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**A grammar of Mankanya: An Atlantic language of Guinea-Bissau,  
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Gaved T.J.D.

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**Author:** Gaved, T.J.D.

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## Chapter 11 - The particle *kë*

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This chapter discusses the particle *kë* which is found throughout natural texts, but is far less frequently found in elicited sentences. Trifkovič (1969) glosses it simply as NARR (for narrative particle) in her texts at the back of her volume, and doesn't describe it at all. When asked the meaning of the particle, native speakers tend to say “and” or “but”, which could be translations in certain contexts, but inadequately describes its behaviour.

It's major use is to mark a different subject:

11.1 **Kë nduba akak atëfa aṭi , kë**  
 kë nduba a- kak a- tēfa a- ṭi , kë  
 DS boy C1S REP SER land\_on\_ones\_feet SER run DS  
**nanug btuur kë aṭi , kë naṭoṅ**  
 na- nug b- tuur kë a- ṭi , kë na- ṭoṅ  
 C1S buyer C5S coffin DS C1S run DS C1S driver  
**ukaaru akak aṭi**  
 u- kaaru a- kak a- ṭi  
 C2S car C1S REP SER run

“The boy landed on his feet and ran off, the owner of the coffin ran off, and the driver of the car he also ran off.”

But it is not required, and in some cases (particularly between sentences) a different subject is not marked explicitly with *kë*:

11.2 a **Napoṭ aṅowna du meeṭ ,**  
 na- poṭ a- ṅow -n -a d- u meeṭ  
 C1S child C1S wash CAUS MID EXT LOC.DIST inside  
**uko unwoyi , du meeṭ meeṭ .**  
 u- ko u- n- woy -i d- u meeṭ meeṭ  
 C2S thing C2S coref be ptcp EXT LOC.DIST inside inside

“The child is washed inside, this thing is done inside”

b **Ñaaṭ**            **ambukuṅ**                            **aji**            **le**    **aji**  
 ñ- aaṭ            a- m- buk    -uṅ a- ji    le    a- ji  
 C1S woman    C1S COREF produce SEL    C1S HAB    IRL    SER HAB  
**apën**            **bdig**            ,    **aya**            **ya**    **kañowa**  
 a- pën            b- dig            a- ya    ya    k-    a- ñowa  
 SER go\_out    C5S outside            SER go    go    IMPERF SER wash\_oneself  
 “The woman who has given birth, if she goes outside, it is to wash”

In some situations it occurs with the same subject:

11.3 **Wori** **mënṭan** **ṅwo**    **ṅji**    **na**    **Bernard**    **na**    **Marcel**  
 wori    mënṭan    ṅ- wo    ṅji    na    Bernard    na    Marcel  
 time    that            1P be    1S    and    Bernard    and    Marcel

**kë** **ṅpok**            **pya**            **ṅrisiya**  
 kë    ṅ- pok            p- ya    ṅrisiya  
 DS    1P refuse    INF go    church

“At that time we were me and Bernard and Marcel, and we refused to go to church”

## 11.1 Clause chaining and switch reference

One of the primary uses of the particle *kë* is to mark a different subject in a clause chain. Therefore its gloss is DS (Different Subject).

In section 9.2 I described the fact that sentences can be formed of multiple non-subordinate clauses, juxtaposed without connectors. This phenomenon, known as clause chaining, is found elsewhere in Africa (Heine and Nurse, 2007) as well as other parts of the world, for example Papuan languages (Foley, 1986) Where the subject of a clause is the same as the previous one, the verb takes a special agreement prefix *a-*. However, this special prefix is identical to the prefix used for singular, class 1 nouns. Therefore there could be an ambiguity in certain situations, and *kë* can be used to clearly mark when a subject has changed.

To illustrate this, consider the multi-clause sentence from the “Two Humpbacked Wives” text shown in example 11.4 below. I have noted the subject of each clause in the right hand column.

This sentence consists of a chain of seven clauses, with no connecting words (apart from *kë*) between them. Chaining is common in narrative texts, though this example is longer than average.

