Antitopics and episode structure in Meskwaki

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Abstract: This paper concerns antitopics, a concept introduced by Chafe (1976), and the interaction of antitopics with episode structure, another focus of Chafe's work (1980a, 1994). I demonstrate that in Meskwaki (Algonquian) narrative texts, one strategy for indicating the boundary of an episode is to begin the episode with an NP in topic position and end it with a repetition of the topic NP at the end of the last clause: the antitopic position. Recognizing this pattern helps make sense of some otherwise puzzling word order patterns in Meskwaki, a language with extremely flexible word order. The interaction of the topic/antitopic pattern with the discourse-based opposition of proximate vs. obviative third person is also discussed.
Keywords: antitopic, episode structure, Algonquian, word order, obviation

It is an honor to contribute to the special issue of *Text & Talk* in memory of Wallace Chafe.[1] The present paper concerns *antitopics*, a concept introduced by Chafe (1976:53–54) and further developed by Chafe's student Knud Lambrecht (Lambrecht 1981, 1994). Antitopics appear at the end of a sentence, the mirror image of the more familiar clause-initial overt topic.[2] Chafe's example of an antitopic in the Iroquoian language Seneca is reproduced in (1):

(1) káeoʔtaʔ   næ·   hayǽ· ʔthak…   **nẽ·kẽ· ne**   **ʔõ·kweh**.
     gun   indeed he-used-to-use   **this**   **person**
     'Indeed he used to use a gun, **this guy**.' Seneca; Chafe (1976:53)[3]

The discussion below will explore the role of the antitopic construction in Meskwaki in relation to *episode structure*, another focus of Chafe's research (see Chafe [1980a:40–47], Chafe [1994:138–139]).

My claim in this paper is that the notion of antitopic helps explain some of the word order patterns found in the Algonquian language Meskwaki, a language with extremely flexible word order. More specifically, I claim that some episodes in Meskwaki narrative texts are bracketed by an overt topic NP at the beginning of the episode and end with a repetition of that same topic in clause-final position—the antitopic position. Below I provide some background about Meskwaki, the corpus of narrative texts under investigation, and Meskwaki word order before

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[1] Wally is the reason why I am an Americanist: when I took Field Methods with Wally, working with a speaker of the Siouan language Lakota, I realized that this was the type of linguistics I wanted to do. Though I ended up specializing in Algonquian languages, not in Lakota, Wally was the co-chair of my dissertation and a valued mentor throughout the years.

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[2] Such constructions are sometimes dismissed as mere "afterthoughts" but Lambrecht argues persuasively that antitopics are not the same thing as afterthoughts. For example, true afterthoughts are stressed; antitopics are not (Lambrecht 1981:76).

[3] I have supplied the translation in (1) since no free translation is given for this example in Chafe (1976). Many thanks to Marianne Mithun for confirming the accuracy of the translation (personal communication).

turning to examples of episodes bracketed by the topic/antitopic pattern. The final section of the paper examines the interaction of topics and antitopics with the Algonquian discourse-based opposition of proximate and obviative third persons, showing that topics and antitopics are usually, but not always, proximate. In the spirit of Chafe (1976), which demonstrated that a number of discourse-based notions, such as givenness and definiteness, must be recognized as distinct phenomena, I argue that proximate status in Algonquian cannot be equated with either the topic or antitopic relation.

1 Background on Meskwaki

Meskwaki is a head-marking polysynthetic Algonquian language spoken on the Meskwaki Settlement in eastern Iowa. Verbs are inflected for subject and object; the argument inflection functions as agreement if a lexical subject or object is present or as pronouns in the absence of an external argument. Meskwaki also has extremely flexible word order: all permutations of subject, verb, and object are grammatical, and in elicitation speakers will report that each permutation "means the same." Discontinuous constituents are possible, including preverbs separated from the remainder of the compound verb stem (Dahlstrom 1995, 2000). Since word order is evidently not employed to disambiguate subjects from objects, it follows that the linear order of constituents within a clause must be determined by discourse factors.

In investigating the discourse factors relevant for conditioning the choice of word order we are lucky to have a remarkable corpus of texts available. These texts were written in the early 20th century by mostly monolingual Meskwaki speakers using the Meskwaki syllabary (Goddard 1996). The corpus consists of nearly 27,000 pages of material and is stored at the National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution; it was collected by Smithsonian ethnologist Truman Michelson who traveled to the Meskwaki Settlement in 1911 and found that most people were literate in the Meskwaki syllabary. Michelson paid speakers by the page to write down traditional texts and ethnographic information, a portion of which Michelson edited and published. More recently Ives Goddard, Lucy Thomason, and I have edited and published other texts from the corpus (e.g. Dahlstrom 1996, Goddard 2006, Thomason 2015). It should be noted that the syllabary used in the corpus of texts does not indicate any punctuation other than a word boundary symbol; nevertheless, it is possible to discern clause boundaries and the syntactic relationship between clauses, as explained in Dahlstrom (2006).

