

Prosody and Independence: Free and Bound Person Marking

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Abstract

Anna Siewierska drew a primary distinction in her work on Person between morphologically free and bound forms. As she noted, languages with bound forms always also contain free forms, though the reverse is not necessarily true. The co-existence of two sets of forms within a language raises questions about differences in their status and function. Here such differences are examined in Mohawk, an Iroquoian language of North America. Comparison of the free and bound forms in unplanned speech reveals that an assumption of the free forms as basic cannot yield a coherent account. It is the bound forms that constitute a unified system, explicable in terms of general mechanisms by which person markers evolve over time. Fundamental to their development are their positions in the constructions they participate in, and the prosody of these constructions. The free forms simply constitute the residue of forms not subject to these developments.

1. Introduction

In her major work on Person, Anna Siewierska opens her discussion of their typology with the statement ‘the major parameter responsible for the cross-linguistic variation in person markers is morphophonological form’ (2004:16). She draws a primary division between free and bound markers. Free forms, also called independent, full, self-standing, cardinal, focal, or strong, constitute separate words and may take primary word stress. Bound forms, also referred to as dependent or reduced, typically cannot be stressed, are often phonologically reduced relative to the free forms, and are morphologically dependent on another element in the utterance. As she observes, languages with bound forms always contain free forms as well, but the reverse is not necessarily true.

The presence of two or more sets of person markers within a language immediately raises questions about possible differences in their functions. Answers that have been proposed reflect both a variety of approaches and the diversity of language structures to be understood. On some accounts, the free forms are viewed as the only true arguments. On others, the free forms are described as ‘emphatic’. Here one common type of system is described, with examples from Mohawk, an Iroquoian language indigenous to northeastern North America. An examination of the markers in spontaneous use, complete with their discourse contexts and prosodic patterns, shows that taking the free forms as the point of departure is actually the wrong approach. It is the bound forms which constitute a unified system, explicable in terms of the mechanisms by which person markers can evolve over time. Fundamental to these mechanisms are the positions in which the forms occur and the prosodic structures over which they operate. The free forms simply constitute the residue of markers not subject to these developments.

2. Free and bound forms in Mohawk

Mohawk contains both free pronouns and pronominal prefixes on verbs. Both types can be seen in (1), the free second person pronoun *í:se* ‘you’ and the second person prefix *sa-*.

(1) Mohawk free and bound forms: Kaia’titáhkhe’ Jacobs, speaker¹

<i>Í:se'</i>	<i>tóka'</i>	<i>wà:kehre'</i>	<i>tóka'</i>	<i>thé:nen'</i>	<i>sarì:waien'</i>
íse'	toka'	wa'-k-ehre'	toka'	thenen'	sa- rihw-a-ien-'
you	maybe	FACT-1SG.AGT-think-PFV	maybe	something	2SG.PAT- matter-have-STAT
you	maybe	I thought	maybe	something	you issue have

‘I thought that you might have some questions

ne ahsheri'wanón:tonhse'.
 ne a-hshe-ri'wanonton-hs-e'
 the IRR-2SG/FI-ask-BEN.APPL-PFV
 the you would ask her
 to ask her.’

The free pronoun *í:se* ‘you’ constitutes a separate word which can bear stress, while the prefix *sa-* cannot stand alone as a word, it is shorter segmentally, and it cannot bear stress of its own (though word stress, which is determined primarily by syllable count, may land on it).

Person prefixes occur on all verbs whether or not there is also a coreferential lexical argument in the clause, as can be seen in (2).

(2) With and without lexical argument

a. With: Josephine Kaieríthon Horne, speaker

<i>lawe'tatshà:ni</i>	<i>kà:sere</i>	<i>wa'katóhetste'.</i>
iaw-e'tatshahni	ka-'sere	wa'-ka-tohetste-e'
N.PAT-be.frightful	N.AGT-drag	FACT-N.AGT-pass-PFV
it is frightful	it/they drag	it/they passed by
extremely	car	they passed by

‘A lot of cars passed by.’

b. Without

Wa'katóhetste'.
 ‘**They** passed by.’

¹ The abbreviations used in the examples are given at the end of the article. Four genders are distinguished in third person in Mohawk: Masculine for male persons and certain male animals, Neuter for inanimates, Feminine-Zoic for animals and certain female persons, and Feminine-Indefinite for generic persons and certain female persons. Neuter and Feminine-Zoic forms are largely the same. Examples are given here in the standard orthography. Most symbols approximate their IPA values. Nasal vowels are written with digraphs <en> for nasal [ɛ̃] and <on> for nasal [ɔ̃]; the letter <i> represents a palatal glide [j] before a vowel; the apostrophe <'> represents glottal stop; and the colon <:> represents vowel length. The acute accent represents stress with high or rising tone, and the grave accent stress with a rising-falling pitch contour.

The sentence in (2b) is fully grammatical on its own, comparable to the translation. Speakers do not feel that anything has been left out, any more than English speakers feel that a noun is missing from *They passed by* (the neuter prefix does not distinguish number).

One approach to patterns like those in (2a) has been to consider lexical nominals (like *kà:sere* ‘car’ here) the true arguments, and verbal affixes (like *ka-* here) simply agreement. The lexical nominal would be seen as the controller. But that would leave clauses like that in (2b) with no controller. Siewierska (2004) and Siewierska & Bakker (2005) discuss this pattern with similar examples from Gumawana, an Oceanic language spoken in New Guinea.

- (3) a. *Kalitoni i-paisewa.*
 Kalitoni 3SG-work
 ‘Kalitoni worked.’
- b. (Ø) *i-situ vada sinae-na.*
 3SG 3SG-enter house inside-3SG.INAL
 ‘He entered the inside of the house.’
 (Olson 1992: 326, cited in Siewierska 2004: 23)

They describe several possible analyses. On one, the subject of (3a) is considered to be *Kalitoni*, and the subject of (3b) is considered to be null, or ‘pro’. On another, the subject of both sentences is considered to be the prefix *i-*, the option they prefer. Identification of the verbal prefixes as actual arguments, in apposition with any lexical arguments, makes the most sense for Mohawk as well, for a number of reasons outlined in detail in Mithun (2003). It is also in keeping with the frequent correlation observed in Siewierska & Bakker (2006:16) between general head-marking typology and bound pronouns.

