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COMANCHE NARRATIVE:
Some General Features and a Selected Text

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To date there is not a single published overall description or analysis of Comanche narrative structure. Texts in Comanche (Ganonge 1958) and in its nearest relative, Shoshoni (Miller 1972), are available, and a small number of works dealing with aspects of Comanche narrative either alone or in relation to Shoshoni have seen the light of day in one form or another, or are about to (Buller 1977; McLaughlin 1983a, 1983b; Armagost 1981, 1982a, 1982b). The purpose of the present paper is to comment on some general features of Comanche narrative and to discuss briefly some aspects of a particular text taken from Ganonge 1958. Since I am out of the country while writing this paper and do not have access to all the necessary materials, it should be clearly understood that this is indeed a working paper. In the same vein, I hope that my failure to cite certain relevant references may be excused.

This paper relies heavily on part of Cranes 1975, a programmatic work giving an excellent overview of the organization of narratives based on texts from many languages. Discussion will focus on events, participants, and settings, with remarks on a selected text following. Appendices contain transcriptions and translations of the text.

Events

The Comanche Texts stories (Ganonge 1958) are narratives in the sense that somebody did something, that event was followed by another, and so on. Two of the stories, however, are descriptions of customary experiences with the form somebody used to/could do something for each collection of identical events, that collection being followed by another, and so on.

The Comanche Texts narratives are not merely strings of events. There are various devices for organizing or setting off one stretch of events from another, with the groups connected linearly to create the narratives. In other words, each text has temporal sequencing of events organized hierarchically. This is often related to other aspects of the text such as changes in location and participants.

One device for setting up blocks of events is coordinate clauses, which allow the narrator to collapse two or more events as one. For example, the narrator might say...
(1) sitākēsē' ma masukumụ sitā ma nakime tessañụ this-FUT-FUT it felt this its ear-on took hold

'She felt it. She took hold of its ear.'

using two independent sentences. Or she might combine them as

(2) sitākēsē' ma masukumụ ma nakime tessañụ this-FUT-FUT it felt its ear-on took hold

'She felt it and took hold of its ear.' 61:31

which omits the second subject and treats the two events as aspects of a single larger event. And, or but in certain environments, is understood in such constructions, though an emphatic conjunction tīnas 'and, again, also' is occasionally used. In the following example, the linear order of the two subevents is reinforced through use of wihunu '(and) then'.

(3) ... jauwụ mi'sa ndi wihunu tịkwennịwụ themselves went then went off hunting

'... (they) themselves went, then went off hunting.' 103:4

It is not known how many clauses can be grouped using only coordination, but the following combination of four clauses illustrates what seems to be about the maximizer.

(4) sitākēsē' narchtáma a urunụ u yañụ paka nuhuwụta this-FUT-Fut can-OBJ found it took her money-OBJ

tīnas 'wekịtu u nkụ narchtáma takañụ u narchtáma a half-OBJ there can-in put its lid-OBJ

ukwụ a mariki 'nenị it-on pressed down

'She found a can, took it, put half her money there in it, pressed down its lid.' 40:40

Events can also be grouped using dependent clauses, as in the following examples.

(5) surikise' wiimu suni neka big mikhka niaru'I ni' ma that-PRT-PRT then thus that-OBJ them do-DEF will go I PRT
y'akuliyi said

'When they had done thus to him, he then said, 'I'll go.'" 6:22

(6) sitikise' ma kumshpa' u rukeza uhravakatu ni'lanu this-PRT-PRT her husband it got dark-DEF then-toward went

'When it got dark, her husband went toward them.' 105:29

(7) manita niid pa kahrihetu pitusa ni'lanu cross-DEF this his camp-toward back went

'Having crossed, he went back toward his camp.' 96:25

It should be pointed out that the events referred to in these embedded clauses are not here asserted to have occurred (though they may be asserted elsewhere in the stories from which they were taken). It is clear, then, that such clauses do not contribute directly to the fully asserted story line but rather provide supporting details, reinforce the temporal sequence, etc.

There are many sentences in Comanche Texts in which embedding and conjoining are combined to create a cluster of events. Of course, events may occur simultaneously rather than in sequence. I do not know whether in talking about these Comanche can use expressions like at the same time or simultaneously. Certain dependent clauses are commonly used to indicate simultaneity or temporal overlap, however, as in the following examples.

(8) surikise' pawakatu u bikasabipluku u bunimu that-PRT-PRT him-toward it made big wing noise-DEF it saw

'He saw it as it made big wing noises toward him.' 27:5

(9) ... siti pe’ coiri nozita bumehtskum there their clothes-OBJ carry-DEF ran

'... they ran carrying their clothes.' 122:16

Another verbal suffix, -katí, characterizes the subject as being in a temporary state. This is often used to mark more or less subsidiary but simultaneous events, though whether we are dealing with a dependent
or a conjoined clause is often unclear.

(10) ... u kwââ mahrawakatu pâyakikatâ to'înu his wife then-toward big-cry-DEP? came out

'... his wife came out to them, crying loudly.'

was crying loudly and came out to them.'
39:26

larger blocks of temporally related events are often set off
using si'ânetâ, which Comanche translates 'at this place'. The word is
clearly based on the locative si'ânu 'here somewhere' but its form
suggests 'from this place' rather than 'at this place'. (Cp. sukî
and sukânu '(at, to) there' and sukuitâ 'from there'.) A better transla-
tion might be 'at this point', for the word is often used to mark major
temporal divisions, often correlating with spatial blocks. An example
of si'ânetâ apparently having only a temporal sense follows (although
a locative sense is naturally always possible, it seems out of place
given the surrounding text).

(11) sitâkâkkâse' si'ânetâ inahpînî maaari'nû'ilatâ these two-PRT-PRT at this point jerk-INT REFL-tell stories-DEP?

