A grammar of Mundabli : a Bantoid (Yemne-Kimbi) language of Cameroon
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Other word classes

This chapter deals with all those word classes which have not been dealt with in the preceding chapters: adverbs (§10.1), adpositions (§10.2), temporal deictics (§10.3), spatial deictics (§10.4), ideophones (§10.5), the interjections 'yes' and 'no' (§10.6) and other interjections (§10.7).

10.1 Adverbs

This section deals exclusively with clause-final manner adverbs which are introduced by the adverbial marker ǎ. In certain cases, manner can also be expressed by serial verb constructions (§9.1.4). Furthermore, there is a second type of adverbs called verbal adverbs. They are dealt with in §9.4. Finally, ideophones may also fulfill the function of manner adverbs. Ideophones are treated in §10.5.

Manner adverbs modify the meaning of the verb (cf. Givón (1984: 77,78)). They always occur in clause-final position, introduced by the particle ǎ which is glossed 'ADVLZ' and may also introduce adverbial phrases. Clause-final manner adverbs are usually derived. They may be based on adjectives or they may be based on reduplicated monosyllabic stems, mostly of unclear origin, as in (395). The tonal pattern of manner adverbs with reduplicated stems is always Low - Low..

(395) m = bwán   mɨ́ gbə̄   ə́   lɔ̀~lɔ̀,   kɛ̌
       1SG = get_wounded(a) 1SG house.LOC ADVLZ empty~RED even
       n = kɔ́   tʃyé bɔ̀   nɨ́ŋ   nō̱   ń = lā   k-ɔ́   kɨ́
       1SG = HAB know(c) FRUST CL7.thing SUBORD 1SG = do(a) CL7-REL CL7

       'I got wounded in my house for no good reason. I don't even know
       what I had done.'

Monosyllabic adverbials may be repeated several times for emphasis, as in
(396). The repetition in this case is not to be confused with the reduplication
found in other adverbs. This is confirmed by the fact that the tone here is not
low, as in the latter (see above). The adverbial **dzú** in this example is probably
related to the postposition **dzō** 'under'.

(396) ǹ = kwúm   gān ə́   dzú dzú dzú,   ʃī
       1SG = creep(c) go(a) ADVLZ down down down CL3/7a.storm
       k-ɔ́   kọ́   ʃú   mī̱ ā   kē   ə́ká
       CL7a-DET catch(b).IPFV come(b).IPFV 1SG COM CL9/10.hand like
       kọ́   mbɛ̄
       catch(b).IPFV CL2.person

       'I crept [going] down [very low]. The storm was catching me with its
       hands as if it were people catching [me].'

The adverb **mọ̀~mọ̀** 'very much' (397) could be derived from the numeral
mọ̀ 'one', however, its synchronic meaning is not related to the numeral.

(397) wù sé   dzǽ   ə́   mọ̀~mọ̀
       CL1 be_hot(c) CL7.mouth ADVLZ one~RED

       'She is very active!' (Lit.: She is very hot in her mouth.)

10.2 Adpositions

Mundabli has prepositions and postpositions. However, postpositions far out-
number prepositions. Prepositions are discussed in §10.2.1 and postpositions
in §10.2.2.

10.2.1 Prepositions

There are only two prepositions: **ā** 'COM', which unites comitative and instru-
mental function and is roughly equivalent to English 'with' and the general
locative preposition **ɨ́**, which is usually optional and which always co-occurs in
combination with a more specific locative or benefactive postposition within a
circumpositional construction. In the examples, pre- and postpositions are un-
derlined and their NP complement is enclosed in square brackets. The preposi-
tions and their glosses and meanings are shown in Table 10.1. In the examples

in this section, pre- and postpositions are underlined and their NP complement is enclosed in square brackets.

preposition	gloss (meaning)
ā	'COM' ('with', comitative or instrumental)
ɨ́	'LOC' (general locative marker)

Table 10.1: The two prepositions with glosses and meanings

10.2.1.1   The comitative/ instrumental preposition ā 'with'

The preposition **ā with** heads a prepositional phrase and may have comitative or instrumental function. Class pronouns for noun classes other than Class 1 and 9, which normally bear a superhigh tone in non-preverbal position, are realized with a LH rising tone when they are the object of the comitative preposition, as in §6.1.3.

The comitative phrase usually stands at the end of a clause, as in (398) and (399), but exceptions are possible; see (400).

(398)   wù tʃú   ā   [mbɨ́],   bɔ̌ mú
        CL1 come(b) COM CL6.palm_wine CL2 drink(b)

        'He came with wine [and] they drank.'

(399)   mɔ̀   w-ɔ̄   yɨ́   ndʒɔ́mɲyīn ā   [kē   yɨ́]
        CL1.man CL1-DET eat(b) CL8.food   COM CL10.fingers CL10;3SG.POSS

        ◇'The man eats the food with his hand.'

