A grammar of Konso

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9. Basic syntax

This chapter presents word order in noun phrases and simple sentences. It also treats verbless sentences and contains information on both comparatives and equative sentences. The comparative sentences are first discussed, followed by the discussion about equatives. Finally, we examine relative clauses.

9.1. Word order

9.1.1. Word order in noun phrases

A noun phrase may consist of just a noun. The following are illustrative examples:

(1a) **kumayta**
stick
'a stick'

(1b) **tapayta**
rat
'a rat'

(1c) **iskatta**
women
'women'

(1d) **ɠimayaa**
old.men
'old men'

A noun phrase may consist of a head noun and a definite suffix as shown in (2).

(2a) **kuta-siʔ**
dog-DEF.M/F
'the dog'

(2b) **orra-siʔ**
people-DEF.M/F
'the people'

(2c) **kaharraa-siniʔ**
sheep-DEF.P
'the sheep'

(2d) **ʕoraa-siniʔ**
trees-DEF.P
'the trees'

A noun phrase can also be formed from a noun and a demonstrative suffix. For instance, the demonstrative suffix **-osiʔ** occurs with the noun **tika** 'house' in (3a), and the demonstrative suffix **-osiniʔ** occurs with the noun **ɗillaa** 'fields' in (3b).

(3a) **tikoosiʔ**
tika-osiʔ
house-DEM.M/F
'this house'

(3b) **ɗilloosiniʔ**
ɗillaa-osiniʔ
fields-DEM.P
'these fields'

A noun phrase may contain a head noun with possessive suffixes, as shown in (4).

(4a) **tika-awu**
house-1SG.POSS.M/F
'my house'

(4b) **fillaa-ssu**
comb-3PL.POSS.P
'their comb'

(4c) **χormaɗaassin**
oxen-2PL.POSS.P
'your oxen'

Indefinite head nouns modified by attributive adjectives contain a relative particle **a**, as in (5a-b). Such noun phrases may be followed by a quantifier, as in (5c-d).

(5a) **nama a ɗer-a**
person REL be.tall-SG
'a tall person'
(lit.: 'a person who is tall')

(5b) **hellaa a ɗeɗ-ɗer-aaʔ**
children REL PL-be.tall-P
'tall children'
(lit.: 'children who are tall')

(5c) **ɠoyra a ɗer-a tokka**
tree REL be.tall-S one
'a tall tree'
(lit.: 'a tree which is tall')

(5d) **ɠoraa a ɗeɗɗeraal lakki**
ɠoraa a ɗeɗ-ɗer-aaʔ lakki
trees REL PL-be.tall-P two
'two tall trees'
(lit.: 'two trees which are tall')

In noun phrases composed of a head noun and a quantifier, the word order is head noun followed by quantifiers. When numerals higher than one are used as quantifiers, singulative nouns are used in the noun phrases, as in (6a-b). In noun phrases, plurative nouns may occur with numerals higher than one as in (6c-d).

(6a) **tika lakki**
house two
'two houses'

(6b) **nama ken**
person five
'five people'

(6c) **χorma-ɗaa leh**
ox-PL six
'six oxen'

(6d) **kahar-raa afur**
sheep-PL four
'four sheep'

The use of the singulative noun **nama** 'person' in the context of noun phrases quantified with numerals higher than one is special in that its suppletive plural form **orra** 'persons, people' is never used with numeral quantifiers, as the ungrammaticality of (7b) illustrates.

(7a) **nama ken=in akk-ay**
person five=1 see-PF[3M]
'I saw five people.'

(7) ***orra ken=in akk-ay**
people five=1 see-PF[3M]
(intended: 'I saw five people.')

Interestingly, both **nama** 'person' and **orra** 'persons, people' may occur with such quantifiers as **lamayta** 'some.M' as shown in (8).

(8a) **nama lamaytaa aytulaa ca**
nama *lamayta=i* *ayetulaa* *kiy-a*
person some.M=3 out.there be-IPF.FUT
'There are some people out there.'

(8b) **orra lamaytaa aytulaa ca**
orra *lamayta=i* *aye-tulaa* *kiy-a*
persons some.M=3 out.there be-IPF.FUT
'There are some people out there.'

The quantifier **piisa** 'all' may occur together with numerals in noun phrases. The order is that the numeral precedes the quantifier. Here is an example:

(9) **antih hellaasinik ken piisan akkay**
anti-ʔ *hellaa-siniʔ* *ken*
1SG.PRO-NOM children-DEF.P five

piisa=in *akk-ay*
all=1 see-PF[3M]
'I saw all five children.'

