Manifestations of Speaker Attitudes in Conflict Stories[*]

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1. Introduction

When we talk about past events, we do not simply report the events as a linear enumeration of neutral information. We rather express our understanding of the human relations, our empathy to the participants and to the participants' psychological states. Based on our egocentric modeling of the past outer-world in our cognition, we encode our subjective views and evaluations of the events in our narratives. In other words, talking about something recalled from memory is a creative activity, since the speaker makes choices at many points reflecting a specific interpretation of her/his underlying thoughts (Chafe 1977, 1994). In this process, the speaker conveys mental imagery, which is her/his interpretation of the events, to the audience so that the audience receives as close mental imagery as the speaker herself/himself holds. For this purpose, speakers use numerous linguistic devices that reflect how they interpret the factual events, human relations, and the attitudes of the participants, and in what way they wish to guide the development of the audience's mental imagery in accordance with their own. For instance, speakers often utilize imitation of voice and gestures. They also use adjectives, relative clauses, and other modifiers to increase the agreement of the audience's mental imagery with their own.

This paper explores tense as one of the linguistic devices for the narrators to express their interpretations of human relations, participants' psychological states, and their empathy with the participants. It focuses on tense of "dialogue-introducers" (Johnstone 1987), reporting clauses that precede direct quotes in narratives, such as *I said*, *she says*, *I was like*, and *he goes*. They switch tense between the present and the past in some peculiar ways which previous discourse studies have found not merely rhetorical but discourse functional (*e.g.*, Schiffrin 1981; Wolfson 1982; Johnstone 1987; Sakita 1998). This paper shows that dialogue-introducer tense expresses the narrators' views of the reported speakers' attitudes in the stories.[1]

Stories involving conflict present one of the situations that often involve attitudinal shifts and contrasts among participants. Narrators of conflict stories often include a series of direct reports of speech interactions as one of the crucial parts in the stories, which are in many cases evaluative parts (Labov 1972; Tannen 1989; Chafe 1994). Narrators express subjective views and evaluations of conflicting speech events, especially when they are participants in the conflicts. They attempt, in narrating the self-involving interactions, to justify their own behaviors by foregrounding their views, in order to create sympathetic alignments with the audience to gain a base of support for their views. Narrators' use of

dialogue-introducer tense reflects such essentials of conflict stories as subtle power balances, feelings including anger and fear, and contrasting reactions between the narrators and their opponents. This paper looks at discourse features of reported utterances such as discourse markers, stumbling expressions, repetitions, repairs, etc., that indicate the reported speakers' attitudes. These discourse features, as manifestations of reported-speaker attitudes, correlate with variations of dialogue-introducer tense.

This paper will present discourse analysis of narratives, which is originally based upon a quantitative survey of dialogue features.[2] In section 2 below, I will first briefly contextualize the present study as a development from the previous investigations of tense-switching. In section 3, I will discuss definitions and functions of conflict stories. In section 4, I will examine conflict stories which range from serious conflict episodes that exhibit high degrees of disagreement or aggression, to exchanges that involve subtle emotional conflict. I will explore the correlations among reported-speaker attitudes, linguistic features within dialogues, and dialogue-introducer tense forms. Finally, I will remark linguistic motivations for the non-temporal but functional use of tense.

2. Background to the Present Study

Tense-switching between the past and the present has long been the subject of much linguistic study, from syntax, semantics to pragmatics. In terms of tense-switching of general English verbs, traditional accounts of tense-shift from the past into the present have held that the historical present tense occurs when the narrators attempt to make the past event more vivid (*e.g.*, Sweet 1892; Jespersen 1931; Quirk, *et al.* 1985; Leech 1987). Pragmatic explanation, on the other hand, has maintained that the tense-switching has the function of events-separation (Schiffrin 1981; Wolfson 1982). However, the tense-switching of reporting verbs has long been a controversial issue. Wolfson (1979, 1982), after carefully examining numerous hypotheses, claimed that the tense-switching of the particular verb *say* is an anomaly. Schiffrin (1981) also admitted that the tense-switching of verbs of saying and direct quotes is perplexing. Johnstone (1987) later reevaluated one of Wolfson's rejected hypotheses and formulated a "relative status hypothesis" that dialogue-introducer tense switches depending on the status of reported speakers. In Sakita (1998), I recently proposed that tense-alternation phenomena are manifestations of multiple factors in complex reporting processes. I presented a cognitive recollection theory and a consciousness stream theory, claiming that tense-switching manifests the reporters' cognitive operations.

