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20. Question words and particles

In this chapter I discuss pronominal, adverbial, clausal and modifying content question words, as well as the marking of polar questions.

20.1. Content question words

Lumun has pronominal, adverbial, clausal and modifying content question words. Modifying question words always have a concord. The pronominal, adverbial and clausal question words are listed in table 105, the modifying question words in table 106. Question words can be divided into those ending in the question word marker **-ṭa** (first columns of both tables), the same forms without **-ṭa** (second columns), and question words containing the (concord and) demonstrative pronominal base (C)-**en** (third columns).

Table 105 Content question words

	<i>ending in -ṭa</i>	<i>without -ṭa</i>	<i>ending in (C)-en</i>
<i>pronominal</i>	ṣṭṭa/ṣṭṭân ‘who’		ṣkkwên/ ṣkkwéṅôn ‘who’
	ḡínṭa ‘what’		ḡimpên ‘what’
<i>clausal</i>	akkaínṭa, akaínṭa ‘why’	akkaîn, akaîn ‘why’	
<i>adverbial</i>	karəṭâ, karəṭa ‘where’		kəren ‘where’
	acínṭa ‘when’	acîn ‘when’	
	táṭṭa, káṭṭa ‘how’	tât, kât ‘how’	
	akkáratṭa ‘what time’	akkárat ‘what time’	

Table 106 Modifying content question words

<i>ending in -ṭa</i>	<i>without -ṭa</i>	<i>ending in (C)-en</i>
C-ṣṭṭa/C-ṣṭṭân 'whose'		C-ṣkkwên/ C-ṣkkwéṅṅn 'whose'
C-ṣínṭa 'what kind of'	C-ṣîn 'what kind of'	C-ṣimpên 'what'
C-árṭa 'where'		C-áren 'where'
C-aráṭṭa 'how'	C-arat 'how'	
C-ṣṭénṭa 'for what purpose, why'	C-ṣṭên 'for what purpose, why'	
C-ṣnṭa 'why'		
C-ṣrənṣṭṭa 'how many'	C-ṣrənṣk 'how many'	
C-iaṭâ 'which'	C-ia 'which'	

Morphophonology

Before **akka** +H and before the subject focus marker (**akk-** or **a-C-C-**, see 19.1), the final **a** of the question word marker **-ṭa** is deleted and the question word and the complementizer/focus marker fuse together, e.g.,

ṣṭṭa akk- [ṣṭakʰ]
ṅínṭa akka [ṅínḁaka]

Use of the question words

Question words ending in **-ṭa** are typically used in neutral questions for information. They can be employed rhetorically. The question words lacking **-ṭa** are used in:

- 1) quick and informal (interruptive) inquiries after a further detail;
- 2) questions that solicit no answer, communicating a negative view of the speaker. Some emotion is typically involved.

Some of the question words without **-ṭa** are used in complement clauses. In that environment they are used in a neutral way.

Question words ending in **-ṭa** have their own intensifying adverb **ṭpu**, or **-ppu**, which gives a sense of urgency to the question. An example was provided in 17.1.4.

Because one way of question formation involves left-dislocation of the content (non-subject) question word, the word order in neutral affirmative statements is recalled here: S V O Adj.

Position in the clause and question constructions

Question words can be used alone. With a verbal or adjectival predicate, they occur in one or two of the following positions or constructions:

- in situ. Subject question words, which always remain in situ, are followed by the focus marker **akk-** replacing the subject concord;
- left-dislocated before the subject. In these constructions the question word is followed by **akka** + H ‘that’ or, in case of ‘where’, by the locative relative **ná**;
- at the right edge of the clause, preceded by **ittĩ** ‘that’.

Next to being used in situ, several of the question words in the first column of table 105 allow for a clause-initial construction with **akka** + H, as do **ṭkkwên** ‘who’ and **ṭimpên** ‘what’ (third column). The forms without **-ṭa** (second column) are not used clause-initially with **akka** + H. **karəṭâ** ‘where’ can be used clause-initially, but is then followed by the locative relative **ná** (see 11.3).

A question with a question word in situ and the same question with an **akka** + H -construction follow here.

ṭkul	w-a.ṭəkə	ṭín-ṭa
child	C-eat:INCOMPL	what-QW

what will the child eat?

ŋín-ṭa akka úkól ʒɹəkô
 what-QW that child eat:DEPINCOMPL

what will the child eat?

The verb in a clause introduced by the complementizer **akka** +H or the locative relative **ná** is either a Dependent Incompletive, a Completive, the Present of ‘be’, or a complex verb of which the (first) auxiliary verb is a Dependent Incompletive, a Completive, or the Present of ‘be’. By contrast, the focus marker **akk-** precedes a non-dependent verb. An example of the latter:

ʒṭ-ṭa akk-a.ɹəkô
 PERS.3-QW FOC-eat:INCOMPL

who will eat it?

Modifying question words come after the noun or noun phrase they modify. C-**ʒnta** ‘why’ modifies subjects, which it directly follows, and precedes a clause introduced by **akka** +H (see 20.1.7).

Several modifying question words can modify personal pronouns: C-**ʒtta**, C-**ʒttân** ‘whose’, C-**ɔkkwên**, C-**ɔkkwéŋôn** ‘whose’, C-**árəṭa** ‘where’, C-**âren** ‘where’, C-**arátta** ‘how’, C-**arât** ‘how’, C-**ʒnta** ‘why’, C-**ɔrənóttá** ‘how many’, C-**ɔrənôk** ‘how many’ (examples are given in this chapter).

Examples illustrating the meaning and use of question words as well as constructions in which they occur are provided in sections 20.1.1 to 20.1.9. The question words are grouped together mainly on the basis of shared lexical formatives. This gives the following clusters:

- **ʒtta**, **ʒttân** ‘who’, **ɔkkwên**, **ɔkkwéŋôn** ‘who’, C-**ʒtta**, C-**ʒttân** ‘whose’, C-**ɔkkwên**, C-**ɔkkwéŋôn** ‘whose’;
- **ŋínṭa** ‘what, why’, **akainṭa/akkaínṭa** ‘why’, **akain/akkaín** ‘why’, **ŋimpên** ‘what’, C-**ɔínṭa** ‘what kind of’, C-**ɔín** ‘what kind of’, C-**ɔimpên** ‘what’;
- **karəṭâ /karəṭa**, **kâren**, C-**árəṭa** ‘where’, C-**âren** ‘where’; **acínṭa** ‘when’, **acín** ‘when’;
- **tátta/kátta** ‘how’, **tát/kát** ‘how’, C-**arátta** ‘how’, C-**arât** ‘how’;

- **akkáraṭta** ‘what time of the day’, **akkárat** ‘what time of the day’;
- C-**ɔ́ṭéṇta** ‘for what purpose, why’, C-**ɔ́ṭén** ‘for what purpose, why’, C-**ɔ́nṭa** ‘why’;
- C-**ɔ́rəṇọ́ṭta** ‘how many’, C-**ɔ́rəṇɔ́k** ‘how many’;
- C-**ɪạṭâ** ‘which’, C-**ɪa** ‘which’

20.1.1. ‘who’ and ‘whose’

ọ́ṭta/ọ́ṭtân ‘who’, **ɔ́kkwên/ɔ́kkwẹ́ṇ** ‘who’, C-**ọ́ṭta**, C-**ọ́ṭtân** ‘whose’ and C-**ɔ́kkwên/C-ɔ́kkwẹ́ṇ** ‘whose’ share a formative (based on) **ɔ́k** ‘s/he’ (including the persona prefix). Though in these forms the sequence **ɔ́** has been shortened to **ọ́**, I will gloss the formative as PERS.3

ọ́ṭta/ọ́ṭtân ‘who’

ọ́ṭta is made up of a formative based on **ɔ́k** ‘s/he’, including the persona prefix (**ọ́-**), and the question word marker **-ṭa**. It has a plural which is formed through attachment of the plural suffix **-ṇ** of nouns with the persona prefix: **ọ́ṭta** + **-ṇ** > **ọ́ṭtân**.

