COHESION IN WANDAMEN NARRATIVE

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1. INTRODUCTION

Discourse is of current interest in linguistics. The nature of a discourse approach to language has not always been clear, however. It seems useful, therefore, to distinguish at least two uses of the notion "discourse" in linguistic theory. These are discourse as text, and discourse as pragmatic transaction. The purpose of this paper is to describe a traditional Wandamen discourse from these two perspectives.

The discourse discussed illustrates a central part of the Wandamen worldview, and is one of several episodes which involve the same two characters. This particular episode is given as an explanation for waves in a certain river.

The approach to the analysis of discourse that is shown in this paper reflects the influence of Longacre (1976), Grimes (1975), and Halliday (1976).

2. THE DISCOURSE AS TEXT

2.1 CONSTITUENTS

The text Bata ve nana Wosimi raro, 'Waves in the Wosimi River', may be partitioned as follows, each number representing a paragraph:

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---Expository discourse

---Narrative discourse

The diagram here shows a narrative discourse embedded in an ultimate expository discourse. The internal 'chunks' of the narrative are partitioned as an effect of certain cohesion processes at work within each sub-constituent. The processes and the constituents they define are discussed next. The full text is given at the end as an Appendix and the portions under discussion are reproduced serially for comment below.

2.2 COHESION PROCESSES

2.2.1 OPENING OF DISCOURSE, sentences 1-3:

1) 'The matter of the waves (in the Wosimi River) is like this.'
2) 'It was because of the sea that these (Wosimi River) waves came into being.'
3) 'No, indeed!'

In the opening, the purpose is given for the story, which is to explain the origin of waves in the Wosimi River. This constituent is grouped together by several cohesion devices. These are as follows.

Reference: A sequence of references to waves occurs through sentences (1) and (2). Plotting such sequences is known as span analysis (Grimes 1975:91).

Linkage: The conjunction avo 'because' occurs at the beginning of sentence (2), linking it with sentence (1), but also with the second part of sentence (2).

Collateral information: Sentence (3) negates sentence (2). Collateral information, instead of telling what did happen, tells what did not happen. Thus, in relating non-events to events, it provides a range of non-events that might take place, which heighten the significance of the real events (Grimes, 1975:64,65).

Stative clause sequence: The particle ma 'be', occurs in both sentences (1) and (2), possibly indicating topic followed by comment. This existential sentence type is an expected characteristic of opening speech material, where what is must precede what happens.

These several features help define sentences (1)-(3) as a constituent.
2.2.2 SETTING, sentences (4)-(5):

(4) 'But rather, it was like this: there were once two brothers, Kuri and Pasai.'

(5) 'One day (lit.: They two lived until) the two of them decided to dam up the Wosimi River, so it would run over to the Umari Bay.'

In these two sentences, the characters are introduced and their plans are stated. Cohesion devices in this sub-constituent are as follows.

Reference: A span of reference to the two brothers together occurs through sentences (4) and (5). The first reference is to 'two brothers', after which their names, 'Kuri and Pasai', are given (lit.: 'two brothers, Kuri and Pasai, the two of them'). Following this they are referred to only as 'they two', both in the form of the pronoun and in the person marker on the verb. This shows "reference decay", since reference goes from using their actual names to using a pronoun form.

Location: The first location, the Wosimi River, is mentioned. This location is a constant that defines this pair of sentences as a sub-constituent of the narrative.

Repetition: The end of sentence (4) is repeated at the beginning of sentence (5):... Kuri Pasai sandu. Sandu sumasoi ..., '... Kuri and Pasai, the two of them. They two lived ...'. The repeated information in sentence (5) is known information, and what follows is new information. This overlapping sequence binds the sentences together into a cohesive unit.

Linkage: The conjunction vape 'but' at the beginning of sentence (4) links this sentence and sub-constituent with sentences (2) and (3) of the previous constituent. The linkage also goes all the way through sentence (17) for it was not the sea that caused the waves, but the story of Kuri and Pasai tells what did.

2.2.3 ONSET OF EPISODE, sentence (6a):

(6a) 'So when they dammed it up, they dammed it up until ...'

The execution of the two brothers' plans is given here as the first event in the story. The following cohesion devices are evident.

