A grammar of Paleni (Samic/Gur family, Burkina Faso)

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1 Introduction

1.1 Languages of southwestern Burkina Faso

Southwestern Burkina Faso is linguistically rich, both in the number of languages and in their genetic and structural diversity. Some of the languages belong to the Mande family (Jalkunan, Bobo, Jula) and reflect expansion from the medieval Mande, Ghana, and Mali empires. Many of the other languages of the zone belong to the (central) Gur family, which extends in a mainly west-to-east band from the Mali-Burkina border area across and above northern Ghana, Togo, and Benin. Several additional languages of SW Burkina were formerly considered to be peripheral (noncentral) Gur, but are now provisionally classified as separate early branches of Niger-Congo and are sometimes loosely labeled as **ex-Gur**. This includes the Senufo family which extends south into northern Côte d'Ivoire, Tiefo (two languages), Toussian (three languages), Viemo (one language), and Samic (see below). There is finally one language, Siamou, which may constitute a very early Niger-Congo branch, but is currently provisionally classified as an isolate.

1.2 Paleni language and the Samic family

The Paleni language belongs to a three-language family that has been called Samic or Samu (Winkelmann 2007). The other two languages are Wara (aka Samwe), and Natioro (aka Samu). The names and codes in (1) are from Glottolog 5.2 viewed in June 2025. Wara is being studied by Skyelar Raiti, and Natioro by Vadim Dyachkov.

(1)

	ISO 639-3
Samu	
Samue	wbf
Palen	pln
Natioro	nti

The Samic group may be one of several genetic sisters of Central Gur, i.e. as part of Gur *sensu lato*, or part of ex-Gur if Gur *sensu stricto* is defined as the old Central Gur. However, the exact genetic place of Samic is not yet determined. In any event, it is generally accepted as part of Niger-Congo.

1.2.1 Names of the language

The ethnonyms for the community, its residents, and its language are in (2).

(2) a. pálà Faniagara village (Jula *farɲagara*)

b. pálà-nnè-nā person of Faniagara village (Paleni ethnicity)
pálá-bɛ̄-nī (irregular plural)

c. pálɛ̀-nì Paleni language

-nnè-nā in (2b-c) is a regular human singular suffix complex, found in ethnic terms like that and in agentive nominals. However, its usual plural is -sɛ̀ɛ̄-nī, as in sàmán-nè-nā 'Wara person', plural sàmán-sɛ̀ɛ̄-nī. There is no parallel for use of -nì in the language name.

The language name is written as "Palɛn" in Kleinewillinghöfer (2007).

1.2.2 Geography

1.2.2.1 Geographical distribution of the language

Paleni is spoken in one village, Faniagara (also spelled Farniagara). Wikipedia gives the coordinates as 10 37 north by 05 21 west. The location is just on the Burkina side of the mountains constituting the Burkina-Mali border.

1.2.2.2 Neighboring languages

The immediate neighboring villages speak Wara and Senufo. Some Paleni speakers also speak one or both of these other languages. Nowadays all adolescents and adults in the zone speak Jula (Dioula) as a second language.

1.2.3 Migration (ethnohistory)

Ethnohistorical accounts describe a local displacement from Dinaworo (10 km from the regional capital Sindou) in the Natioro-speaking zone to settle in Faniagara. This could explain some similarities linking Natioro and Paleni languages as opposed to Wara. No deeper migration stories have been recorded.

1.3 Environment and lifestyle

The inhabitable local environment is bounded by high mountains forming the Mali-Burkina border, and consists of a mosaic of montane slopes, plains, and forests with a few ponds. The people are primarily cultivators. Traditional crops (early 20th C.) were fonio (*Digitaria exilis*), African rice (*Oryza glaberrima*), groundnut (*Vigna subterranea*), and black cowpea (a cultivar of *Vigna unguiculata*). Fonio could be grown in spots in the mountains; the other crops were cultivated in fields in the plains. Later introductions were maize, pearl millet, and peanut.

1.4 Previous and contemporary study of Paleni

1.4.1 Previous work

Paleni was discovered for science by the Bayreuth/Berlin Gur project led by Gudrun Miehe. The project's main focus was documenting noun-class marking systems in Gur and ex-Gur languages (including Senufo). Ulrich Kleinewillinghöfer and Kerstin Winkelmann recorded field data in notebooks in 1992. The published result was Kleinewillinghöfer's chapter (2007) on Paleni ("Palɛn"). Winkelmann's chapter (2007) on comparative Samic reconstructed noun-class marking for Proto-Samic.

1.4.2 Fieldwork

The fieldwork for this grammar and related products was carried out by the author over several months in the period 2025-2026. This work was in tandem with fieldwork by American gap-year student Skyelar Raiti on the Wara language.

Previous projects in southwestern Burkina Faso (e.g. Tiefo, Jalkunan) had involved regular visits by the author to local villages. By 2024 it had become unsafe for white foreigners to travel to the remote border zone where Paleni and Wara are spoken. Project manager Minkailou Djiguiba, a Malian who had worked with the author continuously for twenty years in Mali and Burkina, traveled to the Wara- and Paleni-speaking villages several times. His mission was to help with the identification of named natural species, to record audio for later transcription, and to record video either of people speaking or of everyday activities (the latter for purposes of producing documentary-style videos). Audio and some video recordings were made in 2024 and again in 2026. He also recruited an elderly native speaker of Paleni, Traoré Adama of Faniagara, to come to Bobo Dioulasso to work in person with the author. The older man's thirty-year old son Boukari joined us for several weeks toward the end. The Paleni grammar, lexicon, and text transcriptions emerged from the author's work with these speakers, in several stretches in 2025 and 2026.

1.4.3 Funding

Primary funding for the Paleni and Wara fieldwork has been grant 1263150 (2025-2028), "From language documentation to interdisciplinary regional study", from NSF Dynamic Language Infrastructure - NEH Documenting Endangered Languages. I thank Program Officer Wilson de Lima Silva for invaluable assistance in getting this project going in a challenging environment.

As a followup to the Palen and Wara documentation, I plan to compile a comparative basic lexicon and (separately) a comparative flora-fauna lexicon, with data from a range of SW Burkina languages that I and colleagues have investigated in recent years.

1.4.4 Lexicon

A multi-page xlsx lexical spreadsheet has been completed simultaneously with this grammar. See Appendix 1 for details about the structure of the spreadsheet. The individual worksheets will be archived in csv format as related documents in the Zenodo (LDH) page for this grammar, and in Deep Blue Data. See Appendix 1 for a user's guide.

1.4.5 Audio files

The recordings made are catalogued in Appendix 2. A separate text collection will be published electronically along with this grammar.

2 Sketch

This chapter is an introductory overview of the grammar. All topics are covered in more depth and detail in the following chapters.

2.1 Phonology

2.1.1 Segmental phonology and orthography

Paleni has the typical seven-vowel system of the region: {i e ɛ a ɔ o u}, long and short. There are some nasalized vowels, long and short, but some phonetic nasalized vowels are analysable as oral vowels plus a nasal coda.

The consonantal inventory is also typical of the region in most respects. y represents the semivowel, j represents an affricate (or palatal stop), and r represents a tap. Other consonant symbols are IPA, including ɲ and ŋ. Labial velars consonants k͡p etc. are present but uncommon and are transcribed without ligatures as "kp", etc.

One unusual feature of Paleni is that medial intervocalic or postnasal stops often vary between voiced and unvoiced pronunciations. This is especially the case with velar stops in the position Cv_Cv, for which transcription is normalized as "k". Thus lāká 'go.Ipfv' is most often heard as [lāgá].

ɲ and ŋ do not occur stem-initially except due to hardening of semivowels after a nasal. Stem-initial ɲ in transcriptions always represents word-initial y or y^n hardened by a word-final nasal. Word-initial ŋu likewise always represents lexical wu hardened by a word-final nasal. Thus y^ná 'see.Pfv' in ń ɲá 'I saw', positive (y)ɛ̄ in X míɲ ɲɛ̄ 'in X' (clause-final), and wú-kó-nā 'house' in ŋ̄ ŋú-kó-nā 'my house'.

2.1.2 Tones and tonal diacritics

The languages of southwestern Burkina have either two or three basic tone levels. The three-level systems sometimes have two structurally distinct M-tones.

Paleni has three tone levels: H[igh], M[id], and L[ow]. There is no clear evidence in Paleni for two or more structurally distinct M tones.

Most syllables are level-toned, but there are some contour-toned <HL>, <LH>, <MH> and <LM> syllables. Syllables can be long or short. Many contour-toned syllables are long (bimoraic), either Cvv or CvL with a sonorant coda. However, Cv̀ and Cv̄ verbs may have Ipfv stems Cv̌ and Cv̄́, since the Ipfv stem always ends with an H-tone. Thus pà 'come.Pfv', but pǎ 'come.Ipfv', and kú 'die.Pfv' but kpā́ 'die.Ipfv'. The diacritic in kpā́ expresses <MH>.

Level tones on long vowels are represented with repeated tone diacritics, e.g. áá, āā, àà. Contour tones on long vowels are represented similarly, e.g. áà, àá, àā. Level tones on

vowel plus sonorant codas are usually marked on the vowels, e.g. áw, āw, àw. Contour-toned syllables with sonorant codas can be transcribed interchangeably as âw or as áẁ, etc.

2.1.3 Tonal ablaut

The term tonal ablaut is used here to describe grammatically (as opposed to phonologically) conditioned tone alternations in the same stem or other morpheme. It plays a significant role in Paleni morphotonology.

The major patterns are summarized in §3.6.2, and presented with full detail in the various morphology chapters. One important ablaut pattern is that Ipfv verb stems have final H-tone, thus fìkìmà 'shoo.Pfv' but fìkìmá 'shoo.Ipfv'. Imperative (Imprt) stems and verbal nouns also have their own tonal characteristics.

Nouns are generally tonally stable. In most cases the tones are constant from singular to plural of the same noun, though the suffixes are different. An interesting and systematic exception is M-toned fauna terms like fūū-mā-nā 'goat' and sūū-bā-nā 'horse'. The roots become H-toned in the plural, as in **fún**-sē-nī 'goats' and **súú**-sɛ̄-nī 'horses'. See Root-Tone Raising (§3.6.2.5).

2.1.4 Tone sandhi

Tone sandhi at word or stem boundaries is not well developed in Paleni. In particular, at word and morpheme boundaries there are no tonal assimilations (such as H-tone spreading processes), no tonal dissimilations, and no tone polarizations. However, word-final rising-toned syllables (<HL> and <HM>) are often flattened to L-tone before other words. Thus á kàā 'the thing' is often heard as [á kàà] clause-medially.

Similarly, there are some forms that are M-toned prepausally but L-toned when followed by another constituent. For example, the past marker is usually tɔ̀ medially but tɔ̄ prepausally (§10.7.3-4).

Diachronically, the tonal ablaut processes Final Tone-Raising (e.g., in possessors) and Initial Tone-Dropping (e.g., in possessums) may have originated as a kind of tone sandhi by which an H-tone jumped leftward from the second word to the first word. However, synchronically they are two separate processes.

2.1.5 Intonation

As with other tonal languages of the zone, intonational effects occur mainly at the end of prosodic phrases. In particular, the pitch of the final word remains high when the speaker has more to say, i.e. incompletion intonation. For some speakers in our recordings, the incompletion intonation was a final-syllable rising and partially falling pitch similar to <LHM> tone. For details and annotation, see §3.7.

Paleni also has some monosyllabic expressive adverbials, pronounced forcefully like interjections, including sáw! 'a lot, greatly'. Such forms are often added to already complete clauses; see §8.4.2.1 for details.

2.2 Verbal and clausal inflection

Verbs distinguish perfective (Pfv), imperfective (Ipfv), and imperative (Imprt) stems. The Pfv and Ipfv are almost always distinct, at least tonally.

The abbreviations Pfv, Ipfv, and Imprt are used for these word-level stem categories, whereas unabbreviated "perfective" etc. are used to describe clause-level constructions and categories.

Ipfv stems are often derived from Pfv stems by a tonal modification (e.g. Pfv H → Ipfv MH, Pfv L → Ipfv LH) with or without a segmental modification such as an additional syllable. Examples of Pfv/Ipfv pairings are wúmá/wūmá 'bite' and yà/yàárá 'ascend'. Imprt stems are usually identical to Pfv stems. However, if the Pfv stem is L-toned, some verbs have an HL-toned Imprt stem. Pfv/Ipfv/Imprt trios include yà/yàárá/yâ 'ascend' and sírí/sīsé/sírí 'grow up'. The usual citation form of verbs is just Pfv/Ipfv, e.g., yà/yàárá 'ascend'.

Unsubordinated indicative clauses have either positive (y)ɛ̄ or negative bɔ̀, but the two polarity markers can occur in different linear positions. Positive (y)ɛ̄ follows the main part of the clause including verbs, postverbal objects, postverbal adverbs, and PPs, but it precedes instrumental-comitative prepositional phrases, free postverbal nouns (including nominal predicates of copular clauses), and clausal complements (e.g., of 'know'). Negative bɔ̀ follows all of these. bɔ̀ can be followed by relative nā (resulting in wɔ̀ nā), and by clause-final emphatic dɛ̄ʔ.

Future clauses have a post-subject auxiliary wɛ́ɛ̀ followed by an imperfective VP, thus í wɛ́ɛ̀ yàárá 'they will ascend'. There is also a less common future with pá instead of wɛ́ɛ̀.

Past tense is not marked in simple indicative clauses denoting past events. Past-time marking occurs when the temporal reference point is shifted back from the time of speaking into the past (as in past imperfective 'was VPing'). In this case, past time reference is marked by a post-subject auxiliary such as bà or tɔ̀ ~ tɔ̄ (§10.7.3-6).

2.3 Constituent order

Subjects precede VPs. The relative order of verbs and objects depends on clause-level inflection. Imperfective indicative clauses have preverbal objects. Perfective indicative clauses, and deontics (e.g., imperatives) have postverbal objects. Thus 'hyena' precedes 'kill' in (3a) but follows it in (3b-c).

(3) a. ń sàntùŋkóó-nī līyé ē
1Sg **hyena**-Sg kill.Ipfv Pos
'I (often) kill a hyena.' (sov, imperfective)

b. ń líí sàntùŋkóó-n ī
1Sg kill.Pfv **hyena**-Sg Pos
'I caught a/the hyena.' (svo, perfective))

c. líí sàntùŋkóó-nā
kill.Imprt **hyena**-Sg
'Kill-2Sg a/the hyena!' (vo, imperative)

Pronominal subjects and objects occur in the same linear positions as full NP subjects and objects. For example, pronominal objects precede the verb in imperfective clauses, but follow the verb in perfective and imperative clauses.

2.4 Phrasal verbs

Paleni has many phrasal verbs. As with English (*beat X up*, *jump off*, etc.), a Paleni phrasal verb is a combination of an intransitive or transitive verb with a **pseudo-postposition** (psP). Also as in English, the verb and the psP are always adjacent for intransitive verbs. With transitive phrasal verbs, the psP is adjacent to the verb only in imperfective. When the psP is adjacent to the verb, the two are written as one hyphenated word. On the other hand, transitive perfective and imperative clauses have VO order, so the order is verb, then object, then psP.

Transitive phrasal verbs are cited as "Pfv X psP/X Ipfv-psP", where X is a variable over objects and the specific psP is shown. For intransitives, the citation formula is Pfv-psP/V.Ipfv-psP. Examples are intransitive pìsì-míní/pìsá-míní 'be ruined, malfunction' and transitive wúlá X míní/X wūlá-míní 'chop (meat)'. As these examples show, the psP has no effect on verbal morphology or tones.

Most psP's are identical in form to, and often at least vaguely related semantically to, genuine postpositions (§15.1.2). For example, míní is the basic locative postposition 'in' as well as occurring in some phrasal verbs. However, one important pseudo-postposition, ní 'down', is not attested as a true postposition (§15.1.2.7).

2.5 Nominal morphology

Paleni nouns have an active noun-class system, with many pairings of singular and plural **noun-class** (NC) suffixes. The typical form of a noun consists of a stem, a noun-class suffix, and a **final number suffix** (singular -nā, plural -nī in isolation pronunciations). For example, 'calabash' is sù-kā-nā (singular), sì-yē-nī (plural). The final suffixes are often reduced to a nasal consonant -n̄ which can then assimilate to a following consonant. Sometimes the final -n̄ is entirely omitted. Some but not all nouns omit both the NC suffix and the final suffix when followed by a modifier or compound final, but keep the NC suffix and final -n̄ in other contexts.

The noun classes are not involved in N-Adj or other morphological agreement. N-Adj agreement is instead based on number, and for singulars [±human]. These are also the categories (HSg, NHSg, Pl) of third-person pronouns.

2.6 Noun phrase (NP)

Possessors precede possessums without an overt genitive marker. Tonal processes apply to some possessors (Final Tone-Raising), and to some possessums (Initial Tone-Dropping). For example, sūū-bā-nā 'horse' combines with kú-nā 'head' as sūū-**bá**-ŋ̄ **kù**-nā 'the horse's head'.

Modifiers other than possessors follow the noun. The regular order is Poss-N-Adj-Num-'all'-Dem (§6.1.1).

2.7 Case-marking and PPs

There is no structural case-marking for full NPs, distinguishing subjects from objects. Some pronouns have distinct tonal and/or segmental forms as subject, preverbal object, and postverbal object. For example, 2Sg is bé/bè/bɛ̄ as subject (bɛ́ perfective, bɛ̀ imperfective, bɛ̄ imperative), bé as preverbal object (imperfective clauses), bè as postverbal object, and bé as possessor or postpositional complement. Nouns that are subject to Final Tone-Raising have the raised tonal form as imperfective subjects, imperfective objects (preverbal), possessors, and as complements of some postpositions. This distinguishes imperfective subjects from (unraised) perfective subjects, but it cannot be described as true case-marking.

2.8 Relative clauses

The head noun is optionally fronted to clause-initial position if not already clause-initial (as subject). The final number suffix of the head noun is usually shortened or elided, and the noun is then followed by relative head-marker fáá (singular) or tɔ́ɔ́ ~ tɛ́ɛ́ (plural). This is the head-noun phrase. The end of the relative clause proper is marked by relative nā, which also occurs in 'when/as' background clauses.

In subject relatives, the head is already in subject position in the clause, and it is immediately followed by a VP in regular main-clause form.

(4) [písàá-ŋ̄ fáá] sù nā
[child-Sg RelSg] run.Pfv Rel
'the child who ran'

In nonsubject relatives, the head (including singular fáá or plural tɔ́ɔ́ ~ tɛ́ɛ́) either remains *in situ* or is fronted. In the latter case, the relative clause proper begins with complementizer fá (~ fɔ́) and contains a resumptive pronominal. This option is more common. The focalized clause may be perfective or imperfective.

(5) a. ŋ́ kà [námá-sá-ŋ̄ fáá] nā
1Sg devour.Pfv [meat-Sg-Sg RelSg] Rel
'the meat that I ate'

b. [námá-sá-ŋ̄ fáá] [fá ŋ́ kà á nā]
[meat-Sg-Sg RelSg] [**Comp** 1Sg devour.Pfv 3NHSg Rel]
[= (a)]

2.9 Multi-verb constructions

'Go' and 'come' can occur be followed either by an adjoined subjectless imperfective VP or by a sequential fá clause (see below). There are several variants of the 'go/come and VP' construction (chapter 15). 'Go' is láá/lāká as simple verb, but is replaced by t-initial forms like Pfv tā in multi-verb constructions (§15.1.3). Both 'go' and 'come' can be doubled in multi-verb constructions, e.g., "X went [and went] [and VPed]."

2.10 Interclausal syntax

In perfective contexts as in narratives, event sequences are often phrased with an initial regular perfective main clause, followed by one or more **sequential clauses**. Such clauses begin with the same complementizer fá that occurs in object focalization (5b), then a subject (usually just a pronominal coindexed with the preceding subject), then a perfective VP including a Pfv verb.

(6) fí= í sèlè yá
Comp 3Pl skin(v).Pfv 3NHSg
'(then) they skinned it' (2024_05 @ 00:49)

Another important construction begins with the same complementizer fá, but adds **short subjunctive** ŋ (underspecified nasal) between the subject and the verb, which takes the Imprt stem. Pronominal subjects take M-toned forms, as in imperatives and hortatives (7a). For 1Pl, 2Pl, and 2Sg subjects, ŋ̄ is omitted, so only the Imprt verb and the M-tone of the pronominal distinguish short subjunctive clauses (7b) from sequential clauses. Short subjunctive clauses with fá often function as the equivalent of sequential clauses, but following an imperfective or imperative clause rather than a perfective clause. Short subjunctive clauses are common in descriptions of habitual, past habitual, future, and commanded practices.

(7) a. fɛ̃= ɛ̄ n̄ nwî= í [è kīlāni]
Comp 3HSg Sbjn give.Imprt 3Pl [3MSg Dat]
'and he would give them to him.' (2024_04 @ 01:56)

b. fá tī kà yɛ̀
Comp 1PlImprt devour.Imprt 3HSg
'and we will devour him' (2024_05 @ 02:51)

Without fá, short subjunctive clauses function as quoted imperatives (jussives).

There is also a distinct **long subjunctive** morpheme bā ~ mā that occurs in some complements, for example with 'want [to VP]' or 'want [X to VP]', without complementizer fá (except in 'before' clauses).

3 Phonology

3.1 Internal phonological structure of stems and words

3.1.1 Syllables

Monosyllabic verb stems and particles are nearly always of the syllable types Cv, Cvv (long vowel), Cv^{n}, and Cvv^{n}. Variations on the onset C are discussed below.

(8)	a.	Cv	nì	‘drink.Pfv’
			pà	‘come.Pfv’
			lɔ̄	dative postposition
			-nā-	singular noun-class (NC) suffix
	b.	Cvv	lɑ́ɑ́	‘go.Pfv’
			fɪ̃ɪ́	‘find.Pfv’
			-sɛ̀ɛ̄-	plural noun-class (NC) suffix
	c.	Cv^{n}	má^{n}	‘laugh.Pfv’
			ká^{n}	‘pick (fruit).Pfv’
			tó^{n}	reciprocal
	d.	Cvv^{n}	jɛ̀ɛ́^{n}	‘form a group.Pfv’
			fɔ̃ɔ́^{n}	‘discard.Pfv’

Monosyllabic noun roots are of the same shapes, but generally occur with suffixes.

The nasal ending in Cv^{n} and Cvv^{n} is pronounced as vocalic nasalization in isolation and in other prepausal positions. When followed by consonants, the nasalization in v^{n} turns out to be a nasal coda in most but not all cases. A nasal coda assimilates to the position of the consonant (9). For more detail see §3.2.1.3.

(9)	a.	/má^{n} bɔ̀/	→	mám bɔ̀	‘did not laugh’
	b.	/síyɔ́^{n}-kà-nā/	→	síyɔ́ŋ-kà-nā	‘taboo’
	c.	/yí^{n}-tɑ́ɑ́-nā/	→	yín-tɑ́ɑ́-nā	‘tooth’

Most verb stems whose Pfv and Imprt stems have a nasal ending harden it into alveolar n (nn for monosyllabics) in the Ipfv stem when vowel á is added to the right edge. The n is doubled to nn in Ipfv stems when the nasalization is that of a nasal coda (10b), as is the case with most verbs whose Pfv ends in a nasalized vowel (§3.2.1.3). Thus (10a) and (10b) are regular for nonmonosyllabic and monosyllabic verbs, respectively. Three known verb stems have má (always ungeminated) instead of (n)ná in the Ipfv (10c).

(10)		Pfv	Ipfv	gloss
	a.	kùlàⁿ	kùlàná	‘lock (v)’
	b.	cɛ̀ⁿ	cɛ̀nná	‘winnow by lifting’
	c.	yɔ̀rɔ̀ⁿ	yɔ́rɔ́má	‘sleep (v)’
		yàⁿ	yàmá	‘do, make’
		fúrúⁿ	fúúmá	‘urinate’

Bisyllabic and longer stems contain the same types of syllables, except that initial syllables with a nasal ending have undergone the assimilations indicated.

The onset C position is usually filled by a single consonant. A few high-frequency pronouns and other grammatical morphemes consist of just a vowel (11a), or have allomorphs of that shape (11b).

(11)			
	a.	á	3NHSg pronoun (‘it’), in a few contexts yá
		í	3Pl pronoun
	b.	ɛ̄ ~ yɛ̄	positive
		ɛ̀ ~ yɛ̀	3HSg pronoun (‘he or she’)

Lexical stems that begin with vowels are rare. There are no vowel-initial verb stems. One set of about ten nouns, mostly denoting times of day and seasons or the year, begin with a compound initial á- (12a). Only a few other vowel-initial nouns are known (12b-d). None of these nouns readily takes a possessor for semantic reasons. When a 1Sg mîⁿ possessor or subject is added, one option is to insert a glottal stop before the vowel (12a-b,e). Another option is liaison with 1Sg míŋ̀ before an ŋ-initial form of the stem (12a,d). A third option is seen in (12c), with the stem-initial short i elided.

(12)				
	a.	á-sànán-á-nā	‘morning’	mîⁿ ʔá-sànán-á-nā ~ míŋ ŋá-sànán-á-nā
	b.	àcɛ̀kɛ́ɛ́-nā-nā	‘attiéké (food)’	mîⁿ ʔàcɛ̀kɛ́ɛ́-nā-nā
	c.	ìnsè-fíí-ná-nā	‘measles’	míǹ sè-fíí-nā
	d.	ìsìíŋ-kàsā-nā	‘skin sores’	míŋ̀ ŋìsìíŋ-kàsā-nā
	e.	ùŋmɔ̀	‘wake up.Pfv’	mîⁿ ʔùŋmɔ̀

Some nouns have an extra initial nasal at the left edge, homorganic to the onset consonant. The nasal is partially syllabic in postpausal position, and forms a syllabic coda when preceded by a vowel (13). See §3.2.2.1.1 below for details.

(13)

ɲ̀jɔ́fàá-ná-nā	‘pocket’
ŋ̀gbɛ́sɛ̀ɛ́-ná-nā	‘chewstick’
ŋ̀kɔ̄lɔ̄ŋ-cìŋkáá-nā	‘gizzard’
ǹtɔ̀kpā-nā-nā	‘dance of champion farmers’
m̀bàràntáà-nā-nā	‘banana’

For rare obstruent-semivowel onset clusters like sw, see §3.2.2.1.2 below.

3.1.2 Word-internal metrical structure

Paleni does not have a discernible stress system. However, there are hints of a subtle prosodic organization into CvCv and Cvv units starting at the left edge of stems. The effect is that CvCv and Cvv are unbroken units, while CvvCv and CvCvCv have internal breaks. Oddly, the evidence for this seems to point in opposite directions, with the Cv_v position favoring lenition in one context and fortition (gemination) in another.

Cv_v is favorable to voiced stops varying with voiceless unaspirated stops, while Cvv_v and CvCv_v are favorable to unvoiced aspirated stops. This appears to be systematic for velar stops, and a tendency for other obstruents (§3.2.1.1.1). In this case, Cv_v is a weakening position for consonants.

In verbs, the (n)n reflecting hardening of stem-final nasal coda N before a vowel is heard as geminated nn after monosyllabic Cv^{n} stems, but as simple n after longer stems (including Cvv^{n} and CvCv^{n}) (§3.4.1.7). Thus Cv^{n} becomes Ipfv Cvnná, while CvCv^{n} becomes CvCvná and Cvv^{n} becomes Cvvná. In this case, Cv_v is a strengthening position for consonants.

3.1.3 Grammatical reduplication/iteration limited

Many noun stems have an inherent reduplicative appearance, like the root in kààkàà-nā-nā ‘solifuge’, but they are not created by productive lexical processes (§4.1.4).

Iteration of an entire verb stem, with or without enclitics, is a narrative device to mark prolongation or intensification (§9.5).

3.2 Consonants

3.2.1 Inventory of consonant phonemes

Positions shown in (14) are labial (a), alveolar (b), palatoalveolar (c), velar (d), labial velar (e), and laryngeal (f). Among obstruents (stops and fricatives), voicing is distinctive initially, but less clearly so medially. Velar nasal ŋ is absent in bare form (word-initial or intervocalic) but occurs in homorganic clusters like ŋk. Labial velars {kp gb ŋm} are transcribed without ligatures except in narrow phonetic transcriptions, but function as unit phonemes. Other manner classes are liquids (one lateral and one rhotic) plus oral and nasalized semivowels. h occurs in a few loanwords like lááhárá ‘afterworld’. Glottal stop ʔ does not occur in ordinary lexical stems, but is part of clause-final emphatic dɛ̄ʔ.

(14)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
a.	p	b	m	f	(v)			w	w^n	
b.	t	(d)	n	s	(z)	l	r			
c.	c	(j)	ɲ					y	y^n	
d.	k	(g)	(ŋ)							
e.	kp	(gb)	(ŋm)							
f.										(ʔ), (h)

For consonant clusters see §3.2.2. Initial homorganic nasal-obstruent clusters like mb and ŋkp are common in nouns but not other stem classes, so they are not treated here as unit phonemes.

Vowel-initial words, i.e., with the initial C-position empty, are tolerated though few in number, e.g., á-sàná ‘morning’.

3.2.1.1 Voiced versus voiceless obstruents

There is only a partial phonemic distinction between voiced {b d j g gb} and voiceless {p t c k kp}, and between voiced {v z} and voiceless {f s}. The orthography used here shows “voiceless” symbols for obstruents in medial positions where voiced and voiceless do not contrast, namely for k in Cv_Cv. The details depend on position within stems/morphemes: initial, intervocalic, and postnasal. There are some differences based on point of articulation.

3.2.1.1.1 Voiced versus voiceless stops

Initial, medial intervocalic, and postnasal positions are discussed here in that order. The basic result is that labial b and p are well-distinguished, but that velar g and k are very weakly distinguished. For others (d and t, j and c, gb and kp) data are limited but appear to show that voicing is weakly distinguished. The following data are from the older speaker. The younger speaker tends to generalize voiced pronunciation especially in nasal-stop clusters.

Word- and stem-initially, b has a somewhat broader distribution than p, and b predominates in grammatical morphemes. For non-labial points of articulation, voiceless stops far outnumber voiced where the two contrast at all. Phonemic {d g gb} are essentially limited to cultural vocabulary, i.e., a small number of nouns that are clear or suspected borrowings. Phonemic j (palatoalveolar stop) is only slightly more common. Initial voiceless stops are rather fortis and aspirated.

(15)

voiceless		voiced	
labial (b and p common)			
pà	‘come.Pfv’	bɛ́	2Sg pronoun
písàá-nā	‘child’	bèlè	‘fix, repair.Pfv’

píí	‘ask.Pfv’	bāā-nā	‘leg, foot’
		bà	subjunctive

alveolar (t common; d rare)

tàmbàā-nā	‘granary’	dàŋáà-nā-nā	‘bronze, copper’
tò-ní	‘sit.Pfv’	dúríŋáá-nā-nā	‘world of the living’
tɛ̀ ~ tàⁿ	‘with; and’		
tū	‘inside’		

palatoalveolar (c fairly common; j fairly rare)

cá-nā	‘woman’	jɔ́ɔ́-nā-nā	‘slave’
còmíⁿ	‘rip (sth) off.Pfv’	jɛ̀ɛ́ⁿ	‘form a group’
cûⁿ	‘a little’		

velar (k common, g very rare; see discussion below)

kílā-nā	‘arm’	gùlùkpàŋkáá-nā	‘ostrich’
káká	‘become open.Pfv’		
kó	‘atop’		
kīlānī	dative		

velar labial (kp fairly common, gb very rare)

kpésé	‘discuss.Pfv’	gbáà-nā-nā	‘okra’
kpán-nā-nā	‘shed, stall’		
kpírí	‘beside’		

For stem-medial intervocalic position, it is useful to distinguish the metrical status of #Cv_v on the one hand from that of #Cvv_Cv and #CvCv_Cv on the other, cf. §3.1.2 above. # here represents a stem or word boundary. The situation is clearest for velar stops. They are heard as [g] or less often as unaspirated [k] in #Cv_v. By contrast, they are heard as aspirated [kʰ] in #Cvv_Cv and #CvCv_Cv, as well as at the beginning of suffixes and compound finals. In other words, medial [g] and [kʰ] are allophones of a single phoneme, transcribed “k”. When aspirated [kʰ] is heard in the #Cv_v position normally favoring [g], it is elongated and is analysed here as a geminate kk (only one known example, 16e).

(16) a. voiced [g] or unaspirated [k] in #Cv_v…

báká	[bá**g**á]	‘get tired’
fúkɔ̀-nā-nā	[fú**g**ɔ̀nānā]	‘lightweight metal’
sìkɛ̄	[sìgɛ̄]	‘thus’
túkú-rē-nī	[tú**g**úrēnī]	‘yams’
tīkī	[tī**g**ī]	‘follow’
tɛ́kì-[sīī-kɛ̄-nā]	[tɛ́**g**ìsī:kɛ̄nā]	‘teak tree’

b. voiceless [kʰ] in #Cvv_v… and #CvCv_v

káákù-nā	[kʰá:**kʰ**ùnā]	‘iron’
bóókù-nā	[bó:**kʰ**ùnā]	‘wahrindi (catfish)’
kúrúkún-nā-nā	[kʰúrú**kʰ**ún:ánā]	‘group, herd’

cólókó-ná-nā	[ʧʰólók**ʰ**ónánā]	‘health’
yórókú-ká-nā	[jóɾók**ⁿ**úkʰánā]	‘testicle’

c. beginning of NC suffix

kɛ́ré-kà-nā	[kʰɛ́ɾɛ́k**ʰ**ànā]	‘rifle’
kɛ́ré-kì-nī	[kʰɛ́ɾɛ́k**ʰ**ìnī]	‘rifles’
sīī-kē-nā	[sī:k**ʰ**ēnā]	‘tree’

d. beginning of compound final

bɛ́mbɛ́-kù-kā-nā	[bɛ́mbɛ́k**ʰ**ùkʰānā]	‘chin bone’

e. exceptional geminated [kʰ:] #Cv_v… (only known example of kk)

tákkâr-nā-nā	[tʰák**ʰ:**âɾnānā]	‘matches’

There are fewer examples of medial stops from nonvelar positions. #Cv_v does seem to favor voiced (or unaspirated unvoiced) stop phones. Voiceless aspirated stops in this position are often prolonged and can be analysed as geminates (17).

(17) a.

káccàràkàā-nā	‘tree sp. (*Gardenia*)’
kàccì-yīŋkɔ̄rɔ̄-kɔ̄ɔ̄-nā	‘whirlygig beetle’
nícc-ē-nī	‘lower backs (plural)’

b.

bóttólò-nā-nā	‘bottle’
kùttòō-nā	‘leopard’

c.

bāppà-nā	‘stiffness in leg’
[sí-bé]-kàppà-nā	‘father’s elder brother’

Voiced and voiceless stops can contrast in #Cv_v for coronal (alveolar, palatoalveolar) positions (18a-b), even factoring out the geminates, though data are sparse. The few examples with labial velar stops in this position are voiceless (18c). Analysis is complicated by the possibility of prosodically relevant internal boundaries throughout, and by possible reduplicative effects in the first two items in (18b).

(18) a. medial voiced stop

jàbá-ɲɛ̄-nī	[ʤà**b**áɲɛ̄nī]	‘onions’
fājírì-nā-nā	[fā**ʤ**írìnānā]	‘dawn prayer’ (< Arabic)
fàdéè-nā-nā	[fà**d**éènānā]	‘clanmate’

b. medial voiceless stop

pìpì-nā-nā	[pʰì**p**ʰìnānā]	‘heat, hot weather’
tītɛ́è-nā-nā	[tʰī**t**ʰɛ́ènānā]	‘wooden eating bowl’
bɔ̀tɛ̄ɛ̄-nā-nā	[bɔ̀**t**ʰɛ̄ɛ̄:nānā]	‘sack’

c. medial velar labial kp

lɔ́**kp**à-nā	[lɔ́k͡pʰànā]	‘a market-cycle day’
wɔ́**kp**ìsá-nā	[wɔ́k͡pʰìsánā]	‘thorn’

Stops in the preceding examples are unclustered. The most common cluster type is nasal-stop, which can occur stem-initially or intervocalically within the stem. Here the issue is whether stop voicing is distinguished in nasal-stop clusters. (19) presents labial mb and mp clusters. The medial mb clusters sometimes assimilate to mm, and other stable mm examples like wú**mm**áá-nā ‘mortar’ may once have had *mb. However, there is sufficient evidence to conclude that mb and mp are synchronically distinguishable. Transcriptions are valid for the older speaker, but the younger speaker tends to voice the postnasal stops.

(19)

mb		mp	
a. initial			
m̀bàràntáá-nā-nā	‘banana’	**m̀p**ààsîi-nā-nā	‘couscous’
		m̀pâr-nā-nā	‘chat (n.)’
		m̀pèséè-nā-nā	‘machete blade’
		m̀pèlèmàā-ná	‘gecko’
		m̀pètúú-nā-nā	‘dragonfly’
		m̀póò-nā-nā	‘ant-lion larva’
b. medial			
bá**mb**áá-nā	‘courtyard’	bù**mp**úúlóó-nā	‘large heap’
bà**mb**àŋc-ɛ̄-nī	‘hailstones’	m̀pò**mp**óò-nā	‘deaf mute’
bɛ́**mb**ɛ́ɛ́-nā	‘chin’	bàà**mp**éé-ná-nā	‘hat’
bò**mb**óó-nā	‘tin can’	fíyɛ́**mp**ìì-nā-nā	‘cold (sickness)’
fúú**mb**èɛ̄-nā	‘shoulderbag’	kà**mp**áá-nā	‘adult man’
ká**mb**ɛ́ɛ́-nā	‘pumpkin’	là**mp**áà-nā-nā	‘petroleum lamp’
tà**mb**àā-nā	‘granary’	màà**mp**ílì-nā-nā	‘motor vehicle’
		nā**mp**ōō-nā-nā	‘wealth’
		nà**mp**òlɔ̀-kúù-nā-nā	‘necked gourd’
		ɲ̀jɛ́**mp**èɛ́-ná-nā	‘porch’
		pá**mp**áá-nā	‘cloud’
		pó**mp**ɔ́ɔ́-nā	‘liquid container’
		sɔ̀**mp**ā-nā	‘a market day’
		yà**mp**ín-nā-nā	‘ladle’

nd is distinguishable from nt in initial position, with a single known case of nd (20a). Only nt is known medially.

(20)

nd		nt	
a. initial			
ǹdún-tùkù-bē-nā		**ǹt**àmā-nī	‘soda ash’ (Pl)
‘chicken louse or mite’		**ǹt**àlā-nā	‘spider’

ǹtámpírímāā-nā	‘tree sp. (*Dichrostachys*)’
ǹtàsúú-ná-nā	‘frog’
ǹtɛ̀ɛ̀lɛ̀ɛ̄-nā	‘palm swift’
ǹtɛ̀ɛ̀ŋkéé-nā	‘glue tree (*Cordia*)’
ǹtɔ́ɔ́-nā-nā	‘blister beetle’
ǹtɔ̀kpā-nā-nā	‘dance of champion farmers’

b. medial

(none)

bààntúù-nā-nā	‘leper’
bàntáá-nā	‘beer jar’
báǹtâl-nā-nā	‘pants’
bā-tíntîī-tā-nā-nā	‘heel’
fùntóó-nā	‘arrow’
kàntàā-nā	‘forehead’
kɔ̀ntɔ́ɔ́-nā	‘spear’
làntáàn-nā-nā	‘brideprice’
m̀bàràntáá-nā-nā	‘banana’
mùntóó-nā	‘navel’
nàntɛ́ɛ́-nā	‘winnowing van’
sèrèntákà-nā-nā	‘kettle’
táá-kùntóó-nā	‘boulder’
tíntéé-nā	‘knee’
tìntéé-nā	‘wooden tomtom’
tíntíí-nnè-nā	‘old-time person’
tùntóó-nā	‘empty grain head’

For palatoalveolars, ɲj and the rare ɲc are distinguishable stem-initially. Only ɲc is attested medially in the sparse data, but in allegro speech the c of medial ɲc can be phonetically voiced.

(21)

a. initial

ɲj		ɲc	
ɲjààtíkì-nā-nā	‘host’	ɲcàà^{n}rí-ná-nā	‘stir-stick’
ɲjàŋfúrúmàā-nā	‘tree sp. (*Gardenia*)’		
ɲjàrá-ná-nā	‘lion’		
ɲjɛ́mpɛ̀ɛ́-ná-nā	‘porch’		
ɲjɔ́fàá-ná-nā	‘pocket’		
ɲjún-nā-nā	‘hamerkop (bird)’		

b. medial

(none)

bàmbàɲcā-nā	‘hailstone’
mààɲcíyè-nā-nā	‘papaya’

Initial ŋ̀k tends to be unaspirated and is sometimes heard as ŋ̀g. There is one known case of stable initial ŋ̀g. All known attestations of medial velar nasal-stop are pronounced with ŋk at least in isolation.

(22)	ŋg		ŋk	
a. initial				
	ŋ̀gúrù-nā-nā	‘genet’	**ŋ̀k**ōlɔ̄ŋ-cìŋkáá-nā	‘gizzard’
			ŋ̀kɔ̀pɛ́lɛ́-sā-nā	‘chili pepper’
b. medial				
	(none)		bànà**ŋk**úù-nā-nā	‘cassava’
			bù**ŋk**ó-ná-nā	‘tent’
			bārā**ŋk**āā-nā	‘fork in stick’
			fú**ŋk**ù-nā	‘arrow poison’
			fū**ŋk**ù-nā	‘boundary’
			ká**ŋk**áá-nā	‘flank’
			kāā**ŋk**āā-nā	‘ratchet (n)’
			káfōlò**ŋk**óó-nā	‘trap (n)’
			kálá**ŋk**āā-nā	‘molar tooth’
			kóó**ŋk**óó-nā	‘neckless gourd’
			kpé**ŋk**pɛ́ɛ́-nī	‘beads’
			máà**ŋk**órò-nā-nā	‘mango’
			yī**ŋk**ɔ̄rɔ̄-kɔ̄ɔ̄-nā	‘cowry’

Labial velar data are sparse.

(23)				
	ŋ̀gbésɛ̀ɛ́-ná-nā	‘chewstick’	**ŋ̀kp**ɛ́tùr-ná-nā	‘sawscale viper’
			ŋ̀kpàrmàŋ-kà-nā	‘bile duct’

Obstruent-initial NC suffixes on nouns may begin with voiced labial b, or with unvoiced nonlabial {t k s}. Verbs have few suffixes, but the extra syllable in Ipfv stems can begin with b or s, and the unproductive causative suffix is -sì. Nouns and verbs therefore share a pattern, with voiced b versus voiceless nonlabials. This suggests that the boundary between a root and a suffix is phonologically similar to a word or compound boundary.

3.2.1.1.2 Voiced versus voiceless fricatives

Fricative phonemes are f and s. Voiced [v] and [z] are allophones, especially after initial nasals. A few examples of stem-initial fricatives are in (24).

(24)

voiced		voiceless	
a. labial			
(none)		fáákā-nā	‘manner’
		fúrú^{n}	‘urinate.Pfv’
		fɔ́	‘10’
b. alveolar			
(none)		sáá-ní	‘fall’
		sììmā-nā	‘noise’
		sènàntɔ́	‘behind’

Phonemic voiced fricatives can occur in weakly nativized loanwords like ʒàndàràmúù-nā-nā ‘gendarme’.

Examples of fricatives in medial intervocalic position are in (25). Their normal pronunciation is voiceless.

(25)

voiced		voiceless	
a. labial			
(none)		kàràfá	‘entrust’
		kàfɔ́lɔ-nā-nā	‘owner’
		ɲjɔ́fàá-ná-nā	‘pocket’
		tà-fù-ŋwàā-nā	‘river’
b. alveolar			
(none)		bàsùkóó-nā	‘sweet potato’
		kásá-nā	‘broom’
		káásá-nā	‘disease’
		pìsì-míní	‘be ruined’

Postnasal position is illustrated in (26) for stem-initial clusters. Initial ns and ŋf are often pronounced [nz] and [ŋv] in allegro speech, shifting to voiceless [ns] and [ŋf] in careful speech.

(26)

voiced		voiceless	
a. labial			
(none)		ⁿsánàmpē	‘hare’ (variant)
		ⁿsèkɛ̀ɛ́-ná-nā	‘kestrel’
b. alveolar			
(none)		ᵑfúrúɲàá	‘herb sp. (*Corchorus*)’
		ᵑfèlèŋkéé-nā	‘hoof’
		ᵑfùùŋfááŋfūū-nā-nā	‘mud-dauber wasp’

Medial ns and ŋf are usually voiceless. No phonemic contrasts are observed. Nasalization is mainly realized phonetically on the preceding vowel.

(27)

voiced	voiceless	
a. labial		
(none)	báánsíyá-nā	‘sweet sedge tubers’
	káánsá-nā	‘salt’
	tànsà	‘swallow.Pfv’
	mānsáⁿ	‘laugh.Ipfv’
b. alveolar		
(none)	yààŋfɛ̀ɛ̀-kà-nā	‘fan (n)’
	yàŋfāā-nā	‘tree squirrel’
	yīŋ-fā-nā	‘here’

f does not occur initially in suffixes, perhaps an accidental gap. s occurs in an added final Ipfv stem syllable in mānsá(ⁿ) ‘laugh.Ipfv’, compare Pfv máⁿ. It also occurs in a minor causative suffix -sì, and in NC suffixes like plural -sɛ̄-.

3.2.1.2 Labial velars (kp gb ŋm)

kp, gb, and (less clearly) ŋm are unit phonemes. The onset is velar and the release is bilabial. Frequency and distributional freedom follow the descending scale kp > gb > ŋm. The two stops occur word-initially as well as medially. One or both of the stops are attested before all vowel qualities other than u. Stem-initial examples are in (28).

(28)

a. kp	
initial	
kpáálōō	‘last year’
kpèlé-ná-nā	‘stick, staff’
kpɛ́lɛ́kà-nā-nā	‘adze’
kpílí-kà-nā	‘rake (n)’
kpōkō-nā-nā	‘calabash tomtom’
medial	
lɔ́kpà-nā	‘one of the market-week days’
wɔ́kpìsá-nā	‘thorn’
b. gb	
initial	
gbáà-nā-nā	‘okra’
initial after nasal	
ŋgbésɛ̀ɛ́-ná-nā	‘chewstick’

medial

wú-gbɔ̄-nā	‘placing straw in roofing’
kɔ́ɔ́-gbɔ́-nā	‘tree sp. (*Terminalia*)’, plural kɔ́ɔ́-ré-nī

The Pfv/Ipfv pairing kú/kpā ‘die’ suggests that one diachronic source for kp is *kuV before an unrounded vowel *V, via *kwV and *k^{w}V.

ŋm is attested in the verb ùŋmɔ̀ ‘wake up.Pfv’. An argument against taking ŋm as a cluster is the absence of other nonhomorganic ŋC clusters such as #ŋb.

3.2.1.3 Nasal codas versus nasalized vowels

The majority of stems and morphemes that are transcribed with a final nasalized vowel are analysable as ending structurally (i.e., phonemically) in an oral vowel plus a **nasal coda**. A small number of stems and morphemes end in **true nasalized vowels**. The key difference is that a nasal coda is realized in some contexts as a nasal consonant, while a true nasalized vowel is not. The key contexts are position before vocalic suffixes (including the final á of Ipfv verb stems), and position before (most) vocalic enclitics. In addition, nasal codas are heard as assimilating nasal consonants when they precede an obstruent, especially a stop.

One difficulty in analysis is that a neighboring semivowel y or w can attract nasality, and can become a secondary or even the primary locus of nasality in a morpheme (y^{n}, w^{n}). This is especially the case when the following vowel is denasalized, as in Pfv verbs before 3Pl object í, see (31) below. The transcription usually avoids double marking of nasality, so I transcribe yà^{n} ‘do.Pfv’ with nasal coda, even though the semivowel is also phonetically nasalized [j̃ą̀]. When a Cv^{n} Pfv verb is denasalized, there is usually no nasalization left, but yà^{n} combines with 3Pl í as y^{n}à í with nasalization centered on the semivowel. This suggests that y^{n}à^{n} might be more revealing than yà^{n} as lexical representation for ‘do.Pfv’, though the two cannot contrast.

3.2.1.3.1 Final nasality in nouns

Nominal roots are generally followed by noun-class (NC) suffixes and final suffixes that have Cv shape. When the NC suffix begins with a nonnasal consonant {s b k}, final nasality of the root is audible, either as a homorganic nasal consonant or as vocalic nasalization. It is more difficult to hear root-final nasality when the NC suffix begins with a nasal, the most common suffixes being -nā- and -ŋɛ̄-. With alveolar n, a distinction between geminated nn and simple n is audible in careful speech for the older native speaker. However, I have not been able to distinguish ŋŋ from simple ŋ, and they are not distinguished in transcription even when there is paradigmatic evidence for gemination. NC suffixes beginning with m are uncommon, but there too gemination is absent (or inaudible). In some cases, the best indicator that a noun root ends in a nasal coda is its stripped-down premodifier form, but not all nouns drops NC and final suffixes before modifiers.

‘Dog’ is fɔ̄-mā-nā ~ fā-mā-nā, plural fɔ́n-sɛ̄-nī, reduced premodifier form fɔ́ŋ- with nasal coda as in fɔ́m pà-nā ‘big dog’ and fɔ́ mìyɛ̄-nā ‘red (=brown) dog’. The final nasality is

clearly audible only in fɔ́n-sɛ̄-nī and fɔ́m pà-nā, but this is enough to show that the root is fɔ́ⁿ- with a nasal coda.

With yɔ́rɔ́-mā-nā ‘sleep (n.)’, marginal E-ablauted plural yɔ́rɔ́-m-ɛ̄-nī, only the premodifier form yɔ́rɔ̀ⁿ- as yɔ́rɔ̀ŋ kààⁿrìŋ-kà-nā ‘long sleep’ brings out the nasal coda. The nasality is clearer in the related verb yɔ̀rɔ̀ⁿ/yɔ́rɔ́má ‘sleep’.

Singular NC suffix -nā- combines with a nasal coda as …n-nā-. The gemination is audible in careful speech for the older native speaker, but less so in his allegro speech, and it is usually not apparent in the speech of the younger native speaker. Most nouns with singular -nā- have plurals with -ɲɛ̄-, and geminated ɲɲ is not audibly distinct from ɲ even in careful speech. So nasal codas in some noun roots of the nā/ɲɛ̄ gender can be barely discerned. In cases like yóón-nā-nā ‘village’, plural yóó-ɲɛ̄-nī, the presence of a nasal coda is audible in careful pronunciation of the singular. The premodifier form most clearly brings out the nasal coda: yóóŋ kààⁿrìŋ-kà-nā ‘long (=vast) village’, compound yóóǹ-sì-bɛ̄-nā ‘village owner (=chief)’.

The tendency for semivowels to attract nasality is an issue with yⁿîi ‘yesterday’, where the nasality is spread phonetically over the entire syllable. There is no audible nasal coda in yⁿîi tà mīn-nā ‘yesterday and today’, but there is one in yⁿîin tòō-nā ‘the day before yesterday’. It seems then that this noun alternates between structural yⁿîi and yⁿîiⁿ.

3.2.1.3.2 Final nasality in verbs

For intransitive verbs, a final Cvⁿ syllable in a perfective or imperative clause is analysed as having a nasal coda when the positive morpheme (y)ɛ̄ combines with it as Cvɲ ɲɛ̄ (29a). The nasal coda also appears as nn (after a monosyllabic) or as n (after longer verbs) before the final á of the Ipfv stem (291a). Three verbs irregularly have (ungeminated) m instead (29b). The irregular verb ‘laugh’ adds a final sibilant syllable (29c).

(29)

	Pfv	Pfv+Pos	Ipfv	gloss
a.	bǎⁿ	bàɲ ɲɛ̄	bànná	‘flood (v)’
	bóróⁿ	bóróɲ ɲɛ̄	bōrōná	‘shout’
	céékéⁿ	céékéɲ ɲɛ̄	céékéná	‘have fun, play’
	jɛ̀ɛ́ⁿ	jɛ̀ɛ́ɲ ɲɛ̄	jɛ̀ɛ̀ná	‘form a group’
	kérékéⁿ	kérékéɲ ɲɛ̄	kérékéná	‘be in good health’
	kɔ̄lɔ̄ⁿ	kɔ̄lɔ̄ɲ ɲɛ̄	kɔ̄lɔ̄ná	‘cough (v)’
	mííríⁿ	mííríɲ ɲɛ̄	mííríná	‘think’
	yìⁿ	yìɲ ɲɛ̄	yìnná	‘depart’ (in a compound)
b.	yàⁿ	yàɲ ɲɛ̄	yàmá	‘be done, happen’
	yɔ̀rɔ̀ⁿ	yɔ̀rɔ̀ɲ ɲɛ̄	yɔ́rɔ́má	‘sleep (v)’
	fúrúⁿ	fúrúɲ ɲɛ̄	fúúmá	‘urinate’
c.	máⁿ	máɲ ɲɛ̄	mānsáⁿ	‘laugh (v)’

Similar examples involving stative intransitives (which lack the Pfv/Ipfv opposition) are in (30).

(30)

Stat	Stat+Pos	gloss
kǎⁿ	kǎŋ ɲɛ̄	‘be good’
bìrìmíⁿ	bìrìmíŋ ɲɛ̄	‘be narrow’
píⁿ	píŋ ɲɛ̄	‘be nasty’
sáⁿ	sáŋ ɲɛ̄	‘be small’
sùŋkúⁿ	sùŋkúŋ ɲɛ̄	‘be appropriate’

For transitive verbs, a final Cvⁿ syllable in a Pfv or Imprt stem is analysed as having a nasal coda when the following are observed. First, 3NHSg object enclitic á combines with it as …Cvn á, or as Cvnn á with monosyllabic stems. Second, 3HSg object enclitic yɛ̀ combines with it as Cvŋ ɲɛ̀, from /CvN yɛ̀/. A third criterion is that the Ipfv ends in (n)ná (31a), or rarely má (31b). This third criterion is partially moot for kúⁿ ‘furnish.Pfv’, whose irregular Ipfv is kpɑ̃ⁿ (31d), but the first criterion is filled for this verb with Pfv plus 3NHSg object kúnn á. Interestingly, final nasalized vowels are denasalized in most verbs before 3Pl object enclitic í. The exceptions to this denasalization before 3Pl í involve y or w (including desyllabified i and u) in positions where the semivowel can attract and retain secondary nasality (31b-d). Thus yàⁿ ‘do.Pfv’ behaves like yⁿàⁿ (31c), so denasalizing àⁿ to à does not eliminate nasality. The younger speaker (who converts initial yⁿ to ɲ) pronounces ‘do.Pfv’ as ɲà. Throughout (31a-c), some combinations with 3HSg or 3NHSg enclitic object are missing for semantic reasons or because a verb requires a specific noun as object as with ‘tell (a lie’).

(31)

	Pfv stem					
	bare	+3HSg	+3NHSg	+3Pl	Ipfv	gloss
a.	bàⁿ		bànn á	bà í	bànná	‘sew’
	cɛ̀ⁿ		cɛ̀nn á	cɛ̀ í	cɛ̀nná	‘winnow in wind’
	fɔ́ɔ́ⁿ		fɔ́ɔ́n á	fɔ́rí = í	fɔ̄ɔ̄ná	‘discard’
	kóróⁿ		kórón á	kórí = í	kōrōná	‘roof (a house)’
	kɔ̀rɔ̀síⁿ	kɔ̀rɔ̀síŋ ɲɛ̀	kɔ̀rɔ̀sín á	kɔ̀rɔ̀sí = í	kɔ̀rɔ̀síná	‘guard (v)’
	kpèrèⁿ		kpèrèn á	kpèrì = í	kpèrèná	‘shorten’
	kùlàⁿ		kùlàn á	kùlà í	kùlàná	‘lock (v)’
	míⁿ		mínn á	mí í	mīnná	‘hide (sth, sb)’
	nààríⁿ	nààríŋ ɲɛ̀	nààrín á	nààrí í	nààríná	‘injure’
	náⁿ		nánn á	ná í	nānná	‘stone-grind’
	nàŋkàáⁿ	nàŋkàáŋ ɲɛ̀	nàŋkàán á	nàŋkà í	nàŋkàáná	‘steal’
	pààrìⁿ	pààrìŋ ɲɛ̀	pààrìn á	pààrì í	pààrìná	‘break up with’
	sàráⁿ	sàráŋ ɲɛ̀	sàrán á	sàrí = í	sàráná	‘pay’
	sɛ́bɛ́ⁿ		sɛ́bɛ́n á	sɛ́bí = í	sɛ́bɛ́ná	‘write’
	tábáríⁿ	tábáríŋ ɲɛ̀	tábárín á	tábárí í	tābārīná	‘measure (v)’
	táⁿ		tánn á	tá í	tānná	‘shoot (arrow)’
	tàⁿ X ní	tɛ̀ŋ ɲɛ̀ ní	tènn á ní	tɛ̀ = ɛ́ ní	tànná-ní	‘cover’ (phrasal v)
	tɛ̀rɛ̀ⁿ	tɛ̀rɛ̀ŋ ɲɛ̀	tɛ̀rɛ̀n á	tɛ̀rì = í	tɛ̀rɛ̀ná	‘leave behind’

	tóókó^{n}	tóókǫ́ ɲɛ̀	tóókón á	tóókí = í	tóókóná	‘send’
	túrá^{n}		túrán á	túrá í	tūrāná	‘string (beads)’
	yàrà^{n}		yàràn á	yàrì = í	yàràná	‘align’
	yēbē^{n}	yēbēɲ ɲɛ̀	yēbēn á	yēbì = í	yēbēná	‘grab’
	yɛ̀^{n}				yìnná	‘tell (a lie)’
	yò^{n}		yònn á	yò í	yònná	‘uproot’
b.	sù^{n}		sùnn á	sw^{n}ì = í	sùnná	‘pound’
	tù^{n}		tùnn á	tw^{n}ì = í	tùnná	‘forge (v)’
	yì^{n}		yìnn á	y^{n}ì í	yìnná	‘reap’
	yì^{n} X míní		yìnn á míní	y^{n}ì í míní	yìnná-míní	‘cut by slicing’
c.	yà^{n}		yàm á	y^{n}à í	yàmá	‘do’
d.	kú^{n}	kúɲ ɲɛ̀	kúnn á	kwí^{n} í	kpā^{n}	‘furnish’

The examples given above have stems that consist of or end in Cv^{n} analysable as having a nasal coda. They contrast with a small number of stems whose final a^{n} does not behave as a normal nasal coda. These stems do not add an extra ná syllable in the Ipfv stem; instead, the final á of the Ipfv merges with the stem vowel.

Two difficult intransitive examples are in (32). The format is that of (29) above. In (32a) the Pfv has a nasal coda, but the Ipfv stem has y^{n}á ~ y^{n}ɛ́ instead of (n)ná. In (32a), the Pfv has only a weakly nasalized final vowel (arguably spread subphonemically from the medial m) and fails to show ɲ in positive kùmè(^{n}) = ɛ̄, but the Ipfv stem has ná. So these two verbs give mixed signals.

(32)

	Pfv	Pfv+Pos	Ipfv	Ipfv+Pos	gloss
a.	fì^{n}	fìɲ ɲɛ̄	fìy^{n}á ~ fìy^{n}ɛ́	fìy^{n}ɛ́ = ɛ̄	‘arrive; be able’
b.	kùmà(^{n})	kùmè(^{n}) = ɛ̄	kùmàná	kùmànɛ́ = ɛ̄	‘give birth’

More transitive examples are in (33), whose format is similar to that of (31) above. The Ipfv plus positive column is filled only where it is analytically relevant. In none of these paradigms is there an n or nn before 3NHSg á, and in (33a-b) there is no n or nn in the Ipfv The monosyllabics in (33a-b) also retain nasalization before 3Pl í, though this is not the case with the bisyllabic in (33c). (33a-c) are the best examples of final nasalized vowels that do not behave as vowel plus nasal coda. (33d) repeats kùmà(^{n}) from (32b), here as transitive, and it confirms the Pfv/Ipfv disparity noted above. It is joined by the phrasal verb yàà^{n} … lè (i.e., yàà^{n} X lè). fíy^{n}á ‘shell (nuts)’ does not end in a nasalized vowel, and is included in (33e) to contrast it with ‘arrive’ in (32a).

(33)

	Pfv stem				Ipfv stem		
	bare	+3HSg	+3NHSg	+3Pl	bare	+Pos	gloss
a.	ká^{n}		ká^{n} á	ká^{n} í	kā^{n}	kɛ̄^{n} = ɛ̄	‘pick (fruit)
	kà^{n}	kà^{n} yɛ̀	kà^{n} á	kà^{n} í	kă^{n}	kɛ̆^{n} = ɛ̄	‘scratch’
b.	tíí^{n}		tíí^{n} yá	tíí^{n} í	tīī^{n}yá	tīī^{n}yɛ́ = ɛ̄	‘sharpen’
c.	tūkū^{n}		tūkā^{n} = á^{n}	tūkí = ī	tūká^{n}	tūkɛ́^{n} = ɛ̄	‘reply to’
d.	kùmà(^{n})	kùmà(^{n}) yɛ̀	kùmà(^{n}) yá	kùmà í	kùmàná		‘give birth to’
	yàà^{n}…lɛ̀	yàà^{n} yɛ̀ lɛ̀	yàà^{n} yá lɛ̀	yàà^{n} yí lɛ̀	yààná-lɛ̀		‘expel’
e.	fíy^{n}á		fíy^{n}á á	fíy^{n}á í	fīy^{n}á		‘shell (nuts)’

In a few other cases, mostly for verbs with an extra syllable in the Ipfv, a final nasalized á^{n} appears in the Ipfv but not in the Pfv (or Imprt). The key is observing whether the positive morpheme appears as (y)ɛ̄ or as ɲɛ̄. Intransitives of this general type are in (34). In (34a), the allomorphy of the positive morpheme show that the Pfv stem ends in an oral vowel, but the Ipfv stem has á^{n} with a nasal coda. kùrù/kùr^{n}á in (34b) also adds nasality in the Ipfv, but there is no true nasal coda. Since its nasality is preserved before negative bɔ̀, this Ipfv stem is analysed here as having nasalized r^{n}, structurally similar to nasalized semivowels y^{n} and w^{n} in similar positions. ‘Laugh’ (34c) has a nasal coda in the Pfv, but a true nasalized vowel in the add-on sibilant-initial syllable in the Ipfv. This nasalized vowel in (34c) is denasalized before negative bɔ̀ (see just below for similar cases with transitive verbs).

(34)

	Pfv stem		Ipfv stem			
	bare	+Pos	bare	+Pos	+Neg	gloss
a.	wùní	wùní yɛ̄	wùná^{n}	wùnáɲ ɲɛ̄	wùnám bɔ̀	‘breathe’
	yàní	yàní yɛ̄	yàlìyá^{n}	yàlìyáɲ ɲɛ̄	yàlìyám bɔ̀	‘(liquid) spill out’
b.	kùrù	kùrù yɛ̄	kùr^{n}á	kùr^{n}ɛ́ = ɛ̄	kùr^{n}á bɔ̀	‘snore’
c.	má^{n}	máɲ ɲɛ̄	mānsá^{n}	mānsɛ́^{n} = ɛ̄	mānsá bɔ̀	‘laugh’

More transitives with final nasals in the Ipfv only are in (35a). All of these verbs have Ipfv stems with a final true nasalized vowel (not a nasal coda). The consonant preceding á^{n} is s or r, whether lexical or in an extra syllable in the Ipfv. The final vowel is denasalized before negative bɔ̀, but is present in the bare form and in the high-frequency positive form, as with intransitive ‘laugh’ in (34c) above. (35b) has Cu or Ci stems that add a homorganic nasalized semivowel before Ipfv á and in perfective clauses before 3NHSg á. The final Ipfv syllable is denasalized before the negative morpheme.

(35)

	Pfv stem			Ipfv stem			
	bare	+3HSg	+3NHSg	bare	+Pos	+Neg	gloss
a.	māā	māā yɛ̀	mārā= á	māāsáⁿ	māāsɛ́ⁿ= ɛ̄	māāsá bɔ̀	‘greet’
	tànsà	tànsɛ̀= ɛ̄	tànsá á	tànsáⁿ	tànsɛ́ⁿ= ɛ̄	tànsá bɔ̀	‘swallow’
		(variants tàsà, etc.)					
	má	máá yɛ̀	má á	mááráⁿ	máárɛ́ⁿ =ɛ̄	máárá bɔ̀	‘build’
	wùrù	wùrù yɛ̀	wùrà= á	wùráⁿ	wùrɛ́ⁿ = ɛ̄	wùrá bɔ̀	‘jab, pierce’
b.	nù	nùù yɛ̀	nùwⁿ á	nùwⁿɔ́	nùwⁿɛ́= ɛ̄	nùwɔ́ bɔ̀	‘give’
	nì	nìì yɛ̀	nìyⁿ á	nìyⁿá	nìyⁿɛ́= ɛ̄	nìyá bɔ̀	‘hear’/‘drink’

3.2.1.3.3 Variable final nasality in grammatical morphemes

Two grammatical morphemes have nasalized variants.

The complementizer usually heard as fá (dialectally fɔ́) occurs in sequential, object relative, and short subjunctive clauses. I have never heard nasality in actual clausal examples. For example, ǹsé [fá káá-ɲ̄ ɲâ] ‘what did the baboon see?’ has fá k… not #fáŋ k… or #fáⁿ k… . However, isolation pronunciation of this morpheme during elicitation sessions was often fáⁿ with nasalized vowel.

A somewhat similar situation occurs with tɛ̀ ~ tà(ⁿ), which is the ‘and’ conjunction, the ‘with’ preposition, and the clause-initial ‘if’ morpheme in conditionals. The two speakers I worked directly with use unnasalized tɛ̀ or tà variants, though they are familiar with tàⁿ, which they pronounced with a nasalized vowel (not an assimilating nasal coda).

3.2.1.4 Nasalized semivowels (yⁿ wⁿ) and rⁿ

Phonemically nasalized semivowels are attested in stem-initial position, before vowel a. The known clear cases are in (36).

(36)

a.	yⁿá-pò-nā	‘eye’
	yⁿáásā-nā	‘tail’
	yⁿūū	‘(meat) be boiling in pot’ (stative)
	yⁿá	‘see.Pfv’
b.	wⁿáá-sā-nā	‘grain, seed’
	wⁿáá-nā	‘road’
	wⁿáá-nā-nā	‘twins’
	wⁿátú	‘run.Pfv’
	wⁿá	‘put.Pfv’ (and its compounds)
	wⁿá X tú	‘begin.Pfv X’

In words like yāŋ-kà-nā ‘work (n)’, yàⁿ ~ yɛ̀ⁿ ‘do.Pfv’, and yāāŋfɛ̄ɛ̀-kà-nā ‘fan (n)’ with initial y, a following vowel a (or ɛ), and a nasal coda to the syllable, the y is phonetically

nasalized. Similarly, in words like NHSg demonstrative wā-nā, the w is phonetically nasalized. The transcriptions used here are based on the idea that nasalization spreads phonetically into the semivowel. However, one could argue for transcriptions like yⁿāŋ-kà-nā and wⁿā-nā with double marking of nasality. As noted below, the younger speaker has ɲ corresponding to the older speaker's phonemic yⁿ (ɲá 'see.Pfv') and subphonemic phonetic [ǰ] (ɲāŋ-kà-nā 'work').

A similar issue applies to Nvwv and Nvyv where N is any nasal consonant. Examples are the Ipfv stems of nù/nùwⁿɔ́ 'give' and nì/nìyⁿá 'drink' or 'hear'. The added final vowel in the Ipfv stem requires an epenthetic semivowel homorganic to the preceding root vowel. This semivowel is nasalized in nùwⁿɔ́ and nìyⁿá. The latter rhymes with fìyⁿá 'arrive.Ipfv', whose nasality is centered on the semivowel. However, trisyllabic máníyá 'speak.Ipfv' has an oral y, suggesting that metrical position is relevant. The situation with nouns is harder to analyse since many CvCv- roots are followed by nasal suffixes that would mask nasalized vowels or semivowels in the root.

A preceding nasal coda, like that in 1Sg mîⁿ, turns initial yⁿ or y in the following word into ɲ (37a). It has a less pronounced effect on initial w or wⁿ, except when the w(ⁿ) is followed by u (37b).

(37)	a.	míɲ̀ ɲà-pò-nā	'my eye'	< yⁿá-pò-nā
	b.	míŋ̀ wⁿáá-nā	'my road'	< wⁿáá-nā
		míŋ̀ ŋú-kó-nā	'my house'	< wú-kó-nā

Such combinations are the only cases of stem-initial ɲ and ŋ. (One grammatical particle begins with ɲ, see ɲú 'ever' in §8.4.4.1.2.

The young speaker hardens *yⁿ to ɲ, as in in ɲá 'see.Pfv' and ɲáásā-nā 'tail'. He does the same with phonetically nasalized initial *y, as in ɲāŋ-kà-nā 'work (n)', ɲàŋ 'do.Pfv', and ɲāāŋfɛ̀è-kà-nā 'fan (n)'. Exceptionally, he denasalizes the *yⁿ in yá-pò-nā 'eye', versus the older speaker's yⁿá-pò-nā.

Nasalized tap rⁿ is arguably present in kùrⁿá 'snore.Ipfv' (34b).

3.2.2 Consonant clusters

3.2.2.1 Initial clusters

3.2.2.1.1 Initial nasal-obstruent clusters

These clusters are attested in numerous noun stems (38a), and in three clause-initial or preclausal particles (38b). Many of the nouns denote smallish creepy-crawlies, and may once have carried a class prefix. The nasal is L-toned in isolation pronunciation, but is disregarded in syllable-by-syllable tone notation, so that the root ǹtàlā- is encoded as L.M rather than as L.L.M. Transcriptions have ŋ̀ before f, representing phonetic [ŋ̀ʷ] or the like, as well as before velars and labial velars where it represents [ŋ̀].

(38) a. nouns

stops (ordered from labial to velar)

m̀bàràntáà-nā-nā	‘banana’	
m̀pààsîī-nā-nā	‘couscous’	
m̀pâr-nā-nā	‘chat (n)’	
m̀pèlèmàā-ná	‘gecko’	
m̀pètúú-nā-nā	‘dragonfly’	
m̀póò-nā-nā	‘ant-lion larva’	
ǹtàlā-nā	‘spider’	
ǹtàmā-nā	‘soda ash’ (Sg)	
ǹtámpírímāā-nā	‘tree sp. (*Dichrostachys*)’	
ǹtàsúú-ná-nā	‘frog’	
ǹtèèlèē-nā	‘palm swift’	
ǹtèèŋkéé-nā	‘glue tree (*Cordia*)’	
ǹtɔ̀kpā-nā-nā	‘dance of champion farmers’	
ǹtɔ́ɔ́-nā-nā	‘blister beetle’	
ǹtùlóó-nā	‘wood-hoopoe’	
ǹdún-tùkù-bē-nā	‘chicken louse or mite’	
ɲcàà^{n}rí-ná-nā	‘stir-stick’	
ɲjàŋfúrúmàā-nā	‘tree sp. (*Gardenia*)’	
ɲjààtíkì-nā-nā	‘host’	
ɲjàrá-ná-nā	‘lion’	
ɲjɛ́mpèɛ́-ná-nā	‘porch’	
ɲjɔ́fàá-ná-nā	‘pocket’	
ɲjún-nā-nā	‘hamerkop (bird)’	
ŋgúrù-nā-nā	‘genet’	
ŋkɔ̄lɔ̄ŋ-cìŋkáá-nā	‘gizzard’	
ŋkɔ̀pɛ́lɛ́-sā-nā	‘chili pepper’	
ŋgbésèɛ́-ná-nā	‘chewstick’	
ŋkpàràmàŋ-kà-nā	‘bile duct’	cf. kpàràmà ‘bitter’
ŋkpétùr-ná-nā	‘sawscale viper’	

fricatives (ordered from labial to alveolar)

ŋfúrúŋàá	‘herb sp. (*Corchorus*)’	
ŋfùùŋfáá^{n}-fūū-nā-nā	‘mud-dauber wasp’	
ǹsánàmpē	‘hare’	
ǹsèkèɛ́-ná-nā	‘kestrel (falcon)’	

b.

ŋkàà	‘but’	§19.2.1
ǹtàā	‘wait!’	§17.4.3
ǹtɛ̀→	‘or’	§7.2.1

3.2.2.1.2 Initial obstruent-semivowel clusters

Initial clusters other than those with nasals are rare. The few known cases involve obstruents and semivowels (39).

(39) a. swáá-ná-nā ‘beard (hair)’
kwá-nā ‘market’ or ‘price’ cf. kúwá-nā ‘credit’

b. syó ‘top’

3.2.2.2 Medial clusters

3.2.2.2.1 Medial geminate clusters (mm, nn, pp, etc.)

Nasal clusters mm and nn are attested medially in the position #Cv_v, i.e. following a stem-initial short syllable.

(40) a. bòmmóó-nā ‘honey of stingless bees’ or ‘tin can’
tāmmān-sìì-kē-nā ‘ladder’
bɛ́mmɛ́ɛ́-nā ‘chin’
kámmɛ́ɛ́-nā ‘squash (n)’

b. nàññà-nā ‘now’
sénnɛ́ɛ́-nā ‘knife’
nànnàyîì-nā-nā ‘mint’

Likewise, a nasal coda in short Cv^{n} verb stems (§3.2.1.3) is realized as nn before 3NHSg object á and in Ipfv stems with added final á. Thus mí^{n} ‘hide.Pfv’, mínn á ‘hid it’, mīnná ‘hide.Ipfv’.

nn also occurs often across root-NC boundaries in nominal morphology, as in nún-nā-nā ‘jar for carrying liquids’ and sínán-nā-nā ‘deaf person’. The root-final n is a nasal coda.

Geminated (or fortis) pp, tt, cc, and kk are rare. They occur in a few stems after an initial short syllable.

(41) a. [sí-bé]-kàppà-nā ‘father’s elder brother’
bāppà-nā ‘stiffness in leg’

b. bóttól-nā-nā ‘bottle’

c. tákkâr-nā-nā ‘matches’

d. nícc-é-nī ‘lower backs (plural)’, singular núú-kú-nā

3.2.2.2.2 Medial nasal-obstruent clusters

Medial clusters {mb mp nt ɲc ŋk ns} are discussed and exemplified in §3.2.1.1.1, where the focus is on the voicing feature of the obstruent.

3.2.2.2.3 Medial clusters with final semivowel

A handful of cases are known, involving sy (42a) and ŋw (42). Both consonants are clearly pronounced in these clusters. 'Height' appears to involve syncope and resyllabification. In the case of 'river, creek', the medial ŋw corresponds to initial w^n.

(42) a. ǹsìsyémàā-nā 'sycamore fig tree'
tásyóó-nā-nā 'height', cf. tásíyò 'be lofty'

b. yìŋwáánàā-nā 'spoon'
ɲâŋwéɛ́lɛ̀ɛ̄-nā 'plover'
tà-fù-ŋwàā-nā 'river, creek', cf. w^náá-nā 'road'
wóŋwáá-nā 'large palm-leaf basket'

Velar nasal ŋ does not occur by itself as an unclustered medial consonant.

3.3 Vowels

Nearly all vowels recorded in the lexicon are those of the typical seven-vowel system in the region. Each of the vowels in (43) has phonemically distinct long and short versions.

(43) i u
e o
ɛ ɔ
a

{e o} and {ɛ ɔ} form ATR-like harmonic series (see §3.3.4 below).

a and ɛ tend to merge or alternate randomly when juxtaposed to semivowel y accompanied by nasality. Thus $yà^n$ ~ $yè^n$ 'do.Pfv', yàmá ~ yèmá 'do.Ipfv'.

Many phonetically nasalized vowels at the end of a stem or word are analysable as the combination of a vowel with a stem-final nasal coda. The nasal coda materializes as (n)n in some contexts. All of the oral vowels in (43), long and short, have nasalized counterparts of this type. However, a few stems have true stem-final nasalized vowels (mainly a^n) that do not harden to nasal consonants (§3.2.1.3).

3.3.1 Vowel length

Examples of Cv, Cvv, Cv^n, and Cvv^n verbs are in (44). Short vowels are more common than long vowels.

(44) a. y^ná 'see.Pfv'
nù 'give.Pfv'
kà 'eat meat.Pfv'

b.	píí	‘ask.Pfv’
	líí	‘kill.Pfv’
	wéé X ní	‘look for.Pfv’
	kàà	‘resemble’ (stative)
c.	yà^{n} ~ yɛ̀^{n}	‘do.Pfv’
	yì^{n}	‘cut.Pfv’
d.	tíí^{n}	‘sharpen.Pfv’
	yàà^{n} X lè	‘expel.Pfv’

Since most nouns are followed by one or two Cv suffixes in their citation forms, it is relatively easy to distinguish Cvv- from Cv- roots. Thus kú-nā ‘head’ and túkú-sā-nā ‘powder, flour’ with short vowels, but núú-nā-nā ‘corpse’ and fúúkáá-nā ‘African eggplant’ with long vowels.

For bisyllabic verb and noun stems, CvCv is most common, followed by CvvCv. Noninitial Cvv syllables in uncompounded stems are uncommon but attested: sákánáá ‘fight.Pfv’, sááfúú ‘go into hole.Pfv’, wòlóó ‘eat.Ipfv’.

The majority of phonetic long vowels in the recordings are contractions of stem-final vowels with vocalic pronouns like 3Pl í, 3NHSg á, and in some contexts 3HSg (y)ɛ̀. The ɛ̄ variant of the positive morpheme also contracts. Other long vowels are created by elision of consonants, e.g. /tɛ̀ bɛ́/ → tɛ̀ ɛ́ ‘if you-Sg’.

For length alternations within paradigms of the same stems, see §3.4.1.5.

3.3.2 Nasalized vowels

Most nasalized vowels appear in word-final Cv^{n} syllables, but many of these are best analysed as reduced variants of CvN with a nasal coda. The contrast between stem-final CvN and the less common true Cv^{n} is explained in §3.2.1.3 above. The data presented there show many cases of nasal codas following any vowel quality. There are fewer clear cases of true nasalized vowels, but the most common is a^{n}.

Nonfinal nasalized vowels are not easily sorted into nasal codas versus true nasalized vowels.

Phonemic nasalized a^{n} and aa^{n} have centralized articulations [ə̰] and [ə̰ː] before r, with only weak nasality. Thus làkà^{n}rìŋ-kà-nā ‘tree sp. (*Cassia*)’, pronounced [làkə̰ɾìŋkànā], and kàà^{n}rìn-nè-nā ‘tall’, pronounced [kə̰ː.rìnènā]. Other examples include á-kàà^{n}rá [ákə̰ː.ɾá] ‘dry season’ and ɲcàà^{n}rí-ná-nā [ɲcə̰ː.ɾínánā] ‘stirring-stick’.

3.3.3 Stem-initial vowels

Aside from compounds beginning with á-, most of which denote time of day or the season of the year, very few nouns and no verbs begin with a vowel. This is dealt with in connection with syllable typology in §3.1.1 above.

3.3.4 Vowel harmony (ATR and back/rounded)

Vowel harmony, mainly just ATR, but sometimes combining ATR with back/rounded harmony, is at work in some combinations of stems and suffixes or enclitics. Among mid-height vowels, the opposition of [+ATR] {e o} versus [-ATR] {ɛ ɔ} is overt. When a high vowel i or u shifts to mid-height or controls harmony on a following vowel, this brings out an otherwise covert ATR value of the high vowel. This could suggest that an ancestor of Paleni had an ATR opposition in high as well as in mid-height vowels, i.e., {ɪ ʊ} versus {i u}. When the only low vowel a shifts to mid-height, or controls harmony in a following vowel, the low vowel a behaves as [-ATR].

Most bi- and tri-syllabic Pfv verb stems have a single vowel quality across syllables (45).

(45)

kìrì	‘walk’
kéréké^{n}	‘feel well’
fɛ́rɛ́	‘exit (v)’
báká	‘get tired’
bɔ̀lɔ̀kɔ̀	‘(construction) be completed’
bóró^{n}	‘shout’
fúrú^{n}	‘urinate’

Pfv verbs with nonidentical vowels are listed in (46). Most end in i or a, and if trisyllabic the first two vowels are identical (46a-b).

(46) a. final i

bisyllabic

bùrsì	‘bare (v)’
còmí^{n}	‘rip off’
fùùsì	‘shoot’
kàà^{n}rì	‘lengthen’
násí	‘be afraid’
nààsì	‘straighten’
pààrì^{n}	‘break off (bond)’
sómí	‘peck at’
tɔ̄ɔ̄sī	‘cultivate’
wùní	‘breathe’
yàní	‘spill’

trisyllabic

kòlòŋcì	‘roll’
kɔ̀rɔ̀sí^{n}	‘guard’
làkàsì	‘post, affix’
nàkàrì	‘walk around’ or ‘expel’
sàkàlì	‘(dog) bark’
tábárí^{n}	‘measure’

tùkùsì-míní	‘snap’
yòkòrì	‘forgive’

b. final a

bisyllabic

fíyá^{n}	‘shell (v)’
kùlà^{n}	‘lock (v)’
kùmà(^{n})	‘give birth’
kùùmà	‘become curved’
kpììsà X kpírí	‘assemble’
pílá	‘be cooked’
sììmà	‘shake’
túrá^{n}	‘string (v)’
wúlá	‘fell (tree)’
wúmá	‘bite’
wúná	‘trim’
yɛ́ná	‘roast’
yìlà	‘enter’

trisyllabic

fìkìmà	‘shoo’
kɔ̀sɔ̀mà	‘crumple’
tìkìmà	‘rub on’
yɛ̀lɛ̀mà	‘be tilted’
yɛ̀kɛ̀mà	‘belch’
yìrìmà	‘stir’
yɔ̀kɔ̀mà	‘massage (v)’

c. final ɔ

bisyllabic

sìy^{n}ɔ̀	‘know’
ùŋmɔ̀	‘wake up’
wúkɔ́	‘defecate’

d. other

sááfúú	‘go into hole’ (frozen cpd, cf. sáá-ní ‘fall’)
kɔ̀ní-lā	‘be present’, cf. kɔ̀ní topic marker
tásíyò	‘be lofty’
w^{n}átú	‘run’

There are tendencies toward similar same-vowel repetition for noun roots, but less systematically.

Some verbs have additional modifications of a final vowel in the Ipfv stem. When the Pfv stem ends in a high vowel {i u}, [+ATR] verbs have Ipfv stems ending in é (tòònsé ‘pierce.Ipfv’) or ó (tūkó ‘catch.Ipfv’). See (393) in §10.2.1.4.below. Most verbs are overtly or covertly [-ATR], and their final Ipfv vowel is á.

ATR-harmony as an isolable process is also observable in the phonology of some stem-enclitic combinations and in that of some combinations of noun roots with NC suffixes. A relevant enclitic is positive (y)ɛ̄. In the absence of adjuncts, (y)ɛ̄ immediately follows intransitive verbs of either aspect, and it immediately follows imperfective transitive verbs. It does not undergo vv-Contraction with verb-final high vowels (47a). It contracts as ɛ̄ after {a ɛ ɔ} (47b), and as ē after {e o} (47c). Here the contracted long vowel preserves the ATR value of the first input vowel. Verbs with long final {ee oo} do not contract with yɛ̄ (47d).

(47)	a.	sù	sù yɛ̄	‘run.Pfv’
		sírí	sírí yɛ̄	‘grow.up.Pfv’
		kùntù	kùntù yɛ̄	‘crawl.Pfv’
	b.	sùsɔ́	sùsɛ́= ɛ̄	‘run.Ipfv’
		fɛ́rɛ́	fɛ́rɛ́ ɛ̄	‘exit.Pfv’
		pà	pɛ̀= ɛ́	‘come.Pfv’
		tùwá	tùwɛ́= ɛ̄	‘bathe.Ipfv’
	c.	lé	lé= ē	‘refuse.Pfv’
		wùsó	wùsé= ē	‘hit.Ipfv’
		wèèsé	wèèsé ē	‘shatter.Ipfv’
		wòlò	wòlè= ē	‘eat.Pfv’
	d.	wòlóó	wòlóó yɛ̄	‘eat.Ipfv’
		kèréé	kèréé yɛ̄	‘look.Pfv’ or ‘look.Ipfv’

3HSg object clitic yɛ̀ does not harmonize with a preceding vowel. 2Sg bɛ́ and 2Pl (w)ɔ́ and their tonal variants likewise have fixed [-ATR] vowels. By contrast, 3NHSg object clitic (y)á contracts with preceding monosyllabic transitive verbs in a manner suggesting ATR and back/rounding harmony, hence /píí (y)á/→ pí yé ‘asked it’ and /lùù (y)á/→ lù wó ‘put it in’.

Most nouns have roots that combine with distinct singular and plural NC suffixes. Harmonic processes affecting the NC suffixes can be triggered either by the vocalism of the root or by that of the alternative NC suffix. Brief summaries are given here, with references to the main data sections.

Some nouns undergo E-ablaut from singular to plural. In the important Ø/E gender, the final vowel of the singular root is fronted. Singular {a ɔ} are fronted to -ɛ̄-, while singular o becomes -ē-, preserving ATR values. High vowels {i u} can become either -ɛ̄- or -ē-, revealing otherwise covert ATR values (§4.1.2.1.1). In the uncommon sā/E gender (§4.1.2.1.2), which probably developed by contraction from the sā/rɛ̄ gender (§4.1.2.4.1), the plural has -ɛ̄- (harmonizing with -sā-) regardless of the vocalism of the root.

In an interesting alternation that affects a smallish number of nouns, both ATR and back/rounding harmony are at play. The first split is [±ATR], with [+ATR] then itself subdividing into two values harmonizing with the back/rounding vocalism of the root. Thus [-ATR] -Cā-, [+ATR] -Cē- and -Cō-. In some cases the [+ATR] value of the stem is only brought out by the NC suffix. One such set is singular -bā-, -bē-, -bō- (§4.1.2.3.1, §4.1.2.1.3, §4.1.2.5.2). Another set is singular -kā-, -kē-, -kō- (§4.1.2.5.1, cf. §4.1.2.1.4), not to be

confused with (inanimate) singular -kà-. The a/e/o alternation matches that in final vowels in Ipfv verbs (see above).

Plural NC suffix -sɛ̄- shifts to -sē- after [+ATR] stems, though some of these have high-voweled roots that make [+ATR] otherwise covert (§4.1.2.3). The same alternation happens with plural suffix -rɛ̄-/-rē- (§4.1.2.4).

The rare singular NC suffixes -kā-, -kē-, and -kō- show the combined ATR plus back/rounding harmonies mentioned above. The plurals retain the ATR split, with -yɛ̄- versus -yē-, but in some cases these plural "suffixes" may just be part of Ciye/ɛ roots that monophthongize before the singular suffix (§4.1.2.5.1). Another minor example of [-ATR] a alternating with [+ATR] e is given by the two tree species terms in §4.1.2.1.3.

NC suffixes with invariant (nonharmonizing) non-high vowels are singular -kà- (inanimate nouns, nonhuman participles), singular -(n)nè- (human nouns, agentives), and plural -sɛ̀ɛ̄-.

3.4 Segmental phonological rules

3.4.1 Local segmental processes

3.4.1.1 k/kp and p/kp alternations

Most stems with peripheral stops show no alternations. The only known cases involving alternations between a labial velar and either a velar or a labial are in (48). kpā in (48a) is a slightly irregular reflex of Ipfv *kūá via *kwā and *k^{w}ā.

(48) a. kú 'die.Pfv' **kp**ā (<MH>) 'die.Ipfv'

b. nāŋ-**kp**īyē-nā 'father-in-law' cf. **p**íyé-nā 'man'
nāŋ-cā-nā 'mother-in-law' cf. cá-nā 'woman'

3.4.1.2 Velar palatalization (k → c, kp → c)

A subset of nouns palatalize k or kp to c in plurals that are formed by fronting the root-final vowel to {e ɛ}, a process called E-ablaut in chapter 4. By contrast, alveolar s does not palatalize in E-ablauted plurals. No examples are known involving t. Overall, velar palatalization in E-ablauted plurals is unproductive and lexicalized.

Nominal roots with k that palatalizes in E-ablauted plurals are listed in (49a). A large subset of them are kú-nā 'head' plus its transparent compounds, and some other nouns in the list may also be frozen compounds of 'head'. Nouns with k that have E-ablauted plurals but do not palatalize are in (49b). They include all roots ending in kaa or kɔɔ with long vowel. Nouns ending in koo are protected from velar palatalization by the fact that E-ablaut produces kwee, with a semivowel that shields k from adjacent front unrounded vowels.

(49)

	singular	plural	gloss
a. palatalizing			
singular with kaa			
	fúúkáá-nā	fúúc-ɛ́ɛ́-nī	‘African eggplant’
singular with ku			
	fúúŋkù-nā	fúúɲc-è-nī	‘boundary’
	kāŋkú-nā	kāɲc-é-nī	‘thick slab of wood, log’
	kàmàŋ-kù-nā	kàmàɲ-c-è-nī	‘shoulder’
	kú-nā	c-é-nī	‘head’
	[sīī-ké-ŋ̄]-kù-nā	[sī-yē-ɲ̄]-c-é-nī	‘tree trunk’ (“tree-head”)
	yíŋ-kù-nā	yíɲ-c-è-nī	‘cheek’
singular with ku, fronting spreads to penult			
	núúkú-nā	nícc-é-nī	‘lower back’
b. nonpalatalizing			
singular with ka			
	fáákā-nā	fáák-é-nī	‘manner’
	mbàràmàŋkà-nā	mbàràmàŋk-è-nī	‘gall bladder’
	nákákà-nā	nákák-è-nī (~ náká-kì-nī)	‘spleen’
	wùrùkà-nā	wùrùk-è-nī	‘belly’
	bārāŋkāā-nā	bārāŋk-ɛ̄ɛ̄-nī	‘fork (at end of stick)’
singular with kaa			
	gɔ́nɔ́-jìŋkáá-nā	gɔ́nɔ́-jìŋk-ɛ́ɛ́-nī	‘gizzard’
	kāāŋkāā-nā	kāāŋk-ɛ̄ɛ̄-nī	‘ratchet (musical instrument)’
	káláŋkāā-nā	káláŋk-ɛ̄ɛ̄-nī	‘molar tooth’
singular with kɔɔ			
	yīŋkɔ̄rɔ̄-kɔ̄ɔ̄-nā	yīŋkɔ̄rɔ̄-k-ɛ̄ɛ̄-nī	‘cowry’

Nominal roots with labial velar kp whose E-ablauted plurals palatalize are in (50). Ablauted kp inconsistently palatalizes to simple c after a nasal and to geminated cc intervocalically.

(50)

	singular	plural	gloss
a.	bā-kpà-nā	bā-cc-è-nī ~ bā-kp-è-nī	‘shin’
b.	lòkòmàŋkpà-nā	lòkòmàɲc-è-nī	‘kidney’

3.4.1.3 Processes involving nasalization

3.4.1.3.1 From ND-to-NN

The combination nn occurs in many nouns. This includes agentives, with HSg noun-class suffix -nnè- after vowels and …n-nè- after nasal codas. In (51a) the first n is the nasal coda at

the end of the verb yàⁿ ‘do, make’. In (51b) the nn is part of the suffix, since other related forms including plural sɔ̀-sɛ̀ɛ̄-nī ‘dancers’ show no sign of a nasal coda.

(51) a. sīī-yàn-nè-nā ‘healer’
b. sɔ̀-nnè-nā ‘dancer’

The verb ‘shout’ begins with b, as shown by the combination with 3Sg ɛ̀ (52a). When 1Sg subject ń̩ (assimilating in position) precedes it, the resulting mb is sometimes pronounced [m:] (52b). This also occurs with other mb combinations at boundaries.

(52) a. ɛ̀ bórɔ́ŋ̩ ŋɛ̄ ‘He/She shouted.’
b. ḿ bórɔ́ŋ̩ ŋɛ̄ ~ ḿ mórɔ́ŋ̩ ŋɛ̄ ‘I shouted.’

When the clusters in question occur medially within stems, the older native speaker usually has a clear intuition as to whether a geminate nasal like mm or a nasal-stop cluster like mb is at hand. This is the case with támmàráà-nā-nā ‘dates (fruit)’ versus tàmbàā-nā ‘granary’.

3.4.1.3.2 Final nasal plus initial {y yⁿ}

At boundaries, a nasal may be followed by y or yⁿ, or by w or wⁿ. The nasal may be that of 1Sg subject ń̩, 1Sg possessor n̩̄, short subjunctive ŋ, or subject-focus marker ŋ́, where in each case ŋ represents an assimilating nasal. It may also be a nasal coda as in fúrúⁿ ‘urinate.Pfv’, or the result of clause-medial apocope reducing Nv to N (N here = any nasal consonant) as with mín from postposition míní, ń from ní ‘down’ in phrasal verbs, or -n̄ from final nominal suffix -nā (singular) or -nī (plural).

The y or yⁿ may be a stem-initial consonant, or it may be an allomorph of an otherwise vocalic grammatical morpheme: positive (y)ɛ̄, 3HSg (y)ɛ̀, 3NHSg (y)á. The w or wⁿ is a stem-initial consonant, or the w of future wɛ́ɛ̀.

In the case of nasal plus {y yⁿ}, the nasal spreads rightward into the onset of the second word, resulting in what is theoretically a geminated ŋ̩ŋ̩ (53a). There is no consistent phonetic difference between ŋ̩ŋ̩ and simple ŋ̩ clause-medially, but at boundaries I transcribe with two ŋ̩’s to bring out the structure. The separate tone of 1Sg ń̩ or n̩̄ is audible after a pause, and to some extent medially.

For the older speaker, w or wⁿ is nasalized by a preceding nasal to ŋ before u (53b), but not noticeably before other vowels (53c).

(53) a. yà ‘ascend.Pfv’ ń̩ ŋ̩à bɔ̀ ‘I didn’t go up.’
yⁿá ‘see.Pfv’ ń̩ ŋ̩á á yɛ̄ ‘I saw it.’
yó ‘hit.Pfv’ ń̩ ŋ̩óó yɛ̀ ɛ̄ ‘I hit-Past him/her.’
positive (y)ɛ̄ ɛ̀ fúrúŋ̩ ŋ̩ɛ̄ ‘He/she urinated.’
3HSg (y)ɛ̀ í sàráŋ̩ ŋ̩ɛ̄ ‘They paid him.’

b. wú-kó-nā ‘house’ n̩̄ ŋ̩ú-kó-nā ‘my house’

c.	wá ‘be sated.Pfv’	ŋ́ wá bɔ̀	‘I didn’t get full (sated).’
	w^ná ‘put in.Pfv’	ŋ́ w^ná á ɲ̄ = ɲɛ̄	‘I put it in.’

3.4.1.3.3 l → n after nasal

Initial l nasalizes to n after word-final nasal consonants (including nasal codas) except in careful speech. Commonly affected morphemes include lā ‘there.Def’, as in sàntùɲc-é-ñ nɛ̄ = ɛ̄ ‘hyenas are there’ from /sàntùɲc-é-nī lā ɛ̄/), forms of láá/lāká ‘go’ as in ń nāká ‘I am going’, and place-of-action nominalizing suffix -làā- as in tò-ń-nàā-nā ‘sitting place, seat (n)’ from /tò-nī-làā-nā).

Dative postposition lɔ̄ avoids nasalization since it has an allomorph tɔ́ after nasals, §8.1.1.2.

3.4.1.3.4 Nasal assimilation

Nasal codas, and final n resulting from loss of a final vowel, usually assimilate to a following consonant. The affected stems include Pfv and Imprt verbs ending in nasal coda, Pfv and Imprt phrasal verbs ending in ní ‘down’, nouns ending in final suffixes -nā (singular) and -nī (plural), 1Sg pronouns, and postpositions míní ‘in’, dative kīlānī, and kúnú ‘chez’.

The assimilated nasal is homorganic to a following stop, nasal, or lateral. For example, stative tááká^n ‘be nearby’ combines with negative bɔ̀ as táákám bɔ̀, and with positive (y)ɛ̄ as táákáɲ ɲɛ̄. 1Sg mî^n is part of mîn nè ‘following me’ (< lè), dative mîŋ kīlānī, and mîŋ kpōkō-nā-nā ‘my calabash tomtom’.

Pronunciation of assimilated ns clusters is variable, as in mîn sīī-kē-nā ‘my tree’ and yóòn sèē-nā ‘old village’. The n in this cluster is sometimes closed, and sometimes realized mainly as vocalic nasality.

The transcription here uses ŋ for the assimilated nasal before w and f, as in mîŋ fɔ̄-mā-nā ‘my dog’ and mîŋ wú-kó-nā ‘my house’. Phonetically the nasal can approximate [w̰] in these clusters.

3.4.1.4 Elision of initial and medial consonants

l and r are sporadically elided intervocalically within stems, and the flanking vowels contract. This has probably been a slowly operating sound change for a long time. For some stems the change has been completed and there is no basis to posit a synchronic underlying liquid. Intervocalic medial k is optionally elided in two known stems. A handful of grammatical morphemes beginning with b, p, and t elide the stop in certain combinations. Details below.

3.4.1.4.1 Elision of intervocalic l

Intervocalic l is stable in most stems even between like vowels, e.g. verbs pàlàmà/pàlàmá ‘burn’, sélé/sēlīyé ‘weave’, lóló/lōlīyá ‘drip’, adjective bɔ̀lɔ̀kɔ̀ŋ-kà-nā ‘blunt (not sharp)’, nouns bélé-nā-nā ‘fabric’, kɔ̀ló-ná-nā ‘calabash guitar’, and many others.

In two cases, *l has been elided in one form of a *Cala root. In (54), a transitive phrasal verb keeps the l in the Pfv stem but elides it optionally in the Ipfv and in the verbal noun (which is morphologically related to the Ipfv).

(54)	Pfv	Ipfv	VblN	gloss
	wàlà X sí	X wà(l)á-sí	wà(l)à-sí-ná-nā	‘disturb’

In (55), the suffixed forms of a *Cala- root drop the l, which is preserved in the bare form of the noun.

(55) páá-sā-nā ‘talk (n), words’ bare form of noun: pálà, cf. (220)

The ‘come’ verb pà/pă has an idiosyncratic extension pá là in the progressive construction (412f), but it is not clear whether this involves diachronic elision of *l.

§3.4.1.5 below describes synchronic length alternations that likely originated by reinterpretation of contractions following elision of *l or *r in suffixed plurals of nouns.

3.4.1.4.2 Elision and restoration of intervocalic r

Intervocalic r is less stable than other consonants, including l (preceding subsection). Unconditioned synchronic alternations, even for a single speaker, have been observed in the following stems:

(56)			
	a.	kɔ̀ɔ̀ ~ kɔ̀rɔ̀	reflexive (§18.1.1)
	b.	tòō ~ tòrō	‘a certain’ (§6.3.3.2)

Some noun stems whose roots are Cvv present a medial r when the final suffix is omitted, as when táá-nā ‘stone’ appears in the form tárá as free postverbal noun. Plural táá-rɛ̄-nī ‘stones’ was originally *táár-ɛ̄-nī with vocalic lengthening and E-ablaut, but it is subject to resegmentation as táá-rɛ̄-nī by comparison with singular táá-nā.

Transitive verbs whose Pfv and Imprt stems are of the shape Cvv add a medial r in combination with a following 3Pl object í. The result is Cvri= í. It is likely that at least some of these verbs were formerly *Cvrv, but if so other verbs may have copied the pattern by analogy.

(57)		Ipfv	Pfv	Pfv +3Pl	gloss
	a.	kèréé	kèè	kèrì= í	’look at’
	b.	fīyé	fíí	fírí= í	‘find’
		fòó	fùù	fùrì= í	‘bury’
		fɔ̄ɔ̄ná	fɔ́ɔ́^{n}	fɔ́rí= í	‘discard’
		līyé	líí	lírí= í	‘kill’
		lùwó	lùù	lùrì= í	‘take in’

māāsáⁿ	māā	mārī= í	‘greet’
pīyé	píí	pírí= í	‘request, ask (sb)’
yèé-ní	yèè X ní	yèrè= é ní	‘stop (sb, sth)’

Cv and Cvⁿ Pfv stems do not add r before 3Pl í. Cv stems are mostly unchanged before í (58a), though in allegro speech some contractions like /ai/ → ɛɛ can occur. Cvⁿ stems with nasal coda lose their nasality before í (58b), unless the nasality shifts to a semivowel (58c). True nasalized vowels are unaffected (58d). The two high-frequency Cⁿa verbs with nasalized semivowels contract with í irregularly as Cⁿi= i (58e). One verb with Càà shape before nominal objects shortens to Cv before 3Pl object í (and 3NHSg object á) (58f).

(58)

	Pfv	Pfv plus 3Pl object	gloss
a.	fà	fà í	‘encounter’
	fɛ́	fɛ́ í	‘fan (v)’
	fĩ	fi í	‘buy (sb)’
	kà	kà í	‘devour’
	kpà	kpà í	‘take and hold up’
	nì	nì í	‘hear’
	nì	nì í	‘drink’
	sè	sè í	‘carry’
	sé	sé í	‘insult (v)’
	sɔ̀	sɔ̀ í	‘tamp down’
	tà	tà í	‘pick up’
	tò X ní	tò í ní	‘seat, have (sb) sit’
	tù	tù í	‘bathe’
	wà	wà í	‘wait for’
	wɛ́	wɛ́ í	‘gather’
	yà	yà í	‘take up’
	yó	yó í	‘hit’
b.	cɛ̀ⁿ	cɛ̀ í	‘winnow in wind’
	míⁿ	mí í	‘hide (sb, sth)’
	nàⁿ	nà í	‘stone-grind’
	sùⁿ	sùⁿ í	‘pound (in mortar)’
	táⁿ	tá í	‘shoot (arrow)’
	tàⁿ X ní	tɛ̀= ɛ́ ní	‘shut, cover’.
c.	yàⁿ ~ yɛ̀ⁿ	yⁿɛ̀ í	‘do’
d.	kàⁿ	kàⁿ í	‘scratch’
	káⁿ	káⁿ í	‘pick (fruit)’
e.	wⁿá	wⁿí= í	‘pour in’
	yⁿá	yⁿí= í	‘see’

f. kàà kà í ‘convey (a body)’ (3NHSg object kà yá)

No r appears when an intransitive Cvv Pfv stem is followed by a 3Pl í that is not a direct object, for example a postpositional complement (59a). The only transitive phrasal verb with long vowel is yàà^{n} X lè, which fails to add r, either for bracketing reasons or because of the nasal coda (59b), but cf. ‘discard’ in (57b) above.

(59) a. ń náá [í lɔ̰ɛ̄=] ɛ̄
1Sg go.Pfv [3Pl Dat] Pos
‘I went to their place.’ (< láá)

b. ɲ́ ɲàà^{n} yí lè ɛ̄
1Sg expel.Pfv 3Pl following Pos
‘I drove them out.’

The verb sírí/sīsé means ‘grow up’. It is the source of a phrasal verb síí-míní/sīsé-míní ‘get old’. In the phrasal verb, Pfv síí- elides the r that is still found in simple Pfv sírí.

Similarly, sàntùŋkóó-nā ‘hyena’ has a bare vocative form sàntùŋkóró in tales (2024_10 @ 01:19). The r is elided before suffixes.

The intransitive verb ‘urinate’ is fúrú^{n}/fúúmá. The Ipfv was likely *fúrúmá before elision occurred.

Some verbs have an extra, suffix-like rá morpheme in the Ipfv stem. Whether the r was formerly present in the Pfv as well is speculative. See §10.2.1.5 for relevant examples.

3.4.1.4.3 Elision of initial b and p

The 2Sg pronominal is bɛ́, bɛ̀, or bɛ̄ depending on the aspect-mood category. tɛ̀ ‘if’ often contracts with perfective subject bɛ́ as tɛ̀ =ɛ́.

(60) tɛ̀ =ɛ́ nì yí
if **2SgP** drink.Pfv 3Pl
‘if you-Sg drink it (=liquid)’ (2024_05 @ 03:11)

The native speaker assistant did not elide imperfective tɛ̀ bɛ̀ ‘if you-Sg’ to #tɛ̀ =ɛ̀, which would be homophonous with 3HSg tɛ̀ ɛ̀ ‘if he/she’.

fá bɛ́ with complementizer fá and 2Sg perfective subject usually contracts as fɛ́= =ɛ́. The subjunctive (quoted imperative) counterpart is M-toned fɛ̄= =ɛ̄. The latter is distinguished from 3HSg subjunctive fɛ̄= ɛ̄ ŋ̄ by the presence of the short subjunctive morpheme ŋ.

(61) a. fɛ́= ɛ́ wàlà súsó-nā
Comp **2SgP** cook.Pfv tô
‘(then) you-Sg cooked tô’ (2024_05 @ 02:19)

b. [fɛ̄ = =ɛ̄ pā]
[Comp **2SgImprt** come.Imprt]
[fɛ̄ = =ɛ̄ nûw^{n} á [ŋ̄ kīlānī]]
[Comp **2SgImprt** give.Imprt 3NHSg [1Sg Dat]]
'(said): "(and) come and give it to me!" ' (2024_04 @ 02:09)

bɛ̄ bā with 2Sg subject bɛ̄ and postsubject subjunctive bā (§17.1.3) usually contracts as bā = =ā.

Elision of p occurs in allegro speech in forms of 'come' (pà, pá, pă) following tá 'go.Imprt' and preceding another VP. Examples are in 2024_03 @ 02:32 and 04:07.

3.4.1.4.4 Elision of initial t in tɛ̀ 'with'

tɛ̀ 'with' often elides its t in combinations with forms of 'go' (tā, tá, tâ, kí-lāā) and of 'come' (pà, pá, pă). These combinations occur in the high-frequency conveyance construction (§11.1.1.2.5).

(62) a. fá = á tā [tɛ̄ = [=ɛ̀ sì-yá]]
Comp 3NHSg go.Pfv [go.Ipfv [**with** 3NHSg]
'Then it (=hyena) conveyed it (=sheep).' (2024_05 @ 00:24)

b. [fɛ̄ = ɛ̄ n̄ tá] [pɛ̆ = [=ɛ̀ sì-í]]
[Comp 3HSg Sbjn go.Imprt] [come.Ipfv [**with** 3Pl]]
'and she would go and bring it (=rice)' (2024_09 @ 02:17)

3.4.1.4.5 Elision of intervocalic k

Intervocalic k, usually pronounced [g] in Cv_v position within a stem or root, is elided in a few combinations.

'Go' has a Pfv stem láá and an Ipfv stem lāká ~ lāá. Possible internal reconstructions are Pfv *láká and Ipfv *lāká, which would constitute a regular verb paradigm.

The term for 'Jula person' is yɔ́kɔ́-nnɛ̀-nā (plural yɔ́kɔ́-bá-nī). The root functions as compound initial in yɔ́kɔ́-sɛ̀ɛ̀-sā-nā 'maize' ("Jula sorghum") and yɔ́kɔ́-kànà-sā-nā 'peanut' ("Jula groundnut"). The latter is often pronounced yɔ́ɔ́-kànà-sā-nā, avoiding two consecutive k syllabic onsets.

3.4.1.5 Length alternations

3.4.1.5.1 CvCv- versus CvvC-ɛ/e- in noun stems

Some bisyllabic noun roots lengthen the initial vowel in the E-ablauted plural. The singular-plural pairings form a distinctive paradigmatic pattern. The synchronic genders are Ø/E (63a), sā/E (63b), bɛ̄/E (63c), and Ø/E (63d). E-ablaut is vacuous if the root already ends in a mid-height front vowel (63e).

(63)

	singular	plural	gloss
a.	fārā-nā	fāār-ɛ̄-nī	‘animal skin’
	kālā-nā	kāāl-ɛ̄-nī	‘sturdy stem (of millet, maize, etc.)’
	ǹtàlā-nā	ǹtààl-ɛ̄-nī	‘spider’
b.	yórú-sá-nā	yóór-ɛ́-nī	‘penis’
	lōlō-sā-nā	lōōl-ē-nī	‘intestine’
	combined with syncope		
	yín-sá-nā	yíín-é-nī	‘locust-bean tree (*Parkia*)’
c.	bárá-bā-nā	báár-ɛ̄-nī	‘tree sp. (*Combretum*)’
d.	bābā-nā	bāāb-ē-nī	‘sheep’
	sóró-nā	sóór-é-nī	‘tree sp. (*Vitex*)’
e.	kèrè-sā-nā	kèèr-ē-nī	‘cane rat (agouti)’
	lèsē-nā	lèès-ē-nī	‘time’
	pɛ́lɛ́-nā	pɛ́ɛ́l-ɛ́-nī	‘neighborhood’
	túú-séré-nā	túú-séér-é-nī	‘honeycomb’
	wéré-bé-nā	wéér-é-nī	‘tree sp. (*Khaya*)’

All of the roots in (63) except ‘sheep’ and ‘time’ contain a coronal sonorant {l r n} in the final presuffixal syllable in the singular. Since West African languages are full of processes that restructure coronal sonorant sequences, one suspects that the plurals may have originally had *-rɛ̄- plural suffix, but underwent contractions. For example, *fārā-rɛ̄-nī → fāā-rɛ̄-nī (elision of the first rhotic), then resegmented as fāār-ɛ̄-nī. Once this change had taken place for the roots with Cvrv shape, it may have spread by analogy to those with Cvlv and Cvnv if they had not already undergone a similar contraction. By then the pattern was sufficiently morphologized to spread to a few roots that have medial obstruents.

3.4.1.5.2 Cv versus Cvv in verb stems

There are several monomoraic Cv verb stems, including those in (64). Ipfv stems with an added syllable, see (65) below, are omitted in (64b). Nonnasal Cv transitive Pfv stems lengthen the vowel before some pronominal objects: 3HSg yɛ̀ illustrated here, also 1Sg mì and 2Sg bɛ̀. Lengthening also occurs before the yá allomorph of 3NHSg, as in sɛ̀ɛ̀ yá ‘carried it on head’, but not in cases like nì ‘drink.Pfv’, nìy^{n} á ‘drank it’, which involve the á allomorph and an epenthetic semivowel, as also in nù ‘give.Pfv’, nùw^{n} á ‘gave it’.

(64)

gloss	Pfv	+3HSg object	Ipfv
a. Pfv and Ipfv are both Cv			
intransitive			
‘die’	kú		kpā
‘come’	pà		pă
‘(rain) fall’	sá		să
transitive			
‘bury’	fù	fùù yɛ̀	fŏ
‘eat (meat)’	kà	kàà yɛ̀	kă
‘scratch’	kà^{n}	kà^{n} yɛ̀	kă^{n}
‘carry on head’	sè	sèè yɛ̀	sĕ
b. only the Pfv is Cv (see below for the Ipfv)			
intransitive			
‘run’	sù		
‘ascend’	yà		
‘rot’	yɛ̀		
transitive			
‘buy’	fí	fíí yɛ̀	
‘hide’	mí^{n}	míŋ ŋɛ̀	
‘drink’	nì		

There are a number of verbs whose Pfv is Cv but whose Ipfv is CvvCv, with an apparent frozen suffix as well as vowel lengthening. The known examples are in (65). Verbs of this type with H-toned Pfv keep the H-tone in the Ipfv, unlike most H-toned Pfv verbs that drop to MH-toned in the Ipfv.

(65)

	gloss	Pfv	Ipfv
a.	‘request’	yá	yáárá
	‘ascend’	yà	yàárá
	‘pick up’	tà	tàárá
	‘build’	má	máárá
b.	‘buy’	fí	fííbá
c.	‘sharpen’	tí^{n}	tíí^{n}yá
d.	‘run’	sù	sùùsá

There are other verb stems with Cv Pfv and an extra syllable in the Ipfv that show no length alternation. Examples are sɔ̀/sùsɔ́ ‘dance’ and several with nasal codas like tù^{n}/tùnná ‘gather’.

3.4.1.5.3 Cv versus Cvv in nominal roots

The noun ‘cow, bovine’ has Cvv shape in isolation and before demonstratives and numerals, which also preserve the singular-plural opposition (66a). The form as compound initial, or before a modifying adjective, normally neutralizes number and has Cv shape (66b).

(66) a.

nāā-nā	‘cow’
náá-sɛ̄-nī	‘cows’
náá-sɛ̄-m̄ bāā	‘two cows’
nāā ná w^nā-nā	‘this cow’
náá-sɛ̄ ní yīn-sī-nī	‘these cows’

b.

ná kàà-nā-nā	‘white cow’
ná kàà-ɲɛ̄-nī	‘white cows’
ná-yìlà-mī-nī	‘cow’s milk’
ná-kùrùkùn-nā-nā	‘herd of cows’

Compare this with náá-nā ‘mouth’ (67). Here the forms used before modifiers have Cvv shape. In nouns like this with distinct vocalism in the bare singular and plural, the form used in the plural is often the one used in number-neutralized premodifier position.

(67) a.

náá-nā	‘mouth’
núú-ɲɛ́-nī	‘mouths’
núú-ɲɛ́-m̄ bāā	‘two mouths’
náá-n̄ ná w^nā-nā	‘this mouth’
núú-ɲɛ́-n̄ ní yīn-sī-nī	‘these mouths’

b.

núú kàà^{n}rìŋ-kà-nā	‘large mouth’
núú kàà^{n}rìŋ-kì-nī	‘large mouths’
núú-fārā-nā	‘lip’ (“mouth-skin”)

Additional examples of monosyllabic noun roots are in (68). Premodifier forms shown (including compound initials) are those that omit the NC suffix, if attested.

(68)

singular	plural	premodifier	gloss
a. consistent Cvv			
táá-nā	táá-ré-nī	táá-	‘stone, rock’
wíí-bɛ̄-nā	wíí-sɛ̄-nī	wíí-	‘straw’
w^náá-nā	w^náá-sɛ̄-nī	w^náá-	‘road’
b. independent Cvv, shortened to Cv			
shortened as pre-modifier			
nūū-mā-nā	núú-sɛ̄-nī	núŋ-	‘chicken’
shortened as compound final			
fɔ́ɔ́-nā	fú-ɲɛ́-nī	fúŋ-	‘hole’

c. independent Cv, variably lengthened as pre-modifier or cpd initial

kú-nā	c-é-nī	kú, kó-, kòó-	‘head’	
wú-kó-nā	wú-yé-nī	wú-	‘house’	

d. Cv, not lengthened

pó-nā	pí-sé-nī	pí-	‘child (offspring)’	
—	sí-yé-nī	sí-	‘baggage, gear’ (cpd final)	
y^{n}á-pò-nā	y^{n}á-pì-sē-nī	yá-	‘eye’	yá denasalized
yɛ̄-kā-nā	yɛ̄-ɛ̄-nī	yā-	‘fire’	
yì-kā-nā	yì-yɛ̄-nī	yì-	‘song’	

e. Cvv^{n}, not shortened

yóón-nā-nā	yóó-ɲɛ̄-nī	yóóŋ̀-/yóóŋ-	‘village’	yóò as adverb

There are several heavy monosyllabic verb stems like those in (69).

(69)

gloss	Pfv	Ipfv	
a. Pfv and Ipfv are both Cvv			
intransitive			
‘fall’	sáá-ní	sāá-ní	(phrasal verb)
transitive			
‘look for’	wéé X ní	X wēé-ní	
b. only Pfv is Cvv			
intransitive			
‘go’	láá	lāká ~ lāá	
transitive			
‘look at’	kèè	kèréé	
‘discard’	fɔ́ɔ́^{n}	fɔ̄ɔ̄ná	
‘greet’	māā	māāsá^{n}	
‘steal’	nàŋkàá^{n}	nàŋkàáná	

3.4.1.5.4 Length alternations in noun-verb relationships

‘Die’ is intransitive kú/kpā. The related nouns are kpā-nā ‘death, dying’ and kúú-ká-nā ‘death, funeral’. The latter is homophonous (in the singular) with kúú-ká-nā ‘bone’. The two have different plurals: kúú-yɛ́-nī ‘deaths’, kúú-rɛ́-nī ‘bones’.

‘Hit’ as transitive verb is suppletive yó/wùsó. Transitive Cv Pfv/Imprt stems lengthen the vowel before Cv object pronominals, see (64) above. The Pfv has a long vowel in yóó yɛ̀ ‘hit him/her’ but it is short in yó ó ‘hit it’ and in yó í ‘hit them’. The participle yóó-kà-nā ‘something that is hit’ (e.g., a percussion instrument) has a long vowel, but agentive yó-nnè-nā ‘hitter’ does not.

3.4.1.6 vv-Contraction

All Paleni words end in vowels, though final nasalized vowels can include a nasal coda. Word-final nonhigh short vowels are subject to vv-Contraction when followed by a morpheme beginning with a contractable vowel. The morphemes that begin with contractable vowels are pronominal clitics 2Pl ɔ́, 3HSg ɛ̀ (but not object allomorph yɛ̀), 3NHSg á (but not object allomorph yá), and 3Pl í, along with (y)ɛ̄ as positive morpheme or as 'be' in copular and identificational clauses.

The most straightforward cases of vv-Contraction are those with positive (y)ɛ̄ after verbs (imperfective transitives or any intransitives). Before final oral nonhigh short vowels, the positive morpheme is ɛ̄, and its vowel quality spreads to a preceding a, ɔ, or (vacuously) ɛ̄. If the preceding vowel is [+ATR] e or o, the positive morpheme harmonizes as ē, and its quality can spread back to o or (vacuously) e, but the rounding feature of stem-final {ɔ o} is preserved as a glide under some conditions. The uncontracted (and unharmonized) form yɛ̄ occurs after long vowels (70b) and after short high vowels (70c). In transcription, = indicates a quality change in the stem-final vowel.

(70)		verb	verb + (y)ɛ̄	gloss
	a.	pà	pɛ̀ = ɛ̄	'come.Pfv'
		fɛ́rɛ́	fɛ́rɛ́ ɛ̄	'exit.Pfv'
		bɔ̀lɔ̀kɔ̀	bɔ̀lɔ̀k(ɔ)̨ɛ̀ = ɛ̄	'be dull, blunt'
		lé	lé ē	'refuse.Pfv'
		tūkó	tūk(w)é = ē	'get hot.Ipfv'
	b.	wòlóó	wòlóó yɛ̄	'eat.Ipfv'
		kèréé	kèréé yɛ̄	'look at.Ipfv'
		sákánáá	sákánáá yɛ̄	'quarrel.Pfv'
	c.	sírí	sírí yɛ̄	'grow up.Pfv'
		w^{n}átú	w^{n}átú yɛ̄	'run.Pfv'

If the first word ends in a true nasalized vowel á^{n}, nasality is preserved under contraction (71a). However, most final nasalized vowels are really vowels plus a nasal coda (§3.2.1.3), which combines with yɛ̄ as uncontracted …ɲ ɲɛ̄ (71b).

(71)			
	a.	kā^{n}	'pick (fruit).Ipfv'
		á kɛ̄^{n} = ɛ̄	'picks it'
	b.	kérékɛ́^{n}	'feel well.Pfv'
		í kérékɛ́ɲ ɲɛ̄	'They are feeling well (not sick).'

Positive (y)ɛ̄ follows nouns in transitive perfective and transitive imperative clauses, which have CVO order. Ordinary nouns have full forms ending in a final number suffix, singular -nā or plural -nī. The contractions with (y)ɛ̄ are somewhat irregular (72a-b). Singular

-nā contracts in a phonologically opaque way with (y)ɛ̄ as -n ī. Plural -nī reduces to a nasal coda, which then combines regularly with yɛ as -ɲ̄ ɲɛ̄. Nouns without final singular suffixes (72c-d) show the same contractions as in (70) above.

(72) a. cá-nā ‘woman’
è yⁿá cá-n ī ‘He/She saw a/the woman.’

b. c-ɛ́-nī ‘women’
è yⁿá c-ɛ́-ɲ̄ ɲɛ̄ ‘He/She saw (the) women.’

c. ādāmā ‘Adama (name)’
è yⁿá ādāmɛ̄= ɛ̄ ‘He/She saw Adama.’

d. lí-bé ‘mother’
í yⁿá [í lí-bé] ɛ̄ ‘They saw their mother.’

(y)ɛ̄ as post-subject ‘be’ triggers similar contractions. With some NP subjects, such as personal names, the native-speaker assistant tended to topicalize the subject and then use resumptive subject pronominals.

(73) a. [ɲ̄ cà-ɲ̄] ɲɛ̄ sàmá-nnɛ̄ ‘My wife is a Wara (ethnicity).’
[ɲ̄ c-ɛ̀-ɲ̄] ɲɛ̄ sàmá-sɛ̄rɛ̄ ‘My wives are Wara.’
[í lí-bé] ɛ̄ sàmá-nnɛ̄ ‘Their mother is a Wara.’

b. ādāmā [è ɛ̄ sàmá-nnɛ̄] ‘Adama, he is a Wara.’

Vocalic pronominal clitics occur as subjects, preverbal objects, and postpositional complements, as well as possessors of nouns. 2Pl varies between ɔ́ and mɔ̀ depending on grammatical function.

As subjects, vocalic pronominals contract with preceding tɛ̀ (or variant) ‘if’ or with ‘that’ complementizers á and mà as shown in (74). For nonlogophoric third-person categories, the older speaker always uses mà, but the young speaker can use á (blurring the distinction between logophoric and regular pronominals).

(74)

	tɛ̀ ‘if’	á ‘that’	mà ‘that’
3HSg è	tɛ̀ è	ɛ́= è	mɛ̀= è
3NHSg á	tà= á	á á	mà á
3Pl í	tì= í	í= í	mì= í
2Pl ɔ́	tɔ̀= ɔ́	ɔ́= ɔ́	mɔ̀= ɔ́

Subjects, in the leftmost column in (75), can also be immediately followed (in imperfective transitives) by pronominal objects (column heads). Most of these combinations do not contract, due mainly to semivowel-initial variants of third-person object clitics. Only the bolded combination mà= á contracts reliably. In allegro speech, additional low-level contractions can occur, especially with 3Pl object.

(75)

	(y)ɛ̀ 3HSg	á 3NHSg	í 3Pl	ɔ́ 2Pl
3HSg ɛ̀	ɛ̀ yɛ̀	ɛ̀ yá	ɛ̀ (y)í ~ ɛ̀ ɛ́	ɛ̀ wɔ́
3NHSg á	á yɛ̀	á yá	á (y)í ~ ɛ́ = ɛ́	á wɔ́
3Pl í	í yɛ̀	í yá	í (y)í ~ í yɛ́	í wɔ́
2Pl ɔ́	mɔ̀ yɛ̀	**mà = á**	mɔ̀ (y)í	—

When a pronominal object follows a verb, as in object function in perfective and imperative clauses, 3HSg object takes the yɛ̀ allomorph consistently and does not contract, while 3NHSg á and 3Pl í generally contract with the final syllable of nonmonosyllabics, and 3Pl í (and perhaps vacuously 3NHSg á) also contract with monosyllabic Ca (here y^{n}á 'see.Pfv'), resulting in many long vowels (a = á, i = í). CuCu bisyllabics have 3NHSg allomorph ó just in case they also have a shift (not shown here) to final ó in Ipfv CuCó, indicating that the stem is [+ATR] (76c). Monosyllabic verbs other than Ca preserve their vowel quality even before 3Pl í, as with 'fan' (76a). Several Cvv verbs shorten to Cv before 3NHSg á, in which case á itself shifts to é or ó when the verb is [+ATR] (76d-e). Before 3Pl í, the Cvv verbs often insert a rhotic syllable, and in the specific case of 'greet' this also occurs before 3NHSg á (76e). 2Pl object is not included in (76), since it has a consonant-initial allomorph mɔ́ as postverbal object.

