Studying Dena’ina discourse markers: Evidence from elicitation and narrative

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This paper is concerned with discourse markers in Dena’ina Athabascan. One problem for transcribers and translators of Dena’ina texts is the great number of particles (i.e., words that cannot be inflected) that, according to speaker judgments “have no meaning” or “mean something else in every sentence.” This suggests that these particles are discourse markers, whose function is to relate discourse units to each other and to the discourse as a whole. The paper contrasts two different forms of linguistic inquiry: direct inquiry in the field, by elicitation of meaning and function of the discourse markers, and indirect inquiry, by study of a corpus of Dena’ina narratives. While elicitation is helpful in obtaining an initial gloss for the discourse markers, it is shown that only the study of texts will give us insight into the function of such particles and allows us to understand the important differences between particles that, on first sight, appear to be synonymous.

1. INTRODUCTION. It is only recently that any aspect of Athabascan syntax above the clause level and any aspect relating to discourse have been tackled. At the time of this writing, several accounts exist for clause combining (Rice 1989, Saxon 1998, Kibrik 2004, Holton 2004, Fernald & Perkins 2006, Mithun 2008), and for discourse intonation (Holton 2005, Tuttle & Lovick 2007, among others). While most of these accounts are concerned with only one or two languages, the languages generally seem similar enough to be comparable. Thus there is now some basic understanding of these topics in Athabascan in general.

Several articles on cohesion and coherence (McCreedy 1989, Thompson 1989, Saxon 1993) focus on how the use of pronominal prefixes establishes topic continuity. The most inclusive discourse study is de Reuse & Mullin’s (2005) study of discourse in Western Apache recipes; they discuss how pronominal prefixes, classificatory verbs, and discourse particles can combine to structure discourse. The present paper is a first attempt at a discussion of Dena’ina discourse markers.

Dena’ina (also known as Tanaina) is a Northern Athabascan language spoken in south-central Alaska surrounding the Cook Inlet and on both sides of the Alaska Range. The geographic diversity of the Dena’ina homeland is responsible for the great dialectal diversity; there are four major dialects with considerable variation even within the same major dialect (see Kari (1975) for a detailed discussion of Dena’ina dialectology). Dena’ina is severely endangered with only about 60 fluent speakers, most of them 60 years or older. Linguistic documentation of Dena’ina is available from the 1970s onwards, primarily through the efforts of James Kari and Joan Tenenbaum. The great dialectal diversity poses a severe problem for language revitalization measures, since materials have to be adapted to the dialect spoken in each community.
One problem for transcribers and translators of Dena’ina texts is the great number of particles (i.e., words that cannot be inflected) that, according to speakers I have worked with, “have no meaning” or “mean something else in every sentence.” In the notebooks of Joan Tenenbaum (1973), for example, many particles (e.g. idi ela; see section 4) have highly variable glosses, and several particles (ha’ and q’u, discussed in section 3) are hardly ever glossed at all.

The assumption made here is that these particles are discourse markers in the sense of Schiffrin (1987:31ff.): “sequentially dependent elements which bracket units of talk,” that is, lexical items whose presence cannot be explained just syntactically or semantically and that are instead best defined in terms of their discourse function, in particular, their ability to mark narrative paragraph breaks or the absence thereof. One subset of discourse markers, namely evidentiality markers, has received some attention (Rice 1989, de Reuse 2003, Holton & Müller 2005, Holton & Lovick 2008), but there are discourse markers with other functions that have not yet been discussed for any Athabascan language.

To define the meaning of one of these discourse markers, simple elicitation is not sufficient, despite its undisputable usefulness for initial glossing of lexical items. Direct questioning about the meaning of the particles considered here may or may not yield a useful answer. Take, for example, the conjunctions ch’u, ch’q’u, ch’luq’u: a speaker will translate them with ‘and’. Further elicitation will then show that these particles cannot be used to connect NPs, instead, the postposition el is used following both nouns:

(1) (Lovick Fieldnotes, November 8th, 2005)
   a. *Mary ch’u/ch’q’u/ch’luq’u John
   b. Mary el John el
      Mary with John with
      ‘Mary and John’

But only discourse analysis can show that ch’u, ch’q’u, and ch’luq’u have different functions corresponding to their position within a narrative unit (line). Thus, the information gleaned from elicitation is supplemented by discourse information.

Similarly, the distribution of some of these markers in elicitation is fundamentally different from their distribution in narratives. For example, the marker k’i ‘also’ is particularly frequent in person paradigm elicitation. See (2):

(2) (Lovick Fieldnotes, November 9th, 2005)
   a. t-gh-esh-ch’ix
      INCEP-FUT-1SG-breathe
      ‘I will breathe’

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Abbreviations used here include: ADV=‘adverbial’; AREAL=‘areal prefix’; CLF=‘classifier’; CNJ=‘conjunction marker’; Conj=‘conjunction’; DEM=‘demonstrative article’; DIST=‘distributive plural’; DM=‘discourse marker’; EVID=‘evidential’; Fut=‘future’; Ha=‘high agentivity’; INCEP=‘inceptive’.
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b. nen k’i du t-gh-i-ch’ix?
   2SG too QUEST INCEP-FUT-2SG-breathe
   ‘will you also breathe?’

c. yin k’i t-u-ch’ix
   3SG too INCEP-FUT-breathe
   ‘s/he too will breathe’

While I have hundreds of examples with k’i in my fieldnotes, it occurs in the corpus used for this study only 22 times (in 1,104 lines). It is thus not a particularly frequent discourse marker, which is not predicted from its frequency in elicited speech.

Drawing on a corpus of 15 narratives, I investigate the functions of several Dena’ina discourse markers. For this purpose, I will look both at elicited and at textual data. I will show how results from both kinds of linguistic analysis supplement each other, thus helping us to understand the meaning and function of Dena’ina discourse markers.

2. LANGUAGE, CORPUS, DEFINITIONS.
2.1. THE LANGUAGE. Athabascan languages are famous for their complex polysynthetic morphology, and Dena’ina is not an exception. For reasons of space, no morphemic glosses are provided beyond section 2 of this article. I realize that this may be inconvenient to readers interested in Dena’ina morphology, and refer those readers to Tenenbaum (1978) and Lovick (2006), both of which contain descriptions of Dena’ina morphology and numerous examples with morphemic glosses. In the context here, morphemic glosses add information that is irrelevant to the points made in this paper, and are thus omitted.

There is no comprehensive description of Dena’ina syntax available, so a brief discussion of this is necessary.

2.2. SYNTAX LIGHT. Dena’ina is a verb-final language (SV and OV, according to Dryer’s (1997) typology), and only a few particles—typically evidentials, inferentials, and speech act markers—may follow the verb. There is the possibility of a NP or an adverbial following the verb, but these phrases are clearly marked prosodically as afterthoughts.² (3)-(5) are examples of typical Dena’ina word order.