Having a significant quantity of connected text allows one to investigate discourse-related phenomena, such as the Algonquian discourse-based opposition within third person known as *obviation*: when two or more third person referents are being talked about, the third person most central to the discourse is referred to by the unmarked third person forms (called *proximate*) and the more peripheral third persons are referred to by specially marked *obviative* forms. Subject and object verb agreement reflects the proximate/obviative opposition as well, permitting the great variety of word order possibilities seen in the language. Consider the clause in (2), in which the quoted material has been elided:[4]

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[4] Abbreviations: 3′ = obviative, 3″ = further obviative, 0 = inanimate, ABSENT = absentative, ANIM = animate, AOR = aorist prefix; aorist conjunct inflection, CH.C = changed conjunct, CONTR = contrastive, DIM = diminutive, EMPH = emphatic, EXCLAM = exclamation, EXPL = expletive, FUT = future, IC = Initial Change (ablaut rule), IMP = imperative, IND = independent indicative, INTERR.PART = interrogative participle, LOC = locative, NEG= negative inflection, O = (first) object, O2 = second object, OBL = oblique head of relative clause, OBV = obviative, PART = conjunct participle, PERF = perfective, PL = plural, PRIOR = prioritive, PROHIB = prohibitive, REDUP = reduplication,

(2)　　"..."　*e·hina·či osi·me·hani wi·sahke·ha*
　　　　　　　e·h-in-<u>a·či</u>　　　　　　　o-si·me·h-**ani**　　　　　wi·sahke·h-**a**
　　　　　　　AOR-say.thus.to-<u>3>3′</u>/AOR　　3-younger.sibling-**OBV**　　W-**SG**
　　　　　'Wisahkeha said "..." to his younger brother.' (Kiyana 1913:131F)

In (2) the noun suffixes (in bold) indicate that Wisahkeha, the Meskwaki trickster/culture hero, is proximate (inflected with the unmarked third person suffix) and his younger brother is obviative (inflected with the marked obviative suffix). The underlined verb inflection indicates that the subject of 'say thus to' is proximate (3), while the object of 'say thus to' is obviative (3′).

　　　Within certain syntactic domains, such as a simple clause with two third person arguments, obviation is obligatory. That is, only one of the third persons can be proximate; the other must be obviative. Likewise, if a noun is possessed by a third person possessor, the possessum is obligatorily obviative. In larger stretches of discourse, however, the speaker or narrator has stylistic options available: either maintaining the original proximate third person as proximate through multiple clauses, or shifting the proximate status to another character. The corpus of Meskwaki texts permits a thorough investigation of the contexts in which the proximate status is maintained or shifted.

2 Word order

As previously mentioned, discourse conditions also bear upon the order of constituents within a clause. In earlier work (Dahlstrom [1993] and later papers) I have proposed the template in (3) to account for a great deal of the observed word order patterns in Meskwaki:

(3) [$_{S′}$ TOPIC [$_S$ NEG FOCUS OBLIQUE　　V　　XP*]]
　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　{SUBJ, OBJ, OBJ2, COMP}

Some comments on the template in (3): first, I'm assuming an informal framework of Lexical Functional Grammar (cf. Dalrymple, Lowe, and Mycock 2019), in which it is possible to have flat constituent structure (e.g. no VP); for the definitions of topic and (argument-)focus I follow Lambrecht (1994). Second, none of the positions in the template is required to be filled by an overt consituent: many Meskwaki clauses consist only of a single verb, with the verbal inflection for subject and object functioning pronominally.

2.1 Constituents to the left of the verb

The positions for constituents occuring to the left of the verb are well understood. In leftmost position there may occur an overt topic NP: note that a topic, if it occurs, is in a position hierarchically higher than the comment which follows. See Dahlstrom (1993) for discussion; one piece of evidence for the structural position of topic is the placement of second-position enclitics. Enclitics may occur both in the second position of the topic constituent and in the second position of the comment, as in (4), in which the enclitic particles are underlined.

