Introductions to discourse in Ugaritic narrative verse

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[The introductions to direct speech in Ugaritic narrative verse draw on a stock formulary of patterned phrases. This formulary and its patterns are examined here. The formulae are set out as simple verse-lines (with variants when present) and as expansions of these lines. The expansions have even more variants. Such simple and expanded formulae can be assigned differing prosodic and rhetorical functions, but only the 'messenger formula' occupies a fixed spot. One formula, even, is used after speech. It would appear, too, that multiple-line introductions developed from more basic forms. Comparative material (in Akkadian, Hebrew, etc.) has yet to be fully assessed in a similar manner.]

0) Introduction

This note[1] examines expressions used to introduce speech in the Ugaritic literary texts[2] tracing their development from the single line, through the couplet, to the tricolon and the rare quatrain. Similar studies have been carried out by Loewenstamm and de Moo[3]. First will come a section setting out the formulae and their variants. Then, expansions of these formulae will be examined. After discussion of the prosodic and rhetorical functions of such expressions in both simple and extended forms comes a final paragraph on a post-speech formula. Of course, speeches (and messages) are not always introduced by a formula[4] but when present the prelude to speech is rarely less than a line in length[5]. The reverse is a description of "speaking" with no actual speech as in KTU 1.4 VII 29ff, which has no actual bearing on our discussion.

1) The Formulae

Here are listed one-line formulae used to introduce speech in Ugaritic verse. The first half dozen are the commonest and, as will be seen, they are also those which can occur in expanded form. For ease of reference the formulae have been identified by letters; a number after a slash denotes a variant (e.g. F/2 = second variant of formula F).

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1. For my other studies in Ugaritic verse cf. *UF* 7(1975)383-492; *Or* 45(1976)434-442; *UF* 9(1977)273-284; *UF* 10(1978)397-401; *Or* 48(1979)112-117; *UF* 12(1980)443-447; *UF* 13(1981)181-192.

2) See Del Olmo Lete, *MLC,* pp. 52-60 and his bibliography, l. 55 n. 78. Unfortunately the preliminary study on this topic in Whitaker, *FAUP,* is unavailable to me.

3). S.E. Loewenstamm, "The Address 'Listen' in the Ugaritic Epic and the Bible", in *The Bible World. Essays in Honor of Cyrus H. Gordon.* New York 1980, pp. 123-131, J.C. de Moor, "The Art of Versification in Ugarit and Israel-I", in *Studies in the Bible and the Ancient Near East Presented to S.E. Leowenstamm.* Jerusalem 1979, pp. 119-139; II, *UF* 10(1978)187-217; III, *UF* 12(1980)311-315.

4. As in KTU 1.2 I 40; 1.6 I 5-6; 1.13:21; 1.14 III 21.33; 1.19 II 15ff,22ff; 1.23:71, etc.

5. E.g. KTU 1.1 IV 16 in broken context; cf. Gibson, *CML*[2], p. 39; Del Olmo Lete, *MLC,* p. 159.

A: *wyʕn ltpn 'il dp'id*
    Answer did Lutpan, kindly god.

By far the commonest formula[6] this expression can be set out schematically as *(w)* + $\sqrt{ʕny}$ (usually yqtl) + GN/PN. The meaning "to reply" is normally present only in a weak sense though the formula occurs often in streetches of dialogue. Note the anomalous variant A/1 *yʕn ġlmm yʕnyn* which is used before a negation and is difficult to translate[7].

B: *yš'u gh wyṣḥ*
    He raised his voice and shouted.

Again a frequently used formula[8] which follows the pattern $\sqrt{nš'}$ (yqtl) + *g* + suffix + *w* + $\sqrt{s(y)ḥ}$ (yqtl). There appear to be no variants.

C: *gm lġlmh bʕl kyṣḥ*
    Aloud to his youths did Baal shout.

Though superficially resembling B, formula C[9] is better treated as independent. The variant C/1 *gm ysḥ 'il lrbt 'atrt ym* —also as *gm ysḥ 'il lbtlt ʕnt*— is not significant[10]. It is not clear whether *špš tṣḥ lmt*[10a] belongs here as a variant or not.

