Chapter 2
Sherpa Grammar Summary

A number of researchers have undertaken the task of describing various aspects of Sherpa phonology and grammar. Barbara Kelly's *A grammar and glossary of the Sherpa language* (2004) is the most complete description of Sherpa grammar and phonology to date. In this work, Kelly has consulted various native speakers from different dialect areas, whereas most other Sherpa research has primarily taken data from just a few speakers of the Solu dialect as it is spoken near the towns of Phaplu and Salleri. As the most complete work on Sherpa phonology and grammar, Kelly (2004) is the best resource on which to base a summary of Sherpa phonology and grammar. However, since her work is a Pan-Sherpa grammar focusing on the dialects of the Khumbu area (rather than Solu), it does not always accurately reflect the distinctives of the Sherpa spoken in Solu. In addition, her description of the Sherpa verb phrase lacks many of the details present in previous works, such as Burkhard Schöttelndreyer's paper "Clause Patterns in Sherpa" (1975). As a result, some of the present researcher's data and analysis, as well as the work of Burkhard Schöttelndreyer, is used to supplement Kelly (2004) in this summary, especially in the verb phrase description.

This chapter is divided into four sections: Phonology and transcription scheme, morpho-syntax, Sherpa discourse, and relevant discourse studies on Tibetan languages that are closely related to Sherpa.

2.1 Phonology and Transcription Scheme

The researchers who have analyzed Sherpa have often arrived at different conclusions, especially in the area of phonology. The transcription scheme used in this study combines elements of Kelly (2004:203-221), Schöttelndreyer (1978:248), and Gordon (1969). Transcriptions are presented primarily in IPA format with only a few adaptations. Pauses and other non-linguistic features found in natural discourse are transcribed using various methods, which are described below.

Kelly (2004:203-215) lists 37 consonant phonemes and 6 vowel phonemes.[17] An adapted version of her list with 31 consonants is found in Table 1. Two of Kelly's consonantal phonemes, the uvular stop /q/ and the glottal stop /ʔ/, have not been observed by Schöttelndreyer (1978:248), Gordon (1969), or the present researcher. Therefore, these two phonemes are not included in the transcription of the texts studied in this thesis. In addition, Kelly's palatal series /ɲ/, /c/, /cʰ/, and /ɟ/ is not included in the transcriptions scheme used in this study, because they are always followed by the palatal glide /j/. Therefore, it seems better to interpret these segments as palatalized allophones of /ŋ/, /k/, /kʰ/, and /g/.[18]

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[17] See Gordon (1969), Schöttelndreyer (1978), Sands (2006:3) and Watters (1998) for other lists of phonemes.

[18] Gordon (1969) and Sands (2006) also interpret the palatal consonants as palatalized allophones of the velar series. For Schöttelndreyer (1978, etc.) the oral consonants are palatalized allophones of the velar series, but the palatal nasal/ɲ/ has phonemic status.

	Labial	Dental-alveolar	Retroflex	Palato-alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
Stop	p pʰ b	t tʰ d	ʈ ʈʰ ɖ			k kʰ g	
Fricative	f	s z		ʃ			h
Affricate		ts tsʰ		tʃ tʃʰ dʒ			
Nasal	m	n				ŋ	
Liquid		l̥ ɾ̥ l ɾ					
Glide	w				j		

Table 1: Consonant Phonemes of Sherpa (adapted from Kelly 2004:210)

Kelly's (2004:14) presentation of Sherpa vowel phonemes is displayed in Table 2.[19]

	Front	Central	Back
Close	i		u
Close-mid	e		o
Open-mid			
Open		a	ɑ

Table 2: Vowel Phonemes of Sherpa (adapted from Kelly 2004:214)

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[19] The open vowels /a/ and /ɑ/ are transcribed in Gordon (1969) and Schöttelndreyer (1973, 1975, 1978, etc.) as 'aa' and 'a', respectively. In this thesis, the default transcription for a low vowel is /a/. The /ɑ/ is employed where there is support in the literature. Where scholars disagree on the correct transcription of a word, Schöttelndreyer's transcription is applied.

Sherpa has two phonemic tones: high and low. [20] Tone in Sherpa is connected to the word.[21] Clitics and bound morphemes do not carry their own tone, but rather take on the tone of the word to which they are bound (Kelly 2004:215).

