

Chapter 5

Identification of Clausal Information Types

5.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the morpho-syntactic and lexico-semantic features that distinguish types of storyline clauses from types of supportive material in the Sherpa stories. The storyline is viewed as the backbone of narrative structure. It is the most prominent structural element, and is characterized semantically by bounded sequential happenings that introduce new information, thus moving a story forward along a timeline. Happenings can be one of four verb types: 1. action, 2. motion, 3. cognitive event or 4. contingency. The goal of this chapter is to describe the grammatical features of Solu Sherpa that: 1. Mark the clauses that perform this function of moving a story forward along a timeline, and 2. Mark the various types of clauses that do not perform this function. The terms “information type” and “Band of information” are used here rather than “Band of salience” to make explicit that these levels are not viewed as levels of cognitive salience, but, rather as levels of importance to the line of structural thematic prominence that pushes a story forward through time (cf. Dry 1992). However, the numbering system follows Longacre’s salience scheme for ease of reference and comparison with other work.

5.2 Summary of Information Types

A preliminary analysis of information types in the five Sherpa texts reveals eight supportive information types and one storyline Band. A general description of the information types can be seen in Table 33. The morpho-syntactic devices used to mark the different types of information are described with examples in sections 5.3 to 5.11.

| # | Info Type | Surface Marking |
|---|-----------------------|--|
| 1 | Storyline | <p>Characterized by one of the following lexical/morpho-syntactic/discourse patterns in a main clause:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A happening with an unmarked past stem, e.g. <i>gal'</i> 'go.PST.Dj', 2. A happening with a past stem, impersonal suffix, and postverbal attitude particle <i>dza'</i>, 3. A happening with a past verb stem and a past Dj inferential evidential <i>-nok</i>, 4. A happening with a past verb stem and a past Cj direct knowledge evidential <i>-in</i>, 5. A happening with a past verb stem and a past Dj direct knowledge evidential <i>-suj</i>, or 6. Non-happenings (activities, stative verbs, and copulas) that have been promoted to the storyline by context or a temporal phrase. |
| 2 | Flashback A | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Happenings marked with the past Dj inferential evidential suffix <i>-nok</i> and demoted by discourse context, 2. Happenings that are out-of-sequence, which have been demoted by discourse context alone. |
| 3 | Background Actions | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The past stem of a happening verb with the converb suffix <i>-ni/-n⁸⁰</i>, 2. The unmarked past stem of a happening verb, which acts as a converb without having an overt converb suffix. |
| 4 | Flashback B | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Background actions demoted to flashback by being out of sequence. |
| 5 | Background Activities | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A present stem activity with the converb suffix <i>-ni/-n</i>, 2. An activity with a form of the impersonal suffix <i>-(u)(p)</i>, 3. An activity marked with the continuous aspect suffix <i>-in</i>, 4. Activities marked with the imperfective aspect suffix <i>-ki</i> and evidential <i>-nok</i>, 5. Present stem activity with <i>-nok</i>, 6. Repetition of an activity in a medial clause with <i>-ni</i>, 7. An activity with the continuous suffix <i>-in</i> followed by a copula, |

⁸⁰ When the converb suffix is attached to the past stem of a happening verb, the change of state is construed as perfective and thus a background action, but when the converb suffix attaches to the present stem of a happening verb, the change of state is construed as imperfective and thus a background activity. However, the distinction between present and past stems has not yet been documented for most Sherpa verbs. Therefore, it is not always clear if a background change of state is perfective or imperfective.

| # | Info Type | Surface Marking |
|---|-------------------|---|
| | | 8. An activity marked with the continuous aspect suffix <i>-dok</i> , 9. A happening demoted by a habitual adverb. |
| 6 | Setting | 1. Copulas, e.g. <i>jin'</i> , <i>we'</i> , <i>nok'</i> , 2. Stative verbs, e.g. <i>sir'up</i> 'is called'. 3. Stative verbs indicating new information, which have been subordinated into a relative clause by a form of the impersonal suffix, |
| 7 | Irrealis | 1. Material demoted by quote frame (direct and indirect), 2. Material demoted by negation, 3. Modal verbs, 4. Material demoted through subordination in a purpose clause. |
| 8 | Evaluation | Demotion in which: 1. The storyteller asks a hypothetical question expressing attitudes, 2. The storyteller gives a hypothetical situation expressing attitudes, 3. The storyteller makes a statement expressing attitudes. |
| 9 | Cohesive Material | 1. Clauses with verbs indicating old information subordinated by adverbs such as <i>sima'</i> 'after', <i>bela'/t'ola</i> 'at that time', and suffixes such as <i>-sij</i> 'if/when', 2. Relative clauses with verbs indicating old information demoted by a form of the impersonal suffix, 3. Demoted by being a repeated state of affairs in a main clause. |

Table 33: Clausal Information Types in the Sherpa texts

5.3 Type 9: Cohesive Material

The cohesive material in the texts primarily takes two forms: 1. A clause with previously stated information or script determined information that has been subordinated by means of an adverb such as *sima'* 'after' or *bela'* 'at that time', and 2. A main clause that repeats material that was presented earlier in the text. Example (4) shows cohesive material in a subordinate adverbial clause. In sentence 20, the text says that the narrator's father was drinking liquor. Here in the first part of sentence 21, this activity is repeated in a clause subordinated by the adverb *sima'* 'after'.

(4) BEAR 021

ma', *te'* *arak² ti'*, *t^hu* *sima'* *ma'* -- *ɲira²*, *pala*, *ti'*
tama' *te'* *arak² ti'* *t^hu* *sima'* *tama'* -- *ɲira²* *pala* *ti'*
 CONJ DEM N DEM V CONJ CONJ -- PRO N DEM
 and.then there liquor that **drink after** and.then -- 1pl.GEN father that

ɲirmu *kja'ni* --
ɲirmu *kja'* *-ni* --
 ADJ V -CONV --
 angry do -CONV --

And **after drinking** the local rice wine, our father became angry...

