

# Irrealis in Manam Discourse

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## 1. Introduction

Manam is an Austronesian language spoken by about 7,000 inhabitants of Manam Island, which is located about ten miles off the north coast of Papua New Guinea, between Madang and Wewak. An examination of Manam narrative texts<sup>1</sup> reveals that certain linguistic features do not always operate in the same way in discourse as they do in everyday conversation or isolated sentences. One such feature is the subject/mood marking on Manam verbs.

In Manam discourse verbs in past or present tense are marked by a realis mood prefix. Verbs indicating future, potential or unrealised action are marked by an irrealis mood prefix. At certain key points in narrative discourse realised events are marked by irrealis rather than the expected realis mood. This study will illustrate and explain these mood changes which occur at peak points in narratives, in the context of frustration to one of the main characters, as a special discourse function of irrealis mood.

The study is based on seven Manam texts,<sup>2</sup> plus numerous recorded dialogues and isolated sentences. Five of the texts are narratives, two of which make no use of the

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<sup>1</sup> The texts in this study were recorded and transcribed by Steve and Kim Blewett and Joe Sila during 1982-84, while the Blewetts were living in three different Manam villages—Dagurat, a mainland village comprised, from 1976 to 1985, of Manams from Abaria village on the east side of Manam; Kuluguma village on the western side; and Kolang village on the northern side of the island.

<sup>2</sup> The texts were taped between May 1982 and February 1983. "A Hunting Story" was told by Ebu, a Kuluguma teenager, about his experiences early that same day. "The Eagle Legend" was told by Matiu Mantoka, a young married man living in Dagurat. It is a shortened version of the legend, which might have altered its traditional structure. I have no example of the full version of this legend however. "Sangania's Story" was told by an elderly Kuluguma man, John Sarogia, a story teller well versed in *tradition*. "A Witch Story" was told by John Sarogia's son, Benny Rupunae, a middle-aged teacher at

discourse function of irrealis. One of these two is a short first person text about a pig hunt, and the other is an obviously abbreviated version of a traditional story about an eagle. Both of these stories are told by young village men. The remaining three narratives are unabbreviated traditional stories told by older, experienced storytellers. The other two texts in this study are procedural texts which make no use of the discourse function of irrealis.

## 2. Realis and Irrealis in Clausal and Inter-clausal Relationships

The Manam distinction of “realis/irrealis” is referred to as mood by Lichtenberk (1983:182). Before examining the discourse function of mood, the normal clausal functions will be illustrated. Each Manam verb is obligatorily marked for person, number and mood by a portmanteau prefix. Table 1 lists the subject/mood prefixes.

Table 1: Subject/mood prefixes (3,4)

	person	Realis	Irrealis
	1	u-	m-
singular	2	ku- <sup>3</sup>	go-
	3	i-	nga-

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the local community school. “The Flood Story” was told by Lili Solomon, a middle-aged Dagurat woman, the wife of the village leader. “Canoe Building” was told by Lucas Sila, a highly respected, middle-aged Kuluguma man, a carpenter by trade. “Copra Processing” was told by Sila’s son, Joe, a young high school graduate.

I am very grateful to Joe ‘Bruce’ Sila, from Kuluguma village, who recorded, transcribed and translated “The Witch Story” and “Sangania’s Story” and helped greatly with the transcription and translation of the other stories.

<sup>3</sup> I use the letter ‘k’ where Lichtenberk uses ‘?’ (glottal stop). Although glottal stop is more commonly heard in Manam it is still in the process of replacing [k], or [q] (voiceless uvular stop) (Lichtenberk 1983: 17). ‘K’ is the symbol used for this phoneme in current Manam orthography.

	1IN <sup>4</sup>	ta-	ta-
plural	1EX	ki-	ga-
	2	ka-	kama-
	3	di-	da-

## 2.1. Realis Mood

Realis indicates a realised action, process or state, e.g., an event did or did not happen, has or has not begun, or is or is not happening, as in (1-3).

- (1) *Eoa i -bulai.*  
 fire 3sRL light:it  
 'He lit/lights a fire.'
- (2) *Kabukabu tago teke ki -te.*  
 wild:RED NEG one 1pEXRL see  
 'We did not see even one pig.'
- (3) *Stoalo u -lakolako.*  
 store:LOC 1sRL go:RED  
 'I'm going to the store. / I'm on my way to the store.'

