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## **A grammar of Nchane: A Bantoid (Beboid) language of Cameroon**

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# A grammar of Nchane

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Cameroon

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A grammar of Nchane  
A Bantoid (Beboid) language of  
Cameroon

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---

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*Mbeɛŋse nyume fe Nyo le!* (To God be the glory!)



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## Contents

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|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| Acknowledgements .....                             | v         |
| Contents.....                                      | vii       |
| List of tables .....                               | xiii      |
| List of figures .....                              | xvii      |
| List of abbreviations.....                         | xix       |
| List of symbols .....                              | xxi       |
| Lists of affixes and particles.....                | xxiii     |
| <b>Chapter 1 Introduction.....</b>                 | <b>1</b>  |
| <b>1.1 Language ecology.....</b>                   | <b>1</b>  |
| 1.1.1 Ethnography.....                             | 2         |
| 1.1.2 Sociolinguistic picture .....                | 5         |
| 1.1.3 Language context.....                        | 5         |
| 1.1.4 The Mungong question .....                   | 8         |
| 1.2 Previous research and relevant literature..... | 10        |
| 1.3 Research situation.....                        | 11        |
| 1.3.1 Nature of the data corpus .....              | 11        |
| 1.3.2 Language consultants.....                    | 12        |
| 1.3.3 Presentation of the data.....                | 13        |
| 1.4 Organization of description .....              | 15        |
| <b>Chapter 2 Phonology .....</b>                   | <b>17</b> |
| <b>2.1 Consonants .....</b>                        | <b>17</b> |
| 2.1.1 Consonants with difficult analyses .....     | 18        |
| 2.1.2 Phonetic descriptions of consonants .....    | 21        |
| 2.1.3 Consonant minimal pairs .....                | 24        |
| 2.1.4 Consonant-glide sequences.....               | 27        |
| 2.1.5 Nasal-consonant sequences.....               | 31        |

|                  |  |            |
|------------------|--|------------|
| 2.2              | Vowels.....  | 36         |
| 2.2.1            | Fricative vowel .....                                    | 37         |
| 2.2.2            | Phonetic descriptions of short oral vowels .....         | 39         |
| 2.2.3            | Contrastive sets for short oral vowels .....             | 40         |
| 2.2.4            | Nasal vowels .....                                       | 41         |
| 2.2.5            | Vowel length.....  | 43         |
| 2.3              | Phonotactics.....  | 44         |
| 2.3.1            | Syllable structure .....                                 | 44         |
| 2.3.2            | Distributional Restrictions .....                        | 46         |
| <b>Chapter 3</b> | <b>Phonological processes.....</b>                       | <b>49</b>  |
| 3.1              | Nasal place assimilation .....                           | 49         |
| 3.2              | Front high vowel laxing .....                            | 51         |
| 3.3              | Glide formation .....                                    | 52         |
| 3.4              | Compensatory vowel lengthening .....                     | 53         |
| 3.5              | Vowel copying .....                                      | 54         |
| 3.6              | Spirantization.....                                      | 55         |
| <b>Chapter 4</b> | <b>Tone.....</b>   | <b>57</b>  |
| 4.1              | Tone inventory .....                                     | 58         |
| 4.2              | Functions of tone .....                                  | 64         |
| 4.3              | Tone distribution patterning .....                       | 65         |
| 4.4              | Phonetic realization of tone .....                       | 67         |
| 4.5              | Tone of gender 9/10 nouns.....                           | 68         |
| 4.6              | Tonal processes .....                                    | 69         |
| 4.6.1            | Downdrift.....   | 70         |
| 4.6.2            | Downstep .....   | 72         |
| 4.6.3            | M tone lowering .....                                    | 73         |
| 4.6.4            | Phrase-final boundary rules .....                        | 73         |
| 4.6.5            | H raising.....   | 76         |
| <b>Chapter 5</b> | <b>Nouns.....</b>  | <b>79</b>  |
| 5.1              | Previous analyses of the Nchane noun class system .....  | 79         |
| 5.2              | Noun classes .....                                       | 80         |
| 5.2.1            | Noun class nominal marking .....                         | 82         |
| 5.2.2            | Gender and lexical membership.....                       | 94         |
| 5.2.3            | Derivational classes .....                               | 100        |
| 5.3              | Compound nouns.....                                      | 104        |
| 5.4              | Borrowed nouns .....                                     | 105        |
| 5.5              | Nominalization .....                                     | 106        |
| <b>Chapter 6</b> | <b>Noun phrase structure and nominal modifiers .....</b> | <b>109</b> |
| 6.1              | Simple noun phrases.....                                 | 109        |
| 6.2              | Complex noun phrases .....                               | 110        |

|                  |  |     |
|------------------|--|-----|
| 6.2.1            | Conjoined noun phrases .....                           | 111 |
| 6.2.2            | Associative noun phrases .....                         | 113 |
| 6.3              | Agreement .....  | 117 |
| 6.4              | Nominal modifiers .....                                | 119 |
| 6.4.1            | Possessive Pronouns .....                              | 119 |
| 6.4.2            | Demonstratives .....                                   | 122 |
| 6.4.3            | Quantifiers .....                                      | 131 |
| 6.4.4            | “Some” .....   | 133 |
| 6.4.5            | Numbers .....  | 137 |
| 6.4.6            | Adjectives .....                                       | 144 |
| 6.5              | Nominal modifiers as pronouns .....                    | 145 |
| 6.6              | Noun phrase word order .....                           | 147 |
| <b>Chapter 7</b> | <b>Pronouns</b> .....                                  | 149 |
| 7.1              | Personal pronouns .....                                | 149 |
| 7.2              | Locative pronouns .....                                | 158 |
| 7.3              | Adverbial pronouns <i>nò</i> and <i>nē</i> .....       | 163 |
| 7.4              | The impersonal subject pronoun .....                   | 166 |
| 7.5              | Dummy subject .....                                    | 167 |
| 7.6              | Question word pronouns .....                           | 167 |
| 7.7              | Other pronominals .....                                | 168 |
| <b>Chapter 8</b> | <b>Other word classes</b> .....                        | 169 |
| 8.1              | Prepositions .....                                     | 169 |
| 8.1.1            | <i>fě</i> ‘at’ .....                                   | 170 |
| 8.1.2            | <i>à</i> ‘in’ .....                                    | 172 |
| 8.1.3            | <i>yè</i> ‘on’ .....                                   | 173 |
| 8.1.4            | <i>mbémbé</i> ‘near’ .....                             | 175 |
| 8.1.5            | <i>kònè</i> ‘about’ .....                              | 175 |
| 8.2              | The Comitative conjunction/preposition <i>bé</i> ..... | 176 |
| 8.3              | Interjections .....                                    | 180 |
| 8.4              | Ideophones .....                                       | 182 |
| 8.5              | Quotable gestures .....                                | 183 |
| 8.6              | Locational adverbs .....                               | 184 |
| 8.7              | Temporal adverbial constructions .....                 | 187 |
| <b>Chapter 9</b> | <b>The verb and verb complex</b> .....                 | 189 |
| 9.1              | Verbal morphology .....                                | 190 |
| 9.1.1            | Subject agreement .....                                | 190 |
| 9.1.2            | Progressive .....                                      | 192 |
| 9.1.3            | Distributive .....                                     | 195 |
| 9.1.4            | Causative .....  | 197 |
| 9.2              | The Irrealis/Imperfective H tone .....                 | 199 |
| 9.2.1            | Imperative .....                                       | 201 |

|                   |   |            |
|-------------------|---|------------|
| 9.2.2             | Hortative .....                                       | 202        |
| 9.3               | Preverbal elements .....                              | 203        |
| 9.3.1             | Tense .....   | 204        |
| 9.3.2             | Perfect .....   | 209        |
| 9.3.3             | Habitual .....  | 210        |
| 9.3.4             | The Durative and Sequential marker tú .....           | 211        |
| 9.3.5             | Resultative .....                                     | 213        |
| 9.3.6             | Situative .....                                       | 214        |
| 9.3.7             | Still .....   | 215        |
| 9.3.8             | Iterative .....                                       | 216        |
| 9.4               | Postverbal adverbs .....                              | 217        |
| 9.5               | Other adverbs .....                                   | 221        |
| 9.6               | Attributive verbs .....                               | 225        |
| <b>Chapter 10</b> | <b>Nonverbal predicates and copulas .....</b>         | <b>229</b> |
| 10.1              | Copulas .....   | 229        |
| 10.1.1            | lé ‘COP’ .....  | 231        |
| 10.1.2            | ɲù ‘COP(N)’ .....                                     | 232        |
| 10.2              | Nominal predicates .....                              | 233        |
| 10.3              | Comitative predicates .....                           | 235        |
| 10.4              | Prepositional phrases as predicate .....              | 236        |
| 10.5              | Numeral predicates .....                              | 237        |
| 10.6              | Adjectival Predicates .....                           | 238        |
| <b>Chapter 11</b> | <b>Clause structure .....</b>                         | <b>239</b> |
| 11.1              | Syntactic constituent types .....                     | 240        |
| 11.1.1            | Formally unmarked constituents .....                  | 241        |
| 11.1.2            | Formally marked constituents .....                    | 247        |
| 11.1.3            | The applicative postposition lē .....                 | 254        |
| 11.2              | Argument frames .....                                 | 258        |
| 11.2.1            | One-constituent clauses .....                         | 258        |
| 11.2.2            | Two-constituent clauses .....                         | 259        |
| 11.2.3            | Three-constituent clauses .....                       | 261        |
| 11.2.4            | Alternative argument frames .....                     | 264        |
| 11.3              | Order of clausal constituents .....                   | 266        |
| 11.4              | Clausal constituent alignment .....                   | 266        |
| <b>Chapter 12</b> | <b>Relative clauses .....</b>                         | <b>271</b> |
| 12.1              | Relative clause structure and formal properties ..... | 271        |
| 12.2              | Asymmetries between main and relative clauses .....   | 277        |
| 12.3              | Accessibility of constituents to relativization ..... | 279        |
| <b>Chapter 13</b> | <b>Complex sentences .....</b>                        | <b>283</b> |
| 13.1              | Coordination and verb serialization .....             | 284        |

|                   |   |     |
|-------------------|---|-----|
| 13.1.1            | Juxtaposition .....                                     | 288 |
| 13.1.2            | Disjunction .....                                       | 289 |
| 13.2              | Support clauses .....                                   | 290 |
| 13.2.1            | Setting particle .....                                  | 290 |
| 13.2.2            | Circumstantial clauses .....                            | 293 |
| 13.2.3            | Reason clauses .....                                    | 294 |
| 13.2.4            | Conditional .....                                       | 295 |
| 13.2.5            | Temporal clauses .....                                  | 298 |
| 13.3              | Complement Clauses .....                                | 300 |
| <b>Chapter 14</b> | <b>Questions</b> .....                                  | 311 |
| 14.1              | Polar Questions .....                                   | 312 |
| 14.2              | Content questions .....                                 | 314 |
| 14.2.1            | The interrogative pronoun lá ‘Q’ .....                  | 314 |
| 14.2.2            | The interrogative pronoun yēŋ ‘who’ .....               | 316 |
| 14.2.3            | The interrogative pronoun fànê ‘where’ .....            | 317 |
| 14.2.4            | The interrogative nominal modifier mē: ‘how.many’ ..... | 318 |
| 14.2.5            | The interrogative adverbial pronoun nē: ‘how’ .....     | 318 |
| <b>Chapter 15</b> | <b>Negation</b> .....                                   | 321 |
| 15.1              | Constituent negation .....                              | 322 |
| 15.2              | Clausal negation .....                                  | 323 |
| 15.3              | Triple negation constructions .....                     | 326 |
| 15.4              | Vetitive .....  | 327 |
| <b>Chapter 16</b> | <b>Information structure</b> .....                      | 329 |
| 16.1              | Thetic expressions .....                                | 330 |
| 16.2              | Topic .....   | 331 |
| 16.2.1            | Left dislocation .....                                  | 332 |
| 16.2.2            | Left detachment .....                                   | 335 |
| 16.2.3            | DP-internal word order change .....                     | 336 |
| 16.2.4            | Right dislocation .....                                 | 336 |
| 16.3              | Focus .....   | 338 |
| 16.3.1            | Non-canonical word order focus .....                    | 339 |
| 16.3.2            | Cleft constructions .....                               | 343 |
| 16.3.3            | The scalar focus particle m̄ .....                      | 346 |
| 16.3.4            | The n-copula (n̄) as a focus marker .....               | 348 |
| 16.3.5            | The verb focus particle l̄ .....                        | 352 |
| 16.4              | Givenness .....   | 355 |
| <b>Chapter 17</b> | <b>Interlinearized text</b> .....                       | 359 |
|                   | References .....  | 377 |
|                   | Summary in English .....                                | 385 |
|                   | Samenvatting in het Nederlands .....                    | 389 |

|                       |     |
|-----------------------|-----|
| Curriculum Vitae..... | 393 |
|-----------------------|-----|

---

## List of tables

---

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Table 1.1 Some contrasting elements of Nchane and Mungong grammar. ....  | 9  |
| Table 1.2 Consonant graphemes compared with the practical orthography, the<br>Cameroon alphabet and IPA. ....  | 14 |
| Table 1.3 Vowel graphemes compared with the practical orthography, the<br>Cameroon alphabet and IPA. ....  | 15 |
| Table 2.1 Nchane consonant phoneme inventory. ....   | 18 |
| Table 2.2 Exhaustive list of words with the consonant <b>gh</b> . ....   | 20 |
| Table 2.3 Summary of (N)C sequences at morpheme boundaries of c19 nouns,<br>illustrating likelihood of underlying <b>fɪp-y...</b> forms (n=30). .... | 21 |
| Table 2.4 Minimal pairs for plosives. ....   | 25 |
| Table 2.5 Minimal pairs for nasals. ....   | 26 |
| Table 2.6 Minimal pairs for fricatives. ....   | 26 |
| Table 2.7 Minimal pairs for approximants. ....   | 27 |
| Table 2.8 Cw sequence types. ....  | 29 |
| Table 2.9 Examples of Cw sequences and their prevalence (n=62). ....   | 29 |
| Table 2.10 Cy sequence types. ....   | 31 |
| Table 2.11 Examples of root-initial Cy sequences and their prevalence<br>(exhaustive) (n=19). ....   | 31 |
| Table 2.12 NC(G) sequence types. ....  | 33 |
| Table 2.13 Examples of NC sequences in nouns and their prevalence (n=170).<br>.....  | 34 |
| Table 2.14 Examples of NC sequences in verbs (exhaustive) and their<br>prevalence (n=7). ....  | 35 |
| Table 2.15 Examples of CFu sequences and their prevalence (n=33). ....   | 37 |
| Table 2.16 Contrastive sets for short oral vowels. ....  | 41 |

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Table 2.17 Selected cognates of Nchane and three other Beboïd languages supporting syllable reduction as source of Nchane nasal vowels. .... | 42 |
| Table 2.18 Contrastive pairs for nasal vowels. ....  | 42 |
| Table 2.19 Contrastive pairs for long vowels. ....   | 44 |
| Table 2.20 Examples of different syllable types. ....  | 45 |
| Table 2.21 Syllable patterns of noun roots. ....   | 46 |
| Table 2.22 Syllable patterns of verb roots. ....   | 46 |
| Table 2.23 Attested consonant-vowel sequences in Nchane (simple onsets only). ....   | 47 |
| Table 2.24 Stem-internal consonants in Nchane. ....  | 48 |
| Table 3.1 Selected examples of Nchane word forms with NC sequences, illustrating nasal place assimilation. ....                              | 50 |
| Table 4.1 Summary of tone orthography. ....  | 58 |
| Table 4.2 Phonemic Nchane tone melodies illustrated on noun roots in isolation form. ....  | 59 |
| Table 4.3 Attested Nchane tones in verbs (non-Progressive form). ....  | 64 |
| Table 4.4 Distribution patterns of nominal tone (gender 9/10 nouns excluded). ....   | 66 |
| Table 4.5 Approximate pitch realizations of tone for a male speaker aged 30-40 years. ....   | 67 |
| Table 4.6 Different tonal groups for gender 9/10 nouns (in isolation) with proposed underlying tone group assignment. ....                   | 69 |
| Table 4.7 Summary of Nchane tone processes. ....   | 70 |
| Table 5.1 Summary of Nchane noun classes. ....   | 80 |
| Table 5.2 Selected examples of class 1 and class 2 nouns. ....   | 83 |
| Table 5.3 Irregular class 1 and class 2 nouns. ....  | 83 |
| Table 5.4 Class 1 nouns marked with a vestigial labial glide and class 2 nouns marked with <b>bi-</b> . ....                                 | 84 |
| Table 5.5 Selected examples of gender 3/4 nouns. ....  | 84 |
| Table 5.6 Irregular gender 3/4 nouns. ....   | 85 |
| Table 5.7 Selected examples of Mungong gender 3/4 nouns illustrating three subgroups. ....   | 86 |
| Table 5.8 Gender 3/13 nouns. ....  | 87 |
| Table 5.9 Selected gender 5/6 nouns. ....  | 88 |
| Table 5.10 Selected examples of stem length alternation in gender 5/6 nouns. ....  | 88 |
| Table 5.11 Gender 5/6 nouns with unexplained vowel alternations. ....  | 89 |
| Table 5.12 Selected gender 5/13 nouns. ....  | 90 |
| Table 5.13 Selected gender 7/8 nouns. ....   | 90 |



|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Table 5.14 Selected gender 9/10 nouns. ....   | 91  |
| Table 5.15 Gender 14/6a nouns. ....   | 92  |
| Table 5.16 Class 6a mass nouns. ....  | 93  |
| Table 5.17 Selected gender 19/18a nouns. ....   | 94  |
| Table 5.18 Distribution of Nchane genders. ....   | 95  |
| Table 5.19 Gender 1/2: People. ....   | 95  |
| Table 5.20 Gender 1/2: Dangerous animals and spiders. ....  | 96  |
| Table 5.21 Gender 3/13: Straight objects. ....  | 96  |
| Table 5.22 Gender 5/6: Round objects. ....  | 96  |
| Table 5.23 Gender 7/8: Animals, including male varieties. ....  | 97  |
| Table 5.24 Gender 7/8: Body parts. ....   | 97  |
| Table 5.25 Gender 7/8: Negative entities. ....  | 97  |
| Table 5.26 Gender 9/10: Edible animals and insects. ....  | 98  |
| Table 5.27 Gender 9/10: Generic animal terms. ....  | 98  |
| Table 5.28 Gender 14/6a: Items with a ladder orientation. ....  | 98  |
| Table 5.29 Gender 19/18a: Small items? ....   | 99  |
| Table 5.30 Single class gender nouns. ....  | 100 |
| Table 5.31 Selected class 14 abstract nouns derived from attributive verbs.<br>.....  | 101 |
| Table 5.32 Derived class 19 diminutive-pejorative nouns. ....   | 102 |
| Table 5.33 Class 16 nouns. ....   | 103 |
| Table 5.34 Class 18 nouns. ....   | 104 |
| Table 5.35 Nchane compound nouns. ....  | 104 |
| Table 5.36 Gender 1/2 borrowed nouns. ....  | 105 |
| Table 5.37 Selected examples of nouns derived from verbs. ....  | 106 |
| Table 6.1 Agreement prefixes (for possessive pronouns, spatial demonstratives,<br>anaphoric demonstratives, quantifiers and numerals). .... | 118 |
| Table 6.2 Words showing agreement (preverbal pronouns, postverbal pronouns,<br>relativizers and associative markers). ....                  | 119 |
| Table 6.3 Nchane possessive pronouns. ....  | 121 |
| Table 6.4 Nchane possessive series of illustrative kinship terms with port-<br>manteau members. ....  | 121 |
| Table 6.5 Nchane spatial demonstratives. ....   | 124 |
| Table 6.6 Nchane anaphoric demonstratives. ....   | 129 |
| Table 6.7 Cognate class 2 demonstrative forms (Noni, Mungong and Nchane).<br>.....  | 129 |
| Table 6.8 Unique agreement onsets observed in the demonstrative paradigms<br>of classes 3, 4, 6 and 18. ....                                | 130 |
| Table 6.9 Partial list of Nchane numbers. ....  | 143 |

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Table 7.1 Nchane personal pronouns.....   | 150 |
| Table 7.2 Nchane compound personal pronouns. ....   | 155 |
| Table 8.1 Summary of Nchane locational prepositions. ....   | 170 |
| Table 8.2 Generalized syntactic contexts and corresponding semantic expressions of the conjunction/preposition <b>bé</b> . .... | 176 |
| Table 9.1 Summary of Progressive marking strategies.....  | 193 |
| Table 9.2 Utterance final perfective and progressive forms of selected verbs. ....  | 194 |
| Table 9.3 Possible lexicalized Nchane causatives. ....  | 198 |
| Table 9.4 Realization of grammatical tone in H, M and L tone verbs in clauses with expressions of modality. ....                | 200 |
| Table 9.5 Paradigm of Nchane tenses.....  | 204 |
| Table 9.6 Selected Nchane attributive verbs and their nominalized forms.....  | 227 |
| Table 11.1 Summary of Nchane clausal constituent types. ....  | 241 |
| Table 12.1 Nchane relativizers. ....  | 273 |
| Table 13.1 Summary of complex sentence types.....   | 284 |
| Table 14.1 Summary of Nchane question types. ....   | 311 |
| Table 15.1 Summary of Nchane negation markers.....  | 321 |
| Table 15.2 Clausal negation strategies illustrated through a TAM paradigm. ....   | 324 |
| Table 16.1 Nchane focus strategies. ....  | 339 |
| Table 16.2 Summary of Nchane givenness strategies. ....   | 357 |

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## List of figures

---

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Figure 1.1 Map of the Nchane language area. ....  | 3   |
| Figure 1.2 Nchane genetic affiliation tree.....   | 6   |
| Figure 1.3 Map of Beboid speech forms (adapted from Hamm et al. 2002: 28).<br>.....   | 7   |
| Figure 2.1 Inventory of Nchane vowels (short, oral varieties). ....   | 37  |
| Figure 2.2 General zones of Nchane vowel realization reflecting F1 and F2<br>measurements. ....                                     | 38  |
| Figure 2.3 Nchane nasal vowel inventory.....  | 41  |
| Figure 2.4 Nchane long vowel inventory.....   | 43  |
| Figure 6.1 Alternative agreement patterns of constructions with associative<br>noun phrases. ....                                   | 116 |
| Figure 6.2 Canonical word order of the noun phrase.....   | 147 |
| Figure 11.1 Canonical word order. ....  | 266 |
| Figure 11.2 Comparison of constituent mapping in clauses via grammatical<br>roles vs. semantic roles vs. information structure..... | 267 |
| Figure 13.1 Conditional construction schema. ....   | 295 |
| Figure 15.1 Formula for Nchane constituent negation constructions. ....   | 322 |
| Figure 15.2 Formulas for Nchane clausal negation constructions. ....  | 323 |



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## List of abbreviations

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|                  |                           |
|------------------|---------------------------|
| 1, 2, 3          | first, second, third      |
| AM               | associative marker        |
| ANA1             | anaphoric demonstrative 1 |
| ANA2             | anaphoric demonstrative 2 |
| APPL             | applicative               |
| CAUS             | causative                 |
| CE               | counter-expectation       |
| COM              | comitative                |
| COMP             | complementizer            |
| COMP(K)          | ki complementizer         |
| COMPL            | completive                |
| COND             | conditional               |
| COP              | copula                    |
| <sup>p</sup> COP | past copula               |
| COP(N)           | n-copula                  |
| DIST             | distal                    |
| DISTR            | distributive              |
| EXCL             | exclusive                 |
| FOC              | focus particle            |
| FUT              | future                    |
| GEST             | quotable gesture marker   |
| HAB              | habitual                  |
| HORT             | hortative                 |
| IDEO             | ideophone                 |
| IMP              | imperative                |
| INTERJ           | interjection              |
| ITER             | iterative                 |
| LOC              | locative                  |
| NEG1             | negative 1 particle       |
| NEG2             | negative 2 particle       |

|          |                             |
|----------|-----------------------------|
| NMZR     | nominalizer                 |
| P1       | near past                   |
| P2       | medial past                 |
| P3       | remote past                 |
| PL or pl | plural                      |
| POSS     | possessive                  |
| PRO      | pronoun                     |
| PROG     | progressive                 |
| PROX     | proximal                    |
| Q        | question particle           |
| QP       | polar question tonal clitic |
| REL      | relativizer                 |
| RES      | resultative                 |
| SET      | setting                     |
| SG or sg | singular                    |
| SIT      | situative                   |
| VET      | vetitive                    |

---

## List of symbols

---

|     |  |
|-----|--|
| / / | phonemic representation  |
| [ ] | phonetic representation  |
| ]   | right edge phrase boundary   |
| C   | consonant  |
| V   | vowel  |
| N   | nasal consonant or noun  |
| ·   | half-long vowel  |
| :   | long vowel   |
| -   | morpheme break   |
| ~   | alternative form (usually indicating free variation)                                 |
| G   | glide  |
| (v) | verb   |
| F   | fricative  |
| .   | syllable boundary  |
| σ   | syllable   |
| ↓   | tonal downstep or downdrift  |
| ↓   | lowered tonal register associated with reduplicated forms                            |
| ↑   | raised tonal register associated with some conditional constructions and some topics |
| °   | partially lowered tone   |
| H=  | high tone clitic   |
| *   | protoform or ungrammatical form  |
| ??  | unanalyzed or unknown  |
| #   | semantically unacceptable  |





---

## Lists of affixes and particles

---

### Affixes:

|           |            |   |
|-----------|------------|---|
| -é/V-́    | PROG       | progressive suffix                                |
| -sé       | CAUS       | causative suffix                                  |
| -yè       | DISTR      | distributive suffix                               |
| kī-       | c7         | class 7 nominal and agreement prefix              |
| bī-       | c8         | class 8 nominal and agreement prefix              |
| fī(N)-    | c19        | class 19 nominal and agreement prefix             |
| mū(N)-    | c18a       | class 18a nominal and agreement prefix            |
| bvū-      | c14        | class 14 nominal and agreement prefix             |
| mā(N)-/N- | c6a        | class 6a nominal and agreement prefix             |
| bā-       | c2         | class 2 nominal and agreement prefix              |
| fē-       | c16        | class 16 nominal and agreement prefix             |
| ā-        | c6, c18    | class 6 and class 18 nominal and agreement prefix |
| chī-      | c13        | class 13 nominal and agreement prefix             |
| Ø-        | c1, c4, c5 | classes 1, 4 and 5 nominal prefix                 |
| -w-       | c3         | class 3 nominal infix                             |
| wu-       | c1, c3     | class 1 and class 3 agreement prefix              |
| N-        | NMZR       | nominalizer prefix                                |
| N-        | 1SG        | first-person singular agreement prefix            |

**Particles:**

|        |                      |  |
|--------|----------------------|--|
| á      | NEG1                 | clause-initial negation particle in non-past and/or progressive clausal negation constructions   |
| à      | ‘in’                 | preposition expressing bounded location  |
| bá~bá: | ‘still’              | expresses ongoing action or condition; also present in certain clausal negation constructions  |
| bé     | P1, <sup>o</sup> COP | near past, past copula   |
| bé     | ‘with’               | coordinating conjunction; comitative preposition   |
| ché    | P2                   | medial past  |
| dó     | SIT                  | situative particle, marks support clauses expressing backgrounded situational information  |
| fè     | ‘at’                 | preposition expressing movement  |
| gé     | EXCL                 | exclusive marker   |
| gē     | NEG2                 | negation particle; clause-final in all negative constructions, immediately precedes negated clausal constituents                             |
| gē     | P3                   | remote past, narrative past  |
| ká     | ITER                 | iterative marker, expresses repetition of action   |
| kì     | COMP(K)              | complementizer, complement always has same subject as main clause  |
| là     | CE                   | counter-expectation particle   |
| lé     | COP                  | copula   |
| lē     | APPL                 | applicative postposition   |
| lē     | SET                  | setting particle, introduces support clauses expressing general background information   |
| lē     | COMP                 | complementizer   |
| lò     | FOC                  | verb focus particle  |
| mō     | RES                  | resultative particle, expresses resultative relationship between its clause and a previous clause; also functions as a scalar focus particle |
| né     | ‘if’                 | conditional particle, introduces protases of conditional constructions   |
| né     | GEST                 | quotable gesture particle  |
| ṣù     | COP(N)               | n-copula; also functions as marker of counter-expectation focus  |
| té     | ‘also’               | additive particle  |
| tó     | HAB                  | habitual marker  |
| tú     | ‘return’             | durative marker, sequential marker   |
| yè     | ‘on’                 | preposition expressing unbounded location  |

# Chapter 1

---

## Introduction

---

This descriptive grammar represents research carried out over a period of fifteen years, much of that time while I was residing in the Nchane-speaking village of Nfume. Numerous aspects of the grammar proved challenging to puzzle out, and they reveal a Bantoid language with valuable things to add to the discussion of languages in the area. As befitting an introduction, the current chapter provides an overview of the language of study and the people who use it in §1.1. Previous research is presented in §1.2, including important works in nearby languages. Details regarding the methods of research utilized in this work are given in §1.3, providing the orientation needed by the reader to properly interpret the analyses and conclusions. A general orientation to the study appears in §1.4.

### **1.1 Language ecology**

The cultural milieu of a people is critical to understand how they express themselves through language. This section provides a snapshot into the way Nchane people live and how they are oriented in their environment. I begin with some general facts about the geographical location, tribal makeup, economic activities, etc. Language use and contact is discussed next, followed by details regarding Nchane's place in the linguistic setting. The final section considers the questionable classification of the Mungong speech variety.

### 1.1.1 Ethnography

Nchane is a Beoid language spoken in the North West Region of Cameroon, Donga-Mantung Division, Misaje-Subdivision. The *Atlas Linguistique du Cameroun* (ALCAM) lists the language as: Ncane [873] (Dieu & Renaud 1983). The autonym Nchane is used as the primary entry by the *Ethnologue*, which also lists the following as language name variations: Cane, Ncane, Nchaney, Nchanti, and Ntshanti, (ISO 639-3 language code: ncr) (Eberhard, Simons & Fennig 2020). The number of local speakers is estimated to be 13,000-15,000, with perhaps 1,000 or more Nchane people in the diaspora.

The Nchane kingdom is comprised of five distinct chiefdoms, each of which have separate villages which are often further divided into village quarters: Nkanchi, Chungé, Nfume, Bem and Kibbo. Each chiefdom is naturally headed by its own chief (or *nfon*) and usually one or more subchiefs. These villages and village quarters are mostly situated in a valley running largely northwest to southeast, with the subdivisional head Misaje at the northern end and the Nfume quarter Kamala at the southeastern end.

The Nchane language area is illustrated in Figure 1.1. Primary access to the area is via the Ring Road, which forms a ring covering much of the Northwest Region, with Misaje situated along the northernmost stretch. The road is approximately 350 km long and consists of both paved and graded dirt sections. The elevation of the valley is approximately 500 meters, with the peaks of the surrounding mountains at 700-800 meters. The two Kibbo quarters are located just outside of the valley in what could be described as a mountain pass, which leads to the Noni language area. The two Bem quarters are situated on a plateau formed on the western side of a ridge separating them from the valley-side Nchane villages. The Nkanchi quarter Chako also sits on this plateau, but at a lower elevation. The Nfume quarter Abeng is located on a plateau belonging to the opposite (eastern) ridge. As the map shows, these “outer” villages are accessible only by footpath. It should be noted that the map shows only some of the more well-traveled footpaths. The entire area has a well-developed system of footpaths, providing a more or less direct route to the various markets and access to the numerous garden plots farmed by the people.

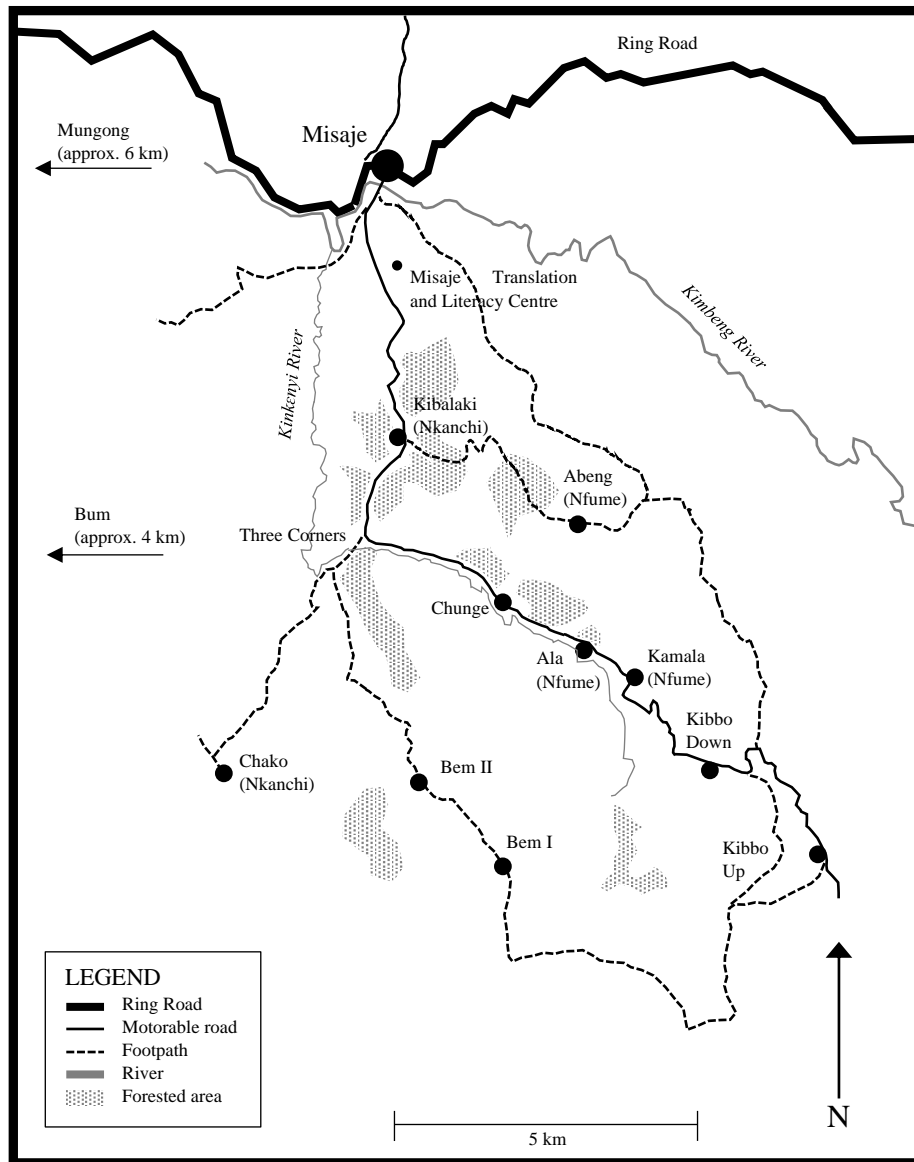


Figure 1.1 Map of the Nchane language area.

The most common historical accounts claim that the Nchane people migrated to the area from Tikar, roughly 100 km to the southeast. A less common account reports the migration as being from Kano in Nigeria, a distance of 700 km to the north. In truth, the accuracy of such accounts is difficult if not impossible to verify. See

Pelican (2006) for further discussion of Nchane history and the problems associated with verification.

The language and culture of the people are similar to those of the neighboring peoples. There is some level of multilingualism, particularly with Noni, and lesser with the other Beboid varieties. Inter-marriage between the Nchane people and other Beboid languages is fairly common, and in some cases institutionalized. For example, the chiefs of certain Nchane villages traditionally take a wife from certain villages outside of the Nchane kingdom. This practice results in regular, ongoing language contact and the ensuing multilingualism.

The people are mostly subsistence farmers, growing diverse crops of corn, pumpkins, peppers, cassava, yams, peanuts (called “groundnuts” in Cameroon Pidgin English), sugar cane, tomatoes and onions. Huckleberry (*solanum scabrum*) is grown year-round for its green leaves from which *njama* is made. This dish is referred to as “soup” and is the favorite accompaniment for *fufu*, the primary meal item in the local area, which is made from corn flour. (Note that *fufu* is made from other starchy vegetables such as cassava in other parts of Cameroon.) Meals may include meat, fish or chicken when available, and certainly for special occasions.

The above vegetables are often taken to the local markets to be sold, an economic activity carried out primarily by women. Mangoes and papayas are common to the area, as are African plums (*dacryodes edulis*). Some people grow these items specifically to be sold in the markets. Men also have “cash crops”, such as palm oil and palm wine.

Domestication of animals among the Nchane people includes chickens, pigs and goats. The raising of goats serves as a type of savings account, with wealth accumulated and stored through the herd. When special financial needs arise such as school fees or medical bills, one or more goats can be sold for the required money. Cattle are common in the area as well, but ranching is mostly an activity carried out by the semi-transitory Fulani, who are spread throughout the region.

African traditional religion is widely practiced by the Nchane people and elements are infused into much of the culture (e.g., behavior deemed as respectful of elders, eating rituals, dances, adherence to local societal rules, taboos, etc.). A local Christian presence has been in the area since at least the 1920’s and its influence appears to be growing. Many people claim membership with one of the several Christian churches in the area, although their attendance of services might be rare and they often continue traditional religious practices. The presence of the largely Muslim Fulani population also means that the Nchane people are exposed to and influenced by Islam. But the number of Nchane adherents appears to remain small.

### 1.1.2 Sociolinguistic picture

The status of Nchane language vitality is consistent with level 5 “developing” on the EGIDS scale<sup>1</sup>. The language is used as the primary means of communication in Nchane homes, among young and old people, in local markets and in village council meetings. Local Christian churches use Nchane and Cameroon Pidgin English, depending on the makeup of attendees and whether or not the preacher is fluent in Nchane. (Pastors from outside the language area are often assigned to Nchane churches). Songs during services are also a mix of Nchane and Cameroon Pidgin English, with Nchane songs less common, but appearing to be growing in use. Community-wide events are also often characterized by Nchane language use, except in Misaje, which has a mixture of people groups.

As mentioned above, contact with other languages is fairly common through intermarriage, as well as at local markets and special events focused around Misaje. Cameroon Pidgin English use is moderate, particularly among men, and English is the language of instruction in local schools. Nchane people also have a good chance of exposure to Fulfulde, spoken by the Fulani living nearby, and limited exposure to Hausa through traders coming from Nigeria.

### 1.1.3 Language context

The *Ethnologue* gives Nchane the following genetic affiliation: Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Volta-Congo, Benue-Congo, Bantoid, Southern, Beboïd (Eberhard, Simons & Fennig 2020), with Mungong listed as an Nchane variety. Nchane’s place in the Bantoid family is illustrated in Figure 1.2, which reflects classifications proposed by the *Ethnologue*, Williamson and Blench (2000: 18) and my own fieldwork.

The presentation of the Beboïd languages in this figure deserves a few comments. First, the dashed line connecting Mashi and Naki indicates that Mashi is considered a variety of Naki by Good et al. (2011). A second remark pertains to the language “Chungmboko”, which is a compound designation comprised of the two speech varieties spoken in Chung (Kimbi) and Mbuk respectively. These two varieties are currently working together in language development facilitated by SIL, but could later prove to represent separate languages. Lastly, as stated above, the *Ethnologue* lists Mungong as a variety of Nchane. However, I believe this designation to be unsupportable for reasons laid out in the following section.

---

<sup>1</sup> The Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (EGIDS) (Lewis & Simons 2016) is an expansion of the GIDS developed by Fishman in 1991. A language designated as Level 5 is described as qualifying for level 6a, with vigorous oral use, in addition to also having standardized literature available and in use at least by a small segment of the population. One could argue that Nchane is better designated as level 6a “vigorous”, although standardized literature is available. The near future will determine if the current language development activities are sufficient for solidifying the level 5 designation.

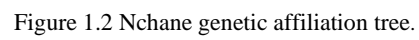


Figure 1.2 Nchane genetic affiliation tree.



The map in Figure 1.3 shows how the Beboid languages are situated.

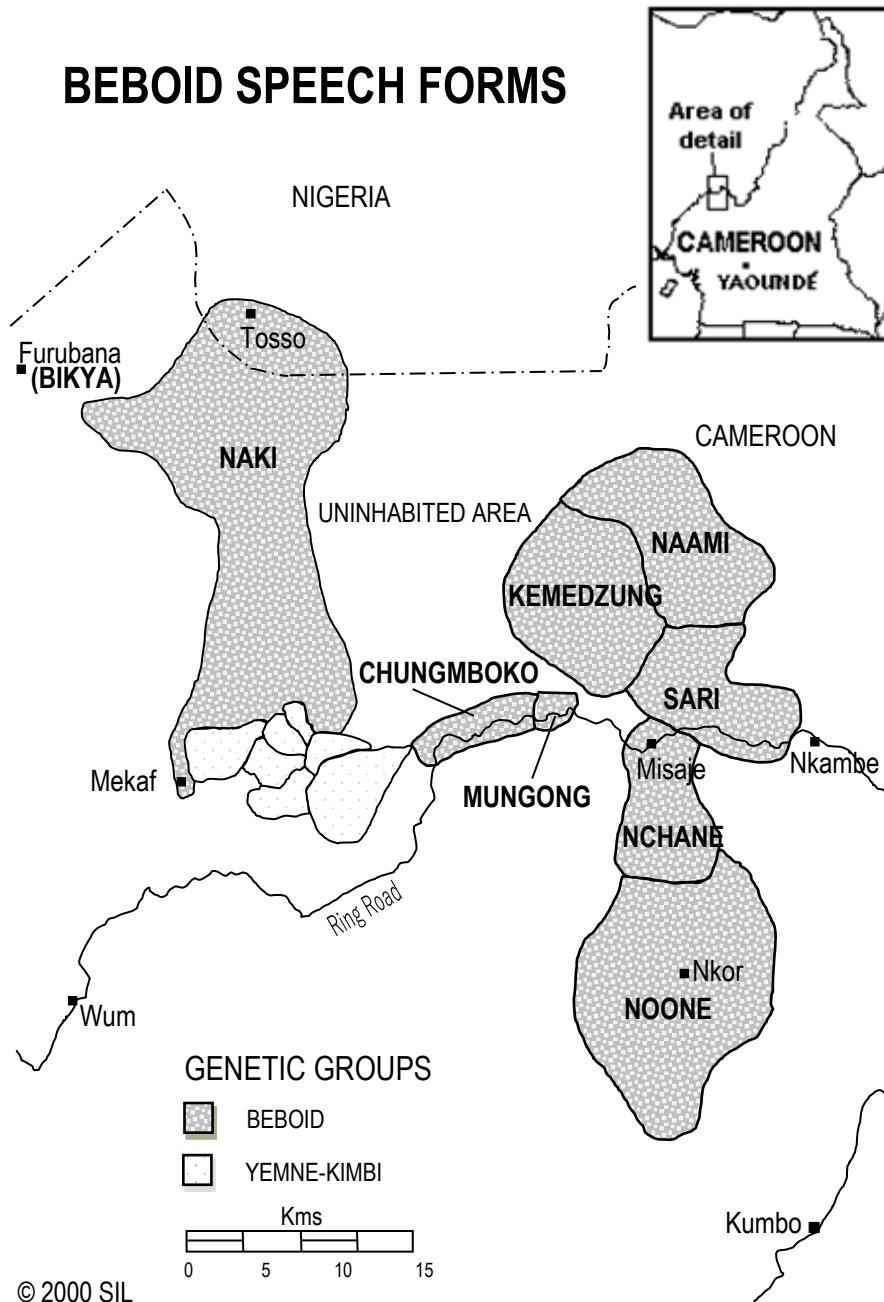


Figure 1.3 Map of Beboid speech forms (adapted from Hamm et al. 2002: 28).

The Nchane language area is insulated from influence from non-Beboid languages on the north and south by other Beboid languages. It is bordered by Bum (Grassfields, Central Ring) on the west and Limbum (Grassfields, Mbam-Nkam) on the east. The Yemne-Kimbi language area is provided in the map as well, since it is geographically close, and prior to 2014 those languages were classified as Western Beboid, while the current Beboid languages (including Nchane) were designated as Eastern Beboid at that time.

#### 1.1.4 The Mungong question

The Mungong speech variety, spoken in a single village to the northwest of the Nchane area (see Figure 1.3), was unclassified prior to 2005, with Eastern Beboid membership considered a possibility. Classification as an Nchane variety was largely predicated on language survey results (Brye & Brye 2001), with study of lexical similarity carried out in 1999 followed by intelligibility testing later that same year. The lexical comparison showed a similarity close to 90% for Mungong and both Nchane and Noni. My own comparisons of lexical items from Mungong and Nchane varieties result in lower similarity numbers, but only modestly so.

The intelligibility testing carried out by Brye and Brye also supported Mungong and Nchane as a single language. However, the research method used did not measure mutual intelligibility, with only Mungong speakers' comprehension of Nchane tested. Nchane speakers routinely report that they do not understand Mungong, and certainly do not think of it as a form of Nchane. Regardless, the two studies engendered a view of Nchane and Mungong as a single language.

With the recently adopted notion of Mungong as an Nchane dialect, a language development project then began in 2003, utilizing a language cluster approach targeting the Beboid languages in the Misaje area. The Mungong and Nchane communities were asked to work together, treating their distinct varieties as dialects of a single language. This request was met with tentative openness on one side and aggressive refusal on the other. This disparate reaction is reflective of what I later saw as a characteristic of the Mungong people—that they are positively disposed towards language acquisition. In effect, the Mungong people appear to be active “collectors” of the languages surrounding them.<sup>2</sup>

In part, the pursuit of polyglossia among the Mungong people surely has to do with their relatively small population, which is estimated to be between 1,200 and 1,500. This is compared, for example, to Nchane (15,000), Kemedzung (4,500), Bum (21,000) or Lamnso (240,000). Each of these languages has a much larger population and fluency in each is positively viewed and pursued by the Mungong people. Having fluency in these “more powerful” languages allows the Mungong people flexibility in aligning themselves with whichever sociolinguistic identity best serves their purposes

---

<sup>2</sup> Over the course of several weeks of visits to Mungong for data collection, I identified at least six languages other than Mungong being spoken in and around the Mungong palace, many of which were heard several times during that period.

in any given social interaction. (Di Carlo (2018) speaks of the complexities of multilingualism in this area of Cameroon, including language choice as it relates to matters of spirituality, viewed as the source of power disparities realized in social encounters.)

Setting aside for the moment the perceived value given to multilingualism, linguistic differences between Mungong and Nchane varieties are somewhat modest. However, the two sound systems are notably different; Nchane has only 18 consonants and 7 vowels, while Mungong has 21 consonants and 9 vowels. Furthermore, significant differences between the grammars are observed as well, some of which are listed in Table 1.1.

| Element                    | Nchane  | Mungong  |
|----------------------------|---|--|
| <b>Demonstratives</b>      | two-distance system (proximal/distal)   | three-distance system (proximal/medial/distal)   |
| <b>Anaphoric Reference</b> | two dedicated anaphoric demonstratives, with emotional deictic expression   | one dedicated anaphoric demonstrative, no emotional deixis apparent  |
| <b>Noun Classes</b>        | 15 non-locative classes   | 12 non-locative classes (classes 5, 6 & 13 lacking)  |
| <b>Quantifiers</b>         | “few” and “some” notions expressed through single word  | “few” and “some” notions expressed through separate words  |
| <b>Future tense</b>        | future distances expressed through non-grammaticalized auxiliaries which precede the copula (i.e., AUX <sub>FUT</sub> COP VERB) | future distances expressed through grammaticalized tense markers following the copula (i.e., COP F1 VERB)  |
| <b>Hortative</b>           | H clitic on preverbal constituent   | L clitic on verb (usually final syllable)  |
| <b>Subject agreement</b>   | non-1SG subject agreement usually occurs on verbs preceded by P1 and P2 markers   | non-1SG subject agreement usually does not occur on verbs preceded by P1 and P2 markers  |
| <b>Applied Objects</b>     | Recipients and Addressees not preceded by any functional marker and usually marked by applicative postposition                  | Recipients and Addressees usually preceded by infinitive-like marker, Recipients sometimes marked by postposition, Addressees never marked by postposition |
| <b>SVCs</b>                | serial verb constructions less structurally typical, with all verbs usually preceded by subject element                         | serial verb constructions more typical, with subject marking phrase-initial only   |
| <b>Conditionals</b>        | protasis-apodosis order invariable  | protasis-apodosis order variable   |
| <b>Focus</b>               | postverbal focus limited to Agent-focus constructions   | postverbal focus available to non-Agent constituents   |

Table 1.1 Some contrasting elements of Nchane and Mungong grammar.

Perhaps even more substantial distinctions between the two language varieties are observed when considered from a sociolinguistic perspective. There is no shared

history between the two peoples as far as I am aware of. Indeed, Pelican, whose dissertation on interethnic relationships (2006) and follow-up study on identity politics (2015) in the Misaje area, makes no mention whatsoever of Mungong. These works include a thorough account of Nchane history from multiple sources, and yet there is no reference to Mungong.

Pelican points out that historical accounts in the area are subject to “production” and closely aligned with identity (2006: 105). In other words, history is formulated to accommodate the current socio-political realities in an ongoing effort to best situate one’s people for advantage. But, for there to be no mention of Mungong in any of the Nchane historical accounts is telling. In fact, some sources (e.g., Chilver 1993; Glauning 1906) suggest that Mungong is more closely associated historically with the Bum people (Grassfields), at least in the more recent past. This is supported by the fact that Mungong belongs to the Bum subdivision (along with the village Bum), while Nchane belongs to the Misaje subdivision.

Significant differences between the Nchane and Mungong speech varieties have been outlined above, including grammatical structures and sociolinguistic characteristics. In addition, language development activities are ongoing in both language communities, with a growing body of literature unique to each speech variety.<sup>3</sup> These factors support the recognition of Nchane and Mungong as distinct from one another, the view taken in this dissertation. I have attempted to provide details of Mungong grammar for contrast and comparison whenever appropriate and when such details are available, to further support this conclusion.

## 1.2 Previous research and relevant literature

The earliest substantial linguistic work on Nchane was in the form of a cross-linguistic study of the noun class systems of the Beboid languages, excluding Chungmboko and Mungong (Hombert 1980). Many of Hombert’s initial findings are substantiated in this current analysis. A dissertation phonology was also done, describing the sound systems of Nchane, Noni and Sari (Richards 1991).

More recently, another dissertation on the Beboid languages was completed in (2010). This work was carried out by Nathan Kimbi, a native Nchane speaker, and sought to establish a theoretical basis for a unifying orthography to serve the Nchane, Sari, Kemedzung, Naami, Mungong, Chungmboko and Naki language communities. It includes some phonological and grammatical details of the languages of study, as well as a practical plan and materials for implementing the pan-Beboid writing system. Interestingly, Nchane serves as the basis for the proposed orthography. This

---

<sup>3</sup> Since the start of language development among the Beboid languages, Mungong and Nchane have both moved ahead separately, using their own orthographies and producing several pieces of literature each. Modest support of language development activities is present in both language communities and locally elected language committees are involved.

is argued for as Nchane is viewed as geographically and linguistically central to the language cluster and therefore, the most widely accessible to all the speech varieties.

As Kimbi's work was being finalized, an SIL sponsored project involving most of these languages was just beginning, which resulted in a number of preliminary works by my colleagues and myself. Those works concerned with Nchane include an orthography proposal (Boutwell & Boutwell 2008), a sketch grammar (Boutwell 2010), a preliminary phonology (Boutwell 2014a), and a description of tone in the noun phrase (Boutwell 2015). The most recent work is an analysis of the demonstrative system, with particular attention given to the anaphoric demonstratives (Boutwell 2018).

Studies involving Mungong generally occurred in parallel with those of Nchane. These include a phonology sketch (Boutwell 2011), orthography proposal (Boutwell & Boutwell 2011) and sketch grammar (Boutwell 2014b). The sketch grammars of Nchane and Mungong demonstrate many similarities between the two speech varieties. However, a number of differences are also apparent, as pointed out in §1.1.4.

In addition to Hombert's research on Beboid noun classes, three other works stand out as particularly important to my analysis of Nchane grammar. First is a 121-page grammar of Noni produced by Hyman (1981). Because of the linguistic nearness of Noni and Nchane, this work provided a helpful start in understanding many of Nchane's grammatical structures. Second and third are two recent dissertations on Yemne-Kimbi languages: Mungbam (Lovegren 2013) and Mundabli (Voll 2017). The importance of these three works is revealed through the many references to them employed throughout this grammar.

### **1.3 Research situation**

Data for this descriptive work come from several sources and were collected over a period extending between 2004 and 2018. The work commenced upon my assignment to the Misaje Cluster project, sponsored by SIL, along with two other families. My family moved to the Nchane village of Nfume in 2004 and lived among the people until 2014, with year-long "sabbaticals" in the States about every fourth year.

#### **1.3.1 Nature of the data corpus**

The recording of cultural observations was the first formal activity, coupled with attempts at learning to speak and understand the language (with only very modest initial success). The collection of a wordlist<sup>4</sup> also was accomplished during the first year of our stay in Nfume, with an Nfume resident serving as my primary language consultant. The wordlist was inputted into SIL's Toolbox and Flex databases. Initial

---

<sup>4</sup> The wordlist used for this collection consisted of 1,500 words organized around domains appropriate for the African context. Of the 1,500 words attempted during elicitation, approximately 1,200 words were obtained.

phonological analysis utilized data from this wordlist, leading to a proposed alphabet, orthography guide and phonology sketch.

A sketch grammar followed, based on a small number of texts that I collected, and elicited materials to fill in some of the gaps, including some paradigms. Tone analysis was a real challenge, with tone frames collected to reveal underlying tones and tonal behavior. Noun phrase tone was studied first, followed by verb tone. At about the same time, the Misaje Cluster project translators (discussed more in §1.3.2) collected several texts as part of their training, some of which they then transcribed and interlinearized. With their assistance, these texts were then checked and reanalyzed by myself.

The data collected prior to the formal commencement of my doctoral studies in 2016 proved insufficient in a number of areas. Once unanswered research questions were identified, I traveled back to Cameroon for a 3-week fieldtrip in July 2018 to supplement the data. Working with Kilese Raphael Ngong (member of the Nchane translation team) and Elijah Kwawe (the Nchane literacy coordinator), I elicited data targeting numerous areas of the grammar such as locative constructions, compound pronouns, copula selection, etc. A selection of verbs was also sorted into tone groups and tense-aspect-modality frames were elicited utilizing representative verbs from each tone group. Furthermore, I was in contact with members of the Nchane translation team during the period of my doctoral studies (2016-2020) via texting media through which confirmations and/or clarifications for certain analyses were accomplished as well as eliciting a small amount of additional data.

All of these activities combined to form the data corpus serving as the basis for the description presented in this work, including a lexicon, texts and several sets of paradigms. The lexicon database contains about 1,600 items. The text corpus includes 23 texts with almost 8,000 words. Well over half of these texts are fully interlinearized. The text corpus contains a variety of text types, including Narrative (historical as well as folk tales), Hortatory, Procedural and Expository.

### **1.3.2 Language consultants**

It will come as no surprise that many individual speakers have impacted this study. Accounting for all of them is an impossible task, since even passing interactions with friends and neighbors certainly affected the way I understood the language. However, it is fitting that certain individuals are recognized for their contributions to this effort. Therefore, the following list is provided (in no particular order) of speakers who contributed in a formal way, usually by giving of their time with the specific purpose of data collection or fielding my questions regarding interpretations and analyses. Following each name, the gender and approximate age (at the time of interaction) of the speaker is given, as well as his or her birth village.

Key language consultants: Shey Tamfu Ephriam (male 30-40 from Nfume), Emmanuel Chambang (male 20-30 from Bem), Nji Enock Tanjong (male 30-40 from Nkanchi), Tata Andreas Tawong (male 40-50 from Nfume), Bekwa Oscar (male 50-

60 from Nkanchi), Hilda Ayaba (female 20-30 from Nfume), Muabong Fon Michael (male 30-40 from Nkanchi), Sjikwe Thomas (male 60-70 from Nfume), Elijah Kwawe (male 30-40 from Nkanchi).

In 2010, the Misaje Cluster project began the arduous task of Bible translation. Several Nchane speakers submitted themselves to an application process, with the following candidates accepted to serve as translators: Chila Frederick Kilese (male 30-40 from Kamala), Kilese Raphael Ngong (male 30-40 from Nkanchi), Kilese Samuel Nfonkwa (male 30-40 from Kamala) and Soka Sylverius Dosi (male 30-40 from Nkanchi).

These four (along with their counterparts from the other Beboid languages involved in the cluster project) received training in many different aspects of translation work, including limited instruction in linguistic analysis. Their almost daily struggles with translation issues coupled with exposure to linguistic concepts meant that their assistance was particularly insightful. My data corpus also grew as a result of their linguistics training, which sometimes involved the collection and analysis of texts, as mentioned earlier.

### 1.3.3 Presentation of the data

Most of the data presented in this description is given as numbered examples. The general format of these consists of three lines, with line one giving the vernacular usually analyzed for morphology, line two providing morpheme glosses, and the English translation appearing in line three. For text examples, a reference designation usually appears at the far right of the last line. The vernacular is presented utilizing a practical orthography, the details of which are provided below. Particular structures illustrated by the examples are usually bolded or set apart by brackets. Grammatical glosses appear in small caps and are guided by the Leipzig Glossing Rules (Comrie, Haspelmath & Bickel 2008). The English translations are italicized and enclosed in single quotation marks (double quotation marks are used to set off quoted speech).

The orthography used in this description is generally comparable to the practical orthography adopted by the Nchane community, but with three exceptions. The first involves the palatal nasal, which is represented with the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) form to allow for transparent portrayal of instances of /n/-/j/ sequences, since [ɲ] can be ambiguous as to its underlying form. In other words, **ny** is reserved for a nasal-approximant sequence (see §2.1.1 for more details). The description's consonant orthography is given in Table 1.2, along with the Nchane practical orthography (Boutwell & Boutwell 2008), IPA and the comparable Cameroon alphabet letters (Tadadjeu & Sadembouo 1984).

| Description orthography | Practical orthography | IPA | Cameroon alphabet |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|-----|-------------------|
| b                       | b                     | b   | b                 |
| ch                      | ch                    | tʃ  | c                 |
| d                       | d                     | d   | d                 |
| f                       | f                     | f   | f                 |
| g                       | g                     | g   | g                 |
| gh                      | gh                    | ɣ   | gh                |
| j                       | j                     | dʒ  | j                 |
| k                       | k                     | k   | k                 |
| l                       | l                     | l   | l                 |
| m                       | m                     | m   | m                 |
| n                       | n                     | n   | n                 |
| ɲ                       | ny                    | ɲ   | ny                |
| ŋ                       | ŋ                     | ŋ   | ŋ                 |
| s                       | s                     | s   | s                 |
| sh                      | sh                    | ʃ   | sh                |
| t                       | t                     | t   | t                 |
| w                       | w                     | w   | w                 |
| v                       | v                     | v   | v                 |
| y                       | y                     | j   | y                 |

Table 1.2 Consonant graphemes compared with the practical orthography, the Cameroon alphabet and IPA.

Note that the voiced velar fricative is a recent addition to the Nchane orthography and does not appear in the 2008 edition of the orthography guide.

The second departure from the Nchane practical orthography involves the mid back rounded vowel. The 2008 orthography guide called for the use of the graphemes **u**, **o**, and **ɔ** to represent high, near high and mid back vowels respectively. However, implementation of these graphemes proved problematic. Upon further study, it was clear that the high-near high distinction had largely been neutralized for the back vowels. The community very quickly abandoned the use of the grapheme **ɔ**, preferring to represent the mid back vowel with the less exotic grapheme **o**. The **u** grapheme was maintained, but put to use in representing the near high back vowel, as well as the fricative vowel “**Fu**”, which is always written following either **f** or **v**.

The **ɔ** grapheme is chosen for the description’s orthography in an attempt to alleviate possible confusion that **o** might bring, since in the practical orthography, **o** represents /ɔ/ and **u** represents /o/. The grapheme **u** is maintained, since there is no /u/ with which it could be confused, /u/ being synchronically represented as /<sup>h</sup>u/. To illustrate the point further, **jú** represents /dʒo/ ‘sun’, while **juvū** represents /dʒ<sup>h</sup>u/ ‘cobra’. In addition, phonetically /o/ is realized higher than [o] anyway, and it behaves phonologically as a high back vowel. See §2.2 for more details.



The vowel graphemes are listed in Table 1.3.

| <b>Description orthography</b> | <b>Practical orthography</b> | <b>IPA</b> | <b>Cameroon alphabet</b> |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|------------|--------------------------|
| a                              | a                            | a          | a                        |
| e                              | e                            | ɪ          | -                        |
| ɛ                              | ɛ                            | ɛ          | ɛ                        |
| i                              | i                            | i          | i                        |
| ɔ                              | o                            | ɔ          | ɔ                        |
| u                              | u                            | o          | o                        |
| Fu                             | Fu                           | Fu         | -                        |

Table 1.3 Vowel graphemes compared with the practical orthography, the Cameroon alphabet and IPA.

The third difference is the regular representation of nasal vowels with a tilde ~ placed underneath the vowel (e.g., **kā̃**). There is no phonemic difference between CṼ and CVN, allowing for the use of CVN in the practical orthography. But the distinction is maintained in this presentation to better reflect the phonetic characteristics of the utterances, as well as to point out the process of syllable reduction observed in the language, which sometimes results in free variation between CṼ and CVN. Placement of the tilde under the vowel rather than above (which is the IPA convention) is a practical choice, avoiding the occurrence of two diacritics (nasalization and tone) in a single space.

Note that, for the most part, IPA is used for chapters 2, 3 and 4, since they are concerned with the phonology of the language. Most of the time, examples in these chapters utilize brackets to indicate phonetic forms.

## 1.4 Organization of description

The overall order of presentation follows in part a smaller to bigger pattern, dealing with discrete units, such as phones, in chapters 2-4. Progressing to larger units, chapters 5-10 are largely concerned with various word classes, beginning with Nouns and Pronouns in Chapters 5 and 7 respectively. Other word classes are covered in chapter 8, verbs in chapter 9 and copulas in chapter 10. Chapters 11-15 describe the language at the clause level and chapter 16 looks at discourse level issues such as Topic and Focus. The description concludes with an interlinearized text presented in chapter 17.



## Chapter 2

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### Phonology

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The phonological system of Nchane represents a language undergoing syllable reduction, with resulting vowel nasalization and lengthening processes. While the phonology of verbs is relatively simple, the analysis of noun phonology is challenging, in part due to the presence of nasals, characteristic of other languages in the area, and documented to be associated with lowering of tones (see Good and Lovegren (2017) and Hyman (1980)).

This chapter is divided into three main sections. Consonants and vowels are described in §§2.1 and 2.2 respectively. A description of syllable structure and observations regarding the distribution of consonants and vowels appears in §2.3. Note that example transcriptions in this chapter are usually placed in brackets, indicating that they represent phonetic, rather than phonemic, realizations. Furthermore, the transcriptions are generally given utilizing IPA characters rather than the description orthography which is used for most of the chapters.

### **2.1 Consonants**

Nchane has 18 consonant phonemes, a somewhat modest inventory when compared to neighboring languages. The Beboid languages Kemedzung, Chungmboko and Sari

have 19, 21 and 21 consonants respectively (Cox 2005; Tabah 2010; Langhout 2015)<sup>5</sup>, while the Yemne-Kimbi language Mungbam is observed to have 24 (Lovegren 2013).

The Nchane consonant phonemes are displayed in Table 2.1, each of which can occur in root-initial position. Note that all unvoiced plosives are aspirated when followed by a vowel. While all consonants occur word initially, only nasals are found in the coda position and only the velar nasal is found word finally. See §2.3.2 for more on distributional restrictions.

|              | Labial | Alveolar | Palatal | Velar |
|--------------|--------|----------|---------|-------|
| Plosives     |        | t        | ch      | k     |
|              | b      | d        | j       | g     |
| Fricatives   | f      | s        | sh      | (gh)  |
| Nasals       | m      | n        | ɲ       | ŋ     |
| Approximants |        | l        | y       | w     |

Table 2.1 Nchane consonant phoneme inventory.

As with many languages in the area, there is no voiceless counterpart to the voiced labial plosive **b**, leaving a gap in the inventory where **p** is usually found. Speakers are able to pronounce [p] with little difficulty, as evidenced by the occurrence of the Cameroon Pidgin English loanword [pjá] ‘pear’, referring to ‘avocado’, which is prevalent in the area. However, other loanwords like [bā] ‘pa’, which is often used as an honorific in place of the Nchane word [tʃi:] ‘father’, as well as western names like [bɔl] ‘Paul’ and [bità] ‘Peter’ show that [b] is preferable as a substitute for [p].

### 2.1.1 Consonants with difficult analyses

Most of the Nchane consonants are analyzed with little difficulty. However, the alveopalatal affricates, the velar fricative and the palatal nasal each present challenges to a proper assignment in the consonant system. These are discussed in turn in this section.

**The consonants ch and j** The alveopalatal affricates have been analyzed as palatal plosives ([c] and [j] respectively), but this is not without questions. The primary complication comes from the fact that the neighboring Beboid languages Sari, Chungmboko, Kemedzung and Mungong, each have an alveolar affricate set (i.e., /ts/ and /dz/) in addition to the alveopalatal affricate set. Richards (1991) includes the Sari alveopalatal affricates with the palatalized consonant inventory and treats the alveolar affricates as palatal plosives, thus dispensing with the affricate class altogether. A

<sup>5</sup> Determining the number of consonants for these neighboring languages is not completely straightforward, as the analyses offered sometimes include questionable phonemes such as /p/ and /h/, both of which are rare in the data and are often limited to borrowed words or exclamations and ideophones.

similar approach is used by Cox (2005) for Kemedzung, where he suggests that they are palatalized allophones of their alveolar affricate counterparts, although he also argues for the maintenance of the affricate class.

However, this analysis is untenable for Mungong, where the occurrences of the alveopalatal affricates outnumber their alveolar counterparts by almost 2:1. Meanwhile, the number of /b<sub>j</sub>/ and /k<sub>j</sub>/ tokens is extremely small compared to the /b/ and /k/ varieties, suggesting that Cy as a sequence type is not very productive and so, not supportive of viewing the alveopalatal affricates as being palatalized versions of some other consonants.

A similar problem exists for Nchane, since Cy sequences are somewhat rare, but the occurrences of /tʃ/ and /dʒ/ are significantly high, slightly higher than those of /t/ and /d/. Furthermore, there are no significant differences in distribution between the alveopalatal affricates and the plosives. Meanwhile, the palatal series includes fricative, nasal and approximant members, with an available opening in the plosive series. Therefore, it makes sense to treat the alveopalatal affricates phonologically as palatal plosives,<sup>6</sup> although the affricate transcriptions are maintained to acknowledge their comparability to consonants of other Beboid language varieties.

**The consonant gh** The velar fricative **gh** appears in parentheses in Table 2.1 to indicate that its status as a phoneme is in question, since it occurs only a few times in the data. In addition to its paucity, it never precedes back vowels when root-initial and when it is root-internal an argument could be made that [ɣ] is simply a product of spirantization of /g/. An additional complication is that it never occurs in Cj, Cw or NC sequences, although this could simply be due to the small numbers in the data.

Richards (1991) treated this phoneme as an oral sonorant, in the same series as **w**, **l** and **y**, and without giving reasons for analyzing it as belonging to the set of approximants rather than to the set of fricatives.<sup>7</sup> It appears to have been rare in his data set as well, and he mentions the complete lack of the prenasalized form [ŋɣ]. Neighboring Noni lists 39 occurrences [ɣ] out of 4544 entries in its online dictionary (Lux 2016). All of these occurrences are root-initial, hinting at neutralization of contrast in other environments. When Nchane cognates are identified for these Noni words, there is usually a [ɣ]:[j] or [ɣ]:[dʒ] correspondence.

Consultants were asked to provide more words with this consonant, which resulted in nine additional words. Each of these words are **gh**-initial with a distinct preference for a following **a** and never with a following back vowel. The synchronic

<sup>6</sup> Additional evidence countering an analysis of the alveopalatal affricates representing palatalized versions of the alveolar plosives is observed with the spirantization of the number ‘three’ when prefixed with class 10 agreement presented in §3.6. When followed by a palatal glide, the underlying /t/ is realized as [ʃ] rather than [tʃ] (/jɪ-tʃɛdɛ/ → jɪ-tʃɛdɪ → [jɪ-ʃɛdɪ]).

<sup>7</sup> It is possible that Richards was moved in this direction because he observed that Noni had a minor phoneme [h], which he treated as a velar fricative; thus, that slot was filled and could not also take [ɣ]. The treatment for Noni was then presumably extended to the Nchane case.

evidence for this phoneme is therefore tenuous and its support as a phoneme is flagging. All words with this consonant are given in Table 2.2.<sup>8</sup> Note that the examples provided by the consultants appear without tone indicated. Note also that the word for ‘jeer at’ **ghay** violates the coda restrictions adopted in the current analysis, namely that the velar nasal **ŋ** is the only consonant observed as a coda.

| Via wordlist elicitation |                      | Via <i>y</i> elicitation session |                    |
|--------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| [mjæyó]                  | ‘blink’              | [ya:]                            | ‘enthroned’        |
| [fɪŋkʰɔ́yó]              | ‘wrist’ <sup>9</sup> | [yali]                           | ‘name’             |
| [yá]                     | ‘surpass’            | [yanɛ]                           | ‘be insane’        |
|                          |                      | [yalɛ]                           | ‘improvise’        |
|                          |                      | [yɪŋ]                            | ‘attach with glue’ |
|                          |                      | [yaj]                            | ‘jeer at’          |
|                          |                      | [yɛ]                             | ‘be jealous’       |
|                          |                      | [yasi]                           | ‘mistreat’         |
|                          |                      | [yami]                           | ‘braid a calabash’ |

Table 2.2 Exhaustive list of words with the consonant **gh**.

**The consonant *j*** The problem faced in analyzing the palatal nasal **j** has less to do with its phonemic status and series assignment, than with the interpretation of [j] in any given occurrence. The phone [j] has four possible underlying representations: /j/, /ɲj/, /ɲʲ/, /<sup>h</sup>j/. The first option, a palatal nasal, is an expected member of the consonant system, since it completes the series of nasal consonants. I assume that a large number of [j] occurrences are in fact realizations of /j/.

The third and fourth options, a palatalized alveolar nasal and a prenasalized palatal approximant respectively, are discounted based on analytical interpretation. The analysis of palatalization as a consonant feature is rejected in favor of consonant-glide sequences (see §2.1.4). And possible instances of prenasalization are interpreted as nasal-consonant sequences (see §2.1.5).

Evidence for the second option, a **ɲj** sequence, is not easy to find, since there is a general constraint requiring NC sequences to have the same place features. Therefore, determining the underlying form of the nasal in NC sequences at morpheme boundaries is speculative at best, particularly as vowel initial stems do not exist. Positive evidence might be found in looking at class 19 nouns, where more than

<sup>8</sup> Without more data it is difficult to draw well supported conclusions. However, as mentioned earlier, it is possible that the **gh** in the word for ‘wrist’ is a phonological artifact resulting from a velar plosive in a [ɔCɔ] sequence. Careful speech results in [fɪŋkʰɔ́yó], which corresponds more closely with the Noni cognate **fikókó**. The word for ‘blink’ is unusual as it surfaces with the phone [æ] for which a clear analysis is lacking. Careful speech also results in [g] rather than [y]. Therefore, neither of these two words provide unquestionable evidence for stem-internal **gh**, but rather supports an analysis of phonological variation of /g/.

<sup>9</sup> Likely, more specifically the knobby bone of the wrist and ankle (*pisiform*).

half of the nouns are marked unambiguously with a **fiN-** prefix, while the remaining nouns have a **fi-** prefix. Yet, the number of class 19 nouns with a [ɲ] at the prefix-root boundary is relatively high, suggesting that at least some of these are underlyingly **ɲ-**. This is illustrated in Table 2.3, where it can be seen that 13% of the nouns have a **fiɲ...** shape versus, for example, 10% having **fiŋk...** and only 3% having **fim...**

| fiN-C...    |   | fi-C...  |   | fiN-C.../fi-C... |
|-------------|---|----------|---|------------------|
| <b>m-b</b>  | 2 | <b>b</b> | 2 | <b>ɲ-y/ɲ</b> 4   |
| <b>n-t</b>  | 4 | <b>k</b> | 2 |                  |
| <b>n-d</b>  | 1 | <b>l</b> | 1 |                  |
| <b>ɲ-ch</b> | 4 | <b>m</b> | 1 |                  |
| <b>ŋ-k</b>  | 3 | <b>s</b> | 2 |                  |
| <b>ŋ-g</b>  | 1 | <b>j</b> | 1 |                  |
| <b>n-s</b>  | 1 |          |   |                  |
| <b>ɲ-sh</b> | 1 |          |   |                  |

Table 2.3 Summary of (N)C sequences at morpheme boundaries of c19 nouns, illustrating likelihood of underlying **fiɲ-y...** forms (n=30).

Perhaps the strongest evidence can be found in words like **ɲū** ‘light’, which appears to be a nominalization of the verb **yū** ‘clean’. The underlying form of this noun therefore is **N- yu** (NMZR- clean). In light of the above evidence, it is justifiable to assume that at least some non-morpheme boundary occurrences of [ɲ] are in fact underlyingly /ɲj/.

### 2.1.2 Phonetic descriptions of consonants

Descriptions of the phonetic characteristics of the various consonants are given in this section. The descriptions are organized around the different types of articulation and include representative examples.

#### 2.1.2.1 Plosives

Nchane has seven plosive consonants consisting of voiceless and voiced varieties of the alveolar, palatal and velar series, and the voiced labial **b**. As mentioned above, all voiceless plosives are slightly aspirated when followed by a vowel.

**The consonant t** The voiceless alveolar plosive **t** is realized as [t]. When followed by a vowel, it is slightly aspirated. Examples are [fiŋtʰimé] ‘middle’, [tʰā] ‘kick’ and [tʰēdī] ‘stone’. The aspiration is greater in words like [tʰi:] ‘abdomen’ and [tʰó] ‘return’, where the following vowel is high, but not significantly so.

**The consonant ch** The voiceless alveopalatal affricate **ch** is realized as [tʃ], and fits into the consonant system as a voiceless palatal plosive. Because it is realized as an affricate, it is not prone to aspiration as observed in the voiceless plosives. Examples are [tʃiŋ] ‘dig’, [tʃébè] ‘termite hill’, [fiŋtʃā] ‘ring’ and [kʰiŋtʃónē] ‘bush’.

**The consonant k** The voiceless velar plosive **k** is realized as [k]. Again, as with **t**, this consonant is slightly aspirated when followed by a vowel, with the aspiration being somewhat greater when the following vowel is high. In fast speech, it can be slightly spirantized, particularly in VCV sequences, where the vowels are identical. Examples are [kʰɪjɛ] ‘cough’, [bɪŋkʰɛsɪ] ‘fingernail (pl)’, [bɪlɪkʰáŋ] ‘papaya’ and [bāŋkʰò] ‘box (pl)’.

**The consonant b** The voiced bilabial plosive **b** is realized as [b]. Examples are [bɪ] ‘goat’, [lábɛ] ‘spider web’, [báŋ] ‘shut’, [bɔ̃nɛ] ‘prayer’ and [m̃bōfá] ‘cat’.

**The consonant d** The voiced alveolar plosive **d** is realized as [d]. While it is observed to occur before high vowels, these sequences are rare, particularly the sequence **di**. An example is [ñdɪŋɛ] ‘omen’. It is possible that this sequence more often triggers spirantization of the **d**, resulting in the sequence **ji**. This hypothesis is supported by the fact that the word for ‘omen’ in Mungong and Noni is [j̃ndʒɛ] and [ndʒɪŋsɛn] respectively, both showing a [d]:[dʒ] correspondence. See §3.6 for more details of the spirantization process.

This consonant has an allophone realized as the alveolar flap [ɾ], which is relatively rare and occurs only when the consonant intervenes between identical high vowels. It usually does not occur in careful speech. Examples are [fɪntʰíɾi] ‘story’ and [fɪzɛ̀ɾɛ] ‘red’. Other examples of **d** are [tʰédí] ‘stone’, [ñdɛŋú] ‘cricket’, [kʰɪdádɛ] ‘palm branch’, [fɪndɔ̃ŋ] ‘throat’ and [fɪntʰódó] ‘ant’.

**The consonant j** The voiced alveopalatal affricate **j** is realized as [dʒ], and functions as a voiced palatal plosive in the consonant system. Examples are [dʒɪsɛ] ‘eye’, [dʒɪ] ‘path’, [kwádʒɛ] ‘think’, [kʰɪdʒāŋ] ‘weaver bird’, [dʒɔ̃ŋ] ‘star’ and [j̃ndʒō] ‘cloth’.

**The consonant g** The voiced velar plosive **g** is realized as [g]. As with **k**, it can be slightly spirantized in fast speech in VCV sequences where the vowels are identical. Examples are [gɪ:] ‘hundred (pl)’, [kʰɪŋgɛŋ] ‘island’, [m̃wángá] ‘hare’, [gɔ̃ŋ] ‘spear’ and [gó] ‘buy’.

### 2.1.2.2 Fricatives

The Nchane fricative series includes three voiceless fricatives and one voiced fricative. The voiced velar fricative is a minor phoneme, with limited distribution and low occurrence. Phonetic descriptions are given below.

**The consonant f** The voiceless labiodental fricative **f** is realized as [f]. Examples of **f** are [fɪ] ‘kidney’, [fɛ:] ‘two’, [kʰɪfá:] ‘mahogany tree’, [fɔ̃] ‘sharpen’ and [kʰɪfōfó] ‘lung’.

**The consonant s** The voiceless alveolar fricative **s** is realized as [s]. It never precedes **i**, hinting at [ʃ] as a palatalized allophonic variant. However, the number of [ʃ] occurrences is too high for it to fit the profile of a palatalized allophone of **s**. In addition, multiple minimal pairs between the two phones exist. Therefore, I do not



adopt the view that they are in allophonic relationship. Examples of **s** are [kʰɪŋkʰɛsi] ‘fingernail’, [sɛ:] ‘slaughter’, [sā] ‘mask’, [kʰɪmsɔŋ] ‘fish trap’ and [sódɛ].

**The consonant sh** The voiceless postalveolar fricative **sh** is realized as [ʃ]. Its place of articulation is comparable to the place of release for the two alveopalatal affricates. Examples are [bvūʃi] ‘face’, [mōpʃɛ] ‘sand’, [m̄bōʃá] ‘cat’, [fɪpʃɔ:] ‘mud wasp’ and [ʃōŋʃɛ] ‘hum’.

**The consonant gh** The voiced velar fricative **gh** is realized as [ɣ]. Its status as a phoneme is questionable and discussed at length in §2.1.1 above.

### 2.1.2.3 Nasals

Nchane has a complete series of nasal consonants, including **m**, **n**, **ɲ** and **ŋ**. Nasal consonants occurring in word final position often are elided, accompanied by the preceding vowel taking on a nasal quality. This elision is less likely when the preceding vowel is short. In both cases, with preceding short and long vowels, there is a degree of free variation between **V~Vŋ**. Note that only the velar nasal **ŋ** is observed in word final position.

For the most part, NC sequences are restricted to consonants with the same place of articulation. Each of these nasals occur in NC sequences where they are observed to often carry tone, although the duration of the nasal’s realization is generally shorter than one would expect with a typical syllabic nasal. The reader is referred to §2.1.5 for an in-depth discussion of the nature of these sequences.

**The consonant m** The bilabial nasal **m** is usually realized as [m]. Before the labiodental fricative **f**, it is usually realized as a labiodental nasal [ɱ].<sup>10</sup> Examples are [mí] ‘swallow’, [tʃɪnāmɛ:] ‘weed (pl)’, [tʃómā] ‘locust’, [mɔ] ‘taste’, [kʰɪmógɛ] ‘maggot’, [bāmɪfā] ‘eagle (pl)’ and [ɱfɔ].

**The consonant n** The alveolar nasal **n** is realized as [n]. Examples are [biní] ‘dance (n)’, [fɪntʃɔnɛ] ‘groundnut’, [nā] ‘cow’ and [nɔŋ] ‘throw’.

**The consonant ɲ** The palatal nasal **ɲ** is realized as [ɲ]. See §2.1.1 above for a discussion of its interpretation. Examples are [ɲí] ‘bee’, [kʰɪnfɛɲɛ] ‘cockroach’, [ɲāɲ] ‘animal’ and [ɲɔ] ‘cutlass’.

**The consonant ŋ** The velar nasal **ŋ** is realized as [ŋ]. Examples are [m̄bjɛŋɛ] ‘bell’, [ŋānɛ] ‘crawl’, [sɔŋɔ] ‘oil palm’ and [n̄dɛŋó] ‘cricket’.

### 2.1.2.4 Approximants

Nchane has three approximants: one lateral approximant and two glides. Each is described in this section.

<sup>10</sup> Assigning [ɱ] as an allophone of /m/ is somewhat arbitrary, since it is a product of place assimilation and its underlying form is not clearly identifiable from its source.

**The consonant l** The alveolar lateral approximant **l** is realized as [l]. In most environments, it is pronounced with a certain amount of closure by the dorsum, similar to the so-called “dark l” in many English dialects, but with much less closure. This is particularly the case when it is adjacent to high back vowels and when it is word initial. The dorsum involvement is much less when it is adjacent to front vowels. Examples are [lɪɪ] ‘dragonfly’, [kʰɪɫɛ:] ‘bat’, [lábɛ] ‘spiderweb’, [lɔmɛ] ‘hasten’ and [kʰɪɫɔŋ] ‘agama lizard’.<sup>11</sup>

**The consonant y** The palatal approximant **y** is usually realized as [j]. Other times it is realized with a light fricative quality best represented by the voiced palatal fricative [j̞]. This variant appears to be in free variation with [j] in all environments and is often corrected to the approximant variant in careful speech. Examples are [kʰɪjɪ] ‘ghost’, [jɪfɛ] ‘transplant’, [jɛɫɛ] ‘sweep’, [jɛŋ] ‘thigh’, [kʰɪjájá] ‘flying ant’, [kʰɪjɔ] ‘soul’, [jɔ] ‘snake’ and [kʰɪjɔŋ] ‘fool’.

**The consonant w** The labiovelar approximant **w** is realized as [w]. Examples are [gwi]<sup>12</sup> ‘net’, [wɛŋɛ] ‘tickle’, [wá:ŋ] ‘market’, [wɔŋ] ‘village’ and [kʰɪwɔŋɛ] ‘ditch’.

### 2.1.3 Consonant minimal pairs

Contrasts for all consonants are given in Table 2.4-Table 2.7 (established by near-minimal pairs when strict-minimal pairs are not available). In most cases, contrasts are given for consonants that share all but one feature. When a consonant has multiple possible analyses, then contrasts are given for that consonant to account for alternative analyses. For example, **w** could be analyzed as a labial or a velar approximant. Therefore, minimal pairs involving **w** are given with consonants from the labial and velar series. All examples in the minimal pairs show the contrasting consonants in root-initial position, with the exception of those involving **ŋ**, for which root-initial examples are relatively rare. Also, both members of a minimal pair belong to the same word class whenever possible. Finally, verb forms in the examples appear in the unmarked P0 form unless otherwise noted.

<sup>11</sup> It is possible that **l** has **r** as an allophone, occurring with words that have an **l** preceding the Progressive suffix **-ɪ**, the **lr** sequence sometimes surfacing as **rɪ** and also sometimes with apparent vowel harmony within the word. Speakers sometimes are not certain themselves if these words should be pronounced with an **l** or a **r**, with limited free variation observed.

<sup>12</sup> The vowel [w] only precedes [i] when **w** is part of a CG sequence. See §2.3.2 for an account of distribution restrictions.

| Consonants | Example | Gloss    | Example               | Gloss    |                |
|------------|---------|----------|-----------------------|----------|----------------|
| t          |         |          |                       |          |                |
|            | /d      | [tʰāŋ]   | ‘count’               | [dáj]    | ‘jump’         |
|            | /ch     | [tʰō]    | ‘hit’                 | [tʃō:]   | ‘feces’        |
|            | /s      | [tʰōŋ]   | ‘shoot’               | [sōŋ]    | ‘beat’         |
| ch         |         |          |                       |          |                |
|            | /t      | [tʃō:]   | ‘feces’               | [tʰō]    | ‘hit’          |
|            | /k      | [tʃá]    | ‘chew’                | [kʰā]    | ‘swear’        |
|            | /j      | [tʃō:]   | ‘feces’               | [dʒò]    | ‘penis’        |
|            | /sh     | [tʃō]    | ‘carve’               | [ʃō]     | ‘wipe off’     |
| k          |         |          |                       |          |                |
|            | /ch     | [kʰā]    | ‘swear’               | [tʃá]    | ‘chew’         |
|            | /g      | [kʰō]    | ‘play’ (e.g., a drum) | [gō]     | ‘play’ (intr.) |
| b          |         |          |                       |          |                |
|            | /d      | [bāŋ]    | ‘shine’               | [dáj]    | ‘jump’         |
|            | /g      | [bá]     | ‘choose’              | [gā]     | ‘divide’       |
|            | /m      | [bī]     | ‘follow’              | [mí]     | ‘swallow’      |
|            | /w      | [bō]     | ‘escape’              | [wó]     | ‘whistle’ (v)  |
| d          |         |          |                       |          |                |
|            | /t      | [dáj]    | ‘jump’                | [tʰāŋ]   | ‘count’        |
|            | /j      | [dáj]    | ‘jump’                | [dʒāŋ]   | ‘announce’     |
|            | /n      | [kʰīdāŋ] | ‘table’               | [kʰīmāŋ] | ‘chin’         |
|            | /l      | [dē:]    | ‘cook’                | [lé:]    | ‘deceive’      |
| j          |         |          |                       |          |                |
|            | /ch     | [dʒò]    | ‘penis’               | [tʃō:]   | ‘feces’        |
|            | /d      | [dʒāŋ]   | ‘announce’            | [dáj]    | ‘jump’         |
|            | /p      | [dʒì]    | ‘hoe’                 | [pī]     | ‘bee’          |
|            | /y      | [dʒēnē]  | ‘swing’               | [jéné]   | ‘breathe’      |
| g          |         |          |                       |          |                |
|            | /b      | [gā]     | ‘divide’              | [bá]     | ‘choose’       |
|            | /ŋ      | [gānè]   | ‘greet’               | [ŋānÉ]   | ‘crawl’        |
|            | /gh     | [gā]     | ‘divide’              | [yá]     | ‘overpower’    |
|            | /w      | [gā]     | ‘divide’              | [wā]     | ‘argue’        |

Table 2.4 Minimal pairs for plosives.

| Consonants | Example  | Gloss      | Example  | Gloss             |
|------------|----------|------------|----------|-------------------|
| <b>m</b>   |          |            |          |                   |
| /b         | [mí]     | ‘swallow’  | [bī]     | ‘follow’          |
| /n         | [mā]     | ‘be alone’ | [nā]     | ‘cow’             |
| /w         | [mā]     | ‘be alone’ | [wā:]    | ‘argue’           |
| <b>n</b>   |          |            |          |                   |
| /d         | [kʰínáŋ] | ‘chin’     | [kʰīdāŋ] | ‘table’           |
| /m         | [nā]     | ‘cow’      | [mā:]    | ‘decorative scar’ |
| /ɲ         | [nā]     | ‘cow’      | [ɲā]     | ‘gift’            |
| /l         | [kʰínáŋ] | ‘chin’     | [fíláŋ]  | ‘clay pipe’       |
| <b>ɲ</b>   |          |            |          |                   |
| /j         | [ɲī]     | ‘bee’      | [dʒi]    | ‘hoe’             |
| /n         | [ɲā]     | ‘gift’     | [nā]     | ‘cow’             |
| /ŋ         | [ɲāŋɛ̃]  | ‘feed’     | [ŋānɛ̃]  | ‘crawl’           |
| /y         | [ɲō:]    | ‘knee’     | [jōŋ]    | ‘thatch’ (n)      |
| <b>ŋ</b>   |          |            |          |                   |
| /g         | [ŋānɛ̃]  | ‘crawl’    | [gānɛ̃]  | ‘greet’           |
| /ɲ         | [ŋānɛ̃]  | ‘crawl’    | [ɲāŋɛ̃]  | ‘feed’            |
| /gh        | [ŋānɛ̃]  | ‘crawl’    | [ɣá]     | ‘overpower’       |
| /w         | [tʰōŋɛ̃] | ‘crow’ (v) | [tʰōwɛ̃] | ‘latrine’         |

Table 2.5 Minimal pairs for nasals.

| Consonants | Example | Gloss       | Example | Gloss       |
|------------|---------|-------------|---------|-------------|
| <b>f</b>   |         |             |         |             |
| /b         | [bī]    | ‘cry’       | [fī]    | ‘blow’      |
| /m         | [mɔ̃]   | ‘taste’     | [fɔ̃]   | ‘sharpen’   |
| /s         | [fāŋ]   | ‘deny’      | [sāŋ]   | ‘draw’      |
| <b>s</b>   |         |             |         |             |
| /t         | [sōŋ]   | ‘beat’      | [tʰōŋ]  | ‘fry’       |
| /n         | [sōŋ]   | ‘beat’      | [nōŋ]   | ‘throw’     |
| /f         | [sāŋ]   | ‘draw’      | [fāŋ]   | ‘deny’      |
| /sh        | [sā]    | ‘mask’      | [ʃā]    | ‘pot’       |
| /l         | [sāŋɛ̃] | ‘scatter’   | [lāŋɛ̃] | ‘pay’       |
| <b>sh</b>  |         |             |         |             |
| /ch        | [ʃɔ̃]   | ‘wipe off’  | [tʃɔ̃]  | ‘carve’     |
| /ɲ         | [ʃā]    | ‘pot’       | [ɲāŋ]   | ‘animal’    |
| /s         | [ʃā]    | ‘pot’       | [sā]    | ‘mask’      |
| /gh        | [ʃā]    | ‘pot’       | [ɣá]    | ‘overpower’ |
| /y         | [ʃā]    | ‘pot’       | [jā]    | ‘suck’      |
| <b>gh</b>  |         |             |         |             |
| /g         | [ɣá]    | ‘overpower’ | [gā]    | ‘divide’    |
| /ŋ         | [ɣá]    | ‘overpower’ | [ŋānɛ̃] | ‘crawl’     |
| /sh        | [ɣá]    | ‘overpower’ | [ʃā]    | ‘pot’       |
| /w         | [ɣá]    | ‘overpower’ | [wā:]   | ‘argue’     |

Table 2.6 Minimal pairs for fricatives.

| Consonants | Example | Gloss      | Example       | Gloss     |               |
|------------|---------|------------|---------------|-----------|---------------|
| l          | /d      | [lé:]      | ‘deceive’     | [dē:]     | ‘cook’        |
|            | /n      | [fíláŋ]    | ‘clay pipe’   | [kʰínáŋ]  | ‘chin’        |
|            | /s      | [láŋɛ̃]    | ‘pay’         | [sāŋɛ̃]   | ‘scatter’     |
|            | /y      | [lēsɛ̃]    | ‘disappear’   | [jésɛ̃]   | ‘be empty’    |
|            | /w      | [lō]       | ‘stop’        | [wó]      | ‘whistle’ (v) |
| y          | /j      | [jénɛ̃]    | ‘breathe’     | [dʒɛ̃nɛ̃] | ‘swing’       |
|            | /ɲ      | [jōŋ]      | ‘thatch’ (n)  | [ɲō:]     | ‘knee’        |
|            | /sh     | [jā]       | ‘suck’        | [jā]      | ‘pot’         |
|            | /l      | [jésɛ̃]    | ‘be empty’    | [lēsɛ̃]   | ‘disappear’   |
|            | /w      | [jā]       | ‘suck’        | [wâ:]     | ‘argue’       |
| w          | /b      | [wó]       | ‘whistle’ (v) | [bō]      | ‘escape’      |
|            | /g      | [wâ:]      | ‘argue’       | [gā]      | ‘divide’      |
|            | /m      | [wâ:]      | ‘argue’       | [mâ]      | ‘be alone’    |
|            | /ŋ      | [kʰíwádɛ̃] | ‘corn husk’   | [kīŋāfɛ̃] | ‘ringworm’    |
|            | /f      | [wâ:]      | ‘argue’       | [fā]      | ‘peel’ (v)    |
|            | /gh     | [wâ:]      | ‘argue’       | [yá]      | ‘overpower’   |
|            | /l      | [wó]       | ‘whistle’ (v) | [lō]      | ‘stop’        |
|            | /y      | [wâ:]      | ‘argue’       | [jā]      | ‘suck’        |

Table 2.7 Minimal pairs for approximants.

### 2.1.4 Consonant-glide sequences

Occurrences of some consonant followed by either the labial-velar approximant **w** or the palatal approximant **y** are described in this section. Consonant-glide clusters are analyzed as sequences rather than as labialization and palatalization, but with some reservation. As pointed out by Parker (2012: 121–122), proper analysis of CG sequences is notoriously problematic for a number of reasons. In the case of Nchane, one difficulty is the variety of sources for such sequences. For example, while there are numerous examples of apparently monomorphemic Cw sequences, there are also many examples of Cw sequences resulting from noun class marking (e.g., [bwēŋ]/[bēŋ] ‘mosquito (sg/pl)’ and [tʃwě]/[bàtʃě] ‘witch (sg/pl), genders 3/4 and 1/2 respectively). The **w** found in such noun class marking comes historically from a CV-prefix. Therefore, the **w** in Cw sequences representing noun class marking might not be comparable to the **w** in Cw sequences occurring in monomorphemic words. It is clear, for example, that in such cases, the **w** segment should be considered unbound to the preceding consonant, at least lexically, making a labialization analysis less tenable.

However, support for a labialization analysis comes from looking at neighboring languages and how gender 3/4 noun marking is handled. While class 3 Nchane nouns are marked with a **w** following the initial consonant of the root, several neighboring languages show this same marking through a labial-velar alternation. For

example, the singular and plural forms of the Nchane word ‘root’ are [gwēŋ] and [gēŋ], while the Mungong forms are [gbā] and [gā]. Instances of Cw sequences in Mungong are attested elsewhere, as are instances of **gb** as a unique phoneme. The simplest way to capture the essence of class 3 noun marking across the Beboid language group is to analyze it as labialization.

Ultimately, with a clear interpretation difficult or impossible, a Cw sequence analysis is preferable to C<sup>w</sup> due to the desirability of decreasing the consonant phoneme inventory. This interpretation is then extended to Cy sequences recognizing both clusters as categorically similar, capturing the generalization that both clusters are consonant-glide sequences.

#### 2.1.4.1 Cw sequences

Consonant clusters C<sub>1</sub>C<sub>2</sub>, where C<sub>2</sub> is a labial-velar approximant /w/ are attested when C<sub>1</sub> is a plosive, fricative or nasal. The consonant cluster is observed at morphological boundaries as well as within basic words in root-initial position. The majority of occurrences are observed in nouns, although they occur in verbs as well. The Cw sequence occurs in about 11% of nouns, which is slightly more than double the rate of the sequence in verbs. This difference in proportion is largely erased when nouns from classes 1 and 3 are removed from the count to control for the **-w-** infix, which represents class marking.