9.1.2. Word order in simple sentences

In simple sentences with intransitive verbs and overt subjects, the word order is that the subject precedes the verb as in (10a-b). In simple sentences with overt subject and overt object, the word order is subject—object—verb as in (10c-d).

(10a) **iʃeennaχ χala idɛʔti**
iʃeenna-ʔ *χala* *i=dɛy-t-i*
3SGF.PRO-NOM yesterday 3=come-3F-PF
'She came yesterday.'

(10b) **inuʔ ʔinhirra**
inu-ʔ *in=hir-n-a*
1PL.PRO-NOM 1=run[PL]-1PL-IPF.FUT
'We will run.'

(10c) **iʃaʕ ʕoyrasiʔ ʔimuray**
iʃa-ʔ *ʕoyra-siʔ* *i=mur-ay*
3SGM.PRO-NOM tree-DEF.M/F 3=cut[SG]-PF[3M]
'He cut the tree.'

(10d) **attil lahasiʔ ʔikkatti**
atti-ʔ *laha-siʔ* *iʔ=kat-t-i*
2SG.PRO-NOM ram-DEF.M/F 1=sell-2-PF
'You (SG) sold the ram.'

The above simple sentences may occur without the overt subjects, in which case the subjects are understood from the type of the subject clitic and the gender agreement marker on the verb. The sentences in (10a) and (10c) are repeated below as (11a) and (11b) without the subject noun.

(11a) **χala iʤeʔti**
χala **i=ʤey-t-i**
yesterday 3=come-3F-PF
'She came yesterday.'

(11b) **ʕoyrasiʔ ʔimuray**
ʕoyra-siʔ *i=mur-ay*
tree-DEF.M/F 3=cut[SG]-PF[3M]
'He cut the tree.'

Below, I show different word orders that are possible, without discussing the meaning differences. For example, the SV word order in (10a), repeated here as (12a), has the VS order in (12b). The examples in (12c-f) have the same constituents but differ in the order of those constituents: (12c) has SOV word order, (12d) has SVO word order, (12e) has VSO word order, and (12f) has OVS word order. VOS and OSV word orders are also possible, though I do not show them here. Further research is needed to determine the functional differences of these word order variants.

(12a) **iʃeennaχ χala iʤeyti**
iʃeenna-ʔ *χala* *i=ʤey-t-i*
3SGF.PRO-NOM yesterday 3=come-3F-PF
'She came.'

(12b) idɐʔti iʃeennaχ χala

i=dɐ̀y-t-i	*iʃeenna-ʔ*	*χala*
3=come-3F-PF	3SGF.PRO-NOM	yesterday

'She came.'

(12c) iʃaʕ ʕoyrasiʔ ʔimuray

iʃa-ʔ	*ʕoyra-siʔ*	*i=mur-ay*
3SGM.PRO-NOM	tree-DEF.M/F	3=cut[SG]-PF[3M]

'He cut the tree.'

(12d) iʃaʔ ʔimuray ʕoyrasiʔ

iʃaʔ	*i=mur-ay*	*ʕoyrasiʔ*
3SGM.PRO-NOM	3=cut[SG]-PF[3M]	tree-DEF.M/F

'He cut the tree.'

(12e) imuray iʃaʕ ʕoyrasiʔ

i=mur-ay	*iʃa-ʔ*	*ʕoyra-siʔ*
3=cut[SG]-PF[3M]	3SGM.PRO-NOM	tree-DEF.M/F

'He cut the tree.'

(12f) ʕoyrasiʔ ʔimuray ʔiʃaʔ

ʕoyra-siʔ	*imur-ay*	*iʃa-ʔ*
tree-DEF.M/F	3=cut[SG]-PF[3M]	3SGM.PRO-NOM

'He cut the tree.'

Simple sentences may occur with temporal adverbs such as χala 'yesterday' and parre 'tomorrow'. Such temporal adverbs are not restricted in their position. They may occur sentence initially as in (13a), between the subject and object as in (13b), between the object and the verb as in (13c) or sentence final as in (13d).

(13a) χala ʕimaytasik karmaa iʔiʃʃay

χala	*ʕimayta-siʔ*	*karmaa*	*i=iʃʃ-ay*
yesterday	old.man-DEF.M/F	lion	3=kill-PF[3M]

'Yesterday the old man killed a lion.'

