

Part II The Basic Verb

PRONOUN PREFIXES

Every Oneida verb has a pronoun prefix attached to the front of the verb stem. There are three classes of these prefixes: transitive, subjective, and objective.

Transitive Pronoun Prefixes

Some verb stems require transitive pronoun prefixes. These prefixes include a pronoun both for the doer of the verb action and for the receiver of the action. Consider the following examples from the vocabulary sample.

kunolúhkwa	ku- is the pronoun prefix in which <i>I</i> is the doer and <i>you</i> is the receiver <i>I love you</i>
shukwaya?tísu	shukwa- is the prefix in which <i>he</i> is the doer and <i>us</i> is the receiver <i>he has created us = the creator</i>
shehlo·lí	she- is the prefix in which <i>you</i> is the doer and <i>her</i> or <i>them</i> is the receiver <i>(you) tell her</i> or <i>(you) tell them</i> (In English commands the subject <i>you</i> is understood, but in Oneida it is always expressed in the prefix.)
hetshlo·lí	hets- is the prefix in which <i>you</i> is the doer and <i>him</i> is the receiver <i>(you) tell him!</i>
askya?takénha? ka	-sk- is the pronoun prefix in which <i>you</i> is the doer and <i>me</i> is the receiver. (The ka - at the beginning is a prepronominal prefix that marks future tense.) <i>will you help me?</i>

A summary of some transitive pronoun prefixes so far:

sk-	<i>you to me</i>	ku-	<i>I to you</i>
she-	<i>you to her or them</i>	khe-	<i>I to her or them</i>
hets-	<i>you to him</i>	i-	<i>I to him</i>
shukwa-	<i>he to us</i>		

These prefixes can be attached to various compatible stems to create words such as the following:

sknolúhkwa	<i>you love me</i>
shenolúhkwa	<i>you love her / you love them</i>
hetsnolúhkwa	<i>you love him</i>
shukwanolúhkwa	<i>he loves us</i>

khenolúhkwa	<i>I love her / I love them</i>
inolúhkwa	<i>I love him</i>

Most terms for relatives in Oneida are transitive verbs. So, from the vocabulary sample:

iyáha	i- is the prefix (see above) and the verb stem means <i>be a parent to</i> iyáha means <i>I am a parent to him = my son</i>
kheyáha	khe- is the prefix and the verb stem means <i>be a parent to</i> kheyáha means <i>I am a parent to her = my daughter</i> or <i>I am a parent to them = my children</i>
aksótha	ak- is the prefix in which <i>she</i> is the doer and <i>me</i> is the receiver aksótha means <i>she is grandparent to me = my grandmother</i>
laksótha	lak- is the prefix in which <i>he</i> is the the doer and <i>me</i> is the receiver laksótha means <i>he is grandparent to me = my grandfather</i>

Some other examples of transitive pronoun prefixes:

áhetsya?takénha? ká	<i>will you help him?</i>
áshukwaya?takénha? ká	<i>will he help us?</i>
skya?tísu	<i>you have made me</i>
sheyáha	<i>your children or your daughter</i>
shukwayáha	<i>our father</i>

Subjective and objective pronoun prefixes

When a verb stem does not require a transitive prefix (typically when there is not both a doer and a receiver), then the stem requires either the subjective set of pronoun prefixes or the objective set. The difference between them is a matter of selection more than meaning and it is not predictable from knowing the meaning of the stem. Nothing obvious you know about English will help you predict whether an Oneida verb stem will take subjective or objective prefixes. From the vocabulary sample the verb *know* and the verb *be happy* both require objective prefixes. Here is a collection of several objective prefixes:

Objective pronoun prefixes:

wak-	<i>I</i>
sa-	<i>you</i>
lo-	<i>he</i>
yako-	<i>she, or someone</i>

And here are some examples of how they attach to verb stems:

wakanúhte	<i>I know</i>
sanúhte	<i>you know</i>
lonúhte	<i>he knows</i>
yakonúhte	<i>she knows</i>
wakatunháhehle	<i>I am happy</i>
satunháhehle	<i>you are happy</i>
lotunháhehle	<i>he is happy</i>
yakotunháhehle	<i>she is happy</i>

The verb *like* requires subjective prefixes such as the following:

