OULDEME NARRATIVE DISCOURSE

OUTLINE OF PRINCIPAL FEATURES

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Abbreviations used

1s	1st pers sing
1sS	1st pers sing subj
1sDO	1st pers sing direct obj
1sIO	1st pers sing indirect object
1p	1st pers pl, etc

A	aorist
AB	ablative *from*
ANA	anaphoric
ATT	attitude marker *tsa*
CD	conditional (irrealis)
CF	directional – centrifugal (*away* from speaker)
CM	comitative
CMP	complement
CP	directional – centripetal (*towards* speaker)
CPL	completive
CS	causative-transitive
DIR	directional (see CF and CP)
EP	epenthetical consonant –n
F	future realis
FI	future irrealis
HAB	habitual
IDEO	ideophone
INF	infinitive
INS	instrumental
INTERJ	interjection
NEG	negative
OBL	oblique
P	preposition
PF	perfective
PL	plural
PLR	pluractional – vowel or tone change in root of verb
PRP	"property" particle *ahe*
Q1	question (less direct)
Q2	question (more direct)
RDP	reduplication
SP	spatial (set of verbal affixes indicating spatial relations: 'from', 'to', 'upon', 'onto' etc)
TOP	topic marker

INTRODUCTION

Ouldeme (*mà wùzlàm*) is a Chadic language, belonging to the Mafa South group of the Centre-West branch of Chadic (ALCAM p 357). It is spoken in the district of Tokombere, Mayo Sava department in the Far North province of Cameroon by some 8-10,000 speakers.

The Ouldeme language has been worked on since the 1960's, principally by Pierre Provoost in his *Essaie sur la langue Uldeme* and Véronique de Colombel, in various publications. Both of these researchers have written extensively on many aspects of the language, and we are indebted to them for many insights they have given. The structure of discourse is not, however, a subject to which they have devoted much attention.

Data for the present study have been gathered principally from our own 3300-entry Ouldeme-French dictionary, from 31 recorded and transcribed texts, and from extensive work undertaken together with Mr Oumaté Timothée, our principal language helper since the beginning of this work, and with the four-man Ouldeme Translation Team.

This paper attempts to give an overview and explanation of the narrative discourse features of Ouldeme. We have chosen to restrict ourselves to narrative discourse as this is the genre of the vast majority of the texts at our disposal, and since it is a somewhat more clearly defined area than other genres.

In such a general survey it is not possible to enter into much depth, but we hope that we have been able to cover, in brief, most of the structural aspects of the language which cannot be touched upon in a grammar outline. We have also sought to complement the work of our predecessors, whose areas of interest were primarily phonology, grammar and the lexicon. As a sequel to the present work, we intend to study in more depth one particle which functions at a discourse level, the ubiquitous topic marker *di.*

Acknowledgment

GENERAL

The overall goal within a linguistic message is communication, the conveying of information. The totality of the means used to put across this information is what is of interest in the analysis of discourse. In recent years, increasing attention has been given to this overall organization of the message being communicated. If there is one word which could characterize the results of these studies, which could capture the essence of what the discourse analyst is looking for, it is *relevance*. In any particular language, what are the strategies employed to distinguish that which is relevant or salient from that which is not? Or, to be less categorical, that which is *more* relevant from that which is *less*. A story which has all the characters centre stage throughout, with no changes of scene or time and no climaxes could, no doubt, be imagined, but equally, we can surmise that it would be difficult to perceive what the author intended and probably would not hold the interest of the audience. More commonly, we find participants coming and going, scenes changing, events foregrounded and backgrounded, explanatory comments given – a whole matrix of interacting features which have to be managed in some way to make a coherent whole. It is this managing which will concern us in the present paper. We will try to answer the question What strategies does the Ouldeme language employ to convey the relative relevance of the disparate elements in a narrative and how they cohere?

In our study of the discourse structure of Ouldeme, we will try to determine at the outset what, other things being equal, is the default or most basic way in which sentences are formed. This will form a ground against which we can more effectively recognize when something is different or unusual, thereby commanding our attention as significant or relevant.

To this end, we will begin by looking at the basic ordering of clause constituents, at a sentence level. Next we will consider the contextual effects produced when constituents are presented in an order different from that which we have established as 'normal'. This will involve us in a discussion of how, in Ouldeme narrative, main events are distinguished from minor and secondary events, how foreground is distinguished from background, how the events in a narrative are co-ordinated one with another. The third section investigates how the actors or participants in a narrative are 'stage-managed': how they are introduced, referred to, and their relative importance determined. Lastly, we shall consider the important role played by quoted speech in Ouldeme narrative.

1. CONSTITUENT ORDER

1.1 Within the clause

1.1.1 Basic word order

Ouldeme is a strict S V O language with no marking for case. No passive construction exists in the language, and so, within the nuclear clause, the basic ordering admits no permutations:

   1) A- si   yam
       3sSA-drink water
       He drinks water

   2) Mogomo a- kəd-erge wutskar.
       wildcat   3sSA-kill- CP   chicken
       The wildcat killed a chicken

Complements other than direct objects (DO) also follow the verb, for example adverbial phrases:

   3) A-   nz-aró ā ŋgam
       3sSA-stay- CP to home
       He arrived home.

   4) A- nz- aró anawo
       3sSA- stay- CP yesterday
       He arrived yesterday.

   5) A- nz- aró wuyawuya
       3sSA- stay-CP   fast REDUP
       He arrived quickly (that is, he didn't stay away long).

Ideophones, which generally have an adverbial function, come, interestingly, before the verb (in (6) *hwiyəp* means 'spend the night'):

   6) Nde hwiyəp a- na-kaŋ á ŋgi   zik.
       then IDEO   3sSA-be-SP at house-of chief
       Then he spent the night at the chief's house.

   7) Barəbərət t- ə- sl-aray ākā ma yaŋ ā   huradʼ avi ge.
       IDEO   3ps-A-leave-CF onto mouth his into stomach hole to
       They rushed before him into the depths of the cave.

Post-verbal ideophones are occasionally found, it would seem for the somewhat trivial reason that they are longer, reduplicated forms. They also tend to follow a *series* of verbs, whilst nonetheless modifying only the final verb in the series; in example (8), the verb *day* 'to pass'[1]:

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[1] Lest the reader think that here the ideophone is pre-posed to the final verb, we may point out that in the text from which example (8) is taken, the same sentence appears six times. In four cases, the 'leaving for home' is the first element of the following sentence, making the ideophone the very last element in the sentence.

8) Kurndakw de a- sl-aru bəra á yam age, a- ŋgəraka patak yaŋ ākā vu,
    frog   ANA 3sSA-leave-CP out from water in 3sSA-put-on   clothes his   onto self

    a-tsəl- aku ākā pəlis yaŋ, a- day ákā təvì inəsi zər, zər, zər, zər, zərə,
    3sSA-climb-SP onto horse his 3sSA-pass on road other (sound of horse galloping)

    a-sl-aru   ā ŋgam age.
    3sSA-leave-CP to home   in

    *The frog came out of the water, put on his clothes, got on his horse, galloped off
    by another route and arrived home.*

With an indirect object the order is S V DO OBL (oblique), with an obligatory trace affix in
the verb:

9) A-vəl-ar   makets ā malamaŋ yaŋ
    3s-give-3sIO knife   to brother   his
    He gave his brother a knife.

10) A-nz-əra-yó ənta makets.
    3s-stay-CM-CP with knife
    He arrived with a knife.

Equative predicates are formed without any copula, in the order Subject - Complement:

11) Ata asla   kuɗa ɗi.
    they person poor   PL
    They were poor people.

1.1.2 Word order in negative clauses
Clauses are negated by postposing the particle *daw*:

12) A-vəl-ar   makets ā malamaŋ yaŋ daw.
    3s-give-3sIO knife   to brother   his   not
    He didn't give his brother a knife.

