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# Himalayan Linguistics

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## **Himalayan Linguistics**

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*Direct speech reports and the cline of prosodic integration in Dolakha Newar*

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### ABSTRACT

Direct speech reporting is a rhetorical strategy used frequently in the production of Dolakha Newar narrative. Direct speech reports are syntactically uniform in constituting center-embedded objects of ditransitive verbs. Prosodically, they show a wide range of behaviors. They may be set off from the surrounding quotative frame by intonation-unit boundaries, variations in pitch or loudness, and/or the production of contours typical of conversational speech. They may also be produced across multiple intonation units and may show patterns of macro-level prosodic structuring indicative of internal prosodic coherence and embedding within higher-level structures. On the other hand, they may exhibit none of these prosodic characteristics and be prosodically integrated with respect to the quotative frame. This variable behavior results from competition among a variety of pressures, including speakers' performative goals, the syntax of complementation, the rhetorical impact of the quoted speech, performance factors, and inter-speaker variation in style, among others. While statistical analyses might fruitfully be applied to objectively quantifiable factors, a purely statistical model will never fully predict prosodic behavior, due to the meaningful nature of prosody and intangible features of individuals in the production of discourse.

### KEYWORDS

direct speech, reported speech, direct quotation, Newar, prosody, intonation

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# *Direct speech reports and the cline of prosodic integration in Dolakha Newar<sup>1</sup>*

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## **1 Introduction**

Noonan (2006) described an important and ubiquitous aspect of everyday discourse in many languages of South and Central Asia. This is the “direct speech style”, a rhetorical style which has the effect of heightening immediacy, furthering involvement of the addressee, and increasing the emotive quality of the narrations (Noonan 2006: 27). Direct speech style is used to indicate reason and causation, purpose and motivation, intention, attendant circumstance, and the listing of alternatives. The direct speech style is typically instantiated syntactically by the incorporation of direct quotes as complements of the quotative verb ‘say’, often in conjunctive participle (i.e. converbal) form.

A number of studies have outlined the areal (Massica 1976, 1991), syntactic (Ebert 1986, Bayer 2001, Genetti 2005), comparative (Ebert 1986, Saxena 1988, Bashir 1996), and historical (Saxena 1988) aspects of these constructions; however, to my knowledge no study has yet examined prosodic aspects of direct quotation in the Himalayan or broader South Asian area. The prosodic treatment of reported speech has been described for better-known European languages, especially for conversational discourse (e.g. Couper-Kuhlen 1999, Gunther 1999, Oliveira and Cunha 2004). However, these languages differ from South Asian languages not only in their syntactic typology but also in the degree to which direct speech is used and its range of rhetorical functions (Noonan 2006).

In Dolakha Newar, a Tibeto-Burman language spoken in Nepal,<sup>2</sup> direct speech reports are syntactically quotative complements, objects of ditransitive quotative verbs. This structure is evident even when the quoted material is highly complex, consisting of multiple complete sentences. A number of features are used to mark discourse as direct speech, including the relative positioning of prosodic and syntactic boundaries, patterns of terminal contours, and changes in loudness, pitch range, register, and timing. As many of these features are scalar, direct speech reports can be placed on a cline from prosodically independent to prosodically integrated with respect to elements of the quotative frame. This variable prosodic behavior can be attributed to competition among discourse functional, syntactic, and production factors.

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1 I am grateful to Kristine Hildebrandt for excellent suggestions that have improved this paper; all errors are, of course, my own.

2 Dolakha Newar is a member of the Eastern branch of the Newar family. It is spoken in the municipality of Dolakha, located about 145 kilometers to the east of Kathmandu in the Janakpur zone. In addition to the 5000 or so residents of the Dolakha township, there are also sizeable numbers of speakers in the Kathmandu Valley and other areas of Nepal, as well as in the broader Nepalese diaspora.

Section 2.0 introduces the literature on reported speech in discourse, differentiating direct and indirect speech, and providing a brief orientation to the work on rhetorical and prosodic aspects of speech reports. Section 3.0 provides background on Dolakha Newar syntax, followed by a more detailed discussion of the syntax of quotative complements. Section 4.0 presents the framework for prosodic analysis and transcription conventions. Section 5.0 presents the variety of prosodic structures that are found with direct speech reports in narrative discourse and exemplifies the cline of prosodic integration. Section 6.0 concludes the paper with discussion of the competing factors that influence prosodic behavior, resulting in the observed cline.

## 2 Reported speech

Reported speech involves the report of a speech act attributed to oneself or another individual. A significant distinction is that between “direct” speech reports and “indirect” speech reports. This has been frequently discussed in the literature; a typical definition is given by Coulmas (1986: 2):

[Direct quotation] evokes the original speech situation and conveys, or claims to convey, the exact words of the original speaker in direct discourse, while [indirect quotation] adapts the reported utterance to the speech situation of the indirect discourse.

Direct speech reports thus involve an interesting shift in perspective from that of the current speaker to that of the reported speaker. This is marked by corresponding shifts in personal, temporal and spatial deixis. For example, the sentence *Veronica asked her sister if she wanted to stay there that night* is an example of an indirect speech report. This can be seen in the third-person pronouns in the dependent clause, the use of the verb form *wanted* in the dependent clause, indicating past tense with respect to the time of the current speech act, and the distal form of the two demonstratives. All four forms reflect the perspective of the narrator. This can be contrasted with the direct speech report *Veronica asked her sister: “Do you want to stay here tonight?”* Here the speech report is syntactically a question, as would be appropriate for the interactional context of the original utterance, with the second-person pronoun referring to the addressee of the reported speech act. The auxiliary verb is in present tense, reflecting the time of the reported utterance, and the proximal demonstrative and locational adverbs *here* and *tonight* index the locational and temporal orientation of the reported speaker. The markers of these different dimensions work in tandem as a signal to the hearer of the shift in deictic orientation.<sup>3</sup>

Direct quotation can be seen as the speaker articulating a “voice” for the character, with varying degrees of mimicry. This gives the speaker the opportunity to “perform” the character, attributing to him or her not only words but also affect and attitudes (Tannen 1989); the use of direct speech reports can thus take on a strongly evaluative function in discourse (Wennerstrom 2001a, Günther 1999).

