This thesis analyzes how obviation, a grammatical structure found in Algonquian languages, is used in two Innu-aimun âtanûkana (myth-legends) told in Sheshatshiu, Labrador. Specifically, I explore the way in which obviation patterns in the two stories, and how the storyteller makes the choice of whether to assign each particular third-person referent proximate or obviative status.

In the study, I identify seven semantic and syntactic environments in the narratives in which the storyteller generally assigns third-person referents proximate status. My study also points to exceptions to these apparent “rules” of proximate assignment where the storyteller will give a third person an unexpected status in order to reflect some meaning at the level of discourse, for example foreshadowing an event, placing focus on a particular character, or attributing the quality of agentivity to a particular character.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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ABBREVIATIONS

Obviation Patterns

PS proximate shift
OS obviative shift
PSp proximate span
OSp obviative span
MP multiple proximates
CoP coreferent proximates
COP coordinate proximates
PSw proximate switch

Syntactic Roles

Vsbj subject of the verb
Vobj object of the verb
PN proper noun
POSSD3 possessed third (i.e., proximate) person
POSSD4 possessed fourth (i.e., obviative) person
POSSR3 third person possessor
PNobv obviative proper noun

Abbreviations Used in Glosses

adv adverb
an animate
CIN conjunct indicative neutral
CS conjunct subjunctive
dem demonstrative
dim diminutive
dir direct
dup reduplicated form
fut future
IC initial changed form
IDN independent dubitative neutral
IDRP independent indirect preterit
IIN independent indicative neutral
IIP independent indicative preterit
Imp imperative
in inanimate
intj interjection
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
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<tr>
<td>indef</td>
<td>indefinite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>intrg</td>
<td>interrogative</td>
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<tr>
<td>inv</td>
<td>inverse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loc</td>
<td>locative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NA</td>
<td>animate noun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAD</td>
<td>animate dependent noun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAP</td>
<td>nominalized animate noun</td>
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<tr>
<td>neg</td>
<td>negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NI</td>
<td>inanimate noun</td>
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<tr>
<td>num</td>
<td>number</td>
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<tr>
<td>obv</td>
<td>obviative</td>
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<tr>
<td>p</td>
<td>particle</td>
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<td>prfx</td>
<td>prefix</td>
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<tr>
<td>pro</td>
<td>pronoun</td>
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<tr>
<td>prv</td>
<td>preverb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sbjctv</td>
<td>subjective</td>
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<tr>
<td>sfx</td>
<td>suffix</td>
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<tr>
<td>s</td>
<td>singular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TS</td>
<td>theme sign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VAI / (AI)</td>
<td>animate intransitive verb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VAI+O</td>
<td>VAI that takes an object</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII / (II)</td>
<td>inanimate intransitive verb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VTA / (TA)</td>
<td>transitive animate verb</td>
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<td>transitive inanimate verb</td>
</tr>
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<td>1</td>
<td>first person</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>second person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>inclusive &quot;we&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>third person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>fourth (i.e., obviative) person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X&gt;Y</td>
<td>X=subject; Y=object</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Other Abbreviations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Meaning</th>
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<tr>
<td>AG</td>
<td>agentive third person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AV</td>
<td>avoidance structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>explicit proximate/obviative reference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FN</td>
<td>frame narrative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GD</td>
<td>general description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>implicit proximate/obviative reference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NC</td>
<td>narrative context</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
nonAG  non-agentive third/fourth person
PE    proximate environment
QS    quoted speech
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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction and Overview

1.1. Introduction

1.1.1. Aim

Obviation is a grammatical structure used in Algonquian languages to distinguish between multiple third persons. This distinction is made by giving one third person proximate status, and designating all others as obviative. While the choice of which third person to make proximate can be straightforward in a simple sentence, the choice becomes more complex within the context of a narrative, where the ranking of third-person nominals becomes “a complex function which includes grammatical function, inherent semantic properties, and discourse salience” (Aissen 1997:705). This thesis examines and analyzes the way in which proximate and obviative status are assigned in two Innu-aimun1 âtanûkana (myth-legends) told in Sheshatshiu2, Labrador: Uâpush mâk Umatshashkuk (Hare and Frog) and Meshâpush (literally, The Great Rabbit). In order to understand and describe how these choices are made by the storyteller, I have divided my research into three stages: 1) the interlinear (morpheme-by-morpheme) translation of the two stories, which reflect each third-person referent’s isolated, changing, and/or continued status as proximate or obviative throughout the story; 2) the analysis of different types of obviation patterns in the stories, where I explore four patterns of

---

1 Innu-aimun, formerly referred to as Montagnais, includes the most easterly set of dialects in the Cree-Montagnais-Naskapi continuum, spoken in Quebec and Labrador.
2 Sheshatshiu is one of two Innu communities in Labrador.
sustained or isolated obviation (single proximate spans, coreferent proximates, coordinate proximates, and obviative spans) and four patterns of shifting obviation (proximate shifts, proximate switches, proximate shifts in function (i.e., other multiple proximates), and obviative shifts); and 3) the systematic identification and analysis of the environments in which the storyteller designates a third person as proximate (what I term “proximate environments”). Here, I chart each third-person referent’s obviation status in a separate table that highlights the syntactic and semantic environments in which third persons are proximate or obviative, and I draw hypotheses concerning the discourse functions served by unexpected uses of obviation.

My preliminary analysis, for example, indicated a correlation between proximate status and agentive third persons. There also appears to be a tendency to use what I call “avoidance strategies”, more marked grammatical structures that allow the narrator to avoid changing a particular third-person referent’s obviation status in contexts where a shift in obviation is not otherwise required by the context of the narrative.

1.1.2. Theoretical Framework

The broad theoretical framework I have adopted for this study is that of narrative analysis, a subdivision of discourse analysis also referred to in the literature by the overlapping, but not equivalent, terms “genre analysis” (Paltridge 2000) and “text analysis” (Valentine 1995). Working within this framework, in this study I isolate and analyze the formal linguistic patterns of obviation that create and reflect meaning in the two ātanâkana. Because there is no specific methodology already set up within this
framework that is suitable for identifying and describing the obviation patterns and proximate environments on which this study focuses, for the purposes of this thesis I have designed a method of analysis in which I chart each story’s use of obviation in tables that highlight the sustained, isolated, or changing statuses of particular third-person referents in the narratives and the syntactic and semantic environments in which proximates and obviatives occur. Based on the information collected and highlighted in these tables, I have analyzed the narratives by identifying the ways in which patterns or isolated instances of proximates and obviatives correspond with other features in the texts.

Within the scope of the study of obviation in Algonquian narratives, this research models its theoretical approach primarily on the studies of Ives Goddard (1984, 1990), Amy Dahlstrom (1991, 1996), and Kevin Russell (1991, 1996). These studies explore the discourse uses of obviation by identifying correlations between patterns of obviation and the narrative contexts in which they appear. The obviation patterns I explore in this thesis, for example, are taken from the above-mentioned studies, as are some basic theoretical assumptions regarding obviation and the analysis of narratives.

1.1.3. Some General Theoretical Assumptions

**The Systemic Perspective:** This thesis adopts the systemic perspective on language use, which treats language not as a set of rules but as “a resource for making meaning” (Paltridge 2000:106). Specifically, this approach is concerned with the system of choices speakers make and with how these choices relate to the genre and structure of
texts. This study, therefore, focuses on the narrator’s choices in designating particular third persons in the stories as either proximate or obviative, and aims to discover how these choices are made and how their outcomes are meaningful within the texts.

**Proximate/Obviative Status as Meaningful:** This thesis assumes a third-person referent’s designation as proximate or obviative or their shifts from one status to the other are meaningful. That is, I have assumed in this study that the choice as to whether to assign proximate or obviative status to a particular third-person referent is not strictly a grammatical choice, but instead often reflects either a genre-defining feature of the text or fulfills some other narrative function.

1.2. Previous Research in the Field

1.2.1. Discourse Analysis

The study of discourse involves the analysis of language above the level of the morpheme, word, clause, phrase, and sentence; that is, unlike areas of linguistics that concentrate on these more micro-areas of language, discourse analysis involves the “bigger picture” of linguistic description (Riggenbach in Paltridge 2000:3), dealing with “language-in-use” (Brown and Yule 1983:1). Defined from a functional perspective, discourse analysis explores both how we create meaning using linguistic forms and what we actually mean by the things we say. From a theoretical standpoint, discourse analysis seeks to answer two broad questions: “why we make particular language choices” and “what we mean by them” (Paltridge 2000:3), and it does this by identifying and
describing the linguistic patterns that occur across written texts or stretches of verbal
communication.

Compared with other areas of linguistic study, discourse analysis is still in the early stages of development. Within the field of discourse, few terms have been universally agreed upon or standardized in the literature, and the result is a wide range of terminology and models of study that rarely correspond precisely, or even closely, with one another. Instead, discourse analysts often create their own categories within the field, and their distinct methods of categorization have created a confusion of overlapping terms and methods of study. For example, Jaworski and Coupland’s “narrative analysis”, Paltridge’s “genre analysis”, and Valentine’s “text analysis” are all very closely related in that they are all concerned with the analysis of text, but they do not refer to identical areas of study, each being used to describe slightly different methodologies and aims. Because of inconsistencies like this, a unified description of what constitutes discourse analysis is not yet possible. However, many approaches to the study are shared, and it is useful to become familiar with the kinds of terms and divisions that have been created in order to understand the range of study encompassed by discourse analysis and the way in which a more focused study (like that of narrative analysis, explored in this thesis) fits into the field of discourse analysis as a whole.

As an example of how the field can be subdivided, Adam Jaworski and Nikolas Coupland argue that seven approaches constitute discourse analysis (1999:14-35): 1) speech act theory and pragmatics (Austin 1999); 2) conversation analysis (Grice 1999); 3) discursive psychology; 4) ethnography of communication; 5) interactional sociolinguistics; 6) narrative analysis; and 7) critical discourse analysis. However, both
Paltridge and Valentine divide the field somewhat differently, using some of the same terms in overlapping but non-equivalent ways. The following table represents three categorizations of areas of study within the field of discourse analysis. Although the divisions do not correspond directly with one another, I have organized them so models of study sharing some similarities in their approach to discourse are listed beside the same number.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Valentine</th>
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<td>Speech Act Theory and Pragmatics</td>
<td>Speech Act Theory</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Conversation Analysis</td>
<td>Conversation Analysis</td>
<td>Conversation Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Discursive Psychology</td>
<td>Pragmatics and Conversation</td>
<td>Discourse as a Social-interactional Analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Ethnography of Communication</td>
<td>Ethnography of Communication</td>
<td>Ethnopoetics</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Interactional Sociolinguistics</td>
<td>Patterns of Cohesion</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Narrative Analysis</td>
<td>Genre Analysis</td>
<td>Text Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Critical Discourse Analysis</td>
<td>Critical Discourse Analysis</td>
<td>Socio-linguistic Research</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.2.2. Narrative Analysis

Narrative analysis, which encompasses the main focus and theoretical approach of this thesis, corresponds roughly with Paltridge’s “genre analysis” and Valentine’s “text analysis” and involves isolating linguistic patterns within texts, locating where certain features of the language are used instead of others, and postulating what a particular pattern of use might indicate. As such, this model of study focuses on things like topic,
comment, participants, and cohesive devices within stretches of narrative or text in order that a narrative analyst can identify and describe the formal linguistic features that mark and divide these units into genres or that serve other functions related to the intended meaning and interpretation of the text. Ruqaiya Hasan argues that basic to this approach to discourse is the need to distinguish between obligatory and optional structural elements in a text, where structures that are obligatory are “genre defining” (in Paltridge 2000:112). For example, linguists interested in this area of study might explore something like what formally marks a folk tale as a folk tale and not, say, as a legend in a particular linguistic community. Similarly, a narrative analyst could explore what the use of a discourse feature like the historical present tense indicates in different types of narrative genres. In this thesis, I examine the role of obviation as a discourse feature in Innu-aimun âtanûkana.

Often, narrative analysts employ the Labovian framework of textual analysis in which the text being analyzed is divided into six structural segments: 1) abstract; 2) orientation; 3) complicating action; 4) evaluation; 5) result or resolution; and 6) coda (Labov and Waletzky 1967; Labov 1999). By dividing the text in this way, a narrative analyst can identify structural elements in each stage of a story that are characteristic of the story’s particular genre. Valentine, for example, uses this approach in her structural analysis of Severn Ojibwe narratives in Making it their Own (1995).

For the purposes of the present study, however, a structural analysis of the texts, like that of Labov, is not suitable because it does not allow for a focused examination of one particular discourse feature in a text (here, obviation). Instead, I have developed my own methodology within the framework of narrative analysis that allows for the
examination of a particular obviation pattern or the obviation status of a particular referent within its immediate context. In my analysis, I also consider the use of obviation within the context of the story as a whole entity. For example, in *Uāpush māk* Umâtshashkuku, because Hare is proximate throughout most of the story, I consider the structural location and importance of the very few instances in which he is not proximate. However, my main focus is on proximates and obviatives as isolated occurrences and as they occur immediately preceding or following third persons with which they corefer.

Jaworski and Coupland argue for the importance of narrative analysis because it “deals with a pervasive genre of communication through which we enact important aspects of our identities and relations with others” (1999:32). They also suggest that the analysis of narratives is valuable for the philosophical and social perspectives it presents, and argue that “it is partly through narrative discourse that we comprehend the world and present our understanding of it to others” (1999:32).

1.2.3. Algonquian Discourse Analysis and Narrative Analysis

Lisa Philips Valentine’s 1995 book *Making it their Own: Severn Ojibwe Communicative Practices*, and Roger Spielmann’s 1998 book ‘*You’re So Fat!*’: *Exploring Ojibwe Discourse*, are comprehensive studies of the discourse practices of particular Ojibwe (Algonquian language family) communities. Because both Valentine and Spielmann incorporate a wide range of approaches into their analyses of Algonquian discourse, these two studies provide a good overview of the kinds of analyses that can be carried out in this field. The features of discourse that Valentine and Spielmann identify
and describe in the communicative practices of the people of Lynx Lake (Valentine), and Pikogan, Winneway, and Wikwemikong (Spielmann) are a valuable resource for comparison with each other and with the findings of studies carried out on other Algonquian languages and dialects.

Valentine’s study explores the language and discourse of the Severn Ojibwe people of Lynx Lake in northwestern Ontario. Corresponding to some degree with the approaches of Jaworski and Coupland discussed earlier, Valentine incorporates six theoretical approaches into her study (Valentine 1995:8-9): text analysis, conversation analysis, sociolinguistic research, discourse as a social-interactional analysis, form-content parallelism, and ethnopoetics. Working with a broad definition of “discourse” as “language used in social interactions” (1995:7), Valentine outlines and describes the linguistic situation in Lynx Lake, focusing on the linguistic resources and language use in the community. She situates the Lynx Lake variety of Severn Ojibwe within the Algonquian language family, explores the changes in communication that have arisen with the introduction into the community of technologies like the telephone, radio, newspaper, and so forth, and identifies instances of lexical and phonological code-switching between Severn Ojibwe and Cree or English. She also discusses Native literacy and the use of syllabics in Lynx Lake, explores the relationship between speech and music, and analyzes the role of religious discourse in the community.

More relevant to the focus of this thesis, Valentine’s study also examines discourse-internal structuring in a Severn Ojibwe first-person narrative and in a myth-legend (aatisoohkaan)\(^3\), using Labov’s model for narrative analysis. Here, Valentine focuses on the “metanarrative” features of these texts, which “frame” or “key” the text

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\(^3\) Severn Ojibwe *aatisoohkaan* is cognate with Innu-aimun *ātanûkan* ‘myth-legend’.
for the reader or listener. She also explores differences and similarities between these
two story genres and identifies some of the genre-specific features that mark them,
including pronoun shifts, tense shifts, discourse particles, repetition, formulaic
expressions, and so forth. Lastly, she discusses the active role that discourse analysis can
play in observing social change and addressing social concerns.

In ‘You’re So Fat!’ Spielmann explores the contemporary use of Ojibwe in two
Algonquin communities in Quebec, Pikogan and Winneway, and in one Odawa
community in Ontario, Wikwemikong. In his book, Spielmann focuses on three aspects
of discourse: 1) language and cultural values, where he explores Aboriginal
ethnohistories and values, interaction patterns in naturally occurring conversation, and
some differences in language use between Algonquian and Indo-European speakers;
2) conversation analysis, where he looks at how reality is built and upheld through
everyday talk, how oral legends and other stories are elaborately constructed by
Anishnaabe storytellers, and how humourous talk and complaints are carried out in
Ojibwe; and 3) linguistic discourse analysis, where he analyzes various genres of Ojibwe
narrative and identifies several of the linguistic features that characterize them in order to
gain a deeper understanding of the role of stories in contemporary Anishnaabe culture.

Valentine’s and Spielmann’s studies of Algonquian narratives analyze a wide
range of discourse features. The analysis of Algonquian narratives can take two forms,
however: 1) a generalized look at several discourse features and strategies, usually within
a small number of texts; or, like the approach adopted in this thesis, 2) a more focussed
approach that examines the occurrence and use of one particular strategy or feature
within one or more texts. In what follows, I describe five studies that analyze the general
narrative structure of particular Algonquian texts (type 1) and three studies that concentrate instead on only one or two discourse features (type 2), including the use of mode and evidentiality in Algonquian narratives. The studies that concentrate specifically on obviation are discussed in depth in Chapter Two.

Richard Rhodes, in his 1979 article “Some aspects of Ojibwa discourse,” outlines some of the discourse phenomena that occur in Central Ojibwa and Ottawa. He explores the distribution and function of several phenomena that appear to be significant at the level of discourse, including use of the past tense, the conjunct mode, and certain morphemes, words, and constructions and various discourse particles. Based on the results of his analysis, Rhodes draws several conclusions. Among these, he finds that the use of the past tense and the untranslatable discourse particle (i.e., a word that has meaning primarily at the level of discourse) *dash* mark prominence (1979:103), that the conjunct is sometimes used to mark the future tense (1979:112), and that the discourse particle *gsha* indicates to hearers that they should suspend their judgement upon hearing what the narrator is about to say (1979:113).

In C. Douglas Ellis’ 1995 introduction to *átalóhkâna nêsta tipâcimôwina: Cree Legends and Narratives from the West Coast of James Bay*, he analyzes the use of several discourse features to mark specific genres of Cree stories. Included in his analysis are sequential ordering, the use of archaic terms, characterization, and the use of formulaic expressions, among others. His findings show, for example, that *tipâcimôwina*, which include all stories that are not myth/legends and that often deal with historical or real-life experiences, are marked in one way as belonging to the genre by their lack of characterization (1995:xxxiii). He also finds that specific formulaic expressions are used
to mark a story as belonging to a particular genre and not to another. For example, he argues that the presence of the word ̀eskwapihkeyak ‘the length of the story’ at the end of a narrative marks the narrative as being a “heroic episode” (1995:xxvi), a subgenre of Cree cyclical ̀atalôhkâna, or myth/legends.

Unlike Rhodes, who analyzes particular discourse features in order to determine their specific functions, Ellis is more concerned with the role that discourse features play in dividing narratives into discrete genres. Because of his particular focus, Ellis’ analysis provides a valuable framework for identifying, organizing, and analyzing different types of Algonquian narratives.

In her 1995 book *Making it their Own*, Valentine explores a wide variety of strategies that play a role at the level of discourse. Specifically, she looks at the use of dubitative verbs, formulaic expressions, the first person, pronoun shifts, tense shifts, direct discourse, repetition, highly-specific verbs, narrator laughter, particles, parallel constructions, pauses, proper names, and so forth. All of these, she argues, reflect particular ways in which the narrator signals information to the hearers. For example, she finds that dubitative verbs are common in legends and “carry the story into the realm of hearsay, liberating story from contemporary life” (1995:194). Where a narrator uses a dubitative verb, then, hearers will know the storyteller is not claiming the story is necessarily true.

Amy Dahlstrom’s 1996 article, “Narrative structure of a Fox text,” presents an analysis of the story “A Young Man who Fasted” in which she identifies several linguistic patterns in the text and hypothesizes the functions of particular discourse
features. While she concentrates on the use of obviation in the text\(^4\), she also looks at occurrences of the evidential enclitic =ye·toke ‘it seems’, conjunctions, the changed conjunct, overt noun phrases, and anaphoric temporal adverbs. From her analysis, Dahlstrom identifies several correlations between the patterns of use of particular discourse strategies and other changes in the text. For example, she finds that evidentials are often used by storytellers where they were not actually witness to the events being recounted, but instead heard the story from someone else (1996:120). Similarly, she notes that the use of the changed conjunct often corresponds with a change in location, the use of overt noun phrases often signals a topic shift, and the use of anaphoric temporal adverbs often indicates a simultaneous shift in time, for example from the time of the story’s events to the present time of the narrator’s telling of the story (1996:117). Dahlstrom concludes from her study that the use of the linguistic devices she identifies may indicate evidential distinctions, stylistic functions, or the division of the story into what she calls “acts” (the major components of a story) and “scenes” (the smaller sections that make up the acts).

Chapter 10 in Spielmann’s 1998 book, ‘You’re So Fat!,’ describes the linguistic discourse analysis of a traditional Anishnaabe legend “Amik Anishnaabewigoban.” In the analysis, Spielmann explores the use of seven discourse features (1998:186): 1) direct discourse; 2) verb switching; 3) doublet constructions; 4) character focus; 5) particles and other discourse markers; 6) word-internal constructions; and 7) general narrative structure. He identifies various ways in which the narrator may use these features, such as to make the hearer focus on significant events in the story, to partition important events, and to show diverse perspectives on the narrative action.

\(^4\) Dahlstrom’s discussion of obviation is dealt with in Chapter Two.
All of the studies discussed above identify patterns of discourse features as they occur in Algonquian narratives. While Rhodes, Dahlstrom, and Spielmann explore how discourse features function within the texts they analyze, Ellis instead identifies the way in which these features pattern differently in distinct genres, with the aim of classifying Algonquian narratives into subgroups of narrative types that can then be compared and contrasted to discover the particular function of different discourse strategies. Valentine, however, incorporates both of these approaches to narrative analysis, first distinguishing first-person narratives from myth-legends and subsequently analyzing the function of various discourse strategies in each of these two genres. In this way, her analysis implies that distinguishing different Algonquian narrative genres and determining the functions of specific discourse features should really be studied in conjunction with one another. That is, in order to determine a particular feature’s function, it is often useful or even necessary to first know the context in which it is used (i.e., what genre of narrative it occurs in and where within the structure of the text itself it is usually found). Similarly, in order to identify the formal features that mark discrete Algonquian narrative genres, it is often useful to have some idea of how the features function at the level of discourse so that a feature marking timelessness, for example, could provide evidence toward the classification of a particular story as a myth or legend. Valentine’s study, therefore, highlights the benefit of incorporating considerations of both genre and function into the analysis of Algonquian narrative discourse.

Other studies have focused on one or two particular discourse strategies and have therefore offered thorough analyses of multiple environments in which a particular discourse feature can occur and have identified patterns that emerge from this set of
occurrences. Lynn Drapeau, in the following three studies, explores Montagnais (=Innu-aimun) evidentials. Although the first of these studies really explores features that do not fall into this category, I have included it in this section because its findings are so closely related to those of the subsequent two papers, and it therefore makes sense for the three to be discussed in conjunction with one another.

In her 1984 article, “Le traitement de l’information chez les Montagnais,” Drapeau looks at several discourse features that appear to be involved in marking the status of reported information in the Betsiamites dialect of Montagnais, including repetition, double direct discourse marking (e.g., John said, “…”, he said to me.), multiple embedding, and the use of verbal paradigms. Specifically, Drapeau concentrates on how the distinction is drawn in Montagnais reported information between events that have been directly witnessed and those that have not. For example, she finds that the indicative mode tends to be used to talk about events that the speaker has witnessed, while the indirect mode is used to talk about information that the speaker has been given from a third party (1984:28). She also finds that in Montagnais narratives the indirect mode is often used at the opening and closing of a story, at the same time as old or background information is provided by the storyteller, and that the indicative mode is often found elsewhere in the story (1984:32). In this paper, Drapeau further analyzes the conclusions she draws about particular discourse features in an attempt to formally characterize the Montagnais narrative genres of atânûkana ‘myth-legends’ and tipâtshimuna, which include all other stories, and demonstrates that the knowledge of how these features are distributed and function in narratives is crucial to distinguishing between these genres.
Drapeau’s 1986 article, “Entre le rêve et la réalité: le mode subjectif en montagnais,” examines the system of verbal paradigms in the Betsiamites dialect of Montagnais and, specifically, explores the context in which what Drapeau calls the “subjective” mode occurs. She finds that the subjective mode occurs in six particular contexts: 1) dream stories; 2) reminiscences; 3) subjective perceptions; 4) astonishment because of a surprising event; 5) euphemisms; and 6) the designation of individuals, objects, or places. Based on similarities between the first five contexts, Drapeau suggests that the subjective mode is used in Montagnais to signal the speaker’s opinion, taste, avoidance of a direct question, or desire to reduce the impact of criticism. In terms of designating people, things, and places using the subjective mode, Drapeau suggests that speakers feel this use reflects a way in which speakers can avoid directly pointing at someone.