In this study, the high toneme is marked with a superscript number two after the word (as in *ki²* 'dog') and the low toneme is marked with a superscript number one after the word (as in *ŋa¹* 'I').[22] The focus of this study is not phonology, and so the phonemic tone has not been analyzed for every word used in the Sherpa texts. In the transcription of the texts, phonemic tone is marked on those words for which there is documentation in Schöttelndreyer and Schöttelndreyer (1973), Hale (1973), Schöttelndreyer (1975), Schöttelndreyer (1978), or Kelly (2004). In a few cases, minimal pairs based on tone have been observed by the present researcher, and tone is also marked on these words. Where the documented transcription of tone differs between the work of the Schöttelndreyers and Kelly, the transcription of the Schöttelndreyers is used because their research focused more on the Solu dialect while Kelly's concentrated on the northern Khumbu dialect.[23]

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[20] According to Kelly (2004:215), these tones are sometimes realized with a falling contour in monosyllabic and disyllabic words. Early researchers such as Gordon (1969) and H. Schöttelndreyer (1971) argued that Sherpa had four phonemic tones: 1) high rising, 2) high falling, 3) low rising, and 4) low falling or level. Sands (2006:11-13) agrees with Gordon and Schöttelndreyer but says that there are very few minimal pairs that distinguish between the two high tones and between the two low tones. In addition, Sands (2006:13) recommends that only high and low tones and not contour tones be marked in the orthography.

[21] Sands (2006:13) hypothesizes that tone in Sherpa is connected to the initial morpheme rather than the word as a whole.

[22] This representation slightly deviates from IPA standards. According to IPA, what is here represented as superscript 2 should be superscript 4 (high tone) and what is here represented as superscript 1 should be superscript 2 (low tone). Considering that there are only two tonemes in Sherpa, it seems unnecessary to implement the full five level system of IPA.

[23] Kelly (2004:16) states that Sherpa also has differences in register that are connected to tone. All breathy vowels are low tone and all low tone vowels that occur after voiced stops have some degree of breathiness. Clear vowels on the other hand can be either high or low tone. Sands (2006:11) argues for a consistent connection between tone and register. She says that high tone, clear vowels, and a tense voice quality correspond to one another while low tone, breathy vowels, and a lax voice quality are connected. Kelly (2004:216) indicates that the phonemic

The pause-marking conventions applied by Brown and Yule (1983:162-164) are adapted to indicate what seem to be meaningful pause divisions in the five Sherpa texts. A double plus sign (+ +) indicates a very long pause, a single plus sign (+) a long pause, a double hyphen (--) a medium pause, and a comma (,) a short pause. Each text has a different range of meaningful pauses, as seen in Table 3. The pause divisions were determined based on the concentration of pauses within a certain range of pause lengths. For example, in SICK there are pauses with a length of .04 sec, .05 sec, .06 sec etc. continuing until .23. Then there is no pause with the length of .24 sec. This break in the range of pause represents the division between short pauses and medium pauses in SICK. After establishing the divisions in each text individually, the divisions were then compared across the five texts and standardized into four groupings based on patterns found.

Story	Short Pause (,)	Medium Pause (--)	Long Pause (+)	Very Long Pause (++)
SICK	.04 to .23 sec	.25 to .66 sec	.73 to 1.48 sec	1.78 to 5.87 sec
RAT	.03 to .20 sec	.22 to 1.10 sec	1.17 to 1.34 sec	1.53 to 3.66 sec
MARKET	.05 to .22 sec	.24 to .69 sec	.74 to 1.84 sec	2.06 to 2.79 sec
BATTLE	.03 to .25 sec	.27 to .48 sec	.51 to 1.87 sec	----------------------
BEAR	.03 to .33 sec	.35 to .59 sec	.61 to 1.55 sec	----------------------

Table 3: Pause Length Groupings in the Five Sherpa Texts

2.2 Morpho-Syntax

This section describes five aspects of Sherpa morpho-syntax, which are relevant to the study of discourse undertaken in the present study: the clause, noun phrase, verb phrase, tense/aspect/evidentiality, and clause linking.

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status of register is being lost, and only marks register when it is clearly pronounced and does not include breathy vowels in her standard inventory of vowel phonemes. Following Kelly, register is not marked phonemically in this study.

2.2.1 Basic Clause Structure

Sherpa typically has an AOV constituent order in transitive clauses,[24] as can be seen in example (1) below.[25]

(1) SICK 008

ŋje¹	r̩ikikur²	ŋi²	so¹in		+ +	TTT AAA
ŋje¹	r̩ikikur²	ŋi²	so¹	-in	+ +	TTT AAA
PRO	N	NUM	V	-EVID	++	TTT AAA
1sg.ERG	potato.pancake	two	eat	-PST.Cj.Dir	++	TTT AAA
A	**O**		**V**			

I ate two potato pancakes.

In connected discourse, the subject or the object can be unexpressed if the referent is clear from the context (Kelly 2004:261). This practice is frequently employed in the texts analyzed for this study.