The full paradigms of Mohawk free and bound markers can be seen in (4) below. The grammatical roles distinguished by the bound markers are semantically based, though now fully grammaticalized: they follow an agent/patient pattern rather than subject/object or ergative/absolutive. Essentially, participants who are in control and instigate events (‘I jumped’, ‘I cut it) are represented by agent forms, and those who are not in control but are affected (‘I fell’, ‘he cut me’) are represented by patient forms. Choices between grammatical agent and patient forms are now lexicalized with each verb, however; speakers do not select prefixes as they speak according to degrees of control or affectedness.

(4) Mohawk core arguments

	Free	Bound
1 SG AGENT	<i>ì:’i</i>	<i>k-</i>
1 SG PATIENT	<i>ì:’i</i>	<i>wak-</i>
1 DU INCLUSIVE AGENT	<i>ì:’i</i>	<i>teni-</i>
1 DU EXCLUSIVE AGENT	<i>ì:’i</i>	<i>iakeni-</i>
1 PL INCLUSIVE AGENT	<i>ì:’i</i>	<i>tewa-</i>
1 PL EXCLUSIVE AGENT	<i>ì:’i</i>	<i>iakwa-</i>
1 DU PATIENT	<i>ì:’i</i>	<i>ionkeni-</i>
1 PL PATIENT	<i>ì:’i</i>	<i>ionkwa-</i>
2 SG AGENT	<i>í:se’</i>	<i>hs-</i>

2 SG PATIENT	<i>í:se'</i>	<i>sa-</i>
2 DU	<i>í:se'</i>	<i>seni-</i>
2 PL	<i>í:se'</i>	<i>sewa-</i>
M SG AGENT	<i>raónha</i>	<i>ra-</i>
M SG PATIENT	<i>raónha</i>	<i>ro-</i>
M DU AGENT	<i>ronónha</i>	<i>ni-</i>
M PL AGENT	<i>ronónha</i>	<i>rati-</i>
M DU/PL PATIENT	<i>ronónha</i>	<i>roti-</i>
FI SG AGENT	<i>akaónha</i>	<i>ie-</i>
FI SG PATIENT	<i>akaónha</i>	<i>iako-</i>
FZ SG AGENT	<i>aónha</i>	<i>ka-</i>
FZ SG PATIENT	<i>aónha</i>	<i>io-</i>
FZ DU AGENT	<i>onónha</i>	<i>keni-</i>
FZ PL AGENT	<i>onónha</i>	<i>konti-</i>
FZ DU/PL PATIENT	<i>onónha</i>	<i>ioti-</i>

The prefixes show considerable allomorphy, not detailed here. Agent/patient combinations on transitive verbs are represented by a separate set of portmanteau prefixes. Alienable and inalienable possessive prefixes on nouns show similar but not identical forms.

As can be seen by comparing the columns above, the free forms make many fewer distinctions than the prefixes. The word *í: 'i*, for example, is translatable variously as 'I', 'me', 'we two' (exclusive dual), 'we two' (inclusive dual), 'us two', 'we all' (exclusive plural), 'we all' (inclusive plural), and 'us all', as well as 'my' (inalienable), 'my' (alienable), 'our' (exclusive dual inalienable), 'our' (inclusive dual inalienable), 'our' (exclusive plural inalienable), and 'our' (inclusive plural inalienable), 'our' (dual alienable) and 'our' (plural alienable). The corresponding prefixes distinguish all of these, with three numbers (singular, dual, plural), inclusive and exclusive duals and plurals, two grammatical roles on verbs (agents, patients), and alienable and inalienable possession on nominals.

Free forms in Mohawk not only mark fewer distinctions than prefixes, they are also relatively rare in speech. The proportion of first and second person free forms in a 4000-clause sample of unscripted speech can be seen in (5).

(5) Free pronouns

1. Clauses with 1 st person participants, any role	1086
1 st person free pronouns	95
Percentage	<u>8.9%</u>
2. Clauses with 2 nd person participants, any role	414
2 nd person free pronouns	14
Percentage	<u>3.4%</u>

The proportion of third person free pronouns is even smaller. The figures 1086 and 414 above include both intransitive and transitive clauses. The vast majority of the transitive clauses also contain a third person argument. In this sample of 4000 clauses, nearly all of which contain at least one third person argument and many of which contain two, there were just 14 third person free pronouns: 2 instances of *akaónha* ‘she’, 7 of *raónha* ‘he’, and 5 of *ronónha* ‘they’.

For some languages, it has been hypothesized that free forms are basic but omitted or ‘dropped’ when reference is clear. Such a hypothesis is at odds with their distribution in languages like Mohawk, as can be seen from example (1) ‘you might have some questions’. Reference to the second person was clear from the obligatory prefix *sa-* on the verb, but the free form *i:se* still appeared. Furthermore, the free form did little to clarify reference: it indicated only that a second person was involved in some way. The prefix specified not only that the argument was second person, but also that it was singular and a grammatical patient. An analysis of the free forms as the only true arguments of their clauses under such circumstances would be difficult to maintain.

Free forms like these are often labeled ‘emphatic’ or ‘contrastive’ in grammars. These terms are rarely defined explicitly, but grammar writers and readers usually feel they have some sense of what is meant by them, generally some functions related to information structure. The next sections examine the uses of these forms in Mohawk constructions conveying marked information structure in unscripted speech.

3. Basic focus constructions

The term ‘emphatic’ might suggest that the free forms are used to mark focus. Of course the term ‘focus’ itself is used in a variety of ways. One basic use, as Siewierska notes, is as ‘the most important or salient piece of information in the utterance, as perceived by the speaker’ (2004:159). Basic focus is often illustrated with lexical gap questions, where the focus is the material requested. The Mohawk free pronouns are indeed used in questions requesting the identity of a referent.

