# 9 The Obviation Construction

## 9.1 Introduction

Like the Independent and Conjunct paradigms and the preverb *é-*, obviation is another grammatical phenomenon of Potawatomi which has different but related uses in syntax and discourse (described in Chapter 8). These different uses within various Algonquian languages have given rise to two main theories of how obviation works: that obviation is basically a syntactic device, or that it is primarily a function of discourse.

It is a descriptive fact that within the Algonquian language family, some languages and dialects regularly employ discourse obviation in narrative while others make little to no use of it. For example, in languages like Fox and Plains Cree, proximate selection is largely determined by the role or status of nominal referents in the narrative, with the most central character, or 'hero', generally assigned proximate status. Proximate spans (where one nominal referent is maintained as a proximate) can last through long stretches of text (Dahlstrom, 1988; 1996; Goddard, 1984; 1990). In Ottawa, on the other hand, the proximate span is equal to roughly a sentence, and proximate selection is based on the grammatical function of a nominal (Rhodes, 1990; 2002).

Potawatomi presents an interesting case for these theories, because the use of discourse obviation is not language or dialect specific, but rather appears to depend on the narrator: Jim Spear's texts (such as "Raccoon and Wolf") can be explained solely by reference to grammatical function within a sentence, however Alice Spear's texts (for

example, "Crane Boy"), show clear efforts at proximate maintenance.[1]  A satisfactory

account of Potawatomi must therefore allow 1) syntactic obviation in the absence of

discourse obviation, and 2) some access/use of discourse obviation for those narrators

that make use of it.

In this chapter, I will argue for a constructional approach to obviation.  That is, I

will argue that obviation has a very broad function—hierarchically ranking

non-coreferent third persons—and this finds different expression across grammatical

domains.  The advantages of such an approach are 1) it theoretically unifies various

instantiations of obviation, 2) helps explain how obviation could be extended to apply in

new contexts, and 3) allows us to explain how speakers of one language or dialect may

access, to varying degrees, one particular type of obviation, such as its discourse use.

In addition, I will incorporate information about Mental Space networks into

constructions.  Because Mental Spaces theory is designed to handle the representation of

viewpoint, it allows us to capture the changes in perspective signalled by proximate

shifts.  Indexing the Mental Space network inside of constructions allows constructions to

"see" what is happening at the discourse level.

The format of the chapter is as follows:  in Section 9.2, I discuss previous

analyses of obviation, giving particular attention to a theory I call the "integrated

approach" which forms the basis of the present analysis.  Section 9.3 presents what I call

the "constructional approach" to obviation.  Section 9.4 lays out the details of this

approach, and discusses how constructions are indexed to Mental Space networks.

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[1] Grammatical attrition might be suspected here, but is not a likely explanation given both were very fluent

speakers, narrating texts at at time when the use of Potawatomi was still quite robust.

Section 9.5 discusses the relationship between the various obviation constructions, and proposes the concept of "constructional maintenance" to account for the difference between the use of obviation in languages like Fox / Plains Cree, Ottawa and Potawatomi.

## 9.2 Previous analyses

Previous analyses of obviation in Algonquian languages can be grouped as pre-generative (traditional grammatical descriptions), syntax-based, discourse-based, and what I will call the "integrated approach". Each of these is discussed, in turn, below.

Pre-generative descriptions of Algonquian languages treat obviation as essentially a discourse phenomenon, where proximates are described as the 'topic' or 'focus' of discourse (Bloomfield, 1962; Hockett, 1966; Wolfart, 1973). A good representation of this perspective is Bloomfield's description of obviation in Menomini: "The proximate third person represents the topic of discourse, the person nearest the speaker's point of view, or the person earlier spoken of and already known" (1962, p. 38).

Later syntactic studies of obviation rejected the notion of proximates being the discourse focus, arguing that this definition of focus is circular (defined only in relation to obviation), and that it does little to explain obligatory contexts of obviation, such as in the case of possession, and clausemate obviation (Dunnigan et al., 1978; Grafstein,

1981).  While these syntactic studies do not discount the discourse use of obviation, they

exclude it from their analyses, as Grafstein states:[2]

> I suspect that one of the reasons for the shortcomings of the traditional approach lies
>
> partially in its failure to separate the semantic function of obviation at the level of discourse
>
> from its syntactic function at the sentential level.  The attempt to describe and predict
>
> obviation exclusively in terms of notions such as 'focus' obfuscates the syntactic
>
> relationships which hold between proximate and obviative nouns within sentences.  (p. 98)

While these studies resulted in a much richer description of the syntactic realization of

obviation, they were later criticized for disregarding the role of obviation in discourse and

its effect on clause and sentence-level syntax (Goddard, 1984).

Proponents of discourse-based obviation (Dahlstrom, 1988; 1996; Goddard, 1984;

1990) argue that in any given narrative, the highest ranked nominal referent (the 'hero')

will be assigned proximate status, and other nominals will be obviative.  This default

ranking is sometimes overridden in specific contexts, and the alternation of proximate

status is known as a 'proximate shift'.  Proximate shifts occur when there is focus on a

particular character, or the narrative is presented from a particular character's viewpoint

(what we have referred to as 'internal viewpoint'—see Section 6.3).  In these cases, the

ranking may assign a secondary character proximate status, and other nominals will be

marked obviative.  An indication that these shifts to secondary characters do not represent

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[2] Aissen (1997), a more recent example of the syntactic approach to obviation, also adopts this tactic: "[t]he

ranking of referents according to discourse salience is a psychological or cognitive task, not a linguistic

one..."

the default ranking is that they often require more 'machinery', such as specification with overt NPs (Goddard, 1990).

Inversion is an important part of a discourse-based argument (see Section 2.8 for a description of direct and inverse verb forms). According to this theory, in any given text, direct and inverse verb forms are used to maintain a high-ranking argument as proximate. In any given clause, if a subject is proximate and the object obviative, the verb will be marked as 'direct'. If the subject is obviative and the object is proximate, the verb will be marked 'inverse'. Proximates and obviatives are therefore determined by discourse ranking, and inversion follows from the assignment of obviation status.

Richard Rhodes, in several articles, argues against the idea that obviation is discourse-driven, in part because such a theory does not account for languages like Ottawa that do not make significant use of discourse obviation. He argues instead for an integrated theory of obviation that encompasses both syntax and discourse (1976; 1985; 1990; 1992; 1994; 2002).

The remainder of this section describes this theory in some detail, because it forms the basis of the present analysis. A summary of the relevant features of this theory is as follows. Within clauses, control of obviation is determined by a hierarchy of grammatical relations, given in (1):


(1)  subjects > primary objects > secondary objects > possessors of obliques


The highest third person on this scale is the 'preferred argument' ("PA"). Within a clause, if anything may be proximate, it will be the preferred argument. The preferred

argument then controls obviation of other third persons within the clause, and to some degree, sententially.  In languages that have discourse obviation, nominals can be obviated from outside the sentence.  In this case, the selection of preferred argument is based on discourse topic:  the highest nominal on the topic hierarchy is the preferred argument.

Inverse verb forms also play an important part in this theory.  It is worth noting at this point that inverse verbs in texts with syntactic obviation occur very infrequently, if at all (a rough estimate would be about 2% of all main clause transitive verbs).[3]  While inverses have an obvious function in languages with discourse obviation—that of maintaining a proximate over a span of sentences—their role in syntactic obviation is not apparent (since there is also a passive).  If inverses are less important for syntactic obviation, it stands to reason that they should not be common.

Whereas in the discourse-central theory direct and inverse verb forms are read off of the mapping of proximate and obviative to surface grammatical functions, for the integrated theory, this mapping takes place between notional and final grammatical relations.  That is, with a direct verb, notional and final relations are aligned, but inverse verbs reverse the notional and final relations, and are thus passive-like.

In order to lay this out in a little more detail, I have shown the difference between the assignment of the Preferred Argument in a syntactic and discourse obviation language in the tables below.  For the purposes of illustration, I have assumed a hypothetical text about Raccoon and Wolf, where Raccoon outranks Wolf on the topic hierarchy, that is,

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[3] I have observed this in Potawatomi, and Rhodes (p.c.) notes that this is also the case in Ottawa.

Raccoon is the central character.  The example sentences use the transitive verb 'see' which takes a subject and primary object.

The first set of tables show how proximate assignment and inversion would work in a syntactic language.  In (2), Rabbit is the final subject, and is assigned preferred argument status (shown in boldface).  Using a direct form means that final relations match notional relations.

(2)  SYNTACTIC LANGUAGE, DIRECT VERB

|  | Raccoon | saw | Wolf |
|---|---|---|---|
| Notional Relations | Subject | > | Primary Object |
| Final Relations | **Subject** | > | Primary Object |
| Preferred Argument | **PA** | | |

Characteristic of syntactic obviation languages, if the nominal referents are switched (which is common when characters converse), a syntactic language will generally still assign PA to the final subject, and will use a direct verb, as shown by the alignment of notional and final relations in (3).

(3)  SYNTACTIC LANGUAGE, DIRECT VERB

|  | Wolf | saw | Raccoon |
|---|---|---|---|
| Notional Relations | Subject | > | Primary Object |
| Final Relations | **Subject** | > | Primary Object |
| Preferred Argument | **PA** | | |

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Occasionally, however, in syntactic obviation language, an inverse verb form will be used. In this case, the PA is still the final subject, but because the notional and final relations are mismatched, the verb will be inverse, as shown in (4):

(4) SYNTACTIC LANGUAGE, INVERSE VERB

|  | Wolf | saw | Raccoon |
|---|---|---|---|
| Notional Relations | Subject | > | Primary Object |
| Final Relations | Primary Object | < | **Subject** |
| Preferred Argument |  |  | **PA** |

In a language with discourse obviation, the PA associates to the highest ranked nominal on the topic hierarchy, in this case, the Raccoon (shown in boldface in (5)). The alignment of notional and final relations means the verb is direct:

(5) DISCOURSE LANGUAGE, DIRECT VERB

|  | **Raccoon** | saw | Wolf |
|---|---|---|---|
| Notional Relations | Subject | > | Primary Object |
| Final Relations | Subject | > | Primary Object |
| Preferred Argument | **PA** |  |  |

The association of PA to the topic hierarchy can be illustrated by switching the nominal referents, as shown in (6). Characteristically, a discourse obviation language will now use an inverse verb, which is based on the mismatch of notional and final relations.