'At this point they made a lot of jerky, telling stories.'
112:22

At times the Comanche Texts narrator reinforces the temporal
sequence of individual events or blocks of events (Armagost 1982a). Use
of the lexical item wi'ânu '(and) then' is one means of linking one or
more subsequent events to one or more preceding.

(12) surâkkâse' tu'bîhtsi'îanâsî naâkâla'îtuku mârâkõ ne those-PRT-PRT youths REFL-killed-PRT they PRT

mînîsîi'nî surâ wînu subhōtâ mi'ânu ... said those there-from went

'Those young men said, "They killed each other." Then they
went from there ...' 94:8,19

Another frequent linking device is repetition of preceding
material in a subordinate clause.
(13) siti kalapanašaká mêarti kahlu simakutitowkanú siti these soldiers their tipi set all on fire these
wihnum âsumi mêarti mishá qu'ameká urá paraibo' písí then thus then do-IMP at that point their leader their
woiwni muynanlwí bugle-Orj sounded
'These soldiers set their tipis all on fire. Doing that to them, their leader then sounded their bugle.' 57:27,28

The verb in the dependent clause may be that of the preceding clause exactly, or include it semantically as does mêarti 'do, treat' in this example. In either case, the dependent clause effectively summarizes the preceding events taken as a block, tying them to the next event or sequence of events.

There may be time lapses of varying length between one set of events and another. In the usual case, which is unmarked in Comanche narratives, there is undoubtedly a culturally determined rate that depends on the type of actions and perhaps on other factors—the nature of the participants, whether groups or individuals are involved, etc. Occasionally these transitions are explicitly marked using either independent or dependent clauses, as 'when evening came' in the following example.

(14) suríkáke' u pietsiku sítíjákumú bighihtújimañú u those-PRT-PRT that morning one hundred Orj got money it
yihkakáke' mêarti nanahtowiyá aqókínákwkú get night-DEP-PRT-PRT their semfolk town-to
híbíml'ayú went drinking
'That morning they got a hundred dollars apiece. When evening came, the men went to town to drink.' 59:2,3

A verbal prefix êxa- 'just' is sometimes used to mark rapid transition.

(15) sime u thiwikvítokáke' súu tukkansái'terapejí thus his just-say-DEP-PRT-PRT that Wichita-man
uríkkhó kimayú them-to was coming
'Just as he said that, that Wichita man was coming to them.' 78:17
Comanche has a rich aspe-cual suffix system, not all parts of which are well understood. As McLaughlin (1963a) notes, the suffix -nI, which he glosses 'comitative', overwhelmingly predominates in narratives. Other suffixes (and zero) occur much less frequently, and most often mark information that is not on the primary event line, such as settings, evaluations, and so forth. We cannot automatically conclude, however, that events unmarked by -nI are off the event line, for almost nothing is known about possible restrictions between type of verb and allowable or necessary aspect marking. Verbs taking the intensifier glossed 'much' by Canonge, -puni, occur in Comanche Texts either uninflected further or with -tI 'progressive', but not with -nI. Similarly, -e 'repetitive, habitual' seems not to accept -nI.

Another as yet unexplained restriction is that on the verbs nikiw 'say (ditransitive)', yikwi 'say (transitive, singular)', and the latter's nonsingular form nikiwa. All these verbs regularly occur in Comanche Texts inflected with -yu 'durative?' and not with -nI.

An interesting pattern of aspect inflection occurs in the two stories (mentioned in the first paragraph of this section) that are of the form somebody used to/would do something. In place of -nI we find -e 'repetitive, habitual' together with -yu 'durative'. In subordinate clauses where -(h)le (is expected, we find -tI (that is, 'repetitive, habitual' + 'progressive'). Finally, the distinction in subordinate clauses between -ku 'imperfect' and -(h)k'i 'perfect' appears to be lost, with -nI (that is, 'repetitive, habitual' + -ki) doing double duty.

Another possible restriction on aspect involves constructions of the sort ra:n and ra:n and ..., which occur occasionally in the stories, always marked with progressive.

(16) sitikwikise1 nahe:i namakati: ma wehi:ti these two-PRT-PRT together it looked for it looked for
simisokritasapakahku ma uran\居家 one mile away-OBJ it found
'together they looked for it and looked for it, and found
it one mile away.' 49:30

I don't know whether other aspect suffixes can occur in such a construction.

Participants

In the Comanche Texts stories very little time is given its initial descriptions of characters, most of whom are introduced in one to three
words. Introductions such as cha’tanakata ‘courage’, stak’ rainhač ‘one white man’, and wahatih nistremanh ‘two Indian men’ suffice, there being apparently no need for elaboration. Nor are there a large number of participants individually identified. If more than two or three are involved, usually most of these are identified and act as one or more groups.

Once the participants are introduced, of course, the narrator must provide enough information about them so that the audience can maintain the identification. In the simplest texts or portions of text, those having only one primary participant or group of participants, identification is maintained using names drawn from a set of demonstrative pronouns based on a spatial ranking scheme, the nominative singular forms of the full set being

(17) sítë ‘this (one) near at hand’
    sorrë ‘that (one) at some distance’
    surë ‘that (one) out of sight, removed’
    nàtà ‘those (some) scattered, various’

The forms are inflected, as appropriate, for dual (sitàth/sittkùë, etc.), the alternate forms used interchangeably) and for plural (sitàt, etc.). Actually, the forms based on the first-syllable vowel o never occur in the primary event line, and those based on e occur only occasionally. This leaves i and y forms, with y typically being used in the periphery of narratives and i in the nucleus. The i forms therefore mark “heightened intensity” (Armstrong 1962a) or “lessened distance between objective content and ground” (McLaughlin 1983a).