The grammatical relations in a Sherpa clause are marked by a split ergative pattern. In some contexts, typically the perfective aspect[26], the ergative-absolutive pattern is used, while the nominative-accusative pattern is used in other contexts, generally with the imperfective aspect. However, absolutive, nominative, and accusative case roles are all unmarked. Only the ergative case role has overt marking (Kelly 2004:248-249).[27]

Ergative case marking is obligatory for the transitive A subjects of a perfective verb, as shown in (1). However, with the imperfective aspect, the ergative-absolutive pattern is optional for third person and second person transitive A

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[24] Traditionally referred to as SOV

[25] The Sherpa clause is discussed in detail by Schöttelndreyer (1975) applying a tagmemics approach.

[26] In Sherpa there is no explicit perfective marker. Perfective aspect is typically indicated by a past evidential suffix or particle. See section 2.2.3.

[27] Kelly (2004:248) argues that a dative marker is used to mark O in imperfective clauses with the nominative accusative pattern, however the present researcher has not observed this type of O marking.

subjects. In the imperfective, the ergative case marking is never found in first person transitive A subjects (Kelly 2004:248).

In both the perfective and imperfective aspects, the transitive O and intransitive S subject are unmarked (Kelly 2004:248-249). Compare the null marking of S in (2) with the null marking of O in (1).

(2) RAT 009

mo¹,	*pje¹*	*ʃurnok*		*ke²*
mo¹	*pje¹*	*ʃur*	*-nok*	*ke²*
DEM	N	V	-EVID	PRT
down	rat	enter	-PST.Dj.Infer	EMPH
	S	**V**		

(I inferred that) this rat entered down there (in the tea shop) [speaker is up in his room on second floor while tea shop is on first floor].

The nominative-accusative pattern is only used with the imperfective aspect. In the imperfective, the null nominative form is used for the transitive A subject and intransitive S subject. For the O, a dative case marker is sometimes used (Kelly: 2004:248)[28]. The nominative-accusative pattern is shown in example (3).

(3) MRKT 006

ŋi¹	*ti¹*	*jaŋ²,*	*arak²*	*tʰuɲin*		*wot¹*	*dza¹*	--
ŋi¹	*ti¹*	*jaŋ²*	*arak²*	*tʰuŋ*	*-in*	*wot¹*	*dza¹*	--
PRO	DEM	PRT	N	V	-ASP	V	PRT	--
1pl	that	EMPH	liquor	drink	-CONT	COP	NegAtt	--
A			**O**	**VP**------------------------				

...[W]e were drinking liquor.

2.2.2 Overview of the Noun Phrase

The noun phrase in Sherpa has an obligatory noun or pronoun followed by an optional case marker, adjective, numeral classifier, number marker or emphatic

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[28] However, the dative marking of O has not been observed in the texts analyzed for this thesis.

marker. The only element that can precede the head noun is a determiner, usually a demonstrative (see Figure 5). Lexicalized phrases are an exception to this, as they sometimes have an adjective or numeral before the noun (Kelly 2004:222).[29]

(DET) + **NOUN** + (CaseM) + (ADJ) + (NumClass) + (NumM) + (EMPH)

Figure 5: The Sherpa Noun Phrase (based on Kelly 2004:222)

A small set of case markers are used in Sherpa to indicate the function of a noun phrase within a clause. These can be seen in Table 4. Nominative, absolutive, and accusative case roles are unmarked. Case markers are phonologically bound to the noun they follow but morphologically they are clitics. Their influence is over the entire noun phrase, not just the noun (Kelly 2004:228).

Casemarker	Function
-(k)i[30]*/-re*[31]	genitive/ergative
-la	dative, associative, allative, instrumental, comitative, locative
-ne/-me/-sur[32]	ablative

Table 4: Sherpa Case Markers and their Functions (adapted from Kelly 2004:228)

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[29] The demonstrative *ti¹* 'that' can also appear directly after a head noun. Kelly (2004:236) describes this post-nominal *ti¹* as a discourse particle. However, in the texts analyzed in this thesis, this word often appears after a head noun with a case suffix. This seems to indicate that it is acting as a pronoun in addition to having a discourse function.

[30] Kelly also lists *-gi* as an allomorph of *-ki* (2004:228)

[31] Kelly states that *-re* is only used with second and third person pronouns (2004:231). The form *-re* does not appear in the data analyzed in this thesis. However, *-ra*, which may be a variant of *-re*, also appears as a genitive marker on first person pronouns.

[32] Kelly states that *-sur* is only attested for speakers of the Southern dialects (2004:228). She does not discuss the difference between *-ne* and *-me* but does state that *-me* is used less widely. Both *-ne* and *-sur* are utilized in the texts studied in this thesis.

2.2.3 Overview of the Verb Phrase

The verb phrase of a main clause in Sherpa consists of an optional negative prefix, a required verb stem with or without an impersonal verbal suffix[33], an optional aspect suffix, an optional evidential suffix and an optional emphatic particle (see Figure 6[34]). In addition, in a complex main verb phrase, a converb with or without the converb suffix precedes the main verb and acts as an adverbial modifier.[35] A converb can also function as an independent medial clause to indicate sequential action. The distinction between these two types of converbs must be determined by context alone.[36]

(Converb) + [(Negative Prefix) + **Stem** + (Impersonal Verbal Suffix) + (Aspect Suffix) + (Evidential Suffix)] + (Emphatic Particle)

Figure 6: Elements of the Main Verb Phrase in Sherpa

Various examples of main verb phrases are illustrated in Table 5.

