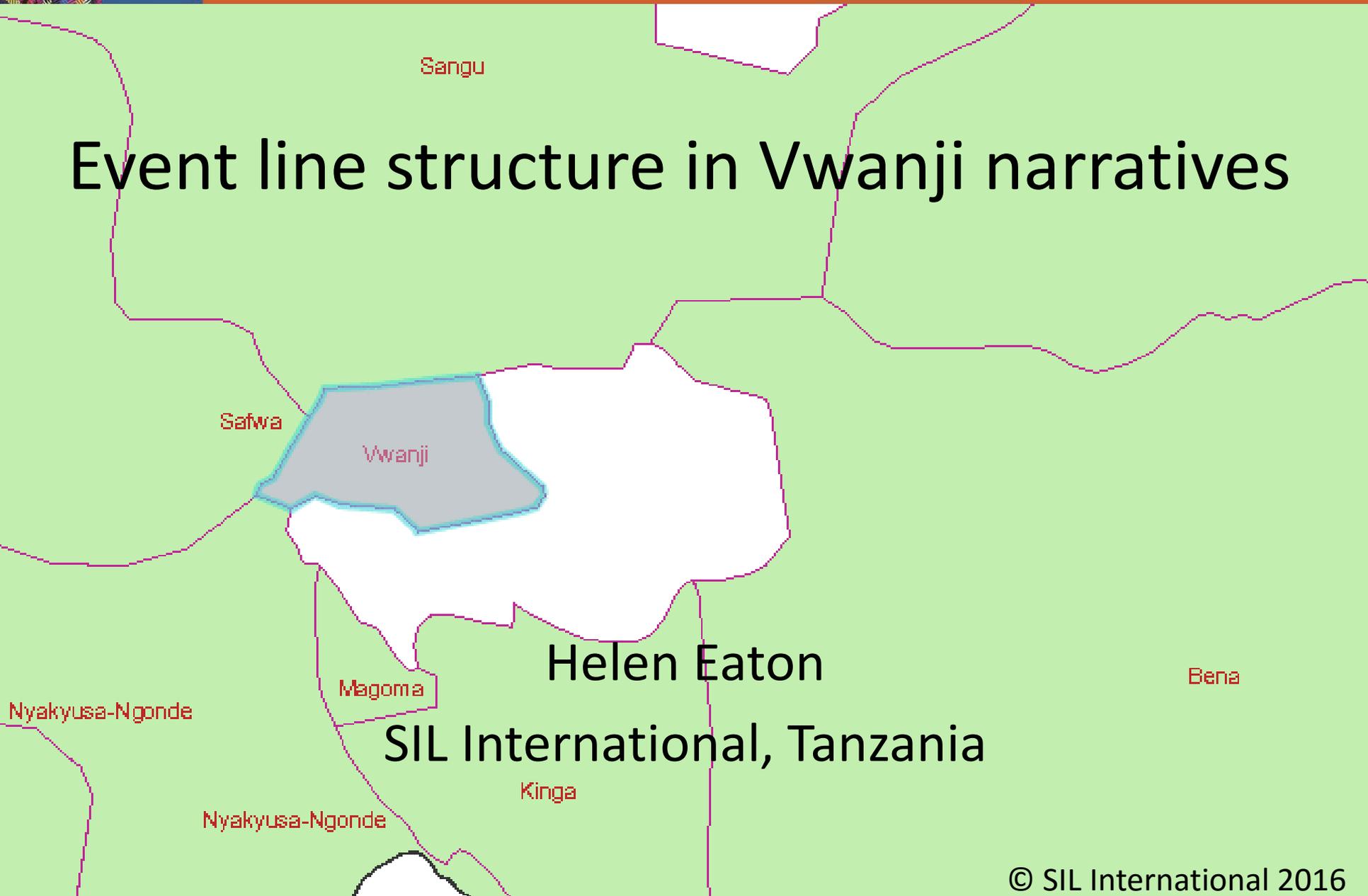


Event line structure in Vwanji narratives



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A clause is part of the semantic main event line if it has two functional properties:

- (a) It must report an event as actually occurring. The “event” cannot be a hypothetical one that is presented as possibly occurring in the future or one that might have occurred in the past. States, which are nonevents by definition, are also excluded.
- (b) The actual reporting of the event must advance the action of the narrative along a chronological time line.

