

# OBVIATION AND COREFERENCE RELATIONS IN CREE-MONTAGNAIS- NASKAPI\*

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## ABSTRACT

*Algonquian languages distinguish between proximate and obviative third persons. This paper claims that wherever two or more proximate third person occurs in a given derivation, these are necessarily interpreted as coreferential. Consequently, only one proximate referent is permitted per derivation. This requirement is highly ranked in the grammar, overriding the universally-familiar mechanisms of determining pronominal reference formalized by Binding Theory. Weak crossover constructions are examined as a case in point—in a subset of the Algonquian constructions examined, the expected weak crossover effects (disjoint reference between a wh-phrase and a pronominal) do not appear. In this same subset of cases, coreference is enforced by the requirement to maintain a single proximate referent per derivation. Weak crossover effects appear in cases where this requirement does not hold. This analysis permits an account of the absence of crossover effects in Algonquian which does not appeal to the argument that Algonquian differs structurally from so-called 'configurational languages'. Possibly, the demands of the proximate/obviative system make the grammar of Algonquian appear more divergent than it is.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

It is a well-known fact about Algonquian languages that, where more than one third person referent occurs within a given span of discourse, only one of these can appear in the unmarked form referred to as 'proximate'. Other third person referents appear in the marked 'obviative' form (Russell 1996, Blain 1997).<sup>1</sup> There are no circumstances under which this

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<sup>1</sup> None of the spans of discourse examined in this paper are longer than a biclausal construction. The given span of discourse over which obviation operates can be much longer than this (see, for example, discussion of how the proximate/obviative opposition operates in the Fox narrative analyzed by Dahlstrom

proximate/obviative distinction is abandoned. Further, while the obviative third persons within the given span of discourse may or may not be coreferent with one another, the proximate third person cannot be coreferent with any of the obviatives. These facts raise the interesting possibility that the referential constraints imposed by what I shall refer to as 'the proximate/obviative system' will, in some area of the grammar, come into conflict with other principles which determine referential relations among third person nominals.<sup>2</sup> I will show that in one such case of conflict it is the referential relations imposed by the proximate/obviative system which prevail.

One area of the grammar where this type of conflict might be expected is wherever referential relations among third persons are determined by the hierarchical relationship of one nominal to another. The referential relations described by Binding Principles, for example, are a case in point. I examine the hierarchically-defined relationship of disjoint reference which generally obtains between an object *wh*-phrase and the pronoun it 'crosses over' as it moves to the front of the clause—so-called 'crossover effects' (Ross 1967, Postal 1970); for example, in a sentence like *Who(m)<sub>i</sub> did his<sub>i</sub> child see?*, the object *wh*-phrase 'who(m)' and the possessive pronoun 'his' in subject position cannot be coreferential.<sup>3</sup> Crossover effects appear to be absent in Algonquian; that is to say, in contexts which typically yield crossover effects in other languages, these effects are absent in the equivalent structure in Algonquian (Dahlstrom 1986, Blain 1997).<sup>4</sup> It is possible that crossover effects do not appear in Algonquian because the crossover

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1996). For the purposes of this paper, however, the reference of the phrase 'a given span of discourse' is restricted to 'a given derivation', the term 'derivation' corresponding roughly to the notion of a sentence.

- 2 Nominals here are taken to be either *pro* (which may or may not be linked to a lexical DP) or a *wh*-phrase. I assume both to be generated in argument position. See Brittain 2001 for discussion supporting this assumption.
- 3 While evidence from a wide range of languages supports the generalization that crossover effects appear in crossover configurations, some exceptional cases are discussed in the literature. See, for example, Grewendorf and Sabel's (1999) discussion of German.
- 4 The term 'crossover construction' refers to constructions (in any language) in which the crossover configuration is attested. For the sake of simplicity I will use the term to refer to the equivalent constructions in Algonquian languages. Use of the term should not be taken to imply that a crossover configuration is present.

configuration never obtains. This is the view of Dahlstrom 1986 and Blain 1997.<sup>5</sup>

The generalization that there may be only one proximate third person referent per given span of discourse is formalized as follows: where two (or more) proximate nominals occur in the same derivation they are required to be coreferent. This requirement, referred to as the One Proximate Referent per Derivation (OPRD) Condition, overrides the disjunctive reference relations which, in a language like English (which lacks a proximate/obviative system), are read off the crossover configuration. I will argue that crossover configurations do obtain in Algonquian (in typical crossover constructions), but that the expected effects do not appear because they are 'masked' by the referential relations imposed by the proximate/obviative system. The conflict under discussion is thus resolved in favour of the proximate/obviative system.

This analysis has the benefit of allowing us to maintain that Algonquian is not substantially different in structural terms from other languages. It also provides an incentive to look for other areas of the grammar where, if conflict of the type just described arises, the proximate/obviative system takes precedence. It may be the case that Algonquian, and other languages in which a proximate/obviative opposition occurs, look to be more underlyingly divergent from, say, non-polysynthetic languages, than they really are. If this is the case, it is important to identify which areas of the grammar are likely to be impacted by a proximate/obviative system which is in some sense ranked more highly than other subsystems of the grammar.<sup>6</sup>

The analysis laid out here has implications for Algonquian in general. My arguments are, however, largely based on Plains Cree examples which appear in Blain 1997, and on Western Naskapi examples from Brittain 2001. These are both dialects of the central Algonquian language referred to as the Cree-Montagnais-Naskapi language complex. Both dialects are spoken in Canada—Plains Cree in Saskatchewan and Western Naskapi in Québec.

The organization of this paper is as follows. In sections 2 and 3 respectively I look at strong crossover (SCO) constructions and weak crossover

5 Baker 1996 also makes this case in accounting for the absence of crossover effects in Iroquoian.

6 While the present discussion lends itself to an Optimality Theory account, it is beyond the scope of this paper to attempt this. Such an account would rank the demands of the proximate/obviative system more highly than the component(s) of the grammar that allow(s) specific referential relations to be read off of specific (for example, crossover) configurations.

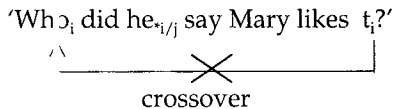
(WCO) constructions. In section 4, evidence in favour of the OPRD Condition is discussed and concluding remarks appear in section 5.