Postposing the negative and obliging it to be the last element not only of the clause but of the
whole sentence can sometimes lead to ambiguity, even for the native speaker:

13) Yesu a-ŋgay: Ni war i Malaftu daw
    Jesus 3s-say   I child of God   NEG

    a) *Jesus said: I am not the son of God   OR* b) *Jesus didn't say: I am the son of
    God*

It is not clear here whether we should bracket the sentence thus (*Yesu aŋgay: Ni war i
Malaftu) daw* (sense A) or thus *Yesu aŋgay: (Ni war i Malaftu) daw* (sense B).
Negating both clauses resolves the ambiguity (the first daw is shortened to *də*):

14) (Yesu a-ŋgay: (Ni war i Malaftu) də) daw.
    Jesus 3s-say   I   child of God   not   not

    Jesus did not say that he was not the son of God

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In example (15), from a text, it is from the pragmatic context alone that the listener understands that *daw* negates the principal clause and not either of the subordinate clauses:

15) T-ə-sər (āne mətərɓiyu asla mə-demerekenege ademes aslatu
3p-A-know that suffering who INF- teach song that not

ā wuram atu) daw.
to girl that NEG

They didn't know that the girl had learned the song through her sufferings.
(C1:119)

1.1.3 Interrogative word order

For Yes/No questions, there are three interrogative clitics, all of which take their place at the very end of the sentence, after the negative marker. The difference between two of them (*y*)*o* and (*y*)*a* being one of degree of insistence of the question. The third marker, *vatak*, can often be interchanged with the other two but does not seem to be any more or less insistent. All three markers can be used in rhetorical or non-rhetorical questions.. The *o* and *a* markers, glossed Q1 and Q2 respectively in the examples in this paper, take a *y* when following a vowel. *vatak* is glossed Q3:

16) K-ə-tsin-erge ve   yo?
2sS-A-rise- CPL   already Q1

Good morning. (lit. Have you already arisen?)

17) Mbəmbər a-   kwa-kwar ákà mə-wara bəra ya?
fear   3sSA-kill- 2sDO from INF-come out Q2

Are you afraid to come out!?

18) Maŋ ahe dide a- hən-er-ege: "Ndene du, badzire nakw du k-ə-fakoma
mother her ANA 3sSA-say-3sIO-DIR   now   TOP truly   you(sg) TOP 2sS-A-want

ziŋ ákane k-ə́-wəro ā guɓar vatak?"
really that 2sS-F-go   to man   Q3

Her mother said to her, "So, is it really true that you want a husband?"

Alternative 'or' questions employ a combination of *vatak* and one of the other markers

19) Ndə̀rziŋ-wi alala. Ni tibik vatak ni vavay o?
look- 1sDO well I black Q3 I red Q1

Look at me closely. I am I a black man or a white man!?

Negative questions are presented as in (20):

20) Aslane n-ə-ked-erge anaha ahne de da ya?
REL   1sS-A-kill-CPL earlier DEM ANA NEG Q2

Isn't that the one I killed earlier?

For content questions, there is a range of question words:

ākele	'whither'
ákele	'whence', 'where'
leŋkeme / lehəme	'when'
həme / həhəme	'how'
əmay	'what'
əway	'why'
keme	'how many', 'how much'

In subject position, the question word comes first and is repeated, in a reduced form, at the end of the clause

21) Əway asla mə-ɗam-akw way?
    who   REL INF tell   2sIO who
    Who told you?

In non-subject position, the question word is the last element in the sentence:

22) K- ə́-wara leŋkeme?
    2sS-F-come when
    When will you come?

1.2 Pre-posing constituents

Spoken Ouldeme has a strong tendency to topicalize constituents by fronting them. There are, however, restrictions as to what can be pre-posed. Verbs, for example, never appear before the subject, presumably because of the obligatory subject prefix on the verb. When objects are fronted, there is no trace pronoun in the place from where the object has been extracted since the verb obligatorily contains an object affix. In (23), from a folk-tale, the frog sowing millet is the object of the verb *pəreŋ* 'see' (the 3sg DO marker is ∅ and is glossed as (3s)):

23) "Kurndakw a- slag-away hay ak-ə-pəreŋ sek seleŋ ziŋ a,
    frog   3sSA-sowPLR-HAB millet 2pS-A-see(3s) time one really Q2
    malamaŋ i ɗi?"
    sisters   my PL?"
    "Really, my sisters, have you ever seen a frog sowing millet!?"

More commonly, the pre-posed object is delimited by the topic marker *di*. In the following example, in the mouth of a character in a text, the direct object of an infinitive, the song, is fronted:

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24) "Sek ademes asláne di, n-ə-ya-hu ákà mə-liyu ve."
     type song   this   TOP 1s-A-tire-AB from INF- dig already

"I'm already tired of singing that kind of song."

And in (25), a question, the first *di* delimits the topic of the sentence, which is a subordinate clause, *"When... "* , and the second *di,* (in its interrogative form *du*) marks the two clauses as the topic of the question *Why?*

25) "...mərez a-sligi hay yaŋ di, k-ə-ŋgay a-mbadʼa vu ɗu, ákamay?"
     person 3sSA-sow millet his TOP 2s-F-say   3s-change self TOP why

When someone is just sowing his millet, why do you say he has metamorphosed?

Although common, almost the default, in direct speech, such pre-posing of object complements never occurs on the story line.

1.3 Subordination

In narrative discourse, the most common clauses to be subordinated are adverbial in nature, signifying discontinuities of time and location. Relative clauses (RC) are much less frequent. For example, in a sample narrative text of 299 sentences, there were 39 subordinate adverbial phrases, mostly of time and delimited by *di,* whereas the only RCs were in direct speech. Other narrative texts show the same characteristics, except that we also find RCs in setting and background information. Example (26) is interesting in this respect, as it has an RC embedded in another RC:

26) Maslalambadʼ i mətərɓi   mbaŋ gəli dʼi ane anzakaŋ á beketəge   ane
     story   of suffering-GEN father our   PL REL in past time P previous years REL

     anaŋi   li   dʼi t- ə-tərɓ-oŋ-to, t- ə-padʼ-ato di nende.
     animal-GEN bush PL 3pS-A-suffer-CS-3pDO 3pS-A-eat-3pDO TOP here-it-is

This is the story of the sufferings of our fathers who lived a long time ago, when wild animals made them suffer and devoured them.

1.3.1 Adverbial phrases

In the event line of a narrative, discontinuities of time and place are signalled by fronting an adverbial phrase or an entire subordinate clause and delimiting it with *di*:

27) A- savo di, a- giya i huradʼ.
     3sSA-elapse TOP 3sSA-make of stomach

After some time, she became pregnant.

28) A- wuru ākā arɓesl, ákā meltivi mə-wara ā yam age di...
     3sSA- go   onto clay   on   road   INF – come to water to TOP

As she was going into the clay field, on the road which leads down to the well...

When a new character or information is presented for the first time, this happens without any kind of marking. New information can even be introduced in a subordinate clause. In the

following example, the principal wife of the chief has never been mentioned before in the story, nor indeed has any wife of the chief, and yet she appears as the subject of both the subordinate and main clauses:

29) Wal kidik azlehe a- wara bǝra ákà mamaghay, hǝŋende di, a- pǝr-ata
woman kitchen great 3sSA-come out from door   thus   TOP 3sSA-see- 3p

kurndakw dí á matava ge ndasl ndaslasla.
frog   PL in yard   in IDEO (in great numbers)

When the chief's first wife came and looked out of the door, she saw hundreds of frogs in the courtyard.

1.3.2 Relative clauses

Ouldeme being an SVO language, we can reasonably expect that the the predominant type of relative clause would be *postnominal* (Keenan 1985:143). Concomitantly, we should expect to find the clauses signalled by a relative pronoun, and this is indeed the case. Most widely used is the particle *ānē* (in orthography *āne*) 'which, who, where, that', related to the demonstrative *ánē* (orth. *áne*) 'this'. Two further relative pronouns *àslànè* and *áslànè* seem to have anaphoric and cataphoric functions. They also have demonstrative equivalents, as shown in Table 1:

	Demonstratives		Relative pronouns
	Near	**Far**	**-**
Neutral	ánē	átū	ānē
Cataphoric	àslánē	àslátū	àslànè
Anaphoric	áslánē	áslátū	áslànè

Table 1 – Demonstratives and relative pronouns

The difference between anaphoric and cataphoric relative pronouns is illustrated in (30) and (31):

30) N-ǝ-zakay makets áslane n- ǝ-g-ǝra aslǝr.
1sS-A-take   knife   ANAREL 1sS-A-do-INS work

I took the knife which I used.

31) N-ǝ-zakay makets àslane n- ó-g-ǝra aslǝr
1sS-A-take   knife   CATREL 1sS-F-do-INS work

I took the knife which I'm going to use.

The forms for the demonstratives shown in Table 1 are well attested in the texts but have not, as yet, been verified as functioning anaphorically or cataphorically in the same way as the relative pronouns. They have been arranged here on the basis of their form only.