SG = singular, SUBJNCT = subjunctive, TEMP = temporal head, VOC = vocative, X = unspecified subject. Subject and object features in verb inflection are separated by > and are followed by identification of the verbal paradigm. The head of a relative clause is identified following the label PART (participle). Vowel length is marked by a raised dot.

Within the clause proper the template in (3) shows that a negative element, if present, occurs on the left edge, followed by a position for focused elements (e.g. contrastive focus, surprising/unexpected information, question words, answers to question-word questions; see Dahlstrom [2003a]), which in turn is followed by the position for syntactically oblique arguments immediately to the left of the verb. Oblique arguments express notions such as goal, source, or path of motion, stationary location, manner, and various types of measure phrases, and are nearly always paired with an overt morpheme on the verb identifying the semantic role played by the oblique (see Dahlstrom [2014] for discussion). The example in (4) exhibits an overt topic, a negative particle, and an oblique all occurring to the left of the verb:

(4)   *manake·hi ko·šiseme·ha a·kwimeko ke·ko·hi ine·netamo·na·nini*
        [_{TOP}   mana=<u>ke·hi</u>   ke-o·šiseme·h-a]
                 this.ANIM=and   2-grandchild-SG

        [_S a·kwi=<u>meko</u>   ke·ko·hi   ine·netamaw-ena·nini]
           not=EMPH   in.any.way   think.thus.about.O's.O2-1>2/NEG

        'And as for your grandchild, I don't think anything [bad] about him at all.' W22E

The oblique in (4), *ke·ko·hi* 'anything, in any way', is an oblique of manner, paired with the initial morpheme of the verb stem *in-* which contributes the gloss 'thus' in the gloss of the verb stem. It should also be noted that the verb in (4) has undergone the syntactic rule of possessor raising, which makes the possessor of the theme argument the first object of a ditransitive stem, with the possessum the second object.

2.2 Constituents to the right of the verb

In contrast to the analysis of material occurring to the left of the verb, in which four distinct positions can be identified, each playing specific syntactic, semantic, or information-structural roles, the material occurring to the right of the verb is not well understood. The template in (3) lists XP – in other words, a constituent of any type – marked with the Kleene star notation (*) indicating that any number of XPs, including zero, may occur. The grammatical functions listed in the curly brackets below XP* indicate that the postverbal XP or XPs may be associated with the functions SUBJECT, OBJECT, OBJECT2 and COMP.[5] In other words, for non-oblique arguments which are neither topic nor focus their unmarked position is after the verb, but no ordering of the post-verbal elements is specified.
        The vagueness of the notation "XP*" to the right of the verb in (3) is admittedly unsatisfying. Despite the availability of a significant corpus of texts, the problem of discovering relevant factors influencing the relative ordering of postverbal constituents when more than one occur has so far remained intractable. This is in large part due to the fact that clauses with two or more postverbal constituents are quite infrequent. In the Meskwaki corpus only 2% of clauses exhibit more than one postverbal constituent, as opposed to 68% with no constituent following the verb and 30% with a single postverbal constituent.[6] These figures are comparable to those found in textual analyses of other languages, such as Du Bois (1987)'s work on Sacapultec

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[5] COMP is the grammatical function borne by complement clauses; OBJECT2 corresponds to OBJ$_\Theta$ in LFG.
[6] These percentages are based upon a text count of the first 100 pages (1,585 clauses) of Kiyana (1913).

Mayan, the basis for Du Bois's One Lexical Argument Constraint: "Avoid more than one lexical argument per clause" (Du Bois [1987:819]).

Within the restricted set of Meskwaki clauses with more than one postverbal consituent all possible orderings of subject, object, second object, and complement clause are attested. In fact it is even possible to find minimal pairs attested in the corpus. Consider (2), repeated below, and (5), both from Kiyana (1913), a 1110 page text about the trickster/culture hero Wisahkeha:

(2)   "..."   *e·hina·či osi·me·hani wi·sahke·ha*   **VOS**
                e·h-in-a·či   o-si-me-h-ani   wi·sahke·h-a
                AOR-say.thus.to-3>3′/AOR   3-younger.sibling-OBV   W-SG
      'Wisahkeha said "..." to his younger brother.' (Kiyana 1913:131F)

(5)   "..."   *e·hina·či wi·sahke·ha osi·me·hani*   **VSO**
                e·h-in-a·či   wi·sahke·h-a   o-si·me·h-ani
                AOR-say.thus.to-3>3′/AOR   W-SG   3-younger.sibling-OBV
      'Wisahkeha said "..." to his younger brother.' (Kiyana 1913:149A)

In both (2) and (5) Wisahkeha is addressing his younger brother; in both the content of the direct quotation has been elided to save space.[7] As is evident from a comparison of (2) and (5), clause-level grammatical relations cannot predict the relative order of postverbal constituents: (2) shows that an object may precede a subject, while (5) demonstrates the opposite order. Nor does the discourse-based opposition of proximate vs. obviative status allow us to explain the relative ordering of arguments: in (2) the obviative argument precedes the proximate and in (5) the proximate argument precedes the obviative. Instead, we must examine larger stretches of discourse to seek an explanation for at least some of the observed word order patterns in the Meskwaki corpus.

