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Gender and Culture

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Abstract
An intriguing question is the degree to which grammatical categories reflect culture. One area in which a direct relationship has sometimes been assumed is that of grammatical gender, since gender categories occur in languages throughout the world, but differ in intriguing ways. Here it is shown that even when parallels between grammar and culture may appear obvious, the relationship may not be immediate and direct. Grammatical categories usually evolve gradually over time, often in series of small steps and not always in a straight line. Examples are drawn from Mohawk, an Iroquoian language of northeastern North America.

1. Language and culture

It is now generally recognized that grammatical categories develop in languages through use. Distinctions made most often by speakers as they speak tend to become routinized over time in grammatical markers. Many grammatical categories recur in language after language, no doubt because they reflect common human interests. Most languages have grammatical causative constructions, for example, and many have tense systems. But other grammatical markers reflect more specific environmental or cultural interests. Central Alaskan Yup'ik, for example, contains a suffix *-ir-* 'have cold N'. Added to the noun root 'ear', it forms the stem *ciuta-**ir**-* 'have cold ears', as in the verb *ciuta-**ir**-tua* 'my ears are cold' (George Charles, speaker p.c.). It is probably no accident that this language is spoken in the Arctic. Central Pomo, a language indigenous to California, has a prefix *č*^{h}- 'by gambling'. Prefixed to the verb *ley* 'exhaust, die off', it yields the verb ***č***^{h}*-léy* 'to lose everything in gambling' (Frances Jack, speaker p.c.). California peoples are known for their long traditions of gaming.

Grammatical gender systems appear in languages distributed throughout the world. They show many similarities cross-linguistically, but there are also interesting differences. Comparisons among them raise questions about the extent to which grammatical gender reflects cognitive universals versus cultural specificity.

1.1. Mohawk

Mohawk, an Iroquoian language indigenous to northeastern North America, shows a grammatical gender system that at first looks much like those of more familiar European systems. Nouns contain gender prefixes.[1]

(1) Noun prefixes

Masculine	***ra**-ksà:'a*	'boy'
Feminine	***e**-ksà:'a*	'girl'
Neuter	***ka**-ièn:kwire'*	'arrow'

1.2. Agreement

It has been proposed that a fundamental feature of grammatical gender systems is the presence of agreement. Hockett defined gender in just this way: "Genders are classes of nouns reflected in the behavior of associated words." (1958:231, cited in Corbett 1991:1). Corbett concurs. "While nouns may be classified in various ways, only one type of classification counts as a gender system; it is one which is reflected beyond the nouns themselves in modifications required of 'associated words'" (1991:4). The Mohawk examples in (2) indicate that the language does show grammatical gender in the strict sense.

(2) Mohawk matching prefixes (examples constructed for comparison)

a. ***Ra****-ká:we-hs* *ne* ***ra****-ksà:=’a.*
3M.SG.AGT-paddle-HAB the **M.SG**-child=DIM
‘The boy is paddling.’

b. ***Ie****-ká:we-hs* *ne* ***e****-ksà:=’a.*
3F.SG.AGT-paddle-HAB the **F.SG**-child=DIM
‘The girl is paddling.’

c. ***Ka****-ká:we-hs* *ne* ***kén****-tsion.*
3N.SG.AGT-paddle-HAB the **N**-fish
‘The fish is paddling.’

d. ***Rati****-ká:we-hs* *ne* ***rati****-ksa’=okòn:’a.*
3M.PL.AGT-paddle-HAB the **M.PL**-child=DISTR
‘The boys are paddling.’

(By regular rule, the vowel of the Neuter prefix *ka-* fuses with the vowel *i* of a following stem, yielding the nasal vowel *en*: *k**a**-**i**tsion* > *k**én**tsion* ‘fish’.)

The verbal prefix system goes a step further. Verb prefixes represent both arguments of a transitive clause. In some cases, the components corresponding to the two arguments can still be discerned, but for the most part these prefixes are highly fused forms.

(3) Mohawk prefixes in transitives (constructed for comparison)[2]

a. ***Ronwa****-nòn:we’-s* *ne* ***ra****-ksà:=’a.*
3F.SG>3M.SG-like-HAB the **M.SG**-child=DIM
‘She likes the boy.’

b. ***Iontate****-nòn:we’-s* *ne* ***e****-ksà:=’a.*
3F.SG>3F.SG-like-HAB the **F.SG**-child=DIM
‘She likes the girl.’ or ‘The girl likes her.’

c. ***Konwa****-nòn:we’-s* *ne* ***kén****-tsion.*
3F.SG>3N.SG-like-HAB the **N**-fish
‘She likes the fish.’

d. ***Ronwati****-nòn:we’-s* *ne* ***rati****-ksa’=okòn:’a.*
3F.SG>3M.PL-like-HAB the **M.PL**-child=DIM
‘She likes the boys.’

Overt lexical nominals or free pronouns need not be present in every clause. Reference can be clear from the verbal prefixes.

2. Males

Not surprisingly, Masculine gender markers are used for all male persons and certain animals whose gender is salient, such as bulls and roosters. Masculine forms are used on occasion for other male animals as well, such as pet dogs or other significant individuals, particularly large ones. The excerpt in example

(4) is a free translation of a Mohawk account of an encounter with a polar bear. The bolded English pronouns reflect the gender distinguished by the verb prefixes.

(4) Encounter with a polar bear: Josephine Kaieríthon Horne, speaker, p.c.
'The bear (**he**) stood up. **He** was about twelve feet tall. When **he** opened his mouth, the inside of it looked like a ball of fire next to **his** huge white teeth. It took several shots to kill (**him**) the bear. The two brothers were all excited. They quickly went back to camp and happily reported that they had killed (**it**) a bear. But by the time they got back to the spot where (**it**) the bear had been killed, **it** was nowhere to be found.'

The speaker used Masculine forms while the bear was alive, but Neuter forms once he was dead.
Masculine dual and plural prefixes are also used for mixed groups of male and female persons.

3. Objects and animals

Neuter forms are generally used for objects and animals. The most common Neuter prefixes are *ka-/ken-* and *o-*, though there are a few others, and phonological processes can obscure some forms. The kinds of nouns that occur with these prefixes are not surprising: *kèn-reks* 'wildcat, mountain lion', *ka-henta'kéha'* meadowlark', *ka-nó:tsot* 'muskie (fish)', *ka-ríhton* 'red oak', *ká-hi* 'fruit, berry', *kahén:ta'* 'field, meadow', *ka-honwé:ia'* 'boat', *ká-tshe'* 'bottle, jug, can', *ka-nhóha'* 'door' ; *o-hkwá:ri* 'bear', *o-hriò:ken* 'chipmunk', *o-tsí:non* 'flea, louse', *o-tsi'tèn:'a* 'bird', *o-hkwé:sen* 'partridge', *o-iahè:ta'* 'perch (fish)', *otsi'eróhta'* 'crab', *ó-se'* 'willow', *ó-honte'* 'grass', *otsì:tsa'* 'flower', *o-hnennà:ta'* 'potato', *ó-iente'* 'wood', *o-'kèn:ra'* 'dust, soil', *o-nén:ia'* 'rock', etc..

For the most part, animals and inanimate objects are represented by the same prefixes. Distinctions can be seen in a few contexts, however. Number is distinguished for animates in verb prefixes, but not for inanimates.

