SPEECH REPORTING STRATEGIES IN KINNAURI NARRATIVES

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1. INTRODUCTION

Dialogues do not have the same function and prerequisites in narratives as in conversation. In narratives they occur when the narrator decides to use them to further the purpose of narration. It is also the narrator who decides on its content and form and the perspective taken. A number of speech reporting strategies occur in Kinnauri narratives. They are: (i) the quotative construction, (ii) sequences of exchange between participants, (iii) isolated instances of direct speech and (iv) non-direct speech. The aim of this paper is to examine the functions of these speech reporting strategies in Kinnauri narratives. It will be suggested here that these strategies display a gradual variation in the speaker's involvement and thereby also in their evidential interpretations. Further, there is a difference in the dramatization of the speech contents in the various strategies. In the quotative construction the narrator reports verbatim someone else's speech (retaining both the form and the content of an "utterance" by a participant earlier in the narrative), thereby retaining the responsibility for the speech with the original speaker and not with the narrator. The next strategy, i.e., direct speech, seems to have different functions when it occurs as an isolated instance ("isolated instances of direct speech") occurring one utterance at a time, and when it comprises an exchange between two or more participants ("segments of instances of direct speech"). Furthermore, among the sequences of exchange, there is a distinction between ritualized narrative exchanges and non-ritualized exchanges. The latter encode important episodes - episodes which have consequences for the story, e.g. in climax situations. Presenting this event as a verbal exchange between two participants provides an opportunity for the listeners to experience the event directly, to relive the experience. This adds to the dramatization of the event, increasing the tempo in story-telling. There is, however, a gradual difference in the length of these exchanges and thereby also in their intensity. The ritualized narrative exchange, on the other hand, is a stylistic feature in some narratives (a sign of traditional oral narratives), where the repetition seems to have the same function as stanzas in songs. Finally, the non-direct speech reporting strategy is the neutral mechanism of narrating events which happened a long time ago. The last-mentioned strategy is lowest on the scale of dramatization and direct involvement.

2.1 BACKGROUND: ON KINNAURI NARRATIVES

Kinnauri is a West Himalayish language spoken in the Himachal Pradesh region of India. It is a verb-final language. A finite unit in Kinnauri is not infrequently composed of a converb segment along with one or more embeddings.

The data for this study comes from the Kinnauri narrative corpus which I have compiled.[1] For the present purposes, I have examined narratives 07, 08, 12 and 13 in my Kinnauri corpus.[2] In traditional Kinnauri narratives (unlike spontaneous narratives) the participants are regularly identified and the structure is more stable. The corpus displays two main narrative styles: one where the narrative comprises sequences of exchange between the various participants, and one where the bulk of the story is told by the narrator in non-direct speech with sporadic occurrences of direct speech. It is the latter which will be the focus of this paper. These narratives are traditional folktales. Traditional folktales in Kinnauri are very often about one specific person and that person's journey through a series of events ("episodes"), where other participants of varying importance show up in one or more episodes before they disappear from the scene. The moral of these narratives is usually the victory of good over evil. A brief sketch of the narratives examined here is as follows.[3]

Narrative 07 is about a girl and some events in her life, namely, her being sent away with a demon, named *Birma Chostin*; her marriage to the king, who used to live six months in heaven and six months on earth; about giving birth to a son; the demon's wicked ways of capturing the girl; and finally the happy ending where the king and the girl (now the queen) and their son are reunited.

Narrative 08 is also about a girl and her life. Her father, remarried to a female demon, leaves his five daughters (from the first wife) in the forest. The girls meet a demon there, who forces them to stay at his place. Each day he sends all but one girl to do errands. He eats the one who stays at home. On their return, the girls discover that the one who was at home is no longer there. After having continued like this for some days, only two girls are left. They are scared and they ask a crow, a fox and finally a mouse for help. The mouse comes up with a scheme which helps the girls to escape. The girls then meet a

[3] These summaries do not reflect the linguistic structure (including the temporal frame) of the Kinnauri narratives.

cow who hides them. The demon, chasing the girls, meets the cow and manages to eat one of the two remaining girls. The cow belongs to a priest couple, who take care of the girl. The priest later gives the girl a golden body. A king finds out about the girl with a golden body and marries her. Then the king and girl meet a female demon and her niece. The female demon turns her niece into the queen and the queen into a servant to the royal couple. Finally the king finds out about this and throws the niece out.