(3) verb-final (Quch’ Nushjun Story)

Kiq’ u yethdi nitsinitsey.
   kiq’ u yethdi ni-tsi-n-i-tsey
   again and.then up.to-head-CNJ-PF-move.elongated.object.quickly
   ‘And another one stuck its head out.’

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(4) with post-verbal evidential clitic (Quch’ Nushjun Story)
Ch’adach’ daghiltey ghu shida.

ch’adach’ d-gh-i-l-tey  ghu shida

thus NEUT-CNJ-PF-CLF-strong there EVID

‘He was still that strong.’

(5) with afterthought indicated by comma (Quch’ Nushjun Story)
Ch’u beggyua k’iydlan, kil.

ch’u  b-gguya  k’-z-d-lan  kil

CONJ  HA-small  INDEF-CNJ-CLF-be  boy

‘And he had a child, a boy.’

Tenenbaum (1978:29) gives the canonical word order preceding the verb as subject-object, and this is certainly true for elicited sentences. However, utterances with SOV structure are not very common in natural discourse, because very few utterances contain both an overt subject and an overt object NP. Not only is this typologically common (see Dryer (1997) for a discussion), but Dena’ina also has a large system of pronominal prefixes indexing subject and object arguments on the verb (see Tenenbaum (1978) for an inventory and Lovick (2006) for typical marking patterns). Thus, the use of free NPs is restricted to cases where pronominal reference is not sufficient, mainly the introduction of new referents (and related to that, change of referents).³

There are a few cases where both arguments of a transitive verb are co-indexed with free NPs. However, the order of the two NPs does not necessarily reflect their syntactic function but rather their relative animacy (Lovick 2006). Also, NPs marked by the new topic marker -hdi (see Section 3.1) are, independent of their syntactic function or their relative animacy, moved into the sentence-initial position. The topicalized NP can be co-referential with either the subject or the object:

(6) topicalized subject
Chida kuya gunhdi naghelt’a na lyes.

chida kuya gun-hdi n-gh-l-t’a-na  l-yes

old.lady grandchild  DEM-TOP  DIST-CNJ-CLF-be-REL  CLF-save

‘The old lady’s granddaughter saved lots of people.’

(7) topicalized object
Shdaja ghunenhdi nen t’inluggen shughu.

sh-daja ghunen-hdi nen  t’-n-luq-en  shughu

1SG-younger.sister  DEM-TOP  2SG  thus-2SG-do-REL  EVID

‘You [are the one] who did this to my sister.’

³ In those cases, the pronominal prefix may or may not be present, see Lovick (2006).
The topic position in Dena’ina is at the beginning of the utterance. If the topicalized NP is co-referential with the subject, there is no change in word order, but if it is co-referential with the object, the NP is frequently (but not always) moved into the topic position, a process known as left dislocation.

2.3. THE CORPUS. For this study, a corpus of 15 traditional narratives comprising 1,104 lines was used. All narratives are oral and have been transcribed and translated by a team consisting of a linguist and a native speaker. For all narratives, I consulted the original audio, as discourse markers are sometimes omitted from transcriptions. No primarily written narratives (e.g. from the collections of Wassillie (1980) or Kalifornsky (1991)) were used, as they contain fewer-than-normal discourse markers. Traditional narratives were chosen because of the ready availability of the materials; many of them have been published, and some of them are available over the web at http://qenaga.org.

It had been planned to balance the narratives by dialect, but this proved to be impossible. The majority of Dena’ina materials are in the Inland and Upper Inlet dialects, and only a few sources exist for the Outer Inlet and Iliamna dialects. Thus there is no representative from the Iliamna dialect here, and only two short narratives in the Outer Inlet dialect. All narratives are listed in Appendix I.

Most of these narratives are traditional stories (the Dena’ina term is sukdu), with the exception of the Geese Story, the story of the Underwater People (the arrival of the first Russians in Dena’ina country), and the Story of Susitna, which are historical narratives. Sukdu are classic folk tales and leave a lot of freedom to the narrator—which explains why several versions even by the same narrator can differ as much as they do. They are not to be confused with more formal genres like poetry (see Tenenbaum (2006:xiv)), epos, or oratory. The focus on the narrative genre is mainly due to the availability of materials; much of the Dena’ina fieldwork by Kari, Tenenbaum, and myself has been centered on narrative and lexical data, and morphological description.

The narrative data is supplemented by my own fieldnotes (March 2005, November 2005, May 2006, and June 2006), which represent the ‘elicited data’. The data collected on the first two trips (mainly verb forms and paradigms for educational purposes) first made it obvious that particles can occur in unexpected places in elicitations, and thus set the research agenda for the last two trips.

My observation during these interviews was (not surprisingly) that fieldwork on discourse markers is remarkably tricky. Asking direct questions “What does X mean?” was frequently unsuccessful and frustrating for the speaker. Several times I would present speakers with made-up sentences containing discourse markers, and they would latch onto all other parts of the sentence, ignoring the discourse marker; this of course would be frustrating for me. In the end, it proved most useful to discuss discourse markers on the side while overtly working on a task like translation or transcription, and to use material gathered in elicitation of verb forms etc. as a guide for asking further questions.

2.4. DEFINITION OF DISCOURSE UNITS. One problem for the study of discourse is the labeling of the units under discussion, and there are many complementary approaches. Chafe (1980, 1987) uses the terms ‘intonation units’ (defined by surrounding pauses), ‘extended clauses’ (intonation units organized into clauses or clause-like structures), and
‘paragraphs’ (cf. Chafe 1987:41f.). These three units are cognitive units, driven by “basic cognitive phenomena such as memory and consciousness.” He lastly discusses sentences as belonging to the “category of phenomena which are under more rhetorical control, and more independent of cognitive constraints” (Chafe 1987:41).

Givón (1983), on the other hand, takes the clause as the basic information unit, assuming that one proposition is mapped onto one clause. Clauses then combine into paragraphs, and paragraphs into texts.

For the present analysis, the basic unit will be called a line. Lines are defined by speaker judgment during the transcription process. Lines correspond to Givón’s clauses insofar as they are the basic information unit. In this sense, lines are semantic units. They are not necessarily syntactic units and may correspond to entities smaller or larger than, or isomorphic with, a syntactic clause. Prosodic cues that may correspond to the ends of lines are falling intonation, lengthening of the final syllables, and following pause (Tuttle & Lovick 2007). In this respect, they bear resemblance to Chafe’s intonation units.

Narrative paragraphs (or episodes) can be defined and studied in two ways. One way has been suggested by Givón (1983:7): A paragraph is characterized by thematic continuity, action continuity, and topic/participant continuity, that is, a paragraph is taken to be an entity that is defined from within itself. This approach is used by McCreedy (1989), Thompson (1989), and Saxon (1993), by studying how topic continuity is expressed in units of text.