Reference: The reference to 'they two' is carried over from the previous sub-constituent, and continues through this one.

Location: The same location, that of the Wosimi River, is also carried over from the previous sub-constituent and continues through this one.

Repetition: This sub-constituent is connected to the previous one by an overlapping sequence, the end of sentence (5) being repeated (with part omitted) at the beginning of sentence (6):... auro suta tum wosimi e diepai raina umari. Apa suta tum pa ..., '... they wanted to dam up the Wosimi so it would run to the Umari Bay. So when they dammed it up ...'. Since it is a verb that is repeated, the particle pa 'when' is added at the end. In this case, the verb is repeated a third time before new information is given, but with a conjunction (to 'until') following the third instance of the verb. Apa suta tum pa suta tum to ..., 'So they dammed it up, they dammed it up until ...'. This succession of a verb being repeated several times, the last time followed by to 'until', indicates an action going on for some length of time, until a new event begins.

Events: In contrast to the non-active verb phrase auro suta tum, 'they wanted to dam up' in sentence (5), note that the first real event of the narrative begins in (6a) with suta tum, 'they dammed up'. This is what makes this a separate sub-constituent from the setting.

Aspect: A sequence of imperfective verb forms occurs in this sub-constituent.

2.2.4 INTERVENING INCIDENT, sentences (6b)-(15a):

(6b) ... then one evening the older brother, Kuri, stood and beat his drum.

(7) This older brother, Kuri, lived in a cave at Inggorosa.

(8) While the (lit.: this) younger brother lived in the Manievi valley.

(9) Then he called across to the older brother like this and said,

(10) "Sir, what did you put on your drum (as drumhead)?"

(11) He called across and answered the (this) younger brother,

(12) "The skin of mother's stomach".

(13) Then (so he) the younger brother went to the back (of the house) and had his mother lie down and he peeled the skin off her stomach to put on his drum also.

(14) But unfortunately she died.

(15a) When she died, ...
itself. One day Kuri beats his drum and lies to his brother about what it is made of, which leads to their mother's death. This in turn leads to their fight in the main part of the episode that follows. Cohesion devices are as follows.

Reference: Spans of reference go back and forth between Kuri and Pasai in this sub-constituent. Their mother is also brought in.

Kuri is introduced separately for the first time, as 'the older brother, Kuri'. The verb following is preceded by a pronoun, indicating emphasis, since the person is usually only marked in the verb. In the sequence of references to him which follow, each has both pronoun and person marker in the verb.

In sentence (7) another reference to Kuri is made, again using his name, along with the deictic 'this', since he has just previously been referred to.

Then Pasai is mentioned separately for the first time, but his name is not given, and the deictic 'this' is used immediately ('this younger brother'), both in contrast to Kuri's introduction as 'the older brother, Kuri'.

Location: In this sub-constituent, the location is different from the setting and onset of episode. This takes place away from the river, and in the area where the two brothers live. This location is a constant throughout this sub-constituent.

Linkage: The conjunctions masi vori yanama ineri, all meaning 'then', in (6b) link the beginning of the sentence with the rest of it, also linking the previous sub-constituent with this one. Notice the relation of the string of synonyms and the distinct change of events which follow from those that precede; also, after this Kuri is introduced separately for the first time, as 'the older brother, Kuri'.

Other conjunctions occurring in each sub-constituent link sentences and clauses together within the sub-constituent itself.

Aspect: A sequence of imperfective verb forms occurs through this sub-constituent until the end of it. In (14b) and (15a) the perfective form is used for 'she died'.

Events: Before and after sentences (7) and (8) (which are non-events), is a span of related events, tying this sub-constituent together.

2.2.5 CLOSURE OF EPISODE, sentences (15b)-(17); CLIMAX, sentences (16b)-(17):

(15b) ... then they both fought each other.

(16) When they fought each other, then they stepped on and shifted the rocks which they wanted to dam up the river with so it would run there to

the Umari Bay.

(17) So then they (the rocks) caused waves.

The previous incident causes the two brothers to fight each other. Their fight takes place back at the river, thus connecting the end of the episode with the onset. This fight brings about the climax of the narrative, since the brothers shift the rocks during their fight, and as the rocks get shifted, they cause the waves. Cohesion devices are as follows.

