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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 *māā-sá* ‘grandfather’ is the recipient and indirect object.

- (1) *mèēn* *māār-sá* *nāms-á* *māāð = ān*
 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 =*Ān* 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 *bér-sāná* ‘explain’ expressing time. In (3), the locative phrase *ūfú íól* ‘in the tree’ and adverb *qēēnē* ‘only’ are both adjuncts to the verb *ān* ‘stay’ expressing location.

- (3) ē àn ūfú 3ól dēēnē.
 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) bāárg-á ḡás-ǎ n nā-lg nà 5n-g=i
 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_[Adjunct]) V (NP_[O]) (NP_[IO]) ({LP, PP, ADV}_[Adjunct])

The examples of (6) show the common word order of verb complements and adjuncts. In (a), the object *k5r* ‘speech’ is followed by a prepositional phrase *é m5n* ‘by time’, which is followed by an adverb of place *tè* ‘here’, and then followed by the adverb *55* ‘only’. In (b), the verb is followed by the locative phrase *m5s5r 55l* ‘on a horse’, by the prepositional phrase *ē páré=n é m5nìl=à* ‘with animal skin of the devil’ which is a prepositional phrase within a phrase, and finally by the prefixed prepositional phrase *d-éès* ‘in his hand’.

- (6a) ā tāl k5r é m5n tè 55.
 SBJV create.SBJV.1sN speech by time here only
 ‘... and I will stop talking here.’ (Tifa14)
- (b) ē àn m5s5r 55l ē páré=n é m5nìl=à d-éès.
 3sN stay horse up with skin.bag = GP devil.GEN = PP-
 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) ālq = á ē wāṭ-ṭ tū.
fox = DEF 3sN /wāṭ/go-INF out
'The fox went out.' (Goat16-17)

- (b) mōrāā ṣō-ṣ-í tāān
government /ṣō/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			
jāḍèèr = ā	wár-sá	kāṇ	īnī = n	ē	māḍā.
Jader = DEF	/wár/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 /gāf/ 'give', /bēē/ 'tell, say', /bāg/ 'bring'.

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

AGENT		THEME	RECIPIENT
jēn	gāḍ-sā	mīī = n	kāmālōgg = ān
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	= \tilde{E}	= $\acute{E}\tilde{E}$	valency- decreasing
Middle	[+ATR], tone change	[+ATR], tone change	
Passive	= $\tilde{A}n\acute{A}$, = \acute{A}	= $\tilde{A}n\acute{A}$, = \acute{A}	
Antipassive	-An	-An	
Causative	[+ATR], - \check{d}^+A	[+ATR], - \check{d}^+A	valency- increasing

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 = \tilde{E} / = $\acute{E}\tilde{E}$, 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)	ḟēn	nām-sá	gùlḁūn	(b)	ḟōgg	nām-sà	gùlḁūn
	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)	gùlḁūn	nām-s = ɛ ³⁸	jên	(b)	gùlḁūn	nām-s = ɛɛ	jɔgg
	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 \check{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 *āggáár* ‘hunter’ of (c) has LH root tone melody which switches to ML tone melody in genitive case.

³⁸ 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 = ḗ é́ 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 = ī́ d-éēn wá.
 someone /káàm/bothered.CAUS-COMP = PAS.A PP-3sO not
 ‘No one was bothered by it.’ (Thng25)
- (c) nāms náo-s = ḗ āggāār
 food /naw/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 nǎm-só (b) gùlḍūgg nǎm-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 = *ĀnÁ* attaches to stems with vowel-final suffixes and the clitic = *Á* 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 nām-s = ānÁ (b) gùlḍūgg nām-s = ānÁ
 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
 /fē/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 =*Ē* / =*ĒĒ* as shown in (17).

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

- (a) jēn nām-**ān**-sá (b) jōgg nām-**ān**-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-**ān**-s = **ē** jēn (b) nām-**ān**-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 =*ĀnÁ*.

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

- nām-**ān**-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⁺A, -d⁺A.

In (19), the reason or initiative for breaking is from *aggáár* ‘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
aggáár	nǎm-sǒ	jēn	gùlǔ = n
hunter	break.CAUS-COMP	person	branch=DEF
‘A hunter made the person break the branch.’			