A paragraph can also be defined in relation to other paragraphs. Chafe (1987:42) notes several prosodic cues for paragraph breaks, such as “an increase in fumbling and disfluency, (...) where an interlocutor is especially likely to contribute some encouraging noise and remark.” Assuming that thematic continuity, action continuity, and topic/participant continuity hold a paragraph together on the inside, it can be concluded (following Chafe (1980:40ff., 1987:42)) that a lack of one or all three of them signals a paragraph break. In Dena’ina, topic discontinuity and action (dis)continuity are frequently marked by discourse markers.

3. DISCONTINUITY.
3.1. NEW TOPIC MARKER -HDI. The marker -hdi occurs a total of 37 times in the corpus. Speakers tend to gloss it with ‘how about’ or ‘as for’, which suggests that it functions as a new topic marker. See (8):

(8) (Two Women Story)

1  “Nen-hdi,” yeñi lu.  
   2SG-TOP she.said NARR  
   ‘‘How about you?’ [the one woman] said.’

2  “Shi-hdi nuti at hggagga tgheshlał,” yeñi lu.  
   1SG-TOP saltwater bear I’ll.be she.said NARR  
   ‘‘As for me, I will be a saltwater bear,’” [the other woman] said.’
While topic continuity is one of the main criteria of paragraph cohesion (see Givón (1983) for a typological study, McCreedy (1989) on Navajo, and Thompson (1989) on Koyukon and Navajo), topic discontinuity is a good criterion for a paragraph boundary.

Following Givón (1983:8), I define topic as the “participant most crucially involved in the action sequence running through the paragraph.” Once a topic has been established, topic continuity is usually indicated by pronominal reference to a nominal antecedent (cf. Thompson (1989) for a discussion of topic continuity in Navajo and Koyukon, among other languages). In one rather spectacular Dena’ina example, the main referent is not referred to by an overt NP for 36 lines. Topic discontinuity, however, is frequently marked by the enclitic -hdi, a ‘new topic’ marker. -hdi always attaches to the last element of the NP, not necessarily to the head noun; in the example below, it attaches to the demonstrative article ghun, rather than to the head noun qeshqa ‘rich man’.

The following example is from the Crane story. The rich man and his daughter treat the cranes badly and are punished for this. In (9), the cranes are flying overhead, announcing bad weather (the punishment). The rich man does not read the signs correctly. He assumes that the weather is going to be good and that that is happening because of him. As a consequence, nearly everyone dies from the cold.

(9) (Crane Story)

1 Hch’anindatl’ ch’u dilghuy kegh gheli.
   they.flew.out conj they.called big really
   ‘[The cranes] flew out and called loudly.’

2 Qek’di’un.
   the.sun.came.out
   ‘The sun came out.’

3 Qeshqa ghun-hdi qughiyyu ch’u tal uch’en t’ugh nidalkiks.
   rich.man dem-top he.came.out conj mat outside down he.laid
   ‘The rich man came out and laid a mat outside on the ground.’

   [two lines of direct speech omitted]

4 “Shi shghuda shughu t’ant’i,” yehni.
   I because.of.me evid it.is he.said
   ‘‘This good stuff is happening on account of me,’” he said.’

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4 I am not concerned with grammatically coded sentence topics as described by Givón.
5 Tałq’e qedeltan.
   on.the.mat he.was.lying.down
   ‘He was lying on the mat.’

6 Ndal yeh hch’anindat’ ghuda shughu nch’uk’a qit’aniyen.
   cranes there they.flew.out because evid not he.knew
   ‘The cranes flew over, but he didn’t know the real reason.’

7 Uch’en dalch’ey kegh gheli.
   outside windy big really
   ‘Outside the wind started to blow really hard.’

8 K’itigi edli ch’u qeshqa yugh dunu’illet.
   too.much cold conj rich.man he.ran.back.inside
   ‘It was really cold and the rich man ran back inside.’

The first two lines of (9) are the last lines of a paragraph dealing with preparations against the coming cold weather. In line 3, the rich man, topic of the next paragraph, is reintroduced into the narrative, marked by -hdi.

This function of -hdi is probably responsible for its pervasiveness in person paradigm elicitations: The frequent switches are an example of highly unnatural topic discontinuity, and some speakers feel the need to mark this.

(10) is taken from the beginning of the Grayling story. Lines 1-5 are the introduction; they give the background to the story of how a woman refuses to pick berries and turns into a grayling for it. The woman is introduced into the narrative in line 6. The topic marker -hdi signals not just that there is a new topic, it also signals the beginning of the main action in a new paragraph.

(10) (Grayling Story)

1 Dehghelch’e hi ey hehdulat, degget qenen qahmidat’.
   baskets there they.carried uphill they.went
   ‘They were carrying their baskets and they went up on the hillside.’

2 Nek’qiniya.
   they.were.picking.berries.in.places
   ‘They were picking berries in places.’

3 Nek’qiniya, yudeq huqudel.
   they.were.picking up they.were.going
   ‘They were picking and they were going up.’
4 Yudeq huqezdatl’ hna,
   up they.went while
   ‘While they went up above,’

5 k’qiniya, t’ananch’q’u k’qiniya.
   they.were.picking everyone they.were.picking
   ‘they were picking, everyone was picking.’

6 Ts’il’t’an deghk’isen gunen-hdi lu
   one woman DEM-TOP NARR
   qeykuh hk’uch’ zdu.
   below.them down.there she.stayed
   ‘This one woman is staying away and was down below away from them.’

7 “K’qiniya” qeylnih hq’u nch’u k’inesya.
   you.pick they.tell.her but not she.picks.not
   ‘You pick,” they say to her but she was not picking.’

Assuming that paragraphs are, among other things, characterized by topic continuity, it follows that a clitic marking topic discontinuity can be used to signal the beginning of a new paragraph. In nearly all of the 36 occurrences in the corpus, -hdi cliticizes to an NP (re)introducing a new topic. Rarely, it can attach to a VP:

(11) (Caribou Story)

1 Ch’u q’uyehdi nigiga yet yinunetnel iqech’ ghu
   conj and berries there she.poured.them.in.it thus there
   t’eyel’an t’eyel’an ch’u.
   she.did.this she.did.this conj
   ‘Then she poured the berries into it big bag and she did this and did this.’

2 Q’uyehdi yidak’itmaniya.
   and.then she.picked.so.it.was.full
   ‘Then she had picked until this was full.’

3 Lu q’uyehdi ey q’ut’un teh hch’anadyux ch’q’u
   narr and.then there every.morning she.goes.back.out conj
   lu vejex uqu hnil’an, k’qisen.
   narr caribou she.looks.for there.is.nothing
   ‘Every morning she goes back out to that flat and she looks for caribou, but there’s nothing.’

