

On the Flow and Shift of Point of View Reflected in Narrative Representation

Yasuto SAWA*

1. Introduction

With the confirmation of the hypothesis and theory presented in Sawa (2001b),¹ in this paper we will focus on the flow and shift of point of view in narrative texts through their practical analysis.

2. Recognizing Narrative Representation in a Narrative Text

Our first task is to illustrate how to recognize narrative representation without any reporting clause, that is, free direct representation (FDR) and free indirect representation (FIR), in a narrative text.

A sentence with a reporting clause enables us to regard it as narrative representation with the identification of its cognitive subject (CS) from the reporting clause as in:

- (1) *'Damn my fish,' the boy said* and he started to cry again.
'Do you want a drink of any kind?' the proprietor asked.
'No,' the boy said.

(The Old Man and the Sea:106) [italics mine]

The italicized sentences can be recognized as narrative representation due to their reporting clauses, from which their CSs can also be identified. On the other hand, as for a sentence with no reporting clause, we cannot decide from the sentence itself whether it is FDR or FIR, or a pure objective narration by the narrator. An example is given below.

- (2) They would find his body there as they had found hundreds of others.

(Master of the Game:39)

In such a case, therefore, we must seek for the clues in a text. Consider the following example.

- (3a) Jamie was filled with anger and despair. (3b) It's incredible, he thought. (3c) One minute I'm as rich as Croesus, and the next minute I'm dead broke.

(op.cit.:48)

The sentence to be considered is (3c). (3a) is the psychological state representation (PSR) of Jamie who is its CS, and (3b) is the direct representation of his thought (DTR). Thus *he* in (3b), *Jamie*, is the expected cognitive subject (ECS) which we retain in mind for the following FDR or FIR, if there might be. Now we regard (3c) as free direct thought representation (FDTR) of Jamie, not as a pure narration by the narrator. This is because it is more acceptable reading. From the content of (3c), it is more natural to think of it as Jamie's further thought

following the one represented in (3b). In other words, if there is a sentence with a reporting clause representing a character's thought, some sentences with no reporting clause which immediately follow that sentence are FDTR or free indirect thought representation (FITR) of the character rather than a mere objective narration by the narrator, expressing the character's further thoughts. Only if this interpretation is impossible, namely only if we as readers find it strange, then we regard those sentences as the narrator's narrations. This idea can also be applied to representation of speech. In short, the interpretation as FDR or FIR takes precedence over that as the narrator's objective narration. That is why (3c) is Jamie's FDTR, because this interpretation is not odd in the least. This fact can be explained by the retention theory, because to retain an ECS means to also retain his point of view from which he proceeds to his further speech, thought or perception. In (3b), the ECS is identified as *he*, who is Jamie, from the reporting clause, and we retain not only him but also his point of view in mind, which leads us to the interpretation of the following sentence (3c) as the free direct representation of his further thought after the one in (3b). Let us see another example.

- (4a) Certainly, Dennys thought, anything would be better than this horrible smelling-place full of horrible little people. (4b) There was a brief whiff of fresh air. A glimpse of a night sky crushed with stars.

(Wiebe, 1990:15)²

(4a) is indirect thought representation (ITR) of Dennys, and from the reporting clause we can identify him not only as CS but also as ECS. Then we read (4b), retaining him with his point of view in mind. Therefore, we interpret (4b) as the free direct perception representation (FDPR) of Dennys, not as the narrator's pure narration telling the state so denoted, which is more acceptable interpretation.

This idea on the basis of the retention theory can also be applied to the case in which a sentence without any reporting clause follows an objective action sentence. As shown in Sawa (2001b), in this case its active subject (AS) is ECS that we retain in mind along with his point of view. Hence in the example given below, we can regard (5c) as free indirect perception representation (FIPR) of and (5d) as FITR of Augustus, ECS as well as AS of (5b).

- (5a) "Why, Jake, you lazy bean," Augustus said, (5b) and walked off. (5c) Jake had a stubborn streak in him, (5d) and once it was activated even Call could seldom do much with him.

