A grammar of Mundabli
A Bantoid (Yemne-Kimbi) language of Cameroon
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Contents

List of Tables ................................................. xv
List of Figures ............................................. xxi
List of abbreviations ..................................... xxiii
List of glosses .............................................. xxv
List of symbols ............................................. xxvii
Lists of affixes, clitics and particles ................... xxix
Acknowledgements ......................................... xxxi

1 Introduction ............................................... 1
  1.1 The Mundabli language ............................... 1
    1.1.1 Geography and infrastructure ................. 1
    1.1.2 The Mundabli people - Culture and economic activities 3
    1.1.3 The name “Mundabli” .......................... 4
    1.1.4 Contact and cross- and intra-dialectal variation ...... 5
    1.1.5 Classification ................................ 7
  1.2 Description and analysis of Mundabli ............... 9
    1.2.1 Previous research on Mundabli ............... 9
    1.2.2 Fieldwork setting ............................ 10
    1.2.3 Presentation of data .......................... 11
    1.2.4 Practical transcription ....................... 11

2 Phonology .................................................. 15
  2.1 Tone ................................................. 15
    2.1.1 Tonal inventory .............................. 15
    2.1.2 Phonetic realization of tones ................. 16
    2.1.3 Noun and verb tone patterns ................ 18
  2.2 Consonants .......................................... 18
2.2.1 Consonant phonemes and allophonic variation ........................................ 19
  2.2.1.1 Plosives .................................................. 20
  2.2.1.2 Affricates ............................................... 21
  2.2.1.3 Fricatives ............................................... 22
  2.2.1.4 Sonorants ............................................... 22
2.2.2 Minimal pairs .................................................. 24
2.2.3 Consonant-glide (CG) sequences ...................................................... 26
  2.2.3.1 Cw sequences ............................................. 26
  2.2.3.2 Cy sequences ............................................. 28
2.2.4 Nasal-consonant (NC) sequences ...................................................... 29
2.2.5 Other issues relating to consonants .................................................. 31
  2.2.5.1 The phonetic effect of the high vowels i, u, ị and ŭ on preceding consonants .... 31
  2.2.5.2 Prepausal devoicing of coda consonants ................................. 32
  2.2.5.3 Preglottalized nasals ..................................... 32
2.3 Vowels ................................................................. 33
  2.3.1 Vowel phonemes and allophonic variation ......................................... 34
    2.3.1.1 Plain vowels ............................................. 34
    2.3.1.2 Pharyngealized vowels .................................. 37
  2.3.2 Minimal pairs .................................................. 38
  2.3.3 Issues in vowel interpretation ..................................................... 39
    2.3.3.1 Individual speaker variation in the phonetic proximity between high and mid vowels ... 39
    2.3.3.2 Pharyngealized vowels: characteristics, distribution and origin ................ 41
2.4 Phonotactics ............................................................ 43
  2.4.1 Syllable structure ................................................. 43
  2.4.2 Distributional restrictions on consonants ....................................... 44
    2.4.2.1 Distributional restrictions on the velar nasal ŋ ............................ 44
    2.4.2.2 Distributional restrictions on the palatal nasal ñ .......................... 44
  2.4.3 Restrictions on VC sequences ................................................. 44
  2.4.4 Restrictions on CV sequences ................................................. 46
    2.4.4.1 Neutralization of alveolar and alveo-palatal sibilants and affricates before the vowels i and u ... 46
  2.4.5 Phonotactics of ideophones ..................................................... 46
  2.4.6 Loanword adaptation .................................................... 48
    2.4.6.1 Loans from English and Cameroon Pidgin .................................. 48
    2.4.6.2 Loans from languages other than English or Cameroon Pidgin ..................... 49
3 Morphophonology and phrasal phonology ............................................... 51
  3.1 Morpheme structure constraints ....................................................... 51
    3.1.1 Structure of lexical roots .......................................... 52
      3.1.1.1 Root-initial position .................................. 52
      3.1.1.2 Root-final coda position ................................ 54
3.1.1.3 Root-vowels ........................................ 54
3.1.2 Structure of affixes ................................. 54
3.1.2.1 CV(N)-prefixes .................................. 54
3.1.2.2 Non-syllabic prefixes ............................ 55
3.1.2.3 The infinitive marker N-...-n/N- .................. 55
3.1.2.4 The first person singular preverbal clitic N= .. 56
3.1.3 Structure of functional items ....................... 57
3.1.3.1 Initial position in function words .............. 57
3.1.3.2 Lack of codas in function words ............... 58
3.1.3.3 Vowels in function words ...................... 58
3.2 Morphonology .......................................... 58
3.2.1 Noun tone patterns ................................. 58
3.2.1.1 Tone of segmental noun class prefixes ........ 59
3.2.1.2 Tone in monosyllabic nouns of genders other than Gender 9/10 ...................... 59
3.2.1.3 Tone of polysyllabic nouns of Genders other than Gender 9/10 ...................... 61
3.2.1.4 Tone in Gender 9/10 nouns .................... 62
3.2.2 Verb tone patterns ................................. 64
3.2.2.1 Verb tone classes ................................ 64
3.2.2.2 Final vs. non-final verb tone patterns ......... 64
3.2.2.3 Perfective vs. imperfective verb tone patterns 66
3.2.2.4 Tone sandhi in verb sequences .................. 66
3.3 Morphophonological alternations .................... 68
3.3.1 Place assimilation of nasals in NC sequences .... 68
3.3.2 Initial consonant mutation in Gender 3/10 nouns . 71
3.3.3 Consonant mutation in the numerals ‘two’ and ‘three’ . 71
3.3.4 Pharyngealization in the numeral ‘one’ ............ 73
3.3.5 Ablaut in perfective vs. imperfective verbal stems ... 73
3.4 Phrasal phonology ........................................ 76
3.4.1 Vowel elision across word boundaries .......... 76
3.4.2 Low tone spread ................................. 77