(6) DISCOURSE LANGUAGE:  INVERSE VERB

|  | Wolf | saw | **Raccoon** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Notional Relations | Subject | > | Primary Object |
| Final Relations | Primary Object | < | Subject |
| Preferred Argument |  |  | **PA** |

So while, for a discourse obviation language, obviation is linked to discourse topic, inversion is still a syntactic process, based on the comparison of notional and final grammatical relations.

While this approach adds complexity by  representing both notional and final relations, it has the benefit of accounting for both syntactic and discourse obviation languages, whereas stand-alone syntax or discourse theories of obviation only account for one type.  The analysis of inverse verb forms as a kind of passive operation is a matter of debate among syntacticians studying Algonquian languages, about which I will only add that in the Potawatomi texts I have examined, inverses seem to have a small range of functions; they are mostly used when someone is being scolded, and therefore are probably a device to background the person doing the scolding.  If so, this use would be in keeping with passive-like semantics.[4]

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[4] For an analysis of inversion as a morphological rather than syntactic operation, see (Dahlstrom, 1988). This is also the analysis of inverses adopted by Anderson in his discussion of Potawatomi (Anderson, 1992).

## 9.3 Constructional approach

The approach I will adopt here is basically that of Rhodes, as presented above. The modification I will propose is that obviation is constructional. This means that obviation is essentially a pairing between form (including proximate selection and obviative morphology) and meaning. I will argue that the meaning of the obviation construction itself is quite broad (ranked non-coreferent third persons), and that it is inherited by constructions that further specify its meaning within particular domains. The family of constructions that inherits obviation illustrates constructional polysemy. That is, constructions, like lexical items, can have multiple semantically related senses that form polysemy networks.

In the next section, I will outline how such a constructional approach would work. I will not consider all the details of obviation, which would unnecessarily complicate the line of argumentation. Rather, I will focus on the operation of obviation in a few critical contexts such as possession, clausemate obviation (particularly between subject, primary object and secondary object), sentential obviation, sentence pairs, and discourse. I will also primarily lay out the constructions themselves, rather than the particular spelling of obviative morphology. (The exception will be the case of possession, where having a construction provides a means of distinguishing between the marking of obviation on animate possessees, but not inanimate ones.)

## 9.4 Obviation constructions in Potawatomi

## 9.4.1 Possession

The smallest domain for the operation of obviation is the phrase, as evidenced by possessed NPs where the possessor is third person. In this case, obviation of the possessee is obligatory. Consider the following example where the possessor is third person and the possessee is a grammatically animate noun, *dabyan* 'car'. The possessed noun is obligatorily marked obviative with the /-En/ suffix:

```
(7)    wdodabyanen
       wEd- Odabyan -En
       3-   car      -OBV
```

In order to capture the obviation facts with possessed NPs, we will propose the first of several hierarchies, the possession hierarchy, given in (8), where possessors outrank possessees.

(8)    POSSESSION HIERARCHY:  possessor > possessee

In general, with regard to such hierarchies, we will say that a nominal that is highly ranked is more likely to be proximate and induce obviation on nominals of lower rank.

A first formulation of the Possessee Obviation Construction is shown in (9). This matrix is an abbreviated representation of a construction (or construct, if the information in the matrix is entirely filled in), with information extracted from various parts of the full construction. [5] The matrix includes three types of information, syntactic ("Syn") and

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[5] This abbreviated representation is based on those given in Goldberg (1995), who uses them to link grammatical functions and thematic roles provided by a general construction with the semantic roles provided by individual verbs.

semantic ("Sem") and role, or grammatical function information.[6]  Divisions of

information within these types is represented by horizontal tiers.

For the Possessee Obviation Construction, within the role specification, the

grammatical function (gf) tier contains the ranking of possessor and possessee, and the

person (pers) tier records the person of each nominal.  Within the semantic specification,

the obviation tier (obv) contains a single value of proximate (PROX +) which is available

for linking with the other tiers (only the proximate value is shown in this representation,

obviative values (PROX–) will be filled in by default in a later construction, "Default

Obviative Assignment, shown in (12)).  Every nominal that is also third person is

"visible" to the obviation tier, and thus available for linking with proximate.  However,

the proximate value associates only with the highest ranking (leftmost) nominal on the gf

tier that is also third person. The construction will therefore assign proximate status to the

highest ranking nominal on the Possession Hierarchy.

(9) POSSESSEE OBVIATION (first formulation):

```
Role:  gf    [ Possessor >  Possessee]
                   |            |
Syn:  pers  [      3            3      ]
                   |
Sem:  obv   [   PROX+                  ]
```

As stated, the Possessee Obviation Construction has information which will be

redundant when we consider the operation of obviation at higher syntactic levels such as

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[6] The separation of role information from syntactic information is a convention of Construction Grammar,

and serves as a means of linking grammatical functions with thematic roles.

the clause and sentence.  In order to make a more general obviation construction, we will need to separate out the information that is particular to possession, that is the Possession Hierarchy.  The Obviation Construction, given in (10), will then have slots for ranked nominals in an unspecified tier, which will be filled in by particular hierarchies.

(10) OBVIATION

$$[ \text{Nom}_i > \text{Nom}_j > \ldots > \text{Nom}_n]$$

Syn:  pers  [   3      3    …    3   ]

Sem:  obv   [  PROX+                    ]

The revised Possessee Obviation Construction, in (11), contains information inherited from the Obviation Construction, and contributes additional information by specifying the use of the Possession Hierarchy for the gf tier (shown in boldface). [7]  Given a ranking of specific nominals, then, Possessee Obviation will link proximate with the highest ranked third person nominal.[8]

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[7] This construction includes the grammatical relation ranking; I leave open the question as to whether such rankings are themselves constructional.   Richard Rhodes has pointed out (p.c.) that if the hierarchies are constructional, it explains certain gaps in the application of clausemate obviation.

[8]  Although in this instance, only Obviation is inherited, note that my convention for representing inheritance relationships will be to cite all the inherited constructions,  rather than just the immediately inherited parent construction.

(11) POSSESSEE OBVIATION (revised)

INHERIT: OBVIATION

Role:  gf   [ Possessor >  Possessee]

Syn:  pers  [       3            3       ]

Sem:  obv   [    PROX+              ]

The remaining issue to address is the assignment of obviative status (PROX -) to any other third person nominals not associated with proximate status.  These values will be filled in by default, as given in (12).  The arrows in the construction show that the third person nominals which were not previously assigned to proximate by the inherited Obviation Construction, are now all assigned obviative status.

(12) DEFAULT OBVIATIVE ASSIGNMENT

Role:  gf    [  $Nom_i$   >   $Nom_j$   > … >  $Nom_n$ ]

Syn:  pers  [      3            3                3    ]

Sem:  obv  [  PROX+     PROX-  …    PROX-]

To illustrate the full construct *wdodabyanen*, we will in this instance provide a morphological spelling rule, given in (13) below.  This will illustrate that although constructions assign obviative status to both animate and inanimate nominals, only animate ones are given obviative marking.  Possessee Obviative Spelling specifies that a

grammatically animate, obviative possessee will be marked by the obviative suffix, given

here as {-En}:

(13) POSSESSEE OBVIATIVE SPELLING

$$
\left[
\begin{array}{l}
\text{syn} \left[
\begin{array}{l}
\text{cat} \quad \text{n} \\
\text{lex} \left[
\begin{array}{l}
\text{stem} \quad + \\
\text{word} \quad +
\end{array}
\right] \\
\text{prox -}
\end{array}
\right] \quad
\text{sem} \left[ \text{anim} + \right] \\
\\
\left[
\begin{array}{l}
\text{syn} \left[ \text{cat} \quad \text{nsuff} \right] \\
\text{lxm} \quad \text{-En}
\end{array}
\right]
\end{array}
\right]
$$
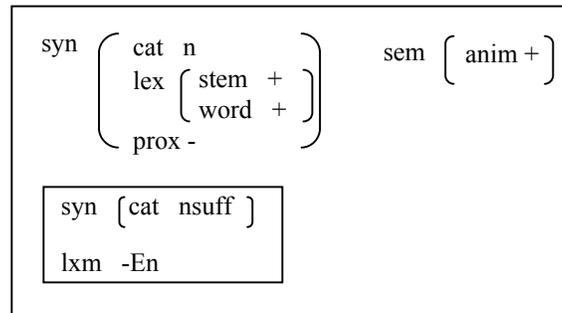
We now return to the example given in (7), of the possessed animate noun

*wdodabyanen* 'his/her car'. The construct *wdodabyanen* is shown in (14) below. The

construct inherits the Possession and Obviation constructions, and these together link the

possessor nominal with proximate. The Default Obviation construction supplies the

obviative value of the possessee. The noun *dabyan* is grammatically animate

(abbreviated "anim +" in the diagram), and this animacy value unifies with the external

semantics to make the construct as a whole grammatically animate.

Because the construct is both obviative and animate (as specified in the external

syntax and semantics of the construct), Possessor Obviative Spelling applies, supplying

the obviative suffix {-En}.