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>11.4</p> <p>a: <b>Kë hënk di</b>      <b>Naala ayaan</b>      <b>na utejan</b><br/> kë hënk d- i      Naala a- ya -an      na u- tejan<br/> DS so C9S GEN      Nala C1S go SEL      and C2S night<br/> “So Naala went at night”</p> <p>b: <b>aṭënk      ŋntaayi</b><br/> a- ṭënk ŋ- ntaayi<br/> SER find C2P demon<br/> “she found the spirits”</p> <p>c: <b>kë ṇado      ptoof</b><br/> kë ṇa- do p- toof<br/> DS C2P do C4S half<br/> “they made a circle”</p> <p>d: <b>aki</b><br/> a- ki<br/> SER dance<br/> “they danced”</p> <p>e: <b>kë aṣë      ban</b><br/> kë a- ṣë ban<br/> DS C1S SEQ arrive<br/> “she arrived”</p> <p>f: <b>anaṭ</b><br/> a- naṭ<br/> SER stand<br/> “she stood”</p> <p>g: <b>akob      iñen      na ṇa</b><br/> a- kob i- ñen na ṇ- a<br/> C1S hit C3P hand and C2P OBJ<br/> “clapped with them”</p> <p>“So Naala went at night, found the spirits dancing in a circle, went up to them, stopped and clapped with them”</p> | <p>Subject<br/>Naala</p> <p>Naala</p> <p>spirits</p> <p>spirits</p> <p>Naala</p> <p>Naala</p> <p>Naala</p> |
|--|--|

When the same subject does several actions in a chain the verbal agreement prefix is substituted by *a-* on second and subsequent verbs. We can't see this when the subject is a singular human, as the prefix is already *a-*, but this phenomenon is illustrated in clauses c and d in the example (repeated below).

c: **kë** **ɲado** **ptoof**  
 kë ɲa- do p- ʔoof  
 DS C2P do C4S half  
 “they made a circle”

d: **aki**  
 a- ki  
 SER dance  
 “they danced”

The spirits *ɲntayi* form a circle and dance. On the first verb, they are referred to by the full prefix form *ɲa-*, but the special *a-* prefix is used on the second verb.

If we now consider the final three clauses, Naala is again the subject.

e: **kë** **aşë** **ban**  
 kë a- şë ban  
 DS C1S SEQ arrive  
 “she arrived”

f: **anaʔ**  
 a- naʔ  
 SER stand  
 “she stood”

g: **akob** **iñen** **na** **ɲa**  
 a- kob i- ñen na ɲ- a  
 C1S hit C3P hand and C2P OBJ

“clapped with them”

Here Naala is again the subject. But without *kë* there would be no way of telling the referent of the verb prefix. The *kë* indicates that there has been a switch to a different subject.

If we look again at the whole sentence, and look for where *kë* is used, we see that it occurs at the beginning of clauses a, c, and e. Leaving aside the beginning of the sentence, we can see that the *kë* occurs each time the subject changes. That is, Naala is the subject of clauses a-b, the spirits are the subject of clauses c-d (introduced by a *kë*) and Naala is again the subject of the final clauses e-g, (and *kë* again marks this switch of subject).

It should be noted that *kë* is used even though there are other indications that the subject is different, e.g. verb prefix in clause c *ɲa-* can only refer to the spirits.

A second example from the “Two Humpbacked Wives” text illustrates another situation where *kë* is used:

11.5 **Wi      ɲakiɲ              aban              ɰi              a**  
 wi    ɲa- ki    -iɲ    a-    ban    ɰ-    i              a  
 when C2P dance SEL SER arrive INT LOC.PROX OBJ  
**kë    ašë              ji    na    wi              akabiranuɲ**  
 kë    a-    šë    ji    na    w-    i    a-    kab              -ir    -an    -uɲ  
 DS    C1S SEQ say with C2S GEN SER be\_near\_to RCP CAUS SEL  
 “When they were dancing and they arrived at her, she asked her neighbour  
 ...”

Here the first clause is actually a subordinate temporal clause, but *kë* is used in the same way as in example 11.4. The subject of the subordinate *wi* clause is the spirits (shown by the *ɲa-* prefix), but Naala is the subject of the main clause. The *kë* indicates a different subject and makes clear the referent of the subject prefix on the first main clause verb.

The *kë* is not obligatory after a *wi* clause. This is illustrated in the following sentence where there is a *wi* clause, but no change of subject means no *kë* is needed.

11.6 **Wi      uwooɲ              uunwina              ašë              ya    na**  
 wi    u-    wo    -oɲ    u-    un-    win    -a              a-    šë    ya    na  
 when C2S be SEL C2S NEG see C1S.OBJ SER SEQ go and  
**pa**  
 pa  
 in\_order\_to

“When it (the spirit) could not find her, it went with it (the hump).”

However, in the “Hare and the Elephant” text, a similar structure *does* use *kë*, even though the subject has not changed. This would seem to indicate that *kë* sometimes has a broader discourse function.

11.7 **Wal              wi              ušaɲ              atuh              wa**  
 w-    al              w-    i              u-    ša    -aɲ    a-    tuh    w-    a  
 C2S moment C2S GEN C2S SEQ SEL SER close C2S OBJ  
**ɰi              bhër** ,  
 ɰ-    i              b-    hër  
 INT LOC.PROX C5S hole  
**kë    ušë              ɰij    mnob              muɲ              akakanan**  
 kë    u-    šë    ɰij    m-    nob              ma-    uɲ              a-    kak    -an    -an  
 DS    C2S SEQ bring C8 honey C8 DEM.DIST  
**aya              di              untanka**  
 a-    ya    d-    i              u-    ntanka  
 SER go EXT LOC.PROX C2S village

“When he (Elephant) had closed him (Hare) in the hole, he took the honey and returned to the village.”

