Comanche deictic markers and their viewing arrangements

Todd McDaniels
SUNY at Buffalo

The following discusses perspective in Comanche, concentrating on third person “deictic” markers. Deictic Center Theory maintains that the events of narrative are subjectively interpreted and metaphorically “viewed” with the assistance of linguistic marking in a way that is analogous with the use of deixis in real world interaction. Deixis is a contextually influenced phenomenon that creates references that are determined by a cognitive orientation to a particular person, a thing, a place, or a time. In the same way that such references are viewpoint-specific in the real world, it is held that storyworlds are “toured” in a fashion that must also be anchored by a particular viewpoint. Following these considerations, it will be put forward that the asymmetrical property of the proximate-obviative contrast associated with Comanche deictic markers creates a polarization in the deictic field, projecting one character as the origin of perspective, and another as the object of perspective.

1. Preliminary linguistic considerations

Comanche has a set of deictic markers, given in Table 1 that act as components of third person demonstratives and definite articles. In interactional discourse they set up a proximal-to-distal deictic distinction, as in Table 1 and example (1):

Table 1. Deictic Markers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proximal</th>
<th>Medial</th>
<th>Distal</th>
<th>Scattered</th>
<th>Undistinguished distance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>u</td>
<td>e</td>
<td>ma</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. a. i-tsa wa’óo. b. o-tsa wa’óo.
   PROX-DM cat       MED-DM cat
   ‘This is a cat.’   ‘That is a cat.’

1 The corpus is drawn entirely from Canonge & Riddles (1958). Emily Riddles’ name was not given as an author. Her name is cited with authorship here as a matter of principle, since she was the storyteller.
2 These occur as bases for a variety of word-types, and in some cases occur as separate words.
b. u-tsa wa’óó. (d) wa’óó ma.
DIST-DM cat cat ‘it’
‘That there is a cat.’ ‘It’s a cat.’

All deictic markers, with the exception of ma, may be found prefixed with a topic
marker, s-, suffixed with a case marker, and distinguished for singular, dual, and plural
(see Charney 1993: 90-92; Robinson & Armagost 1990: 295-297). Only the deictic
morphemes, u, i, and ma occur frequently in narrative. The medial, o, and the scattered, e,
are rare. The investigation, therefore, will be confined to u, i, and ma. Prefixation and
suffixation of the deictic markers and the deictic markers - o and e - will not be
considered significant to the investigation.

Comanche narrative presents some peculiar difficulties in regard to understanding
deictic morpheme selection. It was previously pointed out in Armagost (1985: 305-307)
that the use of i, u, and ma in narrative is not readily transparent with regard to the deictic
properties otherwise commonly ascribed to them.

Story introductions immediately following character introduction often have all
third person referents marked exclusively with u, as exemplified in (2) below:

2. S-u-tii-ki-se’ soo u toya-baah-ku nanisuyake
TOP-DIST-N,PL-NAR-DM many DIST mountain-have-SR handsome

   u ti-tieh-baa-hunu’-baah-ku u-ki-u
   DIST RDP-little-water-creek-have-SR DIST(‘there’)-LOC-PUR

noßiti-nu.
make.camp-PF

‘They(u) were camped where it(u) had many mountains, where it(u) had
many beautiful little creeks.’3 (Canonge & Riddles 1958: 111)

Exclusive u-marking may continue throughout an entire story, reflecting a
deictically DISTral presentation of the events of the story. Alternatively, in the
development and climax of a story, a split often occurs such that one referent gets marked
by i and another with ma, as exemplified by (3) below:

3 The translations given in this and all subsequent examples drawn from Canonge & Riddles (1958) are this
author’s informed adaptations of what may often be highly awkward transliterations given in the original.

3
proximate/obviative contrast. A proximate/obviative contrast is a subdivision of third person reference that distinguishes entities as either primary (proximate) or secondary (obviative) depending on the importance of their status within a discourse. The pragmatic effect that this has on perspective taking within a storyworld is the primary concern of what follows.