When speech reports from multiple speakers are being reported, the effect is of polyphony or the “layering of voices” (Bakhtin 1981). Since the current study will examine direct speech reports in narrative discourse, I will use the term “narrator” to refer to the speaker who produced

3 This paper will only deal with direct quotation, which is ubiquitous in narrative discourse. I do have a handful of examples that could be considered indirect quotation; these use structures that are distinct from those described here. For discussion, see Genetti (2007a: 432-433).

the narrative text and the term “character” to refer to the speaker whose words are reported. In addition to the narrator and multiple characters, one also hears at times in narratives the voice of the “speaker as self”, the narrator speaking outside of the current narrative context and within the context in which the reported narration was produced. Finally, one can find embedding of voices, where one character begins a narration within a story and reproduces the voice of another.

The role of prosody in the production of reported speech has been the subject of numerous studies, primarily on languages of Western Europe. Couper-Kuhlen (1999), examining direct reported speech in English conversation, notes that direct speech reports can be marked by combinations of prosodic features, including changes in pitch register, pitch range, volume, and speech rate, as well as shifts to non-modal phonation, and/or the production of isochronous timing. The speaker mimics the character to a greater or lesser degree by attributing prosodic characteristics to the reported speech. This can give the speech report a lively and immediate character. It also gives the speaker the opportunity to attribute affective qualities to the character and hence to provide implicit evaluation of both the character and the reported utterance. Günther (1999: 696) refers to this as “parodistic stylization” of the character and writes that “recontextualized utterances are stylized, exaggerated, and caricatured and are made to accommodate the reporter’s evaluations.”

### 3 The syntax of quotative constructions in Dolakha Newar

Like other languages of the Himalayan region, Dolakha Newar is strongly verb-final; the ordering of noun-phrase constituents before the verb is typically subject-object, although there is flexibility responsive to pragmatic considerations. Evidence for grammatical subjects can be found in a number of distinct morphosyntactic behaviors. The language has a single category of object which subsumes both patient arguments of transitive and ditransitive verbs as well as recipient arguments of ditransitive verbs; there is no syntactic evidence for two classes of object, such as direct and indirect, or primary and secondary. Regarding casemarking, subjects of transitive verbs are cliticized by the ergative casemarker while subjects of intransitive verbs and copulas are not casemarked. Objects can take the dative casemarker if the referent is animate and given. In complex sentences dependent clauses precede the head upon which they depend, regardless of whether this is a noun (for a relative clause), a predicate (for a complement clause), or another clause (for a converbial clause). Full description and argumentation for these points can be found in Genetti (2007a).

The syntax of quotative constructions also mirrors patterns found in the immediate area. Masica (1976: 136-137) describes quotative constructions as being part of the “participial syntax” of the “Indo-Altaic” area. He notes that there are two distinct quotative constructions found in Indo-Aryan, and that these strongly split the family (1991: 402). Both are found in Dolakha Newar. In one, the quotative verb precedes the direct quote, which is often introduced by a complementizer, typically *ki*. Example (1) illustrates this pattern.<sup>4</sup> The direct speech report is given in bold, a convention used throughout the paper.<sup>5</sup>

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4 All Dolakha Newar examples in this paper are taken from continuous monologic narrative discourse.

5 The following grammatical glosses are used in this paper: ABL ablative; ALL allative; ASS assertion; BV borrowed verb; CL classifier; DAT dative; EMPH emphatic; ERG ergative; EVID evidential; EXCL exclamation; EXT extensive; FUT future; GEN genitive; IND individuating; INF infinitive; IMP imperative; NEG negative; NOM nominalizer; PART participle (converb); PL plural; PR present; PROH prohibitive; PST past; PURP purpose; S singular; REFL reflexive; TOP topic.

- (1) *āmun hat-ai ki “janta chin da-syāt”*  
 3sERG say-3sPR that 1sDAT 2sERG PROH-kill  
 ‘He said: “Don’t kill me!”’

Masica states that in Indo-Aryan, placement of the sentential complement after the quotative verb, as in (1), is found in Hindi-Urdu, Panjabi, Sindhi, and Kashmiri. It is also found in Nepali, as a calque on the Hindi pattern (*ibid.*). From Nepali it was then borrowed into Dolakha Newar.

Masica contrasts these with Sinhalese, Dhakani Urdu, Oriya, Bengali, Assamese, and Nepali, where the quotative phrase precedes the quotative verb, which is typically the verb ‘say’ in conjunctive participial form.<sup>6</sup> Masica (1991: 403) notes that this structure is also found in Dravidian and Tibeto-Burman languages. A Dolakha Newar example is given in (2):

- (2) *āle “gibi=lān hār-mun chin” haṅ-an hat-ai*  
 then where=ABL bring-2sPR 2sERG say-PART say-3sPR  
 ‘Then (she) said: “From where did you bring (this)?”’

Note that the first iteration of ‘say’ in this example is in participial form (i.e. it is a converb; Genetti 2005). Here its function is similar to that of a complementizer and marks the end of the direct quote. It is followed by the fully lexical verb *hat-ai*, which is in finite form, and functions as a full verb to denote the act of speaking. The final verb in such constructions is not restricted to *hat- ‘say’*, but can be other cognition or utterance verbs, such as *ṅen- ‘ask’*, or *bicār yet- ‘think’*.

The use of ‘say’ as a complementizer is not obligatory in such constructions. A direct quote can be directly followed by a finite form of ‘say’, as in (3):

- (3) *“gara mu-ene thuj” hat-ai*  
 hole dig-PART bury-IMP say-3sPR  
 ‘(He) says: “Dig a whole and bury it.”’

Or, the participial form *haṅ-an* (or other non-finite form of ‘say’) can itself denote the act of speaking without a following cognition or utterance verb, as in (4):

- (4) *mā=uri=n “je yet-a ū-i” haṅ-ane pita yer-a*  
 mother-IND-ERG work do-PURP go-1FUT say-PART out come-3sPST  
 ‘The mother said: “I will go to work” and came out.’

Note that this example illustrates the direct-speech style described by Noonan: the direct speech does not clearly report an actual speech event, but instead indicates the intention and purpose of the character. A less literal, but perfectly felicitous, translation would be ‘She came out to go to work’. The narrator could have signaled this equally well with a simple purpose clause, however in this case she made a rhetorical decision to use direct speech. As Noonan points out, this has the effect of heightening the immediacy of the narrative, by bringing the listeners closer to the character and the inner workings of her mind.

<sup>6</sup> I am grateful to an anonymous reviewer for pointing out the Bengali actually has both types of patterns; see Bayer (2001).