3 Episode structure and antitopics

Chafe (1980a:40–47; 1994:138–139) and many others have observed that narratives are not devoid of internal structure: rather, any narrative except the very shortest is comprised of a series of paragraph-sized episodes. (Indeed, the pear film discussed in the papers of Chafe [1980b] was explicitly devised to elicit more than one episode when subjects recounted the plot of the film.) I have discussed Meskwaki episode structure in Dahlstrom (1996), paying special attention in that paper to structural devices used to signal the beginning of an episode: topic NPs, evidential enclitics, and preposed temporal adverbial clauses. Less attention was paid in that paper to how the ends of episodes may be marked.

In this section I demonstrate that one strategy for marking the end of an episode in Meskwaki narrative texts is the appearance of an NP in the rightmost position of the last clause of the episode, in what I am calling the antitopic position, following Chafe (1976:53). Since the beginning of episodes are often indicated by the use of an NP in topic position, the repetition of that NP in the antitopic position neatly brackets the episode with two tokens of the same NP. An example of this pattern is given in (6), which begins with the topic NP (in bold) immediately

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[7] The direct quote is an oblique of manner subcategorized for by the quoting verb and therefore appears immediately to the left of the quoting verb.

followed by a direct quote.[8] The topic is *keše·–maneto·wa,* the Great Spirit, who is addressing his son.

(6)   (Kiyana [1913:74B–74J])

74B   ***wi·na keše·–maneto·wa,*** *"nahi, nekwi·hi, wi·sahke·ha osi·me·hani ki·howi·hka·ni,"*
        e·hina·či okwisani.
        wi·na   keše·–maneto·w-a,   "nahi,   nekwi·hi,   wi·sahke·h-a   o-si·me·h-ani
        he   gentle–spirit-SG   well,   son.VOC   W-SG   3-y.sib.DIM-OBV

        ke-i·h-owi·hka·ni-∅,"   e·h-in-a·či   o-kwis-ani.
        2-FUT-have.O2.as.friend-2/IND   AOR-say.thus.to-3>3′/AOR   3-son-OBV
        The Great Spirit said to his son, "Listen, son, you will have Wisahkeha's little brother
        as your friend."

74C   *"hao," e·hiniči.*
        "hao,"   e·h-i-niči.
         all.right   AOR-say.thus-3′/AOR
        "All right," he said.

74D   *"šewe·na na·hina·hmeko e·hki·šikiwe·kwe·ni*
        "šewe·na   na·hina·hi=meko   e·h-ki·šiki-we·kwe·ni
         but   at.the.time=EMPH   AOR-mature-2P/INTERR.PART/TEMP
        "But whenever the two of you have grown up

74E   *wi·hne·woti·ye·kwe," e·hina·či.*
        wi·h-ne·woti·-ye·kwe,"   e·h-in-a·či.
        FUT-see.each.other-2P/PART/TEMP   AOR-say.thus.to-3>3′/AOR
        is when you will see each other," he said to him.

74F   *"a·kwi no·ta wi·hne·woti·ye·kwini,*
        "a·kwi   no·ta   wi·h-ne·woti·-ye·kwini,
         not   too.soon   FUT-see.each.other-2P/NEG
        "You won't see each other before that,

74G   *i·nina·hmeko mehteno·hi ki·ši–ka·ki·šikiye·kwe.*
        i·nina·hi=meko   mehteno·hi   IC-ki·ši–ka·-ki·šiki-ye·kwe.
        at.that.time=EMPH   only   IC-PERF–REDUP-mature-2P/SUBJNCT
        only at the time when you have both finished growing up.

74H   *ahpene·čiča·hmeko ki·hnenehke·neta·pwa me·nwikeki,*
        ahpene·či=ča·hi=meko   ke-i·h-nenehke·net-a·pwa   IC-menwiken-ki,
        always=so=EMPH   2-FUT-think.about-2P>0/IND   IC-be.good-0/PART/0

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[8] The topic NP in 74B is reinforced with a preceding coreferential independent pronoun. See Dahlstrom [in press] for discussion of this construction.

