Studies in African Linguistics

Editor
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Volume 29, Number 1 • 2000

Studies in African Linguistics

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OBSERVATIONS ON KUNAMA TONE
(Barka Dialect)[*]

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Kunama has been reported by different scholars as having two or three tones, downstep (or not), contrastive length of both consonants and vowels, and lexical stress. Despite this range of reported phenomena, little in-depth research into the prosodic system of Kunama has been undertaken. The aim of the present study is to report such a detailed investigation and to establish on a solid footing basic aspects of the tonal system of Kunama. The work reported is preliminary in the sense that its scope is limited: we present phonological and phonetic evidence for the existence of three level tones, which can combine to form a number of contour tones. This is followed by discussion of tonal phenomena in the noun phrase. No evidence for lexical stress is found.

1. Introduction

Kunama is a Nilo-Saharan language spoken in western Eritrea by approximately 140,000 people. It comprises some seven dialects [John Abraha Ashkaba 1999]; the best known of these are Barka and Marda. The present study is based largely on Barka; however, we have been able to confirm that, with respect to the tonal phenomena examined here, there are no significant differences between these two lects.

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2. Previous treatments of prosodic features in Kunama

Several linguists have written descriptions of Kunama phonology, generally based on the two lects referred to above. Although we limit this brief survey mainly to the last two decades, we may note that Tucker and Bryan [1966], presumably following unpublished work by R. L. Stevenson, observe that "[t]one and stress appear to be significant, both lexically and grammatically." [1966: 337]. They illustrate this observation with forms marked for stress and, significantly, *three* tones.

Of the later work, however, we must first of all consider that of Thompson. Thompson's article "Kunama: Phonology and Noun Phrase" [1983] clearly established the segmental inventory upon which subsequent work has attempted to build. In treating the prosodic phonology, Thompson was quite clear about the need to recognize consonant length (gemination) but admitted his uncertainty as to whether vowel length was distinctive, since he was of the opinion that there was a correlation between vowel length and stress [1983: 284]. This correlation, however, was only thought to be partial since stress was also said to occur without (vowel) length. Elsewhere stress is reported as usually occurring on syllables preceding geminates [1983: 283]. These statements would appear to suggest an accentual assignment that was sensitive to syllable weight. In the article, stress is marked on some, though by no means most, of the words used for exemplification. Interestingly, a few words are also marked with an acute accent. This is notationally distinct from the diacritic employed by Thompson for indicating stress, though no explanation is offered for this differentiation. In a subsequent detailed and instructive account of the Kunama verb system [1989], Thompson includes many more instances of the (still unexplained) acute accent diacritic. Although prosodic features other than consonant and vowel length are generally treated as stress [1989: 308, 326, 328, 336], there are references in a few places to "normal tone" [1989: 313] and "high tone" [1989: 314, 315, 344], as well as to "tone rise" [1989: 330], so that it would seem that an awareness was developing of a more pitch-based prosodic phenomenon.

In more recent descriptive work on Kunama, Bender [1996, 1997] gives clear recognition to tone. His inventory comprises two level tones and a falling tone. In earlier editorial comments to Thompson's 1987 article, Bender had expressed doubts as to the existence of three tones in Kunama and had voiced a suspicion that the falling tone might turn out to be confined to word-final position. In a draft *Kunama–English Lexicon*, however, Bender [1997] records—albeit rather rarely —a falling tone in non-final syllables. Inspection shows that the nuclei of these syllables carrying falling tone are diphthongal, i.e., they are bimoraic syllables, which fact invites comparison with certain claims made in Section 2.2 of the present paper. Nevertheless, Bender also comes out in support of Thompson's interpretation of many aspects of prosodic prominence in Kunama as involving stress, and even extends that view by distinguishing two degrees of stress [1996: 9].

The first mother-tongue speaker to pronounce on Kunama prosody was Nikodimos Idris [1987]. In his view, Kunama is first and foremost a tone language,

and absolutely no mention is made of stress. Three tonemes are distinguished: rising, falling, and level, and there is also mention of the possibility of combinations of rises and falls. Unfortunately, Nikodimos' otherwise excellent overview of Kunama grammar does not mark tone at all regularly.

Banti & Nikodimos Idris [1994] present a somewhat different view: two tones, H and L, and downstep, with no mention of stress. This contribution was made in the form of a conference paper and we are not aware of its having been published. Thus, we are not in a position to offer much comment on their proposals. Suffice to say that our findings on the distributional patterns of the Mid tone in Kunama show none of the typical features that characterise the phenomenon of downstep as found, for example, in many West African languages.

All the early work on Kunama suggests very clearly that the language has an interesting non-segmental inventory, variously claimed as exhibiting length (both consonant and vowel), lexical stress, and tone. The recent opportunity afforded by the presence in London of a linguistically trained Kunama speaker (a co-author in the present study) during the 1998-9 academic session and two Kunama speakers in Oxford facilitated the undertaking of both oral fieldwork-type investigations coupled with laboratory phonetic techniques, and enabled us to make the present contribution to the intriguing debate about Kunama prosody. Our analysis confirms that stress does not play a role in lexical contrasts in Kunama, but we do find a rich tonal inventory: three level lexical tones that also combine to give a range of contours.

2. The tone inventory

2.1. Pitch phenomena. Kunama operates a register tone system in that its basic tones are level. There is no obvious downstep of the sort that leads to terracing, though utterances of sufficient length to determine whether, or to what extent, other downtrends exist have yet to be examined. However, that there is some downtrending is apparent from examples of possessive constructions presented later in the paper. In terms of surface pitch contrasts within single syllables, Kunama exhibits at least a seven-way potential. Three significant contrasts in relatively level pitches are widely in evidence. We identify these as High (H), Mid (M) and Low (L), and indicate them by means of conventional tone marking: H = á; M = ā; L = à.[1] Examples of these in monosyllabic, disyllabic, and trisyllabic words are given in (1) a, b, and c. We have found no monosyllabic words exhibiting the lowest pitch level. Kunama words longer than three syllables are not at all infrequent but these have not been investigated systematically. We suspect, however, that a proper examination of such longer items would not reveal any patterns at variance with the generalization of facts or the analysis proposed here.

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[1] Transcriptions throughout the paper follow IPA conventions, with the following exceptions: y = IPA j ; j = IPA dʒ; š = IPA ʃ; c = IPA tʃ.

(1)   a.   monosyllabic words

        mā   'tooth'

        bé   'Or ...!'

        ú   'Enter (sg.)!'

  b.   disyllabic words

        àbà   'I/me'

        ātā   'uncovering; leading'

        éŋá   'Eat (pl.)!'

  c.   trisyllabic words

        làkàdà 'Stop still (sg.)!'

        āgāsā 'centre, middle'

        élájí   'Run (pl.)!'

The following paragraphs give instrumental data on the three tones and the contours they combine to form, as pronounced in citation forms. The phonetic data is presented in the first instance to provide a concrete instantiation of our description. Of equal or greater value, however, are the indications these data offer for further, more detailed, research on the relation between tonal phonetics and phonology in Kunama.

Phonetically, initial L tones are typically level, but may have a slight fall. Final Ls are typically falling; this appears to be characteristic and may constitute an important perceptual cue for distinguishing between final L and M. (cf. below, concerning falling contours on initial syllables, where final M may be in the tonal range of L, but remains level.) Low tones on intermediate syllables may also show a fall. Table 1 gives average values and standard deviations of five repetitions, from a male speaker, of disyllabic and trisyllabic words. Measurement criteria are explained in the appendix. Figure 1 shows sample pitch traces of a disyllabic and a trisyllabic word.

Mid tones may be level throughout, though tend to exhibit some movement. Where there is movement it tends to occur early in the word and is more likely to be a fall, as shown for the initial syllable values recorded in Table 2. However, rises have also been observed, as seen on the initial syllable of the two utterances shown in Figure 2. Table 2 gives average values and standard deviations of five repetitions of disyllabic and trisyllabic words. Figure 2 shows sample pitch traces.

Table 1. Average F0 values for Kunama Low tones for disyllabic
          and trisyllabic words.

	disyllabic		trisyllabic		
	initial	final	initial	medial	final
Mean	130.4–128.0	124.0–115.2	133.4–126.8	128.8–120.6	119.0–112.0
SD	1.7; 1.2	1.2; 3.0	4.6; 2.6	5.6; 4.8	2.1; 3.5
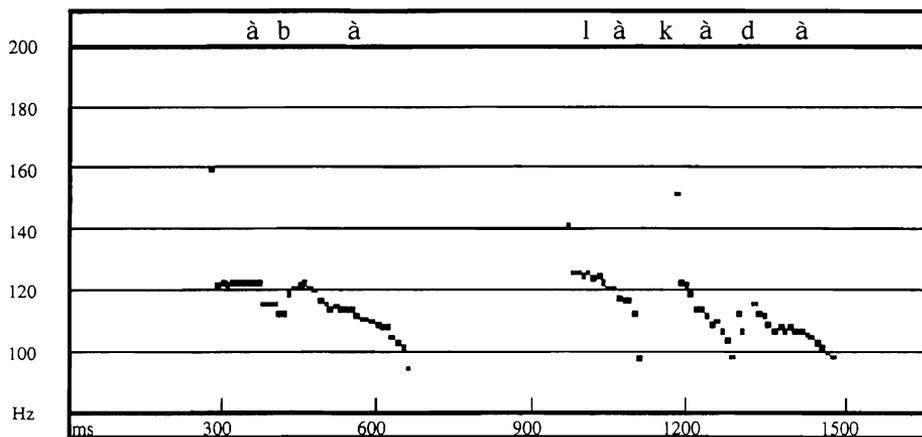
Figure 1: Sample pitch traces of Kunama Low tones for disyllabic and
          trisyllabic words: *àbà* 'I/me'; *làkàdà* 'stop still (sg.)!'.

Table 2: Average F0 values for Kunama Mid tones for disyllabic and
trisyllabic words.

	disyllabic		trisyllabic		
	initial	final	initial	medial	final
Mean	146.6–141.2	140.0–142.4	144.2–139.8	138.6–136.6	140.0–141.6
SD	3.6; 1.6	3.9; 3.3	5.0; 2.6	2.1; 1.7	2.7; 2.3
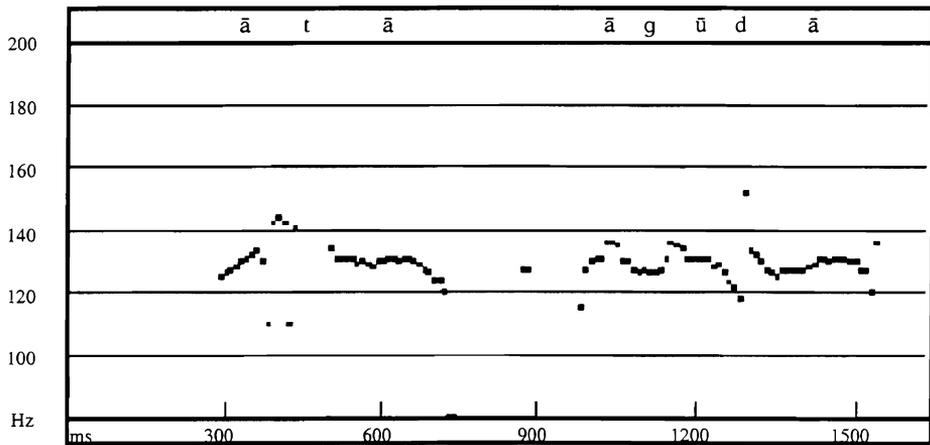
Figure 2: Sample pitch traces of Kunama Mid tones for disyllabic and
trisyllabic words: *ātā* 'uncovering, leading'; *āgūdā* 'waterpot'.

High tones tend to rise throughout the word. Table 3 gives average values of five repetitions of disyllabic and trisyllabic words. Figure 3 shows representative pitch traces of these words.

Table 3: Average F0 values for Kunama High tones for disyllabic and trisyllabic words.

	disyllabic		trisyllabic		
	initial	final	initial	medial	final
Mean	172.8–177.4	175.6–181.2	172.4–177.6	173.6–175.0	176.2–178.0
SD	5.8; 3.3	2.1; 4.6	4.8; 5.4	3.2; 3.7	3.6; 7.8
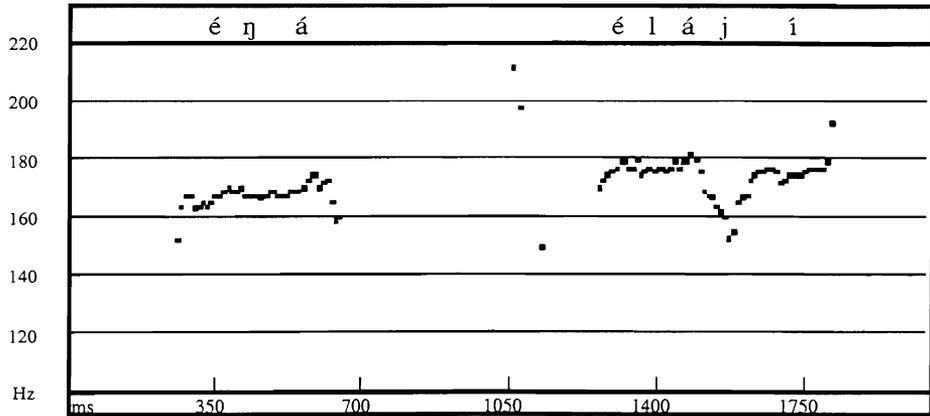
Figure 3: Sample pitch traces of Kunama High tones for disyllabic and trisyllabic words: *éŋá* 'eat (pl.)!'; *élájí* 'run (pl.)!'.

In addition to these three level pitches, a number of contrastive pitch contours are also encountered on single syllables. In all, there are three falling contours and at least one rising contour. Since the beginning and end points of the contours give the auditory impression of coinciding with the relatively invariant pitch levels distinguished in the previous paragraphs, it has seemed appropriate to represent these contours in the transcription as sequences of H, M, and L tones; thus, ˜ represents a contour in which pitch within the syllable falls from level H to level M. Examples of the three falling contours encountered in monosyllabic, disyllabic and trisyllabic words are given in (2). It is clear from these that falling contours are not restricted to final syllables, and therefore cannot be analyzed as the addition of a Low boundary tone to the word.

(2) Falling contours
    a. monosyllabic words

HM	*má̄*	'love (n.)'
ML	*kʷá̀*	'Man! (vocative)
HL	*yô*	'Take it! Here you are!'

    b. disyllabic words

HM	*fāgá̄*	'miracle, prophet'
	tál_lā	'rock'
ML	*káš̂ē*	'ones who returned'
	āssī̀	'here'
	fēèdà	'Stand up (sg.)!'
HL	*sàttê*	'three'
	šóòdà	'Find it (sg.)!'

    c. trisyllabic words

HM	*kòsāsá̄*	'learning, telling'
	náāj ī′kè	'I ran'
ML	*àsárḕ*	'footprints'
	mēèsābè	'Did you (pl.) dig?'
HL	*àtālĩ*	a female anthroponym
	kōntál_lê	'six'
	šáàdĩyā	'Exactly! That's right!'

Average F0 values and standard deviations for HM contours in final and initial position are given in Table 4, and pitch traces from sample utterances in Figure 4. Values for final HM are based on 10 tokens (5 repetitions x 2 words) and for initial HM on 5 tokens. In the latter case, measurement of M was taken midway through the /ll/, since, as argued below, this consonant is tone bearing. The following points may be noted: first, while the HM pitch excursion in final position

Table 4. Average F0 values for Kunama High–Mid contours tones in final (left, n = 10) and initial positions (right).

Tone	final		initial	
	M	HM	HM	M
Mean	137.1	152.5–129.2	173–150.3	136.5
SD	5.0	6.7; 4.1	5.3–5.5	2.5
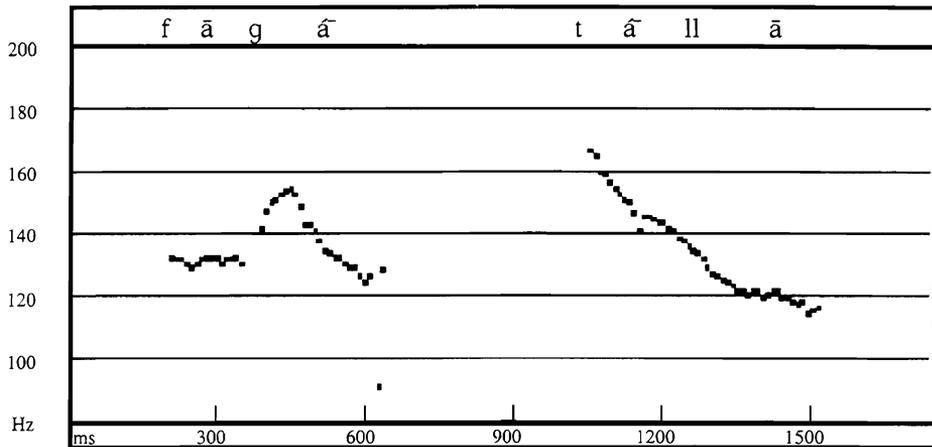
Figure 4. Sample pitch traces of Kunama High-Mid contours in final (left) and initial (right) syllables: *fāgá* 'miracle/prophet'; *tállā* 'rock'.

Table 5. Average F0 values (n = 5) for Kunama Mid–Low contours tones
in final (left) and initial positions.

Tone	final		initial	
	M	ML	ML	L
Mean	122.6	134.6–107.6	130.2–123.8	115.0–104.8
SD	2.7	8.7; 8.6	3.4–3.7	2.4–1.5
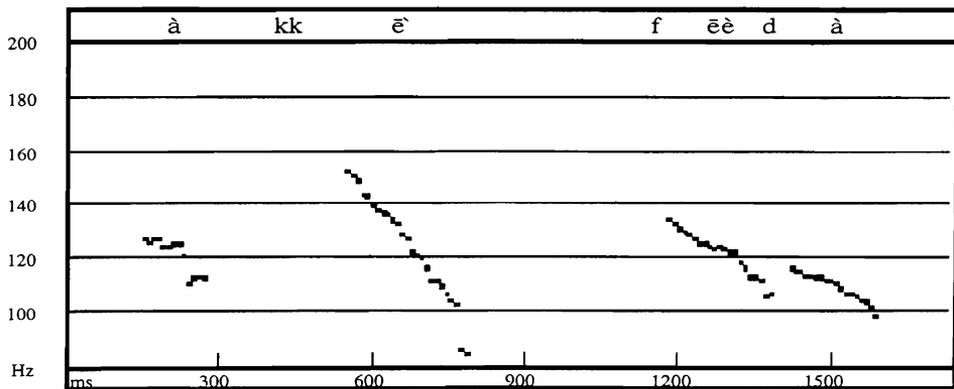
Figure 5. Sample pitch traces of Kunama Mid-Low contours in final (left) and
initial (right) syllables: *àkkê* 'my children (voc.)'; *fēèdà* 'stand up!'.

appears to be greater than that in initial position, the difference is, in fact, slight and not statistically significant. Second, not only is the starting point for H higher in initial position, but the whole word is on a higher F0. It is tempting to speculate that the lower values of HM when following M are a result of a downstepping effect of initial M, and this is suggested as an avenue for further research.

Average values and standard deviations for ML contours in final and initial position are given in Table 5, and pitch traces from sample utterances in Figure 5. Again, the pitch excursion in final position appears greater, though the starting point of M in initial position does not parallel that of H; it is, in fact, lower than that seen in final position. However, as with the preceding case, if the ultimate values for (in this case) L are taken into account, values for the two contexts are virtually identically.

Table 6 presents data on the High–Low contour, illustrated in Figure 6, as realized in final and initial positions. As with the HM contour, the difference in pitch excursions is slight and not statisitcally significant. Again, H begins higher in initial position, and this may be due to a downstepping efect of initial M.

In contrast to the falling contours, rising contours are comparatively rare, though as we shall see below, word-final rises have a significant role as boundary markers within sentences. In word-internal contexts the only rising contour encountered seems to be MH. Word-finally a MH rise is also commonly encountered, and there are some cases where LH seems optionally pronounceable. In our data the optional LH occurs only in final position and only in some words. Examples of word-final MH are given in (3).

(3) Rising contours
   a. monosyllabic words
      tā´   'What?!' (interjection of surprise/indignation)

   b. disyllabic words
      tàtā´   'Grandmother!' (vocative)
      ànī´   a male anthroponym
      gēérē`   'tall' (pl.)
      bāárè   'two'
      māídá¯   'good'

   c. trisyllabic words
      àbìšī´   a male anthroponym
      àgàrē´   'people ...'
      sàllē´ ~ sàllè´   'four ...'
      kāátám̄mè   'pair of pregnant females' (dual)
      mōónàkè   'I quarrelled'
      ā´kkúbê   'camels'
      mīíšàbè   'Are you (pl.) coming?'

Table 6. Average F0 values (n = 5) for Kunama High–Low contours tones
          in final (left) and initial positions.

Tone	final		initial	
	M	HL	HL	L
Mean	138.0	159.4–115.4	171.4–127.6	115.0–99.0
SD	3.8	9.2–6.2	6.5–14.0	9.7–4.6
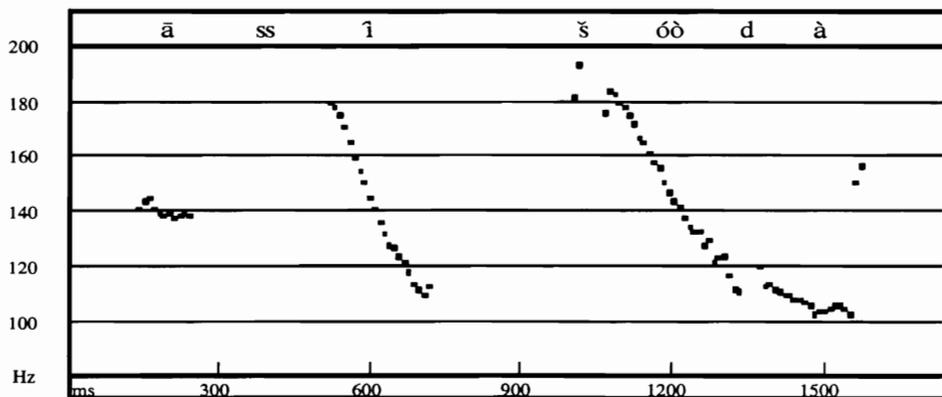
Figure 6. Sample pitch traces of Kunama High-Low contours in final (left) and
          initial (right) syllables. *āssî* 'here'; *šóòdà* 'get it!/find it!'.

Data for the MH contour are presented in Table 7, and representative pitch traces in Figure 7. As can be seen, in both final and initial position the excursion associated with MH is virtually identical.

Such a rich inventory of pitch distinctions might be expected to give rise to a good many contrasts among segmentally homophonous items, and this is indeed the case. The largest set of which we are aware is the following nonoplet: ālā 'putting down'; álá⁻ 'lizard'; àlā` 'Am I beautiful?'; ālá 'Leave me (sg.)!'; álá 'Leave me (pl.)!'; álâ 'Did you (sg./pl.)/they leave me?'; ālâ 'Did he leave me?'; àlā´ 'male anthroponym'; álā 'knocking/bringing down, e.g., fruit from a tree'.

2.2. Analysis. It seems clear that, at the very least, three register tones need to be recognized in Kunama, viz: High, Mid, and Low. The complete lack of restriction on the distribution of Mid (apparent in the preceding examples) opposes any attempt to analyse it as a down-stepped High.

How then are the various falls and rises to be interpreted? First of all, the very fact that at least seven of the logically possible combinations of three register tones are actually attested in the language points in the direction of treating them as sequential combinations of the three register tones rather than as unit tones. Second, the end-points of falls and rises approximate the relatively steady-state pitch levels characteristic of the register tones. This observation is based on native speaker intuitions, i.e., that contours appear to begin and end at the same level as level tones. It is to some extent supported by comparing relevant values for level tones and contours tones in the preceding tables; for example, Tables 2 and 3, respectively, show M to be approximately 144 Hz in initial position and H to be around 175 Hz; Table 4 shows the HM contour to be 173 – 150 Hz. It must be acknowledged, however, that individual speaker variation and a range of factors involved in pitch scaling make such a comparison difficult. Third, the phenomena of tone spreading and replacement, and the fact that often one component of the contour is clearly an independent tonal morpheme, as discussed in detail below, provides strong evidence of the appropriateness of an analysis seeing surface contours as sequences of underlying level tones.

Distributional facts also support the analysis we are proposing. Simple exami-nation of the forms adduced in (2) and (3) leads to the observation (which seems to be a very general one for Kunama) that, in non-final syllables, pitch contours generally occur only in heavy syllables, i.e., in syllables having the shapes (C)VV (where VV represents either a long vowel or diphthong) or (C)VC. Certain cases that seem to contradict this statement are discussed later in the paper. The obvious generalization to be made in the case of bimoraic syllables containing long vowels or diphthongs is that each pitch component of a sequence is associated with a distinct mora. The same statement can be made in the case of heavy syllables closed by nasal or liquid consonants. However, it is equally clear that the second tone of a sequence is not associated with a closing obstruent in a heavy syllable. In such cases the entire contour is realized on the nuclear vowel of

Table 7. Average F0 values for Kunama Mid–High contours tones in final
(left, n = 10) and initial (right, n = 5) positions.

		final		initial	
Tone	L	MH		MH	HL
Mean	123.6	141.6–171.2		141.2–170.2	164.8–119.8
SD	4.7	6.3; 13.3		7.1; 6.6	5.1; 6.3
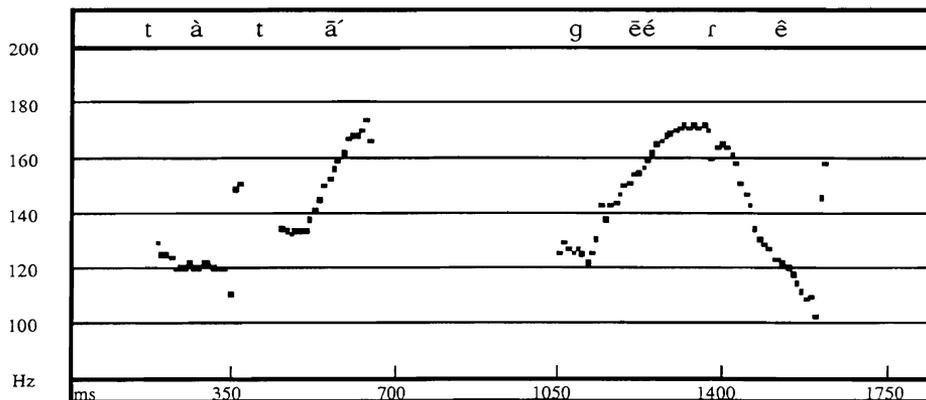
Figure 7. Sample pitch traces of Kunama Mid–High contours in final (left) and
initial (right) syllables: *tàtā́* 'grandmother (voc.)'; *gēérê* 'tall (pl.)'.

the syllable, which is necessarily a short one.[2] In cases like this the term 'tone-bearing-unit', commonly employed in autosegmental analyses, could hardly be equated with the mora in Kunama, for although obstruent moras are quite common, they do not actually 'bear tone'. On the other hand, where there is a sonorant mora (e.g., nasals or liquids), it does carry the tone. It would be more appropriate to say that tones are assigned on a mora-counting basis but that in cases where the assignment involves an obstruent mora, tones are shifted to the preceding vowel mora. A similar analysis of tone in syllables closed by obstruents has been proposed for another Nilo-Saharan language, Nara [Hayward, in press]. The notation of the various diagrams employed in this study adopts the assumptions of segment-to-mora and mora-to-syllable associations originally proposed by Hyman [1985]. To facilitate an appreciation of the independence of morphological boundaries on the segmental and tonal tiers, boundaries (indicated by hyphens) are marked on each tier separately. In the final example in (6), we can be sure that the syllable-final obstruent is indeed moraic as it involves a geminate, i.e., a heavy, consonant.

(6)

ítā 'house'   *mōódā* 'quarrel'   *táĺlā* 'rock

šúkkʷā 'bird'
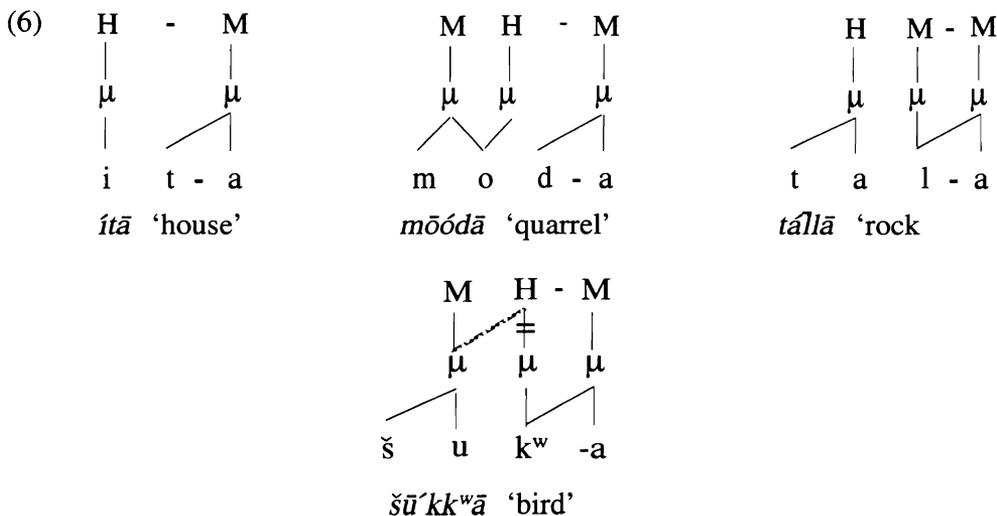
There are, however, some instances of something like a MH rise which occurs in a light syllable word-internally, and would thus appear to run contrary to what has been said about the tone-to-mora assignment being one-to-one in this context. Examination of all such cases reveals that these rising contours are always found

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[2] Kunama has very few "super-heavy" syllables. Three words of which we are aware are: *āūŋgʷá̄* hyaena', *àùŋkʷā* 'boat', and *àùggʷā* 'cat'. A plausible explanation might be to see the labial vowel not as a distinct segment so much as simply a contextual feature of the pronunciation of the low vowel when followed by a consonant sequence containing labialization, for example as *à̄ʷggʷā*, etc. Support for this would be the fact that these are the only three words of the language that appear to violate the veto on super-heavy syllables, and they all show virtually the same curious sequence of segments, which is also not found elsewhere.

when the preceding tone is a Low. An example would be *làg-ḗ´y-ā* 'your (pl.) land', where what is in other contexts a High tone possessive determiner suffix *-éy* 'your' attaches to the Low tone stem *làg-* 'land'. That the tone of *-éy* really is High is evident if it is affixed to Mid or High tone stems, e.g., *ūg-éy-ā* 'your (pl.) stone', *ít-éy-ā* 'your (pl.) house'. The anomaly is resolved if we interpret this particular MH rise simply as the realization of a High tone when it follows a Low tone. Examination of tone sequences within words reveals fairly conclusively that there are no instances of a Low tone followed by a level high pitch, though there are many where a Low is followed by a MH rise (cf. the examples in (3b)). We conclude then that, in this context, the MH rise represents a High tone.

Many of the examples showing falling and rising contours that were adduced in Section 2.1 involved word-final short vowels. In such cases it is clear that the one-to-one assignment of tones to moras just outlined cannot be sustained. Kunama appears to be a language exhibiting strong tonal stability[3] and dumping of string-final tones on the last (rightmost) tone-bearing unit is invoked to account for such forms, as, for example, in (7).