In slightly more complicated texts or portions of text, those with two primary participants or groups of participants, the demonstrative pronouns given above may continue to be used, especially if number distinctions can track the participants. Consider the following fragment, in which sitàt identifies two women and sitàt a group of men and women of which they are a part. (The forms pàë and pài also serve to keep the two sets of participants separate—see below.)

(18) sitàt-pìë puhipha’ta-pàë kobtöp’ha kawštë na rahmi’nù these-PL leaf-on their-PL fire-ÓØ put
    sitàt-pùl sašakùë tašë huba’ainù uhina ràkšë these-PL then-PL boiled (BRK) also made coffee then also
    yùkóchàkùë na siìkawëtëkë sitàt puhipha-rëk’šamøë naùe fryëwëd òt all cooked-PL these-PL leaf-ÓØ made table
    uhina yùkóuìtë sëm’kùë sitàt-kìkàse! pài
    then sìt-DPR ate these-PL-PRT-PRT them-PL
They (women) put it on leaves beside their (women's) fire. They boiled them then and then also made frybread. When it was all cooked, they (all) made a table of leaves and then, sitting, etc. When they (all) had finished eating, they (women) put away their (women's) dishes.

10:14-17

In texts dealing with two participants (or groups) where number inflection would not suffice to distinguish the characters, the narrator generally uses a demonstrative followed by a noun. The noun tends to be as high as possible on a scale of generics while still maintaining nonambiguity, such as woman, soldier, Indian, prairie dog, etc. Where other considerations do not interrupt the flow of text, fairly long passages can be built up in which two participants characterized in this way alternate as agent in the sequence of events. In the following fragment I illustrate such an alternation of main clause subjects.

(19) sit’k’se’ pinorco’ ... 'This cow ...'
 sit’k’se’ oha’nhnkatš ... 'This coyote ...'
sit’k’se’ pinorco’ ... 'This cow ...'
sit’k’se’ oha’nhnkatš ... 'This coyote ...'

and so on for three and a half additional pairs. 19:6-20:16

Such a passage as illustrated in (19) is highly stylized, an apt form for conveying the give-and-take as coyote verbally maneuvers a cow into providing him with a meal. In less stylized passages, the narrator rather quickly boilers for them all; also, he made coffee and that also, by suppressing the noun in one or more sentences with identical subjects.

(20) suruk’se’ ch’ha’nhnakotš has ask ni: habiti ne yahkwí that-PRT-PRT coyote yes here? lie PRT said
 suruk’se’ tsicharuyahnumi’ar! ni ne yahkwí? that-PRT-PRT about to die of hunger PRT said

'That coyote said, "Yes, I'm lying here." He said, "I'm about to die of hunger."' 21:4-5

Where context serves to disambiguate the identifications, the suppression of the noun illustrated in (20) can occur even with different subjects in the two (or more) sentences.

An expanded form of the demonstrative + noun pattern is often found in which a possessive pronoun occurs: suríš b’ε cari’nahí ‘those...
his dogs', sité ma ti' 'this her friend', etc. Kinship terms fall regularly into this pattern. The full pattern--demonstrative + posses-sive + noun--occurs most often in subjects; in objects the demonstrative is less common.

As the number of participants and the distance between expressions used to identify a particular participant increase, the narrator resorts to more cumbersome identifications. This involves relative clauses or other structural complexities, as in these examples.

(21) sim̂k'ixi'em' taibo'ok̂shapun' suhka uhka bok̂ma'li'a
    one-FRT-FRT white-soldier that-OBJ that-OBJ killed-REL
    umatu tunetŝki'em' b̂k̂ whina u tsep̂hen'u
    his sword-with him unhorsed
    'A white soldier, running onto the one who killed the other,
    unhorsed him with his sword.' 87:26

(22) sit̂k'ixi'em' tič̂sk̂i'x su'ama uš̂ki mub̂yik̂i kab̂nik̂at̂e
    this-FRT-FRT chile there their door-in ones camping-POS
    pet̂su'ma'ai nok̂îy'u
    daughter-with was playing
    'This child was playing with the daughter of those camping
    there to the east of them.' 65:10

In the Comanche Texts stories, third person personal pronouns never occur as main clause subjects, except in participants' dialogue. They occur frequently with other main clause functions and in nominal positions in dependent clauses (which require nonnomative forms). These personal pronouns are based on the same deictic framework as the demonstratives given in (17). Pronouns based on o 'scattered, various' do not occur, and those based on a 'at some distance' are found only in participants' dialogue. Probably the most frequent pronoun forms in the stories, however, are based on an additional root me-, which sometimes marks a near range in the ranking scheme and sometimes is undistinguished as to range. Because of the peculiar distribution of me- in relation to the other deictic roots, I have hypothesized that it has, partially, an obviative function (Armagost 1952b).

Zero identification of participants is also frequent. In fully asserted sequences of events involving a given participant as subject, there is a strong tendency to cluster at least some of these events temporally (as discussed earlier). When this is done, the second and following clauses have the subject omitted.
(23) sitákés' tá'riku'kvesképka bitınıŋ ni'anzéí
this-PRT-PRT his cooked prairie dog-at arrived at this point
mu kwanamáku máníi tsaapinyéí
its tail-by them pulled out
'It arrived at his cooked prairie dogs, and at this point
them pulled out by the tail.' 10:20

Several additional features relevant to the maintenance of partici-

cipant identification will be mentioned here. One of these is a same

subject/different subject distinction in certain subordinate clauses.
The verbal suffix -(h)ká si marks a clause whose subject is at least

partially coreferential with that of the matrix clause, and -(h)ká and

-(h)ká mark those whose subject lacks this coreferentiality. (The suffix

-(h)ká usually marks a clause as perfective with respect to its matrix,

and -(h)ká marks a clause as imperfect. The latter often translates as a

locative.)

