

Prominence in Central Somali Narrative Discourse¹

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1. Introduction.

The purpose of this paper is to describe the grammatical structure of narrative discourse in Central Somali, and in particular to discuss the marking of prominence within the discourse. In addition, it will be shown that although the same surface grammatical markers can be found in both dialogue discourse and narrative discourse structures of Central Somali, the pragmatic function of these markers in the two systems is quite different. Thus it will be claimed that pragmatic functions (e.g. focus and topic) must be studied within the context of a particular discourse genre in order to gain a full understanding of their nature.

Central Somali (also known as Rahaween) is closely related to Standard Somali, although the two are not mutually intelligible. It is spoken by approximately 12,000 people living in the northeast corner of Kenya, as well as by large populations residing within Somalia. The language assistants for this paper were both from Kenya: Hassan Abdirahman and Mohamed Adan, both from Mandera. The texts used in this paper were all narrated by Madowbi Maalim, also from Mandera.²

The overall grammatical system of Central Somali has recently been described by Saeed (1981). I will provide a few of the details of the grammatical system here, but otherwise the reader is referred to Saeed's paper. Throughout the following discussion, all phonetic symbols have their usual value, except for j, which represents the affricate [dʒ]; D, J, and G, which are voiced implosive consonants; and the diglot sh which will be used for [ʃ] (in conformity with the standard Somali orthography).

One of the more noteworthy features of Central Somali grammar is the fact that every independent clause must contain a focus marker, yaa. This particle functions to mark the most salient NP in the clause, i.e. normally the constituent which is either asserted as new information or

counterasserted in order to contradict a preceding statement. For example:

- | | | |
|------|--|---------------------------------------|
| 1.a. | aay dilee gool
who killed f.-lion | 'Who killed a she-lion?' |
| b. | lanke yaa gool dilee
man-the F f.-lion killed | 'The man(!) killed a she-lion.' |
| 2.a. | lanke yaa gool dilee
man-the F f-lion killed | 'The man killed a she-lion.' |
| b. | may (lanke) mas aa dilee
no, man-the snake F killed | 'No, (the man) he killed a snake(!).' |

As can be seen, yaa marks the immediately preceding constituent as the item in focus (i.e. lanke in #1b and mas in #2b). 2b also illustrates one of three possible contractions of an NP+yaa sequence, i.e.:

- | | |
|----|--|
| 3. | ...C + <u>yaa</u> --> ...C <u>aa</u> |
| 4. | ...CV + <u>yaa</u> --> ...C <u>ii</u> |
| 5. | ...CVV + <u>yaa</u> --> ...CVV + <u>waa</u>
#CV #CV |

The other major grammatical device which serves as a marker of pragmatic function is word order permutations (the interaction of word order and the focus markers in Standard Somali is described in detail in Biber, 1981).³ The unmarked word order in Central Somali is S O V , where S is the constituent in focus. When the object is in focus, the expected word order is O V S . That is, in general the focused constituent is sentence-initial. 'Exceptions to this generalisation serve to mark the topic. That is, a topicalised constituent is fronted to sentence-initial position, preceding the focused constituent, and functions to establish a framework of "aboutness" for the following predication. For example, in the story "The fox, the ticks, and the elephant", the ticks slowly suck the fox's blood until she dies (and the fox was formerly the owner of the goats), and then we are told that: erinkii shillinaa Dahalli goats-the ticks - F inherited literally 'the goats the ticks inherited'. But due to the O S V word order (object in sentence-initial position, preceding the focused subject), this sentence would have the force: 'As for the goats, the ticks(!) inherited them.' Thus, this construction marks a return to 'the goats'

as the topic, with the following comment describing what happened to them.

One final construction should be discussed before moving on to the narrative discourse structures, that is the conjunction +na. There are three separate conjunctions in Central Somali: iiye which joins two NPs together, oo which joins two clauses together, and +na. This last conjunction also joins two clauses together, but it additionally functions to single out some constituent in the second clause (i.e. the constituent it is attached to) as a contrastive topic. For example, a section in the story "The man and the snake" discusses the attitudes and probable intentions of the man, and then switches to the snake with the sentence:

maskiina	sir	aa ngali	
snake-the-and	cheating	F entered into	'And as for the snake, he decided to cheat.'

Note here that maskii 'the snake' is not old or presupposed information, although it is the topic (marked as such by its sentential position). That is, maskii establishes the framework of aboutness for this sentence, but in addition it contrasts with the topic of the immediately preceding sentence ('the man'). This latter fact is marked by the suffix +na.

Given this background, it is possible to proceed to the analysis of narrative discourse structures.⁴ However, I will return to the discussion of these pragmatic functions later in the paper.

2. Episodic structure within narrative discourse.

The following sections will provide a detailed analysis of the overall episodic structure of and prominence within the narrative text "The woman and the thieves". The full text of this story can be found in Appendix I, and all line references will be to this appendix.