(14) *wdodabyanen* 'his/her car'

INHERIT: POSSESSEE OBVIATIVE SPELLING, POSSESSEE OBVIATION,
OBVIATION, DEFAULT OBVIATIVE ASSIGNMENT

syn
```
cat  n
lex [ stem  + ]
    [ word  + ]
prox -
```

sem [ anim ]

syn
```
cat  npref
role POSSESSOR
```

sem
```
anim  +
prox +
```

lxm  wEd-

syn
```
cat  n
lex [ stem  + ]
    [ word  - ]
role POSSESSEE
```

sem
```
anim  +
prox -
```

lxm   Odabyan

syn [ cat  nsuff ]

lxm   -En
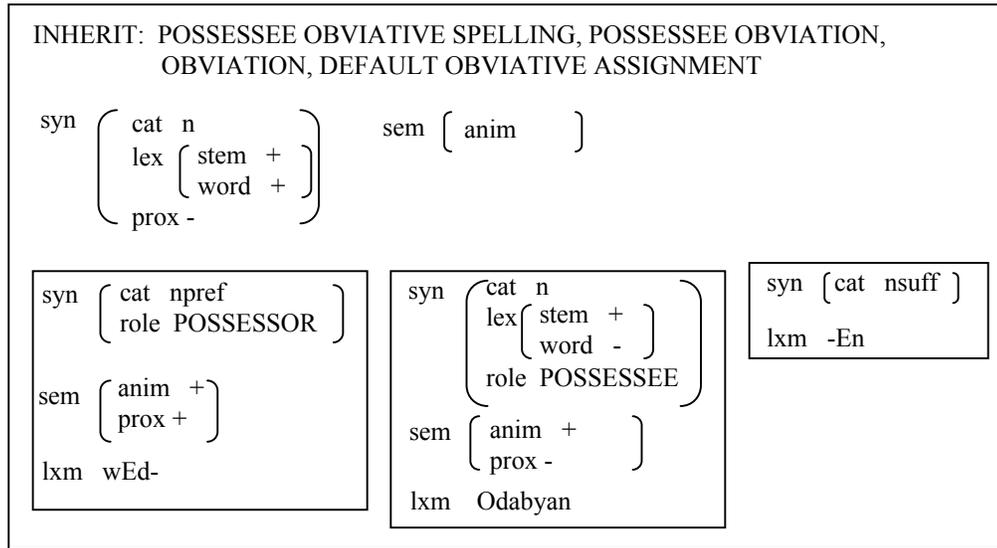
Because Possessee Obviative Spelling only applies to grammatically animate obviative constructs, it will not apply in the case of an inanimate possessee. An example is given in (15) of the inanimate possessed noun *wdonagen* 'his/her dish'. The possessee is semantically obviative, as specified in the external semantics, but it is not morphologically marked as such:

(15) *wdonagen* 'his/her dish'

```
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│  syn ⎡ cat  n          ⎤        sem ⎡anim       ⎤                 │
│      ⎢ lex ⎡ stem  + ⎤ ⎥             ⎣           ⎦                 │
│      ⎢     ⎣ word  + ⎦ ⎥                                          │
│      ⎣ prox -          ⎦                                          │
│                                                                   │
│  ┌──────────────────────────┐   ┌──────────────────────────────┐ │
│  │ syn ⎡ per  3         ⎤    │   │ syn ⎡cat  n          ⎤        │ │
│  │     ⎣ role POSSESSOR ⎦    │   │     ⎢lex⎡ stem  + ⎤  ⎥        │ │
│  │                          │   │     ⎢   ⎣ word  + ⎦  ⎥        │ │
│  │ sem ⎡ anim  + ⎤          │   │     ⎣role POSSESSEE  ⎦        │ │
│  │     ⎣ prox + ⎦          │   │ sem ⎡ anim - ⎤                │ │
│  │                          │   │     ⎣ prox - ⎦                │ │
│  │ lxm  wEd-               │   │ lxm  OnagEn                   │ │
│  └──────────────────────────┘   └──────────────────────────────┘ │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```
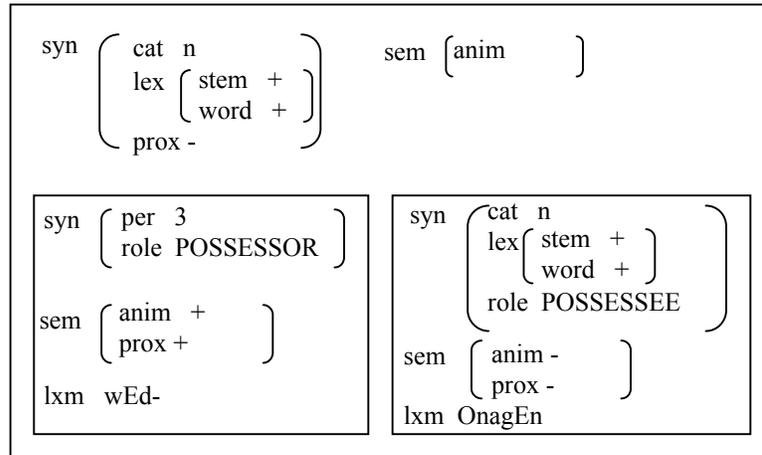
## 9.4.2 Clausemate

The next larger domain to which obviation applies is the clause. Only one third person in a clause may be assigned proximate; any other third persons will be obviative. For syntactic obviation languages, which nominal in a sentence will be proximate is predictable based on its grammatical function.

Proximate selection follows the relational hierarchy, where subjects outrank primary objects, and primary objects outrank secondary objects (for a description of the operation of this hierarchy see Section 8.4):

(16) RELATIONAL HIERARCHY:  SUBJ >  P.OBJ > S. OBJ

We can then state Clausemate Obviation much as Possessee Obviation, the difference being that Clausemate Obviation inherits the Relational Hierarchy to fill in the values for the ranked nominals (shown in boldface):

(17) CLAUSEMATE OBVIATION (first statement)

```
INHERIT:  OBVIATION

  Role:  gf    [ SUBJ >  P. OBJ  >  S. OBJ  ]
                   |         |          |
  Syn:  pers  [    3         3    ...    3    ]
                   |
  Sem:  obv   [  PROX+                        ]
```

## 9.4.2.1 Direct Verb

To demonstrate the use of Clausemate Obviation, consider the direct transitive verb in (18), which has a proximate subject and an obviative primary object.  In order to make the presentation somewhat easier, we will assign the nominal referent of the subject as RACCOON (*ésben*) and the primary object as WOLF (*m'ewé*) (these nominals are not included in the Potawatomi sentence here, but are registered inflectionally on the verb).

(18)  é-gi-wabmat
      é -  gi-  wabEm     -a   -d
      FCT- PST- see.s.o\TA -DIR -3C

      *'he [raccoon-PROX] saw him [wolf-OBV]'*

When the nominal values for subject and primary object are supplied to Clausemate Obviation, the result is the matrix given in (19).  The ranked grammatical roles of subject and primary object are supplied by Clausemate Obviation.  The Obviation Construction associates PROX+ to the highest ranked nominal on the relational hierarchy, which is the subject.  Clausemate Obviation inherits Default Obviative Assignment, which supplies PROX- for the remaining nominal, the primary object.

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(19) CLAUSEMATE OBVIATION CONSTRUCT,

*é-gi-wabmat* 'he [raccoon-PROX] saw him [wolf-OBV]'

```
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│  INHERIT:  OBVIATION,                        │
│                DEFAULT OBVIATIVE ASSIGNMENT  │
│                                              │
│   Sem:  ref   [ RACCOON       WOLF  ]        │
│                  |              |            │
│   Role:  gf    [  SUBJ     >  P.OBJ  ]       │
│                  |              |            │
│   Syn:  pers  [    3            3    ]       │
│                  |              |            │
│   Sem:  obv   [ PROX+       PROX- ]          │
│                                              │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```

A fully specified construct of *é-gi-wabmat* is shown in (20), which shows the information from (19) in its place within the verbal valence.

(20)  Fully Specified Construct:

*é-gi-wabmat* 'he [raccoon-PROX] saw him [wolf-OBV]'

```
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│  INHERIT:  CLAUSEMATE, OBVIATION,                                         │
│            DEFAULT OBVIATIVE ASSIGNMENT                                    │
│                                                                           │
│  syn ⎡ cat  v          ⎤      sem ⎡ frame SEEING  ⎤                        │
│      ⎢ lex ⎡ stem  + ⎤ ⎥          ⎢ part 1  #1 [ ] ⎥                       │
│      ⎣     ⎣ word  - ⎦ ⎦          ⎣ part 2  #2 [ ] ⎦                       │
│                                                                           │
│  val ⎧    ⎛syn ⎡ cat  nominal ⎤ ⎞      ⎛syn ⎡ cat  nominal ⎤ ⎞ ⎫          │
│      ⎪ #1 ⎜    ⎣ per  3       ⎦ ⎟   #2 ⎜    ⎣ per  3       ⎦ ⎟ ⎪          │
│      ⎪    ⎜                     ⎟      ⎜                     ⎟ ⎪          │
│      ⎨    ⎜sem ⎡ ref   RACCOON⎤⎟      ⎜sem ⎡ ref   WOLF ⎤  ⎟ ⎬          │
│      ⎪    ⎜    ⎢ anim  +      ⎥⎟      ⎜    ⎢ anim  +    ⎥  ⎟ ⎪          │
│      ⎪    ⎜    ⎣ obv   prox + ⎦⎟ ,    ⎜    ⎣ obv   prox -⎦  ⎟ ⎪          │
│      ⎪    ⎜role ⎡ gf subj ⎤    ⎟      ⎜role ⎡ gf pobj ⎤    ⎟ ⎪          │
│      ⎩    ⎝     ⎣ _  exp  ⎦    ⎠      ⎝     ⎣ _  cont ⎦    ⎠ ⎭          │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```

## 9.4.2.2 Inverse verb

Next we will compare the case of the inverse verb, which will require some refinements of Clausemate Obviation. To accommodate inverses, we will need a construction that specifies an additional tier, which records final relations alongside notional relations (notional relations are represented here as an inverted hierarchy):

(21)  INVERSE CONSTRUCTION