The reflexive pronoun stem pá- is also relevant to participant

identification. It occurs in a number of constructions in which a subject

is coreferential (or partly so) with another nominal constituent.

In (18) above, it is seen used as a possessive, a main clause object,

and a subordinate clause subject.

It should be noted that identification of participants is sensi-
tive to factors beyond a mechanical measure of number of participants

and distance between expressions used to identify them. For example, in

one of Canove's stories a Comanche inadvertently causes several of his

people to be killed by white soldiers. The word 'soldier' appears in the

following forms.

(24) tabbo'ekisáhpa'á

white man-soldier 85:14 (referring to all the soldiers)

ekisáhpa'ná

soldiers 86:17

tabbo'ekisáhpa'ná

white men-soldiers-OBJ 86:21

tabbo'ekisáhpa'á

white man-soldier 87:25 (referring to one soldier)

ekisáhpa'ná

soldiers 87:27

Note the presence and absence of the plural suffix -ná and the com-
pounding of ekisáhpa'á 'soldier' with tabbo' 'white man'. Plural

number marking in Comanche nouns generally shows some kind of emphasis,

and the compounding here most likely does as well. The fullest form
appears in 66:21, undoubtedly the most emotion laden sentence in the entire text.

Setting

Information about when, where, and under what circumstances the Comanche Texts stories take place is never much elaborated and often given in formulaic expressions. Such setting information is provided in the first one to three sentences of the texts. Temporal and locative adverbs occur, of course, along with dependent adverbial clauses. The verbs in such setting sentences nearly always are uninfluenced for aspect, or occasionally are inflated so as to suggest a static, permanent condition: -(h)ka 'stative', ±u 'durative'; -t̪k 'progressive', and eminence of medial consonant identified as 'durative' in McLaughlin 1982a (see also McLaughlin 1982a:71).

The general temporal setting is regularly expressed by moobes'ik 'long ago' at the beginning of a text. Its absence from a couple of stories does not seem to be significant. (Stories usually close with the expression kibii 'that's all'.) That events are understood to take place during the day unless otherwise specified can be seen from the pattern of changes in temporal setting. Events occurring at night are always so indicated with an expression such as sitik 'tla'entsii 'It became night'. But only events falling in a following daytime period are specifically marked with a comparable expression like sitik tlaa'ili 'It became morning' or pitek'k'ili 'in the (early) morning'. In one story there is the post contact expression tiisbuhahaheni 'Saturday' (lit. 'little' + 'spiritual power' + 'day').

In general, spatial setting is more important than temporal. A few stories occur in the absence of any specified overall location, but most have at least the minimal ga'aan 'there (somewhere)'. This expression is often limited by such modifiers as ta sookihibii 'where we had a village', u biimok'k'arii 'where that big hill sits', or u toyakíma'k 'beside that mountain'. It is not known whether the narrator intended these locative expressions to refer to actual features of the local landscape. In a few stories explicitly named locations occur, such as Fort Sill, Lawton, tamaa'kh'um'bi 'Cedar Creek', and waaahkusi't'okwa 'Wichita Falls'.

Arrival and departure of characters from the scene is usually accompanied by a suitable locative expression, even if this only repeats 'there (somewhere)'. For gross movement verbs, especially gila 'go' and piti 'arrive', the place where movement is directed or ended is almost always specified in the same clause: kuraa'k 'among them', pitiki 'back', sutha 'there somewhere', etc. For movement away, the place left is less often specified in the movement clause. In dependent linking clauses
reinforcing the sequence of events (see Events above), however, the
locatives rarely if ever occur.

There is a strong tendency for each going to be matched by some
explicit arriving. In many cases the arriving is not overtly marked,
however. In several stories, early arrival on the scene by a character
is paired with an eventual departure near the end of the story. In
others, the audience follows along as the character early on departs
from the original scene, returning to it only at the end of the story.
Changes of spatial setting are nearly always marked by participant
movement from one to another, with the audience following along. There
are few spatial discontinuities such as meanwhile/later, at this other
place, such-and-such happened. Many changes of location serve to delimit
major blocks of time as well. So at this point he went toward home, and
then he got there ... might close one temporally related block and open
the next.

Other setting information appearing at the beginning of the
stories relates to the condition and motivation of the characters: being
afraid of nothing, camping without concern, going out to cut a Christmas
tree, being anxious to go to town to gamble, etc.

Text

In this section I will comment on various aspects of a parti-
cular text taken from Canehge 1958. His story XXVIII is reproduced
with only minor notational changes as Appendix A. This reproduction
is faithful to Canehge's segmentation and numbering. Appendix B is the
same story with a slightly different segmentation and hence numbering.

While Canehge did not make explicit his segmentation rationale,
in general it is clear that each unit given a distinct number by him is
a sentence. At various places, however, this practice was not followed,
so that at times what appears to be a single sentence is split between
two numbers and at times a single number is assigned to more than one
sentence. Two features of Comanche interact to produce possibly faulty
segmentation, the absence of all but emphatic conjunctives and the
degree to which independent sentences can occur without an overt subject.
Canehge was much more generous in this latter respect than I have been.
I have segmented so as to give each sentence an overt subject, except for
certain dialogue in which any number of sentences are dominated by a
single matrix verb of saying, and except for certain dialogue where the
narrator assumes the identity of the participant, who is then not overtly
mentioned. The effect of my resegmentation is, in every case, to de-
crease the number of sentences in comparison to Canehge's segmentation.
To avoid confusion, the reader should remember that all references to
the text reproduced here are to the version given as Appendix B. Appen-
dix A is included so that the reader can compare the text as originally
published.
Sentence 1 provides setting information. This text is one of very few in Canarg 1956 that do not begin with goobe 'dek 'long ago', but its absence does not in any way appear to be significant. The locative mu'ana 'there (somewhere)', which is typical, is here modified by ta mookâ'nâlhâkhu 'where we had a village' (lit. 'where we had many houses'). Compare sentence 26, where the participants return to this setting. As far as I know, the 'persoinal' ta occurs only in subordinate clauses. Unlike similar pronouns in various languages, ta can also refer to non-communicers, as in the following example.3