The present analysis of tense forms as manifestations of narrators' views of reported-speaker attitudes suggests a much broader framework than Johnstone's (1987) relative status hypothesis. Johnstone's hypothesis is based on the analysis of "authority stories" in which narrators report their interactions with authorities such as police officers, older neighbors, parents, and military superiors. She claims that narrators use the past tense for introducing the speech of nonauthority figures, while the present tense for the speech of authority figures.

These different tenses of dialogue-introducers indicate that the two characters in the story are on unequal "footings" (Goffman 1981). Her hypothesis, however, accounts only for limited-situational cases and is not applicable to other situational contexts in which there is hardly any distinction of statuses. I have noticed that many of Johnstone's authority stories could be seen in a broader framework of conflict stories. The authority stories often involve the narrators' emotional conflict with the authority figures, and as Johnstone claims, narrators of authority stories intend to "present themselves to their audiences as having been far cheekier than they probably actually were, to show that they are not the types who get intimidated easily" (1987: 45), which is the point of authority stories. Apparent tense-contrasts in authority stories are in fact the narrators' subjective interpretations of contrasts between the narrators' attitudes and the authority figures' attitudes. This way of viewing tense as manifestations of speaker attitudes would enable us to account for tense variations in not only serious conflict episodes but in narratives that involve subtle emotional conflict. The present analysis will lead to a further account for the tense-switching in narratives that involve reported speakers' different attitudes and emotional positions.

3. Conflict Stories

Conflict occurs when two people disagree about an issue and choose to support opposing sides. In most cases, both have concluded that, for the moment, their stances cannot coexist simultaneously with one another (Stein & Miller 1993; Stein *et al.* 1997). In argument, both arguers believe that their stance is more legitimate and more viable than that of their opponent. Conflict may often involve anger, and the most frequent reasons for anger are unexpected violations of moral or social standards, and attempts by an angry person to seek revenge or to guarantee that these violations never occur again (Stein *et al.* 1994). For instance, the following excerpt narrates how a woman and her husband started an argument:

(1)   I was at home .hh and um (0.4) and then we had an ar:gument didn't we (.) Jeff *said* what do you think (0.2) what hour do you think this is and (.) you shouldn't be home this late and (.) and I *said* >at least I had the decency to phone yuh I coulda lied< (Edwards 1997: 145)[3]

The narrator has come home late at night, for which her husband Jeff blames her. Jeff is angry because his wife has broken a moral standard, which is expressed by "you shouldn't be home this late." If the wife had apologized or guaranteed that the violation would never occur again at this point, there would be no argument happening. But she answers in defense of her behavior. She believes that the fact that she phoned him justifies her coming home late. Both wife and husband believe that their stance is legitimate, which causes a conflict. Here, utterances are both introduced in the past tense, and their dialogue features are shown in (1)':

(1)'   Jeff *said*:   {blame, anger}
         I *said*:   {defense, defiance}

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One of the goals of telling conflict stories which are frequently the narratives of self-involving interactions is self-justification (Georgakopoulou 1997). Narrators reassert or reaffirm their own positions, and justify their behaviors and arguments in contrast to those of other parties. By justifying their own behaviors, they attempt to create solidarity with their audience. The narrator's talk preceding excerpt (1) demonstrates how she was attempting to justify her position:

(2)   (. . .) and um so I went out (.) came back at about one o'clock and I phoned (.) him at work (.) which I don't normally do but I thought I wanted to phone him .hh to say that I was back home (.) and (.) um (2.0) and that he could trust me and (.) uh it was just my way of (0.4) like (.) saying (.) that I was (.) youknow   (*Ibid.*)

The narrator describes her norm-breaching telephone call to Jeff as evidence of her consideration of him ("I wanted to phone him") and of her trustworthiness ("he could trust me"). Edwards (1997) points out that these work to undermine Jeff's basis for mistrust of her and to emphasize her honesty and reliability in phoning Jeff. What the narrator is obviously doing is to construe the reality from her standpoint and to construct the narrative in a way to justify her own position in contrast to that of her opponent. Accordingly, another significant aim of conflict stories is the narrator's self-foregrounding. Narrators, in the act of storytelling, reinforce their own views and positions of the human relations and of the events in the conflict situations in the story world. In this manner, narrators foreground their own selves to justify their own positions, and they create sympathetic alignments with the audience and gain a widened base of support for their views. For such purposes, narrators of conflict stories need to convey subtle power balances, feelings including anger and fear, and contrasting reactions between their opponents and themselves. These essentials of conflict stories, which shall be examined in the next section, have close relation with linguistic features within dialogues and dialogue-introducer tense forms.