(6) Focus of question: *Watshenni:nen* Sawyer, speaker

<i>Í:se'</i>	<i>ken</i>	<i>sá:wen</i>	<i>kí:ken</i>	<i>thrák?</i>
i:se'	ken	sa-awen	kí:ken	thrak
2	Q	2SG.AL-possession	this	truck
you	Q	your possession	this	truck
‘Is this your truck?’				

Mohawk focus constructions are characterized by two principal features. The focused element appears at the beginning of the sentence or clause (sometimes after orienting and/or modal particles) and is pronounced with extra high pitch, as can be seen in Figure 1.

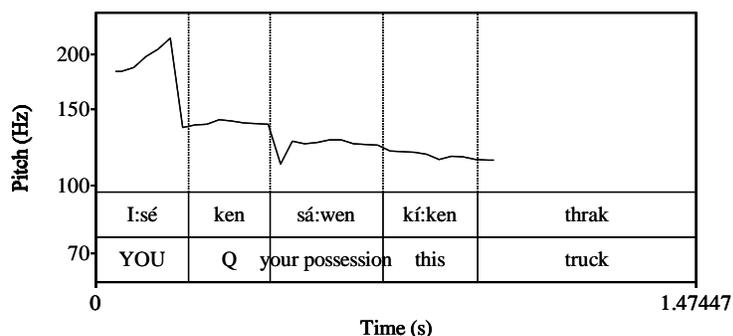


Figure 1: Focus construction in question

This pitch pattern can be contrasted with that of the pragmatically unmarked sentence seen in Figure 2: ‘He sold some truck.’

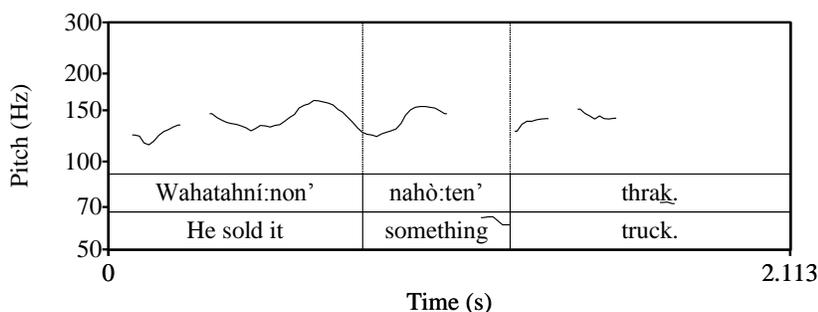


Figure 2: Basic pitch trace: ‘He sold some truck.’

Other frequently-cited examples of a basic focus construction are the answers to lexical gap questions. The material that fills the gap, the questioned information, is the focused element. Mohawk free pronouns are also used in this function. The response to the question in (6) was the sentence in (7).

(7) Focus of response: *Watshenni:nen'* Sawyer, speaker

Í:	<i>wahèn:ron'</i>	<i>akwá:wen.</i>
ì:'i	<i>wa-ha-ihron-</i>	<i>akw-awen</i>
1	FACT-M.SG.AG-say-PRF	1SG.AL-possession
me	he said	my possession

“**mine,**” he said, “it’s mine.””

The focused free pronoun in this answer was also pronounced with extra high pitch.

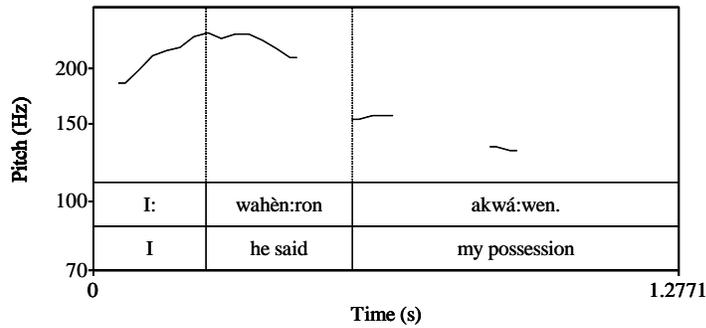


Figure 3: Basic focus construction in answer

Focus constructions are of course not restricted to questions and answers. The statement in (8) contains a focused possessor.

(8) Focused possessor: Wilfred Jaimison, speaker

Í:se' sari:wa' ...
 2 your fault
 'It's **your** fault [that I am in such misery and want].'

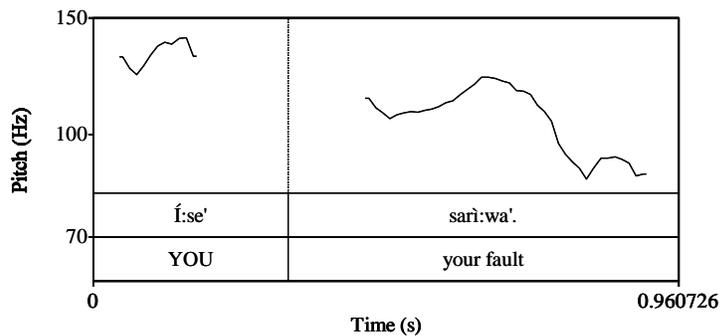


Figure 4: Focused possessor

The significant prosodic feature of the Mohawk focus construction is indeed pitch rather than intensity. The intensity, represented by the continuous, relatively level line in Figure 5, remains essentially stable across the sentence.