(7)   H - M   L   L   M   H
       | | ⟋ | | |⟍
       μ   μ   μ   μ   μ
       | ⟋| | ⟋| ⟋|
       i   t - e   a   t   a   l   i

       ítē` 'houses'   *àtālì* (woman's name)
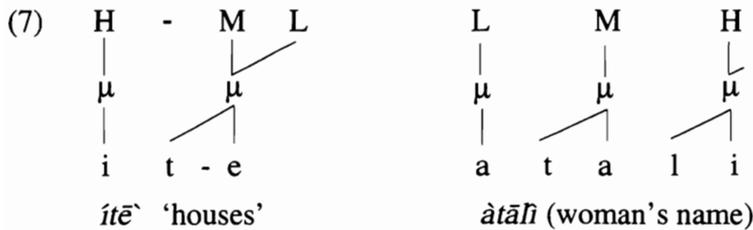
Within utterances, natural breaks occurring after sense groups that are not final in the utterance may occur. When they do, they are signalled by a High boundary tone. Where the pre-boundary vowel carries a Mid tone, a rise to High is heard. In the case where the pre-boundary vowel bears Low tone, a short rise to High is sometimes heard, though this generally contracts its range to that of a MH rise. Likewise, vocative address is signalled by suffixation of a final Low tone. If this suffixation occurs on a noun ending in a vowel bearing a Mid tone, a short falling
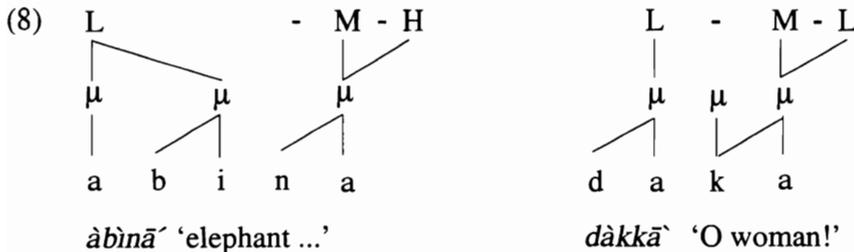
(8)   L   - M - H   L   -   M - L
       |⟍   ⟋ | ⟋
       μ   μ   μ   μ   μ   μ
       | ⟋| ⟋| ⟋| ⟍|
       a   b i   n   a   d   a   k   a

       àbìnā´ 'elephant ...'   *dàkkā`* 'O woman!'

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contour results. Both these phenomena are accounted for by allowing these purely tonal morphemes to dock onto the word-final mora.

It was claimed earlier that word-internal rising and falling contours, i.e., two-tone sequences, were only to be found associated with heavy syllables.[4] An interesting morphological alternation in possessive determiners appears to be motivated by this constraint. There are four possessive determiners: *-aaŋ* '1st person exclusive', i.e., 'I (± one or more others if plural) but not you'; *-iŋ* '1st person inclusive', i.e., 'I and you'; *-ey* '2nd person'; *-iy* '3rd person'. Number in these determiners is expressed tonally, where Low and High tones indicate singular and plural,[5] respectively. Thus: *āīl-ààŋ-ā* 'my cow', *āīl-ááŋ-ā* 'our (excl.) cow'; *làg-èy-ā* 'your (sg.) land', *làg-éy-ā* 'your (pl.) land'; *ít-íy-ā* 'his/her house', *ít-íy-ā* 'their house'. (Since "inclusivity" necessarily requires two or more persons, *-iŋ* always carries High tone.) Now, there is a class of nominals that is distinguished by the presence of a High tone morpheme that is manifested not on the stem itself but on the vowel of any morpheme that is suffixed to the stem; thus: *más-á⁻* 'spear', *tāy-á⁻* 'dog'. The analysis of these forms will be considered in section 3, but what interests us here is the fact that, when monomoraic singular possessive determiners occur with such nominals, a situation arises in which a High – Low sequence would be expected to occur on a short vowel. In such a case, the vowel
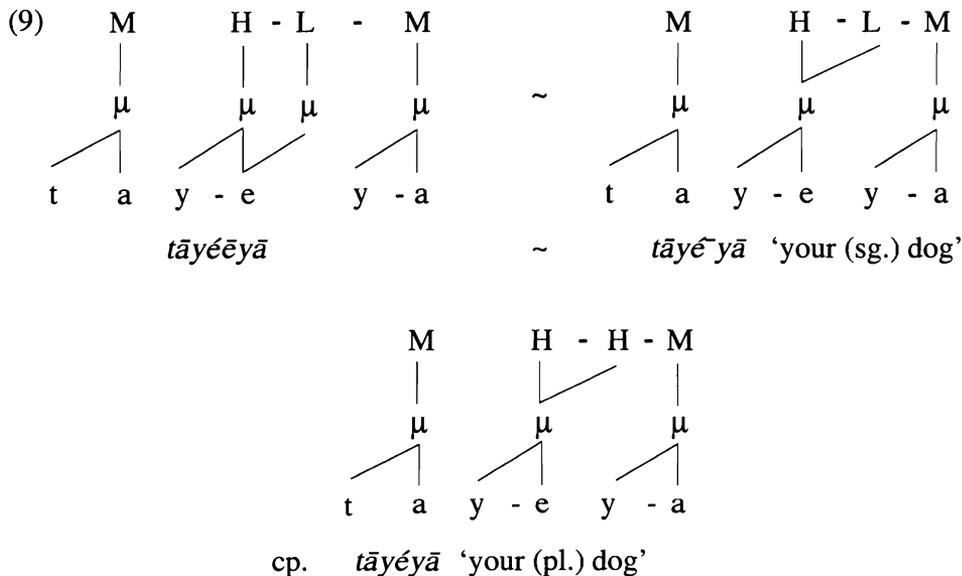
(9)

tāyéēyā   ~   *tāyê⁻yā* 'your (sg.) dog'

cp.   *tāyéyā* 'your (pl.) dog'

---

is sometimes pronounced longer, thereby accommodating the tone sequence in a way appropriate for a word-internal environment. With the corresponding plural determiner, no such sequence would arise, and the vowel observed is always pronounced short, as in (9). As the transcription of the singular form suggests, its representation is not the same as for the pronounced form; in fact, it is affected by a tonal assimilation process which will be discussed in Section 3.1.

3. Tone in the noun phrase

Already, from the account given so far, it will have become clear that tone functions significantly in all aspects of the Kunama language, in both lexicon and grammar, as well as in areas that might be considered as belonging to intonation. Nevertheless, even a cursory examination of the nine-fold set of tonal contrasts possible on the segmental string *ala*, which was adduced at the end of section 2.1, suggests that these contrasts rest heavily on what we may distinguish as the grammatical functions of tone. The four forms of the verb 'leave' cited there may be divided morphologically and tone:segment associations indicated as far as possible, but it is still obvious that some morphemes are tonal only, and this fact is increasingly impressed upon us as we investigate Kunama grammar.

As yet, our understanding of Kunama grammar as far as it relates to tone[6] is still very incomplete. Nevertheless, in order to give some indication of the role of tone, we devote the remainder of this paper to a brief account of tone in the noun phrase. The first subsection deals with tone in nominal words; the second subsection considers some short NP expansions.

3.1. Nominals. As far as their segmental morphology and tonal behaviour are concerned, nouns and adjectives behave identically, and this is given recognition here by treating them under a common label of "nominals".

Simple nominal stems always end in a consonant and may range from zero to three moras in length. The lower limiting case of nominals where it could be maintained that the stem consists of just a consonant will require separate consi-deration later, but as far as the generalities to be presented here are concerned they fall in with all other nominals.

Considerably more work needs to be done and the set of stem tone melodies in (10) is almost certainly not exhaustive. Moreover, we have not extended our investigation to any of the many obvious compound nominals found in the language. In all the examples in (10), and indeed, in our survey of nominals generally, the location of stem tone melodies can regularly be accounted for on the assumption of a left-to-right association convention [Goldsmith 1976; but cp. Pulleyblank 1986], as shown in (11).

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6 Many of the non-tonal aspects of Kunama grammar have, of course, been already very well described by Thompson [1983; 1989], Nikodimos Idris [1987], and Bender [1996].

(10) L: *làg-* 'land', *àbìn-* 'elephant', *ànd-* 'big', *bòbòn-* 'nose'

     M: *ūg-* 'stone', *ŋāād-* 'eating', *ācc-* 'dead', *fātākād-* 'interrupting',
             kōbōrōll- 'foreman'

     H: *jíb-* 'debt', *úkún-* 'owl', *úúd-* 'firewood', *ábííš-* 'male',
             míimím- 'sour'

     LM: *àšūr-* 'straight'

     MH: *āsár-* 'footprint', *lūúš-* 'pure', *sū′kk-* 'bird', *ā′kkúb-* 'camel',
             sāásíd- 'size'

     HM: *táll-* 'rock', *fúūc-* 'lung'

     HL: *láššààd-* 'goat-herd'

     MHM: *kītáāb-* 'book'

(11)

ŋāād- 'eating'   míimím- 'sour'   sāásíd-   'size'

kítáāb-   'book'
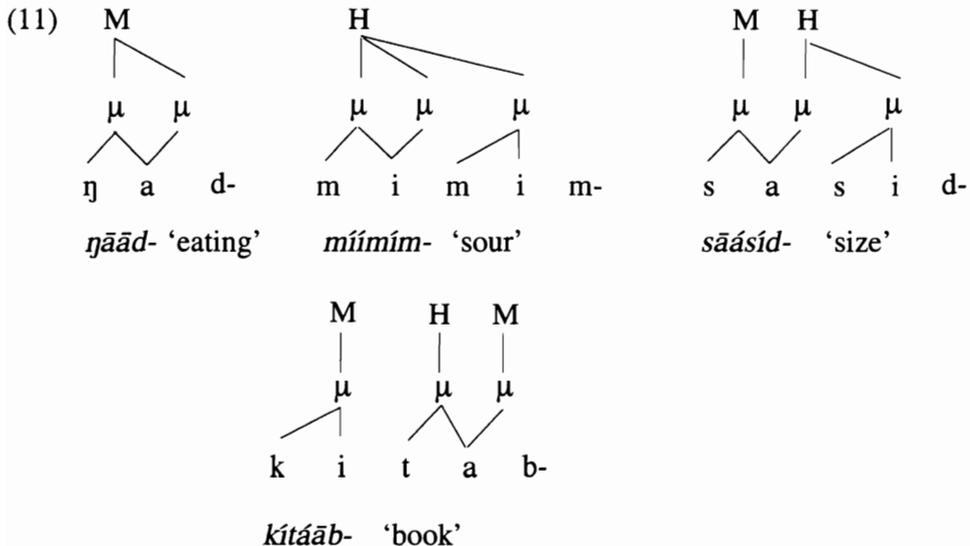
We have encountered only a small handful of items where something like a tonal pre-association would be required to ensure the correct surface pattern, e.g., *āsāŋg-* 'head', where pre-association of the High would allow association of the preceding Mid tone according to the association convention, as in (12a). Here we assume the Obligatory Contour Principle operates, as it appears to apply in the vast majority of cases. However, there is no clear evidence that OCP must be invoked, and an alternative analysis, that each tone is pre-linked as in (12b), while violating the OCP, has the advantage that the above exceptions would no longer be exceptional.

(12) a.   M   H   b.   M   M   H

         ⌐‾‾‾‾‾‾⌐ | | |
         μ   μ   μ   μ   μ   μ
         | ⟋| | | ⟋| |
         a   s   a   ŋ   g-   a   s   a   ŋ   g-

                    āsāŋg- 'head'
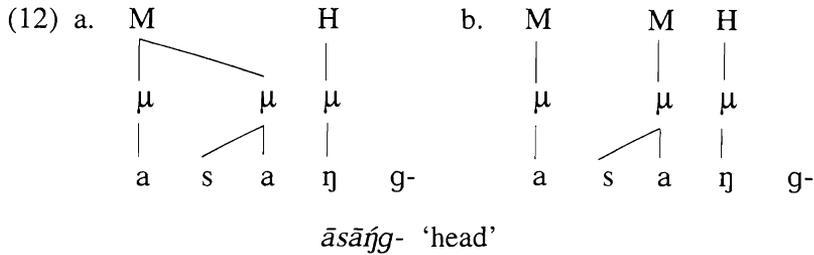
What we refer to as the nominal vowels (NVs) are vocalic suffixes; *-ā* in the case of singular and dual number, and *-ē̃* in the case of plural number. Although one or other of the NVs occur in every nominal form, their location depends upon the presence or absence of other morphemes in the nominal word. Thus, they follow the stem itself in undetermined nominals, but if a determiner is present, they attach to it. The determiner illustrated here is *-àm* 'this', which occurs with singular and dual forms, and *-ày* 'these', which occurs with plural. These points are illustrated here with the two nouns *làgā* 'land' and *āgūdā* 'water-pot', and the adjective *tùrūdā* 'fat'. In each example the nominal vowel is underlined.

(13)   undetermined

singular	*làg-ā̲*	*āgūd-ā̲*	*tùrūd-ā̲*
dual	*làg-ā̲-m̀mè*	*āgūd-ā̲-m̀mè*	*tùrūd-ā̲-m̀mè*
plural	*làg-ē̲̃ˋ*	*āgūd-ē̲̃ˋ*	*tùrūd-ē̲̃ˋ*

   determined (Determiners shown are: *-àm* 'this', *-ày* 'these')

singular	*làg-àm-ā̲*	*āgūd-àm-ā̲*	*tùrūd-àm-ā̲*
dual	*làg-àm-ā̲-m̀mè*	*āgūd-àm-ā̲-m̀mè*	*tùrūd-àm-ā̲-m̀mè*
plural	*làg-ày-ē̲̃ˋ*	*āgūd-ày-ē̲̃ˋ*	*tùrūd-ày-ē̲̃ˋ*

In the above words the tonal patterns are all straightforwardly compositional and only in the case of the dual forms do we observe something that might require a word of explanation. This is the occurrence of a Mid-to-Low fall on the penultimate syllables of these forms. This is readily explained in terms of the Low tone associated with the morpheme marking dual number, viz. *-m̀mè* achieving a maximal realization. This can be taken as rather nice evidence that the domain of tone in Kunama is the morpheme. In this case we have a segmental morpheme which is bimoraic without being either a bimoraic syllable or a sequence of two monomoraic syllables, and its tonal melody associates fully with it without apparent regard for syllable boundaries. And yet, it must be observed that at the same time the syllable-based constraint governing the distribution of tone sequences word-internally is still maintained.

The nominals just considered are all of one type in that, whatever the tonal melody is, it aligns itself with the final mora of the stem. We shall refer to nominals of this type as Class I.

There is, however, another type of nominal where there is an additional High tone that does not align with the final mora of the stem, which means that its realization always takes place on the first element following the stem. In undetermined nominals this High tone is located on the nominal vowels, as in (14). In (14) b and c, the characteristic Mid tone elements of the nominal vowels (-ā, -ê) could be regarded as having been incorporated *en passant* in the High-to-Low falls on the syllable following the stem.

(14) a. singular

       áš-ấ 'old - of thing'; *úúd-ấ* 'firewood'; *árd-ấ* 'intestines'; *tōm-ấ* 'fire'; *āāf-ấ* 'grandmother'; *āūŋgʷ-ấ* 'hyaena'; *kòsās-ấ* 'learning'

    b. dual

       tōm-á-m̀mè 'two fires'; *túkk-á-m̀mè* 'two guns'

    c. plural

       tōm-ê 'fires'; *túkk-ê* 'guns'

Could this additional High tone not be analysed as a component of the nominal vowels? Such a view might require, for example, that we set up two tonally distinct sets of nominal vowels distributed with different stems on a lexically determined basis. That this is incorrect is easily understood when we observe that this High tone appears on other vocalic suffixes—as occurs, for example, in nominal words containing determiners. An example of this has already been seen earlier in (9); the same otherwise unexpected High tone appears in other determiners also, as shown in (15). Here, optional lengthening of the vowel of the determiner is explained as previously (cf. example (9), i.e., as a response to the constraint promoting optimal word-internal association of tone sequences and syllables.

(15) *tōm-ấm-ā ~ tōm-áām-ā*   'this fire';
     túkk-ấm-ā ~ túkk-áām-ā   'this gun'

The examples in (15) also illustrate another common tonological process of Kunama, namely the spreading of Mid tone to replace a preceding Low when the latter is preceded by a High tone. In these examples, the Low tone of *-àm* is affected, as shown by the schema in (16). This assimilation has the effect of smoothing the overall contour. It is an interesting question whether assimilation of this sort occurs more generally, e.g., when the sequence H-M-L occurs with each tone on its own syllable. Our data does not include relevant examples, which must be very rare among nouns in the language if they exist at all. The sequence might well occur in verbal constructions, and this remains an area for further research.

(16)

tōm-áām-ā 'this fire'
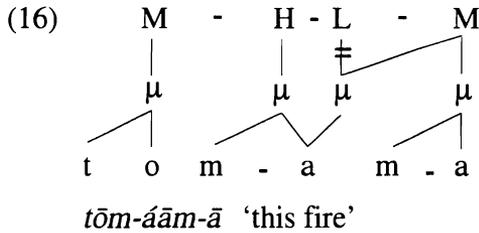
As demonstrated above, the association of tone melodies with nominal stems in Kunama generally follows a left-to-right operation, and it will be noticed that if the extra High tone were analysed just as part of the stem tone melody, its behaviour in words such as *ām̄m-â* 'laugh (n.)' (*ā mm̄-ā), and *īīš-é̄* 'fish (pl.)' (*īīš-ḕ) would run contrary to that generalization. Moreover, as we have said, this High tone never attains association within the stem. We conclude that this floating tonal element represents an independent and purely tonal morpheme. It appears to add nothing to the semantics of the nominals where it is found, and is considered here simply as a marker of a second lexical class which we shall refer to as Class II, exemplified in (17).[7] The claim that these are indeed two nominal classes receives rather striking confirmation when we consider possessive constructions (cf. section 4.2.4.).

(17)   Class II   Class I
          M - H   LM - H   M   HM
          tom-   *kosas-*   cp.   *kut-*   *fuuc-*
          'fire'   'learning'   'breast'   'lung'

We have already made the observation that some nominal stems in Kunama seem to consist simply of a single consonant, which we refer to as 'mono-consonantal' stems. It might be expected that such stems would have no tonal melody of their own, and the tone pattern of a word in which they occurred would be supplied entirely by other morphemes that were present; and this appears to be the case, as shown by the examples in (18).

(18)   singular   plural   cp. dual
          m- 'tooth'   *m-ā*   *m-ḕ*   *m-ā-mm̀è*
          ny- 'meat'   *ny-ā*   *ny-ḕ*   *ny-ā-mm̀è*

Nevertheless, there are some facts that suggest that such stems are not really without tone. Firstly, we find that these nominals divide into two classes, according to tonal behaviour, just like nominals with longer stems. This fact is apparent simply in listening to citation forms, as in (19). Examples of those that have the High tone class marker are given in (20).

---

[7] Thus it would be comparable to a thematic vowel defining a distinct inflectional class in more familiar languages.

(19) w-ā   'eye'   s-ā   'giving'
      kʷ-ā   'man'   w-ā   'leaving off'
      b-ā   'hole'   t-ā   'building, constructing'
      c-ā   'death'   d-ā   'returning'
      n-ā   'drinking'   f-ā   'leaf vegetables'
      k-ā   'taking, accepting'   f-ā   'collecting'
      ŋ-ā   'eating'

(20) m-â⁻   'love'   s-â⁻   'closing'
      k-â⁻   'hate'   t-â⁻   'breaking (tr.)'
      b-â⁻   'raising, ploughing,   t-â⁻   'planting, inserting'
               sexual intercourse'
      w-â⁻   'entering'

At first blush it would appear that the nominals in (19) and (20) belong, respectively, to Classes I and II as previously established for other nominals. Indeed, there seems to be no real difficulty in considering the nominals in (20) as members of Class II. Thus, a nominal such as *má⁻* 'love' behaves exactly like a typical Class II nominal such as *tāyá⁻* 'dog', as shown in (21). It would seem reasonable, therefore, to analyse the nominals of (20) as having stems such as *m´-* 'love', *s´-* 'closing', etc.

(21) 'dog'   tāy-â⁻   m-â⁻   love
      'dogs (dual)'   tāy-á-m̀mè   m-á-m̀mè   loves (dual)
      'dogs (pl.)'   tāy-ê   m-ê   loves (pl.)
      'this dog'   tāy-â⁻m-ā ~ tāy-áām-ā   m-áām-ā   this love
      'your (pl.) dog'   tāy-éy-ā   m-éy-ā   your (pl.) love

There is, however, a problem with identifying the nominals of (19) with Class I. Forms of the nominals listed in (19) should—if they are really members of Class I—show no evidence of either a stem tone melody (they have, after all, mono-consonantal stems) or a post-stem tone (a post-stem High tone being the defining property of Class II nominals). Unexpectedly, however, we find both falls and rises on determiners affixed to these nominals, as shown in (22).

(22) kʷ-āàm-ā   'this man'   (*kʷ-aàm-ā)
      kʷ-ááŋ-ā   'our (excl.) man'   (*kʷ-ááŋ-ā)
      m-ììy-ē`       'his teeth'             (*m-ììy-ē`)
      ny-ēéy-ā   'your (pl.) meat'   (*ny-ééy-ā)

Such forms reveal a parallelism in behaviour to nominals of Class II rather than to Class I, and we suggest that a similar analysis be applied to them by claiming that they also have a floating tone following the stem. In this case, however, that

tone is a Mid. We shall refer to this type as Class III. They could be represented as *m⁻*- 'tooth', *ny⁻*- 'meat', etc.

Are we correct though in assuming these stems to be mono-consonantal? An argument in favour of this analysis would be the fact that the vowel that follows the consonant of the stem appears always to be of a quality as would be furnished by whatever suffix occurs; compare the examples in (21) and (22). An argument for considering them not as mono-consonantal but as consisting of a consonant followed by a short vowel of some sort comes from the fact that vowels of determiner suffixes that attach to them are always long. In other cases it has been noted that such suffixes only show optional vowel lengthening when the derivation creates a tone sequence to be associated with them. Perhaps the constant factor of length in these mono-consonantal nominals could be accounted for by positing a mora in association with the post-stem tones. This would allow the segmental content of any suffix to associate with this mora, and so account for the vowel quality encountered, as in (23).

(23)

māàmā 'this tooth'   *mɲ̃īyā* (< *mɲ̃yā* by assimilation of
                                    Low to Mid) 'his/her love'
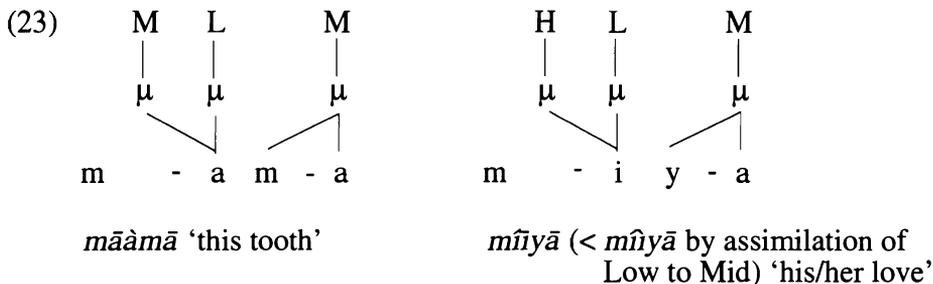
The fact that the citation form contains only a short vowel cannot be considered to constitute a serious objection to such an analysis, for it is a fact about Kunama that there simply are no word-final long vowels. So, any long vowel derived by suffixing a nominal vowel to this stem vowel might be expected to be pruned to length. A similar observation to the effect that there are no super-heavy syllables in the language would counter any objection based on the fact that the nominal vowel is always short in dual forms, such as *m-ā-m̀mê* 'teeth (dual)', for which one imagines a closed syllable contraction process eliminating potentially trimoraic syllables.

An analysis of these stems in this way would be to acknowledge that not all stems end in consonants. This would present a synchronic irregularity but, viewing the proposal positively, it might also go some way towards understanding how post-stem floating tones came about in Kunama, for one could then see such tones as relics of earlier tone-bearing vocalic suffixes. The fact that rather more of the substance of such suffixes was retained in monoconsonantal stems would be similar to the frequent retention of, say, otherwise lost noun class prefixes with monosyllabic noun stems in Bantu, e.g., Swahili Class 9/10 *n-ta* 'wax' but *tembo* 'elephant'.

3.1.1. Numerals. Numeral quantifiers can also certainly be regarded as a sub-group of nominals, though from the point of view of tone there is a slight difference. Thus, while the nominal vowels of all other nominals bear a Mid tone, the nominal vowel of most numerals bears a Low tone. The numerals 1 – 10 operate within a quinary system, whereas from 10 upward the system is clearly decimal.

(24)	one	*éllá⁻*	eleven[8]	*šē´bnáàlà éllá⁻*
	two	*bāárè*	twelve	*šē´bnáàlà bāárè*
	three	*sāttê*	eighteen	*šē´bnáàlà kōńsāttê*
	four	*sàllè*	twenty	*šē´bbáárè*
	five	*kūssúmè*	twenty-one	*šē´bbáárè éllá⁻*
	six	*kōńtállê*	thirty	*šē´bsāttê*
	seven	*kōńtábáárè*	forty	*šē´bsàllè*
	eight	*kōńsāttê*	fifty	*šē´bkūssúmè*
	nine	*éldāúdè*	sixty	*šē´bkōńtállê*
	ten	*šēébè*	hundred	*mújá⁻*

Two things will be observed. Firstly, the only numerals to have the nominal vowel -*a* are *éllá⁻* 'one' and *mújá⁻* 'one hundred'; all the others have the nominal vowel -*e*. It seems clear from this that 'one' is just like any other singular nominal morphologically[9], while all the numerals higher than 'one' behave like plural nominals. The second thing to be noted is that, like other nominals, the numerals are subdivided into those with a floating High tone following the stem (*éllá⁻* 'one', *sāttê* 'three', *kōńtállê* 'six', *mújá⁻* 'hundred') and those that do not have a post-stem vowel.

The attributive quantifying use of numeral quantifiers will be considered in Section 3.4.2, but it is pertinent here to mention the rather special behaviour of *éllá⁻* 'one' in attributive function. When functioning in this way, *éllá⁻* attaches to the noun it quantifies. The latter drops its nominal vowel, though when the tone of this vowel is simply Mid (i.e., with no post-stem High superimposed on it) it may be detected as a component of a rise on the numeral, as in (25).

(25)	*áléllá⁻*	'one lizard'	cp.	*álá⁻*	'lizard'
	méllá⁻	'one love'	cp.	*má⁻*	'love'
	āgūdéllá⁻	'one water-pot'	cp.	*āgūdā*	'water-pot'
	dàkkē´llá⁻	'one woman'	cp.	*dàkkā*	'woman'
	mē´llá⁻	'one tooth'	cp.	*mā*	'tooth'

---

[8] The teens are formed by means of a postpositional phrase structure meaning 'X ahead of ten'.

[9] *mújá⁻* 'hundred' is always quantified by another numeral, and the citation form listed here is a short form of *mújéllá⁻* 'one hundred', which is why it appears with the singular nominal vowel.

The matter is considered here because it would not be unreasonable to see such forms as incipient "singulatives". It is a feature of many Eritrean languages to have a singulative nominal category. In the case of Kunama, a profound linguistic influence has generally been exerted by its neighbour Tigre, which is a language well known for its wide deployment—and extensive use—of a singulative number category [cf. Palmer 1962].[10]

All other quantifiers, i.e., words such as *àrtē`* 'many', *áŋgúdē`* 'few, a little', *búúbī´yē`* 'all', and *búúbī´yā* 'every', behave entirely like adjectives and, like them, have fully regular nominal morphology; it should be noted that their nominal vowels do not pattern tonally like the numerals just considered.

3.2. Determiners. The possessive determiners (*-aŋ* '1st person exclusive', *-iŋ* '1st person inclusive', *-ey* '2nd person', *-iy* '3rd person') and the proximal deictic determiners (*-àm* 'this', *-ày* 'these') have already entered into the discussion of the previous section. There is one further pair of determiners which occurs, like these, in post-stem position, namely *-ōōm* 'that' and *-ōy* 'those'. This suffix also denotes previous reference within discourse, so that it functions somewhat like a definite article. The tonal behaviour of nominals containing *-ōōm* and *-ōy* is entirely straightforward.

The tables in (26) present the tone patterns of four representative nominals of the classes established in 3.1. containing the three determiners for the three number categories; it thus summarizes what has been discussed to this point.

(26) a. *ēlā* 'tree' (Class I)

		possessive det	prox. deic. det	distal deic. det
sg.	*ēl-ā*	*ēl-ààŋ-ā*	*ēl-àm-ā*	*ēl-ōōm-ā*
du.	*ēl-ā-m̀mè*	*ēl-ààŋ-ā-m̀mè*	*ēl-àm-ā-m̀mè*	*ēl-ōōm-ā-m̀mè*
pl.	*ēl-ē`*	*ēl-ààŋ-ē`*	*ēl-ày-ē`*	*ēl-ōy-ē`*

   b. *tāyá~* 'dog' (Class II)

		possessive det	prox. deic. det	distal deic. det
sg.	*tāy-á~*	*tāy-aá~ŋ-ā*	*tāy-á~m-ā* ~ *tāy-áām-ā*	*tāy-óōm-ā*
du.	*tāy-á-m̀mè*	*tāy-áāŋ-ā-m̀mè*	*tāy-á~m-ā-m̀mè* ~ *tāy-áām-ā-m̀mè*	*tāy-óōm-ā-m̀mè*
pl.	*tāy-ê*	*tāy-áāŋ-ē`*	*tāy-á~y-ē`* ~   *tāy-áāy-ē`*	*tāy-ó~y-ē`* ~   *tāy-óōy-ē`*

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[10] The location and behaviour of the dual number marker *-mmè* suggests that it could have had a similar origin. The fact that the final *e* vowel of this form is associated with a Low tone points up its affinity with the numerals.

c. *mā* 'tooth' (Class III)

		possessive det	prox. deic. det	distal deic. det
sg.	*m-ā*	*m-āàŋ-ā*	*m-āàm-ā*	*m-ōōm-ā*
du.	*m-ā-m̀mè*	*m-āàŋ-ā-m̀mè*	*m-āàm-ā-m̀mè*	*m-ōōm-ā-m̀mè*
pl.	*m-ē`*	*m-āàŋ-ē`*	*m-āày-ē`*	*m-ōōy-ē`*

d. *mâ͠* 'love' (Class II)

		possessive det	prox. deic. det	distal deic. det
sg.	*m-â͠*	*m-áāŋ-ā*	*m-áām-ā*	*m-óōm-ā*
du.	*m-á-m̀mè*	*m-áāŋ-ā-m̀mè*	*m-áām-ā-m̀mè*	*m-óōm-ā-m̀mè*
pl.	*m-ê*	*m-áāŋ-ē`*	*m-áāy-ē`*	*m-óōy-ē`*

Finally, mention should be made of another assimilation that has been noted in connection with determiners. When the Low tone determiners (i.e., *-àm*, *-ày*, and the singular possessive determiners) attach to a Mid tone stem in which the last two moras form a heavy syllable, Low tone spreads leftwards to the second mora, replacing its association with Mid. Thus: *mīǹd-àm-ā* 'this leg', cp. *mīnd-ā* 'leg'. The process may be represented as in (27).

(27)
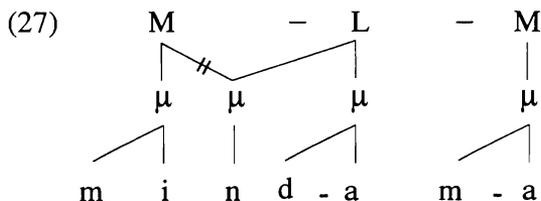
mīǹd-àm-ā 'this leg'

3.3. Simple NP expansions. It is our purpose here to consider a small variety of NP expansions with a view to describing the behaviour of tone within syntax.

3.3.1. Adjectives in attributive function. Although adjectives and nouns form a common class in terms of morphology, their syntactic behaviour is quite distinct, and this distinction extends to tonal patterning as well. While attributive adjectives follow the head noun they qualify, nouns in possessor function precede the head noun.[11] What especially concerns us here is that within a noun-adjective sequence neither constituent shows any tonal change, as shown in (28).

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[11] The point is of interest in terms of areal linguistic features, for within the Horn generally the syntactic location of adjectives vis à vis the noun they qualify and the possessor in a possessive construction correlate.

(28) a. *ítā àǹdā* '(a) big house'   cp. *ítā* 'house'; *àǹdā* 'big'
     b. *tāyá̄⁻ bīībá̄⁻* '(a) red dog'   cp. *tāyá̄⁻* 'dog'; *bīībá̄⁻* 'red'
     c. *ítā dàmádāǹmè* 'a couple of small houses'
                          cp. *ítā* 'house'; *dàmádāǹmè* 'small (dual)'
     d. *kìíšā gèēré̄⁻* 'tall girls'   cp. *kìíšā* 'girl'; *gèēré̄⁻* 'tall (pl.)'