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[33] This is the term used in Schöttelndreyer's work. Kelly (2004) glosses this suffix as 'NMLZ (nominalizer)'.

[34] In Figure 6, parentheses indicate optional elements. The brackets form the boundary of the main verb. The converb is therefore a pre-verbal element of the VP and the emphatic particle is a post-verbal element.

[35] Kelly (2004:241-260) describes the negative prefix, the stem, impersonal verbal suffix (which she calls a nominalizer), aspect particle and evidential particle/suffix, while Schöttelndreyer (1975:46-48, 1978:262-263) uses the terms *editorial particle* and *emphatic particle* to refer to emphatic attitude particles such as *dza¹* and *lo¹* respectively. In addition, Schöttelndreyer (1975:48) labels the "Evidential Suffix" category as "Mood" and includes finite and non finite suffixes here.

[36] Bickel (1998) provides a useful description of different types of converbs. Like Bickel's (1998:203) description of Nepali converbs as having one marker with the two functions of adverbial modification and narrative chaining, the Sherpa converbs also have one marker -ni that express these two functions. The suffix -ni is described as a clause chain suffix by Kelly (2004:273-274) and shown to have both a modification function and subsequent action function very similar to those described by Bickel (1998:203) for Nepali. Schöttelndreyer and Schöttelndreyer (1973) consider -ni to be a simultaneous action marker.

CON-VERB	[NEG	STEM	IMS	ASP	EVID]	EMPH	SOURCE
		zer¹ 'rise'	*-up* IMS				S and S[37] (1973:69)
		tʃuŋ¹ 'obtain'			*-nok* PST.Dj.Infer		S and S (1973:57)
	mo- 'not'	*tʰo¹* 'able'			*-wi* NPST.Dj. CnKn		S and S (1973:58)
		gota¹ 'laugh'		*-ki* IMPV	*-wi* NPST.Dj. CnKn		Kelly (2004:247)
		gal¹ 'go.PST.Dj'	*-up* IMS			*dza¹* NegAtt	Schötteln-dreyer (1978:263)
		wot¹ 'be'	*-up* IMS	*-i* IMPV	*-nok* PST.Dj.Infer		S and S (1973:67)
		la¹ 'raise'			*-suŋ* PST.Dj.Dir		S and S (1973:97)
kja¹-ni 'do'-CONV		*ti¹* 'ask'		*-ki* IMPV			S and S (1973:58-59)
si¹ 'say'		*kja¹* 'do'			*-in* PST.Cj.Dir		Schötteln-dreyer (1978:263)

Table 5: Examples of Main Verb Phrases in Sherpa

2.2.4 Tense, Aspect, and Evidentiality

The evidential suffixes in Sherpa are at least partially responsible for the semantic load in five different categories: person, tense, aspect, volitionality and evidentiality. As Kelly says, "Evidentials in Sherpa are rather complex and deserve considerable attention" (2004:249). What follows is a brief summary of the meanings and functions of the evidential suffixes in Sherpa.[38]

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[37] Abbreviation for Schöttelndreyer and Schöttelndreyer

[38] For more on evidentials in Sherpa, see Woodbury (1986:189-202) and Wierzbicka (1994:120-127).

Sherpa has four evidential suffixes: *-in, -suŋ, -wi* and *-nok*.[39] Table 6 gives the

primary uses of each evidential.

Evidential	Function/Meaning
-in	1. Used with first person volitional actors in declaratives 2. Used with second-person non-volitional actors in interrogatives 3. Used with volitional events that the speaker experienced directly
-suŋ	1. Used with second and third person declaratives where the event was witnessed directly by the speaker 2. Used to imply past tense 3. Used with first person actors in questions 4. Used with first person actors to indicate that the action was accidental
-nok	1. Used in perfective sentences with second and third person actors to indicate that the event was inferred to have happened but not directly witnessed 2. Used in imperfective sentences to express that the speaker is talking about a currently occurring event 3. Used in imperfective sentences with second and third person actors to talk about a past event that he or she witnessed
-wi	1. Always occurs with the imperfective aspect marker *-ki*[40] 2. Used to talk about the generally accepted way that something happened 3. Used to talk about the way in which something is likely to happen

Table 6: The Function/Meaning of Evidentials in Sherpa (based on data from Kelly 2004:249-253, Woodbury 1986, Schöttelndreyer 1975:49 and personal communication with Lee)

One important use of evidentials in Sherpa is in the conjunct/disjunct system.