Throughout a narrative discourse, clauses can be divided into the two categories of events⁵ and nonevents. Event clauses are marked in two ways: 1) the verb is always a past tense form (as opposed to non-event information (e.g. lines 12 and 25) which utilises both past and present tenses), and 2) the clause always contains yaa (as opposed to nonevent clauses which by definition are never marked by yaa, e.g. lines 25 and 26). Beyond this, there seem to be three general types of event

clauses. The first type is a clause consisting of only a verb, e.g. line 16 (i.e. there is no nominal constituent, and therefore no focus marker). The second type is the clause structure discussed in the first section of this paper, consisting minimally of an NP which is in focus, and a verb (see for example lines 13, 14, 22, 23, etc.). Finally, the third type of event clause consists of an entire subordinate clause which marks a major new setting, followed by yaa, followed by an event clause. This type of construction seems to always mark a more major event, and functions to break the discourse down into smaller structural units (referred to as paragraphs).⁶ In the story "The woman and the thieves", the first example of this type is found in line 12, which begins the description of the woman's first meeting with the thieves (lines 12-16). The second example, in line 17, begins the description of the thieves' plotting and initial preparation (lines 17-20). The construction maddaas aa in line 21 marks the beginning of a major new episode (see following discussion). However, at the same time, maddaas aa here also initiates a new paragraph (lines 21-23), which describes the first step in the execution of the thieves' plot. Finally, the subordinate clause-yaa construction in line 24 begins the last paragraph before the climax, in which the thieves take the second step in executing their plan. Thus this construction serves to break the narrative into logical event-units which are larger than sentences.

Some other examples of this type of construction follow: In the story "The fox, the ticks and the elephant", the first major event of the story is: shilin oo meel Daraaran yaa too ku roogsidoi
 ticks which place are together F one let him stand on
 '(when) the ticks are at a place where they are all together, yaa, he (the elephant) stood on one of them.' This event is the incident which initiates all of the following action in the story. In the story "The man who kept his promise", after a very long setting, the events begin as follows: ...iddile hanka hoyidayan yaa lamankii lan ku mid
 village-the they come home to F men-the man one of
 eh yaa balaankii ku baihi
 being F promise-the went out from
 '...as they are (every night) coming to sleep only at the village, yaa, one of the two men, yaa, left the promise.' Again, the whole following

plot centers around the consequences which result from this broken promise. Finally, in the story "The boy who did not cheat", we are told that the boy was sent to school, where he was learning various things, and then

... farte Gorooshe baradi yaa aawkii Dimidi
 symbols-the writing he learned F father-the died

'...(when) he learned the symbols of writing, yaa, the father died.' which is the event which causes the boy to set out upon his subsequent adventures. In all of these examples, the event described begins a whole mini-episode within the narrative. Thus, this type of construction brings a major event or turning point into focus through the use of yaa, while at the same time serving as a boundary marker of a paragraph.

The construction maddaas aa 'then yaa' functions to mark even larger units within the discourse. This construction can be noted in lines 6 and 21, both of which mark the beginning point of a major new episode in the narrative. The first episode, starting in line 6, begins with the woman going back to her own village, then moves on to her meeting the thieves, and the thieves subsequent planning. Then in line 21, the second episode is begun when the thieves actually start to implement their plan; and this entire episode describes only the way in which they carry out the plan. The construction maddaas aa marks the beginning points of these two episodes.

3. Narrative Discourse Prominence.

This section will discuss several methods of marking prominence within a narrative discourse. That is, just as yaa functions to mark the most salient constituent in a sentence, so there are grammatical devices which mark parts of a narrative as more salient than other parts. These devices include event chains, repetition, and collateral statements. Finally, it will be shown that these devices often combine to mark the climax (or most prominent section) of a narrative.

3.1. Event chains.

I have previously described the three most common types of event

clauses. Normally these clauses occur in a discourse mixed together with nonevent information (setting, background, etc.). However, at certain points, the event line of a narrative can be brought into prominence. The most common way of doing this is through an event chain, i.e. a chain of event clauses, each of which contains a minimum number of nominal constituents (e.g. lines 18-20). Longer chains are more marked structures, and therefore result in a greater prominence. For example, in "The fox, the ticks, and the elephant", the ticks attacked the elephant when he was sleeping, and then:

kaheey, ka taanDowidi, lugaagii yaa Dulke ka Dowi,
he woke up, he shook himself, legs-the F ground-the he beat on,

Degaagii yaa "geb geb geb" ku siiyi, "uuuuuu..." yaa erri,
ears-the F gave out, F he said,

(koraa fiiriyee ogtaa)
up-F he was looking know it

'He (the elephant) woke up, he shook himself, he beat his legs on the ground, he made his ears go "geb geb...", he said "uuuu...", (he was looking up, do you know it?!).' This sequence seems to be the high point of the entire narrative, and it is marked as such by the length of the event chain.

