O

Object & Subject Combinations in Perfective, Imperfective, & Future

Ch'a ldakát át ayakgwahéiyagu ₌kudzitee
yoo áyá haa ée at wudulitóow.
—Kaal₌káawu

There is a spirit in everything,
so we are taught.
— Cyril George, ₌Kak'weidí[1]

To begin examining ways in which we can become more dynamic with verbs, we are going to explore Object-Subject combinations in three verb modes: perfective, imperfective, and future. Some things to pay close attention to here are the ways verbs contract when different elements are added, and how Object & Subject pronouns affect contractions.

There are certain combinations in Tlingit that can have multiple interpretations. These are imperfective verbs with a 2nd person and 3rd person combination. For example, «isix-_án» could be «∅-i-si-√x̲án» (you love her/him/it) or «i-∅-si-√x̲án» (s/he loves you). The meaning is usually drawn from context, or else a specifying noun is present and possibly marked with an ergative suffix. The same is true for 3rd person Object **and** Subject **with** the plural marker (has). Using and interpreting this will take time, but for now focus on unpacking the content that is here, looking at the contraction, and practicing some of these combinations with other verbs.

The presence of O & S in the theme notes the *transitivity* of the verb: whether or not Object and Subjects are allowed.

---

1 George, Cyril. "₌Kák'w." trans. Lance Twitchell. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=--1b1oce-SM.

Naish & Story[2] refer to Tlingit verb transitivity with the following terms:

transitive	(+O,+S)
intransitive	(−O,+S)
stative	(+O,−S)
impersonal	(−O,−S)

Crippen[3] uses different terminology, which we will use in our discussion of transitivity and our documentation of verbs. It is important to note the transitivity of a verb to conjugate for person. If O is not listed in the theme, then it will not occur, and the same goes for S. If O is listed, then it will always be in the verb unless you create an antipassive form, which kicks the Object out and pushes the verb into a +D form. if the S is listed in the theme, then it will always be there.

transitive	(+O,+S)
subject intransitive	(−O,+S)
object intransitive	(+O,−S)
impersonal	(−O,−S)

Here are some examples of how transitivity works in verbs. Keep in mind that the theme shows the O-S combinations, and that memorizing the Tlingit pronouns will open the door to conjugating for person.

ixsixán	i-xa-si-√xán	i love you	transitive
xat yisiteen	xat + ÿu-i-si-√teen	you see me; you saw me	transitive
aadé yaa nxagút	aa-dé + yaa + na-xa-∅-√gút	i am walking over there	subject intransitive
xwadlisáa	ÿu-xa-dli-√sáa	i rested; i'm resting	subject intransitive
xat wuliteesh	xat wuliteesh	i am lonely; i was lonely	object intransitive
aadé haa luwagook	haa + lu-ÿu-ÿa-√gook	we ran over there	object intransitive
kuligóos'	ku-li-√góos'	it is cloudy	impersonal
át la.áa	áa-t + la-√.áa	it is situated there (a building)	impersonal

2   Story, Gillan and Constance Nash. *Tlingit Verb Dictionary*. College: University of Alaska: Alaska Native Language Center, 1973, 365–368.

3   Crippen, James. "Tlingitology Seminar Notes: Background and Morphology." Lecture, University of British Columbia 17 Apr 2013, 20.

Object pronouns in Tlingit have been standardized with the following rule: if the pronoun is one letter it is attached to the verb, and if it is more than one letter than it is detached, except in the case of the first person alternative form «x̱aa-» as in «sh tóog̱aa x̱aaditee» (i am grateful). Even though this is how we write it, keep in mind that all open object pronouns will affect conjugation in the preverb. The most confusing of these as far as writing them is probably forms like this:

tlél haa ysix̱án*	tlél + haa + yi-si-√x̱án	you all do not love us

The «haa + y-» section here would rhyme with the word «yáay» (whale). Because of this, there is still discussion about whether open pronouns should just be attached to the verb. The reason to avoid this is that verbs can become extremely long, such as the following conjugation:

haayeeysiteen	haa-yee-ÿu-si-√teen	you all see us; you all saw us

For some students, the third person can be confusing since it is neither heard nor visible, except in the case of the third person O **and** S. Sometimes when conjugating Tlingit verbs as second language speakers, we want to insert a pronoun for a third person because there is one in English, but this creates ungrammatical combinations (marked with *). Look at the following third person O-S combinations.