Person and number are not marked on the verb in Sherpa. Instead, Sherpa uses

personal pronouns and a conjunct/disjunct system with evidential morphology

on the verb.[41] The evidential *-in* is the conjunct marker while *-suŋ* is the disjunct

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[39] Kelly (2004) represents the evidential *-in* as a suffix /-ĩ/ and *-nok, -suŋ*, and *-wi* as independent words but does not mark tone on them. In the work of Schöttelndreyer and Lee, as well as in the available Sherpa lexicons, the evidentials are represented as suffixes. This work follows the convention of transcribing all the Sherpa evidentials as suffixes. There are three copulas in Sherpa, *jin¹, we¹* and *nok¹*, which are semantically and phonologically related to the evidentials *-in, -wi* and *-nok* respectively. These copulas are not marked for person, number, or tense (Kelly 2004: 237-241). The impersonal forms *jind¹up* and *wot¹up* also used in the Sherpa texts analyzed in this thesis and they are inflected like other impersonal verbal forms. These impersonal forms of the copulas are also attested in the texts that appear in B. Schöttelndreyer and H. Schöttelndreyer (1973).

[40] The present researcher has observed in his interaction with Sherpa speakers that *-wi* does not always occur with *-ki*. Common exceptions to Kelly's statement are: *ki-wi* 'do-NPST.Dj.CnKn' , *di-wi* 'go-NPST.Dj.CnKn', and *gi-wi* 'come-NPST.Dj.CnKn'.

[41] The conjunct/disjunct verbal system was developed by Hale (1980) for Kathmandu Newari. The conjunct/disjunct system was first applied to Sherpa by Schöttelndreyer (1980).

marker.[42] Table 7 shows how the conjunct/disjunct system functions in relation to person and sentence type.

Declarative Sentences			Interrogative Sentences		
First Person Actor	Conjunct	*-in*	First Person Actor	Disjunct	*-suŋ*
Second Person Actor	Disjunct	*-suŋ*	Second Person Actor	Conjunct	*-in*
Third Person Actor	Disjunct	*-suŋ*	Third Person Actor	Disjunct	*-suŋ*

Table 7: The Use of Conjunct and Disjunct Morphology in Sherpa (based on Kelly 2004:254)

Tense, like person and number, is not unambiguously marked morphologically in Sherpa, but verbs in the past time frame can be distinguished from non-past verbs based on the context, usually the presence of temporal adverbs. In addition, the presence of certain evidential markers also implies tense. For example, *-suŋ* and *-in* both imply past tense (Kelly 2004:244-245).[43]

Aspect in Sherpa is primarily marked as a distinction between perfective and imperfective. Perfective aspect is typically indicated by a verb stem directly followed by an evidential suffix. An event verb with an impersonal verbal suffix can also be made perfective with the negative attitude particle *dza¹*, as seen in example (4).

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[42] Kelly (2004) sometimes glosses *-nok* as a past disjunct just like *-suŋ,* but she does not discuss how *-nok* relates to *-in* and *-suŋ* in the conjunct/disjunct system.

[43] Schöttelndreyer (1975:49) lists *-wi* and *-in* as future tense suffixes. In the texts studied for this thesis, *-to* and *-no* also appear as future tense suffixes. These last two forms have not been found in any other studies.

(4) (from Schöttelndreyer 1975:47)

batak¹ butuk¹ kja¹ni			ti¹	kur²	ti¹	laŋ²upla			doŋb¹i	

batak¹ butuk¹ kja	*-ni*		*ti¹*	*kur²*	*ti¹*	*laŋ²*	*-up*	*-la*	*doŋb¹*	*-i*
ADV	V	-CONV	DEM	N	DEM	V	-IMS	-DAT	N	-GEN
quickly	do	-CONV	that	bread	that	catch	-IMS	-DAT	tree	-GEN

gonama¹	sala² gal¹up			dza¹

gonama¹	*sala²*	*gal¹*	*-up*	*dza¹*
ADV	ADV	V	-IMS	PRT
from the top	down	go.PST.Dj	-IMS	NegAtt

(I) quickly went down from the top of the tree to the ground in order to catch the bread.

The imperfective is signaled with the impersonal verbal suffix -(u)(p) and/or the imperfective marker -(k)i optionally followed by -wi or -nok. The discourse context is also an important element in distinguishing between non-past and past imperfectives (Kelly 2004:245-248 and Schöttelndreyer 1975:48-50).

Other imperfective forms that appear in the Sherpa texts analyzed in this thesis include three continuous aspect constructions not mentioned by Kelly: 1. -in with an optional copula we¹, 2. -(u)(p)-(k)i-nok 'IMS-IMPV-PST.Dj.Infer', and 3. -dok.[44]

Table 8 summarizes the verbal tense-aspect system in Sherpa with a list of perfective and imperfective tenses and example sentences adapted from Schöttelndreyer (1975:48-50) and Kelly (2004:245-248).