At other times, there may be almost no explicit marking of the participants in an event chain. An example of this is in lines 36-44. Here, the subject switches from the man (36) to the woman (37), back to the man (40), and back to the woman again (41), with no explicit marking of any of the switches. It is possible to understand the participant orientation through the verb morphology, but this is a marked construction, in which all attention is focused on the event line.

3.2. Repetition.

It is also possible to bring into prominence one particular event in the event line. One way of doing this is through repetition. For instance, in "The man who kept his promise", the man hid inside a hyena hole, and then: lama waraabii ha gelen. lamadii waraaba yaa ha gelen.
two hyenas entered two-the hyenas F entered
'Two hyenas entered. The two hyenas entered.' In this case, the repeated

clause is not even part of an event chain, but it is marked through repetition as being an important event in the narrative (the man learned from the hyenas a secret which later helped him to become rich). Another example comes from "The man and the snake". After a long setting, describing the good relationship which a man and a snake had established, we are told that:

maskii iiye ariirkii lankii Dali iiye maskii
snake-the and boy-the man-the birthed and snake-the

yaa isgifen. wal isgifen.
F fought they fought each other

'The snake and the boy who the man gave birth to, and the snake, yaa, fought each other. They fought each other.' Again, these clauses are not part of an event chain. Rather, in both of these examples, the event is focused upon through repetition because it has a crucial relation to later events in the narrative.

3.3. Collateral statements/rhetorical questions.

Collateral statements also function to focus on some particular event clause in the narrative. Grimes (1975.64-70) classifies all instances of telling what did not happen as collateral information. Collateral clauses are important in Central Somali narrative in that they bring into prominence the immediately following clause, which tells what did happen. For instance, line 19 notes that "they did not follow", but rather they passed a different way. Thus the reader's attention is focused on the fact that the thieves circled around the woman by the explicit collateral statement that they did not follow her.

Rhetorical questions are a special case of collateral statements (Grimes 1975.68). In Central Somali narrative, they normally seem to bring a whole sequence of events into prominence, rather than one particular event clause. For instance, in "The man who kept his promise", we are told that a second man, who was dishonest, also went into the hyena hole, that he fought with the hyenas in the hole, and then:

lankow iiye lama waraaba God Datiis eh, maay taawiiyaasa
man-one and two hyenas hole inside being what do you think

'One man and two hyenas inside a hole, what do you think (will happen)?'

After which we are told that the man was mutilated by the hyenas. In this way, the event describing the final outcome of this character is emphasised.

There is a special type of rhetorical question used in Central Somali narratives, ogtaa 'do you know it?!', which has a separate function. It is used mainly to focus on background information, i.e. explanations or comments about what has happened. For instance, in line 25, when the woman and one thief meet the other thief, the narrator wants us to understand that these two thieves are the ones that we have met previously, and that they know each other; and so he uses this construction. In other cases, ogtaa can mark background information which is a type of foreshadowing. For instance, in "The man and the snake", a boy was about to enter a well, and the narrator tells us that:

malaksheeyaa ha galee ogtaa
angel-his-F is entering know it

'His angel of death is entering, do you know it?!' i.e. he is about to die. Then later, when the boy's father is trying to negotiate with the snake, we are told that:

maskiina siraa ngali ogtaa
snake-the-and cheating-F entered know it

'And the snake decided to cheat, do you know it?!' That is, we are to note beforehand that the snake did not intend to honor any agreement.

3.4. Climax structures.

Longacre (1976.217-28) provides a description of several common grammatical devices used to mark the surface structure peak. In Central Somali narrative discourse, the climax (or peak) is marked as the section which combines the greatest number of prominence constructions, and therefore it might be defined as the point of greatest prominence (or focus) in the narrative.

It seems proper to speak of both well-defined climaxes and more loosely defined climaxes. For instance, the event chain previously discussed in "The fox, the ticks, and the elephant" (see section 3.1) is an example of a moderately well-defined climax. It utilises only the feature of longest event chain. But since it is the most marked sequence in the discourse, it constitutes the climax.

Often, a narrative will have more than one climax, corresponding to the number of episodes in the story. These episodes are demarcated through the use of either subordinate clause-yaa constructions, or maddaas aa constructions. For instance, the story "The man who kept his promise" has two climaxes, which correspond to the two episodes. The first episode begins with the subordinate clause-yaa construction describing how one man broke his promise (discussed in section 2). We are then told how (as a result of this broken promise) the honest man ended up in a hyena hole, where he learned from the hyenas how to cure a certain rich man who had been sick for many years; and subsequently how he did in fact cure this rich man, resulting in a great reward. This episode ends with the following climax structure:

shinniidii yaa la haa gooyi, Gurbigii yaa la gowriyi, lankii
 bees-the F were cut m. camel-the F was slaughtered man-the
 meellii yaa liinke Daawi, fiyawaadi
 place-the F was prayed for at he became well

'The bee hive was cut, the camel was slaughtered, the man was prayed for at that place, (and) he became well.' This sequence is marked as a climax construction through the feature of longest event chain.