Note that negating a verb with *tago* 'NEG', the most common verbal and clausal negator in Manam, does not change the mood of the verb.<sup>5</sup> *Tago* is used with both realis and irrealis; compare (2) with (4).

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<sup>4</sup> Abbreviations used in this paper:

RL - realis	TRANS - transitiviser
IR - irrealis	FUT - future
RED - reduplication	bf - buffer element
LOC - locative	POSS - possessive
PASS - passive	NEG - negative
INT - intention	INDF - indefinite
IN - inclusive	EX - exclusive
1s/p - 1st person singular/plural	
2s/p - 2nd person singular/plural	
3s/p - 3rd person singular/plural	

<sup>5</sup> This is in contrast to some other PNG Austronesian languages. In Buhutu (Milne Bay), one of the primary uses of irrealis is in negative clauses (R. Cooper 1987, personal communication).

- (4) *Tago nga -lako kana.*  
 NEG 3sIR go intend  
 'He/she will not/does not intend to go.'

## 2.2. Irrealis Mood

The irrealis mood indicates an unrealised action, process or state, e.g., an event that will or will not happen, should or should not happen, or may or may not happen. Lichtenberk distinguishes three general sentence level uses of irrealis which I will illustrate from my texts.

### 2.2.1. Definite Irrealis (Lichtenberk 1983: 187)

The first type of definite irrealis indicates that an action will quite certainly take place in the relatively near future, as in (5-6).

- (5) *Sakilekile nanari nedi, nanari ne m -nanari*  
 witch story POSS:them story POSS 1sIR recount  
 'The story I am about to tell is about witches.'
- (6) "*Kodeka m -kangko.*"  
 then 1sIR eat:you  
 'Then I'll eat you!'

Definite irrealis is also used in commands and exhortations, as in (7-9). Here irrealis indicates a future action but the action is dependent on an addressee and thus may not happen.

- (7) *Kama-longo. Tamoata ara Sangania.*  
 2pIR listen man name Sangania  
 'Listen. There was a man named Sangania.'
- (8) *Kodeka i -radi, "Pera kama-keli."*  
 then 3sRL tell:them house 2pIR make  
 'Then he said to them, "Build the house."'
- (9) *Sangania kaba i -pile, "Moaede nga -oti be kati nga -repeki."*  
 Sangania again 3sRL say Queen 3sIR descend and canoe 3sIR pull:it.  
 'Again he told them, "She must come and pull up the canoe."'

Definite irrealis may also be used in conditional and contrafactual statements, as in (10-11). These types of complex sentences describe only hypothetical possibilities which may or may not happen, depending on some condition.

- (10) *Sakilekile nge i -alauri. Aine nge i -mua. Nga -te be*  
 witch this 3sRL follow woman this 3sRL precede 3sIR see and  
*nga -kaoataki takana kana be Sakilekile nge... i -alalauri.*  
 3sIR -know:bf:it other thing and witch this 3sRL RED:follow

‘The witch went behind and the woman in front. If she had seen she would have known that not her friend but the witch was following.’

- (11) *Ika kana i -rere taragau nge nga -lale ika nga -bagai.*  
 fish thing 3sRL like eagle this 3sIR go fish 3sIR bring:it  
 ‘Whenever she wanted some fish the eagle would go and bring some back.’

Lichtenberk describes a fourth usage of definite irrealis, “to express sequences of customary, habitual activities” (1983: 189). His second example is taken from a procedural text describing the gardening cycle, and it follows the usage of realis/irrealis discussed in sections 3.1.1—2 of this paper. His first example, apparently taken from a traditional story, possibly fits the characterisation of the “discourse function” of irrealis proposed in this study. This example is discussed further in section 4.7.

### 2.2.2. Indefinite Irrealis (Lichtenberk 1983: 185)

In this construction the adverbial *masa* ‘indefinite’ precedes an irrealis verb, to indicate that an action will probably happen but not in the immediate future as in (12—13). The position of *masa* is somewhat variable within the clause; the reason for this deserves further investigation.

- (12) *I -pile, “Masa m -pura be m -ianguniko.”*  
 3sRL say INDF 1sIR come and 1sIR wake:hit:you  
 ‘She said, “I’ll come later and wake you up.”’
- (13) *“O u -reretakikotina ata kana teke u -rere*  
 oh 1sRL like:you:very but thing one 1sRL like  
*nge natu teke masa nga -pura.”*  
 this child one INDF 3sIR come

'I really like you but one thing I really want is to have a child.'