The phonetic realization is [Cw]. When the preceding consonant is a plosive, the **w** often has a slight fricative quality as a result of the release of the preceding plosive. In all cases, there is a degree of lip rounding at or near the onset of the initial consonant.

Table 2.8 shows which consonants are observed in Cw clusters. The sequence **dw** appears in parentheses to indicate that it occurs only in the class 3 nouns [d<sub>3</sub>wē] ‘mouth’, [d<sub>3</sub>wē] ‘calabash used in tapping palm wine’ and [d<sub>3</sub>wēlē] ‘edge’. The phonetic realization of the initial consonant is therefore usually spirantized such that it sounds more like [d<sub>3</sub>w] than [dw]. The underlying onset consonant for these words is clearly /d/ (as evidenced by their plural forms) and in careful speech the spirantization can be lessened, but never completely absent. It is likely that /dw/ is always realized as [d<sub>3</sub>w], although the small number of tokens and lack of contexts other than class 3 does not allow for certainty. Similarly, the sequence **sw** occurs only in the class 3 word [j<sub>3</sub>wē] ‘palm needle’ ([n<sub>3</sub>sē] representing the plural form). Again, the alveolar consonant is spirantized when followed by **w**. (See §3.6 for a description of spirantization.)

|            |    | Labial | Alveolar | Palatal | Velar |
|------------|----|--------|----------|---------|-------|
| Plosives   | vl |        |          | chw     | kw    |
|            | vd | bw     | (dw)     | jw      | gw    |
| Fricatives |    | fw     | (sw)     | shw     |       |
| Nasals     |    | mw     |          |         | ɲw    |

Table 2.8 Cw sequence types.

The number of occurrences of each **Cw** sequence is given in Table 2.9, which clearly shows that velar consonants are the most numerous in the C<sub>1</sub> position, with the labial consonants the next most common.

| Sequences               | Examples (in phonetic form)                         | # of tokens |
|-------------------------|---|-------------|
| <b>chw</b>              | [tʃwɛ̃] ‘witch’, [tʃwɔ̃] ‘shrew’                    | 2           |
| <b>kw</b>               | [kwɪ:] ‘moon’, [kwādzɛ̃] ‘think’, [kwɛ̃sɛ̃] ‘woman’ | 13          |
| <b>bw</b>               | [bwɪ] ‘dew’, [bwɛ̃dɛ̃] ‘break’                      | 8           |
| <b>(dw)</b>             | [dʒwɛ̃] ‘mouth’, [dʒwɛ̃lɛ̃] ‘edge’                  | 3           |
| <b>jw</b>               | [dʒwɪ] ‘husband’, [kɪdʒwɪ] ‘boundary’               | 2           |
| <b>gw</b>               | [gwɪ] ‘net’, [gwɪ] ‘fall’, [gwɔ̃ɲ] ‘bamboo’         | 17          |
| <b>fw</b>               | [fwɪ] ‘forward’, [mfwā] ‘slave’                     | 6           |
| <b>(sw)</b>             | [ɲfwɛ̃] ‘palm needle’                               | 1           |
| <b>shw</b>              | [bvūsɔ̃fwɪ] ‘seven’, [fwā] ‘shuck corn’             | 3           |
| <b>mw</b>               | [mwɛ̃] ‘farm’, [mwā] ‘child’, [mwāɲgā] ‘hare’       | 3           |
| <b>ɲw</b> <sup>13</sup> | [ɲwāɲ] ‘granary’, [ɲwāɲwā] ‘sugarcane’              | 4           |

Table 2.9 Examples of Cw sequences and their prevalence (n=62).

The sequence **ɲw** is ambiguous as it could represent either an **Nw** cluster belonging to the same syllable (similar in nature to **mw**, **bw** or **gw**), or it could represent an **ŋ.w** sequence, where the two segments belong to different syllables. The word for ‘granary’, for example, clearly has tone on the initial nasal, while both instances of **ɲw** in the reduplicated form for ‘sugarcane’ are pronounced with the segments acting as a unit, the nasal being of shorter duration and minimal observable tonal presence. The reader is directed to §2.1.5, where some of the challenges related to analyzing nasal-consonant sequences are discussed.

An additional question is prompted by the fact that **NC** sequences usually are observed to share place of articulation, so the occurrence of **ɲw** and **mw** suggests that the two sequences are not comparable. It is possible that these **ɲw** tokens are derived

<sup>13</sup> All tokens of **ɲw** in the data have the sequence preceding the vowel **a**, but I suspect that this apparent restriction is an artifact of the limited database. This suspicion is supported by the greater variety of vowels observed following the sequence in Noni words, although there is a clear preference for **a** in this environment. Also note that the Cw sequence in the word [ɲwā] ‘granary’ (c5) is one in which the two consonants belong to different syllables.

from verbs, which take a homorganic nasal prefix **N-**, with the nasal assimilating to the velar place of articulation. Both of the words **[ŋwāŋ]** ‘granary’ and **[ŋwā]** ‘book’ are class 1 nouns, which is the class to which most nominalized verbs belong and are credible as nominalized forms in terms of semantics, although their nominalized status cannot be confirmed. The fourth token, **[ŋwŋwá]** ‘smell (v)’ is likely an ideophone, to which normal rules of phonology do not necessarily apply.

Meanwhile, two of the **mw** tokens are class 1 nouns and the third token is a class 3 noun. Two of these tokens clearly derive the **w** from noun class affixation. (The word for ‘hare’ has the variant **wāŋgā** and so the nature of the **mw** sequence is not clear.) Thus, an argument can be made that nasal place assimilation does not apply in cases of NC sequences resulting from infixation. On the one hand, the nasal of an **N-** prefix undergoes place assimilation when prefixed to words with a **w** onset, with an **[ŋw]** realization. On the other hand, a word initial nasal maintains its place features when taking a **-w-** infix. (See §3.1 for a description of nasal place assimilation.)

Leaving aside the likelihood that the sequences **mw** and **ŋw** have different sources, I nevertheless present both of these sequences as Cw clusters and leave the question regarding their possible differing phonological character for future study.

#### 2.1.4.2 Cy sequences

Consonant clusters  $C_1C_2$ , where  $C_2$  is a palatal approximant /j/, are attested when the initial consonant is a plosive, fricative or nasal, and are nearly restricted to the labial series. As with Cw sequences, Cy sequences are observed at morphological boundaries, as well as in root-initial position of basic words. The sequence is rare, occurring uniquely only 19 times in the data and is pronounced as **[Cj]**.

The different consonants observed in Cy clusters are given in Table 2.10. The consonants **t**, **d**, **ch** and **sh** are placed in parentheses, since they are attested only rarely in the data. Richards (1991: 338) also observed **chy** and **jy** sequences (and no **dy** sequence). However, no mention of frequency of these sequences is offered. Given the similar acoustic properties of a palatal consonant alone and a palatal consonant followed by the palatal approximant **y**, it is possible that some tokens of **shy**, **chy** and **jy** have been mistakenly transcribed without the glide. But it is just as likely that Cy sequences with a palatal initial consonant are in decline. The consonant **n** is omitted from the Cy sequence inventory due to the unclear interpretation of the phone **[ɲ]** as a realization of /**nj**/. See §2.1.1 above for details.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> The vowel /i/ of agreement prefixes for the anaphoric 1 demonstrative is always realized as a palatal glide for classes 8 and 19 (i.e., **[bjē-ē]** and **[fjē-ē]** respectively). Meanwhile, a palatal glide is sometimes also observed in the agreement prefixes for classes 4, 5, 10 and 13 (i.e., **[tjē-ē]**) and class 7 (i.e., **[kjē-ē]**), particularly in careful speech.



|            |    | Labial | Alveolar | Palatal | Velar |
|------------|----|--------|----------|---------|-------|
| Plosives   | vl |        | (ty)     | (tʃy)   |       |
|            | vd | by     | (dy)     |         |       |
| Fricatives |    | fy     |          | (ʃy)    |       |
| Nasals     |    | my     |          |         |       |

Table 2.10 Cy sequence types.

A complete list of root-initial Cy tokens is given in Table 2.11.

| Sequences | Examples (in phonetic form)   | # of tokens |
|-----------|---|-------------|
| (ty)      | [kʰɪntʃɛ̃ŋ] ‘diarrhea’  | 1           |
| by        | [bjɔ̃ŋ] ‘gall bladder’, [bjɔ̃ŋ] ‘fish’, [bjɛ̃:] ‘nail’,<br>[bjā] ‘banana’, [bjāŋ] ‘palm nut’,<br>[bjɔ] ‘raffia palm’,<br>[m̩bjɛ̃ŋɛ̃] ‘bell’, [fɪmbjɔ̃ŋ] ‘hunting bow’ | 8           |
| dy        | [dʒā] ‘testicle’, [bvūdʒɛ̃] ‘bridge’  | 2           |
| fy        | [fjɛ̃] ‘mouse’, [fjɔ̃ŋsɛ̃] ‘resemble’,<br>[fjɔ̃] ‘debt’, [fjɪ] ‘burn’   | 4           |
| shy       | [āfjɔ̃ŋ] ‘stomach (internal)’   | 1           |
| chy       | [tʃjā:] ‘hand’  | 1           |
| my        | [mjæyɔ̃] ‘blink’, [mjɔ̃] ‘squeeze’  | 2           |

Table 2.11 Examples of root-initial Cy sequences and their prevalence (exhaustive) (n=19).

### 2.1.5 Nasal-consonant sequences

A proper interpretation of nasal-consonant sequences is difficult for a number of languages in the area. The same is true for Nchane, where the nasal of NC sequences is observed to always be pronounced with a certain degree of pitch, due to the nasal’s sonorance quality. But the characteristics of the nasal in one word versus a second word are not always the same, and are sometimes different in separate utterances of the same word. While interpretation of such sequences is debatable, I consider them as involving a syllabic nasal rather than prenasalization. However, there is much variation, with the NC onsets of verbs particularly showing more prenasalization-like characteristics.

In §2.1.5.1 I present the general phonetic properties and distribution patterning of NC sequences. I attempt to limit my discussion here to NC sequences in monomorphemic environments. I do this, however, with a recognition that it is likely impossible to rule out all instances of nominalization (which involves a homorganic nasal prefix) and that the question regarding a correct synchronic analysis of the nasal of NC sequences at the morpheme boundary in at least some of the noun classes is not yet answered with certainty. In §2.1.5.2 I present the various sources of NC sequences and discuss briefly how this complicates the analysis. Recognizing the potential sources of NC sequences is critical to understanding their behavior, since the

realization of many of them is variable, suggesting that processes resulting in NC sequences, such as syllable reduction and root incorporation of prefix nasals, have not yet fully regularized.

### ***2.1.5.1 General phonetic properties and distribution of nasal-consonant sequences***

Nasals followed by non-nasal consonants are very common in the data, with the nasal almost always matching the place of articulation of the following consonant. This sequence type is particularly prevalent among nouns, which account for more than 75% of tokens. Slightly more than 50% of these sequences occur in word-initial position and another 35% are stem-initial, with both contexts accounting for more than 85% of total occurrences.

Some of these nasal-consonant sequences show characteristics consistent with both syllabic nasal-consonant sequences and prenasalized consonants. In word-initial position, the duration of the nasal is usually comparable to that of a vowel in a word-initial vowel-consonant sequence and carries tone. However, the duration can be significantly shorter, almost to the point of being unheard by the inattentive listener, particularly in commonly used words like proper nouns.<sup>15</sup> The tone realized on the nasal often matches the preceding tone. When there is no preceding tone, or when the NC sequence occurs at a phrasal boundary, the nasal is almost always realized with a mid tone. (Note that observations regarding the phonetic characteristics of NC sequences in this section are substantiated through the use of Speech Analyzer, an acoustic analysis application.)

The nasal is usually resyllabified, forming a syllable coda, when preceded by a vowel, and usually with no apparent tone implications. In other words, there appears to be no lexical tone associated with most of these nasals. The duration of the resyllabified nasal in the coda position is relatively shorter compared to the word-initial variety and there is a clear reduction in intensity (i.e., a hiatus) marking the nasal-consonant boundary when the consonant is a voiced plosive like **b** or **g**. When the consonant is a voiceless plosive or fricative there is a smaller reduction in intensity at the nasal-consonant boundary and a large reduction between the consonant and the following vowel.

Rarely, reduced intensity has been observed instead occurring at the vowel-nasal boundary suggesting that the nasal has not been completely resyllabified and the nasal-consonant sequence showing characteristics more in line with a prenasalization analysis. Multiple utterances of the same word sometimes yield varying degrees of apparent resyllabification, possibly related to differences in careful and natural speech. These rare cases might be limited to nominalizations. However, examples of known nominalized forms are observed with the nasal being characteristically resyllabified.

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<sup>15</sup> Note for example the form **Cane** as one of the observed varieties of the language name.

The inventory of NC(G) sequences occurring in the data appears in Table 2.12. The glides are given in parentheses when they are attested with a particular NC sequence. The table shows that any consonant can be preceded by a nasal, with the exception of **gh**. There is no evidence to suggest that a **ŋgh** sequence is impossible; its absence is likely due to the scarcity in the data of **gh** itself.

|              | Labial  | Alveolar | Palatal | Velar |
|--------------|---------|----------|---------|-------|
| Plosives     |         | nt(y)    | ɲch     | ŋk(w) |
|              | mb(w/y) | nd       | ɲj      | g(w)  |
| Fricatives   | ɲfw     | ns       | ɲsh(w)  | -     |
| Approximants |         | ɲl       | ɲy      | ɲw    |

Table 2.12 NC(G) sequence types.

Examples of NC sequences in nouns are given in Table 2.13, along with the prevalence of the different NC sequence types. Note that the distribution of glides following the various NC sequence varieties is largely consistent with that of the glides without the preceding nasal.

Some important observations regarding this data set can be made. First, nasal-consonant sequences occurring inside the root and not at a morpheme boundary are rare. In most cases, these appear to be nominalized forms with the NC sequence a result of a verb suffix. Two apparent exceptions are **[mwāŋgā]** ‘hare’ (c1) and **[sēŋli]** ‘okra’ (c1). Second, the voiced velar nasal-plosive sequence **ŋg** rarely occurs before front vowels, with **[kʰiŋgèŋ]** ‘island’ being the only occurrence in the data. Lastly, while the distribution of NCG sequences is modestly wide, their prevalence is very low.

| NC               | Examples (in phonetic form)  | # of tokens |
|------------------|--|-------------|
| nt               | [k <sup>h</sup> ĩntĩ] ‘bowl’ (c7), [k <sup>h</sup> ĩntâ] ‘stool’ (c7), [n̄t <sup>h</sup> ɔ̃ŋ] ‘cane rat’ (c1)  | 15          |
| ɲch              | [ɲtʃĩ] ‘law’ (c1), [fĩptʃã] ‘ring’ (c19), [k <sup>h</sup> ĩptʃɔ:] ‘horn’ (c7)  | 24          |
| ŋk               | [ŋk <sup>h</sup> ĩ:] ‘song’ (c1), [ŋk <sup>h</sup> ã] ‘jigger’ (c9), [k <sup>h</sup> ĩŋk <sup>h</sup> ɔ̃fɛ] ‘bone’ (c7), [ŋkfúsà] ‘ancestor’ (c1), [k <sup>h</sup> ĩŋkfúnɛ] ‘stump’ (c7) | 22          |
| mb               | [m̄bĩ:] ‘grasshopper’ (c9), [m̄bà:] ‘bait’ (c9), [m̄bɔ̃nà] ‘sweet potato’ (c1)   | 23          |
| nd               | [n̄dĩŋɛ] ‘omen’ (c1), [n̄dãŋ] ‘thread’ (c1), [n̄dɔ̃ŋ] ‘hawk’ (c1)  | 7           |
| ɲj               | [ɲdʒĩ] ‘venom’ (c1), [ɲdʒã] ‘balafon’ (c1), [ɲdʒɔ:] ‘mortar’ (c5)  | 13          |
| ŋg               | [k <sup>h</sup> ĩŋgɛŋ] ‘island’ (c7), [ŋgãŋ] ‘tarantula’ (c1), [ŋgɔ̃lɔ] ‘vulture’ (c1), [k <sup>h</sup> ĩŋgvù] ‘duck’ (c7)   | 27          |
| ɲf               | [k <sup>h</sup> ĩŋfɛ:] ‘blind man’ (c7), [k <sup>h</sup> ĩŋfãŋ] ‘molar tooth’ (c7), [ɲfɔ̃] ‘ladle’ (c3)  | 11          |
| ns               | [fĩnsɛsɛ] ‘louse’ (c19), [n̄sã] ‘friend’ (c9), [n̄sɔ:] ‘pepper’ (c1)   | 10          |
| ɲsh              | [fɛɲfĩ] ‘daytime’ (c16), [ɲfãŋ] ‘ground’ (c9), [fĩŋɔ:] ‘mud wasp’ (c19)  | 4           |
| ŋgh              | -  |             |
| ɲl~nl            | [sɛŋli] ‘okra’ (c1), [k <sup>h</sup> ĩŋlã:] ‘kingfisher’ (c7), [nlɔ] ‘poison’ (c1)   | 3           |
| ɲy <sup>16</sup> | [fĩɲjɛlɛ] ‘earring’ (c19), [fĩɲjɔ̃ŋã] ‘pig’ (c19)  | 2           |
| ɲw               | [ŋwãŋ] ‘granary’ (c1)  | 1           |
| mbw              | [m̄bwɛk <sup>h</sup> ɔ̃lɔ] ‘chameleon’ (c1) <sup>17</sup>  | 1           |
| ŋgw              | [ŋgwãŋ] ‘whip’ (c1) <sup>18</sup>  | 1           |
| ɲfw              | [ɲfwã] ‘slave’ (c1)  | 1           |
| ɲshw             | [ɲfwɛ] ‘palm needle’ (c3) <sup>19</sup> , [ɲfwɛ] ‘broom’ (c9)  | 2           |
| nty              | [k <sup>h</sup> ĩntjɔ̃ŋ] ‘diarrhea’  | 1           |
| mby              | [m̄bjɛŋɛ] ‘bell’, [fĩmbjɛŋ] ‘hunting bow’  | 2           |

Table 2.13 Examples of NC sequences in nouns and their prevalence (n=170).

The few examples of NC onsets occurring in verbs show that the duration of the nasal is closer to that of coda nasals. In addition, there is very little or no decrease in intensity at the nasal-consonant boundary. This NC variety shows characteristics of a prenasalized consonant. However, only seven examples of NC word-initial verbs

<sup>16</sup> The inclusion of **ɲy** as a NC sequence type is supported by the presence of a hiatus occurring between the nasal and the consonant. Furthermore, the palatal consonant in both of these words is sometimes realized as the allophone [j].

<sup>17</sup> This is obviously a compound word of some sort. However, the NCw sequence is our focus here, and there is no reason to doubt it as a valid example of this sequence.

<sup>18</sup> This word refers to any instrument used to beat a person, e.g., a cane, stick or strap.

<sup>19</sup> The **w** in this word comes from c3 affixation. The word is likely the source from which the word ‘broom’ is derived, which is fashioned by tying palm needles together. The class 3 affix is apparently maintained in the stem of the new class 9 word.

are found in the data, which are given in Table 2.14. Furthermore, some verbs which were originally transcribed with an NC onset showed that the nasal was not present in recordings, suggesting that the status of this variety of NC sequence is tenuous.

| Sequences  | Examples (in phonetic form)   | # of tokens |
|------------|---|-------------|
| <b>nt</b>  | -   |             |
| <b>pch</b> | -   |             |
| <b>ŋk</b>  | [ <sup>h</sup> k <sup>h</sup> ò] ‘clap’   | 1           |
| <b>mb</b>  | [ <sup>m</sup> bɛ̃] ‘imitate’, [ <sup>m</sup> bæfɔ̃] ‘subtract’, [ <sup>m</sup> bɔ̃] ‘melt’, [ <sup>m</sup> bū:] ‘foam’, [ <sup>m</sup> bóŋɛ̃] ‘perspire’ | 5           |
| <b>ŋg</b>  | [ <sup>h</sup> gōmā] ‘kneel’  | 1           |

Table 2.14 Examples of NC sequences in verbs (exhaustive) and their prevalence (n=7).

Considering the phonetic characteristics of NC sequences observed above, an argument can be made for syllabic nasals as well as prenasalized consonants, with a range of realization patterns consistent with either interpretation. This variability is consistent with diachronic change, the end result of which is difficult to predict, and is explained to a degree by looking at the different sources of NC sequences in the language, which are presented in the following section.

The realization of NC onsets of verbs is particularly more consistent with a prenasalization analysis than NC sequences in other contexts. But even this NC variety is prone to speaker/utterance variability. A more accurate analysis is one which views all NC sequences of the language as a single variety, but with realization tendencies associated with specific contexts (e.g., word class, consonant type, etc.). Most occurrences of NC sequences show characteristics inconsistent with a prenasalization analysis. Therefore, I consider a syllabic nasal analysis preferable.

### 2.1.5.2 Sources of nasal-consonant sequences

Analysis of nasal-consonant sequences is complicated due in part to their multiple sources, with some NC sequences difficult to categorize in terms their morphological status. Five primary contexts are observed:

1. The first-person singular subject agreement prefix **N-**, which affixes to the left side of the verb and often various elements of the verb core (e.g., tense and aspect markers). For example, mē **ŋ-gē n-dú** [1SG.PRO 1SG-P3 1SG-say] ‘I said...’.
2. Consonant initial suffixes added to verb roots with nasal consonant codas. For example, bī**ŋ-sé** [dance-CAUS] ‘roll’.
3. Nominalization is usually accomplished through adding a homorganic nasal prefix **N-** to a verb. All verb roots have consonant onsets. The result then is a NC sequence. For example, kī-n-tē**ŋ**ɛ̃ [c7-NMZR-argue] ‘argument’.

4. Noun class prefixes added to nominal roots and nominal modifiers. For example, māŋ-kó [c6a-ladder] ‘ladders’ and mw-ē: mún-dùdē [c18a-thing c18a-many] ‘many things’.
5. Monomorphemic, root internal NC sequences. For example, mbénè [c5.breast] ‘breast’, mwāŋgā [c1.hare] ‘hare’ and mbū: [foam] ‘foam (v)’<sup>20</sup>.

The first two contexts are easily dealt with, since it is usually obvious when a verb has been marked with subject agreement or a causative suffix, although many verbs are observed which have an apparent historical causative suffix lexicalized as part of the verb root (see §9.1.4 for more details). Contexts 3 and 4 represent environments which are not always easily analyzed. For instance, it is almost certainly the case that some nouns in the data are nominalizations, but without a corresponding source verb identified. This difficulty is particularly troublesome for class 1 nouns, since many of these have root-initial NC sequences, where the homorganic nasal represents either a nominalization prefix or a lexicalized class prefix. Therefore, it is not always apparent if the nasal present at the morpheme boundary in nouns is a part of the root or has been affixed to the root.

The morpheme boundary presented by class agreement marking on nominal modifiers is usually easily identifiable and brings no questions to the status of the resulting NC clusters. But certain genders (particularly 1/2 and 19/18a) are observed to have subgroups involving a homorganic nasal at the morpheme boundary. The question then is whether the nasal belongs to the root or to the prefix. See §5.2.1 for more discussion on noun classes with a prevalence of such NC sequences.

The various sources of NC sequences in the language and the accompanying ambiguity as to their morphological status should be kept in mind when considering the phonetic description offered in the above section. The variability of the phonetic realization of some NC sequences reflects an indistinct morpheme boundary, where a historical nasal prefix element is in the process of being lexicalized onto the root.

## 2.2 Vowels

Nchane has a seven-vowel system, which is in contrast to the neighboring Grassfields languages, which most often have nine vowel systems. However, within the Beboid group, Sari and Noni also have seven vowel systems (Richards 1991). The basic vowel phonemes of Nchane are displayed in Figure 2.1.

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<sup>20</sup> To agitate a liquid with a paddle or stick, resulting in the formation of foam. This is an action used in the production of palm oil to separate the oil from the water.

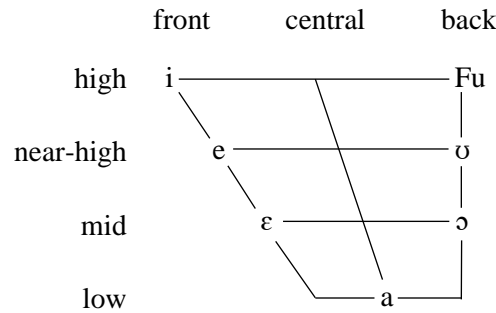


Figure 2.1 Inventory of Nchane vowels (short, oral varieties).

The figure above shows a symmetrical vowel system, with three height distinctions represented in front and back series. However, the vowel system is phonetically asymmetrical, as the high back fricative vowel (represented as **Fu**) is realized as a near-high central vowel [ɥ] with associated frication. Issues related to the fricative vowel analysis and this apparent discrepancy are discussed in §2.2.1, followed by sections describing the phonetic characteristics of vowels and support for their phonemic status. These sections are then followed by presentations of nasal vowels and long vowels. (While these vowels are represented in this chapter in their IPA form, see §1.3.3 for an explanation as to how they are represented in the description's orthography.)

### 2.2.1 Fricative vowel

The vowel **Fu**, appearing in the high back position in Figure 2.1 above, has a severely restricted distribution, following a limited number of consonants and always accompanied phonetically by a fricative. The fricative, either [f] or [v], matches the voicing of the preceding consonant. For example, it is **f** following **k** and **ch**, but **v** following **b**, **g** and **j**. Table 2.15 presents the CFu sequence types with illustrative examples and their prevalence in the data. Note that long and nasal varieties of the vowel in question are also observed. Due to the overall small number of tokens, all varieties of this vowel are treated together.

| Preceding consonant | Examples (in phonetic form)                          | # of tokens |
|---------------------|--|-------------|
| <b>b</b>            | [bvǔ] 'dog', [bvúli] 'lion', [bvǔgǎ] 'nine'          | 5           |
| <b>k</b>            | [kfǔ:] 'rope', [kʰikfǔnǎ] 'rat', [ŋkfúsà] 'ancestor' | 12          |
| <b>g</b>            | [gvǔ] 'chest', [gvǔ:nì] 'obey', [ŋgvǔ] 'tail'        | 12          |
| <b>ch</b>           | [tʃfǔ] 'reply', [ɲtʃfǔgǎ] 'thousand'                 | 3           |
| <b>j</b>            | [dʒvǔ] 'cobra'                                       | 1           |

Table 2.15 Examples of CFu sequences and their prevalence (n=33).

Previous analyses of the Nchane sound system (see Boutwell 2014a; and Richards 1991)<sup>21</sup> have treated these phonetic CF sequences as allophonic variants of Cw sequences when preceding /u/. However, recent attention to similar phenomena in other languages suggests a better analysis is to view this frication as being associated, if only as a trigger, with the vowel itself (see for example Connell 2007; and Faytak 2014).

Figure 2.2 presents the various vowels according to their average formant values and shows that the high, back position normally filled by [u] is empty. The phonetic vowel representing the phoneme /u/, which at one time filled this position, is now realized as a near-high central vowel associated with labiodental frication of the preceding consonant (i.e., the fricative vowel **Fu**).

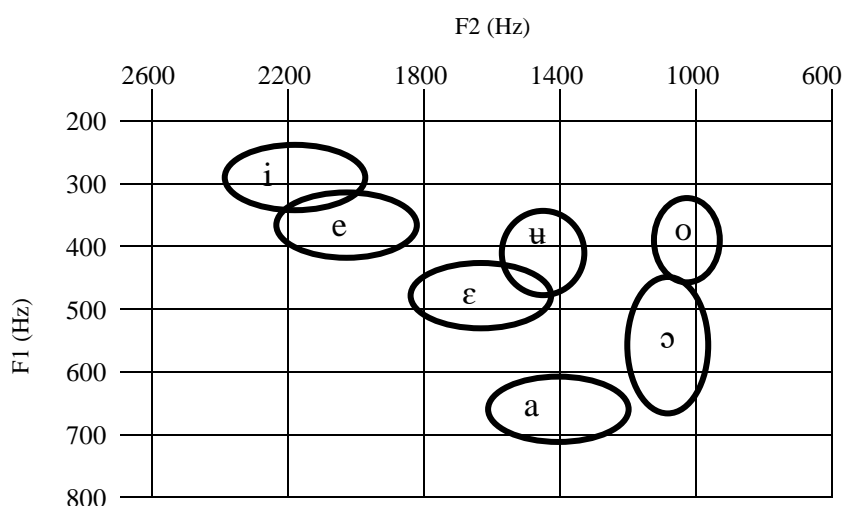


Figure 2.2 General zones of Nchane vowel realization reflecting F1 and F2 measurements.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>21</sup> The CFu sequence is actually not attested by Richards for Nchane, even though at least one instance occurs in his data. However, in the same work, he treats CFu as an allophone of Cwu for Noni. The fact that CFu is not observed by Richards for Nchane may indicate that it is a relatively new development. The current Noni orthography observes 12 consonants in the initial position of CFu sequences (Andrus & Lux 2009: 8), whereas Hyman observed only seven (Hyman 1981: 1). While this might be a result of a relatively small sample size in the case of Hyman's study, it might also support the notion that this phenomenon is relatively novel in the area. Meanwhile, Mungong is the only other Beboid language reported as having this phenomenon of frication associated with the high back vowel, with preliminary work revealing only three consonants (**b**, **k** and **g**) allowed to precede the vowel in question (Boutwell 2011: 10).

<sup>22</sup> These zones reflect the F1 and F2 measurements of the various vowels plotted on a chart, with F1 serving as the horizontal axis and F2 as the vertical axis. The actual number of vowels measured are as follows: i=38, e=53, ε=52, a=19, ɔ=21, o=12, u=8.



Faytak (2014: 56) suggests that such fricative vowels are associated with vowel systems with high vowels being encroached upon by lower vowels. This appears to be consistent with the Nchane vowel system. While no such encroachment is observed for the back vowels, the high front vowel is being crowded by the near-high front vowel and there is no high back vowel in opposition to the high front vowel.

In the past, /o/ is assumed to have placed upward pressure on /u/ resulting in a growing degree of closure and frication. The frication was also accompanied by centralization of the vowel. Speculation is that /u/ is being reanalyzed as a near-high central vowel, relieving the pressure on the high back position and allowing /o/ to move to a slightly higher position. Indeed, the /o/ often sounds like [u] to me, as a native American English speaker. In addition, both of these vowels (/u/ and /o/) exhibit behavior commonly associated with a high back vowel, as is shown in §§3.3 and 3.4.

### 2.2.2 Phonetic descriptions of short oral vowels

As stated in the introduction to the section on vowels, the vowel system is phonetically asymmetrical. This is demonstrated in Figure 2.2 above which shows that there is no high back vowel counterpart to the high front vowel. Further descriptions of each vowel are given below. Note that these descriptions can for the most part be extended to the long and nasal vowel varieties, only differing in duration and nasal quality respectively. Therefore, no phonetic descriptions will be given for the individual long and nasal vowels.

**The vowel i** The high front unrounded vowel **i** is realized as [i], as in [bī] ‘goat’ and [bā-ptfī] ‘laws’. It is normally lax when followed by a nasal, resulting in the realization of [ɪ], as seen in [kʰi-mbā] ‘walking stick’. In this environment, contrast between **i** and **e** is therefore neutralized, and it is highly probable that some instances of transcribed **e** should be considered as **i**. Following a palatal consonant such as **ch** or **j**, laxing usually does not occur, as in [tʃɪndʒu:] ‘mortar’. See §3.2 for a treatment of high front vowel laxing.

**The vowel e** The realization of the near-high front unrounded vowel **e** may best be characterized as [ɪ]. Some instances are a bit lower, possibly represented as [e]. Some examples are [fi-sī] ‘larynx’, [bīlī] ‘hail’ and [lēgō] ‘run’. There is also a degree of free variation between the realizations of [ɪ] and [i], particularly in word final position. Thus, alternative pronunciations are observed for certain words like /ā-gé/→[ā-gí]~[ā-gi] ‘sole of foot’ and /dʒé/→[dʒí]~[dʒi] ‘sandal’.

**The vowel ε** The vowel **ε** is a mid front unrounded vowel [e]. In normal speech, this vowel often laxes when adjacent to a velar consonant, being realized as the mid central vowel [ə]. Sometimes, this laxing also occurs when the vowel is utterance final. The laxing is less likely to occur if the vowel is in a position associated with stress (as indicated by an apparent increase in intensity), such as root initial, and is often “corrected” in careful speech. Note that stress as a feature of the sound system has not been studied beyond the observances made here. These allophones are

illustrated in the examples [kʰɪ-bɛ̃] ‘wing’, [kʰɪ-kwɔ̃] ‘head’, [bɔ̃ŋ] ‘mosquitos’ and [lɛ̃mɔ̃] ‘tongue’.

**The vowel a** The low unrounded vowel **a** is realized as [a], although it is not as low as a standard low vowel and might be more accurately described as the near-high central vowel [ɐ]. This vowel is illustrated in words like [lábɛ̃] ‘spider web’, [ŋkʰã] ‘basket’ and [bã-ndán] ‘thread’. Note that rarely this vowel is pronounced as [æ]. No specific environment for this alternative pronunciation has been identified, and it is analyzed as being in free variation with [a].<sup>23</sup>

**The vowel ɔ** The mid back rounded vowel **ɔ** has the most widely scattered formant plotting area, with a height spanning from 450-650 Hz. However, most instances are realized as [ɔ]. There is a tendency for higher realizations to follow palatal consonants such as /tʃ/ and /ɲ/. But the incidence is inconsistent, with some lower realizations observed after palatal consonants and some higher realizations after non-palatal consonants. Some examples are [kʰɪ-bɔ̃] ‘arm’, [kʰɪ-nsɔ̃mɛ̃] ‘pestle’, [lɔ̃] ‘bite’, [fɪŋ-tʃɔ̃nɛ̃] ‘groundnut’ and [ʒɔ̃] ‘snake’.

**The vowel u** The vowel **u** is realized as a near-high back rounded vowel [ʊ], which is slightly higher than the American English [ʊ]. Its higher realization often makes it sound like [u]. This vowel is illustrated by the words [kʰɪ-ŋkʰɔ̃fɛ̃] ‘bone’ and [kʰɪ-jɔ̃] ‘fool’.

**The vowel Fu** The vowel **Fu** is realized as a near-high central rounded vowel [ɸ], which is associated with labiodental frication. Some examples are [kʰɪ-ŋgvɸ] ‘duck’, [bvɸlɪ] ‘lion’, [bɪ-kfɸnɛ̃] ‘rats’ and [tʃfɸ] ‘reply (v)’.

### 2.2.3 Contrastive sets for short oral vowels

The phonemic status of the seven Nchane vowels is illustrated in Table 2.16, which provides two contrastive sets. The first set establishes contrasts for all the vowels but the back series, with each vowel following the palatal plosive [dʒ]. Contrast for back vowels is observed in the set of words appearing below the dashed line, with the three back vowels following the velar plosive [g].

<sup>23</sup> The vowel [æ] was not observed as a vowel for Nchane by Richards (1991). However, he did note the long version [æ:], but as the phonetic realization of /a:/ (Richards 1991: 355–6). This analysis is not supported by the data corpus associated with this current work, in which /a:/ is realized as [a:], as described in §2.2.5.

| Underlying form | Surface form | Gloss              |
|-----------------|--------------|--------------------|
| /dʒi/           | [dʒi]        | ‘hoe’ (c9)         |
| /dʒẽ/           | [dʒi]        | ‘animal skin’ (c9) |
| /dʒè/           | [dʒè]        | ‘word’ (c9)        |
| /dʒá/           | [dʒá]        | ‘stand’ (v)        |
| /dʒũ/           | [dʒvũ]       | ‘cobra’ (c9)       |
| /dʒó/           | [dʒó]        | ‘sun’ (c5)         |
| /gũ/            | [gvũ]        | ‘chest’ (c9)       |
| /gò/            | [gò]         | ‘buy’ (v)          |
| /gõ/            | [gõ]         | ‘spear’ (c5)       |

Table 2.16 Contrastive sets for short oral vowels.

#### 2.2.4 Nasal vowels

Nasal vowels, which are summarized in Figure 2.3, occur in Nchane and are analyzed as the product of syllable reduction processes. Therefore, the issue of their synchronic phonemic status is somewhat complicated. While minimal pairs which contrast oral and nasal vowels are readily available, the practical orthography represents nasal vowels as VN sequences, reflecting the lack of contrast between nasal vowels and their corresponding VN sequences. Accordingly, it is perhaps more accurate to consider these nasal vowels as the phonetic realization of an oral vowel followed by a nasal consonant in coda position.

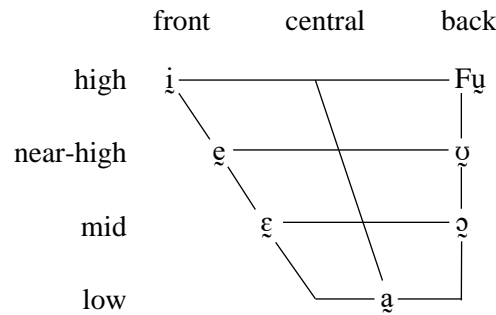


Figure 2.3 Nchane nasal vowel inventory.

Occurrences of nasal vowels are restricted to coda position and a moderate amount of free variation between  $\bar{V}$  and VN is observed.<sup>24</sup> This free variation appears to be less frequent for long nasal vowels than for short nasal vowels. Language

<sup>24</sup> Occurrences of  $\bar{V}$  in the data are usually represented as  $V\bar{n}$  in this work. Although, since free variation between  $\bar{V}$  and  $V\bar{n}$  is observed, both representations are used and are considered as accurate.

internal evidence for the treatment of these vowels as underlying VN sequences comes from verbs like **gē**: ‘go’, which has the progressive form of **gēné**. Considering cognates with neighboring languages in which a nasal consonant is present also supports the hypothesis that these vowels are a result of syllable reduction. Table 2.17 provides a partial list of cognate evidence of syllable reduction.

| Nchane | Noni     | Sari     | Kemedzung | Gloss            |
|--------|----------|----------|-----------|------------------|
| kī-ŋgō | kə-ŋgū:n | fī-ŋgomu | ki-gombō  | ‘bedbug’         |
| ŋgvú   | wvún     | wu:ŋ     | wupshi    | ‘tail’           |
| tā:    | tā:n     | taŋe     | -         | ‘ashes’          |
| chā    | chān     | tsa:ŋ    | tsandi    | ‘monkey’         |
| kī-ŋkâ | kə-ŋkâ:ŋ | ki-ta:ŋ  | ki-ŋkōŋkō | ‘insect, beetle’ |
| kī-lé: | kē-lé:m  | ki-lemē  | ki-lingbā | ‘bat’            |
| byē:   | byēn     | byēni    | byandi    | ‘nail’           |

Table 2.17 Selected cognates of Nchane and three other Beoid languages supporting syllable reduction as source of Nchane nasal vowels.

Near-minimal pairs contrasting nasal and oral vowels are given in Table 2.18.

| Vowels | Underlying form | Surface form            | Gloss              |
|--------|-----------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| i/i    | /fīŋ/           | [fī]                    | ‘be silent’        |
|        | /fī/            | [fī]                    | ‘sit’              |
| e/e    | /kī-fēŋ/        | [k <sup>h</sup> ī-fī]   | ‘palm tree flower’ |
|        | /kī-ptfē/       | [k <sup>h</sup> ī-ptfī] | ‘sleeping room’    |
| ɛ/ɛ    | /dʒèŋ/          | [dʒè]                   | ‘grave’            |
|        | /dʒè/           | [dʒè]                   | ‘word’             |
| a/a    | /ŋgàŋ/          | [ŋgà]                   | ‘proverb’          |
|        | /ŋgá/           | [ŋgá]                   | ‘rust’             |
| ɔ/ɔ    | /kī-mbōŋ/       | [k <sup>h</sup> ī-mbō]  | ‘door’             |
|        | /kī-bó/         | [k <sup>h</sup> ī-bó]   | ‘arm’              |
| u/u    | /kī-kóŋ/        | [k <sup>h</sup> ī-kó]   | ‘shirt’            |
|        | /kī-kô/         | [k <sup>h</sup> ī-kô]   | ‘yam’              |
| Fu/Fu  | /ŋgúŋ/          | [ŋgvú]                  | ‘tail’             |
|        | /ŋgù/           | [gvù]                   | ‘chest’            |

Table 2.18 Contrastive pairs for nasal vowels.

### 2.2.5 Vowel length

Contrastive vowel length is observed in a small number of words, most of which have monosyllabic roots, with long varieties of all seven short vowels. The long vowels inventory is provided in Figure 2.4.<sup>25</sup>

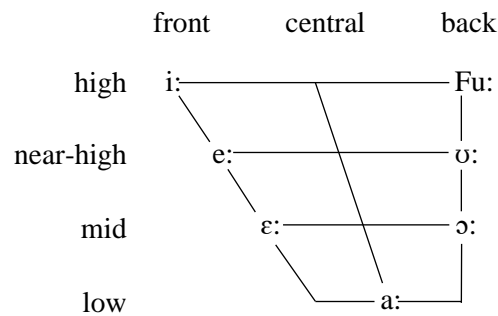


Figure 2.4 Nchane long vowel inventory.

The analysis is somewhat complicated by the occurrence of two types of long vowels, one being the so-called “half-long” variety. Short vowels usually have a duration of about 100 ms and long vowels are about 220-250 ms. Half-long vowels measure about 180-190 ms in duration. Some examples are **kĩntĩ** ‘bowl’ (c7) and **fɛtā** ‘fireside’ (c16). The actual duration of a vowel can be affected by a number of factors. Contour tones and nasalization are particularly associated with longer vowels in Nchane.

Although difficult to substantiate, it is likely that these half-long vowels are a product of syllable reduction, similar to what has been posited for nasal vowels (see §2.2.4). The same has been argued for as the source of long vowels in nearby Mungbam (Lovegren 2013: 96). Because of the relative difficulty in differentiating three length values by the researcher as well as by many native speakers, the current analysis considers half-long vowels as short varieties.

<sup>25</sup> Note that Richards (1991) postulates that [æ] is the surface realization of the long low vowel /aa/. However, there is no evidence in the current data to support this analysis.

Examples of contrast for long vowels are given below.

| Vowels | Example    | Gloss      | Example   | Gloss         |
|--------|------------|------------|-----------|---------------|
| i:/i   | [fī:]      | ‘wind’     | [fī]      | ‘kidney’      |
| e:/e   | [tʃī:]     | ‘mole’     | [tʃī]     | ‘palm kernel’ |
| ɛ:/ɛ   | [fē:]      | ‘two’      | [fē]      | ‘make’        |
| a:/a   | [bī-ɲdʒā:] | ‘clouds’   | [bā-ɲdʒà] | ‘balafon’     |
| ɔ:/ɔ   | [kʰī-jō:]  | ‘elephant’ | [kʰī-jō]  | ‘spirit’      |
| o:/o   | [ŋgò:]     | ‘canoe’    | [ŋgó]     | ‘fire’        |
| Fu:/Fu | [bvù:gō]   | ‘nine’     | [bvúli]   | ‘lion’        |

Table 2.19 Contrastive pairs for long vowels.

## 2.3 Phonotactics

### 2.3.1 Syllable structure

Six types of syllables are observed in Nchane words: V, N, CV, CGV, CVN, and CGVN. The V syllable type is rare, with most occurrences accounted for by class marking for classes 6 and 18 and the preposition à ‘in’. The CV syllable type is by far the most prevalent and is observed involving all consonants and vowels.

The N syllable type is listed here in spite of the fact that the characteristics of the N in NC sequences do not always support its analysis as syllabic. The strongest candidates for such an analysis are the first-person singular subject agreement prefix and the nasal prefix of some class 6a nouns. See §2.1.5 for further discussion.

Examples of each of the syllable types are given in Table 2.20.

| Syllable type | Example               | Gloss             |
|---------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| <b>V</b>      | [ā]                   | ‘in’              |
|               | [ā.dā]                | ‘testicles’       |
| <b>N</b>      | [ŋ.k <sup>h</sup> ō:] | ‘palm kernel oil’ |
|               | [m.bvū:]              | ‘palm wine’       |
| <b>CV</b>     | [dā]                  | ‘testicle’        |
|               | [t <sup>h</sup> i]    | ‘abdomen’         |
|               | [fi]                  | ‘kidney’          |
|               | [jō]                  | ‘hear’            |
| <b>CGV</b>    | [bwī]                 | ‘dew’             |
|               | [gwō]                 | ‘cut down’        |
|               | [kwī]                 | ‘moon’            |
|               | [ŋgwī]                | ‘fishing pole’    |
|               | [fjē]                 | ‘mouse’           |
|               | [fjō]                 | ‘debt’            |
|               | [bjō]                 | ‘raffia palm’     |
| <b>CVN</b>    | [jéŋ]                 | ‘thigh’           |
|               | [dāŋ]                 | ‘jump’            |
|               | [bēŋ]                 | ‘frighten’        |
| <b>CGVN</b>   | [kwēŋ]                | ‘firewood’        |
|               | [ŋwāŋ]                | ‘granary’         |
|               | [bjéŋ]                | ‘fish’            |
|               | [ā.[j]ēŋ]             | ‘stomach’         |

Table 2.20 Examples of different syllable types.

### *Nouns*

Nchane shows a slight preference for monosyllabic noun roots. The phonological structure of roots is dominated by CV and CV.CV structures, although other combinations are not uncommon. Noun roots with more than two syllables are relatively rare. The different syllable patterns of noun roots are summarized in Table 2.21, along with representative examples.

| Pattern                       | Example        | Gloss      |
|-------------------------------|----------------|------------|
| $\sigma$                      | [bī]           | ‘goat’     |
|                               | [fjē]          | ‘mouse’    |
|                               | [tʃōŋ]         | ‘thief’    |
| $\sigma.\sigma$               | [gá.nē]        | ‘grass’    |
|                               | [sǒ.ŋǒ]        | ‘oil palm’ |
|                               | [kwē.sí]       | ‘woman’    |
|                               | [sēŋ.lì]       | ‘okra’     |
|                               | [mwàŋ.gá]      | ‘rabbit’   |
| $\sigma.\sigma.\sigma$        | [bì.lì.kʰáŋ]   | ‘papaya’   |
|                               | [bǒ.ŋǎ.lī]     | ‘tortoise’ |
| $\sigma.\sigma.\sigma.\sigma$ | [tʃǎ.lǎ.gó.gō] | ‘spider’   |

Table 2.21 Syllable patterns of noun roots.

### Verbs

The majority of Nchane verbs have monosyllabic roots with the shape CV. Disyllabic roots most often have the shape CV.CV. Other syllable types, such as CVN and CGV, are relatively uncommon in verb root structures. Table 2.22 summarizes the different patterns observed and gives some examples.

| Pattern         | Example   | Gloss      |
|-----------------|-----------|------------|
| $\sigma$        | [wā]      | ‘argue’    |
|                 | [jǎ]      | ‘vomit’    |
|                 | [bíŋ]     | ‘dance’    |
|                 | [fjì]     | ‘burn’     |
|                 | [gwī]     | ‘fall’     |
|                 |           |            |
| $\sigma.\sigma$ | [pī.lē]   | ‘hide’     |
|                 | [lī.gè]   | ‘run’      |
|                 | [kwā.dzè] | ‘think’    |
|                 | [mjá.gé]  | ‘blink’    |
|                 | [ŋgó.mé]  | ‘bow down’ |

Table 2.22 Syllable patterns of verb roots.

### 2.3.2 Distributional Restrictions

This section discusses observed restrictions on the distribution of consonants and vowels. Table 2.23 shows which CV sequences are attested, considering simple onsets only. Unattested sequences are represented by a minus sign and shaded.



|    | i | e | ɛ | a | ɔ | ʊ | <sup>F</sup> u |
|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|----------------|
| b  | + | + | + | + | + | + | +              |
| t  | + | + | + | + | + | + | -              |
| d  | + | + | + | + | + | + | -              |
| ch | + | + | + | + | + | + | +              |
| j  | + | + | + | + | + | + | +              |
| k  | + | + | + | + | + | + | +              |
| g  | + | + | + | + | + | + | +              |
| f  | + | + | + | + | + | + | -              |
| s  | - | + | + | + | + | + | -              |
| sh | + | + | + | + | + | + | -              |
| gh | - | + | + | + | + | - | -              |
| m  | + | + | + | + | + | + | -              |
| n  | + | + | + | + | + | - | -              |
| ɲ  | + | + | + | + | + | + | -              |
| ŋ  | - | - | + | + | + | + | -              |
| l  | - | + | + | + | + | + | -              |
| y  | + | + | + | + | + | + | -              |
| w  | - | + | + | + | + | + | -              |

Table 2.23 Attested consonant-vowel sequences in Nchane (simple onsets only).

**Restrictions on consonants**

All consonants in the inventory are attested as onsets, although **ŋ** is rare in this position. Conversely, **ŋ** is the only consonant allowed in word final position. Additionally, only nasals are allowed in coda position. As was stated in §2.1.2.3, nasals in word final position are often elided and a nasal quality realized on the preceding vowel. This provides evidence of a preference for CV syllable types, with CVN the only type of closed syllable allowed, and that type of syllable often realized as the open syllable C<sup>̃</sup>V.

Table 2.24 summarizes the consonants which can occur stem-internally. While most consonants are observed in this position, the voiceless palatal plosive is notably unattested. Furthermore, the voiceless alveolar plosive appears only once in the data in a stem-internal environment as indicated by the brackets, in the word **tūtū** ‘potato’, which is possibly a loanword from English and/or perhaps a reduplicated stem. The voiceless velar plosive is also significantly rare in this environment, in spite of it being the most frequent of all but nasal consonants. This suggests that the language prefers voiced and sonorant consonants in stem-internal position. The velar fricative **gh** also appears in brackets, indicating that the total number of tokens of this consonant is small, and the two occurrences of stem-internal **gh** possibly represent an allophonic variety of /g/ rather than the phoneme /ɣ/.

|              |    | Labial | Alveolar | Palatal | Velar |
|--------------|----|--------|----------|---------|-------|
| Plosives     | vl |        | [t]      |         | k     |
|              | vd | b      | d        | j       | g     |
| Fricatives   |    | f      | s        | sh      | [gh]  |
| Nasals       |    | m      | n        | ɲ       | ŋ     |
| Approximants |    |        | l        | y       | w     |

Table 2.24 Stem-internal consonants in Nchane.

***Restrictions on vowels***

While all vowels may occur in word final position, only **a**, **ɛ** and **ɔ** occur in word initial position, with **ɛ** and **ɔ** only attested in this position in interjections. The low occurrence of the fricative vowel has already been discussed in §2.2.1. Because of the small number of tokens, it is difficult to establish any firm conclusions regarding its distribution patterning, beyond the fact that it occurs most often following **b**, **k** and **g**.

The front high vowel **i** often follows the palatal plosives **ch** and **j**, but rarely follows the alveolar plosives **t** and **d**. It is also rarely observed following **n**, but only in word final position, and never follows the alveolar consonants **s** or **l**. These apparent restrictions are suggestive of a spirantization process, although it does not appear to be applied strictly.

## Chapter 3

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### Phonological processes

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A number of phonological alternations are observed, some of which occur due to contact between certain phonemes, and others which are likely fundamentally morphophonological in nature. The alternations due to adjacency of certain segments include nasal place assimilation, presented in §3.1, and high front vowel laxing, described in §3.2. Both of these alternations are illustrated by monomorphemic examples, with additional examples of occurrences at morpheme boundaries providing transparent evidence. Glide formation, which is covered in §3.3, is also likely a strictly phonological phenomenon. Section 3.4 describes the process of compensatory vowel lengthening, observed only in the Anaphoric 1 demonstrative. Vowel copying is a process clearly involving morpheme-morpheme interactions and is also limited to certain word classes. This process is described in §3.5. The chapter concludes with a presentation of spirantization in §3.6, which is observed in a small number of monomorphemic contexts as well as two cases conditioned by affixation.

#### **3.1 Nasal place assimilation**

As was stated in §2.1.5.1, the nasal of NC sequences usually matches the place features of the following consonant. This assimilation is seen in root internal NC sequences, as well as in NC sequences resulting from prefixation, with the process not applying in other types of affixation. Assimilation in root-internal NC sequences is illustrated in (3.1), by verbs as well as nouns.

- (3.1)
- |            |               |
|------------|---------------|
| [mb̥ɔ̃]    | ‘melt’        |
| [ŋkù]      | ‘clap’        |
| [fĩ-ŋkɔ̃]  | ‘cup’ (c19)   |
| [dʒwĩnsɛ̃] | ‘man’ (c1)    |
| [mwàŋgá]   | ‘rabbit’ (c1) |

The examples in (3.2) illustrate nasal assimilation across prefix-stem morpheme boundaries. Example (3.2)a shows assimilation of the first-person singular subject agreement prefix, (3.2)b of the nominalizer and (3.2)c of the nasal coda of the class 6a prefix.

- (3.2)
- |    |                  |            |
|----|------------------|------------|
| a. | [m̥-b̥ɔ̃:]       | ‘I stab’   |
|    | [j̥-j̥ɛ̃]        | ‘I see’    |
|    | [ŋ-g̥ɛ̃:]        | ‘I go’     |
| b. | [m̥-b̥ɪl̥ɛ̃]     | ‘question’ |
|    | [ŋ-f̥i:]         | ‘help’     |
|    | [k̥ɪ-n-t̥ɛ̃p̥ɛ̃] | ‘argument’ |
| c. | [mām-b̥ɪŋɛ̃]     | ‘bundle’   |
|    | [mān-d̥ɛ̃]       | ‘bridge’   |
|    | [māp̥-f̥i]       | ‘face’     |
|    | [māŋ-k̥ó]        | ‘bridge’   |

Selected examples to illustrate place assimilation of nasals followed by each of the non-nasal consonants are given in Table 3.1.

| [m]         | [ŋ]          | [n]             | [p]        | [ɲ]            |
|-------------|--------------|-----------------|------------|----------------|
| [mbà]       | [ŋfā]~[nfā]  | [ntòŋ]          | [p̥t̥f̥ɔ̃] | [māŋ-k̥ó]      |
| ‘soup’ (c9) | ‘eagle’ (c1) | ‘cane rat’ (c9) | ‘insult’   | ‘ladder’ (c6a) |
|             |              | [k̥ɪ-nd̥òŋ]     | [p̥d̥ʒɔ̃]  | [k̥ɪ-ŋgvà]     |
|             |              | ‘neck’ (c7)     | ‘cloth’    | ‘duck’ (c7)    |
|             |              | [f̥ɪ-ns̥ɛ̃s̥ɛ̃] | [p̥f̥áŋ]   | [ŋ-w̥ɪp̥ɛ̃]    |
|             |              | ‘louse’ (c19)   | ‘soil’     | ‘I open’       |
|             |              | [nl̥ɔ̃]~[ŋl̥ɔ̃] | [p̥-j̥ɛ̃]  |                |
|             |              | ‘poison’ (c1)   | ‘I see’    |                |

Table 3.1 Selected examples of Nchane word forms with NC sequences, illustrating nasal place assimilation.

The example given to illustrate the **ŋw** sequence is a verb with a **w** onset in order to clearly show which place features are assimilated by the preceding nasal. Otherwise, the **ŋw** sequence is ambiguous as to whether it represents a case of infixation, in which case the nasal is not expected to assimilate to the place of articulation of the **w**. See §§2.1.4.1 and 2.1.5 for details regarding the challenges of interpreting **Nw** sequences.

As indicated in the table, free variation is observed in NC sequences involving **[f]** and **[ɬ]**. Nasals before **[f]** are realized as **[ŋ]** or **[n]**. Careful speech shows a preference for **[n]**. Nasals before **[ɬ]** are realized as **[n]** or **[ŋ]**, with a preference for **[n]** in onset position and **[ŋ]** in coda position, although either realization can be observed in either environment. Similar variation is observed in Mungong in NC sequences at syllable boundaries where **[ŋ]** is sometimes observed in non-homorganic NC sequences (e.g., **[bāŋfɛ̃]** ‘gather’ and **[kāŋsɛ̃]** ‘be alert’).

Additionally, other CC types are also observed in the same syllabic context in Mungong, as illustrated in (3.3).

- |       |   |           |
|-------|---|-----------|
| (3.3) | <b>[kāŋnə̃]</b> ‘squeeze’<br><b>[gāmti]</b> ‘protect’<br><b>[kūksɛ̃]</b> ‘alter’<br><b>[tsàŋni]</b> ‘headpad’ | (Mungong) |
|-------|---|-----------|

Otherwise, CC sequence restrictions and nasal place assimilation in Mungong is comparable to that of Nchane. See Boutwell (2011) for more details.

Besides the non-homorganic nasals in the alternative NC variants **[nf]** and **[ŋl]** given in Table 3.1, nasal place assimilation is otherwise strictly applied across the language. One regular exception is observed in cases of verb stems with nasal codas followed by the Causative suffix **-sɛ̃**, as in (3.4). The nasal in these verbs is usually **[ŋ]**, but **[n]** is also attested.

- |       |  |
|-------|--|
| (3.4) | <b>[bīŋ-sɛ̃]</b> ‘roll’<br><b>[kōŋ-sɛ̃]</b> ‘awaken’<br><b>[tʃīŋ-sɛ̃]</b> ‘send’<br><b>[fīn-sɛ̃]</b> ‘mix’ |
|-------|--|

This demonstrates that place assimilation does not apply to NC sequences resulting from suffixation. Furthermore, §2.1.4.1 provides evidence suggesting that place assimilation does not apply in cases of infixation. Thus, nasal place assimilation is limited to root internal NC sequences and those resulting from prefixation.

### 3.2 Front high vowel laxing

The front high vowel **/i/** consistently laxes to **[ɪ]** when preceding any NC sequence. This process occurs root-internally, as evidenced by the overall lack of **[iNC]** sequences in the language, with example (3.5) being representative.

(3.5) [fĩnsé] ‘mix’

Laxing is best illustrated in noun class prefixes with an underlying /i/ and noun roots with nasal onsets, as in (3.6).

(3.6) /kĩ-/ + /ntâ/ → [kĩ-ntâ] ‘chair’ (c7)  
 /bĩ-/ + /ntjĩ:/ → [bĩ-ntjĩ:] ‘horns’ (c8)  
 /fĩ-/ + /ŋkĩ/ → [fĩ-ŋkĩ] ‘cup’ (c19)

Laxing can sometimes be blocked when the vowel is preceded by a palatal consonant, with the lax and nonlax varieties in free variation (e.g., [tʃĩ-ŋgũ]~[tʃĩ-ŋgũ] ‘gun’ (c13)). The nonlax alternative in this context is especially seen when the nasal is **ŋ**. Laxing may also occur when the nasal is an onset, particularly in fast speech, but usually it does not (e.g., [kĩ-mógũ] ‘maggot’).

### 3.3 Glide formation

High vowels are realized as glides when preceding other vowels. This is seen in possessive pronouns and the anaphoric demonstrative ANA1, both of which have a vowel onset in the root. Example (3.7) illustrates glide formation observed in possessive pronouns. A high front vowel /i/ in a prefix is realized as [j], while a near-high back vowel /o/ is realized as [w]. Note that the fricative vowel in the class 14 agreement prefix behaves in the same way as the non-fricative vowel in the class 18a agreement prefix.

(3.7) /bĩ-/ + /õŋ/ → [bjõŋ] ‘2SG.POSS’ (c8)  
 /fĩ-/ + /è/ → [fjĩ] ‘3SG.POSS’ (c19)  
 /mõ-/ + /è/ → [mwĩ] ‘3SG.POSS’ (c18a)  
 /bũ-/ + /àn/ → [bwàn] ‘1SG.POSS’ (c14)

Similarly, the high vowels of agreement prefixes on the anaphoric 1 demonstrative are realized as glides, as in (3.8). Again, the fricative vowel in the class 14 agreement prefix is realized as [w], mirroring the behavior of the non-fricative vowel in the class 18a agreement prefix.

(3.8) /tʃĩ-/ + /è/ → [tʃ(j)è:] ‘ANA1’ (c4)  
 /kĩ-/ + /è/ → [k(j)è:] ‘ANA1’ (c7)  
 /bĩ-/ + /è/ → [bjè:] ‘ANA1’ (c8)  
 /mõ-/ + /è/ → [mwè:] ‘ANA1’ (c18a)  
 /kũ-/ + /è/ → [kwè:] ‘ANA1’ (c3)  
 /bũ-/ + /è/ → [bwè:] ‘ANA1’ (c14)

As indicated by the parentheses, the palatal glide is sometimes either not present at all or is only slightly perceptible. This is particularly the case when the

preceding consonant is the palatal obstruent /tʃ/ or the velar obstruent /k/. See §3.4 for an explanation of these alternative realizations, as well as of the long vowel in these forms.

### 3.4 Compensatory vowel lengthening

While long vowels are observed in Nchane, VV sequences involving different vowels are not allowed. This restriction is violated when the Anaphoric 1 demonstrative, which has a root consisting of the vowel *ε* takes a noun class agreement prefix. Therefore, one of the vowels is either deleted or is transformed into a glide (see §3.3). In either case, the result is the loss of a tone bearing unit and the development of an unassociated tone. Vowel lengthening ensues to compensate for the vowel loss and accommodate the unassociated tone.

The vowel prone to deletion (or glide formation) is the weaker of the prefix vowel and the root vowel. When the vowel of the noun class agreement prefix is relatively weak (i.e., /i/, /o/ or /u/), the *ε* of the root is maintained, but lengthened, as illustrated in (3.9).

|       |            |   |           |              |
|-------|------------|---|-----------|--------------|
| (3.9) | /jĩ-/+/ê/  | → | [jê:]     | ‘ANA1’ (c9)  |
|       | /wõ-/+/ê/  | → | [wê:]     | ‘ANA1’ (c1)  |
|       | /bĩ-/+/ê/  | → | [bjê:]    | ‘ANA1’ (c8)  |
|       | /fĩ-/+/ê/  | → | [fjê:]    | ‘ANA1’ (c19) |
|       | /tʃĩ-/+/ê/ | → | [tʃ(j)ê:] | ‘ANA1’ (c4)  |
|       | /kĩ-/+/ê/  | → | [k(j)ê:]  | ‘ANA1’ (c7)  |
|       | /kũ-/+/ê/  | → | [kwê:]    | ‘ANA1’ (c3)  |
|       | /bũ-/+/ê/  | → | [bwê:]    | ‘ANA1’ (c14) |

The example set demonstrates four different realizations of this process, based on the type of consonant and prefix vowel. When the prefix consonant is a glide, the resulting word form has the shape GV:. When the prefix vowel is /i/ and the consonant is a weak obstruent (e.g., /b/ or /f/), then the prefix vowel undergoes glide formation and the root vowel is lengthened. A strong consonant followed by /i/ results in the optional realization of a glide, which is often not heard during normal speech. Finally, when the prefix vowel is the fricative vowel, then the vowel undergoes glide formation in addition to the root vowel being lengthened.

When the prefix vowel is /a/, which is stronger than the root vowel /ε/, then the root vowel is deleted and the prefix vowel is lengthened to compensate.

|        |           |   |       |              |
|--------|-----------|---|-------|--------------|
| (3.10) | /bā-/+/ê/ | → | [bâ:] | ‘ANA1’ (c2)  |
|        | /kā-/+/ê/ | → | [kâ:] | ‘ANA1’ (c6)  |
|        | /mā-/+/ê/ | → | [mâ:] | ‘ANA1’ (c6a) |
|        | /jā-/+/ê/ | → | [jâ:] | ‘ANA1’ (c18) |

### 3.5 Vowel copying

The phenomenon of vowel copying is observed in a limited number of contexts, each involving the copying of a prefix vowel, and insertion of the copied vowel into the stem. Two contexts involve the copying of a prefix /a/, the first of which is the distal demonstrative **gê** illustrated in (3.11). The /a/ of the prefixes for classes 2, 6, 6a and 18 is copied and the vowel of the demonstrative root is deleted.

|        |            |   |         |              |
|--------|------------|---|---------|--------------|
| (3.11) | /bā-/+/gê/ | → | [bà-gā] | 'those' (c2) |
|        | /kā-/+/gê/ | → | [kà-gā] | 'those' (c6) |
|        | /mā-/+/gê/ | → | [mà-gā] | 'that' (c6a) |
|        | /jā-/+/gê/ | → | [jà-gā] | 'that' (c18) |

Note that the agreement prefixes for the other classes do not trigger vowel copying, with the vowel of the demonstrative remaining unaltered (e.g., [**wù-gī**] 'that' (c1) and [**bī-gī**] 'those' (c8)).

The second case involves the numbers 'two', 'three' and 'four' when they are marked with class 6 agreement. The vowel /ɛ/ in each of the numbers is replaced with /a/, which is a copy of the agreement prefix for class 6.<sup>26</sup>

|        |             |   |          |              |
|--------|-------------|---|----------|--------------|
| (3.12) | /ā-/+/fɛ:/  | → | [ā-fā:]  | 'two' (c6)   |
|        | /ā-/+/tɛdɛ/ | → | [ā-tādī] | 'three' (c6) |
|        | /ā-/+/nɛ/   | → | [ā-nā]   | 'four' (c6)  |

This phenomenon could be a phonological one, since words with the sequences **age** and **agɛ** are very rare. The word [**ā-gī**] 'sole of foot' (c17) is one example. An alternation showing the same kind of process is seen with the word for stone (gender 5/6). The singular form is [**Ø-tɛdī**] and the plural form is [**ā-tā**]. However, another gender 5/6 word 'axe' does not show the alternation ([**Ø-tɛmɛ**] and [**ā-tɛmɛ**]).

An alternative analysis of this phenomenon is to treat it as vowel assimilation. So instead of copying the first vowel, inserting it into the root and then deleting the second vowel, the second vowel assimilates properties of the first vowel. However, as will be seen in the next case involving the number 'one', it is apparent that two vowel elements are realized in the final syllable of the root, supporting the copying-insertion analysis.

Vowel copying is also observed in the root of the number 'one' when taking an agreement prefix with a high vowel (including the near-high back vowel).<sup>27</sup> When

<sup>26</sup> The underlying forms of the numbers are based on the surface realizations of the numbers in citation form with no nominal head.

<sup>27</sup> As with the numbers 'two' through 'four' in the previous case, the underlying form of the number 'one' is based on its surface realization in citation form and with no nominal head.



the agreement prefix has the high front vowel /i/, this vowel is copied and the /e/ of the number is deleted. When the prefix has the high back vowel /u/ or the near-high back vowel /o/, the vowel is copied and the /e/ of the number is deleted. Both of these cases are illustrated in (3.13). Note that the copied vowel is also inserted into the second syllable of the root. However, in this case, the /a/ of the root is maintained, and the copied vowel then undergoes glide formation (see §3.3 for an account of glide formation).

|        |               |   |             |             |
|--------|---------------|---|-------------|-------------|
| (3.13) | /tʃĩ-/+/mēmà/ | → | [tʃĩ-mĩmjā] | ‘one’ (c5)  |
|        | /kĩ-/+/mēmà/  | → | [kĩ-mĩmjā]  | ‘one’ (c7)  |
|        | /jĩ-/+/mēmà/  | → | [jĩ-mĩmjā]  | ‘one’ (c9)  |
|        | /fĩ-/+/mēmà/  | → | [fĩ-mĩmjā]  | ‘one’ (c19) |
|        | /wō-/+/mēmà/  | → | [wō-mōmwā]  | ‘one’ (c1)  |
|        | /wō-/+/mēmà/  | → | [wō-mōmwā]  | ‘one’ (c3)  |
|        | /bū-/+/mēmà/  | → | [bvū-mōmwā] | ‘one’ (c14) |

A similar process is observed when the class 10 agreement marker /jĩ-/ is prefixed to roots of the numbers two, three, four and five. The high front vowel of the agreement prefix is copied and inserted to the right of the initial consonant of the number root, as illustrated in (3.14). The root vowels are maintained, and as in the case of vowel copying involving the number one presented above, the copied vowel undergoes glide formation. Note that this process is not triggered in the case of class 4 agreement, even though the class 4 agreement marker for numbers is the same as that for class 10.

|        |              |   |           |               |
|--------|--------------|---|-----------|---------------|
| (3.14) | /jĩ-/+/fě:/  | → | [jĩ-fjě:] | ‘two’ (c10)   |
|        | /jĩ-/+/tēdē/ | → | [jĩ-fēdī] | ‘three’ (c10) |
|        | /jĩ-/+/nē/   | → | [jĩ-njē]  | ‘four’ (c10)  |
|        | /jĩ-/+/tēŋ/  | → | [jĩ-fēŋ]  | ‘five’ (c10)  |

In the case of roots with a /t/ onset, the copied high front vowel results in spirantization of the /t/, which is discussed in the next section.

### 3.6 Spirantization

The process of an obstruent becoming a fricative is referred to as spirantization. This is observed in Nchane in a small number of contexts, sometimes in association with the copying and insertion of a high front vowel (described in §3.5 above). Spirantization occurs to a small degree with the consonants **k** and **g** in monomorphemic contexts, particularly when intervening between identical non-high vowels. For example, /sákā/ ‘news’ is sometimes pronounced as [sáxā], although the frication is usually not very strong.

As was stated in §2.1.2, **d** before **i** is probably usually spirantized. Thus, for example, /dī/ ‘name’ is realized as [dʒī]. Also, the palatal glide **y** is often spirantized

when not preceded by another consonant, with free variation of the two different realizations. This is especially the case when word-initial. For example, [jō]~[jō] ‘hair’, [jēŋ]~[jēŋ] ‘see’ and [jǎ]~[jǎ] ‘suck’.

Morphophonemic occurrences of spirantization are also attested. The root-initial consonants **d** and **s** of class 3 nouns are realized as fricatives, presumably conditioned by the class 3 infix **-w-**. Example (3.15) gives derivations to demonstrate the process.

- (3.15)    /-w-/+/dē/    →    dwē    →    [dʒwē]    ‘mouth’  
              /-w-/+/sē/    →    jswē    →    [ɲʃwē]    ‘palm needle’

While clear examples of class 3 nouns with a **tw** onset are unattested, the fact that class 3 spirantization is not realized with non-alveolar initial consonants implies that the feature +alveolar conditions the process (at least as it is realized with class 3 nouns). The mid front vowel could likewise be a necessary element, since **ɛ** follows the **Cw** sequence in both of the above words.

The previous section also showed that spirantization follows the insertion of a high front vowel to the right of the root-initial **t** of the numbers three and five, when marked with class 10 agreement. This is illustrated by the derivations in example (3.16).

- (3.16)    /jī-/+/tēdē/    →    jī-tjēdī    →    [jī-ʃēdī]    ‘three’ (c10)  
              /jī-/+/tēŋ/    →    jī-tjēŋ    →    [jī-ʃēŋ]    ‘five’ (c10)

## Chapter 4

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### Tone

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Nchane is a tonal language with a tonal system comprising three level tones and several contour tones. This distinguishes it from the two-tone systems commonly associated with Narrow Bantu languages, although many Bantoid languages of the area also report more than two level tones (cf. Mundabli (Voll 2017), Mungbam (Lovegren 2013), Noni (Hyman 1981), and Limbum (Fransen 1995)). Tone functions in marking lexical items as well as in making some grammatical distinctions. Nouns display the largest variety of tones. Therefore, the analysis here gives more attention to nominal tone as compared to other word classes. Some differences in behavior between nominal and verbal tone are observed and will be pointed out below.

The tone inventory, including a lengthy proofing exercise, is given in §4.1 followed by a description of the functions of tone in §4.2. Section 4.3 presents how the various tones are distributed and their general phonetic characteristics are discussed in §4.4. The nouns of gender 9/10 are differentiated by tone only and display tonal behavior that is not clearly understood. Therefore, the tone of these nouns is given special attention in §4.5. Finally, §4.6 is devoted to describing tone processes which have been identified.

An overview of the different representative elements of tone used in this chapter are given in Table 4.1.

| Tone letters | Diacritic | Interpretation |
|--------------|-----------|----------------|
| H            | é         | high           |
| M            | ē         | mid            |
| L            | è         | low            |
| SH           | ě         | super high     |
| SL           | ë         | super low      |
| HM           | ē̃        | high-mid fall  |
| HL           | ê         | high-low fall  |
| ML           | ē̂        | mid-low fall   |
| MH           | ẽ         | low-high rise  |

Table 4.1 Summary of tone orthography.

#### 4.1 Tone inventory

Vowels serve as tone-bearing units, with the roots of word forms characterized by single or multiple tones forming tone melodies. The behavior of the various tone melodies as observed in tone frames indicates that Nchane has three contrastive level tones: High (H), Mid (M) and Low (L). Three falling contour tones are attested, while MH is the only rising contour tone observed.

Richards (1991) attests to three level tones (H, M, L) and five contour tones (HM, HL, ML, LM and LH) on monosyllabic words for Nchane. The current analysis differs in that the LM melody does not appear in this data. The LM examples offered by Richards are all class 9 nouns which are interpreted as M in this work. Additionally, I treat Richard's LH melody as MH, although it often behaves as LH with the M being slightly lowered and triggering downdrift in the appropriate contexts. It should be noted that class 9 nouns present some challenges to identifying underlying tones. This is discussed further in §4.5.

The seven phonemic tone melodies are summarized in Table 4.2, where they are illustrated by nouns with no segmental prefix.<sup>28</sup> A reduced tone inventory is observed in verbs, which is briefly discussed at the end of this section.

<sup>28</sup> While these nouns have no segmental prefix, a floating L is hypothesized as associated with the class 1 prefix position. However, any possible effect of this floating L is imperceptible in isolation utterances.

| Tone melody | Example | Gloss                 |
|-------------|---------|-----------------------|
| H           | Ø-lú    | 'marriage' (c5)       |
| M           | Ø-ñsū   | 'pepper' (c1)         |
| L           | Ø-ŋkù   | 'box' (c1)            |
| HM          | Ø-mŭ    | 'razor' (c5)          |
| HL          | ŋf-â    | 'stirring stick' (c3) |
| ML          | Ø-mū    | 'person' (c1)         |
| MH          | Ø-ŋgūlú | 'vulture' (c1)        |

Table 4.2 Phonemic Nchane tone melodies illustrated on noun roots in isolation form.

Super high (SH) and super low (SL) tones are also observed in the data. However, their occurrence is usually attributable to specific tonal or grammatical contexts and are not considered to be phonemic (see §§4.6.4 and 4.6.5 for an account of SL and SH respectively). As stated in §2.1.5.1, the nasals of NC sequences do not have their own lexical tone, but derive their tone from the preceding tonal context or take an apparent default M tone. When a floating L tone is available, the L tone is usually realized on the nasal rather than the default M tone. However, these nasals are often resyllabified when preceded by an open syllable morpheme. When this is the case, as it is for many of the examples in this chapter, this explains why they are not marked with surface tone.

For the purpose of illustrating the phonemic nature of the seven tone melodies given in Table 4.2, disyllabic class 1 nouns in different tone frames are presented below. Class 1 nouns are chosen for the demonstration because all seven melodies may be accounted for. Finding suitable frames for studying the various tones is challenging, since no single noun class displays tonal patterns in which surface tone is easily mapped to the underlying tone. Furthermore, at times, multiple frames need to be examined in order for distinct tonal patterns to be observed. Therefore, the following exercise should be viewed as a process in which the individual “proofs” at times depend on previous “proofs”, with the sets of data eventually accumulating to elaborate the full system. Where appropriate, the reader is directed to other sections for the finer details of associated processes.

The demonstration begins by showing the tonal behavior of class 1 nouns with different underlying tones in H tone frames. The H frames consist of a conjoined noun phrase with the class 10 noun **ŋi** ‘chickens’ and the conjunction/preposition **bé** ‘with’. The data sets are presented with a header and three lines. The header provides the underlying tone of the noun under investigation. The first line gives the frames, with ‘x and chickens’ on the left and ‘chickens and x’ on the right. The tone diacritics on the examples represent surface tone. The second line gives the underlying tone. The third line gives the glosses. The various melodies are presented in the same order as in Table 4.2, with the exception of the HM melody, for which the tonal behavior is odd. Consequently, it will be treated after the other melodies.

Examples (4.1)-(4.3) show that there are no tonal changes associated with the level tone melodies in a H tone frame, except for downstepping of the H in example (4.1). (See §4.6.2 for a description of this process.) Otherwise, the H's are realized as H's, the M's are realized as M's and the L's are realized as L's. The downstepped H in (4.1) results in a loss of contrast between H and M, but contrast is evident when the word in focus is in the initial position of the frame, establishing phonemic H and M melodies. These frames also provide evidence that is supportive of phonemic M and L melodies, although the pitch difference between the M and L nouns in the frames could be generalized for both nouns as simply lower relative to the H noun in the same frames. More definitive evidence for phonemic M and L melodies is found in a L tone frame, which is given later in this section.

|       |                 |      |                |                |      |                            |
|-------|-----------------|------|----------------|----------------|------|----------------------------|
| (4.1) | <u>H</u>        |      |                |                |      |                            |
|       | <b>Ø-kfúlá</b>  | bé   | ǰí             | ǰí             | bé   | <b>Ø-<sup>+</sup>kfúlá</b> |
|       | <sup>L-</sup> H | H    | <sup>H</sup> H | <sup>H</sup> H | H    | <sup>L-</sup> HH           |
|       | c1-hyena        | with | c10.chicken    | c10.chicken    | with | c1-hyena                   |

|       |                 |      |                |                |      |                  |
|-------|-----------------|------|----------------|----------------|------|------------------|
| (4.2) | <u>M</u>        |      |                |                |      |                  |
|       | <b>Ø-mbégē</b>  | bé   | ǰí             | ǰí             | bé   | <b>Ø-mbégē</b>   |
|       | <sup>L-</sup> M | H    | <sup>H</sup> H | <sup>H</sup> H | H    | <sup>L-</sup> MM |
|       | c1-hill         | with | c10.chicken    | c10.chicken    | with | c1-hill          |

|       |                 |      |                |                |      |                 |
|-------|-----------------|------|----------------|----------------|------|-----------------|
| (4.3) | <u>L</u>        |      |                |                |      |                 |
|       | <b>Ø-nsàlà</b>  | bé   | ǰí             | ǰí             | bé   | <b>Ø-nsàlà</b>  |
|       | <sup>L-</sup> L | H    | <sup>H</sup> H | <sup>H</sup> H | H    | <sup>L-</sup> L |
|       | c1-needle       | with | c10.chicken    | c10.chicken    | with | c1-needle       |

The HL melody illustrated in (4.4) also presents no difficulties for analysis, with no changes of the melody itself, but downdrift is observed when a HLH sequence occurs, as in the “lion and chickens” phrase. (See §4.6.1 for an account of this phenomenon.)

|       |                  |                 |                |                |      |                  |
|-------|------------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------|------|------------------|
| (4.4) | <u>HL</u>        |                 |                |                |      |                  |
|       | <b>Ø-bvúlè</b>   | <sup>+</sup> bé | ǰí             | ǰí             | bé   | <b>Ø-bvúlè</b>   |
|       | <sup>L-</sup> HL | H               | <sup>H</sup> H | <sup>H</sup> H | H    | <sup>L-</sup> HL |
|       | c1-lion          | with            | c10.chicken    | c10.chicken    | with | c1-lion          |

ML roots in utterance-final position are realized with a falling tone. Thus, for example, **nà** ‘cow’ and **mbūnà** ‘sweet potato’ are both realizations of the ML melody. The fall of the contour is usually unrealized when in non utterance-final position or when preceded by a H tone. When there is no fall, as seen in (4.5), the contrast between L and ML is neutralized (cf. example (4.3)). However, evidence for a ML melody is provided in a L frame, which will be given later in this section. Note

that the class 1 ML noun in the example is realized with a phonetic L tone. This phenomenon is explained in §4.6.3.

(4.5)

|                  |      |                |  |                |      |                  |
|------------------|------|----------------|--|----------------|------|------------------|
| <u>ML</u>        |      |                |  |                |      |                  |
| <b>Ø-ŋgvùlè</b>  | bé   | ǰĩ             |  | ǰĩ             | bé   | <b>Ø-ŋgvùlè</b>  |
| <sup>L- ML</sup> | H    | <sup>H</sup> H |  | <sup>H</sup> H | H    | <sup>L- ML</sup> |
| c1-worm          | with | c10.chicken    |  | c10.chicken    | with | c1-worm          |

As seen in (4.6), MH is realized as MH, with the H being pronounced at a lower pitch due to downdrift when the MH sequence is preceded by an additional H (see §4.6.1). While the M lowering observed above in the ML root appears to be blocked by the following H, downdrift nevertheless occurs and it is likely that the M of both H frames is slightly lowered as described in §4.4.

(4.6)

|                  |      |                |  |                |      |                             |
|------------------|------|----------------|--|----------------|------|-----------------------------|
| <u>MH</u>        |      |                |  |                |      |                             |
| <b>Ø-mbvūfá</b>  | bé   | ǰĩ             |  | ǰĩ             | bé   | <b>Ø-mbvū<sup>+</sup>fá</b> |
| <sup>L- MH</sup> | H    | <sup>H</sup> H |  | <sup>H</sup> H | H    | <sup>L- MH</sup>            |
| c1-cat           | with | c10.chicken    |  | c10.chicken    | with | c1-cat                      |

The H frames clearly establish H, HL and MH melodies. As stated earlier, there appears to be a M melody, which is realized at a higher pitch level than the L melody. However, contrast between these melodies is better established in a L frame, which is presented below.

The L frame used in the analysis places the nouns in the first position of the associative noun phrase ‘x of goat’. This presentation is limited to c1 nouns; therefore, the associative marker is a constant and has a L tone. The word for ‘goat’ is **bi** (<sup>L</sup>M) and belongs to class 9. It has a floating L in the prefix position and a M on the root. The tone on ‘goat’ is realized as either M or L depending on the tonal context.

Examples (4.7), (4.8) and (4.9) illustrate H, M and L nouns respectively. Two distinct patterns may be observed. First, the associative markers of the H and M nouns are realized at the same pitch level as ‘goat’, and the H and M nouns are realized with a tone higher than that of the associative marker. Second, the L noun and its associative marker are both realized at the same pitch level, which is lower than that of ‘goat’. The behavior of the tone on ‘goat’ is explained in §§4.6.3 and 4.6.4. The important observation for the purposes of this proofing exercise is that a contrast is established for the L and non-L melodies.

- (4.7) H  
**Ø-kfúlá** wù bì  
<sup>L</sup>- H L <sup>L</sup>M  
 c1-hyena c1AM c9.goat

- (4.8) M  
**Ø-mbégē** wù bì  
<sup>L</sup>- M L <sup>L</sup>M  
 c1-hill c1AM c9.goat

- (4.9) L  
**Ø-ñsàlà** wù bī  
<sup>L</sup>- L L <sup>L</sup>M  
 c1-needle c1AM c9.goat

Examples (4.10), (4.11) and (4.12) each illustrate melodies on the noun involving a L as part of a contour tone melody. In each case, the associative marker is realized at a pitch level which is lower than the following noun ‘goat’. (Again, there is no contrast between the L and ML melodies in this frame. But contrast is observed in examples (4.13) and (4.14) below, where the order of the L frame is reversed.)

- (4.10) HL  
**Ø-bvúlè** wù bī  
<sup>L</sup>- HL L <sup>L</sup>M  
 c1-lion c1AM c9.goat

- (4.11) ML  
**Ø-ḡgvùlè** wù bī  
<sup>L</sup>- ML L <sup>L</sup>M  
 c1-worm c1AM c9.goat

The rising MH tone in (4.12) shows that there are no changes of the tone on the noun associated with the tone frame. (As observed in example (4.6) above, the M lowering rule is blocked because of the H following the floating L-M sequence.)

- (4.12) MH  
**Ø-mbvūfá** wù bī  
<sup>L</sup>- MH L <sup>L</sup>M  
 c1-cat c1AM c9.goat



Up to this point, the H and L frames have not established a contrast between the L and ML melodies, with identical surface realizations of both. A second L frame, consisting of an associative noun phrase with the noun in question in the N<sub>2</sub> position, demonstrates the phonemic status of the two melodies. Example (4.13) shows a L noun, which is realized with a falling L on the final syllable. The final “a” is placed in parentheses to indicate nonphonemic vowel length (only slightly longer than a vowel of normal length), which allows for the realization of the falling L on a single syllable. The ML noun in example (4.14) shows a L.SL pattern and indicates an earlier commencement of the falling L. Thus, the difference between these two melodies is the point at which the fall from L to SL begins.

|        |                   |      |                  |
|--------|-------------------|------|------------------|
| (4.13) | <u>L</u>          |      |                  |
|        | Ø-kfù             | wù   | Ø-nsàlà(à)       |
|        | <sup>L</sup> - ML | L    | <sup>L</sup> - L |
|        | c1-rope           | c1AM | c1-needle        |

|        |                   |      |                   |
|--------|-------------------|------|-------------------|
| (4.14) | <u>ML</u>         |      |                   |
|        | Ø-kfù             | wù   | Ø-ηgvùlè          |
|        | <sup>L</sup> - ML | L    | <sup>L</sup> - ML |
|        | c1-rope           | c1AM | c1-worm           |

Again, the purpose of this section is not to describe the various tonological processes of the language, but rather to establish phonemic contrasts. The reader is directed to §4.6.4 for an explanation of the processes motivating the falling L and L.SL patterns in these examples.

As mentioned above, the HM melody presents some peculiarities which have not yet been accounted for. There are only two class 1 nouns in the data representing this melody, one monosyllabic (ḡkū ‘scabbard’) and one disyllabic (ḡtʃɔ:ḡē ‘praying mantis’). In utterance-final position, the nouns are realized with a HM fall realized on the final syllable. The same pattern is observed in the H frame presented in example (4.15). When the word is not utterance-final, then the tone on the final syllable is realized as a downstepped H rather than as a falling tone.

|        |                       |      |                |                |      |                       |
|--------|-----------------------|------|----------------|----------------|------|-----------------------|
| (4.15) | <u>HM</u>             |      |                |                |      |                       |
|        | Ø-ḡtʃɔ:ḡē             | bé   | ḡí             | ḡí             | bé   | Ø-ḡtʃɔ:ḡē             |
|        | <sup>L</sup> - HM     | H    | <sup>H</sup> H | <sup>H</sup> H | H    | <sup>L</sup> - HM     |
|        | c1-praying.<br>mantis | with | c10.chicken    | c10.chicken    | with | c1-praying.<br>mantis |

Note that certain other noun classes have numerous members with a HM melody, but the tones are realized as level tones on disyllabic forms (e.g., tʃɪ-lélē ‘dragonflies’(c13)). Nevertheless, in each case, downstepping is observed in the H

frame “X and chickens”. For example, the class 5 noun **génē** ‘egg’ is realized as **gɛ́<sup>+</sup>né** **bé** **ʃí** (‘egg and chickens’).

There is no apparent downstep in the HM melody when placed in a L frame, as demonstrated in (4.16). Both syllables of the noun root are realized with a H tone, presenting the same pattern as that of the H melody presented in example (4.7). One possible analysis is that there is a floating L tone (e.g., <sup>L</sup>-H<sup>L</sup>H), with an accompanying rule dictating when downstep is triggered.

- (4.16) **HM**  
**Ø-jɛ́ʃɛ́**                      wù      bɪ  
<sup>L</sup>- HM                      L              <sup>L</sup>M  
 c1-praying.mantis      c1AM      c9.goat

Although the HM melody is not completely understood, it is clear that it represents a separate phonemic melody type.

Verbs display only four phonemic tone melodies, which are summarized in Table 4.3, illustrated by bare verbs.

| Tone | Example | Gloss     |
|------|---------|-----------|
| H    | bɪŋ     | ‘dance’   |
| M    | bē      | ‘cry’     |
| L    | bì      | ‘follow’  |
| ML   | tʃɪnè   | ‘abandon’ |

Table 4.3 Attested Nchane tones in verbs (non-Progressive form).

The tones of M and L verbs are realized as falling when utterance final. All verbs from the M group in the corpus are monosyllabic. The difference between M and ML verbs is neutralized in utterance final position. Therefore, it is possible that these two melodies represent the same underlying melody when realized on verbs.

## 4.2 Functions of tone

As mentioned in the introduction, Nchane tone functions in marking lexical items and in making grammatical distinctions. Distinctions by tone only are not overly common, such that the practical orthography utilizes minimal tone marking (rather than exhaustive marking) for the purpose of disambiguating lexical items for which clausal context is insufficient (see Boutwell & Boutwell 2008). Lexical tone may differentiate items of the same word class, as in (4.17), or of different word classes, as in 0.

- (4.17)    ṅgṱ    ‘termite’ (c9)    ṅgṱ    ‘grinding stone’ (c1)  
             kfṱ    ‘rope’ (c1)        kfṱ    ‘family’ (c5)

- (4.18)    kómḗ    ‘harp’ (c5)        kómḗ    ‘scratch’ (v.)  
             dṣī    ‘hoe’ (c9)        dṣī    ‘eat’ (v.)

While lexical tone represents an essential element of a lexical item, grammatical tone serves to indicate some kind of grammatical meaning. For example, grammatical tone distinguishes gender 9/10 nouns, expressing number. This distinction is thought to be accomplished through the presence of floating tones, L for class 9 and H for class 10. These grammatical tones are realized as a relative tonal difference, with class 9 nouns having a lower tone and c10 nouns having a higher tone. See §4.5 for a description of the tone of this gender.

- (4.19)    ṅàṅ    ‘animal’ (c9)        ṅāṅ    ‘animals’ (c10)  
             bjḗṅ    ‘fish’ (c9)        bjḗṅ    ‘fish’ (c10)

Grammatical tone is also observed in the TAM system. Example (4.20) consists of a clausal minimal pair which illustrates a grammatical H tone indicating Hortative mood. In the first clause, which is in Indicative mood and immediate past tense, the subject pronoun is realized with a M tone. In the second clause, the subject pronoun is realized with a H tone, expressing a desire or softened command.

- (4.20)    wṱ            fṱ:sḗ    bī-gḗ    ‘You borrowed money.’ (just now)  
             2SG           borrow    c8-teeth
- wṱ            fṱ:sḗ    bī-gḗ    ‘You should borrow money.’  
             2SG.HORT    borrow    c8-teeth

### 4.3 Tone distribution patterning

The distribution of the various tone melodies as realized on nouns is given in Table 4.4.<sup>29</sup> The prevalence of each tone melody is given, as well as their occurrence on monosyllabic versus disyllabic noun roots.

<sup>29</sup> This inventory excludes nouns of gender 9/10, since these nouns have underlying tone that is often difficult to discern because of the assumed interaction between the hypothesized floating tone prefixes and noun root tone, in addition to probable nasal depression.

| <b>Tone</b>  | <b>Tokens</b> | <b>% of Total</b> | <b>% monosyl</b> | <b>% disyl</b> |
|--------------|---------------|-------------------|------------------|----------------|
| H            | 72            | 14%               | 10%              | 5%             |
| M            | 90            | 18%               | 13%              | 4%             |
| L            | 52            | 10%               | 10%              | 0%             |
| HM           | 54            | 11%               | 7%               | 4%             |
| HL           | 78            | 15%               | 5%               | 11%            |
| ML           | 90            | 18%               | 11%              | 7%             |
| MH           | 26            | 5%                | 0%               | 5%             |
| unassigned   | 43            | 9%                | 5%               | 4%             |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>505</b>    | <b>100%</b>       | <b>61%</b>       | <b>39%</b>     |

Table 4.4 Distribution patterns of nominal tone (gender 9/10 nouns excluded).

The shaded boxes in the table indicate distribution peculiarities. First, L nouns are limited to those with monosyllabic roots. This melody is further restricted to certain noun classes: 1, 2, 7, 8, 9, 10, 19, 18a. Furthermore, nouns having NC sequences at the prefix-stem boundary are the majority of the L noun group (44 of 52 nouns or 85%). This apparent relationship between L tone and NC sequences has been observed particularly in the Eastern Grassfields languages (see Akumbu & Hyman 2017; and Hyman 1980). See §4.4 for details regarding the phonetic realization of tone as related to these NC sequences.

Second, MH nouns are limited to those with disyllabic roots. As it is the only rising melody observed in the data, it suggests that a single tone bearing unit cannot support rising melodies. And so, when disyllabic nouns with a rising melody are reduced to a single syllable, the rising melody is presumably changed into a melody that is acceptable to a single tone bearing unit.

The unassigned forms represent eight different noun classes, approximately half being gender 7/8 nouns. Some of these forms appear to present an interaction between prefix and root tones, with the prefix tone different than expected. Therefore, in those cases, the unassigned nouns might reflect a subclass marked by a different class prefix from the prevailing one. About one quarter of unassigned forms belong to class 6, with some of these involving a suppletive stem (discussed in §5.2.1). Perhaps the difficulty with assignment in this case has to do with an unstable tone environment reflecting this suppletion. Ultimately, the tonal behavior of these unassigned forms does not clearly follow the observed patterns associated with any of the seven identified tone groups and are therefore, left unassigned.

The distribution of tone on verbs constitutes close to a three-way split when the M and ML groups are combined: H=31%, M and ML=42%, L=28%. The slight predominance of the combined M and ML groups is consistent with what is seen in noun tone distribution patterns summarized in Table 4.4.

#### 4.4 Phonetic realization of tone

The actual pitch realization of tone varies greatly depending on a number of factors, including intonational effects and speaker age and gender. However, the differences in pitch between the various tones are generally consistent. As a point of reference, Table 4.5 gives the approximate pitch measurements of the tones as realized by a male speaker aged 30-40 years.

| Tone | Pitch (Hz) |
|------|------------|
| H    | 155        |
| M    | 140        |
| L    | 125        |
| HM   | 155.130    |
| HL   | 155.115    |
| ML   | 125.105    |
| MH   | 140.155    |

Table 4.5 Approximate pitch realizations of tone for a male speaker aged 30-40 years.

Downstepped high tones ( $\downarrow$ H) usually measure about 10-15 Hz lower in pitch compared to the normal H, similar if not identical to the pitch realization of a normal M. Super low tones (SL) are usually lower than a normal L by about 10 Hz. Super high tones (SH) are usually higher than a normal H by about 10 Hz, although the difference can be as high as 30 Hz in some instances.

Declination, or the gradual reduction in pitch over the course of an utterance (see Snider & van der Hulst 2012: 8), is modest in its realization and most apparent in long utterances. For example, in the sentence

**Lē kwēsé wē: dú nō, mē mō gē: mē n-jò jchē yī bā yúyí bīkfūnè yú  
mē ŋgē: à mǎn-kàlà mā-ā lé.**

‘As that woman said so, I went and brought medicine that kills rats and put it in  
that cassava puff.’ What-goes-around.9.14

the beginning and ending H tones represent a decline of about 45 Hz, with the initial H tone at 181 Hz and the final H tone at 136 Hz.