(76)

		(y)ɛ̀ 3HSg	á 3NHSg	í 3Pl
a.	wà 'wait.for'	wà yɛ̀	wà á	wà í ~ wɛ̀ = ɛ́
	pàlàmà 'scald.Pfv'	pàlàmà yɛ̀	pàlàmà á	pàlàmì = í
	fɛ́ 'fan.Pfv'	—	fɛ́ yá	fɛ́ í
	fɛ́ X sí 'fan.Pfv'	fɛ́ ɛ̀ sí	—	fɛ́ í sí
	pɛ̀rɛ̀ 'pour.Pfv'	—	pɛ̀rà = á	pɛ̀rì = í
	fɛ̀sɛ̀ 'remove.Pfv'	fɛ̀sɛ̀ yɛ̀	fɛ̀sà = á	fɛ̀sì = í
	bìrì X míní 'squeeze'	bìrì yɛ̀ míní	bìrà = á míní	bìrì í míní
	búkú 'bump.Pfv'	búkú yɛ̀	búká = á	búkí = í
	kɔ́kɔ́ 'protect.Pfv'	kɔ́kɔ́ yɛ̀	kɔ́k(ɔ̰)á = á	kɔ́kí = í
b.	y^{n}á 'see.Pfv'	y^{n}áá yɛ̀	y^{n}á á	y^{n}í = í
	w^{n}á 'put.Pfv'	w^{n}áá yɛ̀	w^{n}á á	w^{n}í = í
c.	túkú 'catch.Pfv'	túkú yɛ̀	túkó = ó	túkí = í
	yúkú 'sow.Pfv'	—	yúkó = ó	yúkí = í
	wùrù X ní 'push.Pfv'	wùrù yɛ̀ ní	wùrò = ó ní	wùrì = í ní
d.	fà 'encounter.Pfv'	fàà yɛ̀	fà á	fà í ~ fɛ̀ = ɛ́
	yó 'hit.Pfv'	yóó yɛ̀	yò ó	yò í

e.	líí ‘kill.Pfv’	líí yɛ̀	líy é	lírí= í
	píí ‘ask.Pfv’	píí yɛ̀	píy é	pírí= í
	lùù ‘put in.Pfv’	lùù yɛ̀	lùw ó	lùrì= í
f.	māā greet.Pfv’	māā yɛ̀	mārā= á	mārī= í
	kɛ̀ɛ̀ ‘look at=.Pfv’	kɛ̀ɛ̀ yɛ̀	kɛ̀ɛ̀ yá	kɛ̀rì= í
g.	máná ‘speak.Pfv’	—	mání yá	mání í

A final nasalized vowel can block vv-Contraction with 3NHSg á. This is always the case when the verb ends in a nasal coda, as brought out by the final nasal before 3NHSg á. The nasality usually disappears entirely before 3Pl í object. Some verbs like ‘read’ then allow vv-Contraction or vowel-shortening in the 3Pl (77a-b). Other verbs do not contract (77c).

(77)		3NHSg	3Pl
a.	kàlá^{n} ‘read.Pfv’	kàlán á	kàlí= í
b.	nàŋkàá^{n} ‘steal.Pfv’	nàŋkàán á	nànkà í
c.	kùlà^{n} ‘lock.Pfv’	kùlàn á	kùlà í
	yà^{n} ‘do.Pfv’	yàm á	y^{n}à í

Postverbal 3Pl object í is lowered to ɛ́ ~ é for most transitive phrasal verbs, i.e. when the 3Pl pronominal is sandwiched between the verb and a following pseudo-postposition. This results in [-ATR] 3Pl ɛ́ or [+ATR] 3Pl é contracting with preceding nonhigh vowels (78a-d). In (78b), káá^{n}rí ‘lengthen.Pfv’ is treated as though /káá^{n}rá/ by extrapolation from the final vowel shift in Ipfv kàà^{n}rá, reflecting the morphophonological relationship between the Ipfv stem (with added final á) and the combination of the Pfv stem with 3NHSg á. By contrast, stable final i combines with 3Pl í as the expected i í (e.g., nonphrasal pìsì í ní ‘damaged them’). The influence of the Ipfv stem (with added final á) on the Pfv followed by 3NHSg á is also apparent in the shift of the medial vowel to i before 3NHSg á in (78c), see §3.4.1.8 below. There are parallels with bisyllabic nonphrasal verbs like máná/mānīyá ‘speak, say’ (mání yá ‘say.Pfv it’). In (78d), the nasal coda in monosyllabic Ca^{n} verbs disappears before 3Pl í, but only after blocking contraction. Phrasal verbs based on w^{n}á ‘put’ respect this verb’s irregular 3Pl object form w^{n}í= í (78e), cf. (76b) above.

(78)		3NHSg	3Pl
a.	pɛ̀rɛ̀ X tú ‘pour off.Pfv’	pɛ̀rà= á tū	pɛ̀rɛ̀= ɛ́ tū
	tà^{n} X ní ‘cover.Pfv’	tànn á ní	tɛ̀= ɛ́ ní
	cɛ̀^{n} X míní ‘winnow.Pfv’	cɛ̀nn á míní	cɛ̀ ɛ́ míní
	kà X ní ‘light (fire).Pfv’	kà á ní	kɛ̀= ɛ́ ní
	sɔ̀ X míní ‘step on.Pfv’	sɔ̀ á míní	sɔ̰̀ɛ̀= ɛ́ míní ~ sɔ̀ yɛ̀ míní
	kà^{n} X míní ‘mix.Pfv’	kà^{n} á míní	kɛ̀^{n}= ɛ́ míní

	gbɔ̀ X míní ‘untie.Pfv’	gbɔ̀ yá míní	gbɔ̀ yɛ́ míní
	kɔ̀sɔ̀mà X ní ‘crumple’	kɔ̀sɔ̀mà á ní	kɔ̀sɔ̀mɛ̀= ɛ́ ní
b.	kàà^{n}rí X míní ‘lengthen’	kàà^{n}rà= á míní (cf. Ipfv kàà^{n}rá-míní)	kàà^{n}rɛ̀= ɛ́ míní
c.	fálá X sí ‘scrape off.Pfv’	fálí yá sí	fálɛ́= ɛ́ sí
	bèlè X ní ‘keep.Pfv’	bèlì yá ní (cf. Ipfv fālīyá-sí, bèlìyá ní, §3.4.1.8)	bèlè é ní
d.	wéé X ní ‘look for.Pfv’	wéé yá ní	wéré= é ní
	tò X ní ‘seat.Pfv’	tò yá ní	tò í ní ~ tòrè= é ní
e.	bá^{n} X lɔ̄ ‘increase.Pfv’	bánn á lɔ̄	bá í lɔ̄
	bá^{n} X sí ‘help.Pfv’	bánn á sí	bá í sí
f.	w^{n}á X ní ‘put to bed.Pfv’	w^{n}á á ní	w^{n}í= í ní

3.4.1.7 Nasal gemination in verbs before Ipfv á or 3NHSg object á

This is a metrically conditioned alternation of n and nn.

Most verbs whose Pfv stems end in a nasal coda (§3.2.1.3), like other verbs, add a final á to form the Ipfv stem. The nasal coda then surfaces as geminated nn after a single root syllable, but as simple n after two or more root syllables. Examples are mí^{n}/mīnná ‘hide’, yàrà^{n}/yàràná ‘align’, and túrá^{n}/tūrānná ‘be nearby’.

Three irregular verbs manifest the nasal coda as m (never geminated) instead of nn or n, as in yà^{n}/yàmá ‘do’, cf (10c) above.

The same forms of the nasal coda occur in combinations of a Pfv verb ending in a nasal coda plus 3NHSg object á, thus mínn á ‘hid it’ parallel to Ipfv mīnná, yàràn á ‘aligned it’ parallel to Ipfv yàràná, and yàm á ‘did it’ parallel to Ipfv yàmá. One might expect the same nasals to appear before the other vocalic object pronominal, 3Pl í, but nasal codas are idiosyncratically lost in this combination: mí í ‘hid them’, yàrì= í ‘aligned them’, y^{n}à í ‘did them’. See data in (31) above.

3.4.1.8 a/e/o → i before yá in verbal inflection

Certain bisyllabic transitive Pfv and Imprt verb stems ending in a, o, or e shift their final vowel to i before 3NHSg object (y)á and 3HSg object yɛ̀. They are máná ‘speak.Pfv’, yàlà ‘pour out.Pfv’, yáná ‘roast’, wòlò ‘eat.Pfv’, and phrasal verb fálá X sí ‘carve’. They combine with (y)á as mání yá, yàlì yá, yání yá, wòlì yá, and fálí yá sí. An example with 3NHSg yɛ̀ is bèlì yɛ̀ sí ‘married him/her’.

This vocalic shift also happens in the Ipfv stem of these verbs with the exception of wòlò, for example mānīyá ‘speak.Ipfv’, see (395) below.

Some [+ATR] verbs whose Pfv and Imprt stems end in e show the same shift to i before 3NHSg and 3HSg object pronominals, but have yé in the Ipfv stem. This is the case with the phrasal verb bèlè X sí 'marry.Pfv', as in bèlì yè sí 'married him/her' and Ipfv bèlìyé-sí, and with sélé 'weave' in sélí yá 'wove it' and Ipfv sēlīyé. See also (396) below.

3.4.2 Apocope and syncope

Final number suffixes on nouns, namely singular -nā and plural -nī, are often reduced to just -n̄ or an assimilated nasal phonetically clause-medially. Plural -nī also optionally reduces in prepausal position. Locative postposition míní, mīnī 'today', and dative postposition kīlānī likewise often reduce to mín, mīn, and kīlān under similar conditions. The reduced final nasals from -nī, míní, mīnī, and kīlānī combine with positive (y)ɛ̄ as …ɲ ɲɛ̄. However, the reduced final nasal from singular -nā combines with the positive morpheme as …n ī. In other words, one cannot first merge -nā and -nī as reduced -n̄ and then combine this with (y)ɛ̄.

ní 'down' as the second element in phrasal verbs does not usually lose its vowel when it is separated from the verb by an object. However, it can lost its vowel when encliticized to the verb (in all intransitives, in imperfective transitives, and in nominalizations) and not prepausal (§3.5.2 below).

3.5 Clitics, infixes, and linkers

3.5.1 Proclitics

Personal pronouns have independent and proclitic forms. Proclitics occur in the same linear positions as nonpronominal NPs. The proclitics occur before VPs as subjects, before imperfective transitive verbs as objects, before nouns as possessors, and before postpositions as complements. See §4.3 for examples.

3.5.2 Enclitics

Enclitic-like forms include certain object pronominals, pseudo-postpositions, and polarity morphemes.

Some postverbal object pronominals are word-like in all combinations and cannot be considered to be enclitic. This is the case with 1Pl túwⁿɔ̄ and 2Pl mɔ́à. Those that are impressionistically enclitic include 1Sg mì 1Sg, 2Sg bɛ̀, and 3HSg yɛ̀, especially after Cv verbs, which lengthen to Cvv before them. Even better cases for enclisis are 3NHSg object (y)á and 3Pl object í after monosyllabic stems and certain bisyllabic stems. The most striking cases with 3NHSg (y)á are those where it appears as ó or é by ATR and back/rounded harmony, as in túkú 'catch.Pfv', túkó= ó 'caught it' and fíí 'find.Pfv', fíy é 'found it'. The most striking cases involving 3Pl í are combinations with Cvv verbs that insert an r, as in líí 'kill.Pfv', lírí= í 'killed them'. With other verbs, including all verbs of three or more moras, it is more difficult to demonstrate that these pronominal objects are enclitics.

Phrasal verbs consist of a verb and a separable pseudo-postposition (§15.1.2). If the verb is intransitive, the psP is always adjacent to the verb and is impressionistically

encliticized (or suffixed). If the verb is transitive, the psP is adjacent to the verb in imperfective clauses and in deverbal nominals, but not in perfective or imperative clauses. Most psP's have an invariant form and show no unusual phonological interactions with the verb. However, ní 'down' as psP (§15.1.2.7) behaves differently when encliticized to the verb. When separated from the verb by an object, it retains its vowel, and it combines with polarity morphemes as positive ní yɛ̄ and negative ní bɔ̀. When encliticized to the verb, and not immediately prepausal, it reduces to -ń and combines with polarity morphemes as positive -ɲ́ ɲɛ̄ and negative -ḿ bɔ̀.

Short demonstrative adverbs lā 'there.Def' and yīnā 'here', reduced from lā-fā-nā and yīŋ-fā-nā (§4.4.3), are encliticized to verbs, especially wàkà/wàká 'remain' (§11.2.5.3) and kɔ̀ní 'be present' (§11.2.3.2). However, lā can also occur as a free form. Manner adverb sìkɛ̄ 'thus' is part of prequotative wɛ̄-sìkɛ̄ 'said', reflecting a now-frozen enclisis.

Clause-final positive (y)ɛ̄ and variants (§10.6.2) and the 'be' predicators of the same form are arguably phonological enclitics. Their linear position is determined morphosyntactically. However, (y)ɛ̄ is replaced by allomorph ī after singular nouns, where final suffix -nā becomes -n ī.

Completive bē 'already' (§8.4.4.1.2) is also impressionistically encliticized.

3.5.3 Linkers (absent)

No linkers (morphemes that intervene between two words or stems and require the overt presence of both) have been observed.

3.5.4 Infixes (absent)

No infixes have been observed. However, E-ablaut which forms plural nouns (§4.1.2.1) is a somewhat similar process. So are length alternations in other nominal plurals (§3.4.1.5.1).

3.6 Tones

Paleni has three tone levels (á ā à), like many other languages of southwestern Burkina Faso, but unlike Jula which has two levels. Most syllables are level-toned, but contour-toned syllables occur in some stems, noun-class suffixes (-sɛ̀ɛ̄-), and TAM forms of monosyllabic verbs (pă 'come.Ipfv', yâ 'ascend.Imprt'). Tritonal <LHL> syllables are rare and are created by vv-Contraction (417a-b). See §2.1.2 above for diacritics.

3.6.1 Tones of verb stems

3.6.1.1 Lexical tone melodies for verbs (Pfv stem)

Verbs have Pfv, Ipfv, and Imprt stems, as well as nominalized derivatives. The Pfv and Imprt are segmentally identical (except for 'go!'), but they may differ tonally. The Ipfv may have

an extra syllable not present in the Pfv and Imprt, and the Ipfv always ends in H-tone. The Pfv stem has the best claim to being lexically basic, except as noted below.

Stative verbs have only one stem. They do not distinguish Pfv from Ipfv, and they cannot function as imperatives. Most are semantically deadjectival.

Pfv stems show the tone patterns in (79), based on the Pfv or stative stem. All-H and all-L are predominant, while all-M is limited to a few verbs. Other attested tone patterns are uncommon. The Pfv tones are arguably lexically basic, and I sometimes classify verbs as H-melodic, L-melodic, and so forth based on the Pfv.

(79)

	monosyllabic	bisyllabic	trisyllabic
a. monotonal (H and L common, M rare)			
H	kú ‘die’	yáká ‘weep’	tásíyó ‘slump over’
M	māā ‘greet’	tīkī ‘abandon’	—
L	yɛ̀ ‘rot’	kùntù ‘crawl’	yàlàkà ‘pull’
b. bitonal (falling limited to one stative verb, rising uncommon but attested)			
falling			
HL	—	—	yɔ́kɔ́rɔ̀ ‘be a lot’
HM	—	—	—
ML	—	—	—
rising			
MH	—	—	—
LM	—	yànī ‘spill’ (§15.1.2.7)	—
LH	cɔ̀ɔ́ⁿ ‘pity (v)’	wùní ‘breathe’	kɔ̀rɔ̀síⁿ ‘guard (v)’

The absence of Pfv stems with falling tone patterns is striking; yɔ́kɔ́rɔ̀ ‘be a lot’ (79b) is a stative. The L-toned Pfv verbs can be split into two subtypes based on the tones of the Imprt, as explained just below.

3.6.1.2 Tonal ablaut of verbs

Pfv and Ipfv stems are distinct for most verbs. For some verbs, the Ipfv has an extra syllable absent from Pfv and Imprt stems (e.g. tà ‘pick.up.Pfv’, Imprt tâ, Ipfv tàárá). The Ipfv stem ends in H-toned á, or in a few cases an H-toned mid-height vowel. The added H-toned vowel in the Ipfv does not increase the mora count when it replaces or fuses with a short vowel. Examples are pà/pă ‘come’ yɔ́kɔ́/yɔ̄kɔ́ ‘jump’, lùù/lùwó ‘take in’, nàkàrì/nàkàrá ‘expel’. Of course the Ipfv does add one or two moras when it includes an extra syllable. Examples like yɔ́kɔ́/yɔ̄kɔ́ ‘jump’ present the stepwise drop from H to M of the nonfinal syllables of the Ipfv stem. This drop occurs in the majority of verbs with H-toned Pfv that do not add an extra syllable in the Ipfv.

The Imprt stem is identical segmentally and tonally to the Pfv stem, except that about half of the verbs of one or two moras with all-L Pfv stems become HL-toned in the Imprt. There is no way to tell in advance which L-melodic stems have Imprt stems that are L-toned versus HL-toned, except that all trimoraic and heavier L-toned stems have H*L-toned Imprt

stems. Remarkably, nì/nìy^{n}á ‘drink’ and nì/nìy^{n}á ‘hear’ are homophonous in the Pfv and Ipfv, but distinguish their imperatives as nì ‘drink!’ versus nî ‘hear!’ The existence of two subtypes of L-melodic stems raises the possibility that they were originally distinct tonal types that have merged except in the Imprt stem. Specifically, one might hypothesize that L-melodics of the ‘hear’ type were originally HL-toned throughout. As mentioned above, there are no synchronically HL-toned regular (i.e., TAM-marking) Pfv verbs. It should be noted that Imprt verbs occur not only in true deontic clauses (commands and exhortations), but also in the high-frequency short subjunctive clause type. Full Imprt data are in §10.8.1.1.

For broader details on verb-stem morphology, see chapter 10.

3.6.2 Tones of non-verb stems

3.6.2.1 Lexical tone patterns for nouns

The basic morphological structure of a nominal word is a root followed by an NC (noun-class) suffix and a final number suffix. NC suffixes are specified for singular or plural number. Some nouns lack a singular NC suffix but have a plural NC suffix. The pairing of singular and plural NC suffixes, including those with zero (Ø) singular, constitutes a **gender**. The final number suffix (singular -nā, plural -nī) is reduced to a nasal consonant or omitted in some positions. Some nouns omit both the NC suffix and the final suffix before adjectives and as compound initials.

Most nominal roots have the same tonal and segmental form before singular and plural suffix complexes. So in fáátárà-nā-nā ‘(woman’s) shawl’ and plural fáátárà-ɲɛ̄-nī, few would argue against taking fáátárà- as the root. However, there are numerous nouns whose roots differ slightly from singular to plural. Examples are bābā-nā ‘sheep’, plural bāāb-ɛ̄-nī, where the root is lengthened in the plural (§3.4.1.5.1); nūū-mā-nā ‘chicken’, plural núú-sɛ̄-nī, where an M-toned root is raised to H-toned in the plural (§3.6.2.5), and idiosyncratic irregularities like náá-nā ‘mouth’, plural núú-ɲɛ́-nī.

In most genders, the paired singular and plural NC suffixes share the same tone, as with nā/ɲɛ̄ and kà/kì genders. This includes genders with M-toned singular and plural suffixes that both raise to H-toned after a root ending in H-tone, as in kúú-má-nā ‘tree sp. (*Diospyros*)’, plural kúú-ré-nī. Exceptionally, the productive human gender nnè/sɛ̀ɛ̄ always has L-toned singular -(n)nè- versus rising-toned plural -sɛ̀ɛ̄- (§4.1.2.3.6): bélèn-sèlè-**nnè**-nā ‘weaver’, plural bélèn-sèlè-**sɛ̀ɛ̄**-nī.

Nouns are subject to tonal ablaut, i.e., tonal morphophonology that cannot be classified under regular tone sandhi. These tonal ablaut processes are covered in the following subsections.

3.6.2.2 Rightward H-Spreading from root to M-toned NC suffix

The lexically M-toned NC suffixes remain M-toned (e.g., -nā-, -ɲɛ̄-) after a root-final M or L. However, these NC suffixes raise to H (e.g., -ná-, -ɲɛ́-) after roots that end in a true H-tone. A few examples of this raising, from among many, are in (80).

(80)

singular	plural	gloss
fú-ná-nā	fú-ɲé-nī	‘awl’
kàcìlé-ná-nā	kàcìlé-ɲé-nī	‘long-handled hoe’
kán-ná-nā	ká-ɲé-nī	‘thigh’
kɔ̀lɔ́-ná-nā	kɔ̀lɔ́-ɲé-nī	‘calabash guitar’
kɔ́ɔ́-ná-nā	kɔ́ɔ́-ɲé-nī	‘left side’

Apparent exceptions to the raising rule, in which unraised M-toned -nā- and plural -ɲē- follow an H-toned syllable, are found copiously in transcription. These stems share an additional tonal property, namely, they undergo Initial Tone-Dropping (§3.6.2.7) when preceded by a possessor. Since possessum tone-dropping also affects overtly falling /HL/ and /HM/ roots, one suspects that some or all of the stems in (81) were originally of falling melody. This would immediately explain why Rightward H-Spreading onto NC suffixes fails to apply after these roots. Indeed, the nouns in (81a) have occasional variant pronunciations with root-final ǹ before the nasal NC suffixes, and as free postverbal nouns they raise the NC suffix to -Cv̄ with <MH> tone rather than to -Cv́, see (501) below. The nouns in (81b) also have variant pronunciations with a short L-toned medial vowel. This suggests that native speakers might represent the roots in (81a-b) as having a covertly falling melody (HM or HL). However, such representations are at only weakly motivated by the data overall, and no variant tonal pronunciation is known for the two nouns in (81c).

(81)

	singular	plural	gloss
a.	bélén-nā-nā	bélé(ɲ)-ɲē-nī	‘fabric’
	fúlán-nā-nā	fúlá(ɲ)-ɲē-nī	‘Fulbe person, Pullo’
	kpán-nā-nā	kpá(ɲ)-ɲē-nī	‘shed’
	nún-nā-nā	nú(ɲ)-ɲē-nī	‘portable waterjar’
	sínán-nā-nā	síná(ɲ)-ɲē-nī	‘deaf person’
	yàmpín-nā-nā	yàmpí(ɲ)-ɲē-nī	‘ladle’
	yóón-nā-nā	yóó(ɲ)-ɲē-nī	‘village’
b.	bótól(ò)-nā-nā	bótól(ò)-ɲē-nī	‘bottle’ (Fr)
	pɛ́l(ì)-nā-nā	pɛ́l(ì)-ɲē-nī	‘shovel (n)’ (Fr *pelle*)
	sɛ́n(è)-nā-nā	—	‘gold’
	wár(ì)-nā-nā	wár(ì)-ɲē-nī	‘money’ (Jula)
c.	tààrí-nā-nā	tààrí-ɲē-nī	‘tale’, cf. tà/tàárá ‘pick up’
	sɛ́bɛ́-nā-nā	sɛ́bɛ́-ɲē-nī	‘page’ (Jula), cf. sébɛ́^{n} ‘write’

The preceding examples involve nouns with -nā-/-ɲē- NC suffixes, and their raised variants -ná-/-ɲé-. Similar alternations are attested with other M-toned NC suffixes, including -sē- ~ -sē- and -rē- ~ -rē-. However, L-initial NC suffixes like human singular -(n)nè- and its plural -sɛ̀ɛ̄-, or nonhuman singular -kà- and its plural -kì-, do not raise. Raised forms are bolded in (82a), showing that the roots end in true H-tones. Unraised forms are bolded in (82b-c). In (82b) the root is /M/-melodic so of course the NC suffix is not

raised. In (82c) the root is seemingly H-toned so it is surprising that the NC suffix is not raised. These are the roots that appear as H-toned but arguably end in a structurally <HL> syllable, e.g., /túkû-/. In (82d) the root is M-toned in the singular, but H-toned in the plural, due to Root-Tone Raising (§3.6.2.5). Here again the failure of the NC suffix to raise from M to H is understandable if the plural root ends in a structurally <HL> syllable, e.g., /fókô-/.

(82)		singular	plural	gloss
	a.	fɛ́ɛ́n-**sá**-nā	fɛ́ɛ́-**ɲé**-nī	‘fonio (cereal)’
		fúrú-**sá**-nā	fúrú-**mí**-nī	‘excrement’
		lí-**yé**-nā	líí-**bé**-nī	‘kinsman’
		túú-**sá**-nā	túú-**rɛ́**-nī	‘liver’
		túú-**bá**-nā	túú-b-**ɛ́**-nī	‘cowpea’
		túú-**má**-nā	—	‘honey’
	b.	lōlō-**sā**-nā	lōōl-**ē**-nī	‘intestine’
		sīī-**kē**-nā	sī-**yē**-nī	‘tree’
	c.	túkú-**sā**-nā	túkú-**mī**-nī	‘powder, flour’
		fɔ́-nā	fúú-**rē**-nī	‘ax’
	d.	fɔ̄-**mā**-nā	fɔ́n-**sē**-nī	‘dog’
		fōkō-**bō**-nā	fókó-**sē**-nī	‘shea-tree caterpillar (*Cirina*)’

Another possible source for morphologization of suffixal-tone irregularity is nonmonosyllabic roots with final …Cvv́ syllable, whose pitch rise is not always clearly articulated (83). If a variant Cvv̀ becomes established, the irregularity will be that the NC suffix inexplicably raises to H after an L-tone. The forms in (83) show the full contour tones as in careful pronunciation.

(83)	singular	plural	gloss
	gbɛ́sɛ̀ɛ́-**ná**-nā	gbɛ́sɛ̀ɛ́-**ɲé**-nī	‘chewstick’
	ŋ̀ŋ́fàá-**ná**-nā	ŋ̀ŋ́fàá-**ɲé**-nī	‘pocket’

3.6.2.3 Other tone alternations in natural-species and kin terms

In (84), the NC suffix is H-toned -bé- (or assimilated variant) in the singular but M-toned -sē- in the plural.

(84)			
	séé-bé-nā	séé-sē-nī	‘ground squirrel’

The parental kin terms in (85a) are loosely affiliated with the bē/sE gender, but they have an unusual plural suffix -sèé- with rising tone, as well as an otherwise very rare final plural suffix -yɛ̄ instead of -nī. This -sèé- reduces to -sé- in some compounds (85b).

(85)		singular	plural	gloss
	a.	lí-bé	lí-sèé-yɛ̄	‘mother’
		sí-bé	sí-sèé-yɛ̄	‘father’
	b.	[lí-bé]-kàppà-nā	[lí-sé-yɛ́]-kàppǐ-nī	‘mother’s senior co-wife’
		[sí-bé]-kàppà-nā	[sí-sí-yɛ́]-kàppǐ-nī	‘father’s elder brother’

The parental terms in (85a) remain H-toned after pronominal possessors in their kinship sense: tí lí-bé ‘our mother’, tí sí-bé ‘our father’. As a compound final in the sense ‘owner (of X)’, the term for ‘father’ is tone-dropped and adds the regular final suffix (singular -sì-bē-nā, plural -sì-sē-nī), see §5.1.2.1.7.

3.6.2.4 Leveling of LM syllables to L

Many nouns, both simple stems and derived place nominals (§4.2.1.3) with -làā-, have roots that end in an <LM>-toned syllable that drops to L-toned before plural NC marker -sɛ̄- (86a). One might speculate that the rising tone and long vowel of the singular reflect an original M-toned singular NC suffix, e.g., *-là-Cā-. A few iterative multisyllabic noun stems of this gender also drop the final root syllable from M to L before -sɛ̄- (86b). The tone-dropped syllables are bolded.

(86)		singular	plural	gloss
	a.	fòō-nā	**fòò**-sē-nī	‘kneading stick’
		cɔ̀ɔ̄-nā	**cɔ̀ɔ̀**-sē-nī	‘hip’
		kàā-nā	**kàà**-sē-nī	‘shell’
		fàā-nā	**fàà**-sē-nī	‘vestibule’
		sànsàā-nā	sàn**sàà**-sē-nī	‘bell; rattle’
		sɔ̀-làā-nā	sɔ̀-**làà**-sē-nī	‘dance ground’
	b.	bòkòbòkō-nā	bòkòbò**kò**-sē-nī	‘tree sp. (*Calotropis*)’
		wún-zàmpìyā-nā	wún-zàmpì**yàn**-sē-nī	‘skink (*Chalcides*)’

táá-nā ‘stone’ with plural táá-ré-nī, becomes -tàā- with plural -tàà-rɛ̄-nī or -tàà-sɛ̄-nī in compounds like túkú-nàn-tàā-nā ‘(large flat) grindstone’. -tàā- drops to -tàà- in diminutive túkú-nàn-tàà-pò-nā ‘small round grindstone held in hand’.

3.6.2.5 Root-Tone Raising (M to H) in plural fauna terms

Tone alternations from M to H are typical of uncompounded mono- and bisyllabic roots of nouns that denote animals and that belong to genders with plural NC suffix -sɛ̄- ~ -sē-. M-tone is taken as lexically basic because it occurs in citation forms of the singular noun.

The unraised form is M-toned throughout. The raised form, which occurs in the plural (and in premodifier singular nouns) has an H-toned root.

The semantic restriction to animal terms is brought out in (87a-b), where the "same" root shifts from M to H tone in the plural in the sense 'vervet monkey' but not in the sense 'borassus palm'. No plural tone-raising of this type is attested for any flora term or (other) inanimate noun. Tone-raised syllables are bolded. For tone-dropped kàà-sɛ̄-nī as plural possessum for 'vervet monkey', see (89) below.

(87)	singular	plural	
a.	kāā-bā-nā	kāā-sɛ̄-nī	'borassus palm'
b.	kāā-bā-nā	**káá**-sɛ̄-nī	'vervet monkey'

The known fauna terms that undergo Root-Tone Raising are listed in (88a-d). They belong to various NC genders, but all are fauna terms and all have -sɛ̄- ~ -sē- as plural NC suffix. Other M-toned fauna terms, with plural NC suffixes other than -sɛ̄- ~ -sē-, do not undergo tone-raising (88e).

(88)	singular	plural	gloss
a.	fōkō-bō-nā	**fókó**-sē-nī	'shea-tree caterpillar'
	kāā-bā-nā	**káá**-sɛ̄-nī	'vervet monkey'
	kpāā-bā-nā	**kpáá**-sɛ̄-ni	'porcupine'
	sūū-bā-nā	**súú**-sɛ̄-ni	'horse'
	wɛ̄lɛ̄-bɛ̄-nā	**wɛ́lɛ́n**-sɛ̄-nī	'trunkfish'
	wūlā-bā-nā	**wúlán**-sɛ̄-nī	'bush duiker (mammal)'
	yāā-bā-nā	**yáá**-sɛ̄-nī	'python'
b.	fɔ̄-mā-nā ~ fā-mā-nā	**fɔ́n**-sɛ̄-nī	'dog'
	yīm-mā-nā	**yín**-sɛ̄-nī	'fish (any)'
	fūū-mā-nā	**fún**-sɛ̄-nī	'goat'
	nūū-mā-nā	**núú**-sɛ̄-nī	'chicken'
	sīī-mā-nā	**síí**-sɛ̄-nī	'grasshopper'
	wūūm-mā-nā	**wúún**-sɛ̄-nī	'grub, worm'
	yūūm-manā	**yúún**-sɛ̄-nī	'fly (insect)'
	mīnī-mā-nā	**mínín**-sɛ̄-nī	'patas monkey'
	tūkū-mā-nā	**túkún**-sɛ̄-nī	'francolin (bird)'
	tɛ̄kām-mā-nā	**tékán**-sɛ̄-nī	'army ant (*Dorylus*)'
c.	nāā-nā	**náá**-sɛ̄-nī	'cow, bovine'
	pāā-nā	**páán**-sɛ̄-nī	'Nile monitor lizard'
d.	tūū-kō-nā	**túú**-sɛ̄-nī	'mouse'

e. no plural tone-raising

non-fauna

kāā-bā-nā	kāā-sɛ̄-nī	‘borassus palm’
kān-nā-nā	kāɲàà-sɛ̄-nī	‘firewood’
tɛ̄ɛ̄lɛ̄ɛ̄-nā	tɛ̄ɛ̄lɛ̄ɛ̄-sɛ̄-nī	‘roof’

fauna

bɔ̄ɔ̄-nā-nā	bɔ̄ɔ̄-ɲɛ̄-nī	‘billy-goat’
kōō-nā-nā	kōō-ɲɛ̄-nī	‘spitting cobra’
tūū(-)sā-nā	tūū(-)s-ɛ̄-nī	‘termite’

The last stem here, ‘termite’, may look like it has the -sɛ̄- plural NC suffix, but comparison with the singular shows that the plural is formed by E-ablaut. Within nominal number marking morphology, the noun is treated as tūūsā-, even though tūū- is the premodifier form of the noun.

There are no examples of Root-Tone Raising on human nouns. One can argue whether this is a semantic restriction or a consequence of the different NC genders found with human versus animal terms. A curiosity is the resemblance between ‘dog’ (88b) and ‘younger sibling’, singular fɔ́-mā-nā ~ fá-mā-nā, plural fɔ́n-sɛ̄-nī. ‘Dog’ and ‘younger sibling’ are distinguished tonally in the singular, but are homophonous in the plural.

The raised H-toned plural roots do not trigger Rightward H-Spreading (§3.6.2.2) onto the following NC suffix, e.g., yáá-**sɛ̄**-nī ‘pythons’, not #yáá-**sɛ́**-nī. This already suggests that the seemingly H-toned plural roots are structurally HL-toned, e.g., /yáà-/.

The raised H-toned plural roots are also among the H-toned nouns that drop to L-toned by Initial Tone-Dropping (§3.6.2.7) following a possessor (89a-d). This process is likewise associated with overtly or covertly HL-toned stems. Again the other M-toned fauna terms remain M-toned (89e).

(89)

	‘Zaki’s _ (sg)’	‘Zaki’s _ (pl)’	gloss
a.	zàkîì fōkō-bō-nā	zàkîì **fòkò**-sɛ̄-nī	‘shea-tree caterpillar’
	zàkîì kāā-bā-nā	zàkîì **kàà**-sɛ̄-nī	‘vervet monkey’
	zàkîì kpāā-bā-nā	zàkîì **kpàà**-sɛ̄-ni	‘porcupine’
	zàkîì sūū-bā-nā	zàkîì **sùù**-sɛ̄-ni	‘horse’
	zàkîì wɛ̄lɛ̄-bɛ̄-nā	zàkîì **wèlèn**-sɛ̄-nī	‘trunkfish’
	zàkîì wūlā-bā-nā	zàkîì **wùlàn**-sɛ̄-nī	‘bush duiker (mammal)’
	zàkîì yāā-bā-nā	zàkîì **yàà**-sɛ̄-nī	‘python’
b.	zàkîì fɔ̄-mā-nā	zàkîì **fɔ̀n**-sɛ̄-nī	‘dog’
	zàkîì fūū-mā-nā	zàkîì **fùn**-sɛ̄-nī	‘goat’
	zàkîì nūū-mā-nā	zàkîì **nùù**-sɛ̄-nī	‘chicken’
	zàkîì sīī-mā-nā	zàkîì **sìì**-sɛ̄-nī	‘grasshopper’
	zàkîì tūkū-mā-nā	zàkîì **tùkùn**-sɛ̄-nī	‘francolin (bird)’
	zàkîì yīm-mā-nā	zàkîì **yìn**-sɛ̄-nī	‘fish (any)’
c.	zàkîì nāā-nā	zàkîì **nàà**-sɛ̄-nī	‘cow, bovine’
	zàkîì pāā-nā	zàkîì **pààn**-sɛ̄-nī	‘Nile monitor lizard’

d.	zàkîì tūū-kō-nā	zàkîì **tùù**-sē-nī	‘mouse’
e.	zàkîì bɔ̄ɔ̄-nā-nā	zàkîì bɔ̄ɔ̄-ɲɛ̄-nī	‘billy-goat’
	zàkîì kōō-nā-nā	zàkîì kōō-ɲɛ̄-nī	‘spitting cobra’
	zàkîì tūūsā-nā	zàkîì tūūs-ɛ̄-nī	‘termite’

3.6.2.6 Raising of final tones of nouns

Two processes are recognized here by which final, usually suffixal, tones of nouns are raised. In §3.6.2.6.1, the NC suffix is raised in various nonfinal positions in the clause and is arguably triggered by the following word (or at least was triggered by it historically). In §3.6.2.6.2, a word-final syllable is raised in a free postverbal noun that is often clause-final unless followed by a polarity particle (positive, negative, interrogative).

3.6.2.6.1 Final Tone-Raising (M to H)

In some constructions, the final syllable of a singular noun undergoes tone-raising from M to H, unless it is preceded by an H-tone. This raising applies after the final suffix, -nā singular or -nī plural, is reduced to a nasal or is deleted. Whereas Root Tone-Raising as described above is limited to a subset of plurals of fauna terms that correspond to M-toned singulars, Final Tone-Raising applies to a large set of singular and plural nouns that have M-toned noun-class suffixes, and to M-toned nouns that lack a syllabic NC suffix. Another difference is that Final Tone-Raising affects only the second mora of a Cv̄v̄- root.

Final Tone-Raising applies to many M-toned singular suffixes and with some restrictions to plural NC suffixes. For the fauna terms in (90a), an M-toned NC suffix (-mā-, -bā-, -kō-) is raised to H-toned as imperfective subject. If there is no syllabic NC suffix, raising applies to the final mora (or final syllable) of the noun root, as with ‘cow’ in (90a). In (90b), plural roots of these same fauna terms undergo Root-Tone Raising, which pre-empts Final Tone-Raising of the NC suffix. For nouns whose M-toned singular and plural NC suffixes are both eligible (since they are not preceded by an H-tone), Final Tone-Raising applies to both singular (90c) and plural (90d). The NC suffixes in (90e) are ineligible for Final Tone-Raising even as singulars, either because they are preceded by an H-tone (from a covertly HLtoned root) or because the NC suffix is L-toned rather than M-toned. Additional examples of raising are in (90f).

(90)	a.	mīnī-**má**-ɲ̄ ɲààré = ɛ̄	‘the monkey ascends’
		sūū-**bá**-ɲ̄ ɲààré = ɛ̄	‘the horse ascends’
		tūū-**kó**-ɲ̄ ɲààré = ɛ̄	‘the mouse ascends’
		nāā-ɲ̄ ɲààré = ɛ̄	‘the cow ascends’
	b.	**mínín**-sɛ̄-ɲ̄ ɲààré = ɛ̄	‘the monkeys ascend’
		súú-sē-ɲ̄ ɲààré = ɛ̄	‘the horses ascend’

	túú-sɛ̄-ɲ̄ ɲààrɛ́ = ɛ̄	‘the mice ascend’
	náá-sɛ̄-ɲ̄ ɲààrɛ́ = ɛ̄	‘the cows ascend’
c.	sīī-**ké**-ɲ̄ ɲààrɛ́ = ɛ̄	‘the tree ascends’
	bɔ̄ɔ̄-**ná**-ɲ̄ ɲààrɛ́ = ɛ̄	‘the billygoat ascends’
d.	sī-**yé**-ɲ̄ ɲààrɛ́ = ɛ̄	‘the trees ascend’
	bɔ̄ɔ̄-**ɲɛ́**-ɲ̄ ɲààrɛ́ = ɛ̄	‘the billygoats ascend’
e.	wóló-kà-ɲ̄ ɲààrɛ́ = ɛ̄	‘the food ascends’
	wóló-kì-ɲ̄ ɲààrɛ́ = ɛ̄	‘the foods ascend’
	w^{n}áá-sā-ɲ̄ ɲààrɛ́ = ɛ̄	‘the grain-Sg ascends’
	w^{n}áá-rɛ̄-ɲ̄ ɲààrɛ́ = ɛ̄	‘the grains ascend’
	níí-sā-ɲ̄ ɲààrɛ́ = ɛ̄	‘the oil ascends’
f.	kèrè-**sá**-ɲ̄ ɲààrɛ́ = ɛ̄	‘the agouti ascends’
	kèèr-**ɛ́**-ɲ̄ ɲààrɛ́ = ɛ̄	‘the agoutis ascend’
	lōōl-**ɛ́**-ɲ̄ ɲààrɛ́ = ɛ̄	‘the intestines ascend’
	lōlō-**sá**-ɲ̄ ɲààrɛ́ = ɛ̄	‘the intestine ascends’
	pɛ̀rɛ̀-**sá**-ɲ̄ ɲààrɛ́ = ɛ̄	‘the clay ascends’

The morphosyntactic contexts for Final Tone-Raising are listed in (91). (91a-b) are the classic stripped-down premodifier positions; here the raising applies to the fauna terms but not to other nouns. In (91c-g), the noun retains its suffixes and the raising applies to all nouns with M-toned NC suffixes not preceded by H-tone. Except for (91f), which may be analogical to (91e), all of the contexts involve a tight connection between the noun and a following element. Conspicuously absent is subject before a Pfv verb.

(91) a. noun before adjective
b. noun as compound initial
c. noun preceding a monosyllabic M-toned postposition (except dative lɔ̄)
d. possessor before possessum
e. noun as direct object before an Ipfv verb
f. noun as subject before an imperfective VP
g. noun preceding copula (y)ɛ̄ ‘be’

Contexts (a) and (b) are illustrated in (92). The adjective in the second column is fɔ̀ɔ̄-nā ‘black’. The imperfective VP has the relevant noun as object before wùsó ‘hit.Ipfv’. Final Tone-raising targets the syllabic NC suffix if there is one. If the noun has no syllabic singular NC suffix (92c), or if it omits its syllabic NC suffix before a modifier as with ‘dog’ in (92b), Final Tone-Raising targets the root. In (92c), the root vowel is long in the ‘… hits X’ column, resulting in an <MH> contour-toned long vowel, but short as premodifier in the ‘black X’ column. The nouns in (92a-d) are the fauna terms from the preceding section, but other M-toned fauna terms (92e) show the same raising.

(92)

	noun X	‘black X’	‘… hits X’	gloss of X
a.	fōkō-bō-nā	fōkō-**bó** fòō-nā	fōkō-**bó**-ŋ̀ wùsó	‘shea-tree caterpillar’
	kāā-bā-nā	kāā-**bá** fòō-nā	kāā-**bá**-ŋ̀ wùsó	‘vervet monkey’
	kpāā-bā-nā	kpāā-**bá** fòō-nā	kpāā-**bá**-ŋ̀ wùsó	‘porcupine’
	sūū-bā-nā	sūū-**bá** fòō-nā	sūū-**bá**-ŋ̀ wùsó	‘horse’
	wɛ̄lɛ̄-bɛ̄-nā	wɛ̄lɛ̄-**bɛ́** fòō-nā	wɛ̄lɛ̄-**bɛ́**-ŋ̀ wùsó	‘trunkfish’
	wūlā-bā-nā	wūlā-**bá** fòō-nā	wūlā-**bá**-ŋ̀ wùsó	‘bush duiker’
	yāā-bā-nā	yāā-**bá** fòō-nā	yāā-**bá**-ŋ̀ wùsó	‘python’
b.	fɔ̄-mā-nā	**fɔ́ŋ̀** fòō-nā	fɔ̄-**má**-ŋ̀ wùsò	‘dog’
	fūū-mā-nā	fūū-**má** fòo-nā	fūū-**má**-ŋ̀ wùsó	‘goat’
	tūkū-mā-nā	tūkū-**má** fòō-nā	tūkū-**má**-ŋ̀ wùsó	‘francolin (bird)’
	nūū-mā-nā	nūū-**má** fòō-nā	nūū-**má**-ŋ̀ wùsó	‘chicken’
	sīī-mā-nā	sīī-**má** fòō-nā	sīi-**má**-ŋ̀ wùsó	‘grasshopper’
	yīm-mā-nā	yīm-**má** fòō-nā	yīm-**má**-ŋ̀ wùsó	‘fish (any)’
c.	nāā-nā	**ná** fòō-nā	nāá-ŋ̀ wùsó	‘cow, bovine’
	pāā-nā	**páŋ̀** fòō-nā	pāá-ŋ̀ wùsó	‘Nile monitor lizard’
d.	tūū-kō-nā	tūū-**kó** fòō-nā	tūū-**kó**-ŋ̀ wùsó	‘mouse’
e.	bɔ̄ɔ̄-nā-nā	bɔ̄ɔ̄-**ná** fòō-nā ~ bɔ̄ɔ́**ŋ̀** fòō-nā	bɔ̄ɔ̄-**ná**-ŋ̀ wùsó	‘billy-goat’
	kōō-nā-nā	kōō-**ná** fòō-nā	kōō-**ná**-ŋ̀ wùsó	‘spitting cobra’
	tūū(-)sā-nā	tūū(-)**sá** fòō-nā	tūū(-)**sá**-ŋ̀ wùsó	‘termite’

The examples in (92) with wùsó ‘hit.Ipfv’ are of course transitive, with the relevant noun in object function. Final Tone-Raising also applies to subjects before imperfective intransitive verbs (93a). In transitive imperfectives, if both the subject and object are eligible, both undergo Final Tone-Raising (93b).

(93) a. sūū-**bá**-n̄ sùùsɛ́= ɛ̄
horse-Sg-Sg run.Ipfv Pos
‘the horse (often) runs (=gallops).’

b. sūū-**bá**-ŋ̀ fūū-**má**-ń̀ ŋūmɛ́= ɛ̄
horse-Sg-Sg goat-Sg-Sg bite.Ipfv Pos
‘The horse (often) bites the goat.’ (< wūmá ‘bite.Ipfv’)

c. sūū-**bá**-n̄ séé-bé-ŋ̀ ŋūmɛ́= ɛ̄
horse-Sg-Sg squirrel-Sg-Sg bite.Ipfv Pos
‘The horse (often) bites the ground squirrel.’ (<séé-bé-nā, wūmá)

Final Tone-Raising also applies to possessors, and to nominal complements of some postpositions. (94) illustrates with kú-nā ‘head’ as possessor, and with dative kīlānī as postposition. kú-nā drops to kù-nā as possessum by Initial Tone-Dropping.

(94)		noun X	‘X’s head’	‘(gave) to X’	gloss
	a.	fōkō-bō-nā	fōkō-**bó**-ŋ̄ kù-nā	fōkō-**bó**-ŋ̄ kīlānī	‘shea-tree caterpillar’
		kāā-bā-nā	kāā-**bá**-ŋ̄ kù-nā	kāā-**bá**-ŋ̄ kīlānī	‘vervet monkey’
		kpāā-bā-nā	kpāā-**bá**-ŋ̄ kù-nā	kpāā-**bá**-ŋ̄ kīlānī	‘porcupine’
		sūū-bā-nā	sūū-**bá**-ŋ̄ kù-nā	sūū-**bá**-ŋ̄ kīlānī	‘horse’
		wɛ̄lɛ̄-bɛ̄-nā	wɛ̄lɛ̄-**bɛ́**-ŋ̄ kù-nā	wɛ̄lɛ̄-**bɛ́**-ŋ̄ kīlānī	‘trunkfish’
		wūlā-bā-nā	wūlā-**bá**-ŋ̄ kù-nā	wūlā-**bá**-ŋ̄ kīlānī	‘bush duiker’
		yāā-bā-nā	yāā-**bá**-ŋ̄ kù-nā	yāā-**bá**-ŋ̄ kīlānī	‘python’
	b.	fɔ̄-mā-nā	fɔ̄-**má**-ŋ̄ kù-nā	fɔ̄-**má**-ŋ̄ kīlānī	‘dog’
		fūū-mā-nā	fūū-**má**-ŋ̄ kù-nā	fūū-**má**-ŋ̄ kīlānī	‘goat’
		tūkū-mā-nā	tūkū-**má**-ŋ̄ kù-nā	tūkū-**má**-ŋ̄ kīlānī	‘francolin (bird)’
		nūū-mā-nā	nūū-**má**-ŋ̄ kù-nā	nūū-**má**-ŋ̄ kīlānī	‘chicken’
		sīī-mā-nā	sīī-**má**-ŋ̄ kù-nā	sīi-**má**-ŋ̄ kīlānī	‘grasshopper’
		yīm-mā-nā	yīm-**má**-ŋ̄ kù-nā	yīm-**má**-ŋ̄ kīlānī	‘fish (any)’
	c.	nāā-nā	nāá-ŋ̄ kù-nā	nāá-ŋ̄ kīlānī	‘cow, bovine’
		pāā-nā	pāá-ŋ̄ kù-nā	pāá-ŋ̄ kīlānī	‘Nile monitor lizard’
	d.	tūū-kō-nā	tūū-**kó**-ŋ̄ kù-nā	tūū-**kó**-ŋ̄ kīlānī	‘mouse’
	e.	bɔ̄ɔ̄-nā-nā	bɔ̄ɔ̄-**ná**-ŋ̄ kù-nā	bɔ̄ɔ̄-**ná**-ŋ̄ kīlānī	‘billy-goat’
		kōō-nā-nā	kōō-**ná**-ŋ̄ kù-nā	kōō-**ná**-ŋ̄ kīlānī	‘spitting cobra’
		tūūsā-nā	tūū**sá**-ŋ̄ kù-nā	tūū**sá**-ŋ̄ kīlānī	‘termite’

Raising does not occur before the H-toned postposition míní ‘in’ (sīī-kɛ̄-m̄ míní ‘in the tree’). Similarly, it does not apply before dative lɔ̄, which is replaced by H-toned allomorph tɔ́ in …-ñ tɔ́ after reduction of the noun’s final suffix to -ñ (fɔ̄-mā-ñ tɔ́ ‘(said) to the dog’, 2024_10 @ 00:33), plural fɔ́n-sɛ̄-ñ tɔ́ ‘(said) to the dogs’. Raising does occur before other postpositions including sí ‘on’ (nàŋkáŋkà-ná-ñ sí ‘on the mat’), kó ‘atop’ (sīī-ké-ŋ̄ kó ‘on top of the tree’) and tú ‘under’ (sīī-ké-ñ tú ‘under the tree’), as well as before L-toned postposition lè ‘following’ (sīī-ké-ñ nè ‘following the tree’).

The last environment that triggers Final Tone-Raising is subjects of copular and locational ‘be’ clauses.

(95)	a.	fɔ̄-**má**-ɲ́ / bɔ̄ɔ̄-**ná**-ɲ́	ɲɛ̄	[ká	fōrō]
		dog-Sg-Sg / billygoat-Sg-Sg	be	[thing	black]
		‘The dog/billygoat is black.’			

b. fɔ̄-**má**-ŋ́ / bɔ̄ɔ̄-**ná**-ŋ́ [ˡká fōrō] bɔ̀
dog-Sg-Sg [thing black] Neg
'The dog/billygoat isn't black.'

c. fɔ̄-**má**-ŋ́ / bɔ̄ɔ̄-**ná**-ŋ́ [ˡwú-kó-ñ tú] yɛ̄
dog-Sg-Sg [house-Sg-Sg inside] it.is
'The dog is inside the house.'

As noted above, Final Tone-Raising is not restricted to fauna terms in the manner of Root-Tone Raising (preceding subsection). For inanimate and human nouns, the raising applies when the final nominal suffix is present (as in postpositional complements and as in subject and object arguments), but not in stripped-down noun roots before modifiers. In (96), the adjective 'black' or 'good' does not induce raising for these nouns, but the postposition 'behind' does.

(96) a. sōō-nā 'eating plate', plural sī-yē-nī
sō fòō-nā 'black plate'
sō**ó**-ñ sēnāntɔ́ 'behind the plate'

b. fārā-nā 'skin, hide', plural fāār-ɛ̄-nī
fārā fòō-nā 'black hide'
fā**rá**-ñ sēnāntɔ́ 'behind the hide'

c. yɛ̄-kā-nā 'fire', plural yī-yɛ̄-nī
yā fòō-nā 'black fire'
yɛ̄-**ká**-ñ sēnāntɔ́ 'behind the fire'

d. bāā-nā 'leg', plural b-ɛ̄ɛ̄-nī
bā fòō-nā 'black leg'
bā**á**-ñ sēnāntɔ́ 'behind the leg'

e. kàràmūū-nā-nā 'Muslim, holy man', plural kàràmūū-ɲɛ̄-nī
kàràmūū-ñ nàā-nā 'good Muslim'
kààrmūū-**ná**-ñ sēnāntɔ́ 'behind the Muslim'

Final Tone-Raising does not apply to nouns in citation form (including the left conjunct in conjoined NPs), or in the following positions: a) postverbal object in perfective (97a) and in imperative (97b) clauses; b) subject in perfective clauses (97c); and c) complement of preposition tɛ̀ 'with/and' including the right conjunct in conjoined NPs in citation form (97d-e). Therefore the NC suffix -bā- in 'horse' remains M-toned in these examples.

(97) a. ŋ́ ɲó sūū-bā-n ī
1Sg hit.Pfv horse-Sg-Sg Pos
'I hit-Past the horse.' (< yó(ó))

b. yó sūū-bā-nā
hit.Imprt horse-Sg-Sg
'Hit-2Sg the horse!'

c. sūū-bā-ñ sù yɛ̄
horse-Sg-Sg run.Pfv Pos
'The horse ran (=galloped).'

d. nāā-nā [tɛ̀ sūū-bā-nā]
cow-Sg [and/with horse-Sg-Sg]
'a cow and a horse'

e. zàkîì pɛ̀= ɛ̄ [tɛ̀ sūū-bā-nā]
Z come.Pfv Pos [with horse-Sg-Sg]
'Zaki brought a/the horse.'

For more complex examples involving conjoined 'X and Y', see §7.1.1.

Final Tone-Raising and Initial Tone-Dropping may have been originally connected. In the singular compound (98a), NC suffix -kē- in the initial is raised to -ké-, while the root kú- in the final is dropped to kù-. In the plural version, -yē- in the initial remains M-toned, and c-é- in the final remains H-toned. These pairings suggest the possibility that, in some pre-Paleni, the H-tone of the final shifted to the suffixes of the initial in examples like (98a).

(98) a. [sīī-**ké**-ŋ̄]-**kù**-nā 'tree trunk' ("tree-head")
b. [sī-**yē**-ɲ̄]-**c-é**-nī 'tree trunk s' ("tree-heads")

Roughly similar tonal patterns occur in object-verb combinations in imperfective clauses. Objects undergo Final Tone-Raising while most transitive verbs that are H-toned in the Pfv stem (which precedes objects) are MH-toned in the Ipfv stem (which follows them). Similarly, in N-Adj combinations, the noun is subject to Final Tone-Raising, while most adjectives begin with L-tone. These may all be vestiges of an ancient pattern of leftward H-tone shift across word boundaries within tightly-knit phrases, though they cannot be formalized as such synchronically.

3.6.2.6.2 Raising and truncation in free postverbal noun

Here the term **free postverbal noun** is used for a postverbal noun that is not an object and is not an adpositional complement, and that undergoes suffixal and tonal changes. Such nouns occur in the 'become' construction (§11.2.5.2), in copular clauses (§11.2.2.3), and in some adverbial contexts as in (672d) below. The theme in the 'furnish X with Y' construction is also optionally treated as a free postverbal noun (§11.1.2.3.1).

wààmà/wààmá 'become (sth)' is an intransitive verb that is combined with a free postverbal noun. This noun is not a transitive object, and it remains postverbal in imperfective clauses. It is also not the complement of an adposition. It is intrinsically indefinite (§11.2.5.2). The free noun is not followed by positive (y)ɛ̄, which is placed directly

after the verb. The free noun can be followed by negative bɔ̀ or by polar interrogative nī, but is otherwise clause-final.

This noun omits the usual final suffix (singular -nā, plural -nī), and raises the tone of the noun-class (NC) suffix one notch, from M to H (99a) or from L to M (99b). If there is no overt NC suffix, the raising applies to the final syllable of the stem (99c). If the relevant syllable is already H, there is no tonal change (99d).

(99)		noun	gloss	'(become a) __'
	a.	sù-kā-nā	'calabash'	sù-ká
		bāāb-ɛ̄-nī	'sheep-Pl'	bāāb-ɛ́
		bɔ̄ɔ̄-nā-nā	'billygoat'	bɔ̄ɔ̄-ná
		fā-mā-nā	'dog'	fā-má
		fūū-mā-nā	'goat'	fūū-má
		sīī-kē-nā	'tree'	sīī-ké
	b.	kɛ́rɛ́-kà-nā	'rifle'	kɛ́rɛ́-kā
		tɔ̄ɔ̄-nnè-nā	'farmer'	tɔ̄ɔ̄-nnē
	c.	fārā-nā	'skin'	fārá
		bābā-nā	'sheep-Sg'	bābá
	d.	fìí-ná-nā	'donkey'	fìí-ná
		jàrá-ná-nā	'lion'	jàrá-ná
		pí-sé-nī	'children'	pí-sé
		píyé-nā	'man'	píyé

Some stems insert an r into what would otherwise be the final syllable in this construction (100a). In some cases the r may have been part of the stem but was elided in the citation form (§3.4.1.4.2). Other lexical irregularities are in (100b); they also occur in the X wò X 'every X' construction (307b).

(100)	a.	nàntɔ̀ɔ̄-nā	'friend'	nántɔ̄rɔ̄
		ká-sèē-nā	'old man'	ká-sèrē
		tɔ́ɔ́-nā	'baobab'	tɔ́rɔ́
		báá-pí-yé-nā	'bird'	báá-pí-yéré
	b.	cá-nā	'woman'	cííyà
		písàá-nā	'child'	písàá-mā

The verb kú^{n}/kpā^{n} 'furnish' (§11.1.2.3) has a regular direct object X and a second noun Y in VPs translated 'furnish X with Y'. The second noun Y may take its regular form, including the final suffix, with its usual tones. Alternatively, the second noun can be treated as a free postverbal noun, so it undergoes the same suffixal and tonal changes as the complement of 'become'. In the frame (101a), free nouns without final suffixes undergo the changes in (101b). These are the same changes seen above with the free noun after 'become'.

(101) a. è láá [fɛ̃= ɛ̄ ŋ̄ kún zàkîì __]
3HSg go.Pfv [Comp 3HSg Sbjn furnish.Imprt Z __]
'He/She went and furnished Zaki with …

b.

noun	gloss	after 'furnish'	gloss
nūū-mā-nā	'chicken'	nūū-má	'a chicken'
bābā-nā	'sheep'	bābá	'a sheep'
bāāb-ɛ̄-nī	'sheep-Pl'	bāāb-ɛ́	'(some) sheep'
tɔ́ɔ́-nā	'baobab'	tɔ́rɔ́	'a baobab'
kɛ́rɛ́-kà-nā	'rifle'	kɛ́rɛ́-kā	'a rifle'

Not all cases of suffixal deletion are ascribable to free postverbal noun formation. ǹsánàmpē-nā-nā 'hare' often drops its suffix complex -nā-nā, especially in animal tales, probably because it is then treated like a personal name. Composite nouns beginning with á- denoting seasons and times of day, like á-kààyá(-nā-nā) 'rainy season' and á-sàná(-nā-nā) 'morning', likewise drop their suffix complex unless they denote a specific instance. Unsuffixed forms for these nouns can occur in various positions in the clause and are not instances of free postverbal nouns.

Nouns that are H-toned but that fail to raise syllabic M-toned NC suffixes to H-toned in citation forms (§3.6.2.2) are suspected to be covertly falling-toned (HL or HM). In their free postverbal noun form, a trace of the otherwise covert nonhigh tone element appears in the raising of the M-toned NC suffix only to -Cv̋ (<MH>) instead of -Cv́. Thus túkú-sā-nā 'yam' becomes túkú-sā̋, not #túkú-sá with level H-tones. See (501) below and surrounding commentary.

3.6.2.7 Initial Tone-Dropping

Many nouns undergo Initial Tone-Dropping as possessums and as compound finals, or for some nouns only as compound finals. The affected nouns have overtly or covertly /HL/-melodic mono- and bisyllabic roots. Bisyllabic /HM/-melodics also undergo the process.

In (102a), the bisyllabic root is clearly /HL/-melodic. The initial syllable (bolded) is dropped to L-tone in the possessed form (here, 'my _'), resulting in an all-L-toned stem. /HL/-melodics of more than two syllables are not tone-dropped (102b).

(102)

noun	gloss	'my _'
a. /HL/-melodic roots that undergo tone-dropping		
súsù-nā-nā	'waterjar'	mín **sù**sù-nā-nā
káákù-nā-nā	'iron'	míŋ **kàà**kù-nā-nā
wáràm-pò-nā	'5-franc coin'	míŋ **wà**ràm-pò-nā
bélèŋ-wìì-sā-nā	'thread'	mím **bè**lèŋ-wììs-ā-nā
pɛ́l(ì)-nā-nā	'shovel (n)'	mím **pɛ̀**l(ì)-nā-nā

b. /HL/-melodic roots that fail to undergo tone-dropping
trisyllabic beginning with two H-toned syllables

bótól(ò)-nā-nā	‘bottle’	mím̀ bótól(ò)-nā-nā
fáátárà-nā-nā	‘shawl’	míŋ̀ fáátárà-nā-nā
kpɛ́lɛ́kà-nā-nā	‘adze’	míŋ̀ kpɛ́lɛ́kà-nā-nā

H.M… stems that begin with a single H-toned syllable undergo Initial Tone-Dropping. The second syllable remains M-toned. Examples are in (103).

(103)

noun	gloss	‘my _’
kílā-nā	‘arm’	míŋ̀ **kìl**ā-nā
kílā-pí-yé-nā	‘finger’	míŋ̀ **kìl**ā-pí-yé-nā
kúúsā-nā	‘egg’	míŋ̀ **kùù**sā-nā
kúsō-nā	‘womb’	míŋ̀ **kù**sō-nā
páás-ā-nā	‘speech’	mím̀ **pàà**sā-nā
líyā-nā	‘daba’	míǹ **lìy**ā-nā
y^{n}áásā-nā	‘tail’	míŋ̀ **ɲàà**sā-nā

In (104), the root is usually pronounced as H-toned, but it still undergoes tone-dropping (bolded). The bisyllabics with final nasal in (104a) can be pronounced with L-toned nasal, as in bélɛ́ǹ-nā-nā, in careful pronunciation. They are more often heard as H-toned up to the first morpheme break, as in bélén-nā-nā. Some of them occur as compound initials with telltale HL-tones, as in bélèn-sèlè-nnè-nā ‘weaver’ and bélèŋ-[wìì-sā-nā] ‘thread’. The CvCv-bisyllabics at the end of (104a) are always H-toned. However, all of the stems in (104) are shown to be at least covertly /HL/-melodic by the fact that they fail to raise the tone of the NC suffix -nā-, -sā-, etc. to -ná-, -sá-, etc. Stems that end in a true H-tone do raise the NC suffix tone, by Rightward Tone-Spreading. To distinguish them from the overtly HL-toned stems in (102) above, one could argue that ‘waterjar’ in (102) is /súsù-/, while ‘cloth’ and ‘powder’ in (104a) are /bélɛ́ŋ̀-/ and /túkú+L/, the latter with floating L that blocks suffixal tone-raising. Similar issues are raised by the monosyllabic stems in (104b).

(104)

noun	gloss	‘my _’
a. H-toned bisyllabic root with unraised M-toned NC suffix		
with root-final nasal		
bélén-nā-nā	‘cloth’	mím̀ **bèlèn**-nā-nā
fúlán-nā-nā	‘Fulbe person’	míŋ̀ **fùlàn**-nā-nā
sɛ́bɛ́n-nā-nā	‘page’	míǹ **sèbèn**-nā-nā
sínán-nā-nā	‘deaf person’	míǹ **sìnàn**-nā-nā
other		
túkú-mī-nī	‘powder’ (plural)	míǹ **tùkù**-mī-nī
túkú-sā-nā	‘yam’ or ‘flour’	míǹ **tùkù**-sā-nā
yíní-sā-nā	‘soumbala (spice)’	miŋ̀ **yìnì**-sā-nā

b. H-toned monosyllabic root with unraised M-toned NC suffix

with root-final nasal

kpán-nā-nā	‘shed’	míŋ **kpàn**-nā-nā
nán-nā-nā	‘pouched rat’	míŋ **nàn**-nā-nā
nún-nā-nā	‘portable jar’	míǹ **nùn**-nā-nā
yóón-nā-nā	‘village’	míɲ **ɲòòn**-nā-nā

other

níí-sā-nā	‘oil’	míǹ **nìì**-sā-nā
sɛ́ɛ́-sā-nā	‘sorghum’	míǹ **sɛ̀ɛ̀**-sā-nā
w^{n}áá-sā-nā	‘grain, seed’	míŋ **w^{n}àà**-sā-nā
wíí-bē-nā	‘straw’	míŋ **wìì**-bē-nā

kú-nā (plural c-é-nī) ‘head’ keeps its H-tone after pronominal possessors (ŋ̄ kú-nā ‘my head’) but drops after nominal possessors (fɔ̄-má-ŋ̄ kù-nā ‘the dog’s head’) and in compounds. This and similar examples show that Initial Tone-Dropping is losing its productivity, and is better preserved in lexicalized compounds than in transparent possessive constructions.

A partially similar tonal pattern is observed with pó-nā (plural pí-sé-nī) ‘child (offspring)’. The root remains H-toned after all possessors; bɛ́ pó-nā ‘your-Sg child’, zàkîì pí-sé-nī ‘Zaki’s children’. It drops to X-pò- as diminutive compound final (§5.1.2.3). The diminutive plural is X-pì-sē-nī. Note that -sē- reverts to its basic M-toned form in the compounds, since it is no longer subject to Rightward Tone-Spreading as in pí-sé-nī.

Another partially similar case is ní-mí-nī ‘water’ (plurale tantum). It remains H-toned as possessum after all possessors: ñ ní-mí-nī ‘my water’, zàkîì ní-mí-nī ‘Zaki’s water’. However, in compounds like túkú-[nì-mī-nī] “flour-water” meaning ‘cream of millet’, ní- drops to nì-. This allows the plural NC suffix -mī- to revert to its basic M-toned form.

wú-kó-nā (plural wí-yé-nī) ‘house’ is another case like this. Possessives keep the H-tones: bɛ́ wú-kó-nā ‘your-Sg house’, fɔ̄-má-ŋ̄ wú-kó-nā ‘the dog’s house’. Tone-dropping occurs in the compound tùŋ-[wù-kō-nā] ‘forge house’, with -kō- reverting to M-tone.

It is possible, however, that native speakers interpret X-pì-sē-, X-nì-mī-, and X-wù-kō- as having an {LM} tone overlay as part of compound formation. Possible direct evidence of this comes from táá-nā ‘stone’ (plural táá-rɛ̄-nī), whose root remains H-toned after possessors (ñ táá-nā ‘my stone’, zàkîì táá-nā ‘Zaki’s stone’). It drops to <LM>-toned -tàā-nā in some compounds including bā-tàā-nā ‘sole of foot’ and [wúún-nā-mín]-tàā-nā ‘stones from out in the bush’, but not in yín-táá-nā ‘tooth’. Since neither táá- nor X-tàā- has a synchronically segmentable singular NC suffix, the final M-tone in X-tàā- cannot be explained as reversion to M-tone, so there may be no choice but to recognize an {LM} overlay. See also (-)sèē-nā in (105c-d) just below and -nàā-nā ‘cow’ as compound final in §5.1.2.1.5.

In (105a), the NC suffix is intrinsically L-toned and so ineligible for Rightward Tone-Spreading. As a result, there can be no independent confirmation that the root is structurally /HL/-melodic. One might argue (hesitantly) that these cases are treated as /HL/-melodic by including the NC suffix in the domain for the melodic calculation. In (105b), there is no overt NC suffix, just the monomoraic Cv- stem and the final singular suffix -nā. In (105c), a Cvv- stem has a tone-dropped form with a long <LM>-toned vowel, but there is some ambiguity as to whether séé- is treated as a basic noun root or as an adjective or compound final with zero initial. In (105d), the compound initial is tone-dropped.

(105)

noun	gloss	‘my _’
a. H-toned root followed by L-toned NC suffix		
kɛ́rɛ́-kà-nā	‘rifle’	míŋ̀ **kɛ̀rɛ̀**-kà-nā
tó-nnè-nā	‘visitor’	míǹ **tò**-nnè-nā
b. apparent H-toned Cv- root plus final number suffix		
cá-nā	‘woman’	míŋ̀ **cà**-nā (‘my wife’)
c. apparent H-toned Cvv- root plus final number suffix		
séé-nā	‘elder sibling’	míǹ **sèē**-nā
d. compounds		
ká-sèē-nā	‘old man’	míŋ̀ **kà**-sèē-nā
kú-sáá-nā	‘neck’	míŋ̀ **kù**-sáá-nā
cîì-sèē-nā	‘old woman’	míŋ̀ **cìì**-sèē-nā
y^{n}á-pò-nā	‘eye’	míŋ̀ **ɲà**-pò-nā
possible compound		
písàá-nā	‘child’	míǹ **pì**sàá-nā

The stems in (106) are /H/-melodic and do not undergo Initial Tone-Dropping after a possessor or as compound finals. In (106a) there is no NC suffix. In (106b) the NC suffix has been raised to H-tone by the preceding H-tone of the noun stem.

(106)

noun	gloss	‘my _’
a. H-toned root without overt NC suffix plus final number suffix		
monosyllabic root		
lí-bé	‘mother’	míǹ lí-bé
sí-bé	‘father’	míǹ sí-bé
náá-nā	‘mouth’	míǹ náá-nā
táá-nā	‘stone’	míǹ táá-nā
w^{n}áá-nā	‘road’	míŋ̀ w^{n}áá-nā
bisyllabic root		
bámmáá-nā	‘courtyard’	míǹ bámmáá-nā
bɛ́mmɛ́ɛ́-nā	‘chin’	míǹ bɛ́mmɛ́ɛ́-nā
fáákáá-nā	‘manner’	míŋ̀ fáákáá-nā
fíyɛ́-nā	‘bamboo’	míŋ̀ fíyɛ́-nā
káná-nā	‘war’	míŋ̀ káná-nā
kásá-nā	‘broom’ or ‘daughter’	míŋ̀ kásá-nā
káá^{n}sá-nā	‘salt’	míŋ̀ káá^{n}sá-nā
kúlóó-nā	‘hunger’	míŋ̀ kúlóó-nā
kóóŋkóó-nā	‘cylindrical tomtom’	míŋ̀ kóóŋkóó-nā
kpɛ́ŋkpɛ́ɛ́-nā	‘bead’	míŋ̀ kpɛ́ŋkpɛ́ɛ́-nā
kúwá-nā	‘credit (loan)’	míŋ̀ kúwá-nā

nínsáá-nā	‘tongue’	míŋ̀ nínsáá-nā
núúsá-nā	‘odor’	míǹ núúsá-nā
píyé-nā	‘man’	mím̀ píyé-nā
sénnéé-nā	‘knife’	míǹ sénnéé-nā
sóósá-nā	‘heart’	míǹ sóósá-nā
tábálá-nā	‘bow (for arrows)’	míǹ tábálá-nā
túúbá-nā	‘cowpea’	míǹ túúbá-nā
yínáá-nā	‘name’	míŋ̀ ɲínáá-nā
compounds		
kóó-tóó-nā	‘occipitum’	míŋ̀ kóó-tóó-nā
náá-ŋ̄-fārā-nā	‘lip’	míǹ náá-ŋ̄-fārā-nā
ná-pí-yé-nā	‘nephew, niece’	míǹ ná-pí-yé-nā
yíŋ-fɔ̄-nā	‘ear’	míŋ̀ ɲín-fɔ̄-nā
yín-táá-nā	‘tooth’	míŋ̀ ɲín-táá-nā
yín-téé-nā	‘millet’	míŋ̀ ɲín-téé-nā

b. H-toned root with raised M-toned NC suffix

monosyllabic root		
báá-ná-nā	‘balaphone’	míǹ báá-ná-nā
bɔ́ɔ́-ná-nā	‘agemate’	mím̀ bɔ́ɔ́-ná-nā
kúú-ká-nā	‘bone’	míŋ̀ kúú-ká-nā
láá-sɛ́-nī (pl)	‘sauce’	míǹ láá-sɛ́-nī
ní-mí-nī (pl)	‘water’	míǹ ní-mí-nī
síí-ré-nī (pl)	‘medicine (powder)’	míǹ síí-ré-nī
túú-sá-nā	‘liver’	míǹ túú-sá-nā
wú-kó-nā	‘house’	míŋ̀ wú-kó-nā
yín-ná-nā	‘face’	míŋ̀ ɲín-ná-nā
yín-sá-nā	‘locust-bean’	míŋ̀ yín-sá-nā
bisyllabic root		
fúrú-sá-nā	‘excrement’	míŋ̀ fúrú-sá-nā
námá-sá-nā	‘meat’	míǹ námá-sá-nā
nú(-)wɔ́-nā	‘cut (wound)’	míǹ nú(-)wɔ́-nā
sí(-)yé-nī (pl)	‘baggage’	míǹ sí(-)yé-nī
tíí-ká-nā	‘place’	míǹ tíí-ká-nā
tíí-mí-nī (pl)	‘blood’	míǹ tíí-mí-nī
tú(-)wá-nā	‘flute’	míǹ tú(-)wá-nā

Some fauna terms have M-toned roots in the singular and H-toned roots in the plural (§3.6.2.5). When possessed, the H-toned plurals but not the M-toned singulars undergo Initial Tone-Dropping. The H-toned plurals also fail to raise the tones of the following NC suffix. This suggests that the plural roots end in a covertly falling-toned syllable (e.g., súù- or súú+L).

(107)	noun (sg/pl)	gloss	‘my _’
a.	sūū-bā-nā	‘horse’	míǹ sūū-sā-nā
	súú-sɛ̄-nī	‘horses’	míǹ **sùù**-sɛ̄-nī
b.	fā-ma-nā	‘dog’	míŋ̀ fā-mā-nā
	fɔ́n-sɛ̄-nī	‘dogs’	míŋ̀ **fɔ̀n**-sɛ̄-nī
c.	fūū-mā-nā	‘goat’	míŋ̀ fūū-mā-nā
	fún-sɛ̄-nī	‘goats’	míŋ̀ **fùn**-sɛ̄-nī
d.	nāā-nā	‘cow, bovine’	míǹ nāā-nā
	náá-sɛ̄-nī	‘cows, cattle’	míǹ **nàà**-sɛ̄-nī
e.	yī-mā-nā	‘fish’	míɲ̀ ɲī-mā-nā
	yín-sɛ̄-nī	‘fish (plural)’	míɲ̀ **ɲìn**-sɛ̄-nī

Diachronically, the origin of Initial Tone-Dropping may have been linked to that of Final Tone-Raising. See discussion at the end of §3.6.2.6. However, the two processes are no longer directly connected.

3.6.2.8 Lexical tone patterns for adjectives

Modifying adjectives have nominal suffixes and behave tonally like nouns. The majority begin with L-tone, as in tàmíŋ-kà-nā ‘deep’, nàā-nā ‘pretty, good’, and kɔ̀rɔ̀-kà-nā ‘skinny (animal)’. However, a few begin with H-tone, like kání-kà-nā ‘sweet, tasty’ and fĭyáá^{n}-yé-nī ‘many’.

3.6.2.9 Lexical tone patterns for numerals

The noncomposite numerals are ‘1’ to ‘5’, ‘10’, ‘20’, and ‘400’. There are no apparent restrictions on tones, though some melodies do not happen to occur in this small set of stems. bàà ‘2’ is L-toned in the counting sequence but raises to bāā in phrases and composite numerals. There is no other all-L-toned numeral. Other tone melodies are illustrated by fɔ́ ‘10’, wārā^{n} ‘20’, and sùsú ‘5’.

3.6.3 Tone sandhi (absent)

Tone sandhi processes such as tonal assimilations and dissimilations at word boundaries are largely absent from Paleni. CV̀V̄ syllables can drop to CV̀V̀ before a nonlow-toned suffix (§3.6.2.4), but other than kàā ‘thing’ and its plural k-ɛ̀ɛ̄ it is hard to find CV̀V̄ word-final syllables.

3.6.4 Downstep and downdrift

Phonetic downstep can occur when a <HL> or <HM> syllable is followed by an H-tone. An example involving an <HL> syllable is nû í ‘give-2Sg them!’, if pronounced [nwí↓í]. The usual transcription in this work is nwî= í, which brings out the input tonal patterns.

The gradual lowering of H-toned peaks over the course of a long prosodic phrase is downdrift. It is not indicated in transcription and is not clearly phonologized.

3.7 Word- or phrase-final intonation

Some word-final tonal effects, including for words that can be clause-final, are treated here as regular tonology; see especially §3.6.2.6.2 above on free postverbal nouns.

Marked terminal intonational effects observed in recorded narrative and other extended texts are of two types. One is the typologically familiar terminal higher than modal pitch, i.e., failure to drop to a terminal low pitch. This occurs in recordings for all speakers. The other is a final up-and-down, whereby the final prepausal syllable has a bell-shaped pitch similar to <LHM> contour tone. This effect is common with the speaker Ouattara Moussa who is featured prominently in the 2024 recordings but is also heard in some other recordings. Both terminal effects mark incompletion, for example a background clause setting up a following foregrounded main clause.

In the transcribed texts, at the end of a word before a pause, symbol ↗ indicates a higher-than-modal terminal pitch without a subsequent fall, while ∧ indicates the bell-shaped <LHM> type contour on the final syllable.

Many clauses and phrases in the recordings are run together prosodically, so there is no prepausal syllable in the nonfinal segment(s). The absence of a comma separating two bracketed segments […] […], including complete clauses, indicates this prosodic fusion.

Unbounded prolongation is another intonational effect, transcribed →. It is common with the ‘and’ conjunction wò→ that is typical of unbounded lists (§7.1.3), with the expressive adverbial fúrú(→) ‘for a long time’ or ‘constantly’ (§8.4.2.3), with disjunction ǹtɛ̀→ ‘or’ (§7.2.1), and with clause-final emphatic yá(→) (§19.5.2). In broken sentences, a speaker may prolong the last syllable of the last word in the incomplete clause while thinking of the following words.

The exclamation point ! indicates interjection-like pronunciation. Forms like á!, í!, and é! (tonal markings doubtful) frequently occur at the beginning of quotations. A few particles and expressive adverbs, such as sáw! ‘a lot’ (§8.4.2.1) and pɛ̌! ‘constantly’ (§8.4.2.3), are prosodically invariant and are not subject to ordinary intonational effects.

4 Morphology of nouns, their modifiers, and pronouns

4.1 Nouns

4.1.1 Basic nominal morphology

4.1.1.1 Singular and plural in citation form

Freestanding nouns typically consist of a **root**, a noun-class (**NC**) suffix, and a **final** suffix marking number. The final suffixes are singular -nā and plural -nī in citation forms, regardless of animacy, but they are subject to reduction to -n̄ (assimilating) or other forms in various clausal positions. There are many NC suffixes, typically organized into genders (singular-plural pairings), described individually in the later sections.

In (108a), singular and plural forms follow the root-NC-final pattern. In (108b), there is a clearly segmentable NC suffix in the plural, but none in the singular. This is arguably also the case in (108c), where the plural NC suffix appears to be a mutation of the root-final vowel, described below as E-ablaut. Some nouns have no readily elicitable plural (108d). Conversely, some nouns including terms for liquids are **pluralia tantum**, i.e. occur only in plural form (108e). In (108d) and (108e) the absence of a singular-plural contrast makes morphemic segmentation of NC suffixes more difficult, but in many cases there is a more or less recognizable NC suffix. These are citation forms.

(108)		singular	plural	gloss
	a.	mísí-má-nā	mísí-ré-nī	‘tree sp. (*Anogeissus*)’
		séré-ná-nā	séré-ɲé-nī	‘prayer’
		síyɔ́-kà-nā	síyɔ́-kì-nī	‘taboo, totem’
	b.	sììmā-nā	sììmāŋ-kì-nī	‘noise’
		náá-nā	núú-ɲé-nī	‘mouth’
	c.	sɔ́ɔ́sá-nā	sɔ́ɔ́s-é-nī	‘heart’
		kāŋkú-nā	kāɲc-é-nī	‘log’
	d.	bààntúù-nā-nā	—	‘leprosy’
		dúnúɲáá-nā-nā	—	‘world (of the living)’
	e.	—	támá-nī ~ tɛ́mɛ́-nī	‘sorghum beer’
		—	ní-mí-nī	‘water’
		—	fúú-rē-nī	‘fog’

4.1.1.2 Final suffixes

Most nouns have singular -nā and plural -nī as final suffixes in citation forms (109a). Noun-like adverbs, including nouns beginning with á- that denote seasons or times of day (§5.1.2.1.1), usually occur in a bare form without NC or final suffixes, but also have a full form with -nā-nā especially when denoting a single instance or when functioning as clausal arguments (109b).

(109) a.

singular	plural	gloss
tītɛ́ɛ̀-nā-nā	tītɛ́ɛ̀-ɲɛ̄-nī	'wooden bowl'
tɔ̄ɔ̄-kà-nā	tɔ̄ɔ̄-kì-nī	'field'
yíí-ná-nā	yíí-ɲɛ́-nī	'face'

b.

short form	full form	
mīnī	mīn-nā-nā	'today'
á-kààyá	á-kààyá-ná-nā	'rainy season'
á-sànà́	á-sànà́-ná-nā	'morning'

Adverb 'today' takes its full form as a setting adverb followed by pause (e.g., 2026_03 @ 00:35), while the á- nouns take full forms when denoting specific instances of the season or time-of-day category. There is some ambiguity as to whether the final -nā in the full forms is indeed the singular final suffix, or lā 'there.Def' (→ nā after a nasal), e.g., mīn-nā-nā 'today' with suffixes, or mīn-nā(-n̄) nā 'today there'.

4.1.1.2.1 Reduction of final suffix to -n̄ or -ɲ̄

Nouns preceding numerals, and nouns functioning as subjects (unless focalized), objects (unless in absolute clause-final position), possessors, and postpositional complements, usually reduce the final prefix -nā (singular) or -nī (plural) to -n̄. This then assimilates in position to a following consonant (like a nasal coda). The M-tone of the reduced final suffix is preserved. Often the reduced nasal is inaudible before another nasal.

In (110a-e), the bolded suffix has undergone reduction. In (110f-h), the bolded suffix is unreduced. This when the noun is in absolute clause-final position (110f), and when it is protected by a following nasal morpheme (subject focus, negative identificationals, short subjunctives).

(110) a.

tītɛ́ɛ̀-nā-**n̄** sáá-ɲ́ ɲɛ̄	'the bowl fell'
tītɛ́ɛ̀-ɲɛ̄-**n̄** sáá-ɲ́ ɲɛ̄	'the bowls fell'

b.

tītɛ́ɛ̀-nā-**ŋ̄** fínì	'where is the bowl?'
tītɛ́ɛ̀-ɲɛ̄-**ŋ̄** fínì	'where are the bowls'

c.

tītɛ́ɛ̀-ɲɛ̄-**m̄** bàà	'two bowls'

d. tɔ̄ɔ̄-kì-**m̄** bàà — ‘two fields’
yí-ɲé-**m̄** bàà — ‘two faces’

e. ɲ̄ ɲá tītɛ́ɛ̀-nā-**m̄** bɔ̀ — ‘I didn’t see a/the bowl’
ɲ̄ ɲá tītɛ́ɛ̀-ɲɛ̄-**m̄** bɔ̀ — ‘I didn’t see any/the bowls’

f. tɛ̀ bɛ́ yⁿá tītɛ́ɛ̀-nā-**nā** — ‘if you see a/the bowl’
tɛ̀ bɛ́ yⁿá tītɛ́ɛ̀-ɲɛ̄-**nī** — ‘if you see a/the bowls’

g. [fɔ̄-mā-**nā** m̄] pà — ‘It’s the dog [focus] who came.’
[fɔ́n-sɛ̄-**nī** m̄] pà — ‘It’s the dogs [focus] who came.’

h. tītɛ́ɛ̀-nā-**nā** m̄ bɔ̀ — ‘it isn’t a bowl’
tītɛ́ɛ̀-ɲɛ̄-**nī** m̄ bɔ̀ — ‘it isn’t bowls’ (= ‘they aren’t bowls’)

A special case is interactions of final suffixes with a following (y)ɛ̄, which can occur clause-medially as a copula (‘X is Y’), clause-finally as an identificational (‘it’s X’), or in various positions as a positive indicative marker. As copula, hence nonfinal in the clause, (y)ɛ̄ converts both singular and plural -n̄ into -ɲ̄ (111a), likely via /-n̄ ɲɛ̄/ with y nasalized to ɲ. Grammatical number is then indicated only by the NC suffix or by root allomorphy. When (y)ɛ̄ is final in the clause, (y)ɛ̄ again converts plural -n̄ to -ɲ̄, but it fuses with singular -n̄ as -n ī (111b-c). Since indicative main clauses require either positive (y)ɛ̄ or negative bɔ̀, singular -n ī is common in perfective transitive clauses. It is important to distinguish this clause-final singular -n ī (corresponding to -nā in citation forms) from the plural -nī in citation forms of plural nouns.

(111) a. tītɛ́ɛ̀-ná-**ɲ̄** ɲɛ̄ [ká fɔ̄rɔ̄] — ‘the bowl is black’
tītɛ́ɛ̀-ɲé-**ɲ̄** ɲɛ̄ [ká fɔ̄r-ɛ̄] — ‘the bowls are black’

b. ɲ̄ ɲá tītɛ́ɛ̀-nā-**n ī** — ‘I saw the bowl’
ɲ̄ ɲá tītɛ́ɛ̀-ɲɛ̄-**ɲ̄** ɲɛ̄ — ‘I saw the bowls’

c. wā-nā tītɛ́ɛ̀-nā-**n ī** — ‘that is a bowl’
yīn-sī-nī tītɛ́ɛ̀-ɲɛ̄-**ɲ̄** ɲɛ̄ — ‘those are bowls’

Relative clauses end in a relative morpheme nā. When the clause would otherwise end in a noun, as in perfective transitive relatives, the singular final suffix -n̄ is usually unpronounced, so relative nā effectively replaces the final suffix (112a). Plural final suffix -n̄ is pronounced (by the older speaker) before nā (112b).

(112) a. [cá-ŋ̄ fáá] fí tītɛ́ɛ̀-nā-Ø nā — ‘the woman who bought the bowl’
b. [cá-ŋ̄ fáá] fí tītɛ́ɛ̀-ɲɛ̄-n̄ nā — ‘the woman who bought the bowls’

Nouns can also occur as objects or as prepositional complements in absolute clause-final position, in which case, the final suffix has its full form (singular -nā, plural -nī), aside from

optional reduction of -nī to -n̄. Examples are transitive conditional antecedent ('if') clauses (113a), transitive sequential clauses with fá (113b), transitive imperatives (113c), and positive clauses ending in instrumental-comitative prepositional phrases of type [tè X] (since the positive morpheme precedes such phrases) (113d).

(113) a. tè bé yⁿá tītéè-nā-**nā** 'if you see the bowl'
tè bé yⁿá tītéè-ɲɛ̄-**nī** 'if you see the bowls'

b. fɛ́= è yⁿá tītéè-nā-**nā** 'and he/she saw the bowl'
fɛ́= è yⁿá tītéè-ɲɛ-**nī** 'and he/she saw the bowls'

c. tā fǐ tītéè-nā-**nā** 'go buy a bowl!'
tā fǐ tītéè-ɲɛ̄-**nī** 'go buy some bowls!'

d. è pɛ̀= ɛ̄ [tè tītéè-nā-**nā**] 'he/she brought the bowl'
è pɛ̀= ɛ̄ [tè tītéè-ɲɛ̄-**nī**] 'he/she brought the bowls'

A further complication is that clause-final -n ī (singular) and -nī (unreduced plural) must both be distinguished from pseudo-postposition ní 'down' in phrasal verbs (§15.1.2.7) and from clause-final polar interrogative nī (§13.2.1).

The reduction of final suffixes to -n̄ is distinct from the more severe deletion of entire suffix complexes, including NC suffix and final suffix. This stripping-down occurs in premodifier position and in compound initials. Details vary by NC gender and are summarized in §4.1.2.9 below.

In positions where final suffixes reduce to -n̄, when reduction seemingly fails to occur, this may be due to definite marking (singular ná, plural ní), see §6.5.1.

4.1.1.2.2 Plural final suffix -yɛ̄ with kin terms

Parental kin terms have final plural suffix -yɛ̄ instead of -nī (§4.1.2.3.1).

(114)	singular	plural	gloss
	sí-bé	sí-sèé-yɛ̄	'father'
	lí-bé	lí-sèé-yɛ̄	'mother'

The -yɛ̄ suffix does not undergo reduction in any clausal position.

(115) a. [tí sí-sèé-yɛ̄] pɛ̀= ɛ̄ 'our fathers came'
sí-sèé-yɛ̄ bàà 'two fathers'
[tí sí-sèé-yɛ̄] ɛ̄ 'it's (=they are) our fathers'

b. [tí sí-sèé-yɛ̄] m̄ bɔ̀ 'it isn't (=they aren't) our fathers'

Final -yɛ̄ also occurs in associative plurals (§4.1.5).

This final -yɛ̄ should not be confused with a phonologically partially identical plural NC suffix -yɛ̄- ~ -yē-, which often alternates with -ɲɛ̄- ~ -ɲē- especially among young speakers, as in tòmàtîì-yɛ̄-nī ~ tòmàtîì-ɲɛ̄-nī ‘tomatoes’.

When ‘father’ and ‘mother’ are combined with kūmā-, to specify that the biologically true parent is being referred to, they take regular final suffixes: kūmā-sí-bé-nā, kūmā-sí-sèé-nī, kūmā-lí-bé-nā, kūmā-lí-sèé-nī (§18.1.3).

4.1.2 Noun class and gender

The morphology is most transparent for those nouns (the vast majority) that have distinct singular and plural forms, aside from the final number suffixes. Such nouns can be organized into **genders**, i.e. pairings of singular and plural NCs. The most important ones are listed in (116). Those in (116a) have clearly distinct NC suffixes consisting of a Cv syllable including a consonant. In (116b-c) the singular appears to be just the root (but see below for discussion).

(116)

	singular	plural	comment
a.	-nā-	-ɲɛ̄-	productive, mostly nonhuman
	-bā-	-sɛ̄-	some animals
	-mā-	-sɛ̄-	some animals
	-bɛ̄-	-sɛ̄-	any animacy, a few nouns
	-sā-	-rɛ̄-	some inanimates
	-kà-	-kī-	some inanimates
	-kā-	-yɛ̄-	some inanimates
b.	Ø	E	any animacy
c.	Ø	-ɲɛ̄	any animacy
	Ø	-sɛ̄-	any animacy
	Ø	-rɛ̄-	any animacy

The plural NC suffixes all end in front vowels, predominantly ɛ or e depending on ATR harmony. This raises the possibility that the plural NC suffixes can be decomposed into a consonantal class marker and a vocalic plural marker. The vocalic plural marker might be equated with E-ablaut (symbolized by E). Addressing this issue makes it advisable to consider the Ø/E gender before turning to other genders.

In some combinations, M-toned singular and plural NC suffixes shift to H after an H-tone by Rightward H-Spreading (§3.6.2.2). The final suffixes -nā and -nī remain M-toned. For example, singular NC suffix -nā- remains M-toned in (117a) but is raised to -ná- with no effect on final -nā in (117b).

(117) a. wú-kù-nā-nā ‘wall’
tɛ̄ɛ̄-nā-nā ‘bowl’

b. tɔ̀nɔ́-ná-nā ‘profit’

Certain nouns do not occur with final suffixes -nā (singular) and -nī (plural). This is the case with personal names and most place names. It is also the case with terms for time of day or time of year that begin with compound initial á-, as in á-kààyá ‘rainy season’ and á-sàná ‘morning’, except when they function as countable units. To make them countable, NC suffixes and final suffixes are added. See §5.1.2.1.1 for examples.

Of course there are some nouns that cannot be pluralized, or whose plural is difficult to elicit and is not in common use. There are also about fifty nouns, many of which denote liquids and grains, that are pluralia tantum, i.e., with a plural but no singular form.

The following sections describe the many NC genders. The organization is based on the plural NC marker, with subsections for each singular NC marker.

4.1.2.1 Genders with E-ablaut or I-ablaut

4.1.2.1.1 Ø/E gender

Here Ø takes the singular noun as the bare root, while E is a vocalic mutation that shifts the lexical stem-final vowel to a front vowel {ɛ e}. Whether the singular is really the bare stem is a tricky question, both synchronically and diachronically. Particularly when the singular ends in a long vowel (after factoring out the final suffix), one can suspect that a nonzero singular class marker may have been present at least historically.

Some examples of this gender are in (118a). Because the singular can end in a range of vowels, while the plural ends in a front vowel that can be predicted from the singular vowel (but not vice-versa), the singular can be taken as the lexical root. This means that either the plural form **suffixes** a front vowel (whose features then spread leftward), e.g. /baa-E-ni/ → b-ɛ́ɛ́-nī, or the plural is formed by **E-ablaut**: the features [+front, -round] are overlaid onto the final root vowel, keeping vowel length and (usually) tones intact. The roots in (118b) arguably show vacuous E-ablaut, since they already end in a front vowel. This is certain in the case of ‘time’ which shows the vowel-lengthening associated with E-ablauted plurals of bisyllabic roots.

(118)

	singular	plural	gloss
a.	bāā-nā	b-ɛ̄ɛ̄-nī	‘leg’
	káá-nā	k-ɛ́ɛ́-nī	‘olive baboon’
	láá-nā	l-ɛ́ɛ́-nī	‘rice field’
	yīŋkɔ̄rɔ̄-kɔ̄ɔ̄-nā	yīŋkɔ̄rɔ̄-k-ɛ̄ɛ̄-nī	‘cowry’
	fɔ̃fɔ̀ó-nā	fɔ̃fw-èé-nī	‘lung’
	kàmàŋkù-nā	kàmàɲc-è-nī	‘shoulder’
	núúsá-nā	núús-é-nī	‘odor’

b.	léénséé-nā	lééns(-)éé-nī	‘cockroach’
	lèsē-nā	lèès-ē-nī	‘time’

In alternative segmentations of (118a), both the singular and the plural would end in syllabic NC suffixes. For example, ‘shoulder’ would be singular kàmàŋ-kù-nā and plural kàmàɲ-cɛ̀-nī, belonging to a unique gender kù/cɛ̄. They would then be structurally parallel to other nouns with syllabic singular and plural NC suffixes, e.g. mísí-má-nā ‘tree sp. (*Anogeissus*)’ versus its plural mísí-rɛ́-nī. While this solution is defensible for ‘shoulder’, it would lead to an unwanted proliferation of both singular and plural NC markers when applied more generally. It would be particularly awkward for monosyllabics like ‘leg’ (bāā-nā, plural b-ɛ̄ɛ̄-na), where positing a full syllabic suffix would leave almost nothing for the root.

If it is agreed that the singulars in the Ø/E gender have lexically basic bare roots, we still have the issue whether the plural has an -E suffix or an E-ablaut overlay. A few pairs arguably provide evidence for a suffixal analysis. In (119a), a long oo only fronts its final mora in the plural, becoming /oe/ realized as wee, whereas ɔɔ and aa become ɛɛ. Since the vocalic mutation occurs at the extreme right edge, it is at least compatible with a suffixation analysis. (119b) illustrates an apparent kā/yɛ̄ gender, whose plural (-yɛ̄-) might be related to the final E of E-ablauted stems.

(119)

	singular	plural	gloss
a.	kóóŋkóó-nā	kóóŋkw-ɛ́ɛ́-nī (plural also kóóŋkóó-sɛ́-nī)	‘cylindrical tomtom’
b.	sù-kā-nā	sì-yɛ̄-nī	‘calabash’

However, there are also counterarguments. (120a) shows that E-ablauted plurals of monomoraic Cv- roots have short rather than long vowels. If the vowels were long, they would be more convincing evidence of vowel contraction. The slightly irregular stem in (120b) actually shortens the root-final vowel àá in the plural, unlike other singular stems with final aa.

(120)

	singular	plural	gloss
a.	cá-nā	c-ɛ́-nī	‘woman’
	kú-nā	c-é-nī	‘head’
b.	písàá-nā	pís-é-nī	‘child’

There is one known case where the penult as well as the final syllable optionally shifts vowels under E-ablaut (121). This is more easily handled by an ablaut overlay than by suffixation.

(121)	singular	plural	gloss
	báráŋkòŋkòō-nā	báráŋkwèŋkw-èē-nī ~ báráŋkòŋkw-èē-nī	‘black emperor scorpion’

It is possible that the suffixal analysis was correct diachronically. However, on balance the E-ablaut analysis is more persuasive synchronically.

Either way, the existence of an E-plural raises the possibility that all of the syllabic plural NC suffixes (-ɲɛ̄-, -sɛ̄-, -rɛ̄-, etc.) are E-ablauted forms. If their consonant were to recur in the singular, we could argue that the singular suffix itself undergoes E-ablaut. However, in most cases the consonantisms of the singular and plural suffixes are incompatible.

In several cases, palatalization of velar k or labial velar kp (§3.4.1.2) is triggered by E-ablaut (122a). However, other cases of velar k remain unpalatalized (122b).

(122)		singular	plural	gloss
	a.	fúúŋkù-nā	fúúɲc-è-nī	‘boundary’
		bā-kpà-nā	bā-cc-è-nī	‘shin’
	b.	bārāŋkāā-nā	bārāŋk-ɛ̄ɛ̄-nī	‘fork (at end of stick)’
		kɔ́ɔ́kɔ́ɔ́-nā	kɔ́ɔ́k-ɛ́ɛ́-nī	‘cultivated yam sp.’

The palatalization in (122a) raises the interesting possibility that at least the plural -ɲɛ̄- might be analysed as the E-ablauted form of singular NC -na-, with which it is often paired. However, there is no productive process palatalizing n to ɲ before ɛ. There are many stems with unpalatalized nonsuffixal nɛ syllables, as in nɛ̀kɛ̀sóò-nā-nā ‘bicycle’ and nānnɛ̄rɛ̄kúú-nā-nā ‘rope squirrel’. Therefore an E-ablaut analysis of -ɲɛ̄- is not compelling. Furthermore, plural NC suffix -rɛ̄- has no non-E-ablauted counterpart, and most nouns that have final sa (singular) and sɛ (plural) can be handled by E-ablaut without treating the s as suffixal. So the morphology is not appreciably simplified by assuming that E-ablaut applies en masse to the plural NC suffixes.

In (123), a bisyllabic stem with medial l or r shows an unexpected vowel lengthening of the root in the plural. These stems likely diverged from the Ø/rɛ̄ gender (§4.1.2.4.1) due to sound change (§3.4.1.5.1).

(123)		singular	plural	gloss
	a.	pɛ́lɛ́-nā	pɛ́ɛ́l-ɛ́-nī	‘neighborhood’
	b.	fɑ̄rā-nā	fɑ̄ār-ɛ̄-nī	‘(animal) skin’

Some stems that are here classified as Ø/E may have originated as stems with singular NS suffix *-Cv-. This is a particular issue with singular …sa-nā versus plural …s-ɛ-nī. By simply comparing singular and plural, the optimal analysis is that sa is part of the root and undergoes E-ablaut to s-ɛ-. However, sometimes the wider word-family has forms without the sibilant syllable. For example, māāsā-nā ‘greeting’ and its plural māās-ɛ̄-nī are related to the verb māā/māāsáⁿ ‘greet’, which suggests an alternative hyphenization of the noun as singular

māā-sā-nā and plural māā-sɛ̄-nī. Further support for this alternative is the fact that -sā- is a singular NC suffix in the sā/rɛ̄ and sā/E genders, and -sɛ̄- is a plural NC suffix in bɛ̄/sɛ̄, mā/sɛ̄, and kō/sɛ̄ genders.

4.1.2.1.2 sā/E gender

This gender occurs in two body-part terms and one flora term (124a), whose vowels are lengthened in the plural. 'Chili pepper', which in practice is always plural, may be another example, assuming that the plural has vacuous E (124b).

(124)

	singular	plural	gloss
a.	lōlō-sā-nā	lōōl-ɛ̄-nī	'intestine'
	yórú-sá-nā	yóór-é-nī	'penis'
	yín-sá-nā	yíín-é-nī	'locust-bean tree (*Parkia*)'
b.	ŋ̀kɔ̀pɛ́lɛ́-sā-nā	ŋ̀kɔ̀pɛ́l(-)ɛ́-nī	'chili pepper'

These stems have likely diverged from the fairly common sā/rɛ̄ gender (§4.1.2.4.1). For the diachrony of vowel-lengthening, see §3.4.1.5.1.

4.1.2.1.3 bɛ̄/E or bā/E gender (two tree spp.)

Two flora terms are of this gender.

(125)

singular	plural	gloss
bárá-bā-nā	báár-ɛ̄-nī	'tree sp. (*Combretum*)'
wéré-bé-nā	wéér-é-nī	'tree sp. (*Khaya*)'

These stems can be diachronically grouped with túú-bá-nā 'root' (plural túú-ré-nī) in §4.1.2.4.3, to constitute a small bā/rɛ̄ gender. See also the bā/yɛ̄ gender of wúlú-bá-nā 'tree sp. (*Ceiba*)' in §4.1.2.5.2. The a/e alternation in -bā- versus -bɛ̄- is consistent with the fuller a/e/o type of vowel harmony (§3.3.4), cf. bā/bɛ̄/bō in §4.1.2.3.1.

4.1.2.1.4 kā/E gender (yɛ̄-kā-nā 'fire')

There is one noun of this type. The premodifier form is yā, see (96c) above. A related compound ia yā-sɛ̀ɛ̄-nī 'smoke'.

(126)

singular	plural	gloss
yɛ̄-kā-nā	yɛ̄-ɛ̄-nī	'fire'

4.1.2.1.5 Ø/I gender

In this gender, the singular has no discernible NC suffix, while the plural is formed by mutating the final vowel to i. The great majority of examples are analysed in the following subsection under the rubric of the highly productive nonhuman kà/kì gender, which however is unusual in having L-toned NC suffixes. The few other examples of plurals expressed by mutating the final vowel to i are in (127). They involve either labial velar kp or geminated pp. They behave tonally like the kà/kì cases described below.

(127)

	singular	plural	gloss
a.	túú-kpà-nā	túú-kpì-nī	'big red-headed warrior termites'
b.	lí-bé-kàppà-nā	lí-sí-yɛ́-kàppì-nī	'mother's senior co-wife' (cf. lí-bé 'mother')
	sí-bé-kàppà-nā	sí-sí-yɛ́-kàppì-nī	'father's elder brother' (cf. sí-bé 'father')
c.	báppà-nā	báppì-nī	'stiffness in leg'

The presumed I-ablaut operating here resembles E-ablaut. However, E-ablaut elsewhere converts the low vowel a to ɛ and converts other vowels to ɛ or e, while I-ablaut converts a to i and does not affect other vowels. The two cannot be integrated into a single ablaut process.

4.1.2.1.6 kà/kì gender (inanimates)

A large number of nonhuman nouns have singular -kà- versus plural -kì-. If kà in the singular were taken to be part of the root, the plural could be derived by applying I-ablaut to it as described in the preceding subsection. However, since there are only a few examples of apparent I-ablaut not involving a velar stop, the existence of I-ablaut as an independent process is in doubt. So a good case can be made for segmenting -kà- as a singular suffix and -kì- as a plural suffix.

However, -kà- and -kì- are atypical NC suffixes. The pairing of them as kà/kì as suggested here would be the only gender whose singular and plural unambiguously begin with the same consonant, and differ only by vowel quality. A further difference vis-à-vis most other genders is that -kà- and -kì- are always L-toned.

Representative examples are in (128).

(128)

singular	plural	gloss
túú-ùzù-kà-nā	túú-ùzù-kì-nī	'termite sp. with capped termitary'
fúrú-kà-nā	fúrú-kì-nī	'tiny beetles in stored maize and cowpea'
kɛ́rɛ́-kà-nā	kɛ́rɛ́-kì-nī	'gun, rifle'
sēē-kà-nā	sēē-kì-nī	'load (n)'

támìn-tàŋ-kà-nā	támìn-tàŋ-kì-nī	‘stinging black ant (*Brachyponera*)’
bélè-bàŋ-kà-nā	bélèbàŋ-kì-nī	‘burrgrass (*Cenchrus*)’

Most nouns with kà/kì NC suffixes are inanimate. There are fewer than ten known flora-fauna terms of this gender, and the handful of fauna terms among them denote tiny insects. Participles and adjectives use kà/kì productively for nonhuman (animate as well as inanimate) reference.

The usual combinations with final suffixes are of course -kà-nā and -kì-nī. However, they combine irregularly with (y)ɛ̄ ‘it is’ in the identificational construction. The expected singular combination would be #-kà-n ī, but it is instead -kà-ŋwɛ̄ = ɛ̄. The expected plural combination would be #-kì-ɲ̄ ɲɛ̄, but it is instead -kì-n-sɛ̄ = ɛ̄ (§11.2.1.1).

4.1.2.1.7 sā/kì gender (káá-sá-nā ‘disease’)

This noun has an idiosyncratic mix of -sā- singular and -kì- plural. Also unusual is the fact that the root (rather than an NC suffix) undergoes E-ablaut in the plural.

(129)

singular	plural	gloss
káá-sá-nā	k(-)éé-kì-nī	‘disease’

The related verb is káásá/kāāsá ‘get sick’. Another related word, again with E-ablaut of the root, is kéé-nnè-nā ‘sick person’, plural kéé-sèɛ̄-nī. One might have expected #káá-nnè-nā in this sense.

4.1.2.1.8 nā/kì gender (núkúyì-nā-nā ‘untruth’)

The noun ‘lie (n), untruth’ has two variants. The one in (130a) has an unusual combination of singular -nā- and plural -kì-. The other in (130b) is a normal nā/ɲɛ̄ gender noun.

(130)

	singular	plural	gloss
a.	núkúyìn-nā-nā	núkúyìŋ-kì-nī	‘lie, untruth’
b.	núkú-ná-nā	núkú-ɲé-nī	‘lie, untruth’

4.1.2.2 Genders with plural ɲɛ̄

Like other M-toned NC suffixes, -ɲɛ̄- has an H-toned variant -ɲé- for nouns whose roots end in H-tone (other than covertly …HL-toned roots).

-ɲɛ̄- has an invariant [-ATR] vowel in the productive nā/ɲɛ̄ gender. In other words, -ɲɛ̄- harmonizes with the singular suffix -nā- that it replaces, rather than with the preceding root. Thus kōō-nā-nā ‘spitting cobra’, plural kōō-**ɲɛ̄**-nī (not #kōō-**ɲɛ̄**-nī). For the exceptional féé-ɲé-nī ‘fonio’ see §4.1.2.2.4 below.

4.1.2.2.1 nā/ɲɛ̄ gender (productive)

This highly productive gender has singular -nā-nā and plural -ɲɛ̄-nī, including the final suffixes. Human, animal, and inanimate nouns are well represented. A few examples are in (131a). (131b-c) belong here but present irregular root mutations. There are quite a few singulars in -nā-nā for which no plural was elicitable (131c), and one or two pluralia tantum attested only in a plural with -ɲɛ̄-nī (131d).

(131)

	singular	plural	gloss
a.	bɔ́ɔ́-ná-nā	bɔ́ɔ́-ɲé-nī	‘agemate’
	kàràmūū-nā-nā	kàràmūū-ɲɛ̄-nī	‘holy man’
	mààŋká-ná-nā	mààŋká-ɲé-nī	‘blanket’
	fíí-ná-nā	fíí-ɲé-nī	‘donkey’
	pɛ̀mpé-nā-nā	pɛ̀mpé-ɲɛ̄-nī	‘tree sp. (*Sclerocarya*)’
b.	kún-ná-nā	kúnú-ɲé-nī	‘home’
	á-tùná-ná-nā	á-tùná-ɲé-nī	‘night’ (individuative)
		~ á-tùná-yɛ́-nī	
		~ túɲ-ɲɛ̄-nī	
c.	pìppì-nā-nā	—	‘heat (from fire)’
	níí-ná-nā	—	‘world (of the living)’
d.	—	kàlà-ɲɛ̄-nī	‘scarifications’

As noted in §4.1.2.9, when the suffix complexes for this gender are deleted in premodifier position, the root usually ends in a nasal coda whose morphemic status is debatable.

4.1.2.2.2 Ø/ɲɛ̄ gender

A minor gender including plural -ɲɛ̄- is Ø/ɲɛ̄, i.e., with a bare stem in the singular. Most of the examples involve fɔ́ɔ́-nā ‘hole’ and its compound-final form -fɔ̀-nā (132a). Another example is náá-nā ‘mouth (132b) where one suspects contraction from *núú-ná-nā which may have had one n too many, see (67a) above. Both ‘hole’ and ‘mouth’ shift the root vowel to u in the plural. Unusually, singular ‘hare’ often occurs in unsuffixed form, perhaps reflecting its role as a human-like protagonist in animal tales where ǹsánàŋkpē functions like a personal name.

(132)

	singular	plural	gloss
a.	fɔ́ɔ́-nā	fúú-ɲɛ́-nī	‘hole, pit; grave’
	tà-fɔ̀-nā	tà-fù-ɲɛ̄-nī	‘pond’
	kòó-fɔ̀-nā	kòó-fù-ɲɛ̄-nī	‘throat’
b.	náá-nā	núú-ɲɛ́-nī	‘mouth’
c.	ǹsánàŋkpē(-nā-nā)	ǹsánàŋkpē-ɲɛ̄-nī	‘hare’

4.1.2.2.3 nnè/ɲɛ̄ gender (nàŋkàán-nè-nā ‘thief’)

In one known stem, L-toned singular -nnè- combines with plural -ɲɛ̄- (raised here regularly to -ɲé-). Elsewhere -nnè- is a common human NC suffix paired with plural -sɛ̀ɛ̄- (§4.1.2.3.6, §4.2.1.2). The noun in (133) functions as agentive of the verb nàŋkàá^{n}/nàŋkàáná ‘steal’.

(133)

singular	plural	gloss
nàŋkàán-nè-nā	nàŋkàá-ɲé-nī	‘thief’

4.1.2.2.4 sā/ɲɛ̄ gender

This minor gender contains a few nouns denoting grains and powder.

Fonio is a traditional West African cereal with tiny grains. It is usually referred to in the plural fɛ́ɛ́-ɲé-nī, while singular fɛ́ɛ́n-sá-nā denotes a single grain. fɛ́ɛ́-ɲé-nī is interesting since it is the only common example of plural NC suffix -ɲɛ̄- shifting to [+ATR] -ɲē- (disregarding tone-raising). This is arguably because in the productive nā/ɲɛ̄ gender, plural -ɲɛ̄- harmonizes with singular NC suffix -nā- rather than with the root. There is no similar harmonic relationship between -ɲɛ̄- and singular -sā-, so -ɲɛ̄- is free to harmonize with the root.

Also in the sā/ɲɛ̄ gender are sɔ́kɔ́n-sá-nā/-ɲɛ́-nī ‘herbal medication in powder’ and yín-sá-nā/-ɲɛ́-nī ‘pod of locust-bean tree’ (which contains powdery yellow meal). See also the sā/mī gender (§4.1.2.6.2).

4.1.2.3 Genders with plural -sɛ̄-

Many nouns have a plural with -sɛ̄-nī. -nī is of course the final plural suffix. Plural NC suffix -sɛ̄- is paired with several singular NC suffixes, notably -bē-, -mā-, -lī- ~ -nī-, and -yē-, in roughly descending order of type frequency. There are also many Ø/sɛ̄ nouns (see discussion below).

Both plural -sɛ̄- and the singular counterparts (except those with i) also show occasional vocalic shifts. In the case of -sɛ̄-, the shift is to -sē- in some cases when the corresponding singular has [+ATR] {e o}.

4.1.2.3.1 bē/sē, bā/sē, bō/sē, bē/sèé genders with plural -nī or -yɛ̄

This gender occurs in parental kin terms 'mother' and 'father', derived nominals with -sì- (possibly related to 'father'), 'hair' and 'straw', 'borassus palm', and a few fauna terms. 'Mother' and 'father' have unusual morphology including absence of final singular -nā, rising tone in plural -sèé-, and the otherwise very rare final plural suffix -yɛ̄ rather than -nī (134a). The rising tone in -sèé- suggests some sort of affinity with -sèɛ̄- in the nnè/sèɛ̄ gender (§4.1.2.3.6 below), whose nouns are likewise human.

The vowel of the singular -bv̄- suffix is a for [-ATR] stems, and e or o for [+ATR] stems, though in some cases the suffixal vowel is the only indicator of otherwise covert [+ATR]. The choice between e and o is based on back/rounded harmony with the root (§3.3.4).

(134)

	singular	plural	gloss
a.	lí-bé	lí-sèé-yɛ̄	'mother'
	sí-bé	sí-sèé-yɛ̄	'father'
b.	ná-sì-bē-nā	ná-sì-sē-nī	'cattle raiser'
c.	wúlú-bē-nā	wúlú-sē-nī	'hair'
	wíí-bē-nā	wíí-sē-nī	'straw'
d.	kāā-bā-nā	kāā-sɛ̄-nī	'borassus palm'
	kàà-bā-nā	kàà-sɛ̄-nī	'sheep'
e.	fōkō-bō-nā	fókó-sē-nī	'shea caterpillar (*Cirina*)'
	séé-bé-nā	séé-sē-nī	'ground squirrel'

In the pairing fá-nā 'person', líí-bē-nī 'people', -bē- is part of a suppletive plural (§4.1.2.7.3).

Several animal terms of bē/sē gender, like other fauna terms with -sē-/-sē- plural NC suffix, have M-toned roots in the singular, raising to H-toned in the plural (§3.6.2.5). Non-fauna nouns of these genders show no such tone-raising.

4.1.2.3.2 mā/sɛ̄ gender

This gender is attested in one kin term (135a), one flora term (135b), and several fauna terms including those in (135c). Most of the roots in question end in a nasal, which is heard as n or as vocalic nasalization before plural -sɛ̄-. 'Younger sibling' and 'dog' are tonally distinct in the singular, but homophonous in the plural, since M-toned terms for animals with this plural raise to H in the plural (§3.6.2.5), as also for 'fish (any)' and 'giraffe' in (135c). [+ATR] stems, including those with high vowels whose [+ATR] is otherwise covert, have -sē- in the plural.

(135)

	singular	plural	gloss
a.	fá-mā-nā ~ fɔ́-mā-nā	fɔ́n-sɛ̄-nī	‘younger sibling’
b.	wúnú-mā-nā	wúnún-sɛ̄-nī	‘tree sp. (*Pterocarpus*)’
c.	fā-mā-nā ~ fɔ̄-mā-nā	fɔ́n-sɛ̄-nī	‘dog’
	yīm-mā-nā	yín-sɛ̄-nī	‘fish (any)’
	yīsī-mā-nā	yísín-sɛ̄-nī	‘giraffe’
	fínsì-mā-nā	fínsì-sɛ̄-nī	‘cricket’

Given the association with nasal-final roots, one is tempted to analyse mā as a phonological variant of bā/bē/bō (preceding subsection) by positing an assimilation /bā/→ mā after a nasal. This would be more convincing if -mā- had harmonic variants -mē- and -mō-. The fact that such variants do not occur may be accidental gaps. The question whether -mā- and bā/bē/bō are related, at least etymologically, is left open.

Singular -mā- also occurs in the two flora terms of the mā/rɛ̄ gender (§4.1.2.4.2 below).

4.1.2.3.3 Possible yɛ̄/sɛ̄ gender

This possible gender is attested only with the noun mí(y)… ‘voice’and the diminutive compound final pí(y)…, which is related to the adjective ‘small’. The analytical problem is whether the singular roots are píyé- and míyɛ́- which monophthongize to Ci(i) before -sɛ̄-, or whether the roots contain singular NC suffix -yɛ̄- (becoming -yē- with [+ATR] stems) as a singular NC suffix that is replaced by -sɛ̄- (becoming [+ATR] -sē-) in the plural. In the first analysis, these nouns belong to the Ø/sɛ̄ gender described below. The transcription in (136) follows the second analysis and hyphenates off -yē- ~ -yɛ̄-, but the issue is debatable.

(136)

	singular	plural	gloss
a.	kílà-pí-yé-nā	kílà-pí-sé-nī	‘finger’
	kásá-pí-yé-nā	kásá-pí-sé-nī	‘girl’
	yéém-pí-yé-nā	yéém-pí-sé-nī	‘winged termite’
	báá-pí-yé-nā	báá-pí-sé-nī	‘bird (any)’
	bā-pí-yé-nā	bā-pí-sé-nī	‘toe’
	ná-pí-yé-nā	ná-pí-sé-nī	‘(man’s) nephew or niece’ (§5.1.2.4)
b.	mí-yɛ́-nā	míí-sɛ́-nī	‘voice’

For a similar analytical problem, see the discussion of a possible wɔ̄/rɛ̄ gender in §4.1.2.4.4 below.

4.1.2.3.4 kō/sɛ̄ gender

This gender is limited to ‘mouse’ and its compounds. The plurals show the effects of Root-Tone Raising (§3.6.2.5) and Initial Tone-Dropping (§3.6.2.7).

(137)	singular	plural	gloss
	tūū-kō-nā	túú-sɛ̄-nī	‘mouse’
	pìyé-tùù-kō-nā	pìyé-tùù-sɛ̄-nī	‘white-toothed shrew’

4.1.2.3.5 Ø/sɛ̄ gender

Quite a few nouns have plural -sɛ̄- or [+ATR] variant -sē-, but no clearly segmentable singular NC suffix. In examples like (138a), the root has the same segmental form and the same H-tones in the singular and plural. Final-syllable <LM> tones drop to L before -sɛ̄- (138b), as do a few final M-tones (138c). Compounds with -pò- ‘child’ shift it to plural -pì- (138e), cf. §5.1.2.4. The irregular noun in (138f) may reflect the fusion of two original plurals, one with E-ablaut and the other with -sɛ̄-.

(138)		singular	plural	gloss
	a.	píyé-nā	píyé-sé-nī	‘man’
		sénnéé-nā	sénnéé-sé-nī	‘knife’
		tééléé-nā	tééléé-sé-nī	‘comb (of rooster)’
	b.	wóló-làā-nā	wóló-làà-sɛ̄-nī	‘eating place’
		kàā-nā	kàà-sɛ̄-nī	‘tree bark’
		cɔ̀ɔ̄-nā	cɔ̀ɔ̀-sɛ̄-nī	‘hip’ (plural also c-ɛ̀ɛ̄-nī)
		sínfàā-nā	sínfàà-sɛ̄-nī	‘body’
		yààntɔ̀ɔ̄-nā	yààntɔ̀ɔ̀-sɛ̄-nī	‘tree sp. (*Sterculia*)’
	c.	fɛ̀kɛ̀-fɛ̀kɛ̄-nā	fɛ̀kɛ̀-fɛ̀kɛ̀-sɛ̄-nī	‘battle ax’
	d.	káŋkáá-nā	káŋkáán-sɛ̄-nī	‘side’
	e.	wáràm-pò-nā	wáràm-pì-sɛ̄-nī	‘5-franc coin’
		kàn-nàkà-pò-nā	kàn-nàkà-pì-sɛ̄-nī	‘shepherd’
		[kɛ́ré-kà]-pò-nā	[kɛ́ré-kà]-pì-sɛ̄-nī	‘bullet’
	f.	wɔ̀ɔ̄-nā	wɛ̀ɛ̀-sɛ̄-nī	‘liana sp. (*Landolphia*)’

These nouns are fertile terrain for discovering vestiges of former singular NC suffixes.

4.1.2.3.6 nnè/sɛ̀ɛ̄ gender

This common but unusual gender has invariant L-toned -nnè- in the singular, or -nè- after another nasal. It has invariant -sɛ̀ɛ̄- in the plural. There is no ATR harmony with stem vowels or between the singular and plural NC suffixes. There is no tone-raising after stem-final H-tone, which applies only to M-toned NC suffixes. The plural becomes -sɛ̄rɛ̄ without final plural suffix -nī in free postverbal nouns, as in copular clauses (§11.2.2.3) and in the 'become X' construction (§11.2.5.2). This suggests that the original proto-form was segmentally *-sɛrɛ and that the rhotic was elided when followed by plural final suffix -nī (§3.4.1.4.2).

All known examples denote human categories. Deverbal agentives are formed by adding these NC suffixes directly to forms of the verb (§4.2.1.2). The closest relationship of this gender is probably to the bē/sē gender (§4.1.2.3.1), and specifically to the [+ATR] kin terms lí-bé 'mother' and sí-bé 'father' which have -sèé- plurals (lí-sèé-yɛ̀, sí-sèé-yɛ̄). In (139b) there is a unique ATR shift from singular to plural, triggered by the suffixal vocalism. 'Smoke' (139c) is a plurale tantum.

(139)

	singular	plural	gloss
a.	kāā-nnè-nā	kāā-sɛ̀ɛ̄-nī	'griot'
	pɔ̀ɔ̀-nnè-nā	pɔ̀ɔ̀n-sɛ̀ɛ̄-nī	'Senufo person'
	bélèn-sèlè-nnè-nā	bélèn-sèlè-sɛ̀ɛ̄-nī	'weaver (tradesman)'
	nàn-sòón-nè-nā	nàn-sòón-sɛ̀ɛ̄-nī	'hunter'
	sùwɔ̀n-nè-nā	sùwɔ̀n-sɛ̀ɛ̄-nī	'healer'
	líyà-tɔ̀ɔ̀-nnè-nā	líyà-tɔ̀ɔ̀-sɛ̀ɛ̄-nī	'farmer'
	tòóm-bàn-nè-nā	tòóm-bà-sɛ̀ɛ̄-nī	'neighbor'
	nāmpòó-nè-nā	nāmpòón-sɛ̀ɛ̄-nī	'rich person'
	yì-w^{n}à-nnè-nā	yì-w^{n}à-sɛ̀ɛ̄-nī	'singer'
b.	tó-nnè-nā	tɔ́-sɛ̀ɛ̄-nī	'visitor, guest'
c.	—	yā-sɛ̀ɛ̄-nī	'smoke'

L-toned singular -nnè- also occurs in pálà-nnè-nā 'Paleni person', but its plural is pálá-bɛ̄-nī with -bɛ̄- (§4.1.2.7.2).