(25) mâni sokohna ta tasâ'nhâkha mâni bâkâni
our land-OBJ then open up-DEP us quit (SEH)

'When they opened up our country, they quit providing for us.' 130:15

Sentence 1 also contains three particles, kâ, tsa, and tâa. It is safe to say that none of these is completely understood. Early investigators suggested that tsa was a declarative particle, most likely due to its opposition to ha 'interrogative', ka 'imperative (plural)', etc. It seems to mark a discourse whose assertions are open to possible doubt either by the speaker or the hearer. Thus its usual absence from statements with first and second person subjects, as in the dialogue in sentences 8, 13, 16, etc. Its absence from the quotation in sentence 12 may be as to suggest that the husband's going a particular way is unquestionable, though the woman in fact is lying. Compare also sentences 16 and 23: arriving can be taken as a fact, but extent of chasing is inherently open to individual judgment, hence tsa. McLaughlin 1983b treats this particle slightly differently, saying that it either marks discourse material outside the speaker's experience or serves an emphatic function within direct quotations.

Canarg 1956 takes the particle tâa as 'it is said', but a note in the vocabulary list adds that the complete meaning is still dubious. It is clearly related to tâa 'also, again, and' (tsa + âa 'intensifier'), pia tâa 'because' (pia 'big' + tsa), tâa noo 'or' (tâa + noo 'must'), and perhaps to the independent verb tâa 'are' (tell). McLaughlin 1983b takes this particle as a marker of material outside the speaker's experience, but not as far out as material marked by tsa.

The other particle appearing in sentence 1 is kâ. It, along with yet another particle sa', is found throughout the text, and the two are usually in combination. The kâ apparently marks events in a 'historical past' in which the speaker was not involved. The sa' is a paragraph marker, indicating contrast, change of participants, and the like. Note that within participants' dialogue, such as in sentence 23, sa' occurs without kâ, though of course the narrated event--the wife's
speaking—is marked with the two particles. This same se' occurs without 
ka in the following evaluative comment made by the narrator at the very 
end of one story.

(26) \text{se' təbitəte' that-PRT true} \quad \text{'That's true.'} \quad 29:32

This is a natural spot for a paragraph break, and lack of ka is explained 
if we 'that' refers not to events as narrated but to the narration 
itself.

It is also possible for ka to occur without se', and that is 
when it is combined with the qualitative particle me as in sentences 
3, 8, and elsewhere. According to McLaughlin 1983b, this is the older 
function of ka, which he says derives historically from a verb meaning 
'say'. In sentences 3, 8, etc. we find both ka se' and me se'. In other 
texts me se' is often found, as well as a simple me.

The text follows a common theme in which one or more characters 
leave the original setting, undergo some threatening experience, and 
eventually return to the point of origin. In Figure 1 I represent this 
gross movement of the characters from one physical setting to another 
throughout the story. Numbers identify the sentences in which each 
movement is narrated.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure1.png}
\caption{Gross movement of participants}
\end{figure}
Objectively the greatest portion of the time covered in this text must be taken up in moving from the main camp to the separate camp and thence to the hunting camp, and later in returning to the main camp. As narrated, however, all this movement is nearly instantaneous. What absorbs the narrator's time is of course the events that center on the hunting camp, overcoming the threat of the two Gage, and most particularly the narrow escape of the woman. This escape is described in some detail, first in the third person (sentence 1a) and then as if the narrator were the woman herself (sentence 23). Notice that sentence 23, beyond merely referring to events already told in sentence 1a, in fact provides certain details not mentioned earlier. It is only in this flashback that we are told explicitly that one of the Gage chased the woman and nearly caught her, this being prevented only by the appearance of the husband.

In Figure 2 I show clause by clause, as narrated, this crucial part of the text and some of the events leading up to it. (Read down the first column, then the second.) Each clause is represented by its verb, in 'timeless' English. Verbs in parentheses represent those not explicitly supplied by the narrator. Arrows show direction and distance that narrated events would have to be moved as to make them fit the sequence as it is supposed to have actually occurred. Numbers identify sentences in the text.

Notice the repeated references to the man's leaving the hunting camp. It is interesting that the narrator in fact never assures that the man leaves; nevertheless, it is his absence which allows the Gage to enter the camp and take the woman prisoner ('sit with her'). Notice also that after the woman escapes and her husband asks what happened, she does not immediately give all the details but says only that the Gage arrived. Why should the narrator wait so long to give us the content of sentence 23? Since 1b and 23 together constitute the high point of the story, the narrator separates the information so as to emphasise the drama. In other words, she delineates the complete story of the escape over two separated tellings, thus twice conveying the danger and the daring of the woman.