4 The noun class system ................................ 79
4.1 Previous treatments of Yemne-Kimbi noun class systems . 80
4.2 Overview of the noun class system ..................... 81
4.3 Noun class pairings and unpaired classes ............ 83
4.3.1 Gender 1/2 ........................................ 85
4.3.2 Gender 3/7a ......................................... 86
4.3.3 Gender 7/8 ........................................ 87
4.3.4 Gender 9/10 ......................................... 89
4.3.5 Gender 19/18 ........................................ 90
4.3.6 The exceptional Gender 3/10 ....................... 92
4.3.7 Single Gender 6 ..................................... 93
4.3.8 Single Gender 8a .................................... 95
4.3.9 Unpaired noun classes (single genders) other than Class 6 and 8a .......................... 96
4.4 Noun class assignment of borrowed nouns ........................................ 96
4.5 ‘Derivational’ use of noun classes ...................................................... 99
  4.5.1 Associative plural with the Class 2 prefix (bào-) ......................... 99
  4.5.2 Diminutive derivation with the Class 19/18 prefixes fi- and múN- ............... 100
  4.5.3 Use of Gender 7/8 pronouns for derogatory reference .................. 102
4.6 Discussion of the current analysis of the noun class system ............. 102

5 Agreement .......................... 105
  5.1 Agreement in pronouns ............................................................. 106
    5.1.1 Agreement in 3rd person singular personal pronouns .......... 106
    5.1.2 Agreement in possessive pronouns ...................................... 107
  5.2 Agreement in demonstratives and determiners ............................. 111
  5.3 Agreement in adjectivals .......................................................... 112
    5.3.1 Agreement in adjectives .................................................. 114
    5.3.2 The quantifier -lô ‘all’ ................................................... 116
    5.3.3 The quantifier -dʒwē ‘a lot of’ ......................................... 117
    5.3.4 The quantifier -ntʃin ‘few’ .............................................. 118
    5.3.5 The nominal modifier -dzú ‘other’, ‘certain’ ..................... 119
    5.3.6 The nominal modifier -dóm ‘some’ ..................................... 120
    5.3.7 The nominal modifier d̄ó ’certain’ .................................... 121
    5.3.8 The interrogative quantifier -miŋ ‘how much’;
        ‘how many’ ........................................................................ 121
    5.3.9 The selective interrogative mwān ‘which’ .............................. 122
  5.4 Agreement in numerals ............................................................... 123
  5.5 Overview of agreement patterns ............................................... 125
  5.6 Gender conflict resolution .......................................................... 126

6 Pronouns .................................. 129
  6.1 Personal pronouns ................................................................. 129
    6.1.1 Preverbal pronouns ......................................................... 132
    6.1.2 Non-preverbal pronouns ............................................... 134
    6.1.3 Pronouns as objects of the comitative preposition ā ............. 135
    6.1.4 Pronouns as objects of postpositions ................................ 135
    6.1.5 Benefactive pronouns ..................................................... 138
    6.1.6 Compound pronouns ...................................................... 139
  6.2 The dummy subject ................................................................. 139
  6.3 The impersonal subject pronoun b̄a ........................................ 140
  6.4 Interrogative pronouns ............................................................ 140
  6.5 Indefinite pronouns ............................................................... 141
# 7 Noun modifiers and noun phrase structure

## 7.1 Simple noun phrases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subsection</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lexical Nouns</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pronouns in appositive constructions</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstratives</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjectives</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numerals</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic numerals</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complex numerals</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Etymology of numerals</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borrowing of numerals</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finger counting and signing numbers</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adverbials as noun modifiers</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## 7.2 Complex noun phrases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subsection</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Associative constructions</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associative constructions with nominal possessor</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associative phrase with pronominal possessor</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special cases of possessive marking</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conjunctive coordination of noun phrases</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conjunctive coordination of noun phrases with āmi ‘and’</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusory conjunction</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comitative phrases with the preposition ā ‘with’ as noun modifiers</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postpositional phrases with ngā ‘upon’ can modify nouns</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locative postpositional phrases headed by derived postpositions as noun modifiers</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## 7.3 Word order in the noun phrase

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subsection</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-canonical word order</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possessor + possessed order in possessive constructions</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determiner + noun order with distributive reading</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numerals detached from the rest of the noun phrase</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

# 8 Verb morphology and the verbal complex

## 8.1 Verb morphology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subsection</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Segmental structure of the uninflected verb stem</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verb tone classes and tonal inflection of verbs</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ablaut in perfective vs. imperfective verb stems</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear verb morphology (in non-finite verb forms)</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The nasal infinitive prefix N- or circumfix N-...n</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The prefix kā- on non-finite verbs expressing ability</td>
<td>184</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8.2 Tense markers and other preverbal markers .......................... 184
  8.2.1 Tense markers .................................................. 184
  8.2.2 Other preverbal markers ....................................... 186
8.3 Order of elements in the verbal complex ............................... 187
8.4 Constructions involving non-finite verb forms ......................... 188
  8.4.1 The infinitive .................................................... 188
    8.4.1.1 Infinitives as complements of 'start' and 'know' 189
    8.4.1.2 Infinitives as heads of preposed relative clauses, used to express simultaneity 190
    8.4.1.3 Infinitives in the progressive construction 190
    8.4.1.4 Infinitive as the object of its finite equivalent, for contrastive verb focus 191
    8.4.1.5 Infinitive inside adverbial phrase for emphasis 192
    8.4.1.6 Infinitive as subject or object 192
  8.4.2 The ability construction with auxiliary and prefixed main verb .................. 192
8.5 Constructions involving finite verb forms ............................. 193
  8.5.1 Tense marking constructions .................................... 194
    8.5.1.1 Verb tone patterns of tense marking constructions 194
    8.5.1.2 P0 (present/immediate past) constructions without a segmental marker 196
    8.5.1.3 P1 (hodiernal past) constructions with the P1 marker fə̋ 196
    8.5.1.4 P2 (non-hodiernal past) constructions with the marker à~nà 197
    8.5.1.5 P3 (distant past) constructions with the marker kə̀ 198
    8.5.1.6 P1 (hodiernal future) constructions with the F1 marker dɨ̋ 198
    8.5.1.7 P2 (non-hodiernal future) constructions with the P2 marker ká 199
    8.5.1.8 Overview of tense markers and verb tone patterns in all tenses 200
  8.5.2 Constructions with preverbal markers other than tense markers .................. 202
    8.5.2.1 Verb tone patterns of constructions with markers other than tense markers 202
    8.5.2.2 The marker kə̋ and the habitual aspect construction 204
    8.5.2.3 The marker mɨ/mɨ and consecutive constructions 204
    8.5.2.4 The marker tə̋ and truth focus constructions 206
    8.5.2.5 The preverbal conditional marker kə̀ 207
8.5.3 Negation in constructions involving finite verb forms ............ 208
  8.5.3.1 Negation in tense marking constructions ... 208
8.5.3.2 Negation in constructions with preverbal markers other than tense markers .......... 211
8.5.3.3 Frustrative ............................................. 213
8.5.3.4 The not-yet tense ................................. 213