4.1.2.4 Genders with plural -rɛ̄-

Many nouns have plural NC suffix -rɛ̄-. The [+ATR] variant is -rē-. The most common paired singular suffix is -sā-. There are also many with zero (Ø). There are isolated cases of -kā-, -mā-, -bā-, and -gbɔ̄-.

4.1.2.4.1 sā/rɛ̄ gender

At least a dozen stems of this gender are known. Several are basic lexical items and are likely archaic (140a). In (140b), the medial n in the singular appears have been elided in the plural but left nasalization behind.

(140)		singular	plural	gloss
	a.	máá-sá-nā	máá-ré-nī	‘earth, soil’
		námá-sá-nā	námá-ré-nī	‘meat; game animal’
		túkú-sā-nā	túkú-rɛ̄-nī	‘yam (*Dioscorea*)’
		wáán-sā-nā	wáá^{n}-rɛ̄-nī	‘grain, seed’
		sɛ́ɛ́-sā-nā	sɛ́ɛ́-rɛ̄-nī	‘sorghum grain spike’
	b.	káná-sā-nā	káá^{n}-rɛ̄-nī	‘peanut’

-sā- is also the singular NC suffix in the sā/mī gender (§4.1.2.6.2).

4.1.2.4.2 mā/rɛ̄ gender

Two flora terms constitute this gender.

(141)	singular	plural	gloss
	mísí-má-nā	mísí-ré-nī	‘tree sp. (*Anogeissus*)’
	mànsàà-mā-nā	mànsàà-rɛ̄-nī	‘trailing vine sp. (*Ipomoea*)’

-mā- is also a singular NC suffix in the mā/sɛ̄ gender, where it arguably is a nasal offshoot of -bā- (§4.1.2.3.2 above).

4.1.2.4.3 Minor genders with -rɛ̄- plural

These are isolated, lexically specific, pairings of various nonzero singular NC’s with plural -rɛ̄- (142a-c) or [+ATR] -rē- (142d).

(142)		singular	plural	gloss
	a.	kú-ká-nā	kúú-ré-nī	‘bone’
	b.	túú-bá-nā	túú-ré-nī	‘root’
	c.	kɔ́ɔ́-gbɔ́-nā	kɔ́ɔ́-ré-nī	‘tree sp. (*Terminalia*)’
	d.	kpéé-bé-nā	kpéé-ré-nī	‘tree sp. (*Afzelia*)’

The -bā- (raised to -bá-) in ‘root’ (142b) is consistent with [-ATR] singular -bā- in other genders (§4.1.2.3.1, §4.1.2.1). The plural of ‘root’ confirms its [-ATR] status.

4.1.2.4.4 Possible wɔ̄/rɛ̄ or wā/rɛ̄ gender

Candidates for another isolated gender are based on the nouns in (143).

(143)

	singular	plural	gloss
a.	nú-wɔ́-nā	núú-rɛ́-nī	‘cut (n), wound’
b.	tú-wá-nā	túú-rɛ́-nī	‘flute, whistle (n)’

However, it is also possible that the roots are núwɔ́ and túwá, which monophthongize as Cúú- before -rɛ̄-. The situation is similar to that of the possible yɛ̄/sɛ̄ gender discussed above (§4.1.2.3.3).

4.1.2.4.5 Ø/rɛ̄ gender

There are many nouns with zero singular suffix and -rɛ̄- plural suffix (144a). There are a few cases of tone-dropping as with plural -sɛ̄- (144b), and a few cases of vowel mutation to uu (144c).

(144)

	singular	plural	gloss
a.	tóó-nā	tóó-rɛ́-nī	‘baobab’
	káákù-nā	káákù-rɛ̄-nī	‘iron’
	cîì-sèɛ̄-nā	cîì-sè-rɛ̄-nī	‘old woman’
	táá-nā	táá-rɛ́-nī	‘stone’
	pámpáá-nā	pámpáá-rɛ̄-nī	‘cloud’ (plural also pámpáá-sɛ̄-nī)
b.	wúsù-kàā-nā	wúsù-kàà-rɛ̄-nī	‘fingernail’
	wíí-fòō-nā	wíí-fòò-rɛ̄-nī	‘liana sp. (*Holarrhena*)’
c.	kwá-nā	kúú-rɛ́-nī	‘market’ or ‘price’
	fɔ́ɔ́-nā	fúú-rɛ̄-nī	‘ax’
	fáá-nā	fúú-rɛ̄-nī	‘male animal)’
	á-máá-nā	á-múú-rɛ́-nī	‘mountain’

No known noun stem with a liquid onset of the final root syllable, i.e., …lv- or …rv-, belongs to the Ø/rɛ̄ gender. It is possible that such roots formerly did belong to this gender, but underwent a contraction that elided the suffixal rhotic and produced a long vowel. See discussion of the synchronic bɛ̄/E gender in §4.1.2.1.3.

4.1.2.5 Genders with plural -yɛ̄-

-yɛ̄- is moderately productive as a plural NC suffix, but in some cases segmentation is questionable. The majority of nouns with this plural have a singular suffix beginning with k. Other attested singulars are -bā-, -na-, and zero (Ø). Attested pluralia tantum are bánjî-yɛ̄-nī 'palm wine' and pɔ̄sɔ̄ní-yɛ̄-nī 'poison, insecticide'.

4.1.2.5.1 Genders [-ATR] kā/yɛ̄ and [+ATR] kē/yɛ̄ or kō/yɛ̄

Singular suffixes most commonly paired with plural -yɛ̄- (or [+ATR] -yē-) have the general form -kv̄-, specifically -kā-, -kē-, and -kō-. The vocalic alternations are regular for a/e/o vowel harmony with [-ATR] -kā-, and [+ATR] -kē- and -kō- determined by back/rounding harmony (§3.3.4), compare bā/bē/bō (§4.1.2.3.1). No examples involving root-final nonhigh vowels are known. Note the minimal [±ATR] pair tíí-ká-nā 'place' versus tíí-ké-nā 'termitary'. Especially the examples with singular Cii-kv- versus plural Ci-ye/ɛ- ('place' and 'tree') could be reanalysed as having Ciye or Ciyɛ roots that monophthongize in the singular, or else as Cii roots that undergo E-ablaut in the plural.

(145)

singular	plural	gloss
a. kā/yɛ̄ gender		
tíí-ká-nā	tí-yɛ́-nī	'place'
yì-kā-nā	yì-yɛ̄-nī	'song'
báá-tì-kā-nā	báá-tì-yɛ̄-nī	'footprint'
sù-kā-nā	sì-yɛ̄-nī	'calabash'
b. kē/yɛ̄ gender		
sīī-kē-nā	sī-yɛ̄-nī	'tree'
tíí-ké-nā	tíí-yé-nī	'termitary'
wūrū-kō-nā	wūrū-yɛ̄-nī	'manure'
wú-kó-nā	wú-yé-nī	'house'

4.1.2.5.2 Minor genders nā/yɛ̄, bā/yɛ̄, and sā/yɛ̄

The attested pairings of these genders are in (146). -yɛ̄- and -ɲɛ̄- are phonetically similar and some fluctuation between nā/yɛ̄ and the much more common nā/ɲɛ̄ (§4.1.2.2.2) has been observed, with younger speakers tending to shift toward nā/yɛ̄.

(146)

singular	plural	gloss
a. bànàŋkúù-nā-nā	bànàŋkúù-yɛ̄-nī	'cassava'
tòmàtîì-nā-nā	tòmàtîì-yɛ̄-nī	'tomato'
pɛ̀ɛ̀ŋkààsîì-nā-nā	pɛ̀ɛ̀ŋkààsîì-yɛ̄-nī	'pick-ax'

b.	wúlú-bá-nā	wúlú-yɛ́-nī	‘tree sp. (*Ceiba*)’
c.	níí-sā-nā	níí-yɛ̄-nī	‘oil’

The closest parallel for singular -bā- occurring after u as in (146b) is túú-bá-nā ‘root’ which by itself constitutes the bā/rɛ̄ gender (§4.1.2.4.3). However, -bā- is also the [-ATR] variant in the set bā/bē/bō described in (§4.1.2.3.1), and wúlú-bá-nā ‘tree sp.’ (146b) and túú-bá-nā ‘root’ are shown to be [-ATR] by the ɛ in their plural NC suffixes.

4.1.2.6 Genders with plural -mī-

There are two semantically unrelated clusters of nouns that have this plural. Nouns in one small cluster denote young humans. Nouns in the other cluster denote liquids and similar substances (e.g., powders). Many nouns in the second cluster are pluralia tantum that have no morphological singular (147a). Some other liquids are expressed by compounds of ‘water’ (147b).

(147)	a.	ní-mí-nī	‘water’
		tíí-mī-nī	‘blood’
	b.	yílá-[nì-mī-nī]	‘breast milk’
		sīī-ké-ñ fòlòsí-[nì-mī-nī]	‘tree sap’

A few nouns in the liquid/powder cluster have singular -sā-. For the sā/mī gender see §4.1.2.6.2 below.

4.1.2.6.1 Human nouns with plural -mi-

The attested nouns of this type are listed in (148). In the female noun (148a), the singular has no overt NC suffix. In the male counterpart (148b), -pò- functions somewhat like a singular NC suffix.

		singular	plural	gloss
(148)	a.	kásá-nā	kásá-mí-nī	‘young woman; daughter’
	b.	kàárì-pò-nā	kàrà-mī-nī	‘young man; son’

However, -pò- is elsewhere a compound final denoting young persons (often specifically male), and its plural -pì-sɛ̄-nī contains a true NC suffix -sɛ̄-. An example is píyé-pò-nā ‘boy’, plural píyé-pì-sɛ̄-nī ; see also the diminutive compounds in §5.1.2.3. It follows that -pò- in kàárì-pò-nā ‘young man’ (148b) was not originally an NC suffix, but it began functioning like one when *-pì- was dropped from its plural, likely by analogy to female plural kásá-mí-nī (148a).

4.1.2.6.2 sā/mī gender (liquids etc.)

As noted above, many nouns that denote liquids occur only as pluralia tantum with -mī-. However, some nouns with plural -mī- also have a singular with -sā-. Those in (149a) denote substances that have some connection with liquids.

(149)		singular	plural	gloss
	a.	túkú-sá-nā	túkú-mí-nī	'powder, flour'
		fúrú-sá-nā	fúrú-sá-mī	'excrement'
	b.	yílá-sá-nā	yílá-mí-nī	'breast'

Plural yílá-mí-nī (149b) also means 'milk' (breastmilk or cow's milk), and has no singular in this sense.

-sā- is also the singular NC suffix in the sā/rɛ̄ gender (§4.1.2.4.1).

4.1.2.7 Other nouns with unique genders

These idiosyncratic nouns are presented with brief commentary.

4.1.2.7.1 Possible yɛ̄/nī gender (fí-yé-nā 'thing')

This is the only example of -nī- as apparent plural NC suffix. The morphology is nontransparent. The íí in fíí-nī-nī may be monophthongized from íyé, in which case the singular has no NC suffix. The apparent medial NC suffix -nī- in the plural is unique to this noun.

(150)	singular	plural	gloss
	fí-yé-nā	fíí-nī-nī	'thing'

Compare lí-yé-nā '(sb's) relative, kinsman', plural líí-bé-nā. This is the only other noun with a similar Cí-yɛ́/é- singular, and here too the plural has Cíí-.

4.1.2.7.2 nnè/bɛ̄ gender (pálà-nnè-nā 'Paleni person')

The two nouns in this minor gender denote ethnic persons. Singular -nnè- is common for human nouns as in the nnè/sɛ̀ɛ̄ gender (§4.1.2.3.6), but the plural with -bɛ̄- ~ -bā- is unusual. 'Paleni person' has an idiosyncratic tonal change from singular to plural.

(151)

singular	plural	gloss
pálà-nnè-nā	pálá-bɛ̄-nī	‘Paleni person’
yɔ́kɔ́-nè-nā	yɔ́kɔ́-bá-nī	‘Jula person’

Possible comparanda for plural -bɛ̄- are the ending in lí-bé ‘mother’ and sí-bé ‘father’ (§4.1.2.3.1), but these parental kin terms are singular. A better comparison is with líí-bɛ̄-nī ‘people’ (§4.1.2.7.3).

4.1.2.7.3 Suppletive plural (fá-nā ‘person’, líí-bé-nī ‘people’)

This is the only clearly suppletive noun. Morphemic segmentation of the plural is nontransparent, but -bé- may be related to the NC suffix in plural pálá-bɛ̄-nī ‘Paleni people’ (preceding subsection).

(152)

singular	plural	gloss
fá-nā	líí-bé-nī	‘person’

With a possessor in the sense ‘(sb’s) relative, kinsman’, the singular is nonsuppletive lí-yé-nā, where the internal morpheme break in lí(-)yé- is doubtful.

For compounds with líí- see §5.1.2.2.

4.1.2.8 Summary of segmental alternations in noun roots

In addition to the following subsections, see §3.4.1.5.1 for length alternations of the type bābā-nā ‘sheep-Sg’, plural bāāb-ɛ̄-nī and pɛ́lɛ́-nā ‘neighborhood’, plural pɛ́ɛ́l-ɛ́-nī. Most of the examples of this plural lengthening, but not ‘sheep’, involve roots with medial {l r n}.

4.1.2.8.1 Number suppletion

The only clear case of suppletion is fá-nā ‘person’, líí-bé-nī ‘people’ (§4.1.2.7.3 just above). However, many stems are pluralia tantum, occurring only in the morphologically plural form.

4.1.2.8.2 Consonantal and syllabic alternations

A few noun stems have roots that appear to grow an extra vowel (and syllable) in the plural.

(153)

	singular	plural	gloss
a.	kál-ná-nā	kálá-ɲɛ́-nī	‘freshwater crab’
	kún-ná-nā	kúnú-ɲɛ́-nī	‘house with home’

b.	kān-nā-nā	kāɲàà-sɛ̄-nī	‘firewood’

4.1.2.8.3 Possible monophthongization (iyɛ/ɛ → ii, uwa/ɔ → uu)

A number of comments in preceding sections have raised the question whether forms of the types CiyE and CuwO (or Cuwa), alternating with Cii and Cuu, respectively, contain NC suffixes -yE and -wO or are unsegmentable roots that can monophthongize. A fuller set of examples are the singulars in (154a) and the plurals in (154). The irregular noun ‘thing’ (154c) is harder to analyse because of the unique NC suffix -nī- following the long vowel in the plural.

(154)

	singular	plural	gloss
a.	tú-wá-nā	túú-ré-nī	‘wooden flute’
	nú-wɔ́-nā	núú-rɛ́-nī	‘cut (n)’
	mí-yɛ́-nā	míí-sɛ̄-nī	‘voice’
	lí-yé-nā	líí-bé-nī	‘kinsman’ (possessed)
b.	sīī-kē-nā	sī-yē-nī	‘tree’
	tíí-ká-nā	tí-yɛ́-nī	‘place’
c.	fǐ-yé-nā	fǐí-nī-nī	‘thing’ (§4.1.2.7.1)

However, in (155a) below, the sequence iyɛ fails to monophthongize in the plural (no such examples with uwa or uwɔ are known). In (155b), long ii and uu are likewise stable. In (155c) iyɛ in the plural corresponds to short i or in one case short u in the singular. (155d) shows how even short ɔ in the singular can correspond to uu in the plural. These data cast doubt on the monophthongization analysis of (154a-b) above.

(155)

	singular	plural	gloss
a.	fǐyɛ́-nā	fǐyɛ́-nī	‘bamboo’
	fìyɛ́-nā	fìyɛ́-nī	‘ackee tree’
b.	kíí-nā-nā	kíí-ɲɛ̄-nī	‘neighborhood’
	kúú-ká-nā	kúú-rɛ̄-nī	‘bone’
c.	sù-kā-nā	sì-yɛ̄-nī	‘calabash’
	yì-kā-nā	yì-yɛ̄-nī	‘song’
d.	fɔ́-nā	fúú-rɛ̄-nī	‘ax’

From a synchronic perspective, it is perhaps best not to over-analyse the vowel-length alternations in (154-155), since no clear pattern emerges.

4.1.2.8.4 Other length alternations

The long vowels in the following alternations are bolded. In (156a), root-final long oo corresponds to short e in the E-ablauted plural. The alternation in (156b) is comparable to that of CvCv- singulars versus E-ablauted CvvC-e/ɛ- plurals (§3.4.1.5.1), if -kàsā-nā is segmented as a compound final. (156c) is idiosyncratic. For (156d) cf. §3.4.1.4.2 on elision of r.

(156)

	singular	plural	gloss
a.	fúŋfùrk**óó**-nā	fúŋfùrc-é-nī	'puff adder'
	kùntùrùk**óó**-nā	kùntùrùc-é-nī	'hippo'
	sàntùŋk**óó**-nā	sàntùŋc-é-nī	'hyena'
b.	mánàŋ-kàsā-nā	mánàŋ-k**àà**s-ɛ̄-nī	'scolopender'
c.	pís**àá**-nā	pís-é-nī	'child'
d.	líí-s**èē**-nā	líí-sè-rē-nī	'old person'
	ká-s**èē**-nā	ká-sè-rē-nī	'old man'

4.1.2.8.5 Vowel-quality alternations (ɔ/u, a/u, o/ɔ, ɔ/a, a/e/o)

E-ablaut and I-ablaut were discussed above in §4.1.2.1. Additional vowel-quality alternations in stems and NC suffixes are summarized here, drawing data from preceding subsections.

An alternation ɔ/u is observed in forms of fɔ́ɔ́-nā 'hole' and its compound final -fɔ̀- (157a). A few nouns and adjectives show an aa/uu alternation. For both of these see §4.1.2.2.2 above.

(157)

	singular	plural	gloss	
a.	fɔ́ɔ́-nā	fúú-ɲɛ́-nī	'hole, pit; grave'	
	tà-fɔ̀-nā	tà-fù-ɲɛ̄-nī	'pond'	
	kòó-fɔ̀-nā	kòó-fù-ɲɛ̄-nī	'throat'	
b.	náá-nā	núú-ɲɛ́-nī	'mouth'	cf. (67), (132)
	fáá-nā	fúú-rɛ́-nī	'male (animal)'	
	á-máá-nā	á-múú-rɛ́-nī	'mountain'	

An idiosyncratic ATR alternation o/ɔ is attested in one noun (158a). The suffixes in question do not elsewhere trigger harmony in the root vowel but in this case it appears that they did. The a/ɔ alternation in (158b), see §4.1.2.3.2 above, has a ~ ɔ in the singular and ɔ in the plural (and in the premodifier form fɔ́^{n}-). The plural of 'dog' also shows a tonal change associated with plural fauna terms (§3.6.2.5).

(158)	singular	plural	gloss	
a.	tó-nnè-nā	tɔ́-sɛ̀ɛ̄-nī	‘visitor, guest’	cf. (139)
b.	fā-mā-nā ~ fɔ̄-mā-nā	fɔ́n-sɛ̄-nī	‘dog’	
	fá-mā-nā ~ fɔ́-mā-nā	"	‘younger sibling’	

Vowel harmony, generally from root to NC suffix but in the case of nā/ɲɛ̄ gender from singular to plural NC suffixes, is described in §3.3.4 above.

ATR harmony is behind -Cɛ- ~ -Ce- alternations in plural NC suffixes, including -sɛ̄-/-sē-, -rɛ̄-/-rē-, and -yɛ̄-/-yē-, with the -Ce- variant after [+ATR] stems. Here the vowels are mid-height, so that [+ATR] is the only variable. ATR harmony combines with back/rounded harmony (within [+ATR] only) to produce three-way a/e/o alternations in certain NC suffixes: -bā-, -bē-, -bō- (§4.1.2.3.1, §4.1.2.1.3) and -kā-, -kē-, -kō- (§4.1.2.5.1). One way to look at this is to take a as basic, and force it to mid-height in order to express [+ATR], which then also drags in back/rounded harmony to distinguish e from o.

Other NC suffixes including singular -nnè- and -kà, along with plural -sɛ̀ɛ̄-, have invariant (nonharmonizing) vowels. Plural -ɲɛ̄- is likewise invariant in the productive nā/ɲɛ̄ gender, where ɲɛ̄ apparently harmonizes with -nā- instead of with the root, but there is one case of harmonized -ɲē- in a different gender (‘fonio’, §4.1.2.2.4).

4.1.2.9 Elision or reduction of suffixes in phrasal context

All nominal forms given in the preceding subsections are prosodically independent citation forms. When the noun is nonfinal in a phrase or clause, final number suffixes and certain NC suffixes are subject to reduction or elision. The extent of reduction can differ from one morphosyntactic context to another. Maximal reduction occurs when the noun is a compound initial or is followed by a modifying adjective. The details of this stripping-down depend on the NC gender and on the individual noun root.

(159) illustrates with kɔ́lɔ́-nā-nā ‘cat’ and kèrè-sā-nā ‘marsh cane rat’. They reduce sharply to kɔ́lɔ̀ŋ (before assimilation) and kèrè before adjectives (159a), but only drop the vowel of the final number suffix -nā (to -n̄, before assimilation) in kɔ́lɔ́-nā-n̄ and kèrè-sā-n̄ in (159b-e).

(159)	‘cat’	‘cane rat’
a. before adjective		
‘a good X’	kɔ́lɔ̀n nàā-nā	kèrè nàā-nā
‘a bad X’	kɔ́lɔ̀m pìn-nā-nā	kèrè pìn-nā-nā
b. before numeral		
‘one X’	kɔ́lɔ́-nā-ŋ̄ kááfáà	kèrè-sā-ŋ̄ kááfáà

c. before postposition

‘behind X’	kɔ́lɔ́-nā-ñ sēnāntɔ́	kèrè-sá-ñ sēnāntɔ́
‘(give) to X’	… kɔ́lɔ́-nā-ŋ̄ kīlānī	… kèrè-sá-ŋ̄ kīlānī

d. as possessor

‘X’s tail’ (y^{n}áásā-nā)	kɔ́lɔ́-nā-ɲ̄ ɲààsā-nā	kèrè-sá-ɲ̄ ɲààsā-nā

e. as clausal constituent

‘X ran away.’	kɔ́lɔ́-nā-ñ sù yɛ̄	kèrè-sā-ñ sù yɛ̄
‘We saw X.’	tí y^{n}á kɔ́lɔ́-nā-n ī	tí y^{n}á kèrè-sā-n ī
‘We (often) see X.’	tì kɔ́lɔ́-nā-ɲ̄ ɲɛ́= ɛ̄	tì kèrè-sá-ɲ̄ ɲɛ́= ɛ̄

The NC suffixes that are subject to full suffixal elision before adjectives but not in other functions (e.g. before numerals) are listed in (160).

(160)

NC	gloss	noun	‘bad _’	numeral
a. singular				‘one X’
-nā-	‘village’	yóón-nā-nā	yóòm pìn-nā-nā	yóón-nā-ŋ̄ kááfáà
-sā-	‘yam’	túkú-sā-nā	túkú pìn-nā-nā	túkú-sā-ŋ̄ kááfáà
b. plural				‘two Xs’
-ɲɛ̄-	‘villages’	yóó-ɲɛ̄-nī	yóòm pì-ɲɛ̄-nī	yóó-ɲɛ̄-m̄ bàà

Nouns of the nā/ɲɛ̄ gender typically present a final nasal coda in the stripped-down premodifier form. This leads to an analytical chicken-and-egg question. Do these nouns have roots that end in a nasal coda? Or is the nasal coda just a reduced form of the NC suffix, presumably singular -nā- (since plurality is usually neutralized in premodifier and compound-initial function)?

The final nasal coda before adjective was verified for the following random collection of nā/ɲɛ̄ nouns, with the premodifier form parenthesized: wàláà-nā-nā ‘tablet’ (wàláàŋ), tàárí-nā-nā ‘tale’ (tàáríŋ̀), súsù-nā-nā ‘waterjar’ (súsùŋ), làmpáà-nā-nā ‘lamp’ (làmpáàŋ), kpōkō-nā-nā ‘calabash tomtom’ (kpōkóŋ), kpèlé-ná-nā ‘stick’ (kpèléŋ), kɛ̄ɛ̄súú-ná-nā ‘chest, suitcase’ (kɛ̄ɛ̄súúŋ), kàfɔ́lɔ̀-nā-nā ‘owner’ (kàfɔ́lɔ̀ŋ), gbáà-nā-nā ‘okra’ (gbáàŋ), bèlìyè-sí-ná-nā ‘marriage’ (bèlìyè-sí-ŋ́). The nasal coda gets its tone from the preceding root or other morpheme. T'he nasal coda is most clearly segmentable in ‘marriage’, the verbal noun of a phrasal verb with pseudo-postposition sí. One could extrapolate from this and some other verbal nouns that the nasal coda is a segmental suffix even in the simple roots cited.

Other NC suffixes usually remain intact in all positions, including before adjectives. The final suffix that follows them, singular -nī or plural -nā, is reduced to -ñ (assimilating) before numerals in most cases. The H-toned NC suffix (-kó, -bá, -má) in ‘mouse’, ‘porcupine’, and ‘chicken’ before adjectives reflects Final Tone-Raising (§3.6.2.6.1). ‘Chicken’ has a short premodifier variant núŋ as well as a variant with NC suffix.

(161)

NC	gloss	noun	‘bad _’	numeral
a. singular				‘one X’
-kà-	‘rifle’	kɛ́ré-kà-nā	kɛ́ré-kà pìn-nā-nā	kɛ́ré-kà-ŋ̄ kááfáà
-nnè-	‘visitor’	tó-nnè-nā	tó-nnè pìn-nā-nā	tó-nnè-ŋ̄ kááfáà
-kō-	‘mouse’	tūū-kō-nā	tūū-kó pìn-nā-nā	tūū-kō-ŋ̄ kááfáà
-bā-	‘porcupine’	kpāā-bā-nā	kpāā-bá pìn-nā-nā	kpāā-bā-ŋ̄ kááfáà
-mā-	‘chicken’	nū-mā-nā	nū-má pìn-nā-nā ~ núm pìn-nā-nā	nū-mā-ŋ kááfáà
b. plural				‘two Xs’
-kì-	‘rifles’	kɛ́ré-kì-nī	—	kɛ́ré-kì-m̄ bāā
-sɛ̄-	‘porcupines’	kpáá-sɛ̄-nī	—	kpáá-sɛ̄-m̄ bāā
-sɛ̀ɛ̄-	‘visitors’	tɔ́-sɛ̀ɛ̄-nī	—	tɔ́-sɛ̀ɛ̄-m bāā
E	‘baboon’	k-ɛ́ɛ́-nī	—	k-ɛ́ɛ́-m̄ bàà
-rɛ̄-	‘yams’	túkú-rɛ̄-nī	—	túkú-rɛ̄-m bāā
-mī-	‘water’	ní-mí-nī	ní pì-ɲɛ̄-nī	—

4.1.3 Basic (high-frequency) nouns

High-frequency nouns often have special morphological features in languages of the zone.

‘Woman’ is cá-nā, plural c-é-nī. In the X wò X construction meaning ‘every X’, ‘woman’ takes the form cíyɛ̀ (§7.1.3). As tone-dropped compound final or possessum with human reference, the form is cà-nā (plural c-è-nī). The same L-toned forms are used as adjectives for female animals. Before an adjective, cá-nā ‘woman’ is replaced by cî, as in cî nàā-nā ‘good woman’. The free postverbal form of ‘woman’ is cííyà, as in X (y)ɛ̄ cííyà ‘X is a woman’. The free postverbal form of c-é-nī ‘women’ is cɛ́ɛ̄, as in XY (y)ɛ̄ cɛ́ɛ̄ ‘XY are women’ (§11.2.2.3).

‘Man’ is píyé-nā, plural píyé-sé-nī. It has its regular form before a modifier. A variant -kpíyé-nā occurs in nāŋ-kpíyé-nā ‘father-in-law’ (§5.1.2.4). A different adjectival stem fáá-nā ‘male’ is used with most animal terms.

‘Person’ is fá-nā, suppletive plural líí-bé-nā ‘people’. With a possessor, the sense is ‘(sb’s) relative, kinsman’, and in this case the singular is nonsuppletive lí(-)yé-nā (internal hyphenation questionable). Another relevant form is wɛ̀ɛ̄-nā, plural sɛ̀ɛ̄-nī, which can function as default human possessums, see (262).

For compounds of ‘woman’, ‘man’, and ‘person’, see §5.1.2.2 and the composite kin terms in §5.1.2.4.

‘Thing’ as an independent noun is is fǐ(-)yé-nā, irregular plural fǐí-nī-nī (§4.1.2.7.1). As with li(-)yé-nā ‘relative’ discussed just above, internal segmentation in fǐ(-)yé- is questionable. The premodifier form is fǐí, as in fǐí nàā-nā ‘a good thing’. These forms are obscurely related to fǐíɲìnì-nā-nā ‘domestic animal’, plural fǐíɲìnì-ɲɛ̄-nī.

A contextual alternative to fǐ-yé-nā ‘thing’ is a default nonhuman initial ká ‘thing’ in combination with a following adjective, as in ká fōrō ‘black thing’, see (205a) below. A phonologically similar noun kàā(-nā), plural k-ɛ̀ɛ̄(-nī), is common in texts in abstract

resumptive senses like ‘(that) situation’ and ‘(that) practice/behavior’, and occurs as part of possessive phrases (§6.2.3-4).

4.1.4 Iterative and reduplicative noun stems

Nouns with intrinsic full iteration are in (162). In (162b) the iteration is likely iconic (the action involves repetition), and in (162c) it is probably onomatopoeic.

(162)

	noun	gloss
a.	bòkòbòkō-nā	‘tree sp. (*Calotropis*)’
	cááɲcáá-nā	‘bush sp. (*Senna*)’
	fɛ̀kɛ̀fɛ̀kɛ̄-nā	‘battle ax’
	fɔ̀kɔ̀fɔ̀kɔ̀-sɛ̄-nī (Pl)	‘froth, foam (n)’
	kààkàà-nā-nā	‘solifuge (wind scorpion)’
	kááŋkāā-nā	‘ant sp. (*Messor*)’
	kɔ́ɔ́kɔ́ɔ́-nā	‘yam sp. with bulbils’
	kóóŋkóó-nā	‘neckless gourd’ or ‘cylindrical tomtom’
	kpááŋkpá-nā	‘millipede’
	kpàŋkpáá-nā	‘fried cowpea cakes’
	kpààŋkpáá-ná-nā	‘tick’
	kpɛ́ŋkpɛ́ɛ́-nī (Pl)	‘beads’
	kpɛ̀ŋkpɛ́ɛ́-nā	‘small food basket’
	kùúkùú-nā-nā	‘thorny tree sp. (*Flacourtia*)’
	lōlō-sā-nā	‘intestine’
	lɔ̄lɔ̄-nā-nā	‘share (n)’
	nànná-ná-nā	‘red weaver ant’
	pámpáá-nā	‘cloud’
	pìppì-nā-nā	‘heat (from fire)’
	tùntùkù-páápáá-nā	‘stingless bee’ (buzzes around eyes)
	wááwáá-nā	‘tree sp. (*Lophira*)’
	wɛ́ɛ́ŋwɛ́ɛ́-nā	‘fig tree sp. (*F. cordata*)’
b.	kɛ̀lɛ̀kɛ̀lɛ̄-nā	‘tickling (n)’
	lɛ̀kɛ́lɛ̀kɛ́-ná-nā	‘hiccup (n)’
c.	fììfììkín-ná-nā	‘thick-knee (bird)’
	fófòó-nā	‘lung(s)’
	kāāŋkāā-nā	‘ratchet (percussion instrument)’
	kàáŋkàá-nā	‘pied crow’
	kòókóó-nā	‘plantain-eater (bird)’
	sɔ̀ɔ̀nsɔ̀ɔ̄-nā	‘weaver (bird)’
	túútúù-nā-nā	‘coucal (bird)’

Partial reduplication, perhaps originally the full iteration of a now fused compounding element, is observed in (163a). Partial reduplication is of course less perceptually salient than full iteration. An ABA-type, iteration, likely onomatopoeic, is in (163b).

(163) a. kùŋkùnsō-nā ‘rousette (fruit bat)’
léléèŋkpá-nā ‘thorny tree sp. (*Strychnos*)’
ɲàŋkéŋké-nā-nā ‘tiny black ants’
sììnsìì-kpìí-nā-nā ‘pygmy goose’

b. wóótùwóó-nā ‘stone partridge’

A vowel-quality changeshift u-a or u-a-u occurs in (164).

(164) a. kùùsìkáánsí ‘bumpy or scaly surface’
b. ŋfùùŋfááŋfūū-nā-nā ‘mud-dauber wasp’

4.1.5 Associative plural (-yɛ̄)

Addition of plural suffix -yɛ̄ to a singular noun X that denotes an individual, for example a personal name, creates an associative plural ‘X and company, X and family, X and friends, X et alii’.

(165) a. zàkíì-yɛ̄ pɛ̌= ɛ̄
Z-Pl come.Ipfv Pos
‘The Zaki’s are coming.’

b. [ī sí-bé-yɛ̄] pɛ̌= ɛ̄
[1Sg father-Sg-Pl] come.Ipfv Pos
‘My father and company are coming.’

This final -yɛ̄ is comparable to the same suffix added to already pluralized kin terms (§4.1.1.2.2). However, there is a clear distinction between plural sí-sèé-yɛ̄ ‘fathers’ and ‘father and company’ as in (165b).

4.2 Derived nouns

This section covers verbal nouns, agentives, and abstractives. For diminutives see §5.1.2.3.

4.2.1 Deverbal nominals

4.2.1.1 Verbal noun

A verbal noun is formed by adding final singular suffix -nā directly to the verb, or adding -nā-nā including the singular NC suffix -nā-. For verbs whose Pfv and Ipfv stems

differ segmentally (see below), the segmental form of the verb is closely related to that of the Ipfv stem. However, the VblN and the Ipfv stem very often differ tonally. The Ipfv stem always ends in H-tone. VblNs are all-H-toned for most of the few verbs whose Ipfv is all-H-toned, but for other verbs (including those with MH-toned Ipfv) the VblN ends in M-tone and may be all-M-toned.

The VblN is usually abstractive rather than instantiating. For example, nì-yā-nā 'drinking' does not mean 'beverage' or '(a) drink', which is expressed by the nonhuman participle nìì-kà-nā (plural nìì-kì-nī). Because of the semantics, it is difficult to pluralize a VblN. However, some plural VblN's are elicitable, as with mānsā-nā 'laugh(ing)', plural māns-ɛ̄-nī. For VblNs with an additional incorporated object noun, see §5.1.2.5.1.

4.2.1.1.1 Verbal noun of simple verbs

For verbs whose Ipfv stems have an extra final syllable, this syllable is part of the VblN, where however the syllable may tend to be reinterpreted as a NC suffix (166).

(166)

Pfv/Ipfv	gloss	VblN
a. Ipfv adds rá		
báká/bákárá	'get tired'	bákárá-nā
b. Ipfv adds sá/sɔ́/sáⁿ		
kárí/káásá	'become sick'	káá(-)sá-nā
kìrì/kììsá	'walk'	kììsā-nā
máⁿ/mānsáⁿ	'laugh'	mānsā-nā
sɔ̀/sùsɔ́	'dance (v)'	sù(-)sɔ̄-nā
sù/sùùsá	'run'	sūū(-)sā-nā
c. Ipfv adds yá or yɛ́		
máná/mānīyá	'speak'	mānīyā-nā
nì/nìyⁿá	'drink'	nìyⁿā-nā ~ nìyⁿɛ̄-nā
nì/nìyⁿá	'hear'	nìyⁿā-nā
sí/síyⁿá	'fart (v)'	síyⁿá-nā
d. Ipfv adds bá		
fí/fííbá	'buy'	fííbá-nā
e. Ipfv adds má		
yɔ̀rɔ̀ⁿ/yɔ́rɔ́má	'sleep' (irregular)	yɔ̄rɔ̄mā-nā

Likewise, when the Ipfv mutates the final vowel, usually to á (167a), rarely to áⁿ (167b) or ó (167c), this final vowel appears in the VblN. In (167a) sā/sá in the VblN is not reanalysed as an NC suffix since the sv syllable is part of both Pfv and Ipfv stems and so cannot be cleanly segmented as a suffix.

(167)	Pfv/Ipfv	gloss	VblN
a.	kpísí/kpīsá	‘finish’	kpīsā-nā
	násí/nāsá	‘fear (v)’	násá-nā
	tɔ̄ɔ̄sī/tɔ̄ɔ̄sá^{n}	‘do farming’	tɔ̄ɔ̄sā-nā
b.	kùrù/kùrá^{n}	‘snore’	kùrā-nā
c.	kùntù/kùntó	‘crawl’	kùntō-nā
	túkú/tūkó	‘catch’	tūkō-nā

In most verb stems whose Pfv ends in a nasalized vowel, the Ipfv segmentalizes the nasality as n, followed by the Ipfv vowel á. The VblN then includes this na in the form -nā- ~ -ná-, parsed here as the very common -nā- NC suffix (168).

(168)	Pfv/Ipfv	gloss	VblN
a.	bóró^{n}/bōrōná	‘shout’	bōrōn-nā-nā
	kùmà(^{n})/kùmàná	‘give birth’	kūmān-nā-nā
	mí^{n}/mīnná	‘hide’	mīn-nā-nā
	sɛ́bɛ́^{n}/sɛ́bɛ́ná	‘write’	sɛ́bɛ́n-ná-nā
b.	míírí^{n}/mííríná	‘think’	míírí-ná-nā

In (169a), an NC suffix -sā- is added instead. In the case of ‘cough’, this NC suffix is associated with ailments (as in káá-sá-nā ‘disease’). In (169b), an apparent suffix -kā- is added, unless it is understood to be reduplicative.

(169)	Pfv/Ipfv	gloss	VblN
a. VblN adds -sā-			
	kɔ̄lɔ̄^{n}/kɔ̄lɔ̄ná	‘cough’	kɔ̄lɔ̄n-sā-nā
b. VblN adds -kā-			
	kú/kpā	‘die’	kúú-ká-nā (variant kpā-nā)

For verbs whose Pfv and Ipfv stems differ only by tones, the data are largely compatible with the VblN/Ipfv connection in spite of the absence of a segmental addition to the Ipfv. Monosyllabic verbs often have contour-toned (<MH> or <LH>) Ipfv stems but level M-toned VblNs (170a). The relationship with Ipfv stems is more apparent with bisyllabic and longer stems (170b). In verbs like ‘be a long time’ (170b) with H-toned Pfv and MH-toned Ipfv, the initial M-tone of the Ipfv determines the tone of the verb in the VblN. The composite verb ‘remember’ (170c) seems to include the somewhat irregular verb ‘come’ from (170a), but the VblN adds a rhotic syllable.

(170)

	Pfv/Ipfv	gloss	VblN
a.	lé/lɛ̄	‘refuse’	lɛ̄-nā
	pà/pă	‘come’	pā-nā
b.	lɔ́kɔ́/lɔ̄kɔ́	‘be a long time’	lɔ̄kɔ̄-nā
	sááfúú/sāāfúú	‘go into hole’	sāāfúú-ná-nā
c.	[X táárám] pà/pă (Y lɔ̄)	‘X remember Y’ (§11.1.1.2.6)	táárám-pàrā-nā táárá-nā-ñ tɔ́-ná-nā

For the very rare verb whose Pfv and Ipfv are identically both segmentally and tonally, the VblN cannot be uniquely connected to either one (171).

(171)

Pfv/Ipfv	gloss	VblN
kpésésí/kpésésí	‘criticize’	kpésésí-ná-nā

The irregular verb ‘go’ (§10.2.2.1) has two distinct Ipfv variants, and correspondingly it has two variant VblN’s (172).

(172)

Pfv/Ipfv	gloss	VblN
láá/lāká ~ tā	‘go’	lāā-nā ~ tā-nā (older speaker) lā-nā ~ tā-nā (young speaker)

4.2.1.1.2 Verbal noun of composite and phrasal verbs

Phrasal verbs (§15.1.2) consist of a true verb and a pseudo-postposition (psP). The psP is included in the VblN. For ní ‘down’ see below. In the VblN, the suffix complex consists of the psP plus -nā-nā (raised to -ná-nā after H-tone) instead of just final singular -nā as with some simple VblNs (preceding subsection). Here -nā-nā is the combination of -nā- NC suffix and -nā final singular suffix, familiar from common nouns.

(173)

	Pfv/Ipfv	gloss	VblN
a.	kɔ̀-míní/kɔ̌-míní	‘return’	kɔ̀-mín-ná-nā
	pìsì-míní/pìsá-míní	‘be ruined’	pìsà-mín-ná-nā
	sáá-míní/sāá-míní	‘(baby) fall hard’	sāā-mín-ná-nā
b.	wààmà-tú/wààmá-tú	‘turn, spin’	wààmà-tú-ná-nā
c.	bèlè-sí/bèlìyé-sí	‘marry’	bèlìyè-sí-ná-nā ~ bèlè-sí-ná-nā
	bá^{n} X sí/X bānná-sí	‘help (v)’	bānnā-sí-ná-nā

d.	bá^{n} X lɔ̄/X bānná-lɔ̄	‘increase’	bānnā-lɔ́-ná-nā
e.	w^{n}á X lè/X w^{n}ā́-lè	‘carry on back’	w^{n}ā-lè-nā-nā
	yàà^{n} X lè/X yàànā́-lè	‘expel’	yāānā-lè-nā-nā

Monosyllabic and some other phrasal verbs with psP ní ‘down’ have a VblN whose full pronunciation ends in -ń-ná-nā, where -ń- is syncopated from -ní-. The H-tone of -ná- is spread from -ń-. The geminated nn is audible in careful speech by the older speaker. Thus bēē-ń-ná-nā ~ bēé-ná-nā.

(174)

	Pfv/Ipfv	gloss	VblN
a.	béé-ní/bēé-ní	‘sprout’	bēē-ń-ná-nā
	kóó^{n}-ní/kóónā́-ní	‘lie down’	kóó-ń-ná-nā
	sáá-ní/sāá-ní	‘fall’	sāā-ń-ná-nā
	wéé X ní/X wēé^{n}-ní	‘watch’	wēē-ń-ná-nā
	wɔ̀rɔ̀-ní/wɔ̀rɔ́-ní	‘slide’	wɔ̄rɔ̄-ń-ná-nā
	yéé-ní/yēé-ní	‘stand, stop’	yēē-ń-ná-nā
	yókó-ní/yōkó-ní	‘descend’	yōkō-ń-ná-nā
b.	kúlá^{n}-ní/kūlānā́-ní	‘bend over, bow’	kūlānā-ń-ná-nā
	tà^{n} X ní/X tànnā́-ní	‘cover’	tānnā-ń-ná-nā
	yímí-ní/yīmīnā́-ní	‘bend over’	yīmīnā-ń-ná-nā

One of the few truly compound verbs is illustrated in (175).

(175)

Pfv/Ipfv	gloss	VblN
kpììsà-kpírí/kpììsā́-kpírí	‘assemble’	kpīīsā-kpírí-ná-nā

Sometimes true postpositions can be included in the VblN, if the verb regularly requires a PP in the intended sense. For example, tīkī [X lè] ‘follow after X’ has true postposition lè, as shown by the fact that the PP [X lè] follows the verb even in imperfective clauses. The VblN is tīkī-lè-nā-nā.

Similarly, the more or less encliticized spatial adverbs -yīnā ‘here’ and -lā ‘there’ can be included in VblNs for verbs that frequently co-occur with them: wākā-lā-nā-nā ‘remaining there’ and wākā-yīnā-nā-nā ‘remaining here’.

4.2.1.2 Agentive

Deverbal agentives are formed by adding human NC suffixes -nnè- (singular) and -sɛ̀ɛ̄- (plural) directly to the verb stem. Uncompounded agentives are in (176). They are segmentally related to the Pfv stem of verbs that have clearly distinct Pfv and Ipfv stems (176a), in sharp contrast to VblNs, which are related to the Ipfv stem. However, the tones of the agentive generally follow those in the VblN, which are mainly defined by the Ipfv stem.

Therefore verbs with H-toned Pfv but MH-toned Ipfv have M-toned verb stems in the agentive as well as in the VblN. (The place nominal, see below, usually has the same segmental and tonal form of the stem as the agentive.)

(176)		Pfv/Ipfv	gloss	agentive	gloss
	a.	kìrì/kììsá	'walk'	kìrì-nnè-nā	'walker'
		má^{n}/mānsá^{n}	'laugh'	mān-nè-nā	'laugher'
		sɔ̀/sùsɔ́	'dance (v)'	sɔ̀-nnè-nā	'dancer'
		sù/sùùsá	'run'	sū-nnè-nā	'runner'
		túkú/tūkó	'catch'	tūkū-nnè-nā	'catcher'
	b.	bóró^{n}/bōrōná	'shout'	bōrōn-nè-nā	'shouter'
		kè(r)è/kèréé	'look'	kèrè-nnè-nā	'looker'
		kɔ̄lɔ̄^{n}/kɔ̄lɔ̄ná	'cough'	kɔ̄lɔ̄n-nè-nā	'cougher'
		míírí^{n}/míríná	'think'	míírín-nè-nā	'thinker'
		nàŋkàá^{n}/nàŋkàáná	'steal'	nàŋkàán-nè-nā	'thief'
		nì/nìy^{n}á	'drink'	nì-nnè-nā	'drinker'
		yɔ́kɔ́/yɔ̄kɔ́	'jump'	yɔ̄kɔ̄-nnè-nā	'jumper'
	c.	yɔ̀rɔ̀^{n}/yɔ́rɔ́má	'sleep'	yɔ́rɔ̀n-nè-nā	'sleeper'

nànsòón-nè-nā 'hunter' appears to be based on the noun nànsòón-ná-nà 'hunt (n)' rather than on a verb.

Agentives of phrasal verbs are illustrated in (177). ní 'down' appears as -ń- before -nè-nā.

(177)	a.	wéé X ní/X wēé-ní	'look for'	wēē-ń-nè-nā	'looker'
		kà X ní/X kǎ-ní	'light (fire)'	kà-ń-nè-nā	'one who lights'
		tò-ní/tǒ-ní	'sit'	tò-ń-nè-nā	'sitter'
		nà(-)nī/nànná-ní	'be missing'	nàn-ní-nnè-nā	'missing one'
	b.	bá^{n} X sí/X bānná-sí	'help (v)'	bān-sí-nnè-nā	'helper'
		sùn-sí/sùnná-sí	'learn'	sùn-sí-nnè-nā	'apprentice'
	c.	kɔ̀-míní/kɔ̌-míní	'return'	kɔ̀-mín-nè-nā	'returnee'
	d.	w^{n}á X tú/X w^{n}ā́-tú	'begin'	w^{n}ā-tú-nnè-nā	'beginner'

Agentives of transitive verbs often occur in compounds with an initial noun, either a cognate nominal or a noun denoting an object (§5.1.2.5.3).

4.2.1.3 Place-of-action nominal (-làā-nā, nasalized -nàā-nā)

The noun ‘place’ is tíí-ká-nā, plural tí-yɛ́-nī (§4.1.2.5.1). In deverbal place-of-action nominals, this noun is suppleted by compound final -làā-nā, plural -làà-sɛ̄-nī, added directly to the verb stem. A preceding nasal coda passes its nasality onto the lateral, hence -nàā-nā. M-toned psPs are raised to H-tone, as in the VblN. The segmental form of the verb in the place-of-action nominal (like the agentive) is based on the Pfv stem, in notable contrast to the VblN, which is strongly connected to the Ipfv stem. However, the tones of the verb follow the pattern in the VblN which is defined mainly by the Ipfv. H-toned roots are reserved for verbs with H-toned Pfv and Ipfv, while the many verbs with H-toned Pfv and MH-toned Ipfv have M-toned roots in the place nominal.

(178)	Pfv/Ipfv	gloss	‘place of/for __-ing’	
a.	cééké^{n}/céékéná	‘play’	céékén-nàā-nā	
	fùù/fòó	‘bury’	fùù-làā-nā	
	kpísí/kpīsá	‘finish’	kpīsī-làā-nā	‘(the) end’
	kú/kpā	‘die’	kū-làā-nā	
	máná/mānīyá	‘speak’	mānā-làā-nā	
	mí^{n}/mīnná	‘hide’	mīn-nàā-nā	
	nì/nìy^{n}á	‘drink’	nì-làā-nā	
	sélé/sēlīyé	‘weave’	sēlē-làā-nā	
	sɔ̀/sùsɔ́	‘dance’	sɔ̀-làā-nā	
	tā	‘go.Pfv’ (var.)	tā-làā-nā	(2026_27 @ 02:43)
	tù/tùwá	‘bathe’	tù-làā-nā	
	wàlà/wàlá	‘cook’	wàlà-làā-nā	‘hearth’
	wòlò/wòlóó	‘eat’	wōlō-làā-nā	
	yɔ̀rɔ̀^{n}/yɔ́rɔ́má	‘sleep’	yɔ́rɔ̀n-nàā-nā	
b.	phrasal verbs with ní			
	kóó^{n}-ní/kóóná-ní	‘lie down’	kóó-ń-nàā-nā	
	tò-ní/tǒ-ní	‘sit’	tò-ń-nàā-nā	(2024_03 @ 03:10)
	yèè-ní/yèé-ní	‘stand, stop’	yèè-ń-nàā-nā	‘stop (n), end’
	yɛ̀lɛ̀kɛ̀-ní/yɛ̀lɛ̀kɛ́-ní	‘(snake) slither’	yɛ̀lɛ̀kɛ̀-ń-nàā-nā	‘(snake) tracks’
	yókó-ní/yōkó-ní	‘descend’	yōkō-ń-nàā-nā	
c.	other phrasal verbs			
	kɔ̀-míní/kɔ̌-míní	‘return’	kɔ̀-mín-nàā-nā	
	w^{n}á X tú/X w^{n}ā́-tú	‘begin’	w^{n}ā-tú-làā-nā	

tùn-nàā-nā ‘forge (n)’ is based on tùù^{n}-, a compound initial related to tūkūsìn-nè-nā ‘blacksmith’. tò-ń-nàā-nā ‘sitting place’ as location is distinct from the underived noun bóón-ná-nā which denotes the physical object ‘seat, chair’ among its other senses.

In addition to their primary sense denoting actual locations, place nominals can have extended senses involving goals. Thus ‘hare was going out to look for a wife’ is expressed as “was going to [woman’s look.for-place]” (2026_27 @ 00:16).

For place-of-action nominals with an additional compound initial, see §5.1.2.5.4.

4.2.2 Abstractives

4.2.2.1 Denominal abstractives (‘X-hood’) with -nā-nā

Nouns denoting a human status, without specific reference to individuals, are created by adding -nā-nā (-nā- NC suffix plus singular final suffix -nā) to the relevant noun root. The formation is parallel to that of verbal nouns from verb stems. The human nouns that serve as the basis for the abstraction mostly lack the -nā- NC suffix (179a). In one case where the singular nouns does have -nā-nā, a morpheme -yáá- is added in the abstractive (179b).

(179)

	noun	gloss	abstractive	gloss
a.	nàntɔ̀ɔ̄-nā	‘friend’	nàntɔ̀-nā-nā	‘friendship’
	píyé-nā	‘man’	píyé-ná-nā	‘manhood’
	cá-nā	‘woman’	cîi-nā-nā	‘womanhood’
	písàá-nā	‘child’	písàm-pí-ná-nā	‘childhood’
	ká-sèē-nā	‘old man’	ká-sèn-nā-nā	‘old age’ (male)
	kàárì-pò-nā	‘young man’	kàárì-nā-nā	‘youth (male)’
	kásá-nā	‘young woman’	kásán-ná-nā	‘youth (female)
b.	júkù-nā-nā	‘enemy’	júkù-yáá-nā-nā	‘enmity’

Ethnic abstractives like ‘Fulbe-hood’ were not elicitable.

4.2.2.2 Deadjectival abstractives (‘X-ness’) with -nā-nā and ká

Abstractives derived from some adjectives replace human (-nnè-) and nonhuman (-kà-) NC suffixes by a neutral NC marker. The usual abstractive NC suffix is -nā-, hence -nā-nā when combined with the final singular suffix (180a). The segmentability of -tú- in ‘heavy’, originally most likely the postposition tú, is confirmed by its abstractive (180b). (180c) is a lexically semi-autonomous form loosely related to its adjective.

(180)

	adjective (sg)	gloss	abstractive	gloss
a.	kàní-kà-nā	‘sweet, tasty’	kán(í)-ná-nā	‘sweetness, tastiness’
	kpàànsí-kà-nā	‘hard’	kpàànsí-ná-nā	‘hardness’
	tà-míŋ-kà-nā	‘deep’	tà-mín-ná-nā	‘depth’
	tùràŋ-kà-nā	‘distant’	tùrà-nā-nā	‘distance’
	wàlà-sí-kà-nā	‘fast’	wàlà-sí-ná-nā	‘speed’
b.	yìbì-tú-kà-nā yìbì-tú-nnè-nā	‘heavy’	yìbìyé-tú-ná-nā	‘heaviness, weight’

c.	kàà^{n}rìŋ-kà-nā kàà^{n}rìn-nè-nā	‘long, tall’	kàà^{n}rā-nā	‘length, height’

Color adjectives include the default nominal form ká ‘thing’ in the abstractive (181).

(181)

	adjective (sg)	gloss	abstractive	gloss
a.	kàà-nā	‘white’	ká-kàà-nā-nā	‘whiteness’
b.	fòō-nā	‘black’	ká-fòò-nā-nā	‘blackness’
c.	mìyɛ̄-nā	‘red’	ká-mìyɛ̀-nā-nā	‘redness’

4.2.3 Gentilic -(n)nè-nā and plural -bā-nī ~ -bɛ̄-nī with village names

Gentilics from names of neighboring villages (cf. *New Yorker*, *Parisian*) add singular -nnè-nā and plural -bā-nī to the village name. -nnè-nā is familiar in human nouns, including deverbal agentives, but its usual plural elsewhere is -sɛ̀ɛ̄-nī. Thus mínsárí ‘Néguéni (village)’, mínsán-nè-nā ‘person from Néguéni’, plural mínsá-bá-nī. Terms for natives of Faniagara (pálà) are slightly irregular: singular pálà-nnè-nā, plural pálá-bɛ̄-nī. Plural -bā-nī also occurs in yɔ́kɔ́-bá-nī ‘Jula people’.

4.3 Personal pronouns

Personal pronouns distinguish three persons, as well as singular and plural.

4.3.1 Independent and clitic pronouns and logophorics

Independent pronouns can be pronounced separately as citation forms, and can function as topics (‘as for me’ etc.). 1Sg independent pronoun mî^{n} can be substituted for proclitic ŋ́ or ŋ̄ in any function

The third-person singular distinguishes human (3HSg) from nonhuman (3NHSg). Animals and inanimates are 3NHSg. Even in tales featuring human-like animal characters (e.g., hare, hyena, monkey), agreement is most often 3NHSg, though there is some slippage into 3HSg, for example 2024_05 @ 01:42.

In phrases, unfocalized pronouns are normally in clitic form. Clitics other than 1Sg have a consistent monomoraic proclitic form as perfective subject, preverbal object, complement of postposition, and possessor. These clitic forms are H-toned (2Sg bé, 2Pl ɔ́ ~ wɔ́, 1Pl tí, 3Pl í, 3NHSg á), except for 3HSg which is L-toned (y)è. As imperfective subject, 2Sg bɛ̀ and 1Pl tì are L-toned, and 2Pl also has a different segmental form mɔ̀, but there are no changes in the third-person forms. The 1Sg paradigm is somewhat complex; note the tonal shift to M in possessor function. The postverbal objects forms are independent pronouns for 1Pl and 2Pl. For the other categories, postverbal objects can interact phonologically with transitive verbs, in the fashion of enclitics. The postverbal object forms also occur after prepositions, mainly tɛ̀ ~ tà(^{n}) ‘with/and’.

The possessor forms (182) are identical to the forms for postpositional complements. The imperative ("imprt") subject forms are also used in hortatives. The 2Sg imperative subject form bɛ̄ is usually omitted in positive commands but is required in prohibitives. Further details about third-person clitics are given in the following subsections.

Subjunctive subjects other than 1Sg ŋ́ are M-toned. The "sbjn" forms shown are long subjunctives. Short subjunctives have the same M-toned subject pronominals, with ŋ added to third-person pronouns (and to noun-headed NPs).

(182)

	indep	subject				object		possessor
		pfv	imprt	ipfv	sbjn	postvb	prevb	
1Sg	mîⁿ	ŋ́	ŋ́	ŋ́	ḿ bā ~ ḿ mā	mì ~ m̀	mîⁿ ~ ŋ̀	ŋ̄
2Sg	bɛ́ɛ̀	bɛ́	bɛ̄	bɛ̀	bā = ā	bɛ̀	bɛ́	bɛ́
1Pl	túwⁿɔ̄ ~ tíwⁿɔ̄, tíyⁿɔ̄	tí	tī	tì	tī bā	túwⁿɔ̄	tí	tí
2Pl	mɔ́à	(w)ɔ́	(w)ɔ̄	mɔ̀	ɔ̄ bā	mɔ́à	(w)ɔ́	(w)ɔ́
3HSg	ásɛ̄	ɛ̀	ɛ̄ ŋ̄	ɛ̀	ɛ̄ mā	(y)ɛ̀	(y)ɛ̀	ɛ̀
3NHSg	áà	á	ā ŋ̄	á	ā mā	á	á	á
3Pl	îì	í	ī ŋ̄	í	ī mā	í	(y)í	í

LogoHSg subject	ɛ́ɛ̀ (§18.3.1)
LogoNHSg subject	áá (§18.3.1)
LogoPl subject	íí (§18.3.1)

Postverbal objects 3NHSg á and 3Pl í behave like tightly bound enclitics after certain verbs. In some of these cases, 3NHSg á becomes é or ó by ATR and back/rounded harmony, as in yó ó 'hit.Pfv it' and fí yé 'found.Pfv it'. In addition, 3NHSg object á/é/ó become falling-toned â/ê/ô in absolute prepausal position, as in transitive imperatives and other transitive clauses (conditional antecedents, sequential clauses, subjunctive clauses, imperatives, subject-focus clauses) that have no other clause-final morpheme: fíyⁿ â 'buy it!, yó ô 'hit it!', fí yê 'find it!' This falling-tone does not apply to 3Pl í.

The independent pronouns are infrequently used. Under focus, third-person pronouns are replaced by demonstratives. For subject focus, see (534b). The 'it's (an) X' construction also treats X as focalized and requires demonstratives (494b). So does the presentative construction (§10.5.4.1).

In formatted examples, usually just the pronominal category (e.g., 2Sg or 3Pl) is indicated in interlinears. However, for the three categories that have distinct forms for subjects in perfective and imperfective clauses, the abbreviations P and I are added, e.g., 1PlP and 1PlI. The abbreviation Imprt is added in 1st/2nd person subject short subjunctive clauses (which have no short Sbjn morpheme), as in 1Pl.IImprt, but it is omitted in other subjunctive clauses that do have a Sbjn morpheme.

4.3.2 Proclitic subject pronouns

Examples of unfocalized subject proclitics follow. Subject pronouns are the same in intransitive and transitive clauses, but they are sensitive to aspect and mood. In each paradigm, the subjects are grouped by tone. In indicative (perfective and imperfective) clauses, 3Pl í and 3NHSg á are consistently H-toned while 3HSg è is consistently L-toned. 1Pl, 2Sg, and 2Pl are H-toned in the perfective, and L-toned in the imperfective. There is also a segmental change in the 2Pl (perfective ɔ́ versus imperfective mɔ̀). The final positive particle ɛ̄ (~ yɛ̄ ~ ī) after the verb can be disregarded here.

(183) intransitive subject

a. perfective (sù 'ran', yáká 'wept')

H-toned proclitic

ń sù yɛ̄	ɲ́ ɲáké = ɛ̄	'I ran/wept.'
tí sù yɛ̄	tí yáké = ɛ̄	'We ran/wept.'
bɛ́ sù yɛ̄	bɛ́ yáké = ɛ̄	'You-Sg ran/wept.'
ɔ́ sù yɛ̄	ɔ́ yáké = ɛ̄	'You-Pl ran/wept.'
á sù yɛ̄	á yáké = ɛ̄	'It ran/wept.'
í sù yɛ̄	í yáké = ɛ̄	'They ran/wept.'

L-toned proclitic

è sù yɛ̄	è yáké = ɛ̄	'He/She ran/wept.'

b. imperfective (sùùsá 'runs', yɔ́rɔ́má 'sleeps')

H-toned proclitic

ń sùùsɛ́ = ɛ̄	ɲ́ ɲɔ́rɔ́mɛ́ = ɛ̄	'I run/sleep.'
á sùùsɛ́ = ɛ̄	á yɔ́rɔ́mɛ́ = ɛ̄	'It runs/sleeps.'
í sùùsɛ́ = ɛ̄	í yɔ́rɔ́mɛ́ = ɛ̄	'They run/sleep.'

L-toned proclitic

tì sùùsɛ́ = ɛ̄	tì yɔ́rɔ́mɛ́ = ɛ̄	'We run/sleep.'
bɛ̀ sùùsɛ́ = ɛ̄	bɛ̀ yɔ́rɔ́mɛ́ = ɛ̄	'You-Sg run/sleep.'
mɔ̀ sùùsɛ́ = ɛ̄	mɔ̀ yɔ́rɔ́mɛ́ = ɛ̄	'You-Pl run/sleep.'
è sùùsɛ́ = ɛ̄	è yɔ́rɔ́mɛ́ = ɛ̄	'He/She runs/sleeps.'

These same subject proclitics occur in transitives (184). In the imperfective (184b), the object bābā-nā 'sheep' takes the form bābá-n̄ after Final Tone-Raising (§3.6.2.6.1).

(184) transitive subject

a. perfective (… fí bābā-nā … 'bought a sheep')

H-toned proclitic

ɲ́ fí bābā-n ī	'I bought a sheep.'
tí fí bābā-n ī	'We bought a sheep.'
bɛ́ fí bābā-n ī	'You-Sg bought a sheep.'
ɔ́ fí bābā-n ī	'You-Pl bought a sheep.'

á fí bābā-n ī	‘It bought a sheep.’
í fí bābā-n ī	‘They bought a sheep.’
L-toned proclitic	
è fí bābā-n ī	‘He/She bought a sheep.’

b. imperfective (… bàbā-n fīībá … ‘buys a sheep’)

H-toned proclitic	
ḿ bābá-ŋ̄ fīībɛ́= ɛ̄	‘I buy a sheep.’
á bābá-ŋ̄ fīībɛ́= ɛ̄	‘It buys a sheep.’
í bābá-ŋ̄ fīībɛ́= ɛ̄	‘They buy a sheep.’
L-toned proclitic	
tì bābá-ŋ̄ fīībɛ́= ɛ̄	‘We buy a sheep.’
bɛ̀ bābá-ŋ̄ fīībɛ́= ɛ̄	‘You-Sg buy a sheep.’
mɔ̀ bābá-ŋ̄ fīībɛ́= ɛ̄	‘You-Pl buy a sheep.’
è bābá-ŋ̄ fīībɛ́= ɛ̄	‘He/She buys a sheep.’

Before postsubject ŋ, whether for subject focus (§13.1.1.1) or in short subjunctive clauses (§17.1.3.1), subject pronominals take M-toned form. For 1Pl, 2Sg, and 2Pl, the M-toned form occurs without ŋ in short subjunctive clauses.

Subject pronominals combine with vowel-initial preverbal object pronominals in imperfective clauses as shown in (185). 2Sg (w)ɔ́ is uniformly extended as wɔ́. 3NHSg á and 3Pl í are uniformly extended as yá and yí, nasalizing to ɲá and ɲí after 1Sg ŋ̄. 3HSg è is extended to yè after unlike vowels and after 1Sg ŋ̄, but it remains è (with optional hiatus) after another è vowel, and 2Pl on 3HSg /mɔ̀ è/ optionally contracts to m-è.

(185)

subject	object			
	3HSg yè	3NHSg (y)á	3Pl (y)í	2Pl wɔ́
1Sg	ɲ́ ɲè	ɲ́ ɲá	ɲ́ ɲí	ŋ́ wɔ́
1PlI	tì yè	tì yá ~ tùwá= á	tì yí	tì wɔ́
2SgI	bɛ̀ è	bɛ̀ yá	bɛ̀ yí	—
2PlI	mɛ̀= è, mɔ̀ yè	mɔ̀ á	mɔ̀ yí	—
3HSg	è è	è yá	è yí	è wɔ́
3NHSg	á yè	á yá	á yí	á wɔ́
3Pl	í yè	í yá	í yí	í wɔ́

bɛ̀ è, è è, and mɔ̀ á each can have two syllabic pulses in moderately careful speech.

Another combination subject to optional contraction is 1Sg acting on 2Sg.

(186)

subject	2Sg bɛ́
1Sg	ḿ bɛ́ ~ m=ɛ́

4.3.3 Object pronouns

Objects (NP or pronominal) follow transitive verbs in the perfective, but precede them in the imperfective.

Transitive perfectives with various postverbal pronominal objects are in (187a-b). These pronominals are not proclitic. Some are arguably enclitic to the verb. The 1Pl and 2Pl forms are identical to the independent pronouns. Other object pronominals have enclitic properties at least after mono- and some bimoraic verbs. See §3.4.1.4.2 for more on elision of r, and see below for more 3Pl object combinations.

(187) transitive object (perfective)

a. kèè ~ kèrè 'look at'

è kèè **mì** bɔ̀	'He/She didn't look at me.'
è kèè **bɛ̀** bɔ̀	'He/She didn't look at you-Sg.'
è kèè **yɛ̀** bɔ̀	'He/She didn't look at him/her.'
è kèè **yá** bɔ̀	'He/She didn't look at it.'
è kèè **túw^{n}ɔ̄** bɔ̀	'He/She didn't look at us.'
è kèè **mɔ́(à)** bɔ̀	'He/She didn't look at you-Pl.'
3Pl object with r-inserted form of verb and with vv-Contraction	
è kèrì= **í** bɔ̀	'He/She didn't look at them.'

b. perfective 'tie'

è fɔ̀kɔ̀ **mì** bɔ̀	'He/She didn't tie me.'
è fɔ̀kɔ̀ **bɛ̀** bɔ̀	'He/She didn't tie you-Sg.'
è fɔ̀kɔ̀ **yɛ̀** bɔ̀	'He/She didn't tie him/her.'
è fɔ̀kɔ̀ **túw^{n}ɔ̄** bɔ̀	'He/She didn't tie us.'
è fɔ̀kɔ̀ **mɔ́(à)** bɔ̀	'He/She didn't tie you-Pl.'
vv-Contraction applies	
è fɔ̀kà= **á** bɔ̀	'He/She didn't tie it.'
è fɔ̀kì= **í** bɔ̀	'He/She didn't tie them.'

3HSg postverbal object is yɛ̀ and does not contract with a preceding vowel. 3NHSg á and 3Pl í show a mix of vv-Contraction and y-initial allomorphs as postverbal objects. Pfv verb stems end in a vowel, or in a vowel plus nasal coda that can become a nasal consonant. Relevant combinations are illustrated in (188). 3HSg ɲɛ̀ after nasal coda is derivable phonologically from yɛ̀. 3Pl object is í, often contracting with vowels as …í= í or …ì= í (preserving the tone of the stem-final) and denasalizing stems with nasal codas. 3NHSg object is á or yá, sometimes contracting with the stem-final vowel as …á á, but contracting and harmonizing as …ó ó or …í yé after [+ATR] stems. 3NHSg á combines with nonmonosyllabic stems with nasal coda as …n á, and with monosyllabics as …nn á, except for the three verbs whose nasal coda turns into m. Some monosyllabic verbs are Cvv before NPs and before 3HSg yɛ̀, but shorten to Cv before 3NHSg á and 3Pl í. 'Buy' is irregular in this sense, as the Pfv is fĩ before nominal objects, but is nasalized to fĩ^{n} before 3NHSg yá and is lengthened. Perhaps there has been some analogical or anti-analogical (disambiguating) interference between fĩ 'buy' and fĩí 'find, encounter'. Contracted vowels and vowel sequences like o i and e i are no

longer than two moras (e.g. sé í, not #séé í). = is added as an orthographic indicator that contraction changes the quality of the stem-final vowel.

(188)	verb ends in …	verb	3HSg	3NHSg	3Pl
a.	i	pírí ‘raised’	pírí **yè** bɔ̀	pírá= **á** bɔ̀	pírí **í** bɔ̀
		fĩ ‘bought’	fĩ́ **yè** bɔ̀	fĩ́ⁿ **yá** bɔ̀	fĩ **í** bɔ̀
	u	túkú ‘caught’	túkú **yè** bɔ̀	túkó= **ó** bɔ̀	túkí= **í** bɔ̀
		búkú ‘bumped’	búkú **yè** bɔ̀	búká= **á** bɔ̀	búkí= bɔ̀
	a	tà ‘picked up’	tàà **yè** bɔ̀	tà **á** bɔ̀	tà **í** bɔ̀
		sáká ‘washed’	sáká **yè** bɔ̀	sáká **á** bɔ̀	sákí= **í** bɔ̀
		wúmá ‘bit’	wúmá **yè** bɔ̀	wúmá **á** bɔ̀	wúmá **í** bɔ̀
	e	sé ‘insulted’	séé **yè** bɔ̀	séé **yá** bɔ̀	sé **í** bɔ̀
		fèsè ‘removed’	fèsè **yè** bɔ̀	fèsà= **á** bɔ̀	fèsì= **í** bɔ̀
	ɛ	wɛ́ ‘mistreated’	wɛ́ɛ́ **yè** bɔ̀	wɛ́ **yá** bɔ̀	wɛ́ **í** bɔ̀
		kɛ̀sɛ̀kɛ̀ ‘tickled’	kɛ̀sɛ̀kɛ̀ **yè** bɔ̀	kɛ̀sɛ̀kà= **á** bɔ̀	kɛ̀sɛ̀kì= **í** bɔ̀
	o	yó ‘hit’	yóó **yè** bɔ̀	yó =**ó** bɔ̀	yó **í** bɔ̀
		wòlò ‘ate’	—	wòlì **yá** bɔ̀	wòlì **í** bɔ̀
	ɔ	sɔ̀ɔ̀kɔ̀ ‘rubbed’	sɔ̀ɔ̀kɔ̀ **yè** bɔ̀	sɔ̀ɔ̀kà **á** bɔ̀	sɔ̀ɔ̀kì= **í** bɔ̀
		kɔ́kɔ́ ‘protected’	kɔ́kɔ́ **yè** bɔ̀	kɔ́ká= **á** bɔ̀	kɔ́kí= **í** bɔ̀
b.	nasal coda	tókóⁿ ‘sent’	tókɔ́ŋ **ŋè** bɔ̀	tókón **á** bɔ̀	tókí= **í** bɔ̀
		sàráⁿ ‘paid’	sàráŋ **ŋè** bɔ̀	sàrán **á** bɔ̀	sàrí= **í** bɔ̀
		cɛ̀ⁿ ‘winnowed’	—	cènn **á** bɔ̀	cɛ̀ **í** bɔ̀

The same pronominal object forms occur in imperatives, which have verb-object order like perfective transitives.

As noted at the end of §3.4.1.5.2, monomoraic Cv Pfv and Imprt stems lengthen the stem vowel before most pronominal objects, including 3HSg yɛ̀. See the 3HSg object column in (188a) for ‘bought’, ‘picked up’, ‘insulted’, ‘mistreated’, and ‘hit’.

Imperfective pronominal objects, on the other hand, are proclitic to the verb (189). 1Sg is L-toned ŋ̀ subject to assimilation (189a), but is often replaced by independent mîⁿ. 2Sg bɛ́ and 1Pl tí have H-tones (like the corresponding subject proclitics), and 2Pl is likewise wɔ́ (189b).

(189) imperfective object in (**è** _ kèréé) ‘he/she looks at _’)

a. è **ŋ̀** kèréé yɛ̄ ‘He/She looks at me.’
~ è **míŋ̀** kèréé yɛ̄

b. è **bɛ́** kèréé yɛ̄ ‘He/She looks at you-Sg.’
è **tí** kèréé yɛ̄ ‘He/She looks at us.’
è **wɔ́** kèréé yɛ̄ ‘He/She looks at you-Pl.’

3HSg is yɛ̀ (190a) or è triggering vv-Contraction (190b).

(190) a. è **yè** kèréé yɛ̄ ‘He/She looks at him/her.’
í **yè** kèréé yɛ̄ ‘They look at him/her.’
ɲ́ **ɲè** kèréé yɛ̄ ‘I look at him/her.

b. tyè= **è** kèréé yɛ̄ ‘We look at him/her.’ (< tì (y)è)
bè **è** kèréé yɛ̄ ‘You-Sg look at him/her.’
mɔ̰è= **è** kèréé yɛ̄ ‘You-Pl look at him/her.’

3NHSg is yá (191a) or á triggering vv-Contraction (191b) under the same conditions.

(191) a. è **yá** kèréé yɛ̄ ‘He/She looks at itr.’
í **yá** kèréé yɛ̄ ‘They look at it.’
ɲ́ **ɲá** kèréé yɛ̄ ‘I look at it.

b. ty= **á** kèréé yɛ̄ ‘We look at it.’ (< tì (y)á)
bà= **á** kèréé yɛ̄ ‘You-Sg look at it.’
mɔ̀= **á** kèréé yɛ̄ ‘You-Pl look at it.’

3Pl object is yí (192a). 1Sg subject acting on 3Pl ɲ́ ɲí is phonologically regular. After 1Pl subject, yí usually drops to yé (192b), and 2Sg subject usually contracts with it to bè =é (192c). The full pronunciations tì yí and bè yí are also possible.

(192) a. è **yí** kèréé yɛ̄ ‘He/She looks at them.’
í **yí** kèréé yɛ̄ ‘They look at them.’
ɲ́ **ɲí** kèréé yɛ̄ ‘I look at them.
mɔ̀ **yí** kèréé yɛ̄ ‘You-Pl look at them.’

b. tì **yé** kèréé yɛ̄ ‘We look at them.’
~ tì **yí** kèréé yɛ̄

c. bè =**é** kèréé yɛ̄ ‘You-Sg look at them.’
~ bè **yí** kèréé yɛ̄

4.3.4 Possessor pronouns

Possessor pronouns other than 1Sg have the same forms as perfective subject pronominals. 1Sg possessor can be expressed by mîⁿ as well as by the simple M-toned proclitic n̄.

(193)

		‘X’s mother’	‘X’s calabash’
1Sg	n̄	n̄ ní-bé	n̄ sù-kā-nā ~ mín sù-kā-nā
1Pl	tí	tí lí-bé	tí sù-kā-nā
2Sg	bɛ́	bɛ́ lí-bé	bɛ́ sù-kā-nā
2Pl	ɔ́	ɔ́ lì-bé	ɔ́ sù-kā-nā
3HSg	è	è lí-bé	è sù-kā-nā

3NHSg	á	á lí-bé	á sù-kā-nā
3Pl	í	í lí-bé	í sù-kā-nā

Possessor pronominals have the same tonal effect as other possessors on possessums in most cases. The relevant process is Initial Tone-Dropping. Thus cá-nā ‘woman; wife’, zàkîì cà-nā ‘Zaki’s wife’, and bɛ́ cà-nā ‘your-Sg wife’, etc.

4.3.5 Long third-person pronominals (tà-ásɛ̄, sì-yá, sì-í) and datives (-sɔ̀ rɔ̄)

The forms in (194a) obligatorily replace the usual third person pronominal proclitics (3HSg è, 3NHSg á, 3Pl í) after tɛ̀ (or variant) ‘with/and’. The forms in (194b) obligatorily replace the same proclitics before dative lɔ̄, which here takes allomorph rɔ̄.

(194)

	singular	plural
a. with tɛ̀ ‘with’		
human	tɛ̀ tà-ásɛ̄	tɛ̀ sì-í
nonhuman	tɛ̀ sì-yá	"
b. with dative lɔ̄		
human	è-sɔ̀ rɔ̄	í-sɔ̀ rɔ̄
nonhuman	á-sɔ̀ rɔ̄	"

The examples in (195) involve tɛ̀ or variant ‘with, and’.

(195) a. fǐ= í bèlè fùntóó-sɛ̄-n̄ sīʌ́ ,
Comp 3Pl repair arrow-Pl-Sg on,
fǐ= í tɛ̀= [=ɛ́ tānná [tàⁿ sì-í]],
Comp 3Pl pick.up.Pfv [3Pl shoot.arrow.Ipfv [with **3Pl**]],
‘They repaired the arrows. Then they shot at them (=enemies) with those (arrows).’ (2024_03 @ 00:41)

b. [[fǐ-yé-n̄ fáá] fì-yé] [pɛ̀= [=è sì-yá] nāʌ́],
[[thing-Sg-Sg RelSg] thing-Sg] [come.Pfv [with **3NHSg**] Rel],
[tí sùwⁿɔ̀ bɔ̀]
[1PlP know.Pfv Neg]
‘Whatever thing brought that (situation) about, we don’t know.’
(< pà [tɛ̀ sì-yá]) (2024_03 @ 02:40)

c. fɛ́= è fìⁿʌ́, tūū-sɛ́-n̄ yònná nāʌ́,
Comp 3HSg arrive.Pfv, termite-Pl-Pl extract.Ipfv Rel,
fá sìím-pò-m̄ máná [tɛ̀ tà-ásɛ̄],
Comp genie-Dim-Sg speak.Pfv [with **3Sg**],
‘He (=old man) arrived, collecting termites. A genie spoke to him (=old man).’
(2024_04 @ 00:08-00:16)

3Pl sì-í has a dialectal variant sù-ú heard in one recording (2026_06 @ 00:37).

The examples in (195) are third-person pronominal datives.

(196) a. tɛ̀ tó-nnè-m̃ pàʌ́,
if visitor-Sg-Sg come.Pfv,
fá tī wàlɛ́= [ɛ̀-sɔ̀ rɔ̄]
Comp 1PlImprt cook.Ipfv [**3HSg** Dat]
'When a visitor came, we would cook for him/her.' (2024_03 @ 04:22)

b. bɔ̄ɔ̄-nā-m̃ bà wɛ̄-sìkɛ̄ [á-sɔ̀ rɔ̄]] yɛ̄
billygoat-Sg-Sg Past said [**3NHSg** Dat]] Pos
'Billygoat had said to it (=monkey), …' (2024_10 @ 02:20)

c. māā-sā-ɲ̄ [ɲí-sɔ̀ rɔ̄] yɛ̄
greeting-Sg-Sg [**3Pl** Dat] it.is
'It's greetings to them.' (2024_03 @ 00:01)

4.3.6 kón-nā 'So-and-so'

kón-nā is a variable over personal names, like 'so-and-so', French *un tel*. It can be pluralized as kón-nā-yɛ̄. It can also be extended as kónnácírì (2026_14 @ 00:44).

For kón-nā in human demonstrative phrases, see §4.4.2.2 below.

4.4 Determiners

4.4.1 Discourse-definite markers (-ñ ná singular, -ñ ní plural)

A definite/indefinite distinction is not obligatory in Paleni. Thus fɔ̃-mā-nā can be translated freely as 'a dog' or 'the dog' in various textual contexts.

A somewhat stronger discourse-definite category 'that (same/aforementioned) X' is expressed by adding singular ná or plural ní to the noun, whose own final suffixes reduce to -ñ, resulting in -ñ ná and -ñ ní. The definite markers ná and ní do not reduce in any position. For eligible nouns, an M-toned NC suffix is raised to H-toned by Final Tone-Raising in these combinations. This is the case with fɔ̃-má-ñ ná 'that (same) dog', but not with fɔ́n-sɛ̄-ñ ní 'those (same) dogs' because the root has been raised to H by Root-Tone Raising.

In recordings, it can be difficult to identify discourse-definite marked nouns. First, only some nouns undergo Final Tone-Raising. Second, the gemination (=prolongation) of nn in -ñ ná and -ñ ní is often inaudible. Third, only the tone distinguishes DefSg ná from final singular -nā, relative nā, or nasalized nā from lā 'there.Def', and only the tone distinguishes DefPl ní from final plural nī, singular plus positive or 'it is' -n ī, and interrogative nī. There is not even a tonal distinction versus ní 'down' in phrasal verbs.

For more examples of noun plus definite suffixation, see (288) in §6.5.1 below. For the use of 3NHSg á kàā or just á as "possessor" with abstract situational reference as a kind of back-door discourse-definite marking, see §6.5.1 and §6.2.3-6 below.

4.4.2 Demonstratives

4.4.2.1 Basic demonstratives (è-sā-nā, wā-nā, yīn-sī-nī, wɛ̄ = ɛ̄)

Basic deictic demonstratives are in (197). [±human] is distinguished in the singular but neutralized in the plural. The demonstratives can occur as free forms (without a noun), or as postnominal modifiers.

(197)

	singular	plural
human	è-sā-nā	yīn-sī-nī
nonhuman	wā-nā	"

è-sā-nā and yīn-sī-nī appear to contain a sibilant extension. A somewhat similar sibilant extension occurs in third person pronominal combinations with rɔ̄ allomorph of dative lɔ̄, see (194) above and §8.1.1.2.

Combinations with the identificational ('it is') morpheme (y)ɛ̄ are in (198).

(198)

	singular	plural
a. citation		
human	è-sɛ̄^{n} = ɛ̄^{n}	yīn-sī yɛ̄
nonhuman	wɛ̄ = ɛ̄	"
b. postnominal modifier		
human	X è-sɛ̄^{n} = ɛ̄^{n}	X yīn-sī yɛ̄
nonhuman	X wɛ̄ = ɛ̄	X yīn-sī yɛ̄

Focalization allows neither third-person pronominal proclitics (3HSg è, 3NHSg á, 3Pl í) nor regular independent third-person pronouns (3HSg ásɛ̄, 3NHSg áà, 3Pl íì). This is the case with subject focus (534b) and with 'it's X' clauses (494b), which are also part of object focalization. The same is true of presentatives (§10.5.4.1). In these contexts, demonstratives fill the gap. For example, 'it's them' is expressed as "it's those".

4.4.2.2 Expanded demonstratives with kón-nā or nà-nā

Both in free function ('this/that') and as modifiers ('this/that X'), the demonstratives described above can be expanded by adding a default nominal.

For humans this is kón-nā (singular) or kón-nā-yɛ̄ (plural). For nonhumans the singular is nà-n̄ (reduced from nà-nā) and plural nì-n̄, mimic-ing the vocalic opposition

between -nā (singular) and -nī (plural) in final nominal suffixes. See below for nà-n̄ with human pronouns.

(199)

	singular	plural
human	kón-nā è-sā-nā	kón-nā-yɛ̄ yīn-sī-nī
nonhuman	nà-ŋ̄ wā-nā	nì-n̄ ɲīn-sī-nī ~ nà-n̄ ɲīn-sī-nī

Textual examples of nà-ŋ̄ wā-nā are 2024_03 @ 03:41 and 2026_23 @ 01:31, among others. The human combinations in (199) do not occur in texts.

The same pseudonominals can be used without the following demonstrative. In effect, the pseudo-nominal itself becomes the demonstrative. An example of simple nà-nā is 2024_10 @ 03:06. kón-nā without a following demonstrative means 'So-and-so' (§4.3.6), i.e., a variable over personal names. Bare pseudonominals are common in conjunctions involving unspecified individuals (200). In (200b), as right conjuncts, note singular nà-nā but plural nì-n̄ (not #nì-nī).

(200) a. kón-nā tà kón-nā — 'this one and that one (human)'
kón-nā-yɛ̄ tà kón-nā-yɛ̄ — 'these/those and those (human)'

b. nà-n̄ tà nà-nā — 'this/that and that (nonhuman)'
nì-n̄ tà nì-n̄ — 'these/those and those (nonhuman)'

The expressions in (201a-b) function as wrap-ups after a description, where nà-n̄ can precede NHSg wā-nā or plural yīn-sī-nī. Those in (201c-d) combine nà-n̄ with a singular or plural pronoun and a following noun, making bracketing of nà-n̄ difficult.

(201) a. wā-n̄ [nà-ŋ̄ wā-nā]
DemNH-Sg [DemNH-Sg DemNH-Sg]
'that is that' (= 'that does it', 'that's all')

b. yīn-sī-n̄ [nà-n̄ ɲīn-sī-nī]
DemPl-Pl [DemNH-Sg DemPl-Pl]
'those are those' ('it's those')

c. [í nà-m̄ [[mīn-tíí-kā-m̄ fáá] sí] mīn nā]
[3Pl DemNH-Sg [[today-place-Sg-Sg Rel] on] today Rel]
'(they said:) "(in) the place (=situation) where we are today" '
(2026_23 @ 01:13)

d. á [bɛ́è nà-n̄] [cîì-sèɛ̄-nā ná]
Quot [2Sg DemNH-Sg] [woman-old-Sg DefSg]
'(said:) "(Hey) you-Sg there the old woman!" ' (2026_22 @ 01:23)

4.4.3 Demonstrative adverbs

Some spatial and manner adverbs whose denotation is linked to the here-and-now are in (202). Short forms lā and yīnā are often encliticized (§3.5.2) to verbs, especially wàkà 'remain.Pfv', which requires a spatial expression, and kɔ̀ní 'be present'.

(202) a. spatial

lā	'there (definite)'
lā-fā-nā	'there (definite)
yīnā	'here'
yīŋ-fā-nā	'here'
lèènī	'over there'

b. manner

sìkɛ̄	'thus' (many attestations)

4.5 Adjectives

4.5.1 Inventory of lexical adjectives

Adjectives have postnominal modifying forms, singular and plural. They have nominal morphology, including noun-class (NC) suffixes and final number suffixes (singular and plural). For some adjectives, the NC suffixes are frozen and do not agree with the NCs of the modified nouns. However, several adjectives can modify human as well as nonhuman nouns, and make the distinction using the nnè/sɛ̀ɛ̄ gender for humans and the kà/kì gender for nonhumans (animals as well as inanimates).

Most adjectives also have corresponding stative predicates meaning 'be ADJ' (§9.3.1). The stative predicate are in most cases identical to the modifying forms minus the latter's noun-class and final number suffixes. Many adjectives also have inchoative intransitive verbs (§9.3.2).

In this section the focus is on the modifying forms. Adjectives that distinguish human from nonhuman are in (203). The human gender is always nnè/sɛ̀ɛ̄, and the nonhuman gender is almost always kà/kì with occasional variant plurals (as with 'short'). Further study might show that some additional adjectives from (204) below, currently attested only with nonhuman referents, might also have human forms with nnè/sɛ̀ɛ̄ in occasional use.

(203)

gloss	human sg/pl	nonhuman sg/pl
'robust, good-sized; fat'	bòmmòròn-nè-nā / -sɛ̀ɛ̄-nī	bòmmòròŋ-kà-nā / -kì-nī
'lightweight; fragile'	fàkàmàn-nè-nā / -sɛ̀ɛ̄-nī	fàkàmàŋ-kà-nā / -kì-nī
'tall, grand, imposing'	kàà^{n}rì-nnè-nā / -sɛ̀ɛ̄-nī	kàà^{n}rìŋ-kà-nā / -kì-nī
'skinny'	kɔ̀rɔ̀-nnè-nā / -sɛ̀ɛ̄-nī	kɔ̀rɔ̀-kà-nā / -kì-nī
'strong; hard, difficult'	kpàànsí-nnè-nā / -sɛ̀ɛ̄-nī	kpàànsí-kà-nā / -kì-nī
'short'	kpèrèn-nè-nā / -sɛ̀ɛ̄-nī	kpèrèŋ-kà-nā / -ɲɛ̄-nī
'ruined, malfunctioning'	pìsì-mín-nè-nā / -sɛ̀ɛ̄-nī	pìsì-míŋ-kà-nā / -kì-nī
'medium-sized, half-grown'	sìyà-nnè-nā / -sɛ̀ɛ̄-nī	sìyà-kà-nā / -kì-nī

‘ripe; very old’	sìì-mín-nè-nā / -sɛ̀ɛ̄-nī	sìì-míŋ-kà-nā / -kì-nī
‘fast, speedy’	wàlà-sí-nnè-nā / -sɛ̀ɛ̄-nī	wàlà-sí-kà-nā / -kì-nī
‘heavy’	yìbì-tú-nnè-nā / -sɛ̀ɛ̄-nī	yìbì-tú-kà-nā / -kì-nī
‘many, much’	— / yɔ̀kɔ̀rɔ́-sɛ̀ɛ̄-nī	yɔ̀kɔ̀rɔ́-kà-nā / -kì-nī

In (203), ‘ripe; very old’, ‘fast, speedy’ and ‘heavy’ include pseudo-postpositions (psPs). The psP -tú- distinguishes ‘heavy’ (203) from ‘full’ (204)

Other adjectives are in (204). Adjectives ‘new’, ‘other’, ‘small’, ‘pretty’, and ‘nasty’ can modify human and nonhuman nouns without a suffixal change. ‘Deep’ includes a psP. Some adjectives such as color terms do not directly modify human nouns. Instead, they directly modify ‘skin’, ‘body’, or other feature rather than human nouns themselves.

(204)

gloss	singular	plural	range
‘narrow, tight’	bìrì-kà-nā	bìrì-kì-nī	inan
‘dull (blade)’	bɔ̀lɔ̀kɔ̀ŋ-kà-nā	bɔ̀lɔ̀kɔ̀ŋ-kì-nī	inan
‘smooth, sleek’	bɔ̀lɔ̀kɔ̀-síŋ-kà-nā	bɔ̀lɔ̀kɔ̀-síŋ-kì-nī	inan
‘female’	cà-nā	c-è-nī	hum, anim
‘male (animal)’	fáá-nā	fúú-ré-nī	anim
‘tough (skin, rope)’	fàràkàŋ-kà-nā	fàràkàŋ-kì-nī	inan
‘hot (water)’	—	fɛ̀ɛ̄-nī	inan
‘clean’	fɛ̀ɛ̀sí-kā-nā	fɛ̀ɛ̀sí-kì-nī	nonhum
‘many; abundant’	fǐyáán-ná-nā	fǐyáá^{n}-yé-nī	all
‘black’	fòō-nā	fòò-rē-nī	nonhum
‘white’	kàà-nā	kàà-ɲɛ̄-nī	nonhum
‘sweet, tasty’	kàní-kà-nā	kàní-kì-nī	inan
‘empty, hollow’	kɔ̀ɔ̀-rɔ̄-nā	kɔ̀ɔ̀-sɛ̄-nī	inan
‘dry; lean, emaciated’	kpàà-kà-nā	kpàà-kì-nī	nonhum
‘bitter’	kpàràmàŋ-kà-nā	kpàràmàŋ-kì-nī	inan
‘unripe (fruit)’	kpɛ̀ŋkpè-nā-nā	kpɛ̀ŋkpè-ɲɛ̄-nī	inan
‘easy’	kpɔ̀rɔ̀nsí-kà-nā	kpɔ̀rɔ̀nsí-kì-nī	inan
‘bumpy, scaly (surface)’	kùùsìkáánsí-kà-nā	kùùsìkáánsí-kì-nī	inan
‘wide; spacious’	lèrè-kà-nā	lèrè-kì-nī	inan
‘sharp’	mànà-kà-nā	mànà-kì-nī	inan
‘ripe, turned red (mango)’	mìrì-kà-nā	mìrì-kì-nī	inan
‘red’	mìyɛ̄-nā	mìyɛ̄-nī	inan
‘pretty; good’	nàā-nā	nàà-rɛ̄-nī	all
‘dirty’	nùkùmàŋ-kà-nā	nùkùmàŋ-kì-nī	nonhum
‘plump’	pà-nā	pì-nī	anim
‘small’	pí-yé-nā	pí-sé-nī	all
‘fresh (grass); raw (meat)’	pìì-nā-nā	pìì-ɲɛ̄-nī	inan
‘cooked (food); ripe; soft’	pìlà-kà-nā	pìlà-kì-nī	inan
‘nasty’	pìn-nā-nā	pì-ɲɛ̄-nī	hum, anim
‘thin’	pìsìkàŋ-kà-nā	pìsìkàŋ-kì-nī	nonhum
‘sour; curdled (milk)’	pɔ̀sɔ̀màŋ-kà-nā	pɔ̀sɔ̀màŋ-kì-nī	inan
‘old (person)’	sèɛ̄-nā	sè-rɛ̄-nī	hum

‘old (animal)’	kì sèē-nā	kì sè	nonhum
‘ugly’	sìcīyēkē-nā	sìcīyēkēē-nī	hum
‘deep’	tà-míŋ-kà-nā	tà-míŋ-kì-nī	inan
‘nearby’	tènté-kà-nā	tènté-kì-nī	inan
‘cold; wet; slow’	tììmàŋ-kà-nā	tììmàŋ-kì-nī	all
‘other’	tòō-nā	tòn-sē-nī ~ tèn-sē-nī	all
‘hot’	tùkù-kà-nā	tùkù-kì-nī	inan
‘nicked (blade)’	tùntùrūŋ-kà-nā	tùntùrūŋ-kì-nī	inan
‘distant’	tùràŋ-kà-nā	tùràŋ-kì-nī	inan
‘leading, in front’	wàyà-kà-nā	wàyà-kì-nī	all
‘new’	wù-nā-nā	wù-ɲē-nī	all
‘rotten’	yɛ̀ɛ̀-kà-nā	yɛ̀ɛ̀-kì-nī	inan
‘full’	yìbì-kà-nā	yìbì-kì-nī	inan

Several modifying adjectives describing color and size also correspond to nominals with ká as default head, with either human or nonhuman reference. The following adjective takes a form distinct from its usual modifying form. wààmà ‘become’ combines with this complex nominal to produce an inchoative VP (‘become ADJ’), as in è wààmɛ̀ = ɛ̄ [ká mīy^{n}ā] ‘he/she became red (i.e., brown)’. There are no nominal NC or final number suffixes (205a). Some adjectives require the noun líí ‘person’ for human reference (205b).

(205) a. ká mīy^{n}ā ‘red one’
ká fōrō ‘black one’
ká kāānā ‘white one’
ká pííré ‘small one’
ká pā^{n} ‘big one’

b. líí pìn-nā-nā ‘nasty person’
líí nàā-nā ‘pretty one’

4.5.2 Semantics of basic adjectives

An inventory of attested adjectives is in the preceding subsection. Here some of them are organized into semantic sets. Only one form is shown here for each adjective.

(206) a. color
‘black’ fòō-nā
‘red’ mìyɛ̄-nā
‘ripe, turned red (mango)’ mìrì-kà-nā
‘white’ kàà-nā-nā

b. heat/speed/moisture
‘hot’ tùkù-kà-nā
‘hot (water)’ fɛ̀ē-nī (plural)
‘fast, speedy’ wàlà-sí-nnè-nā
‘leading, in front’ wàyà-kà-nā

	‘cold; wet; slow’	tììmàŋ-kà-nā
	‘dry; lean, emaciated’	kpàà-kà-nā
c. taste, evaluation	‘sweet, tasty’	kàní-kà-nā
	‘bitter’	kpàràmàŋ-kà-nā
	‘sour; curdled (milk)’	pɔ̀sɔ̀màŋ-kà-nā
	‘pretty; good’	nàā-nā
	‘ruined, malfunctioning’	pìsì-mín-nè-nā
	‘ugly’	sìcēēkē-nā
	‘nasty’	pìn-nā-nā
d. overall size	‘robust, good-sized; fat’	bòmmòròn-nè-nā
	‘long, tall, imposing’	kàà^{n}rì-nnè-nā
	‘short’	kpèrèn-nè-nā
	‘plump’	kpà-nā
	‘skinny’	kɔ̀rɔ̀-nnè-nā
	‘medium-sized, half-grown’	sìyà-nnè-nā
	‘small’	pí-yé-nā
	‘heavy’	yìbì-tú-kà-nā
	‘lightweight; fragile’	fàkàmàn-nè-nā
e. dimension	‘wide; spacious’	lɛ̀rɛ̀-kà-nā
	‘narrow, tight’	bìrì-kà-nā
	‘deep’	tà-míŋ-kà-nā
	‘thin’	pìsìkàŋ-kà-nā
	‘distant’	tùràŋ-kà-nā
	‘nearby’	tènté-kà-nā
f. age, condition	‘new’	wù-nā-nā
	‘old (animal)’	kì sèē-nā
	‘old (person)’	sèē-nā
	‘ripe; very old’	sìì-mín-nè-nā
	‘fresh (grass); raw (meat)’	pìì-nā-nā
	‘unripe (fruit)’	kpèŋkpè-nā-nā
	‘cooked (food); ripe; soft’	pìlà-kà-nā
	‘rotten’	yɛ̀ɛ̀-kà-nā
	‘sharp’	mànà-kà-nā
	‘dull (blade)’	bɔ̀lɔ̀kɔ̀ŋ-kà-nā
	‘nicked (blade)’	tùntùrūŋ-kà-nā
	‘clean’	fɛ̀ɛ̀sí-kā-nā
	‘dirty’	nùkùmàŋ-kà-nā
	‘full’	yìbì-kà-nā
	‘empty, hollow’	kɔ̀ɔ̀-rɔ̄-nā
g. texture, hardness	‘smooth, sleek’	bɔ̀lɔ̀kɔ̀síŋ-kà-nā
	‘tough (skin, rope)’	fàràkàŋ-kà-nā

	‘bumpy, scaly (surface)’	kùùsì-káánsí-kà-nā
	‘strong; hard, difficult’	kpàànsí-nnè-nā
	‘easy’	kpɔ̀rɔ̀nsí-kà-nā
h. sex	‘female’	cà-nā
	‘male (animal)’	fáá-nā
i. quantity	‘many; abundant’	fíyáán-ná-nā
	‘many, much’	yɔ̀kɔ̀rɔ́-sɛ̀ɛ̄-nī (plural)
j. identity	‘other’	tòō-nā (§4.5.4)

4.5.3 Deverbal participles as adnominal modifiers

Nonhuman participles are mostly inanimate in reference and end in -kà-nā (singular) or -kì-nī (plural). They can function as postnominal modifiers (207). Participles derived from phrasal verbs include the psP (207b-c).

(207) a. námá sùw^{n}ɔ̀-kà-nā
meat be.taboo-Sg-Sg
‘prohibited meat’

b. mààmpílì-m̄ [pìsì-míŋ]-kà-nā
vehicle-Sg [ruin]-Sg-Sg
‘a wrecked vehicle’

c. sīī [sàà-ní]-kà-nā
tree [fall.down]-Sg-Sg
‘a fallen tree’

d. súsù-ŋ̄ wɛ̀rɛ̀-kà-nā
waterjar-Sg be.shattered-Sg-Sg
‘a broken-up waterjar’

(207c) shows that the psP -ní- does not syncopate to -ń-. Monomoraic Cv verbs lengthen to Cvv- before -kà-nā and -kì-nī, as in nìì-ki-nī ‘drinks (n), beverages’ from nì ‘drink.Pfv’, cf. (247) below. This also exemplifies how participles can function as nouns. Another example is wóló-kì-nī ‘foods’ (< wòlò/wòlóó ‘eat’).

4.5.4 ‘Other’ (tòō-nā, plural tòn-sē-nī ~ tèn-sē-nī)

The adjective ‘other’ is tòō-nā, with plural tòn-sē-nī ~ tèn-sē-nī. This adjective precedes other modifiers, with final -nā or -nī omitted before adjectives or reduced to a nasal coda before numerals (§6.3.3.1).

(208) tíì tòō-nā ‘(a/the) other woman’
tíì tèn-sē-nī ‘(the) other women’

Without the final suffixes -nā and -nī, the forms are tòrō (singular) and tòn-sē ~ tèn-sē (plural). In the absence of a following modifier (numeral, demonstrative), they can be translated either as ‘another’ (plural ‘some other’) or as specific indefinite ‘a certain’ (plural ‘certain, some’) (209a). Plural tòn-sē ~ tèn-sē can also occur in the sense ‘other’ before a following modifier (209b). In English, *other* presupposes a previously established referent of the same type, but in Paleni this is disregarded. For more on specific indefinite tòrō ‘a certain’, see §6.3.3.2.

(209) a. [cíì tòrō] pɛ̀= ɛ̄ ‘another woman/a certain woman came’
[cíì tèn-sē] pɛ̀= ɛ̄ ‘other women/some (specific) women came’

b. cíì tèn-sē bāā-yɛ̄-nī ‘two other women’

tórō without a modified noun means ‘another’ (= ‘someone/something else’), and tón-sē-nī ~ tén-sē-nī means ‘(some) others’.

(210) ī ŋ̄ wéé tén-sē-n̄ ní
3Pl Sbjn look.for.Imprt **other.Pl** down
‘(said:) “Let’s look for some others!’ (2024_10 @ 00:25)

Cf. also the adverb tóró ‘also, too’ (§19.3.1.2).

4.6 Numerals

4.6.1 Cardinal numerals

Numerals have the values presented below when denoting things or people. With respect to currency, the unit of counting is equivalent to five CFA francs. Therefore “1000” denotes 5000 francs in market transactions. The exception is *million*, which has the French sense (e.g. one million CFA francs).

4.6.1.1 ‘1’ to ‘10’

Numerals ‘1’ to ‘10’ are in (211). ‘2’ is L-toned bàà in the counting sequence, but it is M-toned bāā as a postnominal modifier and this is nasalized to -māā in some composite numerals. Other numerals have the same form in the counting sequence and as modifiers. Except in composite numerals (§4.6.1.3 below), these numerals do not take noun-class or final number suffixes.

(211)

kááfáà	1	
bàà	2	-bāā ~ -māā in phrases
táá^{n}rí	3	
náárí	4	
sùsú	5	
sínì-fáà	6	
sínìn-té	7	
sɔ́-tàà^{n}rì	8	
sɔ́-nààrì	9	
fɔ́	10	

'6' through '9' are irregularly composite, consisting of variants of '5' plus variants of '2' through '4'. sínì(n)- in '6' and '7' may also contain a frozen conjunction. In some languages of the zone, '5' is related to 'hand', but Paleni kílā-nā 'arm, hand' is unrelated to '5' or to the initial elements in '6' through '9'.

4.6.1.2 Form and meaning of '1'

'1' is kááfáà both in the counting sequence and, optionally, as an adjectival modifier. It occurs as a counting numeral 'one' (212a), but it is replaced by tòrō 'a certain (one)' (§6.3.3.2) in specific indefinite contexts.

(212)
a. á wùk= ɛ̄ [kwá-ŋ̀ **kááfáà**] 'There remains one day.'
b. [kúú **tòrō**] ɛ̀ pɛ̄= ɛ̄ 'One (=some) day he/she will come.'

Predicative '(X and Y) are the same/identical' makes use of a related nominal form kā-fá-nā (213). See also (489) below. For as an adjunct meaning 'together', see

(213)
a. [nà-ñ tà nà-nā] í yɛ̄ kā-fá-nā
[Dem-Sg and Dem-Sg] 3Pl be one-Sg
'This and that, they are the same (=equal, identical).'

b. [á kā-fá-nā] nī
[3NHSg one-Sg] it.isne
'It's the same (as the other).' (2026_27 @ 01:43); also 'it's just one'

As postnominal modifier, '1' is often expressed by fá-nā-nā with nouns of any animacy type. Its relationship (if any) to the noun fá-nā 'person' is obscure. In view of fá-nā-nā, it is likely that kááfáà is etymologically composite (*káá-fáà or similar).

(214)
a. pí fá-nā-nā 'one child'
ná fá-nā-nā 'one cow'
wú fá-nā-nā 'one house'

b. tààríŋ̀ fá-nā-nā 'one tale' (2026_27 @ 00:07)

4.6.1.3 Decimal numerals (‘20’, …) and composites (‘21’, …)

The decimal numerals are in (215). wārā^{n} ‘20’ and fɔ́kɔ́sɔ́ ‘400’ are unsegmentable primitives. ‘20’ and vigesimal multiples thereof up to ‘380’ are slightly irregular compounds of the literal type “twenties two” (‘40’) to “twenties nineteen” (’380’). They begin with wán-sɛ́-nī which probably includes a plural NC suffix complex -sɛ̄-nī. Odd-numbered decimal multiples (‘30’, ‘50’, ‘70’, ‘90’, ‘100’, up to ‘390’) consist of the preceding vigesimal numeral (‘20’, etc.) plus -tà-fɔ́-yɛ́-nī ‘and-ten-Pl-Pl’, which includes regular nominal suffixation (plural NC suffix -yɛ̄- here raised to -yɛ́-, and final plural suffix -nī).

(215)

fɔ́	‘10’
wārā^{n}	‘20’
wārán-tà-fɔ́-yɛ́-nī	‘30’
wán-sɛ́-m̄-bāā	‘40’
wán-sɛ́-m̄-māā-tà-fɔ́-yɛ́-nī	‘50’
wán-sɛ́-n̄-táá^{n}rí	‘60’
wán-sɛ́-n̄-táá^{n}rí-tà-fɔ́-yɛ́-nī	‘70’
wán-sɛ́-n̄-náárí	‘80’
wán-sɛ́-n̄-náárí-tà-fɔ́-yɛ́-nī	‘90’
wán-sɛ́-n̄-sùsú	‘100’
…	
wán-sɛ́-ŋ̀-fɔ́	‘200’
…	
wán-sɛ́-ŋ̀-fɔ́ tàn sùsí-yɛ́-nī	‘300’
…	
fɔ́kɔ́sɔ̄	‘400’

Digit increments to multiples of ‘10’ are conjunctions of the decimal (or higher) numeral plus the relevant digit term, with regular nominal NC and number suffixes. (216) has examples with fɔ́ ‘10’ as the decimal numeral.

(216)

fɔ́ tàŋ kááfáà-nā-nā	11
fɔ́ tàm bāā-yɛ̄-nī	12
fɔ́ tàn táá^{n}rí-yɛ́-nī	13
fɔ́ tàn náárí-yɛ́-nī	14
fɔ́ tàn sùsí-yɛ́-nī	15
fɔ́ tàn sínì-fáà-yɛ̀-nī	16
fɔ́ tàn sínìn-té-yɛ̄-nī	17
fɔ́ tàn sɔ́-tàà^{n}rì-yɛ̄-nī	18
fɔ́ tàn sɔ́-nàárì-yɛ̄-nī	19

4.6.1.4 Large numerals

Most large numerals are expressed as multiples of fɔ̃kɔ́sɔ́ '400'. For example, '1000' is fɔ̃kɔ̀s-ɛ̄-m-bāā tà fɔ́-yɛ́-nī, literally "400-two and ten."

As in other languages of the region, French *million* is used in the French sense, including with respect to currency.

4.6.2 Ordinal numerals

4.6.2.1 'First' and 'last'

Related to tíntíyɛ́^{n} '(in) the old days', tíntíí- functions as a noun or compound initial in terms denoting entities of ancient times (217a) as well as sequentially specified kinship categories and possessions (217b-d). It is also possible to use tíntíí- as a postnominal modifying adjective 'first in time, oldest', with NC suffix -nnè- (human) or -kà- (nonhuman) (217e).

(217) a. tíntíí-nnè-nā 'old-timer; distant ancestor, one of the first people'
tíntíí-sɛ̀ɛ̄-nī 'first people, distant ancestors'

b. tíntíí-pò-nā 'first(-born) child'
tíntíí-pìyè-pò-nā 'first(-born) boy'
tíntíí-kàsà-pīyē-nā 'first(-born) girl'

c. tíntíí-pàràà-nā-nā 'first husband'
tíntíí-cà-nā 'first wife'

d. tíntíí-wú-kó-nā 'first house'
tíntíí-nāā-nā 'first cow'
tíntíí-nàntɔ̀ɔ̄-nā 'first friend'

e. wú-kó-ñ tíntíí-kà-nā 'first house'
ná tíntíí-kà-nā 'first cow'
nàntɔ̀ɔ̄-ñ tíntíí-nnè-nā 'first friend'
pálà tíntíí-kà-nā 'first word' < páásā-nā 'word', cf. (50)

Noun/adverb wááɲú 'ahead, forward, in front' has a similar morphosyntax. In (218a) it takes the human NC nnè/sɛ̀ɛ̄ gender. In (218b) it is a compound initial.

(218) a. w^{n}ááɲí-nnè-nā 'leader, person in front'
b. w^{n}ááɲí-fì-yé-nā '(the) first thing'

Another possibility for 'first' is to directly inflect the numeral '1'. This form is parallel to other ordinals and is presented in the following subsection.

sēnāntɔ́ ‘behind’ (§8.2.5.3.2) becomes a noun with human reference in (219a). It is a possessor or compound initial in (219b), and a honhuman modifying adjective ‘last’ in (219c).

(219) a. sènàntɔ́-nnè-nā ‘last one (person, e.g. in a race)’
b. sènàntɔ́ fì-yé-nā ‘the last thing’
c. páás-ɛ̄-n̄ sènàntɔ́-ŋ̄-kì-nī ‘last word(s)’

4.6.2.2 Other ordinals

In addition to forms based on tíntíí- (see the preceding subsection), ‘first’ can be expressed by adding the most common NC suffixes (gender nā/ɲɛ̄) directly to the numeral ‘1’ (220a). This morphology, neutral for [±human], also works for higher numerals (220b).

(220) a. pálà tíntíí-kà-nā ‘first word’

b. pálà bāā-nā-nā ‘second word’
pálà táá^{n}rí-ná-nā ‘third word’
pálà fɔ́-ná-nā ‘tenth word’

c. pálà wārán-tà-fɔ́-yɛ́-ná-nā ‘thirtieth word’
pálà wán-sɛ́-n̄-sùsú-ná-nā ‘hundredth word’

4.6.3 Fractions and portions

Any division of a whole entity, whether a half or some other portion, is kàkà-mí(ŋ)-kà-nā ‘division, half’. It is related to the phrasal verb káká X míní ‘divide’.

5 Nominal and adjectival compounds

5.1 Nominal compounds

5.1.1 Possessive compounds

Possessive compounds have the form of a possessor plus a possessum, but are more or less lexicalized. In possessed NPs, the possessor and possessum have their full morphological forms, except for the usual reduction of final suffixes (-nā singular, -nī plural) to nasal consonants in most nonfinal positions. The possessor is subject to Final Tone-Raising, and the possessum is subject to Initial Tone-Dropping. The possessor may be singular or plural, but in fully lexicalized possessive compounds the number distinction of the possessor tends to be neutralized one way or the other.

Possessive compounds are fairly common in flora-fauna terms, compare English *Queen Anne's lace* (plant term). The examples in (221) are clearly of this type. Each entry presents the compound on the top line, followed by the independent forms of the possessor and the possessum.

(221)	forms	glosses	relevant feature
a.	ǹtàsúú-ná-ŋ̄ kìlà-tàā-nā	'herb sp. (*Costus*)'	wide-spreading flower
	ǹtàsúú-ná-nā	'frog or toad'	
	kílà-tàā-nā	'hand'	
b.	kùrùká-ɲ̄ ɲààsā-nā	'herb sp. (*Heliotropium*)'	curved inflorescence
	kùrùkā-nā	'chameleon'	
	y^{n}áásā-nā	'tail'	
c.	núú-sɛ̄-ŋ̄ wàyí-kà-nā	'ricin (shrub)'	poisonous; bushy
	núú-sɛ̄-nī	'chickens' (plural)	
	wàyí-kà-nā	'shield (n)'	
d.	sìn-sɛ̀ɛ́-ŋ̄ kɔ̀ntɔ́ɔ́-nā	'herb sp. (*Excoecaria*)'	long semi-woody stem
	sìn-sɛ̀ɛ̄-nī	'dancing magicians'	
	kɔ̀ntɔ́ɔ́-nā	'spear (n) or arrow'	
e.	túú-sɛ̄-n̄ tùkù-kà-nā	'vine sp. (*Asparagus*)'	short spiny leaves
	túú-sɛ̄-nī	'mice' (plural)	
	túkú-kà-nā	participle of túkú 'catch'	(here agentive 'catcher')
f.	sùká-n̄ sīī-kē-nā	'tree sp. (*Crescentia*)'	huge gourd-like fruits
	sùkā-nā	'calabash'	
	sīī-kē-nā	'tree'	

g. náá-ŋ̄ fārā-nā ‘lip’
náá-nā ‘mouth’
fārā-nā ‘skin’

There are also some examples where suffixation on the possessor has been eroded or lost, but which otherwise belong to the possessive compound type in form and meaning. (222a) has lost the final nasal suffix on the possessor, but it clearly means ‘old woman’s molar tooth’ (pointed due to wear and tear). (222b) has lost all suffixes on the possessor but can be understood to mean ‘fortune-teller’s dog’ figuratively. These examples are transitional between possessive and ordinary compounds.

(222) a. [cî-sē]-kàlàŋkāā-nā ‘herb sp. (*Tribulus*)’ sharp, spiny fruits
cî-sèē-nā ‘old woman’
kálāŋkāā-nā ‘molar tooth’

b. tākā-[fā-mā-nā] ‘praying mantis’ nocturnal predator
tākā-nnè-nā ‘fortune-teller’
fā-mā-nā ‘dog’

See also the following subsection.

5.1.1.1 Primary (true) versus secondary (false) species

There are several pairs of natural species of which one is primary (due to familiarity and/or usefulness). The secondary species is often expressed by adding a pro forma possessor, denoting an animal or an ethnicity.

(223) a. fúlán-sòrò-nā ‘tree sp. (*Vitex madiensis*)’
fúlán-nā-nā ‘Pullo (=Fulbe person)’
sóró-nā ‘tree sp. (*Vitex doniana*)’

b. yìbìrì-ná-m̄ báánsíyá-nā ‘wild onion sp. (*Crinum*)’
yìbìrì-nā-nā ‘pig’
báánsíyá-nā ‘sweet sedge tubers (*Cyperus*)’

5.1.2 Ordinary compounds

Ordinary (i.e., nonpossessive) compounds have initials and finals rather than possessors and possessums. However, the boundary between possessive and ordinary compounds is blurry. Many ordinary compounds likely started out as possessive compounds and underwent morphological reduction and semantic specialization to end up as ordinary compounds.

In both types, Final Tone-Raising may occur on the initial, and Initial Tone-Dropping may occur on the final. N-N compounds are treated tonally like N-Adj pairings in Paleni, as often in Mande and other West African languages.

In ordinary compounds, the initial is often reduced to the noun root, without NC or final suffixes. If so, the initial is not marked for grammatical number. The final does have its full complement of suffixes.

5.1.2.1 High-frequency initials and finals in ordinary compounds

Nouns normally omit clearly segmentable NC and final suffixes when they occur as compound initials or before adjectives. The form taken by nouns in this stripped-down condition is sometimes lexically fixed. A long vowel may be shortened, a vowel quality is changed, a nasal coda that is not transparent elsewhere may appear, and so forth.

5.1.2.1.1 Initial á- in time of day or season of year compounds

These compounds are unusual in that they can omit the NC suffix and the final number suffix in their usual abstract function (224a). When they denote countable units, singular and plural suffix complexes are added (224b).

(224) a.

á-kàà^{n}rá	‘dry season’
á-kààyá	‘rainy season’
á-sàná	‘morning’
á-tùná	‘nighttime’ (not day)
á-yìláá	‘late afternoon’
á-yìrìké	‘midday’ or ‘daytime’ (not night)

b.

á-tùná-ná-nā	‘night’ (unit of time)
á-tùɲé-ɲé-nī	‘nights’

The two season terms have variant HL-toned uncompounded forms káá^{n}rè-nā and kááyà-nā in collocations (§11.1.1.2.1). The tonal alternations resemble, but are not identical to, those involving Initial Tone-Dropping after a possessor or a compound initial (§3.6.2.7). á- is not the same as 3NHSg possessor á, at least synchronically. This is shown by the possibility of adding an external possessor to the entire noun ‘day’ or ‘night’, as in mîɲ ɲá-tùná-ná-nā ‘my night’.

5.1.2.1.2 Compounds with kú-nā ‘head’ as initial (kú-, kó-, kòó-)

‘Head’ (by extension ‘meaning, etymological source’) is kú-nā, plural c-é-nī. As compound initial or before an adjective, the usual form is kú-. There are frozen exceptions with kó- and kòó-.

(225) a. kú-nā (plural c-é-nī) ‘head’

b.	kú-nùù-rɛ̄-nī	‘brain (physical)’	“head-marrow”
	kú-kàà-sā-nā	‘headache’	“eye-sickness”
	kú pà-nā	‘big head’	
	kú fɔ̀ō-nā	‘black head’	
	kú-sáá-nā	‘neck’	??
	kú-wùlù-sē-nī	‘head hair’	“head-hair”
c.	kó-tóó-nā	‘nape (occipitum)’	??
d.	kòó-fɔ̀-nā	‘throat’	“head-hole”

‘Head’ as possessum is kú-nā after a pronominal possessor, kù-nā after nonpronominal possessors by Initial Tone-Dropping (bɛ́ kú-nā ‘your-Sg head’, fɔ̄-má-ŋ̄ kú-nā ‘the dog’s head’). A possible frozen case of -kù-nā as compound final is wú-kù-nā-nā ‘wall (of house or courtyard)’, with wú- from wú-kó-nā ‘house’, but the plural of ‘wall’ is wú-kù-ɲɛ̄-nī (not #wú-c-è-nī).

The phonologically similar noun ‘day’ as unit of time is kwá-nā (plural kúú-rɛ́-nī), as in kúú-rɛ́-ñ táá^{n}rí ‘three days’. ‘Another day; the following day’ is kúú tòrō.

5.1.2.1.3 Compounds with bāā-nā ‘foot’ as initial (bā-)

This noun takes the shortened form bā- as compound initial and bā before adjectives.

(226) a. bāā-nā (plural b-ɛ̄ɛ̄-nī) ‘foot, leg’

b.	bā-kpà-nā	‘tibia, shin’	?
	bā-[pí-yé-nā]	‘toe’	“foot-small”
	bā-pí-[wùsù-kàā-nā]	‘toenail’	
	bā-tàā-nā	‘sole’	“foot-stone”
	bā-[tìì-kā-nā]	‘footprint, track’	“foot-place”
	bā-tíntîì-tā-nā-nā	‘heel’	
	bā-tùsùmàn-nàā-nā	‘ankle’	“foot-joint”
c.	bā kàà^{n}rìŋ-kà-nā	‘long leg’	

Some of these compounds have analogues with kílā-nā ‘arm, hand’ as initial: kílà-[pí-yé-nā] ‘finger’, kílà-tàā-nā ‘palm of hand’.

5.1.2.1.4 Compounds with nāā-nā ‘cow’ as initial (ná-)

nāā-nā ‘cow’ is one of several M-toned fauna terms that undergoes Root Tone-Raising (§3.6.2.5) in the plural náá-sɛ̄-nī and also in the premodifier form. It shortens to ná- as

compound initial and to ná before adjectives (227a-b). This drops to nà- when a possessor is added by Initial Tone-Dropping. 'Bull' (227c) keeps the M-tone.

(227)				
	a.	ná-kùlō-nā	'cattle pen'	
		è nà-kùlō-nā	'his/her cattle pen'	
		ná-[sì-bē-nā]	'cattle owner'	§5.1.2.1.7
		ná-kùrùkùn-nā-nā	'herd of cattle'	kúrúkún-nā-nā 'group, herd'
	b.	ná-lìyā-nā	'ox-drawn plow'	líyā-nā 'daba; plow blade'
		è nà-lìyā-nā	'his/her plow'	
	c.	nāŋ-cún-ná-nā	'bull'	(234c)

As compound final the form is -nàā-nā, plural -nàà-sɛ̄-nī, as in wún-nàā-nā "bush cow," i.e., 'buffalo'.

5.1.2.1.5 Compounds with fɔ́ɔ́-nā 'hole' as final (-fɔ̀-nā)

fɔ́ɔ́-nā (plural fú-ɲɛ́-nī) 'hole' takes the form -fɔ̀-nā (plural -fù-ɲɛ̄-nī) as compound final.

(228)		compound	gloss	related to initial
	a.	kòó-fɔ̀-nā	'throat'	kú-nā 'head'
		wùŋ-fɔ̀-nā	'anus'	wūn-nā-nā 'guts'
		yíŋ-[fɔ̀-nā]	'ear'	yín-ná-nā 'face'
	b.	wūrū-[fɔ̀-nā]	'garbage pit'	wūrū-kō-nā 'manure'
		kúŋ-[fɔ̀-nā]	'rock waterhole'	??

5.1.2.1.6 Compounds with 'thing' as final (X-fìyē-nā)

'Thing' is fǐ-yé-nā, plural fíí-nī-nī. Segmentation of the singular, fí-yé- or fíyé-, is debatable (§4.1.2.7.1). The singular and plural are common as a compound finals, often denoting animals. The first (or root) syllable drops to L-toned. The initial may specify a form of locomotion (229a), a habitat (229b), or a characteristic behavior (229c).

(229)		compound	gloss	initial
	a.	sūū-fì-yē-nā	'wheeled vehicle'	sūū-sā-nā 'run.VblN'
		yɛ̀lɛ̀kɛ̀-ŋ́-fì-yē-nā	'creepy-crawly'	yɛ̀lɛ̀kɛ̀-ń-ná-nā 'slither.VblN'
		wūmā-fì-yē-nā	'flying thing'	wūmā-nā 'fly.VblN'
	b.	wúŋ-fì-yē-nā	'wild animal'	wúún-nā-nā 'the bush, brousse'
		yóóŋ-fì-yē-nā	'domestic animal'	yóón-nā-nā 'village'

c. túkú-fì-yē-nā ‘predator (animal)’ túkú/tūkó ‘catch’

5.1.2.1.7 Compounds with ‘owner’ as final (-sì-bē-nā)

The unpossessed noun ‘owner’ is kàfɔ́lɔ̀-nā-nā, plural kàfɔ́lɔ̀-ɲē-nī, said to be a loanword. However, the compound final meaning ‘owner of __’ is -sì-bē-nā, plural -sì-sē-nī. These forms are related to sí-bé ‘father’, plural sí-sèé-yɛ̄ (§3.6.2.3), but ‘father’ and ‘owner’ diverge in tonal behavior and in final suffixation. In addition to ownership as such (230a), this construction can be used to describe a person with a characteristic feature such as a beard (230b). The initial may end in a nasal coda (230b). “Village owner” means ‘village chief’.

(230)

	noun	gloss	‘owner of __’	plural
a.	pìtìgí-ná-nā	‘shop (n)’	pittìgí-[sì-bē-nā]	pìttìgí-[sì-sē-nī]
	kɛ́rɛ́-kà-nā	‘gun, rifle’	[kɛ́rɛ́-kà-[sì-bē-nā]	[kɛ́rɛ́-kà]-[sì-sē-nī]
	wú-kó-nā	‘house’	wú-[sì-bē-nā]	wú-[sì-sē-nī]
	nāā-nā	‘cow’	ná-[sì-bē-nā]	ná-[sì-sē-nī]
	nā-kùlō-nā	‘cattle pen’	[nā-kùlō]-[sì-bē-nā]	[nā-kùlō]-[sì-sē-nī]
b.	swáá-ɲé-nī (pl)	‘beard’	swááń-[sì-bē-nā]	swááń-[sì-sē-nī]
	nūū-mā-nā	‘chicken’	nūūñ-[sì-bē-nā]	nūūñ-[sì-sē-nī]
	yóón-nā	‘village’	yóón-[sì-bē-nā]	yóón-[sì-sē-nī]

5.1.2.1.8 Privative compounds (‘shortage’, ‘lack’)

The nouns yàà-nā-nā ‘(total) lack’ and kólókó-ná-nā ‘shortage, insufficiency’ can be combined with nouns denoting commodities like ‘water’ and ‘money’.