## 2. STRONG CROSSOVER CONSTRUCTIONS AND SOME THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

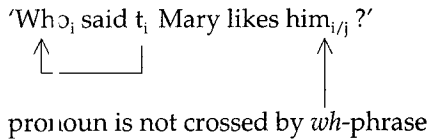
The example in (1a) illustrates SCO constructions in English. The *wh*-phrase extracted from object position crosses over the pronoun 'he'. The crossover configuration results in crossover effects—that is, the *wh*-phrase and the pronoun may not be coreferential. By contrast, in (1b), extraction of the *wh*-phrase from subject position does not result in a crossover configuration, and the *wh*-phrase is optionally coreferential with the pronoun.

### (1) English

#### a. SCO effects

'Wh<sub>i</sub> did he<sub>i/j</sub> say Mary likes t<sub>i</sub>?'  
  
 crossover

#### b. No crossover configuration, no crossover effects

'Wh<sub>i</sub> said t<sub>i</sub> Mary likes him<sub>i/j</sub>?'  
  
 pronoun is not crossed by *wh*-phrase

The ungrammaticality of a bound reading in SCO contexts can be derived from Binding Principles. SCO effects occur if a *wh*-trace (an R-expression) is bound by a c-commanding pronoun (constituting a Principle C Binding violation).

Blain (1997: 33) observes of Plains Cree that 'SCO effects cannot be checked' because of the distinction between proximate and obviative third persons. Example (2) illustrates this case.

### (2) Plains Cree: Absence of SCO effects


Awîna ê-itwê-t Mary-wa ê-miywêyimikot?  
 awîna ê-itwê-t Mary-wa ê-miywêyim-iko-t  
 who conj-say-3 Mary-obv conj-like-inv-3  
 'who did he<sub>i/j</sub> say Mary likes t<sub>i</sub>?'  
(Blain 1997:94)

The subject of the lower clause, Mary, is obviative and the object of this clause (the *wh* phrase) is therefore proximate. The subject of the main clause is also proximate. This means there are two proximate pronominals

in this span of discourse. Given that there can only be one proximate referent per span of discourse, a reading of coreference is required between the two proximate pronominals. In the equivalent construction in English, disjoint reference is forced, as shown in (3).

(3) English: SCO effects

[who]<sub>i</sub> he<sub>i</sub> say Mary likes t<sub>i</sub>



There are two important differences between the Algonquian example in (2) and the English example in (3). The first is that, contrary to our expectations, crossover effects do not occur in (2), and the second is that coreference is obligatory in the Algonquian example in (2). Both of these facts must be accounted for in the Algonquian example if we do not want to simply concede that Algonquian 'crossover constructions' are fundamentally different from the equivalent construction in other languages. First, let us consider some of the reasons why crossover effects could be absent in (2). There are at least three reasons. These are listed in (4), in descending order of theoretical desirability.

(4) Why are crossover effects absent in (2)?

- i. Universally, crossover constructions give rise to crossover effects. In Algonquian, however, another component of the grammar overrides the effects (and in example 2 the referential relations normally imposed by Binding Principle C are overlaid by another set of referential relations).
- ii. Crossover effects do not appear in Algonquian because the crossover configuration does not appear in the syntax.
- iii. Binding Principles do not apply to Algonquian (nor, perhaps, to languages typologically like Algonquian).

Given the amount of crosslinguistic evidence that Binding Principles hold universally, we should immediately rule out (4.i). Moreover, there is ample evidence that Binding Principles do apply in 'non-configurational' languages (see, for example, Baker 1996). We thus rule out (4.i) on both theoretical and empirical grounds; it merits no further discussion. Solution (4.ii) has been argued for by Blain (1997). Blain's arguments are discussed in section 3. I will show that there is evidence that in fact an Algonquian crossover construction has the expected crossover configuration, and that we should therefore expect crossover effects. (4.ii) is thus ruled out on empirical grounds. Solution (4.iii) affords us the best opportunity to conclude

that Algonquian crossover constructions display properties which are cross-linguistically familiar; what makes them seem different is the additional overlay of the proximate/obviative system. It is not merely the apparent absence of crossover effects in (2) that must be accounted for; the obligatory coreference which holds between the proximate pronominals has to be explained. I believe this is the key to arriving at solution (4.iii). Blain observes the following of data like example (2).

(5) Blain (1997:94)

(Given that there may be only one proximate third person in a given span of discourse,) '[s]ince the *wh*-word [in 2] is proximate and the subject of the main clause is proximate, they must be the same person.'

If this observation is formalized, we have the necessary mechanics to override crossover effects. I thus propose the following condition:

(6) One Proximate Referent per Derivation (OPRD) Condition

Wherever more than one proximate argument occurs within the same span of discourse, these are necessarily interpreted as coreferent in order to avoid having more than one proximate referent per derivation. A proximate argument may be either a *wh*-phrase or a *pro*.

The binding configuration created by the OPRD Condition is thus as follows.

(7) General binding configuration created by the OPRD Condition  
 Nominal[prox]<sub>i</sub> Nominal[prox]<sub>i</sub>

The specific binding configuration which will account for the absence of SCO effects in (2) will be as follows:

(8) Specific binding configuration created by the OPRD Condition  
*wh*[prox]<sub>i</sub> *pro*[prox]<sub>i</sub>

In advance of pursuing this analysis further, however, it is necessary to rule out the possibility that there simply are no crossover effects because the configuration never arises in the syntax (solution 4.ii). We will now look at the case Blain (1997) makes for this with regard to example (2).


### 3. EVIDENCE THAT A CROSSOVER CONFIGURATION UNDERLIES THE ALGONQUIAN CROSSOVER CONSTRUCTION

Blain 1997 provides a cleft analysis of simple direct *wh*-constructions in Plains Cree. Crucially, under this analysis, the *wh*-phrase is generated in a

separate clause from the main predicate and its arguments. The resulting configuration is such that the *wh*-phrase never raises past any of the main predicate's arguments on its way to the left edge of the clause. Blain proposes that verb complexes which have the complementizer *ê-* at their left edge are conjoined constructions.<sup>7</sup> The verb in example (2) has at its left edge the *ê-* complementizer. Example (9a) illustrates the structure of a simple direct question with *ê-* at the head of the CP of the rightmost conjoined clause.