9 Serial verb constructions and verbal adverbs 215
9.1 Asymmetrical SVCs ......................................... 216
  9.1.1 Motion .................................................. 217
    9.1.1.1 Deictic orientation .............................. 217
    9.1.1.2 Path .............................................. 220
  9.1.2 Aspectuality or aspect-related ......................... 229
    9.1.2.1 dô 'stay, remain' .................................. 230
    9.1.2.2 më 'finish' ..................................... 230
    9.1.2.3 nim 'sit' ....................................... 231
  9.1.3 Valency ................................................ 232
    9.1.3.1 Causative SVCs with lɔ 'do, make' ............. 232
  9.1.4 Manner .................................................. 233
    9.1.4.1 dzî ‘travel; aimlessly’ .......................... 233
    9.1.4.2 bân ‘be clean; be white; shine; clearly’ .... 234
  9.2 Symmetrical SVCs ......................................... 235
    9.2.1 Sequential events .................................... 235
    9.2.2 Fixed expressions .................................... 236
  9.3 Expression of grammatical categories in SVCs .......... 238
    9.3.1 Tone and mood in SVCs ............................. 238
    9.3.2 Perfective/imperfective aspect marking in SVCs ...... 238
    9.3.3 Tense and polarity in SVCs ......................... 239
    9.3.4 Nominalization in SVCs ............................. 239
      9.3.4.1 Infinitive constructions involving SVCs .......... 239
      9.3.4.2 Ability constructions involving SVCs .......... 240
  9.4 Verbal adverbs ........................................... 240
    9.4.1 Verb-core-final verbal adverbs .................... 241
      9.4.1.1 tî 'surprisingly' .................................. 242
      9.4.1.2 fûbâ, bî ‘also’ .................................. 242
      9.4.1.3 më ‘only’ ....................................... 243
      9.4.1.4 dzâŋâ–dzâŋ ‘again’ .............................. 244
      9.4.1.5 bâ ‘exactly’ ..................................... 245
      9.4.1.6 tâ ‘really’ ...................................... 245
    9.4.2 The verb core-initial adverb së̊n ‘then’ ........ 246

10 Other word classes 247
10.1 Adverbs ..................................................... 247
10.2 Adpositions ................................................ 248
  10.2.1 Prepositions .......................................... 248
    10.2.1.1 The comitative/instrumental preposition â ‘with’ .... 249
    10.2.1.2 The locative preposition î ..................... 250
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10.2.2</td>
<td>Postpositions</td>
<td>251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.2.2.1</td>
<td>Postpositions vs. nouns</td>
<td>253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>Temporal deictics</td>
<td>254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>Spatial deictics</td>
<td>255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>Ideophones</td>
<td>258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>‘Yes’ and ‘No’</td>
<td>261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>Interjections</td>
<td>262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Basic clause structure</td>
<td>265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>Types of argument frames</td>
<td>265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.1.1</td>
<td>Extended intransitive verbs</td>
<td>267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.1.2</td>
<td>Extended transitive verbs</td>
<td>268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>Constituent order within the clause</td>
<td>269</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>Syntactic arguments</td>
<td>270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.3.1</td>
<td>Subject</td>
<td>272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.3.2</td>
<td>Object</td>
<td>273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.3.3</td>
<td>Comitative</td>
<td>274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.3.4</td>
<td>Locative</td>
<td>276</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.3.5</td>
<td>Dative</td>
<td>277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>Grammatical relations</td>
<td>279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.4.1</td>
<td>Case morphology in pronouns</td>
<td>279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Relative clauses</td>
<td>283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>Position of the relative clause</td>
<td>284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>Relative clause-marking</td>
<td>285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.2.1</td>
<td>Postverbal relativizer</td>
<td>285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.2.2</td>
<td>Clause-initial subordinating conjunction</td>
<td>287</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>The representative of the head nominal</td>
<td>287</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>Accessibility to relativization</td>
<td>290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>Asymmetries between main and relative clause properties</td>
<td>291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Copulas and nonverbal predicates</td>
<td>297</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>Copula verbs</td>
<td>297</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>Nonverbal predicate constructions</td>
<td>298</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.2.1</td>
<td>Equative constructions</td>
<td>298</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.2.2</td>
<td>Adjectival predicates</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.2.3</td>
<td>Similative predicates</td>
<td>301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.2.4</td>
<td>Numeral predicates</td>
<td>302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.2.5</td>
<td>Locative predicates and existential clauses</td>
<td>302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.2.5.1</td>
<td>Locative predicates</td>
<td>303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.2.5.2</td>
<td>Existential</td>
<td>304</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.2.5.3</td>
<td>Predicative possession</td>
<td>305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.2.5.4</td>
<td>The locative copula gɛ ᷆</td>
<td>306</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.2.6</td>
<td>Constructions with the semi-copula tʃũ ‘come, become’</td>
<td>308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>Other grammatical functions of copula verbs</td>
<td>308</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
13.3.1 óln future marking ............................... 308
13.3.2 Compound tense and counterfactual conditional constructions ............................... 309
13.3.3 The ability construction ............................. 310