Reference: Reference shifts from the mother, who died at the end of the previous sub-constituent, back to the two brothers in this sub-constituent. Here they are indicated only by pronoun and third person dual marker in the verbs.

The waves are again mentioned in sentence (17), tying up the closing with the opening of the episode.

Location: The location throughout this sub-constituent is back at the river, the same as the setting in the onset of the episode.

Repetition: Sentence (16) begins with a repetition of the end of (15), which ties these two sentences together. In this case, however, sentence (15) uses the perfective form of the verb, and (16) uses the imperfective (... surimu sandu suma sandu pa ...).

Linkage: The conjunctions yanama ineri, meaning 'then', in (15b) connect the first part of the sentence with the last, also the previous sub-constituent with this one. Notice again the relation of the succession of the two synonymous conjunctions and the distinct shift in the narration which follows.

The conjunctions apa yanama, 'so then', at the beginning of (17), link this sentence with the previous one, but also link the climax with the previous part of the episode.

Aspect: This sub-constituent starts off with a perfective verb form ('fought'), then continues with the imperfective (except in the relative clause where one verb is in the perfective — 'the rocks, which they wanted to dam up the river ...')

Events: A span of related events occurs through this sub-constituent.

2.2.6 ANTI-CLIMAX INCIDENTS, sentences (18)-(32):

(18) Then they two separated from each other.

(19) When they separated from each other, the older brother, Kuri, went home to our (this) side.

(20) He went home and didn't take anything.

(21) He only took his cassuarina feather knife with him.

(22) But the (this) younger brother, Pasai, went home to that side,
(23) When he went home he took three things with him.
(24) So then when Kuri went home, he came here and reached the middle of the way.
(25) To the middle of our mountain.
(26) Then he pelted the (this) younger brother.
(27) The thing he threw was a kind of tree that he cut and threw.
(28) Then he went home.
(29) When he went home he went tricking/deceiving people here and there and we don't know where he died.
(30) But as the younger brother came home he also reached the middle, then he cut some bamboo.
(31) He cut some bamboo and he stood bracing himself and stabbed the (this) older brother.
(32) Then he continued and went home.

This sub-constituent tells of incidents that happen after the climax. Cohesion devices are as follows.

Reference: This sub-constituent begins with 'they two', then reference switches back and forth between Kuri and Pasai. Sentence (22) contains the only reference to Pasai's actual name after his first introduction along with Kuri in sentence (4). In (31) we find the only occurrence of 'this' with 'older brother' when he has not just previously been referred to. Most often, 'this' occurs with 'younger brother' and 'the' with 'older brother'.

In sentence (24), 'Kuri' is moved up to the position between the first conjunction and the other two conjunctions, showing emphasis in change of reference.

Location: The events through this sub-constituent take place in a different location than the main episode, as the two brothers separate and each goes his own way.

Repetition: There are five occurrences of overlapping information within this sub-constituent, showing sentences that are tied together.

Linkage: The conjunction yanama, 'then' at the beginning of sentence (18) links it and this sub-constituent back to (17) and the previous sub-constituent.

Aspect: The imperfective verb form is used throughout this sub-constituent, except for seven occurrences of the perfective interspersed among the imperfectives.

In this text, the imperfective form of the verb seems to mark a normal flow of events or a continuing action (such as the rocks causing waves in (17)). The perfective form marks the end of an event or a series of events (e.g. (14)), a non-event (such as (16) — 'which they wanted to dam up ...'; and 'we don't know' in (29)), or a preview summary of what is to follow next, after which this preview is expanded upon (sentence (18), for example).

Events: A span of related events occurs through this sub-constituent, binding it together.

2.2.7 CLOSURE OF DISCOURSE, sentence (33):

(33) This is the end of the story of the waves. (So we say the story of the waves is this long.)

In the closing, the main purpose of the story—-to explain the origin of the waves—is repeated. Cohesion devices are as follows.

Reference: Reference shifts from the two brothers in the previous sub-constituent back again to the waves at the end of the discourse. This ties this constituent with the opening one.

Linkage: The conjunction apavo, 'so' at the beginning of sentence (33) links it to the rest of the whole story, tying it all together.