### 2.2.3. Prospective Irrealis (Lichtenberk 1983: 191)

This construction is marked by an irrealis verb plus the post-verbal adverbial *kana*, 'want to/intend to/be about to', as in (14-15).

(14) *Nge pile ne m -pile kana. Nanari ne.*  
 this talk his 1sIR say intend story his  
 'The story I want to tell is his story.'

(15) *Nga -doki kana, ilaulo di -nangaoti,*  
 3sIR take intend out.to.sea:to 3pRL put:out  
 'Whenever she was about to grab the canoe they would push the canoe out further.'

## 3. "Usual" Occurrences of Realis and Irrealis in Discourse

The present study includes texts from procedural and narrative discourse genre; the irrealis mood is used in each to denote unrealised time. In addition to this usual sentence-level function of irrealis mood there are unexpected occurrences of irrealis in narrative which will be analysed as functioning on the discourse level in the texts. This function will be termed the "discourse function" of irrealis mood. I have not found any example of a corresponding discourse function of irrealis in procedural discourse.

### 3.1. Procedural Discourse

The proportion of verbs occurring in irrealis vs. realis is very different in procedural discourse than in narrative, but the basic meaning of each is the same.

#### 3.1.1. Irrealis in Procedural

Manam procedural discourse may be said to be told in "projected time" (Longacre, 1976:199). The verbs describing the procedures to be followed are in irrealis mood. This is in keeping with the general function of irrealis since the procedures are actually only potential or hypothetical (e.g., If you want to make a canoe then you must do this, then this, then...). One of the procedural texts (example 16) in this study is told

entirely in the first person plural inclusive<sup>6</sup> ; the other text uses second person, both singular and plural (example 17).

Lichtenberk includes this use of irrealis in his category of “definite irrealis” (Lichtenberk, 1983:190), described above in section 2.2.1. He states that irrealis is used in sequences of customary or habitual activities. I have chosen to describe this use on the discourse level: procedural discourse describes customary or habitual activities outside of a time frame, that is, the description is not of a particular event.<sup>7</sup>This follows Lichtenberk’s analysis of his procedural text (his second example (1983: 190-191)). I feel that his first example (p.190) has a different aspectual orientation (see section 4.7).

### 3.1.2. Realis in Procedural

The function of realis mood in procedural discourse is to describe participants, set the scene for a following procedure, or to state that a procedure is completed, e.g., ‘Having done A (RL verb), do B (IR verb)’, as in (16-17). Thus realis mood continues to mark realised (completed or on-going) activities, processes or states, which in procedural discourse are usually non-eventline information. Lichtenberk states for his procedural text, realis is used for “an activity that is not part of the chain of events” (1983: 190).

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<sup>6</sup> In example 16, the RL and IRR prefixes are identical for first person inclusive, but the 3sIR prefix which refers to the tree falling provides a clue to the mood of the discourse, added to the parallelism with other procedural texts.

<sup>7</sup> One could also analyse a procedural text as a series of commands or exhortations (see section 2.2.1, another subtype of Lichtenberk’s “definite irrealis”). There is no syntactic distinction in Manam between a 2nd person “imperative” clause, and a 1st plural or 3rd person “exhortative” clause. It is interesting that of the three procedural texts in this study, one is in 1st inclusive, one in 1st exclusive (Lichtenberk’s, p. 190-191), and one is in 2nd singular/plural.

- (16) *Kati ta -poloi be nga -enoria.*  
canoe 1pIN chop:it and 3sIR lie:down

*Bong i -makoto be i -enoria ta -ngaoi.*  
time 3sRL PASS:break and 3sRL lie:down 1pIN measure:it

'We chop off the canoe and it falls on the ground. When it's broken off and lying down we measure it.'

- (17) *Kama -laeng kama -laeng be... rairaituka*  
2pIR line.up 2pIR line.up and afternoon:very

*ka -laenglaeng be i -rodo...*  
2pRL -line.up:RED and 3sRL dark

'Keep lining them up and if you're still lining them up late in the afternoon when it has gotten dark...'

### 3.2. Narrative Discourse

The proportion of realis/irrealis is almost opposite in narrative compared to procedural discourse in Manam.

#### 3.2.1. Realis in Narrative

In narrative discourse, told in "non-projected" or accomplished time (Longacre, 1976:199), the main events are given in the realis mood, except in rare cases. The event line normally runs as in (18).