14 Information structure ............................. 311
14.1 Introduction ........................................ 311
14.2 Argument focus ..................................... 312
  14.2.1 Canonical constituent order ........................ 313
  14.2.2 Non-canonical constituent order ...................... 314
    14.2.2.1 Immediate after verb (IAV) focus position ... 314
    14.2.2.2 Defocalization of canonically postverbal constituents ....................... 314
  14.2.3 Subject focus .................................... 315
  14.2.4 Defocalization of objects .......................... 316
  14.2.5 Defocalization of obliques ........................ 317
  14.2.6 Oblique focus .................................... 317
  14.2.7 Modifier focus .................................... 318
  14.2.8 Omission of topical objects ........................ 319
14.3 Verb focus ........................................ 319
  14.3.1 Cognate deverbal noun constructions ............... 320
14.4 Truth focus ........................................ 321
  14.4.1 Serial verb constructions with băn ‘clearly’ ...... 321
  14.4.2 The particle tə́ .................................. 322
14.5 Thetic sentences .................................... 323
14.6 Cleft constructions ................................. 324

15 Non-declarative clauses ............................. 327
15.1 Questions and question words ......................... 327
  15.1.1 Polar questions .................................... 327
    15.1.1.1 Tag questions .................................. 328
  15.1.2 Content questions .................................. 329
    15.1.2.1 The interrogative pronoun män ‘what’ ........ 330
    15.1.2.2 The interrogative pronoun ndé ‘who’ .......... 332
    15.1.2.3 The interrogative word nă ‘where’ .......... 333
    15.1.2.4 The interrogative word băn ‘when’ .......... 333
    15.1.2.5 The interrogative word āgăn ‘how’ .......... 334
    15.1.2.6 The borrowed interrogative word why .......... 334
    15.1.2.7 The interrogative nominal modifier -mwăn ‘which’ 334
    15.1.2.8 The interrogative noun modifier mìnj ‘how much, how many’ ............ 335
    15.1.2.9 Multiple interrogative words .................. 335
    15.1.2.10 Plural forms of interrogative words .......... 336
  15.1.3 Questions in reported speech ....................... 336
15.2 The Imperative ...................................... 337
15.3 The Prohibitive .................................................. 339
15.4 The Jussive ...................................................... 340
15.5 Imperatives and jussives with pl. addressee .............. 341

16 Glosed texts ......................................................... 343
  16.1 Song by Yung Henrik, “It is eating me up” ............... 343
      16.1.1 Introduction ........................................ 343
      16.1.2 Text .................................................. 343
  16.2 Recipe for corn beer ........................................ 352
      16.2.1 Introduction ........................................ 352
      16.2.2 Text .................................................. 352

References ............................................................ 355

Samenvatting in het Nederlands ................................... 363

Curriculum Vitae ..................................................... 369
3.3 Examples of stem-initial NC(G) sequences ........................................ 53
3.4 Consonantal agreement in demonstratives ......................................... 55
3.5 Infinitives with the infinitive circumfix ............................................. 56
3.6 Infinitives with a prefix ..................................................................... 57
3.7 Initial consonants in function words .................................................. 58
3.8 Tones of nouns belonging to genders other than Class 9/10 in utterance-final vs. non-final position ......................................................... 59
3.9 Mid tone singular, high tone plural nouns ........................................... 60
3.10 Low singular, mid-low plural nouns .................................................. 60
3.11 Other tonal stem changes in non-Gender 9/10 nouns ......................... 61
3.12 Tonal patterns of bisyllabic nouns (in isolation) ................................. 61
3.13 Tones of Gender 9/10 nouns (in isolation) ........................................ 62
3.14 Tonal patterns of bisyllabic nouns of Gender 9/10 (in isolation) ........ 63
3.15 Verb tone classes with examples of perfective present tense verbs in utterance-final and non-final position .............................................. 64
3.16 Perfective/imperfective tone patterns ............................................... 66
3.17 Homorganic nasals in infinitive verb forms ....................................... 69
3.18 Historical nasal assimilation across word boundaries in Gender 7/8 nouns .................................................................................. 71
3.19 Lack of nasal assimilation in Gender 7/8 nouns ................................ 71
3.20 Examples of Gender 3/10 consonant mutation (taken over from §4.3.6) ................................................................................ 71
3.21 Agreement in numerals (adopted from §7.1.5) ................................... 72
3.22 Perfective vs. imperfective stems without ablaut ................................. 74
3.23 Regular ablaut in perfective/imperfective stems .................................. 74
3.24 Ablaut with ɔ in perfective stems ....................................................... 75
3.25 Ablaut with ə in perfective stems ....................................................... 75
3.26 Overview of perfective/imperfective ablaut patterns ............................ 76