D: *wrgm l'aḫtk ttmnt*
    And say to your sister Octavia.

Essentially a messenger formula, D[11] has a variant, D/1 *lyrgm l'al'iyn bʕl*[11a] and a corresponding form in the passive, formula G, discussed below.

E: *w[yṯ]b ṯr 'abh 'il*
    Respond did Bull El, his father.

Although the formula here is based on a restoration[12]. I have included it because it also occurs in expanded form (see below).

F: *ql lbʕl ttnn*
    Loudly they spoke to Baal.

This formula is followed by a couplet announcing good news[13]. A variant, F/1, inserts a divine name into the same formula: *[ql] lbʕl ʕnt ttnn*[14].

G: *rgm l'il ybl*
    Word was brought to El[15].

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6. KTU 1.1 IV 13 (quoted), 17, 25-26, etc.
7. KTU 1.3 IV 5; Del Olmo Lete, *MLC*, p. 186, opts for "Respondiéronle los macebos esta respuesta".
8. KTU 1.1 II 17; 1.2 III 15; 1.3 III 35-36; 1.5 II 16-17 and elsewhere.
9. KTU 1.4 VII 52-53 (cited).
10. Texts: KTU 1.6 I 43-44 and 1.6 III 22. Both are single lines of verse.
10a. KTU 1.6 VI 22-23; cf. 1.161:19.
11. KTU 1.16 I 38-39; cf. 1.14 V 32 (and 1.2 I 33).
11a. KTU 1.4 V 12.
12. Following KTU 1.14 II 6; cf. Gibson, *CML*[2], p. 165.
13. KTU 1.10 III 32.
14. *Ibid.* II 32. For the prosodic implications see my discussion in a review of J. Kugel, *The Idea of Biblical Poetry*. New Haven/London 1981, to appear in *JSOT*. Altogether different is the formula *wtn qlh bʕrpt*, KTU 1.4 V 8.
15. KTU 1.23:52,59; also, *rgm ly[pn] ybl* in 1.19 IV 50-51.

H: *wywsrnn ggnh*

   His inner self instructed him.

Strictly speaking this line is the second half of a "structurally" parallel couplet[16].

I: *wyqrb bš'al krt*

   He (= El) approached, asking Krt[17].

J: *ṭm ydr krt ṯᶜ*

   There did Noble Krt make a vow[18].

K: *bšm tgᶜrm ᶜṭtrt*

   Athtart rebuked him by name.

A variant of K[19] is K/1: *bhm tgᶜr ṯgr bt 'il,* "The doorman of El's house reproves them"[20].

L: *wypᶜr šmthm*

   He proclaimed their (joint) name[21].

M: *ysly ᶜrpt bhm 'un*

   He abjured the clouds in the terrible drought[22].

N: *hm 'aṭtm tṣhn*

   If both women should shout.

This formula[23] introduces a speech within a speech. Related (or a variant, N/1) is *wṣh hm ᶜm ngr mdrᶜ,* "They shouted to the guardian of the sown"[24].

O: *ṣh lqs 'ilm*

   He invited the gods to the carving.

Though superficially similar to N, the meaning in O[25] is totally different[26].

2) Expansions of the formulae

   Here, expansions of the formulae just listed will be set out (following the same sequence) and discussed briefly.

16. KTU 1.16 VI 26.
17. KTU 1.14 I 37-38; cf. *tqrb ah[h wiš'al/tsh],* 1.16 II 17, and, more remotely *[w/k]yqrb bᶜl bhnth,* 1.17 I 16.
18. KTU 1.14 IV 36-37.
19. KTU 1.2 IV 28, on which cf. Pardee, *BO* 37(1980)274.
20. KTU 1.114:12; the line *b'il 'abh gᶜr* (same text, line 14) is not followed by direct speech. For translation of 1.114 cf. Cathcart–Watson, *PIBA* 4(1980)35-58.
21. KTU 1.2 IV 11.18 where Kothar is naming a double-headed axe; cf. Del Olmo Lete, *MLC,* p. 614. Also, 1.13:32.
22. KTU 1.19 I 38-40, following Del Olmo Lete, *MLC,* p. 389. Note the preceding "filler" line *'apnk dn'il mt rp'i.* Related, perhaps, is *qr my[m] mlk yṣm* in 1.19 III 45-46.
23. KTU 1.23:3(.42-43.46.
24. *Ibid,* line 69.
25. KTU 1.114:2; see note 20.
26. Other possible formulae include KTU 1.17 I 34-36 (blessing) and the series of questions in 1.16 V 10-22.

