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**A grammar of Gaahmg, a Nilo-Saharan language of Sudan**  
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## 14 Clause-level syntax

### 14.1 Introduction

In the previous chapters, various morphemes have been shown to be distinct in form. We now present many of the same morphemes in their syntactic context to show their function. Agentive passive, agentless passive, antipassive, and causative verb forms are shown to be syntactically distinct. In non-verbal clauses, copular clitics are shown to take the place of separate copula particles, which are functionally equivalent but different in form. Relative clauses are morphologically marked for definiteness and grammatical function, and they receive the marking instead of the head noun they modify.

In this chapter, we first discuss grammatical function of constituents in 14.2 and word order in 14.3, then verbal clauses in 14.4 and verbal valency in 14.5, followed by non-verbal clauses in 14.6, relative clauses in 14.7, evidentiality in 14.8, and finally noun phrases in 14.9.

### 14.2 Grammatical function of constituents

Nouns function as subjects, objects, indirect objects, or objects of prepositional phrases. In (1), *mèēn* ‘youth’ has the role of agent and functions as the subject of the clause. The noun *nāmsá* ‘food’ has the role of a theme, functioning as an object, whereas *māōōn* ‘grandfather’ is the recipient and indirect object.

- (1) *mèēn*            *māār-sá*            *nāms-á*    *māōō = ēn*  
 youth.leader /mar/buy-COMP food-DEF grandfather=DAT  
 ‘The youth leader bought the food for the grandfather.’

Case marking does not occur on subject or object nouns, but dative nouns take the clitic =*An* as shown in (1) and (2) and have the role of beneficiary or recipient. In (2), the noun *kááy-ēēgg = é* ‘night-PL=RDM’ functions as the object of the general preposition *é* (GP).

- (2) *ð*    *ná*    *bér-s = āná*            *nālg = ān*            *é*    *kááy-ēēgg = é*  
 and REL explain-COMP=PAS small.ones=DAT GP night-PL=RDM  
 ‘. . . and that which is explained (fable) to children at night.’

Objects and indirect objects are verb complements, whereas prepositional phrases, locative phrases and adverbs are verb adjuncts. In (2), the prepositional phrase *é kááy-ēēgg = é* ‘at night’ is an adjunct to the verb *bérsāná* ‘explain’ expressing time. In (3), the locative phrase *ūfú sál* ‘in the tree’ and adverb *qēēnē* ‘only’ are both adjuncts to the verb *ān* ‘stay’ expressing location.

- (3) ē àn ūfú s̄ól d̄ēēnē.  
 3sN staying tree up only  
 ‘... as he remained in the tree.’ (Nyee35)

### 14.3 Word order

Gaahmg word order is SVO, as in (4).

- (4) bāārg-á ḡás-ā n nā-lg nà ñn-g = ì  
 Baggara-DEF search-CONT.P girl-PL REL.PL young-PL = RDM  
 ‘The Baggara (people group) were kidnapping young girls.’ (Minj2)

As shown in (5), verb complements—objects and indirect objects—immediately follow the verb, and adjuncts follow verb complements. Adverbs are least connected with the verb and the most moveable of the adjuncts, sometimes being fronted before the verb, although not usually before the subject. When more than one kind of adverb is present, manner and directional adverbs normally precede adverbs of place, time, and other adverbs. Negation markers can be analyzed as adverbs, since they follow the verb and its adjuncts and have the same function as adverbs. They are always sentence-final and cannot be fronted before the verb as some adverbs can.

- (5) Word order of complements and adjuncts  
 (ADV<sub>[Adjunct]</sub>) V (NP<sub>[O]</sub>) (NP<sub>[IO]</sub>) ({LP, PP, ADV}<sub>[Adjunct]</sub>)

The examples of (6) show the common word order of verb complements and adjuncts. In (a), the object *kōr* ‘speech’ is followed by a prepositional phrase *é mūn* ‘by time’, which is followed by an adverb of place *t̄è* ‘here’, and then followed by the adverb *ḡō* ‘only’. In (b), the verb is followed by the locative phrase *mōsōr s̄ōl* ‘on a horse’, by the prepositional phrase *ē páré = n é m̄ñil = ò* ‘with animal skin of the devil’ which is a prepositional phrase within a phrase, and finally by the prefixed prepositional phrase *d̄-éēs* ‘in his hand’.

- (6a) ā t̄āl kōr é mūn t̄è ḡō.  
 SBJV create.SBJV.1sN speech by time here only  
 ‘... and I will stop talking here.’ (Tifa14)
- (b) ē àn mōsōr s̄ōl ē páré = n é m̄ñil = ò d̄-éēs.  
 3sN stay horse up with skin.bag = GP devil.GEN = PP-  
 DEF DEF DEF hand.3sPs  
 ‘He rides on a horse with an animal-skin bag of the devil in his hand.’  
 (Minj14-15)

### 14.4 Verbal clauses

Verbal clauses with underived verbs can be transitive, intransitive or dative (three-argument). The intransitive clauses of (7) have the subjects as their only argument. Intransitive verbs are not uncommon in Gaahmg.

(7) **Intransitive (1 argument)**

(a)  $\bar{a}lq = \acute{a}$        $\bar{e}$        $w\bar{a}j\text{-}j$        $t\acute{u}$ .  
 fox = DEF    3sN    /wāj/go-INF    out  
 ‘The fox went out.’ (Goat16-17)

(b)  $m\bar{d}r\bar{a}\bar{a}$        $\acute{s}\bar{d}\text{-}\acute{d}\text{-}\acute{i}$        $t\bar{a}\bar{a}n$   
 government /šd/come.INF-IPF    again  
 ‘The government came again.’ (Fand10)

Transitive verbs have the arguments subject and object which in the clause of (8) have the semantic roles of agent and theme. In Gaahmg, there is no morphological distinction between transitive and intransitive verbs.

(8) **Transitive (2 arguments)**

AGENT		THEME			
$j\bar{a}d\bar{e}\bar{e}r = \bar{a}$	$w\bar{a}r\text{-}s\acute{a}$	$k\bar{a}j$	$\acute{f}i\bar{n}\bar{i} = n$	$\bar{e}$	$m\bar{a}d\bar{a}$ .
Jader = DEF	/wār/carry-COMP	group	3sPs = DEF	with	big.size

‘Jader led his very large group.’ (Fand24-25)

Dative verbs have the arguments subject, object, and indirect object which in the clause of (9) have the semantic roles of agent, theme, and recipient. The presence of a recipient or beneficiary in a clause requires the presence of an agent or experiencer and patient or theme. In other words, a dative cannot be present without a subject and object. The dative verbs attested are /gâf/ ‘give’, /bêê/ ‘tell, say’, /bâg/ ‘bring’.

(9) **Dative (3 arguments)**

AGENT		THEME		RECIPIENT
$j\bar{e}n$	$g\bar{a}\bar{d}\text{-}s\bar{a}$	$m\bar{i}\bar{i} = n$	$k\bar{a}m\bar{a}l\bar{o}gg = \bar{a}n$	
person	give-COMP	goat=DEF	woman=DAT	

‘The person gave the woman the goat.’

### 14.5 Verbal valency

Although there is no morphological distinction between transitive and intransitive verbs, there are four valency-decreasing morphemes and one valency-increasing morpheme attached to verbs. The functions of each are shown by the examples in following sections.

Table 56: Verb derivational markers

	SG	PL	
Agented passive	= $\bar{E}$	= $\acute{E}\bar{E}$	valency- decreasing
Middle	[+ATR], tone change	[+ATR], tone change	
Passive	= $\bar{A}n\acute{A}$ , = $\acute{A}$	= $\bar{A}n\acute{A}$ , = $\acute{A}$	
Antipassive	-An	-An	valency- increasing
Causative	[+ATR], - $\bar{d}^+A$	[+ATR], - $\bar{d}^+A$	

## 14.5.1 Agented passive

The agented passive clitic decreases the valency of the clause by demoting the agent to non-argument status, although an explicit expression of the agent is still required. In clauses with agents encoded by post-verbal constructions, an agented passive clitic =  $\bar{E}$  / =  $\acute{E}\bar{E}$ , which agrees with a genitive agent in number, is attached to the verb stem. The clauses of (10-11) have singular and plural agents in pre- and post-verbal positions.