Examples (5) and (6) illustrate the appearance of cohesive material in a main clause. In example (5), which is a storyline clause, the last part of sentence 7 states that everyone ate potato pancakes. This happening is repeated in the first part of sentence 9, shown in example (6).

(5) SICK 007

ɲiraŋ² + *devid* *k^hristi* *ts^heriŋ* *ɲiraŋ²* *teri²ki* -- *rikikur²* *so'wu*
ɲiraŋ² + *devid* *k^hristi* *ts^heriŋ* *ɲiraŋ²* *teri² -ki* -- *rikikur²* *so' -wu*
 PRO + Nprop Nprop Nprop PRO QNT -ERG -- N V -V.Suffix
 1pl.excl + David Christy Tshering 1pl.excl every -ERG -- potato.pancake eat -IMS
dza' +
dza' +
 PRT +
 NegAtt +

We, David, Christy, Tshering, we all **ate** potato pancakes.

(6) SICK 009

tama' *ti'* *tij¹la* *rikikur²* *so'* +
tama' *ti'* *tij¹la* *rikikur²* *so'* +
 CONJ DEM ADV N V +
 and.then that after **potato.pancake eat** +

And then after that (we) **ate** potato pancakes.

Another pattern that signals cohesive material is a verb indicating old information in a relative clause marked with the impersonal verbal suffix, which takes the form *-u*, *-wu*, *-up*, or *-p* depending on the verb stem. This cohesive

construction is exemplified in (7). The existence of this group, which is described as doing carpentry here, had been indicated earlier in the story and contrasted with those who were there to build walls.

(7) MRKT 005

| | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------|-------------|-----------|--------------------------|--------------|------------------------|-------------------------|----------|
| <i>p^ho</i> | <i>ʃiŋ²</i> | <i>zop,</i> | | <i>(taŋ²)</i> | <i>gari,</i> | <i>t^hul</i> | <i>sima¹</i> | <i>+</i> |
| <i>p^ho</i> | <i>ʃiŋ²</i> | <i>zo</i> | <i>-p</i> | <i>taŋ²</i> | <i>gajra</i> | <i>t^hul</i> | <i>sima¹</i> | <i>+</i> |
| ADV | N | V | -V.Suffix | CONJ | QNT | V | CONJ | + |
| there | wood | make | -IMS | and | all | finisher | | + |

After everyone who does carpentry work finished...

5.4 Type 8: Evaluation

Evaluative information is characterized by clauses in which the storyteller interrupts the narrative flow to make some sort of personal comment. In the Sherpa texts, these comments primarily take three forms: a rhetorical question, as in (8), an opinion about what could have hypothetically happened, as in (9), and a comment that expresses the narrator's feelings about something, seen in (10).

The information in (8) follows a statement about how the fire in the market was burning and there were lots of finished wood products lying around near the fire. In the face of this situation, the narrator utters this comment of desperation.

(8) MRKT 028

| | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|-----------|------------------------|---------------------------|----|-----------|
| <i>tama¹</i> | <i>jaŋ²</i> | <i>kaŋ¹</i> | <i>kit¹up</i> | <i>na</i> | <i>kaŋ¹</i> | <i>kit¹up,</i> | | |
| <i>tama¹</i> | <i>jaŋ²</i> | <i>kaŋ¹</i> | <i>kit¹-up</i> | <i>na</i> | <i>kaŋ¹</i> | <i>kit¹-up</i> | | |
| CONJ | PRT | Q | V | -V.Suffix | CONJ | Q | V | -V.Suffix |
| and.then | EMPH | what | do | -IMS | and | what | do | -IMS |

And then what to do what to do?

Example (9) illustrates two sentences from the RAT story in which the storyteller is explaining why he set the rat on fire in the cage and let the fire burn for

awhile before letting the rat out. In addition, RAT 27 ends with a second example of a hypothetical question.

(9) RAT 026-027

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|---------------|--------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
| <i>nje¹</i> | <i>pala²</i> | <i>ta¹</i> | <i>ti¹</i> | -- | <i>hana</i> | <i>malak¹</i> | <i>gaaa</i> | -- | <i>me¹</i> | <i>tjeni</i> |
| <i>nje¹</i> | <i>pala²</i> | <i>ta¹</i> | <i>ti¹</i> | -- | <i>hana</i> | <i>malak¹</i> | <i>gaaa</i> | -- | <i>me¹</i> | <i>tfe -ni</i> |
| PRO | PRO | ADV | DEM | -- | ADV | ADV | Ver.Pause | -- | N | V -CONV |
| 1sg.ERG | myself | now | that | -- | before | just | Ver.Pause | -- | fire | set.fire -CONV |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| <i>fakgjak</i> | <i>tongup</i> | | <i>sisij,</i> | <i>jeloŋ²</i> | <i>me¹</i> | -- | <i>bataŋ</i> | <i>bitiŋ</i> | <i>p^hirsiŋ</i> | <i>me¹</i> |
| <i>fakgjak</i> | <i>tong</i> | <i>-up</i> | <i>sisij</i> | <i>jeloŋ²</i> | <i>me¹</i> | -- | <i>bataŋ</i> | <i>bitiŋ</i> | <i>p^hir -siŋ</i> | <i>me¹</i> |
| ADV | V | -V.Suffix | CONJ | ADV | N | -- | ONOM | V | -CONJ | N |
| immediately | set.loose | -IMS | if | again | fire | -- | jumping.sound | jump | -if | fire |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| <i>gjaŋfekiwi</i> | | | <i>jin¹</i> | <i>na</i> | -- | | | | | |
| <i>gjaŋfe</i> | <i>-ki</i> | <i>-wi</i> | <i>jin¹</i> | <i>na</i> | -- | | | | | |
| V | -ASP | -EVID | V | PRT | -- | | | | | |
| extinguish | -IMPV | -NPST.Dj.Com | COP | NEG | -- | | | | | |

I myself, at that time, just before, gaaaa, if I had set fire and immediately freed it, (then I would have had to set it on) fire again. If the rat jumped around like 'batang biting' the fire would be put out, right.