With a determiner, in the following case *atu* 'that', the order of the constituents is Head Noun + Rel Cl + Det:

32) A-pəraŋw-aray ghay ane wal gata a- g- erge atu.
    3sSA-see- CF house REL wife his 3sSA-make-CPL DEM

    He saw from afar that house which his wife had built.

Examples (30), (31) and (32) illustrate relativized object complements. Subjects (33) and obliques (34) can also be relativized:

33) Wuram yakw di ane t-ə-w-aray ā yam age di, t- ə-hin-ir-ege: ....
    daughter your(sg) PL REL 3pS-A-go-CF P water P TOP 3pS-A-say-1sIO-DIR

    Your daughters who were going to the well said to me…

34) Natahtu a- giya war wəlamataya yaŋ kindik ane a- tal- tə ma
    Therefore 3sSA-do child festival his little REL 3sSA-call-3pO mouth

    mərdi zlavaŋ.
    people many

    And so he threw a little party to which he invited many people.

Relative clauses without domain nouns are possible, but rare:

35) Aslane n-ə-ked-erge anaha ahne de də ya?
    REL 1sS-A-kill-CPL earlier DEM ANA NEG-Q2

    Isn't that the one I killed earlier?

36) Aslane a- wara bəra nat ahne ya?
    REL 3sSA-come out 3s DEM Q2

    Is it this one who's coming out?

1.3.3 Complement clauses

With verbs of cognition, the topicalization marker *di* can also be used as a complementizer:

37) Nat kəni a- sər di ghi aghar gata daw.
    she TOP 3sS-know CMP house-GEN co-wife her NEG

    She didn't know it was her co-wife's house.

38) Ni kəni n- ə-sər daw, gada a- mbaday vo ya du,
    I too 1sS-A-know NEG perhaps 3sSA-change REFL Q2 TOP

    ni n- ə-sər di a- mbaday vo yo?
    I 1sS-A-know CMP 3sSA-change REFL Q1

    I don't know either. Maybe he does metamorphose. How should I know if he metamorphoses?

1.4 The verbal system

Although Ouldeme has a very complex verbal structure, the tense-aspect system as a formal feature of the verb morphology is somewhat limited. This does not, however, mean that the language is deficient in its expression of temporal and aspectual distinctions, but rather that we have to look beyond the morphology and syntax of the verb itself to find the strategies it employs. In this, we are following a suggestion of Paul Hopper, in his essay *Aspect between discourse and grammar* (Hopper 1982:5-6), where he says (italics his):

> "......the fundamental notion of aspect is not a local-semantic one but is discourse-pragmatic, and is characterizable as *completed event in the discourse*. Although in a given language the morphological or syntactic means for expressing this function may intersect with, or even be identical with, other morpho-syntactic systems......I am suggesting that the encoding of percepts in the world always takes place within a discourse framework..."

The verb has a total of 16 slots in the word itself, and another three as postposed clitics. The structure of the verb as regards its temporal markers is shown Table 2. Slots 1,4 and 5 are given here for convenience. Slots 7 – 15, not shown, hold the imperative, causative/transitive, spatial, directional and object suffixes. The two auxiliary *prefixes* have strictly temporal functions. Other auxiliaries appear as dependent verbs preposed to the main verb in the infinitive.

1	2	3	4	5	6	16
(Subj. Pref.)	Mode	Aux.	*(Root)*	*(Instrument. and Comitative)*	Habitual	Completive *(and Directional)*
	-ə́- *-ə̄-* *-ə̀-* *-á-* *-à-*	*-la-* *-ŋga-*			*-w-*	*-erge*

Table 2 Tense, Aspect and Mode markers in verb

Example (39), from a text, illustrates a cluster of five suffixes simultaneously:

```
        1  2  3   6         15 16
39)  n- ə̄-mbərzl-oŋ-hwa-kwa-n-aró wuram yakw.
     1sS-A-save-     CS –AB- 2sB- EP-CP   daughter  your
     I rescued       from something for you from over there daughter your
     I rescued your daughter for you (from sthg) when she was over there.
```

The modal markers are divided into two groups, as in Table 3, the *ə* group signifying *realis* mode, and the *a* group *irrealis*. Mid-tone *ə* is the default, aorist:

	realis	irrealis
Potential	ə́ *it will happen*	á *it may happen*
Aorist	ə̄ *it happens/happened*	-
Hypothetical	ə̀ *may it happen* *it should have happened*	à *it would happen* *it would have happened*

Table 3 Modal markers

The completive and aorist forms differ in that –*erge*, completive (CPL) views an action in its entirety, irrespective of its tense, whereas the aorist (A) disregards the aspect and indicates that the action is real, either present or past. Thus, future perfect and imperative are possible.

40) **a.** nday
eat-IMP3s
Eat (it)!

b. nd-erge
eat-IMP3s-CPLTV
Eat (it) up!

c. n-ɔ́- nd-erge
1s-FUT-eat-CPLTV
I will eat (it) up.

d. n-ɔ́- nd-erge ve
1s-FUT-eat-CPLTV already
I will have eaten (it) up already.

The clitic *ve*, 'already', can be postposed to any verb or verb phrase, giving a perfective notion, whereas the suffix –*erge* is necessarily only possible with non-punctiliar verbs such as 'sweep', 'give birth', 'drink', 'eat' etc. Inceptives such as *pahoŋ vu* 'begin', statives such as *laɓay* 'be good, beautiful' and motion verbs such as *nzaró* 'arrive' cannot be affixed with the completive marker.

2. FIGURE AND GROUND

2.1 Tense/aspect in discourse

The default time form in the event line in Ouldeme narrative discourse is the *aorist*, which covers both past and present events, viewed simply as an event. There is no perfective/imperfective contrast. There is a habitual form, using the suffix -*w*-, which strongly emphasises repetitive action but is not used to contrast punctiliar action with non-punctiliar. That is, the habitual cannot be used to indicate simultaneity of two actions, as in *while he was eating, she told him...* This is done by the topic marker *di*, which is not part of the verb:

41) Yər a- tsəl āka ma kuvar di, ali a- wara gwa yasasasas
IDEO 3sSA-climbed onto mouth granary TOP sauce 3sSA-came down IDEO
As she scrambled up to the hatch on the granary, the sauce bubbled over.

By the same token, there would seem to be no way of encoding a pluperfect in the verb itself. One way of indicating that one action is complete before the second begins is by inserting the adverbial *ketek*, 'first', 'before', between the two:

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42) Wal ɗi t- ə-slaru ꞥꞥꞥ, guɓar ɗi t-ə-wara bəra á yam age.
    woman PL 3p-A-left   first   man   PL 3p-A-come out from water in
    After the women left, the men came out of the water.

More common, however, when one event is preposed before another, the versatile topic marker *di* is used to mark the setting for the principal clause:

43) Wal ɗi t-ə-slaru ꞥꞥ, guɓar ɗi t- ə-wara bəra á yam age.
    woman PL 3p-A-left   TOP man   PL 3p-A-come out from water in
    The women left *di*, the men came out of the water.

    When the women had left, the men came out of the water

44) A-hwalaru bəra vu, a-slaray ꞥꞥ, kurndakw a-zayaka ambəl i kurndakw
    3sA-collected out self 3sA-left TOP frog   3sA-took   skin   of frog
    yaŋ de áka vu.
    his ANA from self
    After she had gone, the frog took off his frog skin.

2.2 Backgrounding

In languages which distinguish the event line from background information by a change in the tense/aspect form of the verb, this is generally done by switching between perfective and imperfective forms, perfective indicating the foreground events, imperfective signalling non-events and general background material. Since Ouldeme has no real imperfective form of the verb, the aorist, accounting for over 95% of the main verb forms in narrative, carries a heavy load, covering present and past punctiliar action.

There is no overt means of encoding in the verb the switch from the event line to background information, and yet it is clear which is which. There are, in fact, several features which indicate to the audience that there is a change in grounding. We saw above (1.2) how objects cannot be pre-posed on the event line, as can adverbial phrases, and so when we *do* find this happening, we have a clue that we have shifted from foreground to background.