(5) Number distinction for animates: Rita Konwatsi'tsaién:ni Phillips, speaker p.c.

a. *Awenhniserakwé:kon* *en-**ka**-hón:take'.*
all day long **it** will grass eat
'All day long **it** (a cow) would graze.'

b. *Awenhniserakwé:kon* *en-**konti**-hón:take'.*
all day long **they** (ZOIC.PL) will grass eat
'All day long **they** (cows) would graze.'

(6) No number distinction for inanimates: Josephine Kaieríthon Horne, speaker p.c.

a. *Kanákta'* ***ka**-kè:ron.*
place **it** is laid out
'A place was laid out (at the table).'

b. *Kanakta'shòn:'a* ***ka**-kè:ron.*
place here and there **it** is laid out
'Places were laid out (at the table).'

Such a pattern is not uncommon cross-linguistically (Corbett 1991:267-269, Enfield 2007:78, and many others). Distinctions between animate Neuters (termed Zoic in Iroquoian linguistics) and inanimate

Neuters appear in a few other contexts to be described later.

Not surprisingly, inanimate objects are sometimes personified, such as in ceremonial contexts. In (7) the earth is categorized as Feminine, and in (8), the medicines are categorized as Masculine.

(7) Thanksgiving address: Enos Williams, speaker

*Wa't**iethi**nonhwerá:ton'*	*ne*	*tsi*	*iohwentsiatátie'.*
we hereby raise thanks to **her**	the	where	it earth extends along

'We thank **her**, the earth.' . . .

*Te**iethi**nòn:weron*	*ahsonthenhnéhkha'*	*wenhnì:tare'.*
we thank **her**	nighttime	it moon shines

'We greet **her**, the nighttime moon.'

(8) Oratory: Frank Tekaronhió:ken Jacobs Jr., speaker

***Ietshi**iatahónhsatat*	*ne*	*ononhkwa'shòn:'a,*
you all listen to **them**	the	various medicines

'Listen to the medicines,

tsi nahò:ten'	***rón**:ton.*
as such it is a kind	**they** (**M.PL**) are saying

to what **they** (**M.PL**) are saying.'

4. Female persons

So far, the Mohawk system looks much like those of European languages. It differs in some intriguing ways, however. One is that the prefixes used for female persons are also used as generics 'one, they, people', for persons of unspecified sex, and indefinites. One domain in which generics show up routinely is in terms for tools and other devices. Morphological verbs are often used as referring expressions, and are often lexicalized as such. (The forms below are not restricted to utensils typically used by women.)

(9) Feminine and generic usage

a. ***ie**-hiá:tonhs* '**she**, **one** writes'
   ***ie**-hiatónhkhwa'* '**she**, **one** writes with it' = 'pen, pencil'

b. ***ie**-kòn:reks* '**she**, **one** pounds'
   ***ie**-konhrékstha'* '**she**, **one** pounds with it' = 'hammer'

Additional examples of generic uses of these forms are in (10), all from spontaneous speech.

(10) Generic usage in speech

a. *Ieióhe* *na-**ie**-nenhstaienthó:ko'.*
   it is time **one** should unplant the corn
   'It is time to harvest the corn.'

b. *A**hshako**ié:na'* *ne* ***iaka**onkwe'táksen*
   he would catch **one** the **one** is a bad person
   'He would catch bad people.'

c. *Ónhka'* ***iako****tohetstonhátie'* *a**iakhi**nontará:nonte'.*
someone **one** is passing by we would soup feed **one**
'We would give soup to any strangers who might come our way.'

d. *Iah* *ónhka'* *te**iako**tahonhsatá:ton.*
not someone not has **one** pricked one's ears
'No one listened.'

e. *Iohsnó:re'* *sahón:newe'* *tsi nón:* ***ie****-nakerénion'* *nón:kwe.*
it is fast they arrived back to place **one** lives here and there the person
'They soon returned to civilization.'

In combination with an indefinite pronoun such as *ónhka'k* 'someone', the same forms are used as indefinites.

(11) Indefinite usage in speech

Ónhka'k *wa-**hshakó**:-ken'* *ta**iakaw**enonhátie'.*
someone he saw **one** **one** is coming along
'He saw **someone** coming.' (Sex as yet undetermined)

This pronominal category is termed Feminine-Indefinite by Iroquoianists, abbreviated FI.

The use of the same forms for female persons, generics, and indefinites suggests a link between grammar and culture. Iroquoian culture is characterized by longstanding matrilineal and matrilocal traditions. Clan membership is inherited through the mother. Land was traditionally passed down from mothers to daughters. Women have always been highly respected, and they serve important community roles. Chiefs were traditionally men, but they were appointed (and potentially recalled) by the clan mothers. It is perhaps no surprise that generic persons should be represented by Feminine gender forms.

5. Not so fast

In fact the picture is more interesting. Feminine-Indefinite (FI) prefixes are indeed often used in reference to female persons. Just as often, however, a different set of prefixes is used, the same Zoic prefixes used for animals. (This category is accordingly termed Feminine-Zoic (FZ) by Iroquoianists.)

The use of two categories for female persons immediately raises the question of the difference between the two. Speakers are usually surprised when it is brought to their attention. Some are horrified to realize that they are using the same forms for women and animals. They report that they never thought about it, and that "No one notices". The difference in usage between the Feminine-Indefinite and Feminine-Zoic is in fact subtle and intriguing, and subject to variation across communities, families, and even individuals.

5.1. Feminine-Indefinite

When speakers become interested in the difference between the two genders used for women, and ask others to reflect on their own usage, they typically pose questions in terms of the emphatic/contrastive pronouns, *akaónha* 'she, one' (Feminine-Indefinite) and *aónha* 'she, it' (Feminine-Zoic): "Would you use *akaónha* or *aónha* for X?" A point on which all speakers immediately agree is that *akaónha* (FI) is used for grandmothers and mothers. This principle is often characterized in terms of respect. One speaker generalized the principle as follows: "The baseline is to refer to older relatives as *akaónha* (FI), younger

as *aónha* (FZ), but this can change according to personality". An elderly lady noted, "The older you get, the more respect people have for you, so you'll hear less and less *aónha* (FZ)." Many volunteered that *akaónha* (FI) is used "for refined, delicate, lady-like persons". One speaker related usage to the speaker: "*Akáonha* (FI) is used by people who are gentler."

The Feminine-Indefinite is used not just for older women, however. One speaker reported that she would use *akaónha* (FI) "always for little girls, but I know some who would go by personality". Another reported that she used *akaónha* (FI) "for all my daughters, but I know some would do it differently". Several volunteered that Feminine-Indefinite forms have a "diminutive sense" and indicate "endearment". There are, for example, two forms translatable as 'my daughter'. Speakers agree that "Both are definitely acceptable, and both are used all the time." Some noted a slight difference in connotation, however.

(12) Daughters

kheiè:n'a	'my daughter'	FI	"more loving"
tièn:'a	'my daughter'	FZ	"more frivolous"

Often mothers are initially shocked to realize that they use different gender prefixes for different daughters. After some reflection, one observed, "Often the firstborn girl is *áonha* (FZ), then succeeding girls are *akáonha* (FI)."

5.2. Feminine-Zoic

Speakers often remark that *aónha* (FZ) is used for "louder, more powerful, more assertive, more aggressive women". Those referred to with *aónha* (FZ) forms are characterized as "tough women", with "an outgoing nature". The speaker cited above who remarked that *akaónha* (FI) forms are used by gentler speakers also noted that *aónha* (FZ) forms would be "used more by someone who is really rough". Another speaker volunteered interesting comments on the two forms in (12).