(400)   ń=lɔ̀   ā   [mbɔ̀ŋ   mɨ́ŋ]   yɨ̀ŋ
        1SG=go_to_bush(a) COM CL1/2.cow(s) CL2;1SG.POSS CL1/2.bush

        'I am going to the bush with my cows.'

In (400), the comitative phrase directly follows the verb, preceding the locative adjunct **yɨ̀ŋ** 'bush'.

The preposition **ā** also occurs in a certain construction with a transitive verb. Here, the direct object represents the benefactor of the action and the preposition **ā** introduces the undergoer in the form of an oblique argument, as in (401).

(401)   yɛ̄   gǎn tsē   mɨ̄ ā   [ntsɔ́m   mū-ŋ-gɛ̄-ŋ-gɛ̄]
        COMP go(a) find(a) 1SG COM CL6a-soil CL6a-N-be_red-RED

        '...: Go and find me some red soil!'

The same may be expressed by a different construction in which the undergoer is the direct object and directly follows the verb while the recipient is embedded in a circumpositional construction with the general locative preposition ɨ́ preceding it and the dative postposition **lā** following it. For more on this construction, which is characteristic for the verb 'give', see §11.1.2.

10.2.1.2   The locative preposition ɨ́

The general locative preposition ɨ́ is always part of a circumpositional construction in which it co-occurs with a semantically more specific postposition. The postpositions with locative semantics which co-occur with the preposition ɨ́ include **wɔ̄** 'on' in (402) and **mɨ̄** 'in', and even derived postpositions, such as **sê** 'house_front.LOC' and the benefactive postposition **lā** 'for'; see (404) and (405). Its use is generally optional.

(402)   kɔ́   ŋ = kɔ́   kpɪ̌   f-án   bɛ̄n kɔ́   mū   tʃɨ́   ā
        COND   1SG = COND   die(b)   PROX-here   2PL COND   take(a)   come(b)   COM

        dʒám,   bɛ̄n kɔ́   mɨ̄   dʒɪ̀   ʃɪ̀   ɨ́
        CL7/8.calabash_plant   2PL COND   CONSEC   put(a)   go_down(a)   LOC

        [dzàm   ŋgɨ̄]   w̱ɔ̄
        CL9/10.grave   CL9;1SG.POSS   on

        'If I die here, you will bring a calabash seed, and then you will plant
        [it] on my grave.'

(403)   wù   dɔ̄   bɔ̄   kɔ̀ gɪ́   tɛ̄   ɨ́   [gbɔ̄]
        CL1   see(a)   IMPERS   P3   put(b)   CL7/8.walking.stick   LOC   CL3.house

        s̱ê
        front.LOC

        'She saw that someone had put a walking stick in front of the house.'

(404)   kpé   w-ɔ̄   dʒyè   ndʒɔ́myīn ɨ́   [mɔ̀   w-ɔ̄]   ḻā
        CL1.woman   CL1-DET   cook(a)   CL8.food   LOC   CL1.man   CL1-DET   DAT

        ◇'The woman cooks food for the man.'

(405)   ɲwɑ́m   wān   wū   dzé   ɨ́   [gbàn
        CL1.husband   CL1.child   CL1;3SG.POSS   say(b)   LOC   CL1/2.in-law

        wū]   ḻā   yɛ̄
        CL1;3SG.POSS   DAT   COMP

        'Her child's husband said to his in-law: ...'

Certain speakers sometimes pronounce the locative preposition ɑ́ rather than ɨ́. This may be due to contact influence from Missong, where the general locative preposition has the form **á** (Lovegren 2013: 279ff.).

10.2.2 Postpositions

All postpositions are monosyllabic. Postpositions are often historically derived from nouns and in many cases, they are segmentally identical with the latter (see §10.2.2.1). Table 10.2 provides a list of all known postpositions and their glosses. A comparison of postpositions and cognate nouns is found in §10.2.2.1.

postposition	gloss
ʃī	'in front of'
dzə̄m	'behind'
gyíŋ	'next to'
dzō	'under'
wɔ̄	'on'
mɨ̄	'in', 'inside'
yà	'in' (rare)
ŋgɔ̀	'upon, at, on, by', 'with' (instrumental, comitative)
yū	'behind' (following someone)
sám	'in the middle of'
gbə́	'in house', 'at home'
sê	'in front of' (only with dwelling)
kúŋ	'behind' (only with dwelling)
kú	'in home village'
kà̰n	'in hands'
fɔ̄	'on head'
dzæ̀	'in mouth'
wúŋ	'in nose'
kúŋ	'around neck'
bān	'around waist'
lā	'for'

Table 10.2: comprehensive list of postpositions with glosses

Postpositions head postpositional phrases. They directly follow the noun phrase they head and they usually encode spatial location, as in (406)-(407).