ọ́ṭta/ọ́ṭtân is used in different syntactic functions: subject, object, as part of a prepositional phrase. The syntactic function determines which construction(s) is/are possible. In the examples below, it functions as the subject of a verbless clause:

ọ́ṭ-ṭa **p-ɛn**
PERS.3-QW C-DEM

who is it? (i.e. whom are you talking about?)

ọ́ṭ-ṭá-n **én-ṭ-í**
who-PL DEM-C-NEARSP

who are they? (lit.: who are these? For example about people who are present, or while pointing at people in a picture)

When **ṣṭta/ṣṭtân** replaces the subject of a verbal or adjectival clause, a focus construction with **akk-is** is required, or alternatively, with **app-** for the singular and **att-** for the plural (see 19.1):

ṣṭ-ṭa **a-p-p-ərîk**
 PERS.3-QW FOC-C-C-big

who is the biggest?

ṣṭ-ṭá-n **á-ṭ-ṭ-aá.t**
 PERS.3-QW-PL FOC-C-C-come:COMPL

who (PL) came?

ṣṭ-ṭa **akk-a.kkót** **ḡərə**
 PERS.3-QW FOC-do:INCOMPL work

who will do the work?

As an object, **ṣṭta/ṣṭtân** can be used in situ (first and second example below) or fronted in a construction with the complementizer **akka** + H (third example below):

ṣ-kín **ṭ-ṭə.é** **ṣṭ.ṭá-n** **nṓ.ppan**
 PERS-3A C-find:COMPL who:QW-PL inside

who(PL) did they find inside?

ḡ-kw-a.ík **p-a.llíne** **ṣṭ-ṭa**
 2-C-be:PR C-run_for:INCOMPL PERS.3-QW

whom are you running from?

ṣṭ-ṭa **akka** **ḡ-kw-a.ík** **p-a.llíne**
 PERS.3-QW that 2-C-be:PR C-run:INCOMPL

whom are you running from?

After a preposition, the initial vowel **ṣ** of **ṣṭta/ṣṭtân** changes into **a**, in the same way as the persona prefix **ṣ-** in pronouns, personal names and kinship and relational terms (see 4.10.1). The question word can be used in situ, but can also be fronted followed by **akka** + H. In the latter case, preposition and question word are separated: the preposition remains in place adopting its absolute form (second example below).

ɔ-kín **ṭ-ɔṭṭé.t** **n-át.ṭa-n**
 PERS-3A C-leave:COMPL on-who-PL

who (PL) did they leave behind?

ṣṭ-ṭa-n **akka** **ɔ-kín** **ṭ-ɔṭṭé.t** **nán**
 PERS.3-QW-PL that PERS-3A C-leave:COMPL on:ABS

who (PL) did they leave behind?

A special use of **ṣṭṭa** is found in a question about names. This requires a construction with the complementizer **ittí**:

ŋ-kw-ɔccó.t **kəṭan** **ittí** **ṣṭ-ṭa**
 2-C-receive:COMPL name that PERS.3-QW

what is your name? (lit.: you have received the name that who?)

ṣṭṭa/ṣṭṭân can, apparently, be used in complement questions, at least in some cases. The following sentence was not rejected:

m-p-ɔmma **ittí** **ṣṭ-ṭa** **akk-aa.t** **cɪt.tó.kít**
 1-C-not_know:INCOMPL that PERS.3-QW FOC-come:COMPL firstly

I do not know who came first

Commonly, however, **ɔkkwên/ɔkkwéŋôn** ‘who’ is applied in complement clauses (unless the complement clause represents direct speech).

ɔkkwên/ɔkkwéŋôn ‘who’

ɔkkwên ‘who’ contains a formative based on **ɔɔk** ‘s/he’, including the persona prefix **ɔ-**, and the concord **p-** (agreeing with **ɔɔk**) + demonstrative pronominal base **en** (see 8.1). As elsewhere, the realization of the sequence of pronominal **k** and concord **p** deviates from general phonological rules, being realized as [k^w] instead of as [p]. The plural of **ɔkkwên** is formed with **-ŋôn**: **ɔkkwéŋôn**.

Though **ɔkkwên/ɔkkwéŋôn** already contains **p-en** as a formative, in a verbless construction it can still be predicated by **pen** (or plural **ṭen**):

ɔk.kw.én p-ɛn
 who C-DEM

who is this about? (i.e. whom are you talking about?)

ɔkkwên implies a speech context; unlike **ɔtta**, it is not used inthetic questions. The following examples contrast **ɔtta** and **ɔkkwên**. **ɔtta** can be used in context as well as “out-of-the-blue”; the use of **ɔkkwên** in the second example below conveys the speaker’s assumption or awareness that the people were already talking about the person who died when s/he joined the conversation:

ɔtt-ta a-p-p-íó.t
 PERS.3-QW FOC-C-C-die:COMPL

who died?

ɔk.kw.én a-p-p-íó.t
 who:DEM FOC-C-C-die:COMPL

who died? (for example upon joining a group of people at a funeral who are talking about the deceased)

Furthermore, **ɔkkwên/ɔkkwéŋɔn** is typically used in complement clauses. Two examples follow here, the first with ‘who’ as subject of the complement clause, the second with ‘who’ as object.

m-p-ɔmma itti ɔk.kw.én akk-ɔkkɔt.ê
 1-C-not_know:INCOMPL that who:DEM FOC-do:COMPL

I do not know who did it

ɔ-kín t-ɛré-t-ɛ itti ɔk.kw.éŋ-ɔn akka ɔ-kín akkarɔ
 PERS-3A C-speak_about:COMPL that who:DEM-PL that PERS-3A call:DEPINCOMPL

they talked about who (PL) they would invite

Note that the example above ‘I do not know who did it’ is different from a construction with **ɔkkwí í-** (see 6.1.5):

m-p-ɔmma ɔk.kw.í í-p-ɔkkɔt.ê
 1-C-not_know:INCOMPL the_one RES-C-do:COMPL

I do not know the one who did it

C-ṣṭta/C-ṣṭtân ‘whose’ and *C-ṣkkwên/C-ṣkkwéḡṣn*

The nominal modifiers *C-ṣṭta/C-ṣṭtân* ‘whose’ and *C-ṣkkwên/C-ṣkkwéḡṣn* have the connexive *C-ṣ* ‘of’ as a formative. The difference in meaning between the two is similar to that of the pronominal forms. The first question below can, for example, be asked when two people are passing by a grave. The one puts the question to the other, who may or may not know the answer. The second question can be used when walking into a group of people who are gathered around a grave: it is assumed that these people have been talking or are talking about the dead person and know who he or she is.

tupu	t-ṣṭ-ṭá	én-t-í
hole_in_ground	C-of.PERS.3-QW	DEM-C-NEARSP

whose grave is this?

tupu	t-ṣk-kw-én	én-t-í
hole_in_ground	C-of.PERS.3-C-DEM	DEM-C-NEARSP

whose grave is this?