(13) Pretty women

ie-ksa'tí:io	'she is pretty'	FI	"a bit more ladylike"
ka-ksa'tí:io	'she is pretty'	FZ	"the one he'd like to go out with"

The forms in (12) could suggest a difference in degree of respect, and one speaker made such an observation: "*Aónha* (FZ) would be used for someone you don't respect: an animal or a stranger". These forms are indeed common for non-Mohawk women. The terms for 'nun' and 'queen' are both Feminine-Zoic.

(14) Non-Mohawk women

***io**-ia'tatokénhti*	'nun'	FZ	(literally 'she FZ is bodily holy')
***ka**-kwí:n*	'the Queen'	FZ	(Queen Elizabeth)

Speakers are quick to assert, however, that the forms "do not necessarily indicate a lack of respect". One woman noted, "I wouldn't be insulted if someone used *áonha* (FZ) for me. It would mean they just don't know me well. I do the same with others." Another volunteered, "This is not about respect, but about distance." Still another was quick to say that Feminine-Zoic forms "are not rude, never felt to be rude." One explained these forms as appropriate for "someone we don't know, who is not an elder".

A slightly different angle was suggested by another speaker, and her comment was met with unanimous agreement. "*Aónha* (FZ) might be used for someone you don't like, though the form itself

doesn't say that". It was explained that use of Feminine-Zoic forms might convey dislike only if the speaker had always used Feminine-Indefinite forms for an individual before.

Age is mentioned in discussions about *aónha* (FZ) forms as well. Several women have noted that *aónha* (FZ) is used for "contemporaries, women your own age", and their own usage corresponds to their observations. The *aónha* (FZ) forms are used for good friends. They add that "older or younger women could be either". These assessments highlight the subtlety of the distinction, when they are contrasted with the tone of endearment felt in the Feminine-Indefinite daughter terms seen in (11).

Speakers also observe that use of the two categories is very much a family matter. When one woman first became conscious of the grammatical distinction, she asked herself, "Why do I say *aónha* (FZ) for my aunt?" She then realized, "Ah, I'm just imitating my mother." Another noted that "A and her sisters use *aónha* (FZ) forms for each other, with no disrespect." One hypothesized that "The mother decides for a baby girl, and that categorization usually stays for life." Thinking about her own family, she made the following observations. "I am the oldest daughter, so I am *aónha* (FZ). My sisters are *akaónha* (FI). They always use *aónha* for me, and I use *akaónha* for them. I always refer to all my aunts as *aónha* (FZ). But that may be because my mother was the youngest and has always been *akaónha* (FI)."

Usage also differs from one community to the next. Men in Kahnawà:ke generally refer to their wives as *akaónha* (FI), interpreted as a sign of respect. Men in Ahkwesáhsne, however, approximately 50 miles upriver, generally refer to their wives as *aónha* (FZ), interpreted as a sign of affection. One speaker recounted a story from the time she was being courted. Her family was originally from the Ahkwesáhsne community. When she was a teenager, they moved downriver to the Kahnawà:ke community. One day a young man came to the door, asking her mother whether her daughter was at home, using Feminine-Indefinite forms. The mother was perplexed, having no idea who he could be asking for. The daughter he was interested in, the firstborn, had always been referred to with Feminine-Zoic forms. Her younger sisters, referred to with Feminine-Indefinite forms, were much too young to be courted.

The FI/FZ distinction is thus intriguing but far from straightforward. The frequently-cited features of age, respect, and familiarity first evoke European *tu/vous* distinctions, but with closer scrutiny, it becomes clear that the distinctions are not isomorphic. The Mohawk distinction is of course marked in third-person rather than second. It also includes features not commonly associated with the European categories, such as daintiness versus brashness. Feminine-Indefinite forms signal endearment toward family members, but Feminine-Zoic forms signal familiarity among close friends. The Feminine-Indefinite forms are said to mark respect, but it is the Feminine-Zoic forms that are used for people one does not know well. Nevertheless, like the European distinction, and more complex systems like that of Lao described by Enfield (2007:77-84), usage is a social and cultural matter, one subject to subtle variation across communities, families, and individuals.

6. The real story

The associations between language and culture suggested by use of one category for women and generics on the one hand, and a separate category for some women and animals on the other, are not as direct as might be assumed. In fact the Feminine-Indefinite category did not emerge from a view of women as quintessential or prototypical human beings, and the Feminine-Zoic category did not develop from a view of women as akin to animals. The relationship between grammar and culture here is more complex. This can be seen by examining the successive stages of development of the two grammatical categories over time. Though there are no ancient written records of the Iroquoian languages in which these stages are directly attested, paths of development over time can be traced both from comparisons of the systems of modern related languages and from internal clues within each language.

6.1. Comparative evidence

Relationships among the modern Iroquoian languages for which we have substantial documentation are shown schematically in Figure 1.

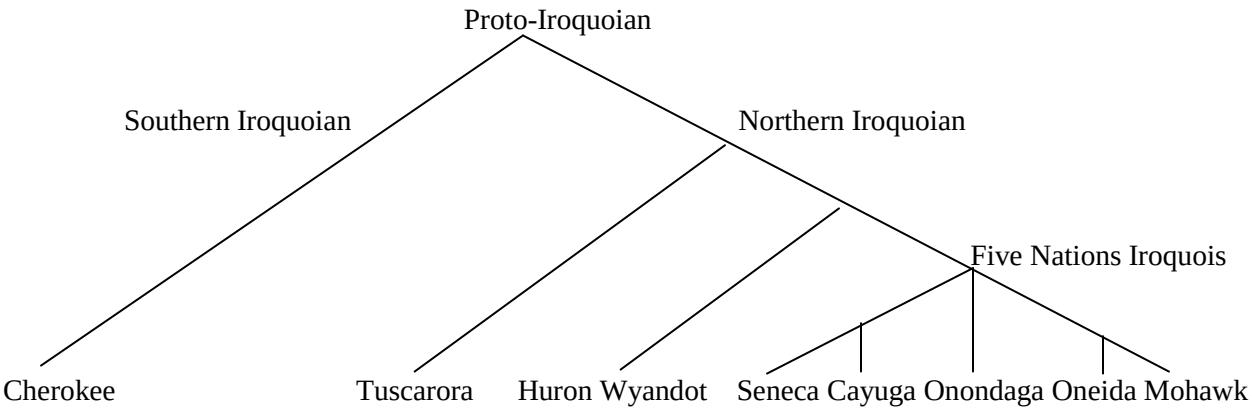


Figure 1: The Iroquoian Language Family

The family first separated into two major branches, Southern Iroquoian and Northern Iroquoian, several thousand years ago. The only known member of the Southern branch is Cherokee, spoken at first contact with Europeans in the 17th century in the North American Southeast, over parts of what is now North Carolina, Virginia, South Carolina, Georgia, and Alabama. The next split occurred within the Northern branch, when the ancestors of modern Tuscarora speakers separated from the main group. The Tuscarora lived until the early 18th century in what is now eastern North Carolina. After the Tuscarora Wars of 1711-1713, they began moving north, eventually settling near the Five Nations groups in western New York and southern Ontario. The Huron language was spoken in the 17th century in what is now Ontario. After epidemics and wars with the Five Nations Iroquois between 1647 and 1649, they were scattered. Some joined other Iroquoian bands in the area and moved west and then south, ultimately settling in Oklahoma, where they are now known as the Wyandot. Others, now known as the Wendat, moved east toward their present location near Quebec City. The Five Nations Iroquois groups lived, at the time of first contacts with Europeans in the early 17th century, in communities extending across what is now New York State. Their villages were located in the configuration shown in Figure 1, with the Seneca at the western edge and the Mohawk at the eastern edge.