(406) sèsăŋ   dā   kwō   wù   yɔ̂ kwō   [bwē] y<u>à</u>
      cl9.spider braid(a) climb(c) enter(c) cl1 enter(c) cl3a.sky <u>in</u>

'The spider braided [the bridge] until it reached heaven.'

(407) *bìkɔ́*   kpɔ́   wū-dʒwē   dɨ́ ná, wū dɨ́ ā
      because cl3/7a.money cl3-much/many be(b) as cl3 be(b) com
      sátàn   [wǔ] y<u>ū</u>   ᷆a̰   mɔ̰̀~mɔ̰̀
      cl1/2.satan cl3.pp <u>behind</u> advlz one~red

'Because a lot of money always has many devils behind it.'

All postpositions may co-occur with the optional locative marker ɨ́, as in (408); see §10.2.1.2.

(408) wù ɲēn   kwō   ɨ́   [dzɛ́]   dzō̱
       CL1 hide(a) enter(c) LOC CL3/7a.rock under

       'He hid under a rock.' (lit.: He hid entered rock under.)

Most postpositions have static spatial semantics. They express location relative to their complement NP. Direction of movement is not encoded by adpositions, but instead by verbs like 'come'/'go', 'ascend'/'descend', 'enter'/'exit' etc., which form part of serial verb constructions (see Chapter 9 for more on serial verb constructions).

The postposition **kàn** 'hands.LOC' can be used in a metaphorical sense, as exemplified in (409) and in (410). In (409), **kàn** is translated as 'away from'. A better translation would probably be 'from the clutches of'. Recall that direction is never marked on the locative phrase. Thus 'from the hands' is no different from 'in the hands'.

(409) wù yó tí   [kū   y-ɔ̄]   kàn
       CL1 run(c) surprisingly CL9.ratmole CL9-DET hands.LOC

       'He ran away from the rat mole!'

(410) kɔ̄   kə̀ yó tʃū   [dzɔ̄m]   kàn   bɔ́ mī
       Koshin P3 run(c) come(b) CL9/10.war hands.LOC CL2 CONSEC
       tʃŭ   kwó   kúŋ   bɨ́   yə́
       come(b) enter(c) hunt(c) go_out(b) go_up(c)

       'The Koshin people ran away from war. They then came in[to this area] and chased away [the Nshwen].'

Only two postpositions are also used in a non-spatial sense: the postposition **ŋgɔ̄** and the postposition **lā**. The former may be used in a spatial sense, as in (411), or in a temporal sense, as in (412).

(411) wē   w-ɔ́   bán   [mɨ́] ŋgɔ̄ ə́   kə̄-lī
       CL3a.sun CL3a-DET shine(b) 1SG.PP upon ADVLZ NMLZ-strong

       'The sun is shining on me strongly.'

(412) mɔ̀   wù kə̀ dzé w-ɔ̄   dʒú   gbàm   [tō
       CL1.man CL1 P3 say(b) CL1-REL CL3/7a.word CL7b.God CL7/8.day
       k-ɔ́]   ŋgɔ̄ kə̀ dī pǎ pɨ́tà kyǎ
       CL7-DEM.DIST upon P3 be(b) Pa P.   K.

       'The person who was preaching on that day was Pa Peter Kia.'

It may also mark an instrumental noun phrase, as in (413). Example (413) is complicated by the fact that the postposition is part of a relative clause and its object NP is omitted, so that the postposition is stranded. When the object of the postposition **kí** is realized, the postposition bears its usual mid-low falling tone. When it is absent, as in (413), the high tone of the omitted object is realized on the postposition, replacing the tone of the postposition itself.

(413) dǐ [sìŋ mwān y-ɔ̄] à lɛ̄ y-ɔ̄ ŋgɔ́
     be(b) cl9.knife cl9.which cl9-det 2sg do(a).ipfv cl9-rel <u>upon</u>

    ◇'Which knife do you use?' (lit.: It is which knife that you do with?)

The non-spatial postposition **lā** 'for' marks the recipient of an action, i.e. a dative/benefactive argument, as in (414). This construction is discussed in more detail in Chapter 11.

(414) kpé w-ɔ̄ dʒyè ndʒɔ́myīn ɨ́ [mɔ̀ w-ɔ̄] lā
     cl1.woman cl1-det cook(a) cl8.food loc cl1.man cl1-det dat

    ◇'The woman cooks food for the man.'

10.2.2.1 Postpositions vs. nouns

Many, perhaps all, postpositions in Mundabli are historically derived from nouns. Often, the origin nouns refer to body parts or other meronyms. Such postpositions may coexist with a noun of identical segmental shape or with a noun similar in shape. Table 10.3 compares postpositions with the nouns they are derived from.

While postpositions are derived from nouns and are in some cases even segmentally identical with them, they differ from the latter in several regards. Specifically, they differ in syntactic behavior, and the tonal pattern of a postposition is often different from that of the corresponding noun, as in **kúŋ** 'around neck' vs. **kǔŋ** 'neck'. The syntactic behavior of postpositions is different from that of nouns. This is illustrated with the noun **yū** 'buttocks' in (415) and the postposition **yū** 'behind' in (416) which are formally identical, but differ in syntactic behavior.