```
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│  Role:  not gf  [P.OBJ  <  SUBJ]     │
│                    │        │        │
│  Role:  fin gf  [ SUBJ  >  P.OBJ ]   │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
```

We will also need to specify that the relational hierarchy in Clausemate Obviation is based on final relations (shown in boldface):

(22) CLAUSEMATE OBVIATION (final)

```
INHERIT:  OBVIATION

  Role:  fin gf  [ SUBJ >  P. OBJ  >  S. OBJ ]
                       |          |          |
  Syn:   pers    [    3          3    …    3    ]
                       |
  Sem:   obv     [ PROX+                          ]
```

Let us now examine the inverse verb *é-gi-wabmegot* given in (23). This verb differs minimally from *é-gi-wabmat* (18) in that the final subject of the verb is obviative, and the primary object is proximate. (As above, we will use nominal referents, this time with the obviative WOLF as notional subject, and the proximate RACCOON as notional primary object.)

(23)  é-gi-wabmegot
      é -  gi-  wabEm     -Ego -d
      FCT- PST- see.s.o\TA -INV -3C

   *'he  [wolf-OBV] saw him [raccoon-PROX]'*

When Clausemate Obviation applies, it operates on final relations, where the final subject is RACCOON and the final primary object is WOLF:

(24) CLAUSEMATE OBVIATION CONSTRUCT,

*é-gi-wabmegot* 'he  [wolf-OBV] saw him [raccoon-PROX]'

```
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│  INHERIT:  OBVIATION                             │
│              DEFAULT OBVIATIVE ASSIGNMENT        │
│                                                  │
│   Sem:  ref       [ RACCOON      WOLF ]          │
│                        |           |             │
│   Role:  fin gf   [ SUBJ     >   P.OBJ ]         │
│                        |           |             │
│   Syn:  pers      [   3           3     ]        │
│                        |           |             │
│   Sem:  obv       [ PROX+       PROX- ]          │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```

Clausemate Obviation then inherits Inverse, which applies because the notional
and final relations are mismatched (see (25)).   It does not change the assignment of
proximate and obviative, which were already specified by Clausemate Obviation and
Default obviative Assignment.


(25) CLAUSEMATE OBVIATION INHERITS INVERSE

```
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│   INHERIT:  INVERSION                            │
│                                                  │
│    Sem:  ref      [ RACCOON      WOLF  ]         │
│                        |           |            │
│    Role:  fin gf  [ SUBJ     >   P.OBJ ]        │
│                        |           |            │
│    Role:  not gf  [ P.OBJ    <   SUBJ ]         │
│                        |           |            │
│    Syn:  pers     [   3           3     ]       │
│                        |           |            │
│    Sem:  obv      [ PROX+       PROX-]          │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```

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The fully specified verbal construct for *é-gi-wabmegot* is given in (26), showing the information about final relations (in boldface):

(26) CLAUSEMATE OBVIATION INHERITS INVERSE, CONSTRUCT

*é-gi-wabmegot* 'he [wolf-OBV] saw him [raccoon-PROX]'

```
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│  INHERIT:  OBVIATION, DEFAULT OBVIATIVE                                    │
│                 ASSIGNMENT, INVERSE                                        │
│                                                                           │
│  syn ⎡ cat  v              ⎤     sem ⎡ frame SEEING      ⎤                 │
│      ⎢ lex ⎡ stem  + ⎤     ⎥         ⎢ part 1  #1 [ ]    ⎥                 │
│      ⎣     ⎣ word  - ⎦     ⎦         ⎣ part 2  #2 [ ]    ⎦                 │
│                                                                           │
│  val ⎧      ⎛ syn ⎡ cat  nominal ⎤ ⎞      ⎛ syn ⎡ cat  nominal ⎤ ⎞ ⎫      │
│      ⎪ #1 ⎜     ⎣ per  3        ⎦  ⎟  #2 ⎜     ⎣ per  3        ⎦  ⎟ ⎪      │
│      ⎪    ⎜                        ⎟     ⎜                        ⎟ ⎪      │
│      ⎪    ⎜ sem ⎡ ref    WOLF  ⎤   ⎟     ⎜ sem ⎡ ref    RACCOON ⎤ ⎟ ⎪      │
│      ⎨    ⎜     ⎢ anim   +     ⎥   ⎟     ⎜     ⎢ anim   +       ⎥ ⎟ ⎬      │
│      ⎪    ⎜     ⎣ obv    prox -⎦   ⎟  ,  ⎜     ⎣ obv    prox +  ⎦ ⎟ ⎪      │
│      ⎪    ⎜ role ⎡ not gf  subj ⎤  ⎟     ⎜ role ⎡ not gf  pobj ⎤  ⎟ ⎪      │
│      ⎪    ⎜      ⎢ fin gf pobj  ⎥  ⎟     ⎜      ⎢ fin gf subj  ⎥  ⎟ ⎪      │
│      ⎩    ⎝      ⎣ _  exp       ⎦  ⎠     ⎝      ⎣ _  cont      ⎦  ⎠ ⎭      │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```
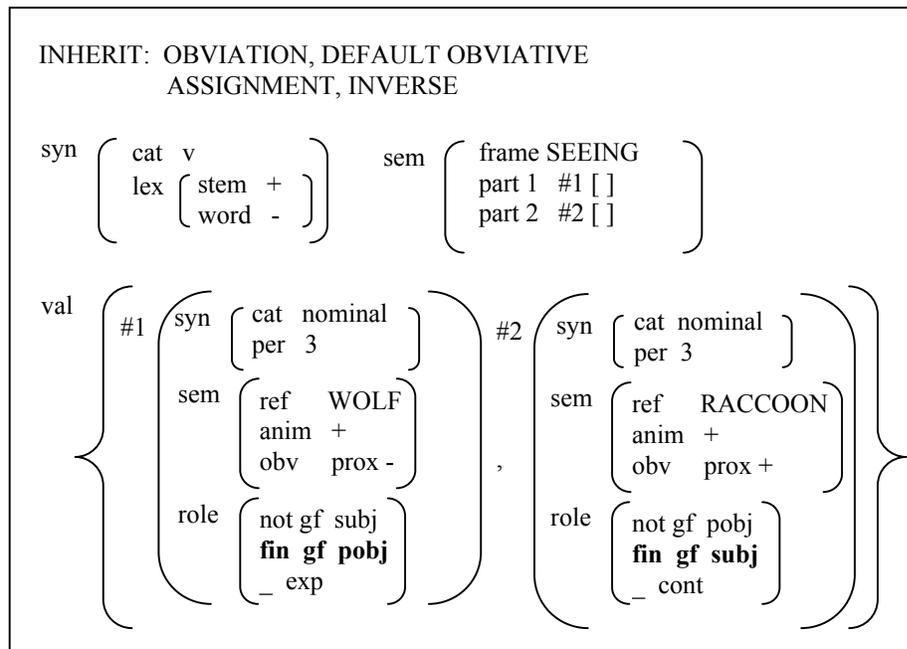
Because direct and inverse verbs have different inflectional morphology, we will need to create a Direct Construction to parallel the Inverse construction. The Direct and Inverse Constructions can then be inherited by constructions which specify the spelling of direct and inverse morphology (these will not be given here, as discussed above). The Direct Construction is given in (27). The construction states that in a direct verb, final relations are the same as notional relations.

(27) DIRECT CONSTRUCTION

```
┌──────────────────────────────────────┐
│   Role:  not gf  [ SUBJ  >   P.OBJ ]  │
│                      |          |     │
│   Role:  fin gf  [ SUBJ  >   P.OBJ ]  │
└──────────────────────────────────────┘
```
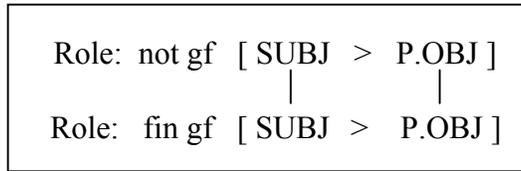
The fully specified verbal construct for (23) can then be restated as follows, which

includes the information about final relations (in boldface):

(28)  CLAUSEMATE OBVIATION
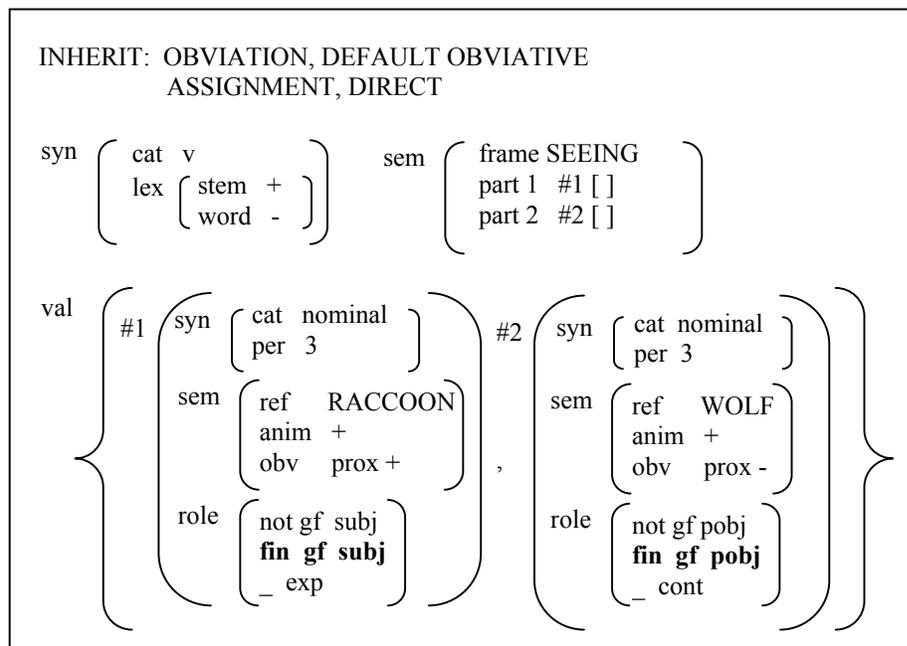


## 9.4.3 Primary Object > Secondary Object

Besides notional subjects inducing obviation on notional primary objects, primary

objects also induce obviation on secondary objects.  In the following sentence, the

primary object 'him' is proximate, and induces obviation of the third person secondary object *gigosen* 'fish':