There is considerable inter-subject variation in the relative frequency of the two constructions, with some older speakers having little or no evidence of the borrowed structure, and some younger speakers using the two structures with similar frequencies. Sometimes the two are combined, and quotative verbs both precede and follow the direct quote. This illustrates that speaker-specific rhetorical strategies are at work; speakers make use of language-available resources at their own leisure, based on their own rhetorical skills.<sup>7</sup> It is possible that this is influenced by the extent to which they use Dolakha Newar vis-à-vis Nepali in daily interactions.

In both constructions, quotative verbs are ditransitive, with ergative-marked subjects and two objects. One object is the dative-marked addressee (frequently omitted) and the other references the speech itself. The latter can be a simple nominal, such as *khā* ‘matter; news’, or a demonstrative, such as *ām* ‘that’; however, it is more common for the object to be a direct quote. Direct quotes may be units of any size and may contain vocatives, imperatives, exclamations, or other elements characteristic of conversational speech. Example (5) illustrates a pre-verbal direct quote consisting of two syntactic sentences; the sentence boundary is indicated by a period:

- (5) Genetti 2007a: 417  
*āmun* “*u janggal=e rājā ji tuṅ khyañ. mebu ma-da*”<sup>NP-O</sup> *hat-ai*  
 3sERG this jungle=GEN king 1s TOP be other NEG-exist say-3sPR  
 ‘He said: “The king of this jungle is I. There is no other”.’

Note that the subject pronoun is in the ergative case, consistent with the transitivity of the construction. The embedded direct quote is the grammatical object and complements the quotative verb. The ordering of constituents is Subject-Object-Verb, the unmarked order for transitive clauses.

Evidence that pre-verbal direct quotes constitute grammatical objects, hence complements, is found in the highly integrated nature of quotative sentences. Cognition and utterance verbs are syntactically transitive or ditransitive, with ergative-marked subjects and transitive suffixal morphology. Transitive and ditransitive clauses necessarily allow an object noun phrase. With quotative verbs, this can be a noun, pronoun, or a direct quote. Thus the quote fills the same grammatical slot as other object noun phrases. In addition, pre-verbal quotative complements exhibit the same patterns of positioning as simple nominal objects, generally coming between the ergative subject and the verb, with some variation attested. Analysis of pre-verbal quotative complements as syntactically independent elements is problematic due to the integrated and clause-internal nature of the quotes. (See Genetti and Slater (2004) and Genetti (2007a: 496-498) for further argumentation on this point).

The arguments for the object status of post-verbal direct quotes is equivocal. In these constructions the verb is still transitive and the subject is ergative; however, the obligatory positioning of the quote after a post-verbal complementizer is not characteristic of grammatical objects. Thus these may not constitute complementation in the strict sense (by which the complement exhibits many properties of a particular grammatical relation), but might better be considered a “complementation strategy” in the sense of Dixon (2007).

7 I thank Kristine Hildebrandt for pointing this out.

## 4 Conventions and methods of prosodic analysis

The prosodic analysis used in this paper is that described in Genetti (2007a: Chapter 3). This follows the theoretical framework known as “Discourse Transcription”, as established by Chafe (1980, 1987, 1993, 1994) and detailed by Du Bois et al. (1993). The goal of this analytic framework is to identify and transcribe the prosodic features of continuous speech in monologic and dialogic discourse. The primary unit of prosodic structuring is considered to be the intonation unit (IU), a stretch of speech uttered under a single coherent intonation contour. Transcription conventions within this framework place each intonation unit on a separate line of text.

Particular intonation contours are viewed as resulting from the interaction of several distinct prosodic features: a raised pitch at the beginning of the intonation unit, optional accents on one (or occasionally multiple) words in an intonation unit, and the terminal pitch contour. The natural phonetic process of declination also affects the slope of the contour. The transcription system also keeps track of pauses, which are key components of discourse structuring.

My prosodic analysis of Dolakha Newar constitutes a language-specific elaboration on the Du Bois et al. framework, as I distinguish between two types of phrasal accents and posit a larger number of terminal pitch contours. Each of these categories will be discussed below.<sup>8</sup>

The prosodically analyzed data used in this study consisted of two full narratives, one 8:45 minutes and one 7:38 minutes in length,<sup>9</sup> supplemented by the first 100 seconds of five other stories. The stories were recorded from four speakers. All of the narratives were recorded between 1987 and 1989 in Dolakha and in Kathmandu, Nepal.

### 4.1 Phrasal accent

Within intonation units, certain words may be made prosodically prominent; such words are said to receive a “phrasal accent”. The most common pattern is for each intonation unit to have one phrasal accent; occasionally a unit will have more than one or will have none (the latter case is especially found with level intonation contours). The acoustic prominence may be realized by increases in loudness, pitch, and degree of pitch movement over the course of the accented word.<sup>10</sup>

I distinguish two types of phrasal accent: normal and emphatic. Normal phrasal accent results in prominence which is noticeable but unremarkable. Emphatic phrasal accent, by contrast, has significant pitch excursions. For example, in one intonation unit with emphatic phrasal accent, the fundamental frequency rose 93 hertz then dropped 36 hertz over the course of a single disyllabic word (see Figure 1); the fall then continues through the end of the IU. Normal phrasal accent is transcribed with a circumflex (^) preceding the accented syllable; for emphatic phrasal accent, the circumflex is replaced by a raised exclamation point (!).<sup>11</sup>