Similarly, when we encounter main clauses with stative verbs rather than action or event verbs, or main clauses with no verb at all, this indicates that we have moved off the time line. Consider this explanatory comment from a text. The first sentence is a locative clause without copula. The subject of the second sentence, *Zigəm dî* 'Mandaras' is marked with *di* and the verb in the main clause is *nay* 'be'. The verb in the main clause of the third sentence is *sər* 'know':

45) Àma á bɜra   aslatu ge di, Zɜgim   dî ham. Kɜrdi dî ᵗ-ɜ-nᵃy alala daw, aslɜrka
    but   in country that   in TOP Mandara PL all   pagan PL 3p-A-be well   NEG except
    vu guɓar aslāne a-   nzakaŋ á dɜɓa ghi gata atu tsɜhecf. Zɜgim dî atu dî, ᵗ-ɜ-sɜr
    man REL   3sA-stay   at back house their that only   Mandara PL that TOP 3p-A-know
    āne anaŋa atu a-nzakwa-hu ademes atu ákà wuram kɜrdi dî atu daw dîkidîki.
    CMP animal that 3sA-find- ABL song   that from girl   pagan PL that NEG at all

    But in that country there were only Mandara people. The pagans did not do well there,
    with the sole exception of the man who lived behind their house. These Mandaras had no
    idea that the animal had got the song from a pagan girl.

In addition to momentarily suspending the time-line, background information sometimes
steps back in time to explain the current events. The directional suffix *ará* (centripetal: 'from
there to here') is used in the next example to indicate that the locus of the action of the verbs
kad 'kill' and *tasl* 'scrape' is anterior to the state in which the participants are now
described to be, giving a pluperfect sense:

46)   …adʼaba aluwar a-kad- t-arᵃ á   li ge. Anaŋ āne t- ɜ́-nday inɜsi ákà
      …because hunger 3sA-kill-3p-DIR from bush from thing REL 3p-F-eat other against
      aluwar kɜni a-na-ha-ta daw, ata asla kudʼa dî. Mahar anaŋ aluwar gata āne
      hunger also 3sA-be-off-3p NEG they person poor PL as if   thing   hunger their REL
      t- ɜ́- f- aray ā ma   ge di, aɓɜlam āne ana t- ɜ-tasl- at-arᵃ á
      3p-F- put-DIR into mouth to TOP leftovers REL if   3p-A-scrape-3p-DIR from paid-
      bariyama atu.
      labour   that

      [He wanted to hit her for losing the food] because they were hungry from when they
      had been in the bush. There was nothing else for them to eat, as they were poor
      people. That is, the only thing they had to put into their mouths was if they [the
      Mandara] had scraped up some leftovers for them after their day's working [for the
      Mandara].

Note also the presence of the topic marker *di* in the previous examples. When we find *di*
marking subjects outside of direct speech, it is significant:

47)   Ata zik ɜnta anaŋa ahe dî, ata áka mi   mɜrdi.
      They chief with animal that TOP they before mouth-of people
      The chief and the animal were in front of all the people.

48)   Zɜgim dî atu dî,   t-ɜ-sɜr āne anaŋa atu a-nzakwa-hu ademes atu ákɜ̀
      Mandara PL that TOP 3s-A-knowREL animal that 3sA-find- ABL song   that from
      wuram kɜrdi dî atu daw dîkidîki.
      girl   pagan PL that NEG at all
      Those muslims had no idea that the beast had got the song from a pagan girl.

It is probably going too far to say that it is the presence of *di* here that indicates that we are
dealing with background material, but it is one of several features which mark a shift in
grounding. In the following two examples, the opening *mbatsa,* which at a sentence level

can be glossed as 'however', at a discourse level takes us off the event line to provide background information:

49) **Mbatsa** kurndakw atu di, nat bəlama   i   bəra atu.
    however frog   that TOP he   quarter chief of village that
    Now, the frog was quarter chief of that village.

50) Ama **mbatsa** gu6ar gata di, a- dzukw-aloŋ ghar ā nat...
    but however husband her TOP 3sA-think- CM3s head to her
    Meanwhile, her husband was thinking about her... ...

The presence of *di* marking subjects or objects here also indicates that this is background information, as *di* is never found marking subjects on the event line. This is somewhat surprising, since it is such a common feature in direct speech, as in the following:

51) War atu **di**, a- vəl- i mətogo ghar zlavaŋ.
    child that TOP 3sA-give-me count   head much
    That child gives me a lot of worry.

In this case *di* is acting as a focus marker. In this role in the following example, spoken by one of the main characters in a folk tale, it focusses on the change of subject,:

52) "N-ə-ga-wa-ra-haŋ mahwase ákà tsekel. Nat di kurahwahwa
    1s- A-do-HAB-3s-SP simple sauce beside side   He TOP IDEO
    a- nza-wa-haŋ ákà dedew tsəhed."
    3sA-stay-HAB-SP beside water jar only
    "I always make a basic sauce for him at the side of the main pot. As for him, he just sits like a slob beside the water jar."

2.2.1 Flashbacks

A flashback is a break in the time line of a narrative to insert events which occurred some time anterior to the events being currently narrated. In African languages true flashbacks are rare, so we did not expect to find any in Ouldeme narrative. Elicitation produced approximations, introduced by *mbatsa* as in examples (49) and (50) above. Another approximation was found in one of the texts (example 72). Here the 'flashback' is only of a few seconds or so and would seem to be introduced by *mahar ane* and marked off, predictably, by *di* . In the story, the beast has already arrived at the house and greeted the girl and her father. Only then do we read that before the beast had arrived, the father had seen him from afar and had said to his daughter that he would kill it:

53) Ham ba **mahar ane** mbaŋ i wuram atu a-pəreŋ, alokwaro kuled **di**,
    so just like   REL father of girl   that 3sSA-see still   far   TOP
    a- hən-ar ā wuram yaŋ:......
    3sSA-say-3sIO to girl   his
    When the father of the girl had seen the beast still far off, he said to his daughter....

3. PARTICIPANT REFERENCE

3.1 Introducing participants

Major participants are often the first actors introduced in the story, as in this example from a text:

54) Gu6ar ghay a- nay, a-nza-kaŋ á dǝ6a ghi   zigǝm ɗi ǝnta huraɗ ghay
    man   house 3sSA-be 3sSA-stay-SP at back house-of Mandara PL with stomach house
    yaŋ ham
    his all
    There was once a man who lived behind the houses of the Mandara with his whole family

In another text the two main participants are introduced in the first sentence:

55) Maŋ awak a- ni di, a- w- erge war babu.
    mother goat 3sSA-be TOP 3sSA-givebirth-CPL child billy-goat
    There was a mother goat who gave birth to a goat kid.

Minor participants usually have no special way of introduction:

56) A-savu   di, wuram i zik ɗi ata fǝrfaɗ t- ǝ-wara ā yam age.
    3sSA-elapse TOP girl of chief PL they eight 3pS-A-come to water to
    After some time, the eight daughters of the chief came to fetch water

Minor participants may also be introduced by describing how the main character meets with the minor character.

57) Yaw, a-wǝru a- nz-ǝra-kw-anay ākā ayeŋ, a- hǝn-er-ege: ...
    So   3sSA-go 3sSA-stay-CM-SP-   onto squirrel 3sSA-say-3sIO-DIR
    'So, he (the beast, main character) met a squirrel (new, minor charater), and said to him: ...

In the following example, the home of a new minor character, the lion, is mentioned before the lion himself is introduced:

58) Mbatsa avi mazlahwpu a-nay ákitatu, war babu de a-dadagwa,
    However, hole lion   3sSA-be yonder child goat ANA 3sSA- ran entered
    bǝrǝt a-gara ā avi ge de, takwalazazay kǝni a-wa- 1- aŋ-aray.
    IDEO 3sSA- to hole in ANA hyena   also 3sSA-go-CM-CS-CF
    Mazlahwpu a- sle- t-er-ege á tivi.
    lion   3sSA-leave-3pDO-DIR on road
    However, there was a lion's den in that place and the kid rushed in, followed closely by the hyena. The lion let them pass on the road.....
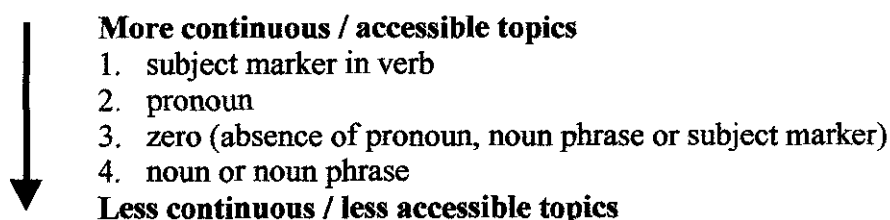
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3.2 Further reference to participants

There are several different ways of encoding further references to participants in Ouldeme. This can be done by using a pronoun, a noun phrase (with or without qualifiers) or by simply using the ever-present subject marker affixed to the verb. Total absence of reference to a subject is found in some rare cases. There is a whole range of anaphoric markers whose functions have not yet been fully studied. These markers are never alone, they are usually attached to a noun phrase and some of them can also be attached to a pronoun. There are also demonstratives which seem to function as anaphoric markers. As such they also have to be attached to either a noun phrase or a pronoun. Table 4 lists the different types of reference:

1.	Subject marker on verb		
2.	Pronoun		
3.	Zero (absence of pronoun, noun phrase or subject marker)		
4	Noun or noun phrase		
5.	Noun phrase + anaphoric marker	(NP + *atu, dide, de, aha, aha de, áne*)	
6.	Pronoun + anaphoric marker	(pron + *atu, dide* or *de*)	

Table 4 Reference types

In applying Givón's iconicity principle (1983:18) to the first four reference types in Ouldeme, one finds that continuity in narrative discourse is usually indicated by the simple presence of the subject marker attached to the verb. Pronouns are relatively rare and they usually indicate some kind of emphasis. Total absence of subject marker, noun phrase or pronoun is also rare and is often preceded by an ideophone. The presence of a noun or a noun phrase indicates discontinuity, a narrative peak or a highlighted turning point.