As the last two examples (28c-d) show, number marking takes place on the adjective rather than on the noun head, but from the tonal point of view each word is fully explicable in terms of its morphology as an independent item.

3.3.2. Numerals and other quantifiers. The rather special behaviour of *éllá̄⁻* 'one' as an attributive quantifier has already been seen (cf. 3.1.1.). When functioning to qualify a nominal, numerals follow the nominal, though they show no signs of cliticizing to it. The plural nominal vowel occurs obligatorily on the NP head, even when dual marking occurs; when this latter is present—necessarily with the numeral 'two'—it is suffixed to the stem of the numeral. Any determiners present are also suffixed to the numeral stem. With regard to tonal behaviour no changes are observed in either word, as shown in (29).

(29) *dàkkē̂ sāttê* 'three women'   cp. *dàkkē̂* 'women', sāttê 'three'
     àbìnē̄⁻ sàl̀lè 'four elephants'   cp. *àbìnē̄⁻* 'elephants', *sàl̀lè* 'four'
     dàkkē̂ bāárāǹmè 'two women (dual)'¹²
                          cp. *dàkkāǹmè* 'women (dual)'
     āgūdē̂ sāttâyè 'these three water-pots'¹³
                          cp. *āgūdē̂* 'water-pots', *sāttê* 'three', *-ày* 'these'
     tāyê sàl̀lōyè 'those four dogs'   cp. *tāyê* 'dogs', *sàl̀lè* 'four', *-ōy* 'those'.

As was noted earlier, other quantifiers are formally just like nominals. When quantifying a nominal their behaviour—including tonal behaviour—is exactly like that of attributive adjectives.

3.4.3. The possessive construction. The possessive construction in Kunama has the order possessor–possessee. In such constructions, tonal changes may be very much in evidence. However, the changes seen in nouns of Classes I and II differ. As possessor, Class I nouns replace the Mid tone melody of the nominal vowel with a Low tone melody; this is clearly seen when the following word begins with a consonant, though when it begins with a vowel, assimilation to the tone borne by this vowel occurs. In possessee function, the tonal melody of the stem is

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¹² The numeral *bāárè* 'two' does not necessarily require dual morphology; thus, *dàkkē̂ bāárè* 'two women'. The semantic distinction conferred by this grammatical difference has not yet been investigated.

¹³ The leftward spreading of the final Low tone should be noted. From our observations to date all assimilations—whether tonal or segmental—operate regressively (leftwards) in Kunama.

replaced by a Mid-High melody, as in (30). The change in tone melody is illustrated clearly in Figures 8 and 9, with the former showing the citation forms and the latter the possessive construction.

(30) a. *dàkkà sāmátā* '(a) woman's grain-basket'

        cp. *dàkkā* 'woman'; *sàmàtā* 'grain-basket'

  b. *àbìnà ūkúnā* '(an) elephant's ear'   cp. *àbìnā* 'elephant'; *ùkùnā* 'ear'

  c. *gàm̀mà mīńdā* '(a) sheep's leg'   cp. *gàm̀mā* 'sheep'; *mīńdā* 'leg'

  d. *dàkkà gāńmê* '(a) woman's sheep (pl.)'

        cp. *dàkkā* 'woman'; *gàm̀mê* 'sheep (pl.)'

  e. *àbìnà ūkúnām̀mè* '(an) elephant's two ears'

        cp. *àbìnā* 'elephant'; *ùkùnām̀mè* 'ear (du.)'

  f. *āgūdà ūkúnā* '(the) ear (= handle) of a waterpot'

        cp. *agūdā* 'waterpot', *ùkùnā* 'ear'

  g. *nyà` hāmá̄* '(the) meat's taste'   cp. *nyā* 'meat', *hámā* 'tastiness'

  h. *kīíšà āsáŋgā* '(a) girl's head'   cp. *kīíšā* 'girl', *āsáŋgā* 'head'

  i. *ítà ūdá̄* '(a) house's door'   cp. *ítā* 'house', *ūdá̄* 'door'

It is important to notice in the examples in (30) that the Mid tone of the nominal vowel of the possessee undergoes no change. However, if the stem of the possessee noun consists of only one mora, assignment of the Mid-High melody forces an association of the second tone with the nominal vowel, so that the nominal vowels of such forms come to resemble those of Class II nominals, as in (31).

(31) a. *ítà ūdá̄* '(a) door of a house'   cp. *ítā* 'house'; *ùdā* 'door'

  b. *mīm̀dà gātá̄* 'shape of a leg'[14]   cp. *mīm̀dā* 'leg'; *gátā* 'shape'

  c. *dàkkà ītá̄* '(a) woman's house'   cp. *ítā* 'house; *dàkkā* 'woman'

   Class II nouns behave in a distinct way in possessive constructions. In the possessor noun the post-stem High tone remains intact but the tone of the nominal vowel itself is not replaced by a Low tone melody as it is in Class I, so that the form appears to undergo no change at all, as in (32).

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14 The Mid-Low fall in the first syllable of *mīm̀dā* results from the tonal assimilation described in section 3.2.
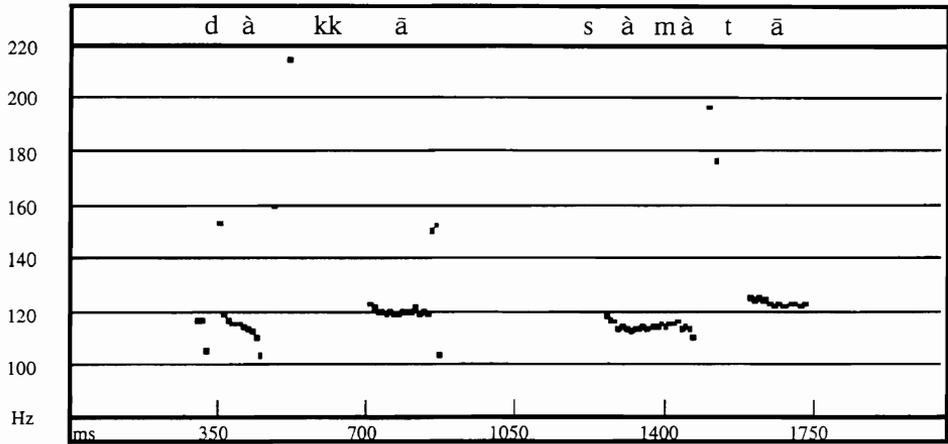
Figure 8: Representative pitch traces of Kunama words *dàkkā* 'woman' and *sàmàtā* 'grain basket' as citation forms.
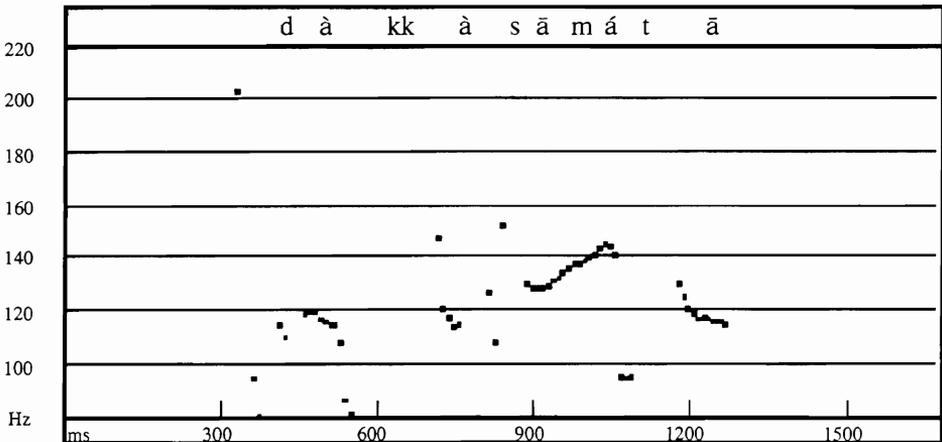
Figure 9: Pitch trace of *dàkkā* and *sàmàtā* as the possessive construction *dàkkà sāmátā* 'a woman's grain basket'.

(32) a. *álá̰ mĩ́ńdā* '(a) lizard's leg'   cp. *álá̰* 'lizard'; *mĩ́ńdā* 'leg'
      b. *kāāsá̰ gátá̰* 'shape of a belly'   cp. *kāāsá̰* 'belly'; *gátá* 'shape'

This difference in behaviour may possibly be explained by means of the raising to Mid of a Low tone preceded by High and followed by Mid, i.e., the assimilation process invoked in Section 3.1 to account for something rather similar in the tonal behaviour of Low tone determiners.

The most interesting difference however appears in the possessee noun, where, in addition to replacement of the stem tone melody by the Mid-High melody, the post-stem High tone is dropped too, as in (33). Illustrations of these are given in Figures 10 and 11.

(33) a. *àbìnà kāásā* '(an) elephant's belly' cp. *àbìnā* 'elephant'; *kāásá̰* 'belly'
      b. *álá̰ šīímā* '(a) lizard's tail'   cp. *álá̰* 'lizard'; *šīímá̰* 'tail'

The fact that in these forms the post-stem High tone is dropped along with the stem tone melody strongly supports the idea that although it is a separate morpheme, this element is part of the stem.

Some consideration needs to be given to the "monoconsonantal-stem" nouns, where their brevity of structure might be expected to impose constraints on the association of the Mid-High melody indicating possessee status. As in the case of Class I nouns with monomoraic stems considered above, the High tone of the melody is obliged to associate with the nominal vowel. However, there being no possibility of three tones associating with the nominal vowel the Mid tone element of the melody receives no phonetic realization. One consequence of the High tone element of the melody being realized on the nominal vowel is that the tonal distinction between Class III and Class II in monoconsonantal-stem nouns is neutralized in possessive constructions; cf. example (34c) below, for example.

(34) a. *gàm̀mà wá̰* '(a) sheep's eye'   cp. *gàm̀mā* 'sheep', *wā* 'eye'
      b. *tāyá̰ nyá̰* '(a) dog's meat'   cp. *tāyá̰* 'dog', *nyā* 'meat'
      c. *dàkkà má̰* '(a) woman's love'   cp. *dàkkā* 'woman', *má̰* 'love'
            or '(a) woman's tooth'   cp. *dàkkā* 'woman', *mā* 'tooth'

Finally, few examples of nested possessive constructions have been observed, and these (35) suggest that they involve essentially the same patterns as have just been described.

(35) a. *kʷà dá´kkà ītá̰* '(a) man's wife's house'
                  cp. *kʷā* 'man'; *dàkkā* 'wife (=woman)'; *ítā* 'house'
      b. *gàm̀mà šīímà šēbérā* 'smell of a sheep's tail'
                  cp. *gàm̀mā* 'sheep'; *šīímá̰* 'tail'; *šèbèrā* 'smell'
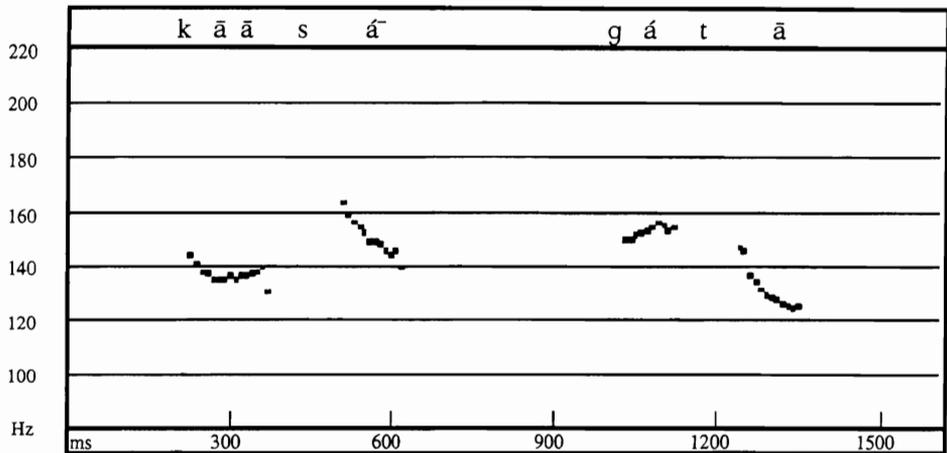
Figure 10: Representative pitch traces of Kunama words *kāāsá̰* 'belly' and
        gátā 'shape' as citation forms.
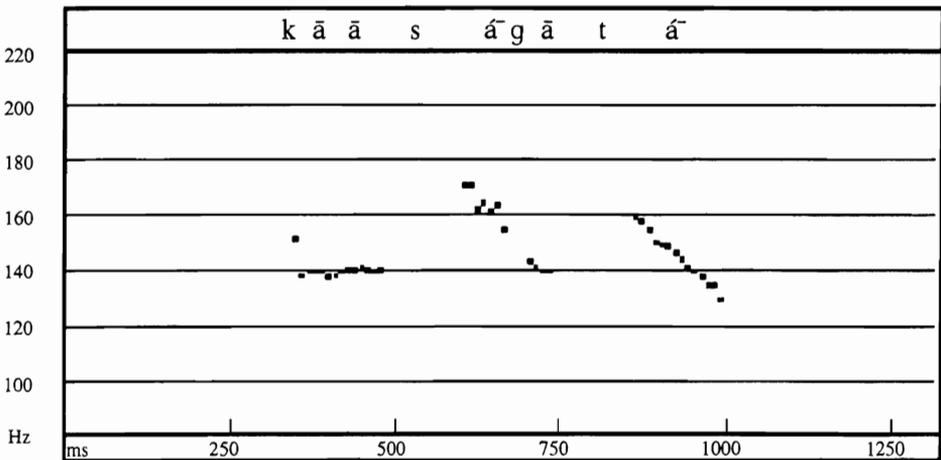
Figure 11: Pitch trace of kāāsá̰ and gátā as the possessive construction
        kāāsá̰ gātá̰ 'shape of a belly'.

4. Summary

Kunama has, in previous work, been claimed to have contrastive tone, length (both consonantal and vocalic) and lexical stress.The present study, while preliminary in the sense that much more remains to be explored regarding Kunama non-segmental phonology, finds no evidence at all for contrastive lexical stress. All lexical constrasts not attributable to segmental or durational differences can be accounted for in terms of three tones and tonal contours resulting from combinations of these three. Both descriptive phonetic data and phonological discussion have been presented concerning the realization of Kunama tone and how it functions in noun phrases. Further work should focus on completing the description of tone in Kunama. Among what we suspect will be many further instances of the grammatical use of tone, the investigation of the verb phrase should be of particular priority. Investigation into factors relating to pitch scaling in Kunama would also constitute important work since, while a small amount of work in this vein has been done on three-tone languages (e.g., Connell & Ladd 1990 and Laniran 1992 for Yoruba, Snider 1998 for Bimoba), the tonal system of Kunama appears to have interesting differences to these languages, and has the potential to contribute greatly to our general understanding of tonal phenomena.

APPENDIX

Measurements of Kunama Tones

Recordings of words illustrating Kunama tones in citation forms and in possessive constructions were recording in the Phonetics Laboratory at the School of Oriental and African Studies on Sept 30 and Oct. 8 1999. The speaker was John Abraha, the third author of this paper. The recordings were done using a Sony DTC ZE700 digital recorder, with the audio signal fed into the left channel and a laryngograph (EGG) signal to the right channel. We are grateful to Bernard Howard for his technical assistance and expertise. Subsequent processing and analysis was done using MacQuirer 4.7 software. Measurements for tones from a selection of citation forms are included in the text. Table A.1, below, presents the measurements done on possessive constructions. Citations forms included in this table were recorded separately from those used in the first part of the paper. Average measurements are based on a minimum of five repetitions of each item. Where the average is based on a greater number of repetitions, this is indicated. Generally two measurements were taken on each vowel, avoiding consonant perturbations and using the general criteria set out in Connell & Ladd [1990] to select landmarks for measurement. In cases of vowels not flanked by consonants, and where no obvious landmark was available, a point was chosen 30–65 ms from the beginning or end of the vowel.

Table A.1. Tone values (F0) for sample Kunama possessive constructions, showing tone changes from citation forms to possessor or possessee position.

Exx	Citation form	Possessor	Possessee
1	dàkkā	119-113; 120	119-115; 116-107	
1	sàmàtā	116; 114-110; 126		128-132; 144; 118-115
2	àbɪnā	122-122; 118; 122	121; 121-114; 117	
2	ùkùnā	127-116; 124-121; 124-131		131-112; 150-156; 137-118
3	gàm̀mā	120-117; 124-127	125-121; 121	
3	mīñdā	130; 124-127		135-154; 128-116
4	dàkkā	119-115; 127-123	120; 122-117	
4	gàm̀mè`	121; 129-112		126-149; 128-104
5	àbɪnā	124–116; 126–122; 124–129	136–126; 125–120; 123–127	
5	ùkùnām̀mè	128–116; 126; 126–118; 106–100		134–123; 163–152; 134–116; 105–103
6	îtā	161–146; 134–124	163–148; 132–123	
6	ùdā	130–123; 127–136		124–123; 143–122
7	mīñdā	133–135; 132–134	136–134; 123–115	
7	gátā	157; 138–127		122; 152–128
8	dàkkā	124–121; 133–134	127–122; 121	
8	îtā	169–171; 138–130		141–126; 154–133
9	álā̄	158-165; 160-134	163-170; 160-143	
9	mīñdā	143; 138-142		145-156; 134-126
10	kāāsá̄	135-137; 153-135	136-140; 164-151	
10	gátā	153-159; 136-125		138; 146-130
11	àbɪnā	129; 132–130; 134–138	131; 133; 128–122	

11	kāāsá⁻	137–140; 156–133		136–160; 136–125
12	álá⁻	155-163; 149-129	154-160; 151-130	
12	šíímá⁻	172-167; 153-132		138-148; 138-125
13	gàm̀mā	133–136; 141–146	133; 136	
13	wā	139–143		159–134
14	tāyá⁻	128; 138-117	128-137; 139-131	
14	nyā	128-122		131-133-116
15	dàkkā	122–121; 132–129	123–122; 125	
15	má⁻	149–123		146–123
16	dàkkā	—	125–122; 127	
16	mā	134–125		147–122
17	kwā	137–141	136–117	
17	dàkkā			133–148; 127–116
17	ítā	168; 132–129		131; 149–122
18	gàm̀mā	—	129–125; 118	
18	šíímá⁻	171; 146–123		141–154; 135–112
18	šèbèrā	131; 130; 137–143–135		134; 148; 135–122

Table A.2. Tonal patterns of Possessee.

	Gloss	Cit	Class	Predicted	Observed	EXX
sàmàtā	grain basket	LLM	I	MHM	MHL	1
ùkùnā	ear	LLM	I	MHM	MLHML	2
šèbèrā	smell	LLM	I	MHM	MHML	18
mīñdā	leg	MM	I	MHM	MHML	3
gàm̀mê	sheep (du.)	LML	I	MHML	MHML	4
ùkùnām̀mè	ear (du.)	LLMLL	I	MHMLL	MHMLL	5
ùdā	mouth	LM	I	MHM	MHM	6
gátā	shape	HM	I	MHM	MHM	7
ítā	house	HM	I	MHM	HMHM	8
gátā	shape	HM	I	MHM	MHM	10
ítā	house	HM	I	MHM	MHM	17
mīñdā	leg	MM	I	MHM	MHM	9
kāāsá̄	belly	MHM	II	MHM	MHM	11
šíímá̄	tail	HHM	II	MHM	MHM	12

wā	eye	M	III	HM	HM	13
nyā	meat	M	III	HM	ML	14
mā	tooth	M	III	HM	HM	16
mâ͡	love	HM	II	HM	HM	15
dàkkā	woman	LM	I	MHL	MHML	17
šíímá͡	tail	HHM	II	MHL	MHML	18

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THE ROLE OF TENSE AND ASPECT IN MBODOMO NARRATIVE DISCOURSE*

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In Mbodomo, a Gbaya language spoken in Cameroon, the tense/aspect of the verb plays an important role in narrative discourse. In general, tense/aspect is not marked on main clause verbs except in the story setting. Outside of the story setting, tense/aspect inflection is used for marking discontinuity of reference (topic, participants), situation (time, location), or action within the narrative text.

1. Introduction

The setting and background information, storyline, and peak episodes of the Mbodomo[1] folktale narrative each have contrastive pragmatic features. In the context of these pragmatic features, the tense/aspect system plays an important role. The past tense is the normal verb inflection for communicating background information and for detailing the setting in Mbodomo narrative. In the story line and in the peak, tense/aspect is not usually marked except where the coherence of the narrative is in some way disrupted. Tense/aspect is one of the means used to mark the point of disruption and, at the same time, maintain overall coherence in the narrative.

The texts referred to in this paper are primarily the folktales *The Girl and the Serpent* and *Hyena and Squirrel*, recounted to and recorded by Bagoutou

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[1] Mbodomo is a Gbaya language spoken in eastern Cameroon. It is in the Adamawa-Ubangi group of the Niger-Congo language family. Although the name of the language is Mbódɔ̀mɔ̀, the English spelling will be used throughout this paper.

Djembélé Sylvain in the Mbodomo village of Gandima Tongo (see APPENDIX).
Four other texts, from the same source, are used, but to a lesser extent. *The Bongo*
is a folk tale of a man who goes hunting for bongo. He reserves the best portion
for himself, but each of his four wives steals some of it. In an effort to find the
guilty person, he puts them all to a test, which all but one pass with flying colors.
Mbádímbáŋ is a tale of a fighting contest between the title character, whose name
signifies a filthy, rude person, and the Spider "Tò". *Báfíá* tells the tale of what
happens to Tò when he insists on exchanging noses with his friend Báfíá who has
an immense nose. In both of the latter two tales, Tò gets himself into trouble and
needs to be rescued by others who show more wisdom than he. *Zùɓèlà* is the tale
of a great hunt which the title character leads. Due to a lack of foresight, the
hunters fail to bring water with them. After a very successful hunt, everyone is
feasting and making merry until everyone but Zùɓèlà is dying of thirst.

2. The structure of the Mbodomo verb

The basic structure of the verb consists of a verb root plus either an inflectional
suffix or an auxiliary verb. The past tense is formed by adding a past tense suffix
-*à*, whose surface form alternates according to vowel harmony constraints
governed by the main vowel of the verb root. All other tense/aspects are formed
with auxiliary verbs, some of which precede the verb, others which follow. These
forms are considered auxiliaries, following Noss [1981] in his description of
Yaayuwee, a language closely related to Mbodomo. The Mbodomo verb takes
only one tense/aspect inflection at a time.[2] The forms listed in (1) summarize the
relevant tense/aspect inflections found in Mbodomo (note: V = verb root).

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[2] In going over this data with a colleague, it became clear that in reality both tense and aspect
are marked on the verb: tense and secondary aspect (HAB, PROG, etc.) are marked by the
presence of either the suffix or of one of the auxiliaries mentioned above, and basic aspect by
tone on the verb root. There are two basic aspects in Mbodomo: perfective and imperfective.
Perfective is indicated by a low tone on the verb root, and imperfective by a high tone.
However, the tense/aspect system in Mbodomo is frozen and completely predictable, and there
are no constructions where the only difference is one of tone. Furthermore, the basic aspect
marked by tone on the verb root can be entirely factored out and the system still make sense.
The tree below illustrates the grammatical choices available:

$$
\text{T/A} < \begin{cases} \text{Perfective} \quad < \begin{cases} \text{PST} \\ \text{PRF} \\ \text{CON} \end{cases} \\[2em] \text{Imperfective} < \begin{cases} \text{FUT} \\ \text{HAB} \\ \text{PROG} \\ \text{PST PROG} \end{cases} \end{cases}
$$
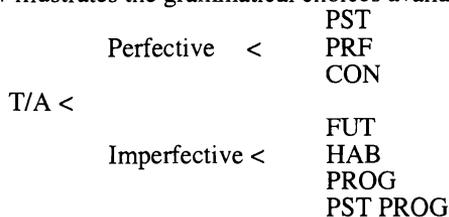
(1)　Perfective:

$$\begin{array}{ll}
\text{V̀-à} & \text{past} \\
\text{V̀ sɔ́} & \text{perfect} \\
\text{màa V̀} & \text{consecutive}
\end{array}$$

Imperfective:

$$\begin{array}{ll}
\text{tà V́} & \text{future} \\
\text{V́ kà} & \text{(pres.) habitual} \\
\text{á V́} & \text{(pres.) progressive} \\
\text{dúŋ-ú V́} & \text{past progressive}
\end{array}$$

Verbs that are non-present tense are explicitly marked for tense, either future, as in (2), or past, as in (3), and are not marked for secondary aspect.

(2)　Future tense: Future Aux + Verb[3]

　　kóé　　tà　　tó　　yòmbò.
　　woman FUT　pound cassava
　　'The woman will pound cassava.'

(3)　Past tense: Verb + past tense suffix

　　tòló yàr-à　　kɔ́-m.
　　dog　lick-PST hand-1S.INALN
　　'The dog licked my hand.'

Verbs that are in the present tense are explicitly marked for secondary aspect only, either habitual imperfective, as in (4), or progressive imperfective, as in (5a) and (b).

(4)　Habitual (present): Verb + Habitual Aux

　　mús bɔ̀ŋ　　lá　　kà　　á　　lí　　yàrà.
　　cat　1S.ALN sleep HAB PREP top bed
　　'My cat habitually sleeps on the bed.'

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[3] The following abbreviations are used in this article:

ALN	alienable poss.	FUT	future tense	PREP	prepostion
AUX	auxiliary verb	HAB	habitual aspect	PRF	perfect aspect
BEN	benefactive prep.	IMP	imperative	PROG	progressive aspect
CAUS	causative marker	INALN	inalienable poss.	PST	past tense
COMP	complementizer	INT	interrogative	PURP	purpose conj.
CON	consecutive action	INTR	intransitive suffix	REL	relative clause mark
CONJ	conjunction	LOG	logophoric pronoun	RFLX	reflexive pronoun
COP	copula	NEG	negative	S	singular
DEM	demonstrative	NOM	nominal suffix	SIM	simultaneity
EXCL	exclamation	PL	plural	TOP	topical marker
FOC	focus	POSS	possession		

(5) Progressive (present): Progressive Aux + Verb (intransitive suffix)
    a. *kóé   á   gí   súgà.*
       woman PROG cook cassava.greens
       'The woman is cooking cassava greens.'

    b. *màtúà á   lák-né.*
       vehicle PROG leave-INTR
       'The car is leaving.'

The perfect aspect[4] is marked by the auxiliary, *só*, as shown in (6). The periphrastic verbal structure, *dúŋ* 'to sit, remain' plus the past tense marker, -à, preceding the verb, as in (7), expresses a past progressive.

(6) Perfect: Verb + Perfect marker
    kóé   yèsìdì só   é-mɔ̀   wâ   fét
    squirrel arrange PRF PL-things 3S.ALN already
    'Squirrel had already arranged his things...' .[HS 11][5]

(7) Past progressive: dúŋ + past tense suffix + verb root
    élé dúŋ-ú   wɔ́r mɔ̀   odile mà hɔ̀-à.
    1P stay-PST talk something Odile SIM arrive-PST
    'We were talking when Odile arrived.'

In narrative discourse, a verbal construction occurs which is not found elsewhere. Welmers [1973:364] and Longacre [1990] call this narrative-unique predicate form the "consecutive tense", which in Mbodomo is formed by juxtaposing the auxiliary verb *má* before the verb root, as in (8). The consecutive tense functions as a past perfective within the storyline of a narrative text.

(8) Consecutive tense: Consecutive Aux. + Verb
    Mbádímbáŋ má kàŋ   Tò lò   á   nù.
    Mbádímbáŋ CON pick.up To throw PREP ground
    'Mbadimbang (then) picked up To and threw (him) to the ground.'

The consecutive tense marker *má*, though superficially similar to the simultaneous marker *mà*, has a completely different function. The simultaneous marker is used only in compound or complex sentences and indicates the relationship between the clauses (see (7) above and sentences [GS 31] and [GS 33] in the

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[4] Although there is reason to question the notion of the perfect as an aspect, I am following Comrie's [1976: 52-3] lead in identifying it as aspect in view of the fact that, in many languages, the perfect may occur with several different tenses but does not occur with other aspects.
[5] The code indicates the sentence number and text which can be found in the appendix.

appendix). The simultaneous marker may occur in a dependent clause and is always found with a verb marked for tense/aspect, whereas the consecutive tense marker is never found in dependent clauses nor with any other tense/aspect inflection in the main clause in which it is found.

3. Role of tense/aspect in Mbodomo narrative

In the discussion of the role of tense/aspect in Mbodomo narrative, it is important to distinguish between background material and foreground or mainline material in the narrative. Hopper and Thompson [1980: 280] describe these as follows:

> "That part of a discourse which does not immediately and crucially contribute to the speaker's goal, but which merely assists, amplifies, or comments on it, is referred to as BACKGROUND...the material which supplies the main points of the discourse is known as FOREGROUND."

Peak is described by Longacre [1996: 37] as "...any episode-like unit set apart by special surface structure features and corresponding to the climax or denouement..."

Also important in the description of the grammatical structure of the Mbodomo folktale narrative is how

> "...verb and noun morphosyntax are used to sort out strands of information relevance in a discourse. Thus the mainline of a discourse can be marked (...) by a characteristic tense, aspect..., by word order in the clause, or by a mystery particle. Various other features can also mark the more pivotal parts of the mainline from the more routine parts and can classify background, supportive and depictive material so that the more crucial bits of such information stand out." [Longacre 1996: 2-3]

Tense/aspect constitute one of the means used in Mbodomo narrative to distinguish between the types of information as well as marking points of discontinuity in the text.

3.1 The Mbodomo narrative. The prototypical Mbodomo folktale narrative consists of a formulaic invitation, a setting, various episodes that increase in tension to an action peak, a denouement, a didactic peak or moral, and a formulaic closure.

In Mbodomo narrative, the mainline, or storyline, is generally not marked for tense/aspect, except at points of discontinuity. Background information, however, is generally marked PAST, especially in the narrative setting. The peak, like the storyline, is not generally marked for tense/aspect except at points of discontinuity. The main syntactic features of peak, both the main peak and sub-peaks, are: word order variation where the object is fronted (OSV), as in (9); nominalized verb phrases which function as tail-head or "summary"-head linkage repeating the information in the preceding clause, and the focus marker *ná* occurring before the main clause verb, both shown in (10). The peak of the narrative may use some or all of these features.

(9) *pì-bòlò kà kóé   pí á   nú   ɓàklà.*
     put-iron that squirrel put PREP mouth hyena
     '(It is) that bit, that Squirrel put in Hyena's mouth.' [HS26]

(10) *hɔ̀-â   mɛ́   gɔ́k   wàn-dòl-bòlò   ná tò-à*
     arrive-PST.NOM POSS serpent chief-fashion-iron FOC strike-PST
     'When the serpent arrived, the blacksmith struck it on

     zù   gɔ́k   gbɛ́.
     head serpent kill
     its head, killing it.' [GS 24]

3.2 Continuity and discontinuity in Mbodomo narrative. A coherent discourse has the tendency to evoke the same referents, revolve around recurring themes, and develop along locational, temporal, or logical parameters [Payne 1997:344]. Givón [1990:896-97] states that "coherent discourse tends to maintain, over a span of several propositions, respectively:
     a) the same referent ("topic");
     b) the same or contiguous time;
     c) the same or contiguous location;
     d) sequential action."
So, when there is a change of reference—topic or participant, change of situation—time or location, or change in sequential action, there is a discontinuity in the text. At these points of discontinuity certain devices are employed "to indicate discontinuities in a coherent monologue...[and] to maintain the overall unity and continuity of the text by guiding the listener...across the discontinuity" [Levinsohn 1994:4-5]. Mbodomo uses tense/aspect as one of its devices to mark these points of discontinuity in the narrative. In general, where there is discontinuity in the text, tense/aspect will be marked on the main clause verb. The main clause verb will not be marked for tense/aspect where there is no discontinuity.

     While tense/aspect inflection marks discontinuity, it is not possible to fully predict which tense/aspect inflection will occur with each type of discontinuity based on the texts used for this study. The most that can be said is that Mbodomo restricts the use of certain tense/aspect inflections. For example, the consecutive tense is used only where there is consecutive or sequential action in the storyline. As a result, the consecutive tense is not found in the background information of a narrative. Furthermore, the future and the perfect constructions are used only where there is a disruption of temporal sequence. In other words, the consecutive tense may permit discontinuities of reference or situation, but not discontinuity of sequential action, and the future tense/aspect and the perfect occur only when there are discontinuities of temporal sequentiality.