Conflict stories considered on a continuum include stories in which narrators aim to talk about a whole conflict episode that features aggression and threats, on one end. There are, on the other end, stories that involve subtle emotional conflicts in some parts of the narratives. I shall start with a conflict story that has conflict as a central event, then examine narratives that include some emotional conflict at some points.

4. Speaker Attitudes and Tense
4.1. Conflict vs. step-back

Conflict stories often involve subtle power balances and hostile negotiations that may develop into aggression and physical threats. Consider the following excerpt about the narrator's conflict with a man who wanted to get a cigarette from him, and the narrator's rejection of the request. The narrator conveys how the man made him mad. After this excerpt, the story continues to the narrator's beating him:

(3)
1. Three weeks ago I had a fight with this other dude outside. He got mad 'cause I wouldn't give him a cigarette. Ain't that a bitch?
2. (Listener: Oh yeah?)
3. He walked over to me. [ø] "Can I have a cigarette?"
4. He was a little taller than me, but not that much.
5. I *said*, "I ain't got <u>no more</u>, man," 'cause, you know, all I had was one left. An' I ain't gon' give up my last cigarette unless I got some more.
6. So I *said*, "I don't have <u>no more</u>, man."
7. So he, you know, dug on the pack, 'cause the pack was in my pocket.
8. She he *said*, "Eh man, I can't get a cigarette, man? <u>I mean--I mean</u> we supposed to be <u>brothers an' shit</u>."
9. So I *say*, "<u>Yeah, well, you know, man, all I got is one, you dig it?</u> An' I won't give up my las' one to nobody."
10. So you know, the dude, he looks at me, an' he--I 'on' know--he jus' thought he gon' rough that motherfucker up.
11. He *said*, "I can't get a cigarette."
12. I *said*, "That's what I said, my man."
13. You know, so he *said*, "What you supposed to be, <u>bad an' shit</u>? What, you think you <u>bad an' shit</u>?"
14. So I *said*, "Look here, my man, I don't think I'm bad, you understand? But <u>I mean, you know</u>, if I had it, you could git it, I like to see you with it, <u>you dig it?</u> But the sad part about it, you got to do without it. That's all, my man." So the dude, he on' to pushin' me, man.
15. (Listener: Oh he pushed you?)

<div align="right">[lines are numbered for convenience; emphasis is added, hereafter]
(Myhill 1992: 62-65)</div>

When we pay attention to the tense of dialogue-introducers, we notice that the narrator uses the past tense (*said*) overall, except for one instance of the present tense (*say*) in line 9 and the zero-quotation (ø) which is without any introductory verbs in line 3. Why does the narrator shift to these non-past forms instead of keeping the past tense constantly? Let us closely examine how the conflict story (3) is developed, to see what makes the dialogue-introducer tense switch along with the story's development. The narrative begins in the past tense. In line 3, the first remark a man utters to the narrator is a request for a cigarette ("Can I have a cigarette?"). It is in zero-quotation form. This use of the zero-quotation form, as well as of other present-tense dialogue-introducer forms, expresses searching and requesting attitudes in contrast to responsive and decisive attitudes, as seen in the following cases:[4]

(4) Misses Czinski's got her housecoat on and down the lawn by then . . . you know [ø] "what's going on here Carol?" [raised pitch] I *said* "it's okay" I *said* "this . . . this guy says he saw something and he can't even see it from where he's parked anyway"

<div align="right">(Johnstone 1987: 40-41)</div>

(5) . . . and Misses Czinski's out there [ø] "Carol is there any problem?" [raised pitch] I *said* "no . . . no"

<div align="right">(*Ibid.*)</div>

(6) there was another girl walking around she *says* "uh do you know where the science building is" and I *said* "well" I *said* "you know, the guard just told me that this was the building. So she *say* "are you goin' here for an Indian class by any chance" and I *said* "yes"

After the man's request in line 3, the conflict starts. The narrator holds a slight hostility to the man, which is observed in his rivalry description of the man in line 4. From line 5 to the end,

the narrator consistently uses the past tense except for once in line 9. I argue that what causes the narrator to switch to the present tense here and back to the past tense next lies in the attitudinal changes. In lines 5 and 6, the narrator rejects the man's request. In line 8, the man responds, confirming his rejection ("Eh man, I can't get a cigarette, man?"). Here the man adds a remark which is considered to be a request for concession, "I mean--I mean we supposed to be brothers an' shit." To this request for concession and alignment, the narrator responds in line 9, "Yeah, well, you know, man, all I got is one, you dig it? An' I won't give up my las' one to nobody." This is the one that is introduced with the present tense (*I say*). We notice that in contrast to the two consecutive rejections in lines 5 and 6, the narrator's attitude in line 9 is different, giving an excuse for not offering a cigarette. In the first two rejections, the narrator's simple and strong attitude appears in the rejection words "no more." On the other hand, the narrator steps back in giving an excuse.