(9) Plains Cree (Blain 1997)

- a. *ê-* heads CP of rightmost clause in conjoined structure

[who]<sub>i</sub> is he t<sub>i</sub> & Op<sub>i</sub> ... *ê-* ... t<sub>i</sub> ]  


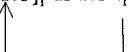
- b. Example of construction

Awîna Mary *ê-wâpamât?*  
 awîna Mary *ê-wâpam-â-t*  
 who Mary conj-see-dir-3  
 'who did Mary see?'

The *wh*-phrase originates in the leftmost clause. As (9b) shows, under this analysis what appear to be uni-clausal *wh*-questions are in fact cleft constructions. Within this structure a maximum of one *wh*-phrase can be fronted for the purposes of binding a null *wh*-Operator in the SpecCP of the clause containing the main predicate. Crucially, the *wh*-phrase raises to the left edge of its clause of origin and thus never crosses over the arguments in the rightmost clause.

Extending this analysis to (2), no crossover effects are expected.

(10) No crossover expected in example (2)

[who]<sub>i</sub> is he t<sub>i</sub> & [he<sub>i</sub> said that Mary likes him<sub>i</sub>]?  


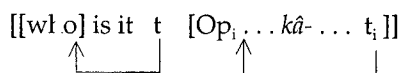
Clauses which are headed by the *kâ-* complementizer are analyzed by Blain as being biclausal in the manner shown in (11).<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> There is also a *kâ-* complementizer in dialects of the Cree-Montagnais-Naskapi language complex. Blain proposes a different structure for clauses which contain the *kâ-* complementizer.

<sup>8</sup> Wolfart 1973 and Reinholtz and Russell 1995 also argue for a bi-clausal analysis of simple direct *wh*-questions.

## (11) Plains Cr e (Blain 1997)

- a.
- $k\hat{a}$
- heads subordinate clause CP



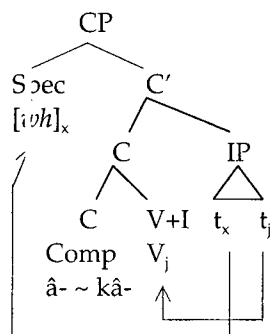
- b. Example of construction

Aw niwa Mary  $k\hat{a}$ -w pam t?  
aw ni-wa Mary  $k\hat{a}$ -w pam- -t  
who-obv Mary REL-see-dir-3  
'who did Mary see?'

Here again, crossover effects are not predicted because the *wh*-phrase originates in the upper clause and does not cross any of the third person arguments.

If we adopt Blain's account of *wh*-movement the absence of crossover effects in Algonquian is resolved—crossover effects are absent because the configuration never appears in the syntax. However, an alternative account of *wh*-movement in Algonquian, which does predict crossover effects, is provided by Britain 2001. Under this view, constructions like (9b) and (11b) are uni-clausal. The *wh*-object raises from the object position to the left edge of the clause as shown in (12). This structure is assumed regardless of the type of complementizer; i.e., whether it is  $k\hat{a}$ - or  $\hat{e}$ - (Naskapi  $\hat{a}$ ).<sup>9</sup>

- (12)
- Wh*
- phrases raise overtly to the SpecCP in a simple direct
- wh*
- construction



<sup>9</sup> Plains Cree  $\hat{e}$ - surfaces as  $\hat{a}$ - in Western Naskapi due to the fact that Western Naskapi  $\hat{e}$ - and  $\hat{a}$ - have merged to  $\hat{a}$ - (MacKenzie 1980).



The reader is referred to Brittain 2001 (pages 153–177) for a more complete case in defense of the structure in (12). I provide a summary of these arguments here.

On the grounds of economy of representation (Grimshaw 1997) alone we should prefer the smaller structure in (12) over the larger structures in (9), (10) and (11). Added to this, evidence provided by multiple *wh*-constructions lead us to reject the larger structures in favour of (12). Recall that under Blain's cleft analysis of *wh*-constructions a maximum of one *wh*-phrase can be accommodated. This predicts, therefore, that multiple *wh*-constructions will be ungrammatical as is indeed the case in Plains Cree.

(13) Plains Cree

\*Awîna ê-itwê-t kîkwây?  
 awîna ê-itwê-t kîkwây  
 who conj-say<sub>-3</sub> what  
 'who said what?' (Blain 1997:90)

In Western Naskapi, however, multiple *wh*-questions are grammatical.

(14) Western Naskapi

a. Multiple *wh*-question

Awân kâ-iyât châkwâniyuw?  
 awân kâ-iyâ-t châkwân-iyuw  
 who [a]-comp+Past-buy(Al)-CIN.S:3.sg what-obv  
 'who bought what?'

b. Alternative constituent order

Awân châkwâniyuw kâ-iyât?  
 awân châkwân-iyuw kâ-iyât  
 who what-obv bought  
 'who bought what?' (Brittain 2001:159)