     Figure 1 summarizes the roles the different tense/aspects play in Mbodomo narrative text. Although the tense/aspect usage is identical in both the story line

Predicate forms/ Key narrative parts	Background		Story line		Action peak	
	cont.	discont.	cont.	discont.	cont.	discont.
Past tense	X			X		X
Consecutive tense				X		X
Unmarked verb		---6	X		X	
Perfect		X		X		X
Future		X		X		X

Figure 1. Tense/aspects inflections and their roles in narrative.

and the action peak, other syntactic features distinguish the story line from the action peak.

Another technique used in Mbodomo narrative to mark certain types of discontinuity, in particular discontinuity of situation, is the use of adverbial phrases and certain conjunctions. While these adverbial phrases and conjunctions are often used in tandem with tense/aspect marking on the verb, this is not always the case, especially with the conjunction *à* 'but/then'. This conjunction will be discussed in further detail below.

3.3 The role of tense/aspect in narrative continuity. As mentioned above, the marking of tense/aspect inflection is one means that Mbodomo uses to mark discontinuities in the narrative. Markedness, however, is not absolute. What may be the marked form in one context, may be the unmarked form in another context [Givón 1990:946]. In the Mbodomo narrative, PAST is marked when it appears in the storyline or peak of a narrative but unmarked elsewhere.

3.3.1 Past tense as normal inflection in the setting and background. The past tense is the normal verb inflection in main clauses in the narrative setting and background. Given that background is that "which...assists, amplifies, or comments on" the speaker's goal [Hopper and Thompson 1980: 280], both examples (11) and (12) give background information. However, while there is continuity between the two sentences in (11), and, hence, the use of the normal, unmarked inflection, there is discontinuity of time and action between the storyline sentence in (12a) and action referred to in the background sentence (12b). Example (12b) reflects this discontinuity by the use of a marked inflection. Even before Hyena had returned home, Squirrel was ready.

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6 The unmarked verb has not yet been found in the background information of a narrative.

(11) *dùŋ-ù   nè   ɓàklà   hínè   kóé.*
sit-PST PREP hyena PREP squirrel
'There was once a hyena and a squirrel.' [HS 2]

wâ dùŋ-ù   ndáŋ kàrá.
3P sit-PST one   long.time
'They were friends (lit. one) for a long time.' [HS 3]

(12) a. *làk-â   mé   ɓàklà á   kí,   ná sì-à   né*
leave-PST.NOM POSS hyena PREP DEM FOC return-PST go

á   lé   wâ.
PREP village 3S.ALN
'(When) Hyena left that place, (he) returned to his (own) village.'
[HS 10]

b. *kóé   yèsìdì só é-mɔ̀   wâ   fét,   fár   là   fét.*
squirrel arrange PRF PL-thing 3S.ALN already wash clothes already
'Squirrel had already arranged his things (and) washed (his) clothes.'
[HS 11]

The past tense also occurs in dependent clauses that provide background infor-
mation. Examples (13) and (14) illustrate the use of relative clauses which pro-
vide background information to the narrative. The example in (15), which also
includes a relative clause providing background information, shows the con-
trasting marked inflection.

(13) *wílí bɔ̀ŋ   kà   tè-à   gɔ̂.*
man 1S.ALN REL come-PST that
'That one, who is coming, is my husband!' [GS 7]

(14) *...é-yí   mé   lé   kà   dùŋ-ù   á   nɔ̀   kpàtà...*
PL-people POSS village REL sit-PST PREP drink beer
'...the people of the village, who sat drinking corn beer,...' [HS 29]

(15) *kóé   fàr-à   tè nè,   pí là   kà   wènè fàr   só*
squirrel wash-PST body 3S.INALN put clothes REL 3S   wash PRF
'Squirrel washed his body (and) put on the clothes that he had already

fét
already
washed.' [HS 23]

3.3.2 Verbs uninflected for tense/aspect as normal inflection in storyline.

The unmarked verb construction in independent clauses in the storyline is uninflected for tense/aspect. Once the context is established, main clause verbs are uninflected for tense/aspect where there is continuity of referent, time, location and action. The sentence in (16a) introduces a new episode. Tense/aspect marking is used in the first sentence marking the point of discontinuity (in this case of location and action), but the main clause verb of the second sentence (16b), which maintains contiguous time, location, and action and the same referents is unmarked for tense/aspect. The main clause verbs in examples (16a-b) are underlined.

(16) a. *kà   kóé   dák pér, ɓàklà <u>ɗè-à</u>   náŋá á   yù,*
     when squirrel pull cord hyena set-PST feet PREP flight
     'Then Squirrel pulled the cord (and) Hyena started running (lit. put his feet into flight)

     súŋ   nè   dóló lé.
     toward PREP road village
     toward the road to the village.' [HS 28]

    b. *kà   é-yí   mé lé   kà dùŋ-ù á   nɔ kpàtà,*
     when PL-people POSS village REL sit-PST PREP drink corn.beer
     'When the people of the village, who sat drinking corn beer,

     ɗé lí á   dóló hɔ̀ wâ <u>nzɔk</u> ná kóé   á   zǔ ɓàklà
     set eye PREP road field 3P see FOC squirrel PREP head hyena
     looked toward the field path, they saw Squirrel on Hyena's head,

     kà   hɔ́ŋ yù   té-né.
     REL run flight come-INTR
     who was running.' [HS 29]

However, Mbodomo narrative tends to limit to approximately two the number of sentences in a string where there is continuity of referent, time, location and action. Other devices, in particular verb chains, are more commonly used in these situations. Verb chains in Mbodomo consist of an independent clause followed by a series of verbs that are not marked for tense/aspect and which do not have overt subjects [Boyd 1997:134]. The sentences in (17) from the folktale, *Zùɓèlà*, and (18) illustrate such verb chains. The verbs are underlined. Other examples of verb chains can be found in the appendix: [GS 24, 26], [HS 46, 48].

(17) *é-yí   ndɔ̀kɔ̀ <u>má</u> <u>gbè</u> é-nám,   <u>ɗé</u> gbàk <u>kátìtì</u> nè   kpòó...*
    PL-people DEM:PL CON kill PL-animal make shelf dry PREP meat...
    'Those people killed animals, made drying shelves (and) dried meat...'

(18) *kóé*   *fàr-à*   *tè*   *nè,*   *pí* *là*. . .
squirrel wash-PST body 3S.INALN put clothes
'Squirrel washed his body (and) put on the clothes...[HS 23]

3.3.3 Verbs uninflected for tense/aspect as normal inflection in peak. The unmarked verb construction in independent clauses that make up the peak or sub-peaks of the narrative are also uninflected for tense/aspect. Except where there is discontinuity, the verb does not generally have tense/aspect inflection in the action peak or in episodal sub-peaks. In the peak of the story, *The Girl and the Serpent*, the girl arrives at the road leading home (change of location, and also first sentence of peak episode, so the main clause is marked for tense/aspect), (19a), but the following sentence, example (19b), maintains the same referent, location, time, and action as the preceding sentence and is hence unmarked for tense/aspect.

(19) a. *hɔ̀-â*   *wâ*   *á*   *dóló, à*   *bùr-ù*   *gòè ndé*
arrive-PST.NOM 3S.ALN PREP road 3S.TOP untie-PST wrap COMP
'When she arrived at the road, she untied the wrap

é   *nzɔ́k gbàlà gɔ́k.*
LOG see bone serpent
to see the serpent bone.' [GS 28]

b. *bùr-ú-à*   *wâ,*   *à*   *nzɔ́k ná*   *bé*   *gɔ́k...*
untie-PST-NOM 3S.ALN 3S.TOP see FOC small serpent
'(When) she untied (the wrap), it's a baby serpent, she saw...' [GS 29]

3.4. The role of tense/aspect in narrative discontinuity. As mentioned above, when continuity of action, time, location, or participant is disrupted, various methods are used at the point of discontinuity to maintain the overall coherence of the text. Givón [1983:18] notes that when there is discontinuity, "more coding material" is required than would otherwise be necessary if there were no discontinuity. Therefore, it stands to reason that less tense/aspect marking would occur where there is continuity and more tense/aspect coding would occur where there is discontinuity. Levinsohn [1994:11] notes that in Makaa, another language of Cameroon, "...tense markers typically occur only at points of discontinuity in a narrative..." This pattern is also found in Mbodomo narrative.

3.4.1. Discontinuity at episodal boundaries. In Mbodomo narrative, tense/aspect markers occur at points of discontinuity, including the initial sentence of each episode. One can thus argue that the initial independent clause of each episode marks an important type of discontinuity, that between two separate parts of the narrative: the discontinuity between establishment of the story setting and the launching of the action of the story. This explains the presence of the tense/aspect inflection in the first sentence of the first episode. The examples in (20) and (21) are the first sentences after the story setting of the folk tales, *The*

Girl and the Serpent and *The Hyena and the Squirrel*, respectively; both have tense/aspect inflection on the main verb.

(20) kè   ɔ̀ŋ   wílí ndé   gbàk-tè-nè-pòndò
then certain man COMP borrow-body-PREP-grass
'Then a certain man called "He-who-changes-bodies-with-the-grass"

nè-à   nè   sɛ́ndì   tè. . .
go-PST and change body
came and changed his body...' [GS 6]

(21) kóé   làk-à   ɔ̀ŋ   sóé nè ɓɔ́ á   lé...
squirrel leave-PST certain day and say PREP village
'One day Squirrel went and said to (the people of) the village...' [HS 4]

However, it is not only the first episode that is inflected for tense/aspect. Later episodes also mark tense/aspect on the episode-initial sentence. The sentences in example (22a) are the last sentences of the peak episode. The sentence immediately following it in (22b) is the first sentence of a new episode (the denouement), and thus is inflected for tense/aspect. For another example showing tense/aspect inflection on the episode-initial sentence see, in the appendix, sentences [HS 27] and [HS 28]. [HS 27] functions as part of the episodal peak and [HS 28] is the first sentence of the following episode.

(22) a. bùr-ú-à   wâ,   à   nzɔ́k ná bé   gɔ́k
untie-PST-NOM 3S.ALN 3S.TOP see FOC small serpent
'(When) she untied (the wrap), it was a baby serpent that she saw

kà   sìkí á   nù.
REL fall PREP ground
(which (i.e. the serpent)) fell to the ground.' [GS 29]

wènè má kpɔ̀ yù   hórò.
3S   CON begin flight again
'She started fleeing again.' [GS 30]

b. kà wènè hɔ́   á   sɔ̀rsí gɔ́k   mà gbàŋ-à.
as 3S   arrive PREP ahead serpent SIM grow-PST
'As she advanced, the serpent grew.' [GS 31]

3.4.2. Discontinuity of action.
Mbodomo marks tense/aspect at points of discontinuity of action. Action continuity may be defined as
"...pertain[ing] primarily to *temporal sequentiality* within [the] thematic paragraph, but also to temporal *adjacency* therein...actions are given primarily in the natural sequential order in which they actually

occurred, and most commonly there is small if any temporal gap...between one action and the next." [Givón 1983:8; italics in original]

Mbodomo marks tense/aspect at points where temporal sequentiality is disrupted. The most obvious examples of interrupted temporal sequentiality are flashbacks to a previous event or looking forward to a future event. In examples (23a-b), Squirrel has arranged his affairs prior to Hyena's return to his village, but in the telling of the narrative it occurs after. This interruption in sequence is marked by tense/aspect inflection in both main clauses. In (24) the event referred to in the main clause occurs prior to that referred to in the dependent clause.

(23) a. làk-â   mé ɓàklà á   kí, ná sì-à   né
       leave-PST.NOM POSS hyena PREP DEM FOC return-PST go

       á   lé   wâ.
       PREP village 3S.ALN
       '(When) Hyena left that place, (he) returned to his (own) village.'
                                                                    [HS 10]

   b. kóé   yèsìɗì só é-mɔ̀   wâ   fét, fár là   fét.
      squirrel arrange PRF PL-thing 3S.ALN already wash clothes already
      'Squirrel had already arranged his things and washed (his) clothes.'
                                                                    [HS11]

(24) kà wènè mà nè-à   á   hɔ̀   á   lé,
     when 3S   SIM go-PST PREP arrive PREP village
     'when she arrived at the entrance of the village,

     gɔ́k   kìfì só gbà gɔ́k   fét.
     serpent become PRF big serpent all
     the serpent had already become a big serpent again.' [GS 33]

Discontinuity in temporal sequence is also marked in clauses to indicate future time. In (25), taken from the tale, *The Girl and the Serpent*, the Serpent transforms itself into human form so that he can marry the girl sometime in the future.

(25) kè   ɔ̀ŋ   wílí ndé   gbàk-tè-nè-pòndò
     then certain man COMP borrow-body-PREP-grass
     'Then a certain man called "He-who-changes-bodies-with-the-grass"

     nè-à   nè sɛ́nɗì tè   mé tà sí nè bé-kóé   kè
     go-PST and change body PURP FUT marry PREP young-woman DEM
     came and changed his body so that (he) could marry this young woman.'
                                                                    [GS 6]

Most often, the future tense occurs in reported speech and indicates future intent, as is seen in example (26) from the story *The Hyena and the Squirrel*. In this story, Squirrel informs the people of the village that he will ride Hyena the next week.

(26) *kóé   làk-à   ɔ̀ŋ   sóé nè ɓɔ́ á   lé   ndé*
squirrel leave-PST certain day and say PREP village COMP
'Squirrel went one day and said to (the people of) the village that:

ɔ̀ŋ   sóé sɔ́ndè kà   té   kí   é   tà   ŋgáŋ ɓàklà
certain day week REL come DEM LOG FUT mount hyena
Next week (lit. day week that comes)

dám   zàŋ   lé
throughout bowels village
he would ride hyena throughout the village.' [HS 4, 5]

Discontinuities of action are also found when the action of the narrative is interrupted by discourse (as at the beginning of example (26) above), by background comment, or at the beginning of a new episode.

In Mbodomo folk tale narratives, quoted speech may play a major role in the telling of the story. In the story, *The Hyena and the Squirrel*, approximately half of the sentences are direct or indirect speech. When speech carries a large part of the information in a story, and whenever there is a shift from reported speech to actual action, tense/aspect is marked. In example (27a), Squirrel tells Lion what he is going to do; then in the following sentence (27b), he carries out the action. In the same manner, Squirrel taunts Hyena in example (28a) before he carries out the action of riding Hyena throughout the village in (28b). Note that in each case the main verb of the action sentence is inflected for tense/aspect.

(27) a. *kóé   má   ɓɔ̀ á   ɗìlà ndé...*
squirrel CON say PREP lion COMP
'Squirrel said to Lion that... [HS 50]

mí tà   kú mé nè ɗé á   tùà   mè.
1S FUT take 2S and put PREP house 2S.ALN
"...I will take you to your house." [HS 51]

   b. *kóe   má   kù ɗìlà nè ɗé á   zàŋ   kírà   wâ*
squirrel CON take lion and set PREP bowels compound 3S.ALN
'Squirrel (then) took Lion to his compound.' [HS 52]

(28) a. *kóé   tè-à   tè   ák ɓàklà ndé: mí ɓɔ̀   mà*[7]
          squirrel come-PST PURP ask hyena COMP 1S say ?
          'Squirrel then asked Hyena: "Didn't I say that

       ndé   mí tà   ŋgáŋ mé ná?
       COMP 1S FUT   mount 2S NEG.INT
       I would ride you?"' [HS 27]

    b. *kà   kóé   dák pér, ɓàklà ɗè-à   náŋá á   yù,*
       when squirrel pull cord hyena set-PST feet PREP flight
       'Then Squirrel pulled the cord (and) Hyena started running (lit. put his
       feet into flight)

       súŋ   nè   dóló lé.
       toward PREP road village
       'toward the road to the village'. [HS 28]

3.4.3. Discontinuities of situation. Mbodomo marks tense/aspect at points of
discontinuity of situation. Levinsohn [1994:5] defines discontinuity of situation as
"...changes in the time and location of the contents of the text." Often changes in
situation are indicated by temporal expressions which indicate a change of time or
place and certain conjunctions. Some of the more common of these temporal
expressions are as follows:

sóé sóndè	'day Sunday ((next) Sunday or week)'
yàrà vàk	'bed two (two days (later))'
kè ɔ̀ŋ sóé	'then one day'
kà mà kàrà	'when later'
mbèâ	'afterwards'
kè	'and then'

The main clause verb following such adverb phrases is always inflected for
tense/aspect. In examples (29) to (33) below, the sentence introducer is in bold
and, in each case, the verb is inflected for tense/aspect. Where there are serial

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[7] There is not enough information to adequately identify this particle. It is not to be confused
with the SIM marker which occurs before the verb. The only other context in which I have
found it is in imperatives. The particle *mà* is found in more polite imperatives and in negative
imperatives as seen below:

mè   tí   ñɔ̀ŋ mà ñínà   'You must take the medicine'
2S.IMP must eat ?   medicine

mè   ñɔ́ŋ mà ná   'Do not eat!'
2S.IMP eat ?   NEG

verbs or verb chains, only the first verb is inflected for tense/aspect, as in (29), (31), and (32).

(29) ***sóé sɔ́ndè*** *ɓàklà gbò-à   té   á   ŋgɔ̀ kóé.*
day Sunday hyena exit-PST come PREP home squirrel
'The next week, Hyena left and went to Squirrel's house.' [HS 12]

(30) ***yàrà vàk,*** *kpátá kà   ɗìlà hã̂ sɔ́   há   kóé   má   yèk.*
bed   two   skin   REL lion give PRF BEN squirrel CON rot
'Two days (later), the skin that Lion had given to Squirrel was rotten.'
                                                                        [HS 56]

(31) *wílí kè   má   ñèŋ nɔ̀.*
man DEM CON walk walk
'This man walked and walked.' [Bongo 6]

kè   ɔ̀ŋ sóé, *wènè má   làk   né kpá mbɔ̀ŋgá*
then one day 3S   CON leave go find bongo
'Then one day, he left and went to find a bongo.' [Bongo 7]

(32) ***kè***   *kóé   kpɔ̀-à   ŋgàŋ ɓàklà súŋ   nè   dóló hɔ̀.*
then squirrel begin-PST mount hyena toward PREP road field
'Then Squirrel began to ride Hyena (back) toward the path leading to the farms.' [HS 31]

(33) ***kè***   *kóé   má kpɔ̀   ɗòŋâ:*
then squirrel CON begin sell.NOM
'Then Squirrel began to sell.' [HS 57]

While the adverb phrase marks the presence of discontinuity, which tense/aspect inflection is used to mark that discontinuity is determined by the context in each particular case. In the case of example (30), the discontinuity is temporal and the PRF tense clarifies the type of temporal discontinuity (flashback) in this particular context. In the case of example (31), the discontinuity is probably of location and possibly of time, but the implied action of walking remains contiguous. While examples (32) and (33) above seem very similar in isolation, their contextual situation is very different. Example (33) is in the middle of an episode, and the CON tense indicates the sequential action in the storyline. Example (32), on the other hand, is background information which "...consists of scene-setting statements and evaluative commentary..." [Hopper and Thompson 1980: 281]. Example (32) ([HS 31] ff.), sets the scene for the main action peak of the story. In the sentence preceding example (32), sentence [HS 30], Squirrel has given Hyena a serious public insult, which Hyena will try to pay back in the main action peak ([HS 34] ff.). Sentences [HS 31, 32, 33] set the scene for that attempted payback. Being background, rather than storyline, example (32) is therefore marked PST,

which is the normal, unmarked tense/aspect for background information (see figure 1).

The conjunction *à* 'but' or 'then' also indicates discontinuity. Unlike the temporal expressions and conjunctions mentioned above, the conjunction *à* does not occur in tandem with tense/aspect marking on the verb. Each time the conjunction *à* occurs, the main clause verb is uninflected for tense/aspect; see example (34) taken from *The Bongo*, and examples (35) and (36). These can be compared also with other examples from the texts in the appendix, [HS 9, 24, 33, 35, 53, 54, and 60].

(34) *á   wâ   kέk   mέ   gɔ̀n yὲrὲ ɗέ   á   é-nú*
      but 3PL search CONJ cut lie   abandon PREP PL-mouth
      'But they look for ways to tell lies, never abandoning the ways (lit. mouth)

      bέŋ   ná.
      child NEG
      of children.'

(35) *à   wὲnὲ tὲ   6ɔ́ á   kóé   kὲ   ndé,*
      but 3S   come say PREP woman DEM COMP
      'Then he came and said to this young woman...' [GS 25]

(36) *à   dìlà ák   mɔ̀   ndé   dὲ á   gê   yăm?*
      then lion ask thing COMP do PREP INT uncle
      'Then Lion asked, "what (are you) doing, Uncle?"'[HS 43]

Discontinuity of situation may occur where there is no overt sentence introducer. In example (37a), the verbs *làk sí né* 'leave return go' imply motion toward a goal, not necessarily arrival at that goal, while the verb *là* 'sleep' in (37b) implies a given location. Therefore, there is a change implied between the going in the sentence in (37a) and the activity at a given location in sentence in (37b).

(37) a. *wâ má làk sí   né á   ŋgɔ̀   wílí kὲ.*
         3P CON leave return go PREP home man DEM
         'They left and were returning to the home of this man.' [GS 18]

    b. *wâ má là   á   kí.*
        3P CON sleep PREP DEM
        'They slept there.' [GS 19]

Often there is more than one cause for the discontinuity. It is not unusual for there to be discontinuity of both situation and action, or of both referent and action.

3.4.4. Discontinuity of reference. Mbodomo marks tense/aspect at points of discontinuity of reference. In particular, where there is a change of referent, the introduction of a new referent, or the re-introduction of an old referent, there is discontinuity (i.e., a new set of referents is on stage). As in other types of discontinuity, the verb is inflected for tense/aspect whenever there is referential discontinuity. Very often, where there is sequential action and contiguous time and location but where there is a back-and-forth shift between two referents, the discontinuity of referents is indicated by the consecutive tense. The consecutive tense indicates merely sequential action, not continuity in general. All tense/aspects, including the consecutive tense, are used to mark the discontinuity and to guide the listener across it [Levinsohn 1994:4-5].

This is seen most clearly in (38) where the topical referent of each sentence changes; first the Lion, then the Squirrel, then back to the Lion again. Lion has been digging at the hole where Squirrel is hiding when Hyena attacks him. Lion falls to the ground in pain and at this moment, Squirrel looks out of his hole and begins to talk to Lion. Since the location remains constant: the mouth of the hole in which the Squirrel was hiding, the time is contiguous and the action sequential, the discontinuity is referential and is marked by the tense/aspect inflection on the verb.

(38) a. **dìlà** *má   sìk   á   nù   kpɔ́   bì-â.*
      lion CON fall PREP ground begin groan-PST.NOM
      'Lion fell to the ground and began to groan.' [HS 47]

   b. **kóé**   *má   gbò sàŋ ák mɔ̀   kà   làk-à   á   dìlà.*
      squirrel CON exit now ask thing REL pass-PST PREP lion
      'Squirrel exited at this time, and asked (Lion) what had happened
      to (him).' [HS 48]

   c. **dìlà** *má   ɓɔ̀   á   nè   fɛ́t.*
      lion CON say PREP 3S all
      'Lion told him everything.' [HS 49]

   d. **kóé**   *má   ɓɔ̀ á   dìlà ndé   à   ìn-ì   ndé*
      squirrel CON say PREP lion COMP 3S.TOP know-PST COMP
      'Squirrel said to Lion that he knows that

      ɓàklà ná   wàn-sìlà,   wàn-yèrè   kà   dùŋ-ù   gɔ́.
      hyena COP proprietor-liver proprietor-lie REL stay-PST like.that
      Hyena is a greedy person, a liar who has always been that way.' [HS 50]

In the sentences in (39), taken from the folk tale, *The Bongo*, each of the man's wives is brought into the story individually after they have been introduced as a group. The tense/aspect inflection signals the change of participant as each

wife arrives on the scene and plays her part. The sentences in (39a-b) are sequential.

(39) a. *kà   mà   kárà   ɔ̀ŋ   kóé   nè-à   nè   ɓérkìɗì kpòó mbɔ̀ŋgá*
        when SIM later, certain wife come-PST CONJ break   meat   bongo
        'After a time, one of the wives came and cut off some of this bongo meat

        kè   ñɔ̀ŋ.   é   ɓɔ́   ndé   ná   gùlá   vè.
        DEM   eat   LOG say COMP COP co-wife LOG:POSS
        (and) ate (it). She (will) say that it was her co-wife (who did it).'
                                                          [Bongo sent. 11-12]

    b. *ɔ̀ŋ   kóé   nè-à   hórò nè   ɓérkìɗì kpòó mbɔ̀ŋgá kè   ñɔ̀ŋ...*
       certain wife come-PST again and break   meat   bongo   DEM eat
       'Another wife came and cut off some of this bongo meat (and) ate (it)...'
                                                          [Bongo sent. 13]

Minor participants, as with main participants, are signaled by tense/aspect inflection as is seen in the folktale, *Báfíá̧*, when a minor character, the rooster, is introduced (example (40)). As is expected with discontinuity, the verb is inflected for tense/aspect.

(40) *wâ   má   tòm   wílí-kùàrà   kè.*
     3P   CON send male-chicken DEM
     'They sent this Rooster.'

Discontinuity of reference also occurs where a previously introduced referent is brought back into the narrative after a long absence, even if the referent in question is a major referent. This is the case with the husband in the narrative *The Bongo*. For most of an episode, the action has focused on the activities of his wives as, one by one, they steal the meat he has put a curse on. Then the man re-enters the scene to find much of his special cache of meat gone. The narrative brings the man back on the scene, example (41), by using the verb, *dùŋ-ù*, 'to sit' which is habitually used in presentative constructions, as in (42). Other presentative constructions like that of example (42) are found in the appendix, [GS 2] and [HS 2].

(41) *wílí dùŋ-ù.*
     man   sit-PST
     'The man returned.'

(42) *dùŋ-ù   ɔ̀ŋ   wílí nè   dɔ́ká kóé.*
     sit-PST certain man   PREP many wife
     'There once was a man with many wives.'

As is the case with discontinuity of action and situation, discontinuity of reference is also marked by tense/aspect inflection on the verb, whether it pertains to shifting of participant or topic, or to the introduction or reintroduction of referents.

4. Summary

Tense/aspect marking is an important means of marking continuity and discontinuity in Mbodomo narrative. Except in the story setting and in background information elsewhere in the narrative, tense/aspect marking is only found on main clause verbs at points of discontinuity. These discontinuities can be either discontinuities of action, of situation, or of reference, or a combination of these. There are also specific points within the narrative that always signal discontinuity. These narrative-generated discontinuities are found at the beginning of each new episode, after reported speech, or after a background comment. All of these discontinuities signal a change in sequence of action and are therefore marked by tense/aspect inflection.

APPENDIX

Bé-kóé   nè   gɔ́k
young-woman with serpent
'The Girl and the Serpent'

Formulaic invitation
GS1   *ènè   nzél   tò   bɔ̀ŋ*
2P.IMP listen story 1S.ALN
'Listen to my story!'

Setting
GS2   *dùŋ-ù   ɔ̀ŋ   bé-kóé.*
it-PST certain young-woman
'There was once a young woman.'

GS3   *dìkà   náŋ   wâ   ɓèl-à   nè   wènè*
since mother 3S.ALN give.birth-PST PREP 3S
'who since her mother bore her,

    à   tí   sì   mà   wílí   ɓé   ná.
3S.TOP must marry IMP man since NEG
she had never gotten married.'
(lit. she must not marry man since [imperative structure in third person])

GS4   *kà   wílí   té   à   sèŋ-à.*
when man come 3S.TOP refuse-PAST
'When(ever) a man came, she refused him.'

GS5   *wílí kè   tè-à   à   sèŋ-à   kàgɔ́.*
man DEM come-PST 3S.TOP refuse-PST like.that
'(When) this man came, she absolutely (lit. like that) refused him.'

Episode 1
GS6   *kè   ɔ̀ŋ   wílí ndé   gbàk-tè-nè-pòndò   nè-à   nè*
then certain man COMP borrow-body-PREP-grass go-PST and
'Then a certain man called "He-who-changes-bodies-with-the-grass" came and

    séndì   tè   mé   tà   sí   nè   bé-kóé   kè.
change body CONJ FUT marry PREP young-woman DEM
changed his body so that (he) could marry this young woman.'

GS7   *pìrá   gbàk-tè-nè-pòndò   hɔ̀-â   kè   bé-kóé   kè*
place borrow-body-PREP-grass arrive-PST.NOM DEM young-woman DEM
'At (lit. place) He-who-changes-bodies-with-the-grass's arrival,this young woman

    ndé   é   dâ   wílí bɔ̀ŋ   kà   tè-à   gɔ̂.
COMP EXCL father man 1S.ALN REL come-PST like.that
exclaimed that "Father, that one, who is coming, is my husband!"'

GS8 *mí tà sí ná wènè.*
1S FUT marry FOC 3S
"'Him, I will marry.'"

GS9 *àsé wílí kè ná gbà gɔ́k.*
but man DEM COP big serpent.
'But this man is really a big serpent.'

Episode 2

GS10 *wâ sì-ì màì tè kál màì sí nè nè á ŋgɔ̀*
3P marry-PST together CONJ gather together return and go PREP home
'They got married, then they gathered everything and returned to the home

gbà gɔ́k.
big serpent
of the big serpent.'

GS11 *hɔ̀-â mùá á dɔ́lɔ́, wílí kè ndé wènè*
arrive-PST.NOM 3P.REFL PREP road man DEM COMP 3S
'At their arrival on the road, this man told her

á kéɗì é sèk.
AUX wait LOG little
to wait for him for a little.'

GS12 *pìrá wènè lè-â mɔ̀ kè;*
place 3S enter-NOM thing DEM
'There, he entered (the bush);'

GS13 *kà bé-kóé kè pí lí, à nzɔ́k ná gɔ́k gà*
when young-woman DEM throw eye 3S.TOP see FOC serpent like.that
'when this young woman glanced (over there) it's a serpent, she saw

kà ɓɔ́ á nè ndé òlò lâk.
REL say PREP 3S COMP LOG.IMP leave
who tells her that they will go now.'

GS14 *bé-kóé kè ndé é kéɗì vé ná wílí vè.*
young-woman DEM COMP LOG wait LOG.REFL COP man LOG.ALN
'This young woman said that it's her husband that she is waiting for.'

GS15 *gɔ́k ndé òlò lák vòlɔ́ áè ná é wílí wâ.*
serpent COMP LOG.IMP leave LOG.REFL because COP LOG man 3S.ALN
The serpent responded that they will go because it is he who is her husband!'

GS16 *bé-kóé kè má ɗè náɲá á yù.*
young-woman DEM CON put/set feet PREP flight
'This young woman started fleeing.'

GS17 *gɔ́k   má   hìn   wènè   gɔ́   nè   bâ.*
serpent CON chase 3S   like.that and catch
'The serpent chased her and caught her.'

GS18 *wâ   má   làk   sí   nɛ́   á   ŋgɔ̀   wílí   kè.*
3P CON leave return go PREP home man DEM
'(Then) they left and where returning to the home of this man.'

GS19 *wâ   má   là   á   kí.*
3P CON sleep PREP DEM
'They slept there.'

Episode 3

GS20 *kàrá   kè   bé-kóé   kè   ndé   é   tà   sí   nɛ́*
later then young-woman DEM COMP LOG FUT return go
'After some time there, this young woman said that she would return

á   ŋgɔ̀   báŋ   vè.
PREP home father LOG.ALN
to her father's house.'

GS21 *wènè   má   kpɔ̀   yù.*
3S   CON begin flight
'She started to flee.'

GS22 *gɔ́k   má   hìn   wènè   gɔ́   nè   hɔ́   á   ŋgɔ̀   ɔ̀ŋ   wàn-dòl-bòlò.*
serpent CON chase 3S   like.that and arrive PREP home certain chief-fashion-iron
'The serpent chased her and (they) arrived at the home of a blacksmith.'

GS23 *bé-kóé   má   lè   6ɔ́   zù   yù   wâ*
young-woman CON enter say head flight 3S.ALN
'The young woman entered, telling her whole story

á   wàn-dòl-bòlò   kè   fét.
PREP chief-fashion-iron DEM all
to the blacksmith.'