2. Deictic Center Theory

Deictic Center Theory’s major assertion is that there exists within language and narrative something akin to a “roving window”, as discussed in (Zubin & Hewitt 1995: 131), which will be referred to here as a focal / perspectival field. This covers everything that would normally be considered to be onstage, while excluding whatever is offstage, as illustrated in Fig.1:

Fig. 1 Objectivized conceptualization of the Deictic Center

The field is anchored by a deictic center. The deictic center is minimally comprised of a perspective origin in straightforward objective tellings. The field converges on the origin, which is the vantage point from which the events of the narrative are “viewed”. The viewer at this origin may be a character of the storyworld, or it may be a virtual observer. The virtual observer is not a direct representation of the author or the listener.

It is an intermediary mental space constructed by the author which is located in the story world, but occurs outside of the deictic field, and is therefore not directly

---

4 Comanche has only a subset of the grammatical characteristics of a proximate/obviative system (Armagost 1985). The contrast is regarded here as an incipient proximate/obviative system at an early stage of grammaticalization.

5 A traditional description of the behavior of a proximate/obviative system identifies the primary (proximate) referent as being that which is first mentioned in a text, while referents that are subsequently introduced are secondary (obviative). This is probably an overly algorithmic approach. It will be assumed that proximate/obviative contrasts are primarily a pragmatic phenomenon, the understanding of which this paper will hopefully contribute to.

6 A thorough discussion of mental spaces is provided in Fauconnier (1997).

7 The concept of a virtual observer owes a great deal to the notion of an empty center argued for in Banfield (1987).
represented linguistically. As with deixis in face to face interaction which is anchored on the ‘here’, ‘now’, and ‘I’ of the real world, the deictic center is concerned with the anchoring of the field on the WHERE, WHEN, WHO and WHAT of the story world. Because the concern here is with the nature of third person reference, we will be primarily concerned with the WHO and the WHAT, although spatial and temporal deixis will also play a role in the argument.

Inside the field is the content (people, animals, things). In objective passages, all the content is of relatively equal weight, and, because it is not linguistically represented, the virtual observer is relatively trivial. It is understood as being anchored in a detached or less biased stance with respect to the content. This is illustrated in Fig. 2 below:

Fig. 2 Objectivized conceptualization of the Deictic Center

As the storytelling becomes increasingly subjectivized, some portion of the content comes to stand out in its saliency and central importance to the discourse as a whole, yielding content, which may be distinguished as either focal or peripheral. The focalized content (the center of attention) becomes a defining part of the deictic center along with the origin, under the assumption that the origin lines up in proximity with the focalized content. When this happens, the deictic center becomes functionally motivated by various linguistic cues, and acts as an anchoring point for perspectivization of the WHO. The subjective conceptualization is illustrated in Fig. 3 below:

---

8 Some possible pragmatic interpretations of the virtual observer are as: a) a mnemonic device for the teller, b) an invitation to the listener to vicariously experience the story, or c) a covert narrator. Which of these the reader prefers is not material to the linguistic analysis.

9 The virtual observer is never represented as a thematic role of a main verb, even as a zero morpheme, but the presence of a virtual observer may be presupposed by particular predicates. For example, the English words, ‘appear’ and ‘seem’, in “Adam appeared at the door. He seemed angry,” clearly presupposes the spatial and psychological vantage point of an observer.

10 The schematicization and resources used in Fig.1 are reminiscent of and highly influenced by Langacker (1985). See also Li (1991: 12) for a notable modification of these concepts within a Deictic Center Theory context.
Such perspectivization can be likened to cinematic camera angles (see Kuno 1987: 203-206). Under this metaphor, the origin is equivalent to a camera, the field is equivalent to everything within the camera's sight, and the camera placement (or perspective) reflects the configuration of the content as either flat as in Fig. 2, or slanted as in Fig. 3.