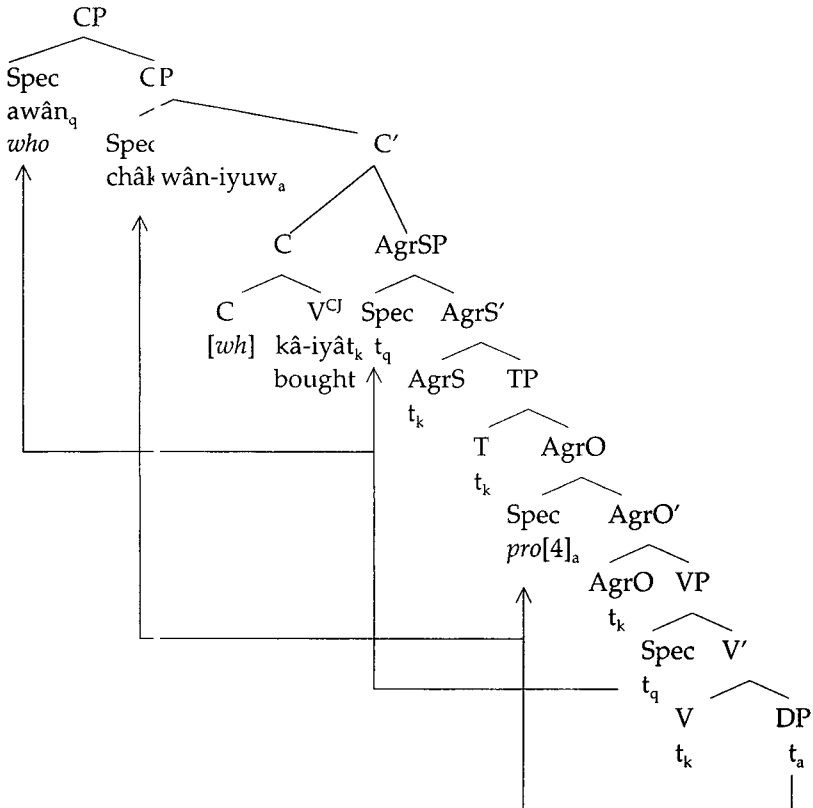
The example in (13) is central to Blain's argument against a uni-clausal analysis of *wh*-question formation in Plains Cree:

'In Nêhiyawêwin, the clearest evidence of the absence of overt *wh*-movement involves the prohibition of multiple *wh*-questions.' (Blain 1997:88)

However, by the same logic a cleft analysis of *wh*-movement cannot account for the Western Naskapi data in (14), because it cannot accommodate the extra *wh*-phrase. Moreover, even if two *wh*-phrases could somehow be accommodated, both would be fronted, ruling out the constituent order in (14a). Whatever analysis of *wh*-questions we adopt for Algonquian must be able to account for all the dialect variations in a uniform manner. Ideally it

will preclude claiming of one dialect that it has biclausal *wh*-questions and of another that the equivalent constructions are unclausal. The cleft analysis fails to account for the Western Naskapi data in (14) but it does account for the absence of crossover effects in (2) and the ungrammaticality of the Plains Cree multiple *wh*-construction in (13). On the other hand, if we adopt the phrase structure in (12) we can account for the Western Naskapi multiple *wh*-constructions in (14) by allowing multiple specifiers.<sup>10</sup>

(15) Western Naskapi multiple CP specifiers: LF structure for (14a–b)<sup>11</sup>



<sup>10</sup> See Rudin 1988, for example, for a multiple specifier analysis of multiple *wh*-constructions in Bulgarian.

<sup>11</sup> The variation in PF representations attested by (14a–b) is discussed in Brittain 2001 and is not pursued here.

Having ruled out solution (4.ii) on empirical grounds, we now turn to the central issue of the paper, solution (4.iii)—the proposal that Algonquian crossover effects are masked by the proximate/obviative system. We thus assume an analysis of *wh*-constructions in which crossover effects ought to be manifest. The absence of these effects is due to the specific binding configuration created by the OPRD Condition (see 8). We now consider the evidence provided by WCO constructions.

#### 4. WEAK CROSSOVER CONSTRUCTIONS AND EVIDENCE FOR THE OPRD CONDITION

A WCO configuration arises in the case that the *wh*-phrase crosses over a pronoun embedded in a complex structure, such as a possessed DP or a relative clause. In (16a.i), the *wh*-subject may be interpreted as coreferential with the possessor pronoun 'her', or not coreferential with it. This is also the case in the relative clause in (16a.ii)—the *wh*-phrase optionally binds the pronoun. In the examples in (16b), on the other hand, crossover effects appear and only one reading is available—the *wh*-phrase and the pronoun, in both (16b.i) and (16b.ii), may not be coreferential. The unavailability of the coreferential readings in these cases are referred to as WCO effects.

(16) English: *wh*-movement in complex DP constructions and relative clauses

a. No WCO effects result from *wh*-extraction from subject position

(i) Possessed DP [who]<sub>i</sub> [ t<sub>i</sub> hit [her<sub>i/x</sub> friend]

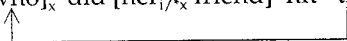


(ii) Relative clause [who]<sub>i</sub> [ t<sub>i</sub> hit [the girl that she<sub>i/x</sub> knows]

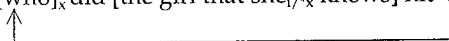


b. WCO effects result from *wh*-extraction from object position

(i) Possessed DP [who]<sub>x</sub> did [her<sub>i/x</sub> friend] hit t<sub>x</sub>



(ii) Relative clause [who]<sub>x</sub> did [the girl that she<sub>i/x</sub> knows] hit t<sub>x</sub>



In (17a) and (17b) I show the Algonquian constructions which are presumed to be equivalent to the data in (16b)—i.e., constructions which contain an extracted *wh*-object.

## (17) Western Naskapi: absence of WCO effects in a WCO configuration

## a. Possessed DP construction

Awân kâ-wâpimikut utawâsîma?  
 awân kâ-wâpim-ikut ut-awâs-îm-a  
 who Comp/Past-see(TA)-CIN.O:3/S:4 poss.3-child-poss-obv  
 'who<sub>i</sub> did his<sub>i/1</sub> child see?' (Brittain 2001:184)

## b. Relative Clause

Awân kâ-suwâyimikut nâpâwa  
 awân kâ-suwâyim-ikut nâpâw-a  
 who Comp/Past-kiss(TA).CIN-O:3/S:4 man-obv  
 mây wâyihât?  
 mây wâyihât-ât  
 like(1A).CIN-O:4/S:3  
 'who<sub>i</sub> did the man she<sub>i/1</sub> likes kiss?' (Brittain 2001:187)

In (17a) I assume the *wh*-phrase crosses over the pronoun within the possessed DP. In (17b) the *wh*-phrase crosses over a pronoun inside a relative clause. The point to note here is that in (17a) and (17b), both WCO configurations, WCO effects do not appear. Moreover, notice that constructions of the type shown in (17a) and (17b) are not only different from (17b), they are also different from the data in (16a)—in both the Algonquian constructions in (17), there is obligatory coreference between the pronominal and the *wh*-phrase. This situation never arises in the English examples in (16a) and (16b).