In her 1996 article, “Conjurors: the use of evidentials in Montagnais second-hand narratives,” Drapeau explores the system of evidential modalities in Montagnais that is grammatically encoded in the language’s verb paradigms to signal the status of information. She analyzes the ways in which different modalities pattern in distinct Montagnais narrative genres, with the particular aim of discovering how they mark foreground or background information and first or second-hand narratives. She finds, for example, that the independent indirect preterit and indirect conjunct forms of the verb correspond with background information in âtâlûkana (myths-legends), and that the use of the independent present dubitative form of the verb in non-embedded clauses of a second-hand narrative overtly marks foregrounding (1996:173). She also finds that in âtâlûkana it is not necessary, as it is elsewhere, for evidentiality to be marked. This lack
of marked evidentiality, she suggests, constitutes a formal discourse feature of Montagnais ątılıkana, where the storyteller can relate the story events as if she/he had witnessed them (1996:174).

The following table represents the studies of Algonquian narratives discussed above, and includes the specific language or dialect of the text(s) being analyzed and the specific feature(s) the narrative analyst explores. It also represents the studies on obviation, which are discussed in Chapter Two. Where I have written “various” for the type of features analyzed, the study explores several features such as the use of repetition, anaphoric temporal adverbs, discourse particles, sequential ordering, direct/indirect discourse, verb-tense ordering, formulaic expressions, and so forth.

**Table 2: Algonquian Narrative Studies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discourse analyst</th>
<th>Language/dialect</th>
<th>Feature(s) analyzed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5. Rhodes (1979)</td>
<td>Ojibwa and Ottawa</td>
<td>Various</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Spielmann (1998)</td>
<td>Algonquin and Odawa (Ojibwe)</td>
<td>Various</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER TWO

Obviation in Algonquian Narratives

2.1. Introduction

Obviation, a grammatical category found in Algonquian languages, has the primary function of distinguishing between multiple third-person referents. As a general rule, in any stretch of narrative involving two or more third persons, one will be proximate, and all others will be obviative. This distinction is reflected morphologically: proximate forms are morphologically unmarked and obviative forms are marked with a suffix. Obviation can therefore be triggered within a verb containing two third persons (subject and object), in the broader context of a clause or sentence, or over a series of sentences. However, while there are many environments in which obviation occurs, there are only two absolutely obligatory rules governing its use: 1) only one of the arguments of a verb can be proximate, and 2) if an animate noun is possessed by an animate third person, the possessed noun is obviative (Goddard 1990:318). Thus, the basic principle states that where there are two animate third persons in any given context, one will be proximate and the other obviative, but “the rules of grammar, in particular of syntax, leave the choice almost entirely open as to which can be which,” creating “a wide latitude of choice in the assigning of proximate and obviative status in a discourse” (Goddard 1990:318).

Although there are numerous instances in which the choice of proximate or obviative appears to be open to the storyteller, there are several tendencies that seem to
narrow the latitude of choice to some extent. For instance, Amy Dahlstrom has found that perception verbs or verbs expressing feelings generally have proximate subjects (1991:110); Kevin Russell has shown that there is a tendency for a proximate to stay constant over a series of clauses, although, in any given text, obviative status will almost always change at least twice (1996:368); Lucy Thomason has found that, in Fox autobiography, obviative forms are rare and that there is a large number of same-sentence proximate shifts (1995:467); and Ives Goddard has demonstrated that there exists a “quasi-universal animacy hierarchy,” which consistently requires that an animate noun designating a non-human never be higher in rank than an animate human noun (1984:277). That is, where an animate non-human noun is proximate, an animate human noun cannot be obviative (i.e., must also be proximate), even if it is the topically secondary third-person referent.

In addition to the grammatical limitations that play a role in the distribution of obviation in narratives, there also appear to be more discourse-based constraints that determine how a storyteller can assign and change the proximate or obviative status of particular third-person referents. What this means is that the tendencies or patterns of obviation in discourse may not reflect complete flexibility in a storyteller’s choice of obviation status where grammatical constraints have already been satisfied; instead, they may reflect the semantic notions on which a particular status is based beyond more easily identifiable grammatical constraints. The important point to be made, as Russell observes in relation to Cree narratives, is that “the choice of which referent to make proximate cannot be forced by the grammatical relations borne by the referents ... [because] ... Cree has devised some circumlocutions that will usually allow even a
proximate nominal to be ‘possessed’ ” (1996:368). This means other factors beyond the
basic grammatical rules must also play a role in determining this choice. Russell’s
statement holds true for other Algonquian languages (and dialects of the Cree-
Montagnais-Naskapi continuum), where environments that dictate that a particular noun
phrase (NP) have a specific obviation status can similarly be avoided by a creative
storyteller.

To say patterns of obviation may reflect the semantics governing the choice of
proximate or obviative raises the more specific question of what these semantic notions
might be. In other words, we must then ask the question: what are the factors, both
syntactic and semantic, that drive the choice of obviation status for each particular noun
phrase in a discourse?

2.2. Previous Research on Obviation in Algonquian Narratives

The studies discussed below give an overview of the kind of work that has been
done towards understanding the discourse uses of obviation in Algonquian languages and
answering the question of what drives a storyteller’s choice of obviation status for each
particular third-person referent in a story. These studies focus their analyses on the use of
obviation in narratives told in a variety of Algonquian languages and dialects and offer
thorough considerations of how proximate and obviative status are assigned in the texts
examined.

Two studies carried out by Ives Goddard, for example, explore the use of
obviation in Fox narratives. In Goddard’s 1984 article, he analyzes the general patterns
of obviation that determine which characters are proximate and which are obviative, and, in his 1990 article, he turns his attention to where changes in obviation occur with respect to the narrative structure of texts, and particularly with respect to paragraph divisions.

Goddard’s 1984 article, “The obviative in Fox narrative discourse,” presents what he calls a preliminary survey of some of the patterns of obviation found in Fox texts (1984:274). In the article, he distinguishes “normal multiple proximates” (including coreferent and coordinate proximates, among others) from “proximate shifts,” and identifies “obviative shifts.” A proximate shift, he argues, where a formerly obviative third person becomes proximate, tends to occur in sections of the narrative that correspond to a shift in focus or point of view and “promotes a subordinate character to coordinate status with the former main character” (1984:279-280).

In his 1990 article, “Aspects of the topic structure of Fox narratives: Proximate shifts and the use of overt and inflectional NPs,” Goddard extends his study of Fox narratives, focussing his analysis on the distribution of proximate shifts. He also classifies these shifts in terms of how they correspond with paragraph divisions as “delayed” or “anticipated” proximate shifts. He concludes that, while proximate shifts often coincide with shifts in paragraph (1990:320), “a one-clause delay in making a proximate shift at the beginning of a new paragraph is a common pattern when … the first clause of the new paragraph contains a verb in the changed conjunct mode” (1990:323). Furthermore, he argues that the changed conjuncts that describe the completion of a movement to a new location or the recapitulation of the previous action “frequently function as scene shifters or episode delimiters …” (1990:323).
Amy Dahlstrom explores the discourse uses of obviation in two Algonquian languages: Plains Cree and Fox. In her 1991 book, *Plains Cree Morphosyntax*, she examines the narrative environments and discourse functions of single and multiple proximates in Plains Cree narratives. She argues that, while there are some similarities between the functions of subjecthood and sentence topic in English and proximate status in Algonquian languages, proximate status cannot be considered as equivalent to either of these. Unlike subjecthood in English, proximate status is not a clause-level relation since “proximate and obviative third persons may range over a sentence or a paragraph-sized episode” (1991:95), and unlike sentence topic in English, proximate status is not a sentence-level relation since “although it is common for there to be one proximate third person in a given sentence, some sentences may have no proximate third person at all, while others have more than one proximate” (1991:95). Dahlstrom concludes that proximate status is often used to reflect the viewpoint of the character with whom the audience can most readily sympathize, and that multiple proximates can be employed by the storyteller to reflect equality in status between two or more characters (1991:119).

In her 1996 article, “Narrative structure of a Fox text,” Dahlstrom further investigates the discourse uses of obviation, this time in a single Fox text. Based on her analysis of the narrative, she concludes that proximate third persons may express a broad range of discourse functions, indicating the character(s) with which the storyteller empathizes, the character(s) whose point of view is being expressed, or the topic of the sentence or passage (1996:122).

Kevin Russell also looks at the nature of obviation and its distribution and discourse functions in Algonquian narratives. His 1991 article, “Obviation as discourse
structure in a Swampy Cree âcimowin,” examines the use of obviation in the Swampy Cree genre of âcimowin (histories and other non-myth/legend stories) and the subgenre of wawiyatâcimowina (funny stories). This study deals with the question of how and to what extent the boundaries of syntactic and obviative constituents coincide (1991:326). For example, he explores instances where the same referent remains proximate over an extended stretch of narrative by asking questions like whether obviation spans coincide with spans of background information, or perhaps with paragraphs. He finds that not only do long stretches of narrative without proximate shifts coincide with stretches of background information, or states rather than actions (1991:328), but that they also seem to represent mid-level discourse units where “obviation groups clauses and sentences together into larger units and divides the entire narrative into smaller units” (1991:323). However, when he looks at how the proximate spans interact with discourse units defined by intonation, pausing, and syntax, he does not find any easy correlations (1991:325).

In his 1996 article, “Does obviation mark point of view?,” Russell examines the interaction of deictic grammatical features that could mark point of view with proximate choice in the Plains Cree narrative “The Story of Skirt” (in Bloomfield 1934) to see whether or not the distribution of proximates and obviatives can be shown to reflect perceptual point of view, thus answering the question “Who sees?” In order to test this hypothesis, Russell compares occurrences of proximate referents with the occurrence of deictic expressions marking the spatial orientation of the relevant third-person referent (1991:374). However, he finds that these do not coincide in “The Story of Skirt,” and so concludes that obviation cannot be said to mark point of view.
Lucy Thomason has also studied the discourse uses of obviation in Fox narratives. In her 1995 article, “The Assignment of Proximate and Obviative in Informal Fox Narrative,” she explores how proximate and obviative status are given in *Autobiography of a Fox Indian Woman* and in three Mortuary texts. By comparing the use of obviation in these informal narratives with Ives Goddard’s 1990 findings for the more formal narratives of Alfred Kiyana, Thomason identifies two paradigms, informal and formal, that characterize the use of obviation. In informal or casual narratives, she argues, discourse features are used more extensively to differentiate third persons, resulting in a drop in the use of obviation. She also finds a tendency in informal narratives for third persons to be introduced as proximates and finds that obviatives in subject position are extremely rare. Thomason argues that, in the informal paradigm, global importance (i.e., within the text as a whole), local importance (i.e., within the immediate context), and the independent status of a particular third-person referent compete for proximate assignment, where global prominence outranks local prominence. Similarly, other tendencies suggest that certain types of third persons are preferred as proximates: 1) inherited proximates (i.e., that are coreferent with the previously-mentioned proximate) are preferred over new third persons; 2) subjects are preferred over objects; and 3) agents and experiencers are preferred as proximates over patients.

The data in Table 3 show some proposed functions of obviation as analyzed in narratives told in Cree, Fox, and the Algonquin and Odawa dialects of Ojibwa.
Table 3: Obviation in Algonquian Narratives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analyst</th>
<th>Language/Dialect</th>
<th>Proposed Function(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Russell</td>
<td>Cree</td>
<td>excitement; suspense; not point of view; non-topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dahlstrom</td>
<td>Cree/Fox</td>
<td>empathy/point of view/topic/spatial orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spielmann</td>
<td>Algonquin/Odawa</td>
<td>moving spotlight from one character to another/focus shifting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goddard</td>
<td>Fox</td>
<td>point of view/focus shift</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomason</td>
<td>Fox</td>
<td>reflecting the status of one third person referent with respect to another</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(in informal narratives) prox. status reflects rankings: subject&gt;object, inherited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>prox.&gt;new 3p, agent/experiencer&gt;patient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 shows the general consensus on obviation is that it functions in Algonquian narratives in some way to shift focus or spatial orientation with respect to third-person referents in the story. Although several analysts suggest obviation might reflect speaker point of view, Russell argues that, at least in Cree, it can be proven that point of view is not reflected in this way (1996:374).

2.3. Methodology

The aim of the present study is to fill some of the gaps in the existing corpus of studies on obviation in Algonquian narratives by providing a systematic analysis of the assignment of proximate and obviative forms in two Innu-aimun atanukâna ‘myth/legends’. The methodology employed involves five stages of analysis: 1) the
interlinear translation of the two stories; 2) tracking the obviation status of each third-
person referent in the stories; 3) identifying instances of eight obviation patterns in the
stories; 4) identifying the semantic and syntactic environments in which third-person
referents are proximate; and 5) proposing discourse functions for proximate and obviative
status in the stories.

2.3.1. Interlinear Translations

In order to gain an understanding of the way in which obviation patterns in each
of the two Innu-aimun stories, a detailed morphological analysis of both Uâpush mâk
Umâtshashkuku and Meshâpush was necessary. For each story, I worked with Marguerite
MacKenzie, Jane Bannister, and Innu-aimun speakers Kanani Penashue and Judy Hill to
create morpheme-by-morpheme translations of the stories. These translations indicate
the proximate or obviative status of each third-person referent and provide and highlight
the data necessary for the identification and analysis of corresponding obviation patterns
as well as the semantic and syntactic environments in which particular obviation statuses
are assigned in the narratives.

2.3.2. Tracking Obviation Status

Secondly, I tracked the isolated, sustained, and changing status of each third-
person referent in the two stories in a table like that given below. These tables provide
the following information for each third-person referent: 1) the line number in which the

26
referent is mentioned; 2) the referent’s status as proximate or obviative; 3) whether the referent’s status reflects a proximate or obviative shift; 4) whether the referent is mentioned explicitly (e.g., proper noun, possessive form) or implicitly (e.g., verb subject or object); 5) the syntactic role of the proximate or obviative third person(s); 6) the semantic role of the proximate or obviative third person(s); and 7) commentary on the particular use of obviation (e.g., avoidance strategy, agent). The tables also provide the data necessary for counting proximate and obviative occurrences and for drawing conclusions based on these numbers.

Table 4 shows the obviation status of Hare between lines 85 and 91 in *Uápush mák Umátshashkuku*.  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line #</th>
<th>Prox/Obv</th>
<th>Pattern</th>
<th>E/I</th>
<th>Syntactic Role</th>
<th>Semantic Role</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>85</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>itikû-obj</td>
<td>spoken to</td>
<td>AV</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>iteu-sbj</td>
<td>speaking</td>
<td>AG</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>89</td>
<td>O, O</td>
<td>OS</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>POSSD4, PNobv</td>
<td>sung to</td>
<td>AV, song, climax</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>89</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>PS</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>PN Vsbj</td>
<td>not wanting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>OS</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Vobj</td>
<td>flown at</td>
<td>nonAG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>PS</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Vsbj</td>
<td>not giving</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The abbreviations used in these tables are explained in the list of abbreviations on pages iv-vi.
2.3.3. Identifying Patterns of Obviation

Using the interlinear translations and the tables discussed in 2.3.1. and 2.3.2., the third stage of analysis involved identifying occurrences of four patterns of isolated and sustained obviation (third-person referents considered on their own and third-person referents whose status as proximate or obviative does not change over a particular stretch of narrative) and four patterns of shifting obviation (the ways in which third persons can alternate between proximate and obviative within a particular stretch of narrative). By identifying occurrences of these obviation patterns in the two stories, I was able to draw correlations between textual environment and obviation status. My focus for this analysis, then, was on the specific sections of text where patterns emerged from the data. These analyses are presented in detail in Chapters Three and Four (Sections 3.2., 3.3., 4.2., and 4.3.).

2.3.4. Identifying Proximate Environments

Fourthly, for each character in the two ātanūkana, I identified the immediate semantic or syntactic environments in which the character appears as a third-person referent (corresponding with Thomason’s “local importance”), and therefore where the storyteller had to make the choice between proximate or obviative status. This analysis revealed a fairly small number of “proximate environments” (PEs: semantic or syntactic environments in which third-person referents are proximate), versus a much larger number of obviative environments (i.e., environments in which third persons are
obviative). Although the status of proximate must be considered the unmarked member of the proximate/obviative grammatical opposition - proximate status being given wherever only one third person appears in a narrative context - in contexts where there already exists an opposition between proximate and obviative, the distribution of proximates and obviatives suggests that the status of obviative becomes the default situation, obviative status being given to third-person referents that are not required, by virtue of their context, to be proximate. I decided, therefore, to focus my analysis on the instances in which a character is assigned proximate status so that I could identify the specific environments in which at least this one storyteller, Etuat Rich, has chosen proximate status over obviative status for the third person involved. Occurrences of obviatives, by contrast, I decided to deal with as the default status in all instances where more than one third person is present. Where exceptions occurred and either proximate status was assigned outside a PE or obviative status was assigned in a PE, I examined the third person’s role within a larger context of the story (Thomason’s “global importance”) to explore how the storyteller might use this unexpected status to alter the listener’s interpretation of the narrative by conveying additional meaning at the level of discourse. These analyses are explored in Chapters Three and Four (Sections 3.4. and 4.4.).

2.3.5. Proposing Discourse Functions

Based on the results of the previous stages of analysis, I have drawn hypotheses regarding (at least) this particular storyteller’s use of obviation. For example, where preliminary research indicated a correlation between proximate status and agentive third
persons, a possible conclusion to be drawn would be to hypothesize a constraint on obviation requiring an agentive third person to be proximate. My preliminary research also revealed a tendency in Uâpush mât Umâtshashkuku to use what I have termed “avoidance strategies”. These strategies can be analyzed as a reflection of constraints governing the use of obviation, where a particular status must be purposely avoided so the storyteller is able to choose an alternative obviation status in order to express a third person’s global importance in the story (i.e., its meaning at the level of discourse).

2.4. The Patterns

This section offers a brief description of each of the eight types of obviation pattern I identify in the two Innu-aimun âtanûkana. I have also included examples given in the literature that have been identified and analyzed in other Algonquian narratives.

2.4.1. Patterns of Sustained or Isolated Obviation

By “sustained and isolated obviation,” I am referring to the instances of third-person referents whose status as proximate or obviative does not change over a particular stretch of narrative. I have chosen to divide the various patterns into two major groupings — sustained/isolated vs. shifting patterns — because this division is particularly useful in terms of textual analysis; that is, the grammatical binary distinction of shifting/non-shifting seems to correlate with similar semantic oppositions in the
narratives, such as active/static. The following patterns of obviation are discussed in this section: single proximate spans, coreferent proximates, coordinate proximates, and obviative spans.

2.4.1.1. Single Proximate Spans (PSp)

A single proximate span is “a stretch of narrative where the same referent is in the proximate” (Russell 1991:323) and where there are no other noun phrases that are proximate. Russell observes a correlation between occurrences of single proximate spans and semantic and syntactic divisions in the narrative structure. For instance, he notes that long stretches of narrative with a single proximate span tend to reflect background information or states rather than actions (1991:328). He also argues that single proximate spans represent mid-level discourse units where “obviation groups clauses and sentences together into larger units and divides the entire narrative into smaller units” (1991:323).

In “The Bear as Truck Driver,” for instance, the Swampy Cree ácimowin that Russell explores in his 1991 article, the man is the only proximate for lines 1-17 (with the exception of part of line 16, where the truck is proximate). Similarly, Goddard looks at how proximate spans correlate with paragraphs, but because it is the proximate shifts (PS) that determine the beginning and end of a particular span, this topic will be dealt with in the section discussing patterns of shifting obviation.
2.4.1.2. Coreferent Proximates (CoP)

Two or more proximate noun phrases that refer to the same person or group of people in a particular narrative context can be interpreted as coreferent proximates. The following excerpt from a Plains Cree narrative (Dahlstrom 1991:102) illustrates such a situation:

(1) e·kwah awa kâ=kaskatahoht e·wako simatapiw.
    And the one (P) who was wounded, he (P) sat up.

In this example, the proximate form ‘kâ=kaskatahoht’ and the proximate subject of ‘simatapiw’ are coreferent. They can co-occur because they are semantically one proximate, both referring to the same third-person referent.

2.4.1.3. Coordinate Proximates (COP)

Two or more non-coreferential proximate noun phrases occasionally co-occur in a single narrative context. It appears that this is allowed when all of the proximates share equal status with one another (for example, if they are part of a team). When this occurs, these multiple proximates can be referred to as coordinate proximates. Falling into the category of multiple proximates, coordinate proximates can be defined as two or more conjoined third-person noun phrases coexisting in a particular narrative context as proximate, with or without a conjunction joining them, as in the following example from Plains Cree (Dahlstrom 1991:115):
In this case, the two third-person referents in this sentence, ‘the boy’ and ‘this young man,’ are coordinate proximates. Unlike coreferent proximates, these proximates can co-occur because they are semantically joined, or grouped, even though they represent two different third persons. Here, the referents’ coordinate status is also reflected syntactically by *ekwah* ‘and’, but this need not be the case.

The following example from a Fox text (Goddard 1984:277) offers convincing evidence that conjoined noun phrases are subject to different restrictions on obviation, because it contains seven conjoined noun phrases, all proximate in form:

\[
(3) \quad \text{mo:} \text{l}¥¥=\text{meko apen}¥¥=\text{ha atame}¥¥=\text{pi, ihkwe}\text{:waki}=\text{ke}\text{:hi, kekimesi, š:e š:kesi:haki,} \\
\text{iškwe:še:he:haki, neniwaki, oškinawe:haki, kwi:yeše:haki.}
\]

Even children (P) are given a smoke, and women (P), everyone (P), maidens (P), little girls (P), men (P), youths (P), boys (P).

In this sentence, ‘children’, ‘women’, ‘everyone’, ‘maidens’, ‘little girls’, ‘men’, ‘youths’, and ‘boys’ are all conjoined, and all are assigned proximate status. Examples (2) and (3), therefore, demonstrate conclusively that there are cases in which several proximates can coexist within the same narrative context.

Dahlstrom observes, however, that not all conjoined noun phrases agree in obviation status. Rather, it is possible for a proximate noun phrase to be conjoined with an obviative noun phrase, as the following example from Plains Cree demonstrates (Dahlstrom 1991:115):
The contrasting obviation statuses given in (4) are difficult to reconcile: Why would the conjoined noun phrases ‘my brother and this woman,’ which are seemingly grouped together, be distinguished by different obviation statuses? Because evidence is still inconclusive as to what proximate and obviative designations imply, it is not possible to conclude what the storyteller is suggesting (or whether the storyteller is suggesting anything) by grammatically distinguishing these two noun phrases.

Similar to coordinate proximates are expanded proximates, which also reflect a close relationship between two noun phrase groups that can share proximate status. The difference between them is that, while coordinate nouns refer to two or more distinct noun phrases, expanded proximates reflect the combination of a previous proximate and another noun phrase, subsumed under one plural proximate form. Goddard presents the following example from a Fox text (1990:324):

(5)  
\[i\text{-}tepi=meko\ e\cdot h=i\text{siwena}\cdot\text{či}\ e\cdot h=owi\ kiwa\cdot\text{či}\]

He (P) took him (O) to where they (P) lived.

In (5), the proximate form ‘they’ refers to a combination of the earlier proximate ‘he’ and others in his group, who are not mentioned separately in this sentence (but who have presumably been mentioned earlier in the discourse and are still contextually relevant). The question arises, then, as to what happens when the noun phrases that merge into an expanded proximate disagree in obviation status. Goddard argues that a plural pronoun that refers to a previous proximate and obviative that have been joined as a plural form is
always proximate and that a noun phrase (NP) consisting of a proximate and an obviative is always construed as proximate (1990:325).

This is easily explainable if we once again consider the status of proximate as the unmarked member of the grammatical opposition (see 2.3.4.). It follows, then, that when two separate proximate and obviative referents merge into a single expanded NP, the newly-formed third-person referent will also receive the grammatically-unmarked status of proximate.

The fact that coordinate proximates commonly occur makes it clear that the claim I made in the introduction to this chapter that, generally, only one third-person referent will be proximate and the others obviative is somewhat misleading. In fact, in the context of discourse, as Goddard observes, it is not unusual for two distinct animate third persons in the same context to be proximate as long as “two proximates are of equal overall status as opposite members of a balanced pairing and are not interacting directly” (1984:278-9).

There are, however, instances of multiple proximates that either do not reflect a balanced pairing, or do interact directly with each other. Goddard argues that there exist multiple proximates that violate the principles of the above definition in each of these two ways. For instance, he argues that there are a few examples of naming constructions in which “the name or designation is in effect quoted matter that stands outside the syntax of the sentence” (Goddard 1984:278). Constructions like these seem to be exempt from the requirements of obviation that would be triggered within most sentences.

Goddard argues that the “animacy hierarchy” (AH) is another constraint that often affects the obviation status of NPs. That is, he points to examples where two third-person
referents are interacting directly, and do not represent an equally-balanced pair topically speaking, but where the ranking of human over non-human neutralizes the distinction that obviation would otherwise reflect. The following example taken from a Fox narrative demonstrates the animacy hierarchy constraint (Goddard 1984:277):

(6) \[i:\text{ni } e:\text{hkwi} \text{či mi}:\text{ša}:\text{mi}:-\text{a}:\text{teso}:\text{hka}:\text{kana } e:\text{nahina}: \text{čimo} \text{či no}:\text{sa } a:\text{nawowa}:\text{ta}.
\]
That is the end of the sacred-pack story (P) the way my uncle Anawowata (P) used to tell (it).