As mentioned above, nouns with NC sequences at the prefix-stem boundary appear to have some association with a L tone. In fact, a M-toned class prefix of such a noun is often slightly lowered, as illustrated in (4.21), which compares classes 2 and 7. In isolation, no lowering is evident in the H forms in (4.21)a.<sup>30</sup> In the M forms in (4.21)b, the class 2 prefix is lowered slightly (indicated by the superscript 0), while

<sup>30</sup> Lowering in the H forms might actually occur, but be imperceptible due to the relatively small difference between a standard M and a lowered M relative to the H.

no lowering is observed of the class 7 prefix. Lowering is observed in both L nouns, as demonstrated in (4.21)c.

- (4.21)
- |    |                       |                       |
|----|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| a. | bā-ndánj              | kī-já                 |
|    | M- H                  | M- H                  |
|    | c2-thread             | c7-ram                |
| b. | bā <sup>0</sup> -ɲfā  | kī-bēɲ                |
|    | M- M                  | M- M                  |
|    | c2a-eagle             | c7-calabash           |
| c. | bā <sup>0</sup> -ɲdʒà | kī <sup>0</sup> -mbàɲ |
|    | M- L                  | M- L                  |
|    | c2-balafon            | c7-walking.stick      |

While the lowering of the prefixes of the M nouns is only slight for class 2 and not apparent at all for class 7, the tone associated with them nevertheless behaves as a L in tonological processes such as downdrift (described in §4.6.1). This is true even for the H nouns, where no lowering of the prefix M is perceived for either class. It should also be noted that the same tonal behavior (seemingly associated with the prefix nasal here) is observed in the few class 2 nouns which do not have a nasal onset, just as is seen with the class 7 example in (4.21)b. Indeed, the same kind of lowering phenomenon is observed in class 9 nouns, where the number of roots with a nasal onset is only about 25%. Thus, a case can be made for the diachronic existence of so-called “nasal classes”, some of which synchronically have no nasal (see Akumbu & Hyman 2017; Good & Lovegren 2017; and Hyman 1980).

A final observation to be made regarding the phonetics of tone involves vowel length. There is a tendency for contour tones to be associated with long vowels or so-called “half” long vowels. This length is likely a byproduct of syllable reduction, as suggested in §2.2.5.

#### 4.5 Tone of gender 9/10 nouns

The singular/plural distinction of gender 9/10 nouns is indicated by tone alone. Generally, class 9 nouns have a relatively low tone, while class 10 nouns have a relatively high tone. The class markings consist of floating tone prefixes in both classes, a floating L for class 9 and a floating H for class 10. However, a workable analysis for these tone markers has been elusive. (The class 9 prefix could be a floating M that behaves like a L, as was described in the previous section.) Table 4.6 provides examples of gender 9/10 nouns with different tonal patterns and an initial hypothesis regarding their underlying tones. Note that the tone of class 9 ML nouns usually surfaces as a LSL fall in isolation.

| Underlying tone | Surface tone |          | Gloss   |
|-----------------|--------------|----------|---------|
|                 | Class 9      | Class 10 |         |
| H               | dʒóŋ         | dʒóŋ     | 'star'  |
| M               | bī           | bī       | 'goat'  |
| L               | dʒì          | dʒī      | 'hoe'   |
| ML              | dʒvù         | dʒvū     | 'cobra' |
| MH              | bvū          | bvū      | 'dog'   |

Table 4.6 Different tonal groups for gender 9/10 nouns (in isolation) with proposed underlying tone group assignment.

In some cases, for example nouns in the H and M groups, the tonal difference between singular and plural forms is difficult for the non-native speaker to perceive, and is possibly neutralized in certain contexts. However, the different underlying tones may be observed in tone frames which place the nouns in contrasting tonal environments. For example, the realizations of the class 9 and class 10 forms of the H noun **dʒóŋ** 'star' in the H frame 'chickens of X' are **[shí bɛ dʒóŋ]** and **[shí bɛ dʒóŋ]** respectively, with the H of the class 9 noun presumably downstepped. Likewise, the underlying differences between singular and plural forms of the M noun **bī** 'goat' are seen in the same frame: **[shí bɛ bī]** and **[shí bɛ bī]**. Native speakers are clearly aware of the L-H grammatical distinction, even when the tones of a singular-plural pairing are realized at the same level. This sometimes results in the speaker pronouncing the plural noun with an extraordinarily high tone in order to make disambiguation certain.

As mentioned above, an analysis of the underlying tones and their behaviors has not been successfully obtained. It is possible that a contributing factor is nasal depression, which is briefly discussed in §4.4. Only about 25% of gender 9/10 nouns have an NC onset. However, nasal prefixes are observed for this gender in a number of nearby languages and are posited for the reconstructed Proto-Eastern Grassfields, representing languages located south and east from Nchane (Hyman 1980: 182).

## 4.6 Tonal processes

Several tonological processes are observed in Nchane, resulting in different tonal realizations. Some of these processes are challenging to identify and understand due to the apparent interaction between tone and root-initial nasals as described in §4.4. An additional complication is the occasional variability of tone in utterances experienced in the elicitation process. In some cases, the same phrase can be uttered by the same speaker with two different tonal patterns one after the other. Nevertheless, this section endeavors to describe some of the details of tonal behavior.

The various tone processes described in this section are summarized in Table 4.7. The first three processes, which are grouped together in the table by a dashed line, are those which apply broadly and without phrase position conditions, although rule 3 may not occur after rule 4. To avoid confusion over the terms *downdrift* and

*downstep*, they are defined here as the lowering of the tonal register due to the presence of a surface L (for *downdrift*), or a floating L (for *downstep*) (see Snider & van der Hulst 2012 for a full treatment of these processes).

The next five processes are those which occur at a phrase boundary. Generally, they may be considered as involving ordered rules (particularly processes 4-7). The “stray erasure” process is proposed out of necessity. It is not illustrated by examples as the other processes are, but is apparent as an intervening process in deriving the proper environment for L lowering. The final process, H raising, primarily involves the realization of grammatical tone.

| Process                      | Rule   | Description   |
|------------------------------|--|---|
| 1. Downdrift                 | $HLH \rightarrow HL^+H$                            | second H of HLH sequence lowers tonal register  |
| 2. Downstep                  | $H^LH \rightarrow H^+H$                            | second H of HH sequence with certain intervening floating L's lowers tonal register   |
| 3. M lowering                | $^LM \rightarrow L^M$                              | M preceded by floating L is realized as L and floating M                              |
| 4. Floating M re-association | $LLL^M] \rightarrow LL^LM$                         | phrase-final floating M takes place of preceding L when preceded by three or more L's |
| 5. Stray erasure             | $^M \rightarrow 0$                                 | floating M is deleted   |
| 6. L lowering                | $LLL] \rightarrow LLSL$<br>$LHL] \rightarrow LHSL$ | phrase-final L lowered to SL when preceded by two or more other L's or a LH sequence  |
| 7. Partial M lowering        | $HMM] \rightarrow HMM^0$                           | phrase-final M is slightly lowered when preceded by sequence of H(M)M                 |
| 8. M raising                 | $LM(M)M]H \rightarrow LM(M)H]H$                    | phrase-final M preceded by L M (M) and followed by H is realized as H                 |
| 9. H raising                 | $H=H \rightarrow SH$                               | lexical H cliticized by grammatical H realized as SH                                  |

Table 4.7 Summary of Nchane tone processes.

In addition to the tone letters and diacritics given in Table 4.1, this section makes use of the following symbols: <sup>H</sup> (floating H tone), <sup>L</sup> (floating L tone), <sup>̃</sup> (partially lowered M tone), <sup>+</sup> (lowered register due to downdrift or downstep), ] (right phrase boundary).

#### 4.6.1 Downdrift

Downdrift (also known as automatic downstep) occurs in HLH and certain HMH sequences, with the second H being lowered and ensuing tones likewise lowered, as is illustrated in (4.22). Its presence in Nchane is particularly notable since the process



(4.22) Ø-lábè    <sup>4</sup>bé    ʃĩ  
                   H L            H        <sup>H</sup>.H  
 c5-web    with    c10.chicken  
*'web and chickens'*

(4.23) Ø-ŋgán      wù      Ø-<sup>+</sup>tʃɔŋ      wù      Ø-<sup>+</sup>lu  
                   H                    L                    H                    L                    H  
                   c1-scorpion    c1AM    c1-thief    c1AM    c5-marriage  
                   *'scorpion of thief of marriage'*

(4.24) fī yá wù ʔbá:ŋ  
M H L H  
c19 surpass 3SG much  
‘...he was very surprised...’ (lit. it surpassed him much)  
Jealous Husband.15

(4.25)      ĩĩ                      bɛ                      bā-<sup>4</sup>kfúlá  
                 <sup>H</sup>H                      H                      M- H  
                 c10.chicken                      with                      c2-hyena

Example (4.26) illustrates that this same phenomenon occurs with class 7 nouns as well. The M of the c7 prefix causes the H root of ‘fool’ to downstep. This is

followed by a second HMH sequence resulting in the H of ‘marriage’ to be downstepped.

- (4.26)       $\int\bar{i}$                        $b\acute{e}$        $k\bar{i}-^{\star}j\acute{u}\eta$        $k\bar{i}$        $\emptyset-^{\star}l\acute{u}$   
 $^{H,H}$                       H              M- H              M                      H  
 c10.chicken      with      c7-fool      c7AM      c5-marriage  
*‘chickens and fool of marriage’*

The lowering observed in these HMH sequences might be better described as a non-automatic process. The phenomenon is not well understood and calls for more study. Regarding tone transcription in this description, the examples presented in chapters following this one are unmarked for downdrift, since the downdrift of HLH sequences is highly regular and therefore predictable. The particular context of a nasal class noun with a lowering M prefix and a H root following another H is not all that common and does not appear in any of the text examples in this description. Therefore, tone diacritics (with no accompanying downdrift/downstep arrow) are to be understood as indicating surface tone for the most part, other than the downdrifted H of HLH sequences.

#### 4.6.2 Downstep

Tonal register may be lowered in HH sequences where a floating L is postulated to intervene. This phenomenon is observed in Nchane, as illustrated in example (4.27). It should be noted that class 1 is probably a nasal class, with a large majority of class 1 nouns having a nasal onset. As mentioned in §4.4, the nasals of nouns belonging to a nasal class appear to have a lowering effect on a M prefix, which then is observed to behave like a L. Thus, it is somewhat ambiguous as to what is triggering the downstep: a floating L or a tonal effect associated with the nasal of the nasal class noun.

- (4.27)       $sh\acute{i}$                        $b\acute{e}$                $^{\star}t\int\acute{o}\eta$   
 $^{H,H}$                       H                      L- H  
 c10.chicken      with      c1-thief

Downstep (also known as non-automatic downstep) also appears to be observed in some HM nouns, as in (4.28), although it is not clear how the M is involved in the process. It is evident, however, that the two following H’s are pronounced at a pitch lower than the H of ‘fly’. Note that downstep does not occur with class 7 HM disyllabic roots in this particular H frame.

- (4.28)       $k\bar{i}-d\bar{z}\bar{e}$                $^{\star}b\acute{e}$                $\int\bar{i}$   
 M – HM                      H                       $^{H,H}$   
 c7-fly                      with              c10.chicken

(4.29)    a. Ø-tí:                  <sup>↑</sup>bé         ĩ  
                             HM                    H         <sup>H</sup>H  
                             c5-stomach         with         c10.chicken

                 b. Ø-gvú<sup>↑</sup>ní         bé         ĩ  
                             HM                    H         <sup>H</sup>H  
                             c5-corpse                 with         c10.chicken

(4.30)      jḁ                      jì                      bǐ  
                 <sup>L</sup>M                      L                      <sup>L</sup>M  
                 c9.snake              c9AM              c9.goat

(4.31)      Ø-kàŋ                      wù                      bī  
                 <sup>L-</sup> ML                      L                      <sup>L</sup>M  
                 c1-rattle                      c1AM                      c9.goat

Four different tonological phenomena are observed at phrase boundaries: floating M re-association, L lowering, partial M lowering, and M raising. Each of these processes is described below in turn.

***Floating M re-association***

Example (4.32) demonstrates a phrase-final floating M preceded by three L's. Presumably, the lexical M of “goat” is disassociated and replaced by the preceding floating L (according to the process described in §4.6.3). This leaves the M tone floating, which then must re-associate due to the presence of the preceding three L's.

- (4.32) Ø-lì      wù      bǐ  
<sup>L-</sup> L      L      <sup>L</sup>M  
 c1-oath    c1AM    c9.goat

Example (4.33) shows that a floating M can disrupt the required LLL sequence (with the sequence instead being L<sup>M</sup>LL). This sequence then provides the necessary context for phrase-final L lowering, which is presented next.

- (4.33) jèŋ      jì      bǐ  
<sup>L</sup>M      L      <sup>L</sup>M  
 c9.thigh    c9AM    c9.goat

***L lowering***

In phrases with three or more consecutive L's, the phrase-final L is realized as a SL, as in (4.34) and (4.35). In the case of the ML noun in (4.35), the contour is realized as a LSL fall.

- (4.34) Ø-kùŋ      wù      bǐ  
<sup>L-</sup> L      L      <sup>L</sup>M  
 c1-python    c1AM    c9.goat
- (4.35) Ø-kfù      wù      Ø-kà(ă)  
<sup>L-</sup> ML      L      <sup>L-</sup> ML  
 c1-python    c1AM    c1-rattle

Likewise, a phrase-final L is realized as SL when preceded by a LH sequence, as in (4.36).

- (4.36) Ø-kfù      wù      Ø-kómě  
<sup>L-</sup> ML      L      HL  
 c1-rope    of    c5-harp

Returning to example (4.33), it was demonstrated that a L<sup>M</sup>LL<sup>M</sup>] did not provide the necessary context for the phrase-final M to be re-associated. However, this sequence does not provide the context for the phrase-final L lowering either. Therefore, the floating M's are either deleted by a stray erasure rule before this phrase-final lowering rule is applied or the floating M's are ignored.

Example (4.37) represents a case where a breath pause is present outside of a phrase boundary (presumably the pause here is due to the speaker gathering his thoughts). Just as in the examples above, the final L of the LLL sequence is realized as a SL.

- (4.37)    bā      gē      jējè      kòně,      bā-ptʃĩ      bā      kī-jō  
               M      M      M L      L L      M- M      M      M- H  
               they    p3    teach    about    c2-law    c2AM    c7-spirit  
               ‘...they taught about the [four] spiritual laws...’      Training.1.7

### **Partial M lowering**

As mentioned in §4.1, the tones of M and L verbs are realized as a falling tone (ML and LSL respectively) when utterance-final. A similar effect is observed in nouns with M tone. However, in this case, the M is usually only slightly lowered in pitch as compared to a normal M, and usually only if it is preceded by a H, as in (4.38). This lowering is observed even when the M has another (non-lowered) M intervening between it and the H, as illustrated in (4.38)b and c.

- (4.38)    a. Ø-bēŋ      b'é      kwē<sup>0</sup>ŋ  
               M                      H      M  
               c4-mosquito    with    c3.firewood  
               ‘mosquitoes and firewood’  
               b. kī-bēŋ      b'é      kī-tē<sup>0</sup>  
               M- M                      H      M- M  
               c7-wing      and      c7-tree  
               ‘wing and tree’  
               c. gwí      wū      Ø-<sup>+</sup>lú      tʃĩ      kī-tē<sup>0</sup>  
               H      M                      H      M      M- M  
               c3.net    c3AM    c5-marriage    c5AM    c7-tree  
               ‘net of marriage of tree’

When the phrase is long and there are more than two M's intervening, the phrase-final M does not lower.

### **M raising**

The final phrase boundary process raises a phrase-final M to H when preceded by a LMM sequence and followed by a H. This process is illustrated in (4.39), where the M of the applicative marker *lē* is realized as H. Note that this process might be limited to clause-final M, with the following H belonging to a new clause.

- (4.39) mē      ĩ̃-gē:      à      màŋ-kàlà      mā-ā      lé      lé  
 1SG.PRO   1SG-put   in   c6a-cassava.puff   c6a-ANA1   APPL   COP

‘...I put [rat poison] in that cassava puff. [It] is...’

What-goes-around.9.14

#### 4.6.5 H raising

The source of a SH tone is not always clear. But most instances appear to be the result of a grammatical H realized on a word with a lexical H. This is illustrated in the examples below. Example (4.40) demonstrates a grammatical H (indicating Habitual aspect) on top of the lexical H of the verb **tɔ́** ‘come’, resulting in a SH.

- (4.40) ɲɔ́dʒì    tɔ́              wù    kɔ́:    ɲgɔ́  
           L            H=H            L       ML       H<sub>M</sub>  
           N.        HAB=come   3SG   catch   c10.termite

‘Nji always catches termites.’

Similarly, a SH is realized on the 3PL subject marker **bɔ́** when the grammatical H indicating Future is also present. This is illustrated in (4.41).

- (4.41) bɔ́    lé    bɔ́              gù    fim-bì  
           H    H       H=H            L       L-L  
           3PL   COP   FUT=3PL   buy   c19-cola.nut

‘They will buy a cola nut.’

It might be that the consecutive preceding H’s and the following L also contribute to the SH realization.

The example set in (4.42) involves H verbs in the progressive form. The progressive suffix is normally marked with a H tone as well. It is possible that the SH on the progressive suffixes here is a strategy to obtain contrast, since SH on the progressive suffix is not observed in non-H verbs.

- (4.42) a. bī-dádè              bī              bā              sáŋ-ě              jé              jú  
           M- H L              M              M              H -H=H              H<sub>M</sub>              H  
           c8-palm.branch    c8REL    they    thatch-PROG    c10.house    on.it

‘...palm branches, that they thatch houses with.’    King of Trees.1.3

b.  $\bar{j}\bar{n}$ -dʒò     j̄t̄j̄i     j̄i     bā     jú:-j̄i  
 M- L     <sup>l</sup>ML     M     M     H -<sup>H</sup>H  
 1SG-take   c9.medicine   c9REL   they   kill-DISTR.PROG

bī-kfūnè     jú,  
 M- M L     H  
 c8-rat     on.it

*'...I took medicine that they are killing rats with...'*

What-goes-around.9.14

However, the realization of SH is not always apparent in these contexts. Furthermore, some SH's are observed in other cases where there is no grammatical H present. Perhaps these SH's are part of a strategy of "correction" for declension or downdrift, so that the pitch does not go lower than desirable.

As a reminder, with the conclusion of the chapters dealing with the language's sound system, the remainder of the book utilizes the description orthography presented in §1.3.3.





# Chapter 5

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## Nouns

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The characteristics of Nchane nouns are presented in this chapter. Like most of the other languages in the area, Nchane exhibits a robust noun class system, which encourages comparison to the noun class systems of Bantu languages. As the realization of this system is of utmost importance to noun morphology and noun phrase syntax, a large portion of this chapter is dedicated to a description of the noun class system.

I begin in §5.1 with a survey of former treatments of the Nchane noun class system, followed by §5.2, which describes the various noun classes and associated morphology. Singular-plural pairings and semantic characteristics possibly motivating noun class assignment are presented in this section as well. Compound nouns are briefly discussed in §5.3 and borrowed nouns in §5.4. The chapter ends with a presentation of nominalization in §5.5. Note that a closed class of kinship terms fused with a possessive pronoun is described in §6.4.1. Also, a detailed description of Pronouns, a word class sometimes considered a noun subtype, is given in Chapter 7.

### **5.1 Previous analyses of the Nchane noun class system**

Hombert's (1980) comparative study of Beboid noun classes is the earliest systematic description of Nchane noun classes. This work provided a basis for my own preliminary description (Boutwell 2010) and the current analysis continues to largely

follow Hombert’s numbering assignments, which are designed to align with Proto-Bantu reconstructions. Some departures are made from these analyses and are pointed out in the relevant sections below.

One other work that should be mentioned is that of Kimbi (2010). This manuscript offers some limited details of the Nchane noun class system, particularly as it is realized through agreement patterns in certain noun modifiers.

## 5.2 Noun classes

This section is concerned with the Nchane noun class system. A brief introduction is given here, followed by a presentation of the different noun classes and nominal class marking. Next, I describe singular/plural class pairings or “genders” and semantic criterion observed associated with the various noun classes. Details regarding the sample size and distribution of the noun classes is given as well. The section concludes with a look at derivational classes.

Nchane nouns are grouped into 17 distinct noun classes, which are summarized in Table 5.1. The approach used in this work for noun class designations begins with the Bantuist convention of assigning numbers to nouns based on nominal prefixes, but relies on agreement patterns with associated words in a sentence for making final judgements on noun class analyses. The current analysis is largely comparable to that of Hombert’s (1980), which utilized the numbering system devised by early Bantuists (Meinhof 1932; Welmers 1973). Note that the classes appear in the table with primary singular and plural pairings on the same line when applicable. Class 13 is a plural class that pairs with classes 3 and 5. Classes 16 and 18, which are described in §5.2.3, usually do not have a plural class pairing.

| Class | Nominal marking | Agreement marking <sup>31</sup> | Class | Nominal marking | Agreement marking <sup>31</sup> |
|-------|-----------------|---------------------------------|-------|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| 1     | Ø-              | wu                              | 2     | bā-             | ba                              |
| 3     | -w-, Ø-         | wu/kfu                          | 4     | Ø-              | yi/che                          |
| 5     | Ø-              | chi                             | 6     | ā-              | a/ka                            |
| 7     | kī-             | ki                              | 8     | bī-             | bi                              |
| 9     | ō-              | yi                              | 10    | ó-              | yi/che                          |
| 14    | b(v)ū-          | b(v)u                           | 6a    | māN-, Ñ-        | maN/ma/mu                       |
| 19    | fī-/fīN-        | fi                              | 18a   | mū-/mūN-        | muN/mu                          |
|       |                 |                                 | 13    | chī-            | chi/yi                          |
| 16    | fē-             | fē/fō                           |       |                 |                                 |
| 18    | ā-              | a/ya                            |       |                 |                                 |

Table 5.1 Summary of Nchane noun classes.

<sup>31</sup> The agreement forms appearing in this table represent the primary agreement realizations. See Table 6.1 for a more complete inventory of agreement forms.

The current analysis diverges slightly from Hombert's, resulting in a closer correspondence with the Proto-Bantu system. One of the most important differences is the merging of Hombert's class 25 with class 6a. These differing elements of analysis are discussed in greater detail in the relevant sections below.

Regarding tone, most classes have prefixes with a mid tone. However, several classes have no tone associated with them other than lexical tone assigned to the stem. Class 9 has a floating low tone, while classes 2, 6, 7, 8, 19 and 18a are observed to have some members with a mid tone associated with the noun class prefix in isolation, but realized with a low tone in certain contexts. Noun classes with subgroupings reflecting different tone characteristics is not unique to Nchane. For example, this has been observed for class 7 nouns in Sari (Langhout 2012: 11). For Nchane, it is likely that these tone alternations are a result of tone lowering processes realized in some nouns with stem-initial NC sequences (sometimes only diachronically), as pointed out in §4.4. Note that evidence was given in Chapter 4 for class 1 having a floating L prefix as well.

As mentioned above, noun class assignment is based on agreement patterning observed in other words associated with the noun. These words include most word classes that modify the noun, as well as nominal anaphors like subject and object pronouns and relativizers. Agreement, commonly referred to as concord in the Bantu tradition, is realized through morphological marking that is distinct to a particular set of nouns.<sup>32</sup> Consequently, two nouns might have the same nominal marking, but are considered as belonging to different classes because the agreement paradigms of the two nouns are different (e.g., classes 1 and 5 or 6 and 18). Sometimes, the agreement marking of two noun classes is the same for all but a few modifiers. Nevertheless, any difference in concordant word classes results in different noun class designations (e.g., classes 1 and 3).

Examples (5.1) and (5.2) illustrate agreement marking for classes 1 and 6, where it can be seen that the possessive pronoun and the distal demonstrative agree with their head nouns. The agreement elements have been bolded to make them more easily identifiable.

- (5.1)    lē    Ø-nā:    **w-ē**  
           COP   c1-cow   c1-3SG.POSS

*'It is his cow.'*

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<sup>32</sup> I make no distinction between the terms "agreement" and "concord", although one could certainly be made. See Corbett (2006: 5–7) for a discussion regarding the benefits of making such a distinction. For our purposes here, "agreement" is used to express the important generalization that noun classes exhibit control over various word classes, both inside and outside the noun phrase.

- (5.2)      jó            ā-gĩŋ      **kà**-gā  
              take.IMP    c6-egg    c6-DIST  
              ‘Take those eggs.’

Note that the agreement element associated with the noun classes is often morphologically similar, if not identical, to the noun class prefixes. This is illustrated in (5.3), where the class 7 nominal class prefix **kĩ**-, is morphologically the same as the subject, object and relativizers, as well as the agreement prefix of the anaphoric demonstrative.

- (5.3)      bó      b'éŋ,      lē      lé      **kĩ**,      **kĩ**-kfūnè      **kĩ**      kùgè  
              3PL    agree    COMP    COP    c7    c7-rat      c7REL    big
- kĩ**      yīdè      **ky**-ē:,      **kí**      lé      **kí**      shú  
              c7REL    black    c7-ANA1    c7REL    COP    c7.FUT    tie
- m̃bāŋē      yī-yú  
              c9.bell      c9-ANA2

‘They agreed that it is him, the fat, black rat, who will tie that bell.’

Cat and Rats.1.6

### 5.2.1 Noun class nominal marking

Prefix noun class marking is prevalent in Bantu languages and is maintained in Nchane in eleven of seventeen classes. The remaining classes show a reduction of the prefix observed in Proto-Bantu reconstructions, with zero marking in classes 1, 4, and 5, a tonal element for classes 9 and 10 and a labial glide infix in class 3.

The marking associated with each of the noun classes is described below. Presentation of the noun classes closely follows the organization of the noun classes in Table 5.1, with an orientation around singular/plural pairings when relevant.

#### *Classes 1 and 2*

Table 5.2 gives selected examples of classes 1 and 2, which are marked with **Ø**- and **bā**- respectively.

| Class 1  | Class 2   | Gloss      |
|----------|-----------|------------|
| Ø-chóŋ   | bā-chóŋ   | 'thief'    |
| Ø-kfúlá  | bā-kfúlá  | 'hyena'    |
| Ø-ñsū    | bā-ñsū    | 'pepper'   |
| Ø-mbēgē  | bā-mbēgē  | 'hill'     |
| Ø-kùŋ    | bā-kùŋ    | 'python'   |
| Ø-ñsàlà  | bā-ñsàlà  | 'needle'   |
| Ø-ŋkū    | bā-ŋkū    | 'scabbard' |
| Ø-bvúlè  | bā-bvúlè  | 'lion'     |
| Ø-kfū    | bā-kfū    | 'rope'     |
| Ø-sēŋlè  | bā-sēŋlè  | 'okra'     |
| Ø-mbūshá | bā-mbūshá | 'cat'      |

Table 5.2 Selected examples of class 1 and class 2 nouns.

The zero prefix of class 1 is characteristic of the Beoid languages and also quite common among the other Bantoid languages of the area. However, 80% of nouns in this class possess a root initial syllabic nasal reminiscent of class 1 marking seen in the neighboring Eastern Grassfields language Limbum (Fransen 1995: 100). Oku and Lamnso have also reported nasal prefix variants of class 1 (Blood 1999: 2; Grebe 1984: 66–74 respectively).

It might be argued, therefore, that this nasal represents a class 1 prefix, with class 1 nouns lacking the nasal corresponding to what researchers have designated as class 1a in some Bantu languages (see Maho 1999: 74). This analysis would have two class 1 subgroups with different nominal marking: **N-** for class 1 and **Ø-** for class 1a. One semantic category commonly selected for class 1a in these Bantu languages is “kinship”. Nchane kinship terms do in fact tend to lack a nasal onset, giving support to a class 1/1a distinction. However, the class 1 homorganic nasal prefix has become lexicalized onto the noun root, appearing in the class 2 forms as well. Ultimately, I adopt a single class 1 analysis with a single pattern of agreement, with class 1 nouns marked with a zero prefix and nasals (when present) belonging to the stem. Meanwhile, recognition of the two subgroups is maintained as having explanatory value when addressing issues of tone. More on this homorganic nasal is presented in §4.4.

Irregular nominal forms are rare in Nchane. However, suppletion is observed in the singular/plural alternations of the words for ‘child’ and ‘human’, both of which belong to gender 1/2. These nouns are shown in Table 5.3.

| Class 1 | Class 2 | Gloss    |
|---------|---------|----------|
| mwā     | bḱ:     | 'child'  |
| mū      | bā-mì   | 'person' |

Table 5.3 Irregular class 1 and class 2 nouns.

Another peculiar realization of gender 1/2 nouns is observed in a handful of nouns, which show remnants of an **u-** prefix as realized by a labial glide following the initial consonant of the stem, illustrated in Table 5.4. These nouns are often kinship terms and likely correspond to a potential class 1a subgrouping. Some of these also take a **bi-** prefix for plural rather than **ba-**. The prefix for ‘bananas’ can be either **ba-** or **bi-**. Agreement for these words prove that they are class 2 rather than class 8. For example, the phrase ‘the women’ is **bikēsé bāà** rather than \***bikēsé byē**. It is possible that the vowel of this class 2 prefix variant has undergone some kind of vowel assimilation process. But evidence to support this hypothesis is lacking at this time.

| Class 1 | Class 2  | Gloss    |
|---------|----------|----------|
| chwē    | ba-ché   | ‘witch’  |
| gwēnē   | bā-gēnē  | ‘in-law’ |
| kwēsé   | bī-kēsé  | ‘woman’  |
| jwēnsé  | bī-lōnsé | ‘man’    |
| ṅgōné   | bī-ṅgōné | ‘banana’ |

Table 5.4 Class 1 nouns marked with a vestigial labial glide and class 2 nouns marked with **bi-**.

#### Classes 3 and 4

Classes 3 and 4 pair together to form a gender and are illustrated in Table 5.5. The singular and plural forms are differentiated by the presence of a labial glide infix for class 3 and zero marking for class 4. The labial glide infix as a marker for class 3 is an innovation of the Beboid languages and the nearby languages identified as the Yemne-Kimbi group (Good et al. 2011), formerly classified as Western Beboid.<sup>33</sup>

| Class 3 | Class 4 | Gloss      |
|---------|---------|------------|
| gwí     | Ø-gí    | ‘net’      |
| bwē     | Ø-bē    | ‘mosquito’ |
| kwēṅ    | Ø-kēṅ   | ‘firewood’ |
| gwōṅ    | Ø-gōṅ   | ‘bamboo’   |

Table 5.5 Selected examples of gender 3/4 nouns.

As mentioned above, class 4 has a zero prefix, a marking also shared by most of the Beboid languages. Conversely, two of the three Yemne-Kimbi languages, classified as Western Beboid at the time of Hombert’s 1980 work, have **-y-** for class

<sup>33</sup> Most of the Beboid and Yemne-Kimbi languages have a labial glide infix as the class 3 marker. Those that do not, utilize **u-** or **Ø-** marking instead. The only other languages in the area observed to have the labial glide infix for class 3 nouns are the Central Ring languages Kom and Men, both of which also have a vowel prefix element (i.e., the class marking has the shape of V-C<sup>w</sup>) (see Kießling 2010).

4 and the third has **i-** for class 4. The lone Beboïd exception is Mungong, which has **(y)i-** for approximately 90% of class 4 nouns. The remaining 10% have zero marking. More details regarding Mungong gender 3/4 is given later in this section.

Roughly 85% of gender 3/4 roots are monosyllabic and 54% have velar onsets, suggesting some kind of regularization. These numbers are significant when compared to other classes. For example, only 56% of class 1 roots are monosyllabic and 37% have velar onsets. For class 7 roots, 51% are monosyllabic and 28% have velar onsets. A similar type of regularization in class 3 roots is also observed in nearby Mundabli, where stem onset alternations of **kp/ts** and **gb/dz** for classes 3 and 10 are observed (Voll 2017: 92–3). Similarly, the Beboïd language Sari reports stem onset alternations of velars and +coronal consonants for some class 3 and class 4 roots respectively (Langhout 2015:18).

While this gender is largely quite regular, the three nouns in Table 5.6 exhibit peculiarities worth noting. The word for ‘garden’ is the lone example of a class 4 noun marked with a prefix. Furthermore, the **[m]:[ŋ]** alternation of the root consonant, is not readily explainable by morphophonological means.

| Class 3 | Class 4 | Gloss         |
|---------|---------|---------------|
| mwē     | ē-ŋē    | ‘garden’      |
| jwē     | Ø-dē    | ‘mouth’       |
| ṽshwēŋ  | Ø-nsēŋ  | ‘palm needle’ |

Table 5.6 Irregular gender 3/4 nouns.

Meanwhile, the words for ‘mouth’ and ‘palm needle’ both show a spirantized:non-spirantized alternation. The source, and therefore the direction, of this alternation is not clear. One obvious possibility is an historical prefix for class 4, which Hombert (1980) reconstructed as **\*i-**. This explanation would constitute a +back:+front opposition for classes 3 and 4 respectively: the back quality of class 3 **\*u-** associating with “back” consonants and the front quality of class 4 **\*i-** associating with “front” consonants. Indeed, the velar:coronal opposition observed in Sari and Mundabli supports this hypothesis.

A final word regarding the status of class 4 is in order. Many languages in the area report class 4, in spite of the apparent similarity of class 4 agreement with that of class 10. Insufficient attention to the agreement patterns of these two classes in the works on most nearby languages makes arriving at clear conclusions difficult if not impossible. It is clear that for some languages in the area, class 4 has merged with either class 10 or class 6. For languages observed to have classes 4 and 10, it is very likely that, in some cases, class 4 has been maintained in the analyses due to semantic and historical reasons, and for some languages, a difference in nominal marking as well.

The Nchane situation is not entirely clear. Segmentally, the agreement patterns of classes 4 and 10 appear to be identical. The tone on agreement elements is usually the same as well. However, speakers appear to have a high awareness of the grammatical high tone associated with class 10, a sensitivity that seems to be lacking with the plural counterpart of class 3 nouns. In this work, the agreement patterns given for classes 4 and 10 are identical except in a few areas like possessive pronouns, where a higher tone is sometimes observed as a variant for class 10 agreement forms. Since a complete merger remains questionable, I maintain class 4 in the analysis. But a merger is clearly underway.

Before moving on, the Mungong gender 3/4 merits some discussion. This gender in Mungong provides evidence of an ongoing 5>3 merger, with a 6>4 merger appearing to be complete. Three subgroups are observed within the gender designated for convenience as 3/4a, 3/4b and 3/4c, with a distribution rate of 11%, 13% and 76% respectively. Gender 3/4a is very similar to Nchane 3/4, with the nominal marking of **Cw/Ø**.<sup>34</sup> Gender 3/4c has nominal marking of **Ø/(y)i-**, while gender 3/4b appears to represent a transitional phase between the other two subgroups, with nominal marking of **Cw/(y)i-**. Examples of each subgroup are given in Table 5.7.

| Subgroup | Class 3 | Class 4 | Gloss      |
|----------|---------|---------|------------|
| a        | kpãŋ    | kãŋ     | 'firewood' |
|          | gbà     | gà      | 'root'     |
| b        | bwê     | ĩ-bê    | 'rock'     |
|          | dʒwã    | ĩ-dzã   | 'mouth'    |
| c        | gvũnà   | ĩ-gvũnà | 'feather'  |
|          | tún     | ĩ-tún   | 'axe'      |

Table 5.7 Selected examples of Mungong gender 3/4 nouns illustrating three subgroups.

Agreement for class 4 in all subgroups is **yi-**. But agreement patterns for the three class 3 subgroups are mixed, with 3a represented by **wu-**, but the other two subgroups showing occurrences of both **wu-** and **yi-**. Furthermore, there appears to be some speaker variation of some of these 3/4b and 3/4c nouns, both in terms of nominal class marking and agreement. In other words, the inclusion of nouns into the 3/4b and 3/4c subgroups is not fixed at this time.

### Classes 3 and 13

A small number of class 3 nouns make their plural with class 13, all of which are presented in Table 5.8. The characteristic labial glide infix seen in class 3 gender 3/4 nouns is not apparent in this gender, although all but one of the words have a labial

<sup>34</sup> Note that the Mungong class 3 labial glide infix is realized as a labiovelar **kp** or **gb** when the stem-initial consonant is a velar. Also note that the 3/4a group shows a strong preference for stem-initial velar consonants, encouraging comparisons with regularization tendencies of Nchane gender 3/4 and of Mundabli, which were noted earlier.



component present in the root's onset. The prefix for class 13 is **chĩ-**. Note that native speakers sometimes disagree about which nouns belong in this gender. The parentheses around the plural for 'village' indicates that some speakers reject this noun as having a plural form, perhaps reflecting the additional sense of 'world'.

| Class 3  | Class 13   | Gloss                 |
|----------|------------|-----------------------|
| Ø-ḡgú    | chĩ-ḡgú    | 'fire, gun'           |
| Ø-bĩné   | chĩ-bĩné   | 'dance' <sup>35</sup> |
| Ø-ḡgvúlé | chĩ-ḡgvúlé | 'vein'                |
| Ø-wā:    | chĩ-wā:    | 'market'              |
| Ø-wḍḡ    | (chĩ-wḍḡ)  | 'village'             |
| Ø-ḡgvũḡ  | chĩ-ḡgvũḡ  | 'tail'                |
| Ø-ḡfũ:   | chĩ-ḡfũ:   | 'stirring stick'      |

Table 5.8 Gender 3/13 nouns.

Regarding the designation of "13", Noni marks the same class with **ji-**, which was labeled 13 by Hyman (1981: 9). As for Nchane, the Noni class 13 is a plural class pairing with two singular classes, 3 and 5, to form minor genders, with the prefix markers **to-**, **ti-** and **tə-** respectively. The same genders are also seen in Koshin (Yemne-Kimbi) (Hombert 1980) and the Central Ring languages Kom (Shultz 1997) and Oku (Blood 1999).

While Hombert analyzed this class as 13 for Koshin, he designated it as 27 for Nchane and Noni because two other languages in his Beboïd study, Bu and Missong, have the same class, but with the prefixes **kə-** and **ki-** respectively, which differ considerably in form from Koshin's class 13 **to-**. He did not rule out the possibility that 13 and 27 had the same origin, but chose to keep the two separate, allowing the question to remain open. I am not constrained by the challenges entailed by reconstructing the noun class for a family of languages, and choose to align my analysis more closely with the traditional Bantu numbering. Additionally, in support of this analysis is the reconstruction for Proto-Western Grassfields (Hyman 1980), which has **\*tĩ-** for class 13, a form that easily allows for Nchane's **chĩ-** as a reflex.

### Classes 5 and 6

A zero prefix is also observed for class 5. This marking is shared by all the Beboïd languages that have class 5 as well as most of the Yemne-Kimbi languages, but is almost nonexistent among other neighboring languages. Lamnso appears to be a rare exception. Class 5 nouns most often pair with class 6 for plural, which has an **ā-** prefix, cognate with Proto-Bantu **\*ma-**. This prefix is closer to the Proto-Bantu form as compared with the other Beboïd languages that have class 6, represented by the

<sup>35</sup> This word has also been observed as a 5/13 noun.

prefixes **ɛ-** or **Ø-**. Note that, as stated earlier, class 6 in Mungong has apparently completely merged with c4.

Some examples of Nchane gender 5/6 nouns are provided in Table 5.9. The examples show that an additional characteristic of this gender is that the singular forms are very often realized with a high tone that is lacking in the plural form.

| Class 5 | Class 6  | Gloss         |
|---------|----------|---------------|
| Ø-chémé | ā-nchémé | 'calf of leg' |
| Ø-lá    | ā-lā     | 'compound'    |
| Ø-tí:   | ā-tí:    | 'stomach'     |
| Ø-gvúnē | ā-gvúnē  | 'corpse'      |
| Ø-lábè  | ā-lábè   | 'web'         |

Table 5.9 Selected gender 5/6 nouns.

A number of languages in the area display peculiarities in class 5 and/or its associated plural class, resulting in some analysis challenges. For example, Fang (Yemne-Kimbi) is observed to have some “irregular” plural members in gender 5/13 (e.g., **lím/tàlímkpà** ‘tongue’), for which the form of the suffix portion of the plural “is not straightforwardly predictable” (Good et al. 2011: 150). Sari and Naami both have longer stems for class 5 forms when compared to their class 6 forms, with both classes taking zero prefixes (Langhout 2015: 19–20; Tabah 2018a: 5 respectively). Naami also has a few nouns forming a gender 5/6 subgroup which does not have the stem length alternation, but is marked by the prefixes **li-** and **ŋə-** respectively. Some class 5 nouns in Noni are observed to be marked with the suffix **-e** (Hyman 1981: 9). Finally, Mungbam has two class 5 subgroups, marked with **i-** and **ɪ-** respectively (Lovegren 2013: 121).

The fact that in most of the cases mentioned above, there are multiple realizations for classes 5 and/or 6, suggests that this gender represents a destabilized environment in which changes are currently ongoing. Indeed, slightly more than one third of Nchane gender 5/6 nouns (39%) show a stem alternation, illustrated in Table 5.10, that results in a longer class 5 stem when compared to its class 6 counterpart.

| Class 5 | Class 6 | Gloss           |
|---------|---------|-----------------|
| Ø-bélé  | ā-bē    | 'hail stone'    |
| Ø-gvúnè | ā-gvūŋ  | 'feather'       |
| Ø-sóŋó  | ā-sōŋ   | 'oil palm'      |
| Ø-ñsūsú | ā-sūŋ   | 'cooking stone' |
| Ø-jīsé  | ā-jī    | 'eye'           |

Table 5.10 Selected examples of stem length alternation in gender 5/6 nouns.

Two possible analyses to account for this stem alternation involve suffixes. One could analyze a suffix for class 5, as Hyman does for Noni. However, in the Nchane case, this suffix would have multiple realizations with no simple explanation for the various forms. A second analysis calls for a subtractive suffix, resulting in a shorter class 6 form. This analysis is quite abstract and would appear to be difficult to support language internally as well as language externally.

A simpler analysis, and the one adopted here, is that the stem alternation is due to the process of syllable reduction observable in other areas of the grammar (cf. 1PL pronouns described in §7.1 and the realization of the progressive form of certain verbs discussed in §9.1.2). This hypothesis comes with the question of why this phenomenon is limited to this gender within the noun class system. Further research is needed to find a plausible answer.

While the majority of gender 5/6 nouns show no such stem alternation, some nouns are observed to have a different tonal realization on the stems of the singular and plural forms, as noted earlier (see the words for ‘compound’ and ‘web’ in Table 5.9 above). This possibly suggests H and L subgroups similar to those observed for Mungbam, and perhaps provides further evidence for the syllable reduction analysis, with the tonal realizations being the result of stray tones left over following the loss of tone bearing units. But without a careful study of the historical forms of these words, it is impossible to give a strong argument in support of this hypothesis.

Finally, Table 5.11 presents two gender 5/6 nouns that have obscure vowel alternations in addition to syllable reduction.

| <b>Class 5</b> | <b>Class 6</b> | <b>Gloss</b> |
|----------------|----------------|--------------|
| tédé           | ā-tā           | ‘stone’      |
| généē          | ā-gíŋ          | ‘egg’        |

Table 5.11 Gender 5/6 nouns with unexplained vowel alternations.

**Classes 5 and 13**

Some class 5 nouns pair with plural class 13, which has a **chĩ-** prefix, as mentioned above. Note that there is no stem alternation in this gender. However, some class 5 nouns show a high tone element lacking in the class 13 counterpart, just as was seen with some gender 5/6 nouns. Selected examples are given in Table 5.12.

| Class 5 | Class 13 | Gloss                |
|---------|----------|----------------------|
| Ø-lú    | chĩ-lú   | 'marriage'           |
| Ø-kfũŋ  | chĩ-kfũŋ | 'back'               |
| Ø-lélē  | chĩ-lélē | 'dragonfly'          |
| Ø-kā:   | chĩ-kā:  | 'fine' <sup>36</sup> |

Table 5.12 Selected gender 5/13 nouns.

**Classes 7 and 8**

The prefixes for classes 7 and 8 are **kĩ-** and **bĩ-** respectively. All Beboid languages have **kĩ-** and **bĩ-** classes, although there is some variety for the vowel of class 7 among the various languages. Table 5.13 provides some examples.

| Class 7   | Class 8   | Gloss            |
|-----------|-----------|------------------|
| kĩ-yá     | bĩ-yá     | 'ram'            |
| kĩ-gũ     | bĩ-gũ     | 'baboon'         |
| kĩ-mbéme  | bĩ-mbéme  | 'caterpillar'    |
| kĩ-jāŋ    | bĩ-jāŋ    | 'weaver bird'    |
| kĩ-ŋkũfē  | bĩ-ŋkũfē  | 'bone'           |
| kĩ-mbì    | bĩ-mbì    | 'hourglass drum' |
| kĩ-kō     | bĩ-kō     | 'forest'         |
| kĩ-ŋchúnē | bĩ-ŋchúnē | 'bushy area'     |
| kĩ-kû:    | bĩ-kû:    | 'yam'            |
| kĩ-dá:dè  | bĩ-dá:dè  | 'palm branch'    |
| kĩ-gwē    | bĩ-gwē    | 'owl'            |
| kĩ-kfūnè  | bĩ-kfūnè  | 'rat'            |
| kĩ-ŋkōgō  | bĩ-ŋkōgō  | 'wound'          |

Table 5.13 Selected gender 7/8 nouns.

<sup>36</sup> This is a payment for some indiscretion, such as adultery.

**Classes 9 and 10**

Classes 9 and 10 are differentiated by a tone alternation alone. Class 9 nouns have a relative low tone and class 10 a relative high tone. Some examples are given in Table 5.14.

| Class 9 | Class 10 | Gloss         |
|---------|----------|---------------|
| jóŋ     | jóŋ      | 'star'        |
| shî     | shí      | 'chicken'     |
| kwē     | kwē      | 'death'       |
| chā     | chā      | 'monkey'      |
| chējē   | chējē    | 'hip'         |
| gwē     | gwé      | 'guinea fowl' |
| ñsàŋ    | ñsàŋ     | 'friend'      |
| bvũ     | bvú      | 'dog'         |
| jēbē    | jēbē     | 'mushroom'    |

Table 5.14 Selected gender 9/10 nouns.

Note that these examples are given in their isolation forms and the associated noun class tone is sometimes only observable when placed into a phrase. For example, while the tone for 'death' and 'monkey' is mid for singular and plural in isolation, the low and high tones associated with classes 9 and 10 respectively are revealed when the nouns are put into tone frames, with the class 9 forms usually realized with a relatively lower tone within the frame as compared to their class 10 counterparts. See §4.5 for more details.

The examples illustrate that a floating tone interacts with the stem tone to produce a variety of surface tone realizations, sometimes in ways that are not easily explainable. Like class 3 above, class 9 shows a strong preference for monosyllabic stems. Furthermore, 73% of the roots have palatal onsets, which hints at the remnants of the Proto-Western Grassfields \*i- prefix (Hyman 1980).

While the class marking for classes 9 and 10 is not overly conservative, the low-high alternation is characteristic of a large majority of the languages in the region. The segmentless nature of the marking is observed throughout the Beboid languages, as well as most of the Yemne-Kimbi languages. But in the Grassfields languages, the tones often are carried by some vowel (usually [i]) or a nasal consonant.

**Classes 14 and 6a**

The minor class 14 has a **b(v)ũ-** prefix. The fricative element is placed in parentheses to indicate that it is often difficult to hear. In contrast, the fricative in words like **bvũ** 'dog'(c9) and **bvũlè** 'lion'(c1) is always very strong. Native speakers perceive the fricative as present in the prefix, and I have transcribed it as such throughout this work. Class 14 is characteristic of the Beboid group, being observed in all the languages with the exception of Chung.

Nearly all of the Yemne-Kimbi languages also have class 14, where it is usually a single class gender populated with mass nouns. Conversely, class 14 nouns in the Bebooid languages often may be pluralized, pairing with class 6a, which is marked with the prefix **māN-** in Nchane. This analysis is a departure from earlier works, which designate the plural class as 25. This decision is based on the shared agreement between non-count class 6a and the plural class paired with class 14.<sup>37</sup>

Some young speakers no longer identify certain class 14 nouns as having a grammatical plural form, sometimes using the class 14 **bvū-** with singular and plural expressions. This class is also observed as a single class gender sparsely populated with mass nouns, with liquids usually marked with the prefix **N-** and nonliquids marked with **māN-**. The single class gender 6a also contains abstract nouns derived from predicate adjectives (see §5.2.3). It is not clear if this explains the diminished use of class 6a plurals for class 14 nouns, or if it has more to do with an overall decline in gender 14/6a membership and greater lack of opportunities for plural expression. For example, the occasions to talk about multiple bridges are very few.

All members of gender 14/6a are presented in Table 5.15. The plural of ‘fufu’ is placed in parentheses to indicate that the plural usage probably indicates “portions” of fufu, while the singular form is most often used as a mass noun expression, and is sometimes used in the language as a generic reference to “food”.

| Class 14 | Class 6a  | Gloss         |
|----------|-----------|---------------|
| bvū-shí  | māŋ-shí   | ‘face’        |
| bvū-kó   | māŋ-kó    | ‘ladder’      |
| bvū-bīŋē | mām-bīŋē  | ‘bundle’      |
| bvū-shē  | māŋ-shē   | ‘inheritance’ |
| bvū-kū   | māŋ-kū    | ‘roof’        |
| bvū-lē:  | (mān-lē:) | ‘fufu’        |
| bvū-lē:  | mān-lē:   | ‘intestines’  |
| bvū-tā   | mān-tā    | ‘cave’        |
| bvū-dyē  | mān-dyē   | ‘bridge’      |

Table 5.15 Gender 14/6a nouns.

As a single class gender for noncountable nouns, class 6a has very few members and is very likely disappearing from the language with members moving to other classes (see Table 5.30 for noncount nouns in other classes). As observed above, liquids in this class are marked with a homorganic nasal prefix, presumably with a

<sup>37</sup> Hombert (1980: 92) follows the convention of distinguishing noun classes based on differing nominal prefixes. Therefore, because the plural counterpart to class 14 has a different prefix shape (**māN-**) from the mass noun class 6a (**N-**), the class 25 designation was used. However, additional support for designating the plural counterpart as 6a is the fact that many Bantu languages are observed as having a 14/6 gender (Maho 1999: 190).

mid tone. Nonliquid mass nouns in this class appear to be marked with **māN-**. But the paucity of members makes generalizations dubious. All tokens in the corpus are given in Table 5.16. Note that the status of the **N-** prefix for the word **mē:** ‘oil’ is dubious, since the nasal onset does not appear to be phonetically long.

| Class 6a  | Gloss                  |
|-----------|------------------------|
| m̄-bvū:   | ‘wine’ ( <i>gen.</i> ) |
| ṽ-kū:     | ‘palm kernel oil’      |
| m̄-mē:    | ‘oil’ ( <i>gen.</i> )  |
| māṽ-kfūnè | ‘pus’                  |
| māṽ-kàlà  | ‘cassava puff’         |

Table 5.16 Class 6a mass nouns.

### ***Classes 19 and 18a***

The prefix **fī-/fīN-** marks nouns of class 19. This class is quite common in the region and is observed in all the Beboïd languages. Among these languages, there is some variation in the prefix vowel, but the consonant is always [f].

Class 19 is normally paired with the plural class 18a (called class 26 by Hombert), which is marked with **mū-/mūN-**. The 18a designation is used for this class to indicate its formal similarity with Proto-Bantu locative class 18 (**\*mù-**), but no claim is being made that this is its source.<sup>38</sup>

Prefixes with the homorganic nasal are prevalent in this gender, with only 25% of class 19 nouns and 14% of class 18a nouns having no nasal immediately following the CV of the prefix. Hombert’s analysis for Nchane generalized the prefixes as **fī-** and **mūN-** for this gender (Hombert 1980: 88). The small number of nouns in the current study with no nasal in the class 19 prefix suggests that the prefix nasal is becoming more prevalent.

This gender is illustrated in Table 5.17 with selected examples. The word for ‘thing’ is the lone irregular gender 19/18a noun observed. The underlying forms **fī-yè** and **mū-yè** are contracted in normal speech to be realized as **fyè:** and **mwè:**.

<sup>38</sup> This class and its **mū-** prefix is observed as an areal feature of the northwestern Bantu A60 group of languages. Maho (1999: 199) offers several different possible sources for this form, but a direct correlation to Proto-Bantu class 18 remains unclear.

| Class 19  | Class 18a | Gloss              |
|-----------|-----------|--------------------|
| fī-láŋ    | mū-láŋ    | 'clay pipe'        |
| fī-pí     | mū-pí     | 'bird' (gen.)      |
| fīŋ-chōnē | mūŋ-chōnē | 'ground nut'       |
| fīŋ-kō    | mūŋ-kō    | 'cup'              |
| fī-kūŋ    | mū-kūŋ    | 'heart'            |
| fīm-bì    | mūm-bì    | 'kola nut'         |
| fīŋ-chīŋ  | mūŋ-chīŋ  | 'palm rat'         |
| fī-kā:    | mūŋ-kā:   | 'calabash for oil' |
| fīn-sésè  | mūn-sésè  | 'louse'            |
| fīŋ-yōŋà  | mūŋ-yōŋà  | 'pig'              |
| fīŋ-kōgó  | mūŋ-kōgó  | 'wrist, ankle'     |

Table 5.17 Selected gender 19/18a nouns.

### 5.2.2 Gender and lexical membership

The above section presented the various noun classes and the primary genders each noun class is a member of. In this section the prevalence of the various genders is considered and observations are made regarding possible semantic criteria for class/gender assignment.

Table 5.18 shows the prevalence of each noun gender. The largest genders are 1/2, 7/8 and 9/10, which are shaded in the table. All other genders account for less than 10% each, and it can be seen that single class genders are generally unproductive, with genders 1, 3, 5, 6, 6a, 7, 8, 9, 10, 18a and 13 each having between one and five members.



| Gender                                  | Number | Percentage |
|---|--------|------------|
| 1/2                                     | 105    | 22%        |
| 3/4                                     | 18     | 4%         |
| 3/13                                    | 7      | 1%         |
| 5/6                                     | 28     | 6%         |
| 5/13                                    | 14     | 3%         |
| 7/8                                     | 157    | 33%        |
| 9/10                                    | 67     | 14%        |
| 14/6a                                   | 13     | 3%         |
| 19/18a                                  | 30     | 6%         |
| 16                                      | 5      | 1%         |
| 17                                      | 6      | 1%         |
| 1, 3, 5, 6, 6a, 7,<br>8, 9, 10, 18a, 13 | 30     | 6%         |
| TOTAL                                   | 480    | 100%       |

Table 5.18 Distribution of Nchane genders.<sup>39</sup>

In terms of lexical criteria for class assignment, only a few semantic tendencies are observed. One obvious semantic category is “people”. Sixty-eight percent of “people” nouns are found in gender 1/2, which accounts for about one quarter of all gender 1/2 nouns. Some examples are provided in Table 5.19.

| Class 1 | Class 2 | Gloss         |
|---------|---------|---------------|
| mũ      | bā-mĩ   | ‘person’ (c1) |
| ṁfòṅ    | bā-ṁfòṅ | ‘chief’ (c1)  |
| chóṅ    | bā-chóṅ | ‘thief’       |
| bwē     | bā-bwē  | ‘mother’      |
| ṁfwā    | bā-ṁfwā | ‘slave’       |

Table 5.19 Gender 1/2: People.

Some foods and tools are found in gender 1/2, as well as some animals. Animals as a lexical category are scattered primarily between genders 1/2, 7/8 and 9/10, with a small number also in gender 19/18a. It is possible that gender 1/2 contains a subset of animals—those that are dangerous and/or carnivorous, as seen in Table 5.20. Animals from the cat family, such as lions and leopards, are found in this gender, along with the hyena and the crocodile. Similarly, birds of prey such as the hawk and the vulture, appear in gender 1/2. Carnivores rarely if ever appear in other genders. One possible exception is the domesticated dog, which belongs to gender 9/10.

<sup>39</sup> The number of tokens excludes nouns for which class assignment has not been established due to variable agreement patterning or lack of data.

| Class 1 | Class 2  | Gloss       |
|---------|----------|-------------|
| bvúlè   | bā-bvúlè | 'lion'      |
| ṅgūlú   | bā-ṅgūlú | 'vulture'   |
| kfúlá   | bā-kfúlá | 'hyena'     |
| kùṅ     | bā-kùṅ   | 'python'    |
| ṅgáṅ    | ba-ṅgáṅ  | 'tarantula' |

Table 5.20 Gender 1/2: Dangerous animals and spiders.

Genders 3/4 and 3/13 appear to be miscellaneous genders, although gender 3/13 might include straight objects.

| Class 3 | Class 13  | Gloss            |
|---------|-----------|------------------|
| ṅgú     | chī-ṅgú   | 'gun, rifle'     |
| nfû     | chī-nfû   | 'stirring stick' |
| ṅgvúlé  | bā-ṅgvúlé | 'vein'           |
| ṅgvúṅ   | chī-ṅgvúṅ | 'tail'           |

Table 5.21 Gender 3/13: Straight objects.

A significant percentage of gender 5/6 is body parts, particularly those which are paired and round. These include the eyes, testes and knees. Other small, round objects are also observed in this gender, including eggs, hailstones, potatoes and rice, suggesting that the quality of 'roundness' might be characteristic of the gender. Table 5.22 provides some examples.

| Class 5 | Class 6 | Gloss       |
|---------|---------|-------------|
| jīsé    | ā-jī    | 'eye'       |
| dyā     | ā-dá    | 'testicle'  |
| ṅy:     | ā-ṅy:   | 'knee'      |
| mbénè   | ā-mbêṅ  | 'breast'    |
| génē    | ā-gíṅ   | 'egg'       |
| bēlē    | ā-bē    | 'hailstone' |
| tēdē    | ā-tā    | 'stone'     |

Table 5.22 Gender 5/6: Round objects.

Gender 5/13 contains miscellaneous nouns.

Certain plants and trees, insects and tools are found in gender 7/8. Many animals are also found here, including those designating male varieties, such as billy goat, ram and rooster. There are also a good number of body parts, including a few

internal organs and the extremities. Examples of these two groups are given in Table 5.23 and Table 5.24.

| Class 7  | Class 8  | Gloss               |
|----------|----------|---------------------|
| kī-bé    | bī-bé    | <i>'billy goat'</i> |
| kī-ḡḡḡnè | bī-ḡḡḡnè | <i>'rooster'</i>    |
| kī-yḍ:   | bī-yḍ:   | <i>'elephant'</i>   |
| kī-gúḡ   | bī-gúḡ   | <i>'baboon'</i>     |

Table 5.23 Gender 7/8: Animals, including male varieties.

| Class 7 | Class 8 | Gloss         |
|---------|---------|---------------|
| kī-láḡè | bī-láḡè | <i>'jaw'</i>  |
| kī-bó   | bī-bó   | <i>'arm'</i>  |
| kī-kā   | bī-kā   | <i>'foot'</i> |
| kī-fūfú | bī-fūfú | <i>'lung'</i> |

Table 5.24 Gender 7/8: Body parts.

This gender also includes numerous nouns that could be viewed negatively, as seen in Table 5.25. Of the twelve “people” nouns found in this gender, all of them may be viewed as defective or incompletely human in some way. These include the words for people who are blind, deaf or lame, as well as prostitutes, orphans and ghosts. Other items found here that could be construed as negative are some insects associated with decay (e.g., maggots), natural disasters and certain illnesses or conditions associated with poor health.

| Class 7  | Class 8   | Gloss                             |
|----------|-----------|-----------------------------------|
| kī-chífè | bī-nchífè | <i>'deaf person'</i>              |
| kī-yḍ    | bī-yḍ     | <i>'spirit'</i>                   |
| kī-yúḡ   | bī-yúḡ    | <i>'fool'</i>                     |
| kī-ḡkú   | bī-ḡkú    | <i>'flood'</i>                    |
| kī-ntēḡē | bī-ntēḡē  | <i>'argument'</i> , <sup>40</sup> |
| kī-nchéḡ | bī-nchéḡ  | <i>'illness'</i>                  |
| kì-ḡkòḡḡ | bì-ḡkòḡḡ  | <i>'abscess'</i>                  |

Table 5.25 Gender 7/8: Negative entities.

Gender 9/10 contains some animals and insects. Many of these are viewed as edible, such as goats, antelopes, termites and grasshoppers. The generic terms fish, snake and animal are also found here. Examples of these two groups are given in Table

<sup>40</sup> This noun is derived from the verb **tēḡē** ‘argue’.

5.26 and Table 5.27. Also found in this gender are some plants, trees and body parts, including the major reproductive organs.

| Class 9 | Class 10 | Gloss         |
|---------|----------|---------------|
| shī     | shí      | 'chicken'     |
| bī      | bī       | 'goat'        |
| chā     | chā      | 'monkey'      |
| ṛgō     | ṛgō      | 'termite'     |
| m̄bē    | m̄bé     | 'grasshopper' |

Table 5.26 Gender 9/10: Edible animals and insects.

| Class 9 | Class 10 | Gloss          |
|---------|----------|----------------|
| yō      | yō       | 'snake' (gen.) |
| byèṅ    | byéṅ     | 'fish' (gen.)  |
| ṇàṅ     | ṇāṅ      | 'animal, meat' |

Table 5.27 Gender 9/10: Generic animal terms.

While gender 14/6a is relatively small and contains miscellany, there are at least three nouns in this gender that have a characteristic physical orientation. Ladder, bridge and roof, given in Table 5.28, are each constructed from two or more long “branches” with numerous shorter, transverse, parallel “branches” affixed. More examples would be needed to substantiate this as a defining element for gender assignment.

| Class 14 | Class 6a | Gloss    |
|----------|----------|----------|
| bvū-kó   | māṅ-kó   | 'ladder' |
| bvū-dyē  | mān-dyē  | 'bridge' |
| bvū-kū   | māṅ-kū   | 'roof'   |

Table 5.28 Gender 14/6a: Items with a ladder orientation.

Gender 19/18a contains a wide range of nouns with no clear lexical unity, with the possible exception of “smallness”. Indeed, a significant portion of these nouns might be viewed as small, some of which are given in Table 5.29.

| Class 19 | Class 18a | Gloss                  |
|----------|-----------|------------------------|
| fī-ńí    | mū-ńí     | 'bird' ( <i>gen.</i> ) |
| fīŋ-kō   | mūŋ-kō    | 'cup'                  |
| fīn-sésè | mūn-sésè  | 'louse'                |
| fīm-bì   | mūm-bì    | 'kola nut'             |
| fīn-tāŋ  | mūn-tāŋ   | 'bead'                 |

Table 5.29 Gender 19/18a: Small items?

However, it is difficult to know with certainty how many of these nouns are in fact derived from another class and how many are underived but assigned to this gender based on small size. See §5.2.3 for discussion of class 19 as a derivational class.

The single class genders by definition contain noncount nouns. All class 6a noncount nouns were presented in Table 5.16, which illustrates two types of noncount nouns—liquids and items that tend to be small and numerous, and therefore perceived of as a mass. Table 5.30 lists the remaining noncount nouns in the corpus, with the noun class of each noun following the gloss. Liquids appear in classes 1, 3, 6, 7 and 9. Note that the class 9 noun for 'water' also refers to 'river', which is countable. Nouns that are treated as mass entities like 'sand' and those which refer to entities with a more amorphous quality such as 'air' and 'light' are also spread out in different classes. Thus, noncount nouns do not appear to display any kind of lexico-semantic unity that would dictate class assignment. Note that 'squirrel' would seem to be countable. Indeed, the Noni cognate is treated as countable.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> The Mungong cognate is also noncountable.

| Example   | Gloss               |
|-----------|---------------------|
| m̄bòŋ     | 'marrow' (c1)       |
| ṇyū       | 'light' (gen.) (c1) |
| ṇfúŋ      | 'storm' (c1)        |
| ṇkàn      | 'corn beer' (c1)    |
| kwā       | 'valuables' (c3)    |
| ṇchwēŋ    | 'spring' (c3)       |
| mū:       | 'sunlight' (c3)     |
| bwē       | 'dew' (c3)          |
| tā:       | 'ashes' (c5)        |
| ā-mbèŋ    | 'milk' (c6)         |
| ā-màn     | 'twin' (c6)         |
| kī-jíbé   | 'darkness' (c7)     |
| kī-ṇchāŋò | 'watery oil' (c7)   |
| kī-búlé   | 'sky' (c7)          |
| bī-fù     | 'foam' (c8)         |
| bī-kālē   | 'menses' (c8)       |
| bī-kānè   | 'fruit' (gen.) (c8) |
| ṇkā       | 'salt' (c9)         |
| fī:       | 'air' (c9)          |
| jàn       | 'rain' (c9)         |
| jō        | 'water' (c9)        |
| ṇgā       | 'rust' (c10)        |
| mūṇ-jégè  | 'smoke' (c18a)      |
| mūṇ-shē:  | 'sand' (c18a)       |
| chī-ká    | 'squirrel' (c13)    |

Table 5.30 Single class gender nouns.

### 5.2.3 Derivational classes

Certain classes are associated with derivational processes and are described in this section. These include the diminutive class 19, and class 14, which derives abstract nouns from predicate adjectives, as well as the two locative classes designated as 16 and 18. Note that class 7 is observed in a number of Bantu languages as having an augmentative function (Maho 1999: 263). This secondary use of class 7 is observed in limited quantities for Mundabli (Voll 2017: 86) and Sari (Langhout 2015: 22–23), where at least for Sari, it is derogatory as well. However, Nchane class 7 does not appear to function as an augmentative. Furthermore, while Nchane class 7 is observed to be associated with negatively perceived nouns, it cannot be used to derive negative nouns.

**Class 14**

Class 14 derives abstract nouns from attributive verbs (described in §10.6). The stem of the abstract form always reflects non-progressive morphology, thus there is sometimes an apparent alternation in the stems of the attributive verb and the derived noun. The process appears to be very productive. Some examples are given in Table 5.31.

| Attributive verb |           |   | Abstract noun |                |
|------------------|-----------|---|---------------|----------------|
| kūgé             | 'big'     | → | bvū-kūgè      | 'bigness'      |
| ṣṣ:ṣṣ            | 'small'   | → | bvū-ṣṣ:ṣṣ     | 'smallness'    |
| jíjè             | 'heavy'   | → | bvū-jíjè      | 'heaviness'    |
| jūṣ              | 'old'     | → | bvū-jūṣ       | 'oldness'      |
| yídé             | 'black'   | → | bvū-yídè      | 'blackness'    |
| chēṣṣ            | 'spoiled' | → | bvū-chēṣṣ     | 'spoiled-ness' |

Table 5.31 Selected class 14 abstract nouns derived from attributive verbs.

**Class 19**

Class 19 as a derivational class of diminutive nouns is reported in neighboring languages, such as Noni (Hyman 1981: 11), Mundabli (Voll 2017: 100) and Mungbam (Lovegren 2013: 124), as well as noted as common among northern Bantu languages (Maho 1999: 88–89). In the past, class 19 was probably used to derive diminutive nouns also in Nchane, but the process is no longer productive. (See also the brief discussion regarding the semantics of c19 nouns in §5.2.2.) Example (5.4) represents a rare exception and shows that the derivational process is similar to those presented above, with the original class prefix being replaced with the class 19 prefix **fī-**. But it should be noted that some speakers do not recognize **fīṣ** as a derived noun.

|       |            |   |             |               |
|-------|------------|---|-------------|---------------|
| (5.4) | ṣṣ         | → | fī-ṣṣ       | 'small knife' |
|       | c9.cutlass |   | c19-cutlass |               |

While diminution is no longer a productive secondary function of class 19, a small number of nouns may be derived, which take on the quality of smallness, but are primarily pejorative expressions. For instance, one can say something like, 'see his small head' as a way of poking fun. Some of these examples are given in Table 5.32. The lexical class is given in parentheses following the lexical form.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>42</sup> Pejorative expression associated with derived diminutive nouns is also reported for Mundabli (Voll 2017: 101) and Mungbam (Lovegren 2013: 124–5).

| Lexical Form | Diminutive-pejorative (c19) | Gloss      |
|--------------|-----------------------------|------------|
| mwā (c1)     | fĩ-mwā                      | 'child'    |
| bā: (c1)     | fĩ-bā:                      | 'pa'       |
| kĩ-kwé: (c7) | fĩ-kwé:                     | 'head'     |
| kĩ-ndòŋ (c7) | fĩ-ndòŋ                     | 'neck'     |
| kĩ-bó (c7)   | fĩ-bó                       | 'hand/arm' |
| kĩ-ká: (c7)  | fĩ-ká:                      | 'leg'      |
| yē (c9)      | fĩ-yē                       | 'house'    |

Table 5.32 Derived class 19 diminutive-pejorative nouns.

### Class 16

The locative class 16 is primarily a derivational class, although the process cannot be said to be productive. The prefix **fē-** shares its form with the preposition **fē**, which usually gives a meaning of 'at' or 'on'. Class 16 nouns are derived by removing the original noun class marking and replacing it with the class 16 prefix, as illustrated in example (5.5). An association of this class with Proto-Bantu class 16 \***pà-** is likely, in spite of the morphological differences. The designation reflects similar semantics commonly expressed through the class, and the **f** onset is attested in apparent class 16 reflexes of other Bantoid languages (e.g., Ejagham and Yamba). See Grégoire (1983) for an account of the diversity observed in class 16 reflexes.

- (5.5)      kī-tānā      →      fē-tāŋ      'at the fireplace'  
                  c7-fireplace      c16-fireplace

The use of class 16 in context is seen in example (5.6), which also reveals the noun imposing agreement on the modifying anaphoric demonstrative. Note that 'path' is lexically a class 9 noun, which generates the class 9 agreement seen in the phrase **yē yē-è** 'that path'.

- (5.6)      j̄n-yéŋ      Ø-ńfòŋ      kī-kāŋī      wù      j̄nù      fē-yēlé      fē-è  
                  1SG-see      c1-chief      c7-N.      c1REL      COP(N)      c16-path      c16-ANA1

*'I saw the chief of Nkanchi, who was there.'* (lit. *at that path*)      Fire.10

Examples of likely lexicalized class 16 nouns, which are few in number, are given in Table 5.33. As the table shows, some of these nouns have a stem differing from that of the historical source noun. Furthermore, in some cases the source is no longer identifiable. The word for 'beginning' shows that it is possible for a class 16 noun to ultimately be derived from a verb, although this is the only example in the corpus of this occurrence. Note that the verb is also marked with the nominalizer prefix **N-**. See §5.5 for a description of this prefix.



| Source     | Gloss            | Class 16 | Gloss             |
|------------|------------------|----------|-------------------|
| chyā:ŋ (?) | 'hand' (c9)      | fē-ká    | 'palm of hand'    |
| bwēŋ (?)   | 'upper arm' (c3) | fē-gbwē  | 'shoulder'        |
| ??         | -                | fē-kú    | 'down, on ground' |
| kē         | 'begin' (v)      | fē-ŋ-kè  | 'beginning'       |

Table 5.33 Class 16 nouns.

In all cases, class 16 nouns have the incorporated meaning of 'at' or 'on'. Class 16 nouns do not appear to have a natural morphological plural. See §8.1.1 for an account of prepositional phrases involving **fē** 'at'.

### Class 18

A second locative class is observed with the prefix **ā-** that is designated as class 18. Like class 16, the semantics of this class motivates its designation, since correspondence between its prefix and that of Proto-Bantu (**\*mù-**) is doubtful. Note that Nchane class 18 corresponds with Noni class 17 (**ē-**) (Hyman 1981: 13). The class 18 prefix corresponds to the preposition **à**, which usually gives a meaning of 'in' or 'inside'. Nouns from other classes are locativized in the same way as described for class 16 above and usually have the incorporated meaning 'inside of'. An example derivation is given in (5.7) and an example in context in (5.8).

- (5.7)      wōŋ            →    ā-wōŋ            'in the village'  
               c3.village        c18-village

- (5.8)      wū      bū      bē      kī-chidè      ā-bō  
               3SG   reach   with   c7-food.mat   c18-hand

'She appeared with a food-mat in (her) hand.'                      Two Wives.3.4

Like class 16, this class is not well represented in the data, but is populated by a few presumed lexicalized forms, including some body parts and words referring to times of the day. The historical source of these nouns is not always known. The nouns sometimes can have class 8 plurals, although it is possible that the locative significance is lacking in the plural forms and might simply reflect the non-derived plural form, as is likely for the word 'morning', seen in Table 5.34, along with other examples.

| Source   | Gloss                 | Class 18 | Class 8  | Gloss                   |
|----------|-----------------------|----------|----------|-------------------------|
| shēŋ     | <i>'liver' (c9)</i>   | ā-shēŋ   | -        | <i>'stomach'</i>        |
| ŋō       | <i>'god' (c1)</i>     | ā-ŋō     | -        | <i>'spirit world'</i>   |
| ??       |                       | ā-ŋkáŋá  | bī-ŋkáŋá | <i>'armpit'</i>         |
| kī-ntánā | <i>'morning' (c7)</i> | ā-ntánā  | bī-ntánā | <i>'in the morning'</i> |
| ??       |                       | ā-ntán   | bī-tán   | <i>'night'</i>          |

Table 5.34 Class 18 nouns.

See §8.1.2 for a description of prepositional phrases headed by à ‘in’ for the purpose of comparison.

### 5.3 Compound nouns

A relatively small number of noun-noun constructions are observed in Nchane, with the head noun limited to class 1, particularly various kinds of people. Examples are given in Table 5.35.

| Example                              | Gloss                                      |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Ø-mū-nché<br>c1-person-medicine (c9) | <i>'traditional healer'</i>                |
| Ø-mū-wá:<br>c1-person-market (c3)    | <i>'trader'</i>                            |
| Ø-mwā-ŋō<br>c1-child-god (c1)        | <i>'God's son'</i>                         |
| Ø-bwē-yē<br>c1-mother-house (c9)     | <i>'mother of the house'</i> <sup>43</sup> |
| Ø-chī-ŋkfù<br>c1-father-deceased(?)  | <i>'widower'</i>                           |

Table 5.35 Nchane compound nouns.

Rather than representing compound nouns, these constructions could be associative noun phrases, which have lost the associative marker and the remaining two nouns phonologically incorporated. Noni is observed to have similar optional associative marker loss for all classes with the shape [wu] and [yi] (i.e., classes 1, 3, 4, 9 and 10). It is likely that optional deletion of these associative markers is common in Nchane natural speech as well, although there is no change in meaning or function

<sup>43</sup> This term refers to the woman who is recognized as the head woman of a home. She is responsible for hosting visitors, preparing meals, etc.

in these cases. One native speaker suggested a difference in meaning between **mū wū kwā** ‘man of valuables’ and **mūkwā** ‘rich man’. But this is unconfirmed.

An attempt at eliciting a plural of a compound noun resulted in example (5.9), which is clearly an associative noun construction. Therefore, the compound noun analysis should be viewed with some suspicion.

- (5.9)      bā-mì      bā      wá:      ‘traders’  
                  c2-person    c2AM    c3.market

## 5.4 Borrowed nouns

Borrowings are not very common in the data. When they do occur, they usually are assigned to gender 1/2, as seen in Table 5.36.

| Class 1 | Class 2  | Gloss                                       |
|---------|----------|---|
| pyā     | bā-pyā   | ‘avocado’ (Cameroon Pidgin English ‘pear’)  |
| sō:gè   | bā-sō:gè | ‘soldier’ (English)                         |
| lēmú    | bā-lēmú  | ‘orange’ (English ‘lemon’)                  |
| áfyòŋ   | bā-áfyòŋ | ‘airplane’ (French ‘avion’)                 |
| jākí    | bā-jākí  | ‘donkey’ (Hausa ‘jaki’)                     |
| kòfí    | -        | ‘coffee’ (English)                          |
| lōŋ     | bā-lōŋ   | ‘trousers’ (Cameroon Pidgin English ‘long’) |
| māshê   | bā-māshê | ‘machine’ <sup>44</sup> (English)           |

Table 5.36 Gender 1/2 borrowed nouns.

The word for ‘pineapple’, given in example (5.10), is the only borrowed noun observed in gender 5/6. It is possible that it is assigned to this gender because of its round shape.

- (5.10)      Ø-nānā      ā-nānā      ‘pineapple’ (French ‘ananas’)  
                  c5-pineapple    c6-pineapple

Another possibility is that the shape of the word fits the pattern of class 6, which has the prefix **a-**, and therefore looks like a class 6 noun. However, the Noni cognate is assigned to gender 5/13, with noun class affixes **-e/di-** respectively, thus resulting in forms dissimilar to the French source word. Therefore, while supported language-internally, the hypothesis that it is assigned to c6 because of its segmental form is questionable.

<sup>44</sup> This word is used in reference to a number of mechanical devices, such as motorbikes and chainsaws.

## 5.5 Nominalization

Nouns may be derived from verbs, which often bring with them extra segments reminiscent of the progressive suffix, but which are more likely reflective of historically longer verb forms. The derivation is accomplished by the addition of the nominalizing prefix **N-**, which precedes the root and which has no apparent effect on phonetic realization in the case of nasal-initial roots. The new stem then takes an appropriate noun class prefix. Most derived nouns are observed in gender 1/2, with a few derived forms seen in gender 7/8 and rarely in other genders. Some examples are given in Table 5.37.

| Source | Gloss   | Noun (SG)  | Noun (PL)   | Gloss             |
|--------|---------|------------|-------------|-------------------|
| bī:    | ‘ask’   | m̄-bīlè    | bā-m-bīlè   | ‘question’ (1/2)  |
| jēpē   | ‘walk’  | j̄-jēpē    | bā-j̄-jēpē  | ‘journey’ (1/2)   |
| shī    | ‘sit’   | j̄-shīlè   | bā-j̄-shīlè | ‘meeting’ (1/2)   |
| yēyè   | ‘teach’ | j̄-yēyè    | bā-j̄-yēyè  | ‘teaching’ (1/2)  |
| m̄byāŋ | ‘lie’   | m̄-m̄byāŋ  | chī-m-mbyāŋ | ‘lie’ (5/13)      |
| tāshé  | ‘join’  | kì-n-tāshé | bì-n-tāshé  | ‘gathering’ (7/8) |
| tépé   | ‘argue’ | kì-n-tépé  | bì-n-tépé   | ‘argument’ (7/8)  |
| tē:    | ‘tell’  | fī-n-tēdē  | mù-n-tēdē   | ‘story’ (19/18a)  |

Table 5.37 Selected examples of nouns derived from verbs.

While derived nouns are rarely seen in other genders such as 5/13 and 19/18a, it is likely that there are few restrictions to which genders can take derived nouns. Semantic criteria might play a role in gender assignment. One known case supports this hypothesis. The derived noun for ‘meeting’ is normally assigned to gender 1/2. However, it can also appear as **kīpshīlè**, a class 7 noun. In this case, it has the added meaning of being regular, for example, ‘a weekly meeting’.

Derived nouns behave as normal nouns, appearing in the subject position (example (5.11)) and object position (examples (5.12) and (5.13)). Note also the agreement on the demonstrative dictated by the derived noun in example (5.11).

- (5.11) **Ø-j̄-shīlè**    **wú-yú**    gè    bé    kōnē    bá-mī    bá  
 c1-NMZR-sit    c1-ANA2    P3    <sup>P</sup>COP    about    c2-person    c2AM
- Ø-ńj-fijē    jē    yī    Ø-pò  
 c1-NMZR-preach    c9.word    c9AM    c1-god

‘This meeting was about (or for) preachers.’

Training.1.2

(5.12) ↑(bvū-jú) bvù bè gè gwē fǒ, bē gē  
 c14-place c14REL 1PL P3 fall there 1PL P3

bíd-ě **bā-m-bīlè** yúfè bāmī bá gē  
 ask-PROG c2-NMZR-ask ten c2-person c2REL P3

tǒ kī bǒ yéŋ bè lē  
 come COMP(K) 3PL see 1PL APPL

*'At the places where we landed, we asked ten questions of the people  
 who came to see us.'* Training.1.18

(5.13) bǒ kēm-é **kī-n-tǎjé**  
 3PL have-PROG c7-NMZR- argue

*'...they were having an argument...'* Sun and Wind.1.1



## Chapter 6

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### Noun phrase structure and nominal modifiers

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This chapter is concerned with the structure of Nchane noun phrases. Sections 6.1 and 6.2 describe simple and complex noun phrases respectively. The distinction between “simple” and “complex” is based loosely on Dryer (2007), with simple noun phrases limited to those with non-complex heads and potentially single-word modifiers and complex noun phrases covering all other cases.

A summary of the agreement system is included in this chapter in §6.3 since the realization of agreement is an important feature of nominal modifiers, which are presented in §6.4. Some nominal modifiers can themselves serve as nominal constituents of a clause and are discussed in §6.5. The final section (§6.6) deals with noun phrase word order.

#### **6.1 Simple noun phrases**

Simple noun phrases are those involving a single noun, with or without a single-word modifier. The head of simple noun phrases is most often a lexical noun or a pronoun, both of which are illustrated in example (6.1). Noun phrases in this section are placed in square brackets while head nouns are bolded.

- (6.1) [Ø-sɔ̃ŋɔ̃]    ɲá-á    [bɛ̀]    bɛ̀    [m̃-m̃ɛ:]  
 c5-oil.palm    give-PROG    1PL    with    c6a-oil  
*'The oil palm tree provides us with oil...'*    King of Trees.1.1

Noun phrases may consist of just a head noun alone as in example (6.1), or they may include one or more nominal modifiers, which follow the head noun, as shown in (6.2) and (6.3).

- (6.2) kī    já    kī    shì    yī    [Ø-tí:]    ch-ē]    lē  
 c7    leave    c7    sit    on    c5-stomach    c5-3SG.POSS    APPL  
*'...it (the fly) left and sat on his (the man's) stomach.'*  
 Greedy Friends.1.15

- (6.3) m-bú    [bā-mbīŋɛ̀    bā-fédè]  
 1SG-pick    c2-smooth.stone    c2-two  
*'...I will pick two smooth stones...'*    Inheritance.1.1

While pronouns are very common in the corpus, noun phrases with a pronominal head are rare. The types of modifiers observed modifying pronominal head nouns are limited to relative clauses and numerals, the latter of which example (6.4) illustrates.

- (6.4) [bɛ̃ŋ    bā-fé:]    bɛ̃ŋ    jémè    fy-ē:    fī-nè  
 2PL    c2-two    2PL    speak    c19-thing    c19-PROX  
  
 ā    bɛ̃ŋ    yē  
 c18    2PL    house  
*'...you two settle the matter (marriage) between yourselves'*  
 Marriage.4.4

## 6.2 Complex noun phrases

Complex noun phrases are characterized by a head consisting of multiple noun phrases or by modifiers consisting of more than one word. These include conjoined noun phrases and associative noun phrases, both of which are treated in the sections below. Relative clauses are also complex modifiers. However, due to the higher degree of complexity of relative clauses, they are treated separately in chapter 11 rather than here. One could argue that noun phrases consisting of a head noun and a modifying possessive pronoun are complex as well and belong in this section, since the possessive pronoun is by definition a noun. However, possessive pronouns rarely





- (6.8) b5 gē: [shí bē shónj bē bā-nā],  
 3PL put c10.chicken with c10.sheep with c2-cow  
*‘...they put aside chickens and sheep and cows, ...’* Inheritance.2

The scope in which conjoined noun phrases behave as single, unified phrases is somewhat limited. For example, as (6.9) illustrates, conjoined noun phrases sharing a single determiner is considered ungrammatical; both of the noun phrases must have their own determiner, as in (6.10). This constraint ensures there is no agreement confusion.

- (6.9) \*[Ø-jwènsè bē Ø-kwē: wú-mū]  
 c1-man with c1-woman.3SG.POSS c1-some  
*‘...a certain man and his wife ...’* (Jealous Husband.1.1)

- (6.10) [Ø-jwènsè wū-mū bē Ø-kwē: wú-mū]  
 c1-man c1-some with c1-woman.3SG.POSS c1-some  
*‘...a certain man and his wife...’* Jealous Husband.1.1

However, conjoined noun phrases can license a single pronoun as observed in (6.11) and (6.12). The “shared” pronoun in the examples below is underlined.

- (6.11) [Ø-jwénsě bě Ø-kwē] jōd-è kī-fē  
 c1-husband.HORT with c1-wife.3SG.POSS take-PROG c7-time  
 kī bō yūg-è Ø-ñ-tēfē  
 COMP(K) 3PL hear-PROG c1-NMZR-advise  
*‘The husband and wife should be taking time to be hearing advice...’*  
 Marriage.6.1

- (6.12) kī-lūŋ kī-mí gè bē [Ø-jwènsè wū-mū bē  
 c7-year c7-some P3 COP c1-man c1-some with  
 Ø-kwē: wú-mū] bō kōŋ-ē yé bá:ŋ  
 c1-woman.3SG.POSS c1-some 3PL.REL love-PROG c10.body much  
*‘Some [time] ago there was a man and wife who loved each other very much.’*  
 Jealous Husband.1.1

Examples of this phenomenon in the corpus occur only with class 1 human nouns, for which the 3PL pronoun is appropriate. Further research would be necessary to determine if conjoined non-human referents and/or non-class 1 nouns could also share pronoun licensing. Of particular interest would be how the agreement system would handle conjoined nouns of different noun classes.

### 6.2.2 Associative noun phrases

Associative constructions consist of two nouns with an intervening associative marker (AM), which agrees with the head noun it follows. The structure of this noun phrase is summarized by the schema below.

N<sub>1</sub>      AM      N<sub>2</sub>

The noun class prefix of the second noun is maintained. The tone on the associative marker varies depending on the class: low tone for class 1, high tone for classes 3, 4 and 10, and mid tone for all other classes.

The associative construction is primarily used for expressing possession when the possessor is a full noun as in (6.13)-(6.15).

- (6.13)    kī-jchō:    kī      Ø-nā  
              c7-horn    c7AM    c1-cow  
              ‘cow’s horn’

- (6.14)    ŋkā            yī      Ø-kwēsé  
              c9.basket    c9AM    c1-woman  
              ‘woman’s basket’

- (6.15)    Ø-bā    wù      bō:  
              c1-pa    c1AM    c2.child  
              ‘children’s pa’

Examples (6.13) and (6.14) clearly show that inalienable as well as alienable possession may be expressed through associative constructions. Inalienable possession may also be expressed through the possessum alone when the possessor is cognitively accessible as in (6.16).

- (6.16)    Ø-jwēŋ      mō    wù    chūgè    chyā:  
              c1-husband    RES    3SG    wash    c10.hand  
              ‘The husband then washed (his) hands.’

Jealous Husband.11

Associative noun constructions where the  $N_2$  is itself a possessed form lack the associative marker, as demonstrated in examples (6.17)-(6.19). Each of these has a class 1 noun as head, for which the associative marker is [wu], which was suggested in §5.3 as possibly prone to elision. It is possible that this phenomenon is limited to associative constructions with class 1 heads or even only those involving kinship terms, although the data are unavailable to confirm this hypothesis.

- (6.17) Ø-kwē    Ø-mwā    wū-nà  
           c1-wife    c1-child    c1-2PL.POSS  
           *'wife [of] your child'*

- (6.18) Ø-bwē    Ø-jw̃:  
           c1-mother    c1-husband.2SG.POSS  
           *'mother [of] your husband'*

- (6.19) Ø-chíjī    Ø-jw̃:  
           c1-father    c1-husband.2SG.POSS  
           *'father [of] your husband'*

In addition to possession, other semantic relationships may be expressed through associative constructions, including OBJECT-SOURCE, OBJECT-PURPOSE and some attributives. Examples (6.20)-(6.26) illustrate the range of expressions possible.

- (6.20) bā-mī    bā    j̃chānē  
           c2-person    c2AM    N.  
           *'Nchane  
           people'*

- (6.21) á-jī    ā    Ø-ŋwà  
           c6-eye    c6AM    c1-book  
           *'letters of the alphabet'*

- (6.22) bī-ŋkāŋ    bī    ā-s̃ŋ  
           c8-beetle    c8AM    c6-palm.tree  
           *'palm beetles'*

- (6.23) mw-ē: mū Ø-lēmè  
c18a-thing c18aAM c5-work  
'tools' (lit. *things of work*)
- (6.24) bvū-jōŋō bvū Ø-sōŋō  
c14-goodness c14AM c5-palm.tree  
'importance (or benefit) of palm trees' (lit. *goodness of...*)
- (6.25) Ø-ŋgē wù j̄shyén  
c1-trouble c1AM c9.property  
'land dispute'
- (6.26) Ø-mū wù j̄chè  
c1-person c1AM c9.medicine  
'doctor'

Associative noun phrases may be modified, with the modifier agreeing with the head noun, as in (6.27) and (6.28). The associative noun phrases are placed in brackets and the agreement elements have been bolded to facilitate the illustrations.

- (6.27) [Ø-mū **wū** j̄ō] **wú-né**  
c1-person c1AM c9.god c1-PROX  
'This man of God...' Marriage.3.7
- (6.28) bā gē yēyè kònè  
they P3 teach about  
[**bà**-j̄chī **bā** kī-yō kī yūdē] **bā-nē**  
c2-law c2AM c7-spirit c7REL clean c2-four  
'...they taught about the four spiritual laws...' (lit. *four laws of the spirit that is clean*) Training.1.7

(6.29)    bṽ:        bǎ        gē    tō        fwé    gē    bé  
             c2.child   c2.REL   P3    come   front   P3    P<sub>COP</sub>

What-goes-around.7.1

$$\begin{array}{l} (6.27)/(6.28) \quad [ [N_\alpha \quad AM_\alpha \quad N_\beta]_{\text{ASSOCP}} \quad \text{DEM}_\alpha ]_{\text{NP}} \\ (6.29) \quad [N_\alpha \quad AM_\alpha \quad N_\beta \quad \text{DEM}_\beta]_{\text{ASSOCP}} ]_{\text{NP}} \end{array}$$

Figure 6.1 Alternative agreement patterns of constructions with associative noun phrases.

(6.30) Ø-ŋgē wù jìshyén yē-nè wù gè kē  
c1-trouble c1AM c9.property c9-PROX c1 p3 begin

*'This land problem began when...'* Land Dispute.3.1

Associative noun phrases are observed to be recursive, at times nesting a second associative noun phrase inside the first. This phenomenon is illustrated in (6.31). Recursive associative noun phrases are not common in the data and might be limited to constructions that are in the process of lexicalization.

- ### 6.3 Agreement

The word classes which show agreement fall into two categories:

- (1) Words taking an agreement prefix. These words can be loosely described as modifiers and include possessive pronouns, spatial demonstratives, anaphoric demonstratives, quantifiers, “some”, and numbers. The agreement prefixes are summarized in Table 6.1. A minus sign represents an unattested form. The multiple agreement forms associated with possessive pronouns are mostly due to stem shape, with vowel initial stems taking a C prefix, and consonant initial stems taking a CV prefix. Note that tone for the proximal demonstratives is either H or M, while that for the distal demonstratives is either M or L. See §6.4.1 for precise details. Also note that the initial consonant of agreement prefixes for numbers are sometimes elided when they are semivowels (i.e., [w] and [j]).

| Class | Possessive pronoun   | Dem<br>spatial | Dem<br>ANA1 | Dem<br>ANA2 | Quantifier | Num  |
|-------|----------------------|----------------|-------------|-------------|------------|------|
| 1     | w-, wū-              | wu-            | w-          | wú-         | wù-/wū-    | wù-  |
| 2     | b-, bē-, bā-         | ba-            | b-          | bá-         | bā-, bá-   | bā-  |
| 3     | w-, wū-              | kfu-           | kw-         | wú-         | wū-/wú-    | wū-  |
| 4     | y-, yē-              | che-           | ch-         | yí-         | yī-, yí-   | yī-  |
| 5     | ch-, chē-            | che-           | chy-        | chí-        | chī-, chí- | chī- |
| 6     | ā-, āw-, āwū-        | ka-            | k-          | á-          | ā-, á-     | ā-   |
| 7     | k-, kē-              | ki-            | k-          | kí-         | kī-, kí-   | kī-  |
| 8     | by-, bè-             | bi-            | by-         | bí-         | bī-, bí-   | bī-  |
| 9     | ý-, yē-              | yí-            | y-          | yí-         | yì-, yí-   | yì-  |
| 10    | ý-, yē-              | che-           | chy-        | yí-         | yī-, yí-   | yī-  |
| 14    | bw-, bù-, bwē-, bvù- | bvu-           | bw-         | bvú-        | bvū-, bvú- | bvū- |
| 6a    | m-, mw-, mù-, mòŋ-   | ma-            | m-          | má-         | māN-, máN- | māN- |
| 19    | fý-, fī-             | fī-            | fý-         | fī-         | fī-, fī-   | fī-  |
| 18a   | mw-, mū-, mwū-       | mu-            | mw-         | mú-         | mūN-, múN- | mū-  |
| 13    | ch-, chē-            | che-           | chy-        | chí-        | chī-, chí- | chī- |
| 16    | f-, fē-              | fē-, fə-       | f-          | fē-         | fē-, fē-   | -    |
| 18    | ā-, āw-, āwē-        | ya-            | y-          | á-          | ā-, á-     | -    |

Table 6.1 Agreement prefixes (for possessive pronouns, spatial demonstratives, anaphoric demonstratives, quantifiers and numerals).

- (2) Non-complex words. Morphologically simple words showing agreement include preverbal and postverbal pronouns, relativizers and the associative marker of associative noun phrases. These are summarized in Table 6.2. Relative clauses modifying class 18 are unattested, which is indicated in the table by a minus sign. Words enclosed by parentheses have either doubtful attestations or have extensive restrictions on distribution. Detailed descriptions of pronouns and relative clauses is given in chapters 6 and 11 respectively, while a description of associative noun phrases appears in the section prior to this one (§6.2.2).



| Class | Preverbal<br>Pro | Postverbal<br>Pro | Relativizer <sup>45</sup> | AM  |
|-------|------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|-----|
| 1     | wū               | wù                | wu                        | wù  |
| 2     | bā               | bó                | ba                        | bā  |
| 3     | wū               | wú                | wu                        | wú  |
| 4     | yī               | yí                | yi                        | yí  |
| 5     | chī              | chí               | chi                       | chī |
| 6     | wō               | wó                | a                         | ā   |
| 7     | kī               | kí                | ki                        | kī  |
| 8     | bī               | bí                | bi                        | bī  |
| 9     | yī               | yì                | yi                        | yī  |
| 10    | yī, yí           | yí                | yi                        | yí  |
| 14    | bvū              | bvú               | bvu                       | bvū |
| 6a    | mōŋ              | mó                | ma                        | mā  |
| 19    | fī               | fí                | fī                        | fī  |
| 18a   | mūŋ              | mú                | muŋ                       | mū  |
| 13    | chī              | yí                | chi                       | chī |
| 16    | (fē)             | (fó)              | (fē)                      | fē  |
| 18    | (ā)              | (wó)              | -                         | ā   |

Table 6.2 Words showing agreement (preverbal pronouns, postverbal pronouns, relativizers and associative markers).