In a context where something was missed *C-ṣkkwên* is used upon asking for clarification. However, *C-ṣkkwên* is sometimes also used without such a conversational context, as an alternative to *C-ṣṭta*.

ṣ-ḥḥḥé	c-ṣk-kw-én
PERS-Ḥḥḥé	C-of.PERS.3-C-DEM

whose Ḥḥḥé are you? / whose Ḥḥḥé are you? (or: in a comparable way as in the previous example: whose Ḥḥḥé is this about?)

ṣ-ḥḥḥé	c-ṣṭ-ṭá
PERS-Ḥḥḥé	C-of.PERS.3-QW

whose Ḥḥḥé are you?

A pronominal proclitic can be attached to the connexive construction:

ḡ-kw-ṣk-kw-én
2-C-of.PERS.3-C-DEM

whose (son/daughter) are you? / whose (son/daughter) are you?

ŋ-kw-ɔ̄t-ɬa

2-C-Of.PERS.3-QW

whose (son/daughter) are you? / *whose* (son/daughter) are you?

20.1.2. ‘what’, ‘why’ and ‘what kind of’

The question words **ŋínɬa** ‘what’, **akaínɬa/akkaínɬa** ‘why’, **akaín/akkaín** ‘why’, **C-ɔ̄ínɬa** ‘what kind of’, **C-ɔ̄ín** ‘what kind of’ and **ŋimpêñ** ‘what’ all share the formative based on **ŋín** ‘what’. Most question words are compatible with **ŋín** having a falling tone, except **ŋimpêñ**, the latter suggests a high or rising tone. I represent it with a high tone, since in the one example I have where it is not preceded by an element with high tone, it is realized as high.

ana ŋ-kw-a.ɬ-ɔ̄kkɔt **ŋín**

and 2-C-IT:INCOMPL-do:DEPINCOMPL what

and what will you do about it?! (lit. go and do)

ŋínɬa ‘what’

ŋínɬa, containing **ŋín** ‘what’ and **-ɬa** as formatives, can be used in a verbless clause. The concord **p-** in the first example, which is a fixed expression, is implicitly understood to agree with **papu** ‘thing’.

ŋín-ɬa **p-en**

what-QW C-DEM

what is it? (what is this that you are talking about?)

ŋínɬa can be used in a verbless clause with complementizer **ittɪ** ‘that’:

ŋín-ɬa **ittɪ** **ɬ-ɔ̄mekɔ̄**

what-QW that NOM-scarify

what is scarification?

As the subject of a verb, **ŋínɬa** is followed by the focus marker **akk-**, or alternatively by **app-** (not **aŋŋ-**). **app-** is used in **Tɔ̄ɾəmaɬɔ̄n** and, for my consultant, implicitly agrees with **papu** ‘thing’.

ηίν-τα **akk-a.îk**

what-QW FOC-be:PR

what is happening? (what is (it)?)

ηίν-τα **a-p-p-ɔkkwɔt.ê**

what-QW FOC-C-C-kill:COMPL

what has destroyed it? (lit.: killed)

ηίν-τα **akk-ɔnó** **ittı** **páı**

what-QW FOC-have that par

what does *par* mean?

ηίντα as object can be in situ or left-dislocated followed by **akka** + H:

ókul **w-a.ɾəkɔ** **ηίν-τα**

child C-eat:INCOMPL what-QW

what will the child eat?

ηίν-τα **akka** **ókól** **ɔɾəkɔ**

what-QW that child eat:DEPINCOMPL

what will the child eat?

ηίντα can be in situ preceded by a preposition. Alternatively, it can be left-dislocated, with an absolute preposition remaining in place:

η-kw-aa.t **η-ηίν-τα**

2-C-come:COMPL with-what-QW

by what did you come here? (i.e. by what means of transport)

ηίν-τα **akka** **η-kw-aa.t** **ή.ηm**

what-QW that C-come:COMPL with:ABS

by what did you come here? (i.e. by what means of transport)

ηίν ‘what’

ηίν, without the question morpheme **-τα**, does not function as a neutral question word. In the earlier cited example, repeated here, it already implies the speaker’s negative view: you can do nothing.

ana η-kw-a.ʔ-ʔkkʔt ηίν
 and 2-C-IT:INCOMPL-do:DEPINCOMPL what

and what will you do about it?! (lit. go and do) (implied: nothing!)

In combination with a Benefactive verb **ηίντα** is interpreted as ‘why’ (‘for what’). Compare:

η-kw-a.ik p-a.llʔt tʔ-ín-ʔa
 2-C-be:PR C-run_to:INCOMPL up_on-what-QW

what are you running to?

η-kw-a.ik p-a.llíne ηίν-ʔa
 2-C-be:PR C-run_for:INCOMPL what-QW

why are you running? (lit.: you are running for what?)

In case of two objects, **ηίντα** in situ as the first (benefactive) object of a Benefactive verb, gives the reading ‘why’:

ana m-p-a.ʔʔkine ηίν.ʔá ηύρύ η-ηʔɪ
 and 1-C-eat_for:INCOMPL what:QW asida with-water

and why would I eat asida with water? (lit.: and I will eat for what asida with water?)

Alternatively, the reason object is left-dislocated in a construction with **akka** + H:

ana ηίν-ʔa akka a-n-ʔʔkine ηύρύ η-ηʔɪ
 and what-QW that CONJ-1-eat_for:DEPINCOMPL asida with-water

and why would I eat asida with water? (lit.: and I will eat for what asida with water?)

As a second (patient) object, **ηίντα** in situ gives the reading ‘what’:

m-p-a.nékine ʔ-kakká ηίν-ʔa
 1-C-take_for:INCOMPL PERS-Kakka what-QW

what can I take to Kakka?