- (18) *Kodeka pera di -keli. Pera di -keli be di -maumbuaki be*  
then house 3pRL make house 3pRL make and 3pRL finish:bf:it and

*bazali di -lalongi, i -manubu, di -boaupoatoki. Kodeka*  
bark.strips 3pRL lay:it 3sRL finish 3pRL attach.close:it then

*dua teke di -nangai.*  
door one 3pRL put:it

'So they built the house. They worked until it was done, then laid the bark floor and fastened it down. Then they put on the door.'



### 3.2.2. Irrealis in Narrative

Although the majority of verbs in narrative discourse are marked by realis mood, 20% of the verbs in the traditional texts used for this paper are in irrealis. Almost all of these occurrences fall within the basic uses of irrealis illustrated above. This is to be expected as most of the examples occur within reported speech or within comments made by the narrator (and thus often as non-eventline information).

Reported speech and narrator comments are removed from the historical viewpoint in which the narrative is set. Reported speech puts the hearer into the present tense with reference to the speech act so that the choice of realis or irrealis depends on the quoted speaker's perspective. This is a device used for dramatic effect and to increase listener interest.

Example (19) illustrates irrealis used in a narrator's comment.

- (19) *Kama -longo. Tamoata ara Sangania.*  
 2pIR listen man name Sangania  
*Nge pile ne m -pile kana. Nanari ne.*  
 this talk his 1sIR say intend story his

'Listen, everyone. There was a man named Sangania. The story I'd like to tell is his story.'

Example (20) shows irrealis used in reported speech.

- (20) *Bokai di -soaki be moata nge i -kiladi,*  
 thus 3pRL sit and snake this 3sRL call.out:them  
*"Ee, kama -mai be kama -rubeta!"*  
 hey 2pIR come and 2pIR set.free:me

'So they sat and the snake called out to them, "Hey, come here and set me free!"'

## 4. Irrealis Mood: the Discourse Function

Several cases of irrealis occur which do not fit into one of the basic functions of irrealis illustrated above. This paper will show that irrealis mood in these cases is func-

tioning on a higher level than the sentence, to add prominence to a section of the discourse.

#### 4.1. Unexpected Instances of Irrealis in Narrative Texts

Five examples of “unexpected” irrealis follow, with explanations of their context within the discourse.

##### 4.1.1. Carving Search

Example (21) comes from a traditional story about two brothers. Sangania, the older brother, is the hereditary village chief. Someone has tattooed a design on his wife’s thigh, and Sangania is trying to find the same pattern carved on a house post, since each man has a personal design. Sangania’s unsuccessful attempts to find the right carving are in irrealis. The successful attempt, when he looks at his brother’s post which matches his wife’s tattoo, goes back to realis. The irrealis verbs, here, describe completed, accomplished events of Sangania’s search.

- (21) *Kodeka Sangania i -tui i -lako gadagada ne moarunga*  
 then Sangania 3sRL stand 3sRL go commoner POSS all  
*nedi nge i -kaka. Teke nga -kakati be nga -ita be*  
 POSS:them this 3sRL open one 3sIR open:it and 3sIR see:them and  
*tago. Kaba taka nga -tagai. Nini be i -maumbuakidoi*  
 NEG again other 3sIR follow:it until and 3sRL finish:bf:it:complete  
*alaurituka, kodeka nediato, tanepoa nedi, ariri nedi*  
 later:very then POSS:them:bf:few chief POSS:them post POSS:them  
*di -gereti nge tari nge nge, i -kakati. I -kaka i-*  
 3pRL carve:it this brother this this 3sRL open:it 3sRL open 3sRL  
*ta bokana, e, maka di -eno.*  
 see:them same yes here 3pRL lie

‘Then Sangania went and turned over all of his commoners’ posts but did not (find the one he was looking for). Last he turned over the posts the chiefs had carved and then came to his brother’s. He turned it over, looked, and that was the one.’

Irrealis mood, here, is used in the context of repeated attempts to find the correct post carving. That the first attempt was unsuccessful is emphasised by the negative *tago*. *Tago* functions as a separate clause here to indicate that the actions did not succeed. This series of events is at the peak<sup>8</sup> of the episode in which the hero's antagonist is identified: the introduction to the conflict. It is a very crucial event in developing the conflict in the plot of the entire narrative.

#### 4.1.2. Water Test

Example (22) comes from another traditional story, about a flood in which the only survivors are two children, who were told to climb up to the top of a coconut tree. As the waters subside the children test the ground to see if it is dry enough to come down by throwing down coconuts. In this text, as in (21), the two unsuccessful attempts, and even the waiting between attempts, are marked by irrealis. The final successful attempt, again, switches back to realis.

