

Discourse analysis of two narratives in Darra (Masakin)

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Discourse type

The texts "Nabo goes hunting" and "The woman who was taken by the Arabs" are defined as narratives because of the following:

1. Chronological time-orientation: Paragraphs are introduced by temporal clauses in the past time.
2. Event-orientation: There is an event line made up of present tense verbs
3. Agent-orientation: Participants are agent-topics of the events.

Paragraph boundaries

Paragraph boundaries are established on account of:

1. Tail-head linkage (when-clauses) or another Temporal Phrase preceding the main verb!
2. Introduction of a new topic or a change of topic.

The Paragraphs of Text 6, "Nabo goes hunting"

- P.1 is an aperture, telling us that we are going to get a story about a man named Nabo.
- P.2 gives the setting for the story and presents the problem: the lion. The topics are the people and the boys.
- P.3 gives the initiating incident, the first attempts at solving the problem. Topics are the people and Nabo.
- P.4 gives the climax of the story. It can be divided into three subparagraphs.
- 4a is the peak, showing the two main topics of the story in close encounter.
- 4b gives the solution to the problem, the denouement. The topics here are the people and Nabo's son.
- 4c is the conclusion, or the final "clearing up" within the climax. Topics: Nabo, the lion and then the people.
- P.5 gives the concluding incident of the story. As in the aperture, Nabo is the main topic.

The Paragraphs of Text 7, "The woman who was taken by the Arabs"

- P.1 is an aperture, giving us the main topic of the story, the woman, and her opponents, the Arabs.

P.2 gives the setting and presents the problem: The woman is now a slave.

P.3 is a pre-peak episode that further illustrates the problem.

P.4 is a second pre-peak episode, leading up to the peak.

P.5 is the peak - the woman runs away from her captivity. One might call P.5 an extended peak, within which one can distinguish the following sub-paragraphs:

5a is a pre-peak - her actual escape

5b is the peak - the Arabs chase her. Probably maximum suspension here.

5c is a post-peak - her long way home

5d is a temporary denouement - she reaches home.

The temporal clauses and phrases in this paragraph do not coincide with changes of topic and are not considered as constituting sub-paragraph boundaries. Rather, they serve to underline the drawn out tension of the whole paragraph.

P.6 is the denouement of the story - the Arab is bought off.

P.7 gives the conclusion of the event line.

P.8 gives the conclusion about the story of the woman. (A further piece of information is not mentioned: The woman was the narrator's great grandmother!)

Topics

With "topic" I understand the main participant in a stretch of discourse.

A major participant in the story as a whole is first introduced by means of an extended Noun Phrase filling (which can be the NP object): an old man who had the name Nabo, a woman who had given birth for the first time, a lion going in the grass. (Nabo is first introduced in this way in the aperture of the story, and then the same introduction is repeated when he enters the event line.)

A new topic or a change of topic is first signalled with a noun or a pronoun off the event line: As NP object of an event line clause (T.7, P.6: The Arab tells the people, (they) say ..), in a pre-positioned "when-clause" (T.7 P.6: when the people saw them, (they) look..) or, most commonly, with the conjunction/clitic ka preceding the noun.

If this topic marker is a noun, it may have Cqr "some, a" Cqqr "another" or a possessive pronoun as an attributive.

A combination of topics (expressed by the pres.tense 3rd.p.pl.clitic *ke*) involves either: the previous topic plus the one mentioned in a following PrepPhrase (*gina* + noun/pron. or pron + *ge*), or: the previous topic and the main topic of the story.

The conversation/interaction paragraphs (T.6, P.3 and 5, T.7, P.2,3, 4 and 6) change topics in a somewhat freer way. Here the topic changes for almost every clause, and it is not always accompanied by a formal topic marker. One of the reasons for this is likely to be that there are only two participants at any one time, the initiator and the responder. Thus there is little risk of confusion. (However: as soon as a third participant is introduced in T.7, P.3, namely the water, the woman has to be formally re-introduced when she again takes over as topic.) Also: as the woman is clearly the main participant in the story, she may not need such formal re-introduction. In T.7, P.3 the Arab is re-introduced as topic (after a clause having both of them as topic), without a formal topic marker. This is probably because he is the initiator in this paragraph, and because there is little risk of confusion. In T.6 "the people" are also re-introduced as topic several times, without an overt topic-marker. Again, there is little risk of confusion, and "the people" may also be considered a generic topic throughout the story.