In such a case, that is with a verb that takes both a beneficiary and a patient object, a construction with **ŋínta akka** + H is ambiguous:

ŋín-ṭa akka a-n-ɔnékɪne ɔ-kakká
 what-QW that CONJ-1-take_for:DEPINCOMPL PERS-Kakka

what can I take to Kakka? / why do I bring it to Kakka?

akkaínta / akaínta ‘why’

The use of the combination **akkaínta** or **akaínta** ‘why’ (< **akka** + **ŋínta**), which comes after the verb phrase, avoids such ambiguity. Whereas a clause with (fronted) **ŋínta akka** + H as ‘why’, or with **ŋínta** in situ as ‘why’, requires a verb in benefactive derivation, the equivalent clause with **akkaínta/akaínta** has a non-benefactive verb:

ŋ-kw-a.ɪk p-a.lɔ́ aka.ín-ṭa
 2-C-be:PR C-run:INCOMPL why-QW

why are you running?

m-p-a.nékiɛ ɔ-kakká aka.ín-ṭa
 1-C-take_for:INCOMPL PERS-Kakka why-QW

why will I take it to Kakka?

akkaîɲ / akaîɲ ‘why’

akkaîɲ and its variant **akaîɲ**, which lack the question morpheme **-ṭa**, are typically used as quick remarks, interrupting the speaker. Rather than like real questions, they function like exclamations, expressing that something is considered unusual:

ɲokul ɲ-ellâ
 children C-be_absent:INCOMPL

akka.îɲ
 why

I have no children (lit.: children are lacking). why?!

C-ɔínta ‘what kind of’, **C-ɔîɲ** ‘what kind of’

C-**ᶑínṭa** ‘what kind of’ and C-**ᶑín** ‘what kind of’ contain the connexive C-**ᶑ** and **ᶑínṭa** or **ᶑín**. They function as modifiers of a noun phrase:

ᶑ-pari **p-aṅ** **p-a.kkóttet** **ᶑóól** **ᶑ-ᶑín-ṭa**
 PERS-wife C-POSS2 C-do.PLUR:INCOMPL sauce C-of-what-QW

what kind of sauce does your wife always make? (App. IV, 12)

k-kw-ᶑkwónᶑ.t **óól** **w-ᶑín-ṭa**
 3-C-produce:COMPL child C-of-what-QW

what child did she give birth to? (a girl or a boy?)

The next example has C-**ᶑín**, without **-ṭa**. It is not really a question, but conveys that the people don’t want to hear the **tit tit** of the boy:

ana **tit** **tit** **t-ᶑᶑek** **t-ᶑín**
 and tit tit C-some C-of-what

and what kind of “*tit tit*” (is this now)?! (“*tit tit*” is a sound made out of fear. Context: a small boy went into a cave to find a porcupine, but now he is afraid and wants to get out. The people outside want the boy to stay inside and get the porcupine). (fr. written story)

ᶑimpên ‘what, why’

ᶑimpên contains the formative **ᶑín** ‘what’ and the demonstrative base **en** ‘that’. The concord is again **p**. Like **ᶑkkwên**, **ᶑimpên** is not used thetically, but needs a (speech) context; it refers to a matter that is (assumed to be) already being discussed. The question below stands in a context of people knowing that they should do something, but they don’t know what. **ᶑimpên** can be used in situ or in a fronted construction with **akka** + H:

ana **ᶑ-nᶑin** **ṭ-a.kkᶑt** **ᶑim-p-ên**
 and PERS-1A C-do:INCOMPL what-C-DEM

but what can we do?

ana **ᶑim-p-én** **akka** **ᶑ-nᶑin** **ᶑkkᶑt**
 and what-C-DEM that PERS-1A do:DEPINCOMPL

but what can we do?

Like **ǎkkwên**, **ŋimpên** is also used in complement clauses, whether in situ (first example below), or fronted within the complement clause preceding **akka** + H (second example). In the second example, **ŋínṭa** was considered acceptable as well; in the first this was less clear.

ǎ-kín ṭ-erettárone.t **itti ǎ-kín ṭ-á.kkót** **ŋím-p-ên**
 PERS-3A C-talk_to_each_other:COMPL that PERS-3A C-do:INCOMPL what-C-DEM
 they discussed amongst each other what they would do

ŋík.ɪ **n-tán** **á-n-ánt-ǎkṭa**
 pass_entrance:IMP with-up_on:ABS SUBJ-1-can:DEPINCOMPL-look_at:DEPINCOMPL
ŋim-p-én akka ǎ-ppénná ǎkkínṭ-óŋ
 what-C-DEM that PERS-Penna do_for:DEPINCOMPL-O2
 come inside to me, so that I can see what Penna is doing to you

ŋimpén akka has the reading ‘why’ when it functions as first object of a Benefactive verb. Note that in the previous example **-óŋ** ‘you’ is understood as the first object of **ǎkkínṭet** ‘do for’, so that **ŋimpên** is understood as the second (patient) object. In the example below the natural interpretation is the other way round: **ŋimpên** is understood as the first object of Benefactive **ǎmmakínṭet** ‘follow for’ (< **ǎmmakot** ‘follow’), giving a ‘why’ reading. Enclitic **-ǎk** ‘him, her’ functions as second (patient) object:

ǎ-kín ṭ-eréṭ.ε **itti ŋim-p-én akka**
 PERS-3A C-speak_about:COMPL that what-C-DEM that
k-kw-á.ík p-á.mmakínṭ-ǎk
 3-C-be:PR C-follow_for.PLUR:INCOMPL-O3
 they spoke about why she is always following him

ŋimpên is also used in questions to which no answer is expected:

ana ŋ-kw-ápp-ǎṭunc.aṭ-in **ŋim-p-ên**
 and 2-C-again:INCOMPL-throw_at.PLUR:DEPPRFV-1:O what-C-DEM
 and what will you throw at me again?! (implication: there is nothing left to throw at me) (App. IV, 116)

ηῶρε **ι-α** **κ-κω-ῶν** **η-ά.μέτ** **ηίμ-π-έν**
 laziness RES-(C-)COP 3-C-have C-tell:INCOMPL what-C-DEM

the laziness that he has tells (us) what?! (i.e. it is beyond words!) (App. I, 22)

20.1.3. ‘where’

karə́tā / **karə́ta**, **kəren**, **C-árə́ta** and **C-âren** ‘where’ share a formative that vacillates between **(k)ər** and **(k)ar**. **karə́tā** and **karə́ta** are sometimes pronounced with a first vowel **ə** rather than **a**. The initial vowel **a** of **C-árə́ta** and **C-âren** comes from the copula (**C-á** ‘be’) rather than being part of the formative. Whether or not there is a relationship with the noun **karən** ‘place’ is unclear.

karə́tā/karə́ta ‘where’

karə́tā or **karə́ta** ‘where’ can be used in situ. In this position, the two tonal alternatives are equivalent, as shown in the following. The first realization is based on **karə́tā**, the second on **karə́ta**.

liccít **l-á.ík kárə́-tā** / **liccít** **l-á.ík** **karə́-ta**
 threshing_floor C-be:PR where-QW threshing_floor C-be:PR where-QW

where is the threshing floor?

karə́tā / **karə́ta** can precede an adjunct of time (or manner):

η-kw-εῶ.t **kárə́-tā** **mεccín**
 2-C-go:COMPL where-qw yesterday

where did you go yesterday?

Alternatively, ‘where’ can be fronted. In this construction only the tonal variant **karə́tā** is used. Fronted **karə́tā** is not followed by **akka** + H, but by locative relative **ná** (discussed in 11.3):

karə́-tā **na** **liccít** **l-á.ík**
 where-QW where:REL threshing_floor C-be:PR

where is the threshing floor?