- (22) *Niu galulubu teke da -kedekiaru da -rokakalaku be tago.*  
 coconut small one 3pIR pick:it:bf:2 3pIR throw:go:2 and NEG  
*Nga -balabalaso. Da -soakiru da -soakiru aba taka da*  
 3sIR go.down:RED:complete 3pIR sit:2 3pIR sit:2 again another 3pIR  
*-kedekiaru da -rokakiaru, tago. Nga -balabalaso. Kodeka,*  
 pick:it:bf:2 3pIR throw:it:bf:2 NEG 3sIR go.down:RED:complete then  
*alaurituka teke di -kedekiaru di -rokakiaru i*  
 later:very one 3pRL pick:it:bf:2 3pRL throw:it:bf:2 3sRL  
*-kaibuang. Abe kateka i -kai.*  
 strong already earth 3sRL strong

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<sup>8</sup> Robert Longacre uses "the term PEAK to refer to any episode-like unit set apart by special surface structure features and corresponding to the Climax or Denouement in the notional (deep) structure." (1983, p. 24).

Longacre also explains that Peak is essentially "a zone of turbulence in regard to the flow of the discourse..." At Peak "the characteristic event-line tense/aspect may be substituted for by another tense/aspect." (1983, p. 25) This is basically what is happening in the Manam texts I have presented.

'They picked a young coconut and threw it down, but it disappeared. So they sat there awhile and tried again, but it disappeared too. Then finally they picked another and threw it down, and the ground was dry and strong again.'

Irrealis mood, again coupled with repetition and *tago*, occurs at the peak of the entire narrative: the fate of the two children, and the entire human race, depends on the receding of the water.

#### 4.1.3. Witch Killing

Example (23) comes from a story about a witch. At this point in the narrative the village men are trying to destroy the witch. The men enter the witch's cave, drag it out and chop it to bits only to have it come back to life. They try again even putting the bits into a fire but it revives again. The third time they chop it completely and put it into the fire and are finally successful in destroying it. The actions of the first two attempts are in irrealis while the successful attempt, as in (21) and (22), is in realis.

- (23) *Di -sili be, teke da -dokarepekamai be, da -zangtotoki da*  
 3pRL enter and one 3pIR take:pull:bf:come and 3pIR cut:it 3pIR  
*-zangtotoki be da -roaki muridialo nga -lako... Tamoata alu*  
 cut:it and 3pIR throw:it behind:them:to 3sIR go. people some  
*di -sili. Da- dokidoki, da -dokitaguraki muridialo da*  
 3pRL enter 3pIR take:RED 3pIR take:grab:it behind:3p:bf:to 3pIR  
*-zangtotoki, eoalo. Ngai nge i -serekidi be i -alalale...*  
 complete:cut:it fire:to it this 3sRL break:bf:them and 3sRL go:RED  
*Ninini be di -taoni be i -alale be i -lako*  
 on.and.on and 3pRL chase:it and 3sRL go and 3sRL go  
*kabikabilo i -soakilako. Be di nge bokai, totokia ninini*  
 back.of.cave:to 3sRL sit:go and they this like.this cut:it:bf on.and.on  
*di -purakani. Moarunga di -totokidi nge eoa doilo.*  
 3pRL come:bf:it all 3pRL cut:it:them this fire all:to  
*Kodeka ngai di -purakani, di -dokitagurakamai, kasiabelonga nge*  
 then it 3pRL come:bf:it 3pRL take:grab:bf:come terrible:smell this

*ono doio i -eno.*  
for all:on 3sRL lie

‘They came and entered the cave. They entered and they pulled her (the witch) out and chopped her up and chopped her up and threw her behind them... Some men again entered. They grabbed her behind them and chopped her up into the fire. She left them and went way from them. They chased her and she went to the back of the cave and stayed there. And the same way while cutting and cutting they came out with her. They all cut her up completely into the fire. Then when they had brought it all a terrible smell was all that remained.’

Here again irrealis functions along with repetition to mark the peak of the narrative. Here *tago* does not follow the unsuccessful actions, showing that *tago* is not obligatory in the context of irrealis. The conflict of the story is finally resolved with the witch’s destruction.