(13b) ʕimaytasiχ χala karmaa iʔiʃʃay

ʕimayta-siʔ	*χala*	*karmaa*	*i=iʃʃ-ay*
old.man-DEF.M/F	yesterday	lion	3=kill-PF[3M]

'Yesterday the old man killed a lion.'

(13c) ʕimaytasiχ karmaa χala iʔiʃʃay

ʕimayta-siʔ	*karmaa*	*χala*	*i=iʃʃ-ay*
old.man-DEF.M/F	lion	yesterday	3=kill-PF[3M]

'The old man killed a lion yesterday.'

(13d) ɠimaytasiχ karmaa iʔiʃʃay χala
ɠimayta-siʔ *karmaa* *i=ʔiʃʃ-ay* *χala*
old.man-DEF.M/F lion 3=kill-PF[3M] yesterday
'The old man killed a lion yesterday.'

9.2. Verbless sentences

The predicate of a sentence can be a verb, noun, adjective or adverb. Verbless sentences may contain nouns that express a profession as in (14a) or a place of origin as in (14b-c).

(14a) antiʔ ʔanʔakimitta
anti-ʔ *an=akim-itta*
1SG.PRO-NOM 1=treat.patient-3SGM
'I am a physician.'

(14b) namasiʃ ʃiraatitta
nama-siʔ *ʃiraat-itta*
man-DEF.M/F Dirashe-3SGM
'The man is a Diraʃitta.'

(14c) iʃeenaʔ ʔakimtteeta
iʃeena-ʔ *akim-tteeta*
3SGF.PRO-NOM treat.patient-3SGF
'She is a physician.'

(14d) iʃinaʔ ʔaʔʔakimiyyaa
iʃina-ʔ *aʔ=akim-iyyaa*
2PL.PRO-NOM 2=treat.patient-P
'(You (SG)) are physicians.'

(14e) orroosik kawwaaɗaa
orra-osiʔ *kawwaaɗaa*
people-DEM.M/F Gawwada
'These people are Gawwada.'

Verbless sentences may also be formed from temporal adverbs. The nominative suffix -ʔ is added to names of the days of the week. Here are some examples:

(15a) awwi palawwa
today Saturday
'Today is Saturday.'

(15b) χala lankayya
yesterday Tuesday
'Yesterday was Tuesday.'

(15c) palawwaʔ ʔawwi
palawwa-ʔ *awwi*
Saturday-NOM today
'Today is Saturday.'

Temporal adverbs and question words such as **ayʃa** 'where?' and **aytamu** 'when?' also form verbless sentences, as shown in (16).

(16a) awwi ayʃa
today where
'What is the day today?'
(lit.: Where is today?)

(16b) palawwaʔ ʔaytamu
palawwa-ʔ *aytamu*
Saturday-NOM when
'When is Saturday?'

Verbless sentences can also be formed from numerals with possessor nouns, as shown below.

(17a) hellaa-ssu lakki
children-3PL.POSS.P two
'They have two children.'
(lit.: 'Their children are two.')

(17b) ɗillaa-yyu sessa
fields-1SG.POSS.P three
'I have three fields.'
(lit.: 'My fields are three.')

Furthermore, verbless sentences may be formed from demonstrative pronouns and other nominals, as illustrated in (18).

(18a) seɗi tika-awu
this house-1SG.POSS.M/F
'This is my house.'

(18b) seni pinaanaa
these wild.animals
'These are wild animals.'

9.3. Comparative and equative sentences

A comparative construction is expressed by the postposition ɢara 'on' and the verb root ɢap- 'to have'. ɢara ɢap- is a phrase used for 'to exceed'. The following are illustrative examples.

(19a) **Apittuɖ ɖerumaak Kappooli ɢara iɢapa**

Apittu-ʔ	*ɖer-umaa-ʔ*	*Kappooli*
Apittu-NOM	be.tall-ABS-DAT	Kappooli

ɢara	*i=ɢap-a*
on	3=exceed-IPF.FUT

'Apittu is taller than Kappoole.'
(lit.: 'Apitto exceeds Kappoole for tallness.')

(19b) **lahasik kappumaaɢ ɢolpasiɢ ɢara iɢapa**

laha-sik	*kapp-umaa-ʔ*	*ɢolpa-siʔ*
ram-DEF.M/F	be.fat-ABS-DAT	he-goat-DEF.M/F

ɢara	*i=ɢap-a*
on	3=exceed-IPF.FUT

'The ram is fatter than the he-goat.'
(lit.: The ram exceeds the he-goat for fatness.)