## (10) Pre-verbal agents

	AGENT		PATIENT		AGENT		PATIENT	
(a)	jên	nām-sá	gùlḍūn		(b)	jōgg	nām-sà	gùlḍūn
	person	break-	branch.DEF			people	break-	branch.DEF
		COMP					COMP	
	‘The person broke the branch.’				‘The people broke the branch.’			

## (11) Post-verbal agent, agented passive verb

	PATIENT		AGENT		PATIENT		AGENT	
(a)	gùlḍūn	nām-s = $\bar{E}$ <sup>38</sup>	jên		(b)	gùlḍūn	nām-s = $\acute{E}\bar{E}$	jōgg
	branch	break-	person.			branch	break-	people.GEN
		COMP=PAS.A	GEN				COMP=PAS.A	
	‘The branch was broken by the person.’				‘The branch was broken by the people.’			

Third person encodings of agents or experiencers follow the verb when objects are in focus, being pre-verbal. In such clauses, nouns with the role of agent or experiencer can be introduced with the general preposition  $\acute{e}$  (GP) as in (12a). Pronouns with such roles can be introduced with the prefix  $\bar{d}$ - ‘by’ as in (b). A noun with these roles following a verb without a preposition is in genitive case, marked by a tone change, as in (c). The noun *aggáár* ‘hunter’ of (c) has LH root tone melody which switches to ML tone melody in genitive case.

<sup>38</sup> As discussed in 10.2.2, root tone of Mid root tone melodies becomes MH in incomplete and complete verbs with agented passive clitic.

(12) **Clauses with agented passives**

- (a) gààr cúó . . . nām-án = ɛ́ ɛ́ káé-gg = à  
 pork sweet /nam/eat-CONT.P=PAS.A GP witchdoctor-PL=DEF  
 ‘Sweet pork . . . was being eaten by witchdoctors.’
- (b) jāām kóðm-s = ɪ́ ɔ́-éēn wá.  
 someone /káàm/bothered.CAUS-COMP = PAS.A PP-3sO not  
 ‘No one was bothered by it.’ (Thng25)
- (c) nāms ɲáó-s = ɛ́ ǎggààr  
 food /ɲaw/need-COMP=PAS.A hunter.GEN  
 ‘Food is needed by the hunter.’

14.5.2 Middle

The verb of (13) has a middle form where the speaker indicates that it is unknown whether there is an implied agent or not. The middle form is distinguished from the active form by the vowel specified as [+ATR] and by a tone change, which is the same tone change as in clauses with post-verbal agents such as (11). Because of lack of data collected, it cannot be determined if first or second person subjects are possible with middle verbs.

(13) **Middle (with or without an implied agent)**

- (a) gùlḍūn ɲǎm-só (b) gùlḍūgg ɲǎm-sò  
 branch.DEF break.MID-COMP branch.PL break.MID-COMP  
 ‘The branch broke.’ ‘The branches broke.’

14.5.3 Passive

In agentless passive verbs, the speaker indicates an implied, unstated agent which could be known or unknown. The clitic = ǎnǎ attaches to stems with vowel-final suffixes and the clitic = ǎ attaches to stems with consonant-final suffixes or suffixless stems. Passive clitics do not agree in number with the syntactic subject (semantic patient), and do not attach the agented passive clitic.

(14) **Passive (implied agent)**

- (a) gùlḍūn ɲām-s = ǎnǎ (b) gùlḍūgg ɲām-s = ǎnǎ  
 branch break-COMP=PAS branch.PL break-COMP=PAS  
 ‘The branch was broken.’ ‘The branches were broken.’

In passive clauses, a noun with the role of theme or patient normally takes the place of the syntactic subject, occurring before the passive verb, as in (15a). However, when there is focus on the passive verb, the noun follows the verb, as in (b).

(15) **Passive clauses**

- (a) kólóḍ-ḍ    ḍùr-s = **ānḍ**  
 egg-DEF    /ḍur/bury-COMP=PAS  
 ‘The egg was buried.’ (Fand21)
- (b) fěḍ-ān = **á**                    jègg = ā                    tád  
 /fɛ/put-CONT.P-PAS    things=DEF    down  
 ‘Things were being laid down.’ (Fand27-28)

## 14.5.4 Antipassive

In antipassive clauses, the speaker indicates an implied, unknown object (patient, theme, or experiencer). Such verb forms are marked by the antipassive suffix *-An* which attaches to the verb root before inflectional suffixes are added. As in active clauses, agents can also be post-verbal in antipassive clauses. In such clauses, verbs are marked with the agented passive clitic = $\acute{E}$ /= $\acute{E}\acute{E}$  as shown in (17).

(16) **Antipassive (unknown patient)**

- (a) jēn            nām-**án**-sá                    (b) jōgg            nām-**án**-sà  
 person    break-ANTIP-COMP                    people    break-ANTIP-COMP  
 ‘The person broke something.’                    ‘The people broke something.’

(17) **Antipassive, agented passive verb (unknown patient)**

- (a) nām-**án**-s = **ē**    jēn            (b) nām-**án**-s = **ēē**                    jōgg  
 break-ANTIP-    person.                    break-ANTIP-                    people.  
 COMP=PAS.A    GEN                    COMP=PAS.A                    GEN  
 ‘Something was broken by the person.’                    ‘Something was broken by the people.’

Further, passive antipassive clauses are used to indicate an implied agent and unknown patient, being marked by the antipassive suffix *-An* and passive clitic = $\acute{A}n\acute{A}$ .

(18) **Passive antipassive (implied agent, unknown patient)**

- nām-**án**-s = **āná**  
 break-ANTIP-COMP=PAS  
 ‘Something was broken.’

## 14.5.5 Causative

Causative clauses are used to indicate the reason or initiative of the action being a different argument than that which does the action. Causative verbs then add a second argument to intransitive clauses and a third argument to transitive clauses. They are marked by the vowel specified as [+ATR] and by the causative suffixes

*-s<sup>+</sup>A, -d<sup>+</sup>A.*

In (19), the reason or initiative for breaking is from *àggáár* ‘hunter’, but the actual breaking is done by *jēn* ‘person’. As shown in (20), causative clauses can also have post-verbal agents, being marked by the agented passive clitic =*Ē*.

(19) **Causative (3 arguments)**

AGENT		EXPERIENCER	PATIENT
<i>àggáár</i>	<i>ɲóm-só</i>	<i>jēn</i>	<i>gùlǫ̀ = n</i>
hunter	break.CAUS-COMP	person	branch=DEF

‘A hunter made the person break the branch.’

(20) **Causative, agented passive verb (3 arguments)**

<i>gùlǫ̀ = n</i>	<i>ɲóm-s-Ī</i>	<i>āggāâr(-è)</i>	<i>jēn</i>
branch=DEF	break.CAUS-COMP-PAS.A	hunter.GEN	person

‘A branch was broken by a hunter making the person break it.’

When dative clauses become causative, a fourth argument is added as shown in (21).

(21) **Causative dative (4 arguments)**

AGENT		EXPERIENCER	THEME	RECIPIENT
<i>àggáár</i>	<i>gòu-só</i>	<i>jēn</i>	<i>mīi</i>	<i>kàmàlǫ̀gg = ān</i>
hunter	give.CAUS-COMP	person	goat	woman=DAT

‘A hunter made the person give a goat to the woman.’

Antipassive causative clauses indicate that one or more of the non-agent arguments are unknown. The same verb form is used regardless of which of the non-agent arguments or how many of them are unknown. Antipassive causative clauses with post-verbal agents also have the same form regardless of which non-agent argument or how many are unknown. In (22-23) the patient is unknown, in (24-25) the experiencer is unknown, and in (26-27) the patient and experiencer are unknown.

(22) **Antipassive causative (unknown patient)**

<i>àggáár</i>	<i>ɲóm-ān-só</i>	<i>jēn</i>
hunter	break.CAUS-ANTIP-COMP	person

‘A hunter made the person break something.’