So you should always think about what is good,

74I *i·nimeko wi·hče·wišite·he·ye·kwe," e·hina·či okwisani **keše–maneto·wa**.*
  i·ni=meko   IC-wi·h-če·wi–išite·he·-ye·kwe,"
  that=EMPH   IC-FUT-equally–think.thus-2P/PART/OBL

  e·h-in-a·či   o-kwis-ani   **keše–maneto·w-a.**
  AOR-say.thus.to-3>3′/AOR   3-son-OBV   gentle–spirit-SG
  that's the way you should both think," **the Great Spirit** said to his son.

Next line:

74J *wi·sahke·hake·hi o·hkomese·hani e·haye·ši–wa·wi·niški·kwe·niči.*
  wi·sahke·h-a=ke·hi   o-o·hkomese·h-ani   e·h-aye·ši–wa·wi·niški·kwe·-niči.
  W-SG=moreover   3-grandmother.DIM-OBV   AOR-still–have.dirty.eyes-3′/AOR
  Meanwhile, Wisahkeha's grandmother's eyes were still dirty from crying.

The repetition of *keše·–maneto·wa* 'Great Spirit' in line 74I in the antitopic position signals the end of this brief episode in which the Great Spirit and his son are the relevant characters. As evidence that 74I is the end of that episode, I have included the immediately following line, 74J, which begins with *wi·sahke·ha o·hkomese·hani* 'Wisahkeha's grandmother' in topic position, beginning a new episode.

   The other character in this passage is the Great Spirit's son, referred to by lexical NPs in lines 74B and 74I. In both lines, the NP is to the right of the verb in the unmarked position for subjects and objects that are neither topic nor focus, as predicted by the word order template in (3). Consequently, the explanation for the word order in 74I is two-fold: *okwisani* 'his son' appears after the verb because that is the unmarked position for a non-topic, non-focus NP, and *keše·–maneto·wa* 'Great Spirit' appears to the right of *okwisani* because it is in the antitopic position, which is sensitive not to clause-level relations but rather to episode-level relations.[9]

   Another example of an episode bracketed by a topic NP in the first line and a coreferential antitopic NP in the last line is given in (7), which is also from the long Wisahkeha text. The context here is that Wisahkeha has sent his younger brother to invite their grandmother to come and eat what he is cooking. The topic is *metemo·he·ha* 'old woman' announced at the beginning of line 277A, again immediately followed by a direct quote representing her thoughts.

(7)   (Kiyana [1913:277A–277F])

277A ***metemo·he·ha**, "ši, we·kone·hča·hye·toke no·šiseme·ha we·či–natomi·hiči?" e·hišite·he·či,*
  metemo·he·h-a,   "ši,   we·kone·hi=ča·hi=ye·toke
  old.woman.DIM-SG   EXCLAM   what=so=apparently

  ne-o·šiseme·h-a   IC-oči–natom-i·hiči?"   e·h-išite·he·-či,
  1-grandchild.DIM-SG   IC-from–summon.DIM-3>1/PART/OBL   AOR-think.thus-3/AOR

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[9] A separate issue is why the son is referred to by a lexical NP in line 74I instead of by the pronominal inflection on the verb. This is an interesting question but beyond the scope of the present paper.

The old woman thought, "Gosh, I wonder why my grandson is inviting me over?"

277B   *e·hanemimeko–wi·te·ma·či.*
e·h-anemi–=meko   –wi·te·m-a·či.
AOR-continue–=EMPH   –accompany-3>3′/AOR
She went away with him.

277C   *i·ya·hi pye·ya·či, o·šisemani e·htaši–wača·honiči pene·wahi.*
i·ya·hi   IC-pya·-či,
yonder   IC-come-3/CH.C

o-o·šisem-ani   e·h-taši–wača·ho-niči   pene·w-ahi.
3-grandchild-OBV   AOR-PROG–cook.O2-3′/AOR   turkey-OBV.PL
When she arrived there, her grandson was busy cooking turkeys.

277D   *no·make·we e·hapihapiči,*
no·make·we   e·h-apih-api-či,
for.a.little.while   AOR-REDUP-sit-3/AOR
She sat there for a little while,

277E   *e·hakwa·hesoniči, e·hsi·kahwa·niči ana·kaneki, e·hma·ne·niči.*
e·h-akwa·heso-niči,   e·h-si·kahw-a·niči   ana·kan-eki,
AOR-serve.self-3′/AOR   AOR-pour.out-3′>3″/AOR   bowl-LOC

e·h-ma·ne·-niči.
AOR-be.numerous-3′/AOR
and he served it up, pouring it into a bowl, a lot of it.