Finally, the comment seen in (10) was uttered after the storyteller had just described the battle and uses the negative attitude particle *dza¹* to express his negative feelings about the situation.

(10) BATTLE 024

| | | | | | | |
|------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|------------------------|----------|
| <i>la,</i> | <i>ta¹</i> | <i>hariŋ¹</i> | <i>ti¹</i> | <i>jin¹</i> | <i>dza¹</i> | <i>+</i> |
| <i>la</i> | <i>ta¹</i> | <i>hariŋ¹</i> | <i>ti¹</i> | <i>jin¹</i> | <i>dza¹</i> | <i>+</i> |
| PRT | ADV | ADV | DEM | V | PRT | + |
| OK | now | today | that | COP | NegAtt | + |

Oh, that day was like that.

5.5 Type 7: Irrealis

The irrealis material in the Sherpa texts takes four forms: 1. Quoted material (direct and indirect), 2. Negated verbs, 3. Modal verbs, and 4. Purpose clauses.

In example (11), the quoted verb *kja'* is an irrealis question used to talk about a happening that has not taken place. The quote frame, the main clause of the sentences, is a storyline clause.

(11) SICK 029

| | | | | |
|--------------|------------------|--|-------------------|----|
| <i>"kaŋ'</i> | <i>ki'wi"</i> | | <i>si'nok</i> | -- |
| <i>kaŋ'</i> | <i>ki' -wi</i> | | <i>si' -nok</i> | -- |
| Q | V -EVID | | V -EVID | -- |
| what | do -NPST.Dj.CmKn | | say -PST.Dj.Infer | -- |

She said "what should we do?"

The use of negated verbs to mark irrealis information is seen in (12).

(12) BEAR 053

| | | | | | | | | |
|----------------|----------------|----------------|-------------|-----------------|--------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| <i>te'wa,</i> | <i>tiŋ'la,</i> | <i>te'wa</i> | -- | <i>tum' ti'</i> | <i>(lawā),</i> | <i>te'wa,</i> | <i>te'wa</i> | <i>tiŋ'la,</i> |
| <i>te' -wa</i> | <i>tiŋ'la</i> | <i>te' -wa</i> | -- | <i>tum' ti'</i> | <i>lawā</i> | <i>te' -wa</i> | <i>te' -wa</i> | <i>tiŋ'la</i> |
| DEM -P | ADV | DEM -P | -- | N | DEM | VerPs | DEM -P | DEM -P |
| there | -from | after | there | -from | -- | bear | that | VerPs |
| | | | | | | | | there |
| | | | | | | | | -from |
| | | | | | | | | after |
| <i>ti'</i> | <i>tsur,</i> | <i>ti'</i> | <i>loŋn</i> | | <i>mawā'wu,</i> | | | |
| <i>ti'</i> | <i>tsur</i> | <i>ti'</i> | <i>loŋ</i> | <i>-ni</i> | <i>ma- wa' -wu</i> | | | |
| DEM | ADV | DEM | V | -CONV | NEG- V | -V.Suffix | | |
| that | back | that | return | -CONV | not- came | -IMS | | |

And then after, and then after, the bear **did not return back**.

The use of a modal verb to communicate the desire do something is illustrated in

(13).

(13) BEAR 021

| | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------|------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|--------------|--------------------------|--|-------------------|-------------------|
| <i>ma',</i> | <i>te'</i> | <i>arak² ti',</i> | <i>t^hu</i> | <i>sima' ma'</i> | -- | <i>ŋira²,</i> | <i>pala,</i> | <i>ti'</i> | <i>ŋirmu</i> |
| <i>tama'</i> | <i>te'</i> | <i>arak² ti'</i> | <i>t^hu</i> | <i>sima' tama'</i> | -- | <i>ŋira²</i> | <i>pala</i> | <i>ti'</i> | <i>ŋirmu</i> |
| CONJ | DEM | N | DEM | V | CONJ | CONJ | -- | PRO | N |
| and.then | there | liquor | that | drink | after | and.then | -- | 1pl.GEN | father |
| | | | | | | | | | that |
| | | | | | | | | | angry |
| <i>kja'ni</i> | -- | <i>tama'</i> | <i>ŋiraŋ²</i> | <i>ti'</i> | <i>tuko'</i> | -- | <i>t^hu t^hu t^hu,</i> | <i>tum' foru,</i> | <i>go',</i> |
| <i>kja' -ni</i> | -- | <i>tama'</i> | <i>ŋiraŋ²</i> | <i>ti'</i> | <i>tuko'</i> | -- | <i>t^hu t^hu t^hu</i> | <i>tum' for</i> | <i>-up go'</i> |
| V | -CONV | -- | CONJ | PRO | DEM | DEM | -- | VerPs | N |
| do | -CONV | -- | and.then | 1pl.excl | that | like.that | -- | VerPs | bear |
| | | | | | | | | | chase -IMS |
| | | | | | | | | | need |

And then after drinking the local rice wine, our father was angry. And we **wanted to chase** the bear.

Finally, the communication of irrealis information by means of a purpose clause is shown in (14) below. A fully explicit purpose clause has an impersonal verbal suffix with the dative suffix followed by the main verb. This sentence indicates that three or four people were in that place for the purpose of building walls.