It is proposed that passages making use primarily of $u$ may fit well into the objective schematization. This is so in part because of the distal deixis, and in part because it lacks the polarization between referents and between grammatical functions. Secondly, it is proposed that passages making use of $i$ and $ma$ fit well with the subjective schematization, with the proximate $i$ acting as the focalized content, and the obviative, $ma$, filling in the peripheral content. The following passage, (4a-e), exemplifies the use of the proximate, $i$, acting in a principled fashion as the focalized content:

4. a. s-i-ti-kwį-ki-se’
   wihnu pi-hi ta’siwoo’-tįhkapi’-ka
   TOP-PROX-N-NAR-DM then CO-DL buffalo-meat-LOC

   tiaši pi-hi atika’-tįhkapi’-ka yikwi-nyu.
   andCO-DL deer-meat-LOC sit.PL.SUBJ-PF

b. s-i-ti-kwį-ki-se’
   ma ina-nyu.
   TOP-PROX-N-DL-NAR-DM OBV jerk.meat-PF

c. Tiiaši-ki-se’
   s-i-ti-kwį
   also-NAR-DM TOP-PROX-N-DL CO-DL pick-RSLT-from.A

   tįhkį’-ee-yu,
   eat-RPT-IMPF
d. s-u-ti-ki-se’
   TOP-DIST-N,PL-NAR-DM
tsaas pihná-kama-nu.
   good sugar/sweet-taste-PF

```
e. s-i-ti-kwá-ki-se’
   TOP-PROX-N-DL-NAR-DM
s-i’-áne-ti
   TOP-’here’(i)-ADV-LOC
```

iah-pini, na-naatimu’i-ka-ti.
jerk.meat-ONGO RFL-tell.story-STAT-IMPF

(a) They (i) then sat down by their buffalo and deer meat.
(b) 'They (i) jerked it.'
(c) 'Also they (i) were eating now and again from their pickings.'
(d) 'They (u) tasted good and sweet.'
(e) 'They (i) went on jerking [meat], and telling stories.'

(Canonge & Riddles 1958, 112)

Placing the examples above within the context of Deictic Center Theory, the proximate marked referents occupy the focalized content with respect to the WHO of the deictic center. The focalized content is i-marked and tightly drawn toward the virtual observer, though not equated with it. This might be seen as being supported not only by the prominent role of i-marking in the narrative, but also by the proximal deixis that is conveyed by its use in interactional discourse, and which creates a spatial metaphor mirrored by Fig. 311. Furthermore, and perhaps most importantly, the proximate, i, in (4) is singling out referents of great thematic importance.

The deictic center follows a principle of inertia (Zubin & Hewitt 1995, 142), a principle which promotes the stability of the deictic center by way of its continuation. This principle is a product of a selective attention effect reflected in the relative degree of prominence within a discourse plan (In other words, stories tend to revolve around "main characters"). Discourse prominence, in turn, generally manifests itself in terms of prevalence or frequency of mention. This also typically correlates with certain grammatical functions such as a proximate marking and main clause subject.12

The expected norm, therefore, is for the proximate to consistently and repetitively demarcate a particular referent (the focalized referent), thereby anchoring the WHO of the deictic center.13

---

11 See also Lothers (1996, 3-4) for a similar explanation with respect to Kalam Kohistani narrative.
12 See Zubin (1979, 483) for a correlation between subject and discourse prominence.
13 Proximate marking and MC subject marking do bounce back and forth between two referents in the context of activities which the referents' participation is integrated in some way and reciprocal, for which conversational turn-taking might be taken as the most canonical example. This fits into the theoretical architecture in DC Theory as a split-screen view of the field. A useful metaphor would be the back and forth head motion of spectators at a tennis match. Beyond noting here that these contexts exist, they will not figure as a matter for discussion in this paper.
Notice that when the correspondence between main clause subject and discourse prominent (focalized) referent fails, as it does in (4d), wherein a peripheral referent occurs as main clause subject, the subject is nevertheless conspicuous in not having been marked proximate.¹⁴

3. WHO shift

From time to time, shifts of proximate marking are expected whereby another character becomes more central. This should be understood as a shift in the WHO of the deictic center, which shall be otherwise referred to here as a WHO shift. Once a shift occurs, the newly centralized character should be expected to be marked proximate in the subsequent text. An instance of a WHO shift is exemplified in an excerpt from story XXXI given below. The initial two characters are the only two mentioned from the story’s beginning. They arrive home among relatives, bringing grapes with them. The transition point occurs in the third sentence (5c). The relatives at that point take over as the central participants. It is only the actions of the relatives that should be understood as being represented from there on in:

5. a. S-i-ti-kį-se’ ma kaku’ pini-su’a
   TOP-PROX-N-NAR-DM OBV(‘his’) grandmother CO-also
   ma-kį tihiya-to’i-nu.
   OBV-LOC horse-motion.up-PF

   b. S-i-ti-kwį s-i-hkutį pi-hi kahni-kį-hu nutaa-nu.
   TOP-PROX-N-DL TOP-PROX-from CO-DL house run-PF

   c. [Ma-hti piti-hka-kį-se’] ma-hti na’nimi-niį
   OBV-A,DL arrive-SR-NAR-DM OBV(‘their’) G,DL relative-PL
   s-i-hka natsamukwe-’a tsah-yumi’i-nu.
   TOP-this-A grape-A INST(hand)-unload-PF

¹⁴ The use of u-marking is resorted to here because it would be ungrammatical for ma to occur as a main clause subject with SOV syntax. The only other possibility would be for ma to appear as a subject in privileged second position, but this is a precluded option in third person narrative.
d. S-i-ti’-ki-se’
   wihnu piǐ  pi-pia-tison-e
   TOP-PROX-N,PL-NAR-DM then CO,PL RDP-big-dishpan-A

   hima-htsi, ma-kī-hu  ma  tsahpómi’i-nu, ma  kotse-nu,
take-SS OBV-LOC-PUR OBV strip-PF OBV wash-PF

   piǐ  huu-’awo-kī  ma  tah-ni-’i-nu.
   CO,PL  tree-bowl-LOC OBV pound-PUR-RPT-PF

(a) ‘This(i) his(ma) grandmother herself also mounted on it(ma) [the wagon].’
(b) ‘These(i) two from here ran to their house.’
(c) ‘When they(ma) arrived, their relatives unloaded the grapes.’
(d) ‘They(i) then taking their big dishpans, stripped them, washed them,
   and grounded them in their wooden bowl.’
   (Canonge & Riddles 1958: 116)

The two initial participants, the boy and the grandmother, who had been proximate and had exercised a central role are represented by ma in (c), rather than i, as was previously the case. The marking of the earlier participants with the obviative, ma, contributes to the downgrading of their importance.

The relatives are introduced in the transition sentence (5c) as a bare noun phrase (a noun phrase with no article). In Comanche, referents introduced into a story for the first time are typically introduced as bare noun phrases. The bare noun phrase should be grouped together with the proximate, in that they both convey that their referent is the focus of attention. Hypothetically speaking, if the focalized referents were mentioned before, they would be marked proximate in the transition sentence. The referents who are newly introduced in (5c) continue to be marked in the following sentence (5d) as proximate testifying to their newfound central status. The shift initiated in (5c) is illustrated in Fig. 4 below;

Fig. 4

The transition sentence (5d) can be identified as having a grammatical construction which will be referred to here as a perspective cleft:
Perspective Cleft:
[\textit{ma \{"subj\}}...Verb]_{SR}, i / \emptyset \{\text{subj}\}...Verb

A perspective cleft is made up at minimum of a fronted subordinate adverbal switch-reference clause, but it may also interact with the proximate/obviative contrast in such a way that the same the proximate referent of the immediately preceding sentence becomes the subordinate "subject" and is marked as obviative.\footnote{It is grammatical, though rather odd, for the subordinate subject to be marked with the proximate form.}

The same general construction is also found in (6d), though expanded to include multiple preposed switch-reference clauses. Sentence (6d) is interesting, because the shift in the WHO is buttressed by a shift in the WHERE, as prompted by the second switch-reference clause:

6. a. S-i-tii-ki-se’ simi’oyet\texttt{i} pi\texttt{i}
   TOP-PROX-N,PL-NAR-DM everyone CO,PL
   puha-na-maka’muki-pi\texttt{-ha} hima-htsi wekwi-nu.
   medicine-RFL-prepare-RSLT-A take-SS enter-PF

b. S-i-tii-ki-se’ wihnu u-tii wopiwihntua
   TOP-PROX-N,PL-NAR-DM then DIST(‘their’)-PL drum
   piki-tiiki.
   drum-INCEP

c. S-i-ti\texttt{-} wihnu tinikwi-mi’a.
   TOP-PROX-N,PL then sing-go

d. [S-u-ni ma-ri\texttt{i} na-yikwi-\texttt{bi}ni-ku-ki\texttt{-}se’] [s-o-’ana ma-ri\texttt{i} kwihne’-nakwi\texttt{ } u
   TOP-DIST-manner OBV-A,PL RFL-do-CONT-SR-DM
   TOP-‘there’(o)-ADV OBV-PL north DIST
   roya-kari-ku, s-u-’ana u-ma simi’ rui\texttt{-}htsi’
   mountain-sit-SR TOP-DIST-ADV DIST-on one young\texttt{-}man
   pi\texttt{} notsa’ka-ma’ai pa’a-nai u-rii kahni
   CO(‘his’) girlfriend-with above-from DIST(‘their’)-PL abode
   pia’-eka-kuh-ta\texttt{-}a-hkaku, u-rii \texttt{bn}i-nu.
   big-red-fire-sun-?-SR DIST-A,PL see-PF
e. S-i-ti-kì-se’ s-i-hka bì na’wa’ihpì’a,
TOP-PROX-N,PL-NAR-DM TOP-PROX-A CO RFL-woman-A
"yee, u-rii-kì-hu ni’ mi’a-pì-ha suwaai-tì."
EXCL DIST-PL-LOC-PUR 1stP,SG go-PF.PTC-A want-IMPF
me yìkwìi-yu.
QUOT say-IMPF
f. S-i-ti-kì-se’ wa’ihpì’, "haa, nah ni’ s-i-kì
TOP-’the’(i)-N-NAR-DM woman yes just 1stP,SG TOP-(i)-ADV
u-rii-kì-hu i mi’a-ka, kari-ru’i.” me-ki.
DIST(’them’)-PL-LOC-PUR 2ndP,SG go-SR sit-UNR QUOT-NAR
(a) ‘They(i) all got the medicine they prepared, and went in.’
(b) ‘They(i) then started beating their drum.’
(c) ‘They(i) then went on singing.’
(d) ‘As they ma went on doing like so, [there(o) <where> that(u) mountain sits north of them], there(u) a young man with his girlfriend saw them(u) and their fire from above.’
(e) ‘He(i) said to his woman(i), “Oh, I want to go over to them.”
(f) ‘The(i) woman said, “OK, I’ll just stay here when you go to them.”
(Canonge & Riddles 1958: 70-71)

Fig. 5

As in (5a-b), the initially proximate marked referents in (6a-c), ‘the men at the peyote meeting’, are downshifted to obviative in the transition sentence (6d), and then dismissed as non-mentions in the following sentences (6e-f). At the same time, the newly introduced referents, ‘a young man and his girlfriend’, in the transition sentence (6d) go on to be proximate marked in the following sentence (6e), and continue to be so as the passage continues in (6e-f).
4. Represented Perception (RP) shift

On the other hand, many sentences that have the same characteristics as those of a perspective cleft are problematic when interpreted this way, because the results can turn out to be the opposite of what is expected for a WHO shift. The uplifted referent in the aforementioned sentence type frequently may be retained as an obviative rather than a proximate in the subsequent text, or sometimes not even retained at all. Furthermore, the referent that is downshifted from proximate to obviative in a transition sentence often reverts back to proximate in the text that immediately follows. This is exemplified in the following examples:

7. a. S-i-tih-ki-se’
   tahtoo-hsti
   wihnu
   mi’a-nu.
   TOP-PROX-N-NAR-DM put.shoes.on-SS then go-PF

   b. [Ma-hti
       mi’anoo-ku-ki-se’],
       s-i-ti
       u
       papi
       OBV-ACC,DL travel-SR-NAR-DM TOP-PROX-N DIST('its') head

       ma-hti
       nap-ka-htu
       to-i-nu-ki
       OBV('their')-DL trail-LOC-along come.out-PF-DIR(come)

       pia-ta-ni'yi-ki-noo-ti.
       loud-INST(foot)-be.unstationary-transport-IMPF

c. S-i-ti-k-ki-se’
   ma
   tii’, “...” me yikwii-yu.
   TOP-PROX-N-NAR-DM OBV POS.friend QUOT say-IMPF

(a) 'They(i) put their moccasins on, and then left.'
(b) 'As they(ma) traveled along, this(i) that(u) head comes in sight along their trail, coming making a running noise.'
(c) ‘This (i) her friend said, “...”