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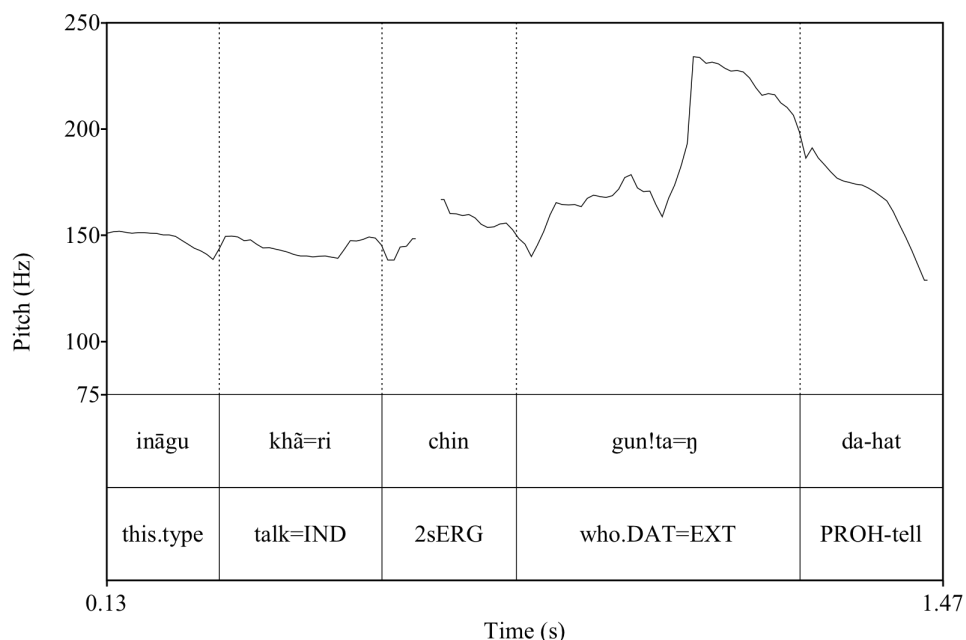
8 My other work on the prosodic structure of Dolakha Newar includes Chapters 3 and 21 of Genetti (2007a), as well as two other articles that focus on the interaction of syntax and discourse in the production of narrative: Genetti and Slater (2005) and Genetti (2007b). Readers wishing for more detail on the prosodic analysis are referred to these works.

9 The longer narrative can be found in Genetti and Slater (2004), accompanied by sound files. The other complete narrative, with prosodic transcription, is in Genetti (2007: 539-556).

10 Which syllable of a word will realize the phonetic prominence of the phrasal accent depends upon the word’s phonotactic structure; see Genetti (2007a: 71-72).

11 It is fascinating to consider why speakers may choose to give a particular word a certain level of prominence when producing natural discourse. Some factors will be obvious, such as when an element is in contrast to another; however,





**Figure 1. Pitch trace illustrating emphatic phrasal accent in sentence meaning: “Don’t say this to anybody!”**

#### 4.2 Terminal contour type

The positioning of the phrasal accent and the terminal pitch contour found on the last few syllables of an intonation unit are the primary determinants of the overall pitch shape of the intonation unit. It is possible to recognize four dominant categories of terminal pitch contours in the data: fall, level, rise, and rise-fall.<sup>12</sup> The pitch shapes that are found on units with these four terminal contour types can be briefly characterized as follows; a fuller discussion is provided in Genetti (2007a: 75-86).

*Fall:* Fairly steady fall from the last phrasal accent to the end of the intonation unit. Transcribed by a single or double back-slash (\ or \\\).

*Level:* Limited pitch variation over the duration of the intonation unit. Transcribed by an underscore (\_).

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these clearly do not tell the entire story. A full study of this would need to take into account at a minimum the lexical category of the word, the phrase and construction type, topicality, focus, contrastiveness, predictability, and intonation patterns used in the previous discourse, as well as less tangible factors such as the speaker’s attitude and evaluation of the content of the utterance, and the speaker’s physical and emotional state. Idiosyncratic variation, as well as variation based upon social factors, are also likely to come into play. Elicited examples, even those contriving to elicit longer stretches of discourse, can only hint at this complexity. See also §6.

12 About 4% of intonation units in the prosodically analyzed data were difficult to categorize and had idiosyncratic characteristics (Genetti 2007a: 75). Other units are abandoned or “truncated”. Such examples have been excluded from the current discussion.

*Rise*: Steady fall from the last phrasal accent, usually ending on the penultimate syllable, followed by a step-up or steady rise in pitch over the last syllable. Transcribed by a single or double slash (/ or //).

*Rise-fall*: Steady fall from the last phrasal accent, usually ending on the penultimate syllable, followed by an evenly distributed and equally salient rise and fall over the final syllable, with the peak of the pitch arc located approximately at the mid-point of the rhyme. Transcribed by a slash followed by a back-slash (^).

Within two of these categories, rise and fall, I make binary distinctions. Falls are phonetically sub-classed as “high falls” and “mid falls”. High falls start at a high pitch relative to a speaker’s natural pitch range then fall more dramatically than one finds with a mid fall. Rises are sub-classed as “rise” and “marked rise”, again based on the degree of pitch change. Marked rise contours have increased perceptual salience; acoustically, they are those with an increase in fundamental frequency of at least 35 hertz over the last syllable. In each case, the more dramatic contour is transcribed by a doubling of the symbol, thus \\ for high fall and // for marked rise. The transcription conventions are given in Table 1.

| Terminal contours                   |                        |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------|
| High-falling terminal contour       | \\                     |
| Mid-falling terminal contour        | \                      |
| Level terminal contour              | –                      |
| Rising terminal contour             | /                      |
| Marked-rising terminal contour      | //                     |
| Rise-fall terminal contour          | ^                      |
| Accents                             |                        |
| Phrasal accent                      | ^                      |
| Emphatic accent                     | !                      |
| Short pause (100-200 milliseconds)  | .                      |
| Medium pause (300-600 milliseconds) | ..                     |
| Long pause (over 700 milliseconds)  | ( ) duration specified |

**Table 1. Prosodic transcription conventions (Genetti 2007a: 492)**

## 5 The prosodic treatment of direct speech reports

Direct speech reports in Dolakha Newar may be set off from the quotative frame by intonation-unit boundaries, variations in pitch or loudness, and the production of contours typical of conversational speech. They may also be produced across multiple intonation units and may show patterns of macro-level prosodic structuring indicative of internal prosodic coherence and embedding within higher-level structures. On the other hand, many direct speech reports show none of these characteristics and are prosodically unmarked with respect to the quotative frame.

### 5.1 Intonation-unit boundaries

Direct speech reports can be made prosodically independent by separating them into distinct intonation units. Thus the presence of IU boundaries around the quoted material will contribute to its prosodic independence from the quotative frame. Evidence for the cline of prosodic integration is apparent even when one looks at this one factor. In some examples, there is no IU boundary on either side of the direct speech report. An example of this is given in (6):

- (6) Not parsed as separate: speech report in same IU as surrounding material  
 ... (1.01) *āle* “*jir-a*” *hat-cu* \  
           then be.okay-3sPST say-3sPST  
 ‘Then (she) said: “Okay”.