Stative clause: The topic of the waves is followed by ma, and then by the new information of the story being 'up till here'. Note that existential sentence type is once again used, this time at the close of the story. This also ties this constituent together with the opening one.

3. DISCOURSE AS PRAGMATIC TRANSACTION

3.1 COMPONENTS

Besides looking at discourse structurally, one can also view discourse as a real transaction between speaker and hearer. In Gregerson's 1976 model of The Communication Act, he presents various aspects involved with the Communication Source as speaker and the Communication Goal as hearer. Some of the components of a speech situation which occur in this text or this type of text are discussed below.

The 'Communication Source' or speaker for this type of narrative is an old person who knows the story well. The 'Communication Goal' or audience would be younger members of the family of the speaker. For both speaker and hearer, the location is on the floor in their house, and the time is at night before going to bed. This would not happen every night, however, just occasionally, but if the story is a long one it could be continued two or three nights in a row so as not to keep the children up too late.

The purpose of the speaker in telling this type of narrative is to teach and
entertain by explaining certain geographical features of the area or the origin of things. In this story, of which the text analyzed here is just a part, it is explained why the big paramere trees are all on one side of the bay and the bamboo trees are all on the other side. Values about what is good and what is bad are also taught. The purpose of the hearer, however, is mainly to be entertained and to hear about the old times.

For this type of narrative the speaker has certain presuppositions: that the story is true, that the family likes to hear stories, and that the children will learn good morals from the stories. In this particular story, we know the speaker presupposes certain things because of the way he talks about them. He presupposes that the hearers know that 'Wosimi' is a river, and 'Umari' is a bay, since in sentence (5) he uses 'Wosimi' and 'Umari' by themselves with no modifying noun. He also presupposes that the hearers will understand that the brothers' throwing paramere trees and bamboo at each other explains the location of these today. Other presuppositions about the characters will be discussed in section 3.3. The hearer also has certain presuppositions in hearing this kind of story. He, too, believes the story is true, that he will be entertained as he listens, and that the characters are giants who can do extraordinary things.

The speaker's attitude as he tells the story is one of pride in being able to tell the story and in being able to tell about superhuman feats of their ancestors. The hearer's attitude, on the other hand, is astonishment and amazement at these superhuman feats accomplished by the story characters, their ancestors.

3.2 SPEECH GENRES

From a pragmatic point of view, the speaker is explaining something (the origin of waves in a certain river) to his hearer in sentences (1)-(3) and (33), i.e., he is giving an expository discourse. In order to do so he must use a narrative discourse (the story of Kuri and Pasai), which includes sentences (4)-(32).

--- explain --> narrate --> explain ---

Speaker (1-3) (4-32) (33) Hearer

The diagram shows that the speaker goes through a narration in order to get his explanation across to the hearer; the narration is embedded in the exposition. The prominence peaks of both exposition and narration come together at one point, in sentence (17), where the brothers shift the rocks and the rocks cause waves.

3.3 CHARACTERS

Speaker empathy with certain characters can be seen in two ways. One is when the author uses the deictic nei 'this' to show a feeling of closeness with a participant, either because of his character, or because of a recent previous reference to him. This deictic is always used with Pasai, the younger brother, from the very first reference to him, because he is the "good guy". The only times it is used with Kuri, the older brother, is when he has just previously been referred to (6 and 7), and when he is being stabbed (31). Even though he was stabbed by the "good guy", the speaker empathizes with him at this point. Other than these two occasions, the deictic pai 'the' is always used for Kuri. Thus, it is usually 'the older brother' vs. 'this younger brother'.

The other way the speaker shows a feeling of closeness to some participant is by not using his proper name. Pasai's (the "good guy") name is only mentioned once (22) after the first reference to Kuri and Pasai together in sentence (4); and this is after several references have already been made to him ('this younger brother' only). On the other hand, references to Kuri (the "bad guy") often include his name (besides 'the older brother'), i.e. 'the older brother, Kuri', creating more of a feeling of distance to him.

Certain presuppositions about the characters are held by the speaker and, possibly, the hearer. These are that Kuri and Pasai are their ancestors and are giants, so can do extraordinary things; Kuri represents evil, and Pasai, good; Kuri is poor (he only took one knife with him - (21)), and Pasai is rich (he took three things with him - (23)); someday Pasai will return and will bring with him a "golden age" -- he went to the west, so will return from there and bring all kinds of riches and good things with him; their mother died because of Kuri's trickery of Pasai, and not because Pasai was stupid and skinned his mother; the reason they fought was because Pasai was angry at Kuri for tricking him; and, the two brothers separated because good and evil cannot be united.