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

gùlǔ = n	nǎm-s-ǐ	aggāār(-è)	jēn
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
aggáár	gǒu-sǒ	jēn	mīi	kāmǎlǒgg = ān
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)**

aggáár	nǎm-ǎn-sǒ	jēn
hunter	break.CAUS-ANTIP-COMP	person
‘A hunter made the person break something.’		

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

jēn	nǎm-ǎn-s = ǐ	aggāār(-è)
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-**ǎn**-só gùldūn
 hunter break.CAUS-ANTIP-COMP branch.DEF
 ‘A hunter made someone break the branch.’

(25) **Antipassive causative, agented passive verb (unknown experiencer)**

gùldūn nóm-**ǎn**-s=**ǐ** āggāàr(-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-**ǎn**-só
 hunter break.CAUS-ANTIP-COMP
 ‘A hunter made someone break something.’

(27) **Antipassive causative, agented passive verb (unknown patient & experiencer)**

nóm-**ǎn**-s=**ǐ** āggāàr(-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 *gùldūn* ‘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)**

gùldūn nóm-s=**ǎn**ǎ 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-**ǎn**-s=**ǎn**ǎ
 person break.CAUS-ANTIP-COMP=PAS
 ‘The person was made to break something.’

(30) **Passive causative antipassive (implied agent, unknown experiencer & patient)**

nóm-**ǎn**-s=**ǎn**ǎ
 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	---	= Ā	
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 =Ā 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** tū wá
 money-PL-DEF COP there not
 ‘There is no money.’ (Fand16)
- (b) Bḕl mán **tā-án** tū
 metal certain COP-CONT.P there
 ‘There was a certain metal token’ (Fand8)
- (c) t́ó-gg-ó dāmō-gg=**ā**
 cow-PL-DEF blind-PL=COP
 ‘The cows are blind.’

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

- (32a) t́ó=**n** (b) t́ó-gg=**ā**
 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 (= *n*) 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 = *ā* on plural adjectives takes the [ATR] quality of the adjective word.

(33) Adjectival clauses

- | | |
|--|---|
| (a) <i>t̥s̥s̥</i> <i>tā</i> <i>s̥ɛggār</i>
cow COP strong
'A cow is strong.' | (b) <i>t̥s̥-gg</i> <i>tā</i> <i>s̥ɛggār-g</i>
cow-PL COP strong-PL
'Cows are strong.' |
| (c) <i>t̥s̥s̥</i> <i>s̥ɛggār</i>
cow strong
'A cow is strong.' | (d) <i>t̥s̥-gg</i> <i>s̥ɛggār-g=ā</i>
cow-PL strong-PL = COP
'Cows are strong.' |
| (e) <i>t̥s̥s̥</i> <i>ḍəm̃= n</i>
cow blind = COP
'A cow is blind.' | (f) <i>t̥s̥-gg</i> <i>ḍəm̃-gg= ā</i>
cow-PL blind-PL = COP
'Cows are blind.' |

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

(34) Definite adjectival clauses

- | | |
|---|--|
| (a) <i>t̥s̥s̥= n</i> <i>s̥ɛggār</i>
cow = DEF strong
'The cow is strong.' | (b) <i>t̥s̥-gg-5</i> <i>s̥ɛggār-g= ā</i>
cow-PL-DEF strong-PL = COP
'The cows are strong.' |
| (c) <i>c̥s̥l</i> <i>s̥ɛggār= ā</i> <i>ḍəm̃= n</i>
donkey strong = blind =
DEF COP
'The strong donkey is blind.' | (d) <i>c̥s̥l-ēēgg</i> <i>s̥ɛggār-g= ā</i> <i>ḍəm̃-gg= ā</i>
donkey- strong- blind-
PL PL = DEF PL = COP
'The strong donkeys are blind.' |