(14) MRKT 002

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------|----|-------------|----|
| <i>gal¹</i> | <i>sima¹</i> | <i>tama¹</i> | + | <i>gajra eee</i> | + | <i>rengaj ti¹</i> | <i>mi²</i> | <i>mi²ra</i> | <i>sum²</i> | | | | |
| <i>gal¹</i> | <i>sima¹</i> | <i>tama¹</i> | + | <i>gajra eee</i> | + | <i>rengaj ti¹</i> | <i>mi²</i> | <i>mi²</i> | - <i>ra</i> <i>sum²</i> | | | | |
| V | CONJ | CONJ | + | QNT VerPs | + | QNT DEM N | N | - | CLF NUM | | | | |
| go.PST.Dj | after | and.then | + | all VerPs | + | some that | person | person - | CLF three | | | | |
| <i>ʒi²</i> | <i>ti¹</i> | + | <i>jaŋ²</i> | <i>tsikpa¹</i> | <i>gjakupla</i> | | | + | <i>wot¹</i> | <i>dza¹</i> | -- | <i>wala</i> | -- |
| <i>ʒi²</i> | <i>ti¹</i> | + | <i>jaŋ²</i> | <i>tsikpa¹</i> | <i>gjak</i> | - <i>up</i> | - <i>la</i> | + | <i>wot¹</i> | <i>dza¹</i> | -- | <i>wala</i> | -- |
| NUM | DEM | + | PRT | N | V | -V.Suffix | -DAT | + | V | PRT | -- | N | -- |
| four | that | + | EMPH | wall | make | -IMS | -for | + | COP | NegAtt | -- | wall(E) | -- |

And after we went, some of the group of everyone, three or four men, they were there **to make** a wall...wall.

5.6 Type 6: Setting

Setting material is communicated by means of copulas and stative verbs. In (15) the verb *si¹-up* 'to say' is used descriptively and appears with the non-past evidential suffix. Setting material in (16) is indicated by means of a stative verb 'know' in a relative clause communicating new information.

(15) SICK 003

| | | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|
| <i>ai²</i> | <i>miŋma²</i> | <i>si¹wi</i> | + |
| <i>ai²</i> | <i>miŋma²</i> | <i>si¹</i> | - <i>wi</i> + |
| N | N | V | -EVID + |
| older.sister | Tuesday | say | -NPST.Dj.CmKn + |

The sister was called Mingma (Tuesday).

(16) MRKT 004

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------|------------|------------------------|----|----------------|-------------------------|-----------|------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <i>tama'</i> | <i>ŋi'</i> | <i>loŋ²</i> | -- | <i>tsik'</i> | <i>fe²wu</i> | | <i>ti'</i> | <i>jeloŋ²</i> | <i>mi²ra</i> | <i>sum²</i> |
| <i>tama'</i> | <i>ŋi'</i> | <i>loŋ²</i> | -- | <i>tsikpa'</i> | <i>fe²</i> | -wu | <i>ti'</i> | <i>jeloŋ²</i> | <i>mi²</i> | - ra <i>sum²</i> |
| CONJ | PRO | ADV | -- | N | V | -V.Suffix | DEM | ADV | N | - CLF NUM |
| and.then | 1pl | again | -- | wall | able.to.know | -IMS | that | again | person | - CLF three |
| <i>ti'</i> | + | <i>tsikpa'la</i> | | <i>wot'</i> | <i>dza'</i> | + | | | | |
| <i>ti'</i> | + | <i>tsikpa' -la</i> | | <i>wot'</i> | <i>dza'</i> | + | | | | |
| DEM | + | N | | -DAT | V | PRT | + | | | |
| that | + | wall | | -for | COP | NegAtt | + | | | |

And then among us there were three of us who **knew how** (to build) walls and we were (there making) walls.

Example (17) shows how an inferential copular verb *nok¹* is used to express setting material.

(17) RAT 003

| | | |
|-------------|---------------------------------------|-------------|
| <i>pje'</i> | <i>k^hafjen²</i> | <i>nok'</i> |
| <i>pje'</i> | <i>k^hafjen²</i> | <i>nok'</i> |
| N | ADV | V |
| rat | many | COP.Infer |

There were many rats.

5.7 Type 5: Background Activities

Background activities indicate a change of state but are construed as off the storyline because they are semantically construed as on-going and lacking a clear beginning or end. Background activities in the Sherpa texts are marked in a number of ways: 1. a present stem activity with the converb suffix *-n(i)* in a medial clause, 2. an activity with the impersonal suffix *-(u)(p)* in an independent clause, 3. the use of an activity with the continuous suffix *-in*, 4. an activity with the imperfective suffix *-ki* and evidential *-nok*, 5. a present stem activity with *-nok*, 6. a repetition of an activity in a medial clause with *-n(i)*, 7. an activity with the continuous suffix *-in* followed by a copular verb, 8. an activity with the continuous suffix *-dok*, or 9. a happening verb demoted off the storyline by a

habitual adverb. These nine strategies for marking background activities in Sherpa are illustrated briefly in Table 34.