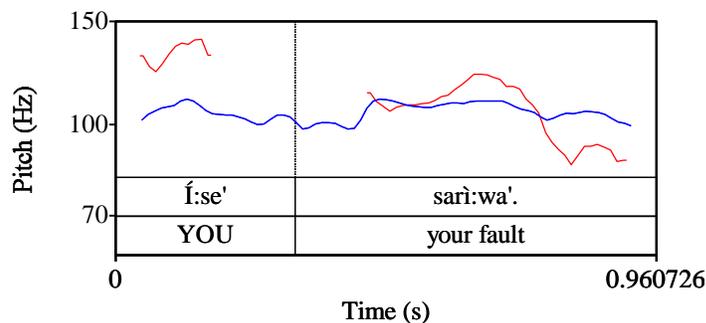


Figure 5: Pitch and intensity.

(Mohawk has contrasting tone on stressed syllables. The tone marked with an acute accent on the vowel, as in *í:se* ‘you’, is basically rising. The tone marked with a grave accent, as in *sari:wa* ‘your fault’ rises sharply to a point usually higher than that of the rising tone, then plunges below the baseline pitch. The two contrasting tones can be seen in the pitch trace in Figures 4 and 5).

A focused grammatical patient can be seen in (9) below. The speaker was recounting a conversation between Mary Magdalene and Jesus Christ from a Bible story. The significant new information was expressed in the free pronoun *ì:i* ‘me’. The information in the remainder of the clause, ‘they were discussing’, had already been established.

(9) Focused transitive patient: Harry Miller, preacher

MM ‘They used to tell us that one day Jesus Christ would be coming.’

JC *ì:i ionkwathró:ri.*
1 one discusses me
 ‘They were talking about **me**.’

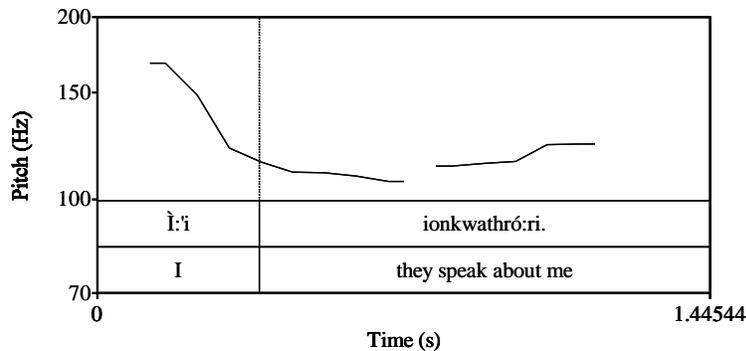


Figure 6: Focused grammatical patient

The focused element need not be a core argument. In (10), part of the same story, the free pronoun *ì:i* ‘me’ is not a core argument and is not represented in the verb ‘he must enter’.

(10) Focused free pronoun: Harry Miller, preacher

‘No man can enter my Father’s place directly.’

Tká:konte’ í:’ nen nonká:ti enthaiénhtahkwe’.
 it is necessary **1** now side will he begin from here
 ‘He must enter through **me**.’

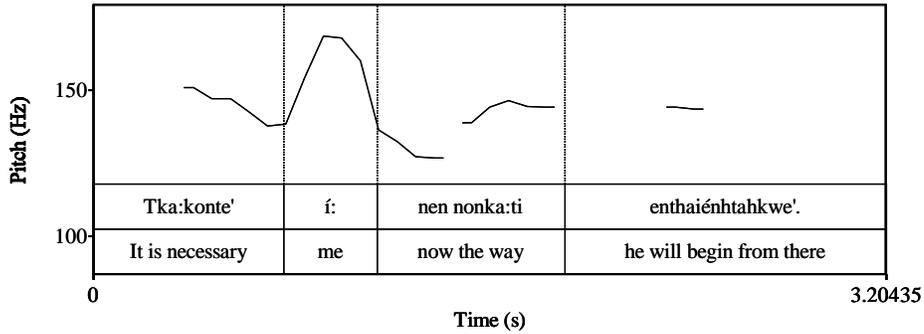


Figure 7: Non-core-argument focused element

Again the focused element appears at the beginning of the clause, pronounced with extra-high pitch.

There are other, more specific types of focus constructions. One is contrastive, where the element in focus is specifically contrasted with another possibility or defined set of possibilities. In Mohawk, the same basic focus construction can be used for this function, with the focused element initial (perhaps after various orienting and/or modal elements) and pronounced with extra high pitch. The article *ne*, which fuses with a following vowel-initial word - *ne ì: 'i > nì:i, ní:, ni* - marks a referent in case it has been mentioned previously.

(11) Contrastive focus: Lazarus Jacob, speaker

Tóka' ní:se' enhsatè:ko', iah ki' nì:'i tha:katé:ko'.
 maybe **the 2** you will escape not in fact **the 1** would I escape
 'Maybe **you** would run away, but **I** wouldn't run away.'

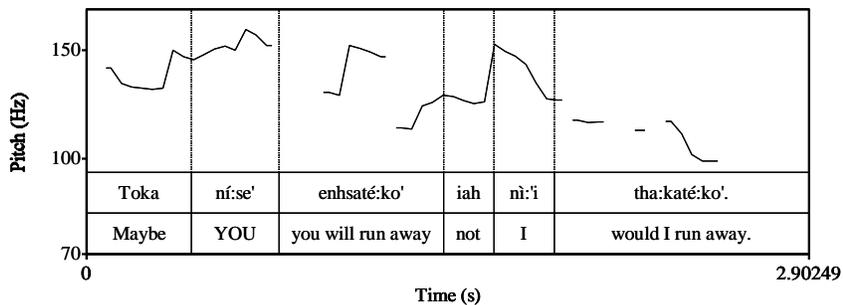


Figure 8: Contrastive focus

4. Cleft constructions

Mohawk also contains a cleft construction, in which a focused element occurs initially and is set off from the following nuclear clause by the particle *nè: 'e* or *ne: '.*

(12) Focus of cleft: Sonny Edwards, speaker

Í: nè:' enkaten'nikonhrará'sheke' nawèn:ke.
1 it is I will always put my mind on it the water
 'I will watch over the water.'

The pitch pattern matches those seen in the previous section, where the focused element is pronounced with extra high pitch.