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

(35) **Demonstratives in copular clauses**

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>(a) ṭṣṣ mǎn ɖəmǎ = n
 cow certain blind = COP
 ‘A certain cow is blind.’
 ‘This is a blind cow.’</p> | <p>(b) ṭṣ-gg bŭigg ɖəmǎ-gg = ə
 cow-PL certain.PL blind-PL = COP
 ‘Certain cows are blind.’
 ‘These are blind cows.’</p> |
| <p>(c) ṭṣṣ níí ɖəmǎ = n
 cow this blind = COP
 ‘This cow is blind.’
 ‘This is a blind cow.’</p> | <p>(d) ṭṣ-gg nìì ɖəmǎ-gg = ə
 cow-PL these blind-PL = COP
 ‘These cows are blind.’
 ‘These are blind cows.’</p> |
| <p>(e) ṭṣṣ níí ǎən = ə
 cow this 1sPs = COP
 ‘This cow is mine.’
 ‘This is my cow.’</p> | <p>(f) ṭṣ-gg nìì ǎnəgg = ə
 cow-PL these 1sPp = COP
 ‘These cows are mine.’
 ‘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) ṭṣṣ ǎən = ə
 cow 1sPs = COP
 ‘a cow is mine.’</p> | <p>(b) ṭṣ-gg ǎnəgg = ə
 cow-PL 1sPp = COP
 ‘cows are mine.’</p> |
| <p>(c) ṭṣṣ = n ǎən = ə
 cow = DEF 1sPs = COP
 ‘The cow is mine.’</p> | <p>(d) ṭṣ-gg = ɖ ǎnəgg = ə
 cow-PL = DEF 1sPp = COP
 ‘The cows are mine.’</p> |
| <p>(e) ṭṣṣ = n sèggār ǎən = ə
 cow = strong 1sPs =
 DEF COP
 ‘The strong cow is mine.’</p> | <p>(f) ṭṣ-gg sèggār-g = ə ǎnəgg = ə
 cow-PL strong-PL = 1sPp =
 DEF COP
 ‘The strong cows are mine.’</p> |

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

- (37a) ṭṣṣ níí ɖəmǎ = n ǎən = ə
 cow this blind = COP 1sPs = COP
 ‘This cow is blind and mine.’
- (b) ṭṣ-gg nìì ɖəmǎ-g = ə ǎnəgg = 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) *fēētfa = n* *jēn* *ḍù.ī = n*
Feetfa=DEF person black=COP
 ‘Feetfa 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>ín, 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 *ín, 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 *ín*.