Elsewhere simple yàà-nā-nā means ‘air, wind’. Examples with the sense ‘lack’ are in (231). The more transparent ones are possessives, but high-frequency ones tend to fuse into compounds.

(231)

a.	níɲ̃ ɲàà-nā-nā ~ ní-mí-ɲ̃ ɲàà-nā-nā	‘lack of water, drought’	ní-mí-ní ‘water’ (plural)
b.	wárà ɲàà-nā-nā ~ wárì-ɲ̃ nàà-nā-nā	‘lack of money’	wár(ì)-ɲē-nī ‘money’ (plural)
c.	wóló-kà-ɲ̃ ɲàà-nā-nā	‘lack of food’	wóló-kà-nā ‘food’
d.	yāŋ-kà-ɲ̃ ɲàà-nā-nā	‘lack of work’	yāŋ-kà-nā

kólókó-ná-nā ‘shortage’ is attested in possessives (or unfused compounds) like ní-mí-ŋ̃ kólókó-ná-nā ‘shortage of water’.

5.1.2.1.9 ‘X-mate’ compounds with bá-nnè-nā as final

bá-nnè-nā (means ‘colleague’. It may be related to the phrasal verb bá^{n} X sí ‘help X’, but note the unnasalized bá- in plural bá-sɛ̀ɛ̄-nī. As compound final, it takes the form -bà-nnè-nā. The initials denote joint activities.

(232)	noun	gloss	‘__-mate’	gloss
	yāŋ-kà-nā	‘work (n)’	[yāŋ-kà]-[bà-nnè-nā]	‘workmate, colleague’
	kālán-ná-nā	‘study (n)’	[kālám]-[bà-nnè-nā]	‘schoolmate’
	tɔ́ɔ́rɔ̀-tà-nā	‘travel (n)’	[tɔ́ɔ́rɔ̀-tà]-[bà-nnè-nā]	‘fellow traveler’

5.1.2.2 ‘Person’, ‘man’, and ‘woman’ compounds

‘Person’ is suppletive: singular fá-nā, plural líí-bé-nī (§4.1.2.7.3). With a possessor in the sense ‘kinsman, relative’, the noun is nonsuppletive: singular lí-yé-nā (arguably líyé-nā), plural again líí-bé-nā.

lí- (in kin terms) and líí- (with adjectives or finals) occur in the following:

(233)		singular	plural	gloss	
	a.	lí-bé	lí-sèé-yɛ̄	‘mother’	cf. sí-bé ‘father’
		lí-sèm-pò-nā	lí-sèm-pìs-ē-nī	‘grandchild’	
	b.	líí-kàà-nā-nā	líí-kàà-ɲɛ̄-nī	‘white person’	
		líí-fɛ̀lɛ̀kɛ̀ɛ̄-nā	líí-fɛ̀lɛ̀kɛ̀è-sɛ̄-nī	‘ethnicity, race’	
		líí-sèɛ̄-nā	líí-sè-rē-nī	‘old person’	

Suppletive singular fá-nā ‘person’ is not usually compatible with adjectival modification or with compounding. However, it may have originally been part of certain kin terms: fàtéè-nā-nā ‘clanmate, patrilineal kinsman’, fá-mā-nā ‘younger sibling’. Any relationship to fá complementizer and/or to singular relative marker fáá (§14.1.1) is speculative.

Adult human terms are cá-nā ‘woman’ (plural c-é-nī) and píyé-nā ‘man’ (plural píyé-sé-nī). As a sex-marking modifier for humans, the tone-dropped possessum and compound-final forms for ‘woman’ are cà-nā, c-è-nī. As a sex-marking modifier for female animals, the modifying form cà-nā ‘female’ (plural c-è-nī) can combine with a wide range of terms (234a-c). píyé-nā occurs as a modifier ‘male’ with human terms, but it is replaced by other modifiers to denote male animals. The most common ‘male’ modifier with animals is fáá-nā (plural fúú-rɛ́-nī) (234b). fáá-nā combines with many animal terms, but ‘bull’ has a specialized compound final. For chickens, both ‘hen’ and ‘rooster’ have specialized finals (234d). For the fauna terms, the premodifier and compound-initial form is based on the segmental and tonal form of the unmodified plural.

(234)		singular	plural	gloss
	a.	tūkūsìn-nè-nā	tūkūsìn-sɛ̀ɛ̄-nī	‘blacksmith’ (caste)
		tūkūsìɲ-cà-nā	tūkūsìɲ-c-è-nī	‘female blacksmith’
		tūkūsìm-pìyē-nā	tūkūsìm-pìyè-sē-nī	‘male blacksmith’
	b.	fā-mā-nā ~ fɔ̄-mā-nā	fɔ́n-sɛ̄-nī	‘dog’
		fɔ́ɲ cà-nā	fɔ́ɲ c-è-nī	‘female dog’
		fɔ́ŋ fáá-nā	fɔ́ŋ fúú-ré-nī	‘male dog’
	c.	nāā-nā	náá-sɛ̄-nī	‘bovine, cattle’
		ná cà-nā	ná c-è-nī	‘cow (female)’
		nāɲ-cún-ná-nā	nāɲ-cú-ɲé-nī	‘bull’
	d.	nūū-mā-nā	núú-sɛ̄-nī	‘chicken’
		núún-tú-ná-nā	núún-tú-ɲé-nī	‘rooster’
		núún-nì-bē-nā	núún-nì-sē-nī	‘hen’ (cf. lí-bé ‘mother’)

Composite affinal kin terms (§5.1.2.4) have M-toned -cā-nā ‘female’ and a special form -kpīyē-nā ‘male’ with kp (235a). ‘Co-wife’ has -cà-nā (235b).

(235)				
	a.	nāɲ-cā-nā	nāɲ-cā-sē-nī	‘mother-in-law’
		nāŋ-kpīyē-nā	nāŋ-kpīyē-sē-nī	‘father-in-law’
	b.	tɛ̀ɛ̀ɲ-cà-nā	tɛ̀ɛ̀ɲ-c-è-nī	‘co-wife’

cá-nā ‘woman’ is replaced by cîì before modifiers, and by cííyà as predicate nominal (§4.1.3).

(236) presents compounds denoting aged individuals. Here ká- is male, cîì- is female. (The younger speaker pronounces the latter as cí- with short H-toned vowel.)

(236)				
	a.	líí-sɛ̀ɛ̄-nā	líí-sèr-ē-nī	‘old person’
	b.	ká-sɛ̀ɛ̄-nā	ká-sèr-ē-nī	‘old man’
	c.	cîì-sɛ̀ɛ̄-nā	cîì-sèr-ē-nī	‘old woman’

5.1.2.3 Diminutive compounds (-pò-nā, plural -pì-sē-nī)

The diminutive compound final is singular -pò-nā and plural -pì-sē-nī. The related noun is pó-nā ‘child’ (especially as offspring), plural pí-sé-nī, of Ø/sɛ̄ gender (§4.1.2.3.5). With a pronominal possessor, pó-nā ‘child (offspring)’ remains H-toned (è pó-ná ‘his/her child’, í pí-sé-nī ‘their children’). ‘Child’ in the non-kinship sense ‘pre-adult human’ is písàá-nā, with the “same” plural pís-é-nī, arguably of Ø/E gender (§4.1.2.1.1) and so with a different plural hyphenation. The distinction between offspring and youthfulness is neutralized in diminutive compounds. The related adjective is pí-yé-nā ‘small’, plural pí-sé-nī, nominalized ká píírɛ́ ‘small thing’, suppletive verb sáⁿ ‘be small’.

Diminutive compounds with -pò-nā are unisex, or inherit their sex reference from the compound initial. Human examples are in (237). For one such compound, the plural has two variants, one of them without an overt diminutive marker (237c). For another, the more common plural is -mī-nī (237d) as in some other human plurals (§4.1.2.6.1).

(237)		singular	plural	gloss
	a.	lí-sèm-pò-nā	lí-sèm-pì-sē-nī	‘great-grandchild’ (male or female)
	b.	píyé-pò-nā	píyé-pì-sē-nī	‘boy’
		kàn-nàkà-pò-nā	kàn-nàkà-pì-sē-nī	‘herder’ (usually a young boy)
	c.	fūm-pò-nā	fūm-pì-sē-nī ~ fūn-sèē-nī	‘exchange farmer’
	d.	kàárì-pò-nā	kàrà-mī-nī (plural less often kàárì-pì-sē-nī)	‘adolescent boy, young man; son’

For ‘great-grandchild’ (237a) there is no precise source, as grandparental terms have no counterpart to -sèm-. ‘Boy’ (237b) is the diminutive of píyé-nā ‘man’. For ‘herder’ (237b), cf. verb náká/nāká ‘tend (livestock)’. For ‘exchange farmer’ (237c), cf. noun fūn-nā-nā ‘reciprocal labor exchange in farming’.

In vocatives, -pò as compound final is raised to -pō in vocatives, as in sìmím-pō ‘hey genie!’ (2024_04 @ 00:44). For ‘young man’ (237d), tones of the root are also raised: káárí-pō ‘hey young man!’, plural kárá-mī. Final suffixes are omitted in these vocatives.

Diminutive compounds can also denote a small object that is paired with a larger object. The semantics of (238a) are transparent. (238b) describes a large, slightly convex grindstone on which grain is milled using a small, rounded grindstone held in the hand.

(238)		noun	gloss	diminutive	gloss
	a.	kɛ́rɛ́-kà-nā	‘rifle’	[kɛ́rɛ́-kà]-pò-nā	‘bullet’
	b.	túkú-nàn-tàā-nā	‘large grindstone’	[túkú-nàn-tàà]-pò-nā	‘small grindstone’

Additional diminutives with -pò-nā are in (239). All of them have plurals with -pì-sē-nī.

(239)		diminutive	gloss	related
	a.	sìmím-pò-nā	‘genie’	
	b.	wáràm-pò-nā	‘5-franc coin’	wárì-nā-nā ‘money’
	c.	wɔ́rɔ̀m-pò-nā	‘(a) native’	
	d.	yⁿá-pò-nā	‘eye; eyeball’	yⁿá/yⁿā́ ‘see’

Some combinations of pí-yé-nā ‘small’ with preceding nouns are lexicalized and can be considered to be compounds functionally.

(240)		noun	gloss	related	gloss
	a.	kásá-pí-yé-nā	‘young girl’	kásá-nā	‘young woman’
	b.	kílà-pí-yé-nā	‘finger’	kílā-nā kílà-tàā-nā	‘arm, hand’ ‘palm of hand’
	c.	ná-pí-yé-nā	‘man’s nephew/niece’		
	d.	yéém-pí-yé-nā báá-pí-yé-nā	‘winged termite’ ‘bird (any)’		

kásá-pí-yé-nā functions as the female counterpart of píyé-pò-nā ‘boy’ (237b) above.

5.1.2.4 Composite kin terms

Many kin and relationship terms are morphologically complex or compounded, often irregularly.

The nouns in (241) are not strictly kin terms, though when possessed some of them can mean ‘wife’, ‘kinsman’, ‘son’, and ‘daughter’. Those in (241a) have idiosyncratic plurals, but the singulars are not composite. Those in (241b), some repeated from the preceding subsection, have diminutive morphology. lí-yé-nā (241c) replaces fá-nā (241a) in the possessed singular.

(241)		noun	plural	gloss
	a.	cá-nā fá-nā kásá-nā	c-ɛ́-nī líí-bé-nī kásá-mī-nī	‘woman; wife’ (possessed or not) ‘person’ (unpossessed) ‘young woman; daughter’ (possessed or not)
	b.	kàárì-pò-nā kásá-pí-yé-nā	kàrà-mī-nī kásá-pí-sé-nī	‘young man; son’ (possessed or not) ‘girl’
	c.	lí-yé-nā	líí-bé-nī	‘kinsman, relative’ (possessed)

Some uncompounded kin and relationship terms that take NC and final suffixes are in (242). The genders are nā/ɲɛ̄ (242a), mā/sɛ̄ (242b), and Ø/sɛ̄ (242c). ‘Husband’ (242d) is unusual due to its long vowels (242d). Plural -ɲɛ̄- varies with -yɛ̄- for ‘clanmate’.

(242)		noun	plural	gloss
	a.	bɔ́ɔ́-ná-nā fàtéè-nā-nā nàntɔ̀ɔ̄-nā	bɔ́ɔ́-ɲɛ́-nī fàtéè-ɲɛ̄-nī ~ -yɛ̄-nī nàntɔ̀ɔ̀-sɛ̄-nī	‘agemate, peer’ ‘clanmate’ (“t” pronounced [d]) ‘friend’

b.	fá-mā-nā	fɔ́n-sɛ̄-nī	‘younger sibling’ (plural also ‘dogs’)
c.	séé-nā	séé-sɛ̄-nī	‘elder sibling’
d.	páráá	páá-sáá-yɛ̄ ~ páráá-yɛ̄	‘husband’

Suffix -bē- (raising to -bé- after H-tone) as in the plurals ‘people’ and ‘kinsmen’ in (241a,c) reappears, but as a singular NC suffix, paired with plural -sɛ̀ɛ́- (becoming [+ATR] -sɛ̀é-) in (243a). Here singular -bé occurs without the usual final singular -nī, and -sɛ̀ɛ́- (~ -sɛ̀é-) occurs with the less common final plural suffix variant -yɛ̄ (§4.1.2.3.1).

(243)	noun	plural	gloss
a.	lí-bé	lí-sɛ̀é-yɛ̄	‘mother’
	sí-bé	sí-sɛ̀é-yɛ̄	‘father’
b.	písí-bē	písí-bē-yɛ̄	‘maternal uncle’

More clearly composite kin terms include those in (244). The senior parental terms (244a) add the adjective-like modifier -kàppà-nā to ‘mother’ and ‘father’ terms (see above). The unisex grandchild term adds -sèŋ- and diminutive -pò- to líí-, on which see (233) above.

(244)	noun	plural	gloss
a.	[lí-bé]-kàppà-nā	[lí-sí-yɛ́]-kàppì-nī ~ [lí-bé]-kàppì-nī	‘mother’s senior co-wife’
	[sí-bé]-kàppà-nā	[sí-sí-yɛ́]-kàppǐ-nī ~ [sí-bé]-kàppì-nī	‘father’s elder brother’
b.	líí-sèm-pò-nā	líí-sèm-pì-sē-nī	‘grandchild’

Composite kin terms based on cá-nā ‘woman; female’ are in (245a). ‘Father-in-law’ begins with the same nāŋ- as ‘mother-in-law’, so -kpíyé-nā should mean ‘male’, but elsewhere the adjective ‘male’ is fáá-nā (plural fúú-ré-nī). -kpíyé-nā is a variant of píyé-nā ‘man’. However, -pí-yé-nā in ‘nephew/niece’ (245c) is probably directly related not to ‘man’, rather to the adjective ‘small’ (pí-yé-nā), which forms a word-family with ‘child’ (-pó-nā) and diminutive -pò-nā (§5.1.2.3).

(245)	noun	plural	gloss
a.	nāŋ-cā-nā	nāŋ-cā-sɛ̄-nī	‘mother-in-law’
	tèèŋ-cà-nā	tèèŋ-c-è-nī	‘(woman’s) co-wife’
b.	nāŋ-kpíyé-nā	nāŋ-kpíyé-sé-nī	‘father-in-law’
c.	ná-pí-yé-nā	ná-pí-sé-nī	‘(man’s) nephew or niece’

5.1.2.5 Deverbal nominal finals with incorporated object

An initial noun, either a cognate nominal or a noun denoting a typical object, can be added to deverbal nominals.

5.1.2.5.1 Composite verbal nouns

Uncompounded verbal nouns add simple nominal suffixes directly to the verb stem (§4.2.1.1). Verbal nouns of transitive verbs can add an incorporated object as possessor.

(246) a. páásā-m̄ pīyē-nā ‘question (n)’
páásā-nā ‘word; matter’
pīyē-nā ‘ask.VblN’

b. támá-n̄ nìy^{n}ā-nā ‘beer-drinking’
támá-nī ‘beer’ (plural)
nìy^{n}ā-nā ‘drink.VblN’

c. námá-sá-ŋ̄ kà-nā ‘meat-eating’
námá-sá-nā ‘meat’
kà-nā ‘eat.meat.VblN’

5.1.2.5.2 Function-specifying compounds

These compounds describe types of water and oil that are used for different purposes. ‘Water’ and ‘oil’ are head nouns, followed by modifying compounds.

For ‘water’ (ní-mí-nī, plurale tantum), relevant expressions are in (247). The verbs ‘drink’ and ‘bathe’ are participialized with -kì-nī (plural of -kà-nā).

(247)		Pfv/Ipfv	gloss	compound	gloss
	a.	nì/nìy^{n}á	‘drink’	ní-mí-n̄ nìì-kì-nī	‘drinking water’
	b.	tù/tùwá	‘bathe’	ní-mí-n̄ tùù-kì-nī	‘bathing water’

níí-sā-nā ‘oil’ drops its suffixes in two similar compounds (248).

(248)		Pfv/Ipfv	gloss	compound	gloss
	a.	tìkìmà/tìkìmá	‘rub on, apply’	níí tìkìmà-síŋ-kà-nā	‘rubbing oil (lotion)’
	b.	wòlò/wòlóó	‘eat’	níí wòlò-kà-nā	‘eating (=cooking) oil’

In another construction, the semantic head is the compound final. It is preceded by a noun-verb compound.

(249) túkú-nàn-tàā-nā ‘large grindstone (on which grain is ground)’
túkí-mí-nī ‘flour, powder’
ná^{n}/nāná ‘stone-grind’
táá-nā ‘stone’

5.1.2.5.3 Composite agentives

Uncompounded agentives add human singular suffixes -nnè-nā or plural -sèɛ̄-nī to a form of the verb stem. See §4.2.1.2 for the morphology. Compound agentives add either a cognate nominal or a noun denoting the typical object. Such tightly-knit compounds are distinct from full possessor-possessum compounds, which can trigger tonal changes in the possessor (Final Tone-Raising) and in the possessum (Initial Tone-Dropping) (250e).

(250)		agentive	plural	gloss	component noun/verb
	a.	yì-w^{n}à-nnè-nā	yì-w^{n}à-sèɛ̄-nī	‘singer’	yì-kā-nā ‘song’ w^{n}á X míní ‘put into’
	b.	líyà-tɔ̄ɔ̄-nè-nā (synonym tɔ̄ɔ̄-nnè-nā)	líyà-tɔ̄ɔ̄-sèɛ̄-nī	‘farmer’	líyā-nā ‘daba (hoe)’ tɔ̄ɔ̄sī/tɔ̄ɔ̄sá^{n} ‘cultivate’
	c.	yāŋ-kà-yàn-nè-nā	yāŋ-kà-yàn-sèɛ̄-nī	‘worker’	yāŋ-kà-nā ‘work (n)’ yà^{n}/yàmá ‘do’
	d.	bélèn-sèlè-nnè-nā	bélèn-sèlè-sèɛ̄-nī	‘weaver’	bélén-nā-nā ‘fabric’ sélé/sēlīyé ‘weave’
	e.	kpōkó-ɲ̄ ɲò-nnè-nā	kpōkó-ɲ̄ ɲò-sèɛ̄-nī	‘tomtom beater’	kpōkō-nā-nā ‘tomtom’ yó/wùsó ‘hit’

5.1.2.5.4 Composite place-of-action nominals

For simple place-of-action nominals with -làā-nā, see §4.2.1.3. In (251a), làā-nā is added to composite verbs. In (251b), the place-of-action nominal with làā-nā is preceded by a compound initial denoting an object. In (251c), the nominal is preceded by a full noun.

(251)		place nominal	gloss	components
	a.	[tìkì-lɔ́-làā-nā	‘forge (n)’	tíkí X lɔ̄/X tìká-lɔ̄ ‘forge (v)’
		[bèlè-sí-làā-nā	‘repair place’	bèlè X sí/X bèlìyé-sí ‘repair’

	[wⁿā-tú]-làā-nā	‘beginning’	wⁿá X tú/X wⁿá-tú ‘begin (sth)’
b.	[yāŋ-kà]-yàn-nàā-nā	‘workplace’	yāŋ-kà-nā ‘work (n)’ yàⁿ/yàmá ‘work (v)’
c.	wárì-ɲɛ̄-ñ mín-nàā-nā	‘place to hide money’	wárì-ɲɛ̄-nī ‘money’ míⁿ/mīnná ‘hide’
	wú-kó-m̄ máá-làā-nā	‘place to build a house’	wú-kó-nā ‘house’ máá/mááráⁿ ‘build’

Two cardinal-direction terms make use of this construction (252).

(252)	a.	wīīké-ñ sāāfúúⁿ-làā-nā	‘west’	wīīké-nā ‘sun’ sáafúúⁿ/sāāfúúⁿ ‘go into burrow’
	b.	wīīké-ŋ̄ fū-làā-nā	‘east’	wīīké-nā ‘sun’ fú/fwā ‘emerge from burrow’

5.1.2.6 Habitat-specifying initials

The basic distinction between domestic and wild forms of the same (or similar) species is made by adding a compound initial ‘the bush, brousse’ or ‘village’ (253). Cf. wúún-nā-nā ‘the bush (brousse)’ and yóón-nā-nā ‘village’.

(253)	kɛ̄rīyàā-nā	‘guinea-fowl’	wúŋ̀-kɛ̀rìyàa-nā ‘wild guinea-fowl’ yóóŋ̀-kɛ̀rìyàā-nā ‘domestic guinea-fowl’

More precise habitats or seasons of wild species can be indicated by a compound initial in the form of a slightly contracted locative PP (254). The initials are tà-fɔ̀-nā ‘pond’, wúún-nā-nā ‘the bush (brousse)’, sīī-kē-nā ‘tree’, and á-kààyá ‘rainy season’.

(254)	a.	[[tà-fɔ̀-m̄]-mím]-[bàà-pì-sē-nī] [[pond-Sg]-in]-[bird-Dim-Pl-Pl]	‘water birds’ (e.g. duck, jacana)
	b.	[[wúún-nā-m̄]-mím]-[bàà-pì-sē-nī] [[the.bush-Sg-Sg]-in]-[bird-Dim-Pl-Pl]	‘birds of the (dry) bush’
	c.	[[sīī-kē]-míŋ]-[wūmā-kà-nā] [[tree-Sg]-in]-[snake-Sg-Sg]	‘tree snake’
	d.	[á-kààyá]-[bàà-pì-sē-nī] [rainy.season]-[bird-Dim-Pl-Pl]	‘rainy-season (migratory) birds’

5.2 Adjectival compounds

5.2.1 Bahuvrihi compounds

A bahuvrihi specifies a subtype of a general category, defined by either a number of its features/parts or by its adjectivally modified feature/part.

5.2.1.1 N-Num bahuvrihi

In this construction, a noun-numeral combination serves as compound initial (255). In this way, the numeral cannot be mis-parsed as having scope over the head noun, e.g., 'snake' in (255a). The second part of sɔ́-tàà^{n}rì '8' and sɔ́-nààrì '9' becomes M-toned.

(255) a. [[cé-m̄]-bāā]-wùmà-kà-nā
[[head-Pl]-two]-snake-Sg-Sg
'two-headed snake'

b. [[b-ɛ̄ɛ̄-n̄]-[sɔ́-tāā^{n}rī]-ntàlā-nā
[[foot-Pl-Pl]-[eight]-spider-Sg
'eight-footed spider'

5.2.1.2 N-Adj bahuvrihi

In this construction, the bahuvrihi takes N-Adj form and functions as a postnominal adjective (256).

(256) a. wūmā-kà-ŋ̄ kú-fɔ̀ɔ̄-nā
snake-Sg-Sg head-black-Sg
'black-headed snake'

b. tūū-kó y^{n}àà-kàà^{n}rìŋ-kà-nā
mouse-Sg tail-long-Sg-Sg
'long-tailed mouse' (< tūū-kō-nā, y^{n}áá(-)sā-nā)

6 Noun phrase structure

6.1 Organization of NP constituents

6.1.1 Linear order

The order of words within an NP is Poss-N-Adj-Num-'all'-Dem. (257a) illustrates N-Adj-Num. (257b) illustrates N-Num-Dem. (257c-d) illustrate Poss-N-Adj with NP and pronominal possessors. (257e) illustrates N-Num-'all'-Dem.

(257) a. wú nàà-rɛ̄-ñ táá^{n}rí
house good-Pl-Pl three
'three good houses'

b. wú táá^{n}rí-yɛ̄-nī yīn-sī-nī
house three-Pl-Pl DemPl-Pl
'these/those three houses'

c. zàkîì wú kàà^{n}rìŋ-kì-nī
Z house long-Pl-Pl
'Zaki's big houses.'

d. tí bābā-m̄ mìyɛ̄-nā
1Pl sheep-Sg red-Sg
'our brown sheep-Sg'

e. wí-yé-ñ táá^{n}rí-yɛ̄-ñ tō-yɛ̄-ɲ̄ ɲīn-sī-nī
house-Pl-Pl three-Pl-Pl all-Pl-Pl DemPl-Pl
'all those three houses'

6.1.2 Headless NPs

Basic color and size adjectives cannot readily function as NP heads in the absence of an overt noun. When no specific nominal category is required (as when discourse has made it obvious), dummy elements ká (nonhuman) and líí (human) occur in the nominal slot, cf. (205a) above.

(258) a. ká mìyɛ̄-nā 'the red one' (nonhuman)
b. líí mìyɛ̄-nā 'the red (=brown) one' (human)

Some participles are lexicalized as nouns, e.g. wóló-kì-nī 'food(s)' from the verb 'eat'. Numerals and demonstratives can occur in absolute function without an overt noun (259a-b).

(259) a. bāā-yɛ̄-m̄ pɛ̀= ɛ̄ ‘Two (of them) came.’ bāā ‘2’
b. nû nà-ñ [tí kílānī] ‘Give that (one) to us!’ < nà-nā ‘that’

6.2 Possessives

Possessors, whether noun-headed or pronominal, precede the possessum.

6.2.1 Forms of possessor and possessum

The usual reduction of final number suffixes -nā (singular) and -nī (plural) to nasal codas applies to possessors as to other nonfinal nouns in the clause. Eligible possessors are subject to Final Tone-Raising, which raises M-toned NC suffixes to H if not preceded by another H-tone (§3.6.2.6.1).

Possessums are subject to Initial Tone-Dropping (§3.6.2.7). This process drops roots with overt or covert /HL/ or /HM/ melody to L-toned. “Covert” applies to /HL/-melodic roots that are superficially H-toned but that do not raise a following M-toned NC suffix to H, as in yóón-nā-nā ‘village’ with root /yóòŋ/, hence X yòòn-nā-nā ‘X’s village’. A few H-toned monosyllabics like cá-nā ‘woman’ that lack overt NC suffixes are also covertly /HL/-melodic in this context, hence X cà-nā ‘X’s wife’. True /H/-melodic nouns, as well as /M/- and /L/-melodics, are unaffected. For some nouns, Initial Tone-Dropping is observed in (probably archaic) compound finals but not after possessors.

As an example, ‘the dog’s yam’ combines fā-mā-nā ‘dog’ with túkú-sā-nā ‘yam’ as fā-má-ñ tùkù-sā-nā. The M-toned NC suffix -mā- of ‘dog’ is raised to -má-, while its final singular suffix -nā is reduced to -ñ. Meanwhile, túkú- is dropped to tùkù- since it is covertly /HL/-melodic as shown by its failure to raise the NC suffix -sā- to -sá-.

Many more examples of these tonal processes are in the relevant subsections of §3.6, as well as scatted in the subsections below. As noted at the end of §3.6.2.6.2, Final Tone-Raising and Initial Tone-Dropping may have jointly originated as the result of a leftward shift of the initial H-tone ot the possessum, landing on the NC suffix of the possessor.

6.2.2 Alienability and definiteness

There is no morphological distinction between alienable and inalienable position. (260) illustrates with two possessums that would be alienable (‘dog’, ‘house’), and two that would typically be inalienable (‘elder sibling’, ‘head’), in languages with an alienability distinction.

(260) a. zàkîì fā-mā-nā ‘Zaki’s dog’
zàkîì wú-kó-nā ‘Zaki’s house’
zàkîì sèē-nā ‘Zaki’s elder sibling’
zàkîì kù-nā ‘Zaki’s head’

b. tí fā-mā-nā ‘our dog’
tí wú-kó-nā ‘our house’

tí sèɛ̄-nā	‘our elder sibling’
tí kù-nā	‘our head (=chief)’

However, two key kin terms lí-bé ‘mother’ and sí-bé ‘father’, plurals lí-sèé-yɛ̄ and lí-sèé-yɛ̄, are morphologically anomalous. They cannot end in the usual final number suffixes -nā (singular) or -nī (plural), except as compound finals, see (134) above.

Since Paleni lacks obligatory definiteness marking, the issue whether possessums are grammatically definite does not arise. Kin terms and body-part terms combine with discourse-definite markers and with demonstratives in the same way that other nouns do.

6.2.3 Default possessum (wèɛ̄-, sèɛ̄-, kàā-/kà-, k-èɛ̄-/kè-)

A default possesum can occur in contexts where the category of the possessum is obvious in context, as in parallelistic constructions like (261), where ‘our children’ in the first clause is matched by ‘theirs’ in the second.

(261) [fá tī tá] [[tí pís-é-n̄] nùwⁿɔ́ [yí kīlāni]],
[Comp 1PlImprt go.Imprt] [[1Pl child-Pl-Pl] give.Ipfv [3Pl Dat]],
[fī= ī n̄ tɛ̄=] [=ɛ̌]
[Comp 3Pl Sbjn go.Imprt] [come.Ipfv]
[[=ɛ́ k-èɛ̄-n̄] nùwⁿɔ́ [tí kīlānī]]
[[3Pl **Poss**-Pl-Pl] give.Ipfv [1Pl Dat]]
‘… So we would (go and) give our children to them (in marriage), and they would then (go and) come and give theirs to us.’ (2024_03 @ 02:32)

The forms of default possessums are in (262).

(262)	singular human	wèɛ̄-nā
	plural human	sèɛ̄-nī
	singular nonhuman	kàā-nā ~ kà-nā
	plural	kèɛ̄-nī ~ kè-nī

An example of kà-nā is (529a) below. The forms in (262) also occur as (redundant) classifiers before overt possessums (263).

(263)	tí wèɛ̄-n̄ lí-yé-nā	‘our person (=kinsman)’
	tí sèɛ̄-n̄ líí-bé-nī	‘our people (=kin)’
	tí kàā-m̄ bābā-nā	‘our sheep-Sg’
	tí k-èɛ̄-m̄ bāāb-ɛ̄-nī	‘our sheep-Pl’

The two human forms, wèɛ̄-n̄ and sèɛ̄-n̄, were elicited but were not confirmed by textual occurrences. The nonhuman forms are fairly common in recordings, e.g., báá-ɲɛ̄-ŋ̄ kàā-ŋ̄ wⁿáá-nā ‘the nature (wⁿáá-nā) of balaphones (báá-ɲɛ̄-nī)’ in 2024_07 @ 02:14.

6.2.4 Further constructions with nonhuman kàā, k-èɛ̄, kà-nā

With pro forma third-person pronominal possessors, á kàā (singular) and í k-èɛ̄ (plural) can also be preposed to nonhuman nouns of the same grammatical number. Note the absence of final nasals. Here á and í do not denote possessors in the literal sense, rather they are coindexed with the head noun. The effect is an emphatic discourse-definiteness.

(264) a. [á kàā sàntùŋkóó-ɲ̄] ɲìŋ fínì
[3NHSg **thing**.Sg hyena-Sg] depart.Pfv where?
'Where did that hyena come from?' (2024_05 @ 04:01)

b. [í k-èɛ̄ sàntùŋkóó-ɲ̄] ɲìŋ fínì
[3Pl **thing**-Pl hyena-Pl] depart.Pfv where?
'Where did those hyenas come from?'

See also á kàā 'the guy/fellow', plural í k-èɛ̄ 'the guys/fellows', which refer back to previously introduced indefinite discourse referents that are variables over individuals (§6.5.4). More often, á kàā refers back to a general situation just described.

Suffixed kà-nā or kàā-nā 'thing' can be used in the sense 'X's turn'. The full form has 'day' or other noun completing the possessive (265a-c). The final noun is omitted in (265d).

(265) a. [[ŋ̄ / bɛ́ / è kà-ŋ̄] kwá-ŋ̄] fìɲ ɲɛ̄
[[1Sg / 2Sg / 3HSg **thing**-Sg] day-Sg] arrive.Pfv Pos
'My/your-Sg/his-or-her turn's day has arrived.'

b. [[tí / wɔ́ / í kàā-ŋ̄] kwá-ŋ̄] fìɲ ɲɛ̄
[[1Pl / 2Pl / 3Pl **thing**-Pl] day-Sg] arrive.Pfv Pos
'Our/your-Pl/their turn's day has arrived.'

c. [ñ níí-bé-ŋ̄] kú kɔ̀ní yɛ̄]
[1Sg person-Pl-Pl] die.Pfv Topic Pos]
[ŋ̄ kà-ŋ̄] kpā-ŋ̄ kɔ̀ní] [á wɛ́è wàlá-sí [bɛ́ sí] yɛ̄]
[1Sg **thing**-Sg] die-Sg Top] [3NHSg Fut heat.up.Ipfv [2Sg on] Pos]
'Although my kinsmen died, as for own death in turn, it will put the heat on you-Sg.' (2026_22 @ 01:14)

d. pí-yé-ŋ̄ kà-nā
man-Sg-Sg **thing**-Sg
'the man's turn' (2026_09 @ 00:25)

kàā may be related to ká (which serves as a default nominal preceding color adjectives and some others), cf. (205a) in §4.5.1 above.

6.2.5 Recursive possession

In stacked possessives of the type ‘X’s Y’s Z’, both Y and Z are treated tonally as possessums. The bracketing [[X Y] Z] with possessors to the left of possessums is consistent with the tones. This is brought out in (266), where ‘tail’ (singular or plural) and ‘dogs’ (plural only) undergo Initial Tone-Dropping (bolded) as possessums. The NC suffix -mā- in ‘dog’ undergoes Final Tone-Raising to -má- (underlined) as possessor.

(266) a. nouns

fā-mā-nā / fɔ́n-sɛ̄-nī	‘dog’ / ‘dogs’
y^{n}áá(-)sā-nā / y^{n}áá(-)s-ɛ̄-nī	‘tail’ / ‘tails’

b. X-Y possession

zàkîì	fā-mā-nā	‘Zaki’s dog’
zàkîì	**fɔ̀n**-sɛ̄-nī	‘Zaki’s dogs’
fā-<u>má</u>-ɲ̄	**ɲàà**(-)sā-nā	‘the dog’s tail’
fɔ́n-sɛ̄-ɲ̄	**ɲàà**(-)s-ɛ̄-nī	‘the dogs’ tails’

c. X-Y-Z possession

[zàkîì	fā-<u>má</u>-ɲ̄]	**ɲàà**(-)sā-nā	‘Zaki’s dog’s tail’
[zakîì	**fɔ̀n**-sɛ̄-ɲ̄]	**ɲàà**(-)sɛ̄-nī	‘Zaki’s dogs’ tails’

6.2.6 Possessor extended with kīlānī or kàā/k-ɛ̀ɛ̄

A human possessor can be extended by adding kīlānī (267a). Cf. dative-benefactive postposition kīlānī (§8.1.1.1), but note that kīlānī can also mean ‘chez, at the place of, amongst’. A nonhuman possessor can be extended by adding kàā-nā (singular) or k-ɛ̀ɛ̄-nī (plural) (267b).

(267) a. [fǐ= í tā] [tɛ́= [[í kīlāɲ] ɲóò]]
[Comp 3Pl go.Pfv] [go.Ipfv [[3Pl **Poss**] village]]
‘(and) they went back to their own village’ (< tā, yóò)
(2024_03 @ 00:47)

b. báá-ɲɛ̄-ŋ̄ kàā-ŋ̄ w^{n}áá-nā, tɛ̀ [tɔ̄ɔ̄sá-ŋ̄ kàā-ŋ̄ w^{n}áá-nā]
balaphone-Pl-Pl **thing**-Sg road-Sg, and [cultivation-Sg **thing**-Sg road-Sg]
‘The nature of the balaphones, and the nature of farm work.’
(2024_07 @ 02:14)

6.3 Noun plus adjective

6.3.1 Elision of NC suffix before adjective

As in many languages of the zone, N-Adj is treated prosodically and morphologically like an N-N compound. This is in spite of the fact that N-Adj is semantically left-headed while most

N-N compounds are right-headed. Such suffixal elision does not apply to nouns before numerals or in simple constituents.

The noun omits its final number suffix (-nā, -nī), though some noun roots end in a nasal coda in their premodifier form, especially nouns of the nā/ɲɛ̄ gender. Plurality is usually marked only on the adjective. These points are illustrated in (268a-b).

(268) a. tɔ́ɔ́-nā ‘baobab (tree)’
tɔ́ɔ́ kàà^{n}rìŋ-kà-nā ‘a long (=tall) baobab’
tɔ́ɔ́ fòō-nā ‘a black baobab’
tɔ́ɔ́ pí-yé-nā ‘a small baobab’

b. tɔ́ɔ́-rɛ́-nī ‘baobabs’
tɔ́ɔ́ kàà^{n}rìŋ-kà-nā ‘long (=tall) baobabs’
tɔ́ɔ́ fòò-rē-nī ‘black baobabs’
tɔ́ɔ́ pí-sé-nì ‘small baobabs’

Nouns that include an overt NC suffix before the final suffix sometimes preserve, sometimes reduce, and sometimes drop the NC suffix. In the productive nā/ɲɛ̄ gender, deletion of the NC suffix is regular, but it leaves behind a nasal coda whose morphemic status is debatable (see §4.1.2.9). The nasal is bolded in (269).

(269) a. kpèlé-ná-nā ‘stick’
kpèlé**ɲ** ɲìbì-tú-kà-nā ‘a heavy stick’
kpèlé**ŋ** fòō-nā ‘a black stick’
kpèlé**m** pí-yé-nā ‘a small stick’

b. kpèlé-ɲé-nī ‘sticks’
kpèlé**ɲ** ɲìbì-tú-kì-nī ‘heavy sticks’
kpèlé**ŋ** fòò-rē-nī ‘black sticks’
kpèlé**ḿ** pí-sé-nì ‘big sticks’

Singular NC suffix -sā- is optionally dropped before the adjective (270a,c). In (270b), the singular NC suffix is generalized before adjectives.

(270) a. túkú-sā-nā ‘yam’
túkú(-**sā**) kàà^{n}rìŋ-kà-nā ‘a long yam’
túkú(-**sā**) fòō-nā ‘a black yam’
túkú(-**sā**) pí-yé-nā ‘a small yam’

b. túkú-rē-nī ‘yams’
túkú(-**sā**) kàà^{n}rìŋ-kì-nī ‘long yams’
túkú(-**sā**) fòò-rē-nī ‘black yams’
túkú(-**sā**) pí-sé-nì ‘small yams’

c. wíí-sá-nā ‘rope’
wíí(-**sá**) kàà^{n}rìŋ-kà-nā ‘a long rope’

wíí(-**sá**) fòō-nā ‘a black rope’
wíí(-**sá**) pí-yé-nā ‘a small rope’

d. wíí-s-é-nī ‘ropes’
wíí kàà^{n}rìŋ-kì-nī ‘long ropes’
wíí fòò-rē-nī ‘black ropes’
wíí pí-sé-nì ‘small ropes’

NC marker -kā- (variant -kō-), like -sā-, is optionally omitted before an adjective (271).

(271) a. sù-kā-nā ‘calabash’
sù(-**kā**) kàà^{n}rìŋ-kà-nā ‘a long calabash’
sù(-**kā**) fòō-nā ‘a black calabash’
sù(-**kā**) pí-yé-nā ‘a small calabash’

b. sì-yɛ̄-nī ‘calabashes’
sù(-**kā**) kàà^{n}rìŋ-kì-nī ‘long calabashes’
sù(-**kā**) fòò-rē-nī ‘black calabashes’
sù(-**kā**) pí-sé-nì ‘small calabashes’

Singular NC markers -bē-, -kà-, and -nnè- are resistant to dropping before adjectives. For -mā-, another option is a nasal coda (272a). Only singular forms are presented here.

(272) a. kúú-má-nā ‘tree sp. (*Diospyros*)’ (root kúú^{n})
kúú-**má** kàà^{n}rìŋ-kà-nā ‘a long (=tall) *Diospyros*’
kúú-**má** fòō-nā ‘a black *Diospyros*’
kúú-**má** pí-yé-nā ‘a small *Diospyros*’
(reduced variants kúúŋ kàà^{n}rìŋ-kà-nā, etc.)

b. wíí-bē-nā ‘straw’
wíí-**bē** kàà^{n}rìŋ-kà-nā ‘long straw’
wíí-**bē** fòō-nā ‘black straw’
wíí-**bē** pí-yé-nā ‘small straw’

c. kɛ́ré-kà-nā ‘gun, rifle’
kɛ́ré-**kà** kàà^{n}rìŋ-kà-nā ‘a long rifle’
kɛ́ré-**kà** fòō-nā ‘a black rifle’
kɛ́ré-**kà** pí-yé-nā ‘a small rifle’

d. kāā-nnè-nā ‘griot’
kāā-**nnè** kàà^{n}rì-nè-nā ‘a tall griot’
kāā-**nnè** fòō-nā ‘a black griot’
kāā-**nnè** pí-yé-nā ‘a small griot’

Singular NC suffix -yɛ- has a limited distribution, so it is best to speak of individual nouns. fĭ-yé-nā ‘thing’ reduces to fĭí, as in fĭí fòō-nā ‘a black thing’. Diminutive compound final -pí-yé-nā likewise reduces to -pí-, as in bàà-pí-yé-nā ‘toe’, bàà-pí fòō-nā ‘a black toe’.

Liquids are pluralia tantum as unmodified nouns. Before a modifier, ní-mí-nī ‘water’ omits the plural NC marker -mī-, but the adjective is morphologically plural. ‘Water’ has a variant nú instead of ní in the high-frequency combination ‘hot water’ (273a). ‘Blood’ keeps its -mī- suffix (273b), which helps avoid confusion with tíí-ká-nā ‘place’ (premodifier tíí).

(273) a. ní-mí-nī ‘water’
nú fɛ̀ɛ̄-nī ‘hot water’
ní fɛ̀ɛ̀sí-kì-nī ‘clear water’
ní tìì̀màŋ-kì-nī ‘cold water’

b. tíí-mī-nī ‘blood’
tíí-mī mìyɛ̄-nī ‘red blood’
tíí-mī fòò-rɛ̄-nī ‘black blood’

6.3.2 Tonal interactions

When a noun is followed by a modifying adjective, the noun usually has its singular NC even if the adjective is plural. However, plural NC marking on the noun is attested.

M-toned fauna terms raise the tone of the root to H in the plural by Root-Tone Raising, e.g. sīī-mā-nā ‘grasshopper’, plural **síí**-sɛ̄-nī ‘grasshoppers’ (§3.6.2.5). For the relevant M-toned fauna terms, in an N-Adj combination the singular NC suffix (if present) gets the H tone, leaving the root M-toned. If there is no overt NC suffix, the root gets the H tone. In other words, these nouns are associated with a “floating” H-tone that is realized in different parts of the word depending on context, except that the citation form of the unmodified singular has no H-tone. In (274), raised H-toned syllables are bolded.

(274) a. sūū-bā-nā, plural **súú**-sɛ̄-nī ‘horse’ (sg/pl)
sūū-**bá** píyé-nā ‘a small horse’
sūū-**bá** fòō-nā ‘a black horse’ (variant)
sūū-**bá** kpà-nā ‘a big horse’
súú fòō-nā ‘a black horse’ (variant)
súú-sɛ̄-m̄ pì-sɛ̄-nī ‘small horses’

b. kpāā-bā-nā, plural **kpáá**-sɛ̄-nī ‘porcupine’
kpāā-**bá** fòō-nā ‘a black porcupine’
kpāā-**bá**-m̄ pì-sɛ̄-nī ‘a small porcupine’
kpáá-pì-sɛ̄-nī ‘small porcupines’

c. fūū-mā-nā, plural **fúún**-sɛ̄-nī ‘goat’
fúúŋ fòō-nā ‘a black goat’
fúúm píyé-nā ‘a small goat’

Diminutives with -pò-nā or its plural -pì-sē-nī show the H-tone on the root (275a), even before an adjective (275b).

(275) a. súú-pò-nā ‘foal, newborn horse’ (diminutive)
súú-pì-sē-nī ‘black foals’ (diminutive plural)
kpáá-pò-nā ‘newborn porcupine’ (diminutive)

b. súú-pò fòō-nā ‘black foal’
súú-pò fòò-rē-nī ‘black foals’ (variant)
súú-pì-sē fòò-rē-nī ‘black foals’ (variant)

6.3.3 Set-partitioning quantifiers

‘Other’ and ‘a certain’ are treated in the subsections below. For ‘nothing’ and ‘no-one’, see the subsection on negative polarity items (§6.6.5).

6.3.3.1 Syntax of tòō-nā ‘other’

tòō-nā ‘other’ and plural tòn-sē-nī ~ tèn-sē-nī (§4.5.4) precede other postnominal modifiers (adjectives and numerals). However, the final suffix -nā or -nī is dropped. Instead of #tòō, the singular takes the form tòrō. The plural form tòn-sē ~ tèn-sē is used even before another plural-marked adjective.

(276) a. nāā-nā ‘cow, bovine’
náá-sē-nī ‘cows’

b. ná tòō-nā ‘(an/the) other cow’
ná tòn-sē-nī ~ tèn-sē-nī ‘(some/the) other cows’

c. ná tòrō fòō-nā ‘(an/the) other black cow’
ná tòn-sē fòò-rē-nī ‘(some/the) other black cows’

d. ná tòō-ŋ̄ kááfáà ‘one other cow’
ná tòn-sē-m̄ bāā ‘(the) two other cows’
ná tòn-sē-n̄ táá^{n}rí ‘(the) three other cows’

For a different function of tòrō, see the following subsection.

6.3.3.2 ‘A certain X’ (tòrō), ‘some X(s)’ (tòn-sē ~ tèn-sē)

Singular tòrō ~ tòō and plural tòn-sē ~ tèn-sē can be added to a noun to indicate specific indefiniteness, e.g. ‘a (certain) X’ or plural ‘some (particular) Xs’. They reflect Initial Tone-Dropping as modifiers. There is no final number suffix with tòrō, but plural tòn-sē can have a

reduced nasal coda in clausal context. These modifiers are related to the adjective 'other' (§4.5.4), which however takes the form tòō-nā (singular) or tòn-sē-nī ~ tèn-sē-nī (plural) when NP-final.

Specific indefinite examples are in (277). Some high-frequency combinations show irregular or specialized forms of the noun. In (277), tòn-sē is shown for the plurals but tèn-sē is always possible.

(277)	'a certain X'	gloss	plural	source noun
a.	fíín tòrō	'something'	fíín tòn-sē	fǐ-yé-nā 'thing'
b.	líí tòrō	'someone'	líí tòn-sē	fá-nā 'person', pl. líí-bé-nī
c.	tíí tòrō	'somewhere'	tíí tòn-sē	tíí-ká-nā 'place'
	cîì tòrō	'some woman'	cîì tòn-sē	cá-nā 'woman' (§4.1.3)
d.	bābá tòrō	'a certain sheep'	bāāb-ɛ́ tèn-sē	bābā-nā 'sheep', pl. bāāb-ɛ̄-nī
	wú-kó tòrō	'a certain house'	wú-yé tèn-sē	wú-kó-nā 'house'
	kpèlén tòrō	'a certain stick'	kpèlén tèn-sē	kpèlé-ná-nā 'stick'

lèsè tòrò 'some other time' (2024_08 @ 01:01) is all-L-toned, for expected lèsē tòrō.

yéé-tòrō 'next year' is from yéé-nā 'year'.

tén-sē can also occur in absolute function, without a noun, meaning 'some (of them)'. For examples, see §6.3.3.2.

6.3.4 N-Adj1-Adj2

Two adjectives may modify the same noun, hence N-Adj1-Adj2. The final number suffix on Adj1 is reduced to a nasal coda in the usual way. Nouns like sūū-bā-nā 'horse' that undergo Final Tone-Raising (realized on the NC suffix if present, otherwise on the root) before single adjectives do so here as well.

For adjectives that readily combine with the nominalizing ká (e.g., color adjectives, 'big'), the adjective takes the tone-dropped form kà as Adj2 but not as Adj1 (278)

(278) phrase	gloss	noun	Adj1	Adj2
sūū-bá kpà-ŋ̄ [kà fòō-nā]	'big black horse'	sūū-bā-nā	kpà-nā	fòō-nā
sūū-bá tùū-ŋ̄ [kà fòō-nā]	'another black horse'	sūū-bā-nā	tùū-nā	fòō-nā
wú wù-nā-ŋ̄ [kà fòō-nā]	'new black house'	wú-kó-nā	wù-nā-nā	fòō-nā
sūū-bá fòō-ŋ̄ [kà kpà-nā]	'big black horse'	sūū-bā-nā	fòō-nā	kpà-nā
(~ súú fòō-ŋ̄ [kà kpà-nā])				
táá yìbì-tú-kà-ŋ̄ [kà kpà-nā]	'big heavy rock'	táá-nā yìbì-tú-kà-nā		kpà-nā

Other adjectives like yìbì-tú-kà-nā 'heavy' are added as Adj2 without kā (279).

(279)	phrase	gloss	noun	Adj1	Adj2
	táá kpà-ɲ̃ ɲìbì-tú-kà-nà	‘big heavy rock’	táá-nā	kpà-nā	yìbì-tú-kà-nā
	táá mìyā-ɲ̃ ɲìbì-tú-kà-nà	‘heavy red rock’	táá-nā	mìyā-nā	yìbì-tú-kà-nā

If N-Adj1-Adj2 is plural, plurality is expressed on both adjectives, but usually not on the noun. In (280), both kpì-nī and yìbì-tú-kì-nī are plural.

(280)	phrase	gloss	noun	Adj1	Adj2
	táá kpì-ɲ̃ ɲìbì-tú-kì-nī	‘big heavy rocks’	táá-nā	kpì-nī	yìbì-tú-kì-nī

The order of adjectives is free, unless N-Adj1 is lexicalized. However, the scope-bearing adjectives ‘new’ and ‘other’ occur preferentially in Adj1 position, bound tightly to the noun. Adj2 is then added to the combination. See (276c) above for ‘other’ with a second adjective. wù-nā-nā ‘new’ is featured in (281).

(281)	wú^{n}	ŋù-nā-ŋ̄	kàà^{n}rìŋ-kà-nā
	house	new-Sg-Sg	long-Sg-Sg
	‘a tall new house’.		

6.4 Noun plus numeral

6.4.1 Simple N-Num

A simple N-Num combination makes use of the full form of the noun, except that the final number suffix is reduced from -nā (singular) or -nī (plural) to just a nasal coda (bolded below) that assimilates to the following noun. The noun is singular before the numeral ‘one’, but usually plural in form before numerals greater than ‘one’, even though grammatical plurality is redundant.

(282)			
	a.	wúmá-kà-nā / wúmá-kì-nī	‘snake’ / ‘snakes’
		yī-mā-nā / yín-sē-nī	‘fish’ / ‘fish (plural)’
	b.	wúmá-kà-**ŋ̄** kááfáà	‘one snake’
		yī-mā-**ŋ̄** kááfáà	‘one fish’
	c.	wúmá-kì-**m̄** bāā	‘two snakes’
		wúmá-kì-**ŋ̄** wārā^{n}	‘twenty snakes’
		yín-sē-**m̄** bāā	‘two fish’
		yín-sē-**ŋ̄** wārā^{n}	‘twenty fish’

The Initial Tone-Dropping that affects many H-initial possessums is not affected by the presence of a following numeral. Thus the root syllable in ‘fish (plural)’ drops from H to L after the possessor in (283b), with or without a following numeral.

(283) a. **yín**-sē-nī ‘fish (plural)’

b. zàkîì **yìn**-sē-nī ‘Zaki’s fish’
zàkîì **yìn**-sē-m̄ bāā ‘Zaki’s two fish’

A nonsingular numeral is sometimes completed with plural suffix complex -yɛ̄-nī (~ -yɛ́-nī after H-tone) or just -yɛ̄. This longer form is usual when the N-Num sequence is followed by a determiner (§6.5.2). It is also attested in other contexts involving definiteness.

(284) a. [ná tòn-sē-n̄ táá^{n}rí-yɛ́-n̄] fínì
[cow other-Pl-Pl three-**Pl-Pl**] where?
‘Where are the other three cows?’

b. fá á fùù [[yɔ́kɔ́-sɛ̀ɛ̀]-[pìs-é-n̄] táá^{n}rí-yɛ̄] ní
Comp 3NHSg throw.down.Pfv [[maize]-child-Pl-Pl] three-**Pl**] down
‘Then it threw the three maize grains down (on the ground).’
(2026_27 @ 00:29)

6.4.2 N-Adj-Num

In this combination, the numeral follows the adjective. The adjective is plural in form (for numerals greater than one). Final plural -nī on the adjective is reduced to a nasal coda.

(285) a. wú fòò-rē-m̄ bāā
house black-Pl-Pl two
‘two black houses’

b. wú kàà^{n}rìŋ-kì-n̄ táá^{n}rí
house long-Pl-Pl three
‘three long (tall) houses’

6.4.3 ‘X times’

These expressions express the number of iterations of an event.

6.4.3.1 ‘X times’ (bɛ̄ɛ̄-nī)

To quantify over event instances, the noun bɛ̄ɛ̄-nī, reduced to bɛ̄ɛ̄-n̄, is followed by the appropriate numeral. It is identical in form to, and is likely derived diachronically from, b-ɛ̄ɛ̄-nī ‘feet’, plural of bāā-nā ‘foot’. However bɛ̄ɛ̄-nī ‘times’ occurs before káá-fáà ‘1’ as well as before higher numerals (286). This is the most general ‘X times’ construction. The VP is open-ended.

(286) è pè= ɛ̄ [bɛ̄ɛ̄-ŋ̄ káá-fáà/táá^{n}rí]
3HSg come.Pfv Pos [times-Pl one/three]
'He/She came once/three times.'

6.4.3.2 'X blows' (-y^{n}ààsā-nā) and 'X containerfuls'

y^{n}áásā-nā 'tail' becomes -y^{n}ààsā-nā as a compound final. In this construction it can mean 'blows'. The initial is a body part ('hand', 'foot', etc.) or a weapon ('whip', 'stick', etc.). The compound is always followed by a numeral or other quantifier. The actual form is plural -y^{n}ààs-ɛ̄-n̄ before numerals greater than '1' (287a).

The number of containerfuls is expressed by quantifying over the term for the container itself. The commodity measured is a (pseudo-)possessor (287b).

(287) a. fā= ā ɲ̄ ɲóó bɛ̀,
Comp 3NHSg Sbjn hit.Ipfv 2Sg,
[sɔ̀ɔ̀káá-y^{n}ààs-ɛ̄-n̄ náárí] [[bɛ́ wùŋ-fɔ̀-m̄] míní]
[whip-**blow(n)**-Pl-Pl four] [[2Sg rear-hole-Sg] in]
'(it said:) "so I may hit you-Sg four times on your butt-hole" '
(2024_10 @ 03:59 to 04:06)

b. máá-ɲɛ́-n̄ tábárín-sī-yē-m̄ bāā
rice-Pl-Pl measure-basket-Pl-Pl two
'two dry measures (basketfuls) of rice'

6.4.4 Partitive

Partitives like 'how many of your cows?' are divided into a main clause with the quantified NP and a following PP with sí 'on'. See (562g) below for an example.

6.5 Noun plus determiner

6.5.1 (Discourse-)definite markers (singular ná, plural ní)

For (discourse-)definite singular ná (DefSg) and plural ní (DefPl), see §4.4.1. Combinations of these markers with nouns are in the "definite" column on the right in (288a-c). In comparison with its citation form, the noun shows reduction of the final suffix to -n̄, and eligible nouns undergo Final Tone-Raising. DefSg and DefPl markers do not themselves reduce to a nasal. Some contrasts of unmarked and definite nouns in clausal context are in (288d-g). In textual passage (288h), kàà-bá-n̄ ná in the first line is definite singular, but kàà-bā-n̄ nā in the second line is just the combination of kàà-bā-nā with clause-final relative marker nā (note the difference in tones).

(288)

	gloss	reduced unraised	reduced raised	citation	definite
a.	‘billygoat’	bɔ̄ɔ̄-nā-ñ	bɔ̄ɔ̄-ná-ñ	bɔ̄ɔ̄-nā-nā	bɔ̄ɔ̄-ná-ñ ná
	‘billygoats’	bɔ̄ɔ̄-ɲɛ̄-ñ	bɔ̄ɔ̄-ɲé-ñ	bɔ̄ɔ̄-ɲɛ̄-nī	bɔ̄ɔ̄-ɲé-ñ ní
b.	‘dog’	fɔ̄-mā-ñ	fɔ̄-má-ñ	fɔ̄-mā-nā	fɔ̄-má-ñ ná
	‘dogs’	fɔ́n-sɛ̄-ñ	—	fɔ́n-sɛ̄-nī	fɔ́n-sɛ̄-ñ ní
c.	’tree’	sīī-kē-ñ	sīī-ké-ñ	sīī-kē-nā	sīī-ké-ñ ná
	‘trees’	sī-yē-ñ	sī-yé-ñ	sī-yē-nī	sī-yé-ñ ní

d. fɔ̄-mā-m̄ pɛ̀= ɛ̄ ‘a/the dog came’
[fɔ̄-má-ñ **ná**] pɛ̀= ɛ̄ ‘the/that (same) dog came’

e. ḿ mání yá [fɔ̄-mā-ñ tɔ̰ɛ́=] ɛ̄ ‘I said it to a/the dog’
ḿ mání yá [[fɔ̄-má-ñ **ná**] lɔ̰ɛ̄]= ɛ̄ ‘I said it to the/that (same) dog’

f. ń tàŋ fɔ́n-sɛ̄-ñ ní yɛ̄ ‘I covered some/the dogs’
ń tàŋ [fɔ́n-sɛ̄-ñ **ní**] ní yɛ̄ ‘I covered the/those (same) dogs’

g. tɛ̀ bé yⁿá sīī-kē-nā ‘if you-Sg see a/the tree’
tɛ̀ bé yⁿá [sīī-ké-ñ **ná**] ‘if you-Sg see the/that (same) tree’

h. kàà-bá-ñ **ná**, fǐ= í sèlè yá,
sheep-Sg-Sg DefSg Comp 3Pl skin.Pfv 3NHSg,
í sèlè kàà-bā-ñ **nā**↗,
3Pl skin.Pfv sheep-Sg-Sg Rel,
[fǐ= í tā] [á kǎ]
[Comp 3Pl go.Pfv] [3NHSg devour.Ipfv]
‘That sheep-Sg, they (=hyenas) skinned and butchered it. Having skinned and butchered the sheep, they began to devour it.’ (2024_05 @ 00:49)

Another way to express discourse-definiteness, for spatiotemporal nouns, is to make use of 3NHSg “possessor” á in abstract sense. Thus [á yòòn-nā-ñ] tɔ́ ‘in that (same) village’ (2026_27 @ 01:08) and [á kwá-ñ] sí ‘on that (same) day’ (2026_06 @ 00:37). A special case of this is á kàā ‘that thing (situation)’, which can also function as “possessor” of another noun (§6.2.4), as in [[á kàā tíí-ká-ñ] sī ‘in that place (=situation)’ (2026_06 @ 00:30) and á kàā sàntùŋkóó-nā ‘that hyena’ (2024_05 @ 04:01), see also 2024_03 @ 03:18 & 04:38.

6.5.2 Noun plus demonstrative

For the forms of demonstratives, see §4.4.2.1. In simple N-Dem combinations, the demonstrative follows the definite form of the noun (289a-e). Plurality is marked on both the noun and the demonstrative (289b,e). The situation with expanded demonstrative nà-ŋ̄ wā-nā

(§4.4.2.2) is more complex, since its nà- effectively replaces the noun's final suffix -nā, making segmentation and markup difficult (289f).

(289) a. písàá-ñ né= è-sā-nā
child-Sg DefSg DemHSg-Sg
'this/that child'

b. pís-é-ñ ní yīn-sī-nī
child-Pl-Pl DefPl Dem-Pl-Pl
'these/those children'

c. kún-ná-ñ ná wā-nā
house-Sg-Sg DefSg DemNH-Sg
'this/that house (with courtyard)'

d. fɔ̄-má-ñ ná wā-nā
dog-Sg-Sg DefSg DemNH-Sg
'this/that dog'

e. fɔ́n-sɛ̄-ñ ní yīn-sī-nī
dog-Pl-Pl DefPl Dem-Pl-Pl
'these/those dogs'

f. kún ná nà-ŋ̄ wā-nā
house-Sg DefSg DemNH-Sg DemNH-Sg
'this/that house' (< kún-ná-nā)

6.5.3 N-Adj and N-Num plus demonstrative

Demonstratives follow adjectives and numerals. The morphophonology of the Adj-Dem combination is the similar to that for N-Dem (see above). NC suffixes of the adjective, except human plural -sɛ̀ɛ̄-, are raised (-kà- to -ká-, -kì- to -kí-, -nnè- to -nné-). The Num-Dem combination has plural -yɛ̄-nī suffixes (-yɛ́-nī after H-tone) before loss of the final i (290f).

(290) a. wú kàà^{n}rìŋ-ká-nā wā-nā
house long-Sg-Sg DemNH-Sg
'this/that tall house'

b. wú kàà^{n}rìŋ-ká nà-ŋ̄ wā-nā
house long-Sg-Sg DemNH-Sg DemNH.Sg-Sg
'this/that tall house'

c. wú kàà^{n}rìŋ-kí-nī yīn-sī-nī
house long-Pl-Pl Dem-Pl-Pl
'this/that tall house'

d. líí kàà^{n}rìn-né-nā è-sā-nā
person long-Sg-Sg DemHSg-Sg
'this/that tall person'

e. líí kàà^{n}rìn-sèɛ̄-nī yīn-sī-nī
person long-Pl-Pl Dem-Pl-Pl
'these/those tall people'

f. wú táá^{n}rí-yɛ́-ñ yīn-sī-nī
house three-Pl-Pl Dem-Pl-Pl
'these/those three houses'

6.5.4 Indefinite anaphors (e.g., 'the guy')

Human referents that have been introduced into the discourse as indefinites can be referred back to (cf. English *the fellow*, *the chap*, etc. or French *le mec*, *le type*) as á sì-bé 'its father/owner' (singular) and as í sì-sèé-yɛ̄ 'their fathers/owners'.

For nonhumans or abstractions the relevant pairing is á kàā 'the thing' and plural í k-èɛ̄ 'the things'. These phrases feature kàā/k-èɛ̄, which also turns up in possessives (§6.2.4). These LM-toned forms are subject to flattening as L-toned especially before an H-tone (§3.6.2.4).

(291) í wàká [[á kàà] sí]
3Pl remain.Ipfv [[3NHSg thing] on]
'They kept at it (=kept doing that).' (2026_27 @ 02:57)

í k-èɛ̄ is also attested with indefinite human reference (2026_27 @ 02:32).

6.6 Universal and distributive quantifier

For set-partitioning quantifiers ('other', 'a certain'), see §6.3.3 above.

6.6.1 'All' and 'every' (tō)

The universal quantifier is tō 'all'. Its default form, in the absence of a specific modified noun, is í-tō or í-tō(n)-nā-nā 'everything' (292a), which has nonhuman and often abstract reference. In clause-nonfinal position, í-tō can combine with plural suffixes -ɲɛ̄-nī (variant -yɛ̄-nī), reduced to -ɲɛ̄-ñ when medial in the phrase (292b). When added to a noun denoting the class of referents, the noun takes plural form if it denotes countable things, and tō again takes nominal suffixes (292c). 'Everyone' can also take singular suffixes (292d). The entirety of a singular entity also requires singular tō(n)-nā-nā. Even a plurale tantum like 'water' can take tō(n)-nā-nā (292e).

(292) a. í-tō ‘all, everything’
nwî= í-tō ‘Give (me) everything!’ (< nû)

b. í-tō-ɲɛ̄-m̄ pìsì-mí-ɲ ɲɛ̄ ‘Everything has been ruined.’
í-tō-ɲɛ̄-ñ náá yɛ̄ ‘Everyone went away.’ (< láá)

c. [líí-bé-ñ tō-ɲɛ̄-ñ] náá yɛ̄ ‘Everyone went away.’
[náá-sɛ̄-ñ tō-ɲɛ̄-ñ] náá yɛ̄ ‘All the cows went away.’
[c-é-ñ tō-ɲɛ̄-ñ] náá yɛ̄ ‘All the women went away.’

d. líí-bé-ñ tōn-nā-nā ‘everyone’

e. yóón-nā-ñ tōn-nā-nā ‘the whole village’
ní-mí-ñ tōn-nā-nā ‘all of the water’
[yóó-ɲɛ̄-n tōn-nā-n] tɔ́ ‘for all of the villages’ (2024_03 @ 01:58)

f. í líí [yóón-nā-ñ líí-bé-ñ tō-yɛ̄-ɲ̄] ɲɛ̄
3Pl kill.Pfv [village-Sg-Sg person-Pl-Pl all-Pl-Pl] Pos
‘They killed all the people of the village.’

g. yóón-nā-m̄ bānā,
village-Sg-Sg be.how?
[ɔ́ pís-é-ñ tō]
[2Pl child-Pl-Pl **all**]
[tɔ̀= [ɔ́ c-è-ñ tō]]
and [2Pl woman-Pl-Pl **all**]]
[tɔ̀= [ɔ́ cólókón tō]] yá→
[and [2Pl health **all**]] Emph
‘How is (everyone in) the village (=household)? All your-Pl children, and all your women, and all your-Pl health(s)?’ (2026_03 @ 00:09)

6.6.2 Distributive ‘each’

tō can also have distributive function (‘each’). The plural suffix complex in this case is -yɛ̄-nī. The clearest examples of this are in clauses where ‘each X’ is paired with an iterated numeral (§8.4.5) in distributive function.

(293) [píyé-sé-ñ tō-yɛ̄-ñ] [c-é-m̄ bāā-m̄-bɔ̄ɔ̄]
[man-Pl-Pl all-Pl-Pl] [woman-Pl-Pl two-Link-two]
‘Each man has two wives.’

6.6.3 Indefinite relatives (‘whoever’, …)

Phrases with ‘whoever’, ‘whatever’, and the like are expressed by interrogative clauses with ‘who?’, ‘what?’, or other question word followed (without a terminal pitch fall) by a second clause (294).

(294) a. [wòró ḿ] pà yīŋ-fā̄-nā̄, ḿ bā líí yɛ̀
[who? SFoc] come.Pfv here-Sg, 1Sg Sbjn kill.Imprt 3HSg
‘Whoever comes here, I must kill him/her.’

b. [ǹté-fɛ̄ ɲ̄] ɲàⁿ↗, ɛ̀ wɛ́ɛ̀ fìyⁿá [fɛ̄rɛ́] bɔ̀
[what? SFoc] be.done.Pfv, 3HSg Fut be.able.Ipfv [exit.Ipfv] Neg
‘Whatever is done (=he/she does), he/she will not be able to get out.’

For [fí-yé-n̄ fáá] fì-yé ‘whatever’ as subject of a clause, see (196b) above.

For a pragmatically somewhat similar construction combining tɛ̀ ‘if’ with a relative clause, see §14.1.8 and §16.1.2.

6.6.4 Scope relationships of negation with quantifiers

In the combination of ‘all’ and ‘a lot’ with negation, negation scopes over the quantifiers.

(295) a. í pà [í tō] bɔ̀, tén-sɛ̄ pɛ̀= ɛ̄
3Pl come.Pfv [3Pl **all**] **Neg**, other-Pl come.Pfv Pos
‘They didn’t all come, (just) some (of them) came.’

b. [í tō-yɛ̄-m̄] pà bɔ̀
[3Pl **all**-Pl-Pl] come.Pfv **Neg**
‘They didn’t all come.’

c. í yɔ́kɔ́rɔ̀ bɔ̀
3Pl **be.many** **Neg**
‘There aren’t many of them.’

d. ŋ́ wòlóó kpá bɔ̀
1Sg eat.Ipfv **often** **Neg**
‘I don’t eat often.’

On the other hand, ‘other/some’ scopes over negation.

(296) a. tén-sɛ̄ pà bɔ̀
other-Pl come.Pfv **Neg**
‘Some (of them) didn’t come.’

b. ɲ́ ɲá tón-sē bɔ̀
1Sg see.Pfv **other**-Pl **Neg**
‘I didn’t see some of them.’

6.6.5 Negative polarity (‘anyone/no-one’, …)

A semantically light noun like ‘thing’ or ‘person’ or their plurals can function as a negative polarity item (‘nothing’, ‘nobody’) in any grammatical function (subject, object, etc.). The negative clause ends in bɔ̀ as usual.

lí-yé-nā ‘person’ (often reduced to lí-yé) is preferred over fá-nā ‘person’ in this construction.

(297) a. lí-yé-ɲ̄ ɲá= á bɔ̀
person-Sg see.Pfv 3NonSg Neg
‘Nobody had seen it.’ (2024_01 @ 00:54)

b. ɲ́ ɲá lí-yé bɔ̀
1Sg see.Pfv **person**-Sg Neg
‘I didn’t see anybody.’

fí-yé-nā ‘thing’ also loses its final suffix as negative polarity marker. In addition, it becomes fíyè with falling tone contour in this construction. I transcribe it as a separate lexical item without a hyphen, and use ‘nothing’ in interlinears.

(298) a. ɲ́ ɲá fíyè bɔ̀
1Sg see.Pfv **nothing** Neg
‘I didn’t see anything.’

b. fíyè fɛ́ré bɔ̀
nothing exit.Pfv Neg
‘Nothing happened.’

6.7 Structural case-marking

There is no morphological case-marking for subject or object in nouns.

7 Conjunction

Nouns, pronouns, numerals, and noun-like adverbs can be conjoined by tɛ̀ or variant ‘and/with’. Clause-initially, tɛ̀ means ‘if’ (chapter 16). For “conjunction” of verbs and VPs, see the multi-verb constructions in chapter 15.

7.1.1 Conjunction X tɛ̀ Y ‘X and Y’

The ‘and’ conjunction is tɛ̀ ~ tà(ⁿ). This is also the instrumental and comitative ‘with’ preposition. The unusual combinations of ‘with’ and personal pronouns (§8.1.2) also apply to the right conjunct in conjoined NPs.

tɛ̀ is bracketed with the right conjunct Y. If the entire ‘X and Y’ is prosodically unbroken, the left conjunct can undergo normal reduction of the final suffix to -ŋ̄ (299a). The right conjunct likewise reduces its final suffix to -ŋ̄ in the relevant clausal positions (299a). The conjoined NP can alternatively be preposed as a topic phrase, requiring a subsequent plural resumptive pronoun (299b). Or one of the NPs can function as subject, so the second NP appears as a postverbal ‘with’ phrase (299c). (299c) can also be semantically asymmetric, with just the left conjunct as agent.

(299) a. [píyé-sɛ̄-n̄ [tɛ̀ c-ɛ́-n̄]] láá yɛ̄
[man-Pl-Pl [**and** woman-Pl-Pl]] go.Pfv Pos
‘The men and the women went away.’

b. píyé-sɛ̄-n̄ [tɛ̀ c-ɛ́-nī], í láá yɛ̄
man-Pl-Pl [**and** woman-Pl-Pl], 3Pl go.Pfv Pos
‘The men and the women, they went away.’

c. píyé-sɛ̄-n̄ náá yɛ̄ [tɛ̀ c-ɛ́-nī]]
man-Pl-Pl go.Pfv Pos [**with** woman-Pl-Pl]]
‘The men went away, along with the women.’
or: ‘The men conveyed the women (there).’

d. fɔ̃-má-n̄ tūkáⁿ
dog-Sg-Sg accept.Ipfv
[ī mā yⁿá tón [tàm mīnī-mā-m̄]] bɔ̀
[3Pl Sbjn see.Imprt Recip [**with** monkey-Sg-Sg]] Neg
‘A dog isn’t willing for him(self) and a monkey to see each other.’
(lit. “dog$_i$ isn’t willing for them$_{ij}$ to see each other [with monkey$_j$]’
(2024_01 @ 01:44)

In other words, while a conjoined NP (X tɛ̀ Y) can be fit into an ordinary nonfinal morphosyntactic argument slot, this is rather unidiomatic. Paleni speakers prefer to separate

the right conjunct as a peripheral adjunct. In addition, spatiotemporal adverbs have full nominal suffixation as right conjuncts and sometimes as left conjuncts, whereas in their usual adverbial function their suffixation is stripped down. For example, sínsí-nā 'tomorrow' and wíyé-nā 'this year' show up in conjoined NPs, especially as right conjuncts, in the forms sínsí-nāā-nā(-nā) and wíyé-nā-nā (subject to reduction of the final -nā to -ñ). Similarly, 'today' is mīnī as adverb, but mīn-nā as right conjunct. Examples are in (300).

(300) a. mīn(ī) [tàⁿ sínsí-nāā-nā(-nā)]
today [**and** tomorrow-Sg-Sg]
'today and tomorrow'

b. wíyé-nā(-ñ) [tàⁿ yɛ́ɛ́-tòrō-nā(-nā)]
this.year-Sg-Sg [**and** next.year-Sg(-Sg)]
'this year and next year'

When the conjoined NP is the final constituent in the clause, the usually clause-final positive suffix (y)ɛ̄ or variant follows the left conjunct, as though the clause ended with it and the right conjunct was added as an afterthought (301a). Negative bɔ̀, on the other hand, follows the right conjunct (301b).

(301) a. [ń sùkù fūū-mā-n ī] [tà bābā-nā]]
[1Sg sell.Pfv goat-Sg-Sg **Pos**] [**with/and** sheep-Sg]]
'I sold a/the goat and a/the sheep.' (sùgù ~ sùkù)

b. ń sùkù fūū-mā-ñ [tà bābā-m̄] bɔ̀
1Sg sell.Pfv goat-Sg-Sg [**with/and** sheep-Sg] **Neg**
'I sold a/the goat and a/the sheep.'

The 'with/and Y' phrase is therefore a peripheral adjunct, but not so peripheral as to fall outside the scope of negation. The same is true of [tɛ̀ Y] as instrumental-comitative PP, which occurs in optional adjuncts as in 'I chopped the wood (with an axe)'.

NC suffixes on nouns are subject to Final Tone-Raising (M to H) in some morphosyntactic contexts (§3.6.2.6.1). This raising is triggered by certain following words or phrases (modifying adjectives, imperfective VPs, etc.). For reasons given above, conjoined NPs usually avoid such clause-medial positions. However, if a conjoined NP occurs anyway in such a position, tone-raising does apply to the rightmost conjunct. For example, in the conjunction 'cow and goat', both 'cow' and 'goat' retain their M-tones in (302a), where 'cow and goat' is subject of a perfective clause. In (302b), the VP is imperfective, which raises the NC suffix in 'goat' from -mā- to -má- (bolded), but has no effect on 'cow' (whose raised form would be nāá-ñ).

(302) a. [nāā-ñ tà fūū-mā-ñ] náá yɛ̄
[cow-Sg and goat-Sg-Sg] go.Pfv Pos
'The cow and the goat went.' (< láá)

b. [nāā-n̄ tà fūū-**má**-n̄] nākɛ́= ɛ̄
[cow-Sg and goat-Sg-Sg] go.Ipfv Pos
'The cow and the goat often go.' (< lāká)

Speakers also prefer to avoid constructions of the type [X tɛ̀ Y] Postp, where the conjoined NP functions as complement of the postposition. The postposition can be repeated after both X and Y, or it can occur after X and omitted after Y. Thus in (303a) the dative appears after 'her father' and is omitted after the following 'her mother'. 'Between me and you-Sg' has to include tí súnú 'between us', either with 'me and you' preposed as a topic (303b) or with 'and/with you-Sg' added after the PP (303c).

(303) a. [fɛ̄= ɛ̄ n̄ tá] [fɛ̄= ɛ̄ n̄ nwî í],
[Comp 3HSg Sbjn go.Imprt] [Comp 3HSg Sbjn give.Imprt 3Pl]
[[ɛ̀ sí-bé] kīlān] [tɛ̀ [ɛ̀ lí-bé]]
[[3HSg father-Sg] **Dat**] [and [3HSg mother-Sg]]
'She would go and give it (= rice) to her father and (to) her mother.'
(2024_09 @ 02:22)

b. [mîn tɛ̀ tɛ̀-bɛ́] [tí súnú]
[1Sg and 2Sg] [1Pl **between**]
'Me and you-Sg, between us.'

c. [tí súnú] [tɛ̀ tɛ̀-bɛ́]
[1Pl **between**] [and/with 2Sg]
'Between us, (me) and you.'

Pronouns are common as left and right conjuncts. The right-conjunct forms are the same as 'with X' pronouns. The younger speaker tends to drop the extra prefixed tɛ̀-/tà- in the 1Sg and second person right conjuncts.

(304)

category	as left conjunct	as right conjunct (with tɛ̀)
1Sg	mí	tɛ̀ tɛ̀-mî^{n}
1Pl	túw^{n}ɔ̄	tà túw^{n}ɔ̄
2Sg	bɛ́	tɛ̀ tɛ̀-bɛ́
2Pl	mɔ́à	tà tà-mɔ̰̀ā
3HSg	ásɛ̄	tɛ̀ tà-ásɛ̄
3NHSg	á	tà sì-yá
3Pl	í	tà sì-í

7.1.2 Conjunction within complex numerals

Numerals denoting odd-numbered multiples of '10' from '30' up are conjunctions of the next lower multiple of '20' plus 'ten' (§4.6.1.3). For example, '30' is "twenty-and-ten-Pl-Pl" (wārán-tà-fɔ́-yɛ́-nī). These conjunctions are rather fused. Numerals combining a decimal and

a digital numeral ‘13' are more transparent conjunctions (§4.6.1.3), as in fɔ́ tàⁿ tááⁿrí-yɛ́-nī ‘13’ (“ten and three-Pl-Pl”).

7.1.3 Open-ended lists (X wò→, Y wò→, …)

Open-ended lists ‘X and Y and Z (and …)’ are expressed with wò(→) following each conjunct (305a). It is prosodically bracketed with the preceding constituent and can be prolonged. The emphasis is on the inclusiveness or completeness of the ideally completed set, as in ‘whether it be X, Y, (or) Z’. wò(→) can also occur at the end of a clause, indicating the existence of other parallel cases not explicitly laid out (305b), cf. English *for example*, *etcetera*, or *among others*. A similar passage is in 2024_06 @ 00:13.

(305) a. [písàá-m̄ bèlè-ɲɛ̄-n̄ wò→]
[child-Sg garment-Pl-Pl **and**]
[ɛ̀ ǹsé wò→]
[3HSg what? **and**]
[ɛ̀ yínáá-ŋ̄ wò→]
[3HSg name-Sg **and**]
‘(Whether it be) the baby’s garments, his/her whatever, his/her name …’
(2026_06 @ 00:52-00:55)

b. [núú-sɛ̄-ŋ̄ wɛ́ɛ̀ kpā lé ɛ̄] [í tō],
[chicken-Pl-Pl Fut die.Ipfv totally Pos] [3Pl all],
[tì= í wⁿá kɛ̄rīyɛ̀ɛ̀-[kùù-sɛ̄-ŋ̄] wò] [á kā-fá-nā]
[if 3Pl put.Pfv guinea.fowl-[egg-Pl-Pl] **and**] [3NHSg one-Sg]
‘The chickens will all die off. If they take guinea-fowl eggs for example, it’s the same thing.’ (2026_16 @ 00:10)

wò→ is heard as gò→ after a nasal in (2024_03 @ 02:27), but this is unusual.

7.1.4 ‘Every day/year/…’ (X wò X)

This construction takes the form X wò X ‘every X’, with repeated singular noun X. The final singular suffix -nā is omitted in both X’s, but NC suffixes including -nā- (or raised -ná-) are retained. (306) illustrates with X denoting a temporal unit. For the extra rhotic in ‘every year’ (306b), see §3.4.1.4.2.

(306)

	phrase	gloss	source noun
a.	kwá wò kwá	‘every day’	kwá-nā ‘day’
	yímín-ná wò yímín-ná	‘every month’	yímín-ná-nā ‘moon, month’
	á-tùná-ná wà= á-tùná-ná	‘every night’	á-tùná-ná-nā’night’
b.	yɛ́rɛ́ wò yɛ́rɛ́	‘every year’	yɛ́ɛ́-nā ‘year’

Examples with other common nouns are in (307). Those in (307a) are regular, but those in (307b) show one or another kind of irregularity. For 'person', the usual suppletive singular form fá-nā is replaced by lí-yē, which is elsewhere a possessum in the more specific sense '(sb's) relative'. The irregular forms for 'woman' and 'child' (307b) also occur in free postverbal nouns (100b).

(307)	phrase	gloss	source noun
a.	kú wò kú	'every head'	kú-nā 'head'
	píyé wò píyé	'every man'	píyé-nā 'man'
	wú-kó wò wú-kó	'every house'	wú-kó-nā 'house'
	yóón-nā wò yóón-nā	'every village'	yóón-nā 'village'
b.	lí-yé wò lí-yé	'every person'	lí-yé '(sb's) relative'
	cííyà wò cííyà	'every woman'	cá-nā 'woman'
	písàá-mā wò písàá-mā	'every child'	písàá-nā 'child'

7.2 Disjunction

7.2.1 'X or Y' (ǹtɛ̀→)

Disjunctions can link clauses S1 and S2, especially in polar interrogatives. As in other local languages, French *ou bien* 'or' is now very common at the boundary between S1 and S2, usually phrased prosodically with S2. The traditional disjunction is ǹtɛ̀→, with variably prolonged vowel, phrased at the end of S1 (308a). The two disjunctive particles can be combined, as in S1 ǹtɛ̀→, *ou bien* S2 (308b). This confirms the bracketing of ǹtɛ̀→ with the first disjunct (expressing unresolved incompleteness), and that of *ou bien* with the second. Disjunction is usually not expressed at constituent level within a larger clause. Instead, the relevant referents are topicalized as a conjunction preceding the main clause (308c), or they occur in parallel clauses ('are you going, or am I going').

(308) a.

zàkîì	lāá	ǹtɛ̀→,	ɛ̀	wɛ́ɛ̀	wàká-yīnɛ̄=	ɛ̄
Z	go.Ipfv	**or**,	3HSg	Fut	remain.Ipfv-here	Pos

'Is Zaki going? Or will he stay here?'

b.

[cá-nā	ŋ̄]	kú	ǹtɛ̀→,	*ou bien*	píyé-n	ì
[woman-Sg-Sg	SFoc]	die.Pfv	**or**,	**or**	man-Sg	it.is.Q

'Was it <u>a woman</u> [focus] who died, or was it a man?' (2026_27 @ 02:03)

c.

bɛ́	[tɛ̀	tì-mí],	[wòró	ń]	nāká
2Sg	[and	1Sg],	[who	SFoc]	go.Ipfv

'(Between) you-Sg and me, who is going?'

7.2.2 wɔ́mbɔ̀ ‘otherwise, anyway’

If the antecedent of one conditional construction is not fulfilled, a second conditional beginning with ‘otherwise, anyway’ (= ‘if not’) can follow. The ‘otherwise’ phrase is wɔ́mbɔ̀ ~ wɔ́mmɔ̀ ~ ɔ́mmɔ̀, slightly contracted and fused from tɛ̀ wā-m̄ bɔ̀ ‘if (it is) not that’. wɔ́mbɔ̀ breaks up the logical train of thought, either by negation of the preceding assumption (‘otherwise’), or just changing the topic abruptly (‘anyway’).

(309) a. [tɛ̀ wālɔ̄ɔ̄-n̄ sá] [ń nāká [tɔ̄ɔ̄-kà-m̄ míŋ] ŋɛ̄],
[if rain-Sg rain.fall.Pfv] [1Sg go.Ipfv [field-Sg-Sg in] Pos]
wɔ́mbɔ̀ [ŋ́ wɛ́ɛ̀ wàká yé= ɛ̄]
otherwise [1Sg Fut remain.Ipfv village Pos]
‘If it rains, I’ll go to the field. Otherwise I’ll stay home.’

b. ɔ́mmɔ̀ yɔ́kɔ́-kàà^{n}-rɛ̄-nī wò→,
anyway Jula-groundnut-Pl-Pl and,
mínsá-c-ɛ̀-n̄ tɔ̀ɔ̄ pɛ̀= ɛ̄
Néguéni-woman-Pl-Pl Past.Ipfv come.Ipfv Pos
‘(We don’t know why that happened.) Anyway, (as for) peanuts and so forth, the women of Néguéni used to come …’ (2024_03 @ 02:45)

8 Postpositions and adverbials

PPs (adpositional phrases) are adjuncts that follow intransitive verbs and transitive verb-object combinations. Most Paleni adpositions including datives and spatials are postpositions. tɛ̀ ~ tà(ⁿ) 'with' (which is also the conjunction 'and') and fɔ́ 'all the way to' are prepositions. Postpositional phrases are part of the clausal core in the sense that they precede the polarity morpheme, positive (y)ɛ̄ or negative bɔ̀. Prepositional phrases are more peripheral but not completely extra-clausal; they follow positive (y)ɛ̄ but precede negative bɔ̀. In the conveyance ('bring', 'convey') construction (§11.1.1.2.5), the obligatory 'with' phrase is separated from the motion verb ('go' or 'come') only by positive (y)ɛ̄, so the optional dative PP follows both (y)ɛ̄ and the 'with' phrase.

Lexical adverbs like 'today' may occur in the same postverbal position as postpositional phrases, preceding polarity morphemes. Alternatively, they may be treated as preclausal topics indicating the spatiotemporal setting.

Several monosyllabic postpositions (sí, tú, lɔ̄, lɛ̀) have Doppelgängers that function as pseudo-postpositions (psPs) in phrasal verb constructions (§15.1.2). When one of the psPs immediately follows a verb, which happens in all intransitive and in imperfective transitive clauses, it cannot be confused with a postposition. However, when the psP is separated from the verb by the object, which happens regularly in transitive perfective and imperative clauses, there is some risk of misparsing. When in doubt, imperfective counterparts clearly distinguish psPs from postpositions.

8.1.1 Dative

8.1.1.1 kīlānī 'to' with ditransitives

Dative 'to X, for X' involving receipt of an entity is kīlānī. In addition to 'give', this includes recipients for ditransitives like 'give' and 'entrust' (§11.1.2.3), and counterparts in commercial transations ('buy' and 'sell'). Examples are (310a-c). In these cases, the PP with kīlānī is optional. kīlānī can also have a quasi-spatial sense, translatable as 'among X' where X is a population, or 'in X's country' (310d); see also §8.2.3.3.

(310) a. ń nù wárí-ɲɛ̄-n̄ [zàkîi kīlāŋ] ɲɛ̄
1Sg give.Pfv money-Pl-Pl [Z **Dat**] Pos
'I gave the money to Zaki.'

b. ń sùkù kàà-bā-n̄ [zàkîi kīlāŋ] ɲɛ̄
1Sg sell.Pfv sheep-Sg-Sg [Z **Dat**] Pos
'I sold a sheep to Zaki.'

c. ŋ́ fí kàà-bā-n̄ [zàkîì kīlāŋ] ɲɛ̄
1Sg buy.Pfv sheep-Sg-Sg [Z **Dat**] Pos
'I bought a sheep from Zaki.'

d. [fī= ī n̄ tā] [tɛ́= [ɛ́ sùkùrá [í kīlān]]]],
[Comp 3Pl Sbjn go.Imprt] [go.Ipfv [3Pl sell.Ipfv] [3Pl among]]]]
'and they would go and sell them among them (=foreigners)'
(2024_03 @ 01:31)

'Give X to Y' can also be expressed with different syntax as 'provide/furnish Y with X', where Y is the grammatical object and X is an optional adjunct (§11.1.2.3.1).

kīlānī can also be added to a possessor in a possessed NP (§6.2.6).

For kīlānī in the sense 'want (sth)', see §11.2.6.2.1.

8.1.1.2 lɔ̄ (tó, rɔ̄) dative with 'say' and as benefactive

lɔ̄ is the dative postposition used with verbs of saying, including máná/mānīyá 'say, speak' and the two prequotative verbs yàmá 'said' and wɛ̄-sìkɛ̄ 'said'. The postposition hardens and raises to tó after the two M-toned final nasal suffixes -nā and -nī, resulting in both cases in -n̄ tó. The combination with reciprocal tón is tón tɔ̄. For rɔ̄ after pronominals see below.

(311) a. ḿ mání= yá [zàkîì lo̰ɛ̄=] ɛ̄
1Sg say.Pfv 3NHSg [Z **Dat**] Pos
'I said it to Zaki.' (= 'I told Zaki.')

b. zàkîì mání= yá [míí ro̰ɛ̄=] ɛ̄
Z say.Pfv 3NHSg [1Sg **Dat**] Pos
'Zaki said it to me.' (= 'Zaki told me.')

c. wɛ̀ɛ̀ [fí= í tīkī kwá-n̄ ní, [tón tɔ̄]]
so [Comp 3Pl put.down.Pfv day down, [Recip **Dat**]]
'That's how they set the date, mutually.' (2024_05 @ 03:32)

The PP with lɔ̄ can also add a benefactive PP as an adjunct to an already complete clause, such as one describing conveyance of an object (312a) or one describing an activity (312b). In the conveyance construction, positive (y)ɛ̄ immediately precedes the obligatory 'with' phrase. When an optional dative phrase is added, it follows both (y)ɛ̄ and the 'with' phrase. Elsewhere the dative PP precedes positive (y)ɛ̄ in main clauses, as in (311a-b) and in (313a) below.

(312) a. ḿ pɛ̀= ɛ̄ [tàⁿ súsó-m̄] [bɛ́ɛ́ rɔ̄]
1Sg come.Pfv Pos [with tô-Sg] [2Sg **Dat**]
'I have brought some tô for you-Sg.'

b. tɛ̀ c-é-ɲ̄ [ɲí kìlà-tàà-sɛ̄-ŋ̄] wùsó [bɛ́ɛ́ rɔ̄]
if woman-Pl-Pl [3Pl hand-Pl-Pl] hit.Ipfv [2Sg **Dat**]
'when the women clapped their hands for you-Sg' (2024_07 @ 02:06)

In (313a), the context is an abstract goal. In (313b), the context is reaching a point in space defined by the location of an individual. See also sēnāntɔ́ 'behind' (§8.2.5.3.2) which contains a fused H-toned tɔ́.

(313) a. zàkîì yāŋ-kà-ɲ̄ ɲàmá [wár-ɲɛ̄-n̄ tɔ̰́ɛ́=] ɛ̄
Z work-Sg-Sg do.Ipfv [money-Pl-Pl **Dat**] Pos
'Zaki works for money.'

b. fá á fìŋ [[kpōkó-ɲ̄ ɲò-nnè-n̄] tɔ́]
Comp 3NHSg arrive.Pfv [[tomtom-Sg hit-Sg-Sg] **Dat**]
'and it arrived at the tomtom beater' = 'it came up to the tomtom beater'
(2026_23 @ 01:01)

Several pronominal combinations show assimilation to the ɔ̄ vowel of the postposition (314a-b). The 1st/2nd person forms additionally lengthen the pronominal (314a). The -sɔ̀ extension in third-person forms (314b) resembles the sibilant extensions in demonstratives (§4.4.2.1).

(314) a. 1Sg míí rɔ̄
1Pl tɔ́ɔ́ rɔ̄
2Sg bɛ́ɛ́ rɔ̄
2Pl mɔ́ɔ́ rɔ̄ ~ máá rɔ̄

b. 3HSg è-sɔ̀ rɔ̄
3Pl í-sɔ̀ rɔ̄
3NHSg á-sɔ̀ rɔ̄

lɔ̄ is also the 'than' postposition in asymmetrical comparative constructions (§12.1.1).

8.1.2 Instrumental or comitative preposition tɛ̀ ~ tà(ⁿ)

The instrumental or comitative preposition is tɛ̀ ~ tà(ⁿ). The most common variant in recordings is tɛ̀. The preposition occurs in prototypical instrumental 'by means of' contexts, with a nonhuman and generally inanimate complement, as in (315a). It can also have comitative sense with a human complement (315b).

(315) a. ɲ́ ɲìŋ [kán-ná míɲ] ɲɛ̄ [tàⁿ fɔ́ɔ́-nā]
1Sg cut [wood-Sg Loc] Pos [**Inst** ax-Sg]
'I chopped the firewood with an ax.'

b. è yɛ̄ [tɛ̀= [è pís-é-nī]]
3HSg be [**Inst** [3HSg child-Pl-Pl]]
'He is with his children.'

In addition to instrumental and comitative PPs, tɛ̀ ~ tà(ⁿ) occurs clause-initially in conditional antecedents (§16.1.1).

Combinations of tɛ̀ ~ tà(ⁿ) with pronouns are in (316). The main irregularity is that there is an extra tV- syllable linking tɛ̀ to the otherwise monomoraic 1Sg, 2Sg, 2Pl, and 3HSg pronominals (316a). Diachronically, this linking tɛ̀ was probably the 'and/with' morpheme but became reanalysed as part of a pronominal allomorph, whereupon the preposition tɛ̀ was re-added (cf. Spanish *conmigo* 'with me' with a similar history). 1Pl túwⁿɔ̄ already begins with t and is unchanged. Third-person pronominals take long forms with a sibilant (§4.3.5). 3HSg tɛ̀ tà-á-sɛ̄ (cf. 3HSg independent pronoun ásɛ̄) is another case of doubling of *tɛ̀. The sibilants in 3Pl tɛ̀ sì-í and 3NHSg tɛ̀ sì-yá recall the sibilants in demonstratives (§4.4.2.1) and those in third-person datives (314b above).

(316) a. 1Sg tɛ̀ tì-mí
2Sg tɛ̀ tɛ̀-bɛ́
2Pl tà tà-mɔ́

b. 1Pl tà túwⁿɔ̄

c. 3HSg tɛ̀ tà-á-sɛ̄
3Pl tɛ̀ sì-í
3NHSg tɛ̀ sì-yá

An instrumental or comitative prepositional phrase [tɛ̀ X] is more peripheral to the clausal core than postpositional phrases, though it is not external to the clause. Its peripherality is shown by the position of the positive particle (y)ɛ̄, which is bolded in (317). The morpheme precedes instrumental and comitative phrases (317a), but it follows postpositional phrases (317b) and other adverbials. An exception is that an optional dative PP may follow the 'with' phrase in the conveyance construction, in which case positive (y)ɛ̄ precedes both of the PPs (317c).

(317) a. ń náá tɔ́órɛ̀= **ɛ̄** [tɛ̀ zàkîì] 'I traveled with Zaki'
ń tɔ̄ɔ̄sī **yɛ̄** [tà líyā-nā] 'I did farming with a daba (hoe).'

b. ḿ mání yá [zàkîì lɔ̰̄] **ɛ̄** 'I said it to Zaki.'
ń tīkī [zàkîì lɛ̀] **ɛ̄** 'I followed after Zaki.'
ɲ́ ɲà [á-máá-ŋ̄ kwɛ̄=] **ɛ̄** 'I climbed (on) the mountain.' (< yà, kō)

c. ḿ pɛ̀= **ɛ̄** [tɛ̀ ní-mí-n̄] [zàkîì lɔ̄] 'I brought some water to Zaki.'

tɛ̀ ~ tà(ⁿ) is also the 'and' conjunction in NPs (§7.1). Here too the [tɛ̀ X] phrase is detachable from the apparent left conjunct. This is shown by the preferred linear order of object NPs in imperfective clauses as in (318a). Again, the positive morpheme precedes the [tɛ̀ X] phrase.

(318) a. ḿ bɛ́ yⁿɛ̃́= ɛ̄ [tɛ̀ zàkîi]
1Sg 2Sg see.Ipfv **Pos** [with/and Z]
'I (often) see you-Sg and/with Zaki.'

b. ḿ bābá-ŋ̄ fīībɛ́= ɛ̄ [tɛ̀ fūū-mā-nā]
1Sg sheep-Sg buy.Ipfv **Pos** [with/and goat-Sg-Sg]
'I (often) buy a sheep and/with a goat.'

8.2 Spatial postpositions

8.2.1 Spatial and temporal nominals without postpositions

Some nouns can occur in spatial constructions without an overt locative postposition. This is the case with village names (319a), with adverbial yóò related to yóón-nā-nā 'village' (319b), and with adverbial kúní '(to) home'. yóò combines with positive and negative morphemes as yó ɛ̄ and yó bɔ̀.

(319) a. ń nāká pálɛ̀= ɛ̄
1Sg go.Ipfv **Faniagara** Pos
'I'm going to Faniagara (village).' (< lāká)

b. ń nāká yó ɛ̄
1Sg go.Ipfv **village** Pos
'I'm going to the village.'

Other nouns that denote common locations or destinations like 'the bush, brousse' and 'well' require an overt locative postposition like míní.

See also the high-frequency demonstrative adverbs in §4.4.3, and the other spatial adverbs in §8.4.4.2.

8.2.2 Expression of locative, allative, and ablative

Locative adjuncts including spatial PPs denote locations. These adjuncts can occur in clausal contexts of static position, motion toward (allative), or motion from (ablative). Directionality is expressed almost entirely by verbs such as 'go', 'come', 'enter', 'exit', and 'arrive'. Locative 'be' with reference to stationary individuals is unexpressed except in non-present tenses. Thus "X [Y in]" means 'X is in/at Y' (§11.2.3).

8.2.3 Primary spatiotemporal postpositions

8.2.3.1 tú ‘in, inside (house); below’

This postposition combines especially with ‘house’ and other terms for covered structures. The combination means ‘inside the house’, but it is conceptualized as ‘under (the roof of) the house’.

(320) a. zàkîì yìlà [wú-kó-ñ tú] yɛ̄
Z enter.Pfv [house-Sg-Sg **inside**] Pos
‘Zaki entered the house.’

b. bóó-ná-ŋ̄ [wú-kó-ñ tú] yɛ̄
seat-Sg-Sg [house-Sg-Sg **inside**] Pos
‘The chair is in(side) the house.’

The sense ‘under, below’ is clearer when the landmark is an individual entity rather than an enclosing structure. Textual examples involve position under a tree, or under an individual who is up in the tree (321a-b).

(321) a. sàntùŋkóó-nā, lā, mīnī-má-ñ tú
hyena-Sg, there.Def, monkey-Sg-Sg **below**
‘The hyena was (still) there, below the monkey.’ (2024_10 @ 05:43)

b. [fɛ́= è báká tāý [písàá-nā tú]
[Comp 3HSg get.tired.Pfv to.exhaustion [child-Sg **below**]
‘She got tired (shaking the tree) below the child.’ (2026_22 @ 01:06)

c. á [sīī-ké-ñ tú] yɛ̄
3NHSg [tree-Sg-Sg below] Pos
‘It’s under the tree.

For ‘(out) in the bush’, i.e., away from villages, both wúún-nā-ñ tú and wúún-nā-m̄ míní are in use.

For phrasal verbs including tú as pseudo-postposition, see §15.1.2.2.

8.2.3.2 míní ‘in, to’

This postposition occurs in a wide variety of locative contexts. It combines with the positive particle as míŋ ŋɛ̄ and with the negative particle as mím bɔ̀. The full form míní occurs in isolation and at the end of subordinated clauses (322e).

(322) a. zàkîì láá [tɔ̀ɔ̀-kā míŋ] ŋɛ̄
Z go [field-Sg **in**] Pos
‘Zaki went out to the field.’

b. zàkîì [yóón-nā míŋ] ɲɛ̄
Z [village-Sg **in**] Pos
'Zaki is in the village.'

c. zàkîì [wúún-nā-m̄ mím] bɔ̀
Z [the.bush-Sg-Sg **in**] Neg
'Zaki is not out in the bush (=brousse).'

d. wárì-ɲɛ̄-m̄ [bɔ̀ɔ̀tɛ̄ɛ̄-nā-m̄ míŋ] ɲɛ̄
money-Pl-Pl [sack-Sg-Sg **in**] Pos
'The money is in the sack.'

e. í lɑ́á [[fí= í tò-ɲ̄ [ɲá-máá-m̄ míní]]
3Pl go.Pfv [[Comp 3Pl sit.Pfv [mountain-Sg **in**]]
'Then they went and settled on the mountain.' (2024_03 @ 00:37)
(< á-máá-nā)

For phrasal verbs including míní, see §15.1.2.4.

míní is phonologically similar to the uncommon noun mîⁿ 'place', which is attested only in the phrase míǹ tòō 'a certain place' or 'another place'.

8.2.3.3 'Chez X' (X kúnú)

'Chez X, at the home of X' can be expressed as 'X's own household' with possessed kún-ná-nā 'household (with courtyard)' (local French *concession*), plural kúnú-ɲɛ̄-nī. As postposition it is reduced to kúnú. It combines with present (y)ɛ̄ as kúŋ ɲɛ̄, phonologically parallel to míŋ ɲɛ̄ (preceding subsection). The complement NP or pronoun often combines with kīlānī, as in possessives (§6.2.6).

(323) a. zàkîì lɑ́á [[è kīlāŋ] kúŋ] ɲɛ̄
Z go [[3HSg Poss] **chez**] Pos
'Zaki went to his place.' (= 'Zaki went home.')

b. ń nāká [ŋ̄ kīlāŋ] kúŋ] ɲɛ̄
1Sg go.Ipfv [1Sg Poss] **chez**] Pos
'I am going to my place.'

c. tɛ̀ è lɑ́á [[è kīlāŋ] kúnú]
if 3HSg go.Pfv [[3HSg Poss] **chez**]
'if he/she goes home'

X kīlāŋ kúnú can be shortened to just X kīlānī "X's own", with 'household' or 'place' understood. However, kīlānī more often expresses a more abstract and geographically distributed 'among (the) X' or 'in X's country' (§8.1.1.1).

(324) zàkîì láá [ɛ̀ kīlāŋ] ɲɛ̄
Z go [3HSg **chez**] Pos
'Zaki went to his place.' (= 'went home.')

There is also an adverbial form kúní '(to) home', as in fìŋ kúní 'arrived home' (2026_19 @ 01:01).

kúnú is not attested as a psP in phrasal verbs.

8.2.3.4 'During X' or 'in the guts/heart of X' ([X wùnnà] míní)

The noun wūn-nā-nā 'guts, entrails' is the basis for a complex postposition wùnnà míní. After a noun denoting a time span, it means 'during X' or 'within the limits of X' (325a). It can be simplified to just locative míní 'in' (325b). wu is pronounced ŋu after a nasal.

(325) a. [yéé-ŋ̄ ŋ̀ùnnà] míní, tì wɛ́ɛ̀ [wú-t táá^{n}rí-yɛ̄] máárɛ́^{n}= ɛ̄
[year-Sg **inside**] **in**, 1PlI Fut [house-Sg three-Pl] build.Ipfv Pos
'In a year, we will (=can) build three houses.' (variant wú-yé-n̄ táá^{n}rí-yɛ̄)

b. yímín-ná-m̄ míní, tì wɛ́ɛ̀ wú-kó-m̄ máárɛ́^{n}= ɛ̄
month-Sg-Sg **in**, 1PlI Fut house-Sg-Sg build.Ipfv Pos
'In (=during) a/the month, we will build a house.'

With an animate NP, wūn-nā-nā can mean 'X's guts (=heart)' in the context of visceral (=deeply held) belief.

(326) [[zàkîì wūn-nā-m̄] míírí-ná-m̄] míní
[[Z guts-Sg] think-Sg-Sg] in
'in Zaki's guts (=heart, mind)'

8.2.4 Proximity

8.2.4.1 kpírí 'beside X, next to X'

kpírí expresses position very close to, and preferably to the side of, a landmark object, often a person. The landmark need not have a front and a back, as with 'tree' (327e).

(327) a. zàkîì kpírí
Z **beside**
'beside Zaki'

b. sīī-kē-n̄ sá [ŋ̄ kpírí] yɛ̄
tree-Sg-Sg fall.Pfv [1Sg **beside**] Pos
'A tree fell next to me.'

c. fī= ī ŋ̄ wⁿá kāɲc-é-m̄ [písàá-ŋ̄ kpírí]
Comp 3Pl Sbjn put.Imprt log-Pl-Pl [child-Sg **beside**]
'Then they would lay some logs (as firewood) next to the baby.'
(2026_06 @ 00:18)

d. è yálè [ɛ̄ mā→, wⁿáá yè ní [í kpírí]]
3HSg want.Ipfv [3HSg Sbjn put.Imprt 3HSg down [3Pl **beside**]]
'(said:) "I would like to put her to bed next to you-Pl." ' (2026_27 @ 02:39)

e. mààmpílì-nā-n̄ [sīī-ké-ŋ̄ kpírí] yɛ̄
vehicle-Sg-Sg [tree-Sg-Sg **beside**] it.is
'The car is next to the tree.'

8.2.4.2 pèlɛ̄-nā 'around'

'Around, somewhere in the vicinity of' is expressed by pèlɛ̄-nā following a spatial expression.

(328) zàkîì wɛ́è fīyé [yīŋ-fā-m̄ pèlɛ̄-n] ī
Z Fut be.found.Ipfv [here-Sg **around**-Sg] Pos
'Zaki must be (somewhere) around here.'

8.2.4.3 'Toward X'

No specific postposition for 'toward X, in the direction of X' was elicited. In such contexts, X is expressed as a simple NP in locative function like Banfora (city) in (329), or with a locative postposition like míní. The motion verb expresses directionality.

(329) [ɲ́ ɲá [zàkîì kììsɛ́=] ɛ̄] [fɛ́= è lāká bànfórā]
[1Sg see.Pfv [Z walk.Ipfv] Pos] [Comp 3HSg go.Ipfv B]
'I saw Zaki walking to(ward) Banfora.' (< yⁿá)

8.2.4.4 núnnɔ̄ 'at the mouth/border/verge of X'

The postposition is understood by speakers to be based on a variant of náá-nā 'mouth', plural núú-ɲɛ̄-nī, premodifier núú. A more immediate source is núnnɔ̄ŋ-kà-nā 'lid, covering', which is probably an old compound beginning with 'mouth' (in the sense 'opening, passageway').

In (330) the landmark is a structure with an entrance or other opening ('house, 'granary', 'window', 'burrow'). The noun náá-nā and the postposition núnnɔ̄ are sufficiently dissociated to allow their combination (330b).

(330) a. zàkîì tò-ŋ́ [ŋú-kó-n̄ núnnɛ̄=] ɛ̄
Z sit.Pfv [house-Sg-Sg **at.mouth.of**] Pos
'Zaki has sat (=is sitting) in front of the house.'

b. zàkîì tò-ŋ́ [[ŋú-kó-n̄ náá-n̄] núnnɛ̄=] ɛ̄
Z sit.Pfv [[house-Sg-Sg **mouth**-Sg] **at.mouth.of**] Pos
[=(a)]

c. [ń nāká] [tǒ-ń [[sàntʊ̀ŋc-é-m̄ pɛ̄é-n̄] núnnɛ̄=]] ɛ̄
[1Sg go.Ipfv] [sit.Ipfv [[hyena-Pl-Pl burrow-Sg] **at.mouth.of**]] Pos
'I will go and sit at the mouth (=entrance) of the hyenas' burrow.'
(2024_05 @ 00:18)

In (331), the landmark is not a front-back oriented structure, and núnnɔ̄ is translatable as 'at the edge/verge/rim of' or, in the case of water bodies, 'on the shore/bank of'.

(331) a. mɔ̀ [tàfɔ̀-n̄ núnnɔ̄] bɔ̀
2PlI [pond-Sg **at.mouth.of]** Neg
'You-Pl are not at the edge (bank, shore) of the pond.'

b. bɛ̄ tá lā [fɔ́ɔ́-n̄ núnnɔ̄] bɔ̀
2SgImprt go.Imprt there.Def [hole **at.mouth.of]** Neg
'Don't-2Sg go to the edge of the pit!'

c. tī kí-lāā [kɔ̀lɔ́fɔ̀-n̄ núnnɔ̄]
1PlImprt go.Imprt [well-Sg **at.mouth.of]**
'Let's go up to the edge (rim) of the well.'

8.2.5 Spatial relationships

8.2.5.1 Surface contact

8.2.5.1.1 sí 'on'

[X sí] expresses position directly on a horizontal surface (332a), a vertical surface (332b), or a three-dimensional entity with a head or other top (332c).

(332) a. bɔ̀ɔ̀tɛ̄ɛ́-nā-n̄ [nàŋkáŋkà-ná-n̄ sí] yɛ̄
sack-Sg-Sg [mat-Sg-Sg **on**] Pos
'The sack is on the mat.'

b. màŋkɔ́ɔ́-ŋ̄ [wú-kù-ná-n̄ sí] yɛ̄
agama-Sg [wall-Sg-Sg **on**] Pos
'The agama lizard is on the wall.'

c. [fá= á tā] [fá= á yɔ́kɔ́,
[Comp 3NHSg go.Pfv] [Comp 3NHSg jump.Pfv,
[[ǹsánàmpē-nā-m̄ pò-n̄] sí]]
[[hare-Sg-Sg child-Sg] **on**]]
'He (=dog) went and it jumped on hare's child.' (2024_01 @ 01:06)

sí also occurs in the context 'X put garment on Y'. In (333a) there is no PP since X puts the garment on himself. In (333b) there is a PP since X has dressed another person.

(333) a. tí wⁿá [tí sìm-bèlè-ɲɛ̄-ɲ̄] ɲɛ̄
1PlP put.on.Pfv [1Pl boubou-Pl-Pl] Pos
'We put on our boubous (garments).'

b. ŋ́ wⁿá sím-bèlè-nā-m̄ [písàá-n̄ sí] yɛ̄
1Sg put.on.Pfv boubou-Sg-Sg [child-Sg **on**] Pos
'I put the boubou on the child.'

The phrase [Y sí] 'on Y' is appropriate in (333b) since a boubou is worn over one's torso and is supported by the shoulders. It has an opening for the head and is put on in the fashion of pullover sweaters. This phrasing does not work for 'put on shoes' (334a), 'put on pants' (334b), or 'put on hat' (336a below), each of which uses a different postposition.

(334) a. ŋ́ wⁿá fāār-ɛ̄-m̄ [[písàá-m̄ b-ɛ̄ɛ̄] míɲ] ɲɛ̄
1Sg put.on.Pfv shoe-Pl-Pl [[child-Sg **foot-Pl**] **in**] Pos
'I put the shoes on the child's feet.'

b. ŋ́ wⁿá báǹtâl-nā-m̄ [písàá-n̄ lè] ɛ̄
1Sg put.on.Pfv pants-Sg-Sg [child-Sg **on.leg**] Pos
'I put the pants on the child.'

More abstract examples of sí are in (335). Note especially the adversarial ('against') element in (335b-c).

(335) a. zàkîì tɛ̀rɛ́n [[támá-n̄ nìyⁿá-n̄] sí] yɛ̄
Z crave [[beer-Pl drink.VblN-Sg] **on**] Pos
'Zaki has a craving for (sorghum) beer.'

b. sākānáá-ná-ŋ̄ fìŋ [fíyè yàmá [tí sí]] bɔ̀
quarrel-Sg-Sg be.able.Pfv [anything do.Ipfv [1Pl **on**]] Neg
'The quarrel (=fighting) couldn't do anything against us.' (2024_03 @ 01:06)

c. [káá-sá-m̄ fáá] [è sí] nā
[disease-Sg-Sg RelSg] [3HSg **on**] Rel
'the disease that was afflicting him' (2024_04 @ 01:08)

See also ‘they are hard at work’ (414b) in §10.5.2.2. For partitive function, see (562g) in §13.2.2.7.

sí occurs in several phrasal verbs as a pseudo-postposition (§15.1.2.1).

8.2.5.1.2 kó ‘atop’

kó ‘atop, on top of’ expresses position on the head of a human, or on the summit of a mountain. In [X kó], X may be a person (without overt mention of ‘head’), a mountain, or a structure.

(336) a. tí tàm bààmpéé-ɲɛ̄-n̄ [tí kwé=] ɛ̄
1PlP cover.Pfv hat-Pl-Pl [1Pl **atop**] Pos
‘We put on our hats.’

b. fĩ= í tò-ɲ́ [ɲá-máá-ŋ̄ kó]
Comp 3Pl sit.Pfv [mountain **atop**]
‘(and) they sat (=settled) on the mountain.’

c. fĩ= í kpílí í, kpá-nā-ŋ̄ kó,
Comp 3Pl gather.up.Pfv 3Pl, shed-Sg-Sg **atop**]
‘They gather it (=grain) up, on top of a thatched shed (for drying)’.
(2024_06 @ 01:35)

d. fɛ̃= ɛ̄ n̄ séé yɛ́= [ɛ̀ kó]
Comp 3HSg Sbjn carry.on.head.Imprt 3NHSg [3HSg **atop**]
‘She would put it (=basket) on top of her head (to carry it).’ (2024_09 @ 01:55)

The same postposition is used more abstractly in the ‘X add Y [to Z]’ construction with verb w^ná/w^nā̃ ‘add’ (337a). An alternative is a ‘with Z’ phrase (337b). The position of the positive particle (y)ɛ̄ is different in the two constructions, since comitative PPs follow (y)ɛ̄.

(337) a. í [líí tòrō] w^nā̃ [tí kwé=] ɛ̄
3Pl [person other] add.Ipfv [1Pl **atop**] Pos
‘They (often) add another person on (=onto) us.’

b. í [líí tòrō] w^nɛ̃= ɛ̄ [tà túw^nɔ̄]
3Pl [person other] add.Ipfv Pos [**with** 1Pl]
[=(a)]

Consistent with the sense of addition or accumulation is the occurrence of kó in a construction with ‘go’ and a time expression that includes á kàā ‘the thing’ referring back to an event (338a). kó also occurs as complement of lé/lɛ̃ ‘refuse’ in the sense ‘refuse to give back’ (338b). Here there may have been some crossing of postposition kó with the phonologically similar kɔ́ ‘again’.

(338) a. á lāá [[á kàā] kwé=] ē
3NHSg go.Ipfv [[3NHSg thing] **atop**] Pos
'from that point on, …' (2024_01 @ 01:31)

b. fá á lé [[tèmbèé-ñ nínsáá-ŋ̄] kó]
Comp 3NHSg refuse.Pfv [[croc-Sg tongue-Sg] **atop**]
'and it (=dog) refused to give back the croc's tongue.' (2026_18 @ 00:26)

8.2.5.2 Vertical relationships

8.2.5.2.1 kúsúnū 'over, above' or 'on top of'

This postposition denotes position above the landmark. Often there is space between the landmark and the referent (339a). It is possible for the referent to be adjacent to the landmark as long as the vertical relationship rather than surface contact is emphasized (339b). This is often the case when the landmark is already above ground, as in building a wall layer by layer from the ground up. A more abstract quantitative sense occurs with verbs like 'add' (339c). When contact on a horizontal surface is emphasized, sí 'on' is the usual postposition. Cf. also kó 'atop' (preceding subsection).

(339) a. zàkîì kúsúnū
Z **above**
'above Zaki' or 'over Zaki's head'

b. fí= í w^{n}á= á [táá-ré-ŋ̄ kúsúnū]
Comp 3Pl put.on.Pfv 3NHSg [stone-Pl-Pl **above**]
'and they lay it (=moistened earth) on top of the stones' (2024_06 @ 00:50)

c. tí w^{n}á→, wóló-kì-nī [tóŋ kúsúnū]
1PlP add.Pfv, food-Pl-Pl [Recip **on.top.of**]
'We added (=collected) food on top of each other.' (2024_07 @ 00:31)

A semantically relevant noun/adverb is syó 'summit; crown (of head); up above; sky'.

8.2.5.2.2 táákáā 'under'

Here the referent is under the landmark, with or without an intervening space (340). However, 'under (a tree)' is expressed with postposition tú (§8.2.3.1), since the tree is conceptualized as covering or enclosing the relevant space.

(340) a. zàkîì táákáā
Z **under**
'under Zaki'

b. nàŋkáŋkà-nā-n̄ táákáā
mat-Sg-Sg **under**
'under the mat'

8.2.5.2.3 ní 'down' (possible former postposition)

No synchronic postposition ní has been observed. This is a blessing since such a postposition could easily be confused with other morphemes including plural definite marker ní on nouns and clause-final interrogative nī.

However, ní is a common second part in phrasal verbs, e.g. intransitive tò-ní/tǒ-ní 'sit' and transitive wéé X ní/X wēé-ní 'look for X' (§15.1.2.7). In phrasal verbs, ní often suggests downward motion. Other phrasal verbs consist of a verb plus a pseudo-postposition that is identical in form and roughly consistent in meaning with a true postposition (míní 'in', sí 'on', tú 'inside', dative lɔ̄, lè 'following').

8.2.5.3 Horizontal relationships

8.2.5.3.1 yínnāā 'in front of/before'

This postposition specifies position in front of a person, house, or other entity that has a front and back. It is related to yín-ná-nā 'face'. yínnāā can also mean 'before (a moment in time)' (341c), though other phrasings are also possible (341d).

(341) a. zàkîì yínnāā
Z **in.front.of**
'in front of Zaki'

b. wú-kó-n̄ ɲínnāā
house-Sg-Sg **in.front.of**
'in front of the house'

c. séré-ɲɛ̄-ɲ̄ ɲínnāā
prayer-Pl-Pl **in.front.of**
'before the holy day'

d. séré-ɲɛ̄-m̄ mā fîⁿ
prayer-Pl-Pl Sbjn arrive.Imprt
'before the holy day; between now and the holy day'

'Be afraid of X' is phrased as 'fear/be afraid before X' with verb násí/nāsá. The image is of one cowering in the awesome presence of X.

(342) ń násí [zàkîì yínnāā] yɛ̄
1Sg fear.Pfv [Z **in.front.of**] Pos
'I am afraid of Zaki.'

Adverb 'ahead, forward, in/to the front' is wááɲú (343), cf. §4.6.2.1.

(343) ɛ̀ láá wááɲɛ́= ɛ̄
3Sg go.Pfv **ahead** Pos
'He/She went forward (to the front).'

8.2.5.3.2 sēnāntɔ́ 'behind/after X'

This postposition expresses spatial location with reference to a landmark. It may have originated as a PP with sēn-nā-nā 'back (body)' and dative allomorph tɔ́.

(344) a. zàkîì sēnāntɔ́
Z **behind**
'behind Zaki'

b. wú-kó-n̄ sēnāntɔ́
house-Sg-Sg **behind**
'behind the house'

The combination of 'in front of' and 'behind' has the idiomatic sense 'all over' or 'totally' (345), cf. English *from head to toe*.

(345) [nà-ɲ̄ ɲínnāā] [nà-n̄ sēnāntɔ́],
[DemNH-Sg **in.front**] [DemNH-Sg **behind**],
jɛ̀ɛ́-nā-n̄ nà-míɲ ɲɛ̄
bond-Sg-Sg be.annulled.Pfv Pos
'In front of that (and) in back of that (=all over), the bond (=friendship) has been canceled.' (2024_01 @ 01:35)

The temporal sense 'after', combined with the verbal noun kpīsā-nā 'finish, end', occurs in (346).

(346) [yāŋ-kà-ŋ̄ kpīsá-ŋ̄] sēnāntɔ́
[work-Sg finish-Sg] **behind**
'after work' (when work has finished)

8.2.5.3.3 lè 'on (legs)' or 'following X'

This postposition can express 'on (legs)', with reference to leggings such as pants, and also to belts. lè nasalizes to nè (except in careful speech) after another nasal.

(347) a. ŋ́ wⁿá [mím̀ báǹtâl-nā-n̄] [n̄ nè] ē
1Sg put.on.Pfv [1Sg pants-Sg-Sg] [1Sg **on.leg**] Pos
'I put on my pants.'

b. ŋ́ wⁿá sāntíír-nā-m̄ [písàá-n̄ nè] ē
1Sg put.on.Pfv belt-Sg-Sg [child-Sg **on.leg**] Pos
'I put the belt on the child.' = 'I girded the child with the belt'

lè also expresses following the trajectory of a landmark in motion. It occurs regularly with tīkī/tīkí 'follow', and may follow other motion verbs to add the sense 'following X', 'on the heels/trail of X', or 'in the footsteps of X'. X can be a person, an animal, a snake, etc.

(348) a. ŋ́ wɛ́ɛ̀ yìlá [á lè] ē
1Sg Fut enter.Ipfv [3NHSg **following**] Pos
'I will follow it (=hyena) in.' (2024_05 @ 00:35)

b. tīkī [zàkîì lè]
follow.Imprt [Z **following**]
'Follow-2Sg Zaki!'

c. ń tīká [zàkîì lè] bɔ̀
1Sg follow.Ipfv [Z **following**] Neg
'I don't follow Zaki.'

d. á [wò-ró nà-n̄ nɛ̄= ɛ̄]
that [who? Dem Foc it.is]
wɛ́ɛ̀ yàárá [[mīnī-má-n̄ ná] lè]
Fut ascend.Ipfv [[monkey-Sg-Sg DefSg] **following**]
'(said:) "Who there [focus] will climb up after that monkey?"'
(2024_10 @ 03:15)

For phrasal verbs with lè as pseudo-postposition, see §15.1.2.6.

8.2.5.4 Spatiotemporal intervals

8.2.5.4.1 súnúú 'among Xs', 'between X and Y'

'Among (a group X)' in a more or less literal spatial sense is expressed as X súnúú, based on the noun súnúú 'middle'. 'Between X and Y' is expressed as X súnúú [tà/tɛ̀ Y], i.e., literally "among X [with Y]." For pronominal combinations of tɛ̀ ~ tà(ⁿ), see §8.1.2.

(349) a. tí súnúú [tɛ̀ tɛ̀-bɛ́]
1Pl **middle** [with 2Sg]
'between you-Sg and me' (lit., "between us and/with you-Sg")

b. [c-é-n̄ súnúú] [fǐ= ǐ kèè [cííyà tòrō]]
[woman-Pl-Pl **among**] [Comp 3Pl look.atPfv [woman a.certain]]
[fǐ= ǐ nù yɛ̀ [ǹsánàmpē kīlānī]]
[Comp 3Pl give.Pfv 3HSg [hare Dat]]
'Among the women they looked at a woman and they gave her to the hare.'
(2026_27 @ 03:26)

A more abstract 'among X' where X is a population such as an ethnicity, kīlānī is usual (§8.1.1.1).