The second episode begins with the following subordinate clause-yaa construction:

hoobe ... gaalshee hortiis ko odini, gebertun
 when camels-his in front were fenced girl-this

mankii nki jerti, walaagun baatirke eh, yaa, kii kala koiyi.
 house-the was there inside this one beautiful being F the other came

'When (the honest man was given 100 camels), his camels were fenced in front of his house, this girl was in the house for him, (and she) was very beautiful, yaa, the other one (i.e. the dishonest man) came.' Then, in this episode, the dishonest man learns how the first man became rich, and subsequently he also goes to the hyena hole so that he can learn a secret too, whereupon he is killed by the hyenas. This episode ends with the following climax construction:

meellii yaa liki harbiyi. lankow iiye lama waraaba God Datiis eh
 place-the F was fought at man-one and two hyenas hole inside being,

maay taawiiyaasa? lankii meellii yaa liki JeJabsadi. lankii
 what do you think man-the place-the F was broken to pieces man-the

meellii yaa liki JeJabsadi.
 place-the F was broken to pieces

'That place was fought at by them. One man and two hyenas inside a hole, what do you think will happen? The man was mutilated at that place. The man was mutilated at that place!' The features of an event chain, a rhetorical question and repetition are combined in this climax.

There are a few points to note here. First, in this story there is no main climax or point of focus for the entire narrative. Rather, each of the two episodes has a climax. The preferred position for these climax constructions is episode-final. In narratives of this type, the episodes are simply concatenated together, i.e. they are not part of a larger structure which has its own climax. Thus in this story, after the second episode which ends with the dishonest man being killed by the hyenas, we are simply given an explanation and moral concerning what happened. There are no further events to serve as a focus for the entire narrative.

In contrast, "The woman and the thieves" consists of two episodes, each of which contains a focus construction, plus a final climax structure. This discourse-final structure functions as the climax for the entire narrative. The overall structure of this text is outlined below:

Lines 1-5 Initial setting

Line 6 Episode 1: maddaas aa
 Line 6 Paragraph 1: maddaas aa
 Line 12 Paragraph 2: Subordinate clause-yaa
 Line 17 Paragraph 3: Subordinate clause-yaa
 Lines 18-20 Focus structure: Event chain
 Collateral statement

Line 21 Episode 2: maddaas aa
 Line 21 Paragraph 4: maddaas aa
 Line 24 Paragraph 5: Subordinate clause-yaa
 Lines 27-33 Focus structure: Event chain
 Collateral statement
 Repetition

Lines 36-44 Climax: Most marked event chain
 Repetition
 Rhetorical question
 Participant reorientation

Lines 45-47 Moral

The climax of the first episode occurs in lines 18-20, i.e. when the one thief actually makes all of the necessary preparations for their plan. This climax is marked by an event chain and a collateral statement (line 19). The climax of the second episode (lines 27-33) occurs when the second thief actually takes the sheep. It combines a collateral statement (line 27), and repetition (lines 28 and 29), with a well-developed event chain.

Narrative focus structures (or climaxes) tend to occur unit-finally in Central Somali. Thus the climax of both of these episodes occurs at the end of the episode unit (as was the case in "The man who kept his promise"). The climax in lines 36-44 also occurs unit-finally, although the unit in this case is the entire narrative rather than an episode. This climax is the most marked structure in the entire discourse, describing the manner in which the first thief completes the execution of the plan. It combines the features of a long event chain, repetition (lines 41/43 and 42/44), and a rhetorical question (line 39). There is in fact one further focus marker in this final climax, that of participant reorientation. Grimes (1975.262-271) discusses the permutations which can occur between the different case roles assigned to the participants in a narrative. He ranks the case roles in a scale of relative involvement in the action, and claims that whenever a permutation moves a participant over several case roles, "... there is a surprise, an interruption, or a point where things go wrong..." (1975.266), i.e. a point of focus. The shifts from lines 36 to 37, from 38 to 40, and from 40 to 41 are all of this type. In each of these permutations, a participant who is totally removed from the action is shifted to the agent case role. Thus, this entire sequence is brought into even greater prominence through the use of this device.

In summary, this narrative has provided an example of a discourse which is structured as a series of episodes embedded in a maxi-episode. Conversely, "The man who kept his promise" illustrates those narratives which consist of a mere concatenation of episodes, with no embedding. There are probably several other ways in which a Central Somali narrative can be structured. However, seemingly in all of them, the same prominence markers are employed, and combine together to provide narrative focus constructions.

