FINITE VERB FORMS IN NUBRI WITH A FOCUS ON CONJUNCT-DISJUNCT DISTINCTION

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This paper is a preliminary report on the finite verb forms in Nubri. Nubri reveals the verb agreement pattern known as 'conjunct-disjunct (C-D) like some Tibetan varieties, such as Kyirong Tibetan, Gyalsumdo among others. Nubri shows fairly consistent pattern of the verbs in the past tense marked with -hin, and –soŋ for conjunct and disjunct respectively. However, this is not consistent in the non-past tense.

Keywords: Nubri, conjunct, disjunct, evidentiality

1. Introduction and typological features

Nubri (Glottolog code number 1243) is spoken in Tsum-Nubri Village council in the northern Gorkha. The Nubripas (Nubri people) are recorded as one of the nationalities of Nepal under the term 'Larke' in official government records (NFDIN record). There are a few studies about the Nubri language. Among different varieties of Nubri, a few materials exist in the Lho variety, such as (Dhakal 2018a, c; 2019).[1] The genetic classification proposed in Bradley (1997) is given in Figure 1.

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Tibeto-Burman
     Western TB
          Central Bodish/Tibetan
               Central
                  gTsang
                     Lho, NUBRI, Gyalsumdo
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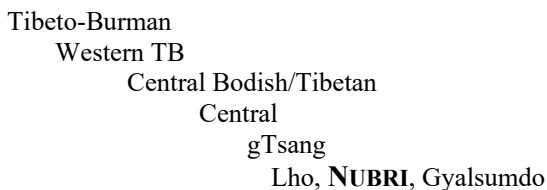
Figure 1: Genetic classification of Nubri (Bradley 1997:5)

Similarly, Tournadre (2016) reports that Nubri is spoken along the Sino-Nepalese border, and he classifies this in 'South Western Section' based on the 'geolinguistic continuum.'

Nubri is a tonal language and bears the characteristics of 'Sinospheric' languages. Nubri makes use of suffixes compared to prefixes. The comparative and superlative forms of adjectives are morphologically derived. The clauses can be combined with the sequence of verbs known as 'serial verbs' (see examples 61, 62, 63). The copulas are used to express evidentiality and other tense and aspect system (Dhakal, 2018b).

The data for this study were obtained from direct elicitation from Lakpa Lama from Lho village of Gorkha. Moreover, the sentences from a text have been examined to further confirm the agreement patterns in the language. The data for this study come from the speakers from Prok village in the northern Gorkha.

The paper is organized as follows. The finite verb forms traditionally known as 'conjunct', 'disjunct' are described in section 2. This section describes the finite verb forms in the past, and present tense, and also discusses the use of copulas in Nubri. Some uses of copulas, such as in the progressive aspect and desiderative mood are discussed in section 3. Mirativity in Nubri is discussed in section 4. Finally, the paper is summarized in section 5.

2. Conjunct/disjunct

A number of scholars have discussed the agreement pattern known as 'conjunct/disjunct' particularly in Tibeto-Burman languages since Hale (1980)[2]. Hargreaves (2005) has discussed the pattern in some details. He notes that one type of marking is reserved for main clause in the first person subject and questions with second person subjects (the "conjunct"), while another type of

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[1]The other varieties of Nubri include Prok, Sama and Namrung.

[2]Some scholars don't prefer to use the terms 'Conjunct/Disjunct' for the marking of agreement in verbs (cf. Tournadre 2008). However, this paper discussed the verb agreement pattern rather than the literal meaning of the verbs. Some examples are obtained from the corpus and they are indicated in […].

marking is used in all other cases ("disjunct"). Hargreaves (2005:6) mentions that a clause will have a conjunct form in the Kathmandu Newar if:

(a) the clause is finite, and

(b) the event being described is interpreted as involving an intentional action by the actor, and

(c) the speech act is either

   (i) declarative/first person, or

   (ii) interrogative/second person, or

   (iii) reported speech when the matrix clause subject and complement clause subject are co-referential.

Nubri also follows the pattern described by Hargreaves (2005), and some scholars discussed in relation with the same pattern overall.[3]

2.1 Conjunct/disjunct in Nubri

While the first person statement and the second person question take the conjunct form, the rest of the verb forms take the disjunct form in finite verb morphology. The conjunct past form terminates in *-hin*, the conjunct question forms mainly end in *-sjã*, and the disjunct form ends in *–soŋ* in Nubri.