ax̱six̱án*	a-x̱a-si-√x̱án*	[ungrammatical]
x̱asix̱án	∅-x̱a-si-√x̱án	i love her/him/it
x̱at six̱án	x̱at + ∅-si-√x̱án	s/he loves me
isix̱án	∅-i-si-√x̱án	you love her/him/it
isix̱án	i-∅-si-√x̱án	s/he loves you
asix̱án	a-∅-si-√x̱án	s/he loves her/him/it
kusix̱án	ku-∅-si-√x̱án	s/he loves someone
dudzix̱án	∅-du-dzi-√x̱án	s/he is loved

These are the 3rd person combinations for the singular forms, and since the 3rd person Object and Subject pronouns are pluralized with a preverb, we should look at some plural combinations and see how those change.

tusixán	∅-tu-si-√xán*	we love her/him/it
has tusixán	has + ∅-tu-si-√xán	we love them
haa sixán	haa + ∅-si-√xán	s/he loves us
has haa sixán	has + haa + ∅-si-√xán	they love us
has yisixán	has + ∅-yi-si-√xán	you all love her/him/it
has yee sixán	has + yee + ∅-si-√xán	s/he loves you all
has kusixán	has + ku-∅-si-√xán	they love someone
has dudzixán	has + ∅-du-dzi-√xán	they are loved

This brings us to the 3–3 combinations, which are easy to put together but linguistically impossible to interpret without context. Either we know by what we have heard what the subject and object should be, or it is often specified outside of the verb phrase with a noun or possible more than one noun and one of them having the ergative marker.

has asixán	has + a-∅-si-√xán	s/he loves them
		they love her/him/it
		they love them

Some verbs conjugate for Object using a ***nominal object*** instead of the Object pronoun, and these are noted as N in the theme. If there is no ***relational suffix*** (-x',-de,-náx, etc) present then there are two options. The most common option is a combination of a ***nominal object*** and a ***relational base***. We remember ***relational bases*** from our discussions on direction & relational terms, and that in verbs the most common way to cojugate them is by substituting the ***possessive pronoun*** in order to change the object. A noun can also be inserted in place of a pronoun, as in the following.

ax toowú yak'éi	ax + toowú + ÿa-√k'éi	i feel great
ax éesh toowú yak'éi	ax + éesh + toowú + ÿa-√k'éi	my father feels great
du daadzixáaw	du + daa-dzi-√xáaw	s/he is hairy
wé keitl daadzixáaw	wé + keitl + daa-dzi-√xáaw	that dog is hairy
i jeet x'akkwadatáan	i + jee-t + x'a-ga-u-ga-xa-da-√táan	i'll call you
Nora jeet x'akkwadatáan °	Nora + jee-t + x'a-ga-u-ga-xa-da-√táan	i'll call Nora
i tuwáa sigóo	i + tu-ÿá si-√góo	you want it
ax tláa tuwáa sigóo °	ax + tláa + tu-ÿá si-√góo	my mother wants it

a<u>x</u> <u>x</u>'éit sa.ín héen!	a<u>x</u> + <u>x</u>'-é-t + ∅-sa-√.ín + héen	give me water!
gawdáan <u>x</u>'éit sa.ín héen!	gawdáan + <u>x</u>'-é-t + ∅-sa-√.ín + héen	give the horse water!
a<u>x</u> jikaadá<u>x</u> gú!	a<u>x</u> + ji-ka-dá<u>x</u> + ∅-∅-√gú	get out of my way!
Henry jikaadá<u>x</u> gú!	Henry + ji-ka-dá<u>x</u> + ∅-∅-√gú	get out of Henry's way!