Finally, some comments about style, organization, and guarantees that the audience will be able to follow the text. The narrator, obviously must make continual adjustments as she tells her story, these adjustments being reflected at many different levels in the structural organization of the text. The result is a continuum of possible structural patterns reaching from a very open weave to a highly complex and tightly woven product. Certain events may be tied together as one through the use of complex sentences, for example, and once this choice is made the grammatical system requires particular structural patterns. Or the choice is made to use a possessive rather than a demonstrative in a noun phrase, say, again with a predictable structural pattern.6
Here I want to comment specifically on some patterns found in the first ten sentences of our text, patterns that aid the hearer (or reader) in tracking the participants and in understanding correctly the temporal organization of the events. These patterns involve anaphora, or ties backward to previously occurring material, and cataphora, or ties forward to material about to occur. For example, one of the simplest types of anaphora occurs in sentence 1, where we find the possessive pronoun pa 'one's (own)' without the possessive form 'one's' is required since the object of the postpositional phrase (i.e. 'his wife') is partially coreferential with the subject 'this man'. But whose mother accompanies the group, the man's or the wife's? The possessive form u 'one's' is required here since no such coreferentiality exists. In other words, it is the wife's mother, and this is shown lexically in sentence 3 by kaka 'grandmother (mother's mother)'.
Why then båå kaku's 'their (son) grandmother (OBJ)’ in sentence 3, and not uråå kaku’s 'their grandmother (OBJ)’? Notice that the possessive båå depends on at least partial coreferrentiality with the subject of the clause in which it is found. The subject of the final three clauses of sentence 3 is pkaww 'themselves', a dual form referring back to the subject and object of the first clause of the sentence (the man and his wife). Thus the coreferential possessive stem is required. These relationships in sentence 3 are shown at X in Figure 3, which also contains other details to be discussed directly below.

Figure 3. Anaphora and cataphora in sentence 3

Sentence 3 contains another example of anaphora, in that the subject of S4 is covert and identical to that of S3 (Y). Also, the relationship between båå in S4 and pkaww in S3 is actually more complex than stated above. The possessive must be a pi form in S4 if it is coreferrential with the subject, but this subject is in fact not physically present. Instead, the suffix (hīt) on the verb of S4 marks the subject of that clause as identical to that of the matrix clause S3. This forward looking tie is shown at X = Z in Figure 3.
Whether a particular tie is anaphoric or cataphoric depends, in many cases, on the operation of other syntactic processes. For example, pronominal subjects of independent verbs in Comanche normally move into second position in their clauses (where first position is then, roughly, any constituent). In $S_9$ of Figure 3, the ultimate effect of $X = Z$ is cataphoric in that presence of -(b)ka forces one to locate a subject upward and to the right. But if the subject of $S_9$ was not pronominal it would occur (normally) in sentence initial position, and thus the effect of the tie would be anaphoric, backward in the sentence.

The clauses making up sentence 3 are grouped temporally in a particular way through use of the dependent clause $S_4$ and conjoining of $S_1$ and $S_3$, $S_4$ and $S_5$. This temporal grouping is reflected in the structure shown in Figure 3, but obviously many other possibilities exist for narrating these particular events with different temporal groupings. Sentence 6 has a similarly complex organization, part of which is shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Anaphora and cataphora in part of sentence 6

Here, $Y$ is an anaphoric tie of the now familiar kind. Dependent clause $S_3$ is marked by the verbal suffix -(b)ka as having a subject distinct from that of $S_4$. $X$ is cataphoric, but only because clause $S_3$ has undergone prior fronting within the matrix $S_1$. If $S_3$ was in normal adverbial position following the subject of $S_1$, $X$ would tie backward to this subject. In another sense, shown by $Z$, clause $S_3$ has an anaphoric relation with part of sentence 5, for this first clause of 6 is tied semantically to siti ma kumahpi ... mitanu 'Her husband ... went' in the prior sentence.

As the final example of the 'tightness' of structural and semantic relationships in the text, consider Figure 5. I include all
anaphoric and cataphoric ties of the type discussed here within sentences 5 and 6, taken clause by clause.

Figure 5. Anaphora and cataphora in sentences 5 and 6

Not shown in Figure 5 are two additional ties of a different type. The singular verb stem isticka 'kill' in 5a shows that its object ta'siwo'o 'buffalo (OBI)' is semantically singular, and the verb stem taayum'il 'take down' in 6a shows that its object me 'it' is semantically plural (that is, several pieces of butchered meat).

In this paper I have tried to give the reader some idea of the organization of events, participants, and settings in Comanche narratives, and I have made some comments about a particular text. This working paper is more than scratches the surface, needless to say. It is encouraging to see increasing attention to this language, as evidenced by works cited earlier, among others.
NOTES

1. Notation, roughly phonemic, follows Canonge 1958 with the following exceptions:
   1 replaces ʔ for glottal stop
   4 replaces a for high back unrounded vowel
   A, E, etc. replaces e, i, etc. for voiceless vowels
   occasional nonsfirst syllable stress is not indicated

   Alternations between voiced and voiceless vowels and between the consonants t/r and p/b are treated as phonemic by Canonge. His practice will, for consistency, be followed here.

   Abbreviations used throughout the paper are as follows:

   BEN benefactive  PL plural
   DSP dependent clause  PRF particle
   DL dual  RSL reflexive
   INT intensifier  REL relative clause
   ORU objective case

2. When an example sentence is taken directly from Canonge 1958, numbers directly following the example refer to location by page and sentence number.

3. There are five fully asserted clauses marked with -ŋ in the two stories, each of them clearly evaluative.

4. There is one exception to this statement, the form tabetkitai 'having eaten dinner' in 130:10.

5. Example (25) is not inconsistent with my statement that ta occurs only in subordinate clauses. Although ta is semantically the subject of the matrix clause, note that it is not physically present.

   Example (25) in fact is rather surprising in structure. With a pronoun subject other than ta, one would expect something like

   nami akono  tabatkaite u' nami basikkatu
   our country-DEF open up-DEF he us quit (BEN)

   'When he opened up our country, he quit providing for us.'

   although other possibilities are open since the position of u' 'he' is quite variable.

6. An interesting question arises here. If the stories were told
to Comanche alone, outside the traditional context in which they might be
told, how much if at all did the narrator modify the narratives by
supplying additional identifying material (relative clauses, etc.),
otherwise unnecessary background information, and so forth?

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APPENDIX A

Story XXVIII of Canonge 1958, as originally segmented and numbered. See Appendix B for resegmented version, with morpheme by morpheme glosses and translation.