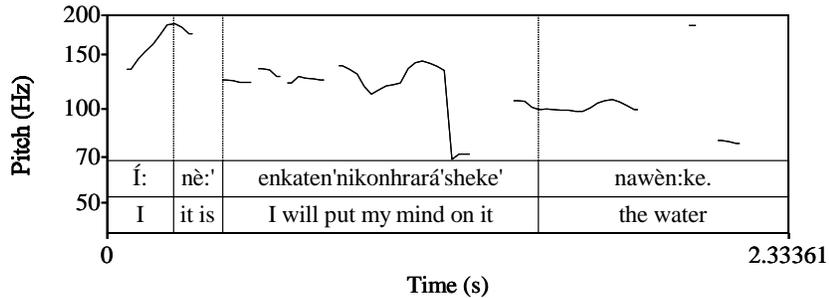


Figure 9: Cleft construction

The cleft construction is not necessarily contrastive, but it may be used for contrastive focus. In (13), the pronoun *í:* explicitly contrasts the speaker with all others.

(13) Contrastive cleft: Sonny Edwards, speaker

Í:' nek nè:'e aonhà:'a enkatshennaháwa.
1 the only it is alone I will name carry
 'I alone will bear that name.'

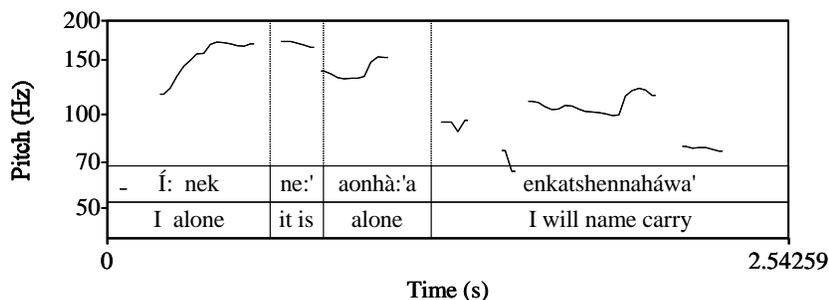


Figure 10: Contrastive focus

5. Contrast without focus

The same free pronouns are used to indicate contrast without focus. In these constructions, the pronoun does not normally appear at the beginning of the sentence, and it is not pronounced with high pitch. An example can be seen in (14). (The entire conversation was in Mohawk, but only the free translation is provided in material showing the context).

(14) Speaker contrast: Josephine Kaieríthon Horne, speaker

CB ‘This [translation] work we’re doing, what would you call it,
tetewawennanetáhkwaḥs [we word unlayer]
 or: *tetewawennaténie’s* [we word change]?’

JH *A:kéḥre:* ‘---
 I would think
 ‘I’d think--

a:kehre’ ki’ ni:i,
 I would think actually **the 1**
 I **myself** would think,

tetewawennanetáhkwaḥs.
 we word unlayer
 we are translating the words.’

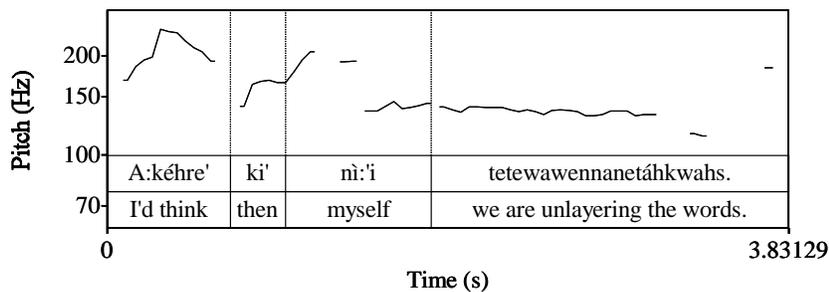


Figure 11: Contrast without focus

The first person free pronoun is much more frequent in this construction, because it often serves a politeness function: ‘This is just my opinion or experience or feeling, not necessarily shared by you or others’. In (15) the speaker was contrasting her own experience with that of others, but this was not the focus of her comment.

(15) Speaker contrast: Dorris Kawennanó:ron Montour, speaker
Akwé:kon ki' kí:ken-television ki' ni' wa'katerò:roke.
 everything actually this actually **the 1** I watched
 ‘All of this I actually saw on television, **myself**.’

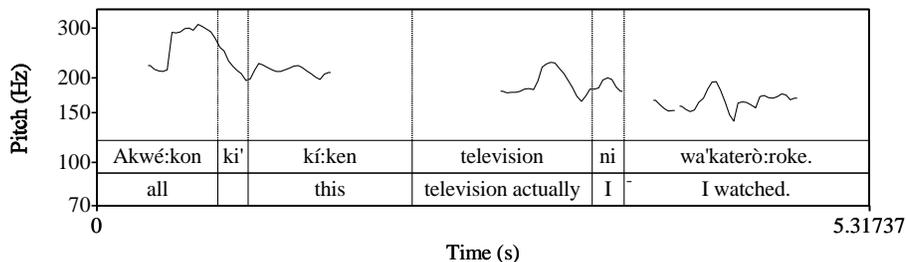


Figure 12: Contrast without focus

6. Topicalization constructions

The free pronouns also occur in another kind of marked information structure. A special topicalization construction is used to indicate a shift in topic. The shift is usually to a topic that is not brand new to the discourse, but one that was previously mentioned or associated with a previously mentioned referent. The topicalized element may be a full lexical nominal or larger phrase, or simply a free pronoun. In (16), the speaker was shifting the discussion from her children and husband to herself.

(16) Topic shift: Dorris Kawennanó:ron Montour, speaker

‘Some of my children worked there, and our husbands, you know.’

Ī:’ ò:ni tho tewatió’tehkwe’, kwáh ki:.
1 also there I used to work there even this
 ‘I **myself** used to work there as well.’

‘That is why I felt so bad about what I saw.’

The shifted topics are also pronounced with higher pitch, but they are generally detached prosodically from the nuclear clause, which often, though not always, begins with a pitch reset.