(415) yū yɨ́
     cl9/10.buttocks cl10;3sg.poss

    ◇'his buttocks'

(416) wù bāŋ [kwā kɨ́ k-ɔ́] yū
     cl1 follow(b) cl7.frog cl7;3sg.poss cl7-det <u>behind</u>

    'He followed his frog.'

postposition	postposition gloss	noun	noun gloss
dzə̄m	'behind'	**dzə̄m**	'back'
yà	'in'	**yà**	'intestines'
yū	'behind'	**yū**	'buttock'
sê	'in front of (dwelling)'	**sê**	'front side of dwelling'
kúŋ	'behind (dwelling)'	**kúŋ**	'back side of dwelling'
gbə́	'in house, at home'	**gbɔ̀**	'house'
kú	'in home village'	**kwế**	'home'
fɔ́	'on/at head'	**fɔ́**	'head'
kà̄n	'in hands'	**kán** (v)	'hold'
dzǽ	'in mouth'	**dzǽ**	'mouth'
wúŋ	'in nose'	**wṹŋ**	'nose'
kúŋ	'around neck'	**kǔŋ**	'neck'
bā̄n	'around waist'	**bā̄n**	'waist'

Table 10.3: Comparison of postpositions and cognate nouns

When a noun is modified by another NP in a possessive construction, the resulting noun phrase is head-initial, i.e. the possessum precedes the possessor, as in (415) where the noun **yū** 'buttocks' is followed by a possessive pronoun. A postpositional phrase, on the other hand, is head-final, i.e. the noun phrase precedes the postposition, as in (416), where the postposition **yū** 'behind' is preceded by the dependent noun phrase **kwā kí k-ɔ́** 'that his frog'.

Finally, postpositions have a specific tonal effect on dependent pronouns. Pronouns which are the object of a postposition always bear a high tone. Their segmental shape is the same as that of independent pronouns (see §6.1 for details).

While there is a clear case for postpositions to be considered a different word class from nouns, grammaticalization is clearly underway with some postpositions.

10.3 Temporal deictics

Temporal deictics allow the speaker to specify the time of an event more precisely than grammatical tense. They are adjuncts, and their position within the sentence is relatively flexible. Table 10.4 contains a few selected temporal deictics.

Examples of temporal deictics are given in (417)-(422). They usually occur at the end of the clause, as in (417), but not necessarily so, see e.g., (419) where **ɲwɛ́n** 'now, today' is followed by a manner adverb. The temporal deictic in each example is underlined.

temporal deictic	gloss
ɲwén	'now, today'
ɲántɔ̄	'yesterday'
ŋgwé	'tomorrow'
tywő̄m	'long time away, past or future'

Table 10.4: Selected temporal deictics

(417) mɔ̀   w-ɔ̄   táŋ   tsʉ́   b-ɔ́   ɲwén
       CL1.person CL1-DET buy(b) CL8.banana CL8-DET <u>now</u>

'The man bought the banana now.'

(418) wù fɔ́ ā   gàn   wɔ̄   dʒwō   ɲwén
       CL1 P1 NEG   go(a) NEG   CL1/2.stream <u>today</u>

'She did not go to the stream today.'

(419) yū   y-ɔ̄   bò   ɲwén ǎ   kī-lī
       CL9/10.buttock CL9-DET be_bad(a) <u>now</u> ADVLZ NMLZ-be_strong(a)
       (e)
       INTERJ

'Sex is very dangerous these days.'

(420) wù à tʃǔ   ɲántɔ̄
       CL1 P2 come(b) <u>yesterday</u>

◇'He arrived yesterday.'

(421) wù kɑ̃́ ʃí   ŋgwé
       CL1 F2 spend_day(b) <u>tomorrow</u>

◇'He will spend the day at home tomorrow.'

(422) *só* ɲ̋=tʃyé   yɛ̄   mī̄ wān   kɛ̀ kpī̄   tywő̄m
       so 1SG=know(c) COMP SG CL1.child P3 die(b) <u>long_ago</u>

'So I know that my child died long ago.'

10.4   Spatial deictics

Spatial deictics have not been elicited in detail. However, some of them occur commonly in natural speech. These include **tʃɪn**, **fɔ** and **tɔ**, all of which translate roughly as 'there'. The deictics are given here without tones because their tones may vary. Historically, **fɔ** and **tɔ** must have functioned as deictic

demonstratives, with the demonstrative root **-ɔ́** and the agreement prefixes **f-** (PB class 16) and **t-** (PB class 17). However, synchronically, they do not modify nouns. Instead, they are adjuncts.