1. su'amakise' ris ta sookäñibainiku sëka' renamphë' pë kwahama'al u pi'a'ma'al tëna tëna t'us' tëna tëna pet'a'ma'al uiri noka'iniU
2. sitkise' mi'saŋoo ar'ana nohičiU
3. sitkise' tenamphë' bë kwëh amaka'niku tibëhukwatu'i takö nekë
4. suhka bë kaku' na bëh tänë'tehama'alhku sukëh bu bëh kahnikh uiri bëhse pekë mi'amë wiinu tibëniUkaka
5. su'amakise' sitkuse' nobicëniU
6. sitkise' na kumahpë' su'shru hunu'natu ta'sico' a tibënišnañi yuñukata tibëhkanU
7. si'anetë na nochiš pë kwëhawatu mi'amë
8. ma bitibëkise' sita na kwëh na tsayun! Itsë pehë nananU
9. pëhë tiñakamëshka péhë tibëhkapëh inanU
10. sita wa'ipë' na ina'etë na rohiteani'ini'a hanukë
11. sitkise' na kumahpë' ina'këhë në' na soo'yadeihe bëniwatu'i mekë
12. sitkise' na kwëh namochitsë në' pitës kinañë mekë
13. si'anetëkise' na ni'Anu wahëtë' varashi'tënamakkë' shawata bitiñë
14. surëkise' hakë' bi kumahpë' mekë
15. surëkise' wa'thë' ibu u' si'a'ni mekë
16. p'atahu pu ni'a'linha uhri të'AvektäniU
17. surëkise' sësë' shawaka në' karnë' sinh na kumahpë' a wëlnkwa mekë
18. sitkise' shu ka shawaka karë'linhia uhri në' tibëhkapë' hanukë rohiteani'ii mekë na yshake i to'innë
APPENDIX B

Reassembled and numbered version of story XXVIII from Canonge 1958, with morpheme by morpheme glosses. Complete translation follows the text. Abbreviations give below.

1. su'ama-ki-tie' mi te sco-káh-u-báh-hux ekáh-i rema-bhá' pí there-HP-ASP HVID IMP3S many-house-have-DEP one-NOM man-ABS his own kwáhá-ma'ai u pia'-na'ai tía-sí títas-ta tun- this-HP-FAR go-haul-ASP there haul-arrive-ASP his own wife-with her mother-with 7-INT little-NOM son-NOM 7-INT little-NOM peti'-ma'ai uri noka'-i-NU daughter-with them move off-ASP

2. sitik'i-se' mi's-noo-rí so'ama no-bití-nú this-HP-FAR go-haul-ASP there haul-arrive-ASP his own wife-OBJ REFL-get ready meat-kill-thither-ASP
ta-kwá no-ká suhka báá kaku'-a baá we-DL QOT-HP that OBJ their own PL grandmother-OBJ their own DL

3. sitik'i-se' tena-bhá' bá kwáh-i na-maka'muki ta-bekka-kuu-tu'I this-HP-FAR man-ABS his own wife-OBJ REFL-get ready meat-kill-thither-ASP

ta-kwá no-ká suhka báá kaku'-a baá we-DL QOT-HP that OBJ their own PL grandmother-OBJ their own DL

rí-ríe'-táhá-ma'ai-hu su-káh nu kahní-káhnu urií ká-híí RREL-little-NOM DL-with-OBJ there at their own PL house-at them leave-DEP

4. su'ama-ki-se' sitik'i-kwá no-bití-nú this-HP-FAR these-DL haul-arrive-ASP

pí-kwá mi'a-nú wihnu také-nú-kwá RFLB-DL go-ASP then hunt wuag-ASP-thither

ta-kwá no-ká suhka báá kaku'-a baá we-DL QOT-HP that OBJ their own PL grandmother-OBJ their own DL

5. sitik'i-se' ma kuna-bhá' su'a-hru huna'-nautu ta'siwo'-a this-HP-FAR her husband-ABS there along creek-along buffalo-OBJ

mukarásna-ri yRU-ka-tí ta-bekka-nú ai'muset ma noo-htsi much-NOM OBJ fat-have-NOM OBJ meat-kill-DEP at this point it haul-DEP

6. ma bití-hka-kí-se' sitik'i ma kwáh na tayumú'i-tsi pí-hi this-arrive-DEP-HP-DEP his wife it take down-DEP RFLB-DL OBJ