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[44] The first two constructions are also found in Schöttelndreyer (1975:50-51), but the third has not been found in any other studies.

Tense-Aspect	Sentence	Translation
Perfective Past Tense	ŋje¹ bin¹-in	'I gave.'
	kʰjo¹-re bin¹-suŋ	'You gave.'
	kʰjo¹-re bin¹-nok	'You gave.'
	ti¹-ki bin¹-suŋ	'He/she gave.'
	ti¹-ki bin¹-nok	'He/she gave.'
Imperfective Tenses		
Future 1	ŋa¹ ter²-in	'I will give.'
	kʰjoraŋ¹ ter²-ki-wi	'You will give.'
	ti¹ ter²-ki-wi	'He/she will give.'
Future 2 / Past Continuous[45]	kʰjoraŋ¹ ter²-ki-nok	'You will give; you were giving.'
	ti¹ ter²-ki-nok	'He/she will give; he/she was giving.'
Perfect	ŋa¹ bin¹ we¹	'I am/was in the state of having given.'
	kʰjoraŋ¹ bin¹ we¹	'You are/was in the state of having given.'
	ti¹ bin¹ we¹	'He/she is/was in the state of having given.'
Continuous	ŋa¹ ter²-in we¹	'I am/was giving.'
	kʰjoraŋ¹ ter²-in we¹	'You are/were giving.'
	ti¹ ter²-in we¹	'He/she is/was giving.'
Past Perfect Continuous	kʰjoraŋ¹ bind¹-u-i-nok	'You had been giving.'
	ti¹ bind¹-u-i-nok	'He/she had been giving.'
Future Continuous	kʰjoraŋ¹ ter²-in-nok	'You will be giving.'
	ti¹ ter²-in-nok	'He/she will be giving.'

Table 8: Summary of the Tense-Aspect System in Sherpa (adapted from Schöttelndreyer 1975:48-50 and Kelly 2004:246-248)

2.2.5 Clause Linking in Sherpa

A sentence in Sherpa has one or more clauses and ends with a main clause dominated by a finite verb (Kelly 2004:261).

Tense, aspect, mood, and evidential suffixes are attached to verbs to create a main verb.[46] Subordinating suffixes such as -siŋ 'when/if' and subordinating

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[45] The difference between a past interpretation and a future one is based on context.

[46] Cf. Kelly 2004, chapter 4 for a description of finite verbs.

29

adverbs such as *sima*[1] 'after' attach to verbs to form subordinate clauses of various types (Kelly 2004:262, 266).

The converb suffix *-n(i)* attaches to verbs to indicate sequential narrative linkage or acts as an adverbial modifier. The difference between these two functions is based on context, and often difficult to determine (Kelly 2004:264). When the narrative linking function is utilized, the resulting non-main clause can be interpreted as a medial clause[47]. However, if a verb with a converb suffix is employed to modify a main verb, it is part of the main clause (Kelly 2004:264).

The impersonal verbal suffix *-(u)(p)* is a finite suffix in questions, some imperfective sentences, and when it is followed by certain suffixes and particles, it can mark perfective aspect (Kelly 2004:246, Schöttelndreyer 1975:22-23, 47). In addition, it can function as a nominalizer, complementizer, or relativizer, in which case it functions as a subordinating suffix (Kelly 2004:267-272).

2.3 Sherpa Discourse

A number of works have been published that analyze Sherpa phonology and morpho-syntax. But the quantity of studies on Sherpa discourse is quite small. Only four studies on Sherpa discourse are currently available, and only one since 1978. In 1973, Kenneth Pike and Burkhard Schöttelndreyer published two works on Sherpa discourse, both more theoretical than descriptive. One treats the nature of the clause in connected discourses, and the other analyzes paragraph

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[47] Cf. The concept of *medial clause* is employed in this thesis following the usage in Longacre (1989:426-429, 439) and Christian (1987:82-88) in relation to Gujarati. Masica (1991:321-325, 397-401) uses the term *conjunctive participle* to refer to these types of verbal forms, while Bickel (1998) describes them as *converbs*. In this thesis, the verb and verbal morphology are referred to as a *converb* and *converb suffix* respectively. See footnote 31 for more on converbs and the converb suffix.

divisions by reversing pairs of sentences and asking native speakers about the acceptability of the results. Then in 1978, B. Schöttelndreyer studied a large corpus of narrative texts from various sub-genres to discover the typical structure of different sorts of narratives. Most recently, Sang Yong Lee (n.d.) has examined normative discourse in Sherpa, which is a sub-type of Longacre's behavioral discourse type. The conclusions found in Schöttelndreyer (1978) are the most relevant for this study, and his findings are summarized below.