EXPANSIONS OF A

> A-1: *yʿn 'il bšbʿt ḥdrm*
>> *bṯmnt 'ap sgrt*
>> *El spoke from seven rooms,*
>> *from eight antechambers.*

The couplet occurs twice[27] though no reason for its use is immediately apparent.

> A-2: *wtʿn btlt ʿnt*
>> *ṯṯb ybmt l'imm*
>> *Virgin Anath replied,*
>> *the 'sister-in-law' of the peoples made response.*

Twice this introduction is followed by a lengthy speech[28] while in another text it forms part of a tricolon which also comes before a long speech[29].

> A-3: *wyʿn dn'il mt rp'i*
>> *yṯb ǵzr mt hrnmy*
>> *yš'u gh wyṣḥ*
>> *Danel, R.-man, replied,*
>> *the adult, H.-man, responded.*
>> *He raised his voice and shouted.*

In effect this climactic strophe[30] comprises a couplet (= A-2) plus a standard speech-introduction formula (= B). It closes the period of mourning for Aqhat and marks a transition to normal life.

EXPANSION OF B

> B-1: *wypqd krt ṯc*
>> *yš'u gh wyṣḥ*
>> *Noble Krt gave orders,*
>> *raised his voice and shouted.*

The B-formula here[31] comes in the second line. Krt has just been cured; he is ordering preparations for a celebration sacrifice and this couplet marks a transition to normal life once more (see above on A-3). For the set of expressions involving the verb *ṣḥq*, see below.

EXPANSION OF C

> C-1: *'any lyṣḥ ṯr 'il 'abh*
>> *'il mlk dyknnh*
>> *yṣḥ 'aṯrt wbnh*
>> *'ilt wṣbrt 'aryh*
>> *Sighing, Bull El his father exclaimed,*
>> *El, the king who established him,*
>> *Athirat and her sons exclaimed,*
>> *the goddess and her band of relatives.*

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27. KTU 1.3 V 10-12 // 25-27.
28. KTU 1.3 IV 21-22; 1.19 I 5-6.
29. KTU 1.4 V 49-50; see 1.20 I 7-8.
30. KTU 1.19 IV 18-20, followed by a tricolon.
31. KTU 1.16 VI 14-16.

Here I follow Del Olmo Lete[32]. Gibson[33] considers these words to belong to Anath's description of Baal —"(Yet) groaning he indeed cries out to the bull El his father, etc."— which obviates the difficulty of parsing *ysḥ* (third line) with *'aṯrt bnh* as subject, though this problem is not insurmountable. Each time it is used this introduction is followed by eight lines stating that Baal has no palace. It belongs, therefore, to formulaic language.

EXPANSIONS OF B AND C

We come now to expansions of B and C which include the aspect of happiness and rejoicing and seem to comprise an independent semantic set[34].

> C-2: *šmḫ rbt 'aṯrt ym*
> *gm lġlmh ktṣḥ*
> *Lady Asherah of the Sea rejoiced,*
> *aloud did she call to her page.*

Asherah is reacting to the sight of silver and gold[35].

> B-2: *ṣḥq btlt 'nt*
> *tš'u gh wtṣḥ*
> *Virgin Anath laughed;*
> *she raised her voice and exclaimed.*

The couplet introduces the announcement of good news to Baal: his palace is to be built[36]. In the Aqhat text the same couplet precedes Anath's offer of marriage[37]. Kothar-and-Hasis also use this introduction for the "I told you so" speech concerning the windows:[38]

> B-3: *ṣḥq kṯr wḫss*
> *yš'u gh wyṣḥ*
> *lrgmt lk 'al'iyn b'l*
> *ṯtbn b'l lhwty*
> *Kothar-and-Hasis laughed,*
> *raised his voice and exclaimed:*
> *'Did I not tell you, O Mightiest Baal,*
> *that you would come back to my word?'*