In many other cases, IU boundaries both precede and follow the speech report, allowing the reported speech to be entirely separated from the surrounding material. This can be seen in (7):

- (7) Full separation: speech report has IU boundaries before and after  
*pahila=e* *mi=n* /  
 before=GEN man=ERG  
  
 “*jana hātta yeu^li sona=pen pi-en tar-sa khene,* /  
 1sGEN why however.much flower=PL plant-PART put-if if  
  
*dokhunuj wail-ai jur-a* /  
 all wilt-BV be-3sPST  
  
*haŋ-ane* /  
 say-PART  
  
 .. *ŋen-ju* \<\  
 ask-3sPST  
 The first man asked, saying: “Why is it that however much I plant flowers, they all wilt?”

There are two intermediate structures bridging these two extremes. An IU boundary can be present at the beginning of the speech report, but not at the end, as in (8), or at the end of the speech report but not the beginning, as in (9):

(8) Intermediate: IU boundary precedes but does not follow speech report

*jawāph bi-ene //*  
answer give-PART

*.. ām mi=n //*  
that man=ERG

*ām^ta hat-cu \\  
3sDAT say-3sPST*  
'Giving that answer, that man spoke to him.

*.. ^chin /*  
2sERG

*.. deu=e ^sewā yet-a on-sa \  
god=GEN service do-PURP go-if*

*..thi-gur khā ηeη-an ^yā” haη-ane ām^ta hat^cu \\  
one-CL matter ask-PART come(IMP) say-PART 3sDAT say-3sPST*  
'If you are going in the service of God, ask him one thing and come back," so saying, he spoke to him.'

(9) Intermediate: IU boundary follows but does not precede speech report

*...^pāṇḍuk janm-ai ju-eni “lita me!bu=η damu”\  
Panduk be.born-BV happen-PART again other=EXT exist*

*...haη-an /*  
say-PART  
'Panduk having been born (s/he) said "Again there is another!"'

Example (10) is more complicated. Note that there is no IU boundary at either the beginning or the end of the speech report, yet there are boundaries internal to the quoted speech:

(10) Intermediate: No IU boundaries before or after but internal to speech report

*dwā^ku=ri iri “oho: \  
senior-NR1=IND daughter.in.law EXCL*

*..^ji yā githi yer-i /*  
1s EMPH what do-1FUT

*lās ^cār-agi” haη-an\_*  
embarrassed feel-1sPR say-PART  
'The senior daughter-in-law said: "Oho! What will I do? I feel embarrassed"...

In the first line, the subject noun phrase is not produced with any distinctive intonation contour. The speech-report begins with an exclamation, which clearly sets it off as distinct from the main-line narration. It is also prosodically offset by the production of a falling contour over a prolonged final vowel. There are two IU boundaries within the speech report itself, giving the quoted speech an internal prosodic structure that parallels the syntactic structure, as the IU boundaries are positioned before and after a dependent participial clause. We see that although the direct speech report is not entirely separated, it still has some prosodic features that set it apart from the quotative frame.

## 5.2 Variation in pitch

It is also possible for distinct alterations in pitch to separate direct speech reports from surrounding material, even in the absence of an IU boundary. This is true of the direct speech report in (11); the pitch trace of this sentence is given in Figure 2:

- (11) (1.9) *māji=n*                    “*lau*    *ō*        <sup>^</sup>  
           boatman=ERG    EXCL    go(IMP)
- ..ota*    <sup>^</sup>*parāsar*    *risi=ta* /  
 3sDAT    Parasar    Risi=DAT
- ..kho*    *tār*    *yeŋ-an*    <sup>^</sup>*bi-u*”    *hat-cu*    *hā* \  
 river    cross    do-PART    give-IMP    say-3sPST    EVID
- ‘The boatman said: “Lo! Go! Ferry Parasar Risi across the river”’

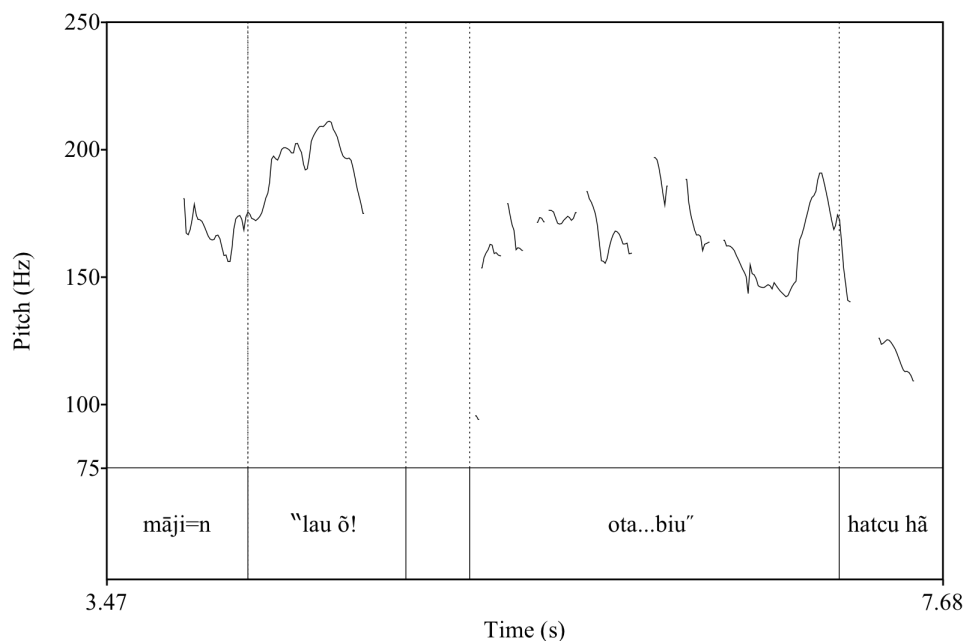


Figure 2. Pitch trace of (11), demonstrating increased F0 at the onset of the speech report, and falling F0 following the speech report

The first intonation unit in this example contains a subject noun phrase indexing the character who utters the quote followed by the first clause of the quote: an exclamation followed by a verb in imperative form. On the pitch trace, an increase in fundamental frequency is clearly seen over the quoted portion of this intonation unit.<sup>13</sup> The F0 measurements bear this out; while the noun phrase *māji=n* has an average F0 measurement of 168 hertz, the direct speech report *lau ō* has an average F0 of 197 hertz. The third intonation unit in this example also has a combination of quoted and non-quoted material. It contains the predicate of the second clause *kho tār yeŋ-an bi-u* ‘ferry across the river’ followed by the quotative verb and evidential particle. We see that there is a rise in F0 over the last syllables of the direct quote, followed by a sharp drop (of about 80 hertz) over the quotative verb and particle. It is interesting that the quotative verb, which is the complement-taking predicate and hence the “main verb” of the sentence in syntactic terms, is clearly the reduced element in prosodic terms.