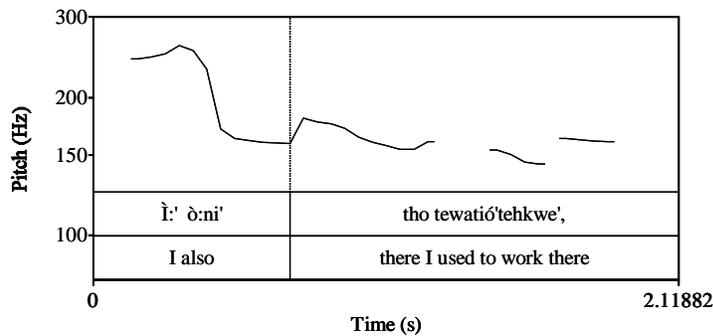


Figure 13: Topic shift

In (17) the speaker had been talking about her little brother, then shifted to discussing herself with the free pronoun *ni*’ (short form of *ne ì:’i* ‘the I’). She subsequently continued talking about herself, but with only prefixes.

(17) Topic shift: Cecelia Peters, speaker

‘And so she laid him (my little brother) there.’

Thó ki n ni’ wa’kanitskó:ten’ wahiiaten’nikòn:raren’.
 there this too **the 1** I sat I set my mind on him
 ‘And **me**, I sat there too and minded him.’

Iáh tewakaterièn:tare' to: sha'tewakohserià:kon.
 not do I know how many when I had winter crossed
 I don't know how old I was.

Ken' shikà:'a.
 small when I was sized
 I was little.'

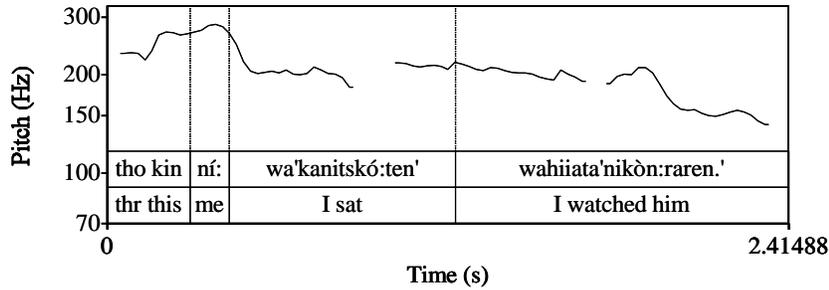


Figure 14: Topic shift

Free pronouns are not used every time there is a shift in what would be expressed with a subject in English. This can be seen in the excerpt from a conversation cited in (17) below. (The conversation was in Mohawk, but only the free translation is provided here for reasons of space). The conversation was about a certain man T., who was already under discussion when this passage begins. What is translated as the subject of many of the sentences differs from that of the previous sentence: lines 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 18, 19, and 20. Many of these switched subjects are pronominal: lines 3, 4, 5, 9, 10, 18, and 20. But none of these sentences contains a free pronoun: all of those referents are identified uniquely by pronominal prefixes on the verbs. This is because the overall topic remained the same: the man referred to as T. In line 11, another man, J., was introduced with a topicalization construction. His full name was topicalized. Each time J. was referred to in subsequent sentences, it was only with a prefix on the verb. When another speaker asked whether she could pour herself some coffee, she did not use the free pronoun *ì: 'i*, because her query was not intended to change the topic of discussion. And it did not, as can be seen in line 20, where no free pronoun was necessary to reintroduce the man under discussion.

(18) No free pronouns

- | | | | |
|----|---|--------------------|----|
| CB | 'That T. was a bad man, wasn't he. [laughter] | | 1 |
| | Over there there's a school. | | 2 |
| | That's where <u>I</u> started to teach, you know. | <u>NO FREE PRO</u> | 3 |
| | He was always chasing the children | <u>NO FREE PRO</u> | 4 |
| | They couldn't play near the fence. | <u>NO FREE PRO</u> | 5 |
| | His house was right here [gesturing], on this side of the school. | | 6 |
| | The school was on this side. | | 7 |
| | Nowadays it's called Step by Step [School]. | | 8 |
| | And they would throw their ball there | <u>NO FREE PRO</u> | 9 |
| | and he 'd keep it. | <u>NO FREE PRO</u> | 10 |
| | On the other hand, J. used to give it back. | | 11 |

	He was bad too.’ [laughter].		12
JD	‘Yes.’		13
CB	‘Yes. And he planted a nice garden.’		14 15
JH,WS	‘Yes.		16
CB	‘J.’		17
KJ	‘May I have a cup of coffee?’	<u>NO</u> FREE PRO	18
CB	‘Nowadays there’s a road there. What would he say if he came back and saw it?’	<u>NO</u> FREE PRO	19 20

The passage in (19) below, by contrast, provides a good example of the use of a free pronoun to shift the topic. The speaker shifted the topic of discussion from stories with monsters to herself with the free pronoun *ni:* (*ne i:’i* ‘the me’): ‘As for **me**, I would tremble’. She then continued talking about herself, but with prefixes alone.

(19) Free pronoun with topic shift: *Watshenni:ne*’ Sawyer, speaker

‘And at night they would tell stories, scary stories about the skeleton, the monster with just lower limbs, all kinds of things, all kinds of dead things would come and scare you.

Ó:nen ki’ ni: watia’tishónkhwa’, FREE PRONOUN
then in fact **the 1** I bodily shake
So then **as for me**, I would tremble,

I was really scared. So they’d say, “Go to bed!” I would never sleep when I was so scared. I would climb upstairs and sit there at the top of the stairs, waiting for the visitors to leave.’

7. Antitopic constructions

Free pronouns appear in another marked construction, identifying antitopics. In antitopic constructions, the nuclear clause is followed by a referring expression which reconfirms the identity of a continuing topic. In (20) the speaker was discussing her childhood. There was a brief explanation of the Depression, but the overall topic remained her family. The sentences which followed continued this topic.