4. Comparison of pragmatic roles in narrative and dialogue discourse.

It is interesting at this point to specifically consider the ways in which pragmatic roles are marked syntactically within Central Somali narrative discourse. Section 1 described the function of yaa, +na, and word order to mark the corresponding pragmatic roles of focus (new information and counter assertion), and topic (aboutness). These generalisations hold only for a question-response elicitation framework, although the results can perhaps be generalized to normal dialogue discourse.⁷ However, as will be seen, pragmatic roles are marked quite differently in narrative discourse.

The function of yaa is particularly noteworthy. It continues to function as a focus marker, singling out the most salient constituent in the clause. However, yaa occurs only in event clauses in narrative discourse, and in fact it functions as one of the main markers which distinguish event from nonevent clauses. In addition, it has been shown that subordinate clause-yaa-event clause constructions function as boundary markers for paragraphs and/or episodes within a narrative. The constructions do not merely mark a boundary, but they additionally establish a setting, or framework of aboutness, for the following episode. Thus yaa, which is strictly a focus marker in dialogue discourse, has taken on a topic-marking function in narrative discourse.

The other major differences between these two genres are illustrated in the following schematic diagram: (see diagram 1)

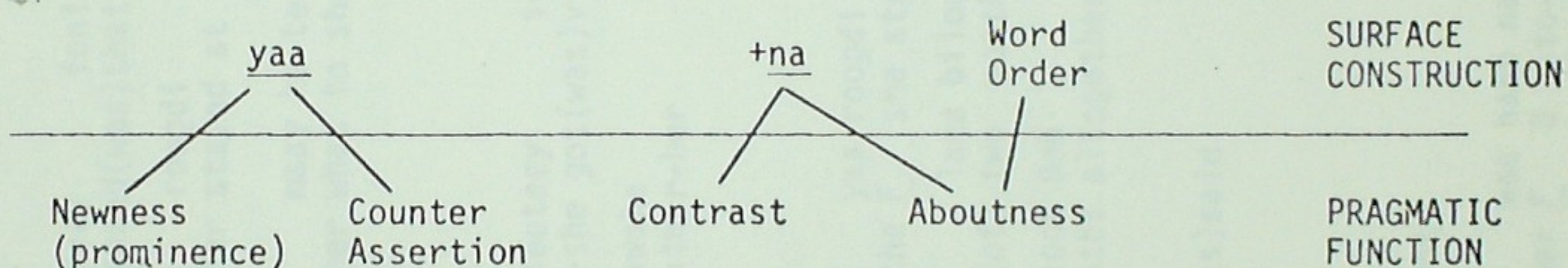
That is, counter assertion (which was marked by yaa in dialogue) is marked by collateral statements. Prominence is marked separately from newness (both were marked by yaa in dialogue) by the features of event chains and repetition. Word order permutations continue to mark aboutness, while the conjunction +na continues to mark contrastive aboutness. All of these pragmatic role/syntactic device correlations have been illustrated in sections 2 and 3.

The main point to note is that pragmatic roles must be studied within the framework of some specific discourse genre. Most studies of focus and topic are based upon question and answer elicitation pro-

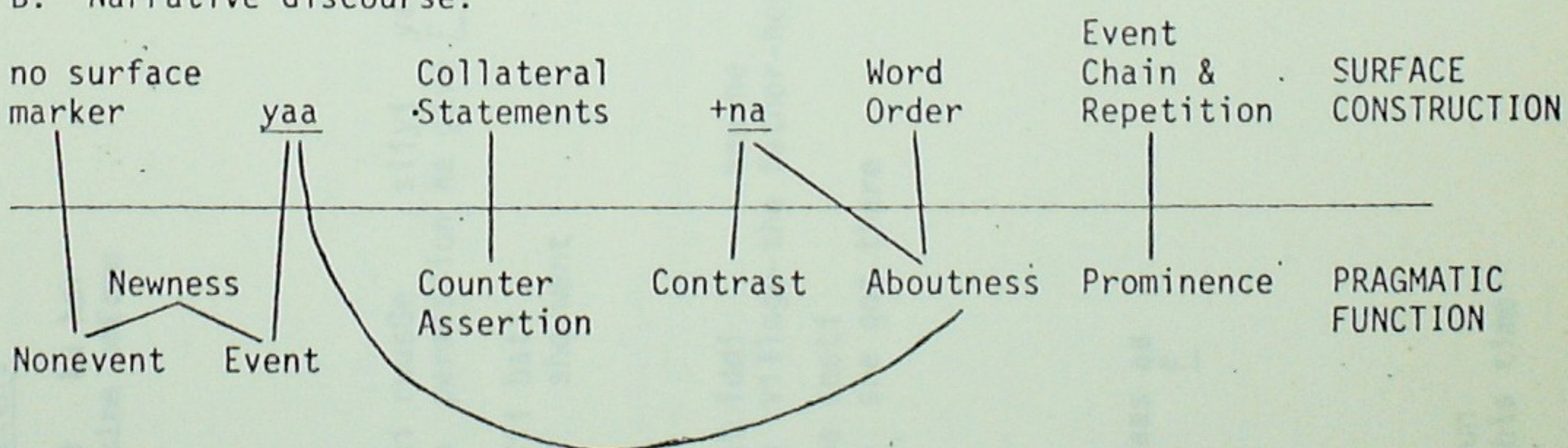
cedures, and therefore at best the results are applicable to only dialogue discourse. This is not a weakness in itself, but becomes one when it is not recognised, and the results are claimed to have a general applicability. The present study has shown that there is no reason to expect that generalisations concerning pragmatic roles obtained within the framework of one discourse genre will hold for another genre. Rather each genre stands as a separate framework, and must be recognised as such.