Historically the difference was probably one between closeness (**fɔ**) and distance (**tɔ**). Examples (423)-(426) contain instances of **fɔ**, **tɔ** and **tʃɪn**. The deictic in the examples is underlined.

(423)   kwó   gān   <u>t-ɔ́</u>   mɪ̄
        enter(c) go(a) DIST-DET in

        'Go in there!'

(424)   wān   w-ɔ́   yɔ́m   mɛ̌   <u>t-ɔ́</u>   gbɔ̄   kúŋ
        CL1.child CL1-DET sing(c) only DIST-DET CL3.house behind_house.LOC

        'The child continued to sing behind the house.'

(425)   tō   mɪ̄   wé   ʃɪ̀   tí   (e),
        CL7/8.day CONSEC dawn(b).IPFV go_down(a).IPFV surprisingly INTERJ
        wù kū   nɪ̄m   <u>f-ɔ́</u>   gbɔ́,   (o)
        CL1 cry(a) sit(a) PROX-there house.LOC INTERJ

        'When day has broken, she is there in the house crying.'

(426)   ŋkwɪ̄n nɔ̄   bɔ́ nɪ̀m   w-ɔ́   wú/<u>tʃɪ́n</u> wɔ̄
        CL1.hill SUBORD CL2 live(a) CL1-REL CL1PP/there on

        ◇'the hill on which they live'

fɔni and **tɔni** are two other forms used as spatial deictics and derived from **fɔ** and **tɔ**, see e.g. (427)-(429). Unlike **fɔ** and **tɔ**, which function as nominal modifiers or represent a whole NP, the locative adverbials **fɔni** and **tɔni** (also **fani** and **tani**) are adverbials and generally occur in clause-final position. They often co-occur with prenominal **fɔ tɔ**, **fán** or **tán**, as in (428)[1] and (429).

(427)   bɪ̄ mɪ́   nɪ̀m   <u>fɔ̌nɪ́</u> (ē),   bɪ̄ dzé   nɪ̀m tí   mɛ̌
        1PL CONSEC sit(a) here INTERJ 1PL speak(b) sit(a) surprisingly only
        yɛ̄,   lòŋ   bɔ́   dɪ̌ tá   mɛ̌ yɛ̌n lā, bɪ̄
        COMP CL8.suffering CL8-DET be(b) specifically only Y. DAT CL8
        kwó   fúbɔ̌ bí ŋgɔ̄
        enter(c) also 1PL upon

        'And we are sitting here, saying that only Yain is suffering, but the suffering has also attacked some of us.'

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[1]The italics on **mɔ́sɪ́** 'must' show that the word is a borrowing. Obligation is usually expressed by a different construction.

(428) Dyǎ kə̀ dzē   tʃ́ɨ́n, ń-kə̀   dɨ̄   ná tʃ́ɨ́n t-ɔ́
      D. P3 say(b) there 1SG=P3 be(b) as there DIST-there

      ŋkwɨ̄n   wɔ̄ tɔ́ní, yɛ̄, kə́ wū tọ̄   mɛ̄
      CL1/2.mountain on there COMP COND CL1IRR grow_up(b) finish(a)

      tʃū   wù tã   lá   kə̀ wɔ̄ sǎm,   wù dɨ̌ *mɔ́sɨ́*
      come(b) CL1 VER.FOC;NEG do(a) ?? NEG CL1.play CL1 F1 must

      yíŋ   gbɔ̂   áná   nɨ̌   tʃū   nɨ̄m
      build(c) CL3.house like_that mother.3POSS come(b) live(a)

      'Dya said on that hill when I was there, that when he will have grown
      up fully, he will not play, he must build a house and bring down his
      mother.'

(429) kwē   b-ɛ́n   ŋà   tán   sɛ́   tání,
      CL7/8.rat CL8-DEM.PROX boast(a) there CL3/7a.attic there

      n=dɨ́   lá   kpɨ́   mɛ́   kwē   b-ɛ́n   tán
      1SG.PVB=F1 make(a) die(b) finish(a) CL7/8.rat CL8-DEM.PROX there

      sɛ́   ō
      CL3/7a.attic EMPH

      'These rats which are showing off in this attic - I will kill all of them!'

While **fɔ** and **tɔ** seem to be widely interchangeable, in some contexts only
one of them renders a grammatical construction. An example is the use of
fɔ in relative clauses. The spatial deictic **fɔ́** is used as obligatory postverbal
demonstrative in relative clauses which relativize on a locative expression.
In this case, the spatial deictic **fɔ** occurs immediately after the verb of the
relative clause, forming part of a paradigm with relativizers in the form of
distal demonstratives which occupy this slot and which agree with the head
of the relative clause in noun class, as in (430) and (431). The use of **tɔ** in
this context is not attested. For more on relative clauses, see Chapter 12 and
Lovegren and Voll (2017).