Generic/specific. In both texts, there is a dichotomy between the generic topics and their specific "representatives":

The people of old vs. Nabo, the people vs. boys, vs. "some man", and vs. Nabo's son, the people vs. the woman, and the Arabs vs. one Arab and vs. another Arab. (It seems the lion has no generic counterpart!)

Use of Pronouns: Object pronouns are used whenever the NP object refers to a person, but without introducing it as a new topic. Subject pronouns are not found in T.6. In T.7 'go/ogo (Subj.pron, 3rd p.sg, m. and fem.) is used whenever the ^{woman} ~~she~~ needs overt re-introduction as topic, but it is used for no one else. This also seems to underline the woman's position as main topic of the whole story.

Verb tense: Narratives are mainly in the present tense.

Present tense (+clitic +verb stem) is used for material on the event line.

Past tense (+verb stem +suffix) is used for background material, "the setting".

Infinitive (+clitic +verb stem) is used for verbs immediately following ka + noun/pron. (i.e. introduction of new/change of topic), when the verb also is background information and therefore off the event line. (When the clitic/conj. ka + noun/pron. is followed by a verb on the event line, this verb is in the present tense.)

As this ka can take the prefix a (see below), one is led to consider it a neutralised verb clitic which also function as a conjunction.)

The prefix a-

(as in akki and akko, from a+ki and a+ko) seems to function on discourse level. It can attach itself to verb clitics in the present tense, to verb stems in the past tense, and to adjectives and other noun attributives when there is no verb "to be". It seems to indicate emphasis, rather like the exclamation mark in written English. It never occurs on the event line.

Balance of on/off event line

Narratives then show a certain balance as to what is on the event line and what is off it:

On the eventline is the "thread" of the story.

Off the event line are the settings, including temporal phrases, the introduction of new/different topics, the emphasising prefix a- and quotations.

Text 6 - Nabo goes hunting : NARRATIVE

1 **akkiindqraade ma akki semo memo da** or jo ubi ade bqradi bo ne kqrrqge
 (s) want : (s) speak talk of people of old like old man who has name
 ma nabo

2 **yo ka ano nati tqgki tqr**
 when was he alive day some
ane or ti demboruade
 went people to field-clearing
ka aurraqi
 cows

ke ruyo arrqku
 (they) herd cows
ke no dirraqko ko tao ti tallo
 (s) see lion (he) goes in grass
ke digu gurraqi girri ko tao ridde or
 (they) send way one (he) goes tells people
ma dirraqko ka iddo
 lion is there

3 **yo beesidde or da**
 when heard people that

ke bqro ta ~~wa~~ ande
 (they) run go there
ke bidde di ano ga dirraqko
 (they) make fire when is lion

ka bqradi bq ne
 old man who has
kqrrqge ma nabo
 name : "

ko no ge tikke
 (he) comes from behind
ko bitta ma kqre ka rokko ?
 (he) asks : where is nuisance
ke riddebe ma onde inni
 (they) tell him : it is there

4 **yo beesidde ga**
 when heard that
yo middo di kqddukku
 when came fire near him

ka dirraqo
 lion

ko adqrahe
 (he) searches him
ko birru ge ti di
 (he) jumps from in fire
ko tao modde nabo
 (he) goes carries "
ka bqta gqra ginsbu
 (they) fight with him
ka na dona
 (he) has shield

ka nabo
 "

ke bqta gqra gina dirraqko bada **ke dokutta**
 (they) fight with lion until (they) get tired

4u **ka or tta gqndu no gira**
 people all climb into trees

ka bur bqr
 person some

ko ridde bakki bo nabo ma awo rqqko obadi
 (he) tells son of " go see father
akka dirraqo kaboddebe
 lion (he) kills him

ka bakki
 the son

ko lu ge no bira
 (he) goes from in tree
ko tao
 (he) goes
ko kettakko ge bqde
 (he) goes up with father
ko tarro dirraqo
 (he) kills lion

ke abo gina bqradi
 (they) fall with old man
ke mera dirraqo
 (they) slaughter lion

tc

Text 6 - cont.