### 5.3 Loudness

In addition to the decreased pitch over the quotative verb and final particle in example (11), there is also a marked decrease in loudness. Variations in loudness commonly set off quoted speech from the surrounding quotative frame. We can see this by comparing the average intensity over the last three syllables of the quoted material, which is 72 decibels, while the average intensity over the three syllables of the quotative verb and particle, 61 decibels. This is a clearly audible difference. While the quotative verb is a syntactically required element and not an afterthought, the prosodic reduction in pitch and loudness produces the impression that the quotative verb is “tacked on” to the quote, like an obligatory grammatical particle.

Narrators sometimes use variations in loudness to mark turn-taking in reported conversations. In such sequences, the speech reports are produced at the level of loudness typical of the narrative as a whole, while the quotative frames are produced at a quieter level, even to the point of being barely audible on the recording. When repeated, this pattern of variation functions as an aid in the layering of voices and the corresponding levels of the narrative: the louder discourse tracks the voice of the characters and the embedded level of their conversation, while the softer discourse tracks the voice of the narrator and the main line of the narration. An example of this is given in (12), a series of three independent sentences, each reporting the speech of one of three characters. These sentences have parallel structuring: each begins with the subject noun phrase *thi-mā=n* ‘one’, which is produced in its own intonation unit with falling intonation, here functioning to delineate the referents as distinct topics; this is then followed by the production of the speech report; and each ends with the quotative verb and sentence-final evidential particle.

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<sup>13</sup> Fundamental frequency is the acoustic parameter which correlates with perceived pitch. Intensity is the acoustic parameter which correlates with perceived loudness.

(12) Increased loudness on speech reports; decreased on quotative frames

a. <sup>ˆ</sup>thi-mā=n \  
one-CL=ERG

. “<sup>ˆ</sup>ji wā: \  
1s TOP

<sup>ˆ</sup>hāluwā chu=ke ũ-i dar-sā jana \  
haluwa cook=ALL go-INF have-if 1sGEN

.<sup>ˆ</sup>nai khō-i jeu” \\  
food see-1FUT maybe

.. hat-cu hã \\  
say-3sPST EVID

b. . thi-mā=n \  
one-CL=ERG

.. “<sup>ˆ</sup>bhānche=ke ũ-i dar-sa janta jā uliuli khene  
cook=ALL go-1FUT have-if 1sDAT rice little bit

na-i bi-eu” hat-cu hã \\  
eat-INF give-3FUT say-3sPST EVID

c. . thi-mā=n \  
one-CL=ERG

.. “<sup>ˆ</sup>ji wā rājā=ke tuŋ ũ-i ka” \\  
1s TOP king=ALL FOC go-1FUT ASS

.. haŋ-an hat-cu hã \\  
say-PART say-3sPST EVID

Table 2 displays the average intensity measurements over the three parts of each sentence: the pre-quotative noun phrase, the quote itself, and the post-quotative material (quotative verb, optional complementizer *haŋ-an*, and evidential particle).

| Sentence | Part                    | Intensity (Decibels) |
|----------|-------------------------|----------------------|
| (12a)    | Pre-quotative NP        | 64 dB                |
|          | Quote                   | 67 dB                |
|          | Post-quotative material | 59 dB                |
| (12b)    | Pre-quotative NP        | 61 dB                |
|          | Quote                   | 70 dB                |
|          | Post-quotative material | 60 dB                |
| (12c)    | Pre-quotative NP        | 63 dB                |
|          | Quote                   | 72 dB                |
|          | Post-quotative material | 61 dB                |

**Table 2. Average intensity measurements of pre-quotative, quotative, and post-quotative material in the three sentences of example (12)**

We can see a clear pattern of heightened intensity over the quoted speech and lower intensity on the marginal quotative frames. This has the effect of foregrounding the reported speech against the quieter background of the main-line narrative.

#### 5.4 *Contours characteristic of conversational speech*

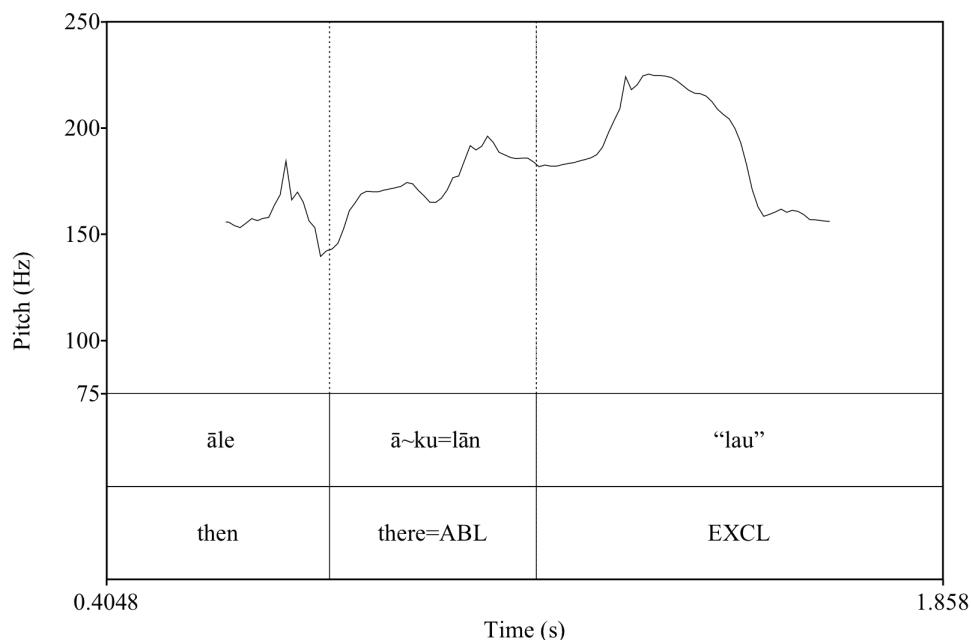
When the onset of quoted speech is not marked by an intonation-unit boundary, the quote can still be prosodically marked as a direct speech report by the production of a contour that is strongly characteristic of conversational, as opposed to narrative, discourse. This is especially true of the high-rise contour characteristic of questions and the rise-fall contours that typify exclamatory or vocative utterances.