Equative sentences are expressed by a construction in which the equated element is the subject, the entity to which it is equated receives the postposition **minaʔ** 'in front of (facing)' and the value of comparison is expressed in a predicative adjective or a (derived) abstract noun plus the dative and a verb 'to be'. The equated element may be a pronoun (20a), an independent possessive pronoun (20b) or a noun preceded by a genitive (20c).

(20a) **inantasiʔ ʔiʃa minaʔe ɖerumaak kitta**

inanta-siʔ	*ʔiʃa*	*minaʔ=i*	*ɖer-umaa-ʔ*
girl-DEF.M/F	he	in.front.of=3	be.tall-ABS-DAT

kiy-t-a
be-3F-IPF.FUT

'The girl is as tall as he is.'

(20b) **inantasiχ χayya minaʔe ɖeri**

inanta-siʔ	*χayya*	*minaʔ=i*	*ɖer-i*
girl-DEF.M/F	mine	in.front.of=3	be.tall-PF

'The girl is as tall as I am.'

(20c) **simmintoosiʔ ʔa ɗakaam minaʔee kokkooki**

simmintoota-asiʔ	*ʔa*	*ɗakaá-ʔ*	*minaʔ=i*
cement-DEM.SG	GEN	stone-GEN	in.front.of=3

kokkook-i
be.strong-PF
'This (mixed) cement is as strong as stone.'

A noun may precede the genitive particle which, in turn, is followed by a possessive pronoun as in (21).

(21) **inantaasiʔ ʔa χayya minaʔe ɗeri**

inanta-asiʔ	*a*	*χayya*	*minaʔ=i*	*ɗer-i*
girl-DEM.SG	GEN	mine	in.front.of=3	be.tall-PF

'The girl is as tall as I am.'

9.4. Relative clauses

Relative clauses follow their head noun. Except for a definite head noun in subject relative clauses, the head noun is marked by the relative particle **ʔa**. In subject relative clauses in which the head noun is definite, there are no subject clitics. The head noun is never represented in the relative clause by a pronoun. Moreover, there is no marking of the end of the relative clause. Special verb forms are used in relative clauses. These special forms mark gender and/or number and vary with respect to aspect. For example, in the present imperfective, first person singular and third person singular masculine add **-yo**; plurals of all persons and single nouns with plural gender value add **-yaaʔ**; second person singular, third person singular feminine and nouns that show third feminine gender agreement marker on the verb add **-ttu**. These forms are added after the present imperfective suffix **-ni**. The special forms are followed by the cleft construction marker (see also Section 3.5). The following are illustrative examples:

(22a) **ana a urmalaapa anniyoó iʃa akkay**

ana	*a*	*urmalaa-opa*
1SG.PRO.ACC	REL	market-to

an-ni-yo-ó	*iʃa*
go-IPF.PRES-1SG/3SGM-CLF	3SGM.PRO.ACC

akk-ay
see-PF[3M]
'It's me who was going to the market who saw him.'

(22b) **iʃoonna a urmalaapa anniyaaʔé iʃa akkay**
iʃoonna *a* *urmalaa-opa*
2PL.PRO.ACC REL market-to

an-ni-yaaʔ-é *iʃa*
go-IPF.PRES-P-CLF 3SGM.PRO.ACC

akk-ay
see-PF[3M]
'It's you (PL) who went to the market and saw him.'

(22c) **iʃeenna a urmalaapa annittoó iʃa akkay**
iʃeenna *a* *urmalaa-opa*
3SGF.PRO.ACC REL market-to

an-ni-ttu-ó *iʃa* *akk-ay*
go-IPF.PRES-P-CLF 3SGM.PRO.ACC see-PF[3M]
'It's her who went to the market and saw him.'

It is also common for first person singular to add **-ttu** in the present imperfective.

In the future imperfective, except second person plural and third person plural, the remaining persons replace the future imperfective marker **-a** with **-u**. The second person plural, the third person plural and single reference nouns with plural gender value add **-aʔ** to the future imperfective suffix. Here are some examples:

(23a) **antiʔ ʔinantasiʔ ʔurmalaapa antun upa**
anti-ʔ *ʔinanta-siʔ* *urmalaa-opa*
1SG.PRO-NOM girl-DEF.M/F market-to

an-t-u=in *up-a*
go-3F-1SG/1PL/2SG/3SGM/3SGF=1 know-IPF.FUT
'I know the girl who will go to the market.'