Narrative 13 is about a prince who is portrayed as lazy by his family, and his journey to return to his father's country as a rich and successful king. Because this prince didn't do anything while living at home, his share of the property is soon expended. He decides to go abroad with his wife and two children to try his luck. At one place the prince's wife goes to a village to beg for food, where she is taken in as a slave by the villagers. After having waited for her for a while, the prince decides to cross the river with one child at a time. When he had crossed the river with one child, the river rose suddenly and the prince disappeared, leaving one child on each side of the river. A washerman and his wife hear the crying and come to their rescue, and decide to raise the children. When the children grow up, one day they go to look for their parents. They go to a king's court and request the king to give them employment. The king says that they can look after an old woman who is staying at the graveyard if they promise to watch her the whole night. In order to stay awake all night, they narrate their life story to each other, which the old woman hears. She sees similarities between their stories and her own children's life stories. Next day she asks the king to listen to their story. When the children narrate the story, the king and the old woman each think that the children are telling his/her story. They finally recognize that the old woman is the prince's wife and that the children are their own children. After making her his queen, the prince (now the king) decides to return to his father's country with pomp and ceremony.

Unlike narratives 07, 08 and 13, narrative 12 is a chain of episodes which are loosely connected to one another. Each episode has its own main character(s). The first episode is about the friendship between a calf and two lion-cubs and the cubs' greedy mother who ate up the cow. The cubs' took revenge by killing their own mother. Later the calf dies too. They put the remains of the calf in a stone house, into which they also entered. From that stone house there grew a tree which bore fruit. The second episode concerns a king and his two queens and their inability to conceive children. A demon promises to help them. He brings two pieces of fruit from the stone house to be given to the queens. The king gives the core of the fruit to the queen whom he liked best. The skin of the fruit is thrown in the garbage, which the other queen picks up and eats. After a while both the queens give birth to sons. The much-

liked queen's son is not smart, whereas the other queen's son is. Afterwards the
demon returns and claims the two sons. He decides to take the smart one. The
next episode tells how the smart son kills the demon and returns to his country,
where one of the queens is happy and the other is not. The last episode is about
the other queen, who then tries to kill the smart son by poisoning his food. But,
the smart son fed the food first to his cat and dog who died. The narrative ends
abruptly at this point – a typical feature of oral narrative.

2.2 BACKGROUND: DIRECT AND INDIRECT SPEECH IN KINNAURI NARRATIVES

There is a long tradition of regarding direct quotations as verbatim
reproductions of their original utterance. Bally, for instance, suggests that direct
quotation is "a phonographic reproduction of the thoughts and words"
(1914:422). For Li, it 'involves reproducing or mimicking the speech of the
reported speaker" (1986:40) and for Coulmas "he commits himself to faithfully
rendering form and content of what the original speaker said" (Coulmas
1985:42, all as reported in Clark and Gerrit 1990). Clark and Gerrit (1990)
argue against direct quotation being verbatim reproduction. They suggest that
quotations depict what speakers commit themselves to to as the the depiction of
selected aspects of the referent. Verbal reproduction *per se* has nothing to do
with it" (1990:795). The occurrence of direct speech in Kinnauri narratives
supports Clark and Gerrit's viewpoint.

Kinnauri makes a distinction between direct and indirect speech, as
illustrated in (1) and (2).[4]

(1) *ram-ɩs*   *rɩŋ-ɔ*   *gə*   *kaməŋ*   *šuŋšuŋ*   *to-k*
     name-ERG   say-PST   I   work   finish/PERF   be-1SG
     Ram said "I have finished the work".

(2) *ram-ɩs*   *rɩŋ-a*   *ki*   *dɔ-s*   *kaməŋ*   *šuŋšuŋ*   *to*
     name-ERG   say-PST   COMP   s/he-ERG   work   finish/PERF   be/PRST
     Ram said that he (Ram) has finished the work.

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[4] The meanings of the abbreviations used in this study are as follows. 1 = first person, 2 =
second person, 3 = third person, 1/2 = object agreement, ABL = ablative, ACC = accusative,
ADV = adverbial, AGR = agreement, AUX = auxiliary, COMP = complementizer, DAT =
dative, DIMINU = diminutive, N.PST = narrative past, EMP = emphasis, ERG = ergative, F
= feminine, FUT = future, H/HON = honorific, IMP = imperative, IMPF = imperfective,
INST = instrumental, LOC = locative, NEG = negative, NF = nonfinal verb, NOM =
nominalizer, NONFUT = nonfuture, NP = noun phrase, PERF = perfective, PL = plural,
POSS = possessive, PROG = progressive, PRST = present, PST = past, SG = singular, V =
verb.