Subjective pronoun prefixes:

k-	<i>I</i>
s-	<i>you</i>
la-	<i>he</i>
ye-	<i>she, or someone</i>

knú·wehse	<i>I like it</i>
snú·wehse	<i>you like it</i>
lanú·wehse	<i>he likes it</i>
yenú·wehse	<i>she likes it or someone likes it</i>

The verb *like* can also be used with transitive prefixes as in the following:

kunú·wehse	<i>I like you</i>
sknú·wehse	<i>you like me</i>
inú·wehse	<i>I like him</i>
shukwanú·wehse	<i>he likes us</i>

SIMPLE SENTENCES

Statements

A verb can function as a complete sentence or additional identifications of the pronoun prefixes can be added:

<u>lotunháhehle</u>	<i>he is happy</i>
Amos <u>lotunháhehle</u>	<i>Amos is happy</i>
Wali <u>yakotunháhehle</u>	<i>Mary is happy</i>
hetshlo·lí Amos	<i>tell Amos</i>
shehlo·lí Wali	<i>tell Mary</i>
iyáha <u>lotunháhehle</u>	<i>my son is happy</i>
kheyáha <u>yakotunháhehle</u>	<i>my daughter is happy</i>

Notice that the pronoun prefixes must always be used even when a name is used as well. Notice also that the pronoun prefix must agree with the subject in gender (as well as number and person). The order of words in Oneida expresses emphasis more than grammatical relations, so the following are also possible:

<u>lotunháhele?</u> Amos	<i>Amos is happy</i>
<u>yakotunháhele?</u> Wali	<i>Mary is happy</i>
<u>lotunháhele?</u> iyáha	<i>my son is happy</i>
<u>yakotunháhele?</u> kheyáha	<i>my daughter is happy</i>

It is also possible to express the same meaning with the particle **né·n** between the verb and the noun as in the following:

<u>lotunháhele?</u> né·n Amos	<i>Amos is happy</i>
<u>yakotunháhele?</u> né·n Wali	<i>Mary is happy</i>
<u>lotunháhele?</u> né·n iyáha	<i>my son is happy</i>
<u>yakotunháhele?</u> né·n kheyáha	<i>my daughter is happy</i>

Notice how the arrangement of words in a sentence affects the choice of whispered or non-whispered versions of a word.

Yes-no Questions

There is an easy way to turn any statement into the corresponding yes-no question. Add the particle **ká**. This is simply a grammatical word that signals a question. It is always positioned as the second word in the question.

<u>lonúhte</u>	<i>he knows</i>
<u>lonúhte</u> ká	<i>does he know?</i>
<u>lonúhte</u> Amos	<i>Amos knows</i>
<u>lonúhte</u> ká Amos	<i>does Amos know?</i>
<u>sanúhte</u>	<i>you know</i>
<u>sanúhte</u> ká	<i>do you know?</i>
<u>lotunháhele?</u> iyáha	<i>my son's happy</i>
<u>lotunháhele?</u> ká iyáha	<i>is my son happy?</i>
<u>sknolúhkwa</u>	<i>you love me</i>
<u>sknolúkhwa?</u> ká	<i>do you love me?</i>

Who Questions

The Oneida expression for *who* is **úhka? náhte?**. By itself this is pronounced **úhka? náhohte**. It is also possible to use just **úhka?** without **náhte?** or **náhohte**. Unless you know specifically that the answer will be a male, who-questions always use a feminine pronoun prefix on the verb. The general rule is that if you don't know whether you're talking about a male or female, then you assume female as an indefinite form.

úhka? náhte? yakonúhte	<i>who knows?</i>
úhka? náhte? yakotunháhehle	<i>who is happy?</i>
úhka? náhte? yenú·wehse	<i>who likes it?</i>
úhka? náhte? shenolúhkwa	<i>who(m) do you love?</i>
úhka? náhte? sheyáha	<i>who is your daughter?</i>

Negative statements

Negative statements are made by adding the particle **yah** before the verb and by attaching a special negative prefix to the verb. This is usually **te?**- (or just **te-** before an **h** or **s**) and it is one of the dozen or so prepronominal prefixes. If the verb already has a prepronominal prefix, then the negative prefix often combines or fuses with that prefix in ways that will be explained later.

yah te?yakonúhte	<i>she doesn't know</i>
yah teshukwanolúhkwa	<i>he doesn't love us</i>
yah te?wakanúhte	<i>I don't know</i>
yah te?knú·wehse	<i>I don't like it</i>