(20) Antitopic construction: *Watshenni:ne*’ Sawyer, speaker

‘We were poor growing up.
But then everybody was poor then.
Nobody had any money.
It is what one calls ‘when money was dear’ in our language.

The Depression.’

Nék tsi ionkwatera'swi:ió ní:'i.
 but our luck was good **the 1**
 ‘But we were still lucky, **us**.’

‘We had a home.
 We had food.’

The prosody of Mohawk antitopic constructions is distinctive. Antitopics are usually pronounced with a relatively flat pitch contour, often creaky voice, and slower rhythm.

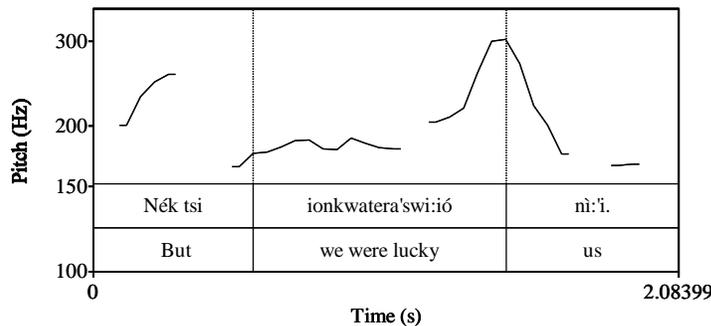


Figure 15: Antitopic construction

(The pitch rise at the end of *ionkwatera'swi:ió* ‘we are lucky’ is part of a general pattern whereby if the stressed syllable of a word is open and the tone rising, the following syllable is pronounced with a further rise in pitch, when it is followed immediately within the prosodic phrase by another word).

The information status of referents identified by free pronouns in antitopic constructions is quite different from that of referents in focus or topicalization constructions. They do not represent new information, they show no contrast, and they refer to a continuing larger topic rather than a shifted one.

8. Isolated pronouns

Free pronouns appear in still other types of constructions. They are used to identify a referent when there is no verb to support a prefix. This use can be seen in the comparative construction in (21).

(21) Isolated free pronoun: Watshenní:ne’ Sawyer, speaker

‘It was a relief when they had passed through the village, because

tho nihontária'kskwe' tsi ní:' ní:io . . .
 there so they used to be hungry as **the 1** so it is
 ‘they were as hungry as **us** . . .’

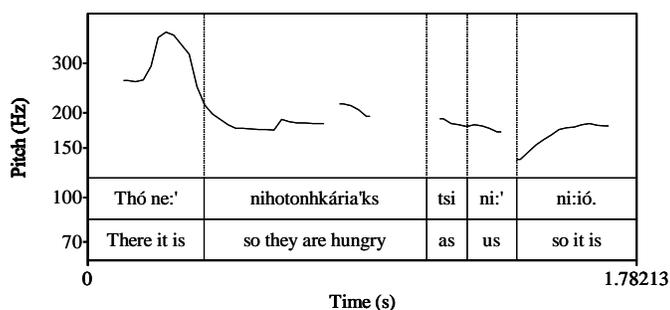


Figure 16: Isolated free pronoun in comparative construction

Another example of a free pronoun is in the negative construction without a verb to host a prefix in (22): ‘not me’.

(22) Isolated free pronoun: Josie Day, speaker

‘I used to wonder why my uncle Sens’

shakoien'okòn:'a tionateriserihare' k ni' íáh.
 his children there they their stocking hung and **the 1** not
 children hung up their stockings and not **me.**

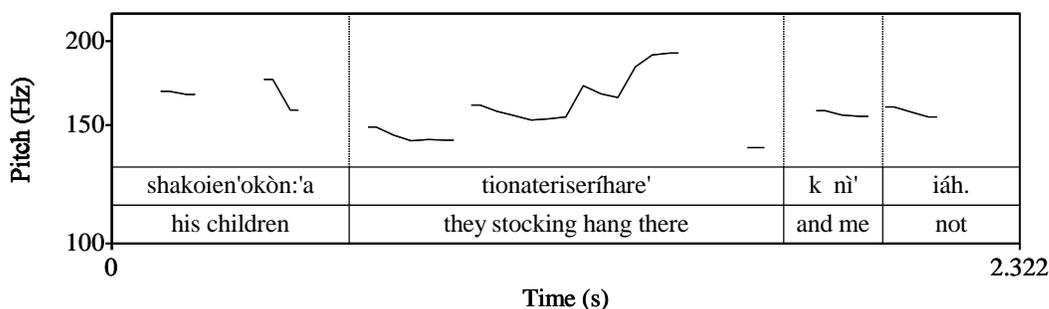


Figure 17: Isolated free pronoun in negative construction

A third example is in (23) in the clause ‘it was you’, literally ‘that you’.

(23) Isolated pronoun: Minnie Hill, speaker

Wa'koniatkáh tsi í:se'.
 I saw you that **2**
 ‘I saw that it was **you.**’

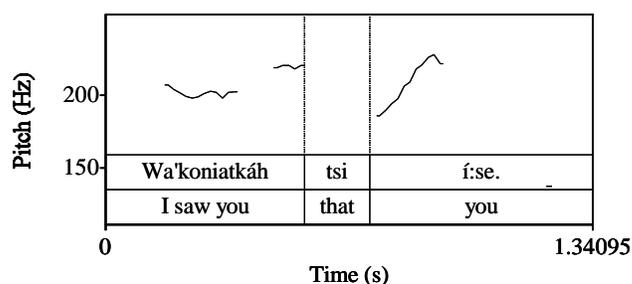


Figure 18: Isolated free pronoun in equational construction

A fourth example is in (24), where the speaker is echoing the sentiment of the previous speaker.

- (24) Isolated pronoun: Josephine Horne, speaker
 ‘I feel strongly about the language.’

Í: ò:ni’.
1 also
 ‘**Me** too.’

Such examples show that the free pronouns do not necessarily indicate contrast.