(1) *ŋà*   *momo*   *ʃɛ-hin*
     1SG   dumpling   eat-PST.CJ
     'I ate momo.'

(2) *khø*   *momo*   *ʃɛ-soŋ*
     2SG   dumpling   eat-PST.DJ
     'You ate momo.'

(3) *kho*   *momo*   *ʃɛ-soŋ*
     3SG   dumpling   eat-PST.DJ
     'He ate momo.'

As shown in (1-3), the distinction is maintained between the first person and non-first person pronouns.

2.1.1 Past

The verb inflections of the verb *phin* 'go' in perfective (past tense) verb forms are given in Table 1 in statements, and questions. An example follows.

(4) *ŋà*   *phin-hin*
     1SG   go-PST.CJ
     'I went.'

Table 1: Inflection of verb *phin* 'go' in past tense

		State.	Ques.
1SG	*ŋà* 'I'	phin-hin/ phin-hĩ	bu-sjã
1PL	*horaŋ* 'we' (excl.)	phin-hin/ phin-hĩ	bu-sjã
1PL	*ŋi* 'we'	phin-hin/ phin-hĩ	bu-sjã
2SG	*khø* 'you'	bu-soŋ	phin-hina
2PL	*khjaŋgja* 'you PL'	bu-soŋ	phin-hina
3SG.M	*kho* 'he'	bu-soŋ	bu-sjã
3SG.F	*mo* 'she'	bu-soŋ	bu-sjã
3PL	*khuŋ* 'they'	bu-soŋ	bu-sjã

The distinction is seen in the finite verb forms between the first and non-first persons in statements in this table. On the other hand, the verbs are marked with *-hina* in both the second person singular and plural, contrasting this with the finite verb form of the first and the third person pronouns, viz. *–sjã* in question. The finite verb forms given in Table 1 show that the first and the third persons are identical. The verb forms in statement (state.) and question (ques.) in the past tense are given in Table 1.

The verb agreement pattern is identical both in transitive, and ditransitive verbs. The verb agrees only with one noun phrase (NP) in Nubri in both intransitive and transitive clauses. Examples from the transitive verbs (5-7) corroborate this claim.

(5) *ŋà*   *khim*   *dʒo-hin*
     1SG   house   clean-PST.CJ
     'I cleaned the house.'

[3]In addition to Newar mentioned above, the distinction between conjunct/disjunct pattern is characterized in a number of Tibeto-Burman languages. Among the languages closely related to Tibetan varieties, literature is found in some languages, such as Sherpa (Kelly 2004), Dongwang Tibetan (Bartee 2007, 2013), Kyirong Tibetan (2002), and in Gyalsumdo (2018b). This is also reported in well-studied Tibetan varieties, such as Lhasa Tibetan and classical Tibetan (DeLancey 2003a, b). In addition, this is also reported in Kaike (Watters 2006).

(6) *khø   khim   dʒo-soŋ*
    2SG   house   clean-PST.DJ
    'You cleaned the house.'

(7) *kho   khim   dʒo-soŋ*
    3SG   house   clean-PST.DJ
    'He cleaned the house.'

The inflection of the verb *dʒo* 'clean' in the past tense in question is given in (8-10).

(8) *ŋà   khim   dʒo-sjã*
    1SG   house   clean-PST.QUE
    'Did I clean the house?'

(9) *khø   khim   dʒo-sjã*
    2SG   house   clean-PST.QUE
    'Did you clean the house?'

(10) *kho   khim   dʒo-soŋ*
     3SG   house   clean-PST.DJ
     'Did he clean the house?'

The inflections of the transitive verbs in the past tense in statements and questions are given in Table 2.

Table 2: The finite verb *dʒo* 'clean' in the past tense

1SG	*ŋà* 'I'		State.	Ques.
1SG	*ŋà* 'I'		dʒo-hin	dʒo-sjã
1PL	*horaŋ* 'we' (exclusive)		dʒo-hin	dʒo-sjã
	ŋi 'we'		dʒo-hin	dʒo-sjã
2SG	*khø* 'you'		dʒo-soŋ	phin-hina
2PL	*khjaŋgja* 'you PL'		dʒo-soŋ	phin-hina
3SG.M	*kho* 'he'		dʒo-soŋ	dʒo-sjã
3SG.F	*mo* 'she'		dʒo-soŋ	dʒo-sjã
3PL	*khuŋ* 'they'		dʒo-soŋ	dʒo-sjã

The examples given in (11-12) further illustrate this.

