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A grammar of Ik (Icé-tód) : Northeast Uganda's last thriving Kuliak language

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Citation

Schrock, T. B. (2014, December 16). *A grammar of Ik (Icé-tód) : Northeast Uganda's last thriving Kuliak language*. LOT dissertation series. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/30201>

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Issue Date: 2014-12-16

10 Sentences and Beyond

Up to this point, the discussion of syntax has been concerned with the formation of individual noun phrases and clauses, main and subordinate. It has also covered the formation of complex sentences that combine a matrix clause with a subordinate clause. The present chapter moves beyond clause-level syntax to examine the joining of two or more main clauses (§10.1) and Ik's primary clause-linking strategy—clause chaining (§10.2).

10.1 Clause coordination

Clause 'co-subordination', or clause chaining, is the language's preferred method for linking clauses. However, the coordination of two independent clauses is also observed. Such coordination, the topic of the following section, can be used to communicate a relationship of addition, contrast/counter-expectation, or disjunction between two or more clauses.

10.1.1 Additional

The addition of one independent clause to another is usually handled by first nominalizing the second clause and then joining it to the first clause with the connective *nda* 'and'. Once the second clause is nominalized, it is then treated syntactically as a peripheral, oblique argument. This is reflected morphologically by the fact that the main verb of the nominalized clause takes the oblique case. Here are some examples:

- (1) *Hodetuo bilikeretea nda imojiresi fiyukumui.*
hód-ét-u-o bílíkereté-á nda imójír-ésí fiyókumú-¹
free-INCH-3SG-SEQ spurfowl-ACC and twist-INF[OBL] neck-GEN
He then freed the spurfowl and twisted its neck.
(‘And he freed the spurfowl and the twisting of its neck.’)

- (2) *Gameese ja gwee na nda ats'esukot.*
 gám-é-ese = ja gwé-é = na nda áts'-és-úkot'
 kindle-INCH-SPS = ADV bird-DAT = DEM.SG and eat-INF-COMP [OBL]
 So then a fire was made for the bird, and it was eaten.
 ('And it was kindled for this bird and the eating.')
- (3) *Keesia Kaabonje ts'oo nda poroni barats.*
 ke-es-í-a kaabónje-ε nda pór-óni barats-°
 go-INT-1SG-REAL Kaabong-DAT and proceed-INF [OBL] morning-INS
 I'm going to Kaabong and will proceed in the morning.
 ('I'm going to Kaabong now and the proceeding in the morning.')

If the subject of an added second clause needs to be made explicit (same or different from the first clause), it can appear in one of two positions: 1) before the nominalized verb in the oblique case or 2) after the nominalized verb in the genitive case. In position (1), it takes the oblique case because the preposition *nda* interprets it as a peripheral argument of the first clause (see example 4). In position (2), it takes the genitive case because it modifies the NP head which is the nominalized verb (see example 5):

- (4) *...nda ja nci atsoni awak.*
 nda = ja nci ats-oni awá-k^e
 and = ADV I [OBL] come-INF [OBL] home-DAT
 ...and then I came home ('and I to come home').
- (5) *...nda ja atsoni ncie awak.*
 nda = ja ats-oni nci-e awá-k^e
 and = ADV come-INF [OBL] I-GEN home-DAT
 ...and then I came home ('and to come of me home').

From the position of *nci* in (4), one might suspect that it is the first term in a compound with *ats-on* 'to come'. However, the first term in a compound often changes the tone of the second term. In light of this, compare the

- (9) *Benia ncuk, buo kot.*
 bení-á j̄cu-k° || bu-o = kót°
 not.be-REAL I-COP you.SG-COP = ADV
 It's not me, rather it's you.

- (10) *Ogoe ntsi yeti bi.*
 ógo-e ntsi j̄ét-í bi
 let-IMP he[OBL] save-3SG[OPT] you[OBL]

Naa koto moo bed̄...

náá = koto mo-o béd̄-í

CONJ = ADV not-SEQ want-3SG

Let him save you. But if he doesn't want to,...

Some Ik speakers, especially those having learned other languages, find alternative ways to express contrast. This may be for example, by borrowing a contrast word from Karimojong (*naít*) or Swahili (*lakini*).