(23) **Antipassive causative, agented passive verb (unknown patient)**

<i>jēn</i>	<i>ɲóm-ān-s = Ī</i>	<i>āggāâr(-è)</i>
person	break.CAUS-ANTIP-COMP=PAS.A	hunter.GEN

‘The person was made to break something by a hunter.’



- (24) **Antipassive causative (unknown experiencer)**  
 àggáár nóm-ǫn-só gùlǫ̀n  
 hunter break.CAUS-ANTIP-COMP branch.DEF  
 ‘A hunter made someone break the branch.’
- (25) **Antipassive causative, agented passive verb (unknown experiencer)**  
 gùlǫ̀n nóm-ǫn-s=ǐ āggā̀r(-è)  
 branch.DEF break.CAUS-ANTIP-COMP=PAS.A hunter.GEN  
 ‘The branch was broken by a hunter making someone break it.’
- (26) **Antipassive causative (unknown patient & experiencer)**  
 àggáár nóm-ǫn-só  
 hunter break.CAUS-ANTIP-COMP  
 ‘A hunter made someone break something.’
- (27) **Antipassive causative, agented passive verb (unknown patient & experiencer)**  
 nóm-ǫn-s=ǐ āggā̀r(-è)  
 break.CAUS-ANTIP-COMP=PAS.A hunter.GEN  
 ‘Something was broken by a hunter making someone break it.’

Passive causative clauses are used to indicate an implied, unstated agent of a causative verb. The patient such as *gùlǫ̀n* ‘branch’ in (28) is the syntactic subject. The noun *jēn* ‘person’ is an experiencer which does the action at the initiative of an unstated agent such as *àggáár* ‘hunter’.

- (28) **Passive causative (implied agent)**  
 gùlǫ̀n nóm-s=ǎnǎ́ jēn  
 branch.DEF break.CAUS-COMP-PAS person  
 ‘The person was made to break the branch.’

Finally, passive causative antipassive clauses indicate an implied agent and one or

- (29) **Passive causative antipassive (implied agent, unknown patient)**  
 jēn nóm-ǫn-s=ǎnǎ́  
 person break.CAUS-ANTIP-COMP=PAS  
 ‘The person was made to break something.’
- (30) **Passive causative antipassive (implied agent, unknown experiencer & patient)**  
 nóm-ǫn-s=ǎnǎ́  
 break.CAUS-ANTIP-COMP=PAS  
 ‘Someone was made to break something.’

more unknown non-agent arguments.

### 14.6 Non-verbal clauses

There are two sets of copulas with which all non-verbal clauses are formed. The most common set of copulas are shown in table 57 and are used for adjectival, possessive, and equative clauses. A second set is used for locative and presentational clauses, which will be presented shortly. With the limited data collected, it could not be determined how existential clauses, if possible, are constructed.

Table 57: Common copulas

	Non-past SG	Non-past PL	Past continuous
Copula	tā	tā	tā-án
Copular clitic on consonant-final noun phrases	---	= Ǻ	
Copular clitic on vowel-final noun phrases	= n		

In non-verbal clauses, the copula *tā* can be used as in (31a) or the past continuous copula *tā-án* can be used. However, it is also common for a copular clitic = Ǻ to attach to the final word of a clause as in (c). Although the independent past continuous copula *tā-án* can be used for past reference, the copular clitic cannot.

(31) **Non-verbal clauses**

- (a) gùrūūs-úgg-ú    **tā**    tù    wá  
 money-PL-DEF    COP    there    not  
 ‘There is no money.’ (Fand16)
  
- (b) Bḕ̀l    mán    **tā-án**    tù  
 metal    certain    COP-CONT.P    there  
 ‘There was a certain metal token’ (Fand8)
  
- (c) ṭ́-ɡg-ó    ḍ̀m̄-ɡg=Ǻ  
 cow-PL-DEF    blind-PL=COP  
 ‘The cows are blind.’

In answer to the question *jīn n̄́é* ‘What is this?’ or *jíggì n̄́é* ‘What are these?’, the copular clitic attached to a single noun is a clause in itself.

- (32a) ṭ́= n                      (b) ṭ́-ɡg=Ǻ  
 cow = COP                      cow-PL = COP  
 ‘(This) is a cow.’                      ‘(these) are cows.’

As will be seen, there is no difference in the clausal construction between adjectival clauses and nominal non-verbal clauses. However, as mentioned in 8.3.1, there is a morphological difference in the copular clitic attached to consonant-final nouns (=A) and the copular clitic attached to consonant-final adjectives (no marking).

#### 14.6.1 Adjectival clauses

In (33), singular and plural adjectival clauses are shown—with the copula *tā* in (a-b) and with the copular clitic in (c-d). There is no copular clitic marking on singular consonant-final adjectives as in (c). The clitic on vowel-final singular adjectives is =*n* as in (e). The clitic =*A* on plural adjectives takes the [ATR] quality of the adjective word.

##### (33) Adjectival clauses

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| (a) $t\acute{s}\acute{o}$ $t\grave{a}$ $s\grave{e}gg\grave{a}r$ | (b) $t\acute{s}\text{-}gg$ $t\grave{a}$ $s\grave{e}gg\grave{a}r\text{-}g$       |
| cow COP strong  | cow-PL COP strong-PL  |
| ‘A cow is strong.’  | ‘Cows are strong.’  |
| (c) $t\acute{s}\acute{o}$ $s\grave{e}gg\grave{a}r$              | (d) $t\acute{s}\text{-}gg$ $s\grave{e}gg\grave{a}r\text{-}g = \grave{a}$        |
| cow strong  | cow-PL strong-PL = COP  |
| ‘A cow is strong.’  | ‘Cows are strong.’  |
| (e) $t\acute{s}\acute{o}$ $\grave{d}\grave{a}m\grave{o} = n$    | (f) $t\acute{s}\text{-}gg$ $\grave{d}\grave{a}m\grave{o}\text{-}gg = \grave{a}$ |
| cow blind = COP   | cow-PL blind-PL = COP   |
| ‘A cow is blind.’   | ‘Cows are blind.’   |

In the adjectival clauses of (34), the initial noun phrases are marked for definiteness.

##### (34) Definite adjectival clauses

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| (a) $t\acute{s}\acute{o} = n$ $s\grave{e}gg\grave{a}r$                                    | (b) $t\acute{s}\text{-}gg\text{-}\acute{o}$ $s\grave{e}gg\grave{a}r\text{-}g = \grave{a}$  |
| cow = DEF strong  | cow-PL-DEF strong-PL = COP   |
| ‘The cow is strong.’  | ‘The cows are strong.’   |
| (c) $c\acute{o}l$ $s\grave{e}gg\grave{a}r = \acute{a}$ $\grave{d}\grave{a}m\grave{o} = n$ | (d) $c\acute{o}l\text{-}\acute{e}\acute{e}gg$ $s\grave{e}gg\grave{a}r\text{-}g = \grave{a}$ $\grave{d}\grave{a}m\grave{o}\text{-}gg = \grave{a}$ |
| donkey strong = blind =   | donkey- strong- blind-   |
| DEF COP   | PL PL = DEF PL = COP   |
| ‘The strong donkey is blind.’   | ‘The strong donkeys are blind.’  |

Demonstratives are not used pronominally. Instead, the indefinite adjective *mān*/*būgg* ‘certain’ can be used as in (35a-b). Otherwise, demonstratives can be used as in (c-f).