4.1 Noun classes with corresponding nominal prefixes and pronouns ........ 82
4.2 Examples of noun classes showing noun class marking on the noun or lack thereof ................................................................. 83
4.3 Relative frequency of singular-plural noun class pairings .................... 84
4.4 Singular-plural pairings of Gender 1/2 nouns ...................................... 85
4.5 Singular-plural pairings of Gender 3/7a nouns, examples of identical singular and plural forms .................................................. 87
4.6 Irregular singular-plural stem alternation in Gender 3/7a nouns .......... 87
4.7 Singular-plural pairings of Gender 7/8 nouns, examples of identical singular and plural forms .................................................. 88
4.8 Singular-plural pairings of Gender 7/8 nouns, examples of irregular stem alternation ................................................................. 88
4.9 Singular-plural pairings of Gender 9/10 nouns showing tonal stem alternation ................................................................. 90
4.10 Singular-plural pairings of underived Class 19/18 nouns (without prefix) .................................................................................. 91
4.11 Singular-plural pairings of derived Gender 19/18 nouns (with prefix) ........................................... 91
4.12 Singular-plural pairings of Class 3/10 nouns, examples showing initial consonant mutation .............................. 92
4.13 Singular-plural pairings of Class 3/10 nouns, examples without consonant mutation ......................................... 93
4.14 Class 6 nouns .................................................. 94
4.15 Class 8a nouns .................................................. 95
4.16 Single gender 3a, comprehensive list ........................................ 96
4.17 Single gender 7b, comprehensive list ........................................ 96
4.18 Single gender 9a, comprehensive list ........................................ 97
4.19 Single gender 10a, comprehensive list ........................................ 97
4.20 Selected nominal loans ........................................ 98
4.21 Noun classes, current system ....................................... 103
4.22 Agreement classes ........................................ 103

5.1 Overview of agreement patterns, illustrated by pronouns . . . 106
5.2 Agreement in preverbal and non-preverbal third person singular pronouns for all noun classes ......................... 107
5.3 Agreement in possessive pronouns ....................................... 108
5.4 Agreement in 1st possessive pronouns ....................................... 109
5.5 Consonantal agreement in demonstratives ....................................... 111
5.6 Agreement prefixes in adjectivals, three different tone patterns: mid, high and low ........................................ 113
5.7 List of adjectives (not exhaustive) ....................................... 114
5.8 Agreement prefixes and tonal alternation in adjectives, illustrated by the adjective -fyin ‘new’ ....................................... 115
5.9 Agreement prefixes and tonal alternation in the quantifier -lo ‘all’ ....................................... 116
5.10 Agreement prefixes and tonal alternation in the quantifier -dzw ‘a lot of’ ........................................ 117
5.11 Agreement prefixes on -ntf ‘a few’, ‘a bit’, ‘a little’ ....................................... 118
5.12 Agreement prefixes on the modifier -dz ‘certain’, ‘other’ ....................................... 119
5.13 Agreement prefixes on -dom ‘some’, ‘any’, ‘other’ ....................................... 120
5.14 Numeral agreement prefixes ........................................ 123
5.15 Noun class agreement in numerals ....................................... 123
5.16 Overview of agreement patterns, including prefixes and tonal changes, exemplified by different types of noun modifiers . . . 125

6.1 Overview of personal pronouns (non-preverbal forms) ....... 130
6.2 Preverbal, non-preverbal and object of postposition forms for 1st and 2nd person personal pronouns and paired genders ....... 130
6.3 Preverbal, non-preverbal and object of postposition forms of single gender personal pronouns ....................................... 131
6.4 Preverbal forms of personal pronouns ....................................... 132
6.5 Non-preverbal forms of personal pronouns ....................................... 134
6.6 Forms of personal pronouns when they are the object of a post-position ............................................. 136

7.1 Demonstratives .................................................. 145
7.2 List of adjectives (not exhaustive), repeated from Table 5.7, §5.3.1 .................................................. 148
7.3 Adjective agreement prefixes ................................. 149
7.4 The numerals 1 to 10 in their absolute form .......... 152
7.5 Agreement in the numerals 1 to 4 ......................... 152
7.6 Multiples of 10, 100 and 1000, the numeral nouns .... 154
7.7 A few examples of complex numerals combining multiples of 10, 100 and 1000 ........................................... 155
7.8 Complex numerals which combine higher digits with the basic numeral 10, or with a single-digit numeral ........ 156
7.9 Signing numbers to others ..................................... 159
7.10 Inclusory conjunction of pronouns ....................... 168

8.1 Tone patterns of (monosyllabic) imperative verbs of tone classes $\lambda$, $\beta$ and $\gamma$ with examples ...................... 180
8.2 Tone patterns of imperfective verbs of all three verb tone classes in utterance-final position with examples ............... 181
8.3 Regular ablaut in perfective/imperfective stems, repeated from Table 3.23 .................................................. 182
8.4 Infinitives with circumfix, repeated from Table 3.5, §3.1.2.3 .... 183
8.5 Infinitives with prefix, repeated from Table 3.6, §3.1.2.3 ...... 183
8.6 Tone patterns of Class $\lambda$, $\beta$ and $\gamma$ ability verb forms 184
8.7 Tense markers ....................................................... 185
8.8 Non-tense preverbal markers and their functions ............. 186
8.9 Tone patterns of the infinitive in utterance-final and non-final position, the contrast between Class $\beta$ and $\gamma$ is neutralized . 189
8.10 Segmental tense markers and tone patterns of final and non-final perfective verbs of tone classes $\lambda$, $\beta$ and $\gamma$ in all tenses ($p0$-$p3$ and $f1$-$f2$) .................................................. 194
8.11 Tone patterns of non-final affirmative perfective verbs and of negated perfective verbs in $f3$ .................................. 195
8.12 Elicited example of verb-final and non-verb-final simple clauses containing perfective verbs of verb tone classes $\lambda$, $\beta$ and $\gamma$, in all tenses ($p0$-$p3$ and $f1$-$f2$) .................................................. 201
8.13 Tone patterns of final perfective consecutive verbs in all tenses ($p0$-$p3$ and $f1$-$f2$) .................................................. 203
8.14 Tense markers and merged tense + pre-core negation markers .............................................................. 208
8.15 Tone patterns of negated and of affirmative non-final perfective verbs of tone classes $\lambda$, $\beta$ and $\gamma$ in all tenses ($p0$-$p3$ and $f1$-$f2$) .................................................. 209
8.16 Elicited examples of affirmative non-verb-final simple clauses containing perfective verbs of Class $\lambda$, $\beta$ and $\gamma$ in all tenses ($p0$-$p3$ and $f1$-$f2$) .................................................. 211
8.17 Elicited examples of negative simple clauses containing perfective verbs of Class A, B and C in all tenses (p0-p3 and f1-f2)  