Here, the animacy hierarchy “prevents the uncle (\text{no}:\text{sa} ‘my father’s brother’) from going into the lower-status category of the obviative, since even though he is topically secondary and mentioned second he is of higher rank, and hence the uncle must be proximate also” (Goddard 1984: 277). The two third-person referents in this passage, ‘story’ (P) and ‘uncle’ (P), are interacting directly, and do not represent an equally-balanced pair topically speaking, but the ranking of human over non-human neutralizes the distinction obviation would otherwise reflect.

The animacy hierarchy is significant in that it demonstrates that there is an order to or ranking of the constraints that govern obviation. In the above example, the animacy hierarchy, which requires that ‘uncle’ be proximate, outranks the constraint that would impose an obviative status on the same third-person referent if the animacy hierarchy did not apply.

2.4.1.4. Obviative Spans (OSp)

An obviative span occurs where a particular third-person referent remains obviative for the duration of a stretch of narrative. Goddard discusses an unusual case of
sustained obviation found in a passage in which almost everything is described by the manitous who, over 34 manuscript pages, remain obviative except for two brief proximate shifts, both of which are explained as “focus shifts” (1990:326). This example of a sustained obviative “contrasts with the largely backgrounded proximate status of the hero and is an indication that it is the hero’s viewing of the manitous’ activity that is significant to the narrative” (Goddard 1990:328). Because this occurrence is, in Goddard’s words, “a remarkable case” with very little with which to compare it, it is especially difficult to determine any discourse functions or constraints. However, it is an interesting example of another kind of obviation pattern found in Algonquian narratives.

2.4.2. Patterns of Shifting Obviation

Unlike the patterns of sustained and isolated obviation discussed above, patterns of shifting obviation illustrate the ways in which noun phrases can alternate between proximate and obviative status in Algonquian narratives. These patterns also often suggest the motivation behind changes in obviation, since the shifts in obviation may delineate, or correlate with, the boundaries of other textual divisions. The following patterns are discussed in this section: proximate shifts, proximate switches, proximate shifts in function, and obviative shifts.
2.4.2.1. Proximate Shifts (PS)

A proximate shift occurs when a third-person noun phrase previously marked as obviative becomes proximate. Unlike proximate switches, proximate shifts do not reverse the obviation status of the two third persons because the previous proximate is no longer present in the narrative. That is, the previous proximate does not become obviative; it is no longer mentioned\(^6\). The following is an example of a proximate shift in Plains Cree (Dahlstrom 1991:111):

\[
\text{(7)} \quad \text{pe·htamiyiwa ayahciyiniwah namoya wa·hyaw e·h=aya·yit, mita·taht e·y=ih\text{"}tsiyit, mi\text{"}n e·yakonik ne·hiyawah e·h=ntonawa·cik.}
\]

Ten Blackfoot (O) who were not far away heard it, and they (P) also were seeking Cree (O).

In (7), the Blackfoot are obviative in the first clause and proximate in the second clause. The example does not represent a proximate switch because ‘Cree (O) “is not, strictly speaking, coreferential with the earlier references to the group of Cree men and the boy” (Dahlstrom 1991:112); instead, it is non-referential, identifying the aim of the Blackfoot’s search, and so the Cree men and the boy are not demoted to obviative status (Dahlstrom 1991:112).

The following example (taken from Goddard 1990:319-320) can be analyzed as a proximate switch (see 2.4.2.2.), but because the proximate shift is more prominent than the obviative shift, I will deal with the passage in this section:

---

\(^6\) It is possible to posit an abstract obviation status for the third person who is no longer mentioned. This is discussed in 2.4.2.3., 3.3.3., and 4.3.3.
(8) A woman (P) and her one-year-old have become lost during the spring buffalo hunt.

(1.1) \textit{weči-či} =\textit{ke-hi e-h=kehči-natone-hoči}.
And where she (P) had come from a great search was made for her (P).

(1.2) \textit{ona-pemani apina-meko e-h=mahkate-winiči}.
Her (P) husband (O), for his part, fasted.

(1.3) ᵉⁿⁱʷⁱʷⁱᵗᵃ, “\textit{nahi! wa-pake ki-h=ne-wa-wa ki-wa},” e-h=\textit{ineči}.
¶ And then, it is said, her (O) husband (P) was told, “Well, tomorrow you will see your wife.”

This proximate shift is from the woman to her husband, and it coincides with a shift in paragraph, which Goddard argues is often the case (1990:320). Interestingly, the different ways of referring to the husband in the passage reflect circumlocutions or avoidances of the normal patterns that govern the use of obviation. In this way, the storyteller can cause the shift to occur simultaneously with the shift in paragraph. Goddard explains how the storyteller manages to express a possessed NP as proximate:

In (1.2) \textit{ona-pemani} ‘her (P) husband (O)’ is an ordinary possessed noun. As such, the possessor can be proximate or obviative, but the possessed noun itself must be obviative; the morphology does not provide for an obviative possessor of a proximate noun. In (1.3) the structure of the discourse calls for the husband to become a new proximate, and hence requires a form that is proximate but still indicates the continuity of the identity of the husband. This requirement could have been filled by \textit{neniwa} ‘man (P)... but the more elegant solution in the text is to use \textit{we-wi-wita} ‘her (O) husband (P),’ a participle of the verb \textit{owi-wi} ‘have (her) as wife’ meaning literally ‘he (P) who has her (O) as wife’ (1990:320-321).

\footnote{This symbol marks the shift in paragraph.}
The more complex structure used by the storyteller is convincing evidence for motivational intent behind the proximate shift. It seems likely that the storyteller intentionally caused the shift to occur at the same time as the shift in paragraph.

However, Goddard observes proximate shifts that do not coincide with changes in paragraph; instead, they occur one clause later (“delayed”) or one clause earlier (“anticipated”) than the corresponding shift in paragraph. He argues that “a one-clause delay in making a proximate shift at the beginning of a new paragraph is a common pattern when ... the first clause of the new paragraph contains a verb in the changed conjunct mode” and that the changed conjuncts that describe the completion of a movement to a new location or a recapitulation of the previous action “frequently function as scene shifters or episode delimiters ...” (1990:323). The following example from a Fox narrative reflects this type of “delayed” proximate shift (Goddard 1990:322):

(9) ma·ne=meko e·h=neseči, e·h=ča·ki·=meko ·nakatešitamowá·či owi·kewa·wani.
Many of them (P) were killed. And all of them (P) fled abandoning their (P) houses.

¶ ki·ši·=pi ·ča·ki·nakatamowa·či, pe·hki e·h=wa·wi·seniwa·či neno·te·waki.
¶ After they (P) all had abandoned them, they say, the people (P) feasted in earnest.

In this example, a group of Sioux are being forced by the Fox to abandon their homes. The proximate shift is in the second clause after the paragraph change. In the first clause of the paragraph, the Sioux are still in the proximate (perhaps recapitulating the action), and only in the second clause do the Fox re-enter the scene as proximate.

Like Goddard, who has worked with Fox texts, Matthew Dryer analyzes the distribution of proximate shifts in Ojibwa and Cree narratives (and in a British Columbia
isolate, Kutenai) in order to discover whether proximate shifts are predictable from other
textual properties. He charts the number of proximate shifts in a number of stories by
text environment, although he acknowledges that proximate shifts are most likely
determined by “fairly abstract properties in the speaker’s cognitive representation
underlying the text [and therefore may be] symptomatic of these underlying determining
factors” (1992:143).

The structure of Dryer’s charts offers a clear and objective way by which
instances of obviation in narratives can be organized and analyzed, perhaps revealing
new patterns of obviation. But his study is to some degree problematic. For example, the
percentages he calculates for shift occurrences are not based on enough data from which
to draw reliable conclusions. Furthermore, although his Ojibwa chart is based on the first
twenty clauses (skipping the first one) in ten texts, his Cree chart is based on the first
hundred clauses (skipping the first one) in only one text. By comparing a small
introductory section from ten texts with a large section from a single text, Dryer’s
comparison is based on imbalanced data that will likely produce skewed results. While
the Ojibwa data reflect the distribution of proximate shifts in numerous story
introductions, the data for Cree reflect the distribution of proximate shifts in more varied
structural environments of a text.

Keeping these limitations in mind, Dryer’s charts suggest that proximate shifts
occur in similar environments in both Ojibwa and Cree. His data show, for example, that
the number of proximate shifts that occur when the previous proximate is still present in
the current clause is 3.1% in Cree and 4.4% in Ojibwa. Furthermore, in neither language
do the data attest a proximate shift where the previous proximate is not in the current
clause (which contains equally animate (i.e., human) participants) and when the one clause is embedded in the other.

His data also suggest two differences between Ojibwa and Cree proximate shifts in discourse. For one, Dryer’s Cree data do not attest proximate shifts where the previous proximate has dropped out of the discourse, and where all other third-person participants are non-human or inanimate. His data for Ojibwa, however, suggest that proximate shifts occur in this environment 9.4% of the time. Secondly, in environments other than the special environments identified by Dryer, his Ojibwa data suggest that a proximate shift will occur 100% of the time, while his Cree data attest occurrences only 52.6% of the time.

Despite its problems, Dryer’s study is not without merit. It does suggest that there are structurally or semantically based patterns that characterize the distribution and use of proximate shifts by storytellers. It would, however, be useful to produce similar charts based on more extensive and more balanced data in order to elicit more reliable results concerning the distribution of proximates in these and other Algonquian languages and dialects.

Other Algonquianists have proposed several suggestions as to the discourse functions of proximate shifts. Goddard, for example, claims a proximate shift will sometimes change the focus of the narration, describing a character from the speaker’s point of view (1984:279). The suggestion has also been made that proximate shifts may mark heightened actions where “the more intense the story, the more frequently the proximate referent changes” (Russell 1991:328). These shifts, especially where there are mismatches between proximate spans and the discourse units, may contribute to suspense
or excitement in the narrative (Russell 1996:368). Regina Pustet, in contrast, proposes that:

…the notion of some abstract, pragmatic deixis is being expressed, coinciding both with Uhlenbeck’s ideas about obviation placing the participants of a clause at different stages of ‘closeness’ to the ego, as well as with the concept of foregrounding, i.e. discourse prominence (1994:63).

Because proximate shifts can occur in such a wide variety of contexts, even allowing, as the earlier example shows, a possessed noun phrase to become proximate, it stands to reason that their uses may reflect a number of different discourse functions, which may or may not correspond with those suggested above.

2.4.2.2. Proximate Switches (PSw)

I draw a distinction between proximate shifts and switches, defining proximate switches as proximate shifts where the previous proximate also changes status, becoming marked as obviative. In other words, proximate and obviative noun phrases exchange obviation status with each other. In order to demonstrate this pattern, Goddard uses the following example in which the hero, who is proximate, becomes obviative and the people, who are obviative, become proximate. I have deliberately left out some of the lines in order to avoid unnecessary repetition, but all changes in obviation in the passage are reflected (1990:329):

“...but with me you would have eaten bears here,” he (Hero-P) told them (his people-O).
And then, after four days, he (Hero-P) made a statement.

At that, that one (One of his people-P) said secretly, “But I brought myself.”

That black object up ahead is where you are to go and cook,” he (Hero-O) said.

And the women (P) departed.

Because this switch in proximates is not syntactically motivated by the grammatical constraints on obviation, this a good example of obviation status being determined by discourse constraints. Based on the above example, Goddard claims that:

This stylistic flourish draws attention to the somewhat unusual obviative status the hero has in the passage, an obviative status that evidently signals the narrative intent that his quoted statements be heard from the point of view of the addressees. (1990:331).

Where a similar shift occurs in a Plains Cree narrative between the Blackfoot and the Cree, Dahlstrom argues that “one effect of the change in proximates is to focus upon the Blackfoot, highlighting their nearness to the Cree, and creating suspense in the narrative” (1991:112). She also suggests viewpoint might be involved in the switch because there is a semantic parallel between the reciprocal searches of the Blackfoot for the Cree and the Cree for the Blackfoot.
2.4.2.3. Proximate Shifts in Function (PSF) (Other Multiple Proximates (MP))

Instances of multiple proximates can be analyzed (and defined) in a number of ways: 1) as coexistent proximates, 2) as evidence for distinct obviation spans, or 3) as proximate shifts in function, where each third-person referent is alternately obviative underlyingly, even though they are never pronounced as such. That is, if analyzed as proximate shifts in function, we could account for these multiple proximates by saying that we simply do not see either of the third persons becoming obviative because each time they are mentioned, their status shifts once again to proximate.

The following example from Plains Cree demonstrates multiple proximates that are best analyzed as coexistent proximates (Dahlstrom 1991:114):

(11)  \( e\cdot h=takohte\cdot cik\ e\cdot kotah,\ a\cdot say\ o\cdot ma\ ka\cdot =pa\cdot skiswa\cdot t\ mostoswah. \)

When they (P) arrived there, he (P) had already shot the buffalo (O).

In this case, where ‘they’ and ‘he’ are proximates, Dahlstrom argues that, because both proximate third persons belong to the group of Cree who are out looking for Blackfoot, “neither is more prominent than the other, so they share proximate status” (1991:114). In other words, they reflect a balanced pairing between which there is no direct interaction.

However, there are other instances of multiple proximates that either a) do not reflect a balanced pairing, or b) do interact directly with each other. Goddard shows two instances of multiple proximates that violate the principles of the above definition in each of these two ways. For instance, he argues that there are a few examples of naming constructions “in which the name or designation is in effect quoted matter that stands
outside the syntax of the sentence” (Goddard 1984:278). Constructions like these seem to be exempt from the requirements of obviation that would be triggered within a normal sentence. The following is an example of this type of naming construction in Fox (Goddard 1984:277):

(12)  \[ \text{me:me: } \text{čiki=ča:h=meko kehke:nemekwa } \text{maneto:wa e:nemčini.} \]
     
     Certainly the one (O) called manitou (P) knows about him (O).

Although ‘manitou’ refers to the same third person as ‘the one’, they are not given equal obviative status because the phrase ‘called manitou’ is somehow outside the syntax of the sentence (Goddard 1984:277). Note that the sentence is grammatical without ‘called manitou’ since you can say, “Certainly the one knows about him.” In this way, the designation of ‘manitou’ as proximate is not really relevant to the opposition of obviation functioning in the rest of the sentence, so it is not marked for obviation.

Some multiple proximates, however, as mentioned above, might be better analyzed as proximate shifts in function. Goddard argues that the following example from a Fox text illustrates this possibility (1984:280):

(13)  \[ \text{i:ni=ke:h=ni:ki } \text{še:ški=meko } \text{wi:h=inekikhwišina:ke } \text{no:hkomesa}
     \text{inekikhwihto:kwe:ni } \text{nekya. } \text{“ko:hkomesa:=ni } \text{wi:h=na:naki}
     \text{ayo:h=wi:h=taši:wi:-cihehki,” netekwa nekya. Kotaka=ma:h =wi:na=meko}
     \text{metemo:he:ha.} \]
     
     My mother (P2) seemingly had made that house of mine only big enough for my grandmother (P1) and me to lie down. “Now I will go get your grandmother to be here with you,” my mother (P2) told me. It was another old woman (P1) though.

In this passage, both third-person participants, the mother and the grandmother, are proximate. However, Goddard suggests that, rather than coexistent as proximates, these
multiple proximates represent a series of abstract shifts, first from the grandmother to
the mother, and then from the mother back to the grandmother. He claims that, rather than
reflecting balanced equals, the storyteller is expressing a transition from the mother, who
is more central before this passage, to the grandmother, who is more prominent in the
story after this passage. As such, he argues there is a shift of focus occurring in this
excerpt from the mother to the grandmother, reflected in the storyteller’s use of back-to-
back proximate shifts.

2.4.2.4. Obviative Shifts (OS)

I define an obviative shift as a shift from proximate to obviative where there is no
obvious syntactic motivation for the change in status, and therefore for which the
constraints that require the shift are yet to be determined. Obviative shifts often create the
unusual occurrence of a sentence or clause with an obviative form but no corresponding
proximate. Because such a construction cannot serve the grammatical function of
distinguishing between two third persons, the occurrence of a lone obviative strongly
suggests some discourse function at work, and one that reflects a constraint that outranks
the basic grammatical restriction that usually requires a lone third-person referent to be
proximate. The following example from Fox illustrates an obviative shift (Goddard
1984:282):

(14)  e:h=pi:tikawa: či maneto:wani i:nahi e:wińičini. ke:htena=meko
neye:wokonakateniki e:h=py[aj]:niči· we:weneteniki aša:ti:hani, nye:wi
e:h=pye:to:niči. e:h=a: čimoči...
He (P) went inside a manitou (O) who lived there. And indeed in four days he (O) came back. The arrowheads were exceedingly fine, and he (O) brought four of them. And he (P) gave his report…

In the second sentence, the hero shifts from proximate to obviative status, and remains obviative until the last sentence when he becomes proximate again. Goddard argues that this shifting in obviation “has the effect of shifting the point of view from the hero back to his father and the rest of his people, even though they are not mentioned” (1984:282). Whether or not this obviation pattern functions to shift point of view is to some degree ambiguous, but there is a definite correlation in this passage between the obviative status of the hero and his presence and absence in the scene described.
CHAPTER THREE

Obviation in Uâpush mâk Umâtshashkuku

3.1. Introduction

This chapter explores the use of obviation in the Innu-aimun story Uâpush mâk Umâtshashkuku / Hare and Frog, told in Sheshatshiu by Etuat Rich. Specifically, I identify and describe patterns of sustained and isolated obviation in the story (proximate spans, coreferent proximates, coordinate proximates, and obviative spans) and patterns of shifting obviation (proximate shifts, proximate switches, proximate shifts in function, and obviative shifts). My analysis of these patterns suggests the use of avoidance strategies, where the storyteller uses a more unusual (i.e., marked) syntactic construction in order to assign an obviation status (proximate or obviative) to a third-person referent that would not be grammatical with a more common (i.e., less marked) syntactic construction. It also points to a correlation between proximates and agentive participants, where active (e.g., flying, killing, carrying) third persons are proximate and less active (e.g., sitting, being killed, being carried) third persons are obviative. Both of these results indicate that obviation serves some function at the level of discourse (e.g., perhaps a hierarchy of agentivity). In this chapter — and in Chapter Four — I do not discuss the morphological shape of the obviative markers because such a description is not essential to the analysis. Rather, all patterns rely on the binary distinction of whether third-person referents are
proximate or obviative — morphologically unmarked (i.e., no suffix) or marked (i.e., with a suffix).⁸

Secondly, in this chapter, I also explore the semantic and syntactic constraints governing obviation. Because this analysis has pointed to an identifiable and finite set of environments in which third persons are designated as proximate, and has suggested that obviatives occur “elsewhere”, my focus in this analysis is on the nature of these environments, which I term “proximate environments”. That is, I analyze the use of obviation in this story by determining in which textual environments the storyteller assigns proximate status to a character (e.g., where a third person is an agent) as opposed to the much more numerous set of “elsewhere” environments in which he assigns what I refer to as the “default obviative status” to third-person referents.

3.1.1. Uâpush mâk Umâtshashkuku

This Innu-aimun story, recorded in Sheshatshiu, Labrador, can be found in *Sheshatshiu Atanukana mak Tipatshimuna / Myths and tales from Sheshatshit*, collected by Madeleine Lefebvre and Robert Lanari in 1967 as part of the Labrador Innu Text Project. Examples appear in the recently established standardized transcription (Drapeau and Mailhot 1989, Mailhot 1997) with the addition of vowel length. The following is a brief summary of the story.

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⁸ For a grammatical description of obviation, see Clarke 1982.
3.1.2. Summary of Uâpush mâk Umâtshashkuku

In the first episode of the story, Hare comes upon a porcupine and runs home afraid. Frog tells his brother, Hare, that if he carries him to the porcupine, he will kill it. After killing the porcupine, Frog brings it home, and Hare begins cooking it, telling Frog to go to bed and that he will call him when the meal is ready. However, Hare eats the entire porcupine himself.

In the second episode, Hare comes upon a group of beavers and again runs home afraid. Frog gets Hare to carry him to the beavers so he can kill them. After killing the beavers, Frog brings them home and Hare starts cooking them, again telling his brother to go to sleep. This time, however, Frog refuses to sleep, demanding he be fed. When Hare ignores him, Frog starts singing that his brother Hare won’t give him any food, and an owl appears and flies toward Hare, scaring him into the corner of the tent while Frog eats his share of the food. Only when Frog is full does the owl leave.

In the third and final episode, Hare comes upon animal tracks. Yet again, he runs home afraid. Frog explains that he has seen moose tracks and that moose is delicious. Frog finds and kills the moose and tells Hare the lungs are very good to eat. Hare eats the lungs and soon becomes sick. Frog tells Hare that his greediness is what has made him sick. Because of this experience, Hare is less greedy with food in the future.
3.2. Patterns of Sustained and Isolated Obviation

3.2.1. Single Proximate Spans

In *Uâpush mâk Umâtshashkuk*[^9], Hare is proximate throughout most of the story with only a small number of exceptions. Furthermore, he is only overtly obviative twice, with both occurrences appearing in a single sentence. That is, the form *Uâpush-a* (Hare-obv.), with the obviative suffix -a, only occurs twice, on one particular occasion in the story. Apart from this instance, Hare is obviative once in the form *ushtesha* ‘his (P) brother (O)’ (line 126), and elsewhere only where he is not mentioned, but contextually implied, as a topically-secondary third person (lines (70), (73), (89), (90), (92), (93), and (102)). The following example illustrates some of the ways in which the storyteller keeps Hare proximate while designating other third persons as obviative:

(15) *Pâtukâiât ek*[^9] *ushîma, pîtûteueshpimitameu utamishkuminua.* (77)
When he (Hare-P) brought his (Hare-P) little brother (Frog-O) inside, he (Hare-P) threw his (Frog-O) beavers (O) inside his tent.

*Ek*[^9] *peminuet ek*[^9] *nenua amishkua.* (78)
Then he (Hare-P) cooked the beavers (O).

*Nipâ! iteu nenua ushîma.* (79)
“Go to sleep!” he (Hare-P) told his (Hare’s-P) brother (Frog-O).

*Ek*[^9] *nepekâshunitî nenua ushîma tâpue.* (80)
Then his (Hare’s-P) brother (Frog-O) indeed pretended that he was asleep.

*Kâtshî tshîshntenuet, mâtshishut ek[^9], tshekât tshetâmuât nenua amishkua, kutuâsht itashinua.* (81)
When he (Hare-P) was finished the cooking, he (Hare-P) started eating; he (Hare-P) had almost finished eating all of the six beavers (O).

[^9]: The numbering given to lines from *Uâpush mâk Umâtshashkuk*[^9] (and from *Meshâpush* in Chapter Four) is my own.
Ashamî eku! itikû. (82)
“Feed me!” he (Frog-O) said to him (Hare-P).

Ekâ pitamâ, iteu. (83)
“Not now,” he (Hare-P) said to him (Frog-O).

In line (80), it is significant that, although he is the only third person overtly mentioned in the sentence, Frog is obviative. This is achieved by describing him in terms of a possessed form in which Hare is the possessor (and therefore proximate) and Frog is the possessee (obviative). To state this argument in more concrete terms, by using the form ushîma ‘his little brother’ instead of the independent noun phrase Umâtshashkukû ‘Frog,’ the storyteller can avoid promoting Frog to proximate status. In other words, the use of ushîma is an effective “avoidance strategy.”

A similar avoidance strategy occurs in lines (82) and (83), which contrast the direct form iteu ‘he (proximate) said to him (obviative)’ with the inverse form of the same verb itikû ‘he (obviative) said to him (proximate).’ Although the use of the two contrasting forms serves to distinguish between the two speakers (Hare and Frog), the choice of which form is assigned to which third-person referent is significant. By using the direct form iteu when Hare is the speaker and the inverse itikû when Frog is the speaker, the storyteller can keep Hare proximate and Frog obviative even when their respective roles as speaker and listener change.

These avoidance strategies are not limited to the above example. The use of iteu when Hare is the speaker persists throughout the story. (Hare is the subject of the verb iteu 21 times, and the object of iteu only twice.) Similarly, the form ushîma ‘his little brother (obviative)’ is used consistently to describe Frog, while the form nishtesh ‘my older brother (proximate),’ which occurs in direct speech, appears consistently to
describe Hare when Frog is the speaker. The form nishtesh, representing a first-person possessor and a third-person possessee, is proximate because there is only one third person, the possessor being a first-person speech act participant (SAP). The result of this distribution of possessives, then, is to keep Hare proximate and Frog obviative. The following example from Uâpush mâk Umâtshashkuku demonstrates this tendency:

(16a) ... iteu nenua ushîma (frame narrative\textsuperscript{10}) (79)  
... he (Hare-P) said to his (Hare-P) little brother (Frog-O)

(16b) “... nishtesh”, itikû (quoted speech\textsuperscript{11}) (12)  
“... my (Frog’s-SAP) older brother (Hare-P),” he (Frog-O) said to him (Hare-P)

3.2.2. Coreferent Proximates

The following is an example of coreferent proximates in Uâpush mâk Umâtshashkuku:

(17) Ashuâpameu nenua, kushteu tshetshî nâshâukut. (34)  
He (Hare-P) waited for him (Beaver-O), because he (Hare-P) was afraid that he (Beaver-O) might have followed him (Hare-P) (=he (Hare-P) might have been followed).

