

Sounding How It Sounded: Quotation and Relevance in Hul'q'umi'num' Salish Narratives

Zachary Gilkison
Simon Fraser University

Halkomelem (ISO code: hur) is a Central Salish language spoken around the Salish Sea in southwestern British Columbia. This paper focuses on the Island dialect (Hul'q'umi'num'), drawing from a corpus of recordings and transcripts from over twenty different speakers dating back to 1962 as part of an ongoing research effort to study the pragmatic, prosodic, and discourse devices used by Elders in narratives and the function of these devices. One device is the use of quotation in narratives and the choice made by the speaker in how to manifest the reported speech. Direct quotation is found in every language, and indirect quotation is only rarely absent (Li, 1986); Hul'q'umi'num' has both indirect quotation (1) and direct quotation (2), (3):

(1) thut 'al' kws stl'i's kws kwunnuhws kw' shkw'am'kw'um's
say only DET want-3ERG DET get-LC-3ERG DT.ND source.of.strength-3POS
...he just said that he wanted to get something that would be his power.
(EM.Tzouhalem.34842-34859)

(2) suw' qwals tthuw'ne'lulh, "a.a.a, si'em', 'a.a.a."
LK speak-3ERG DEM.PL a.a.a respected.one a.a.a
The elders all responded, "Yes, respected one, yes."
(WSa.ts'usqun'220055-22006)

(3) tl'e' wulh thutst-hwus 'uw' yuxts'uli'us 'u kw' chumux.
too now say-3ERG-TR-CAUS CN SER-share-3ERG OB DT.ND gum
She again said to him [skwathshun'] to share some gum.
"a.a.a, ha' 'un' stl'i' tthu nu chumux 'i' m'i ch kwun'um.
a.a.a if 2POS want DT.M 1POS gum CNJ AUX.come 2SUBJ take-MID
[skwathshun'] "Oh, if you want some of my gum, come and get it."
(CLA.skwathshun'.19547-19550)

The form of direct quotation varies considerably throughout the texts, both phonologically and syntactically (e.g. overt (2) or omitted (3) speech verbs). The question follows: if direct quotation is more difficult to process (Köder, Maier, & Hendriks, 2015), what is the benefit of choosing to report speech directly in narratives when indirect speech reporting is less taxing on the listener?

The balance of processing effort and benefit for direct quotation is particularly well-explained in terms of Relevance Theory (RT) (Noh, 2000; Sperber & Wilson, 2001). In RT, speakers are assumed to optimize the *relevance* of any utterance by minimizing the *processing* effort of receiving and maximizing the *cognitive effect* their utterance has on the receiver. I show that, in Hul'q'umi'num' narratives, the speaker often includes performative features in direct quotation (e.g. prosodic prominence or speaking style as in (2) above). The features increase the relevance of the reported speech by 1. easing the processing of the direct quotation by demonstrating the speech itself and 2. increasing the cognitive effect of the quotation by highlighting it in the context of the rest of the narrative, as more marked and vivid manners of speaking are used at prominent points in narratives (Longacre, 1996; Margetts, 2015). By elucidating the details of this narrative device, we can begin to see how speakers conceptualize

speech in Hul'q'umi'num': on one hand, we see how they expect speech in a given context to look; on the other, we see one of many ways they make their stories more comprehensible and enjoyable.

References

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