This observation of the attitudinal shifts is based on linguistic features we can see in the context. First, in line 9, the narrator prefaces the rejection with turn initiators "yeah," "well," and "you know." "Yeah" shows his acknowledgement of the previous request for alignment (Schiffrin 1987). "Well" implies his not matching the man's expectation. It indicates that the ideational options offered by the previous question are not precisely followed in the content of answers (*Ibid.*). "You know" indicates his attempt to draw the man's attention to his having only one cigarette left. He claims that his possession of only one cigarette is a shared knowledge which leads to a reasonable rejection of the request. These turn initiators used in a series not only soften his attitudes but also delay the rejection, which is a main portion of the answer. Second, the narrator starts by giving an excuse followed by an explanation, rather than simply rejecting the request. He even admits that he has one cigarette left, compared to his previous claims that he had no cigarette. Third, he tags a question "you dig it?" With the prefacing "you know," it embodies his attempt to confirm the man's understanding of his explanation. These show the narrator's temporarily softened attitude and roundabout way of rejection, compared to the two previous simple rejections. In addition, fourth, we see a linguistic clue of the motivation for the narrator's softening attitude. Immediately before the narrator's response led by "So I say," the man softens his attitude to request for concession, saying, "we supposed to be brothers an' shit." The man's softening attitude is also reflected in his repeated use of "I mean" which signals a modification of the intentions of a prior utterance (*Ibid.*). Since the man has modified his attitude from confirming rejection to requesting concession, the narrator steps back and prefaces his rejection with turn initiators, and is also motivated to give an excuse. From the next remark by the man in line 10, the conflict resumes, and the past tense is used constantly. Note that the narrator's last remark also includes an explanation, but it is not introduced with "I say," which seems to contradict my claim that the narrator's previous use of the present tense accompanies an excuse or explanation. In this case, the man's preceding remark is more aggressive, containing repeated challenges with "bad an' shit?" In contrast to the narrator's

stepping back at the man's "brothers an' shit," the repeated uses of "bad an' shit?" made the narrator hold a firm attitude. So the narrator's last remark starts as a rebuttal and persuasion, that are reflected in the past-tense dialogue-introducer. Only from the remark "But I mean, you know, if I had it, you could git it," he starts giving an explanation. But here already the two parties are in the mood for a physical fight. The whole dialogues are featured as listed in (3)':

(3)'　He [∅]:　　{request}
　　　　I *said*:　　{rejection}
　　　　I *said*:　　{rejection}
　　　　he *said*:　　{confirmation of rejection, request for concession}
　　　　I *say*:　　{TI, excuse, explanation}
　　　　He *said*:　　{confirmation of rejection}
　　　　I *said*:　　{affirmation of rejection}
　　　　he *said*:　　{confirmation of hostility, reproach}
　　　　I *said*:　　{rebuttal, persuasion, explanation, excuse}　　　　　　(TI=turn initiator)

From this example (3) and numerous other instances, I assume that a narrator tends to use the past tense (*said*) in narrating conflicting exchanges, reflecting the both parties' pushing forward with the balance of power in conflict and switches to the present tense when there is any softening or stepping back from the conflict. I assume the following pattern for the tense that shows the delicate balance of power in the conflict episode:

said vs. *said*	: conflict, balance of power
-> *say(s)*	: step back; suspension

In narrating conflict stories, narrators typically start with abstracts to summarize the stories, and orientations to set the scenes. In the substantial parts, there are arguments that accompany pushing power from both sides, suspensions, withdrawal from conflict, and various kinds of negotiation. In these complicating-action parts, there generally arise varieties of moves related to conflict, such as challenge, concession, false charge, show of hostility, interruption, precaution, rebuttal, rejection, reproach, threatening, and warning. To better guide the listeners' development of the mental image of the story world with these complex reported-speaker attitudes, narrators use tense-shifting along with the development of the stories.

4.2. Conflict vs. step-forward

　　　In the data set, there are seemingly opposing cases to what I just hypothesized. Let me raise one example. In the following excerpt, the present tense seems not to be used for stepping back from the conflict:

(7)
　　　1. .. a=nd .. he just .. *said* "well, that theory was .. debunked."
　　　2. ... I *said* "Oh? by whom."
　　　3. ... He *said* "well by .. Peterson."

4. ... I *said* ... "who's Peterson."
5. .. He *says* "you don't know Peterson? ... Oh my goodness. .. Why he's one of our great ... local .. geologists."
6. ... I *said* "well, .. uh that's nice, but why would he be the one to debunk this."

