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Development units and their morphological marking in Quechua narrative discourse

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1 Development units

- When people tell a story, they’ve got a reason for telling it - a purpose. In the process of developing their discourse, they take various steps towards reaching their goal. These steps can be thought of as “development units”.

- Development, as a unit of discourse, hasn’t been widely documented in the linguistic literature, though it has been recognized.

- A “development” is a new phase or stage in the action of the narrative, often involving a shift from what came before. It has been referred to in various ways:

  - “something new, different and distinct from what precedes” (Winer 1882:552) narrative
  - “new stage” (Halliday and Hasan 1976:268) narrative & conversation
  - “development” (Mandler and Johnson 1977:119) narrative
  - “new subpart of a discourse” (Schiffrin 1987:324) conversation
  - “subproject” (Clark 1996:345) conversation
  - “new phase in the action” (Revell 1996:61) narrative
  - “a new burst of closely related actions” (Heimerdinger 1999:124) narrative
  - “step” or “development” (Levinsohn 2000a:73) narrative (mostly)
  - “next segment” (Redeker 2006:345) narrative & conversation
  - “step in reaching the story’s objective” (Nicolle 2015:12) narrative
  - “thematic development” (Nicolle 2015:32) narrative

- Most of these authors work on English, except for Winer (Koiné Greek), Revell (Biblical Hebrew), Heimerdinger (Ancient Hebrew), Levinsohn (Inga-Quechuan, Bantu languages, Biblical Hebrew, Koiné Greek) and Nicolle (African languages).

- Mandler and Johnson, Levinsohn, and Nicolle are the only ones who present a substantive stretch of narrative, analyzed according to developments. The others just give short excerpts.

  “…discourse cannot be expected to conform to patterns as clearly defined as those found in morphology or syntax. The ways people create larger stretches of language are governed by their purposes and the flow of their thoughts, and those processes are not as rigidly structured as words or sentences. In spite of this looser organization, discourse analysts have discovered a variety of ways in which larger stretches of language are organized, and also ways in which discourse factors influence the shape of sentences and words” (Chafe 2014:202).

2 Data and analysis, a collaborative effort

- Narratives involving conflicts and other narratives that are histories of towns written (2012-2013) by representatives from eight dialects of Quechua spoken in Central Peru (qwh, qwo, qx, qv, qv, qm, qv, qw).


- The preparation for the workshop, and the analysis during the workshop involved collaborative effort between Stephen, myself, representatives from the eight dialects, and several other linguists.
3  Development units illustrated - North Conchucos Quechua conflict narrative

The strike that took place at the Pedagogical Institute in Pomabamba in 2001
(North Conchucos Quechua)
by Juan Julio Vergaray

1. Ten years-na-m have passed since there was a strike in Pomabamba. 2. Because the Director of the Pedagogical Institute was poor at administration, all the students and the parents wanted him fired.
3. But those from the education office-na-m did not want to fire him or replace him with someone else.
4. For that reason-na-m all the students shut the Institute door so that the director could not come in. 5. After shutting the door all the students took turns guarding it day and night. 6. They kept it closed, continuing the strike, until another director would be put into office.
7. Because for a month-na this had not been resolved-mi, they had no classes. 8. So the students had a meeting with the authorities to make an agreement about how to reach a solution. 9. On Friday they agreed that after cleaning it, they would leave the Institute open the next day.
10. But even though they had come to an agreement-na-mi, the director and the police went by night and took the students prisoner. 11. At midnight when the director and the police broke down the door and went into the Institute, one small female student escaped through the window. 12. When that student rang the bell of the chapel, all the people around there came to check on the students, and they did not find them.
13. Because they did not-na find-mi the students who were guarding the Institute, they went to the police station to get them out. 14. When the police did not want to turn them over, all the parents, the students and the people of the town stoned the police station, even breaking down the door. 15. Breaking down the door, destroying the windows, taking the police as prisoners, they liberated the students. 16. Having liberated the students, they looked for a way to punish the authorities.
17. To that place-na-m when a Colonel arrived from Huaraz, he sent those police to other places of service. 18. That same day he removed all the other authorities from office.
19. Those from the education office-na-m named another director right away, removing the bad director from office. 20. In this way, the parents and the students removed the authorities from office.
21. From the time that happened (until) now-qa the Pomabamba officials behave better. (jump to present)
22. This-qa will continue! (jump to the future)

Summary:
1-2  Orientation to the conflict
3  Beginning of the conflict
4-6  Students shut the door and kept it closed.
7-9  They were missing class, so had to do something.
10-12  Though an agreement had been made, the police stormed the institute and captured the students.
13-16  The parents didn’t find the students, so stoned the police station and got the students.
17-18  The Colonel came and sent the police to other places of service.
19-20  The Education office named a new director.
21  The Pomabamba officials behave better now.
22  This will continue!
Factors feeding into our understanding of development units

4.1 Relationship of development units to paragraphs
- A paragraph break - when there is a change in place, time, participants or event structure (event or non-event) (Givón 1984:245, Chafe 1987:43).
- A significant change in one or more of these dimensions often coincides with the beginning of a development unit as well, but not always.
- Development unit divisions do not necessarily align with paragraph or episode divisions (Mandler and Johnson 1977:120, Levinsohn 2000a:77, and Nicolle 2015:12).