Example (13) illustrates this point. It begins with a sentential adverbial followed by the locative phrase  $\tilde{a} ku=l\tilde{a}n$ , then moves into the direct quote, which begins with an exclamation. The production of the exclamation, including its characteristic rise-fall contour, marks the move into the reported speech:

- (13)
- ...(1.41)  $\tilde{a}le$   $\tilde{a} ku=l\tilde{a}n$  “*lau*”  $\wedge$   
                   then there=ABL EXCL  
                   ‘Then (he said): “Lau!”’

Figure 3 shows the pitch trace for this intonation unit. The second vertical dotted line indicates the onset of the direct speech report.





**Figure 3. Pitch trace of (13), demonstrating rise-fall contour over quoted material; the arrow marks the onset of the quotation**

At the onset of the exclamation, the F0 approximates 190 hertz. It increases to 224 hertz at the peak of the utterance, then falls to about 160. Such dramatic rise-fall contours are not characteristic of non-quotative narrative discourse. On the other hand, they are commonly heard on exclamatory and vocative expressions.

### 5.5 Higher-level prosodic structuring

Finally, direct speech reports can be prosodically distinguished from the surrounding quotative frame by the patterned sequencing of terminal contours across IU's. These sequences are frequently found in non-quoted speech and provide macro-level prosodic structuring. Such structures have been referred to in the intonation literature as prosodic paragraphs or “paratones” (Fox 1973, Brown 1977, Brown et al. 1980, Fox 1984, Wichmann 2000: 105-107, Wennerstrom 2001b: 100-108 and *passim*) or “subordinating intonation structures” (Fox 1984).<sup>14</sup> In Dolakha Newar, the most common pattern is to have a sequence of IU's with rising (or, less frequently, rising-falling) terminal contours, followed by an IU with a falling terminal contour. One finds this pattern with list intonation, as in the following utterance, a list of the proper names of three brothers:

<sup>14</sup> The paratone is conceptualized as an intonational paragraph (although smaller than a written paragraph [Brown et al. 1980: 26]). It has been defined in different ways, depending in part upon the intonational model being used for the analysis. However it appears that the units identified as paratones in those frameworks would substantially overlap with what I call prosodic sentences. Prosodic sentences are also similar to what Fox (1984) terms “subordinating intonation structures”. More work is needed to compare, contrast, and ultimately synthesize the various proposals for prosodic macro-units currently found in the intonation literature.

- (14) Syntactic list of proper names; single prosodic sentence  
 .. <sup>ˆ</sup>bidur /\  
 Bidur  
  
 .. <sup>ˆ</sup>paṇḍuk /  
 Paṇḍuk  
  
 .. <sup>ˆ</sup>dhirtarāṣṭra \  
 Dhirtarāṣṭra  
 ‘Bidur, Paṇḍuk, Dhirtarāṣṭra.’

The rise and rise-fall contours indicate that there is more material to come, while the fall indicates finality; hence intonation is used by the speaker to indicate his or her intentions to continue. Chafe (1997) refers to this as the “signpost” function of intonation. Genetti and Slater (2004) and Genetti (2007b) follow Chafe (1994: 142-144) in using the label “prosodic sentence” to refer to prosodic macro-units in narrative consisting of a sequence of intonation units with continuing intonation followed by a single intonation unit with final intonation. Example (14) is thus a prosodic sentence even though it is not a syntactic sentence (since it does not have a predicate). The boundaries of prosodic and syntactic sentences are frequently co-terminus, as in example 15:

- (15) .. <sup>ˆ</sup>khu-mā mucā janm-ai ju-ene /  
 six-CL child be.born-BV happen-PART  
  
 ām mucā=pen thau thau <sup>ˆ</sup>thāi on-a \  
 that child=PL REFL REFL place go-3sPST  
 ‘The six children were born (and) each child went to its own place.’

This is a complete syntactic sentence, with a non-finite participial clause in the first intonation unit followed by a finite clause in the second intonation unit. The rising contour at the end of the first intonation unit marks prosodic non-finality, just as the participial verb marks syntactic non-finality. Similarly, the second intonation unit ends in both final prosodic marking (a fall), and final syntactic marking (a finite verb). The prosodic and syntactic structuring are thus parallel in this example.<sup>15</sup>

Direct speech reports are frequently split across multiple intonation units. When they are, the sequence of contours can create prosodic sentences, which can then be embedded into higher-level prosodic structures. This is dramatically exemplified in (16), where the quoted material, syntactically three complete sentences, is split over six intonation units.

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15 However, this is not always the case. See Genetti 2007b for discussion of “prosody-syntax mismatches” and their functions in Dolakha Newar narratives.

(16)

a. *haŋ-ane* //  
say-PART

b. “*jin*      *yeu'ling*      *sona=pen*      *pir-agi* /\  
1sERG    however.many    flower=PL    plant-1sPR

c. *tara*    *pi-en* /  
but    plant-PART

d. *on-ngasin* /  
go-when

e. *ām*    *sona*    *ˆma-mwā* /  
that    flower    NEG-survive

*End of first syntactic sentence*

f. *dokhu'nuy*    *wail-ai*    *ju-en*      *siˆt-a* \\  
all            wilt-BV    be-PART    die-3sPST

*End of second syntactic sentence*

g. *hātta*    *ju-eu*” \_  
why    happen-3FUT

*End of third syntactic sentence*

h. *haŋ-an*      *hat-cu* \\  
say-PART    say-3sPST

That being said, he said: “However many flowers I plant, but I plant them and when I go, those flowers do not survive. All of them wilted and died. Why will that happen?”

This example begins with a participial verb referencing the speech event of the preceding sentence (line a). It has a marked rising terminal contour which is anticipatory of material to come. The prosodic sentence initiated by this unit can be analyzed as being suspended during the production of the direct speech report in the six intonation units realized in lines (b) through (g).<sup>16</sup> In lines (b) through (e), there are either rise or rise-fall terminal contours. Line (f) has a high fall indicating finality, which closes off the prosodic sentence. Line (g) comprises an independent sentence at both the prosodic and syntactic levels. It is pronounced with a level terminal contour (a type of final contour frequently used in quoted speech). Line (h) moves out from the direct speech report to the narrative level, resuming the suspended prosodic sentence begun in line (a), and closing it off with the production of the high-fall terminal contour. The analysis, then, is of two complete prosodic sentences which are embedded into a higher-level prosodic sentence. The prosodic embedding exactly parallels the syntactic embedding of the quotative complement.