maa-nú pí-hi tákka-núe'-hka phá this-DEP RFLB-DL OBJ eat-finish-DEP their own DL eat-NOM-OBJ jerk-ASP
7. sita wai-hp'i na ina-'e-ti na rob-tesi'i-mi i's huakua this woman-ABS it fork-ASP-ABS it INST-hang up-go outside
8. sita-k'1-se' ma kuma-hp'i i-nakwih-1 na' ma noo'-vahne-ti this-HP-PAR her husband-ABS this-side-OBJ I-NOM this hill-other side-OBJ
buni-kwasu!i me-k'i see-thither-ASP QOT-HP
9. sita-k'se' ma kwash namischi-htsi nai'pi'isi kima-ew ne-k'a this-HP-PAR his wife hurry-DEF you back come-ASP QOT-HP
10. si'anewi-k'i-se' ma mi'4-ka wahash-ta wasasai't-tena-ni-kwai at this point-JP-PAR his go-DEF two-NOM DL Osage-man-NOM-DL
ma-waka bita-nu her-to arrive-ASP
11. suri-kwi-k'se' hak'i-se' kuma-hp'i ma-ti those-DL-HP-PAR where-PAR your husband-ABS QOT-HP
12. suri-ki-se' wai-hp'i i-bu u' mi'a'i me-k'a pse'esta-hpu that-HP-PAR woman-ABS this-way he-NOM go-ASP QOT-HP RFLL-others-others u mi'a'Ih-a ubri te'Awe-k'a-nu his go-ASP-NEL them DL tell-REM-ASP
13. suri-k'se' sinti'-ma-waka ni'-kar-i-ru'i ani ma kuma-hp'i-a that-JP-PAR one-NOM her-to I-NOM sit-ASP you her husband-ABS-OBJ
waki-kwa me-k'a look for-thither QOT-HP
14. sita-k'se' nihka ba-waka kari'-Ih-a ihka nai'-rihka-pb-i this-HP-PAR this OBJ RFLL-to sit-ASP-NEL this OBJ I-NOM eat-NOM-OBJ
huakua rob-tesa-ru'i co-k'i on yan homo t'ni'nui pi pu kw i outside INST-hang up-ASP QOT-HP it take-ASP go out-ASP her own horse-OBJ
na-rinoc'-raki-ti pia kahnin-nihtsi namtisi-k'asa-ku RFLL-saddle-NOM-pit-NOM their own PL house-near RFLL-INSTR-lead-continue-DEF
u-wakatu tahtisi tsiomka4-nu u-ba'to'i-tse' pia kuma-hp'i-a it-toward really run-ASP it-on go up-DEF her own husband-ABS-PGS
pi-petu mi'4-I-betu nukii-ew pia kuma-hp'i-a ra-fura-nu RFLL-toward go-ASP-toward run off-ASP her own husband-ABS-OBJ INST-find-ASP
15. surū-kā-se' temā-gā' haka-ni-kia ēkā na-sa-nū me-kā thāt-HF-PAR man-ABS what-manner-ASP you happen-ASP QOT-HF
16. waha-hāt-kwā wasasā'í temā-ni-kwā na-waka bitā'ī me-kā two-NOM-DL ēsage-nan-NOM-DL me-to arrive-ASP QOT-HF
17. sitē-kā-se' u kuma-hpi' sī'anetē uhra kuhiya-ni'sa-nū this-HF-PAR her husband-ABS at this point them DL spy-go-ASP
18. surū-kwā-kā-se' su'anetē uhra kahri muhyā-katē ku-ins-biāl those-DL-HF-PAR at that point their DL house door-from INST-jerk-INTS
19. sitē-kā-se' pitīsa pitā-nū this-HF-PAR back arrive-ASP
21. surū-kwā-kā-se' su'ana u bia-noo'karā-kua u māmas'nakāw-ih those-DL-HF-PAR there that big-hill-sit-DEF it farther-side-OBJ ni'sa-nū go-ASP
22. surū u kuma-hpi' su'esa u noo'ma to'ī-e-li uhra that her husband-ABS it-on that hill-on go up-ASP-ASP then DL kuhiya-ee-yu spy-ASP-ASP
23. surū-kā-se' u kwhā tēmāsā'no-kwā-tsa' surū sānā' na-waka karā'ī that-HF-PAR his wife each-OBJ-ASRT that one-NOM me-to sit-ASP
nī buku-ban to'ī-tal ni runatē-ka nī mis-kā'ī i noha u'-i na my horse-on go up-DEF no run-DEF me go-BEN-ASP almost be-NOM iz kwā'hā ru'ī śā-śē' ni-matu to'ī-tal ni ma-kwēno'sa-nū catch-ASP you-PAR me-cate come up-DEF no INST-save-ASP
24. sitē-kā-se' ma kuma-hpi' u rukani-ka uhra-wakatu ni'sa-nū this-HF-PAR her husband-ABS it set dark-DEF then DL-toward go-ASP
25. sitē-kwā wasasā'í ni-kwā huma-ī bā-hi u nakā-kā-kua those-DL ēsage-NOM-DL outside-EXTL RFLB-DL OBJ his hear-ASP-DEF pla-'讷usuk1-bni big-swear-INTS
The following abbreviations are used in the above text:

- ABS: absolute
- AGT: agentive
- ASP: aspect
- ARRT: assertive
- BEN: benefactive
- DL: dual
- DEP: dependent
- DUB: dubitative
- EVID: evidential
- EXST: old 'be' found in some
- ADVB: adverbs and postpositions
- HIST: historical past
- IMP: impersonal pronoun
- INST: instrumental
- INT: intensifier
- NOM: nominalizer
- OBJ: objective
- PAR: paratactic particle
- PL: plural
- POS: possessive
- QOT: quotative
- RDP: reduplicative
- RECIP: reciprocal
- REL: relative
- RFLE: reflexive
- RFPL: reflexive pronoun base
- ?: unknown

Translation of the above text:

1. They say that there, where we had a camp, a man moved off with his wife, her mother, his little son, and his little daughter.

2. He was travelling, then arrived and camped over there.
3. This man said to his wife, "Get ready. We'll go off hunting," and leaving their grandmother there at their camp with their children, they themselves left, then went hunting.

4. There somewhere they arrived and camped.

5. Her husband killed a fat buffalo along there on a creek and at this point, hauling it, went to his wife.

6. When he arrived, his wife took it down and fed them, and after they'd eaten, jerked their meat.

7. This woman having jerked it went hanging it up outside.

8. Her husband said, "I'll go look this way on the other side of this hill."

9. His wife said, "Hurry and come back."

10. At this point, when he'd gone, two Osage came up to her.

11. They said, "Where is your husband?"

12. That woman said, "He went this way," and told them a way different from where he went.

13. One said, "I'll sit with her. You go look for her husband."

14. She said to the one sitting with her, "I'll go hang up this meat outside," and taking it went out and, her horse being saddled and tied near their tipi, really ran to it, then getting on it, ran off toward the way her husband had gone and met him.

15. That man said, "What happened?"

16. "Two Osage came up to me."

17. Her husband at this point went to spy on them.

18. At that point they were busy roasting jerked meat to the east of their tipi.

19. He arrived back.

20. "They're still sitting at our tipi."

21. They went there somewhere, where that big hill sits, farther off from it.