*Kë* is also found in sentence initial position. This was seen in example in example 11.4 and is also seen in the following examples:

11.8 **Kë biki untanka bti bați abi**  
 kë bik- i u- ntanka bti ba- ti a- bi  
 DS C1P GEN C2S village all C1P run SER come

**ayit**

a- yit

SER meet

“Then all the villagers came running to meet together.”

11.9 **Kë Țwaraati , ahar umaalu , na**  
 kë Țwaraati a- har u- maalu na  
 DS Țwaraatsi C1AS wife C2S hare and

**bayiț baka bti kë babi ațoo awooni**  
 ba- yiț baka bti kë ba- bi a- țo a- wooni  
 C1P relative C1P.GEN all DS C1P come SER sit SER cry

“Țwaraati, Hares wife, and all their relations, sat down and cried.”

11.10 **Kë ñaaț aloț națaf kë așë win**  
 kë ñ- aaț a- loț na- țaf kë a- șë win  
 DS C1S woman C1S INDEF C1S elderly DS C1S SEQ see

**jibi Naala aňagani ți katoh**  
 jibi Naala a- ñagan -i ț- i ka- toh  
 like Nala C1S be sad CMPL INT LOC.PROX C3S house

“An old lady saw how Naala was sad and staying in the house.”

This sentence initial *kë* can also occur after adverbial points of departure, and renewals.

11.11 **ți pla a mēñtan puņ kë**  
 ți i p- la a mēñtan p- uņ kë  
 INT LOC.PROX INF seek OBJ that C4S DEM.DIST DS

**umaalu ubi gañir aka ñaaț**  
 u- maalu u- bi gañir a- ka ñ- aaț  
 C2S hare C2S PST win SER have C1S woman

“In this courting, Hare succeeded in winning the women.”

11.12 **Uwajantën kë uloț ușë tuh wa**  
 u- waj -antën kë u- loț u- șë tuh w- a  
 C2S three ORD DS C2S INDEF C2S SEQ close C2S OBJ

**ți bhër**  
 ți i b- hër  
 INT LOC.PROX C5S hole

“The third time, Elephant closed him into the hole.”



In the wider context of these examples, *kë* is still marking a different subject.

This is also illustrated by the following single sentence example which has full noun phrases for most of the subjects:

11.13

|               |              |             |              |             |             |                                 |           |            |
|---------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|---------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| <b>Kë</b>     | <b>başë</b>  | <b>ya</b>   | <b>pla</b>   | <b>mnob</b> | <b>na</b>   | Subject<br>Hare and<br>Elephant |           |            |
| <i>kë</i>     | <i>ba-</i>   | <i>şë</i>   | <i>ya</i>    | <i>p-</i>   | <i>la</i>   |                                 | <i>m-</i> | <i>nob</i> |
| DS            | C1P          | SEQ         | go           | INF         | seek        | C8                              | honey     | and        |
| <b>umaalu</b> | <b>kë</b>    | <b>bko</b>  | <b>başë</b>  | <b>wo</b>   |             | Tree                            |           |            |
| <i>u-</i>     | <i>maalu</i> | <i>kë</i>   | <i>b-</i>    | <i>ko</i>   | <i>ba-</i>  |                                 | <i>şë</i> | <i>wo</i>  |
| C2S           | hare         | DS          | c7s          | object      | c7s         | SEQ                             | be        |            |
| <b>kë</b>     | <b>bko</b>   | <b>başë</b> | <b>wo</b>    |             |             | Tree                            |           |            |
| <i>kë</i>     | <i>b-</i>    | <i>ko</i>   | <i>ba-</i>   | <i>şë</i>   | <i>wo</i>   |                                 |           |            |
| DS            | c7s          | object      | c7s          | SEQ         | be          |                                 |           |            |
| <b>akab</b>   |              | <b>ti</b>   | <b>pliik</b> |             |             | Tree                            |           |            |
| <i>a-</i>     | <i>kab</i>   | <i>ti</i>   | <i>i</i>     | <i>p-</i>   | <i>liik</i> |                                 |           |            |
| SER           | be_near_to   | INT         | LOC.PROX     | C6S         | well        |                                 |           |            |
| <b>awo</b>    | <b>na</b>    | <b>bhër</b> |              |             |             | Tree                            |           |            |
| <i>a-</i>     | <i>wo</i>    | <i>na</i>   | <i>b-</i>    | <i>hër</i>  |             |                                 |           |            |
| SER           | be           | and         | C5S          | hole        |             |                                 |           |            |
| <b>kë</b>     | <b>bnob</b>  | <b>bawo</b> | <b>da</b>    |             |             | bee hive                        |           |            |
| <i>kë</i>     | <i>b-</i>    | <i>nob</i>  | <i>ba-</i>   | <i>wo</i>   | <i>d-</i>   |                                 | <i>a</i>  |            |
| DS            | C5S          | beehive     | C5S          | be          | C9S         | OBJ                             |           |            |