Episode sub-peak

GS24 *hɔ̀-â   mɛ́   gɔ́k   wàn-dòl-bòlò   ná   tò-à   zù*
arrive-PST.NOM POSS serpent chief-fashion-iron FOC strike-PST head
'When the serpent arrived, the blacksmith struck it on its head,

gɔ́k   gbɛ́.
serpent kill
killing it.'

Episode 4

GS25 *à   wènè   tè   6ɔ́   á   kóé   kè   ndé,   kpòó   gɔ́k   kè*
but 3S come say PREP woman DEM COMP meat serpent DEM
'Then he came and said to this young woman: "This serpent meat,

mè   ñɔ̂ŋ mè tí   kù   mà   gbàlà gɔ́k   ké   lák   né   ná.
2S.IMP eat   2S must take IMP bone   serpent DEM leave PREP NEG
you must eat. But you must not take any bone of this serpent with you.'"

GS26 bé-kóé   kè   má   ñɔ̀ŋ gɔ́k   káŋ   ɔ̀ŋ   gbàlà hêr
     young-woman DEM CON eat   serpent carry certain bone attach
     'This young woman ate the serpent, but (she) carried away a bone tied up

     á   nú   gòè.
     PREP mouth wrap
     in her wrap.'

GS27 làk-â   wâ   á   kí   ndé   é   sí   né
     leave-PST.NOM 3S.ALN PREP DEM COMP LOG return go
     'When she left there, she said that she would return

     á   ŋgɔ̀   báŋ   wâ.
     PREP home father 3S.ALN
     to her father's house.'

Peak episode
GS28 hɔ̀-â   wâ   á   dóló, à   bùr-ù   gòè
     arrive-PST.NOM 3S.ALN PREP road 3S.TOP untie-PST wrap
     'When she arrived at the road,

     ndé   é   nzɔ́k gbàlà gɔ́k.
     COMP LOG see   bone   serpent
     she untied the wrap to see the serpent bone.'

GS29 bùr-ú-à   wâ,   à   nzɔ́k ná bé   gɔ́k   kà
     untie-PST-NOM 3S.ALN 3S.TOP see   FOC small serpent REL
     '(When) she untied (the wrap), it's a baby serpent, she saw (which (i.e. the serpent))

     sìkí á   nù.
     fall PREP ground
     fell to the ground.'

GS30 wènè má   kpɔ̀   yù   hórò.
     3S   CON begin flight again
     'She started fleeing again.'

Denouement
GS31 kà wènè hɔ́   á   sɔ̀rsí gɔ́k   mà   gbàŋ-à.
     as 3S   arrive PREP ahead serpent SIM grow-PST
     'As she advanced, the serpent grew.'

GS32 wènè kà   hóŋ yù.
     3S   that run flight
     'It was she who was fleeing.'

GS33 *kà   wènɛ mà nè-à   á   hɔ̀   á   lé,   gɔ́k   kìfì   sɔ́*
      when 3S   SIM go-PST PREP arrive PREP village serpent become PRF
      'When she arrived at the entrance of the village, the serpent had already become

      gbà gɔ́k   fɛ́t.
      big   serpent all
       a big serpent again.'

GS34 *kà   wènè ɓɔ́ ndé   é   lé   tùà   mɛ́   báŋ   wâ,*
      when 3S   say COMP LOG enter house POSS father 3S.ALN
      'When she said (to herself) that she's arrived at her father's house,

      gɔ́k   ná bà   wènè gbè, gúr   wènè nè   kìlí-â.
      serpent FOC catch 3S   kill swallow 3S   PREP whole-NOM
      the serpent caught, killed her (and) swallowed her whole.'

Didactic peak

GS35 *ndé   mɛ́ bé-kóé,   kà   wílí hɔ́   á   ŋgɔ̀ mɛ́ mɛ́ tà   sí*
      COMP 2S young-woman when man arrive PREP home 2S CONJ FUT marry
      'Now you, young woman, when a man arrives at your house (wanting) to marry

      mɛ́, ná sɔ́nsí mè   kà   sɔ̀   hɑ̆   há   mɛ́.
      2S COP chance 2S.ALN REL God give BEN 2S
      you, it is the chance that God has given to you.'

GS36 *á   wílí kà   tɛ́,   mɛ́ ná sɛ́ŋ   á   kè,   mɛ́ kɛ́k   ná gènzágà*
      but man REL come 2S FOC refuse PREP DEM 2S search FOC same.thing
      'But if you refuse the man that comes, you'll suffer the same fate

      ndé   zúŋá gàn-à   mbɔ̀rà fè-à   fìyò tà   zù.
      COMP girl ignore-PST counsel die-PST death without head
      (as) that girl who ignored good counsel (did) (and) die a horrible death.'

Formulaic closure

GS37 *ndé   nzégìlí tò bɔ̀ŋ   gɔ́è.   tò mè   é.*
      COMP finish tale 1S.ALN like.that tale 2S.ALN EXCL
      'That is the end of my story. Your story!'

ɓàklà nè   kóé
hyena PREP squirrel
'Hyena and Squirrel'

Formulaic invitation
HS1 *gbíí   tò bɔ̀ŋ   sìkì á   l̀ı   gbírìm.*
(noise) tale 1S.ALN fall PREP water (noise)
'My tale sounds like falling water.'

Setting
HS2 *dùŋ-ù nè   ɓàklà hínè kóé.*
sit-PST PREP hyena PREP squirrel
'There was once a hyena and a squirrel.'

HS3 *wâ dùŋ-ù   ndáŋ kàrá.*
3P sit-PST one long.time
'They were friends (lit. one) for a long time.'

Episode 1
HS4 *kóé   làk-à   ɔ̀ŋ   sóé nè ɓɔ́ á   lé   ndé*
squirrel leave-PST certain day and say PREP village COMP
'One day Squirrel went and said to (the people of) the village

HS5 *ɔ̀ŋ   sóé sɔ́ndè kà té   kí é   tà   ŋgáŋ ɓàklà*
certain day Sunday REL come DEM LOG FUT mount hyena
that: Next week (lit. day week that comes) he would ride hyena

dám   zàŋ lé.
throughout bowels village
throughout the village.'

HS6 *yí   tà   nzɔ́k pìrá é   tà   ŋgáŋ zù ɓàklà dám   zàŋ lé*
people FUT see place LOG FUT mount head hyena throughout bowels village
'Everyone will see him ride on hyena's head throughout the village.'

HS7 *mbè-â   ɓàklà gbò-à   lé   à yí mé lé   ɓɔ́ á   nè ndé:*
after-NOM hyena exit-PST village but people POSS village say PREP 3S COMP
'Later Hyena left his village (and went to another), and the people of (that) village said to him that...

HS8 *é   ɓɔ̀ mà ndé   kóé   tà   ŋgáŋ mé dám   zàŋ lé*
3S.INDF say ? COMP squirrel FUT mount 2S throughout bowels village

á   sɔ́ndè kè   kà tè ná?
PREP week DEM REL come NEG.INT
"They say that Squirrel will ride you throughout the village next week, won't he?"

HS9 *à   ɓàklà kífì-dı̆   é   kĕ, kóé   lèm-à   mé ŋgàŋ é?*
but hyena change-CAUS EXCL CONJ squirrel able-PST CONJ mount INT
'But (or then) Hyena responded, "Well then? Is Squirrel able to ride?"'

HS10   làk-â   mé   ɓàklà á   kí,   ná   sì-à   né
       leave-PST.NOM POSS hyena PREP DEM FOC return-PST go

       á   lé   wâ.
       PREP village 3S.ALN
       '(When) Hyena left that place, (he) returned to his (own) village.'

HS11   kóé   yèsìdì sɔ́ é-mɔ̀   wâ   fét   fár   là   fét.
       squirrel arrange PRF PL-thing 3S.ALN already wash clothes already
       'Squirrel had already arranged his things and washed (his) clothes.'

Episode 2

HS12   sóé sɔ́ndè ɓàklà gbò-à   té   á   ŋgɔ̀ kóé.
       day Sunday hyena exit-PST come PREP home squirrel
       'On Sunday, Hyena left and went to Squirrel's house.'

HS13   kóé   ná   mé kà ɓɔ̀-à   ndé   é   tà   ŋgáŋ mí.
       squirrel FOC 2S REL say-PST COMP LOG FUT mount 1S
       '"Squirrel, is it you who said that you will ride me?"'

HS14   mè   gbó tè   tè   ŋgáŋ mí
       2S.IMP exit come PURP mount 1S
       '"(So) come out and ride me!"'

HS15   kóé   kìfì-dì   ɓàklà: ná ò   gɔ́n yèrè kí   á   mé é?
       squirrel change-CAUS hyena FOC who cut lie DEM PREP 2S INT
       'Squirrel responded to hyena: "Who told you that lie?"'

HS16   tè   mí   kà   hím-hím gâ   mí ɓɔ́ bóŋ ŋğǐ gè sóé é?
       body 1S.INALN REL hurt-hurt like.that 1S say debt DEM that day INT
       '"With my body that hurts so much, would I make such a (lit. that) commitment that
       day?"'

HS17   ɓàklà ndé   ɔ̀gɔ́ kà dúŋ   ná   yèrè, kóé   à   tê   á   wâ
       hyena COMP then if remain FOC lie, squirrel AUX:IMP come PURP 3P

       né nè ák á   lé.
       go and ask PREP village
       'Hyena (said) that if it is a lie, Squirrel must go (with him, so that) they could go and
       ask (the people of) the village."'

HS18   kóé   ndé   fólà   kà é   tà   né né á   lé   zí-ná
       squirrel COMP means REL LOG FUT go go PREP village exist-NEG
       'Squirrel (said) that he doesn't have the ability to go to the village.'

HS19   é   lém   mé   nè nɔ̀   ná.
       LOG is.able PURP go walk NEG
       'He is not able to walk.'

HS20 *ɓàklà ndé   wènè à   tê   é   tà   káŋ nè.*
hyena COMP 3S   AUX.IMP come LOG FUT carry 3S
'Hyena₁ (said) that "he₂ must come, (and that) he₁ will carry him₂.'

HS21 *kóé   ndé   wènè à   kéɗì bîn é   fár tè   é   dóŋ.*
squirrel COMP 3S   AUX.IMP wait a.little LOG wash body LOG first
'Squirrel₁ (said) that he₂ must wait a little, (while) he₁ washes himself₁ first.'

HS22 *ɓàklà ndé   wènè à   dê bèlé.*
hyena COMP 3S   AUX.IMP do quickly
'Hyena said he must hurry up.'

Episode 2 sub-peak

HS23 *kóé   fàr-à   tè   nè,   pí là   kà   wènè fàr só   fét*
squirrel wash-PST body 3S.INALN put clothes REL 3S   wash PRF already
'Squirrel washed his body (and) put on the clothes that he had already washed.'

HS24 *à   kóé   tè   ɓó á   ɓàklà ndé:*
but squirre come say PREP hyena COMP
'But Squirrel (then) came and said to Hyena:

HS25 *găŋ-mɔ̀   kà dé ná é   kè wènè à   dê   é   pí bé pér*
cold-thing REL do FOC LOG then 3S   AUX put.IMP LOG throw little cord
'(Because of) the cold that he₁ has, he₂ must let

á   nú   nè   é   bá nè mɔ̀ gó   é   zígà   sík ná.
PREP mouth 3S.INALN LOG catch 3S thing like.that LOG FUT.NEG fall NEG
him₁ put a small cord in his₂ mouth, (so that) he₁ (can) hold (on to) him₂ (so) he₁ will
not fall off.'

HS26 *pì-bòlò kà kóé   pí á   nú   ɓàklà.*
put-iron that squirrel put PREP mouth hyena
'(It is) that bit, that Squirrel put in Hyena's mouth.'

HS27 *kóé   tè-à   tè   ák ɓàklà ndé: mí ɓɔ mà ndé*
squirrel come-PST PURP ask hyena COMP 1S say ? COMP
'Squirrel then asked Hyena: "Didn't I say that

mí tà   ŋgáŋ mé ná?
1S FUT mount 2S NEG.INT
I would ride you?"'

Episode 3

HS28 *kà   kóé   dák pér, ɓàklà ɗè-à   náŋá á   yù, súŋ nè   dóló lé.*
when squirrel pull cord hyena set-PST feet PREP flight toward PREP road village
'Then Squirrel pulled the cord (and) Hyena started running (lit. put his feet into flight)
toward the road to the village.'

HS29   kà   é-yí   mé   lé   kà   dùŋ-ù   á   nɔ̀   kpàtà   ɗé lí   á
      when PL-people POSS village REL sit-PST PREP drink corn.beer set eye PREP
      'When the people of the village, who sat drinking corn beer, looked toward

      dóló hɔ̀   wâ nzɔ̀k ná   kóé   á   zŭ   ɓàklà kà   hɔ́ŋ yù   té-né.
      road field 3P see   FOC squirrel PREP head hyena REL run flight come-INTR
      the field path, they saw Squirrel on Hyena's head, who was running.'

HS30   kóé   má   ŋgàŋ ɓàklà dám   zàŋ   lé   gɔ́   támpì ɓàklà.
      squirrel CON mount hyena throughout bowels village like.that tire   hyena
      'Squirrel rode hyena throughout the entire village, (and) in that manner tired him out.'

Scene-setting to peak episode
HS31   kè   kóé   kpɔ̀-à   ŋgàŋ ɓàklà súŋ   nè   dóló hɔ̀.
      then squirrel begin-PST mount hyena toward PREP road field
      'Then Squirrel began to ride Hyena (back) toward the path leading to the farms.'

HS32   hɔ̀-â   mé   kóé   á   nú   kɔ̀   wâ,
      arrive-PST:NOM POSS squirrel PREP mouth hole 3S.ALN
      'When Squirrel arrived at the entrance to his hole,

      kóé   ná   kpèɗ-à   lé   zăŋ   kɔ̀.
      squirrel FOC jump-PST enter bowels hole
      (he) jumped (from Hyena and) entered into the hole.'

HS33   à   ɓàklà ák mɔ̀   ndé   kóé   tén   ná   mé kà   sèm-à   mí á
      but hyena ask thing COMP squirrel true FOC 2S REL embarrass-PST 1S PREP
      'But Hyena asked, "Is it really you, Squirrel,

      lí   yí   mé   lé   á   lí   wànzà bɔ̀ŋ?   mé tà   nzɔ́k!
      eye people POSS village PREP eye lover   1S.ALN 2S FUT see
      that (can) embarrass me in the eyes of the village people, (and) in the eyes of my lover?
      You will see!"'

Peak episode
HS34   ɓàklà má   kpɔ̀   zà kɔ̀   mé   kóé.
      hyena CON begin dig hole POSS squirrel
      'Hyena begins to dig Squirrel's hole.'

HS35   à   dìlà ɓɔ́ ndé   é   lâk.
      then lion say COMP LOG leave
      'Then Lion says that he leaves.'

HS36   dìlà nzɔ́k ná   ɓàklà kà   zá nù.
      lion see   FOC hyena REL dig ground
      'It's Hyena (that) Lion saw digging in the ground.'

HS37   dìlà ndé   yăm yăm dè á   gè?
      lion COMP uncle uncle do PREP INT
      'Lion (asks), "Uncle, uncle, what are (you) doing?"'

HS38 *ɓàklà ndé   ɗìlà ná gbèlè bé kóé   ŋgàŋ-à   é   dám*
      hyena COMP lion FOC simple little squirrel mount-PST LOG throughout
      'Hyena (said) "Lion, (it's a) simple little squirrel (that) rode me throughout

      zàŋ   lé   sémù   nè   é.
      bowels village embarrass PREP LOG
      the village embarrassing me."'

HS39 *ɗìlà ndé   yăm ɓàklà ná   é   tà   gbákɗì nè á   zà kɔ.*
      lion COMP uncle hyena FOC LOG FUT help   3S PREP dig hole
      'Lion (said), "Uncle Hyena, (it is) I (who) will help you to dig the hole."'

HS40 *ɗìlà kpɔ̀-à   zà kɔ.*
      lion begin-PST dig hole
      'Lion began to dig the hole.'

HS41 *ɓàklà á   mbè   á   vèkì   gásá fálá   ɗìlà kà gbɔ̀-à   nè mbè.*
      hyena COP behind PURP measure big testicles lion REL protrude-PST PREP behind
      'Hyena was behind (Lion) measuring Lion's large testicles that were protruding behind (him).'

HS42 *kà   ɗìlà kífìɗì lí   à   nzɔ́k ná   ɓàklà kà   pém fálá   nè.*
      when lion turn eye 3S.TOP see   FOC hyena REL stare testicle 3S.INALN
      'When Lion turned his eye, it's Hyena, he sees who is staring at his testicles.'

HS43 *à   ɗìlà ák mɔ̀ ndé   dè á   gê yăm?*
      then lion ask thing COMP do PREP INT uncle
      'Then Lion asked, "what (are you) doing, Uncle?"'

HS44 *ɓàklà ndé   yăm ná   mí pém ná kóé   kà   wènè gbó á*
      hyena COMP uncle FOC 1S stare FOC squirrel when 3S   exit PURP
      'Hyena (responds), "Uncle, (it's) me watching for Squirrel, (so that) when he exits,

      mì bá   nè.
      1S catch 3S
      I (can) catch him."'

HS45 *ɗìlà kà wà   ná zà-à   kɔ.*
      lion that 3S.REFL FOC dig-PST hole
      'It is Lion, himself, who dug the hole.'

Denouement

HS46 *kpèɗ-â   mé   ɓàklà, ná mgbàn-à   fálá   ɗìlà lák-né.*
      jump-PST.NOM POSS hyena FOC tear.off-PST testicle lion leave-INTR
      'Then Hyena jumped, (he) tore off Lion's testicles (and) ran away.'

HS47 *ɗìlà má   sìk á   nù   kpɔ́ bì-â.*
      lion CON fall PREP ground begin groan-PST.NOM
      'Lion fell to the ground and began to groan..

HS48   *kóé   má   gbò sàŋ ák mɔ̀ kà   làk-à   á   dìlà.*
squirrel CON exit now ask thing REL pass-PST PREP lion
'Squirrel exited at this time, and asked (Lion) what had happened to (him).'

HS49   *dìlà má   ɓɔ̀ á   nè fét.*
lion CON say PREP 3S all
'Lion told him everything.'

HS50   *kóé   má   ɓɔ̀ á   dìlà ndé   à   ìn-ì   ndé   ɓàklà   ná*
squirrel CON say PREP lion COMP   3S.TOP know-PST COMP hyena COP
'Squirrel said to Lion that he knows that Hyena is

wàn-sìlà,   wàn-yèrè   kà   dùŋ-ù   gɔ́.
proprietor-liver proprietor-lie REL stay-PST like.that
a greedy person, a liar that has always been that way.'

HS51   *mí tà   kú mé nè ɗé á   tùà   mè.*
1S FUT take 2S and put PREP house 2S.ALN
'"I will take you to your house."'

HS52   *kóé   má   kù dìlà nè ɗé á   zàŋ kírà   wâ*
squirrel CON take lion and set PREP bowels compound 3S.ALN
'Squirrel (then) took Lion to his compound.'

HS53   *à   kóé   ɓɔ́ á   dìlà ndé   é   tà   kímbìlì ɓàklà té   né*
then squirrel say PREP lion COMP LOG FUT cause   hyena come go
'Then Squirrel said to Lion that he will cause Hyena

á   dìlà á   bá nè.
PREP lion PURP catch 3S
to come to Lion so that (he) could catch him.'

HS54   *à   kóé   ák dìlà ndé: dìlà kà mè dúŋ nè kpátá, mè hą́ á   mí.*
then squirrel ask lion COMP lion if 2S stay have skin   2S give BEN 1S
'Then Squirrel asked Lion, "Lion, if you still have a skin, give (it) to me;"'

HS55   *à   mí nè ɗé á   yêk.*
then 1S go put for rot
"then I will put (it out) to rot."'

HS56   *yàrà vàk, kpátá kà   dìlà hą́ só   há kóé   má   yèk.*
lit   two skin REL lion give PRF BEN squirrel CON rot
'Two days (later), the skin that Lion had given to Squirrel was rotten.'

HS57   *kè kóé   má   kpɔ̀ dòŋgâ: kùlù   kúlú   kùlù   kúlú*
then squirrel CON begin sell.NOM rotten.skin rotten.skin rotten.skin rotten.skin
'Then Squirrel began to sell: Rotten skin, rotten skin, rotten skin, rotten skin!'

HS58   *ɓàklà má   gbò sàŋ: gèné á   gê? gɔ́m màì.*
hyena CON exit now: price PREP INT 100 (francs).
'Hyena exited then (and asked): "How much?" (Squirrel responded) "100 francs."'

HS59 *ɓàklà má hè sàŋ ñɔ́ŋ fét.*
hyena CON buy now eat completely
'Hyena bought (it) and ate it all up.'

HS60 *à kóé ɓɔ́ á wènè ndé, ɓàklà dɔ́kâ háŋàŋ á tùà.*
then squirrel say PREP 3S COMP hyena many exist PREP house
'Then Squirrel said to him, "Hyena, there are many (more) at the house."'

HS61 *wâ má làk né á ŋgɔ̀ dɪlà.*
3P CON leave go PREP home lion
'They left and went to Lion's house.'

HS62 *hɔ̀-â mùà né á kí dɪlà ná bà-à ɓàklà gbé.*
arrive-PST:NOM 3P.POSS go PREP DEM lion FOC catch-PST hyena kill
'At their arrival, Lion caught Hyena killing him.'

Didactic peak

HS63 *ndé ná sìlà mé ɓàklà gbé wènè é.*
COMP FOC liver POSS hyena kill 3S EXCL
'(Now) that's how the greediness of Hyena killed him!'

Formulaic closure

HS64 *ndé nzégìlì tò bɔ̀ŋ gɔ̀ ê!*
COMP end tale 1S.ALN like.that EXCL
'(Now) that's how my tale ends!'

HS65 *tò mè ê!*
tale 2S.ALN EXCL
'Your tale!'

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LES SÉRIES VERBALES EN BAOULÉ: QUESTIONS DE MORPHOSYNTAXE ET DE SÉMANTIQUE*

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This article demonstrates, from morphological and syntactic facts, the existence of serial verbs in Baoulé. The analysis illustrates the difference between serial verb constructions, simple conjoined verbs, and auxiliary verb/nominalized verb constructions. The author proposes that serial verbs do not constitute a homogeneous category in Baoulé. In order to deal efficiently with serial verbs, it is necessary to combine morphosyntactic features with lexical information.

1. Introduction

Il existe à ce jour une abondante littérature relative au phénomène des «séries verbales» dans les langues africaines. Les premiers linguistes qui se sont intéressés à la question avaient, dans leur grande majorité, pronostiqué qu'il s'agissait là d'une spécificité des langues africaines. Les points de vue les plus récents sur le sujet nuancent cette affirmation et font remarquer, à juste titre, que si l'on analyse cette construction sous l'angle de son fonctionnement syntaxique et conceptuel, on peut arriver à la conclusion qu'elle est reconnaissable dans beaucoup de langues. A. Delplanque [1998] pense même que cette structure syntaxique est nécessaire à toute langue naturelle. Rémy Bole-Richard [1978] donne des exemples de «séries verbales» dans des langues aussi diverses génétiquement que géographiquement que sont l'éwé (Sud Togo-Ghana), l'adioukrou (Côte d'Ivoire), l'agarabi (Nouvelle-Guinée), le vietnamien (Vietnam), le laotien (Laos), le chinois (Chine), etc. Le but de cet article n'est pas de prolonger ce débat sous quelque forme que ce soit, mais de rendre compte des procédés morpho-syntaxiques qui permettent de déterminer, dans une langue comme le baoulé, qu'une suite de verbes constitue une «série verbale» plutôt qu'une «séquence de propositions» ou même une combinaison «auxiliaire + verbe».

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* Cet article s'inspire de l'ouvrage que D. Creissels et moi-même avons publié en 1977 et qui s'intitule « *Description phonologique et grammaticale d'un parler baoulé* ».

2. Série verbale: essais de définition

La définition de la «série verbale» varie selon les langues, mais également selon le point de vue théorique adopté par le descripteur. D'une manière générale, on désigne de ce terme une succession de radicaux verbaux ayant un sujet commun, seul le premier terme de la série étant affecté des marques de modalités verbales, les termes suivants ne retenant de leur nature verbale que la faculté d'être suivis d'une expansion. C'est par exemple le point de vue adopté par le linguiste M. Houis [1977] qui considère les «séries verbales» comme

> «des faits de composition au niveau du prédicat. Elles sont ainsi carac-
> térisées: le prédicat est assumé par une série comportant un verbe affecté
> de son prédicatif et suivi d'une série de lexèmes à valence verbo-nominale.
> Le prédicatif n'est pas répété. Le verbe initial et les lexèmes peuvent
> recevoir des expansions primaires.» [Houis 1977: 55].

Cette définition semble établir une «hiérarchie» entre les verbes composant la série puisqu'il y est mentionné que seul le premier verbe est affecté d'une modalité verbale (aspect, temps, mode, négation). Une telle définition ne saurait convenir au cas du baoulé où, au contraire, les verbes de la série sont affectés «à égalité»[1] de la même modalité verbale. La même idée est reprise par Delplanque [1986:35] qui parle, lui, de «syntagme verbal» qu'il définit comme «une structure assumant une fonction prédicative unique et constituée d'au moins deux constituants» entre lesquels on distingue «clairement un noyau et une expansion». En effet, fait remar-quer par ailleurs cet auteur, «le second verbe du syntagme porte une conjugaison moins riche que le premier, comme si toutes les séquences étaient de structure: noyau V1 + expansion V2» [Delplanque 1998:232]. Ce que dit Delplanque du dagara (langue gur du Burkina Faso) ne peut pas, encore une fois, être retenu pour les faits du baoulé. Dans cette dernière langue, le comportement tonal de la forme verbale permet d'affirmer sans hésitation aucune que la deuxième partie d'une série verbale n'est pas l'expansion du premier terme de la série. Cette loi tonale est la suivante: dans un énoncé, le radical verbal est

> – á ton[2] fondamental haut (pour les monosyllabes: CV́) et bas suivi de haut
> (pour les dissyllabes: CV̀CV́) *s'il n'est pas suivi d'expansion ni de circonstant*;
> – á ton bas (à la fois pour les monosyllabes: CV̀, et les dissyllabes: CV̀CV̀) *s'il est*
> *suivi d'une expansion ou d'un circonstant*.

Prenons comme exemple le verbe *wàdí* (ton fondamental bas-haut) «courir», «fuir quelqu'un/quelque chose» lorsqu'il apparaît seul dans une structure «V + Expansion» («fuir quelqu'un/quelque chose») ou dans une série verbale *wàdí ...bá* /courir...venir/ «venir en courant»:

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[1] Sauf lorsque le premier verbe est au progrssif; dans ce cas, le deuxième verbe est au mode intentionnel comme dans l'énoncé (3).

[2] Le baoulé est une langue à ton. Dans cette langue, des lois tonales (que nous n'exposerons pas ici, faute de place) transforment constamment la mélodie globale des énoncés.

(1) construction V + Expansion[3]

    Enoncé de base: Enoncé réalisé:

    /ɔ́ sú   wà̰dɪ̀ kòfɪ́/   →   [ɔ̀ sú wà̰dɪ̄ kòfɪ̀] «Il fuit Koffi.»
    il PROG fuir   Koffi

(2) construction à série verbale

    Enoncé de base: Enoncé réalisé:

    /ɔ́ sú   wà̰dɪ̀ bá/   →   [ɔ̀ sú wà̰dɪ̄ bá] «Il vient en courant.»
    il PROG courir venir

Sans chercher à être exhaustif, on peut retenir qu'en surface, la réalisation tonale du verbe *wà̰dí* est différente d'un énoncé à l'autre: le ton de ce verbe est phonologiquement bas-bas dans l'énoncé (1) et bas-haut dans l'énoncé (2). La raison est qu'en (1), le verbe est suivi de l'expansion *kòfɪ́*, alors qu'en (2), le verbe V2 *bá* ne fonctionne pas comme une expansion de V1 *wà̰dí*, mais comme un verbe plein.

En baoulé, nous définissons la série verbale comme une succession de verbes ayant un sujet commun, succession de verbes telle que:
    a) aucune conjonction ne relie ces verbes entre eux; ils ne sont séparés par aucune rupture d'intonation;
    b) le sujet n'est exprimé obligatoirement qu'auprès du premier de ces verbes, auprès des verbes suivants il peut être repris, mais de manière facultative, par un pronom de rappel;
    c) chaque membre de la série garde ses caractéristiques verbales: possibilité d'être précédé d'un pronom sujet, d'être suivi d'une expansion.

Voici, à titre d'illustration, quelques schèmes d'énoncés à série verbale (où N(S) = nominal sujet, V1 = premier verbe de la série, N(E) = nominal en fonction d'expansion, V2 = deuxième verbe de la série).

(3) Schème N(S) + V1 + N(E) + V2 + N(E)

    kòfɪ́ sù   kà̰ ɟɔ́lɛ́ klē   àmlā̰
    K.   PROG dire affaire montrer.INT A.
    «Koffi raconte quelque chose à Amlan.»

(4) Schème N(S) + V1 + V2 + N(E)

    kwàkú dɪ̄   kpɛ́   kòfɪ̄
    K.   manger.CONS couper-CONS K.
    «Kouakou mange sans en donner à Koffi.»

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[3] Conventions utilisées:

ACC	aspect accompli	IMP	mode impératif
AUX	auxiliare	NéG	morphème de négation
CONS	mode constatif	PROG	aspect progressif
DéF	morphème du défini singulier	RÉS	aspect résultatif
INJ	mode injonctif	SFX.N	suffixe de nominalisation
INT	mode intentionnel		

(5) Schème N(S) + V1 + N(E) + V2

    ɔ̄ tūtū-lì   ndrē   bà-lì
    il ramasser-ACC champignon venir-ACC
    «Il a apporté des champignons (qu'il a ramassés).»

(6) Schème N(S) + V1 + V2

    ɔ̀ sú   wā̰dì bá
    il PROG courir arriver
    «Il arrive en courant.»

Cependent, ainsi définie, rien ne permet de distinguer la «série verbale» d'autres constructions comportant une suite de verbes telles que les propositions indépendantes juxtaposées ayant un sujet unique, les combinaisons «auxiliaire + verbe» et «verbe + forme nominalisée du verbe». Ce problème constitue l'objet de la section suivante.

3. Différences entre la série verbale et les autres constructions comportant des suites de verbes

3.1. Série verbale *vs* propositions indépendantes juxtaposées ayant un sujet unique. Nous partirons de l'énoncé en (7).

(7) *ɔ̄ wā̰dī-lī   ɔ̀ wɔ̀-lī*
    il courir-ACC il aller-ACC
    «Il est parti en courant.»

Cet énoncé peut être interprété de deux façons: (i) il comprend deux propositions indépendantes juxtaposées; (ii) il s'agit d'une construction sérielle. Dans le premier cas, les deux parties sont séparées par une rupture d'intonation (une légère pause après *wā̰dī-lī*) que nous pourrions matérialiser par une virgule, comme en (8). Nous pouvons alors le traduire par «Il a couru, (et) il est parti».

(8) *ɔ̄ wā̰dī-lī , ɔ̀ wɔ̀-lī.*

Dans le deuxième cas, il n'y a pas de rupture d'intonation entre les deux verbes et il sera traduit par «Il est parti en courant».

    Mais le critère le plus décisif de différenciation entre les deux constructions, c'est qu'en (8) le pronom sujet ɔ est obligatoire devant le verbe de la deuxième proposition, alors que devant le deuxième terme d'une série verbale, comme en (7), il est possible, mais facultatif. Cela veut dire que l'énoncé (9) est parfaitement licite, alors que le (10) ne l'est pas.

(9) *ɔ̄ wā̰dī-lī   wɔ̀-lī*   «Il est parti en courant.»
    il courir-ACC partir-ACC

(10) **ɔ̄ wā̰dī-lī , wɔ̀-lī*

Une preuve supplémentaire de cette différence est fournie par l'opération de nominalisation. La nominalisation (par l'adjonction du suffixe –*lɛ̂*) de l'énoncé (8) analysé comme comportant deux propositions donne deux constituants nominaux coordonnés (11), alors que sa nominalisation en tant qu'une seule proposition à prédicat complexe donne un seul constituant nominal (12).