8.2.5.4.2 fɔ́ X 'all the way to X'

Preposition fɔ́ 'all the way to' is distinct from the high-frequency complementizer fá (variant fɔ́). fɔ́ 'all the way to' is emphatic, at least in positive clauses. It precedes an NP or adverbial that denotes a location. As a peripheral adjunct like tɛ̀ X 'with X', the fɔ́ X phrase follows the positive morpheme but precedes the negative morpheme (350a-b).

(350) a. ń sù yɛ̄ [fɔ́ yóò]
1Sg run.Pfv Pos [**all.the.way.to** village]
'I ran all the way to the village.'

b. ń sù [fɔ́ yó] bɔ̀
1Sg run.Pfv [**all.the.way.to** village] Neg
'I didn't run all the way to the village.'

The temporal sense '(all the way) until' is exemplified in (351).

(351) tì wɛ́ɛ̀ sùsɛ́= ɛ̄ [fɔ́ [sínsí-nā á-sànā]]
1PlI Fut dance.Ipfv Pos [**all.the.way.to** [tomorrow-Sg morning]]
'We'll dance until tomorrow morning (=all night).'

8.2.5.4.3 tà 'pick up' and tīkī X ní 'put down' as temporal bookends

Paired clauses with tà/tàárá 'pick up, take' in the sense 'begin, initiate', and tīkī X ní/X tīká-ní 'deposit, put down' in the sense 'complete' occur in standard tale closings like (352).

(352) è tà á [[tíí-ká-n̄ fáá] sí] nā,
3HSg **pick.up**.Pfv 3NHSg [[place RelSg] on] Rel,
wɛ̀ɛ̀ [fɛ́= è tīkā= á ń nā]
so [Comp 3HSg **put**.Pfv 3NHSg **down** there.Def]
'The place on which he had picked it up, there he has put it down.' (lā 'there.Def')
(2026_27 @ 03:36)

8.3 Abstract relationships

8.3.1.1 'About, concerning X'

'About X' in contexts like 'talk about X' is expressed using a possessed form of the noun páásā-nā 'word, talk (n)'.

(353) [témé-m̄ pààsā] lā wúm bɔ̀
[beer-Sg **talk(n)**] there.Def any.more Neg
'There is no longer any talk of beer.' (2026_06 @ 01:03)

8.3.1.2 páásā-nā purposive 'for X' and causal 'because of X'

The noun páásā-nā 'talk (n), speech' has abstract senses like '(the) matter/subject (of sth)'. It is also used as a kind of postposition, in possessum tonal form pààsā-nā, to mean 'because of' or 'for (a goal)'.

(354) a. í pà [túú-má-m̄ pààsā-n] ī
3Pl come.Pfv [honey-Sg-Sg **talk(n)-Sg**] Pos
'They have come for (=because of) the honey.'

b. í sákánáá [wár-ɲɛ̄-n̄ pààsā-n] ī
3Pl quarrel.Pfv [money-Pl-Pl **talk(n)-Sg**] Pos
'They fought over the money.'

Benefactive 'for X' is expressed by one or the other of the basic dative postpositions (§8.1.1).

8.3.1.3 mā X 'like X' (similarity)

mā 'like, similar to' is followed by an independent pronoun or by an NP. Pronominal combinations are in (355).

(355) mā mîì 1Sg
mā túw^{n}ɔ̄ 1Pl
mā bɛ́ɛ̀ 2Sg
mā mɔ́à 2Pl
mā á-sɛ̄ 3HSg
mā yáà 3NHSg
mā îì 3Pl

mā can also take indicative clausal complements. A textual example is (356).

(356) mà bɛ́ ɛ́ɛ̀ lɛ̀= ɛ̄ līyé [mā [n̄ níí-bé-n̄]] nā
that 2SgP Fut Past 3HSg kill.Ipfv [**like** [1Sg person-Pl-Pl]] there.Def
'(You said (= thought) you would kill me, just like (you killed) my kinsmen there?'
(< līyé, líí-bé-nī ; 2026_22 @ 01:11)

8.3.1.4 nū '(reply) to'

The verb tūkū^{n}/tūká^{n} combines with a PP headed by nū in the sense 'reply to X'. This verb takes an obligatory 3NHSg direct object, hence Pfv tūkwā^{n} á^{n} [X nū] and Ipfv á tūká^{n} [X nū]. That nū is a true postposition rather than a psP in a phrasal verb is shown by the fact that the (often human) addressee X remains postverbal in imperfective clauses. Similarly, the verbal noun is tūkā-nā without nū.

nū may be related to náá-nā 'mouth', whose root vowel shifts from aa to uu in some combinations, including plural núú-ɲɛ̄-nī.

8.4 Lexical adverbs and adverbial phrases

8.4.1 Authenticity

8.4.1.1 'Really', 'a real X'

Adjective nàā-nā 'good' (plural nàà-rɛ̄-nī) can mean 'real, genuine, authentic, true' (357a). Likewise, pìn-nā-nā 'bad' (plural pì-ɲɛ̄-nī) can mean 'false' (357b).

(357) a. píyé-n̄ nàā-nā 'a real man'
sɛ́ɛ́ nàà-rɛ̄-nī 'good/genuine sorghum'

b. sɛ́ɛ́ pì-ɲɛ̄-nī 'bad/false sorghum'

8.4.1.2 'Exclusively, nothing but'

This is phrased with two negative clauses. The first is a negative main clause (with 'nothing', 'nobody', 'never', etc.). The second is a conditional antecedent clause with 'be'. Unlike ordinary conditionals, in this case the antecedent ('if' clause) follows the main clause.

(358) [náá-sɛ̄-n̄ fíyè wòlóó bɔ̀] [tà= á tɔ̀ sɔ́kɔ́n-sá-m̄ bɔ̀]
[cow-Pl-Pl **anything** eat.Ipfv **Neg**] [**if** 3NHSg be grass-Sg-Sg **Neg**]
'Cattle eat nothing if it isn't grass.' (= 'Cattle eat nothing but grass.')

For lexical 'only' or 'alone', see §19.3.3.

8.4.2 Extent and evaluation

8.4.2.1 ‘A lot, greatly, excessively’ (sáw!, kɔ̄sɛ̄bɛ̄, tóró)

sáw! ‘a lot, greatly’ is an expressive adverbial that follows a complete positive indicative clause, which may include the positive morpheme. It is the most general word meaning ‘a lot, greatly, excessively’. It has no intrinsic pejorative nuance like English *too much*.

(359) a. è kúm mì yɛ̄ sáw
3HSg furnish.Pfv 1Sg Pos **greatly**
‘He gave me a lot.’ (< kú[n])

b. è yà[n] yáŋ-kà-n ī sáw
3HSg do.Pfv work(n)-Sg Pos **greatly**
‘He/She worked hard.’

c. fá [tí líí-bé-ñ] nírí= í, sáw!,
Comp [1Pl person-Pl-Pl] kill.Pfv 3Pl, **lots!**
‘our people killed them, plenty of them.’ (2024_03 @ 00:53)

sáw! cannot be a predicate (‘be a lot’). This is expressed by the stative deadjectival verb yɔ́kɔ́rɔ̀ ‘be a lot; be too much’.

(360) wā-nā á yɔ́kɔ́rɛ̀= ɛ̄
DemNH-Sg 3NHSg **be.a.lot** Pos
‘That, it’s a lot/too much.’ (= ‘That’s a lot.’)

The Jula word kɔ́sɔ́bé ‘a lot, greatly’ is now common, pronounced kɔ̄sɛ̄bɛ̄ or kɔ̄sɔ̄bɛ̄, in simple or iterated form.

(361) fá tí kám-míŋ kɔ̄sɔ̄bɛ̄-kɔ̄sɔ̄bɛ̄
Comp 1PlP get.along.Stat **very.much**
‘We get along very well.’ (2024_03 @ 02:54)

tóró ‘very much/many, too much/many’ is an occasional borrowing from French *trop* (2024_03 @ 00:31).

8.4.2.2 ‘To exhaustion’ (tāý!)

tāý! ‘greatly’ is another expressive adverbial. It is interchangeable with sáw! in some contexts, and it has the same morphosyntax. It is mainly attested with verbs like ‘get tired’, ‘speak’, ‘laugh’, and ‘run’, and implies exhaustion.

(362) a. è sù yɛ̄ tāý!
3HSg run.Pfv Pos **to.exhaustion**
'He/She ran to exhaustion.'

b. è máɲ ɲɛ̄ tāý!
3HSg laugh.Pfv Pos **to.exhaustion**
'He/She laughed to exhaustion (=laughed until his/her sides ached).'

c. [fɛ́= è sììmà sīī-kē-nā]
[Comp 3HSg shake.Pfv tree-Sg-Sg]
[fɛ́= è pà] [fɛ́= è báká tāý!]
[Comp 3HSg come.Pfv] [Comp 3HSg get.tired.Pfv **to.exhaustion**]
'Then she shook the tree until she (came and) got exhausted.'
(2026_22 @ 00:59)

d. [fɛ́= è báká tāý! [[písàá-n̄ ná] tú]
[Comp 3HSg get.tired.Pfv **to.exhaustion** [[child-Sg Def] below]
'She got tired (shaking the tree) below the child.' (2026_22 @ 01:06)

8.4.2.3 fúrú→ 'for a long time' and pɛ́! 'constantly'

fúrú→ 'for a long time' or 'constantly' (363a-d) follows positive (y)ɛ̄, but it is compatible with a following negative bɔ̀. There is also a longer form fúrútútú! A less common adverbial pɛ́! 'constantly' has similar meaning and syntax (363e).

(363) a. è sù yɛ̄ fúrú→
3HSg run.Pfv Pos **long.time**
'He/She ran for a long time.'

b. è sù fúrú→ bɔ̀
3HSg run.Pfv **long.time** Neg
'He/She didn't run for a long time.'

c. fɛ́= è kèè yɛ̀ fúrú
Comp 3HSg look.at.Pfv 3HSg **long.time**
'She looked at him for a long time.' (2026_22 @ 01:19)

d. [yīn-sī-ɲ̄ ɲɛ̄] [fɛ́= è í nìy^{n}á fúrú→]
[DemPl-Pl it.is] [Comp 3HSg 3Pl drink.Pfv **constantly**]
That (=porridge) [focus] is what he would drink all the time.'
(2026_07 @ 00:20)

e. tūū-sá-ɲ̄ ɲɔ̀nnɛ́= ɛ̄ pɛ́!
termite-Sg-Sg be.uprooted.Ipfv Pos **constantly**
'Termites are dug up constantly.' (2026_16 @ 00:01)

8.4.2.4 Adjectival intensifiers

Interjection-like adjectival intensifiers did not turn up in elicitation or in texts. The native-speaker assistent indicated that copular predicates with ká are more emphatic than those with stative verbs, at least for color categories. The statives are not cognate to the nominal predicates. In (364), a stative predicate is followed by the stronger copular predicate.

(364) a. [á yìrì yɛ̄] [á yɛ̄ [ká fɔ̄rɔ̄]]
[3NHSg **be.black** Pos] [3NHSg be [thing **black**]]
'It is very black.'

b. [á wārɛ̄= ɛ̄] [á yɛ̄ [ká kāānā]]
[3NHSg **be.white** Pos] [3NHSg be [thing **white**]]
'It is very white.'

c. [á mìrì yɛ̄] [á yɛ̄ [ká mīy^{n}ā]]
[3NHSg **be.red** Pos] [3NHSg be [thing **red**]]
'It is very red.'

8.4.2.5 'A little' or 'slowly, gently' (cû^{n})

cû^{n} 'a little' can function as an adverb. It follows positive (y)ɛ̄ or variant and precedes negative bɔ̀. Unlike sáw! and tāý!, it can also be a nominal predicate (365c). It can be iterated for distributivity (365d).

(365) a. ɛ̀ yàɲ ɲāŋ-kà-n ī cû^{n}
3HSg do.Pfv work-Sg-Sg Pos **a.little**
'He/She did a little work.'

b. ɲ́ ɲɔ̀rɔ̀ɲ ɲɛ̄ cû^{n}
1Sg sleep.Pfv Pos **a.little**
'I slept a little.'

c. á cûm bɔ̀
3NHSg **a.little** Neg
'It isn't a little.'

d. [ī mā tá] [á nùw^{n}ɛ́= [ɛ̀ kīlāɲ̄] cûɲ-cûɲ-cû^{n}]
[3Pl Sbjn go.Imprt] [3NHSg give.Ipfv [3HSg Dat] Iter-Iter-**a.little**]
'So they go and give it to him a little bit at a time.' (2026_07 @ 00:25)

8.4.2.6 'Well' and 'badly'

A positive evaluation of an action is expressed as 'with goodness (i.e., quality)'. The only negative counterpart is the negation of the positive (366b). An adverbial form kán-nārā without tɛ̀ is attested (366c).

(366) a. è céékéɲ̄ ɲɛ̄ [tɛ̀ kán-ná-nā]
3HSg play.Pfv Pos **[with** **goodness-Sg-Sg]**
'He played well.' (in sports)

b. è céékén [tɛ̀ kán-ná-ḿ] bɔ̀
3HSg play.Pfv **[with** **goodness-Sg-Sg]** Neg
'He didn't play well.'

c. fá á yàŋ kààr-nā-ŋ̄ kán-nārā
Comp 3NHSg do.Pfv youth-Sg-Sg **well**
'Then it did (=acted) youthfulness very well.' (2026_18 @ 00:26)

8.4.3 Speed (fíí-fīī 'fast' and yérɛ́tɛ̄ 'slowly, gently')

These adverbs can refer to literal speed in motion as in (367a-b), or to the duration of stationary processes such as weaving.

(367) a. è sùùsɛ́= ɛ̄ fíí-fīī
3HSg run.Ipfv Pos fast(adv)
'He/She runs fast.'

b. è sùùsɛ́= ɛ̄ yérɛ́tɛ̄
3HSg run.Ipfv Pos slowly(adv)
'He/She runs slowly.'

fíí-fīī is unrelated to the adjective 'fast, rapid'. Similarly, yérɛ́tɛ̄ is unrelated to the adjective tììmàŋ-kà-nā 'cold; wet; slow'.

8.4.4 Spatiotemporal adverbs and particles

8.4.4.1 Temporal adverbials

8.4.4.1.1 Lexical temporal adverbs

Several basic temporal adverbs, or nouns often used as such, are in (368). In (368b), tòō-nā 'other' adds a time unit to the displacement from the present. Basic terms denoting days and years typically have a short form used as adverbs, and a fully suffixed nominal form when functioning as subjects. Positive identificational and copular predicates of these nouns have

nɛ̄= ɛ̄, whose first morpheme replaces (or consists of) the final singular suffix -nā, thus mīn nɛ̄= ɛ̄ ‘it’s today’

(368) a.

nàñnà-nā	‘now; nowadays’
tíntíyɛ́ⁿ	‘in the old days, long ago’ (very common)
ŋ̀gbínnáá	‘later’ (2026_19 @ 00:11)
fālābā	‘always’ (2026_16 @ 00:21)
péléw!	‘always’ (2024_10 @ 00:59)

b.

mīnī	‘today’ (as adverb)
mīn-nā-nā	‘today’ (e.g., as subject)
yⁿîì	‘yesterday’ (as adverb)
yⁿîì-nā-nā	‘yesterday’ (e.g., as subject)
yⁿîì-n tòō-nā	‘the day before yesterday’ or ‘a few days ago’
sínsí-nā	‘tomorrow’ (as adverb)
sínsí-nā-nā	‘tomorrow’ (e.g., as subject)
sínsí-nā tòō-nā	‘the day after tomorrow’ or ‘in a few days from now’

c.

kpáálōō	‘last year’ (as adverb)
kpáálōō-nā-nā	‘last year’ (e.g., as subject)
kpáálōō tòō-nā	‘the year before last’ or ‘a few years ago’
wíyé-nā	‘this year’
yɛ́ɛ́-tòrō(-nā)	‘next year’ (“year-other”)
yɛ́ɛ́-tòrō tòō-nā	‘the year after next’ or ‘in a few years from now’

8.4.4.1.2 Postverbal particles bē ‘already’ and ŋ̀nú ‘ever’

The completive particle bē follows the verb, but it may precede or follow a postverbal object (369a,c,d). It follows the subject if there is no overt verb, as in locational predicates (369b). Experiential perfect ŋ̀nú ‘ever’ follows yⁿá ‘see.Pfv’ (369e-f). Unlike English *ever*, it can occur in future contexts (369f). It may be related to yí, a particle that also occurs after ‘see.Pfv’ but only in negative clauses (§10.6.1.1).

(369) a.

zàkîì	tīkī	bē	kwá-ñ	ní	yɛ̄
Z	put.down.Pfv	**already**	day-Sg	down	Pos

‘Zaki has already set the date.’

b.

zàkîì	bē	yīŋ-fā-n	ī
Z	**already**	here-Sg	Pos

‘Zaki is already here.’

c. kúú-ká-nā— kwá-ŋ̄ [fí= í tīkā= á ḿ bē]
funeral-Sg-Sg— day-Sg [Comp 3Pl set.Pfv 3NHSg down **already**]
[fá= á kpísí] nā
[Comp 3NHSg finish.Pfv] Rel
'when they had already set the date and it was finalized, …'
(2024_08 @ 00:32)

d. ŋ́ wúlá kān-nā-m̄ bē bɔ̀
1Sg chop.Pfv firewood-Sg-Sg **already** Neg
'I have not yet chopped the firewood.'

e. ɲ̄ ɲá yàn-nā-ŋ̄ / zàkîì ɲú bɔ̀
1Sg see.Pfv elephant-Sg-Sg / Z **ever** Neg
'I have never seen an elephant/Zaki.'

f. [ɲ́ ɲálè ē] [fá ɲ́ ɲá yàn-nā-ɲ̄ ɲú]
[1Sg want Pos] [Comp 1Sg see.Pfv elephant-Sg-Sg **ever**]
'I would like to see an elephant (sometime in my life).'

8.4.4.1.3 Postverbal lɛ̀ 'just' and lé 'totally'

The postverbal particle lɛ̀ (370a-c) indicates recency or inception. It follows verbs or future wɛ́ɛ̀. It is distinct from postverbal lé, which indicates totality (370d).

(370) a. [cá-ɲ̄ ɲɛ̀ lɛ̀] [fɛ́= [ɛ̀ núúsá-m̄] pǎ] nā
[woman-Sg rot.Pfv **just**] [Comp [3HSg odor-Sg] come.Ipfv] Rel
'when the (dead) woman started to rot, and her odor came (out)'
(2026_27 @ 02:49)

b. ɔ́ líí lɛ̀ [ɲ̄ cà-n̄] nā
2PlP kill.Pfv **just** [1Sg woman-Sg] Rel
'now that you-Pl have just killed my wife' (2026_27 @ 03:20)

c. bɛ̀ =ɛ́ɛ̀ lɛ̀ fìy^{n}á [tǒ-ń sìkē]
2SgI Fut **just** be.able.Ipfv [sit.Ipfv thus]
'Can you just sit like that (and do nothing)?' (2026_16 @ 00:27)

d. [núú-sɛ̄-ŋ̄ wɛ́ɛ̀ kpā lé ē] [í tō]
[chicken-Pl-Pl Fut die.Ipfv **totally** Pos] [3Pl all]
'The chickens will all die off.' (2026_16 @ 00:10)

8.4.4.1.4 ‘Still’

There is no simple ‘still’ adverb. The narrative context in (371) would call for *still* in English, but there is no comparable adverb in Paleni.

(371) ǹsánàmpē, [fá= á tā] [tā],
hare, [Comp 3NHSg go.Pfv] [go.Ipfv],
sàntùŋkóó-nā, lā, mīnī-má-ñ tú
hyena-Sg, there.Def, monkey-Sg-Sg below
‘Ah, the hare, it went away. The hyena was (still) there, below the monkey.’
(2024_10 @ 05:43)

Fuller expressions specifying endpoints, like ‘until now/today’ (§8.4.4.1.7), are used in more emphatic contexts.

8.4.4.1.5 ‘(Not) yet’ (bàbàá)

This adverb occurs in negative clauses (with final bɔ̀). bàbàá immediately follows intransitive verbs (372a). If the clause has postverbal arguments or adjuncts, bàbàá may immediately follow the verb (372b-c), or it may precede the negative particle (372d).

(372) a. ɛ̀ pà bàbàá bɔ̀
3HSg come.Pfv **yet** Neg
‘He/She hasn’t come yet.’

b. ɛ̀ láá bàbàá [yóón-nā-m̄ mím] bɔ̀
3HSg go.Pfv **yet** [village-Sg-Sg in] Neg
‘He/She hasn’t yet gone to the village.’

c. ŋ́ kà bàbàá námá-sá-m̄ bɔ̀
1Sg eat.meat.Pfv **yet** meat-Sg-Sg Neg
‘I haven’t yet eaten the meat.’

d. ɛ̀ nù wárì-ɲɛ̄-ŋ̄ [ŋ̄ kīlām] bàbàá bɔ̀
3HSg give.Pfv money-Pl-Pl [1Sg Dat] **yet** Neg
‘He/She hasn’t yet given me the money.’

8.4.4.1.6 ‘By (the time of)’ (yàní)

yàní X, where X is denotes a future time point or interval, means ‘by (the time of) X, no later than X’. That is, a specified event will occur or be completed no later than the time denoted by X. There is a rather opaque phrase in the sense ‘by morning’, i.e., ‘sometime overnight’ (373b). It includes variants of á-sàná ‘morning’ and káká/kāká ‘open’, cf. (467a).

(373) a. è wɛ́ɛ̀ kpɛ́= ɛ̄ [yàní á-sànáˊ / sínsí-nā]
3HSg Fut die.Ipfv Pos [**by.time** morning / tomorrow]
'He/She will be dead by the morning/by tomorrow.'

b. sánì sánà-mà-kāká-nā
by.time wee.hours
'by morning; overnight' (2026_27 @ 01:17 and 01:37)

yàní by itself, without a following temporal phrase, means 'in a while'.

(374) yàní súsó-nā mā pá
by.time tô-Sg Sbjn come.Imprt
'In a while the tô should come.' (2024_10 @ 01:59)

For yàní in long subjunctive 'because …' clauses, see §17.7.1.2.

8.4.4.1.7 'Until X' (fɔ́ X)

fɔ́ X, where X denotes a time point or interval, means 'until X' or more emphatically 'all the way until X'. Its phrase is a peripheral adjunct that followed positive (y)ɛ̄.

(375) tì wɛ́ɛ̀ yìkā-ŋ̄ ŋʷɛ́= ɛ̄ [fɔ́ á-sànáˊ]
1PlI Fut song-Sg put.Ipfv Pos [**until** morning]
'We will sing until morning.' (< wⁿâ)

8.4.4.2 Spatial adverbials

Some noun-like lexical spatial adverbs are in (376). They can be locational predicates, or they can be added as adjuncts to already complete clauses.

(376) a. tóóní 'on the ground'
táákāā 'down below'
syó 'above, on top'

b. yínnāā 'ahead, in front'
wááɲú 'ahead, in front'
sēnāntɔ́ 'behind, in back'

c. súnúú 'in the middle'

8.4.5 Iterated distributive numerals

Numerals can be iterated for distributivity, e.g. ‘three by three’, ‘three at a time’, ‘three each’. The forms are in (377). For ‘1’ (377a) and numerals from ‘5’ to ‘10’ (377c), the entire numeral is iterated withoout change. For ‘2’, ‘3’, and ‘4’, the initial iteration is shortened to CV̄N- and the entire form is M-toned (377b). With composite numerals that end in a simple numeral, only this final numeral is iterated (377d).

(377) a. kááfáà ‘1’ káfá-káfáà

b. bāā ‘2’ bā-m-bɔ̄ɔ̄
táá^{n}rí ‘3’ tā-n-tāā^{n}rī
náárí ‘4’ nā-n-nāārī

c. sùsú ‘5’ sùsú-sùsú
sínì-fáà ‘6’ sínì-fáà-sínì-fáà
sɔ́-tàà^{n}rì ‘8’ sɔ́-tàà^{n}rì-sɔ́-tàà^{n}rì
fɔ́ ‘10’ fɔ́-fɔ́

d. wán-sɛ́-n̄-sùsú ‘100’ wán-sɛ́-n̄-sùsú-sùsú

9 Verbal derivation

Multi-verb constructions, along with phrasal verbs (lexicalized combinations of verbs with pseudo-postpositions) are covered in chapter 15. This chapter covers valency (=transitivity) alternations, deadjectival verbs, compound-like verbs (rare), and verb iteration.

There is no reversive derivational morphology. Antonyms in pairings like ‘open’ and ‘shut’, ‘cover’ and ‘uncover’, ‘tie up’ and ‘untie’, and ‘remember’ and ‘forget’, are not related derivationally.

9.1 Ambi-valent (labile) verbs

Many verbs are ambi-valent (=labile). That is, they have the same form in intransitive and transitive frames. The presence or object of an overt object reveals the valency of such stems in individual clauses.

In (378a), the intransitive is semantically basic and the transitive version functions as a causative. The semantic relation in (378b) is similar, but it is fuzzy whether the intransitive or transitive is more basic. In (378c), the transitive is semantically basic and the intransitive functions as an antipassive (i.e. an object is implied but covert). In (378d), the transitive is semantically basic and the intransitive functions as a passive.

(378)	Pfv/Ipfv	intransitive	transitive
a.	yèè-nī/yèé-nī	‘stand, stop (halt)’	‘stop (sth, sb)’
	yà/yàárá	‘ascend’	‘take (sth) up’
b.	tà^{n}/tànná	‘(e.g. door) shut, become shut’	‘shut (e.g. door)’
c.	wòlò/wòlóó	‘eat, have a meal’	‘eat (sth)’
	má/máárá^{n}	‘build, do construction’	‘build (sth)’
d.	yà^{n}/yàmá	‘be done; happen’	‘do’
	fù/fwǎ	‘(money) be paid’	‘pay’

Textual examples of passives like (378d) include ‘bond be annulled’ (2024_01 @ 01:35), ‘be found’ (2024_03 @ 01:38), ‘fonio be cultivated’ (2024-09 @ 03:44), ‘medicine be given’ (2024_10 @ 02:46), ‘earth be stripped off’ (2024_10 @ 04:51), ‘name be known’ (2026_06 @ 00:37), and ‘kola nuts be taken out (=offered)’ (2026_06 @ 01:03). The sheer ease of using basically transitive verbs as passives is the main reason for the absence of passive and mediopassive derivations.

In (379), the transitive verb is semantically a causative of the intransitive verb, but the forms are unrelated phonologically.

(379) yìlà/yìlá ‘enter’
wⁿá/wⁿā ‘put in’

9.2 Valency increase or decrease by overt derivation

9.2.1 Rare morphological causative (-sì)

There are five known cases (380a-e) of segmentally nonidentical but phonologically related intransitive-transitive pairs, where the transitive functions as causative and ends in a suffix -sì (Pfv), becoming Ipfv -sá (-ATR) or -sé (+ATR). In (380d-e) the intransitive is [-ATR] and the causative shifts to [+ATR]. In both (380d) and (380e), an original *Cvrv may have elided its rhotic before a suffixal *s (§3.4.1.4.2).

(380)

	Pfv/Ipfv	gloss
a.	báká/bákárá	‘become tired, suffer’
	bàkà-sì/bàkà-sá	‘fatigue (sb), wear (sb) out’
b.	yókó-ní/yōkó-ní	‘descend’
	yòkòn-sì X ní/X yòkòn-sé-ní	‘take down, unload’
c.	ùŋmɔ̀/ùŋmɔ́	‘wake up’
	ùŋmɔ̀-sì/ùŋmɔ̀-sá	‘wake (sb) up’
d.	wɛ́rɛ́/wɛ̄rɛ́	‘be shattered’
	wɛ̀ɛ̀-sì/wɛ̀ɛ̀-sé	‘shatter’
e.	fɛ́rɛ́/fɛ̀rɛ́	‘exit (v)’
	fɛ̀sɛ̀/fɛ̀sɛ́	‘take out’

Other trimoraic transitive verbs ending in sì are làkàsì/làkàsá ‘post, affix’, nààsì X míní/X nààsá míní ‘straighten X’, and tùkùsì X míní/X tùkùsá míní ‘snap, break in half’. These are not known to be paired with bimoraic intransitives, but some may be frozen causatives.

This causative with -sì is not to be confused with the phrasal-verb construction with pseudo-postposition sí ‘on’ (§15.1.2.1). The transitive version of the phrasal construction is VERB.Pfv X sí (with sí separated from the verb by the object X) and X VERB.Ipfv-sí. The intransitive version is VERB.Pfv-sí and VERB.Ipfv-sí. Unlike the causatives in (380), the phrasal-verb construction with sí is neutral for transitivity, can be separated from the verb, has invariant i-vowel regardless of aspect, and has invariant H-tone.

A periphrastic causative can be constructed with fíí/fīyé ‘find’ in the main clause, in the sense ‘bring it about that …’, followed by an indicative main clause (§17.1.2.3) or by a long subjunctive (§17.6.6). There are also a few examples of yàⁿ/yàmá ‘do’ with similar meaning, followed by a sequential clause (§17.5.2.1) or by a long subjunctive (§17.6.6).

9.2.2 Passive derivation (absent)

Because it is so easy to use transitive verbs without morphological change as passive or mediopassive intransitives, there is no morphological or morphosyntactic passive formation.

9.3 Deadjectival verbs

9.3.1 Stative adjectival predicates

These predicates are stative and do not distinguish aspect. In positive contexts they are followed by positive (y)ɛ̄. Subject nouns and pronouns take their perfective form, e.g., 1Pl subject tí rather than tì in tí kàà^{n}rì yɛ̄ ‘we are tall’. Most stative verbs are phonologically related to postnominal modifying adjectives (381a), though numerous minor irregularities are observed. A few stative verbs are suppletive (381b).

(381)

	stative verb	gloss	related modifying adjective
a.	bìrì-míní	‘be narrow, tight’	bìrì-kà-nā
	bòmmòrò	‘be robust’	bòmmòròŋ-kà-nā
	bɔ̀lɔ̀kɔ̀	‘be dull, not sharp’	bɔ̀lɔ̀kɔ̀ŋ-kà-nā
	bɔ̀lɔ̀kɔ̀sí	‘be smooth’	bɔ̀lɔ̀kɔ̀síŋ-kà-nā
	fàkàmà	‘be lightweight’	fàkàmàŋ-kà-nā
	fàràkà	‘be tough’	fàràkàŋ-kà-nā
	fɛ́ɛ́sí	‘be clean’	fɛ̀ɛ̀sí-kà-nā
	kàà^{n}rì	‘be tall, imposing’	kàà^{n}rìŋ-kà-nā
	kání	‘be sweet’	kání-kà-nā
	kɔ̄ɔ̄rɔ̄	‘be empty, hollow’	kɔ̀ɔ̀-rɔ̄-nā
	kɔ̀rɔ̀	‘be skinny’	kɔ̀rɔ̀-kà-nā
	kpá	‘be dry, lean’	kpàà-kà-nā
	kpáánsí	‘be hard, solid’	kpàànsí-kà-nā
	kpàràmà	‘be bitter’	kpàràmàŋ-kà-nā
	kpērē^{n}	‘be short’	kpèrèŋ-kà-nā
	kpɔ́rɔ́nsí ~ kpɔ́ɔ́nsí	‘be easy’	kpɔ̀rɔ̀nsí-kà-nā
	lèrɛ̀	‘be wide, spacious’	lèrɛ̀-kà-nā
	máná	‘be sharp’	mànà-kà-nā
	mìrì	‘be red’	mìrì-kà-nā, mìyɛ̄-nā
	nùkùmà	‘be dirty’	nùkùmàŋ-kà-nā
	pílá	‘be cooked, be ripe’	pìlà-kà-nā
	pí^{n}	‘be nasty’	pìn-nā-nā
	pìsìkà	‘be thin’	pìsìkàŋ-kà-nā
	pìsì-míní	‘be ruined’	pìsìmíŋ-kà-nā
	pɔ̀sɔ̀mɔ̀	‘be sour’	pɔ̀sɔ̀mɔ̀ŋ-kà-nā
	síí-míní	‘be very old’	sììmíŋ-kà-nā
	táákáⁿ	‘be nearby’	táákáŋ-kà-nā
	tá-míní	‘be deep’	tà-míŋ-kà-nā
	tásíyó	‘be lofty’	tàsìyòŋ-kà-nā

	ténté	‘be very close’	tènté-kà-nā
	túkú	‘be hot’	tùkù-kà-nā
	tùntùrū^{n}	‘be nicked (blade)’	tùntùrūŋ-kà-nā
	túrá^{n}	‘be distant’	tùràŋ-kà-nā
	wàlà-sí	‘be fast’	wàlà-sí-nnè-nā
	wáyá	‘be leading’	wàyà-kà-nā
	yìbí	‘be full’	yìbì-kà-nā
	yíbí-tú	‘be heavy’	yìbì-tú-kà-nā
	yɔ́kɔ́rɔ̀	‘be much, many’	yɔ̀kɔ̀rɔ́-kà-nà
b.	sírí	‘be fat, big’	cf. modifying pà-nā
	kǎ^{n}	‘be good’	cf. modifying nàā-nā
	sá^{n}	‘be small’	cf. modifying pí-yé-nā
	yìrì	‘be black’	cf. modifying fòō-nā
	wárá	‘be white’	cf. modifying kàà-nā

9.3.2 Deadjectival inchoative verbs

Inchoatives (‘become ADJ’) denote changes of state, and unlike statives they can occur in perfective as well as imperfective clauses. Paleni has no productive inchoative morphology. Some deadjectival verbs can function either as statives or as inchoatives, see (410) below. ‘Rot’ is a regular aspect-marking verb yɛ̀/yɛ̌. The stative verb tììmà ‘be cold, cool; be slow’ is made inchoative by combining it with pseudo-postposition ní ‘down’, hence á tììmà-ɲ́ ɲɛ̀ ‘it cooled off/down’.

Other adjectives, including color terms, occur in nominal form after wààmà/wààmá ‘become’ (§11.2.5.2). (382) shows how this construction can express inchoatives with color adjectives in nominal form with ká (§4.5.1). The positive morpheme (y)ɛ̄ follows wààmà directly, preceding the free postverbal noun (382a).

(382) a. ɛ̀ wààmɛ̀= ɛ̄ [ká mīy^{n}ā]
3HSg turn.Pfv Pos [entity red]
‘He/She turned red.’

b. ɛ̀ wààmà [ká mīy^{n}ā] bɔ̀
3HSg turn.Pfv [entity red] Neg
‘He/She didn’t turn red.’

9.4 Verbs with incorporated nouns

True incorporation of noun roots as compound initials has not been observed. However, a few tight collocations of verbs and nouns can be mentioned.

Transitive wɛ́/wɛ̄ elsewhere means ‘mistreat’ or ‘collect (herbs, wood)’. It occurs in a collocation with an unsuffixed but possessed form of náá-nā ‘mouth’ (plural nú-ɲɛ́-nī).

(383)	perfective	imperfective	gloss
	wɛ́ [X nɑ́ɑ́]	[X nɑ́ɑ́] wɛ̂ ~ [X nú] wɛ̂	‘nourish X’

In perfective clauses, wɛ́ [X nɑ́ɑ́] superficially resembles a phrasal verb. However, imperfective clauses bring nɑ́ɑ́ along with its possessor into preverbal position. By contrast, phrasal verbs strand the pseudo-postposition in postverbal position when the object moves to preverbal position.

9.5 Verb iteration

Verbs and following satellites can be repeated (iterated) to emphasize prolongation.

In (384a), the iteration consists of the Pfv transitive verb and the following object. In the imperfective, the preverbal object is not repeated in the iteration, which begins with the verb (384c).

(384) a. [ī mā kà á] [kà á]
[3Pl Sbjn **devour**.Pfv 3NHSg] [**devour.**Pfv 3NHSg]
‘(said:) “Let’s devour it and devour it!” ’ (2024_10 @ 01:52)

b. tì sàntùnc-é-ñ tūkó-tūkwé= ē
1Pl.I hyena-Pl-Sg **catch**.Ipfv-**catch**.Ipfv Pos
‘We (often) catch and catch (=keep catching) hyenas.’

A more transparent construction is to repeat a same-subject sequential clause with fá that includes the verb (385).

(385) [fá [písàá-ñ ná] sù]
[Comp [child-Sg DefSg] **run**.Pfv]
[fɛ́= è sù] [fɛ́= è sù] [fɛ́= è sù]
[Comp 3HSg **run**.Pfv] [Comp 3HSg **run**.Pfv] [Comp 3HSg **run**.Pfv]
‘and the child ran and he ran and he ran’ (2026_22 @ 00:40)

10 Verbal and clause-level inflection

The most important distinction in a verb's paradigm at word-morphological level is between perfective (Pfv) and imperfective (Ipfv) stems. The Ipfv stem is generally marked, i.e., it is derived from the Pfv. There is sometimes a suffix-like additional final syllable in the Ipfv stem, and in any case the Ipfv stem raises the tone of the final syllable to H if it is not already H. The usual citation form for aspect-marking verbs is Pfv/Ipfv, e.g. sù/sùùsá 'run'. Statives do not mark aspect and have only one stem.

The Pfv and Ipfv stems can combine with postverbal particles or with auxiliary-like postsubject particles to express categories such as future (a subtype of imperfective) and completive perfect (a subtype of perfective).

The verbal noun (§4.2.1.1) is phonologically related to the Ipfv in segmental and tonal form. The agentive (§4.2.1.2) and the place-of-action nominal (§4.2.1.3) are related to the Pfv in segmental form but have tonal similarities to the Ipfv.

Abbreviations Pfv and Ipfv always refer to the morphological categories. No abbreviations are used for "perfective" or "imperfective" when referring to entire clauses or verb complexes. An exception is that lower-case "pfv" and "ipfv" are used where typographically necessary in headings for columns in table-like arrays.

The imperative (Imprt) stem is often identical to the Pfv stem. However, L-toned Pfv stems divide into those that correspond to L-toned Imprt stems and those that correspond to H*L-toned Imprt stems. H*L means monosyllabic <HL>, bisyllabic H.L, or trisyllabic H.H.L.

Polarity is expressed by particles that follow the verb and are often clause-final, positive (y)ɛ̄ and negative bɔ̀. In clauses with instrumental-comitative ('with') adjuncts, (y)ɛ̄ precedes the adjunct while bɔ̀ follows it. Similarly, in biclausal constructions like 'X knows [(that) …]', (y)ɛ̄ follows the main clause while bɔ̀ follows the subordinated clause. bɔ̀ occurs in deontic modals as well as in indicative clauses, while (y)ɛ̄ occurs only in indicatives.

Both polarity particles can be followed by interrogative and emphatic clause-final particles. Polarity, interrogative, and emphatic particles can co-occur with any clause-level inflectional categories, unless otherwise indicated.

As a warm-up, the following examples illustrate typical clausal contexts for Pfv (386a), Ipfv (386b), and Imprt (386c) stems of the transitive verb túkú/tūkó 'catch'. Perfective and imperative clauses have VO order, while imperfective clauses have OV. In (386a), ī is an allomorph of positive (y)ɛ̄.

(386) a. sàntùŋkóó-ñ túkú nūū-mā-n ī
hyena-Sg catch.**Pfv** chicken-Sg-Sg Pos
'The hyena caught a/the chicken.'

b. sùntùŋkóó-ñ nūū-má-ñ tūkó bɔ̀
hyena-Sg chicken-Sg-Sg catch.**Ipfv** Neg
'A/The hyena doesn't (=won't) catch a/the chicken.'

c. túkú nūū-mā-nā
catch.**Imprt** chicken-Sg-Sg
'Catch-2Sg the chicken!'

Similar examples with an intransitive verb yɔ́kɔ́/yɔ̄kɔ́ 'jump' are in (387). The most important difference versus transitives is that an intransitive Imprt verb may be clause-final.

(387) a. sàntùŋkóó-ɲ̄ ɲɔ́kɛ́= ɛ̄
hyena-Sg jump.**Pfv** Pos
'The hyena jumped.'

b. sàntùŋkóó-ɲ̄ ɲɔ̄kɔ́ bɔ̀
hyena-Sg jump.**Ipfv** Neg
'The hyena doesn't jump.'

c. yɔ́kɔ́
jump.**Imprt**
'Jump-2Sg!'

10.1 Verb stems

10.1.1 Segmental shapes

Verb stems must end in a vowel, or in a vowel plus a nasal coda that is expressed in the citation form as vowel nasalization. The syllable count in Pfv and Imprt verbs is usually one, two, or three, but some Ipfv stems add an extra syllable. Pfv/Ipfv stems of more than three syllables are unattested, if bɔ̀lɔ̀kɔ̀-sí 'be smooth' is bimorphemic. The minimal shape is Cv or Cv^{n}. Other shapes include Cvv, CvCv, CvvCv, CvCvCv, and so forth, plus counterparts with final nasal codas.

Transitive Cv verbs lengthen to Cvv before enclitic-like Cv object pronominals (with some exceptions for 3NHSg object), thus kà 'devour.Pfv', kàà yɛ̀ 'devoured him/her'. Some Cv Pfv/Imprt stems correspond to CvvCv Ipfv stems (§10.2.1.5).

Nasal codas harden into nasal consonants when not prepausal. Before a consonant, a nasal coda is heard as a homorganic nasal, as in ɛ̀ wùnám bɔ̀ 'he/she doesn't breathe'. It combines with y as ɲɲ, as in wùná^{n} 'breathe.Ipfv', ɛ̀ wùnáɲ ɲɛ̄ 'he/she breathes' with positive (y)ɛ̄. Before the added final á in Ipfv stems, and before 3NHSg object á, the nasal coda hardens to n, or geminated nn for monosyllabic verbs. An example is mí^{n} 'hide.Pfv', mínn á 'hid it', and mīnná 'hide.Ipfv'. Three verbs harden the nasal coda to m instead of (n)n.

10.1.2 Lexical tones

Since most Ipfv stems include a tonal change, the lexical tone melody is arguably best determined from the Pfv stem. A range of lexical melodies is observed. The tones and tone melodies in (388) are attested for uncompounded Pfv verb stems. All melodies are monotonal (level) or bitonal. Bitonal melodies have the tone break at the right edge (as seen in

trimoraics). Level /H/ and level /L/ melodies are predominant. Rising melodies and level /M/ are attested, but falling melodies are absent, if deadjectival stative yɔ́kɔ́rɔ̀ ‘be many’ is excluded.

(388)

melody	example (Pfv or Stat)	gloss
a. monosyllabic		
most common		
H	kú	‘die’
L	pà	‘come’
attested but uncommon		
M	māā	‘greet’
LH	bă^{n}	‘flood (v)’
absent		
HL	—	
HM	—	
MH	—	
b. bisyllabic		
most common		
H.H	báká	‘get tired’
L.L	kùrù	‘snore’
attested but uncommon		
L.H	wɔ̀rɔ́^{n}	‘slide’
M.M	tīkī	‘leave, abandon’
absent		
M.H	—	
H.L	—	
H.M	—	
L.M	—	
M.L	—	
c. trisyllabic		
most common		
H.H.H	yókórí	‘skim’
L.L.L	yàlàkà	‘pull’
attested		
H.H.L (one ex.)	yɔ́kɔ́rɔ̀	‘be a lot, abound’
L.L.H	kàràfá	‘entrust’ (< Jula)
absent		
L.H.H	—	
L.L.M	—	
L.M.M	—	
H.L.L	—	
H.H.L	—	
M.M.M	—	

M.M.H	—
M.H.H	—
M.M.L	—
M.L.L	—

The few known level M-toned regular intransitive and transitive verbs are listed in (389a-b). Statives have a wider range of lexical melodies and several are M-toned (389c).

(389) M-toned verbs (Pfv or stative)

a. intransitive

kɔ̄lɔ̄^{n}	‘cough’	
tīkī ~ tūkū	‘follow’	
tɔ̄ɔ̄sī	‘do farming’	also transitive

b. transitive

kānā	‘show’	
māā	‘greet’	
tīkī	‘leave, abandon’	
tɔ̄ɔ̄sī	‘cultivate (crops)’	also intransitive
yēbē^{n}	‘snatch’	
tūkū^{n}	‘reply; accept’	

c. stative and/or deadjectival

kīlānī	‘want’
kpērē^{n}	‘be short’
y^{n}ūū	‘(meat) be boiling’

The known cases of rising and falling melodies as observed in Pfv or stative stems are listed in (390). ‘Be smooth’ may be a phrasal verb. Clearly phrasal verbs are excluded.

(390) a. LH-toned

bǎ^{n}	‘flood (v)’
bɔ̀lɔ̀kɔ̀(-)sí	‘be smooth’
còmí^{n}	‘rip off’
jɛ̀ɛ́^{n}	‘join together (small group)’
kàlá^{n}	‘read, study’
kàràfá	‘entrust’
kɔ̀rɔ̀sí^{n}	‘guard, watch over’
nààrí^{n}	‘injure’
nàŋkàá^{n}	‘steal’
sàrá^{n}	‘pay (sb)’
sùŋkú^{n}	‘must’
wùní	‘breathe’
yàmá	‘said’

b. LM

tùntùrūⁿ	‘be nicked’

c. HL

yɔ́kɔ́rɔ̀	‘be a lot, abound’

All of the above is based on taking the tones of the Pfv stem as lexically basic. This clearly makes senses regarding segmental form. With regard to tone melodies, a case can be made that the Ipfv stem is basic except for its final H-tone. This is because some H-toned Pfv stems correspond to H-toned Ipfv stems and others correspond to MH-toned Ipfv stems, so the Ipfv tones cannot be predicted from the Pfv. Furthermore, the initial tone of the Ipfv usually determines the tones of deverbal nominals.

10.2 Morphophonology of verb paradigms

10.2.1 Ipfv stem formation

The Ipfv stem of each aspect-marking verb ends in an H-toned syllable, except that monosyllabic stems can have rising tones in the Ipfv. The stem-final vowel quality is basically a, shifting to o or e by vowel harmony after some [+ATR] stems. A Pfv that ends in a nasal coda has an Ipfv stem with …(n)ná or in three cases …má. Some other verbs add an extra syllable with a different consonant such as s or r.

In phrasal verbs, the pseudo-postposition (psP) is not involved in the morphology of Ipfv stem formation.

10.2.1.1 Pfv and Ipfv identical

Almost all aspectually dynamic verbs have some audible distinction between Pfv and Ipfv stems. In some cases the tonal difference is present, but nearly inaudible in clausal contexts. For example, pà/pă ‘come’ combine with positive (y)ɛ̄ as pɛ̀ = ɛ̄ (perfective) and pɛ̆ = ɛ̄ (imperfective), a rather subtle distinction.

The only known case of total homophony is kpésí/kpésí ‘criticise’.

10.2.1.2 Ipfv formed from Pfv by raising its final tone

If the Pfv ends in a nonhigh-toned syllable, its final tone must be raised to H in the Ipfv. Many mono- and bisyllabic stems have L-toned Pfv and L*H-toned Ipfv (391a-b). The small number of verbs with M-toned Pfv stems have MH-toned Ipfv (391b).

(391)

	Pfv/Ipfv type	Pfv	Ipfv	gloss
a.	l/lh	kà	kă	‘eat (meat)’
		kùntù	kùntó	‘crawl’

		yìlà	yìlá	‘enter’
		yèkèmà	yèkèmá	‘belch’
b.	m/mh	tīkī	tīká	‘leave, abandon’
		tɔ̄ɔ̄sī	tɔ̄ɔ̄sá	‘cultivate, do farming’

10.2.1.3 H-toned Pfv becomes MH Ipfv

Raising the final tone to H in the Ipfv (see the preceding subsection) would be vacuous with verbs whose Pfv already ends in H-tone. The majority of /H/-melodic verbs, especially mono- and bisyllabics, form the Ipfv by dropping the tone of the initial syllable (or mora) one notch to M (392). If the verb has an extra final syllable in the Ipfv, the M-tone spreads to the second syllable. As a reminder, the diacritic in ā is for <MH>-toned short vowel.

(392)

Pfv/Ipfv type	Pfv	Ipfv	gloss
h/mh			
monosyllabic			
	kú	kpā	‘die’
	sá	sā	‘(rain) fall’
	sáá-ní	sāá-ní	‘fall’
bisyllabic			
	fɛ́ré	fɛ̄ré	‘exit (v)’
	sááfúú	sāāfúú	‘go into hole; (sun) set’
	wɛ́ré	wɛ̄ré	‘shatter’
	yáká	yāká	‘weep’
	yílá	yīlá	‘call’
	yókó-ní	yōkó-ní	‘descend’ (phrasal verb)
	yɔ́kɔ́	yɔ̄kɔ́	‘jump’
trisyllabic (Ipfv)			
	yíbí	yībīyé	‘become full’
	yímí-ní	yīmīná-ní	‘bend over’ (phrasal verb)

10.2.1.4 Ipfv lowers the final high vowel to nonhigh

Some verbs with final high vowels {i u} show segmental changes in the Ipfv, in addition to the tonal alternations described above. There are two types of vocalic shift. In the first type illustrated in (393a), a final high vowel {i u} drops all the way to a (or a^{n}). In the second type, the final vowel drops stepwise from Pfv {i u} to the corresponding [+ATR] mid-height vowel {e o}. This three-way a/e/o alternation fits a vowel-harmonic pattern also observed in some noun-class suffixes, where a is [-ATR], {e o} are [+ATR], and e versus o is determined by back/rounded harmony (§3.3.4).

(393)	shift	Pfv	Ipfv	gloss
a.	u→ a	kú	kpā	‘die’
		kùrù	kùr^{n}á	‘snore’
		wùrù	wùrá^{n}	‘jab’
	i→ a	wùní	wùná^{n}	‘breathe’
		kpísí	kpīsá	‘finish’
		kìrì	kììsá	‘walk’
		sàkàlì	sàkàlá	‘bark, grunt’
		tɔ̄ɔ̄sī	tɔ̄ɔ̄sá	‘cultivate’
b.	u→ o	fùù	fòó	‘bury’
		túkú	tūkó	‘catch’
		kùntù	kùntó	‘crawl’
	i→ e	kòlòŋcì	kòlòŋcé	‘roll’
		wèèsì	wèèsé	‘shatter’ or ‘lightly grind’
		yòkòn-sì X ní	X yòkòn-sé-ní	‘take down’

This high i/u versus nonhigh a/e/o alternation has a carryover effect on combinations of the Pfv stem with 3NHSg á object clitic. Transitive verbs in (393b) that drop final u to o in the Ipfv also shift 3NHSg á to ó after the Pfv stem, thus fù wó ‘buried it’ and túkó= ó ‘caught it’. By contrast, the verbs that drop final i to e in the Ipfv in (393n) do not have parallel Pfv forms with 3NHSg object. Instead, they combine the final i of the Pfv with 3NHSg object allomorph á as aa by regular vv-Contraction: kòlòŋcà= á ‘rolled it’, wèèsà= á ‘shattered it’, and yòkòn-sà= á ní ‘took it down’.

10.2.1.5 Ipfv adds a suffix-like syllabic extension Cá/Cɛ́/Cé

Many verbs add a syllable at the right edge of the Ipfv stem. In effect, they add a consonant, since the final vowel is one of those allowed by other Ipfv stems. The final-H requirement for Ipfv stems is satisfied by the extra syllable.

The extra syllable has vowel a, with the partial exception of ‘give’ (394b). This vowel is preceded by an epenthetic y after i (394a), or w after u (394b). If the Pfv stem ends in a nasal coda, the latter is manifested as nn after a Cv stem, and as n after hearvier stems (394c), see §3.2.1.3 and §3.4.1.7. A handful of verbs convert the nasal coda to m (394d). The irregular verb ‘arrive’ has a nasal coda in the Pfv but a nasalized semivowel in the Ipfv (394e).

(394)	extra syllable	Pfv	Ipfv	gloss
a.	ya	nì	nìy^{n}á	‘drink’ or ‘hear’
		sómí	sōmīyá	‘peck’
		tímí	tīmīyá	‘transplant’

b.	wa/wɔ	fú	fwā̃ (< /fūá/)	‘emerge from hole’
		tù	tùwá	‘bathe’
		nù	nùwⁿɔ́ ~ nùwⁿá	‘give’
c.	(n)na	bǎⁿ	bànná	‘flood (v)’
		yààⁿ X lè	X yààná-lè	‘expel’
		bóróⁿ	bōrōná	‘shout’
		kùmà(ⁿ)	kùmàná	‘bear (a child)’
d.	ma	yàⁿ	yàmá	‘do’
e.	(irregular)	fìⁿ	fìyⁿá	‘arrive’

The type with wá is limited to the verbs listed in (394b) above, but kú/kpā̃ ‘die’ was probably once of this type. The types with yá and ná are productive.

In some verbs with bisyllabic Pfv stem CaCa, the final a is raised to i, followed by yá in the Ipfv (395). The y in yá is arguably epenthetic.

(395)	extra syllable	Pfv	Ipfv	gloss
	ya	máná	mānīyá	‘speak, say’
		yàlà	yàlìyá	‘pour out’
		fálá X sí	X fālīyá-sí	‘carve’
		yáná	yānīyá	‘roast’

When the Pfv stems in (395) are followed by 3NHSg (y)á object, the same stem-final shift to í occurs, e.g., mání yá ‘said it’ (§3.4.1.8).

The verbs in (395) have an alveolar sonorant l or n medially. wàlà/wàlá ‘cook (a meal)’ with medial l, and fàyà/fàyá ‘split’ with medial y, do not follow the pattern in (395). Nor do CaCa verbs with medial obstruent: káká/kāká ‘open’, wàkà/wàká ‘remain’, yáká/yāká ‘weep’, yàkà/yàká ‘pinch’, tàkà/tàká ‘dip’, kàsà X míní/X kàsá-míní ‘scatter’.

Another set of verbs with added Ipfv yá or [+ATR] yé has Pfv stem Ci, Cii, CiCi, or CeCe. Ipfv nìyⁿá (396a) is comparable to fìyⁿá ‘arrive.Ipfv’ (394e) and the Ipfv stems in (394b) above. The verbs in (396b) are bimoraic [+ATR] verbs.

(396)	extra syllable	Pfv	Ipfv	gloss
a.	ya	nì	nìyⁿá	‘hear’ or ‘drink’
b.	ye	píí	pīyé	‘ask (sb)’
		fíí	fīyé	‘find’
		líí	līyé	‘kill’
		bèlè X sí	X bèlìyé-sí	‘marry’
		sélé	sēlīyé	‘weave’

When the Pfv stems in (396) are followed by 3NHSg (y)á, the combinations are these: nìy^{n} á, pí yé, fĭ yé, lí yé, bèlì yá sí, sélí yá. In pí yé, fĭ yé, and lí yé the 3NHSg pronominal also shows ATR harmony with the verb.

Still other stems have an unpredictable consonantal onset to the extra syllable. Since s is a special case (see below), (397) presents the other cases. All but 'look at' have final á in the Ipfv. Those in (397a) are singletons that must have their own idiosyncratic prehistories. 'Go' (397a) and 'look at' (397c) have elided an original medial *k or *r in the Pfv, followed by vv-Contraction. The Pfv's of 'sleep', 'do', and 'urinate' (397b) may have originally ended in *m. However, 'buy' (397a) looks more like a composite Ipfv. The cases with ra in (397d) are fairly numerous, and this does look like a frozen suffix since the preceding root keeps its Pfv tone and lengthens a short vowel.

(397)		extra syllable	Pfv	Ipfv	gloss
	a.	ba	fĭ	fĭíbá	'buy'
		ka	láá	lāká ~ lāá	'go' (§10.2.2.1)
	b.	ma	yɔ̀rɔ̀^{n}	yɔ́rɔ́má	'sleep'
			yà^{n}	yàmá	'do'
			fúrú^{n}	fúúmá	'urinate'
	c.	re	kèè	kèréé	'look at'
	d.	ra	yà	yàárá	'ascend'
			yá	yáárá	'ask for'
			wá	wāārá	'be full (of food)'
			má	máárá^{n}	'build'
			tà	tàárá	'pick up'
			báká	bákárá	'get tired'
			sùkù	sùkùrá	'sell'

10.2.2 Suppletive and irregular verbs

10.2.2.1 'Go' (láá, lāká, tā, tā, tá)

The forms of 'go' as pronounced by the older speaker are summarized in (398). A set of l-initial forms contrasts with a parallel set of t-initial forms. The l-forms occur mainly in independent main clauses, while the t-forms occur mainly in subordinate clauses and in biclausal constructions.

(398)			
	a.	láá	Pfv stem (in main clause)
		tā	Pfv stem (in multi-verb constructions)
	b.	lāká ~ lāá	Ipfv stem (in main clause)
		tā	Ipfv stem (in multi-verb constructions)

c.	kí-lāā	Imprt stem (in main clause)
	láà	Imprt stem (variant, after subjunctive bā ~ mā)
	tá	Imprt stem (in multi-verb constructions)
		(heard as tā before H-tone)

Imprt tá is H-toned as simple 'go!' with or without an overt locational like 'there', and in multi-clause subjunctive combinations like [fɛ̄= ɛ̄ n̄ tá] […] 'and he/she went and …' with open-ended following clause. 'Come!' is tá pā, plural addressee ɔ̄ tá pā, and 'go back!' is tá kɔ̂-míní 'go back!' A following clause beginning with 3NHSg á, 3Pl í, or other H-toned nominal is compatible with tá. However, tá is heard as M-toned tā when tightly combined (and arguably compounded) with an H-initial second verb, e.g. tā yâ 'go and ascend', tā [fí X] 'go buy X!' Plural addressee ɔ̄ tā yâ with level-pitched ɔ̄ tā confirms that tā is M-toned. The combination tá kɔ̂-míní 'go back!' with H-toned tá may reflect the fact that phonologically <HL>- toned kɔ̂ in kɔ̂-míní 'go back!' is pronounced with level mid pitch.

The t- and l-initial forms may be diachronically related. Progressive lā ~ tā (§10.5.2.1) may be a grammaticalized form of 'go'. Dative postposition lɔ̄ hardens (and raises) to tɔ́ after a nasal, as in cá-n̄ tɔ́ 'to the woman' (§8.1.1.2). However, the l-initial forms of 'go' nasalize to n-initial after another nasal, as in n̄ nākɛ́= ɛ̄ 'I (often) go'.

Examples of Pfv 'go' are in (399). Simple main clauses, with and without overt locational expressions, have Pfv láá (399a). An imperfective VP can be added to láá, here exemplified with verbs wòlóó 'eat.Ipfv' and fííbá 'buy.Ipfv' (399b). láà is attested after subjunctive mā (399c), where it competes with tá 'go.Imprt'.

(399)	a.	zàkîì **láá** yɛ̄	'Zaki went.'
		zàkîì **láá** bɛ̄ ɛ̄	'Zaki already went.'
		zàkîì **láá** yó ɛ̄	'Zaki went to the village.'
		zàkîì **láá** [tɔ̄ɔ̄-kà-m̄ mím] bɔ̀	'Zaki didn't go to the field.'
		tɛ̀ zàkîì **láá**	'if Zaki goes'
		zàkîì ǹ **náá**	'it was <u>Zaki</u> [focus] who went.
	b.	[zàkîì **láá**] [wòlóó] yɛ̄	'Zaki went and ate.'
		[zàkîì **láá**] [bā-bá-m̄ fííbɛ́=] ɛ̄	'Zaki went and bought a sheep.'
	c.	ɛ̀ lɔ́ɔ̀ yálè [ɛ̄ mā **láà**]	'He/She wanted to go.'

However, when 'go' is tightly phrased with a following VP or clause, the usual Pfv form is tā (400a). tā is required in indicative fá clauses (400b-d). In (400b), tā in this linking function is followed by an imperfective clause beginning with tā́ 'go.Ipfv'. tā in linking function need not denote actual motion, whereas a following tā́ 'go.Ipfv' does denote actual motion.

(400)	a.	[zàkîì	tɛ̄=	ɛ̄]	
		[Z	**go.Pfv**	Pos]	
		[fɛ́=	ɛ̀	wòlò	y^{n}îì]
		[Comp	3Hsg	eat.Pfv	yesterday]
		'Zaki went and he ate yesterday.'			

b. tì tɔ̀ɔ̀ [í tūkwé=] ē,
1PlI Past.Ipfv [3Pl catch.Ipfv] Pos,
[fá tí tā]
[Comp 1PlP **go.Pfv**]
[tɛ̄= [=ɛ́ sùkùrá]]
[go.Ipfv [3Pl sell.Ipfv]]
'We used to capture them. Then we would go and sell them.' (2024_03 @ 01:23)

c. fɔ̄-mā-ñ tīkī= í lā,
dog-Sg-Sg leave.Pfv 3Pl there.Def,
[fá= á tā]
[Comp 3NHSg **go.Pfv**]
[fá= á yɔ́kɔ́], [[ǹsánàmpē-ná-m̄ pò-ñ] sí]
[Comp 3NHSg jump.Pfv], [hare-Sg-Sg child-Sg] on]
'The dog left them there. Then it (=dog) went and it jumped on hare's child.'
(2024_01 @ 01_03 to 01:06)

d. [fá á tā] [fá á fìŋ [[ŋóón tòrō] lɔ̄]]
[Comp 3NHSg **go.Pfv**] [Comp 3NHSg arrive.Pfv [[village a.certain] Dat]]
'Then it went and arrived at a certain village.' (2026_27 @ 00:29)

That linking tā is perfective is confirmed by the forms of those pronominal-subject proclitics that have different perfective and imperfective forms (1Pl tí tā, 2Pl ɔ́ tā, 2Sg bɛ́ tā). As in the examples above, a perfective tā clause is typically minimal in form (fá plus pronominal plus tā), and it is prosodically linked to the following open-ended fá clause (400a) or bare imperfective VP (400b).

Simple imperfective clauses with lāká ~ lāá are in (401). The k is optionally elided, and is pronounced [g] when it is not elided. The bisyllabic and monosyllabic pronunciations are in free variation. It is also possible to use lāká ~ lāá when directly followed by an imperfective VP (401b).

(401) a. zàkîì **lāké=** ɛ̄ 'Zaki goes/is going.'
zàkîì **lāká** yó ɛ̄ 'Zaki is going to the village.'
ñ **nāká** yó bɔ̀ 'I am not going to the village.'
tì wɛ́ɛ̀ **lāá** yɛ̄ 'We will go.'

b. [ñ **nāká**] [wòlóó] yɛ̄ 'I (often) go and eat.'

The alternative form for 'go.Ipfv' is tā́ with <MH> tone, consistent with the required final H-tone of Ipfv verbs. This allomorph is common before another imperfective VP, where it competes with lāká ~ lāá, and after subject-focus ŋ (402a). tā́ is obligatory in imperfective clauses that are appended to a preceding linking clause, which regularly results in the sequence …tā] [tā́… as in (402b) and (400b) above. Here the first tā is the linking 'go.Pfv' (with watered-down or absent motion sense) and the second tā́ is 'go.Ipfv'. tā́ is also more common than lāká ~ lāá in imperfective complements of 'be able (to VP)' (402c).

(402) a. [zàkîì **tā̀**] [wòlóó] yɛ̄ ‘Zaki (often) goes and eats.’
[zàkîì ǹ] **tā̀** ‘It’s Zaki [focus] who goes.’

b. [fɛ́= è tā] [**tā̀** [tɛ̀ núú-nā-nā]],
[Comp 3HSg go.Pfv] [go.Ipfv [with corpse-Sg-Sg]]
‘Then he went away with the corpse.’ (2026_27 @ 02:24)

c. è wɛ́ɛ̀ fìy^{n}á [**tā̀**/lāá] bɔ̀
3HSg Fut be.able.Ipfv [go.Ipfv] Neg
‘He/She will not be able to go.’

The regular positive imperative of ‘go’ is kí-lāā (403a). It is presumably composite diachronically, but the initial kí is synchronically obscure. kí-lāā also occurs in simple positive horatives (403b). kí-lāā is grammatical but uncommon under negation (403c). It does occur in subjunctives with postsubject bā ~ mā (403d).

(403) a. kí-lāā ‘Go-2Sg!’
kí-lāā yóò ‘Go-2Sg to the village!’
ɔ̄ kí-lāā ‘Go-2Pl!’

b. tī kí-lāā ‘Let’s go!’

c. bɛ̄ kí-lāā bɔ̀ ‘Don’t-2Sg go!’
tī kí-lāā bɔ̀ ‘Let’s not go!’

d. tī bā kí-lāā ~ tī bā láà ‘so that we may go’

The common ‘go.Imprt’ form under negation is tá (404a), cf. tā ‘go.Pfv’ and tā̀ ‘go.Ipfv’. tá (or its M-toned variant tā before H-tone) is also regular when it is followed by a second imperative VP (404b), see also §15.1.3.2. The usual imperative of ‘come’ is tá pā (404c), where ‘go’ does not have its usual noncentripetal directional sense. tá is also optionally preposed to other imperative motion verbs (‘ascend’, ‘descend’, ‘enter’, ‘exit’), where the second verb can be in the Imprt stem for a bounded action or in the Ipfv stem for extended action (404d). Finally, tá is regular after short subjunctive ŋ (404e), and it is an option after long subjunctive bā ~ mā.

(404) a. bɛ̄ tá bɔ̀ ‘Don’t-2Sg go!’
bɛ̄ tá yó bɔ̀ ‘Don’t-2Sg go to the village!’
ɔ̄ tá bɔ̀ ‘Don’t-2Pl go!’

b. tá [wòlò] ‘Go-2Sg eat!’
tá [nì] ‘Go-2Sg drink!’
tā [fǐ námá-sá-nā] ‘Go-2Sg buy some meat!’
ɔ̄ tá [máná] ‘Go-2Pl speak!’

c. tá pā ‘Come-2Sg!’
bɛ̄ tá pā bɔ̀ ‘Don’t-2Sg come!’
bɛ̄ pá bɔ̀ ‘Don’t-2Sg come!’

d. yâ ‘Ascend-2Sg!’
tā yâ ‘Ascend-2Sg!’
tá yàárá ‘Keep-2Sg ascending!’

e. wɛ̀ɛ̀ [fá ká-sèr-ē-m̄ mà tā =] [á yàmá] sìkē]
so [Comp old.person-Pl-Pl Past go.Pfv] [3NHSg do.Ipfv] thus],
[fī = ī n̄ **tá**]
[Comp 3Pl Sbjn go.Imprt]
[[yùkùmàŋ-kì-nī, tōn-nā-m̄] bèlìyé [tóŋ kīlānī]]
[[event-Pl-Pl, all-Sg-Sg] fix.Ipfv [Recip among]]
‘That is how the old people did it; they would go and organize all events (=rites) collectively.’ (2024_03 @ 02:21)

10.2.2.2 ‘Come’ (pà/pă)

Pfv pà and Ipfv pă are quite regular.

The expected Imprt stem for a verb with L-toned Pfv would be either #pà or #pâ.The actual imperative phrase for ‘come!’ is composite tá pā. In subjunctive clauses, ‘come.Imprt’ has the tonal forms pá and pā, whose distribution mirrors that of the more common ‘go’. As with tá ~ tā ‘go/Imprt’, M-toned pā ‘come.Imprt’ is heard before a tightly phrased following verb beginning with H-tone. H-toned pá is usual in other contexts.

The syntax of ‘come’ resembles that of ‘go’ (§15.1.3). Both can be followed by open-ended imperfective VPs, sequential clauses, or short subjunctive clauses. ‘Come’ as well as ‘go’ is sometimes doubled, as in ‘X came [and came] [and VPed]’, see (691b).

10.2.2.3 ‘Hit’ (yó/wùsó)

The forms of ‘hit’ are in (405).

(405) a. yó ‘hit.Pfv’
yó ‘hit.Imprt’

b. wùsó ‘hit.Ipfv’
wūsō-nā verbal noun

As with other monomoraic transitive verbs, yó lengthens its vowel in yóó yɛ̀ ‘hit him/her’, yóó mì ‘hit me’, and yóó bɛ̀ ‘hit-you-Sg’. It is clearly short in yó ó ‘hit it’ and in yó í ‘hit them’. The 3Pl object combination is yó í, never #yórí = í with inserted r, which we would expect from a true bimoranic Cvv verb. See (31a) and (57) above.

(406) a. ɲ́ ɲó í bɔ̀
1Sg hit.Pfv 3Pl Neg
'I didn't hit them.'

b. yó í 'Hit-2Sg them!'
yó ó 'Hit-2Sg it!'
yóó yɛ̀ 'Hit-2Sg him/her!'
yó zàkî 'Hit-2Sg Zaki!'

Although yó and wùsó are suppletive synchronically, it is conceivable that they are cognate. The irregular Pfv/Ipfv pairings sù/sùùsá 'run' and sɔ̀/sùsɔ́ 'dance (v)' could be vestiges of an ancient Ipfv suffix *-sɔ́ with a back or low vowel. If the second syllable of wùsó can be accounted for in this fashion, the remaining issue is whether yó and wù- are cognate. The u in wùsó could have been raised from *o before the sibilant suffix, parallel to the raising of ɔ to u in sɔ̀/sùsɔ́ 'dance'.

10.2.2.4 yà^{n}/yàmá 'do' or 'be done'

Both as transitive 'do' and as intransitive 'be done, happen', this verb is basically regular in form. It is one of three verbs whose nasal coda in the Pfv corresponds to m rather than to (n)n in Ipfv yàmá, and in the combination of the Pfv with 3NHSg á object (yàm á 'did it'). The regular imperative yâ^{n} 'do!' is well attested.

However, in addition to its function as 'do.Ipfv', yàmá is also common as an equivalent of wɛ̄-sìkɛ̄ 'said' before quoted matter. In this construction, the subject of yàmá 'said' takes perfective forms, e.g., bɛ́ yàmá 'you-Sg said'.

There is also an H-toned form yámá that replaces the usual Imprt yâ^{n} in subordinated clauses and multi-verb imperatives in the sense 'do until' with the sense completed by a following clause (§17.3.2.2).

10.3 Dynamic (aspect-marking) and stative verbs

Aspectually dynamic verbs that denote events and actions distinguish Pfv from Ipfv stems. This allows them to occur in perfective clauses (including fá sequential clauses) and in imperfective contexts (simple imperfective clauses, future clauses with wɛ́ɛ̀, imperfective VP complements to motion verbs). (407) exemplifies with wùrù/wùrá^{n} 'jab'.

(407) a. tí wùrù zàkî yɛ̄ 'We jabbed Zaki.'
b. tì zàkî wùré^{n}= ɛ̄ 'We (often) jab Zaki.'
c. tì wɛ́ɛ̀ [zàkî wùré^{n}=] ɛ̄ 'We will jab Zaki.'

Dynamic verbs also occur in imperative clauses if the meaning allows (408), as well as in short and long subjunctive clauses.

(408) ɔ̄ wùrù zàkî 'Jab-2Pl Zaki!'

Stative verbs do not distinguish Pfv from Ipfv stems, do not occur in the future construction with wɛ́ɛ̀, do not have imperatives, and do not occur in subjunctive clauses.

Most statives are intransitive deadjectival statives meaning 'be ADJ' (§9.3.1). Their subjects have the same form as in perfective clauses of dynamic verbs. Examples are tí rather than tì for 1Pl, and ɔ́ rather than mɔ̀ for 2Pl (409a-b).

(409) a. tí kpērɛ̄ŋ ɲɛ̄ 'We are short.'
b. ɔ́ yíbí-tú yɛ̄ 'You-Pl are heavy.'
c. á yìrì yɛ̄ 'It is black.'

Some deadjectival verbs like 'be short' can also function as inchoatives ('become short'), in which case they can form an Ipfv stem (410). Other deadjectival verbs like 'become black' lack this capability, and are strictly stative. In inchoative contexts, they take nominal form with ká (410). They can also follow the verb wààm̀a/wààmá 'become', which itself has Pfv and Ipfv stems, see (382a-b) above.

(410) tì pá kpērēné= ē
1PlI Fut become.short.Ipfv Pos
'We will become short.'

sùwⁿɔ̀ ~ sìyⁿɔ̀/sùwⁿɔ́ 'know' is an aspectually dynamic verb in Paleni. kīlānī 'want' occurs in imperfective-like frames, and could be regarded as a special type of stative, but it does not have the morphology of a true Ipfv stem (§11.2.6.2.1).

10.4 Perfective and perfect categories

10.4.1 Perfective

The most consistent distinction in form between a (simple) perfective clause and a (simple) imperfective clause is that the verb is in the Pfv or Ipfv stem, respectively. Neither clause type has a post-subject TAM particle. Polarity is independent of TAM marking and is expressed by postverbal positive or negative particles.

Some subject pronominals (1Pl, 2Sg, 2Pl, 3HSg) have different tonal forms in perfective (H-toned) and imperfective (L-toned) clauses. For 2Pl there is also a segmental difference, perfective ɔ́ versus imperfective mɔ̀. See §4.3.2 for details. Many nouns also have different tonal forms as subjects before perfective versus imperfective VPs due to Final Tone-Raising, which applies to subjects and objects in imperfective (but not perfective) clauses.

Perfective main clauses prototypically describe completed, temporally bounded events usually in the past. Antecedent ('if') clauses in conditional constructions are perfective if they denote single, temporally bounded hypothetical events, but imperfective antecedents are allowed if they denote recurrent or unbounded eventualities (§16.1.1). Sequential clauses that begin with complementizer fá (~ fɔ́) require a Pfv verb (§17.5.1).

10.4.2 Marked perfect categories

Some particles that give perfect-like nuances to perfective clauses are bḕ ‘already’ (§8.4.4.1.2), lɛ̀ ‘just’ (§8.4.4.1.3), and ɲú ‘ever’ (§8.4.4.1.2). The past perfect (‘had VPed’) is expressed by the perfective with the reference time shifted to the past (§10.7.2).

10.5 Imperfective and future categories

10.5.1 Imperfective

For transitive verbs, the object precedes the verb in imperfective clauses, unlike the case in perfective and imperative clauses. This applies to pronominal as well as to full-NP objects.

For intransitive verbs, the distinction between perfective and imperfective clause is most reliably made by the choice of the Ipfv stem as opposed to the Pfv (or Imprt) stem of the verb. There are no Ipfv inflectional morphemes (e.g., postsubject auxiliaries) outside of the verb itself in basic imperfective clauses. However, postsubject particles do occur along with Ipfv verbs in future and progressive constructions.

Most 1st/2nd person pronominal proclitics have different forms as subjects of imperfective clauses and as subjects of perfective and imperative clauses. For 1Pl and 2Sg the difference is tonal: imperfective 1Pl tì and 2Sg bɛ̀ versus H-toned for perfective and M-toned for imperative/hortative. For 2Pl there is also a segmental difference: imperfective mɔ̀, perfective ɔ́, imperative ɔ̄.

Nouns that are eligible for Final Tone-Raising undergo this tonal process as subjects of imperfective clauses, but not as subjects of perfective clauses (§3.6.2.6.1). Final Tone-Raising also applies to preverbal objects in transitive imperfective clauses.

Final Tone-Raising also applies to nouns functioning as possessors and as compound initials. This suggests the diachronic scenario (411), which is further supported by the close morphological relationship between Ipfv verb stems and corresponding verbal nouns.

(411) stage 1 — proto-language is strictly VO regardless of aspect;
N-N including N-VblN compounds with incorporated object are right-headed;
compound initials undergo Final Tone-Raising

stage 2 — a progressive construction “X is in (duck-)hunting’”develops:
intransitive: *X *be* [VblN *in*] …
transitive: *X *be* [[Y-VblN] *in*] …
with Y as compound initial (incorporated object)

stage 3 — Y expands from a simple compound initial to a full NP;
schematically *X is in [those black ducks] hunting*

stage 4 — the old progressive expands to become the general imperfective;
new progressives of the original type can pop up later (see below)

stage 5	‘be’ is grammaticalized as imperfective auxiliary; ‘be’ erodes to zero, leaving behind a tonal trace on the subject; ‘in’ postposition is grammaticalized, then erodes to zero

10.5.2 Progressive

10.5.2.1 Progressive with post-subject lā ~ tā

The simple imperfective construction (412a) is made progressive by adding lā ~ tā after the subject, which takes Pfv form for pronominal subjects (412b). lā and tā are dialectal variants in simple main clauses. They may be diachronically related to one or the other of ‘go’ (láá/lāká), ‘be’ (tɔ̀), and lā ‘there (definite)’. The open-ended verb is in the Ipfv stem. In transitives, progressive lā precedes the object, e.g. námá-sá-nā ‘meat’ or 1Sg mîⁿ in (412d). ‘Come.Ipfv’ (elsewhere pǎ) has an irregular bipartite form pá là in this construction (412f). This seemingly repeats the first lā in L-toned form là. In textual example (412g), the first verb is ambiguously tā (progressive) or tā (‘go.Pfv’), the latter reading favored by the sequential construction, but the context is progressive. This tā is followed by tā́ ‘go.Ipfv’ and an unexpected L-toned tà (parallel to L-toned là with ‘come’), resulting in an alliterative sequence that makes morphemic identification difficult. On the recording, tā tā́ tà is pronounced [tāárà].

(412)	a.	è wòlóó yɛ̄	‘he/she eats’
	b.	è lā [wòlóó] yɛ̄	‘he/she is eating’
		í lā [wòlóó] yɛ̄	‘they are eating’
		è lā [wòlóó] bɔ̀	‘he/she is not eating’
	c.	è lā [yààrɛ́=] ɛ̄	‘he/she is ascending’
		è lā [lākɛ́=] ɛ̄	‘he/she is going’
		è lā [kpɛ̂=] ɛ̄	‘he/she is dying’
		è lā [yākɛ́=] ɛ̄	‘he/she is weeping’
		è lā [mānsɛ́ⁿ=] ɛ̄ⁿ	‘he/she is laughing’
	d.	è lā [námá-sá-ŋ̄ kɛ̌=] ɛ̄	‘he/she is eating meat’
		è lā [mîŋ̄ wùsɛ́=] ɛ̄	‘he/she is hitting me’
	e.	tì lā [yààrɛ́=] ɛ̄	‘we are ascending’
		mɔ̀ lā [yààrɛ́=] ɛ̄	‘you-Pl are ascending’
	f.	è lā pá lɛ̀= ɛ̄	‘he/she is coming’
		è lā pá là bɔ̀	‘he/she is not coming’
	g.	[fɨ́= í tā] [tā́ tà tɔ̄ɔ̄sá]	‘they were going and farming’ (2026_23 @ 00:47)

Nominal subjects show Final Tone-Raising as in other imperfective clauses, thus fɔ̄-má-n̄ from fɔ̄-mā-nā ‘dog’ in (413).

(413) fɔ̄-**má**-n̄ nā [wòlóó] yɛ̄
dog-Sg-Sg Prog [eat.Ipfv] Pos
‘The dog is eating.’

10.5.2.2 Progressive with verbal noun plus sí ‘on’

A verbal noun or similar nominal denoting an activity can combine with postposition sí ‘on’ in another progressive construction. It is more emphatic than the unmarked progressive with lā (preceding subsection). Since locative predicates lack an overt copula, this progressive is structurally analysable as a locative predicate.

(414) a. í [tɔ̄ɔ̄-sá-n̄ sí] sìkɛ̄ péléw! nā
3Pl [farming-Sg-Sg on] thus always Rel
‘as they were cultivating constantly’ (2024_10 @ 01:15)

b. í [yāŋ-kà-n̄ sí] yɛ̄
3Pl [work(n)-Sg-Sg on] Pos
‘They are hard at work.’

10.5.3 Future

In addition to the marked future constructions described below, a simple imperfective clause can express an imminent event, particularly motion.

(415) ń nākɛ́= ɛ̄
1Sg go.Ipfv Pos
‘I’m going (soon).’ (< lāká) (cf. colloquial English *I’m off*)

10.5.3.1 Future with post-subject wɛ́ɛ̀

Future time is most often expressed by postsubject wɛ́ɛ̀, followed by an imperfective VP. ‘Will be’ in copular sentences is wɛ́ɛ̀ tɔ̄ (416g). The subject preceding wɛ́ɛ̀ is in imperfective-subject form, e.g., 1Pl tì, wālɔ̄ɔ́-n(ā) ‘rain’. This future construction is very common in recordings. The sense may be someone’s intention to do something, or simple prediction of agentless events.

(416) a. ɛ̀ wɛ́ɛ̀ bákáré= ɛ̄
3Sg **Fut** get.tired.Ipfv Pos
‘He/She will get tired.’

b. tù wɛ́ɛ̀ wòlóó nàñnà-n ī
1PlI **Fut** eat.Ipfv now-Sg Pos
'We will eat now.' (< tì wɛ́ɛ̀)

c. sínsí-nā tù wɛ́ɛ̀ tɔ̄ɔ̄sám bɔ̀
tomorrow 1PlI **Fut** cultivate.Ipfv Neg
'Tomorrow, we will not do farm work.'

d. wālɔ̄ɔ́-ŋ̄ wɛ́ɛ̀ sá mīm bɔ̀
rain-Sg **Fut** rain.fall.Ipfv today Neg
'It won't rain today.' (< wālɔ̄ɔ̄-nā)

e. tù wɛ́ɛ̀ mānsɛ́ⁿ= ɛ̄ⁿ
1PlI **Fut** laugh.Ipfv Pos
'We will laugh.' (< mānsáⁿ)

f. á [ŋ̄ kàà-bá-ŋ̄] wɛ́ɛ̀ wàká-lā [sàntùŋkóó-ŋ̄ kīlām] bɔ̀,
Quot [1Sg sheep-Sg-Sg] **Fut** remain.Ipfv-there.Def [hyena-Sg chez] Neg,
ŋ́ wɛ́ɛ̀ yìlá [á lè] ɛ̄
1Sg **Fut** enter.Ipfv [3NHSg following] Pos
'(said:) "My sheep-Sg will not remain there with the hyena! I will follow it in!" '
(2024_05 @ 00:31-00:35)

g. mīn-ná-ŋ̄ wɛ́ɛ̀ tɔ̄ yɛ̄ mīn-ná
today-Sg-Sg **Fut** be Pos today
'Today will be today.' (2026_23 @ 01:02)

'Be able to VP' is generally expressed as 'will arrive' plus imperfective VP (§15.2.8).

wɛ́ɛ̀ contracts with 2Sg and 2Pl pronominal clitics (417).

(417) a. 2SgI bɛ̀ wɛ́ɛ̀ → bɛ̀-ɛ́ɛ̀
b. 2PlI mɔ̀ wɛ́ɛ̀ → mɔ̀-ɔ́ɔ̀

These contractions are pronounced as single syllables with bell-shaped < LHL> tones: [bɛ̂ː], [mɔ̂ː].

Nominal subjects undergo Final Tone-Raising as in other imperfective clauses.

(418) fɔ̄-**má**-ŋ̄ wɛ́ɛ̀ [wòlóó] yɛ̄
dog-Sg-Sg Fut [eat.Ipfv] Pos
'The dog will eat.'

The origin of wɛ́ɛ̀ is obscure. One possibility is that it evolved out of the future with pá (see below), more specifically out of pɛ́= ɛ̄ 'comes' including the positive morpheme. However, it is not decomposible synchronically, and the positive marker is added at the end of future clauses.

10.5.3.2 Future with pá

The other future construction has post-subject pá, likely derived from pă ‘come.Ipfv’. Here the spatial-directional sense can be indistinct or even absent, and it can even combine with ‘go’ (419c). Subject pronominals and nouns subject to Final Tone-Raising show their imperfective forms.

(419) a. è pá mānsɛ́^{n}= ɛ̄
3Sg **Fut** laugh.Ipfv Pos
‘He/She will (come and) laugh.’ (< mānsá^{n})

b. wālɔ̃́-m̄ pá sɛ̃́= ɛ̄
rain(n) **Fut** rain.fall.Ipfv Pos
‘It will (come and) rain.’ (< sɛ̃́)

c. tì pá lāá yɛ̄
1PlI **Fut** go.Ipfv Pos
‘We will go.’

d. tì pá lāá bɔ̀
1PlI **Fut** go.Ipfv Neg
‘We won’t go.’

e. fɔ̃-má-m̄ pá lāá yɛ̄
dog-Sg-Sg **Fut** go.Ipfv Pos
‘The dog will go.’

In (420), an initial pá future clause (preceded by a conditional antecedent) is followed by two wɛ́è future clauses (only the first is shown here). This suggests that pá is a marked future.

(420) tì pɛ́= [è kɛ̌=] ɛ̄,
1PlI **Fut** [3HSg devour.Ipfv] Pos,
è wɛ́è wàká-lā bɔ̀,
3Sg **Fut** remain.Ipfv-there Neg,
tì wɛ́è è līyé= ɛ̄
1PlI **Fut** 3HSg kill.Ipfv Pos
‘(if he comes here) we’ll devour him. He won’t remain there (=survive). We’ll kill him …’ (2024_05 @ 02:51)

The older speaker suggests that the pá future expresses a nonimmediate event that is likely but uncertain.

10.5.4 Presentatives

10.5.4.1 Presentative (nā)

The basic presentative morpheme is nā. It occurs most transparently after pronominals. In (421a) it follows an L-toned form of the 1st/2nd person pronominal proclitic, as with imperfective subjects, but the 1Sg form is syllabic. For third persons, the regular 'this/that' demonstratives (§4.4.2.1) can function as stand-alone presentatives (421b). Presentative clauses do not include positive (y)ɛ̄. Negation and interrogation are pragmatically incompatible with presentatives.

(421) a. mì nā — 'Here I am!'
tì nā — 'Here we are!'
bɛ̀ nā — 'Here/There you-Sg are!'
mɔ̀ nā — 'There you-Pl are!'

b. è-sā-nā — 'There he/she is!'
yīn-sī-nī — 'There they are!'
wā-nā — 'There it is!'

When a nonpronominal NP is involved, it occurs in unreduced form followed by the demonstrative (422a-b). An extra nā is added to personal names that do not include final singular -nā (422c).

(422) a. nāā-nā wā-nā — 'There's a/the cow!'
náá-sɛ̄-nī yīn-sī-nī — 'There are the cows!'
[míǹ nāā-nā] wā-nā — 'There's my cow!'

b. písàá-nɛ̄ = è-sā-nā — 'There's the child!'
pís-é-nī yīn-sī-nī — 'There are the children!'

c. [zàkîì nɛ̄ =] è-sā-nā — 'There's Zaki!'

There is a subtle tonal distinction between presentative nāā-nā wā-nā 'there's a/the cow!' (422a) and the citation form of the N-Dem phrase [nāá(-n̄) ná] wā-nā 'this/that cow'. The H-tones in the latter are due to Final Tone-Raising (nāā- → nāá-) and to replacement of final singular suffix -nā by DefSg ná. In the plural, presentative náá-sɛ̄-nī yīn-sī-nī 'there are the cows!' is distinguished tonally from náá-sɛ̄(-n̄) ní yīn-sī-nī 'these/those cows' by DefPl ní. Of course, NPs like 'this cow' normally occur nonfinally within clauses, whereas presentatives like wā-nā are self-standing clauses, so confusion is unlikely.

The phrases in (422a-c) can only be interpreted as presentatives since they lack positive (y)ɛ̄. In other constructions where 'cow' or 'cows' is the final major constituent, it is followed by the particle (y)ɛ̄ ~ ī, which functions as positive marker in (423a) and as identificational in (423b).

(423) a. ŋ́ fí [nāá(-n̄) ná wā-n] ī ‘I bought this cow.’.
ŋ́ fí [náá-sɛ̄(-n̄) ní yīn-sī-ɲ̄] ɲɛ̄ ‘I bought these cows.’

b. nāā-n ī ‘It’s a cow.’
náá-sɛ̄-ɲ̄ ɲɛ̄ ‘They are cows.’

Nonhuman presentative wā-nā can be combined with a following sequential clause. Here wā ŋ̄ is tentatively parsed as subject focus (424).

(424) [wā ŋ̄] [fɛ́= ɛ̀ yá wòlóó]
[DemNH-Sg SFoc] [Comp 3HSg 3NHSg eat.Ipfv]
‘Look at him/her eating it!’ or ‘Look, he’s eating it!’

10.6 Polarity (positive and negative) particles

Polarity is expressed by particles that occur clause-finally or combined with another clause-final particle. Positive polarity marked in this way is restricted by clausal mood (indicative versus deontic) and the presence or absence of focalized constituents.

10.6.1 Negative markers

10.6.1.1 Negative bɔ̀, wɔ̀, and yí bɔ̀

Negative bɔ̀ occurs at the right edge of clauses, even long ones with postverbal adjuncts (425). At the end of a complex biclausal construction, it has broad scope (425b-c). The verb ‘see’ is negated either by simple bɔ̀ or by the combination yí bɔ̀. The latter is illustreated in (425d-f). The combination of yⁿá/yⁿā̄ ‘see’ and yí has some morphosyntactic similarity to phrasal verbs, but this yí is attested only under negation.

(425) a. [[líí kàà-ɲɛ̄-ŋ̄ fìì-nī-m̄] bà tɔ̀ [tí kīlānī]
[[person white-Pl-Pl] thing-Pl-Pl] Past be.Past [1Pl among]
[[á lèsɛ̄-n̄] tɔ́] bɔ̀,
[[3NHSg time-Sg] Dat] **Neg**
‘We didn’t have the things of the white people (e.g. vehicles) in those days.’ (2026_08 @ 03:30)

b. zàkîì sùwⁿɔ̀ [á bɛ́ pà m̀] bɔ̀
Z know.Pfv [Quot 2SgP come.Pfv Irr] **Neg**
‘Zaki doesn’t know that you-Sg have come.’

c. zàkîì sùwⁿɔ̀ [á [wò-ró ḿ] pà] bɔ̀
Z know [Quot [who? SFoc] come.Pfv] **Neg**
‘Zaki doesn’t know who has come.’ (§11.2.6.1)

d. á yⁿá bàà yí bɔ̀
3NHSg see.Pfv Papa **Neg** **Neg**
'It didn't see Papa.' (2026_19 @ 01:11)

e. í tójŋ= ŋā(ⁿ) yí bɔ̀
3Pl Recip see.Ipfv **Neg** **Neg**
'They don't see (=interact with) each other.' (2026_18 @ 00:34)

f. bɛ́ pɛ̀= ɛ̄, ŋ́ ŋá bɛ̀ yí bɔ̀
2SgP come.Pfv Pos, 1Sg see.Pfv 2Sg **Neg** **Neg**
'You-Sg came, (but) I didn't see you.'

bɔ̀ is usually clause-final, but it does precede nā as final morpheme in relative clauses or background clauses, the combination being pronounced wɔ̀ nā (426a-b). In negative polar interrogatives, bɔ̀ can be pronounced bɔ̀ɔ̄ with a pitch rise (426c). A more common alternative is wɔ̀ 'Neg.Q' as in (551) below. Finally, bɔ̀ can be followed by clause-final emphatic particles (426d).

(426) a. [cá-ŋ̄ fáá] pà wɔ̀ nā
[woman-Sg Rel]Sg come.Pfv **Neg** Rel
'the woman who didn't come'

b. lí-yé-ɲ̄ ŋá wɔ̀ nā
person-Sg-Sg see.Pfv **Neg** Rel
'since no-one had seen it' (2024_01 @ 00:58)

c. zàkîì fɛ́rɛ́ bɔ̀ɔ̄
Z exit.Pfv **Neg.**Q
'Didn't Zaki come out?'

d. ŋ́ wɛ́ɛ̀ bɛ́ tīká-lā bɔ̀ dɛ̄ʔ
1Sg Fut 2Sg leave.Ipfv-there.Def **Neg** Emph
'I won't let you-Sg off, mind you!' (2024_10 @ 05:06)

bɔ̀ occurs in deontic modals (prohibitives, hortative negatives) as well as in indicatives of any tense-aspect category. The presence of negation has no effect on the TAM inflectional apparatus. However, prohibitives require an overt 2Sg subject (427a), whereas positive singular-addressee imperatives usually have no overt subject.

(427) a. bɛ̄ fɛ́rɛ́ bɔ̀
2SgImprt exit.Imprt **Neg**
'Don't-2Sg go/come out!'

b. zàkîì fɛ́rɛ́ bɔ̀
Z exit.Pfv **Neg**
'Zaki did not go/come out.'

c. zàkîì fɛ̄rɛ́ bɔ̀
Z exit.Ipfv **Neg**
'Zaki does not go/come out.'

d. tī wòlò bɔ̀
1PlImprt eat.Imprt **Neg**
'Let's not eat!'

10.6.1.2 Negative auxiliary lé/lɛ̄ plus imperfective VP

This auxiliary-like verb takes imperfective VP complements, with a syntax like 'fail to VP' or 'fail VPing'. It is limited to main clauses with focalized constituents, and it is fairly uncommon in texts because constituent focalization does not readily combine with negation.

(428) a. [wò-ró ɲ́] ɲà
[who-Sg SFoc] ascend.Pfv
'Who climbed up?' (< yà)

b. [wò-ró ń] né yàárá
[who?-Sg SFoc] **fail**.Pfv ascend.Ipfv
'Who didn't climb up?'

Further pairings of positive and negative clauses are in (429). The Ipfv stem lɛ̄ is difficult to distinguish audibly from Pfv lé, compare (429b) with (428b) above. Notice that lɛ̄ follows future wɛ́ɛ̀ (429a,c).

(429) a. [wò-ró ŋ́] wɛ́ɛ̀ yàárá 'Who will climb up?'
[wò-ró ŋ́] wɛ́ɛ̀ **lɛ̄** yàárá 'Who will not climb up?'

b. [wò-ró ɲ́] ɲàárá 'Who (often) climbs up?'
[wò-ró ń] **nɛ̄** yàárá 'Who doesn't climb up?'

c. [tī ŋ̄] wɛ́ɛ̀ yàárá 'It's we [focus] who will climb up.'
[tī ŋ̄] wɛ́ɛ̀ **lɛ̄** yàárá 'It's we [focus] who will not climb up.'

d. [tī ɲ̄] ɲà 'It's we [focus] who climbed up.'
[tī n̄] **né** yàárá 'It's we [focus] who didn't climb up.'

These examples involve subject focalization. A similar example involving negation with object focalization is (548b) below.

10.6.2 Positive particle

10.6.2.1 Positive (y)ɛ̄ ~ ɛ̄ or ī

What is here called the "positive" particle (abbreviation Pos) has an uncontracted full form yɛ̄, with invariant ɛ̄ vowel, never ē. The uncontracted form occurs after short high vowels and after all long vowels: sùn-sí yɛ̄ 'learned', sù yɛ̄ 'ran', wòlóó yɛ̄ 'eats', láá yɛ̄ 'went', kèréé yɛ̄ 'looks'. After a nasal (except as noted below), yɛ̄ is nasalized to ɲɛ̄, after which the original nasal assimilates in position: kɔ̄lɔ̄ɲ ɲɛ̄ 'coughed'.

Exceptionally, final singular suffix -nā combines with the positive morpheme as -n ī, see the following subsection. This allows a distinction between singular -n ī and plural -ɲ̄ ɲɛ̄ (from final plural suffix -nī).

After short nonhigh vowels that do not end in a nasal coda, the particle contracts and is subject to ATR harmony. See vv-Contraction §3.4.1.6. Omitting tones, /a ɛ/ and /ɛ ɛ/ contract as ɛ= ɛ, /ɔ ɛ/ contracts as ɔ̰ɛ= ɛ or sometimes as ɛ= ɛ, and /o e/ contracts as we= e or sometimes as e= e. The = symbol indicates that contraction or vocalic change has occurred.

The particle occurs clause-finally, or postverbally before a peripheral adjunct (instrumental-comitative PP, subordinated clause, expressive adverbial). It occurs in indicative clauses of either perfective or imperfective aspect. It is absent from imperative clauses, from clauses with focalized constituents, from sequential clauses with fá, from all subjunctive clauses, and from conditional antecedents with tɛ̀ 'if'. It can co-occur with polar interrogative nī, but only if the two are separated by another constituent.

Examples of normal indicative clauses with positive (y)ɛ̄ are in (430). For (y)ɛ̄ as 'it is' in identificational clauses and as 'be' in copular clauses, see §11.2.1-2. An extension of 'it is' in nonsubject-focus constructions is described in §13.1.2.

(430) a. í bákɛ́= ɛ̄
3Pl get.tired.Pfv **Pos**
'They got tired.' (< báká)

b. í bákárɛ́= ɛ̄
3Pl get.tired.Ipfv **Pos**
'They get tired.' (< bákárá)

c. í námá-sá-n̄ kɛ̌= ɛ̄
3Pl meat-Sg-Sg eat.meat.Ipfv **Pos**
'They eat (the) meat.' (< kǎ)

d. ɲ́ ɲá [n̄ sí-bé] ɛ̄
1Sg see.Pfv [1Sg father-Sg] **Pos**
'I saw my father.' (< y^{n}á)

e. ɲ́ ɲá zàkíî yɛ̄
1Sg see.Pfv Z **Pos**
'I saw Zaki.'

f. ḿ mání= yá [zàkîì lɔ̰ɛ̄=] ɛ̄
1Sg say.Pfv 3NHSg [Z Dat] **Pos**
'I said it to (=I told) Zaki.'

g. í wéé pís-é ɲ́ ɲɛ̄
3Pl look.for.Pfv child-Pl down **Pos**
They looked for the children.' (< pís-é-nī ní)

h. ɲ́ ɲá táá-rɛ́-ɲ̄ ɲɛ̄
1Sg see.Pfv stone-Pl-Pl **Pos**
'I saw the rocks.' (< y^{n}á, táá-rɛ́-nī)

i. ŋ́ fā-má-ŋ̄ wùsé= ɛ̄
1Sg dog-Sg-Sg hit.Ipfv **Pos**
'I (often) hit the dog.' (< wùsó)

j. í pà mīɲ ɲɛ̄
3Pl come.Pfv today **Pos**
'They came today.' (< mīnī)

k. í tīkī kwá-n̄ ní [tón tɔ̰ɛ́=] ɛ̄
3Pl put.down.Pfv day-Sg down [Recip Dat] **Pos**
'They set the date mutually. ('They agreed on the date.')

l. ḿ pɛ̀= ɛ̄ [tɛ̀ mòtóò-nā-nā]
1Sg come.Pfv **Pos** [with motorcycle-Sg-Sg]
'I came with (=brought) the motorcycle.'

vv-Contraction of (y)ɛ̄ directly to a verb reduces but does not eliminate the tonal distinction between Pfv and Ipfv stems. Pfv yìlà and Ipfv yìlá remain subtly distinct in (431a-b).

(431) a. í yìlɛ̀= ɛ̄
3Pl enter.Pfv Pos
'They went/came in.' (< yìlà)

b. í yìlɛ́= ɛ̄
3Pl enter.Ipfv Pos
'They go/come in.' (< yìlá)

Unlike negative bɔ̀, the positive particle cannot occur in deontic modal clauses (432).

(432) a. yílà
enter.Imprt
'Go/Come-2Sg in!'

b. ɔ̄ yílà
2PlImprt enter.Imprt
‘Go/Come-2Pl in!’

c. tī yílà
1PlImprt enter.Imprt
‘Let’s go in!’

The positive particle is also absent from clauses that have a focalized constituent, including all focalized subjects (433). See chapter 13 for more details.

(433) a. [wò-ró ń] náà
[who-Sg SFoc] go.Pfv.Q
‘Who went?’ (< láá)

b. [zàkîì m̀] pà
[Z SFoc] come.Pfv
‘It’s Zaki [focus] who came.’

c. ɔ́ pà nîìnî
2PlP come.Pfv how?.Q
‘How did you-Pl come?’

Because of this restriction on the clause-final positive particle, one can argue that it implies focus on the verb, VP, or clause as a whole. However, if so it is a default focus marking with weak pragmatic force.

10.6.2.2 Fusion of (y)ɛ̄ with -nā suffix as -n ī

ī has the more restricted distribution among positive markers. It occurs in indicative clauses after the nominal final singular suffix -nā, which reduces to -n̄ (434a-b). Ironically, nominal final plural suffix -nī does not survive in this form when its noun occurs in the same position. Thus pís-é-nī ‘children’ combines with the positive morpheme as pís-é-ɲ̄ ɲɛ̄ (434c).

(434) a. í kà námá-sá-n ī
3Pl eat.meat.Pfv meat-Sg-Sg Pos
‘They ate the meat.’ (< námá-sá-nā)

b. ń̀ ɲó bābā-n ī [tɛ̀ sɔ̀ɔ̀káá-nā]
1Sg hit.Pfv sheep-Sg Pos [with club-Sg-Sg]
‘I hit the sheep-Sg with a club.’ (< bābā-nā)

c. ń̀ ɲá pís-é-ɲ̄ ɲɛ̄
1Sg see.Pfv child-Pl-Pl Pos
‘I saw the children.’ (< pís-é-nī)

Another case of clause-final ī that could be mistaken for the positive morpheme is mīnī ‘today. Note the contrast between mīnī (435a) and mīⁿ (→ mīm by assimilation) in the negative counterpart (435b).

(435) a. nû wár-ɲɛ̄-ŋ̄ [ŋ̄ kīlām] mīnī
give.Imprt money-Pl [1Sg Dat] today
‘Give-2Sg me the money today!’

b. bɛ̄ nû wár-ɲɛ̄-ŋ̄ [ŋ̄ kīlām] mīm bɔ̀
2SgImprt give.Imprt money-Pl [1Sg Dat] today Neg
‘Don’t give-2Sg me the money today!’

However, in compounds like mīnī-pìs-é-nī ‘children of today’, ‘today’ has its bisyllabic form. Moreover, (435a) is an imperative clause, and such clauses do not allow a final positive morpheme. When mīnī ‘today’ is the last constituent in a positive indicative clause, it combines with the positive morpheme as mīŋ ɲɛ̄ (430j). So the correct analysis of (435a) is that ‘today’ retains its bisyllabic form in absolute clause-final position.

10.7 Past time

Events that have been completed in the past normally occur in the perfective aspect, without tense (past/nonpast) marking. However, overt past-time marking does occur with statives (which do not distinguish perfectivity), to specify that the state occurred in the past. Statives include adjectival predicates (‘be ADJ’), locational and possessive predicates (‘be here’, ‘have a house’), and some other verbs (e.g. ‘know’). Overt past-time marking also occurs when the aspectual structure is based on a reference time in the past, rather than the moment of speaking, as in ‘X was sweeping’ or ‘X had swept’.

There are several grammatical morphemes that specify past reference times, including bà, the cluster tɔ̀, tàà, tɔ̀ɔ̄, and lɔ́ɔ̀. lɔ̄ in counterfactual consequent clauses (‘would have VPed’, §16.4) might be distantly related to tɔ̀ and/or lɔ́ɔ̀. The most basic past-time marker is bà.

10.7.1 Postsubject past-time bà

Pronominal combinations with past-time bà are in (436). The forms of the pronominals are those used before perfective VPs. The nasalized variant mà occurs optionally after a nasal consonant, as with 1Sg ḿ bà ~ ḿ mà. 2Sg /bɛ́ bà/ usually contracts to bá = à.

(436) a. 3HSg è bà
3NHSg á bà
3Pl í bà

b. 1Pl tí bà
1Sg ḿ bà ~ ḿ mà

2Sg	bá= à
2Pl	ɔ́ bà

With nouns: zàkîì bà ‘Zaki’, písàá mà ~ písàá-m̄ bà ‘the child’, pís-é mà ~ pís-é-m̄ bà ‘the children’, mīnī-mā-m̄ bà ‘the patas monkey’, mínín-sɛ̄-m̄ bà ‘patas monkeys’. Final suffixes -nā and -nī are reduced to a nasal (-m̄ bà), and this can reduce farther to just mà.

bà can combine with a following perfective or stative VP, as described below.

10.7.2 Past perfect (bà plus perfective)

The combination of past marker bà with a perfective VP functions as past perfect.

(437) a. [íí bà wɛ̄-sìkɛ̄]
[LogoPl **Past** said]
[á bɛ̄ tá lɛ̄= [ɛ́ lè] bɔ̀]
[Quot 2SgImprt go.Imprt there.Def [3Pl following] Neg]
‘(said:) “we had told you-Sg not to go following them!” ’ (2026_22 @ 01:55)

b. bɔ̄ɔ̄-nā-m̄ bà wɛ̄-sìkɛ̄ [á-sɔ̀ rɔ̄]] yɛ̄
billygoat-Sg-Sg **Past** said [3NHSg Dat]] Pos
‘Billygoat had said to it (=monkey), …’ (2024_10 @ 02:20)

10.7.3 Past ‘was/were; existed’ (bà tɔ̀, tɔ̀)

Locational predicate ‘was/were (sw)’ is expressed by bà tɔ̀ or nasalized mà tɔ̀ plus plus a spatial expression. Here bà is the past-time marker, while tɔ̀ is ‘be’, tending to mean more specifically ‘be.Past’ since tɔ̀ is omitted in present-time contexts.

(438) a. cá-nā-m̄ bà tɔ̀ [tɛ̀ [ɛ̀ pís-é-nī]]
woman-Sg-Sg **Past** **be.Past** [with [3HSg child-Pl-Pl]]
‘There was a woman, with her children.’ (2026_22 @ 00:01)

b. [[líí kàà-ɲɛ́-ŋ̄] fìì-nī-m̄] bà tɔ̀ [tí kīlānī]
[[person white-Pl-Pl] thing-Pl-Pl] **Past** **be.Past** [1Pl among]
‘We didn’t have the things of the white people in those days.’
(2024_09 @ 03:30)

c. ɛ̀ bà tɔ̀ yīŋ-fā-n ī
3HSg **Past** **be.Past** here-Sg Pos
‘He/She was here.’

d. [mɔ̄ m̄] mà tɔ̀ lā-fā-nā
[2Pl SFoc] **Past** **be.Past** there.Def-Sg
‘It’s <u>you-Pl</u> [focus] who were there.’

e. [á kàā] bà tɔ̀
[3NHSg thing.Sg] **Past** **be.Past**
[[pálà yòòn-nā-m̄] míŋ] ŋɛ̄
[[Faniagara village-Sg-Sg] in] Pos
'That's what there was in Faniagara village.' (2024_04 @ 02:29)

bà tɔ̀ can also be simplified to just tɔ̀ 'be.Past'. tɔ̀-lā 'was/were there' is the default spatial (439e).

(439) a. è tɔ̀ yīŋ-fā-n ī
3HSg **be.Past** here-Sg Pos
'He/She was here.'

b. [wò-ró ń] tɔ̀ lā-fā-nā
[who? SFoc] **be.Past** there.Def
'Who was there?'

c. [sūū-fì-yē fíyè] tɔ̀ yīnā bɔ̀
[run-thing-Sg anything] **be.Past** be.here Neg
'There weren't any vehicles here.' (2024_09 @ 02:46)

d. tà= á tɔ̀ cá-nā
if 3NHSg **be.Past** woman-Sg
'if (=since) it was a woman' (2026_27 @ 02:05)

e. í tɔ̀-lā [tí kīlāŋ] ŋɛ̄ dɛ̄?
3Pl **be.Past**-there.Def [1Pl among] Pos Emph
'We sure had them.' (2024_03 @ 04:07)

The combination bà tɔ̀ appears to focalize the subject in (440a-b), but without overt focalizing morphology.

(440) a. [í k-ɛ̀ɛ̄] bà tɔ̀
[3Pl thing-Pl-Pl] **Past** **be.Past**
'Those (things) are what there was.'

b. [á kàā] bà tɔ̀ [[pálà yòòn-nā-m̄] míŋ] ŋɛ̄
[3NHSg thing] **Past** **be.Past** [[Faniagara village-Sg-Sg] in] Pos
'That (thing) is what there was in Faniagara village.' (2024_04 @ 02:29)

10.7.4 Past identificational predicates (n tɔ̄, m bà tɔ̄)

For identificational predicates with senses like 'it's a sheep' or 'it's me!', see §11.2.1. The past-time versions have n tɔ̄. Present-time pronominal combinations like mì yɛ̄ 'it's me!', tì

yɛ̄ ‘it’s us!’, and è-sɛ̄ = ɛ̄ ‘it’s him/her!’ have (y)ɛ̄ instead of tɔ̄. The nasal in n tɔ̄ (441a) is tentatively glossed in interlinears as “Irr” (**irrealis**). It is roughly parallel to irrealis m in negative identificational m bɔ̀ (§11.2.1.2), and to irrealis m before negative bɔ̀ in some subordinated clauses (§17.3.1.1). The nasal is indistinguishable in form from the subject-focus (SFoc) marker ŋ. When past and negative categories combine, there is only one audible nasal in n tɔ̄ bɔ̀ (441c), not #n tɔ̄ m̄ bɔ̀. In (441b), bà is the true past-time marker and tɔ̄ is the ‘be’ verb that tends to skew to past time. When past-time bà is omitted, the time reference is still understood to be in the past. In other words, tɔ̄ can function as ‘be.Past’, cf. past-time tɔ̀ and variants in adjoining subsections.

(441) a. [bābā-nā n̄] tɔ̄ ‘it was a sheep’
[bāāb-ɛ̄-nī n̄] tɔ̄ ‘it was (=they were) sheep’
[ádámá ń] tɔ̄ ‘it was Adama.’
[n̄ sí-bé] ń tɔ̄ ‘it was my father’

b. [mī m̄] bà tɔ̄ ‘it was me!’
(~ [mī n̄] tɔ̄)
[tī m̄] bà tɔ̄ ‘it was us!’
(~ [tī n̄] tɔ̄)

c. [bābā-nā n̄] tɔ̄ bɔ̀ ‘it wasn’t a sheep’
[bāāb-ɛ̄-nī n̄] tɔ̄ bɔ̀ ‘it wasn’t (=they weren’t) sheep’
[mī n̄] tɔ̄ bɔ̀ ‘it wasn’t me!’

10.7.5 Past imperfective (tàà ~ tɔ̀ɔ̄)

Here the past marker is postsubject tàà or tɔ̀ɔ̄. Both forms occur in recordings in similar contexts. However, morphosyntactically tàà is a Pfv stem and tɔ̀ɔ̄ is an Ipfv stem. For pronominal subjects that distinguish perfective from imperfectives (1Pl, 2Pl, 2Sg), tàà requires perfective forms (tí, ɔ́, bé), while tɔ̀ɔ̄ requires imperfective forms (tì, mɔ̀, bɛ̀). Similarly, only tɔ̀ɔ̄ triggers Final Tone-Raising on a preceding subject noun (442f). Both tàà and tɔ̀ɔ̄ are followed by imperfective VPs. tɔ̀ɔ̄ drops to tɔ̀ɔ̀ before H-tone (442c). tɔ̀ɔ̄ is also attested as ‘be.Past’ with a following locational (442g).

(442) a. tí tàà [yɔ́kɔ́-sɛ̀ɛ̀-sá-n̄ tɔ̀ɔ̄sɛ́^{n} =] ɛ̄^{n}
1PlP **Past.Ipfv** [maize-Sg-Sg cultivate.Ipfv] Pos
‘We used to grow maize.’ (cf. 2024_03 @ 02:21)

b. è tàà síy^{n}ɛ́ = ɛ̄
3HSg **Past.Ipfv** fart.Ipfv Pos
‘She was farting.’ (2026_27 @ 03:10)

c. mínsá-bá-nī↗, tì tɔ̀ɔ̀ [í tūkwé=] ē
Negueni-Pl-Pl, 1PlI **Past.Ipfv** [3Pl catch.Ipfv] Pos
'The people of Néguéni (village), we used to capture them.' (< tūkó)
(2024_03 @ 01:13)

d. mínsá-c-è-n̄ tɔ̀ɔ̄ pɛ̌= ɛ̄
Néguéni-woman-Pl-Pl **Past.Ipfv** come.Ipfv Pos
'The women of Néguéni used to come.'

e. sàntùɲc-é-n̄ tàà [kàà-sɛ̄-n̄ tūkó péléw!]
hyena-Pl-Pl **Past.Ipfv** [sheep-Pl-Pl catch.Ipfv constantly]
'Hyenas used to catch sheep-Pl all the time.' (2024_05 @ 00:01)

f. bā**bā**-n̄ tàà pɛ̌= ɛ̄ 'The sheep-Sg used to come.'
bā**bá**-n̄ tɔ̀ɔ̄ pɛ̌= ɛ̄ "

g. [í yínáá-sé-n̄] tɔ̀ɔ̄ [sɛ́bɛ́-ɲɛ̄-m̄ míɲ] ɲɛ̄
[3Pl name-Pl-Pl] **be.Past** [paper-Pl-Pl in] Pos
'Their names would be (written) on the papers.' (2026_14 @ 00:42)

10.7.6 Past adjectival predicates (bà, tɔ̀)

Stative adjectival predicates ('be red', etc.) are featured in §11.3. The type with a dedicated stative intransitive predicate is shifted to past time by adding postsubject bà. This is illustrated for color terms in (443a-b) and for 'be easy' in (443c).

(443) a. á mìrì yɛ̄ 'it is red'
á wárɛ́= ɛ̄ 'it is white'
á mìrì bɔ̀ 'it isn't red'
á wárá bɔ̀ 'it is white'

b. á **bà** mìrì yɛ̄ 'it was red'
á **bà** wárɛ́= ɛ̄ 'it was white'
á **bà** mìrì bɔ̀ 'it wasn't red'
á **bà** wárá bɔ̀ 'it wasn't white'

c. yāŋ-kà-ŋ̄ kpɔ́ɔ́nsí yɛ̄ 'The work is easy'
yāŋ-kà-m̄ **bà** kpɔ́ɔ́nsí yɛ̄ 'The work was easy'.

An alternative construction for present-time or timeless contexts is with positive copula (y)ɛ̄ 'be' followed by ká as default nominal, plus an M-toned variant of the modifying adjective (444a). ká is compatible with color and size adjectives. (y)ɛ̄ is absent from negative versions (444b). The relevant time interval is shifted to the past by adding tɔ̀ 'be.Past'immediately after the subject, preceding the other particles (444c).

(444) a. á yɛ̄ [ká mīy^{n}ā] ‘it is red’
á yɛ̄ [ká kāā-nā] ‘it is white’
á yɛ̄ [ká fɔ̄rō] ‘it is black’

b. á [ká mīy^{n}ā] bɔ̀ ‘it isn’t red’
á [ká kāā-nā] bɔ̀ ‘it isn’t white’
á [ká fɔ̄rō] bɔ̀ ‘it isn’t black’

c. á **t(ɻ)è＝** ɛ̄ [ká mīy^{n}ā] ‘it was red’
á **tɔ̀** [ká mīy^{n}ā] bɔ̀ ‘it wasn’t red’

Postsubject tɔ̀ is probably related in some way to past identificational n tɔ̄ (§10.7.4 above), but the two occur in different linear positions.

10.7.7 lɔ́ɔ̀ (or nasalized nɔ́ɔ̀) for past imperfective

lɔ́ɔ̀ appears to be an irregular allomorph of past imperfective tàà ~ tɔ̀ɔ̄, but it occurs in different contexts. lɔ́ɔ̀ commonly follows main-clause cognition verbs that have (or may have) clausal complements, including ‘want’ and ‘know’.

For (y)álè ‘want’ with subjunctive clausal complement, see §17.6.3. For past time ‘wanted’, lɔ́ɔ̀ immediately follows (y)álè. Hence è yálè lɔ́ɔ̀ (y)ɛ̄ [ɛ̄ mā pā] ‘he/she wanted to come’. See also (697e) below. Similarly, ń sùw^{n}ɔ̀ lɔ́ɔ̀ yɛ̄ […] ‘I knew (that …)’.

lɔ́ɔ̀ can also follow future wɛ́è for a future-in-past, as in wālɔ̄ɔ́-ŋ̄ wɛ́è lɔ́ɔ̀ sɛ̄＝ ɛ̄ ‘rain was about to fall’. Another way to say this is to have lɔ́ɔ̀ follow the subject and precede a place nominal with -làā-nā (§4.2.1.3), where ‘place’ is understood abstractly as situation or position, as in è lɔ́ɔ̀ [námá-sá-ŋ̄ kà-làā-n] ī ‘he/she was about to eat the meat’.

The past imperfective marker tàà or tɔ̀ɔ̄ combines with subject focus (SFoc) ŋ as n nɔ́ɔ̀, where nɔ́ɔ̀ is nasalized from lɔ́ɔ̀. See §13.1.1.2 for an example.

10.8 Deontic modals

10.8.1 Imperatives

In positive imperatives, clause-final positive ɛ̄ (or variant) is absent. Nouns at the end of a positive imperative clause show their full suffixal form.

The positive imperative usually has zero marking of singular addressee, followed by a VP beginning with the Imprt stem. For plural addressee, 2Pl ɔ̄ is the clause-initial subject pronominal. Transitive imperative clauses have VO order, like perfective clauses but unlike imperfective clauses. The Imprt stem is related segmentally to the Pfv stem, not the Ipfv stem.

Imperatives can also be phrased in biclausal fashion with tá ‘go!’ preceding either another imperative VP or an imperfective VP.

10.8.1.1 The Imprt stem

The Imprt stem occurs in simple commands, but also in subjunctive clauses which are very common in recordings. The Imprt stem is segmentally identical to the Pfv stem with the exception of 'go'. If the Pfv stem is other than L-toned, the Imprt is also tonally identical to the Pfv, so there is no difference between the two stems. (445) illustrates the identity of Imprt and Pfv stems versus Ipfv stems with verbs of /H/, /M/, /LH/, and /MH/ melodies.

(445)	gloss	Imprt	Pfv	Ipfv
	a. H-toned Pfv and Imprt			
	'laugh'	má^{n}	má^{n}	mānsá^{n}
	'stone-grind'	ná^{n}	ná^{n}	nānná
	'write'	sɛ́bɛ́^{n}	sɛ́bɛ́^{n}	sɛ́bɛ́ná
	'exit (v)'	fɛ́rɛ́	fɛ́rɛ́	fɛ̄rɛ́
	'finish'	kpísí	kpísí	kpīsá
	'weep'	yáká	yáká	yāká
	'jump'	yɔ́kɔ́	yɔ́kɔ́	yɔ̄kɔ́
	'criticize'	kpésési	kpésési	kpésési
	b. M-toned Pfv and Imprt			
	'follow'	tīkī	tīkī	tīká
	'cultivate'	tɔ̄ɔ̄sī	tɔ̄ɔ̄sī	tɔ̄ɔ̄sá^{n}
	c. rising-toned Pfv and Imprt			
	'breathe'	wùní	wùní	wùná^{n}

However, a large subset of /L/-melody verbs distinguish Imprt and Pfv stems tonally. All /L/-melodic verbs of three or more moras (CvvCv, CvCvCv) have H*L-toned Imprt stems, including trisyllabic H.H.L (446). This also accounts for 'wake up' (446a) if uŋmɔ is trimoraic, which is difficult to prove in the absence of other (C)vCCv verbs.

(446)	gloss	Imprt	Pfv	Ipfv
	a. 'wake up'	úŋmɔ̀	ùŋmɔ̀	ùŋmɔ́
	b. 'shoot'	fúúsì	fùùsì	fùùsá
	'lengthen'	káá^{n}rì	kàà^{n}rì	kàà^{n}rá
	'curve (sth)'	kúúmà	kùùmà	kùùmá
	'shake'	síímà	sììmà	sììmá
	'become'	wáámà	wààmà	wààmá
	'lightly stone-grind'	wéésì	wèèsì	wèèsé
	c. 'walk around'	nákárì	nàkàrì	nàkàrá
	'bark (v)'	sákálì	sàkàlì	sàkàlá
	'pull'	yáláká	yàlàkà	yàlàká

‘belch’	yékémà	yèkèmà	yèkèmá
‘forgive’	yókórì	yòkòrì	yòkòró

/L/-melodic verbs of one or two moras divide into a subtype with HL-toned Imprt and another with L-toned Imprt (447). There is no discernible phonological or semantic basis for this split. The otherwise homophonous nì/nìyⁿá ‘hear’ and nì/nìyⁿá ‘drink’ have distinct tonal forms in the Imprt, nî versus nì, respectively (447).

(447)

gloss	Imprt	Pfv	Ipfv
a. L-toned monosyllabic Pfv			
HL-toned Imprt			
‘arrive (there)’	fîⁿ	fìⁿ	fìyⁿá
‘strip off’	lâ	là	lǎ
‘hear’	nî	nì	nìyⁿá
‘give’	nû	nù	nùwⁿɔ́
‘carry on head’	sê	sè	sě
‘run’	sû	sù	sùùsá
‘pick up’	tâ	tà	tàárá
‘wash’	tû	tù	tùwá
‘wait for’	wâ	wà	wǎ
‘ascend’	yâ	yà	yàárá
‘pound in mortar’	sûⁿ	sùⁿ	sùnná
‘cover’	tâⁿ	tàⁿ	tànná
‘select’	tûⁿ	tùⁿ	tùnná
‘look at’	kéè	kèè	kèrée
L-toned Imprt			
‘eat (meat)’	kà	kà	kǎ
‘drink’	nì	nì	nìyⁿá
‘dance (v)’	sɔ̀	sɔ̀	sùsɔ́
‘sew’ or ‘throw’	bàⁿ	bàⁿ́	bànná
‘scratch’	kàⁿ	kàⁿ	kǎⁿ
‘miss’	nàⁿ	nàⁿ	nànná
‘sleep overnight’	sàⁿ	sàⁿ	sànná
‘shut, cover’	tàⁿ	tàⁿ	tànná
‘forge’	tùⁿ	tùⁿ	tùnná
‘cut’	yìⁿ	yìⁿ	yìnná
‘uproot’	yòⁿ	yòⁿ	yònná
‘bury’	fùù	fùù	fòó
‘take in’	lùù	lùù	lùwó
b. L-toned CvCv Pfv			
HL-toned Imprt			
‘remove’	fésè	fɛ̂sè	fɛ̀sé
‘bring closer’	wɔ́rɔ̀	wɔ̀rɔ̀	wɔ̀rɔ́

‘sift’	yɛ́ŋɛ̀	yɛ̀ŋɛ̀	yɛ̀ŋɛ́
‘enter’	yílà	yìlà	yìlá
L-toned Imprt			
‘split’	fàyà	fàyà	fàyá
‘tie’	fɔ̀kɔ̀	fɔ̀kɔ̀	fɔ̀kɔ́
‘walk’	kìrì	kìrì	kìisá
‘snore’	kùrù	kùrù	kùrá^{n}
‘pour from jar’	pɛ̀rɛ̀	pɛ̀rɛ̀	pɛ̀rɛ́
‘dip’	tàkà	tàkà	tàká
‘eat’	wòlò	wòlò	wòlóó
‘pierce, jab’	wùrù	wùrù	wùrá^{n}
‘pinch’	yàkà	yàkà	yàká
‘sleep (v)’	yɔ̀rɔ̀^{n}	yɔ̀rɔ̀^{n}	yɔ́rɔ́má
‘swallow’	tànsà	tànsà	tànsá^{n}

Imperatives of phrasal verbs are featured in (448). The pseudo-postposition is disregarded in the formation of the Imprt stem, which presents the same range of tonal forms as in simple verbs.