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4  Kiq’u nuk’inedya-hdi yinuk’enet yı giga yinunetnel.
    again she.picked.berries-top she.poured.in there berries she.poured.in
    ‘She picked berries again and she poured them in again, she poured in more
    berries.’

5  Kiq’u yet hunusduy idi elı lṳ vejex.
    again there she.walked.up conj narr caribou
    ‘Again she walked up there and then caribou.’

The stretch of text in (10) describes how a woman prepares to deal with the (fanged) caribou; she fills a large sack with berries and climbs in so that the caribou will bite their teeth out on the sack without hurting her. Lines 1-3 describe the preparations, and how she would look out for caribou. Line 4, where she is again picking berries, leads over to line 5, where she finally sees caribou.

Following a VP, -hdi does not have paragraph breaking function and instead seems to indicate background action. However, there are too few (three) examples in the corpus to be certain.

3.2. NEW ACTION MARKER Q’U. Q’u is one of the most frequent particles in the corpus with 116 occurrences. Q’u is so pervasive in Dena’ina discourse that it is very hard to assign a meaning to it—it seems to have so many different functions that it is hard to see how they all relate to each other. In fact, it frequently is not glossed at all because its meaning is so hard to determine.

In the Dena’ina stem list, Kari (n.d.) glosses it with ‘now’ and ‘emphatic’, and points out that it commonly occurs in adverbials which specify a point in time or emphasis. Speakers gloss it with ‘now’ in the rare cases where they gloss it at all—frequently, they claim that it “has no meaning.”

In elicited sentences, q’u is remarkably rare and almost never has the meaning ‘now’. If the meaning ‘now’ is intended, speakers will usually prefer the adverb q’udigu ‘right now’:

(12) (Lovick Fieldnotes, November 8th 2005)
    Q’udigu qayeh qech’ ghesyul.
    right.now village to.it I’m.walking
    ‘I’m walking to the village right now.’

More common in elicitation is the ‘emphasis’ reading of q’u. It occurs particularly frequently in questions, following and emphasizing the question word:

(13) (Lovick Fieldnotes, May 19th 2006)
    Nunkdahdı daha q’u eydu?
    your.mother.top where emph she.lives
    ‘Where does your mother live?’
Both functions of *q’u* also occur in connected speech. In this paper, I will concentrate on the ‘now’ reading of *q’u*, because of its clear discourse functions. Brief mention of the ‘emphasis’ reading of *q’u* will be made at the end of this section.

The gloss ‘now’ suggests that *q’u* is a temporal adverb referring to either the reference time (the real-world time when the line is uttered) or to the event time (a point in time within the narrative; the terminology follows Schiffrin (1987)). The first usage, shown in (14), is straightforward and can be observed several times in the corpus:

(14) \( Quch’ Nushjun Story \)

\[ Q’u \, dutgheshchet. \]

\textit{I.will.shut.up}

‘I will shut up now.’

The point of time the speaker refers to is set in the real world and not the story world, the story-telling situation rather than an event in the story itself. The example in (14) is taken from the end of the story, where the speaker transitions from the storytelling to the real world. Due to the nature of the corpus (narratives as opposed to conversation), cases like this are fairly rare.

(15) \( Quch’ Nushjun Story \)

1 \( En’\,ushen\, gheli\, iydlan\, tets’\, ghini\, belaq’a\, ich’a \)

\textit{old.man\, really\, he.became\, spear\, his.hand\, from.it\, dinghel.}

\textit{it.dropped}

‘He got real old and that spear dropped out of his hand.’

2 \( Ch’u\, guhqugh\, q’u\, dagheshtggech’\, t’eghetl’il. \)

\textit{this.far\, adv\, I.make.it.short\, I’m.going.to.do.it}

‘Here I’m going to shorten the story.’

3 \( Ch’u\, qubel\, nuhghiq’uts’. \)

\textit{to.them\, it.got.cold.again}

‘And it got to be fall time on them.’

Lines 1 and 3 of (15) contain the main story line, and line 2 is a comment of the speaker on the telling of the story, rather than on the story itself. Again, the storyteller transitions from the story world to the real world—only this time, he transitions back in the following line.

Somewhat trickier is the second usage, *q’u* referring to a point of time within the event time. A straightforward example is (16):
(16) *q’u* referring to event time (*Hunting Dog Story*)

1. *Łik’a ghin, helch’ qubegh qiydlan*
   
   dog dem evening to.them it.became
   
   *ki q’u qeyech’ tunudalggey.*
   
   again they.walked.away.from.him
   
   ‘When it became evening, they again walked away from the dog.’

2. *Bingha ghun ki biydelchih gheli.*
   
   his.older.brother dem again he.was.scolding.him really
   
   ‘His older brother was really bawling him out.’

3. "*Łik’akda ghin yach’ tiłt’uh q’u,“ yelni.*
   
   old.dog dem away you.throw.him adv he.said.to.him
   
   ‘“Throw away that old dog!” he said to him.’

4. ‘*Q’u helch’ na’el taydlan.”*
   
   ADV evening to.us it.has.become
   
   ‘It has become evening on us now.’

5. *Jani haught enhghydlu.*
   
   all.day.long they.had.been.staggering.along
   
   ‘All day long they had been staggering along.’

Both occurrences of *q’u* in (16) refer to points of time within the narrated time. The text is about two brothers who are trying to find food for their family. A dog is following them. The younger brother feeds and carries the dog, while the older brother keeps encouraging him to get rid of it. The paragraph above describes the second time this occurs (hence *ki q’u* and *ki ‘again’* in lines 1 and 2). The older brother is getting very annoyed and insistent (line 3), and accuses the younger brother of wasting valuable time (line 4).

Frequently, *q’u* does not just indicate that a certain event is taking place at a particular time within the story. Instead it functions as a discourse marker (rather than as temporal adverb), signaling that a new action is about to begin. In this way, *q’u* marks the beginning of a new paragraph, and it is quite similar to English *now* as described by Schiffrin (1987:232). See (17).

(17) (Beginning of *Ch’iduchuq’a Story*)

1. *Ch’iduchuq’a gun lu.*
   
   Ch’. dem narr
   
   ‘This is Ch’iduchuq’a.’
2 *Tuzdatl’na guna lu.*
they.going.up DEM NARR
‘Some people went up into the mountains.’

3 *Qunsha iqu qel’an dghiliq’ hdalts’i*
ground.squirrels for they.trapped on.the.mountain they.stayed
*ch’luq’u k’iqu qel’an k’iqu qel’an.*
CONJ again they.trapped again they.trapped
‘They were trapping squirrels, they were staying up on the mountain and they kept trapping and trapping.’

4 *Oh, shan daghisedi ghin lu*
oh summer it.lasting DEM NARR
*qunsha iqu qel’an hnuyu.*
ground.squirrel for they.trapped when
‘Oh, all summer long they trapped ground squirrels.’