5

yo bikkoddo
When he-has-~~erised~~

||ke odde onabo ti bira
(they) put ? " in tree

ko kqtukku
(he) gets up

||ke moddebe de kono dirrqkobe ge na yqr
(they) see him neg. did lion him another
ille ti
not neg.

ko tao ginake toma
(he) goes with them home

Free translation of Text 6

I want to tell a story about some people in the old days, namely an old man whose name was Nabo. One day while he was alive, the people (adults) went out to the fields to work. The boys herded the cows, and they saw a lion walking in the grass. So they sent a boy to go and tell the adults that there is a lion there. When the adults heard that, they came running and lit a fire to get the lion out of the grass. The old man named Nabo joins them and asks "Where is this nuisance?" When the lion heard that, he gets insulted, and when the fire forces him out of the grass, he heads straight for Nabo, who fights (wrestles) with him, because he only has a ^{shield} ~~catapult~~, ~~and this is not enough to shoot the lion~~. So they wrestle with each other until they are both very tired. All the other people are by now sitting in trees (a usual place of rest) and watching. Then someone says to Nabo's son: "Go and help your father. The lion is about to kill him!" So Nabo's son climbs down from the tree and goes up beside his father, and then he shoots the lion with a gun. The lion falls, and the old man with him, and then they can slaughter the lion. Nabo is then put in a tree to recover, and gets up after a rest. Everyone sees that he is perfectly all right, and they all go home.

Text 7 - The Women who was taken by the Arabs: NARRATIVE

2.1

ubi yo ka gllabe kumqre or
old when Arabs chase people

ka burbabari bqr bo kono ge ti dirre
is. woman some who give from her to other
earth

2.2

abqtakkono gllabe be
seized Arab her

ke ta bege days
(she) go her with home

ka gllabe gqr
Arabs same

ko na be
(he) has her

ko kqrekine be dari,
(she) cooks him food

2.3

ka tqgki tqr
dies some
ka gllabe gqrq ndqraddebe
Arabs other warlike men

ko bobo tao yuy
(he) takes her go far

ke ludde ti dabo
(they) go down in valley

ko riddebe ma akki ndqraddu
(he) tells her : (I) want you

ko gka
(she) refuses

ka gllabe riube
Arabs threaten her

ko riddebe ma ma dunne ti safia
(he) tells her : take sand in bucket

ko gakkigbe
(she) carries it

ko riddebe ma ludde ti gir
(he) tells her : pour in water

ko ludde ti
(she) pours in

ka gir moddebe gume)
water takes her child

ka 'go
she

ko abo ge dabo
(she) goes into valley

4

yo una gllabe ma akkonno bege yida
when knew Arabs she had done to him (she)

ko riddebe ma manna ridde gllabe ga
(he) tells her : don't go tell Arabs your

ko tao doma
(she) goes home

ka gllabe gu bittaddebe: ma kqre ka gume
Arabs her ask her : where is child

ko kqtigko
(she) keeps quiet

ka gllabe una ma bur kobe
Arabs knows person did her

ko riddebe ma rididi bur mbo koru mi
(he) tells her : tell me person who did you this

ka 'go
she

de ko rio ayqr ti
neg (she) says anything neg

5a

yo ka gqrqobi todi
when tomorrow evening

ko kinega dari
(she) cooks them food

ko dege
(she) gives them

Text 7 - cont.