(23b) **antit tuparraasiniʔ ʔurmalaapa anaaʔ ʔinupa**
anti-ʔ *tuparraa-siniʔ* *urmalaa-opa*
1SG.PRO-NOM girl-DEF.M/F market-to

an-aaʔ *in=up-a*
go-P 1=know-IPF.FUT
'I know the girls who will go to the market.'

In the perfective, except the second person singular and third person singular feminine, the remaining persons have the third person masculine perfective suffix -ay. All plural persons add -eeʔ after -ay. The second person singular and third person singular feminine have the perfective marker -i. The following are demonstrative examples.

(24a) **hellaasiniχ χala hirayeeʔin akkay**
hellaa-siniʔ *χala* *hir-ay-eeʔ=in*
children-DEF.P yesterday run[PL]-PF[3M]-P=1

akk-ay
see-PF[3M]
'I saw the children who ran yesterday.'

(24b) **innaasiniχ χala ɗeyayeeʔin akkay**
innaa-siniʔ *χala* *ɗey-ay-eeʔ=in*
children-DEF.P yesterday come-PF[3M]-P=1

akk-ay
see-PF[3M]
'I saw the child who came yesterday.'

(24c) **inanta a ɗeʔti iɗeri**
inanta *a* *ɗey-t-i* *i=ɗer-i*
girl REL come-3F-PF 3=be.tall-PF
'The girl who came is tall.'

In the subsequent subsections, I discuss word order in relative clauses, subject relative clauses, non-subject relative clauses and headless relative clauses.

9.4.1. Word order in relative clauses

In relative clauses with indefinite antecedent, the word order is that the head noun is followed by the relative particle ʔa. The relative particle is followed by the object, which, in turn, is followed by the verb as in (25a). With definite subjects, the head noun is followed by the object, which is, in turn, followed by the verb as in (25b). Note that despite the English translation in (25a), the head noun is indefinite.

(25a) **nama a sawwi ɠaarɠaar-ay i=ɗey-ay**
person REL Sawwe help-PF[3M] 3=come-PF[3F]
'The person who helped Sawwe came.'

(25b) **nama-siʔ sawwi ɠaarɠaar-ay**
person-DEF.M/F Sawwe help-PF[3M]

i = ʤey-ay
3 = come-PF[3M]
'The person who helped Sawwe came.'

In subject relative clauses, the word order is strict. For example, any reordering of the contituents of the example in (25a) yields unacceptable sentences, as in (26): (26a) is unacceptable because the relative particle occurs clause-initially. Similarly, sentence (26b) is unacceptable because the relative particle comes after the object noun **sawwe** (proper name); (26c) is unacceptable since the verb is moved from its clause-final position; (26d) is unacceptable because the object of the relative clause precedes the definite head noun.

(26a) ***a nama sawwe ʕaarʕaar-ay i = ʤey-ay**
REL person Sawwe help-PF[3M] 3 = come-PF[3M]
(intended: 'The person who helped Sawwe came.')

(26b) ***nama sawwe a ʕaarʕaar-ay i = ʤey-ay**
person Sawwe REL help-PF[3M 3 = come-PF[3M]
(intended: 'The person who helped Sawwe came.')

(26c) ***a ʕaarʕaar-ay nama sawwe i = ʤey-ay**
REL help-PF[3M] person Sawwe 3 = come-PF[3M]
(intended: 'The person who helped Sawwe came.')

(26d) ***sawwe namasiʔ ʕaarʕaaray iʤeyay**
**sawwe* *nama-siʔ* *ʕaarʕaar-ay*
sawwe person-DEF.M/F help-PF[3M]

i = ʤey-ay
3 = come-PF[3M]
(intended: 'The person who helped sawwe came.')

In object relative clauses, the reordering of the subject and object is needed. In (27a), we have a subject relative clause but an object relative clause in (27b).

(27a) **hellaasiniʔ ʕolpasiʔ ʔiʃʃayeeʔ ʔiʕaʔʕapamin**
hellaa-siniʔ *ʕolpa-siʔ*
children-DEF.P he-goat-DEF.M/F

ʔiʃʃ-ay-eeʔ *i = ʕaʔ-ʕap-am-i-n*
kill-PF[3M]-P 3 = PL-catch-PAS-PF-P
'The children who killed the he-goat were caught.'