We saw that SCO effects can be derived by appealing to Binding Principles. Accounting for WCO effects is less straightforward. Binding Principles do not comment on the disjunctive relations enforced in (16b). There are several accounts of why WCO effects are manifest in WCO configurations. The 'Leftness Condition', (Chomsky 1976, Koopman and Sportiche 1982), for example, provides an account of the phenomenon. For present purposes, I have adopted the most restrictive account of WCO, Safir's 1996 account. Under this view, WCO effects are due to what Safir describes as an 'A-bar-Consistency Violation'. A formal definition of A-bar-Consistency is given in (18).

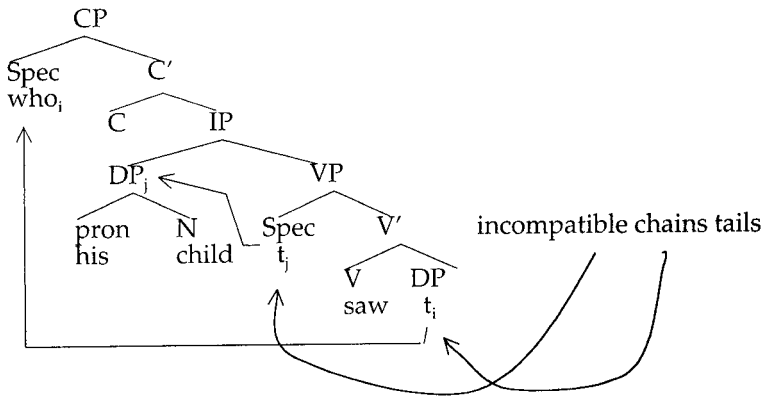
(18) Safir (1996:318), A-bar-Consistency

An A-bar-chain is either consistently derivational A-bar-binding (dA-bar-binding) or representational A-bar-binding (rA-bar-binding).

Thus, a *wh*-phrase can bind either its own trace (derivational binding), or a pronoun (representational binding), but not both at the same time. WCO effects appear in the case that a *wh*-phrase simultaneously heads a chain which has at its tail its own trace (a derivational chain) and a pronoun (a representational chain). These chain tails—the trace and the pronoun—are referred to as ‘incompatible chain tails’ and the source of the violation is this incompatibility. This case is illustrated in (19).

(19) WCO configuration: An A-bar-Consistency violation results in WCO effects

(Who<sub>i</sub> did his<sub>i,j</sub> child see?)



In (19), ‘who’ is in a position to bind either the pronoun ‘his’ or the *wh*-trace. The result of this configuration is an A-bar-Consistency violation, resulting in the WCO effects evidenced in the English examples in (16b). In the case where a *wh*-subject is extracted, the configuration does not result in an A-bar-Consistency violation, permitting the optional binding we saw in the examples in (16a). I will claim that an A-bar-Consistency violation can be averted in deference to the requirements of the proximate/obviative system. To use Safir’s terminology, the incompatible chain tails are rendered compatible in some manner. Precisely how this incompatibility is resolved is a technical matter I do not address in detail beyond suggesting that in Algonquian grammar OPRD Condition ranks highly, higher, for example, than either Binding Principles or the prohibition on creating an A-

bar-Consistency violation. The specific circumstances under which we assume the OPRD Condition to apply to account for the Naskapi data in (17) are the following.

- (20) a. In a Crossover configuration, the following conditions necessarily hold

*wh*[prox]<sub>i</sub> ... *pro*[prox]<sub>i,j</sub> ... *wh*-trace<sub>i</sub>

- b. The relative ordering of *pro* and *wh*-trace is irrelevant so that the OPRD Condition applies in the case of object *wh*-extraction or subject *wh*-extraction

*wh*[prox]<sub>i</sub> ... *wh*-trace<sub>i</sub> ... *pro*[prox]<sub>i,j</sub>

Thus, if there is a proximate *pro* and a proximate *wh*-phrase, these are interpreted as coreferent.

We have already seen in (2) and in (17a–b) cases where, contrary to expectations, coreference is enforced between a *wh*-phrase and a pronoun. (21) illustrates the case of *wh*-subject extraction—coreference between the *wh*-phrase and the pronoun is again obligatory, an effect which can be straightforwardly derived from the OPRD Condition.

- (21) Not a WCO configuration: Enforced coreference

- a. Western Naskapi: *wh*-extraction from subject position

Awîin kâ-wâpimât utawâsîma?

awîn kâ-wâpim-ât ut-awâs-îm-a

who Comp/Past-see(TA)-CIN.O:4/S:3 poss.3-child-poss-obv

‘who<sub>i</sub> saw his<sub>i</sub> child?’

(Brittain 2001:184)

- b. Structure: [who]**prox**<sub>i</sub> t<sub>i</sub> see [<sub>DP</sub> [his]**prox**<sub>i</sub> child-obv ]]



In the Plains Cree example in (22a) and in the Passamaquoddy example in (22b), WCO effects appear in a WCO configuration.

- (22) WCO effects in WCO configuration

- a. Plains Cree relative clause: *wh*-extraction from object position

Awînihi nâpêw kâ-sâkihât kâ-ocêmât?

awîni-hi nâpêw kâ-sâkih-â-t kâ-ocêm-â-t?

who obv man REL-love-dir-3 REL-kiss-dir-3

‘who<sub>i</sub> did the man who loves her<sub>i,j</sub> kiss?’

(Blain 1997:219)

- b. Passamaquoddy: *wh*-extraction from object position (pseudo-transitive construction)

Wen-il witap-ihil kis-ahka-l-ac-ihil?  
 who-obv his-friend-obv Perf-throw.AI+O-obvS-3Conj-obv  
 'who<sub>i</sub> did his<sub>i</sub> friend throw?' (Bruening 2000)

Under my analysis, WCO effects appear here because the OPRD Condition does not apply to enforce coreference between the obviative *wh*-object and, in (22a) the object of the relative clause, in (22b) the possessor pronoun.

The data in (17a) is repeated for ease of reference as (23a).