| # | Strategy | # | Sherpa Example | English Translation |
|---|--|-----------|---|---|
| 1 | Present stem activity verb with <i>-n(i)</i> | SICK 15 | <i>te¹wa jaŋ² + goŋa laŋ-ni +</i> | And (we) were laughing . |
| 2 | Imperfective activity with the impersonal verbal suffix <i>-(u)(p)</i> | BATTLE 48 | <i>maŋmi²la k^hur²upla dalza¹, kit¹-up</i> | (I) was helping the army carry (injured people). |
| 3 | An imperfective activity with the continuous marker <i>-in</i> | RAT 18 | <i>taŋ² ti¹ k^ha¹la sal sal sal bet-in</i> -- | And (I) was pouring (ash) on (the rat) like “sal, sal, sal”. |
| 4 | An activity with the imperfective suffix <i>-ki</i> and evidential <i>-nok</i> | RAT 25 | <i>k^haŋjen², p^hir-ki-nok --</i> | (The rat) was jumping a lot. |
| 5 | Present stem activity verb with <i>-nok</i> | MRKT 18 | <i>tama¹, p^ho malak¹ baki lone, tsoŋ, tsoŋ, tsoŋ, tsoŋ ban dji¹-nok</i> | And just here the fire was burning on the bamboo mat like “tsong tsong tsong”. |
| 6 | Repetition of an activity in a medial clause with <i>-ni</i> | MRKT 06 | <i>t^haŋduŋ kit¹up ti¹ kit¹up TXXX kja¹-ni --</i> | (Some) were having a party inside [teller laughing]. |
| 7 | Activity with the continuous marker <i>-in</i> and a copula. | MRKT 06 | <i>arak² t^huŋ-in wot¹ dza¹ --</i> | (We) were drinking liquor. |
| 8 | Repetition of an activity with the continuous suffix <i>-dok</i> | SICK 13 | <i>kjak,pa² fel-up ti¹ fel-dok --</i> | (David) continued to have diarrhea. |
| 9 | A happening demoted by a habitual adverb | SICK 17 | <i>t^handa² raŋ² t^handa² raŋ², das minit, das minitla, t^hojlet gal¹+</i> | (David) went to the toilet again and again , about every ten minutes. |

Table 34: Strategies for Marking Background Activities

5.8 Type 4: Flashback B

Based on the texts analyzed in this thesis, two flashback Bands have been posited. Flashback B includes information demoted from the background action Band and the information on the flashback A Band is storyline material that has been demoted by being temporally out-of-sequence.

A background action that has been demoted by textual context is illustrated in (18). The statement previous to (18) states that everyone ate potato pancakes. Then in (18), the narrator relates that they ate cooked potatoes and then ate potato pancakes. So this recapitulation of the action of eating potato pancakes after eating the cooked potatoes points to the fact that the eating of cooked potatoes happened first even though it was introduced after the eating of potato pancakes.

(18) SICK 009

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|--|-----------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| <i>gomu¹la</i> | <i>ti¹</i> | <i>riki¹</i> | <i>tso²</i> | <i>so¹,</i> | <i>tama¹</i> | <i>ti¹</i> | <i>tij¹la rikikur²</i> | <i>so¹</i> | <i>+ tama¹,</i> | |
| <i>gomu¹ -la</i> | <i>ti¹</i> | <i>riki¹</i> | <i>tso²</i> | <i>so¹</i> | <i>tama¹</i> | <i>ti¹</i> | <i>tij¹la rikikur²</i> | <i>so¹</i> | <i>+ tama¹</i> | |
| N | -DAT | DEM N | V | V | CONJ | DEM | ADV N | V | + CONJ | |
| night | -for | that | potato | cook | eat | and.then | that | after | potato.pancake | |
| <i>nje¹</i> | <i>ɲi²,</i> | <i>devidki</i> | <i>ɲi²,</i> | <i>k^hristi</i> | <i>ɲi²</i> | <i>++</i> | <i>TTT k^hristi</i> | <i>ɲi²</i> | <i>ts^herij</i> | <i>ɲi²</i> |
| <i>nje¹</i> | <i>ɲi²</i> | <i>devid -ki</i> | <i>ɲi²</i> | <i>k^hristi</i> | <i>ɲi²</i> | <i>++</i> | <i>TTT k^hristi</i> | <i>ɲi²</i> | <i>ts^herij</i> | <i>ɲi²</i> |
| PRO | NUM | Nprop | -ERG | NUM | Nprop | NUM | ++ | TTT | Nprop | NUM |
| 1sg.ERG | two | David | -ERG | two | Christy | two | ++ | TTT | Christy | two |
| <i>kja¹ni</i> | <i>rikikur²</i> | <i>ɲi²</i> | <i>ɲi²</i> | <i>so¹wu</i> | <i>dza¹</i> | <i>+</i> | | | | |
| <i>kja¹ -ni</i> | <i>rikikur²</i> | <i>ɲi²</i> | <i>ɲi²</i> | <i>so¹ -wu</i> | <i>dza¹</i> | <i>+</i> | | | | |
| V | -CONV | N | | NUM | NUM | V | -V.Suffix | PRT | + | |
| do | -CONV | potato.pancake | two | two | eat | -IMS | | NegAtt | + | |

That night (we) **cooked (and) ate** potatoes. And then after that (we) **ate** potato pancakes. And then I ate two potato pancakes, David ate two, Christy ate two...Christy ate two and Tshering ate two. (Each of us) ate two.

5.9 Type 3: Background Actions

Background actions are happenings that have been backgrounded

(i.e. marked as structurally less important) by their placement in a subordinate

clause or a medial clause. In contrast with background activities, which are

conceptualized as on-going, background actions are punctiliar. These actions are

often marked with the converb suffix *-n(i)*, but this is not obligatory.⁸¹ Example

(19) illustrates a series of actions without the converb suffix.