(op.cit.:49)²

From the cognitive perspective on the basis of the retention theory that we have illustrated so far, we can explain how to recognize free direct or indirect narrative representation in a text. The retention theory is fully useful for recognizing narrative representation and exactly identifying its CS in a narrative text as well.

3. Analysis

Our goal here is to prove the validity of the hypothesis and theory which we have presented so far, following Sawa (2001b),¹ through a practical analysis of some written narrative texts. First, consider the text below.

- (6a) 'Santiago,' the boy said.

- (6b) 'Yes,' the old man said. (6c) He was holding his glass and thinking of many years ago.
 (6d) 'Can I go out and get sardines for you for tomorrow?'
 (6e) 'No. Go and play baseball. I can still row and Rogelio will throw the net.'
 (The Old Man and the Sea:7)

(6a) and (6b) are direct speech representation (DSR), with each CS indicated in the reporting clause. (6c) is an objective action sentence with its AS *he*, who is *the old man*. Under our retention theory, therefore, the ECS for (6d) is the last AS *he* in (6c), but actually its CS is not *the old man* but *the boy*. Although this seems to be a counterexample to our theory, it is not. Under the retention theory, we retain an ECS in mind until we recognize a new CS from the reporting clause of another sentence later. To put it another way, an ECS does not change so long as we don't meet a sentence with a reporting clause from which we recognize a new ECS different from the one which we have retained so far. However, we must interpret (6d) as the free direct speech representation (FDSR) of *the boy*, not *the old man*. This is because sentence (6d) does not immediately follow (6c) but begins on another line after an indent, which graphologically indicates a new CS different from the one that we have retained, namely ECS. In other words, FDSR beginning on a new line after an indent usually marks the change of CS. On the other hand, if FDSR comes just after some narrative representation, its CS is the same as that of the narrative representation, as in:

- (7a) 'No,' the old man said. (7b) 'You're with a lucky boat. Stay with them.'
 (op.cit.:6)

In the example above, CS of FDSR (7b) is the same as that of (7a), *the old man*. Furthermore, (7b) immediately follows (7a) instead of starting on a new line. Thus the retention theory holds true of FDSR, provided that it begins not on a new line with an indent but just after another narrative representation. This assumption is reinforced by the fact that what Wiebe calls *paragraph break* typically indicates the shift of point of view (1990:209),² which means the change of CS. The author usually uses an indent so as to denote a paragraph break. By analogy with this fact, therefore, it is entirely fair to say that FDSR beginning on a new line after an indent has another CS different from the one which we have retained. We will particularly deal with this *paragraph break* later. Before that, let us analyze other texts to confirm the validity of the retention theory.

- (8a) Call knew there was no point in arguing. (8b) That was what Augustus wanted: argument. (8c) He didn't really care what the question was, (8d) and it made no difference to him which side he was on. (8e) He just plain loved to argue.
 (Wiebe, 1990:255)²

(8a) is PSR with Call as its CS and ECS as well. Thus we can interpret (8b) as FITR reflecting Call's point of view who is identified as its CS under the retention theory, so that he is still ECS. Likewise, (8c) - (8e) are interpreted as a series of FITR of Call, CS who has been the ECS retained in our mind. This interpretation is quite natural.

- (9a) Jamie exploded in a fury. (9b) "We'll nae call the whole thing quits!" (9c) In his anger his Scottish burr came back. (9d) "I'm entitled to half that claim. And I'll get it. I registered it in both our names."

(9e) Van der Merwe smiled thinly. (9f) "Then you tried to cheat me. I could have you arrested for that." (9g) He shoved the money into Jamie's hand. (9h) "Now take your wages and get out."

(9i) "I'll fight you!"

(9j) "Do you have money for a lawyer? I own them in all these parts, boy."