“So they (along with Hare) went to look for honey. Now there was a tree (*bko*) near to the well and it had a hole and there was a bee hive there.”

We see therefore that a primary use of *kë* is used to mark a change of subject, but if there are other indications that the subject has changed (e.g. different verb prefixes) then its presence is not obligatory. It is also occasionally used when there is no change of subject for reasons that need more research.

## 11.2 *Kë* after a noun phrase

Though the main use of *kë* is clause initially for marking a different subject it can also be found between a subject noun phrase and the verb. The following examples illustrate this.

11.14 **Kë** **Ṭwaraati** **kë** **aşë** **bi** , **akak**  
 kë Ṭwaraaṭi kë a- şë bi a- kak  
 DS Ṭswaraatsi DS C1S SEQ come SER REP  
**awat** **ubaldu** **wi** **nul** **ṭuṇ**  
 a- wat u- baldu w- i nul ṭ- uṇ  
 SER bring\_down C2S bucket C2S GEN 3s.poss INT LOC.DIST  
**pliik**  
 p- liik  
 C6S well

“So Tsewaratsi came, and she also lowered her bucket into that well”

11.15 **Kë** **ñaaṭ** **aloṇ** **naṭaf** **kë** **aşë** **win**  
 kë ñ- aaṭ a- loṇ na- ṭaf kë a- şë win  
 DS C1S woman C1S INDEF C1S elderly DS C1S SEQ see  
**jibi Naala aṇagani ṭi katoh** .  
 jibi Naala a- ṇagan -i ṭ- i ka- toh  
 like Nala C1S be\_sad CMPL INT LOC.PROX C3S house  
 “An old lady saw how Naala was sad and staying in the house.”

In these examples the first *kë* each time marks a subject switch, but the second does not seem to have the same function. It does not occur every time there is a subject switch followed by a noun or noun phrase. The second *kë*, between the subject noun or noun phrase seems to highlight the subject.

One possible reason for this highlighting function is contrast. In the following example there is partitive contrast between all the spirits in sentence 11.16a and the one who had taken Nala's hump in 11.16b. (There are several occurrences of *kë* in this example, including the complementising *kë* COMP. The relevant one is underlined in sentence 11.16b.)

11.16a **Kë** **ṇntaayi** **ṇaduka** **ki** **ki**  
 kë ṇ- ntaayi ṇa- duk -a ki ki  
 DS C2P demon C2P leave MID dance dance  
**ṭuṇ** **te** **kë** **unuur** **udo** **jint** **kë**  
 ṭ- uṇ te kë u- nuur u- do jint kë  
 INT DEM.DIST until COMP C2S day C2S INGR be\_clean DS  
**ṇaşë** **jun** **pwayşër** .  
 ṇa- şë jun p- wayşër  
 C2P SEQ begin INF disperse

“The spirits stayed dancing there until daybreak, and then they started to disperse”

b **Unṣaan**                      **ayeenk**              **pben**              **ṭi**  
 u- n- ṣa -aṅ a- yeenk p- ben ṭ- i  
 C2S COREF SEQ SEL C1S receive C4S swelling INT LOC.PROX  
**Naala** **kë** **uṣë**              **kak** **ala**              **ñaan** **anwulun**  
 Naala kë u- ṣë kak a- la ñaan a- n- wul -un  
 Nala DS C2S SEQ again SER seek person C1S COREF give SEL  
**wa**              **napoṭ**              .  
 w- a na- poṭ  
 C2S OBJ C1S child  
 “The one who had taken the lump from Nala, looked again for the one who had given him the 'child' ”

It is also sometimes used as a way of introducing new characters:

11.17 **Kë** **ṭwaraati** , **ahar**              **umaalu** , **na**  
 kë ṭwaraati a- har u- maalu na  
 DS ṭswaraatsi C1AS wife C2S hare and  
**bayiṭ**              **baka** **bti** , **kë** **babi**              ...  
 ba- yiṭ baka bti kë ba- bi  
 C1P relative C1P.OBJ all DS C1P come  
 “Then Tsewaratsi, Hare’s wife, and all their relations came ...”