9.1 Verbal adverbs  

10.1 The two prepositions with glosses and meanings  
10.2 Comprehensive list of postpositions with glosses  
10.3 Comparison of postpositions and cognate nouns  
10.4 Selected temporal deictics  
10.5 Ideophones, partly in context, with descriptions, sorted according to semantic criteria  
10.6 Variants of ‘yes’ and ‘no’  

11.1 Preverbal, non-preverbal, object of postposition and object of comitative preposition forms of all personal pronouns, adapted from Table 6.2  
11.2 Special dative/benefactive pronoun forms  

12.1 Preverbal pronouns and determiners/relativizers  
12.2 Segmental tense markers and tone patterns of non-final perfective verbs of verb tone classes A, B and C in all tenses (p0-p3 and f1-f2) in main and relative clauses  

15.1 Comprehensive list of question words  
15.2 Imperative verb forms in single verb cores  
15.3 Examples of second person prohibitives with single verb cores
List of Figures

1.1 Lower Fungom Language Map, courtesy of Pierpaolo Di Carlo 2
1.2 Niger-Congo family tree, adapted from Schadeberg (2003: 155) 7
1.3 Bantoid family tree, following Glottolog (Hammarström et al. 2017) 8

2.1 Inventory of plain vowel phonemes 33
2.2 Inventory of pharyngealized vowel phonemes 34
2.3 Vowel plot (speaker: Kemba Jacqueline Ntie) 40

4.1 Singular-plural noun class pairings 84

11.1 Basic word order 269

12.1 Position of the relative clause relative to the head nominal and to other noun modifiers 284
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADJ</td>
<td>adjective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATR</td>
<td>advanced tongue root</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>consonant</td>
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<tr>
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<td>database</td>
</tr>
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<td>glide</td>
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<td>immediate after verb position</td>
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<td>immediate before verb position</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>object</td>
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<td>PB</td>
<td>Proto Bantu</td>
</tr>
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<td>PRO</td>
<td>pronoun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sp.</td>
<td>species (used for animal and plant species and for different versions of an object, like e.g. baskets)</td>
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# List of glosses

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1, 2, 3</td>
<td>first, second, third person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a), (b), (c)</td>
<td>verb tone classes in gloss</td>
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<tr>
<td>ADVLZ</td>
<td>adverbializer</td>
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<tr>
<td>CLN</td>
<td>noun class n</td>
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<tr>
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<td>complementizer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>copula</td>
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<tr>
<td>DS</td>
<td>dummy subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f1</td>
<td>hodiernal future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f2</td>
<td>non-hodiernal future</td>
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<td>non-current speaker quotative marker</td>
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<td>P2</td>
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<td>P3</td>
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<td>special pronoun form used when a pronoun is object of a position</td>
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The glosses used here adhere to the glossing conventions introduced by the Leipzig Glossing Rules (Comrie et al. 2008). As suggested there, when a single object-language element is rendered by several metalanguage elements (words or abbreviations), these are separated by periods. If an object-language element (words only) is neither formally nor semantically segmentable and only the metalanguage happens to lack a single-word equivalent, the underscore is used instead of the period Rule 4a.
List of symbols

○ marks an elicited example
- morpheme break
; morpheme break without exact location (in gloss)
= clitic boundary
. separates labels (in the gloss) when a single object-language element is rendered by several metalanguage category labels
- separates words (in the gloss) when a single object-language element is rendered by several metalanguage words
/ separates alternative glosses
~ connects reduplicant and reduplicated morpheme
~ marks phonological variants
<...> mark orthographic forms
?? gloss unknown
This section contains a list of affixes and bound forms including noun class and agreement prefixes and a list of free particles.

<table>
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<tr>
<td>N=</td>
<td>1SG.PVB</td>
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<td>N-...n~N-</td>
<td>INF</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>yi~y-</td>
<td>cl.10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

nominalizer
preverbal form of first person singular pronoun; procliticizes to the verbal core
infinitive prefix/circumfix; choice depends on the shape of the verb stem
Class 2 agreement prefix
Class 8 agreement prefix
Class 2 nominal prefix and agreement prefix
Class 19 nominal prefix and agreement prefix
Class 7 agreement prefix
Class 18 agreement prefix
Class 6a agreement prefix
Class 1 agreement prefix
Class 3 agreement prefix
Class 5 agreement prefix
Class 9 agreement prefix
Class 10 agreement prefix
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>yɛ̄<del>ɛ̄</del>â</td>
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</table>
Acknowledgements

There are many people to whom I would like to express my gratitude. First of all, I want to thank my supervisors, Jeff Good and Maarten Mous. Thank you so much for your enthusiasm and for your constant encouragement! I also want to thank the Akuma family and the Tantoh family for their friendship and for sparking my interest in Cameroon.

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Finally, Dad, although you’re not able to see this anymore: Thank you for your love, for always having believed in me, and having encouraged me in everything I do!
In case you do not find your name here, but feel you should, please feel included!
CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1 The Mundabli language

1.1.1 Geography and infrastructure

Mundabli is spoken in a village generally known by the name Mundabli (for more on this name, see §1.1.3). The village is located in the Northwest region of Cameroon and more specifically in a region called Lower Fungom. Figure 1.1 shows a map of this region. Lower Fungom is part of the Fungom subdivision of Menchum division, which corresponds to the administrative commune of Zhoa. Lower Fungom does not form a separate administrative unit but it is distinguished from the rest of Fungom by its lower elevation and the ecological characteristics that go with it.