(19) SICK 010

| | | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--|-------------------------------|----------|
| <i>tama¹</i> | <i>TXXX devidki</i> | <i>lakla</i> | <i>+ rikikur²la</i> | | <i>+ mar¹ ku</i> | <i>+</i> |
| <i>tama¹</i> | <i>TXXX devid -ki</i> | <i>lakla</i> | <i>+ rikikur²</i> | <i>-la</i> | <i>+ mar¹ ku</i> | <i>+</i> |
| CONJ | TXXX Nprop -ERG | N | + N | -DAT | + N V | + |
| and.then | TXXX David -ERG | in.hand | + potato.pancake | -for | + butter polish/spread | + |
| <i>mar¹ ku</i> | <i>pinat</i> | <i>bat^har, ku</i> | | <i>-- ti¹ k^ha loŋ² XXX --</i> | | |
| <i>mar¹ ku</i> | <i>pinat</i> | <i>bat^har, ku</i> | | <i>-- ti¹ k^ha loŋ² XXX --</i> | | |
| N V | N | N V | | -- DEM N ADV XXX -- | | |
| butter polish/spread | peanut(E) | butter(E) polish/spread | | -- that time again XXX -- | | |
| <i>martsj² ku</i> | <i>so¹ + +</i> | | | | | |
| <i>martsj² ku</i> | <i>so¹ + +</i> | | | | | |
| N V | V ++ | | | | | |
| chilli.pepper polish/spread | eat ++ | | | | | |

And David, **spread** butter, peanut butter and then chili sauce on potato pancakes in his hand and then ate (them).

Example (20) shows the converb suffix *-ni* attached to the action verb *si¹* ‘say’, indicating a background action in a medial clause.

(20) BEAR 007

| | | | |
|---|--------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| <i>ŋiraŋ² te¹wa</i> | <i>pala ti¹ki</i> | <i>ɖa²p</i> | <i>si¹ni,</i> |
| <i>ŋiraŋ² te¹ -wa</i> | <i>pala ti¹ -ki</i> | <i>ɖa² -p</i> | <i>si¹ -ni</i> |
| PRO DEM -P | N DEM -GEN V -V.Suffix | V -CONV | |
| 1pl.excl there -from | father that -GEN go -IMS | say -CONV | |

My father **said** that we are going...

5.10 Type 2: Flashback A

Flashback clauses are characterized in two ways: 1. Out-of-sequence happenings marked with the past disjunct inferential suffix *-nok*, and 2. Out-of-sequence happenings marked as out-of-sequence by discourse context along.

⁸¹ See footnote 79 for a discussion about the difficulty of determining if a happening verb with the converb suffix *-n(i)* is a background action or a background activity.

In example (21), there is a new happening with the pattern of an inferred action. However, it occurs out of the temporal sequence of the storyline. The statement in this example occurs as the narrator and his friend survey the damage after the battle in the valley was over. There is a series of statements about the people and animals that they found 'had died'. Although the verbs are marked with the inferential evidential suffix normally used for storyline clauses, it is clear that the people in (21) must have died during the conflict and not at the moment when the narrator and his friend are observing them.

(21) BATTLE 047

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|---------------|------------|---|--------------|--------------|---|--------------------------------------|---------------|-------------|
| <i>ti'</i> | <i>bela'</i> | <i>ti'</i> | + | <i>palis</i> | <i>tiwi'</i> | + | <i>k^halja²</i> | <i>tsowi'</i> | <i>uruŋ</i> |
| <i>ti'</i> | <i>bela'</i> | <i>ti'</i> | + | <i>palis</i> | <i>tiwi'</i> | + | <i>k^halja²</i> | <i>tsowi'</i> | <i>uruŋ</i> |
| DEM | ADV | DEM | + | N | PRO | + | NUM | ADV | ADV |
| that | time.when(N) | that | + | police(E) | 3pl.ERG/GEN | + | fifty | approximately | maybe |
| <i>se²nok</i> | | | + | | | | | | |
| <i>se²-nok</i> | | | + | | | | | | |
| V | -EVID | | + | | | | | | |
| kill | -PST.Dj.Infer | | + | | | | | | |

At that time maybe about 50 police had been killed.

5.11 Type 1: Storyline

The storyline clauses are characterized by verbs in main clauses that indicate happenings. Six morpho-syntactic/discourse patterns are found to communicate storyline material: 1. Unmarked past verb stems, 2. Past verb stems with the impersonal suffix and a postverbal attitude particle, 3. Past verbs stems with the past disjunct inferential evidential *-nok*, 4. Past verb stems with the past conjunct direct knowledge evidential *-in*, 5. Past verb stems with the past disjunct direct knowledge evidential *-surj*, and 6. Non-happenings (activities, stative verbs, and

copulas) that have been promoted to the storyline by a temporal adverb or context.

Example (22) illustrates pattern 1, a storyline clause in which the verb takes the form of an unmarked past stem.

(22) MRKT 025

| | | | | | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|---------------|------------------------|-------------|----------|
| <i>jaju¹</i> | <i>doŋbu¹</i> | <i>taŋ²</i> | <i>tfoŋda</i> | <i>gal¹</i> | <i>AXXX</i> | <i>+</i> |
| <i>jaju¹</i> | <i>doŋbu¹</i> | <i>taŋ²</i> | <i>tfoŋda</i> | <i>gal¹</i> | <i>AXXX</i> | <i>+</i> |
| ADV | N | CONJ | ADJ | V | AXXX | + |
| up | tree | and | same | go.PST.Dj | AXXX | + |

It **became** as high as the tree.

Pattern 2 is exemplified by the sentence in (23). The past stem *gal¹* ‘go.PST.Dj’ is followed by the impersonal suffix *-up/-u/-p/-wu* and the attitude particle *dza¹*, communicates that the speaker has negative feelings towards the state of affairs indicated by the verb (Schöttelndreyer 1975:46).

(23) SICK 005

| | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| <i>ŋiraŋ²</i> | <i>ti¹</i> | <i>jo¹</i> | <i>gal¹u</i> | <i>dza¹</i> | <i>gomu¹</i> | <i>+</i> |
| <i>ŋiraŋ²</i> | <i>ti¹</i> | <i>jo¹</i> | <i>gal¹</i> | <i>-up</i> | <i>dza¹</i> | <i>gomu¹</i> |
| PRO | DEM | ADV | V | -V.Suffix | PRT | N |
| 1pl.excl | that | up | go.PST.Dj | -IMS | NegAtt | night |

We **went** up to that place at night.