Examples such as this, with macro-level structuring across intonation units, show a greater degree of prosodic independence than examples where the direct-speech reports lack such prosodic sequencing. These examples could stand independently as prosodically discrete and coherent units, while other direct speech reports could not.

16 See Genetti 2007b for arguments in favor of the suspension of the prosodic sentence of the quotative frame.

### **5.6 The cline of prosodic integration**

We have seen that there are a number of prosodic features which can set direct speech reports off from the surrounding quotative frame, including intonation-unit boundaries preceding or following the quote, changes in pitch or loudness, the use of contours commonly found in interactional discourse, and prosodic structuring across intonation units that parallels that of independent prosodic sentences. Particular speech reports can have all or none of these properties. Thus there is a cline of prosodic integration from prosodically integrated to prosodically independent. (This is parallel in some ways to proposed clines for syntactic integration, e.g., Lehmann 1988, Matthieson and Thompson 1988, Hopper and Traugott 2003: 177.). We can see this cline as having two distinctive endpoints, one with IU boundaries at both sides of the speech report, shifts in pitch and loudness, and the production of terminal contours, alone or in sequence, typical of prosodically independent units in other types of discourse (e.g., example 16). On the other end is the necessarily shorter speech report, which is fully integrated into the quotative frame, and receives no prosodic marking whatsoever (e.g., example 6). Between this, direct speech reports can vary from having more or fewer markers of independence and greater or lesser degrees of variation in pitch or loudness.

## **6 Explaining the unique prosodic behavior of quotative complements**

This study has demonstrated that quotative complements in Dolakha Newar have varying degrees of prosodic salience and lie along a cline from complete prosodic integration with the quotative frame to complete prosodic independence. This raises two questions: first, why should direct quotes display this variable prosodic behavior, even though they all realize the same *syntactic* structure as complements of quotative verbs; and second, what factors influence a speaker's choice of the prosodic treatment of particular instances of direct speech.

All instances of direct speech in the data share the core syntactic structure of being complements of quotative verbs. However, they exhibit a tremendous range of prosodic behaviors. This variability results from a tension among factors, some pulling in the direction of independence and others in the direction of integration. The primary factor favoring prosodic independence is the functional nature of direct speech reports. These necessarily purport to be the exact words produced by the original speaker. This is clearly why direct speech reports are sentential (even multi-sentential), as opposed to reduced, complements. This is also why direct speech reports can have prosodic features similar to those of independent utterances; they contribute to a speech report's performative quality. The more characteristics they have of independent utterances, the more vivid and immediate they seem. "Performing" a speech report also allows for parodistic stylization (Günther 1999: 696), the ability of speakers to attribute affective qualities to the character, hence to implicitly evaluate the character and the reported utterance. Thus, producing prosody that mimics an independent utterance is a rich narrative device.

Pulling in the other direction are several factors that favor the prosodic integration of quotative complements. The first is the syntax of quotation. In the *haj-an* construction, where the direct quote precedes the quotative verb, direct speech reports are grammatically objects, syntactically dependent on the following verb. The narrator's utterance remains incomplete until the production of that verb, which closes off the speech report and mediates the shift to the main-line narrative. This prohibits direct speech reports from becoming completely independent; they are not syntactically

final, but must be followed by further material. A second factor that favors the prosodic integration of speech reports is that the quotative verbs that follow direct reports carry inflectional suffixes that either link them to the following clause (if the verb is non-finite), or terminate the sentence (if the verb is finite). This means that the quotative verbs have a significant “signpost” function (Chafe 1997), and frequently carry their own distinctive terminal contour. Quotative verbs can thus be prosodically salient, with greater prosodic prominence than the complement. The latter becomes subordinate, hence integrated.

Thus the variable prosodic behavior of direct speech reports can be attributed to competing pressures in the production of narrative discourse. On the one hand, storytellers want to engage their audience by performing and evaluating the characters as they confront the various devices in the plot. On the other hand, they need to complete the sentence into which the speech report is embedded and produce the immediately following verb, which may have its own need for prosodic salience. Layered on top of these pressures are discourse factors that might influence the speaker’s choice, such as the rhetorical import of the speech report (Noonan 2006), and the extent to which it contains surprising or new information. Thus we see that syntactic and prosodic factors compete for the allocation of prosodic resources. Performance factors, such as speaker fatigue or rate of speech, could also play a role.

Finally, one needs to consider inter-speaker variation in style. Speakers vary in their interest and proficiency in storytelling and in the degree to which they use a performative style. Also, some speakers are quiet or shy in front of the microphone while others are excited by the opportunity to perform and be recorded. Even within the production of a single narrative a speaker may vary in their level of performativity, becoming animated in some parts and comparatively monotone in others. All of these factors will influence the degree to which the speaker chooses to mimic (or not mimic) prosodic characteristics as they take on the voice of the character.

I have suggested that the range of prosodic behavior found over direct speech reports results from a variety of competing pressures, some of which take precedence in specific instances and others which take precedence elsewhere. This raises the interesting question of whether one would be able to construct a multivariate statistical analysis that would weigh these various factors and correlate them with the production of particular prosodic variables produced by speakers. In other words, could one construct a predictive model that accounts for each instance of speaker behavior? Such a study would be complex and would require some normalization to appropriately respond to idiolectal variation. It is hoped that the current paper will help establish a framework for such a model by identifying the range of variables that such a study would need to take into account.<sup>17</sup> However, it is important to remember that prosodic structures are, in part, meaningful, conveying emotion and attitude, so are not simply mechanistic reflexes. So while statistical analyses confined to objectively quantifiable dimensions may tell part of the story, quantitative analyses will always fall short in predicting the full richness of human behavior in the production of meaningful discourse.

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17 These would, at a minimum, include the following: features of the speech report (including length, construction type, syntactic complexity, content (e.g., presence of focused or contrastive NP’s, intensifiers, gradable adjectives, discourse particles)); features of the quotative frame (e.g., length and complexity of that sentence, position of speech report before or after the quotative verb, presence or absence of a complementizer); rhetorical factors (e.g., role of speech report in moving the plot forward, inferences that the speaker wants the hearer to draw); broader discourse factors (e.g., length of the story, parallelism of a given utterance with preceding discourse); production factors (e.g. rate of speech, dysfluencies), setting (nature of the audience); and characteristics of the narrator (proficiency in storytelling, level of excitement, level of familiarity with the story, clarity of articulation, fatigue, storytelling goals, even personality). Social factors, such as gender or age, may also play a role.

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