4.2 Marking
- Typical development units are marked at the beginning of the unit, on the first constituent of the sentence, in Quechua.
- In accord with what Fox (1986:44) writes, based on her work on reference tracking, “The marked member of a morphosyntactic opposition tends to be associated with the beginning of discourse units.”

4.3 Predictability
- Givón (1983:67) writes, “The more predictable the information, the less coding it receives.” And the contrast is also true, that unpredictable information will be marked in some way.
- New developments in narrative typically relate events that aren’t predictable from what has already been said, and they are marked.

4.4 Conjunctions
- Levinsohn (2012:1) explains that when author narrate their stories, they tend to package the events so that some are associated together, but others are separated off from them because they move the story forward to what Revell (1996:61) calls “a new phase in the action of the narrative”.
- So, when we see the conjunction ‘and’ in a story in English we know to associate what follows with what has just been presented.
- In contrast, when we see ‘then’ or ‘now’, we know that what comes next is a “new phase” in the story.

4.5 The English now:
- Halliday and Hasan (1976:267-270) discuss the English now in their chapter on conjunctives.
  - when now is prominent phonologically, it is deictic and not cohesive. It means ‘at the present time’.
  - when now is functioning cohesively, as a continuative, it is reduced (not maximally prominent phonologically) and that it is a cue to “the opening of a new stage in the communication”.
  - “this may be a new incident in the story, a new point in the argument, a new role or attitude being taken on by the speaker, and so on” (1976:268).
- Those who have categorized the English now along the same lines (when it is functioning cohesively) as Halliday and Hasan include Schiffrin 1987, Clark 1996, Revell 1996, and Redeker 2006.
- Schiffrin (1987:228-245) - examples from conversation showing how now as a temporal adverb contrasts with its discourse function of marking a new subpart of discourse. She also demonstrates that at times, it is difficult to determine which way it is being used.
- In English, the word now can be used as a development marker. It’s a signal that alerts listeners to a new stage of the narrative.

5 Quechua development marking
In Quechua, the marking is somewhat more complex.
5.1 The pattern in most of the Quechua dialects studied

- In many of the dialects, a bound morpheme -na ‘now’ plus an evidential marker (either -m(i) ‘direct’ or -sh(i) ‘reportative’) signals the beginning of a development, provided it’s in temporal sequence in relation to what came previously.
- The -na-m/-sh combination is attached to the first constituent of the sentence, which may be a connective, a subordinate clause, the subject (especially when he or she responds in a contrastive way to the previous event), or some other non-verbal constituent such as a locative.
- A second type of development marker, -qa ‘topic’, can do two things in relation to development:
  - mark the beginning of distinct units that are not related sequentially to the immediate context, where there is some type of gap in time.
  - be attached to the subject to indicate that the new unit develops through his or her actions.

5.2 Some differences between the dialects

- Ambo Pasco (qva), uses evidentials very little. The development marker -na-m/-sh is not used. -na ‘now’ alone is used alone.
- Ambo Pasco (qva) and Margos-Yarowilca-Lauricocha (qvm) employ the connective chauraga or tsauraga ‘so’, respectively, as a development marker that introduces the reaction or response to a speech or action.
- Corongo (qva) uses -na-m/sh very little, and only on subordinate clauses. This language mainly uses -qa as a development marker.
- Huaylas (qwh) uses both -na-m/sh and -qa much more frequently than the other dialects, and often in the same sentence.

5.3 -na ‘now’

- The suffix -na ‘now’, as in English, has both a temporal adverb function and a development marker function.
- Both the Quechua -na and the English now have other functions as well. See Weber (1989:376-386) for Quechua and Schifflin (1987:228-246) for English.

5.4 -qa ‘topic’

- Topic is used here in the sense of “topic-comment”, not in the sense of “discourse topic”.
- Weber explains that -qa can be used to resume a topic, but that it is never used to establish a topic (1989:400).
- Weber feels that “topic”, the most commonly used gloss for -qa, is a somewhat arbitrary label (1989:400). He mentions that -qa has also been associated with “focus”, and that better labels might have been “relevance” or “theme.”