The h - l rule - a sound rule

When the negative prefix (or in fact any prefix) is added to a verb whose pronoun prefix starts with an **l-**, then that **l-** changes to an **-h-**. This is a very general pattern with only a few exceptions. Use **l-** when it starts a word and **-h-** when it doesn't.

lonúhte	<i>he knows</i>
yah tehonúhte	<i>he doesn't know</i>
lanú·wehse	<i>he likes it</i>
yah tehanú·wehse	<i>he doesn't like it</i>
lotunháhehle	<i>he is happy</i>
yah tehotunháhehle	<i>he isn't happy</i>

PRONOUN SUBCLASSES

The pronoun prefixes given earlier are just a few of many that are possible. There are fifteen subjective prefixes, about a dozen objective ones, and nearly sixty transitives. Each of those prefixes has variations that depend on the initial sound of the verb stem. It makes sense to classify stems both by what general class they are in (subjective, objective, or transitive) but also by the beginning sound. Here are the subclasses listed in the order of their frequency:

a-stems	verb stems that begin with a
c-stems	verb stems that begin with consonants (Except for a few peculiarities with stems that begin with y or h , it doesn't matter which consonant it is.)
i-stems	verb stems that begin with i
o-stems	verb stems that begin with either o or u
e-stems	verb stems that begin with either e or Λ

The first two subclasses are the biggest (over 80 percent of all Oneida verb stems) so we'll concentrate on those and postpone the others until later. Here's a slightly extended list of pronoun prefixes (still not the full list):

	objective		subjective	
	a-stem	c-stem	a-stem	c-stem
<i>I</i>	wak-	wak-	k-	k-
<i>you</i>	sa-	sa-	(h)s-	(h)s-
<i>he</i>	lo-	lo-	la-	la-
<i>she</i>	yako-	yako-	yu-	ye-
<i>they</i>	lon-	loti-	lu-	lati-

(The h in parentheses is only used when there's a prepronominal prefix.)

The verb stems from the previous lessons can now be identified as follows:

<i>tell</i>	-hlo·lí	transitive c-stem
<i>ask</i>	-li?wanu·tús	transitive c-stem
<i>parent of</i>	-yΛha	transitive c-stem
<i>grandparent of</i>	-hsotha	transitive c-stem
<i>love</i>	-nolúhkwa	transitive c-stem
<i>help</i>	-ya?takénha	transitive c-stem
<i>know</i>	-anúhte	objective a-stem
<i>live</i>	-nakehlu	subjective c-stem
<i>like</i>	-nú·wehse	subjective c-stem and transitive c-stem
<i>be happy</i>	-atunháhehle	objective a-stem

Vowel drop rule - a sound rule

In general when a pronoun prefix ending in a vowel is attached to a stem beginning in a vowel, the verb stem vowel is dropped. This is true of all the a-stems. There are some exceptions among o-stems.

Some more verbs

<i>work</i>	-yo·t<u>é</u>	objective	c-stem
<i>have money</i>	-hwístay<u>Δ</u>	objective	c-stem
<i>be hungry</i>	-atuhkályaks	subjective	a-stem
<i>eat</i>	-atekhu·n<u>i</u>he	subjective	a-stem
<i>drink</i>	-hnekíl<u>h</u>a	subjective	c-stem

Some examples:

wakyo·t<u>é</u>	<i>I am working</i>
satuhkályaks kΔ	<i>are you hungry?</i>
lutekhu·n<u>i</u>he	<i>they are eating</i>
yah tehahnekíl<u>h</u>a	<i>he doesn't drink</i>
úhka? náhte? yakohwístay<u>Δ</u>	<i>who has some money</i>
lonatunháhele? kΔ khey<u>λ</u>h<u>a</u>	<i>are my children happy?</i>
yah te?wakhwístay<u>Δ</u>	<i>I haven't got any money</i>

CONVERSATIONAL VOCABULARY

There are several expressions for *yes*. The most general word is $\Lambda\cdot\Lambda$. Use it for answering questions. For agreeing with someone you can use $\text{n}\acute{\text{e}}\cdot$ or $\text{n}\acute{\text{e}}\cdot \text{wah}$. The word for *no* is $\text{y}\acute{\text{a}}\text{h}\text{t}\Lambda$. There is also a slightly less formal word tah . For an intermediate response, you can use $\text{khe}\cdot\text{l}\acute{\text{e}} \text{ki}?\text{wah}$ which means *I guess so* or $\text{t}\text{a}\text{t} \text{nu}?\text{u}$ which means *maybe*.