Based on the use of obviation in (17), we can infer that all of the proximates refer to the same person. It is important to note, however, that the same inference does not hold true for the obviatives. Because the general pattern suggests a particular obviation span will allow only one third-person referent to be proximate while all others must be obviative, a

\textsuperscript{10} The frame narrative includes all of the textual material that appears outside direct quotations (e.g., iteu, itikû).

\textsuperscript{11} Quoted speech includes any direct quotations (i.e., spoken material).
storyteller’s use of obviation cannot indicate whether multiple obviative third persons in a span are coreferent or whether they refer to distinct third persons. In this particular case, multiple proximates tell us the same person is the subject of the verbs waited, was afraid and the patient of the verb followed, but, based on the use of obviation, we cannot determine whether or not the follower and the person being waited for are the same or different third persons. As readers, therefore, we must rely on contextual clues within the text in order to distinguish these third-person referents. Here, for example, the context makes it clear that Hare waits for and fears the same third-person referent who he believes has followed him. In other words, all three obviative third persons refer to the beaver.

3.2.3. Coordinate Proximates

There are no examples of coordinate proximates in Uâpush mâk Umâtshashkuku. However, there is a good example in the story of Goddard’s “animacy hierarchy” at work. That is, there is an example where two third-person referents are interacting directly, and do not represent an equally-balanced pair topically speaking, but where the ranking of human over non-human neutralizes the distinction obviation would otherwise reflect. The porcupine, who has been consistently obviative until this point in the

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12 The animacy hierarchy is discussed in Sections 2.1. and 2.4.1.3. of Chapter Two.
13 It is important to note that the term “human” as it applies with regard to the animacy hierarchy includes characters in the stories that are animals, like Hare and Frog.
narrative (lines (2), (3), and (9)), is given proximate status when he interacts directly with
the animate, but non-human, noun mishtiku ‘tree’, as shown in the following example:14:

(18)  
Uiâpamât auennua akushînua kâkua. (2)  
He (Hare-P) saw someone (O), the porcupine (O), perched (in a tree).

Akushînua auennua uâpameu,uâuieshinua kâkua. (3)  
He (Hare-P) saw someone who was perched, a round porcupine (O).

…

Tshika nakatitin takushinitî. (9)  
“I (Hare) will leave you behind when he (Porcupine-O) arrives.”

Mueu anite mishtikua auen nuâpamâu, akushîu anite. (10)  
“I saw someone (Porcupine-P) eating a tree (O) there; he (Porcupine-P) was
perched up there.”

In lines (2) and (3), the porcupine is given obviative status relative to Hare (who is
proximate) even when he is the subject of the verbs akushînua ‘he is perched’ and
uâuieshinua ‘he is round’. In line (9), the porcupine keeps his status as obviative, which
is more marked in this sentence because he is the lone third person in the sentence.

However, his status shifts to proximate in line (10). Even though the porcupine was
previously given obviative status relative to Hare, who is proximate, when the tree is
introduced into the narrative alongside the porcupine, the animacy hierarchy requires the
porcupine to have a higher status than the non-human tree, thus neutralizing the
grammatical distinction previously reflected between Hare and the porcupine. The
animacy hierarchy is significant in that it demonstrates that there likely exists a ranking
of the constraints that govern obviation.

14 In this example, I have left out the lines where Porcupine is not mentioned. I have made similar
omissions in later examples, always marked by ellipses.
3.2.4. Obviative Spans

The following excerpts from *Uâpush mâk Umâtshashkuku* reflect the period for which the owl is obviative after being introduced into the narrative as proximate and subsequently shifting back to obviative status:

(19)  *Ek*º *pet teueunitî nenua ṳhûa anite utashtuaikanît, shieshkâshkuponîut niâte ne Uâpush.* (94)
When the owl (O) landed on top of the ridge pole, Hare (P) quickly moved back into the forest.

…

*Apù tshî nâtât, tânite kushteu nenua ʉhûa, akushînua anite tânite.* (98)
He (Hare-P) couldn’t go towards him because he (Hare-P) was afraid of the owl (O), who was perched (on top of the tent).

…

*Ek*º *tshâtâpamikut mânî ʉhûa, kâu niâte pâtâpînîu mânî.* (100)
The owl (O) kept staring at him (Hare-P), and he (Hare-P) kept running away over there.

…

*Kâtshî mîtshishut tôpue, ekJ nekatâukuht nenua ʉhûa.* (103)
When he (Frog-P) was indeed finished eating, then the owl (O) flew off from them.

This example illustrates the suggested correlation between action and obviation status. Hare is the more active third person and is correspondingly proximate while the owl, who is perched on top of the tent, is obviative. However, if more agentive third persons are required to be proximate, an argument would have to made to explain why the owl is still obviative in line (103), when he leaves. A possible explanation for this could be that the
owl is less agentive when leaving than when flying at Hare in order to scare him, but it
would be difficult to determine exactly where the line between agentive and non-agentive
should be drawn. This correlation is more clearly evident in the patterns of shifting
obviation found in the narrative and is therefore discussed in more depth below.

3.2.5. Discussion

Although most studies have concentrated on shifts in obviation, the patterns of
sustained obviation offer an organized way of looking at how obviation is used in
different textual situations. Furthermore, these patterns often correlate with patterns of
shifting obviation in Algonquian narratives. Unlike the patterns of shifting obviation,
though, which are often analyzed in order to discover corresponding changes involving
point of view or focus, the patterns of sustained obviation represent the durations between
the boundaries created by the shifts. To give a hypothetical example of this, if we were
to say that a proximate shift places “focus” on the noun phrase that becomes proximate,
then the span of text for which the noun phrase is proximate would correspond with the
duration of the focus. Specifically, the lack of change in obviation that characterizes the
aforementioned patterns may indicate a parallel lack of action, suspense, and so forth in
the narrative. If this is the case, and spans of obviation are meaningful, then collecting
data on each of the patterns of sustained obviation will allow a comparison of spans of
obviation with other discourse patterns in particular narratives.
3.3. Patterns of Shifting Obviation

3.3.1. Proximate Shifts

An example of a proximate shift in *Uâpush mâk Umâtshashkuku* occurs in a passage where Frog shifts from obviative to proximate when he kills the porcupine:

(20) *Tshâtuâtamât ek*, *ek* nepâiât nenua *kâkua ne Umâtshashkuku*, nepâiât *nenua*.
(15) He (Hare-P) carried him (Frog-O), and then Frog (P) killed the porcupine (O), he (P) killed him (O).

There are (at least) three possible readings that can account for the distribution of obviation in this passage. First, the shift may represent the promotion of Frog to a higher obviation status than Hare. This scenario would involve Frog shifting from obviative to proximate, as attested by the data; Hare may shift to obviative status, but because Hare is not mentioned in the second half of the sentence, it is left unspecified and cannot be determined.

It is also possible to account for this shift by hypothesizing a second scenario in which Frog is promoted to a status that is *equal* with Hare; that is, Frog and Hare become coordinate proximates as opposite members of a balanced pairing (even though Hare is not explicitly mentioned). Furthermore, the grammatical contexts do not inhibit this situation. In the first clause, the verb *tshâtuâtamât* ‘he (proximate) carries him (obviative)’ requires a proximate third-person subject and an obviative third-person object (i.e., Hare and Frog are interacting directly) and therefore Hare and Frog cannot both be proximate. Even if the verb were in the inverse form, the two third persons...
would still be interacting directly and would therefore require different obviation statuses. In the second clause, however, where the storyteller marks Frog’s shift to proximate explicitly by using the full proximate NP *Umâtshashkuk*[^15], Hare and Frog are no longer interacting directly with each other and so the constraint requiring that they have different statuses is no longer applicable. By removing the grammatical context in which Hare and Frog are required to have distinct obviation statuses, the storyteller can use obviation to reflect the notion of equality between the two characters.

Semantically, this second reading is also plausible if we consider Hare and Frog’s respective roles in the sentence (their local importance) and within the story as a whole (their global importance). In the first clause, Hare carries Frog to the place where they will find the porcupine they both wish to kill. In the second clause, Frog kills the porcupine and, in doing so, plays his role in the shared aim of killing the porcupine. In other words, when Frog kills the porcupine, it is as if he becomes part of a team with Hare, and it therefore makes sense that the two, like noun phrases in coordinate structure, share proximate status.[^15]

Third, Lucy Thomason[^16] suggests Frog’s shift in status from obviative to proximate could also be analyzed as his promotion to a status higher than that of the porcupine, but still lower than that of Hare. This scenario would correspond to the following obviation ranking: Hare (P) > Frog (P) > Porcupine (O). That this further distinction is not reflected in the morphology used by the storyteller can be explained by the fact that Innu-aimun cannot morphologically encode this relative ranking. That is,

[^15]: Additional evidence supporting this argument is found in a passage from *Meshâpush*, discussed in Section 4.3.1. in Chapter Four.
[^16]: This suggestion was made to me by Lucy Thomason during the discussion that followed the presentation of my paper at the 2001 Algonquian Conference at the University of California at Berkeley.
obviation can only make the binary distinction between marked and unmarked and therefore cannot reflect the relative ranking of three unequal third persons. This third reading, therefore, represents another plausible description of the use of obviation in Example (20).

Again, considering a possible correlation between proximate status and agentivity is revealing because the passage can also be explained in terms of which third person is the most “active” or “agentive” at any particular point. In the first clause in (20), Hare is logically the more active of the two third persons because he is the one doing the carrying. In the second clause, however, Frog is more active since he kills the porcupine. This argument also accounts for the porcupine’s status as obviative. As the one being killed, he is logically less agentive than the one doing the killing, and certainly less of an agent when he is dead.

3.3.2. Proximate Switches

The following example from *Uâpush mâk Umâtshashkuku* shows a proximate switch where Hare and the owl exchange status, Hare becoming proximate and the owl becoming obviative:

(21)  

\[ 
Niâtăuât ekr. \]  (93)  

Then he (Owl-P) flew over to him (Hare-O).

\[Ekkr^*\, pet\, teueunitî\, nenua\, âhûa\, anite\, utashtuaikanît,\, shieshkâshkupanîut\, nîate\, ne\, Uâpush.\]  (94)  

When the owl (O) landed on top of the ridge pole, Hare (P) quickly moved back into the forest.
As in the other examples from *Uâpush mâk Umâtshashkuku* involving shifts in obviation, there is again a correlation between action/agentivity and proximate status. In this passage, while the owl is flying at Hare to scare him and to allow Frog to eat, he is proximate. When he is perched on the tent, however, and Hare is moving back in fear, Hare becomes proximate, a shift explicitly signaled by the storyteller’s use of the full proximate NP *Uâpush*. This correlation between proximates and more agentive third persons suggests that the more marked third person (i.e., more active/agentive) will be assigned the semantically more prominent (although morphologically unmarked) proximate form. A logical extension of this prediction is that all less marked (i.e., less active/agentive) third persons will be assigned a default obviative status.

However, it is also significant that the owl (obviative) is the first of the two third persons mentioned after the switch in obviation. This ordering of a new obviative before a newly-assigned proximate makes the switch appear more deliberate. Furthermore, it indicates that obviative status may (at least in some cases) represent more than a default status since the owl is designated as obviative before Hare is explicitly re-introduced as proximate.

### 3.3.3. Proximate Shifts in Function

Goddard suggests that what appear to be multiple proximates may in fact sometimes be proximate shifts in function, constituting or foreshadowing a shift in narrative focus (1984:280). Based on this analysis of multiple proximates, I suggest that the following example from *Uâpush mâk Umâtshashkuku* demonstrates multiple
proximates that could alternatively be analyzed as coexistent proximates, evidence for
distinct obviation spans, or proximate shifts in function:

(22) Kâtshî nipâiât ekue tshîuetâiât. (16)
After killing it (Porcupine-O), then he (Frog-P) took it home.
Piâtâkuepanit eku ne Uâpush. (17)
Then Hare (P) burned the quills off the porcupine (O).

Nipâ! iteu. (18)
“Go to sleep!” he (Hare-P) said (to him (Frog-O)).

…

Eku nepât tâpue, ne Umâtshashku nipekâshû. (20)
Then he (Frog-P) indeed went off to bed, but Frog (P) only pretended that he (P) was sleeping.

Kâtshî piminuepanit ekue muâkuet. (21)
After he (Hare-P) finished cooking, he (P) ate the porcupine (O).

It could be argued that, in this passage, Hare and Frog are coexistent as proximates in a
single obviation span, perhaps in a way akin to that of coordinate proximates. However,
because Hare and Frog are diametrically opposed in terms of their goals (Hare to eat all
the food and Frog to get his share), it is difficult to explain what circumstances might
allow this situation.

Another possibility is that the occurrences of non-coreferent proximates in
different sentences offer evidence for the fact that each sentence constitutes a separate
and distinct obviation span where the status of a particular third person as proximate or
obviative is not relevant to the same or other third-person referents in separate sentences.
However, this too is problematic. If each sentence constitutes a distinct obviation span,
then how do we account for the occurrence of proximate spans where there are
convincing examples of avoidance strategies to indicate that a particular third-person referent is deliberately being kept proximate over a series of sentences, or even throughout the story as a whole? The evidence suggests, then, that obviation status is at least sometimes significant over a larger stretch of text.

Third, there exists the possibility that these multiple proximates are, in fact, proximate shifts in function. With regard to (22), we could hypothesize that proximate status shifts from Frog to Hare, back to Frog, and then back to Hare again. That we see no evidence for either of them becoming obviative can be explained by the fact that the one third person is not mentioned while the other is proximate. And, in fact, we do see some evidence supporting this hypothesis in line (18) where Frog is the obvious obviative object of *iteu ‘he (P) said to him (O).’*

### 3.3.4. Obviative Shifts

In *Uâpush mâk Umâtshashkuku*, after a period of time in which Hare is continuously proximate, Hare’s status shifts from proximate to obviative, as shown in the following example:

(23) “*Nishtesha uâpusha ama ni uî ashamik* nishtesha uâpusha,” *iteu ne Umâtshashkuku*. (89)

“My older brother (O) Hare (O) doesn’t want to feed me any, my older brother (O) Hare (O),” Frog (P) was saying.

The only third person in this passage is the obviative form *nishtesha uâpusha* ‘my brother Hare (O)’, (repeated twice) although the possessor (Frog) is implied as a first-person
referent by the context. The use of this lone obviative is significant because the author could have avoided making Hare obviative by using the proximate forms nishtesh uâpush ‘my brother Hare (P)’, which would be equally grammatical in the context. Because of the presence of this marked and overtly obviative form, then, the passage constitutes another type of avoidance strategy, where the storyteller avoids using a proximate.

Interestingly, this single instance in which Hare is given overt obviative status occurs while Frog is singing, the action that summons the owl and results in Frog getting his share of food to eat. It therefore also occurs when Hare is least agentive in the story, since all action at this point in the story is being carried out on Hare.

3.3.5. Discussion

In his study of obviation in Swampy Cree, Russell states that, “while it is perfectly possible for the proximate referent to change from clause to clause, it usually does not”; and, “while it is theoretically possible for the same referent to be proximate throughout an entire story, this rarely happens” (1991:323). General tendencies like these suggest that when the proximate referent does change, it is likely significant. The patterns of shifting obviation discussed in the above section support this claim. Correlations between particular patterns and the agentive role of the third-person referents suggest a connection between use of obviation and discourse function.

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17 It is possible the beavers represent a second third person, implied as the second object of the verb asham-‘feed’. However, positing the beavers’ status as proximate is problematic, since this status would violate both the animacy hierarchy and the hierarchy of grammatical relations.

18 Another explanation for the form nishtesha Ulâpusha is given in Section 3.4.6.
The apparently deliberate use of avoidance strategies that create the patterns also points to a role for obviation at the level of discourse. Similar tendencies and correlations occur in Meshâpush and are discussed in detail in Chapter Four.

3.4. Proximate Environments: Semantic and Syntactic Contexts Where Proximates Occur, and the Default Obviative

In this section, I examine the semantic and syntactic environments in which the narrator assigns proximate status to each character in the story: 1) the moose; 2) the beavers; 3) the porcupine; 4) the owl; 5) Frog; and 6) Hare. In order to identify these proximate environments (PE), I have used tables like the one described in Section 2.3.2. of Chapter Two. For each line in which a particular character is mentioned, these tables indicate the character’s status as proximate or obviative, whether the status represents a proximate or obviative shift, whether the referent is referred to explicitly (e.g., by a proper noun) or implicitly (e.g., implied within the verb form), the syntactic role of the referent, the semantic role of the referent, and any additional comments regarding the environment in which the referent occurs (e.g., if the referent is the lone third person in the narrative context). The information gathered and highlighted in these tables presents a clear picture of how the storyteller assigns proximate and obviative status within the narrative, and indicates a small set of PEs in which Etuat Rich usually assigns a third-person referent proximate status.
3.4.1. Mûsh ‘Moose’

The moose, who is seen by Hare and later killed by Frog, is referred to as obviative seven times and as proximate five times\(^{19}\), as shown in Table 5:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line #</th>
<th>Prox/Obv</th>
<th>Pattern</th>
<th>E/I</th>
<th>Syntactic Role</th>
<th>Semantic Role</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>107</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>Vobj PN</td>
<td>seen mûsha</td>
<td>nonAG</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>115</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>PS</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Vsbj</td>
<td>tastes good</td>
<td>GD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>116</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>PN</td>
<td>mûsh</td>
<td>GD naming</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>117</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Vobj-P</td>
<td>(I) killed (general)</td>
<td>nonAG, GD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>119</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Vobj-P</td>
<td>(we) find</td>
<td>nonAG, lone 3p</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>121</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Vobj-P</td>
<td>(I) find</td>
<td>nonAG, lone 3p</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>124</td>
<td>O, O, O</td>
<td>OS</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>Vobj ×3, PN</td>
<td>followed, caught up to, killed, mûsha</td>
<td>nonAG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>125</td>
<td>O, O</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Vobj ×2</td>
<td>killed, head cut off</td>
<td>nonAG (dead)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>128</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>PN Vobj</td>
<td>seen mûsha</td>
<td>nonAG (dead)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>133</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>POSSR-O</td>
<td>‘his lungs’ úpana</td>
<td>nonAG (dead)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>136</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>PN-O, POSSR-O</td>
<td>mûsha</td>
<td>nonAG (dead)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>142</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>POSSR-O</td>
<td>‘his lungs’ úpana</td>
<td>nonAG (dead)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These five proximate occurrences can be accounted for by two classes of textual environment. First, adhering to the basic rule of Algonquian obviation, the moose is generally required by grammatical constraints to have proximate status when he is the

---

\(^{19}\) Proximate forms, and their corresponding data, are represented in bold in all tables. In the Prox/Obv column, referents that occur in direct quotations are represented in italics, while those in narrative clauses are given in normal print.
only third person in a particular narrative context. It is important to note, however, that a
narrative context (NC), as I use the term here, is not definable in specific terms; how
large a textual environment affects the storyteller’s choice of whether to assign a third
person proximate or obviative status appears to change. The NC is sometimes roughly
equal to the quoted speech (QS) of a sentence; sometimes, to the frame narrative (FN).20
Analyzing the NCs as corresponding with these particular spans of text, we find the
moose is the only third-person referent in its narrative context, and is therefore assigned
the predictable status of proximate in lines (117), (119), and (121):

(24) Ninipāiâtî ne mânî. (117)
    “I used to kill them (moose, in general-P).”

...  
Nika nâshââuû, itikû. (119)
    “I will swim to find him (the moose-P),” he (Frog-O) said to him (Hare-P).

...

Nika nâshââuû, itikû. (121)
    “I will swim after him (the moose-P),” he (Frog-O) said to him (Hare-P).

The moose is also proximate when being described in terms of the class of
animals in general, as in lines (115), (116), and (117)21:

(25) Mishta uîtshitû an tshîtshue, nishtesh, itikû. (115)
    “It (moose, in general-P) tastes very good, my brother,” he (Frog-O) said to him
    (Hare-P).

20 I treat the frame narrative as separate from the quoted speech because the rules of obviation do not apply
across this boundary. Also, a narrative context sometimes comprises a larger section of text, or even the
story in its entirety. I explore these larger NCs later in the chapter when I discuss the ways in which the
storyteller can use obviation to serve discourse functions.
21 In line (117), the moose is semantically doubly-marked for proximate status, because he is the only third
person in the sentence and is also being described in general, rather than specific, terms.
In line (115), Frog tells Hare that moose (in general) taste good; he is not commenting on the particular moose Hare has seen. Similarly, in line (116), Frog names the class of animals and not this specific moose as mûsh. Lastly, in line (117), Frog tells Hare he has killed moose in the past. At this point in the story at least, this particular moose is clearly still alive and so Frog must once again be referring to other moose (i.e., the animal, in general) that he has killed.

The moose is also mentioned a few times after he is killed by Frog, as the possessor of his head (line (125), when he is facing Hare (line (128)), and as the possessor of his lungs (lines (133), (136), and (142)). In each of these instances, he is given obviative status.

3.4.2. Amishkuat ‘Beavers’

Table 6 shows the distribution of proximate and obviative status for the beavers in *Uâpush mâk Umâtshashku*°:
Table 6: Obviation Status of *Amishkuat*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line #</th>
<th>Prox/ Obv</th>
<th>Pattern</th>
<th>E/I</th>
<th>Syntactic Role</th>
<th>Semantic Role</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>O, O</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Vobj, Vsbj-inv</td>
<td>awaited, follows</td>
<td>noneAG, AV</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>PS</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Vsbj</td>
<td>they break</td>
<td>AG plural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>P, P, P</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Vsbj</td>
<td>×3</td>
<td>have sharp teeth, bite, kill</td>
<td>plural AG, GD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Vsbj</td>
<td></td>
<td>tastes good</td>
<td>GD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>PN</td>
<td>amishku²</td>
<td></td>
<td>GD naming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>OS</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>PN-O</td>
<td>amishkua (come out)</td>
<td>plural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>O, O</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Vsbj</td>
<td>×2</td>
<td>go through ×2</td>
<td>plural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Vobj</td>
<td></td>
<td>seen</td>
<td>plural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>PS</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Vsbj</td>
<td>take off</td>
<td>AG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td>O, O</td>
<td>OS</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Vobj, Vsbj</td>
<td>grabbed, go ahead</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Vsbj</td>
<td></td>
<td>are gone</td>
<td>noneAG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67</td>
<td>O, O</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>Vobj PN, Vobj</td>
<td>rejoined <em>amishkua</em> killed</td>
<td>noneAG, nonAG</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69</td>
<td>O, O</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>Vobj, POSSD4</td>
<td>pulled, ‘his beavers’</td>
<td>noneAG, AV</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>O, O</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>Vobj, POSSD4</td>
<td>pulled, ‘his beavers’</td>
<td>noneAG, AV</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>PS</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>POSSD3</td>
<td>cook ‘my beaver’</td>
<td>lone 3p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>78</td>
<td>O, O</td>
<td>OS</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>Vobj, PN-O</td>
<td>cooked, <em>amishkua</em></td>
<td>nonAG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>PN-O</td>
<td></td>
<td><em>amishkua</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The eight times in which the storyteller assigns the beavers proximate status can be accounted for by three classes of PE. Like the moose, the beavers are always proximate when they are either the lone third-person referent in their narrative context (line (71)), or when the beavers are being described in general (lines (40), (41), and (42)). However, the beavers are also proximate in a third environment; they are also given proximate status in lines (39), (40), and (56)²²:

(26)  *Mishtikua nenua nânâtuâkameuat anite shâkaikanît.* (39)
      “They (the beavers-P) are chewing down trees, there at the lake.”

²² Both the agentive third person and the verb reflecting the character’s agentivity are underlined.

70
“They (beavers-P) must have very sharp teeth. Indeed, if they (P) were to bite us, they (P) would surely kill us,” he (Hare-P) said to him (Frog-O).

...
3.4.3. *Kâk"* ‘Porcupine’

The porcupine is given obviative status nine times, and proximate status seven times (in line (9), twice in line (10), and in lines (11), (12), (13), and (23)):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line #</th>
<th>Prox/Obv</th>
<th>Pattern</th>
<th>E/I</th>
<th>Syntactic Role</th>
<th>Semantic Role</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>Vobj, Sbj-O (PN-O)</td>
<td>seen, perches kâkua</td>
<td>intro’d in Obv</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>O, O</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Vobj, Vsbj-O (PN-O)</td>
<td>seen, perches kâkua</td>
<td>nonAG</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>Vsbj-O (PN)</td>
<td>is round kâkua</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Vsbj-O</td>
<td>arrives</td>
<td>(lone 3p)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>P, P</td>
<td>PS</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>Vsbj (PRO) Vsbj</td>
<td>eats, perches</td>
<td>Anim.H (tree)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Vsbj</td>
<td>looks scary</td>
<td>GD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Vsbj</td>
<td>tastes good</td>
<td>GD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Vobj (1p-sbj)</td>
<td>killed</td>
<td>nonAG/ GD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>OR</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>Vobj (PN-O)</td>
<td>killed kâkua</td>
<td>nonAG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>O, O</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Vobj ×2</td>
<td>killed, taken</td>
<td>nonAG</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>PS</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>POSSD3</td>
<td>‘your porcupine’</td>
<td>lone 3p</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By comparing the NCs involved in the porcupine’s occurrences as proximate with the proximate environments identified so far for the moose and the beavers, we can account for five of the times the storyteller assigns the porcupine proximate status by his occurrence in three proximate environments: 1) where he is the lone third-person referent in a narrative context (lines (11) and (23)); 2) where the narrator is giving a general description of porcupines (lines (11), (12), and (13)); and 3) where he is an agent (line (10), where the porcupine is eating a tree).
However, there is a second instance in line (10) where the porcupine is given proximate status but is not an agent, is not being described in general terms, and is not the lone third-person referent in the narrative context, as shown in the following:

(27)  *Mueu anite mishtikua auen nuápamâu, akushîu anite.*  (10)
      “I saw someone (Porcupine-P) eating a tree (O) there; he (Porcupine-P) was perched up there.”