   (Canonge & Riddles 1958: 42)

The proximate referents in (7a) become obviative in (7b) and then revert to proximate again in (7c). The ‘head (skull)’ which was uplifted to proximate in the transition sentence (7b) gains mention only in quoted speech within the story, until a new day begins.

8. a. S-i-ti-k-ki-se’
   u pietsi-ku
   sooyoti
   pitusi riasi
   TOP-PROX-N,PL-NAR-DM DIST be.tomorrow many back again

   u-ki-hu
   mi’a-nu,
   s-u-ma
   toya-ma
   kia-ru.
   DIST-LOC-PUR go-PF TOP-DIST-on mountain-on motion.up-PF
In (8), the *i*-marked characters in (8a) become *ma*-marked in (8b) and then subsequently revert to being *i*-marked in (8c). Also after being introduced by a bare noun phrase in the main clause subject, ‘big hole’ begins to be referred to by *ma* instead of by *i* in the very next clause of (8b). The ‘wing noises’, also introduced as a bare noun phrase in (8b), are not referred to again in (8c).

The analysis, as presented thus far, requires a caveat: Why create a *WHO shift* if it is simply going to be immediately shifted back? Deictic Center Theory provides an answer to this by providing a cognitively and contextually principled alternative to a *WHO shift*.

As mentioned previously, the *deictic center* is composed of a *perspective origin* and a *focalized content*. Thus far the *perspective origin* has simply been an unoccupied *virtual observer*. Most of the concern by necessity has been directed toward discerning which character or entity occupies the *focalized content*. It is suggested here that the *perspective origin* may not always be quite so unoccupied. Clearly the whole concept of the *WHO shift* is based on the premise that a character may not only be downshifted from the *focalized* portion of the *content* to the *periphery* but also potentially removed (*effaced*) from the focal/perspectival *field* altogether. However, making use of Langacker’s (1985) concept of an ‘optimal viewing arrangement’, Deictic Center Theory provides another alternative for an *effaced* character besides simply departing the scene. An ‘optimal viewing arrangement’ is characterized by a maximum disparity between the relative degree of attention paid to different entities such that one of them can be said to be *effaced*, but it ascribes a greater rather than a lesser degree of association of the
\textit{effaced} character with the subjective viewpoint. The line of reasoning for this is that, in an ‘optimal viewing arrangement’, not dwelling on a central character whose presence we must nevertheless continue to presuppose is metaphorically akin to ignoring the eyeglasses or nose on one’s own face. Our own noses or eyeglasses (when worn) are essentially equatable with our respective viewpoints in the real world. Both an \textit{effaced} character and the \textit{origin/virtual observer} exist outside the \textit{focal/perspectival field}. The \textit{effaced} referent, through an ‘optimal viewing arrangement’, gains by inference what Kuno (1987, 204-205) refers to as “total identification.” “Total identification” equates the perspectival stance of a character with that of the \textit{virtual observer}, thus replacing the \textit{virtual observer} (rendering it as no longer virtual). The effect is to provide a portion of a story that is mediated through the eyes and ears of an actual character. This effect of “total identification” will be referred to from this point on as \textit{represented perception}.

From a linguistic standpoint, \textit{effacement} may be iconically motivated if the linguistic element used is one which attracts less attention, relatively speaking. It is proposed here that \textit{ma}, due to its behavior as an obviative, is particularly suited to this function. By applying this conceptualization to the previously problematic examples in (7)-(8), we can identify the initial \textit{i}-marked referent as becoming subsequently \textit{effaced} and indistinguishable from the perspective \textit{origin} when it becomes \textit{ma}-marked in the following sentence. In other words, the audience is meant to understand the scene in (7) as being viewed through the eyes of the two women fleeing a pursuing skull, and in (8) as being viewed through the eyes of the men ascending the mountain. What is occurring is not a \textit{WHO shift} but, instead, a shift from the \textit{focalized content} to the perspective \textit{origin}, that is, from one component of the \textit{deictic center} to another in order to create a shift toward a \textit{represented perception}, an \textit{RP shift}.