(Payne 1992: 379, following Labov & Waletzky 1967, Hopper 1979)



Four factors which influence formal realisation of event line structure in Vwanji

1. Relative chronological order of events
2. Degree of connection between events
3. Relative importance of events
4. Location of events relative to the deictic centre

Narrative (SP-NAR-VB-FV) is the default choice for perfective events in event line:

- (1) Ləkɛləkɛ a-kinul-a (NAR) ɸ-lɸ-voko lwake
 slowly 1.SP-NAR.lift.up-FV AUG-11-hand 11.PP.3SG.POSS
- a-ka-tool-a (NAR) i-sengo
 1.SP-NAR-take-FV AUG-9.sickle
- a-kihɸɸt-a (NAR)
 1.SP-NAR.thrust.down-FV
- a-ka-tem-a (NAR)
 1.SP-NAR-cut-FV

‘Slowly he lifted up his hand, took the sickle, thrust (it) down and cut.’

Exception for two speech verbs:

(2) ʈ-mʈ-ghoosi a-kamʉl-a (NAR)
 AUG-1-man 1.SP-NAR.answer-FV

a-ka-ti (NAR)
 1.SP-NAR-say

Pwe-ji-veele (ANT) bahaapa
 16.LOC-9.SP-be.ANT 16.PROX.DEM.REDUP

‘The man answered saying, “It was right here.”’

1. Relative chronological order of events

Narrative auxiliary plus Present (SP-NPST-VB-FV) for imperfective events in event line:

(3a) ʈ-ng'ina ye i-gomok-a (PRES) ku-ku-jimilisi-a
 AUG.1A-mother when 1.SP.NPST-return-FV 15-15.REFL-relieve-FV

a-ka-kumbuk-a (NAR) kuuti
 1.SP-NAR-remember-FV 15.say

a-veele a-syemilue (P1.ANT)
 1.SP-be.ANT 1.SP-forget.ANT

ku-dind-a ʈ-mʈ-lyango
 15-close-FV AUG-3-door

'As the mother was returning from relieving herself, she remembered that she had forgotten to close the door.'



1. Relative chronological order of events

Narrative auxiliary plus Present (SP-NPST-VB-FV) for imperfective events in event line:

(3b) Pe a-ka-v-a i-kwingil-a (NAR.CONT)
and.so 1.SP-NAR-be-FV 1.SP.NPST-15.enter-FV

 mɛ nyumba nɛ vwoghofi
 18.LOC 9.house COM.AUG 14.fear

‘And so she entered the house in fear.’

Events in event line elaborated upon by means of following Present or Anterior (SP-VB-ANT) verb:

(4) a-ka-vɛɛk-a (NAR)

1.SP-NAR-leave-FV

i-hɛm-a (PRES) kɛnji

1.SP.NPST-go.out-FV outside

i-lɛt-a (PRES) ku-kwisi-a na va-ghogholo a-va-nine

1.SP.NPST-go-FV 15-15.chat-FV COM.AUG 2-old.people AUG-2.NP-fellow

'... he left, going outside to chat with his fellow old people.'



2. Degree of connection between events

Narrative plus Present for quick succession:

(5) a-ka-tool-a (NAR) i-mbunda ji-la
1.SP-NAR-take-FV AUG-9.club 9.EP-DIST.DEM

i-hɛm-a (PRES) ku-lu-a i-li-lɛgɛ
1.SP.NPST-go.out-FV 15-fight-FV AUG-5-war

‘... he took that club, going out to do battle.’

Narrative plus Present with shared argument:

- (6) A-ka-fik-a (NAR)
1.SP-NAR-arrive-FV
- a-ka-m'-bon-a (NAR)
1.SP-NAR-1.OP-see-FV
- | | | | | | |
|-------------|---------------------|--------|---------|----------|---------|
| ɛ-n'-diimi | i-hɛm-a (PRES) | mɛ | nyumba | ja | n-twa |
| AUG-1-youth | 1.SP.NPST-go.out-FV | 18.LOC | 9.house | 9.PP.CON | 1-chief |
- a-fwal-ile (ANT) vɛ-nono
1.SP-wear-ANT 14.NP-good

'She arrived and saw the youth coming out of the chief's house dressed well.'