(35) **Demonstratives in copular clauses**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>(a) ṭṣó mán ḍəmṣ = n<br/>         cow certain blind = COP<br/>         ‘A certain cow is blind.’<br/>         ‘This is a blind cow.’</p> | <p>(b) ṭṣ-gg bīgg ḍəmṣ-gg = ə<br/>         cow-PL certain.PL blind-PL = COP<br/>         ‘Certain cows are blind.’<br/>         ‘These are blind cows.’</p> |
| <p>(c) ṭṣó níí ḍəmṣ = n<br/>         cow this blind = COP<br/>         ‘This cow is blind.’<br/>         ‘This is a blind cow.’</p>         | <p>(d) ṭṣ-gg nìì ḍəmṣ-gg = ə<br/>         cow-PL these blind-PL = COP<br/>         ‘These cows are blind.’<br/>         ‘These are blind cows.’</p>         |
| <p>(e) ṭṣó níí ə̀n = ə<br/>         cow this 1sPs = COP<br/>         ‘This cow is mine.’<br/>         ‘This is my cow.’</p>                 | <p>(f) ṭṣ-gg nìì ə̀nəgg = ə<br/>         cow-PL these 1sPp = COP<br/>         ‘These cows are mine.’<br/>         ‘These are my cows.’</p>                  |

14.6.2 Possessive clauses

Clause-initial noun phrases of possessive copular clauses can be unmarked for definiteness as in (36a-b) or marked for definiteness as in (c-f).

(36) **Possessive copular clauses**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>(a) ṭṣó ə̀n = ə<br/>         cow 1sPs = COP<br/>         ‘a cow is mine.’</p>   | <p>(b) ṭṣ-gg ə̀nəgg = ə<br/>         cow-PL 1sPp = COP<br/>         ‘cows are mine.’</p>  |
| <p>(c) ṭṣó = n ə̀n = ə<br/>         cow = DEF 1sPs = COP<br/>         ‘The cow is mine.’</p>                                   | <p>(d) ṭṣ-gg = ɔ ə̀nəgg = ə<br/>         cow-PL = DEF 1sPp = COP<br/>         ‘The cows are mine.’</p>  |
| <p>(e) ṭṣó = n sèggār ə̀n = ə<br/>         cow = strong 1sPs =<br/>         DEF COP<br/>         ‘The strong cow is mine.’</p> | <p>(f) ṭṣ-gg sèggār-g = ə ə̀nəgg = ə<br/>         cow-PL strong-PL = 1sPp =<br/>         DEF COP<br/>         ‘The strong cows are mine.’</p> |

It is also possible to have two copular clitics attached to two coordinate constituents

- (37a) ṭṣó níí ḍəmṣ = n ə̀n = ə  
 cow this blind = COP 1sPs = COP  
 ‘This cow is blind and mine.’
- (b) ṭṣ-gg nìì ḍəmṣ-g = ə ə̀nəgg = ə  
 cow-PL these blind-PL-COP 1sPp = COP  
 ‘These cows are blind and mine.’

of the predicate.

With the limited data collected, it could not be determined if nominal predicates are possible in possessive clauses. However, they are possible in equative clauses as shown in (38a-b) below.

### 14.6.3 Equative clauses

The copular clitic is also used in equative clauses. As in other past tense non-verbal clauses, past tense equative clauses are formed with the past continuous copula *tā-án* as in (38b).

(38) **Equative copular clauses**

- (a) *jēn*      *bàà.ṽ = n*      (b) *jēn*      *tāán*      *bààḽ*  
 person    father=COP      person    COP.CONT.P    father  
 ‘The person is a father.’      ‘The person was a father.’

- (c) *fēēt̃fā = n*    *jēn*      *dù.ī = n*  
 Feetfā=DEF    person    black=COP  
 ‘Feetfā is a black person.’

There is no difference in the clausal construction between adjectival clauses as in (33) of 14.6.1 and the nominal non-verbal clauses in (38).

### 14.6.4 Locative clauses

Non-past locative and presentational non-verbal clauses are formed with a different set of copulas. Past tense locative clauses are formed with the past continuous copula *tā-án*.

Table 58: Non-past locative and presentational copulas

	SG	PL
Locative copula	<i>íin, éēn</i>	<i>ēggàn</i>
Locative copular clitic in noun phrase	<i>= Ān</i>	<i>= Ān</i>
Locative copular clitic in relative clause	<i>= ÉĒn</i>	<i>= ÈÈ</i>

The singular locative copula *íin, éēn* has free variation in vowel quality independent of the [ATR] quality of the words surrounding it. The noun phrase of locative clauses can be unmarked for definiteness as in (39a-b) or definite as in (c-d). In either, the copular clitic *=Ān* can take the place of *íin*.

(39) **Singular locative clauses**

- (a) *jāā* *bānḍāl* ***fīn*** *wéé* *bèŋŋ*  
 person weak LCM house beside  
 ‘A weak person is beside a house.’
- (b) *jāā* *bānḍāl* = ***ān*** *wéé* *bèŋŋ*  
 person weak=LCM house beside  
 ‘A weak person is beside a house.’
- (c) *jāā* = n *bānḍāl* = (***ā***) ***fīn*** *wéé* *bèŋŋ*  
 person=DEF weak=(DEF) LCM house beside  
 ‘The weak person is beside a house.’
- (d) *jāā* = n *bānḍāl* = ***ān*** *wéé* *bèŋŋ*  
 person=DEF weak=LCM house beside  
 ‘The weak person is beside a house.’

The plural locative copula is *ēggàn*. The copular clitic =*Ān* can take the place of *ēggàn* when attached to noun phrases unmarked for definiteness as in (40a-b) or when attached to definite noun phrases as in (c-d).

(40) **Plural locative clauses**

- (a) *jōgg* *bānḍāl-g* ***ēggàn*** *wéé* *bèŋŋ*  
 people weak-PL LCM house beside  
 ‘Weak people are beside a house.’
- (b) *jōgg* *bānḍāl-g* = ***ān*** *wéé* *bèŋŋ*  
 people weak-PL=LCM house beside  
 ‘Weak people are beside a house.’
- (c) *jōgg* *bānḍāl-g* = ***à*** ***ēggàn*** *wéé* *bèŋŋ*  
 people weak-PL=DEF LCM house beside  
 ‘The weak people are beside a house.’
- (d) *jōgg* *bānḍāl-g* = ***ān*** *wéé* *bèŋŋ*  
 people weak-PL=LCM house beside  
 ‘The weak people are beside a house.’

14.6.5 Presentational clauses

Presentational clauses are formed with the same copulas as locative clauses, along with the adverb *tù* ‘there’. The copular clitic =*Ān* can take the place of *fīn* when attached to an unmarked noun phrase as in (41b) or when attached to a definite noun phrase as in (d).

(41) **Singular presentational clauses**

- (a) ʔóó sèggār **īn** ʔù (b) ʔóó sèggār = **ān** ʔù  
 cow strong LCM there cow strong=LCM there  
 ‘There is a strong cow.’
- (c) ʔóó = n sèggār **īn** ʔù (d) ʔóó = n sèggār = **ān** ʔù  
 cow=DEF strong LCM there cow=DEF strong=LCM there  
 ‘There is the strong cow.’

Similarly, the copular clitic =*Ān* can take the place of *ēggàn* when attached to an unmarked plural noun phrase as in (42b) or when attached to a definite plural noun phrase as in (d).

(42) **Plural presentational clauses**

- (a) ʔó-gg sèggār-g **ēggàn** ʔù (b) ʔó-gg sèggār-g = **ān** ʔù  
 cow-PL strong-PL LCM there cow-PL strong-PL=LCM there  
 ‘There are strong cows.’
- (c) ʔó-gg sèggār-g = **à** **ēggàn** ʔù (d) ʔó-gg sèggār-g = **ān** ʔù  
 cow-PL strong- LCM there cow-PL strong- there  
 PL=DEF PL=LCM  
 ‘There are the strong cows.’

Past tense presentational clauses must use the copula *ʔā-án*.

(43) **Past tense presentational clauses**

- (a) ʔóó **ʔāán** ʔù (b) ʔó-gg **ʔāán** ʔù  
 cow COP.CONT.P there cow-PL COP.CONT.P there  
 ‘There was a cow.’ ‘There were cows.’

## 14.6.6 Non-verbal question clauses

The question marker *à* indicates a question with a yes/no response and can mark non-verbal or verbal question clauses. This section discusses how it is used in non-verbal questions and section 15.3 presents its use in verbal questions. Question clauses have the same construction as equivalent declarative clauses except for the question marker.