#### 4.1.4. Witch Chase

Example (24) is another excerpt from the witch story. The witch is chasing a woman, who has climbed up a tree removing the bark behind her to prevent the witch from climbing after her. When the witch arrives at the tree there is some dialogue, all in irrealis mood. First the witch asks a question, then the woman replies with instructions for the witch. This direct quotation contains four verbs in “definite irrealis” (section 2.2.1 above). After the dialogue is a reported action: the witch tries unsuccessfully to climb the tree. This verb is also in irrealis, although it is an actual event.

(24) “*Baituka m -rake?*” “*Uo! lumam taka nga -mua, lumam taka*  
how 1sIR ascend hey hand:your other 3sIR precede hand:your other  
*nga -lauri be go -rake.*” *Ngai dededeba eta*  
3sIR go.behind and 2sIR ascend it sideways:only up.there  
*nga -kumaulako. Tago.*  
3sIR climb:go NEG

‘How shall I climb up (the tree)?’ ‘Well, just put one hand in front of the other and go up.’ She (tried to) climb up sideways but didn’t (make it).’

Here irrealis highlights an unsuccessful action as in (21-23). Here there is no repetition but the negative *tago* is again present. The witch does not succeed in catching the woman, but the woman succeeds in escaping from the witch—something very unusual and unexpected. This incident is the peak point in the episode and is a major turning point in the narrative.

In these four sections of text the irrealis mood functions to mark realised actions that were not successful in attaining their intended result, and to set them off from the final action that is successful. In the final action of examples (21-23) the same verbs are repeated in realis when the action is finally successful. The successful actions are highlighted by the unsuccessful. There is no repeated successful action in example (24). This fact indicates that irrealis can mark an unsuccessful action even apart from repetition. In each case the unsuccessful action/actions build tension and suspense, at a peak point in the discourse.

The other element that appears often in these examples of irrealis is the negative *tago*. *Tago* does not appear as a comment on the lack of success of the action, however, in example (23). The word *tago*, therefore, need not appear with irrealis in the context of an unsuccessful action.

#### 4.1.5. Posthole Escape

The next example of the discourse function of irrealis does not explicitly indicate an unsuccessful action but, as in (24), it does indicate a very unexpected action. This passage (25) is taken from the text about Sangania (as is 21). Sangania discovers that his younger brother, Ongkau, tattooed his (Sangania's) wife's thigh, indicating that the two had had sexual relations. Sangania plots to kill Ongkau by having the main post of the new chief's house thrown on top of him. Ongkau realises the plot and digs an escape route.

- (25) *Di -kelikeli be Ongkau nge diato bagi nediato*  
 3pRL make:RED and Ongkau this they:bf:few clan POSS:them:bf:few  
*ariri nediato labu ngae i -kelikeli. Tari zaiza be*  
 post POSS:them:bf:few large.end that 3sRL make:RED brother with and  
*di -kelikeli. Ngai nga -keli nga -lako, boazinga ne mukumuku*  
 3pRL make:RED he 3sIR make 3sIR go tunnel POSS little

*nga -emaki, pera kana nga -magimatei be nga -emaki. Nini*  
 3sIR make:it house POSS 3sIR mark:exact:it and 3sIR make on.and.on  
*be, gimoa ne mukumuku ngae i -keli ni be pera kana saringa*  
 and hole POSS little that 3sRL make until and house POSS close  
*i -pusika*  
 3sRL come.out

'Ongkau was digging post holes for his clan with his brothers. He dug a hole and made a little tunnel. Then he made a small hole and came out near his house.'

Here is a significant change of events. The hero's (Sangania's) plans are being frustrated. His brother is doing something unheard of (assuming that the listeners share the cultural background of procedure for building a chief's house, which used to include sacrificing a man to assure spirits' blessings/power on the house). Ongkau works in secret, digging a tunnel to escape being killed, while everyone else does what is expected. The finishing of the hole and his coming out returns to realis mood. The realis mood continues as the expected events pick up again. Here, irrealis highlights the fact that the villain gets the upper hand. The whole direction of the story changes and listeners' expectations are disrupted—Ongkau actually can be seen to change from villain to hero here, thus the plot is no longer predictable. This episode is also the first of two parallel peaks in the narrative. The conclusion of the narrative is the second peak where the villain finally escapes and now exists as a star in the sky. (This second peak does not contain irrealis.)