There are a couple of arguments to explain the storyteller’s choice of proximate status here. First, this third-person referent must be proximate because it occurs in the same narrative context with a second coreferent third-person referent (the porcupine) who is acting as an agent in its context and therefore requires proximate status.

It is worth noting, however, that another constraint, the animacy hierarchy, would also require the porcupine to be proximate in this environment. Described in the same narrative context with the non-human, albeit grammatically-animate, *mishtik* ‘tree’, the porcupine would be required to have proximate status.

The fourth environment in which the porcupine is proximate, then, involves both coreference and the animacy hierarchy, both of which require proximate status for their corresponding third-person referent.

3.4.4. *Uhù ‘Owl’*

With regard to the characters discussed thus far, the storyteller’s choice as to when to make a third person proximate has been fairly straightforward. The distribution of proximates for the moose, the beavers, and the porcupine can all be explained by their
presence in only a few PEs. However, the way in which the storyteller chooses the owl’s obviation statuses throughout the story is more complex. Rather than assigning the owl proximate or obviative status based solely on each particular narrative context in which he is mentioned, it appears the storyteller sometimes chooses the owl’s obviation status based on the owl’s presence in a much larger NC — and maybe even within the context of the story as a whole. That the owl’s obviation status reflects his global importance is evident when we look at Table 8, where a pattern emerges: the first five times the owl is mentioned in the narrative, he is proximate; then, his status shifts to obviative and he keeps this status for the last five times he is mentioned. In other words, the owl is proximate for half of the time he is present in the story, and then obviative for the second half of the story:

Table 8: Obviation Status of Uhû

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>E/I</th>
<th>Prox/Obv</th>
<th>Pattern</th>
<th>Syntactic Role</th>
<th>Semantic Role</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>86</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Vobj</td>
<td>told (1&gt;3)</td>
<td>intro’d as P</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>(PN) Vsbj</td>
<td>rejoins (ûhû)</td>
<td>AG</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>iteu-sbj</td>
<td>speaks</td>
<td>AG, FN</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>92</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>itâkanu-obj</td>
<td>told</td>
<td>AV, FN</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Uhû ‘Owl’ (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>E/I</th>
<th>Prox/Obv</th>
<th>Pattern</th>
<th>Syntactic Role</th>
<th>Semantic Role</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>93</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Vsbj</td>
<td>rejoins</td>
<td>AG</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>94</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>OS</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>Vsbj, (PN-O)</td>
<td>lands ûhûa</td>
<td>nonAG?, AV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>98</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>Vobj, (PN-O)</td>
<td>feared ûhûa</td>
<td>nonAG</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>98</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Vsbj</td>
<td>perches</td>
<td>nonAG?, AV</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>Vsbj-inv, (PN-O)</td>
<td>watches</td>
<td>AG</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>105</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Vsbj-inv</td>
<td>leaves</td>
<td>AG</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This is not to say that the particular narrative contexts in which the owl is mentioned are not relevant with regard to the storyteller’s decision of whether to make him proximate or obviative. Of the owl’s five occurrences in the story as proximate, two can be explained by the owl’s agentivity in the immediate NC (lines (90) and (93) where he is the agent of the verb ‘rejoins’). Two other instances occur in the frame narrative, as shown in (28):

(28)  *Apū uī ashamāut nenua tshishimināna, iteu.* (91)  
“He (Hare-P) doesn’t want to give our brother (Frog-O) anything to eat,” he (the owl-P) said to him (unidentified hearer-O).

*Nâtâu, itâkanû.* (92)  
“Fly over to where he (Hare-O) is,” he (the owl-P) was told by (unidentified speaker-O).

In lines (91) and (92), the narrator’s use of *iteu* and *itâkanû* in the frame narrative serves to keep the third-person referents straight, distinguishing the owl (as speaker and hearer) from the other speaker/hearer, who is unidentified. Although the owl is not the only third person here, one of the two third persons must be designated as proximate, and it makes sense that the known variable, the owl, should have the semantically “superior” status to the unknown speaker/hearer. In this way, the narrator can use obviation to rank multiple third persons in a “participant hierarchy” (Silverstein 1976; Aissen 1997).

Line (86), however, where both the owl and Hare are assigned proximate status, is problematic:

---

23 Here, it is not the storyteller’s use of obviation but the context that suggests the unidentified hearer and speaker refer to a single third person.
In this sentence, the third-person referent (who we later find out refers to the owl) is not coreferent with ‘his brother’, which refers to Hare, and yet the two third-person referents share proximate status in what appears to be a single narrative context. Furthermore, the owl is not an agent here; he is the passive object and hearer/listener of the verb ‘tell’. Only because it would be semantically incoherent for the two proximates to corefer do we know that this cannot be the case. Nor can the other identified PEs account for the owl’s status as proximate; the animacy hierarchy is not relevant, and the narrator is not describing owls in general, since it is this specific owl that Frog is going to tell about Hare’s greediness.

So, what can we say about this particular use of the proximate? One suggestion would be to hypothesize that the narrator can sometimes break the “rules” of proximate assignment and employ proximate status to serve deliberate discourse functions by designating proximate status where its occurrence is noticeable as an exception to the general constraints governing its use. That is, by designating the owl as proximate where no grammatical or semantic environment requires him to be proximate, perhaps the narrator is suggesting listeners interpret some meaning at the level of discourse. For example, this could represent an instance of Goddard’s “proximate shifts in function”, where the occurrence of the second proximate foreshadows something in the following section of narrative. In this case, the narrator could be foreshadowing the characteristic of agentivity in a character that has yet to act as an agent.

---

24 See page 65 for a discussion of “proximate shifts in function”.

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By regarding the storyteller’s use of obviation in (29) as an exception to the
general rules governing proximate assignment, we can draw hypotheses regarding the
discourse functions of similar exceptions when the owl is obviative in narrative contexts
where we would expect him to be proximate, as in the following:

(30)  *Ekʰ* pet teueunitî nenua ūhūa anite utashtuaikanît, shieshkâshkupanîut niâte ne
Uâpush.  (94)
When the owl (O) landed on top of the ridge pole, Hare (P) quickly moved back
into the forest.

...  

*Apû tshi nâtât, tânite kushteu nenua ūhūa, akushînua anite tânite*.  (98)
He (Hare-P) couldn’t approach him (Frog-O) because he (Hare-P) was afraid of
the owl (O), who was still perched on top of the tent.

...  

*Ekʰ tshâtāpamikut mâni ūhūa, kâu niâte pâtāpipanîu mâni*.  (100)
The owl (O) kept staring at him (Hare-P), which made Hare (P) run back.

...  

*Ekue iâpit nakatâukut*.  (105)
And then, he (Owl-O) flew off anyway, leaving him (Hare-P) behind.

In these four sentences, the owl is the obviative subject of the verbs ‘lands’, ‘perches’,
‘watches’, and ‘leaves’, and, although it is to some degree ambiguous, it can also be
argued that he is a semantic agent in these sentences.  As discussed in Section 3.2.4.,
however, by designating the owl in these sentences as obviative, the storyteller could be
manipulating the extent to which he thinks the owl should, in fact, be regarded as an
agent.  By breaking the “rules” of obviation, Rich could be drawing attention to the fact
that, while the owl is landing, perching, watching, and leaving, his real purpose in the
story — to fly at Hare in order to scare him away from Frog’s food — has already been accomplished, and his role in the story is essentially over.

3.4.5. *Umâtshashkuku* ‘Frog’

Despite the large number of times in which Frog is referred to in the third person and must therefore be assigned either proximate or obviative status, the distribution of Frog’s obviation status is extremely regular. All 23 of Frog’s occurrences as proximate coincide with his semantic status as an agent. Whenever Frog is proximate, he is killing, pretending to sleep, removing poles, making a toboggan, singing, and so forth.

There is, however, one example in which Frog is given obviative status in what, at first, appears to be an exception to the rule that requires all agents to be proximate:

(31) *Ekue kutapanîunitî niâte.* (66)

Then, he (Frog-O) *went underwater.*

In this sentence, however, the English translation is somewhat misleading. Although Frog is the subject of the verb *kutapaniuniti* ‘go underwater’, he is not the agent of this action. Rather, he goes underwater as a result of Hare having hit him and, as he falls into the water, is believed by Hare to be dead. In other words, when translated into English, the verb *kutapaniuniti* suggests agentivity, but the context (and the use of a lone obviative) show that this is not, in fact, the case. Perhaps a more accurate translation with regard to agentivity would therefore be: ‘Then, he (Frog-O) *sank* into the water.’
There are additional exceptions. In saying that there are 23 occasions where Frog is given proximate status, I have chosen to exclude a couple of instances involving the verb it- ‘to say’. I have decided to treat this verb separately because of the difference in the way in which obviation status patterns with forms like iteu ‘s/he (prox) says to him/her (obv)’ and itikû ‘s/he (obv) says to him/her (prox)’. This difference in how obviation is assigned and functions in the frame narrative can be seen in lines (70), (73), and (102), where Frog is proximate as the subject of the verb iteu:

(32) Kâtshî tshîuetâpet nenua utamishkuma, ek", iteu: Nishtesh, petâ má anite ishkuteu.  (70)

After he (Frog-P) pulled his beavers home, he (Frog-P) said to him (Hare-O): “My older brother, bring me some fire there.”

…

Uuu, uuu, iteu, násht tshitakuînâua  (73).

“Ooh, ooh,” he (Frog-P) said to him (Hare-O), “you’re really hurting me.”

…

Shâsh, shâsh nitepîshkun, iteu ne Umâtshashkuk°.  (102)

“Okay, okay, I am full now,” Frog (P) said to him (Hare-O).

Unlike the assignment of obviation in (32), the overwhelming tendency with regard to the frame narrative in this story is to designate Frog as obviative, distinguishing him in this way from, say, Hare, who is consistently proximate in this narrative context. Frog is the object of iteu on 23 occasions, and the subject of the inverse form itikû on 17 occasions, where he is accordingly given obviative status. This distribution allows the storyteller to create a ranking of these two characters: Hare (P) > Frog (O). So why is Frog given the unexpected role of the proximate subject of iteu in lines (70), (73), and (102)?
In all three cases, Hare is the object of *iteu*, and so we know relative ranking is not coming into play, since Hare has been shown (see Section 3.3.1.) to have superior ranking to Frog the large majority of the time. Line (70) can be explained by one of the proximate environments already identified. Although Frog is usually assigned obviative status when he is the subject or object of *iteu/itikû*, in this sentence he has already been assigned proximate status within the narrative context of the frame (i.e., as the subject of ‘pulling the beavers’) and so coreference would require that Frog also be given proximate status in his role as speaker. A logical conclusion to draw from this distribution of proximate status is that the constraint requiring coreferent third persons to share obviation status outranks the constraint requiring a particular obviation status for the frame narrative verb.

Frog’s status as proximate in lines (73) and (102), however, is more complex. As I hypothesized with regard to the owl, I would like to suggest that these so-called “exceptions” may represent two more examples of the storyteller using obviation to fulfil some discourse function (i.e., the assignment of proximates here is significant within a larger NC). In lines (73) and (102), the context makes it clear which third person refers to Hare and which refers to Frog (as is the case with line (70), as well). Not needing obviation to distinguish between multiple third persons, then, the narrator is free to use obviation for some other purpose.

A clue as to the storyteller’s intent surfaces if we consider where in the storyline Frog becomes the subject of *iteu*. In line (73), Frog tells Hare he is hurting him. Frog’s status as proximate over Hare’s status as obviative stands in stark contrast with the action itself, which is being carried out solely by Hare, who grabs and hurts Frog. Perhaps,
then, by reversing their obviation statuses (and therefore their relative ranking) where it is clear that Hare is the agent and Frog the patient of the action, the narrator can further draw attention to (i.e., put focus on) the action itself.

Similarly, in line (102), where Frog’s status as proximate and his role in the sentence as an agentive subject are further emphasized by the full NP Umâtshelfkuku, Frog has finally gotten enough to eat after the previous occasions when Hare had eaten all the food himself. Here, the narrator can signaling the importance of (or agentivity involved in) this particular moment in the story by assigning Frog proximate status — a status listeners do not expect to find in the context of the frame narrative.

Due to its length, Table 9, which shows the assignment of proximate and obviative status for Frog, can be found in Appendix C.

3.4.6. Uâpush ‘Hare’

Because Hare is proximate throughout most of the story, initially it appears counter-intuitive to consider the few instances in which he is obviative as the “default” situation. However, a large percentage of Hare’s occurrences as proximate can easily be accounted for by his presence in two proximate environments already discussed in this chapter. Of the 81 times when Hare is referred to as proximate (not including occurrences involving iteu and related forms of the verb ‘to say’), 69 coincide with Hare’s status as a semantic agent. Two more involve narrative contexts in which Hare is the semantic object of a verb but where he is also a proximate agent elsewhere in the same NC; in these cases, therefore, coreference requires that he be proximate in both
occurrences. An example where coreference determines Hare’s status as proximate is
given in (33):

(33) *Ek*\(^{10}\) *tshâtâpamikut mâni ûhuâ, kâu niâte pâtâpianû mâni.* (100)
The owl (O) kept staring at him (Hare-P), which made Hare (P) run back.

In the first clause, Hare is a non-agent in his role as the object of the owl’s stare,
but in the second clause he is the semantic agent (and subject) of the verb *pâtâpianû*
‘s/he runs back’. Because the two third persons (Hare and the owl) are directly
interacting in this sentence, and are not coordinate proximates, they are required to have
distinct obviation statuses. Therefore, it appears that, because Hare is agentive in the
second clause, he is also required to be proximate (even as a non-agent) in the first clause
of the sentence. Based on the rules of obviation discussed so far in this thesis, there is no
obvious reason why the sentence would not be equally grammatical if the owl were
proximate and Hare obviative in this sentence. However, in light of the narrator’s
tendency to make Hare proximate throughout most of the story, it makes sense that Etuat
Rich chooses to give Hare, rather than the owl, proximate status.

The distribution of Hare’s proximate status also suggests an additional PE. The
last group of proximate occurrences coincides with Hare’s syntactic and semantic status
as a possessor, a PE that Judith Aissen refers to as “the genitive constraint” (1997). Hare
is a proximate third-person possessor ten times in the story, in lines (22), (41), (45), (64),
twice in (77), and in lines (79), (80), (122), and (148). In possessive forms, the rules of
obviation require a third-person possessor and a fourth-person (i.e., obviative third-
person) possessee. That is, “when both a possessed noun (possessum) and its possessor
(genitive) are third persons (animate), the genitive must outrank the possessum on the participant hierarchy” (Aissen 1997: 711-712). An example of this is given in (34):

(34)  Pâtukâiât ekʷ ušîma, pitûteušpimitameu utamishkuminua. (77)  
When he (Hare-P) let his (Hare’s-P) little brother (Frog-O) inside, he (Hare-P) threw his (Hare’s-P) brother’s (Frog’s-O) beavers (O) inside.

In line (77), Hare is the third-person possessor of both his brother, Frog, and his brother’s beavers and is therefore required to be proximate. Because possessive forms like these strictly require proximate status for the possessor and obviative status for the possessee, the storyteller’s choice to use a possessive form may represent another avoidance strategy employed to keep Hare proximate and other characters, like Frog, obviative.

It is also informative to look at the nine times Hare is obviative (i.e., where no constraints require him to be proximate, or where his assignment as obviative is an exception). He is obviative three times in lines (90), (92), and (93), each of which involves the verb ‘fly to/at’, where the owl is the subject of the verb and Hare, the object. It makes sense that Hare is not designated as proximate in these narrative contexts since: 1) he is not a lone third person; 2) he is not an agent; 3) he is not coreferent with a proximate third person; 4) he is not a possessor; and 5) the narrator is not describing hares in general. In other words, there is no obvious semantic or syntactic context to cause Hare to be proximate in this textual environment.

Three more times when Hare is designated as obviative have already been discussed in the previous section. These occurrences involve sentences in which Hare is the object of iteu (i.e., obviative), while Frog is the subject of iteu (i.e., proximate).
Suggested reasons for this distribution of proximate and obviative are discussed in Section 3.4.5.

Hare is also obviative twice in line (89), where he is described by the overt noun phrases *nishtesha uâpusha* on two occasions in the song that marks what would generally be agreed upon as the story’s climactic moment. Here, unlike the occurrences in which Hare is the semantic object of ‘fly to/at’, we would expect a proximate form, since Hare is the only third person in the narrative context.

There are a couple of possible explanations for this use of an obviative. First, if we treat this as another exception, the storyteller could again be breaking the general rules of obviation in order to draw attention to the song and its role as the story’s climax. However, it is also possible that, in this particular example, Hare is not obviative at all.25 Because so much has still to be learned regarding the phonological and syntactic nature of the songs in these stories, it is possible that the suffix -a found on *nishtesh-a* and *uâpush-a* in this example — which usually marks a NP as obviative — is not the obviative marker at all but rather some phonological addition, inserted to make the song flow more smoothly, or included for some other reason.

Lastly, Hare is overtly obviative as a possessed fourth-person referent in line (126):

\[
(35) \quad \textit{Nete tshe utûtenîtî ushtesha ekute etashtât nenû ushtikuânim.} (126)
\]

He (Frog-P) put the head where he (Frog-P) knew his (Frog’s-P) older brother (Hare-O) would be when he (Hare-O) arrived.

This is the only time in the story where we get the form *ushtesha* ‘his (P) older brother (O)’, and it is an interesting sentence because, while the two third persons are neither

25 Marguerite MacKenzie made this suggestion in a private meeting.
coreferent nor coordinate, and therefore cannot share proximate status, both Frog and Hare are semantic agents (i.e., Hare placing the head and Frog arriving) and so it is not clear how the choice as to which third person should be proximate and which should be obviative would be made by the storyteller. Because the general tendency throughout the story is for Hare to be proximate and Frog to be obviative (compare Tables 9 and 10 in Appendix C), it would seem that this example might also best be regarded as an “exception”, the narrator again using an unexpected obviation status to create some other meaning in the discourse, perhaps placing focus on Frog and highlighting the action he is taking to get back at Hare by scaring him with the moose head.

3.4.7. Discussion

Based on the above analysis of the distribution of proximate and obviative status for each of the characters in *Uâpush mâk Umâtshashkuku*, I have identified six semantic and syntactic environments in which a third-person referent is generally proximate (i.e., PEs): 1) where a referent is the lone third person in a narrative context (NC); 2) where a third-person referent is being described in general terms; 3) where the third person is an agent; 4) where the third person is coreferent with a proximate in the same NC; 5) where the animacy hierarchy requires a third person to have a higher status than a non-human third person in the same NC; and 6) where a third person occurs as the possessor in a possessive form. If any one (or combination) of these conditions or environments is met, the relevant third-person referent will usually be assigned proximate status.
However, the above analysis also reveals exceptions to these constraints and suggests a storyteller will sometimes break these “rules” in order to reflect some discourse function in the narrative, such as drawing attention to a particular event in the story, foreshadowing that a particular character will serve an agentive role within the narrative, or implying a character’s role is no longer important in the story.

Also, where obviation is not serving any function necessary to the interpretation of the narrative by the listener (e.g., eliminating ambiguities in reference), the storyteller will sometimes use obviation status to rank characters in a “participant hierarchy”, where proximates rank above obviatives.
CHAPTER FOUR

Obviation in Meshâpush

4.1. Introduction

This chapter extends the analysis in Chapter Three, exploring the use of obviation in a second Innu-aimun story, Meshâpush (literally, The Great Hare), also told by Etuat Rich in Sheshatshiu, Labrador. As in Chapter Three, I identify and describe occurrences of the patterns of sustained and isolated obviation and the patterns of shifting obviation in the story. These patterns, like those identified in Uâpush mâk Umâtshashkuku, suggest the use of avoidance strategies and point to a correlation between proximates and agentive third persons. Secondly, I identify and analyze this story’s proximate environments. My conclusions indicate that third persons tend to be proximate in the same environments in this âtanûkan as in Uâpush mâk Umâtshashkuku, and that, once again, the storyteller will sometimes give a third person an unexpected obviation status in order to express meaning at the level of the discourse.

4.1.1. Meshâpush

Along with Uâpush mâk Umâtshashkuku, this Innu-aimun story can be found in Sheshatshiu Atanukana mak Tipatshimuna / Myths and tales from Sheshatshit, collected by Madeleine Lefebvre and Robert Lanari in 1967 as part of the Labrador Innu Text Project. The following is a brief summary of the story.
4.1.2. Summary of Meshâpush

Meshapush sees many fish while walking along the shore but, even when he tries to spear them, he cannot catch any. He explains his dilemma to his grandmother and she tells him about a spider who weaves nets during the night. Taking his grandmother’s advice, Meshapush goes and finds the spider. He hides in an old rotten tree and when the spider asks some girls to go fetch the rotten wood, Meshapush is brought by the girls, hidden inside the wood, to a spot where he watches the spider and learns how to weave a net. Meshapush runs home before the spider can catch him.

Meshapush and his grandmother make a net, and Meshapush uses the net to catch fish. However, he has no knife and cannot clean the fish. This time, his grandmother tells Meshapush about a metalworker from whom he can get metal with which to make a knife. He goes and finds the metalworker, who gives him metal, but the piece is too thin and keeps bending so Meshapush cannot clean the fish. His grandmother tells him to get a better piece from the metalworker. Once again, Meshapush runs off and finds the metalworker, who refuses to give him a better piece. Meshapush hits the metalworker on the head and runs off with a good piece of metal. He then makes a good knife and cleans the fish.

Without fire, though, Meshapush cannot cook the fish. So he takes his net and goes to the ocean where he sings out to the whales to come and join together to form a bridge he can cross. The whales do this, but warn Meshapush not to scratch them. He scratches them, and as he reaches the last whale, they go underwater. Meshapush washes up on shore, almost dead. Some girls find him and take him back to their house so they
can play with him. Although their father orders them to kill him, the girls place Meshapush by the stove to dry out.

After Meshapush dries out, he puts his net under his armpit and it catches fire. With the burning net, Meshapush runs toward home. He again scratches a whale, and falls into the water, but manages to run ashore with his fire. He runs home and is finally able to cook the fish. This, the narrator tells us, is how the Innu got fire. Never before Meshapush brought it there, he tells us, was there fire in their part of the world.

4.2. Patterns of Sustained and Isolated Obviation

4.2.1. Single Proximate Spans

In Meshăpush, the girls who find Meshapush washed up on shore and bring him into their house are never given obviative status. Unlike any other character mentioned in either Meshăpush or Uăpush mâk Umătshashkukâ, this group of girls is always proximate, each of the 12 times they are mentioned by the storyteller.

As was the case in many of the examples taken from Uăpush mâk Umătshashkukâ discussed in Chapter Three, the girls’ status as proximate correlates with their collective semantic role as a group of agents rather than patients. Every time the girls are mentioned, they are playing an active/agentive role in the story (walking, looking, taking Meshapush inside, speaking, placing a net, leaving Meshapush behind, etc.). In 11 of the 12 occurrences, the girls are also subjects rather than objects. Once, however, they are the semantic object of itikă ‘s/he (O) says to him/her (P)’. As in Uăpush mâk Umătshashkukâ, where the storyteller uses avoidance strategies to keep Hare proximate,
here the narrator keeps the girls proximate (i.e., avoids making them obviative) by using
the verb’s inverse form.

Meshapush, the story’s main character, is also proximate for long spans of
narrative throughout most of the story, although there are eight occasions where the
narrator briefly assigns him obviative status. This distribution can be seen clearly in
Table 19, given in Appendix C, and is discussed in greater detail in Section 4.4.1. of this
chapter.

4.2.2. Coreferent Proximates

The following shows an example of coreferent proximates in Meshâpush:

(36)  

\[ E \text{k}^n \text{ an}^i \text{ ite} \text{ up}^i \text{ishkun}^n \text{it} \text{ u}^e \text{t} \text{n}^a \text{t}^a \text{t}^a \text{,} \text{ pem}^u \text{ushin}^a \text{t}^a \text{u}^a \text{t}^a \text{,} \text{ keu}^t^a \text{au}^a \text{t}^a \text{ ne} \text{,} \text{ uet}^s \text{hipita}^u \text{amu}^a \text{t}^a \text{ nen}^u \text{ ut}^a \text{s}^i \text{skum}^u \text{ann}^u \text{,} \text{ t}^s \text{hauep}^a \text{tu}^a \text{u}^a \text{t}^a \text{ nen}^u \text{ menuan}^u \text{it} \text{,} \text{ eukuann}^u \text{n}^u \text{ t}^a \text{pu}^e. \]  

(50)

Then he (Meshapush-P) went over there towards his (Metalworker’s-O) back, he
(P) crept up behind him, (Metalworker-O), he (P) threw something (metal-O), he
(P) knocked him (Metalworker-O) down, and ran back with the good piece of
metal (O); indeed it was the one (O) (that he wanted).