(11) *ī   wà̄dī-lɛ̄'n   nìī   kɔ́-lɛ̄'n*
de.lui courir-SFX.N-DÉF et de.lui partir-SFX.N-DÉF
«Sa course et son départ.» [lit. le fait qu'il court et le fait qu'il part]

(12) *ī   wà̄dī-lɛ̄   kɔ́-lɛ̄'n*   ou   *ī   wà̄dī kɔ́-lɛ̄'n*
de.lui courir-SFX.N partir-SFX.N-DÉF   de.lui courir partir-SFX.N-DÉF
«Le fait qu'il part en courant.»

3.2 Série verbale *vs* «auxiliaire + verbe». La série verbale est proche de la construction «auxiliaire + radical verbal» (suite de deux verbes ayant un sujet unique), elle s'en distingue par une plus grande autonomie entre les termes de la série. Dans la construction «auxiliaire + verbe» en effet, absolument rien ne peut s'insérer entre les deux constituants de la construction et l'auxiliaire perd ses caractéristiques verbales à la fois syntaxiquement (impossibilité de le faire suivre de sa propre expansion) et morphologiquement (impossibilité de l'affecter d'un suffixe aspectuel ou négatif par exemple). Le baoulé connaît en particulier deux auxiliaires *wá* et *kó*. *wá* est à la fois par sa forme et par son sens à rapprocher du verbe *ba*[4] «venir» qui fait partie des unités significatives qui connaissent en baoulé une alternance *b~w*. Quant à *kó*, il est à rapprocher du verbe *kɔ* «partir, aller»; il a en commun avec lui le sens directionnel d'éloignement; par contre du point de vue formel, nous avons ici une alternance *ɔ ~ o* isolée dans le système du baoulé. On remarquera que *wá* et *kó*, en tant qu'auxiliaires, ne subissent pas les variations de forme que subissent *ba* et *kɔ* en tant que verbes pleins, comme par exemple:
— à l'accompli où le verbe *kɔ* prend la forme *wɔ*:

(13) *ɔ̄ wɔ́-ĺ̀ı̀   gwābɔ̀*   «Il est allé au marché.»
il aller-ACC marché

à comparer à (14):

(14) *ɔ̀ kō   tó-ĺ̀ı̀   tánī*   «Il est allé acheter du tissu.»
il aller(AUX) acheter-ACC tissu

— à l'injonctif où le verbe *ba* prend la forme *bla*:
(15) *ɔ́ɔ̀   blà   mī wú̄ wā*   «Qu'il vienne près de moi.»
il-INJ venir-INJ moi auprès ici

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[4] Les verbes monosyllabiques baoulé cités en isolation ne portent pas de ton, au contraire des auxiliaires et des verbes dissyllabiques.

à comparer à (16):

(16) ɔ̄ɔ̀   wā   fà   dwō   «Qu'il vienne prendre de l'igname.»
     il-INJ venir(AUX) pendre-INJ igname

De manière générale, ces deux auxiliaires présentent une valeur directionnelle qui correspond à leur étymologie. En tant que verbes pleins, *ba* et *kɔ* prennent pour expansion un nom désignant *le lieu* qui constitue le but du déplacement. *gwābò* et *klɔ̀* constituent les buts de «aller» et «venir».

(17) ɔ̄ wɔ̄-lì   gwābò   «Il est allé au marché.»
     il aller-ACC marché

(18) ɔ̄ ā̰   bā   klɔ̀   «Il est venu au village.»
     il RÉS venir village

En tant qu'auxiliaires, ils se combinent à un radical verbal qui dénote l'action qui constitue le but du déplacement.

(19) ɔ̀ kō   tó-lì   tā̰nī̄   «Il est allé acheter du tissu.»
     il aller(AUX) acheter-ACC tissu

(20) ɔ̀ wā   tútū-lì   ndrê   «Il est venu ramasser des champignons.»
     il venir(AUX) ramasser-ACC champignon

Pour exprimer simultanément *le lieu* et *l'action* buts du déplacement, on combine les deux constructions en une série verbale. Par exemple, en combinant l'énoncé (17) et l'énoncé (19), on aura celui de (21).

(21) ɔ̄ wɔ̄-lì   gwābó ɔ̀ kō   tó-lì   tā̰nì
     il aller-ACC marché   il aller(AUX) acheter-ACC tissu
     «Il est allé au marché acheter du tissu.»

On peut donc dire en gros que ces constructions ont une valeur comparable à la construction française «aller/venir + infinitif». Le fait remarquable est que *wá* et *kó* forment avec le verbe qui les suit un bloc compact dans lequel il est absolument impossible d'insérer un affixe quelconque.

3.3. Série verbale *vs* verbe + radical verbal nominalisé. Soit l'énoncé en (22).

(22) ɔ̄   sì   sṵ̄   «Il sait pleurer.»
     il-CONT savoir pleurer

Cet énoncé comporte une combinaison de deux radicaux verbaux qui ne manifeste pas de manière évidente des caractéristiques différentes de la série verbale ou de la combinaison «auxiliaire + radical verbal». Mais une étude du fonctionnement de cette construction montre que:

— il ne peut pas apparaître de pronom sujet de rappel devant le deuxième radical verbal;

— seul le premier des deux radicaux verbaux peut porter des marques de modalités verbales, alors que dans la série verbale les deux termes portent ces marques, et dans la construction «auxiliaire + verbe» les suffixes de l'accompli et de la négation suivent le deuxième élément. Comparer, par exemple, les énoncés suivants (23-25) où nous avons souligné les radicaux verbaux et mis hors italiques le suffixe de la négation.

(23) ɔ *fá*-mà̰   *tā̰nɪ̀ mā*-má   *kwàɟó* «Il ne donne pas de tissu à Kouadio.»
il prendre-NÉG tissu donner-NÉG Kouadio

(24) ɔ à   *kō*   *tó*-mā̰   *nà̰nɪ̄* «Il n'est pas allé acheter un bœuf.»
il RÉS aller(AUX) acheter-NÉG bœuf

(25) ɔ *sí*-mà̰   *sṵ̄* «Il ne sait pas pleurer.»
il savoir-NÉG pleurer

— enfin, le fait que *sṵ* doit être considéré en (22) comme un radical verbal nominalisé en fonction d'expansion de *sɪ* est confirmé par ce qui se passe si on veut avoir comme deuxième constituant de cette construction un radical verbal pourvu lui-même d'une expansion. Ceci est possible, mais alors l'expansion précède le radical verbal, comme un nom en fonction de complétant précède un nom en fonction de complété. Soit les énoncés suivants:

(26) ɔ̰ *sṵ̄* *tɔ́* *āljĕ* «Elle fait la cuisine.»
elle PROG cuire nourriture

(27) ɔ̰ *kō*   *tɔ̰́* *āljĕ* «Elle va faire la cuisine.»
elle aller(AUX) cuire nourriture

(28) ɔ *sɪ̄*   *āljè* *tɔ̰́* «Elle sait faire la cuisine.»
elle savoir-CONS nourriture cuire

En (26), le nom *àljĕ* «nourriture» est l'expansion (objet direct) du verbe *tɔ* «cuire» à l'aspect progressif, et en (27) du bloc *kɔ́ tɔ* «aller cuire»; en (28) en revanche, c'est le bloc *àljĕ tɔ* qui fonctionne comme expansion de *sɪ*. Et ce bloc est justement un syntagme nominal de structure «nom complétant + nom complété» qu'on peut gloser par «la cuisson de la nourriture». Cela constitue l'évidence que dans l'énoncé (22) le radical verbal *sṵ* a bel et bien un fonctionnement de nominal.

4. Emploi des séries verbales et significations

Sémantiquement parlant, on peut dire que la succession des lexèmes verbaux constituant une série verbale reproduit généralement les phases successives d'un processus. Il ne faut toutefois pas oublier que l'intérêt de cette analyse n'est dans

bien des cas qu'étymologique. Parmi les verbes qui interviennent de manière parti-
culièrement fréquente dans les séries verbales, on observe qu'ils manifestent un
sens qui, bien qu'apparenté au sens qu'ils ont lorsqu'ils constituent à eux seuls le
prédicat verbal, ne s'y ramène pas de manière évidente. Dans l'analyse qui va
suivre, nous reviendrons sur cet aspect de la question, en particulier pour certaines
séries verbales dont l'un des verbes est *fa* «prendre» ou *ma* «donner».

Selon le sens des verbes qui entrent dans leur composition, les séries verbales
en baoulé expriment, entre autres, les valeurs suivantes:
— introduction du bénéficiaire d'une action;
— introduction d'un instrumental ou d'un comitatif;
— expression de la comparaison.

4.1 L'introduction du bénéficiaire d'une action. D'une manière générale, c'est
le verbe *ma* «donner», lorsqu'il figure en position de V2, qui introduit le bénéfi-
ciaire d'une action. Il faut faire remarquer qu'on ne le trouve que rarement dans
des énoncés où il assume seul la fonction de prédicat, bien que ceci soit possible
comme l'atteste l'énoncé en (29).

(29) *ī   sí   ɔ á   mɛ́⁵ ì kpāù kā*
     de.lui père il RÉS donner lui pain   petit
     «Son père lui a donné un peu de pain.»

Dans cet énoncé, *ì kpāù kā* est en réalité la fusion en un syntagme complétif du
bénéficiaire *ì* «lui» et de l'objet *kpāù kā* «un peu de pain». Il faut comprendre ce
syntagme comme constituant un groupe nominal qu'on peut gloser par «un peu
de pain pour lui», «un peu de pain destiné à lui». Dans la majorité des cas, le sens
de «donner» est exprimé par la combinaison de *ma* avec le verbe *fa*, qui signifie à
l'état isolé «prendre» (30).

(30) *kòfī sú fā   dwɔ̄ mā   kwàkū*
     Koffi PROG prendre igname donner Kouakou
     «Koffi donne de l'igname à Kouakou.»

Sémantiquement, il serait erroné d'interpréter l'énoncé (30) comme «Koffi
prend de l'igname pour la donner à Kouakou». Ce dernier sens serait rendu en
baoulé par une phrase complexe comprenant deux propositions reliées par une
conjonction. L'interprétation que nous faisons ici de l'énoncé (30) est confirmée
par l'existence d'énoncés comme celui en (31) qu'il est exclu d'interpréter comme
«tu prends ta maison pour me montrer».

(31) *ā sú fā   wɔ́ swǎ'n   klé   mī*
     tu PROG prendre de.toi maison-DÉF montrer moi
     «Tu me montres ta maison.»

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⁵ La voyelle finale du verbe *ma* devient *ɛ* sous l'influence du *ì*.

Dans cette série verbale, *fa* fonctionne comme un outil grammatical dont le rôle est simplement d'introduire l'objet d'un prédicat dont le sens est entièrement donné par l'autre lexème verbal (ici *ma̧*) avec lequel *fa* est en combinaison, bien que d'un point de vue morphologique, *fa* reste ici pleinement un verbe. On peut donc dire que, dans les constructions de ce type, *ma̧* a pour fonction, en tant que deuxième verbe d'une série verbale, d'introduire le bénéficiaire d'une action dont l'objet constitue syntaxiquement le premier terme de la série.

4.2. L'introduction d'un instrumental ou d'un comitatif.

C'est le verbe *fa* «prendre» en position de V1 dans une série verbale qui permet d'exprimer l'instrumental ou le comitatif, comme l'exemple (32) l'atteste.

(32) *ɔ̄ fā-lī̧   dwō bà-lī̧*
      il prendre-ACC igname venir-ACC
      «Il a apporté de l'igname.»

dwō dans cet énoncé est syntaxiquement une expansion de *fa* et sémantiquement un complément d'accompagnement. Cet énoncé peut d'ailleurs être traduit par «il est venu avec de l'igname». Un problème se pose cependant sur le statut réel de *fa* dans cette construction. S'agit-il d'un simple verbe occupant une position V1 dans une série verbale ou ne peut-on pas lui accorder le statut d'auxiliaire dans cette construction? Certes, le fait qu'au contraire des auxiliaires *wá* et *kó*, *fa* semble accepter l'adjonction d'affixe (cf. le suffixe –*lī̧* de l'accompli en (32))[6] pourrait l'exclure de cette classe. Cependent, cette reconnaissance de *fa* comme auxiliaire est indispensable pour rendre compte des constructions comme celle en (33).

(33) *n̄   kṵ̄ndē sī̧ ká n̄   fá   kɔ̄ lī̧ kǎ*
      je-INT chercher argent je-INT prendre(AUX) aller endroit
      «J'ai besoin d'argent pour le voyage.»

   Du point de vue sémantique, l'adjonction de l'auxiliaire *fá* signale donc la présence d'un instrumental, elle correspond à peu près à la tournure française où «avec» en valeur adverbiale s'ajoute à un verbe: «il est parti avec», «il a coupé du pain avec», etc. Ceci explique sans doute que les formes à auxiliaire *fá* se rencontrent rarement isolées, mais le plus souvent comme deuxième terme de séries verbales dont le premier terme introduit justement l'instrumental auquel renvoie l'auxiliaire *fá*. Ce premier terme est fréquemment le verbe *fa* lui même, et il est intéressant à ce sujet de noter le parallélisme de fonctionnement entre l'auxiliaire instrumental et les auxiliaires directionnels (34-36).

(34) *ɔ̄ wɔ̄-lī̧   gwābó ɔ̀ kɔ̄   tó-lī̧   ɲɥ̂ê*
      il aller-ACC marché il aller(AUX) acheter-ACC poisson
      «Il est allé au marché acheter du poisson.»

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[6] D'ailleurs dans cet énoncé, *fa* est V1 dans ce qui est une série verbale.

(35) ɔ́ fā-lī̄   lāljě̌   ɔ̀ fā   kpé-lī̄   kpā̄ù̀
      il prendre-ACC couteau il prendre(AUX) couper-ACC pain
      «Il a coupé du pain avec un couteau.»

(36) ɔ̀ sū̄   fá   wē̄sè̀   ɔ́   fá   kpé   kwā'n
      il PROG prendre machette il-INT prendre(AUX) couper liane-DÉF
      «Il coupe la liane avec une machette.»

4.3. L'expression de la comparaison. La comparaison de supériorité ou d'in-
fériorité s'exprime en baoulé par des séries verbales comportant comme V2 le
verbe *tra* «dépasser». Ce verbe peut à lui seul constituer le prédicat d'énoncé
exprimant une comparaison, comme dans (37). Mais le plus souvent on le trouve
dans des énoncés à série verbale comme dans (38)-(41).

(37) n̄   trà   kwàkū̄   àfwē̄ n̄sjē̄
      je-CONS dépasser Kouakou année six
      «J'ai six ans de plus que Kouakou.»

(38) ā̄   lē̄   àwlē̠bà trà   mī̄
      tu-CONS avoir cœur   dépasser-CONS moi
      «Tu es plus courageux que moi.»

(39) ɔ̄   dī̄ ɟùmā̠ trà   mī̄
      il-CONS faire travail dépasser-CONS moi
      «Il travaille plus que moi.»

(40) n̄   kɔ̄ bwàkē̄ n̄   trā̄   kòfī̄
      je-CONS aller Bouaké je-CONS dépasser Koffi
      «Je vais plus souvent à Bouaké que Koffi.»

(41) n̄   sī̄   kòfī̄ n̄   trā̄   kwàkū̄
      je-CONS connaître Koffi je-CONS dépasser Kouakou
      «Je connais Koffi mieux que Kouakou.»

Les deux derniers exemples montrent que dans de telles constructions *tra*
prend systématiquement:
    — comme sujet, le même sujet que le premier terme de la série;
    — comme expansion, l'élément sur lequel porte la comparaison.
    Il est intéressant de noter que l'énoncé (41) présente la même ambiguïté que sa
traduction en français: «Je connais mieux Koffi que je ne connais Kouakou» ou «je
connais mieux Koffi que ne le connaît Kouakou».

4.4. Autres valeurs véhiculées. Sous ce titre, nous rangeons des valeurs comme:
    — la non participation à une action (ou l'exclusion d'une action).

Cette valeur est exprimée par le verbe *kpɛ* «couper» comme deuxième terme
d'une série verbale (42).

(42) *bè   dĭ   bé   kpè   mī̄*
     ils-CONS manger ils-CONS couper moi
     «Ils mangent sans moi.» ou «Ils mangent sans m'en donner.»

— les circonstances d'un déplacement: pour exprimer ces circonstances, on trouve
des séries verbales où le verbe de déplacement est en deuxième position, le premier
terme de la série précisant par exemple la façon dont s'effectue le déplacement
(43)-(44).

(43) *ɔ wē̄-lĭ   nzyĕ kpè-lĭ*
     il nager-ACC eau   traverser-ACC
     «Il a traversé la rivière à la nage.»

(44) *ɔ sú   wā̰dì bá*
     il PROG courir arriver
     «Il arrive en courant.»

5. Concurrence entre constructions à séries verbales et autres constructions

Pour exprimer un certain nombre d'autres valeurs, les constructions à séries ver-
bales entrent en concurrence ou sont en distribution complémentaire avec d'autres
constructions que nous allons à présent passer en revue.

5.1. Concurrence entre séries verbales et constructions avec <u>ní</u> pour l'expression de l'instrumental.
Pour l'expression de l'instrumental, le baoulé dispose
d'une construction comportant le coordinatif *ní* «et», «avec».

(45) *ɔ sū   tí kē̄ ànwā̰'n nì̄   sāfè*
     il PROG ouvrir porte-DÉF avec clef
     «Il ouvre la porte avec une clef.»

(46) *ɔ kpē̄-lĭ   kpā̰ù nī̄ lāljĕ*
     il couper-ACC pain   avec couteau
     «Il a coupé du pain avec un couteau.»

(47) *ɔ kpē̄-lĭ   kwā̄ nī̄ wèsē̄*
     il couper-ACC liane avec machette
     «Il a coupé une liane avec une machette.»

Dans ces énoncés, *ní* sert à introduire ce qui sémantiquement peut s'analyser
comme un instrument, à savoir *sāfè* «clef», *lāljĕ* «couteau» et *wèsē̄* «machette».
Ces énoncés sont en concurrence (parce que parfaitement synonymes) avec les
suivants, qui sont construits à partir de séries verbales où le premier verbe *fa* a

pour expansion l'instrument et le deuxième est très souvent combiné à l'auxiliaire *fá* (de sens instrumental) (48)-(50).

(48) *ɔ̀ sū   fà   sāfɛ̀ ɔ̄ fá   tí kē̄ ànwā̰'n̰*
      il PROG prendre clef   il prendre(AUX) ouvrir porte-DÉF
      «Il ouvre la porte avec une clef.»

(49) *ɔ̄ fā-ḭ̄   lāljɛ̆   ɔ̀ fā   kpé-ḭ̀   kpā̰ṵ̀*
      il prendre-ACC couteau il prendre(AUX) couper-ACC pain
      «Il a coupé du pain avec un couteau.»

(50) *ɔ̄ fā-ḭ̄   wɛ̀sē̄   ɔ̀ fā   kpé-ḭ̀   kwà*
      il prendre-ACC machette il prendre(AUX) couper-ACC liane
      «Il a coupé une liane avec une machette.»

Bien que ces énoncés paraissent parfaitement synonymes, il y a des cas où sémantiquement on peut percevoir une légère nuance de sens, comme dans les exemples (51)-(52). Ces deux énoncés peuvent tous les deux être traduits par «Il est venu avec une femme». Mais alors que le premier est une information relativement neutre, dans le deuxième, il y a une insistance sur l'implication, dans l'action dénotée, de celui dont il est question. Ce deuxième énoncé peut alors, en plus, être glosé par «il s'est fait accompagné d'une femme!», «il a fallu qu'il s'amène avec une femme!».

(51) *ɔ̄ n̄ī blā   bà-ḭ̄*
      lui et femme venir-ACC

(52) *ɔ̄ fà-ḭ̄   blā   bà-ḭ̄*
      il prendre-ACC femme venir-ACC

VI. 2. Concurrence et/ou distribution complémentaire entre séries verbales et verbes à deux expansions.

Lorsqu'un verbe baoulé peut être suivi de deux expansions, celles-ci ne portent aucune marque signalant leur fonction respective, mais elles occupent l'une par rapport à l'autre une place fixe en liaison avec cette fonction. En particulier, pour les verbes à deux expansions dont l'une représente sémantiquement un «objet» et l'autre un «destinataire» ou «bénéficiaire», le destinataire ou bénéficiaire précède systématiquement l'objet (53)-(55).

(53) *kòfi sū   klɛ̀   ɲísā̰   flùwā*
      Koffi PROG écrire N'guessan lettre
      «Koffi écrit une lettre à N'guessan.»

(54) *bē̄ klē̄-ḭ̀   m̄ī bé swǎ'n*
      ils montrer-ACC moi leur maison-DÉF
      «Ils m'ont montré leur maison.»

(55) ɔ̄ ā̰ mā̰   kōfì bōlí kṵ̀
      il RÉS donner Koffi chèvre une
      «Il a donné une chèvre à Koffi.»

Dans ces trois énoncés, les constituants nominaux en fonction sémantique de
bénéficiaires (ɲísā̰, mì et kōfì) précèdent les objets (flùwā, bé swǎ'n et bōlí kṵ̀).
On notera d'ailleurs l'emploi, avec certains verbes, de cette structure S V E1 E2
où E1 représente un objet ou patient et E2 un instrument (56)-(57). ì et mī̄ sont en
fonction de E1 tandis que sābwî et ácɔ̀ljɛ̄ sont en fonction de E2.

(56) ɔ̄   fì fḭ̀   ì sābwî   «Il le griffe.»
      il-CONS déchirer le ongle

(57) ɔ̄ bō-lḭ̀   mī̄ ácɔ̀ljɛ̄   «Il m'a donné un coup de poing.»
      il battre-ACC moi poing

Mais la construction S V E1 E2 n'est pas la seule à pouvoir décrire une situa-
tion mettant en jeu agent, objet et destinataire, et il y a même des cas où, en pré-
sence d'une telle situation, cette construction est syntaxiquement impossible. C'est
ici qu'il convient de poser le problème de la concurrence qui existe entre cette
construction et les séries verbales qui se partagent en quelque sorte le même
domaine fonctionnel. Par exemple, avec le verbe cɛ «faire cadeau» on peut avoir
indifféremment, pour exprimer «fais-moi cadeau d'une chèvre», l'un des deux
énoncés, (58) ou (59).

(58) cɛ̄   mì bōlí   (structure: V E1 E2)
      offrir.IMP moi chèvre

(59) fā   bòlḭ̀ cɛ̀   mī̄   (série verbale)
      prendre.IMP chèvre offrir.IMP moi

Par contre, pour exprimer «fais-moi cadeau de <u>la</u> chèvre (en question)», ou «fais-
moi cadeau de <u>cette</u> chèvre», c'est-à-dire lorsque le mot bòlḭ̀ «chèvre» est défini
ou est déterminé par le déictique ce, on ne peut avoir que la construction à série
verbale (60)-(61).

(60) fā   bòlḭ̀'<u>n</u>   cɛ̀   mī̄
      prendre.IMP chèvre-DÉF offrir-IMP moi
      «Fais-moi cadeau de <u>la</u> chèvre.»

(61) fā   bòlḭ̀ <u>ngǎ</u> cɛ̀   mī̄
      prendre.IMP chèvre cette offrir-IMP moi
      «Fais-moi cadeau de <u>cette</u> chèvre.»

Nous avons le même phénomène avec un autre verbe de don mā̰ «donner»; les
énoncés (62) et (63) ont le même sens.

(62) *mā̰*   *mì bōlǐ*   «Donne-moi une chèvre.»
      donner.IMP moi chèvre

(63) *fā*   *bòlī mā̰*   *mī*   «Donne-moi une chèvre.»
      prendre.IMP chèvre donner.IMP moi

Avec, en fonction d'objet, le pronom déictique *ngǎ* «ceci» on ne peut avoir que le sens vu en (64).

(64) *fā*   *ngǎ mā̰*   *mī*   (construction à série verbale)
      prendre.IMP ceci donner.IMP moi
      «Donne-moi ceci.»

   Par ailleurs, au sens de «donne-moi la chèvre en question», on ne peut là aussi avoir que la construction à série verbale (65).

(65) *fā*   *bòlī'n*   *mā̰*   *mī*
      prendre.IMP chèvre-DÉF donner.IMP moi
      «Donne-moi la chèvre en question.»

On remarquera qu'un énoncé comme celui en (66), où le nom *bōlǐ* est défini (présence du morphème -'*n*) est possible, mais il signifie exactement «donne la chèvre qui me revient/qui m'est destinée», et non pas «donne-moi la chèvre en question».

(66) *mā̰*   *mì bōlǐ'n*   (structure: V E₁ E₂)
      donner.IMP moi chèvre-DÉF

Tout se passe comme si, quand le référent du nom qui est l'objet du transfert est connu de quelque manière que ce soit (défini ou déterminé par un déictique), le sens de *ma* tout seul ne suffit plus, mais il est renforcé par celui de *fa*, comme pour décrire concrètement la scène du transfert d'objet dans la tradition baoulé: on prend l'objet (on tient l'objet dans la main) et on le donne. C'est ici que l'apport d'autres sciences telles que l'ethnosociologie serait souhaitable. En attendant on peut expliquer ces impossibilités syntaxiques par le fait que (pour prendre l'exemple de l'énoncé (65)) les deux constituants nominaux qui suivent le verbe *ma* sont reliés entre eux dans un syntagme nominal et non, en dépit des apparences, directement au verbe lui-même. Ainsi, dans l'énoncé (65), *mì* constitue syntaxiquement le complétant de *bōlǐ'n* et non l'expansion de *ma*. On peut donc dire que, syntaxiquement parlant, ce qui suit le verbe *ma* (ou *cɛ*) est:
   — ou bien le constituant nominal représentant le bénéficiaire lorsque *ma* constitue le deuxième terme d'une série;
   — ou bien la fusion en un syntagme complétif du bénéficiaire et de l'objet: dans un énoncé comme (66) *ɔ ā mā̰ kòfī (ī) bōlǐ* il-RÉS-donner-Koffi-(lui)-chèvre «Il a donné une chèvre à Koffi», il faut comprendre *kòfī (ī) bōlǐ* comme constituant un groupe nominal au sens de «chèvre pour Koffi» ou «chèvre destinée à Koffi».

6. Conclusion

La présentation que nous venons de faire de la série verbale en baoulé montre qu'il ne s'agit pas d'une catégorie vraiment homogène. A côté des séries verbales quasi lexicalisées comme *fa...kɔ* /prendre...partir/ «emporter», *fa...ba* /prendre ...venir/ «apporter», etc., d'autres semblent se construire au gré des circonstances du discours et des besoins d'expression du locuteur. D'un autre côté, si par oppositions successives aux autres constructions comportant une succession de verbes, on peut arriver à caractériser morphologiquement et syntaxiquement la série verbale en baoulé, il demeure des problèmes non encore élucidés qui relèvent de la lexicographie du baoulé. L'impression qui se dégage est que chaque verbe transitif tend à sélectionner le verbe avec lequel il constitue une série verbale. Il reste à décrire systématiquement de tels phénomènes de sélection qui sont liés au moins en partie à des contraintes lexicales qui dépendent elles-mêmes de manière évidente de la sémantique propre à chaque verbe et de la compatibilité entre les nuances de sens apportées par chacun des termes de la série.

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From the edge:

Njerep: A postcard from the edge
Bruce A. Connell and David Zeitlyn

FROM THE EDITOR:
DOCUMENTING ENDANGERED LANGUAGES

When I first took on the task of Editor of *Studies in African Linguistics* nine years ago, I stated in a message from the Editor that part of the role of the journal is to "facilitate and promote the publication of African language data ... that might not find a place easily or suitably in more general journals." During the past decade it has become increasingly clear that many African languages are not only endangered, but are already on the brink of extinction. Many of these, unfortunately, will disappear with little or no documentation. In keeping with the goal of the journal stated above, therefore, the journal will henceforth devote a separate section to documenting these endangered languages. Papers for this section should be good, concise, descriptive linguistic sketches, indicating as well the current state of the language. In addition to grammatical description, they may also include lists of lexical items, short texts or songs. As with all papers submitted to the journal, these sketches will be reviewed.

In this issue of *SAL*, we launch this new section appropriately enough with a sketch titled "Njerep: A postcard from the edge", authored by Bruce Connell and David Zeitlyn. Njerep, a Mambiloid language of Cameroon, appears to have no more than six speakers who have any significant knowledge of the language, all of them quite old. The title of this inaugural piece provides, I believe, an appropriate name for this section—*From the edge*.

Robert Botne

NJEREP: A POSTCARD FROM THE EDGE*

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Njerep is a language on the edge of extinction. It is no longer spoken on a regular basis, nor is it even known well by any one speaker. There are now, in fact, only five people who remember the language well enough to produce fragments of speech or who remember songs in the language. Our aim in this paper is to document the language to the extent possible. We have collected a wordlist of the language, a number of songs and other bits of text which, fragmentary though they are, permit some insights into the structure of the language, its genetic affiliation and its former importance in the region. Since we view language as a cultural artifact intimately connected to both the culture and the history of its speakers, the paper begins with a brief discussion of Njerep ethnography and history. We then look at evidence for the genetic affiliation of Njerep, and follow this with a description of its structural characteristics. Appendices are included which contain the Njerep wordlist, transcriptions of songs and, finally, genealogical information on the remaining speakers, which gives some insight into the sociological aspect of language contraction.

1. Introduction

Njerep today is not a language of daily use. It is known—or remembered—by a small handful of people in the Mambila village of Somié in Adamawa Province, Cameroon. Of six people who have some scattered knowledge of the language, there is but one elderly man, Mial, who may still be capable of conversing in it to any extent. A seventh elder, who knew the language better than any of the re-

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maining speakers, Wajiri Bi, died in late 1998. The survivors, it appears, are not up to the status of "semi-speaker" [Dorian 1973], but are best viewed as "rememberers" [Campbell & Muntzel 1989]. In its terminal stage, the language has been used primarily for greetings, joking, occasionally to share secrets, and its songs sung to recall the past. These functions have apparently died with Bi. While our primary aim in this paper is to present a linguistic description of Njerep, in recognition of the intrinsic connection between language and culture—which becomes all the more apparent when a language is dying—we begin with a brief discussion of the ethnography and history of the Njerep people. We then move on to examine their language: its linguistic affiliations and those aspects of its structure that are determinable from the available linguistic data. This material is presented in its entirety, either in the text of the paper or in the accompanying appendices. In the concluding paragraphs we look briefly at some of the factors that have brought Njerep to the edge of extinction, in an effort to better understand some of the dynamics of language decline and death. The paper is, then, little more than a postcard and gives only a tiny fragment of the language as it was. It is, however, the most complete record of Njerep we are ever likely to have.

2. Ethnography and history

2.1. Fragments of local history. All Mambila on the Tikar Plain came from the Mambila Plateau and the adjoining areas of the Adamawa Plateau. It is within this context that the history of the Njerep, and village of Somié and its surroundings is to be understood. Somié, also known as Ndeba in Ba-Mambila, or Cokmo (sometimes written Tchokmon), is presently located at 6° 28' N, 11° 27' E in the Bankim sub-division of the Province of Adamawa, Cameroon.[1] It lies on the Tikar Plain in the extreme southwest of the Province, near the border with Northwest Province and the Nigerian frontier. The present population is the result of several (at least three, and possibly four) waves of immigration by different groups of Mambila down from the Mambila Plateau onto the Tikar Plain. No clear and detailed picture emerges from the oral history concerning these events, as accounts from different informants are contradictory (see Zeitlyn 1994; Zeitlyn, Mial and Mbe in press).

   The four named groups of immigrants are Liap, Ndeba, Njerep and Mvop. It is a matter of controversy whether the Liap or the Ndeba were the first arrivals, though both may have had a hand in pushing the Tikar away from the base of the escarpment and farther into the plain. Little is now known of the Liap other than that they must have come from the area around Chichale mountain near Guessimi, on the Adamawa Plateau. In Somié, some people are still occasionally described as Liap through patrilateral descent. The Liap are said to have hidden from subsequent invaders in caves. Some informants recount a story of Liap performing a dance in a cave which collapsed, trapping or crushing the dancers. Others talk of caves at the River Pongong (near Tor Luo hill) in which Liap pots may be found.

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[1] The village has moved three times, most recently in 1964.