The question marker for non-verbal clauses is most commonly clause-final. The question marker *à* is independent from stems, evidenced by lack of [ATR] quality change in the question marker in (44b).

- (44a)  $\text{ʔóó} = \text{n}$      $\text{sègār}$     **à**    (b)  $\text{ʔóó} = \text{n}$      $\text{ɖəm̄} = \text{n}$     **à**  
 cow = DEF    strong    QM    cow = DEF    blind = COP    QM  
 ‘Is the cow strong?’    ‘Is the cow blind?’

When the copular clitic =*À* is at the same place in the clause as the question marker, it is joined to the question marker (45b) instead of to the word it follows as in declarative clauses such as (45a).

- (45a)  $\text{ʔó-gg} = \text{ó}$      $\text{ɖəm̄-g} = \text{ò}$     (b)  $\text{ʔó-gg} = \text{ó}$      $\text{ɖəm̄-g}$     **à = à**  
 cow-PL =    blind-    cow-PL =    strong-PL    **COP = QM**  
 DEF    PL = **COP**    DEF  
 ‘The cows are blind.’    ‘Are the cows blind?’

The question marker is shown in demonstrative copular clauses (46a-b), adjectival clauses (c-f), equative clauses (g-h), and presentational clauses (i-j). In (e-f), the predicate is fronted for focus, and the copula and question marker are fronted along with it.

(46) **Non-verbal question clauses**

- (a)  $\text{ʔóó} = \text{n}$     ( $\text{néé}$ )    **à**    (b)  $\text{ʔó-gg} = \text{ò}$     ( $\text{nèè}$ )    **à**  
 cow = COP    this    QM    cow-PL = COP    these    QM  
 ‘Is this a cow?’    ‘Are these cows?’
- (c)  $\text{ʔóó} = \text{n}$      $\text{ɖəm̄} = \text{n}$     **à**    (d)  $\text{ʔó-gg} = \text{ó}$      $\text{ɖəm̄-g}$     **à = à**  
 cow = DEF    blind = COP    QM    cow-PL = DEF    strong-PL    COP = QM  
 ‘Is the cow blind?’    ‘Are the cows blind?’
- (e)  $\text{ɖəm̄} = \text{n}$     **à**     $\text{ʔóó-n}$     (f)  $\text{ɖəm̄-g}$     **à-à**     $\text{ʔó-gg} = \text{ó}$   
 blind = COP    QM    cow-DEF    strong-PL    COP-QM    cow-PL = DEF  
 ‘Is the cow blind?’    ‘Are the cows blind?’
- (g)  $\text{jèèm}$      $\text{néé}$      $\text{ʔóó} = \text{n}$     **à**    (h)  $\text{jègg}$      $\text{nèè}$      $\text{ʔógg}$     **à-à**  
 thing    this    cow = COP    QM    things    these    cow-PL    COP-QM  
 ‘Is this thing a cow?’    ‘Are these things cows?’
- (i)  $\text{ʔóó} = \text{n}$      $\text{ʔù}$     **à**    (j)  $\text{ʔó-gg} = \text{òn}$      $\text{ʔù}$     **à**  
 cow = LCM    there    QM    cow-PL = LCM    there    QM  
 ‘Is there a cow?’    ‘Are there cows?’

14.6.7 Non-verbal negative clauses

The negative particle *wá* is clause final and does not attach to the word it follows. Non-verbal negative clauses have the same construction as equivalent affirmative clauses except for the negative marker. The negative marker is shown in



demonstrative copular clauses (47a-b), adjectival clauses (c-d), presentational clauses (e-f), and past presentational clauses (g-h).

(47) **Non-verbal negative clauses**

- (a) ʔóṣ = n      wá      (b) ʔó-gg = ð      wá  
 cow = COP      not      cow-PL = COP      not  
 ‘(This) is not a cow.’      ‘(These) are not cows.’
- (c) ʔóṣ = n      ðòmṓ = n      wá      (d) ʔó-gg = ó      ðòmṓ-g = ð      wá  
 cow = DEF      blind = COP      not      cow-PL = DEF      strong-PL = COP      not  
 ‘The cow is not blind.’      ‘The cows are not blind.’
- (e) ʔóṣ = n      ʔù      wá      (f) ʔó-gg = ʃn      ʔù      wá  
 cow = LCM      there      not      cow-PL = LCM      there      not  
 ‘There is no cow.’      ‘There are no cows.’
- (g) ʔóṣ = n      ʔāán      ʔù      wá      (h) ʔó-gg = ʃn      ʔāán      ʔù      wá  
 cow =      COP.      there      not      cow-      COP.      there      not  
 LCM      CONT.P      PL = LCM      CONT.P  
 ‘There was no cow.’      ‘There were no cows.’

#### 14.7 Relative clauses

Relative clauses are introduced with the relativizer *ná/nà* ‘who, which, that’ which agrees in number with the head noun it follows. Relative clauses have been attested to modify noun subjects as in (48), objects as in (49), and copular complements as in (50).

- (48) jēn      ná      ʃn = í      ē      pàl-i      táḍ      ḍ-ŋ-mùṣ-gg.  
 person      REL.SG      bad = RDM      3sN      fall-it      down      PP-3pO-front-PL  
 ‘The person which was bad fell down in front of them.’ (Thng7-8)
- (49) kórá      kōr      ná      ʃn = í.  
 speaks      word      REL.SG      bad = RDM  
 ‘She speaks rudely (lit. the word which bad).’ (Assa6)
- (50a) càḍr      néé = n      é      sālāḍ = à      è      ālḍ      è      jēgg  
 tale      this = DEF      of      hyena.GEN = COP      of      fox.GEN      of      thing.PL.GEN  
 ‘This story is about a hyena, fox, and some
- (b) é      lēēl-ēēgg = à      bígg      nà      àn-n      léél-éēgg = è  
 of      grass.GEN-PL = COP      some      REL.PL      stay-INF      grass-PL = RDM  
 wild forest animals (lit. some things that live in the grass).’ (Nyee1-2)

The relativizer *ná/nà* can also be used pronominally as in (51).

- (51) **nà**      āgg    biɣɣè    dáāgg    é    ɲɔ̃ɔ̃gg=í  
 REL.PL   1pN   left   two   in   behind=SBO  
 ‘Those which we left behind . . .’ (Thng7)

Relative clauses differ from subordinate clauses in the conjunctions introducing the clause, in the clause-final clitics, and in marking for definiteness. As will be discussed in 15.2, the subordinate conjunctions *é gārā* ‘when, while’, *é kōrā* ‘because’, *(ā)r* ‘if’, *wār* ‘but’ introduce subordinate clauses instead of the relativizer *ná/nà*. As shown in 7.7 and 8.3.8, the clause-final subordinate clitic is always =É̇ with High tone, whereas the relative clause clitic agrees in number with the head noun =É̇/=Ē̇. Finally, subordinate clauses are not distinguished for definiteness, but many relative clauses are.

Relative clauses can take the place of noun modifiers which are either marked or unmarked for definiteness. Thus, relative clauses are also marked or unmarked for definiteness. In (48-50), the relative clauses are definite, whereas in (51) the relative clause is unmarked for definiteness. Most commonly the head noun is unmarked for definiteness if the relative clause has a definite clitic. Singular definite clitics on relative clauses have High tone and plural definite clitics have Low tone.

Table 59: Definite relative clause clitics

	SG	PL
Short	=É̇	=Ē̇

In noun phrases with dative, accompaniment, and subordinate clitics, there is no marking for definiteness and the noun phrases are ambiguous for definiteness. However, in relative clauses with such nouns, there is a definiteness distinction, except with dative relative clauses which cannot attach a dative clitic to semantically indefinite relative clauses. Some clitics such as the dative merge with the definite relative clause clitic (=É̇=Ān becomes =É̇Ē̇n), but other clitics such as the accompaniment and subordinate follow the definite relative clause clitic (=É̇=nĒ̇ becomes =É̇Ē̇=nĒ̇, where =nĒ̇ is the accompaniment clitic attaching to vowel-final stems). This definite marking is shown in (52) where the same definite relative clause clitics attach to clause-final nouns, adjectives and verbs—all consonant-final. Dashes indicate there are no clitics on the clause-final word, whereas an x indicates the word category cannot occur as definite.