## 6.4 Nominal modifiers

This section describes the following Nchane nominal modifiers: possessive pronouns, demonstratives, quantifiers, “some”, numerals and adjectives. Each of these modifiers consists of a stem and an agreement prefix, which expresses agreement with the head noun. These modifiers are broadly classified as determiners, as they function in determining the reference or quantity characteristics associated with the head noun. Some of the modifying word classes are observed functioning as nominal heads themselves, independent of any overt, lexical noun (see §6.5). And I assume that any determiner category may do so. However, the overwhelming function of these words is modifying and as such, they are treated primarily as nominal modifiers.

### 6.4.1 Possessive Pronouns

Possessed nouns (other than those in associative noun phrases) are immediately followed by a possessive pronoun which consists of an agreement prefix and a stem. The agreement prefix expresses agreement with the head noun (or possesum), while

<sup>45</sup> The tone of relativizers differs depending on which clause constituent is relativized. See §12.1 for more details.

the stem encodes for person and number of the possessor. Examples (6.32) and (6.33) are given to illustrate.

|        |                     |                       |                     |                      |
|--------|---------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| (6.32) | n̄<br>c9.cutlass    | y-àŋ<br>c9-1SG.POSS   | n̄<br>c9.cutlass    | y-è<br>c9-3SG.POSS   |
|        | 'my cutlass'        |                       | 'his/her cutlass'   |                      |
| (6.33) | fīŋ-yōŋè<br>c19-pig | fī-àŋ<br>c19-1SG.POSS | fīŋ-yōŋè<br>c19-pig | fī-è<br>c19-3SG.POSS |
|        | 'my pig'            |                       | 'his/her pig'       |                      |

Non-human possessors do not express possession through possessive pronouns, but rather through associative noun phrases (see for example (6.13)). A possible exception to this rule is when a non-human is personified. This can lead to a situation where pronominal reference associated with a human referent can be used for stylistic reasons.

Table 6.3 provides a summary of the possessive pronoun forms. Some variation of vowels is observed in the stems of all but the 1SG and 3PL series. This variation is especially pronounced in the 1PL and 2PL series, where the stem vowel is sometimes **e** and sometimes **a**. It is likely that this variation is at least in part free, with both forms fully accepted by speakers.

At times, there is also variation of the agreement in the paradigm resulting in less conservative reflexes than those found in the agreement paradigms of other word classes (cf. the quantifiers paradigm). The variation, particularly that of vowels, is even observed within certain series. For example, the class 2 agreement is generally **ba-**, but for 1PL it is **bə-**. Class 14 agreement for 2PL is another notable form, with the vowel appearing as **ε** rather than **u**.

The agreement for classes 6 and 18 in all but the 3PL series reveals a segmentally longer form than seen in other concordant word classes. The agreement for these classes is usually **(C)a**, or sometimes the phonetically similar **(C)ɔ**. But in the possessive pronoun series the underlying agreement is **awu**. This represents the only case of a disyllabic agreement prefix and is reminiscent of augments in some Bantu languages (see Katamba 2003: 107–8). Regardless of its source, it is likely a strategy adopted by the language to overcome the problem of prefixation of a vowel initial stem with a prefix that has no fundamentally associated consonant. If this hypothesis is correct, then one would need to posit that the strategy is unnecessarily extended to the plural possessive pronoun series, which do not have vowel initial stems.

| Class | Person/Number |      |     |       |       |       |
|-------|---------------|------|-----|-------|-------|-------|
|       | 1SG           | 2SG  | 3SG | 1PL   | 2PL   | 3PL   |
| 1     | wàŋ           | wò   | wè  | wūsè  | wūnà  | wūbō  |
| 2     | bàŋ           | bòŋ  | bè  | bēsà  | bānā  | bābō  |
| 3     | wāŋ           | wò   | wē  | wūsē  | wūnē  | wūbō  |
| 4     | yāŋ           | yò   | yì  | yēsē  | yēnē  | yēbō  |
| 5     | chāŋ          | chùŋ | chē | chēsā | chēnā | chībō |
| 6     | āwāŋ          | āwò  | āwì | āwūsē | āwūnā | ābō   |
| 7     | kāŋ           | kùŋ  | kè  | kēsā  | kēnā  | kēbō  |
| 8     | byāŋ          | byūŋ | byē | bēsā  | bēnā  | bēbō  |
| 9     | yāŋ           | yò   | yè  | yèsè  | yènè  | yēbō  |
| 10    | yāŋ           | yó   | yé  | yésé  | yéné  | yébō  |
| 14    | bwāŋ          | bwōŋ | bwē | bwūsā | bwēnā | bwūbō |
| 6a    | m(w)āŋ        | mōŋ  | mwē | mūsā  | mūnā  | mōŋbō |
| 19    | fyāŋ          | fyōŋ | fyē | fīsā  | fīnā  | fībō  |
| 18a   | mwāŋ          | mwōŋ | mwē | mūsā  | mūnā  | mwūbō |
| 13    | chāŋ          | chōŋ | chē | chēsā | chēnā | chēbō |
| 16    | fāŋ           | fōŋ  | fē  | fēsā  | fēnā  | fēbō  |
| 18    | āwāŋ          | āwò  | āwē | āwēsē | āwēnē | ābō   |

Table 6.3 Nchane possessive pronouns.

The singular possessives of certain kinship terms, all of which belong lexically to class 1, display portmanteau forms, with the possessor fused with the possessum. For example, the form for ‘my wife’ is derived from **kwēsé** ‘wife’ + **aŋ** ‘1SG.POSS’, resulting in the form **kwā̃**. Table 6.4 gives an account of some of these words, along with their plural counterparts. The portmanteau phenomenon does not extend to the plural possessive forms, although the 3PL form is reduced, lacking an agreement prefix.

| Base form ‘gloss’ | 1SG    | 2SG    | 3SG     | 1PL        | 2PL        | 3PL     |
|-------------------|--------|--------|---------|------------|------------|---------|
| kwēsé ‘wife’      | kwā̃:  | kwō̃:  | kwē̃:   | kwē̃ wēsè  | kwē̃ wènè  | kwē̃ bó |
| jwēŋsé ‘husband’  | jwā̃:  | jwō̃:  | jwē̃:   | jōmā wēsè  | jōmā wènè  | jōmā bó |
| bwē̃: ‘mother’    | bwā̃:  | bwō̃:  | bwē̃:   | bwē̃ wēsè  | bwē̃ wènè  | bwē̃ bó |
| chī̃: ‘father’    | chījā̃ | chījō̃ | chījē̃: | chījī wēsè | chījī wènè | chījī b |

Table 6.4 Nchane possessive series of illustrative kinship terms with portmanteau members.

Identifying a base form for these kinship terms is difficult, since the core semantics of each involve the notion of possession. This allows for these base forms to be used in contexts that express a possessive relationship for which it is not overtly marked. Additionally, the base forms for ‘wife’ and ‘husband’ are disyllabic, with the ultimate syllable apparently not present in the conjugated forms. Curiously, the

opposite is observed in the word for ‘father’, with the base form monosyllabic and most of the conjugated forms displaying all of, or a portion of, the second syllable **ji**.

The plurals of these kinship terms belong to class 2 and take the prefix **bā-**. No agreement is observed in the portmanteau forms, but agreement is present in the plural possessor forms (except in the case of 3PL). To illustrate, compare examples (6.34) and (6.35).

- (6.34)    **lé    bā-chijàŋ**  
           COP    c2-father.1SG.POSS  
           ‘*They are my fathers.*’

- (6.35)    **lé    bā-chiji    bē-sà**  
           COP    c2-father    c2-1PL.POSS  
           ‘*They are our fathers.*’

#### 6.4.2 Demonstratives

Two types of demonstratives are present in Nchane, both types being represented by two forms each. The exophoric set of demonstratives expresses the notion of spatial orientation. The endophoric set is used in anaphoric reference and is important to discourse organization. One of these anaphoric demonstratives, designated as ANA2, also has a unique function of encoding speaker attitude toward the participant. Both types occur immediately after the modified noun (or after the possessive pronoun if one is present). The spatial demonstratives are described first and then the anaphoric demonstratives.

##### *Spatial demonstratives*

Nchane has a bipartite system of spatial demonstratives, which identify the referent in terms of relative distance from the deictic center, which is most commonly the speaker. The proximal demonstrative has the underlying form **nē** and marks referents located near the speaker, while the distal demonstrative has the underlying form **gē** and marks referents located far from the speaker. (The distal demonstrative is subject to vowel copying, resulting in the alternate form **gā**. See §3.5 for more details.) These two demonstratives combine with a set of noun class agreement prefixes as illustrated in (6.36)-(6.39).

- (6.36)    **wù    dú,    kó            là    mǎŋ-kàlà            mǎ-nē,**  
           3SG    say    catch.IMP    CE    c6a-cassava.puff    c6a-PROX

‘*She said (with irritation), “Take this cassava puff...”*.’

What-goes-around.4.9

- While both of these demonstratives are used routinely in normal speech in exophoric reference, only the proximal demonstrative appears in the text corpus and a large majority of these occurrences are used in making anaphoric reference. For example, the phrase “this joining” in (6.40) is a reference to the act of marriage, which is mentioned earlier in the text. It cannot be construed as a reference encoding relative spatial position. Note that anaphoric reference through the proximal demonstrative may also encode special topic status (see §16.2.3 for more details).

- (6.40) Ø-n-tāse wú-nē lé nò wū tó bé Ø-bwē  
 c1-NMZR-join c7-PROX COP like.that 3SG come with c1-mother  
 kēnē bé Ø-chiji kēnē bé b̃: bá-yú  
 or with c1-father or with c2-child c2-ANA2  
*‘This joining (marriage) will come through the mother, the father or  
 THOSE children.’* Marriage.3.3

Other cases are ambiguous—the proximal demonstrative could be functioning exophorically or endophorically. This is illustrated in (6.41), where the phrase “this blind man” refers to a blind man that was seen earlier. It is possible that the blindman is still nearby at the moment of this utterance and the speaker is indicating his physical presence. Or the reference could be anaphoric, indicating the aforementioned blind man.

- (6.41)    **kì-nfɛ́:**        **kī-nē**    lé    kī    fūŋ-sè        wá        bā-mī  
                  c7-blind.man    c7-PROX    COP    c7    worry-CAUS    already    c2-person
- wèsè    bɛ́    kī-lègè  
                  very    with    c7-begging

*‘...this blindman has already worried people too much with begging.’*

What-goes-around.3.5

As mentioned earlier, the distal demonstrative is not present in the text corpus at all, suggesting that it does not have a discourse function.

A summary of the spatial demonstratives is provided in Table 6.5.

|    | Proximal | Distal |     | Proximal | Distal |
|----|----------|--------|-----|----------|--------|
| 1  | wúnē     | wùgē   | 2   | bánē     | bāgā   |
| 3  | kfúnē    | kfùgē  | 4   | chénē    | chēgē  |
| 5  | chēnē    | chègē  | 6   | kánē     | kàgā   |
|    |          |        | 13  | chénē    | chègē  |
| 7  | kínē     | kìgē   | 8   | bínē     | bigē   |
| 9  | yínē     | yìgē   | 10  | chénē    | chēgē  |
| 14 | bvúnē    | bvùgē  | 6a  | mánē     | màgā   |
| 19 | fīnē     | fīgē   | 18a | mūnē     | mùngē  |
| 16 | fēnē     | fògē   |     |          |        |
| 18 | yānē     | yāgā   |     |          |        |

Table 6.5 Nchane spatial demonstratives.

### *Anaphoric demonstratives*

The other type of demonstrative functions primarily in anaphoric reference. That is, the demonstratives are used to refer to a participant that has been previously mentioned. These referents are most often major participants in the story. Note that other pragmatic considerations can call for the use of the second anaphoric demonstrative (ANA2), as will be illustrated later in this section.

The functional difference between the two anaphoric demonstratives is pragmatic. The first anaphoric demonstrative (ANA1), with the underlying form è, is used to mark nouns in a story that are coreferential with important participants or

props. For example, “money” (lit. “teeth”<sup>46</sup>) in (6.42) is an important prop in a story about a house fire. The money burns up in the fire and the loss of the money was a tremendous hardship for the speaker and a source of sorrow.

- (6.42) mē      gē    ñ-tó      b́é    bī-gē,    ñ-tó,      j́-ché,  
 1SG.PRO   P3   1SG-come   with   c8-tooth   1SG-come   1SG-sleep
- bvūchūyū,    j́-jò      bī-gè      **by-ē:**  
 next.morning   1SG-take   c8-tooth   c8-ANA1
- ñ-lē      ñ-gē      yē  
 1SG-enter   1SG-put   c9.house

*‘I brought some money (lit. teeth) and slept. The next morning, I took that money and put it in my house.’*  
 Fire.1.4-5

Similarly, the “woman” and the “blindman” in (6.43) are both major participants in the story the example comes from. And the “cow” in (6.44) is an important prop in the *Three greedy friends* text; it is present throughout the entire story.

- (6.43) Ø-kwēsé    wē-ē      káŋ-è      màŋ-kàlà,      **kì-nf̥:**  
 c1-woman   c1-ANA1   fry-PROG   c6a-cassava.puff   c7-blindman
- ky-ē:**      gēn-è      kī      lēg-è      màŋ-kàlà      à  
 c7-ANA1   go-PROG   c7   beg-PROG   c6a-cassava.puff   in
- Ø-kwēsé    wē-ē      lē      à-jū      à-chī      à-jū      à-chī  
 c1-woman   c1-ANA1   APPL   c18-day   c18-all   c18-day   c18-all

*‘That woman continued frying cassava puffs and that blindman was always coming and begging cassava puffs from her, day after day.’*  
 What-goes-around.1.5

<sup>46</sup> The word for “teeth” is used here to refer to money. The source of this usage is unclear. It is possible that historically the Nchane people literally used teeth as a form of currency. Indeed, many of the “notables” in the area, when in ceremonial dress, wear necklaces strung with teeth from some large animal, an indication of the precious nature of teeth. A second hypothesis is that its use is metaphorical, standing in for something like cowrie shells, which were used for currency. Eggon (West-Plateau), spoken in Nigeria, is documented as having such a polysemy (Roger Blench pers. comm.). However, of the nearby languages, Noni is the only other language known to use “teeth” in reference to money.

- 'They arranged to buy a cow to slaughter and sell. After they bought that cow and came with it...'* Greedy Friends.1.3-1.4

Examples (6.45) and (6.46) illustrate ANA2 modifying a referent that was marked previously with ANA1. In both cases, the function of ANA2 is primarily pragmatic—to indicate to the hearer that a negative event connected to that referent is about to occur. For example, following the sentence in example (6.45), the cow is laid on the man, who is then killed by the cow's horn.

- 'The friends agreed that he should sleep on the ground so they could lay that cow on him.'*  
Greedy Friends.1.5

Example (6.46) is taken from a story in which rats plan to tie a bell on the tail of a cat who has been terrorizing them, in order to alert them of the cat's approach. In the very next sentence, the cat appears and begins to catch them. The association of the bell with the traumatic event is only peripheral, but it serves as a peak-marking device, increasing tension.



- (6.46)    bós    bēŋ    lē    lé    kī,    kī-kfūnè    kī    kùgē    kī  
              3PL   agree   COMP   COP   c7   c7-rat   c7REL   big   c7REL
- yídè    kē-ē    kī    lé    kī    shú    **mbyàṅè**    **yí-yú**  
              black   c7-ANA1   c7REL   COP   c7.FUT   tie   c9.bell   c9-ANA2

*'They agreed that it would be the fat, black rat who would tie THAT bell (on the cat's tail).'*

Cat and Rats.1.6

There is some evidence from the text corpus that referents that produce a sound are preferentially marked by ANA2. Thus, there might be multiple factors related to the use of ANA2 with the bell in the previous example. Similarly, ANA2 is used preferentially with referents that are deemed in some way as faulty, abnormal or dangerous. This would include entities such as mentally deranged people and storms. This is particularly the case when the “negative” condition of the referent is in contrast with the “normal” condition. This is illustrated in (6.47), which provides a contrast between a woman who has changed herself into an animal and her fellow-wife who is a normal woman.

- (6.47)    Ø-kwēsé    wē-è    jà    wī    mēsè,    wú    gē:    wú  
              c1-woman   c1-ANA1   stand   up   complete   3SG   go   3SG
- jō    kī-chídè    kē-ē,    wù    lēgè    wù    kwé    bē    kī  
              take   c7-food.mat   c7-ANA1   3SG   run   3SG   home   with   c7
- Ø-kwēsé**    **wú-yú**    shè    jìchùŋ    à    nàŋ    lē  
              c1-woman   c1-ANA2   remain   c?.bush   in   c9.animal   APPL

*'The woman got up, went and took that food-mat and ran home with it. The (other) "woman" remained in the bush as an animal.'*

Two Wives.4.1-3

Note that ANA2 is not always used with this referent; at times this referent appears with ANA1. This suggests that there are several factors related to its use in addition to adverse quality, such as speaker preference and storytelling style.

As a subjective discourse tool, the effect of ANA2 is sometimes subtle and the purpose of its use not readily apparent. Such is the case in (6.48), where it functions to express a speaker comment regarding the appropriate way to enter into marriage. The speaker is giving advice about marriage to a group of young people and is saying that the agreement to marry can be made by the parents or by the children (i.e., the boy and girl) themselves. His use of ANA2 with “children” indicates the speaker’s displeasure at children arranging their own marriage, which is traditionally accomplished by the parents of the children.

- (6.48) Ø-ñ-tāsè wú-nē lé nò wū tó b́é Ø-bwè  
 c1-NMZR-join c1-PROX COP like.that c1 come with c1-mother

kēnē b́é Ø-chíjī kēnē b́é **b̃j:** **bá-yú**  
 or with c1-father or with c2.child c2-ANA2

*'This joining (marriage) will come through the mother, the father or  
 THOSE children.'* Marriage.3.3

There is otherwise no negative or surprising event connected with this reference and no effect at the discourse level. The sole purpose for its use is the expression of a very subtle discouragement of this behavior and is an extreme case of its subjective use.

While ANA2 is most often associated with adverse reference, it can also be used to express the notion of intensity and/or complexity as in (6.49). This example comes from a text describing a training program for local pastors. The function of ANA2 in this example appears to indicate that the meeting consisted of multiple modules and/or that the training given through the meeting was deemed challenging by the speaker.

- (6.49) Ø-j-shilē wú-yú gè b́é kōnē bá-mī bá  
 c1-NMZR-sit c1-ANA2 P3 <sup>P</sup>COP about c2-person c2AM  
 Ø-ñ-fijē jē yī Ø-jò  
 c1-NMZR-preach c9.word c9AM c1-god

*'This meeting was about (or for) preachers.'* Training.1.2

It is important to note that ANA1 or the distal demonstrative could be substituted for ANA2 in (6.49). However, it would be unacceptable for ANA2 to be used if the meeting was short, uninteresting and simple in content (with all other factors remaining the same).

Table 6.6 provides a summary of the anaphoric demonstratives. Note that the vowel of the ANA1 root is deleted when the prefix vowel is the low vowel /a/, followed by compensatory vowel lengthening. This is the case for classes 2, 6, 6a and 18. See §3.4 for more details. Also, a palatal glide is sometimes heard when prefixes have **ch** or **k** onsets. The glide realization is often stronger or weaker depending on who is speaking. In contrast, a glide is almost always heard with demonstratives marked with class 8 or 19 agreement.

|    | ANA1    | ANA2  |     | ANA1    | ANA2  |
|----|---------|-------|-----|---------|-------|
| 1  | wē:     | wúyú  | 2   | bā:     | báyú  |
| 3  | kwē:    | wúyú  | 4   | ch(y)ē: | yíyú  |
| 5  | ch(y)ē: | chíyú | 6   | kā:     | áyú   |
|    |         |       | 13  | ch(y)ē: | chíyú |
| 7  | k(y)ē:  | kíyú  | 8   | byē:    | bíyú  |
| 9  | yē:     | yíyú  | 10  | ch(y)ē: | yíyú  |
| 14 | bwē:    | bvúyú | 6a  | mā:     | máyú  |
| 19 | fyē:    | fíyú  | 18a | mwē:    | múyú  |
| 16 | fē:     | féyú  |     |         |       |
| 18 | yā:     | áyú   |     |         |       |

Table 6.6 Nchane anaphoric demonstratives.

***Cross-linguistic and historical observations of the demonstrative system***

While Nchane presents a bipartite system of spatial demonstratives, several other Beboid languages are reported to have a tripartite system of spatial demonstratives, including Naami (Tabah 2018a), Chungmboko (Tabah 2018b), Noni (Hyman 1981) and Mungong (Boutwell 2014b). The tripartite systems include demonstratives which express a location far from the speaker and the hearer, in addition to the near-speaker and near-hearer varieties.

The near-hearer (or medial) demonstrative in some of these languages appear to be cognate with the Nchane ANA1 demonstrative. Hyman noted that the Noni near-hearer demonstrative has the dual purpose of expressing spatial orientation and definiteness, or referentiality (Hyman 1981:24). The fact that this spatial demonstrative is observed to have a discourse role further supports its cognate status with Nchane ANA1. Mungong also has clear cognates with Nchane in its demonstrative system. The distal demonstrative in Mungong is reported to be used in anaphoric reference as well (Boutwell 2014b: 10). The class 2 demonstratives of each of these language varieties is given in Table 6.7, in order to illustrate cognancy. Dedicated anaphoric demonstratives are given with a shaded background.

|          | Proximal | Medial | Distal | Anaphoric |
|----------|----------|--------|--------|-----------|
| (Nchane) |          | (ANA1) |        | (ANA2)    |
| Noni     | bā-n     | b-ā    | bò-bā  | bó-dvú    |
| Mungong  | bō-nō    | bé-ē   | b-òkō  | bé-jùŋ    |
| Nchane   | bá-nē    | bā-à   | bā-gā  | bá-yú     |

Table 6.7 Cognate class 2 demonstrative forms (Noni, Mungong and Nchane).

The morphology of classes 3, 4, 6 and 18 merit a few comments. When considering the complete agreement paradigms for these classes (see Table 6.1 and Table 6.2), each have agreement elements with either no consonant onset or a consonant onset with a high degree of sonorancy (i.e., a glide consonant). However, in the demonstrative paradigm, the agreement for these classes appear with consonant onsets with a lower degree of sonorancy relative to the onsets of their agreement in the remaining agreement system. For example, the agreement for class 6 most often has the form **a**. But the class 6 agreement for demonstratives is **ka**. Table 6.8 summarizes these observations.

| Class | Prevailing agreement onset | Demonstrative agreement onset |
|-------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 3     | GV                         | kwV                           |
| 4     | GV                         | chV                           |
| 6     | V                          | kV                            |
| 18    | V                          | yV                            |

Table 6.8 Unique agreement onsets observed in the demonstrative paradigms of classes 3, 4, 6 and 18.

The “strong” consonant onset appearing in Nchane demonstratives curiously does not extend to the ANA2 forms. This fact suggests that ANA1 is derived from the exophoric set, as supported by the cognancy of ANA1 with the distal demonstrative of nearby languages; but it seems likely that ANA2 derived from a different source. It is unknown at this time what that source might have been. That Nchane has co-opted a spatial demonstrative to serve as a counterpart for ANA2 brings its demonstrative system in line with Diessel’s generalization of demonstrative typologies that demonstrative systems are “usually organized in paradigms of contrastive forms” (2012: 2420). With the distal (near-hearer) demonstrative taking up the task of anaphoric reference fulltime, the far distal demonstrative is generalized to mark all references that are away from the speaker. It also began to be used to make anaphoric references for non-major participants. This appears to be handled most often in the Beboid languages by the distal demonstrative.

A final observation is that the subjective and adverse nature of ANA2 has not been observed in any of the other Beboid languages, nor in other languages of the area. Although, the demonstratives of the nearby Grassfields language Bafut have been observed to be used in expressing various degrees of irritation (Mfonyam 2012). In-depth studies of the demonstrative systems of nearby languages are few in number, particularly those with attention to function beyond spatial deixis and basic anaphoric reference. I expect that similar expressions of what some have termed “emotional deixis” are present in the demonstrative systems of nearby languages, but have yet to be adequately studied. Still, the particulars of Nchane’s demonstrative system may very well be unique.

### 6.4.3 Quantifiers

Two dedicated quantifiers have been identified in the text corpus: **dùdē** ‘many’ and **chī** ‘all’. The form **mū** ‘some’ has multiple functions, quantification being but one. Since it has more than one use, it is treated independently in §6.4.4. Quantifiers generally immediately follow the modified noun and are always marked with noun class agreement. In this section, the noun phrase appears in brackets and the quantifier is bolded.

The quantifier **dùdē** ‘many’ is used to express that the number of the modified noun is large, but the number is not specified. When used with uncountable nouns, the meaning rendered is ‘much’. The alternative form **dùlē** is likely a dialectal variant. Examples (6.50)-(6.52) show it modifying plural nouns, while (6.53) illustrates its use with a mass noun.

- (6.50) [bā-mì     **bā-dùdē**]  
           c2-person    c2-many  
           ‘many people’

- (6.51) [mw-ē:     **mūn-dùlē**]  
           c18a-thing    c18a-many  
           ‘many things’

- (6.52) [bī-lōŋ     **bī-dùlē**]  
           c8-year     c8-many  
           ‘many years’

- (6.53) [kwā             **wū-dùdē**]  
           c3.valuable<sup>47</sup>    c3-many  
           ‘much money’

The entire number of a noun is expressed through the quantifier **chī** ‘all’. It follows the noun it modifies, as well as a possessive pronoun, if present, as in (6.55).

- (6.54) wū    tēŋ    [bī-kfūnè     **bī-chī**]  
           3SG    call    c8-rat            c8-all  
           ‘he called all the rats’

---

<sup>47</sup> The word **kwā** ‘valuable’ is a generic term used for things of value. It can sometimes be translated as ‘cost’ or ‘money’. It contrasts with the specific term **bī-gē** ‘teeth’, which is also used as a term for ‘money’.

- 'all my things'*

*'the whole tree'*

- 'The palm is an important property tree in Nchane and to all the world.'*  
King of Trees.1.1

Fire.5.4

- What-goes-around.10.1

- (6.60) [yē] gē fyé **yì-chī**  
 c9 p3 burn c9-all  
 ‘...it (my house) completely burned.’

Fire.5.2

The example below is likely a grammaticalized construction, where the noun and quantifier are repeated to express a durative situation.

- (6.61) Ø-kwēsé wē-ē káŋ-è màŋ-kàlà, kì-fē:  
 c1-woman c1-ANA1 fry-PROG c6a-cassava.puff c7-blind.man  
 ky-ē: gēn-è kī lēg-è màŋ-kàlà à  
 c7-ANA1 go-PROG c7 beg-PROG c6a-cassava.puff in  
 Ø-kwēsé wē-ē lē, [à-jū **ā-chī**] [à-jū **ā-chī**]  
 c1-woman c1-ANA1 APPL c6-day c6-all c6-day c6-all

‘That woman continued frying cassava puff and that blind man was always coming and begging cassava puff from her, day after day.’

What-goes-around.1.5

While the quantifier routinely appears as a nominal modifier, it also appears in the possibly lexicalized time adverbial compound **sēgè-chī** ‘always’, combining with the time adverb **ségè** ‘when’. This is illustrated in example (6.62).

- (6.62) bǒ gēn-è fē bō lē **sēgè-chī**  
 3PL.HORT go-PROG at 3PL APPL when-all

‘They (the husband and wife) should visit them (their parents) all the time...’

Marriage.6.2

#### 6.4.4 “Some”

The determiner **mū** ‘some’ is observed as having three functions. One function is as an indefinite quantifier. A second function is as a specific indefinite determiner. In this function, it is used with non-referential nouns, especially when introducing participants of a story, where it is translatable as ‘a certain one’. Finally, it is also used in expressing contrastive reference, where ‘other’ is an appropriate translation. Each of these uses are described in this section. In all usages, the canonical position of the determiner is following the modified noun and the determiner takes agreement marking based on its nominal head. When the vowel of the agreement prefix is [i], the vowel of the determiner variably harmonizes with it.

As a quantifier, **mũ** is used with plural nouns to express an indefinite quantity. The quantity may be either unknown or unimportant. The quantifier function rarely appears in the text corpus. Examples (6.63) and (6.64) were both elicited for the purpose of illustration.

- (6.63) [bā-mī      **bá-mũ**]  
           c2-person    c2-some  
           ‘some people’

- (6.64)    ná            mē            [bī-bē:      **bí-mī**]  
           give.IMP    1SG.PRO    c8-calabash    c8-some  
           ‘Give me some (a few) calabashes.’

Example (6.65) shows the quantifier combining with the modifier **shēgē** ‘small’, with the resultant meaning of ‘small amount’.

- (6.65)    wū    ná    mē            [bī-gē      **bī-mī**    shēgē    shēgē]  
           3SG    give    1SG.PRO    c8-tooth    c8-some    small    small  
           ‘...he (God) gave me a little money.’ Fire.42

No quantifier with a dedicated meaning of ‘small amount’ or ‘few in number’ has been identified. Thus, this quantifier-adverb combination might be one of the primary means for making these kinds of expressions.

The most common use of **mũ** in the text corpus is as a specific indefinite determiner, observed often in presentational constructions at the beginning of stories, and often with singular nouns. Examples (6.66) and (6.67) are both the first sentences of stories and are presenting a major or minor participant.

- (6.66)    [kì-nfē:      **kí-mú**    gē    jēp-í]  
           c7-blind.man    c7-some    P3    walk-PROG  
           ‘A certain blind man was walking around.’ What-goes-around.1.1

- (6.67)    [Ø-jwēnsé    **wū-mũ**    gē    bé    yú,    wū    kēmè]  
           c1-man            c1-some    P3    <sup>P</sup>COP    on.it    c1REL    have  
           bī-kēsé            bā-fédè  
           c2-woman    c2-two  
           ‘There was a man who had two wives.’ Two Wives.1.1



(6.68) [kī-lūŋ   **kí-mí**]   gē   bé  
c7-year   c7-some   p3   <sup>p</sup>COP  
‘Some years ago,’   Jealous Husband.1.1

(6.70)    lē    ki-nfē:            kē-ē            dó    kí    t5-ð            [Ø]-jú    **chí-mí**  
           SET    c7-blind.man    c7-ANA1    SIT    c7    come-PROG    c5-day    c5-some  
           *'As that blind man was coming one day, ...'*                      What-goes-around.2.1

(6.71) [Ø-tán      **wú-mù**]      lé      byèŋ      bú      yú.      bē      chī,  
c1-time      c1-some      COP      c9.fish      exit      on.it      1PL      pull

[Ø-tán      **wú-mù**]      lé      byèŋ      bú-dé      gè      yú      gè  
c1-time      c1-some      COP      c9.fish      exit-COMPL      NEG2      on.it      NEG2

*‘Some times, (after pulling) a fish would come out on it (the fishing line).  
We pulled other times and no fish came out on it.’*      Fishing.1.8-9

Similarly, the two occurrences of **múmu** in (6.72) constitute a contrast between the ‘things’ which were rescued from the burning house and those which were not. The determiners in this case are serving a pronominal function, referring to the topicalized noun phrase “things in the house”.

- (6.72) [mw-ē:      mú      yē kwè], **mú-mú**      bā      būsè,  
 c18a-thing c18aREL on home c18a-some they remove
- mú-mú**      fyē  
 c18a-some burn

*‘Some of the things in the house they removed, other things burned.’*

Fire.5.1

The determiner in (6.73) is ambiguous without context. In an out-of-the-blue utterance, the interpretation would likely be as an indefinite quantifier—‘I want a few calabashes’. However, if the speaker first states that the calabashes that he bought yesterday were damaged and unusable, then the interpretation would be contrastive—‘I want other calabashes’ or ‘different calabashes’.

- (6.73) ṅ-gō:n-é      bī-bē:      bí-mî  
 1SG-want-PROG c8-calabash c8-some

*‘I want some (a few) calabashes.’*

or

*‘I want other (or different) calabashes.’*

The word **mùmù** ‘some/another person’ is a fused form of the noun phrase **mû wû-mû**. The class 1 agreement marker **wû** is dropped and the noun **mû** ‘person (c1)’ fuses with the bare stem of the determiner **mû**, as illustrated in (6.74).

- (6.74) Ø-táŋ      wû      bā      m̄būn-é,      Ø-mù-mù  
 c1-time c1REL they foam-PROG c1-person-some
- kól-è      à      kî-ntī      lē  
 catch-PROG in c7-bowl APPL

*‘As they are foaming,<sup>48</sup> someone else is collecting [the foams] in a bowl.’*

Making Palm Oil.1.7

<sup>48</sup> This example is from a text explaining how to make palm oil, which is used for cooking, as a lubricant, and for skin care. The palm nuts are put into a stone trough and pounded with large tree limbs, which releases the oil from the nuts. Water is then added to “wash” the pounded nuts, followed by vigorously agitating the oil-water mixture with a small stick. This “foaming” action creates a layer of floating foam containing most of the oil, which is collected in a bowl and cooked to drive out the water.

The syntactic behavior of this determiner is not completely understood beyond the fact that it follows the head noun. However, example (6.75) shows the determiner modifying nouns in a coordinate noun phrase, where each noun is modified by a separate determiner. In contrast, the coordinate noun phrase licenses a single relativizer, behavior consistent with its analysis as a single grammatical unit. It is not known if this behavior represents a common restriction against the determiner modifying coordinate noun phrases or if there are pragmatic reasons for the behavior in this particular case.

- (6.75)    kī-lūŋ    kī-mí    gē    bé    [Ø-jwènsè    **wū-mū**]    bé  
              c7-year    c7-some    P3    <sup>P</sup>COP    c1-man    c1-some    with
- [Ø-kwē    **wú-mū**]    bō    kōŋ-è    yē    bán  
              c1-wife.3SG.POSS    c1-some    3PL.REL    love-PROG    c9.body    much
- ‘Some years ago, there was a man and wife who loved each other very  
              much.’    Jealous Husband.1.1

The fused form **mùmù** ‘someone else’ has been observed to co-occur with the anaphoric 1 demonstrative (see §6.6 for an example), and the indefinite specific determiner appears in one example with a number that is serving as a predicate. Otherwise, co-occurrences of the determiner and other demonstratives or quantifiers are unattested.

#### 6.4.5 Numbers

The form of the numbers 1-10 are relatively unremarkable, with the exception of the number 7, which is morphologically complex, consisting of the number 6 plus **shwē**, whose meaning is unknown (see example (6.76)). I assume that the complex is additive in nature.

- (6.76)    bvū-sō    ‘six’  
              c14-six
- bvū-sō-shwē    ‘seven’  
              c14-six-??

It is likely that these two numbers have lexicalized class 14 agreement, since the neighboring Noni language has similar forms for these numbers, but without the **bvu** at the beginning (cf. **s5:chàn** ‘six’ and **s5:shwî** ‘seven’ (Hyman 1981: 28)).<sup>49</sup> The number 9 also may have lexicalized class 14 agreement, with the assumed agreement element also present in the number 9 of Mungong, Noni and Chung.

The numbers 11-99 are phrasal, being formed through the connective **jìchò** ‘plus’, which joins the number in the ten’s position with the number in the one’s position. While the numbers 1-5 in single digit numbers appear without agreement marking, in these complex numbers they are marked with agreement, even in citation form. Thus, when appearing without a modified noun, they are marked with gender 19/18a agreement, as seen in (6.77).

|        |       |       |                 |                |
|--------|-------|-------|-----------------|----------------|
| (6.77) | yúfè  | jìchò | fī-mímyā        | ‘eleven’       |
|        | ten   | plus  | c18a-one        |                |
|        | yúfè  | jìchò | mùñ-fé:         | ‘twelve’       |
|        | ten   | plus  | c18a-two        |                |
|        | m̃bāŋ | shē   | jìchò fī-mímyā  | ‘thirty-one’   |
|        | tens  | three | plus c19-one    |                |
|        | m̃bāŋ | shē   | jìchò mùñ-tēdē  | ‘thirty-three’ |
|        | tens  | three | plus c18a-three |                |

As these examples illustrate, the number 1 has class 19 agreement marking, which usually denotes that the head noun is singular rather than plural in number, in spite of the fact that the complex number as a whole expresses plurality. Note that the number 1 is subject to vowel copying and other phonological processes described in §3.5.

Unlike in their citation forms, the numbers 1-5, as single digit numbers as well as in the one’s position of complex numbers, are marked with agreement when modifying a noun, while numbers 6-10 are not marked with agreement in either case. Examples (6.78) and (6.79) show the numbers 1 and 4 agreeing with their head nouns, which precede the numbers.

<sup>49</sup> The Mungong forms for “six” and “seven” are similar to those of Nchane and Noni, while the Beboïd languages Kemedzung, Naki, Sari and Naami all show no formal connection between these numbers. Rather, a subtractive strategy is observed for the number “seven”, which is derived from “eight” (i.e., 8 – 1), and the form for “six” is completely unique. Meanwhile, Chungmboko (also Beboïd) numbers 6-10 all appear to be formally independent from each other.

- (6.78)    *j̄chānē*    *gè*    *jè-mé*            [*jē*            **yí-mímyā**]  
              N.            P3    speak-PROG    c9.language    c9-one

*‘The Nchane (people) spoke one language.’*

History.4.2

- (6.79)    [**bā**-*jchī*    **bā**    *kī-yō*    *kī*    *yūdē*    **bā-nē**]  
              c2-law            c2AM    c7-spirit    c7REL    clean    c2-four

*‘four spiritual laws’*

Training.1.7

Examples (6.80) and (6.81) illustrate the numbers 2 and 4 in the one’s position of complex numbers agreeing with their head nouns.

- (6.80)    [**ā**-*gín*    *yúfè*    *j̄chò*    **ā-fá:**]  
              c6-egg    ten            plus            c6-two

*‘twelve eggs’*

- (6.81)    [**bī**-*yò*            *m̄bāŋ*    *fíyé*    *j̄chò*    **bī-nē**]  
              c8-elephant    tens            two            plus            c8-four

*‘twenty-four elephants’*

As (6.82) shows, the number 1 in complex numbers agrees with the singular form of the head noun, rather than the head noun itself, which is plural in number. This follows the pattern observed in citation forms in (6.77).

- (6.82)    [**bī**-*yò*            *m̄bāŋ*    *fíyé*    *j̄chò*    **kī**-*mīmyā*]  
              c8-elephant    tens            two            plus            c7-one

*‘twenty-one elephants’*

(6.83)    bē      gē      bíd-ě      [bā-m-bīlè      yúfè]  
           1PL    P3    ask-PROG    c2-NMZR-ask    ten

|           |       |    |      |         |     |     |     |      |
|-----------|-------|----|------|---------|-----|-----|-----|------|
| bāmī      | bá    | gē | tō   | kī      | bó  | yén | bè  | lē   |
| c2-person | c2REL | P3 | come | COMP(K) | 3PL | see | 1PL | APPL |

Training.1.18

(6.84)     $\bar{m}b\bar{a}\eta$      $f\acute{e}:$     *'twenty'*  
                $[ \bar{m}b\bar{a}\eta$      $f| \acute{e}': ]$

|        |      |                 |
|--------|------|-----------------|
| m̄bāṇ  | tēdē | <i>'thirty'</i> |
| [m̄bāṇ | [ē]  |                 |

m̄bāŋ    nê                    'forty'  
[m̄bāŋ    nê]

m̄bāŋ      t̄eŋ      'fifty'  
[m̄bāŋ]    [t̄eŋ]

<sup>50</sup> Several languages in the area have cognates for the word **m̐bāŋ**. In nearly all these languages, there appears to be no formal relationship between this number and the number 10, resulting in a difficult analysis for the word. However, Fransen, with direction from van Reenen, postulates that the Limbu word for twenty **m̐bāā** is derived from the plural form of 10 (**m-vūū** ‘c6-ten’) plus the number 2 (**bāā**) (Fransen 1995: 164–6).

- (6.85) gwí: 'one hundred'  
c3.hundred
- Ø-gí:-fé: 'two hundred'  
c4-hundred-two
- gwí: b́é fy-ē: fī-mímyà 'one hundred and one'  
c3.hundred with c19-thing c19-one

As the example for the number 101 shows, the number in the hundred's position is joined to the smaller numbers with the conjunction **b́é**. However, the conjunction **j́chò** is observed rather than **b́é** when the number is modifying a noun. It is not known if this is a formal distinction between the citation and adjectival forms, or if it represents an artifact of data collection. However, it does reveal the similarity in function and meaning of these two connecting words.

An additional item of interest is that the citation form shows that a head nominal, the generic 'thing', appears to the left of the number 1, for which it licenses agreement. This agreement was pointed out for the examples in (6.77), although no generic noun appeared in those examples. Likewise, no generic noun appears to the left of the number 1 in complex numbers in adjectival form, as was pointed out for (6.82), yet the number 1 agrees with the singular form of the head noun. The presence of the generic noun "thing" in the citation form of 101 then provides a possible clue as to why the number 1 in complex numbers agrees with the singular counterpart of the head nominal. For example, perhaps the source phrase for 'one hundred and one cows' is **bà-nà gwí: j́chò Ø-nà wù-mùmwà** (c2-cow c3.hundred plus c1-cow c1-one).

Numbers in the thousand's position are treated as nouns belonging to gender 1/2. Smaller numbers follow the thousand numbers and are joined together with the connective **b́é** 'with' as above with the hundred numbers.

- (6.86) Ø-j́chfùgè 'one thousand'  
c1-thousand
- bà-j́chfùgè b́ā-fé: 'two thousand'  
c2-thousand c2-two
- Ø-j́chfùgè b́é Ø-gí: bvūgē m̀bāŋ bvūgē j́chò bvū-sō-shwē  
c1-thousand with c4-hundred nine tens nine plus c14-six-??
- '1997' (the year)

The numbers for hundreds and thousands never agree with the head noun, but maintain their fundamental markings for genders 3/4 and 1/2 respectively.

Numbers may function as a predicate adjective, following a copula as in (6.87).

- (6.87)    mē        ñ̃-fē        kwē        yī        Ø-kī  
              1SG.PRO   1SG-make   c9.death   c9REL   c4-month

lé    **yúfē**    **jàchò**    **yī-fē:**  
       COP    ten        plus        c4-two

*'I am having a death celebration in December.'* (lit. *death that month is twelve*)

Finally, (6.88) shows that numbers may be reduplicated. The reduplicated number follows the head noun and functions to express repetition. In this example, it co-occurs with a verb marked with the Distributive suffix, and presumably clarifies that four people were chosen from each church, rather than only four people in total being chosen from all the churches.

- (6.88)    chī-chó        chí        wōŋ        wū        misàyē    lē        gē  
              c13-church   c13AM   c3.country   c3AM   M.        APPL   P3

bā-yè            [bā-mī        **bā-nē**    **bā-nē**]  
       choose-DISTR   c2-person   c2-four   c2-four

*'The churches of the Misaje area chose four people each.'* Training.1.5

Table 6.9 below presents a partial list of Nchane cardinal numerals in citation form, along with the numbers as they appear when modifying a noun.



|      | Number                  | Gender 1/2 ('cow')           |
|------|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1    | mēmà                    | nà wūmūmwā                   |
| 2    | fé:                     | bàna bāfé:                   |
| 3    | tēdé                    | bàna bātēdé                  |
| 4    | nē                      | bàna bānē                    |
| 5    | tēŋ                     | bàna bātēŋ                   |
| 6    | bvūsō                   | bàna bvūsō                   |
| 7    | bvūsōshwē               | bàna bvūsōshwī               |
| 8    | ŋā                      | bàna ŋā                      |
| 9    | bvùgē                   | bānā bvùgē                   |
| 10   | yúfē                    | bàna yúfē                    |
| 11   | yúfē ñchò fimímyà       | bàna yúfē ñchò wūmūmwā       |
| 12   | yúfē ñchò mūmfé:        | bàna yúfē ñchò bāfé:         |
| 13   | yúfē ñchò mūntédé       | bàna yúfē ñchò bātédé        |
| 14   | yúfē ñchò mūnē          | bàna yúfē ñchò bānē          |
| 15   | yúfē ñchò mūntēŋ        | bàna yúfē ñchò bātēŋ         |
| 16   | yúfē ñchò bvūsō         | bàna yúfē ñchò bvūsō         |
| 17   | yúfē ñchò bvūsōshwē     | bàna yúfē ñchò bvūsōshwē     |
| 18   | yúfē ñchò ŋā            | bàna yúfē ñchò ŋā            |
| 19   | yúfē ñchò bvùgē         | bàna yúfē ñchò bvùgē         |
| 20   | m̄bāŋ fīyē              | bàna m̄bāŋ fīyē              |
| 21   | m̄bāŋ fīyē ñchò fimímyà | bàna m̄bāŋ fīyē ñchò wūmūmwā |
| 22   | m̄bāŋ fīyē ñchò mūmfé:  | bàna m̄bāŋ fīyē ñchò bāfé:   |
| 100  | gwí:                    | bàna gwí:                    |
| 101  | gwí: bé fīyē fimímyà    | bàna gwí: ñchò wūmūmwā       |
| 200  | gí:fé:                  | bàna gí:fé:                  |
| 1000 | ñchfùgè                 | bàna ñchfùgè                 |
| 2000 | bànchfùgè bāfé:         | bàna bànchfùgè bāfé:         |

Table 6.9 Partial list of Nchane numbers.

Ordinal numbers are very limited and are not number based. They involve the use of the words **fwē** 'front', **bī** 'follow' and **jiŋ** 'back' appearing in relative clauses. (6.89)-(6.91) illustrate **fwē** and **bī** in ordinal expression.

- (6.89) m̄n-ka-là      mā      **fwē**      mā-à  
 c6a-cassava.puff    c6aREL    front    c6a-ANA1

*'that first cassava puff'*

What-goes-around.4.1

- (6.90) k̄i-mā      k̄i      **fwē**      lē  
 c7-week    c7REL    front    APPL

*'the first week'*

Training.1.7

- (6.91)    kɪ-mā    kɪ    bɪ    fɔ̃    lē  
              c7-week   c7REL   follow   there   APPL  
              ‘the second week’ (lit. *the week that followed there*)                    Training.1.8

The word ‘follow’ is usually understood in context as indicating that the modified noun is following some other like entity in a sequence. Therefore, it has a generalized meaning of “the follower”, and only expresses the notion of “second” when following the “first”.

When two like-entities are presented as a contrastive pair, the word **jɪŋ** can be used to refer to the non-first noun, sometimes interpreted as “the second”, as in (6.92). It is probably more correct, however, to consider this expression as “the last one”. In fact, it is likely that the words for ‘front’ and ‘back’ are iconic representations of ‘first’ and ‘last’ respectively. Unfortunately, the data corpus contains no examples of **jɪŋ** with a clear “last” reading.

- (6.92)    Ø-kwēsé    wū    fwē    bɛ́    wū    ā-jɪŋ  
              c1-woman   c1REL   front   with   c1REL   c18-back  
              ‘the first wife and the second one’                    Two Wives.1.2

While not common, these words functioning as ordinal numbers may co-occur with numbers, as illustrated in (6.93).

- (6.93)    bā-mī    bá    bā-nē    bá    fwē  
              c2-person   c2REL   c2-four   c2REL   front  
              ‘the first four people’                    Training.1.9

### 6.4.6 Adjectives

The two words **fɛŋ** ‘new’ and **kɛgē** ‘ancient’ form a very small class of adjectives identified through elicitation methods, since they do not appear in the text corpus. Example (6.94) shows that adjectives follow the modified noun and are marked with noun class agreement.

- (6.94)    kwēŋ    wú-kwēgē    tē:m-é    kwà  
              c3.firewood   c3-ancient   strong-PROG   c3.value  
              ‘Very old firewood is expensive.’

Adjectives are distinguished from attributive verbs (described in §9.6) by several formal characteristics. First, unlike attributive verbs, adjectives require a

copula in simple property type expressions like “X is Y”. This is illustrated with the adjectives in examples (6.95) and (6.96).

- (6.95)     $k\bar{i}$ -bē:        **lé**        [ $k\bar{i}$ -fēŋ]  
               c7-calabash    COP    c7-new

*‘The calabash is new.’*

- (6.96)     $k\bar{i}$ -tē        **lé**        [ $k\bar{i}$ -kēgē]  
               c7-tree        COP    c7-ancient

*‘The tree is ancient (or very old).’*

A second formal distinction is that attributive verbs have the capacity for verbal affixation such as the Progressive suffix. Adjectives may not take any verbal suffixes. Furthermore, they are not candidates for class 14 abstract noun derivation, which is a productive process for attributive verbs.

Finally, adjectives are affected by high back vowel copying similar to that seen in numbers when “modifying” class 1 and class 3 nouns, as illustrated in (6.97), as well as (6.94) above. Note that the adjective appears as a predicate adjective in (6.97), but a nominal modifier in (6.94).

- (6.97)    Ø-ŋwā    gē    bē        **wū-fwēŋ**  
               c1-book    P3    <sup>P</sup>COP    c1-new

*‘The book was new.’*

The occurrence of high back vowel copying suggests phonological incorporation of the agreement element and supports the analysis that these words are nominal modifiers similar to numbers rather than verb-like words like the attributive verbs.

## 6.5 Nominal modifiers as pronouns

As pointed out in the introduction to §6.4, several of the nominal modifier word classes are observed in the data functioning as pronouns. They appear in the subject and object positions, although, because of the small number of examples, it is impossible to be certain that there are no syntactic restrictions on any given nominal modifier word class. The examples below demonstrate their pronominal use, including possessive pronouns (6.98)–(6.99), the proximal demonstrative (6.100), “some” (6.101)–(6.102), and numbers (6.103).

- (6.98) ↑(yē yì mē gè jì-ché-é yì lē),  
c9.house c9REL 1SG.PRO P3 1SG-stay-PROG on APPL

yì nù **y-àŋ**, jì mē gè  
c9REL COP(N) c9-1SG.POSS c9REL 1SG.PRO P3

jì-ché-é yè lé kībè, jī gē fyé jì-chī  
1SG-stay-PROG on APPL actually c9 P3 burn c9-all

*'The house in which I was staying, which was mine and in which I was actually staying, completely burned.'* Fire.5.2

- (6.99) ŋgú kfú-nē wū yīdī lé **w-àŋ**  
c3.gun c3-PROX c3REL black COP c3-1SG.POSS

*'This black gun is mine.'*

- (6.100) bē: bā-ā gè bé bō tó, wū ná bǒ  
c2.child c2-ANA1 P3 <sup>P</sup>COP 3PL come 3SG give 3PL

màn-kàlà mā-ā mǎn-tēdé, wū ná **wú-nē**,  
c6a-cassava.puff c6a-ANA1 c6a-three 3SG give c1-PROX

wū ná **wú-nē**  
3SG give c1-PROX

*'Those children came and he gave them those three cassava puffs; he gave to each one.'* (lit. he gave to this one and he gave to this one)  
What-goes-around.7.8

- (6.101) mw-ē: mú yē kwè, **mú-mú**  
c18a-thing c18aREL on home c18a-some

bā būsè, **mú-mú** fyē  
they remove c18a-some burn

*'The things in the house, some were removed, others burned.'* Fire.5.1

- (6.102) *bā-mī*    *bá*    *wōŋ*    *kw-ē:*    *lē,*    *bó*    *ché-é*    *à-kfū:*,  
 c2-person   c2AM   c3.village   c3-ANA1   APPL   3PL   stay-PROG   c18-attic

***bā-mú***    *chè-è*    *à-gāgú*    *ā*    *bì-ntā*    *kú:*  
 c2-some   stay-PROG   c18-under   c18AM   c8-chair   down

*‘...people from that country were staying (hiding) in their attics, others were staying under beds...’*  
 Inheritance.7

- (6.103) *yē*    *yē-né*    *tū*    ***yī-mímyā***  
 c9.body   c9-2PL.POSS   become   c9-one

*‘...your body will become one...’*  
 Marriage.3.9

## 6.6 Noun phrase word order

The modifiers described above never occur all together, modifying the same noun. But there are several examples in the text corpus in which two modifiers occur together. From these examples, the word order given in Figure 6.2 is extrapolated.

NOUN + POSSESSIVE + “some” + DEMONSTRATIVE + QUANTIFIER

Figure 6.2 Canonical word order of the noun phrase

One departure from this word order is rarely observed, where a demonstrative precedes the noun in what appears to be a topic-marking strategy, as described in §16.2.3.

The position of relative clauses is somewhat variable. Usually, the position is sensitive to the type of relative clause in question, whether it is restrictive or nonrestrictive. Restrictive relative clauses usually precede demonstratives and nonrestrictive relative clauses follow demonstratives (and probably quantifiers as well). However, other factors such as information load, and topic and focus concerns, are believed to impact position as well. See §12.1 for more details.

The phrases in (6.104)-(6.106) present various modifier combinations allowing for the canonical word order of noun phrases to be postulated.

- (6.104) *jó:*    [*mw-ē:*    ***mw-òŋ***    ***mūŋ-chī***]  
 take.IMP   c18a-thing   c18a-2SG.POSS   c18a-all

*‘Take all your things...’*  
 Two Wives.7.2

- (6.105) [Ø-mū-**mū**      **wé-ē**]      kē      wù      bēd-è  
 c1-person-some    c1-ANA1    begin    3SG    cry-PROG

*'That other man started crying...'*

Greedy Friends.1.16

- (6.106) bō:      bā-ā      gè      bé      bō      tó,      wū      ná      bǒ  
 c2-child    c2-ANA1    P3    <sup>P</sup>COP    3PL    come    3SG    give    3PL

[màŋ-kàlà      **mā-ā**      **mān-tēdé**],      wū      ná      wú-nē,  
 c6a-cassava.puff    c6a-ANA1    c6a-three      3SG    give    c1-PROX

wū      ná      wú-nē  
 3SG    give    c1-PROX

*'Those children came and he gave them those three cassava puffs; he gave to each one.'* (lit. *he gave to this one and he gave to this one*)

What-goes-around.7.8

# Chapter 7

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## Pronouns

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The Nchane pronoun is defined by its coreferential characteristic. In other words, a pronoun has coreference with a noun phrase or in certain cases a larger discourse portion, for which it is substitutable. The various kinds of Nchane pronouns are presented in this chapter, with the largest portion of the chapter dedicated to personal pronouns, including simple and complex forms, which are presented in §7.1. This section also presents the so-called “class pronouns”, which constitute a large subset of third-person pronouns.

Substantial attention is given to locative pronouns and the adverbial pronouns in sections 7.2 and 7.3 respectively. The chapter concludes with relatively short sections on the impersonal subject pronoun (§7.4), dummy subjects (§7.5), question word pronouns (§7.6) and other pronominals (§7.7). Note that relativizers, which have a possible analysis as relative pronouns, are described in Chapter 12.

### 7.1 Personal pronouns

This section describes the Nchane personal pronoun system, including simple and complex forms, as well as what I refer to for the sake of convenience as “class pronouns”. The conventional category of personal pronouns includes those which encode person and number categories and typically apply primarily to humans. Class pronouns always belong to the third-person category, but also encode the category of

noun class, with third-person human referents expressed through the gender 1/2 pronouns. These two types of pronouns are considered as belonging to a single set of personal pronouns.

The Nchane simple personal pronouns are given in Table 7.1, with preverbal and postverbal varieties listed separately. The pronouns for classes 16 and 18 appear in parentheses to indicate their rarity.

| Person          | Gender | SG        |            | PL        |            |
|-----------------|--------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|
|                 |        | Preverbal | Postverbal | Preverbal | Postverbal |
| 1 <sup>st</sup> |        | mē        | mè         | bē        | bè         |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> |        | wō        | wò         | bēŋ       | bèŋ        |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> | 1/2    | wù        | wù         | bó, bō    | bó         |
|                 | 3/4    | wū        | wú         | yī        | yí         |
|                 | 5/6    | chī       | chí        | wō        | wó         |
|                 | 7/8    | kī        | kí         | bī        | bí         |
|                 | 9/10   | yì, yī    | yì         | yī, yí    | yí         |
|                 | 14/6a  | bvū       | bvú        | mōŋ       | mó         |
|                 | 19/18a | fī        | fí         | mūŋ       | mú         |
|                 | 13     |           |            | chī       | yí         |
|                 | 16     | (fē)      | (fó)       |           |            |
|                 | 18     | (ā)       | (wó)       |           |            |

Table 7.1 Nchane personal pronouns.

The table illustrates that pronouns appearing in preverbal and postverbal positions are mostly segmentally identical for each person and number referent, but usually differ tonally. Furthermore, the class pronouns usually conservatively reflect the common agreement forms associated with their respective noun classes.

In terms of tone, there are two primary patterns observed which appear to distinguish class pronouns from those referring to people (which are henceforth referred to as “human pronouns”). Class pronouns mostly have a mid tone on preverbal forms and a high tone on postverbal forms. Exceptions are classes 1 and 9, which have a low tone on pronouns in both positions, consistent with the characterization of these classes as “low tone classes” in most of the nearby Western Grassfields languages (Hyman 1980). The class 9 and class 10 pronouns have two tonal realizations each. The source of the variation has not been identified, but could be phonological context.<sup>51</sup> Meanwhile, the human pronouns tend to have a mid tone

<sup>51</sup> I have observed that native speakers are acutely aware of the high grammatical tone associated with class 10, as evidenced by over-correction in cases of class ambiguity. It is believed that, because of this awareness, the realization of phonological output is sometimes altered to accommodate the perceived “highness” of class 10 forms.



in the preverbal position and a low tone in the postverbal position. As with classes 9 and 10, the third-person plural preverbal pronoun has two unexplained tonal variants.

The fact that almost all pronouns have a mid tone in preverbal position and a low tone (in the case of human pronouns) or a high tone (in the case of class pronouns) in postverbal position suggests that these tones are associated with their respective clausal positions rather than with the lexical items themselves or with specific grammatical roles. This hypothesis, while not formally investigated, is supported by example (16.20), the relevant portion of which is given below for convenience, where the postverbal focused 2SG “subject” is realized with a low tone rather than a mid tone. (See §11.4 for a discussion of how pronouns in such constructions are interpreted in terms of grammatical relations.)

- (16.20)    **nē**    **jálè**    **gē**    **wḁ**  
               if    wrong    do    2SG

*‘[Or] if YOU...did wrong...’*

Marriage.4.6

While the tones of pronouns in postverbal position are very stable, usually surfacing as given in the table, the tone on the preverbal pronouns are sometimes affected by grammatical tones associated with certain constructions (e.g., Durative, Stimulus, Hortative, etc.). These tone changes are discussed in the relevant sections in the verb chapter (Chapter 9).

The 1PL pronouns are often realized with a half-long vowel. This length is likely due to syllable reduction, a hypothesis that is supported by the Noni cognates **bēsèn** ‘1PL(exclusive)’ and **bēènè** ‘1PL(inclusive)’ (from Hyman 1981: 15), which show disyllabic forms. (Nchane generally does not distinguish between *inclusive* and *exclusive* categories, although such a distinction is observable in some of the complex pronouns described later in this section.)

Pronouns are used anaphorically, replacing an already mentioned and discourse-accessible referent, or one that is understood without full mention. Examples of simple pronouns are given in (7.1)-(7.6), which also illustrate pronouns in various syntactic and semantic roles.

- (7.1)    **wù**    **ké**    **wḁ**  
               3SG    know    2SG

*‘He knows you.’*

- (7.2)    **wù**    **já**    **mè**    **Ø-ŋgwě**  
               3SG    give    1SG.PRO    c1-fishing.pole

*‘He gave me a fishing pole.’*

Fishing.1.2

- (7.3) **mē**      gē      n-tō      bē      bī-gē  
 1SG.PRO    P3    1SG-come    with    c8-tooth  
*'I brought some money.'* (lit. *come with teeth*)      Fire.1.4

- (7.4) **bā-mī**      bá-dùdē      lēg-è      Ø-jō      fè      **bēŋ**      lē  
 c2-person    c2-many    beg-PROG    c1-god    at    2PL    APPL  
*'...many people will be praying to God for you,'*      Marriage.4.1

- (7.5) **ñsā**      y-ē      bí:      **wù**      lē,  
 c9.friend    c9-3SG.POSS    ask    3SG    APPL  
*'Her friend asked her,...'*      What-goes-around.2.2

- (7.6) **bó**      tú      bē      **wù**      jīŋ  
 3PL    return    with    3SG    back  
*'...they returned back with him.'*      Land Dispute.2.2

The class pronouns function the same as human pronouns and are illustrated in (7.7)-(7.9). Class pronouns in postverbal position are somewhat rare, since inferable Objects are usually omitted (see §11.1.1 for more details) and inferable objects of prepositions are usually referred to through non-agreeing locative pronouns (see §7.2).

- (7.7) **yī**      kāsè      yī      tú      Ø-mū      wū      wōŋ  
 c9    return    c9    become    c1-person    c1AM    c3.world  
*'It (goat) turned back into a human.'* <sup>52</sup>      Two Wives.6.3

- (7.8) **wù**      ñilē      **kí**  
 3SG    hide    c7  
*'He hid it (calabash).'*

- (7.9) **ñ-tó**      bē      **yī**  
 1SG-come    with    c9  
*'I will bring it (rat poison).'*      What-goes-around.3.3

<sup>52</sup> Note that the second c9 pronoun in this example is considered to be preverbal rather than postverbal.

(7.10)      wù      jēj-é      chúlē  
              3SG      walk-PROG      well  
              *'It (the cow) is walking well.'*

(7.12)    **b5**    **jí**  
              **c2**    eat  
  
              *'The cows ate.'*

(7.14)

|          |      |         |            |               |          |
|----------|------|---------|------------|---------------|----------|
| bī-ntā   | bé   | bà-ŋwà, | mw-ē:      | mw-āŋ         | mūŋ-chī, |
| c8-chair | with | c2-book | c18a-thing | c18a-1SG.POSS | c18a-all |

...

|         |             |     |                |
|---------|-------------|-----|----------------|
| bà-ŋwà  | b-āŋ        | ... | bā-sālifikè    |
| c2-book | c2-1SG.POSS | ... | c2-certificate |

...

|           |      |    |      |        |
|-----------|------|----|------|--------|
| <b>b5</b> | té   | gè | fyē  | bà-chì |
| c2        | also | p3 | burn | c2-all |

*'Chairs and books, all my things, ...my books, ...certificates, ...the  
all burned.'*

Fin

The pronominal forms generally share the segmental shape of their corresponding class prefixes (or their historical shape in some cases), as previously mentioned. However, the class 2 pronoun **bú** (or third-person plural) appears to be an innovation, with the conservative pronoun **bā** currently used as an impersonal

pronoun (described in §7.3), although there are times when the two pronominal forms are presumably used in place of the other. (While the pronominal forms are different, both pronouns usually license the same class 2 agreement forms. Only rarely is the form **bɔ-** seen as an agreement marker.)

This phenomenon is reminiscent of what is observed in some nearby Western Grassfields languages. Hyman points out that the third-person pronouns in some of those languages resemble the proximal demonstrative or the word for ‘body’, with the original third-person pronoun forms sometimes utilized for logophoric reference (2018a: 201). However, these innovated third-person pronouns are reflected throughout the noun class pronoun systems, suggesting common third-person root forms. The Nchane case appears to involve the class 2 pronoun only, rather than all third-person pronouns. In addition, there is obviously no correlation between the class 2 pronoun and the proximal demonstrative (**nē**) or the word for ‘body’ (**yē**), but it does bear a striking resemblance to the third-person plural possessive pronoun root **b̃**.

Pronouns for the locative classes are rare and are identical to their locative pronoun counterparts (treated in §7.2), which are coreferential with prepositional phrases. Consequently, instances of these pronouns are often ambiguous regarding the type of antecedent with which they are coreferential. The antecedents in (7.15)-(7.18) are considered to be locativized nouns, and as such are illustrative of locative class pronouns.

- (7.15) **fɛ**    jùŋ  
c16    old

*‘It (the fireplace site) is old.’*

- (7.16) wù    jīlè    **fɔ**  
3SG    hide    c16

*‘He hid it (the palm of his hand).’*

- (7.17) **ā**    yù    bó  
c18    kill    3PL

*‘It (their stomachs) hurts them.’*

What-goes-around.9.15

- (7.18) wù    jīlè    **wɔ**  
3SG    hide    c18

*‘He hid it (his hand, or lit. at his arm).’*

A system of compound pronouns is observed in Nchane which enables the expression of specific combinations of referents. These complex pronouns are formed by combining various simple pronouns into a single structure, a special type of pronominal construction only observed in languages spoken in Cameroon (Cysouw 2009: 183). The Nchane compound pronouns are summarized in Table 7.2.

The dashed line in the table indicates that there are two series of compound pronouns, one based on first person and one on second person. In both series, the base form, appearing to the far left, denotes a plural referent which includes the referent of the second part, appearing to the right. In other words, the base form expresses the notion of “plural” (in addition to either first or second person). The second part denotes the other member(s) of the reference. Thus, the first part is “incorporative” rather than additive (see Cysouw 2009: 171).

| Example | Gloss   | Meaning            |
|---------|---------|--------------------|
| bēsáwò  | 1PL.2SG | “me + you.SG”      |
| bēsáwù  | 1PL.3SG | “me + him/her”     |
| bēsábèŋ | 1PL.2PL | “me + you.PL”      |
| bēsábó  | 1PL.3PL | “me + them”        |
| bēnéwù  | 2PL.3SG | “you.PL + him/her” |
| bēnēbó  | 2PL.3PL | “you.PL + them”    |

Table 7.2 Nchane compound personal pronouns.

The first person-based compound pronouns are formed by joining **bēsá** with one of the non first-person pronouns (i.e., **wò**, **wù**, **bèŋ** and **bó**). The form **bēsá** appears to be cognate with the Noni first-person exclusive pronoun **bēsèn** (Hyman 1981: 15), although this base form is used to construct inclusive as well as exclusive Nchane compound pronouns. This pronoun element resembles the first-person plural pronoun **bē**, which might be a derivative, as was implied earlier in this section.

Examples (7.19) and (7.20) show compound first-person pronouns in preverbal position and (7.21) and (7.22) show them in postverbal position. The examples show that an *inclusive:exclusive* distinction is expressed through these compound pronouns. The pronouns in (7.19) and (7.21) are understood as excluding the addressee, while those in (7.20) and (7.22) specifically include the addressee.

- (7.19) **bēsáwù**    bɔ̃            à-jɔ̃  
 1PL.3SG    descend    c18-water

*‘We (me plus him/her) went down to the stream.’*

Fishing.1.3

- (7.20) **bēsáwò** bŭ-dé bé lā mwēnē  
 1PL.2SG exit-COMPL 1PL.FUT go.goal c3.garden  
*‘We (me plus you) shall go to the farm.’* Jealous Husband.1.4

- (7.21) Ø-ñfōŋ gē yéŋ **bēsābó** lē  
 c1-chief P3 see 1PL.3PL APPL  
*‘The chief saw us (me plus them).’*

- (7.22) tádà gē nā **bēsáwò** bvū-lē:  
 T. P3 give 1PL.2SG c14-fufu  
*‘Tada gave us (me plus you) fufu.’*

The second person-based compound pronouns are formed by joining **bēné** with a third-person pronoun (i.e., **wù** or **bó**). The **bēné** element is cognate with the Noni first-person inclusive pronoun **bè:nè** (Hyman 1981: 15). These compound pronouns also may appear in preverbal and postverbal positions, as shown in (7.23)<sup>53</sup> and (7.24).

- (7.23) **bēnéwù** bé jí mw-ē:  
 2PL.3SG P1 eat c18a-thing  
*‘You all (you plus he/she) ate something.’*

- (7.24) Ø-ñfōŋ gē yéŋ **bēnēbó** lē  
 c1-chief P3 see 2PL.3PL APPL  
*‘The chief saw you all (you plus them).’*

Observe that this base form expresses incorporative plurality as with the first-person base form **bēsā**, which was suggested as a possible source for the first-person plural pronoun **bē**. This base form, however, expresses second person plural rather first person, in spite of sharing the **bē** element.

<sup>53</sup> In this example, the H of the P1 marker following the complex pronoun is observed not to be downdrifted. A concerted study of the tonal behavior of complex pronouns has not been carried out and, therefore, this tonal realization is unexplained.

The base part of the compound pronouns can also be used with full nouns, as seen in (7.25) and (7.26), a phenomenon also observed for the nearby Ring language Aghem (Hyman 1979: 54–5).

- (7.25) **bēsá-Ø-kwā:**      bē    bē    làd-é,  
 1PL-c1-wife.1SG.POSS    1PL    P1    go.goal-PROG
- wū    jù      tū:      bvū-lê:    nōnō  
 3SG    COP(N)    carry    c14-fufu    empty
- ‘I and my wife were going (to the farm to do work) and she CARRIED FUFU WITHOUT SOUP.’*  
 Jealous Husband.19.1

- (7.26) Ø-ñfōŋ    gē    yéŋ    **bēnē-táda**    lē  
 c1-chief    P3    see    2PL-T.      APPL
- ‘The chief saw you all (you and Tada).’*

The Beboid languages Mungong and Noni also have compound pronouns (Boutwell 2014b: 25; and Hyman 1981: 17–8 respectively). Following attempted targeted elicitation, Naki (Beboid) is reported to not have them (Good et al. 2011: 63). As a part of the same study of Naki, compound nouns were attested in Ajumbu (Yemne-Kimbi) (Good et al. 2011: 42).

Mundabli (Yemne-Kimbi) was earlier reported as having compound pronouns as well, but the analysis was changed to that of “inclusory conjunction” constructions (Voll 2017: 167–72). This type of construction involves the conjoining of two nominals via a conjunction, with the first nominal described as an “inclusory conjoint”, which denotes the entire set (Haspelmath 2007a: 33). Indeed, in contrast to Nchane, Mundabli appears to have a conjunctive element in these constructions. Nevertheless, the Mundabli inclusory conjunction constructions and the Nchane compound pronouns accomplish similar semantic output and should therefore be considered as two varieties of the same phenomenon. Note that the presence of compound pronouns has not been attested in any of the other Beboid languages.

## 7.2 Locative pronouns

There are three locative pronouns **fɔ́**, **yɔ́** and **yú**, which are coreferential with prepositional phrases headed by the three main prepositions **fɛ̀** ‘at’, **à** ‘in’ and **yè** ‘on’ respectively.<sup>54</sup> Each of these pronouns is presented in this section. As will be seen in the various examples below, the locative pronouns encode not only coreference with a nominal, but also the spatial deictic semantics associated with the preposition heading the coreferential prepositional phrase.

The corpus contains no occurrences of these pronouns in preverbal position, most likely because the canonical position for prepositional phrases is postverbal. Therefore, I assume that the locative pronouns are limited to postverbal position. The pronoun **yú** is also coreferential with Comitative Obliques, which are introduced by the conjunction/preposition **bɛ́** ‘with’. While this pronominal reference is not strictly locative, both types of **yú** coreference are described in this section for convenience.

Prepositional phrases headed by the preposition **fɛ̀** ‘at’ can be referenced with the locative pronoun **fɔ́** ‘there’, which is illustrated in examples (7.27)–(7.29). Note that the preposition **fɛ̀** is used to express motion towards as well as away from, but can also express static location with some verbs (i.e., “be at” someplace). Examples of the corresponding pronoun that is coreferential with a prepositional phrase expressing motion towards are lacking in the data.

- (7.27)    wù    já        **fɔ́**        wù    kwē    fɛ̀-yēlē,  
           3SG   leave    there    3SG   home   c16-way
- wù    tɔ́        wù    shī    wù    fuf-è    shēŋ  
           3SG   come    3SG   sit     3SG   rest-PROG   c9.liver

*‘He left (the farm) and returned home, and he sat and relaxed.’*

Jealous Husband.16

- (7.28)    wù    mɔ́    wù    búse    m̃-bà:    **fɔ́**,    wù    ná  
           3SG   RES   3SG   remove   c6a-soup   there   3SG   give

Ø-jwɛ́:                                    lē  
   c1-husband.3SG.POSS    APPL

*‘She just removed soup from there (the leaf) and gave [it] to her husband.’*

Jealous Husband.13

<sup>54</sup> The words **fɛ̀nè** ‘there’ and **yànè** ‘here’ are treated as locational adverbs and are described in §8.6, although they could be interpreted as locative pronouns as well. Perhaps the primary difference between these words and the locative pronouns presented here is that antecedents for these words are not clearly identifiable as they are for the locative pronouns.



- (7.29) Ø-kwēsé wú kán-è màn-kàlà wē-ē wù  
 c1-woman c1REL fry-PROG c6a-cassava.puff c1-ANA1 3SG

jù fǔ bē n̄sā y-è  
 COP(N) there with c9.friend c9-3SG.POSS

*‘...the woman who was frying cassava puff was there (in the neighborhood) with her friend.’* What-goes-around.2.1

The referent object<sup>55</sup> of the pronoun usually occurs earlier in the text, or the referent object is inferable or generic, as in the previous examples. In rare cases, it is present in the same sentence as the pronoun, as in (7.30), where the relative clause demands the use of the resumptive pronoun. (This appears to be a special case, since relative clauses usually do not have resumptive pronouns. See Chapter 12 for more details.)

- (7.30) ↑(bvū-jú) bvù bè gè gwē fǔ, bē gē  
 c14-place c14REL 1PL P3 fall there 1PL P3
- bíd-ě bā-mbīlè yúfè bāmī bá gē tō  
 ask-PROG c2-question ten c2-person c2REL P3 come
- kī bó yéŋ bè lē  
 COMP(K) 3PL see 1PL APPL

*‘At the places where we landed, we asked ten questions of the people who came to see us.’* Training.1.18

The locative pronoun **yǔ** ‘inside’ is coreferential with prepositional phrases headed by the preposition **à** ‘in’. It is rare in the text data, occurring only three times. Examples (7.31) and (7.32) clearly show the substitutive role of the pronoun, while example (7.33) provides an illustration from the text data.

- (7.31) wū dè: byán à Ø-ká lē  
 3SG cook c10.palmnuts in c1-barrel APPL

*‘He cooked palm nuts in a barrel.’*

<sup>55</sup> The term “referent object” is used here rather than simply “referent” to account for the fact that the locative pronoun is coreferential with the entire prepositional phrase rather than only the object of the prepositional phrase.

- (7.32) wū dè: byán yó  
3SG cook c10.palmnuts inside

*'He cooked palm nuts in it (a barrel).'*

- (7.33) bā gē jò yó, bā kē bā chùg-è  
they put c9.water inside c2 begin c2 wash-PROG

*'...they put water inside (the trough) and begin washing (the palm nuts)...*

Making Palm Oil.1.5

The final locative pronoun **yú** 'on.it' is coreferential with prepositional phrases headed by the preposition **yè** 'on', as in (7.34) and (7.35).

- (7.34) wù gē kì-chídē kē-è fè-kū, wù fīsé  
3SG put c7-food.mat c7-ANA1 c16-down 3SG twist

yē **yú**, wù fīsé yē **yú**  
c9.body on.it 3SG twist c9.body on.it

*'...she put the food mat on the ground and twisted her body on it multiple times...*

Two Wives.3.6

- (7.35) Ø-tán wú-mù lé byèŋ bú **yú**  
c1-time c1-some COP c9.fish exit on.it

*'Sometimes, fish will come out on it (the fishing line).'*

Fishing.1.8

As mentioned above, this pronoun is also coreferential with Comitative Obliques. But the data suggests that this pronoun can only refer to INSTRUMENTS and not ACCOMPANIMENT, even though both of these semantic roles are expressed through Comitative Obliques. Referential ACCOMPANIMENT obliques maintain the conjunction/preposition **bé** followed by an appropriate personal pronoun (see (7.9) and (7.11) above). One possible exception is described at the end of this section.

Example (7.36) illustrates the locative pronoun **yú** which is coreferential with a Comitative Oblique. The pronoun (in example b) has the same semantic role and occurs in the same position in the clause as its referent object (in example a), which appears in square brackets. (Although the speaker substituted "medicine" for "poison", the set of examples clearly shows the syntactic and semantic structures of the base sentence which correspond to the sentence with the pronoun.)

- (7.36) a. wù mō wù chú ntāŋ, lē  
 3SG RES 3SG respond suggest COMP
- S<sub>(AGENT)</sub>
- bé bé mē wū wò, tū mē  
 1PL.COND <sup>P</sup>COP 1SG.PRO c1REL 2SG then 1SG.PRO
- V O<sub>(EXP)</sub> OCOM<sub>(INSTR)</sub>  
 m̄-bé j̄-yū wā wù [bé Ø-ńlò]  
 1SG-P1 1SG-kill already 3SG with c1-poison
- 'She then suggested, "If I were you, I would have killed him with poison."'*  
 What-goes-around.3.1
- b. lē Ø-kwēsé wé-ē dú nō,  
 SET c1-woman c1-ANA1 say like.that
- mē mō gē: mē j̄-jò j̄chē yī  
 1SG.PRO RES go 1SG.PRO 1SG-take c9.medicine c9REL
- S<sub>(AGENT)</sub> V O<sub>(EXP)</sub> OCOM<sub>(INSTR)</sub>  
 bā yú-yǐ bī-kfūnè yú,  
 c2 kill-DISTR.PROG c8-rat on.it
- mē ŋ-gē: à mǎŋ-kǎlā mà-à lē  
 1SG.PRO 1SG-put in c6a-cassava.puff c6a-ANA1 APPL
- 'As that woman said so, I went and brought medicine that kills rats and put it in that cassava puff.'*  
 What-goes-around.9.14

This pronoun often occurs as a resumptive pronoun in nonrestrictive relative clauses that provide additional information regarding the referent object (i.e., the relative clause's head) (cf. (7.30)). The referent object is given in square brackets in (7.37) and (7.38).

- (7.37) [bī-dádè] bī bā sǎŋ-ě yé yú  
 c8-palm.branch c8REL they thatch-PROG c10.house on.it
- '...palm branches, which they thatch houses with.'* King of Trees.1.3

- '...they captured Pa Damume, whom they used in crossing the stream.'*  
(lit. *whom they crossed the stream with him*) Land Dispute.2.3

*'My husband, don't fear anything, there is soup.'* (lit. soup is with the fufu(?))  
Jealous Husband.2.2

- 'There was a woman who was frying cassava puff in that quarter.'* (lit. a certain woman was with life(?))      What-goes-around.1.4



- (7.43) lē fí dó fí nù nɔ̃,  
SET c19 SIT c19 COP(N) like.that

bɔ̃: bā-ā gē kwī-yè bā-chī  
c2.child c2-ANA1 P3 die-DISTR c2-all

*'As it was so, all those children died (one after another).'*

What-goes-around.10.1

In example (7.44), the pronoun is acting as a discourse deictic, where the antecedent is the thing said by someone earlier. The reference is to the proposition made through the utterance, that they should poison the beggar.

- (7.44) lē Ø-kwēsé wé-ē dú nɔ̃,  
SET c1-woman c1-ANA1 say like.that

mē mɔ̃ gē mē j̃-jò j̃chē  
1SG.PRO RES go 1SG.PRO 1SG-take c9.medicine

yī bā yú:-yí bī-kfūnè yú,  
c9REL they kill-DISTR.PROG c8-rat on.it

mē j̃-gē: ä mǎŋ-kälä mà-à lē  
1SG.PRO 1SG-put in c6a-cassava.puff c6a-ANA1 APPL

*'As that woman said so, I went and brought medicine that kills rats and put [it] in that cassava puff.'*

What-goes-around.9.14

The adverbial pronoun in (7.45) appears to be part of a conventionalized prepositional phrase translated as “so”. A clear antecedent is not apparent, suggesting that this prepositional phrase is a discourse device of some kind, perhaps indicating a topic shift. As this is the only example of the construction in the text data, it is not possible to substantiate this hypothesis. The prepositional phrase is realized at a higher tonal register and the pronoun itself has a long vowel.

- (7.45) ↑(yè nɔ̃: lè), fí mó fī nù lē  
on like.that APPL c19 RES c19 COP(N) SET

bā-mī bá-dùdē lēg-è Ø-nɔ̃ fè bèn lē  
c2-person c2-many beg-PROG c1-god at 2PL APPL

*'So, many people will be praying to God for you,'*

Marriage.4.1

This pronoun has a secondary function of introducing certain support clauses and complement clauses. See §§13.2.2 and 13.3 for descriptions of these other uses of *nò*.

As stated in the introduction to this section, the form *nē* is rare in the data, and the analysis is tentative at this time. But as (7.46) and (7.47) show, it can co-occur with *nò*, resulting in constructions that may be interpreted as “since this, then...”. In (7.46), the speaker seems to be saying that, as a result of his speaking, his behavior will change. In (7.47), the people thought that, since his house burned down, then he would go hang himself.

- (7.46)    *nò*            *ɲ-jèm-é*            *à-bèŋ*            *nē*  
              like.that    1SG-speak-PROG    c18-today    like.this

*‘As I am saying this today, ...’*

Jealous Husband.22

- (7.47)    *bā-mī*            *gè*    *ké-é*            *lē*  
              c2-person    P3    know-PROG    COMP

*nò*            *Ø-lá*            *chī-nē*            *fyé*    *nē*  
              like.that    c5-compound    c5-PROX    burn    like.this

*‘People were knowing that as this (my) compound burned like this, ...’*

Fire.26

The form of *nē*, along with the apparent proximal semantics, suggests a connection between this pronoun and the proximal demonstrative, possibly even that they are one and the same, with the use presented here representing a second function of the demonstrative. However, the form *nò* has no such demonstrative counterpart and seems to form a contrasting pair with *nē*. More research is needed for a more complete analysis.

## 7.4 The impersonal subject pronoun

The pronoun **bā**, an obviously conservative reflex of Proto-Bantu class 2 \***ba-**, is used as an impersonal subject pronoun and is glossed as ‘they’, with the word **bā-mī** ‘people’ the pronoun’s antecedent. It is only used for human referents, where the 3PL pronoun **bó** would otherwise be appropriate. The impersonal subject pronoun is used whenever the agent is generic or the precise identity of the agent is unimportant. The subjects in examples (7.48) and (7.49), taken from historical and procedural texts respectively, are both generic entities, referring to “people” in general.

- (7.48) fē mū gē shílē fó, **bā** gē té-ŋé fó à  
 at c1-person P3 sit there they P3 call there in

Ø-jī ch-é lē  
 c5-name c5-3SG.POSS APPL

*‘At the place each person settled, they called the place by his name.’*  
 History.4.1

- (7.49) **bā** gē: jō: yí jē: yō, kì yī  
 they put c9.water c9REL cold inside COMP(K) c9

jē-sē m-mē:  
 cool-CAUS c6a-oil

*‘...they add cold water to cool the oil.’* Making Palm Oil.1.10

The agents in example (7.50) are not necessarily generic as are those in the above examples. Here there were particular people who helped remove things from the burning houses, and the speaker surely is aware of the identities of many of them. However, while the impersonal pronoun refers to these particular people, their identities are unimportant. Therefore, the impersonal subject pronoun is used.

- (7.50) mw-ē: mú yē kwè, mú-mū  
 c18a-thing c18aREL in home c18a-some

**bā** būsè, mú-mú fyē  
 they remove c18a-some burn

*‘The things in the house, some they removed, some burned.’* Fire.5.1



*'As the woman was going, she stood and the husband wondered what would happen.'* (lit. *it is what is*) Jealous Husband.4.2

- (7.53)    bós    gē    kēm-é    ki-ntēpē,    lē    lé    **yēŋ**    wú  
              3PL   P3   have-PROG   c7-argument   COMP   COP   who   c1REL
- kēm-è    mù-ŋgà    wù    ghá    Ø-mù-mù  
              have-PROG   c18a-power   3SG   surpass   c1-person-some

*‘...they were arguing about who was stronger...’* (lit. *it is who that is having strength, he passing the other*)                      Sun and Wind.1.1

## 7.7 Other pronominals

As demonstrated in §6.5, certain noun modifiers are observed that can function pronominally. In other words, they occur not as modifiers in a noun phrase, but rather as the lone nominal element of a noun phrase and are coreferential with a full noun referent. These noun modifiers include possessive pronouns, the proximal demonstrative, the indefinite demonstrative, and numbers. Their occurrence as pronouns is uncommon in the text corpus. See §6.5 for specific examples.

# Chapter 8

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## Other word classes

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This chapter is concerned with word classes other than nouns, nominal modifiers, verbs and grammatical markers such as tense and aspect auxiliaries. I begin in §8.1 with a description of prepositions, which function in locational deictic expressions, as well as establishing ‘aboutness’ relationships. §8.2 describes the comitative preposition **bé** ‘with’, which is also functions as a coordinating conjunction. Interjections and ideophones are presented in sections 8.3 and 8.4 respectively. A brief description of predications involving hand movements appears in §8.5, and locational adverbs are treated in §8.6. The chapter ends with §8.7, in which temporal adverbs are described.

### 8.1 Prepositions

The primary preposition type in the data corpus establishes locational and orientational relationships between verbs and their constituents. Description of these “locational” prepositions takes up the largest portion of this section. The preposition **kòné** ‘about’ represents a second type and is relatively uncommon in the data. Accordingly, it is briefly described at the end of the section.

There are four different locational prepositions attested in the data corpus. With each of these prepositions, the resulting prepositional phrases include the postpositional applicative marker **lè** ‘APPL’. (See §11.1.3 for a discussion regarding

the applicative analysis.) The various prepositions are described in the subsections which follow, where prepositional phrases in the examples appear in brackets and prepositions are bolded.

Table 8.1 summarizes the locational prepositions and the semantic expressions typically associated with each.

| Preposition | Gloss       | Semantic expression  |
|-------------|-------------|----------------------|
| fě          | <i>at</i>   | movement             |
| à           | <i>in</i>   | bounded location     |
| yè          | <i>on</i>   | unbounded location   |
| m̄bébé      | <i>near</i> | approximate location |

Table 8.1 Summary of Nchane locational prepositions.

As a reminder, **fě** and **à** each have locative noun counterparts designated as classes 16 and 18 respectively, which are described in §5.2.3. Prepositional phrases are differentiated from their corresponding locative noun phrases by phrase syntax and agreement patterning. First, as stated above, prepositional phrases usually include the postposition applicative marker, while locative noun phrases do not. Second, prepositions do not generate agreement marking; their nominal complements maintain their own lexical class marking and agreement protocols. Locative nouns generate agreement, generally **fě** and **a** respectively, which is reflective of the locative noun class marking.

### 8.1.1 fě ‘at’

The preposition **fě** usually expresses a change in location of the subject and is glossed as ‘at’. The concept of ‘movement’ is illustrated in examples (8.1) and (8.2).

- (8.1) lē    bó    dó    bó    gē,    bó    bú    [fě    kì-tē    ky-ē:    lē]  
 SET   3PL   SIT   3PL   go   3PL   arrive   at   c7-tree   c7-ANA1   APPL

*‘As they went, they arrived at that tree.’*

Jealous Husband.3.6

- (8.2) lē Ø-bwē: lād-é mwē, wù gē: bī-nfūnē  
 SET c1-mother go.goal-PROG c3.garden 3SG put c8-corn

lē wù shé  
 SET 3SG remain

wū gō [fē Ø-ŋ-gò wù-bàlà lē]  
 3SG grind at c1-NMZR-grind c1-foreign APPL

*'As the mother was going to the farm, she put corn aside so that she (the daughter) would remain (near the house) and take [it] to the grinding mill.'*  
 Disobedient Child.1.3

Movement is also apparent in clauses with the verb **gē**: 'go', where the endpoint of the movement is expressed through the prepositional phrase, as in (8.3) and (8.4).

- (8.3) wù tū bō: bā-ā  
 3SG carry c2.child c2-ANA1

wù gē: [fē Ø-mū wù ɲchē lē]  
 3SG go at c1-person c1AM c10.medicine APPL

*'...he took those children to a doctor.'* What-goes-around.9.6

- (8.4) bō gēn-è [fē bō lē] sēgè-chì,  
 3PL.HORT go-PROG at 3PL APPL when-all

bō gvūn-è bō bō ká fī-ì bō  
 3PL.HORT obey-PROG 3PL 3PL ITER help-PROG 3PL

*'They (the husband and wife) should visit them (their parents) all the time, and respect them (lit. obeying them and helping them)'*  
 Marriage.6.2

It is possible that the complements of **fē** prepositions are not primarily expressions of locations, but a mixture of LOCATION and some other semantic role such as RECIPIENT or BENEFACTIVE (perhaps generalized as GOAL), particularly those where the complement is Human. For example, a benefactive reading is appropriate for the prepositional phrase in (8.5).

- (8.5)    ↑(yè    nō:       lē),    fī    mō    fī    nù       lē  
           on    like.that    APPL    c19    RES    c19    COP(N)    COMP
- bā-mī       bá-dùdē    lēg-è       Ø-nō    [fē    bèn    lē]  
           c2-person    c2-many    beg-PROG    c1-god    at    2PL    APPL
- ‘So, many people will be praying to God for you,’                      Marriage.4.1

### 8.1.2 à ‘in’

The preposition **à** is the most common preposition in the text corpus and is most often best translated as ‘in’. It expresses the location of a constituent, a location that is characterized as bounded. In other words, the location is conceived of as an entity with boundaries like a container and the identified constituent is located within the boundaries. Examples (8.6)-(8.8) illustrate.

- (8.6)    bā    dē:    [à    Ø-ká       lē]  
           they    cook    in    c1-barrel    APPL
- ‘They cook [the palm nuts] in a drum.’                      Making Palm Oil.1.3

- (8.7)    lé    nū       kinfē:,    Ø-kwèsē    wē-è       būsē    shī,  
           SET    COP(N)    soon    c1-woman    c1-ANA1    remove    c9.chicken
- bā    nù       bā    yòŋ    bā    kèně    wá,       bā  
           they    COP(N)    c2    cook    c2    prepare    already    c2
- kūjè    [à    kī-ŋkámè    lē]  
           wrap    in    c7-leaf       APPL
- ‘Immediately, that woman took the chicken out, having already cooked and prepared [it] and wrapped in a leaf.’                      Jealous Husband.12

- (8.8)    mē       mō    ŋ-gē:,    mē       jī-jò       ñchē       yī  
           1SG.PRO    RES    1SG-go    1SG.PRO    1SG-take    c9.medicine    c9REL
- bā    yú-yí                      bī-kfūnè    yú,  
           they    kill-DISTR.PROG    c8-rat       on.it
- mē       ŋ-gē:    [à    mǎŋ-kālā       mà-à       lē]  
           1SG.PRO    1SG-put    in    c6a-cassava.puff    c6a-ANA1    APPL
- ‘I went and brought medicine that kills rats and put [it] in that cassava puff.’                      What-goes-around.9.14

The located constituent and its location are usually concrete, as in the above examples. However, the locational relationship between the constituent and its location in (8.9) might be considered as abstract. This example comes from a story about two wives, one of whom can transform herself into an animal. The first wife goes home, while the second one stayed out in the wilderness in her animal form.

- (8.9) Ø-kwēsé wú-yú shè ñchùŋ [à ɲàŋ lē]  
 c1-woman c1-ANA2 stay c?.bush in c9.animal APPL  
*'That (other) "woman" remained in the bush as an animal.'* (lit. *inside the animal*)  
 Two Wives.4.3

Historically, many of the people groups throughout Cameroon believed that certain people can change their forms from that of a human to that of an animal. This is in contrast to a person's spirit leaving his or her body and possessing the body of an animal. Therefore, the bounded, locational expression made through the prepositional phrase in this example is figurative.

Most of the verbs appearing with this preposition express movement from outside the location to inside the location. In other words, the prepositional phrase serves as a GOAL. However, certain verbs appearing with the preposition require a SOURCE, with movement from inside the location to outside the location. The examples below illustrate this difference.

- (8.10) gélé kī-yò [à kī-tā: lē]  
 put.IMP c7-elephant in c7-fence APPL  
*'Put the elephant inside the fence (enclosure).'*
- (8.11) būsē kī-yò [à kī-tā: lē]  
 remove.IMP c7-elephant in c7-fence APPL  
*'Remove the elephant from the fence (enclosure).'*

### 8.1.3 yè 'on'

The preposition **yè** has a core meaning of 'on'. Like **à** 'in' above, it is not directional, but rather expresses information regarding the location of a constituent or the location of the verb's affect. The location is not considered bounded as it is with the preposition **à**, and the constituent is thought of as merely present at or in contact with the location, as seen in (8.12) and (8.13).

- (8.12) bē sū: ŋgō [yē Ø-ŋgwè lē]  
 1PL string c10.termite on c1-fishing.pole APPL  
*'We put termites on the hook.'*<sup>56</sup> Fishing.1.4

- (8.13) kī já kī shì [yē Ø-tí: ch-ē lē]  
 c7 leave c7 sit on c5-stomach c5-3SG.POSS APPL  
*'...it (the fly) left (the meat) and sat on his (the man's) stomach...'*  
 Greedy Friends.1.15

As with **à**, this preposition can sometimes express a SOURCE location, as in (8.14). This of course is dictated by the requirements of the verb.

- (8.14) já [yē nàŋ yí-nè lē] chégē  
 leave.IMP on c9.meat c9-PROX APPL quickly  
*'Go away from this meat quickly!'* Greedy Friends.1.11

Note that the preposition 'from' is used in the free translations for both examples (8.11) and (8.14), while these examples have different Nchane prepositions. The difference between the two is that (8.11) expresses the bounded location "in the fenced enclosure", while (8.14) expresses the unbounded location "on the meat".

Some conventionalized uses of **yè** are orientational and temporal, as seen in the examples below.

- (8.15) m̄bémbé [yè kī-bō kī-ŋkòŋò lē],  
 near on c7-arm c7-left APPL  
 wù gē yēŋ bā-mī bā-mū  
 3SG P3 see c2-person c2-some  
*'Off to his left, he saw some people...'* Lake.5.4

<sup>56</sup> The word **ŋgwè** 'fishing pole' actually refers to the apparatus used for fishing. This includes a stick or pole of some kind, a string, usually a float, and a hook. There are individual words for each of the parts. However, as seen in this example, it is appropriate to talk about attaching the bait using the word referring to the whole apparatus. I assume the speaker could also have used the actual word for hook if he had wanted to.



- (8.16) kī-fē kī-mú lé [yè kī-lùŋ lē] Ø-j̄chfùgè  
 c7-time c7-some COP on c7-year APPL c1-thousand
- bé Ø-gí: bvùgē m̄bāŋbvùgē j̄chò bvūsōshwī  
 with c4-hundred nine ninety plus seven
- 'Sometime in 1997...'* Training.1.1

#### 8.1.4 m̄bémbé 'near'

Proximity is expressed through the preposition **m̄bémbé** (or **m̄bébé**) 'near', which sometimes can be interpreted as 'beside', and is possibly derived from the noun **kī-mbè** 'side'. This preposition, which is rare in the data, locates a constituent as being close to the preposition's complement, as illustrated in (8.17) and (8.18).