5 *Q’u idi ela eya’ qunsha ghini nal qisil*
ADV CONJ oh.dear! ground.squirrel DEM on.us they.disappeared
*qunsha nch’u chihdel’t’ik’ ha’i’qidyuq.*
ground.squirrel not they.killed thus.it.happened
‘All of a sudden, oh! The ground squirrels disappeared on us, they didn’t kill any more ground squirrels.’

Lines 1-4 of (17) offer background information; they provide a temporal setting (summertime) and they classify the story as a ground squirrel story: a story told in the summer, when people go up the mountains to trap squirrels, and at the same time a story that has squirrel trapping as its topic. The beginning of the main action of the story in line 5 is signaled by *q’u*. In this instance, *q’u* does not refer to any specific time; it instead situates the following events at an arbitrary point of time, the time that the story took place. All events narrated in the story occur in the time span following the point set by *q’u*. Somewhat different is the use of *q’u* in (18).

(18) *(Crane Story)*
1 *Chida kuya ngela ngela ch’u*
old.lady granddaughter she.dug she.dug CONJ
*qeshqa uts’enaqa yet qeyaninudel.*
rich.man his.children there they.came
‘The old lady’s granddaughter kept digging and digging and the rich man’s children came over there.’
2 K’eldunna qeymunetuχ.
   some they.helped.her
   ‘Some of them helped her.’

3 Q’u q’aqiniluyethdindalghinyeh
   DM she.finished.digging and.then cranes DEM there
   hts’anindatl’.
   they.flew.overhead
   ‘Just as she finished digging, the cranes flew over.’

The first two lines in (18) describe how the girl digs a hole to protect her from the cold
that the cranes are going to bring. They provide the background against which line 3 is set:
again, q’u situates the following events. The difference in (17) is that the point in time set
by q’u is not arbitrary but instead part of the story: the end of the preceding event (digging)
is simultaneous with the beginning of the next one (cranes flying).

This is an important function of q’u: by situating events within the narrative, it can be
used to define narrative paragraphs.5

(19) (Quch ’Nushjun Story)
1 Kiq’ukiyetnitsik’enitseya’kada.
   again there something.stuck.its.head.out big.one indeed
   ‘Another one put its head out, a big one.’

2 Bejil’u qughettlet hnuq’u he know brown bear
   its.ears they.came.out when
   chil’ishen quht’ana ghila ch’u.
   he.killing.them man it.was CONJ
   ‘When its ears came out, it knew that this was a man that kills brown bears.’

3 Ggagga chich’el’ishi quht’ana ghila.
   brown.bear he.killing.them man it.was
   ‘He was a bear killer.’

4 Q’uyeltsadahnenu.
   DM with.it he.clubbed.him
   ‘He clubbed that one [with his tomahawk].’

5 An anonymous reviewer pointed out that it is not clear whether q’u in (18) ends the preceding or
begins the next paragraph. In cases like (18), this is hard to determine, possibly indicating that a
paragraph break does not have to be totally rigid, and that in fact a line itself may constitute the break.
(19) is an interesting example because it contains a parenthetical. Lines 1 and 4 are the main story line (Quch’ Nushjun encounters a bear and tries to kill it), but lines 2 and 3 contain the thoughts of the bear: the bear realizes that Quch’ Nushjun is a bear killer. The initial q’u in line 4 signals the end of the parenthetical and indicates that the main storyline is resumed.

In (20) below, Chickadee has just told the women that their husband, whom they believed to be dead, is in fact living with another wife in a different village. What follows is their reaction to this discovery. Again, q’u signals the beginning of a new paragraph.

(20) (Two Women Story)

1 “Hhį!” qeyñi lu. is.that.so! they.told.him NARR “Is that so!” they said to him.’

2 “Yagheli,” qeyñi lu. good they.said.to.him NARR “Alright,” they said to him.’

3 Ch’ggagga gin nudnilen. chickadee DEM he.flew.away.again ‘Chickadee flew away again.’

4 Q’ut’un q’ut’un gheli q’u t’sahnitet. morning morning really DM they.woke.up ‘Early in the morning, they woke up.’

5 Nlugha huk’es’uk hq’u not.yet the.sun.hadn’t.risen but ‘The sun hadn’t risen yet, but’

6 t’sahnitet ha’. they.woke.up CONJ ‘they woke up.’

7 Nuhuat’lin nutihna qilan ch’q’u. they.got.dressed both they.were CONJ ‘They got dressed, both of them.’

In (21) and (22), q’u ‘now’ also signals the beginning of a new paragraph. In both cases, q’u appears in the middle of the utterance, following an utterance that provides background information.
(21) (Porcupine and Brown Bear)

Tayanq’ haugh sht’a yel nitsighakit
middle as.far.as just with.him he.was.swimming

idi el q’u nini ghini yilt’eh.
conj DM porcupine DEM it.clubbed.him

‘He had just swum out to the middle when the porcupine clubbed him.’

(22) (Porcupine and Brown Bear)

Yudeq sht’a ni’ilgguk idi el q’u ggagga yeh ch’aniyu.
up just he.had.gone conj DM brown.bear there it.came.out

‘He was just up when a brown bear came out.’

Q’u can also be used to add emphasis to question words (see (13) above) and noun phrases. See (23):

(23) (Quch’ Nushjun Story)

1 Yeqeĉ’ bel quyeltlet k’a nch’u t’i-nil.
thus it.tried.to.jump.out.to.him too not it.couldn’t.make.it

‘It [bear] had tried to leap out to him [Quch’ Nushjun] but couldn’t do it.’

2 Qu’yethdi yet nitsinitsey.
and.then there it.stuck.its.head.out

‘So it thrust its head there.’

3 Chin shla q’u ulaq’a nuyu’ul ulach’ gheli haugh q’u6
axe little EMPH his.hand he.grabbed.it.again with.all.his.might

yetsighala kidghiłnen.
top.of.its.head he.hit.it

‘He grabbed his little tomahawk again and hit that bear on the top of the head as hard as he could.’

(23) describes a bear hunt. In the utterances preceding this stretch of text, Quch’ Nushjun, who is looking for wood for sled crossbraces (hence the axe), comes across a bear den and starts killing the bears. At this point of the story, Quch’ Nushjun is already an old man and not as strong as he used to be. However, he is still strong enough to kill a grizzly bear with one stroke, armed with just an axe, rather than with his special bear-hunting spear. The axe is emphasized this once and then not mentioned again throughout the text. Q’u thus emphasizes a referent once, but this emphasis is restricted to the line it occurs in.

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6 In this case, q’u is part of the complex adverbial ulach’ gheli haugh q’u ‘with all his might, completely’.