- (23) No WCO effects in a WCO configuration (example 17a)

- a. Western Naskapi, Possessed DP construction: *wh*-extraction from object position

Awân kê-wâpimikut utawâsîma?  
 awân kê-wâpim-ikut ut-awâs-îm-a  
 who Comp/Past-see(TA)-CIN.O:3/S:4 poss.3-child-poss-obv  
 'who<sub>i</sub> did his<sub>i/j</sub> child see?' (Brittain 2001:184)

- b. Structure [who]**prox**<sub>i</sub>[<sub>DP</sub>[his]**prox**<sub>i</sub> child-obv ]] see t<sub>i</sub>

(24) provides a summary of how the OPRD Condition applies in (21), (22) and (23).

- (24) The OPRD Condition 'takes precedence over' configurationally-determined means of establishing pronominal reference (crossover):

- a. OPRD Condition applies so that:

*wh*[**prox**]<sub>i</sub> ... *wh*-trace<sub>i</sub> ... *pro*[**prox**]<sub>i/j</sub> (accounting for 21)

or

*wh*[**prox**]<sub>i</sub> ... *pro*[**prox**]<sub>i/j</sub> ... *wh*-trace<sub>i</sub> (accounting for 23)

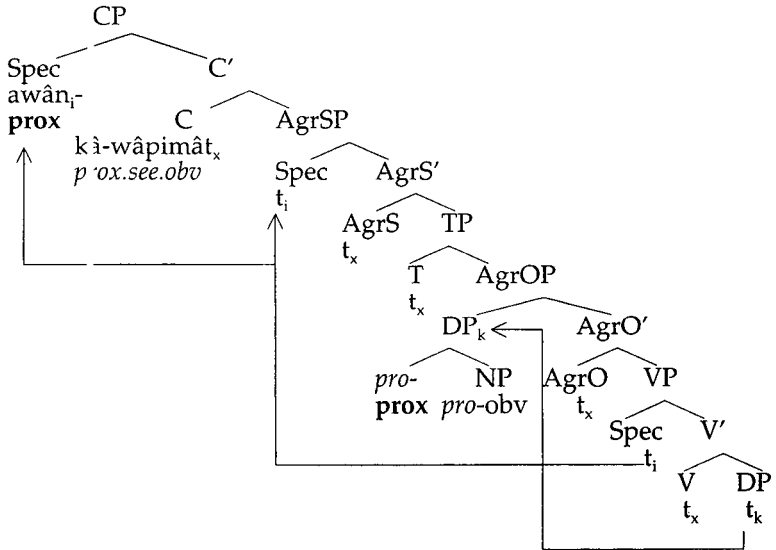
- b. WCO effects appear where OPRD Condition does not apply:

*wh*[obv]<sub>i</sub> ... *pro*[**prox**]<sub>i/j</sub> ... *wh*-trace<sub>i</sub> (accounting for 22)

In the case of both (21) and (23), the proximate *wh*-phrase is coreferential with the proximate possessor pronoun. The relative ordering of the *wh*-trace and the pronoun is irrelevant. In the case of (22), where the WCO configuration occurs, the application of the OPRD Condition masks the WCO effects. In (22), because the *wh*-phrase is not proximate, the OPRD Condition does not apply and the expected WCO effects appear. The phrase structure in (25) shows example (21). (26) illustrates (23).

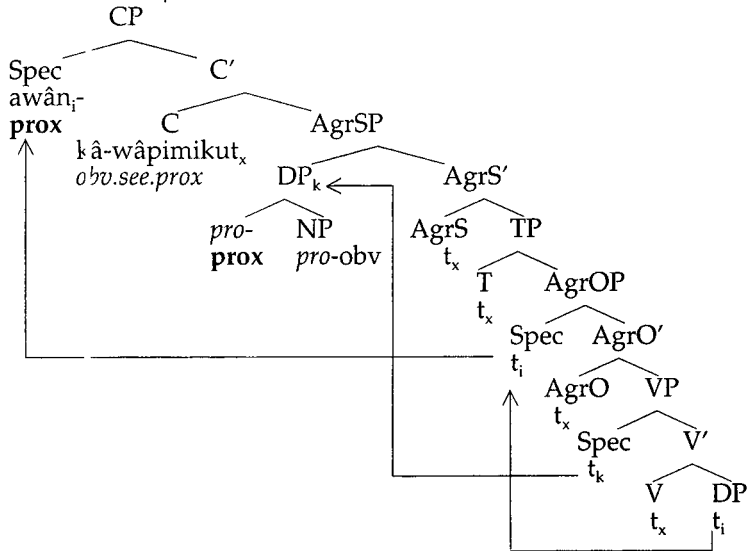
(25) Western Naskapi: *wh*-extraction from subject position, example (21)

*Awî:n kâ-wâpimât utawâsîma?*  
 'who<sub>i</sub> saw his<sub>x</sub> child?'



(26) Western Naskapi: *wh*-extraction from object position, example (23)

*Awî:n kâ-wâpimikut utawâsîma?*  
 'who<sub>i</sub> did his<sub>x</sub> child see?'





The coreference relations among arguments in a relative clause can also be accounted for by assuming the OPRD Condition: whether the *wh*-phrase is extracted from subject position or object position, so long as the *wh*-phrase is proximate, coreference with the pronominal is obligatory:

## (27) Western Naskapi

- a. *Wh*-phrase extracted from subject position: bound reading only

Awân kâ-suwâyimât aniya nâpâwa mâywâyihât?  
 awân kâ-suwâyim-ât an-iyâ nâpâw-a  
 who Comp/Past-kiss(TA)-CIN.O:4/S:3 Dem-obv man-obv  
 mâywâyihât-ât  
 like(TA)-CIN.O:4/S:3  
 'who<sub>i</sub> kissed the man she<sub>i/\*k</sub> likes?'

Structure: [who]<sub>i</sub> t<sub>i</sub> kissed [<sub>DP</sub>pro-obv [<sub>CP</sub>she<sub>i</sub> likes him-obv ]]

- b. *Wh*-phrase extracted from object position: bound reading only

Awân kâ-suwâyimikut nâpâwa mâywâyihât?  
 awân kâ-suwâyim-ikut nâpâw-a  
 who Comp/Past-kiss(TA)-CIN.O:3/S:4 man-obv  
 mâywâyihât-ât  
 like(TA).CIN-S:4/O:3  
 'who<sub>i</sub> did the man she<sub>i/\*j</sub> likes kiss?'