(11) *ŋa   kho-la   ʈã   te-hin*
     1SG   3SG-DAT   money give-PST.CJ
     'I gave him money.'

(12) *kho   tá   nakpa   ŋa-kar-la*
     he   horse black   five-EMPH-DAT
     má   té-dzoŋ
     maize   give-PST.DJ
     'I gave corn (maize) to the five black horses.'

The verbal inflections in intransitive and transitive clauses in Tsum (cf. Dhakal, Donohue, Gautam and Liu, 2016), the closest neighbour of Nubri, is different in terms of verb agreement. The inflections of intransitive and transitive verbs inflect differently in Tsum although these two are the closest neighbours.

2.1.2 C/D in the non-past tense

The distinction between C/D discussed with regard to the past tense in section 2.1.1 is not maintained in the non-past tense. The finite verbs in Nubri in the non-past tense end consistently with the copula *jø̀* irrespective of pronouns, numbers, and kinds of sentences (statements, questions). The suffix *–tja* is attached to the verbs with all verb forms in questions.

(13) *ŋà   ɖo   jø̀*
     1SG   walk   COP
     'I walk.'

(14) *kho   ɖo-tja*
     3SG   walk-NPST.Q
     'Does he walk?'

All the pronouns (as subjects) follow the pattern as in (13), and in question as in (14). They are not therefore repeated. The finite forms do not follow the C/D pattern as described in the past tense.

2.1.3 C/D in subordination

The distinction between C/D in different tense is presented in sections 2.1.1-2.1.3. In addition to different tenses marked with C/D, the subordinated clause is marked with conjunct when the subject of the subordinated clause is coreferential with the subject of the main clause. By contrast, if the agent of the subordinated clause is different than the subject of the subordinated clause, it is marked with the disjunct form.

(15) *kho-gi ŋà khim-la de-hin lap du*
     he-ERG I house-LOC sit-PST.CJ say COP
     'He$_i$ said that he$_i$ sat at home.'

(16) *kho-gi   ŋà   khim-la*
     he-ERG   I   house-LOC
     de-soŋ   lap   du
     sit-PST.DJ say   COP
     'He$_i$ said that he$_j$ sat at home.'

(17) *lakpa-gi   ŋà   khim-la de-hin*
Lakpa-ERG   I   house-LOCsit-PST.CJ
lap du
say COP
'Lakpa_i said that he_i sat at home.'

(18) *lakpa-gi   ŋà   khim-la*
he-ERG   I   house-LOC
de-soŋ   lap   du
sit- PST.DJ say   COP
'He_i said that he_j sat at home.'

Unlike in Newari in which the conjunct-disjunct is also maintained in the relative (attributive) clauses (Hargreaves 2005:18), this is not maintained in Nubri.

(19) *di   ŋà de-sa hjul   re*
this   1SG sit-NMLZvillage COP
'This is the village where I lived.'

(20) *di   kho de-sa hjul   re*
this   1SG sit-NMLZvillage COP
'This is the village where he lived.'

(21) *ŋà sa-ken hjopa   tsatsa   duk*
1SG   eat-NMLZrice   little   COP
'The rice that I will eat is little.'

(22) *khosa-ken hjopa   tsatsa   du*
3SG   eat-NMLZrice   little   COP
'The rice that he will eat is little.'

The verb forms are identical in (19) and (20). The suffix -*ken* is used in (21-22) irrespective of the subject of the main clause.

2.1.4 C/D and volitionality

The distinction between C/D we showed in previous sections is relevant only with the intentional verbs. While the distinction is maintained with the volitional verbs, viz. the actions carried out intentionally by the subject agents in these clauses, there is no distinction in verb agreement in the non-volitional verbs. The agent (subject) cuts his finger by mistake, and thus there is no volitionality in this action (24). Example (22) is from a discourse, and we know that the action is not intentional in this case, and the verb form terminates in the disjunct form. Otherwise, the speaker would use the finite verb that terminates in -*hin*. The discourse context tells

us that the speaker was trying to go up to make a phone call to his family members but in vain.