(Master of the Game:47)

(9a) is the psychological action representation (PAR) with Jamie as its CS. He is also ECS, and from the retention theory we can interpret (9b) as the free direct representation of his speech. In the same way, (9c) is considered to be PAR and (9d) FDSR, both of which reflect Jamie's point of view. Then there is a paragraph break, after which (9e) comes as PAR of Van der Merwe. Here we also notice the shift of point of view from Jamie to Van der Merwe. (9f) is FDSR of Van der Merwe, while (9g) the objective action sentence in which he is not only AS but also ECS that we retain in mind. That is why (9h) is the free direct representation of his speech. Besides, as we discussed earlier, we find the change of CS with that of point of view between (9h) and (9i), and between (9i) and (9j), owing to the indents there. In this way we can correctly interpret (9i) as Jamie's FDSR, while (9j) as that of Van der Merwe.

(10a) He [Jeremy] remembered how she dared to run into the ocean after him and how he was determined to save her no matter what. (10b) He'd never cared as much about another person. (10c) Selfish, just as his mother had said. (10d) But she did not call him selfish any more. (10e) No, he most probably would never forget Lynette. (10f) Most probably he could not forget her even if he tried.

(Wiebe, 1990:191)²

(10a) is PSR of Jeremy as its CS, the ECS for free direct or indirect narrative representation that might follow. As a result, from the retention theory we interpret all the following sentences (10b) - (10f) as the free indirect representation of Jeremy's thought, which interpretation is the most acceptable.

(11a) Zoe looked at the notebook. (11b) On the first page Joe had written WAR WORK in large block letters in red and blue crayon. (11c) On the next page he had written the date and under it all about seeing Miss Lavatier's boyfriend in the vacant lot.

(op.cit.:256)

From the objective action sentence (11a), we recognize ECS *Zoe* who is also AS of this sentence. Therefore, by applying the retention theory, we consider (11b) and (11c) to be FIPR of *Zoe*, and this interpretation is most natural.

The analysis of several narrative texts which we have made so far assures us that the retention theory is fully valid in that it enables us to make a correct recognition of every narrative representation in a text and an exact identification of its CS.

4. The Flow and Shift of Point of View

Now we turn to the main discussion of this paper: how a narrative text is generally organized in terms of the *flow* and *shift* of point of view, to which the retention theory is also related. As we pointed out in Sawa (2001b),¹ there is often seen a series of narrative representation reflecting only one and the same CS's point of view. For instance, (10) consists of a series of

narrative representation in which only one common CS Jeremy's point of view is reflected. In other words, these successive representation compose the flow of the same CS's subjective point of view. Let us call this flow *subjective context*. In a subjective context, we retain the same CS, tracking the flow of his point of view, that is, the stream of his consciousness. A subjective context changes into another, causing the shift of CS with that of point of view, when we dismiss the former CS that we have retained and then adopt a new CS and retain it. A paragraph break, as we mentioned earlier, typically indicates such a shift. A clear example is shown below.

(12a) "Drown me?" Augustus said. (12b) "Why if anybody had tried it, those girls would have clawed them to shreds." (12c) He knew Call was mad, (12d) but wasn't inclined to humor him. (12e) It was his dinner table as much as Call's, (12f) and if Call didn't like the conversation he could go to bed.

(12g) Call knew there was no point in arguing. (12h) That was what Augustus wanted: argument.

(Wiebe, 1990:164)²

(12a) - (12f) are Augustus's subjective context reflecting the flow of his point of view. (12g) - (12h) are, on the other hand, that of Call reflecting the flow of his point of view. That is, there is a shift of subjective context, its CS and point of view over a paragraph break between (12f) and (12g). In this way, a paragraph break can be a mark of a shift of point of view.

As is shown above, in the same paragraph the flow of a character's point of view is maintained, composing his subjective context, unless there appears narrative representation with a reporting clause whose CS is another character. If such narrative representation appears, a shift of point of view occurs, starting that character's subjective context. In other words, a reporting clause of narrative representation, like a paragraph break, indicates a shift of point of view if its CS is different from the one which we have retained in mind just before it.