In this example, the subject of the verbs ‘rejoin’, ‘throw’, ‘knock over’, ‘grab’, and ‘run
home carrying’ are all proximate. Because multiple proximates in a single NC have been
shown to represent coreferent NPs, we can deduce that the subject of each of these verbs
refers to the same character. And, from the context, we know each of the proximates
refers to Meshapush. Although the designation of obviative status cannot tell us whether
the multiple obviatives in this sentence are coreferent, contextual clues indicate that it is
the metalworker who is both rejoined and knocked down by Meshapush and the piece of metal that is thrown, grabbed, and judged to be good.

Another example of coreferent proximates can be seen in the following:

(37) *Apù tshî uâpamâkanit an iânapîtsheti, tepishkânîti ek' iânapîtshet*. (9) “No one can see her (Spider-P) when she (Spider-P) makes the nets. At night, she (Spider-P) makes the nets.”

This is an interesting example of coreferent proximates because it shows us that, by using proximate status, a storyteller can signal a verbal object’s coreference with a verbal subject. Here, for instance, the spider is both the subject of the verbs *iânapîtsheti* ‘when she (Spider-P) makes a net (O)’ and *iânapîtshet* ‘she (Spider-P) makes a net (O)’ and the object of the verb *uâpamâkanit* ‘someone (O) sees her (Spider-P)’. As readers or listeners, we know the spider must be the one who is seen, as well as the one who makes the net, because of the proximate status of the object (and patient) of *uâpamâkanit*.

4.2.3. Coordinate Proximates

Nowhere in *Meshâpush* are two proximates joined by a conjunction or present in the same clause. However, in (38), two proximates occur in separate clauses of the same sentence in what, at first, appears to be a single narrative context:

(38) *Kâtshi tshîtûteht, ekue ânapîtset*. (20) After they (Girls-P) left, then she (Spider-P) made the net.

In (38), both the girls and the spider are proximate. However, it is important to note that most of the instances of proximates coexisting in a single sentence (i.e., possible
coordinate proximates) in Meshâpush and Uâpush mâk Umâtshashkuku occur in sentences constructed like the one given above; that is, in most sentences in these two stories containing two non-coreferent proximates, the first occurs in a temporal clause beginning with the preverb kâtshî ‘after’, and the second occurs in the following clause after the particle ekue ‘at that moment, then’.

This distribution suggests these multiple proximates are perhaps better analyzed as something other than coordinate proximates. In Sections 3.3.3. and 4.3.3., these constructions are dealt with as “proximate shifts in function”, but another possibility is that the multi-clausal construction whose first clause begins with kâtshî ‘after’ represents, in fact, two distinct obviation spans, where the two proximates can seemingly co-exist and still obey the grammatical constraint requiring a single proximate in a particular narrative context. Semantically, this is also a plausible explanation, because the two clauses are separated in time, the first action having already been completed at the time when the second commences. More evidence would be needed, however, to substantiate this alternative hypothesis.

4.2.4. Obviative Spans

In Uâpush mâk Umâtshashkuku, the owl is obviative for a span of narrative where he is the less active/agentive third person and in which Hare, the more active third person, is kept proximate by the storyteller (see 3.2.4.). A similar pattern shows up in Meshâpush. Although the father is only mentioned three times, he is always obviative, as seen in (39):
“Father,” they (Girls-P) said to him (Father-O), “we brought home an animal (Meshapush-P).”

... 

“No, kill it there,” their father (O) said to them (Girls-P).

... 

“No, it isn't,” she (one of the girls-P) said to him (Father-O).

Even when the father is speaking to the girls, ordering them to kill Meshapush, the narrator avoids giving him proximate status by using both the inverse form of the verb ‘to say’ (i.e., itikū) and the third-person possessive form of the noun denoting ‘father’ (i.e., ûtâuîa ‘their father (O)’). That the narrator keeps the father obviative is not surprising when we consider the context in which the father appears. Each time the father is mentioned, rather than playing an active role in the story, he is always speaking. In fact, the father never actually does anything in the story; he only tells his daughters what they should do (and his daughters ignore his orders). His daughters, however, play a very active role in the story, taking Meshapush home (line (70)), bringing him inside, placing him near the stove (line (77)), and so forth. As in Uâpush mâk Umâtshashkuku, then, we again find a pattern where a particular non-active (non-agentive) third person remains obviative for the span of narrative during which it is juxtaposed to another, clearly active or agentive, third person.
4.2.5. Discussion

By looking at the patterns of sustained and isolated obviation in a second Innu-aimun âtanûkan, we find that similar tendencies and correlations occur in both stories. Specifically, characters tend to remain proximate over the particular stretch of narrative in which they are agentive. And, the reverse is also often the case; often characters will remain obviative for the period in which they are non-active or non-agentive. These patterns also give insight into what constitutes the narrative context (NC) in which the rules of obviation apply. Based on the pattern found with kâtshî ‘after’ constructions, for example, we might hypothesize that separate clauses constitute distinct NCs when they are temporally distinct from one another (i.e., when the action in the first clause precedes or follows the action in the second clause).

4.3. Patterns of Shifting Obviation

4.3.1. Proximate Shifts

The following passage from Meshâpush shows an example of a proximate shift that parallels an example from Uâpush mâk Umâtshashkuku discussed in Chapter Three:

(40)  
Then, that woman (P), the old woman (P), started cutting babiche on her own.

Kâtshî uâshkâpet ne kûkûminâsh, ekue ânapîshet Uâpush, ânapîtshepanû.  (29)
After the old woman (P) made babiche, Hare (P) made a net; he (Hare-P) made a net on his own.
Before line (28), when her status shifts to proximate, the grandmother is always obviative. Again, this shift is consistent with the theory that agentivity requires proximate status, since the grandmother becomes proximate when she cuts the babiche. Line (29), however, is another example of a kâtshi ‘after’ construction (see 4.2.3.). While the two clauses may constitute separate NCs, they can also be analyzed another way. The use of obviation in line (29) is also interesting if we consider the possibility that obviation status can sometimes reflect equality (or lack of equality) between characters. In the first clause of this sentence (and in line (28)), the grandmother is proximate when she is cutting the babiche that will enable Meshapush to make the net. In the second clause, Meshapush makes the net and plays his role toward their shared goal of catching fish. As with Hare and Frog in Uâpush mâk Umâtshashkuku (see Example (20)), here Meshapush and his grandmother can be viewed as members of a team, and it can be argued that the storyteller’s choice to give them the same obviation status serves to grammatically encode their semantic equality.

4.3.2. Proximate Switches

In Uâpush mâk Umâtshashkuku, Hare and the owl switch status where there is a corresponding shift in agentivity. When Hare is more agentive, he is proximate and the owl is obviative, and vice versa. In Meshâpush, a similar switch in status occurs between Meshapush and the spider:

(41) - Shâsh tshitshî tshissinuâpamitin, iteu, etânapîtshein, etâpekaut tshitânapi. (23)
“I already saw what you were doing,” he (Meshapush-P) said to her (Spider-O), “the way you weave your net.”
At utütâmëue enik⁴, apù kâ tsheshtâuât. (24)
The spider (P) kept trying to hit him (Meshapush-O), but she (Spider-P) couldn’t hit him (Meshapush-O).

In line (23), Meshapush observes the spider and learns how to weave a net and, in doing so, becomes the more agentive of the two third persons in the narrative context. Correspondingly, Meshapush is given proximate status and the spider is assigned obviative status. In line (24), however, the spider tries to hit Meshapush and, having become the more agentive third person in this situation, shifts from obviative to proximate, while Meshapush’s status shifts from proximate to obviative. As in Uâpush mâk Umâtshashkuku³, this proximate/obviative switch can be explained entirely by agentivity, where the more agentive third person receives proximate status, and the less agentive third person is designated the default obviative status.

4.3.3. Proximate Shifts in Function

In Chapter Three, I argue that a stretch of narrative in which Hare and Frog are both proximate can be explained as a series of proximate shifts where proximate status shifts from one third person to the other, but where, because the non-proximate third person is not mentioned, we see no textual evidence for the shifts. The following passage from Meshâpush, where obviation patterns similarly, can be explained in the same way:

(42)  Ekk⁴ uiâshkâshâpepanit ne ishkueu, kûkûminâsh. (28)
Then, that woman (Grandmother-P), the old woman (Grandmother-P), started cutting the babiche.
In line (28) and the first clause of line (29), the grandmother is proximate. Then, in the second clause of line (29) — and in lines (30) and (31) — Meshapush is proximate. Although there is no textual evidence for the grandmother’s shift to obviative after Meshapush is given proximate status (i.e., she is not mentioned in lines (30) and (31)), it is possible to argue that this is, in fact, what happens. If we posit an abstract obviative status for the unmentioned character and argue that what look like multiple proximates are in fact proximate shifts in function, then we eliminate the problem of two non-coordinate, non-coreferent third persons coexisting as proximate in a single narrative context. That is, we can say that in the second clause of line (29), the grandmother is obviative, but because she is not mentioned, we simply do not see any results of this shift. Furthermore, line (32) supports this analysis:

(43)  - Apû takuâk mûkumân, iteu ne kûkûminâsh. (32)
     “There is no knife (P),” that old woman (Grandmother-P) said to him (Meshapush-O).

Once again, the grandmother is proximate, but this time the transitive verb iteu ‘s/he (P) says to him/her (O)’ implies Meshapush as its obviative object and so there is evidence of Meshapush’s shift from proximate to obviative.
4.3.4. Obviative Shifts

Meshapush is generally proximate when he is the subject or object of the verb *it*-‘to say’. However, there are a few instances where Meshapush shifts to obviative status in this context\(^{26}\):

(44a)  *Mishta-mîshetinua namesha nepâiât.* (31)
He (Meshapush-P) caught many fish (O).

- *Apû takuâk mûkumân, iteu ne kûkûminâsh.* (32)
“There is no knife (P),” that old woman (Grandmother-P) said to him (Meshapush-O).

(44b)  *Ek\(^e\) apû tshi uînameshet eshk\(^a\), ushâm papakâshinû nenû, uâkâpissinam\(" mâni nenû ât uû uînamesheti.* (40)
But, he (Meshapush-P) couldn’t clean the fish yet. It (the metal piece-O) was too thin. He (Meshapush-P) kept bending it as he (Meshapush-P) tried to clean the fish.

- *Mâuât apû minuât au, iteu nenua ûssima.* (41)
“No, it (knife-P) is no good,” she (Grandmother-O) said to her grandson (Meshapush-O).

*Etotû menuânit kanuenitam\(" an.* (42)
“He has a better one (P).”

« *Apû minuât », tshe itât.* (43)
“It (knife-P) is no good,” she (Grandmother-P) would say to him (Meshapush-O).

- *Eshe, itikû.* (44)
“Yes,” he (Meshapush-O) said to her (Grandmother-P).

In both (44a) and (44b), Meshapush’s status shifts from proximate to obviative.
Furthermore, these shifts occur while Meshapush is being informed of some obstacle preventing him from attaining his goal of eating the fish. In (44a), his grandmother tells him they have no knife with which to clean the fish; in (44b), she explains that the knife

\(^{26}\) Meshapush’s status before and after the shifts is underlined.
he has acquired is no good because it keeps bending and is not be strong enough to clean the fish.

Another obviative shift involves the whales, who are proximate the first few times they are mentioned, then shift to obviative, and remain obviative for as long as they appear in the story. Their shift from proximate to obviative is given in (45):

(45) - *Eshe, itikū*. (60)
    “Yes,” he (Meshapush-O) said to him (Whale-P).

…

_Nete tsekât nenna mâshten kâssipiteu ekue kutapanûnitî._ (63)
He (Meshapush-P) was almost on the last one when he (Meshapush-P) scratched him (Whale-O) and it (Whale-O) went underwater.

As seen in the above example, the whale shifts to obviative status after Meshapush steps on and scratches him. After this point, even when the whales are the lone third-person referent in the sentence, they are obviative:

(46) _Ekue kutapanûnitî kassinû etashinitî._ (87)
Then then all (Whales-O) went underwater.

_Eukuekuâ ketapanûnitî kassinû._ (89)
All of them (Whales-O) went underwater.

The distribution of proximate and obviative status for the whales suggests their shift to obviative may reflect some other meaning in the narrative. By keeping the whales obviative in environments where we would expect them to be proximate (i.e., when they occur in PEs), the storyteller may be accentuating a difference in the whales’ status in the story before and after they have been scratched by Meshapush.
4.3.5. Discussion

As with the patterns of sustained and isolated obviation, the patterns of shifting obviation in *Meshâpush* closely resemble those found in *Uâpush mâk Umâtshashkuk*'. Once again, there is a strong correlation between proximate status and the corresponding referent’s role as an agent. However, several shifts in status also appear to reflect the storyteller’s use of obviation to serve some discourse function, for example highlighting a character’s status or focusing on some event or aspect of the story. These patterns also suggest an alternative analysis for *kâtshî* ‘after’ constructions. Although they can be analyzed as a case of two clauses representing distinct NCs, they can also be explained as proximate shifts in function, where, if we posit an abstract obviative status, we can argue that the first proximate has shifted to obviative but, because the newly-obviative third person is not mentioned, we have no textual evidence for the shift.

4.4. Proximate Environments: Semantic and Syntactic Contexts Where Proximate Occur, and the Default Obviative

In Chapter Three, I identified six environments in which third-persons are usually designated as proximate (see Section 3.4.7.). In this section, I test this analysis to see if the characters in *Meshâpush* are proximate in the same environments and if any additional proximate environments surface. Here, I explore the environments in which the following characters are proximate: 1) the father; 2) the fish; 3) the whale(s); 4) the grandmother; 5) the metalworker; 6) the spider; 7) the girls; 8) the (other) girls; and
9) Meshapush. I also further explore the contexts in which the storyteller designates a third person as obviative in a PE or gives a third person proximate status in an unexpected environment in order to serve some discourse function.

4.4.1. \textit{Utäiia} ‘Father’

Although the girls’ father is mentioned only three times, it is significant that, unlike any other character in \textit{Uâpush mâk Umätshawkuk} or \textit{Meshâpush}, the father is always obviative (i.e., never proximate). This distribution is easily explainable, though, if we analyze the immediate NCs in which he is mentioned. The father only appears in the story when he is speaking to, or being spoken to by, his daughters. Based on findings discussed in Chapter Three, we already know forms of the verb ‘to say’ (including \textit{iteu}, \textit{itikü}, etc.) interact with obviation assignment differently than quoted speech or other types of frame narrative. Obviation status with regard to this verb often functions: 1) to distinguish multiple third persons; and 2) to reflect a ranking — proximate over obviative — between the two third persons involved. It follows, then, that the girls, who are more prominent in the story than their father, are the subject of the direct form of the verb ‘to say’ and therefore assigned proximate status, and that, in contrast, the narrator makes the father the subject of the inverse form of the verb ‘to say’ in order to assign him the default obviative status. The father’s obviation status is represented in Table 11:
Table 11: Obviation Status of Utâuîa

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line #</th>
<th>Prox/Obv</th>
<th>Pattern</th>
<th>E/I</th>
<th>Syntactic Role</th>
<th>Semantic Role</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>71</td>
<td>voc, O</td>
<td>OSp</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>(PN) iteu-obj</td>
<td>nûtâ, spoken to</td>
<td>FN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73</td>
<td>O</td>
<td></td>
<td>E</td>
<td>itikû-sbj</td>
<td>says, that father</td>
<td>AV, FN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75</td>
<td>O</td>
<td></td>
<td>I</td>
<td>iteu-obj</td>
<td>spoken to</td>
<td>FN</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.4.2. Nameshat ‘Fish’

The fish, who are mentioned eight times in the story, are only proximate twice. The storyteller assigns them as coreferent proximates in one sentence, where they are the lone third-person referent in their narrative context, as shown in (47):

(47)  Nûkum, iteu, apû tshî nipâikâu anite nameshat, mishta-mîtshetuat. (6) “Grandmother,” he (Meshapush-P) said to her (Grandmother-O), “I couldn't kill the fish (P); they (Fish-P) were very many.”

Elsewhere, the fish are obviative, and occur in narrative contexts that do not require proximate status (i.e., where they are non-agentive, occur alongside more prominent third persons, etc.). That the fish are almost always obviative is not surprising, however, since they are always patients rather than agents; their role in the story is limited to being plentiful, caught, cleaned, cooked, and eaten by Hare, and they are referred to in relation to Hare as he tries to acquire them for food. The obviation status of the fish is given in Table 12:

27 Although the noun phrase Nûkum ‘Grandmother’ looks like a third-person referent, it is actually a vocative form and therefore acts as if in a separate narrative context from the rest of the sentence.
Table 12: Obviation Status of *Nameshat*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line #</th>
<th>Prox/Obv</th>
<th>Pattern</th>
<th>E/I</th>
<th>Syntactic Role</th>
<th>Semantic Role</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>PN Vobj</td>
<td>seen, are big/many intro’d O</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Vobj</td>
<td>(not)killed</td>
<td>nonAG</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>O, O</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Vobj×2</td>
<td>(not)spear, killed</td>
<td>nonAG</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Nameshat* ‘Fish’ (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line #</th>
<th>Prox/Obv</th>
<th>Pattern</th>
<th>E/I</th>
<th>Syntactic Role</th>
<th>Semantic Role</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>P, P</td>
<td>PS</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>PN Vobj, Vsbj</td>
<td>(not)killed, are big lone 3p, CoP</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>OS</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>PN Vobj</td>
<td>caught/killed</td>
<td>nonAG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>PN Vobj</td>
<td>caught/killed</td>
<td>nonAG</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.4.3. *Uâpameku* ‘Whale’

The obviation status assigned to the whale — who is alternately referred to in the singular (the last whale) and plural (the entire group of whales) — is represented in the following table:

Table 13: Obviation Status of *Uâpameku*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line #</th>
<th>Prox/Obv</th>
<th>Pattern</th>
<th>E/I</th>
<th>Syntactic Role</th>
<th>Semantic Role</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>VOC</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>interj</td>
<td>uâpamekuat, be in group×2</td>
<td>AG (pl)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>P×2</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>Vsbj PN, Vsbj</td>
<td>uâpamekuat, be in group×2</td>
<td>AG (pl)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>PN iteu-sbj</td>
<td>uâp. says</td>
<td>AG (s), FN</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>itikû-obj</td>
<td>spoken to</td>
<td>AV, FN</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63</td>
<td>O×2</td>
<td>OS</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>Vobj, Vsbj</td>
<td>nenua, scratched, go under</td>
<td>nonAG, AG (s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Vsbj</td>
<td>goes under</td>
<td>AG</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>86</td>
<td>O×2</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>Vobj PN-O, Vobj</td>
<td>stepped on, scratched</td>
<td>nonAG</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87</td>
<td>O×2</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Vsbj×2</td>
<td>go under, are a #</td>
<td>?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>itâkanû-indef</td>
<td>they say</td>
<td>FN</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>89</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Vsbj</td>
<td>go under</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

103
The whale(s) are proximate four times. Twice, they are proximate where they are the lone third person in the sentence:

(48)  *Ekue ne áshakumuat tápue uâpamekuat, áshakumuat neka ite akâmît.* (57)
Then, it is true, the white whales (P) got themselves hooked together right across the river.\(^{28}\)

One of the whales is also proximate two times, first as the subject of *iteu* and second as the object of *itikû*:

(49)  *Nika kutapanîunân uesh kâssipishîâtî, iteu ne uâpameku".* (59)
“We will go underwater if you scratch us,” that white whale said to him.

*Eshe, itikû.* (60)
“Yes,” he (Meshapush-O) said to him (Whale-P).

In both cases, the storyteller assigns Meshapush obviative status and assigns the whale proximate status in relation to the verb *it-* ‘to say’ (i.e., *iteu, itikû*) in the frame narrative. Because Meshapush is the main character, and therefore the one we would expect to be assigned the more prominent status (i.e., proximate), this distribution could reflect some additional meaning in the discourse. For example, by assigning this unexpected proximate status, the storyteller could be drawing attention to the importance of the whale’s role in the story.

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\(^{28}\) The river, although translated into English as a third-person referent, is a locative form denoting the location of the action (i.e., across the river).
4.4.4. *Ukûma* ‘Grandmother’

The grandmother is proximate seven of the 13 times she is mentioned in the story. Two occurrences in which she is designated as proximate are given in the following:

(50)   \[E_{k}^{u} \text{uâshkashâpepanit ne ishkueu, kûkûminâsh.}\] (28)
Then, that woman (Grandmother-P), the old woman (Grandmother-P), started cutting the babiche.

\[Kâtshî uâshkashâpet ne kûkûminâsh, ekue ânapîtschet Uâpush, ânapîtshepanû.\]
(29) After the old woman (Grandmother-P) made the babiche, Hare (P) made the net; he (Hare-P) made the net on his own.

In (50), the grandmother fulfils the semantic role of agent as the subject of the verbs \(uâshkashâpepanit\) ‘cuts babiche’ and \(uâshkashâpet\) ‘cuts babiche’, but other factors influence the narrator’s choice to make her proximate. While the two coreferent and explicit references to the grandmother (\(ne\ ishkueu\ and \(kûkûminâsh\)) and her grammatical inclusion as a verbal subject all represent a single third-person referent in line (28) — the nominal concept of ‘babiche’ encompassed in the intransitive verb \(uâshkashâpepanit\) ‘cuts babiche’ — there is not only a second third person in line (29), but a second proximate. Because the second proximate refers to Meshapush, the two cannot corefer and only a few explanations, therefore, can account for this distribution of proximates.

First, the grandmother and Meshapush can be analyzed as coordinate proximates, as I propose in Section 4.2.3. They can also be analyzed as proximate shifts in function, as I posit in Section 4.3.1. Thirdly, these multiple proximates may represent another exception to the rules of obviation assignment, where the narrator purposely breaks the rule that generally allows only one proximate in a narrative context. Lastly, it can be
argued that the grandmother and Meshapush occur in separate narrative contexts, and can therefore both be proximate (see 4.2.3.). This argument becomes more convincing when we consider the syntactic structure of the sentence; the grandmother appears in the first clause, headed by kâtshî ‘after’, and Meshapush appears in the second clause after ekue ‘and then’, his action occurring in a temporally-distinct environment.

The grandmother’s obviation status is given in Table 14:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line #</th>
<th>Prox/Obv</th>
<th>Pattern</th>
<th>E/I</th>
<th>Syntactic Role</th>
<th>Semantic Role</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>VOC, O</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>(POSSD3) iteu-obj</td>
<td>(nûkum) spoken to</td>
<td>interj./AV, FN</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>itikû-sbj</td>
<td>speaks</td>
<td>AV, FN</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>iteu-obj</td>
<td>spoken to</td>
<td>FN</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>itikû-sbj</td>
<td>speaks</td>
<td>AV, FN</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>P, P, P</td>
<td>PS</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>Vsbj PN, PN</td>
<td>cuts, woman, old woman</td>
<td>AG (team?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>Vsbj PN</td>
<td>cuts, old woman</td>
<td>‘after’ clause</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>PN iteu-sbj</td>
<td>old woman, speaks</td>
<td>sees problem, FN</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>OS</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>iteu-obj</td>
<td>spoken to</td>
<td>Hare agrees, FN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>PS</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>iteu-sbj</td>
<td>speaks</td>
<td>sees problem, FN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>itât-sbj</td>
<td>would say</td>
<td>sees problem, FN</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>itikû-sbj</td>
<td>spoken to</td>
<td>Hare agrees, FN</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>OS</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>iteu-obj PN</td>
<td>spoken to, nenua ükuma</td>
<td>proposes solution, FN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>iteu-obj PN</td>
<td>spoken to, ükuma</td>
<td>H finds fire (AG), FN</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in the above table, the remaining five times in which the grandmother is given proximate status all occur in the frame narrative. These are discussed in further detail in Section 4.4.9.
4.4.5. Kâiassîkumanitshesht ‘Metalworker’

The metalworker is proximate six times. In line (33), he is the lone third person; in line (51), he is the possessor of the third-person noun phrase ‘metal’ in utassîkumânim; and in lines (34), (38), and (51), the animacy hierarchy can account for his proximate status, as given in Example (51):

(51)  Tshipâ tshî mînik u natuenitamutî assîkumâna tshetshî mûkumânîtshein. (34)
“Perhaps he (Metalworker-P) would give you metal (O) to make a knife, if you asked him (Metalworker-P).”

Ekue mînât ne kâiassîkumanitshesht, papatshishekushinû nenû mîneu. (38)
Then, the metalworker (P) gave him a very thin piece (O) (of metal).

Ekⁿ ne uââshkamenimut apû akuannit nene utassîkumânim ne kâiassîkumanitshesht. (51)
Then, when he (Metalworker-P) woke up, the metalworker's (P) metal (O) was gone.

The animacy hierarchy requires the metalworker, who is proximate, to be superior in status than the inanimate and non-human assîkumân-a ‘metal-obviative’, and ‘thin piece’, expressed as obviative in the verb paptshishekushinû ‘it is a thin piece (O)’. However, the metalworker’s status as proximate in these sentences can also be explained by his simultaneous presence in other proximate environments. Twice when the metalworker is proximate in these lines, he is also a semantic agent. The metalworker’s proximate status in lines (34) and (38), then, can also be explained by the fact that he is the agent of the verb mineu ‘he gives’, and his proximate status in line (34), where he is the semantic object of the verb natuenitamutî ‘asks for’, can be accounted for by coreference.