(448)	gloss	Imprt	Pfv	Ipfv
a. with ní ‘down’				
	‘descend’	yókó-ní	yókó-ní	yōkó-ní
	‘lie down’	kóó^{n}-ní	kóó^{n}-ní	kóóná-ní
	‘sit down’	tò-ní	tò-ní	tǒ-ní
	‘pour’	yàlà X ní	yàlà X ní	X yàlìyá-ní
	‘stand’	yèè-ní	yèè-ní	yèé-ní
	‘look’	wéé X ní	wéé X ní	X wēé-ní
b. with míní ‘in’				
	‘disperse’	kàsà-míní	kàsà-míní	kàsá-míní
	‘untie’	gbɔ̀ X míní	gbɔ̀ X míní	X gbɔ̌-míní
c. with lè ‘following’				
	‘expel’	yàà^{n} X lè	yàà^{n} X lè	X yàáná-lè

Imperatives of the few true composite verbs in common use are in (449). Only the first stem undergoes tonal changes (‘assemble’).

(449)	gloss	Imprt	Pfv	Ipfv
	‘remain (here)’	wàkà-yīnā	wàkà-yīnā	wàká-yīnā
	‘assemble’	kpíísà-kpírí	kpìisà-kpírí	kpìisá-kpírí
	‘get up’	yìn-sō	yìn-sō	yìnná-sūyō

Imprt stems of irregular verbs are in (450).

(450)	gloss	Imprt	Pfv	Ipfv
a.	‘hit’	yó yóó yè (3HSg object) yó ó (3NHSg object) yó í (3Pl object)	yó	wùsó
b.	‘go’	kí-lāā tá	lāá ~ tā	lāká ~ lāá ~ tā
c.	‘come’	pá tá pā pá-yīnā wúú^{n}-yīnā	pà	pă
d.	‘come (take)’	húú^{n} húú^{n}-yīnā		
e.	‘do’	yâ^{n} yám â ‘do it!’ yámí= í ‘do them!’	yà^{n} yàm á ‘did it’	yàmá

For ‘hit’, the Imprt is based on the same form as the Pfv rather than on the suppletive Ipfv (450a), as expected given the close association of Imprt and Pfv stems. ‘Come’ (450c) has an interjection-like Imprt variant húú^{n} in the sense ‘come (and take)’, as in an offer to give something. Imprt pá ‘come!’ is usually preceded by tá ‘go!’ (tá pā), and/or followed by yīnā ‘here’ (pá yīnā). The Imprt stem of ‘go’ is either tá or kí-lāā (450b). tá is related to tā ‘go.Pfv’ and to tā ‘go.Ipfv’ (§10.2.2.1). tá also optionally precedes other Imprt stems (§10.8.1.3 below). kí-lāā ‘go!’ consists of an unexpected element kí-, plus what seems to be an M-toned variant of Pfv lāá. In view of pá-yīnā with proximal -yīnā, the second element in kí-lāā may have been influenced by the adverb lā ‘there (definite)’.

10.8.1.2 Simple imperative clauses

Positive singular-addressee imperative clauses begin with the Imprt stem of the verb (451a), which is described above. Plural-addressee imperative clauses begin with ɔ̄, glossed “2PlImprt” in interlinears, which differs tonally from 2Pl perfective proclitic ɔ́ (451b). M-tone is regular in pronominal proclitics in deontics and in subjunctive clauses.

(451)			
a.	sû		‘run-2Sg!’
	yáláká wíí-sá-nā		‘pull-2Sg the rope!’
b.	ɔ̄ sû		‘run-2Pl!’
	ɔ̄ yáláká wíí-sá-nā		‘pull-2Pl the rope!’

Imperative clauses are easily recognized by the Imprt verb stem, the omission of 2Sg subject, the special tonal form of the 2Pl subject pronominal, the absence of positive particle (y)ɛ̄, and the full suffixal form of clause-final object nouns like wíí-sá-nā in (451a-b). Contrast imperatives in (451) above with the perfective indicative clauses in (452).

(452) a. bɛ́ yàlàkà wíí-sá-n ī ‘You-Sg pulled the rope.’
b. ɔ́ yàlàkà wíí-sá-n ī ‘You-Pl pulled the rope!’

Because objects of transitive imperatives can be in absolute clause-final position, 3NHSg object (y)á and its ATR-harmonized variants ó and é take falling tone: yó ô ‘hit it!’, fésà = â ‘remove it!’, sùkà = â ‘sell it!’.

10.8.1.3 tá imperative plus a VP or adverb

tá as a stand-alone Imprt stem means ‘go!’, as a less common alternative to kí-lāā. While kí-lāā often occurs as a one-word imperative clause in the literal sense ‘go!’, tá usually combines with a following spatial adverb or with a following VP, and tá does not always express actual motion.

When tá is followed by a spatial adverb, it does indicate motion (453).

(453) tá lèènī
go.Imprt over.there
‘Go-2Sg over there!’

Imprt tá can be followed by a subjectless VP, which is usually imperative (454a), but can also be imperfective in form to express prolonged or repetitive action (454b), compare (613a-b) below. If the open-ended VP does not itself express motion, tá may be the only indicator of motion. In tá pā ‘come!’ (454c), tá is redundant, but this is nevertheless the usual phrasing for ‘come!’

(454) a. tá plus imperative VP
[tá] [wòlò] ‘Go-2Sg eat!’
[tá] [máná] ‘Go-2Sg and speak!’
[tá] [kpísí yàŋ-kà-nā] ‘Go-2Sg finish the work!’
[tá] [yálákà wíí-sá-nā] ‘Go-2Sg pull the rope!’
[tá] [kóó^{n}-ní] ‘Go-2Sg lie down!’
[tá] [tǒ-ní] ‘Go-2Sg sit down!’

b. tá plus imperfective VP
[tá] [wòlóó] ‘Go-2Sg eat!’ (prolonged/repetitive)

c. [tá] [pā] ‘Come-2Sg!’

Imprt tá can also be followed by a subjunctive clause with fá complementizer, see (618a-b) below.

In the preceding examples, tá functions as Imprt stem of 'go'. It is tonally distinct from tā 'go.Pfv'. Both tá 'go.Imprt' and tā 'go.Pfv' can be followed by imperfective VPs, but otherwise tá and tā occur in different contexts. Only tá 'go.Imprt' can be followed by imperative VPs and by subjunctive clauses, while only tā 'go.Pfv' can be followed by perfective sequential clauses. In addition, pronominal subjects have different tonal forms before tá and tā, and only tá can be immediately preceded by short subjunctive ŋ.

10.8.1.4 Prohibitive

The prohibitive is produced by adding all-purpose negative bɔ̀ to the end of a simple imperative (455a) or a biclausal tá imperative (455b). For singular addressee, 2Sg subject variant bɛ̄ (M-toned) is usually present, unlike the case in positive imperatives. For plural addressee, 2Pl subject variant ɔ̄ is required as in positive imperatives. The M-toned pronominals contrast with H-toned 2Sg bɛ́ and 2Pl ɔ́ for subjects of perfective clauses, and contrast with L-toned bɛ̀ and mɔ̀ for subjects of imperfective clauses.

(455) a. bɛ̄ wòlò bɔ̀ 'Don't-2Sg eat!'
bɛ̄ yá bɔ̀ 'Don't-2Sg go up!'
bɛ̄ yálákà wíí-sá-m̄ bɔ̀ 'Don't-2Sg pull the rope!'
wɔ̄ yálákà wíí-sá-m̄ bɔ̀ 'Don't-2Pl pull the rope!'

b. bɛ̄ tá wòlò bɔ̀ 'Don't-2Sg (go) eat!'
ɔ̄ tá wòlò bɔ̀ 'Don't-2Pl (go) eat!'

10.8.2 Hortatives

10.8.2.1 Hortative positive ('let's …')

The minimal form of a hortative is 1PlImprt tī (M-toned, like 2SgImprt bɛ̄ and 2PlImprt ɔ̄ in commands) plus an imperative VP (456a). However, for verbs other than 'go', and even often for 'go' itself, the idiomatic hortative is a combination of fixed tī tá 'let's go!' with the open-ended VP, which is either imperative (456b) or imperfective (456c) in form, the latter expressing prolonged or habitual action. In the fuller [tī tá] [VP] version, tī tá need not indicate actual motion. In other words, tī tá is well on the way to becoming grammaticalized as a fused 1Pl hortative. tá drops to tā before an H-tone under some conditions, as in 'let's ascend!'

(456) a. tī '1PlImprt' with imperative VP
tī tá 'Let's go!'
tī wòlò 'Let's eat!'
tī wòlò súsó-nā 'Let's eat tô!'
tī yâ 'Let's ascend!'

b. [tī tá] plus imperative VP

[tī tá] [tá]	‘Let’s go!’
[tī tá] [wòlò]	‘Let’s eat!’
[tī tá] [wòlò súsó-nā]	‘Let’s eat tô!’
[tī tā] [yâ]	‘Let’s ascend!’
[tī tá] [kà námá-sá-nā]	‘Let’s (go) eat the meat!’
[tī tá] [yáláká wíí-sá-nā]	‘Let’s (go) pull-2Pl the rope!’

c. [tī tá] plus imperfective VP

[tī tá] [tā]	‘Let’s go (often)!’
[tī tá] [wòlóó]	‘Let’s eat (often)!’
[tī tá] [súsó-ŋ̄ wòlóó]	‘Let’s eat tô (often)!’
[tī tá] [yàárá]	‘Let’s ascend (often)!’

The simple imperative stem of ‘go’ is the irregular kí-lāā. This form is not usual in 1Pl hortatives, but it can occur when it denotes actual motion and it is followed by another clause (457).

(457) [tī kí-lāā] [tī tá] [kpísí yāŋ-kà-nā]] ‘Let’s go (and go) and finish the work!’

If the addressee of a 1Pl hortative is plural, the M-toned 2Pl clitic ō is optionally added (458).

(458) [ō tī tá] [túkú sàntùŋkóó-nā]
[**2PlImprt** 1PlImprt go.Imprt] [catch.Imprt hyena-Sg]
‘Let’s (all) go catch the hyena!’

10.8.2.2 Hortative negative

Negative bɔ̀ is added to the positive hortative with no other change. Only single-clause hortatives were readily elicitable in the negative (459a-b).

(459) a. tī tá bɔ̀ ‘Let’s not go!’
b. tī tá pā bɔ̀ ‘Let’s not come!’

10.8.2.3 Non-1Pl subject exhortations

Exhortations involving a non-1Pl agent, usually ‘God’ in standard formulae of the ‘may God VP!’ type, are expressed as subjunctive clauses without a higher main clause. Such formulae tend to show contractions or other irregularities. Examples are (755), (756a-b), and (758) in the section on greetings (§19.6).

10.8.3 Clarification requests

The phrase in (460) is uttered when the speaker isn't sure whether the addressees want tea to be brought, perhaps because the speaker didn't quite hear what the addressee just said. Local French is *d'amener le thé?*

(460) [ń tá] [pā [tɛ̀ téɛ̀-yɛ̄-nī]]
[1Sg go.Imprt] [come.Imprt [with tea-Pl-Pl]]
'Shall I bring the tea?' or 'Do you want me to bring the tea?'

11 Clause, VP, and predicate structure

11.1 Clausal constituents

Although there is no structural case-marking for Paleni nonpronominal NPs, subjects and objects are clearly distinguished from each other and from other constituents.

11.1.1 Subjects

11.1.1.1 Subject properties

Subjects, whether pronominals or full-NPs, occur clause-initially, preceding the VP. Excluding preclausal topics, only a few grammatical elements can precede subjects, such as tɛ̀ 'if' and complementizers á, mà, and fá. Future wɛ́ɛ̀, progressive lā, past-time bà, and subjunctive morphemes ŋ̄ and bā occur after the subject and before the VP. 1st/2nd person pronominals have distinctive forms as subjects, and some (1Pl, 2Sg, 2Pl) have distinct tonal forms in perfective and imperfective clauses. Pronominal subjects of deontic modals (imperative, hortative) and of subjunctive clauses have a distinctive M-toned form. Subjects have their own focalization construction (chapter 13). These features clearly distinguish subjects from non-subjects.

Imperatives and hortatives have structural subjects. Although singular addressee is overtly zero in positive imperatives, the M-toned form bɛ̄ occurs in prohibitives, and quoted imperatives (jussives) have overt subjects. 2Pl ɔ̄ occurs in all deontics with plural addressee.

There is no strong correlation of subjecthood with [+human] or [+animate]. 'I have the hiccups' is expressed as "hiccups are on me" (469), 'I am hungry' is "hunger cuts on me" (471a), and 'I have a house' is "house (be) mine" (§11.2.4.1.1).

Transitive X VERB Y is rather freely convertible into passive intransitive Y VERB, usually with no change in the form of the verb (§9.1).

11.1.1.2 Subject-verb collocations

11.1.1.2.1 Temporal and meteorological

The main weather event in this tropical climate is rain. The noun wālɔ̄ɔ̄-nā 'rain (n)' takes a unique verb sá/sâ '(rain) fall, precipitate' (461a). Even without wālɔ̄ɔ̄-nā, (461b) is easily understood.

(461) a. wālɔ̄ɔ̄-n̄ sɛ́= ɛ̄
rain-Sg rain.fall.Pfv Pos
'It rained.' (< sá)

b. á pá sɛ̌= ɛ̄
3NHSg Fut rain.fall.Ipfv Pos
'It will (soon) rain.'

The two main seasons of the year are the rainy season (local French *hivernage*) and the dry season (462). The rains come mainly from June to September. Citation forms for the season terms are in (462) along with bare forms used in collocations. For á-, see §5.1.2.1.1.

(462)

	citation form	bare form	gloss
a.	á-kàà^{n}rá	káá^{n}rɛ̀-nā	'dry season'
b.	á-kààyá	kááyá-nā	'rainy season'

The bare forms occur in subject-verb collocations for the onsets of the two seasons. The verbs are káká/kāká 'become open' and sá/sā '(rain) fall', respectively.

(463) a. káá^{n}rɛ̀-ŋ̄ kákɛ́= ɛ̄ 'the dry season has begun' ("has opened")
b. kááyá-ñ sɛ́= ɛ̄ 'the rainy season has begun' ("has precipitated")

The tonal alternations in these data are similar (but not identical) to what we would expect if káá^{n}rɛ̀-nā and kááyá-nā in (463a-b) presented the lexical tone melodies, and if the á- initial in (462a-b) were treated prosodically as a possessor (i.e. as 3NHSg á), so that Initial Tone-Dropping (§3.6.2.7) lowered the syllable to kàà. Other nouns with á- in the same semantic range are followed by LH-toned stems (464), but these nouns do not have a corresponding HL-toned bare stem or a fixed noun-verb collocation.

(464)

a.	á-sàná	'morning'
	á-sàná-ná-nā	'morning' (singular)
	á-sàń-ɲɛ́-nī	'mornings'
b.	á-yìrìké	'mid-day' (around 10am to 2pm)
	á-yìrìké-ná-nā	'mid-day' (singular)
	á-yìrìké-ɲɛ́-nī	'mid-days'
c.	á-yìláá	'late afternoon' (around 2pm to dusk)
	á-yìláá-ná-nā	'late afternoon' (singular)
	á-yìláá-ɲɛ́-nī	'late afternoons'
d.	á-tùná	'evening, night'
	á-tùná-ná-nā	'night' (singular)
	á-tùná-ɲɛ́-nī	'nights'

Stative predicates indicating the time of day are simple identificationals. They can be formed from any of the time-of-day nouns. In (465a), the final -n ī is the fusion of final singular -nā and the positive or 'it is' particle (y)ɛ̄.

(465) a. á-sànáː-ná-n ī ‘it’s morning’
b. á-sànáː-ná-nāː m̄ bɔ̀ ‘it isn’t morning’
c. á-sànáː-ná-nāː n̄ tɔ̄ ‘it was morning’
d. á-sànáː-ná-nāː n̄ tɔ̄ bɔ̀ ‘it wasn’t morning’

Transitions from one time of day to the next can be expressed by wààmà/wààmáː ‘become; turn (into)’ (466a). Note that ‘night fall’, ‘night end’, and ‘mid-day end’ all use the verb sáá-ní/sāá-ní ‘fall’. This should not be confused with sàⁿ/sànáː ‘spend the night’ or with sá/sā ‘(rain) fall’. Two terms for ‘night’ are in use in these collocations: á-tùnáː-ná-nāː (or just á-tùnáː) as the basic term, versus pííké-nāː for ‘nightfall’ (transition into night).

(466) a. á wààmáː= á-yìrìké-nāː ‘it has become mid-day’
á wààmáː= á-sànáː-nāː ‘it has become morning’

b. á-tùnáː-nāː-n̄ sáá-ɲ́ ɲɛ̄ ‘night has ended’ (“fallen”)
pííké-n̄ sáá-ɲ́ ɲɛ̄ ‘night has fallen’
á-yìrìké-ná-n̄ sáá-ɲ́ ɲɛ̄ ‘mid-day has ended’

Daybreak can be expressed by combining a reduced form of ‘morning’ with káká/kāká ‘open’ (467a). There is also an expressive adverbial (467b).

(467) a. sáŋ̀ kákɛ́= ɛ̄ ‘day has broken’
sáŋ-kàkà lèsē ‘daybreak (time)’, around 5am

d. á-sànáː búr-búr-búr ‘the crack of dawn’

Terms for Muslim daily prayers are mostly combinations of the general word séré-ná-nāː ‘prayer’ plus a time-of-day noun. However, the specific Arabic term for ‘dawn prayer’ is also in use.

(468) a. fājírì-nāː-nāː ‘dawn prayer’
fājírì-ɲɛ̄-nīː ‘dawn prayers’

b. fājírì-nāː-ŋ̄ fìŋ ɲɛ̄ ‘dawn prayer has arrived’

11.1.1.2.2 Bodily afflictions

Some afflictions are expressed by placing the name of the affliction in subject position, followed by a PP predicate with postposition sí ‘on’ (§8.2.5.1.1).

(469) lègé-lègé-ná-n̄ [n̄ sí] yɛ̄
Iter-hiccup-Sg-Sg [1Sg **on**] Pos
‘I have the hiccups.’ (lit. “Hiccups are on me”)

Nouns that are attested as subjects in this construction are in (470).

(470)

lègé-lègé-ná-nā	‘hiccup(s)’
ní-nìyⁿā-nā	‘thirst’
kúlóó-nā	‘hunger’
wīyā-nā	‘cold (n)’
pìppì-nā-nā	‘heat (n)’
fíyɛ́m-pìì-nā-nā	‘sniffles (in nose)’

The verb yìⁿ/yìnná can be added between some of these subjects and an experiencer PP with sí ‘on’ to indicate change of state. Elsewhere yìⁿ/yìnná is transitive ‘cut’, and it occurs in a biclausal construction in the sense ‘depart (somewhere else), to come here’ (§17.5.3.3). Here perhaps it should be loosely taken as antipassive intransitive ‘cut, do cutting’.

(471) a.

kúlóó-ɲ̄	ɲìnná	[tí	sí]	yɛ̄
hunger-Sg	**cut**.Ipfv	[1Pl	on]	Pos

‘We are hungry.’ (2024_10 @ 01:32)

b.

pìppì-nā-ɲ̄	ɲìnná	[tí	sí]	bɔ̀
heat-Sg-Sg	**cut**.Ipfv	[1Pl	on]	Neg

‘We are not (feeling) hot.’

‘Become weary’ is a simple intransitive báká/bákárá. For ‘fear’ see §11.2.6.3.

11.1.1.2.3 Bodily emissions

Some bodily emissions are expressed by dedicated intransitive verbs (472). For ‘hiccup’ see above.

(472)

fúrúⁿ/fúúmá	‘urinate’
kɔ́lɔ́ⁿ/kɔ̄lɔ̄ná	‘cough (v)’
máⁿ/māⁿsáⁿ	‘laugh (v)’
sí/síyⁿá	‘fart (v)’
wùní/wùnáⁿ	‘breathe’
wúkɔ́/wūkɔ́	‘defecate’

Sneezing is phrased as ‘do a sneeze’ (473).

(473)

è	yàɲ	ɲésìyó-nā-n	ī
3HSg	do.Pfv	sneeze(n)-Sg-Sg	Pos

‘He/She sneezed.’

11.1.1.2.4 Emotion

Euphoria and dysphoria are expressed by combining a possessed form of wūn-nā-nā ‘guts, entrails’ in subject function with an evaluative predicate (474a-c). ‘Guts’ here expresses a visceral emotional center, but it can also be a strong cognitive center expressing deeply held beliefs, see (480) below. The stative phrasal verbs in (474a-b) are related to ká^{n} ‘be good’ and pí^{n} ‘be bad, nasty’.

(474) a. [zàkîì wūn-nā-ŋ̄] kám-míɲ ɲɛ̄
[Z **guts**-Sg-Sg] be.good Pos
‘Zaki is happy.’

b. [zàkîì wūn-nā-m̄] pím-míɲ ɲɛ̄
[Z **guts**-Sg-Sg] be.bad Pos
‘Zaki is sad/unhappy.’

c. [zàkîì wūn-nā-m̄] pìsì-míɲ ɲɛ̄
[Z **guts**-Sg-Sg] be.ruined.Pfv Pos
‘Zaki has become disappointed/distraught.’

wūn-nā-nā ‘guts’ can also be reduced to a postposition w^{n}ú. The PP [X w^{n}ú] follows ká^{n} ‘be good’ and the phrase means ‘be pleasing to X’.

(475) á ká^{n} [ŋ̄ ŋú] bɔ̀
3NHSg be.good [1Sg **guts**] Neg
‘It doesn’t please me.’ (= ‘It displeases me’) (2024_05 @ 02:29)

Anger is expressed either by a similar bodily phrasing with sóósá-nā ‘heart’ plus verb pàlàmà/pàlàmá (476a-c). The alternative is a dedicated verb yùkù/yùkùrá (476d)

(476) a. [zàkîì sɔ́ɔ́sá-m̄] pàlàmɛ̀= ɛ̄
[Z **heart**-Sg] be.angry.Pfv Pos
‘Zaki is angry.’

b. [bɛ́ sɔ́ɔ́sá-ná-m̄] pálámà bɔ̀
[2SgImprt **heart**-Sg-Sg] be.angry.Imprt Neg
‘Don’t-2Sg get angry!’

c. pálámà [bɛ́ sɔ́ɔ́sá-nā]
be.angry.Imprt [2Sg **heart**-Sg]
‘Get-2Sg angry’

d. zàkîì yùkù yɛ̄
Z **get.angry**.Pfv Pos
‘Zaki became furious.’

11.1.1.2.5 Conveyance construction (‘bring’, ‘convey’)

In this construction, a motion verb (often ‘come’ or ‘go’) is followed by a comitative PP containing tɛ̀ ~ tà(ⁿ) ‘with’, denoting the theme. The recipient is optionally expressed as a PP with dative lɔ̄ (§8.1.1.2). Elsewhere dative PPs with lɔ̄ precede positive (y)ɛ̄, but in the conveyance construction, if an optional dative PP is added after the obligatory ‘with’ phrase, the order is (y)ɛ̄, then ‘with’ phrase, then dative PP (477d).

(477) a. [tá] [pā] [tàⁿ téè-yɛ̄-nī]
[go.Imprt] [come.Imprt] [**with** tea-Pl-Pl]
‘Bring-2Sg the tea!’

b. [kí-lāā] [tàⁿ/tɛ̀ téè-yɛ̄-n̄] [zàkî lɔ̄]
[go.Imprt] [**with** tea-Pl-Pl] [Z **Dat**]
‘Take-2Sg the tea (there) for Zaki!’

c. [fɛ́= ɛ̀ pà] [tɛ̀ témɛ́-m̄] [míí rɔ̄]
[Comp 3HSg come.Pfv] [**with** beer-Sg] [1Sg **Dat**]
‘and he has brought me some sorghum beer’ (2024_09 @ 01:00)

d. [ɛ̀ pɛ̀= ɛ̄] [tɛ̀ témɛ́-m̄] [míí rɔ̄]
[3HSg come.Pfv **Pos**] [**with** beer-Sg] [1Sg **Dat**]
‘He/She brought me the/some sorghum beer.’

(478a) is a typical positive conveyance clause without the optional dative PP. The negative counterpart in (478b).

(478) a. zàkî pɛ̀= ɛ̄ [tɛ̀ téè-yɛ̄-nī]
Z come.Pfv **Pos** [with tea-Pl-Pl]
Zaki brought the tea.’

b. zàkî pà [tɛ̀ téè-yɛ̄-m̄] bɔ̀
Z come.Pfv [with tea-Pl-Pl] **Neg**
‘Zaki didn’t bring the tea.’

tā̄ ‘go.Ipfv’ optionally contracts with tɛ̀ ‘with’ as tɛ̄̀= =ɛ̀ (479a), cf. the uncontracted variant (479b). Forms of pà/pă ‘come’ likewise optionally contract with tɛ̀ (479c).

(479) a. [fá= á tā] [tɛ̄̀= [=ɛ̀ sì-yá]]
[Comp 3NHSg go.Pfv] [go.Ipfv [with 3NHSg]]
‘… then it (=hyena) conveyed it.’ (2024_05 @ 00:24)

b. [fá= á tā] [tā̄= [tà sì-yá]
[Comp 3NHSg go.Pfv] [go.Ipfv [with 3NHSg]]
[=(a)]

c. [tá] [pɛ̄= [=ɛ̀ sì-yá]]
[go.Imprt] [come.Imprt [with 3NHSg]]
‘Bring-2Sg it!’

11.1.1.2.6 ‘Forget’ and ‘remember’

‘Forget’ and ‘remember’ take dative objects. ‘X forget Y’ is phrased as “[X’s guts] forget [Y-dative],” with fá/fā ‘forget’ and wūn-nā-nā ‘guts’ (here as visceral cognitive center). ‘Guts’ is wūn-nā-nā for a singular possessor, and wūŋ-ɲɛ̄-nī for a plural successor (480a-b). ‘Remember’ can be phrased as ‘X’s memory come [Y-dative]” (480c-d), with possessed táárá-nā ‘memory’ as subject. It can also be phrased by replacing pà/pă ‘come’ by a verb pàrà/pàrá ‘forget’ which takes ‘X’s memory’ as object (480e-f). One might speculate that the otherwise unattested pàrà/pàrá is a vestigial causative of pà/pă ‘come’. Verbal nouns are fā-nā ‘forgetting’ and táárám-pàrā-nā ‘remembering’.

(480) a. [í wūŋ-ɲɛ̄-ŋ̄] fá [zàkîì lo̰ɛ̄=] ɛ̄
[3Pl **guts**-Pl-Pl] **forget**.Pfv [Z Dat] Pos
‘They forgot (about) Zaki.’

b. [tí wūŋ-ɲé-ŋ̄] wɛ́ɛ̀ fɛ̄= ɛ̄
[1Pl **guts**-Pl-Pl] Fut **forget**.Ipfv Pos
‘We will forget.’

c. [í táárá-m̄] pà [zàkîì lo̰ɛ̄=] ɛ̄
[3Pl **memory**.Pfv] **come**.Pfv [Z Dat] Pos
‘They remembered Zaki.’

d. [í táárá-ŋ̄] wɛ́ɛ̀ pă [zàkîì lo̰ɛ̄=] ɛ̄
[3Pl **memory**.Pfv] Fut **come**.Ipfv [Z Dat] Pos
‘They will remember Zaki.’

e. tí pàrà [tí táárá-n] ī
1PlP **remember**.Pfv [1Pl **memory**-Sg] Pos
‘We remembered.’

f. tì [tí táárá-m̄] pàré= ɛ̄
1PlI [1Pl **memory**-Sg] **remember**.Ipfv Pos
‘We (often) remember.’

For complex complements, see §17.3.1.4 (‘forget that/whether …’) and §17.6.4 (‘forget to VP)’.

11.1.2 Objects

11.1.2.1 Object properties

There is at most one direct object in each clause. An object immediately follows the verb in perfective (481a) and imperative (481b) clauses, but it precedes the verb in imperfective clauses (481c). This mobility distinguishes objects from PPs and other adjuncts, which are strictly postverbal. Object pronouns occur in the same linear positions as object NPs. 1st/2nd person pronouns have different forms as postverbal objects and as preverbal objects (§4.3.3). 3HSg is yè as preverbal or postverbal object, versus è as subject, possessor, and postpositional complement. Objects are bolded in (481).

(481) a. ḿ píí **zàkîì** yɛ̄ ‘I asked (píí) Zaki.’
ḿ píí **yè**= ɛ̄ ‘I asked him/her.’

b. píí **zàkîì** ‘Ask-2Sg Zaki!’
píí **yè** ‘Ask-2Sg him/her!’

c. ń **zàkîì** pīyé ɛ̄ ‘I (often) ask Zaki.’
ɲ́ **ɲè** pīyé ɛ̄ ‘I (often) ask him/her.’

The intransitive versus transitive distinction is maintained in phrasal verbs, which simply add a postverbal pseudo-postposition (psP). Transitive phrasal verbs behave like other transitives. In perfective and imperative clause, the object immediately follows the verb and is immediately followed by the psP. In imperfective clauses the object precedes the verb, stranding the psP as a postverbal suffix or enclitic. See §15.1.2 for details on phrasal verbs.

Transitive X VERB Y can be intransitivized as Y VERB (passive intransitive), there being no morphological passivization process. X VERB Y can also simplify to X VERB, but it is unclear whether the object Y is syntactically zeroed (as in antipassives) or is just omitted (cf. English verbs like *eat*, *swallow*, and *lose*).

Paleni has no parallel to English-type syntactic alternations like ‘give the money to X’ versus ‘give X the money’. Paleni has one ‘give’ verb where the theme is the object, and a different ‘give/furnish’ verb where the recipient is the object (§11.1.2.3 below).

11.1.2.2 Object-verb collocation

The high-frequency ambi-valent verb yà^{n}/yàmá (variant yè^{n}/yɛ̀má) is transitive in the sense ‘do, make’ and intransitive in the sense ‘be done, happen’. Examples of collocations with this verb are yàm bèlìyè-sí-ná-nā ‘do (=perform) a marriage’ and yàŋ kúú-ká-nā ‘do (=perform) a funeral’.

w^{n}á/w^{n}ā́ ‘put (in, on)’ is notable among other transitive verbs for occurring in a wide range of combinations. Many of them are collocations with psPs in phrasal-verb constructions, rather than simple verb-noun collocations: w^{n}á X lè ‘carry (child) on back’, w^{n}á X nī ‘put (child) to bed’ or ‘pour (offering) to ancestors’, and w^{n}á X sí ‘water (a garden)’.

11.1.2.3 Ditransitives

11.1.2.3.1 'Give' (nù), 'furnish' (kú^{n}), 'entrust' (kàràfá)

If X is the theme (=the object transferred) and Y is the recipient, the construction for nù/nùw^{n}ɔ́ 'give' is of the type "give X [to Y]," with optional 'to Y' (482). The object X follows the verb in perfective and imperative clauses, but precedes the verb in imperfectives. The dative postposition for the recipient is kīlānī (§8.1.1.1).

(482) a. tí nù námá-sá-n̄ [zàkîì kīlāŋ] ŋɛ̄
1PlP **give**.Pfv meat-Sg-Sg [Z Dat] Pos
'We gave the meat to Zaki.'

b. nû námá-sá-n̄ [zàkîì kīlām] bɔ̀
give.Imprt meat-Sg-Sg [Z Dat] Neg
'Don't-2Sg give meat to Zaki!'

c. tì námá-sá-n̄ nùw^{n}á [zàkîì kīlām] bɔ̀
1PlI meat-Sg-Sg **give**.Ipfv [Z Dat] Neg
'We don't give meat to Zaki.'

kàràfá/kàràfáná 'entrust', a regionally widespread word of Arabic origin, has the same syntax as nù 'give'.

(483) a. ŋ́ kàlìfá wárì-ŋɛ̄-nī [zàkîì kīlāŋ] ŋɛ̄
1Sg **entrust**.Pfv money-Pl-Pl [Z Dat] Pos
'I entrusted the money to Zaki.'

b. ŋ́ wárì-ŋɛ́-n̄ kàlìfáná [zàkîì kīlāŋ] ŋɛ̄
1Sg money-Pl-Pl **entrust**.Ipfv [Z Dat] Pos
'I (often) entrust money to Zaki.'

Similar constructions with kīlānī are in use for 'sell X [to Y]' and 'buy X [from Y]', see §8.1.1.1.

The alternative construction meaning 'give X to Y' is of the literal type "furnish/provide Y with X". The recipient Y is the direct object, so it follows the verb in perfectives and imperatives but precedes the verb in imperfectives. The verb in this construction is kú^{n}/kpā^{n}, glossed 'furnish' (484). The theme X is expressed as a free NP (484a-c) or as a PP with sí 'on' (484d). The free NP may present its full suffixal form when clause-final, as in (484e).

(484) a. tí kún zàkîì námá-sá-n ī
1PlP **furnish**.Pfv Z meat-Sg-Sg Pos
'We furnished Zaki with meat.'

b. kún zàkîì námá-sá-m̄ bɔ̀
furnish.Imprt Z meat-Sg-Sg Pos
'Don't-2Sg furnish Zaki with meat!'

c. tì zàkîì kpā^{n} námá-sá-ḿ bɔ̀
1PlI Z **furnish**.Ipfv meat-Sg-Sg Neg
'We don't furnish Zaki with meat.'

d. ā ŋ̄ kúnn á [sií-ré-ñ sí]
3NHSg Sbjn **furnish**.Imprt 3NHSg [medicine-Pl-Pl on]
'(billygoat said to monkey:) "please provide me with medicines!" '
(2024_10 @ 02:20)

e. tɛ̀ tí kún zàkîì námá-sá-nā / fɔ̃-mā-nā / wárì-ɲɛ̄-nī / fārā-nā
if 1PlP furnish.Pfv Z meat-Sg-Sg / dog-Sg-Sg / money-Pl-Pl / skin-Sg
'if we provide Zaki with meat/a dog/money/a skin'

When the theme X is a free noun denoting a specific indefinite singular, the free noun may take the form of a singular noun without its final number suffix. In this case, the final syllable of the noun (whether an NC suffix or the final syllable of the root) is raised to H tone, and may undergo additional minor changes. See (101) in §3.6.2.6.2 for examples.

11.1.2.3.2 'Show' (kānā … láá)

'Show' is the verb kānā/kāná. It occurs in three constructions, two of which include láá and the third of which is a simple ditransitive like 'give'.

When the theme X (the object shown) is overt, the first construction is perfective kānā X láá, imperfective kāná X láá. Since X remains in postverbal position in the imperfective, kānā cannot be taken as an ordinary transitive verb, and kānā … láá cannot be taken as an ordinary phrasal verb (§15.1.2.5). This would seem to suggest that [X láá] is a PP. However, láá is not otherwise known as a postposition. Moreover, if the recipient Y is added the construction is kānā X Y láá, which makes it impossible to parse [X láá] as a PP. Rather, kānā … láá is best analysed as a two-part serial-verb or verb-plus-satellite construction. This is consistent with the verbal noun kānā-lāā-nā. In this light, láá might possibly be identified as láá 'go.Pfv', here reduced to itive directional sense. However, no other combination of verb plus láá is attested. Alternatively, it might be connected in some way with presentative ló, §10.5.4.2, which would make some sense semantically.

(485) a. ŋ́ kānā wárì-ɲɛ̄-ñ láá yɛ̄
1Sg **show**.Pfv money-Pl-Pl **go** Pos
'I showed the money.'

b. ŋ́ kānáː wárì-ɲɛ̄-n̄ láá yɛ̄
1Sg **show**.Ipfv money-Pl-Pl **go** Pos
'I (often) show the money.'

c. ŋ́ kānā wárì-ɲɛ̄-n̄ zàkîː láá yɛ̄
1Sg **show**.Pfv money-Pl-Pl Z **go** pos
'I showed the money to Zaki.'

It is also possible to omit the theme while expressing the recipient overtly. In this case, kānā … láá behaves like a transitive phrasal verb (486a-b). Finally, kānā can behave like ditransitive 'give', with dative recipient and without láá (486c). This simpler construction is the one that occurs in the recordings.

(486) a. kānā zàkîː láá
show.Imprt Z **go**
'Show-2Sg (it to) Zaki!'

b. ń zàkîː kānáː-láá yɛ̄
1Sg Z **show**.Ipfv-**go** Pos
'I (often) show (it to) Zaki.'

c. fá= á kānā sɔ́kɔ́-ɲɛ́-n̄ [ɲɛ̀-sɔ̀ rɔ̄]
Comp 3NHSg **show**.Pfv herb-Pl-Pl [3HSg **Dat**]
'Then it showed him herbs.' (2024_04 @ 01:00)

11.1.2.4 VP as a morphosyntactic categor

Many complements in Paleni are clausal rather than just VPs. This is notably the case with sequential and short subjunctive fá clauses, which require overt subjects even when contextually predictable.

VP as a morphosyntactic unit, including aspect marking, is relevant to combinations of motion verbs with open-ended VPs, as in 'go/come (and) VP' (§15.1.3). In addition, postsubject morphemes like future wéɛ̀ partition clauses into the subject and the VP.

11.2 'Be', 'become', 'have', and lexical statives

11.2.1 Identificational predicates

These are one-place predicates identifying or describing an unexpressed but understood referent that has been introduced in a question or in prior discourse. There is no overt subject and no 'be' predicator, just the polarity marker (positive or negative).

Such predicates are also part of object focalization clauses (§13.1.2), cf. English *[it's X] [that I want]*.

11.2.1.1 'It's (an) X'

The question ǹté fɛ̃́-fìyé 'what is that?' (§13.2.2.2) can be answered by phrases like (487a-d). Final nominal suffixes -nā (singular) and -nī (plural) are reduced or modified before the positive morpheme (y)ɛ̄, which is glossed 'it is' in this construction. Singular NC suffix -nā combines with the positive morpheme as -n ī (487a), and plural NC suffix -nī combines with it as -ɲ̄ ɲɛ̄ (487b). Exceptionally, the nonhuman kà/kì gender combines (y)ɛ̄ 'it is' with singular -kà-nā as -kà-ŋwɛ̄= ɛ̄ and plural -kì-nī as kì-n-sɛ̄= ɛ̄ (487c). These increments are related to demonstratives (NHSg wā-nā, plural yīn-sī-nī), cf. (490b-c) below. (487d) features nouns and adverbs that lack nasal suffixes.

(487)	a.	bābā-n ī	'It's a sheep.'	< bābā-nā
		fãmā-n ī	'It's a dog.'	< fãmā-nā
		táá-n ī	'It's a rock'	< táá-nā
		wú-kó-n ī	'It's a house.'	< wú-kó-nā
		yàmpín-nā-n ī	'It's a ladle.'	< yàmpín-nā-nā
		túkú-sā-n ī	'It's a yam.'	< túkú-sā-nā
		cá-n ī	'It's a woman.'	< cá-nā
		pí-yé-n ī	'It's a man.'	< pí-yé-nā
		pálà-nā-n ī	'It's Faniagara (village).'	< pálà-nā-nā
	b.	fɔ́n-sɛ̄-ɲ̄ ɲɛ̄	'It's (=they're) dogs.'	< fɔ́n-sɛ̄-nī
		wú-yé-ɲ̄ ɲɛ̄	'It's (=they're) houses.'	< wú-yé-nī
		túkú-rɛ̄-ɲ̄ ɲɛ̄	'It's (=they're) yams.'	< túkú-rɛ̄-nī
		c-é-ɲ̄ ɲɛ̄	'It's (=they're) women.'	< c-é-nī
	c.	tɔ́ɔ́-kà-ŋwɛ̄= ɛ̄	'It's a field.'	< tɔ́ɔ́-kà-nā
		tɔ́ɔ́-kì-n-sɛ̄= ɛ̄	'It's (=they're) fields.'	< tɔ́ɔ́-kì-nī
		kɛ́rɛ́-kà-ŋwɛ̄= ɛ̄	'It's a rifle.'	< kɛ́rɛ́-kà-nā
		kɛ́rɛ́-kì-n-sɛ̄= ɛ̄	'It's (=they're) rifles.'	< kɛ́rɛ́-kì-nī
	d.	zàkîì (y)ɛ̄	'It's Zaki.'	< zàkîì
		wɛ̀ɛ̀-fáá-sìkɛ̄= ɛ̄	'It's like this.'	< -sìkɛ̄
		[bɛ́ sí-bé] yɛ̄	'It's your-Sg father'	< sí-bé

nɛ̄= ɛ̄ occurs after adjuncts such as spatiotemporal adverbs. In some cases (e.g., with nàñnà-nā 'now'), nɛ̄= ɛ̄ could arguably be parsed as final singular suffix -nā plus (y)ɛ̄ 'it is'. However, when it follows a postposition, such parsing is ruled out (488c).

(488)	a.	sínsí-nā nɛ̄= ɛ̄	'It's tomorrow'	< sínsí-nā
		nàñnà nɛ̄= ɛ̄	'It's now.'	< nàñnà-nā
		yīŋ-fā-n̄ nɛ̄= ɛ̄	'It's here.'	< yīŋ-fā-nā
	b.	mīn nɛ̄= ɛ̄	'It's today.'	< mīnī
		y^{n}îì nɛ̄= ɛ̄	'It's (=it was) yesterday.'	< y^{n}îì

c. [[á kwá-n̄] sí] nɛ̄= ɛ̄ ‘it’s on that (same) day’ 2026_06 @ 00:37

nɛ̄= ɛ̄ is common in adjunct focalization (§13.1.4), where it is glossed as “Foc” in interlinears.

In (489a), nī is added to kā-fá-nā and cannot be parsed as the fusion of final suffix -nā with positive allomorph ī. Note the absence of nī in the negation. This may reflect resegmentation and fusion of n ī in examples like (487a) above. A different construction is (489b), with regular -n ī in the positive. The negative versions are provided here for comparison but are explained in the following subsection.

(489) a. á kā-fá-nā nī ‘It’s the same (as the other one)’ (2026_27 @ 01:43)
á kā-fá-nā bɔ̀ ‘It isn’t the same.’

b. á kà-fá-nā-n ī ‘It’s (just) it (=that one) alone.’
á [kà-fá-nā-nā m̄] bɔ̀ ‘It isn’t (just) it (=that one) alone.’

Pronominal and demonstrative combinations are in (490). 1Pl, 2Sg, and 2Pl pronominals take L-toned form as in imperfective clauses (490a). 1Sg is also L-toned mì instead of its usual subject form ŋ́. The third person forms are demonstratives (§4.4.2.1), so there is no distinction between ‘it’s them’ and ‘it’s these/those ones’ in (490b). However, an extended demonstrative can be used to force a demonstrative reading (490c).

(490) a. mì yɛ̄ ‘It’s me.’
tì yɛ̄ ‘It’s us.’
bɛ̀= ɛ̄ ‘It’s you-Sg.’
mwɛ̀= ɛ̄ ‘It’s you-Pl.’

b. ɛ̀-sɛ̄^{n}= ɛ̄ ‘It’s him/her.’ or ‘It’s this/that one (human).’
yīn-sī yɛ̄ ‘It’s them.’ or ‘It’s these/those ones.’
wɛ̄^{n}= ɛ̄ ‘It’s it (nonhuman).’ or ‘It’s this/that (nonhuman)’

c. nà-ŋ̄ wɛ̄= ɛ̄ ‘It’s that (nonhuman).’
nì-n̄ sɛ̄= ɛ̄ ‘It’s those (nonhuman).’

The last form here, nì-n̄ sɛ̄= ɛ̄, is interesting since it appears to be based on the fusion of a final plural suffix -nī on a missing noun, plus the regular 3Pl demonstrative yīn-sī(-nī). This makes it parallel to its singular counterpart nà-ŋ̄ wɛ̄= ɛ̄. Compare (199) above.

A question like wò-rí yɛ̄ ‘who is it?’ or plural wò-sɛ̄é-yɛ̄ ɛ̄ ‘who are they?’ (§13.2.2.1) can similarly be answered by phrases like (491a-d).

(491) a. mì yɛ̄ ‘It’s me.’
tì yɛ̄ ‘It’s us.’

b. ādāmɛ̄= ɛ̄ ‘It’s Adama.’

c. [n̄ sí-bé] ɛ̄ ‘It’s my father.’

d.	tɔ̄ɔ̄-nnè-n ī	‘It’s (=he’s) a farmer.’	< tɔ̄ɔ̄-nnè-nā
	tɔ̄ɔ̄-sɛ̀ɛ̄-ɲ̄ ɲɛ̄	‘They’re farmers.’	< tɔ̄ɔ̄-sɛ̀ɛ̄-nī

Forms with cá-nā ‘woman’ and its plural c-é-nī are regular (492). This is in contrast to the irregular forms of these nouns in copular sentences with overt subjects, see (503f) in §11.2.2. below).

(492)	cá-n ī	‘It’s a woman.’
	c-é-ɲ̄ ɲɛ̄	‘It’s (=they’re) women.’

11.2.1.2 ‘It isn’t (an) X’ (m bɔ̀)

Most negative identificationals replace the positive morpheme by m bɔ̀ (493). There is some ambiguity as to which constituent the nasal in m bɔ̀ belongs to. Here it is bracketed with the preceding noun and glossed in interlinears as “Irr” (**irrealis**). One could also equate the extra nasal with SFoc ŋ, though this would make little sense given that focalization and negation do not easily combine for pragmatic reasons. Exceptionally, the phrases in (493e) omit the extra nasal before bɔ̀. Perhaps these phrases are taken to be verbal rather than nominal.

(493)	a.	[bābā-nā m̄] bɔ̀	‘It isn’t a sheep.’	
		[fɔ́n-sɛ̄-nī m̄] bɔ̀	‘It isn’t (=they aren’t) dogs.’	
		[tɔ́ɔ́-kà-ŋwā m̄] bɔ̀	‘It isn’t a field.’	< tɔ́ɔ́-kà-nā
		[tɔ́ɔ́-kì-nì-sɛ̄ m̄] bɔ̀	‘It isn’t (=they aren’t) fields.’	< tɔ́ɔ́-kì-nī
		[túkú-sā-nā m̄] bɔ̀	‘It isn’t a yam.’	
	b.	[mīn nā m̄] bɔ̀	‘It isn’t today.’	
		[ādāmā m̄] bɔ̀	‘It isn’t Adama.’	
		[mī m̄] bɔ̀	‘It isn’t me.’	
	c.	[ñ sí-bé ḿ] bɔ̀	‘It isn’t my father.’	
	d.	[pálà-ná ḿ] bɔ̀	‘It isn’t Faniagara (village).’	
		[zàkîì m̀] bɔ̀	‘It isn’t Zaki.’	
	e.	á kā-fá-nā bɔ̀	‘It isn’t the same.’	(489a)
		á [ká fɔ̄rɔ̄] bɔ̀	‘It isn’t black.’	(444b)

1st/2nd person pronouns have Cv̄ shape with M-tone in this construction (494a). Third-person pronouns are again disallowed, and are replaced by demonstratives (494b). These details are similar to those for SFoc ŋ.

(494)	a.	[mī m̄] bɔ̀	‘It isn’t me.’
		[tī m̄] bɔ̀	‘It isn’t us.’

	[bɛ̄ m̄] bɔ̀	‘It isn’t you-Sg.’
	[wɔ̄ m̄] bɔ̀	‘It isn’t you-Pl.’
b.	[è-sā m̄] bɔ̀	‘It isn’t him/her.’
	[wā m̄] bɔ̀	‘It isn’t it.’
	[yīn-sī m̄] bɔ̀	‘It isn’t them.’

The combination m bɔ̀ also occurs in negative factive complements of verbs like ‘know’ (§17.3.1.1), where the extra nasal helps to clarify the scope of the final negative (‘X doesn’t know that Y came’ versus ‘X knows that Y didn’t come’). The extra nasal also occurs in past-time n̄ tɔ̄ ‘was/were’ (§10.7.4).

11.2.2 Equational (copular) predicates (‘X is Y’)

Two-place equational clauses with overt subject X and predicate nominal Y are covered here. Minor constructions are disposed of in §11.2.2.1 and §11.2.2.2. The productive construction with positive (y)ɛ̄ functioning as copula between X and Y is covered in §11.2.2.3.

11.2.2.1 X Y ‘X is Y’

A few examples were elicited with X and Y juxtaposed, where X is a pronoun. This does not appear to be a regular construction. The examples can also be construed as appositions. See also ‘us Palabeni’ in (733a) below.

(495)	a.	mîⁿ ādāmā	‘I am Adama.’ or ‘me Adama’
	b.	mîn tɔ̄ɔ̄-nnè-nā	‘I am a farmer.’ or ‘me the farmer’
		túwⁿɔ̄ tɔ̄ɔ̄-sɛ̀ɛ̄-nī	‘We are farmers.’ or ‘we farmers’

The negative counterpart of this is not distinguishable from that of the X Y (y)ɛ̄ (see below).

11.2.2.2 X Y (y)ɛ̄ ‘X is Y’

In this version, Y (y)ɛ̄ is the identificational construction described above, with the addition of X as a kind of topic, roughly ‘as for X, it’s (a) Y’. X has its full suffixal form as in isolation pronunciation.

(496)	a.	è-sā-nā	sàmán-nè-n ~ sàmán-nè=	ī ɛ̄	‘That (person) is a Wara.’ (ethnicity)
	b.	yīn-sī-nī	sàmán-sɛ̀ɛ̄-ɲ̄	ɲɛ̄	‘Those are sheep.’
		wā-nā	bābā-n	ī	‘That is a sheep.’

A negative example is (497).

(497) mîⁿ ādāmā bɔ̀ ‘I am not Adama.’

A special case of this X Y (y)ɛ̄ construction is the ‘Y belong to X’ construction with wɛ́ré (§11.2.4.2).

However, this X Y (y)ɛ̄ construction should not be confused with locational predicates, where the subject is immediately followed by a locational expression (such as a bare place name). I take the ‘X have Y’ construction with kīlānī (§11.2.4.1.1) as being a special case of the locational predicate.

11.2.2.3 X (y)ɛ̄ Y ‘X is Y’

This version is fully productive. The subject X is followed by the positive morpheme (y)ɛ̄, here glossed as ‘be’ in interlinears if unaccompanied by a tense marker. Positive (y)ɛ̄ also occurs in the identificational construction ‘it’s (a) X’ (§11.2.1), in clefted nonsubject focalized clauses, and in other positive indicative main clauses. (y)ɛ̄ is replaced by the true copula tɔ̀ in future and past-time constructions. (y)ɛ̄ has its usual allomorph ī when it fuses with final singular suffix -nā, as in (499e) below.

If X is a pronoun, it is normally in proclitic form. When directly followed by (y)ɛ̄ ‘be’ or by future wɛ́ɛ̀ tɔ̀ ‘will be’, imperfective subject proclitics (1Pl tì, 2Sg bɛ̀, 2Pl mɔ̀) are used (498a-b). When immediately followed by past ‘was/were’ in the form tɔ̀ or bà tɔ̀, perfective subject proclitics (1Pl tí, 2Sg bɛ́, 2Pl ɔ́) are used (498c-d).

One can think of (y)ɛ̄ in equational clauses like (498a) as a copula ‘be’ (498a). However, in marked tenses (past-time, future), the tense marker is followed by tɔ̀, which is arguably the real (or at least original) copula ‘be’. This tɔ̀ is itself followed by positive (y)ɛ̄ (498b-c).

(498) a. mɔ̀ yɛ̄ tɔ̄ɔ̄-sɛ̄rɛ̄
2PlI be farmer-Pl
‘You-Pl are farmers.’

b. tù wɛ́ɛ̀ tɔ̰ɛ̀= ɛ̄ tɔ̄ɔ̄-sɛ̄rɛ̄
1PlI Fut be Pos farmer-Pl
‘We will be farmers.’

c. tí bà tɔ̰ɛ̀= ɛ̄ tɔ̄ɔ̄-sɛ̄rɛ̄
1PlP Past be Pos farmer-Pl
‘We were farmers.’

d. tí tɔ̰ɛ̀= ɛ̄ tɔ̄ɔ̄-sɛ̄rɛ̄
1PlP be.Past Pos farmer-Pl
‘We were farmers.’

Personal names as the predicate nominal Y have their regular form. However, suffixed nouns as predicate nominals take a special form described as free postverbal noun in §3.6.2.6.2 above. This involves omission of the final number suffix, and raising of the NC suffix one notch, from M to H and from L to M. Some noun roots and the NC suffix -sèɛ̄ also insert an 1. For example, tɔ̄ɔ̄-sɛ̄rɛ̄ in (498a-d) is from the noun whose citation form is tɔ̄ɔ̄-sèɛ̄-nī. Singular tɔ̄ɔ̄-nnè-nā 'farmer' likewise becomes tɔ̄ɔ̄-nnɛ̄ as free postverbal noun, cf. (99b) above. More examples of free postverbal nouns are given below, but first some more details about the syntax (499). The á in (499e) is quotative.

(499)	a.	ɲ́ ɲɛ̄ ādāmā	'I am Adama (name).'	
	b.	è yɛ̄ sàmán-nɛ̄	'He/She is a Wara.'	< sàmán-nè-nā
		í yɛ̄ sàmán-sɛ̄rɛ̄	'They are Waras.'	< sàmán-sèɛ̄-nī
		ɲ́ ɲɛ̄ sàmán-nɛ̄	'I am a Wara.'	
	c.	tì yɛ̄ tɔ̄ɔ̄-sɛ̄rɛ̄	'We are farmers.'	< tɔ̄ɔ̄-sèɛ̄-nī
		bè ɛ̄ tɔ̄ɔ̄-nnɛ̄	'You-Sg are a farmer.'	< tɔ̄ɔ̄-nnè-nā
		ɲ́ ɲɛ̄ tɔ̄ɔ̄-nnɛ̄	'I am a farmer.'	
	d.	ādāmā yɛ̄ tɔ̄ɔ̄-nnɛ̄	'Adama is a farmer.'	
		[m̄ pó-ɲ̄] ɲɛ̄ tɔ̄ɔ̄-nnɛ̄	'My child is a farmer.'	
	e.	[míɲ̀ ɲínáá-n] ī [á múúsā]	'My name is Moussa.'	< yínáá-nā

Negative counterparts omit the post-subject positive (y)ɛ̄ and add the regular negative bɔ̀ after the predicate (500a). Subject focalized clauses with ŋ after the subject also omit (y)ɛ̄ (500b). However, positive conditional antecedent clauses with tɛ̀ 'if' behave like regular copular clauses (500c).

(500)	a.	ń tɔ̄ɔ̄-nnɛ̄ bɔ̀	'I am not a farmer.'
		mɔ̀ tɔ̄ɔ̄-sɛ̄rɛ̄ bɔ̀	'You-Pl are not farmers.'
		fɔ̄-má-ñ tɔ̄ɔ̄-nnɛ̄ bɔ̀	'The dog is not a farmer.'.
	b.	[wòrí ń] tɔ̄ɔ̄-nnè-nā	'Who is a/the farmer?
		[è-sā ñ] tɔ̄ɔ̄-nnè-nā	'He/She [focus] is the farmer.'
	c.	tɛ̀ è yɛ̄ tɔ̄ɔ̄-nnɛ̄	'if he/she is a farmer'

The nouns in (501a-d) are of the productive nā/ɲɛ̄ gender (501a-c) and others in (501d-e) also have syllabic M-toned NC suffixes in citation forms. In the free postverbal noun (the Y in 'X be Y'), the final number suffix is omitted, leaving NC suffixes as word-final. M-toned NC suffixes are raised to H-toned (501a,c) if not already H-toned (501b), just as L-toned -(n)nè- is raised one notch to -(n)nɛ̄ and -sèɛ̄- is raised to -sɛ̄rɛ̄ in (500a). For those apparently H-toned noun roots that are suspected of being structurally falling-toned, so they fail to raise the tone of an M-toned NC suffix in the citation form, the suffix is raised only to <MH>-toned. This is the case in (501e) and in plural 'dogs' in (501d). The M element in the suffixal <MH>

tone is arguably a trace of the otherwise covert final nonhigh tone element at the end of the root.

(501)

	noun	‘(I am a…/we are…)’	
a.	kàfɔ́lɔ̀-nā-nā	… kàfɔ́lɔ̀-ná	‘an owner, a master’
	kàfɔ́lɔ̀-ɲɛ̄-nī	… kàfɔ́lɔ̀-ɲɛ́	‘owners, masters’
b.	kɔ̀rɔ́-ná-nā	… kɔ̀rɔ́-ná	‘an idiot’
	kɔ̀rɔ́-ɲɛ́-nī	… kɔ̀rɔ́-ɲɛ́	‘idiots’
c.	kàràmūū-nā-nā	… kàràmūū-ná	‘a holy man’
	kàràmūū-ɲɛ̄-nī	… kàràmūū-ɲɛ́	‘holy men’
d.	fɔ̃-mā-nā	… fɔ̃-má	‘a dog’
	fɔ́n-sɛ̄-nī	… fɔ́n-sɛ́	‘dogs’
e.	túkú-sā-nā	… túkú-sā	‘a yam’
	túkú-rɛ̄-nī	… túkú-rɛ́	‘yams’

Intrusive rhotics occur in predicative forms of NC suffixes -sɛ̀ɛ̄- and -sɛ̀ɛ̄- and in nouns containing adjective pí-yé-nā ‘small’. An intrusive rhotic is absent in citation forms. The r does occur in the citation form of ‘old women’, so the predicative form lengthens the preceding vowel.

(502)

	noun	‘(I am a…/we are…)’	
a.	kāā-nnɛ̀-nā	… kāā-nnɛ̄	‘a griot’
	káá-sɛ̀ɛ̄-nī	… kāā-sɛ̄rɛ̄	‘griots’
b.	cîì-sɛ̀ɛ̄-nā	… cîì-sɛ̄rɛ̄	‘an old woman’
	cîì-sɛ̀-rɛ̄-nī	… cîì-sɛ̄ɛ̄rɛ̄	‘old women’
c.	kásá-pí-yé-nā	… kásá-pí-yéré	‘a young girl’
	kásá-pí-sé-nī	… kásá-pí-sɛ̄	‘young girls’

Additional examples of predicate nominals (middle column), some irregular, are in (503). In (503a-d), the final number suffix -nā or -nī is deleted as before. NC suffixes are preserved. Unexpected tone-dropping from H to M occurs in singular ‘a man’ (503a). ‘A girl’ (503c) lengthens its vowel. ‘Child’ and ‘woman’ show irregular forms (503d-e) also observed in X wò X ‘every X’ (§7.1.4). fá-nā ‘a person’ is suppleted by líyé, as also when possessed with the sense ‘(sb’s) kinsman’. Nouns of the nonhuman kà/kì gender add an increment based on demonstratives (503f), compare (487c).

(503)	noun	‘(I am a…/we are…)’	
a.	píyé-nā	… pīyē	‘a man’
	píyé-sé-nī	… píyé-sé	‘men’
b.	píyé-pò-nā	… píyé-pō	‘a young boy’
	píyé-pì-sē	… píyé-pì-sē	‘young boys’
c.	kásá-nā	… kásáá	‘a girl’
	kásá-mī-nī	… kásá-mī	‘girls’
d.	písàá-nā	… písàá-mā	‘a child’
	pís-é-nī	… pís-é	‘children’
e.	cá-nā	… cííyà	‘a woman’
	c-ɛ́n-nī	… cɛ́ɛ̄	‘women’
f.	fá-nā	… líyé	‘a person’
	líí-bé	… líí-bé	‘people’
g.	kɛ̄rɛ̄-kà-nā	… kɛ̄rɛ̄-kà-ŋwā	‘a rifle’
	kɛ̄rɛ̄-kà-nā	… kɛ̄rɛ̄-kì-nsɛ̄	‘rifles’

11.2.3 Locational-existential predicates

11.2.3.1 Without post-subject predicator

The regular positive particle (y)ɛ̄ and the regular negative particle bɔ̀ combine with locational expressions to specify the location of the subject. There is no post-subject ‘be’. There is no extra nasal before bɔ̀. The locational expression may be a PP with a postposition like míní ‘in’ (504a-b), or it may be a spatial adverb (504c-d). Final Tone-Raising applies to the relevant nouns as subjects. For example, bɔ̀ɔ̀tɛ̄ɛ̄-nā-nā ‘sack’ raises its NC suffix -nā- to -ná- in (504f). Relevant pronominal subjects take imperfective subject allomorphs (1Pl tì, 2Pl mɔ̀, 2Sg bɛ̀) (504e).

(504)	a.	zàkî [wúún-nā míɲ] ɲɛ̄	‘Zaki is (out) in the bush.’
		zàkî [wúún-nā mím] bɔ̀	‘Zaki is not (out) in the bush.’
		tì [wúún-nā míɲ] ɲɛ̄	‘We are (out) in the bush.’
		fɔ̄-má-ŋ̄ [wúún-nā míɲ] ɲɛ̄	‘The dog is (out) in the bush.’
	b.	zàkî [tɔ́ɔ́-kà-m̄ míɲ] ɲɛ̄	‘Zaki is (out) at the field.’
		zàkî [tɔ́ɔ́-kà-m̄ mím] bɔ̀	‘Zaki is not (out) at the field.
	c.	zàkî yīŋ-fā-n ī	‘Zaki is here.’
		zàkî yīŋ-fā-m̄ bɔ̀	‘Zaki is not here.’

d. zàkîì lā-fā̃-n ī ‘Zaki is there.’
zàkîì lā-fā̃-m̄ bɔ̀ ‘Zaki is not there.’

e. bɛ̀ lā nī ‘Are you-Sg there?’
mɔ̀ lā nī ‘Are you-Pl there?’

f. bɔ̀ɔ̀tɛ̄ɛ̄-ná-n̄ [nàŋkáŋkà-ná-n̄ sí] bɔ̀
sack-Sg-Sg [mat-Sg-Sg on] Neg
‘The sack is not on the mat.’

Certain nouns denoting familiar locations occur in bare form without suffixes or locative postpositions, cf. English *be home* instead of *be in the home*, or *be in town* instead of *be in the town*. In other words, they are treated like place names. yóón-nā-nā ‘village’ (root yóóŋ̀) is often reduced to just yóò as a spatial adverb (505a). This reduces further to yó before a polarity morpheme (505b).

(505) a. zàkîì [yóón-nà mím] bɔ̀ ‘Zaki is not in the village.’

b. zàkîì yó= ɛ̄ ‘Zaki is in the village’
zàkîì yó bɔ̀ ‘Zaki is not in the village’.

The default locational adverb is lā (506). It functions as predicate when the location is either understood in context (even ‘here’) or when it is nonspecific. Its fuller form is lā-fā̃-nā ‘there’.

(506) zàkîì lɛ̄= ɛ̄ ‘Zaki is present (here/there)’
zàkîì lā nàñnà-n ī ‘Zaki is present (here/there) now.’
zàkîì lā bɔ̀ ‘Zaki is not present (here/there); Zaki is absent’

11.2.3.2 kɔ̀ní (kɔ̀ní-lā and kɔ̀ní-yīnā) ‘be present’

kɔ̀ní with an immediately following spatial adverbial means ‘be present (here/there)’. It may have originated as rebracketing of *[X kɔ̀ní] LOC with some spatial expression LOC, originally ‘[X (topic)] was LOC’, as X [kɔ̀ní LOC]. The absence of a ‘be’ verb in locational predicates facilitated this rebracketing. For kɔ̀ní as marginal synchronic topic marker, see §19.1.1.2.

The common adverbial combinations are kɔ̀ní-yīnā ‘be present (here)’ (507a) and kɔ̀ní-lā ‘be present (there)’. The default is kɔ̀ní-lā, where the spatial location may be vague. Other spatial expressions are also compatible with kɔ̀ní (507b). The default kɔ̀ní-lā can co-occur with a following more concrete adverbial (507c).

(507) a. tì kɔ̀ní-yíné= ɛ̄
1Pl.I **be**-here Pos
‘We are (present) here.’ (2024_03 @ 03:00)

b. mānsā-ŋ̄ kɔ̀ní [tí kīlāɲ] ɲɛ̄
laughter-Sg **be** [1Pl among] Pos
'There is laughter among us.' (2024_03 @ 03:10)

c. mɔ̀ kɔ̀ní-lā pă-lā yó ɛ̄
2Pl.I **be** -there.Def come.Ipfv-there.Def village Pos
'You-Pl are coming (=arriving) there at the village.'

In (508), the SFoc morpheme ŋ precedes kɔ̀ní, and the clause is understood by speakers to be a subject-focus construction. This is an indicator that kɔ̀ní is part of the VP, not the final word in the subject. However, it is easily seen how the rebracketing occurred, with ŋ̄ parsed as a nominal final suffix.

(508) [á kàā ŋ̄] kɔ̀ní [tí kīlānī]
[3NHSg thing SFoc] **be** 1Pl among]
'That (situation) [focus] is what is present among us.' (2024_03 @ 03:22)

11.2.3.3 yīnā 'be here'

yīnā as positive or negative predicate has locational-existential function with reference to proximate location. yīnā can also follow various verbs as an encliticized version of yīŋ-fā-nā 'here'.

(509) a. fíyè yīnā bɔ̀
anything **be.here** Neg
'There is nothing (here).' (2024_05 @ 04:11)

b. fíyè yīnɛ̄=
something **be.here** Pos
'There is something here.'

c. fá-ɲ̄ ɲīnɛ̄=
person-Sg **be.here** Pos
'There is someone here.' (< fá-nā)

11.2.4 Possessive predicates

11.2.4.1 Having and acquiringɡ̄

11.2.4.1.1 'X have Y' (kīlāni)

The main possessive predicate meaning 'X have Y', i.e., emphasizing the existence of Y, is a construction of the form "Y (be) [X Dative]." Dative postposition kīlānī is diachronically related to kílā-nā 'arm, hand', and the original possessive predicate would have been

something like “Y (be) in X’s hand”. There is no overt ‘be’, as usual in locational predicates as opposed to copular clauses. Positive (y)ɛ̄ follows the dative PP, so the form usually heard is kīlāŋ ŋɛ̄ (positive) or kīlām bɔ̀ (negative). Eligible subject nouns can undergo Final Tone-Raising, hence -sɛ́- and -ŋɛ́- in (510a).

(510) a. kàà-sɛ́-n̄ [tí kīlāŋ] ŋɛ̄ ‘We have (some) sheep.’
wárì-ŋɛ́-n̄ [zàkîì kīlām] bɔ̀ ‘Zaki doesn’t have (any) money.’

b. pís-é(-n̄) [tí kīlām] bɔ̀ ‘We have no children.’
pís-é-n̄ [zàkîì kīlām] bɔ̀ ‘Zaki doesn’t have children.’

In (511), the subject is focalized, so there is no (y)ɛ̄ and kīlānī has its full form. The younger speaker pronounces kīlāŋ.

(511) [[pís-é-n̄ bāā-yɛ̄-nī] n̄] [tí kīlānī]
[[child-PL̄-Pl two-Pl-Pl] SFoc] [1Pl Dat]
‘We have two children.’

An alternative phrasing, marginal but possible when it is contextually understood which NP is possessor, is of the literal form ‘X be Y’. Here ‘be’ has seemingly shifted its meaning to ‘have’ (512). We could alternatively analyse this as a kind of bahuvrihi (§5.2.1.2), parallel to ‘Zaki is two-legged’.

(512) zàkîì yɛ̄ [pís-é-m bàà] ‘Zaki has two children.’

11.2.4.1.2 y^ná/y^nā̂ ‘see’ as ‘acquire, get’

‘Acquire, get, obtain’ is a secondary sense of the transitive verb y^ná/y^nā̂ ‘see’. The subject may have been an active acquirer or a passive recipient.

(513) zàkîì y^ná wú-kó-n ī
Z **see**.Pfv house-Sg-Sg Pos
‘Zaki got (=acquired) a house.’

11.2.4.2 ‘Y belong to X’ (wɛ́rɛ́)

The possessed noun wɛ́rɛ́ ‘posession, property (of sb)’ functions by itself as predicate nominal in this construction. The “subject” is a preposed topic, cf. §11.2.2.2 above.

(514) a. [wú-kó-nā ŋwā-nā] [zàkîì wɛ́rɛ́] ɛ̄
[house-Sg-Sg Dem-Sg] [Z **Poss**] Pos
‘This house belongs to Zaki.’

b. wú-kó-nā [zàkîì wɛ́rɛ́ ḿ] bɔ̀
house-Sg-Sg [Z **Poss** Irr] Neg
'The house does not belong to Zaki.'

11.2.5 Identity and location over time

11.2.5.1 'Resemble' (kàà, fɛ́rɛ́)

Two constructions for 'X resemble Y' are in use. The first has stative transitive kàà (515a-c). Note that kàà follows the object 'Zaki' in (515c), as in normal transitive imperfective (including future) clauses. The second construction is literally 'X exits to Y', cf. English *X takes after Y*. It has the Ipfv stem of fɛ́rɛ́/fɛ̄rɛ́ 'exit, go out' (515d).

(515) a. zàkîì kàà [tí sí-bé] ɛ̄
Z **resemble** [1Pl father-Sg] Pos
'Zaki resembles our father.'

b. ḿ mà kàà zàkîì yɛ̄
1Sg Past **resemble** Z Pos
'I used to resemble Zaki.' (< bà)

c. ɛ̀ wɛ́ɛ̀ zàkîì kàà yɛ̄
3HSg Fut Z **resemble** Pos
'He/She will resemble Zaki.'

d. zàkîì fɛ̄rɛ́ [[tí sí-bé] lɔ̰ɛ̄=] ɛ̄
Z **exit**.Ipfv [[1Pl father-Sg] Dat] Pos
'Zaki resembles our father.'

11.2.5.2 'Become Y' and 'transform X into Y'

The verb 'become, turn into (sth)' is wààmà/wààmá. Positive (y)ɛ̄ follows the verb and precedes the nominal adjunct in positive clauses (516a). Negative bɔ̀ follows the nominal adjunct.

(516) a. zàkîì wààmɛ̀= ɛ̄ báá-pí-yéré / fā-má / cííyà
Z become.Pfv Pos bird-Dim-Sg / dog-Sg / woman
'Zaki turned into a bird/a dog/a woman.'

b. ɛ̀ wààmà báá-pí-yéré / fā-má / cííyà bɔ̀
3HSg become.Pfv bird-Dim-Sg / dog-Sg / woman Neg
'He didn't turn into a bird/a dog/a woman.'

Here ‘bird’ etc. are free postverbal nouns. They show special forms in comparison to citation forms and normal predicates (§3.6.2.6.2). The NC suffix (if any) is retained, but the final number suffix is absent. The vowel of the NC suffix is raised to H-tone. If there is no overt NC suffix, the final stem-syllable is raised. Some nouns and NC suffixes insert an r in the final syllable, and some other irregularities are observed. Free postverbal nouns with similar modifications occur in copular clauses (§11.2.2.3).

The transitive (causative) version ‘X transform Y into (a) Z’ uses the same verb wààmà/wààmá and the same free postverbal nouns.

(517) a.

ŋ́	wààmà	zàkîì	yɛ̄	báá-pí-yéré
1Sg	transform.Pfv	Z	Pos	bird-Dim-Sg

‘I turned Zaki into a bird.’

b.

ŋ́	wààmà	zàkîì	báá-pí-yéré	bɔ̀
1Sg	transform.Pfv	Z	bird-Dim-Sg	Neg

‘I didn’t turn Zaki into a bird.’

11.2.5.3 ‘Remain’ (wàkà/wàká plus spatial)

The root of this verb is wàkà-/wàká-. It requires a following spatial expression (§15.1.1.1). The defaults are the more or less encliticized spatial demonstratives -yīnā ‘here’ and -lā ‘there’. These finals are optionally omitted if a more specific spatial expression is added as in (518a)

(518) a.

è	wàkà	yó	ē
3HSg	**remain**.Pfv	village	Pos

‘He/She stayed in the village.’

b.

è	wàkà-lā	[wúún-nā	míŋ]	ŋɛ̄
3MSg	**remain**.Pfv-**there**	[the.bush-Sg	in]	Pos

‘He/She stayed (there) out in the bush (=brousse).’

c.

[yīŋ-fā-n̄	nɛ̄=	ɛ̄]	[fí=	í	wàká-yīnā	[tí	kīlānī]]
[here-Sg	Foc	it.is]	[Comp	3Pl	**remain**.Ipfv-**here**	[1Pl	among]]

‘It’s here [focus] that they stay among us.’ (2024_03 @ 02:49)

d.

á	[ŋ̄	kàà-bá-ŋ̄]	wɛ́ɛ̀	wàká-lā
Quot	[1Sg	sheep-Sg-Sg]	Fut	**remain**.Ipfv-**there**.Def

[sàntùŋkóó-ŋ̄	kīlām]	bɔ̀
[hyena-Sg	chez]	Neg

(He said:) “My sheep-Sg will not remain there with the hyena!” ’
(2024_05 @ 00:31)

11.2.6 Mental and emotional states

11.2.6.1 ‘Know’ (sùwⁿɔ̀/sùwⁿɔ́)

sùwⁿɔ̀/sùwɔ́ⁿ ‘know’ is a dynamic aspect-marking verb, not a stative. The state of knowing is expressed as a telic change-of-state event, cf. English *find out*. It can take an NP object in the sense ‘know, be acquainted with (sb/sth)’ (519a).

(519) ń sùwⁿɔ̀ zàkîì yɛ̄
1Sg know.Pfv Z Pos
‘I know Zaki.’

For ‘know’ with factive clausal complements, see §17.3.1.1.

11.2.6.2 ‘Want’, ‘like’, and ‘need’

11.2.6.2.1 kīlānī ‘want’

‘X want Y’ is expressed by an imperfective clause with the Ipfv (pseudo-)verb kīlānī. Other translations are ‘like’ and ‘need’. kīlānī is well-known as a dative postposition that can also mean ‘among, at the place of, chez’. A possible literal parsing of (520a) is therefore “I (am) at the place of water.” This is likely the diachronic source, but synchronically there is no obvious reason not to take kīlānī as an imperfective verb.

(520) a. ń ní-mí-ŋ̄ kīlāŋ ɲɛ̄
1Sg water-Pl-Pl **want**.Ipfv Pos
‘I would like some water.’

b. tì fíyè kīlām bɔ̀
1PlI anything **want**.Ipfv Neg
‘We don’t want anything.’

c. [ǹté-fɛ̄ yɛ̄] [(fɔ́) mà= á kīlānī]
[what? it.is] [(Foc) 2PlI 3NHSg **want**.Ipfv]
‘What do you-Pl want?’

d. yóón-nā-ŋ̄ wárì-ɲɛ̄-ŋ̄ kīlāŋ ɲɛ̄
village-Sg-Sg money-Pl-Pl **want**.Ipfv Pos
‘The village needs money.’

e. [fɛ̄= ɛ̄ ɲ̄ ɲàmɛ́=] [ɛ́ɛ̀ ɛ̀ kīlāŋ ɲɛ̄]
[Comp 3HSg Sbjn said] [LogoHSg 3HSg **want**.Ipfv Pos]
‘She says, “I want him.” ’ (2024_09 @ 04:08)

f. ǹsé [fá bà= á kīlānī]
what? [Comp 2SgI 3NHSg **want**.Ipfv]
'What do you-Sg want?'

kīlānī 'want' does not take VP or clausal complements. For (y)álè 'want' with long subjunctive clauses, see §17.6.3.

11.2.6.2.2 'Be sweet' = 'be wanted, be dear', 'be happy'

Happiness can be expressed as "X's guts are happy", where "be happy" translates kám-míní, a phrasal verb based on ká^{n} 'be good, be sweet' (521a). 'Guts, entrails, insides' is wūn-nā-nā as noun, pronounced ŋūn-nā-nā by the younger speaker. For the older speaker, w becomes ŋ only after a nasal. For 'guts' as visceral emotional center, see §11.1.1.2.4.

If the source of pleasing is the subject, the emotional center can be reduced to postposition-like noun w^{n}ú (521b).

(521) a. [ɛ̀ wūn-nā-ŋ̄] kám-míɲ ɲɛ̄
[3HSg **guts**-Sg-Sg] be.good.Pfv Pos
'He/She is happy.'

b. [[wɔ́ pó-nā] pààsā-ŋ̄] ká^{n} [ŋ̄ ŋú] yɛ̄
[[2Pl child-Sg] matter-Sg] be.good [1Sg **guts**] Pos
'I am in love with your-Pl child.' (2024_05 @ 01:40)

11.2.6.3 'Fear' (nási/nāsá)

'Be afraid' is the verb nási/nāsá (Ipfv). The Pfv stem occurs in most examples even describing present states. If the object of fear is expressed, it is the complement of a PP with postposition yínnāā 'in front of, before', the image being of one trembling or cringing in the presence of the object.

(522) a. ń nási [zàkîi yínnāā] yɛ̄
1Sg **fear**.Pfv [Z before] Pos
'I am afraid of Zaki.'

b. zàkîi nási [fā-má-ŋ̄ ɲínnāā] bɔ̀
Z **fear**.Pfv [dog-Sg-Sg before] Neg
'Zaki does not fear the dog.'

For clausal complements of this verb, see §17.3.1.5 and §17.6.5.

11.3 Stative adjectival predicates

All stative predicates can be shifted into a past time interval by adding bà or tɔ̀ ~ tɔ̄ (depending on the construction) immediately after the subject (§10.7.6). Forms presented below are for present time or timeless contexts.

11.3.1 Basic adjectives as stative predicates

Adjectives can be made predicative in two ways. First, many modifying adjectives have a semantically related stative predicative form. This predicative form has no derivational affixation, and in most cases it does not mark aspect. Positive (y)ɛ̄ and negative bɔ̀ follow the predicate, as with intransitives.

In (523a) the predicative adjective is phonologically related to the modifying adjective, sometimes with minor irregularities. In (523c) the predicative adjective is suppletive. In (523b) the predicative and modifying adjectives have a slim phonological connection, but the frequent elision of r makes a connection plausible. In (523), to save space, for adjectives that can modify human and nonhuman referents, only nonhuman forms are presented. The positive 'it is __' predicate ends in positive (y)ɛ̄.

(523)

		modifying	predicative	'it is __'	'it is not __'
a.	'long'	kàà^{n}rìŋ-kà-nā	kāā^{n}rī	á kāā^{n}rī yɛ̄	á kāā^{n}rī bɔ̀
	'sweet'	kàní-kà-nā	kání	á kání yɛ̄	á kání bɔ̀
	'skinny'	kɔ̀rɔ̀-kà-nā	kɔ̄rɔ̄	á kɔ̄rɛ̄ = ɛ̄	á kɔ̄rɔ̄ bɔ̀
	'dry'	kpà-nā	kpá	á kpɛ́ = ɛ̄	á kpá bɔ̀
	'strong'	kpàànsí-kà-nā	kpáánsí	á kpáánsí yɛ̄	á kpáánsí bɔ̀
	'bitter'	kpàràmà-kà-nā	kpàràmà	á kpàràmɛ̀ = ɛ̀	á kpàràmà bɔ̀
	'short'	kpèrèŋ-kà-nā	kpērē^{n}	á kpērēɲ ɲɛ̄	á kpērēm bɔ̀
	'easy'	kpɔ̀rɔ̀nsí-kà-nā	kpɔ́rɔ́nsí	á kpɔ́rɔ́nsí yɛ̄	á kpɔ́rɔ́nsí bɔ̀
	'wide'	lèrè-kà-nā	lèrè	á lèrè = ɛ̄	á lèrè bɔ̀
	'sharp'	mànà-kà-nā	máná	á mánɛ́ = ɛ̄	á máná bɔ̀
	'dirty'	nùkùmàŋ-kà-nā	nùkùmà	á nùkùmɛ̀ = ɛ̄	á nùkùmà bɔ̀
	'cooked'	pìlà-kà-nā	pílá	á pílɛ́ = ɛ̄	á pílá bɔ̀
	'nasty'	pì-nā-nā	pí^{n}	á píɲ ɲɛ̄	á pím bɔ̀
	'thin'	pìsìkàŋ-kà-nā	pìsìkà	á pìsìkɛ̀ = ɛ̄	á pìsìkà bɔ̀
	'sour'	pɔ̀sɔ̀mɔ̀ŋ-kà-nā	pɔ̀sɔ̀mɔ̀	á pɔ̀sɔ̀mɛ̀ = ɛ̄	á pɔ̀sɔ̀mɔ̀ bɔ̀
	'old'	síí-míŋ-kà-nā	síí-míni	á síí-míɲ ɲɛ̄	á síí-mím bɔ̀
	'deep'	tà-míŋ-kà-nā	tá-míní	á tá-míɲ ɲɛ̄	á tá-mím bɔ̀
	'nearby'	táákáŋ-kà-nā	tááká^{n}	á táákáɲ ɲɛ̄	á táákám bɔ̀
	'very near'	tènté-kà-nā	ténté	á ténté ɛ̄	á ténté bɔ̀
	'cold, wet'	tììmàŋ-kà-nā	tììmà	á tììmɛ̀ = ɛ̄	á tììmà bɔ̀
	'hot'	tùkù-kà-nā	túkú	á túkú yɛ̄	á túkú bɔ̀
	'distant'	tùràŋ-kà-nā	túrá^{n}	á túráɲ ɲɛ̄	á túrám bɔ̀
	'speedy'	wàyà-kà-nā	wáyá	á wáyɛ́ = ɛ̄	á wáyá bɔ̀
	'fast'	wàlàsí-kà-nā	wàlàsí	á wàlàsí yɛ̄	á wàlàsí bɔ̀

‘heavy’	yìbì-tú-kà-nā	yíbí-tú	á yíbí-tú yɛ̄	á yíbí-tú bɔ̀
‘much’	yɔ̀kɔ̀rɔ́-kà-nā	yɔ́kɔ́rɔ́	á yɔ́kɔ́rɛ̀= ɛ̄	á yɔ́kɔ́rɔ̀ bɔ̀

b. semi-suppletive

‘red’	mìyɛ̄-nā	mìrì	á mìrì yɛ̄	á mìrì bɔ̀

c. suppletive

‘black’	fòō-nā	yìrì	á yìrì yɛ̄	á yìrì bɔ̀
‘white’	kàà-nā-nā	wárá	á wáré= ɛ̄	á wárá bɔ̀
‘fat’	kpà-nā	sírí	á sírí yɛ̄	á sírí bɔ̀
‘small’	píyé-nā	sá^{n}	á sáɲ ɲɛ̄	á sám bɔ̀

There are other seemingly similar verbs that denote states, but that are actually dynamic (aspect-marking verbs) rather than intrinsically stative (non-aspect-marking) verbs, even though they also have modifying forms (participles). In (524), the predicates are Pfv stems that denote the change in state resulting in the present state. Compare ‘ruined’ with Ipfv pìsá-míní ‘becomes ruined, malfunctions’, and ‘rotten’ with verb yɛ̀/yɛ̌ ‘rots’.

(524)

	participle	Pfv	‘it is __’	‘it is not __’
‘ruined’	pìsì-míŋ-kà-nā	pìsì-míní	á pìsì-míɲ ɲɛ̄	á pìsì-mím bɔ̀
‘rotten’	yɛ̀ɛ̀-kà-nā	yɛ̀	á yɛ̀= ɛ̄	á yɛ̀ bɔ̀

An alternative stative adjectival predicate is a construction with default nominal ká plus an archaic, M-toned form of the modifying adjective as nominal predicate. This is a special case of the copular construction (‘X is Y’). Only a few adjectives are attested with ká. The list includes the three core color adjectives, two of which lack NC suffixes, plus two size adjectives that also lack NC suffixes. The positive version ‘it is __’ has copula (y)ɛ̄ in postsubject rather than clause-final position. The negative version has negative bɔ̀ at the end of the predicate. There is no extra nasal before bɔ̀, suggesting that ká plus adjective is treated as a verbal rather than as a nominal predicate.

(525)

		modifying	nominal	‘it is __’	‘it is not __’
a.	‘red’	mìyɛ̄-nā	ká mīy^{n}ā	á yɛ̄ ká mīy^{n}ā	á ká mīy^{n}ā bɔ̀
	‘black’	fòō-nā	ká fōrō	á yɛ̄ ká fōrō	á ká fōrō bɔ̀
	‘white’	kàà-nā-nā	ká kāā-nā	á yɛ̄ ká kāā-nā	á ká kāā-nā bɔ̀
b.	‘old’	sèē-nā	ká sērē	á yɛ̄ ká sērē	á ká sērē bɔ̀
	‘fat’	kpà-nā	ká kpā^{n}	á yɛ̄ ká kpā^{n}	á ká kpām bɔ̀
	‘small’	pí-yé-ná	ká pííré	á yɛ̄ ká pííré	á ká pííré bɔ̀

For past-time forms of stative adjectival predicates (‘it was ADJ’), see §10.7.6.

11.4 Numeral predicates

Numerals can be predicates. The construction uses (y)ɛ̄ as copula in positive clauses, thus [m̄ bāāb-ɛ́-ɲ̄] ɲɛ̄ sùsú ‘my sheep are six (in number)’.

12 Comparative constructions

12.1 Asymmetrical comparatives

12.1.1 With open-ended VP and dative lɔ̄ ‘than’

A simple comparative involving a shared VP but distinguishing two individuals is expressed by adding a dative PP with lɔ̄ in the sense ‘than’. The positive morpheme follows the dative PP.

(526) a. ŋ́ wòlóó [zàkîì lɔ̰̄=] ɛ̄
1Sg eat.Ipfv [Z **Dat**] Pos
‘I eat more than Zaki.’

b. ń námá-sá-ŋ̄ kǎ [zàkîì lɔ̰̄=] ɛ̄
1Sg meat-Sg-Sg eat.meat.Ipfv [Z **Dat**] Pos
‘I eat meat more than Zaki.’ (= ‘I eat more meat than Zaki.’)

c. zàkîì wòlóó [míí rɔ̰̄=] ɛ̄
Z eat.Ipfv [1Sg **Dat**] Pos
‘Zaki eats more than me (=than I do).’

Nonsubjects can also be compared. The listener must use context to infer which argument of the clause corresponds to the complement of the dative. In (527) this is easy since two food names are compared.

(527) ɲ́ [ɲɔ́kɔ́-sɛ̀ɛ̀]-sùsó-ŋ̄ wòlóó [mɑ̄ɑ̄n-sɑ́ɑ́-n̄ tɔ̰́=] ɛ̄
1Sg [Jula-sorghum]-tô-Sg eat.Ipfv [rice.tô-Sg **Dat**] Pos
‘I eat maize tô more than (I eat) rice tô.’ (staple grain dishes)

Example (528), by contrast, has two plausible readings, as does the English translation.

(528) ɲ́ ɲɔ́ zàkîì [bɛ́ɛ́ rɔ̰̄=] ɛ̄
1Sg hit.Pfv Z [2Sg **Dat**] Pos
‘I hit-Past Zaki more than you-Sg.’

The same basic comparative construction is used with stative adjectival predicates.

(529) a. [mîŋ wú-kó-ŋ̄] kɑɑ̀^{n}rì [[bɛ́ kà-n̄] tɔ̰́=] ɛ̄
[1Sg house-Sg-Sg] be.long [[2Sg Poss.NH-Sg] **Dat**] Pos
‘My house is taller (grander, bigger) than yours-Sg.’

b. ń síí-mín [zàkîì lɔ̄] bɔ̀
1Sg be.old [Z **Dat**] Neg
'I am not older than Zaki.'

c. yɔ́ɔ́-kɛ̀ɛ̀-rɛ̄-ŋ̄ káŋ [káá^{n}-rɛ̄-ñ tɔ̰́ɛ́=] ɛ̄
Jula-groundnut-Pl-Pl be.good [groundnut-Pl-Pl Dat] Pos
'Peanuts are better than groundnuts.'

12.1.2 Superlatives

There is no specifically superlative morphology. Examples like (530a) can be interpreted as superlative.

(530) a. è-sā-ɲ̄ [ɲì-w^{n}à-nnè-ñ nàā-nā] [yóón-nā mín]
DemHSg-Sg [song-put-Sg-Sg good-Sg] [village-Sg in]
'That one is the good (=best) singer in the village.'

b. yīn-sī-ɲ̄ [ɲì-w^{n}à-sɛ̀ɛ́-ñ nàà-rɛ̄-ɲ̄] [ɲóón-nā mín]
DemPl-Pl [song-put-Pl-Pl good-Pl-Pl] [village-Sg in]
'Those are the good (=best) singers in the village.'

12.2 Symmetrical comparatives kā-fá

12.2.1 'Be equal' with sìyà-nī 'agree' or kā-fá-nā 'one'

Equality of two measured or evaluated entities can be expressed by phrasing the domain of comparison as the subject (with the compared individuals as possessors). The predicate is then either the intransitive phrasal verb sìyà-ní/sìyá-ní 'be in agreement' in its Ipfv form (531a), or a copular predicate with kā-fá-nā 'one, the same' (531b). The two entities may be fronted as a topical conjoined NP and resumed by a plural possessive pronoun.

(531) a. [mí tà zàkîì] [tí kàà^{n}rā-ñ] sìyá-ɲ́ ɲɛ̄]
[1Sg and Z] [1Pl length-Sg] **agree**.Ipfv Pos
'Zaki and I are of the same height.'

b. [mí tà zàkîì] [tí kàà^{n}rā-ɲ̄] ɲɛ̄ kā-fá-nā
be one-Sg
[=(a)]

12.2.2 'Become equal' with fì^{n}/fìy^{n}á 'arrive'

The verb fì^{n}/fìy^{n}á 'arrive; reach, attain' occurs in contexts where X and Y have reached equality after being previously unequal.

(532) è bà kàà^{n}rì [míí rɔ̰ɛ̄ =] ɛ̄,
3HSg Past be.long [1Sg Dat] Pos,
nàñnà [ŋ̄ kàà^{n}rā-ŋ̄] fìɲ ɲɛ̄ [tɛ̀ tà-á-sɛ̄]
now [1Sg length-Sg] **arrive**.Pfv Pos [with 3HSg]
'He/She used to be taller than me, (but) now my height has caught up with him.'

13 Focalization and interrogation

13.1 Focalization

Nonverb constituents (NPs, adverbs, PPs) can be focalized. In a clause with a focalized constituent, the usual clause-final positive morpheme (y)ɛ̄ is omitted, which could suggest that (y)ɛ̄ is a verb/VP/truth-value focalizer. Subject focus requires a post-subject particle ŋ.

Object focus involves clefting: the fronted NP occurs in an identificational ('it is X') clause, followed by the remainder of the clause, which begins with complementizer fá and includes a resumptive pronoun. These fá clauses can be perfective, imperfective, or stative, unlike the case with other fá clauses such as (perfective) sequential clauses and short subjunctive clauses.

Adjunct focus is expressed using nɛ̄ = ɛ̄, a variation on the object-focus construction.

An NP can be topicalized, after which its referent can be focalized with a demonstrative, as in 'NP$_x$, that$_x$ [focus] is what …' Heavy NPs such as relative constructions are often topicalized in this manner.

13.1.1 Subject focus

13.1.1.1 Post-subject SFoc marker ŋ

Subjects are already clause-initial. To specify subject focus, a nasal morpheme ŋ (subject to place assimilation) is added between the subject and the VP. Its tone is spread from the preceding syllable. The final suffix on a noun is not reduced before ŋ, but see below for demonstratives. In transcription, ŋ can be bracketed with the subject. Fauna terms like 'sheep' do not undergo Final Tone-Raising (533c).

(533) a. [wò-ró ǹ] pà — 'Who came?'
[zàkîì m̀] pà — 'It's Zaki [focus] who came.'

b. [túkúsìn-nè-nā m̄] pà — 'It's the blacksmith [focus] who came.'
[túkúsìn-sèē-nī m̄] pà — 'It's the blacksmiths [focus] who came.'
[túkúsìn-sèē-m̄ bàā-yɛ̄-nī m̄] pà — 'It's the two blacksmiths [focus] who came.'

c. [bābā-nā m̄] pà — 'It's the sheep-Sg [focus] that came.'
[bābā-nā m̄] pă — 'It's the sheep-Sg [focus] that comes.'

SFoc ŋ and short subjunctive particle ŋ both occur in post-subject position. However, Sbjn ŋ occurs in clauses with initial fá subordinator (§17.1.3.1) and in indirect commands, which do not allow subject focus. SFoc ŋ but not Sbjn ŋ can combine with 1st/2nd person pronominals. Sbjn ŋ can combine with regular third-person proclitic subjects, but SFoc ŋ replaces them with demonstratives. In addition to short Sbjn ŋ and SFoc ŋ, there is a morpheme ŋ here

called irrealis (Irr) that occurs in negative copular clauses (§11.2.2.3) and in past-time 'be' clauses (§10.7.4). The possible relationship among these elements is an important puzzle for Paleni grammatical analysis.

Pronominal-subject combinations with SFoc ŋ are in (534). They are the same for perfective and imperfective clauses. The 1st/2nd person pronominals are M-toned, and 2Pl mɔ̄ has the initial m also found in its imperfective subject form mɔ̀ as opposed to its perfective subject form ɔ́ and its imperative form ɔ̄. Instead of third person pronominal subjects, demonstratives are used (534c). The nasal in the demonstratives is ambiguous between the SFoc morpheme and the truncated and assimilated final suffix from è-sā-nā etc., but it is here taken as SFoc.

(534)

	category	focalized	'it's __ [focus] who … came' (pà)	go(es)' (lāká)
a.	1Sg	mī ŋ̄	[mī m̄] pà	[mī n̄] nāká
	1Pl	tī ŋ̄	[tī m̄] pà	[tī n̄] nāká
	2Sg	bɛ̄ ŋ̄	[bɛ̄ m̄] pà	[bɛ̄ n̄] nāká
	2Pl	mɔ̄ ŋ̄	[mɔ̄ m̄] pà	[mɔ̄ n̄] nāká
b.	3HSg	è-sā ŋ̄	[è-sā m̄] pà	[è-sā n̄] nāká
	3NHSg	wā ŋ̄	[wā-m̄] pà	[wā-n̄] nāká
	3Pl	yīn-sī ŋ̄	[yīn-sī m̄] pà	[yīn-sī n̄] nāká

Textual examples are in (535). Subject-focus clauses often follow either a preposed topical NP as in (535a), or description of a situation that is resumed by 'that' as in (535b).

(535) a. bèlè-sí cà-nā, [è-sā n̄] núŋkòó-n̄ tàárá
marriage woman-Sg, [DemHSg **SFoc**] chicken.basket-Sg pick.up.Ipfv
'The bride, it's she [focus] who would take the chicken basket.'
(2024_09 @ 01:49)

b. [wā m̄] pà [tà …]
[DemNH(-Sg) SFoc] come.Pfv [with …]
'That [focus] is what brought it about that …' (2024_10 @ 07:35)

The SFoc forms in (534) above can occur before statives and past markers.

(536) a. [bɛ̄ n̄] tɔ̀ɔ̀ yīŋ-fā-nā
[2Sg SFoc] be.Past here-Sg
'It's you-Sg [focus] who were here.'

b. [bɛ̄ ŋ̄] yīŋ-fā-nā
[2Sg SFoc] here-Sg
'It's you-Sg [focus] who are here.'

c. [tī ɲ̄] ɲɔ́kɔ́rɔ̀
[1Pl SFoc] be.many
'It's we [focus] who are many.'

13.1.1.2 n nɔ́ɔ̀ (subject focus plus past imperfective)

SFoc combines with the past imperfective marker (elsewhere tàà or variant) as n nɔ́ɔ̀.

(537) á [bɛ̄ n̄] nɔ́ɔ̀ míŋ̀ wùsó sìkɛ̄
Quot [2Sg **SFoc**] **Past.Ipfv** 1Sg hit.Ipfv thus
'(said:) "It was you-Sg [focus] who was beating me like that!" ' (2024_10 @ 04:54)

13.1.2 Object focus (cleft plus fá ~ fɔ́)

'Who?' as object can remain *in situ* (538a) or it can occur in a biclausal cleft construction (538b). The *in situ* version cannot be directly negated. In the cleft construction, the first clause is an identificational clause ending with (y)ɛ̄ 'it's (a) _'. The second clause has fá ~ fɔ́ complementizer and a resumptive pronominal, here 3HSg object yɛ̀.

(538) a. í yó wò-rî 'They hit who(m)?'

b. [wò-rí yɛ̄] [fí= í yóó yɛ̀] 'Who(m) did they hit (him/her)?'
[wò-rí yɛ̄] [fí= í yóó yɛ̀ bɔ̀] 'Who(m) did they not hit (him/her)?'

The ability of intrinsically focal 'who?' to occur *in situ* (538a) suggests the possibility that noninterrogative focalized objects could also occur in the same position. One might suspect that simple omission of clause-final positive (y)ɛ̄ ~ ī could indicate a focalized object. However, the examples in (539b) were rejected (#) as stand-alone clauses with focalized semantics. Overt object focalization requires the cleft construction with resumptive pronoun (539c-d). The resumptive pronoun is indicated as a parenthesized pronoun in the translations but would be omitted in idiomatic English. Addition of bɔ̀ to the subordinate clause expresses wide-scope negation (539d).

(539) a. í yóó mì yɛ̄ 'They hit-Past me.'
í yóó písàá-n ī 'They hit-Past the child.'

b. #í yóó mì 'It's me [focus] that they hit-Past.'
#í yóó písàá-nā 'It's the child [focus] that they hit-Past.'

c. [mì yɛ̄] [fí= í yóó mì] 'It's me [focus] that they hit-Past (me).'
[mì yɛ̄] [fí= í wɛ́ɛ̀ míŋ̀ wùsó] 'It's me [focus] that they will hit (me).'
[písàá-n ī] [fí= í yóó yɛ̄] 'It's the child [focus] that they hit-Past (him/her)'

d. [mì yɛ̄] [fí= í yóó mì] bɔ̀ 'It isn't me [focus] that they hit-Past (me).'

The fá ~ fɔ́ morpheme resembles but is not identical to singular relative marker fáá (§14.1.1). Furthermore, fá ~ fɔ́ is not limited to singular number. A nasalized variant fá^{n} was heard in artificial citation of this morpheme but not in actual clauses. The basic form is fá, which occurs before NPs and before most consonant-initial pronominal subjects (540a). It contracts with vocalic pronominals (540b). 2Sg perfective bɛ́ also contracts by eliding its b, but 2Sg imperfective bɛ̀ is uncontracted (540c), avoiding confusion with 3Sg. 2Pl perfective ɔ́ also contracts, and 2Pl imperfective assimilates vowel quality to fɔ́ mɔ̀ instead of #fá mɔ̀ (540d).

(540) a.
1Sg	fá ŋ́
1Pl (pfv)	fá tí
1Pl (ipfv)	fá tì
NP	fá NP

b.
3Pl	fǐ= í
3HSg	fɛ́= ɛ̀
3NHSg	fá= á

c.
2Sg (pfv)	fɛ́= ɛ́
2Sg (ipfv)	fá bɛ̀

d.
2Pl (pfv)	fɔ́= ɔ́
2Pl (ipfv)	fɔ́ mɔ̀

Textual examples are in (541). ‘Porridge’ is plural in form but is resumed by a 3NHSg pronominal in (541b).

(541) a. [yīn-sí-ɲ̄ ɲɛ̄] [fɛ́= ɛ̀ í nìy^{n}á fúrú]
[DemPl-Pl it.is] [Comp 3HSg 3Pl drink.Ipfv constantly]
That (porridge) [focus] is what he would drink all the time.’

b. [sɔ́ɔ́rɛ́-ɲ̄ ɲɛ̄] [fǐ= í yá w^{n}ɛ́= [ɛ̀-sɔ̀ rɔ̄]]
[porridge-Pl it.is] [Comp 3Pl 3HSg put.Pfv [3HSg Dat]]
‘Porridge [focus] is what they can put (=serve) to him.’ (2026_07 @ 00:12)

c. [[á nínsáá-n] ī] [fá fɔ̄-mā-ŋ̄ kà yá]
[[3NHSg tongue-Sg] it.is] [Comp dog-Sg-Sg take.away.Pfv 3NHSg]
‘It was its tongue [focus] that the dog took away.’ (2026_18 @ 00:56)

d. [mì yɛ̄] [fá bɛ̀ m̀ bànná]
[1Sg it.is] [Comp 2SgI 1Sg hurl.Ipfv]
‘It’s me [focus] that you-Sg are hurling at!’ (2026_22 @ 01:35)

13.1.3 Focus on complement of adposition

As with object focus, focus on the complement of an adposition involves fronting the relevant NP into an 'it's X' cleft, with a resumptive pronoun in the fá clause. In (542a) the focal NP is a conjoined NP. It is preposed as a topic, and is then resumed by a demonstrative in the cleft.

(542) a. kpɛ̀ŋkpɛ́ɛ́-sɛ́-n̄ [tɛ̀ wɔ́ŋwáá-sɛ́-nī],
small.basket-Pl-Pl [and large.basket-Pl-Pl],
[yīn-sī yɛ̄] [fī= í wóló-kì-ŋ̄ w^{n}ā [í míní]],
[DemPl it.is] [Comp 3Pl food-Pl-Pl put.in.Ipfv [3Pl in]],
'Small food baskets and large baskets, those (=baskets) [focus] are what they would put food in.' (2024_09 @ 03:33)

b. [[á kàā bákárá-n] ī] [fá bà= [á sí] pé!]
[[3NHSg thing fatigue-Sg] it.is] [Comp 2SgI [3NHSg on] constantly]
'It's the fatigue of that (work) [focus] that you-Sg are on (=suffering from) constantly.' (2026_16 @ 00:32)

13.1.4 Adjunct focus

The cleft construction can focalize a noun-like adverbial like y^{n}ī 'yesterday', yīŋ-fā-nā 'here', or sìkɛ̄ 'like this, thus'. It can also focalize an adverbial PP.

The identificational clause has nɛ̄= ɛ̄ instead of yɛ̄, with nɛ̄= glossed as a focus morpheme. Examples with simple adverbs are in (543).

(543) a. [y^{n}ī nɛ̄= ɛ̄] [fɛ́= ɛ̀ pà] 'It's yesterday [focus] that he/she came.'
[y^{n}ī nɛ̄= ɛ̄ [fɛ́= ɛ̀ pà] bɔ̀] 'It isn't yesterday [focus] that he/she came.'

b. [yīŋ-fā-n̄ nɛ̄= ɛ̄] [fá tì wòlóó] 'It's here [focus] that we eat.'
[yīŋ-fā-n̄ nɛ̄= ɛ̄ [fá tì wòlóó] bɔ̀] 'It isn't here [focus] that we eat.'

c. [fán sìkɛ̄ nɛ̄= ɛ̄] [fá tì tɔ̄ɔ̄sá^{n}] 'It's like this [focus] that we do farming.'

A textual example is (544).

(544) [yīŋ-fā-n̄ nɛ̄= ɛ̄] [fī= í wàká-yīnā [tí kīlānī]]
[here-Sg Foc **it.is**] [Comp 3Pl remain.Ipfv-here [1Pl among]]
'It's here [focus] that they stay among us.' (2024_03 @ 02:49)

An entire PP may be focalized in this way (545).

(545) a. [[wú-kó-n̄ tú] nɛ̄= ɛ̄] [fá tì lāká] [wòlóó]
. [[**house-Sg-Sg in**] Foc it.is] [Comp 1PlI go.Ipfv] [eat.Ipfv]]
'It's into the house [focus] that we will go eat.'

b. [bā-tàā-m̄ mín] nɛ̄= ɛ̄] [fá cá-ŋ̄ kììsá]
[**sole-Sg** **in**] Foc it.is] [Comp woman-Sg walk.Ipfv]
'It's <u>on foot</u> [focus] that the woman would walk.' (2024_09 @ 02:46)

c. [[[sōō fá-nā] mín] nɛ̄= ɛ̄] [fí= í wòlóó]
[[[**plate** **one-Sg**] **in**] Foc it.is] [Comp 3Pl eat.Ipfv]
'It's <u>a single (shared) plate</u> [focus] that they would eat in.' (2026_07 @ 00:38)

13.1.5 Possessor focus

'Who?' can serve as possessor (546a). Responses to (546a), however, present no overt focalization. Thus (546b) could reply to 'Who is it?' as well as to 'It's whose child?'.

(546) a. [wò-ró pó] ɛ̄ 'It's whose child?'

b. [mím̀ pó] nī 'It's my child.'
[tí pó] nī 'It's our child.'

13.1.6 Manner focus (wɛ̀ɛ̀ 'so')

A common construction in recordings involves initial wɛ̀ɛ̀ plus a fá complement. wɛ̀ɛ̀ should not be confused with postsubject future wéɛ̀. It is probably derived from wɛ̄^{n}= ɛ̄ 'it is this/that' (490b), cf. demonstrative wā-nā. A dialectal variant wɔ̀ɔ̀^{n} occurs once in a recording (547b).

wɛ̀ɛ̀ resumes a situation described in preceding discourse, and focalizes it in the new sentence ('…, <u>that</u>'s why …' or ('…, <u>that</u>'s how …'). It is glossed as 'so' in interlinears. The fá clause may be subjunctive (547a), perfective (547b), or imperfective (547c).

(547) a. wɛ̀ɛ̀ [fá nāŋ-kpīyē-nā n̄ tá] [á yàmá sìkɛ̄]]
so [Comp father.in.law Sbjn go.Imprt] [3NHSg do.Ipfv thus]]
'<u>That</u> [focus] is how the father-in-law would do it.' (2024_09 @ 03:40)

b. á wɔ̀ɔ̀^{n} [fí= í yóó yɛ̀]
Quot **so** [Comp 3Pl hit.Pfv 3HSg]
'(said:) "That's why we hit her".' (2026_27 @ 03:13)

c. wɛ̀ɛ̀ [fá tì sɔ́kɔ́-ɲé-n̄ wɛ́ʌ̀],
so [Comp 1PlI herb-Pl-Pl collect.Ipfv],
[fá tì yé nùw^{n}ɔ́ [líí-bé-ŋ̄ kīlānī]
[Comp 1PlI 3Pl give.Ipfv [person-Pl-Pl Dat]
'That's why we collect herbs and we give them to the people.'
(2024_04 @ 02:25)

13.1.7 Focalization and negation

Because negation denies the realization of the underlying scenario during a time frame, negation is only awkwardly combinable with constituent focalization, and the combination is of low frequency in texts. When the two do co-occur, negation is expressed by the verb lé/lɛ̄ 'fail (VPing)', which is followed by an imperfective VP. Thus positive (548a), with focalized object, becomes negative (548b). In this way, the subordinated focus clause (beginning with fá) avoids internal negation with bɔ̀.

(548) a. ǹsɛ̄ [fɛ́= =ɛ́ wòlì yâ]
what? [Comp 2SgP eat.Pfv 3NHSg.Q]
'What did you-Sg eat?' (< wòlò)

b. ǹté-fɛ̄ fì-yé [fɛ́= =ɛ́ lé [á wòlóò]]
what? thing [Comp 2SgP **fail.Pfv** [3NHSg eat.Ipfv.Q]]
'What didn't you-Sg eat?'

For examples of lé/lɛ̄ with focalized subjects, see §10.6.1.2.

13.1.8 VP focus

To the extent that clause-final positive (y)ɛ̄ is obligatory in positive indicative clauses when there is no focalized nonverb constituent, this morpheme arguably marks verb (or VP, or clause) focus. If so, it is a default focus with weak pragmatic force.

13.2 Interrogatives

13.2.1 Polar (yes/no) questions with final nī or negative wɔ̀

Positive polar questions are most often formed by clause-final particle nī, often reduced to n̄, after an otherwise normal indicative clause. The final positive particle (y)ɛ̄ is omitted when it would otherwise be adjacent to nī (549a-d).

(549) a. zàkîì pà nī
Z come.Pfv **Q**
'Did Zaki come?'

b. bɛ̀ kàà-bá-n̄ sùkùrá nī
2SgI sheep-Pl sell.Ipfv **Q**
'Do you-Sg sell sheep?'

c. bɛ́ y^{n}á fɔ̄-mā-nā nī
2SgP see.Pfv dog-Sg-Sg **Q**
'Did you-Sg see the dog?'

d. bɛ́ y^{n}á fɔ́n-sɛ̄-n̄ nī
2SgP see.Pfv dog-Pl-Pl **Q**
'Did you-Sg see the dogs?' (< fɔ́n-sɛ̄-nī)

The positive particle does co-occur with the polar interrogative particle when the two are separated by another constituent, such as an instrumental-comitative phrase (550a) or a subordinated clause (550b).

(550) a. bɛ́ pɛ̀= ɛ̄ [tà zàkîì] nī
2SgP come.Pfv **Pos** [with Z] **Q**
'Did you-Sg come with Zaki?'

b. zàkîì sùw^{n}ɛ́= ɛ̄ [á bɛ́ pà] nī
Z know.Pfv **Pos** [Quot 2SgP come.Pfv] **Q**
'Does Zaki know that you-Sg have come?'

A negative polar question, often querulous or rhetorical, has final (w)ɔ̀ (551). An alternative is bɔ̀ɔ̄ with a slight pitch rise as in (426c) above.

(551) a. bɛ̀ wòlóó wɔ̀
2SgI eat.Ipfv **Neg.Q**
'You-Sg don't eat?'

b. bɛ́ wòlò wɔ̀
2SgP eat.Pfv **Neg.Q**
'You-Sg didn't eat?'

c. [tíntíyɛ́^{n} í tàà, [líí-bé-n̄ tūkó]]
[old.days 3Pl Past.Ipfv, [person-Pl-Pl catch.Ipfv]]
[fī= ī ŋ̄ w^{n}í= í [[wú fá-nā-n̄] tú] wɔ̀
[Comp 3Pl Sbjn put.Imprt 3Pl [[house one-SgSg] inside] **Neg.Q**
'In the old days, did they not use to catch (=round up) the people (=women) and put them inside one room?' (rhetorical question, 2026_27 @ 02:28)

d. bɛ́ pɔ̀= ɔ̀ 'You-Sg didn't come?' (< pà)
bɛ́ láá wɔ̀ 'You-Sg didn't go?'
bɛ́ lé wɔ̀ 'You-Sg didn't refuse?'
bɛ́ yóó yɛ̀ wɔ̀ 'You-Sg didn't hit him/her?'
bɛ́ y^{n}á á wɔ̀ 'You-Sg didn't see it?'
bɛ́ yó nāā-ŋ̄ wɔ̀ 'You-St didn't hit the cow?'

Mild sickness is expressed by the negation of kérékɛ́^{n} 'feel well' (552).

(552) a. zàkîì kérékém bɔ̀
Z feel.well **Neg**
'Zakis is sick (not feeling well).'

b. zàkîì kérékéŋ wɔ̀
Z feel.well **Neg.Q**
'Is Zaki sick (=not feeling well)?'

13.2.2 Content (WH) interrogatives

These interrogative words occur variously as subject, object, possessor, postpositional complement, and adjunct. In all cases they are focalized. For subject focus ('who?' and 'what?'), subject-focus particle ŋ is present. There is no overt focus marking on non-subjects. However, clause-final identificational (y)ɛ̄ 'it's (a) _' occurs where clefts are required.

Clauses with content interrogatives end with a slight pitch fall. This can be represented as a final L-tone, often resulting in falling contour tones <HL> Cv̂ or <ML> Cv̌, without noticeable prolongation. For example, in isolation wò-rí 'who?' is pronounced wò-rî.

13.2.2.1 'Who?' (wò-ró)

The human interrogative is wò-ró 'who?'. The combination with (y)ɛ̄ 'it is' is wò-rí yɛ̄. (The younger speaker generalizes wò-rí to replace wò-ró in all positions.) If the referent is known to be two or more individuals, the plural form wò-sèɛ̄-yɛ̄ 'who?-Pl' can be used.

(553) a. wò-rí yɛ̂ 'It's who?' = 'Who is it?'
wò-sèɛ̄-yɛ̄ ɛ̂ 'It's who-Pl?' = 'Who are they?'

b. [wò-ró ḿ] pà 'Who came?'
[wò-sèɛ̄-yɛ̄ m̄] pà 'Who-Pl came?'
[wò-ró ń] ɲó zàkîì 'Who hit Zaki?' (< yó)
[wò-ró ḿ] bɛ́ wùsô 'Who hits you-Sg?'
[wò-ró ń] ɲá bɛ̀ 'Who saw you-Sg?'
[wò-sèɛ̄-yɛ̄ n̄] ɲó zàkîì 'Who-Pl hit Zaki?' (< yó)

c. zàkîì yó wò-rî 'Who did Zaki hit?'
zàkîì yó wò-sèɛ̄-yɛ̂ 'Who-Pl did Zaki hit?'

d. bɛ́ nù wárì-ɲɛ̄-n̄ [wò-ró kīlānì] 'Who did you-Sg give the money to?'
bɛ́ nù wárì-ɲɛ̄-n̄ [wò-sèɛ̄-yɛ̄ kīlānì] 'Who-Pl did you-Sg give the money to?'

e. [wò-ró pó] ɛ̂ 'It's whose child?'
[wò-sèɛ̄-yɛ̄ pó] ɛ̂ 'It's whose-Pl child?'

f. [wò-rí yɛ̄] [fí= í yóó yɛ̀] 'Who did they hit?'
[wò-sèɛ̄ yɛ̄] [fí= í yó î] 'Who-Pl did they hit?'

As identificational predicate or as focused subject, wò-ró may be extended with nà-ñ nā, consisting of demonstrative nà-nā (elsewhere nonhuman) and lā ‘there (definite)’. This can be shortened to wòró ń nɛ̄= ɛ̄.

(554) á [wò-ró nà-ñ nɛ̄= ɛ̄]
that [who? Dem Foc it.is]
wɛ́ɛ̀ yàárá [[mīnī-má-ñ ná] lè]
Fut ascend.Ipfv [[monkey-Sg DefSg] following]
‘(said:) “Who there [focus] will climb up after that monkey?” ’ (2024_10 @ 03:15)

13.2.2.2 ‘What?’ (ǹté-fɛ̄́, ǹsé)

The nonhuman interrogative is ǹté-fɛ̄́ or ǹsé. After the nasal, the t or s is phonetically voiced [d] or [z]. -fɛ̄́ is a reduced form of fǐ-yé(-nā) ‘thing’, cf. fǐyè ‘(not) anything’. The fuller combination ǹté-fɛ̄́ fìyé ‘what?’ is also common. However, these forms are often reduced in allegro speech.

For fǐ-yé-ñ fáá fìyé ‘whatever thing’, parallel to ǹté-fɛ̄́ fìyé ‘what?’ (555c-d), see 2026_06 @ 00:17.

The simple question ‘what is it?’ includes identificational (y)ɛ̄ ‘it is’ (555a). In (555b-c), ‘what?’ is a focalized subject and is followed by SFoc ŋ. In (555d), by contrast, ‘what?’ is a focalized object and is fronted, followed by a complement clause with fá. In one variant of (555c), and in (555d), ǹté-fɛ̄ is compounded with fǐyé-nā ‘thing’.

(555) a. ǹté-fɛ̄́ yɛ̂ ‘What is it?’
ǹté-fɛ̄́-ñ nɛ̄= ɛ̄ ‘What?” (with following phrase)

b. [ǹté-fɛ̄́ ḿ] pà ‘What happened?’ (“What came?”)
[ǹté ń] sìkɛ̂ ‘What’s going on?’

c. [ǹté-fɛ̄́ fìyé ń] nâ ‘What is going on?’ (“What is there?”)
[ǹsé ń] nâ

d. [ǹté-fɛ̄́ yɛ̄] [fɛ́= ɛ́ ý^{n}á â] ‘What did you see?’
[ǹté-fɛ̄́ fìyé yɛ̄] [fɛ́= ɛ́ y^{n}á â] ‘What is the thing that you-Sg saw?’
[ǹté-fɛ̄́ fìyé yɛ̄] [fɔ́= ɔ́ y^{n}á â] ‘What is the thing that you-Pl saw?’
[ǹté-fɛ̄́ fìyé yɛ̄] [fɛ́= ɛ́ y^{n}á á bɔ̀] ‘What is the thing that you-Sg didn’t see?’
[ǹté-fɛ̄́ fìyé yɛ̄] [fɛ́= ɛ́ lé [á y^{n}â]] ‘What is the thing that you-Sg failed to see?

Examples with ‘want’ (§11.2.6.2.1) are in (556).

(556) a. [ǹté-fɛ̄́ yɛ̄] [fá bà= á kīlānī]
[what? it.is] [Comp 2SgI 3NHSg want.Q]
‘What do you-Sg want?’

b. [ǹté-fɛ̄é yɛ̄] [fɔ́ mà= á kīlānǐ]
[what? it.is] [Comp 2PlI 3NHSg want.Q]
'What do you-Pl want?'

'Why?' is ǹté-fɛ̄ tùkóó (or ǹsé tùkóó) 'what reason?' plus locative postposition míní. It is treated as a focalized adjunct.

(557) a. [[[ǹté-fɛ̄ tùkóó] mín] nɛ̄= ɛ̄] [fɛ́= =ɛ́ pà]
[[[what? reason] in] Foc it.is] [Comp 2SgP come.Pfv]
'Why did you-Sg come?'

b. [[[ǹté-fé tùkóó] mín] nɛ̄= ɛ̄]
[[[what? reason] in] Foc it.is]
[fɔ́ mɔ̀ [ŋ̄ kàà-sɛ̄-n̄] tūkô]
[Comp 2PlI [1Sg sheep-Pl-Pl] catch.Ipfv.Q]
'Why is it that you-Pl catch my sheep-Pl?' (2024_05 @ 01:02)

ǹsé can be possessed, as in míǹ ǹsé 'my what?' or bé ǹsé 'your what?' 3HSg ɛ̀ ǹsé 'his/her what?' occurs in 2026_06 @ 00:52 in the sense 'his/her whatever'.

13.2.2.3 'Where?' (fínì, finà nɛ̄= ɛ̄)

The spatial locative interrogative is fínì. It is generally a postverbal *in situ* adjunct and is often clause-final. It can be reduced to fìn. The full prepausal form fínì may contain a variant of positive particle allomorph ī at least etymologically, and fínì can be used as a one-word question without a subject or verb (558e). However, if fínì was originally composite, it is now rather fused. When fronted in the adjunct focalization construction, it takes the form fínà nɛ̄= ɛ̄, and is resumed in the fá clause by lā 'there (definite)' (558f).

(558) a. bɛ̀ lāká fínì
2SgI go.Ipfv **where?**
'Where are you-Sg going?'

b. [bɛ́ sí-bé] fínì
[2Sg father-Sg] **where?**
'Where is your-Sg father?'

c. [bɛ́ wú-kó-ŋ̄] fínì
[2Sg house-Sg-Sg] **where?**
'Where is your-Sg house?'

d. bɛ̀ lāká fìn nàñnà-nâ
2SgI go.Ipfv **where?** now-Sg.Q
'Where are you-Sg going now?'

e. fǐnì
where?
'Where is it?'

f. [fǐnà nɛ̄= ɛ̄] [fá zàkîì lâ]
[**where?** Foc it.is] [Comp Z there.Def.Q]
'Where is Zaki?'

g. íí wɛ́ɛ̀ lɛ̀ yɛ̄-ká-ŋ̄ fīyé fǐnì
LogoPl Fut just fire-Sg-Sg find.Ipfv **where?**
'(said:) "Where will we find fire(wood)?" '

13.2.2.4 'Which?' (kàà-rí)

The interrogative adjective 'which?' is kàà-rí. The plural is kàà-sɛ́. Like other adjectives, 'which?' follows the noun (559a). It also follows other adjectives (559b) and numerals (559c) that help define the larger set out of which one or more individuals are to be identified. Plural (y)ɛ̄ appears between the numeral and 'which?' (559c).

(559) a. [wú-kó kàà-rí] yɛ̄ 'which house (is it)?'
[wú-yé kàà-sɛ́] ɛ̄ 'which houses (are they)?'
[wú-kó kàà-rí yɛ̄] [fɛ́= ɛ́ y^{n}á â] 'Which house is it that you-Sg saw?'
[[wú-kó kàà-rí] ń] sáá-nî 'which house fell?'
[[wú-yé kàà-sɛ́] ń] sáá-nî 'which houses fell?'

b. [wú fòrò kàà-rí] yɛ̄ 'it's which black house?'
[wú fòò-rē kàà-sɛ́] ɛ̄ 'it's (=they're) which black houses?'

c. [wú bāā-yɛ̄ kàà-sɛ́] ɛ̄ 'it's which two houses?'
[wú táá^{n}rí-yɛ̄ kàà-sɛ́] ɛ̄ 'it's which three houses?'

'Which?' is part of 'when?' phrases, see the following subsection.

13.2.2.5 'When?'

'When?' is expressed as "(in) which T?" where T is some temporal noun such as lè-sē-nā 'time, moment', kwá-nā 'day', or yímín-ná-nā 'month'. The full construction with a postposition occurs with 'month' and 'time' (560a-b). A contracted form occurs with 'day' (560c).

(560) a. bɛ̀ pă [[yímí-ŋ̄ kàà-rí] mínî]
2SgI come.Ipfv [[**month-Sg-Sg** **which?**-Sg] Loc.Q] Q
'In which month are you-Sg coming?'

b. bɛ̀ pă [[lè-sē kàà-rí] lɔ̀]
2SgI come.Ipfv [[**time-Sg** **which**?-Sg] Dat.Q]
'At what time are you-Sg coming?'

c. bɛ̀ pă [kú kò-rî]
2SgI come.Ipfv [**day** **which?**-Sg.Q]
'(On) which day are you-Sg coming?'.

13.2.2.6 'How?' (nîìní ~ yìní)

The manner interrogative is nîìní. In identificational predicates, it varies with yìní. The latter can also mean 'how much?' (see below). 'Do what?' and 'say what?' are expressed as "do/say it how?"

(561) a. mɔ̀ tɔ̄ɔ̄sáⁿ nîìní yīŋ-fā-nā
2PlI cultivate.Ipfv **how?** here.Q
'How do you-Pl do farming here?'

b. bɛ̀/mɔ̀ yàárá nîìnî
2SgI/2PlI ascend.Ipfv **how?**.Q
'How are you-Sg/-Pl going to climb up?'

c. á nîìnî
3NHSg **how?**.Q
'How is it?'

d. á yìnî
3NHSg **how?**.Q
[=(c)]]

e. [á yínáá-nā] yá yìnî
[3NHSg name-Sg] Emph **how?**.Q
'Its name is how? (=what?)' (2024_10 @ 03:51)

f. á tùw á yàmá nîìnî
Quot 1PlI 3NHSg do.Ipfv **how?**.Q
'(said:) "What will we do?" ' (2024_10 @ 04:37)

13.2.2.7 'How much/many?' (yìní)

The quantitative interrogative is yìní, which is also a variant 'how?' interrogative (preceding subsection). Plural yìní-yɛ̄ occurs in (562a). However, in (562b) yìní is followed by positive (y)ɛ̄ in copula function. Nouns appear in their pre-numeral forms, often including plural NC suffixes if relevant. By contrast, abstractions like lè-sē-nā 'time' take the singular form of the

noun (562d). (562g) illustrates a partitive phrase with postposition sí ‘on’. pâ in (562a) has <LHL> tone as the combination of pă ‘come.Ipfv’ with the added L-tone for questions. ‘Salt’ and ‘water’ are plurals.