277F   *o·ni e·hwi·hpoma·či o·šisemahi* **metemo·ha.**
o·ni   e·h-wi·hpom-a·či   o-o·šisem-ahi   **metemo·h-a.**
and.then   AOR-eat.with-3>3′/AOR   3-grandchild-OBV.PL old.woman-SG
And then **the old woman** ate with her grandsons.

In (7) we see again the pattern of ending the episode with a repetition of the overt topic NP which began the episode.

The two examples we have seen so far end the episode with two constituents following the verb in the final clause, where the rightmost constituent echos the overt topic which began the episode. It is also possible to have an episode of this type ending with just a single constituent following the verb of the final clause, as in (8). (Only the beginning and end of (8) is given, to save space.) Here the overt topic announced at the beginning of the episode is Maminatenoha, Wisahkeha's father. He is referred to again with a full NP at the end of this portion of the text two pages later, in line 284O, where the full NP echoing the initial topic is the only constituent appearing to the right of the verb.

(8)   (Kiyana [1913:282M–284O])

282M **wi·na**=*na·hkači* **mami·nateno·ha** *e·hse·kesičimekoho*.
      wi·na=na·hkači   **mami·nateno·h-a**   e·h-se·kesi-či=mekoho.
      he=again   M-SG   AOR-be.frightened-3/AOR=EMPH
      And **Maminatenoha himself** was very frightened.

[26 lines of text…]

284O *i·nokiwi·na mešemekoho e·to·hiwa·ne·ni," e·hiči* **mami·nateno·ha**.
      i·noki=wi·na   meše=mekoho   IC-ito·hi-wa·ne·ni,"
      now=CONTR   freely=EMPH   IC-fare.so.DIM-1/INTERR.PART/OBL

      e·h-i-či   **mami·nateno·h-a.**
      AOR-say.thus-3/AOR   M-SG
      but as it is now, let whatever happens to me happen," **Maminatenoha** said.

    A similar example may be seen in the text published in Dahlstrom (2003b). The overt topic here, *pašito·ha* 'the old man', refers to the father of the hero of the story. The father has done something quite bad and gets punished for it by his son in this passage. (Again, I've abbreviated the presentation of this episode to save space.)

(9)   (Dahlstrom [2003b:106–107.11G–12H])

11G   **pašito·ha***ke·hi*
      pašito·h-a=ke·hi
      old.man-SG=moreover

11H   *me·hmeko–po·ni–ne·ne·sokwe,*
      IC-me·hi–=meko   –po·ni–ne·ne·so-kwe,
      IC-yet–=EMPH   –cease–be.panting-3/PRIOR

11I   *kapo·twe e·ye·ši–šekišekišiki,*
      kapo·twe   IC-aye·ši–šekišekišin-ki,
      at.some.point IC-still–REDUP.lie-3/CH.CONJ

11J   *e·hki·ški·škatahokoči okwisani.*
      e·h-ki·ški·škatahw-ekoči   o-kwis-ani.
      AOR-REDUP.whip-3′>3/AOR   3-son-OBV

      And **as for the old man,**
      even before he stopped panting,
      at some point while he was still lying down,
      he got a whipping from his son.

[18 lines of text…]

12H   *"ka·tača·hna·hka nekotahi iha·hkani," e·hineči* **pašito·ha**.

"ka·ta=ča·hi=na·hka   nekotahi   iha·-hkani,"
don't=so=again   anywhere   go-2/PROHIB
e·h-in-eči   **pašito·h-a**.
AOR-say.thus.to-X>3/AOR   old.man-SG
"So don't you ever go anywhere again," **the old man** was told.

4 Obviation and antitopics

Let us now return to the minimal pair provided earlier, which demonstrated that a postverbal subject and a postverbal object could occur in either order:

(2)   "..."   *e·hina·či osi·me·hani wi·sahke·ha*   **VOS**
                 e·h-in-a·či   o-si·me·h-ani   wi·sahke·h-a
                 AOR-say.thus.to-3>3′/AOR   3-younger.sibling-OBV   W-SG
                 'Wisahkeha said "..." to his younger brother.' (Kiyana 1913:131F)

(5)   "..."   *e·hina·či wi·sahke·ha osi·me·hani*   **VSO**
                 e·h-in-a·či   wi·sahke·h-a   o-si·me·h-ani
                 AOR-say.thus.to-3>3′/AOR   W-SG   3-younger.sibling-OBV
                 'Wisahkeha said "..." to his younger brother.' (Kiyana 1913:149A)