In complement clauses **karəṭa/karəṭâ** and **kəren** are not used, only the locative relative **ná**:

m-p-əmma **na** **k-kw-ónu** **kəmón**
 1-C-not_know:INCOMPL where:REL 3-C-have house

I don't know where s/he has his/her house he lives (I don't know where s/he lives)

Like other locative constituents **karəṭa/karəṭâ** can be preceded by **ń-** 'with, by, (away) from', but not by any of the other proclitic prepositions:

liçək **l-aa.t** **ŋ-káro-ṭâ /** **ŋ-káro-ṭa**
 goats C-come:COMPL with-where-QW with-where-QW

where have the goats come from?

kəren 'where'

kəren probably contains the demonstrative pronominal base **en** as a formative (see 8.1), but there seems to be no trace of a concord. Like **ŋimpên** and **əkkwên**, **kəren** is used in questions which are not really questions, but imply a negative statement. For example, the speaker is telling somebody that some of his goats escaped and says 'and where were you?!', implying: I needed you then to search with me, but you didn't show up:

a-ŋ-kw-əká.t **kəren**
 CONJ-2-C-be:COMPL where

and where were you?! (you didn't show up!)

In the example below, somebody has just said that s/he has a threshing floor, but as far as the hearer knows this is not the case:

liçcít **l-á.ík** **kəren**
 threshing_floor C-be:PR where

where is (this) threshing floor?!

kəren with proclitic **ń-** ‘with, by, (away) from’ is a standard expression in answer to the greeting **táṭṭa** ‘how is it?’. It is an evasive answer, communicating an unwillingness to give further details:

táṭ-ṭa

how-QW

ṅ-kóren

with-where

how are you? fine (but don’t ask further questions!)

C-árəṭa ‘where’ and **C-âren**

The related nominal modifiers are **C-árəṭa** ‘where’ and **C-âren** ‘where’. **C-árəṭa** is used in order to obtain information about the whereabouts of somebody or something:

ṅṛin **p-árə.ṭa**

PERS.ṅṛin C-where

where is ṅṛin?

appentíná **w-árə.ṭa**

groundnuts C-where

where are the groundnuts?

a-ṅ-kw-árə.ṭa

CONJ-2-C-where

and where are you?

By contrast, **C-âren** in the next example is not a neutral inquiry after somebody’s whereabouts. It implies that the person was expected to be present, but is not:

k-kw-íré.t **ittı** **k-kw-á.kkappərtakə** **ána** **k-kw-âren**

3-C-say:COMPL that 3-C-return:INCOMPL and 3-C-where

s/he said that s/he would come back, but where is s/he?!

In the example below, the chicken saw the cat coming, but now does not see it anymore, which is worrying. The chicken asks the jackal:

ana pólá p-âren
and cat C-where

and where is the cat now?! ('The story of the jackal')

The following example is not a neutral question after the whereabouts of the addressee's children (**ɲokul**), but departs from the knowledge that the addressee does not have children and conveys that this is not really how it should be:

ana á-ɲ-áɲ ɲ-âren
and PROBS-C-POSS2 C-where

and where are yours?! (you should get serious and have a child!)

20.1.4. 'how'

táttá, **táttáráttá**, **tăt** and **C-aráttá** all share the formative **tăt** 'how' (as do **akkáráttá** and **akkárat** 'what time', see 20.1.5). **káttá** and **kăt** share the variant of **tăt**, **kăt**.

táttá/káttá 'how'

táttá 'how' and **káttá** 'how' are generally preceded by the complementizer **ittĩ** 'that'. The combination **ittĩ káttá** / **ittĩ táttá** is used in situ:

ɲ-kw-a.kkót ɲǎré éɲ-ɲ-í ittĩ kăt-ɬa / tát-ɬa
2-C-do:INCOMPL work DEM-C-NEARSP that how-QW / how-QW

how will you do the work?

In the next example **táttá/káttá** is not preceded by **ittĩ**, but the defective verb **-ǎpəri** contains the same formative **-tĩ** as **ittĩ**:

k-kw-ǎpəri tát-ɬa / kăt-ɬa
3-C-say how-QW / how-QW

what did s/he say?

In the next case **ittĩ** is absent. The expression is a fixed formula, a greeting upon seeing somebody who has just got up:

ŋ-kw-ɨcát.é táť-ťá / kát-ťá
 2-C-lie_down:COMPL (that-)how-QW / (that-)how-QW

how did you sleep? (greeting in the morning)

táťta and **káťta** ‘how’ are very common greetings:

táť-ťá / kát-ťá
 how-QW / how-QW

m-p-ɔpərɔt
 1-C-good

how are you? I am fine

itti káťta (or **itti táťta**) is also used in complement clauses:

m-p-ɔŋɔt.é itti ɔ-nɔn ʈ-ánt-ɔkəne-n itti
 1-C-like:COMPL that PERS-2A C-can:INCOMPL-show:DEPINCOMPL-O1 that

ɔ-nɔn ʈ-a.ra tún itti kát-ťá cəné
 PERS-2A C-cultivate:INCOMPL onion that how-QW here

could you show me how you (PL) grow onions here? (lit.: I want that you (PL) can show me ...) (fr. written text)

táťta/káťta cannot be left-dislocated.

táťta can be reduplicated to **táťtáráťta**. The reduplication has an intensifying effect. A how-question with **táťtáráťta** is not a neutral question for information, but expresses that something is thought to be (have been) very difficult. Which part is the reduplicated part is not clear. In the example I have glossed the second part as the reduplicated part:

ŋ-kw-aa.t táťtá-ráťta
 2-C-come:COMPL how~INTS

how did you manage to come? (for example when there were no buses)

tăť/kăt ‘how’

The short forms **tăt/kăt** ‘how’ are used in expressions that function as exclamations rather than as real questions. The example below has the implicit connotation of ‘you probably have nothing to say’:

ana ɔ-nɔn ʃ-ére tăt
and PERS-2A C-speak:INCOMPL how

and what do you (PL) have to say?! (lit.: and how will you speak?!)

Comparable to **ɔkkwên** and **ɲimpên**, and like **itti kátta/itti táttá**, the short forms **tăt/kăt** are furthermore used in complement clauses. The following example functions as complement of ‘they talked about’:

... **ana ɔ-llé p-ɔkǐccé.r-ɔk n-tuan kăt**
 and PERS-husband C-chase:COMPL-O3 with-home how

...and how her husband had chased her from the house (from wr. story)

Unlike **itti kátta / itti táttá** the short forms require some context; they are not easily used ‘out of the blue’. The first sentence below can, for example, be used in a conversation between two people who are walking through an onion field, and one of which is known or assumed to have knowledge about the cultivation of onions:

m-p-ɔɲɔʃ.é itti ɔ-nɔn ʃ-ánt-ɔkóne-n itti
1-C-like:COMPL that PERS-2A C-can:INCOMPL-show:DEPINCOMPL-O1 that

ɔ-nɔn ʃ-a.ra ʃún tat cəné
PERS-2A C-cultivate:INCOMPL onion how here

could you show me how you grow onions here? (lit.: I want that ...)