(562) a. [líí(-bé) yìní-yɛ̄ m̄] pâ
[person-(-Pl) **how.many?-Pl** SFoc] come.Ipfv.Q
‘How many people are coming?’ (< pă plus final l-tone)

b. [[kááns-é-ɲ̄ ɲìní-yɛ̄] ɛ̄] [fɛ́= =ɛ́ fî]
[[salt-Pl-Pl **how.many?-Pl**] it.is] [Comp 2Sg buy.Pfv.Q]
‘How much salt did you-Sg buy?’

c. bɛ́ pà [tàⁿ [ní-mí-ɲ̄ ɲìnî]]
2SgP come.Pfv [Inst [water-Pl-Pl **how.much?**.Q]]
‘How much water did you bring?’

d. bɛ́ lɔ́kɔ́ [lè-sɛ̄-ɲ̄ ɲìnî]
2SgP be.long.time.Pfv [time-Sg-Sg **how.much?**.Q]
‘You-Sg spent how much time (there)?’ (= ‘You were there for how long?’)

e. kàà-sɛ́-n̄ sùkùrá yìní-yìnî
sheep-Pl-Pl be.sold.Ipfv Iter-**how.much?**.Q
‘The sheep sell for how much each?’

f. yìnî
how.much?.Q
‘It’s how much?’

g. [[náá-sɛ̄-ɲ̄ ɲìní] yɛ̄]
[[cow-Pl-Pl how.many?] it.is]
[fɛ́= =ɛ́ sùkì= í] [[bɛ́ nàà-sɛ̄-n̄] sī]
[Comp 2SgP sell.Pfv 3Pl] [[2Sg cow-Pl-Pl] on
‘How many of your-Sg cows did you-Sg sell?’

14 Relativization

Most of this chapter is about restrictive relative clauses with at least a default head in some argument or adjunct function. However, clause-final relative marker nā can also occur in background clauses in narrative, without a relative head (§14.4).

14.1 Basics of relativization

14.1.1 Relative morphemes (RelSg fáá, RelPl tɔ́ɔ́ ~ tɛ́ɛ́, clause-final nā)

The head nominal (noun with or without modifiers) is optionally fronted, if not already clause-initial as subject. Its final number suffix is reduced or deleted as in other nonfinal positions. It is followed by the relative markers, which are singular fáá and plural tɔ́ɔ́ ~ tɛ́ɛ́. The older speaker uses tɔ́ɔ́, but tɛ́ɛ́ is clearly heard in recordings of Ouattara Moussa (e.g. 2024_08 @ 00:16). In the absence of an overt noun, fáá or tɔ́ɔ́ ~ tɛ́ɛ́ by itself can function as relative head.

The main part of the relative clause begins with the complementizer fá, which is sometimes omitted or at least inaudible. Relative particle nā occurs at the end of the entire relative clause. Care must be taken to distinguish relative nā from other similar morphemes, including nā 'there.Def' (nasalized from lā). Relative nā is also homophonous with final singular suffix -nā in nouns, but relative nā need not follow a noun, and it occurs in relative clauses with plural as well as singular heads.

For hybrid conditional antecedents and relatives ('if there is one who …'), see §14.1.8 and §16.1.2.

14.1.2 Combinations of fá (~ fɔ́) with pronominals

When the subject in a nonsubject relative is pronominal, the combinations with fá ~ fɔ́ are as in (563), showing the fɔ́ variant. The pronominals present regular tone alternations from perfective to imperfective (1Pl, 2Sg, 2Pl). fɔ́ contracts with vocalic pronominals by regular vv-Contraction. Additionally, the b of the 2Sg pronominal is elided in the perfective (contracted fɛ́-ɛ́ instead of #fɔ́ bɛ́). Imperfective 2Sg fɔ́ bɛ̀ does not contract to #fɛ́= =ɛ̀, which would be homophonous with 3HSg.

(563)

	perfective	imperfective
1Sg	fɔ́ ŋ́ ~ fá ŋ́	fɔ́ ŋ́ ~ fá ŋ́
1Pl	fɔ́ tí ~ fá tí	fɔ́ tì ~ fá tì
2Sg	fɛ́= =ɛ́	fɔ́ bɛ̀ ~ fá bɛ̀
2Pl	fɔ́= ɔ́	fɔ́ mɔ̀
3HSg	fɛ́= ɛ̀	fɛ́= ɛ̀

3NHSg	fá á	fá á
3Pl	fí= í	fí= í

14.1.3 Negative relative clause

The negative particle (elsewhere bɔ̀) precedes clause-final relative marker nā, but the combination is regularly pronounced wɔ̀ nā. (564a) is a regular headed relative, while (564b) is a background clause without a relative head.

(564) a. [páás-ɛ̄-n̄ tɔ́ɔ́] sùŋkúŋ [fɛ̃= =ɛ̃ mání í] wɔ̀ nā]
[talk-Pl-Pl RelPl] must [Comp 2SgImprt say.Imprt 3Pl] **Neg** Rel]
'words that you-Sg should not say' (2024_05 @ 04:45)

b. ɔ́ pà [tà súsó-n̄] [tí lè] fáráw! wɔ̀ nā
2PlP come.Pfv [with tô-Sg] [1Pl following] fast **Neg** Rel
'as you-Pl haven't brought tô to us quickly (=on time)!'

14.1.4 Subject relatives

In subject relatives, the head nominal is already clause-initial and does not need to be fronted. The head nominal plus relative marker is immediately followed by the VP, e.g. pà 'came' and fí bā-bā-nā 'bought a/the sheep'(565). Before the clause-final nā, bābā-nā 'sheep-Sg' is reduced to bābā, and bāāb-ɛ̄-nī 'sheep-Pl' is reduced to bāāb-ɛ̄-n̄. Head nouns are cá-nā, c-ɛ́-nī, píyé-nā, and píyé-sé-nī.

(565) a. [cá-ŋ̄ fáá] [pà nā] 'the woman who came'
[c-ɛ́-n̄ tɔ́ɔ́] [pà nā] 'the women who came'
[c-ɛ́-n̄ tɔ́ɔ́] [pà wɔ̀ nā] 'the women who didn't come'

b. [pí-yé-ŋ̄ fáá] [fí bābā nā] 'the man who bought the sheep-Sg'
[píyé-sé-n̄ tɔ́ɔ́] [fí bāāb-ɛ̄-n̄ nā] 'the men who bought the sheep-Pl'

14.1.5 Nonsubject relatives

In nonsubject relatives, the head nominal may remain *in situ*. This ordering is illustrated by object relatives in (566), where the head nominal is based on bāāb-ɛ̄-nī 'sheep-Pl'. In the perfective version (566a), the object is adjacent to clause-final nā. In the imperfective version (566b), the object is preverbal and is not adjacent to clause-final nā.

(566) a. zàkîì sùkù [bāāb-ɛ̄-n̄ tɔ́ɔ́] nā 'the sheep-Pl that Zaki sold'
b. zàkîì [bāāb-ɛ̄-n̄ tɔ́ɔ́] sùkùrá nā 'the sheep-Pl that Zaki sells'

More often, nonsubject relatives front the head nominal, including fáá or tɔ́ɔ́ ~ téé. In this case, the rest of the relative clause begins with complementizer fá ~ fɔ́, which however is often unstressed and faintly audible unless contracted with a pronominal subject (as with 2Sg fé= =é). The fá clause contains a resumptive pronoun coindexed with the fronted head. The resumptive pronoun is bolded in the examples below. 'Money' in (567c) is morphologically plural. The head nominals in (567a-c) are object relatives.

(567) a. [bābā-ŋ̄ fáá] [fɔ́ zàkî fíy^{n} **á** nā] 'the sheep-Sg that Zaki bought (it)'
[bāāb-ɛ̄-n̄ tɔ́ɔ́] [fɔ́ zàkî fí **í** nā] 'the sheep-Pl that Zaki bought (them)'

b. [bābā-ŋ̄ fáá] [fɔ́ zàkî sùkà= **á** nā] 'the sheep-Sg that Zaki sold (it)'
[bāāb-ɛ̄-n̄ tɔ́ɔ́] [fɔ́ zàkî sùkì= **í** nā] 'the sheep-Pl that Zaki sold (them)'

c. [wárì-ɲɛ̄-n̄ tɔ́ɔ́] [fé= =é nù **í** [cá-n̄ kīlān] nā] 'the money(s) that you-Sg gave (them) to the woman'

In (568), the head noun corresponds to the 3HSg pronoun (y)è as complement of the dative postposition kīlānī.

(568) [cá-ŋ̄ fáá] [fé= =é nù wárì-ɲɛ̄-ɲ̄ [ɲè kīlān] nā]
[woman-Sg RelSg] [Comp 2SgP give.Pfv money-Pl-Pl [**3HSg** Dat] Rel]
'the woman who you-Sg gave the money to (her)'

In (569), the head noun corresponds to the complement of the instrumental-comitative preposition (tɛ̀).

(569) [núú-sɛ̄-n̄ téé]
[chicken-Pl-Pl RelPl]
[fí= í yàm bèlìyè-sí-ná-n̄ [tɛ̀ sì-í] nā
[Comp 3Pl do.Pfv marriage-Sg-Sg [with **3Pl**] Rel
'the chickens with which they had made the marriage' (2024_09 @ 01:40)

In (570), the head noun corresponds to the possessor of the object.

(570) [píyé-ŋ̄ fáá]
[man-Sg RelSg]
[fé= =é fí [è wú-kó-n̄] nā]
[Comp 2SgP buy.Pfv [**3HSg** house-Sg-Sg] Rel]
'the man whose house you-Sg bought'

Perfective examples are in (571).

(571) [bābā-ŋ̄ fáá] [**fé= =é** fíy^{n} á nā] 'the sheep-Sg that you-Sg bought'
[bāāb-ɛ̄-n̄ tɔ́ɔ́] [**fɔ́= ɔ́** fí í nā] 'the sheep-Pl that you-Pl bought'
[wú-kó-ŋ̄ fáá] [**fá ŋ́** fíy^{n} á nā] 'the house-Sg that I bought'
[wí-yé-n̄ tɔ́ɔ́] [**fɔ́ tí** fí í nā] 'the houses that we bought'

Imperfective examples are in (572).

(572) [wú-kó-n̄ fáá] [**fɔ́ bà**= á máárá^{n} nā] ‘the house that you-Sg are building’
[bābā-ŋ̄ fáá] [**fɔ́ mo̱à** á y^{n}á nā] ‘the sheep-Sg that you-Pl see’
[bāāb-ɛ̄-n̄ tɔ́ɔ́] [**fɔ́ tì** é y^{n}á nā] ‘the sheep-Pl that we see’
[bāāb-ɛ̄-n̄ tɔ́ɔ́] [**fɔ́ bɛ̀ ɛ́** y^{n}á nā] ‘the sheep-Pl that you-Sg see’

14.1.6 Minimal heads (bare fáá or tɔ́ɔ́ ~ téɛ́)

Relative marker fáá or its plural tɔ́ɔ́ ~ téɛ́ can occur without an overt head noun. It is best to think of this as a minimal head rather than as the absence of a head.

(573) a. fáá [fá ɲ́ ŋá= á nā]
RelSg [Comp 1Sg see.Pfv 3NHSg Rel]
‘what (=the thing that) I have seen’ (2024_03 @ 04:46) (< y^{n}á ‘see’)

b. tɔ́ɔ́ [fá ɲ́ ŋí= í nā]
RelPl [Comp 1Sg see.Pfv 3Pl Rel]
‘the things that I have seen’

With a minimal head in a subject relative, the complementizer fá is omitted.

(574) a. fáá fɛ́rɛ́ nā
RelSg go.past.Pfv Rel
‘what has passed’

b. tɔ́ɔ́ fɛ́rɛ́ nā
RelPl go.past.Pfv Rel
‘what things have passed’

c. téɛ́ fú-ŋɛ́-n̄ sùnná nā
RelPl grave-Pl-Pl excavate.Ipfv Rel
‘those who excavated the graves’ (2024_08 @ 00:16)

d. tɛ̀ [fáá fūn-nā-n̄] nā
if [**RelSg** cooperation-Sg] there.Def
‘if whoever’s turn was there’ (2024_10 @ 01:10)

If a nonsubject minimal head remains *in situ* (not fronted), the final relative nā morpheme is often omitted when the relative head morpheme is clause-final (575a-b). However, it is present when there is an intervening constituent (575c).

(575) a. è pà [tà fáá]
3HSg come.Pfv [with **RelSg**]
'what he/she has brought' (2024_05 @ 03:28)

b. è pà [tà tɔ́ɔ́] (nā)
3HSg come.Pfv [with **RelPl**] (Rel)
'what things he/she has brought' .

c. è pà [tà fáá] mīn nā
3HSg come.Pfv [with **RelSg**] today **Rel**
'what he/she brought today'

14.1.7 Demonstrative head for indefinite reference

In (576a-b), nonhuman demonstrative nà-nā or wā-nā occurs as head without fáá or tɔ́ɔ́ ~ téɛ́. These examples are understood by speakers to be relative clauses semantically, and they contain clause-final relative nā.

(576) a. nà-n̄ fɛ́rɛ́ bē, [[í súnúú-nā-m] mín] nā
DemNH-Sg go.past.Pfv already, [[3Pl middle-Sg-Sg] in] Rel
(‘said:) “what has already passed between us” ’ (2024_10 @ 02:29)

b. wā-ŋ̄ fɛ́rɛ́ [tí súnúú] nā
DemNH-Sg go.past.Pfv [1Pl between] Rel
‘what(-ever) has passed between us’

When ‘thing’ is used abstractly as the head in a subject relative, ‘the thing (that) …’ takes the form fíyè-ŋ̄ fáá fìyé, as in 2026_03 @ 00:22. Here relative fáá is flanked by two forms of ‘thing’, which as simple noun is fí-yé-nā. The redundant repeated fìyé is parallel to that in ǹté-fɛ̄é fìyé ‘what?’ (§13.2.2.2).

14.1.8 Hybrid conditional antecedent and relative clause

In (577), the first clause begins with ‘if’ and contains a minimal relative fáá. The consequent includes a resumptive 3NHSg pronominal coindexed with the relative head in the antecedent.

(577) [tà cîi-sèē-m̄ máná fáá]
[if woman-old-Sg say.Pfv RelSg]
[fɛ́= [è múúná] mání yá tóró]
[Comp [3HSg also] say.Pfv 3NHSg also]
‘If the old woman said whatever, he/she too (=child) said it also.’
(2026_22 @ 01:04)

Another example is (641) below.

Combinations of conditional antecedent ‘if’ and indefinite-head relatives are common in languages of the zone. One way to gloss such clauses is ‘if there is someone/something that …’.

14.1.9 Pronominal heads

Pronouns can function as relative heads (578a). fáá and tɔ́ɔ́ ~ téé are absent. The pronoun is resumed in the fá clause. The fá clause is parenthetical, and is similar to other adjuncts such as the spatial adverb in (578b).

(578) a. túwⁿɔ̄ [fá tì tɔ̄ɔ̄sáⁿ]
1Pl [Comp 1PlI cultivate.Ipfv]
‘we who do farming’

b. túwⁿɔ̄ yīŋ-fā-nā
1Pl here-Sg
‘we (who are) here’

14.1.10Adpositional complement heads

In (579a-b), ‘time’ in the dative postpositional phrase ‘at time’ is relativized on. The PP remains *in situ*. The sequence [[X fáā] rɔ̄] nā is common in adverbial relatives (§17.7.1, §17.7.3) with X = ‘time’ or ‘manner’, and it normally is not broken up by another constituent. In (579b) relative nā therefore precedes an adjunct rather than occupying its usual clause-final position.

(579) a. sàntùŋc-é-ñ nì tɛ̄mɛ̄-ñ [[lèsē-ñ fáá] rɔ̄] nā
hyena-Pl-Pl drink.Pfv beer-Sg [[time-Sg RelSg] **Dat**] Rel
‘(at) the time when the hyenas drank the beer’ (2024_05 @ 03:48)

b. è fìn [[nèsē-ñ fáá] rɔ̄] nā
3HSg arrive.Pfv [[time-Sg RelSg] **Dat**] Rel
[[yɛ̄-ká-ñ ná] sē-làā-nā]
[[fire-Sg-Sg DefSg] take.straw-place-Sg]
‘when he/she arrived at that straw-burning place, …’ (2026_19 @ 00:19)

In (580a), ‘beer’ in the comitative prepositional phrase ‘with beer’ is relativized on. (‘Beer’, like other liquids, is plural.) (580b) is a similar textual example, but with a minimal head.

(580) a. zàkîì pà [tà [tāmā-ñ tɔ́ɔ́]] nā
Z come.Pfv [**with** [beer-Pl RelPl]] Rel
‘the sorghum beer that Zaki brought’

b. è pà [tà fáá]
3HSg come.Pfv [**with** RelSg]
'what he/she has come with (=has brought)' (2024_05 @ 03:28)

14.2 Correlative construction

A relative clause may function as a topic for a following clause that resumes the referent with correlative wèè. The effect is similar to a correlative relative construction.

(581) fáá [fá ɲ́ ɲá= á nā]
RelSg [Comp 1Sg see.Pfv 3NHSg Rel]
[wèè [fá ḿ mání= yá nā]]
[so [Comp 1Sg say.Pfv 3NHSg Rel]]
'What (=the thing that) I have seen, that's what I have said.'
(2024_03 @ 04:46) (< y^{n}á 'see')

14.3 Participial modifiers

A participle is functionally a reduced relative clause. It is formed by adding nonhuman NC suffix -kà- or plural -kì- to a verb stem. The participle of any transitive can function as a modifying adjective (582) if semantically eligible (582). Some common modifying adjectives are participial in form.

(582) [wú-n̄]-náā-ŋ̄ kùlàŋ-kà-nā
[house]-mouth-Sg lock-Sg-Sg
'a locked door'

Participles can also function as nouns (583).

(583) tí kpílí-kì-nī
1Pl gather-Pl-Pl
'things that we have gathered up' ("our gathereds")

kàā-nā 'thing' or its plural k-ɛ̀ɛ̄-nī (§6.2.3) can function as a semantically light noun denoting any nonhuman entity, followed by a participle with -kà-nā (plural -kì-nī). In (584) it is debatable whether 'things' is the noun with wóló-kì-nī 'eaten' as modifying adjective, or whether wóló-kì-nī 'foods' is the noun and k-ɛ̀ɛ̄-nā is a possessive linker (§6.2.3-4).

(584) [yīn-sī-n̄ [tí k-ɛ̀ɛ̄-ŋ̄ wóló-kì-nī]]
[Dem-Pl [1Pl thing-Pl-Pl eat-Pl-Pl]]
'Those are our staple foods.' = 'Those are the things we eat.'
(2024_05 @ 01:16)

14.4 Clause-final relative nā in background echo clauses

nā, presumably the final morpheme in relative clauses, is often added to what is otherwise a regular main clause to form a background clause. It can often be translated freely with 'as …', 'it being the case that …', or 'while …'. It often repeats content from the preceding sentence, as echoed background material before another foregrounded event.

(585) fá písàá-nā yìn-sō [fɛ́= ɛ̀ tā] [tɛ̄= [ɛ́ lè]],
Comp child-Sg get.up.Pfv [Comp 3HSg go.Pfv] [go.Ipfv [3Pl following],
[písàá-ñ lākɛ́= [=ɛ́ lè] nā, …
[child-Sg go.Ipfv [3Pl following] **Rel**, …
'… then (another) child got up and followed after them. As the child was following them, …' (2026_22 @ 00:07)

In (586), nā is followed by nɛ̄= ɛ̄, which occurs elsewhere in the identificational 'it's (an) X' construction with temporal expressions X, and can focalize a fronted adjunct.

(586) ɛ̀ fìn nā [nɛ̄= ɛ̄]
3HSg arrive.Pfv Rel [Foc it.is]
'he having arrived' (2026_27 @ 01:52)

15 Multi-verb and complex VP constructions

15.1 Verb-verb compounding and serialization

15.1.1 Splittable verb-verb compounds

Many verbs, especially those of four or five syllables, and trisyllabics ending in a Cvv syllable, are either transparently composite or are treated prosodically as composite. The composite nature is transparent when one or both components are recognizable as simple verbs. Other clear cases are transitive verbs whose two parts are separated by the object X in perfective and imperative clauses, but joined in imperfective clauses. If such a verb is ambi-valent, we can infer that its intransitive counterpart is also composite even though the two parts are always adjacent in intransitives. This is the case with 'assemble', which can be intransitive '(group) assemble, come together' or transitive 'assemble, call together (a group)' (587). X represents the transitive object.

(587)	Pfv/Ipfv	gloss	VblN
a. intransitive			
	kpììsà-kpírí/kpììsá-kpírí	'assemble (intr)'	kpììsà-kpírí-ná-nā
b. transitive			
	kpììsà X kpírí/X kpììsá-kpírí	'assemble (tr)'	kpììsà-kpírí-ná-nā

A further indication of composite structure is that the Ipfv kpììsá-kpírí shows regular Ipfv morphophonology (shift of final vowel to a, final H-tone) at the level of kpììsá-.

A perfective transitive example showing the split is (588).

(588)	è	kpììsà	líí-bé-n̄	kpírí	yɛ̄
	3HSg	assemble.Pfv	person-Pl-Pl	assemble	Pos
	'He/She gathered the people together.'				

The other known unusual composite verbs are in (589). 'Listen' (589a) is a phrasal verb with possibly composite yíní-wàà plus pseudo-participle ní 'down'. Unlike 'assemble' (see above), 'listen' forms its Ipfv stem by modifying the second element. 'Get up' (589b) and its transitive (causative) counterpart form the Ipfv by regular changes in the first part, but also have a different form of the second part. yíní- in 'listen' may be connected with yín-fɔ̄-nā 'ear'. yìn- in 'get up' may be connected with yì^{n}/yìnná 'lean down on'.

(589)	Pfv/Ipfv	gloss	VblN
a.	yíní-wàà-ní/yíní-wāá-nī	'listen'	yíní-w^{n}āā-ń-ná-nā

b.	yìn-sō/yìnná-sūyō	‘get up’	yīnnān-sūyō-nā-nā
	yì^{n} X síyó/X yìnná-síyó	‘get X up’	yīnā-sūyō-nā-nā

15.1.1.1 Verb plus yīnā ‘here’ or lā ‘there.Def’

These deictic spatial adverbs can function as spatial predicates (‘be here’, ‘be there’) or they can follow another verb as adjuncts. Enclisis is indicated by the reduction from fuller forms yīŋ-fā-nā ‘here’ and lā-fā-nā ‘there.Def’. A preceding verb has its usual form. The adverb or enclitic is immediately adjacent to intransitive verbs, and to transitive verbs in imperfective clauses. It follows objects in perfective and imperative clauses. As with other locational expressions, the sense may be static position or directional (to or from).

15.1.1.1.1 wàkà/wàká ‘remain’ plus -yīnā or -lā

The verb wàkà/wàká ‘remain’ requires a following locational expression. The high-frequency combinations are with -yīnā ‘here’ and or -lā ‘there (definite)’ (§11.2.5.3).

(590)	Pfv/Ipfv	gloss
	wàkà-yīnā/wàká-yīnā	‘remain (here), be left (here)’
	wàkà-lā/wàká-lā	‘remain there’

One of these spatials, usually -lā, readily co-occurs with a more specific locational expression.

(591)	è	wàkà-lā	pálɛ̀=	ɛ̄
	3HSg	remain-there	Faniagara	Pos
	‘He/She has stayed in Faniagara (village).’			

Verbal nouns treat the combinations as compound verbs, hence wàkà-lā-nā ‘remaining there’, wàkà-yī(-)nā ‘remaining here’.

The intransitive phrasal verb wàkà-ní/wàká-ní means ‘(activity) go out of use, cease to be practiced’ (§15.1.2.7. There is a textual example in 2026_14 @ 01:04).

15.1.1.1.2 nù/nùw^{n}ɔ́ ‘give’ plus yīnā or lā

’Give’ combined with yīnā ‘here’ means ‘give to me/us’. The more specific ‘to me’ or ‘to us’ is optionally added.

(592)	nû	nūū-mā-ɲ̄	ɲīnā	([tí	kīlānī])
	give.Imprt	chicken-Sg-Sg	**here**	([1Pl	Dat])
	‘Give-2Sg the chicken here (to us)!’				

15.1.2 Phrasal verbs

A phrasal verb consists of a true verb and a pseudo-postposition (psP), cf. English *come in* and *break it off*. In transitive clauses, the psP mimics a true postposition in perfective and imperative clauses, where the linear order is verb-object-psP. However, in imperfective clauses the object appears preverbally, and the psP is stranded as an enclitic to the verb (transcribed as a suffix). Intransitive phrasal verbs encliticize the psP to the verb in all clause types.

That transitive phrasal verbs have true objects, rather than PPs, is confirmed by the form of postverbal object pronouns. For example, 1Sg object is mì both with phrasal verb túkú X sí 'touch X' (593a) and with a simple transitive like 'hit' (593b), versus ŋ̄ as postpositional complement (593c).

(593) a. è túkú mì sí yɛ̄
3HSg touch **1Sg** on Pos
'He/She touched me.'

b. è yóó mì yɛ̄
3HSg hit.Pfv **1Sg** Pos
'He/She hit me.'

c. è wⁿá á [ñ sí] yɛ̄
3HSg put.Pfv 3NHSg [**1Sg** on] Pos
'He/She put it (=robe) on me.'

The following subsections describe phrasal verbs separately for each psP.

15.1.2.1 Phrasal verbs with pseudo-postposition sí 'on'

A transitive phrasal verb with psP sí 'on' is 'help' (594). The object X intervenes between the stem and sí in perfective clauses. In imperfective clauses, the object X precedes the verb, leaving sí to encliticize to the verb.

(594)

Pfv/Ipfv	gloss	VblN
báⁿ X sí/X bānná-sí	'help (sb)'	bānnā-sí-ná-nā

Clausal examples are in (595).

(595) a. ḿ bán zàkîì sí yɛ̄
1Sg **help**.Pfv Z **on** Pos
'I helped Zaki.'

b. ń zàkîì bānná-sí yɛ̄
1Sg Z **help**.Ipfv-**on** Pos
'I (often) help Zaki.'

c. í m̀ bānná-sí bɔ̀
3Pl 1Sg **help**.Ipfv-**on** Neg
'They don't help me.'

Semantically, 'help' verbs in languages of the region often mean 'add oneself, join (sb, in an activity)', cf. English *lend a hand to X*.

The same verb with a different psP produces bá^{n} X lɔ̄ 'increase X'.

Intransitive phrasal verbs are difficult to segment because there is no object X that can split them. For ambi-valent verbs, if the transitive is demonstrably a phrasal verb, it is assumed that the intransitive is also a phrasal verb, and this is indicated by hyphenation. An example is transitive bèlè X sí/X bèlìyé-sí 'repair X' or '(man) marry (a woman)' and intransitive bèlè-sí/bèlìyé-sí 'get married'. If a strictly intransitive verb ends in sí, a clue that it is segmentable could be a tone shift to H on the syllable before sí, since Ipfv verbs require final H-tone. In a case like kpésésí/kpésésí 'criticize' that is H-toned throughout, there may be no way to determine whether sí is segmentable. This verb, incidentally, also takes a PP [X sí], hence kpésésí [X sí] 'criticize X'.

The known phrasal verbs with sí are in (596).

(596)

Pfv/Ipfv	gloss	VblN
a. intransitive		
wúlá-sí/wūlá-sí	'lay egg(s)'	wūlā-sí-ná-nā
ambi-valent		
bèlè-sí/bèlìyé-sí	'assemble (intr)'	bèlìyè-sí-ná-nā
sùn-sí/sùnná-sí	'learn X (a trade)'	sūnnā-sí-ná-nā
possible frozen case		
kpésésí [X sí] (Pfv = Ipfv)	'criticize'	kpésésí-ná-nā
b. transitive		
bá^{n} X sí/X bānná-sí	'help X'	bānnā-sí-ná-nā
bèlè X sí/X bèlìyé-sí	'repair X; marry X'	bèlìyè-sí-ná-nā
fálá X sí/X fālīyá-sí	'peel X'	fālīyā-sí-ná-nā
sáká X sí/X sāká-sí	'wash X'	sākā-sí-ná-nā
(cf. simple sáká/sāká 'wash')		
sɔ̀ɔ̀kɔ̀ X sí/X sɔ̀ɔ̀kɔ́-sí	'scrub X'	sɔ̀ɔ̀kɔ̀-sí-ná-nā
(cf. simple sɔ̀ɔ̀kɔ̀/sɔ̀ɔ̀kɔ́ 'rub')		
sù^{n} X sí/X sùnná-sí	'learn X (a trade)'	sùnnà-sí-ná-nā
(cf. simple sù^{n}/sùnná 'pound')		
túkú X sí/X tūkó sí	'touch X'	tūkū-sí-ná-nā
(cf. simple túkú/tūkó 'catch')		
wàlà X sí/X wà(l)á-sí	'disturb (life, world)'	wàà-sí-ná-nā
(cf. simple wàlà/wàlá 'cook')		

Phrasal verbs with sí are distinct from verbs (mostly intransitive) that combine with a true PP with postposition sí. Examples: fɛ́ [X sí] ‘fan X’, kpésési [X sí] ‘criticize X’.

15.1.2.2 Phrasal verbs with pseudo-postposition tú

Stems that form phrasal verbs with a psP tú, cf. true postposition tú ‘inside (house)’ or ‘under’, are in (597).

(597)	Pfv/Ipfv	gloss	VblN
	a. intransitive		
	ambi-valent		
	wààmà-tú/wààmá-tú	‘turn, spin (tr)’	wààmà-tú-ná-nā
	b. transitive		
	pèrɛ̀ X tú/X pèrɛ́-tú	‘pour off, drain’	pèrɛ̀-tú-ná-nā
	wààmà X tú/X wààmá tú	‘turn, spin (tr)’	wààmà-tú-ná-nā
	w^{n}á X tú/X w^{n}ā́-tú	‘begin (sth)’	w^{n}ā-tú-ná-nā

w^{n}átú/w^{n}ātú ‘run’ is doubtfully related.

The phrasal verbs in (597) are distinct from verbs that take a true PP [X tú], as with yòkòrì [X tú] ‘forgive X’.

15.1.2.3 Phrasal verbs with pseudo-postposition lɔ̄ (~ tɔ́)

The psP lɔ̄ is related to the true postposition lɔ̄ (dative, benefactive). Both shift to tɔ́ after a final nasal suffix -n̄. The known phrasal verbs with lɔ̄ are in (598b). Examples are in (598c-d).

(598)	Pfv/Ipfv	gloss	VblN
	a. intransitive		
	(none)		
	b. transitive		
	bá^{n} X lɔ̄/X bānná lɔ̄	‘increase, make bigger’	bānnā-lɔ́-ná-nā
	tíkí X lɔ̄/X tīká lɔ̄	‘forge (v)’	tīkā-lɔ́-ná-nā

c.

ń	tíkí	líyā-n̄	tɔ́	yɛ̄
1Sg	forge.Pfv	daba-Sg	Dat	Pos

‘I forged a/the daba.’

d. ń níyā-n̄ tīká lɔ̰ɛ̄= ɛ̄
1Sg daba-Sg forge.Ipfv Dat Pos
'I (often) forge a daba'.

15.1.2.4 Phrasal verbs with pseudo-postposition míní

míní is the primary locative postposition 'in, at, to'. True locative PPs [X míní] can follow many verbs as adjuncts. As a psP, míní occurs in the phrasal verbs in (599). Some of the intransitives involve changes of state or reversals, but there is less of a common semantic thread in the transitives.

(599)

Pfv/Ipfv	gloss	VblN
a. intransitive		
gbɔ̀-míní/gbɔ̌-míní	'change (sth)'	gbɔ̀-mín-ná-nā
kɔ̀-míní/kɔ̌-míní	'return, go back'	kɔ̀-mín-ná-nā
inchoatives (change of state)		
pìsì-míní/pìsá-míní	'be ruined, malfunction'	pìsà-mín-ná-nā
síí-míní/sīsé-míní	'get old; (grain) ripen'	sīsē-mín-ná-nā
súkú-míní/sūká-míní	'snap, break (intr)'	sūkā-mín-ná-nā
b. transitive		
bìrì X míní/X bìrí-míní	'squeeze'	bìrì-mín-ná-nāī
gbɔ̀ X míní/X gbɔ̀-míní	'change (sth); untie'	gbɔ̀-mín-ná-nā
cúrú X míní/X cūrú-míní	'pour back and forth'	cūrū-mín-ná-nā
fàyà X míní/X fàyá-míní	'butcher (an animal)'	fàyà-mín-ná-nā
fèsè X míní/X fèsé-míní	'winnow by shaking'	fèsè-mín-ná-nā
kàà^{n}rì X míní/X kàà^{n}rá-míní	'lengthen (sth)'	kàà^{n}rà-mín-ná-nā
káká X míní/X kāká-míní	'divide (sth)'	kākā-mín-ná-nā
(cf. simple káká/kāká 'open, uncover')		
kà^{n} X míní/X kà^{n}-míní	'mix; combine'	kà^{n}-mín-ná-nā
(cf. simple kà^{n}/kā 'scratch')		
kàsà X míní/X kàsá-míní	'mix; combine'	kàsà-mín-ná-nā
kpìsì X míní/X kpìsá-míní	'damage (v)'	kpìsà-mín-ná-nā
nààsì X míní/X nààsá-míní	'straighten'	nààsà-mín-ná-nā
sɔ̀ X míní/X sùsɔ́-míní	'step on'	sùsɔ̀-mín-ná-nā
tù^{n} X míní/X tùnná-míní	'pick out (particles)'	tùnnà-mín-ná-nā ā
(cf. simple tù^{n}/tùná 'gather, collect')		
yèrɛ̀ X míní/X yèrɛ́-míní	'rip'	yèrɛ̀-mín-ná-nā
yìbì X míní/X yìbíyé-míní	'wring out'	yìbìyè-mín-ná-nā
yì^{n} X míní/X yìnná-míní	'cut (by slicing)'	yìnnà-mín-ná-nā

The transitive verb còmí^{n} 'rip.Pfv' is not segmentable, as shown by Ipfv còmíná.

15.1.2.5 Phrasal verb with satellite láá

The verb 'show' is kānā/kāná. It often combines with a following satellite láá in constructions that resemble phrasal verbs. For discussion see §11.1.2.3.2.

15.1.2.6 Phrasal verbs with pseudo-postposition lè 'following'

For the true postposition lè, used in contects like 'X follow Y', see §8.2.5.3.3. lè is attested as psP in two phrasal verbs. w^ná/w^nā́ is common elsewhere in the sense 'put in, put on', including most relevantly 'put (garment) on', e.g. a boubou (robe) over one's torso. yàà^n is not attested without lè, but the phrasal verb fits into the 'X follow Y' semantic range.

(600)	Pfv/Ipfv	gloss	VblN
	w^ná X lè/X w^nā́-lè	'carry (child) on back'	w^nā-lè-nā-nā
	yàà^n X lè/X yàànā́-lè	'expel, drive out'	yāānā-lè-nā-nā

See also the discussion of (y)álè 'want (to VP)' in §17.6.3.

15.1.2.7 Phrasal verbs with satellite ní 'down'

Certain intransitive and transitive verbs combine with an apparent psP that takes the form ní in absolute clause-final position (in imperatives, fá clauses, and conditional antecedents), and after nonpronominal postverbal objects. ní reduces to a nasal coda when directly encliticized to the verb, including before polarity markers (ɲ́ ɲɛ̄, ḿ bɔ̀) when it is adjacent to the verb. In nominalizations, -ní- syncopates to assimilating nasal -ń-. Unlike the clear cases of psP, ní has no corresponding true postposition.

Transitive phrasal verb kà X ní/X kǎ-ní 'set fire to, ignite' corresponds to non-phrasal intransitive kà/kǎ 'catch fire, be ignited'. In this case, addition of ní adds an agent in the fashion of causative derivatives.

Morphemic parsing can be nonobvious in transitive perfective clauses, since ní is also a definite plural marker for nouns, as in pís-é(-n̄) ní 'the children, those (same) children'. In (601), túkú is nonphrasal 'catch.Pfv'. The object ends in [ni] only in a few combinations (bolded).

(601)			
	a.	è túkú písàá-**n ī**	'he/she caught a/the child'
		è túkú pís-é-ɲ̄ ɲɛ̄	'he/she caught some/the children'
	.	è túkú [písàá-n̄ ná] yɛ̄	'he/she caught that (same) child'
		è túkú [pís-é-n̄ **ní**] ɲɛ̄	'he/she caught those (same) children'
		è túkú zàkî yɛ̄	'he/she caught Zaki'
		è túkú mì yɛ̄	'he/she caught me'
	b.	è túkú písàá-m̄ bɔ̀	'he/she didn't catch a/the child'
		è túkú pís-é-m̄ bɔ̀	'he/she didn't catch any/the children

è túkú [písàá ná] bɔ̀	‘he/she didn’t catch that (same) child’
è túkú [pís-é-n̄ **ní**] bɔ̀	‘he/she didn’t catch those (same) children’
è túkú zàkîì bɔ̀	‘he/she didn’t catch Zaki’
è túkú mì bɔ̀	‘he/she didn’t catch me’

Compare (601) with the transitive phrasal verb wéé X ní ‘catch.Pfv’, whose corresponding forms are in (602a-b). DefSg ná and DefPl ní seemingly merge as ní after nonpronominal objects, but what is actually happening is that the final suffixes are reduced and often deleted before psP ní. The psP is followed by positive (y)ɛ̄ and by negative bɔ̀ without contraction. This analysis is confimed by the occurrence of ní after the unsuffixed personal name Zaki. Note that ní (bolded) has a much wider distribution in (602) than does segmental [ni] with any tone (bolded) in (601). With the 1Sg object pronoun mì (and other pronouns), the psP does reduce to an assimilating nasal ń, so it combines with polarity morphemes as positive ɲ́ ɲɛ̄ and negative ḿ bɔ̀. There is no similar assimilating nasal after the pronoun in (601) above.

(602) a.

è wéé písàá(-n̄) **ní** yɛ̄	‘he/she looked for the child’
è wéé pís-é(-n̄) **ní** yɛ̄	‘he/she looked for the children’
è wéé zàkîì **ní** yɛ̄	‘he/she looked for Zaki’
è wéé mì **ɲ́** ɲɛ̄	‘he/she looked for me’

b.

è wéé písàá **ní** bɔ̀	‘he/she didn’t look for the child’
è wéé pís-é **ní** bɔ̀	‘he/she didn’t look for the children’
è wéé zàkîì **ní** bɔ̀	‘he/she didn’t look for Zaki’
è wéé mì **ḿ** bɔ̀	‘he/she didn’t look for me’

In the imperfective, the object precedes transitive verbs. The final suffixes on the preverbal object noun reduce to assimilating nasals. With a simple nonphrasal transitive like tūkó ‘catch.Ipfv’, there is no extra nasal element after the verb (603).

(603) a.

è písàá-n̄ tūké= ɛ̄	‘he/she (often) catches the child.’
è písé-n̄ tūké= ɛ̄	‘he/she (often) catches the children.’
è zàkîì tūké= ɛ̄	‘he/she (often) catches Zaki.’
è míǹ tūké= ɛ̄	‘he/she (often) catches me.’

b.

è písàá-n̄ tūkó bɔ̀	‘he/she (often) doesn’t catch the child.’
è pís-é-n̄ tūkó bɔ̀	‘he/she (often) doesn’t catch the children.’
è zàkîì tūkó bɔ̀	‘he/she (often) doesn’t catch Zaki.’
è míǹ tūkó bɔ̀	‘he/she (often) doesn’t catch me.’

By contrast, when the phrasal verb is wɛ̄́ X ní ‘look.for.Ipfv’, there is always a nasal element encliticized to the verb, parallel to the psP’s in the other phrasal verbs described in the preceding sections. Except when prepausal, encliticized -ní reduces to an assimilating nasal (bolded below) in positive -ɲ́ ɲɛ̄ and negative -ḿ bɔ̀. There is no similar postverbal nasal in (603) above.

(604) a. è písàá-ŋ̄ wēé-**ɲ́** ɲɛ̄ ‘he/she (often) looks for the child.’
è písé-ŋ̄ wēé-**ɲ́** ɲɛ̄ ‘he/she (often) looks for the childred.’
è zàkîì wēé-**ɲ́** ɲɛ̄ ‘he/she (often) looks for Zaki.’
è míŋ̀ wēé-**ɲ́** ɲɛ̄ ‘he/she (often) looks for me.’

b. è písàá-ŋ̄ wēé-**ḿ** bɔ̀ ‘he/she (often) doesn’t look for the child.’
è písé-ŋ̄ wēé-**ḿ** bɔ̀ ‘he/she (often) doesn’t look for the childred.’
è zàkîì wēé-**ḿ** bɔ̀ ‘he/she (often) doesn’t look for Zaki.’
è míŋ̀ wēé-**ḿ** bɔ̀ ‘he/she (often) doesn’t look for me.’

In imperfective constructions that lack polarity particles, such as in conditional antecedents with tɛ̀ and object focalization clauses with fá, a clause-final psP takes its full form ní.

(605) tì = í písàá-ŋ̄ wēé ní ‘if they look (Ipfv) for the child’

The verbal noun of ‘look for’ is wēē-ń-ná-nā ‘searching, (a) search’.

Whereas distinguishing transitive phrasal verbs from simple transitives can be tricky, as shown above, intransitive phrasal verbs are more easily spotted. They end in -ní in absolute prepausal position, but they combine with polarity markers as -ɲ́ ɲɛ̄ (positive) and -ḿ bɔ̀ (negative).

The known phrasal verbs with psP ní are in (606). X represents the object in transitives. Most of the verbs involve a change in state or position, with a preponderance of downward or outward directionality. For example, ‘ascend’ is not included but ‘descend’ is. In the intransitives, note that -ní is disregarded in the tonal and segmental formation of the Ipfv stem.

(606) a. intransitive

kóó(^{n})-ní/kóónā-ní	‘lie down, go to bed’
kúlá^{n}-ní/kūlāná-ní	‘bend over, bow’
lóló-ní/lōlīyá-ní	‘(liquid) drip’
nà-ní/nànā-ní	‘be missing’
sáá-ní/sāá-ní	‘fall’
tò-ní/tǒ-ní	‘sit’
wàkà-ní/wàká-ní	‘go out of use’ (< wàkà- ‘remain’, §11.2.5.3)
yèè-ní/yèé-ní	‘stand, stop’
yíní-w^{n}àá-ní/yíní-w^{n}àá-ní	‘listen’
yókó-ní/yōkó-ní	‘descend’

b. transitive

bèlè X ní/X bèlìyé-ní	‘keep’
fù X ní/X fwǎ-ní	‘cause X to fall’
kà X ní/X kǎ-ní	‘light (fire)’
kɔ̀sɔ̀mà X ní/X kɔ̀sɔ̀má-ní	‘crumple’
màsà X ní/X màsá-ní	‘knock down’
sùkùlù X ní/X sùkùló-ní	‘flip over’
w^{n}á X ní/X w^{n}ā-ní	‘put (child) to bed’

wéé X ní/X wēé-ní	‘look for’	
wùrù X ní/X wùrú-ní	‘push’	
yàlà X ní/X yàlìyá-ní	‘dump, spill, pour out’	(comment below)

Some clausal examples are in (607). The two parts of the phrasal verb are bolded.

(607) a. ŋ́ **wéé** wárì-ɲɛ̄-ñ **ní** yɛ̄
1Sg look.for.Pfv money-Pl-Pl down Pos
‘I looked for the money.’

b. fá syó-ŋ̄-wàlɔ̄ɔ̄-nā **fùù** túw^{n}ɔ̄ **ní**
Comp God-Sg make.fall.Pfv 1Pl down
‘God caused us to fall.’ (2024_05 @ 01:10)

c. è **fùù** písàá / pís-ē **ní** yɛ̄
3HSg make.fall.Pfv child / child-Pl down Pos
‘He/She made the child/the children fall.’

d. è zàkîì **fɔ̀á-ɲ́** ɲɛ̄
3HSg Z make.fall.Ipfv Pos
‘he/she (often) causes Zaki to fall.’

In a few cases, a phrasal verb with psP ní is in the process of fusing into an unsegmentable stem that happens to end in ní. This is possible with intransitive phrasal verbs, where the psP is always adjacent to the stem in the fashion of an enclitic. If the same verb stem occurs in a different sense without ní, or with one or more distinct psP’s, identification of ní as a separate morpheme is more transparent. If the phrasal verb with ní is isolated, segmentability can be opaque.

For example, transitive yàlà X ní/X yàlìyá-ní ‘dump, spill, pour out’ is a well-behaved phrasal verb. Its intransitive counterpart ‘(liquid, grain) be spilled’ is yànī/yàlìyá-ní. Ipfv yàlìyá-ní is compatible with phrasal-verb status, since the H-toned á characterising the Ipfv precedes ní. However, the corresponding Pfv stem yànī does not behave like phrasal #yà-ní. It combines with positive (y)ɛ̄ as yànī yɛ̄, and with negative bɔ̀ as yànī bɔ̀, instead of the expected #yà-ɲ́ ɲɛ̄ (positive) and #yà-ḿ bɔ̀ (negative). Contrast this with the fully regular intransitive phrasal verb sáá-ní ‘fall.Pfv’ (positive sáá-ɲ́ ɲɛ̄, negative sáá-ḿ bɔ̀). The unstable status of ‘be spilled’ is suggested by an attestation of Pfv intransitive yàlìyà-ní (608), clearly back-formed from the intransitive Ipfv yàlìyá-ní.

(608) fá= á yàlìyà-ní
Comp 3NHSg spill.Pfv
‘and it spilled’ (2024_10 @ 02:52

If yàlìyà-ní were eventually to fully replace intransitive Pfv yànī, the intransitive pairing yàlìyà-ní/yàlìyá-ní would come to be irregularly related to transitive yàlà X ní/X yàlìyá-ní.

Another example of this instability is sànī (Pfv) ‘be alive’. Its Ipfv stem sànná-ní is clearly phrasal, since the H-toned Ipfv á precedes -ní. But the Pfv usually combines with

polarity morphemes as sànī yɛ̄ (positive) and sànī bɔ̀ (negative). The regular phrasal-verb combinations sà-ɲ́ ɲɛ̄ and sà-ḿ bɔ̀ are attested, but less common.

15.1.3 Motion verbs in compounding and serialization

Motion verbs like 'come' and 'go' often occur in the main clause, followed by a second clause or VP.

15.1.3.1 'Come' and 'go' plus imperfective (or perfective?) VP

In the most tightly-knit construction, an imperfective or future motion verb is directly followed by a second imperfective VP with implied identical subject. The motion and nonmotion events are conceptually integrated. Adjuncts like 'here' follow the second VP but may have scope over the whole, so that bracketing can be ambiguous. In indicative contexts, there is a single positive or negative polarity marker after the second verb. By contrast, if the second VP is part of a sequential clause with fá, the positive marker immediately follows the motion verb.

Examples of imperfective VPs following 'come' are in (609). In (609a-b), yīŋ-fā-nā 'here' combines with the positive marker (y)ɛ̄ as yīŋ-fā-n ī.

(609) a. tì pă [wòlóó yīŋ-fā-n] ī
1Pl**come**.Ipfv [eat.Ipfv here-Sg] Pos
'We (often) come and eat here.'

b. tì pă [námá-sá-n kă yīŋ-fā-n] ī
1Pl**come**.Ipfv [meat-Sg-Sg eat.meat.Ipfv here-Sg] Pos
'We (often) come and eat meat here.'

c. tì pă [wòlóó yīŋ-fā-m̄] bɔ̀
1Pl**come**.Ipfv [eat.Ipfv here-Sg] Neg
'We don't come and eat here.'

Examples with 'go' are in (610).

(610) a. tì tā [wòlóó lā-fā-n] ī
1Pl**go**.Ipfv [eat.Ipfv there.Def-Sg] Pos
'We (often) go and eat there.'

b. tì tā [námá-sá-n kă lā-fā-n] ī
1Pl**go**.Ipfv [meat-Sg-Sg eat.meat.Ipfv there.Def-Sg] Pos
'We (often) go and eatl meat there.'

c. tì tā̀ [wòlóó lā-fā̀-m̄] bɔ̀
1PlI **go**.Ipfv [eat.Ipfv there] Neg
'We don't go and eat there.'

d. zàkîì lāká [fɔ̄-má-ŋ̄ wùsé=] ɛ̄
Z **go**.Pfv [dog-Sg-Sg hit.Ipfv] Pos
'Zaki is going (there) to hit the dog.'

e. ń nāká [tǒ-ń [[sàntʊ̀ŋc-é-m̄ pēé-n̄] núnnɛ̄=]] ɛ̄
1Sg **go**.Ipfv [sit.Ipfv [[hyena-Pl-Pl burrow-Sg] at.mouth.of]] Pos
'I will go and sit at the mouth of the hyenas' burrow.' (2024_05 @ 00:18)

The construction in (609) and (610) above, with no complementizer, was readily elicitable with imperfective 'come' and 'go' plus a second imperfective VP. Perfective counterparts were rejected in elicitation, but some apparent examples do occur in recordings after tā 'go.Pfv'. Such passages are interpreted by the older speaker as rapid-speech reductions of same-subject sequential clauses, which require complementizer fá along with an overt subject and a Pfv verb (§17.5.1). During transcription sessions, the assistant therefore suggested emending (611a) to (611b). The alternative analysis favored here is that tā 'go.Pfv' can be directly compounded with a following Pfv verb, just as tá 'go.Imprt' can be directly compounded to a following Imprt verb or imperative VP (see the following subsection). Therefore (611a) has not been emended as (611b), but is instead analysed as compounding of tā with the following Pfv verb. In this view, (611a) is arguably a single clause with compound verb tā-yìŋ. Since the question is debatable, the bracketing is retained.

(611) a. [fǐ= í tā] [yìŋ wíí-bē-nā]
[Comp 3Pl **go**.Pfv] [reap.**Pfv** straw-Sg-Sg]
'(When it is completed,) they go and reap some straw.' (2024_06 @ 01:09)

b. … [fǐ= í tā] [fǐ= í yìŋ wíí-bē-nā]
… [Comp 3Pl **go**.Pfv] [**Comp** 3Pl reap.**Pfv** straw-Sg-Sg]
(= [a])

15.1.3.2 Imperative 'go/come and VP!' with tá

Of the two Imprt stems for 'go' (§10.2.2.1), kí-lāā occurs in main clauses with or without a second VP, while tá is specialized to combine with a second VP (§10.8.1.3). Simple imperative tá is immediately followed by an imperative VP in (612a-c). In the middle of a multi-clause passage, tá (not kí-lāā) may occur in a short subjnnctive clause before another VP as ii (612d), where preceding discourse is omitted. tá drops its tone to tā before H-tone in some combinations (612b-d).

(612) a. [tá] [wòlò lèènī]
[**go**.Imprt] [eat.Imprt over.there]
'Go-2Sg eat over there!'

b. [tā] [kóó^{n}-ní]
[**go**.Imprt] [lie.down.Imprt]
‘Go-2Sg lie down!’

c. [tā] [fí bābā-nā]
[**go**.Imprt] [buy.Imprt sheep-Sg]
‘Go-2Sg buy a sheep!’

d. [fī= ī ñ tā] [tâ í]
[Comp 3Pl Sbjn **go**.Imprt] [take.Imprt 3Pl
‘Then they (officials) take (=enlist) them.’ (2026_14 @ 01:04)

Imprt tá can also combine with a following imperfective VP to command prolonged or repeated action. There are thus two ways to express ‘go-2Sg and VP’ with the same lexical items. In (613a) and (613b), the double-imperative form, analysable as a verb-verb compound, is placed above the less common imperative-plus-imperfective variant. The verb in (613b) is pèrè/pèré ‘milk (v)’. Its object ná-yìlà-mī-nī ‘cow’s milk’ follows Imprt pèrè but precedes Ipfv pèré, as expected.

(613) a. [tá] [sɔ̀] ‘Go-2Sg dance!’
[tá] [sùsɔ́] ‘Go-2Sg and keep dancing!’

b. [tá] [pèrè ná-yìlà-mī-nī] ‘Go-2Sg milk the cow!’
[tá] [ná-yìlà-mī-m̄ pèré] ‘(Always) go-2Sg milk the cows!’

15.1.3.3 Motion verb plus sequential fá clause

An alternative construction has ‘come’ or ‘go’ in a perfective main clause followed by a sequential clause (§17.5) containing the complementizer fá ~ fɔ́ and a Pfv verb. The motion event and the second event can be construed as merely sequenced in time, or as purposfully connected. The partial independence of the two clauses is shown by the occurrence of positive particle (y)ɛ̄ or variant in the first clause, and its absence at the end of the second clause. This is the construction that the older speaker views as underlying the abbreviated version with apparent subjectless perfective VP, as in his suggested emendation of (611a) to (611b) above.

Examples with ‘come’ are in (614).

(614) a. [tí pè= ɛ̄] [fɔ́ tí fí bābā-nā / bāāb-ɛ̄-nī]
[1PlP **come**.Pfv Pos] [Comp 1PlP buy.**Pfv** sheep-Sg / sheep-Pl-Pl]
‘We came and bought a sheep/(some) sheep-Pl.’

b. [è pè= ɛ̄] [fɛ́= è sɔ̀]
[3HSg **come**.Pfv Pos] [Comp 3HSg dance.**Pfv**]
‘He/She came and danced.’

c. [í pɛ̀= ɛ̄] [fǐ= í kóó(ⁿ)-ní]
[3Pl **come**.Pfv Pos] [Comp 3Pl lie.down.**Pfv**]
'They came and lay down (to sleep).'

Examples with 'go' are in (615). 'Go' is often doubled in the form of an intervening fá clause with a redundant tā 'go.Pfv' (615c).

(615) a. [tí tɛ̄= ɛ̄] [fɔ́ tí fǐ bābā-nā / bāāb-ɛ̄-ni]
[1PlP **go**.Pfv Pos] [Comp 1PlP buy.Pfv sheep-Sg/sheep-Pl-Pl]
'We went and bought a sheep/(some) sheep-Pl.' (< tí tā)

b. [ɛ̀ lɑ́á yɛ̄] [fɛ́= ɛ̀ sɔ̀]
[3HSg **go**.Pfv Pos] [Comp 3HSg dance.Pfv]
'He/She went and danced.'

c. [ɛ̀ lɑ́á yɛ̄] [fɛ́= ɛ̀ tā] [fɛ́= ɛ̀ sɔ̀]
[3HSg **go**.Pfv Pos] [Comp 3HSg **go**.Pfv] [Comp 3HSg dance.Pfv]
'He/She went and (went and) danced.'

Negative bɔ̀ occurs once, after the second clause, with wide scope or with ambiguous scope. That is, (616a-b) does not clearly affirm that the referent came or went, though this motion is not completely excluded. The ambiguity makes bracketing uncertain.

(616) a. ɛ̀ pà [fɛ́= ɛ̀ wòlò] bɔ̀
3HSg come.Pfv [Comp 3HSg eat.Pfv] **Neg**
'He/She didn't come and eat.'

b. ɛ̀ lɑ́á [fɛ́= ɛ̀ wòlò] bɔ̀
3HSg come.Pfv [Comp 3HSg eat.Pfv] **Neg**
'He/She didn't come and eat.'

When negation has clearly narrow scope over just the second clause, the fá construction is not used and two complete independent clauses (positive then negative) are juxtaposed (617a-b).

(617) a. [ɛ̀ pɛ̀= ɛ̄] [ɛ̀ wòlò bɔ̀]
[3HSg come.Pfv Pos] [3HSg eat.Pfv **Neg**]
'He/She came (but) he/she didn't eat.'

b. [tí lɑ́á yⁿî yɛ̄] [tí kóóⁿ-ḿ bɔ̀]
[1PlP go.Pfv yesterday Pos] [1PlP lie.down.Pfv **Neg**]
'We went (there) yesterday, (but) we didn't lie down (there).'

Imperative 'come' is usually expressed as [tá] [pā], literally 'go come!' tá pā 'come!', like simple tá 'go!', can be followed by a subjunctive fá clause (618a). The younger speaker

preferred (618b), with ‘come’ doubled, the second occurrence directly juxtaposed to and phrased with the open-ended imperative. The effect is like a proclitic or compound initial ‘come!’ on the second verb.

(618) a. [tá pā] [fɛ̄= =ɛ̄ sɔ̀ / sákálì]
[go.Imprt come.Imprt] [Comp 2SgImprt dance/bark.Imprt]
‘Come-2Sg and dance / bark!’

b. [tá pā] [fɛ̄= =ɛ̄ pá] [sɔ̀ / sákálì]
[go.Imprt come.Imprt] [Comp 2SgImprt **come**.Imprt] [dance/bark.Imprt]
[=(a)]

The dedicated main-clause imperative for ‘go’ is the irregular kí-lāā. When a second clause is added, the open-ended verb is usually preceded by tá, resulting in a phrasing with a literal structure ‘Go [and go] [and lie down!]’ but with two noncognate ‘go’ verbs (619). tá in (619) could be analysed as compounded with the immediately following Imprt verb.

(619) a. kí-lāā [fɛ̄= =ɛ̄ tá] [sɔ̀ / sákálì]]
go.Imprt [**Comp** 2SgImprt **go**.Imprt] [dance.**Imprt**/bark.**Imprt**]]
‘Go-2Sg and dance / bark!’

b. kí-lāā [fɛ̄= =ɛ̄ tá] [fí bābā-nā]]
go.Imprt [**Comp** 2SgImprt **go**.Imprt] [buy.Imprt sheep-Sg]]
‘Go-2Sg and buy a sheep!’

c. [kí-lāā lèènī] [fɛ̄= ɛ̄ tá] [wòlò]]
[**go**.Imprt over.there] [Comp 2SgImprt **go**.Imprt] [eat.Imprt]
‘Go-2Sg over there and eat!’

15.2 Verbal nouns and imperfective VPs as complements

The following subsections describe main-clause verbs that take complements in the form of verbal nouns, imperfective VPs, or in a few cases quoted clauses.

15.2.1 ‘Agree to VP’ (tūkū^{n}/tūká^{n}) plus VblN or quotative

tūkū^{n}/tūká^{n} means ‘reply to (sb, sth)’ as a simple transitive. With a VblN or quotative complement, it means ‘accept (a request or proposition), consent/agree to (sth)’, i.e. ‘reply favorably to’. A VblN as complement functions as object of the main-clause verb, and therefore follows Pfv and Imprt verbs (620a) but precedes Ipfv verbs (620b).

(620) a. zàkîì tūkū^{n} [è pā-n] ī
Z **agree**.Pfv [3HSg come.VblN-Sg] Pos
‘Zaki agreed to come.’

b. zàkîì pá-n̄ tūkɛ́ⁿ= ɛ̄
Z come.VblN-Sg **agree**.Ipfv Pos
'Zaki (often) agrees to come.'

The VblN may have a possessor expressing the agent.

This verb can also take a quotative complement, in which case the main-clause verb is glossed as 'reply'.

(621) [zàkîì á tūkɛ́ⁿ= ɛ̄] [ɛ́ɛ̀ pɛ̌= ɛ̄]
[Z 3NHSg **reply**.Ipfv Pos] [LogoHSg come.Ipfv Pos]
'Zaki replies to it (saying) that he will come.' = 'Zaki agrees to come.'

15.2.2 'Refuse to VP' (lé) with paired quotative clause

lé 'refuse, say no' can be elaborated by adding a quotative clause expressing the content that was refused. In (622), the logophoric subject pronominal is part of a quotative clause. The positive morpheme follows 'refuse' in the main clause. The second clause has its own positive or negative marking. The combination makes semantic sense as a juxtaposition of two independent clauses.

(622) [zàkîì lé ɛ̄] [ɛ́ɛ̀ pă bɔ̀]
[Z **refuse**.Pfv Pos] [LogoHSg come.Ipfv Neg]
'Zaki refused, (saying) he isn't coming.' = 'Zaki refused to come.'

15.2.3 'Help X to VP' (báⁿ X sī) and VblN PP or imperfective VP

'Help X' is expressed by the phrasal verb báⁿ X sí/X bānná-sí (§15.1.2.1).

A complement can be elaborated by addition of a PP with postposition sí 'on'. The complement of the postposition is a verbal noun, which may itself include an object (623a). Or the complement can be an imperfective VP (623b-c). In either case, the positive morpheme follows the complement in indicative contexts (623a-b), but is absent in imperatives (623c).

(623) a. ḿ bán zàkîì sí
1Sg **help**.Pfv Z **on**
[[[ɛ̀ wú-kó] máárá-n̄]] sí] yɛ̄
[[[3HSg house-Sg] build.**VblN**-Sg]] **on**] Pos
'I helped Zaki (to) build his house.'

b. ḿ bán zàkîì sí [yín-téé-ɲ̄ ɲūkwé=] ɛ̄
1Sg **help**.Pfv Z **on** [millet-Sg sow.**Ipfv**] Pos
'I helped Zaki (to) sow the millet.' (< yūkó)

c. ɔ̄ bám mì sí, tàmbàá-ɲ̄ ɲàárá
2PlImprt **help**.Imprt 1Sg **on**, granary-Sg raise.**Ipfv**
'Please help-2Pl me raise the granary!' (2024_06 @ 01:21) (< yàárá)

15.2.4 'Be afraid of VPing' (násí/nāsá) with verbal noun or subjunctive

In simple main clauses, 'X fear Y' is expressed as 'X fear (= cringe, tremble) before Y', with verb násí/nāsá 'fear (v)' and postposition yínnāā 'in front of' (§11.2.6.3). The same construction can be used with a verbal noun in the Y position (624a). The verbal noun optionally adds an object (624b). An alternative construction is with a long subjunctive complement (624c).

(624) a. tí násí [bōrōn-ná-n̄ yínnāā] yɛ̄
1PlP **fear**.Pfv [shout.**VblnN**-Sg-Sg in.front.of] Pos
'We are afraid to shout/of shouting.'

b. zàkîì násí [[námá-sá-ŋ̄ kà-ɲ̄] ɲínnāā] yɛ̄
Z **fear**.Pfv [[meat-Sg-Sg eat.meat.**VblN**-Sg] before] Pos
'Zaki is afraid to eat meat.'

c. [ɔ́ násí yɛ̄] [ɔ̄ bā bóróⁿ]
[2Pl **fear**.Pfv Pos] [2Pl **Sbjn** shout.Imprt]
'You-Pl are afraid to shout.'

A factive 'that' clause with complementizer mà can express 'X fear that [Y VP]' with a disjoint subject. In this case the main clause with 'fear' has its positive marker.

(625) [ń násí yɛ̄] [mà zàkîì pă yīŋ-fā-nī]
[1Sg **fear**.Pfv Pos] [**that** child-Pl-PlZ come.Ipfv here-Sg]
'I am afraid that Zaki will/might come here.'

15.2.5 'Begin to VP' (wⁿá X tú) with verbal noun

wⁿá/wⁿā́ elsewhere is the transitive verb 'put/lay X down'. It combines with tú as a transitive phrasal verb wⁿá X tú/X wⁿā́-tú 'begin'. Its object is a VblN.

(626) a. písàá-ŋ̄ wⁿá yākā-n̄ tú yɛ̄
child-Sg **begin**.Pfv ẃeep.VblN-Sg **in** Pos
'The child began to weep.'

b. písàá-ɲ̄ ɲākā-ŋ̄ wⁿā́-tú yɛ̄
child-Sg weep.VblN-Sg **begin**.Ipfv Pos
'The child (often) begins to weep.'

The verbal noun can be expanded with a complement, like ‘meat’ in (627).

(627) è wⁿá [námá-sá-n̄ kà-n̄] tú yɛ̄
3HSg **begin**.Pfv [meat-Sg-Sg eat.meat.VblN-Sg] **in** Pos
‘He/She began to eat the meat.’

15.2.6 ‘Stop (cease) VPing’ (yèè-ní/yèé-ní) with verbal noun

In this construction, transitive phrasal verb yèè X ní/X yèé-ní ‘stop, halt (sth)’ takes a VblN as object.

(628) a. písàá-ɲ̄ ɲèè
child-Sg **stop**.Pfv
yākā-n̄ / bōrōn-nā-n̄ / mānīyā-n̄ ní yɛ̄
weep.VblN-Sg / shout.VblN-Sg / speak.VblN-Sg **down** Pos
‘The child stopped weeping/shouting/speaking.’

b. písàá-ɲ̄ ɲākā-ɲ̄ / bōrōnā-ɲ̄ / mānīyā-ɲ̄ ɲèé-ɲ́ ɲɛ̄
child-Sg weep.VblN-Sg / shout.VblN-Sg / speak.VblN-Sg **stop**.Ipfv Pos
‘The child (often) stops weeping/shouting/speaking.’

15.2.7 ‘Finish VPing’ (kpísí) with imperfective VP

kpísí is elsewhere intransitive ‘finish, end’ or transitive ‘finish (sth)’. In the sense ‘finish VPing’ it is intransitive, so it is adjacent to the subject even in imperfective clauses. kpísí is followed by an imperfective VP with understood same subject.

(629) a. è kpísí [yì-ká-ŋ̄ wⁿâ] bɔ̀
3HSg **finish**.Pfv [song-Sg-Sg put.Ipfv] Neg
‘He/She hasn’t finished putting (=singing) the song.’ (< yì-kā-nā)

b. è kpìsá [yì-ká-ŋ̄ wⁿɛ̂=] ɛ̄ⁿ
3HSg **finish**.Ipfv [song-Sg-Sg put.Ipfv] Pos
‘He/She (often) finishes putting (=singing) the song.’

c. è kpísí [sūūsɛ́=] ɛ̄
3HSg **finish**.Pfv [run.Ipfv] Pos
‘He/She finished running.’ (< sūūsá)

d. è kpísí [kàà-sɛ́-n̄ sùkùré=] ɛ̄
3HSg **finish**.Pfv [sheep-Pl-Pl sell.Ipfv] Pos
‘He/She has finished selling the sheep-Pl’. (< sùkùrá)

e. í kpísí [á sùsɔ́] nā
3Pl **finish**.Pfv [3NHSg tamp.Ipfv] Rel
'when they have finished stomping on it (=earth)' (2024_06 @ 00:59)

An alternative is to express the open-ended action as an imperfective main clause, then add Pfv kpísí 'finish' in a sequential clause with fá. The combination of Ipfv and Pfv verbs is unusual, since elsewhere imperfective clauses are followed by short subjunctives. However, this aspect transition makes sense for the combination of an extended activity (atelic) and its conclusion (telic). The ordering of the two clauses is also iconically correct.

(630) [tɛ̀= [è kɔ̀ŋ̀] kùntó] [fɛ́= è kpísí]
[if [3HSg Top] crawl.Ipfv] [Comp 3HSg **finish**.Pfv]
'when he (=baby) has mastered crawling (on all fours), …' (< kɔ̀ní)
(2026_07 @ 00:12)

15.2.8 'Be able to VP' (fìⁿ/fìyⁿá) with imperfective VP

The main-clause verb is fìⁿ/fìyⁿá 'arrive', cf. French *arriver à VP* 'manage to VP'. It can function as a simple intransitive 'be able', indistinguishable from 'arrive' (631a). It can also be an intransitive plus locative PP [X míní] or [X tú] in the sense 'be stronger than X, be able to handle/manage X' (as in combat) (631b-c).

(631) a. è fìyⁿá bɔ̀
3HSg **be.able**.Ipfv Neg
'He/She can't.' = 'He/She doesn't arrive.''

b. ŋ́ fìyⁿá [zàkîì míɲ] ɲɛ̄
1Sg **be.able**.Ipfv [Z in] Pos
'I can handle (=defeat) Zaki.'

c. í fìɲ [ɲí tú] bɔ̀
3Pl **be.able**.Pfv [3Pl inside/under] Neg
'They couldn't overpower them (in combat).' (2024_03 @ 00:20)

Generalized ability not limited to one occasion is expressed by fìyⁿá 'be able.Ipfv', usually in future form wɛ́è fìyⁿá, plus an imperfective VP (632). If the open-ended VP is transitive, the object precedes the verb as always in imperfective clauses (632b-c).

(632) a. è fìyⁿá [yàárɛ́=] ɛ̄
3HSg **be.able**.Ipfv [ascend.Ipfv] Pos
'He/She can climb up.'

b. è fìyⁿá [námá-sá-ŋ̄ kǎ] bɔ̀
3HSg **be.able**.Ipfv [meat-Sg-Sg eat.meat.Ipfv] Neg
'He/She can't eat meat.'

c. ŋ́ wɛ́ɛ̀ fìyⁿá [fā-má-n̄ tūkó] bɔ̀
1Sg Fut **be.able**.Ipfv [dog-Sg-Sg catch.Ipfv] Neg
'I won't be able to catch the dog.'

d. sàntùŋkóó-ŋ̄ wɛ́ɛ̀ fìyⁿá [yàárá] bɔ̀
hyena-Sg Fut **be.able**.Ipfv [ascend.Ipfv] Neg
'The hyena won't be able to climb up.' (2024_10 @ 03:18)

Pfv fìⁿ expresses success on a specific occasion ('manage to VP'). The subordinated VP remains imperfective in form.

(633) a. yⁿîì è fìŋ [ŋàárɛ́=] ɛ̄
yesterday 3HSg **be.able**.Pfv [ascend.Ipfv] Pos
'Yesterday, he/she was able to (=managed to) climb up.' (< yàárá)

b. è fìn [námá-sá-ŋ̄ kǎ] bɔ̀
3HSg **be.able**.Pfv [meat-Sg-Sg eat.meat.Ipfv] Neg
'He/She wasn't able to (=failed to) climb up.'

c. á fìŋ [ŋàmá sìkɛ̄] bɔ̀
3NHSg **be.able**.Pfv [be.done.Ipfv thus] Neg
'It wasn't able to happen like that.' (2026_22 @ 02:01

Intransitive verbs take the Ipfv stem after fìⁿ/fìyⁿá 'be able' (634).

(634)

	Pfv/Ipfv	gloss	'he/she cannot …'
a.	céékéⁿ/céékéná	'have fun, play'	è wɛ́ɛ̀ fìyⁿá [céékéná] bɔ̀
	fìⁿ/fìyⁿá	'arrive'	è wɛ́ɛ̀ fìyⁿá [fìyⁿá] bɔ̀
	yà/yàárá	'ascend'	è wɛ́ɛ̀ fìyⁿá [yàárá] bɔ̀
	kìrì/kììsá	'walk'	è wɛ́ɛ̀ fìyⁿá [kììsá] bɔ̀
	máⁿ/mānsá	'laugh'	è wɛ́ɛ̀ fìyⁿá [mānsá] bɔ̀
	sɔ̀/sùsɔ́	'dance (v)'	è wɛ́ɛ̀ fìyⁿá [sùsɔ́] bɔ̀
	sù/sùùsá	'run'	è wɛ́ɛ̀ fìyⁿá [sùùsá] bɔ̀
b.	láá/lā(k)á ~ tā	'go'	è wɛ́ɛ̀ fìyⁿá [tā] bɔ̀ ~ è wɛ́ɛ̀ fìyⁿá [lāá] bɔ̀
	pà/pǎ	'come'	è wɛ́ɛ̀ fìyⁿá [pǎ] bɔ̀
c.	yìn-sō/yìnná-sūyō	'get up'	è wɛ́ɛ̀ fìyⁿá [yìnná-sūyō] bɔ̀
d.	sáá-ní/sāá-ní	'fall'	è wɛ́ɛ̀ fìyⁿá [sāá-ḿ] bɔ̀
	kɔ̀-míní/kɔ̌-míní	'return'	è wɛ́ɛ̀ fìyⁿá [kɔ̌-mím[bɔ̀

15.2.9 kpɛ̀ ‘end up’ with sequential clause or perfective VP

‘End up (VPing)’ or ‘succeed in (VPing)’ can be expressed by kpɛ̀, followed by a perfective sequential clause (635a-b). In allegro speech, the perfective sequential clause can omit fá and the subject pronominal (which is always same-subject), resulting in a perfective VP (635c-d). An effort to elicit an Ipfv stem led to inconclusive results, suggesting the possibility that kpɛ̀ may be a particle rather than a true verb. In one textual example, kpɛ̀ functions as a clause-final adverb and was glossed as ‘also’ by the younger speaker (635e).

(635) a. [ɛ̀ kpɛ̀ ɛ̄] [fɛ́= ɛ̀ nù nūū-mā-nā]
[3HSg **end.up**.Pfv Pos] [Comp 3HSg give.Pfv chicken-Sg-Sg]
‘He/She ended up giving a/the chicken.’

b. [ɛ̀ kpɛ̀ [fɛ́= ɛ̀ nù nūū-mā-m̄] bɔ̀]
[3HSg **end.up**.Pfv [Comp 3HSg give.Pfv chicken-Sg-Sg] Neg
‘He/She didn’t end up giving a/the chicken.’

c. ɛ̀ kpɛ̀ fìn [nūū-má nùwⁿɛ́=] ɛ̄ⁿ
3HSg **end.up**.Pfv be.able.Pfv [chicken-Sg give.Ipfv] Pos
‘He/She was (finally) able to give the chicken.’

d. [fɛ́= ɛ̀ kpɛ̀] [nù nūū-mā-nā]
[Comp 3HSg **end.up**.Pfv] [give.Pfv chicken-Sg-Sg]
‘And he ended up giving the chicken.’ (2026_27 @ 01:01)

e. fɛ̃= ɛ̄ ŋ̄ fésì= í kpɛ̀
Comp 3HSg Sbjn take.out.Imprt 3Pl **also**
‘(And) he would also take it (=beer) out’ (2024_09 @ 04:52)

16 Conditional constructions

16.1 Hypothetical conditional

16.1.1 Antecedent tɛ̀ ~ tà clauses and consequent clauses

Antecedent clauses begin with tɛ̀ ~ tà ‘if’, which is also the ‘with/and’ preposition. A third variant of the preposition, tà^{n}, is also attested, but may tend to mean ‘as soon as …’. tà^{n} clauses are described separately in §17.7.1.1.1 below.

An antecedent clause can be perfective, imperfective, or stative. If it denotes a single bounded event, it is perfective. Thus the antecedent clauses in (636) have Pfv verbs, the pronominal subjects have their perfective form (2Sg bɛ́, 2Pl ɔ́, 1Pl tí), and transitive objects (e.g., námá-sá-nā ‘meat’) follow the verb. 2Sg tɛ̀ bɛ́ sometimes contracts to tɛ̀ =ɛ́. A positive antecedent clause does not allow the positive particle (y)ɛ̄. In the context of a confidently expected near-future event, ‘when …’ is a more apt English translation than ‘if …’, as in ‘when they come, we’ll eat dinner’.

(636)	antecedent	gloss	Pfv/Ipfv
a.	tɛ̀ bɛ́ sáá-ní	‘if you-Sg fall’	sáá-ní/sāá-ní
	tɛ̀ bɛ́ yókó-ní	‘if you-Sg descend’	yókó-ní/yōkó-ní
	tɛ̀ bɛ́ yà	‘if you-Sg ascend’	yà/yǎ
	tɛ̀ bɛ́ yìn-sō	‘if you-Sg get up’	yìn-sō/yìnná-sūyō
	tɛ̀ bɛ́ yìlà	‘if you-Sg enter’	yìlà/yìlá
	tɛ̀ bɛ́ kú	‘if you-Sg die’	kú/kpā
b.	tɔ̀= ɔ́ sáá-ní	‘if you-Pl fall’	sáá-ní/sāá-ní
	tɔ̀= ɔ́ yókó-ní	‘if you-Pl descend’	yókó-ní/yōkó-ní
c.	tɛ̀ tí kà námá-sá-nā	‘if we eat meat’	kà/kǎ

Imperfective antecedent clauses are allowed when the verb denotes atelic motion, as in (637). The subject pronominals (2Sg bɛ̀, 2Pl mɔ̀, 1Pl tì) are those used in imperfective clauses, and the verbs are in the Ipfv stem.

(637)	antecedent	gloss	Pfv/Ipfv
a.	tɛ̀ bɛ̀ kìì́sá	‘if you-Sg are walking’	kìrì/kìì́sá
	tɛ̀ bɛ̀ sùùsá	‘if you-Sg are running’	sù/sùùsá
b.	tɛ̀ mɔ̀ sùùsá	‘if you-Pl are running’	sù/sùùsá
c.	tɛ̀ tì námá-sá-ŋ̄ kǎ	‘if we are eating meat’	kà/kǎ

Since positive particle (y)ɛ̄ does not occur in antecedents, a clause-final noun takes its full suffixal form, as with 'meat' in (638).

(638) tɛ̀ tí kà námá-sá-nā
if 1PlP eat.meat.Pfv meat-Sg-Sg
'if we eat meat'

Negative antecedent clauses have the usual clause-final bɔ̀ (639). The final verb or noun in the clause then takes its regular clause-medial form.

(639) tɛ̀ bɛ́ sáá-ḿ bɔ̀ 'if you-Sg don't fall'
tɛ̀ tí kà námá-sá-m̄ bɔ̀ 'if we don't eat meat'

See also 'otherwise' in §7.2.2.

The consequent can be a short subjunctive (640a), a sequential clause (640b), a deontic modal (640c-d), or a future indicative clause (640e).

(640) a. tɛ̀ bɛ́ sáá-ní, fɛ̄= =ɛ̄ yìn-sō
if 2SgP fall.Pfv, Comp 2SgImprt get.up.Imprt
'If you-Sg fall, get-2Sg (back) up!' (< sáá^{n})

b. tɛ̀ tí kà námá-sá-nā, fɔ́ tí kárí
if 1PlP eat.meat.Pfv meat-Sg-Sg, Comp 1PlP get.sick.Pfv
'If we eat meat, we get sick.'

c. tɔ̀= ɔ́ sáá-ní, ɔ̄ yìn-sō
if 2PlP fall.Pfv, 2PlImprt get.up.Imprt
'If you-Pl fall, get-2Pl (back) up!'

d. tɛ̀ bɛ́ sáá-ḿ bɔ̀, [bɛ̄ tá] [pā]
if 2SgP fall.Pfv Neg, [2SgImprt go.Imprt] [come.Imprt]
'If you-Sg don't fall, come-2Sg (back)!'

e. tɛ̀ ŋ́ ŋá zàkîì,
if 1Sg see.Pfv Z,
ŋ́ wáà= á mānīyá [ɛ̀ lɔ̰ɛ̄=] ɛ̄
1Sg Fut 3NHSg say.Ipfv [3HSg Dat] Pos
'If I see Zaki, I will tell ("say it to") him.' (< y^{n}á, wɛ́ɛ̀)

16.1.2 Hybrid antecedent-relative clause

It is possible in Paleni to fuse a conditional antecedent clause ('if') with a relative clause ('one who …'). The result is understood to mean 'if there is (any)one who …' (§14.1.8). Such hybrids are common in languages of the zone.

(641) tɛ̀ [fáá kérékém bɔ̀↗], fɛ̄= ɛ̄ ŋ̄ wɛ́ sɔ́kɔ́-ɲɛ́-nī,
if [RelSg be.healthy Neg], Comp 3HSg Sbjn collect.Imprt herb-Pl-Pl,
[fɛ̄= ɛ̄ ñ nwî= í [ɛ̀ kīlānī]
[Comp 3HSg Sbjn give.Imprt 3Pl [3MSg Dat]]
'If there was someone who was sick, he (=old man) would gather herbs, and he would give them to him/her.' (< nû) (2024_04 @ 01:56)

16.2 'Even if'

16.2.1 àlí tɛ̀ 'even if'

This consists of the regular 'if' marker tɛ̀ plus àlí 'even'.

(642) àlí tɛ̀ wālɔ̄ɔ̄-ñ sá,
even **if** rain(n)-Sg rain.fall.Pfv,
ní-mí-ɲ̄ ɲìlá [tàmbàā-m̄ mím] bɔ̀
water-Pl-Pl enter.Ipfv [granary-Sg in] Neg
'Even when the rain falls, water doesn't enter the granary.' (< yìlá)
(2024_06 @ 01:42)

16.2.2 'Even if' without 'even' or 'if' morphemes

In (643), conditional tɛ̀ and positive (y)ɛ̄ are absent from the clause functioning as hypothetical antecedent.

(643) wālɔ̄ɔ̄-ñ sá, ń nāká [[ñ tɔ̄ɔ̄-kà-m̄] míɲ] ɲɛ̄
rain(n)-Sg rain.fall.Pfv, 1Sg go.Ipfv [[1Sg field-Sg-Sg] to] Pos
'Even if it rains, I'm going to my field.' (< lāká)

The pragmatic effect is something like 'It rained? I'm (still) going …'. Compare truncated antecedents in English like *come what (come) may* and *come hell or high water*. See also the willy-nilly conditional construction (just below) which is built on this one.

16.3 Willy-nilly conditionals

In this construction, two parallel antecedents with conflicting truth conditions are presented. The second antecedent may be the negation of the first. Constituents repeated in the second antecedent are pronominalized (e.g., subjects) or omitted (e.g., adverbials). The realization of the consequent is independent of which antecedent clause turns out to be correct.

(644) [wālɔ̄ɔ̄-n̄ sá] [á sá bɔ̀],
[rain(n)-Sg rain.fall.Pfv] [3NHSg rain.fall.Pfv Neg]
ń nāká [[n̄ tɔ̄ɔ̄-kà-m̄] míɲ] ɲɛ̄
1Sg go.Ipfv [[1Sg field-Sg-Sg] to] Pos
'Whether it rains or it doesn't rain, I'm going to my field.'

This construction is related to the 'even if' construction (preceding subsection).

16.4 Counterfactual conditionals

In a counterfactual conditional, the antecedent denotes an eventuality that seemed possible at the time but did not in fact materialize. The consequent denotes a hypothetical eventuality that would have been caused or entailed by the antecedent.

The consequent clause is in future form plus the morpheme lɔ̄, which perhaps originated as a variant of tɔ̀ ~ tɔ̄ to mark past time (§10.7.3-6). lɔ̄ is also sometimes added to the antecedent clause (645a-b).

(645) a. tɛ̀ zàkîì tà (lɔ̄) síí-ré-nī
if Z take.Pfv (**Past**) medication-Pl-Pl
è wɛ́ɛ̀ lɔ̄ kpā́ bɔ̀
3HSg Fut **Past** die.Ipfv Neg
'If Zaki had taken the medicine, he wouldn't have died.'

b. tɛ̀ è sé mì y^nîì,
if 3HSg insult.Pfv 1Sg yesterday,
ŋ́ wɛ́ɛ̀ lɔ̄ è līyé
1Sg Fut **Past** 3HSg kill.Ipfv
'If he had insulted me yesterday, I would have killed him.'

If the antecedent clause is a copular clause, it includes tɔ̀ 'be.Past' followed by long subjunctive mā (§17.1.3.2). This tɔ̀ mā is distinct from bà/mà tɔ̀ in the 'there was …' construction (§10.7.3). The consequent clause is as before (646).

(646) tà= á tɔ̀ mā cá-nī,
if 3NHSg **be.Past** **Sbjn** woman-Sg.it.is,
ŋ́ wɛ́ɛ̀ lɔ̄ è wùsé= ɛ̄
1Sg Fut **Past** 3HSg hit.Ipfv Pos
'If it were (=had been) a woman, I would have struck her.' (< wùsó)

17 Clausal complements and adjuncts

17.1 Complementizers

This chapter begins by briefly reviewing the various complementizers and subjunctive markers. More details about each of them are presented in later sections.

17.1.1 á 'that' versus interjection á 'ah!'

A quotative 'that' complementizer á occurs at the beginning of some subordinated clauses (§17.2). It can precede nonpronominal NPs, and pronominals that begin with a consonant. The clause can be perfective or imperfective. Logophorics 3HSg ɛ́ɛ̀, 3NHSg áá, and 3Pl íí may have originated as fusions of quotative complementizer á with 3HSg è, 3NHSg á, and 3Pl í.

In quotations, there is a somewhat fuzzy distinction between complementizer á 'that' and utterance-initial interjection á! 'ah!' or 'oh!' Expecially in narratives, a quoted speaking turn conventionally begins with such an interjection, with variable vowel quality (á!, ɛ́!, etc.). In clear cases, the interjection is forcefully pronounced and it is not prosodically fused with the following words.

(647) sàntùŋkóó-ɲ̄ ɲàmá,
hyena-Sg said,
á!, tɛ̀ bɛ́ wɛ̄-sìkɛ̄ [mà kúlóó-m̄ [bɛ́ sí] yɛ̄] yá→,
ah!, if 2SgP said [that hunger-Sg [2Sg on] Pos] Emph,
á! ǹté-fɛ̄ [fá tì wáà= á wòlóó mīnī]
ah!, what? [Comp 1PlI Fut 3NHSg eat.Ipfv today]
'Hyena said, "Ah, so you say that you are hungry, huh? Ah, what are we going to eat today?" ' (2024_10 @ 01:32 to -38)

Some narrators even add an apparent interjection á! before nonquoted clauses. In this case the distinction between the 'that' complementizer and the interjection is particularly blurry.

17.1.2 Clause-initial mà 'that'

Another complementizer is clause-initial particle mà. It occurs in factive complements of 'know' (§17.3.1.1), 'look for' (§17.3.1.3), 'forget' (§17.3.1.4), and 'fear' (§17.3.1.5). mà clauses are usually perfective in form, but (with exceptions discussed below) they are weakly or strongly irrealis modally. Clause-initial mà should not be confused with post-subject long subjunctive bā ~ mā (§17.1.3.2).

mà occurs chiefly before third-person subjects, pronominal or nonpronominal for the older speaker. His contractions of mà with vowel-initial pronominals are in (648).

(648) 3HSg mɛ̀= ɛ̀
3Pl mì= ì
3NHSg mà= á
2Pl mɔ̀= ɔ́

In simple quotations, mà rather than á is usual before nonlogophoric third-person pronominal subjects. The presence or absence of mà is therefore a helpful clue as to whether a following 3Sg or 3Pl subject pronoun is logophoric (coindexed to the author of the quotation) or not. See §18.3.1 for comparisons of clauses with logophoric and nonlogophoric third-person pronominal subjects.

The younger speaker uses á rather than mà before third-person pronominals, with 3HSg á ɛ̀ combining as ɛ́= ɛ̀ and 3Pl á í combining as í í, mimic-ing logophorics.

(649) has mà in a subjunctive clause with 3HSg subject.

(649) [písàá-ŋ̄ fáá] [fí= í lɔ́ɔ̀ (á)lè [á yàmá]]
[child-Sg RelSg] [Comp 3Pl Past.Ipfv want.Stat [3NHSg do.Ipfv]]
[mɛ̀= ɛ̄ ń tá lɛ̄= [ɛ́ lè] wɔ̄] nā
[**that** 3HSg Sbjn go.Imprt there.Def [3Pl following] Neg] Rel
'the (other) child whom they had said (=intended) that he not go there following (=with) them …' (2026_22 @ 00:32)

17.1.3 Post-subject subjunctive morphemes

Subjunctive particles in short (ŋ) and long (bā ~ mā) forms occur in various subordinate clauses. They follow the subject, unlike the clause-initial complementizer mà (see above). The verb is in the Imprt stem in both short and long subjunctive clauses. Complementizer fá ~ fɔ́ is regular in short subjunctive clauses, except in jussives (quoted imperatives). fá ~ fɔ́ is absent in long subjunctive clauses, except in 'before …' clauses.

17.1.3.1 Short subjunctive ŋ

A short subjunctive clause has the form fá X ŋ plus imperative VP when the subject X is an NP or a third-person pronoun. ŋ gets its tone from the preceding syllable. When the subject X is a 1st/2nd person pronoun there is no ŋ, so the form is just fá X plus imperative VP. Pronominal subjects other than 1Sg have M-toned form in these clauses, as in imperatives and hortatives. The complementizer fá can be omitted in exhortations, and it can be replaced by quotative á in quoted imperatives with 1st/2nd person subjects.

Short Sbjn ŋ can be distinguished by context from the phonologically similar subject-focus (SFoc) marker ŋ (§13.1.1.1). Both intervene between the subject and the VP. One difference is that SFoc ŋ can follow 1st/2nd person pronouns, while Sbjn ŋ cannot. Another is that third-person subject pronouns take demonstrative forms (3HSg ɛ̀-sā-nā, etc.) before SFoc ŋ, but they take simple pronominal proclitic form before Sbjn ŋ. Another is that subjunctive

clauses are imperative in form, while SFoc ŋ requires indicative VPs. Finally, most textual occurrences of Sbjn ŋ are in fá clauses, while SFoc ŋ cannot combine with fá.

(650) shows the form of subjects in short subjunctive clauses. Pronominal subjects other than 1Sg have M-toned form, as in imperatives and exhortations. fá undergoes vv-Contraction when combined with vocalic subject pronouns, and the result is leveled to M-tone. Because 2Sg bɛ̄ elides its b, resulting in fɛ̄= =ɛ̄, the only audible difference between 3HSg and 2Sg is the subjunctive morpheme ŋ in 3HSg fɛ̄= ɛ̄ ŋ̄. Nouns as subjects do not reduce their final suffix (-nā, -nī).

(650) a.

3HSg	fɛ̄= ɛ̄ ŋ̄ …
3Pl	fī= ī ŋ̄ …
3NHSg	fā= ā ŋ̄ …

b.

Zaki	fá zàkî ǹ̩ …
fɔ̄-mā-nā ‘dog’	fá fɔ̄-mā-nā ŋ̄
fɔ́n-sɛ̄-nī ‘dogs’	fá fɔ́n-sɛ̄-nī ŋ̄

c.

	with fá	with á
2SgImprt	fɛ̄= =ɛ̄	á bɛ̄
2PlImprt	fɔ̄= ɔ̄	ɔ́= ɔ̄
1PlImprt	fá tī	á tī
1Sg	fá ń̩	á ń̩

Some short subjunctive examples with nonpronominal NP or third person pronominal subjects are in (651).

(651) a.

[fɛ̄=	ɛ̄	m̄	pá]		
[Comp	3HSg	**Sbjn**	come.Imprt]		
[fɛ̄=	ɛ̄	n̄	tá]	[tɔ̄ɔ̄sá^{n}],	
[Comp	3HSg	**Sbjn**	go.Imprt]	[cultivate.Ipfv]	

‘He had to come and he had to go and do farm work.’ (2024_09 @ 00:14)

b.

[zàkî	ǹ	tá]	[pā],	fɛ̄=	ɛ̄	ŋ̄	wòlò
[Z	**Sbjn**	go.Imprt]	[come.Imprt],	Comp	3HSg	**Sbjn**	eat.Imprt

‘Zaki must come and eat!’

c.

[pís-é-nī	n̄	tá]	[pā],	fī=	ī	ŋ̄	wòlò
[child-Pl-Pl	**Sbjn**	go.Imprt]	[come.Imprt],	Comp	3Pl	**Sbjn**	eat.Imprt

‘The children must come and eat!’

2Sg subject is featured in (652a). Part of this example is repeated with 2Pl, 1Pl, and 1Sg subjects in (652b).

(652) a. [kúú-rɛ̄-m̄ bàà] [fɛ̄= =ɛ̄ tá]
[day-Pl-Pl two] [Comp 2SgImprt go.Imprt]
[fɛ̄= =ɛ̄ yílà lā],
[Comp 2SgImprt enter.Imprt there.Def],
fɛ̄= =ɛ̄ nû làmpóó-nā-nā,
[Comp 2SgImprt give.Imprt tax-Sg-Sg,
[fɛ̄= =ɛ̄ tá] [kɔ̂-míní]
[Comp 2SgImprt go.Imprt] [return.Imprt]
'Two days for you-Sg to go and enter (=arrive) there, and for you-Sg to give (=pay) the tax, and for you to go back.' (2024_07 @ 00:22 to 00:25)

b. [fɔ̄= ɔ̄ tá] [fɔ̄= ɔ̄ yílà lā] 'for you-Pl to go and enter there'
[fɔ́/fá tī tá] [fɔ́/fá tī yílà lā] 'for us to go and enter there'
[fɔ́/fá ń tá] [fɔ́/fá ɲ́ ɲílà lā] 'for me to go and enter there'

Short subjunctive clauses with fá are very common in narratives. They occur in quoted imperatives and complements of sùŋkú^{n} 'must', but they are not limited to such classically subjunctive contexts. In recordings, they often function like sequential clauses when the temporal context is imperfective (including gnomic, past habitual, future) or deontic, i.e., not a report of a specific sequence of past events.

17.1.3.2 Long subjunctive bā ~ mā

The long (i.e. syllabic) variant occurs in the constructions 'want (to VP)', 'forget (to VP)', 'fear (that/lest …), 'cause (X to VP)', purposive clauses, 'before' clauses, and some irrealis conditionals. In Paleni these are all full clausal complements with overt subjects; see §17.6.3-6 and §17.7.1.2, also examples (624c), (646), and (693). The complementizer fá ~ fɔ́ is absent in long subjunctives, except in 'before …' clauses.

Subject combinations with the long Subj are in (653). The allomorph bā is regular after 1st/2nd person pronominals with the partial exception of 1Sg. 1Pl, 2Sg, and 2Pl subjects have M-toned forms tī, bɛ̄, and (w)ɔ̄, but 2Sg /bɛ̄ bā/ contracts as bā= =ā. 1Sg subject ŋ́ remains H-toned, hence ḿ bā, often assimilating further as ḿ mā. Third person pronominals take the nasal long subjunctive allomorph mā. One might speculate that this mā reflects short subjunctive *ŋ plus bā in some Pre-Paleni. Nouns whose citation forms end in a final number suffix (singular -nā, plural -nī) usually drop the suffix but take the nasal subjunctive allomorph mā.

(653) a.

3HSg	ɛ̄	mā
3Pl	ī	mā
3NHSg	ā	mā

b.

2Sg	bā=	=ā
2Pl	ɔ̄	bā
1Pl	tī	bā
1Sg	ḿ	bā ~ mā

fɔ̄-mā-nā ‘dog’	fɔ̄-mā(-m̄)	mā
fɔ́n-sɛ̄-nī ‘dogs’	fɔ́n-sɛ̄(-m̄)	mā

When uncontracted, bā ~ mā is M-toned in careful pronunciation. However, it is often heard as low pitched, especially before a nonlow tone.

Examples are in (654). The verb is in the Imprt stem for regular verbs, e.g. yâ ‘ascend.Imprt’ (versus Pfv yà) and kí-lāā ‘go.Imprt’. Stative tɔ̀ ‘be’ is also allowed (654b).

(654) a. [tī tá] [pā] [fá tī bā nì í]
[1PlImprt go.Imprt] [come.Imprt] [Comp 1Pl **Sbjn** drink.Imprt 3Pl]
‘Let’s go and let’s drink it (=beer)!’ (2024_09 @ 01:05)

b. [ǹté-fɛ̄ yɛ̄] [fá tùw= á nùwⁿɔ́ [sìím-pò-ŋ̄ kīlānī]],
[what? it.is] [Comp 1PlI 3NHSg give.Ipfv [genie-Dim-Sg Dat]],
tī bā tɔ̀ [tóŋ kīlāni]
1Pl **Sbjn** be [Recip among]
‘What shall we give to the genie, so that we may be together?’
(2024_04 @ 00:34-00:37)

c. [á yàn nîìní] [bā= =ā tá]
[3NHSg be.done.Pfv how?] [2Sg **Sbjn** go.Imprt]
[bā= =ā fírí= í lɛ̄= ɛ̄]
[2Sg **Sbjn** find.Imprt 3Pl there.Def Pos.Q]
‘How did it happen for you-Sg to go and find them there?’ (2026_22 @ 01:57)

17.1.4 fá ~ fɔ́ clause-initial complementizer

The complementizer fá occurs in a range of constructions (655a-e). It has a dialectal variant fɔ́. The full set of pronominal-subject combinations is in (655f).

(655) a. relative clause (§14.1.1-2)
b. clause with focalized nonsubject constituent (§13.1.2ff.)
c. sequential clause (§17.5)
d. short subjunctive clauses (§17.6.2)
e. ‘before’ clauses with long subjunctive (§17.7.1.2)

f.

subject	imperative	perfective	imperfective
1Sg	fá ŋ́	fá ŋ́	fá ŋ́
1Pl	fá tī	fá tí	fá tì
2Sg	fɛ̄= ɛ̄	fɛ́= =ɛ́	fá bɛ̀
2Pl	fɔ̄= ɔ̄	fɔ́= ɔ́	fá mɔ̀
3HSg	fɛ̄= ɛ̄ ŋ̄	fɛ́= ɛ̀	fɛ́= ɛ̀
3NHSg	fā= ā ŋ̄	fá= á	fá= á
3Pl	fī= ī ŋ̄	fí= í	fí= í

Sequential clauses have perfective subjects and subjunctive clauses have imperative subjects. Relative and focalized clauses can have either perfective or imperfective subjects. Note especially that perfective 2Sg fɛ́= =ɛ́ and 3HSg fɛ́= è are distinguished only by tones.

17.2 Quotations

17.2.1 'Say' verbs and quotative á 'that'

Two interchangeable verbs occur strictly before actually reported quoted matter. They are wɛ̄-sìkɛ̄ (= wɛ̄sɛ̄kɛ̄) 'said' and yàmá 'said'. wɛ̄-sìkɛ̄ 'includes sìkɛ̄ 'thus'. In normal allegro speech wɛ̄-sìkɛ̄ can be severely reduced, for example to [sɛ̄], and sometimes just the sibilant is audible. yàmá is homophonous with the Ipfv of yà^{n}/yàmá, but in the sense 'said' it behaves like a Pfv verb, as does wɛ̄-sìkɛ̄. Both are glossed as 'said' in texts. In other contexts, e.g., 'said it' or 'said that' or 'said what?' with nominal object, and broadly in imperative and subordinated contexts, the transitive verb máni/mānīyá 'speak, say' replaces wɛ̄-sìkɛ̄ 'say' and yàmá. máni/mānīyá normally has 3NHSg á as default object (hence Pfv and Imprt máni yá and Ipfv á mānīyá).

wɛ̄-sìkɛ̄ 'say' and yàmá are usually followed by a complementizer á or mà, or an exclamation like á!, then the quoted matter.

The most common quotative complementizer is á. The uncontracted form á occurs when the subject begins with a consonant. This is the case with nonpronominal NPs, and with several pronominal subjects (1Sg, 1Pl, 2Sg, and the imperfective form mɔ̀ for 2Pl).

(656) a. zàkîi wɛ̄-sìkɛ̄ [á pís-é-m̄ pɛ̌= ɛ̄]
Z said [**Quot** child-Pl-Pl come.Ipfv Neg
'Zaki said that the children are coming.'

b. zàkîi wɛ̄-sìkɛ̄ [á tì pă bɔ̀]
Z said [**Quot** 1PlI come.Ipfv Neg]
'Zaki said that we are not coming.'

c. zàkîi wɛ̄-sìkɛ̄ [á ḿ pɛ̌= ɛ̄]
Z said [**Quot** 1Sg come.Ipfv Pos]
'Zaki said that I am coming.'

d. zàkíi wɛ̄-sìkɛ̄ [á [bɛ́ sí-bé] pɛ̌= ɛ̄]
Z said [**Quot** [2Sg father-Sg] come.Ipfv Pos]
'Zaki said that your-Sg father is coming.'

e. yàmá é, [á [ŋ̄ kàà-sɛ̄-ɲ̄] ɲɛ̄]
said hey!, [Quot [1Sg sheep-Pl-Pl] it.is]
[fá sàntùŋkóó-n í tūkó˥]
[Comp hyena-Sg 3Pl catch.Ipfv]
'said, "hey! It's my sheep-Pl [focus] that the hyena catches." '
(2024_05 @ 00:11)

á contracts with 2Pl perfective subject ɔ́, and with 2Pl possessor ɔ́, as ɔ́= ɔ́. For the older speaker, this is the only vocalic contraction involving this complementizer.

(657) a. zàkíì wɛ̄-sìkɛ̄ [ɔ́= ɔ́ pɛ̀= ɛ̄]
Z said [**Quot** **2PlP** come.Pfv Pos]
'Zaki said that you-Pl have come.'

b. zàkíi wɛ̄-sìkɛ̄ [ɔ́= [ɔ́ sí-bé] pɛ̌= ɛ̄]
Z said [**Quot** [**2Pl** father-Sg] come.Ipfv Pos]
'Zaki said that your-Pl father is coming.'

When á combines with third-person pronominal subjects (or possessors of subjects), a distinction is made between logophoric sense (the subject is coindexed to the quoted speaker, i.e., the quoted author) and nonlogophoric sense (the subject is not coindexed). The following comments are based on the speech of the older speaker; the younger speaker expands the use of á to include nonlogophoric third-person subject pronominals.

If the original direct quote included first-person pronominal subjects, these convert to logophoric subjects in quoted material. LogoHSg ɛ́ɛ̀, LogoNHSg áá, and LogoPl íí may have originated as *á plus the relevant subject proclitic, but these (especially íí) would be phonologically problematic as synchronic derivations. The logophorics are therefore treated as single morphemes (658).

(658) a. zàkíì wɛ̄-sìkɛ̄ [ɛ́ɛ̀ pɛ̌= ɛ̄]
Z said [**LogoHSg** come.Ipfv Pos]
Zaki$_x$ said that he$_x$ is coming.'

b. zàkíì wɛ̄-sìkɛ̄ [ɛ́ɛ̀ pă bɔ̀]
Z said [**LogoHSg** come.Ipfv Neg]
Zaki$_x$ said that he$_x$ is not coming.'

c. pís-é-ŋ̄ wɛ̄-sìkɛ̄ [íí pɛ̌= ɛ̄]
child-Pl-Pl said [**LogoPl** come.Ipfv Pos]
'The children$_x$ say that they$_x$ are coming.'

d. pís-é-ŋ̄ wɛ̄-sìkɛ̄ [íí pă bɔ̀]
child-Pl-Pl said [**LogoPl** come.Ipfv Neg]
'The children$_x$ say that they$_x$ are not coming.'

If the third-person subject (or possessor of subject) is not coindexed with the quoted author, quotative á is replaced by mà. This clause-initial 'that' complementizer is distinct from post-subject subjunctive bā ~ mā.

(659) a. ŋ́ wɛ̄-sìkɛ̄ [mì= í pɛ̌= ɛ̄]
1Sg said [**that** **3Pl** come.Ipfv Pos]
'I said that they are coming.'

b. ŋ́ wɛ̄-sìkɛ̄ [mà= á pɛ̌= ɛ̄]
1Sg said [**that** **3NHSg** come.Ipfv Pos]
'I said that it is coming.'

c. ŋ́ wɛ̄-sìkɛ̄ [mɛ̀= ɛ̀ pɛ̌= ɛ̄]
1Sg said [**that** **3HSg** come.Ipfv Pos]
'I said that he/she is coming.'

d. ŋ́ wɛ̄-sìkɛ̄ [mà [ɲ̄ sí-bé] pɛ̌= ɛ̄]
1Sg said [**that** [1Sg father-Sg] come.Ipfv Pos]
'I said that my father is coming.'

Combinations of the complementizers with pronominal subject proclitics are summarized in (660), along with the regular (nonquoted) form of the pronominals. Here "pfv" and "ipfv" refer to clause types, not to verb-stem morphology. Again, this distribution of á versus mà is based on the older speaker.

(660)

		pfv	Quot	ipfv	Quot
a.	1Sg	ŋ́	á ŋ́	ŋ́	á ŋ́
b.	1Pl	tí	á tí	tì	á tì
	2Sg	bɛ́	á bɛ́, mɛ́= ɛ́	bɛ̀	á bɛ̀, má bɛ̀
c.	2Pl	ɔ́	ɔ́= ɔ́	mɔ̀	á mɔ̀
d.	3HSg	ɛ̀	mɛ̀= ɛ̀	ɛ̀	mɛ̀= ɛ̀
	3NHSg	á	mà= á	á	mà= á
	3Pl	í	mì= í	í	mì= í
e.	LogoHSg	—	ɛ́ɛ̀	—	ɛ́ɛ̀
	LogoNHSg	—	áá	—	áá
	LogoPl	—	íí	—	íí

As mentioned at the top of this chapter, quoted matter in narratives is often introduced with an exclamation á! 'ah!' (or é!, í!, ɛ̄! or similar) that is understood to be the first syllable of the actual quotation (§17.1.1). The exclamation and complementizer co-occur in (661), where á! is followed after a slight prosodic break by quotative á. But usually quotative á is omitted when the quoted matter begins with an exclamation.

(661) fɛ́= =ɛ́ mání= í, á!, á tɛ̀ =ɛ́ nìy^{n} yâ→,
Comp 2SgP speak.Pfv 3Pl, **ah!,** **that** if 2SgP hear.Pfv 3NHSg
'(said:) "You-Sg say them (=words). Ah, if you-Sg have heard it …'
(2024_05 @ 04:50)

17.2.2 Pronominal treatment of original addressee

In quotation, original 2Sg and 2Pl pronouns indexing the addressee can be converted to third-person, as with 3NHSg á in (662a). However, there are also many examples where 2Sg or 2Pl is retained in a direct quotation (662b). In addition, second person can be used generically as in English *you can't fight City Hall!*, describing recurrent actions (662c).

(662) a. sàntùŋkóó-ŋ̃ wɛ̄-sìkɛ̄ [fūū-mā-ñ tn̰ɛ́=] ɛ̄,
hyena-Sg said [goat-Sg-Sg Dat] Pos,
áá wáà= á kɛ̌= ɛ̄
LogoNHSg Fut **3NHSg** devour.Ipfv Pos
'The hyena said to the goat, "I will devour you-Sg." '

b. [kí-lāā nàntɔ̀ɔ̄-nā] [bɛ̄ tā] [yámá [bɛ́ láá-sɛ́-nī]]
[go.Imprt friend-Sg] [**2SgImprt** go.Imprt] [do.until.Imprt [2Sg sauce-Pl-Pl]]
'(said:) "Go, friend, until you do your-Sg sauce!" ' (2024_03 @ 04:34)

c. fɛ̃= =ɛ̄ túkú nūū-mā-nā↗,
Comp **2SgImprt** catch.Pfv chicken-Sg-Sg,
fɛ̃= =ɛ̄ nùʷ á [tó-nnè-ŋ̃ kīlānī]
Comp **2SgImprt** give.Pfv 3NHSg [foreigner-Sg-Sg Dat]
'You-Sg (=any resident of the village) would catch a chicken, and you would give it to the visitor.' (2024_03 @ 04_29)

17.2.3 Jussive complements

17.2.3.1 Quoted imperatives and prohibitives

The original addressee is expressed as subject of the quoted clause, not (obligatorily) by a dative PP in the 'said' clause. The quoted clause is a short subjunctive. The complementizer depends on the subject (1st/2nd versus third person).

17.2.3.1.1 With subjunctive and á 'that' for 1st/2nd person

Quoted imperatives and their negations can occur in the same quotative frame as quoted indicatives. In (663), the quotative complementizer is á. This is normal for 1st/2nd person pronominal subjects of the short subjunctive clause. The subjunctive mood is expressed by the M-toned imperative-subject forms of 1Pl, 2Pl, and 2Sg (tī, ɔ̄, bɛ̄) and by the Imprt stem of the verb(s).

(663) a. zàkîì wɛ̄-sìkɛ̄ [á ń / tī tá] [pā]
Z said [**Quot** 1Sg / 1PlImprt go.Imprt] [come.Imprt]
'Zaki told me/us to come.'

b. zàkîì wɛ̄-sìkɛ̄ [á ń / tī tá [pā] bɔ̀]
Z said [**Quot** 1Sg / 1PlImprt go.Imprt [come.Imprt] Neg]
'Zaki told me/us not to come.'

c. zàkîì wɛ̄-sìkɛ̄ [ɔ́= ɔ̄ tá] [pā]
Z said [**Quot** 2PlImprt go.Imprt] [come.Imprt]
'Zaki said for you-Pl to come.'

17.2.3.1.2 With short subjunctive and mà 'that' for other subjects

For subjects other than 1st/2nd person pronominals, a quoted imperative is expressed by short subjunctive ŋ (664a-c). The complementizer is mà, but it is often omitted (664d-e).

(664) a. ŋ́ wɛ̄-sìkɛ̄ [mɛ̀= ɛ̄ n̄ tá] [pā]
1Sg said [**that** 3HSg **Sbjn** go.Imprt] [come.Imprt]
'I told him/her to come.'

b. ŋ́ wɛ̄-sìkɛ̄ [mì= ī n̄ tá] [pā]
1Sg said [**that** 3Pl **Sbjn** go.Imprt] [come.Imprt]
'I told them to come.'

c. ŋ́ wɛ̄-sìkɛ̄ [mà zàkîì n̄ tá] [pā]
1Sg said [**that** Z **Sbjn** go.Imprt] [come.Imprt]
'I told Zaki to come.'

d. [fɛ́= ɛ̀ yàmá] [ī ɲ̄ ɲílà [wú-kó-n̄ tú]]
[Comp 3HSg said] [3Pl **Sbjn** enter.**Imprt** [house-Sg inside]]
'He said, "go-2Pl into the house!" ' = 'He told them to go into the house.'
(< yílà) (2024_05 @ 04:07)

e. [bɔ̄ɔ̄-nā-m̄ bà [wɛ̄-sìkɛ̄ [á-sɔ̀ rɔ̄]] yɛ̄],
[billygoat-Sg-Sg come.Pfv [said [3NHSg Dat]] Pos],
ā ŋ̄ kúnn á, síí-ré-n̄ sí
3NHSg **Sbjn** furnish.**Imprt** 3NHSg, medicine-Pl-Pl on
'Billygoat came and said to it (=monkey), "please provide me with medicines!" '
(2024_10 @ 02:20)

17.2.3.2 Quoted hortatives

A hortative can be quoted, with optional á 'that'. A 1Pl hortative subject can be retained (665a-b), or it can be converted to third person short subjunctive (665c).

(665) a. zàkîì wɛ̄-sìkɛ̄ [á tī kí-lāā]
Z said [Quot **1PlImprt** go.Imprt]
'Zaki said, let's go!'

b. á!, [tī kí-lāā] [fá tī tá] [tɔ̄ɔ̄sī,
oh!, [**1PlImprt** go.Imprt] [Comp 1PlImprt go.Imprt] [cultivate.Imprt,
[tí yínnāā-nnè-ŋ̄] kīlānī]]
[1Pl leader-Sg-Sg] Dat]]
'(said:) "Oh, let's go and do farm work, for our leader!"' (2024_07 @ 01:23)

c. ǹsánàmpē wɛ̄-sìkɛ̄→, sàntùŋkóó-ñ tɔ́,
hare said, hyena Dat,
ī ŋ̄ wⁿá fūn-nā-nā
3Pl Sbjn put.Imprt cooperation-Sg-Sg
'The hare said to the hyena, "let's do a labor exchange (in the fields)!" '
(2024_10 @ 00:00)

17.2.4 Quoted questions

Polar interrogative nī can be added in directly quoted polar interrogatives (666a). Indirect quotation makes use of tɛ̀ ~ tà(ⁿ) 'if', here freely translated 'whether' (666b-e). Quotative complementizer á 'that' is optional. Positive morpheme (y)ɛ̄ does not occur in true conditional antecedents with tɛ̀ ~ tà(ⁿ) 'if'. This is sometimes the case in 'whether' complements (666b-c). However, other examples do show (y)ɛ̄ in 'whether' complements (666d-e), suggesting that 'if' conditional antecedents and 'whether' complement clauses are not strictly equivalent syntactically.

(666) a. [fɛ́= ɛ̀ pírí= í],
[Comp 3HSg ask.Pfv 3Pl],
á!, mɔ̀ lāká [núú-ná-ŋ̄ fùù-làā-nā] ñ
ah!, 2PlI go.Ipfv [corpse-Sg-Sg bury-place-Sg] **Q**
'and he asked them, "ah, are you-Pl going in a burial procession?" '
(2026_27 @ 01:58)

b. [zàkîì píí mì yɛ̄]
[Z ask.Pfv 1Sg Pos]
[á tà ŋ́ wéɛ̀ fìyⁿá] [pă]
[Quot **if** 1Sg Fut be.able.Ipfv] [come.Ipfv]
'Zaki asked me whether I can/could come.'

c. [píí yɛ̀]
[ask.Imprt 3HSg]
[tà= wālɔ̄ɔ̄-ñ sá lā]
[**if** rain(n)-Sg rain.fall.Pfv there.Def]
'Ask him/her whether rain has fallen in their place (=village).'

d. [píí yɛ̀]
[ask.Imprt 3HSg]
[tà wālɔ̄ɔ̄-n̄ sá lɛ̄= [ɛ́ kīlāɲ] ɲɛ̄]
[**if** rain(n)-Sg rain.fall.Pfv there.Def [3Pl among] **Pos**]
'Ask him/her whether rain has fallen in their place (=village).'

e. [píí yɛ̀]
[ask.Imprt 3HSg]
[tà zàkîı̂ pɛ̀= ɛ̄] [tɛ̀ námá-sá-nā]
[**if** Z come.Pfv **Pos**] [with meat-Sg-Sg]
'Ask him/her whether Zaki brought the meat.'

Quoted content (WH) interrogatives use the regular interrogative word ('who?', 'what?', etc.).

(667) a. [pírí= í] [á [wò-sɛ̀ɛ̄-yɛ̄ m̄] pă]
[ask.Imprt 3Pl] [Quot [**who?**-Pl-Pl SFoc] come.Ipfv]
'Ask-2Sg them who (plural) is coming.'

b. [pírí= í] [[lèsè kàà-rí(-nā)] lɔ̄] nɛ̄= ɛ̄]
[ask.Imprt 3Pl] [[time **which?**-Sg(-Sg)] Dat] Foc it.is]
[fí= í pă]
[Comp 3Pl come.Ipfv]
'Ask-2Sg them what time they are coming.'

c. tā [pí yê],
go.Imprt [ask.Imprt 3NHSg],
[ǹté-fɛ̄é yɛ̄] [fá tùw= á nùw^{n}ɔ́ [sìím-pò-ŋ̄ kīlānī]]
[**what?** it.is] [Comp 1PlI 3NHSg give.Ipfv [genie-Dim-Sg Dat]]
'(said:) "Go ask it, what shall we give to the genie?" ' (2024_04 @ 00:34)

17.3 Subordinated indicative clauses

17.3.1 'That/whether' complements

17.3.1.1 'Know/see/hear (that …)'

sìy^{n}ɔ̀ (~ sùw^{n}ɔ̀)/sùw^{n}ɔ́ 'know' is aspectually dynamic (§11.2.6.1). There is no distinction between 'know that …' and 'know whether …'. That is, there is no presupposition that the complement proposition is true. Positive 'X know(s) that …' is normally expressed with Pfv sùw^{n}ɔ̀ in the sense 'has found out' plus positive (y)ɛ̄ in the main clause (668b). The factive complement may be independently positive (668a) or negative (668b). In either case, for the older speaker the complement begins with quotative á complementizer for 1st/2nd person subjects, and with mà 'that' for third person pronominal subjects. Negative 'X not know that/whether …' is expressed with negative bɔ̀ positioned after the complement but with wide

scope. In this case, negative bɔ̀ is expanded as m bɔ̀ (668c). In view of the contrast between bɔ̀ in (668b) and m bɔ̀ in (668c), the nasal in the latter is analysed here as an irrealis ("Irr") morpheme and is bracketed at the end of the embedded clause, whose truth is not asserted. The effect is to force an interpretation where negation has wide scope including 'know'.

(668) a. [ń sùwⁿɛ̀= ɛ̄] [mà zàkîì kú yɛ̄]
[1Sg know.Pfv **Pos**] [that Z die.Pfv **Pos**]
'I know that Zaki has died.'

b. [ń sùwⁿɛ̀= ɛ̄] [mà zàkîì kú bɔ̀]
[1Sg know.Pfv **Pos**] [that Z die.Pfv **Neg**]
'I know that Zaki hasn't died.'

c. [ń sùwⁿɔ̀ [mà zàkîì kú ḿ] bɔ̀]
[1Sg know.Ipfv [that Z die.Pfv **Irr**] **Neg**]
'I don't know that/whether Zaki has died.'

d. [zàkîì sùwⁿɛ̀= ɛ̄] [á tí pɛ̀= ɛ̄]
[Z know.Pfv **Pos**] [Quot 1PlP come.Pfv **Pos**]
'Zaki knows that we have come.'

e. zàkîì sùwⁿɔ̀ [á wò-ró ḿ pà] bɔ̀
Z know.Pfv [Quot who? Foc come.Pfv] **Neg**
'Zaki doesn't know who has come.'

The closest parallels to the clause-final irrealis nasal morpheme in (668c) are m bɔ̀ in negative identificationals (§11.2.1.2) and the past-time variant n tɔ̄ following some predicates (§10.7.4).

17.3.1.2 'Believe/suspect (that …)'

The verb míírí^{n}/míírínà 'think' (a regional word) can take clausal complements with optional quotative á. The main clause with 'think' has a 3NHSg object resuming the complement. In (669b), negation has narrow scope over just the subordinated clause since the main clause has a positive morpheme.

(669) a. [zàkîì á míírínɛ́= ɛ̄] [á ŋ́ kú yɛ̄]
[Z 3NHSg think.Ipfv Pos] [**Quot** 1Sg die.Pfv Pos]
'Zaki thinks that I have died.'

b. [ɲ́ ɲá míírínɛ́= ɛ̄] [zàkîì pă bɔ̀]
[1Sg 3NHSg think.Ipfv Pos] [Z come.Ipfv **Neg**]
'I think that Zaki is not coming.'

17.3.1.3 Perception verbs with ‘that/whether …’

The verbs nì/nìyⁿá ‘hear’ and yⁿá/yⁿā̀ ‘see’ can take factive (‘that’) and dubitative (‘whether’) complements. The complementizer is quotative á or mà depending on the person of the subject. The main clause has 3NHSg á or variant resuming the complement clause.

‘Hear’ is illustrated in (670). The nasal irrealis morpheme in (670c) indicates that the negation has wide scope, as in (668c) above with ‘know’.

(670) a. [tí nìyⁿ é= ɛ̄] [á bé pɛ̀= ɛ̄]
[1PlP hear.Pfv 3NHSg Pos] [**Quot** 2SgP come.Pfv Pos]
‘We heard that you-Sg have come.’

b. [tí nìyⁿ é= ɛ̄] [á zàkîì pà bɔ̀]
[1PlP hear.Pfv 3NHSg Pos] [**Quot** Z come.Pfv Neg]
‘We heard that Zaki hasn’t come.’

c. tí nìyⁿ á [á/mà zàkîì pà m̀] bɔ̀
1PlP hear.Pfv 3NHSg [**Quot/that** Z come.Pfv **Irr**] Neg
‘We haven’t heard whether Zaki has come.’

‘See’ and ‘look for’ are featured in (671). Irrealis m bɔ̀ in (671b) again shows that negation has wide scope.

(671) a. [ɲ́ ɲá á yɛ̄] [mà pís-é-ñ tɔ̀-lā bɔ̀]
[1Sg see.Pfv 3NHSg Pos] [**that** child-Pl-Pl be.Past-there.Def Neg]
‘I saw that the children were not there.’

b. [ŋ́ wéé-ń nā] [mà pís-é-ñ pà m̀] bɔ̀
[1Sg look.for.Pfv there.Def] [**that** child-Pl-Pl come.Pfv **Irr**] Neg
‘I haven’t looked there (to see) whether the children have come.’

‘See’ can also occur with what appears to be a direct object X followed by an imperfective VP of which X is the logical subject. With a nonpronominal X, the bracketing is unclear (672a-b). However, when X is a pronoun, X takes postverbal object form (672c), showing that X is bracketed with the main-clause verb ‘see’. By extrapolation, zàkîì in (672a-b) is not bracketed with ‘come’.

(672) a. ɲ́ ɲá zàkîì [pɛ̌=] ɛ̄
1Sg see.Pfv Z [come.Ipfv] Pos
‘I saw Zaki come/coming.’

b. ɲ́ ɲá zàkîì [pă] bɔ̀
1Sg see.Pfv Z [come.Ipfv] Neg
‘I didn’t see Zaki come.’

c. zàkîì y^{n}á mì [pɛ̌=] ɛ̄
Z see.Pfv 1Sg [come.Ipfv] Pos
‘Zaki saw me come/coming.’

d. fá ɲ́ ɲá nà-m̄ [pă nín-nàŋkín-nɛ̄]
Comp 1Sg see.Pfv DemNH-Sg [come.Ipfv person-Sg]
‘Then I saw that thing coming as a human.’ (2026_19 @ 00:53)

17.3.1.4 [X wūn-nā-ŋ] fá/fā ‘forget (that/whether …)’

The complement of ‘forget (that/whether) …’ (§11.1.1.2.6) is the same as that for ‘know (that/whether) …’. The complementizer is mà or á, with mà required before third person pronominals.

(673) a. [[ŋ̄ wūn-nā-ŋ̄] fɛ̄= ɛ̄] [mà zàkîì kú yɛ̄]
[[1Sg guts-Sg-Sg] forget.Ipfv **Pos**] [that Z die.Pfv **Pos**]
‘I (often) forget that Zaki died.’

b. [[ŋ̄ wūn-nā-ŋ̄] fɛ́= ɛ̄] [mɛ̀= ɛ̀ kììsá bɔ̀]
[[1Sg guts-Sg-Sg] forget.Pfv **Pos**] [that 3HSg walk.Ipfv **Neg**]
‘I forgot that he/she doesn’t walk.’

c. [ŋ̄ wūn-nā-ŋ̄] fá Ø [mà zàkîì kú ḿ] bɔ̀
[1Sg guts-Sg-Sg] forget.Pfv **Ø** [that Z die.Pfv **Irr**] **Neg**
‘I have not forgotten that Zaki died.’

17.3.1.5 násí/nāsá ‘fear (that/lest …)’ with mà ‘that’ complement

Complements of násí/nāsá ‘fear, be afraid’ are in (674). With an NP as the entity that is feared, the phrasing is ‘be afraid [in front of X]’ (674a), with postposition yínnāā ‘in front of’ (§8.2.5.3.1). ‘Fear that …’ with clausal complement requires a ‘that’ clause with mà (674b). ‘Be afraid lest …’, with reference to a possible but undesirable future event, takes a negative ‘that’ clause with mà (674c), cf. French *ne* in ‘lest’ complements. For ‘be afraid to VP’ with subjunctive complement, see §17.6.5.

(674) a. ń nási [káá-sá-n̄ ɲínnāā] yɛ̄
1Sg fear.Pfv [disease-Sg-Sg **in.front.of**] Pos
‘I am afraid of getting sick.’

b. ń nási yɛ̄ [mà zàkîì kú yɛ̄]
1Sg fear.Pfv Pos [**that** Z die.Pfv Pos]
‘I am/was afraid that Zaki may have died.’

e. [ń nási yɛ̄] [mà písàá-nā-n̄ sáá-ŋ́ [fɔ́ɔ́-m̄ mím] bɔ̀]
[1Sg fear.Pfv Pos] [**that** child-Sg-Sg fall.Pfv [hole-Sg in] Neg]
'I fear lest the child may fall into the pit.' (< sáá-ní)

17.3.2 Main clauses in subordinated function

17.3.2.1 kpáánsí bɔ̀ 'be possible (that …)'

A possible or doubtful future event is expressed by 'it isn't solid (i.e., certain)' plus an imperfective or stative main clause. There is no overt subordination. kpáánsí means 'be hard, solid, strong', or 'be difficult', or more abstractly 'be definite, certain'.