Are the final NPs (2) and (5) also examples of the episode-ending antitopic construction exemplified in (6–9)? The answer is yes. (2) is the end of an episode involving Wisahkeha, his younger brother, and their grandmother, which begins with *wi·sahke·ha* in topic position followed by quoted speech directed to the grandmother:

(10) (Kiyana [1913:130H–131F])

130H   *kapo·twemeko **wi·sahke·ha**, "ano·hko,*
       kapo·twe=meko| **wi·sahke·h-a**, "ano·hko,
       at.some.point=EMPH   W-SG   grandmother.VOC
       Pretty soon **Wisahkeha** said, "Gee, grandma,

130I   *a·kwini·hkameko ke·ko·hi iši–kano·ši·hiya·kini e·hpya·ya·ke," e·hina·či wi·sahke·ha.*
       a·kwi=ni·hka=meko   ke·ko·hi   išil–kano·n-i·hiya·kini
       not=MAN'S.EXPL=EMPH   anything   thus–speak.to.DIM-2>1P/NEG

       e·h-pya·-ya·ke,"   e·h-in-a·či   wi·sahke·h-a.
       AOR-come-1P/AOR   AOR-say.thus.to-3>3'/AOR   W-SG
       you never said a word to us when we came in," Wisahkeha said to her.

[7 lines…]

131F   *"nahi, nesi·hi, natomi i·niya mahkwa," e·hina·či osi·me·hani **wi·sahke·ha**.*
       "nahi,   nesi·hi,   natom-i_   i·niya   mahkw-a,"

well,   y.sib.DIM.VOC summon-2>3/IMP   that.ABSENT.ANIM   bear-SG

e·h-in-a·či   o-si·me·h-ani   **wi·sahke·h-a.**
AOR-say.thus.to-3>3'/AOR   3-younger.sibling.DIM-OBV   W-SG
"Listen, brother, tell that bear to come here," **Wisahkeha** said to his younger brother.

The lines after 131F concern the younger brother traveling to find the bear and their subsequent conversation.

The final NP in example (5) is also an instance of an episode-ending antitopic, as can be seen in (11), but in an important respect it is a departure from the pattern we have seen so far. In (11) both the topic NP at the beginning of the episode and the antitopic NP closing the episode are obviative, the grammatical category indicating that the referent is more peripheral to the discourse than the referent expressed by third person proximate forms. In contrast, in (6–10) the topics and antitopics have all been expresed by proximate NPs.

(11) (Kiyana [1913:145J–149A])

145J   *o·ni **osi·me·hani**, "ke·htenake·hmekowi·na i·niya te·pwe·wa e·nowe·či," e·hikoči.*
       o·ni_   **o-si·me·h-ani**,   "ke·htena=ke·hi=meko=wi·na
       and.then   3-younger.sibling.DIM-OBV   truly=moreover=EMPH=CONTR

       i·niya   te·pwe·-wa   IC-inowe·-či,"
       that.ABSENT.ANIM   speak.the.truth-3/IND   IC-talk.so-3/PART/OBL

       e·h-∅-ikoči.
       AOR-say.thus.to-3'>3/AOR
       And then **his younger brother** said to him, "Truly what he said is right."

[38 lines…]

149A   *"kašina·h,nesi·hi, i·nimeko ki·hišawipena ayo·hmekoočiwe·pi," e·hina·či wi·sahke·ha*
       osi·me·hani.
       "kašina·h,=nesi·hi,_   i·ni=meko| ke-i·h-išawi-pena   ayo·hi=meko|=očiwe·pi,"
       why!=y.sib.VOC   that=EMPH   2-FUT-do.thus-21/IND   here=EMPH=from.now.on

       e·h-in-a·či   wi·sahke·h-a   **o-si·me·h-ani.**
       AOR-say.thus.to-3>3'/AOR   W-SG   3-younger.sibling.DIM-OBV
       "Well, brother, we will do exactly that from here on," Wisahkeha told **his brother.**

The episode in (11) is a dialogue between Wisahkeha and his younger brother; it begins after the two boys have been scolded by the bear whom their grandmother has married. As can be seen in 145J, the episode begins with the younger brother speaking: in the course of the episode the younger brother speaks more than he has in earlier episodes of the narrative and succeeds in persuading his more rebellious older brother that they ought to heed the bear's advice. The prominence of the younger brother in this episode motivates the NP *osi·me·hani* 'his younger brother' to appear as both topic in line 145J and antitopic in line 149A. Nevertheless,

because the narrator chose to identify this character with a possessed kinterm the NP is obligatorily marked obviative and cannot be proximate.