It is possible to reconstruct stages in development of the gender categories by comparing the modern languages. Traits found in both branches of the family, Southern Iroquoian (Cherokee) and Northern Iroquoian, can be hypothesized to have been present in their common ancestor, Proto-Iroquoian. On this basis it appears that Proto-Iroquoian had one basic third person category with no gender distinction, and one Indefinite category used only for generic and indefinite humans. Number distinctions were made for all animates in the basic third person category. This system has survived intact in modern Cherokee, where basic third person prefixes are cognate with Mohawk *ka-* and *o-*, and the Indefinite prefix is cognate with Mohawk *ie-*. Traces of this system remain in all of the other languages.

Proto-Northern-Iroquoian shows the introduction of a new Masculine category, present in all of the modern Northern Iroquoian languages (Chafe 1977). The original basic third person category shrank accordingly to apply to just objects, animals, and female persons. The original Indefinite category was still used only for generics and indefinite persons. This system is preserved in modern Wendat (Huron) and Wyandot.

Proto-Five-Nations shows the beginning of another change, still in progress in some of the languages. Speakers began using Indefinite forms not just as generics and indefinites, but also as a sign of respect for

certain female persons. This change further diminished the range of the original basic third person markers to just objects, animals, and other female persons. It is thus a residual category, what is left of the original basic third person category after the removal of males to the new Masculine category and some females to the Indefinite category. This is essentially the situation found in modern Onondaga, Oneida, and Mohawk. Chafe (p.c.) reports that in Onondaga, the Feminine-Indefinite category can signal empathy, while the Feminine-Zoic can signal detachment. Abbott (1984) provides a detailed description of the Oneida system. It largely parallels the Mohawk one, with comparable variation across dialects and speakers, but it also shows subtle differences. In his 1953 grammatical sketch of Oneida, Lounsbury reported that age is the principal basis for the distinction, with a tendency among speakers to restrict Feminine-Zoic forms to 'adult, active, female persons' (1953:51). Abbott noted that several decades later, some speakers, mainly male, concurred: Oneida Feminine-Zoic forms signal greater age than Feminine-Indefinite forms, "with the dividing line somewhat vaguely around adolescence" (1984:128). He also found, however that other speakers strongly disagreed about the overriding importance of age. As in Mohawk, close relatives tend to be referred to with Feminine-Indefinite forms, but close friends with Feminine-Zoic forms. Abbott concludes that the choice seems to 'be based on age, size, gracefulness, kin relation, or even empathy' (1984:128).

The extension of Indefinite forms to women has proceeded further in the western Five Nations languages. In modern Seneca and Cayuga, they are now used for all female persons. It is difficult to know precisely when these last developments occurred, and the extent to which they were driven by language contact. The Five Nations groups constituted a strong political alliance, the League of the Iroquois, and it is known that the members of the bands did interact and intermarry to some extent. After the Tuscarora arrived in the area, they too were brought into the League. Modern Tuscarora shows the same system as its immediate Seneca neighbors: reflexes of the original Indefinite forms are now used for all female persons.

6.2. Internal evidence

There is also internal evidence within each of the Northern Iroquoian languages of the extension of original Indefinite forms to female persons.

One indication is the form of traditional personal names. Naming practices follow ancient, pre-contact traditions. Names were the property of clans, traditionally bestowed by the clan mother or some other knowledgeable elder. Often a baby was given the name of a deceased relative of the same clan, but only one person at a time could bear a traditional name. The names are old, so not all are still interpretable, but most are still transparent. Some examples of traditional Mohawk names are in (15).

(15) Some traditional Mohawk women's names

***Ka**-ia'tanó:ron*	'She is body-precious'
***Ka**-nerahtenhá:wi*	'She is carrying leaves'
***Ka**-heráwaks*	'She shakes the cornstalk'

What is significant is that in all of the Five Nations communities and among the Tuscarora as well, traditional names for women may contain Zoic or Neuter prefixes (*Ka-*, *W-*), but never Indefinite prefixes, no matter who the bearer. This is true even in communities where all women are now referred to with Feminine-Indefinite forms. The names predate the extension of the Indefinite gender forms to women.

A second indication of the direction of development of the gender categories involves kinship terms. The kinship terms are based on morphological verbs. As noted earlier, verbal prefixes may be intransitive or transitive. They distinguish three persons, three numbers, three genders, and two roles, grammatical Agent and Patient. Where the relationship is reciprocal, as for cousins, intransitive reciprocal forms are used with dual or plural prefixes ('we two are cousins to each other' = 'my cousin'). Where the

relationship is asymmetrical, transitive prefixes are used, with the senior kinsman marked by forms similar to grammatical Agents in regular verbs, and the junior kinsmen marked like grammatical Patients.

(16) Transitive verbs and kinterms

a. Verb
rák*-ken-hs*
3M.SG/1SG-see-HAB
'**he** sees **me.'**

b. Kinterm
rak*-hsót=ha*
3M.SG/1SG-be.grandparent.to=DIM
'**he** is grandparent to **me**' = 'my grandfather'

Most kinterms for female relatives have both Feminine-Indefinite and Feminine-Zoic forms.

(17) 'My younger sister'

a. ***khe****-'kèn:'=a*
1SG/3FI-be.older.sibling.to=DIM
'**I** am older sibling to **her** (FI)' = 'my younger sister' FI

b. ***ke****-'kèn:'=a*
1SG/3FZ.SG-be.older.sibling.to=DIM
'**I** am older sibling to **her** (FZ)' = 'my younger sister' FZ

But not all kinship terms for women have two forms. For grandmothers and mothers, there are only Zoic forms.

(18) Feminine-Zoic only

a. ***<u>ak</u>****-hsót=ha*
3FZ.SG/1SG-be.grandparent.to=DIM
'**she** (**FZ**) is grandparent to **me**' = 'my grandmother' FZ

b. ***<u>ake</u>****-'nistén=ha*
3FZ.SG/1SG-be.mother.to=DIM
'**she** (**FZ**) is mother to **me**' = 'my mother' FZ

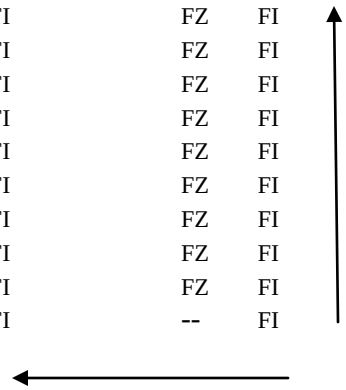
What is surprising is that these are the very individuals speakers unanimously agree should be referred to with Feminine-Indefinite verbal prefixes and independent pronouns. The gaps begin to make sense when it is recognized that the use of Indefinite forms as a sign of respect for elders is an innovation. Words for 'my grandmother' and 'my mother' are among the earliest kinship terms learned by children and the most frequently used. They are thus the most resistant to change.

The extension of Indefinite forms to certain women is only gradually making its way through the regular verbal and kinship prefix paradigms. It is more advanced in the verbal paradigms, but certainly not complete. There are, for example, no separate Feminine-Indefinite dual or plural verb prefixes. Forms used for referring to more than one woman are descended from the original basic third person forms. The kinship prefix paradigms are even less advanced. The progress of the innovation can be traced in Table 1. For each relationship ('my grandmother', 'your grandmother', etc.) the table shows whether the

innovative Feminine-Indefinite form yet exists (FI) or not (--), and whether the original Feminine-Zoic form still persists (FZ) or not (--).