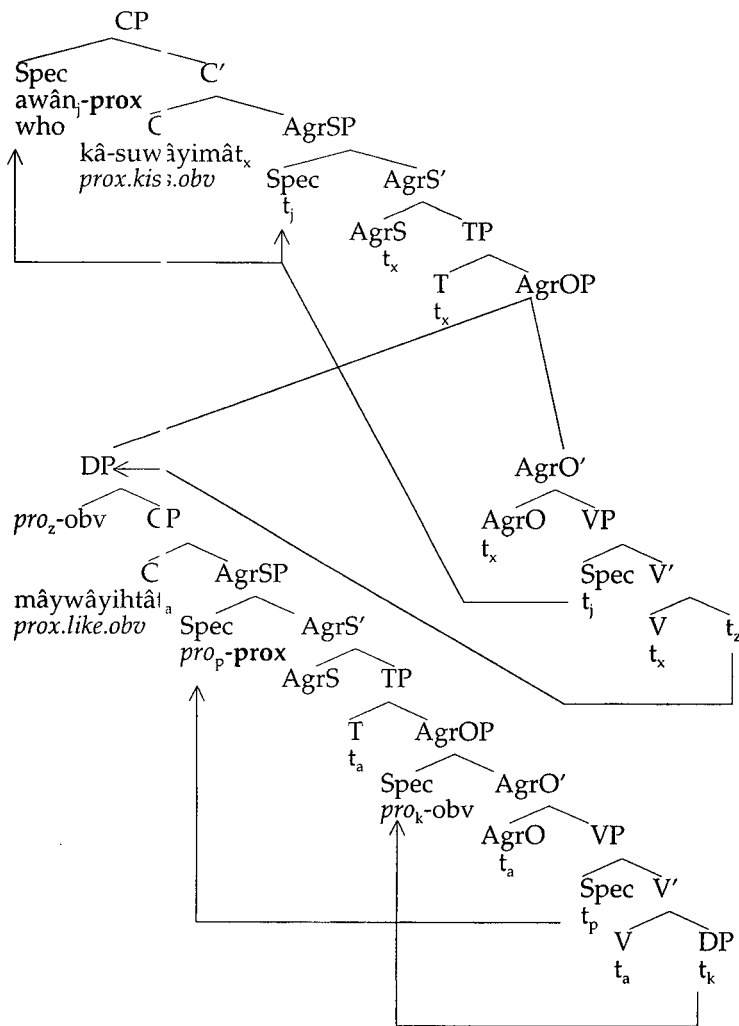
Structure: [who]<sub>i</sub> kissed [<sub>DP</sub>pro-obv [<sub>CP</sub>she<sub>i</sub> likes him-obv ] t<sub>i</sub> ]

The structures for these examples are given in (28) and (29), respectively.

(28) Example (27a)

*Wh*-phrase extracted from subject position (i.e., no A-bar-Consistency violation occurs)

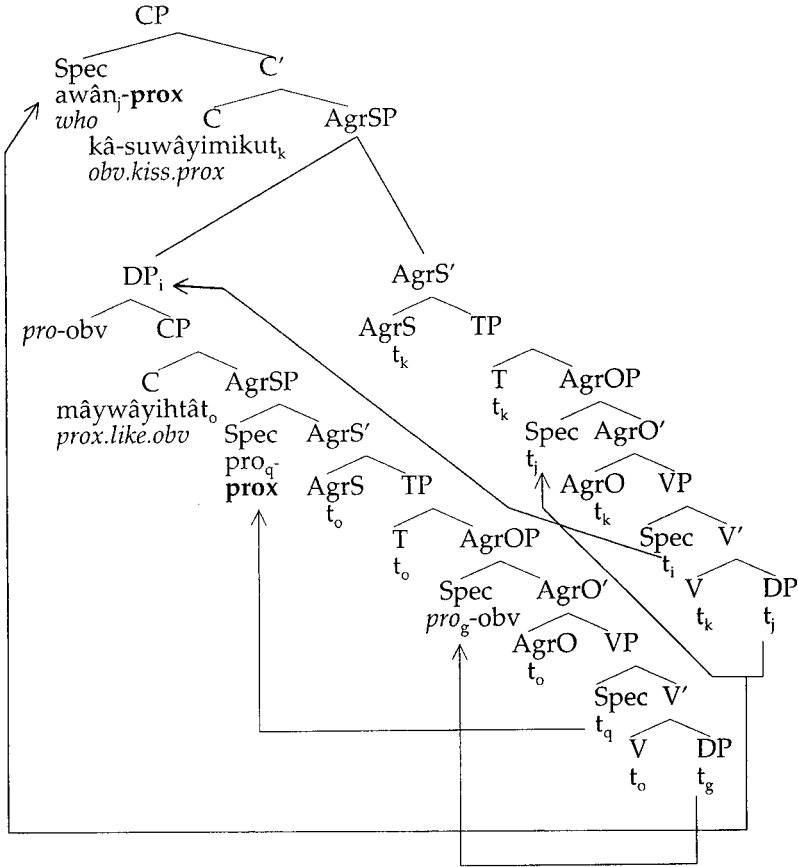
OPR Condition forces co-reference between *wh*-phrase and *pro*-prox



(29) Example (27b)

*Wh*-phrase extracted from object position

A-bar-Consistency violation 'averted' due to application of OPRD Condition (*awân* 'who' binds the subject of the relative clause)



In (28), the OPRD Condition applies because the *wh*-phrase and the subject of the relative clause are both proximate. This configuration does not give rise to an A-bar-Consistency violation because the *wh*-phrase is extracted from subject position. In structure (29), the extraction of the *wh*-phrase from object position results in an A-bar-Consistency violation but the application of the OPRD Condition in this example, enforces coreference between the *wh*-phrase and the subject of the relative clause.