In a recent paper (Dahlstrom [2017]) I have argued that the proximate/obviative opposition cannot be defined in terms of topic: topic NPs in Meskwaki and other Algonquian languages are usually proximate, but are not necessarily proximate. A near minimal pair from Dahlstrom (2017:48) demonstrates this:

(12) *wi·sahke·hake·hi wa·natohkameko e·hkehči—nepa·či*
　　　wi·sahke·h-a=ke·hi　　wa·natohka=meko　　e·h-kehči—nepa·-či
　　　W-SG=and　　　　　　peacefully=EMPH　　AOR-greatly—sleep-3/AOR
　　　'As for Wisahkeha (prox), he was peacefully sound asleep.' (Kiyana 1913:163)

(13) *i·ninike·hi o·šisemani wa·natohkameko e·hkehči–nepa·niči*
　　　i·n-ini=ke·hi　　o-o·šisem-ani
　　　that-OBV=and　her-grandchild-OBV

　　　wa·natohka=meko　　　e·h-kehči–nepa·-niči
　　　 peacefully=EMPH　　　AOR-greatly–sleep-3′/AOR
　　　'As for her grandson (obv), he was peacefully sound asleep' (Kiyana 1913:10)

In (12) the topic is Wisahkeha, referred to with a proximate NP; the comment is that he is peacefully sound asleep. (13) is from a different episode in Kiyana (1913), also describing Wisahkeha being sound asleep, but here the scene is presented from the point of view of Wisahkeha's grandmother. Consequently, in (13) Wisahkeha is referred to by a kinship term with the grandmother as possessor, a syntactic configuration which obligatorily puts the possessum into obviative status. Nevertheless, the aboutness relation – the function of the topic/comment construction – which holds in (12) is identical to that which holds in (13). Topics express aboutness and the use of an antitopic signals the end of the stretch of discourse which is about the episode's topic. The proximate/obviative opposition, on the other hand, is available to express empathy, point of view, or other discourse-based factors. The near minimal pair in (12) and (13) demonstrate that a topic NP in Meskwaki may be obviative: the episode in (11) extends that observation to antitopics as well.

5 Conclusion

This paper has described a strategy used in Meskwaki narrative texts for indicating episode boundaries: the episode may begin with a topic NP appearing in the leftmost position of the first clause, and end with a repetition of the same NP in the rightmost position of the final clause – the position I am calling the antitopic position. The result is to bracket the episode with two instances of the same NP appearing in a chiastic pattern.

Recognizing that episode-level considerations may influence both the narrator's choice to use a lexical NP rather than pronominal inflection and the narrator's choice of where the NP occurs in the clause helps us understand some of the factors involved in the possible varieties of Meskwaki word order. In particular, the positioning of NPs in the infrequent cases of more than one NP following the verb may not be due to clause-level relations, or to the proximate/obviative

opposition within third person, but may be due to stylistic and rhetorical choices made by the speaker or narrator.

At the same time, however, it is important to note the limitations of what is being claimed here. Not all episodes in a text will be bracketed with an initial topic and a final antitopic: there are additional structural devices available to signal episode boundaries. I am also not claiming that all instances of Meskwaki clauses exhibiting more than one postverbal consituent can be explained as containing a final antitopic: just that the antitopic analysis is able to account for a significant number of such clauses. In other words, the word order template given above in (3) can be amended to indicate the possibility of a final antitopic position, but the Kleene star notation on the postverbal XP consitutent cannot yet be deleted: it is still necessary to allow more than more XP position to the right of the verb.

(14) [$_{S'}$ TOPIC [$_S$ NEG FOCUS OBLIQUE   V   XP*   ANTITOPIC]]
$\{$SUBJ, OBJ, OBJ2, COMP$\}$

We have also seen how the topic/antitopic pattern interacts with the discourse-based opposition within third person known as obviation: most tokens of antitopics are proximate, just as most tokens of topics are, but it is also possible to find obviative antitopics paired with obviative topics. Example (11) above provides further evidence for the argument made in Dahlstrom (2017) that the proximate/obviative distinction cannot be defined in terms of topicality. Instead, in the spirit of the influential article of Chafe (1976), more subtle distinctions must be recognized in the realm of discourse pragmatics: the proximate/obviative opposition does different work in packaging information structure than the topic and antitopic constructions.

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