(430) ń=tʃyé   dè   nọ̄   [wù fɨ́   f-ɔ́]
      1SG=know(c) CL9.place SUBORD CL1 pass(b) PROX-REL

      'I know the place which she had passed (through).' (lit.: ...where she
      had passed.)

(431) à   mī   nìm ʃī   bǎ   dɛ̀   nā   [bɔ̄
       2SG CONSEC sit(a) go_down(a) exactly CL9.place there CL2
       kpā   <u>f-ɔ́</u>   gù],   ā   fì-ŋgī   wá
       light_fire(a).IPFV PROX-there CL3/7a.fire COM CL19-water 2SG.PP
       kɛ̀n
       hands.LOC

'Then (you will) sit down exactly where they make fire, with a bit of water in your hand.'

10.5   Ideophones

Ideophones are used frequently in narratives and in spontaneous conversations. However, speakers differ in the quantity of ideophones they use, with a tendency for old people to use them more frequently than younger people. Ideophones are often accompanied by specific gestures. Some examples of ideophones are given in (432)-(435). In (432) and (433), the ideophones follow the adverbial pro-form **áná** 'like that', which links them with the rest of the sentence.

(432) n=dɨ̄   mɛ̌   pɛ́ kɜ̀ kwɔ́   gbɔ́   áná   <u>mwàŋ</u>
       1SG=see(a) only P. P3 enter(c) house.LOC like_that IDEO

'I just saw Pe entering the house like that: "mwàŋ".'

(433) pɛ́ kɜ̀ wɛ̌   fĭn áná   <u>fyàfyà</u>
       P. P3 breath(a) there like_that IDEO

'Pe was breathing there like this: "fyafya".'

The ideophone **mwàŋ** as in (432), often with a drawn out nasal coda **mwàŋŋŋŋ**, depicts speed. The ideophone **fyàfyà** in (433) imitates the sound of heavy breathing, as after physical strain. In examples (434) (which contains two ideophones) and (435), the ideophones are simply attached to the end of the clause; the adverbial pro-form **áná** is not used.

(434) pɛ́ dʒī   ʃī   mbĭ   m-ɔ́,   ɑ̌   *the very*
       P. put(a) descend(a) CL6.palm_wine CL6-DET ADVLZ the very
       mbĭ   ŋgɔ́ m-ɔ́   ŋgɔ̄ <u>tìŋtìŋ</u>, byé-ā-ntí mū ʃú
       CL6.palm_wine upon CL6-DET upon IDEO   B.-COM-N. take(a) come(b)
       <u>kpàʔ</u>, wù mú
       IDEO   CL1 drink(b)

'Pe put in the wine, still the very wine, the same one, exactly. Bie-a-Ntie grabbed it, "kpaʔ", and she drank.'

(435) wéee, ndʒɔ́m tán mě t-ɔ̌ bán t-ɔ́
       INTERJ CL8.things fly(a) only DIST-there CL1/2.outside DIST-DET
       wǎaawǎaa
       IDEO

'Alas, things were flying outside there, "waaawaaa".'

The ideophones in (434) and (435) **tìŋtìŋ** are very specific ideophones expressing strong resemblance (**tìŋtìŋ**) and grabbing (**kpàʔ**) or imitating the sound of the storm (**wǎaawǎaa**). Most ideophones consist either of a single open or closed syllable or of two or more repetitions of a single syllable. Note that ideophones may end in an obstruent, as in **kpàʔ** (434) or **kǎt˥** This is an exception from the general phonotactics of Mundabli. Normally, a syllable can end only in a nasal or in the liquid **l**, see §2.4. The ideophone **kǎt˥** illustrates that something is completely destroyed.[2] Vowels and final nasals in ideophones may be drawn out for intensity, such as in **mwàŋ** in (432) or **wǎaawǎaa** in (435) with multiple **a** and **ŋ** representing single segments with an exceptionally long duration.

Ideophones can be subdivided according to semantic criteria into expressions of visible impressions, temperature impressions, smell and taste impressions and audible impressions, as done in the first column of Table 10.5. The second column contains ideophones either isolated or in context. Here, the ideophones are written in bold letters. The third column contains descriptions of their use.

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[2]The ideophone **kǎt˥**is usually followed by the following gesture: lips are pursed and the index finger of the right hand is bent and moved over the pouched lips from right to left.