This is the first time in this story that Tsewaratsi has been mentioned. It is also the beginning of a new discourse unit.

11.18 **Kë** **ñaaṭ**              **aloṅ**              **naṭaf**              **kë** **aṣë**              **win**  
 kë ñ- aaṭ a- loṅ na- ṭaf kë a- ṣë win  
 DS C1S woman C1S INDEF C1S elderly DS SER SEQ see  
**jibi** **Naala** **añagani**              **ṭi**              **katoh**  
 jibi Naala a- ñagan -i ṭ- i ka- toh  
 like Nala C1S be\_sad CMPL INT LOC.PROX C3S house  
 “An old lady saw how Naala was sad and staying in the house.”

Here an old lady, a minor character, is introduced. As in the previous example this also begins a new discourse unit.

Sometimes its only use is to mark a new discourse unit. The following example from the story of Nabanka Biyagi comes after a non-event line discursion about why the royal compound is a symbol for the Mankanya people. The sentence starts a new discourse unit describing the events after Nabanka Biyagi (who is no longer a new character) becomes king.

11.19 **Kë** **Nabanka** **Biyagi** **kë** **aneejan**              **pṣih**  
 kë Nabanka Biyagi kë a- neejan p- ṣih  
 DS Nabanka Biyagi DS SER insert C6S kingdom/throne  
 “So Nabanka Biyagi became king”

Here is another example from the “Hare and the Elephant” This starts a new discourse unit where Tsewaratsi’s actions reveal where Hare is trapped.

11.20 **Kë** **Ṭwaraati** **kë** **aşë** **bi** **akak**  
 kë Ṭwaraaṭi kë a- şë bi a- kak  
 DS Ṭswaraatsi DS SER SEQ came SER return  
**awat** **ubaldu** **wi** **nul** **ṭuṇ**  
 a- wat u- baldu w- i nul ṭ- uṇ  
 SER bring\_down C2S bucket C2S GEN 3s.poss INT LOC.DIST  
**pliik**  
 p- liik  
 C6S well

“So Tsewaratsi came, and she also lowered her bucket into that well”

In all these examples above the *kë* between noun phrase and verb has occurred with the sentence initial *kë* marking a different subject. However, in the “Hare and Elephant” there are several places where *kë* does *not* occur in this position, even though there is a sentence initial *kë* marking a different subject. This shows it is not obligatory in this situation.

11.21 **kë** **umaalu** **ubi** **gañir** **aka** **ñaat**  
 kë u- maalu u- bi gañir a- ka ñ- aaṭ  
 DS C2S hare C2S PST win C1S have C1S woman  
 “..Hare won the girl”

**Udeeb** **kë** **uşë** **de** **uloṇ**  
 u- deeb kë u- şë de u- loṇ  
 C2S anger DS C2S SEQ eat C2S INDEF  
 “Elephant got angry” (Lit. “Anger ate Elephant”)

Here the *kë* highlights *udeeb* ‘anger’, and this indicates the beginning of a new discourse section. However, there is no sentence initial *kë* which would normally be associated with a different subject.

A similar situation occurs later in the story, after the women have lowered their bucket.

11.22 **kë** **ukak** **atiink** , **aşë** **ji** :“....”  
 kë u- kak a- tiink a- şë ji  
 DS C2S REP SER hear SER SEQ say  
 “He (Hare) heard it again and said “....” ”

**Ṭwaraati** **kë** **aşë** **hanṭla**  
 Ṭwaraaṭi kë a- şë hanṭla  
 Ṭswaraatsi DS C1S SEQ look\_up  
 “Tsewaratsi lifted her eyes ...”

It seems that where *kë* is used after the noun phrase, *kë* as a different subject marker before it is optional. This could be an indication that historically the *kë* after the noun phrase was in fact the same particle but has been moved to highlight the subject.

Though there are some instances where the use of *kë* after the noun phrase can be explained by contrast, the majority of cases of this usage of *kë* seem to mark the beginning of a new discourse unit. This might be considered a natural extension of its use, as often (but not always) the beginning of a discourse unit is in some way contrastive with the preceding unit.