Table 1: Gradual extension of Indefinite forms to female kinsmen

	'my'		'your'		'her'		'his'	
'grandmother'	FZ	--	FZ	--	FZ	--	FZ	--
'mother'	FZ	--	FZ	--	FZ	--	FZ	--
'older sister'	FZ	--	FZ	--	FZ	FI	FZ	FI
'younger sister'	FZ	FI	FZ	FI	FZ	FI	FZ	FI
'daughter'	FZ	FI	FZ	FI	FZ	FI	FZ	FI
'stepdaughter'	FZ	FI	FZ	FI	FZ	FI	FZ	FI
'sister-in-law'	FZ	FI	FZ	FI	FZ	FI	FZ	FI
'daughter-in-law'	FZ	FI	FZ	FI	FZ	FI	FZ	FI
'niece'	FZ	FI	FZ	FI	FZ	FI	FZ	FI
'granddaughter'	FZ	FI	FZ	FI	FZ	FI	FZ	FI
'stepmother'	--	FI	--	FI	--	FI	FZ	FI
'mother-in-law'	--	FI	--	FI	--	FI	--	FI



The earliest learned, most frequently-used terms have been the most resistant to change. The innovation has not yet reached any of the terms for grandmothers and mothers, nor those for 'my older sister' or 'your older sister'. There are now, however, Indefinite forms for 'her older sister' or 'his older sister'. On the other hand, for the terms which are probably the last to be learned and used, the terms denoting those relationships in which it is most important to show respect, the Feminine-Zoic forms have disappeared entirely. There are only Indefinite forms for all mothers-in-law as well as 'my stepmother', 'your stepmother', and 'her stepmother'. A Feminine-Zoic term still persists for 'his stepmother'. (Additional developments in the pronominal system are discussed in Mithun 2010.)

7. Agreement reconsidered

The difference in rates of development between the regular verbal prefix paradigms and the kinship prefix paradigms has lead to prefix mismatches within clauses. Grandmothers and mothers, for example, can be referred to only with Feminine-Zoic kinship terms, but only with Feminine-Indefinite verb prefixes.

(19) Grandmother mismatches: Josephine Kaieríthon Horne, speaker p.c.

a. ***Ak****hsótha* — ***en****ie**nenhstóhare'* — *tánon'*
ak-hsot=ha — en-**ie**-nenhst-ohar-E' — tanon'
3FZ/1SG-be.grandparent.to=DIM — FUT-**FI.AGT**-corn-wash-PFV — and
my grandmother (**FZ**) — she (**FI**) will corn wash — and
'My grandmother **(FZ)** would wash **(FI)** the corn and

b. *en**ie**the'serón:ni'* — *ohén:ton* — *tsi niió:re'*
en-**ie**-the'ser-onni-' — o-hent-on — tsi ni-io-r-e'
FUT-**3FI.AGT**-meal-make-PFV — N-lead-STATIVE — so PRT-3N.PAT-extend-STATIVE
she (**FI)** will grind — before — so it is far
grind **(FI)** it before

c. *kana'tarokhón:we* *en**ie**na'tarísa'.*
ka-na'tar-o-k=honwe en-**ie**-na'tar-is'a-'
N-bread-be.in.water-CONT=genuine FUT-**3FI.AGT**-bread-finish-PFV
traditional cornbread she (**FI**) will bread finish
she **(FI)** made cornbread.'

It could be argued that this is typical of agreement systems in general. In many languages, the gender markers that appear on different lexical items, such as verbs, nouns, adjectives, demonstratives etc. need not have identical forms; they must simply encode the same categories. But these Mohawk mismatches cannot be generalized by lexical category. Other kinship terms for women have both Zoic and Indefinite forms, and the prefix categories on these terms normally match those on associated verbs.

(20) Zoic daughter: Sha'tekenhátie' Marian Phillips, speaker

Tanon' ***konwa**ièn:'a* *s**ka**ià:ta* ***Ka**hentinéhson'*
tanon' **konwa**-ien'=ah s-**ka**-ia't-at **ka**-hent-ine-hson'
and **3FI/3FZ.SG**-have.as.offspring REP-**3FZ.SG**-body-be.one **3FZ.SG.AGT**-field-lead-DISTR
and she (FI) has **her** (**FZ)** as child one (**FZ**) body **she** (**FZ**) leads the field
'And her (FI) one **(FZ)** daughter **(FZ),** Kahentinéhson' **(FZ)**

è:neken' *nenkwá:* *she's* ***ka**nákere'.*
è:neken' nenkwa she's **ka**-naker-e'
up that.side formerly **3FZ.SG.AGT**-reside-STATIVE
up that side formerly she **(FZ)** resides
used to live **(FZ)** up there.'

The terms for 'grandmother' and 'mother' could still be accommodated in various ways theoretically. They could be listed as morphologically Zoic but syntactically Indefinite, for example. They could be likened to the Latin *agricola* 'farmer', which appears to have a Feminine ending formally but is categorized as Masculine for purposes of agreement.

These are not the only cases of mismatches. It was seen earlier that Zoic prefixes on verbs distinguish number, while the usually similar Neuter prefixes do not.

(21) Number distinctions

a. Zoic verbal prefixes

ka-	SG.AGENT	*io-*	SG.PATIENT
keni-	DU.AGENT		
konti-	PL.AGENT	*ioti-*	DUOPLURAL PATIENT

b. Neuter verbal prefixes

ka-	NEUTER.AGENT (SG.DU/PL)	*io-*	NEUTER.PATIENT (SG/DU/PL)

(All of the prefixes exhibit considerable allomorphy.)

The prefixes on Zoic nouns, however, do not usually distinguish number. The result is again mismatches between the nouns and verbs that are supposed to agree.

(22) Bug mismatch? Dorothy Karihwénhawe Lazore, speaker p.c.

Kaniataratátie'	*en**kont**ohétstake'*	***ka**tsi'niowá:nen's* (. . .)
ka-niatar-at-atie'	en-**konti**-ohetsts-akE'	**ka**-tsi'non-owan-en-'s
N-river-extend-PROG	FUT-**3Z.PL.AGT**-pass-CONT	**N**-bug-be.large-STATIVE-DISTR
along the river	**they** will pass by	**it** is bug large variously

'Insects **(NEUTER)** will pass by **(ZOIC.PL)** along the river (that you have never seen),

ok	*ò:ni'*	*ne*	*karonhia'kéhshon'*	*en**kont**ítie',*
ok	ohni'	ne	ka-ronhi-a'ke=hshon	en-**kont**-itie-'
and	also	the	N-sky-place=DISTR	FUT-**3Z.PL.AGT**-fly-PFV
and	also	the	through the skies	**they** will fly

and they will also fly **(ZOIC.PL)** through the skies

seken	*ne*	***ka**tsi'niowá:nen's*.
seken	ne	**ka**-tsi'non-owan-en-'s
also	the	**3N**-bug-be.large-STATIVE-DISTR
also	the	**it** is bug large variously

as well, those insects **(NEUTER)**.'

This example reflects a common Mohawk pattern: many terms for animals contain a Neuter prefix that does not distinguish number, but they co-occur with verbs containing Zoic prefixes that do. The term for 'cow(s)' is literally 'it jowl protrudes doubly', no matter how many cows are under discussion. The form of the noun prefix does not change with number, but the form of the verb prefix does.

