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The Use Aspect in a Gwich'in Narrative

Abstract: This thesis examines the use of aspect in a Gwich'in narrative. It investigates the role of viewpoint aspect in terms of the theoretical framework proposed by Hopper, in highlighting and foregrounding information in discourse, and in structuring narrative discourse. The focus of the analysis is on the perfective/imperfective contrast which involves native speaker choice. The findings are that there is an interesting correlation between shift in narrative episode and shift in viewpoint aspect. There is also evidence to support Hopper's theory of the use of aspect as a foregrounding device. The study also briefly examines the narrative in terms of Labov's proposed universal narrative structure, but does not find enough evidence to fully support his claims in Gwich'in. It is suggested that further studies be carried out of this sort.