- (8.17) gélé Ø-nà [m̄bébé yē lē]  
 put.IMP c1-cow near c9.house APPL
- 'Put the cow near the house.'*
- (8.18) lē wú yēn-è Ø-ŋkè: wù tō  
 SET 3SG sing-PROG c1-song 3SG come
- [m̄bémbé Ø-lā wù Ø-kwēsé wú kàŋ-é  
 near c5-compound c3AM c1-woman c1REL fry-PROG
- màŋ-kàlà wē-ē lē],  
 c6a-cassava.puff c1-ANA1 APPL
- 'As he was singing and coming near to the compound of that woman who was frying cassava puff,'* What-goes-around.4.4

#### 8.1.5 kònè 'about'

Aboutness relationships can be established through the preposition **kònè** 'about'. Unlike the locational prepositional phrases above, **kònè** phrases do not have the applicative postposition. Example (8.19) illustrates the function of this preposition.

- (8.19) bā gē yēyè [kònè Ø-ŋwā wù bī-ŋjīŋī]  
 they P3 teach about c1-book c1AM c8-picture
- '...they taught about the picture booklet...'* Training.1.8

Prepositional phrases headed by **kòṇè** may also serve as predicate, as seen in (8.20).

- (8.20) Ø-jì-shilè wú-yú gè bé [kòṇè bá-mī bá  
 c1-NMZR-sit c1-ANA2 P3 <sup>P</sup>COP about c2-person c2AM  
 Ø-ńj-fijē jē yī Ø-pò]  
 c1-NMZR-preach c9.word c9AM c1-god

*'This meeting was about (or for) preachers.'*

Training.1.2

## 8.2 The Comitative conjunction/preposition **bé**

The relational particle **bé** 'with' has multiple functions. In certain contexts, it behaves like a coordinating conjunction. In other contexts, it is a preposition, establishing a certain type of relationship, usually between the subject and the preposition's complement. These different functions, and the syntactic contexts in which they occur, are summarized in Table 8.2. Note that this summary represents a generalization, since exceptions are observed. A description of each of these functions is given in the remainder of this section.

| Syntactic context |                            |      |             |      | Function/Expression |
|-------------------|----------------------------|------|-------------|------|---------------------|
|                   |                            | Noun | Conjunction | Noun | coordination        |
| Noun              | Verb <sub>[+motion]</sub>  | -    | Preposition | Noun | accompaniment       |
| Noun              | Copula                     | -    | Preposition | Noun | possession          |
| Noun              | Verb <sub>[+process]</sub> | Noun | Preposition | Noun | instrumental        |

Table 8.2 Generalized syntactic contexts and corresponding semantic expressions of the conjunction/preposition **bé**.

As a conjunction, **bé** joins two noun phrases in a coordinate construction, as in (8.21) and (8.22). Note that the conjunction is bolded and the coordinated constituents are in brackets. See also §6.2.1 for a treatment of conjoined noun phrases.

- (8.21) bā kē bā chùg-è bā bús-è  
 they begin c2 wash-PROG c2 remove-PROG  
 [chē] **bé** [Ø-gvúnē] yéyē  
 c10.palm.kernel with c5-chaff separate

*'...they begin washing and separating the kernels and the chaff...'*

Making Palm Oil.1.5

- (8.22) [Ø-jwénsɛ́]      **bé**      [Ø-kwê]      jɔ́d-è      kī-fê      kī  
 c1-husband.HORT      with      c1-wife      take-PROG      c7-time      COMP(K)

bó      yūg-è      Ø-ñ-tēfē      wú      būd-é  
 3PL      hear-PROG      c1-NMZR-advise      c1REL      exit-PROG

Ø-dē      yī      [Ø-chíjì]      **bé**      [Ø-bwē]      lē  
 c4-mouth      c4AM      c1-father      with      c1-mother      APPL

*'The husband and the wife should be taking time to be hearing from the father and mother.'*  
 Marriage.6.1

As a nominal coordinator, its function is similar to the English conjunction 'and', and can be used to complete a list of nouns, with the conjunction occurring between the final constituent and the rest of the list.

- (8.23) bó      gē      jā      tīkālì,      bō      jū      bó      bā-tèŋ,      ŋkájí  
 3PL      P3      leave      T.      3PL      COP(N)      3PL      c2-five      N.

chūŋè      ŋfúmè      kībó      **bé**      bēm  
 Ch.      N.      K.      with      B.

*'They left Tikari, five of them: Nkanchi, Chunge, Nfume, Kibbo and Bem.'*  
 History.2.1

Examples (8.24) and (8.25) illustrate rare cases where constituents other than noun phrases are coordinated. In (8.24) a prepositional phrase and a locative noun phrase are conjoined. In (8.25) a complex prepositional phrase is conjoined to an adverbial phrase.

- (8.24) Ø-sōŋɔ́      lé      kī-tē      kī      tēmē      jīshēŋ  
 c5-palm      COP      c7-tree      c7REL      strong      c9.property

[yè      j̣chànè      lē]      **bé**      [à-wé      à-wōŋ      ā-chī]  
 on      N.      APPL      with      c18-up      c18-world      c18-all

*'The palm is an important property tree in Nchane and to all the world.'*  
 King of Trees.1.1

- (8.25) kī-mā kī fwē lē, bā gē yēyè [kònnè bà-ŋchī  
 c7-week c7REL front APPL they P3 teach about c2-law
- bā kī-yō kī yūdē bā-nē] **bé** [nò  
 c2AM c7-spirit c7REL clean c2-four with like.that
- Ø-mù lé nò wú bi: bà-mbīlè]  
 c1-person COP like.that 3SG.FUT ask c2-question

*'In the first week, they taught about the four spiritual laws and how to give a questionnaire.'* (lit. *like that a person will ask questions.*)

Training.1.7

Comitative relationships are also expressed through **bé**. In this function, illustrated in (8.26)-(8.28), the particle follows the verb or verb complex, and the verb is usually a motion verb. The preposition indicates that the Agent carried out the action in the presence of the preposition's complement.

- (8.26) Ø-jwē wù já wē **bé** Ø-kwē: lād-è  
 c1-husband 3SG leave up with c1-wife.3SG.POSS go.goal-PROG

*'The husband got up with his wife, going [to the farm to work].'*

Jealous Husband.3.3

- (8.27) wū bū **bé** kī-chídè à-bō  
 3SG arrive with c7-food.mat c18-hand

*'She appeared with a food-mat in [her] hand.'*

Two Wives.3.4

- (8.28) wù lēgè wù kwé **bé** kī  
 3SG run 3SG home with c7

*'...she ran home with it (the food mat).'*

Two Wives.4.2

Clauses containing **bé** phrases preceded by a copula usually have a possessive reading that is reflected in the free translations by the word 'have', as in (8.29) and (8.30).

- (8.29) jīchég:, mē lé **bé** jīchè yí yū bī-kfūnè  
 true 1SG.PRO COP with c9.medicine c9REL kill c8-rat

*'In fact (or truly), I have medicine that kills rats.'*

What-goes-around.3.2

- (8.30) mē lé **bé** màn-kàlà yānē à kī-kē: lē  
 1SG.PRO COP with c6a-cassava.puff here in c7-bag APPL  
*'I have some cassava puff here in [my] bag...'* What-goes-around.7.6

The verb **kēmē**, which is glossed as 'have', is also routinely used in possession expressions. While a careful study of the similarities of these two predication types has not been made, it appears that the **bé** phrase more often connotes physical co-occurrence rather than actual possession.

Example (8.31) represents an exception to the generalized context of a **bé** phrase following a copula as expressing possession. Here it is expressing a comitative relationship.

- (8.31) lē kī-nfē: kē-ē dó kī tō-ò Ø-jú  
 SET c7-blind.man c7-ANA1 SIT c7 come-PROG c5-day  
 chí-mī, Ø-kwēsé wú kán-è màn-kàlà  
 c5-some c1-woman c1REL fry-PROG c6a-cassava.puff  
 wē-ē wù jù fò **bé** n̄sā y-è  
 c1-ANA1 3SG COP(N) there with c9.friend c9-3SG.POSS  
*'As that blind man was coming one day, that woman who was frying cassava puff was there (in the neighborhood) with her friend.'*  
 What-goes-around.2.1

Finally, this preposition is used to express instrumental relationships. Here, the PATIENT-object, when syntactically present, occurs between the verb and the INSTRUMENT-object. When the PATIENT-object is not present, it is always inferable. The verb is usually one which expresses a process carried out by the subject. Instrumental expressions are illustrated in (8.32) and (8.33).

- (8.32) wù mō wù bō: Ø-tí: **bé** fī-jō,  
 3SG RES 3SG stab c5-stomach with c19-knife  
 wù gwē wù kwé  
 3SG fall 3SG die  
*'...he then stabbed [his] stomach with the knife, he fell and died.'*  
 Greedy Friends.1.15

- (8.33) Ø-tán wù m-mē: jē-dě chúlē, bā kē bā  
 c1-time c1REL c6a-oil cool-COMPL well they begin c2

kɔl-è bē kī-ntī, bā gəl-è à shā lē  
 catch-PROG with c7-bowl c2 put-PROG in c9.pot APPL

*'When the oil has cooled off well, they start collecting [it] with a bowl, keeping [it] in a pot.'*  
 Making Palm Oil.1.11

Example (8.34) illustrates an abstract instrumental relationship—the blindman has caused many people to be worried or bothered through his begging.

- (8.34) kī-nfē: kī-nē lé kī fūŋ-sè wá  
 c7-blind.man c7-PROX COP c7 worry-CAUS already

bā-mī wèsè bē kī-lègè  
 c2-person very with c7-beg

*'...this blindman has already worried people too much with begging.'*  
 What-goes-around.3.5

### 8.3 Interjections

Words that function to primarily express the emotion of the speaker are known as interjections. While interjections are certainly quite common in everyday speech, there are just a few examples of them in the text corpus, and none of them are exclusive to Nchane.

The interjections in the text data always occur clause-initial, often with a raised tonal register, usually with lengthened vowels, and prone to reduplication. Examples (8.35)–(8.37) illustrate two interjections that are common throughout the anglophone regions of Cameroon. As (8.35) and (8.36) show, the interjections **wē:**<sup>57</sup> and **hēbē** are interchangeable for the most part and express distress and/or surprise.

- (8.35) mō ñ-dú lē, **wē:**, Ø-lā w-āŋ lé wú fyé  
 RES 1SG-say COMP INTERJ c5-compound c3-1SG.POSS COP c3 burn

*'Then I said, "Oh! My compound has burned!"'*<sup>58</sup> Fire.2.4-5

<sup>57</sup> Possibly coming from German *weh* or *wehe* translatable as “woe” or “how dare you”. Note that Cameroon was colonized by Germany between 1884 and 1917.

<sup>58</sup> This example appears to illustrate a case of agreement confusion, since the noun **lā** ‘compound’ is usually treated as a class 5 noun and pairing with class 6. Note that the agreement consonant for class 5 is “ch”. Other examples of this noun in the corpus display the same confusion, while the plural form is always unambiguously class 6.

- (8.36) lē n-dú lē, **hēbê:**, Ø-lā w-āŋ lé  
 SET 1SG-say COMP INTERJ c5-compound c3-1SG.POSS COP

wú fyé ... bō gē bé bō já bō lég-è,  
 c3 burn ... 3PL P3 <sup>P</sup>COP 3PL leave 3PL run-PROG

*'As I said, "Oh! My compound has burned!", ...they (all the people with me) had gotten up and were running (to where the fire was) ...'*

Fire.2.6-3.2

- (8.37) Ø-kwēsé wē-è gē lē, **hēbê:**, wō gé  
 c1-woman c1-ANA1 cry.out COMP INTERJ 2SG do.COND

bvū-jòŋè, ... wō tō wā  
 c14-good ... 2SG come already.QP

*'...that woman called out, "Oh! You-do-good..., have you already come?"'*

What-goes-around.4.4

The interjection **ō:** in (8.38) expresses surprise, while **hǎy** in (8.39) expresses frustration and general distress. This second one might be cognate with the Hausa word **kai**. Note that, while the text examples of these interjections show them reduplicated, non-reduplicated instances are common in natural speech.

- (8.38) **ō:** **ō:** nsā y-àŋ, lé jíchyé: jíchyé:  
 INTERJ INTERJ c9.friend c9-1SG.POSS COP true true

lē Ø-ŋfòŋ wē-nè gō:n-è  
 COMP c1-chief c1-2SG.POSS want-PROG

kī wù jí fī-kùŋ fy-àŋ  
 COMP(K) 3SG eat c19-heart c19-1SG.POSS.QP

*'Oh, oh, my friend! Is it really true that your chief wants to eat my heart?'*

Smart Monkey.1.11-12

- (8.39) **hǎy** **hǎy** fī ghá wù, wù tū: bō:  
 INTERJ INTERJ c19 surpass 3SG 3SG carry c2.child

bā-ā, wù gē: fē Ø-mū wù ɲchē lē  
 c2-ANA1 3SG go at c1-person c1AM c10.medicine APPL

*'"Hey, hey!" It (their illness) was beyond his ability to give aid, and he took them to a doctor.'*

What-goes-around.9.6

Example (8.40) illustrates the use of **ḵchḗ:** (or **ḵchyḗ:**) as an interjection, where it expresses a strong affirmation.

- (8.40) **ḵchḗ:**, mē lé [bé ḵchè yí yū bī-kfūnè]  
 true 1SG.PRO COP with c9.medicine c9REL kill c8-rat

*'In fact (or truly), I have medicine that kills rats.'*

What-goes-around.3.2

This construction could also be viewed as an instance of *verum focus*, which is treated in §16.3.4.

## 8.4 Ideophones

Ideophones have not been intensively researched. However, a few occurrences are observed in the text data, which are presented here. Ideophones are words that are iconic in some way, referencing not only an entity, but also some intrinsic quality of the entity. Or as Dingemanse put it, they are “DEPICTIONS” which encourage the hearer to experience “the scene depicted” by the predication (2012: 655).

Perhaps the most common and readily recognized examples of ideophones are onomatopoeic, mimicking the sound of the referent. Examples (8.41)-(8.43) illustrate this type of ideophone. The ideophone **wáà** in (8.41) is clearly not a lexical noun, but is simply a mimicked sound of something being poured. Example (8.42) presents a similar ideophone type, where the utterance of the word **ḵshū** is to a degree somehow representative of ‘silence’.

- (8.41) wù jó nù bvù-lḗ: bw-ē:, wù chú **wáà**, à  
 3SG take COP(N) c14-food c14-ANA1 3SG pour IDEO in  
 jò lḗ, wū tú wū kēnè wū kēnè wū kēnè  
 c9.water APPL 3SG then 3SG stir 3SG stir 3SG stir

*'She took the FLOUR, poured [it], pssss, into the water, and stirred and stirred.'*

Disobedient Child.1.10

- (8.42) mān-júsè gè bé **ḵshū**  
 c6a-area P3 <sup>P</sup>COP IDEO

*'The area was silent.'*<sup>59</sup>

Lake.6.12

Meanwhile the ideophone **fīm** in (8.43) is clearly a lexical noun, but with idiophonic properties.

<sup>59</sup> Noni has the cognate **shūmm**, apparently with the [m] lengthened.



- (8.43)    lē    **fīm**    yé    lēs-è  
              SET   c9.air   c9REL   enter-PROG

*‘...so that air that was entering [the plane] ...’*

Training.1.14

In each of the above examples, the ideophone contains a long vowel. The vowel in **fīm** ‘air’ in (8.43) is particularly long, measuring 0.35 ms, while long vowels typically measure around 0.25 ms. This word is also used to express that the weather is ‘cold’. In this usage, the vowel is often “dragged” very long and with falling tone, **fīm** ‘It’s very cold.’ (presumably because the wind is blowing strongly). Note that the vowel of **fīm** in other occurrences is consistent with typical long vowels, suggesting that the vowel length of ideophones can be varied for stylistic effect and/or expression of degree. (These long vowels are represented here in the orthography as double and triple vowels rather than utilizing the conventional long vowel representation **v:** to reflect this characteristic of ideophone phonology.)

Ideophones may also in some way mimic the movement of the referent. The verb **ndēndē** ‘stumble’ in (8.44) appears to be a reduplicated form that expresses a stuttering action, although the non-reduplicated source of the verb has not been identified.

- (8.44)    wù    gè    bé    yè    kì-mànjè    lē    bé    kì-jì-chēŋ  
              3SG   P3   <sup>P</sup>COP   on   c7-doubt   APPL   with   c7-NMZR-soil
- fō,    wū    gē    **ndēndē**    wù    bú    à-kfū  
              there   3SG   P3   stumble   3SG   exit   c18-out

*‘He was confused and ill, and he stumbled outside ...’*

Lake.6.4

Reduplicative morphology in ideophones is not unexpected, as Dingemanse points out that ideophones are “susceptible” to this type of “expressive morphology” (2012: 656). In addition, the reduplication here is consistent with that seen with certain Nchane infinitive verbs functioning as manner adverbs (see §9.4).

## 8.5 Quotable gestures

This section presents a short description of what some researchers refer to as “quotable gestures” (see Kendon 2013: 12 for example). These are expressions accomplished through the use of a movement of a hand or some other physical gesture with semantic content. The text corpus has only a few examples, two of which are presented below in (8.45) and (8.46). Both of these examples contain the word **né** ‘GEST’, which is possibly derived from the adverbial pronoun **nē** ‘like.this’.

In example (8.45), at the moment **né** was uttered, the speaker made a motion with his hand across his neck, mimicking the action of the knife cutting across the neck.

- (8.45)    *já*        *lò*        *chēgégé,*    *mē*        *lé*        *mé*  
              leave.IMP    FOC        quickly    1SG.PRO    COP    1SG.PRO.FUT
- ń-kó*        *wò,*        *mē*        *n-sē:*        ***né***        *fè-bwē*  
              1SG-catch    2SG    1SG.PRO    1SG-cut    GEST    c16-neck

*'Leave quickly or else I will catch you and cut you like this, at your neck!'*  
    Greedy Friends.1.19

Example (8.46) is taken from a hortatory text in which a father is giving advice to his son before he is sent off to school in a village outside of the speaker's tribal area. Whether figuratively or literally, the father is holding out some money for the son to take as he says "***né***".

- (8.46)    ***né***        *kwà*        *kfū-nè*        *shēgē*        *nò*        *wō*        *gē:*  
              GEST    c3.value    c3-PROX    small    like.that    2SG    go
- wō*        *kè*        *kì-n-ché*        *k-ùŋ*        *yú*  
              2SG    begin    c7-NMZR-stay    c7-2SG.POSS    on.it

*'Here is a little money for you to go and start your stay with.'*  
    School Advice.6

## 8.6 Locational adverbs

Intentional study of locational deictics has not been undertaken. Nevertheless, several locational adverbs are present in the data corpus, allowing for some analyses to be made. These adverbs usually occur immediately after the verb, but may also follow one of the postverbal constituents, such as an Object or Comitative Oblique. This section presents two different locational paradigms expressed through adverbs: place deixis and vertical deixis.

Place deixis expresses the notions of "here" and "there". The most common way of expressing the notion of "there" in the data corpus is through the locational pronoun ***f5***, which is described in §7.2. This pronoun is coreferential with a location expressed through a prepositional phrase headed by the preposition ***fè*** 'at'. It is likely that specific, referential locations are expressed in this way, while nonspecific location reference is made through one of the adverbs described below.

The adverb ***fēnē*** 'here' refers to a generic place and often is interpreted as the present location of the speaker. Its form suggests that it is derived from the proximal demonstrative marked with class 16 agreement. It is cognate with the Noni adverb ***fēn***, which looks to be further along in the grammaticalization process. Examples (8.47) and (8.48) are given to illustrate the adverb's use.

- (8.47) mē lé fènè Ø-ṛgè lē  
1SG.PRO COP here c1-trouble APPL

‘...I am here in trouble.’

Richman.16

- (8.48) bé já fēnē,  
1PL.HORT leave here

bé gē: wōṅ wū-mū lē  
1PL.HORT go c3.village c3-some APPL

‘We should leave here and go to some other village.’

Inheritance.5

The notion “here” may also be expressed through the adverb **yānē**, as seen in (8.49) and (8.50). The difference between the adverbs **fēnē** and **yānē** is not clear, although the form of this second adverb hints at a derivation from the proximal demonstrative marked with class 18 agreement. Therefore, in addition to proximity, **yānē** might encode the notion of “inside”, which is associated with class 18 semantics. It is cognate with the Noni form **jān**.

- (8.49) mē lé bé mǎṅ-kàlà yānē à kī-kē: lē  
1SG.PRO COP with c6a-cassava.puff here in c7-bag APPL

‘I have some cassava puffs here in [my] pocket...’

What-goes-around.7.6

- (8.50) n̄sā y-ē bí: wù lē lā:, kī-fē:  
c9.friend c9-3SG.POSS ask 3SG APPL Q.COMP c7-blind.man

kī-nē tó kī tò-ò yànè té lē  
c7-PROX HAB c7 come-PROG here also APPL.QP

‘Her friend asked her, “(Does) this blind man also come here?”’

What-goes-around.2.2

Example (8.51) shows **yānē** being used in opposition to the adverb **yālē**. The identical onsets indicate shared prefixes, again suggesting class 18 agreement. This “there” adverb does not appear elsewhere in the data corpus and no further analysis is available at this time.

- (8.51) kī-ntúgè lé ā-bè-ntēnē kī tánj lò  
 c7-hole COP c18-1PL-middle COMP(K) be.able FOC
- Ø-mù g'é jā yè yālē, wú tó yānē g'è,  
 c1-person NEG2 leave on there 3SG come here NEG2
- kī tánj lò Ø-mū g'é jā yānē,  
 COMP(K) be.able FOC c1-person NEG2 leave here
- wú tó yālē g'è  
 3SG come there NEG2

*'There is a hole between us, so that a person cannot leave from there and come here, and cannot leave here and come there.'* Richman.17

Vertical deixis expresses the notions of “up” and “down”. The adverb **wē** is often marked with class 16 agreement and usually follows the verb, as in (8.52). It is unknown if it can be marked with agreement for any class other than 16.

- (8.52) bē jā bè bènè fē-wé fè Ø-ɲò lē  
 1PL P3 leave 1PL ascend c16-up at c1-god APPL
- '...we left and climbed up toward heaven.'* Training.1.13

It commonly appears, as in (8.53) and (8.54), without any class agreement.

- (8.53) Ø-jwē wù já wē bé Ø-kwē: lād-è  
 c1-husband 3SG leave up with c1-wife.3SG.POSS go.goal-PROG
- 'The husband got up with his wife, going [to the farm to work].'*  
 Jealous Husband.3.3

The difference between the prefixed and nonprefixed forms is probably nuanced, with the prefixed form expressing movement as well as location.

While the adverb usually immediately follows the verb, it can also follow an Object.

- (8.54) Ø-mū wù Ø-ɲò wú-né chāsē chyà: wē  
 c1-person c1AM c1-god c1-PROX.FUT raise c9.hand up
- 'This man of god will raise [his] hand up...'* Marriage.3.7

The adverb **fɛ-kū** ‘down’ always appears marked with class 16 agreement and may immediately follow the verb or some postverbal constituent, as examples (8.55)-(8.57) show.

- (8.55) Ø-jwē: shī **fɛ-kū**  
 c1-husband sit c16-down  
*‘The husband sat down.’* Jealous Husband.8

- (8.56) bā shī-shē **fɛ-kū**  
 they sit-CAUS c16-down  
*‘...they put [the oil] down.’* Making Palm Oil.1.9

- (8.57) mē ŋ-gē yēn-é bà-mì lē **fɛ-kū**  
 1SG.PRO 1SG-P3 see-PROG c2-person APPL c16-down  
*‘I was seeing people on the earth...’* Training.1.16

Example (8.58) shows that multiple locational adverbs can occur in the same clause, although this is the only such example in the data corpus.

- (8.58) gɛ fy-ē: fī-mī jùmè yú  
 NEG2 c19-thing c19-some COP(N) on.it  
 fí ghàg-ē bvù-gù **fɛnē** **fɛ-kū** gè  
 c19REL surpass-PROG c14-marriage here c16-down NEG2  
*‘...there is nothing greater than marriage here on earth.’* Marriage.3.1

## 8.7 Temporal adverbial constructions

Several different types of structures are used in expressing temporal information in Nchane sentences, ranging from simple nouns or adverbs to noun phrases with modifying relative clauses. Simple nouns and adverbs, serving as time adverbials are common in natural speech, where they usually appear in sentence-initial position. The time adverbials in the text data are primarily more complex structures. Some of these structures are presented below, with the temporal adverbial structure bolded.

Time adverbials often consist of a noun phrase with a time word like **kilūŋ** ‘year’ as the head, as in (8.59) and (8.60).

- (8.59) **kī-lūŋ** **kí-mí** gè bé Ø-jwènsè wū-mū bé  
 c7-year c7-some P3 <sup>P</sup>COP c1-man c1-some with  
 Ø-kwê: wú-mū bō kōŋ-ē yé bá:ŋ  
 c1-woman.3SG.POSS c1-some 3PL.REL love-PROG c10.body much  
*'A certain year (ago), there was a man and wife who loved each other very much.'*  
 Jealous Husband.1.1

- (8.60) **bī-lūŋ** **bí-dùlē** **jīŋ**,  
 c8-year c8-many back  
 bì-ǻ gē lī: jīshyáŋ yì bì-ŋkājī lē  
 c2-X P3 enter c9.land c9AM c2-N. APPL  
*'Many years ago, the X people trespassed (lit. entered) Nkanchi territory.'*  
 Land Dispute.1.2

The time adverbial can also take the form of a prepositional phrase. In these constructions, the applicative postposition, which usually appears in prepositional phrases, is not present.

- (8.61) **à** **bwú** **bw-ē:**, bè gē jā,  
 in c14 c14-ANA1 1PL P3 leave  
 bè bèn-è fē-wé fē Ø-jò lē  
 1PL ascend-PROG c16-up at c1-god APPL  
*'On that one (day), we left, climbing toward heaven.'* Training.1.13

The time adverbial in (8.62) appears to be a lexicalized clausal construction, consisting of **bwū-chū yú** 'c14-day kill'.<sup>60</sup>

- (8.62) **bwūchūyū:**, n-jò bī-gè by-ē:, n-lē ŋ-gè yē  
 next.morning 1SG-take c8-teeth c8-ANA1 1SG-enter 1SG-put c9.house  
*'The next morning, I took that money (lit. teeth) and put it in my house.'*  
 Fire.1.4-5

<sup>60</sup> The root for 'day' has an unclear analysis, since its use as a time reference is limited. The word for 'day' when counting or referring to a certain 'day' is **jú**, which also means 'sun'. It is possible that the root **chū** actually means something like 'dark' or 'darken', which could explain its assignment to the abstract noun class 14.

## Chapter 9

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### The verb and verb complex

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This chapter describes the formal characteristics of the Nchane verb and the verb complex. Verbal morphology is presented in §9.1, followed by a discussion of the grammatical high tone clitic in §9.2. This high tone clitic is associated with Imperative and Hortative constructions, as well as several of the preverbal elements of the verb complex, which are treated in §9.3. A group of postverbal particles, which I treat as adverbs, is described in §9.4. Section 9.5 deals with a small group of words that function similarly to the adverbs in §9.4, but which differ from them in terms of formal properties and are thus more difficult to categorize. The chapter ends with a presentation of attributive verbs in §9.6.

The term ‘auxiliary’ is conventionally used as a label for verbs and verb-like words that are used in a secondary fashion, adding grammatical information to the verbal expression, such as tense or aspect. I use the term in this work as a means of grouping together a set of words that occur in the preverbal position of the verb complex. While many of these words are clearly related to active main verbs, the sources for several of them have not been identified.

Below is a generalized schema of the verb complex, where SM refers to subject agreement.

[AUXILIARY SM-VERB-suffix ADVERB]<sub>VERB COMPLEX</sub>

First, it appears to be a reduced form derived from the unbound first-person singular pronoun **mē**, which is glossed as ‘1SG.PRO’ to differentiate it from the



reduced, subject agreement form ‘1SG’. In contrast, the other agreement forms appear to be unreduced, being segmentally identical to their pronominal counterparts, such as postverbal pronouns and relativizers.

Second, first-person singular subject agreement is phonologically bound to the main verb and verb auxiliaries, while the other subject agreement forms are unbound.

Third, they have a wider distribution than other subject agreement markers, usually occurring on the first verbal element of the verb complex, even when a full subject pronoun is present. The contrastive behavior is illustrated in (9.3), which has a first-person singular unbound pronoun and subject agreement, and (9.4), which has only a third-person singular unbound pronoun preceding the main verb and no subject agreement.

- (9.3)      mē          ĩ̃-gē:      à      mǎŋ-kàlà          mā-ā          lē  
              1SG.PRO   1SG-put   in   c6a-cassava.puff   c6a-ANA1   APPL  
              ‘...I put [the poison] in the cassava puff.’                      What-goes-around.9.14

- (9.4)      wù      gē      à      Ø-ŋkà:      lē  
              3SG   put   in   c1-basket   APPL  
              ‘...she put [the fufu] in a basket.’                                      Jealous Husband.3.1

This wider distribution pattern extends to constructions with the P3 marker (see example (9.15)), with the homorganic nasal prefixing both the P3 marker and the main verb that follows. As will be pointed out in §9.3.1, the P3 marker is usually not followed by subject agreement marking other than first-person singular subjects.

The first-person singular subject agreement prefix might be considered a clitic. In fact, a similar homorganic subject marker is treated as such in nearby Mundabli (Voll 2017: 56–7). Its reduced form and the fact that it has word-like functions but phonological characteristics of an affix are consistent with the description of clitics given by Spencer and Luís (2012). Additional support for this analysis would seem to be its inclusion in a subject agreement system where all the other members are unbound forms. However, the prefix analysis is maintained, given that it is supported by the syntax, with the homorganic nasal occurring multiple times, marking agreement on verbs and auxiliary verbs.

A final comment to be made regarding subject agreement has to do with the numerous iterations of subject marking in Nchane clauses. It seems that most verbal elements, including auxiliaries which express tense and aspect, as well as the main verb, must be preceded by a subject element. Multiple subject marking such as this can be referred to as “Hyperagreement” (see for example Carstens 2011).

As stated above, subject agreement forms other than first person singular for Nchane are segmentally identical to pronominal forms.<sup>61</sup> Therefore, sentences which contain a single lexical verb and one or more auxiliaries are syntactically similar if not identical to those which contain multiple lexical verbs such as conjoined clauses and serial verb constructions. Consequently, for the most part, the current analysis makes no distinction between “subject pronouns” and “subject agreement markers”.

### 9.1.2 Progressive

Non-progressive/Progressive is the primary aspectual distinction made in Nchane, with all main verbs expressing one of these aspects. Non-progressive aspect is perfective in nature and has zero marking, as in example (9.5). Progressive aspect is an imperfective aspect and expresses an action that is in process. It is indicated by the suffix *-é*, as illustrated in example (9.6). Note that the nasal vowel of the verb in (9.5) is realized as VN when the verb is marked with the progressive suffix as in (9.6).

- (9.5)      wù    kɛ̃:    bvũ-lɛ̃:  
              3SG   stir   c14-food  
              ‘*She cooked (by stirring) food.*’ (just now)

- (9.6)      wù    kɛ̃n-é    bvũ-lɛ̃:  
              3SG   stir-PROG   c14-food  
              ‘*She is cooking (or stirring) food.*’

The high tone of the Progressive suffix is realized as a low tone whenever certain high-toned grammatical elements precede it in the clause, as demonstrated in example (9.7). See §9.2 for a discussion of this phenomenon.

- (9.7)      ɲjì    lé    wú    fɔ̃:s-è    bĩ-gɛ̃  
              N.   COP   3SG.FUT   borrow-PROG   c8-teeth  
              ‘*Nji will be borrowing money.*’ (lit. *teeth*)

There are three different realizations of the Progressive suffix, depending on the syllable shape of the verb. Verbs with the syllable shapes CV and CVN (which are phonemically the same) take the suffix *-é*, as shown above. The suffix is realized through vowel ablaut in verbs with CVCV shape. These verbs almost exhaustively

<sup>61</sup> Segmentally distinct subject agreement forms for 2SG (*ā*) and 2PL (*mē*) were initially identified in two separate texts. Subsequently, these forms were rejected by language consultants, who replaced them with the pronominal-like forms (*wɔ̃* and *bēŋ* respectively). It is probable that these distinct agreement markers represent older forms that have largely fallen into disuse.

In these cases, I assume that a suppressed C<sub>2</sub> is realized, revealing an older form of the verb stem. Support for this hypothesis is found in the verb **bífé** ‘ask’ from

the neighboring Noni language, whose progressive form is **bi:te**. Compare these forms with **bi:** and **bídě**, the Nchane forms of the same verb.<sup>62</sup> The crucial element in the comparison is the CVCV shape of the non-progressive form of the Noni verb, suggesting that the protoform likely had a second consonant in the non-progressive form. The result of this alternative Progressive marking strategy for CV verbs is that it is often unpredictable what the surface form of the progressive verb form will take based on the perfective form of a verb.

Table 9.2 gives examples of verbs in their non-progressive and progressive forms, organized by tone group. The Non-progressive forms are given in their utterance-final form, which often results in the tone of H and M verbs being realized with a falling contour. In sentence internal context, these verbs are usually realized as level H or M tones respectively, although the contour tone of disyllabic M nouns is usually maintained in this context as well.

| Tone group | Non-progressive | Progressive | Gloss          |
|------------|-----------------|-------------|----------------|
| H          | bî:             | bídě        | <i>ask</i>     |
|            | kô:             | kó:lě       | <i>catch</i>   |
|            | bín̩            | bíně        | <i>dance</i>   |
|            | tón̩            | tóně        | <i>fry</i>     |
|            | tén̩            | téně        | <i>call</i>    |
|            | kémè            | kémě        | <i>have</i>    |
|            | kwé             | kwé:        | <i>die</i>     |
|            | yú              | yú:         | <i>kill</i>    |
|            | ná              | ná:         | <i>give</i>    |
| M          | bō              | bōgé        | <i>descend</i> |
|            | chū             | chūlé       | <i>ignite</i>  |
|            | fwē:            | fwē:dé      | <i>burn</i>    |
|            | kē:             | kē:né       | <i>stir</i>    |
|            | yā̃             | yā̃né       | <i>vomit</i>   |
|            | sū̃             | sū̃né       | <i>beat</i>    |
|            | lē̃             | lē̃né       | <i>work</i>    |
|            | jī̃             | jī̃né       | <i>look</i>    |
| L          | bì              | bí:         | <i>follow</i>  |
|            | jù              | jú:         | <i>fight</i>   |

Table 9.2 Utterance final perfective and progressive forms of selected verbs.

The data shows possible complementary distribution between the M and L groups, with M verbs having CVC-V progressive forms and L verbs CV-V. More research

<sup>62</sup> Note that Noni is observed to have a **fɛ~te** alternation for a small number of verbs having the shape **CVfɛ** (see Hyman (1981: 47)). No attempt is made to explain the role of the consonants in this alternation.

would be needed to verify that these results are not an artifact of the limited number of L verbs in the data.

Note that speakers sometimes perceive the  $V_1$  in progressive forms with CVC-V realizations as long, even though the duration is usually of “normal” short length or what might be described as half-long. I have chosen not to represent this perceived length in the examples. Also note that the H of the progressive is usually realized as SH when the progressive form has a CVC-V shape and the verb is a H verb. I suggest that the Progressive H is realized as SH in this context in order to maintain contrast in the tonal environment.

There are numerous exceptions to the generalized presentation of Progressive marking presented in this section. For example, in Table 9.2 we see that the progressive form for the H verb **t́** ‘come’ does not have a surface H tone as we expect. The verb otherwise appears to behave as a H tone verb. No satisfactory explanation is available. In addition, the verb **kwé** ‘die’ appears to have the same form for Non-progressive and Progressive. One possible explanation for this is that the CGV shape is less open to vowel copying, but this is unconfirmed. Another possible explanation for unexpected Progressive forms is competing strategies, as is observed for some verbs. For example, the verb **jù** ‘fight’ has two alternate progressive forms, **jú:** and **jùdé**. And as mentioned above, some speakers perceive vowel length when others apparently do not.

### 9.1.3 Distributive

Another verb suffix is the Distributive **-yè**, illustrated by the elicited paradigms in (9.11) and (9.12), which give the non-suffixed form for comparison. The meaning added by the suffix is usually either “one-after-another” or “successive times”, with the context helping the hearer to arrive at a proper interpretation. These examples also demonstrate that the distributive suffix fuses with Progressive marking, resulting in the form **-yí**.

- (9.11) a. *tádà gē sē: Ø-bīlīkán*  
T. P3 cut c1-papaya

*‘Tada cut the papaya (once).’*

- b. *tádà gē sē:-yè Ø-bīlīkán*  
T. P3 cut-DISTR c1-papaya

*‘Tada cut the papaya (into pieces).’*

- c. *tádà gē sē:-yí Ø-bīlīkán*  
T. P3 cut-DISTR.PROG c1-papaya

*‘Tada was cutting the papaya (into pieces).’*

- (9.12) a.  $j\bar{a}\eta$        $g\bar{e}$      $ch\bar{e}:\eta$   
           c9.rain    P3    drop

*'The rain dripped (one drop).'*

- b.  $j\bar{a}\eta$        $ch\bar{e}:\eta-y\acute{i}$        $l\bar{a}$   
           c9.rain    drop-DISTR.PROG    FOC

*'The rain is dripping.'*

This suffix is not very common in the data corpus and elicitation efforts reveal that the extension is not productive, with only a small number of verbs identified which can take it. Examples (9.13) and (9.14) come from the text corpus and reveal that slightly different interpretations of distributive action are possible through **-yē**. My language consultants informed me that the sentence in (9.13) is interpreted as successive actions. The sentence would still be grammatical without DISTR, but the extension apparently brings focus to the act of dying of each individual child, following their ingestion of poison.<sup>63</sup>

- (9.13)  $b\bar{a}:$        $b\bar{a}-\bar{a}$        $g\bar{e}$      $kw\bar{e}-y\bar{e}$      $b\bar{a}-ch\bar{i}$   
           c2.child    c2-ANA1    P3    die-DISTR    c2-all

*'...all those children died (one after another).'*    What-goes-around.10.1

A slightly different interpretation is called for in example (9.14), where the Distributive functions in describing the use of rat poison. The “medicine” is presumably commonly used by many individuals to kill many rats.

- (9.14)  $j\bar{a}ch\bar{e}$ ,       $y\bar{i}$        $b\bar{a}$      $y\acute{u}-y\acute{i}$        $b\bar{i}-kf\bar{u}n\bar{e}$      $y\acute{u}$   
           c9.medicine    c9REL    they    kill-DISTR.PROG    c8-rat    on.it

*'...medicine, that they are killing rats with...'*    What-goes-around.9.14

<sup>63</sup> Noni (Hyman 1981: 36) and Mungong (Boutwell 2014b: 31–2) are both observed to also have a distributive extension, the forms being **-yē** and **-shə** respectively. In both of these Beboid languages, they are reported to express pluractionality, with either multiple agents carrying out an action or with one agent carrying out an action multiple times. In addition, in both languages a secondary sense of the extension is completeness, where the action is repeated to the point where the action cannot be carried out again (e.g., completely cutting something up). This sense is unconfirmed for the Nchane Distributive. In neither Noni or Mungong is successive action observed as a part of the extension's semantics.

Disyllabic verbs taking the extension have not been observed. Therefore, it is unknown how the Distributive and Progressive suffixes would behave in such a context.

#### 9.1.4 Causative

The status of **-sɛ**, the Causative suffix, in Nchane is tenuous. A few nearby languages have been documented as having an active Causative extension. These include Limbum (Fransen 1995: 205) and fellow Beoid language Noni (Hyman 1981: 38), although these descriptions are from 20-30 years ago, and it is possible that the suffix is no longer active in these languages. Recent works in the nearby Yemne-Kimbi languages do not observe an active Causative suffix. Aghem was observed to have a decaying Causative (Anderson 1979: 81). The Causative in Nchane is likely in a similar state, evidenced primarily in a number of lexicalized forms given in Table 9.3, which also includes potential candidates for the original source of the stems when possible.

The variable tone observed on the grammaticalized suffixes in the table has several possible explanations. Some of these word forms might not really have a historical Causative suffix, although the semantics of most is suggestive of a such an analysis. Another possible explanation is that the variable tone represents different degrees of lexicalization. As will be shown below, the active suffix itself does not present with a consistent suffixal tone. Therefore, it is not possible to confidently posit a tone for the current Causative suffix or its previous form.

A small number of causative verbs in Table 9.3 present with word-final **she** rather than **sɛ**. These words might represent cases of Distributive-Causative fusing, similar to what is observed with co-occurrences of Distributive and Progressive marking (see §9.1.3), but involving lenition of the Causative consonant and no change to the vowel. Such a hypothesis seems appropriate in view of the semantics of some of these derived forms. For example, the causative verb “spill” could be interpreted as multiple instances of “pour”.

| Stem             | Gloss   | Causative form | Gloss                 |
|------------------|---------|----------------|-----------------------|
| --               | --      | bāṅsè          | 'stumble'             |
| --               | --      | bōnsé          | 'groan'               |
| bīṅ              | 'dance' | bēṅsé          | 'roll'                |
| bú               | 'exit'  | būsē           | 'remove'              |
| dáṅ              | 'jump'  | dāṅsé          | 'spread' (e.g., fire) |
| --               | --      | jēsē           | 'praise'              |
| jí               | 'curse' | jīsè           | 'annoy'               |
| fē               | 'pass'  | fēsé           | 'arrive'              |
| --               | --      | fyēṅsē         | 'resemble'            |
| --               | --      | fínsé          | 'mix'                 |
| --               | --      | físé           | 'twist'               |
| --               | --      | fōsè           | 'borrow'              |
| fū               | 'pour'  | fūshē          | 'spill'               |
| --               | --      | gōsē           | 'grind'               |
| gū <sup>64</sup> | 'buy'   | gīsē           | 'sell'                |
| yē               | 'see'   | yēsè           | 'uncover'             |
| --               | --      | yísé           | 'fill'                |
| ká               | ITER    | kásè           | 'return'              |
| --               | --      | kōṅsé          | 'awaken'              |
| --               | --      | kōsē           | 'barter'              |
| --               | --      | kūsē           | 'alter'               |
| lē               | 'hurt'  | lāṅsè          | 'wound'               |
| --               | --      | lēsé           | 'disappear'           |
| lé               | 'enter' | lésé           | 'dress'               |
| --               | --      | māsè           | 'admire'              |
| --               | --      | mēsé           | 'complete'            |
| shī              | 'sit'   | shīshé         | 'lower'               |
| --               | --      | tāshē          | 'add, join'           |
| --               | --      | chīṅsé         | 'send'                |

Table 9.3 Possible lexicalized Nchane causatives.

As eluded to above, while the Causative does not appear to be a productive verbal extension in Nchane, there are two clear examples of a Causative suffix in the text corpus, given in (9.15) and (9.16). In these cases, the Causative allows for the verb to take an Object complement.<sup>65</sup>

<sup>64</sup> This verb is realized utterance finally with a falling L tone.

<sup>65</sup> In example (9.15), the Object "airplane" is inferable and, therefore, omitted as described in §11.1.1.



- (9.15) lē bē gē tú j'ēŋ n̄fúmè, mē ŋ-gē n-dū  
 SET 1PL P3 return back N. 1SG.PRO 1SG-P3 1SG-say

Ø-mū wú gè chid-é lé lē, wú fē  
 c1-person c1REL P3 pull-PROG APPL COMP 3SG.HORT make

Ø-àfyôŋ wú bō-sé fè-kū: (f)è-kū:  
 c1-airplane 3SG.HORT descend-CAUS c16-ground c16-ground

lē mē j̄-yēsē bō: b-àŋ lē fē-mēnē  
 COMP 1SG.PRO 1SG-greet c2.child c2-1SG.POSS APPL c16-garden

*'As we were coming back from Nfume, I said to the pilot that he should reduce the height so that I could greet my children at the farm.'*

Training.1.17

- (9.16) bā gē: jō: yí jē: yō, kì yī  
 they put c9.water c9REL cold inside COMP(K) c9

jē-sē m̄-mē:  
 cool-CAUS c6a-oil

*'...they add cold water to cool the oil.'*

Making Palm Oil.1.10

Note that example (9.15) is somewhat remarkable as, in addition to the Causative extension, it utilizes the verb **fē** 'make', which is how causative constructions are routinely formed, which is illustrated in (9.17).

- (9.17) Ø-sōŋō fí-í kì chī fē: jàŋ tó  
 c5-oil.palm help-PROG COMP(K) c5 make c9.rain come

*'Palm trees help to make the rain come.'*

King of Trees.1.7

## 9.2 The Irrealis/Imperfective H tone

As observed in §9.1.2, the high tone associated with the Progressive suffix is usually unrealized on that suffix whenever it is preceded by certain high-toned elements. This phenomenon is restricted to specific grammatical markers and/or constructions, such that it is better explained as a result of a grammatical high tone clitic rather than a tonological process.

Irrealis as a grammaticalized category is not widely reported among the languages of the area (although it is observed for nearby Mungbam (Lovegren 2013: 188) where it is argued for based on the tonal behavior of certain conjugations). Nevertheless, this high tone clitic can be described as expressing something

approaching Irrealis mood, while also characterizing Imperfective constructions. The relationship between Irrealis and Imperfective is perhaps derived from both categories expressing incomplete, and therefore unrealized, predications. A connection between the two is recognized in other languages (see for example Fleischman 1995), and appears to be dictated by the facts of Nchane grammar, which are presented below.

To illustrate the behavior of this grammatical tone, a paradigm is presented in Table 9.4 consisting of five different conjugations of verbs from each of the tone groups (H, M and L). The morpheme on which the grammatical H tone is realized is bolded for illustration purposes. The P0 forms serve as a base for comparison. With each verb, the Progressive suffix of the indicative Progressive forms have a high tone. The high tone is realized on the verb in the Imperative conjugation.<sup>66</sup> The subject element to the left of the verb is realized with the high tone to indicate Hortative mood. In Hortative-Progressive conjugations, the subject is again realized with the high tone, but the Progressive suffix has a low tone.<sup>67</sup>

| Example              | Free translation                        |             | Verb form |
|----------------------|---|-------------|-----------|
| jí (H verb)          |   | <i>eat</i>  |           |
| wō jí fĩ-mbì         | <i>You ate a kola nut.</i>              |             | P0        |
| wō jí-í fĩ-mbì       | <i>You are eating a kola nut.</i>       |             | PROG      |
| wō <b>↑jí</b> fĩ-mbì | <i>Eat a kola nut!</i>                  |             | IMP       |
| wó jí fĩ-mbì         | <i>You should eat a kola nut.</i>       |             | HORT      |
| wó jì-ì fĩ-mbì       | <i>You should be eating a kola nut.</i> |             | HORT-PROG |
| kēmè (M verb)        |   | <i>have</i> |           |
| wō kēmè bĩ-gê        | <i>You had money.</i>                   |             | P0        |
| wō kēm-é bĩ-gê       | <i>You are having money.</i>            |             | PROG      |
| wō <b>kēmé</b> bĩ-gê | <i>Have money!</i>                      |             | IMP       |
| wó kēmè bĩ-gê        | <i>*You should have money.</i>          |             | HORT      |
| wó kēm-è bĩ-gê       | <i>You should be having money.</i>      |             | HORT-PROG |
| gù (L verb)          |   | <i>buy</i>  |           |
| wō gù fĩ-mbì         | <i>You bought a kola nut.</i>           |             | P0        |
| wō gūd-é fĩ-mbì      | <i>You are buying a kola nut.</i>       |             | PROG      |
| wō <b>gú:</b> fĩ-mbì | <i>Buy a kola nut!</i>                  |             | IMP       |
| wó gū fĩ-mbì         | <i>You should buy a kola nut.</i>       |             | HORT      |
| wó gūd-è fĩ-mbì      | <i>You should be buying a kola nut.</i> |             | HORT-PROG |

Table 9.4 Realization of grammatical tone in H, M and L tone verbs in clauses with expressions of modality.

<sup>66</sup> The ↑ symbol on the Imperative H verb indicates that the register is raised in order to accommodate the H Imperative marking on a lexically H verb.

<sup>67</sup> The non-progressive hortative form for ‘have’ is ungrammatical, presumably due to a semantic constraint.

This paradigm is representative of how the grammatical high tone behaves in various constructions in which a verb with a Progressive suffix is realized with low tone rather than a high tone. The markers and constructions displaying this behavior, and therefore believed to be associated with the grammatical H, are Future, Hortative, Habitual, Durative, Situative, Still, and Iterative. Other constructions which likely involve this high tone clitic are Imperative and Conditional.<sup>68</sup> Furthermore, sentences with multiple Progressive verbs show that only the Progressive suffix of the first verb is realized with a high tone, while the remaining verbs have a low tone on the suffix, as illustrated in (9.18).

- (9.18)    b́ó    gē    lán-é,            b́ó    yén-è    bà-ḡkě,  
              3PL   P3   rejoice-PROG   3PL   sing-PROG   c2-song
- b́ó    bín-è            Ø-bíně  
              3PL   dance-PROG   c5-dance

*'They were rejoicing, singing and dancing.'*<sup>69</sup>

Lake.5.3

The reader is encouraged to be mindful of the grammatical H tone clitic and its association with the various markers listed above, most of which are presented in §9.2. No generalized glossing is used for indicating the H clitic, since this would not be very helpful in indicating the specific functions of each marker or construction type. Instead, glossing is provided for individual moods and aspects. The remainder of this section describes Imperative constructions and Hortative constructions, both of which are expressed through the grammatical H tone by itself, without segmental marking.

### 9.2.1 Imperative

Commands are formed by a H tone placed on the verb, as in (9.19) and (9.20). The underlying form of the verb in (9.19) is **j̄** and that for the verb in (9.20) is **chūgē**. As mentioned above, if the verb is disyllabic, then the H tone associates with both syllables of some verbs, but only with the ultimate syllable of other verbs, as is the case in (9.20). No explanation for this variation is available. Another unexplained peculiarity is that the vowel of some monosyllabic verbs lengthens in the Imperative

<sup>68</sup> The Progressive suffix in conditional constructions are sometimes observed with a low tone. But other times it appears that the conditional high tone is realized at the clause level, with various elements of the clause having a high tone and/or a higher tonal register. In the few instances of this in the data corpus, the tone on the Progressive suffix is sometimes high as well. See §13.2.4 for a description of Conditional constructions.

<sup>69</sup> The clause **b́ó bínè bíně** illustrates the occurrence of a cognate deverbal noun object, which has been argued as evidence in other languages that there are no true intransitive verbs. However, it is more likely for Nchane that a number of verbs which are often intransitive in English, like 'dance' and 'sing', are usually or even strictly transitive. There are plenty of Nchane verbs which present as intransitive (e.g., 'cry', 'sleep' 'die' and 'breathe').

form. One possible explanation for this lengthening is that these verbs were formerly disyllabic.

- (9.19)      j́ó:            mw-ē:            mw-əŋ            mū-chī  
take.IMP   c18a-thing   c18a-2SG.POSS   c18a-all
- 'Take all your things...'*
- Two Wives.7.2
- (9.20)      chūgé          chyâ:  
wash.IMP   c10.hand
- 'Wash (your) hands.'*
- Jealous Husband.9

While the examples above have no preverbal nominal element, it is not uncommon for commands to have a second-person pronoun preceding the verb, as illustrated in (9.21), which has the ML verb **kā**:

- (9.21)      w̄s      kó:      ńgǫ  
              2SG      catch.IMP      c10.termite  
              ‘You, catch termites.’

Despite the free translation, this does not appear to be a vocative imperative expression, since there is usually no pause between the pronoun and the verb. One also can see that the tone realized on this nominal element is the same as that for typical preverbal pronouns. More study is needed to determine what motivates the presence or absence of the pronoun, and what difference, if any, exists between the two imperative varieties.

### 9.2.2 Hortative

Expressions of the speaker's desire and/or obligation are accomplished through the addition of a high tone clitic that associates with the subject element to the left of the verb. This is illustrated in examples (9.22)-(9.24), with the element associated with the high tone clitic bolded. In (9.22), the high tone is realized on the normally mid-toned 2SG pronoun.

- (9.22)      wǒ              bī              wù              lē  
                  2SG.HORT   follow   3SG   APPL  
                  ‘You should follow him.’

Examples (9.23) and (9.24) show that the Hortative H tone is realized as a SH tone when the subject element is lexically H, represented in these examples by the nouns **chíjì** and **kwēsé** respectively. The realization of the SH on the predicate

adjective element in example (9.24) is somewhat unexpected and I have no good explanation for this occurrence. Note further the SH tone realized on the class 1 relativizer, which is underlyingly M or H.

- (9.23) lē Ø-chǐjī bó tó chège  
 COMP c1-father.HORT c1.3PL.POSS come quickly  
*'[she said] that their father should come quickly...'*  
 What-goes-around.9.4

- (9.24) wō wǔ Ø-kwēsě ká lē  
 2SG c1REL c1-woman.HORT promise COMP  
*'You the girl should promise that...'*  
 Marriage.5.4

Example (9.25) shows that the H tone clitic occurs on the subject pronoun as well as the subject agreement marker, with the Resultative marker **mō** intervening. It also shows that the H tone associated with Progressive aspect is changed to a L tone when the clause is marked with Hortative H tone. This alternation apparently has no effect on the Hortative H tone realized on the subject. This alternation is further illustrated in examples (9.26) and (9.27).

- (9.25) wú mō wú bì-ì tādà lē  
 3SG.HORT RES 3SG follow-PROG T. APPL  
*'He should just be following Tada.'*

- (9.26) wó bì-ì wù lē  
 2SG.HORT follow-PROG 3SG APPL  
*'You should be following him.'*

- (9.27) bēŋ gè-è lē kī-ŋ-kòŋē  
 2PL.HORT do-PROG COMP c7-NMZR-want  
*'You should be showing love...' (lit. you should be doing so that love)*  
 Marriage.7

### 9.3 Preverbal elements

The verb complex includes a position to the left of the main verb. This “slot” may be occupied by one of several words, each dealing in some way with the temporal situation of the predication. These include tense markers and aspectual markers, each of which are discussed in the sections below. As mentioned in §9.1.1, subject

agreement is usually observed between the various auxiliaries and the main verb. Exceptions are noted in the relevant sections below.

### 9.3.1 Tense

Non-future tense expression is accomplished through various tense particles, or auxiliary verbs, which precede the main verb. Future tense is realized as a high tone clitic as well as a copula. Table 9.5 presents a frame to illustrate the tenses, where the main verb is given in its non-progressive form. The same paradigm is possible using a progressive verb, with the tense elements identical in both cases.

| Tense | Example                  |     |     |         | Time Frame               |                            |
|-------|--------------------------|-----|-----|---------|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| P0    | wù                       |     | jí  | bvũ-lê: | just now or not specific |                            |
| P1    | wù                       | bé  | wũ  | jí      | bvũ-lê:                  | some hours ago             |
| P2    | wù                       | ché | wũ  | jí      | bvũ-lê:                  | yesterday or some days ago |
| P3    | wù                       | gē  |     | jí      | bvũ-lê:                  | more than several days ago |
| FUT   | wù                       | lé  | wú  | jí      | bvũ-lê:                  | sometime in future         |
|       | 3SG                      |     | 3SG | eat     | c14-food                 |                            |
|       | 'She ate/will eat food.' |     |     |         |                          |                            |

Table 9.5 Paradigm of Nchane tenses.

The concept of “time frame” as presented in this description should be understood as a general indication of the time reference. However, the various tenses may be used according to the given context to communicate relative proximity of time of occurrence between two separate events. For example, stories are often situated in the past using P3, with references to earlier events within the context of the story utilizing P1, even though the actual time difference between the two events is more than “several hours”. See examples (9.32) and (9.33) below for illustrations of relative time reference.

The description presented here does not attempt to elucidate the finer details of the system, but recognizes that, in many cases, Nchane tense does not simply reflect a linear measurement of time. In some cases, it can be viewed as an interplay between time and remoteness, with remoteness characterized not only in terms of linear time, but also degree of certainty or other expressions of pragmatic concerns. The reader is encouraged to consider the findings of Botne and Kershner (2008), who detail some of these extra-temporal uses of tense in several Bantu languages.

Note that present tense is not a part of the Nchane tense system. Present events or states are commonly expressed through the use of Progressive aspect or, in some cases, through the use of the copula *lé*, although clauses involving the copula can have an immediate past reading in certain contexts.

The bare form of the verb (usually interpretable as P0) is often interpreted as expressing immediate past tense, or generic past tense, where the specific time of the

event is either unknown or unimportant. This tense is illustrated in examples (9.28) and (9.29).

- (9.28)    bē    yú    Ø-nā:  
           1PL   kill   c1-cow  
           *'We killed the cow.'* (just now or recently)

- (9.29)    wū    kèn    bvū-lē:  
           3SG   cook   c14-food  
           *'She cooked food.'* (sometime in the past)

In longer strings of discourse, the tense, usually P3, is often established in the initial sentence or in the setting section, with P0 utilized in the following clauses. (See also the description preceding example (9.40) for more discussion of this point.)

Events that occurred between several minutes and several hours ago are indicated through the particle **bé** (P1), which is possibly related to the verb **bí** 'to follow'. This tense is illustrated in examples (9.30) and (9.31).

- (9.30)    kībó    **bé**    wū    bèn    fwē  
           K.    P1    3SG   ascend   front  
           *'Kibbo went ahead.'*

- (9.31)    bē    **bé**    bē    bòn    bì-nfùnè  
           1PL   P1    1PL   plant   c8-corn  
           *'We planted corn.'*

In stories, P1 is often used in background events or in quoted speech, as in (9.32) and (9.33) respectively. In both cases, its use indicates that the speaker considers the predication with P1 to have taken place only a short while before the events in the mainline of the story and reflecting relative rather than linear temporal distance. In other words, the actual time difference between events might be more than several hours. Note that example (9.33) comes from a third-person narrative text about a husband and wife. In this sentence, the husband is telling his friends about the events that occurred earlier in the text.

- (9.32) b́ó kwě̀è b́ó gē: b́ó fésè fē-b́ó-kfúŋ, nū  
 3PL be.home 3PL go 3PL arrive c16-3PL-home COP(N)

b́ó: bá Ø-kwésě wē-è wū **bé** nā  
 c2.child c2AM c1-woman c1-ANA1 c1REL P1 give

kì-nfè: kē-è m̀an-kàlà mā-ā  
 c7-blind.man c7-ANA1 c6a-cassava.puff c6a-ANA1

*'They went and arrived at their home, being the children of that woman who gave that blindman those cassava puffs.'*

What-goes-around.8.2

- (9.33) bēsá Ø-kwā: bē **bé** làd-é, wū nù  
 1PL c1-wife.1SG.POSS 1PL P1 go.goal-PROG 3SG COP(N)

tú-ú bvū-lē: nōnō  
 carry-PROG c14-food empty

*“I and my wife were going (to the farm to do work) and she CARRIED FUFU WITHOUT SOUP.”*

Jealous Husband.19.1

Events that occurred approximately one to three days ago are indicated by the particle **ché** (P2), as seen in examples (9.34) and (9.35). It possibly comes from the verb **ché** ‘stay’.<sup>70</sup>

- (9.34) chílá **ché** wū gù nàŋ  
 Ch. P2 3SG buy c9.meat

*‘Chila bought meat.’ (e.g., yesterday)*

- (9.35) jàŋ **ché** yī tō  
 c9.rain P2 c9 come

*‘The rain came.’ (a few days ago)*

This tense is found in the text corpus only once, with the example given in (9.36). It follows example (9.32) in the text by several sentences and distinguishes this event (the woman coming and deceiving) from the P1 event (the mother giving the poisoned cassava puffs to the blind man).

<sup>70</sup> The gloss of this verb is perhaps insufficient, since it usually expresses the notion of residing or staying overnight at a location.



- (9.36) Ø-kwēsé wé-é chfú lē, b̄: bā-nē dú lē,  
c1-woman c1-ANA1 reply COMP c2.child c2-PROX say COMP

b̄ lé b̄ jí m̄n-kàlà mà  
3PL COP 3PL eat c6a-cassava.puff c6aREL

Ø-kwēsé wú-mù **chí** t̄ wú lé: b̄ m̄  
c1-woman c1-some P2 come c1REL deceive with 1SG.PRO

*'The woman answered that "These children are saying that they ate cassava puffs, which a certain woman came who deceived me ..."'*

What-goes-around.9.13

Events that occurred four days or more ago are indicated by the marker **gē** (P3) as in (9.37)-(9.39). It is not known if this form is related to an active verb. But one possibility is that it comes from the verb **gē** 'put', that has the alternative forms **gē:** and **ḡ**. Another candidate is the verb **ḡ:** 'go'. This tense is distinct from P1 and P2 in that there is no subject agreement marker preceding the main verb (or any auxiliary verb that might follow). First person singular is an exception to this generality, with subject agreement almost always occurring in this case, as illustrated in (9.39). This reduced agreement marking suggests that the P3 marker has undergone greater grammaticalization than the other past tense markers.

- (9.37) b̄ **gē** jí Ø-bèlèk̄n̄  
1PL P3 eat c1-papaya

*'We ate a papaya.' (e.g., last week)*

- (9.38) bā-mī bā j̄chānī **ḡ** t̄ w̄n̄ wū  
c2-person c2AM N. P3 come c3.village c3AM

tíkālè lē  
T. APPL

*'The Nchane people came (a long time ago) from the Tikari tribe.'*

History.1.1

- (9.39) m̄ **gē** j̄-jā ŋ-ḡ: Ø-j̄-j̄n̄  
1SG.PRO P3 1SG-leave 1SG-go c1-NMZR-walk

*'I left and went on a journey...'*

Fire.1.2

The P3 tense can be described as the narrative past and is used extensively in story-telling. In some texts, P3 is used liberally throughout the text. But more often, P3 is used only in the introduction with little or no tense marking in the rest of the text. Example (9.40) comes from a text where P3 occurs twice in the first sentence, with no tense marking throughout the remaining text until the final sentence.

- (9.40) Ø-jú ch'í fwí chì mē ŋ-gè ñ-lā  
 c5-day c5AM front c5REL 1SG.PRO 1SG-P3 1SG-go.goal
- byéŋ, ñsàŋ y-àŋ wú gè jō mē,  
 c10.fish c9.friend c9-1SG.POSS 3SG P3 take 1SG.PRO
- wù já mē Ø-ŋgwě  
 3SG give 1SG.PRO c1-fishing.pole

*'The first day that I went fishing (many years ago), my friend took me.  
 He gave me a fishing pole.'* Fishing.1.1-2

Examples (9.41) and (9.42) show that future events are indicated by the copula **lé** and a H tone clitic that docks on the subject agreement element occurring between the copula and the main verb. When the subject agreement is already carrying a H tone, the future H tone is usually realized as a SH (super high) tone, as illustrated in (9.42). See Chapter 10 for a detailed description of Nchane copulas and their various functions.

- (9.41) āŋkāŋ lé wú kásé  
 A. COP 3SG.FUT return
- 'Akang will return.'*
- (9.42) b́ó lé b́ǒ gù fī-mbì  
 3PL COP 3PL.FUT buy c19-kola.nut
- 'They will buy a kola nut.'*

The verb **bū** 'exit' in its progressive form is also sometimes used in near future expressions. As with future expressions involving the copula, a H tone clitic is present on the subject agreement element to the right, as illustrated in example (9.43).

- (9.43) ñjì būd-é wú sūŋ Ø-mwā  
 N. exit-PROG 3SG.FUT beat c1-child
- 'Nji will beat the child.'*

Example (9.46) is another illustration of the copula's function as a perfect marker. The completed "action" of women surpassing provides the context for the speaker's encouragement for husbands to stop being suspicious of their wives. In this case, the Perfect reading is reinforced by the co-occurrence of the postverbal adverb **wá** 'already' (see §9.4).

- (9.46) nē Ø-mù kēm-é Ø-kwē:, wū chínè mū-m-bíjē  
if c1-person have-PROG c1-wife 3SG abandon c18a-NMZR-suspect

lē, ñjē bī-késé lé bō ghà wā  
APPL reason c2-woman COP 3PL surpass already

*'If a man has a wife, he stops suspecting her a lot, because women are already wiser.'* (lit. ...women have already surpassed or conquered [us/me].)  
Jealous Husband.23

A past tense example of the copula's expression of perfect is given in (9.47). In this text about a house fire, the speaker states at the beginning that his house had burned down. Then he begins to describe the context leading up to the event. In this section, there is a series of sentences with the P3-COP sequence, each giving background information, setting the stage for when he discovered his house was burning. Note that the copula has two forms differentiating Past and non-Past tenses. See §10.1.1 for more details.

- (9.47) bē gē **bé** bē yú: bī-tādā  
1PL P3 <sup>P</sup>COP 1PL hear c8-shout

*'We had heard shouting.'*

Fire.1.15

### 9.3.3 Habitual

Habitual aspect is formed analytically through the use of the verb **tó** 'come' in the preverbal position, illustrated in examples (9.48) and (9.49). These examples show that both Progressive and non-Progressive verbs can be used in habitual expressions. The tone on the Habitual marker is realized as SH when preceding a H tone verb, irrespective of the intervening subject element. It can also be seen in these examples that the P3 auxiliary precedes the Habitual auxiliary, and there is no subject marking intervening, which is as expected with P3 tense constructions.

- (9.48) tādā gē tǒ wù bín-è bé bā-mī:  
T. P3 HAB 3SG dance-PROG with c2-person

*'Tada was always dancing with people.'*

- (9.49) tādā gē tǒ wù bíj bé bā-mī:  
T. P3 HAB 3SG dance with c2-person

*'Tada always danced with people.'*

The meaning of Habitual is further illustrated in examples (9.50)-(9.52), where the actions are regularly occurring. Example (9.50) is taken from a text

describing how palm oil is processed. In the procedure, the people always dry certain byproducts after the nuts have been pounded and washed. The Habitual in example (9.51) is used to describe the habitual activity of a certain woman. Example (9.52) shows the Habitual in a negative construction and with what appears to be a verb of cognition. In this case, the speaker is choosing to make a habit of NOT thinking in a certain way about his wife.

- (9.50)    *bā    tʃ    bā    ténè    chē                      b'é    Ø-gvúnē*  
              they   HAB   c2   dry   c10.palm.kernels   with   c5-chaff  
              *'They always dry the palm kernels and chaff.'*      Making Palm Oil.1.15

- (9.51)    *wù    b'é    légé    lò    à    Ø-kwēsé    wú-mù*  
              3SG   P1   beg   FOC   in   c1-woman   c1-certain  
  
              *lē,    wú    tʃ    wū    kāŋ-è    mǎŋ-kàlà*  
              APPL   c1REL   HAB   3SG   fry-PROG   c6a-cassava.puff  
              *'He asked for [cassava puff] from a certain woman who is always frying cassava puffs.'*      What-goes-around.9.10

- (9.52)    *jád-ē                      á-bèŋ    gēn-ē    fwé,    m̄-báj    gē*  
              leave-PROG   c18-day   go-PROG   front   1SG-still   NEG2  
  
              *n̄-tʃ                      m̄-bīŋè    Ø-kwā:                      gè*  
              1SG-HAB   1SG-suspect   c1-wife.1SG.POSS   NEG2  
              *'From this day forward, I will not suspect my wife.'*    Jealous Husband.22

### 9.3.4 The Durative and Sequential marker *tú*

The word *tú* 'return' is fundamentally a verb that functions semantically in multiple ways depending on its syntactic context. As a main verb, it occurs a few times in the text data and is distinguished by taking a locative complement. The other uses are in expressions of duration and of sequence, and realized when the marker occurs in the preverbal auxiliary slot. Both of these grammatical functions are treated in turn below in this section.

Durative aspect is expressed through the addition of the verb *tú* 'return'. As examples (9.53) and (9.54) show, Durative aspect is used to express an action that is occurring over a relatively long period of time. In other words, it adds a sense of longevity to the occurring action. These expressions contrast with plain progressive expressions presented in §9.1.2, which only express that the action is ongoing, but without any reference to length of duration. Note that Durative aspect only occurs with verbs in Progressive form.

- (9.53) Ø-jwē:    **tú**    wū    jīŋ-è    nò    bī-nì  
 c1-husband   return   3SG   look-PROG   as   c8-buttock

shīŋsh-é    Ø-kwē:,    kī-dōŋ    tá    wù  
 shake-PROG   c1-wife.3SG.POSS   c7-jealousy   grow   3SG

*'The husband was watching (the whole time) how her buttocks were shaking, and he was jealous.'*    Jealous Husband.4.1

- (9.54) wū    **tú**    wū    kēn-è    à-kfúŋ,    wū    báŋ  
 3SG   return   3SG   stir-PROG   c18-outside   3SG   still

ŋù    yē    yī    ɲàŋ  
 COP(N)   c9.body   c9AM   c9.animal

*'She remained going around outside, still being an animal.'*

Two Wives.4.10

When **tú** occurs before a main verb in non-progressive form, it is orienting two sequential events or periods of time to each other at the discourse level.<sup>71</sup> The action in example (9.55) occurs after a man and his wife go to their farm to do work. The sequential **tú** serves to link this sentence with the previous one, providing discourse cohesion. This same function is illustrated in example (9.56), which takes place after a woman has put corn flour into a pot of boiling water.

- (9.55) mé    **ń-tú**    ŋ-gē:    ñ-jí  
 1SG.PRO   1SG-then   1SG-go   1SG-eat

*'I then went and ate...'*

Jealous Husband.20

- (9.56) wū    **tú**    wū    lē:  
 3SG   then   3SG   stand

*'She then stood...'*

Jealous Husband.4.2

<sup>71</sup> Note that sequential events are routinely expressed through simple juxtaposition and usually with non-progressive verbs, as pointed out in §13.1.1. Therefore, the function of **tú** as a sequential marker is concerned with discourse organization.

Note that the relationship between the two sequential events or periods is often a logical one. For example, the ordered steps for preparing fufu are: boiling water, adding the corn flour, stirring the mixture. This logical ordering is completely transparent in conditional *if-then* constructions, where **tú** occurs in the clause-initial position of the apodosis clause (which always follows the protasis clause). See §13.2.4 for a detailed presentation of these constructions.

### 9.3.5 Resultative

The word **m̩** ‘RES’ occurs in the preverbal position and expresses a resultative relationship between the action in its clause and a previous clause, as illustrated in examples (9.57)–(9.59). A main verb counterpart for this word has not been identified. Note that in the sentence preceding example (9.59), the man “measures” his neck with a knife while warning a vulture that he will “cut him (the vulture) like this.” Therefore, the “knife cutting him at his neck” is the result of his intended mimicked cutting.

- (9.57)    b́    túŋ    Ø-nà    wē-è,    lē    kī-jchô    kī    Ø-nà  
           3PL   shoot   c1-cow   c1-ANA1   SET   c7-horn   c7AM   c1-cow

**m̩**    kī    b̩    wù,    wù    kwé  
 RES   c7   stab   3SG   3SG   die

*‘They sent that cow (on top of him) so that the cow’s horn then pierced him and he died.’*  
 Greedy Friends.1.6

- (9.58)    ségé    wū    g̩:    wū    jí,    wú    **m̩**    wū    kwé,    w̩  
           when   3SG   go   3SG   eat   3SG.HORT   RES   3SG   die   2SG

fú-dē    ā-ŋgē-wù-b̩  
 rest-COMPL   c18-trouble-3SG-hand

*‘When he goes and eats, he should then die, and you will rest from the trouble from him.’*  
 What-goes-around.3.4

- (9.59)    fī-j̩    **m̩**    fī    sē:    wù    fē-bwé,    wù    **m̩**    wù  
           c19-knife   RES   c19   cut   3SG   c16-neck   3SG   RES   3SG

gwē    wù    kwē  
 fall   3SG   die

*‘The knife then cut him at [his] neck, he then fell and died.’*  
 Greedy Friends.1.21

However, a cause-effect reading is not clear in examples like (9.62), where it seems that a sequential temporal relation between the subordinate and main clauses is expressed. While sequential events are often encoded without the presence of SIT, its presence in this sentence indicates that their “having gone” is somehow relevant to their “arrival at the tree”, rather than the subordinate clause simply serving in discourse cohesion.



- (9.62) lē bós dós bós gē:, bós bú fè kì-tē ky-ē: lē  
 SET 3PL SIT 3PL go 3PL arrive at c7-tree c7-ANA1 APPL

*'As they (a husband and wife) went [to their farm], they arrived at the tree (in which a man is hiding in order to trick the husband).'*

Jealous Husband.3.6

The Situative particle often co-occurs with the Setting marker **lē**. However, native speakers report that the Setting marker is usually considered optional in these sentences, while SIT is not.

### 9.3.7 Still

The verb **bāŋɛ** 'cover' might be the source for the word **bá** or **bá:** 'still', which precedes the verb and expresses that an action or condition is ongoing and/or current. It is observed occurring only with verbs in progressive form, as examples (9.63) and (9.64) show. Example (9.65) illustrates its use with a copula.

- (9.63) m-bá: n-lég-è, n-tó-ò á-jīshí  
 1SG-still 1SG-run-PROG 1SG-come-PROG c18-path

*'(They started putting out the fire while) I was still running, coming to the place.'*

Fire.4.1

- (9.64) Ø-kwēsé wù kém-é Ø-mwà bá shēgē shēgè,  
 c1-woman c1 have-PROG c1-child still small small

wú bá wū yán-è ā-mbēŋ  
 c1REL still 3SG suck-PROG c6-breast

*'The woman had a child who was still very small, who was still breast-feeding.'*

Two Wives.4.6

- (9.65) wū tú wū kēn-è à-kfúŋ,  
 3SG return 3SG go.around-PROG c18-outside

wù bá nù yē yī nàŋ  
 3SG still COP(N) c9.body c9AM c9.animal

*'She remained going around outside, still being an animal.'*

Two Wives.4.10

This word is the same one used in certain negative constructions, which is presented in §15.2.

### 9.3.8 Iterative

The word **ká** ‘ITER’ precedes the main verb and is used to indicate the repetition of an action, as in (9.66)-(9.68).

- (9.66)    bā-mī      bá      bā-nē      bá      fwē      gè      bē      bó      fúnè  
              c2-person   c2REL   c2-four   c2REL   front   P3   <sup>P</sup>COP   3PL   fly
- à    Ø-àfyōŋ    lē,    kēg-è      misàzē    bō    gē:    dūmbú rānch  
  in   c1-airplane   APPL   begin-PROG   M.       3PL   go   D. R.
- bō    gē:    ákwètū    bō    kásè    bō    tó      bō    fēsè    misàzē  
  3PL   go   A.       3PL   return   3PL   come   3PL   pass   M.
- bō    gē:    nífumè    bō    **ká**    bō    kásè    bō    tó      misàzē  
  3PL   go   N.       3PL   ITER   3PL   return   3PL   come   M.
- yē   bī-bó    bī      Ø-jú    lé      m̄bāŋnē    j̄chò    bī-tēŋ  
  in   c8-arm   c8AM   c5-day   COP   forty       plus   c8-five

*‘The four persons flew from Misaje town, to Dumbu Ranch, to Akweto, then passed over Misaje to Nfume, and back to Misaje in 45 minutes.’*

Training.1.10

- (9.67)    kī-mā      kī      bī      fō      lē,      bā      gē      yēyè  
              c7-week   c7REL   follow   there   APPL   they   P3   teach
- kònē    Ø-ŋwā    wù    bī-ŋjīŋī,    bā    **ká**    bā    jīŋè  
  about   c1-book   c1AM   c8-picture   they   ITER   c2   look.at
- Ø-lēmè    chí    kī-mā    kī      fwē  
  c5-work   c5AM   c7-week   c7REL   front

*‘The second week, we studied the picture booklet and reviewed the work treated in the first week.’*

Training.1.8

- (9.68)    lē      wū-nē    Ø-kwèsē    wū      nùmē    nàŋ,      wù      **ká**  
              COMP   c1-PROX   c1-woman   c1REL   COP(N)   c9.animal   c1REL   ITER
- nūmè    Ø-mù    wū    wùŋ,      lé    Ø-kwèsē    wū    nē    lē  
  COP(N)   c1-person   c1AM   c3.village   COP   c1-woman   3SG   how   APPL

*‘[He said], “This woman who is an animal and again a human is what kind of woman?”’*

Two Wives.7.3

## 9.4 Postverbal adverbs

Postverbal adverbs, words which modify in some way the meaning of the verb, are presented in this section. These markers include the manner adverbs **chègē** ‘quickly’, **chúlē** ‘well’ and reduplicated infinitives, and the degree adverbs **bá:ŋ** ‘much’, **wèsè** ‘very’ and **wá** ‘already’. The adverb **wá** ‘already’ immediately follows the verb, with any verbal complements present (e.g., objects or locative obliques) following the adverb. The adverbs **chègē** ‘quickly’, **bá:ŋ** ‘much’ and **wèsè** ‘very’ follow verbal complements when present, while the data is inconclusive regarding the precise behavior of **chúlē** ‘well’ and reduplicated infinitives in terms of word order.

### Quickly

The manner adverb **chègē** ‘quickly’ immediately follows the verb, as in (9.69), or the complement of the verb, as in (9.70). As the gloss implies, this adverb indicates that the action takes place in a short period of time or with haste.

- (9.69) Ø-chĩĩ      bǝ      tǝ      **chègē**,      wú      tó  
 c1-father.HORT    c1.3PL.POSS    come    quickly    3SG.HORT    come
- wú      yéŋ    fy-ē:      fĩ      lē      lē  
 3SG.HORT    see    c19-thing    c19REL    COP    APPL

*‘Their father should come quickly and see what is happening.’*

What-goes-around.9.4

- (9.70) já      yē    nàŋ      yí-nè      lē      **chègē**  
 leave.IMP    on    c9.meat    c9-PROX    APPL    quickly

*‘Go away from this meat quickly!’*

Greedy Friends.1.11

The adverb in (9.69) is presumed to be realized with a higher tone as a result of the Hortative H marking. Note that this example appears to be an exception to the general rule that the grammatical H tone can only occur once in a sentence. Here it appears that the H is realized at the clause level, with all elements of the first clause having higher than normal tone, as well as the subject elements of the second clause, but not the verbs. It is presumed that this liberal realization of the grammatical H reflects a pragmatic application of the grammatical H, expressing a great sense of urgency and desire of the speaker.

### Well

Another manner adverb is **chúlē** ‘well’, which also follows the verb and expresses that an action is of good quality and/or that a process has progressed to an acceptable point. Lack of data makes it difficult to know if it also follows any complements that are present. This adverb is illustrated in examples (9.71) and (9.72).

- (9.71) wù jēn-í **chúlē**  
3SG walk-PROG well

*'He is walking well.'*

- (9.72) Ø-tán wù m-mē: jē-dě **chúlē**, bā kē bā  
c1-time c1REL c6a-oil cool-COMPL well they begin c2

kōl-è bé kī-ntî, bā gēl-è à shā lē  
catch-PROG with c7-bowl c2 put-PROG in c9.pot APPL

*'When the oil has cooled off well, they start collecting it with a bowl, keeping it in a pot.'*  
Making Palm Oil.1.11

### **Reduplicated infinitives**

Examples (9.73) and (9.74) show reduplicated infinitives following the main verb and functioning like a manner adverb. These are the only examples in the data of reduplicated infinitives serving as adverbs, thus it is not known if adverbial expressions other than manner are possible. The meaning of the reduplicated infinitive is ultimately connected to the semantics of the lexical verb from which it is derived, but has been grammaticalized into an adverbial sense. In the case of 'run' in (9.73), the reduplicated infinitive adds the adverbial meaning of 'immediately', while reduplication of the infinitive meaning 'hide' in (9.74), gives the reading of 'in secret'. Note that the second iteration is usually pronounced at a lower tonal register, indicated by the non-raised down arrow ↓.

- (9.73) lē bì-ŋkápé yú Ø-ñtōŋ wú-yú, bō gē jà  
SET c2-N. hear c1-horn c1-ANA2 3PL P3 leave

**ñ-lēgè** ↓**ñ-lēgè**, bō lé à-**X** kī  
NMZR-run NMZR-run 3PL enter c18-X COMP(K)

bó fí lán- bōy, bó tú bé wù jīŋ  
3PL receive L.-B. 3PL return with 3SG back

*'After the Nkanchi people heard that news (lit. that horn), they left immediately for X to take Long Boy back.'*  
Land Dispute.2.2

- (9.74) wù jō wù gē: wù gō **ŋ-pilè** ↓**ŋ-pilè**  
3SG take 3SG go 3SG grind NMZR-hide NMZR-hide

*'...she took [the corn] and went and ground it secretly.'*

Disobedient Child.1.6

These reduplicated infinitives contrast formally with verbs used multiple times, as seen in (9.75), a rare case where the repeated verb **gēn-é** expresses a durative action. The reduplicated adverbial infinitives follow the main verb and have no subject element preceding them, while the repeated verbs have a subject element preceding the first verb in the series. In addition, the repeated verbs maintain their core meaning, while the adverbial reduplicated infinitive has an extended meaning.

- (9.75) lē bó jā bō **gēn-é** **gēn-é** **gēn-è**, bó  
 SET 3PL leave 3PL go-PROG go-PROG go-PROG 3PL  
 bú fē-dʒō-ntēnē  
 arrive c16-water-middle

*'As they left and went and went and went, they reached the middle of the river.'*  
 Smart Monkey.1.9

### **Much**

Examples (9.76)-(9.78) illustrate the degree adverb **bá:ŋ** 'much', which has the alternate form **báŋá**. It follows the verb and, when present, the object, as in (9.76) and (9.77).

- (9.76) lē wū fú:, fī ghá wù **bá:ŋ**, wù gē:  
 SET 3SG satisfy c19 surpass 3SG much 3SG go  
 wù fú: Ø-lēmè, wù fú: Ø-lēmè  
 3SG clear c5-work 3SG clear c5-work

*'As he was satisfied (from eating), he was very surprised and he went and cleared a large field.'*  
 Jealous Husband.15

- (9.77) kī-lūŋ kí-mí, gè bē Ø-jwènsè wū-mū bē  
 c7-year c7-some P3 COP c1-man c1-some with  
 Ø-kwē: wú-mū bō kōŋ-è yé **bá:ŋ**  
 c1-woman.3SG.POSS c1-some 3PL.REL love-PROG c10.body much

*'Some years [ago], there was a man and his wife, who loved each other very much.'*  
 Jealous Husband.1.1

- (9.78) ŋj-fàŋ **báŋá**  
 1SG-fear much

*'...I was very worried.'*

Fire.24

Although it has a similar form to the adverb **bá** ‘still’, described in §9.3.7, their different syntactic distribution patterns and very different semantics suggest that they are in no way related.

### Very

Another degree adverb is **wèsè** ‘very’. This adverb often modifies adjectival complements and expresses intensity and/or degree, as in (9.79).

- (9.79) Ø-táŋ wū mē gē j̄-chīlè byēŋ,  
c1-time c1REL 1SG.PRO P3 1SG-pull c9.fish
- mē gē m̄-bé lāŋyè **wèsè**  
1SG.PRO P3 1SG-<sup>P</sup>COP happy very
- ‘When I caught a fish, I was very happy.’* Fishing.1.10

Example (9.80) shows that it can also follow a verbal complement.

- (9.80) k̄-nf̄ɛ: k̄-nē lé k̄ fūŋ-sè wá  
c7-blind.man c7-PROX COP c7 worry-CAUS already
- bā-mī **wèsè** bē k̄-lègè  
c2-person very with c7-beg
- ‘...this blindman has already worried people too much with begging.’*  
What-goes-around.3.5

The semantics of this adverb and **bá:ŋ** ‘much’ are very similar and it is unclear what differentiates their use.

### Already

The adverb **wá** ‘already’ is relatively common in the text data and expresses an action or state that has already occurred. It is exemplified in examples (9.81) and (9.82), which show that it occurs immediately following the verb, with (9.81) also illustrating that it precedes any present complements of the verb.

- (9.81) k̄ gē bá: jí gē,  
c7 P3 still eat NEG2
- nō k̄ gē jí **wá** mw-ê:, k̄ fū:  
like.that c7 P3 eat already c18a-thing c7 satisfy
- ‘...he did not eat [it] (the cassava puff), as he had already eaten something and was satisfied.’* What-goes-around.5.1

- (9.82) lē jū kinfē:, Ø-kwèsē wē-è būsē shī,  
 SET COP(N) soon c1-woman c1-ANA1 remove c9.chicken

bā jù bā yòŋ bā kèŋě **wá**, bā  
 they COP(N) c2 cook c2 prepare already c2

kūjè à kī-ŋkámè lē  
 wrap in c7-leaf APPL

*‘Immediately, that woman took the chicken out, having already cooked and prepared [it], and wrapped in a leaf.’* Jealous Husband.12

The core meaning of **wá** involves temporal focus—contrasting the realization of the action at an earlier time with the presumed alternative (i.e., that the action is currently unrealized). It is not observed to occur with verbs in the Progressive form and often appears to contribute to a past perfect reading, as seen in (9.83).

- (9.83) nē Ø-mù kēm-é Ø-kwē:, wū chínè  
 if c1-person have-PROG c1-wife.3SG.POSS 3SG abandon

mū-m-bíŋē lē ŋjē bī-késé lē bō  
 c18a-NMZR-suspect APPL reason c2-woman COP 3PL

ghà **wā**  
 surpass already

*‘If a man has a wife, he stops suspecting her a lot, because women are already wiser.’* (lit. ...they have already surpassed or conquered [us/me].) Jealous Husband.23

## 9.5 Other adverbs

The adverbs presented in this section differ from those in the previous section in terms of scope and/or restricted distribution. They include **gé** ‘EXCL’, **té** ‘also’ and **là** ‘CE’.

### *Exclusive*

The adverb **gé** ‘EXCL’ expresses exclusivity and represents a second function of the conjunction **gē** ‘or’. It most often immediately follows the verb, but may be preceded by a locative pronoun. Its scope can be the predicate, as in (9.84), or the verb’s complement, as in (9.85).

Determining the adverb’s scope appears to be based on context. For example, the adverb in (9.84) immediately follows the verb “look” and its scope is the predicate. The context for this sentence is a man who is having trouble breathing has asked a woman for help. Rather than helping the man, the woman just looks at him—all

actions other than “looking” are excluded. Although it is plausible that given a different context, the alternative reading of the woman looking only at the man, excluding other people, is possible. But this possibility is unconfirmed.

- (9.84)    wū    gē    jìhè    **gé**    wù    né  
              3SG   P3   look   EXCL   3SG   GEST

*‘She only looked at him.’*

Lake.4.7

In contrast, the adverb in (9.85) follows the verb, but is preceded by the locative pronoun “there”. The adverb’s scope is the complex comitative oblique “trousers and shoes”, which follows the adverb and appears in brackets.

- (9.85)    ñ-gē    ñ-lē:    fó    **gé**    [bé    Ø-lóŋ    wù-mùmwà  
              1SG-P3   1SG-stand   there   EXCL   with   c1-trousers   c1-one  
  
              bé    bà-lābā   bà    mē    gè    ñ-kēm-ē    bī-kà:lē]  
              with   c2-shoe   c2REL   1SG.PRO   P3   1SG-have-PROG   c8-??

*‘I stood there only with one pair of trousers and a pair of shoes.’*

Fire.6.1

### **Also**

The adverb **té** ‘also’ is used in expressions of subject (or agent) focus, highlighting the argument’s membership in a group of one or more similar lexical items. Its position is somewhat variable, sometimes following the verb, and sometimes preceding it. However, the argument within the scope of the adverb always precedes the adverb.

For example, in the sentence preceding (9.86), a friend encourages a woman that, after poisoning and killing a begging blindman, the woman will rest from his begging. Therefore, the scope of the first adverb in this example is the subject ‘we’—the friend, including herself, and others with the woman in “resting”. The second adverb adds the subject “many people” to the group of those who are “resting”. The scope cannot include the verb itself, since there are no other predicates of which “many people” are agents. In both cases, the scope of the adverb is the subject, which precedes the adverb, although the second adverb also follows the verb. (The source of the vowel length and falling tone pattern of the second adverb is unknown at this time, and the significance of these differences is uncertain.)



- (9.86) bē tē fū-dē, bā-mī bá-dùdē fū-dē tē:  
 1PL also rest-COMPL c2-person c2-many rest-COMPL also

ā-wù-bō  
 c18-3SG-hand

*'We also (in addition to you) will rest, and many people also will rest from his hands (from his begging) ...'*  
 What-goes-around.3.5

Likewise, the scope of the adverb in (9.87) is the location “here”, which precedes it. The friend is clearly implying by her question that the blindman comes to other places. Therefore, “here” is being added to the group of other locations to which the blindman is always coming.

- (9.87) nāsā y-ē bí: wù lē, lā: kī-fē:  
 c9.friend c9-3SG.POSS ask 3SG APPL Q.COMP c7-blind.man

kī-nē tó kī tò-ò yànè tē lè  
 c7-PROX HAB c7 come-PROG here also APPL.QP

*'Her friend asked her, "(Does) this blind man also come here?"'*  
 What-goes-around.2.2

Example (9.88) further illustrates the function of tē, indicating that the “certificates” belong to the list of items previously stated, all of which burned in the house fire.

- (9.88) mō bā-sālifikè bà mē gè ñ-kém-é  
 RES c2-certificate c2REL 1SG.PRO P3 1SG-have-PROG

yūnībāsētī wú tūlūtù kánādà, bā tē gè fyē bà-chì  
 university c1AM T. C. c2 also P3 burn c2-all

*'Even the certificates that I was having from the University of Toronto, Canada, they also all burned.'*  
 Fire.5.8

Examples of this adverb with predicate scope have not been observed.

### Counter-expectation

The adverb lā ‘CE’ is rare in the data and is not well understood. The examples show that some kind of counter-expectation is present in the predication and its use may be restricted to direct speech. The adverb can follow an Imperative verb and is used when the speaker is coerced in some way to give a command that he/she does not truly want carried out. The expectation with an imperative is that the speaker giving the command desires that the command be followed. The adverb lā indicates that the

hearer should interpret the desire of the speaker as counter to that associated with a non-modified imperative.

A possible context for (9.89) is the speaker wanting the monkey as a pet, but someone in authority over the speaker has ordered them to have the monkey killed.

- (9.89)    yú        **là**    chá:        yí-nè  
              kill.IMP   CE   c9.monkey   c9-PROX

*'Kill this monkey (although I'd prefer that you didn't).'*

The adverb in example (9.90) might be interpreted as a pretense. The woman really does want the blindman to take the poisoned cassava puff. But she wants to appear as if she is annoyed by his begging and is only giving in to his request so that he will be contented for the moment and leave her alone.

- (9.90)    wù    dú,    kó        **là**    màn-kàlà        mā-nē,    wó        jí  
              3SG   say   catch.IMP   CE   c6a-cassava.puff   c6a-PROX   2SG.HORT   eat

*'She said (with irritation), "Take this cassava puff, you should eat [it]."'*

What-goes-around.4.9

The particle **là** in the next examples appears in questions. In both cases, the speaker is indicating that there is a mismatch between perceived realities. For example, (9.91) occurs just after some children, who were sick, have explained that they had eaten cassava puffs that a beggar had given them, which he had gotten from a certain woman. The children's mother immediately began to cry with great intensity, because she is the one who gave the beggar the cassava puffs, which she had poisoned in order to kill him. She realizes that her children have instead eaten the poisoned food. Her husband is surprised at her emotional outburst and is essentially saying that there is no reason for her to be crying like that.

- (9.91)    Ø-jwē:        bí:    là:        lé    lá  
              c1-husband.3SG.POSS   ask   Q.COMP   COP   Q

fī        wò    bēd-é    **là**  
              c19REL   2SG   cry-PROG   CE

*'Her husband asked, "So, why are you crying?"' (lit. it is what that you are crying)*

What-goes-around.9.12

Example (9.92) also clearly expresses the mismatch between perceived realities. This example comes from a story where a wife devises a plot to trick her husband. She has secretly prepared a full meal, including soup. But the husband only sees her preparing the fufu. Since his wife is preparing the fufu where her husband

can see her, she is apparently inferring that she is also preparing soup or has already done so (particularly since soup is considered a crucial part of the meal). Therefore, he asks his wife if she has soup, while indicating that he believes she does not. A possible appropriate translation might be something more like an accusation, “You don’t *really* have soup, do you!”.

(9.92) wō lé b́é m̀-̀bà: lā  
2SG COP with c6a-soup CE

‘So, do you have soup?’

Jealous Husband.2.1

In both of these question examples, the speaker appears to be expressing a belief counter to the facts being presented. In this way, it is possible that they are a type of rhetorical question, where the purpose of the question is less about getting an informative answer and more about expressing a belief in the unreliability of perceptions.

## 9.6 Attributive verbs

Expressions of attributes such as color and size are accomplished through adjectives in many languages. The word class Adjective, is typically analyzed as a type of nominal modifier. These attributive expressions are sometimes difficult to analyze in African languages, many of which are said to have a very small restricted set of adjectives. Unsurprisingly, Nchane attributives do not offer a clear and simple analysis. It appears, however, that most attributives in Nchane can best be described as a special type of verb which will be referred to as “attributive verbs”. Because the analysis of these attributive words has not been straightforward, one of the primary goals of this section is establishing the verb-hood of such words. See §6.4.6 for a description of the small class of Nchane adjectives and a brief discussion regarding how they differ from attributive verbs.

Both of the attributives in (9.93), **kùgē** ‘big’ and **yídè** ‘black’, are associated with agreeing elements which are virtually indistinguishable as either relativizers or agreeing prefixes (although such agreement elements are not always present, as seen in many of the examples in this section).

(9.93) b́ó bēŋ lē lé kī, kī-kfūnè kī **kùgē** kī  
3PL agree COMP COP c7 c7-rat c7REL big c7REL

**yídè** kē-ē kī lé kī shú m̀byà̀nè yí-yú  
black c7-ANA1 c7REL COP c7.FUT tie c9.bell c9-ANA2

‘They agreed that it is him, the fat, black rat, who will tie *THAT* bell (on the cat’s tail).’

Cat and Rats.1.6

The elicited examples (9.94)-(9.96) show behavior of **kùgè** ‘big’ that is consistent with verbs. First, in (9.94) and (9.95), the word appears with high tone on the final vowel **e** which is associated with Progressive aspect. Second, the clause-final focus particle **l̩**, which is typical for intransitive progressives (see §16.3.5), is required. Finally, examples (9.95) and (9.96) display tense marking.

- (9.94)    kī-bē:            kī-nē            **kùg-é**            l̩  
              c7-calabash    c7-PROX    big-PROG    FOC

*‘This calabash is big.’*

- (9.95)    kī-bē:            kī-nē            chí    **kùg-é**            l̩  
              c7-calabash    c7-PROX    P2    big-PROG    FOC

*‘This calabash was big.’*

- (9.96)    kī-bē:            kī-nē            lé    kí            **kùg-è**  
              c7-calabash    c7-PROX    COP    c7.FUT    big-PROG

*‘This calabash will be big (e.g., it is small now, but it is still growing).’*

The attributive word also has an Imperative conjugation form. The command in (9.97) could be said to someone who is considered to be too small or sickly. Alternatively, the verb can be shortened to **kú** (which is the preferred form for at least some speakers).

