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Bine

SENTENCE BOUNDARIES
AND CONJUNCTION

Bine clauses combine together to form sentences. The average sentence is two to three clauses in length. Some may be four to six clauses and many are only one clause in length. Non-finite verbs such as infinitives and participles occur rather frequently in non-narrative text, however most sentences contain a finite verb, and most narrative and procedural clauses contain finite verbs. There are no 'medial verbs'¹ in Bine although these are very common in Papuan (Non-Austronesian) languages of the Trans-New Guinea Phylum. Since nearly every verb is marked for tense and mood, as well as for person and number, verbs are not usually a good indication of sentence boundaries. It is not always immediately clear where the sentence boundaries should be drawn. Sentence final intonation² does help and so do grammar clues, but there are occasions when where to place the sentence boundary is debatable.

Sentence length is not noticeably different between narrative and non-narrative texts. Clauses contain finite verbs and are frequently joined sequentially without a conjunction in narrative and procedural type texts. Whereas in other non-narrative texts frequently only one clause in the sentence has a finite verb and the other clauses are joined to it by logical connectors or by verb infinitives.

Clause juxtaposition occurs when two or more clauses form a closely-knit series of actions. The subject usually remains constant; the object, however, may differ from clause to clause. The following sentences are taken from the beginning of a procedural text about the däci tree and its fruit.

- (1) --- a) Caaple liba yoo-pac-u-si, b) däci kuu
mumu when 3o.ir-uncover-hab-1/3nsg.s däci seed
bine jää-pläetn-im-u-si, c) kaake
nsg.o 3o.ir-split-acc-pl.o-hab-1/3nsg.s shells
yii-sab-em-u-si, d) kuu bine jääbe cabu
3o.ir-throw-pl.o-hab-1/3nsg.s seed nsg.o basket into
yää-bäcn-im-u-si.
3o.ir-put.inside-pl.o-hab-1/3nsg.s

- (2) a) Pui jääbe yaa-wad-u-si, b) calame cabu
that basket 3o.ir-take-hab-1/3nsg.s creek into

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- (2) a) Pui jääbe yaa-wad-u-si, b) calame cabu
 that basket 3o.ir-take-hab-1/3nsg.s creek into
yii-gl-en-im-u-si.
 3o.ir-dunk-prog-pl.o-hab-1/3nsg.s
- (3) Yaa-craj-u-ge neeneni nesae bimu cama.
 3er.ir-remain-hab-3sg two three day with
- (4) a) Sää-rp-em-u-si liba,
 tw.3o.ir-take.from.water-pl.o-hab-1/3nsg.s when
 b) däci kuu bine jää-pul-em-u-si,
 däci seed nsg.o 3o.ir-crush-pl.o-hab-1/3nsg.s
 c) iiya cama jaa-man-im-u-si,
 coconut with 3o.ir-knead-pl.o-hab-1/3nsg.s
 d) tope yaa-tn-em-u-si,
 package 3o.ir-wrap-pl.o-hab-1/3nsg.s
 e) caaple cabu yää-br-är-u-si.
 mumu into 3o.ir-put.to.mumu-inc-hab-1/3nsg.s
- (5) a) Caaple ne yoo-l-u-si, liba
 mumu sg.o 3o.ir-cover-hab-1/3nsg.s when
 b) yoo-pac-u-si, c) biname cina inwe ca
 3o.ir-uncover-hab-1/3nsg.s person nsg.s behind from
piba yää-rw-äj-u-si.
 then 3o.ir-eat-aug-hab-1/3nsg.s
- 1.a) When they uncover the mumu, b) they split the däci
 seeds, c) throw the shells, d) and put the seeds into a
 basket. 2.a) They take that basket and soak it in the
 creek. 3) They leave it for five days. 4.a) When they
 take it from the water, b) they crush the däci seeds,
 c) knead with coconut liquid, d) wrap into a package,
 e) and put into a mumu. 5.a) They cover the mumu, b) and
 when they uncover it, c) later then people eat it.

In the passage above there are grammatical clues as to sentence boundaries. One clue is when the head noun of a locative phrase in one clause becomes the object of the next clause. This repetition of the noun serves as a partial recapitulation of the preceeding clause. Especially when accompanied by sentence final intonation, it is an indication of sentence boundary. Sometimes the verb from the preceeding clause is repeated in non-finite form at the beginning of the next clause as in Sentence (7).

- (6) piba gagle ca yaa-tn-u-ge suguba ne.
 then banana.leaf by 3o.ir-wrap-hab-3sg.s tobacco sg.o
- (7) A-tn-eji suguba ne druku cabu yaa-c-it-u-ge.
 cl-wrap-p.par tobacco sg.o holder into 3o.ir-put-sem-hab-3sg.s

6) Then wrap the tobacco in a banana leaf. 7) The wrapped tobacco they put into the tobacco holder.