(675) a. [á kpáánsí bɔ̀] [wālɔ̄ɔ́-m̄ pɛ̌= ɛ̄]
[3NHSg be.solid Neg] [rain(n)-Sg come.Ipfv Pos]
'It's possible ("not difficult") that rain will come.'

b. [á kpáánsí bɔ̀] [zàkî sùw^{n}ɔ̀-mím bɔ̀]
[3NHSg be.solid Neg] [Z find.out.Pfv Neg]
'Maybe Zaki doesn't know (=hasn't found out).'

17.3.2.2 yámá 'do until'

This yámá is obscurely related to yà^{n}/yàmá 'do' and to prequotative yàmá 'said'. Note the tonal distinction. yámá is attested only in long subjunctives in the middle of three-clause sequences. yámá expresses the continuation of the initial situation at least until the time of the third situation. The latter takes the form of an indicative clause. See also §17.7.1.3.

(676) a. [ī mā pá]
[3Pl Sbjn come.Imprt]
[ī mā yámá]
[3Pl Sbjn **do.until**.Imprt]
[í sírí yɛ̄],
[3Pl grow.up.Pfv Pos]
'They (=chicks) come and eventually they grow up.' (2026_16 @ 00:06)

b. [bɛ̀= =ɛ́ɛ̀ yàmá [[nà-ŋ̄ fáá] rɔ̄]] bɔ̀,
[2SgI Fut do.Ipfv [[DemNH-Sg RelSg] Dat] Neg,
[ī mā yámá]
[3Pl Sbjn **do until**.Imprt]
[í sànī [bɛ́ kīlāŋ] ŋɛ̄]
[3Pl live.Pfv [2Sg chez] Pos]

[bɛ́ sùwⁿɔ̀ bɔ̀],
[2SgP know.Pfv Neg],
'You-Sg don't know what you will do, so that they (=chickens) will stay alive in your place.' (2026_16 @ 00:34)

17.3.2.3 fíí 'bring it about that …'

fíí 'find' can mean 'bring it about that …' with reference to some situation. The common combination is [wā ŋ̄] fíí X, where X is an indicative clause. This consists of nonhuman demonstrative wā-nā 'that', SFoc ŋ, and fíí. The overall sense is 'that [focus] is what brought it about that …' or 'that [focus] explains why …'.

(677) [[wā ŋ̄] fíí] [í tóɲ= ɲâⁿ) yí bɔ̀]
[[DemNH SFoc] **find**.Pfv] [3Pl Recip see.Ipfv Neg Neg]
'That's why they (=dog and crocodile) don't see each other (=interact).'
(2026_18 @ 00:34)

For another construction with fíí, but with long subjunctive complement, see §17.6.6.

17.4 Obligation

17.4.1 'Should' and 'must' (sùŋkúⁿ with short subjunctive)

The stative verb sùŋkúⁿ can express weak or strong obligation ('should', 'must'). sùŋkúⁿ can take the agent as subject in its own clause, which is then resumed in the subordinated clause. The subject of sùŋkúⁿ takes perfective forms (e.g., 1Pl tí, fɔ̄-mā-n̄ 'the dog'). The subordinated clause is a short subjunctive, with complementizer fá and Imprt verb stem. Third-person subjects are followed by Sbjn ŋ, while 1st/2nd person subject pronominals show their usual imperative/hortative forms (M-toned except 1Sg ŋ́). The positive marker (y)ɛ̄ directly follows sùŋkúⁿ (678a), while negative bɔ̀ follows the subordinated clause (678b).

(678) a. [tí sùŋkúɲ ɲɛ̄] [fá tī sû]
[1PlP **must** Pos] [Comp 1PlImprt run.Imprt]
'We must run.'

b. tí sùŋkúŋ [fá tī sû] bɔ̀
1PlP **must** [Comp 1PlImprt run.Imprt] Neg
'We must not run.'

c. [tí sùŋkúɲ ɲɛ̄] [fá tī kà námá-sá-nā]
[1PlP **must** Pos] [Comp 1PlImprt eat.meat.Imprt meat-Sg-Sg]
'We must eat meat.'

d. [ɛ̀ sùŋkúɲ ɲɛ̄] [fɛ̄= ɛ̄ ŋ̄ kà námá-sá-nā]
[3HSg **must** Pos] [Comp 3HSg **Sbjn** eat.meat.Imprt meat-Sg-Sg]
'He/She must eat meat.'

e. [í sùŋkúɲ ɲɛ̄] [fī= ī ŋ̄ kà námá-sá-nā]
[3Pl **must** Pos] [Comp 3Pl **Sbjn** eat.meat.Imprt meat-Sg-Sg]
'They must eat meat.'

f. tí sùŋkúɲ ɲɛ̄,
1PlP **must** Pos,
[fá tī tá] [kpɛ̀ŋkpɛ́ɛ́-sɛ̄-ñ nùwⁿɔ́ [bé kīlānī]]
[Comp 1PlImprt go.Imprt] [small.basket-Pl-Pl give.Ipfv [2Sg Dat]
'We should go and give you-Sg some small baskets.' (2024_07 @ 00:53)

17.4.2 wààjíbì 'obligation, necessity'

This regionally widespread noun, of Arabic origin, can be focalized as an adjunct. The remaining clause is indicative rather than subjunctive.

(679) [wààjíbì nɛ̄= ɛ̄]
[**obligation** Foc it.is]
[bɛ̀ nūū-má-ŋ̄ fɔ̀á-ɲ́ ɲɛ̄]
[2SgI chicken-Sg-Sg put.down.Ipfv Pos]
It's an obligation/necessity [focus] that you-Sg (will) put down (=raise) a chicken.'
(2026_16 @ 00:29)

17.4.3 ǹtàā 'wait!'

This word is an imperative morphosyntactically, and can combine with imperative plural-subject marking (ɔ̄ ǹtàā). It precedes a fá short subjunctive clause, a long subjunctive clause, or a conditional antecedent with tɛ̀ 'if'. The discourse context is a short delay before another action (suggested or warned about).

(680) a. ǹtàā [fá ń nû [yɔ́kɔ́-sɛ̀ɛ̀-rɛ̄-ñ tí-yɛ́-nī]]
wait.Imprt [Comp 1Sg give.Imprt [maize-Pl-Pl place-Pl-Pl]]
'Wait and I'll give some replacement maize!' (2026_27 @ 00:57)

b. á ǹtàā [ā mā tɔ̀ ǹsé]
ah! wait.Imprt [3NHSg Sbjn be what?]
[ā mā fíí písàá-nā],
[3NHSg Sbjn encounter.Imprt child-Sg],
'Ah, hold on, there must be something, it will find (and harm) the child.'
(2026_22 @ 00:11)

c. yⁿìí [mà ǹtàā] [fá ɲ́ ɲóó bɛ̀ kɔ́]
yes [that wait.Imprt] [Comp 1Sg hit.Imprt 2Sg again]
'Yes, wait and I'll hit you-Sg again!' (2024_10 @ 04:37)

The combination ǹtàā bā with bā 'for a while' (§19.4.5) more clearly means 'wait (a while)!' (before a suggested action).

(681) [ǹtàā bā] [tɛ̀ wālɔ̄ɔ̄-n̄ sá]
[wait.Imprt a.while] [if rain(n)-Sg fall.Pfv]
'Wait-2Sg until the rain falls!'

17.5 Sequential clauses

17.5.1 Basic sequential clause with fá (~ fɔ́)

In this construction, two clauses denote chronologically distinct but closely related or closely spaced events. The first is expressed as a regular perfective main clause. The second event is a subordinated perfective clause beginning with complementizer fá ~ fɔ́. The two perfective clauses seem to be syntactically parallel except for the complementizer (682). Two or more sequential clauses can be added to a single main clause.

(682) a. [ɛ̀ sáá-ɲ́ ɲɛ̄] [fɛ́= ɛ̀ yìn-sō]
[3HSg fall.Pfv Pos] [**Comp** 3HSg get.up.Pfv]
'He/She fell down and (then) got back up.'

b. [í yókó-ɲ́ ɲɛ̄] [fí= í yà]
[3Pl descend.Pfv Pos] [**Comp** 3Pl ascend.Pfv]
'They went down and (then) came back up.'

c. [ɔ́ yèé-ɲ́ ɲɛ̄] [fɔ́= ɔ́ bóróⁿ]
[2PlP stand.Pfv Pos] [**Comp** 2PlP shout.Pfv]
'You-Pl stopped and (then) shouted.'

When the first of several clauses describing an event sequence is imperfective instead of perfective, the following clauses are usually short subjunctives, as in (683a). Some elicited examples have an imperfective main clause followed by a perfective sequential clause (683b-d), but this combination is not confirmed by textual examples, except when the first clause is atelic and the second clause is 'finish' as in (630) above.

(683) a. yɔ́kɔ́-sèè-sá-n̄ tɔ̄ɔ̄sɛ́ⁿ= ɛ̄,
Jula-sorghum-Sg be.cultivated.**Ipfv** Pos,
fá tī tɔ̄ɔ̄sī yɔ́ɔ́-kààⁿ-rɛ̄-n̄
Comp 1PlImprt cultivate.**Imprt** Jula-groundnut-Pl-Pl
'Maize is cultivated, and we cultivate peanuts.' (2026_03 @ 00:57)

b. [í yōkó-ɲ́ ɲɛ̄] [fǐ= í yà]
[3Pl descend.**Ipfv** Pos] [**Comp** 3Pl ascend.**Pfv**]
'They (often) go down and (then) come back up.'

c. [mɔ̀ yèé-ɲ́ ɲɛ̄] [fɔ́= ɔ́ bóró^{n}]
[2PlI stand.**Ipfv** Pos] [**Comp** 2Pl shout.**Pfv**]
'You-Pl (often) stop and (then) shout.'

d. [ɛ̀ sāá-ɲ́ ɲɛ̄] [fɛ́= ɛ̀ yìn-sō]
[3HSg fall.**Ipfv** Pos] [**Comp** 3HSg get.up.**Pfv**]
'He/She (often) falls down and (then) gets back up.'

The first clause may also be an imperative or other deontic modal (684). In this case the following fá clause is a short subjunctive (684a-b).

(684) a. [yókó-ní] [fɛ̄= ɛ̄ yâ]
[descend.Imprt] [**Comp** 2SgImprt ascend.Imprt]
'Go-2Sg down and (then) come back up!'

b. [zàkîì ɲ̀ ɲókó-ní] [fɛ̄= ɛ̄ ɲ̄ ɲâ]
[Quot Sbjn descend.Imprt] [**Comp** 3HSg Sbjn ascend.Pfv]
'May Zaki go down and (then) come back up!'

Although sequential fá clauses do not directly allow imperfective VPs, they do allow future wɛ́ɛ̀ plus an imperfective VP.

(685) [tì= í pà] [fǐ= í wɛ́ɛ̀ [ɛ̀ yínáá-ŋ̄] w^{n}ā]
[if 3Pl come.Pfv] [**Comp** 3Pl **Fut** [3HSg name-Sg] put.Ipfv]
'when they came and they were going to put (=bestow) his/her name'
(2026_06 @ 00:30)

b. [tɔ̀= ɔ́ pà] [fɔ́ mɔ̀ =ɔ́ɔ̀ [ɛ̀ yínáá-ŋ̄] w^{n}ā]
[if 2PlP come.Pfv] [**Comp** 2PlI **Fut** [3HSg name-Sg] put.Ipfv]
'when you-Pl came and you-Pl were going to put (=bestow) his/her name'

fá clauses in object focalization constructions freely allow imperfective as well as perfective clauses (§13.1.2).

17.5.2 Non-motion verbs specialized for sequential constructions

17.5.2.1 yà^{n}/yàmá 'bring about that …' plus sequential

Transitive yà^{n}/yàmá 'do, make' can occur in a main clause in the sense 'cause, bring about (that …)'. A transition between literal 'put' and abstract 'cause' is (686a), where the

complement is a spatial adverbial. The abstract sense ‘cause’ is clear in (686b), where the complement is a sequential clause with complementizer fá and a Pfv verb.

(686) a. [káná-nā ɲ̄] ɲà^{n} túw^{n}ɔ̄ [á-máá-ŋ̄ kó]
[war-Sg SFoc] do.Pfv 1Pl [mountain atop]
‘War [focus] put us on top of the mountain.’ (cf. 2026_03 @ 00:23)

b. [[kpáá-nā ɲ̄] ɲàmá] [fá [ī tàmbàā-ŋ̄] wàkà kɔ́ɔ́rɔ̄]
[[drought-Sg SFoc] do.Ipfv] [Comp [1Sg granary-Sg] remain.Pfv empty]
‘The drought is causing my granary to be empty.’

17.5.3 Motion verbs specialized for sequential constructions

17.5.3.1 ‘Go (and) VP’

‘Go’ (§10.2.2.1) is normally láá/lāká (Ipfv also lāá) in main clauses (687a-b). The obscurely related Imprt stem is kí-lāā.

(687) a. tí láá yɛ̄ ‘we went’
tí láá yó ē ‘we went to the village’
… [tì bà láá yóò] ‘… that we go to the village’

b. tì lākɛ́= ɛ̄ ‘we (often) go’

c. kí-lāā ‘go-2Sg!’
bɛ̄ kí-lāā bɔ̀ ‘don’t-2Sg go!’

These l-initial forms compete with t-initial forms in a complex way. Ipfv tā́ is allowed in main clauses but occurs mainly in add-on imperfective VPs, including those preceded by a different t-form (688a). Imprt tá (or tā before H-tone) is allowed in main clauses but occurs mainly before other imperative and imperfective VPs and in short subjunctive clauses (688b). Pfv tā is very common in tightly-knit strings of sequential clauses (688c).

(688) a. tì tā́ yó ē ‘we (often) go to the village’
tì tɛ́= ɛ̄ ‘we (often) go’
[fǐ= í tā] [tɛ́= [[í kīlāɲ] ɲóò] ‘then they (went and) went to their village’

b. tá ‘go-2Sg!’
tá yóò ‘go-2Sg home!’ (to the village)
bɛ̄ tá bɔ̀ ‘don’t-2Pl go!’
tá pā ‘come-2Sg!’
tá yâ ‘go-2Sg up!’
tá [fǐ kàà-bā-nā] ‘go-2Sg and buy a sheep!’
tá yàárá ‘keep-2Sg going up!’ (imperfective)

tá [kàà-bá-ŋ̄ fííbá] ‘go-2Sg (often) and buy a sheep!’
[fī= ī ñ tá] […] ‘they would/should go and …’

c. [fá= á tā]
[Comp 3NHSg **go**.Pfv]
[fá= á yìlà, [tɛ̀ sì-yá], [[á fɔ́ɔ́-m̄] mín]]
[Comp 3NHSg enter.Pfv, [with 3NHSg], [[3NHSg hole-Sg] in]]
‘(Then) it went and took it in, into its hole.’ (2024_05 @ 00:24-00:28)

A main clause with ‘go’ can be followed by a fá sequential clause with a Pfv verb (689a) or directly by an imperfective VP (689b-f). For apparent cases with ‘go’ followed by a perfective VP without fá or a subject, see discussion of (611a) in §15.1.3.1.

(689) a. [ɛ̀ lá́á yɛ̄] [fɛ́= ɛ̀ sù]
[3HSg **go**.Pfv Pos] [Comp 3HSg run.Pfv]
‘He/She went and ran.’

b. ɛ̀ lá́á [wòlóó] yɛ̄
3HSg **go**.Pfv [eat.Ipfv] Pos
‘He/She went and ate.’

c. tā sû
go.Imprt run.Imprt
‘Go-2Sg and run!’

d. [wɔ̄ tā] sû
[2PlImprt **go**.Imprt] run.Imprt
‘Go-2Pl and run!’

e. [fí= í tā] [á máárá^{n}]
[Comp 3Pl **go**.Pfv] [3NHSg build.Ipfv]
‘(and) they go and build it.’ (2024_06 @ 00:59)

Imprt tá or Pfv tā can be doubled, as in indicative “X went [and went] [(and) VPed]” or imperative “go [and go] [(and) VP]!” (690a-b). Since ‘convey X (somewhere)’ is expressed as ‘go [with X]’, ‘go’ in the first clause can also be paired with a ‘convey’ clause (690c).

(690) a. [fá tí tā] [tɛ́= [=ɛ́ sùkùrá]]
[Comp 1PlP **go**.Pfv] [**go**.Ipfv [3Pl sell.Ipfv]]
‘Then we went to go sell them.’ (2024_03 @ 01:23)

b. kí-lāā [fɛ̄= ɛ̄ tá] [sùkù kàà-bā-nā]
go.Imprt [Comp 2SgImprt **go**.Imprt] [sell.Imprt sheep-Sg-Sg]
‘Go-2Sg and sell the sheep-Sg!’

c. [fá= á tā] [tɛ́= [=è sì-yá]]
[Comp 3NHSg **go**.Pfv] [**go**.Ipfv [with 3NHSg]]
'Then it went and took (=conveyed) it.' (2024_05 @ 00:24)

17.5.3.2 'Come (and) VP'

'Come and VP' is very common. 'Come' can be taken literally as centripetal motion. It can also be more abstract, expressing the onset of the action denoted by the open-ended clause (cf. English *come to be* and *become*). In (691a) the granary isn't going anywhere, for example. 'Come' can be doubled in sequential and subjunctive constructions, like 'go' (691b).

(691) a. fǐ= í má â,
Comp 3Pl build.Pfv 3NHSg,
[fá= á pà] [fá= á bɔ̀lɔ̀kɔ̀]
[Comp 3NHSg **come**.Pfv] [Comp 3NHSg be.completed.Pfv]
'They build it. It (=granary) comes and is completed.' (2024_06 @ 01:07)

b. [í pɛ̌= ɛ̄] [fǐ= ī m̄ pá]
[3Pl **come**.Ipfv Pos] [Comp 3Pl Sbjn **come**.Imprt]
[fǐ= ī n̄ tɔ̄ɔ̄sī]
[Comp 3Pl Sbjn cultivate.Imprt]
'They would come and they would do farming.' (2024_09 @ 00:23)

17.5.3.3 'Depart (there/here)' (yì^{n}/yìnná) and come/go'

The verb yì^{n}/yìnná '(get up and) depart', followed by a locational expression (usually 'there' or 'here') occurs in the constructions 'X depart from there (and come)' and 'X depart from here (and go)'.

(692) a. [è yìn nɛ̄= ɛ̄] [fɛ́= è pà]
[3HSg depart.Pfv there.Def Pos] [Comp 3HSg come.Pfv]
'He/She left there and came.' (= '… came from there') (< lā)

b. [è yìŋ ŋīnɛ̄= ɛ̄] [fɛ́= è láá]
[3HSg depart.Pfv here Pos] [Comp 3HSg go.Pfv]
'He/She left here and went.' (< yīnā)

This use of yì^{n}/yìnná is related to the sense of the compound verb yìn-sō/yìnná-sīyō 'get up'. For another construction with yì^{n}/yìnná, see (471) in §11.1.1.2.2.

17.6 Subjunctive and purposive clauses

For the forms of the short and long subjunctive particles, see §17.1.3.

17.6.1 Long subjunctive clause in purposive function

Subjunctive clauses with long subjunctive bā ~ mā and an Imprt verb, but without an initial complementizer, can function as purposive clauses with no additional marking. An overt subject is required in same-subject (693a-b) as well as different-subject (693c) versions. The main clause has independent polarity marking.

(693) a. [tì sùùsɛ́= ɛ̄] [tī bā wéé zàkîì ní]
[1PlI run.Ipfv Pos] [1Pl **Sbjn** look.for.Imprt Z down]
'We are running (for us) to look for Zaki.'

b. [ŋ́ fí tɔ̄ɔ̄-kà-n ī] [ḿ mā tɔ̄ɔ̄sī yɔ́kɔ́-sɛ̀ɛ̀-sā-nā]
[1Sg buy.Pfv field-Sg-Sg Pos] [1Sg **Sbjn** cultivate.Imprt maize-Sg-Sg]
'I bought a field in order (for me) to grow maize.'

c. [ŋ́ fí tɔ̄ɔ̄-kà-n ī]
[1Sg buy.Pfv field-Sg-Sg Pos]
[[ŋ̄ kààrì-pò-nā] bā tɔ̄ɔ̄sī yɔ́kɔ́-sɛ̀ɛ̀-sā-nā]
[[1Sg young.man-Dim-Sg] **Sbjn** cultivate.Imprt maize-Sg-Sg]
'I bought a field so that my son can grow maize.'

17.6.2 Short subjunctive fá clause in purposive function

The typical short subjunctive clause with fá and (for third person subject) subjunctive ŋ is not strictly purposive. Such clauses often function as the imperfective and deontic equivalent of sequential clauses, expressing chronological order of events (694a). In some cases they can be interpreted contextually as purposive (694b). A more explicitly purposive construction replaces the short subjunctive with the long subjunctive (694c). This example includes fá, which is elsewhere usually not part of long subjunctives (except 'before' clauses).

(694) a. fɛ́= è mání yá [[è c-è-n̄] tɔ́],
Comp 3HSg say.Pfv 3NHSg [[3HSg woman-Pl-Pl] Dat],
fī= ī n̄ tīkī tɛ́mɛ́ ń
Comp 3Pl **Sbjn** put.down.Imprt beer down
'He would say it to (=inform) his wives. Then they would put down (=set out) the sorghum beer.' (2024_07 @ 01:38)

b. ɔ̄ w^{n}á [líí tòrō] [tà tì-mí],
2PlImprt add.Imprt [person other] [with 1Sg],
[fɛ̄= ɛ̄ n̄ tá] [pā]
[**Comp** 3HSg **Sbjn** go.Imprt] [come.Imprt]
'Add-2Pl another person to me, so that he come!' (2024_05 @ 03:25)

c. [tī tá] [pā] [fá tī bā nì í]
[1PlImprt go.Imprt] [come.Imprt] [Comp 1Pl **Sbjn** drink.Imprt 3Pl]
'Let's come, so we may drink it!' (2024_09 @ 01:05)

17.6.3 'Want to VP' (y)álè with long subjunctive or jussive

'Want' with a nominal object is expressed by kīlānī (§11.2.6.2.1). 'Want' with a clausal complement, for same or different subject, is stative imperfective (y)álè. Subject combinations for (y)álè are in (695). The 1Pl, 2Sg, and 2Pl subject pronominals have their imperfective forms.

(695) a.

1Sg	ḿ ɲálè
1PlI	tì yálè
2SgI	bɛ̀ álè
2PlI	mɔ̀ álè
3HSg	ɛ̀ yálè
3NHSg	á álè
3Pl	í yálè

b.

'the woman'	cá-ɲ̄ ɲálè
'the women'	c-ɛ́-ɲ̄ ɲálè

(y)álè is here taken to be unsegmentable and to mean 'want (to VP)'. Alternatively, one might parse (y)á as the 3NHSg pronominal, invariant in form since it resumes the subordinated clause. In this case, lè would either be the postposition lè 'following (sb, sth)' in a locational predicate without copula ("X is following after it, that …"), or an otherwise unknown imperfective transitive verb.

If the subjects of the two clauses are the same, the subordinated clause begins with a subject pronominal of the same category as the main clause subject, but without anaphoric (e.g., logophoric) marking. The subordinated clause contains long subjunctive bā ~ mā (§17.1.3.2). Pronominal subject combinations attested with the complement of 'want' are in (696), cf. §17.1.3.2.

(696) a.

1Sg	ḿ mā ~ ḿ bā
3HSg	ɛ̄ mā
3Pl	ī mā
3NHSg	ā mā

b.

1Pl	tī bā
2Pl	ɔ̄ bā

c.

2Sg	bā= =ā

In positive examples, positive (y)ɛ̄ in the ATR-harmonized form ɛ̄ immediately follows lè (697a-b). Negative bɔ̀ follows the subordinated clause, but with wide scope (697d). The

subordinated clause has long subjunctive bā ~ mā following the subject. For past time, lɔ́ɔ̀ (past imperfective) is added after (y)álè (697e).

(697) a. [tì yálè ē] [tī bā láà yóò]
[1PlI **want** **Pos**] [1Pl **Sbjn** go.Imprt village]
'We want to go to the village.'

b. è yálè ē [è mā→, w^náá yɛ̀ ní [í kpírí]]
3HSg **want** Pos [3HSg **Sbjn**, put.Imprt 3HSg down [3Pl beside]]
'(said:) "I would like to put her to bed next to you-Pl." ' (2026_27 @ 02:39)

c. [tàárí-ŋ̄ fá-nā] [fá ɲ́ ɲálè]
[tale-Sg one-Sg] [Comp 1Sg **want]**
[ḿ mā w^ná á] yá
[1Sg **Sbjn** put.Imprt 3NHSg] Emph
'<u>One tale</u> [focus] is what I want to put (=tell).' (2026_27 @ 00:07)

d. [tì yálè [tī bā láà yó] bɔ̀]
[1PlI **want** [1Pl **Sbjn** go.Imprt village] **Neg**]
'We don't want to go to the village.'

e. [ɲ́ ɲálè lɔ́ɔ̀ yɛ̄] [ḿ mā pá]
[1Sg **want** Past.Ipfv Pos] [1Sg Sbjn come.Imprt]
'I wanted to come.'

When the complement is a clause with a different subject, it is implied that the wanter has communicated a wish or command with the subordinated agent. There are two options for the form of the complement. One is a jussive (quoted imperative) clause (§17.2.3.1.2), which has Imprt verbs and has short subjunctive ŋ̄ after third-person subjects, but lacks complementizer fá (698a-c). Long subjunctive bā ~ mā is also possible (698d).

(698) a. ɲ́ ɲálè ē
1Sg **want** Pos
[[ŋ̄ kàárì-pò-nā] ŋ̄ kí-lāā / láà yóò]
[[1Sg son-Sg] **Sbjn** go.Imprt village]
'I want my son to go to the village.'

b. [[n̄ sí-bé] yálè ē]
[[1Sg father-Sg] **want** Pos]
[á ń náà yóò]
[Quot **1Sg** go.Imprt village]
'My father wants me to go to the village.' (< láà)

c. [ñ sí-bé] yálè
[1Sg father-Sg] **want**
[á ń sû] bɔ̀
[Quot 1Sg run.Imprt] Neg
'My father doesn't want me to run.'

d. [zàkîì yálè ɛ̄] [bā= =ā lɑ́ɑ̀ yóò]
[Z **want**.Ipfv Pos] [2Sg **Sbjn** go.Imprt village]
'Zaki wants you-Sg to go to the village.'

Another alternative is a full short subjunctive clause with fá (699).

(699) a. [ɲ́ ɲálè ɛ̄]
[1Sg **want** Pos]
[fɛ̄= ɛ̄ n̄ nɑ́ɑ̀ yóò]
[Comp 3HSg **Sbjn** go.Imprt village]
'I want him/her to go to the village.' (< lɑ́á)

b. [ɲ́ ɲálè
1Sg **want**
[fá zàkîì ǹ nɑ́ɑ̀ yó] bɔ̀]
[Comp Z **Sbjn** go.Imprt village] Neg]
'I don't want Zaki to go to the village.'

17.6.4 'Forget to VP' ([X wūn-nā-ŋ̄] fá) with long subjunctive

In simple main clauses, 'forget' (§11.1.1.2.6) takes a locative complement (§11.1.1.2.6). In the sense 'forget to VP', this verb is followed by a long subjunctive clause (700).

(700) a. [tí wūɲ-ɲɛ̄-ŋ̄] fɛ́= ɛ̄] [tī bā bóró^{n}]
[1PlP guts-Pl-Pl] **forget**.Pfv Pos] [1Pl **Sbjn** shout.Imprt]
'We forgot to shout.'

b. [tí wūɲ-ɲɛ̄-ŋ̄] fá [tī bā bóróm] bɔ̀
[1PlP guts-Pl-Pl] **forget**.Pfv [1Pl **Sbjn** shout.Imprt] Neg
'We didn't forget to shout.'

For factive clausal complements ('forget that …'), see §17.3.1.4.

17.6.5 násí/nāsá 'be afraid to VP' with long subjunctive

For násí/nāsá 'be afraid (of)' with a PP ('in front of X') complement, see §11.2.6.3. For the same construction with a verbal-noun as the postpositional complement, see §15.2.4.

In the sense 'be afraid to VP', a long subjunctive complement is possible.

(701) a. [zàkîì násí yɛ̄] [ɛ̄ mā kí-lāā yóò]
[Z **fear**.Pfv Pos] [3HSg **Sbjn** go.Imprt village]
'Zaki is afraid of going to the village.'

b. tí násí [tī bā kà námá-sá-m̄] bɔ̀
1PlP **fear**.Pfv [1Pl **Sbjn** eat.meat.Imprt meat-Sg-Sg] Neg
'We are not afraid to eat meat.'

c. [í násí yɛ̄] [ī mā tá] [pā yīŋ-fā̄-nā]
[3Pl **fear**.Pfv Pos] [3Pl **Sbjn** go.Imprt] [come.Imprt here]
'They are afraid to come here.'

17.6.6 yà^{n}/yàmá 'do, make' or fíí/fīyé 'cause' with long subjunctive

A periphrastic causative can be constructed with yà^{n}/yàmá 'do, make' in the main clause. The subordinated clause is a long subjunctive (702a). The same causative sense can be expressed using fíí/fīyé 'find' instead of yà^{n}/yàmá (702b).

(702) a. [káná-nā-ɲ̄ bà yàmá] [tī bā tò-ɲ́ [ɲá-máá-ñ sí]
[war-Sg-Sg Past **do**.Ipfv] [1Pl **Sbjn** sit.Imprt [mountain-Sg on]
'The war(s) used to make us settle on the mountain.'

b. [fī-yé-ŋ̄ fáá fīyé] fíí túw^{n}ɔ̄
[thing-Sg-Sg RelSg thing] **cause.**Pfv 1Pl
[tī bā tò-ɲ́ [ɲá-máá-ñ sí] nā]
[1Pl **Sbjn** sit.Imprt [mountain on] Rel]
'the thing that induced us to settle on the mountain' (2026_03 @ 00:22 to 00:23)

For fíí with an indicative main-clause complement, see §17.3.2.3.

17.7 Adverbial clauses

17.7.1 Temporal adverbial clauses

17.7.1.1 'When …' clauses

17.7.1.1.1 tɛ̀/tà 'if/when …' and tà^{n} 'as soon as …'

Conditional antecedent ('if') clauses that denote recurrent events can often be translated as 'when(-ever)' clauses, as in (703a-c).

(703) a. tà tì wòlóó, bɛ̄ tá [tí yīlá] bɔ̀
if 1PlI eat.Ipfv, 2SgImprt go.Imprt [1Pl call.Ipfv] Neg
'If/When we are eating, don't-2Sg go calling us!'

b. tɛ̀ fā-má-n̄ sàkàlá, tì yɔ́rɔ́má bɔ̀
if dog-Sg-Sg bark.Ipfv, 1PlI sleep.Ipfv Neg
'If/When a dog is barking, we don't (=can't) sleep.'

Using tà^{n} instead of tɛ̀ ~ tà 'if' in the antecedent clause, with a Pfv verb, seems to imply an immediate chronological sequence ('as soon as'). The two speakers for this project stuck to unnasalized tɛ̀ ~ tà, but had intuitions about the use of tà^{n} by others. The second clause has long subjunctive bā ~ mā as in purposive clauses.

(704) a. tà^{n} zàkîì pà, tī bā yâ
as.soon.as Z come.Pfv, 1Pl Sbjn ascend.Imprt
'When/As soon as Zaki comes, we'll ascend.'

b. tà^{n} pís-é-n̄ kóó^{n}-ní, tī bā fɛ́rɛ́
as.soon.as child-Pl-Pl lie.down.Pfv, 1Pl Sbjn exit.Imprt
'When/As soon as the children have gone to bed, we will go out.'

17.7.1.1.2 Temporal adverbial relative clauses

These constructions are based on the schema '(at/on/in) the TIME that/when …' where TIME is a temporal noun ('time/moment', 'day', etc.) or a demonstrative. The morphology is sometimes trimmed. The head (bolded) is a demonstrative in (705a), a temporal noun in (705b-d).

(705) a. wā-ŋ̄ [fá tí pà], tí sùw^{n}ɔ̀ líyé bɔ̀
DemNH-Sg [Comp 1PlP come.Pfv], 1PlP know.Pfv person Neg
'When we came, we didn't know anybody.'

b. ɛ̀ pà [[kwá-ŋ̄ fáá] sí] nā, ɛ̀ wòlò bɔ̀
3HSg come.Pfv [[**day**-Sg RelSg] on] Rel, 3HSg eat.Pfv Neg
'On the day when he/she came, he/she didn't eat.'

c. ɛ̀ pà [[yɛ́ɛ́-ŋ̄ fáá] mín] nā, …
3HSg come.Pfv [[**year**-Sg RelSg] in] Rel, …
'In the year when he/she came, …'

d. í túrán [[nèsē-ŋ̄ fáá] rɔ̄] nā
3Pl be distant [[**time**-Sg RelSg] Dat] Rel
'at the time when they were far away' (< lèsē-nā)

17.7.1.2 ‘Before’ clauses with fá or yàní and long subjunctive

‘Before’ clauses are subjunctives (usually long subjunctives), and contain a verb in Imprt stem. Complementizer fá ~ fɔ́ is sometimes present in long subjunctives (706a-c), sometimes not (706e-f). The presence of fá in short subjunctives (706d) is normal, but its presence in long subjunctives is otherwise rare. yàní ‘by (the time of)’ (§8.4.4.1.6) can be used instead of fá (706f).

(706) a. [tì wɛ́ɛ̀ yìlɛ́= ɛ̄] [fɔ́ wālɔ̄ɔ̄-nā mā pá]
[1PlI Fut enter.Ipfv Pos] [Comp rain(n)-Sg Sbjn come.Imprt]
‘We’ll go in, before the rain comes.’

b. [zàkîì fɛ́rɛ́] [fá ḿ mā yâ / yókó-ní]
[Z exit.Pfv] [Comp 1Sg Sbjn ascend.Imprt / descend.Imprt]
‘Zaki went out before I went up/went down.’

c. wòlò [fɛ̄= =ɛ̄ bā yɔ̀rɔ̀^{n}]
eat.Imprt [Comp 2Sg Sbjn sleep.Imprt]
‘Eat-2Sg, before you sleep.’

d. wòlò [fɛ̄= =ɛ̄ yɔ̀rɔ̀^{n}]
eat.Imprt [Comp 2SgImprt sleep.Imprt]
[= (c)]

e. wòlò [bā= =ā yɔ̀rɔ̀^{n}]
eat.Imprt [2Sg Sbjn sleep.Imprt]
[= (c)]

f. [tī wólò] [tī bā yɔ̀rɔ̀^{n}]
[1PlP eat.Imprt] [1Pl Sbjn sleep.Imprt]
‘Let’s eat before we sleep.’

g. [tì wɛ́ɛ̀ yìlɛ́= ɛ̄] [yàní wālɔ̄ɔ̄-nā mā pā]
[1PlI Fut enter.Ipfv Pos] [**from.now** rain(n)-Sg Sbjn come.Imprt]
‘We’ll go in, before the rain comes.’ (=706a)

Pronominal combinations with bā ~ mā are listed in §17.1.3.2.

17.7.1.3 ‘Until …’ clause

The textual example (707) occurred in a context that was tailor-made for ‘until’, but it is phrased using simple sequential clauses.

(707) [fɛ́= è sììmà sīī-kē-nā]
[Comp 3HSg shake.Pfv tree-Sg-Sg]
[fɛ́= è pà] [fɛ́= è báká tāý]
[Comp 3HSg come.Pfv] [Comp 3HSg become.tired.Pfv to.exhaustion]
'Then she shook the tree until she (came and) got exhausted.' (2026_22 @ 00:59)

Explicit 'until' can be expressed by fɔ́ (§8.4.4.1.7), but this preposition is rather emphatic. An unusual verb yámá with no other forms occurs in medial long subjunctive clauses. The overall construction is freely translated with 'until' (§17.3.2.2). The yámá clause connects a preceding clause describing a state or activity with a following indicative clause describing a terminal state or an interruption (708).

(708) [ī mā pá] [ī mā yámá] [í sírí yɛ̄]
[3Pl Sbjn come.Imprt] [3Pl Sbjn do.until.Imprt] [3Pl grow.up.Pfv Pos]
'They (=chicks) come and eventually they grow up.' (2026_16 @ 00:06)

17.7.2 Spatial adverbial clauses ('place where …')

Speakers often express 'where X VPs' using a possessed deverbal place nominal with -làā-nā (§4.2.1.3), as in (709a). Where this is difficult, a full relative clause with the noun tíí-ká-nā 'place' as head can be used (709b).

(709) a. [tí tɔ̄ɔ̄-làā-n̄] túráɲ ɲɛ̄
[1Pl cultivate-**place**-Sg] distant it.is
'Our cultivating (=farming) place is far away.'

b. tì yɔ́rɔ́má [tíí-ká-ŋ̄ fáá] sí] nā,
1PlI sleep.Ipfv [**place**-Sg-Sg RelSg] on] Rel,
[lā-fā-nɛ̄= ɛ̄] [fɔ́ tì yāŋ-kà-ɲ̄ ɲàmá lā]
[there.Def-Sg it.is] [Comp 1PlI work-Sg-Sg do.Ipfv there.Def],
'The place where we sleep, it's there [focus] that we work.'

17.7.3 Manner relatives ('the way …')

There are two basic nouns meaning 'manner, way (of doing)', fáákā-nā and fɛ̄lēkēē-nā. However, náá-nā 'mouth' can occur with dative lɔ̄ in a manner relative (710).

(710) á wɛ́è kpīsá bɔ̀
3NHSg Fut finish.Ipfv Neg
mɔ̀ yāŋ-kà-ɲ̄ ɲàmá [[náá-ŋ̄ fáá] rɔ̄] nā,
2PlI work(n)-Sg-Sg do.Ipfv [[mouth-Sg RelSg] Dat] Rel
'It (= job) will not get done, the way you-Pl work.'

The fixed phrase 'that being the case, in that situation' uses a variant fùŋkù-nā 'manner'.

(711) á nà-ŋ̄ [[fùŋkù-ŋ̄ fáá] rɔ̄] nā
3NHSg DemNH-Sg [[**manner**-Sg RelSg] Dat] Rel
“That being the case, …’ (2024_05 @ 01:35)

See also mā X ‘like X’ (§8.3.1.3), sìkɛ̄ ‘thus’ (§4.4.3), and wɛ̀ɛ̀ ‘so’ (§13.1.6).

18 Anaphora

18.1 Reflexives

18.1.1 Reflexive nonsubjects (kɔ̀rɔ̀, kɔ̀ɔ̀, kɔ̀ɔ̀^{n})

Reflexive-object constructions have literal senses, expressing events where the reference happens to be both the conceptually distinguished agent and patient, as in 'cut oneself'. Reflexives are rather uncommon in texts. The known collocations are '(group) tie self' in the sense 'come together as a war party' (713b), and 'help self' with the phrasal verb 'help' (714a).

In postverbal position in perfective or imperative clauses, a reflexive object is expressed by the noun kɔ̀rɔ̀ ~ kɔ̀ɔ̀ preceded by the appropriate pronominal possessor (712a-b). The elision of intervocalic tap r is also common elsewhere (§3.4.1.4.2). kɔ̀rɔ̀ ~ kɔ̀ɔ̀ is not attested elsewhere as a regular noun.

(712) a. zàkîì yìɲ [ɲɛ̀ kɔ̀rɛ̀ =] ɛ̄
Z cut.Pfv [3HSg **Refl**] Pos
'Zaki cut himself.'

b. ɛ̀ yìɲ [ɲɛ̀ kɔ̀rɔ̀] bɔ̀
3Sg cut.Pfv [3HSg **Refl**] Neg
'She didn't cut herself.'

c. [í k-ɛ̀ɛ̄] yɛ̄ [tì = [í kɔ̀rɔ̀]]
[3Pl thing-Pl] be [with [3Pl **Refl**]]
'Their kind was by themselves (=a separate group).' (2024_08 @ 00:16)

As preverbal object in imperfective clauses, the reflexive morpheme is either kɔ̀ɔ̀^{n} (713a) or the same kɔ̀rɔ̀ ~ kɔ̀ɔ̀ (713b), depending on the speaker.

(713) a. í [yí kɔ̀ɔ̀m] bàkà-sɛ̀ = ɛ̄
3Pl [3Pl **Refl**] fatigue.Ipfv Pos
'They tire themselves out.'

b. líí-kà-sɛ̀ɛ̄-nī fɔ̀kɔ̀ [í kɔ̀rɔ̀] [líí-bé-nī lɛ̀]
person-devour-Pl-Pl tie.Pfv [3Pl **Refl**] [person-Pl-Pl following]
'The cannibals attacked the people.' (lit., "tied themselves")
(2026_22 @ 00:21)

kɔ̀ɔ̀^{n} occurs in the postverbal object of phrasal verbs, i.e., with an immediately following pseudo-postposition (714a). In (714b-c), kɔ̀ɔ̀^{n} is complement of a postposition.

(714) a. è báɲ [ɲè kɔ̀ɔ̀n] sí
3HSg help.Pfv [3Sg **Refl**] on
'He helped himself.'

b. è nù wárì-ɲɛ̄-ɲ̄ [[ɲè kɔ̀ɔ̀ŋ] kīlānī]
3Sg give.Pfv money-Pl-Pl [[3HSg **Refl**] Dat]
'She gave the money to herself.'

c. ī ŋ̄ w^{n}í= [[í kɔ̀ɔ̀ŋ] kó]
3Pl Sbjn add.Imprt [[3Pl **Refl**] atop]
'(They said:) Let's add to ourselves!" ' (2024_10 @ 00:25)

Combinations of the kɔ̀rɔ̀ variant with pronominals are in (715). The vocalic pronominals are subject to phonological interaction with the preceding word.

(715) a. 1Sg ŋ̄ kɔ̀rɔ̀
1Pl tí kɔ̀rɔ̀ ~ tú kɔ̀rɔ̀
2Sg bɛ́ kɔ̀rɔ̀
2Pl (w)ɔ́ kɔ̀rɔ̀

b. 3HSg è kɔ̀rɔ̀
3NHSg á kɔ̀rɔ̀
3Pl yí kɔ̀rɔ̀

In imperfectives, the combination of 3Pl í subject and reflexive, (y)í kɔ̀ɔ̀^{n}, can be pronounced regularly as [jíkɔ̰̀:] or slightly irregularly as í [jékɔ̰̀:].

18.1.2 Reflexive objects in deontic modals

2Sg and 2Pl reflexive objects take their normal forms in imperatives and prohibitives (716a-c). 1Pl reflexive object takes its normal form in hortatives (716d).

(716) a. yó [bɛ́ kɔ̀rɔ̀]
hit.Imprt [2Sg Refl]
'Hit yourself!'

b. bɛ̄ yìm [bɛ́ kɔ̀rɔ̀] bɔ̀
2SgImprt cut.Ipfv [2Sg Refl] Neg
'Don't-2Sg cut yourself!'

c. ɔ̄ yó [ɔ́ kɔ̀rɔ̀]
2PlImprt hit.Imprt [2Pl Refl]
'Hit yourselves!'

d. tī yó [tí kɔ̀rɔ̀]
1PlImprt hit.Imprt [1Pl Refl]
'Let's hit ourselves!'

18.1.3 Optional expanded reflexive possessors (kúmá, yámpá-ná-nā)

The regular enclitic pronominal possessors normally occur in nonsubject NPs regardless of whether the possessor is coindexed with the clausemate subject. Therefore 'his father' has the same form in (717a), with or without a coindexed subject, and in (717b) with different referents.

(717) a. zàkîì yⁿɛ́= [ɛ̀ sí-bé] ɛ̄
Z see.Pfv [**3HSg** father-Sg] Pos
'Zaki$_x$ saw his$_x$ (own) father.' or 'Zaki$_x$ saw his$_y$/her father.'

b. ɲ́ ɲɛ́= [ɛ̀ sí-bé] ɛ̄
1Sg see.Pfv [**3HSg** father-Sg] Pos
'I saw his/her father.'

If it is necessary to overtly distinguish self (coindexed to subject) from other as possessor, the possessor can be expanded. If the possessum denotes a close human blood relative, kūmā is added after the possessor to specify that it's the "real" kinsman, e.g., one's biological parent or child or a full sibling (718). Addition of kūmā forces sí-bé 'father' and sí-sèé-yɛ̄ to take regular final suffixes: sí-bé-nā, sí-sèé-nī (subject to the usual phonological modifications).

(718) a. zàkîì yⁿɛ́= [ɛ̀ kūmā-sí-bé-n] ī
Z see.Pfv [3HSg true-father-Sg-Sg] Pos
'Zaki saw his (own) true father.' (< sí-bé 'father')

b. zàkîì yⁿɛ́= [[ɛ̀ kúmá-sí-bé-m] bɔ̀
Z see.Pfv [[3HSg true-father-Sg-Sg] Neg
'Zaki did not see his (own) true father.'

c. í yⁿɛ́= [[ɛ́ kūmā-sì-sèé-ɲ̄] ɲɛ̄
3Pl see.Pfv [[3Pl true-father-Pl-Pl] Pos
'They saw their own father.' (< sí-sèé-yɛ̄ 'fathers')

If the possessum is nonhuman, the noun yámpá-ná-nā 'even' (§19.3.2) is added as inner possessum. yámpá-ná-nā is invariant for number.

(719) a. ɛ̀ sùkù [[ɛ̀ yámpá-ná-n̄] kàà-bā-n] ī
3HSg sell.Pfv [[3HSg **Refl**-Sg-Sg] sheep-Pl-Sg] Pos
'She sold her own sheep-Sg.' (< kàà-bā-nā)

b. è sùkù [[è yámpá-ná-n̄] kàà-sɛ̄-ɲ̄] ɲī
3HSg sell.Pfv [[3HSg **Refl**-Sg-Sg] sheep-Pl-Pl] Pos
'She sold her own sheep-Pl.' (< kàà-sɛ̄-nī)

c. í sùkù [[í yámpá-ná-n̄] kàà-sɛ̄-ɲ̄] ɲī
3Pl sell.Pfv [[3Pl **Refl**-Sg-Sg] sheep-Pl-Pl] P
'They sold their own sheep-Pl.'

18.2 Emphatic pronouns

18.2.1 '(By) oneself'

In (720a) 'with/and himself' translates as 'by himself', i.e. 'unassisted'. In (720b), the numeral 'one' combined appositionally with a pronominal "possessor" means 'alone, unaccompanied'.

(720) a. zakîì má wú-kó-n ī [tɛ̀ [è kɔ̀rɔ̀]]
Z build.Pfv house-Sg-S Pos [with [3HSg Refl]]
'Zaki build the house by himself.'

b. ɲ́ ɲɔ́rɔ́mé= ɛ̄ [ɲ̄ kááfáà]
1Sg sleep.Ipfv Pos [1Sg one]
'I sleep alone.'

18.3 Logophorics

Logophorics are anaphoric pronouns in quoted material (speech or thought) that are coindexed with the attributed author of the quotation. In Paleni the attributed author must be a third person from the perspective of the current speech act. Thus 'he$_x$ said he$_x$ is coming' requires logophoric marking, but 'I said I am coming' and 'You said you are coming' do not, although all three are citations of the original utterance with 'I' as subject.

Logophorics are distinct from other third-person pronouns in subject position only.

18.3.1 Logophoric pronouns

In (721a-b), the quoted author is Zaki, and the subject of the quoted clause is coindexed with him. The quoted clause begins with a 3Sg logophoric subject pronominal éɛ̀. This could arguably be parsed morphemically as the fusion of complementizer á 'that' with 3HSg è. This is probably correct historically, but synchronically éɛ̀ functions as a 3HSg logophoric subject pronominal. If the author and the subject of the quoted clause are disjoint, the quoted clause begins with complementizer mà 'that' (721c). (721d) is a logophoric textual example similar to (721a-b).

(721) a. zàkîì wɛ̄-sìkɛ̄ [ɛ́ɛ̀ pă bɔ̀]
Z said [**LogoHSg** come.Ipfv Neg]
'Zaki said that he isn't coming.' = 'Zaki said, "I am not coming." '

b. zàkîì wɛ̄-sìkɛ̄ [ɛ́ɛ̀ pɛ̀= ɛ̄]
Z said [**LogoHSg** come.Pfv Pos]
'Zaki$_x$ said that he$_x$ came.'

c. ŋ́ wɛ̄-sìkɛ̄ [mɛ̀= ɛ̀ pɛ̌= ɛ̄]
1Sg said [that **3HSg** come.Ipfv Pos]
'I said that he/she is coming.' (< pá)

d. fɛ̃= ɛ̄ ɲ̄ ɲàmɛ́= [ɛ́ɛ̀ ɛ̀ kīlāɲ ɲɛ̄]
Comp 3HSg Sbjn said [**LogoHSg** 3HSg want.Ipfv Pos]
'She says, "I want him." ' (2024_09 @ 04:08)

For the younger speaker and in some recordings with other speakers, ɛ́= ɛ̀ (homophonous to LogoHSg ɛ́ɛ̀) can still function as quotative á plus (nonlogophoric) 3HSg pronominal ɛ̀, as in 2026_27 @ 02:53. The older speaker who worked with me disapproved of this.

The 3Pl logophoric pronominal is íí (722a-b), without an obvious complementizer. It may have absorbed the 'that' complementizer á diachronically, as in *á í → íí, but this contraction is not synchronically regular segmentally (/ai/ more often contracts as ɛɛ).

(722) a. píyé-sé-n̄ wɛ̄-sìkɛ̄ [íí pă bɔ̀]
man-Pl-Pl said [**LogoPl** come.Ipfv Neg]
'The men say they aren't coming.'

b. píyé-sé-n̄ wɛ̄-sìkɛ̄ [íí pɛ̀ ɛ̄]
man-Pl-Pl said [**LogoPl** come.Pfv Pos]
'The men said that they came.'

c. í yàmá [íí lāká [tíí-ká-m̄ míɲ] ɲɛ̄],
3Pl said [**LogoPl** go.Ipfv [place-Sg-Sg in] Pos]
'they having said "we will to go to a place".' (2026_22 @ 00:01)

d. [fĩ= í yàmá]
[Comp 3Pl said]
[íí wɛ́ɛ̀ ɛ̀ kɛ̌= ɛ̄]
[**LogoPl** Fut 3HSg devour.Ipfv Pos]
'They said, "we will devour you-Sg." ' (< kă)

As with 3HSg, nonlogophoric 3Pl subject in a quotation requires the 'that' complementizer mà (723).

(723) ŋ́ wɛ̄-sìkɛ̄ [mì= í pɛ̌= ɛ̄]
1Sg said [that 3Pl come.Ipfv Pos]
'I said that they are coming.'

As these examples show, LogoHSg subject ɛ́ɛ̀ and LogoPl subject íí have invariant forms, regardless of whether the clause is perfective or imperfective.

Nonhuman logophoric áá occurs in animal tales.

(724) fá= á yàmá, áá lāká wūkɔ̰́= ɛ̄
Comp 3NHSg said, LogoNHSg go.Ipfv defecate.Ipfv Pos
'It (=hyena) said, "I am going (somewhere) to defecate." ' (2024_10 @ 05:56)

In object function, there is no difference between logophoric and other third-person human pronominals. For example, an original utterance (725a) could be reported by an eavesdropper as (725b) if the addressee is the same, but (725b) also has a nonlogophoric reading.

(725) a. bɛ́ yóó mì yɛ̄
2SgP hit.Pfv 1Sg Pos
'You-Sg hit me.'

b. ɛ̀ wɛ̄-sìkɛ̄ [á bɛ́ yóó yɛ̀ ɛ̄]
3HSg said [Quot 2SgP hit.Pfv **3HSg** Pos]
'He$_x$ said that you-Sg hit him$_{xy}$/her$_y$.'

18.3.2 First and second person antecedents

There are no morphological first or second person logophorics. In (726), the subject of the quotative clause (bolded) has ordinary first and second person pronominals after mà 'that'. This mà is often indistinct or entirely elided before consonant-initial pronominal subjects. The expected 2Pl imperfective combination mà mɔ̀ tends to be avoided or replaced by á mɔ̀ subject to vv-Contraction with the preceding vowel.

(726) a. [ŋ́ wɛ̄-sìkɛ̄ ɛ̄] [mà ḿ pǎ bɔ̀]
[1Sg said Pos] [that **1Sg** come.Ipfv Neg]
'I said that I am not coming.'

b. [tí wɛ̄-sìkɛ̄ ɛ̄] [mà tì pǎ bɔ̀]
[1PlP said Pos] [that **1Pl**I come.Ipfv Neg]
'We said that we're not coming.'

c. [bɛ́ wɛ̄-sìkɛ̄ ɛ̄] [mà bɛ̀ pǎ bɔ̀]
[2SgP said Pos] [that **2SgI** come.Ipfv Neg]
'You-Sg said that you're not coming.'

d. [ɔ́ wɛ̄-sìkɛ̄ ɛ̄] [(=ɛ́) mɔ̀ pǎ bɔ̀]
[2PlP said Pos] [(that) **2PlI** come.Ipfv Neg]
'You-Pl said that you're not coming.'

18.4 Reciprocal

18.4.1 Basic reciprocal constructions (tó^{n})

The reciprocal stem is tó^{n}. It occurs in nonsubject positions, denoting a collection of entities that are coindexed with the clausemate subject in a distributed fashion. If the subject denotes two individuals or two separate groups, the reciprocal clause sums over two subject-on-object events (X on Y, Y on X). If the subject denotes more than two individuals or groups, the reciprocal clause sums over an indeterminate number (at least two) subject-on-object events.

(727) a. tí kèè tóŋ ŋɛ̄
1Pl look.at.Pfv **Recip** Pos
'We looked at each other.'

b. tì tóŋ kèréé yɛ̄
1PlI **Recip** look.at.Ipfv Pos
'We (often) look at each other.'

c. í yó tóm bɔ̀
3Pl hit.Pfv **Recip** Neg
'They didn't hit each other.'

tó^{n} is perhaps obscurely related to the root in tó-nnè-nā 'visitor, guest'.

18.4.2 'Together' (kā-fá-nā)

The adverb 'together' is kā-fá-nā. It has invariant form, and it occurs in this sense as a postverbal adjunct. It is related to the numeral kááfáà '1', cf. also fá-nā 'person'. fá-nā can also occur after other nouns, as in sōō fá-nā 'one plate (for group eating)' (§4.5.1.2). Elsewhere kā-fá-nā means '(one and) the same' as predicate, see (213) above.

(728) a. tì yāŋ-kì-n̄ ŋàmɛ́= ɛ̄
1PlI work(n)-Pl-Pl do.Ipfv Pos
'We work.' (< yàmá)

b. tì yāŋ-kì-ɲ̄ ŋàmɛ́= ɛ̄ kā-fá-nā
1PlI work(n)-Pl-Pl do.Ipfv Pos **together**
'We work together.'

c. tì yāŋ-kì-ɲ̄ ɲàmá kā-fá-nā bɔ̀
1PlI work(n)-Pl-Pl do.Ipfv **together** Neg
‘We don’t work together.’

19 Grammatical pragmatics

19.1 Topicality

19.1.1 Topic markers

19.1.1.1 Preclausal topical NPs and pronouns

Any NP can appear in preclausal position functioning as topic for the following clauses without an overt topic marker. Unmodified pronouns are independent pronouns (729a) or demonstratives. Modified pronouns can include a proclitic (729b). Parallel nonpronominal NPs are featured in (729c). In each case, a resumptive pronoun occurs in the following clause.

(729) a. mîì, ń nāká lā bò
1Sg, 1Sg go.Ipfv there.Def Neg
'Me, I'm not going there.'

b. m̄ múúná tóró, ń nāgá lā bò
1Sg too too, 1Sg go.Ipfv there.Def Neg
'As for me, I'm not going there.'.

c. séé-sā-nā [wālɔ̄ɔ̄-ɲ̄ ɲó í], fì= ī m̄ béé-ní,
sorghum-Sg-Sg [rain-Sg hit.Pfv 3Pl], Comp 3Pl Sbjn sprout.Imprt,
yíŋ-w^{n}àà-rɛ̄-n̄ [wālɔ̄ɔ̄-ɲ̄ ɲó í], fì= ī m̄ béé-ní
millet.grain-Pl-Pl [rain-Sg hit.Pfv 3Pl], Comp 3Pl Sbjn sprout.Imprt
'Sorghum, (if) rain hits them (=sorghum grains), they sprout. Pearl millet, (if) rain hits them, they sprout.' (2024_06 @ 00:19)

19.1.1.2 kɔ̀ní as topic marker

kɔ̀ní can follow a subject NP or pronoun in topicalizing function ('as for X'). Sometimes the topic phrase is prosodically integrated as a clause-internal subject. In this case, a pronominal may take proclitic form (730a). kɔ̀ní is attested once after a focalized subject, but the pragmatic force is unclear (730b).

(730) a. [è kɔ̀ní] fɛ́rɛ́ [tɛ̀ [[yɔ́kɔ́-sɛ̀ɛ̀]-[pìs-é-n̄] táá^{n}rí]]
[3HSg **Top**] exit.Pfv [with [[maize]-[child-Pl-Pl] three]]
'As for him, he (had) left with three grains of maize.' (2026_27 @ 03:30)

b. [[káná-nā ŋ̄] kɔ̀ní] yàn túwⁿɔ̄ [á-máá-n̄ sí],
[[war-Sg SFoc] **Top**] do.Pfv 1Pl [mountain-Sg on]
'War [focus] put us up on the mountain.' (2026_03 @ 00:22)

In prosodically set-off preclausal topic phrases, pronouns take independent form, e.g., túwⁿɔ̄ kɔ̀ní 'as for us, …'.

kɔ̀ní belongs to a regionally widespread set of phonologically similar forms. In many of the other languages, kɔ̀ní or variant is strictly limited to topic function. In Paleni, kɔ̀ní has a wider set of functions and distributions and it is difficult to interpret specific occurrences.

In (731a), kɔ̀ní occurs at the end of a conditional antecedent clause. In (731b), it occurs at the end of an indicative clause (but before positive yɛ̄) describing background for what follows. In (731c) kɔ̀ní intervenes between 'go' and an add-on imperfective; a speaker suggested 'anyway' (*en tout cas*) as a gloss.

(731) a. [tà= á tɔ̀ [[fááká wò fááká] lɔ̄] kɔ̀ní
[if 3NHSg be [[manner and manner] Dat] **Top**
'no matter what manner it was' (2026_07 @ 00:41).

b. [n̄ níí-bé-ŋ̄] kú kɔ̀ní yɛ̄]
[1Sg person-Pl-Pl] die.Pfv **Top** Pos]
'although my kinsmen died, …' (2026_22 @ 01:14)

c. [fɛ̄= =ɛ̄ tá kɔ̀ní] [bákárá] pɛ́!
[Comp 2SgImprt go.Imprt **Top**] [get.tired.Ipfv] constantly
'So you-Sg go and wear yourself out anyway all the time.'

kɔ̀ní can also function as a stative 'be (sw)' predicate, followed by a spatial expression, minimally -yīnā 'here' or -lā 'there (definite)'. See §11.2.3.2 for the relevant examples.

19.1.1.3 Relative nā as topic marker

Relative nā is common clause-finally not only in true relative clauses but also in nonrelative indicative background clauses that can be freely translated 'when …' or 'it being the case that …' (§14.4). By extension, nā can also follow a preposed noun in topical function (732). However, some apparent examples of this may really involve discourse-definite singular ná.

(732) wɛ̀ɛ̀ bānnā-sí-ná-nā nā, wɛ̀ɛ̀ [fí= í tā] [á nùwⁿɔ́]]
so **help-Sg-Sg** **Rel**, so [Comp 3Pl go.Pfv] [3NHSg give.Ipfv]]
'The help, that's what they went and gave ' (2024_07 @ 00:59)

19.2 Preclausal discourse markers

19.2.1 'But' (ŋ̀kàà)

ŋ̀kàà is a preclausal particle meaning 'but' or 'on the other hand'. This is a local variant of a regionally widespread form with this sense.

(733) a. ŋ̀kàà [tí pálá-bɛ̄-nī], í fìn [tí sākānáá] bɔ̀
but [1Pl Faniagara-Pl-Pl], 3Pl be.able.Pfv [1Pl combat(v).Ipfv] Neg
'But us Palabeni, they (=enemies) couldn't combat (=defeat) us.'
(2024_03 @ 01:13)

b. ŋ̀kàà [wūsó-n̄ nà-nā],
but [hit-Sg DemNH-Sg],
ŋ̀kàà ŋ́ wɛ́ɛ̀ bɛ́ tīká-lā bɔ̀
but 1Sg Fut 2Sg leave.Ipfv-there.Def Neg
'But that beating, but I won't let you-Sg off!' (2024_10 @ 05:00)

19.2.2 'Well, …'

French *bon* occurs in recordings as an unstressed preclausal particle, translatable as 'well', 'okay', 'all right', or the like. It marks a new paragraph-like segment. French *donc* (pronounced dɔ́ŋ̀kì) and the regionally widespread form hàyà are also attested but rare in the corpus.

19.3 'Also', 'even', 'only'

19.3.1 'Also'

19.3.1.1 múúná 'also, too'

múúná 'also' can combine with a preceding nominal or pronominal "possessor."

(734) a. [m̄ múúná] lāká lɛ̄= ɛ̄
[1Sg **also**] go.Ipfv there.Def Pos
'I too am going there.' (< lā)

b. [tí múúná] lāká lɛ̄= ɛ̄
[1Pl **also**] go.Ipfv there.Def Pos
'We too are going there.'

c. [zàkî múúná] lāká lɛ̄= ɛ̄
[Z **also**] go.Ipfv there.Def Pos
'Zaki too is going there.'

A textual example is (735c) below.

19.3.1.2 tóró ‘also’

Unlike múúná (preceding subsection), tóró occurs postverbally (but before polarity morphemes) as an adverb. múúná and tóró can combine in the same clause (735c).

(735) a. [ɛ̀ múúná] máná tóré= ē
[3HSg also] speak.Pfv **also** Pos
‘He/She too spoke.’

b. ɛ̀ máná tóró bɔ̀
3HSg speak.Pfv **also** Neg
‘He/She (was present but) didn’t also speak.’

c. [tà cîì-sèē-m̄ máná fáá]
[if woman-old-Sg say.Pfv RelSg]
[fɛ́= [ɛ̀ múúná] mání yá tóró]
[Comp [3HSg **also**] say.Pfv 3NHSg **also**]
‘If the old woman woman said whatever, he/she too (=child) said it also.’
(2026_22 @ 01:04)

.
tòrō ‘(an)other’ or ‘a certain’ is likely unrelated. A different tóró ‘very much/many, too much/many’ is a borrowing from French *trop* (2024_03 @ 00:31).

19.3.2 ‘Even’ (yámpá-ná-nā)

yámpá-ná-nā ‘even’ can be added as a modifier to a subject.

(736) a. [písàá-ɲ̄ ɲámpá-ná-ŋ̄] wɛ́ɛ̀ fìyⁿá [sīī-ké-ɲ̄ ɲìnná-síyé=] ē
[child-Sg **even**-Sg-Sg] Fut be.able.Ipfv [wood-Sg-Sg lift.Ipfv] Pos
‘Even a child can lift the log.’

b. fá [kpōkó-ɲ̄ ɲò-nnè-ɲ̄ ɲámpá-ná-m̄] pà
Comp [tomtom-Sg hit-Sg-Sg even-Sg-Sg] come.Pfv
‘Then the tomtom beater himself came.’ (2026_23 @ 01:10)

The 1Sg form is mîɲ ɲámpá-ná-nā ‘even I’. The 1Pl form is tí yámpá-ná-nā. For yámpá-ná-nā in reflexive possessors see §18.1.3.

For ‘even if’ conditional antecedents, see §16.2.1.

19.3.3 'Only'

In addition to the lexically specific terms presented here, note the biclausal (double-negative) 'nothing but' construction in §8.4.1.2.

19.3.3.1 líí fá-nā-nā 'alone'

The nominal expression líí fá-nā-nā 'alone' can be used with a singular human referent to express aloneness or uniqueness (737). It is pluralized as líí fá-ɲɛ̄-nī. Compare líí- 'person' as compound initial (e.g., líí-sèē-nā 'old person') and fá-nā 'one, same' (§4.6.1.2) and related forms.

(737) a. [[ñ níí fá-nā] ŋ̄] wàkà-yīnā
[[1Sg **person** **one**-Sg] SFoc] remain.Pfv-here
'Only I am left/have remained here.'

b. [[è líí fá-nā] ŋ̄] wàkà-yīnā
[3HSg **person** **one**-Sg] SFoc] remain.Pfv-here
'Only he/she is left/has remained here.'

c. [[tí líí fá-ɲɛ̄] ŋ̄] wàkà-yīnā
[[1Pl **person** **one**-Pl] SFoc] remain.Pfv-here
'Only we are left/have remained here.'

19.3.3.2 yéékέ 'only, alone'

yéékέ 'only, alone' can occur as the last word in an NP, or it can occur at the end of the clause. In (738), yéékέ is added to an independent pronoun or to a demonstrative. These forms can occur as arguments inside clauses.

(738) 'only __'

a. 1Sg mîɲ ɲéékέ
1Pl túw^{n}ɔ̄ yéékέ
2Pl mɔ́ yéékέ
2Sg bɛ́ yéékέ

b. 3HSg ásɛ̄ yéékέ
3NHSg áà yéékέ
3Pl îì yéékέ

c. demonstratives

HSg	è-sā-ɲ̄ ɲéékέ
Pl	yīn-sī-ɲ̄ ɲéékέ
NHSg	wā-ɲ̄ ɲéékέ

The construction in (739) is identificational. The forms of the subjects are identical to those for subject focus (with SFoc ŋ).

(739) 'it's only __'

a.

1Sg	[mì ɲ̀] ɲéékέ
1Pl	[tì ɲ̀] ɲéeké
2Pl	[mɔ̀ ɲ̀] ɲéékέ
2Sg	[bɛ̀ ɲ̀] ɲéékέ

b.

3HSg	[è-sā ɲ̄] ɲéékέ
3Pl	[yīn-sī ɲ̄] ɲéékέ
3NHSg	[w^{n}ā ɲ̄] ɲéékέ

Negative bɔ̀ can be added: [mì ɲ̀] ɲéékέ bɔ̀ 'it's not just me'. Negation scopes over 'only'.

In clauses, yéékέ can be part of an NP, as in object-focalized (470a). In subject focus constructions, the subject has SFoc ŋ, and yéékέ is added as a postverbal adjunct but has scope over the subject (740b-e).

(740) a. [fée-ɲé-nī yéékέ] [fá tí tɛ̀= é tɔ̄ɔ̄sá]
[fonio-Pl-Pl **only**] [Comp 1Pl Past 3Pl cultivate.Ipfv]
'We would only cultivate <u>fonio</u> [focus]. (2026_03 @ 00:53)

b. [tī m̄] pà yéékέ
[1Pl **SFoc**] come.Pfv **only**
'<u>We</u> [focus] came alone.'

c. [[tī m̄] má wú-kó-n̄] [tà [tí kɔ̀rɔ̀]] yéékέ
[[1Pl **SFoc**] build.Pfv house-Sg-Sg] [with [1Pl Refl]] **only**
'<u>We</u> [focus] built the house alone (=by ourselves).'

d. [fɔ́n-sɛ̄-nī m̄] pà yéékέ
[dog-Pl-Pl **SFoc**] come.Pfv **only**
'Only <u>the dogs</u> [focus] came.'

e. [[tī m̄] pà yéékέ] tà [tí kɔ̀rɔ̀] bɔ̀
[[1Pl **SFoc**] come.Pfv **only**] and [1Pl Refl] Neg
'It's not <u>only we</u> [focus] who came.'
(lit. "It's not <u>we</u> [focus] who came with (=by) ourselves.")

19.4 Chronological relations and phasal polarity

19.4.1 'Again' (kɔ́)

kɔ́ is a defective verb 'do again' that often functions as an adverb 'again'. It is usually combined with another verb that denotes any action or event. The order of kɔ́ and the other verb is variable. (741a-f). In (741g) both verbs occur in sequential clauses.

(741) a. tì wáà= á máárá kɔ̰́ɛ́= ɛ̄
1PlI Fut 3NHSg build.Ipfv **again** Pos
'We will rebuild it.'

b. tì wɛ́ɛ̀ kɔ̰́á= [á máárɛ́=] ɛ̄
1PlI Fut **again** [3NHSg build.Ipfv] Pos
[=(a)]

c. má kɔ́ wú-kó-nā
build.Imprt **again** house-Sg-Sg
'Rebuild-2Sg the house!' (also má wú-kó-ŋ̄ kɔ́)

d. ḿ má kɔ́ wú-kó-n ī
1Sg build.Pfv **again** house-Sg-Sg Pos
'I rebuilt the house.'

e. fá káná-m̄ pà kɔ́
Comp war-Sg come.Pfv **again**
'Then warfare resumed.' (2024_03 @ 00:26)

f. fá= á yó =ó kɔ́
Comp 3NHSg hit.Pfv 3NHSg **again**
'then it (=hyena) hit it (=billygoat) again.' (2024_10 @ 04:46)

g. [fá= á kɔ́] [fá= á là-mínī]
[Comp 3NHSg **again**] [Comp 3NHSg be.annulled.Pfv]
'It (=bond) has again broken up.' (2024_01 @ 0-1:41)

An iterated form kɔ̀kɔ́ is attested in the verb position of a sequential clause (742a-b). No other examples could be elicited. kɔ̀kɔ́ is distinct from the verb kɔ́kɔ́/kɔ̄kɔ́ 'survive, escape'.

(742) a. fí= í kɔ̀kɔ́,
Comp 3Pl **do.again**.Pfv,
fí= í bèlè fùntóó-sɛ̄-ñ sí
Comp 3Pl repair.Pfv arrow-Pl-Sg on
'They again repaired the arrows.' (< bèlè X sí/X bèlìyá-sí) (2024_03 @ 00:41)

b. [fá á kɔ̀kɔ́] [fá á fúúkúⁿ]
[Comp 3NHSg **do.again**.Pfv] [Comp 3NHSg grunt.Pfv]
'Then it grunted again.' (2024_23 @ 01:44)

kɔ́ is irregularly related to the phrasal verb kɔ̀-míní/kɔ̌-míní 'return, go back'. The semantic connection is clear, but the tonal difference makes it difficult to fully equate them.

19.4.2 wúⁿ '(not) any longer'

wúⁿ is a negative polarity item. Its linear position in the clause is variable. In (743) it immediately follows the subject in an equational sentence. This is the type of syllable for which the semivowel tends to attract nasality, but wúⁿ still has a nasal coda.

(743) a. í wún nàntɔ̀ɔ̀-sɛ̄ bɔ̀
3Pl **any.more** friend-Pl Neg
'They are no longer friends.'

b. á wúŋ [ká fɔ̄rɔ̄] bɔ̀
3NHSg **any.more** [thing black] Neg
'It isn't black any more.'

c. è wúɲ ɲīŋ-fā-m̄ bɔ̀
3HSg **any.more** here Neg
'He/She isn't here any longer.'

wúⁿ can follow future wɛ́ɛ̀, preceding the VP (744).

(744) a. ŋ́ wɛ́ɛ̀ wúŋ fā-má-n̄ tūkó bɔ̀
1Sg Fut **any.more** dog-Sg-Sg catch.Ipfv Neg
'I won't catch dogs any more.'

b. lí-yé wɛ́ɛ̀ **wún** tɔ̄ɔ̄sá bɔ̀
someone-Sg Fut **any.more** cultivate.Ipfv Neg
'Nobody does farm work any more.'

In other contexts, wúⁿ can precede the VP (745a) or it can follow a verb or predicate locational (745b-c).

(745) a. è wúm pă / wòlóó bɔ̀
3HSg **any.more** come.Ipfv/eat.Ipfv Neg
'He/She doesn't come/eat any more.'

b. lí-yé kúú-ká yàmá wúm bɔ̀
someone-Sg funeral be.done.Ipfv **any.more** Neg
'No-one does any more funerals.' (2024_08 @ 01:09)

c. [tɔ̄ɔ̄sá-ñ ná] wún nàñnā-m̄ bɔ̀
[cultivate-Sg DefSg] **any.more** now-Sg Neg
'That farming is not there any more.' (2024_09 @ 04:58)

19.4.3 tɔ́níí '(not) at all, (not) ever'

This word occurs immediately before the negative particle. It indicates that the negation has sweeping factual and temporal scope. It can co-occur with negative polarity items like fíyè '(not) anything" (746a) and wú^{n} '(not) any more' (746b).

(746) a. fíyè lā tɔ́níí bɔ̀
anything there.Def **at.all** Neg
'There is nothing at all left.'

b. ŋ́ wɛ́ɛ̀ wún tɔ̄ɔ̄sá tɔ́níí bɔ̀
1Sg Fut any.more cultivate.Ipfv **at.all** Neg
'I don't do farming at all any longer.'

c. ń nāká bòbò tɔ́níí bɔ̀
1Sg go.Ipfv B **at.all** Neg
'I never go to Bobo (city).'

19.4.4 bàbàá '(not) yet'

This adverb is a negative polarity item. It can immediately follow the verb, or it can immediately precede negative bɔ̀.

(747) a. zàkîì láá bàbàá [tɔ̄ɔ̄-kà-m̄ mím] bɔ̀
Z go.Pfv **yet** [field-Sg-Sg in] Neg
'Zaki hasn't gone out to the field yet.'

b. zàkîì fèsè bàbàá támá-m̄ bɔ̀
Z take.out.Pfv **yet** beer-Pl Neg
'Zaki hasn't taken out (=served) the sorghum beer yet.'

c. ŋ́ wɛ́ɛ̀ námá-sá-ŋ̄ kǎ bàbàá bɔ̀
1Sg Fut meat-Sg-Sg eat.meat.Ipfv **yet** Neg
'I won't eat the meat yet.'

d. bɛ̄ kà námá-sá-m̄ bàbàá bɔ̀
2SgImprt eat.meat.Imprt meat-Sg-Sg **yet** Neg
'Don't-2Sg eat the meat yet!'

e. zàkîì pà [tà téè-yɛ̄-m̄] bàbàá bɔ̀
Z come.Pfv [with tea-Pl-Pl] **yet** Neg
'Zaki hasn't brought the tea yet.'

19.4.5 bā 'for a while, for now'

bā indicates a moderate time interval starting with the present moment. It is attested in imperatives.

(748) a. wáà yɛ̀ bā
wait.for.Imprt 3HSg **a.while**
'Wait for him/her (for a while).'

b. [fá á tā] [tá bā]
[Comp 3NHSg go.Pfv] [go.Ipfv **a.while**]
'Then it (=dog) went away for a while.' (2026_23 @ 01:40)

c. ǹtàā bā
wait! a.while
'Wait (=hold off) for a while!' (§17.4.3)

19.5 Clause-final particles

19.5.1 Emphatic or admonitive dɛ̄ʔ

This common clause-final emphatic (which follows polarity morphemes) can be a simple emphatic, or it can have an admonitive (=warning) force. It is always prepausal, i.e., it follows polarity morphemes. It ends with a glottal stop, which is not otherwise a consonantal phoneme in the language.

(749) a. kúlóó-ɲ̄ ɲìnná [tí sí] yɛ̄ dɛ̄ʔ
hunger-Sg cut.Ipfv [1Pl on] Pos **Emph**
'We are hungry, mind you!' (2024_10 @ 01:32)

b. tí kám-míɲ ɲɛ̄ dɛ̄ʔ
1PlP get.along.Stat Pos **Emph**
'We sure get along!' (2024_03 @ 03:00)

c. ŋ́ wɛ́è bɛ̀ tīká-lā bɔ̀ dɛ̄ʔ
1Sg Fut 2Sg leave.Ipfv-there.Def Neg **Emph**
'I won't let you-Sg off, mind you!' (2024_10 @ 05:06)

19.5.2 Emphatic yá

This clause-final particle is less emphatic than dɛ̄ʔ. It too follows polarity morphemes. It can be prolonged (yá→).

(750) a. á tɛ̀ bɛ́ wɛ̄-sìkɛ̄ [mà kúlóó-m̄ [bɛ́ sí] yɛ̄] yá→,
ah! if 2SgP said [that hunger-Sg [2Sg on] Pos] **Emph**
'So you say that you are hungry, huh?' (2024_10 @ 01:38)

b. [tààrí-ŋ̄ fá-nā] [fá ɲ́ ɲálè]
[tale-Sg one-Sg] [Comp 1Sg want]
[ḿ mā wⁿá á yá]
[1Sg Sbjn put.Pfv 3NHSg **Emph**]
'One tale [focus] is what I want to put (=tell).' (2026_27 @ 00:07)

19.5.3 Emphatic kɛ̀

This morpheme is attested at the end of a future-tense clause. No negative counterpart could be elicited. Follow-up elicitation suggested that it can be used in mildly emphatic positive answers to polar interrogatives (Q: 'Did he go?' A: 'Yes he did go!').

(751) a. á [yóóǹ]-[sì-bē] wáà= á kèréé ē kɛ̀
ah! [village-Sg]-[owner-Sg] Fut 3NHSg look.at.Ipfv Pos **Emph**
'(said:) "ah, hopefully the village chief will look at it!" ' (2026_27 @ 03:16)

b. è sáá-ɲ́ ɲɛ̄ kɛ̀
3HSg fall.Pfv Pos Emph
'(Yes) he/she did fall down.' (< sáá-ní)

19.6 Greetings and other formulae

The transitive verb 'greet (sb)' is māā/māāsáⁿ. The noun is māā-sā-nā 'greeting'.

19.6.1 All-purpose greetings

The greeting and response in (752) can be exchanged at any time of day or evening. The verbs in the greeting and response are irregularly related to the initial element in the compound verb yìn-sō/yìnná-sūyō 'get up'. yàⁿ (elsewhere 'do.Pfv') and bàynà are obscure.

(752) greeting: ɔ́ yàŋ ɲìní bàynà
2PlP get.up
'Did you-Pl get up well?"

response: tí yínɛ̄= ɛ̄
1PlP get.up.Pfv Pos
'We got up.'

An alternative greeting fɑ̃nā (not otherwise attested) is used when the addressee(s) is/are at work, including in the fields.

(753) greeting: fɑ̃nā

response: fɑ̃nā tòrō

These exchanges can be followed by a question with bānā.

(754) a. wɔ́ bānā 'How are you-Pl?'

b. yóón-nā-m̄ bānā 'How is (everyone in) the village (or household)?' (2026_03 @ 00:09)

c. ɔ́ cólókón-nā yá→ 'your-Pl health?'

The reply to (754c) is tí cólókó-ɲ̄ ɲɛ̄'(it's) our health.'

19.6.2 'Good night!'

The phrase as actually spoken is in (755a). It is understood by speakers to be a mutation from and contraction of (755b).

(755) a. syó-ŋ̄-wàlɔɔ̄-nā kàrà sàñ nāā-nā

b. syó-ŋ̄-wàlɔɔ̄-nā káká [á-sàná-ñ nāā-nā]
God-Sg open.Imprt [morning-Sg good-Sg]
'May God open (=give) a good morning!'

19.6.3 Travel greetings

(756a) is used to send off someone who is preparing for a long trip. The traveler's response is (756b). Cool temperature is equated with comfort in this hot climate. The ending of (756b) is obscure semantically although the words are recognizable. The final -ñ of 'God' is ambiguous (reduced final singular suffix -nā, or short subjunctive ŋ̄).

(756) a. syó-ŋ̄-wàlɔɔ̄ ñ lùù bɛ́ kànnàŋ-kà-nā
God-Sg Sbjn put.in.Imprt 2Sg goodness-Sg-Sg
'May God have you enter (there) in wellbeing.'

b. syó-ŋ̄-wàlɔ̄ɔ̄ n̄ tíímà [n̄ sēnāntɔ́-ná] ní
God Sbjn cool.Imprt [1Sg behind-Sg] down
'May God keep behind me cool.'

A person returning to the village after a long trip is greeted matter-of-factly (757a). The response is (757b).

(757) a. bɛ́ pà bē ē
2SgP come.Pfv already Pos
'You-Sg have come already!'

b. yᵐ̀ií [ḿ pɛ̀= ɛ̄] [[ŋ̄ kànàŋ-kà-m̄] pɛ̀= ɛ̄]
yes [1Sg come.Pfv Pos] [[1Sg goodness-Sg-Sg] come.Pfv Pos]
'Yes, I have come. My wellbeing has come.'

19.6.4 Greetings on major rituals or holy days

On major holy days, a New Years' wish is given.

(758) syó-ŋ̄-wàlɔ̄ɔ̄ n̄ nû yɛ́ɛ́-tòrō-nā [tí kīlānī]
God Sbjn give.Imprt next.year-Sg [1Pl Dat]
'May God give us next year!'

Amen!

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Indices

1. morphemes

(note: many M-toned NC suffixes have tonal variants not shown here)

Ø (zero)
- -Ø- singular NC suffix in Ø/E, Ø/I, Ø/ɲɛ̄, Ø/sɛ̄, and Ø/rɛ̄ genders, §4.1.2

a
- á a) 3NHSg pronominal, §4.3.1
  b) 'that …' before quoted matter, §17.1.1, §17.2
- á- initial in compounds denoting times of day or seasons, §5.1.2.1.1

aa
- áà 3NHSg independent pronoun, §4.3.1
- áá 3NHSg logophoric subject, §18.3

á lè 'want (to VP)', §17.6.3, variant yá lè

àlí tɛ̀ 'even if', §16.2.1

ásɛ̄ 3HSg independent pronoun, §4.3

á-sɔ̀ rɔ̄ 3NHSg dative, §4.3.5, cf. lɔ̄

ba
- bà past-time marker, §10.7, cf. tɔ̀ ~ tɔ̄
  past perfect, §10.7.2
  bà tɔ̀ (~ tɔ̄) past time, §10.7.3, variant mà tɔ̀ ~ tɔ̄ \)
- -bā- singular NC suffix (-ATR), §4.1.2.1.3, §4.1.2.4.3, §4.1.2.5.2
  plural NC suffix (~ -bɛ̄-) in gentilic nominals, §4.1.2.7.2
- bā long subjunctive, §17.1.3.2, post-subject, variant mā
  'before …' clauses, §17.7.1.2
  'for a while' (adjunct, in imperatives), §19.4.5

bàbàá '(not) yet', §8.4.4.1.5

-bàn-nè-nā 'mate' in compounds ('workmate', etc.), §5.1.2.1.9
- bē 'already', §8.4.4.1.2 (postverbal)
- -bē- singular NC suffix (+ATR, unrounded)
  in bē/sɛ̄ gender, §4.1.2.3.1
  in bē/E gender (becomes -bé- after H-tone), §4.1.2.1.3
  in a tree name, §4.1.2.4.3
  singular suffix in lí-bé 'mother' and sí-bé 'father', §4.1.2.3.1
  plural NC suffix in líí-bē-nī 'people', §4.1.2.7.3

bɛ
- bɛ́ 2Sg subject proclitic (perfective), §4.3.1
  initial b often elided in fɛ́= =ɛ́ 'that you' and tɛ̀ =ɛ́ 'if you'
  2Sg preverbal object proclitic (imperfective), §4.3.1
  2Sg possessor, §4.3.1
- bɛ̀ 2Sg subject proclitic (imperfective), §4.3.1

2Sg postverbal object, §4.3.1

bɛ̄ 2Sg subject proclitic (imperative), §4.3.1
initial b often elided in fɛ̄= =ɛ̄ with fá ‘that’

-bɛ̄- plural gentilic suffix in pálá-bɛ̄-nī ‘Paleni people’ (cf. -bā-), §4.1.2.7.2

bɛɛ

béɛ̀ 2Sg independent pronoun

bɛ̄ɛ̄-nī ‘X time(s)’, §6.4.3.1

-bō- singular NC suffix (+ATR, rounded)

bɔ̀ negative, §10.6.1.1
replaced by wɔ̀ before relative nā, §10.6.1.1
double-negative for ‘nothing but, exclusively’, §8.4.1.2

ca-

cá-nā ‘woman’ (as noun), cf. cîì, cííyà

cà-nā ‘woman’ (possessum or human compound final)
‘female’ (modifying adjective for animals), §4.5.1

cîì ‘woman’ before modifier or compound final, §4.1.3, cf. cá-nā

cííyà ‘woman’ as free postverbal noun, §4.1.3, cf. cá-nā

cûⁿ ‘a little’ or ‘gently, slowly’, §8.4.2.5

dɛ̄ʔ clause-final emphatic particle, §19.5.1

E symbol for E-ablaut equivalent to plural NC suffix in nouns, §4.1.2.1

e

ē [+ATR] variant of positive (y)ɛ̄, §10.6.2.1

-ē- [+ATR] variant of E-ablaut plural NC suffix, §4.1.2.1

ɛ

è 3HSg proclitic pronominal, §4.3.1

ɛ̄ positive morpheme, variant of (y)ɛ̄, §10.6.2.1
as copula ‘be’ or identificational ‘it is’, variant of (y)ɛ̄, §11.2.1-3

-ɛ̄- E-ablauted plural NC suffix, §4.1.2.1, [+ATR] variant -ē-
possible contraction of -yɛ̄-

éɛ̀ 3HSg logophoric subject, §18.3

è-sā-nā ‘this/that’ (HSg demonstrative), §4.4.2.1

è-sɔ̀ rɔ̄ 3HSg dative, §4.3.5, cf. lɔ̄

fá (~ fɔ́) complementizer, §17.1.4
sequential clause, §17.5
subjunctive clause, §17.1.3, §17.6
object focalization, §13.1.2

fáá relative, §13.1.2 head (singular), §14.1.1, cf. plural tɔ́ɔ́ ~ téé

fá-nā ‘person’, §4.1.2.7.3

fáá-nā ‘male (animal)’, §4.5.2, cf. pí(-)yé-nā ‘man’

fé=, fɛ̄= contracted forms of complementizer fá

féré/fɛ̄ré ‘exit (v), go out’
in the sense ‘resemble(s)’, §11.2.5.1

fíí/fīyé ‘find, encounter’
‘bring it about that …’, §17.3.2.3

fìⁿ/fìyⁿá ‘arrive’
‘be able (to VP)’, §15.2.8

‘become equal’, §12.2.2
fí-yé-nā ‘thing’, plural fíí-ní-nī, §4.1.3, §4.1.2.8.3
fɔ́ a) ‘all the way to, until’, §8.2.5.4.2, §8.4.4.1.7
b) variant of fá complementizer)
fúrú(→) ‘for a long time, constantly’, §8.4.2.3
-gbɔ́- apparent singular NC suffix in one tree name, §4.1.2.4.3
I symbol for I-ablaut, equivalent to plural NC suffix in nouns, §4.1.2.1.5-8
i
í 3Pl proclitic pronominal, §4.3.1
ī in …n ī, variant of positive (y)ɛ̄, §10.6.2.2
-ī- I-ablaut as plural NC suffix, variant of E-ablaut
ii
îi 3Pl independent pronoun, §4.3.1
íí 3Pl logophoric subject, §18.3
í-sɔ̀ rɔ̄ 3Pl dative, §4.3.5, cf. lɔ̄
ka
-kà- common inanimate singular NC suffix in kà/kì gender, §4.1.2.1.6
singular NC suffix in nonhuman adjectives and participles, §4.5.1-3
-kā- singular NC suffix in kā/yɛ̄ gender, §4.1.2.5.1
singular NC suffix in yɛ̄-kā-nā ‘fire’ gender, §4.1.2.1.4
singular NC suffix in kú-ká-nā ‘bone’, §4.1.2.4.3
ká before color/size adjectives, §4.1.3, (181), (382), (205a), (525a)
ká-sèɛ̄-nā ‘old person’, §4.1.2.8.4
kà-nā possessum from ká ‘thing’, §6.2.4
kaa
kàā(-nā) ‘thing (abstract), situation’, plural k-ɛ̀ɛ̄-, cf. ká ‘thing’
default NHSg possessum, §6.2.3-4
linker between possessor and NHSg possessum, §6.2.4, §6.2.6
á kàā ‘the thing (abstract)’, §6.5.4
kàà ‘resemble’, §11.2.5.1
kááfáà ‘one’, §4.6.1.2
kā-fá-nā ‘(be) one, (be) the same’, (213)
in symmetrical comparatives, §12.2.1
‘together’, §18.4.2
-kɛ̄- singular NC suffix in [+ATR] kē/yē gender, §4.1.2.5.1
related to -kō- by rounding/backness assimilation, cf. also [-ATR] -kā-
k-ɛ̀ plural of kà(-nā)
k-ɛ̀ɛ̄- default NHPl possessum, §6.2.3-4, plural of kàā-
-kì- a) common inanimate plural NC suffix in kà/kì gender, §4.1.2.1.6-8
b) plural NC suffix in nonhuman adjectives and participles, §4.5.1-3
kí-lāā ‘go.Imprt’, §10.2.2.1; cf. láà, tá
kīlānī a) dative postposition with ditransitives like ‘give’, §8.1.1.1
b) in ‘have’ construction, §11.2.4.1.1
c) extension of possessor, §6.2.6
d) ‘want’, §11.2.6.2.1
ko

kó postposition ‘atop’, §8.2.5.1.2
-kō- singular NC suffix in kō/yē gender, §4.1.2.5.1
related to -kē- by rounding/backness assimilation, cf. [-ATR] -kā-
minor singular NC suffix in kō/sɛ̄ gender (‘mouse’), §4.1.2.3.3
kón-nā a) ‘So-and-so’, §4.3.6
b) as demonstrative, §4.4.2.2
kɔ́ ‘(do) again’, §19.4.1
kɔ̀ɔ̀ variant of kɔ̀rɔ̀
kɔ̀ɔ̀ⁿ reflexive (preverbal), §18.1.1, used by some speakers, cf. kɔ̀rɔ̀
kɔ̀ní a) topic, §19.1.1.2
b) ‘be present’ (with spatial adverb), §11.2.3.2
kɔ̀rɔ̀ reflexive (postverbal), §18.1.1, variant kɔ̀ɔ̀
for some speakers, also preverbal
kpɛ̀ ‘end up (VPing)’, §15.2.9
kpírí postposition ‘beside, next to’, §8.2.4.1
kúmáreflexive possessor, §18.1.3
kúⁿ/kpāⁿ ‘furnish’, §11.1.2.3.1
kú-nā ‘head’
as compound initial (kú-, kó-, kòó-), §5.1.2.1.2
kúnú postposition ‘at the place of, chez’, §8.2.3.3
kúsúnū postposition ‘over, above, on top of’, §8.2.5.2.1
lā a) ‘there.Def’, short (enclitic) variant of lā-fā-nā, §4.4.3, §15.1.1.1
kɔ̀ní-lā, §11.2.3.2
b) progressive (post-subject particle), §10.5.2.1, variant tā
laa
-làā- deverbal place-of-action nominals, §4.2.1.3
láá ‘go.Pfv’, §10.2.2.1, cf. tā, kí-lāā
kānā X láá ‘show’, §11.1.2.3.2, §15.1.2.5
lāá ‘go.Ipfv’, variant of lāká, §10.2.2.1
láà ‘go.Imprt’, optional form after long subjunctive bā ~ mā, §10.2.2.1
lā-fā-nā ‘there.Def’, §4.4.3
lāká ~ lāá ‘go.Ipfv’, §10.2.2.1, cf. tā
le
lè postposition ‘on (legs)’ or ‘following, (going) after’, §8.2.5.3.3
pseudo-postposition in phrasal verbs, §15.1.2.6
lé adverb ‘totally’, §8.4.4.1.3
lé/lɛ̄ ‘refuse, say no’, §15.2.2
as negative auxiliary, §10.6.1.2
in negative focalized clause, §13.1.7
lèènī ‘over there’, §4.4.3
lɛ̀ adverb ‘just’, §8.4.4.1.3
lí-bé ‘mother’, §4.1.2.3.1
líí ‘person’ (compound initial or before a modifier), (205b)
líí-bē-nī ‘people’, §4.1.2.7.3
líí-sèenā ‘old person’, §4.1.2.8.4
líí-fá-nā-nā ‘(person) alone’, §19.3.3

lɔ
- lɔ̄ — dative postposition with ‘say’, §8.1.1.2
  - becomes tɔ̄ after a nasal
  - rɔ̄ in irregular pronominal datives, §8.1.1.2
- pseudo-postposition in phrasal verbs, §15.1.2.3
  - -lɔ́- in nominalizations of phrasal verbs, §3.6.2.10
- morpheme in counterfactuals, §16.4
- lɔ́ — presentative, §10.5.4.2

lɔ́ɔ̀ — past time, §10.7.7

-m̀ — variant of mì (1Sg postverbal object)

ma
- -mā- — singular NC suffix in mā/sɛ̄ gender, §4.1.2.3.2
- singular NC in two flora terms of mā/rɛ̄ gender, §4.1.2.4.2
- mā — long subjunctive, §17.1.3.2, post-subject, variant bā
  - ‘before …’ clauses, §17.7.1.2
- ‘like (similar to)’, §8.3.1.3
- mà — ‘that …’ complementizer, §17.1.2, §17.3
- mà tɔ̀ (~ tɔ̄) — past time, §10.7.3, variant bà tɔ̀ (~ tɔ̄)
- má/máárá[n] — ‘build’

mi
- mì — 1Sg postverbal object pronominal, §4.3.1
- -mī- — plural NC suffix
  - with liquids, §4.1.2.6.2
  - with human nouns, §4.1.2.6.1

mî[n] — 1Sg independent pronoun (can occur in any function), §4.3.1

mini
- mīnī — ‘today’, §8.4.4.1.1
- míní — postposition ‘in, at, to’, §8.2.3.2
- pseudo-postposition in phrasal verbs, §15.1.2.4
  - míŋ ɲɛ̄ with positive (y)ɛ̄

mɔ̀ — 2Pl subject pronominal (imperfective), §4.3.1

mɔ́à — 2Pl independent pronoun, §4.3.1

2Pl postverbal object pronoun, §4.3.1

múúná — ‘also’, §19.3.1.1, cf. tóró

n
- -ñ — reduced from final suffx -nā
- -ń- — syncopated from -ní- in nominalized phrasal verbs
- ń, ñ, ǹ — surface form of any ŋ morpheme before an alveolar
- n tɔ̄ — past identificational predicate, §10.7.4

na
- ná — definite singular, §4.4.1, §6.5.1
- -nā — singular final suffix on nouns, §4.1.1.2
  - combines with positive (y)ɛ̄ as -n ī, §4.1.1.2.1
- -nā- — singular NC suffix for nā/ɲɛ̄ gender, §4.1.2.2.1
  - raised to -ná- after H-tone by Rightward H-Spreading
  - followed by singular final suffix -nā (-nā-nā, -ná-nā)

in ‘X-hood’ nominals and deadjectival abstractives, §4.2.2.1-2
nā final morpheme in relative clause, §14.1.1
in backgrounded echo clause, §14.4
nā nasalized variant of lā ‘there.Def’ after a nasal consonant
nā presentative, §10.5.4.1
nà-nā NHSg demonstrative, §4.4.2.2
naa
náá, -nāá nasalized variants of láá ‘go.Pfv’ and lā(k)á ‘go.Ipfv’
-nàā- nasalized variant of place-of-action nominalizer -làā-
nàñnà-nā ‘now; nowadays’, §8.4.4.1.1
nà-ŋ̄ wā-nā NHSg demonstrative, §4.4.2.2
násí/nāsá ‘fear (v)’
intransitive plus ‘in front of X’, §11.2.6.3
-nè- postnasal variant of human singular NC suffix -nnè-, §4.1.2.3.6
in deverbal agentives, §4.2.1.2
in gentilic nominals, §4.2.3
nàŋkàá-nnè-nā ‘thief’, §4.1.2.2.3
ni
ní, -ní ‘down’, part of several phrasal verbs, §15.1.2.7
-ń- (assimilating) in nominalizations of phrasal verbs, §3.6.2.10
-nī plural final suffix on nouns, §4.1.1.2
ní definite plural, §4.4.1, §6.5.1
nī clause-final polar interrogative marker, §13.2.1
in ‘it’s X’, (489a)
-n ī singular final suffix -nā plus variant of positive (y)ɛ̄, §4.1.1.2.1
nì/nìyⁿá ‘drink’ (Imprt nì) or ‘hear’ (Imprt nî)
nì-ɲ̄ ɲīn-sī-nī NHPl demonstrative, §4.4.2.2
-nnè- HSg NC suffix, after monosyllabic stem
nɔ́ɔ̀
n nɔ́ɔ̀ subject focus (ŋ) plus past imperfective, §10.7.7
ǹtàā! ‘wait!’, §17.4.3
ǹtɛ̀→ ‘or’, §7.2.1
nu
nù/nùwⁿɔ́ ‘give’, §11.1.2.3.1
with yīnā ‘here’ or lā ‘there.Def’, §15.1.1.1.2
nū postposition with ‘reply (to sb)’, §8.3.1.4
núnnɔ̄ postposition ‘at the mouth/border/verge of’, §8.2.4.4
ɲ
ɲ… as word- or morpheme-initial after nasal, nasalized from y or yⁿ
-ɲ̄ variant of final plural suffix -nī, e.g. combines with positive yɛ̄ as -ɲ̄ ɲɛ̄
-ń̄ (see ní ‘down’)
ń̄, ɲ̄, ǹ̄ surface form of any atonal ŋ morpheme before an alveopalatal
ɲá nasalized form of 3NHSg (y)á
ɲá lè nasalized form of (y)á lè ‘want’
ɲɛ
-ɲɛ̄- plural NC suffix for nā/ɲɛ̄ and Ø/ɲɛ̄ genders, §4.1.2.2.1

raised to -ɲé- after H-tone by Rightward H-Spreading
followed by plural final suffix -nī (-ɲē-nī, -ɲé-nī)
tends to denasalize as -yē-

ɲē — nasalized form of positive (y)ē
ɲè — nasalized form of 3HSg (y)è

ɲí — nasalized form of 3Pl yí

ɲú — ‘ever’ (experiential perfect), §8.4.4.1.2

ŋ — (assimilates in position to following consonants)
ŋ — 1Sg proclitic, §4.3.1
ŋ́ — 1Sg subject proclitic
ŋ̄ — 1Sg possessor proclitic
ŋ̀ — 1Sg preverbal object proclitic
ŋ — short subjunctive marker after 3rd-person subject, §17.1.3
ŋ — irrealis
before negative bɔ̀, §11.2.1.2, §17.3.1.1
before tɔ̄ ‘was/were’, §10.7.4
ŋ — subject focus, §13.1.1, tone spreads from the left
ŋu… — word-initial after nasal, nasalized from wu…

ŋ̀kàà — ‘but’, §19.2.1

ɔ — (variants wɔ́, wɔ̄)
ɔ́ — 2Pl subject pronominal (perfective), §4.3.1
2Pl preverbal object pronominal, §4.3.1
2Pl possessor pronominal, §4.3.1
ɔ̄ — 2Pl subject pronominal (imperative), §4.3.1

pa
pà/pă — ‘come’
imperative tá pā
multiverb constructions, §17.5.3.2
pá — future, §10.5.3.2

páásā-nā — ‘words, talk (n)’
‘about, concerning’ and ‘for, in order to’, §8.3.1.1-2

pɛ̄lɛ̄-nā — postposition ‘around’, §8.2.4.2

písàá-nā — ‘child (non-kinship)’, cf. pó-nā
plural pís-é-nī
písàá-mā, (100b), (307b)

pise-
pís-é-nī — ‘children, young people’, plural of písàá-nā
-pìs-ē-nī — plural of -pò-nā diminutive, §5.1.2.3

píyé-nā — ‘man’, §4.1.3
nāŋ-kpíyé-nā ‘father-in-law’, §5.1.2.4
for ‘male’ (animals) see fáá-nā

po-
pó-nā — ‘child (offspring)’, cf. písàá-nā ‘child (non-kinship)’
-pò-nā — diminutive compounds
plural -pì-sē-nī

-rē- — [+ATR] variant of plural NC suffix -rɛ̄-

-rɛ̄- common plural NC suffix, especially in sā/rɛ̄ gender, §4.1.2.4
rɔ̄ variant of dative lɔ̄ after 3rd person pronominals, §4.3.5, §8.1.1.2
-sā- a) singular NC suffix in sā/E, sā/kì, sā/mī, and sā/rɛ̄ genders, §4.1.2
è-sā-nā ‘this/that (HSg)’, §4.4.2.1
sáw! ‘a lot, greatly’, §8.4.2.1
-sɛ̄- *(see -sɛ̄- NC suffix)*
-sèé- plural NC suffix with a few kin terms, §4.1.1.2.2, §3.6.2.3
sēnāntɔ́ postposition ‘behind, in back of’, §8.2.5.3.2
-sɛ̄- common plural NC suffix, §4.1.2.3
[+ATR] variant is -sē-
sɛɛ
-sèɛ̄- common human plural NC suffix human nnè/sèɛ̄ gender
-sɛ̄rɛ̄ as free postverbal noun
sèɛ̄- default human Pl possessum, §6.2.3
-sɛ̄rɛ̄ variant as free postverbal noun of plural NC -sèɛ̄-, §4.1.2.3.6
si
sí postposition ‘on’, §8.2.5.1.1
part of progressive construction, §10.5.2.2
partitive, (562g)
pseudo-postposition in phrasal verbs, §15.1.2.1
H-toned -sí- in nominalizations, §3.6.2.10
-sī archaic causative suffix, §9.2.1
si-be
sí-bé ‘father’, §4.1.2.3.1
á sì-bé ‘the guy’, §6.5.4
-sì-bē-nā ‘owner (of X)’ compound, §5.1.2.1.7
sì-í 3Pl pronominal after tɛ̀ (or variant) ‘and/with’, (194a), (316c)
sìkɛ̄ ‘thus, like this/that’, §4.4.3 (see also wɛ̄-sìkɛ̄)
sì-yá 3NHSg pronominal after tɛ̀ (or variant) ‘and/with’, (194a), (316c)
sìyà-nī/sìyá-nī ‘agree’
in symmetrical comparatives, §12.2.1
-sɔ̀ augment on 3rd-person pronominals before dative rɔ̄, (194b)
forms are 3HSg è-sɔ̀ rɔ̄, 3NHSg á-sɔ̀ rɔ̄, 3pl í-sɔ̀ rɔ̄
perhaps related distantly to sibilants in tà-ásɛ̄, sì-yá, sì-í
súnúú postposition ‘among’ or ‘between’, §8.2.5.4.1
sùŋkú^{n} ‘should/must VP', §17.4.1
sùw^{n}ɔ̀/sùw^{n}ɔ́ ‘know’, Pfv variant sìy^{n}ɔ̀
with complement clause, §17.3.1.1
ta
tà/tàárá ‘pick up, take’ (Imprt tâ)
in sense ‘begin, take up (an activity)’, §8.2.5.4.3, cf. tīkī X nī
tā ‘go.Pfv’ in multi-verb constructions, §10.2.2.1, cf. láá
followed by sequential fá clause with Pfv verb, §17.5.3.2
progressive (post-subject particle), §10.5.2.1, variant lā
tá ‘go.Imprt’ in multi-verb combinations, §10.2.2.1, §10.8.1.3, cf. kí-lāā
followed by imperative VP or by a subjunctive fá clause

tá pā ‘come!’
tā ‘go.Ipfv’ in multi-verb constructions, §10.2.2.1, cf. lāká
followed by imperfective VP
tà ‘with/and’, variant of tɛ̀, §8.1.2
‘if/when …’, variant of tɛ̀ §16.1.1, §17.7.1.1.1
tàà past imperfective, §10.7.5, variant tɔ̀ɔ̄
táákāā postposition ‘under’, §8.2.5.2.2
tà-ásɛ̄ 3HSg pronoun after tɛ̀ (or variant) ‘and/with’, (194a), (316c)
tà-mɔ́ 2Pl pronoun, after tɛ̀ ‘with/and’, (316a)
tà^{n} with/and’, variant of tɛ̀, §8.1.2
tèn-sɛ̄ variant of tòn-sɛ̄ ‘some (others)’, §6.3.3.2
tɛ̀ a) ‘with/and’ (variants tà, tà^{n}), follows positive (y)ɛ̄
NP conjunction, §7.1.1
instrumental-comitative preposition, §8.1.2
b) ‘if/when …’, §16.1.1, §17.7.1.1.1
tɛ̀-bɛ́ 2Sg pronoun, after tɛ̀ ‘with/and’, (316a)
tɛ́ɛ́ relative head (plural), §14.1.1, variant tɔ́ɔ́, cf. singular fáá
ti
tí 1Pl subject pronominal (perfective), §4.3.1
1Pl possessor pronominal, §4.3.1
1Pl preverbal object pronominal, §4.3.1
tī 1Pl subject pronominal (hortative), §4.3.1
tì 1Pl subject pronominal (imperfective), §4.3.1
tīkī X nī ‘put (down)’
in sense ‘complete (an activity)’, §8.2.5.4.3, cf. tà ‘take, pick up’
tì-mí 1Sg pronoun after tɛ̀ ‘with/and’, (316a)
tíntíyɛ́^{n} ‘in the old days’, §8.4.4.1.1
tíy^{n}ɔ̄ (variant of túw^{n}ɔ̄)
tō ‘all, every, each’, §6.6.1-2
tó^{n} reciprocal, §18.4.1
tòn-sɛ̄ ‘some (others)’, §6.3.3.2, dialectally tèn-sɛ̄
tòō ‘other’, §6.3.3.1
toro
tórō ‘another one’, §4.5.4
tòrō ‘a certain (one)’, §4.5.4, §4.6.1.2, §6.3.3.2
tóró ‘also’, §19.3.1.1, cf. múúná
tɔ
tɔ́ variant of dative postposition lɔ̄ after a nasal, §8.1.1.2
tɔ̀, tɔ̄ ‘be (sw)’, especially past-time ‘was/were (sw)’, §10.7.3
past-time marker, §10.7.3-6, cf. bà
bà tɔ̀ (~ tɔ̄), mà tɔ̀ (~ tɔ̄) ‘was/were, existed’, §10.7.3
n tɔ̄ past identificational predicate, §10.7.4
tɔɔ
tɔ́ɔ́ relative head (plural), §14.1.1, variant tɛ́ɛ́, cf. singular fáá
tɔ̀ɔ̄ past imperfective, §10.7.5, variant tàà, cf. nɔ́ɔ̀
tú postposition ‘in, inside’ or ‘below’, §8.2.3.1

pseudo-postposition in phrasal verbs, §15.1.2.2

túwⁿɔ̄ 1Pl independent pronoun, §4.3.1
1Pl postverbal object pronoun, §4.3.1

wààmà/wààmá ‘become (sth), turn into (sth)’, §11.2.5.2, §9.3.2

wàkà/wàká ‘remain (sw)’, §15.1.1.1.1

wā-nā ‘this/that’ (NHSg demonstrative), §4.4.2.1

wɛɛ
- wéɛ̀ ‘future’ (post-subject), §10.5.3.1
- wɛ̀ɛ̀ ‘so …’ or ‘that’s how …’ (manner focu), §13.1.6
- wɛ̄ = ɛ̄ ‘it’s this/that (nonhuman)’, §4.4.2.1, cf. wā-nā, (y)ɛ̄
- wɛ̀ɛ̄- default HSg possessum, §6.2.3

wɛ́rɛ́ ‘belong to’, §11.2.4.2

wɛ̄sɛ̄kɛ̄ (variant of wɛ̄-sìkɛ̄)

wɛ̄-sìkɛ̄ ‘said’ (preceding quoted matter), §17.2.1, synonym yàmá, cf. sìkɛ̄

wò(→) in open-ended lists, §7.1.3
X wò X ‘every X’, §7.1.4

wɔ
- wɔ́, wɔ̄ variants of ɔ́, ɔ̄ (2Pl pronominals)
- wɔ̀ form of negative bɔ̀ before relative nā, §10.6.1.1

wɔ́mbɔ̀ ‘otherwise’, §7.2.2

wúⁿ ‘(not) any longer’, §19.4.2

wūn-nā-nā ‘guts, viscera’ (emotions), §8.2.3.4
- X wùnnà míní postposition ‘during X’ or ‘in the guts (=heart) of X’, §8.2.3.4

wùsó ‘hit.Ipfv’ §10.2.2.3, cf. Pfv yó(ó)

yá(→) clause-final emphatic, §19.5.2

yáá júkù-yáá-nā-nā ‘enmity’, §4.2.2.1

yá lɛ̀ ‘want (to VP)’, §17.6.3, variant á lɛ̀

yama
- yàmá Ipfv stem of yàⁿ/yàmá ‘do, make’
- yàmá ‘said’, before quoted matter, synonym wɛ̄-sìkɛ̄

yámpá-ná-nā ‘even X’, §19.3.2
reflexive possessor, §18.1.3

yàⁿ/yàmá ‘do, make’
in biclausal causative construction, §17.5.2.1, §17.6.6

yàní ‘by, no later than (time)’, §8.4.4.1.6, §17.7.1.2

(y)ē [+ATR] variant of positive (y)ɛ̄

yéékɛ́ ‘only, alone’, §19.3.3.2

yɛ
- (y)ɛ̄ positive morpheme in indicative clauses, §10.6.2, §11.3.1
  - becomes ŋɛ̄ after nasal
  - in stative predicates, §11.13.1
  - as copula or ‘it is’, §11.2.1-3
- yɛ̀ 3HSg pronominal, especially as object, §4.3.2, cf. ɛ̀
- -yɛ̄- plural NC suffix (followed by final plural suffix -nī)
  - often functions as a variant of -ŋɛ̄- plural NC suffix
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-yɛ̄ plural suffix for some kin terms, §4.1.2.3.1
possible source of E-ablaut plurals with -ɛ̄- or -ē-
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-yē- a) [+ATR] variant of plural -yɛ̄- NC suffix
b) possible singular NC suffix in fǐ(-)yé-nā ‘thing’, §4.1.2.7.1
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yí 3Pl pronominal proclitic, especially postverbal object, §4.3.1-2; cf. í
yí bɔ̀ extension of negative bɔ̀ after ‘see’, §10.6.1.1
yīnā short form of yīŋ-fā-nā ‘here’, §4.4.3, §11.2.3.3, §15.1.1.1
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yó b) ‘hit.Pfv’ and ‘hit.Imprt’, §10.2.2.3, cf. Ipfv wùsó
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Abbreviations and symbols

1Sg etc.	person (1,2,3) and number (Sg,Pl)
Adj	adjective
Adv	adverb(ial)
ATR	advanced tongue root
C	consonant (in CvCv, etc.)
Comp	complementizer (fá ~ fɔ́)
cpd	compound
Dat	dative
Def	definite
Dem	demonstrative
Det	determiner
Emph	emphatic
Foc	focus
Fr	French
Fut	future
H	a) high tone
	b) human (usually in HSg)
Hort	hortative
Imprt	imperative
Inst	instrumental
Ipfv	imperfective
Irr	irrealis
L	low tone
Loc	locative
Logo	logophoric
M	mid tone
N	noun
NC	noun class
Neg	negative
NH	nonhuman (often in NHSg)
NP	nominal phrase
Num	numeral
O	object (in “SVO”)
Obj	object
Ord	ordinal
Pfv	perfective stem of verbs
Pl	plural
Pos	positive (§10.6.2)
Poss	possessor, possessive
PP	adpositional phrase
Ppl	participle

Prog	progressive
Proh	prohibitive
Prsntv	presentative
psP	pseudo-postposition (in phrasal verb, §15.1.2)
Q	question
Quot	quotative
Recip	reciprocal
Refl	reflexive
Rel	relative-clause marker
S	subject (in “SVO”)
sb	somebody
Sbjn	subjunctive
SFoc	subject focus
Sg	singular
sth	something
sw	somewhere
TAM	tense, aspect, mood
Top	topic
V	verb (in “SVO”)
v	vowel (in CvCv, etc.)
VblN	verbal noun
VP	verb phrase

Symbols and diacritics

regular symbols

=	clitic boundary or phonological liaison
&	and
#	ungrammatical
*	reconstructed

tone diacritics

v́	high tone
v̀	low tone
v̄	mid tone
v̌	rising tone (<LH>)
v̂	falling tone (<HL>)
ṽ	falling tone (<ML>)
v̋	rising tone (<MH>)
v̰	bell-shaped (rising-falling) tone (<LHL>)

intonational markings

→	prolongation
↗	terminal pitch rise or absence of pitch decline
↗↘	terminal rise then fall to mid pitch
,	pause or gentle prosodic boundary
—	abrupt interruption

Appendix 1: User's guide to the Paleni lexical spreadsheet

The lexicon is in the form of spreadsheets. It was initially done in xlsx format divided into multiple worksheets: nouns, adjectives, numerals, intransitive verbs, transitive verbs, and places. The organization into data and coding columns of each worksheet is customized for the relevant stem-class. Intransitive and transitive verbs are separated so that combinations of transitives with third-person object enclitics, and those of intransitive perfectives with polarity morphemes, can be fully set out. In each worksheet, some columns include data and others include coded indicators for various phonological, morphological, and semantic categories to facilitate research.

Each xlsx worksheet corresponds to a separate csv spreadsheet for permanent archiving.

Nouns worksheet

In the nouns worksheet, the column headings are these: singular, plural, possessed sg, English, français, comment, family, species, category, sorter, cpd, type, rdp, NCsg, NCpl, Pl yɛ̄, vocal, v/vv, tones, and tone alt. Of course the columns can be reordered, and sorting can be done based on any of the columns.

Singular and plural have full citation forms, including noun-class (NC) suffixes and final suffixes (usually -nā singular and -nī plural). Possessed singular is added for some nouns, especially those with apparent H-toned roots, since some nouns but not others undergo Initial Tone-Dropping. English and francais are translations, followed in some cases by comments. Family and species are added for flora and fauna.

Category groups nouns by rough semantic class: abstract, activity, blade, body, body emission, body organ, celestial, construction, container, cooking, emotion, ethnic, fauna (with several subcategories such as fauna-arthropod), fire, flora, flora-cultivated, food, garment, implement, kin, liquid, medical, metal, money, music, part, part animal, part plant, person, place, possession, quantity, sense, space, speech, substance, thing, time, topography, vehicle, weapon, weather.

The sorter was made by stripping the suffixes from the singular, or from the plural in the case of pluralia tantum. The only purpose of the sorter is to alphabetize the Paleni forms including plurals as well as singulars.

The remaining columns use codes to group nouns by phonological and morphological characteristics. The cpd column has "cpd" for regular compounds, "VblN" for simple verbal nouns, and "n+adj" for a few noun-adjective collocations. The "type" column includes subtypes of compound, including "poss" (possessive type) and "dim" (diminutive). The "rdp" column marks nouns that have a reduplicative appearance.

NCsg and NCpl columns show the respective noun-class suffixes. In the formulae, "E" means E-ablauted plural, "I" means I-ablauted plural, E in "sE" etc. means e/ɛ alternation, and V in "bV" etc. means a/e/o alternation due to vowel harmony. Suffixes with

invariant vocalism have their normal transcription. For example, ɲɛ is invariant while ɲE is subject to harmony. A handful of nouns have final plural suffix -yɛ̄ instead of the usual -nī, and this is flagged in the "Pl yɛ̄" column.

The "vocal" column flags idiosyncratic vocalic alternations in roots. In the v/vv column, "v/vv" indicates CvCv (singular) versus CvvCv (plural) in roots; a handful of cases of vv/v with the opposite length alternation are also indicated. The "tones" column encodes the tones of the singular root (or the plural if there is no singular) using . as syllable divider, thus HL is a falling tone on a single syllable while H.L is bisyllabic. Importantly, H% indicates that an apparent H-toned syllable at the end of the root is treated as though HL-toned, as shown by the failure of a following M-toned NC suffix to raise to H-toned, and usually also by the occurrence of Initial Tone-Dropping in the possessed form. The "tone alt" column flags unexpected tonal shifts from singular to plural, either "LM/L" for leveling of a final LM-toned syllable before a plural NC suffix, or "M/H" for M-toned singular roots denoting fauna species that undergo Root-Tone Raising in the plural.

If there is a separate flora, fauna, or flora-fauna sheet, it contains items from the main nouns worksheet of these semantic categories.

Adjectives worksheet

"Singular" and "plural" columns present modifying adjectives including NC and final suffixes. The "is not ADJ" presents the stative predicate, using negative bɔ̀ to avoid phonological complexities with positive (y)ɛ̄. This predicative form is isolated in the "stative pred" column. Some adjectives of color and size combine with the default nonhuman nominal ká, and these combinations are presented in the "with ká" column. English and français gloss columns are following by comments. The "category" column is based on semantic class (clean, color, dimension, ease, full, moist, other, quality, quantity, sex, sharp, size, space, speed, state, state food, taste, temperature, texture, time, weight. The remaining columns are "tones" (syllable by syllable of the modifying adjective), "with psP" (adjectives that include a pseudo-participle), and "rdp" (reduplicative appearance). The "sorter" column can be used for alphabetical ordering including items that do not include modifying adjectives.

Numerals worksheet

This worksheet is simple and straighforward. The "gloss" column uses numerals. Comments describe composition.

Places worksheet

This worksheet includes Paleni names for nearby villages (mostly Wara), as well as gentilics (cf. New Yorker, Parisian) related to these villages.

Verbs worksheets

These worksheets give the Pfv and Ipfv stems of regular verbs, and the single form for stative verbs (in the "Pfv" column). For some verbs, the Imprt is illustrated with plural-addressee ɔ̄, which makes tones of the verb easier to hear. The Imprt stem is shown especially for verbs with L-toned Pfv stems, since such verbs divide into a subtype with HL-toned Imprt and another with L-toned Imprt (homophonous to the Pfv). Other verbs have predictable Imprt stems (identical to the Pfv). For many but not all verbs, the verbal noun (VblN) is also shown. These data are followed by "English" and "français" translations and a "comments" column.

The "category" column distinguishes "activity", "body", "consume", "cook", "cover", "create", "emotion", "farm", "give", "impact", "medical", "mental", "move", "perception", "quality", "quantity", "space", "speech", "stance", and "time".

Other columns shared by the two verb spreadsheets are voc, +Cv, syll, Pfv tone, and Ipfv tone. The "voc" column flags final vowel mutations from Pfv to Ipfv (i/a, u/a, and for [+ATR] verbs u/o and i/e), as well as other [+ATR] verbs with stable e or o including in the Ipfv. The "+Cv" column indicates the added syllable in the Ipfv (na, ra, sa, etc.) if there is one. The "Pfv tone" and "Ipfv tone" columns indicate the tone melody of the Pfv and Ipfv stems, respectively. In the "Pfv tone" column, single symbols like h and l are understood to be spread over the entire stem.

The intransitive and transitive spreadsheets differ in which combinations are shown involving the Pfv stem. Intransitive Pfv stems are usually followed, in main clauses, by positive (y)ɛ̄ or negative bɔ̀. These combinations are phonologically informative and are spelled out. Transitive Pfv stems are followed by objects. The combinations with 3HSg, 3NHSg, and 3Pl pronominal object are phonologically informative and are spelled out. The Ipfv stems of both intransitive and transitive verbs are usually followed by positive (y)ɛ̄ or negative bɔ̀, and these combinations are spelled out.

Appendix 2: Audio files

There are two Paleni audio corpora, each consisting of ethnohistorical texts and tales, from 2024 and 2026. The recordings whose titles are marked with * have been transcribed and translated and will be presented in the companion texts volume. All of the recordings will be deposited at Deep Blue Data (University of Michigan Libraries).

The 2024 recordings were these. Speakers were Traoré Niopé (01 and 02), and Ouattara Moussa (03 to 18).

2024_01	*Tale: dog, patas monkey, and hare
2024_02	A riddle
2024_03	*War, peace, and festivities on the mountain
2024_04	*Genies taught our ancestors about medicinal herbs
2024_05	*Tale of the old man and the hyenas
2024_06	*Granaries
2024_07	*Paying taxes and doing farm work for the chief
2024_08	*Burying the dead
2024_09	*Betrothal and marriage
2024_10	*Tale of hare, hyena, and patas monkey
2024_11	Origin of hunting
2024_12	Festivities in the village
2024_13	Collective farming
2024_14	Song: paupers don't go to the market
2024_15	Wearing shoes
2024_16	Adopting the culture of whites
2024_17	*Ethnic scarifications and nose rings
2024_18	The fortune-teller

The 2026 recordings were the following, with speakers indicated in parentheses. Adrien (in 02) is a Wara who does not speak Paleni, but was involved in organizing.

2026_01	Greetings (Traoré Adama)
2026_02	Opening comments (Adrien)
2026_03	*Faniagara village (Traoré Adama)
2026_04	Colonial taxes (Traoré Soumaïla)
2026_05	Making announcements (Traoré Adama)
2026_06	*Childbirth (Koné Niolé)
2026_07	*Raising a baby (Koné Niolé)
2026_08	Marriage then and now (Traoré Adama)
2026_09	Marriage then and now for women (Ouattara Bamuso)
2026_10	Funeral and burial of a man (Traoré Soumaïla)

2026_11 Funeral and burial of a woman (Ouattara Niession)
2026_12 Families used to work fields (Ouattara Adama)
2026_13 Cooking tô, groundnut, and cowpea (Ouattara Bamuso)
2026_14 *Colonial recruitment of soldiers (Traoré Adama)
2026_15 Building houses (Ouattara Adama)
2026_16 *Feeding termites to chicks (Ouattara Bamuso)
2026_17 Tale of hyena and rooster (Traoré Adama)
2026_18 *Tale of crocodile and dog (Koné Niolé)
2026_19 *Tale of a man, his child, and the magical fire (Ouattara Bamuso)
2026_20 Tale of rooster, hyena, and hare (Traoré Soumaïla)
2026_21 Name of airplanes then and now (Traoré Maouélégnan)
2026_22 *Tale of a woman, her child, and sorceror (Ouattara Bamuso)
2026_23 *Tale of the origin of balaphones (Koné Niolé)
2026_24 Tale of hyena and goat (Koné Niolé)
2026_25 Tale of hyena, dog, and goat (Traoré Adama)
2026_26 Tale of hen and fortune-teller (Koné Niolé)
2026_27 *Tale of hare who seeks a wife with three grains of maize (Traoré Mariétou)
2026_28 Tale of old man and children who launched an airplane (Traoré Mariétou)
2026_29 Tale of hyena and goat (Traoré Adama)
2026_30 Women’s song with clapping (Ouattara Niession)
2026_31 Women’s marriage song 1 (Traoré Diouma)
2026_32 Women’s marriage song 2 (Traoré Diouma)
2026_33 Women’s marriage song 3 (Traoré Diouma)
2026_34 Women’s marriage song 4 (Traoré Diouma)
2026_35 Women’s marriage song 5 (Traoré Diouma)