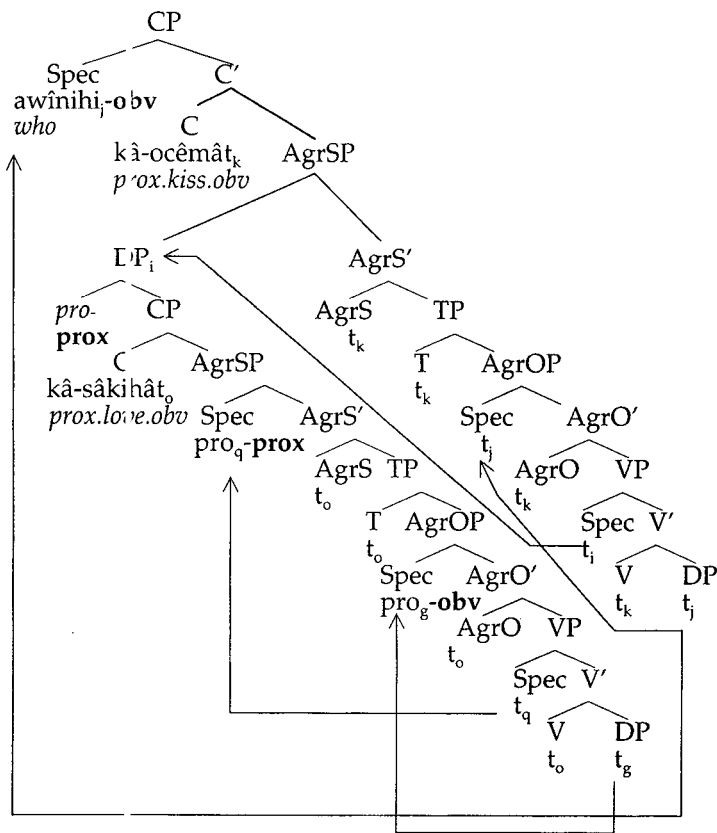
The phrase structure for the example in (22a) is provided in (30).

(30) Plains Cree, example (22a): obviative *wh*-phrase extracted from object position ('VCO effects in WCO configuration)

a. (Example 22a)

Awînihi nâpêw kâ-sâkihât kâ-ocêmât?  
 awîni-hi nâpêw kâ-sâkih-â-t kâ-ocêm-â-t?  
 who obv man REL-love-dir-3 REL-kiss-dir-3  
 'who did the man who loves her<sub>i/j</sub> kiss?'

b. X[prox] loves Y[obv], X[prox] kissed Z[obv]?



The notation in (30b) highlights the relations within the construction: the subject of the main clause and the subject of the relative clause are both proximate, and are coreferential as the OPRD Condition requires. Notice that both the object of the relative clause and the *wh*-object of the main

clause are obviative—these are highlighted in bold on the phrase structure. These two obviative arguments, however, are not coreferential. This raises the question of what causes the obligatory disjoint reference. The most obvious answer is that here we are seeing WCO effects—to state this in terms of Safir 1996, the chain tails ‘covert *pro*’ and ‘*wh*-trace’ are incompatible here in just the same manner that the overt pronoun and the *wh*-trace shown in the English example in (19) are incompatible chain tails. It would seem prudent to be wary of taking an analysis which works well in languages like English or German, for example, i.e., languages which predominantly have overt pronouns, and applying it to languages which typically have null pronominals. The obvious question is ‘are covert *pro* and a *wh*-trace incompatible chain tails?’ Perhaps we shouldn’t expect to find crossover effects in languages which have null pronominal arguments. Safir in fact observes that A-bar-Consistency violation occurs irrespective of whether the tail of the representational chain is a covert pronoun or an overt pronoun; a clash involving a covert pronominal tail however, appears to give rise to less bad effects than a clash involving an overt pronoun. The Plains Cree example in (22a) supports the view that the chain tails *pro* (ie, the covert pronoun) and *wh*-trace are indeed incompatible. In (22a), the OPRD Condition applies to enforce coreference between the subjects of the relative and main clauses. WCO effects appear in this WCO configuration here because the OPRD Condition fails to apply to the object pronouns.

The analysis predicts the facts in (31) in a straightforward manner.

(31) Western Naskapi: disjoint reference forced by obviative /proximate distinction

a. *Wh*-extraction from subject position

Awân kâ-suwâyimât aniya nâpâwa mâywâyihâtâyichî?

awân kâ-suwâyim-ât an-iya

who Comp/Past-kiss(TA)-CIN.O:4/S:3 Dem-obv

nâpâw-a mâywâyihât-âiyichî

man-obv like(TA)-CIN.O:5/S:4

‘who<sub>e</sub>, kissed the man she<sub>e<sub>i</sub>/k</sub> likes?’

b. *Wh*-extraction from object position

Awîiyuwa kâ-suwâyimâyichî nâpâwa mâywâyihât?

awây-y-uwâ kâ-suwâyim-âiyichî

who-objv Comp/Past-kiss(TA)-CIN.O:5/S:4

nâp.iw-a mâywâyihât

man-objv like(TA)-CIN.O:4/S:3

'who, did the man she<sub>i/k</sub> likes kiss?'

Disjoint reference is obtained in the relative clause constructions in both (31a) and (31b). In (31a), the *wh*-subject is proximate. However, since it is the only proximate nominal in the construction, the OPRD Condition does not apply to enforce coreference. In (31b), the obviative *wh*-phrase is not required to be coreferential with any of the pronominals below it.

## 5. CONCLUDING REMARKS

In conclusion, it would seem that something like the OPRD Condition occupies a central place in the grammar of Algonquian. It ensures that the type of ambiguity which arises in an English construction like *Who saw his dog?*—where 'who' may or may not bind the pronoun—never arises in Algonquian. At the same time, we also have a simple explanation for the fact that WCO effects appear in a subset of WCO configurations in Algonquian. The analysis offered here may be too simple but I believe that the existence of the OPRD Condition, or something like it, is worth considering. At the very least it allows us to account for the absence of Crossover effects in Algonquian without claiming that Algonquian is different configurationally from the so-called configurational languages (where crossover effects turn up in the expected places). More generally, the OPRD Condition should take precedence over Binding Principles throughout the grammar of Algonquian. The extent to which this prediction holds remains to be determined by future research.

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