(23) *ŋà   hjala   bu-soŋ*
I   above   go-PST.DJ
'I went up.' [Nubri1.101]

The actions in (23-26) are not done intentionally by the speakers. Therefore, all the finite forms of the verbs in these sentences have the finite verb forms that end in -*soŋ/-dzoŋ*.

(24) *ŋà-i   ŋà   lakpa   tup-soŋ*
1SG-ERG   1SG   hand   cut-PST.DJ
'I cut my hand (accidentally).'

(25) *ŋà kho-la   thoŋ-dzoŋ*
1SG   he-ACC   see-PST.DJ
'I saw him.'

(26) *ŋà   ɖɣ   tor-soŋ   dẽ dzhor-soŋ*
1SG   knife lose-PST.DJ and find-PST.DJ
'I lost the knife and found it.'

(27) *ŋà   sa-la   bhap   ghel-soŋ*
I   earth-LOC fall   fall- PST.DJ
'I fell onto the ground (accidentally).'

This can further be illustrated by the pairs of examples presented in (28-33). Although both of the kinds of constructions are possible, the meaning they express is different in the following pairs of sentences (28-29, 30-31, 32-33).

(28) *ŋà-i   hé   tup-hin*
1SG-ERG   potato cut-PST.CJ
'I cut the potato.'

(29) *ŋà-i   ŋà   lakpa   tup-soŋ*
1SG-ERG   I   hand   cut-PST.DJ
'I (accidentally) cut my hand.'

(30) *ŋà tshu   naŋ   tshu-soŋ*
I   water   inside   enter- PST.DJ
'I submerged into water.'

(31) *ŋà tshu   naŋ   tshu-hin*
1SG   water   inside   enter-PST.CJ
'I submerged into water.'

(32) *ŋà   ṣa   top-soŋ*
1SG   hair   cut- PST.DJ
'I cut my hair.'

(33) ŋà ʂa top-hin
1SG hair cut-PST.CJ
'I cut my hair.'

The pairs of examples in these sentences show that there is a distinction between volitional and non-volitional actions. While the volitional actions make a distinction between conjunct and disjunct, the distinction is not maintained in the non-volitional actions.

Examples (34-35) also show a contrast between the volitionality versus non-volitionality.

(34) ŋà ɲal-hin
1SG sleep-PST.CJ
'I slept.' [Volitional]

(35) ŋà ɲal-soŋ
1SG sleep-PST.DJ
'I slept.' [Non-volitional]

It was shown earlier that the verb in the past tense makes distinction between 'conjunct' and 'disjunct'. It is also to be noted that the past time is not always marked with the past tense suffixes in the natural discourses. The speakers also make use of the bare verb stems to refer to the past tense in the discourse contexts. For example, all of the examples taken from various discourses do not have any TAM markers in them. Instead, they merely have the bare verb stems.

(36) bhõ tʃìk iskul dzaŋ
daughter one school send
bu ɲi ḍhawa dzaŋ
son two lama send
'(I) sent a daughter to school, and two sons to school.' [Nubri1.008]

(37) atsu ghjatso-la lokaldi hoŋ
brother Ghyacho-DAT support come
'(We) came in support of Ghyacho brother.'
[Nubri1.059]

(38) ʃara thamdze hjala gjukphin
male whole above run go
'All the male person went running.'
[TashiChoeden.128]

There is the absence of tense and agreement markers in example (39), which is obtained from a discourse. The speaker is asked where she was born, and in turn she replies. Interestingly, we see that there is no tense marker in the verb. However, the context tells us that the verb from refers to the past tense.

(39) ŋa namla-la ke
I Namla-LOC born
'I was born in Namla.' [Nubri3.6]

The bare verb form is used not only in statement, but also in questions. As we see in (40), there is no use of the TAM marker in the verb. Similarly, when the addressee answers the question, he again makes use of the verb form without any inflectional marker. This is true in both examples (40-42).