In a complement clause **tăt/kăt** can be left-dislocated followed by **akka** + H:

m-p-ɔɲɔʃ.é itti ɔ-nɔn ʃ-ánt-ɔkóne-n tat akka
1-C-like:COMPL that PERS-2A C-can:INCOMPL-show:DEPINCOMPL-O1 that that

ɔ-nɔn ʃ-a.ra ʃún cəné
PERS-2A C-cultivate:INCOMPL onion here

could you show me how you grow onions here? (lit.: I want that ...)

C-aráttá ‘how’, *C-arât* ‘how’

The modifying word *C-aráttá* ‘how’ contains the copula *C-á* and *táttá* (*tắt* ‘how’ + the question word marker *-tta*) as formatives. Some examples:

nenní **ŋ-kw-a.rát-ta**
Nenni 2-C-how-QW

Nenni, how are you?

ɔ-nenní **p-a.rát-ta**
PERS-Nenni C-how-QW

how is Nenni?

lɔn **l-a.rát-ta**
words C-how-QW

what is going on?

In the example below *C-aráttá* modifies an object pronoun:

ɔ-nɔn **t-immá.kát-ɔ́k** **p-á.rát-ta**
PERS-2A C-see:PST-O3 C-how-QW

how was s/he when you (PL) saw him/her? (lit.: you saw him/her being how?)

The short form is *C-arât* is used in quick questions for further details:

pəlla **p-ellâ** | **ana** **p-p-éllá** **p-árât**
cat C-be_absent:INCOMPL and PRO-C-be_absent:INCOMPL C-how

the cat is not here. and how come it is not here?

20.1.5. ‘what time’

akkáráttá contains **akka** + H ‘that’ and **táttá** ‘how’ as formatives, but has developed a tone pattern of its own. **akkáráttá** is used in order to inquire after the time of the day that something happened or is expected to happen.

η-kw-εó.t **tuán** **akkáraṭ-ṭa** | **m-p-εó.t** **cipín**
 2-C-go:COMPL home what_time-QW 1-C-go:COMPL evening

at what time did you go home? I went in the evening

akkáraṭṭa can be left-dislocated, followed by **akka** + H:

akkáraṭ-ṭa **akka** **η-kw-εó.t** **tuán**
 what_time-QW that 2-C-go:COMPL home

at what time did you go home?

The short form can be used as a quick way of asking more precise information:

ᵛ-íaia **p-a.ik** **p-âṅṭán** | **akkarat**
 PERS-mother C-be:PR C-come:INCOMPL what_time

my mother is coming. what time? (the assumption is that the mother will come today)

akkáraṭṭa is not used for asking after the (clock) time of the present moment. The expression for this is:

ciṅki **c-ia-ṭâ**
 sun c-which-QW

what's the time? (lit. the sun is which?)

20.1.6. 'when'

While **akkáraṭṭa** 'what time' inquires after the time of the day that something happened or is expected to happen, **acínṭa** 'when' is used in case of a larger time frame. A question with **acínṭa** conveys no knowledge (or assumption) on the part of the speaker about the day of the event.

η-kw-aa.t **kárəṭṭóm** **ácín-ṭa**
 2-C-come:COMPL Khartoum when-QW

when did you arrive in Khartoum?

The short form **acîn** needs a (speech) context and typically has an expressive value. The example below, is not a neutral question inquiring after the time or day that the speaker and addressee will fight, but conveys an eagerness to fight and perhaps the suggestion that the addressee may want to escape from it. The addressee replies that they will fight now.

ana ɔ-rit ʦ-a.ʦáttɔ acîn | ɔ-rit ʦ-a.ʦáttɔ ácca
 ana PERS-12 C-fight:INCOMPL when PERS-12 C-fight:INCOMPL now

and when will we fight?! we will fight now!

In the next example **acîn** is used as a quick interruption to ask when something is going to take place:

ɔ-íára p-a.ík p-ântán | acîn
 PERS-mother C-be:PR C-come:INCOMPL when

my mother is coming. when? (no knowledge/assumption about the time frame is conveyed)

The example below with **acîn** is not a real question. It is asked after the eggs of the bird got broken and the implied answer is ‘never’:

ana puʦupé p-ápp-ɔkwónɔ acîn
 and bird C-again:INCOMPL -produce:INCOMPL when

akka p-p-ókkwá.t pəʦin
 that PRO-C-become_old:COMPL finally

and when will the bird produce (eggs) again? because it will be old (implied answer: never)

The form **acîn** is further used in a complement clause. **acínʦa** is possible as well. Both are used only in final position:

m-p-ɔmma itti ɔ-kín ʦ-ântan acîn / acín-ʦa
 1-C-not_know:INCOMPL that PERS-3A C-come:INCOMPL when / when-QW

I do not know when they will come (lit.: I do not know that they will come when)

20.1.7. ‘for what purpose’ and ‘why’

C-ṣṭénṭa ‘for what purpose, why’ and *C-ṣṭên* ‘for what purpose, why’

C-ṣṭénṭa modifies a noun and expresses ‘for what purpose’ or ‘why’. The long form is used in neutral questions. In the example below it functions as predicate:

ṣṭən **p-ṣṭén-ṭa**
basket(k.o.) C-for_what_purpose-QW
for what is the basket?

In the next example *C-ṣṭénṭa* modifies an object noun. The object noun phrase remains in situ:

n-ṭ-a.pṣṛe **kamər** **k-ṣṭén-ṭa**
2A-C-put_at.PLUR:INCOMPL sand C-for_what_purpose-QW
why are you collecting sand?

The noun phrase can be fronted in a cleft construction with the copula:

təré **t-ṣṭén-ṭá** **t-á** **ḡ-kw-ṣnû**
fear C-for_what_purpose-QW C-COP 2-C-have
why are you afraid? (lit.: fear for what purpose it is you have?)

ṭakurít **ṭ-ṣṭén-ṭá** **ṭ-á-kkôṭ** (< **ṭ-a** + **ḡ-** + **ṣkkôṭ**)
style_of_young_man C-for_what_purpose-QW C-COP-(2-)do:DEPINCOMPL
why do you dress up like a young man? (lit.: style for what purpose it is you make?)

C-ṣṭénṭa and *C-ṣṭên* can be used in a complement clause. In this environment there seems to be no difference between the long and the short form:

m-p-ṣmma **itti** **ṣṭən** **p-ṣṭén-ṭa** / **p-ṣṭên**
1-C-not_know:INCOMPL that basket(k.o.) C-because_of_what-QW C-because_of_what
I do not know what the basket is for

In a main clause, the short form conveys a negative judgement:

pəʔən **p-əʔən**
basket(k.o.) C-because_of_what

for what is the basket?! (we don't need it, you should not have brought it)

C-ʒn̄ta 'why'

C-ʒn̄ta 'why' modifies a subject (pro)noun. It is used in a construction with **akka** +H, often in combination with **ittinâ** 'so, like this'. Questions with C-ʒn̄ta are not neutral inquiries, but convey that it would be better if the situation were different, they express some worry, disappointment or disapproval.

ukul **w-ʒn̄ta** **akka** **w-íkko** **cík**
child C-why that PRO-sit:DEPINCOMPL VREF

cínáŋ **ákkómân**
there_where_you_are since

why is the child still sitting here?