(23) Cow mismatch: Rita Konwatsi'tsaién:ni Phillips, speaker p.c.

Ísi'	*nónhskwati*	*she's*	*niió:re'*
yonder	bridge beyond	formerly	so it is far

*nie**konn**éhtha'*	*ne*	*te**io**nhónhskwaron.*
n-ie-**konn**-e-ht-ha'	ne	te-**io**-nhonhskwar-ont
PRT-TRLOC-**3Z.PL.AGT**-go.with-HAB	the	DV-**3N.**PAT-jowl-be.attached
there **they** (**ZOIC.PL)** habitually go	the	it (**NEUTER**) doubly jowl protrudes

'The cows used to pasture way over on the other side of the bridge.'

(The Duplicative prefix *te-* (DV) here reflects the fact that two jowls are involved.)

An obvious explanation might be that number is not marked in the noun prefix morphology but it is marked in the verb prefix morphology. Singular, dual, and plural Zoic prefixes on nouns have the same form, but those on verbs are distinct. This hypothesis soon runs into exceptions, however. The term for 'sheep' has a Zoic plural prefix, no matter how many sheep are involved.

(24) Plural prefix on noun 'sheep'

*te**ioti**na'karontòn:'a*
te-**ioti**-na'kar-ont=on'a
DV-**3Z.PL.PAT**-horn-be.attached=DISTR
'they jowl protrude doubly' = 'sheep' (any number)

The number of sheep under discussion is specified only in associated predicates elsewhere in the clause. It is possible to specify that there is just one sheep, but in a larger phrase. Even here the noun for sheep still contains the Zoic plural prefix *ioti-*.

(25) ‘one sheep’

skaià:ta	*te**ioti**na’karontòn:’a*
s-ka-ia’t-at	te-**ioti**-na’kar-ont-on’a
REP-NEUTER-body-be.one	DV-**3Z.PL.PAT**-horn-be.attached=DISTR
one body	sheep

It is interesting to note that in the eastern Mohawk communities, where the first language contact was with French, there is an alternate term for ‘sheep’: *timotón*. This word is a transparent copy of a French term, but it is the plural form *des moutons*. Sheep are animals that usually appear in groups (flocks). The unmarked number for sheep is plural. Such cases could be likened to the ‘unproblematic mismatches discussed by Corbett in his work on agreement, mismatches ‘which arise because the controller lacks forms which would guarantee matching’ (2006:144).

These mismatches between noun prefixes and the number of referents actually suggest a more general principle, that gender is not a syntactically active property of nouns synchronically. In the account of the encounter with the polar bear seen earlier, the noun for ‘bear’ retained its Neuter form ***o**-hkwá:ri*, whether it was categorized in the verbal prefix as Zoic or Masculine.

(26) Masculine polar bear: Josephine Kaieríthon Horne, speaker p.c.

*Wa’t**há**:ta’ne’*	*kí:ken*	***o**hkwá:ri.*
wa’-t-**ha**-ta-’n-E’	kiken	**o**-ahkwari
FACT-DV-**3M.SG.AGT**-stand-INCH-PFV	this	**NEUTER**-bear
he stood up	this	bear

‘The bear (**he**) stood up.’

(27) Zoic polar bear: Josephine Kaieríthon Horne, speaker p.c.

Óksa’k	*sahiathrorià:na’*
oksa’k	sa-hi-at-hrori-ahna-’
immediately	REP-3M.DU.AGT-tell-MIDDLE-ANDATIVE-PFV
immediately	they went back to tell

‘They quickly returned to camp to report

tsi	*wa’**konwá**rio’*	*ohkwá:ri.*
tsi	wa’-**konwa**-rio-’	**o**-ahkwari
that	FAC-**3DP/3Z.SG**-kill-PFV	**NEUTER**-bear
that	they killed **it ZOIC**	bear

that they had killed (**it**) a bear.’

It should be noted that this account was related by an excellent speaker. Other speakers agree that these are appropriate forms.

Similarly, in the ceremonial speeches seen earlier where otherwise inanimate objects are personified, it is only the verbal prefixes that show a category shift.

(28) Oratory: Frank Tekaronhió:ken Jacobs Jr., speaker

***Ietshii**atahónhsatat*	*ne*	*ononhkwa’shòn:’a,*
ietshii-at-ahonts-atat	ne	**o**-nonhkw-a’=shon’a
2PL/3HU.PL-MIDDLE-ear-prick	the	**NEUTER**-medicine-NS=DISTR
you all listen to **them**	the	various medicines

‘Listen to the medicines (**NEUTER**),

tsi	*nahò:ten'*	***rón**:ton.*
tsi	n-a-h-o'ten-'	**ron**-aton
at	PRT-FACT-N.-be.a.kind.of -PFV	**3M.PL.AGT**-say
as	such it is a kind	**they** (**M.PL**) are saying

to what **they** (**M.PL**) are saying.'

It should be noted that the prefix *o-* on 'medicines' has approximately the same form as the Neuter Patient prefix that appears on verbs, but the medicines are not functioning as grammatical Agents here, as can be seen in the prefix 'they' on the verb 'they are saying'. The noun 'medicine' always begins with the prefix *o-* no matter what its grammatical role in the clause.

Zoic forms differ from general Neuters not only in showing number distinctions, but also in certain transitive prefix combinations. Basic neuters are not represented unless they are the only core argument of the clause. The Masculine plural agent prefix in intransitive verbs, for example is *rati-/-hati-*, as in: *wa-**hati**-ká:we'* '**they** paddled'. The same form is used in transitives with Neuter patients '**they**/it or them'. Different forms are used in transitives with Zoic patients: *konwa-* '**they/ it** or **her'** and *konwati-* '**they/them**'.

(29) Zoics and Neuters

a. Zoic (animate) patients

*Sa-**konwa**-ia'tisákha'.*	'**They** went back out to look for **it** (a cow).'
*Sa-**konwati**-ia'tisákha'.*	'**They** went back out to look for **them** (cows).'

b. Neuter (inanimate) patients

*Sa**hati**sákha'.*	'**They** went back out to look for (it/them).'

But the agreement patterns are not always as might be expected. The choice of Zoic or Neuter gender prefixes in the verb does not always depend on the referent. The sentences in the next four examples come from an account of the history of the old church bell at Kahnawà:ke, Quebec. The bell was sent by ship at the beginning of the 18th century as a gift from the King of France. It was wartime, however, and the ship was captured and taken to Salem, Massachusetts. The cargo was sold, and the bell was purchased by the town of Deerfield. When news of the sale reached the Mohawks, they set out for Deerfield. They managed to find the bell, take it down from the church steeple there, and fasten it to a beam to carry it back home. It was wintertime, however, and after struggling some way through the deep snow, they decided to bury the bell and return for it in the spring.

In the first clause in sentence (29), the ship was categorized in the verbal prefix *konwa-* as Zoic. This is perhaps not surprising; many English speakers refer to ships as 'she'. But this same ship was categorized by the same speaker as Neuter in the second clause of the same sentence.

(30) Zoic and Neuter ship: Josephine Kaieríthon Horne, speaker p.c.