(29)    ```
Nbégwzemwa                  niw        gigosen.
1.dry.for.s.o.\TA=DIR.I those=OBV  fish=OBV
```

    *I'm drying those fish (OBV) for him (PROX).* [POEX00287]

This obviation fact is easily captured using the existing machinery of Clausemate Obviation. Since in this case the subject is first person, it is not visible to obviation. Proximate will associate to the highest available nominal on the hierarchy, which is in this case the primary object. The obviative status of the secondary object can then be filled in by Default Obviative Assignment.


(30) PRIMARY OBJECT > SECONDARY OBJECT

```
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│  INHERIT:  RELATIONAL HIERARCHY              │
│                                              │
│   Role:  fin gf  [ SUBJ >  P. OBJ  >  S. OBJ ]│
│                      |        |        |     │
│   Syn:   pers    [   (1)      3    …   3   ]  │
│                               |              │
│   Sem:   obv     [         PROX+          ]  │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```

## 9.4.4 Sentential

Obviation also operates across clauses. Within a sentence, the subject of a main clause can induce obviation on the subject of a subordinate clause. Consider the following sentence using the verb *é-wabmat* 'he sees him' where the main clause subject

is proximate and the subordinate clause subject is obviative: [9]

(31)
```
Bama  zhe  na    mine  é-wabmat              [kwekséyen
later EMPH EMPH again FCT-see.s.o\TA=3/3'C squirrel=OBV

é-bmebtonet].
FCT-run.along\AI=OBV=3C
```

*Later on, he (PROX) saw a squirrel (OBV) running along.* [AS:2:2:021]

To account for sentential obviation, we will need another hierarchy where main clause subjects outrank subordinate clause subjects, represented as follows:

(32)  SUBJECTS HIERARCHY:  SUBJ > {SUBJ}

The Sentential Obviation Construction given in (33) will then inherit this hierarchy, and associate proximate with the highest ranked nominal, the main clause subject:

(33)  SENTENTIAL OBVIATION

```
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│   INHERIT:  SUBJECTS HIERARCHY        │
│                                       │
│   Role:  gf     [ SUBJ > {SUBJ} ]     │
│                      |        |       │
│   Syn:   pers   [    3        3    ]  │
│                      |                │
│   Sem:   obv    [ PROX+            ]  │
│                                       │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
```

─────────────────

[9] As a general rule, an independent verb that takes a complement inflects as if it had an inanimate object, or no object at all (so a TI or AI verb may be used).  If the subject of the subordinate verb is animate, the independent verb may optionally inflect for an animate object.  Some types of complement clauses do not allow this optionality, such as embedded content questions.   However, some semantic classes of main clause verbs, such as perception verbs (as in this example), require the main clause verb to inflect for an animate object, if the complement has an animate subject.

A fully specified construct for the main clause verb in (31) is given on the following page, which shows how the Sentential Obviation construction can 'see' the subordinate clause subject.  The external syntax and semantics are for the main clause verb, abbreviated as SEEING in the semantics.   The three-part valence is my representation of subject-to-object copy, where the subject of the subordinate clause, 'SQUIRREL' is instantiated morphologically on the higher verb as primary object, and on the lower verb as subject.  The subordinate clause subject is embedded in the valence of the subordinate clause verb RUNNING.

INHERIT: SUBJECTS HIERARCHY, OBVIATION

$$
\left[
\begin{array}{l}
\text{syn} \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{cat v} \\ \text{lex} \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{stem } + \\ \text{word } + \end{array} \right] \end{array} \right] \\[2em]
\text{sem} \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{frame SEEING} \\ \text{part 1} \\ \text{part 2} \end{array} \right] \\[2em]
\text{val} \left[
\begin{array}{l}
\left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{syn} \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{cat nom} \\ \text{per 3} \end{array} \right] \\ \text{sem} \left( \begin{array}{l} \text{GRASSHOPPER} \\ \text{anim } + \\ \textbf{prox} + \end{array} \right) \\ \text{role} \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{not gf subj} \\ \text{fin gf } \textbf{subj} \\ - \quad \text{exp} \end{array} \right] \end{array} \right] \\[4em]
\left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{syn} \\ \text{sem} \\ \text{role} \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{not gf pobj} \\ \text{fin gf pobj} \\ - \quad \text{cont} \end{array} \right] \end{array} \right]
\end{array}
\right] \\[6em]
\text{syn} \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{cat v} \\ \text{lex} \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{stem } + \\ \text{word } + \end{array} \right] \end{array} \right] \\[2em]
\text{sem} \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{frame RUNNING} \\ \text{part 1} \end{array} \right] \\[2em]
\text{role} \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{gf comp} \\ - \quad \text{cont} \end{array} \right] \\[2em]
\text{val} \left[
\begin{array}{l}
\text{syn} \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{cat nom} \\ \text{per 3} \end{array} \right] \\
\text{sem} \left( \begin{array}{l} \text{SQUIRREL} \\ \text{anim } + \\ \textbf{prox -} \end{array} \right) \\
\text{role} \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{gf } \textbf{subj} \\ - \quad \text{agt} \end{array} \right]
\end{array}
\right]
\end{array}
\right]
$$

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## 9.4.5 Sentence clusters

The final syntactic domain for the operation of obviation is with sentence clusters, which as a less-common phenomenon, will only be briefly dealt with here. With sentence clusters (described in Section 8.4), a third person subject of one sentence can induce obviation of a third person subject in the following sentence, given a particularly close semantic relationship between the sentences.

We capture this using a different hierarchy, given in (34).

(34) SEQUENTIAL SUBJECTS HIERARCHY: $SUBJ_i > SUBJ_j$

This hierarchy will be inherited by the Sentence Cluster Obviation Construction, given in (35):

(35) SENTENCE CLUSTER OBVIATION

```
INHERIT:  SEQ. SUBJECTS HIERARCHY

Role:  gf      [SUBJ_i  >   SUBJ_j ]
                   |          |
Syn:   pers    [   3         3     ]
                   |
Sem:   obv     [ PROX+             ]
```

## 9.5 Discourse Obviation and the role of mental spaces

We now turn to the use of obviation in discourse. When a narrator makes use of obviation at the discourse level, I will assume there is access to a default ranking of nominals relevant to the narrative (based on the narrator's global conception of his tale, goals in telling it, etc.). In the default ranking, the central character (the one the narrative is 'about') is ranked highest, and other characters are ranked lower depending on their importance in the narrative. A narrator may access other rankings at various points in the narrative, making another character a temporary proximate, which is known as a 'proximate shift'. However, the default ranking is the one predominantly used in the narrative, and the one to which a narrator will normally return after a proximate shift.

The text I will be referring to in this section is 'Crane Boy' (given in Appendix C); in the previous chapter, I argued that the narrator made use of discourse obviation, which makes it suitable for analysis here.

I will begin by constructing the default ranking of characters. The principle character is Crane Boy; he occurs early in the narrative, and is the central character in all subsequent episodes. The character he primarily interacts with is the Old Woman. Throughout the narrative, Crane Boy is generally maintained as a proximate, while the Old Woman is usually in the obviative. Other episodes that involve either Crane Boy or the Old Woman interacting with secondary characters have Crane Boy or the Old Woman as proximate, with the other characters as obviative. Based on the narrator's selection of proximates, we can rank the nominals in this narrative as follows:

(36)  TOPIC HIERARCHY (DEFAULT, CRANE BOY NARRATIVE)

$$\text{Crane Boy} > \text{Old Woman} > \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{Crane Boy's Parents,} \\ \text{Bad Boy,} \\ \text{Big Spoon,} \\ \text{etc.} \end{array} \right.$$

While this ranking is based on the proximate status of nominals in the narrative, it is also in accord with the overall topic structure; that is, the story is presented as being mainly about what happens to Crane Boy, and his experiences living with the Old Woman.

Example (37) shows a mental spaces diagram that represents the act of narration in abbreviated form. The context of the narrative is represented by a space in the "Reality" Domain (Space R), and the narrative itself is represented by the space inside the Narrative Domain (Space N). Basic narration is 'external' narration, as opposed to 'internal' narration where the narrator adopts the viewpoint of one of the characters in the narrative. External narration, as shown in this diagram, takes place from the V-POINT of the narrator in the Reality Domain (see Chapter 7 for the representation of external narration in Mental Spaces theory). This V-POINT is associated with the default Topic Hierarchy, where Crane Boy outranks the Old Woman (The ranking is abbreviated here to include just Crane Boy and Old Woman.):

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(37) DEFAULT TOPIC RANKING ASSOCIATED TO "REALITY" DOMAIN

Space R:
    BASE
    **V-POINT**

@     *"REALITY" DOMAIN*

TOPIC HIERARCHY:
*Crane Boy > Old Woman*

*NARRATIVE DOMAIN*

@

Space N:
   FOCUS

The construction we will posit for Discourse Obviation (given in (38)) is similar to those already proposed for syntactic obviation. The primary difference is that it uses the Topic Hierarchy, which is a ranking of nominals based on their relative importance to the current discourse (the topic hierarchy is represented by ranking the nominal referents in 'Sem: ref' in the abbreviated matrix).