(39) **Singular locative clauses**

- (a) jāā bāṇḍāl **īn** wéé bènɲ
 person weak LCM house beside
 ‘A weak person is beside a house.’
- (b) jāā bāṇḍāl = **ān** wéé bènɲ
 person weak=LCM house beside
 ‘A weak person is beside a house.’
- (c) jāā = n bāṇḍāl = (**ā**) **īn** wéé bènɲ
 person=DEF weak=(DEF) LCM house beside
 ‘The weak person is beside a house.’
- (d) jāā = n bāṇḍāl = **ān** wéé bènɲ
 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 bāṇḍāl-g **ēggàn** wéé bènɲ
 people weak-PL LCM house beside
 ‘Weak people are beside a house.’
- (b) jōgg bāṇḍāl-g = **ān** wéé bènɲ
 people weak-PL=LCM house beside
 ‘Weak people are beside a house.’
- (c) jōgg bāṇḍāl-g = **ā** **ēggàn** wéé bènɲ
 people weak-PL=DEF LCM house beside
 ‘The weak people are beside a house.’
- (d) jōgg bāṇḍāl-g = **ān** wéé bènɲ
 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 *ɲù* ‘there’. The copular clitic =*Ān* can take the place of *īn* 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 **fin** 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 *ēggān* 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 **ēggān** 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** **ēggān** ʔù (d) ʔó-gg sèggār-g = **ān** ʔù
 cow-PL strong-PL=DEF LCM there cow-PL strong-PL=LCM there
 ‘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) ʔɔ́ɔ́ = n sɛ̀gā́r à (b) ʔɔ́ɔ́ = n ɖ̀əmɔ́ = 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) ʔɔ́-gg = ɔ́ ɖ̀əmɔ́-g = ɔ́ (b) ʔɔ́-gg = ɔ́ ɖ̀əmɔ́-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) ʔɔ́ɔ́ = n (nɛ́ɛ́) à (b) ʔɔ́-gg = ɔ́ (nɛ̀ɛ̀) à
 cow = COP this QM cow-PL = COP these QM
 ‘Is this a cow?’ ‘Are these cows?’
- (c) ʔɔ́ɔ́ = n ɖ̀əmɔ́ = n à (d) ʔɔ́-gg = ɔ́ ɖ̀əmɔ́-g à = à
 cow = DEF blind = COP QM cow-PL = DEF strong-PL COP = QM
 ‘Is the cow blind?’ ‘Are the cows blind?’
- (e) ɖ̀əmɔ́ = n à ʔɔ́ɔ́-n (f) ɖ̀əmɔ́-g à-à ʔɔ́-gg = ɔ́
 blind = COP QM cow-DEF strong-PL COP-QM cow-PL = DEF
 ‘Is the cow blind?’ ‘Are the cows blind?’
- (g) jɛ̀ɛ̀m nɛ́ɛ́ ʔɔ́ɔ́ = n à (h) jɛ̀gg nɛ̀ɛ̀ ʔɔ́gg à-à
 thing this cow = COP QM things these cow-PL COP-QM
 ‘Is this thing a cow?’ ‘Are these things cows?’
- (i) ʔɔ́ɔ́ = n ʔù à (j) ʔɔ́-gg = ɔ́n 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) ʔɔ̃ = n wá (b) ʔɔ̃-gg = ɔ̃ wá
 cow = COP not cow-PL = COP not
 ‘(This) is not a cow.’ ‘(These) are not cows.’
- (c) ʔɔ̃ = n ɖəmɔ̃ = n wá (d) ʔɔ̃-gg = ɔ̃ ɖəmɔ̃-g = ɔ̃ wá
 cow = DEF blind = COP not cow-PL = DEF strong-PL = COP not
 ‘The cow is not blind.’ ‘The cows are not blind.’
- (e) ʔɔ̃ = n ʔù wá (f) ʔɔ̃-gg = ʔn ʔù wá
 cow = LCM there not cow-PL = LCM there not
 ‘There is no cow.’ ‘There are no cows.’
- (g) ʔɔ̃ = n ʔāán ʔù wá (h) ʔɔ̃-gg = ʔn 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 ɔ̃n = í ē pəl-ì táɖ ɖ-ŋ-mùù-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 ɔ̃n = í.
 speaks word REL.SG bad = RDM
 ‘She speaks rudely (lit. the word which bad).’ (Assa6)
- (50a) càðr néé = n é sālāɖ = à è âlɖ 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 lēl-ēēgg = à bīgg 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 ɲǎǎgg = 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 kārā* ‘because’, *(ā)* ‘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 =*É* with High tone, whereas the relative clause clitic agrees in number with the head noun =*É*/=*Ē*. 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	= <i>É</i>	= <i>Ē</i>

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 (= *É*=*Ā**n* becomes =*ÉĒn*), but other clitics such as the accompaniment and subordinate follow the definite relative clause clitic (= *É*=*nĒ* becomes =*ÉÉ*=*nĒ*, where =*nĒ* 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	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 bāṇḍāl	jāā = n bāṇḍāl = (á)	'weak person'
	jāā ná bāṇḍāl	jāā ná bāṇḍāl = é	'person who is weak'
V SG	jāā ṇāṇ	jāā = n ṇāṇ	'person files'
	jāā ná ṇāṇ	jāā ná ṇāṇ = é	'person who files'
N PL	àggáār-g	àggáār-g = á	'hunters'
	jōgg ná àggáār-g	jōgg ná àggáār-g = è	'people who are hunters'
ADJ PL	jōgg bāṇḍāl-g	jōgg = (ḍ) bāṇḍāl-g = à	'weak people'
	jōgg ná bāṇḍāl-g	jōgg ná bāṇḍāl-g = è	'people who are weak'
V PL	jōgg ṇāṇ	jōgg = ḍ ṇāṇ	'people file'
	jōgg ná ṇāṇ	jōgg ná ṇāṇ = 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 bāṇḍāl-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: $= \acute{E} = \acute{A}n$ becomes $= \acute{E}\acute{E}n$ in singular clauses and $= \acute{E} = \acute{A}n$ becomes $= \acute{E}\acute{E}n$ in plural clauses.