6 Neutralization or not?

- At times it is difficult to determine if -na-mi is serving as a temporal adverb or as a development marker. Sometimes it appears to be doing both as in #1 and #7 above.
- Schifflin (1987:263) shows how for English, the distinction between now as adverb and marker is neutralized in temporal comparisons. She gives the example:
  1) I have so far considered phonology.
  2) Now let us consider morphology.
- Schourup (1999:241) notes however, that Fraser (1996:169-170) sees the marker status of now as incompatible with adverb status. Fraser believes the distinction can’t be neutralized, that it must be one or the other on a given reading.
- In #1 and #7, -na-mi may be serving both purposes. I debated how to analyze those.
- In relation to #1, Levinsohn (2000a:73) explains that “the scene needs to be set for the first step or development of the story to occur”, so he would not classify this as a development.
1. One time on the 28th of July (Peruvian Independence Day) they had a festival in Urpish.
2. In this festival the teachers and the students presented a drama.
3. In the drama, the director-qa, imitating a peasant farmer who was upset with his boss, said, “You’re going to get a beating from the Indian” as he was chewing his coca.
4. As he was doing that he says, “My coca comes out splintered. Expletive. What’s going to happen?”
5. When he said that, the people in the audience laughed a lot.
6. After it was all over, the men and the director-qa began to drink liquor.
7. As they were becoming more and more drunk they began to insult one another.
8. Humiliating the others, the director-qa says, “Useless stupid people, you have not studied like I have. That’s why you don’t even know where your nose is. You don’t know anything.”
9. Seeing that he was humiliating them, one man-qa said, “Puffing yourself up because you are the director, why are you putting us down? You are a teacher only in name. You don’t even know how to write an official letter, useless dog.”
10. When he said that, he (the director) got excessively angry.
11. The director-qa ran to the person who had answered him and punched him in the face.
12. The other man responded in the same way and they grabbed each other, fighting.
13. In that fight, he hit the director-qa in the nose with his head and he (the director) got a nosebleed.
14. So those who separate fighting people separated them and took them to their homes.
15. As they were taking him off, the director-qa yelled as he walked, “Expletive 1, expletive 2, expletive 3. For touching me with your dirty hands, tomorrow you will know it from me!”
16. The next day as day was dawning-na-shi, the director-qa said sadly, “Why did I fight? Now, with what face will I ask him to sell me potatoes or sheep?”
17. After that-na-shi, when he went out to the street he saw the person with whom he had fought.
18. So he called out to him and said, “Pardon me, Nicanor. For being drunk we fought.”
19. Nicanor also said to him, “Pardon me as well, teacher.”
20. Saying that, they hugged one another and made up.
21. Then they said, “For our reconciliation let’s drink to cure our heads” and they drank some liquor.
22. After that-qa, respecting one another very well at that point, they lived helping each other.

Summary:
Overall, -qa ‘topic’ marks the person through whom the narrative is developed.
1-2 Setting, not a development unit
3-5 The director is the main person through whom the narrative is developed, and these are his actions
6-7 Here is a shift to the men and the director carrying out the actions
8 Shift back to the director
9-10 Another man responds to the director, picking a fight, and the director gets angry
11-12 The director starts a fight and the other man responds.
13-14 The man hits the director, and the director as object is marked, because he is the main person through whom the narrative is developed.
15 The director protests as he is carried off.
16 & -na-shi appears for the first time, marking a different kind of development unit. The tone has changed. The director is sorry for what he did and wants to work it out.
Of interest, up until this point only -mi, the evidential for direct evidence, has been used. -shi is typically used with reported information. However, -shi also used when something shameful has happened (Hintz 2007:96). When the director was ashamed. So -na-shi, rather than -na-mi, is used.
22 The last -qa is with a gap in time.
Towards a typology of development markers

- He proposes (2012:1) that “Cross-linguistically, story development may be marked on two axes: the linkage axis and/or the agent axis.”
  - The “linkage axis” correlates with “temporal succession” (2012:2). We saw this in the Strike narrative, where the marker -na-m ‘NOW-DIR’ was used primarily, often attaching to time terms or adverbial clauses with a relationship to time.
  - The “agent axis” correlates with “agent orientation” (2012:2) such as we saw in the Independence Day story, where the director was marked with -qa.
- Levinsohn gives evidence from several languages supporting the proposal development marking correlates with constituent order. Namely:
  - OV languages (such as Quechua & Korean) regularly mark story development on both axes.
  - On the other hand, VO languages (such as English, Chewa and Fuliiru – two Bantu languages, Koiné Greek and Ancient Hebrew) typically only mark development along the linkage axis. English, for example, uses conjunctions such as ‘then’ or ‘now’ to mark development along the linkage (temporal succession) axis (2012:2).

Other ways of marking new developments in narrative

- Nominal reference to a character (as opposed to pronominal reference or ellipsis):
  - Ancient Hebrew – “A narrator may introduce a “new phase in the action of the narrative” by using a nominal in the designation of a character where a pronoun would not have been ambiguous” (Revell 1966:61, Levinsohn 2000b.1).
  - Japanese - Discourse boundaries, as in the transition between “introduction” to “action” in the story line, can be marked by nominal reference (Clancy 1980:153-154, 160, 196-197).
- Switch to another tense
  - French - A “switch from some other tense to an isolated simple past may also be used to mark a particular moment when the reasoning is advanced by a new element in the argumentation, or by a change of perspective. The new element is often accompanied by the conjunction or ‘well, now’” (Waugh and Monville Burston 1986:861).
- Inverted clauses
  - Tagalog - Inverted clauses (subject initial rather than predicate initial) tend to be associated with the beginnings of discourse units (Fox 1987).

Conclusion

Discourse data from Quechua languages help to illuminate our understanding of how language users develop and structure narrative discourse, marking distinct units.
References