ɔ-rɔn **ʔ-ʒn̄ta** **akka** **ɔ-rɔn** **ɔkwón̄ta** **ittinâ**
PERS-12A C-why that PERS-12A be_born:DEPINCOMPL so

why were we born like this?

In the following example pronominal **t** refers to a pig (**tuttəruk**):

t-t-ʒn̄ta **akka** **t-t-á.ík** **t-ʒó**²⁸ **ittinâ**
PRO-C-why that PRO-C-be:PR C-cry:INCOMPL so

why is it (the pig) crying like this?

The following is an example of C-ʒn̄ta without the connecting **akka**. **pənan**, which is related to **ɔnnân** 'mother', is an abusive term.

k-kw-ʒn̄ta **ant-áme** **pənan**
3-C-why can:DEPINCOMPL-come_to:DEPINCOMPL mother

why, on his/her mother, let him/her come back (in anger, as a threat)

²⁸ Irregular Incompletive (< ɔʒ 'cry').

20.1.8. ‘how many’

C-ၵၵၵၵၵၵၵၵ expresses ‘how many’. First some examples of predicative use:

ၵ-ၵၵၵၵၵၵၵၵ **ၵ-ၵၵၵၵၵၵၵၵ-ၵၵၵ**
 PERS-2A C-how_many-QW

how many are you?

kəmən **k-ၵၵၵၵၵၵၵၵ-ၵၵၵ** **í-k-ၵၵၵၵၵၵၵၵ** **cəné**
 rooms C-how_many-QW RES-C-be_built:INCOMPL here

how many rooms will be built here? (lit.: the rooms (are) how many which will be built here?)

When **C-ၵၵၵၵၵၵၵၵ** modifies the object, the object noun phrase can remain in situ, but also be fronted. When fronted, it is followed by a relative construction with **ၵ-C-a** (second example below).

ၵၵၵၵၵၵၵၵ-ၵၵၵၵၵၵၵၵၵ **mén** **m-ၵၵၵၵၵၵၵၵၵ-ၵၵၵ**
 2-C-have palm_fruits C-how_many-QW

how many palm fruits do you have?

mén **m-ၵၵၵၵၵၵၵၵၵ-ၵၵၵ** **í-m-á** **ၵၵၵၵၵၵၵၵၵၵၵၵၵ**
 palm_fruits C-how_many-QW RES-C-COP 2-C-have

how many palm fruits do you have?

Like the other forms without **-ၵၵၵ**, **C-ၵၵၵၵၵၵၵၵ** is used as a quick (perhaps interruptive) question:

ၵ-ၵၵၵၵၵၵၵၵၵ **ၵၵၵၵၵၵၵၵၵၵၵၵၵ** **ၵၵၵၵၵၵၵၵၵၵၵၵၵၵၵၵၵ** **ménní**
 PERS-3A C-be:PR C-come:INCOMPL today

ၵၵၵၵၵၵၵၵၵ
 C-how_many

they are coming today / how many (are they)?

20.1.9. ‘which’

The nominal modifier **C-iaṭâ** expresses ‘which’. An object noun phrase with **C-iaṭâ** can be used in situ, but can also be fronted. When fronted, it is followed by a relative construction with **I-C-a**:

ŋ-kw-akkó.t **ṭákúřít** **ṭ-ía-ṭâ**
 2-C-do:INCOMPL style_of_young_man C-which-QW

in which young man’s style will you dress?

ṭakuřít **ṭ-ía-ṭâ** **í-ṭ-ákkôṭ**
 style_of_young_man C-which-QW RES-C-COP.(2-)do:DEPINCOMPL

in which young man’s style will you dress? (lit.: the young man’s style is which that you will do?)

Modifying question words, like other modifiers, can be used independently. In the next example, pronominal **p-** has implicit reference to **papu** (thing).

íáia **ana** **p-ia-ṭâ** **í-p-á** **ŋ-kw-ókkóṭ.é**
 my_mother and C-which-QW RES-C-COP 2-C-do:COMPL

mother, and what is it that you have made? (can refer to food)

The short form (**C-ia**) is commonly used in complement clauses, but in the examples below **C-iaṭâ** was considered acceptable as well.

cik **c-írrók** **ṭářu** **aŋŋəna**
 place C-cold Ṭařu very

ŋ-kw-əmma **itti** **pəřu** **p-ía**
 2-C-not_know:INCOMPL that dry_season C-which

ana **cókku** **c-ia**
 and rainy_season C-which

Ṭařu is a very cool place. You will not know which is the dry season and which is the rainy season (i.e. in both periods it is cool) (fr. written story)

ḡáaí **lɔɾək** **l-a.ik** **l-ɔppɔt**
 I.don't_know ropes C-be:PR C-many

ána **m-p-ɔmma** **itti** **t-ɔtté** **t-ía** **n.tít**
 and 1-C-not_know:INCOMPL that C-of.your_father C-which from:ABS

I don't know, there are many ropes and I do not know which one among them is your father's (lit.: I do not know that your father's (is) which among (them)) (fr. written dialogue)

The short form is also used to shortly ask 'which one'?

ɛt-m **aɾám**
 give:IMP-01 book

w-ia
 c-which

give me the book! which one?

20.2. Question particles

20.2.1. The question particle -i

Attachment of the enclitic question particle -i turns a statement into a (neutral) polar question. Such a question solicits a response that starts with **ij** 'yes', or **á ā** / **é ē** / **m̃ m** 'no'. Questions marked by -i can be used thetically, they require no specific context.

The tonal realization of questions evolves from the tonal properties of the element to which the question particle is attached; questions do not seem to have a specific intonation pattern. The particle functions largely as a regular low-toned item, except after an element with a rising (LH) tone. After a rising tone, application of the Tone Shift Rule (see 3.3.1) would be expected, resulting in a falling tone on the question particle. Instead, the particle can be tonally realized in two ways: as rising or as low. The paradigm follows here:

after L **ḡkwɔnó pəlla-i** (**pəlla** + -i) 'do you have a cat?'
 after H **ḡkwɔnó ɾakəɾok-i** (**ɾakəɾok** + -i) 'do you have a chicken?'
 after LH **ḡkwɔnó ɾok-ĩ** (**ɾok** + -i) 'do you have a dog?'

after LH **ŋkwɔ́nó t̥ok-ɪ** (t̥ök + -ɪ) ‘do you have a dog?’
 after HL **ŋkwɔ́nó pɔɾɔpé-ɪ** (pɔɾɔpê + -ɪ) ‘do you have a bird?’