Lower Fungom is a mountainous area with elevations ranging roughly from 500 to 900 meters in elevation. The Mundabli village is situated on top of a steep hill, at a height of about 900 meters, overlooking all of Lower Fungom. The farming plots are found at lower elevations, close to the rivers Mbem and Kimbi, at a walking distance of up to around 7 kilometers. Mundabli is also spoken in two smaller settlements, ndʒə̂m, also known as “Mundabli over-side”, and būm ā ndʒāŋ, a small settlement near the heritage site kwè kùmbɔ̀ (see Di Carlo (2011: fig.2, p.58)), and in a few detached hamlets which are scattered in the bush adjacent to the village and form part of the chiefdom of Mundabli. While būm ā ndʒāŋ is situated on top of a hill across the Mbum

¹The highest point of Fungom division lies at about 1300 meters.
1.1. The Mundabli language

river, also at a height of about 900 meters, ndʒə̂m and most of the smaller hamlets are found at lower elevations, close to the river.

In order to get to Mundabli from the closest town (Wum), it is possible to take a pickup truck which goes to Abar once a day (see map in Figure 1.1).
Although the distance is only around 26 kilometers by road, the ride takes several hours due to the extremely bad condition the road is in. The road gets fixed every couple years, but in such a manner that by the time the rainy season has reached its full height, the road has become impassable again and only courageous motorbike taxi drivers take the risk. From Abar, it is still a two to three hour walk to Mundabli on a foot path which crosses through the villages Missong and Mashi. Up to Mashi (at ca. 770 meters elevation), at the foot of the Mundabli hill, the path is good enough for a motorbike to drive on, but from there on only steep and narrow paths lead up to the village itself, which is thus only accessible by foot. It is not uncommon for Mundabli people to walk to Weh (the closest marketplace on the Ring Road) or to Wum, in order to save the fare for public transport.

Footpaths connect all the villages in the area. The Nigerian border, which is at a distance of about 30 kilometers as the crow flies, can also be reached on foot. The closest market is Abar market, which takes place once a week. Other markets frequented by Mundabli people are Yemgeh, Weh and (less commonly) Wum market. The closest health station is also found in Abar. The closest hospital is in Wum. However, in many cases, people attend traditional doctors before or instead of turning to a nurse or physician. There is one traditional doctor in Mundabli whose reputation attracts people from Wum and even further away. Mundabli has a primary school which was accredited by the government of education, a few years ago, after it had been run as a community school for several years. The closest secondary school is found in Missong. For further education, teenagers move to Wum where many of them live with relatives or better-off Mundabli people. Mundabli has a make-shift radio station which is operated by Tembo Adamu Mohammed and broadcasts in Mundabli. Due to the high altitude of the village, the station can be received over a great distance. In 2012, there were two generators in the village which were in private possession and which were mainly used to operate a corn mill and to play dance music at special occasions. Access to clean water is restricted to two springs located on the side of the Mundabli hill. Water must be carried up from the springs along a steep dirt path. In the rainy season, rain water for doing the laundry and for consumption is collected in the village, which is fortunate because in the rainy season the steep path that leads to the village from the spring resembles a slippery mud slide. In the dry season, one may have to wait half an hour for the little pool to refill in order to get drinking water. Sometimes, the spring closer to the village dries up completely. In order to save time and energy, people wash themselves and their clothes at streams on the hillside.

1.1.2 The Mundabli people - Culture and economic activities

Mundabli is a chiefdom led, at the time of publication, by chief Tem Nyungfu and sub-chief Mambo Goodboy Bumnyam, in collaboration with the village
1.1. The Mundabli language
council which is headed by the chief. Mundabli is neither itself part of another
chiefdom, nor does it incorporate any other villages in its own chiefdom. While
many villagers are Christians and a handful are Muslims, probably everyone
also practices the local traditional religion. As pointed out in §1.1.1, the village
is organized in quarters which are geographically separate. The people who
live in a quarter form a separate exogamous kin group (Di Carlo 2011: 62).
Names are often connected with certain quarters so that one can deduce from
a person’s name which quarter they belong to.

The main economic activity in Mundabli is farming. Probably the most im-
portant source of income for the Mundabli is palm oil. As Lower Fungom is at a
relatively low altitude, it is suitable to grow palm trees. Palm oil is made in the
village and sold at local markets. Coffee and cocoa are also grown for trade,
but only in small quantities. Other crops are corn, peanuts (locally known as
‘groundnuts’), plantains, cassavas, cocoyams, pumpkin seeds (locally known
as ‘egussi’), gourds, calabashes, okras, etc. Other economic activities in Mund-
abli include hunting, trapping, animal breeding and fishing. Nowadays mainly
small animals are hunted, e.g., cane rat (in Pidgin ‘cutting grass’), rat mole,
rock hyrax (in Pidgin ‘stone beef’), different kinds of squirrels, snakes and
monkeys, certain birds, such as e.g. the francolin (in Pidgin ‘bush fowl’) and,
rarely, antelopes. In the past buffalos (in Pidgin ‘bush cows’), african wild
pigs (in Pidgin ‘bush pigs’) and gorillas were also hunted, but due to extensive
hunting, they have nearly disappeared from this area. While meat is a special
treat for people in the village, it is also something that can be traded. Dried
and smoked “bush meat” is very popular with Cameroonians. The Mundabli
also gather plants including various wild vegetables and wild spices such as
e.g., ‘bush pepper’ (Piper guineense) and ‘njangsa’ (Ricinodendron heudelotii var.
africanaum), mushrooms, fruit and certain insects, for subsistence or in order
to sell them at the market. People breed chickens and occasionally ducks for
eggs and meat, and goats and sheep for consumption and sale. The rivers that
cross Mundabli territory are home to various species of fish which people catch
with rods and nets, and to crabs which are caught by hand. Due to the lack
of employment opportunities in the area, many young people move to South-
west Cameroon (or other places) to work on plantations, on oil pipelines, in
factories, in the port, to do business and so on. These people often invest in
the village and many of them come back at some point of time to marry and
eventually to settle down and spend their retirement in the village.