From the discussions so far, in terms of *point of view*, it is safe to say that a narrative text is generally organized in such a way as a subjective context, in which we track the flow of a character's point of view, is followed by another starting a new subjective context of a character different from the one that we have retained, which fact means a shift of point of view. A shift of point of view is typically indicated by a reporting clause of narrative representation and a paragraph break.

5. Further Analysis

Finally, some more data for analysis are given here in order to fully confirm the validity and availability of the suggestions which we have provided so far.

(13a) Lorena felt her indignation growing. (13b) She was beginning to feel cornered, something she had not expected to feel again. (13c) Jake was supposed to have ended that, and yet he hadn't.

(op.cit.:214)²

(13a) and (13b) are PSR with Lorena as their CS which we retain in mind as ECS. Under the retention theory, therefore, we can correctly interpret (13c) as Lorena's FITR, with the result that (13a) - (13c) reflect the flow of her point of view, composing her subjective context.

(14a) She [Susan] wrung her hands together; (14b) she was still tearless. (14c) "Please

go."

(14d) Now he [Dr. Pfeiffer] felt a stir of anger. (14e) What did she want? (14f) Everything he had said to her over this hour had been met with hostility and despairing derision---most unreasonable. (14g) She was like those simple women in his father's parish---congregation. (14h) She wanted maudlin answers to things for which there were no answers. (14i) Didn't she?

(ibid.)²

(14a) is an objective action sentence with Susan as its AS. (14b) is not such an action sentence but objectively reports Susan's tearless state. However, we can treat it like (14a), because it is also a sentence objectively narrated by the narrator. Thus, its subject, which we will call *static subject* (SS) henceforth, is treated like AS of an objective action sentence as is exemplified by (14a). We will also call a sentence like (14b) an *objective state sentence*. Like AS, SS can be ECS, which makes it possible to regard (14c) as Susan's FDSR. As a result, (14a) - (14c) make up her subjective context. Then there is a paragraph break, by which the shift of point of view from Susan to Dr. Pfeiffer is denoted. (14d) is PSR with Dr. Pfeiffer as its CS, in which he is recognized as the new ECS under the retention theory. That is why we can interpret (14e) - (14i) as a series of Dr. Pfeiffer's FITR, which is his subjective context as a whole.

(15a) She [Lucy] went up to him and took his arm. (15b) "Tony! I was wondering if you were coming."

(15c) "S-sorry I'm late," Tony said. (15d) "I had some b-business to finish up."

(15e) Lucy gave him a warm smile. (15f) "It doesn't matter, as long as you're here. What would you like to do this afternoon?"

(15g) "What do you have to offer?"

(15h) Lucy looked him in the eye. (15i) "Anything you want," she said softly.

(Master of the Game:261)

The retention theory enables us to interpret each sentence above as follows, and this interpretation is most preferable.

(15a) is the objective action sentence with Lucy as its AS and also ECS that we retain in mind.

(15b) is Lucy's FDSR, so that the ECS is still Lucy.

(15c) is Tony's DSR, and from here he is the new ECS retained in our mind.

(15d) is his FDSR.

(15e) is Lucy's PAR, which means she is ECS from this sentence.

(15f) is her FDSR.

(15g) is Tony's FDSR, not Lucy's, because it does not immediately follow (15f) but begins on a new line after an indent.

(15h) is Lucy's PAR.

(15i) is her DSR.

There are shifts of point of view from Lucy to Tony and from Tony to Lucy several times. However, we can correctly recognize them by applying the suggestions which we have presented so far. Now let us see the final example below, a text composed of a series of a character's perception.

(16a) The old man saw the brown fins coming along the wide trail the fish must make in the

water. (16b) They were not even quartering on the scent. (16c) They were headed straight for the skiff swimming side by side.

(The Old Man and the Sea:97)

Since (16a) is the indirect perception representation (IPR) with *the old man* as its CS, under the retention theory we can make a correct interpretation of (16b) and (16c) as his FIPR, which is a quite natural interpretation.