10.1.3 Disjunctive

Disjunction is signaled by the presence of the disjunctive *kedé* (which has the parallel *kori* in Teso-Turkana). Like *n̄da* 'and/with', *kedé* 'or' can link both noun phrases and independent clauses. The following examples illustrate disjunction with *kedé* and variety of verb and clause types:

- (11) *...paka deese yaŋa kedé kwaatese nk.*
 paka d-é-ese yáŋ-a kedé kwaát-é-ese ŋk^a
 until bring-VEN-SPS my.mother-NOM or birth-VEN-SPS I-NOM
 ...until my mother is brought (i.e. married) or I am born.

- (12) *Ogoe ŋaŋosik...*
 ógo-e ŋáŋ-ós-i-k^e
 let-IMP.SG open-PASS-3SG-SIML

kede egee koneeni korobadi.

kede egé=e kóné-éní kóróbádi-Ø
 or put-IMP.SG = DP one-PSSM[OBL] thing-GEN
 Leave it open, or put something on it.

(13) *Kamiya noo die kede maa noo kamiyid?*

kám-i-a=noo dí-é kede máá=noo kám-i-í=d^e
 like-PLUR-REAL = PST3 ones-DAT or not-PRF = PST3 like-PLUR-3SG = DP
 Was it like these, or was it not like these?

10.2 Clause chaining

Clause chaining is the linchpin of Ik discourse. As defined here, it is the linking of one or more clauses with non-finite verbs to a clause with a finite verb. The syntactic relationship between the initial or controlling clause and the chained clauses is the subject of debate; some describe it as ‘quasi-coordinate’ (Haiman & Monroe 1983:xii) and others as ‘co-subordination’ (Van Valin & LaPolla 1997:455). It is not clearly coordinative or subordinative and thus may be considered a hybrid of the two (Schröder 2013a:2). In Ik, chained sequential clauses are more coordinative, while chained simultaneous clauses seem more subordinative.

In many languages, particularly outside of Africa but also in Ethiopia, a clause chain begins with a sequence of non-finite clauses culminating in a final clause that bears the TAM specifications of the whole chain. But in Ik, as in neighboring Teso-Turkana languages like Toposa, the clause chain begins with the controlling finite clause and is then followed by one or more non-finite clauses (Schröder 2013b:5). This ‘post-nuclear’ orientation of the clause chain is well-attested in Africa but rarer elsewhere (Payne 1997:321)

Ik exhibits two kinds of chained clause: sequential and simultaneous. The markers or indicators of these clauses are the verbal inflectors that bear the same labels (§7.8.1 for sequential, §7.8.2 for simultaneous). As the label

implies, sequential clauses in a clause chain carry the sequence of mainline or foregrounded information in any kind of text with sequential events. Simultaneous clauses, on the other hand, convey offline contextual circumstances that cooccur with events or states in clauses preceding them. The initial, controlling element that creates the TAM setting for a clause chain may consist of any non-chained verb or even an adverbial phrase.

10.2.1 Sequential clause chains

The analysis of sequential clause chaining in this grammar is only preliminary. But it should serve as an introduction to what could turn out to be a fruitful topic. Sequential clause chains communicate sequential states or events. As such, they are the predominant clause type found in narratives. Because of that, the sequential aspect had previously been called the ‘narrative mood’ (e.g. Heine & König 1996:76). But sequential clauses are found in many types of discourse, from narrative to procedural to expository to exhortatory, even imperative. Sequential clauses are marked with a combination of high-tone suppression and an eclectic paradigm of special subject-agreement suffixes (see also §7.7.1). The following table presents the sequential paradigm for *béd-* ‘want’ and *wet-* ‘drink’. Note the inclusion of the sequential impersonal passive (SPS) marked by {-ese’}:

(14) *Sequential verb paradigm*

	Non-final	Final	Non-final	Final
1SG	béd-ia-a	béd-ia-k ^ʔ	wet-ia-a	wet-i-a-k ^{oʔ}
2SG	béd-ídu-ɔ	béd-ídu-k ^ʔ	wet-idi-o	wet-idu-k ^{oʔ}
3SG	béd-ú-ɔ	béd-ú-k ^ʔ	wet-u-o	wet-u-k ^o
1PL.EXC	béd-íma-a	béd-íma-k ^ʔ	wet-ima-a	wet-im-a-k ^{oʔ}
1PL.INC	béd-ísinɔ-ɔ	béd-ísinu-k ^ʔ	wet-isini-o	wet-isinu-k ^{oʔ}
2PL	béd-ítɔ-ɔ	béd-ítu-k ^ʔ	wet-iti-o	wet-itu-k ^{oʔ}
3PL	béd-ínɪ	béd-ín	wet-ini	wet-in
SPS	béd-ése	béd-és	wet-ese	wet-es ^{eʔ}