(52) **Definite with dative, accompaniment, and subordinate markers on consonant-final words**

Final	SG		PL		SG		PL	
			DEF	DEF	REL	REL	RDM	RDM
N	---	-gg	=Á	=Á	---	---	=É	=È
ADJ	---	-gg	=Á	=À	---	---	=É	=È
V	H	L	x	x	---	---	=É	=È
N DAT	=Án	=Án	=Án	=Án	x	x	=ÉÈn	=ÈÈn
ADJ DAT	=Án	=Án	=Án	=Án	x	x	=ÉÈn	=ÈÈn
V DAT	x	x	x	x	---	---	=ÉÈn	=ÈÈn
N ACM	=É	=É	=É	=É	=É	=É	=ÉÉ=nÈ	=ÈÈ=nÈ
ADJ ACM	=É	=É	=É	=É	=É	=É	=ÉÉ=nÈ	=ÈÈ=nÈ
V ACM	x	x	x	x	---	---	=ÉÉ=nÈ	=ÈÈ=nÈ
N SBO	=É	=É	=É	=É	=É	=É	=ÉÉ=nÉ	=ÈÈ=nÈ
ADJ SBO	=É	=É	=É	=É	=É	=É	=ÉÉ=nÉ	=ÈÈ=nÈ
V SBO	x	x	x	x	---	---	=ÉÉ=nÉ	=ÈÈ=nÈ

In (53), nouns, adjectives and verbs are shown at the end of noun phrases and at the end of relative clauses. Each phrase is also shown unmarked and marked for definiteness. The singular definite relative clause marker is =É and the plural definite relative clause marker is =È.

(53) **Definite markers on consonant-final words**

Final	Unmarked	Definite	
N SG	àggáár	àggáár = á	'hunter'
	jāā ná àggáár	jāā ná àggáár = é	'person who is hunter'
ADJ SG	jāā bāñdāl	jāā = n bāñdāl = (á)	'weak person'
	jāā ná bāñdāl	jāā ná bāñdāl = é	'person who is weak'
V SG	jāā ñāñ	jāā = n ñāñ	'person files'
	jāā ná ñāñ	jāā ná ñāñ = é	'person who files'
N PL	àggáár-g	àggáár-g = á	'hunters'
	jōgg nà àggáár-g	jōgg nà àggáár-g = è	'people who are hunters'
ADJ PL	jōgg bāñdāl-g	jōgg = (ð) bāñdāl-g = à	'weak people'
	jōgg nà bāñdāl-g	jōgg nà bāñdāl-g = è	'people who are weak'
V PL	jōgg ñāñ	jōgg = ó ñāñ	'people file'
	jōgg nà ñāñ	jōgg nà ñāñ = è	'people who file'

In (54), nouns, adjectives and verbs are again shown at the end of noun phrases and at the end of relative clauses, this time with the dative clitic. In noun phrases with an attached dative clitic, the phrase is ambiguous for definiteness, as the dative clitic and no other is attached regardless of whether the phrase is semantically definite or indefinite. And, the distinction cannot be made by adding a definite marker to the head noun in noun phrases with adjectives, such as in \*jāā-n bāñdāl-ān. In relative clauses, unlike other clitics, semantically indefinite dative nouns modified by a

relative clause are impossible, such as *\*jāā ná bāṇḍāl = ān*. When the dative clitic attaches to definite relative clauses, it merges with the definite relative clause marker: =É=Ān becomes =ÉĒn in singular clauses and =Ē=Ān becomes =ĒĒn in plural clauses.

(54) **Dative markers on consonant-final words**

Final	Unmarked	Definite	
N SG	àggáár = <b>ān</b>	àggáár = <b>ān</b>	‘to hunter’
	*jāā ná àggáár = <b>ān</b>	jāā ná àggáár = <b>éĒn</b>	‘to person who is hunter’
ADJ SG	jāā bāṇḍāl = <b>ān</b>	jāā bāṇḍāl = <b>ān</b>	‘to weak person’
	*jāā ná bāṇḍāl = <b>ān</b>	*jāā = <b>n</b> bāṇḍāl = <b>ān</b>	
	*jāā ná bāṇḍāl = <b>ān</b>	jāā ná bāṇḍāl = <b>éĒn</b>	‘to person who is weak’
V SG	jāā ná ṇāṇ	jāā ná ṇāṇ = <b>éĒn</b>	‘to person who files’
N PL	àggáár-g = <b>ān</b>	àggáár-g = <b>ān</b>	‘to hunters’
	*jōgg nà àggáár-g = <b>ān</b>	jōgg nà àggáár-g = <b>èĒn</b>	‘to people who are hunters’
ADJ PL	jōgg bāṇḍāl-g = <b>ān</b>	jōgg bāṇḍāl-g = <b>ān</b>	‘to weak people’
	*jōgg nà bāṇḍāl-g = <b>ān</b>	*jōgg = <b>ś</b> bāṇḍāl-g = <b>ān</b>	
	*jōgg nà bāṇḍāl-g = <b>ān</b>	jōgg nà bāṇḍāl-g = <b>èĒn</b>	‘to people who are weak’
V PL	jōgg nà ṇāṇ	jōgg nà ṇāṇ = <b>èĒn</b>	‘to people who file’

As with dative clitics, in noun phrases with an attached accompaniment clitic =Ē, the phrase is ambiguous for definiteness, as the accompaniment clitic and no other is attached regardless of whether the phrase is semantically definite or indefinite. However unlike dative clitics in relative clauses, there is a definiteness distinction for accompaniment nouns modified by a relative clause, as unmarked relative clauses attach the accompaniment clitic alone and definite relative clauses attach the accompaniment clitic (for vowel-final stems =nĒ) following the definite relative clause clitic: =ÉĒ=nĒ in the singular clauses and =ĒĒ=nĒ in plural clauses.

(55) **Accompaniment markers on consonant-final words**

Final	Unmarked	Definite	
N SG	àggáár = <b>ē</b>	àggáár = <b>ē</b>	‘with hunter’
	jāā ná àggáár = <b>ē</b>	jāā ná àggáár = <b>éé = nē</b>	‘with person who is hunter’
ADJ SG	jāā bāṇḍāl = <b>ē</b>	jāā bāṇḍāl = <b>ē</b>	‘with weak person’
		*jāā = <b>n</b> bāṇḍāl = <b>ē</b>	
	jāā ná bāṇḍāl = <b>ē</b>	jāā ná bāṇḍāl = <b>éé = nē</b>	‘with person who is weak’
V SG	jāā ná ṇāṇ	jāā ná ṇāṇ = <b>éé = nē</b>	‘with person who files’

Final	Unmarked	Definite	
N PL	àggáār-g = ɛ̃	àggáār-g = ɛ̃	‘with hunters’
	jɔ̃gg nà àggáār-g = ɛ̃	jɔ̃gg nà àggáār-g = ɛ̃ɛ̃ = nɛ̃	‘with people who are hunters’
ADJ PL	jɔ̃gg bánḍāl-g = ɛ̃	jɔ̃gg bánḍāl-g = ɛ̃	‘with weak people’
	jɔ̃gg nà bánḍāl-g = ɛ̃	*jɔ̃gg = ɔ̃ bánḍāl-g = ɛ̃ jɔ̃gg nà bánḍāl-g = ɛ̃ɛ̃ = nɛ̃	‘with people who are weak’
V PL	jɔ̃gg nà n̄ān	jɔ̃gg nà n̄ān = ɛ̃ɛ̃ = nɛ̃	‘with people who file’

Similarly, in noun phrases with an attached subordinate clause-final clitic, the phrase is ambiguous for definiteness, as the subordinate clitic and no other is attached regardless of whether the phrase is semantically definite or indefinite. However, in relative clauses, there is a definiteness distinction, as unmarked relative clauses attach the subordinate clitic alone and definite relative clauses attach the subordinate clitic (for vowel-final stems = *nÉ*) following the definite relative clause clitic: = *ÉÉ = nÉ* in singular clauses and = *ÈÈ = nÈ* in plural clauses where subordinate marker High tone is lowered following Low tone.

