. Finally, example (17.6) seems to be problematic even with my assumptions. I repeat here again:

23. [awa $_1$]   [okimâhkân   awa $_2$]
     this   chief   this
         'This is this chief'

I categorize example (23) as a DP. Based on the nominal phrase assumption (page 16), [awa $_1$] and [awa $_2$] does not implement the same function.   [awa $_1$] as the determiner denotes the referential meaning to the noun phrase [okimâhkân awa $_2$].   Inside of this noun phrase, [awa $_2$] as a "discourse marker" shows the conceptual closeness between the speaker/hearer and the noun.

6. Conclusion

In this paper, I briefly reviewed the so-called nominal predicate/ "equational" sentence in Plains Cree. I suggest a new approach based on the arguable points found in previous studies. In my argument, the main points are summarized as follows: 1) There is no nominal predicate construction in Plains Cree. Only the indefinite nominal expression seems to be less referential and can be interpreted as the predicate. At a clausal level, the new information is able to be interpreted as the predicate. However, it is not structurally dependent. 2) Demonstratives in Plains Cree can serve two different functions: as a determiner or as a "discourse marker" based on whether they are referential or conceptual and whether or not they occur in the NP. In the future, this approach will demand more data analysis.

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