## 4.2. Further Evidence

### 4.2.1. Unsuccessful Action in Realis

In examples (21-24) irrealis mood expresses unsuccessful actions, while in (25) it expresses an unexpectedly successful action which thwarts the hero's plans, dramatically reversing the plot of the story. All five examples contain the common element of frustration. In the first four one of the main characters is frustrated in an attempt to do something. In the last, the main character's plans are frustrated by the villain's actions.

Unsuccessful action and/or expectancy reversal is not the full explanation for the use of irrealis in Manam discourse. Further evidence illustrates that irrealis is not required to mark unsuccessful actions.

Example (26) contains a series of repeated unsuccessful actions which occur in realis. Early in the Sangania text, the hero (Sangania) discovers a crime when some flowers covered with blood float out to meet his canoe. The flowers get in the way of his paddle and he tries to throw them away but they keep coming back until he picks one up and understands its message.

- (26) *Sangania ruanga zaiza di -ore di -oro, abe kabu di*  
 Sangania friend with 3pRL paddle 3pRL come.up already shore 3pRL  
*-saringaringadi, moare nge di -oti. Di -oti, Sangania*  
 near:RED:they flower this 3pRL come.down 3pRL come.down Sangania  
*ore ne burunao di -loko. Sangania i -dokitata i -rokaki.*  
 paddle his tip:bf:to 3pRL block Sangania 3sRL take:up 3sRL throw:it  
*Kaba i -ore. Moare ma nge di -panana kaba ore*  
 again 3sRL paddle flower here this 3pRL run again paddle  
*memenao di -loko. I -rokaki. Kaba i -ore. I -ore*  
 blade:bf:to 3pRL block 3sRL throw:it again 3sRL paddle 3sRL paddle  
*kaba di -loko... I -doki. I- doki kodeka di -ore,*  
 again 3pRL block 3sRL take 3sRL get then 3pRL paddle  
*abe di -pura kabulo.*  
 already 3pRL come shore:to

'Sangania and his friend were now approaching the shore and this flower floated out toward them. The flower floated out and blocked Sangania's paddle. Sangania took it, threw it away and continued paddling. The flower just came back to his paddle. Again he threw it but it kept coming back to his paddle. He took it and then they paddled and reached the shore.'

All of these actions are in realis mood, although the passage looks similar to several of the above passages, especially (23), in which the witch is cut up and thrown out but



comes back several times. This episode is part of the introduction of the narrative, setting the stage for what is to come; it does not constitute a peak in the narrative plot.

A single counter-example is not conclusive evidence that the irrealis in (21-25) is based solely on discourse relationships and not on semantic factors within the episode. However, (26) shows that a repeated series of unsuccessful actions may be expressed in realis. Example (26) must therefore be contrasted with (21-25) to arrive at a more complete explanation of the use of irrealis in those examples.

#### 4.2.2. Lichtenberk's Example

Lichtenberk quotes a short section from a traditional narrative text as an example of "definite irrealis...used to express sequences of customary, habitual activities...habitually, not just on a particular occasion" (1983:189-190). The translation of this section follows:

(27) 'she (a mythical woman) would see[IRR] a chiefly woman and a chief, she would urinate[IRR], she would urinate[IRR] down, and out of her urine a taro would sprout[IRR]' (when describing the origin of the taro, the same process was repeated in each village the woman visited) (1983:190)

From the small section of text given, it is impossible to do much analysis of the discourse structure of this story. However, this looks as if it might be the peak of an episode,<sup>9</sup> if the story is about the origin of taro. We do not know whether or not frustration is present in the context. Lichtenberk's analysis of this segment as expressing "customary, habitual activities...not just on a particular occasion" (i.e., procedural discourse) seems unsatisfactory in the light of this text, in which, presumably, taro was created during one segment of time, and once in each village.

The sequences of events in (21), (22), (23) and (25) look very similar to this—sequences of actions repeated an unspecified number of times, but within a particular time frame: None of my examples describe "habitual" activities—they all lead to a definite goal,<sup>10</sup> as the actions in (27) appear to do also. The action in (24) is not re-

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<sup>9</sup> This section could also possibly be part of a procedural discourse embedded in the narrative.

<sup>10</sup> In (21) Sangania found what he was looking for; in (22) the children got back to dry ground; in (23) the witch was killed; in (25) Ongkau escaped.

peated. And in (26) we see a similar sequence of repeated actions, not occurring at a narrative peak, expressed in realis. In these examples analysis of the structure of narrative discourse seems to give more insight into the function of irrealis than does a strictly sentence-level analysis.