Diagram 1: Relation of surface constructions to pragmatic functions.

A. Dialogue discourse (assuming that question/answer elicitation = dialogue).



B. Narrative discourse.



APPENDIX I: The Woman and the Thieves.⁸

<u>Line #</u>	<u>Nonevent</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Dialogue</u>
1.	inti ku hor the time before	maay Diideey inni islaanto what happened(was)that woman-one iddiye roogdi village-her stayed at	
2.		hartishe maay ke terrey husband-her what to she said(was)	"iddi reer aawkey yaa mbahee" village-the people father-my <u>F</u> to-I-go
3.	marki ruusGe siiyi yaa when permission he gave <u>F</u>	bati she went	
4.	haddii bati when she went	maay inseeteey iddi where to-she got(was)village-the reer aawshe family father-her	
5.	marki iddi aawshe when village-the father-her hoobe seeti when she got there	iddi yaa roogdi village-the <u>F</u> she stayed at mudde lama bilood ama a period(of) two months or sedde bilood Don three months altogether	
6.	maddaas aa then <u>F</u>	le erri -A (it was)said	"maddun wal ki sigootiye. now -A IN you will be escorted iddaa ngalbidaasa" village-your to-you will be taken home
7.		ha bati B she went	
8.	maddun at this time	iddiye waa haan nagati village-her <u>F</u> B -to-returned	

9. maay lahaa siiyeey eleenko
 what -A/B (was)given (was) ram-one
 iiye teneg Daise eh
 and a-tin ghee being
10. wal ha ka sigootiyi
 -A B IN she was escorted
11. marki sii haan dareeraasi jid aa haa haitey
 while like that B she was walking, road F B she had
 sii haan dareeraasi
 like that B she was walking
12. lama lan tuugo
 two men(who were)thieves
 oo talaadayan meel
 who are plotting(and)a-place
 faDiyani yaa nkoiti
 sitting F to-she came
13. nimankii yaa salaanti
 men-the F she greeted
14. id aa warsiti
 village F she asked about
15. "arladun see li nki jera" yaa terri
 land-this how -A in are there F she sa
 "meel fulan wal ki jera."
 place certain -A at there are
 "ooke ki hooyidi koree?" "haa."
 tonight to-I go home can yes
16. mooddi
 she passed

17. hoobe mooddi islaantiba
when she passed woman-the
bartiye maaddi yaa lamadii lamba erren "wariya hibilow." "hoo"
image-her almost gone F two-the men said hey you yeah
"islaantun hoolashe wedita sife iyeena wal nki diirna
woman-this animal-her leading a-way she-& -A NEG/IN reached
adina hoola ku ke Da-ada, weele kortee?" "haa weele kora."
you-& property M IN you rob do can you yes do I can
"see weelaasa?" "ku hor koiyee islaante garrunaa madegii
how you do it in front I come woman-the cane F head-the
Datiisaa Dowee." erri kow "tan iyeede eh ma jertoo." erri
its middle I hit said one this one being NEG there is he said
"sife ya-ani iyeena kii-n-ke kasna hoolana unu kuke Gaadan
a way that is she-& you-NEG-IN knows property-& we M IN take
ani weelee." waa erri "see weelaasoow?" "hiinDoole iske weele
I will do F he said how you do it blind R to-I mak
waa erri "ul Deeraa Gaadadee jidke Datiisaa an
F he said stick long F I will take road-the middle F I
faDeedee adina oo hor koy." yaa erri
will sit you-& in front come F he said
18. talaaden ogtaa
they planned know it!
19. islaantiba ma dabakanna inte Gaadenna
woman-the NEG they follow-& here they took-&
hor goobenna
in front they circled-&
kow aa jidke Datiis nfaDeedi
one F road-the middle in-he sat
20. ullo Deer yaa Gaadadi
stick-a long F he took
21. maddaas aa erri lanke "shangarte weeraasa eeyu?" "anuwu"
then F he said man-the sound-the calling who its me