<div align="right">(Chafe 1994: 218-19)[5]</div>

The narrator reports her telephone conversation with someone. She introduces utterances both by herself and by the interlocutor with *said*, except for one utterance in line 5. Both parties involved in this conversation are experiencing an emotional conflict. In line 1, the interlocutor denies the theory that the narrator has mentioned. In line 2, the narrator asks him to be clearer on who denied the theory, to which the interlocutor gives a response in line 3. In line 4, the narrator still keeps asking for clarification of who Peterson is. In response to this question, for the first time the interlocutor takes a longer turn in line 5. His response is not only to answer who Peterson is, but also to claim that the narrator does not know Peterson, whom he claims to be one of their great local geologists. This claim is rather personal, deviant from arguing on the theory or the theorist. The man is emphasizing the narrator's lack of knowledge. This is the point that is introduced with the present tense (*he says*). Against this claim about the narrator's ignorance, however, the narrator stays calm in line 6, and reverts to her point, requesting for clarification of why Peterson is the one to debunk the theory. She points out the irrelevance of her lack of knowledge of Peterson. What we sense out of this short excerpt is that neither of the parties compromises. One is insisting that the theory has been debunked, while the other is not persuaded but keeps asking questions to object to his explanation. For the interlocutor, the narrator's not knowing Peterson is an opportunity to gain the upper hand, to lead to his superiority. Here he finds a chance to break through the conflicting power balance, and he bursts into a personal remark, with heightened emotion.[6] These exchanges are featured as follows:

(7)'   he *said*:   {claim, negation of the other's claim}
       I *said*:   {clarification Q}
       He *said*:   {A}
       I *said*:   {clarification Q}
       He *says*:   {A (Q), exclamation, claim, emotional burst, superiority}
       I *said*:   {acceptance, clarification Q, calm}   (Q=question, A=answer)

I assume the following tense patterns for this excerpt:

| *said* vs. *said* | : challenge, conflict, balance of power |
| -> *say(s)* | : step forward |

Notice that the characterization of *say(s)* is different from what I discussed in relation to example (3), in which *say(s)* introduced the attitude of stepping back from the conflict in contrast to the challenging attitude of *said*. Here in (7), I have characterized the use of *say(s)* as stepping forward rather than stepping back from the conflict. What is common to these two seemingly opposing attitudes is that the conflict annoys the speakers, so that they attempt

either to step forward or step backward from the conflict. The one in (7) who is stepping forward and finding a way to gain the upper hand is actually attempting to find a key to escape from the power balance to superiority. The pattern for conflict and conflict-avoidance reflected in tense choice is therefore generalized as follows:

said vs. *said*	:	challenge, conflict, balance of power
-> *say(s)*	:	avoidance, softening, or escape from conflict

When the conflicting power balance is kept more parallel by both parties, the dialogue-introducer stays in the past tense. However, when the balance is broken, even temporarily, the tense switches to the present. With this pattern of tense usage, the narrator conveys a power balance and its temporal breakthrough in the narrated world.

4.3. Different-directional switch

We have so far analyzed the attitudinal contrast in reporting conflict dialogues. Let us turn to some different-situational cases which involve subtle emotional conflict, and examine whether they fit in the account of the attitudinal contrasting use of dialogue-introducer tenses.

Excerpts (8) and (9) have similar question-and-answer pairs, but have different-directional tense-shiftings. Excerpt (8) is from an episode about the narrator's fall. He was asked by a man if he had been drunk. Excerpt (9) is from an authority story in which the narrator recounts the time when she was stopped by a police officer:

(8)   So he *said* to me, "Were you--did you have something to drink?"
      I *says*, "I don't drink at quarter to twelve in the morning. It's too early."
                                                                    (Wolfson 1982: 65)
(9)   and he *goes*, "you been drinking?"
      and I *said*, "WELL . . . yeahh . . . I had a few beers this afternoon."   (Johnstone 1987: 39)

In (8), the question is introduced with *said*, while the narrator's response is led by *says*.[7] In (9), by contrast, the question is introduced with the present-tense verb *goes*, while the narrator's answer is led by *said*. When similar pairs of question and answer are reported with different tense-shifts as in these cases, I suggest that the narrators' conceptualizations of the two situational contexts are not the same. The narrators may reflect attitudinal contexts in the ways they introduce dialogues.