(40) namla-la lo ghatsø de
Namla-LOC year how much sit
'How long did you live in Namla?'
[Nubri3.7]

(41) lo ɲiʃu namla-la de
year twenty Namla-LOC sit
'(I) lived in Namla for twenty years.'
[Nubri3.9]

(42) ʃuku ʈapliŋ-di ho-di khur
plastic tent-DEF that-DEF carry
'(We) carried the plastic tents.'

The discussion reveals that the bare verb stem may be used to refer to the past tense, in addition to the conjunct form -hin, or -soŋ. In the surface, it is not clear yet whether the speaker is using the past tense or the non-past tense.

Let's consider the following examples where the speaker uses the bare verb stem. As we see in (43), the speaker uses the bare verb stem to refer to the present tense (aspect) while asking the questions, but also giving the answer as in (44). It makes the case complex to find clear nuances to find out the differences between the past and present use of the bare verb stem.

(43) dhana ghana ɲal
now where sleep
'Where do you sleep now?' [Nubri1.118]

(44) *dhana   khim   naŋ   ɲal*
     now   house   inside sleep
     'Now   (we)   sleep   in   the   house.'
     [Nubri1.124]

(45) *lo-la   lep*
     Lho-LOC   reach
     '(We) reached Lho.' [Nubri1.92]

It is not necessary that the conjunct, and disjunct are always marked to show tense in Nubri. As shown in the examples, the past tense is zero marked.

2.1.5 C/D and copulas

It seems that Nubri shows a contrast between conjunct and disjunct in the use of copulas. The forms of copulas in Nubri are *jɷ̀*, *duk*, and *re*. They are discussed in brief in this section.

The copulas *jɷ̀* and *du/duk* are used in locative clauses. Nubri makes a distinction between the first and non-first person copulas in locative clauses in statements. The copula *jɷ̀* appears with the first person statements, and with the second person questions. It is also to be mentioned that when the copula appears with the second person question, an additional suffix *-kja* appears with the copula *jɷ̀*. The form that appears with the copula is copula *jɷ̀da*.

Table 3: Locative copulas in Nubri

	State.	Ques.	Neg.
ŋà 'I'	jɷ̀	dukja	mé
horaŋ 'we'	jɷ̀	dukja	mé
ŋi 'we'	jɷ̀	dukja	mé
khɷ 'you'	duk	jɷ̀da	mé
khjaŋgja 'you (PL)'	duk	jɷ̀da	mé
kho 'he'	duk	dukja	mé
mo 'she'	duk	dukja	mé
khuŋgja 'They'	duk	dukja	mé

By contrast, there are mixed uses of the copulas in the questions. The copula *dukja* is used with the first person pronouns whereas *jɷ̀da* with the second person pronouns. The negative form is identical with all verb forms as shown in Table 3.

(46) *ŋà   pheta   jɷ̀*
     I   outside   COP.CJ
     'I was outside.'

(47) *kho   khim-la   du*
     I   house-LOC   COP.DJ
     'I am at home.'

The identificational clauses are formed by making use of the copula *hin, re* (48-49).

(48) *ŋà   nubri-pa   hin*
     I   Nubri-NMLZ   COP
     'I am a Nubri person.'

(49) *kho   nubri-pa   re*
     3sg   Nubri-NMLZ   COP
     'He is a Nubri person.'

The preliminary report shows that the following copular forms are used in Nubri in conjunct and disjunct.

Table 4: Summary of copula

	Conjunct	Disjunct
Locative	*jɷ̀*	*du*
Identificational	*hin*	*re*

The copular forms for conjunct and disjunct are distinct in Nubri. A detailed analysis is required.

3 Other uses of copular verbs

The copulas are used for some other functions in Nubri. The main uses of the copulas are used in this section.

3.1 Progressive aspect

Nubri does not make use of any morphemes to for the progressive aspect. Instead, it makes use of serial verb construction to show that the actions are in progress. The progressive construction is formed with the verb followed by the lexical verb *de* 'sit'. This is followed by the copula that makes C/D distinction.

(50) *ŋa   nubri   ɖhe   de   jɷ*
     I   Nubri   go   sit   COP
     'I am going to Nubri.'

(51) *ki   hoŋ   de   duk*
     dog   come   sit   cop
     'The dog is coming.'

(52) *kho   tsá   tup   de   duk*
     he   grass   cut   sit   COP
     'He is cutting the grass.'