Greetings

 $\text{she}\cdot\text{k}\acute{\text{u}}$

hello (a name or special greeting term for a relative can be added right after $\text{she}\cdot\text{k}\acute{\text{u}}$, the context form)

 $\text{shek}\acute{\text{o}}\text{l}\text{i}$

hello (a greeting typically between males)

 $\text{sk}\Lambda\text{n}\Lambda?\text{k}\acute{\text{o}} \text{k}\Lambda$

how are you?

 $\text{sk}\Lambda\text{n}\Lambda?\text{k}\acute{\text{o}}$

fine

 $\text{oh} (\text{ni}\cdot\text{s}\acute{\text{e}}) \text{n}\text{iy}\text{oht}\text{uh}\acute{\text{a}}\text{t}\text{i}$

how is it going with you?

 $\text{yoyanl}\acute{\text{a}}\text{t}\text{i}$

it's going fine

 $\text{kwah} \text{tsi}?\text{niy}\text{okw}\acute{\text{e}}\text{n}\text{i}$

as well as can be expected

 $\text{n}\acute{\text{a}}\text{hte}?\text{ol}\acute{\text{i}}\cdot\text{w}\text{ase}$

what's new?

 $\text{yah} \text{oh} \text{n}\acute{\text{a}}\text{hoht}\text{e}$

nothing

 $\text{kwah} \text{ok} \text{o}\cdot\text{n}\acute{\text{a}}$

the same (this can be used as a greeting exchange - it is simply asked with a questioning intonation $\text{kwah} \text{ok} \text{o}\cdot\text{n}\acute{\text{a}}$ and answered with a declarative one $\text{kwah} \text{ok} \text{o}\cdot\text{n}\acute{\text{a}}$)

 $\text{ok} \text{ni}?\text{i}\cdot\text{s}\acute{\text{e}}$

and you?

Identifications

 $\text{uhka}?\text{n}\acute{\text{a}}\text{hte}?\text{thi}\cdot\text{k}\acute{\text{a}}$

who is that?

 $\text{lu}\cdot\text{k}\text{w}\acute{\text{e}}$

man

 $\text{yu}\cdot\text{k}\text{w}\acute{\text{e}}$

woman

 $\text{yeks}\acute{\text{a}}$

child or girl

 $\text{laks}\acute{\text{a}}$

boy

 $\text{ukwehu}\cdot\text{w}\acute{\text{e}} \text{ni}?\text{i}$

I am Oneida, or I am Iroquois

 $\text{on}\Lambda\text{yote}?\text{a}\cdot\text{k}\acute{\text{a}} \text{ni}?\text{i}$

I am Oneida (People of the Standing Stone)

 $\text{o}?\text{slu}\cdot\text{n}\acute{\text{i}}\cdot \text{ni}?\text{i}$

I am white

 $\text{atwa}?\text{k}\acute{\text{a}}\text{nha} \text{ni}?\text{i}$

I am an Indian (non-Iroquoian)

 $\text{ukwehuw}\acute{\text{e}}\cdot\text{ne} \text{tekn}\acute{\text{i}}\cdot\text{tehlu}$

I live in Oneida

 $\text{kanat}\acute{\text{a}}\cdot\text{ke} \text{tekn}\acute{\text{i}}\cdot\text{tehlu}$

I live in Green Bay

 $\text{kanat}\acute{\text{a}}\cdot\text{ke} \text{tekn}\acute{\text{a}}\text{kehle}$

I live in Green Bay

 $\text{oh} \text{nes}\Lambda?\text{tal}\acute{\text{o}}\cdot\text{t}\Lambda$

what is your clan?

 $\text{oskle}\cdot\text{w}\acute{\text{a}}\text{ke} \text{niwaki}?\text{tal}\acute{\text{o}}\cdot\text{t}\Lambda$

I am bear clan

 $\text{ony}\acute{\text{a}}\text{ht}\Lambda \text{niwaki}?\text{tal}\acute{\text{o}}\cdot\text{t}\Lambda$

I am turtle clan

 $\text{okw}\acute{\text{a}}\text{ho} \text{niwaki}?\text{tal}\acute{\text{o}}\cdot\text{t}\Lambda$

I am wolf clan