The metalworker’s obviation status is given in Table 15:
Table 15: Obviation Status of Kâiassîkumanitshesht

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line #</th>
<th>Prox/Obv</th>
<th>Pattern</th>
<th>E/I</th>
<th>Syntactic Role</th>
<th>Semantic Role</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>PN</td>
<td>metalworker</td>
<td>intro’d P</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>P×2</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Vsbj-inv, Vobj</td>
<td>he gives you, you ask him</td>
<td>AG, AH</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>O×2</td>
<td>OS</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>Vobj D, iteu-obj</td>
<td>seen, spoken to</td>
<td>nonAG, FN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>PS</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>PN Vsbj</td>
<td>gives (metal)</td>
<td>AG, AH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>OS</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Vobj</td>
<td>found/gotten</td>
<td>nonAG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>iteu-obj</td>
<td>spoken to</td>
<td>FN</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>itikû-sbj</td>
<td>says</td>
<td>AV, FN</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>O×2</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Vobj×2</td>
<td>found/thrown at</td>
<td>nonAG</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>P×3</td>
<td>PS</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>Vsbj, POSSR3, PN</td>
<td>awakes, his metal, PN</td>
<td>AH</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.4.6. Enik" ‘Spider’

The spider is proximate 13 times in Meshâpush. Nine times, she is the semantic agent in her narrative context (in lines (7), (8), (9), (11), (12), (20), and (24)); once, she is the lone third person (line (10)); one occurrence can be explained by coreference (line (9)); and twice, she is proximate in the frame narrative involving the verb ‘to say’, once as the subject of iteu, and once as the object of itikû, in lines (15) and (17) respectively.

The spider’s occurrences as proximate in the frame narrative are given below:

(52) Natuápamek" uïsítâk", iteu uetakussinit. (15)
“Go look for rotten wood (P),” she (Spider-P) said to them (Girls-O) in the evening.

Éshe, itikû. (17)
“Yes,” they (Girls-O) said to her (Spider-P).
In this example, the spider is given proximate status, and the girls are assigned obviative status. When the spider speaks with Meshapush in line (23), however, she is obviative and Meshapush is proximate:

(53) *Shâsh tshitshî tshissinuâpamitin, iteu, etânapîtshein, etâpekaut tshitânapi.* (23) “I already saw what you were doing,” he (Meshapush-P) said to her (Spider-O), “the way you weave your net.”

Which third person is assigned proximate status in relation to the verb *it* ‘to say’ in the frame narrative is significant in that it suggests a relative ranking of the characters.

Based on the storyteller’s assignment of obviation status in (52) and (53), for example, we can interpret the following ranking: Meshapush > Spider > Girls.

### Table 16: Obviative Status of *Enik*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line #</th>
<th>Prox/Obv</th>
<th>Pattern</th>
<th>E/I</th>
<th>Syntactic Role</th>
<th>Semantic Role</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>Vsbj PN</td>
<td>enik&quot;, makes webs</td>
<td>intro’d P, AG</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Vsbj PN</td>
<td>enik&quot;, makes webs</td>
<td>AG</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>(P?), P×2</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Indef., Vsbj×2</td>
<td>(not)seen, makes nets×2</td>
<td>AG×2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Vobj</td>
<td>(I) look for him</td>
<td>AV</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Vsbj</td>
<td>will kill</td>
<td>AG</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Vsbj</td>
<td>will (not) kill</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>O, OS</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>Vobj, PNsomeone</td>
<td>found/gotten</td>
<td>nonAG</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>P, PS</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>iteu-sbj</td>
<td>speaks</td>
<td>AG, FN</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>itikû-obj</td>
<td>spoken to</td>
<td>AV, FN</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Vsbj</td>
<td>makes web</td>
<td>AG</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>O, O</td>
<td>OS</td>
<td>Vobj, Vsbj</td>
<td>seen, makes net</td>
<td>nonAG, AG</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>iteu-obj</td>
<td>spoken to</td>
<td>FN</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>P, P</td>
<td>PS</td>
<td>E PN Vsbj, Vsbj</td>
<td>(try to) hit, (not) hit</td>
<td>AG (but missing)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.4.7. *Ishkuessat* ‘Girls’

The storyteller assigns the girls proximate status three times. They are the lone third person in line (14), and they are required by the animacy hierarchy to be proximate in line (18), where both the *ishkuessat* ‘girls (P)’ and the animate, but non-human, *uîssîtâkua* ‘rotten wood (O)’ occur in the same NC. They are also proximate in line (20), involving a *kâtshî* ‘after’ construction (refer to Section 4.4.4.):  

(54)  
\[ \text{Kâtshî tshîtûteht ekue ânapîtshet.} \]  
\[ (20) \]  
After they (Girls-P) left, then she (Spider-P) made the net.  

Once again, in a two-clausal sentence headed by the preverb *kâtshî*, two proximates can coexist where one (the girls) occurs in the first clause and the other (the spider) occurs in the second clause.  

The only environment in which the girls are not proximate is in relation to the verb *it-* ‘to say’ where, as speakers and hearers, they are obviative relative to the proximate spider in lines (15) and (17). This distribution of obviation status in the frame narrative therefore suggests the ranking: Spider > Girls.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line #</th>
<th>Prox/Obv</th>
<th>Pattern</th>
<th>E/I</th>
<th>Syntactic Role</th>
<th>Semantic Role</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>Vsbj PN</td>
<td><em>ishkuessat, come out</em></td>
<td>lone 3p</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>OS</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>iteu-obj</td>
<td>spoken to</td>
<td>FN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>itikû-sbj</td>
<td>speak</td>
<td>AV, FN</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>PS</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>PN Vsbj</td>
<td><em>anitshenat ishkuessat, bring wood</em></td>
<td>AH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Vsbj</td>
<td>leave</td>
<td>S makes web</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.4.8. Ishkuessat ‘(Other) Girls’

Unlike any other character in either Uâpush mâk Umâtshashkuku or Meshâpush, and even though they are never the lone third person in their narrative context, the ishkuessat ‘(other) girls’ are always proximate, as shown in Table 18:

Table 18: Obviation Status of (other) Ishkuessat

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line #</th>
<th>Prox/Obv</th>
<th>Pattern</th>
<th>E/I</th>
<th>Syntactic Role</th>
<th>Semantic Role</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>66</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>Vsbj PN</td>
<td>ishkuessat, walk around</td>
<td>AH</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Vsbj</td>
<td>see</td>
<td>AG</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>iteu-sbj</td>
<td>say</td>
<td>AG</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Vsbj</td>
<td>take (M) inside</td>
<td>AG</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>iteu-sbj</td>
<td>say</td>
<td>FN</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>itikû-obj</td>
<td>spoken to</td>
<td>AV, FN</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>iteu-sbj</td>
<td>say</td>
<td>FN</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77</td>
<td>P×2</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Vsbj×2</td>
<td>bring inside, place/check net</td>
<td>AG×2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79</td>
<td>P×2</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Vsbj×2</td>
<td>leave him, check net</td>
<td>AG×2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Vsbj</td>
<td>leave him</td>
<td>AG</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The girls are proximate in three proximate environments: 1) they are agents in lines (67), (70), (77), (79), and (80), where they ‘see’, ‘take’, ‘bring’, ‘place’, and ‘leave’ Meshapush; 2) they are proximate in line (66), where the animacy hierarchy requires them to have a higher obviation status than the inanimate and non-human mîtsuâp ‘house’; and 3) in lines (68), (71), (73), and (75) in the frame narrative, the storyteller assigns the girls proximate status and their father, with whom they are speaking,

I have called these girls the ‘(other) girls’ in order to distinguish them from the girls discussed in 4.4.7. These girls are the ishkuessat who find Meshapush washed up on shore and bring him into their home.
obviative status, producing the ranking: Girls > Father. In line (68), also involving the verb *iteu*, one of the girls is designated as proximate when speaking to the other girls in the group, who are relegated to obviative status.

**4.4.9. *Meshâpush* ‘Meshapush’**

The distribution of proximate and obviative status assigned to Meshapush is fairly complex, although a large number of his proximate occurrences can be accounted for by the following: 1) his status as an agent; 2) the effect of the animacy hierarchy; 3) his occurrence as the lone third person in a NC; 4) his status as a possessor; and 5) his occurrence in a sentence involving the *kâtshi* ‘after’ construction. The remaining times where Meshapush is proximate all involve varying forms of the verb *it- ‘to say’ and occur in the frame narrative. However, Meshapush is sometimes proximate and sometimes obviative in this environment, as shown in (55a):

(55a) *Shâšh tshitshî tshissinuâpamitin, iteu, etânapîtshein, etâpekaut tshitânapi.* (23) “I already saw what you were doing,” he (Meshapush-P) said to her (Spider-O), “the way you weave your net.”

...  

*Apû minuât au ka mînin, iteu, uâuâkâpissipanû.* (46) “What you gave me is no good,” he (Meshapush-P) said to him (Metalworker-O). “It (O) keeps bending.”

(55b) *Apû takuâk mûkumân, iteu ne kûkûminâsh.* (32) “There is no knife (P),” that old woman (P) said to him (Meshapush-O).

...
“We will go underwater if you scratch us,” that white whale (P) said to him (Meshapush-O).

In (55a), the storyteller assigns Meshapush the higher status relative to the spider and the metalworker, but in (55b), the whale and the grandmother are given the higher status. While the rankings of Meshapush > Spider, Meshapush > Metalworker, and Whale(s) > Meshapush are sustained throughout the story (in the context of the frame narrative), the grandmother and Meshapush’s statuses as proximate and obviative sometimes switch, as shown in (56a) and (56b):

(56a) \[Nûkum, iteu, apû tshî nipâikâu ani te nameshu, mishta-mîtshetuat.\] (6)
“Grandmother,” he (Meshapush-P) said to her (Grandmother-O), “I couldn't kill the fish; there were very many.”

\[Tâu anite nussim, itikû, ânapîtsheu eniku.\] (7)
“There is, my grandchild,” she (Grandmother-O) said to him (Meshapush-P), “a spider (P) who makes nets.”

(56b) \[Mâuât apû minuât au, iteu nenua ûssima.\] (41)
“No, it's no good,” she (Grandmother-P) said to her grandson (Meshapush-O).

\[Apû minuât, tshe itât.\] (43)
“It is no good,” she (Grandmother-P) would say to him (Meshapush-O).

In (56a), Meshapush is proximate and in (56b), he is obviative. What determines this distribution can be explained by the respective roles of the grandmother and Meshapush. The majority of the time, Meshapush is proximate relative to the grandmother in this environment, yielding the ranking Meshapush > Grandmother. Only when the grandmother points out a problem to Meshapush is the ranking reversed and the grandmother assigned the more prominent proximate status:
In the above example, the grandmother is proximate when she tells Meshapush he has no knife with which to clean the fish (line (32)) and when she tells him the metal he has is no good because it keeps bending (line (41)). It is also important to note that the speaker in line (32) is marked overtly by the noun phrase kûkûminâsh ‘old woman (P)’ and that the hearer in line (41) is marked overtly by ûssima ‘his/her grandson (O)’. Because the characters are explicitly identified in this way, it is not necessary for the narrator to use iteu and itikû for the purpose of distinguishing speaker and hearer.

These are the only instances in which the grandmother ranks above Meshapush in this syntactic context, and it is therefore plausible that the narrator is using this unexpected ranking to highlight the importance of the grandmother’s role in telling Meshapush what he needs in order to clean the fish.
4.4.10. Discussion

My analysis of the proximate environments in *Meshâpush* has shown that third persons in this story are generally proximate in all six of the PEs identified in *Uâpush mâk Umâtshashkuku*. The analysis has also pointed to a seventh environment, the *kâtshi* ‘after’ construction, in which third persons are proximate. That the same PEs show up in both stories is significant because this provides further evidence for the existence of a finite set of constraints determining the distribution of proximates and obviatives not only in these two narratives, but perhaps in the genre more generally. Further study, therefore, may reveal these PEs to be genre-defining features of Innu-aimun *âtanûkana*, or even of all Algonquian myth-legends.
CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusions

5.1. General Conclusions

In this thesis, I have characterized the complexity involved in the syntactic and semantic role of obviation in two Innu-aimun âtanûkana. While obviation is to some extent a grammatical (morphological and syntactic) phenomenon in Algonquian narratives, it must also be understood as a discourse phenomenon, reflecting participant hierarchies and carrying layers of meaning involving discourse salience and the individual creative expression of the storyteller at this higher level of linguistic communication. The analyses in this thesis have shown, as argued by Ann Grafstein, that “obviation within sentences is governed by syntactic constraints which are part of sentence grammar, while obviation across sentences is governed to a large extent by properties of discourse” (1981:87). The identification and description of patterns of sustained, isolated, and shifting obviation and the detailed and systematic analysis of the immediate syntactic and semantic proximate environments have suggested a theory of the constraints that govern obviation both within and across sentences (or, otherwise stated, within different types of narrative context). These analyses have also presented a theory of how a creative storyteller can manipulate these constraints in order to use obviation as a tool of discourse. This chapter summarizes the conclusions suggested by the different uses of obviation explored in this thesis.
5.1.1. Patterns of Sustained and Isolated Obviation

By virtue of the fact that they involve proximate or obviative statuses that are maintained by the storyteller over prolonged stretches of narrative, the patterns of sustained and isolated obviation found in the two Innu-aimun ătanûkana provide evidence in support of the argument that a storyteller can use obviation to create meaning at the level of discourse. Specifically, it is significant that the same patterns show up in both stories. Just as we find a tendency to keep Hare proximate in Uâpush mâk Umâtshashkuku, we also see a tendency to keep Meshapush and the father’s daughters (the ishkuessat) proximate in Meshâpush. Furthermore, I have shown that, in both stories, the narrator employs avoidance strategies in order to maintain the proximate status of these characters. In other words, that these characters remain proximate for a prolonged duration in the narratives reflects the purposeful intent of the storyteller.

Not only are characters kept proximate by the storyteller; the analysis of these obviation patterns indicates that a character’s status as obviative will also often be purposely sustained by the narrator. In Uâpush mâk Umâtshashkuku, the storyteller uses avoidance strategies on the one hand to keep Hare proximate and, on the other hand, to keep the owl obviative for a stretch of narrative; in Meshâpush, similar strategies are employed by the storyteller in order to keep the father obviative.

Of more significance than the presence of the same patterns of sustained and isolated obviation in both stories, then, is the fact that, in both Uâpush mâk Umâtshashkuku and Meshâpush, the storyteller uses avoidance strategies to purposely sustain the obviation status (either proximate or obviative) of a particular character.
Although much of the criteria involved in the choice of whether to make a third-person referent proximate or obviative can indeed be found at the level of the clause or sentence (as shown in the analysis of proximate environments), the patterns of sustained and isolated obviation provide evidence for the fact that the storyteller also considers larger contexts in the story, and sometimes the story as a whole, in making the choice between proximate and obviative status for a third-person referent.

5.1.2. Patterns of Shifting Obviation

Like the patterns of sustained and isolated obviation, the patterns of shifting obviation show that obviation can be triggered, and can carry meaning, at the level of discourse (i.e., obviation can be used to reflect a character’s global importance). For example, that characters like the whales (in Meshâpush) only shift status once throughout the entire narrative suggests a change in obviation status is likely significant within the context of the story as a whole and implies the location of the shift may coincide with a semantic shift in the story.

However, the patterns of shifting obviation also indicate that not only is the choice of obviation status meaningful within the scope of larger stretches of narrative but it often carries meaning within smaller contexts like the clause or sentence (i.e., obviation can also be used to reflect a character’s local importance). For example, in the two átanûkana, these patterns indicate that a change in obviation status often coincides with a change in agentivity, where third persons are assigned proximate status if they are agents.
In this way, the shifts in obviation and the way in which they pattern in these two stories provide evidence that both larger narrative contexts (e.g., the story as a complete entity) and smaller narrative contexts (e.g., the clause or sentence) influence the storyteller’s choice of whether to make a third-person referent proximate or obviative.

Lastly, the analysis of the patterns of shifting obviation raises the possibility that obviation status is assigned to characters at an abstract level (i.e., even characters that are not explicitly mentioned are assigned either proximate or obviative status). By analyzing some multiple proximates as proximate shifts in function, we find that even characters who are not mentioned can be argued to have underlying obviation statuses, where explicitly-mentioned proximate third persons shift to obviative when they are not mentioned, and shift back to proximate when they reappear in the story.

5.1.3. Proximate Environments

A detailed look at the smaller narrative contexts that generally require a third person to be proximate in these two âtanûkana reveals a set of seven environments in which the relevant third person will usually have proximate status: 1) where a referent is the lone third person in a NC; 2) where a third-person referent is being described in general terms; 3) where the third person is an agent; 4) where the third person is coreferent with another third person in the same NC who is required to be proximate; 5) where the animacy hierarchy requires a third person to have a higher status than a non-human third person in the same NC; 6) where a third person occurs as the possessor in a possessive form; and 7) in a kâṭshî ‘after’ construction.
Having identified these proximate environments, exceptions to the rules
governing obviation surface in instances where the storyteller assigns a third person
either obviative status in a proximate environment, or proximate status in a context other
than a proximate environment. These exceptions appear to be a reflection of the
storyteller’s intentional manipulation of the rules governing obviation in order to employ
obviation as a tool of discourse within a context larger than that encompassed in a
proximate environment. By using an unexpected obviation status in this way, the
narrator can signal meaning at the level of discourse, placing focus on a character,
foreshadowing an event, and so forth.

An understanding of the way in which obviation is triggered and carries meaning
in smaller narrative contexts better equips us to clarify the ways in which the storyteller
can use obviation at the level of discourse. For example, because the data suggest a
proximate is often assigned its status based on its semantic role as an agent, we might
interpret an unexpected proximate (e.g., proximate status assigned to a character who is
not explicitly described as an agent) as a signal of agentivity. Similarly, we might
hypothesize that an unexpected proximate status functions to foreshadow the important
role a character will play later in the story.

The analysis of proximate environments also indicates that, while obviatives have
been shown to be the default status, given to third-person referents who do not occur in a
proximate environment, this does not imply that obviative status is relegated to default
status when triggered within larger narrative contexts. That is, although obviative status
is the default situation when assigned in contexts like the clause or sentence, by giving a
third person the unexpected status of obviative in a proximate environment, the
storyteller can use this predominantly-default status for a discourse function such as a character’s lack of agentivity or inferior status relative to another, more prominent character.

The analysis of proximate environments also points to a hierarchy of characters that the storyteller can express — in some contexts — through obviation. By designating third persons as proximate or obviative (most notably when they are the subject or object of the verb *it*- ‘to say’), as long as obviation status is not serving the function of distinguishing between multiple third persons, the storyteller can rank proximate third persons above obviative third persons, using obviation to create a participant hierarchy.

5.2. Concluding Remarks

In answer to the question, “Does the use of obviation in narratives reflect not only grammatical functions but discourse functions as well?,“ the overwhelming answer must be yes, “the choice of proximate referent and the distribution of proximate shifts is based largely on higher-level discourse factors” (Russell 1996: 368). Not only does the use of obviation in the two Innu-aimun stories reflect a set of finite rules that drive a storyteller’s choice of proximate or obviative status for each third-person referent in smaller narrative contexts, but, because the rules governing obviation are sometimes purposely broken within the NC of the sentence or clause, it suggests a storyteller’s assignment of obviation must correspond to something meaningful at the level of discourse. Goddard shares the conclusion that obviation functions as a tool of discourse:
For a given pair of animate third persons in a discourse there is, in the first place, the option of which to make proximate and which to make obviative. Even when a proximate has been established, however, there is still the option of whether to make the next third person an obviative or a new proximate. It is because of this flexibility and the way it functions that obviation must be considered a category of discourse, rather than of sentence syntax (Goddard 1990:318).

While I would stress that it is equally important to recognize the significant syntactic and semantic role that obviation plays at the level of the sentence or clause — where the uses of obviation identified in these two âtanûkana may be shown in future studies to characterize the genre of Innu-aimun âtanûkana, or Algonquian myth-legends in general — I agree with Goddard that obviation is at the same time a discourse phenomenon. Beyond the syntactic and semantic functions obviation fulfils within the context of a sentence or clause in this thesis, obviation has been shown to serve discourse functions that reflect the storyteller’s “creativity in using what is available in the language to tell a compelling and coherent story” (Spielmann 1998:198).

That the grammatical form of obviation can be used to express meaning beyond more basic grammatical functions supports Dell Hymes’ and Dennis Tedlock’s assertion that “native North American performed narratives are better seen as oral poetry than as what Western cultures have classified as prose” (Russell 1991:320). Similarly, inspired by the papers of Joel Sherzer and Anthony Woodbury (1987:2), Dahlstrom sums up the role of the study of Native American discourse analysis:

Work in ... [the ethnopoetics of Native American discourse] ... seeks to simultaneously bring out the art and power of Native American literature by attending to the linguistic details of the original text, and to increase our understanding of the grammatical oppositions within the language by investigating their use in the context of verbal art (1996:124).
Dahlstrom highlights an important aspect of linguistic study. In no case can linguistic structures be completely separated from the contexts in which they occur. Nor should we attempt this complete disassociation. To bring this point back within the scope of this thesis, we can learn much about obviation by considering its many roles in Algonquian narratives while at the same time experiencing the art and power the literature expresses.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A:
Interlinear Translation of *Uâpush mâk Umâtshashkuk*”

\[ref 001\]
\text{tx} Pepâmipâtât \quad \text{ekw} \ Uâpush.
\text{mr} papâmipâtâ \quad \text{-t} \quad \text{ekw} \ uâpush
\text{gl} \ IC.run.dup \quad \text{-CIN.3} \ \text{then} \ \text{hare}
\text{ps} \ VAI \quad \text{-sfx} \quad \text{p} \quad \text{NA}

\text{f} \ Hare \ was \ off \ on \ his \ run.

\[ref 002\]
\text{tx} Uiâpamât \quad \text{auennua}
\text{mr} uâpam \quad \text{-ât} \quad \text{auen} \quad \text{-inua}
\text{gl} \ IC.see \quad -(TA)\text{CIN.3}\text{>4} \ \text{someone} \quad \text{-obv(s/pl)}
\text{ps} \ VTA \quad \text{-sfx} \quad \text{pro.indef} \quad \text{-sfx}

\text{tx} \ akushînua \quad \text{kâkua}.
\text{mr} \ akushî \quad \text{-ini} \quad \text{-u} \quad \text{-a} \quad \text{kâkw} \quad \text{-a}
\text{gl} \ be.perched \quad \text{-obv} \quad \text{-IN.3} \quad \text{-obv(s/pl)} \ \text{porcupine} \quad \text{-obv(s/pl)}
\text{ps} \ VAI \quad \text{-sfx} \quad \text{-sfx} \quad \text{-sfx} \quad \text{NA} \quad \text{-sfx}

\text{f} \ He \ (Hare) \ saw \ someone, \ the \ porcupine, \ perched \ (in \ a \ tree).

\[ref 003\]
\text{tx} \ Akushînua \quad \text{auennua}
\text{mr} \ akushî \quad \text{-inua} \quad \text{auen} \quad \text{-inua}
\text{gl} \ be.perched \quad \text{-obv(s/pl)} \ \text{someone} \quad \text{-obv(s/pl)}
\text{ps} \ VAI \quad \text{-sfx} \quad \text{pro.indef} \quad \text{-sfx}

\text{tx} \ uâpameu, \quad \text{auennua}
\text{mr} \ uâpam \quad \text{-e} \quad \text{-u}
\text{gl} \ see \quad -(TA)\text{TS.dir.3}\text{>4} \quad \text{-IIN.3}
\text{ps} \ VTA \quad \text{-sfx} \quad \text{-sfx}

\text{tx} \ uâuieshinua \quad \text{kâkua}.
\text{mr} \ uâuieshin \quad \text{-u} \quad \text{-a} \quad \text{kâkw} \quad \text{-a}
\text{gl} \ be.round \quad \text{-IIN.3} \quad \text{-obv(s/pl)} \ \text{porcupine} \quad \text{-obv(s/pl)}
\text{ps} \ VAI \quad \text{-sfx} \quad \text{-sfx} \quad \text{NA} \quad \text{-sfx}

\text{f} \ He \ saw \ someone \ who \ was \ perched, \ a \ round \ porcupine.

\[ref 004\]
\text{tx} \ Tshâuepâtât \quad \text{ekw,} \ \text{pâtutepâtât} \quad \text{uitshît}.
\text{mr} \ tshîuepâtâ \quad \text{-t} \quad \text{ekw} \ \text{pitutepâtâ} \quad \text{-t} \quad \text{uitshû} \quad \text{-it}
\text{gl} \ IC.run.home \quad \text{-CIN.3} \ \text{then} \ IC.run.inside \quad \text{-CIN.3} \ \text{home} \quad \text{-Loc}
\text{ps} \ VAI \quad \text{-sfx} \quad \text{p} \quad VAI \quad \text{-sfx} \quad \text{NI} \quad \text{-sfx}

\text{f} \ Then \ he \ ran \ back \ and \ ran \ inside \ his \ home.

\[ref 005\]
\text{tx} \ Ka \quad \text{-uî} \quad \text{utâmaitsheuâ}
\text{mr} \ ka \quad \text{uî} \quad \text{utâmaits} \quad \text{-e} \quad \text{-u} \quad \text{-â}
\text{gl} \ subjv \ try.to \ \text{hit} \quad -(TA)\text{TS.dir.3}\text{>4} \quad \text{-IIN.3} \quad \text{-sbjctv}
\text{ps} \ prfx \ \text{prv} \ \text{VTA} \quad \text{-sfx} \quad \text{-sfx} \quad \text{-sfx} \quad \text{-sfx}
He seemed to be trying to hit out; he did it there at the doorway.