Fig. 6 Subjective type 2: ‘Optimal Viewing Arrangement’/\textit{Represented Perception}

By the same token, the referent that is newly uplifted becomes the \textit{focalized content} which, in the case of a \textit{represented perception}, will be referred to as the \textit{object of perception}. Other non-proximate referents, if they are present, should be understood as being in view only peripherally or less attentively. If we consider the last passage, in the
first two clauses in (8), we view a ‘big hole’ through the eyes of the men approaching it. We infer that the WHERE of the deictic center has progressed closer toward the hole by the third and fourth clauses. In the third clause, the ‘big hole’ is now marked obviative, because the focalized object of perception has also progressed toward being attentive to the contents of the hole, and the ‘big hole’ itself is now viewed only peripherally.

5. Conclusion

It is hoped that the concepts developed thus far will better account for the selection of deictic morphemes in Comanche narrative, as represented by the Canonge & Riddles corpus. The proximate form, i, was related to a heightened state of attentional focus (i.e. focalized) while the obviative was related to reduction in the amount of attentional focus. In addition, attentional focus was understood as a matter of coherence related to the prominence of a referent within a discourse plan. Shifts of proximatehood bringing with them shifts of discourse prominence were exemplified. It was also shown that in some cases the downshifting of a proximate referent to obviative could also be temporary. The effect of this was to take a character offstage in order to occupy the origin, allowing the audience to view a scene directly through a character's own experience (represented perception). Notice that, though the object of perception has been identified as the focalized referent, it is no longer relatable to prominence in the discourse plan. This is entirely appropriate since the character occupying the origin does not have access to the story as told, but only to the events as directly experienced.

It should be understood that given instances of WHO shifts and RP shifts may, in fact, share the same grammatical characteristics, that is to say, both may involve perspective clefts. No claim of any one-to-one correspondence between syntax and discourse function is being made. Other factors such as animacy and discourse coherence are ultimately necessary for identifying WHO shifts vs. RP shifts.

The criteria for the selection of deictic morphemes in Comanche narrative, therefore, involve more than simply an encoding and decoding of propositions. Deictic Center Theory is ultimately both a context-dependent pragmatic theory and a cognitive theory. Rather than giving algorithmic determinations of meaning based on Saussurian oppositions or Chomskian rules, it relies on a gathering of a body of circumstantial cues and an audience which necessarily takes an active role in determining what the best interpretation of such cues may be. If one wants to understand what’s going on with the linguistic marking in narrative, then one really needs a sophisticated cognitive model of narrative understanding.

List of Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>Accusative</th>
<th>OBV</th>
<th>Obviative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADV</td>
<td>Adverbializer</td>
<td>ONGO</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CO</td>
<td>Coreferential Pronoun</td>
<td>PF</td>
<td>Perfective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONT</td>
<td>Continuative</td>
<td>PL</td>
<td>Plural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIR</td>
<td>Directional</td>
<td>POS</td>
<td>Possessed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Code</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIST</td>
<td>Distal</td>
<td>PROX</td>
<td>Proximate/Proximal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DL</td>
<td>Dual</td>
<td>PTC</td>
<td>Participial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DM</td>
<td>Discourse marker</td>
<td>PUR</td>
<td>Purposive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMPF</td>
<td>Imperfective</td>
<td>QUOT</td>
<td>Quotative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INST</td>
<td>Instrumental</td>
<td>RDP</td>
<td>Reduplication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOC</td>
<td>Locative</td>
<td>SG</td>
<td>Singular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MED</td>
<td>Medial</td>
<td>SR</td>
<td>Switch-Reference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>Nominative</td>
<td>TOP</td>
<td>Topic marker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAR</td>
<td>Narrative marker</td>
<td>UNR</td>
<td>Unrealized</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

References