(27b) ʕolpaytasee a hellaasiniʔ ʔiʃʃin iʕalamay
ʕolpayta-si=i *ʔa* *hellaa-sini?* *ʔiʃʃ-i-n*
he-goat-DEF.M/F=3 REL children-DEF.P kill-PF-P

i=ʕal-am-ay
3=slaughter-PAS-PF[3M]
'The he-goat that the children killed was slaughtered.'

9.4.2. Subject relative clauses

In subject relative clauses, the head noun is the subject of the relative clause. Subject relative clauses can be headed by a definite head noun (28a-b) or an indefinite head noun (28c-d).

(28a) filaasinip patayeeʔ ʔiteyaɗin
filaa-sini? *pat-ay-ee?*
comb-DEF.P be.lost-PF[3M]-P

i=teyaɗ-i-n
3=find.MID-PF-P
'The comb that went missing was found.'

(28b) orrasiʕ ʕoraa ʕuuray iɗeyay
orra-si? *ʕoraa* *ʕuur-ay*
people-DEF.M/F trees cut[PL]-PF[3M]

i=ɗey-ay
3=come-PF[3M]
'The people who cut trees came.'

(28c) tika a palɗ-aʔ i=paʕaar-i
house REL be.wide-M/F 3=be.good-PF
'A house that is wide is good.'

(28d) orra a ʕoraa ʕuur-ay i=ɗey-ay
people REL trees cut[PL]-PF[3M] 3=come-PF[3M]
'People who cut trees came.'

9.4.3. Non-subject relative clauses

In non-subject relative clauses, the head noun is not the subject of the clause. In such relative clauses, the object of the verb can be relativised. In (29) the object ʔokkatta 'cow' is relativised as a definite object head noun (29a) and as an indefinite head noun in (29b).

(29a) **antiʔ ʔokkattasik katamayin akkay**
anti-ʔ *okkatta-siʔ* *kat-am-ay=in* *akk-ay*
1SG.PRO-NOM cow-DEF.M/F sell-PAS-PF[3M]=1 see-[3M]
'I saw the cow that was sold.'

(29b) **antiʔ ʔokkatta a katamayin akkay**
anti-ʔ *okkatta* *a* *kat-am-ay=in*
1SG.PRO-NOM cow REL sell-PAS-PF[3M]=1

akk-ay
see-[3M]
'I saw a cow that was sold.'

In non-subject relative clauses, the object of the dative can also be relativised. In (30a), object noun in the dative phrase **konfa** 'shorts' is relativised. In (30b), (irrespective of the English translation) the indefinite dative object **ohta** 'blanket' is relativised.

(30a) **konfaseen kappoolip pidday ikeray**
konfa-siʔ *a=in* *kappoole-ʔ*
shorts-DEF.M/F REL=1 kappoole-DAT

pidd-ay *i=ker-ay*
buy[SG]-PF[3M] 3=be.old-PF[3M]
'The shorts that I bought for Kappoole got worn out.'

(30b) *ohta ak kantoolid daassi ʔbaldi*
ohta *a=iʔ* *kantoole-ʔ* *daaʃ-t-i* *i=bald-i*
blanket REL=2 kantoole-DAT give-2-PF 3=be.wide-PF
'The blanket that you (SG) gave to Kantoole was wide.'

In non-subject clauses, the object of the postposition can be relativised, as in (31).

(31) **ɠoyraseen ɠaraa luukkata pohay imuramay**
ɠoyra-siʔ=in *ɠaraa* *luukkata*
tree-DEF.M/F=1 on fruit

poh-ay *i=mur-am-ay*
harvest-PF[3M] 3=cut[SG]-PAS-PF[3M]
'The tree that I picked the fruits from was cut.'

9.4.4. Headless relative clauses

Headless relative clauses are characterised by not having overt head nouns. This is shown in the following examples:

(32a) **an iʃa akkinu male anɗeʔnu**

a = in	*iʃa*	*akki-n-u*
REL = 1	3SGM.PRO[ACC]	see-1PL-NEG.IPF.FUT

male	*an = ɗey-n-u*
without	1NEG = come-1PL-NEG.IPF.FUT

'Unless we see him, we shall not come (back).'

(32b) **aa inun akkin male inɗeyan**

a = i	*inu = in*	*akk-n*
REL = 3	1PL.PRO[ACC] = 3NEG	see-P

male	*in = ɗey-a-n*
without	3NEG = come-IPF.FUT-P

'Unless they see us, they will not come (back).'