*Wa'**konwa**ié:na'*	*ne*	***ka**honweia'kó:wa,*
wa'-**konwa**-iena-'	ne	**ka**-honweia'=kowa
FACT-**3PL/3Z**-catch-PFV	the	**N**-boat=AUG
they caught it (**ZOIC**)	the	ship (**NEUTER**)

'They captured **it** (**ZOIC**) the ship

iahatíhawe'	*wastonhronòn:ke*
i-a-hati-haw-E'	waston=hronon'=ke
TRLOC-FACT-3M.PL.AGT-take-PFV	Boston=resident=place
they took **(it NEUTER)**	United States

and took it (**NEUTER**) to the United States.'

Perhaps even more surprising is the categorization of the town of Deerfield as Zoic in (31).

(31) Zoic town: Josephine Kaieríthon Horne, speaker p.c.

Deerfield	*t**konwá**:iats,*	*tsi*	*nón:*	*tioia'totarhè:'on.*
Deerfield	t-**konwa**-iat-s	tsi	ne=onwe	t-io-ia't-otarhe'-on
Deerfield	CISLOC-3FI/**3Z.SG**-call-HAB	at	the=place	CISLOC-**3N.PAT**-bodily-hook-ST
Deerfield	they call **it** (**ZOIC**)	at	the place	there it (NEUTER) was seized

'It was seized at a place called (**ZOIC**) Deerfield.'

In (32) the bell was Neuter, as would be expected.

(32) Neuter bell: Josephine Kaieríthon Horne, speaker p.c.

Karontà:ke	*wahatihwánerenke'.*
ka-ront-=a'ke	wa-hati-hwanerenk-E'
NEUTER-log=place.at	FACT-3M.PL.AGT-tie-PFV
log place	they tied (it NEUTER)

'They fastened it (**NEUTER**) to a beam.

Wahonnenhsà:ren'. . .
wa-hon-nenhs-a-hren-'
FACT-3M.PL.AGT-shoulder-LK-set.on-PFV
They carried it (**NEUTER**) on their shoulders . . . '

But in (33), this same bell was referred to as Zoic.

(33) Zoic bell: Josephine Kaieríthon Horne, speaker p.c.

*En**konwa**ia'táta'*	*ne*	*iehwista'ékstha'.*
en-**konwa**-ia't-at'a-'	ne	ie-hwist-a-'ek-hst-ha'
FUT-**3.PL/3Z.SG**-body-insert-P	the	3FI.AGT-metal-LK-hit-INS-HAB
they will bodily insert it (**ZOIC**)	the	one metal strikes with it

'[They decided] they would bury (it **ZOIC**) the bell.'

This is not a matter of stylistic options. Speakers agree that these prefixes are the only acceptable ones in these sentences.

Similar alternations can be seen in the verbal prefixes associated with corn. In (34) corn is Neuter, as would be expected.

(34) Corn: Josephine Kaieríthon Horne, speaker p.c.

Nó:nen	*akwé:*	***io**státhen*	*n**ó**:nenhste',*
ne-onen	akwék-on	io-stath-en	ne=o-nenhst-E'
the-when	be.all-STATIVE	**3N.PAT**-be.dry-STATIVE	the-**NEUTER**-corn-NS
when	all	it (**NEUTER**) is dry	the corn

'When the corn was completely dry **(NEUTER)**,

sók	*nòn:wa'*	*entsakwanenhstarón:ko'*
sok	ne=onhwa'	en-ts-iakwa-nenhst-a-ron-ko-'
then	the=now	FUT-REP-1EXCL.PL.AGT-corn-LK-be.attached-REV-PFV
then	now	we will corn remove

we would take the kernels off the cob.'

But in (35) the corn is referred to as Zoic. This speaker was commenting on what she had noticed during a drive through the surrounding area.

(35) Corn: Watshenní:ne Sawyer, speaker p.c.

Ó:nenhste'	*ken'k*	*ni-**konti**-hnenié:son's*
o-nenhst-E'	ken'=ok	ni-**konti**-hneni-es-on's
N-corn-NS	small=just	PRT-**3Z.PL.AGT**-length-be.long-DISTR
corn	small	so **they** (**ZOIC.PL**) are long variously

'The corn **are** (**ZOIC**) very short.

tsi ní:io	*nakwé:*	*thie-**ioti**:-ten.*
tsi ni-io-ht	ne=akwek-on	th-ie-**ioti**-ten
as PRT-N.PAT-be.so	the=all-STATIVE	CONTR-TOC-**3Z.PL.PAT**-be.poor
as so it is	the all	**they** (**ZOIC.PL**) are just poor there

They all seem to be doing poorly (**ZOIC**).'

Other speakers concur that only Zoic prefixes could be used here: "'No one would ever say *Ken'k niión:son's* for 'it is short' referring to corn." (Kanerahtenhá:wi Nicholas, p.c.).

The somewhat surprising choices of gender prefixes appear to be controlled by the verb stem. Some additional examples of unexpected verb prefixes are in (36). Verbs for growing and getting frostbitten require Zoic prefixes, which distinguish number. The verb for getting ripe requires a Neuter prefix, with no number distinction. Speakers have no choices here.

(36) Some additional observed verbs

ioti-ká:ion	'they are growing slowly' (corn)	PL
ioti-kenhé:ion	'they are slow growing' (corn, berries, potatoes, grass)	PL
ioti-hniò:'on	'they just grew' (volunteer trees in the woods)	PL
ioti-iénhton	'they got frosted' (berries)	PL
ion-atonníson	'they have finished growing, they're ripe' (potatoes)	PL
io-hiá:ri	'they are ripe' (blackberries)	SG

Relatively few verb stems can be used with either animate or inanimate arguments. It appears that verbs for growing, catching, burying, and having a proper name require grammatically animate patients, that is, they routinely occur with Zoic Patient prefixes. Prototypical scenarios have been routinized to grammatical requirements.

The prefixes on many nominals do not signal gender directly. The original number markers have been frozen in the lexicalized nominals. Basic morphological nouns consist minimally of three parts: a noun prefix, a noun stem, and a noun suffix. Nouns beginning with *o-* (or its allomorphs) are usually Neuter.

(37) Morphological noun

ó:nenhste'
o-nenhst-E'
NEUTER-corn-NOUN.SUFFIX
'corn'

A very large number of lexicalized referring expressions are actually morphological verbs, without overt nominalizers. Some were seen earlier. Their prefixes may match the gender category of their referents, as in the case of 'nun', or not, as in the case of 'pencil', literally '**one** writes with it'.

(38) Many syntactic nominals (referring expressions) are morphological verbs.

a. *ioia'tatokénhti*
io-ia'-t-a-tokenht-i
ZOIC.SG.PAT-body-LK-be.holy-STATIVE
'she is body holy' = 'nun'

b. *iehiatónhkhwa'*
ie-hiaton-hkw-ha'
INDEFINITE.AGT-write-INS-HAB
'one writes with it' = 'pen, pencil'

There are in fact very few true morphological human nouns. The terms for 'boy' and 'girl' seen earlier, and for 'man' and 'woman', are ancient, but they are based on the verb roots *-ksa* 'be a child' and *-onkwe-* 'be a person'.

(39) Common nominals

raksà:'a	*rón:kwe*
ra-ksa='a	r-onkwe
M.SG.AGT-**be.a.child**=DIM	M.SG.AGT-**be.a.person**
'boy'	'man'
ieksà:'a	*iakón:kwe*
ie-ksa='a	iak-onkwe
FI.AGT-be.a.child=DIM	FI.AGT-be.a.person
'girl'	'woman'

These roots occur most often in the referring expressions above, but there is ample evidence of their status as verb roots. The sets of noun and verb stems are completely distinct in Mohawk. Only noun stems can serve as the foundation of morphological nouns, and only verb stems can serve as the foundation of morphological verbs. Mohawk shows extensive noun incorporation, whereby a noun stem is compounded with a verb stem to form a new verb stem. Only morphological noun stems can be incorporated. The verb roots *-ksa* 'be a child' and *-onkwe* 'be a person' must be overtly nominalized before they can be incorporated.