More continuous / accessible topics
1. subject marker in verb
2. pronoun
3. zero (absence of pronoun, noun phrase or subject marker)
4. noun or noun phrase
Less continuous / less accessible topics

Combinations of anaphoric markers with noun phrases or pronouns are not included in the schema above since their actual usage requires further investigation.

3.2.1 Subject marker affixed to verb

In continuous narrative, the subject is not usually marked except at the beginning of a new unit, where it is introduced for the first time or reintroduced after a period offstage. The subject is encoded in the verb by a subject marker which indicates the speaker. A flow of successive clauses with no participant marker other than that of the subject marker shows that there are no disruptions in the flow of events or changes in the agent / actor.

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	Pron or NP	subject marker + verb
Continuous text	-	+
Discontinuous text	+	+

In the following example, the third person singular marker 'a-' (highlighted) is the only clue to indicate who the actor is in the second to fourth clauses:

59) Babu   de   a-   ghwar ā bəra   di,
billy-goat ANA 3sSA-rush   to outside TOP
a-daradagwa ā ŋgam age.
3sSA-ran   to home   to
A-   nzaró di,
3sSA-arrived TOP
a-   hən-er-   ege ā maŋ   ahe: "Iya, Iya!"
3sSA-say- 3sIO-DIR to mother his   mother, mother!

The little billy-goat rushed out and ran home as fast as he could. "Mother, Mother!" he said when he got there.

In cases where all the participants are in the same person, the clue to a change in subject can be the presence of an ideophone, some kind of a particle or a time phrase. When none of these indicators are present, the subject usually remains the same. In the following example, ideophones (marked with an exclamation mark in the gloss) break the action and thus give the needed clue to change of actor. All the verbs are in the third person singular form, indicated by the subject marker *a-*, again highlighted. Here, the lion tears the hyena's skin off and the goat pours honey on the skin to trick the lion:

60)
Tap   a-   gus kwa ghar age di,   **lion**
Whap! 3sSA-seize from head   from TOP
nziyat tsəkwa ākā sek,
tearing! right up to   foot
nde a-   p-   ar-aku   ama de tsa: **goat**
then 3sSA-spread-3sIO-SP   honey ANA thus
slərəm, slərəm, slərəm, a-   peɗ-   erge   **lion**
chomp !   chomp!   chomp! 3sSA-eat(3sDO)-CPL
a-   te-w-   eŋ-erge sluvu ahe ham ham
3sSA-rip-HAB-CS-CPL flesh   his   all
ndəli6 a-   pəra-ku ama de ham ham   **goat**
Gloop!, 3sSA-poured   honey ANA   all
ŋgraf, ŋgraf, ŋgraf, a-   peɗ-   erge takwalazazay de   **lion**
Crunch! crunch! crunch! 3sSA-eat(3sDO)-CPL hyena   ANA

Whap! The lion grabbed the hyena and tore his skin off from his head to his feet, and the goat-kid spread out more honey on it. Chomp, chomp, chomp, the lion ate up the hyena, he ripped up all its flesh. Gloop, the goat-kid poured out all the honey. Crunch, crunch, crunch, the lion gobbled up the hyena.

3.2.2 Pronoun with or without qualifiers

There are several pronouns and combinations of pronouns and qualifiers which may also refer to participants, for example *àsláne* 'this' (see Table 1 – Demonstratives and relative pronouns), *nat kəni* 'he also'. More study needs to be done in this area.

> 61) Katatu di àsláne yaŋ a- p-   ar-ahoŋ məndavaŋwiyu.
>   at that TOP this one her 3sSA-putPL-3sIO-SP insults
>
>   *At that her older sister began to scold her.*

However, pronouns are relatively rare in narrative discourse. They often seem to have a special function of emphasis. In the following example the third person pronoun *nat* emphasizes the fact it was the woman who ate all the food:

> 62) A- vəl-ar daf atu daw. Nat a- nd-erge.
>   3sSA-give-3sIO food that NEG she 3sSA-eat-CPL
>
>   *She didn't give him the food, she ate it herself.*

3.2.3 Zero marking

Total absence of reference to a subject is found only when reported speech lacks an opening or a closing mark like *A says*. Ideophones may also indicate a change of subject. The following extract contains both cases. The discussion between the animal and the girl takes place in the Mandara language:

63)

SUBJECT	SPEECH MARGIN	REPORTED SPEECH	SPEAKER/ACTOR
Nde wuram atu Then the girl	ahənerege: she-said	"Zlakwa daye!" "Go away, sir"	**Girl speaks**
∅	∅	Kirkir. Silence (IDEO)	**Animal**
∅	∅	"Zlakwa daye!" "Go away, sir"	**Girl speaks**
∅	∅	Kirkir Silence (IDEO)	**Animal**
Ndala dədi Then	ahənar ā wuram de: he-said to the girl	"Isə daka!" "Give me a thorn"	**Animal**
∅	∅	"Kandanwe daye?" "What for, sir?"	**Girl**
∅	aŋgay. she said		
∅	Aŋgəla again məhenerege gapa: he-said to her again	 "Isə daka!" "Give me a thorn"	**Animal**
∅	∅	"Kandanwe daye?" "What for, sir?"	**Girl**

∅	∅	"Isə daka abayə ni" "Give me a thorn", I said	**Animal**
∅	aŋgay he said		
Nde adarakada gwa then she ran down ā adak dide. to thorn ANA			

3.2.4 Noun or noun phrase

Full noun phrases, with or without qualifiers, are often used when there is some kind of discontinuity in the narrative, such as a change of speaker, participant, time or location, as in example (56), repeated here:

64) Asavu   di,   ▧▧▧▧▧▧▧ t- ə-wara ā yam age.
     After some time TOP, daughter of chief PL they eight   3pS-A-came to water to.
     After some time, the eight daughters of the chief came to fetch water.

In the following extract from a text, the nouns *zik* 'chief' and *mərdi* 'people' indicate the change of subject:

65) Nde hwiyəp a-   na-kaŋ á ŋgi   zik.
     Then   IDEO   3sSA-stay-SP at house-of chief
     I wura diwa di, ▧zik▧ a-   f-aku atim ākā akwar ihedϵdϵŋ, ...
     of morning early TOP chief 3sSA-put-SP drum on   stone   indeed
     nde ▧mərdi▧ t-ə-gamara ghar ham á matavu yaŋ age ənta wuram dí kəni.
     then people 3pS-A-gather head   all in yard   his in   with girl   PL also.
     Then he spent the night at the chief's house. Early in the morning the chief indeed put the drum on the stone (signifying an important event), then all the people and the girls came together in his courtyard.

3.2.5 Noun phrase + anaphoric marker

Two anaphoric markers, *de* and *aha,* occur with nouns or noun phrases. Two of the demonstratives, *atu* 'that' and *áne* 'this', often seem to have an anaphoric function, and for this reason they are included in this section. Like the other anaphoric markers, they may obligatorily occur either with a noun phrase or a pronoun. These anaphoric markers may be combined with each other (*aha de*) or combined with the topic marker *di* (*dide*). The combined forms may lend more emphasis to a noun phrase, but not enough is known at this stage of our research. The combined forms are much less common than the simple forms: in the whole text corpus, *aha* is found 44 times and *de* about 230 times, whereas there are only five occurrences of *aha de.*

The usage of *de* and *aha* is somewhat similar. To some extent they seem to act like simple definite articles but they also have a more far-ranging anaphoric function. As we have just seen, *de* is much more common than *aha.* The way the two particles are used may depend partly on the personal style of the narrator: although *aha* is found 44 times in all the 31 texts, it is found 18 times in one text and is completely absent from another text of 300 sentences. Further study needs to be done to define the exact usage of these particles.