Even less is known of the Ndeba, other than that they too came from the Guessimi area, and that they gave their name to the village. They are said to be the people who dug the trenched forts visible in aerial photographs and on the ground at Gumbe and in the forest of Duabang [Zeitlyn 1992]. We could discover no account of any cultural practices to distinguish them from their successors. These early immigrants were conquered or absorbed in their turn by subsequent waves of Mambila invaders.

The second wave of immigrants to the present Somié area (considering both Liap and Ndeba as part of the first) is itself divided into different groups. All accounts agree this wave originated on the Adamawa Plateau, and introduced the Njerep and the Luo. While the linguistic evidence presented below indicates that Njerep and Kasabe (the language of the Luo) were closely related, and these two with a third language, Cambap, elicited accounts differ as to the degree of differentiation between the Njerep and the Luo. The most common version suggests these two groups were one with the Camba (aka Twendi [Connell 1998]), and only differentiated when they left the villages of Sango and Camba (an intermediate stop, already on the Tikar plain) fleeing to the hills at the foot of the Mambila escarpment to escape horsemen. The horsemen in most accounts are Fulɓe invaders, though at least one local historian suggests this movement was earlier, and precipitated by the Chamba invasion of a slightly earlier period.[2] Although descendents of the Njerep and Luo now live on the Tikar plain, they still identify the villages in the mountains which they established, and one local mountain bears the name Tor Luo (*tòr* = 'hill, mountain'). What is unclear is whether these two differentiated from Camba in the way just described, or at an earlier time, perhaps when leaving the Adamawa Plateau homeland. Perhaps one pointer with some bearing on the question is that the Luo claim to have songs not known to the Njerep. This alone cannot be taken as evidence of a long history of separation, but does point to some cultural differentiation.

Whatever the case, the Njerep and Luo are now separate and appear to have been so since they reached their present locations. Their separate accounts of relations with their neighbours, as discussed below, confirm this, especially since the Njerep (but not Luo) claim to have conquered the Ndeba.

The last wave of Mambila immigrants onto the Tikar Plain were the Mvop who came down the escarpment from Mvor village on the Mambila Plateau, southwest of Dorofi—this site has been documented by Jean Hurault [1979: 22 & Plate VII, 1986: 131 & Plate III]. Oral tradition tells us that a group of children of Tulum, their common ancestor in Mvor, founded the villages of Sonkolong, Somié, and Atta. Much hinges on the reasons for the arrival of the Mvop on the Tikar Plain. In the central part of Somié, it is said to have been a conquest. War started over the giving of dues, such as palm oil and special ("royal") game, to the Mvop. As is common throughout this area, chieftainship is marked by rights over game such as buffalo: a specified portion of any royal animal killed must be sent to the chief of a

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[2] Mial Nicodeme, citing the published work of Eldridge Mohammadou [1990 &1991]. There is potential for confusion between the two names 'Camba' and 'Chamba'; both are pronounced the same, [tʃamba], though at present there is no evidence of a connection between the two.

particular group to acknowledge their superior status. In this case, it is claimed, the thigh of a buffalo which had been killed was not sent to the Mvop chief Tulum at Mvor. (We have not yet found an explanation of why the Ndeba should have done this before their conquest by the Mvop.) In Somié, two hamlet headmen name new chiefs and are accorded great respect. One of these is the head of Njerep hamlet, and thus the head of Ndeba. The other is the head of Gumbe hamlet who is of Mvop descent.

According to our informants, Njerep and Ndeba once exchanged buffalo thighs, a mark of reciprocal respect, and it was the breaking of this custom which led to the conquest of Ndeba by Njerep. The breaking of the custom is more a symptom than a cause, but granted the symbolic importance of buffalo in the region, any local ruler who was politically ambitious could use claims to buffalo as part of their political strategy. Hence, a local war could well be triggered by refusal to give a buffalo thigh. Traditions concerning buffalo rights also exemplify local history in the case of the Luo. The Luo, allies of the Mvop, retain buffalo thighs for themselves. They are said to have been granted this right by Tulum, the Mvop ancestor, after Luo healers treated him for spear wounds incurred in a battle with the Tikar. More people today know about the curing than about who Tulum and his followers were fighting—there is considerable uncertainty on this point.

2.2. Summary. Given the uncertainties and complexity of the regional history of the last two centuries, the following seems the best current summary.

The Tikar Plain was inhabited by proto-Tikar speakers.[3] It appears that during the 19th century—possibly earlier—speakers of four languages, Cambap, Kasabe, Njerep, and Yeni, left the area around Djeni Mountain (known on current maps of Cameroon as l'Aigue Mboundou). They settled in, or perhaps established, various villages farther west and south, in the foothills and on the Tikar Plain. The most plausible hypothesis is that the Fulani jihad of the 19th century (part of the Sokoto Jihad) was the primary cause of this upheaval, though there is some indication that the movement occurred, or at least began, prior to the jihad, perhaps as a result of the Chamba Leko incursions (as suggested by Mohammadou 1990; Fardon 1988 gives an overview of Chamba history). The Kwanja, too, were pushed southward until some settled on the Tikar Plain where they eventually mixed with the Camba and Yeni. It is again not clear who came first; however, the most probable scenario is that they were all part of a general movement and arrived on the plain at more or less the same time. Meanwhile, the Mambila (Mvop) came down from the Mambila Plateau, and incorporated Ndeba, Njerep, and Liap villages situated at the bottom of the escarpment, but could not expand further into the Plain because of the Tikar who had become bigger and more centralized [Hurault 1988]. Pressure from the Fulɓe is cited by local informants to account for these changes. In any event, it appears that the factors that led to these movements also precipitated the decimation of the peoples involved, ultimately resulting in considerable inter-marriage and leaving their viability as linguistic groupings tenuous. Ethnic identity

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[3]The identification of proto-Tikar is itself controversial see Zeitlyn [1996], Mohammadou [1990; 1991], Fowler & Zeitlyn [1996].

has survived somewhat longer, but it too is clearly not as strong as it once was, as the Njerep and Luo now see themselves as Mambila (as do Ndeba and Liap), while the Camba and Yeni now to a large degree see themselves as Kwanja.

3. Linguistic Affiliation

Linguistic data on Njerep comes primarily from two village elders, Wajiri Bi (Bi was the Njerep headman; *wajiri* is a Fulfulde term for 'headman') and Mial. Materials gathered include a wordlist, a number of songs or snatches of songs, and sentence fragments. Other songs were also recorded by Bondjie, the Njerep *marenjo*[4], and Wum, a senior woman in Somié.

3.1. Background. The languages in the general area where Njerep is spoken belong to the Mambiloid group [Blench 1993; Connell 2000]. Mambila is the largest language in this group, with approximately 90,000 speakers, and is also the most internally diverse. It comprises two major dialect clusters (East and West Mambila), each containing a number of dialects. Within each cluster mutual intelligibility exits between some lects, but by no means all. Among the other languages in Mambiloid are Kwanja, Vute, Wawa, Somyev, Tep, Mvanip, and Mbongno. The Grassfields Bantu languages are spoken to the south of Mambiloid, with one of these, Yamba, in relatively recent times having expanded so that its speakers are now also found throughout much of the Mambiloid area. Both Mambiloid and Grassfields are generally accepted as being Bantoid. Fulfulde is widely used in the Mambiloid area as a lingua franca.

3.2. The Affiliation of Njerep. On the basis of the available data, Njerep appears to have been part of a cluster which included Cambap (the language of the Camba, still spoken by approximately 30 people), Kasabe, and Yeni (or Djeni). Both Kasabe and Yeni are now extinct, although we did manage to record a wordlist with Bogon, the last speaker of Kasabe, some several months before his death. Of Yeni, only a song survives to attest its former existence [Connell 1998]. The evidence presented below makes it clear that these languages were closely related to each other and to Mambila generally. They can best be considered part of, or closest to, the East Mambila cluster, but whether they constituted a cluster themselves within that grouping is indeterminant. A fourth language, Langa, which has a few hundred speakers, may also be a part of this grouping. Langa is considered part of East Mambila, more closely akin to Mambila lects located in the eastern region of the Mambila Plateau in Nigeria, such as those spoken at Kara, Titong and Kabri, than it is to Njerep and Cambap. Langa is spoken on the Adamawa Plateau near Djeni Mountain and more or less adjacent to the area in Nigeria where most of the East Mambila lects are located.

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[4] *Marenjo*, or *mayramjo*, is a Fulfulde term roughly translatable by 'princess'. In this context the *marenjo* is the female counterpart of the headmen—*wajiri*—mentioned above, who name new chiefs.

Table 1 Evidence for the linguistic affiliation of Njerep.

	head	eye	tongue	face
Njerep	*fə́lī*	*ŋgíē*	*líbā*	*ŋgíē*
Kasabe	*fə́lī*	*ŋgĩ̄*	*nĩmá*	—
Cambap	*ŋgə̄*	*ŋgə̄rĩn*	*nə̄mān*	*mbòm sī-ì*
Langa	*ŋgéĩ*	*ŋgə̄rē*	*nə́mān*	*mbòm*
Gelep	*wĩ:n*	*ndʒə̄rέ*	*nə̄mān*	*mbòm*
Karbap	*hōn*	*ndʒērē*	*nə̄mān*	*nǰīmə̄nī*
Ba	*fə̃̄*	*ndʒə̄lō*	*lέbā*	*ndʒə̄lō*
Sundani	*ŋgũ̂*	*ɲērì*	*nêm*	*mɔ́:dù*
Ndung	*ŋgã̂*	*ɲîn*	*némnə̀*	*gbèmsî*

	person	food	salt	yam
Njerep	*nɔ̀rɔ̀*	*já*	—	—
Kasabe	*nɔ̀r*	*já*	*tómō*	—
Cambap	*nɔ̀r*	*járáp*	*tōmó*	*tùà*
Langa	*nòr*	*járáp*	*tōmó*	*tùà*
Gelep	*nɔ̀r*	*jārāp*	*tōmó*	*tùà*
Karbap	*nòr*	*dʒĩ jā ŋgí*	*tó:m*	*tùà*
Ba	*nwàr*	*jāp*	*túɔ́m*	*tìὲ*
Sundani	*wìrà*	*jénbù*	*ndɔ́mù*	*mò:bù*
Ndung	*wɔ̀àr*	*jên*	*ndôm*	*mœ̃̄*

elbow	skin	navel	back	blood
tʃàkūdū	pàndā	kímbī	ŋgódʒēk	hwómí
wúlú mbáɰâ	pàndā	kíbí	kàmè	wómó
ŋgɔ̄nǝ̄ bē-ì	fàndā	kúmbūn	kàma	wámá
kēndū	fàndā	kímbǝ̄n	hàmù	wámì
kēndū		kǝ̄mbɔ́n	kàmù	wám
kēdē	fàdā	kǝbō´	ŋgādīgā	wámí
tʃàkōr	par	kíbî	ŋgɔ̀gɔ̀	hwɔ́m
ŋgònǝ̄	pàndá	tʃímì	dʒòmdínǝ̀	fámǝ̀
ŋgū´n bî	pà¯n jîr	tʃîm	kɔ̀ɰɔ̄	kfêm

calabash	dog	crab	bird	fowl
gbá	būndū	—	gálè	tʃōɾō
gbá	būndū	kámbá	nǝ̄nū	tʃɔndō
gbá	būndū	kámbá	nūnū	tʃɔndō
ʃɪɾɪ	búndú	hámbā	nūnū	tʃōndō
gbá	būndū	kāmbān	nūnū	tʃɔndɔ̄
gwá	bōdí	kābán	nūnūŋ	tʃōdō
ŋgàp	bōr	kāp	nōn	tʃūār
ndīkpéŋdɨ	dʒī`	kámbā	nònǝ̄	tʃúndè
sɔ̄`ɣ	dʒì	ká¯m	nù¯n	tʃî¯n

Njerep, Kasabe, and Cambap resemble East Mambila more closely than they do their immediate Mambila neighbour. The local variety of Mambila, part of the West Mambila cluster, is known generally as Ba. It is sometimes referred to as Mvop since, as discussed above, the Mvop are now dominant in the area. However, since Ba is the more widely used term, we use it here as the linguistic designation for the language of the Mvop.

Table 1 (preceding page) presents data representative of phonological and lexical correspondences. Data is included from Njerep, Cambap, Kasabe, and Langa, as well as from Ba, two other Mambila lects, Gelep (Titong) and Karbap (Kara), and two neighbouring Kwanja lects, Sundani and Ndung. In examining the comparative series, it should be recalled that both Njerep and Kasabe were presumably subject to influence from Mvop (and Ndeba), as that is the language now spoken by the Njerep and Luo, and that the Camba all speak primarily a variety of Kwanja; that language has had some influence on Cambap [Connell 1999].

It is apparent from the data in Table 1, first, that the two Kwanja lects, Sundani and Ndung, are distinct from the others; developments reflected, for example, in the initial consonants of 'navel', 'person', 'blood', and 'salt' establish this. Among the other languages (the Mambila set), there are a number of developments evident, though those seen for Ba are most striking. The vocalic developments reflected in 'person', 'salt', and 'fowl', and the change in morpheme structure, CVCV(C) > CVC (e.g., 'skin', 'dog', 'crab', and 'fowl'), in particular, set Ba apart. Njerep, on the other hand, shares characteristics with the remainder, viz. Kasabe, Cambap, Langa, Gelep, and Karbap. The languages which are geographically closest to Njerep (with the exception of Kasabe), Ba, Sundani, and Ndung, then, are not those which are its closest linguistic neighbours.

Not all the comparative series in Table 1 form complete cognate sets. Some show evidence of borrowings. The apparent ŋg – f correspondence seen for 'head' between Njerep and Kasabe, on one hand, and Cambap and Langa, on the other, is indicative of an influence from Ba on Njerep and Kasabe; the true situation is more likely reflected in 'eye', as there are other items which could be cited showing the same correspondence. Similarly, comparing 'eye' and 'face', we are inclined to conclude that the semantic extension of 'eye' to 'face' in Njerep is an influence of Ba. And, the form found for 'navel' in Kasabe can reasonably be assumed to be a borrowing from Ba, as can the form for 'tongue' in Njerep.

Others of the comparative series are indicative of lexical innovation. On the basis of this evidence, the two Kwanja lects are again established as separate (cf. 'elbow', 'yam', 'calabash', and 'dog'). Among forms for 'eye', those in Njerep, Kasabe, Cambap, and Langa constitute one set of cognates, while those in Gelep, Karbap, and Ba, form another. Both 'face' and 'back' group Camba, Langa, and Gelep; on the evidence of 'back' Kasabe is also included with this grouping. 'Calabash' groups all of these with the exception of Langa.

In short, the combined evidence of phonological developments and lexical innovation clearly demonstrates the greater proximity of Njerep to Kasabe and Cambap, and these three to Langa, Gelep, and Karbap, all East Mambila lects. It will be noted, though, that many of their shared similarities are apparent retentions; it is Ba that has, in many respects, innovated compared to the other Mambila lects.

It is therefore difficult to propose a subgrouping among the East Mambila lects on the basis of shared innovations. However, regardless of what subgrouping may be established, Njerep is obviously part of the Mambila cluster, and within this cluster is closer, linguistically, to those languages which are geographically more distant.

4. Structural characteristics of Njerep

4.1. Phonology. In presenting the phonetic and phonological (and other) characteristics of Njerep it will be borne in mind that all of our speakers have been thoroughly absorbed by Ba Mambila: Ba is their primary language and has been for quite some time. What we discuss, therefore, is Njerep in its terminal stage; we are not in a position to say a given characteristic represents Njerep as it was when it was a primary language; we do, however, include information pertaining to the possible influence of Ba. It should also be noted that a certain amount of variation—'inconsistency'—in pronunciation was observed, both across and within speakers. This is not unexpected in a language in its terminal stage, and indeed has been considered part of the contraction process [Dressler 1988; cf. Connell 1999]. Given these reservations, and the implicit possibility that there is no "fixed" phonemic system as is generally conceived, what we understand to be the phonemic inventory of Njerep as spoken by these two elders is presented in the tables below.

4.2. Consonants. Table 2 presents the consonant inventory of Njerep as determined by their occurrence in stem-initial position. A list of words exemplifying these consonants in initial position is given in (1). Noteworthy variation or other characteristics are included in the wordlist in Appendix 1.

4.2.1 A note on labialization. Other than the labialized velar nasals shown, there are a few consonants which may conceivably be considered labialized, such as /v/ in *vwàn* 'two', above, or /t/ in *tūā* 'speak'. These are few in our data, and although the consonant itself is indeed labialized in these cases, the alternative analyses, that they represent an underlying vowel sequence (only /ua/ and /uo/ occur in our data) or a sequence of semi-vowel—vowel are more plausible. In sup-

Table 2. Consonant inventory of Njerep.

	bilabial	labio-dental	alveolar	post-alveolar	velar	labial-velar
nasal	m		n	nj	ŋ	
prenasal	mb		nd	ndʒ	ŋg	ŋmgb
plosive	p b		t d		k g	kp gb
fricative		f v	s			
affricate				tʃ dʒ		
approx.			l	j		w

(1) Njerep consonants in initial position.

mā	'build, construct'	*tʃádá*	'monkey'
mbání	'breast'	*dʒárá*	'firewood'
pàndā	'skin'	*já*	'eat'
bǎ	'elder brother, sister'	*ɲàdà*	'give birth'
vwàn	'two'	*ŋgǎ*	'buy'
fā	'village'	*kàmɔ̀*	'chest'
nágá	'lick'	*gāā*	'tadpole'
ndágá	'bed'	*ŋʷɔ́bɔ́*	'steal'
tàbà	'earth, soil'	*ŋgʷɛ̀ní*	'frog'
dǎ	'sing'	*kpɔ́lɔ́k*	'tortoise (Ba)'
sámbá	'gourd rattle'	*ŋmgbà*	'chief'
lànè	'invite'	*gbá*	'calabash'
ɲàmā	'animal'	*wù*	2S[5]
ndʒēlē	'nail, claw'		

port of the latter we note also that the only other permissible vowel sequences are /ie/ and /ia/.

4.2.2. Intervocalic consonants. Most consonants occurring initially may also occur intervocalically in C2 position. Exceptions are the doubly articulated labial-velars and the prenasalized palatals. Only one consonant occurs intervocalically that does not also occur initially, that is [ɾ]. While it is tempting to analyze this consonant as an allophone of /d/, there are a few words, e.g., *tʃádá* 'monkey' which seem consistently to be pronounced with [d]. Seeing it as a variant of /l/ is also a possibility, as there are some words where this variation occurred, e.g., *tálí ~ tárí* 'stone'. Alternation between [l] and [n] has also been noted; however, in the large majority of words where /l/ occurs intervocalically, there is no variation.

4.2.3. Final consonants. The great majority of words in Njerep are vowel final. Among those few that do end with a consonant, the repertoire of consonants available is restricted to /m, n, ŋ, p, r, k/. The trilled [r] may be seen as a positional variant of any or all of /t, d, l/.

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[5] The following abbreviations are used in this paper:

assoc	associative	imp	imperative	1S	first person singular
asp	aspect	io	indirect object	2S	second person singular
C	consonant	loc	locative	3S	third person singular
cop	copula	neg	negative	1P	first person plural
dem	demonstrative	pl	plural	2P	second person plural
do	direct object	poss	possessive	3P	third person plural
fut	future	t/a	tense/aspect		

4.3. Vowels. Njerep appears to have had a seven vowel system /i, e, a, ə, u, o, ɔ/. Examples of the occurrence of these are given in (2).

(2) Njerep vowels

bīnī	'dance, song'	*búndú*	'dog'
bén	1P	*mbòtò*	'wine, beer'
bə́	2P	*bɔ́n*	3P
mbání	'breast'		

Among the speakers we worked with, there were a number of variations. First, in at least a few words, either [i] or [e] is realized; in all cases we consider these to be instances of /i/, as in [mí] ~ [mé] 'house'. In closed syllables, /i/ is centralized and lowered. Second, /e/ may be realized as [e] or [ɛ] in open syllables, while in closed syllables, [ɛ] occurs. Third, there may be some variation between /e/ and /a/. We observed this only across speakers, whereas other instances of variation occurred both across and within speakers. Four, /ə/ is realized within a range from high back unrounded [ɯ] to mid central [ə]. Our data is insufficient to determine any conditioning factors, other than that when following velars, [ɯ] is the usual realization. [ə] is also seen to alternate with [ɛ] in grammatical words, e.g., *né* ~ *nɔ́*, T/A marker, *mè* ~ *mə̀*, 1S. Finally, /u/ in closed syllables is somewhat lowered and centralized. In other cases, vowels in individual words are variable, perhaps as result of influence or borrowing from other languages known to our speakers. 'Fire' for example was given with three different pronunciations: *wú, wúɔ̄,* and *wā.* Figure 1 presents a vowel chart illustrating the variation as areas of overlap.

Figure 1. Vowel chart of Njerep.
   (NB: the chart is based on impressionistic, rather than instrumental observation.)
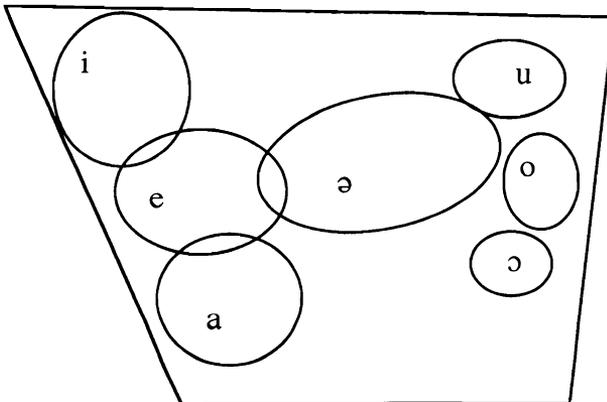
4.4. Tones. Njerep has three level tones, High, Mid, and Low. The three tone system is a feature shared with other East Mambila lects, including Cambap, while western dialects such as Ba have four tones. The level tones combined to give a number of contours. Minimal or near-minimal pairs are given in (3).

(3) Njerep tonal contrasts.

gbá	'calabash'	ŋgà	'crocodile'
gbā	'bad'	ŋgǎ	'buy'
ŋgbàŋ	'cave'	gāā	'tadpole'
ŋgbà	'chief'	jílí	'fufu'
tʃá	'day'	jīlá	'name'
tʃà	'hunger'		

Table 3. Examples of Njerep tones compared to tones of cognate words in Ba.
[Tone markings for Njerep are: H = ´, M = ⁻, L = `; for Ba, tones are numbered 1 to 4, high to low.]

Tone	Njerep	Ba	Gloss
High	hwómé	hwɔm1	'blood'
	tú	to21	'tree'
Mid	tʃōdō	tʃuar2	'fowl'
	būndū	bor2	'dog'
Low	ʃùnù	sòn4	'mouth'
	mènà	məna4	'neck'
High-Mid	hóbō	hɔbo21	'forest'
	ŋgírī	ŋgərə2	'tail'
	tʃádā	tʃar2	'monkey'
	jálē	ja2	'bush'
High–Low	ŋgábɔ̀	ŋgap24	'antelope'
Mid-High	jīlá	jɪlī21	'name'
Low–High	njàmɔ́	njam3	'animal'
	ŋgwèní	ŋgwə3	'frog'
	nòr lòbó	nuar4 lɔp3	'witch'

4.4.1. Tone melodies. Lexical items in Njerep can be classified according to tone melody, though not all possible combinations of the three tones are found. Interestingly, nouns have a preponderance of Hs, while verbs are skewed towards Ls. The complete absence of LM sequences may suggest M to be in fact a downstepped H. However, as other phenomena associated with downstep, such as terracing, seem not to be present, an analysis of M is preferred. Beyond this, we can only speculate that lexical tone melody interacted with grammatical tones in the verb phrase, as this is the case in other Mambila lects, including both Cambap and Ba.

(4) Basic tone melodies

Nouns:

Melody	H	M	L	HM	HL	MH	ML	LH	LM
Monosyllabic	10	6	8	5	0	0	0	3	0
Disyllabic	23	8	17	22	6	3	0	17	0

Verbs:

Melody	H	M	L	HM	HL	MH	ML	LH	LM
Monosyllabic	7	1	2	0	0	0	1	2	0
Disyllabic	4	6	12	7	5	0	0	6	0

With one exception (see below), singular pronouns all bear Low tone, plural pronouns take High. This follows the pattern found in Ba, but not in Cambap, so it may be reasonable to assume that tones of pronouns in Njerep have come under the influence of Ba.

4.4.2. Complex tone patterns. A number of words in our data occur with more complex tone melodies. Almost all of these involve a contour on the final syllable of the word, and all but two of these involve a contour falling to L. For nouns, the final L can in most cases be analyzed as a tonal morpheme indicative of a possessive or genitive relationship (see below).

Similarly, a number of disyllabic verbs also have more complex melodies, with a HL contour on the second of the two syllables. The final L in these cases also may well be a floating tonal morpheme, though its function is not clear. In both Ba and Cambap, a suffixed floating L marks nominalized or (infinitive) verb forms.

5. Morphology

The great majority of words in Njerep are disyllabic, CVCV. Among nouns there is a propensity to this structure, while verbs are evenly divided between CVCV and CV forms. Words of a CVC structure are rather few in number. Three main word classes appear in our data: nouns, verbs, and adjectives.

5.1. Nouns. Njerep nouns do not bear any particular morphological marking. In other Mambiloid languages one finds vestigial evidence of a former noun class system relatable to Bantu. However, in Njerep, except for the possibility that stem initial prenasalized consonants reflect a former class prefix, as well as certain other C1 reflexes, this vestigial evidence has disappeared.

5.1.1. Pluralization. Three different means of pluralization are recorded in our data, all of which find their parallels in other Mambiloid languages. These are shown in (5–7).

(5) *nòr   bè̀*
     person PL

(6) *gálè-m*
     bird-PL

(7) *bò-ŋwúnā*
     PL-child

The first of these, assuming Njerep matched a pattern found throughout the region, was a generalized means of marking plural. In some West Mambila and most East Mambila languages, as well as many other Mambiloid languages, a second system of pluralization exists which involves a number of suffixes [Connell 2000]; the plural marker in (6) seems related to this system. The plural marker in (5) is cognate with that in (7); the preposing is through the influence of Ba, which regularly marks plurals in this manner. In cases where other quantifiers were used (e.g., numerals, 'many') the plural marker was omitted.

5.1.2. Personal pronouns. With the exception of the third person singular, there was only one paradigm of personal pronouns. These are listed in (8). Comparative evidence across Mambiloid suggests strongly that *à*, as a 3S subject pronoun, is borrowed from Ba.

(8) Personal pronouns

mè̀ ~ mè̀	'I; me; my'
wù	'you; your'
à; mò	'he, she, it; him, her; his, her, its'
bén	'we, us, our'
bí ~ bè̀	'you, your' (*bí* from Ba)
bón	'they; them; their'

5.1.3. Adjectives. Seven adjectives are recorded in our data: *dʒīrí* 'black'; *tʃàrè* 'small'; *dòlò* 'large/wide'; *dè̀mè̀* 'big'; *lō* 'good'; *gbā* 'bad'; *sùnú* 'single'.

5.1.4. Verbs. Like nouns, verbs in Njerep were not marked morphologically in their base form. The only information we have concerning modification to base forms involves suffixation or tonal changes, as discussed below.

5.2. Associatives. Associative constructions assumed an order of X + Y + V̀: dependent + head, plus a suffix marking the grammatical relation. The suffix took different forms; either a vowel bearing a low tone (9, 10, 13) or simply the tone itself (11, 12). The latter is the marking used in Ba and may be seen as having been influenced by Ba. While the suffix vowel is in apparent partial harmony with the stem vowel, it is interesting to note that it is cases where the stem contains a back vowel that the suffix vowel is lost.

(9) *nòr jíb-ì*   'thief'
   man steal-ASSOC

(10) *bàlé bḕ-ì*   'hand (palm)'
    inside hand-ASSOC

(11) *dʒú wā-* `   'smoke'
    smoke fire-ASSOC

(12) *gē tʃōdō-* `   'egg'
    egg hen-ASSOC

The influence of Ba in associative constructions is also seen in lexical borrowing. In (13), the Njerep form for 'calabash', *gbá*, is replaced with the Ba form, *ŋgàb*, but the Njerep associative marker is retained.

(13) *tú ŋgàb-ɛ̀*   'calabash tree' (lit tree of calabash)
    tree calabash-ASSOC

5.3. Negation. Negation was indicated by suffixation; our sole example shows that the -V suffix replaced the final vowel of the CVCV stem and harmonized with the stem vowel: *gònè* 'like, want, accept' vs *gònò*.

(14) *mà̀ twá mɔ́ twá nòrè gòn-ò*
    1S speak 1S speak person like-NEG
    'I speak, I speak, people don't like/want it.'

6. Syntax

6.1. Word order. Like other Mambiloid languages, Njerep featured a basic word order of Subject–Verb–Object, demonstrated in (15–18) as well as other examples.

(15) *bə́ tɔ́lɛ̄ mé*
      2P enter house
      'You enter the house.'

(16) *bə́ dà bá bīnī*
      2P sing ASP song
      'You sing a song.'

(17) *mə̀ kə̀mâ mbílī*
      1S climb oil-palm tree
      'I climb the oil-palm.'

(18) *tā   ŋàdá mə̀*
      father bear 1S
      'Father gave birth to me.'

6.2. Noun phrase. Modifying elements in the noun phrase—numeral quantifiers, possessives, and attributives—typically followed the noun.

(19) *tònè   vwàn*
      elephant two
      'two elephants'

(20) *gbílé mə̀*
      wife 1S.POSS
      'my wife'

(21) *nòr   gbā*
      person bad
      'a bad person'

(22) *gbá   də̀mə̀*
      calabash big
      'a big calabash'

6.3. Verb phrase

6.3.1. Imperatives. The basic verb form appears to have occurred in imperative forms. There is no change in tone between indicative and imperative forms; given that other Mambiloid languages do mark imperatives tonally, we speculate that its absence in Njerep may be a recent development.

(23) *tɔ́lḕ   ŋmgbàŋ*
     enter (IMP) cave
     'Enter the cave!'

(24) *làné   nòr   bə̀*
     invite (IMP) person PL
     'Invite people!'

(25) *ŋá   mō   kúlū*
     give (IMP) 3S   stool
     'Give him the stool!'

(26) *dʒé bâ fā*
     go   ASP village
     'Go to the village!'

6.3.2. Order of Objects. Our data permit us only to say that direct objects preceded indirect objects.

(27) *ŋá mò   gbá   dəmə̀*
     give 3S.DO calabash.IO big
     'Give him a big calabash.'

(28) *ŋá mə̀   gbá   dəmə̀*
     give 1S.DO calabash.IO big
     'Give me a big calabash.'

6.3.3. Predicate attributives

(29) *nə̀r   ŋgŭ súnú*
     person COP alone
     'A single person.'

(30) *nyàmə́ nə́ kúkú*
     animal COP many
     'The animals are many.' (N.B. the absence of the plural marker in this case.)

(31) *à né lɔ̄*
     3S COP good
     'It is good.'

6.3.4. Tense – aspect marking. On the limited data available, it is difficult to offer a clear statement as to tense and aspect marking. As examples (32)–(37) show, at least one form of both past and present were unmarked. A number of grammatical particles existed, though, which appear to function either as copula or aspect markers (exx. 29–31, 38), and either alone or in connection with the future marker. No doubt others, for which we have no evidence, also existed.

6.3.4.1 Past. Past tense could be indicated unmarked, as in (32). The verb *gílī* 'finish' was used to form what may be considered a perfective, as in (33).

(32) *mə̀   ŋgǎ   gbá   nìmè*
      1S   buy   calabash   water
      'I bought the calabash (of) water.'

(33) *nòr   kú   gílī*
      person   die   finish
      'The person is dead.'

6.3.4.2 Present. Present tense could be indicated by an unmarked form (34–39).

(34) *mə̀   tɔ́lē̄   ŋmgbàŋ*
      1S   enter   cave
      'I enter the cave.'

(35) *mə̀   kə̀má   mbílī*
      1S   climb   oil-palm tree
      'I climb the oil-palm.'

(36) *à   twá   lélē̄*
      3S   speak   lie
      'He/she/it tells a lie'.

(37) *mə̀   tʃá   nō̄   ŋ̄ɲ̄î*
      1S   sleep   LOC   here
      'I sleep here.'