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To summarize, *q'u* has several functions. It can function as a local emphasis marker. It can also function as temporal adverb meaning ‘now’, but its function can be more than just situating an event in time. It also marks action discontinuity. There are three contexts where this happens particularly frequently: the background action is finished and the main action starts, one (old) action is finished and a new action starts, or a narrative digression is finished and the main action starts again. In all cases, *q'u* signals a coming action break, just as *-hdi* signals a coming topic break.

4. CONTINUITY.

4.1. CONJUNCTIONS: POSITION AND FUNCTION. Dena’ina has a remarkable number of conjunctions that can be roughly translated as ‘and’: *eł*, *ch'u*, *ch'q'u*, *ch'luq'u*, *ha/ha*', and *idi ela*. Of these, *eł* conjoins only NPs.7 Following Holton’s (2004) analysis of Tanacross conjunctions, I originally assumed that different conjunctions have different scope, so that one conjunction would ideally connect clauses, a different conjunction would connect lines, and a third would maybe connect paragraphs. However, this assumption was not borne out by the data, and speakers were always ready to agree to substitutions of one conjunction with another (as long as they were dialectally appropriate, see section 4.2). Instead, it turned out that the position of a conjunction within a line indicates which units are connected. The co-existence of several synonymous conjunctions seems to be due to dialectal differences and very slight semantic differences.

Clauses within an utterance are usually conjoined with *ch’u*, *ch’q’u*, *ch’luq’u* (henceforth *ch’u* refers to all variants) or *ha/ha’*.  

(24) (Mouse Story)  

\[ Q’uyehdi \ yegh \ n’ilgguk \ ha’ \ yenil’an. \]

and.then to.her he.went conj he.looked.at.her

‘And then he went over to her and looked at her.’

(25) (Ground Squirrel Story)

\[ Tinuhqenlyit \ ch’q’u \ ndunuhqenlyit \ ch’q’u \]

they.keep.running.back.out conj they.keep.running.back.in conj

\[ yuyeh \ nch’u \ hdilts’ik. \]

inside not they.don’t.stay

‘They keep running back out and they keep running back in, and they don’t stay inside.’

Lines can be connected using *ch’u* or *idi ela* in line-final position. In that position, *ch’u* and *idi ela* form an intonational unit with the preceding word (usually a verb).

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7 In other Athabascan languages, the postposition *eł* and its cognates (*ʔiḷ* in Upper Kuskokwim Athabascan (Kibrik 2004), *el* in Tanacross (Holton 2004)) can be used to coordinate clauses. This use of the postposition *eł* does not occur in the corpus. Also, Dena’ina speakers refused sentences with *eł* as a clause connective.
The use of *ch’u* and *idi ela* in line-final position is a rhetorical means to keep the hearer interested. (26) below is taken from the *Two Women* story. Two women have been deserted by their husband. They turn into bears and get ready to attack the village where the husband now resides. In (26), the husband prepares his bow to shoot the two bears before he realizes that they are in fact his wives.

(26) (*Two Women Story*)

1. *Ts’ilten k’niq’nughuyel ch’q’u*
   bow he.nocked.an.arrow  
   ‘He nocked an arrow in his bow.’

2. *ts’elq’i ghin nunch’ nutasdyu*
   one broadside she.started.walking 
   ‘one of [the bears] walked by him exposing her flank and’

3. *idi ela ts’ilten ela deqtalghel ch’q’u*
   CONJ bow with he.raised  
   ‘Suddenly he raised his bow and’

4. *ts’ilten ya nichet.*
   bow he.pulled.it.back 
   ‘he pulled back the bowstring.’

The pace of the story in (26) is slowed down considerably, creating suspense (“when will the husband realize that he is about to shoot his wives?”). The intonation in each line in (26) indicates the end of a line, but the use of final *ch’q’u* indicates that more is to follow. (27) illustrates that the same is true for *idi ela*.

(27) (*Caribou Story*)

1. *Ch’u yegh q’u q’u nughilghat’ idi el.*
   and to.her ADV ADV it got dark  
   ‘And then it got dark on her, and

2. *yech’a il’uch’.*
   they migrated away from her 
   ‘the caribou herd moved away from her.’

Thus, *ch’u* and *idi ela* create cohesion within stretches of text.

In sentence-initial position, *ch’u* and *idi ela* have yet again a different function (*ha/ha’* cannot occur there). They are used to connect paragraphs, rather than connecting lines within paragraphs. (28) is from the same source as (26), about 20 lines further into the story:
(28)  (Two Women Story)
1  K'elduna  qut'ana  chihdghilt'ik  k'elduna  shtuqehnanilyit.
   some  people  they.killed  some  they.ran.away
   ‘They killed some people and some ran away.’
2  Qayeh  qayeh  qizdlu  t'anch’q’u  qangehnazchet  ha'.
   house  house  area  all  they.destroyed.them  conj
   ‘They destroyed all the houses in the village.’
3  T'anch'gheli  qangehnazchet.
   all.of.them  they.destroyed
   ‘They demolished every last one of the houses.’
4  Ch'q'u  hch'a  hch'a  naqidyu.
   conj  they.started.back.uphill
   ‘Then they started back uphill.’
5  Yudeq  ghu  k’ehnuldatl’  ghu  humuqesdyu.
   uphill  there  they.ate.berries  there  they.went.back.there
   ‘They got back up to the top, where they had eaten berries.’

Lines 1-3 are within the same paragraph. The beginning of the next paragraph (lines 4 and 5) is signaled by ch’q’u.

(29)  (Mouse Story)
1  Dlin’a  shla  gin  eyeh  nushedultex.
   mouse  little  dem  inside  he.was.running.around
   ‘The little mouse was running around inside.’
2  Nalqeni  lach  yitse  ndghiłtl’it’.
   hot  ashes  over.him  he.poured
   ‘He [man] poured hot ashes over him [mouse].’
3  Really  nalqeni.
   hot
   ‘Really hot.’
4  Yeh  shtuqehnusheldaltuk’.
   there  he.ran.away
   ‘He ran away from him.’
Hey gheli idi ela k’undet tqedyuq.

winter really conj starvation it.happened

‘Really late that winter, they were starving.’

In this example, lines 1-4 belong to one paragraph and line 5 to another one. Lines 1-4 are set in the summer in the smokehouse (at the time when people prepare and store—or put up—fish for winter). They describe how the rich man’s son hurts the mouse by pouring hot ashes over him. In line 5, the punishment for this deed is described: starvation sets in. The beginning of a new paragraph is signaled by the adverb hey gheli ‘in late winter’, but also by the connective idi ela.

Thus, ch’u and idi ela have three functions, depending on their position: They conjoin clauses in line-medial position; they conjoin lines in line-final position, creating tension, and they conjoin paragraphs in line-initial position.