"What are you doing?" he (Frog) said to him (Hare).

"What are you doing?" he (Hare) repeated back to him.

"You can hardly walk," he (Hare) said to him (Frog).

"I (Hare) will leave you behind when he (porcupine) arrives."

"I saw someone eating a tree there; he (porcupine) was perched up there."
"He really looked very scary."

"It really tastes good, my older brother (Hare)," he (Frog) said to him.

"So, take me (Frog) there now, and I will kill him (porcupine)."

"Yes," he (Hare) told him (Frog).
He (Hare) carried him (Frog), and then Frog killed the porcupine, he killed him.

After killing it (porcupine), he (Frog) took it home.

Then Hare burned the quills off the porcupine.

"Go to sleep!" he (Hare) told him (Frog).

"I will feed you; I will wake you when I am done cooking."

"Umâtshashkukw nipekâshû."
Then he (Frog) indeed went to sleep, but Frog only pretended to sleep.

After he (Hare) finished cooking, he ate the porcupine.

His younger brother (Frog) was asleep.

"Where is your dead porcupine?" he (Frog) said to him (Hare).
"Your (Frog's) older brothers were here and I (Hare) fed them and they finished all of it (porcupine)," he said to him.

(He was the one that had eaten it, all by himself)

Then, he (Frog) had nothing at all to eat.

Again he (Hare) took off, again while he was there.

He (Hare) ran there where the stream was full of bushes.
What was standing there but a beaver lodge!

They (the beavers) were chewing down trees.

He (Hare) ran back home.

After running home, he ran into his home.

He seemed to want to hit something there, and he did it there at his doorway.
He waited for him, because he was afraid that he might have been followed.

"What are you doing, my brother?" he (Frog) said to him (Hare).

"What are you doing?" he (Hare) repeated back to him.

"You can hardly walk," he (Hare) said to him (Frog).

"There's a house standing there."

"You can hardly walk," he (Hare) said to him (Frog).

"What are you doing?" he (Hare) repeated back to him.
They (the beavers) are chewing down trees, there at the lake.

They (beavers) must have very sharp teeth. Indeed, if they were to bite us, they would surely kill us,” he (Hare) said to him (Frog).

It (beaver) really tastes good, my older brother,” he (Frog) said to him.

"It is a beaver."
“Well, carry me there, and we will kill them.”

“Yes,” he (Hare) said to him (Frog).
He (Hare) left the next day with his younger brother (Frog), carrying him on his back. He was walking around when suddenly he took off, and then he (Hare) put him (Frog) down.

Then he (Hare) chopped through the ice to get to the beavers. He (Hare) put sticks around (and) then he closed off (the lodge entrances).

"Ok," he (Hare) said to him (Frog), "I will dig around with my stick. You grab the beavers."

"Yes," Frog said to him (Hare).
"You grab the beavers," he (Hare) said to him (Frog).

"Yes," he (Frog) said to him (Hare).

Frog took the poles away for the beavers.

He (Frog) took the sticks out and the beavers went through, they went through.
“Well, what happened to them?” he (Hare) said to him (Frog).

Then they (the beavers) saw it (the hole/opening).

At that moment, indeed, they (the beavers) took off.

“Get the beavers!” he (Hare) said to him (Frog).

Then, he (Frog) was trying to grab the beavers but they kept going through.

“What are you doing?” he (Hare) said to him (Frog).
None of them (the beavers) were there anymore.

As he sat, he saw (the opening) there; he (Frog) must have taken away too many sticks.

He (Hare) hit him (Frog) on the head and then he threw him in the water.

Then he (Hare) returned (home).
Then he (Hare) was lonely for his younger brother, since he killed him.

"I killed him (Frog)," he (Hare) thought.

Then, he (Frog) went under water.

Then Frog swam underwater to get the beavers and killed them there in the water.

Then he (Frog) loaded the toboggan, then he loaded the toboggan.
After he (Frog) loaded the toboggan, then he pulled his beavers home.

After he (Frog) pulled his beavers home, he said to him (Hare): "My older brother, bring me some fire there."

"I want to make a fire (to cook) my beavers."

Then he (Hare) grabbed him (Frog).
"Ooh, ooh," he (Frog) said to him, "you're really hurting me."

"You are hurting me. Don't hit me."

"Aaa," he (Hare) said to him (Frog).

"They (beavers) bit me (Frog)," you (Frog) should say to them."
When he (Hare) let his little brother (Frog) inside, he threw his brother's beavers inside his tent.

Then he (Hare) cooked the beavers.

Then his brother (Frog) indeed pretended he was sleeping.
When he (Hare) was finished the cooking, he started eating. He had almost finished eating all of the six beavers.

"Feed me!" he (Frog) said to him (Hare).

"Not now," he (Hare) said to him (Frog).

"You can eat after I have eaten."

"No," he (Frog) said to him (Hare). "Feed me (now)!

"I will tell him that my older brother won't give me any."

"I will tell him that my older brother won't give me any."
"Aah, no," he (Hare) said. "I can't give you any."

"When I am done, then you can eat."

Then he (Frog) started singing, "MY BROTHER, HARE, DOESN'T WANT TO FEED ME" said Frog. "Hare doesn't want to feed me."

Then an owl flew to him (Hare).
"He (Hare) doesn’t want to give our brother anything to eat," he (the owl) said.

"Fly over to where he (Hare) is," he (the owl) was told.

Then he (the owl) flew over to him (Hare).

When the owl landed on top of the ridge pole, the hare quickly moved back into the forest.

"Well, now you can eat," he (Hare) told him (Frog).
Then indeed he (Frog) ate.

He would say every now and then: “That's enough, you're eating it all!”

He (Hare) couldn't approach him (Frog) because he was afraid of the owl, who was still perched on top of the tent.

“Well,” he (Hare) said to him (Frog): “You're going to finish it all!”
The owl kept staring at him, which made the hare run back.

Then he (Frog) ate.

"Okay, okay, I am full now," said Frog to him (Hare).

When he (Frog) was finished eating, then the owl flew away.
"You seem to have eaten it all up!", he (Hare) said.

And then, he (the owl) flew off anyway, leaving him behind.

Again, he (Hare) was off on his run.

He (Hare) saw the tracks of a moose.

Then he (Hare) ran back home.

He (Hare) ran into his tent.
It seemed as if he were getting a stick ready by the door after he got in.

"I can hardly walk," he (Hare) said to him (Frog).

"I saw the tracks of something. He left big hoofprints."

"What did they look like?" he (Frog) said to him (Hare).
It has split hooves," he (Hare) said to him (Frog).

It tastes very good, my brother," he (Frog) said to him (Hare).

It was a moose.

I used to kill them.

Well, make me a snowshoe for one leg. Then we will go fetch him."
"I will swim to go find him (the moose)," he (Frog) said to him (Hare).

"Yes," he (Hare) said to him (Frog).

Then he (Hare) carried his younger brother (Frog) with him.

"Just follow the tracks here," he (Frog) said to him (Hare).
Then he ran after it. He caught up to it, and then Frog killed the moose.

After he (Frog) killed it (moose), he cut its head off.

He put the head where he knew his older brother would be when he came home.
Hare came out from the woods.

He (Hare) saw a moose facing him.

The head was facing him.

He (Hare) was afraid of him (the moose), then he suddenly turned around.

Again, he came around from the other side of the woods.
Ekute anite etashtât ne.
right.there there IC.put.down -CIN.3 that
dem.adv VAI+O -sfx pro.dem.an

He (Frog) put it down right there.

Uâpitîtânua nenua ûpana.
whiten? -obv -IIN.3 -obv(s/pl) that 3- lung -obv
VAI -sfx -sfx -sfx pro.dem.in.pl prfx- NID -sfx

His lungs were white.

-Nishtesh, petute ekw, itikû.
1- brother come.here then say -(TA)TS.inv.4>3 -IIN.3
prfx- NAD p VTA -sfx -sfx

“Come here, my older brother,” he (Frog) said to him (Hare).

Niâtât tâpue.
IC.go.to -CIN.3>4 indeed
VTA -sfx p

He (Hare) went over to him.

Mishta uâuitshinamw
very find.it.good.to.eat.dup -(TI)TS.3>4 -IIN.3
prfx VTI -sfx -sfx

tenite uâpititânua
tânite uâpititâ

He found it very good to eat, that which had been put there, the
places where the moose’s lungs were white; and he was really hungry.
"Eat those, my brother," he said to him. "They are very good when eaten."

Then he (Hare) ate it.

He (Hare) finished the lungs.

Then he (Hare) went home.

When he (Hare) got home, he became sick.
The hare was sick. The lungs made him bloated.

"I am really in pain," he (Hare) said to him (Frog).

"My worm must be moving around."

"Yes. No wonder you're sick, you always want to eat and eat,"

Frog said to him (Hare).
Indeed, not long after, he (Hare) threw up.

He (Hare) threw up his ice.

He (Hare) must have had ice inside (himself).

But then, after he (Hare) passed the worm, he didn't eat very much.

That's it, that is the length of the storytelling.
APPENDIX B:
Interlinear Translation of Meshâpush

\ref 001
\tx Eukuan tshe âtanûtsheiân.
\mr eukuan tshe âtanûtshe -iân
\gl that's.it fut tell.a.legend -(AI)CIN.1
\ps dem prv VAI -sfx

f I will tell a legend.

\ref 002
\tx Ekw anite etûtet nâneu,
\mr ekw anite itûte -t nâneu
\gl then there IC.go.by.foot -CIN.3 shore
\ps VTA -sfx -sfx NI
\tx uâpameu namesha,
\mr uâpam -e -u namesh -a
\gl see -(TA)TS.dir.3>4 -IIN.3 fish -obv(s/pl)
\ps VTA -sfx -sfx NA -sfx
\tx mishta - mîtshetinau.
\mr mishta mîtshet -ini -u -a
\gl very be.many -obv -IIN.3 -obv(s/pl)
\ps prfx VAI -sfx -sfx -sfx

Then, where he (Meshapush) walked along the shore, he saw fish. There were really a lot of them.

\ref 003
\tx Kuetû tûtueu, apû tshî nipâiât.
\mr ât tshikâkuât -e -u apû tshî nipâi -ät
\gl even.if spear -(TA)TS.dir.3>4 -IIN.3 not able kill -(TA)CIN.3>4
\ps VTA -sfx -sfx neg prv VTA -sfx

He did everything possible, (but) he couldn't kill them.

\ref 004
\tx At tshikâkuâteu mâni,
\mr ât tshikâkuât -e -u mâni
\gl even.if spear -(TA)TS.dir.3>4 -IIN.3 usually
\ps VTA -sfx -sfx p

He would spear them, but he couldn't kill them.

\ref 005
\tx Ekue tshîue.t.
\mr ekue tshiue -t
\gl at.that.moment return -CIN.3
\ps VAI -sfx
Then he returned home.

"Grandmother," he said to her, "I couldn't kill the fish; there were very many."

"There is, my grandchild," she said to him, "a spider who makes nets."

"But she only makes nets at night."

\f

\f Then he returned home.

\ref 006
\tx - Nûkum, iteu, apû tshî
\mr ni- ûkum it -e -u apû tshî
\gl 1- grandmother say -(TA)TS.dir.3>4 -IIN.3 not able
\ps prfx- NAD VTA -sfx -sfx neg prv
\tx nipâikâu anite nameshat, mishta -
\mr nipâi -akâu anite namesh -at mishta
\gl 1- kill -(TA)CIN.1>3p there fish -NA.pl very
\ps VTA -sfx dem.adv NA -sfx prfx
\tx mîtshetuat.
\mr mîtshetî -u -at
\gl be.many -IIN.3 -IIN.3p
\ps VAI -sfx -sfx
\f "Grandmother," he said to her, "I couldn't kill the fish; there were very many."

\ref 007
\tx - Tâu anite nussim,
\mr itâ -u anite ni- ussim
\gl be -IIN.3 there 1- grandchild
\ps VAI -sfx dem.adv prfx- NAD
\tx itikû, ånapîtsheu enikw.
\mr it -ikw -u ånapîtshe -u enikw
\gl say -(TA)TS.inv.4>3 -IIN.3 make.a.web -IIN.3 spider
\ps VTA -sfx -sfx VAI -sfx NA
\f "There is, my grandchild," she said to him, "a spider who makes nets."

\ref 008
\tx Eukuan mukw tepishkânîti ekw iånapîtshet.
\mr eukuan mukw tipishkâ -nitî ekw ånapîtshe -t
\gl that's.it but IC.be.night -obv then IC.make.a.web -CIN.3
\ps dem p VII -sfx p VAI -sfx
\f "But she only makes nets at night."

\ref 009
\tx Apû tshî uâpamâkanit an
\mr apû tshî uâpam -âkani -t an
\gl not able see -indf>3 -CIN.3 that
\ps neg prv VTA -sfx -sfx pro.dem.an
\tx iånapîtshetî, tepishkânîti ekw
\mr ånapîtshe -t -i tipishkâ -nitî ekw
\gl IC.make.a.web -CIN.3 -CS IC.be.night -obv then 3
\ps VAI -sfx -sfx VII -sfx prv
“No one can see her when she makes the nets. At night, she makes the nets.”

“There, I will look for her,” he (Meshapush) said to her.

“She will kill you,” she said to him.

“No, she will not kill me.”

He went to find her (Spider) and indeed, there was her home.

Then, girls came out (of Spider’s house).
"Go look for rotten wood," she (Spider) said to them (Girls) in the evening.

"Don't bring hare wood."

"Yes," they said to her (Spider).

Indeed, the girls went and brought the rotten wood.
That's where Hare was, in the rabbit wood.

After they (Girls) left, then she (Spider) made the net.

He (Meshapush) saw her (Spider) make the net during the night.

Then he came out (of the log).
The spider kept trying to hit him, but she kept missing him.

Then he (Meshapush) ran away.

Then he ran home.

"Cut babiche, make a rope," he (Meshapush) said to his grandmother.
After the old woman made the babiche, Hare made the net; he made the net on his own.

After he made the net, indeed he caught fish.

He caught many fish.

"There is no knife," that old woman said to him.
There is a metalworker.

Perhaps he would give you metal to make a knife, if you asked him for it.

"Yes," he said to her.

Then indeed he ran off.

"Petā mà,"
He (Meshapush) saw someone (Metalworker) walking. “Give me metal or iron,” he said to him, “I want to make a knife.”

Then, the metalworker gave him a very thin piece of metal.

Then, he ran home.

But, he couldn't clean the fish yet. It (the metal piece) was too thin. He kept bending it as he tried to clean the fish.
"No, it's no good," she (Grandmother) said to her grandson (Meshapush).

"He has a better one."

"It is no good," she would say to him.

"Yes," he said to her.

Again Hare ran off to get him.
"What you gave me is no good," he said to him (Metalworker), "it keeps bending."

"I cannot give you anymore," he said to him. "I’m using the metals."
Then he (Meshapush) went home, and then ran back again (to the metalworker).

\ref 050
\begin{verbatim}
\textit{Ekw anite ushpishkunnit \textit{uet}}
\textit{mr ekw anite ushpishkun -ini -it ût}
\textit{gl then there his/her.back -obv -loc IC.from}
\textit{ps p \textit{dem.adv NID} -sfx -sfx p}

\textit{nâtât, \textit{pemûshinâtâuât,}}
\textit{mr nât -ât \textit{pimûshinâtâu -ât}}
\textit{gl go.get -(TA)CIN.3>4 throw.at -(TA)CIN.3>4.}
\textit{ps VTA -sfx VTA -sfx}

\textit{keutâuât \textit{ne,}}
\textit{mr kautâu -ât \textit{ne}}
\textit{gl knock.over -(TA)CIN.3>4 that}
\textit{ps VTA -sfx \textit{pro.dem.an}}

\textit{uetshipitamuât}
\textit{mr utshipit -am -u -ât}
\textit{gl IC.grab.s.o. -(TI)TS.3>4 -IN.3>4 -(TA)CIN.3>4}
\textit{ps VTI -sfx -sfx -sfx}

\textit{nêb \textit{utassîkumânûnû,}}
\textit{mr nêb \textit{u- assikûmân -inû}}
\textit{gl that poss.3- metal -obv(s/pl)}
\textit{ps \textit{pro.dem.in.obv prfx- NI -sfx}}

\textit{tshâuepâtuât \textit{nenû}}
\textit{mr tshûuepâtu -ât \textit{nenû}}
\textit{gl IC.run.home.carrying -CIN.3>4 that}
\textit{ps \textit{VAI+O -sfx \textit{pro.dem.in.obv}}}

\textit{menuânit, \textit{eukuannû \textit{tâpue.}}}
\textit{mr minuâ -ini -t \textit{eukuan -inû tâpue}}
\textit{gl IC.be.good -obv -CIN.3 that's.it -obv(s/pl) really}
\textit{ps VII -sfx -sfx dem -sfx p}
\end{verbatim}

Then he (Meshapush) went over there towards his (Metalworker's) back, he crept up behind him, he threw something (metal), knocked him down, grabbed his piece of metal, ran back with the good piece; indeed it was the one (that he wanted).

\ref 051
\begin{verbatim}
\textit{Ekw ne ulâshkamenimut, \textit{apû}}
\textit{mr ekw ne ulâshkamenimu -t \textit{apû}}
\textit{gl then that IC.become.conscious -CIN.3 not}
\textit{ps p \textit{pro.dem.an VAI -sfx neg}}

\textit{akuannit \textit{nene} utassîkûmânîm}
\textit{mr akuan -ini -t \textit{nene} \textit{u- assikûmân -im}}
\textit{gl exist -obv -CIN.3 that(absent) 3- metal -poss}
\textit{ps VII -sfx -sfx \textit{pro.dem.in prfx- NI -sfx}}
\end{verbatim}
Then, when he woke up, the metalworker's metal was gone.

---

His (Meshapush's) knife was good.

He made a knife. Then, indeed he cleaned the fish.

After he cleaned the fish, he couldn't cook them, since there was no fire.

After he cleaned the fish, he couldn't cook them, since there was no fire.
"I will go get fire," he said to his grandmother.

He (Meshapush) took his net, then, and went to a point in the land, and then he started to sing: "very big whale, very big whale, join together to form a bridge across, very big whale," he sang.

Then, it is true, the white whales got themselves hooked together right across the river.
"Don't scratch us."

Nika kutapanîunân uesh kâssipishîâtî,
ni- ka kutapanîu -nân uesh kâssipit -âtî
fut go.underwater -IIN.ip because scratch -CS.2>1p
prfx- prfx VAI -sfx p VTA -sfx

iteu ne uâpamekw.
it -e -u ne uâpamekw
say -(TA)TS.dir.3>4 -IIN.3 that white.whale
VTA -sfx -sfx pro.dem.an NA

"We will go underwater if you scratch us," the white whale said to him.

-Eshe, itikû.
ehe it -ikw -u
yes say -(TA)TS.inv.4>3 -IIN.3
p VTA -sfx -sfx

"Yes," he (Meshapush) said to him (Whale).

Tâpue teshkamipâtât ekw.
tâpue tashkamipâtâ -t ekw
true IC.run.across -CIN.3 then
p VAI -sfx p

Then, indeed he ran across.

Uâuîkuekashepanîu, tâtakussepanishû
uâuîkuekashepanî -u tâtakussepanishi -u
put.claws.out.and.in.repeatedly -IIN.3 step.on.dup -IIN.3
VAI -sfx VAI -sfx

anite.
anite
there
dem.adv
He kept scratching (them). He stepped on each one there.

Nete tshekât nenua mâshten
nete tshekât nenua mâshten
over.there almost that last
p p pro.dem.an.obv(s/pl) p

kâssipiteu ekue
kâssipit -e -u ekue
scratch -(TA)TS.dir.3>4 -IIN.3 at.that.moment
VTA -sfx -sfx p
He was almost on the last one when he scratched him and it went underwater.

It (the last whale) went underwater and he fell off there.

He washed up on shore, there in the ocean.

There stood a house close by, a house built of wood. There were girls walking around.
Who did they see washed up on shore, but Hare, who was already almost dead.

"Hey," she said, "Let's play with it!"

Then they (Girls) indeed took him home.

Then they (Girls) indeed took him home.
"Father," they said, "we brought home an animal (Meshapush)."

"We will play with it."

"No, kill it there," their father said to them.

"It must be Meshapush."

"No, it isn't," she (one of the girls) said to him.

"It would be bigger if it were Meshapush."
Then they indeed brought him inside. There, they put him close to the stove.

Then Hare dried off.

Then they left him behind there when they checked the net.

They left him there. He was starting to move around.
Then he opened his net with his feet.

"I wish my net would dry out," he was thinking.

Then his net dried out, as it was in his armpit.

The net caught on fire; he ran out.

He ran back home.
He stepped on the white whales and then scratched the last one.

Then all went underwater.

"You are scratching us!" they said about him.

All of them went underwater.
Then he ran ashore, and ran home with fire.

"I have already found fire!" he told his grandmother.

Then he made a fire, and then cooked. He ate and ate and ate, and then ate (some more).

After he had indeed eaten enough, that was it, (already) he had fire now.

The page dimensions are 612.0x792.0.
That is why there is fire, it is said, all the fire.

Hare did it.

We never had fire here long ago; only over there far away did it exist.
### APPENDIX C:
Tables 9, 18, and 19

**Table 9: Obviative Status of Umâtshashkuku**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line #</th>
<th>Prox/Obv</th>
<th>Pattern</th>
<th>E/I</th>
<th>Syntactic Role</th>
<th>Semantic Role</th>
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<td>I</td>
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<td>speaks</td>
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<td>speaks</td>
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*Umâtshashkuku* ‘Frog’ (Continued)
Table 10: Obviative Status of Uâpush

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Table 19: Obviative Status of *Meshâpush*

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<td>rejoins, throws, knocks, grabs, runs home</td>
<td>AG ×5!!</td>
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<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>POSSR3</td>
<td>‘his knife’</td>
<td>knife good</td>
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<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>P, P</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Vsbj ×2</td>
<td>makes knife, cleans fish</td>
<td>AG ×2</td>
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<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>P, P</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Vsbj ×2</td>
<td>cleans fish, cooks (neg)</td>
<td>AG</td>
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<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>iteu-sbj</td>
<td>speaks</td>
<td>AG, FN</td>
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<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>P ×4</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Vsbj ×4</td>
<td>takes net, goes, sings, says</td>
<td>AG ×4 song</td>
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<tr>
<td>59</td>
<td>O OS</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>iteu-obj</td>
<td>spoken to</td>
<td>FN</td>
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<td>60</td>
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<td>I</td>
<td>itikû-sbj</td>
<td>speaks</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>61</td>
<td>P PS</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Vsbj</td>
<td>runs (over whales)</td>
<td>AG</td>
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<tr>
<td>62</td>
<td>P, P</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Vsbj ×2</td>
<td>scratches, steps on</td>
<td>AG</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Vsbj</td>
<td>scratches (whales)</td>
<td>AG</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Vsbj</td>
<td>gets off (whales)</td>
<td>AG</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>65</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Vsbj</td>
<td>washes ashore</td>
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<td>67</td>
<td>O, O OS</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>Vobj PN-O, Vsbj-O</td>
<td>seen, is almost dead</td>
<td>nonAG ×2</td>
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<tr>
<td>69</td>
<td>P PS</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Vobj-P</td>
<td>‘let’s take him’</td>
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<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>O OS</td>
<td>E</td>
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<tr>
<td>71</td>
<td>P PS</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>PN</td>
<td>animal</td>
<td>lone 3p</td>
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<td>Meshâpush</td>
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<td>77</td>
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<td>I</td>
<td>Vobj</td>
<td>brought, placed</td>
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<td>78</td>
<td>P PS</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>PN, Vsbj</td>
<td>uâpush, dries</td>
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<td>lights net on fire</td>
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<td>I</td>
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<td>I</td>
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<td>runs out</td>
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<td>Vsbj</td>
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<td>Pattern</td>
<td>E/I</td>
<td>Syntactic Role</td>
<td>Semantic Role</td>
<td>Comment</td>
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<tr>
<td>86</td>
<td>P, P</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Vsbj ×2</td>
<td>steps on, scratches</td>
<td>AG ×2</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Vsbj ×2</td>
<td>runs, runs home</td>
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<td>speaks</td>
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<td>92</td>
<td>P ×4</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Vsbj ×4</td>
<td>makes fire, cooks, eats, eats</td>
<td>AG ×4!</td>
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<tr>
<td>93</td>
<td>P, P</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>Vsbj ×2, DEM</td>
<td>eats, has fire, ne</td>
<td>AG</td>
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<tr>
<td>95</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>PN Vsbj</td>
<td>makes fire, <em>Uâpush</em></td>
<td>AG! lesson</td>
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