(56) **Subordinate *é gārā* markers on consonant-final words**

Final	Unmarked	Definite	
N SG	àggáár = ɛ̃	àggáár = ɛ̃	‘when . . . hunter’
	jāā ná àggáár = ɛ̃	jāā ná àggáár = ɛ̃ɛ̃ = nɛ̃	‘when . . . person who is hunter’
ADJ SG	jāā bánḍāl = ɛ̃	jāā bánḍāl = ɛ̃	‘when . . . weak person’
	jāā ná bánḍāl = ɛ̃	*jāā = n bánḍāl = ɛ̃ jāā ná bánḍāl = ɛ̃ɛ̃ = nɛ̃	‘when . . . person who is weak’
V SG	jāā ná n̄ān	jāā ná n̄ān = ɛ̃ɛ̃ = nɛ̃	‘when . . . person who files’
N PL	àggáār-g = ɛ̃	àggáār-g = ɛ̃	‘when . . . hunters’
	jɔ̃gg nà àggáār-g = ɛ̃	jɔ̃gg nà àggáār-g = ɛ̃ɛ̃ = nɛ̃	‘when . . . people who are hunters’
ADJ PL	jɔ̃gg bánḍāl-g = ɛ̃	jɔ̃gg bánḍāl-g = ɛ̃	‘when . . . weak people’
	jɔ̃gg nà bánḍāl-g = ɛ̃	*jɔ̃gg = ɔ̃ bánḍāl-g = ɛ̃ɛ̃ = nɛ̃ jɔ̃gg nà bánḍāl-g = ɛ̃ɛ̃ = nɛ̃	‘when . . . people who are weak’
V PL	jɔ̃gg nà n̄ān	jɔ̃gg nà n̄ān = ɛ̃ɛ̃ = nɛ̃	‘when . . . people who file’

When one or more relative clauses are within another relative clause, the definite relative clause marker can only attach to the final word of the final clause.

(57) **Definite markers on relative clauses within relative clauses**

Unmarked	Definite	
jāā ná bāṅḍāl ná àggáár	jāā ná bāṅḍāl ná àggáár = é *jāā ná bāṅḍāl = é ná àggáár *jāā ná bāṅḍāl = é ná àggáár = é	‘person who is weak who is hunter’
jōgg nà bāṅḍāl-g nà àggáár-g	jōgg nà bāṅḍāl-g nà àggáár-g = è *jōgg nà bāṅḍāl-g nà àggáár-g *jōgg nà bāṅḍāl-g nà àggáár-g = è	‘people who are weak who are hunters’

In genitive noun phrases or relative clauses, either marked or unmarked for definiteness, only the head noun undergoes a change in tone.

(58) **Genitive relative clauses**

Final	Unmarked	Definite	
ADJ SG	jāā bāṅḍāl jāā ná bāṅḍāl	jāā = n bāṅḍāl = (á) jāā ná bāṅḍāl = é	‘of weak person’ ‘of person who is weak’
ADJ PL	jōgg bāṅḍāl-g jōgg nà bāṅḍāl-g	jōgg = (ò) bāṅḍāl-g = à jōgg nà bāṅḍāl-g = è	‘of weak people’ ‘of people who are weak’

14.8 Evidentiality

The certainty of an action taking place is marked in the clause rather than on the verb. There are two degrees of certainty or evidentiality for both completive and incompleted verbs.

The normal completive form by itself is a statement of certainty. It states that it is certain the action is completed. Uncertainty in the completive form is indicated by the particle *lā* and optionally by the clause-final subordinate clitic =É. Both degrees of certainty in the completive are shown in (59).

(59) **Degrees of certainty in the completive**

- (a) ē kómsó māgàḍ ‘He cut.’ certainty  
 (b) **lā** ē kómsó māgàḍ(=É) ‘He may have cut a stick.’ uncertainty

(60) **Completive uncertainty paradigms**

- |                         |                         |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| (a) ‘may have bought’   | (b) ‘may have buried’   |
| lā á mār-sà 1sN         | lā á ḍūr-sù 1sN         |
| lā ó, ú = mār-sè 2sN    | lā ó, ú = ḍūr-sù 2sN    |
| lā ē mār-sā 3sN         | lā ē ḍūr-sū 3sN         |
| lā āgg mār-sà 1pN       | lā āgg ḍūr-sù 1pN       |
| lā ògg, ūg = mār-sè 2pN | lā ògg, ūg = ḍūr-sù 2sN |
| lā ēggà mār-sà 3pN      | lā ēggà ḍūr-sù 3pN      |
| PRON buy-COMP           | PRON bury-COMP          |

In (60), completive uncertainty paradigms show that the uncertainty particle occurs before the subject pronoun.

Similarly, the incomplete verb by itself is also a statement of certainty. It states that it is certain the action is ongoing or for certain will be ongoing. Adding the uncertainty particle *lā* before the incomplete verb or attaching the clause-final subordinate clitic =*Ē* indicates uncertainty in the future. With either marker, the other marker is optional.

(61) **Degrees of certainty in the incomplete**

- |     |                                      |                        |             |
|-----|--------------------------------------|------------------------|-------------|
| (a) | kóm māgàḍ                            | ‘He will cut a stick.’ | certainty   |
| (b) | é <b>lā</b> kóm māgàḍ( = <b>Ē</b> )  | ‘He may cut a stick.’  | uncertainty |
| (c) | é ( <b>lā</b> ) kóm māgàḍ = <b>Ē</b> | ‘He may cut a stick.’  | uncertainty |

As mentioned in 9.6.2, tone is altered on subject pronouns of incomplete verbs to indicate future actions with certainty. The same future incomplete paradigms in 9.6.2 are given in (62) for ease of reference.

(62) **Future certainty incomplete paradigms**

- |                         |                                      |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| (a) ‘will run’          | (b) ‘will bury the egg’              |
| ā            gāl    1sN | ā            ḍùr    kólóḍ = ó    1sN |
| û = gəl    2sN          | û = ḍùr    kólóḍ = ó    2sN          |
| é            gāl    3sN | é            ḍùr    kólóḍ = ó    3sN |
| āggā        gāl    1pN  | āggā        ḍùr    kólóḍ = ó    1pN  |
| ūggū = gəl    2pN       | ūggū = ḍùr    kólóḍ = ó    2sN       |
| (Ēggà) é    gāl    3pN  | (Ēggà) é    ḍùr    kólóḍ = ó    3pN  |
| PRON        run.        | PRON        bury.    egg=DEF         |
| INCP                    | INCP                                 |

Unlike in uncertain completive paradigms, in uncertain incomplete paradigms the uncertainty particle occurs after the subject pronoun. In second person forms, the particle attaches to the verb, thereby taking on [+ATR] quality. The same meaning

(63) **Future uncertainty incomplete paradigms**

- |                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| (a) ‘may run’                     | (b) ‘may bury egg’                            |
| á, ā        lā    gāl    1sN      | (b) á, ā        lā    ḍùr    kólóḍ = ó    1sN |
| ó, ɔ̄, ú,    û = lɔ̄ = gəl    2sN | ó, ɔ̄, ú,    û = lɔ̄ = ḍùr    2sN             |
| ē, é        lā    gāl    3sN      | ē, é        lā    ḍùr    kólóḍ = ó    3sN     |
| āgg(á)    lā    gāl    1pN        | āgg(á)    lā    ḍùr    kólóḍ = ó    1pN       |
| ɔ̄ggó, ɔ̄ggó,    2pN              | ɔ̄ggó, ɔ̄ggó,    2pN                          |
| ūgg(ú), ūggū = lɔ̄ = gəl          | ūgg(ú), ūggū = lɔ̄ = ḍùr                      |
| ēggà        lā    gāl    3pN      | ēggà        lā    ḍùr    kólóḍ = ó    3pN     |
| PRON        run.                  | PRON        bury.    egg=DEF                  |
| INCP                              | INCP  |

is communicated regardless of whether the future or non-future subject pronouns precede the uncertainty marker. Second person subject pronouns are optionally [+/- ATR] regardless of the [ATR] quality of the root vowel.