When the particle is attached after a final vowel with a H tone, the LHL tone that would result on the long vowel is simplified to HL, and realized over the long vowel or diphthong. Though the same effect is found upon attachment of the prepositional pro-clitics **ɪ-**, **nɔ-**, **tɔ-** and **t̥ɔ-** to low-toned nouns with long vowels, and in one case of a diphthong (apart from **ɪ-maít** ‘in the beans’, there is also **ɪ-máit**, see 3.1.2), this does not seem to be a general tone rule of the language. LHL tones are attested on long vowels and diphthongs, though not very often. Examples are: **túŋ** ‘shovel’, **ɛé** ‘stab, blow’, **ɔ́k** ‘s/he’, **naák** ‘on him/her’, **uê** ‘instrument(k.o.)’, **kuá** ‘digging tool’, **cuál** ‘sack’, **cuân** ‘rat (sp.)’, **éɔ́** ‘go’, **kaŋ** ‘bee’, **naŋ** ‘on me’, **naŋ** ‘on you’. Two examples with tone simplification follow here:

ŋkwɔ́nó mət̥é-ɪ (< mət̥ɛ-î < mət̥é + -ɪ) ‘are you sleepy?’ (lit.: do you have sleep?)
ŋkwɔ́nó parí-ɪ (< parí-î < parí + -ɪ) ‘do you have a wife?’

Some examples of polar questions with answers follow here.

ŋ-kw-ina **ókurrɔ** **kárrú-ɪ**
 2-C-know:INCOMPL engrave:DEPINCOMPL mother_tongue-Q

ij **m-p-ina**
 yes 1-C-know:INCOMPL

can you write Lumun? yes, I can

ɔ-t̥t̥ɛ **p-a.ík-ɪ**
 PERS-your_father C-be:PR-Q

a-a **ɔ-ŋappá** **p-íó.t**
 no-REDUP PERS-my_father C-die:COMPL

is your father still alive? no, my father died

In answer to a negative question, **ij** ‘yes’ is applied for confirmation of the negative situation:

η-kw-ǎnn-ittā-ı

2-C-NEG-get_married:DEPCOMPL-Q

ij m-p-ǎnn-ittā

yes 1-C-NEG-get_married:DEPCOMPL

are you not married? / no, I am not (lit.: yes, I am not married)

In speech, a single question sometimes has more than one question particle. The example below has a question particle, with tone as in prepausal position, after the possessor pronoun. **ntít** is therefore like an afterthought. It does, however, belong to the question, so that it must take the question particle as well. When elicited, this sentence would only have the question particle at the end, after **ntít**.

η-kw-əmma

2-C-not_know:INCOMPL

lɔʁək

ropes

l-ən-î

C-POSS2A-Q

n.tır-î

from:ABS-Q

do you not recognize your ropes among them? (fr. written dialogue)

Another example is the following. The question particle is obligatory after the first clause, but not after the second, which is not really part of the question. Still, it is possible to use it there:

η-kw-íccá p-á.ík-ı akka m-p-əká-t p-ellâ-t / p-ellâ-r-ı

2-C-still C-be:PR-Q that 1-C-be:COMPL C-be_absent:COMPL C-be_absent:COMPL-Q

are you still there? because I was not there ...

Combinations of a question word lacking **-ta** (see 20.1) and the question particle **-ı** are possible. An example follows here. **ηɔm** ‘for what’ retains its rethorical flavour suggesting here that there is no good reason for collecting urine, while at the same time **-ı** questions that supposition:

a-parı-ón

CONJ-wife-PL

ómékat

say:DEPPRFV

ıttı

that

nɛɛ

nonsense

ηæ

urine

η-ó-ín-ı

c-of-what-Q

his wife and children said, nonsense, urine for what?! (i.e. urine is good for nothing, or is it?!) (App. IV, 52)

20.2.2. The tag question word **pái** ‘is it?’

The tag question word **pái** ‘is it’ consists of the (non-person) pronoun clitic **p-** (implicitly referring to **papu** ‘thing’), the concord + copula **p-á**, and the question particle **-i**. The tag question word can be used after a positive but also after a negative statement. It solicits confirmation (**ijj** ‘yes’) by the addressee.

ɔ-rit **ɬ-a.ɪk** **ɬ-a.réko** **ménní** **p-á-i**
 PERS-12 C-be:PR C-work:INCOMPL today PRO.C-COP-Q

you and I are going to do some work today, aren't we?

ɔɪk **c-íppá** **p-á-i**
 place C-hot PRO.C-COP-Q

it is hot, isn't it

It can also be used after a negative statement:

ɔkórónn-óká **íttínâ** **p-á-i**
 NEG:DEP-be:DEPCOMPL so PRO.C-COP-Q

it is not so, is it?

20.2.3. The particle for information recovery **-a**

Tonally, the particle **-a** behaves in the same way as **-i**. It does not coalesce with a preceding vowel. The particle **-a** is used for recovery of information or for confirmation that (the implication of) what has just been said has been correctly understood. It is employed, for example, when part of the conversation was missed. The particle can be used on a content question (first example below) or on a statement (second example below). In the latter case it solicits a yes/no answer.

ɔɬ-ɬa **akk-aa.r-â**
 PERS.3-QW FOC-come:COMPL-RECOV

who did you say has come?

k-kw-áar-â | **ij**
 3-C-come:COMPL-RECOV yes

do I understand correctly that s/he has come? (are you saying that s/he has come?) yes

20.2.4. The particle for informal information recovery -ε

The question particle -ε behaves tonally in the same way as -ɪ and -a, and like those particles, does not coalesce with a preceding vowel. Like -a, -ε is used in a conversational context for recovery of information or for confirmation that (the implication of) what has just been said has been correctly understood. It can be used on a statement or a content question. -ε differs from -a in that it is typically used in informal situations, for example by somebody who is not really following the conversation between friends or family, but picks up a detail about which s/he wants to make sure (first example below) or collect some missed information (second and third examples):

k-kw-áar-ê | **ij**
 3-C-come:COMPL-RECOVINF yes

did you say s/he has come? yes

ɔkkwén **akk-ɪɔ.r-ê**
 who FOC-die:COMPL-RECOVINF

who died?/who is it that died? (conveying no particular interest in the rest of the conversation)

ŋ-kw-ɪɾét **kar-ě**
 2-C-say:COMPL how-RECOVINF

what did you say? (conveying no particular interest in the rest of the conversation)

-ε is also used on informal greeting questions between friends. For example, somebody has asked his/her friend how s/he is and then has greeted the other people. Then s/he returns to the friend and resumes the earlier question:

kar-ě

how-RECOVINP

and how is it?

20.2.5. Absence of question marking

Question marking is entirely absent in verbless questions. Such questions follow on a statement and ask whether the same is true for someone or something else. The question just consists of **ana** +H ‘and’ and a personal pronoun (whether a participant or a third person) or a noun (phrase). Its predication is understood to be the same as that of the preceding statement, which may have been uttered by the speaker but also by the addressee. These questions do not invite a response starting with ‘yes’ or ‘no’, merely a confirming or denying statement.

m-p-ɔpərɔt ana ɔ-úŋ
 1-C-good and PERS-2

m-p-ɔpərɔt
 1-C-good

I am fine, and you? I am fine

m-p-a.ik p-a.éḥ ana ɔ-úŋ
 1-C-be:PR C-go:INCOMPL and PERS-2

m-p-ǎnn-éḥ
 1-C-NEG-go:DEPINCOMPL

I am going, and you? I am not going

ɔ-kukkú p-ɔŋɔ
 PERS-Kokku c-ill

ana ɔ-lalú
 and PERS-Lalu

ɔ-lalú p-ɔpərɔt
 PERS-Lalu C-good

Kokku is ill. And Lалу? Lалу is fine