"adina?" "ana hibilee hibileeyuu so-oti ahaa iddeey yaa
 you-& I so and so traveller I am village-my F
 njeedi." "anina lan hinDoole eh ahaa, id geedde eh ku Dumeey
 to-going I-& man blind I am village shifting M I am los
 islaanle ahaa, ini i kalmeeto meel islaan faDeeye
 Muslim-only I am that me you help (to) place Muslim are settled
 i jeeto fadee." "walaalow ana waana ulusaa tenegona
 me to reach I want brother-oh I also am heavy tin-one-&
 wedeey neef idi enna wedee, see ke weelee?"
 I'm carrying animal sheep also I'm leading, how will I do it
 "neefkii ida eh ani kiin-jiidee." waa erri "hinDoo aa
 animal-the sheep I for you-will lead F he said eyes F
 beellina maayyee galnya hoogaa ku lahaa. ada ulle
 I have lost-& maybe hands strength-F in I have you stick-the
 i-n-Goboi." "hayeh."
 me-for-grab ok

22.

neefkii yaa nDiibti
 animal-the F to-she handed

23.

ullii yaa nGobati
 stick-the F of-she took hold

24.

waali la dareeroob dareeroob iridii yaa Data nke gaabati
 as they were walking and walking sun-the F middle for-at became short
 maana nDiina yaa lankii kala ku hor koiyi
 NEG-& did it set (yet) F man-the other from front came

25.

"nebede." "nebed allaaay."
 peace peace(of)God

iskasaayana ogtaa
 R-they are knowing know it!
 lamade lan lakiin iyeede
 two-the men but she
 ma kasaasa
 NEG is knowing

26. maay terreey
what she said (was) "aaboow meelotun meel ooke unne
father-oh places-these place tonight we
ke hoiyenna ama jerti oo id eh islaan meel ku Dowya?
at spend the night is there which village Muslim place to close
"haa." "intee?" "meel fulaan aa la faDiyi." yaa erri
yes where place certain F -A they settled F he said
- lamada lanna is ogyina ogaw
two-the men-& R know know it!
iridina Diidi maddun.
sun-the-& fell now
27. kun aleenkii hadegge ma goynee
this one ram-the rope-the NEG cut
28. siibi
he removed it
29. madasheey aa ku siibi
mead-his F M he removed (from the rope)
30. erretaa saaradeey
back-the-F he put it on
31. la baihi
with(it)he went
32. "hayeh, ni kihee aay."
ok us lets make go mother
33. israihen
R they went
34. sidi ndareereyen ndareereyen maay erreey
like that they were walking & walking what he said (was) "abbay galanteey fududdaa eleenkii
elder sister hand-my is light ram-the
inni siibidi yaa taawiyee, fiiri."
that it escaped F I think look
yaa erri
F he said

35. hoobe riid ha deeshi, eleenkii maleh
when behind she looked ram-the none

"eleenkii meellun Dowaa ha deereey
ram-the place-this close B he reached
geedun reedsheey inte eh ha deereey
tree-this behind there B he reached
fiiri." yaa erri "tenegona wededee."
look F he said tin-a-& I'm carrying
"haa, tenegge inti Dig." yaa erri "ani
yes tin-the here put it F he said I
hayee, sheen teneg galanteey ha ka
have it bring(the)tin hand-my B in
siin." yaa erri
put it F he said

36. teneggii yaa kor faDeedi
tin-the F on top he sat

37. ha roorteey
B she ran

38. eleenkii yaa ha weeddidi
ram-the F B she looked for

39. eleen aman Deer erretii le
a-ram time long back-the -A
saaradi, intee le ke aragee
kept on where -A at will it be seen

40. baihi
he went

41. ha nagateey
B she came

42. teneggii me yaalaa
tin-the NEG is there

43. ha nagateey
B she came

44. lankii hanDoolage haayi iiye
 man-the blind he was and
 teneggi me yaalan
 tin-the NEG are there

45. maay terreey
 what she said (was)

"insheffi-adoi, shar ma ke daaraaso.
 do not help people evil NEG at will touch

46. ya-ani lankun hoo iyee inin kaalmeena,
 that is man-this if she had not helped
 shar ma aragfanne ogtaa
 evil NEG see-would know it!

47. taas aa saas hatoi
 that one F like that let it be

English translation of "The Woman and the Thieves".