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de

de is often used when the addressee of previous (or nearly previous) spoken speech has become the subject of the sentence in which *de* occurs. This seems also to be the case with a participant referred to in previous speech, not necessarily only the addressee. However, some texts, seem to use *de* somewhat differently. In one case (Babu 23 c) *de* does not refer to any participant in a speech act, but refers to something totally new.

de also occurs modifying nouns in a non-subject function following the verb. However, examples of *de* in subject position can also be found. *de* is common in direct speech whereas there are no examples of *aha* within quotes. *de* can mark longer units like a noun phrase which includes a relative clause:

66) "Avər daw azlehi yu, anaŋa áslane a-wara a-sə-hɪ-n-ege
    rain   NEG big sister my animal RELANA 3sSA-come 3sSA-drink AB-1sIO-EP-DIR

    aduwa gəli anawo de."
    milk   our yesterday ANA

    "It's not rain, my sister, it's the animal which took our milk from me yesterday and drank it."

aha de

As we noted above, the combination of *aha* and *de* is rare:

67) Akitatatu di, anaŋa aha de a- tsətsək-ura-yó ənta
    then   TOP animal ANA ANA 3sSA-stop-   CM- CP with

    mbaŋ i wuram áne.....
    father of girl   this

    At that point, the animal stopped with the girl's father...

aha de may also be split, in the following case bracketing a relative clause:

68) a- vəl-er- ege ā wal aha ane t- ə- f- al-awo ākā sida de.
    3sSA-give-3sIO-CPL to woman ANA REL 3pS-A-put-CM-SP   to witness ANA

    He gave it to the woman whom they had chosen to be a witness.

áne

áne 'this', near, is mostly used in quoted speech. *áne* is never found modifying the subject NP on the story line. In one text (example 69) *áne* is used to refer to a new participant, the closest approximation to a cataphoric marker we have observed to date. In the same text it is also used anaphorically, to reintroduce a participant who has been off stage for thirty sentences. Example (69) gives part of this text in a summary form and shows the dual use of this particle:

69)

Sentence1 Yaw, ⟨wal diyal⟩ a-   hən-er-ege ā guɓar gata "Ana k-ə́-bek-erge
Well,   wife barren 3sSA-say-3sIO-DIR to husband her   if   2sS-F-chase-CPL

⟨aghar yu ane də di,⟩ n- ə́-sliyu."
co-wife my this NEG TOP 1sS-F-leave

The barren wife said to her husband, "If you don't chase out my co-wife, I'm
leaving."

(The husband puts his other wife out, with her children and dogs. She goes
off and does quite well for herself. After a while, the husband feels bad about
the whole affair and goes off to look for her. He finds her with a lot of
possessions and fetches her home.)

Sentence30 Ane t- ə-nzaro ā ŋgam age ⟨wal diyal ane⟩ a-pəreŋ anaŋhar i aghar,
when 3pS-A-arrive to home to   wife barren ANA 3sSA-see things of co-wife

gata di, a- hən-er-ege ā guɓar gata....
her TOP 3sSA-say-3sIO-DIR to husband her

When they (the man with his other wife) arrived home and the barren wife saw her
co-wife's things, she said to her husband....

In one text the participant marked with *áne* has been on stage but in the object position,
sorely mistreated:

70) Akitatatu di, anaŋa aha   de a-tsətsək-əra-yó ənta mbaŋ i wuram ane,....
Then   TOP animal ANA ANA 3sSA-stop- CM-CP with father of girl   this
Then the animal stopped with the girl's father

áne can mark longer units such as a NP including a relative clause:

71) "Alem ənta wuram asli   teŋwa am-ə́-kwaslaku ghay, nde n-ə́-pəreŋ
We   with girl   REL-GEN first   1pS-F- wait   house then 1sS-F-see

anaŋ ane a- ga-w-iya vu   ane"
thing REL 3sSA-do-HAB-do REFL this

"The first girl and I will watch the house, then I'll see this thing which keeps on
happening."

atu

atu 'that' (distant from point of reference), seems to have a more varied use than *áne*. It can
be found in background information, in quoted speech and eventline clauses, and in one text
it occurs in subject position with a pronoun. As far as we have been able to determine,
discourse usage seems to be the same as *aha*: the addressee of the previous quoted speech
becomes the subject of the clause containing the *atu*-marked NP.

When *atu* is combined with the first person singular pronoun *nay* the combination *ni tu (nay*
atu) indicates a special focus, 'as for me'. Although *aha* and *atu* are often similar in the ways
they are used, there is no corresponding form *nay aha*, since *aha* does not occur with a
pronoun (see next section).

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3.2.6 Pronoun + anaphoric marker

Three different anaphoric markers - *atu, dide* and *de* - were found in the texts in connection with a pronoun. The anaphoric marker attached to a pronoun seems to bring special emphasis to the narrative (even more emphasis than a pronoun on its own). In one story, the father of the heroine wants to kill the animal that keeps on drinking their milk. The father hides himself hoping to attack the animal when it arrives. Then the narrator lays out the scene (background information): the animal comes and sings with the girl, whilst the father (*nat di de* 'as for him') is hiding on top of the hangar waiting. Note also the location clause in the second sentence with its typical lack of verb, one of the indications that this is background information (see 2.2 on Backgrounding):

72) Ham ba mahar ane a-nzaró ā matava ge di, t-ə-li   ademes ənta wuram
    so just like   REL he-arrived to yard   in TOP they-sang song   with girl
áne. Nat   dide ákā kuɓal.
this   he (father) TOP on   hangar

When he (the beast) arrived to the yard, he sang with the girl. He (the father) was on the hangar.

3.3 Default encoding values for various contexts

Following the principles of Levinsohn's field procedures (1994), default values for encoding subjects are discussed here in four different contexts depending on the subject and its relation to the previous sentence. In addition to Levinsohn's model, we have also looked into whether the participants are major or minor characters in the story. This study is based mainly on two of the texts from our corpus.

3.3.1 Same subject as previous sentence

When the subject is the same as the subject in the previous sentence, well over 90% of participant encoding uses the subject marker alone, which is the default encoding form:

73)

Subject	Verb	Complement
War babu de	azakay	war hədizl yaŋ kende, ama anege
Child goat ANA	he took	little calabash his this size honey in it
	ahwal vu	ā li ge de tsa.
	he left	for the bush
	Anzi,	
	he arrived	
	atəbay	wal de.
	he looked	for a wife
	Anzaku	daw
	he found	not
	aŋgambara ghar	a ŋgam age.
	he returned.	home

3.3.2 Addressee of quoted speech becomes subject in following sentence

When the subject is the adressee of a speech reported in the previous sentence, the defining of the default form is more complex. In the two texts studied, in half of the cases the subject of

the following clause was either N or N + DEM/GEN, and in the other half, just the subject marker. Total absence of reference is also found, although this is rare. It seems that there is no one single default form for this context but in fact two, which are of equal importance: NP + subject marker or subject marker alone.

In the following example a father speaks to his daughter who then answers back to him. The reference to the speaker is shown by a noun + a genitive marker and a determiner. The girl is one of the main characters in the story whereas the father is a more minor character.

74) Guɓar ghay aha a-tsineŋ   di, a- hən-ar ā wuram yaŋ:
   Man   house   ANA 3sSA-hear(3sDO) TOP 3sSA-say-3sIO to girl   his
"Wuru k-ə́-daray anaŋ aku ā həge, avər a-   dza ghar."
   go   2sS-F-bring_in thing fire to house rain 3sSA-pull head
Nde wuram yaŋ de a-   hən-er-ege:
then daughter his ANA 3sSA-say-3sIO-DIR
"Avər daw baba, anaŋa ahe a- wa- w- ará a-   se- w- erge
   rain   NEG Father animal PRP 3sSA-come-HAB-CP 3sSA-drink-HAB-CPL
aɗuwa dide."
milk   ANA

When the father heard it, he said to his daughter, "Go and get the firewood into the house. Rain is coming." His daughter said, "It's not rain, father, it's the animal who keeps coming and drinking the milk."