yo ke rako
when (they) eat

ka gollabe no noddebe lo
Arabs come find her gone

ko mura aqgkorro
(he) escapes night

ko ridde robqdege ma muraano bida mbi
(he) tells brothers: escape

ke gaodde no uddu
(they) climb onto horses

ke tao adqrabe
(they) go search her

5b

ka 'go
she

amoddo ta ioma
headed go home

yo midde ti kdigku
when came beside her
(they)

ka aqllabe tao
Arabs go

ko wittakko
she hides

yo dqme robe
when not find her

ke gerittakko ta daye
(they) return go home

5c

ka 'go
she

tggi ntadero tqddak
day the third
aqgare dobi
morning

ko kqrukku tao doma
she goes up go house

ko arro ti kadder deta
she stays in road twice
night

ko no no dqtqbo
she comes to

kp kudde ti buru
she spends in tree

ko nodde gir anne
she finds water there

ko dqma kqrukku ge anne
she unafraid get up from there

yo yuno
when she has dress

5d

ka burbabari bqr no ko ta iddi
woman some animals she goes fields

ko makqrakkobe
she sees her

ko unabe
she kneels her

ko kqbo dubbq
she beats whiplash

ka or lu ge no kaw
people come from on hill
dash

ke no noddebe
(they) come find her

ke bobo ta anno kaw
(they) take her go come hill

P. 6

tggi ntadero tobqtaqnto
day the fourth

ka gollabe gu midde
Arabs her come

yo none or ke
when saw them
people

ke mo rona tao
(they) take cats - go
mills

ka burbabari una gqllabe gu
 woman Arab's Arab her
 ko riddeke ma gqllabe gi kay yqtti
 (she) tells them : Arab my is that
 amiddo to kadder ki
 he has come on way my
 ka gqllabe ridde or ma amiddi to kadder ko burb. arwaddo
 Arab tells people : I have come on way of woman lost
 ke riddebe ma middo
 (they) tell him : she came
 ka 'r de gqllabe gurq ka rqqatfer ttowa
 people give Arab ox and heifer
 ka gqllabe lagka
 Arab refuses
 ka 'r riddebe ma dqma mo ya de yotti ti
 people tells him : if not take one-heg good neg
 you thing
 ko mo rqqatfer ttowa
 (he) takes heifer
 ke tao
 (they) go
 ka 'r na tiwa w6riri
 people have hearts clean
 ke nakqr ne kqtakke gina gqllabe
 they have love with Arab
 b6da t6gki nti
 until day this
 ka kqrraga ko burbabari ma aadumq mbo kono sela ka
 name of woman : " who begat " and
 gallu bqtese

Free translation of Text 7:

In the old days when the Arabs took slaves, there was a woman who had just had her first child. The Arabs seized her (and the baby) and took her to their land. One Arab had her (as slave/concubine?), and she did his cooking. One day another Arab decides that he wants her, so he takes her away into a valley and tells her. But she refuses. So he threatens her and forces her to carry sand in a bucket, which she does. He then tells her to go into the river and pour it out. As she does this, the current carries away the baby (which she had on her back). But she does nothing to retrieve it, just walks away. Now the Arab understands that he is in trouble, and asks her not to tell her master what had taken place. And her master does ask what happened to the baby and who mistreated her. She will say nothing at all. But in the evening, when she has cooked the meal and her master is eating, she escapes in the night. When the Arab finds her gone, he and his brothers set after her on horseback. She heads straight for home, and when the Arabs get too close, she hides, and they have to give up and turn back. So she continues her walk home, spending two nights on the way. On the third day she arrives at Dqtqbo, (near home). Here she spends the morning resting in a tree. She also finds some water, but once she has bent down to drink, she is too tired to get up again.

Text 7 - cont.

Now a woman on her way to the fields come past and recognise her. She ululates to attract attention, so that more people come down (from their hill homes) and help carry her home.

One the forth day the Arab comes after her. When the people see him and his friends, they go away (to a safer place) with their catapults ready. The woman recognises her master and says: "That is my Arab. He has come to get me back." And the Arab tells the people: "I have come for the woman I lost." So they say: "She came". The people then offer the Arab an ox and a heifer (in stead of the woman), but he first refuses to accept that. When the people say: "It is not good if you don't take something (Unless you take something, it won't be a good settlement?)", he accepts the heifer, and everyone departs.

The people are now very relieved, and since then they have had peace with the Arabs.

The name of this woman was Andumq, and she later had a daughter called sela and a son called Gallu Bqtese.