1. Long ago there was a woman, and she was living at her own village.
 2. (One day) she said to her husband, "I will go to visit my father's family." 3. So when he had given her permission, she went. 4. When she went, eventually she reached her father's village. 5. When she got there, she stayed for a period of two or three months. 6. Then someone said, "You will be sent home now." 7. So she went back. 8. At this time she went back to her own village. 9. What she was given was a ram and a tin of ghee. 10. She was escorted back home with these things (i.e. they were her going-away presents). 11. While she was walking, (she was taking a road back), (and) while she was walking, 12. she came to two men who were thieves, who were sitting at a place and plotting (together). 13. She greeted the men. 14. She asked about (her) village. 15. "How are the people settled in this area?" she said. "They are at a certain place." "Can I get home to that place tonight?" "yes."
 16. She passed by them. 17. When she had gone on, so that her image was almost out of sight, the two men said to each other, "Hey you." "Yeah" "This woman who is leading her animal, do you know any way you can steal her property without harming her." "Yes, I can do it." "How will you do it?" "I will come from in front of the woman and will club her over the head." said the one. "That method is not acceptable." said (the other one). "I will show you a way with which I will steal her property while she doesn't even know who I am." he said. "How will you do that?" "I will make myself to be blind." he said. "I will take a long stick and I'll sit in the middle of the road; and you will (then) come from in front." he said. 18. So they planned--do you know it?! 19. They did not follow the woman. Rather they took another way, and circled around in front of her, and the one sat in the middle of the road. 20. He had taken a long stick. 21. Then the man said, "Who is making that sound?" "Me" "And (who are) you?" "I am so and so, a traveller going to my own village." "And I am a blind man, and am lost because my village has shifted away. I am a Muslim. What I want is for you to help me get to a place where Muslims are settled." "But brother, I am also burdened, I am carrying a tin and leading a sheep, so what will I do?" "The sheep I will lead for you." he said. "I may have lost my eyes but my arms are still strong. You grab this stick for me." "ok."

22. She gave the animal to him. 23. She took hold of the stick. 24. As they walked on and on, and the sun was almost to go down (but it had not set yet), the other man came from in front of them. 25. "Peace." "God's peace." The two men know each other, do you know it?! But she is not aware. 26. She said, "Oh father, is there a place around here where we can sleep tonight, which is a Muslim village and nearby." "Yes." "Where?" "They have settled at a certain place." he said. And the two men are knowing each other, (know it!), and the sun fell right then. 27. This one (thief) did not cut the ram's rope. 28. Rather he removed it. 29. (That is), he removed the ram's head out from (the rope). 30. He put it on his back. 31. He went with it. 32. "Ok, let's go mother." 33. So they went together. 34. After they had been walking and walking, what he said was, "elder sister, my hand has become light, I think that the ram has removed itself from the rope. Look!" he said. 35. When she looked behind, there was no ram. "The ram has reached to only that close place, just behind that tree. Go look!" he said. "But I am carrying this tin." "Oh yes, put the tin here." he said. "Bring it, I will keep it by putting my hand on it." he said. 36. So he sat on top of the tin. 37. She ran back. 38. She looked for the ram. 39. A ram which has been carried on somebody's back for a long time, how can it be found? 40. He went. 41. She came back. 42. The tin is not there. 43. She came back. 44. The blind man and the tin are not there. 45. She said, "If you do not (try to) help people, no harm will come to you." 46. That is, if she had not helped this man, she would not have been tricked (and robbed), do you know it?! 47. That one (i.e. this story) let it be like that (i.e. let it end there).

Footnotes.

1. I would like to thank Elaine Andersen, Bernard Comrie, Dick Hayward and Elinor Ochs for helpful discussions and comments on earlier versions of this paper, although certainly none of them would agree with all of the suggested analyses in this version.
2. The texts were narrated to Somalis present at the recording session (who were free to respond to the story teller), rather than to myself or to the tape recorder. The purpose of this methodology was to transfer the focus from the "collection" itself to the actual story-telling.
3. The following references also contain descriptions of focus/topic in Standard Somali: Andrzejewski (1975), Gebert (1980), and Hetzron (1965).
4. I am using the term "narrative discourse" in this paper to refer only to uninterrupted monologue which depicts a chronological series of events (i.e. "stories" as opposed to dialogue narrative or personal narrative).
5. My use of "event-clause" here seems quite similar to Labov's (1972) use of the term "narrative-clause".
6. The term "paragraph" is used here merely as a convenient label for a structural unit larger than a sentence yet smaller than an episode. It should not be taken to imply the psychological reality of such a unit, as I never obtained native speakers' reactions to these divisions.
7. That is, it is difficult to assess the actual value of data obtained in a standard elicitation framework. The purpose here is not to evaluate this type of procedure, but rather to point out that the results obtained represent only a partial description of the phenomena in question.
8. The following abbreviations are used to mark some of the pre-verbal particles found in this text:
 - A 'agentless passive'
 - B 'direction "back" (towards the speaker)'
 - IN 'instrumental'
 - M '(movement) away from'
 - NEG 'negative'
 - QUES 'question'
 - R 'reciprocal action'

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