- (9.97)    **kūgē**  
              big.IMP

*‘Fatten up!’*

Preverbal aspectual markers can also precede these attributive words. In (9.98), **bá** ‘still’ occurs before the attributive verb **shēgē** ‘small’, which is repeated to express degree.

- (9.98)    Ø-kwēsé    wù    kēm-é            Ø-mwà    bá    **shēgē**    **shēgē**,  
              c1-woman    c1    have-PROG    c1-child    still    small    small

*‘The woman had a child who was still very small...’*      Two Wives.4.6

The nominalized forms of words that function as attributive verbs are considered abstract nouns and belong to class 14. The non-progressive form of the verb serves as the stem. A partial list of these attributive verbs and their nominalized forms appear in Table 9.6.

| Attributive verb | Nominalized form | Gloss       |
|------------------|------------------|-------------|
| kùgē             | bvū-kūgè         | 'bigness'   |
| ɲɔ̃:ɲē           | bvū-ɲɔ̃ɲē        | 'thinness'  |
| jījē             | bvū-jíjè         | 'heaviness' |
| jùŋ              | bvū-jūnè         | 'oldness'   |
| yídè             | bvū-yídè         | 'blackness' |

Table 9.6 Selected Nchane attributive verbs and their nominalized forms.



## Chapter 10

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### Nonverbal predicates and copulas

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This chapter is about clauses that lack a lexical verb. All of these involve a copular verb, of which Nchane has two. Because of the importance of the copulas to nonverbal predicate constructions, I begin this chapter with their descriptions (§10.1). The remaining sections (10.2-10.6) present various kinds of nonverbal predicate constructions. Throughout this chapter, the predicates in examples are given in brackets, while copulas are bolded.

#### 10.1 Copulas

Nchane has two copulas: **lé** ‘COP’ and **ɲù(mɛ̃)** ‘COP(N)’.<sup>72</sup> These are referred to as “copula” and “n-copula” respectively. Both of these copulas generally serve as a link between the subject and a predicative expression. A number of different grammatical constituents may serve as the predicate element, including such items as nouns or

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<sup>72</sup> The Nchane copula **lé** is cognate with the Chungmboko copula **la**, which is relatively distant from Nchane geographically. Meanwhile, the n-copula is cognate with the Noni copula **nú**, the only copula observed in that language (Hyman 1981: 88). No other Beoid language has been reported as having two copulas, as far as I am aware, although most of these languages are in the early stages of linguistic research and such a discovery might simply not yet have been published.

noun phrases, prepositional phrases and adjectives. See §§10.2-10.6 for examples of each type.

The copula appears in the data about four times as often as the n-copula and is considered the “basic” type. While Nchane has two copulas, it does not appear that they are distinguished by introducing predicates of different constituent categories, as is the case in some languages. Nor is the difference between the two associated with the expression of different copular clause types, although identification of such differentiation can be difficult to obtain, as observed by Mikkelsen (2005). Nevertheless, examples (10.1) and (10.2) demonstrate that the same copula is used in what I designate as predicational and identificational copular clauses respectively.

- (10.1) Ø-nā wú-nē lé [wū-jùŋ]  
c1-cow c1-PROX COP c1-old

*‘This cow is old.’*

- (10.2) Ø-nā w-àŋ lé [wú-nē]  
c1-cow c1-1SG.POSS COP c1-PROX

*‘My cow is this one.’*

The fundamental difference between the two copulas appears to be a tendency related to the type of state being expressed—fixed or static state versus dynamic state. Examples (10.3) and (10.4) are given to illustrate this distinction. An equative relationship is expressed in (10.3) and the truthfulness of the statement is fixed; it is a fact that “these things” equal “things that God gave me”. The state in example (10.4) is expressed within the context of the speaker’s perception from a helicopter high above the scene. The state expressed, “that people are small”, is context-dependent and would be false in a different context, for example, if the speaker saw the people from a much lower height. In contrast, the statement in (10.3) is true in any possible context.

- (10.3) mw-ē: mū-nē lé [mw-ē: mù Ø-jò  
c18a-thing c18a-PROX COP c18a-thing c18aREL c1-god  
  
já mē yú],  
give 1SG.PRO on.it

*‘...these things are things that God gave me...’*

Fire.32



- (10.4)    mē        ĩ̃-gē        yēn-é        bà-mì        lē        fē-kū,        b5  
              1SG.PRO    1SG-P3       see-PROG    c2-person    APPL    c16-down    3PL
- jùmè**    [shēgē    shēgē]  
              COP(N)    small       small

*'I was seeing people on the earth looking very small.'*       Training.1.16

Some formal tendencies between the two copulas are also observed. For example, the n-copula is relatively more common in backgrounded constructions, such as **lē** setting clauses (appearing more than twice as often in these as the copula). In addition, the n-copula functions secondarily as a focus marker (see §16.3.4), contrasting its complement with an alternative, usually expected or desired, complement.

The observations made to this point might suggest that the difference between the two copula types has to do with semantic-pragmatic concerns. An alternative hypothesis is that the difference involves a modality component, with the n-copula being associated with Irrealis or Irrealis-like expression. Dynamic states are viewed as less *real* than static ones. Support clauses (e.g., Setting clauses) do not necessarily encode Irrealis predications; but they do communicate background, rather than mainline information, and therefore the information is less relevant and salient. And the contrastive focus constructions presume an alternative reality.

Ultimately, the difference between the two copulas remains obscure for now, awaiting more intensive research. The remainder of this section looks more closely at the formal properties of the two copulas, first **lé** 'COP', followed by **jù** 'COP(N)'.

### 10.1.1 lé 'COP'

As stated in the introduction, the copula is generally used to link a subject with a predicative expression, as in (10.3) above. Examples (10.5) and (10.6) further illustrate this function. Additionally, example (10.6) shows that the copula has the alternate form **bé** 'COP' for past tense expressions, also appearing with P3, which is common in the text data.

- (10.5)    j̃jì    **lé**    [Ø-mwā    y-āŋ]  
              N.    COP    c1-child    c1-1SG.POSS

*'Nji is my son.'*

- (10.6)    b5    gè    **bé**    [ńsàŋ]  
              3PL    P3    <sup>P</sup>COP    c9.friend

*'They were friends.'*

Greedy Friends.1.2

The copula may occur with no overt subject in clauses where other languages require a dummy subject. An example of this is the cleft construction, as illustrated in (10.7) and (10.8), which again shows the past tense form of the copula. See §16.3.2 for a fuller description of cleft constructions.

- (10.7) **lé** [Ø-nlò wù bɔ̃: bā-ā jí]  
 COP c1-poison c1REL c2.child c2-ANA1 eat  
*'...it is POISON that those children had eaten.'* What-goes-around.9.7

- (10.8) chí **bé** [jìjì wú chí ɲà m-bvũ: tádà lē]  
 P2 <sup>P</sup>COP N. c1REL P2 give c6a-wine T. APPL  
*'It was NJI who gave wine to Tada.'*

The copula may also precede the main verb (i.e., as an auxiliary verb in the preverbal slot). In this position it functions either in expressing Future tense or Perfect aspect. See §§9.3.1 and 9.3.2 respectively for more details.

### 10.1.2 ɲù 'COP(N)'

Clauses with the n-copula often appear to have predicates that express temporary states or those that are in some way context dependent, as illustrated in (10.4) above. The n-copula has short and long forms (**ɲù** and **ɲùmè**), for which no satisfactory explanation is available other than possibly representing different stages of grammaticalization. The short form is much more prevalent. In most cases it appears that there is a preference for one over the other.

Unlike the copula, clear occurrences of the n-copula in clauses with a tense marker have not been observed. However, examples (10.9) and (10.10) show it co-occurring with the aspectual auxiliaries **bá** 'still' and **dó** 'ST' respectively. Note that the n-copula does not elicit a subject agreement element in (10.9), indicating that it is less verb-like than common verbs, at least in this context.

- (10.9) wū tú wū kēn-è à-kfúŋ,  
 3SG return 3SG stir-PROG c18-outside  
 wù bá **ɲù** [yē yī ɲàŋ]  
 3SG still COP(N) c9.body c9AM c9.animal  
*'She remained going around outside, still being an animal.'*  
 Two Wives.4.10

- (10.10) lē d́ ɲù [kī-fē kì b̥z̥: bā Ø-ɲwà  
 SET SIT COP(N) c7-time c7REL c2.child c2AM c1-book  
 t́ b̥ jí mw-ē:]  
 come 3PL eat c18a-thing

*‘When it was time that school children come to eat something...’*

What-goes-around.7.1

The n-copula also functions as a constituent focus marker as described in §16.3.4. It is not always easy to discern when it is acting to express focus versus as a copula. But it is certain to be outside the verbal core when bringing focus. In example (10.11), the n-copula is modifying the postverbal object **bvùlḡ**: ‘food’, which is in the form of flour before being cooked. Object focus is called for because the daughter in the story has not taken corn to be ground into flour, and she believes that her mother is boiling the unground corn rather than the flour.

- (10.11) wù j́ ɲù bvù-lḡ: bw-ē:, wù chú wáà, à  
 3SG take COP(N) c14-food c14-ANA1 3SG pour IDEO in  
 j̀ lē, wū tú wū kēnè wū kēnè wū kēnè  
 c9.water APPL 3SG then 3SG stir 3SG stir 3SG stir

*‘She took the FLOUR, poured [it], pssss, into the water, and stirred and stirred.’*

Disobedient Child.1.10

## 10.2 Nominal predicates

Nouns may serve as predicate expressions and as such are linked to the subject by the copula as illustrated in (10.12) and (10.13).

- (10.12) ɲ-já ɲ-gḡ: Ø-sùkū,  
 1SG-leave 1SG-go c1-school  
 ɲjē mē lé [Ø-mù ɲ-yēyḡ]  
 reason 1SG.PRO COP c1-person NMZR-teach

*‘I left and went to school, because I am a teacher.’*

Fire.1.6

- (10.13) b̥ gè b́ [ńsàɲ]  
 3PL P3 <sup>1</sup>COP c9.friend

*‘They were friends.’*

Greedy Friends.1.2

Certain locational nouns, such as ‘house’ and possibly ‘school’, are routinely used in locative expressions without a preposition, which is usually associated with locative expressions. Thus, the predicate nominal in (10.14) gives the location of the subject, and is linked by the copula.

- (10.14) Ø-mwā b́é Ø-bwê: gē **b́é** [yē]  
 c1-child with c1-mother P3 <sup>P</sup>COP c9.house

*‘A child and her mother were in their house.’* Disobedient Child.1.1

Existentials usually involve a copula linking a subject with the locative pronoun **yú** ‘on.it’. This locative pronoun is coreferential with **yè** ‘on’ prepositional phrases, as well as with Comitative Objects marked with **b́é** ‘with’. This type of construction is illustrated in (10.15).

- (10.15) Ø-kwēsé wú-mù gē **b́é** [yú] wú gē  
 c1-woman c1-some P3 <sup>P</sup>COP on.it c1REL P3

káŋ-é màŋ-kàlà Ø-ntè wè lē  
 fry-PROG c6a-cassava.puff c1-quarter up APPL

*‘There was a woman who was frying cassava puff in that quarter.’*  
 What-goes-around.1.4

This presentational strategy is very common in the text data, frequently observed in the setting sections of stories where the major participants are introduced. The precise antecedent of the locative pronoun is unknown, resulting in some interpretational ambiguity. In other words, it is not known whether the pronoun is coreferential with a Locative Oblique or with a Comitative Oblique. The “existential” interpretation is reflected in the translation, which is always “there was x”. See §7.2 for more details.

A less common syntactic construction type involving the copula is the cleft construction, where the predicate nominal follows a copula with no argument in the subject position. Example (10.16) demonstrates that the cleft construction represents a second strategy for expressing existentials.

- (10.16) kī-lūŋ kī-mí, gē **b́é** [Ø-jwènsè wū-mū b́é  
 c7-year c7-some P3 <sup>P</sup>COP c1-man c1-some with  
 Ø-kwê: wú-mū bō kōŋ-ē yé bá:ŋ]  
 c1-woman.3SG.POSS c1-some 3PL.REL love-PROG c10.body much

*‘Some years ago, there was a man and wife who loved each other very much.’*  
 Jealous Husband.1.1

Example (10.17) is another case of a cleft construction with a predicate nominal. In this instance, the predicate expresses a time reference, establishing the temporal setting for the text.

- (10.17) gè **bé** [ā-jū yūfē ñchò bvūsōfwî,  
P3 <sup>P</sup>COP c6-day ten plus seven  
  
yē kwī wū bō: tó bō lēg-è yú]  
on c3.moon c3REL c2.child HAB 3PL run-PROG on.it  
  
‘It was the 17<sup>th</sup> of February (lit. the month in which children used to run)...’  
Fire.1.1

The adverbial pronoun **nō** ‘like.that’ can serve as a predicate in similitive expressions. In (10.18), where **nō** follows the n-copula, the subject is the empty class 19 pronoun, which refers generally to the situation described earlier, that her children have eaten poisoned food intended for an annoying blind beggar.

- (10.18) lē fí dó fí **pùmè** [nō:],  
SET c19 SIT c19 COP(N) like.that  
  
Ø-kwēsé wē-è m̃bū: b́é kwè, wù bēd-è  
c1-woman c1-ANA1 burst with c9.death 3SG cry-PROG  
  
‘As it was so, that woman started crying and crying.’  
What-goes-around.9.11

As was stated in §10.1.2, the longer n-copula form seen in this example is thought to represent an older form of the stem.

### 10.3 Comitative predicates

Predicates marked with the comitative conjunction/preposition are treated in much the same way as nominal predicates. The subject is linked to the comitative predicate via the copula, establishing a comitative relation between the two nouns. Examples (10.19)-(10.21) are given to illustrate.

- (10.19) j̃chég:, mē **lé** [bé j̃chè yí yū bī-kfūnè]  
true 1SG.PRO COP with c9.medicine c9.REL kill c8-rat  
  
‘In fact (or truly), I have medicine that kills rats.’  
What-goes-around.3.2

- (10.20) w<sup>5</sup> l<sup>é</sup> [b<sup>é</sup> m-bà:] lā  
 2SG COP with c6a-soup CE

*'So, do you have soup?'*

Jealous Husband.2.1

- (10.21) g<sup>é</sup> b<sup>ē</sup> g<sup>ē</sup> jí mw-ē: mú j̄-jīlē g<sup>è</sup>,  
 NEG2 1PL P3 eat c18a-thing c18aAM NMZR-eat NEG2

b<sup>ē</sup> g<sup>ē</sup> b<sup>é</sup> [b<sup>é</sup> j<sup>è</sup>ŋ]  
 1PL P3 <sup>P</sup>COP with c9.hunger

*'We did not eat food, we remained hungry.'* (lit. *we were with hunger*)

Fire.1.9

#### 10.4 Prepositional phrases as predicate

Prepositional phrases are also linked to the subject with a copula when acting as a predicate. These clauses are usually expressions of location, as illustrated in (10.22) and (10.23).

- (10.22) l<sup>é</sup> ŋ-g<sup>ē</sup> Ø-sùkū ā-ntānā,  
 SET 1SG-go c1-school c18-morning

ŋ-g<sup>ē</sup> jū [f<sup>è</sup> Ø-sùkū lē], lē tó bú  
 1SG-P3 COP(N) at c1-school APPL SET come arrive

Ø-jú bī-kā bī-<sup>†</sup>f<sup>é</sup>: b<sup>é</sup> bī-jchīŋ mbàŋ sh<sup>è</sup>  
 c5-day c8-leg c8-two with c8-?? tens three

*'As I went to school in the morning, I was at the school when it was half past two...'*<sup>73</sup>

Fire.1.7

- (10.23) lē mé ŋ-g<sup>ē</sup> m-b<sup>é</sup> [à Ø-āfyōŋ lē],  
 SET 1SG.PRO 1SG-P3 1SG-<sup>P</sup>COP in c1-airplane APPL

*'As I was in the airplane...'*

Training.1.14

<sup>73</sup> The H of the number 'two' in this example clearly appears to be downstepped, even though the context does not appear to fit that which is associated with downdrift or downstep. The pitch is considerably lower than that of the preceding noun 'day' and the same as the conjunction that follows. There is a pause after 'two', so the apparent downstep could represent a phrase-final lowering. Another possible explanation is that this time adverbial is conventionalized and doesn't present the expected surface forms. Regarding the semantics of the phrase **jú bīkā bīfē:**, the word for leg is assumed to be a metaphor for the big hand of a clock, both of which have a long, thin and straight shape.

Example (10.24) is a rare case of a prepositional phrase predicate that is expressing something other than location.

- (10.24) wù gè **bé** [yē kì-màṅè lē b'é kì-ṅ-chēṅ fō]  
 3SG P3 <sup>P</sup>COP on c7-doubt APPL with c7-NMZR-spoil there  
*'He was confused and ill...' (lit. 'was on doubts and with spoiledness there')*  
 Lake.6.4

Prepositional phrases headed by the non-locational preposition **kōnē** 'about' can also serve as a predicate. Once again, the prepositional phrase is linked to the subject via a copula.

- (10.25) Ø-ṅ-shilè wú-yú gè **bé** [kōnē bá-mī bá  
 c1-NMZR-sit c1-ANA2 P3 <sup>P</sup>COP about c2-person c2REL  
 Ø-ṅ-fijē jē yī Ø-ṅò]  
 c1-NMZR-preach c9.word c9AM c1-god  
*'This meeting was about (or for) preachers.'*  
 Training.1.2

## 10.5 Numeral predicates

Examples (10.26) and (10.27) illustrate numbers serving as predicates. The number is marked with agreement corresponding to the class of the subject whenever appropriate (see §6.4.5 for rules regarding numbers and agreement). Example (10.26) shows the subject and number being linked by the copula, while the third-person pronoun **bó** precedes the number in (10.27). In this case, it is possible that the numeral predicate is linked to its subject through simple juxtaposition. But insufficient data does not allow for a clear analysis at this time.

- (10.26) ā-lā ká-ā á gē fyē gē **bé** [ā-fá:]  
 c6-compound c6-ANA1 c6REL P3 burn P3 <sup>P</sup>COP c6-two  
*'There were two compounds that burned (lit. those compounds that burned were two).'*  
 Fire.20

- (10.27) bō gē jā tīkālì, bō **ṅū** [bó bā-tèṅ], ṅkápí  
 3PL P3 leave T. 3PL COP(N) 3PL c2-five N.  
 chūṅè ṅfúmè kībó b'é bèm  
 Ch. N. K. with B.

*'They left Tikari, five of them: Nkanchi, Chungé, Nfume, Kibbo and Bem.'*  
 History.2.1

## 10.6 Adjectival Predicates

As observed in §6.4.6, adjectives do not appear in the text corpus. Nevertheless, elicited examples such as (10.28) and (10.29) (repeated from §6.4.6) show that adjectives may serve as predicate, following the copula.

- (10.28)    *kī-bē:*            **lé**            [*kī-fēŋ*]  
               c7-calabash    COP    c7-new

*‘The calabash is new.’*

- (10.29)    *kī-tē*            **lé**            [*kī-kēgē*]  
               c7-tree    COP    c7-ancient

*‘The tree is ancient (or very old).’*



# Chapter 11

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## Clause structure

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The specifics of Nchane clause structure are described in this chapter. The discussion is limited to clauses with verbs, although many of the characteristics of clauses with verbal predicates are present in those with non-verbal predicates. Clauses with non-verbal predicates and copulas are treated in Chapter 10.

There are five categories of clausal constituents identified by formal distinctions: Subject, Object, Applied Object, Comitative Oblique, Locative Oblique. These formal distinctions are discussed in §11.1. Conventional labels have been used in part out of convenience, since they offer an easily recognizable starting point for describing how the various constituents are realized and how they function. However, as pointed out by Haspelmath, the use of conventional categories as a means of describing clausal constituents is highly problematic since “the categories of language structure are language-particular” (Haspelmath 2007b: 121).

Therefore, these terms should be understood as attempts at recognizing common characteristics shared between a constituent associated with a traditional term and Nchane’s version of that constituent. For example, the Nchane Subject may be more like a traditional object in certain respects, but the label “subject” represents a closer approximation as compared to the label “object”. In order to avoid unintended claims regarding the assignment of labels, I will be describing the Nchane variety of constituents utilizing the proper noun form of the constituent label (e.g., Subject,

Object, etc.). However, as will be seen below, while these designations are useful in capturing formal characteristics of the various constituent types, they are of limited use in describing how these constituents are organized into clauses.

Certain verbs are noted to usually appear with certain types of constituents and in certain syntactic configurations. This characteristic of verbs is often treated in grammars through the notion of *transitivity*, along with the identification of *arguments* (i.e., constituents required by the verb for grammaticality). However, assessing Nchane clausal constituents for argumenthood is challenging. First, some of these constituents may be omitted from the clause whenever they are inferable. The phenomenon of clauses lacking certain argument-like constituents is particularly clear for objects, but is true of even subjects, as discussed in §11.1.1. Second, some verbs have multiple “argument frames”, appearing with different constituents, with different shades of meaning in each frame.

Consequently, rather than attempting to establish the transitivity of verbs, I will subscribe to the notion of clausal valency, categorizing clauses according to the number of constituents present. Descriptions of the different clause types are given in §11.2. In many cases, these constituents may be argued for as obligatory elements for grammaticality, in other words, as conventional arguments. But in other cases, the degree of obligation is not so clear.

I treat all of the constituent types as Nchane Arguments and make no attempt at distinguishing among them between Arguments and Adjuncts, because each of them, as will be further shown, can be seen as obligatory in particular clauses (though not necessarily in every one of those from the examples). Although such a distinction can certainly be made in semantic terms, it does not appear to have any bearing on formal expression in Nchane and is ignored for the moment.

An additional important observation is that the various constituent types have a tendency to appear in a particular order and in particular clausal “positions” or “slots”. I infer this tendency into an assumed canonical word order as presented in §11.3. Non-canonical word orders are observed which bring into question how Nchane organizes and governs clause syntax. There is some evidence to suggest that Nchane clause structure is oriented around semantic roles and information structure elements like Topic and Focus, in addition to grammatical relations. This issue is taken up in §11.4.

## 11.1 Syntactic constituent types

Nchane distinguishes two categories of clausal constituents in terms of phrasal elements: those that are formally marked and those that are formally unmarked. Altogether, five distinct types of constituents are observed: Subject, Object, Applied Object, Comitative Oblique, Locative Oblique. Subjects and Objects are unmarked constituents, most frequently differentiated by clause position, with Subjects occurring before the verb and Objects occurring after the verb. Applied Objects occur with the postposition applicative marker *lë* ‘APPL’ and follow the Object, if present.

The two oblique constituents also follow any co-occurring Objects and are both introduced by prepositions (which serves as a partial defining characteristic). Comitative Obliques are introduced by the preposition **bé** ‘with’ and encode accompaniment constituents as well as instrumentals.<sup>74</sup> Locative Obliques are usually marked by one of several prepositions and the applicative marker **lě** ‘APPL’.

These different clausal constituents are summarized in Table 11.1, with a detailed description of each given in subsections 11.1.1 and 11.1.2, where the constituent being described appears in brackets. The Applicative analysis presented here is somewhat unconventional and not undisputable. Therefore, a discussion regarding this postposition and choice of analysis is provided in subsection 11.1.3.

| Constituent        | Syntactic form        |
|--------------------|-----------------------|
| S                  | NP                    |
| O                  | NP                    |
| O <sub>APPL</sub>  | NP + <b>lě</b>        |
| OBL <sub>COM</sub> | <b>bé</b> + NP        |
| OBL <sub>LOC</sub> | prep + NP + <b>lě</b> |

Table 11.1 Summary of Nchane clausal constituent types.

### 11.1.1 Formally unmarked constituents

Subject and Object are formally unmarked constituents and differentiated by clause position and agreement patterning. Descriptions of both are given in this section, beginning with the Subject, followed by the Object.

#### *Subject*

The formal characteristics of the Nchane Subject are as follows: 1) Subjects are unmarked, 2) Subjects occur to the left of the verb, the position associated with sentence topics, 3) Subjects generate subject agreement in certain cases. Note that this is the only constituent type that generates agreement on verbs. These characteristics are exemplified in (11.1) and (11.2), both of which also illustrate the tendency of Subjects to encode semantic AGENTS.

- (11.1) [kì-nfɛ:      kí-mú]    gē    jēn-í  
           c7-blind.man    c7-some    P3    walk-PROG<sup>75</sup>

*‘A certain blind man was walking around.’*

What-goes-around.1.1

<sup>74</sup> The word **bé** actually functions as a conjunction as well as a preposition. See §8.2 for a fuller description.

<sup>75</sup> In addition to simply ‘walking’, the verb **jēné** expresses the notion of ‘strolling’ or ‘walking around’, without a particular destination in mind. It can also mean ‘visit’ and ‘travel’. Context is necessary to determine which shade of meaning is intended.

- (11.2) [mē] gē j̄-jā ŋ-gē: Ø-j̄-jēpě  
 1SG.PRO P3 1SG-leave 1SG-go c1-NMZR-walk

*'I left and went on a journey...'*

Fire.1.2

Referents of Subjects are usually animate, but it is possible to have an inanimate Subject, as in (11.3). Inanimate Subjects are rare and might be limited to INSTRUMENTS in constructions which serve to suppress agentivity.

- (11.3) [fī-j̄] m̄ fī sē: wù fē-bwé, wù m̄  
 c19-knife RES c19 cut 3SG c16-neck 3SG RES

wù gwē wù kwē  
 3SG fall 3SG die

*'The knife then cut him at his neck, he then fell and died.'*

Greedy Friends.1.21

While the preverbal position usually is filled by a Subject, there are a number of circumstances in which this is not the case. One such situation is when the subject of the sentence is first-person singular. At times, no subject pronoun is used, leaving this position empty. However, the verb is usually marked with subject agreement as in (11.4). This is quite common in the text data.

- (11.4) j̄-já ŋ-gē: Ø-sùkū,  
 1SG-leave 1SG-go c1-school

*'I left and went to school...'*

Fire.1.6

So-called *agent focus* constructions also may leave the preverbal position empty, as in (11.5).

- (11.5) chí yéŋ tādà wù lē  
 P2 see T. 3SG APPL

*'TADA saw him.'*

In agent focus constructions, the logical subject (i.e., the AGENT constituent which canonically is expressed by a Subject) appears in the postverbal position, the position associated with Focus. But as this example shows, the postverbal constituent does not generate the expected subject agreement, taking on the properties of an Object and analyzed as such. So, although this clause has a logical subject, no syntactic subject is present.

This observation is important when viewing a clause like that in (11.6), where the preverbal and postverbal constituents of a neutral-focus clause have switched positions. This is the usual outcome of agent focalization in clauses with a PATIENT (at least those which are non-human); the PATIENT is said to be *defocalized* and moved to the preverbal position.

- (11.6)    bvū-ŋgá    bw-ē:    bvù-chí:    gē    ná    Ø-ŋò  
              c14-power    c14-ANA1    c14-all    P3    give    c1-god

*'GOD gave all that power.'*

Fire.57

Note that in this case—agent focalization of clauses with a Subject (AGENT) and Object (PATIENT)—the language apparently prefers having a constituent in the preverbal position. This preference is observed in neighboring Noni (Hyman 1981: 107), where the preverbal position is filled by either a dummy subject or a preposed object, as well as Naki (Good 2010: 11). See §16.3.1 for a fuller description of word order focus constructions.

The temptation to call the defocalized PATIENT the new Subject must be abandoned because this preverbal constituent does not generate subject agreement. This fact is illustrated in (11.7), which is grammatically acceptable, but where a semantically infelicitous reading is dictated when the semantic PATIENT in preverbal position generates subject agreement.

- (11.7)    #mūŋ-chōnē    chí    mū    jí    bā-nā  
              c18a-groundnut    P2    c18a    eat    c2-cow

*'Groundnuts ate the cows.'*

*\*'The COWS ate the groundnuts.'*

Cleft constructions, a second focus strategy, also routinely result in an empty preverbal position. In other words, these constructions have no syntactic subject, as illustrated in (11.8). (See §16.3.2 for more details regarding cleft constructions.)

- (11.8)    lé    Ø-ŋò    wú    gē    nā    jè    yē-è  
              COP    c1-god    c1REL    P3    give    c9.path    c9-ANA1

*'It is GOD who gave that way.'*

Fire.50.2

An argument could be made that in constructions like those in (11.5) and (11.8), where the preverbal position is empty, there is a null subject. However, there is no subject agreement in either example. And while other nearby languages make use of expletive subjects in these kinds of constructions, the occurrence of an expletive subject in Nchane is not attested. See §7.5 for further discussion of dummy subjects.

Objects show the following characteristics: 1) Objects are unmarked, and 2) Objects do not generate agreement on verbs. Furthermore, they usually immediately follow the verb, the position generally associated with focus, although this is only a strong tendency. Examples (11.9) and (11.10) illustrate the typical Object, which is usually associated with semantic PATIENTS.

- (11.10)    bó     kē     bō     jǐng-s-è                [ŋgú]  
            3PL   begin   3PL   extinguish-PROG     c3.fire  
  
            ‘*They started quenching the fire.*’
- Fire.3.4

(11.11) Ø-kwèsē    wē-è    būsē    [shī],  
 c1-woman    c1-ANA1    remove    c9.chicken  
 ‘...that woman took the chicken out...’                      Jealous Husband.12

- (11.12)    b́      ká      b̃              kēm-è      [Ø-n-téǽ]  
              3PL   ITER   3PL.FUT   have-PROG   cI-NMZR-advice  
*'They again will be having advice...'*                                  Marriage.4.2

As mentioned above, agent focus constructions where the AGENT and PATIENT switch clausal positions have no Subject. Rather, the AGENT and PATIENT of these clauses are both Objects (see example (11.6) above). Another context which allows for clauses with two Objects is when a THEME and a RECIPIENT appear in the same clause. These constituents are usually expressed as Objects, with the RECIPIENT immediately following the verb and the THEME coming next. Examples (11.13) and (11.14) illustrate such double-object clauses. Both Objects appear in brackets and the RECIPIENT Object is bolded as well.

- (11.13) wú ná [bɔ̃] [kì-m-bɔ̃nɛ̃]  
 3SG.HORT give 3PL c7-NMZR-pray  
 ‘...he will bless them...’ (lit. give them prayers) Marriage.3.7

- (11.14) nū bɔ̃: bá Ø-kwésɛ̃ wɛ̃-è, wū bé  
 COP(N) c2.child c2AM c1-woman c1-ANA1 c1REL P1  
 nā [kì-nfɛ̃: kɛ̃-è] [màŋ-kàlà mā-ā]  
 give c7-blind.man c7-ANA1 c6a-cassava.puff c6a-ANA1  
 ‘...being the children of that woman who gave that blindman that  
 cassava puff.’ What-goes-around.8.2

Note that RECIPIENTS may also be expressed through Applied Objects, as described in §11.1.2. In this case, the order of the two constituents is reversed, with the THEME-Object preceding the RECIPIENT-Applied Object.

The object is often inferable, and thus open to ellipsis, which is very common in the data. The omitted object in (11.15), indicated by a minus, is inferred from the full noun referent appearing in the previous clause.

- (11.15) bɔ̃ bájɛ̃ mw-ɛ̃: mw-ɛ̃:, bɔ̃ tɔ̃ŋ [-]  
 3PL gather c18a-thing c18a-ANA1 3PL burn c18a  
 ‘...they gathered those things and burned [them].’ Inheritance.6

In (11.16), the full noun referent **ŋgwè** ‘fishing pole’ appears in the first sentence of the example, and corresponds to the omitted object in the setting clause of the second sentence. Note that the use of the class 1 pronoun in the main clause of the second sentence might serve to make clear that the thing thrown into the water is the baited hook rather than just the termites.

- (11.16) bē sū: ŋgɔ̃ yē Ø-ŋgwè lē  
 1PL string c10.termite on c1-fishing.pole APPL  
 lē bé sū: [-], bē nɔ̃ wù à-jɔ̃  
 SET 1PL string c10 1PL throw c1 c18-water  
 ‘We put termites on the hook. After putting [them on the hook], we threw  
 it (the baited hook) in the stream.’ Fishing.1.4-5

Ellipsis of human objects is unattested in the data. Referential human Objects typically appear as pronouns, as illustrated in (11.17).

- (11.17)    b́    túŋ    Ø-nà    wē-è,    lē    kī-ŋchô    kī    Ø-nà  
              3PL   shoot   c1-cow   c1-ANA1   SET   c7-horn   c7AM   c1-cow

             m̩    kī    b̩    [wù],    wù    kwé  
              RES   c7   pierce   3SG   3SG   die

*‘They sent that cow (on top of him) so that the cow’s horn then pierced him and he died.’*  
    Greedy Friends.1.6

Locative nouns (described in §5.2.3) are derived from prepositional phrases and represent another type of Object—those which express semantic LOCATIONS.<sup>76</sup> They are observed as exhibiting distribution patterns comparable to their Locative Oblique counterparts (described later in this section), as seen in the examples below. Example (11.18) shows a LOCATION-Object following a PATIENT-Object, while in example (11.19) it follows a Comitative Oblique.<sup>77</sup>

- (11.18)    bá    mbú:    bá    mēsē,    bá    dē:    m̩-mē:    [fè-tāŋ]  
              they   foam   c2   finish   c2   cook   c6a-oil   c16-fireplace(c7)

*‘After finishing foaming, they cook the on the fireplace.’* (lit. *at the fireplace*)  
    Making Palm Oil.1.8

- (11.19)    wū    bū    bé    kī-chídè    [à-b̩]  
              3SG   arrive   with   c7-food.mat   c18-hand(c7)

*‘She appeared with a food-mat in [her] hand.’*     Two Wives.3.4

Examples (11.20)-(11.22) are other instances of LOCATION constituents without a preposition. The verb **gē**: ‘go’, illustrated in (11.20) and (11.21), usually does not have a prepositional phrase as complement, although it is possible. Likewise, locations expressed through proper nouns as in (11.22) typically are not introduced by a preposition.

<sup>76</sup> There is no reason to think that a locative noun could not also serve as a Subject, although the locational semantics severely limit the possible contexts in which it could be Subject. The most likely candidates for a locative noun Subject are those which are lexicalized, such as certain body parts.

<sup>77</sup> The fact that the LOCATION-Object follows the THEME-Comitative Object supports the analysis that clause syntax is organized by semantic roles rather than grammatical roles, at least to a degree. This asymmetry between semantic and grammatical roles is discussed in detail in §11.4.



- (11.20) m̄ n-lé ĩ-gē: [yē]  
RES 1SG-enter 1SG-go c9.house

*‘...so, I just entered the house.’*

Fire.7.1

- (11.21) lé ĩ-gē: [Ø-sùkū] ā-ntānā,  
SET 1SG-go c1-school c18-morning

*‘As I went to school in the morning...’*

Fire.1.7

- (11.22) b̄ gē jā [tíkālì],  
3PL P3 leave T.

*‘They left Tikari, ...’*

History.2.1

### 11.1.2 Formally marked constituents

The remaining clausal constituents are described in this section. Each of them appears with some kind of formal marking and usually follows the verb. The Applied Object is marked with the postposition applicative marker. The Comitative Oblique is introduced by a preposition, while the Locative Oblique is marked with a preposition and the postposition applicative marker.

The designations “Object” for Applied Object and “Oblique” for the two preposition-marked constituents, should not be considered as conventionally applied terms. They are simply reflections of the fact that Applied Objects may often be considered as obligatory constituents, while the two Oblique constituents often appear to have Adjunct status. Furthermore, the designation “Oblique” provides a means to recognize the formal similarities of the two different constituent types, both of which are marked by prepositions.

#### *Applied Object*

Applied Objects are marked with the phrase-final applicative postposition **lē** ‘APPL’ and usually occur immediately after the verb, unless an Object is present, then they follow the Object. They are less common than Objects, but are often seen with certain verbs like ‘see’, ‘tell’ and ‘touch’, as seen in (11.23)-(11.25) respectively. The semantic roles encoded are usually THEME, ADDRESSEE or BENEFACTIVE/RECIPIENT.

- (11.23) mē ĩ-gē ĩ-yēn-é [bà-mì lē] fē-kū,  
1SG.PRO 1SG-P3 1SG-see-PROG c2-person APPL c16-down

*‘I was seeing people on the earth...’*

Training.1.16

- (11.24) wù gē tī [wù lē] lē wù mǒn-é sēŋ kī  
 3SG P3 tell 3SG APPL COMP 3SG feel-PROG pain COMP(K)

wū yēn-ē lē wū gōn-é Ø-ń-fī:  
 3SG breathe-PROG SET 3SG want-PROG c1-NMZR-help

*'He told her that he was feeling pain when breathing so that he wanted help.'*  
 Lake.4.6

- (11.25) ŋ-gē: kī-bó à-kfūŋ, lē fī: yé lēs-è  
 1SG-put c7-arm c18-outside SET c9.air c9REL enter-PROG

yè kòn-è [mē lē]  
 c9 touch-PROG 1SG.PRO APPL

*'...I put my hand outside so as to receive fresh air.'* (lit. *so that the air that is entering touches me*)  
 Training.1.14

- (11.26) táda nā mùp-chōnē [ŋjì lē]  
 T. give c18a-ground.nut N. APPL

*'Tada gave groundnuts to Nji.'*

Applied Objects encoding RECIPIENTS in clauses with a THEME-Object, like in (11.26), are uncommon in the data corpus. Usually, the object is inferable and thus, omitted as described in §11.1.1. In this case, the Applied Object occurs immediately after the verb, as illustrated in (11.27).

- (11.27) wù mō wù búse m-bà: fó,  
 3SG RES 3SG remove c6a-soup there

wù ná [Ø-jwè: lē]  
 3SG give c1-husband.3SG.POSS APPL

*'She just removed soup from there (the leaf) and gave [it] to her husband.'*  
 Jealous Husband.13

As a reminder, when the THEME-Object is retained, the RECIPIENT usually is expressed through a second Object, which follows the verb and precedes the THEME as in (11.13) and (11.14) above.

There are no convincing examples in the text corpus of an omitted Applied Object. However, (11.28) might illustrate such an omission. If there is an omitted Applied Object here, it would be encoding a RECIPIENT. But the RECIPIENT is apparently no one in particular.

- (11.28) wù ná Ø-ŋgē [-] gē: bú kī-fē  
 3SG give c1-trouble the people(?) go reach c7-time
- kī Ø-mū ŋgāmū wú-mù gē fīsè yē,  
 c7REL c1-person old c1-some P3 twist c9.body
- wú dú wù lē lē  
 3SG say 3SG APPL COMP
- '...he gave trouble (was disruptive) to the point (lit. going and reaching time) that an elder turned and said to him...'* Lake.3.1

Example (11.29) shows that the predication 'give trouble' can have a RECIPIENT, although in this case it appears as an Object rather than an Applied Object. Therefore, because the RECIPIENT can be encoded as an Object or an Applied Object, it is not possible to know which one of these constituents is omitted in (11.28), if in fact the RECIPIENT has been omitted.

- (11.29) wù tó wù nā-à mē Ø-ŋgē,  
 3SG HAB 3SG give-PROG 1SG.PRO c1-trouble
- ŋchē: ségē-chī ségē-chī  
 true when-all when-all
- '...he is always giving me trouble, truly all the time.'*  
 What-goes-around.2.3

Constructions involving a speech verb, but with no ADDRESSEE, as in (11.30), are another possible source of evidence for an omitted Applied Object. Speech acts can sometimes have no specific addressee. But the "blind man" is clearly being addressed in this example, even though he does not appear in the sentence.

- (11.30) wù dú [-], kò là  
 3SG say blind.man catch CE
- mān-kàlà mā-nē, wó jí  
 c6a-cassava.puff c6a-PROX 2SG.HORT eat
- 'She said (with irritation) [to the blindman], "Take this cassava puff, you should eat [it]."'*  
 What-goes-around.4.9

Both of these examples with no grammatical applied object, along with the ellipsis of objects presented in §11.1.1, suggests that the notion of valency is of limited importance to Nchane. More discussion on this issue is provided in §11.2.

Example (11.31) is a rare example of a BENEFACTIVE in the text data. It is not surprising that it is expressed through an Applied Object, since RECIPIENTS often are as well.

- (11.31) mē      ĩ-gē      ĩ-gūd-é      Ø-ĩkāŋ      [bò lē],  
 1SG.PRO   1SG-P3   1SG-buy-PROG   c1-sha<sup>78</sup>   3PL   APPL  
*'I was buying sha (i.e., corn beer) for them....'*      Fire.46

A few examples are observed in the text corpus that have Applied Objects expressing LOCATIONS. These could be prepositional phrases (i.e., Locational Obliques), but with the preposition omitted for some reason. Examples (11.32) and (11.33) are given to illustrate.

- (11.32) Ø-mwā   wū   Ø-bwī   bó   bēm   gē   jā  
 c1-child   c1AM   c1-mother   3PL.POSS   B.   P3   leave  
 [Ø-ñ-tásé-jé   lé]  
 c1-NMZR-cross-path   APPL  
*'Their brother Bem left the junction...'*      History.3.4

- (11.33) bō   kēm-é   kī   bō   gē:  
 3PL   have-PROG   COMP(K)   3PL   go  
 [bvū-shí   bvū   Ø-mù   wù   Ø-nò   lē]  
 c14-face   c14AM   c1-person   c1AM   c1-god   APPL  
*'...they have to go before the man of God.'* (lit. *go to the face of the person of God*)      Marriage.3.6

### **Comitative Obliques**

Comitative Obliques are marked with the conjunction/preposition **bé** 'with', which is described in detail in §8.2. These obliques immediately follow the verb in clauses with no object and express the semantic roles of ACCOMPANIMENT and INSTRUMENT, as seen in (11.34) and (11.35) respectively.

<sup>78</sup> *Sha* is a regional term used for locally produced corn beer.

- (11.34) kéfē wó wā:d-è [bé Ø-chíjī Ø-jwǝ:]  
 VET 2SG quarrel-PROG with c1-father c1-husband.2SG.POSS  
*‘...don’t quarrel with your father-in-law...’* Marriage.6.6

- (11.35) Ø-táŋ wù m-mē: jē-dě chúlē,  
 c1-time c1REL c6a-oil cool-COMPL well  
 bā kē bā kǝl-è [bé kǝ-ntī],  
 they begin c2 catch-PROG with c7-bowl  
*‘When the oil is cool, they start collecting [it] with a bowl...’*  
 Making Palm Oil.1.11

Examples (11.36) and (11.37) show that Comitative Obliques follow Objects. Occurrences of Comitative Obliques and Objects in the same clause are somewhat rare in the data, likely due to the tendency to omit inferable objects.

- (11.36) lē wú mēsē yē yī Ø-ŋǝ  
 SET 3SG finish c9.word c9AM c1-god  
 [bé Ø-bwē-yē w-è]  
 with c1-mother-house c1-3SG.POSS  
*‘...after devotions with his host (lit. house-mother)...’* Lake.4.2

- (11.37) mé m-bǝ: wǝ [bé fī-ŋǝ fī-nē]  
 1SG.PRO 1SG-stab 2SG with c19-knife c19-PROX  
*‘...I will pierce you with this knife...’* Greedy Friends.1.14

A formal distinction is made between Comitative Obliques which encode ACCOMPANIMENT and those which encode INSTRUMENT. The former are usually observed in the text corpus to use personal pronouns for referential entities, while maintaining the comitative preposition, as in (11.38). In contrast, referential INSTRUMENTS never appear with simple pronominal reference, but instead are modified by a relative clause and with the resumptive locative pronoun **yú** ‘on.it’, as illustrated in (11.39), where the locative pronoun is best translated as “with him”. See §7.2 for a description of **yú** and its multiple antecedent types.

- (11.38) lē bó gū Ø-nà wē-è, bǝ tǝ [bé wù]  
 SET 3PL buy c1-cow c1-ANA1 3PL come with c1  
*‘When they bought the cow and came with it...’* Greedy Friends.1.4

(11.39) bós kô: bá dāmūmē,  
3PL catch P. D.

wù bós gē jō bós dā jō [yú]  
c1REL 3PL P3 take 3PL cross c9.stream on.it

*‘...they captured Pa Damume, who they used in crossing the stream.’*  
(lit. *who they crossed the stream with him*) Land Dispute.2.3

These two examples are particularly striking since the ACCOMPANIMENT referent is -[human] and encoded with a personal pronoun, while the INSTRUMENT referent is +[human] but encoded with a locative pronoun, which would presumably require a referent with a lower animacy factor.

Example (11.40) is a rare case of a clause with two Comitative Obliques. While the literal interpretation is problematic, it seems that both of these obliques are encoding ACCOMPANIMENT.<sup>79</sup>

(11.40) wó ká wó chēṅè [bé kī-ṅ-ché k-ūṅ]  
2SG ITER 2SG spoil with c7-NMZR-stay c7-2SG.POSS

[bé Ø-ṅ w-ō]  
with c1-god c1-2SG.POSS

*‘You have also spoiled your own life with your God.’* School.23

The text corpus contains no examples of Applied Objects and Comitative Obliques in the same clause.

### **Locative Obliques**

Locative Obliques are expressed through prepositional phrases consisting of one of several prepositions followed by a noun phrase and the phrase-final applicative postposition **lē**. These constituents usually express LOCATION and follow any Objects and/or Comitative Obliques that might be present. See §8.1 for a description of prepositions.

<sup>79</sup> The verb in this example is semantically complex and poorly understood. In constructions which have no post-verbal complement, it can mean “become spoiled” and the pre-verbal complement appears to be a PATIENT. Post-verbal complements are always introduced by the comitative preposition and the meaning is “destroy” or “cause to be spoiled”. The Comitative Oblique in such constructions appears to be affected by the action and therefore might be construed as a PATIENT rather than ACCOMPANIMENT. However, this would be the only known case of a Comitative Oblique encoding a semantic role other than ACCOMPANIMENT or INSTRUMENT.

Examples (11.41)-(11.43) demonstrate Locative Obliques expressed through prepositional phrases which are headed by the three primary prepositions, **fɛ** ‘at’, **à** ‘in’ and **yè** ‘on’, respectively.

- (11.41) b́ó bú [fɛ̀ kɪ-tɛ́ ky-ɛ́: lɛ́]  
 3PL arrive at c7-tree c7-ANA1 APPL  
*‘...they arrived at that tree.’* Jealous Husband.3.6

- (11.42) bā dē: [à Ø-ká lɛ́]  
 c2 cook in c1-barrel APPL  
*‘They cook [the palm nuts] in a drum.’* Making Palm Oil.1.3

- (11.43) wé, mē ŋ-gè j̄-yēn-é lɛ́  
 up 1SG.PRO 1SG-P3 1SG-see-PROG COMP  
 Ø-àfyóŋ sél-é [yè kɪ-njá lɛ́]  
 c1-airplane skip-PROG on c7-cloud APPL  
*‘Up (in the air), I felt (lit. saw) that the airplane was galloping on the clouds.’* Training.1.15

SOURCE constituents may be expressed through a Locative Oblique, as seen in (11.44). It may be that SOURCE is a subtype of LOCATION in Nchane.

- (11.44) Ø-bā wē-è lɛ́ mē lé b́é  
 c1-pa c1-ANA1 COMP 1SG.PRO COP with  
 m̄n̄-kàlà yānē à kɪ-kɛ: lɛ́, mà  
 c6a-cassava.puff here in c7-bag APPL c6aREL  
 n-lēg-é [à Ø-kwēsé wū-mù lɛ́]  
 1SG-beg-PROG in c1-woman c1-some APPL  
*‘That pa [said], “I have some cassava puff here in [my] bag, which I was begging from some woman.”’* What-goes-around.7.6

Locative Obliques follow Objects and Comitative Obliques, as shown in (11.45) and (11.46) respectively. Note that, while the Locative Obliques in the above examples are arguably adjuncts, example (11.45) illustrates a case where it is an obligatory constituent in this particular argument frame, since its absence would result in an alternative semantic reading of the verb (that he was set aside for some later use or purpose). Alternative argument frames are discussed in some detail in §11.2.4.

- (11.45) bā-mī bá-mù gē tò bō gē: wù [à kì-ntā lē]  
 c2-person c2-some P3 come 3PL put 3SG in c7-chair APPL  
*‘...some people came, put him in a chair...’* Lake.5.1

- (11.46) yé gē bē bō, bī-Ǟ kô: lán-bōy,  
 c10.sorrow P3 COP 3PL c2-X catch L.-B.  
 bō gē: bē wù [à Ø-ntō wù-bō lē]  
 3PL go with 3SG in c1-palace c1-3PL.POSS APPL  
*‘Unfortunately for them<sup>80</sup> (lit. sorrows were them), the X people  
 captured Long-Boy and took him to their palace.’* Land Dispute.2.1

Although quite rare, topic-marked Locative Obliques occur clause-initially, which is illustrated in example (11.47).

- (11.47) [ā kī-tē lé], nēŋgē yèŋ shì lē  
 in c7-tree APPL N. see c9.chicken APPL  
*‘In the tree, Nenge saw a chicken.’*

Prepositional phrases as Locative Obliques may be referenced via locative pronouns, which occur in the same clausal position as their non-pronominal counterparts. See §7.2 for specific details. While locative noun phrases (described as Objects in §11.1.1) have similar distribution and semantics of Locative Obliques, they are only rarely replaced with a pronoun, and pronominal reference might be limited to lexicalized locative nouns like “palm of hand”, which might be more identifiable as PATIENTS/THEMES than as LOCATIONS.

### 11.1.3 The applicative postposition *lē*

The *lē* postposition does not present as a typical applicative marker, which is conventionally recognized as a verbal extension reconstructed for Proto-Bantu as *\*-id-* (Meeussen 1967). Nevertheless, its occurrence with constituents encoding various types of semantic roles and of different syntactic types is suggestive of applicative-like function, with polysemy widely recognized as associated with applicatives (see for example Hyman 2018b: 179; and Jerro 2016a: 218). This section begins with a look at how the cognates of *lē* are treated in neighboring languages, followed by a brief presentation of some of the different contexts in which *lē* is observed and possible analyses. Language data contrasting clauses with and without *lē* is presented next, illustrating semantic alternation associated with *lē* and seeking

<sup>80</sup> The analysis of this apparently conventionalized phrase is not certain.



evidence of a core function of the postposition. The section concludes with a brief summary of the relevant points presented and justification for an applicative analysis.

The Nchane applicative marker **lē** is cognate with Mundabli **lā** (Voll 2017) and Mungbam **=nV** (Lovegren 2013), both of which are treated as marking dative case. However, it is also cognate with Noni **lé**, which has several proposed analyses, including “locative suffix” (Hyman 1981: 13), “in someone’s stead” (cf. benefactive) and a marker of “indirect object” (cf. dative) (Hyman 1981: 80–81). The Mungong cognate **nə** is analyzed as a locative marker (Boutwell 2014). However, it appears to be much less productive and occurs with fewer types of constructions.

Nchane RECIPIENTS/BENEFACTIVES are often marked with **lē**, as well as the complements of certain verbs like ‘see’ and ‘say’. (Examples of these are given in §11.1.2 above.) In the case of RECIPIENTS, a dative analysis as taken in Mundabli and Mungbam is supported. However, this analysis is less appropriate for the THEME complements of ‘see’ and ‘touch’, where the transfer of goods or services is not immediately evident.

It is possible that in each of these cases there is a sense of directionality involved in the predication. With RECIPIENTS, there is the movement of an object from one individual to another. Meanwhile, the act of “seeing” could be understood as the transfer of an image from the object to the eye/mind of the EXPERIENCER. Likewise, ADDRESSEES are the recipients of some kind of verbal message. Indeed, analyzing **lē** as a Locative postposition is well suited for its role in marking Locative Obliques. However, not all LOCATIONS are marked with **lē**. Note that I assume the postposition marking Applied Objects (e.g., RECIPIENTS) and Locative Obliques as representing a single morpheme.

De Kind and Bostoen (2012) argue that similar polysemy of the Ciluba (Bantu) applicative is best subsumed in the general term GOAL. An analysis of **lē** as a marker of GOAL seems plausible, but only infers its similarity to the applicative extension observed in other languages like Ciluba. Thus, an applicative analysis might be merited in order to capture similar function, even though **lē** is not a verbal extension.

Applicatives are also typically thought of as valency-changing operators, which would seem to make this analysis less appropriate for Nchane, since **lē** arguably does not affect the valency of the verb. However, recent attention has been given to the role that applicatives play in effecting semantic shifts in certain Bantu languages (see Jerro 2016b and; Marten & Mous 2017 for example), without an apparent change in valency. Semantic alternations can be observed in contrasting clauses with and without a **lē**-marked constituent, which is illustrated below.

In both of the clauses in (11.48) and (11.49), “Tada” is the THEME of the verb **chūpè** ‘show’ and the 3SG pronoun **wū** is the BENEFACTIVE, or the one for whom something is being shown. The interpretation of (11.48), with the double-object construction, must be that “he” was looking for “Tada”. While the same interpretation

is possible for (11.49), the clause with the Applied Object, it also could mean that “he” was altogether unaware of “Tada”.

- (11.48)    ñjì    gē    chūpè    wū    tádà  
              N.    P3    show    3SG    T.

*‘Nji showed him Tada.’ (‘he’ was looking for Tada)*

- (11.49)    ñjì    gē    chūpè    tádà    wù    lē  
              N.    P3    show    T.    3SG    APPL

*‘Nji showed Tada to him.’ or ‘Nji introduced Tada to him.’*

One way to interpret the difference between the two clauses is in terms of specificity. The clause in (11.48) with the two Objects (i.e., without an Applied Object) has a narrower range of expression, where the action of the AGENT is motivated by the desire of the BENEFACTIVE. On the other hand, the clause in (11.49) with the Applied Object expresses a more general situation, where the predication possibly happened without any intentionality or forethought of any of the parties involved.

Examples (11.50) and (11.51) show a similar semantic alternation involving the seeing of a tree. Example (11.50) has an Object followed by a locative pronoun, which provides a locational setting for the “tree”. This locative pronoun is also present in (11.51), but here it follows a prepositional phrase. In this second example, the reading is of seeing the *place* where the tree is rather than the tree itself.

- (11.50)    nēŋgé    yēŋ    kī-tē    yō  
              N.    see    c7-tree    inside

*‘Nenge saw a tree there (in the forest).’*

- (11.51)    nēŋgé    yēŋ    ā    kī-tē    lē    yō  
              N.    see    in    c7-tree    APPL    inside

*‘Nenge saw the area of a tree there (in the forest).’*

Again, the clause with the applicative postposition is used to express a predication with a broader or more general interpretation.

The next two sets of examples contrast a locative noun with its corresponding prepositional phrase. A locative noun is seen in (11.52) and expresses a specific location, while a prepositional phrase, with accompanying applicative postposition, occurs in (11.53) and expresses an approximate location.

- (11.52) bá dē: m̄-mē: [fè-tāŋ]  
 they cook c6a-oil c16-fireplace

*‘...they cook the oil on the fireside.’*

Making Palm Oil.1.8

- (11.53) wū gē: m̄-mē: [fè kī-tānā k-àŋ lē]  
 3SG put c6a-oil at c7-fireplace c7-1SG.POSS APPL

*‘He put the oil near my fireplace.’*

The locative noun in (11.54) also expresses a specific location. The “market” refers to a specific one that the speaker has in mind. Reference to “market” in (11.55) is made through a prepositional phrase and applicative postposition and gives a generic reading—the market is either one that the speaker does not personally know (i.e., has never seen it or been to it) or the specificity of the market is unimportant.

- (11.54) wū gē: [fè-wā:ŋ]  
 3SG go c16-market

*‘He went to the market.’ (one that is known)*

- (11.55) wū gē: [fè wā:ŋ lē]  
 3SG go at c3.market APPL

*‘He went to a market.’ (market location is unknown)*

In each of the example sets above, the clauses with the applicative postposition give a more general reading than do the clauses with an unmarked Object, suggesting that the marker is associated with some kind of semantic alternation. It is possible that this alternation is a reflection of what Jerro describes as the Applied Object making a “stronger pragmatic contribution” as compared to the non-applied variety (2016a: 218–19). Thus, the clauses with the Applied Object are pragmatically marked. For example, the sentence with the locative noun Object in example (11.54) is something commonly said, while the applicative example in (11.55) requires a more unusual context in order to be uttered.

To conclude, the **lē** postposition routinely occurs marking RECIPIENTS/BENEFACTIVES, ADDRESSEES, LOCATIVES, and the complement of certain verbs like ‘see’. The wide range of semantic roles associated with the postposition is comparable to that observed with applicative constructions in other languages and indicates a similar function. In addition, the presence of **lē** is sometimes observed effecting a semantic alternation, although the nature of that alternation is somewhat obscure. Finally, the form is plausible as a reflex of the Proto-Bantu applicative **\*-id-**, which often is realized as **-il**, with the form **-le** present

## 11.2 Argument frames

In this section I will simply refer to clauses with differing numbers of constituents, where “constituent” refers more specifically to nominal constituents (i.e., the clause constituent “verb” is excluded). Thus, clauses with only one constituent (cf. intransitive) are described in §11.2.1, clauses with two constituents (cf. transitive) are presented in §11.2.2 and those with more than two constituents are discussed in §11.2.3. The final section (11.2.4) presents clauses with certain verbs which display multiple argument frames. In other words, they can appear with different kinds of constituents, resulting in different shades of meaning expressed by the verb.

### 11.2.1 One-constituent clauses

(11.56) S V  
[kì-nfɛ̀: kɪ́-mú] [gɛ̃ jɛ̃ɲ-ɪ]  
c7-blind.man c7-some P3 walk-PROG

*'A certain blind man was walking around.'*      What-goes-around.1.1

<sup>81</sup> The word **ché** ‘stay’ expresses the idea of staying overnight at a location. It often may be interpreted as sleeping. In its extended meaning, it means to live somewhere.

- (11.60) S V O  
 [bā] [lé bā yú] [nàŋ yē-è]  
 they COP c2 kill c9.animal c9-ANA1  
*'...they have killed the animal.'* Inheritance.25

In place of an Object, the clause can have an Applied Object. This variety of clause occurs with a small number of verbs like **yēŋ** 'see', as in (11.61).

- (11.61) S V O<sub>APPL</sub>  
 [wū] [yēŋ] [kī-chídè kē-è lē]  
 3SG see c7-food.mat c7-ANA1 APPL  
*'...she saw that food mat.'*<sup>82</sup> Two Wives.6.1

This configuration is also seen in clauses with a RECIPIENT when the THEME Object is omitted. Example (11.62) illustrates an omitted Object, where "cassava puff" in the final clause is inferable from the first clause of the sentence. The omitted Object often appears in an earlier sentence, or perhaps not at all, in the case of a universally known referent.

- (11.62) wù jó màn-kàlà mā-ā mà  
 3SG take c6a-cassava.puff c6a-ANA1 c6aREL  
  
 wù bé yéfè wū gē:, [wù] [ná] [wù lē]  
 3SG <sup>P</sup>COP rub 3SG put 3SG give 3SG APPL  
*'She took that cassava puff, which she had rubbed [with poison] and set aside, and gave [it] to him.'* What-goes-around.4.8

Two-constituent clauses may also have a Subject and a Comitative Oblique or a Locative Oblique. These are illustrated in (11.63) and (11.64). The obliques in these clauses are not obligatory, in the sense that leaving them out would not affect grammaticality. Nevertheless, that fact does not appear to have any consequences beyond the clause having only two constituents.

<sup>82</sup> This word translated as "food mat" is usually a flat, circular mat made of woven strips of dried palm frond shavings. The food mat is used in food processing, such as separating beans from chaff.

- (11.63) S V OBL<sub>COM</sub>  
 mē [gḗ n-t5] [bḗ bī-gḗ]  
 1SG.PRO P3 1SG-come with c8-teeth  
*'I brought some money.'* (lit. *I came with teeth*) Fire.1.4

- (11.64) S V OBL<sub>LOC</sub>  
 [bó] [fúnè] [à Ø-afyōŋ lē]  
 3PL fly in c1-airplane APPL  
*'...they flew in an airplane...'* Training.1.10

### 11.2.3 Three-constituent clauses

Some verbs are able to take a Subject, an Object and an Applied Object, resulting in clauses with three constituents. The Object follows the verb and expresses the THEME, while the Applied Object follows the Object and expresses the RECIPIENT. The text corpus contains no examples of such object-applicative clauses, but the elicited clauses in (11.65) and (11.66) are given to illustrate.

- (11.65) S V O O<sub>APPL</sub>  
 [tádà] [gḗ ná] [Ø-ŋgōnē] [chà: lē]  
 T. P3 give c1-banana c9.monkey APPL  
*'Tada gave a banana to the monkey.'*

- (11.66) S V O O<sub>APPL</sub>  
 [tádà] [chíŋs-é] [m̄-bvū:] [ŋjì lē]  
 T. send-PROG c6a-wine N. APPL  
*'Tada is sending wine to Nji.'*

Clauses with a THEME and a RECIPIENT more commonly express these semantic arguments through two Objects, as seen in (11.67) and (11.68). The RECIPIENT immediately follows the verb and the applicative postposition is not present.

- (11.67) S V O<sub>1</sub> O<sub>2</sub>  
 [wū] [ná] [mē] [Ø-ŋgwè]  
 3SG give 1SG.PRO c1-fishing.pole  
*'He gave me a fishing pole.'* Fishing.1.2

- (11.68)
- |                |         |                  |          |       |                  |      |
|----------------|---------|------------------|----------|-------|------------------|------|
| bḡ:            | bā      | Ø-kwēsé          | wē-è     | S     | V                |      |
| c2.child       | c2AM    | c1-woman         | c1-ANA1  | c1REL | <sup>P</sup> COP | give |
|                |         |                  |          |       |                  |      |
| O <sub>1</sub> |         | O <sub>2</sub>   |          |       |                  |      |
| [kì-fḡ:        | kē-è]   | [màṅ-kàlà        | ma-a]    |       |                  |      |
| c7-blind.man   | c7-ANA1 | c6a-cassava.puff | c6a-ANA1 |       |                  |      |
- ‘...the children of that woman who had given that blindman that cassava puff.’*
- What-goes-around.8.2

It is possible that the preference for this configuration is the result of the higher rank of recipients on the animacy scale as compared with typical themes, with animates appearing closer to the verb and inanimates less close. (This observation is also relevant to the notion of the postverbal position as associated with focused constituents, as discussed in §§11.4 and 16.3.)

Three-constituent clauses may also have a Subject, an Object or Applied Object, and one of the oblique constituent types. (11.69) and (11.70) show clauses with a Subject, an Object and a Comitative Oblique, the first example having an INSTRUMENT constituent and the second example having an ACCOMPANIMENT constituent. Meanwhile, (11.71) illustrates a clause with a Subject, an Object and a Locative Oblique. In each case, the oblique follows the Object, which follows the verb.

- (11.69)
- |             |          |      |                    |          |
|-------------|----------|------|--------------------|----------|
| S           | V        | O    | OBL <sub>COM</sub> |          |
| [mé]        | [m-bḡ:]  | [wḡ] | [bé fī-pḡ          | fī-nē]   |
| 1SG.PRO.FUT | 1SG-stab | 2SG  | with c19-knife     | c19-PROX |
- ‘...I will pierce you with this knife...’*
- Greedy Friends.1.14
- (11.70)
- |       |            |           |                    |
|-------|------------|-----------|--------------------|
| S     | V          | O         | OBL <sub>COM</sub> |
| [ṇjì] | [gē là]    | [wá:]     | [bé bī]            |
| N.    | P3 go.goal | c3.market | with c9.goat       |
- ‘Nji went to the market with a goat (e.g., to sell).’*



- (11.71) S V O  
 [kì-nfɛ̃: ky-ē:] [gēn-è kī lēg-è] [màŋ-kàlà]  
 c7-blind.man c7-ANA1 go-PROG c7 beg-PROG c6a-cassava.puff
- OBL<sub>LOC</sub>  
 [à Ø-kwēsé wē-ē lē] à-jū à-chī à-jū à-chī  
 in c1-woman c1-ANA1 APPL c18-day c18-all c18-day c18-all
- ‘...the blindman was coming and begging cassava puff from that woman, day after day.’* What-goes-around.1.5

Clauses with a Subject, an Applied Object and an oblique constituent, as in (11.72), are rare. As indicated by the parentheses, the postposition applicative marker is optional for the first postverbal constituent (i.e., “monkey”). Therefore, this clause can appear with an Applied Object or an Object. It is unclear if there is an actual semantic difference between the two versions (e.g., see vs. look at), although the semantic role of “monkey” is THEME in both.

- (11.72) S V O<sub>(APPL)</sub> OBL<sub>LOC</sub>  
 [nēŋgé] [yēŋ] [chā: (lē)] [ā kī-tē lē]  
 N. see c9.monkey APPL in c7-tree APPL
- ‘Nenge saw a monkey in a tree.’*

The text corpus contains no examples of clauses with more than three of the primary nominal constituents, but the elicited examples in (11.73), alternative iterations of the same clause, show that they can be formed. It could be argued that the Locative Oblique in (11.73)a is modifying the RECIPIENT-Applied Object, and therefore not actually a clausal constituent. However, this argument is less tenable for the clause in (11.73)b, where the Locative Oblique and the RECIPIENT-Object are separated by the THEME-Object.

- (11.73) a. S V O O<sub>APPL</sub> OBL<sub>LOC</sub>  
 [tádà] [gē ná] [Ø-ŋgònē] [chā: lē] [ā kī-tē lē]  
 T. P3 give c1-banana c9.monkey APPL in c7-tree APPL
- ‘Tada gave a banana to the monkey in the tree.’*
- b. S V O<sub>1</sub> O<sub>2</sub> OBL<sub>LOC</sub>  
 [tádà] [gē ná] [chā:] [Ø-ŋgònē] [ā kī-tē lē]  
 T. P3 give c9.monkey c1-banana in c7-tree APPL
- ‘Tada gave the monkey a banana in the tree.’*

The applicative postposition marking the Applied Object in (11.73)a is obligatory in this case, avoiding a potentially problematic double-object construction. I assume that the grammar dictates that the first Object in such constructions be interpreted as the RECIPIENT and the second Object as the THEME. Thus, omitting the applicative postposition would result in a semantically infelicitous utterance.

#### 11.2.4 Alternative argument frames

A small number of verbs have been observed to have more than one argument frame. In other words, the same verb appears in different clauses with different kinds of, and/or different numbers of, clausal constituents. This sometimes leads to difficulties in determining which constituents are required by a given verb, as stated in the chapter's introduction. Thus, rather than considering the valency of verbs, I have chosen to describe the valency of clauses. This section illustrates some of these verbs and the accompanying semantic shift presented by the alternative frames.

The examples below illustrate the alternative argument frames of the verb **ɲá** 'give'. In example (11.74), the verb takes two Objects, (or as shown in (11.65) above, an Object and an Applied Object). In contrast, the verb in example (11.75) takes an Object and a Comitative Oblique. Considering the Semantic roles in each clause, (11.74) has a RECIPIENT and a THEME, while (11.75) has a BENEFACTIVE and a THEME (or perhaps INSTRUMENT).

- (11.74)    S            V            O<sub>RECIPIENT</sub>    O<sub>THEME</sub>  
              [wũ]    [ɲá]    [mɛ̃]    [Ø-ŋgwè]  
              3SG    give    1SG.PRO    c1-fishing pole

*'He gave me a fishing pole.'*

Fishing.1.2

- (11.75)    S                    V                    O<sub>BENEFACTIVE</sub>    OBL<sub>THEME?</sub>  
              [Ø-sɔ̃ŋɔ̃]    [ɲá-á]    [bè]    [bé    m-mɛ̃:]  
              c5-oil.palm    give-PROG    1PL    with    c6a-oil

*'The palm tree provides us with oil.'*

King of Trees.1.3

The verb **gɛ̃**: 'put' often takes an Object and a Locative Oblique as seen in (11.76). A second argument frame is illustrated in (11.77), where there is no locative constituent. In this second frame, the verb expresses the notion of something being put aside or stored for use at a later time.

- (11.76) S V O<sub>PATIENT</sub>  
 [bā-mī bā-mû] [gē tò b5 gē:] [wũ]  
 c2-person c2-some P3 come 3PL put 3SG

OBL<sub>LOCATION</sub>  
 [à kî-ntā lē]  
 in c7-chair APPL

*'...some people came, put him in a chair...'*

Fire.5.1

- (11.77) S V O<sub>PATIENT</sub>  
 wũ gē: bī-nfūnē  
 3SG put c8-corn

*'...she put the corn aside...'*

Disobedient Child.1.3

The lack of a locative element in this example does not simply imply that the location is unimportant and therefore unspecified. When this is the case, the generic location **bvūjū bvūmū** [c14-place c14-some] can be used.

The verb **yēŋ** 'see' also has multiple argument frames, as illustrated in examples (11.78) and (11.79). The first takes an Applied Object and expresses that the object is actually seen or will be seen. The second example takes a complement clause and functions like a verb of cognition.

- (11.78) S V O<sub>THEME</sub>  
 mē ŋ-gē n-yēn-é [bà-mì lē] fē-kū,  
 1SG.PRO 1SG-P3 1SG-see-PROG c2-person APPL c16-down

*'I was seeing people on the earth...'*

Training.1.16

- (11.79) S V COMPLEMENT  
 [wũ] [yēŋ] [lē lé Ø-nlò]  
 3SG see COMP COP c1-poison

wũ b5: bā-ā jí]  
 c1REL c2.child c2-ANA1 eat

*'...he realized that it is POISON that the children had eaten.'*

What-goes-around.9.7

### 11.3 Order of clausal constituents

The canonical order of clausal constituents (in terms of grammatical roles) is given in Figure 11.1. This schema reflects the basic order of words in positive declarative main clauses with default or neutral topicality and focus.

Subject-Verb-(Object)-(Object<sub>APPL</sub>)-(Oblique<sub>COM</sub>)-(Oblique<sub>LOC</sub>)

Figure 11.1 Canonical word order.

The above order is extrapolated from examples with various constituent combinations, since all of the constituent types have not been observed together in a single clause. All of the constituents following the verb are in parentheses, indicating that they are optional elements of the clause. In some clauses, a first-person singular subject is expressed only through an agreement prefix on the verb. However, as this is the only case in which it could be argued that the Subject constituent is not present, at least in canonical sentences, I maintain an analysis of the Subject as an obligatory constituent of the clause.<sup>83</sup> This observation has been made for the nearby language Mundabli (Voll 2017: 269) and is likely representative of all the languages in the area.

Note that time adverbs like “yesterday” and “next week” are somewhat free in their clausal position, although they tend to occur either clause-initially or clause-finally.

In general, there is no case marking of constituents, and grammatical relations are dictated to a large extent through word order. Yet, there is a strong tendency for object pronouns to carry a L tone or a H tone, while subject pronouns usually have a M tone, although this tendency is considered to be associated with clause position rather than with grammatical case. (See §11.4 for further discussion).

Departure from the canonical word order primarily has to do with topic-marking and focus strategies. These are described in Chapter 16.

### 11.4 Clausal constituent alignment

In this section I attempt to identify how Nchane organizes and governs clauses. There are three areas with apparent influence over constituent alignment and selection: grammatical roles, semantic roles, information structure. First impressions are that much of clause governance falls within the domain of grammatical roles. However, as will be demonstrated below, semantic role and information structure considerations are more active in influencing clause syntax. The hypothesized constituent mapping as controlled by these three systems is summarized in Figure 11.2.

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<sup>83</sup> It might be more precise to say that the only obligatory constituent is the Agent rather than the Subject. See §11.4 and §16.3.1 for details regarding this point.

| Slot       | 1       | V    | 2         | 3       | 4      | 5      |
|------------|---------|------|-----------|---------|--------|--------|
| <b>GR:</b> | SUBJ    | VERB | OBJ       | OBJAPPL | OBLCOM | OBLLOC |
| <b>SR:</b> | AGT     | VERB | PAT/THM   | RECIP   | INSTR  | LOC    |
| <b>IS:</b> | [TOPIC] | VERB | [FOCUS... |         |        | ...]   |

Figure 11.2 Comparison of constituent mapping in clauses via grammatical roles vs. semantic roles vs. information structure.

Each of these systems are addressed below in order.

Nchane can be viewed as an SVO language, with grammatical relations encoded largely by word order. As observed for Mundabli (Voll 2017: 279), support for grammatical relations is relatively weak beyond word order. The only possible evidence of case marking is found in the pronominal system, where preverbal pronouns may be differentiated from postverbal pronouns by the realization of tone. As mentioned earlier, preverbal pronouns usually have a mid tone, while postverbal pronouns usually have a low or a high tone.

However, this variation in tone appears to be more associated with clause position than with grammatical role. As was stated in §7.1, the observation that postverbal pronouns usually have a low or a high tone extends not only to Objects, but also to Applied Objects and Comitative Obliques; in other words, any postverbal pronoun. Thus, for example, tone cannot be said to specifically mark for Accusative case, although it might be argued that pronouns are marked tonally as Subjective/Nominative case, in opposition to non-Subjective/Nominative case.

Another possible evidence for grammatical relations is agreement marking on verbs. It is clear that in focus-neutral, declarative sentences with certain TAM configurations, verbs agree with the Subject, as in (11.80).

- (11.80) **bā-nā**    *ché*    **bā**    *jí*    *kì-nfūnē*  
           c2-cow    p2    c2    eat    c7-corn

*‘The cows ate the corn.’*

However, as (11.81) shows, in agent focus constructions where the logical subject and the logical object switch clausal positions, the preverbal “object” does not elicit verbal agreement. Nor does the postverbal “subject” (which by my definition is an AGENT-Object).

- (11.81) *kì-nfūnē*    *ché*    *jí*    **bā-nā**  
           c7-corn    p2    eat    c2-cow

*‘The COWS ate the corn.’*

Constructing a sentence with the inanimate referent serving as a grammatical subject (i.e., preverbal and eliciting verbal agreement) results in the clause in (11.82). This clause is grammatical, but semantically infelicitous.

- (11.82) #kì-nfūnē    ché    kī    jí    bā-nā  
                   c7-corn    p2    c7    eat    c2-cow

*‘The corn ate the cows.’*

The above observations demonstrate that clause positions are not strictly designated according to grammatical roles. Subjects are limited to the preverbal position, but not all preverbal constituents are Subjects. Furthermore, non-agentive preverbal constituents are normally not Subjects. As reflected in Figure 11.2, there is a fairly strong tendency for constituents encoding the various semantic roles to occur in a particular position and in a particular order relative to the other constituents. In other words, AGENTS almost always precede the verb and PATIENTS and THEMES usually follow the verb. INSTRUMENTS follow PATIENTS and LOCATIONS come last.

One common exception to the semantic role mapping in Figure 11.2 is observed in double-object constructions, where RECIPIENTS precede THEMES. As mentioned in §11.1.2, this word order might be related to animacy concerns. But the important thing to observe about this exception as it relates to constituent alignment is that the RECIPIENT can only precede the THEME when it is encoded as an Object, not as an Applied Object. This indicates two competing influences in the alignment process.

Good (2010: 64–65) notes similar concerns related to the clause structure of Naki, Noni and Aghem, stating that “...the interpretation of the word order facts indicate(d) that such grammatical roles [i.e., subject and object] play relatively little role in these languages’ surface syntax.” He suggests that information structure concerns such as topic and focus are critical in determining constituent alignment, such that these languages could be described as “discourse centered” rather than “grammatical-role centered.”

The degree to which Nchane is similar to Naki in terms of syntax management is difficult to determine. However, it seems clear that Nchane clause structure also displays strong tendencies for Topic and Focus positions (or “fields” as Good puts it). Topics usually appear in the preverbal position, although it seems that clause-initial position is more topical than the immediately before verb position, since non-subject constituents marked as topic are observed to precede preverbal subjects when they are present.

Focus is associated with the postverbal position. This is evidenced in postverbal agent focus constructions as well as the focusing cleft construction (see

examples (11.6) and (11.8) respectively). In both of these constructions, the focused constituent follows the verb (or the copula in the case of the cleft construction).

The argument for Topic and Focus influence over clause syntax is further supported by the “dummy” focus element **l̩** ‘FOC’ in certain predicate focus constructions, as in (11.83). The focus particle is obligatory in this example and apparently fulfills the syntactic requirement of this verb form to have a complement in the postverbal position, the clausal position which happens to be associated with focus.

(11.83) wù gē ná Ø-ntāŋ lē wū kwé-é **l̩**  
 3SG P3 give c1-thought COMP 3SG die-PROG FOC

*‘He thought that he was dying.’*

Lake.4.4

Hyman makes similar observations regarding the same focus marker in Noni, noting that certain verb forms “require a verbal complement” (Hyman 1981: 77). One can therefore infer that, in these cases, where the focus is on the entire predication, the language prefers to have some element in the postverbal focus position rather than having it empty. See §16.3.5 for a description of this focus marker.

However, it does not necessarily follow that the sentence topic always occurs preverbally. In the case of postverbal agent focus constructions where the logical object is preposed (or *defocalized*), the preverbal THEME-Object is normally more topical than in its canonical postverbal position, but it might not be the *de facto* Topic. In fact, postverbal agent focus constructions with no PATIENT/THEME-Object end up without a preverbal constituent altogether. The same is true of cleft constructions, which have no subject, dummy or otherwise. Nevertheless, topic-marking strategies usually position the Topic to the left of the verb.

In addition, while there is some validity to the notion of the postverbal position being associated with Focus, only postverbal agent focus constructions place the focused constituent immediately after the lexical verb. The focused constituent follows the copula in cleft constructions, while in counter-expectation focus constructions, the focused constituent follows the n-copula and can remain *in situ*, as illustrated in (11.84).

(11.84) á wū bé ná bvū-lē: **pū shì lē** gè  
 NEG1 3SG P1 give c14-fufu COP(N) c9.chicken APPL NEG2

*‘She did not give fufu to THE CHICKEN.’ (she gave it to someone else)*

In summary, Subjects only appear in the preverbal position, but Objects may be postverbal or preverbal (in certain contexts). However, Applied Objects never precede Objects and Locative Obliques are almost always clause-final. Likewise, AGENTS tend to be preverbal and to serve as sentence Topics. There is a preference

for RECIPIENTS to precede THEMES, but only when encoded as an Object. But when a RECIPIENT follows a THEME, it is encoded as an Applied Object. Topics usually are somewhere to the left of the verb, with non-Subject Topics preceding the preverbal Subject. But postverbal Topics are attested (for example (16.6)). In addition, there is strong evidence that Focused constituents follow the verb or a copula. But the expression of focus through the postverbal position of the lexical verb is limited to *in situ* Objects (in so-called neutral focus constructions) and postverbal agent focus constructions.

I conclude that no single system can be viewed as primary in clausal constituent selection and alignment. It appears that all three of these areas (grammatical roles, semantic roles and information structure) are working together to control the placement of the various clausal constituents. However, the influence of grammatical roles is significantly limited in comparison with discourse-semantic concerns.



## Chapter 12

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### Relative clauses

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This chapter describes Nchane relative clauses. I begin in §12.1 with a presentation of various details related to clause structure and the formal elements of relative clauses. Section 12.2 looks at how relative clauses differ from main clauses and §12.3 addresses the topic of which clause constituents are available for relativization and which clausal roles may be filled by noun phrases modified by relative clauses. Note that in the examples, the head nominal and resumptive pronouns (when present) are bolded and relative clauses appear in brackets. Gaps are represented by a minus sign.

#### 12.1 Relative clause structure and formal properties

Nchane relative clauses follow the head nominal and are introduced by a relativizer which agrees with the head nominal. This is illustrated in example (12.1), which has a relativized class 2 noun, and example (12.2), which has a relativized class 9 noun.

(12.1) **bā-mī** [bá - gè tó-ó] bā yēs-è mè  
c2-person c2REL person P3 come-PROG c2 greet 1SG.PRO

lē lē Ø-lā w-àŋ lé wù fyé  
APPL COMP c5-compound c1-1SG.POSS COP c1 burn

*‘The people who were coming, were sympathizing (lit. greeting) with me that my compound had burned.’* Fire.44

- (12.2) Ø-sɔ̃ŋɔ̃      ɲá-á  
 c5-oil.palm    give-PROG

**fɪ:**      [yē      mw-ē:      mūɲ-chí      kòŋē      - ]  
 c9.air    c9REL    c18a-thing    c18a-all      want    air

*'The palm tree provides air that all things need.'*      King of Trees.1.8

The relativizers, which are summarized in Table 12.1, are segmentally identical to the personal pronouns. However, they present a different tone pattern. While main clause preverbal pronouns are marked with either a L or a M tone, relativizers introducing clauses with a relativized preverbal constituent are marked with a H tone. Likewise, main clause postverbal pronouns are marked with a H tone, but relativizers introducing clauses with a relativized postverbal constituent are marked with either a L or a M tone.<sup>84</sup>

The parentheses enclosing certain relativizers in the table indicate that they are rare. The alternative form for class 2 enclosed in parentheses is a particularly interesting case, illustrating a possible split in the relativizer system. The prevalent form is **ba**, which is a conservative reflex of the class 2 nominal prefix. This form is observed as the relativizer for human and nonhuman relativized constituents. The alternative form **bɔ** is seen only with human relativized constituents, often appearing to be interchangeable with **ba** in this context. It is likely to be used with postverbal as well as preverbal relativized constituents, although it is only observed in the text data with those that are preverbal. No difference has been established in meaning between the two relativizers as they are used with human relativized constituents.

<sup>84</sup> The term “relativizer” is utilized here rather than “relative pronoun”, in spite of the fact that the Nchane relativizer is represented by different forms depending on the grammatical role (or clausal position) of the relativized constituent. This fact hints at an extraction strategy, which would be supportive of a relative pronoun analysis. Future research may in fact reveal that these relative linkers are best described as such. But for now, the more broadly defined term is chosen in order to align with the current trend in typological studies of relative clauses (e.g., Atindogbé & Grollemund 2017).

| Class            | Relativizers<br>with preverbal<br>relativized<br>constituents | Relativizers<br>with postverbal<br>relativized<br>constituents |
|------------------|---|--|
| 1                | wū, wú  | wù   |
| 2                | bá, (bó)  | bà   |
| 3                | wú  | wū   |
| 4                | yí  | yī   |
| 5                | chí   | chī  |
| 6                | á   | ā  |
| 7                | kí  | kī   |
| 8                | bí  | bī   |
| 9                | yì  | yì, yī   |
| 10               | yí  | yī, yí   |
| 14               | bvú   | bvū  |
| 6a <sup>85</sup> | má  | mà, mā   |
| 19               | fí  | fī   |
| 18a              | mú  | mū   |
| 13               | yí  | chī  |
| 16               | (fó)  | (fē)   |
| 18               | (wó)  | (ā)  |

Table 12.1 Nchane relativizers.

The position of the relative clause within the noun phrase is not clearly substantiated due to insufficient data. However, noun phrases containing a relative clause and a demonstrative are common in the data, which show that the relative clause can either precede or follow the demonstrative, as examples (12.3) and (12.4) respectively illustrate.

(12.3) Ø-kwēsé [wú - káŋ-è màŋ-kàlà] wē-ē  
 c1-woman c1REL woman fry-PROG c6a-cassava.puff c1-ANA1

wù ɲù fó bé ñsā y-è  
 3SG COP(N) there with c9.friend c9-3SG.POSS

*'...that woman who was frying cassava puff was there (in the neighborhood) with her friend.'* What-goes-around.2.1

<sup>85</sup> The class 6a pronouns are pronounced by some speakers as **mə** or **mɔŋ**.

- (12.4) wù jǒ mǎŋ-kàlà mā-ā [mǎ wù bé  
 3SG take c6a-cassava.puff c6a-ANA1 c6aREL 3SG <sup>P</sup>COP  
 yéfè - wū gē:], wù ná wù lē  
 rub cassava.puff 3SG put 3SG give 3SG APPL

*'She took that cassava puff, which she had rubbed [with poison] and set aside, and gave [it] to him.'* What-goes-around.4.8

The motivation for the alternative ordering is not completely clear but is believed to be related to information load. Relative clauses that are relatively long tend to follow the demonstrative, while shorter ones precede them. The information load presented by longer relative clauses is possibly too heavy to accommodate the binding of the demonstrative to the head nominal when separated by such a great distance. Examples (12.5) and (12.6) provide further evidence for this hypothesis, where the long relative clause in (12.5) follows the demonstrative and the short relative clause in (12.6) precedes the demonstrative.

- (12.5) bǒ kwě̀ bǒ gē: bǒ fésè fē-bǒ-kfún, nū  
 3PL be.home 3PL go 3PL arrive c16-3PL-home COP(N)  
 bǒ: bá Ø-kwě̀ wē-è [wū - bé  
 c2.child c2AM c1-woman c1-ANA1 c1REL woman P1  
 nā kǐ-nfè: kē-è mǎŋ-kàlà mā-ā  
 give c7-blindman c7-ANA1 c6a-cassava.puff c6a-ANA1

*'They went and arrived at their home, being the children of that woman who gave that blindman that cassava puff.'*

What-goes-around.8.2

- (12.6) ŋ-kēpè yē [yí - fyé] ché-é  
 1SG-repair c10.house c10REL house burn c10-ANA1

*'...I repaired those houses that burned...'*

Fire.52

It is further observed that head nominals with modifiers appearing in RC-DEM word order often appear to have a stronger incorporation of the relative clause and head nominal, such that the modified noun phrase is used as a discriminating designation for the referent. For example, the modified noun phrase in (12.3) “that woman who was frying cassava puff” appears three times in the text, with the additional information provided by the relative clause seemingly unnecessary in one of those occurrences, since there is no other “woman” present in the story with whom

she could be confused. The modified noun phrase apparently takes on the role of a formulaic label for the woman.

No examples of headless relative clauses are observed in the text data. However, (12.7) shows that relative clauses may be formed without an overt head. In this case, the relativized constituent is an inferable object that, as a result, has been omitted from the main clause. The relativizers in these constructions are not invariant as one would expect in a headless relative clause, but in contrast agree with the omitted object.<sup>86</sup>

- (12.7)     $\text{j̀j̀i} \quad \text{gē} \quad \text{fí}, \quad [\text{mā} \quad \text{tádà} \quad \text{gē} \quad \text{chĩ̀ŋsè} \quad -]$   
           N.    P3    receive    c6aREL    T.    P3    send    wine

*'Nji received [the wine] that Tada sent.'*

Example (12.8) represents a rare case of an apparent relative clause without a relativizer. These kinds of relative clauses have not been intentionally studied and, therefore, nothing more can be said of them except that they seem to be an acceptable variation.

- (12.8)     $\text{wō} \quad \text{lé} \quad \text{bé} \quad \text{fy-ē:} \quad [\text{wó} \quad \text{ɲá} \quad \text{bè} \quad \text{yũ:}]$   
           2SG    COP    with    c19-thing    2SG.HORT    give    1PL    on.it.QP

*“...do you have something [that] you should give us?”*

What-goes-around.7.5

A single head noun may be modified by multiple relative clauses, which may be juxtaposed to each other as in (12.9) or joined by a conjunction as in (12.10). While the relative clauses share a single head, each has its own relativizer.

- (12.9)     $\uparrow(\text{yē} \quad [\text{yì} \quad \text{mē} \quad \text{gè} \quad \text{ɲ-ché-é} \quad \text{yì} \quad \text{lē}]),$   
           c9.house    c9REL    1SG.PRO    P3    1SG-stay-PROG    c9    APPL

$[\text{yì} \quad - \quad \text{ɲù} \quad \text{y-āŋ}], \quad [\text{yì} \quad \text{mē} \quad \text{gè}]$   
           c9REL    house    COP(N)    c9-1SG.POSS    c9REL    1SG.PRO    P3

$\text{ɲ-ché-é} \quad \text{yì} \quad \text{lé} \quad \text{kībè}, \quad \text{yī} \quad \text{gē} \quad \text{fyé} \quad \text{yì-chī}$   
           1SG-stay-PROG    c9    APPL    actually    c9    P3    burn    c9-all

*'The house in which I was staying, which was mine and in which I was currently staying, it completely burned.'*

Fire.5.2

<sup>86</sup> The class 19 relativizer **fi** is the likeliest candidate for a headless relative clause, if they are possible, since this is the relativizer observed in relative clauses involving the question word **lá** as an apparent relativized constituent.

- (12.10) Ø-gvúnē [chì bā fwèd-é - ] gē  
 c5-palm.nut.chaff c5REL they burn-PROG chaff or

[chì bā fèl-é bī-tēgē yú]  
 c5REL c2 make-PROG c8-pillow on.it

*‘...palm nut chaff, that they use as kindling (lit. burn) or that they are making pillows with...’*  
 King of Trees.1.3

Typologically, the relationship between the relative clause and the matrix noun phrase is important to establish (Andrews 2007: 207). Most Nchane relative clauses are adjacent to the head nominal, which suggests that the relative clause is externally embedded. “Embedded” refers to the relative clause occurring within the matrix noun phrase. “Externally” refers to the head nominal occurring outside of the relative clause.

A relatively small number of examples in the text data show a different orientation of the head nominal and relative clause. For example, (12.11) and (12.12) show the head nominal and the relative clause separated by elements not belonging to the noun phrase. In the case of (12.11), a verb intervenes between the head nominal and the modifying relative clause. In (12.12), the head nominal and relative clause are separated by a locative adverb and a prepositional phrase.

- (12.11) bā-mī gè ké-é lē nò Ø-lá chī-nē  
 c2-person P3 know-PROG COMP like.that c5-compound c5-PROX

fyé nē, bī-gē fyé, mw-ē: mū lēmè fyé  
 burn like.this c8-tooth burn c18a-thing c18aAM work burn

[mù ñ-jòd-é - ñ-lēm-è  
 c18aREL 1SG-take-PROG things 1SG-work-PROG

bī-gē by-ē: yú]  
 c8-tooth c8-ANA1 on.it

*‘People knew that as my compound burned, money burned, and the tools (lit. things of work) burned that I was using to earn that money with...’*  
 Fire.26

- (12.12) mē lé bē **màŋ-kàlà** yānē à kī-kē: lē,  
 1SG.PRO COP with c6a-cassava.puff here in c7-bag APPL
- [mà n-lēg-é - à Ø-kwēsé wū-mù lē]  
 c6aREL 1SG-beg-PROG cassava.puff in c1-woman c1-some APPL
- 'I have some cassava puff here in [my] bag, that I was begging from a certain woman.'*  
 What-goes-around.7.6

The relationship between the head nominal and relative clause in these examples is said to be “adjoined” (Andrews 2007: 214), where the relative clause is located outside of the noun phrase of which the head nominal is head. It is possible that all Nchane relative clauses are of the adjoined type, even though they are usually adjacent to the head nominal. But the main point to be made here is that Nchane relative clauses are sometimes not so tightly bound to the noun phrase of the head nominal that they cannot appear outside of it.<sup>87</sup>

Another important aspect of the relative clause to consider is what happens to a nominal when it is relativized. Unmarked constituents (Subjects and Objects), as well as Applied Objects, leave a gap in the relative clause in the position where that constituent would appear in its non-relative clause counterpart. Conversely, a resumptive pronoun occurs in place of relativized constituents introduced by a preposition (Comitative Obliques and Locative Obliques). Examples of both strategies are illustrated in §12.3 below.

## 12.2 Asymmetries between main and relative clauses

There appear to be no limitations on tense and aspect marking in relative clauses which would differentiate them from main clauses. However, two elements of the grammar set relative clauses apart from main clauses.

The first distinguishing grammatical feature is subject agreement. As described in §9.1.1, subject agreement is usually present in main clauses, preceding the second verbal element of the verb complex. However, subject agreement is usually not observed in relative clauses following P1 and P2 tense auxiliaries, as seen in (12.13) and (12.14).

<sup>87</sup> The separation of the relative clause from the head nominal as in these examples might be limited to constructions involving nonrestrictive relative clauses. Thus, perhaps the separation reflects a type of afterthought, where additional information is added at the end. More research would be needed to confirm this proposition.

- (12.13) wù jǒ mǎŋ-kǎlà mǎ-ā [mǎ wù bé  
3SG take c6a-cassava.puff c6a-ANA1 c6aREL 3SG P1

yéfè - wū gē:], wù ná wù lē  
rub cassava.puff 3SG put 3SG give 3SG APPL

*'She took that cassava puff, which she rubbed [with poison] and set aside, and gave [it] to him.'* What-goes-around.4.8

- (12.14) bvū-nē lé bvū-kǒ [bvū tǎdà chí yèŋ - ]  
c14-PROX COP c14-ladder c14REL T. P2 see ladder

*'This is the ladder that Tada saw.'*

Otherwise, there is no difference in subject agreement patterning in relative clauses versus main clauses for auxiliary verbs. Additionally, main and relative clauses with first-person singular subjects show no distinction in subject agreement patterning, regardless of which auxiliary verbs are present.

A second difference between relative clauses and main clauses involves the focus marker **lǒ**. As observed in §16.3.5, this marker is required to follow progressive verbs that are [-FUT, -NEG] and which have no other complement. Examples (12.15) and (12.16) show that this marker does not occur in relative clauses in this verbal context.

- (12.15) Ø-kwēsé wē-è shíshē ŋkǎ  
c1-woman c1-ANA1 put.down c9.basket

[yì wù bé tūd-é - ]  
c9REL 3SG P1 carry-PROG basket

*'...that woman put down the basket that she was carrying.'* Jealous Husband.7

- (12.16) bǎ-mī [bá - gē tǒ-ó],  
c2-person c2REL person P3 come-PROG

*'The people who were coming, ...'* Fire.44

Focus strategies in general are unattested in the relative clauses of the text corpus. Asymmetry between main and relative clauses in focus marking has been observed as a tendency among Sub-Saharan languages (Creissels 2017: 262–3) and is not surprising, since relative clauses typically express background information in which focus is usually not encoded. However, Mungbam and Mundabli both report



no such asymmetry, with focus strategies available to relative as well as main clauses (Lovegren 2013: 401; and Voll 2017: 292 respectively). Therefore, this observation for Nchane should be considered as preliminary, as further research might prove otherwise.

### 12.3 Accessibility of constituents to relativization

Any clausal constituent may be relativized, including Subjects, Objects, Applied Objects, Comitative Obliques, Locative Obliques and Time Adverbials.<sup>88</sup> Examples (12.17)-(12.19) illustrate a relativized Subject, Object and Applied Object respectively. In each of these cases, the relativized constituent leaves a gap in the relative clause, indicated by a minus sign. Note that the Applicative postposition is also absent in the case of a relativized Applied Object. (The syntactic structure of the relative clauses in the examples of this section is provided for the reader's convenience.)