Here is a breakdown of the discourse units in a story about Hare and Elephant. Where *kë* is used with a noun phrase the first part of each sentence of the unit is shown, and the *kë* is underlined. Some sentences also have a *kë* at the beginning of sentence indicating a different subject.

|  |       |  |
|--|-------|--|
| Introduction and background                                      | 1-2   |  |
| Elephant gets angry  | 3-4   | <i>Udeeb <u>kë</u> uşë de uloŋ</i>                                       |
| Elephant tricks Hare and shuts him in a hole                     | 5-7   | <i>Kë uloŋ <u>kë</u> uwini</i>   |
| Elephant returns to the village and tells his story              | 8-9   |  |
| Hare's wife's reaction   | 10    | <i>Kë Ʀëwaraati, ahar umaalu, na bayiŋ baka b<i>ë</i> <u>kë</u> babi</i> |
| Women draw water and hear Hare singing                           | 11-14 |  |
| Hare's wife draws water and hears Hare singing                   | 15-17 | <i>Kë Ʀëwaraati <u>kë</u> aşë bi</i>                                     |
| Hare's wife tells women to draw water again and Hare sings again | 18-20 | <i>Ʀëwaraati <u>kë</u> aşë ji na baat bukuŋ</i>                          |
| Hare's wife finds Hare and lets him out                          | 21    | <i>Ʀëwaraati <u>kë</u> aşë hanŋla</i>                                    |
| They return to village and conclusion                            | 22-24 |  |

The frequency of this usage of *kë* varies from text to text.

### 11.3 *Kë* with *hënk di*

*Kë* at the beginning of a sentence is sometimes combined with *hënk di* 'like this'. This is used three times in the "Two wives" story. The first time it introduces a summary statement that closes the introductory section.

|       |                            |                           |                |
|-------|----------------------------|---------------------------|----------------|
| 11.23 | <b>Kë hënk di</b>          | <b>abaaŋ</b>              | <b>kabi</b>    |
|       | kë hënk d- i               | a- ba -aŋ                 | k- a- bi       |
|       | DS so EXT LOC.PROX         | C1S CMLPTV SEL            | IMPERF SER PST |
|       | <b>duka duka ʈi</b>        | <b>pdo na Naala te kë</b> |                |
|       | duka duka ʈ- i             | p- do na Naala te kë      |                |
|       | stay stay INT LOC.PROX     | INF do and Nala until DS  |                |
|       | <b>bado bot</b>            | <b>awo ʈi</b>             | <b>ploolan</b> |
|       | ba- do bot                 | a- wo ʈ- i                | p- loolan      |
|       | C1P INGR do_something_next | SER be INT LOC.PROX       | C4S one        |
|       | <b>na ñiinʈ kë ñaaʈ</b>    | <b>aji bi duka duka</b>   |                |
|       | na ñ- iinʈ kë ñ- aaʈ       | a- ji bi duka duka        |                |
|       | and C1S man DS C1S woman   | C1S HAB PST stay stay     |                |
|       | <b>kañagan ʈuŋ</b>         | <b>katoh</b>              |                |
|       | k- a- ñagan ʈ- uŋ          | ka- toh                   |                |
|       | IMPERF SER be_sad          | INT LOC.DIST C3S house    |                |

“So this is what she (Dama) kept doing to Naala until she and her husband were in agreement, and the woman (Naala) was sad and stayed in the house.”

The other two examples are parallel, and are the introductory clauses of each of Naala and Dama’s attempts to remove their humps. In these examples, though there is a subject switch, there is also a proper noun, so the *kë* is not required in order to disambiguate.

|       |                              |                    |           |
|-------|------------------------------|--------------------|-----------|
| 11.24 | <b>Kë hënk di</b>            | <b>Naala ayaaŋ</b> | <b>na</b> |
|       | kë hënk d- i                 | Naala a- ya -aŋ    | na        |
|       | DS so EXT LOC.PROX           | Nala C1S go SEL    | with      |
|       | <b>utejan aʈënk ɲntaayi</b>  |                    |           |
|       | u- tejan a- ʈënk ɲ- ntaayi   |                    |           |
|       | C2S night SER find C2P demon |                    |           |

“And so Naala went at night, she found the spirits ...”

|       |                                      |                   |            |
|-------|--------------------------------------|-------------------|------------|
| 11.25 | <b>Kë hënk di</b>                    | <b>Dama akaaŋ</b> | <b>aya</b> |
|       | kë hënk d- i                         | Dama a- ka -aŋ    | a- ya      |
|       | DS so EXT LOC.PROX                   | Dama C1S REP SEL  | SER go     |
|       | <b>na utejan aya ʈënk ɲntaayi</b>    |                   |            |
|       | na u- tejan a- ya ʈënk ɲ- ntaayi     |                   |            |
|       | with C2S night SER go find C2P demon |                   |            |

“And so Dama also went at night, she found the spirits ...”

Another example of this construction can be found in the story of Nabanka Biyagi which tells his rise to the chiefdom of all the Mankanya, and the building of the first royal compound. *Kë hënk di* is found at the end of the introductory section describing the expansion of Bula the chief village.