° most speakers would insert a pronoun after the name here, and it may sound awkward without it

If the **nominal object** has an attached **relational suffix** in the theme, then these are conjugated using a combination of **possessive pronouns** and **relational bases** or in some cases the **emtpy base**. We see these **nominal object + relational suffx** combinations most commonly in motion verbs, so they usually must have a relational base, and which one to choose depends on what is being conveyed.

hítde yaa nagút	hít + yaa + na-∅-∅-√gút	s/he is walking to the house
a<u>x</u> <u>x</u>ánde yaa nagút	a<u>x</u> + <u>x</u>án-de + yaa + na-∅-∅-√gút	s/he is walking towards me
a<u>x</u> éet hís'!	a<u>x</u> + ee-t + ∅-∅-√hís'	lend it to me!
du jeedá<u>x</u> wulihásh	du + jee-dá<u>x</u> + ∅-ÿu-li-√hásh	it drifted away from her/him
i éet <u>k</u>uwaháa	i + ee-t + <u>k</u>u-ÿa-√háa	it's your turn
yee yát a<u>x</u>dligein	yee + yá-t + a-<u>x</u>a-dli-√<u>g</u>ein	i am looking at all your faces; i looked at all your faces

A **nominal object** can be added to many verbs as well, and the selection of **relational base** depends on what the verb is conveying. Here are some examples of conjugated verbs and the addition of an optional **nominal object**.

dleit akaawadán	dleit + a-ká-ÿu-ÿa-√dán	it is snowing heavy; it was snowing heavy
dleit haa káa akaawadán	dleit + haa + ká + a-ká-ÿu-ÿa-√dán	it is snowing heavy on us; it was snowing heavy on us
ka<u>x</u>waaneek	∅-ka-ÿu-<u>x</u>a-ÿa-√neek	i told about it
i een ka<u>x</u>waaneek	i + ee-n + ∅-ka-ÿu-<u>x</u>a-ÿa-√neek	i told you about it
du een ka<u>x</u>waaneek i daat	du + ee-n + ∅-ka-ÿu-<u>x</u>a-ÿa-√neek + i + daa-t	i told her/him about you
x'áant uwanúk	x'áan-t + ÿu-∅-ÿa-√núk	s/he is mad
a<u>x</u> yís x'áant uwanúk	a<u>x</u> + yís + x'áan-t + ÿu-∅-ÿa-√núk	s/he is mad at me
yoo <u>x</u>'atán!	yoo + <u>x</u>'a-∅-∅-√tán	speak!
a<u>x</u> een yoo <u>x</u>'atán!	a<u>x</u> + ee-n + yoo + <u>x</u>'a-∅-∅-√tán	speak to me!

Pay attention to how these are used, and how the relational suffix changes in different verb modes. If we take the

above examples and move them into the future mode, this
is the result.

dleit akakgwadáan	dleit + a-ká-ga-u-ga-∅-√dáan	it will snow heavy
dleit haa kaadé akakgwadáan	dleit + haa + ká-dé + a-ká-ga-u-ga-∅-√dáan	it will snow heavy on us
kakkwanéek	∅-ka-ga-u-ga-xa-∅-√néek	i will tell about it
i eedé kakkwanéek	i + ee-dé + ∅-ka-ga-u-ga-xa-∅-√néek	i will tell you about it
du eedé kakkwanéek i daat	du + ee-dé + ∅-ka-ga-u-ga-xa-∅-√néek + i + daa-t	i will tell her/him about you
x'áande kgwanóok	x'áan-de + ga-u-ga-∅-∅-√nóok	s/he will be mad
ax yís x'áande kgwanóok	ax + yís + x'áan-t + ga-u-ga-∅-∅-√nóok	s/he will be mad at me
yoo x'akgeetáan	yoo + x'a-ga-u-ga-i-∅-√tán	you will speak
ax eedé yoo x'akgeetáan	ax + ee-dé + yoo + x'a-ga-u-ga-i-∅-√tán	you will speak to me

So, let's get to conjugating. To begin with, let's look at

	OBJECT		SUBJECT	
1SG	xat ~ xaa-	me·	xa-	i
1PL	haa	us	tu-	we
2SG	i-	you	i-	you
2PL	yee-	you all	yi-	you all
3H	∅- ~ a-	her/him	∅-	she/he
INDH	kaa ~ ku-	someone	du-	someone
INDN	at	something	—	—
(3) PL	has ~ s	them	has ~ s	they