Although uncommon, it is possible for the subject pronoun to be repeated following the certainty marker and before the verb, as in (64).

- (64) á lā á gār fól  
 1sN UNC 1sN dig.INCP hole  
 ‘I may dig a hole.’

## 14.9 Noun phrases

### 14.9.1 Word order in the noun phrase

The noun phrase can be diagrammed in the order of (65). The head noun is followed by an optional possessive pronoun (POS), and one or more optional adjectives. More than one adjective in the same noun phrase is rare and no prescribed order in the noun phrase can be determined. It is also possible for demonstratives (DEM) to precede alienable possessive pronouns. The possessors of inalienable nouns—kinship terms and body parts—precede the possessed noun, and the possessors of alienable nouns follow the noun.

- (65) **Noun phrase word order**  
 NP -> (POS<sub>Inalienable</sub>) N (POS<sub>Alienable</sub>) ({DEM, NUM, ADJ<sub>Quan</sub>, ADJ<sub>Qual</sub>})

The adjectival clause of (66a) shows a noun phrase with three adjectives—a demonstrative, numeral, and adjective of quality. The possessive pronoun *ónègg = è* ‘mine=COP’ is a noun phrase complement of the non-verbal adjectival clause and the copula clitic is attached. In (b), the second singular possessive pronoun *ó* ‘your’ precedes the kinship term *yāā nāā* ‘aunt, younger mother (lit. mother girl)’—a compound noun phrase, which is followed by a demonstrative.

- (66) **Noun phrase word order**  
 (a) ʔó-gg nì ásamán ɖùìgg = è ónègg = è  
 cow-PL these five black=DEF 1sPp=COP  
 ‘These five black cows are mine.’  
 (b) è ó yāā nāā néé lèèn-án ɖūmùùn ɖ-ūūŋ ʔà  
 and 2sPs mother girl this was.coming towards PP-2sO there  
 ‘Your mother’s sister was coming to you there.’ (Assa3-4)



- (c) *bù fīŋá-ḍō kōr ón ní m̄ mā māŋ*  
 let hear word 1sPs this very carefully  
 ‘Listen carefully to what I am saying (lit. this my word)!’ (Womn3)
- (d) *bē-ēn ā wár-ḍā bàl-g=ā n̄è ón̄gg k̄āē*  
 /bēg/say- SBJV /wár/bring- instrument- these 1sPp all  
 CONT.P SBJV PL=DEF  
 ‘They were saying to bring all my wood instruments.’

In (c), the first singular possessive pronoun *ón* ‘my’ follows the singular noun *kōr* ‘word’, being an alienable noun, and is followed by the demonstrative *ní* ‘this’. In (d), the third plural possessive pronoun *ón̄gg* ‘my’ follows the plural alienable noun *bàl-gā* ‘instrument’. A demonstrative, possessive pronoun, and quantitative adjective are all present in the same noun phrase, where the demonstrative precedes the pronoun, possibly being fronted for emphasis.

Constructions with relative clauses are preferred above long noun phrases with multiple adjectives. In (67), the relativiser *n̄ā* begins three separate relative clauses.

- (67) *ṭgg ón̄gg n̄ā ásámán n̄ā wíḡg n̄ā ðùigg=è ēggàn k̄alg*  
 cows 1sPp REL five REL good REL black=RDM L.COP field  
 ‘My five good black cows are in the field.’

#### 14.9.2 Noun agreement

Adjectives, possessive pronouns, and demonstratives agree with nouns in number. Agreement is marked by the geminate velar segment *gg* or tone change. The plural adjective suffix *-gg* is shown in (68a-b) and the possessive pronouns *ón̄gg* and *ōȳgg* are shown in (c-d). In (e-f), High tone in the demonstratives indicates a singular noun and Low a plural noun.

- (68) **Noun agreement**
- |     | Noun SG          | Noun PL              |                        |
|-----|------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| (a) | <i>kòlèèḍ ì</i>  | <i>kòlèèḍ-g ì-gg</i> | ‘heavy sword’          |
| (b) | <i>ṭṣ kóṣfār</i> | <i>ṭgg kóṣfār-g</i>  | ‘thin cow’             |
| (c) | <i>māā ón</i>    | <i>māā-gg ón̄gg</i>  | ‘my house’             |
| (d) | <i>māā ōȳn</i>  | <i>māā-g ōȳgg</i>   | ‘our house’            |
| (e) | <i>ṭṣ néé</i>    | <i>ṭṣ-gg n̄èè</i>    | ‘this cow/ these cows’ |
| (f) | <i>ṭṣ náá</i>    | <i>ṭṣ-gg n̄àà</i>    | ‘that cow/ those cows’ |

#### 14.9.3 Possessive phrases

Possession of most nouns is expressed by the general preposition *é* (GP) following the possessed noun and preceding the possessor. The possessor is in genitive case

which is marked only by a tone change. Examples (69b, d, f) are incorrect, but given for comparison with the examples of (70).

(69) **Noun possessive phrases**

- |     |                     |    |               |     |        |           |
|-----|---------------------|----|---------------|-----|--------|-----------|
| (a) | gàḍáàè              | é  | jên           | (b) | *jēn   | gàḍáàè    |
|     | basket              | GP | person.GEN    |     | person | basket    |
|     | ‘basket of person’  |    |               |     |        |           |
| (c) | gàḍáàè-gg           | é  | jên           | (d) | *jēn   | gàḍáàè-gg |
|     | basket-PL           | GP | person.GEN    |     | person | basket-PL |
|     | ‘baskets of person’ |    |               |     |        |           |
| (e) | gàḍáàè-gg           | é  | jôgg          | (f) | *jôgg  | gàḍáàè-gg |
|     | basket-PL           | GP | person.GEN-PL |     | people | basket-PL |
|     | ‘baskets of people’ |    |               |     |        |           |

Although body part nouns can also be possessed by having the same construction as other nouns as shown in (70a, c, e), it is more common for the possessor of body part nouns to precede the body part without the general preposition and without being in genitive case as in (70b, d, f).

(70) **Body part noun possessive phrases**

- |     |                  |    |               |     |        |        |
|-----|------------------|----|---------------|-----|--------|--------|
| (a) | lúḍ              | é  | jên           | (b) | jēn    | lúḍ    |
|     | leg              | GP | person.GEN    |     | person | leg    |
|     | ‘leg of person’  |    |               |     |        |        |
| (c) | lú-ūgg           | é  | jên           | (d) | jēn    | lú-ūgg |
|     | leg-PL           | GP | person.GEN    |     | person | leg-PL |
|     | ‘legs of person’ |    |               |     |        |        |
| (e) | lú-ūgg           | é  | jôgg          | (f) | jôgg   | lù-ùgg |
|     | leg-PL           | GP | person.GEN-PL |     | people | leg-PL |
|     | ‘legs of people’ |    |               |     |        |        |

In (71a), the possessor *ūfú* ‘tree’ precedes the body part noun *ḍḍḍ* ‘body’ it possesses. As seen in (71b), kinship terms may also form possession by the possessor preceding the possessed noun. In this case, the kinship term possessor *yáā* ‘mother’ precedes the noun *nāā* ‘girl’ it possesses.

- (71a) é gārā káhs-s=í ūfú-n=í, ē dḍḍs-s  
 GP when struck-COMP=SBO1 hijliij.tree-DEF=SBO 3sN start-INF  
 ‘When she struck the tree,

lôŋ      ē      wāŋ-ŋ      sím      ūfú      ǝǝŋ.  
 until      3sN      went-INF      down      tree      body  
 (her horns) went deep into the tree (lit. into tree's body).' (Nyee 14-15)

- (b) ò      ó      yāā      nāā      néé      lèèn-án      ðūmùùn      ð-ūūŋ      ɬà  
 and      2sPs      mother      girl      this      was.coming      towards      PP-2sO      there  
 'Your mother's sister (lit. your girl mother) was coming to you there.'  
 (Assa3-4)