3.4 REPORTED SPEECH

Reported speech in a narrative is an embedded pragmatic event of the characters in the narration. In the intervening incident (6b - 15a) there is a direct interchange between the two characters in the story, as the story teller relates to the hearer what the two brothers, themselves as speaker and hearer, said to each other. This includes two quotations, which are
the only ones in the text. Because of this interchange, the event takes place which causes the waves, the central point of the story. This explains why 'mother' is first referred to as beî in sentence (12), and later as vinà in sentence (13). The first reference occurs in reported speech, so the local word is used, while the latter reference is part of the speaker's own narration, so the more general word is used.

NOTES

1. The Wandamen language is spoken on the north coast of Irian Jaya, south and east of the Bird's Head. This area includes the Wandamen bay in the district of Manokwarai and the subdistrict of Waisori. There are about 5,000 Wandamen speakers, approximately 4,000 of which live in this subdistrict.

Wandamen is an Austronesian language (Capell, A., A Linguistic Survey of the South-Western Pacific, 1962, pp. 2-3). Language analysis in the Wandamen area has been carried out under the auspices of the University of Cenderawasih-Summer Institute of Linguistics Project, by Nitya Ongkoharma beginning in October 1977, and joined by me in December 1978. This paper was written at a linguistic workshop on Danau Bira in May-June 1980. I wish to acknowledge the contribution of Mr. Y. Nelwan and all his help in writing this paper. I am also most grateful for the invaluable consultant help of Dr Kenneth Gregerson and Miss Marit Kana. Our work is carried out under the auspices of the Cenderawasih University and the Summer Institute of Linguistics Project.

REFERENCES


APPENDIX: BATA VE NANA WOSIMI RARO ('WAVES IN THE WOSIMI RIVER')

(Note: All verbs are in the imperfective aspect, unless marked as perfective.)

(1) Bata wari. ma toapa nine.

wave the, pl. are like this

'The matter of the waves (in the Wosimi River) is like this.'

(2) Ava rawana ninia ma vie bata

because sea this is became wave

pa.

the

'It was because of the sea that these (Wosimi River) waves came into being.'

(3) Piva.

no

'No, indeed!'

(4) Vape mambe neta vava ne

but brothers younger older this

sandu, Kuri Pasai sandu.

they two Kuri Pasai they two

'But rather it was like this: there were once two brothers, Kuri and Pasai.'

(5) Sandu sumasoï to

they two they two lived until

matau auro sutaui

themselves they two wanted they two
tu Wosimi e diepa

pile up across Wosimi and it runs

rawa Umari,

side Umari

'One day (lit. They two lived until) the two of them decided to dam up the Wosimi River, so it would run over to the Umaari Bay.'

(6) Apa sutaui pa

so they 2 piled it up when

sutaui to mani vori

they 2 piled it up until then then

yanama ineri baba pai Kuri,

then then older brother the Kuri

andi dìosa e viara nie

he he stood and he beat his

piverotu pai nana ravina pa.

drum the at evening the

'So when they damned it up, they damned it up until one evening the older brother, Kuri, stood and beat his drum.'

(7) Baba nei Kuri ma misoi

older brother this Kuri is he lived

nana kambe rei wai Inggorosa.

at hole the Inggorosa
'This older brother, Kuri, lived in a cave at Inggorosa.'

(8) Mae madia nei ni and younger brother this the one who
miesoi nana rao Manievi wa. he lived at valley Manievi the

'While the (lit. this) younger brother lived in the Manievi valley.'

(9) Avari siau avaru so then he called across to
baba pai toapa nini dioya older brother the like this he said
e dioyo: and he said

'Then he called across to the older brother like this and said:'

(10) "Tuvope vitoni respected form of address what
bimbara nomu pisereotu you put on perf. your drum
pai pa?" the

'Sir, what did you put on your drum (as a drum-head)︖'

(11) Amana siau avaru so but he called across to
madia nei e dioya younger brother this and he said
e dioyo: and he said

'He called across and answered (this) younger brother,'

(12) "Ma bei sane rawa paina. " mother stomach skin it is

'The skin of mother's stomach.'