11.26 **Kë hënk di                      ɲtaak              ɲi**  
           **kë hënk d- i                      ɲ- taak              ɲ- i**  
           DS   so           C9S DEM.PROX   C2P country   C2P GEN  
**namehaŋ                      ɲuŋ                      bɛi   ɲakyaaŋ                      ya aya**  
 na- meh -aŋ ɲ- uŋ                      bɛi ɲa- k-              ya -aŋ ya a- ya  
 2P know SEL C2P DEM.DIST all C2P IMPERF go SEL go SER go  
**aya**  
 a- ya  
 SER go

“And so it was that all those villages that you know were appearing.”

The expression *hënk di* does not require a *kë* as it also found twice in that story without it.

The first occurs at the end of the second section which describes how the older men have begun to fight over who will be king.

11.27 **Kë ugut                      umeet                      ubi                      bot**  
           **kë u- gut                      u- meet                      u- bi                      bot**  
           DS   C2S war           C2S interior   C2S PST   do\_something\_next  
**aneejan**  
 a- neejan  
 SER insert  
 “And so a mystic war started.”

**Hënk di                      bawooŋ                      abi                      fiŋar                      fiŋar**  
 hënk d- i                      ba- wo -oŋ a- bi                      fiŋ -ar                      fiŋ -ar  
 so           C9S DEM.PROX   C1P be SEL   SER PST   kill DIST   kill DIST  
**te kë                      naŋih                      nafeey                      aŋë                      ka                      pnduud**  
 te           kë                      na- ŋih                      na- Feey a- ŋë                      ka                      p- nduud  
 until COMP C1S chief   C1S Feey C1S SEQ   have C6S compound  
**pi                      nul                      pi                      abëkani                      baŋaŋa**  
 p- i                      nul                      p- i                      a- bëkan -i                      ba- ŋaŋa  
 C4S GEN   3s.poss   C4S GEN   SER put\_down CMPL   C1P teenager\_(boy)  
**biki                      nul                      da**  
 bik- i                      nul                      d- a  
 C1P GEN   3s.poss   C9S OBJ

“So like this they started killing each other until the chief of the Nafeey formed his group of those who had been initiated there.”

**Kë baṭaṣa mēnṭan bukuṅ ñaaṅ**  
 kë ba- ṭaṣa mēnṭan buk- uṅ ñaaṅ  
 DS C1P teenager\_(boy) that C1P DEM.DIST person  
**anduwaniṅ Nabanka Biyagi aṣë wo**  
 a- n- duw -an -i -iṅ Nabanka Biyagi a- ṣë wo  
 SER COREF call CAUS MID SEL Nabanka Biyagi C1S SEQ be  
**da kë aṣaaṅ awo naweek baka**  
 d- a kë a- ṣa -aṅ a- wo na- week baka  
 C9S OBJ DS C1S SEQ SEL C1S be C1S elder\_sibling C1P.GEN  
 “Amongst those initiates, there was someone who was called Nabanka  
 Biyagi, and he was the eldest.”

Here the *hēnk di* still serves as a summariser, but the marker *kë* appears on the sentence before, and on the following sentence which is the beginning of a new episode.

The second occurs at the end of the story as a conclusion.

**11.28 Hēnk di Nabanka Biyagi aneejanuṅ**  
 hēnk d- i Nabanka Biyagi a- neej -an -uṅ  
 so C9S DEM.PROX Nabanka Biyagi C1S enter CAUS SEL  
**apaṣ Pmeṣ**  
 a- paṣ p- meṣ  
 SER create C4S royal\_compund  
 “So this was how Nabanka Biyagi became king and founded Pmesh”

Here *kë* is not used in any of the immediately surrounding sentences.

As both *kë* and *hēnk di* separately are used to mark discourse units it may be that using them together emphasises this marking.

## 11.4 What sort of information does *kë* occur with?

Some languages have words for marking discourse units which are only found in either background material or in the main event line. This is not the case in Mankanya with *kë* as it occurs in both situations. For example, the following excerpt is from the introductory section of the “Two Humpbacked Wives”, describing the household situation of the two wives. All the sentences are background material, but *kë* is found in sentences 11.29a and 11.29c.

**11.29a Kë baat batëb bukuṅ baṣë wo**  
 kë b- aaṭ ba- tēb buk- uṅ ba- ṣë wo  
 DS C1P woman C1P two C1P DEM.DIST C1P SEQ be  
**na mben ṭi feṭ .**  
 na m- BEN ṭ- i feṭ  
 and c6p swelling INT LOC.PROX back  
 “And these two women had humps on their backs”



b **Anwoonj**                      **naweeek**                      **i**                      **katoh**                      **awo**  
 a- n- wo -onj na- week i ka- toh a- wo  
 C1S COREF be SEL C1S elder\_sibling GEN C3S house C1S be

**na pben pmpoṭi** .  
 na p- BEN p- mpoṭi  
 with C4S swelling C4S small  
 “The eldest in the household had a small hump.”