(38) DISCOURSE OBVIATION

INHERIT: OBVIATION

Sem: ref     [ $NOM_i$ > $NOM_j$ ]

Syn: pers     [    3       3   ]

Sem: obv     [   PROX+       ]

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## 9.5.1 Inversion

The Discourse Obviation construction is inherited, in turn, by the Direct and Inverse verbal constructions.  To see how this works, we will examine a transitive verb.  In a text such as Crane Boy, which shows evidence of proximate maintenance (and therefore a discourse topic hierarchy), we might expect to see a verb like the following (this example is constructed for ease of comparison with previous examples; there are plenty of comparable transitive verbs in the text).  For our example, let us say that the notional subject is CRANE BOY and the notional object is OLD WOMAN (we will assume that the narrator 'chooses' which nominal referents will be associated with the notional subject and notional primary object).

(39)  ```
é-wabmat
é -  wabEm    -a  -d
FCT- see.s.o\TA -DIR -3C
```

'he [Crane Boy-PROX] saw her [Old Woman-OBV]'

Let us also say that this example comes from a point in the text where there is external narration, that is, the narrator is not overtly representing the viewpoint of a character.  The Topic Ranking in use is then the default ranking, which is available by the viewpoint of the external narrator, as shown in (37) above.  The external semantics of the verbal construction references information about the mental spaces structure, such as the location of the BASE, V-POINT and FOCUS (shown in boldface in (40)).  In this case, BASE and V-POINT are in "R"  (the reality domain) and FOCUS is in "N" (the narrative domain).  The location of V-POINT, in particular, provides access to the associated Topic Hierarchy.

(40) MENTAL SPACES ARE INDEXED INSIDE OF CONSTRUCTIONS

```
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│  INHERIT:  OBVIATION,  DEFAULT OBVIATIVE                          │
│               ASSIGNMENT                                          │
│                                                                  │
│  syn  ⎛ cat  v            ⎞      sem  ⎛ frame SEEING          ⎞   │
│       ⎜ lex ⎡ stem  + ⎤   ⎟           ⎜ part 1                ⎟   │
│       ⎝     ⎣ word  + ⎦   ⎠           ⎜ part 2                ⎟   │
│                                      ⎜ spaces ⎡ BASE     R ⎤  ⎟   │
│                                      ⎜        ⎨ V-POINT  R ⎬  ⎟   │
│                                      ⎝        ⎣ FOCUS    N ⎦  ⎠   │
│                                                                  │
│  val  ⎧ ⎛ syn ⎡ cat  nom ⎤   ⎞   ⎛ syn ⎡ cat  nom ⎤      ⎞ ⎫     │
│       ⎜ ⎜     ⎣ per   3   ⎦   ⎟   ⎜     ⎣ per   3   ⎦      ⎟ ⎜     │
│       ⎜ ⎜                     ⎟   ⎜                        ⎟ ⎜     │
│       ⎨ ⎜ sem ⎡ CRANE BOY ⎤  ⎟   ⎜ sem ⎡ OLD WOMAN ⎤     ⎟ ⎬     │
│       ⎜ ⎜     ⎢ anim +    ⎥  ⎟   ⎜     ⎢ anim  +   ⎥     ⎟ ⎜     │
│       ⎜ ⎜     ⎣ prox -    ⎦  ⎟   ⎜     ⎣ prox +   ⎦      ⎟ ⎜     │
│       ⎜ ⎜                     ⎟   ⎜                        ⎟ ⎜     │
│       ⎜ ⎜ role ⎡ not gf subj⎤⎟   ⎜ role ⎡ not gf pobj⎤   ⎟ ⎜     │
│       ⎜ ⎜      ⎢ fin gf subj⎥⎟   ⎜      ⎢ fin gf pobj⎥   ⎟ ⎜     │
│       ⎩ ⎝      ⎣  _  exp    ⎦⎠   ⎝      ⎣  _  cont   ⎦   ⎠ ⎭     │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```
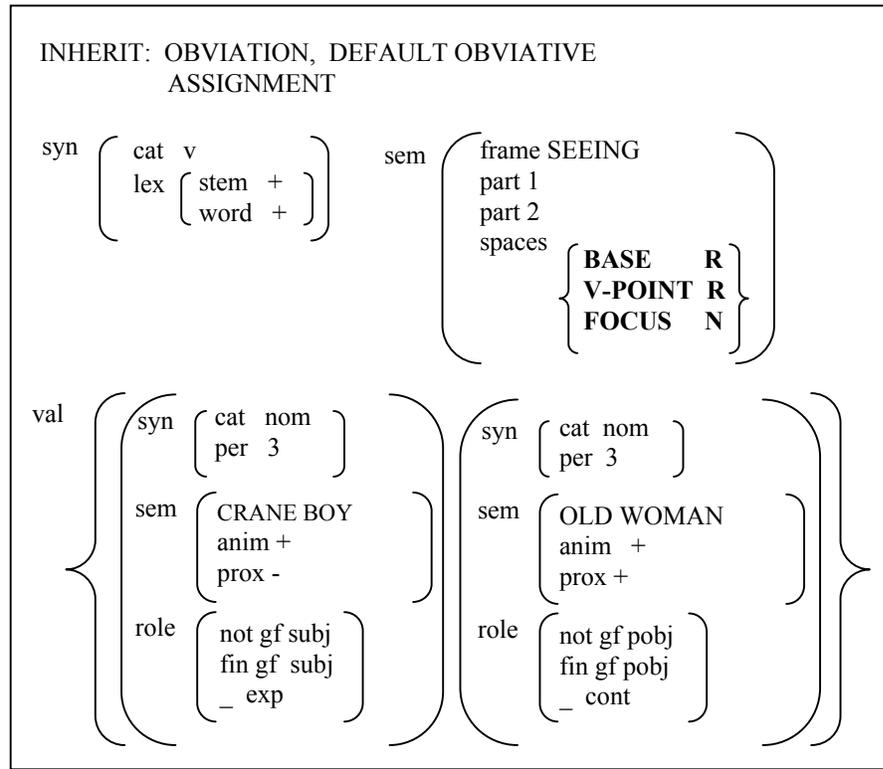
In this hypothetical example, the narrator has associated the notional subject with the final subject, motivating the use of the Direct Construction (the contribution of this construction is shown in boldface):

(41) DISCOURSE OBVIATION INHERITS DIRECT

```
┌──────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│  INHERIT:  OBVIATION, DIRECT                          │
│                                                        │
│                                                        │
│   Sem: ref       [ CRANE BOY  > OLD WOMAN ]           │
│                         |              |               │
│   Role:  not gf  [   SUBJ       >    P.OBJ     ]      │
│                         |              |               │
│   Role:  fin gf  [   SUBJ       >    P.OBJ     ]      │
│                         |              |               │
│   Syn:  pers     [     3              3        ]      │
│                         |                              │
│   Sem:  obv      [   PROX+                      ]      │
└──────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```

Now let us examine the case of an inverse verb.  This time, the Old Woman is the notional subject and Crane Boy is the notional primary object:

(42)    é-wabmegot
        é -  wabEm      -EgO -d
        FCT- see.s.o\TA -INV -3C

'she [Old Woman-OBV] saw him [Crane Boy-PROX]'

The space configuration remains the same, as for external narration:  BASE and V-POINT are in R, and FOCUS is in N.  This is shown in the external semantics of the verbal construct:

(43) MENTAL SPACES ARE INDEXED INSIDE OF CONSTRUCTIONS

```
INHERIT:  OBVIATION, DEFAULT OBVIATIVE ASSIGNMENT


syn  ⎡ cat  v           ⎤      sem  ⎛ frame SEEING            ⎞
     ⎢ lex ⎡ stem  + ⎤  ⎥           ⎜ part 1                  ⎟
     ⎣     ⎣ word  + ⎦  ⎦           ⎜ part 2                  ⎟
                                    ⎜ spaces ⎡ BASE      R ⎤  ⎟
                                    ⎜        ⎢ V-POINT R   ⎥  ⎟
                                    ⎝        ⎣ FOCUS    N   ⎦  ⎠