In (8), the man is not simply asking a question with mere curiosity or without any idea. The man is cautious of the stranger lying down on the street. He is suspicious, supposing that the stranger is drunk and may cause some danger to him. He has a blaming attitude. The narrator, sensing the man's suspicious attitude, attempts to dodge his question, giving an excuse-like response, to soften the tension between them. Here, pushing power toward a conflict is expressed with the past-tense dialogue-introducer. In contrast, a softer attitude with stepping back from causing a conflict is expressed in the present tense.

On the other hand, in (9), the narrator attempts to convey that the police officer's

attitude is not authoritatively strong, and the narrator responds with the firmer, never-intimidated attitude. Indeed, Johnstone (1987) states that the point of people telling their interactions with authority figures is to show that they are not intimidated by the authority. Against the police officer's question whether the narrator had been drinking, she admits it, as if saying, "So what?" This unintimidated attitude is related to the narrator's utterance "WELL" which is stronger than a simple response marker. It emphasizes that the police officer's presupposition should be canceled (Owen 1983), in that his yes-no question format is irrelevant. She implies that she only had a few beers in the afternoon, but that she has not been drinking recently. It also indicates that she disagrees with the police officer, meaning "yes but . . ." (Pomerantz 1984). The narrator's attitude with this response is, "Yes, I only had a few beers this afternoon, but I haven't been drinking much. So what is wrong with it?" The narrator intends to spotlight her never-intimidated attitude when facing the authority's professional checkups. Such a contrast is not intended in (8), on the contrary.

The following dialogic features are assumed for the two excerpts:

(8)' he *said*:   {suspicion, blame}
     I *says*:   {dodge, excuse}

(9)' he *goes*:   {police checkup, simple Q}
     I *said*:   {TI, A, acknowledgment, "So what?"}

The different-directional tense-shiftings in narrating the two similar exchanges about drinking in (8) and (9) have actually resulted from different attitudinal contexts that the narrators attempted to convey.

We have seen up to this point that the narrators' uses of dialogue-introducer tenses in narratives that involve conflict situations are manifestations of reported-speaker attitudes. The past-tense dialogue-introducers often introduce dialogues that feature conflicting, challenging, or never-intimidated attitudes. They may be used in pair, reflecting the power balance. On the other hand, the present-tense dialogue-introducers tend to reflect the reported-speaker attitudes in relation to stepping back from conflicts, watching the situations, suspending conflicts, or making excuses.

4.4. Attitudinal modifications

The cases we have examined involved tense-shifts that contrasted two speakers' attitudes, but the dialogue-introducer tense-shifts may also often represent a subtle shift of one speaker's emotional state or a modification of the narrator's view of the speaker. In examining personal narratives, I have often encountered the cases in which the narrator shifts tenses in introducing the same two utterances by one person. This type of tense-shift in report of the same person has two ways of occurrence--either when the reported speaker's attitude shifts in a course of conversation, or when the narrator's view of the speaker's attitude shifts. These two cases reflect how tense represents narrators' evaluations of the speaker attitudes.

Example (10) contains a dialogue-introducer tense-shift that accompanies a reported speaker's attitudinal shift in her repeated responses. A woman is reporting her prior interaction with her daughter as an illustration of why she should date boys only of her own religion:

(10) And when I heard she was goin' out with him, I *said*, "You're goin' out with him," I *said*, "You're goin' out with a Gentile boy?" She *says*, "Well Daddy knows his father." I *said*, "I don't care." So she introduced him, and they went out, and she came home early, and I *said*, "Well, y' goin' out with him again?" She *says*, "Nope." I *said*, "Did he get fresh?" She *said*, "No!"   (Schiffrin 1990: 250-51)

The tense-contrast in the last two lines reflects the shift of the speaker's firmness in repeated negations. When the narrator's daughter comes home from dating, the narrator asks if she is going out with him again, to which the daughter gives a light negation "Nope." The narrator further asks another question, "Did he get fresh?" The daughter is apparently annoyed or even insulted by her mother's blatant interference, and answers with a firm negation "No!" The narrator reports the daughter's shift in attitude toward her, by first using the present tense to introduce the light response ("She *says*, 'Nope,'") then switches to the past tense to introduce the emphasized or insisted negation ("She *said*, 'No!'"). The narrator's tense-shift in this case represents the reported speaker's instantaneous shift in attitude.[8]

Let us move to the other case of tense-shift in report of the same-person utterances-- the tense shifts along with the modification of the narrator's view of the reported-speaker attitude. Example (11) involves the narrator's modification of her view of herself as a reported speaker. It is an excerpt from an authority story told by a woman about the time when she was stopped by a police officer:

(11) and I *said* "what's the problem" and he *says* "well misses um . . . . I saw back down there by the high school I think you were going a little FAST there it's a thirty-mile-an-hour zone you know" and I *says* "yeah I know" I *said* "ah I know" . . . and he *says* ". . . . oh . . . ." he *goes* "well . . . I just want to let you know you're doing a good job"   (Johnstone 1987: 41)

The police officer claims that the woman committed a traffic violation by speeding. But his way of speaking to her conveys that his attitude is not strong and authoritative. Or at least, the narrator attempts to convey his attitude as such, by (i) introducing his utterances with the present tense throughout, and (ii) reconstructing his utterances with linguistic features that indicate his soft attitude ("well," "um . . .," "I think," "a little FAST," "you know," "I just"). On the contrary, the narrator intends to convey her own attitude as a stronger, never-intimidated one. In line 3, she reports her response to the police officer in repetition: "*I says* 'yeah I know' *I said* 'ah I know.'" She is repairing her utterance from "yeah I know" to "ah I know,"[9] and along with the repair, she also repairs her use of the dialogue-introducer tense from the present to the past.[10] This repair suggests that the narrator has sensed that "*I says* 'yeah I know'" is not enough to express her words and attitude, thus immediately modifies

her imagery of herself. The corrected remark "I *said* 'ah I know'" communicates her firmer confidence towards the police officer, which immediately makes him step back, saying ". . . oh . . ." As a discourse marker of information management tasks (Schiffrin 1987), "oh" displays receipt of an unanticipated answer. The narrator's remark "ah I know" thus serves as a turning point of this whole report, since the woman's response that she knows the speed limit of the street justifies her innocence, and the police officer realizes that his claim about the narrator's traffic violation is improper. He starts giving an excuse pretending that he never even thought of charging her with a traffic violation. In order to make the best of this evaluative part, the narrator modifies her own imagery of herself and repairs her utterance. The narrator indicates, with the linguistic features in her narrative, her evaluation of herself and of the police officer. While she conveys the police officer's non-authoritative attitude, she reinforces her own never-intimidated attitude by the repair as well as by her first utterance "what's the problem" which indicates her annoyance. In contrast to her constant uses of the present tense to introduce the police officer, she uses the past tense to introduce her own remarks. Or, to be exact, she repairs herself in order to be consistent in her description of her attitude as firm and strong. This example confirms the attitudinal correlation between the dialogue and the dialogue-introducer tense.

From these cases, we assume a more-generalized argument that the narrators tend to use the present tense to introduce the reported speaker's utterance in a weaker position, while they use the past tense for the speaker's more-assured, firmer attitude in a stronger position.

4.5. Background of the non-temporal use of tense

It is not a surprise that the dialogue-introducer tense expresses the narrators' views of reported-speaker attitudes. Reporting verbs used in direct reporting discourse (*e.g.*, *say*, *go*) are "neutral" (Johnstone 1987) or "transparent" (Yamanashi 1991) place markers without variational lexical meanings. This is in contrast to the characterizations of more-lexical, performative reporting verbs in indirect reporting discourse, such as used in *he shouted, I suspected, she asserted, he confessed*, that carry illocutionary or perlocutionary forces (*Ibid.*) and show reported speakers' attitudes. When narrators use direct reporting styles that favor less-complex and less-wordy reports (Sakita 1996, 1998), they use tense as a means to express the speaker attitudes and compensate for the lack of lexicality of the reporting verbs. If, on the other hand, a narrator fully described the speaker attitudes that accompany the dialogues instead of using the tense variations, the report would become quite wordy. Let us refer back to example (9) for instance. The detailed description of the dialogues as in (12) would lose the art of direct reporting style as a performance to demonstrate the exchanges with depictions:

(9)   and he *goes*, "you been drinking?"
        and I *said*, "WELL . . . yeahh . . . I had a few beers this afternoon."   (repeated)

(12) and he *said*, "you been drinking?" but was not in an authoritatively strong manner. Of course I was not intimidated and *said* with enough confidence, "WELL . . . yeahh . . . I had a few beers this afternoon."

Direct reporting style, as one of its characteristics, *shows* how something happened, rather than *describes* what happened (Yule 1993; Sakita 1995, 1998). Direct style frequently appears in narratives' climactic parts that often feature speakers' emotional states or feelings as significant points, but it does not explicitly verbalize them. The verb inflections for tense are thus diverted for the functional uses to express the delicate attitudinal differences of reported speakers and the ways the speakers spoke out the utterances. This is considered a reasonable diversion of the use of the tense forms, since the actual past-time references are clear especially in the climactic parts in the midst of the narratives. Indeed, tense-shift is almost completely restricted to "complicating action" clauses (Labov 1972) in which the central events are related in chronological order (Schiffrin 1981), so there is no temporal confusion even without temporal markings. Tense, therefore, is a useful and available means of interweaving into stories the attitudinal factors that are not sufficiently expressed by the verbs.