The following excerpt from a 3-person narrative serves to illustrate some of the morphological, syntactic, and discourse characteristics of chained sequential clauses. Note the sequential markers in bold print and the introductory temporal phrase *na kónító ódoue baratso* ‘One day, in the morning...’ that sets the temporal context for the clause chain that follows:

- (15) *Na konto odowue baratso,*
 [na = kón-ít-ó ódou-e barats-oó]_{ADV}
 CONJ = one-SING-INS day-GEN morning-INS
 One day, in the morning,

ipuo takaiak,
 [ip-u-**o** taká-fka-k^a]_{SEQ1}
 cast-3SG-SEQ shoe-ACC
 he cast (his) shoes (in divination),

eguo takaika ebak,
 [eg-u-**o** taká-fk-a éba-k^a]_{SEQ2}
 put-3SG-SEQ shoe-PL-NOM gun-ACC
 and the shoes made (the shape of) a gun,

ipuo nabo,
 [ip-u-**o** nabó]_{SEQ3}
 cast-3SG-SEQ again
 and he cast (them) again,

egini ebak.
 [eg-**ini** éba-k^a]_{SEQ4}
 put-SEQ gun-ACC
 and they made a gun.

The chained clauses in (15) carry no TAM information apart from the sequential aspect that shows the semantic relationship of sequentiality with

all preceding clauses, starting with the temporal NP *baratsoó* ‘in the morning’. What is not shown in (15) (for reasons of space) is that at the beginning of the narrative, the tense of the narrative is set in the remote past first of all with the adverbial phrase *kam-ɔ = nɔɔ lopiarié* ‘In the year of Lopiar,...’, in which the relative pronoun *nɔɔ* marks remote past tense.

The clause chain in (15) is taken from a narrative, but sequential clauses are also found in other texts, for example one with an imperative controller:

(16) *Kae Kaabɔŋik,*

[ká-e kaabɔŋi-k^e]_{IMP}

go-IMP.SG Kaabong-DAT

Go to Kaabong,

dzigweiduo riy,

[dzígw-e-idú-ɔ ri-^a]_{SEQ1}

buy-VEN-2SG-SEQ goat-NOM

buy a goat,

deiduo awak,

[d-é-ídu-o awá-k^e]_{SEQ2}

bring-VEN-2SG-SEQ home-DAT

bring (it) home,

toŋoliduk,

[toŋól-ídu-k^ɔ]_{SEQ3}

slaughter-2SG-SEQ

slaughter (it),

ilakasitukodukoo jak.

[ilák-ás-it-ɔkɔ-ídu-kɔ = ɔ ják-^a]_{SEQ4}

happy-ABST-CAUS-COMP-2SG = DP elders-NOM

and make the elders happy with it.

The sequential impersonal passive (SPS; §7.9.4) is found in the same types of discourse as the non-passive sequential forms. Like the impersonal passive (§7.9.3), the SPS omits and depersonalizes the subject (A/S) of the verb to which it affixes. It is found on both transitive and intransitive verbs, as in *ηκ-es* ‘And it is/was eaten’ and *κε-es* ‘It is/was gone (i.e. ‘people went’)’.

The following excerpt from an expository/procedural text illustrates the use of the suffix {-εσε} encoding sequential passivized activities. In this text, part of the procedure for grinding snuff tobacco (a favorite among the Ik) is laid out in a step-by-step sequence. The agent carrying out the procedure is not in view, though all sequential verbs in this excerpt are transitive. In lines 2, 4, 6 & 7, the objects of the passivized verbs are overt, encoded as subjects in the nominative case. In line 5, they are left implicit:

- (17) 1 *Naa iryametanie gwasak,*
 [náá iryám-ét-an-í-é gwasá-k^e]_{ADV}
 CONJ get-VEN-IPS-SIML stone-DAT
 When a stone is gotten,
- 2 *ηweese nabalarjit.*
 [ηυ-εσε nabálarjit-^a]_{SEQ1}
 grind-SPS soda.ash-NOM
 soda ash is ground.
- 3 *Naa nabalarjitia iwidiimetik,*
 [náá nabálarjití-á iwíd-ím-et-i-k^e]_{ADV}
 CONJ soda.ash-ACC pulverize-MID-INCH-3SG-SIML
 When the soda ash is finely ground,
- 4 *egesee lotob,*
 [eg-esé=e lótób-^a]_{SEQ2}
 put-SPS = DP tobacco-NOM
 tobacco is put in it,

- 5 *nda ηweese paka napudumukotuk,*
 [ńda ηu-εεe páka napúǵ-úm-ukot-u-k^o]_{SEQ3}
 and grind-SPS until powdery-PHYS2-COMP-3SG-SEQ
 and it's ground until it becomes powdery,
- 6 *ikakeese dakwin,*
 [íkáké-εεe dakw-in-∅]_{SEQ4}
 separate-SPS wood-POSS.PL-NOM
 and its woody stems are separated out,
- 7 *ogweese nayaa napudim,*
 [ógo-εεe nay-á napúǵ-úm-∅]_{SEQ5}
 leave-SPS where-NOM powdery-PHYS2-REAL
 and the powdery part is left,
- 8 *nda ipapeesi cuo misi mes.*
 [ńda ipápé-éśi cu-o mísi mes-[?]]_{NORMALIZED COMPL}
 and moisten-SPS water-INS either beer-INS
 and it is moistened with either water or beer.

As (17) shows, sequential clause chains can be interrupted and reinitiated by adverbial clauses expressing simultaneity, marked by the conjunction *náá*. Such clauses encode temporality relative to the sequential clauses that follow them, not the absolute temporality set by the controlling clause.

On a continuum between coordination and subordination, sequential clauses are more coordinative. This is reflected syntactically in their invariable VSO constituent order and canonical case marking, both characteristics of unmarked main clauses. The next examples—the first a non-past realis clause and the second a sequential clause—both have VAO order with nominative-marked subjects and accusative-marked objects:

- (18) *Ceesa ntsa riyek.* *Ceyoo ntsa riyek.*
 cɛ-ɛs-á_v nts-a_A rié-k^a_o cɛ-I-ɔ_v nts-a_A rié-k^a_o
 kill-INT-REAL he-NOM goat-ACC kill-3S-SEQ he-NOM goat-ACC
 He'll kill the goat. And he killed the goat.

At the same time, chained sequential clauses are subordinate to, or dependent on, a preceding TAM-specifying element. In that sense, they are subordinate—but at a supra-clausal rather than intra-clausal level.

10.2.2 Simultaneous clause chains

Simultaneous clause chains communicate circumstances cooccurring with the event or state in the preceding clause. The preceding, controlling clause can be any kind of clause: realis, sequential, imperative, or even another simultaneous clause. The simultaneous marker is the suffix {-kɛ} attached to the underlying (irrealis) forms of the subject-agreement suffixes. The following table shows this in paradigms for *béd-* ‘want’ and *wet-* ‘drink’:

(19) *Simultaneous verb paradigm*

	Non-final	Final	Non-final	Final
1SG	béd-í-kɛ	béd-í-k ^e	wet-í-kɛ	wet-í-k ^e
2SG	béd-ídi-ɛ	béd-ídi-k ^e	wet-ídi-ɛ	wet-ídi-k ^e
3SG	béd-í-ɛ	béd-í-k ^e	wet-i-ɛ	wet-i-k ^e
1PL.EXC	béd-ími-ɛ	béd-ími-k ^e	wet-ími-ɛ	wet-ími-k ^e
1PL.INC	béd-ísini-ɛ	béd-ísini-k ^e	wet-ísini-ɛ	wet-ísini-k ^e
2PL	béd-íti-ɛ	béd-íti-k ^e	wet-íti-ɛ	wet-íti-k ^e
3PL	béd-áti-ɛ	béd-áti-k ^e	wet-áti-ɛ	wet-áti-k ^e

As seen in (19), the simultaneous verb paradigm is all regular, apart from the non-final 1SG form which contains the final form of {-kɛ}. This is because the non-final form would create a dispreferred tri-vowel sequence.