val  ⎧ syn ⎡ cat  nom ⎤      syn ⎡ cat  nom ⎤           ⎫
     ⎪     ⎣ per   3   ⎦          ⎣ per   3   ⎦           ⎪
     ⎪                                                   ⎪
     ⎨ sem ⎡ CRANE  BOY ⎤    sem ⎡ OLD WOMAN  ⎤         ⎬
     ⎪     ⎢ anim +      ⎥        ⎢ anim   +    ⎥         ⎪
     ⎪     ⎣ prox +      ⎦        ⎣ prox -      ⎦         ⎪
     ⎪                                                   ⎪
     ⎪ role ⎡ not gf pobj ⎤   role ⎡ not gf subj ⎤       ⎪
     ⎩      ⎢ fin gf  subj ⎥        ⎢ fin gf pobj ⎥       ⎭
            ⎣  _  exp      ⎦        ⎣  _  cont     ⎦
```
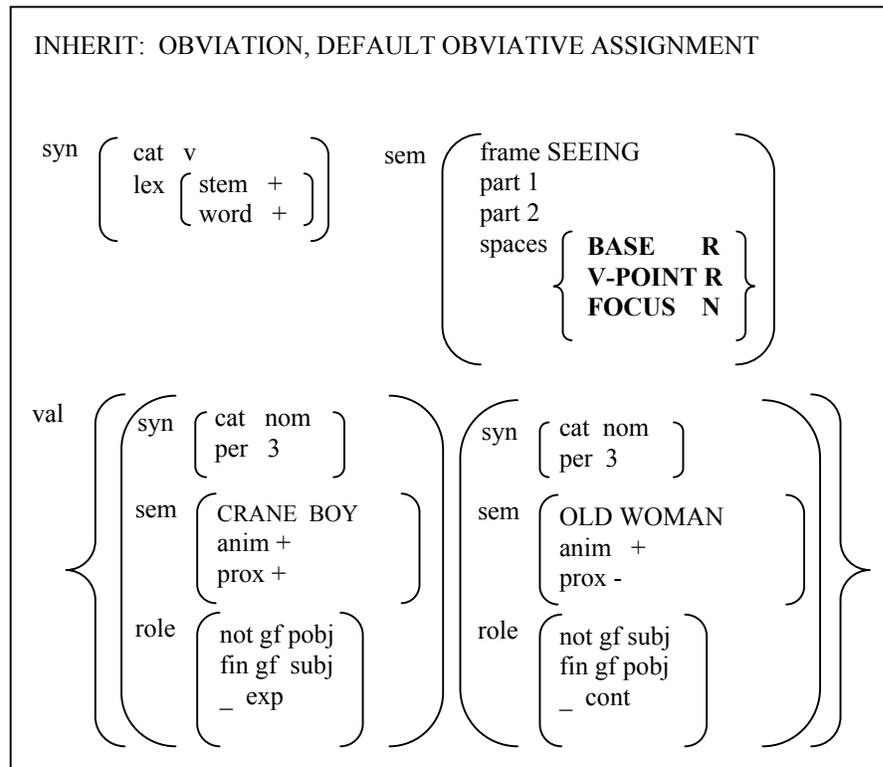
In this case, Discourse Obviation will still assign proximate status to Crane Boy as highest ranked nominal on the topicality scale and as the final subject. Old Woman, ranked lower on the topicality scale and the final primary object, will be obviative.

Because there is a mismatch between notional and final relations as shown in the following matrix, Inverse applies:

(44)  DISCOURSE OBVIATION INHERITS INVERSE

```
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│  INHERIT:  OBVIATION,  INVERSE                        │
│                                                       │
│    Sem: ref      [  CRANE BOY  >   OLD WOMAN ]        │
│                        |                 |            │
│    Role: not gf  [   P.OBJ       <      SUBJ      ]   │
│                        |                 |            │
│    Role: fin gf  [    SUBJ       >      P.OBJ     ]   │
│                        |                 |            │
│    Syn:  pers    [      3                 3       ]   │
│                        |                             │
│    Sem:  obv     [   PROX+                        ]   │
│                                                       │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```

## 9.5.2 Proximate shifts

Narrators sometimes shift perspective to represent the viewpoint of a character. To do so, they access a V-POINT from within the narrative domain.  Since V-POINT is associated with a Topic Hierarchy, accessing a different V-POINT can result in a proximate shift, where a secondary character is temporarily a proximate.

To illustrate, in the Crane Boy narrative, there is a proximate shift when the Old Woman first hears Crane Boy crying, and approaches him (lines 15-18).  During this episode, all references to the Old Woman are proximate, and the references to Crane Boy are obviative, which is expected if there is a 'rezeroing' of the center of deictic reference. The Topic Hierarchy linked to the Old Woman's viewpoint has Old Woman ranked highest, followed by Crane Boy  (these are the only two characters in the episode):

(45)  TOPIC HIERARCHY (associated with Old Woman):  Old woman > CraneBoy

In this case, we might expect that if 'Old Woman sees Crane Boy', Old Woman will be proximate, and Crane Boy obviative, reflecting the new Topic Hierarchy associated with the Old Woman.  As such, a direct form would be used:

(46)    
```
é-wabmat
é -  wabEm     -a   -d
FCT- see.s.o\TA -DIR -3C
```

'she [Old Woman-PROX] saw him [Crane Boy-OBV]'

This new topic hierarchy is indexed to a V-POINT inside the mental spaces network.  The diagram in (46) shows a Character Domain inside of the Narrative Domain.  This Character Domain represents the viewpoint (thoughts, construals, vantage point, etc.) of the Old Woman.  The narrator, by representing the narrative as coming from the Old Woman's restricted point of view, makes use of 'internal' narration. This is represented in mental space terms by a V-POINT inside the Narrative Domain that is associated to the V-POINT of the Old Woman (represented by the arc in the diagram connecting the two "@" signs in each domain).  This association link provides access to the Topic Hierarchy representing the Old Woman's viewpoint where Old Woman outranks Crane Boy:

(47) MENTAL SPACE REPRESENTATION OF A PROXIMATE SHIFT
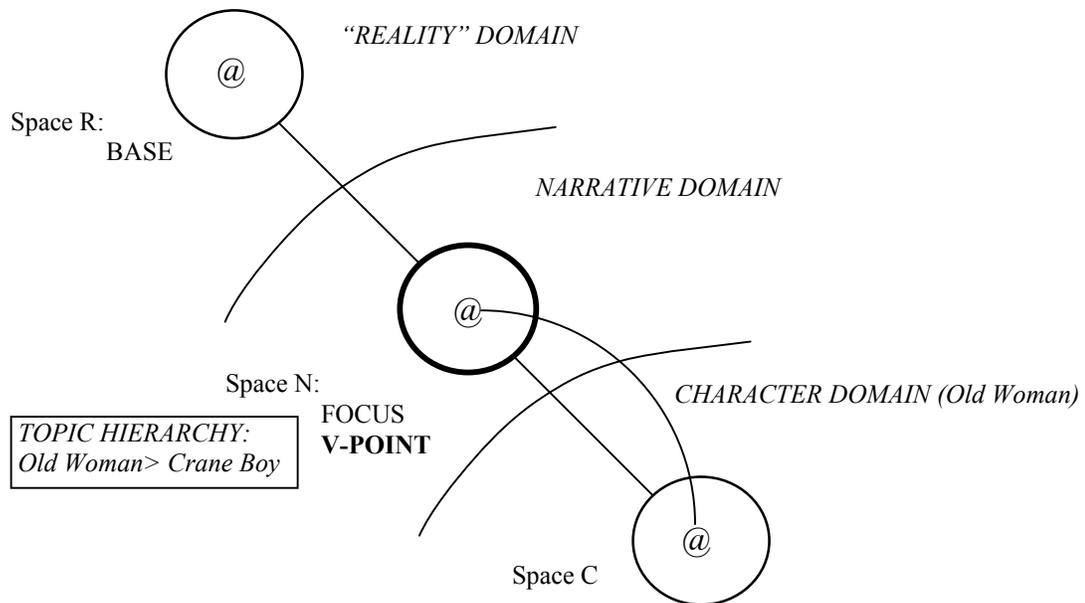


The index to the new ranking is provided in the construct of the predicate, within

the external semantics, as shown below (in boldface):

(48)  NEW RANKING IS INDEXED INSIDE OF THE EXTERNAL SEMANTICS

*é-wabmat* 'she [Old Woman-PROX] saw him [Crane Boy-OBV]'

```
INHERIT:  OBVIATION,
          DEFAULT OBVIATIVE ASSIGNMENT,
          DIRECT

syn  ⎡ cat  v              ⎤    sem  ⎡ frame SEEING              ⎤
     ⎢ lex ⎡ stem  + ⎤     ⎥         ⎢ part 1                    ⎥
     ⎣     ⎣ word  + ⎦     ⎦         ⎢ part 2                    ⎥
                                     ⎢ spaces ⎧ BASE      R ⎫   ⎥
                                     ⎢        ⎨ V-POINT  N ⎬   ⎥
                                     ⎣        ⎩ FOCUS    N ⎭   ⎦

val  ⎧ ⎡ syn ⎡ cat  nom ⎤      ⎤   ⎡ syn ⎡ cat  nom ⎤      ⎤ ⎫
     ⎪ ⎢     ⎢ per  3   ⎥      ⎥   ⎢     ⎢ per  3   ⎥      ⎥ ⎪
     ⎪ ⎢     ⎣ prox +   ⎦      ⎥   ⎢     ⎣ prox -   ⎦      ⎥ ⎪
     ⎪ ⎢                       ⎥   ⎢                       ⎥ ⎪
     ⎨ ⎢ sem ⎡ OLD WOMAN ⎤     ⎥   ⎢ sem ⎡ CRANE BOY ⎤     ⎥ ⎬
     ⎪ ⎢     ⎣ g. an  +  ⎦     ⎥   ⎢     ⎣ g. an  +  ⎦     ⎥ ⎪
     ⎪ ⎢                       ⎥   ⎢                       ⎥ ⎪
     ⎪ ⎢ role ⎡ not gf  subj ⎤ ⎥   ⎢ role ⎡ not gf pobj ⎤  ⎥ ⎪
     ⎩ ⎣      ⎢ fin  gf subj ⎥ ⎦   ⎣      ⎢ fin  gf pobj⎥  ⎦ ⎭
                ⎣ _    exp    ⎦            ⎣ _    cont   ⎦
```
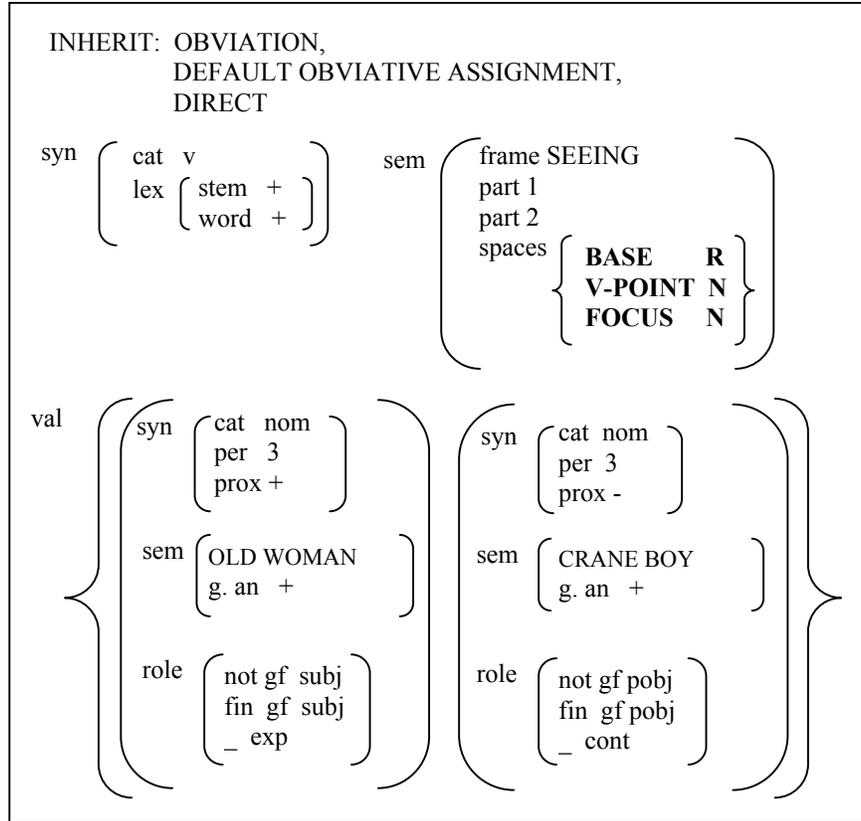
In this case, proximate status will be assigned to Old Woman, as the final subject and highest ranking nominal on the new topic hierarchy.   Crane Boy, lower on the hierarchy and the final primary object, will be obviative.  The alignment of notional and final relations allows the Direct construction to apply:

(49)  PROXIMATE SHIFT, DISCOURSE OBVIATION INHERITS DIRECT

```
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│  INHERIT: OBVIATION, DIRECT                               │
│                                                           │
│   Sem: ref      [ OLD WOMAN  >    CRANE BOY ]             │
│                     |                  |                  │
│   Role: not gf [    SUBJ      >       P.OBJ    ]          │
│                     |                  |                  │
│   Role: fin  gf [   SUBJ      >       P.OBJ    ]          │
│                     |                  |                  │
│   Syn:  pers   [     3                 3       ]          │
│                     |                                     │
│   Sem: obv     [   PROX+                        ]         │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```

## 9.6 Discussion

The sections above have presented an analysis of obviation in several domains: the phrase, the clause, within a sentence, sequential sentence clusters, and in discourse.  I have argued that these uses of obviation are themselves constructions, which are related by shared inherance of the Obviation Construction.

Besides sharing the inheritance of the Obviation Construction, these constructions are also similar to each other in the types of hierarchies they introduce.  Although the hierarchies have been stated as determined by the morphological marking of obviation, there is reason to suspect a deeper similarity:  An argument can be made for the overall saliency of higher ranked nominals, based on animacy (possession), agency (clausemate), syntactic embedding (sentential), semantic embedding (sentence clusters), and topicality (discourse).  A likely motivation for the extension of Obviation in each case seems

therefore to be 1) non-coreferential third persons, and 2) a reasonable basis for establishing relative saliency among them.

The Obviation Construction itself has a very broad function, that of linking proximate status with the highest ranking third person nominal on some unspecified hierarchy. Each construction that inherits Obviation adds information by contributing a specific hierarchy. A construction that makes use of this kind of inheritance relationship is known as an 'instance' construction (for a discussion, see Goldberg, 1995). The inheritance relationships for the Obviation instance constructions are shown in the diagram on the following page:

Note: arrows
show direction of
inheritance

DIRECT
INVERSE

INSTANCE CONSTRUCTIONS:

POSSESSION
(Possession Hierarchy)

CLAUSEMATE
(Notioanl Relations Hierarchy)

SENTENTIAL
(Subjects Hierarchy)

SENTENCE CLUSTER
(Sequential Subjects Hierarchy)

DISCOURSE
(Topic Hierarchy)

OBVIATION

DEFAULT
OBVIATIVE
ASSIGNMENT

229
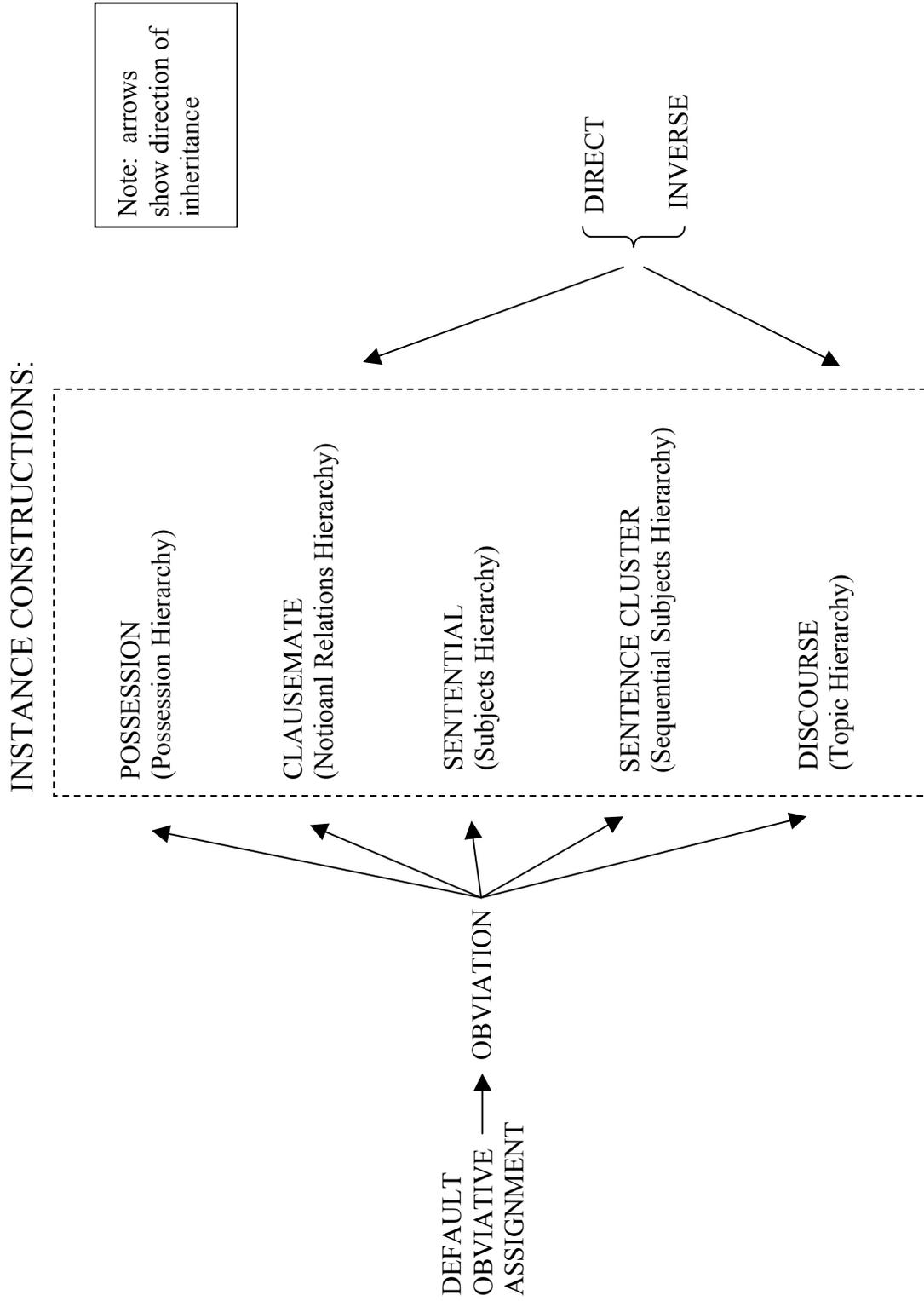
Returning to the question posed at the beginning of this chapter, by advocating a constructional approach, we assume that neither syntax nor discourse plays a more important role in the application of Obviation *per se*; that is, both Clausemate and Discourse Obviation represent polysemic extensions of the Obviation Construction. It is another question, however, which constructions a language has in its inventory, and the extent to which its speakers make use of them. In order to address this question, I propose the concept of 'constructional maintenance', where different languages, dialects (or even narrators!) may access a construction to varying degrees. With respect to Discourse Obviation, we might define the following degrees of maintenance (although I believe it to be essentially a cline):

STRONG MAINTENANCE: the nominal highest in the topic rank will be the proximate within the discourse span.

WEAK MAINTENANCE: attention to topic rank will be given in some contexts, generally more visible ones, but not others.

NON-MAINTENANCE: the construction does not apply or is not available in the constructional inventory.

Comparing languages then, we might represent the maintenance of Clausemate and Discourse Obviation as follows:

|            | Clausemate Obviation    | Discourse Obviation     |
|------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| **Fox**        | Weak to non-maintenance | Strong maintenance      |
| **Ottawa**     | Strong maintenance      | Weak to non-maintenance |
| **Potawatomi** | Strong maintenance      | Weak maintenance        |

A language like Fox has strong maintenance of discourse obviation, while having weak to non-maintenance of Clausemate Obviation. Ottawa is the reverse; it has strong maintenance of Clausemate Obviation, but weak to non-maintenance of Discourse Obviation. Potawatomi is somewhere in the middle of these extremes: it can be generally characterized as a syntax obviation language, with strong maintenance of Clausemate Obviation, however some narrators make limited use of discourse obviation (for instance in main clauses transitive verbs, but not with main clause intransitives), and so has weak maintenance of the Discourse Obviation Construction.

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