5. Conclusion

Narratives are by no means accurate representations of the real world, but are reconstructions of past events based on the narrators' interpretations in particular perspectives. They are reconstituted in the narratives' social and personal contexts of occurrence, that have dynamic relationships with the narratives' functions and purposes. Accordingly, the narrative description of the reported-speaker attitudes depends on the narrators' subjective views of the situations and their interpretations of the human relationships. The reported-speaker attitudes that manifest as dialogic features are the ones that are put into the speech at the time of the narration, and they may not be the actual attitudes accompanying the original utterances of the reported speakers. In other words, the linguistic manifestations of reported-speaker attitudes depend on the narrators' conscious or unconscious decisions, which they make in real time over the course of the narration, in order to communicate most effectively to the audiences what they think the points of the stories are. Since one of the most essential functions of narratives is the narrators' establishing or enhancing intimacy with their audiences (Stahl 1989), the narrators aim to align with their audiences through gaining support for their views. This is particularly true of their reports of their conflicting exchanges with others, in which speakers' subtle attitudinal shifts or emotional negotiations often serve as points of the stories. Therefore this paper mainly has dealt with the cases in which the dialogue-introducer tense reflected subtle balances of power, feelings including anger and fear, and contrasting reactions between the narrators themselves and other reported speakers. Dialogue-introducer tense forms in such narratives well reflect the narrators' evaluations of the speakers' delicate attitudinal shifts, which also manifest in

discourse as dialogue-internal features like discourse markers. By way of conclusion, I should emphasize that although the contextual variation and situational "particularity" of language (Becker 1988) puzzles us when we encounter not-readily explicable linguistic features, language remains our best means of communicating our mental images.

Notes

* I would like to express my gratitude to Masa-aki Yamanashi for his invaluable comments on an earlier version of this study. The final product reflects my own views.

1 Speaker attitudes include the mental position the reported speakers possess when they made the utterances in quote, and the feeling or emotion they held at the time of the speech.

2 The present text analysis is based on a survey of correlations between tense forms and dialogue features. In another work (ms.), I listed up numerous dialogue features that are related to each dialogue in discourse data base, and surveyed what tense form is used for each feature. This paper presents an analysis of some typical cases from the survey.

3 'Greater than' and 'lesser than' signs enclose speeded-up talk as in: >he said<.

4 See Sakita (1998) for detailed discussions of the dialogue-introducer tense-contrast for the searching and requesting attitudes versus responsive and decisive attitudes.

5 This transcription is segmented into intonation units. Two dots indicate a brief break in timing, three dots a full-fledged pause.

6 Example (7) accepts the traditional interpretation of the historical present tense since the narrator expresses the heightened emotional content of her interlocutor's utterance ("You don't know Peterson? . . ."). Still, I would say that his heightened emotion results from his gaining the upper hand in a conflict by emphasizing the narrator's lack of knowledge. On the other hand, example (3) did not have the reading of added emotion, having nothing to do with the climax of a story. In this study, I have raised the uses of the present tense in examples (3) and (7) as cases of narrators' describing speakers who attempt to escape from conflict of any sort.

7 In spoken English, the present-tense dialogue-introducer for the first person often takes the form of *I says* or *says I* instead of *I say*. See Sakita (1998) for discussions of its frequency and background.

8 The following involves the same pattern of attitudinal shift in one speaker's repeated negations:

> (i) But he didn't believe me I was ma=rried. I kept t- --He's= talking about how we should carry on a conversation later, and <u>*I'm going*, "no, no," I *said*, "I don't -- You know I really don't think my husband would appreciate that." .. I *said*, "you know, it's a little difficult having three in the same bedroom."</u> [Transcription simplified; listener's reactions omitted]
>
> (UCSB CSAE: CUZ)

The narrator prefaces the initial part of the negation with a present-tense dialogue-introducer ("I'*m going*, 'no, no,'"), and switches to the past tense to report the rest of her negation. The speaker's insistence is observed in her repair "I *said*, 'I don't -- You know I really don't think . . .'"

In (i), we notice the use of *be going* as another way to introduce dialogues. Although I do not deal with the verb-switching in this paper, it is another significant issue in exploring narratives.

9 'Repair' is a speech activity during which speakers locate and replace a prior information unit (Schiffrin 1987).

10 This might be considered a repetition in the actual utterance instead of the repair at the time of the report, but it is far more natural to consider it as a repair, as Johnstone (1987) treated it as such.

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