c **Kë pi anwoonj Naala pawoonj**  
 kë p- i a- n- wo -onj Naala pa- wo -onj  
 DS C4S GEN C1S COREF be SEL Nala C6S be SEL  
**pweek kë aṣaaṅ akaana kanuura**  
 p- week kë a- ṣa -aṅ a- ka -an -a ka- nuura  
 C4S older DS C1S SEQ SEL SER have CAUS MID C3S beauty  
**maakan** .  
 maakan  
 very

“But Naala’s was big, though she had great beauty.”

d **Ul i ñiintṭ aṭuunṭ ṭi uhaaṣ**  
 ul i ñ- iintṭ a- ṭu -unṭ ṭ- i u- haaṣ  
 3s.subj GEN C1S man C1S place SEL INT LOC.PROX C2S soul  
**wi nul** .  
 w- i nul  
 C2S GEN 3s.poss

“It was her that the husband loved.”

In the story of Hare and Elephant *kë* introduces a reminder of background information at the start of a new section.

11.30 **Kë iṣë me bko buṅ bakab**  
 kë i- ṣë me b- ko b- unṭ ba- kab  
 DS 2S SEQ know c7s object c7s DEM.DIST c7s be\_near\_to

**ṭi dko di pliiik pi**  
 ṭ- i d- ko d- i p- liik p- i  
 INT LOC.PROX C9S place EXT LOC.PROX C6S well C4S GEN

**untanka wi bañaanṭ bakliiknuṅ**  
 u- ntanka w- i ba- ñaanṭ ba- k- liik -n -unṭ  
 C2S village C2S GEN C1P person C1P IMPERF draw\_water CAUS SEL  
 “Now you know that tree is near to the village well where people draw water.”

For examples of *kë* used in the main event line, we could look at many of the examples already given. Here are two more:

|       |            |              |            |               |               |              |               |            |            |
|-------|------------|--------------|------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|------------|------------|
| 11.31 | <b>Kë</b>  | <b>bawat</b> |            | <b>ubaldu</b> | <b>du</b>     |              | <b>pliik</b>  |            |            |
|       | kë         | ba- wat      |            | u- baldu      | d- u          |              | p- liik       |            |            |
|       | DS         | C1P          | bring_down | C2S           | bucket        | EXT LOC.DIST | C6S well      |            |            |
|       | <b>kë</b>  | <b>udo</b>   | <b>do</b>  | <b>kluj</b>   | <b>meel</b>   | <b>kë</b>    | <b>mampën</b> | <b>ado</b> | <b>tar</b> |
|       | kë         | u- do        | do         | kluj          | meel          | kë           | mam- pën      | a- do      | tar        |
|       | DS         | C2S          | INGR       | do            | water         | DS           | C8            | go_out     | SER do     |
|       | <b>tar</b> | <b>tar</b>   | <b>kë</b>  | <b>ukak</b>   | <b>atiink</b> |              |               |            |            |
|       | tar        | tar          | kë         | u- kak        | a- tiink      |              |               |            |            |
|       |            |              | DS         | C2S           | REP           | SER          | hear          |            |            |

“Now they (the women) dropped the bucket down the well, it started to go 'klung', the water slopped out, going 'thar, thar, thar', and he heard it again.”

|       |               |                |              |              |             |            |       |          |     |       |
|-------|---------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|------------|-------|----------|-----|-------|
| 11.32 | <b>Kë</b>     | <b>untaayi</b> | <b>uşë</b>   | <b>yeenk</b> | <b>pben</b> |            |       |          |     |       |
|       | kë            | u- ntaayi      | u- şë        | yeenk        | p- BEN      |            |       |          |     |       |
|       | DS            | C2S            | demon        | C2S          | SEQ         | receive    | C6S   | swelling |     |       |
|       | <b>amëban</b> | <b>kë</b>      | <b>Naala</b> | <b>aşë</b>   | <b>neej</b> | <b>aki</b> |       |          |     |       |
|       | a- mëb        | -an            | kë           | Naala        | a- şë       | neej       | a- ki |          |     |       |
|       | SER           | carry          | CAUS         | DS           | Nala        | C1S        | SEQ   | enter    | SER | dance |

“So the spirit took the hump and held it, and Naala entered the ring and danced”

## 11.5 Summary

This chapter has given a brief overview of some of the uses of *kë*.

The primary function of *kë* with event line clauses seems to be that of signalling a switch in subject but it is occasionally used where there is no switch of subject.

Sometimes *kë* appears after the subject noun phrase, in order to mark that noun phrase, either for the purpose of contrast, or maybe for the introduction of a new character.

However, *kë* is sometimes used when the subject has not changed. Often these occur at the beginning of a new discourse unit, and highlight this change.

A more in-depth study of the discourse level uses of this word is required.