Example (24) illustrates pattern 3. The bounded action of meeting the woman is indicated by the past verb stem *t^hej* ‘meet’ followed by the past disjunct inferential evidential *-nok*.

(24) SICK 002

| | | | | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|---|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------|
| <i>te'kine</i> | -- | <i>devid taj² k^hristila</i> | -- | <i>te' + jul¹la</i> | <i>juk¹</i> |
| <i>te' -ki -ne</i> | -- | <i>devid taj² k^hristi -la</i> | -- | <i>te' + jul¹ -la</i> | <i>juk¹</i> |
| DEM -GEN -ABL | -- | Nprop CONJ Nprop -DAT | -- | DEM + N -DAT | V |
| there -GEN -from | -- | David and Christy -for | -- | there + village -for | visit |
| <i>ɬa²p</i> | <i>t^hela</i> | <i>dalza¹ ai²,</i> | <i>t^heɲnok</i> | <i>ke² +</i> | |
| <i>ɬa² -p</i> | <i>t^he -la</i> | <i>dalza¹ ai²,</i> | <i>t^heɲ -nok</i> | <i>ke² +</i> | |
| V -V.Suffix | N -DAT | N N | V -EVID | PRT + | |
| go -IMS | day -for | friend older.sister | meet -PST.Dj.Infer | EMPH + | |

After that, on that day David and Christy went up to visit the village, and **met** a friend-sister.

The use of the past conjunct direct knowledge evidential *-in* with a past stem, the fourth pattern, is seen in (25).

(25) BATTLE 015

| | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------|---|---------------------------|----------|--------------|--|
| <i>ɲje¹</i> | <i>sisi,</i> | <i>dalza¹ ti¹la</i> | <i>sa¹in</i> | -- | <i>we,</i> | <i>k^hjoraŋ¹ go¹</i> |
| <i>ɲje¹</i> | <i>sisi</i> | <i>dalza¹ ti¹ -la</i> | <i>sa¹ -in</i> | -- | <i>we</i> | <i>k^hjoraŋ¹ go¹</i> |
| PRO VerPs N | DEM -DAT | V -EVID | -- | VOC.EXCL | PRO N | |
| 1sg.ERG VerPs | friend that -for | say -PST.Cj.Dir | -- | hey | 2sg.NOM door | |
| <i>mape²</i> | <i>we¹,</i> | | | | | |
| <i>ma- pe²</i> | <i>we¹</i> | | | | | |
| NEG- V | V | | | | | |
| not- open | COP | | | | | |

I **said** to my friend, "hey, you don't open the door."

The fifth pattern, the use of the past disjunct direct knowledge evidential *-suŋ* with a past stem, is shown in (26).

(26) RAT 004

| | | | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|--------------|------------------|
| <i>tama¹</i> | <i>ɲa¹</i> | <i>loŋ²</i> | <i>ɲirmu</i> | <i>lasuŋ,</i> |
| <i>tama¹</i> | <i>ɲa¹</i> | <i>loŋ²</i> | <i>ɲirmu</i> | <i>la -suŋ</i> |
| CONJ | PRO | ADV | ADJ | V -EVID |
| and.then | 1sg | again | angry | felt -PST.Dj.Dir |

And then I also **became** angry.

Pattern 6, the promotion of a non-happening to the storyline, is exemplified in (27). The temporal marker *gomu¹ ɲezu* 'from (that) night' indicates a clear initial boundary for the event promoting it to the line of sequential happenings.

(27) SICK 011

ti' k^ha loŋ², sotfja k^hafjen² t^hu' + tama', gom¹ ŋeʒu, ma' -- kjak,pa²
ti' k^ha loŋ² sotfja k^hafjen² t^hu' + tama' gom¹ ŋeʒu tama' -- kjakpa²
 DEM N ADV N ADV V + CONJ N P CONJ -- N
 that time again tea many drink + and.then **night** **from** and.the-- feces

fel'u mar', am mo mo mo mo +
fel' -up mar' am mo mo mo mo +
 V -V.Suffix PRT EXCL EXCL EXCL EXCL EXCL +
 diarrhea -IMS EMPH EXCL EXCL EXCL EXCL EXCL +

Then he also drank lots of tea, and then **from that night** (he) had diarrhea.

5.12 The Distribution of Storyline Patterns

Table 35 displays the number of storyline clauses marked with each pattern in each story along with a percentage indicating the frequency of that pattern in the story. The last row lists the total number of storyline clauses, the total number of storyline clauses exhibiting each pattern, and the percentage of storyline clauses in all five stories combined, which employ each storyline pattern. The complete list of storyline clauses for each story is exemplified in Appendix III.

| Text | Pst stem | | <i>-up dza'</i> | | <i>-nok</i> | | <i>-in</i> | | <i>-suŋ</i> | | Promotion | |
|------------|----------|-----|-----------------|------------|-------------|------------|------------|------------|-------------|------------|-----------|-----|
| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| SICK | 3 | 19% | 4 | 25% | 6 | 38% | 1 | 6% | 0 | 0% | 2 | 13% |
| RAT | 1 | 9% | 5 | 45% | 3 | 27% | 0 | 0% | 2 | 18% | 0 | 0% |
| MRKT | 2 | 14% | 1 | 7% | 3 | 21% | 4 | 29% | 4 | 29% | 0 | 0% |
| BATTLE | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 2 | 12% | 5 | 29% | 10 | 59% | 0 | 0% |
| BEAR | 7 | 24% | 0 | 0% | 5 | 17% | 8 | 28% | 9 | 31% | 0 | 0% |
| TOTAL (87) | 13 | 15% | 10 | 11% | 19 | 22% | 18 | 21% | 25 | 29% | 2 | 2% |

Table 35: Usage of Storyline Patterns in the Sherpa Texts

Overall, the past disjunct direct knowledge evidential suffix *-suŋ* was the most used storyline marker in the stories, employed in 29% of the storyline clauses. The markers *-nok* and *-in* were also utilized in a large number of storyline clauses, 22% and 21% respectively. However, the most used pattern was different in four of the five stories (see the numbers and percentages in bold in

Table 35). The past stem patterns and the promotion patterns were never the most used storyline pattern in any story.