4.2. CONJUNCTIONS: DIALECTOLOGY AND MEANING NUANCES. The question arises why there are several connectives with such similar meaning and function. One reason is dialectology. Table 1 shows which connective occurs in which dialects. Note that Lime Village and Nondalton are both Inland dialect. Speaker MH shows characteristics of both these villages (she was born in Lime Village, but has lived in Nondalton for more than 70 years).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Connective</th>
<th>Nondalton</th>
<th>MH</th>
<th>Lime</th>
<th>Kenai</th>
<th>Upper Inlet</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ch’luq’u</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ch’q’u</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>51</td>
<td></td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ch’u</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>147</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ha’</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>32</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>idi ela</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ch’u is the preferred connective in Lime Village, the Kenai and in the Upper Inlet dialect. Speakers from Lime Village use both ch’u and ch’q’u.

Ha/ha’, ch’luq’u, and ch’q’u are used mainly in Nondalton. Of these, ch’luq’u usually connects clauses, ha/ha’ usually connect clauses and lines, and ch’q’u can connect clauses, lines or paragraphs. Kari (p.c.) points out that ha/ha’ may be on the way to replacing ch’q’u, and elicitation work done in recent years has confirmed this; most present-day speakers prefer ha/ha’ as clause and line connector (but will also accept ch’q’u). In a more vital language situation, this split between connectives might continue, resulting in a clear system like the one described by Holton (2004) for Tanacross, with different connectives indicating different degrees of closeness.
Idi ela is the only connective that occurs in all dialects, although it is much more frequent in the Inland dialect. Idi ela differs from the other connectives in its meaning; it is not a plain ‘and’ connective, but it can contain an element of surprise and suddenness. Indeed, speakers frequently gloss it with ‘suddenly’, even in cases like (29) above, where the onset of starvation in late winter is probably not sudden, but rather a gradual process.

(30) (Mouse Story)

1 Qeshqa vey’a gun chaqenq’a yeh nugheyul.
   rich.man his.son DEM smokehouse there he.was.walking.around
   ‘The rich man’s son was walking around in the smokehouse.’

2 Kalajeł gini fish shla vendenghalts’etl’
   fish.drying.pole DEM little it.had.stuck.onto.it
   nuydeldel ch’u.
   he.nibbled.on.that conj
   ‘He chewed little pieces of fish that had dried on the fish pole.’

3 He, he chew on, on the kalajel.

4 Idi’ela gu veghe ndu’ilggugen qilan.
   conj then to.him someone.coming.in there.was
   ‘Suddenly, someone came in to him.’

In the story, (30) immediately follows (29) above; the smokehouse is the place where the rich man’s son has poured hot ashes on the Mouse. Now he returns to this place because he is hungry enough to chew little bits of fish from the fish drying poles. The person entering in line 4 is of course the Mouse, who will explain to him about appropriate behavior towards animals. Idi’ela (a variant spelling of idi ela) indicates that the Mouse’s appearance is sudden and surprising.

In this section, I have discussed five connectives, all of them with the meaning ‘and’. I have been concerned with their exact function (which size of unit they connect) and meaning. I have seen that ch’luq’u can only connect clauses. Ha/ha’ can connect clauses and lines and may be gradually replacing ch’q’u with that function in the Inland dialect. Ch’u and ch’q’u can connect clauses, lines, and paragraphs, depending on their position within the line. Ch’q’u is used mainly in Nondalton, ch’u in all other dialects. Idi ela can connect lines and paragraphs, depending on its position within the line. It occurs most frequently in line-initial position and is then usually glossed as ‘suddenly’.

4.3. SEQUENTIALITY OF EVENTS: Q’UYEHDI AND YETHDI. There are two adverbial connectives in Dena’ina that can be glossed with ‘then’: yethdi and q’uyehdi. The main difference between them is dialectal with q’uyehdi being used mainly (but not exclusively) in the Inland dialect, and yethdi in the Upper Inlet and Kenai dialects. There is apparently no meaning difference. Thus, the discussion will treat both connectives together.
Q’uyehdi/yethdi are typically found at the beginning of a line. They usually occur when the events described are clearly sequential.

(31) (Quch’Nushjun Story)
1 Yeqech’ bel quyeltlet k’a nch’u t’inil.
   thus to.him it.tried.to.jump.out too not it.could.not
   ‘It [bear] had tried to leap out but couldn’t do it.’

2 Q’u yethdi yet nitsinitsey.
   ADV then there it.stuck.its.head.out
   ‘So it thrust its head there.’

[3 lines omitted, describing the killing of the bear]

3 Kiq’u ki yet nitsik’enitsey ka’a kda.
   again again there something.stuck.its.head.out big indeed
   ‘Another [bear] put its head out, a big one.’

[3 lines omitted, describing the killing of this bear]

4 Yet yelugh yel qitel ch’u dutsi yeqala dedulnen.
   there its.end with.it it.jumped and on.top its.dirt.pile it.fell
   ‘That bear jumped over it and it fell down over its pile of dirt.’

5 Kiq’u yethdi nitsinitsey.
   again then it.stuck.its.head.out
   ‘Then another one stuck its head out.’

At this point in the story, Quch’Nushjun has found a bear den with three bears in it and he starts killing them, one after the other. This is the kind of situation where q’uyehdi/yethdi tend to occur: when events sequentially follow one another, rather than when events overlap or occur simultaneously.

Q’uyehdi/yethdi do not have a clear paragraph breaking function, instead, they generally indicate action continuity. This is shown in the next example:

(32) (Caribou Story)
1 Ch’u q’uyehdi nigiga yet yinunetnel iqech’ ghu
   and then berries there she.poured.them.in thus there
   t’eyel’an t’eyel’an ch’u.
   she.did.it she.did.it and
   ‘Then she poured the berries into a big bag and she did this and did this.’
2 *Q’uyehdi* *yidat’imaniya.*
then she.picked.up.to.its.mouth
‘Then she had picked until this was full.’

3 *Łu q’uyehdi ey q’ut’un teh hch’anadyux ch’q’u*

*NARR* then every.morning she.goes.back.out and

*Łu vejex uqu hnił’an, k’qisen.*

*NARR* caribou she.looks.for there.is.nothing

‘Every morning she goes back out to that flat and she looks for caribou, but there’s nothing.’

4 *Kiq’u nuk’inedyahdi yinuk’enel yi giga*

again she.picked.top she.poured.them.in in.it berries

*yinunetneł.*

she.poured.them.in

‘She picked berries again and she poured them in again, she poured in more berries.’

The stretch of text above clearly is part of the same paragraph; the woman in the narrative is preparing for when she will meet the caribou, and all of the story units in this paragraph describe parts of her preparations.