2. Degree of connection between events

Narrative plus Present and *kɛmo* ‘while’ for loosely connected events:

(7) ɛ-Mbututu na-a-ka-pɛlik-isyagh-a (NAR.IPFV)

AUG.1A-Mbututu NEG-1.SP-NAR-hear-CAUS.IPFV-FV

a-ka-v-a i-fwet-a (NAR.CONT)

1.SP-NAR-be-FV 1.SP.NPST-curse-FV

kɛmo i-ghend-a~ghend-a (PRES)

while 1.SP.NPST-walk-FV~walk-FV

‘Mbututu would not listen, he was cursing as he walked around.’

Highlighting with Present or Anterior verb:

(8a)	Ləkələkə	a-kinul-a (NAR)	ɸ-lɸ-voko	lwake
	slowly	1.SP-NAR.lift.up-FV	AUG-11-hand	11.PP.3SG.POSS
		a-ka-tool-a (NAR)	i-sengo	
		1.SP-NAR-take-FV	AUG-9.sickle	
		a-kihɸɸt-a (NAR)		
		1.SP-NAR.thrust.down-FV		
		a-ka-tem-a (NAR)		
		1.SP-NAR-cut-FV		

‘Slowly he lifted up his hand, took the sickle, thrust (it) down and cut.’



3. Relative importance of events

Highlighting with Present or Anterior verb:

(8b) Himbe a-tem-ile (ANT) ʉ-lʉ-ghʉlʉ lwake jʉjuo!
INTERJ 1.SP-cut-ANT AUG-11-leg 11.PP.3SG.POSS 1.EMPH.PRO

‘Oh, he has cut his own leg!’

Highlighting with Present or Anterior verb:

(9a) t-lɛsongue		jaale (P4)	ni	ng'haki
AUG-9.sunbird		9.SP.PST4.be.ANT	COM.AUG	10.haste
kange	ɰ-mɰ-lomo	ghwake	n-tali	
again	AUG-3-beak	3.PP.3SG.POSS	3.NP-long	
		ji-ka-ti (NAR)		
		9.SP-NAR-say		
		Ni-longolel-e (SUBJ)	pi-nyulukil-a	
		1SG.SP-precede-FV	15-reach.for-FV	

‘The sunbird was hasty and what’s more its beak was long and it said,
“Let me reach for (it) first.”’



3. Relative importance of events

Highlighting with Present or Anterior verb:

(9b) Himbe ji-solokel-a (PRES) nkate mɬ meeta
INTERJ 9.SP.NPST-fall.down-FV inside 18.LOC 9.bamboo.spile

I-n-juni i-si-ngi si-ka-ti (NAR)
AUG-10-bird AUG-10.EP-other 10.SP-NAR-say

‘Oh, it falls down into the bamboo spile! The other birds said...’



3. Relative importance of events

Downplaying by backgrounding event line clause as temporal relative:

(10) I-n-juni si-ka-pəling'han-a (NAR) ku-kong'haan-a
AUG-10-bird 10.SP-NAR-agree.RECP-FV 15-gather.RECP-FV

Ye si-kong'han-ile (ANT)
when 10.SP-gather.RECP-ANT

 si-ka-posani-a (NAR) kuuti
 10.SP-NAR-ask.RECP-FV 15.say

'The birds agreed to gather together. After they gathered together, they asked each other saying...'

Pragmatically predictable event downplayed:

(11) †-ki-ghono i-kya v̄v̄-vili ye ki-fik-ile (ANT)

AUG-7-day AUG-7.PP.CON 14.EP-two when 7.SP-arrive-ANT

†-Tudesaghe a-ka-k̄mb̄k-a (NAR) kuuti

AUG.1A-Tudesaghe 1.SP-NAR-remember-FV 15.say

‘When the second day arrived, Tudesaghe remembered that...’