- (12.17)
- |              |       |        |          |                        |                          |  |
|--------------|-------|--------|----------|------------------------|--------------------------|--|
|              |       |        | <b>S</b> | <b>V</b>               | <b>OBL<sub>LOC</sub></b> |  |
| <b>bā-mī</b> | [bá   | -      | t̩       | kwè]                   | dú                       |  |
| c2-person    | c2REL | person | come     | c9.death <sup>89</sup> | say                      |  |
- 'The people who came to the death said...'*      Disobedient Child.1.14

- (12.18)
- |           |              |  |  |  |  |  |
|-----------|--------------|--|--|--|--|--|
| <b>mē</b> | <b>kōŋ-é</b> |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1SG.PRO   | want-PROG    |  |  |  |  |  |
- 
- |                |        |          |          |         |           |          |
|----------------|--------|----------|----------|---------|-----------|----------|
|                |        | <b>S</b> | <b>V</b> |         |           | <b>O</b> |
| <b>bvū-lē:</b> | [bvū   | Ø-kwē:   | lé       | wú      | kēn-è     | - ]      |
| c14-fufu       | c14REL | c1-wife  | COP      | 3SG.FUT | cook-PROG | fufu     |
- 'I want the fufu that (my) wife will be cooking.'*

<sup>88</sup> It is perhaps technically more correct to say that prepositional phrases (i.e., Comitative Obliques and Locative Obliques) themselves are not the target of relativization, but rather the nominals appearing in the prepositional phrases. See the discussion regarding this distinction, appearing with the relevant examples in this section.

<sup>89</sup> In its nominal form, **kwè** 'death' is often used, as it is here, in reference to the celebration of a death, also referred to as a "cry-die" in Cameroon Pidgin English.

- (12.19)
- |              |         |           |     |       |                   |                   |  |
|--------------|---------|-----------|-----|-------|-------------------|-------------------|--|
|              |         |           | S   | V     | O <sub>APPL</sub> | O <sub>APPL</sub> |  |
| <b>mw-ē:</b> | [mú     | bā-mí     | yéŋ | -     | kì-ŋché           | k-àŋ              |  |
| c18a-thing   | c18aREL | c2-person | see | thing | c7-stay           | c7-1SG.POSS       |  |
- 
- |      |     |          |             |       |     |        |      |
|------|-----|----------|-------------|-------|-----|--------|------|
| lē]  | lé  | Ø-dē     | yī-bō       | yí    | lé  | yí     | sé:  |
| APPL | COP | c4-mouth | c4-3PL.POSS | c4REL | COP | c4.FUT | tell |
- 'The things people saw in my life, only their mouths will say.'* (lit. *it is their MOUTHS that will tell*)
- Fire.62

Prepositional phrases are technically not themselves relativized, but rather the nominals of the prepositional phrases, with a resumptive pronoun occurring in the place of the prepositional phrase. This distinction is important, since as stated in §7.2, these locative pronouns encode coreference to the nominal of the prepositional phrase as well as the spatial deictic semantics of the preposition. Therefore, the locational reference of the prepositional phrase remains *in situ*, while the nominal element is *ex situ*, but overtly accessible as the nominal head of the relative clause.

A relativized nominal of a Comitative Oblique is illustrated in example (12.20), while that of a Locative Oblique appears in example (12.21). A resumptive pronoun is utilized in both cases.

- (12.20)
- |         |     |     |         |          |  |
|---------|-----|-----|---------|----------|--|
| mē      | mō  | gē: | mē      | ŋ-jò     |  |
| 1SG.PRO | RES | go  | 1SG.PRO | 1SG-take |  |
- 
- |             |       |      |                 |          |                    |
|-------------|-------|------|-----------------|----------|--------------------|
|             |       | S    | V               | O        | OBL <sub>com</sub> |
| <b>ŋchē</b> | [yī   | bā   | yú:-yí          | bī-kfūnè | <b>yū</b> ,        |
| c9.medicine | c9REL | they | kill-DISTR.PROG | c8-rat   | on.it              |
- 
- |         |         |    |                  |          |      |
|---------|---------|----|------------------|----------|------|
| mē      | ŋ-gē:   | à  | māŋ-kālā         | mà-à     | lē   |
| 1SG.PRO | 1SG-put | in | c6a-cassava.puff | c6a-ANA1 | APPL |
- '...I went and took poison that they are killing rats with and I put it in that cassava puff.'*
- What-goes-around.9.14

- (12.21)
- |                    |        |     |        |                    |
|--------------------|--------|-----|--------|--------------------|
|                    |        | S   | V      | OBL <sub>Loc</sub> |
| ↑( <b>bvū-jú</b> ) | [bvù   | bè  | gè gwē | <b>fó</b> ],       |
| c14-place          | c14REL | 1PL | P3     | fall there         |
- 'At the places where we landed...'*
- Training.1.18

Relativized time adverbials are fairly common in the text data. Section 11.3 points out that time adverbials may appear in either clause-initial or clause-final positions. The tone on the relativizer in example (12.22) suggests that the language

treats this time adverbial as occurring postverbally, which is reflected in the example by the placement of the gap after the Object.

- (12.22)
- |     |     |        |            |       |                     |      |         |  |
|-----|-----|--------|------------|-------|---------------------|------|---------|--|
|     |     |        |            |       | S                   |      |         |  |
| lē  | dó  | jù     | kī-fē      | [kī   | bō:                 | bā   | Ø-ŋwà   |  |
| SET | SIT | COP(N) | c7-time    | c7REL | c2.child            | c2AM | c1-book |  |
|     |     |        |            |       |                     |      |         |  |
| V   |     |        | O          |       | ADV <sub>TIME</sub> |      |         |  |
| tʰ  | bō  | jí     | mw-ē:      | - ]   |                     |      |         |  |
| HAB | 3PL | eat    | c18a-thing | time  |                     |      |         |  |
- 'When it was time that school children usually eat...'*  
 What-goes-around.7.1

The tone of the relativizer for **kīfē** 'time' is generally consistent throughout the text corpus, while that for other time adverbials is realized as high. This suggests that the various time adverbials could be categorized as either clause-initial or clause-final. But this analysis is currently untested.

While not common, it is also possible for a constituent of a relative clause itself to be relativized. In other words, relativization is recursive, which can be seen in (12.23). The nested relative clause appears in parentheses with its head nominal underlined, while the higher-level relative clause appears in brackets.

- (12.23)
- |            |       |                    |       |        |               |         |       |  |
|------------|-------|--------------------|-------|--------|---------------|---------|-------|--|
| dī ū       | bákù  | núwá               | gē    | gà     | kì-jwī        | kī-nē   | bé    |  |
| D.O.       | B.    | N.                 | P3    | divide | c7-boundary   | c7-PROX | with  |  |
|            |       |                    |       |        |               |         |       |  |
|            |       |                    | S     | V      | O             |         |       |  |
| Ø-màshê    | [wú   | -                  | gē    | chùñē  | <u>bvū-jū</u> | (bvú    |       |  |
| c1-machine | c1REL | machine            | P3    | mark   | c14-place     | c14REL  |       |  |
|            |       |                    |       |        |               |         |       |  |
| S          | v     | obl <sub>loc</sub> |       |        |               |         |       |  |
| -          | lé    | à-ntēnē            | à     | ñkāmbe | bé            | à       | wūm)] |  |
| place      | COP   | c18-middle         | c18AM | N.     | with          | c18AM   | W.    |  |
- 'DO (Divisional Officer) \*Bako Noah made this boundary with a machine (telescope) which indicated a point midway between Nkambe and Wum.'* \*Pseudonym  
 Land Dispute.3.2



# Chapter 13

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## Complex sentences

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Sentences involving more than one verb are described in this chapter, which is divided into three main sections: Coordination and verb serialization (§13.1), Supporting clause constructions (§13.2), and Complement clause constructions (§13.3). The first section describes sentences with multiple clauses which can be understood as having equal status in terms of expressing events or states. The notion of verb serialization as a syntactic construction type is questionable for Nchane. Therefore, the section begins with a discussion of sentences with adjacent verbs and the problems associated with assigning a serial verb construction analysis. This is followed by descriptions of juxtaposed clauses and disjunctive clauses.

Section 13.2 looks at sentences with different types of supporting clauses, as conceived by Dixon (2009), who characterizes the majority of multiclausal sentences as having a *Focal clause* and a *Supporting clause*. A Focal clause ‘refers to the central activity or state of the biclausal linking’, while a Supporting clause ‘may set out the temporal milieu for the Focal clause, or specify a condition or presupposition for it or a preliminary statement of it, etc.’ (Dixon 2009: 3). The notion of “supporting” is chosen rather than “subordinate” since, in most cases, the non-main (or non-Focal) clause is difficult to define according to typical criterion for identifying subordination, such as embeddedness, inflectional restrictions, etc.

Complement clauses, which are described in §13.3, function as clausal arguments. As such, they differ from the other types of complex sentences described in this chapter, belonging to the syntactic structure of the focal clause.

The various types of complex sentences are summarized in Table 13.1. Parentheses indicate that those items are optional. In the case of coordination, “(Cl<sub>n</sub>)” suggests that more than two clauses may be juxtaposed. Complement clauses are represented by “-clause<sub>i</sub>”, indicating that they are a part of the syntactic structure of the focal clause.

| Category        | Subcategory      | Syntactic structure  |
|-----------------|------------------|--|
| Coordination    | juxtaposition    | Cl <sub>1</sub> - Cl <sub>2</sub> - (Cl <sub>n</sub> )   |
|                 | disjunction      | Cl <sub>1</sub> - <b>kɛnɛ</b> - Cl <sub>2</sub> /<br>Cl <sub>1</sub> - <b>genɛ</b> - Cl <sub>2</sub> |
|                 |                  |  |
| Supportive      | temporal         | <b>lɛ</b> - Cl <sub>1</sub> - Cl <sub>2</sub>  |
|                 | purpose          | Cl <sub>1</sub> - <b>lɛ</b> - Cl <sub>2</sub>  |
|                 | circumstantial   | <b>nɔ</b> - Cl <sub>1</sub> - Cl <sub>2</sub>  |
|                 | reason           | Cl <sub>1</sub> - <b>nje</b> - Cl <sub>2</sub>   |
|                 | condition        | ( <b>nɛ</b> ) - Cl <sub>1</sub> - ( <b>tú</b> ) - Cl <sub>2</sub>                                    |
|                 | time             | <b>sege</b> - Cl <sub>1</sub> - Cl <sub>2</sub>  |
| Complementation | cognition/speech | Cl <sub>1</sub> - <b>lɛ</b> -clause <sub>i</sub>   |
|                 | manner           | Cl <sub>1</sub> - <b>nɔ</b> -clause <sub>i</sub>   |
|                 | intent           | Cl <sub>1</sub> - <b>ki</b> -clause <sub>i</sub>   |

Table 13.1 Summary of complex sentence types.

Note that sentences involving relative clauses are not discussed here, but are described in Chapter 12. Commas are employed in the examples of this chapter to indicate perceived clause boundaries, which often coincide with breath pauses, except for §13.3, where they are more strictly representative of pauses. See the introduction of §13.1 for details regarding clause boundary identification. Words under consideration in a particular section are bolded for the reader’s convenience.

### 13.1 Coordination and verb serialization

Sentences with multiple verbs are common in Nchane. Those which consist of clauses of equal status could possibly be described as serial verb constructions (henceforth SVCs), which are generally defined as “sequence[s] of verbs which act together as a single predicate[s]” (Aikhenvald 2006: 1).

Aikhenvald gives a number of definitional criteria for SVCs, such as expressing a single event, monoclausality (e.g., no markers of clausal dependency or conjunctions), verbs sharing arguments and TAM marking, and prosodies associated with a single clause. But these criteria are only slightly helpful for Nchane, since they do not clearly differentiate juxtaposed clauses from single clauses with serialized verbs. To illustrate this point, two comparable examples are given in (13.1).

The notion of ‘single-event’ expression through SVCs is difficult to obtain while remaining objective and without depending on cultural factors, as pointed out by Bisang (2009: 810). However, this example set is construed as contrasting ‘multiple-event’ and ‘single-event’ sentences. The context for (13.1)a is a man has gone to bed, but wakes up in the middle of the night unable to breathe. He gets out of bed and goes into the next room in an attempt to get better air. While it is possible to imagine this sentence as expressing one single event, it is more likely that rising up and exiting represent separate (although perhaps related) events. And significantly, the verb **jā** ‘rise’ contributes its lexical meaning to the sentence.

Meanwhile, example (13.1)b occurs after a man has worked all day at his farm and has just returned home. The verb **tó** ‘come’ does not indicate the discrete action of the man arriving (as the previous clause has already established his arrival at home), and so, does not contribute its lexical meaning to the sentence.

- (13.1) a. wù gē jā wé, wù ndéndè wù bú à-kfú  
           3SG P3 rise up 3SG stumble 3SG exit c18-outside

*‘He got up and stumbled outside...’*

Lake.4.5

- b. wù tó wù shī wù fuf-è shēŋ  
       3SG come 3SG sit 3SG rest-PROG c9.liver

*‘...he came and relaxed.’*

Jealous Husband.16

In comparing the two expressions, it can be seen that they are structurally similar. There are no morphological or syntactic markers of clausal subordination or of support clause status, nor of clausal adjunction in either example. Subject marking is usually associated with each verb of a sequence. This is evidenced in both of the examples and therefore not diagnostic for SVCs. This is in contrast to the neighboring Yemne-Kimbi languages Mungbam and Mundabli, both of which are reported to have SVCs with single subject marking (Lovegren 2013: 215–254 and; Voll 2017: 215–240 respectively). In addition, as stated in §11.1.1, objects are routinely omitted from clauses whenever they are inferable. Thus, the possibility of shared objects as a means of identifying SVCs is also unhelpful.

Tense, aspect and mood (TAM) marking also offers little or no help in differentiating the two possible multiverbal structure types. The example in (13.1)a has a tense marker preceding the first verb only. This illustrates the tense-marking strategy of the language, which usually establishes tense at discourse boundaries, with little or no tense marking for later sentences. One could interpret the single tense marker in (13.1)a as being shared by the following clauses. The same strategy is observed for expressions like (13.1)b. While this specific example has no tense marking, similar SVC-like expressions such as the relative clause in (13.2) show the

(13.2)    bó    kô:    bá    Dāmūmê,  
             3PL   catch   pa   D.

*'...they captured Pa Damume, whom they used in crossing the stream.'*  
(lit. *whom they crossed the stream with him*) Land Dispute.2.3

Prosodies represent another possible indicator to differentiate SVCs. However, prosodic elements in Nchane sentences are somewhat inconsistently realized. Clause boundaries are often marked by pauses, but this is not always the case. Example (13.3) presents multiple verbal elements with no apparent pause, change in intensity or tonal phenomena to mark a clause boundary. However, the two verbs may not be interpreted as encoding a single complex event, but rather two separate events in sequence. Thus, I interpret this sentence as comprised of two juxtaposed, independent clauses.

“...you put [it] (the poison) in this cassava puff and give [it] to him.”  
What-goes-around.3.3

Conversely, some sentences with multiple verbs which seem to express a single event, and thus, representative of an SVC analysis, have clear pauses following the verbs. Such is the case in (13.4), which has a distinct pause following the verb 'go'.



- (13.4)      mɛ            ń-tú            ń-gɛ:  
                  1SG.PRO    1SG-then    1SG-go
- ǰ-jí            bvū-lɛ:      bɛ      ɲàŋ            yī            shī  
                  1SG-eat    c14-food    with    c9.meat    c9AM    c9.chicken
- 'I then went and ate fufu with chicken ...'*                              Jealous Husband.20

Note that the verb **gɛ:** in this example does not contribute its basic lexical meaning, since the eater does not actually change location. Note also that the verb **tú** is serving as an auxiliary and not as a so-called “coverb” (i.e., one of multiple lexical verbs constituting an SVC), although it illustrates how auxiliaries within the verb complex are syntactically indistinct from possible SVC constructions, with a subject appearing before each verb, “coverb” and auxiliary verb.

Nevertheless, there is a significant occurrence in the data of multiverb sentences, such as (13.4), where the apparent “primary” verb is preceded by some “secondary” verb, most often one of motion like “go” or “come”. This ordering of verbs is in contrast to Mundabli and Mungbam, where the so-called “minor” coverb follows the “major” coverb. This alternative ordering does occur in Nchane, as illustrated in (13.5), although it is rare.

- (13.5)      lásálɔ    kwé,    wù    bɛ            wù    gɛ:    fɛ    Ø-ɲò    lɛ  
                  L.            die        3SG    ascend    3SG    go        at    c1-god    APPL
- 'Lazarus died and went to heaven ...'*                              Richman.11

It is unknown what, if any, significance is represented by the alternative sequencing of the apparent primary and secondary verbs in (13.4) and (13.5).

To summarize, there is some evidence in support of SVCs in Nchane. However, it is likely that those instances of SVC-like structures are less typical than those of other languages reported to have SVCs, even languages nearby. Formal characteristics of sentences expressing complex events through multiple verbs are not observed to differentiate clause chaining structures from SVCs. Primarily, evidence for Nchane SVCs is the relatively common co-occurrence of primary verbs and closed class verbs such as ‘go’, ‘come’ and ‘exit’, particularly when the semantic expression provided by these latter verbs may be construed as more functional than lexical.<sup>90</sup>

Therefore, the current analysis pays little attention to the possible existence of SVCs in Nchane. Sentences with multiple verbs are treated as constructed with

<sup>90</sup> These SVC-like constructions are likely involved in the grammaticalization of “minor” coverbs into grammatical markers of TAM categories. For example, the verb **tú** ‘return’ often expresses Sequentiality or Durative aspect when followed by a second verb, and where the core semantic expression is encoded by the second verb. See §9.3.4 for more examples.

chains of clauses, unless there are conjunctions present or formal markers of dependency.

### 13.1.1 Juxtaposition

Clauses which communicate different actions are often joined through simple juxtaposition (i.e., without a conjunction), as in (13.6). If any tense marking is present, it occurs only in the first clause and applies to the entire sentence.

(13.6) wù m̄ wù búṣē m̄-bà: f́,  
3SG RES 3SG remove c6a-soup there

wù ná Ø-jwè: lē  
3SG give c1-husband.3SG.POSS APPL

*'She just removed soup from there (the leaf) and gave [it] to her husband.'*  
Jealous Husband.13

More than two clauses can be juxtaposed in this manner, forming clause chains.

(13.7) kī j̄ màŋ-kàlà mā-ā, kī gē: à-kē, kī já  
c7 take c6a-cassava.puff c6a-ANA1 c7 put c18-bag c7 leave

kī gēn-è, kī nā-à c1-ŋkè lē w̄ gé  
c7 go-PROG c7 give-PROG c1-song COMP 2SG do.COND

bvū-j̄ŋē tū w̄ gé yē y-̄ lē,  
c14-good then 2SG do on c9-2SG.POSS APPL

w̄ gé bvū-bēfè tū w̄ gé yē y-̄ lē  
2SG do.COND c14-bad then 2SG do on c9-2SG.POSS APPL

*'He took that cassava puffs and put it in his bag and left and was going and singing his song, "You do good you do for yourself; you do bad you do for yourself."'*  
What-goes-around.5.2

(13.8) bēŋ t̄ bēŋ ḱ, bēŋ jí,  
2PL come.IMP 2PL catch 2PL.HORT eat

bēŋ mú j̄ f́  
2PL.HORT drink c9.water there

*""Come and take [the cassava puff], you should eat [it] and drink water.""*  
What-goes-around.7.7

The actions of these complex sentences are usually interpretable as sequential occurrences when the verbs are in non-progressive form. Simultaneous action can also be expressed through clause chains when the verbs are in progressive form, as illustrated in (13.9).

- (13.9)    b́ó    gē    lán-é,            b́ó    yén-è            bà-ŋkě,  
              3PL   P3   rejoice-PROG   3PL   breathe-PROG   c2-song  
  
              b́ó    bín-è            Ø-bíně  
              3PL   dance-PROG   c5-dance

*'They were rejoicing, singing and dancing.'*<sup>91</sup>

Lake.5.3

While clauses within the same sentence generally have the same subject referent, clauses with different subjects can also be juxtaposed, as in (13.10). This sentence is describing a single, complex event and is characterized by short pauses at clause boundaries and a gradual diminishing intensity pattern over the entire sentence.

- (13.10)    bā    kē:    bvù-lè:,    ŋ-gū    m-bà:,    bō    jí    yú  
              3PL   stir   c14-food   1SG-buy   c6a-soup   3PL   eat   on.it

*'They cooked fufu, I bought soup and they ate with it.'*

Fire.46

### 13.1.2 Disjunction

Two types of disjunctive constructions are observed—those which express simple alternatives and those which express counter expectation. The first type, which is not present in the text data, involves the conjunction **kèně** 'or' and expresses two alternative actions or events, as illustrated in (13.11).

- (13.11)    tādà    gē    lè,    **kèně**    wù    ŋgū:  
              T.    P3   work   or   3SG   play

*'Tada either worked or he played.'*

Counter-expectational clauses are joined through the disjunctive conjunction **gēné** 'but', which might have a second function in expressing frustration. The counter-expectational clause occurs as the second clause, as illustrated in (13.12) and

<sup>91</sup> The clause **b́ó bínè bíně** illustrates the occurrence of a cognate noun object, which has been argued as evidence in other languages that there are no true intransitive verbs. However, there are plenty of Nchane verbs which present as intransitive (e.g., 'cry', 'sleep' 'die' and 'breathe'). Meanwhile, some Nchane verbs which are often intransitive in English, like 'dance' and 'sing', are usually or even strictly transitive.

(13.13). The examples show that tense marking occurs in both of the conjoined clauses, contrasting with juxtaposed clauses described above.

(13.12) wù gē kùŋ m̀byēŋē,  
3SG P3 ring c9.bell

gēné Ø-mū gē bá:ŋ tó gē  
but c1-person P3 still come NEG2

*'He rang the bell, but no one responded (lit. came).'*

Lake.6.7

(13.13) wù gè bá:ŋ yēŋ gē bī-bāgē lé gè,  
3SG P3 still see NEG2 c8-wound APPL NEG2

gēné bó gē kwé wâ  
but 3PL P3 die already

*'He saw no injuries, but they were clearly dead.'*

Lake.6.3

## 13.2 Support clauses

As suggested in the chapter's introduction, Support clauses typically provide necessary information for the proper interpretation of the focal clause. This can be background information, such as the temporal setting. Or it can provide the purpose or conditions for the focal clause predication. Support clauses are often introduced by a particle or word of some sort, with the type of support clause dictating the order of the main and support clauses. Support clauses in the examples of this section are placed in brackets.

### 13.2.1 Setting particle

The Setting particle **lē** 'SET' introduces support clauses that provide details surrounding the action or event that occurs in the focal clause, such as temporal or situational setting, as in (13.14) and (13.15). The Setting clause usually precedes the focal clause.

(13.14) [lē bē bījē], bē yēŋ nò ñgú bèn-é  
SET 1PL look 1PL see like.that c9.fire ascend-PROG

*'As we looked, we saw that the fire was burning.'*

Fire.2.1

- (13.15) [lĕ bī-tādā gĕ yàd-é mèsàzĕ], bĕ gĕ bé  
 SET c8-shout P3 shout-PROG M. 1PL P3 <sup>P</sup>COP  
 bè bú fò bè sã:, bè bú bè gĕ: ā-jèshí  
 1PL exit there 1PL scatter 1PL exit 1PL go c18-path

*'As they were shouting in Misaje, we then scattered and went out on the road.'*  
 Fire.1.16-17

The **lĕ** particle often is accompanied by a tonal change of the following subject pronoun, which is partially illustrated in (13.14). Low toned pronouns often are realized with a M tone and mid toned pronouns (such as **bĕ** 1PL) with a H. Note that the **lĕ** particle functions as a complementizer in other syntactic contexts. See §13.3 for details.

The Setting clause can sometimes give a sequential reading as in (13.16), usually indicated by the word 'after' in the free translation. The event or action in the Setting clause occurs first, followed by that of the focal clause.

- (13.16) [lĕ bĕ: bā-ā jí], bó jã bō kwĕ:d-è  
 SET c2.child c2-ANA1 eat 3PL leave 3PL return.home-PROG

*'After those children ate, they left and were returning home.'*  
 What-goes-around.8.1

Other times, the Setting clause appears to be in a logical relationship with the focal clause that could be interpreted as cause-effect, although a sequential reading is often still appropriate. This is illustrated in (13.17) (as well as (13.15) above).

- (13.17) [lĕ bā-mfúmè yú Ø-ntùŋ wú-yú],  
 SET c2-N. hear c1-news c1-ANA2  
 bō gĕ jã bō fĕsè fè kì-jwī lĕ  
 3PL P3 leave 3PL arrive at c7-boundary APPL

*'When the Nfume people heard the news, they left and arrived at the boundary.'*  
 Land Dispute.1.3

When **lĕ** occurs with **jù** 'COP(N)', there is no subject in the Setting clause. The Setting clause in (13.18) provides a temporal setting for the action of the focal clause. But it might also be interpreted as a causal clause as in the previous example. In other words, the woman cooked because it was evening, the normal time for cooking.

- (13.18) [lɛ̀ ɲù fɛ̃-ɲfù], Ø-kwɛ́sé wɛ́-ɛ̀ gɛ̀ bé  
 SET COP(N) c16-evening c1-woman c1-ANA1 P3 <sup>P</sup>COP  
 wù kɛ́: bvũ-lɛ́:  
 3SG stir c14-food

*'As it was evening, that woman cooked fufu.'* Jealous Husband.2.3

The initial Setting clause in (13.19) gives situational context, referring to the previous events of speaker rushing to his burning house and trying to go inside to rescue his belongings. (Note that the sequence **lɛ̀ ɲù** in this example and the previous one demonstrates that cleft constructions in Setting clauses use the n-copula rather **lé**.)

- (13.19) [lɛ̀ ɲù nò], [lɛ̀ ñ-tó ɲ-kásè m̀-bé ɲ-jɛ̀nɛ̀],  
 SET COP(N) like.that SET 1SG-come 1SG-return 1SG-P1 1SG-look  
 mɛ̃ ɲ-gɛ̃ ɲ-kásè ɲ-yɛ̀ɲ bɔ́: Ø-bwɛ́: lé,  
 1SG.PRO 1SG-P3 1SG-return 1SG-see c2.child c1-mother APPL  
 nò bɔ́ ɲùd-é Ø-ɲgɛ̀,  
 like.that 3PL fight-PROG c1-trouble  
 kɪ bɔ́ ɲɲs-è ɲgú  
 COMP(K) 3PL extinguish-PROG c9.fire

*'As it was so, as I turned and looked, I saw my brothers, that they were suffering to put out the fire.'* Fire.8.1

The Setting particle may also introduce Purpose clauses, which usually express the reason for the action in the focal clause. In this case, the support clause follows the focal clause, as illustrated in (13.20) and (13.21). This second example also illustrates the Setting particle functioning both ways in the same sentence, first introducing a Setting clause, and second introducing a Purpose clause.

- (13.20) mɛ̃ ɲ-gɛ̀ ɲ-wɛ̃ɲè kɪ-mbɔ́ɲ kɪ shɛ̃gɛ̃,  
 1SG.PRO 1SG-P3 1SG-open c7-cover c7REL small  
 ɲ-gɛ́: kɪ-bɔ́ à-kfũɲ [lɛ̀ fɪ:  
 1SG-put c7-arm c18-outside SET c9.air  
 yí lɛ́s-è yì kòɲè mɛ̃ lɛ́]  
 c9REL enter-PROG c9 touch 1SG.PRO APPL

*'...I opened the window and kept my hand outside so as to receive fresh air (lit. air that was entering touch me).'* Training.1.14

- (13.21) [lɛ Ø-bwē lād-é mwē], wù gē: bī-nfūnē  
 SET c1-mother go.goal-PROG c3.farm 3SG put c8-corn
- [lɛ wù shé wū gō fē Ø-ŋ-gò wù-bàlà lē]  
 SET 3SG remain 3SG grind at c1-NMZR-grind c1-foreign APPL
- 'As the mother was going to the farm, she put corn aside so that she (the daughter) would remain (near the house) and take [it] to the grinding mill.'*  
 Disobedient Child.1.3

### 13.2.2 Circumstantial clauses

The adverbial pronoun **nò** 'like.that' may be used to introduce support clauses that usually can be interpreted as providing the circumstances under which the event in the focal clause occurs. The Circumstantial clause precedes the focal clause and appears to serve a discourse cohesion role, as it most often repeats events that occurred in earlier sentences. For example, in the text from which (13.22) is taken, the action of the husband sitting down occurs two sentences earlier.

- (13.22) [nò Ø-jwēŋ shilé fē-kū:], wū mó wū bí:  
 like.that c1-husband sit c16-down 3SG RES 3SG ask
- lē wō jō fānē m-bà  
 COMP 2SG take where c6a-soup
- 'As her husband sat down, he then asked, "Where will you get soup?"'*  
 Jealous Husband.10

Likewise, example (13.23) comes two sentences after the text says that the woman and her husband "left and were going (to the farm)".

- (13.23) [nò Ø-kwēsé wé-é gèn-é] wū tú wū lē:  
 like.that c1-woman c1-ANA1 go-PROG 3SG then 3SG stand
- Ø-jwē: tú wū kwàj-i lē lé lá lē  
 c1-husband.3SG.POSS return 3SG think-PROG COMP COP Q COP
- 'As the woman was going, she stood and her husband wondered what would happen.'*  
 Jealous Husband.4.2

Example (13.24) illustrates a slightly different formulation of the Circumstantial clause as compared to the earlier examples. While the support clauses of those examples contained at least the same verb as an earlier sentence in linking the current and earlier events, the Circumstantial clause in (13.24) abstracts the state of "weakness" from the previous sentence, where the participant was "confused and

sick”. However, the effect is the same, with the two sentences given greater cohesion through the support clause.

- (13.24) [nò wù gè b́e gē b́e bvù-ŋgà gè],  
 like.that 3SG P3 <sup>P</sup>COP NEG2 with c14-power NEG2
- wū gē jā wù gē: yē yì Ø-nò lē  
 3SG P3 leave 3SG go c9.house c9AM c1-god APPL
- kì wú gē: wú kūŋ m̄byèŋè, [nò b́o t̄s  
 COMP(K) 3SG go 3SG ring c9.bell like.that 3PL HAB
- b́o gè-è k̄i-fè k̄i Ø-ŋgè lē]  
 3PL do-PROG c7-time c7AM c1-trouble APPL

*‘As he was weak (lit. with no power), he left and went to the church to go and ring the bell, as they always did in times of trouble’* Lake.6.5

The second **nò** in the above example does not precede the focal clause and does not have the same discourse cohesion role. In this case, the support clause expresses a manner relationship with the focal clause. The meaning realized here is reflective of the use of **nò** in complement clauses (see §13.3).

Note that in many cases, **nò** and **lē** are interchangeable. Indeed, the introducing particles in (13.24) were “corrected” by language consultants from **lē** (in the original version of the text) to **nò**. The interchangeability of these two particles in part reflects the discourse role of **nò**. Since **lē** has not been observed to have the same kind of function in producing discourse cohesion, it is not surprising that multiple readings of a text can result in these kinds of corrections. However, as will be seen in the section on complement clauses, these two particles can introduce subtle changes to the meaning of the expressions.

### 13.2.3 Reason clauses

Reason clauses are introduced by **ŋjē** ‘reason’ and usually follow the focal clause, as in (13.25) and (13.26).

- (13.25) ŋ-já ŋ-gē: Ø-sùkū,  
 1SG-leave 1SG-go c1-school
- [ŋjē mē lé Ø-mù n-yēyè]  
 reason 1SG.PRO COP c1-person NMZR-teach

*‘I left and went to school, because I am a teacher.’*

Fire.1.6



- (13.26) kóŋ      bó,    wó    gvúŋ    bó,  
           love.IMP   3PL   2SG   obey   3PL
- [ŋjē      lé      bó      bó      bɔ̃yī    Ø-jwɔ̃:]  
           reason   COP   3PL   3PL.REL   birth   c1-husband.2SG.POSS

*'Love them (your parents-in-law), respect (lit. obey) them, because it is they who delivered (gave birth to) your husband.'*      Marriage.6.7

### 13.2.4 Conditional

Conditional constructions are variable in form. However, they are likely based on the schema given in Figure 13.1.<sup>92</sup>

[(**né**) +H...] <sub>PROTASIS</sub>, [(**tú**)...] <sub>APODOSIS</sub>

Figure 13.1 Conditional construction schema.

The particle **né** introduces the protasis and is glossed in this context with 'if'. The same word appears in other contexts glossed 'like.that' and associated with gestural predications (see §8.5). The apodosis is introduced by the word **tú** 'then', which is also seen marking Durative and Sequential (see §9.3.4). Both of these polysemous particles are largely differentiated from the other use of their forms by syntactic considerations, with the conditional particles occurring clause-initially (see example (13.32) for a possible exception).

Example (13.27) illustrates the fully marked conditional construction, with high tone on the verb of the protasis (realized here as SH due to a grammatical H on top of a lexical H when preceding a L), which is also introduced by **né**, and the apodosis introduced by **tú**.

- (13.27) [**né**    jàŋ      tɔ̃              lò],    **tú**    mē      lé  
           if      c9.rain   come.COND   FOC   then   1SG.PRO   COP
- ŋ-gòŋ-è              ñjū      yí      yēŋē  
           1SG.FUT-want-PROG   c9.cloth   c9.REL   dry

*'If rain comes, then I will be wanting dry clothes.'*

<sup>92</sup> The Conditional construction is very similar to that reported for Noni, where the protasis is introduced by **ē** (cf. **né**) and the apodosis is introduced by either **é** or **tō** (cf. **né** and **tú** respectively) (Hyman 1981: 102).

As the parentheses in Figure 11.1 indicate, the **né** and **tú** are not always present. However, the order of the construction is always protasis-apodosis, and there is nearly always a H tone element associated with the protasis. This H tone is observed in the minimal pair given in (13.28), where the mid-toned verb **gvũŋ** in the conditional clause in b. is realized with a H tone.

- (13.28) a. wù gvũn-é mē  
3SG obey-PROG 1SG.PRO

*'He is obeying me.'*

- b. [Ø-mwā gvún-é]  
c1-child obey-PROG.COND

*'If the child is obeying ...'*

The factors motivating the behavior of this H tone are unknown at this time. It is usually observed marking the verb or auxiliary verb. Sometimes even the entire protasis clause may be realized at a higher than normal register, as illustrated in example (13.29). This higher tonal register is indicated by the up arrow, which applies to everything in the parentheses.

- (13.29) [↑(wō gī)], mé m-bō: wō  
2SG play.COND 1SG.PRO.FUT 1SG-stab 2SG

bé fī-nō fī-nē, wō kwē  
with c19-knife c19-PROX 2SG die

*'If you mess with me (lit. play [me]), I will pierce you with this knife and you will die.'*

Greedy Friends.1.14

It is possible that the H tone is the true marker of Conditional, with **né** and **tú** simply contributing their own meanings, which are consistent with *if-then* semantics. The verbs or auxiliary verbs of the protases in this section are analyzed with COND in their glosses in order to account for the H tone associated with conditionals. However, as just stated, it is often the case that the realization of the H tone extends beyond the predicate.

The text corpus contains no examples of a fully marked conditional construction. Instead, conditional constructions usually have only **né** and no **tú** as in (13.30) or the inverse as in (13.31). Note that (13.31) is another example where the entire protasis is realized on a higher tonal register than the apodosis.

- (13.30) wō wũ Ø-jwēŋsé, [né wō lě wō gè jálè],  
 2SG c1REL c1-man if 2SG COP.COND 3SG do wrong  
 wò lěgè lē Ø-kwō fōsē wò  
 2SG beg.IMP COMP c1-wife.2SG.POSS.FUT forgive 2SG  
*'You the husband, if you have done wrong, ask that your wife forgive you.'*  
 Marriage.4.5

- (13.31) [↑(bēŋ lě bēŋ gè nō)], tú bēŋ lé bēŋ gè  
 2PL COP.COND 2PL do like.that then 2PL COP 2PL do  
 fy-ē: fī bēŋ yūg-é à Ø-ŋwà wù Ø-ŋò lē  
 c19-thing c19REL 2PL hear-PROG in c1-book c1AM c1-god APPL  
*'If you do so you have done what is required in the book of God.'*  
 Marriage.3.8

Example (13.32) is a rare case where **né** does not precede the Subject. This example is comparable to (13.30), both of which have a topic-marked (left-detached) subject. It is not known what motivates this alternative ordering, nor if it has any effect on the meaning.

- (13.32) wō wũ Ø-mwā wú Ø-kwēsé, wò né lě  
 2SG c1REL c1-child c1REL c1-woman 2SG if COP.COND  
 wō lē: fē Ø-lá chī Ø-jwēŋsé lē,  
 2SG enter at c5-compound c5AM c1-man APPL  
 kéfē wó lās-è bā-mī bā-ā gē,  
 VET 2SG lose<sup>93</sup>-PROG c2-person c2-ANA1 NEG2  
 kéfē wó wā:d-è bé Ø-chíjī Ø-jwō:  
 VET 2SG quarrel-PROG with c1-father c1-husband.2SG.POSS  
 mò Ø-bwē Ø-jwō: gè  
 RES c1-mother c1-husband.2SG.POSS NEG2  
*'You the girl child, if you enter into your husband's compound don't look down on those people, don't quarrel with your father-in-law or mother-in-law.'*  
 Marriage.6.6

<sup>93</sup> This verb can also mean “minimize” or “make small”.

### 13.2.5 Temporal clauses

Events may be described temporally through a support clause introduced by a time word. The support clause, which usually precedes the focal clause, establishes a temporal setting for the event (or future event) in the focal clause. The primary time word observed introducing this kind of support clause is **ségé** ‘when’, which is illustrated in (13.33) and (13.34).<sup>94</sup>

- (13.33) [ségé wū gè: wū jí], wú mō wū kwé,  
 when 3SG go 3SG eat 3SG.HORT RES 3SG die  
 wó fú-dé ā-ŋgē-wù-bō  
 2SG.FUT rest-COMPL c18-trouble-3SG-hand  
*‘When he goes and eats, he should then die, and you will rest from the trouble from him.’* What-goes-around.3.4

- (13.34) [ségē bēŋ lé bēŋ gē wá nō:], tú bēŋ lé  
 when 2PL COP 2PL do already like.that then 2PL COP  
 bēŋ tū wā Ø-mù lé wù-mùmwa,  
 2PL become already c1-person COP c1-one  
 yē yē-né tū yī-mímyā  
 c9.body c9-2PL.POSS become c9-one  
 bvù-kūgè mò bvù nùmè à-bèŋ-tēnē  
 c14-wealth RES c14 COP(N) c18-2PL-middle  
*‘When you have done like that you have already become one, your body will become one, then riches will be in your midst.’* Marriage.3.9

The word **táj** ‘time’ (from English) also functions in providing temporal background information similar to **ségé**. Although it usually occurs as the head nominal of a relative clause, as in (13.35), it appears to be in the process of grammaticalizing as an introducer of temporal support clauses. This is supported by example (13.36) where it appears without a relative clause.

<sup>94</sup> In very rare cases, this word shows class 1 agreement, suggesting that it is a noun. However, it commonly appears phonologically bound with nominal modifiers such as **chī** ‘all’, and without any agreement. Thus, it is believed to have grammaticalized into an adverb.

- (13.35) [Ø-táŋ wū mē gē chīlè byēŋ],  
c1-time c1REL 1SG.PRO P3 pull c9.fish

mē gē m-bé lānyè wèsè  
1SG.PRO P3 1SG-<sup>P</sup>COP happy very

*'When I caught a fish, I was very happy.'*

Fishing.1.10

- (13.36) [Ø-táŋ m̄-mē: bē], bā shī-shē fē-kū  
c1-time c6a-oil ready they sit-CAUS c16-down

*'When the oil is ready, they (remove it from the fireside and) put it down (on the ground).'*

Making Palm Oil.1.9

Temporal background information is commonly expressed in the text data through a relative clause with the time word **kifé** as the head nominal, as demonstrated in (13.37).

- (13.37) [kī-fé kī mē ŋ-gè m̄-būd-é yē kw-é:],  
c7-time c7REL 1SG.PRO 1SG-P3 1SG-exit-PROG c9.house c3-ANA1

mē ŋ-gē m̄-būd-é nù njū  
1SG.PRO 1SG-P3 1SG-exit-PROG COP(N) c9.cloth

yī yē y-āŋ lē, mò bē bà-lābā  
c9AM c9.body c9-1SG.POSS APPL RES with c2-shoe

bà mē gē n-lēs-è nù bó fyé wā  
c2REL 1SG.PRO P3 1SG-wear-PROG COP(N) c2 burn already

*'The time I was coming from that house, I was coming out with my clothes and shoes that I was wearing already burned.'*

Fire.7.2

Less commonly, temporal support clauses may occur in sentence-final position, as demonstrated in (13.38) and (13.39). In both of these examples, the temporal clause does not apply to the initial main verb, a likely explanation for its occurrence in sentence-final position.

- (13.38) wū jépè b́é bī-kā:, wū gē:, wū lēŋ Ø-lēmè,  
3SG walk with c8-footstep 3SG go 3SG work c5-work

[kèg-è Ø-jú chí fwē yē kī-mà: lē,  
begin-PROG c5-day c5REL front on c7-week APPL

gèn-è ā-jú lé ā-tādē]  
go-PROG c6-day COP c6-three

*'He traveled by foot (to the village) and held services (lit. went and worked work), starting the first day of the week (Monday) and going through the third day (Wednesday).'* Lake.1.2

- (13.39) bā gē yēyè bā-mī lē lé nò  
they P3 teach c2-person COMP COP like.that

bó fī bā-mī bá-mù b́é Ø-bōnè  
3PL help c2-person c2-some with c5-prayer

fè bà-ŋgē bā-bō lē, [kī-fē  
at c2-trouble c2-3PL.POSS APPL c7-time

kī bā chūp-í bī-jīpí kī Ø-mwā-pò]  
c7REL they show-PROG c8-picture c7AM<sup>95</sup> c1-child-god

*'They taught people how to help certain people with prayer for their problems, while they were showing the Jesus Film.'* Training.1.4

See §8.7 for an account of temporal adverbs, which usually fulfill a similar function.

### 13.3 Complement Clauses

Complement clauses are those which serve as an argument of a verb and which contain a verbal or predicative element. There are several different kinds of complement clauses observed in Nchane, each of which are introduced by a complementizer. More often than not, there is no breath pause associated with these complementizers. (Note that breath pauses are indicated by a comma in this section.) But the examples below show that when a breath pause is present, it usually occurs after the complementizer. This is especially true for speech complements. The verbs in complement clauses are apparently fully finite, except for those in **kī** complements. The different kinds of

<sup>95</sup> The use of the c7 associative marker with a c8 noun reflects the singular nature of 'pictures' as used here, where it refers to a single 'film'.

matrix verbs and their complements, which appear in brackets, are treated below in this section.

### ***Lē***

The particle ***Lē***, which functions as a support clause introducer (see §13.2.1), also serves as a complementizer, introducing complements of several different types of verbs, including those of cognition and sensation, and verbs of communication. Examples of each of these are given below, where the gloss for ***Lē*** is ‘COMP’.

Verbs of cognition and desire often take a complement clause which is introduced by ***Lē*** ‘COMP’, as illustrated in (13.40)-(13.42).

- (13.40)    bós    gē    ké-é            [Lē,    mē            lé    j́-jó  
              3PL   P3   know-PROG   COMP   1SG.PRO   COP   1SG.FUT-take

Ø-kfù,    ĩ-gē:    ĩ-shèŋ]  
c1-rope   1SG-go   1SG-hang

*‘They were knowing that I will take a rope and go hang (myself).’*  
Fire.28

- (13.41)    bē    kwāj-í            [Lē    kī-lūŋ    kí            tō            lē,  
              1PL   think-PROG   COMP   c7-year   c7REL   come   APPL

bē    j́ú                    kì                    bē    búšē            ā-jī            ā  
1PL   COP(N).FUT   COMP(K)   1PL   remove   c6-eye   c6AM

Ø-ŋwà    wù            ĩchānē]  
c1-book   c1AM   N.

*‘We are thinking that next year, we will be publishing the Nchane alphabet.’*  
Speech.1.4

- (13.42)    ĩjē    bō    gōn-é            gē            [Lē    fy-ē:            fī-mī  
              reason   3PL   want-PROG   NEG2   COMP   c19-thing   c19-some

lēšē    gē]  
end    NEG2

*‘...because they don’t want anything to be wasted (lit. end, disappear or become extinct).’*  
Greedy Friends.1.4

Verbs of sensation like ‘see’ and ‘hear’ can also take a complement clause introduced by ***Lē*** if the sensation results in realization, as seen in (13.43) and (13.44).

- (13.43) lē Ø-mù j̄ché wé-é gē: wú j̄īē, wù  
 SET c1-person c9.medicine c1-ANA1 go 3SG look.at 3SG

yéŋ [lē lé Ø-nlò, wù bō: bā-ā jí]  
 see COMP COP c1-poison c1REL c2.child c2-ANA1 eat

*'When the doctor looked, he realized that it is POISON that those children ate.'*  
 What-goes-around.9.7

- (13.44) Ø-tán wù tó-ó, bē mò bē yú  
 c1-time 3SG come-PROG 1PL RES 1PL hear

[lē m̄byèŋè kūd-é], bē mò bē lēgè  
 COMP c9.bell ring-PROG 1PL RES 1PL run

*'When he is coming, we will then hear that the bell is ringing and we will then run away.'*  
 Cat and Rats.1.4

Verbs expressing the various forms of communication have complements introduced by lē 'COMP'. This includes the verbs 'say', 'ask' and 'reply', as in (13.45)-(13.47). Except for different pronominal reference, direct and indirect quotations are formally indistinguishable, as is seen in (13.45) and (13.46) respectively.

- (13.45) Ø-kwēsé wē-ē dú [lē,  
 c1-woman c1-ANA1 say COMP

Ø-jwá:, shīlé fè-kū, bē jí mw-ē:]  
 c1-husband.1SG.POSS sit.IMP c16-down 1PL eat c18a-thing

*'That woman said "My husband, sit down and we will eat."'*  
 Jealous Husband.8.1

- (13.46) Ø-bā: wē-è bē wù dú [lē,  
 c1-pa c1-ANA1 <sup>P</sup>COP 3SG say COMP

wū bē légé lò à Ø-kwēsé wú-mù lē,  
 3SG <sup>P</sup>COP beg FOC in c1-woman c1-some APPL

wú tó wū kāŋ-è màn-kàlà]  
 3REL HAB 3SG fry-PROG c6a-cassava.puff

*'That pa said that he begged (something to eat) from a certain woman who is always frying cassava puff.'*  
 What-goes-around.9.10



- (13.47) wù chfú [lɛ, ɛ:, wù tó wù nā-à mē  
 3SG reply COMP yes 3SG HAB 3SG give-PROG 1SG.PRO

Ø-ŋgē, j̄chɛ: ségɛ-chī ségɛ-chī]  
 c1-trouble true when-all when-all

*'She answered, "Yes. He is always giving me trouble, truly all the time."'*  
 What-goes-around.2.3

Quotations of questions are usually introduced by the complementizer **lā:**, as illustrated in example (13.48).<sup>96</sup>

- (13.48) n̄sā y-ē bí: wù lē [lā:, k̄-nfɛ:  
 c9.friend c9-3SG.POSS ask 3SG APPL Q.COMP c7-blind.man

k̄-nē tó k̄ t̄-ò yànè tē l̄]  
 c7-PROX HAB c7 come-PROG here also APPL.QP

*'Her friend asked her, "(Does) this blind man also come here?"'*  
 What-goes-around.2.2

Speech verbs more commonly associated with indirect quotations also take complements introduced by **l̄**. These include verbs such as 'agree', 'suggest', 'beg' and 'promise'. Examples (13.49) and (13.50) are representative of these kinds of communication verbs.

- (13.49) bó bēŋ [l̄ lé k̄, k̄-kfūnè k̄ kùgē k̄  
 3PL agree COMP COP c7 c7-rat c7REL big c7REL

yídè k̄-ē, k̄ lé k̄ shú m̄byànè yí-yú]  
 black c7-ANA1 c7REL COP c7.FUT tie c9.bell c9-ANA2

*'They agreed that it is him, that fat, black rat, who will tie THAT bell (on the cat's tail).'*  
 Cat and Rats.1.6

<sup>96</sup> There are counter examples, where a question quote is introduced by the standard **l̄**. The motivation for this variation, as well as the difference in meaning or function between the variants, is unknown at this time.

(13.50) wō wū Ø-jwēŋsé né wō lé wō gè jálě,  
 2SG c1REL c1-man if 2SG COP 3SG do wrong

wò lěgè [lě, Ø-kwō fōsē wò]  
 2SG beg.IMP COMP c1-wife.2SG.POSS.FUT forgive 2SG

*'You the husband, if you have done wrong, ask that your wife forgive you.'*  
 Marriage.4.5

Rarely, the quotation occurs before the speech verb. In this case, there is no complementizer, as illustrated in example (13.51). Note that the SOV word order observed in this example is characteristic of one of the clausal negation strategies, which is described in §15.2.

(13.51) [gé lá lē, wō mē fí gè], wù bī:  
 do Q COMP 2SG 1SG.PRO help NEG2 3SG ask

*“‘Why don’t you help me?’ he asked.”*<sup>97</sup> Lake.4.8-9

Examples (13.52)-(13.55) show other verbs that can take a complement introduced by lē that do not fit neatly into the above categories, although all of them, with the exception of (13.55), may be construed as expressing different types of communication. (Example (13.55) might be better understood as a purpose clause, which is described in §13.2.1.)

(13.52) bēŋ mō bēŋ jí Ø-lè, [lē gé fy-ē:  
 2PL.HORT RES 2PL.HORT eat c1-oath COMP NEG2 c19-thing

fí-mí bà yú fí lé fí nò fī  
 c19-some still on.it c19REL COP c19.FUT like.that c19

gà-sē bēŋ gē], jījè, lé nò Ø-ŋwă  
 divide-CAUS 2PL NEG2 reason COP like.that c1-book

wù Ø-ŋdō gōn-é lē, bā chē-è nō:  
 c1AM c1-god want-PROG COMP they stay-PROG like.that

*'You should take an oath that there shall be nothing that will separate you, because that is how the book of God want us to stay.'* Marriage.5.5

<sup>97</sup> The high tone on the first two words of this sentence is the result of intonation associated with exasperation or some other strong emotion.

(13.53) bā gē yēyè bā-mī, [lē lé nò,  
they P3 teach c2-person COMP COP like.that

bó fī bā-mī bá-mù bē Ø-bōnè  
3PL help c2-person c2-some with c5-prayer

fè bà-ŋgē bā-bō lē, kī-fē  
at c2-trouble c2-3PL.POSS APPL c7-time

kì bā chūn-í bī-jīnì kī Ø-mwā-nò]  
c7REL they show-PROG c8-picture c7AM<sup>98</sup> c1-child-god

*'They taught people how to help certain people with prayer for their problems, while they were showing the Jesus Film.'* Training.1.4

(13.54) fī-mánjá fī-nē dūn-í [lē wō gé bvū-jōŋē,  
c19-story c19-PROX show-PROG COMP 2SG do.COND c14-good

tū wò gé nù yē y-ō lē, wò gé  
then 2SG do COP(N) on C9-2SG.POSS APPL 2SG do.COND

bvū-bēfè, tū wò gé nù yē y-ō lē]  
c14-bad then 2SG do COP(N) on C9-2SG.POSS APPL

*'This story is teaching (lit. showing) that, if you do good, then you do FOR YOURSELF; if you do bad, then you do FOR YOURSELF.'*  
What-goes-around.10.2

(13.55) bēŋ gè-è [lē, kī-ŋ-kòŋē nùmè  
2PL.HORT do-PROG COMP c7-NMZR-want COP(N)

ā-bēŋ-nténé, sēgē chī:, mō bē Ø-kfū chī-nā]  
c18-2PL-middle when all RES with c5-family c5-2PL.POSS

*'You should be showing love among yourselves and even YOUR FAMILY.'* Marriage.7

<sup>98</sup> The use of the c7 associative marker with a c8 noun reflects the singular nature of 'pictures' as used here, where it refers to a single 'film'.

The copula **ɲù** is observed taking a complement clause introduced by **lɛ̃** in example (13.56). This is the only example of a **lɛ̃** complement clause following a copula and it is difficult to know for certain if it is functioning similarly to those cases above. However, the example illustrates that it is possible.

- (13.56) ↑(yè nō: lè), fĩ m'ó fĩ ɲù [lɛ̃,  
on like.that APPL c19 RES c19 COP(N) COMP  
bā-mĩ bá-dùdē lɛ̃g-è Ø-ɲō fè bèn lɛ̃]  
c2-person c2-many beg-PROG c1-god at 2PL APPL  
*'So, it is then that many people will be praying to God for you,'*<sup>99</sup>  
Marriage.4.1

### Nɔ̃

The adverbial pronoun **nɔ̃**, as with the particle **lɛ̃** treated above, introduces certain complement clauses, in addition to its function in introducing support clauses (see §13.2.2), although its use as a complementizer is less common. These complement clauses, illustrated in (13.57) and (13.58), usually may be described as manner complements, with the free translation often appropriately utilizing the word “how”.

- (13.57) fĩ ghá [nɔ̃ wù lē yē]  
c19 surpass like.that 3SG enter c9.house  
*'It was beyond her how to enter the house...'* Two Wives.4.9
- (13.58) lē bì-nfūnē by-ē: kē bĩ tád-è [nɔ̃ bā  
SET c8-corn c8-ANA2 begin c8 grow-PROG like.that they  
kē bā jì-ì  
begin they eat-PROG  
*'As that corn was getting ready to start eating...'* (lit. *began growing like that they begin eating*)  
Two Wives.2.4

<sup>99</sup> The analysis of the prepositional phrase translated as ‘so’ presents some difficulties. The tone on **nɔ̃** ‘like.that’ appears with a SH tone. Furthermore, the tone on the entire prepositional phrase is higher than on a neutral prepositional phrase, with the high tone continuing onto the subject and auxiliary **m'ó** of the focal clause. A possible explanation is that this high tone represents Hortative mood, which is realized on, not only the subject, but also on the preceding prepositional phrase functioning as an adverbial. As for the prepositional phrase itself, it appears to have a conventional usage here and, therefore, lexicalized. Thus, the lexicalized form might present a different tonal pattern than expected for the ungrammaticalized form. Further research would be needed to substantiate these hypotheses.

The complement clause may appear well after the main verb. In example (13.59) it appears as the second member of a coordinate complement, following a prepositional phrase.

- (13.59) kī-mā kí fwē lē, bā gē yēyē kòně,  
 c7-week c7REL front APPL they P3 teach about
- bà-jchī bā kī-yō kī yūdē, bā-nē bē  
 c2-law c2AM c7-spirit c7REL clean c2-four with
- [nò, Ø-mù lé nò wú bì: bà-mbīlě]  
 like.that c1-person COP like.that 3SG.FUT ask c2-question

*'In the first week, they taught about the four spiritual laws and how to give a questionnaire.'* (lit. *like that a person will ask questions*)

Training.1.7

As the examples in (13.60) show, **nò** and **lē** as complementizers are interchangeable with a slight difference in meaning. The **nò** complement has a manner semantic element which is lacking in the **lē** complement.

- (13.60) a. lē bē bījē, bē yéŋ [nò ñgú bèn-é]  
 SET 1PL look 1PL see like.that c9.fire ascend-PROG
- 'As we looked, we saw how the fire was going up.'* Fire.2.1
- b. lē bē bījē, bē yéŋ [lē ñgú bèn-é]  
 SET 1PL look 1PL see COMP c9.fire ascend-PROG
- 'As we looked, we saw that the fire was going up.'* (Fire.2.1)

### **Kì**

The particle **kì/kī** 'COMP(K)' introduces clauses which often appear to be complements, although in certain usages they are more similar to Purpose support clauses. It is cognate with the Noni form **kèé-**, which is treated as an infinitive prefix (Hyman 1981: 52). However, the corresponding Nchane form is perhaps always unbound, although it shares the form of the c7 prefix **kī-**, which is possibly its source.

This particle functions in a similar way to **lē** 'SET' in Purpose clauses (see §13.2.1), although **kì** complements always have the same subject as the focal clause, while **lē** Purpose clauses can have the same subject or a different subject. The main verb of the complement clause may be described as less finite or "deranked" (following Cristofaro 2005), as it never appears with an auxiliary of any type. However, they can appear with verbal extensions. It appears that **lē** may often be substituted for **kì**, but **kì** generally may not be substituted for **lē**. The difference in

meaning between the two types of clauses is nuanced, with **kì** complements often expressing something like Intention rather than Purpose. The complements introduced by **kì** may represent a focused type, but this hypothesis is yet to be substantiated.

Examples (13.61)-(13.63) illustrate **kì** introducing complements of cognition and communication verbs, similar to **lě** complementation. As stated above, the complement clause always has the same subject as the focal clause.

- (13.61) mē      ĩ̃-gè      kòŋ-é      [**kì**      ñ-tá:      fè      bā-mī]  
 1SG.PRO   1SG-P3   want-PROG   COMP(K)   1SG-join   at   c2-person  
*'I wanted to join the people...'*      Lake.5.5

- (13.62) b́      b́é      [**kì**      b́      kē      b́      ch̀-è  
 3PL   agree   COMP(K)   3PL   begin   3PL   stay-PROG  
 k̀-ŋ-chê      k̀- b́,      j́jē      Ø-mù      b́      Ø-kwē]  
 c7-NMZR-stay   c7-3PL.POSS   reason   c1-person   with   c1-wife  
*'They will agree to live together as husband and wife.'*      Marriage.3.4

- (13.63) b́      sísē      [**kì**      b́      gū      Ø-nà,      b́      sé:      b́      gēsē]  
 3PL   decide   COMP(K)   3PL   buy   c1-cow   3PL   cut   3PL   sell  
*'They arranged to buy a cow to slaughter and sell.'*      Greedy Friends.1.3

Examples (13.64) and (13.65) show that other clausal constituents may intervene between the verb of the focal clause and the complement. These examples also better illustrate the “intention” sense often expressed through these complements. Example (13.65) further shows that the complement clause can consist of multiple clauses and have a complex syntactic structure.

- (13.64)  $\bar{j}$ -yéŋ    bā-mī    bá    mèsàzē    lē,    nò    b5  
 1SG-see    c2-person    c2AM    M.    APPL    like.that    3PL  
 jùd-é    Ø-íggè    [kì    bó    jīŋs-è    ñgú]  
 fight-PROG    c1-trouble    COMP(K)    3PL    extinguish-PROG    c9.fire  
*'I saw the people of Misaje, as they were suffering (lit. fighting trouble) to put out the fire.'*    Fire.8.2

- (13.65)    nò    wù    gè    bé    gē    bē    bvù-ŋgà    gè,  
 like.that    3SG    P3    <sup>P</sup>COP    NEG2    with    c14-power    NEG2  
 wū    gē    jā    wù    gē:    yē    yì    Ø-nò    lē,  
 3SG    P3    leave    3SG    go    c9.house    c9AM    c1-god    APPL  
 [kì    wú    gē:    wú    kūŋ    mbyèŋè,    nò  
 COMP(K)    3SG    go    3SG    ring    c9.bell    like.that  
 bó    tǔ    bó    gè-è,    kì-fè    kī    Ø-ŋgē    lē]  
 3PL    HAB    3PL    do-PROG    c7-time    c7AM    c1-trouble    APPL  
*'Although he was very weak, he set out for the church to ring the bell as they always did in times of trouble.'*    Lake.6.5

Again, similar to **lē** complementation, **kì** can introduce a complement of a copula, as in (13.66) and (13.67).

- (13.66)    lē    wū    kwé,  
 SET    3SG    die  
 bā    gē    bē    [kì    bā    tē    kwè    yí-yú]  
 they    P3    <sup>P</sup>COP    COMP(K)    they    celebrate    c9.die    c9-ANA2  
*'When she died, they were to celebrate THAT death.'*    Disobedient Child.1.13  
 (13.67)    bē    nù    [kì    bē    yēyē    jè    yì    ñchànè]  
 1PL    COP(N)    COMP(K)    1PL    learn    c9.word    c9AM    N.  
*'We have been learning the Nchane language.'*    Speech.1.3

Obligation may be expressed through a **ki** clause preceded by the verb **kēmē** ‘have’. Note that the verb of the complement clause appears with the progressive suffix.

- (13.68) gέ nò Ø-jwṽ: kēm-é [ki  
do.IMP like.that c1-husband.2SG.POSS have-PROG COMP(K)
- wū kòŋ-è Ø-bwṽ: bέ Ø-chíjò,  
3SG love-PROG c1-mother.2SG.POSS with c1-father.2SG.POSS
- bέ Ø-kfū ch-è chī-chī, bi-mbè lé bī-chi]  
with c5-family c5-3SG.POSS c5-all c8-side COP c8-all

*‘Your husband has to love your mother and your father in all ways.’*  
(lit. *has to be loving your mother and father with all his family, all sides*)

Marriage.6.8

While not common, the **ki** complement clause can occur before the focal clause. Example (13.69) illustrates such a case, where the complement clause appears to be topicalized.

- (13.69) Ø-mwāŋ yè mèsē lē [ki wó chē-è  
c1-child.1SG.POSS on finish APPL COMP(K) 2SG stay-PROG
- chúlé yē yì bvù-gù: lē] lé lē, wṽ  
well c9.house c9AM c14-marriage APPL COP COMP 2SG
- kém-é ki wò kē mw-ē: mūn-dùdē,  
have-PROG COMP(K) 2SG know c18a-thing c18a-many
- ŋjē gέ fy-ē: fī-mī jùnmè yú fī  
reason NEG2 c19-thing c19-some COP(N) on.it c19REL
- ghàg-ē bvù-gù fēnē fē-kū gè  
surpass-PROG c14-marriage here c16-down NEG2

*‘My child, as for now, to stay well in a married house is that you have to know many things, because there nothing that is above marriage here on earth.’*

Marriage.3.1



# Chapter 14

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## Questions

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Nchane interrogative constructions may be categorized into two types: polar questions (sometimes referred to as yes-no questions) and content questions. Polar questions are formed by a low tone enclitic, while content questions utilize one of several question words, most of which behave like interrogative pronouns, taking the place of the constituent being questioned. The different types of interrogative constructions, and the question element associated with them, are summarized in Table 14.1.

| <b>Tone/word</b> | <b>Gloss</b> | <b>Type of interrogative</b> |
|------------------|--------------|------------------------------|
| L tone enclitic  | QP           | polar                        |
| <b>lá/-lá</b>    | Q            | general                      |
| <b>yēŋ</b>       | who          | person                       |
| <b>fànê</b>      | where        | place                        |
| <b>-mê:</b>      | how.many     | number                       |
| <b>nê:</b>       | how          | manner/quantity              |

Table 14.1 Summary of Nchane question types.

Section 14.1 describes polar questions, which also includes a short description of tag questions, a subtype of polar question. Section 14.2 treats content questions.

## 14.1 Polar Questions

(14.1) a. wō jí-í Ø-bèlèkāŋ  
2SG eat-PROG c1-papaya

b. w̄ jí-í Ø-bèlèkân  
2SG eat-PROG c1-papaya.QP

(14.2)    n̄sā        y-ē        bí:    wù    lē,    lā:        kì-nf̣ɛ̃:  
          c9.friend    c9-3SG.POSS    ask    3SG    APPL    O.COMP    c7-blind.man

|         |     |    |           |       |      |         |
|---------|-----|----|-----------|-------|------|---------|
| kī-nē   | tó  | kī | tò-ò      | yà-nè | té   | lè      |
| c7-PROX | HAB | c7 | come-PROG | here  | also | APPL.OP |

What-goes-around.2.2

Example (14.3) shows further that the enclitic is neutralized when the word it cliticizes already has a falling tone. The word for “thing” normally is pronounced with a ML fall in utterance final position.

- (14.3) wɔ̃ jí wā fy-ē:  
2SG eat already c19-thing.QP

*'Have you already eaten something?'*

What-goes-around.4.5

Note that this example also shows what appears to be question intonation, with the mid-toned 2SG pronoun having a SH tone and the word for “already”, which normally has a HL tone, is realized with a M tone. Question intonation as seen here is sometimes observed in Content questions as well, but its realization appears to be optional.

Tag questions are a special type of polar question consisting of an assertive declarative statement, followed by a short polar question, requesting affirmation or disaffirmation of the assumption asserted in the declarative statement. Example (14.4) demonstrates that the tag in Nchane tag questions takes the form of the short phrase **lé jíchē**: ‘it is true’, with the polar question tone enclitic realized on the final word of the tag. The form for ‘true’ without the L enclitic is normally **jíchē**.

- (14.4) wò ké-é lē mw-ē: mū-nē  
2SG know-PROG COMP c18a-thing c18a-PROX

sān-é mē nē, lé jíchē:  
smell-PROG 1SG.PRO like.this COP true.QP

*'You know that these things are offensive to me (lit. smelling me), right?'*

Inheritance.4

An important aspect of tag question formation to typological studies is whether the assertion and the tag have the same polarity. The assertion and tag have opposite polarity in many languages. This is not the case for Nchane; the tag is invariably positive, regardless of the polarity of the assertive statement, as illustrated in (14.5). The polarity of the assertive statement is positive in a. and negative in b. Nevertheless, the tag portion of the question remains positive in each case.

- (14.5) a. jìjì gēn-é ā-bèn, lé jíchē:  
N. go-PROG c18-B. COP true.QP

*'Nji is going to Bem, true?'*

- b. á jìjì gēn-è ā-bèn gè, lé jíchē:  
NEG1 N. go-PROG c18-B. NEG2 COP true.QP

*'Nji is not going to Bem, true?'*

## 14.2 Content questions

Content questions are those which seek the identity of some unknown constituent. These questions in Nchane utilize one of several question words, which correspond to the type of constituent that is unknown by the questioner. The question word typically is coreferential with the unknown constituent (i.e., they are interrogative pronouns), occurring in the same clausal position as that constituent in a declarative clause.

The question word **mē**: ‘how.many’ is an interrogative nominal modifier which follows a noun. It stands in the place of the number in declarative sentences and is appropriately marked with an agreement prefix. So, although it is not itself pronominal, it is replative.

Although question words are considered as inherently focused, the interrogative clause may explicitly mark the question word as in focus, either through a cleft construction or postverbal focus. Each of the interrogative words is treated in the following sections, where they appear bolded.

### 14.2.1 The interrogative pronoun **lá** ‘Q’

The form **lá** is productive as an interrogative marker and is observed in three different types of syntactic constructions. In the first, **lá** takes the place of the constituent in question. The resulting question can often be translated with the question word ‘what’. The examples presented in (14.6) represent two different syntactic strategies for the common question, “What is this?”.

- (14.6) a. **fī-nē**      **lé**      **lá**  
                  c19-PROX    COP    Q  
                  ‘What is this?’
- b. **lé**      **lá**      **fī-nē**  
                  COP    Q      c19-PROX  
                  ‘What is this?’ (lit. it is what, this)

Note that non clause-final occurrences of **lá** are usually realized with a super high tone when preceded by the copula, as in (14.6)b. This super high tone is likely the result of question intonation associated with this particular type of question construction.

In both examples, the interrogative pronoun occurs in the postverbal focus position. But example (14.6)b is a copula clause with a right-dislocated subject, marking it explicitly as Topic.

Examples (14.7) and (14.8) illustrate questions with an object and subject interrogative respectively. Example (14.7) utilizes a cleft construction to mark the

questioned constituent as in focus. In addition, it demonstrates that **lá** is treated as belonging to class 19, as evidenced by the corresponding class 19 relativizer.

(14.7) wù bí: bṵ: bā-ā lé là:  
3SG ask c2.child c2-ANA2 APPL Q.COMP

lé **lá** fī bēŋ bé jî  
COP Q c19REL 2PL P1 eat

*'...he asked those children, "What is it that you ate?".'*

What-goes-around.9.8

The syntactic analysis of example (14.8) is unclear, but it demonstrates that the interrogative pronoun can occur clause initially. The high tone on the subject marker suggests that it is really a relativizer, which then hints at this clause being a type of cleft construction (but lacking a copula). Another possibility is that the tone reflects pragmatic concerns. Regardless, this example is important for establishing the different clausal positions available for the interrogative pronoun.

(14.8) **lá** fī yí wò  
Q c19REL pain 2SG

*'What is hurting you?'*

The question word **lá** can sometimes be used to elicit the reason for an action or state, with the translation appropriately using the word "why", as illustrated in example (14.9). In the sentence which follows this example, the wife explains the reason for her crying.

(14.9) Ø-jwē: bí: là: lé **lá**  
c1-husband.3SG.POSS ask Q.COMP COP Q

fī wò bēd-é là  
c19REL 2SG cry-PROG CE

*'Her husband asked, "So, why are you crying?".'* (lit. *it is what that you are crying*)

What-goes-around.9.12

As was stated in §9.5, this example might actually present a type of rhetorical question, where the presence of the Counter-expectation adverb indicates that the speaker somehow does not believe that there is a valid reason for her crying.

The second type of syntactic construction involves **lá** and an adverbial word of some kind. In (14.10) and (14.11) **lá** follows the time word **ségé** and the reason clause introducer **jījē** respectively. In both cases, the interrogative pronoun is replacing the elements given in the response, which follow the adverb. For example,

the response to the question in (14.11) could be **ɲjē n-tēmè gè** ‘because I am not well (lit. strong)’. The adverbial introducer is maintained in the response.

- (14.10) Ø-ɲfɔŋ tó ségɛ lá  
c1-chief come when Q

*‘When will the chief come?’*

- (14.11) wò bá: jɔ̃ kɔ̃-dē gē ɲjē lá  
2SG still c9.water catch-COMPL NEG2 reason Q

*‘Why have you not carried water?’*

Finally, **lá** can appear in a noun phrase, where it takes an agreement prefix corresponding to the head noun. The resulting form can be translated as “which”. The agreement prefix is realized with a H tone. Examples (14.12) and (14.13) are given to illustrate.

- (14.12) lé Ø-mwā **wú-lá** wú jí bvù-lɛ:  
COP c1-child c1-Q c1REL eat c14-fufu

*‘Which child ate fufu?’*

- (14.13) Ø-ɲfɔŋ tó Ø-jú **chí-lá**  
c1-chief come c5-day c5-Q

*‘When will the chief come?’ (lit. the chief comes which day)*

### 14.2.2 The interrogative pronoun **yēŋ** ‘who’

The interrogative word **yēŋ** ‘who’ is pronominal, taking the place of the unknown referent, which is usually a human, as in (14.14).

- (14.14) wū-nē lé **yēŋ**  
c1-PROX COP who

*‘Who is this?’*

Unknown possessors are usually encoded with **yēŋ**, with the accompanying translation of “whose”, as illustrated in (14.15). The pronoun **yēŋ** is coreferential with the possessor, whether expressed as a possessive pronoun or the N<sub>2</sub> of an associative noun phrase. (As stated in §5.3, omission of the associative noun marker for class 1 and class 9 head nominals has been reported for Noni and is likely for Nchane as well. Thus, the syntax of this interrogative could be comparable to either type of genitive construction.)

- (14.15) lé Ø-mwā yēŋ wú jǐ bvù-lē:  
COP c1-child who c1REL eat c14-fufu

*‘Whose child ate fufu?’*

Example (14.16) shows **yēŋ** again appearing in an associative noun phrase. But in this case, it is not expressing the notion of possession, but is best translated as “which”. This question could be asked in the context of buying a hoe from a vendor at the market who has several hoes to choose from.

- (14.16) wò gón-ě jì yī yēŋ  
2SG want-PROG c9.hoe c9AM who

*‘Which hoe do you want?’*

### 14.2.3 The interrogative pronoun fànē ‘where’

‘Where’ questions utilize the interrogative pronoun **fànē**, as in (14.17) and (14.18).

- (14.17) wò gēn-é fànē  
2SG go-PROG where

*‘Where are you going?’*

- (14.18) Ø-chijò lé fànē  
c1-father.2SG.POSS COP where

*‘Where is your father?’*

Example (14.19) presents the locative interrogative pronoun co-occurring with an Object. The interrogative pronoun appears in the immediately-after-verb Focus position, with the Object following, suggesting that this is normative for the interrogative locative pronoun. This is particularly noteworthy since focus-marked Locative Obliques are unattested in the immediately-after-verb position.

- (14.19) nò Ø-jwē: shìl-é fē-kū:  
like.that c1-husband.3SG.POSS sit-PROG c16-down

wù mō wù bí: lē wō jǒ fànē m-bă  
3SG RES 3SG ask COMP 2SG take where c6a-soup

*‘As her husband was sitting down, then he asked “Where will you get soup?”’*  
Jealous Husband.10

#### 14.2.4 The interrogative nominal modifier **mê:** ‘how.many’

The unknown quantity of countable items is expressed through the interrogative nominal modifier **mê:**, which is marked by a noun class agreement prefix corresponding to the item in question. It follows the noun that it modifies, as illustrated in (14.20) and (14.21).

- (14.20) wō lé b'é bō: **bā-mê:**  
 2SG COP with c2.child c2-how.many  
*‘How many children do you have?’*

- (14.21) lé bī-gè **bī-mê:**  
 COP c8-teeth c8-how.many  
*‘How much does it cost?’*

#### 14.2.5 The interrogative adverbial pronoun **nê:** ‘how’

The interrogative adverbial pronoun **nê:** is utilized in forming manner questions, as demonstrated in example (14.22). The pronoun occurs at the right edge of the clause and is coreferential with the propositional response.

- (14.22) bā fê-dē Ø-īkāŋ **nê:**  
 they make-COMPL c1-beer how  
*‘How do they make corn beer?’*

A second function of **nê:** is in forming questions seeking the unknown quantity of uncountable (or mass) nouns. In (14.23) the interrogative pronoun follows the uncountable noun in question, while in (14.24) it follows the main verb.

- (14.23) wò kēm-é Ø-īkāŋ **nê:**  
 2SG have-PROG c1-sha how  
*‘How much sha (i.e., corn beer) do you have?’*

- (14.24) jò lé yī shē **nê:** ā shā lē  
 c9.water COP c9 remain how in c9.pot APPL  
*‘How much water is remaining in the pot?’ (lit. the water remains how in the pot)*

In this second example, the uncountable noun appears to be topical, as it occurs in the preverbal position associated with Topics. It is possible then that this accounts for the differing clause position of the interrogative pronoun.



This interrogative pronoun also appears in questions requesting the degree of certain quality nouns attributed to some nominal constituent. In this context, the interrogative pronoun follows a prepositional phrase in which the quality noun is the prepositional complement, as (14.25) and (14.26) illustrate.

- (14.25)    bī            y-ò                    lé    yē    bvū-tādē    lē    **nē:**  
                  c9.goat    c9-2SG.POSS    COP    on    c14-grow    APPL    how

*‘How big is your goat?’ (lit. your goat is on growth how)*

- (14.26)    Ø-mwā    w-ò                    lé    yē    bvū-jūnē    lē    **nē:**  
                  c1-child    c1-2SG.POSS    COP    on    c14-be.old    APPL    how

*‘How old is your child?’ (lit. your child is on oldness how)*

It can be observed that the interrogative adverbial pronoun **nē:** is similar in form to the interrogative nominal modifier **mē:** treated in §14.2.4. Both have the shape **Nē:** and are marked with a ML falling tone. Furthermore, there is partial overlap in the semantics expressed by both words—both encoding measurement of quantity. Therefore, it is possible that they share a common source. One candidate for that source is the **né** ‘GEST’ treated in §8.5.



# Chapter 15

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## Negation

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Negative constructions in Nchane display a fair amount of variety, which presents a challenge for description. This chapter attempts to capture the generalities that have been observed, as well as point out some of the finer details which appear to be related to motivating different negation construction strategies.

Negative clauses utilize one or more negation words, which are summarized in Table 15.1. The negative marker **gē** ‘NEG2’ appears in all negative clause constructions, usually in clause-final position. Note that the tense and aspect “contexts” for the negation markers **bá** ‘still’ and **á** ‘NEG1’ as provided in the table are approximations and not absolute, since the actual situation is more complicated. More details are provided in §15.2.

| Marker      | Gloss | Context                  |
|-------------|-------|--------------------------|
| <b>gē</b>   | NEG2  | multiple                 |
| <b>bá</b>   | still | preverbal (+PAST, -PROG) |
| <b>á</b>    | NEG1  | clause initial (-PAST)   |
| <b>kéŋē</b> | VET   | clause initial (+IMP)    |

Table 15.1 Summary of Nchane negation markers.

Negation constructions may be divided into two types, depending on the target or scope of the negation. Constituent negation is described in §15.1 and clausal negation in §15.2. Triply marked negative constructions are presented in §15.3. The final section (15.4) deals with negative commands, which are designated as “vetitive” constructions.

### 15.1 Constituent negation

Negative constructions, in which the target of the negation is a clausal constituent, utilize a discontinuous marker consisting of two instances of **gē** ‘NEG2’. The first **gē** immediately precedes the negated constituent; the second **gē** occurs at the end of the clause. The NEG2 marker is usually realized in clause-final position with a L tone. Note that it has the alternative pronunciation of [kē], particularly in non-clause final position. The framing construction is summarized in Figure 15.1.

**gē x...gē**

Figure 15.1 Formula for Nchane constituent negation constructions.

The ellipsis in the formula represents any elements which canonically follow the negated constituent “x”. This includes the verb complex, in the case of subject negation. Presumably, any clausal constituent may be negated utilizing this strategy. Examples (15.1)-(15.3) demonstrate subject, object and comitative oblique negation respectively.

- (15.1) **gē** fy-ē: fī-mī nùmè yú  
 NEG2 c19-thing c19-some COP(N) on.it  
 fí yàg-é bvù-gù fēnē fè-kū **gē**  
 c19REL surpass-PROG c14-marriage here c16-down NEG2  
*‘...no other thing exists that is greater than (lit. surpassing) marriage here on earth.’*  
 Marriage.3.1

- (15.2) mū-jǐ gè nǎ-á **gē** bà-ŋkè **gē**  
 c18a-bird P3 give-PROG NEG2 c2-song NEG2  
*‘Birds were not singing.’ (lit. giving no songs)*  
 Lake.6.1

- (15.3) nò wù gè bé **gē** bé bvù-ŋgà **gē**,  
 like.that 3SG P3 <sup>P</sup>COP NEG2 with c14-power NEG2  
*‘Although he was very weak...’ (lit. as he was not with power)* Lake.6.5

The text data also provide examples of negation of complement clauses, as in (15.4).

- (15.4)      kī-fē      shégé,      wù      gē      jā      wé,      wù      nū      gē  
                  c7-time      small      3SG      P3      stand      up      3SG      COP(N)      NEG2
- nò      wú      yéné      gē  
                  like.that      3SG      breathe      NEG2

*‘Sometime later, he awoke, unable to breathe.’ (lit. he being not like that he breathe)*      Lake.4.3

## 15.2 Clausal negation

As with constituent negation, the negation of clauses also involves discontinuous negative marking. However, unlike with constituent negation, clausal negation is sensitive to TAM expression, resulting in two distinct negation strategies, which are summarized in Figure 15.2. For the sake of convenience, I refer to the first strategy as the “**bá**-strategy” and the second strategy as the “**á**-strategy”.<sup>100</sup>

- S **bá** V<sub>[core]</sub>...gē      (clauses with [+PAST], [-PROG] verbs)  
**á** S V<sub>[complex]</sub>...gē      (elsewhere)

Figure 15.2 Formulas for Nchane clausal negation constructions.

The **bá**-strategy involves the auxiliary **bá** or **bá:** ‘still’, which immediately precedes the verb core and does not allow subject agreement to intervene between it and the main verb, although it is itself marked with subject agreement when the subject is 1SG. Tense markers, when present, precede the negative marker. For these reasons, I consider **bá** as belonging to the verb complex. Data is lacking that would establish the ordering of **bá** and preverbal TAM markers other than tense.

In the **á**-strategy, the negative marker **á** ‘NEG1’ occurs in the clause-initial position. A suitable candidate for the source of NEG1 has not yet been identified. As Figure 15.2 indicates, the **bá**-strategy is used only with past, non-progressive constructions and the **á**-strategy elsewhere. The NEG2 marker **gē** occurs in the clause-final position in both strategies.

<sup>100</sup> The neighboring Beboid language Noni makes the same distinction, with +PAST, -PROG clauses utilizing the negative marker **bá** ~ **bá:** in the preverbal position, and +PROG clauses utilizing the negative marker **ké** in clause initial position (Hyman 1981: 57, 60). The nearby Yemne-Kimbi language Mungbam also makes a distinction between two categories of clauses in negative clause formation. However, in this language, the distinction is Realis vs. Irrealis, and differentiates the two by utilizing different negative markers for each distinct type, with comparable syntax in each (Lovegren 2013: 417).

The association of ‘still’ in negative constructions aligns with the notion of “phasal polarity expressions”, where the negative counterpart of the “still” expression is the “no longer” expression or the “not yet” expression.<sup>101</sup> Löfgren (2019) shows that it is not uncommon for Bantu languages to utilize such phasal polarity expression systems, where at least one positive term appears with and without negation markers to establish such a contrastive set of expressions.

The two strategies for clausal negation constructions are illustrated through an elicited TAM paradigm presented in Table 15.2, with the phrase “Nji catches (k5) termites (ḡg5)” serving as the base. It can be seen that the object in the **bá**-strategy obligatorily occurs in the immediately-before-verb position, although not in triple negative constructions (see §15.3). Presumably, this allows NEG2 to occur in the immediately after verb position associated with canonical focus. Meanwhile, the object appears *in situ* in the **á**-strategy.<sup>102</sup>

| Tense | Example                       | Gloss                          |
|-------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| P0    | ḡḡì <b>bá</b> ḡg5 k5 ḡḡè      | ‘Nji didn’t catch termites.’   |
| P1    | ḡḡì bé <b>bá</b> ḡg5 k5 ḡḡè   | ‘Nji didn’t catch termites.’   |
| P2    | ḡḡì chí <b>bá</b> ḡg5 k5 ḡḡè  | ‘Nji didn’t catch termites.’   |
| P3    | ḡḡì ḡḡ <b>bá</b> ḡg5 k5 ḡḡè   | ‘Nji didn’t catch termites.’   |
| PROG  | <b>á</b> ḡḡì k5d-è ḡg5 ḡḡè    | ‘Nji isn’t catching termites.’ |
| FUT   | <b>á</b> ḡḡì k5 ḡg5 ḡḡè       | ‘Nji will not catch termites.’ |
| HAB   | <b>á</b> ḡḡì tó wù k5 ḡg5 ḡḡè | ‘Nji doesn’t catch termites.’  |

Table 15.2 Clausal negation strategies illustrated through a TAM paradigm.

Note that the position of the object in negative clauses is slightly different from object defocalization observed in affirmative clauses. In negative constructions, the object occurs between the negative marker **bá** and the main verb, while in affirmative clauses the defocalized object precedes the entire verb complex. See §16.3.1 for more details.

<sup>101</sup> Nchane uses the same term “still” for both, “not yet” and “no longer” expressions, a phenomenon observed by Kramer (2017: 6) for some languages.

<sup>102</sup> It appears that future tense marking in the future example in Table 15.2 is neutralized. Regardless, this clause may not be confused with an immediate past reading, since the corresponding P0 clause utilizes the negative marking associated with the **bá**-strategy.

Example (15.5) is a text example illustrating a preverbal object in a non-progressive negative construction.

- (15.5) Ø-lá chí-mī, bā gè **bá:** fy-ē: fó búse **gē**  
 c5-compound c5-some they P3 still c19-thing there remove NEG2  
*'In the other compound, they did not remove anything.'* Fire.22

As mentioned above, clauses with progressive verbs utilize the **á**-strategy, as in (15.6).

- (15.6) **á** jíjì chí kūŋ-è Ø-nà **gē**  
 NEG1 N. P2 drive.away-PROG c1-cow NEG2  
*'Nji was not driving the cow away (yesterday).'*

The Progressive suffix is realized with a low tone, just as in constructions with a preverbal grammatical high-toned element, such as Hortative and Durative, which was discussed in §§9.1.2 and 9.2.

Although it is typical for non-progressive past clauses to utilize **bá** rather than **á**, there is at least one exception worth noting. Examples (15.7) and (15.8) both show the **á**-strategy being utilized with non-progressive past clauses. However, both clauses are focus constructions. Example (15.7) is a postverbal agent focus clause with the pronoun **wù** in focus and example (15.8) shows focus on the applied object **shī lē** through the use of the focusing copula **nū**.

- (15.7) (ŋgáŋ), **á** bvū-lē: bé ná wù shī lē **gē**  
 no NEG1 c14-fufu P1 give 3SG c9.chicken APPL NEG2  
*'(No), HE did not give the chicken fufu (someone else did).'*

- (15.8) **á** wù bé ná bvū-lē: nū shī lē **gē**  
 NEG1 3SG P1 give c14-fufu COP(N) c9.chicken APPL NEG2  
*'He did not give THE CHICKEN fufu.'* (he gave it to THE DOG, for example)

Therefore, to the elements characterizing clauses which utilize the **bá**-strategy, we should add that any kind of formal focus marking is absent. Note that no examples of a clause with a Progressive main verb utilizing the **bá**-strategy appear in the data.

(15.9)      bá-mí              gè      jèm-é              **gè**  
                  c2-person.NEG    P3      talk-PROG      NEG2

Lake.6.11

(15.10)    *n̄-tēm-è*                      **gè**  
                1SG.NEG-strong-PROG          NEG2

This phenomenon suggests that the language may be in the early stages of losing the initial negative marker, as predicted by the Jespersen cycle (see Jespersen (1917), and Devos and van der Auwera (2013) more specifically for this phenomenon among African languages), which is also relevant to the following section on triple negation constructions.

Clauses with three negative markers are neither common nor rare in the text data. They always consist of the non-progressive negative marker **bá**, a NEG2 marker preceding a negated constituent and a clause-final NEG2. Examples (15.11) and (15.12) are given to illustrate.

(15.11)    *n̄sá*            *y-é*            *chē-ē*            *gè*    ***bá:***    *yēyè*    ***gē***  
                  c10.friend    c10-3SG.POSS    c10-ANA1    P3    still    learn    NEG2

|           |          |      |
|-----------|----------|------|
| fy-ê:     | fī-mī    | gè   |
| c19-thing | c19-some | NEG2 |

Greedy Friends.1.7

(15.12) wù gè **bá:** yēŋ **gē** bī-bāgē lé **gè,**  
 3SG P3 still see NEG2 c8-wound APPL NEG2

Lake.6.3

Note that the Object in these triple negation constructions remains *in situ*.



<sup>104</sup> This verb can also mean “minimize” or “make small”.

- (15.15) **kéḿ** bḗŋ jḗŋ-ì bḗŋ ság-è wù ā-lā  
 VET 2PL walk-PROG 2PL judge-PROG 3SG c6-compound
- ā bā-mī lé **gè**  
 c6AM c2-person APPL NEG2

*'Do not go around, gossiping about her (lit. judging her) in people's compounds, ...'*

Marriage.6.4

The vetitive marker is likely a grammaticalized contraction of some sort. The **ké** portion of the word is possibly a form of **gḗ** NEG2, which is sometimes pronounced as [kḗ] as pointed out in §15.1. The high tone could represent a negative grammatical high tone associated with the other preverbal negative markers **bá** and **á**; or perhaps it is the high tone associated with Imperative or Hortative constructions.

Two possibilities are noted for the source of the **fḗ** element. The first is that it comes from the verb **fḗ** 'make, do'. A more likely possibility is that it is derived from the locative class 16 prefix **fḗ-**. Indeed, the same form is seen in some rare cases acting like a conditional introducer. Further, the development of the class 16 locative affix into a negative marker is observed in other African languages (see Devos & Van der Auwera 2013: 237).

# Chapter 16

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## Information structure

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This chapter is concerned with how information is presented and organized within a discourse and, at a simpler level, the sentences of a discourse. As pointed out in §11.4, information structure plays a key role in the alignment of constituents in a clause. There is an apparent preference for Topics to appear to the left of the verb and focused constituents to the right of the verb, a general tendency observable in many of Nchane's topic and focus construction types, as will be seen in the sections below.

Information structure is an area of study involving many factors, but I limit the discussion here to four primary issues: Thetic expressions, Topic, Focus, and Givenness. Because these terms, especially topic and focus, can be used in different ways and have different scopes of expression, I begin here in the introduction with some definitions.

*Thetic* expressions are those presented as one piece of information, generally considered as lacking topical and focused elements. Furthermore, they often contain all new information. For the most part, this type of expression in Nchane offers little in the way of unique structures or markers and may be helpful as a kind of backdrop for viewing the various information packaging structures. Thus, §16.1 offers a brief description of two different kinds of thetic expressions appearing in the text corpus.

*Topic*, according to Lambrecht, is “the thing which the proposition...is ABOUT” (1996: 118). Nchane Topics are usually expressed by agents appearing in the preverbal position, agents being particularly suited for the topic role. Various marking strategies are employed to indicate the topical status of referents, especially when the intended Topic might otherwise be unclear. Much of §16.2 is dedicated to describing these different strategies.

I follow Krifka and Musan (who cite Rooth 1985) in defining *focus* as indicating “the presence of alternatives that are relevant for the interpretation of linguistic expression” (2012: 7). Different types of focus represent specific salient characteristics of the relationship between the members of the set of alternatives. For example, *contrastive* focus denotes one member of a restricted set, where the alternative member(s) does not result in a true proposition. *Scalar* focus, on the other hand, denotes one member of a set, which is presupposed to be the least likely to result in a true proposition.

Postverbal referents in canonical sentences are often construed as focused and could be thought of as having been selected from among numerous other plausible referents. These postverbal referents also most often represent new information, which aligns well with Lambrecht’s observation that “focus has to do with the conveying of new information” (1996: 206). Therefore, §16.3 begins with a brief description of sentences with no “special” focus marking, followed by separate presentations of the various structures expressing focus in Nchane.

*Givenness* has to do with the activation status of a referent within a discourse setting. A referent may be new or old. Or a referent can be old, but inactive, and therefore in need of reactivation. While the concept of givenness applies to clausal expressions as well as nominal expressions, its realization in participant tracking in Nchane is particularly notable and will receive most of the attention in the description given in §16.4.

### 16.1 Thetic expressions

Sentences for which there is no discourse context are comparable to canonical sentences. Both have SAuxVO word order and no special marking. So-called “out of the blue” statements, referred to as “annuntiative” by Sasse (2011: 281), are illustrated by examples (16.1) and (16.2).

- (16.1)    *jāŋ*        *tó-ó*        *lò*  
               c9.rain    come-PROG   FOC

*‘Rain is coming.’*

- (16.2) mē      ñ-fē      kwē      yī      Ø-kī  
 1SG.PRO   1SG-make   c9.death   c9REL   c4-month

lé      yúfè      ñchò      yī-fé:  
 COP   ten   plus   c4-two

*'I am having a death celebration in December.'* (lit. *death that month is twelve*)

Presentational utterances, which are commonly observed as the first sentence of stories, also closely follow the canonical pattern. As described in §6.4.4, this type of construction often includes a nominal subject modified by the specific indefinite determiner **mū** 'some', as in (16.3) and (16.4).

- (16.3) Ø-jwēnsé      wū-mū      gē      bé      yú,      wū      kēmè  
 c1-man      c1-some      P3      <sup>P</sup>COP      on.it      c1REL      have

bī-kēsé      bā-fédè  
 c2-woman      c2-two

*'There was a man who had two wives.'*

Two Wives.1.1

- (16.4) kī-nfê:      kī-mú      gē      jēp-í,      kī      lēg-è      mw-ê:  
 c7-blind.man      c7-some      P3      walk-PROG      c7      beg-PROG      c18a-thing

*'A certain blind man was walking around and begging.'*

What-goes-around.1.1

## 16.2 Topic

As mentioned in the chapter's introduction, Topic is defined as the referent which the proposition is about. Nchane Topics may occur in the preverbal position or in the postverbal position as in (16.5) and (16.6) respectively, although the language appears to prefer preverbal Topics. The discourse contexts are given in (16.5)a and (16.6)a, which show that the referent that functions as Topic often appears in the postverbal position of the preceding sentence, although it is also possible for it to appear in the preverbal position. Note that Topics in this section appear in brackets.

- (16.5) a. *kī-lūŋ kí-mí, gē bé Ø-jwènsè wū-mū bé*  
 c7-year c7-some P3 <sup>P</sup>COP c1-man c1-some with  
*Ø-kwē wú-mū, bō kōŋ-ē yē bá:ŋ*  
 c1-wife c1-some 3PL.REL love-PROG c10.body much  
*'Some years [ago], there was a man and wife, who loved each other very much.'* Jealous Husband.1.1
- b. [bó] ché-é kī-ŋ-ché kí jōŋē wēsè  
 3PL stay-PROG c7-NMZR-stay c7REL good very  
*'They were living a life that was very good.'* Jealous Husband.1.2
- (16.6) a. *mē gē n-tō bé bī-gē, n-tō jī-ché*  
 1SG.PRO P3 1SG-come with c8-teeth 1SG-come 1SG-stay  
*'I brought some money and slept.'* Fire.1.4
- b. *bvū-chfū yū, jī-jò [bī-gè by-ē:]*  
 c14-day brighten(?) 1SG-take c8-teeth c8-ANA1  
*n-lē ŋ-gè: yē*  
 1SG-enter 1SG-put c9.house  
*'The next morning, I took that money and put [it] in [my] house.'* Fire.1.5

More could be said about the Nchane Topic as a notional expression. But the current work is mostly concerned with describing particular constructions and grammatical elements involved with identifying Topics. As such, the remainder of this section describes the various topic-marking strategies utilized by Nchane. These strategies are: Left dislocation, Left detachment and DP-internal word order changes. The section ends with a brief treatment of right dislocation, although its function as a Topic-marking device is dubious. Note that, in addition to Topics appearing in brackets, the symbol ↑ precedes elements enclosed in parentheses to indicate tone realization at higher tonal register, which is often associated with special topic-marking strategies.

### 16.2.1 Left dislocation

PATIENTS and Locative Obliques have been observed in left dislocations, where the topic-marked referent occurs in sentence-initial position and realized at a higher tone

register, maintained across a portion of or the entire dislocated phrase.<sup>105</sup> The need for special topic marking such as left dislocation arises in several situations, such as when a referent has inactive status due to a relatively long gap between mentions or no previous mention at all, or in some cases of topic shift. Furthermore, non-agent referents usually require special topic marking.

Left dislocation usually involves relativized nominals as in (16.7), in which the PATIENT is Topic. This referent is mentioned five sentences earlier, but becomes inactive, as there are three different Topics between mentions. The Topic of the previous sentence is ‘the first four’, referring to those who earned the award of a helicopter ride. The *in situ* Object pronoun likely occurs because the antecedent is human. This is suggested by the observation made in §11.1.1 that human Objects are subject to special syntactic requirements such as being restricted from Object ellipsis.

(16.7) [↑(mē wú chīlā) jījì īnòk], Ø-jñ gē fí [mē],  
1SG.PRO c1REL Ch. N. E. c1-god P3 help 1SG.PRO

bā bá: mē à bā-mī bá bā-nē ñtēnē:  
they choose 1SG.PRO in c2-person c2REL four middle

‘I, myself, Chila<sup>106</sup> Nji Enock, was blessed to have been chosen among the four persons.’ (lit. *God helped me and they chose me*) Training.1.11

Example (16.8) shows another topicalized PATIENT. This sentence is part of the conclusion to the text, with previous sentences talking about how the speaker was able to overcome the destruction of his house and belongings. These ‘events’ in his life are consolidated into one reference and flagged as Topic by the left dislocation construction.