The distinction is maintained to contrast the conjunct and disjunct in the use of copulas in the progressive aspect.

3.2 Desiderative

The suffix -*ŋi* is added to the verb root to indicate the desiderative mood. The desiderative mood expresses the speakers' desire. The verb marked by the desiderative suffix is followed by the verb *de* 'sit', and this is again followed by the verb *duk*.

(53) *ŋa hjopa ʃɛ-ŋi de   duk*
     I   rice   eat-DESID sit   COP.DJ
     'I want to eat rice.'

(54) *ŋa   hjopa ʃɛ-ŋi   me-de duk*
     I   rice eat-DESID NEG-sit COP
     'I don't want to eat rice.'

(55) *ŋà   ara   thuŋ-ŋi   ɖø duk*
     I   liquor drink-DESID want COP
     'I want to drink liquor.'

(56) *ŋà   tsum-la   ɖho-ŋi*
     I   Tsum-LOC   go-DESID
     ma-ɖø   duk
     NEG-want   COP
     'I did not want to go to Tsum.'

It is to be noted that the finite verb form is obtained by making use of the disjunct copula *duk*. It is natural to use this form because one's desires are not volitional.

4 Evidentiality

Like Tibetan languages, Nubri also make use of evidentiality. Evidentiality is served by the use of the copulas. The use of the copula *duk* refers to evidentiality. The mirative indicates the 'unexpected information' (DeLancey 2000:12). DeLancey (2000:1) mentions, "Evidentiality refers to the grammatical marking of the source of evidence for a proposition; mirativity refers to the marking of a proposition as representing information which is new to the speaker." The information coded in the proposition is surprising to the speaker."

(57) *bhitsa   lep-soŋ*
     boy   come-PST
     'The boy came (arrived).'

(58) *bhitsa   lep   duk*
     boy   come   COP
     'The boy came arrived (it was found so).'

(59) *khoʃi-soŋ*
     he die-PST
     'He died.'

(60) *khoʃi   duk*
     he die   COP
     'He died (it was found so).'

The construction in (57) and (58), and also (59) and (60) differ in how the information is obtained by the speaker. When a speaker utters the sentence (57), for example, he is sure about the information. The information is expected by the speaker. By contrast, if the information is surprising to the speaker, he makes use of the construction as in (58). Similar is the case in (59) and (60) respectively.

The following examples, all obtained from the narratives related to the earthquake, have similar constructions. It is natural that we do not expect that the earthquake occurs, or the houses fall. The information like this is surprising to the speaker as can be read in the following sentences.

(61) *saŋdul   lep   duk*
     earthquake   come   COP
     'The earthquake occurred.'

(62) *oda   khim   ʃik   hoŋ   duk*
     there   house fall   come   COP
     'The house fell (completely) there.'

(63) *iskul   ʃik   hoŋ   duk*
     school   fall   come   COP
     'The school fell (completely) there.'

Thus, the constructions given in (61-63) show that the information coded in these sentences is unexpected to the speakers. They thus differ from the finite verb forms that terminate in -*hin*, and -*soŋ*.

5 Conclusion

The finite verbs in Nubri feature the agreement system that is known as 'conjunct' and 'disjunct'. However, the kind of agreement in Nubri does not align neatly with 'conjunct' and 'disjunct' featured in Tibetan varieties mentioned in various sources

mentioned earlier, such as DeLancey (2003a, b).The choice of the use of copulas in the verb agreement is further complicated by a number of factors. Like the Tibetan varieties discussed in this chapter, the distinction between conjunct and disjunct is determined by volitionality. There is a grammatical category known as mirativity in Nubri. It is also interesting to note that there is slight divergence in the verb agreement pattern in Nubri compared to the 'conservative' conjunct/disjunct pattern.

Acknowledgements

Abbreviations

ABL: ablative; ACC: accusative ; C: conjunct; CAUS: causative; CLF: classifier; D: disjunct; ERG: ergative; INF: infinitive; LOC: locative; LVM: loan verb marker; NMLZ: nominalizer; NPST: non-past; NEG: negative; PRF: perfect; PST: past; PROG: progressive, progressive converb; Q: question; SIM: simultaneous converb; STAT: statement; 1: first person pronoun; 2: second person pronoun; 3: third person pronoun.

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