Schöttelndreyer (1978:248) identifies various narrative genres in Sherpa. The three main groups are: fables, remote narratives and reports. Fables and remote narratives can then be divided into event-oriented and participant-oriented narratives, while reports can be divided into plot-oriented and narrator-oriented. The Sherpa narrative genres discussed by Schöttelndreyer (1978:248) are pictured in Figure 7.
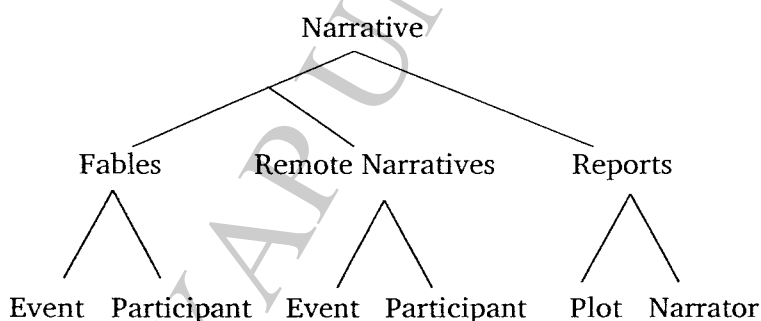

Figure 7: Major Narrative Sub-genres in Sherpa (according to Schöttelndreyer 1978:248)

The plot-oriented reports and narrator-oriented reports can be further subdivided into direct and indirect based on the verbal forms that are used for mainline events (see Figure 8). Each marker indicates the degree of involvement the

narrator feels in relation to the event expressed. For both types of direct reports, the verbal markers indicate that the narrator is an eye-witness to the event. In the plot-oriented indirect report, the verbal morphology indicates that the narrator was an eye-witness to the event but was not directly involved. On the other hand, in the narrator-oriented indirect report, the suffix indicates that the narrator was involved in the event but wishes he or she had not been (Schöttelndreyer 1978: 261-262).
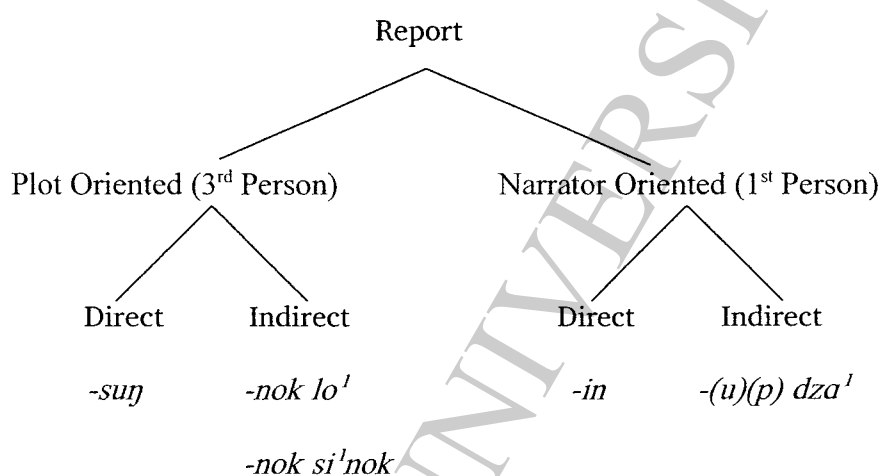
```
                            Report
                   _____/      _____
                  /                        \
  Plot Oriented (3ʳᵈ Person)      Narrator Oriented (1ˢᵗ Person)
         /\                                /\
        /  \                              /  \
   Direct   Indirect                 Direct   Indirect
   -suŋ     -nok lo¹                   -in     -(u)(p) dza¹
            -nok si'nok
```

Figure 8: Verbal Suffixes in the Event Sequence of Reports in Sherpa (adapted from Schöttelndreyer 1978:262)

The fables, remote narratives, and reports all are analyzed consisting of an introduction, a corpus (or body), and a closure. In the introduction, Schöttelndreyer identifies three possible sections: the heading (or title), the identificational setting and the circumstantial setting. He also mentions a number of surface devices in Sherpa that are used to introduce the time and place of the story to the audience (Schöttelndreyer 1978:248-258).

Schöttelndreyer then posits five paragraph boundary markers for Sherpa: conjunctions, linkage, time settings, space settings, and shift of focus (1978:258).

An analysis of types of clausal information was also conducted (Schöttelndreyer (1978:261-264). It was found that the standard verbal suffix for mainline events in a Sherpa narrative is *-nok*. But at the tension point of a narrative, *-suŋ* is sometimes employed. As mentioned above, mainline events in reports are marked differently than those of other narratives. Schöttelndreyer lumps background and collateral information together as tributary material. Setting material is marked with the imperfective construction *-up-in-nok*. The future construction *-gu-wi* is used to mark other sorts of tributary information. Questions and negated events are also considered tributary material. In addition, background material is sometimes marked by the phrase *tʃila si si* 'because', which he analyzed grammatically as a rhetorical question. Finally, the closure is usually some sort of summary statement or moral. But some narratives just end with the final event and do not have a formal closure.