Here, too, belong two texts which insert a couplet or tricolon between the B-2 couplet[39]:

> B-4[1]: *šmḫ lṭpn 'il dp'id*
> *p'nh lhdm yṯpd*
> *wyprq lṣb wyṣḥq*
> *yš'u gh wyṣḥ*

32. Del Olmo Lete, *MLC*, p. 191; the texts are KTU 1.3 V 35-37 // 1.4 I 4-8 // 1.4 IV 47-50.

33. Gibson, *CML²*, p. 54.

34. See the preliminary study by Del Olmo Lete, *AF* 2(1976)233-236.

35. KTU 1.4 II 28-29, plus 10-line speech. Note that in 1.4 V 35-36 an introductory formula appears to be missing.

36. KTU 1.4 V 25-26.

37. KTU 1.18 I 22-23.

38. KTU 1.4 VII 21-22; the second couplet appears to play on the introductory formula under discussion (*ṯ(w)b*, "to return" evokes the meaning "to reply").

39. See note 32. KTU 1.4 IV 27-30 simply joins the "action" tricolon to our formula; accordingly, it is not discussed as an expansion here.

> *Latipan, kindly god, rejoiced;*
> *his feet he placed on the footstool,*
> *he uncreased his forehead and laughed,*
> *raised his voice and shouted.*

Here[40] El announces his joy at knowing Baal to be alive.

In the variant a line parallel to the first is inserted and, as Del Olmo Lete noted, the line sequence within the following couplet is inverted:

B-4[2]: *bdn'il pnm tšmḫ*
    w'l yshl p'it
    yprq lṣb wyṣhq
    p'n lhdm ytpd
    yš'u gh wyṣh
    Danel's face gleamed joyfully,
    above, his brow shone, etc.

The strophe is followed by a quatrain (Danel can relax now) and then come the lines (six couplets) listing stock characteristics of the ideal son[41]. There is, incidentally, a near-parallel to examples from this set in the Babylonian Epic of Erra[42]:

išmes[um] Erra	*immerā pānūšu*
kī ūme n[apard]ê	*uḫtambisu zīmūšu*
īrumma [ana] Emeslam	*irtami šubassu*

Erra listened to him; his face shone;
like a shining bright day his looks were exuberant.
He entered Emeslam and took his seat.

These three lines, which mark an important moment in the poem[43] are followed by a couplet introducing Erra's instructions to Išum.

EXPANSIONS OF D

D-1: *wrgm lbn 'ilm mt*
    tny lydd 'il ġzr
    And tell divine Mot,
    repeat to the hero, El's favourite.

Here[44] and in two other passages the injunction precedes a message[45]. The fourth occurrence is before the "told you so speech"[46].

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40. KTU 1.6 III 14-17.
41. KTU 1.17 II 8-12. Del Olmo Lete, *AF* 2(1976)234, n. 17 comments: "En todo caso la fórmula de discurso directo debe considerarse *como elemento aparte e independiente*" (emphasis mine). Here, too, can be included the formula

'il yẓhq bm lb
wygmd bm kbd
El laughed inside himself
and rejoiced inwardly.

(KTU 1.12 I 12-13) which is followed by direct speech without the act of speaking mentioned (= Ø prelude).
42. For text and translations cf. Lambert, *Iraq* 24(1962)120-121; L. Cagni, *L'Epopea di Erra*. Rome 1969, pp. 124-125 and L. Cagni, *The Poem of Erra*. Malibu 1977, p. 58.
43. So Cagni, *Poem*, p. 59, n. 160.
44. KTU 1.4 VIII 29-31.
45. KTU 1.3 III 11-12, 21-23.
46. KTU 1.3 IV 7-8.

D-2: *lk l'abk yṣb*
>*lk l'abk wrgm*
>*ṯny l[krt ṯˁ/ 'adnk]*
>*Go to your father, Yassub,*
>*go to your father and say,*
>*repeat to[Krt the Noble (or) your master]*

As with D-1 the "messenger formula" comes after a command ordering movement to the addressee. Here[47] the repetitive pattern is followed by staircase parallelism.