### 4.3. Summary of Evidence

#### 4.3.1. Overall Strategy for Marking Narrative Peak

Several linguistic devices, in addition to irrealis mood, are used in these texts to mark episode peaks. The more prominent a peak is in the structure of a narrative text, the more elaborately these devices are used.

##### 4.3.1.1. Repetition

Repetition is a common feature of Manam narrative as (21-23) and (26) illustrate. Although repetition is often used together with irrealis at a narrative peak, many instances of repeated action in realis also occur. Repetition acts as a suspense building device, slowing down the flow of the narrative to build and prolong suspense.

##### 4.3.1.2. Negation

The negative word *tago* appears in a number of the narratives (21, 22, 24) following an unsuccessful action in irrealis mood. *Tago* does not appear in (23) or (26), thus its presence is not obligatory in the context of irrealis and/or repetition and/or frustration. Its use at a narrative peak heightens the tension and slows the flow of the narrative.

##### 4.3.1.3. Frustration

The semantic element of frustration, expressed in all the texts by unsuccessful actions and/or expectancy reversal, seems to be in itself a technique used often in Manam discourse to highlight a narrative peak.

#### 4.3.2. The Role of Irrealis Mood in Marking Narrative Peak

Irrealis mood often functions in conjunction with repetition. Irrealis highlights the unsuccessful attempts in a series of repeated actions creating a higher degree of suspense than repetition would alone. What is most significant, though, is that each of these uses of irrealis leads up to a successful action which is a major peak in the struc-

ture of the narrative plot.<sup>11</sup> Examples (22) and (23) mark the peak of the entire narrative and are very elaborate in the number of verbs repeated and the degree to which the narrative is slowed down. Example (21) is the peak of a pre-peak episode (or “sub-plot”); it is less elaborate in its use of repetition (the narrative is not slowed quite so much).

In (24) and (25) irrealis functions to highlight certain events that run contrary to the expectation of the audience. In (24) the woman gets the best of the witch and eventually escapes, a very unexpected event. The expected flow of the narrative is reversed at this point. Irrealis is also used for an unsuccessful action here, as in the previous examples. The action in irrealis is the peak point in the episode which immediately precedes the peak episode of the entire narrative. In (25) the digging of an escape tunnel from the post hole is certainly very unusual in this familiar procedure for building a Manam chief’s house. The villain of the story gets the upper hand (and becomes the hero), again reversing the expected flow of the narrative. This episode is the first of two peak episodes of the narrative. In both (24) and (25) the use of irrealis occurs at a crucial point in the narrative plot.

Example (26), in contrast to the others, occurs at the beginning of the Sangania narrative where the tension is just beginning to build. Repetition of an unsuccessful action is used but irrealis is not.

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<sup>11</sup> David Wakefield describes switching between realis and irrealis aspect in sequential discourse in an unpublished article, “A contextually-constrained aspect-switching rule in Miniafia” (Miniafia is an Austronesian language spoken in the Northern Province of P.N.G.). Verbs in Miniafia are marked for both subject:person/number and realis/irrealis (Wakefield’s term), as in Manam, by a portmanteau prefix.

Wakefield shows that switching between realis and realis mood in Miniafia discourse serves to distinguish background material from event line material. I have not found realis and irrealis to be used in this manner in Manam narrative. In Miniafia realis indicates present time while irrealis indicates non-present (past or future) time. In Manam, however, realis indicates ‘realised’ (past or present) time, while irrealis indicates ‘unrealised’ (future or hypothetical) time. Thus, no real comparison is possible between the two languages.

Graham Scott states that in Fore narratives there are “occasional tense shifts from Remote Past to Past to Present, a crowded stage, some repetition or elaboration of events...” (p. 40, 41) at crucial points. Although Fore is a non-Austronesian language it is interesting that tense shifts and repetition can both occur at a crucial points in narratives.

## 5. Conclusion

All of the examples of the discourse function of irrealis discussed in this paper have certain similar features. First, there is a common element of frustration. Secondly, each example comes at a peak point in the narrative. The general discourse function of irrealis in Manam narrative, then, is to highlight a peak point of a narrative in conjunction with some type of frustration, and involving unsuccessful action or expectancy reversal.

More data need to be examined in order to determine whether or not this is the only function of irrealis in Manam discourse. Another question is whether the discourse function of irrealis is used only in traditional narrative texts or in other discourse genre as well. In any event this paper has demonstrated that a functional description based only on sentence-level analysis is insufficient to describe all occurrences of irrealis mood in the Manam language.

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