3. Relative importance of events

Thematically significant passing of time not downplayed:

(12) t-ki-ghono ki-ka-fik-a (NAR) i-kya kɛ-va-tavik-a
AUG-7-day 7.SP-NAR-arrive-FV AUG-7.PP.CON 15-2.OP-line.up-FV
a-va-hinja pa=maaso gha n-tolan'dala
AUG-2-girl 16.LOC=6.eye 6.PP.CON 1-bridegroom

'The day arrived for lining up the girls in front of the bridegroom.'

Auxiliary plus *ku-* infinitive for events away from deictic centre:

- (13) $\text{\textcircled{H}}$ -Nkoola ye a-li (PRES) ku-tiigh-a ni fya mwene
 AUG.1A-Nkoola when 1.SP-be 15-deal.with-FV COM.AUG 8.PP.CON 3SG.CONTR.PRO
- na-a-ka-p $\text{\textcircled{H}}$ lik-a (NAR) kuuti
 NEG-1.SP-NAR-hear-FV 15.say
- $\text{\textcircled{H}}$ -Mpeesi a-n-kemel-ile (ANT)
 AUG.1A-Mpeesi 1.SP-1.OP-call-ANT

'As Nkoola was dealing with his things, he didn't hear that Mpeesi had called him.'

Narrative plus Present for movement towards or away from the deictic centre:

(14) Ghɛ-ka-kil-a (NAR) ɛ-mwaka ghɛ-mo
 3.SP-NAR-pass-FV AUG-3.year 3.EP-one

ɛ-Mbututu a-ka-kyɛl-a (NAR)
 AUG.1A-Mbututu 1.SP-NAR-travel-FV

i-lɛt-a (PRES) kɛ Vɛ-sango
 1.SP.NPST-go-FV 17.LOC 14-Sangu

‘One year passed and Mbututu travelled (going) to the Sangu area.’

Narrative plus Present for movement towards or away from the deictic centre:

(15)	Aveene	va-ka-swev-a (NAR)	i-sanjala
	3PL.CONTR.PRO	2.SP-NAR-pick.up-FV	AUG-10.firewood
		va-ka-vuuk-a (NAR)	
		2.SP-NAR-leave-FV	
		vi-vuj-a (PRES)	
		2.SP.NPST-return-FV	

‘They picked up the firewood and left (returning).’



4. Location of events relative to the deictic centre

pi- infinitive for event at deictic centre, *ku-* infinitive for event away from deictic centre:

(16)	Pe	a-kasi-a (NAR)	pi-pind-a
	and.so	1.SP-NAR.start-FV	15-carry-FV
		i-lɔt-a (PRES)	ku-fis-a
		1.SP.NPST-go-FV	15-hide-FV

‘And so he started to carry (it), going to hide (it).’

Four factors which influence formal realisation of event line structure in Vwanji

1. Relative chronological order of events
2. Degree of connection between events
3. Relative importance of events
4. Location of events relative to the deictic centre

1. **NAR** (default, perfective)

akatoola isengo, akihuta ('he took the sickle, thrust (it) down')

2. **NAR aux+PRES** (imperfective)

akava ikwingila m# nyumba ('she entered the house')

3. **PRES** (if event immediately follows preceding one)

akatoola imbunda jila ihuma ('he took that club, going out')

4. **PRES or ANT** (if event is highlighted)

himbe jisolokela nkate m# meeta ('oh, it falls down into the bamboo spile')

5. **ye-clause+ANT** (if event is downplayed)

ye sikong'hanile ('after they gathered together')

6. **INF pi- or ku-** (relative to deictic centre)

akasia pipinda, iluta kufisa ('he started to carry (it), going to hide (it)')

- How can we clearly distinguish (in functional terms) between separate, closely connected events realised by different verbs and a single macroevent realised by multiple verbs?
- How does the relative importance of events in the narrative relate to the other three factors identified so far? E.g. Are events presented out of order in order to be highlighted or downplayed? Is the narrator able to move the deictic centre of the narrative in order to highlight or downplay certain events?
- Can the distribution of the *pi*- infinitive be adequately described by reference to the deictic centre of the narrative? How is it used in text genres which do not have a physical location as a deictic centre?