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

Final	Unmarked	Definite	
N SG	àggáár = ān	àggáár = ān	‘to hunter’
	*jāā ná àggáár = ān	jāā ná àggáár = éēn	‘to person who is hunter’
ADJ SG	jāā bāṇḍāl = ān	jāā bāṇḍāl = ān	‘to weak person’
		*jāā = n bāṇḍāl = ān	
	*jāā ná bāṇḍāl = ān	jāā ná bāṇḍāl = éēn	‘to person who is weak’
V SG	jāā ná ṇāṇ	jāā ná ṇāṇ = éēn	‘to person who files’
N PL	àggáār-g = ān	àggáār-g = ān	‘to hunters’
	*jōgg nà àggáār-g = ān	jōgg nà àggáār-g = èēn	‘to people who are hunters’
ADJ PL	jōgg bāṇḍāl-g = ān	jōgg bāṇḍāl-g = ān	‘to weak people’
		*jōgg = ś bāṇḍāl-g = ān	
	*jōgg nà bāṇḍāl-g = ān	jōgg nà bāṇḍāl-g = èēn	‘to people who are weak’
V PL	jōgg nà ṇāṇ	jōgg nà ṇāṇ = èēn	‘to people who file’

As with dative clitics, in noun phrases with an attached accompaniment clitic $= \acute{E}$, 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 $= n\acute{E}$) following the definite relative clause clitic: $= \acute{E}\acute{E} = n\acute{E}$ in the singular clauses and $= \acute{E}\acute{E} = n\acute{E}$ in plural clauses.

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

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

Final	Unmarked	Definite	
N PL	àggáār-g = é	àggáār-g = é	‘with hunters’
	jǝgg nà àggáār-g = é	jǝgg nà àggáār-g = èè = nē	‘with people who are hunters’
ADJ PL	jǝgg bándāl-g = é	jǝgg bándāl-g = é	‘with weak people’
		*jǝgg = ɔ bándāl-g = é	
	jǝgg nà bándāl-g = é	jǝgg nà bándāl-g = èè = nē	‘with people who are weak’
V PL	jǝgg nà nǝn	jǝgg nà nǝn = èè = nē	‘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 = nÉ** in plural clauses where subordinate marker High tone is lowered following Low tone.

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

Final	Unmarked	Definite	
N SG	àggáár = é	àggáár = é	‘when . . . hunter’
	jǝā ná àggáár = é	jǝā ná àggáár = éé = nÉ	‘when . . . person who is hunter’
ADJ SG	jǝā bándāl = é	jǝā bándāl = é	‘when . . . weak person’
		*jǝā = n bándāl = é	
	jǝā ná bándāl = é	jǝā ná bándāl = éé = nÉ	‘when . . . person who is weak’
V SG	jǝā ná nǝn	jǝā ná nǝn = éé = nÉ	‘when . . . person who files’
N PL	àggáār-g = é	àggáār-g = é	‘when . . . hunters’
	jǝgg nà	jǝgg nà àggáār-g = èè = nÉ	‘when . . . people who are hunters’
	àggáār-g = é		
ADJ PL	jǝgg bándāl-g = é	jǝgg bándāl-g = é	‘when . . . weak people’
		*jǝgg = ɔ bándāl-g = èè = nÉ	
	jǝgg nà bándāl-g = é	jǝgg nà bándāl-g = èè = nÉ	‘when . . . people who are weak’
V PL	jǝgg nà nǝn	jǝgg nà nǝn = èè = nÉ	‘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 bāṇḍāl ná àggáár	jāā ná bāṇḍāl ná àggáár = é *jāā ná bāṇḍāl = é ná àggáár *jāā ná bāṇḍāl = é ná àggáár = é	‘person who is weak who is hunter’
jōgg ná bāṇḍāl-g ná àggáār-g	jōgg ná bāṇḍāl-g ná àggáār-g = è *jōgg ná bāṇḍāl-g ná àggáār-g *jōgg ná bāṇḍāl-g ná àggáār-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 bāṇḍāl jāā ná bāṇḍāl	jāā = n bāṇḍāl = (á) jāā ná bāṇḍāl = é	‘of weak person’ ‘of person who is weak’
ADJ PL	jōgg bāṇḍāl-g jōgg ná bāṇḍāl-g	jōgg = (ḍ) bāṇḍāl-g = à jōgg ná bāṇḍāl-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 incomplete 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 = *ē*. 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(= ē) ‘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-sà 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 ōgg, ūg = mār-sà 2pN	lā ōgg, 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 lā kóm māgàḍ(= Ē) | ‘He may cut a stick.’ | uncertainty |
| (c) | é (lā) kóm māgàḍ = Ē | ‘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 kólólḍ = ḍ 1sN |
| ū = gəl 2sN | ū = ḍùr kólólḍ = ḍ 2sN |
| é gāl 3sN | é ḍùr kólólḍ = ḍ 3sN |
| āggā gāl 1pN | āggā ḍùr kólólḍ = ḍ 1pN |
| ūggū = gəl 2pN | ūggū = ḍùr kólólḍ = ḍ 2sN |
| (ēggà) é gāl 3pN | (ēggà) é ḍùr kólólḍ = ḍ 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 kólólḍ = ḍ 1sN |
| ó, ̄, ú, ū = l̄ = gəl 2sN | ó, ̄, ú, ū = l̄ = ḍùr 2sN |
| ē, é lā gāl 3sN | ē, é lā ḍùr kólólḍ = ḍ 3sN |
| āgg(á) lā gāl 1pN | āgg(á) lā ḍùr kólólḍ = ḍ 1pN |
| ōggó, ̄ggó, 2pN | ōggó, ̄ggó, 2pN |
| ūgg(ú), ūggū = l̄ = gəl | ūgg(ú), ūggū = l̄ = ḍùr |
| ēggà lā gāl 3pN | ēggà lā ḍùr kólólḍ = ḍ 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 fōl
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_{Inalienable}) N (POS_{Alienable}) ({DEM, NUM, ADJ_{Quan}, ADJ_{Qual}})