semantic criteria	ideophone	description
visible	**būbūbūbū**	'pure white'
	fììììì	'pure black'
	ŋàŋŋŋŋ	'burning down of sun; bright red'
	tìŋtìŋtìŋ	'strong resemblance'
audible	**wùùùùù**	'light storm or strong wind blowing'
	wààààà	'light storm or strong wind blowing'
	ŋgìŋgìŋgìŋgìŋgìŋ	'strong storm blowing'
	wàààà	'rain falling heavily (before it stops abruptly); sound of water being pushed away with force'
	wɔ̌ŋwɔ̌ŋwɔ̌ŋ(...)	'rain falling heavily and continuously.'
	tʃàtʃàtʃàtʃàtʃàtʃàtʃà	'rain falling lightly but continuously.'
	nyǎŋkàŋkèŋkèŋkèŋ	'call of a bushfowl species called **nyǎŋ**'
	byǎ́byǎ́byǎ́byǎ́byǎ́byǎ́	'someone talking a lot'
	kpàkpàkpàkpàkpà	'someone talking a lot'
	wàwàwàwàwàwàwàwà	'someone shouting a lot'
	fyǎ́tfyǎ́t	'sound of blowing one's nose'
temperature	**dʒǔ́ǔ́ǔ́ǔ́**	'really cold'
	tsùtsùtsùtsùtsùtsù	'really hot'
	kpòkpòkpòkpòkpò	'really hot'
smell and taste	**tsàtsàtsà**	'bad smell'
other	**tìtìtìtì(tì(tì))**	'waiting for a long time'
	kìŋkìŋkìŋkìŋ	'walk stamping ones feet; work heavily; be healthy'
	tǎ́pˁ∼pǎ́pˀ	'full to the rim'
	kǎtˀ	'completely finished or destroyed'
	kpàʔ	'sound of grabbing something quickly'

Table 10.5: Ideophones, partly in context, with descriptions, sorted according to semantic criteria

10.6 'Yes' and 'No'

The words for 'yes' and 'no' (see Table 10.6) can serve as one-word answers to polar questions, can introduce more elaborate answers to polar questions, or can serve as general markers of agreement or disagreement, either on their own or followed by a more elaborate explanation. They thus have an ambiguous status between formulaic expressions and interjections.

variants	gloss
hm̀, **ɛ̀ɛ**, **ɛ̀hɛ̌**	'yes'
ŋgàŋ, **ǎy∼ǎyī**, **ʔm̋ʔm̀∼ʔm̀ʔm̀∼hm̋ʔm̀**	'no'

Table 10.6: Variants of 'yes' and 'no'

The form **hm̀**[3] is used to express agreement or confirmation; the interjection **ɛ̀ɛ** 'yes' is more commonly used to signal interest and to encourage another speaker to continue, e.g. when reporting an event. The word **ŋgàŋ** 'no' is hardly ever used in spontaneous speech, except sometimes for emphasis. Among the other forms, **ǎyī** expresses more emphasis than **ǎy**. Both **ǎyī** and **ǎy** are stronger than the nasal forms (**ʔm̋ʔm̀∼ʔm̀ʔm̀∼hm̋ʔm̀**). In (436)-(439), **hm̀** 'yes' is used to express agreement, accompanied by a complete sentence.

(436) hm̀, wù dǐ kə̄-ʃī
       INTERJ CL1 be(b) ABIL-descend(a)

       'Yes, she can come down.'

(437) hm̀, wù kə̀ dī f-án
       INTERJ CL1 P3 be(b) PROX-here

       'Yes, she was here.'

(438) hm̀, wù kə̀ tʃū tū ʃī fán
       INTERJ CL1 P3 come(b) pluck(a) CL9/10.fowl there

       'Yes, she came and plucked feathers here.'

(439) ʔm̀hm̌ ʔm̀, bɔ̋ kán dɛ̀ yɨ̄ŋ lā gbɔ̀
       yes   INTERJ CL2 lack(b) CL9.place build(c) DAT CL3.house

       'Yes. They don't even have space to build houses.'

In (440)-(443), **ǎy∼ǎyī** is used to mark disagreement. In all these examples, it is accompanied by a complete sentence.

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[3]What is written here as <h> is phonetically a voiceless bilabial nasal.

(440) ǎy, yɛ̄   ŋ = gī̄   kɔ́ yɛ̄   ǹ = kǎ   dǝ̌   ké, *nǒ*
       no COMP 1SG = put(b) at? COMP 1SG = F2 see(a) ?? no

       'No! That I should allow it so that I will see, right?!'

(441) ǎy, á   n̄ = dzɛ̌   kɔ̀   wɔ̄ yɛ̄ à dzé lɔ̄~lɔ̄
       no NEG 1SG = say(b) catch(b) NEG COMP 2SG say(b) empty~RED
       bǎ,   n = dzɛ̌   yɛ̄ à dzé ɑ́   ntʃīn
       CL2.PP;DAT 1SG = say(b) COMP 2SG say(b) ADVLZ CL1.truth

       'No, I have not said that you are telling a lie (to them). I said that you
       are telling the truth.'

(442) ǎyī, wù dzě   yɛ̄ t-ání   wū   ɲã̀
       no   CL1 say(b) COMP DIST-there CL1;3SG.POSS hurt(a)

       'No, she said that this part hurts. '

(443) ǎyī, bɔ́ ā dɪ̌   wɔ̄ ā dɛ̀   fwɛ́n
       no   CL2 NEG be(b) NEG COM CL9.place clear(b)

       'No, they don't have a place to clear.'