The subject marker alone is usually used when the addressee of the previous sentence is a main character who then becomes the subject of the following sentence. However, just the subject marker may be used to refer to a minor character who is in some way dominant in the situation), for instance when the girl's family (minor characters) are scolding their daughter (major character):

75) T- ə-hən-er-ege ā wuram gata aha: "Aɗuwa ɗu, əmay a- wara
   3pS-A-say-3sIO-CPL to girl   their ANA   milk   TOP what 3sSA-come
a- s- erge may?" Ŋguslukw, a- lavar-aka-ta daw.
   3sSA-drink-CPL what   IDEO   3sSA-answer-SP-3pIO NEG

They said to their daughter, "About the milk, what was it that came and drank it?" Embarassed silence, she answered them nothing.

3.3.3 Subject in a nonsubject role (other than addressee)

Unfortunately the texts do not provide enough examples to allow us to study this case. In the few examples we have, the subject of the clause in question in the following sentence may be marked either with a noun phrase + subject marker, or just with the subject marker.

3.3.4 Other changes of subject

When other than the above mentioned changes of subject take place (eg. a new actor to the scene), a noun phrase is the most common way of reference (almost 90% of all the cases) and is thus the default form. This nounphrase may occur in a pre-posed subordinate clause. This is understandable, since a noun phrase generally marks different kinds of discontinuities.

4. QUOTED SPEECH

Quoted conversation forms a considerable part of the content of Ouldeme narrative. Generally, the speeches are treated as the equivalent of a single event, as far as the development of the story is concerned, and as such, changes of participant and even scene can be effected by little more than having been referred to by one of the participants. Direct speech is the norm, although semidirect speech is not uncommon. No examples of true indirect speech have been found in the data.

Before looking at some of the details of how quoted speech is handled, it is worth emphasizing just how big a part dialogue plays in Ouldeme narrative. There are, of course, means of indicating who is saying what and to whom, as we shall see below, but once a dialogue is established, no further hint, other than the content of the dialogue itself, is given as to the identity of the speaker. Consider the following extract from a 'beauty and the beast' story, in translation only. There are in fact three characters here, plus the narrator. The principal character in the story, Wedewede, one of the chief's daughters, has caused much suffering to the 'beast', in this story a frog. The frog's mother tells him to go and state his case to the chief, so he rounds up all the frogs and they present themselves in the early morning in front of the chief's house, a formidable and somewhat daunting spectacle. The chief at first only answers from within the house but is reluctant to show himself. His principal wife admonishes him, however, and he consents to receive the frogs. We have indicated here, on the left, the speaker at each point, but the actual story, of course, contains only the words of the right-hand column:

76)

Narrator	Then the Chief put on his robe, came out to them and said:
Chief	"Greetings, my sons. Is it something important that brings you out so early in the morning?"
Frog	"Yes, of course it is important, Sir. You see, yesterday I was sowing my millet alone, and then these daughters of yours came along to the well and wished me luck in my sowing Then one of their number said, 'Hey, a frog metamorphosed itself in front of my eyes. Have you ever seen a frog sowing millet? I'll have to kill it.' Then she trampled me into the ground. That's what I've come to tell you."
Chief	"Which daughter was it?"
Frog	"Well, just one of your daughters (how should I know which one?)"
Chief	"I see, well just wait a moment while I call them. This one who's coming out now, was it her?"
Frog	"No, it wasn't her."
Chief	This one who's coming out now, was it her?"
Frog	"Not her."
Chief	This one who's coming out now, was it her?"
Frog	"Not her."
Narrator	*Then there was only Wedewede left in the house*
Chief	"Come on out, Wedewede!"
Wedewede	"I'm here, I'm coming out. I'll just oil my belt first."
Chief	"Come on out, Wedewede!"
Wedewede	"I'm here, I'm coming out. I'll just put the oil back into the granary first."
Chief	"Come on out, Wedewede!"
Wedewede	"What do you imagine the frogs are going to give you, Chief? I'm here, I'm coming

out."

Chief	"Come on out, Wedewede!"
Narrator	*Finally she came out.*
Chief	"If it was her, then seize her!"
Narrator	*They pounced on Wedewede and grabbed her.*
Wedewede	"Woe is me! The frogs' spit will consume me! Woe is me! What have I done to the chief? Why is he giving me to the frogs?"
Narrator	*But, when she spoke thus, there were frogs thick on the ground.*
	Before [she could say] "I'll get up and flee", the frogs had already grabbed her again.
Wedewede	"Oh, woe is me! The frogs are going to devour me. Woe is me! I am no more!"
Narrator	*right until they arrived at the house, crying all the way.*

As can be seen in the above, even a new interlocuteur (here Wedewede) can be introduced by only an oblique reference. Similarly, changes of scene can be effected by a participant's mention followed by an indirect reference by the narrator in a subordinate clause marked by *di*, as in (77)(subordinate clause highlighted):

77) Wal gi kurndakw de maŋay: "Ni kəni n-ə́-wuru. Bi n-à-gus-aro
  wife of frog   ANA say   I too 1sS-F-go perhaps 1sS-CD-catch-CP
  amtaɗ,   n-à-wara n-à-pər-ege aghur bəlama." A-hwal-aro bəra vu,
  beanleaves 1sS-CD-come 1sS-CD-put-DIR bean   also   3sSA-collect-CP out self
  a- sl- aray di, kurndakw a-   zay-aka ambəl i kurndakw yaŋ de ákā vu...
  3sSA-leave-CF TOP frog   3sSA-take-SP skin of frog   his ANA from self

  *The frog's wife said, "I'll go too. Maybe I'll get some bean leaves while I'm there
  and I'll add some beans to it when I come back." When she had got her things
  together and left, the frog took off his frog skin...*

4.1 Speech margins

Table 5 shows all the formulae used for marking quoted speech and should be referred to when reading sections 4.1.1 and 4.1.2.

	pre-speech		**post-speech**
Direct	**A ahənerege:**		∅
	A ahənerege ā B		∅
	other verb ahənerege		∅
	A maŋay:		∅
	∅	*speech*	maŋay
	∅		aŋgay
	∅		∅
Semidirect	∅		aŋgay di
	∅		ahənerege di
	∅		tsa di

Table 5 Formulae at speech margins

4.1.1 Direct speech

In dialogue it is customary to indicate who is addressing whom, and, notwithstanding the zero marking in Ouldeme noted above, this is handled for the most part by the verb *hən-ar*

'say (to someone): *a-hən-ar* or *a-hən-er-ege*[2] 'he said to him' *a-hən-et-ege* 'he said to them' etc, as in (78) (English translation only):

> 78) *When he arrived at the place where the house was, he found his wife there inside.* ▓▓▓▓▓, *"Listen. If I were to say to you 'Let's go,' would you really come with me, my wife?"*

Although the verb *hənar* contains an obligatory IO affix, not infrequently we find the addition of the preposition *ā* 'to', with a noun-phrase indicating the addressee:

> 79) Nde wuram .... a- hən-ar ā akudar   yaŋ: ....
>   then girl   3sSA-say-3sIO to older_sibling her
>   *Then the girl ... said to her older sister...*

Other verbs of speaking, such as 'answer', are obligatorily followed by *hən-ar* or *ŋgay*:

> 80) Nde wuram ahe atu a-   mbəd-ar- aka, a- hən-er-ege:....
>   then girl his that 3sSA-answer-3sIO-SP 3sSA-say-3sIO-DIR
>   *Then that daughter of his answered him and said, ...*

When we come upon the speech introducer *maŋay*, ostensibly from the verb *ŋgay* 'say (to no-one in particular)', sometimes we are to understand that the speaker is addressing himself and it should be understood as 'he said to himself' or even 'he thought'. In this case, only the context tells if there is a real or imagined addressee. (81) contains two examples of *maŋay*, the first of which might be construed as an announcement, the second of which is best understood as the principal character Wedewede's thoughts:

> (81) Bak inəsi mərdi ▓▓▓▓ "Am-ə-wuru ā kəlif á melelehw age." Wəlam aghur
>   day other people say   1pS- A- go   P fish P river   P   day   rise
>   kəni mərdi t- ə-hwal vu, Wedewede ▓▓▓▓: "Ni kəni n-ə́-wuru. Bi
>   also people 3pS-A-gather REFL Wedewede say   I too 1sS-F-go   Perhaps
>   n- à- hwal-aku ghar ākā məra   i   anaŋ inya m-à-və- li   seleŋ."
>   1sS-CD-gather- SP head to someone GEN thing none 3s-CD-give-1sIO one
>
> *Another time people said, "Tomorrow we're going fishing in the river." The next day they set off, and Wedewede said [to herself], "I'll go too. It may be that someone would take pity on me and give me even one."*

4.1.2 Semidirect speech

In our text corpus we found numerous examples of quotations which we would hesitate to call indirect speech, since the words of the speaker are presented in the first person singular, but which are obviously not direct speech. Most of these examples appear in non-foreground material, generally in subordinate clauses, as in (82), where we have italicized the words of the man, who is the principal character in the story:

---

[2] The change from ɑ to e in the affix —ɑr is the result of palatalisation spreading back from the suffix –ege. *Ahənar* and *ahənerege* are interchanged quite arbitrarily and would seem to differ only stylistically.