The adjectival clause of (66a) shows a noun phrase with three adjectives—a demonstrative, numeral, and adjective of quality. The possessive pronoun *śnəgg* = *ə* '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 *ś* '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) ʔə-gg nī áśámán ʔūgg = ə śnəgg = ə
cow-PL these five black=DEF 1sPp=COP
'These five black cows are mine.'

- (b) ə ś yāā nāā néé lèèn-án ʔūmùùn ʔ-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-dā* *kōr* *óòn* *níí* *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-dā* *bààl-g = ā* *nèè* *ónègg* *kāē*
 /bēg/say- SBJV /war/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 *óòn* ‘my’ follows the singular noun *kōr* ‘word’, being an alienable noun, and is followed by the demonstrative *níí* ‘this’. In (d), the third plural possessive pronoun *ónègg* ‘my’ follows the plural alienable noun *bààlgā* ‘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 relativisor *nà* begins three separate relative clauses.

- (67) *ṭogg* *ónègg* *nà* *ásámán* *nà* *wíðg* *nà* *ḍùigg = è* *ēggàn* *kālg*
 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 *ónègg* and *ōyègg* 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>kòlèèð ñ</i> | <i>kòlèèð-g ñ-gg</i> | ‘heavy sword’ |
| (b) | <i>ṭóó kóófār</i> | <i>ṭogg kóófār-g</i> | ‘thin cow’ |
| (c) | <i>máà óòn</i> | <i>máà-gg ónègg</i> | ‘my house’ |
| (d) | <i>máà òyòn</i> | <i>máà-g òyègg</i> | ‘our house’ |
| (e) | <i>ṭóó néé</i> | <i>ṭó-gg nèè</i> | ‘this cow/ these cows’ |
| (f) | <i>ṭóó náá</i> | <i>ṭó-gg nàà</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) | gàdààè é jên
basket GP person.GEN
'basket of person' | (b) | *jên gàdààè
person basket |
| (c) | gàdààè-gg é jên
basket-PL GP person.GEN
'baskets of person' | (d) | *jên gàdààè-gg
person basket-PL |
| (e) | gàdààè-gg é jôgg
basket-PL GP person.GEN-PL
'baskets of people' | (f) | *jôgg gàdààè-gg
people basket-PL |

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) | lúd é jên
leg GP person.GEN
'leg of person' | (b) | jên lúd
person leg |
| (c) | lú-ūgg é jên
leg-PL GP person.GEN
'legs of person' | (d) | jên lú-ūgg
person leg-PL |
| (e) | lú-ūgg é jôgg
leg-PL GP person.GEN-PL
'legs of people' | (f) | jôgg lù-ūgg
people leg-PL |

In (71a), the possessor *ūfū* 'tree' precedes the body part noun *āā* '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 *yāā* 'mother' precedes the noun *nāā* 'girl' it possesses.

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

lâŋ ě wāŋ-ŋ sím ũfú ʒʒŋ.
 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 ɲāā néé lèèn-án dūmùùn ɖ-ũũŋ 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)