Sometimes the word siige 'finished that' occurs as a recapitulation of the former clause. These various recapitulations combine with other features to indicate sentence boundaries, but they are not always such an indication when they occur apart from other clues.

- (8) a) Tabe mage te o-cl-uj-i, b) tiite ne
 3sg.s mother sg.s int.f-go-P5-i/3sg.s fish.trap sg.o
- tage gome i-pic-mal-uj-i, c) o-can-uj-i
 mouth near 3o-close-dim-P5-i/3sg.s 3o.f-carry-P5-i/3sg.s
- Neeteri Nätégiye, d) pe-ga u-jar-äc-it-uj-i
 (place name) there-p 3o.f-throw-com-sem-P5-i/3sg.s
- baduge cabu.
 river into

- (9) Siige, tabe t-a-cn-en-ut-uj-i
 finished 3sg.s tw-int-return-prog-sem-P5-i/3sg.s
- Pugigaabe teeme cewe me.
 (place name) 3.pos village to

8.a) She the mother went, b) closed the fish trap near the mouth, c) carried it to Neeteri Nätégiye, d) and threw it into the river there. 9) Finished, she returned to her village Pugigaabe.

In Sentence (9) the repetition of the pronoun also indicates a new sentence. The clauses in Sentence (8) are simply juxtaposed to imply a closely-knit sequence of events. There is no connector needed even with the final clause. A connector may occasionally occur before the last clause, such as 'then' or 'but' or 'finished', but never 'and'.

The use of a deictic, such as 'that' in Sentence (2) is often but not always used to separate clauses because it gives more prominence to a person or object that is already in unmarked focus in the preceeding clauses.

A change in the time of action separates events, especially in a sentence of juxtaposed clauses where events occur in rapid succession. Sentence (3) above is thus separated from preceeding and following clauses.

Another important indicator of sentence boundaries is the conjunction. Some conjunctions join clauses into one sentence, while others are used to separate clauses. However, the primary use of conjunctions remains that of showing relationships between clauses and thus between sentences and paragraphs.

PARAGRAPH BOUNDARIES AND CONJUNCTION

Bine paragraphs vary in size as well as in composition. In narrative discourse clues such as a change in setting, either time or location, may signal a new paragraph. Also, a return to the eventline after more lengthy background information may, but does not always, signal a new paragraph. A change in the tense of the eventline, but not merely tense switching, may indicate a new paragraph. A change in the speaker of quoted material may require a new paragraph. In a narrative a major character is often the global topic for one or more paragraphs. Focus on another major participant would then indicate a change in global topic and the need for a new paragraph.

Non-narrative discourse is usually subject matter oriented. A change in topic, or a shift in emphasis may indicate a new paragraph. Certain conjunctions help in signaling changes of global topic. Yo meaning 'yes' indicates a major shift in topic or emphasis. Siige meaning 'finished' may operate at the clause, sentence, or paragraph level.

- (1) Yo, siige puma-cita ca liba, sosi
yes finished there-first from if/when church
pisi n-yene---
there Eq-3m.sg.np

Yes, finished, if you go on from there, there is a church---

Poto cidi me usually means 'about' or 'concerning' and it can be used to introduce or to end a paragraph, or a smaller or larger chunk of discourse.

- (2) Cuta nuuja gwidape poto cidi me---
also other thing some edge to

Also, another thing,---

Cuta piiyepu 'also and' as well as most other conjunctions discussed under Sentence Boundaries may function also at the paragraph level.

QUOTED SPEECH

Quoted speech may be introduced as either thought or audible speech. Direct and indirect quotations follow the same pattern of construction.

- (1) Tabē je-j-i-ge egä, "Cane o-tn-i m-äne."
 3sg.s 3o-say-P2/i-3sg.s thus 1sg.s cl-go-nom Pos-1sg.np
 He said thus, "I want to go."

Either the verb of speaking or the word egä 'thus' may be omitted when a rapid exchange of conversation is taking place, or any time when the act of speaking is clearly indicated.

Intention, which in many languages is constructed from quoted thought, is usually expressed by the word siŋi 'want' in Bine. This is accompanied by the verb infinitive.

- (2) Cane siŋi wa-wen-a-me.
 1sg.s want cl-do-nom-inf
 I want to do it.

There is a verb to negate quoted thought as follows:

- (3) Cane a-pu na-nen-i-ge
 1sg.s this-like 1sg.er-thought(erroniously)-P2/i-3sg
egä maane o-tn-i m-äte.
 thus 2sg.s cl.go.nom Pos-2sg.np
 I erroneously thought that you wanted to go.