Non-finite simultaneous verbs appear in both a) preposed adverbial clauses introduced by a conjunction and b) post-posed chained clauses without a conjunction. It is only the latter type that is considered a chained clause, though both types are common in discourse. In the following excerpt from the same narrative sampled above (15), both types of simultaneous clauses are present, but only the chained clauses are indicated with bold print:

(20) *Na ηabuƙotie, zikini ntsia deikao,*

[na = ηáb-ókɔt-I-ε]_{ADV} [zík-ínI ntsí-á de-ika-³]_{SEQ}
 CONJ = finish-COMP-3SG-SIML tie-SEQ he-ACC leg-PL-ABL

When it finished, they tied him up by the legs,

nda xikesukoti ntsie dakuk,

[nda ʃík-és-ókɔtI ntsí-é dakú-k^e]_{NOMINALIZED}
 and hang-INF-AND[OBL] he-GEN tree-DAT

and they hung him in a tree,

ikaa iyie kijee

[iká-á i-i-e kǐjé-e]_{SIML1}
 head-ACC be-3SG-SIML ground-DAT

his heading (being) down,

tudúlik.

[tudú-l-í-k^e]_{SIML2}
 upside.down-3SG-SIML
 (being) upside down.

In (20), the first chained simultaneous clause, *ikáá iie kǐjée* ‘his head (being) down’ is controlled by the directly preceding clause with the nominalized verb *ʃíkésukɔt^e*. The second chained clause, *tudúlik^e*, consists only of the verb and is controlled by the simultaneous clause directly preceding it.

On a continuum between coordination and subordination, simultaneous clauses fall closer to subordination. This is evident syntactically in that a) they exhibit the SVO constituent order of other subordinate clauses and b) any overt core arguments, regardless of the grammatical person and number of the subject, take the accusative case as in other subordinate clauses. The third line from (20) is repeated in (21) to illustrate these points. Note that the constituent order is SV, and the overt subject, *ikáá* ‘head’ is both preverbal and marked in the accusative case:

- (21) ...*ikaa iyie kijee*,
iká-á_s i-i-e_v kǐjé-e_{PERIPHERAL}
 head-ACC be-3SG-SIML ground-DAT
 ...(his) head (being) down,

The subordinate nature of simultaneous chained clauses is also seen discursively in that they take the sequence of events temporarily ‘offline’. For example, in a narrative, they interrupt the mainline to provide contextual details like the fact that the guy’s head was hanging down, upside-down. To get back to the mainline sequence, a pre-posed simultaneous clause is often used. This occurs a few lines later in the story of (20), after the man’s wife got worried and went to look for him:

- (22) *Na kayie, itayoo amee ineenosik.*
 [na = ka-i-e]_{ADV} ita-I-ɔ́ ámé-e [inénó-ós-í-k^e]_{SIML}
 CONJ = go-3SG-SIML reach-3SG-SEQ person-DAT hang-PASS-3SG-SIML
 When she went, she found the guy hanging.

Lastly, chained simultaneous clauses may function in specific ways: as adverbial manner clauses (§9.6.2), as one of the complementation strategies (§9.11.2), and in bi-clausal comparative constructions (§9.13.2). These three functions are reiterated here with one example each. In (23), the simultaneous clause relates the manner in which a fire climbed up a hill:

- (23) *Toriteta naa ts'ad,*
 totir-et-a = náa ts'ad^a
 climb-VEN-REAL = PST1 fire-NOM
 The fire climbed up

nkie dakwitiniicikaa muj.

[ŋk-r-ε dakw-itíni-iciká-a muj]_{SIML}
 eat-COMP-3SG-SIML tree-PL-VAR.PL-ACC all
 consuming all the various types of trees.

In this second example, the chained simultaneous clause acts as a complement to the main verb *itámáán-* 'behoove/necessitate':

- (24) *Itamaana*
 itámáán-a
 necessitate-REAL
 It is necessary (that)

bedetiike koneenia awee bik.

[bécf-ét-íí-ke kóní-éní-a awé-é bi-k^e]_{SIML}
 want-VEN-1SG-SIML one-PSSM-ACC home-GEN you.SG-DAT
 I look for another home for you.

And in this last example, the chained simultaneous clause acts as an adverbial manner clause in a bi-clausal comparative construction:

- (25) *Kwatsa ntsa iloyee ncik.*
 kwáts-á nts-a [iló-í-é jíci-k^a]_{SIML}
 small-REAL he-NOM defeat-3SG-SIML I-ACC
 He's smaller than me.