D-3: *qmm 'aṯr 'amr*
>*ṯny dˁtkm*
>*wrgm lṯr 'aby 'il*
>*ṯny lpḫr mˁd*
>*Standing, advance and speak,*
>*repeat your communication,*
>*and say to my father, Bull El,*
>*repeat to the full assembly.*

The execution of this command differs, slightly[48]:

D-4: *qmm 'aṯr 'amr*
>*ṯny dˁthm*
>*'ištm yi'tmr*
>*ḫrb lṭšt lšnhm*
>*rgm lṯr 'abh 'il*

A figurative couplet is inserted after the first two lines ["(Like) a fire, two fires they appeared/ (like) a sharpened sword, their tongue"][49] —while the final line is omitted.

EXPANSION OF E

E-1: *yṯb 'al'iyn bˁl*
>*ytˁdd rkb ˁrpt*
>*Reply did Mightiest Baal,*
>*respond did the Cloudrider.*

A long, important complaint follows[50]; the initial word is based on restoration[51]. There appear to be no other expansions of E.

EXPANSION OF *X

*X is the unattested formula *yṯn gh bky* of which two examples appear to be expansions[52]:

X-1: *ybky wyšnn*
>*yṯn gh bky*
>*He wept, gnashing his teeth;*
>*he gave vent to weeping.*

47. KTU 1.16 VI 27-29.
48. Command: KTU 1.2 I 15-17, restored from execution, lines 31-33.
49. Following J.C. de Moor, *The Seasonal Pattern in the Ugaritic Myth of Baˁlu*. Neukirchen-Vluyn 1971, p. 129.
50. KTU 1.4 III 10-11.
51. Strictly, *y[ṯ]b*; see, conveniently, Del Olmo Lete, *MLC*, p. 197.
52. KTU 1.16 I 13-14 and II 35-36 (fem.). For the idiom *yṯn g(h)* cf. 1.2 IV 6 and 1.16 I 55.

Both lines use hendiadys. The couplet belongs to a tricolon with the opening line ʿl 'abh yʿrb, "He entered his father's presence", which is a prelude to Elhu's speech of concern for Krt's approaching demise. The same couplet (in the fem.) introduces the same speech from Elhu's sister, Octavia.

3) Discussion

Having examined the prelude-to-speech formula with their variants and expansions, we now have to consider the occurrence, distribution, development and purpose of the collected data. To begin with, variants of the standard formulae are few; they include A/1, C/1, D/1, F/1, K/1 and perhaps N/1. Expansions of the formulae are never based on these variant forms. As for occurrence, A and B are the most frequently used, followed by C and D. The expansions (including variants) have corresponding ratios of occurrence[53]. No hard and fast conclusions can be drawn concerning development, but there are indications that single line formulae were expanded rather than the other way about. Three factors point towards development in this direction. 1) Single-line formulae outnumber attested expansions (in the ratio of approximately 15:6). ?) Expansions are never based on variants of such formulae (as already mentioned). 3) The expansions tend to have several variants, while maintaining the standard formulae unchanged whereas these standard formulae have few variants (hardly more than one per formula in about six cases). Such considerations, in fact, suggest the following line of development: single word - single line - couplet - tricolon - quatrain. It can even be argued that the initial stage is ∅, i.e. absence of any speech introducing element, but this would only apply to the evolution of this particular kind of formula and could not have validity for the general development of verse units[54].

With regard to the expansions, no hard and fast rules emerge concerning their purpose. They can introduce lengthy speeches, they can mark a climax or important moment in a poem and they can be used simply as messenger formulae. A table will show the distribution.

    i.*introducing long speech*

    C-1 (formulaic); C-2; B-2; B-4[2]; E-1; X-1.

    ii.*marking key passage*

    A-2; A-3; B-3; B-4[1]; X-1.

    iii.*messenger formula*

    D-1; D-2; D-3; D-4.

It can be noted that X-1 combines both structural (i) and rhetorical (ii) functions, an anomaly which may suggest it is a pseudo-expansion. Also, inner-variants of B-4 have different functions, which is curious. A-1 is unassigned (see above) and set iii comprises variants of the expanded messenger formula.