(13) Apa ria mapui tiawabari so he went to the back he lay down
sinian e kiaka siniani his mother and he peeled his mother
sane rawa pa e diito stomach skin the and he also wanted
diito nei pai. he also put on his the

'Then/so he (the younger brother)

went to the back (of the house) and had his mother lie down and he peeled the skin of her stomach to put on his (drum) also.'

(14) Anama piva e ka dimborua. but no and too bad she died,
perf.
'But unfortunately she died.'

(15) Dimborua pa yanama ineri she died, perf. when then then
surimu sandu. they 2 fought, perf. they 2

'When she died, then they both fought each other.'

(16) Sumu sandu pa yanama they 2 fought they 2 when then
suta suriri they 2 stepped on they 2 shifted
rovuki suro suritaur rock they 2 wanted they 2

Umaru wasi. Umaru the, pl.

'When they fought each other, then they stepped on and shifted the rocks which they wanted to dam up the river with so it would run to the Umaru Bay.'

(17) Apa yanama asi so then they, 3rd pl. inan.
simbe bata, caused wave

'So then they (the rocks) caused waves.'

(18) Yanama surimbovo sandu. then they 2 divided, perf. they 2

'Then they 2 separated from each other.'

(19) Surimbovo sandu pa they 2 divided, perf. they 2 when
baba Kuri andi vievu older brother Kuri he he went

nanapi rava tane ne. home to side our this
'When they separated from each other, the older brother Kuri went home to our (this) side.'

Amana ima vievu mana
but he is he went home but
dio toyana pavo kio
he did like that since he took
piesa va,
something not

'He went home and didn't take anything.'

Kio vei nie sumbe wonggei
he took only his knife cassuary
tu pai vei vee e vievu
feather the only and he went
tutir i.
home with it

'He only took his cassuary feather knife with him.'

Mae netakatu ne Pasai andi
and younger brother this Pasai he
vievu nanapi rawa Saneu vedia.
he went home to side Saneu that

'But (this) younger brother, Pasai, went home to that side, Saneu.'

Apa vievu pa ima kio
so he went home when he is he took
pi pa toru e vievu
thing the three and he went
tutir asi.
with them

'When he went home he took three things with him.'

Apa Kuri yanama ineri vievu
so Kuri then then he went home
pa vievu ma miesi
when he came home here he reached
rabua.
middle

'So then when Kuri went home, he came here and reached the middle of the way.'

Tane wi nei rabua.
our mountain this middle

'To the middle of our mountain.'

Avori yanama ineri sio
then then he threw
madia nei.
younger brother this

'Then he pelted (this) younger brother.'

Apa pi diso pai ni
so thing he threw, perf. the was
paramere pai tiaratw e
kind of tree the he cut and
diso.
he threw, perf.

'The thing he threw was a kind of tree that he cut and threw,'

Yanam ineri ria dimbavura,
then then he went he went home, perf.

'Then he went home.'

Vievu pa vievura
he went home when he went home
diavi tititu kaiwasa pai na nine
he tricked people the from here
rapo to tatindui moya
to there until we know, perf. not
viouru nanpa,
he died where

'When he went home he went tricking/deceiving people here and there, and we don't know where he died.'

Mae madia nei, madia
and younger brother this younger
nei ni vievu
brother this one who he went home
ma diomasu rabua wori
here he also reached middle then
yanama ineri tiaratu sasa pai,
then then he cut bamboo the

'But as the younger brother came home he also reached the middle, then he cut some bamboo.'

Tiaratu sasa pai e tiaeti
he cut bamboo the and he braced
a ditisa baba
and he stabbed, perf. older brother

nei.
this

'He cut some bamboo and he stood
bracing himself and stabbed (this)
older brother.'

(32) Yanama ineri miesop e
then then he continued and

ria dimbavura.
he went he went home, perf.

* * *

'Then he continued and went home.'

(33) Apavo tatoyo bata wasi ma
so we say wave the, pl. is
topanusa pai dieroi vape
story the it is long but
tiopa yana.
it is like that

'This is the end of the story of
the waves.'