Thus, *q’uyehdi/yethdi* ‘then’ has a markedly different function from adverbs like *q’u*, connectives like *ch’u*, and the topic marker *-hdi*. In contrast to all of these, *q’uyehdi/yethdi* indicate that there is not going to be a paragraph break of any sort, that the story unit following *q’uyehdi/yethdi* is part of the same paragraph as the preceding one. In this way, *q’u* and *q’uyehdi/yethdi* complement each other. *Q’u* starts a new paragraph, while *q’uyehdi/yethdi* continue a paragraph.

5. CONCLUSION. In the preceding sections, several discourse markers—a topic marker, several conjunctions, and two adverbs—have been discussed, and their discourse functions have been demonstrated. For the conclusion, I examine a longer stretch of text in order to show how the above-mentioned markers interact.

The beginning of the Raven story “Raven and his Two Wives” by Alexie Evan in (33)—originally not part of the corpus—exemplifies nearly all of the markers discussed above.

(33) *(Raven and His Two Wives)*

1 *Chulyin gun ĺu nutihna ve’uqa qilan yen ki.*

Raven *DEM NARR two wives there.were he too

‘That Raven had two wives, that one.’
2 Shan ghu k’ehzelgha.
summer then they.were.drying.fish
‘They were putting up fish in the summer time.’

3 Shanlaghi uqu qel’an hmuy shan quzel.
salmon they.were.fishing.for when summer they.spent
‘They were fishing for salmon and that’s how they spent the summer.’

4 Iqech’ t’qet’an k’ehzelgha k’ehzelgha.
thus they.were.doing they.were.drying.fish they.were.drying.fish
‘They kept on that way, putting up fish, drying it.’

5 Q’uyehdi liq’a hva liq’a hva qisil idi el
then salmon salmon were.gone CONJ
q’uyehdi lu dehi t’iheghilyu ha’.
then NARR cache they.put.them.in CONJ
‘And then the salmon, the salmon stopped running and then they put them in
the cache.’

6 Vava nihdi qighishin nihyenilu ha’.
dry.fish stuff nicely they.put.it.away CONJ
‘They carefully stored away the dry fish and everything.’

7 Q’uyehdi hey qayeh ghu qech’ nuhtasdatl’.
then winter village there to.it they.took.off.again
‘Then they left to return to their winter village.’

[3 lines omitted]

8 Aa’, iqech’ t’qet’an ghu naqeli ghu lu hdalts’i
yes thus they.did there fall there NARR they.stayed
hmuyu lu.
when NARR
‘Ah, they kept doing that while they spent the fall there.’

9 Q’uyehdi...
then
‘Then...’
Lines 1-4 are the general introduction: the story is set (in the summer), the main referents (Raven and his wives) are introduced, and it is explained what they are doing (drying fish). Lines 5-7 describe how they store the fish in a cache. While typically this is part of the routine of putting up fish, it is important for this story that this action be described in some detail—later in the story, Raven will go to the cache, try to pull out some fish, and die in the cache. For this reason, this part of the process is described very carefully.

Here, the discourse markers discussed above start appearing. The repeated occurrence of q’uyehdi ‘then’ marks the events as sequential: first the fish is being dried, then the salmon run stops, then everything is stored in the cache, then everyone returns to the winter village. Note that this sequentiality is complemented by the use of connectives in line final position, tying the lines closely together.

The omitted lines do not contain any discourse markers. They describe how Raven and his family stay in their winter camp and how his wives keep going to the cache to get fish. Line 8 above is the last line in the introduction of the narrative. Line 9, the isolated q’uyehdi, is right in the middle between the introductory paragraph and the rest of the narrative.

The beginning of the main part of the narrative is signaled by two discourse markers at the same time: q’u ‘now’, situating the narrative at a particular time (winter) and idi ela ‘and (suddenly)’. From its position in the utterance, we can assume that the meaning of idi ela is ‘suddenly’ rather than a plain connective; it emphasizes how unusual it is that Raven wants to go to the cache himself, rather than sending his wives.

This example illustrates the functions of the discourse markers considered here:

- Connectives like ch’u, idi ela, and ha’ tend to create cohesion within paragraphs if they occur in line final position. In line initial position, they mark paragraph breaks.
- Q’u serves as a paragraph-defining marker. It frequently occurs in contexts where background information (such as the introduction to a narrative) is contrasted with foreground information (the main story line). Similarly, it can separate narrator comment or digressions from the main story line, and it frequently occurs when new action starts.
- Finally, the topic marker -hdi (no occurrence in the final examples) can signal the beginning of a new paragraph. Just as topic continuity is one of the main
cohesion criteria within paragraphs, topic discontinuity (formally marked by 
-hdi) indicates a paragraph break.

This paper has shown how several Dena’ina discourse markers—-hdi ‘new topic’, q’u ‘now’, ch’u, idi ela, and ha’ ‘and’—can be used to structure Dena’ina traditional narratives. All of these particles have discourse functions, and these can only be grasped by the analysis of natural discourse.

While elicitation is a useful tool in determining certain kinds of semantic differences (for example the difference between idi ela ‘and suddenly’ vs. ch’u etc. and ha/ha’ ‘and’), it is impossible to understand the function of some of the discourse markers without considering their status in connected discourse. The glosses given by speakers for -hdi ‘as for, how about’ or q’u ‘now’ are fairly accurate, but not sufficient for linguistic inquiry. The study of texts reveals that -hdi and q’u function as new topic and new action markers, respectively, and it also reveals that the various conjunctions for ‘and’ have different scope, depending on their position within a line. An adequate description of these particles has to include information gleaned both from elicitation and from the study of connected speech.

Several discourse markers have not been addressed here for reasons of space, and also because their function is not fully understood. The corpus consists mainly of traditional narratives, and markers may function differently in other text genres. Also, it must be said that all or any or none of the discourse markers I have discussed may be used to define paragraphs in any particular instance; there is much that we do not know about Dena’ina discourse.
## Appendix I

List of narratives. The dialect abbreviations are as follows: I—Inland dialect, O—Outer Inlet dialect, U—Upper Inlet dialect.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English Name</th>
<th>Dialect</th>
<th>Storyteller</th>
<th>Transcriber</th>
<th>Lines</th>
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<tr>
<td>Porcupine and Brown Bear</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Gulia Delkittie</td>
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<td>Alexie Evan</td>
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<td>Two Women Story</td>
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<td>Ground Squirrel Story</td>
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<td>Antone Evan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Raven and His Two Wives</td>
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<td>Tenenbaum</td>
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<td>Mouse Story</td>
<td>I</td>
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<td>Lovick</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raven Story II</td>
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<td>Lovick</td>
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<td>Berez</td>
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<td>Kari</td>
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<tr>
<td>Underwater People Story</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>Fedosia Sacaloff</td>
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<td>Susitna story</td>
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<td>Hunting Dog Story</td>
<td>U</td>
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<td>Kari</td>
<td>132</td>
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REFERENCES


DE REUSE, WILLEM (see Reuse)


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