4) Speech-Closing Formula

Unnoticed has gone the peculiar use of a formula which comes *after* a speech in Ugaritic narrative verse, as a form of closural device[55], though in effect it tends to open a stanza.

    bph rgm lyṣ'a

    bšpth hwth

    Barely had the word left his mouth,

    the speech (left) his lips

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53. A: very frequent – A-1,2,3: six times; B: frequent – B-1,2,3,4: seven times; C: three times – C-1,2: four times; D: four times – D-1,2,3,4: seven times; E: once – E-1: once.

54. For a discussion of expansion and contraction see de Moor's papers (note 3, above).

55. On this feature of poetry cf. B. Smith, *Poetic Closure*. Chicago/London 1968, and E. Häublein, *The Stanza*. London 1978, pp. 53ff.

The couplet is used four times in Aqhat, in three of which Danel is asking Baal to break the wings of birds suspected of concealing his son's remains[56]. The formula is not used when the same deity is requested to heal these creatures. The fifth occurrence is more problematic[57] —we cannot even be sure whether the suffix -*h* is masc. or fem.— and it may be followed by a further reference to speech, though no speech is quoted[58]. The only certainty is that, as in the Aqhat text, the connotations are entirely negative.

5) Closing remarks

The present study is very much in the nature of a beginning[59]. Better evaluation of the data collected here is required and the material presented needs further sifting. Examples not discussed or referred to only in passing require closer analysis. In addition, the study of comparative material will provide a wider frame of reference than has been adopted here[60].

56. See my studies in *ZAW* 88(1976)244 and *UF* 13(1981)185, with the pertinent corrections. Texts: KTU 1.19 II 26; III 7,21-22.35-36.

57. KTU 2 IV 6 is discussed in detail by Pardee, *BO* 37(1980)273 (= review of Gibson, *CML²*).

58. For references to preceding speech in Babylonian literature cf. Atraḫasis I iii 166-167; vii 385; viii 403-404 (and par.); II iii 29, etc. and Erra I 92-93, 163, 179, 190-191; V 20-21 (cited above), etc. For immediate action after discourse cf. Erra IV 139-150.

59. The stanza division in Del Olmo Lete, *MLC*, was very helpful for this particular study.

60. I have in mind the literature from Mesopotamia (see note 58). F. Sonnek, "Die Einführung der direkten Rede in den epischen Texten", *ZA* 46(1940)225-235 is very much out of date. A survey of some easily available material yields the following partial picture. Erra: near-equal number of monocola (I 31,94,126,164; IIb 15; IIIc 57; IIId 2; IV 130,137; V 4,48) and couplets (I 104-105, 129-130, 168-169, 179-180; IIc 2-3; IIIc 28-29, 34-35, 38-39; V 16AB; cf. IV 37-38) with some partial lines. Atraḫasis: chiefly couplets; note the 6-line introduction in II 364-369. In some contest literature the characters are distinguished by different introductory couplets, e.g. Ox and Horse (*BWL* 177:24, etc. and 178:19, etc.); Tamarisk and Palm (*BWL* 156:2 and 7-8, etc. note 158:7 for a variant). Unusual couplets occur in *BWL* 165:14-15 and 171:25-26. The "Dog" tricolon is noteworthy (*BWL* 192: 14-15 = 194:24-25 = 207:¿-3) as is the quatrain in *BWL* 210:6-9. Other texts include *BWL* 190:6 and 9 (Fox); 194:12-13, etc. (answer + weeping); 196:17-18; 204:17 and 208:18-19. For the Epic Gilgamesh cf. J. H. Tigay, *The Evolution of the Gilgamesh Epic*. Philadelphia 1982, pp. 60-61, 136, 233, including comparison with Atraḫasis. (Note that Tigay spells "Sonnek" "Sonneck" throughout). See now K. Hecker, *Untersuchungen zur akkadischen Epik* (AOAT 8). Neukirchen-Vluyn 1974, pp. 174-180. For Egyptian verse cf. J. L. Foster, *JNES* 39(1980)109/ n. 17.