6. Summary

The practical analysis of many narrative texts in this paper gives us sufficient assurance that the hypothesis and theory which we have proposed are fully valid and available not only for the accurate recognition of narrative representation with its CS exactly identified, but also for keeping track of the flows and shifts of point of view appropriately in a narrative text. From this perspective we have also clarified how a narrative text is generally organized, which helps us as readers deepen the understanding of narrative as a whole.

Notes

- 1 Sawa, Y. (2001b) "A Cognitive Approach to Subjective Expressions in Narrative Texts," *Research Reports of Ube National College of Technology* 47, 141-148.
- 2 Wiebe, J.M. (1990) "Recognizing Subjective Sentences: A Computational Investigation of Narrative Text," ph.D.dissertation, Technical Report at State University of New York at Buffalo.

References

- Banfield, A. (1982) *Unspeakable Sentences: Narration and Representation in the Language of Fiction*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, Boston.
- Black, J.B., T.J. Turner. & G.H.Bower. (1979) "Point of View in Narrative Comprehension, Memory, and Production," in *Journal of Verbal Learning and Verbal Behavior* 18, 187-198.
- Brinton, L. (1980) "'Represented Perception': A Study in Narrative Style," *Poetics* 9, 363-381.
- Bruder, G.A., J.F.Duchan., W.J.Rapaport., E.M.Segal., S.C.Shapiro. & D.A.Zubin. (1986) "Deictic Centers in Narrative An Interdisciplinary Cognitive-Science Project," Technical Report at State University of New York at Buffalo.
- Chafe, W.L. (1979) "The Flow of Thought and the Flow of Language," in Talmy Givon ed. (1979), 159-181.
- Fleischman, S. (1990) *Tense and Narrativity*, University of Texas Press, Austin.
- Givon, T. ed. (1979) *Syntax and Semantics 12: Discourse and Syntax*, Academic Press, Inc.
- Ikeda, T. (1992) *Eigo Buntairon* [English Stylistics: A Practical Synthesis], Kenkyusha, Tokyo.
- Kuno, S. (1978) *Danwa no Bunpoo*, Taishukan, Tokyo.
- Kuno, S. & E.Kaburaki. (1977) "Empathy and Syntax," *Linguistic Inquiry* 8, 627-672.
- Leech, G.N. & M.H.Short. (1981) *Style in Fiction: A Linguistic Introduction to English Fictional Prose*, English Language Series 13, Longman, New York.
- Morrow, D.G., S.L.Greenspan. & G.H.Bower. (1987) "Accessibility and Situational

- Models in Narrative Comprehension," in *Journal of Memory and Language* 26, 165-187.
- Nakagawa, Y. (1983) *Jiyuu Kansetsu Wahoo*, Kyoto-Aporonsha, Kyoto.
- Quirk, R., S.Greenbaum., G.N.Reech. & J.Svartvik. (1985) *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language*, Longman, New York.
- Rapaport, W.J. et al. (1989) "Deictic Centers and the Cognitive Structure of Narrative Comprehension," Technical Report at State University of New York at Buffalo.
- Sawa, Y. (2001a) "An Analysis of the Sentences in Narrative Related to Subjectivity," *Research Reports of Ube National College of Technology* 47, 129-139.
- Schiffirin, D. (1981) "Tense Variation in Narrative," *Language* 57, 45-62.
- Thelin, N.B. ed. (1990a) *Verbal Aspect in Discourse*, John Benjamins, Amsterdam.
- (1990b) "Verbal Aspect in Discourse: On the State of the Art," in N.B.Thelin ed. (1990) , 3-88.
- (1990c) "On the Concept of Time: Prolegomena to a Theory of Aspect and Tense in Narrative Discourse," in N.B. Thelin ed. (1990) , 91-129.
- Uspensky, B. (1973) *A Poetics of Composition*, University of California Press, Berkeley.

Texts Cited

- Hemingway, Earnest (1976) *The Old Man and the Sea*, Grafton Books, London.
- Sheldon, Sidney (1983) *Master of the Game*, Pan Books, London.