A correlation was observed between the use of *-suŋ* and *-in* and the non-use of *-up dza'* and vice versa. That is, MRKT, BATTLE, and BEAR have a relatively high frequency of *-suŋ* and *-in*, but very low frequency of *-up dza'*. Similarly, SICK and RAT have a relatively high frequency of *-up dza'*, but a relatively low frequency of *-suŋ* and *-in* compared to the other texts. In contrast, the inferential evidential suffix *-nok* has a relatively high frequency of use in all the texts, although it is the most used storyline marker only in SICK. This correlation could be explained as a result of stylistic variation since SICK and RAT were told by the same person. Another explanation may be that this distribution is connected to the observation that while *-in*, *-suŋ*, and *-up dza'* all indicate past punctiliar events the knowledge of which was gained by direct knowledge, *-up dza'* indicates a negative attitude and *-in* and *-suŋ* indicate a more positive or neutral attitude towards the event. Therefore, it seems that direct knowledge storyline events in a story are either mostly described with a negative attitude or mostly described with a positive/neutral attitude. That is, storytellers do not seem to mix these two attitudes in direct knowledge storyline events. The use of *-nok*, which never appears with *dza'*, does not seem to be affected by the storyteller's attitude towards direct knowledge storyline events. For this reason *-nok* is employed quite frequently in all five stories.

5.13 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has identified the clausal information types found in the five Solu Sherpa stories of personal experience and described the strategies used to mark these types. Nine different clausal information types have been discovered. These include eight supportive types and a storyline Band, which is marked in six different ways. The eight supportive types are (in order of structural importance): 1. Flashback A, 2. Background actions, 3. Flashback B, 4. Background activities, 5. Setting, 6. Irrealis, 7. Evaluation, and 8. Cohesion.

The storyline clauses are marked in six different ways: 1. Unmarked past stem, 2. Happening verb with a past stem, an impersonal verbal suffix, and the negative attitude particle, 3. A happening verb with a past stem and a disjunct inferential evidential suffix *-nok*, 4. A happening verb with a past stem and a conjunct direct evidence evidential suffix *-suj*, 5. A happening verb with a past stem and a past disjunct direct evidence evidential suffix *-in*, and 6. Non-happening promoted to storyline by a temporal marker or by discourse context.

It was found that the Sherpa stories employed between three and five storyline clause patterns. Overall, *-suj* was the most utilized storyline marker, employed in 29% of the storyline clauses. However, the most used pattern was different in four of the five stories.

These results suggest a modification of the event sequence marking scheme posited for different types of Sherpa narratives by Schöttelndreyer (1978:261-263).

Schöttelndreyer suggests six different devices that mark backbone material (i.e. storyline clauses) in five different Sherpa narrative sub-genre, as seen in Table 36.

| Narrative Type | Storyline Marking Device |
|--|-------------------------------|
| Plot oriented direct report | <i>-suŋ</i> |
| Plot oriented indirect report | <i>-nok lo' / -nok si'nok</i> |
| Narrator oriented direct report | <i>-in</i> |
| Narrator oriented indirect report | <i>-up dza'</i> |
| Non-personal Narratives (i.e. folktales) | <i>-nok⁸²</i> |

Table 36: Sherpa Storyline Devices Posited by Schöttelndreyer (1978:261-263)

A comparison of Tables 35 and 36 shows that four of Schöttelndreyer's (1978) six markers appear in the five texts studied here, with two additional devices also employed.⁸³ Unlike Schöttelndreyer's scheme, which includes one or two main storyline patterns for each narrative genre, the data in this study describes 5 stories from the same genre that employ between three and five different storyline patterns.

The differences between Schöttelndreyer's description and the results of this study on stories of personal experience (which encompass three of his four report sub-genres) seem to suggest at least two modifications to Schöttelndreyer's scheme. First of all, while Schöttelndreyer posits storyline marking as a primary indicator of narrative sub-genre, this study seems to suggest that storyline

⁸² In addition, Schöttelndreyer (1978:261, footnote 11) states that one speaker used *-suŋ* at the tension point of a story.

⁸³ The forms *-nok lo'* and *-nok si'nok* do not appear as storyline forms in the texts studied in this thesis. These are reportative forms that mark storyline in reported stories about the personal experience stories of someone else other than the narrator. No stories of this type are studied in this thesis.

marking should not be used as an important feature in distinguishing between types of personal experience narratives in Sherpa.

In this chapter, each story is described as employing a different combination of storyline devices used at different frequencies. On the basis of storyline, then, the five texts would be seen as four, perhaps five different personal narrative sub-genres. However, considering the 'family resemblance' view of genre adopted in this thesis, it seems better to describe these stories as a single narrative sub-genre based on the bundle of features presented in Chapter 4, rather than considering each text a separate sub-genre based on the distribution and frequency of storyline marking patterns alone.

A second modification suggested by this study, which is related to the first, is that the marking of storyline in Sherpa should not be seen in terms of one or two options per story. Rather, this study indicates that a story can have up to six types of storyline information which a narrator may mark in six different ways depending on the source of the information and the narrator's attitude towards it.