(16.8) [↑(mw-ē: mú bā-mí yéŋ kì-jché k-àŋ  
c18a-thing c18aREL c2-person see c7-stay c7-1SG.POSS

lē)] lé Ø-dē yī-bō yí lé yí sē:  
APPL COP c4-mouth c4-3PL.POSS c4REL COP c4.FUT tell

‘The things that people saw in my life, only their mouths will say (lit. *it is their mouths that will tell*).’ Fire.62

<sup>105</sup> Left dislocations of simple noun phrases are presumed to be allowed, but no instances are observed in the text data, nor have they been tested for acceptability through elicitation studies. However, example (16.10) hints at its possibility, along with the possibility of left-dislocated agents.

<sup>106</sup> This is a compound word consisting of **chī** (c1) + **lā** (c5) ‘father + compound’ and is used as a title of respect for the leader of a family living in a compound.

The examples of left dislocation so far have dealt with reactivating a previously active referent. Example (16.9) illustrates a previously unmentioned referent marked as Topic through left dislocation. Lambrecht observes that “brand-new referents”, which have low acceptability as topics because they are unidentifiable (or cognitively inaccessible), are made more acceptable through anchoring to an identifiable referent (Lambrecht 1996: 167). Thus, in this example, the brand-new referent “things” is linked to the addressee through the second-person pronoun to make it more identifiable and acceptable as a topic.

- (16.9) [↑(mw-ē: mù wō búd-é wó) gēn-è  
c18a-thing c18aREL 2SG exit-PROG 2SG.FUT go-PROG

Ø-ŋwā yú] lé ŋ-gù wá mùŋ-chì  
c1-book on.it COP 1SG-buy already c18a-all

*‘All the things you are to go to school with, I have already bought.’*

School.3

The complex sentence in example (16.10) begins with a left-dislocated relativized noun phrase which is coreferential with the PATIENT and AGENT in contrasting consecutive clauses. The Topic “things” refers to a sum of money that was mentioned more than twenty sentences earlier, as well as other things in the house such as furniture and clothes, which are cognitively accessible through cultural association (i.e., certain items are commonly found in Nchane houses and assumed to be present). As with the previous example, the new information (“things”) is anchored to old information (“home”) to mitigate its low accessibility.

- (16.10) [↑(mw-ē: mú yē kwè)], [mú-mú] bā būsè,  
c18a-thing c18aREL on home c18a-some they remove

mú-mú fyē  
c18a-some burn

*‘The things in the house, some was removed, others burned.’* Fire.5.1

Note that the PATIENT Topic in the first main clause is expressed twice, first through the left-dislocated noun phrase “things in the house”, and second through a left-dislocated demonstrative pronoun. This is the clearest example in the data of PATIENT-AGENT-verb (PAV) word order. (Compare with examples (16.7), which has an *in situ* PATIENT pronoun, and (16.8), which has no PATIENT pronoun, neither *in situ* nor left-dislocated.) I assume that the clause would be grammatical without the demonstrative pronoun, but it occurs in order to establish a contrastive frame consisting of two instances of the demonstrative pronoun as described in §6.4.4.



This example also shows that, while unmarked Topics most often occur in the immediately-before-verb position, specially marked Topics occur as the leftmost constituent. The second main clause has a second instance of the demonstrative pronoun as Topic. But in this case, it is an *in situ* AGENT and its relationship with the sentence-initial phrase is more correctly analyzed as representing a left-detached Topic, which is described in §16.2.2.

### 16.2.2 Left detachment

While AGENTS are often sentence Topics, appearing with no special topic marking and in the immediately-before-verb position, some AGENT Topics require more encoding to indicate their topic status. This is the case for at least some contrastive AGENT Topics and unpredictable switch Topics. The topic-marking strategy for such AGENTS is what Lambrecht calls “left detachment” (1996: 177). In this topic-marking strategy, a noun phrase is “detached” from the main clause, being separated by a breath pause and followed by a pronoun, and usually realized with a raised tonal register. The “unmarked” AGENT Topic is differentiated from the left-detached Topic by having no breath pause between it and the main clause, lacking a following subject pronoun, and realized with a non-raised tonal register.

A left-detached Topic is illustrated in example (16.11). In this case, “Kibbo” is contrasted with “Nfume”, the Topic of the previous sentence, which reported where he settled when he and his four brothers first came to the Nchane area.

- (16.11) ↑([kībó, wù] bé) wù bɛː fwé,  
K. 3SG <sup>P</sup>COP 3SG ascend front

*‘Kibbo, he had gone ahead...’*

History.3.3

The left-detached Topic in example (16.12) follows example (16.10) in the text and represents an unexpected, abrupt topic switch. Topics usually remain as topic for several sentences at a time. Therefore, the switch of topic from “things in the house” to “my house” after just one sentence is unexpected and requires special encoding.

- (16.12) [↑(yē yì mē gè j̃n-ché-é yè lē),  
c9.house c9REL 1SG.PRO P3 1SG-stay-PROG on APPL  
  
yì j̃n y-āŋ, yì mē gè  
c9REL COP(N) c9-1SG.POSS c9REL 1SG.PRO P3  
  
j̃n-ché-é yè lé kībè, yī] gē fyé yì-chī  
1SG-stay-PROG on APPL actually c9 P3 burn c9-all

*‘The house in which I was staying, which was mine and in which I was currently staying, it completely burned.’*

Fire.5.2

### 16.2.3 DP-internal word order change

Section 6.4.2 showed that the canonical word order for demonstrative phrases is noun-demonstrative. The opposite order is rarely observed in the text data and appears to mark the referent as a Topic, while also expressing some emotion such as surprise or exasperation. The raised tonal register associated with the other topic-marking strategies is again observed. There is no pause between the Topic and the main clause, nor does a subject pronoun follow the Topic. A possible analysis is that the non-canonical word order expresses a contrastive reading of the demonstrative. In other words, “this X” as opposed to “that X”. Future research is needed to reach clear conclusions. Examples (16.13) and (16.14) are given to illustrate.

- (16.13) wù dú bó lé lē,  
 3SG say 3PL APPL COMP  
 ↑([fī-nē fy-ē:] lé) fī ghā wá mē  
 c19-PROX c19-thing COP c19 surpass already 1SG.PRO  
*‘...he said to them, “This thing is beyond me.”’ (i.e., this problem is too difficult for me to solve)*  
 Inheritance.6

- (16.14) lē, [↑(wū-nē Ø-kwèsē wū nūmē nàŋ),  
 COMP c1-PROX c1-woman c1REL COP(N) c9.animal  
 wù ká nūmē Ø-mù wū wùŋ] lé  
 c1REL ITER COP(N) c1-person c1AM c3.village COP  
 Ø-kwèsē wū nē lē  
 c1-woman c1AM how APPL  
*‘[He said], “This woman who is an animal and again a human is what kind of woman?”’*  
 Two Wives.7.3

### 16.2.4 Right dislocation

Right dislocations involve a detached referent, which appears in sentence-final position. Evidence for this structure as a topic-marking strategy is relatively weak, with (16.15) the clearest example in the text corpus. Note that the right-dislocated phrases in the below examples are **bolded**.

- (16.15) mē lé jí-ná bèŋ bvū-ŋgá,  
1SG.PRO COP 1SG.FUT-GIVE 2PL c14-power

**Ø-mū wú lé wú yú nàŋ yí-nē**  
c1-person c1REL COP 3SG.FUT kill c9.animal c9-PROX

*'I will give power to you all, to the person who will kill this animal...'*

Inheritance.7

Example (16.16) demonstrates that right dislocations often provide further clarifying information regarding the referent. The right dislocation in this example (and in the previous one) might be analyzed as what Lambrecht calls an “antitopic”, which has limited functionality as a topic-marking device (e.g., it cannot be used to mark new topics). Indeed, right dislocations in Nchane are not characterized by the raised tonal register associated with the other topic-marking strategies, just as antitopics are observed as always being unaccented. See Lambrecht (1996: 202–205) for more on antitopics. Note that the phrase appearing in all caps in the translation is a focus-marked constituent. See §16.3.4 for a description of this focus strategy.

- (16.16) bɔ̃: bā-ā lē, bɔ̃ bé jí nù mən-kàlà  
c2.child c2-ANA1 COMP 3PL <sup>P</sup>COP eat COP(N) c6a-cassava.puff

má-mù mà kì-ŋfɛ́ kí-mí bé ná bò lē,  
c6a-some c6a.REL c7-blind.man c7-some <sup>P</sup>COP give 3PL APPL

**kì-ŋfɛ́ kē-ē kí tɔ́ kī jèmè lē,**  
c7-blind.man c7-ANA1 c7REL HAB c7 talk COMP

**wɔ́ gé bvū-jɔ́ŋē, tū wɔ́ gé yē y-ɔ́ lē,**  
2SG do.COND c14-good then 2SG do on c9-2SG.POSS APPL

**wɔ́ gé bvū-bēfè, tū wɔ́ gé yē y-ɔ́ lē**  
2SG do.COND c14-bad then 2SG do on c9-2SG.POSS APPL

*'Those children [said] that they had eaten SOME CASSAVA PUFF  
WHICH A CERTAIN BLINDMAN HAD GIVEN THEM, that blindman  
who always says that you do good, you do for yourself; you do bad,  
you do for yourself.'*

What-goes-around.9.9

Slightly more common in the text data is the right-dislocated vocative, illustrated in example (16.17), in which the vocative is enclosed in brackets.<sup>107</sup>

- (16.17) kɪ-nfɛ:      kē-ē      bē:ŋ,      ñ-fūf-é      wá      shēŋ,  
              c7-blindman    c7-ANA1    agree    1SG-rest-PROG    already    c9.liver
- [bō:      b-āŋ]  
              c2.child    c2-1SG.POSS

*‘The blindman agreed, “I am already resting, my children.”’*

What-goes-around.7.4

Rather than marking Topics, these are probably best described simply as “addressing structures”, exhibiting a function of vocatives that Sonnenhauser and Noel Aziz Hanna observe as one of the few clearly defining characteristics of the phenomenon (2013: 17). While this type of right dislocation is not associated with topic marking, it is presented here for easy comparison with examples (16.15) and (16.16) and to illustrate the rightward position’s weaker association with topic expression, since right dislocation is not a dedicated topic-marking strategy, and even when used to mark topic, it is limited in that capacity.

### 16.3 Focus

As stated in the introduction, *focus* establishes the focused element as being selected from among alternatives. Focused referents tend to appear in the immediately after verb position, where PATIENTS routinely occur. Thus, postverbal PATIENTS are otherwise unmarked, as illustrated in (16.18), a response to the question, “What did Tada buy?”.

- (16.18) Tádà    gú    jì  
              T.      buy    c9.hoe
- ‘Tada bought a hoe.’*

While it is true that there are many alternative items which Tada could have bought in the above example, these alternatives are not necessarily active in the common ground of the communicative act. This observation leads Krifka and Musan to restrict the definition of focus further to mean that it “especially stresses and points out the existence of *particular* alternatives” (2012: 7, emphasis my own). Thus, the remainder of this section describes focus constructions with this more restricted definition in mind.

<sup>107</sup> Left edge vocatives are also observed in the data. As vocatives have not yet been formally investigated, I have no hypothesis at this time regarding the function or pragmatics of leftward versus rightward varieties.

Nchane uses several different strategies for different kinds of focus. These strategies include word order changes, clefting and the use of focusing words or particles. Generally, the various strategies are associated with the expression of specific types of focus, although there is some limited overlap. Furthermore, with the exception of word order change, these strategies are not limited to focus of just one constituent type. These details are summarized in Table 16.1.

| Focus device             | Type of focus             | Scope of focus       |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|
| non-canonical word order | exhaustive/contrastive    | agent                |
| cleft                    | exhaustive/identification | any clausal term     |
| <b>m̄</b> ‘RES’          | scalar                    | any clausal term     |
| <b>ɲ̄</b> ‘COP(N)’       | counter-expectation       | non-agents/clause/VP |
| <b>l̄</b> ‘FOC’          | assertive                 | verbs                |

Table 16.1 Nchane focus strategies.

The remainder of this section presents the different focus strategies observed, organized according to the form of the focusing structure. Non-canonical word order is described in §16.3.1 and clefts in §16.3.2. The focus markers **m̄**, **ɲ̄**, and **l̄** are presented in §§16.3.3-16.3.5. In the examples below, focusing words are bolded while the target of the focus appears in brackets.

### 16.3.1 Non-canonical word order focus

This section describes focus constructions where the AGENT appears in the immediately-after-verb position, which may be characterized as the in-focus position. Along with the post-posing of the AGENT, the PATIENT, if present, is usually pre-posed. The strategy is only rarely observed in the data and is limited to agent focus, the same as observed for Noni (Hyman 1981: 108). Meanwhile, the immediately-after-verb position is also identified as a focus position in Naki, Mundabli and Mungbam, but allows for the focus of presumably any constituent (Good 2010: 49; Voll 2017: 318 ; and Lovegren 2013: 343 respectively).

Example (16.19) illustrates an AGENT-PATIENT inversion, which marks the AGENT as being in focus.

- (16.19)    *bv̄-ŋgá*    *bw-ê:*    *bv̄-čí:*    *gē*    *ɲá*    [*Ø-ɲò*]  
               c14-power    c14-ANA1    c14-all    p3    give    c1-god

*‘GOD gave all that power.’*

Fire.57

The sentence in example (16.19) follows the report of the speaker’s house being destroyed by fire, along with a large sum of money and all of his carpenter’s tools. The loss of the money was a great hardship, since he had to provide food and

While the AGENT appears in the postverbal position, the PATIENT usually appears in the preverbal position in what may be referred to as “defocalization” of the PATIENT. This term is used to reflect the occurrence of the PATIENT in the out-of-focus position, rather than in the in-focus position, where PATIENTS occur canonically. While the text corpus contains no examples of a defocalized PATIENT which clearly does not serve as Topic, I consider defocalization to be a byproduct of the agent focus strategy rather than topicalization.

The notion of “defocalization” of the PATIENT is supported externally by evidence from the language Aghem (West Ring-Grassfields), spoken about 70 kilometers west of the Nchane-speaking area. The object noun (cf. PATIENT) in Aghem is observed to take a prefix when occurring in “focus neutral” constructions, where the noun immediately follows the verb. This prefixed noun structure is the expected Bantu noun structure. However, when any element other than the object is focused, the object takes a suffix, appearing in the “out of focus” form (Hyman & Watters 1984). This defocalized form of the object noun (i.e., suffixed rather than prefixed) is therefore comparable to the Nchane defocalized PATIENT (i.e., preverbal rather than postverbal).

(16.20) a. wō wū Ø-jwēnsé, né wō lé wō gè jálě.  
 2SG c1REL c1-man if 2SG COP 2SG do wrong  
 'If my man forgives me, I am wrong.'  
 wō légè lē Ø-kwō: fōsē wō  
 2SG beg.IMP COMP c1-wife.2SG.POSS forgive 2SG  
 'I beg my wife to forgive me.'

*'You who are the man, if you did wrong, ask that your wife forgive you.'*  
Marriage.4.5

- b. *nē jálè gē [wò] wū Ø-kwēsé, wò l'égè*  
 if wrong do 2SG c1REL c1-woman 2SG beg.IMP

*lē Ø-jwɔ̃: lē wú fɔ̃sē wò*  
 COMP c1-husband.2SG.POSS COMP 3SG.FUT forgive 2SG

*'[Or] if YOU who are the woman did wrong, ask that your husband will forgive you.'*  
 Marriage.4.6

Defocalization of a postverbal constituent in word order focus constructions does not occur in certain contexts. One such situation is when the PATIENT is first person. Thus, the example set in (16.21) demonstrates that first-person PATIENTS may not be defocalized.

- (16.21) a. *chí sūŋ [ɲì] mē*  
 P2 beat N. 1SG.PRO

*'NJI beat me.'*

- b. *\*mē chí sūŋ [ɲì]*  
 1SG.PRO P2 beat N.

Intended: *'NJI beat me.'*

Note that the post-posed, focused AGENT, along with a first-person PATIENT, results in a clause with an empty preverbal slot. Note also that there is no subject agreement; in clauses with canonical word order and with a P2 marker, subject agreement is required. The fact that it does not appear in this example, indicates that there is no grammatical subject relation present in the clause.

Likewise, Applied Objects appearing in clauses with a focused postverbal AGENT remain in their canonical position following the postposed AGENT, as illustrated in (16.22). Applied Objects can precede the verb in certain negation constructions. Thus, the restriction of Applied Object defocalization might be limited to word order focus constructions as seen here.

- (16.22) *chí yéŋ [tādà] wù lē*  
 P2 see T. 3SG APPL

*'TADA saw him.'*

In three-term clauses, the PATIENT is defocalized, just as they are in the two-term (AGENT-PATIENT) clauses presented above, and the Applied Object again remains in its canonical position, as demonstrated in (16.23).

- (16.23) mūn-chōnē      ná      [tádà]      ñjì      lē  
                  c18a-groundnut      give      T.              N.      APPL

*‘TADA gave groundnuts to Nji.’*

As mentioned earlier, some nearby languages (although, not Noni) allow for non-subject constituents to be focused by appearing in the immediately after verb position and with the PATIENT defocalized. Example (16.24) shows that this is not possible for the Nchane Applied Object, which requires a different focus strategy.

- (16.24) \*tádà      mūn-chōnē      ná      [ñjì      lē]  
                  T.              c18a-groundnut      give      N.      APPL

Intended: *‘Tada gave groundnuts to NJI.’*

Negative, non-canonical word order focus operates much the same as its affirmative counterpart, with the focused agent following the verb and the PATIENT preceding it. Example (16.25) is a response to the question “Did Nji give the chicken fufu?”. The question asserts that it was Nji who gave, while the response contrasts this assertion, expressing that while someone did give, that someone was not Nji.

- (16.25) ñgáñ,      á              bvú-lē:      bé      ná      [wù]  
                  no              NEG1      c14-fufu      pl      give      3SG

shī              lé              gè  
                  c9.chicken      APPL      NEG2

*‘No, HE did not give the chicken fufu.’ (someone else did)*

This example appears to indicate that focused constituents may not be concurrently negated, since a clause negation strategy is utilized rather than one for constituent negation. (See §16.3.5 for further discussion on this matter.) As noted in §15.2, the *á*-strategy is employed in negative constructions involving formal focus marking, as is observed here.

In some cases, word order focus is constrained by semantics and social hierarchy concerns. Example (16.26) has two possible interpretations, with the focused interpretation having questionable acceptability. Given the right context, my language consultants agreed this could have the second interpretation. However, an adult man has a higher social status than a child. Therefore, the non-focused interpretation is the default one.



- (16.26) Ø-bā wū-nē sūŋ [bɛ:]  
 c1-pa c1-PROX beat c2.child

*‘This pa beat the children.’*

*(?) ‘The CHILDREN beat this pa.’*

Example (16.27) has only one possible interpretation, since the agent and PATIENT are of equal social status. Therefore, a different focus strategy is needed to obtain an unambiguous focused reading.

- (16.27) tádà sùŋ ɲì  
 T. beat N.

*‘Tada beat Nji.’*

*\*‘NJI beat Tada.’*

### 16.3.2 Cleft constructions

Clefts consist of a clause-initial copula followed by an object noun phrase<sup>108</sup> (the *ex situ* focused constituent) modified by a relative clause. In contrast to nearby languages such as Noni (Hyman 1981), Mundabli (Voll 2017) and Mungbam (Lovegren 2013), there is no dummy subject present. Presumably, any nominal constituent may be focused through a cleft construction, which identifies the denotation. In other words, the focused constituent answers the question of “who”, “what”, “when” or “where”.

A cleft construction focusing an agent is illustrated in (16.28). The focused agent is *identified* as the answer to the previous sentence’s seemingly rhetorical question, where the speaker asked himself how he is going to accomplish a certain task that appeared impossible.

- (16.28) lé [Ø-ɲò] wú gè ɲā jè yē-è  
 COP c1-god c1REL P3 give c9.path c9-ANA1

*‘It is GOD who gave that way.’*

Fire.49.2

Note that the cleft construction places the focused term to the right of the copula, which serves as the main verbal element of the sentence. Therefore, this strategy supports the notion of the immediately-after-verb position as associated with focus.

<sup>108</sup> According to the definitions given in §11.1, the noun phrase following the copula has the grammatical form of an Object, even though this Object may express any of the various semantic roles, such as AGENT or RECIPIENT.

Example (16.29) involves a focused PATIENT. This example comes from a story in which some children are sick and a doctor is asked to discover what is the cause of their sickness. Because the children are having stomach pain, one can suppose that they have eaten “something”. That “something” is identified as poison.

- (16.29) lē Ø-mù-ṗché wé-é gē: wú jīŋē, wù yéŋ  
 SET c1-person-medicine c1-ANA1 go 3SG watch 3SG see
- lē lé [Ø-nlò] wù bō: bā-ā jí  
 COMP COP c1-poison c1REL c2.child c2-ANA1 eat

*‘When the doctor looked, he saw that it was POISON that those children ate.’*  
 What-goes-around.9.7

As stated in §11.1.1, inferable PATIENTS are routinely omitted. This is the case in example (16.30), representing an unusual instance where focus is obtained for a null expression. The prior sentence explicitly mentions the “cassava puff” being referenced here. Thus, the cleft construction involves a headless relative clause, where the omitted PATIENT is the focused constituent, which is identified as the “cassava puff” that the children have eaten. Here, the focus is exhaustive, since the poisoned cassava puff is the only entity that results in a true proposition.

- (16.30) lé mó [-] mà mē bé nà kī-mfē:  
 COP RES cassava.puff c6aREL 1SG.PRO P1 give c7-blind.man
- kè-è lē, kí gē: kí nā bō: bà-nè  
 c7-ANA1 APPL c7REL go c7 give c2.child c2-PROX
- lē bó jí fē à-shén kī á yù bō  
 SET 3PL eat make c18-liver COMP(K) c18 kill 3PL

*‘[That] is [the very CASSAVA PUFF] that I gave to the blind man, who went and gave [it] to these children to eat, making [their] stomachs to hurt them.’*  
 What-goes-around.9.15

RECIPIENTS may also be focused through cleft constructions, as illustrated in (16.31).<sup>109</sup> However, as the noun phrase following the copula is not marked with the applicative postposition *lē*, the example suggests that the focus construction is based on a clause with RECIPIENT-THEME word order, where both postverbal

<sup>109</sup> This example shows a third-person-singular pronoun between the AGENT and the verb in the relative clause. Unfortunately, it is unknown if this pronoun is coreferential with the AGENT or with the focused RECIPIENT. If coreferential with the AGENT, then the full noun AGENT would appear to be left-detached; if coreferential with the RECIPIENT, then the pronoun is resumptive, which has only been observed in coreference with prepositional phrases.

constituents are Objects. Focus of Applied Objects through clefting is apparently not possible.

- (16.31) lé [ńjì] wū tādá wū ńā mùń-chōnē  
COP N. c1REL T. 3SG give c18a-groundnut

*'It is NJI to whom Tada gave groundnuts.'*

A focused time adverbial in a cleft construction is shown in example (16.32). In the preceding sentence, five brothers consider where each will go to do farming. This temporal context is identified as the time that the first brother makes his decision.

- (16.32) lé [kī-fē kī-nē lé] kī chūngè gè ńā  
COP c7-time c7-PROX APPL c7REL Ch. P3 leave  
  
wū bēnē kī-mbē kī Ø-jú sàń-é yó lé,  
3SG ascend c7-side c7REL c5-sun rise-PROG inside APPL  
  
wū gē dāń jō yì kīńkēńī wū shí chūngè-kō  
3SG P3 cross c9.water c9AM K. 3SG sit Ch.-forest

*'It is at THIS TIME that Chunge moved toward the east and crossed the Kikenye River and settled in Chunge-Ko (Chunge Forest).'*

History.3.1

Questions often are formed utilizing cleft constructions, as illustrated in (16.33) (AGENT focus) and (16.34) (PATIENT focus).<sup>110</sup>

- (16.33) lé [Ø-mwā wú-lá] wú jí bvù-lē:  
COP c1-child c1-Q c1REL eat c14-fufu

*'It is which child who ate fufu?'*

<sup>110</sup> There are no examples in the text data of word order focus in question constructions. However, this strategy is observed in examples from the Nchane New Testament. For example, *Nya yēē bvungā bvuyu wo le?* [give who c14.power c14.this 2SG APPL] 'Who gave this power to you?' (Matthew 21:23).

(16.34) wù bǐ: bǔ: bā-ā lé là:  
 3SG ask c2.child c2-ANA2 APPL Q.COMP

lé [lá:] fī bēŋ bé jì  
 COP Q c19REL 2PL P1 eat

*'...he asked those children, "What is it that you ate?"'. (lit. it is what that you ate)* What-goes-around.9.8

No examples of negative clauses involving cleft constructions are present in the text data. But example (16.35) shows that it involves the n-copula rather than *lé*.

(16.35) ŋgáŋ, á nū [wù]  
 no NEG1 COP(N) 3SG

wú bé nā shī bvū-lē: gē  
 c1REL P1 give c9.chicken c14-fufu NEG2

*'No, it was not HIM who gave the chicken fufu. (It was someone else.)*

Furthermore, no examples of a focused prepositional phrase in a cleft construction are observed in the text data. However, this has not been ruled out as a possibility.

### 16.3.3 The scalar focus particle *m̩*

The Resultative marker *m̩* 'RES', in its primary function, occurs in the preverbal slot and establishes a resultative relationship between two clauses (see §9.3.5). In its secondary function, it precedes a focused clausal constituent. The focused constituent is interpreted as being selected from a group of one or more "similar" alternatives, and often might be assumed to be excluded from this group or to be the extreme member of the group. For example, "snakes" in the sentence, "I like all animals, even *snakes*.", is considered an extreme member of the group "animals", perhaps because they are dangerous or hard to care for. Thus, "snakes" are measured along a desirability scale and identified as the least likely member of the group "animals" to be liked.

Scalar focused constituents are somewhat rare in the data and are apparently always right-dislocated. This is illustrated in (16.36), which has a focused PATIENT. The context for this sentence is a husband sending his wife away after he discovers she is doing witchcraft. He orders her to take all her things with her, including the smallest article, her 'rags', which are used in a variety of mundane tasks such as serving as a cushion when carrying objects on the head.

- (16.36) jós mw-ē: mw-ōŋ mū-chī, mō [fī-chánjā  
 take.IMP c18a-thing c18a-2SG.POSS c18a-all RES c19-rag  
 fī njū], wō gē: wō tú fē Ø-chíjò lē  
 c19AM c9.cloth 2SG go 2SG return at c1-father.2SG.POSS APPL  
*'Take all your things, even [YOUR] RAGS, and return to your parents  
 (lit. your father).'* Two Wives. 7.2

The focus in (16.37) is very similar to that in the above example. The focused PATIENT appears as the ultimate member of a group of activities.

- (16.37) jīchānē gē jēm-é jē yí-mímyā, bō gē-è  
 N. P3 talk-PROG c9.language c9-one 3PL do-PROG  
 mw-ē: nōmā, mō [mw-ē: mū wōŋ]  
 c18a-thing same RES c18a-thing c18aAM c3.village  
*'The Nchane people spoke the same language and did the same things,  
 even their traditional activities.'* History.4.2

A scalar focused Comitative Oblique appears in (16.38), which is the last sentence of a hortatory text giving advice to young married couples. The final admonition is to love not only themselves, but also the families of the husband and wife, which is presumably harder to do or less likely to be considered.

- (16.38) bēŋ gē-è lē kī-ŋ-kōŋē jūmè  
 2PL.HORT do-PROG COMP c7-NMZR-desire COP(N)  
 ā-bēŋ-nténé sēgē chī: mō [bé Ø-kfū chī-nā]  
 c18-2PL-middle when all RES with c5-family c5-2PL.POSS  
*'You should be showing love among yourselves and even YOUR  
 FAMILY.'* Marriage.7

The scalar focus marker occurs twice in example (16.39). The first occurrence involves a complex agent, with the focused member appearing at the right edge of the sequence and being marked as the most important or surprising of the agent members. The second occurrence is found at the end of the sentence forming an ellipsis, and represents a final addition to the list of agents.

- (16.39) bā-mī bē bā-édà bā bēsābó gè bē bā-chī,  
c2-person with c2-elder c2AM 1PL.3PL P3 <sup>P</sup>COP c2-all

**m̩** [Ø-bástò], b̩ gē bē b̩ já-á  
RES c1-pastor 3PL P3 <sup>P</sup>COP 3PL leave-PROG

b̩ lég-è b̩ gēn-è, **m̩** mē tē  
3PL run-PROG 3PL go-PROG RES 1SG.PRO also

*'All the people, with our elders, and even THE PASTOR, they were running and going, and even I also.'*  
Fire.3.1-2

It is assumed that any clausal constituent could be focused using the scalar focus marker, although no examples are observed in the data of applied objects or locative obliques in such constructions. However, example (16.40) shows that propositions can also be focused through **m̩**. The focused proposition represents the extreme act of raising someone from the dead to preach to a man's living brothers, who are not accepting the preaching of Moses.

- (16.40) mò bā búšè Ø-mù à-jēŋ,  
RES they remove.COND c1-person c18-grave

b̩ gē yù gè  
3PL NEG2.FUT hear NEG2

*'...even if they remove someone from the grave, they (your brothers) will not hear.'*  
Rich man.1.21

#### 16.3.4 The n-copula (n̩) as a focus marker

The copular verb **n̩** 'COP(N)' (presented in §10.1.2) has a secondary function as a focus marker. The copula precedes the focused constituent, contrasting it with some alternative, and with an additional expression of emotion such as surprise or counter-expectation. The data show PATIENT focus is obtained often via this strategy, as well as focus on locatives. AGENTS, however, are never focused with the copula. The focused constituent most often appears immediately after the verb, although there is some evidence to indicate that the focused constituent remains *in situ*.

Example (16.41) illustrates PATIENT focus with **ɲù**. The focused denotation contrasts **bvùlɛ̃**:<sup>111</sup> ‘fufu’ with **bɪfũnɛ̃** ‘corn(pl)’, that is mentioned in the previous sentence.

- (16.41) wù jò **ɲù** [bvù-lɛ̃: bw-ɛ̃:], wù chú wáà, à  
 3SG take COP(N) c14-fufu c14-ANA1 3SG pour IDEO in  
 jò lɛ̃, wũ tú wũ kɛ̃nɛ̃ wũ kɛ̃nɛ̃ wũ kɛ̃nɛ̃  
 c9.water APPL 3SG then 3SG stir 3SG stir 3SG stir  
*‘She took the FLOUR, poured [it], pssss, into the water, and stirred and stirred.’*  
 Disobedient Child.1.10

The discourse context suggests that this contrast is expressing a counter expectation. In the story, before leaving for work on the farm, a mother left corn with her daughter with the instruction to take it to the mill to be ground into flour so that it would be available to cook for the evening meal. The daughter did not do as her mother demanded. So, when the mother returned home, she found the unground corn and, without her daughter’s knowledge, took other corn to the mill to be ground. Later in the evening, she asked her daughter to bring her the corn. However, instead of using the unground corn, she took the flour and put it in the water to cook.

The intention of killing an annoying, blind beggar is the context for example (16.42), another instance of PATIENT focus with **ɲù**.

- (16.42) bɔ̃: bā-ā, lɛ̃ bɔ̃ bɛ́ jí **ɲù**  
 c2.child c2-ANA1 COMP 3PL <sup>P</sup>COP eat COP(N)  
 [màŋ-kàlà má-mù mà  
 c6a-cassava.puff c6a-some c6aREL  
 kɪ-ŋfɛ̃ kɪ-mí bɛ́ ɲá bɔ̃ lɛ̃]  
 c7-blind.man c7-some P1 give 3PL APPL  
*‘Those children [said] that they had eaten SOME CASSAVA PUFF,  
 WHICH A CERTAIN BLINDMAN GAVE THEM...’*  
 What-goes-around.9.9

In the previous sentences, the cassava puffs are poisoned and given to the blind beggar. However, he did not eat them, but later gave them to the woman’s own children, who then ate the poisoned cassava puffs. Focusing this Object emphasizes

<sup>111</sup> This word is the generic word for ‘food’, but more specifically denotes ‘fufu’, made from boiled corn flour and formed into a ball. The way it is used here suggests that it can also refer to the flour before it is cooked.

this surprising turn of events, that they are the same “cassava puffs” that were intended for the blindman to kill him.

In example (16.43), **ɲù** is used to underline the importance and surprise of the location of the fire, expressed through an Applied Object. The speaker was alarmed to discover the fire was occurring near his house. Therefore, a contrast is established between the actual location of the fire and the assumed location of the fire.

(16.43) lē bē yēŋ ŋgú bēn-è, ŋgú bēn-ē  
SET 1PL see c10.fire ascend-PROG c10.fire ascend-PROG

kī-mbè kī Ø-gómé Ø-sùkú lē,  
c7-side<sup>112</sup> c7AM c1-government c1-school APPL

**ɲù** [kī-mbè kī ɲ-ché-é kī lē]  
COP(N) c7-side<sup>112</sup> c7REL 1SG-stay-PROG c7 APPL

*‘As we saw fire burning, fire was burning in the side of government school, being WHERE I WAS LIVING.’* Fire.2.3

The example set in (16.44) illustrates how **ɲù** can be used to focus a prepositional phrase. The two examples are parallel sentences, with (16.44)a appearing early in the text and the “song” utilized as the name of a major participant. The same set of phrases occurs in (16.44)b, serving as the moral of the story. This time, however, the focusing copula appears. The moral is emphasizing the false belief that a person can treat others poorly and not experience negative effects from that treatment. It also highlights the surprise experienced by the woman who ended up killing her own children with poison intended for the blind beggar.

(16.44) a. kī jēɲ-i kī yēn-è Ø-ŋkè: lē, wō gé  
c7 walk-PROG c7 sing-PROG c1-song COMP 2SG do.COND

bvū-jōŋè, tū wō gé yē y-ō lē, wō  
c14-good then 2SG do on c9-2SG.POSS APPL 2SG

gé bvū-bēfè, tū wō gé yē y-ō lē  
do.COND c14-bad then 2SG do on c9-2SG.POSS APPL

*‘...he was moving and singing a song, “You do good, you do for yourself; you do bad, you do for yourself.”’* What-goes-around.1.3

<sup>112</sup> The word **kīmbè** ‘side’ here is expressing a general location that could be translated as “village quarter” or “area”.



- b. fi-mánjá    fi-nē    dūn-í    lē,  
           c19-story    c19-PROX    show-PROG    COMP
- wō    gé    bvū-jōŋē,    tū    wō    gé  
       2SG    do.COND    c14-good    then    2SG    do
- pù**    [yē    y-ō    lē],    wō    gé    bvū-bēfè,  
       COP(N)    on    c9-2SG.POSS    APPL    2SG    do.COND    c14-bad
- tū    wō    gé    **pù**    [yē    y-ō    lē]  
       then    2SG    do    COP(N)    on    c9-2SG.POSS    APPL

*'This story is teaching that, [if] you do good, you do FOR YOURSELF; if you do bad, you do FOR YOURSELF.'*

What-goes-around.10.2

The scope of the n-copula is over whatever immediately follows. In the above examples, that has been a clause constituent. But example (16.45) demonstrates that **pù** can mark an entire clause for focus. Here, the focus copula follows a locative, which serves as the subject of the following focused clause. The fact that the house is already burnt upon the speaker's arrival is focused and contrasts with the possibility of the house being only partially burnt.

- (16.45) lē    ñ-tó    ṁ-fēsē    fè    yē    lē,    ñ-tó  
           SET    1SG-come    1SG-arrive    at    c9.house    APPL    1SG-come
- yē    y-àŋ    **pù**    [yī    fyē    wá    yī-chī]  
       c9.house    c9-1SG.POSS    COP(N)    c9    burn    already    c9-all

*'As I arrived at the house, I came to my house when IT HAD ALREADY COMPLETELY BURNED.'*

Fire.4.3

The focus copula may also precede a verb phrase, as in (16.46). The focus is on the act of a man's wife carrying fufu without soup, which is in contrast with the normal situation of soup accompanying the fufu. A short while later, the wife produces fufu *with* soup, which is a pivotal event in the story.

- (16.46) bēsá-Ø-kwê:    bē    bé    làd-é,    wū    **pù**  
           1PL-c1-wife.1SG.POSS    1PL    P1    go.goal-PROG    3SG    COP(N)
- [tú:    bvū-lē:    nōnō]  
       carry    c14-food    empty

*"'I and my wife were going (to the farm to do work) and she CARRIED FUFU WITHOUT SOUP.'"*

Jealous Husband.19.1

In example (16.47), the focus copula follows the matrix verb and precedes the PATIENT, which would appear to be the focused constituent. However, it is not simply the PATIENT that is in focus. The example follows the husband asking where the wife will get soup, with this sentence offering an indirect answer to the question. The contrast expressed is between two activities, “worrying over where the soup will come from” and “preparing for eating”.

- (16.47) Ø-kwē chfú lē [chūgé **ɲù** chyā:],  
 c1-wife reply COMP wash.IMP COP(N) c10.hand
- Ø-jwā:, Ø-jwē: mō wù chūgè chyā:  
 c1-husband.1SG.POSS c1-husband RES 3SG wash c10.hand
- ‘The wife answered, “JUST WASH [YOUR] HANDS, my husband.”  
 and the husband washed [his] hands.’* Jealous Husband.11

Perhaps the placement of the focus copula before the PATIENT in what is interpreted as verb phrase focus is dictated by the main verb appearing in its imperative form. This explanation would restrict the n-copula from preceding imperative verbs. Or it might be that the main verb of a clause with no preverbal nominal term cannot be preceded by the n-copula when functioning as a focus marker. Indeed, a clause with no subject elements and having an n-copula followed by a lexical verb might be confused with a type of cleft construction. However, these hypotheses remain untested for the moment.

The n-copula as a focus marker may appear in negative constructions, as illustrated in (16.48). As was observed in §15.2, focused clauses demand the use of the á-strategy for negation, which is also utilized for clauses with verbs that are not [+PAST] and [-PROG]. Additionally, the various constituents appear in their canonical order. This example also provides the clearest evidence in the data corpus that **ɲù**-focused constituents remain *in situ*, with the focused Applied Object following the Object.

- (16.48) á wù bé ɲā bvū-lē: **ɲù** [shī lē] gè  
 NEG1 3SG P1 give c14-fufu COP(N) c9.chicken APPL NEG2
- ‘He did not give THE CHICKEN fufu.’ (e.g., he gave to the dog)*

### 16.3.5 The verb focus particle lō

The focus marker **lō** ‘FOC’ is not clearly a focus marker, at least not entirely. In some cases, its occurrence is seemingly related to clause structure concerns. To better understand its function, I begin with a few comments regarding the marker as it appears in the neighboring language Noni.

A homophonous form is observed in Noni, where Hyman observes that it is required with sentences which have verbs that are minus future [-FUT], minus negative [-NEG], and minus focused [-FOC]. The [-FOC] designation indicates that the verb does not appear with the focus auxiliary **nɔ́ɔ́**, which is somewhat analogous to Nchane's n-copula **pù**, and is often translated with the immediate past adverb “just” (Hyman 1981: 56, 60, 77). It is further observed that **lɔ́** is not required if a verb complement, such as an object, is present. Thus the “aspectual adverb...either completes the [-FUT, -FOC] verb, or, places additional focus on the verb itself” (Hyman 1981: 85).<sup>113</sup>

Nchane presents a similar pattern with **lɔ́**. As illustrated in (16.49)-(16.51), **lɔ́** is required with verbs that are [-FUT, -NEG, -FOC] when there is no verb complement. (As inferred above, the +FOC verb form for Nchane is the n-copula. Thus, **lɔ́** is not expected in clauses in which the n-copula serves as the main verb.) In addition, **lɔ́** is not permitted in negative constructions or in constructions with other focus marking. Note that Hyman and Watters convincingly argue that negation structures are “intrinsically focused”, representing the marked polarity value (1984: 262). Thus, a language might disallow the presence of more than one focus feature (in this case, verb focus and negation). However, example (16.25) above demonstrated that, while term negation is incompatible with a focused agent, clausal negation and a focused agent are allowed to co-occur.

- (16.49) wù gē ná Ø-ntāŋ lē wū [kwé-é] **lɔ́**  
 3SG P3 give c1-thought COMP 3SG die-PROG FOC  
*‘He thought that he was dying.’* Lake.4.4

- (16.50) bē gōn-é wò lē Ø-ŋfōŋ wū-sè [ché-é] **lɔ́**  
 1PL want-PROG 2SG SET c1-chief c1-1PL.POSS sick-PROG FOC  
*‘We want you because our chief is sick.’* Smart Monkey.1.10

- (16.51) shā yī tōpē yī-nè [kùgè] **lɔ́**  
 c9.pot c9REL hot c9-PROX big FOC  
*‘This hot pot is big.’*

The above examples suggest that Nchane clauses, at least in some verb conjugations, require a verb complement, and **lɔ́** fulfills that requirement when no other complement is available. Good (2010: 66) suggests that such a phenomenon can be taken as evidence for the existence of a postverbal “field”, which in some

<sup>113</sup> A similar case is presented for the West Ring-Grassfields language Aghem, where **nò** ‘FOC’ (cf. **lɔ́**) is observed as obligatory in sentences with no verbal complement and non-focus verb marking (Watters 1979: 166).

contexts must be filled. As we have seen with word order focus and cleft focus constructions, this postverbal field could be designated as a Focus field, as is argued for Naki.

While the analysis of **lɔ̃** as a slot filler has some merit, it does not, however, account for its occurrence in certain other cases. For example, the minimal pair in (16.52) shows that it is not required with imperative verbs having no following constituent. But when it is present, it appears to have an intensifying or emphatic function. The focused version could be used, for example, after the speaker has already used the non-focused version, but with the command going unheeded.

- (16.52) a. *gɛ́nɛ́*  
go.IMP  
*‘Go.’*
- b. [*gɛ́nɛ́*] **lɔ̃**  
go.IMP FOC  
*‘Go!’*

Example (16.53) is a natural text example of a similar construction. The command could occur without FOC, but its presence makes the command stronger.

- (16.53) [*já*] **lɔ̃** *chɛ́gɛ́, mɛ́ lé mé*  
leave.IMP FOC quickly 1SG.PRO COP 1SG.PRO.FUT  
*ɲ-kó wò, mɛ́ n-sɛ́: né, fɛ́-bwɛ́*  
1SG-catch 2SG 1SG.PRO 1SG-cut GEST c16-neck  
*‘Leave quickly or I will catch you and cut you like this, at [your] neck!’*  
Greedy Friends.1.19

Examples (16.54) and (16.55) are somewhat ambiguous regarding focus. Example (16.54) occurs after a woman realizes that her husband suspects her of being unfaithful to him. The sentence here can be understood as her waiting until the right time to enact her plan to solve this problem.

- (16.54) *wù tú wū [mān-ɛ́] gɛ́ lɔ̃*  
3SG return 3SG watch-PROG EXCL FOC  
*‘She then was just watching...’* Jealous Husband.1.4

Example (16.55) is part of a response to the question of what the woman’s children had eaten to make them sick. It is possible that the verb is focused here in

order to emphasize that the blind beggar received it from that woman rather than buying it somewhere or preparing it himself.

(16.55) wù bé [légé] **l̩** à Ø-kwěsé wú-mù lē,  
 3SG P1 beg FOC in c1-woman c1-certain APPL

wú tó wū kāŋ-è màn-kàlà  
 c1REL HAB 3SG fry-PROG c6a-cassava.puff

*'He asked for [cassava puff] from a certain woman who is always  
 frying cassava puffs.'* What-goes-around.9.10

The neighboring languages Mundabli and Mungbam apparently acquire similar verb focus through cognate deverbal noun constructions, which occur in the postverbal position instead of a focus particle like Nchane, Noni and Naki (Voll 2017: 320; and Lovegren 2013: 350 respectively). For example, while Nchane utilizes a structure like “The man drank **l̩**” to report that the man drank (something), Mundabli would likely use the structure “The man drank drink”, where the infinitivized form of the verb serves as the verb’s complement. Cognate deverbal nouns in Nchane are observed, but are quite rare and not used systematically with otherwise intransitive verbs, as they apparently are in Mundabli.

## 16.4 Givenness

Krifka and Musan state that *givenness* has to do with “the indication that the denotation of an expression is present in the immediate common ground content” (2012: 21). In other words, expressions may be denotations of *new* information, those which are absent from shared knowledge in communication, or they may be denotations of old or *given* information, those which are known by both speaker and addressee. Furthermore, Krifka and Musan indicate that the notion of givenness must accommodate degrees of givenness. This accounts for denotations of expressions that are no longer salient in common ground due to long absence.

Givenness in Nchane is largely expressed through its demonstrative system and is slightly different for minor versus major participants. In short, new participants in a discourse are most often introduced with the specific indefinite demonstrative **mū** ‘some’, which in this context is usually translated as ‘certain’. Subsequent mentions, while the participant maintains active status, are generally made through personal pronouns. Participants may be reactivated following long absences through full nouns.

References to major participants follow a similar pattern. However, second mention often includes one of the anaphoric demonstratives presented in §6.4.2. Reactivation of major participants again includes one of the anaphoric demonstratives. The reader is encouraged to observe these patterns in the interlinearized texts provided in Chapter 17. The text excerpt in (16.56) also illustrates the above points. References to the major participant “woman” are bolded to make identification easier.

- (16.56) a. *kī-lūŋ kí-mí gè bé Ø-jwènsè wū-mū bé*  
 c7-year c7-some P3 <sup>P</sup>COP c1-man c1-some with  
*Ø-kwē: wū-mū bō kōŋ-ē yé bá:ŋ*  
 c1-woman c1-some 3PL.REL love-PROG c10.body much  
*'A certain year (ago), there was a man and wife who loved each other very much.'*  
 Jealous Husband.1.1 (Sentence 1)
- b. *Ø-kwēsé wē-ē tó wù kē lē*  
 c1-woman c1-ANA1 come 3SG know COMP  
*Ø-jwē: bīŋ-é wù*  
 c1-husband.3SG.POSS suspect-PROG 3SG  
*'That woman came to know that her husband was suspecting her (of unfaithfulness).'*  
 Jealous Husband.1.3 (Sentence 3)
- c. *wù tú wù mān-è gē lò*  
 3SG return 3SG watch-PROG EXCL FOC  
*'She just kept watching...'*  
 Jealous Husband.1.4 (Sentence 4)

Following sentence 4, there are three sentences of dialogue. This results in the need for the “woman” to be reactivated in the mainline through a full nominal reference and accompanying anaphoric demonstrative.

- d. *lē nù fē-ŋfù, Ø-kwēsé wē-ē gē bé*  
 SET COP(N) c16-evening c1-woman c1-ANA1 P3 <sup>P</sup>COP  
*wù kē: bvū-lē:*  
 3SG stir c14-food  
*'As it was evening, that woman cooked fufu.'*  
 Jealous Husband.2.3 (Sentence 8)

The following references are again made through a pronoun. This pattern is repeated several times throughout the text.

A summary of these patterns is given in Table 16.2.

| <b>Information status</b> | <b>Sequence</b>    | <b>Minor participants</b> | <b>Major participants</b> |
|---------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| new                       | first mention      | N (+ mû)                  | N (+ mû)                  |
|                           | second mention     | pronoun                   | N + ANA / pronoun         |
| given                     | subsequent mention | pronoun                   | pronoun                   |
|                           | reactivation       | N                         | N + ANA                   |

Table 16.2 Summary of Nchane givenness strategies.





## Chapter 17

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### Interlinearized text

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The text provided in this chapter was originally provided by a male speaker from Nkanchi village. It is a narrative text and can be further classified as a folk tale. As with so many folk tales, it serves a dual purpose of providing entertainment, while also teaching something. The moral of this story is that you reap whatever you sow, and comes in the form of parallel conditional clause constructions translated as, “You do good, then you do for yourself; you do bad, then you do for yourself.”

The moral is overtly stated in the final sentence, where it is also marked with focus. But it also appears several times throughout the story, as one of the main characters, a blind beggar, is quoted periodically singing a song consisting of the moral. In the sentence found at (17.17), the blind beggar is addressed by the parallel clause constructions. Later, in (17.28), the name is truncated, with just the first conditional construction used, as well as having the honorific title “Pa” at the front.

Although these parallel clause constructions have characteristic conditional syntax, their tonal behavior is not entirely consistent with conditional constructions, as described in §13.2.4. The verb appearing in these clauses is the mid-toned **gē** ‘do’, which is realized with a high tone in the protasis (as expected), but also in the apodosis (which is not necessarily expected). Furthermore, the apodosis introducer **tú** ‘then’ is usually realized with a mid tone, rather than the expected high tone. I attribute these discrepancies to the fact that, in all cases but the final occurrence, these parallel

conditional constructions are presented either as lyrics of a song or as a name. As such, it would not be surprising if the clauses are affected by prosodies associated with those contexts.

A final observation of interest is that in the original version of the text (and in the original telling), the second-person singular pronouns in the conditional constructions were given as **ā** rather than **wō**, except for the final iteration in (17.53). This pronominal form is rejected by some speakers, although it is still commonly used in some Nchane speaking locations in certain constructions like **ā jí** ‘You, eat!’. I assume this represents an archaic form which still occurs in some grammaticalized contexts, such as names, which in some cases are derived from clauses, such as **bānéwōmē** ‘The WORLD hates me’.

### Mr. What-goes-around-comes-around

By Soka Sylverius Dosi

- (17.1)    kì-nfê:            kī-mú        gē    jēp-í,            kī    lē-gè        mw-ē:  
          c7-blind.man    c7-some    P3    walk-PROG    c7    beg-PROG    c18a-thing

*‘A certain blind man was walking around and begging.’*

What-goes-around.1.1

- (17.2)    kì-nfê:            kī-nē        gē    jēp-í            lē    Ø-lá  
          c7-blind.man    c7-PROX    P3    walk-PROG    SET    c5-compound
- lē    Ø-lá,            kī    jēp-ì            kī    lē-gè        mw-ē:  
          SET    c5-compound    c7    walk-PROG    c7    beg-PROG    c18a-thing
- à-jú        à-chī        à-jú        à-chī  
          c6-day    c6-all    c6-day    c6-all

*‘This blind man was walking around from compound to compound and begging, day after day.’*

What-goes-around.1.2

(17.3) lē kī jèn-ì kī lēg-è mw-ē:,  
SET c7 walk-PROG c7 beg-PROG c18a-thing

kī jèn-ì kī yē:n-è Ø-ṛkè: lē, wō gé  
c7 walk-PROG c7 sing-PROG c1-song COMP 2SG do.COND

bvū-jōṛè, tū wō gé yē y-ō lē,  
c14-good then 2SG do on c9-2SG.POSS APPL

wō gé bvū-bēfè, tū wō gé yē y-ō lē  
2SG do.COND c14-bad then 2SG do on c9-2SG.POSS APPL

*'As he was walking around and begging, he was walking around and singing a song, "You do good you, do for yourself; you do bad, you do for yourself."'*  
What-goes-around.1.3

(17.4) Ø-kwēsé wú-mù gē bé yú wú gē  
c1-woman c1-some P3 <sup>P</sup>COP on.it c1REL P3

kāṇ-é mǎṇ-kàlǎ Ø-ṛtè wè lē  
fry-PROG c6a-cassava.puff c1-quarter up APPL

*'There was a woman who was frying cassava puff in that quarter.'*  
What-goes-around.1.4

(17.5) Ø-kwēsé wē-ē kāṇ-è mǎṇ-kàlǎ, kī-fē:  
c1-woman c1-ANA1 fry-PROG c6a-cassava.puff c7-blind.man

ky-ē: gēn-è kī lēg-è mǎṇ-kàlǎ à  
c7-ANA1 go-PROG c7 beg-PROG c6a-cassava.puff in

Ø-kwēsé wē-ē lē, à-jū ā-chī à-jū ā-chī  
c1-woman c1-ANA1 APPL c6-day c6-all c6-day c6-all

*'That woman continued frying cassava puffs and that blind man was always coming and begging cassava puffs from her, day after day.'*<sup>114</sup>  
What-goes-around.1.5

<sup>114</sup> The tone on the anaphoric demonstrative in the first clause of this sentence is expected to be mid-low rather than high-mid. Furthermore, the tone on the progressive suffix is expected to be high rather than low. Low tone on the progressive suffix is only expected when there is a grammatical high tone clitic preceding it. The translation provided indicates that this clause is interpreted as having Durative aspect. Therefore, I assume that the high tone on the anaphoric demonstrative is the realization of the high tone associated with the Durative marker **tū**.

- (17.6) lē kì-nfê: kē-ē dó kí t5-ò Ø-jú chí-mî,  
 SET c7-blind.man c7-ANA1 STIM c7 come-PROG c5-day c5-some

Ø-kwēsé wú kán-è màn-kàlà wē-ē,  
 c1-woman c1REL fry-PROG c6a-cassava.puff c1-ANA1

wù jù fó bē n̄sā y-è  
 3SG COP(N) there with c9.friend c9-3SG.POSS

*'As that blind man was coming one day, that woman who was frying cassava puff was there (in the neighborhood) with her friend.'*

What-goes-around.2.1

- (17.7) n̄sā y-ē bí: wù lē lâ:,  
 c9.friend c9-3SG.POSS ask 3SG APPL Q.COMP

kì-nfê: kī-nē tó kī tò-ò yànè té lè  
 c7-blind.man c7-PROX HAB c7 come-PROG here also APPL.QP

*'Her friend asked her, "(Does) this blind man also come here?"'*

What-goes-around.2.2

- (17.8) wù chfú lē, ē:, wù tó wù jā-à mē  
 3SG respond COMP yes 3SG HAB 3SG give-PROG 1SG.PRO

Ø-ñgē, j̄chē: ségē-chī ségē-chī  
 c1-trouble true when-all when-all

*'She replied, "Yes. He is always giving me trouble, truly all the time.'*

What-goes-around.2.3

- (17.9) wù mō wù chfú Ø-ntāŋ lē, bē bē  
 3SG RES 3SG respond c1-suggest COMP 1PL <sup>P</sup>COP
- mē wū wò, tū mē m̄-bē j̄-yū wā  
 1SG.PRO 3SG 3SG then 1SG.PRO 1SG-P1 1SG-kill already

wù bē Ø-ñlò  
 3SG with c1-poison

*'She then suggested, "If I were you, I would have killed him with poison."'*

What-goes-around.3.1

- (17.10) *j̄nché:, mē lé bē j̄nchè yí yū bī-kfūnè*  
 true 1SG.PRO COP with c9.medicine c9REL kill c8-rat

*'In fact (or truly), I have medicine that kills rats.'* What-goes-around.3.2

- (17.11) *n̄-tó bē yī, wō gé: à mǎn-kàlà*  
 1SG-come with c9 2SG put.IMP in c6a-cassava.puff

*mā-nē lé, wó ná wù lē*  
 c6a-PROX APPL 2SG.HORT give 3SG APPL

*'I will bring it (poison) and you put it in this cassava puff and you should give [it] to him.'* What-goes-around.3.3

- (17.12) *ségé wū gè wū jí, wú mō wū kwé,*  
 when 3SG go 3SG eat 3SG.HORT RES 3SG die

*wō fú-dē ā-ŋgē-wù-bō*  
 2SG rest-COMPL c18-trouble-3SG-hand

*'When he goes and eats, he will just die, then you will rest from the trouble from him.'* What-goes-around.3.4

- (17.13) *bē té fū-dé, bā-mì bā-dùdē fū-dē tē:*  
 1PL also rest-COMPL c2-person c2-many rest-COMPL also

*ā-wù-bō, j̄jē kī-nfè: kī-nē lé*  
 c18-3SG-hand reason c7-blind.man c7-PROX COP

*kī fūŋ-sè wá bā-mī wèsè bē kī-lègè*  
 c7 worry-CAUS already c2-person very with c7-begging

*'We also (in addition to you) will rest, and many people also will rest from his hands (from his begging), because this blindman has already worried people too much with begging.'* What-goes-around.3.5

(17.14) lē bvū-chfū dó bvú-yú, lē wū tónj màn-kàlà  
 SET c14-day SIT c14-break SET 3SG fry c6a-cassava.puff

mā fwē mā-à, wù jō j̄chē chy-ē:,  
 c6aREL front c6a-ANA1 3SG take c10.medicine c10-ANA1

wù yéfē màn-kàlà mā-yú  
 3SG rub c6a-cassava.puff c6a-ANA2

*'The next morning (lit. as the day broke), as she fried the first cassava puff, she took that poison (lit. medicine) and she rubbed [it] on that cassava puff.'* What-goes-around.4.1

(17.15) wù chásè wù gē:  
 3SG pack 3SG put

*'She packed (or loaded) [it] and put [it] aside.'* What-goes-around.4.2

(17.16) lē nù gē shēgē, kì-nf̃: kē-ē jēp-i  
 SET COP(N) P3 small c7-blindman c7-ANA1 walk-PROG

kī tō-ò, kī nā-à Ø-ŋkè lē, wō gé  
 c7 come-PROG c7 give-PROG c1-song COMP 2SG do.COND

bvū-jōŋē, tū wō gé yē y-ō lē,  
 c14-good then 2SG do on c9-2SG.POSS APPL

wō gé bvū-bēfē, tū wō gé yē y-ō lē  
 2SG do.COND c14-bad then 2SG do on c9-2SG.POSS APPL

*'After a little while...that blindman was walking around, and coming, and singing a song that "You do good, you do for yourself; you do bad, you do for yourself."'* What-goes-around.4.3

- (17.17) lē wú yēn-è Ø-ŋkè: wù tó-ò  
 SET 3SG sing-PROG c1-song 3SG come-PROG
- m̄bémbé Ø-lā wù Ø-kwēsé wú kàn-é  
 near c5-compound c3AM c1-woman c1REL fry-PROG
- màn-kàlà wē-ē lē, Ø-kwēsé wē-è gē  
 c6a-cassava.puff c1-ANA1 APPL c1-woman c1-ANA1 cry.out
- lē, hēbê:, wō gé bvū-jòŋè, tū wō gé yē  
 COMP INTERJ 2SG do.COND c14-good then 2SG do on
- y-ō lē, wō gé bvū-bēfè  
 c9-2SG.POSS APPL 2SG do.COND c14-bad
- tū wō gé yē y-ō lē, wō tō wā  
 then 2SG do on c9-2SG.POSS APPL 2SG come already.QP

*'As he was singing and coming near to the compound of that woman who was frying cassava puffs, that woman called out, "Oh! You-do-good-then-you-do-for-yourself-you-do-bad-then-you-do-for-yourself, have you already come?"'*

What-goes-around.4.4

- (17.18) wǒ jí wā fy-ē:  
 2SG eat already c19-thing.QP

*"Have you already eaten something?"*

What-goes-around.4.5

- (17.19) mō ĵ-pǎ wò fy-ē: wò jílè lè  
 RES 1SG.HORT-give 2SG c19-thing 2SG eat APPL.QP

*"Should I give you something to eat?"*

What-goes-around.4.6

- (17.20) kì-nfē: kē-ē lē, m̄-bá fy-ē: ā jí gē  
 c7-blind.man c7-ANA1 COMP 1SG-still c19-thing in eat NEG2

*'The blindman said "I've eaten nothing."'*

What-goes-around.4.7

(17.21) wù jǒ màṅ-kàlà mā-ā mà  
 3SG take c6a-cassava.puff c6a-ANA1 c6aREL

wù bé yéfè wū gē:, wù ná wù lē  
 3SG <sup>P</sup>COP rub 3SG put 3SG give 3SG APPL

*'She took that cassava puff, which she had rubbed [with poison] and set aside, and gave [it] to him.'* What-goes-around.4.8

(17.22) wù dú, kó là màṅ-kàlà mā-nē,  
 3SG say catch.IMP CONCESS c6a-cassava.puff c6a-PROX

wó jí  
 2SG.HORT eat

*'She said (with irritation), "Take this cassava puff, you should eat [it]."'* What-goes-around.4.9

(17.23) kì-nfê: kē-ē kī fí màṅ-kàlà  
 c7-blind.man c7-ANA1 c7 receive c6a-cassava.puff

mā-ā, kī gē bá jí gē,  
 c6a-ANA1 c7 P3 still eat NEG2

nō kī gè jí wá mw-ē: kī fū:  
 like.that c7 P3 eat already c18a-thing c7 satisfy

*'The blind man took the cassava puff and did not eat it as he had already eaten something and was satisfied.'* What-goes-around.5.1



(17.24) kí jós màṅ-kàlà mā-ā, kī gē: à-kē, kī já  
 c7 take c6a-cassava.puff c6a-ANA1 c7 put c18-bag c7 leave

kī gēn-è, kī nā-à Ø-ṅkè lē, wō gé  
 c7 go-PROG c7 give-PROG c1-song COMP 2SG do.COND

bvū-jōṅē tū wō gé yē y-ō lē, wō gé  
 c14-good then 2SG do on c9-2SG.POSS APPL 2SG do.COND

bvū-bēfè tū wō gé yē y-ō lē  
 c14-bad then 2SG do on c9-2SG.POSS APPL

*'He took that cassava puffs and put it in his bag and left and was going and singing his song, "You do good, you do for yourself; you do bad, you do for yourself."'*  
 What-goes-around.5.2

(17.25) lē kī gēn-è kī fēsè fē-jō:, kī shī fós kī  
 SET c7 go-PROG c7 reach c16-water c7 sit there COMP(K)

fúf-è shēṅ, kī nù fós, kī nù fós  
 rest-PROG c9.liver c7 COP(N) there c7 COP(N) there

*'As he was going and reached the water, he sat there to rest, and was there (for an extended period of time).'*  
 What-goes-around.6.1

(17.26) lē dós nù kī-fē kī bō: bā Ø-ṅwà  
 SET SIT COP(N) c7-time c7REL c2.child c2AM c1-book

tós bō jí mw-ē:, bō: bā gē tō  
 come 3PL eat c18a-thing c2.child c2REL P3 come

fwé gē bé bō: bā Ø-kwēsé wē-è  
 front P3 <sup>P</sup>COP c2.child c2AM c1-woman c1-ANA1

*'When it was time that school children come to eat something, the children who came first were the children of the woman.'*  
 What-goes-around.7.1

- (17.27) lē bós dós bós tós, bō yéŋ wō gé bvū-jōŋē,  
 SET 3PL SIT 3PL come 3PL see 2SG do.COND c14-good
- tū wō gé yē y-ō lē, wō gé bvū-bēfè,  
 then 2SG do on c9-2SG.POSS APPL 2SG do.COND c14-bad
- tū wō gé yē y-ō lē, wú shì-ì fè-jō  
 then 2SG do on c9-2SG.POSS APPL 3SG sit-PROG c16-water

*'As they came, they saw You-do-good-then-you-do-for-yourself-you-do-bad-then-you-do-for-yourself, sitting at the water.'*

What-goes-around.7.2

- (17.28) bós yěsè lē, Ø-bā:, wō lé wō shì-ì wō  
 3PL greet COMP c1-pa 2SG COP 2SG sit-PROG 2SG
- fúf-è shéŋ, Ø-bā: wō gé bvū-jōŋē,  
 rest-PROG c9.liver c1-pa 2SG do.COND c14-good
- tū wō gé yē y-ō lē  
 then 2SG do on c9-2SG.POSS APPL

*'They greeted him "Pa, are you sitting and resting, Pa You-do-good-then-you-do-for-yourself?"*

What-goes-around.7.3

- (17.29) kì-nfē: kē-ē bē:ŋ, ñ-fūf-é wá shēŋ,  
 c7-blindman c7-ANA1 agree 1SG-rest-PROG already c9.liver
- bō: b-āŋ  
 c2.child c2-1SG.POSS

*'The blindman agreed, "I am already resting, my children."'*

What-goes-around.7.4

- (17.30) Ø-bā:, wō gé bvū-jōŋē, tū wō gé yē y-ō  
 c1-pa 2SG do.COND c14-good then 2SG do on c9-2SG.POSS
- lē, wō lé bē fy-ē: wó ná bè yû:  
 APPL 2SG COP with c19-thing 2SG.HORT give 1PL on.it.QP

*'"Pa You-do-good-then-you-do-for-yourself, do you have something to provide us with?"'*

What-goes-around.7.5

- (17.31) Ø-bā wē-è lē mē lé bé màŋ-kàlà yānē  
 c1-pa c1-ANA1 COMP 1SG.PRO COP with c6a-cassava.puff here

à kī-kē: lē, mà n-lēgé à Ø-kwēsé wū-mù lē  
 in c18-bag APPL c6aREL 1SG-beg in c1-woman c1-some APPL

*‘That pa [said], “I have some cassava puff here in [my] bag, which I begged from some woman.”’*  
 What-goes-around.7.6

- (17.32) bēŋ tǔ bēŋ kó, bēŋ jí,  
 2PL come.IMP 2PL catch 2PL.HORT eat

bēŋ mú jò fó  
 2PL.HORT drink c9.water there

*“‘Come and take [the cassava puff], you should eat [it] and drink water.”’*  
 What-goes-around.7.7

- (17.33) bē: bā-ā gè bé bō tó, wū ná bō  
 c2.child c2-ANA1 P3 <sup>P</sup>COP 3PL come 3SG give 3PL

màŋ-kàlà mā-ā mǎn-tēdé, wū ná wú-nē,  
 c6a-cassava.puff c6a-ANA1 c6a-three 3SG give c1-PROX

wū ná wú-nē  
 3SG give c1-PROX

*‘Those children came and he gave them those three cassava puffs; he gave to each one.’ (lit. he gave to this one and he gave to this one)*  
 What-goes-around.7.8

- (17.34) lē bē: bā-ā jí, bó já bō kwē:d-è  
 SET c2.child c2-ANA1 eat 3PL leave 3PL be.home-PROG

*‘After those children ate, they left and were returning home.’*  
 What-goes-around.8.1

(17.35) b́ó kwě̀è b́ó gē: b́ó fésè fē-b́ó-kfúŋ, ɲù  
 3PL be.home 3PL go 3PL arrive c16-3PL-home COP(N)

b̃: bā Ø-kwēsé wē-è wū bé ɲā  
 c2.child c2AM c1-woman c1-ANA1 c1REL P1 give

kì-nfè: kē-è m̀àŋ-kàlà mā-ā  
 c7-blind.man c7-ANA1 c6a-cassava.puff c6a-ANA1

*'They went and arrived at their home, being the children of that woman who gave that blindman those cassava puffs.'*

What-goes-around.8.2

(17.36) lē b́ó d́ó b́ó gē: b̃ lē:, b̃ gwē  
 SET 3PL SIT 3PL go 3PL enter 3PL fall

lē à-shēŋ, lē à-shēŋ yú-ú b́ó  
 COMP c18-liver COMP c18-liver kill-PROG 3PL

*'As the children entered [the house], they felt that (their) stomachs were killing them.'* (lit. *they fell so that [their] liver was killing them*)

What-goes-around.8.3

(17.37) Ø-bwē b́ó t́ó wù bí: b̃ lē  
 c1-mother 3PL.POSS come 3SG ask 3PL APPL

là: lé lá, b̃: b-āŋ  
 COMP.Q COP Q c2.child c2-1SG.POSS

*'Their mother came and asked them, "What is (the problem), my children?"'*

What-goes-around.9.1

(17.38) b̃: bā-ā lē, à-shēŋ  
 children that COMP c18-liver

*'The children [replied], "(Our) stomachs."'*

What-goes-around.9.2

- (17.39) Ø-bwē bós chinè bō: bā-ā lé fós  
 c1-mother 3PL.POSS leave c2.child c2-ANA1 APPL there

wù légē wù gē:, wū lá Ø-bá wù-bō,  
 3SG run 3SG go 3SG go.goal c1-pa c1-3PL.POSS

lē bō: bā-nē bēd-é bā lē à-shēŋ  
 COMP c2.child c2-PROX cry-PROG c2 COMP c18-liver

*'Their mother left those children there and ran to their pa and [said]  
 that these children are crying, they [are saying] "(Our) stomachs."'*  
 What-goes-around.9.3

- (17.40) lē Ø-chǐjì bós tós chēgē, wú tós,  
 COMP c1-father.HORT 3PL.POSS come quickly 3SG.HORT come

wú yéŋ fy-ē: fī lé lē  
 3SG.HORT see c19-thing c19.REL COP APPL

*'[They said] that their father should come quickly and see what is  
 happening.'* What-goes-around.9.4

- (17.41) wù tós wù yéŋ fy-ē: fī-yú nù  
 3SG come 3SG see c19-thing c19-ANA2 COP(N)

à jè yí-mì lē  
 in c9.road c9-some APPL

*'He came and saw that thing was in a bad way.'* (lit. *in other or  
 different path*) What-goes-around.9.5

- (17.42) hǎy hǎy, fī ghá wù, wù tú: bō:  
 INTERJ INTERJ c19 surpass 3SG 3SG carry c2.child

bā-ā wù gē: fè Ø-mū wù nchē lé  
 c2-ANA1 3SG go at c1-person c1AM c10.medicine APPL

*'"Hey, hey!" It (their illness) was beyond his ability to give aid, and he  
 took them to a doctor.'* What-goes-around.9.6

(17.43) lē Ø-mù-nché wé-é gē: wú jīŋē, wù yéŋ  
 SET c1-person-medicine c1-ANA1 go 3SG watch 3SG see

lē lé Ø-nlò wù bō: bā-ā jí  
 COMP COP c1-poison c1REL c2.child c2-ANA1 eat

*'When the doctor looked, he saw that it was POISON that those children ate.'*  
 What-goes-around.9.7

(17.44) à Ø-nlò wē-ē nù wū gē: wá bō: bā-ā  
 in c1-poison that COP(N) c1 go already c2.child c2-ANA1

yē lē wèsè, wù bí: bō: bā-ā lé là:,  
 c9.body APPL much 3SG ask c2.child c2-ANA1 APPL Q.COMP

lé lǎ fī bēŋ bé jì  
 COP Q c19REL 2PL P1 eat

*'Since the poison had already spread through their bodies too much, he asked those children, "What is it that you ate?"'*  
 What-goes-around.9.8

(17.45) bō: bā-ā lē, bō bé jí nù mǎŋ-kàlà  
 c2.child c2-ANA1 COMP 3PL <sup>P</sup>COP eat COP(N) c6a-cassava.puff

má-mù mà kì-mfē kí-mí bé ná bō lē,  
 c6a-some c6a.REL c7-blind.man c7-some <sup>P</sup>COP give 3PL APPL

kì-mfē kē-ē kí tó kī jèmè lē, wō  
 c7-blind.man c7-ANA1 c7REL HAB c7 talk COMP 2SG

gé bvū-jōŋē, tū wō gé yē y-ō lē, wō  
 do.COND c14-good then 2SG do on c9-2SG.POSS APPL 2SG

gé bvū-bēfè, tū wō gé yē y-ō lē  
 do.COND c14-bad then 2SG do-PROG on c9-2SG.POSS APPL

*'Those children [said] that they had eaten SOME CASSAVA PUFF, WHICH A CERTAIN BLINDMAN HAD GIVEN THEM, that blindman who always says that you do good, then you do for yourself; you do bad, then you for yourself.'*  
 What-goes-around.9.9

(17.46) Ø-bā wē-è bé wù dú lē, wù bé légé lò  
 c1-pa c1-ANA1 P1 3SG say COMP 3SG P1 beg FOC

à Ø-kwēsé wú-mù lē, wú tó  
 in c1-woman c1-certain APPL c1REL HAB

wū kāŋ-è màŋ-kàlà  
 3SG fry-PROG c6a-cassava.puff

*‘That Pa said that he begged from a certain woman who is always  
 frying cassava puffs.’* What-goes-around.9.10

(17.47) lē fí dó fí nùmè nō:, Ø-kwēsé wē-è  
 SET c19 STIM c19 COP(N) like.that c1-woman c1-ANA1

m̩bū: bé kwè, wù bēd-ě  
 burst with c9.death 3SG cry-PROG

*‘As it was so, that woman started crying and crying.’*  
 What-goes-around.9.11

(17.48) Ø-jwē bí: là: lé lá fí wò bēd-é là  
 c1-husband ask COMP.Q COP Q c19REL 2SG cry-PROG Q

*‘The husband asked, “Why are you crying?”’* What-goes-around.9.12

- (17.49) Ø-kwēsé wé-é chfú lē, bɔ̃: bā-nē dú lē,  
 c1-woman c1-ANA1 reply COMP c2.child c2-PROX say COMP
- bɔ̃ lé bɔ̃ jí màn-kàlà mà Ø-kwēsé wú-mù  
 3PL COP 3PL eat c6a-cassava.puff c6aREL c1-woman c1-some
- chí tō wú lé: bē mē lē bē gɔ̃  
 P2 come c1REL deceive with 1SG.PRO SET 1PL.HORT search
- jè yì bē yú-yé kì-nfɛ: kī-nē kí  
 c9.path c9REL 1PL kill-DISTR.COND c7-blind.man c7-PROX c7REL
- jèn-ī kī lēg-ē mw-ē:, kī-nē yú  
 walk.around-PROG c7 beg-PROG c18a-thing c7-PROX on.it

*'The woman answered that "These children are saying that they have eaten cassava puffs, which a certain woman came who deceived me that we should look for a way to kill this blindman who is going around begging things, [kill] this one with it."'* What-goes-around.9.13

- (17.50) lē Ø-kwēsé wé-ē dú nō, mē mō gɛ:  
 SET c1-woman c1-ANA1 say like.that 1SG.PRO then go
- mē j̃-jò j̃chē yī bā yú-yí  
 1SG.PRO 1SG-take c9.medicine c9REL they kill-DIST.PROG
- bī-kfūnè yú mē j̃-gɛ: à màn-kàlà mā-ā lé  
 c8-rat on.it 1SG.PRO 1SG-put in c6a-cassava.puff c6a-ANA1 APPL
- 'As that woman said so, I went and brought medicine that kills rats and put [it] in that cassava puff.'* What-goes-around.9.14

- (17.51) lé mó mà mē bē já kì-mfɛ: kē-ē lé,  
 COP RES c6aREL 1SG.PRO P1 give c7-blind.man c7-ANA1 APPL
- kí gɛ: kī nā bɔ̃: bā-nē lé, bó jí,  
 c7REL go c7 give c2.child c2-PROX APPL 3PL eat
- fē à-shén kē á yù-ù bó  
 make c18-liver begin c18 kill-PROG 3PL
- 'That is the very cassava puff that I gave to the blind man, who went and gave [it] to these children for them to eat, that made (their) stomach to begin hurting them.'* What-goes-around.9.15



- (17.52) lē fí dó fí nù nɔ̃,  
SET c19 SIT c19 COP(N) like.that

bɔ̃: bā-ā gē kwī-yè bā-chī  
c2.child c2-ANA1 P3 die-DISTR c2-all

*'As it was so, all those children died (one after another).'*

What-goes-around.10.1

- (17.53) fī-mánǎ fī-nē dūŋ-í lē, wɔ̃ gé bvū-jɔ̃ŋē,  
c19-story c19-PROX show-PROG COMP 2SG do.COND c14-good

tū wò gé nù yē y-ɔ̃ lē, wò gé  
then 2SG do COP(N) on C9-2SG.POSS APPL 2SG do.COND

bvū-bēfè, tū wò gé nù yē y-ɔ̃ lē  
c14-bad then 2SG do COP(N) on C9-2SG.POSS APPL

*'This story is teaching that, if you do good, then you do FOR  
YOURSELF; if you do bad, then you do FOR YOURSELF.'*

What-goes-around.10.2



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## Summary in English

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Nchane is a Bantoid (Beboid) language with approximately 15,000 speakers located primarily in five villages in the Northwest Region of Cameroon. The language is vigorously used in Nchane homes and at community events, with a growing list of vernacular literary works available since the early 2010's. This book provides a description of Nchane grammar, beginning with the sound system and ending with information structure. The data corpus supporting this work includes a lexicon with about 1,600 entries, 23 texts of various genres, and some elicited material. Most of this data was collected while I lived in the Nchane village of Nfume from 2004 to 2015.

The sound system is composed of 18 consonants, seven vowels and seven tone melodies involving three level tones. The vowel inventory includes one fricative vowel, realized as a near high central vowel with accompanying friction, but often showing behavior consistent with a high back vowel, which is the best analysis for its underlying form.

There is an observable preference for monosyllabic roots, and syllable codas are limited almost entirely to the velar nasal **ŋ**. The process of syllable reduction has resulted in the allophonic variants **CVŋ** and **C $\tilde{V}$** , as well as what could be described as half-long vowels. A few phonological processes are observed, including nasal place assimilation and high front vowel laxing in the environment of a following NC sequence.

The tone system is characterized by high, mid and low level tones, which combine into high-mid, high-low, mid-low and mid-high contour tones. Vowels serve as tone-bearing units, with tones serving to mark lexical items as well as some grammatical distinctions. Tone analysis is complicated by lowering-tonal effects associated with the nasal of nouns belonging to so-called nasal classes (eg, classes 1,

8 and 9). Tonological processes include downdrift, downstep, and a number of phrase-boundary phenomena.

Nouns are grouped into 17 different noun classes, with noun class affixes the primary form of nominal morphology. Most noun classes are characterized by the noun having either zero marking or a prefix. Classes 9 and 10 are distinguished by low and high tone clitics respectively and class 3 is marked by a labial glide infix **-w-**, which is an innovation of the Beboid and nearby Yemne-Kimbi languages. Derivational classes include two locative noun classes (classes 16 and 18), which correspond to the prepositions **fè** ‘at’ and **à** ‘in’ respectively, with the core semantics of the prepositions usually evident in the locative nouns as well.

Noun phrases are head-initial, consisting of a head nominal followed by an optional modifier of some kind. Modifiers always agree with the head noun, expressed through an agreement prefix. The anaphoric demonstratives are of particular interest, with the anaphoric demonstrative 2 **yú** appearing with participants which are judged by the speaker as being associated with a usually negative quality, in addition to marking it as a major participant in the discourse. Very few Nchane adjectives have been discovered, with attributes more commonly expressed through verbs.

Nchane pronouns may be divided into two types: simple and compound. Compound pronouns have only been observed in Cameroonian languages and consist of two pronominal elements. The base form denotes plural reference in addition to either first or second person. The second element specifies the other member(s) of the reference. Generic reference is made through the impersonal pronoun **bā**, the antecedent of which is the noun **bā-mī** ‘people’. Unlike nearby languages such as Noni (also Beboid), Nchane does not have a dummy subject. Constructions in which a dummy subject element appears in these other languages, are observed with a gap in the preverbal “subject” position in Nchane.

Verbs tend to be monosyllabic. Verb morphology is limited to the first-singular subject agreement prefix and Progressive, Distributive and Causative suffixes. A high tone clitic is observed in a number of constructions, including Imperative and Hortative constructions. The normally high-toned Progressive suffix of verbs in constructions with the accompanying high tone clitic is realized with a low tone, indicating that the Progressive high tone is itself the same high tone clitic, which is usually restricted to a single iteration per sentence. Tense and aspectual distinctions are largely expressed through various preverbal particles. Nchane also has a number of post-verbal adverbs, some of which belong to the verb complex.

Nchane makes use of two copulas **lé** ‘COP’ and **jù** ‘COP(N)’, with **lé** often expressing static states and **jù** expressing dynamic states. In addition to their function in copula clauses, **lé** functions as an auxiliary verb in future constructions and perfect constructions, while **jù** also functions as marker of counter-expectation focus. These

copulas appear in nonverbal predicate constructions, with a variety of elements serving as predicate, including nouns, numbers, adjectives and prepositional phrases.

Clauses consist of a verb (minimally) and usually one or more nominal constituents. The nonverbal clause constituent types include Subject and Object (both of which are formally unmarked), Applied Object, Comitative Oblique and Locative Oblique. While Nchane could be classified typologically as an SVO language, constituent governance is based upon semantic roles and information structure concerns more than upon grammatical roles. Agents are strongly associated with the preverbal position, as are sentence topics. Meanwhile, Patients almost always occur in the postverbal position, which is also the position most frequently associated with focus.

Applied Objects are marked by the Applicative postposition **lẽ**, in contrast to most analyses of applicatives in Bantu languages, which typically involve an applicative verbal suffix. The applicative analysis is supported by the occurrence of this postposition with semantic RECIPIENTS/ BENEFACTIVES, ADDRESSEES, and LOCATIVES, semantic roles commonly associated with applied objects in Bantu languages. Further support comes from some cases of the Applicative postposition effecting an apparent semantic alternation.

Relative clauses are introduced by a relativizer that agrees with the head nominal. Relativized constituents leave a gap in the relative clause, except in the case of constituents introduced by prepositions, which makes use of resumptive pronouns. Relativizers are realized with a high tone when the relativized constituent is preverbal and a low or mid tone when it is postverbal. The verbs of relative clauses are only slightly less finite than those of main clauses, with relative clauses requiring subject agreement in fewer tense environments than in main clauses.

Sentences involving more than one verb are common in Nchane. While some nearby languages display distinctive serial verb constructions, sentences with multiple clauses of equal status in Nchane are better described as clause chaining structures. Most support (cf. subordinate) clause types usually precede their focal clause counterparts. Furthermore, most are introduced by a particle or word of some sort, indicating the type of support clause. Complement clauses are introduced by one of three complementizers. The most common complementizer is **lẽ**, which introduces complements of verbs of cognition and communication.

Polar questions are marked by a low tone enclitic and content questions utilize one of several question words, which correspond to the unknown constituent. Question words often occur *in situ*, appearing in the canonical position associated with the constituent to which the question word corresponds. However, the use of cleft constructions to mark the question word as focused is relatively common.

Negative constructions usually involve discontinuous negative marking, with the clause-final negative marker **gē** always present. Negated constituents are preceded by the same negative marker **gē**, while negated clauses are marked either by the auxiliary **bá** ‘still’ (in the case of past tense and nonprogressive verbs) or a clause-initial **á** (in all other contexts).

In canonical sentences, the preverbal position usually expresses sentence topics, while the postverbal position is associated with focus. When the topic is for some reason unclear, Nchane uses one of three strategies to indicate the topic: left dislocation, left detachment, or DP-internal word order change. Each of these strategies is usually accompanied by a higher tonal register realized on at least a portion of the topic-marked phrase.

Several strategies are utilized for the expression of various kinds of focus. Non-canonical word order is limited to focusing Agents only, with the Agent constituent occurring in the immediately-after-verb position. When an Object (usually a Patient) is also present, it is “defocalized”, occurring in the preverbal position. This kind of strategy normally expresses exhaustive or contrastive focus.

Cleft constructions may be used to focus any nominal constituent, usually identifying the denotation, for example in answering “who” or “what” questions. And the words/particles **m̄**, **ɲù** and **l̄** are used in expressions of scalar, counter-expectation, and assertive focus respectively.

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## Samenvatting in het Nederlands

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Nchane is een Bantoid (Beboid) taal met ongeveer 15.000 sprekers die voornamelijk in vijf dorpen in de Noordwestelijke regio van Kameroen wordt gesproken. De taal wordt thuis gebruikt en bij evenementen in de gemeenschap, en het afgelopen decennium is er meer literatuur in het Nchane verschenen. Dit boek geeft een beschrijving van de Nchane grammatica, beginnend met het klanksysteem en eindigend met de informatiestructuur. Het datacorpus waarop het gebaseerd is bevat een lexicon met ongeveer 1.600 lemma's, 23 teksten van verschillende genres, en materiaal uit elicitatie. De meeste van deze gegevens zijn verzameld tussen 2004 en 2015, toen ik in het Nchane dorp Nfume woonde.

Het klanksysteem bestaat uit 18 medeklinkers, zeven klinkers en zeven toonmelodieën met drie niveaus. Nchane heeft één fricatieve klinker, gerealiseerd als een tweedegraads centrale klinker met bijbehorende frictie; omdat deze zich echter gedraagt als een hoge achterklinker, is dat de beste analyse is voor zijn onderliggende vorm.

Er is een duidelijke voorkeur voor eenlettergrepige stamwoorden, en voor open lettergrepen – coda's zijn bijna volledig beperkt tot de velaire nasaal **ŋ**. Het proces van lettergreepreductie heeft gezorgd voor de allofone varianten **CVŋ** en **CṼ**, evenals wat kan worden omschreven als halflange klinkers. Enkele fonologische processen zijn assimilatie van nasalen en het veranderen van de hoge voorklinker van gespannen naar ongespannen voor een NC-sequentie.

Het toonsysteem wordt gekenmerkt door hoge, middelhoge en lage tonen, die kunnen combineren tot de contourtonen hoog-mid, hoog-laag, mid-laag, en mid-hoog. Klinkers dienen als toondragende eenheden, en tonen markeren zowel lexicale als enkele grammaticale verschillen. De analyse van toon wordt gecompliceerd door het toonverlagende effect van nasalen aan het begin van woorden in de zogenaamde nasale naamwoordklassen (bijv. klasse 1, 8 en 9). Tonologische processen omvatten

downdrift, downstep, en een aantal fenomenen die de grenzen van fonologische groepen markeren.

De naamwoorden zijn verdeeld in 17 verschillende naamwoordklassen, waarbij de klassemarkeerders de belangrijkste nominale morfologie vormen. De meeste naamwoordenklassen hebben een nulmarkering of een voorvoegsel. De klassen 9 en 10 worden onderscheiden door respectievelijk lage en hoge tonen, en klasse 3 wordt gemarkeerd door een labiale glijklank **-w-** als infix, wat een innovatie is van de Beboïd en de nabijgelegen Yemne-Kimbi-talen. Tot de afgeleide klassen behoren twee locatieve zelfstandige naamwoordenklassen (klasse 16 en 18), die overeenkomen met respectievelijk de voorzetsels **fɛ** 'op, bij' en **à** 'in', waarbij de kern van de betekenis van de voorzetsels meestal ook in de locatieve zelfstandige naamwoorden terug te vinden is.

Zelfstandige naamwoordgroepen zijn hoofdinitieel, bestaande uit een hoofd gevolgd door een optionele bepaling zoals een bijvoeglijk of bezittelijk voornaamwoord. De bepalingen komen altijd overeen met het hoofdnaamwoord in naamwoordklasse, gemarkeerd als prefix. Met name de anaforische demonstratieven zijn interessant: de anaforische demonstratief 2 **yú** geeft aan dat de spreker de referent associeert met een negatieve eigenschap, en dat de referent een 'major participant' in het verhaal/gesprek is. Er zijn zeer weinig bijvoeglijke naamwoorden van Nchane ontdekt – bijvoeglijke bepalingen worden over het algemeen uitgedrukt door werkwoorden.

De persoonlijke voornaamwoorden in het Nchane kunnen worden onderverdeeld in twee soorten: eenvoudige en samengestelde. Samengestelde persoonlijke voornaamwoorden zijn alleen in Kameroense talen waargenomen en bestaan uit twee voornaamwoordelijke elementen. De basisvorm geeft de eerste of tweede persoon aan alsook getal. Het tweede element geeft het (de) andere lid (leden) van de verwijzing aan. Een algemene verwijzing wordt gemaakt door middel van het onpersoonlijk voornaamwoord **bā**, waarvan het antecedent het zelfstandig naamwoord **bā-mî** 'mensen' is. In tegenstelling tot nabije talen zoals Noni (ook Beboïd), heeft Nchane geen *dummy* onderwerp. Constructies waarin een *dummy* onderwerp in deze andere talen voorkomt, hebben in het Nchane simpelweg een lege onderwerpspositie.

Werkwoorden zijn over het algemeen monosyllabisch. De morfologie van de werkwoorden is beperkt tot het voorvoegsel van de eerste persoon enkelvoud van het onderwerp en de progressieve, distributieve en causatieve achtervoegsels. Een enclitische hoge toon komt voor in een aantal constructies, waaronder Imperatieve en Hortatieve constructies. Het Progressieve achtervoegsel, wat normaal een hoge toon heeft, wordt gerealiseerd met een lage toon in constructies met de enclitische hoge toon, wat aangeeft dat de Progressieve hoge toon en de enclitische toon één en dezelfde zijn, en dat deze hoge toon meestal beperkt is tot één per zin. Tijd en aspectueel onderscheid komt grotendeels tot uiting in verschillende preverbale



partikels. Nchane heeft ook een aantal post-verbale bijwoorden, waarvan sommige tot het werkwoordelijk complex behoren.

Nchane maakt gebruik van twee copula's **lé** COP en **ɲù** COP(N), waarbij **lé** vaak statische toestanden uitdrukt en **ɲù** dynamische toestanden. Naast hun functie in copulazinnen fungeert **lé** als hulpwerkwoord in toekomstige constructies en perfecte constructies, terwijl **ɲù** ook fungeert als markerings van tegenverwachtingsfocus. Deze copula's komen voor in non-verbale predikaatconstructies, met een verscheidenheid aan elementen die als predikaat dienen, waaronder zelfstandige naamwoorden, getallen, bijvoeglijke naamwoorden en voorzetsels.

Zinnen bestaan uit (minimaal) een werkwoord en meestal één of meer naamwoorden. De niet-verbale constituenten van de zin zijn Onderwerp en Lijdend Voorwerp (die beide formeel ongemarkeerd zijn), Applicatief Voorwerp, Meewerkend Obliet en Locatief Obliet. Terwijl Nchane typologisch zou kunnen worden geclassificeerd als een SVO-taal, worden de constituenten meer bepaald door de semantische rollen en de informatiestructuur dan de grammaticale rollen. De Agens worden sterk geassocieerd met de pre-verbale positie, net als Topics. De Patiens komt bijna altijd in de post-verbale positie, wat ook de positie is die vaak geassocieerd wordt met Focus.

Applicatieve Voorwerpen worden gemarkeerd door de Applicatieve postpositie **lɛ**, in tegenstelling tot de meeste analyses van applicatieven in Bantoetalen, die typisch een applicatief verbaal achtervoegsel bevatten. De applicatieve analyse wordt ondersteund door het feit dat de postpositie ook gebruikt wordt met semantische RECIPIËNTEN/BENEFACTIEVEN, ADDRESSEES, en LOCATIEVEN, semantische rollen die gewoonlijk geassocieerd worden met applicatieven in Bantoetalen. Verdere argumenten komen van enkele gevallen waarin de Applicatieve postpositie een semantisch verschil teweegbrengen.

Relatiefzinnen worden geïntroduceerd door een relatiefmarkeerder die overeenkomt in de naamwoordklasse met het gerelativiseerde constituenten. Gerelativiseerde constituenten laten een gat achter in de relatieve bijzin, behalve in het geval van constituenten geïntroduceerd door voorzetsels, die gebruik maken van resumptive voornaamwoorden. Relatiefmarkeerders worden gerealiseerd met een hoge toon als het gerelativiseerde constituent preverbaal is en een lage of middentoon als het postverbaal is. Relatieve bijzinnen lijken iets minder finiet dan hoofdzinnen, aangezien werkwoorden in relatiefzinnen in minder werkwoordstijden vervoeging vereisen dan in hoofdzinnen.

Zinnen met meer dan één werkwoord komen vaak voor in het Nchane. Terwijl sommige naburige talen seriële werkwoordconstructies vertonen, worden zinnen met meerdere zinnen van gelijke status in Nchane beter beschreven als *clause chaining* structuren. De meeste typen bij zinnen gaan vooraf aan de hoofdzin. Bovendien worden de meeste zinnen geïntroduceerd door een partikel of een woord,

wat het type bijzin aangeeft. Complementszinnen worden ingeleid door een van drie voegwoorden. Het meest voorkomende voegwoord is **lɛ**, dat complementen van werkwoorden van cognitie en communicatie introduceert.

Polaire vragen worden gemarkeerd met een lage toon, en inhoudelijke vragen maken gebruik van een van de vele vraagwoorden, die overeenkomen met de onbekende referent. Vraagwoorden komen vaak *in situ* voor, in de canonieke positie de bevraagde constituent. Het gebruik van gekloofde constructies om het vraagwoord als gefocust te markeren komt echter relatief vaak voor.

Negatie maakt meestal gebruik van tweeledige negatieve markering, waarbij de zinsfinale negatieve markering **gɛ** altijd aanwezig is. Negatieve constituenten worden voorafgegaan door dezelfde negatieve markering **gɛ**, terwijl ontkennende zinnen worden gemarkeerd met de aanvullende **á** ‘nog steeds’ (in het geval van werkwoorden in de verleden tijd en niet-progressieve werkwoorden) of een zinsinitiële **á** (in alle andere contexten).

In canonieke zinnen wordt in de pre-verbale positie meestal het topic van de zin uitgedrukt, terwijl de postverbale positie wordt geassocieerd met focus. Wanneer het onderwerp om een of andere reden onduidelijk is, gebruikt Nchane een van drie strategieën om het onderwerp aan te duiden: dislocatie of *detachment* naar de linker periferie, of het wijzigen van de DP-interne woordvolgorde. Elk van deze strategieën gaat meestal gepaard met een hoger tonaal register dat wordt gerealiseerd op minstens een deel van de topic-markeringszin.

Verskillende strategieën worden gebruikt voor het uitdrukken van verschillende soorten van focus. De niet-canonieke woordvolgorde is beperkt tot het focussen van de Agens, waarbij de Agensconstituent zich aansluitend achter het werkwoord moet bevinden. Wanneer een Voorwerp (meestal een Patiëns) ook aanwezig is, wordt het “gedefocaliseerd” door de pre-verbale positie geplaatst te zijn. Dit soort strategie drukt normaalgesproken een exhaustieve of contrasterende focus uit.

Gekloofde constructies kunnen worden gebruikt om eender welke nominale constituent te focussen, waarbij meestal de referent wordt geïdentificeerd, bijvoorbeeld bij het beantwoorden van “wie” of “wat” vragen. En de partikels **m̩**, **p̩** en **l̩** worden gebruikt in uitdrukkingen van respectievelijk scalaire, tegenverwachting, en assertieve focus.

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## Curriculum Vitae

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Richard Lee Boutwell was born in Oklahoma, USA on 4 September, 1965. After graduating from Cleveland Innovative High School in Oklahoma City in 1983, he attended the University of Central Oklahoma, earning a Bachelor of Science degree in Medical Technology in 1990. He worked as a medical technologist in Oklahoma City from 1990 until 1997, when he joined Wycliffe Bible Translators and began his training in language development. In 2000, Richard earned a Master of Arts in Linguistics from the University of Texas at Arlington. His Master's thesis is titled *Functional universals of tense-aspect-modality morphology in SOV languages*. From 2000 to 2002, he studied French in Neuchatel, Switzerland, followed by language development work in Cameroon with SIL International, where he served as a linguistics specialist for the Beoid (Misaje) language cluster project from 2003 to 2015. During this period, Richard also helped as a trainer and advisor for various linguistics courses for language development projects in the Northwest Region, as well as performing some limited teaching and administration activities at the Cameroonian Baptist Theological Seminary in Ndu, Cameroon. His Ph.D. studies formally commenced in 2016 at Leiden University in the Netherlands. This dissertation is the culmination of his doctoral research.