My data also contain instances of ingressive fricatives, used to indicate
agreement. The ingressive fricative may be articulated in different ways. The
tokens I have found in my recordings are all from a particular speaker who
is around 40 years old. An ingressive sound with assertive function has also
been reported by Lovegren (2013: 274-275) to exist in Mungbam.

10.7 Interjections

In this section, I describe a few very salient interjections, in order to pro-
vide an impression of interjections in Mundabli. Interjections are used fre-
quently in conversation, e.g. in order to express one's feelings or one's atti-
tude or to express agreement or disagreement. Interjections expressing agree-
ment or disagreement were already discussed in §10.6 and will not be re-
peated here. Many of the common interjections in Mundabli also exist in the
regional variety of Cameroon Pidgin and probably in other languages in the
area. Among these are **wɛ̌** (444) which expresses dismay and **ɑ́ʔɑ́** (445) which
expresses amazement and disbelieve with negative connotations. The interjec-
tion **ò** (444), which expresses emphasis and occurs at the end of a sentence,
is also attested in Cameroon Pidgin.

(444) wɛ́,   wū ā dɪ̌   wɔ̄ gbɔ̄   kúŋ   ò
       INTERJ CL1 NEG be(b) NEG CL3.house house_backside.LOC INTERJ

       'Alas! She is not behind the house!'

(445) yɛ̄   wù kwɔ́   gbɔ́,   wù   dɔ̄ bɔ̄ kɔ̀
COMP CL1 enter(c) CL3.house.LOC CL3;3SG.POSS see(a) IMPERS P3
ʃyā   tɔ̄   gbɔ̄ wɯ́,   ǎʔǎ,   wù bú   yɛ̄
sweep(a) away(c) house CL3.CL1.POSS INTERJ CL1 ask(b) COMP
mɛ̀,   ā   n=dɪ́   wɔ̄ ā   nɪ́   ā   n=dɪ́
NCS.QUOT.Q NEG 1SG=be(b) NEG COM CL1.mother NEG 1SG=be(b)
wɔ̄ ā   tɪ̌   ā   n=dɪ́   wɔ̄ ā   wɛ́   ā
NEG COM CL1.father NEG 1SG=be(b) NEG COM CL1.sibling NEG
n=dɪ́   wɔ̄ ā   mɔ̀   dzū,   mɪ́ŋ gbɔ̀̄
1SG=be(b) NEG COM CL1.person CL1.certain 1SG house.LOC
ʃyà   gɪ̌   ndɛ̀ yɛ̄
sweep(a) put(a) who QUOT.Q

'When she was about to enter the house, she saw that someone had swept her house. Huh! She asked [herself]: I am [here] without a mother, without a father, without a sibling, without anyone. Who has swept my house?'

Examples (444) and (445) are taken from the same narrative. Example (444) contains two interjections, **wɛ́** and **ò**. The first interjection **wɛ́** expresses dismay at the fact that the sister is not behind the house as expected but has instead gone missing. The sentence-final interjection **ò** emphasizes the statement and gives it more weight. Example (445) contains the interjection **ǎʔǎ** expressing consternation and disbelief by the main character of the story at the fact that someone must have entered and swept her house while she was on the farm. Dismay or disbelief may also be expressed by ululation, which is widespread in the area. The interjection 'Wonderful!' [**wǎndàfùl**], adopted from Pidgin and translatable as 'amazing, incredible' is more neutral and without necessarily having a negative or a positive connotation. Finally, an interjection which, to the best of my knowledge, does not exist in Pidgin or in related languages is **òǒō**, cf. (446) and (447). It expresses ignorance or lack of knowledge.

(446) m̀m, bɔ̄ kɔ̀   nɪ́m   ā   wān   w-ɔ̄,   tʃyé   bɔ̌
yes IMPERS P3;HAB sit(a).IPFV COM CL1.child CL1-DET know(c) CL2
kɔ̀ fǎn   yī   wù è,   òǒō
P3 sell(a) eat(b) CL1 INTERJ INTERJ

'Yes. They kept the child [of the gorilla]; whether they sold [it] and [someone] ate it? I don't know!'

(447) tʃyé   bɔ̄ kɔ̀ yī è,   òǒō, ā   n=dɪ́   wɔ̄
know(c) IMPERS P3 eat(b) INTERJ INTERJ NEG 1SG=be(b) NEG
kɔ̄-tʃyê̄
ABIL-know(c)

'Whether they ate [it]? I don't know! I cannot know.'

The interjection **òǒō** is equivalent to saying 'I don't know' or 'I have no idea' or shrugging one's shoulders. There are also volitive interjections which are conventionally used to chase away different animals or even people. The sound **ʃʃʃ** is used to chase away fowl. Goats and sheep are chased away with the interjection **tsì**, and in order to chase away dogs or people (mostly children), the imperative form **bí** 'Go out!' is used.