Schöttelndreyer's article presents a number of details about how Sherpa narratives are structured. However, there are no clear definitions of the various narrative genres, just a list of surface structures.

2.4 Discourse in Other Central Tibetan gTsang Languages

A few narrative discourse studies have been conducted on gTsang languages other than Sherpa. The most relevant studies for this thesis describe narrative discourse in Jirel and Syuwa (Kagate)[48], which are both considered to be Central Tibetan gTsang languages (Bradley 1997:5-6).

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[48] Selected discourse features of one narrative of personal experience in Dolpo, another gTsang language, have also been described by Peebles (2006).

The most relevant study for this thesis is Tej Bahadur Jirel's description of selected features of folk narratives in the Jirel language[49]. The main concentration of Jirel speakers live in the town of Jiri (Jirel 1999:1), which is also inhabited by Sherpa speakers (Kelly 2004:222) (see Figure 4 above).

Jirel's (1999) study describes discourse boundaries, surface structure, plot structure and information salience for four folk narratives. The first section describes the Jirel language as employing four different boundary markers: change in time, change in location, change in participants and phonological markers such as pauses and changes in the rate of speech. In the second section, Longacre's (1996:36) etic plot and surface segments are applied to the Jirel texts resulting in an emic list of plot and surface segments. The Jirel texts analyzed exemplify eight different surface segments: title, aperture, stage, prepeak episodes, peak episodes, postpeak episodes, closure, and finis. The title, closure, and finis, however, are optional. Jirel observes that the peak is distinguished from the other surface units by a number of characteristics listed by Longacre (1996:39-48): rhetorical underlining, concentration of participants, heightened vividness (especially a high density of action verbs), change of pace and a change of vantage point and/or orientation. However, a change in the use of particles and the use of onomatopoeia are not used in the peak. In relation to the notional structure, six of Longacre's (1996:36) seven segments are observed in Jirel: exposition, inciting moment, developing conflict, climax, denouement and conclusion. Only the segment of final suspense is absent in Jirel folk narratives.

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[49] Other studies on Jirel narrative discourse, which are not directly relevant to this thesis, are Maibaum 1978 on participant reference and Strahm 1978 describing aspects of narrative cohesion.

In the final section of the body, information salience is discussed. Jirel identifies

seven of Longacre's (1996:28) nine etic Bands in Jirel narratives. These are:

primary storyline, secondary storyline, background activities/events, setting,

irrealis, evaluation and cohesion. Only the routine storyline and background

activity from Longacre's etic scheme are not found. Jirel's (1999:119) salience

scheme appears in Table 9.

Band of Salience	Description
1 - Primary Storyline Band	Past tense verb with suffix -*duk* '-Past Disjunct' in independent clauses
2 - Secondary Storyline Band	Past tense verb with -*cyakwa* '-Disc[50]' in independent clauses
3 - Background activities/events	Prolonged, repetitive and gradual with verb suffixes -*nameki*, -*jin*, -*gin*, -*in*, -*ala*/-*la*
4 - Setting	Existential verb *wot-akwa-lo* '(there) was' or '(there) were' and stative verb *det-cyakwa-lo* '(there) lived' with a locative element, temporal and locative elements
5 - Irrealis	Negation, condition, suggestion, question and pretension
6 - Evaluation (author intrusion)	Mainly moral, evaluative clauses
7 - Cohesion	Adverbial clauses (mainly tail-head and summary-head linkage clauses or repetitive back-reference) and relative clauses

Table 9: A Salience Scheme for Jirel Folk Narratives (adapted from Jirel 1999:119)

Another language that is closely related to Sherpa, in which discourse has been

studied, is Syuwa. Monika Höhlig (1978) studied evidentials and events in

Syuwa narrative. She identifies four patterns of evidential usage for the

expression of completed events in Syuwa, as seen in Table 10.

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[50] Attitude particle disclaiming responsibility (Jirel 1999: xvi)

Evidential Patterns	Use
-si completive.witnessed	1. To show that the speaker is an eye-witness or agent 2. In the body of an unverified narrative
-si　　　　　*lo* completive.witnessed secondhand	1. To indicate the information is from someone who is an eye-witness or agent
-tu completive.unwitnessed	1. To indicate that the information is from someone other than an eye-witness 2. To indicate that the speaker is making a deduction based on background knowledge 3. Speaker witnessed the results of an event but not the origin
-tu　　　　　*lo* completive.unwitnessed secondhand	1. To indicate that the information is from someone other than an eye-witness 2. In the introductory sentence of an unverified story

Table 10: Patterns of Evidential Usage in Syuwa (data from Höhlig 1978)