(38) *mə̀   mwá   mbòtò   mə̀   mbàmò   ŋènè*
      1S   drink   beer   1S   urinate   DEM
      'I drink beer, I urinate.'

(39) *bɔ́   mwā̄   mbòtò   bɔ́   sālé   táp*
      2P   drink   beer   2P   announce   war
      'You drink beer, you announce war'.

6.3.4.3. Grammatical particles. Three grammatical particles are in evidence in the Njerep data. Two of these, *né* and *ŋgǔ*, exemplified in (29–31), above, functioned as copulas and appear to have indicated a present state. The difference between them is not known. The third particle, *bá̃*, also seems to have functioned as a copula (40), but was also apparently used to indicate a change of state (41–42). In Ba, a similar particle has this function [Perrin n.d.], and this analysis fits the Njerep data. For Ba, Perrin describes it as a copula but often labels it as an aspect marker. Similarly, *né* also appears to have had an aspectual function, as shown below in (47).

(40) *tʃùà   bá   mə̀   ʃjā*
     hunger   COP   1S   seize
     'I am hungry.'

(41) *bɔ́ dà   bá   bīnī*
     2P sing   ASP   song
     'You (begin to) sing a song.'

(42) *mə̀ dʒé bá̂   mə̀ dʒé bá̂   mbà   mbāmò*
     1S go   ASP   1S go   ASP   urinate urine
     'I go, I go to urinate.'
     (In this sentence, repeating the initial part of the utterance was said to indicate seeking permission.)

6.3.4.4. Future. The future was regularly marked with *dʒè*, a form of the verb 'go/come', preceding the main verb, as in (43). 'Go' and 'come' were differentiated only by tone, the former having a high tone and the latter a low tone. In Ba, a similar tonal distinction is used more generally, with the addition of a low tone to any verb of motion rendering the meaning 'motion towards the speaker'. It is not known whether the tonal distinction in Njerep is due to a Ba influence; the Njerep words themselves are cognate with, but not borrowed from, Ba. This apart, one of our speakers varied the tone of *dʒe* when used to mark future; it is not clear whether this functioned to mark different types of future, or was simply variation of the sort discussed earlier in 4.1.

(43) *mə̀ dʒè   ŋgǎ gbá   nìmè*
     1S FUT   buy   calabash water
     'I will buy a calabash of water.'

Other examples of the future in our data show variations in word order, and have *dʒè* combining with an aspect marker. In (44), the future marker follows the main verb, and in (45–46), it combines with *bá̂* and follows the main verb. In (47), *dʒè né* immediately follows the subject, while the verb is clause final. We note here the parallel with Ba non-narrative, non-focus forms where the verb is also clause-final [Perrin n.d], though in Ba a high tone is suffixed to the postposed verb, while in Njerep (from the one example available) a low tone appears to be added. We assume the variation in word order between (43) on one hand, and (44-46) on the other, also has to do with discourse level considerations.

(44) *wù twá   dʒè lélē*
     2S speak FUT lie
     'You will tell a lie.'

(45) *nàsāɾā   jé dʒè bá̂   sēŋgē*
     European eat FUT ASP   palm nut
     'The European will eat the palmnut.'

(46) *bɔ́ ŋgòlē dʒè bá bīnī*
      2P dance FUT ASP dance
      'You are going to dance.'

(47) *nàsārā dʒè né mbílī kɜ̀mâ*
      European FUT ASP oil-palm tree climb
      'The European will climb the oil-palm.'

7. Conclusion

Populations move, merge, and separate in response to changing ecology, demography, and as part of political process. A dispute about succession can lead to schism [Kopytoff 1987]. Political ambition can lead to warfare and conquest. Local rivalry can lead to one group inviting a third party to help them against their competitors. Having won the battle they may then find they have became vassals in their own turn. Such processes make up (and have made up, over the *longue durée*) human history.

Over the last two hundred years the regional history of the Tikar plain in Cameroon has been dominated by the effects (mainly knock-on effects) of the Sokoto Jihad and the south-easterly spread of Islam. Consequent population movements and mergers have led some languages to flourish and others to disappear. One such language is Njerep, which we have documented here, albeit in a fragmentary fashion. This is all that remains of the language. Of its sister language, Kasabe (Luo), we know even less, and of Yeni barely a whisper. We can only speculate about the cultural variety that has also vanished but we take some consolation from the suggestion that it was ever thus.

APPENDICES

The appendices contain all available data for Njerep not included in the text. Since, in the case of terminal languages or last remaining speakers, semi-speakers or rememberers, the question of how well or how much an informant remembers of his or her language is of some interest, it is worth noting that standard elicitation techniques generally did not produce good results. This is in sharp contrast to the experience of, for example, Sawyer (as reported in Elmendorf 1981) working on Wappo and Yuki, both native American languages, where informants were able to recall details of their language, in one case after 60 years of non-use. In the present case, while many of the words in the following list were elicited without difficulty, others came only with the aid of a prompt. The singing of a song, for example, would often trigger the memory. Contrasting experiences such as these obviously may be due to a variety of factors, including individual abilities and an individual's relationship with his or her language; however, we believe the difference between our experience here and that of researchers such as Sawyer has much to do with the relation between the disappearing language and the replacing language, and provides some insight into the relation between language and culture. Exploration of such issues is beyond the scope of the present paper.

Appendix One: Njerep Wordlist

In the following wordlist, alternative transcriptions reflect different pronunciations from different speakers, or variation within one speaker. In such instances the most frequent pronunciation is given first.

Nouns
Body parts

fə́lī	'head'	tógō, tóō	'throat'
júlí fə̄lì; sùbé	'hair'	mbágā, mbāgā	'arm, hand'
ŋgíē̄; ŋgî	'eye'	tʃàkūdū	'elbow'
ɲúnū	'nose'	bàlé bēì	'hand (palm)'
ʃùnù	'mouth'	ɲə̄gə̄`	'finger'
ɲíēn, ɲíē̄	'tooth'	ndʒē̄lē̄	'nail, claw'
líbā	'tongue'	jòró; jǐ`r	'body'
wūlī	'chin'	pàndá, pàdá	'skin'
dílī	'beard'	kàmò	'chest'
wūlí	'jaw'	mbání	'breast (female)'
ŋgíē̄; ŋgî	'face'[cf. eye; from Ba]	ñ, lè	'belly'
kúnú	'forehead'	kímbī	'navel'
tíā, kíā, cíā	'ear'	ŋgódʒē̄k	'back'
mènà	'neck'	kí; tí	'buttocks'

gúlē̄; ŋgúi	'leg' [gúlē̄ from Ba]
fōlṑ	'thigh'
nólē̄	'knee'
gúlē̄	'foot'
kūā, kúlī	'bone'
ŋgòmè	'heart'
bìlè	'stomach'
tímí	'liver'
hwómé; hwómí	'blood'
dìrí	'saliva'
mbídí	'excrement'
mbāmɔ̀	'urine'
hōn	'voice'

Humans

nòr, nòrò, nòrè	'person'
nòr gí	'people'
nòr ʃíbì	'man'
gbúlí; gwúlí	'woman' [cf. 'wife']
ŋwúnū; ŋwúnā; muín tʃàrè	'child'
bò ŋwúnā	'children' (bò=PL; < Ba)
ʃíā; síā	'husband'
gbɔ́lé; gbɔ́né	'wife'
mǎ	'mother'
tá; tā	'father'
bǎ	'elder brother/sister, same sex'
tʃílɛ́	'elder brother/sister, opposite sex'
gí bī̀	'community, ethnic group'
tʃàŋɔ̂, tʃàŋgɔ̂	'ancestors' (cf. spirit, ghost)
gònò	'in-law'
kìnì	'guest, stranger'
ŋmgbà	'chief'

nòr lɔ́nə̀	'native doctor'
nòr ŋgāmə̄	'diviner'
nòr jíbì	'thief'
nòr lòbó	'witch'
kúmú	'corpse'
tʃàŋɔ̂	'ghost'

Foods and plants

ŋá	'food'
jílí	'fufu'
jílí ŋgìlí	'cocoyam fufu'
ŋgìlī	'cocoyam (generic)'
nìmə̀	'water'
mbòtò	'wine (general)'
mbòtò	'sorghum beer'
hóbō	'forest'
jálē̄	'bush'
ɲúdī	'grass (generic)'
gwī	'elephant grass' (*Pennisetum purpureum*)
tú	'tree'
mbɔ́lī	'oil palm' (*Elaeis guineensis*)
sāŋgā, sēŋgē	'palm kernel'
gbá	'gourd (generic)'
gbá	'calabash'
tú ŋgàbè	'calabash tree' (ŋgàb < Ba)

Animals

njàmɔ́	'animal (general)'
ŋgírī	'tail'
ŋgírī jā̀r	'buffalo tail' (jā̀r < Ba)
bódó, būndú, būndū; būdū	'dog'
mbíā, mbíâ	'goat'

sə̀r ŋgɔ́ŋ, sɔ̀r ŋgɔ́ŋ	'sheep'
nàgà	'cow, zebu' (Ba)
ŋgábɔ̀, ŋgàbɔ́	'antelope (generic)'
tʃádā, tʃádá, kádā	'monkey (generic)'
jàrɛ́	'buffalo, 'bushcow''
tònè	'elephant'
ŋgùì	'leopard'
kpɔ́lɔ́k	'tortoise' (Ba)
ŋgà:	'crocodile' (Ba)
sà	'snake (generic)'
ŋgwèní	'frog'
gàlé	'frog spawn'
gāā	'tadpole'
mátʃùk	'frog (sp, big)'
kùlà dʒīrí	'toad' (*dʒīrí* = 'black')
gálè; gálìm, gáɭìm	'bird' [-ìm forms are plurals]
bálè, báɭè	'wing'
ŋgwīlê	'feather'
gē, gē tʃōdò	'egg'
tʃōrō, tʃōdō	'fowl, chicken'

Living

fā	'village'
ŋgwòlɛ́	'field'
gɔ́dʒē	'farm'
ndúŋ	'granary'
mí; mím	'house'
kòŋ	'wall (interior room divider)'
kɔ́dʒɔ́; kúlū	'stool'
ndágá	'bed' (Ba)
sámbá	'gourd-rattle'
wú; wúɔ́, wā	'fire'
dʒárá	'firewood'

tú wā`	'ashes'
tʃá wūɔ̀	'charcoal'
dʒú wā`	'smoke'
táp	'war'
ŋgāmə̄	'divination (general)'
dʒū	'language'
jĩlá	'name'
bīnɛ̄	'song; music'
bīnī; bīndí	'dance'
ŋgə̀	'thing'

Nature

tàbè	'earth, soil'
tárí; tálí; tʃárà	'stone'
tòrò; tòrì	'hill, mountain'
ŋmgbâŋ	'cave'
nìmə̀	'river (= water)'
nìmə̀ dòlò	'river, large'
nŭ:	'rain (n.)'
lū	'sun'
wɔ́lí	'moon, month'
mbèní	'star'
tʃʲá; tʃá	'day'
tʃímbí	'night'; a proper name
bèndí; béndí	'illness'
tʃùà; tʃà	'hunger, famine'

Verbs

já	'eat'
jájâ	'chew'
mwá, ŋwá	'drink'
nə́mə́	'bite'
nágá	'lick'
mə̀dà	'swallow'
ndʒɔ́dɔ̄; ndʒɔ̄dɔ̄	'suck (e.g., breast)'
kūlū	'spit' (Ba)

mbà	'urinate'	dǎ	'sing'
ŋàdà	'give birth'	kā`	'look at'
dènà	'live (exist)'	ŋwɔ́nà	'see'
kúvá, kú	'die'	lànè	'invite'
gònè	'like, love'	ná	'cook'
tʃá	'sleep (v.)'	ŋgàdé	'roast'
tɔ́lē	'stand (up)'	gùò	'grind'
dənè	'sit (down)'	tʃō	'chop, cut' (from Ba?)
sátē	'sit with legs extended'	tūrū	'break (with a stone)' (< Ba?)
ŋálē	'sit with legs extended' (Ba?)	gātē	'tap with force' (Ba gērā 'tap sharply, with force')
tólē	'enter'		
dʒè	'come'	kámɔ́	'squeeze (orange)'
dʒé	'go out, exit, go (finally)'	mbàbâ	'carry (e.g., child at side)'
wé	'return, arrive'	núlū	'carry (e.g., on head)'
jùâ	'leave'	ɲìmá	'extinguish'
gólè	'walk'	ŋgǎ	'buy (general)'
dòlò	'run'	gùlù	'sell'
kəmê; kəmá	'climb'	mwɔ́bɔ́; ŋwɔ́bɔ́	'steal'
lèlèbâ	'jump, fly'	ŋá	'give'
ŋgòlí	'dance'	tébè	'throw (e.g., spear, stone)'
kùlâ	'wash, bathe'	wùlà	'kill'
jàgə	'wash (things)'	mā	'build (house)'
kəmâ	'touch (with hand)'	nō	'be (location)'
ʃùgə̂	'rub'		
bīēn	'greet (salute)'	**Adjectives**	
mònó	'think'	dʒīɾí	'black'
kélè	'know'	lɔ	'good'
jénè	'forget'	gbā	'bad'
gònè	'want'	dòlò	'wide, large'
tūā	'speak (a language)'	dəmə	'big'
bīēn	'ask (question)'	tʃàɾè	'small'
twáɾē	'reply (question)' (cf. speak)	sùnú	'single, alone'
		kùkú	'many' (< Ba?)
lélē	'lie'	tʃén	'one'
gílī; gíē	'finish' (gíē from Ba)	vwàn	'two'

Appendix Two: Song lyrics

Three songs were recorded with Bondjie at Njerep hamlet on 26-03-00 with the assistance of Ciebeh Daniel. They were translated on 1-04-00 with the assistance of Mial Nicodeme. It was not possible to find glosses for all lexical items; consequently, some are marked with "?" where the gloss should be. Others parts of the songs, typically at the beginning and end of phrases, are semantically empty. A free translation is given to the right of each phrase. These are tentative translations only, partly due to the uncertainty of glosses in certain instances, and missing glosses in others. For Bondjie's first song, especially, but for all of the songs to some extent, it is their nature that the phrases are not complete sentences, but rather fragments srung together to evoke a memory or mood. Words known to be loans from Ba-Mambila are marked with an asterisk.

1. Bondjie's first song. In response to a request to explain the meaning of this song, Bondjie embarked on a long recounting of Njerep history.

mm̀m̄ḿ ó-ó ŋgbālē é-hē
      ?
                                                    ???

      wóbē ŋgbālē mì āō m̄m̄m̄
        ?   ?   1S
                                                    ???

ə̀ jájá mə̀ tālé ə̀-ə̄
eat   1S   turn
                                      Eating, I turn around

m̀ jájá mə̀ *ŋālé   m̀-m̄
   eat   1S   sit, legs out
                          Eating, I sit with my legs extended

è-hè óbī ŋgbà mvòp é è-hē
    call chief Mvop
                                 The Mvop chief calls

m̀-m̄ wé   wé-ō   ə̄
     returning returning
                              Returning, returning

ə̀-hə̀ óbó mə̀ wé-ō wé-ōō hm̀
    call 1S return
                                 Call, I return

ə̀m hm̄ wé-ē   wé-ē   óó
      returning returning
                              Returning, returning

m̀ óbó ŋgbà mvòp ē-hē
   call chief Mvop
                                 The Mvop chief calls

m̀-ḿ télē mè ŋgí ō ə̄
    enter my eye
                                      I see him

ə̀m̄ jájá mə̀ tālé ē hm̄m̄
    eat   1S   turn
                                    Eating, I turn around

m̀ hm̄ tālé ē hm̄m̄
     turn
                                       Turn

ə̀-hə̄ óbó-ó ówó jè ò-ó
     call
                                       Call

hə̀ ŋálā mə̀ dʒé wòlé bâ hē
   ?   1S   go   field T/A?
                               I'm going to the farm

m̀m̀ ŋálā mə̀ dʒé kə̀mə́ bâ hē
   ?   1S   go   climb T/A?
                              I'm going to climb

m̀ hm̀ óbíé télē mə̀ ŋgíē hē
     call   enter I eye
                              Calling, I see

ə̀ ŋgbà mvòp télē mə̀ ŋgíē hə̄
  chief Mvop enter 1S eye
                            I see the Mvop chief

ə̀-hə̀ jájá mə̀ tālé ə̀-ə̄
     eat   1S   turn
                            Eating, I turn around

       jájá mə̀ hālé ə̀-ə̄
       eat   1S   regain
                            Eating, I'm satisfied

m̀ óbó já ŋgíē ō-hm̄
    call   eat eye
                              Call, eat, see

m̀ ŋgbà mvòp télē mə̀ ŋgíē-hē
  chief Mvop enter 1S eye
                            I see the Mvop chief

m̀-hm̄ dʒé kə̀mə́ nə́ dā-ā
     go   climb T/A? sing
                            Go, climb, sing

óó ōō jāā éé

2. Bondjie's second song.

We might call this song "The chief of Mvop eats sisongo". Sisongo is 'elephant grass'; the tender young inside shoots are eaten, but (at least for the Njerep) normally only during lean times. Palmnuts, on the other hand, are well liked, a treat. The song illustrates, on one level, the ambivalent nature of relations betwen the Njerep and the Mvop, and, on another level, the dilemma the Njerep faced, aware of being absobed by the Mvop.

"In times of famine the Mvop chief eats sisongo,
  but the Njere chief eats sweet palmnuts. Whose house shall I enter?"

tʃō   *jé   gwī-ē   m̄m̄m̄
chop   eat   sisongo

                                          Chop (cut) and eat sisongo

ŋgbà   mvòp   tʃō   *jé   gwī   ndʒɔ́p   ndʒɔ́p   é-jēé
chief   Mvop   chop   eat   sisongo   ?   ?

                                       The Mvop chief eats sisongo

ŋgbà   mvòp   há
chief   Mvop   ?

                                       The Mvop chief

ŋgbà   mvòp   tʃō   *jé   gwī   ndʒā   dʒín
chief   Mvop   chop   eat   sisongo   bitter

                                     The Mvop chief eats sisongo,
                                                 it's bitter

ŋgbà   njēré   tūrū   *jé   sāŋgā   ēè
chief   njere   break   eat   palmnut

                                       The Njerep chief breaks and
                                                 eats palmnuts

ŋgbà   njēré   gātē   *jé   sāŋgā   ndáŋ   lē   ndáŋ
chief   njere   tap   eat   palmnut   ?   ?

                                       The Njerep chif taps (breaks),
                                                 eats palmnuts

è-yē   ŋgbà   mvòp   ā
      chief   Mvop

                                       The Mvop chief

ŋgbà   mvòp   tʃō   *jé   gwī   ndʒā   dʒín
chief   Mvop   chop   eat   sisongo   ?   bitter

                                       The Mvop chief eats sisongo,
                                                 it's bitter

ó - ō - ó - ō - ó - óí   jēēē

mə̀   tōlē   dʒé   mí   njì   bá
1S   enter   FUT   house   where   Q

                                       Which house will I enter?

dʒē   mə̀   tɔ̄lē   dʒē   ní   bē-è-è
go   1S   enter   FUT   LOC?   ?

                                       Will I enter here?

mə̀   tōlē   dʒé   mí   njì   bá
1S   enter   FUT   house   where   Q

                                       Which house will I enter?

ŋgbà   mvòp   tʃō   *jé   gwī   ndʒā   dʒín
chief   Mvop   chop   eat   sisongo   ?   bitter

                                       The Mvop chief eats sisongo,
                                                 it's bitter

ŋgbà   njēré   gātē   *jé   sāŋgā   ndáŋ   lē   ndáŋ
chief   Njere   tap   eat   palmnut   ?   ?

                                       The Njerep chief taps (breaks),
                                                 eats palmnuts

3. Bondjie's third song. This song again had Bondjie embarking on stories of the past, particularly regarding the food people ate during hard times. In her explanation of the song, Bondjie talked, for example, of how they ate frogs and mice, though these words don't appear in the song.

m̀mí	m̀m̄	tɔ́lé	dé	mí	ē	nɔ̄n-ē	
		enter	?	house		Non-POSS	Enter Non's house

ə̀ɛ	mə̀	tɔ́lē	dʒé	*wā	ē	bì-ē
1S	enter	FUT	Q		Bi-POSS	Will I enter Bi's (house)?

é	mə̀	tɔ́lē	dʒé	*wā	ē	nɔ̄n-ē
1S	enter	FUT	Q		Non-POSS	Will I enter Non's (house)?

m̀-m̄-m̄	gbá	ŋgbá-ē	m̀-m̄
	calabash	chief(?)-POSS	The chief's calabash

ə̀ɔ́-éé	tá	mə̀	tɔ́lē	ə̀ɔ́
	?	1S	enter	I enter

ə̀ɔ̄-éé	já	mə̀	*gíē	nɔ̄n-ē
	eat	1S	finish	Non-POSS	I finish eating Non's

ə̀-m̄	*jé	gɔ̀nì	é	ə̀-m̄
	eat	want	I want to eat

ə̀	māì	já	mìnà	hòrò	gònò	bā	ə̀ɔ̄
		eat	?	trouble	want-NEG	T/A?	Eat, I don't want trouble

ə̀	jó	jájá	hòrò	gònò	bā	ə̀-ŋ̄
	?	eat	troubles	want-NEG	T/A?	Eat, I dont want trouble

é-è	sà	gùó	bá	bē	ŋgbè	ə̀-ə̄
	snake	?	COP	?	chief	The snake has come for the chief

m̀-m̄	mân	jábūó	bá	ŋgbōmà	m̀-m̄-m̄
	?	sound of shitting (ideo)	COP	?	???

m̀-m̄	*jé-ē	è-ē
	eat	Eat

è-è-ē	*jé-ēē	nāná	ə̀-īī
	eat	how?	Eat—how?

Mial's song. When asked why people had stopped speaking Njerep, Mial replied that the younger people used to laugh at them when they used it. The phrases in the song are repeated several times each and in random order.

ó-ō-ò nə́m nə́ bó nə́nə́ kwā gèbə̄ tʃén
? ? ? ? say? ? one

???say ? once

mə̀ twá mə̀ twâ nòr gònò-ō
1S speak 1S speak people like-NEG

I speak, people don't like it

wá-ō ŋwá mə̀ ŋwâ hòn gònò-ō
drink 1S drink voice like-NEG

I drink, my voice doesn't like it

wá-ō-ò já mə̀ já hòn gònò-ō
eat 1S eat voice like-NEG

I eat, my voice doesn't like it

Appendix Three: Njerep speakers

The census of Njerep, done in January of 1997 and February 1999, recorded 191 people living in the hamlet of Njerep and a further 10 in the tiny hamlet of Tor Luo. Only four people listed Njerep as a language used at home, and in no case was it the only language used; in fact, information gleaned from interviews conducted separately from the census suggested it is highly doubtful that the language is used at all any longer, except perhaps when a degree of secrecy or privacy is required, or for greetings and joking. In addition to these four, a fifth person indicated Njerep as a language she used outside the home (she is Njerep married to an Mvop). Other people of Njerep descent live in other *quartiers* of Somié, though only two are known to have any ability to speak the language. The fact that of the six people who know the language best, three are of the same family (they share the same father), suggests that the terminal stage of this language has been a protracted period.

name	sex	father	mother
Bi (b. ca 1922 – 1998)	M	Nguel	Semke
Djekegni Marthe (b. ca 1928)	F	Nguel	Nguouane
Nguea Abraham (b. ca 1939)	M	Vouhon	Mbeha
Bondjie Salamatou (b. ca 1940)	F	Nguel	Tchouboukeh
Mial Nicodeme (b. ca 1931)	M	Bong	Mbiyu Mbayor
Wum Margarite (b. ca 1933)	F	Kwom (Njerep)	Yako (Langa)

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PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

Bartens, Angela. *Ideophones and Sound Symbolism in Atlantic Creoles*. Helsinki: The Finnish Academy of Science and Letters. 2000. Pp. 198. ISBN 951-41-0864-7. Paper.

[From the back cover]: "This study deals with a specific type of expressive language, ideophones, the occurrence of which is areally determined. It aims at a prototype definition of ideophones in both the Atlantic creole la127ate languages. It is argued that the correspondences between African and creole ideophones are both functional and substantial. By consequence, the suggested etymologies may contribute to the debate on crteole genesis."

Contents are divided into four chapters. Following a brief introduction, the first chapter (pp. 11-12) provides a very brief overview of the treatment of ideophones in the literature. The second chapter—"Characterization of ideophones: Towards a cross-linguistic prototype" (pp. 13-43)—focuses on the various phonological, syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic properties of ideophones, concluding with a summary of ideophones in Atlantic creole languages. Chapter 3 (pp. 44-179), "The use of ideophones in the Atlantic Creoles and their tentative etymologies", constitutes the substantive body of the book. In this section, the author has divided ideophones into three types, discussing particulars of each. Chapter 4 is a paragraph summary of the work. There are two appendices, one listing the languages surveyed and the informants for each language, the other languages and language families and the numbers of ideophones occurring in them. The book includes an extensive reference section, but no index.

Diallo, Abdourahmane. *Grammaire descriptive du pular du Fuuta Jaloo (Guinée)*. Frankfurt/M., Bern, Brussels, New York, Vienna: Peter Lang GMBH. 2000. Pp. xix, 256. ISBN 3-631-34701-4. DM 89.00.

[Translated from the publisher's announcement]: The present work has as its goal to describe the Pulaar of Guinea as it is spoken in the Fuuta Jaloo region. It is motivated, on one hand, by a pedagogical concern to serve as support for the creation of teaching manuals, on the other hand, by an academic and scientific concern, offering to researchers a descriptive reference tool on this widely spoken language of which the morphological, phonological, prosodic, and syntactic characteristics have been only insufficiently described. The proce-dure followed is description and analysis of the facts, generalization from the facts, and explication of discrepancies. Priority is given to the regularity and systematicity of the rules of the language.

Maho, Jouni. *A Comparative Study of Bantu Noun Classes*. Göteborg, Sweden: Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis. 2000. Pp. xvi, 388. ISBN 91-7346-364-7. Paper, Swedish krone 200.

Maho sets out in Chapter 1 ("Theoretical preliminaries", pp. 1-17) the aims of his study and the comparative-typological method he follows, summarizing briefly the extensive literature on the subject of Bantu noun classes. In Chapter 2 ("The Bantu languages: an overview", pp.18-49), he discusses the issue of what constitutes a Bantu language. Chapters 3 ("Bantu noun class

systems", pp. 50-145) and 4 ("Selected distribution and coherence areas", pp. 146-242), which constitute the bulk of the text, describe the features of the noun class systems and the geographical distribution of several patterns across the Bantu domain. Chapter 5 ("Historical implications and speculations", pp. 243-270) addresses the issue of what noun classes and what noun class pairings existed in Proto-Bantu. The book concludes with Chapter 6 ("Summary, conclusions and comments", pp. 271-274), two supplementary sections, Section A ("Noun class data for Bantu languages", pp. 275-328) and Section B ("Explanatory notes to the maps", pp. 329-337), a Bibliography, and 2 indexes, one for personal names cited, the other for language names.

Musere, Jonathon. *Traditional African Names*. Lanham, Maryland, and London: The Scarecrow Press, Inc. 2000. Pp ix, 403. ISBN 0-8108-3643-2. Cloth, $65.00.

This book provides a listing of approximately 5,500 African names approximately 36 languages ranging along a central east African corridor in the vicinity of the Great Lakes, from southern Sudan to Zimbabwe. Entries include whether it is a male or female name, a guide to pronunciation of the name, the meaning, the source ethnic group (but not the language name), and a reference to the literature where relevant. References and an index are included.

Newman, Paul. *The Hausa Language*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. 2000. Pp 800. ISBN 0-300-08189-8. $80.00.

[From the publisher's announcement]: "This book is a comprehensive grammar of Hausa... Unlike other grammars, this book is organized alphabetically... The grammar covers such expected topics as tonology, noun plurals, and verbal tense/aspect as well as often neglected topics, including verbal idioms, proper names, and language games. Newman also incorporates historical linguistic notes that explain and explicate current Hausa phenomena, especially puzzling anomalies, in terms of their Chadic and Afroasiatic origins."

Schmaling, Constance. *Maganar hannu. Language of the Hands: A descriptive analysis of Hausa Sign Language*. Seedorf: Signum Verlag. 2000. Pp 295. ISBN 3-927731-70-6. DM 54,00.

[From the publisher's announcement]: "Hausa Sign Language (HSL) is the language used by deaf people in the Hausa-speaking areas of northern Nigeria. This book introduces the reader to the deaf community in Kano State and presents a description and analysis of the phonology, morphology, and lexicon of HSL as used in this area."

Webb, Vic and Kembo-Sure (eds.). *African Voices: An Introduction to the Languages and Linguistics of Africa*. Capetown, South Africa: Oxford University Press Southern Africa. 2000. Pp. xiv, 334. ISBN 0-19-5716817. Paper.

This book is directed towards undergraduates studying (African) linguistics. It addresses both topics of general linguistics (phonetics and phonology, the sturcture of the lexicon, semantics, discourse analysis) and of macro-sociolinguistics (social, political, educational). The text consists of twelve chapters. Each chapter includes, apart from the main text, a list of "Expected outcomes" (i.e., what a student should be able to do after studying the chapter), several sets of questions and/or tasks, and a bibliography. Chapter titles are as follows (Webb and Kembo-Sure are the authors unless otherwise noted): Ch. 1 "Language as a problem in Africa"; Ch. 2

"The languages of Africa" ; Ch. 3 "Linguistics: an overview"; Ch. 4 "Languages in contact (Nkonko M. Kamwangamalu); Ch. 5 "Languages in competition"; Ch. 6 "The sounds of Africa: their phonetic characteristics" (Herman Batibo); Ch. 7 "System in the sounds of Africa" (Herman Batibo); Ch. 8 "Building techniques in African languages" (D. Okoth Okombo); Ch. 9 "The lexicons of Africa" (Danie Prinsloo, Albina R. Chuwa, Elsabé Taljard); "Ch. 10 "Discourse: language in context" (Hilton Hubbard); Ch. 11 "Cross-cultural communication in Africa" (Oswald K. Ndoleriire); Ch. 12 "Language in education and language learning in Africa" (Jane Kembo). An appendix provides an overview of the language situation in different countries, listing the population, number of languages spoken, main languages, and official language(s). The book includes an extensive index.

UPCOMING MEETINGS
ON AFRICAN LANGUAGES/LINGUISTICS

2001

March 23-25
ANNUAL CONFERENCE ON AFRICAN LINGUISTICS (ACAL), 32ND. University of California, Berkeley, California. (Contact: ACAL32, Department of Linguistics, 1203 Dwinelle Hall, University of California, Berkeley, CA 084720; e-mail: ACAL32@uclink.berkeley.edu; website: http://linguistics.berkeley.edu/~acal 32/)

March 30-April 1
NORTH AMERICAN CONFERENCE ON AFROASIATIC LINGUISTICS (NACAL). Toronto, Canada. (Contact: Robin Thelwall, 2121 1st Avenue NW, Calgary, Alberta T2N 0B6, Canada; Tel.: 403 283 4494; Fax: 403 283 5584; e-mail: eubule@telusplanet.net

April 26-28
AFRICAN LANGUAGE TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION (ALTA) CONFERENCE, 5TH. University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin . (Contact: Karen Gleisner, Project Assistant, National African Language Resource Center, 4231 Humanities Building, 455 N. Park St., University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI 53705; Tel.: 608-265-7905; fax: 608-265-7904; e-mail: kbhartwig@facstaff.wisc.edu; website: http:// african.lss.wisc.edu/nalrc)

August 22-25
NILO-SAHARAN LINGUISTICS COLLOQUIUM, 8th. Hamburg University, Hamburg, Germany. (Contact: 8th NSLC, Institute of African and Ethiopian Studies, Rothenbaumchausee 67/69, Hamburg University, D-20148 Hamburg, Germany; Tel.: 0049-40/42838-4874; fax: 0049-40/42838-5675; e-mail: nilosah@ uni-hamburg.de)

August 27-29
COLLOQUIUM ON AFRICAN LANGUAGES AND LINGUISTICS, 31ST. Leiden, The Netherlands. (Contact: The Organizaer, CALL, Dept. of African Linguistics, Leiden University, P. O. Box 9515, 2300 RA Leiden, The Netherlands; e-mail: CALL@let.leidenuniv.nl; website: http://www.let.leidenuniv.nl/tca/atk/call.html