82) Ama *n- ɔ́- zayaka andəwi atu ákā vu n- ɔ́- pəleŋ á hərage*
    but   1sS-FUT-take off shirt   that from body 1sS-FUT-spread on ground
    n- ɔ́- naka tsa a-   ŋgay di, aku dífir a-gus   andəwi yaŋ aha,
    1sS-FUT-lie   3sSA-say TOP fire IDEO 3sSA-seize shirt   his   ANA
    kərəp a-   nda-ka.
    IDEO   3sSA-eat- SP
    But when he said to himself, "I'll take off my shirt, spread it out on the ground and sleep on it," the fire suddenly caught the shirt and burned it up completely.

Table 5 above gives three different formulae for marking semidirect speech. Those using the verbs *ahənerege* and *aŋgay* are similar in form and effect. The third, using the particle *tsa* (which we have elsewhere glossed as 'attitude marker') with *di*, seems to mark a character's thoughts, but presented in a more oblique and unexpected manner. In examples (83) and (84), other than the verbs being in the first person, there is no indication that these are not the narrator's own words. We have again italicized the quotations. In (83) this helps to distinguish the family's thoughts from the imagined words of the calabash:

83)   I malawu malawu di, ata mbaŋ yaŋ t-ə-nzaru, *am-ɔ́-zakará gwa adúwa*
    of evening evening TOP they father her 3pS-A-arrive 1pS-F-take_from down milk
    ákā kuɓal, am-ɔ́-si tsa di, "Fetet" suwa maŋay, "ak- ə-vəl- i   may?"
    from hangar 1pS-F-drink SPMG   IDEO   calabash say   2pS-A-give-1sIO what
    In the evening, when her father and the others arrived home thinking that they'd just lift the milk off the hangar and drink it, the calabash was empty, as if it were saying to them "What are you going to give me?"

84)   Ndala *n-ɔ́-tsatsakw n-ɔ́-tuway* tsa di, dəgutsik kurndakw dī t- ə-ŋgəla
    before 1sS-F-standup 1sS-F- flee   SPMG IDEO   frog   PL 3pS-A-again
    mə-gus ve.
    INF-seize already
    Before she could say "I'll get up and run off", the frogs fell upon her in great numbers.

4.1.3 Embedded quotations

We have already noted the dominant role assigned to quoted speech in Ouldeme narrative, and how it may include material which might be expected on the event line or in background information. In this final section, we will look briefly at how the words of other characters are quoted within the speeches of a 'beauty and the beast' story. Firstly, an example with two levels. The frog is here telling his mother how he was innocently sowing his millet when Wedewede, the 'beauty' of the story, came along with her sisters and tried to kill him. We see here once more the importance of the particle *di* – here with several different roles - in articulating the sections of the frog's monologue:

85)   "Aya maŋ yu, ni mərez
            Yes   mother mine I   person
            aŋgwalaŋ daw, k- ə́-ŋgi di,
            genuine   NEG   2sS-F- say   TOP
            ihedǎedeŋ.
            truly

Yes, mother, you were right when you said I'm not normal.

Time setting   Anaha di,
            earlier   TOP

Earlier today

"and" co-ordination   wuram i zik dǐ t- ə-wara
            daughter of chief PL 3pS-A-come
            ā yam age ata fərfad di,
            to water in they eight   TOP

the eight daughters of the chief came to fetch water

"and" co-ordination   t- ə-hən-ir-ege: 'Mbəraŋ tsa
            3pS-A-say-1sIO-DIR courageATT
            dagwa bəretsu, mbəraŋ tsa
            fellow   number 2   courage ATT
            dagwa bəretsu' di.
            fellow   number 2   TOP

and wished me luck as I sowed.

Topicalisation   Seleŋ ahe a- n-ege di
            one   PRP 3sSA-be-PRP TOP

One of their number

continuation marker   maŋay: 'Kurndakw
            say   frog
            a- mbəd- ki vu,
            3sSA-change-1sIO REFL
            kurndakw a- slag-away hay
            frog   3sSA-sow-HAB   millet
            yaw?' a haŋende haŋende di,
            Q1   thus   thus   TOP

said, 'A frog has metamorphosed before me', 'Do frogs sow millet' and so on,

serial verbs   azəkwi, aməsəwi,
            she took me, she threw me she
            atsələkinge nzak nzak nzak
            trampled upon me IDEO
            nzak nzaka.

she picked me up, threw me and trampled all over me.

            Maŋay: 'N-ə-kəd-erge ve
            say   1sS-A-kill-CPL already
            tsa.' Nde a- ŋg- iri-ge ā
            ATT Then 3sSA-return-1sIO-P to
            ma6ərəv age. Nde
            heart   in   then
            n- ə-tsetsek-erge, n- ə-si
            1sS-A-stand- CPL   1sS-A-drink
            kuli yu.
            pipe   my

She thought she had finished me off. But life came back into me, and I got up and smoked my pipe.

"if not"   Nde kadǎa n-ə-ŋga-sligi hay
            Then   1s-A-AUX-sow   millet,

Then I sowed again

temporal subordination   dədi, ndala nakw k-ə́-nz-aray
            if not,   before you 2s-A-stay-CF
            there TOP
            atu di

And if it weren't for that, before you arrived,

            n-à-ŋgəla mə-sləg-erge avuh
            1sS-A-again INF-sow-CPL   field
            aslatu ziŋ."
            that   really

I would already have finished that field.

The second example is slightly more complex, with a change of speaker in the embedded speech. Here, Wedewede, daughter of the chief, has now been married to the frog against her will. Her mother-in-law reveals to her that the husband is in fact only wearing a frog skin, and that if Wedewede can find the skin sometime when her husband has sneaked off without it, she should burn it, then she'll have a real man as a husband. Her husband comes back, fails to find his frog skin, and falls into a rage, refusing to speak to her. She goes to the wise old mother-in-law to ask "What now?" The mother-in-law tells her to start making a sauce in the pot on the fire, and then to say out loud that she has no gumbo (okra) to hand. If she climbs up into the granary to get some, who will let her know if the sauce boils over? The mother-in-law assures her that the husband will not be able to keep quiet, that he will speak to her. And that is how it turns out.

Here, then, is the mother-in-law's advice, set out with the embedded speech indented to show the logical structure. Once again we have highlighted the topic marker *di* and its interrogative equivalent *du* to indicate how they mark off the articulations in the speech:

86) "M-ə́-giya *yes yes yes* ákà tsekel ahe di,
    3sS-F-make   ONOM   P   side   PRP TOP
    k- ə́-ŋgay
    2sS-F- say
    'Anaŋ mədəɓiyu anəhi á ahər age daw áne du,
    Starching agent   have I   in hand P   NEG this TOP
               ana n-ə-w-aray ākā ma kuvar,
               if   1sS-A-go-CF to   mouth granary
                    ali yu áne m-ə́-wara gwa du,
                    sauce my this 3sS-F-come down TOP
          uway m-á-dəm-i   way?'
          who   3sS-FI-tell- 1sIO who?
      tsəhed di,
      just   TOP
      nakw k- ə́-w-aray di,
      you   2sS-F-go-CF   TOP
      m- ə́-hən-ekw-ege 'Ali yakw tu a-   wara gwa' di,
      3sS-F-say- 2sIO-DIR sauce your DEM 3sSA-come down   TOP
nakw k-ə́-hən-er-ege 'K-ə-ləvə-   ri ve!'"
you   2sS-F-say-3sIO-DIR 2sS-A-answer-1sIO me!'

"The sauce will go 'bubble bubble bubble' at the side, then just say 'I don't have any starching agent to hand. If I go up into the granary to get it, who will tell me if my sauce boils over', and when you go he'll say 'Your sauce is boiling over', then say 'You spoke to me!'"

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