(40) Nominalized roots

a. *ra-ksa-**'t**-í:io*
M.SG.AGT-be.a.child-**NOMINALIZER**-be.good
'He is a good boy.'

b. *r-onwek-**'t**-í:io*
M.SG.AGT-be.a.person-**NOMINALIZER**-be.good
'He is a good man.'

The morphological structures of noun and verb words are also completely distinct. The two verb roots 'be a child' and 'be a person' participate in verbal morphological constructions, such as the Coincident.

(41) Coincident construction

Shikeksà:'a, . . .
shi-ke-ksa='a
COINCIDENT-1SG.AGT-be.a.child=DIM
'When I was a child . . .'

They are negated like other verbs as in (42), rather than like nouns as in (43).

(42) Clausal and verbal negation
Iáh teskaksà:'a.
iah te-s-ka-ksa='a
not NEG-REP-FZ.SG.AGT-be.a.child=DIM
'She is no longer a child.'

(43) Nominal negation
Iáh ó:nenhste' tè:ken.
iah o-nenhst-E' te'-ka-i
not N-corn-NS NEG-3N.AGT-be
not corn is it
'It is not corn.'

Other terms for persons are also morphological verbs, such as *akostèn:ha* 'elderly lady' and *rokstèn:ha* 'elderly man' based on the verb root *-ksten* 'be old'; *nitiakoiòn:ha* 'young woman', and *nithoiòn:ha* 'young man', based on another root *-akaion* 'be old'; *ieià:tase'* 'young lady' (literally 'she is new bodied'), and *ranekénhteron* 'young man', a stative verb based on the verb stem *-nekenhter-* 'be a young man'. The same verb stem is used as a syntactic predicate: *kenekénhteron* 'I am a young man'. The word *rohsken'rakéhte'* 'warrior, post-adolescent man', is literally 'he carries a weapon ('he rust-carries'). The word *rahsennowá:nen* 'chief' is a verb meaning literally 'his name is great'. The word *ratsiénhaienhs* 'councillor' is literally 'he lays the (council) fire'. As was seen earlier, kinship terms are based on morphological verbs. Terms that characterize people in terms of their activities or professions are morphological verbs, such as *rató:rats* 'hunter', literally 'he hunts', or *ra'swáhtha'* 'fireman', literally 'he extinguishes'. One term, *owirà:'a* 'baby', is a morphological noun based on the noun root 'offspring', but it is marked grammatically as Neuter with its prefix *o-*.

The prefixes on referring expressions do not necessarily classify the referents of those terms directly. Many are simply relics of the original verbal constructions that were their sources. In some cases the sources are still very much alive and alternatives exist: *ra'swáhtha'* 'fireman', *ron'swáhtha'* 'firemen' ('they extinguish'). In others, the terms have simply become labels, even if speakers can retrieve the sources: *teionhónhskwaron* 'cow(s)'.

8. Conclusions

The material seen in the preceding sections illustrates several points about relations between grammatical gender systems and culture.

The first is that such grammatical systems can be more intricate and interesting than might first appear on the basis of elicited sentences. The sets of constructed Mohawk sentences seen at the outset would, at first, appear to show a typologically prototypical, even European-type gender system, with Masculine, Feminine, and Neuter gender categories marked on nouns and reflected in agreement prefixes on verbs. The Masculine prefixes are used for male persons, the Feminine prefixes for female persons, and the Neuter prefixes for objects and animals. Examination of spontaneous speech quickly shows that the

categorization is more complex, however. Within the Neuter category a formal distinction is made between inanimates and animates, with number distinguished only for animates. Such a situation is not uncommon cross-linguistically. Mohawk Masculine and Feminine prefixes are sometimes used for personified objects and animals, again not a rare phenomenon. Somewhat surprising is the fact that the Feminine forms used for certain female persons are also used to refer to unidentified persons or to people in general. Perhaps even more surprising is the fact that the same Neuter (Zoic) forms used for animals are also used for referring to other female persons. The factors governing choices between these two categories, termed Feminine-Indefinite and Feminine-Zoic, are complex and variable across communities, families, and individuals. These gender categories are not isomorphic with others found elsewhere in the world, and the factors underlying their distribution do not match criteria for choice seen among categories elsewhere either. Like gender systems in many other languages, however, they are subject to variation across speakers and communities.

Second, the existence of agreement has often been cited as a fundamental property of grammatical gender systems, and the first set of Mohawk examples would appear to illustrate exactly this property. The nouns and associated verbs in those examples contain similar sets of prefixes reflecting gender and number. A closer look at spontaneous speech shows, however, that standard notions of agreement do not fully capture the relationships between the forms that actually occur. The prefixes on nouns may match the coreferential pronominal prefixes on verbs in gender and number, but they often do not. The noun prefixes are not synchronically active. They are an artifact of their diachronic sources and remain unchanged no matter what their referent or syntactic role in the clause. The forms of the noun prefixes may or may not match the referents of the nouns. Furthermore, the verbal prefixes are actually fully referential bound pronominal forms, which reflect features of their referents, rather than noun classes.

Finally, a reconstruction of the development of the Mohawk gender system shows that though grammatical gender categories may indeed reflect culture, the relationship is not necessarily immediate and direct. The fact that the same gender category is used for women and generic reference to human beings is not a result of a conception of women as prototypical humans. It is, instead, the result of the use of original indefinite forms to refer to certain women as a sign of respect. That extension of the original indefinite category to certain female persons does of course reflect an aspect of culture. The fact that the same gender category is used for animals and certain other women is not a result of the conception of women as akin to animals. That gender category is a residual category, one that originated as a basic third person category undifferentiated for gender but was narrowed in successive steps, first with the introduction of a separate Masculine category for males, and then with the use of the original generic category for certain females.

Relations do indeed exist between grammatical gender categories and culture, but these relations are often more complex and interesting than might be assumed.

Notes

[1]Examples are presented here in the official orthography in use in the Mohawk communities. Vowels *i, e, a, o* have approximately IPA values. Nasalized vowels are represented by digraphs: *en* [ʌ̃] and *on* [ʊ̨]. Glottal stop is represented by an apostrophe ’. The letter *i* represents a glide [j] before vowels. Vowel length is represented by a colon :. Stress with rising tone is indicated with an acute accent *ó*; stress with falling tone is indicated with a grave accent *ò*.

[2]The abbreviations used for grammatical terms are the following.

AGT	Grammatical Agent	INS	Instrumental applicative
AUG	Augmentative	LK	Linker
CISLOC	Cislocative	M	Masculine
CONTR	Contrastive	N	Neuter
DIM	Diminutive	NS	Noun Suffix
DISTR	Distributive	PAT	Grammatical Patient
DU	Dual	PFV	Perfective
DV	Duplicative	PL	Plural
F	Feminine	PROG	Progressive
FACT	Factual	PRT	Partitive
FI	Feminine-Indefinite	REP	Repetitive
FUT	Future	REV	Reversive
FZ	Feminine-Zoic	SG	Singular
HAB	Habitual aspect	TRLOC	Translocative
INCH	Inchoative		

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