9. The free pronouns

The Mohawk free pronouns thus serve a variety of functions. They are sometimes emphatic or contrastive, but not always. They occur in distinct constructions marking basic focus, contrastive focus, non-focus contrast, topic shift, antitopic, and a variety of functions in verbless contexts, that is, clauses without a verb to host a prefix, seen here in comparative, negative, equational, and parallel constructions. The same free pronoun can even occur more than once within a sentence with different functions. The sentence in (25) contains a topicalization construction, with topicalized *ì:’i* ‘I’ and pitch reset before the nuclear clause, and a non-focused contrastive *ní:* ‘myself’. As explained above, the article *ne* marks the second, though not the first appearance of the pronoun.

- (25) Topicalization and non-focal contrast: Watshenni:ne’ Sawyer, speaker
 ‘There were three of us children in the family, two of them boys.
 One boy was called *Kahionwa’kérha*’ [Canoe Floating on the River].
 And one boy was called *Tiohatéhkwen* [Parting of the Road].’

Tánon’ í:’ Watshenni:ne’ ní: ióntiats.
 and **1** she name carries **the 1** one calls me
 ‘And **I**, I am called Namebearer **myself**.’

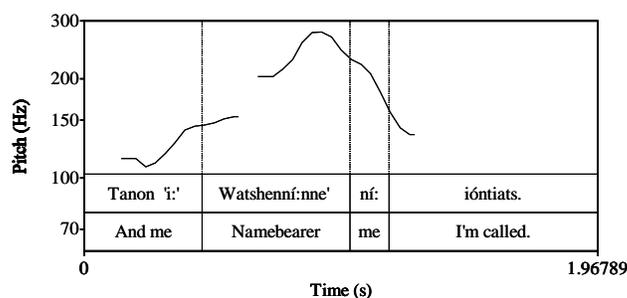


Figure 19: Multiple free pronouns

10. Conclusion

The free pronouns in Mohawk thus do not serve a single, unified function. A syntactic analysis under which they are considered the only basic arguments of their clauses, and the prefixes mere agreement, runs into problems at every turn. The free and bound markers do usually ‘agree’, in that they both reflect features of a common referent. But free pronouns make many fewer distinctions than the prefixes, so they would make poor controllers. They are, furthermore, absent much more often than they are present. Ascribing their absence to a kind of ‘pro-drop’ mechanism, whereby they are deleted when reference is otherwise clear, would be at odds with their actual distribution; when they occur, reference is usually otherwise clear from the obligatory prefixes on the verb. Furthermore, they do not serve a unified function in terms of information structure. They identify referents in basic focus, contrastive focus, non-contrastive focus, topicalization, antitopic, and a variety of verbless constructions.

If, however, we shift our attention to the prefixes and the mechanisms by which they tend to develop over time, an explanation for the differences between the two sets emerges. The most common mechanisms by which affixes come into being involve processes of grammaticalization. Recurring constructions consisting of an unstressed function word adjacent to a content word can become routinized by speakers, processed as chunks during speech. Word boundaries within the construction may fade, and the function word may ultimately become an affix. Such a scenario could well underlie the structure of the modern Iroquoian verb. It is likely that unstressed free pronouns, representing given core arguments in clauses with unmarked information structure, were regularly positioned immediately before the verb, an order which continues within the verbal morphology. Their high frequency, their constant position adjacent to the verb, their unmarked information structure, and their corresponding lack of prosodic prominence would set the stage for fusion with the following verb. Pronouns that were not regularly positioned adjacent to the verb and that carried marked prosody would not be subject to such developments.

In some languages with both free and bound markers, the two sets are still etymologically related, as in French, but this need not be the case. Both sets of markers may evolve over time, as individual forms are added, lost, and replaced. In Mohawk, the modern first person free pronoun is *i:*, but the first person singular and exclusive prefixes are all based on *k-*, and the inclusive prefixes *t-*, none containing the vowel *i*. The modern third person free pronouns are transparently complex morphologically, based on a root *-ónha* ‘alone’, with third person prefixes: *a-ónha* ‘it/she/her’ (NEUTER/ZOIC), *aka-ónha* ‘one/she/her’ (GENERIC/FEMININE), *ra-ónha* ‘he/him/his’, *ion-ónha* ‘they/them/their’ (FEMININE/ZOIC), and *ron-ónha* ‘they/them/their’ (MASCULINE). These

forms are apparently newer than the prefixes and, unlike most of the prefixes, are not cognate across the family. The Iroquoian prefix paradigm also did not necessarily take shape all at once (Mithun to appear). Only one basic third person prefix category can be reconstructed for Proto-Iroquoian, undifferentiated for gender, plus an indefinite or generic category 'one'. A distinct masculine prefix category can be reconstructed only to the Northern Iroquoian branch of the family. The extension of indefinite forms to certain women occurred even later and is in fact still an ongoing process in Mohawk, slowly making its way through the elaborate transitive prefix paradigm.

So what characterizes the modern Mohawk free pronouns as a group? They are simply an assortment of forms that do not share in the positional and prosodic patterns that would be conducive to fusion with a host, patterns that typically underlie the development of bound forms. They occur outside of the nuclear clause, in marked focus, topic, or antitopic positions, scattered throughout the clause, or in contexts without a following verb. They show distinctive prosody and are not usually part of the same prosodic phrase as the verb in the clause. The prefixes, by contrast, are apparently descended from pronouns in unmarked information structures that regularly occurred immediately before the verb without special prosodic prominence. Differences between the Mohawk free and bound forms may ultimately be best understood in terms of the mechanisms behind their development.

Abbreviations

1 first person, 2 second person, 3 third person, AGT agent, AL alienable, APPL applicative, BEN benefactive, DU dual, FACT factual, FI feminine-indefinite gender, FZ feminine-zoic gender, INAL inalienable, IRR irrealis, M masculine, N neuter, PAT patient, PFV perfective, PL plural, PRF perfect, Q question marker, SG singular, STAT stative

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