1.1.3 The name “Mundabli”
‘Mundabli’ is the English name for the Mundabli people, their home village and
their language. The speakers of Mundabli refer to themselves and their village
as ndʒān. In the Mundabli language, a Mundabli person is referred to as mó
ndʒān, the Mundabli people are the bɔndʒān, their language is pɔ ndʒān
and the Mundabli village is referred to as ndʒān kʉ. However, the Mundabli
also acknowledge the name “Mundabli” and they use it when conversing with
outsiders. It is unknown where the English name “Mundabli” (also Mundabli or more rarely Ndabile\(^2\)) originated from. People in Mundabli think the name may be based on a misunderstanding. They think that someone must have mistaken part of a greeting ceremony as the language name. According to this theory, the original phrase must have been something like *mɨ̄n = dâ̄lî* ‘As for me, I am still well.’ or *bɪ̄də̄bə̄-lî* ‘We are still well.’.

In the way they are used by the Mundabli speakers and their neighbours, the names ndʒa᷆n and Mundabli represent only the variety spoken in Mundabli, i.e. in the village and associated hamlets. They do not include the variety spoken in Mufu, although the two varieties are so close that, from a linguistic standpoint, the two can be viewed as dialects of a single language.

In opposition to local use, the Ethnologue entry “Mundabli” (ISO 639-3 code: boe, Lewis et al. 2009) represents three varieties: Mundabli, Mufu and Buu.\(^3\) Whereas Mundabli and Mufu are reasonably close and could be considered dialects of the same language, Buu is so different from Mundabli and Mufu that it should be considered a separate language (see §1.1.4 for details). The use of the name “Mundabli” to subsume all three varieties falsely implies that we are dealing with a single language. But also to represent only Mundabli and Mufu,

The name Mundabli is also a bad choice for representing only Mundabli and Mufu, because in its public use, it refers only to the Mundabli dialect, to the exclusion of Mufu. Mufu people would most certainly feel offended if their variety were called a dialect of Mundabli. I suggest instead using the compound name Mufu-Mundabli to represent this dialect-cluster. While the existence of a common name implies that the two varieties are so close that they can be considered a single language for linguistic reasons, the fact that the name is a compound made up of the names of the two varieties reflects at the same time that these two dialects have independent socio-political status.

It must be remarked though that such a common name represents a purely linguistic entity. While Mundabli and Mufu are “culturally closer to each other than to any other Lower Fungom society,” Di Carlo (2011: 87), they still form separate politically distinct socio-cultural groups. In this description, I use the name “Mundabli” to refer only to the Mundabli dialect, as spoken in the Mundabli chiefdom, including the village and associated settlements and hamlets (thus excluding Mufu and Buu).

### 1.1.4 Contact and cross- and intra-dialectal variation

Mundabli is in contact with other Yemne-Kimbi languages, Ring languages and Jukunoid (to the north, see Hombert (1980: footnotes 3-4)), Cameroon

\(^2\)The name “Ndabile” is primarily found in (Chilver and Kaberry 1968) and sources based on it.

\(^3\)Ngako Yonga (2013: VII) suggests renaming the language from Buu with a long <uu> to Bu with a short <u> because the language does not have long vowels. However, I stick to the name ‘Buu’, for reasons laid out in Good et al. (2011: 124).
1.1. The Mundabli language

Pidgin, English and - to a much lesser degree - French.

For purely linguistic reasons, Mundabli may be viewed as one of two dialects of a common language called Mufu-Mundabli. The name is composed of the English names of the two chiefdoms in which these varieties are spoken. Although the dialects have a lot in common and are mutually intelligible, at the same time there are striking differences which make the two clearly distinguishable. Acoustically, the most striking difference is that Mundabli uses pharyngealized vowels where Mufu has syllable-final velar stops. More research is needed in order to determine the exact relationship between the two varieties. In spite of their closeness, Mundabli and Mufu are viewed by their speakers as different languages, mainly for socio-political reasons. As is characteristic of Lower Fungom villages, each of the two villages has its own chief and forms its own socio-political unit.

According to the speakers of Mundabli, there is no dialectal variation within the Mundabli variety and speakers of the different quarters, as well as those living in detached hamlets all speak more or less the same way. However, there is a certain degree of intra-lectal variation based on age rather than on the affiliation to a certain quarter or lineage. This variation seems to reflect an ongoing process of language change. Younger speakers (approximately up to the age of 40-50) speak differently from older speakers. The elders variety is perceived to be more correct. E.g., the chief is said to speak “real” Mundabli, whereas younger people are allegedly corrupting the language. The most prominent difference is the gradual loss of final /l/ in younger speakers, which is accompanied by a change in vowel quality (cf. Table 1.1). The version used by the chief and other older people is regarded as the “correct” form, but speakers use the other form just as often.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>older speakers</th>
<th>younger speakers</th>
<th>gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>kwål</td>
<td>kwè</td>
<td>homestead, sacred grove</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kwāl</td>
<td>kwē</td>
<td>house rat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bwēl</td>
<td>bwē</td>
<td>calabash (used as oil container)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dēl</td>
<td>dē</td>
<td>weight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tēl</td>
<td>tē</td>
<td>pull (v)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.1: Age-based variation in the pronunciation of original CVl stems

In the past, Mundabli has been viewed as part of the “Ji cluster” (Good et al. 2011: 124), together with Mufu and Buu, because these three languages seem to share certain similarities. However, recent studies led by myself and by Doriane Ngako (2013) on Buu and Mundabli suggest that Buu is a separate language. This is supported by the findings presented in Di Carlo (2015) on the linguistic prehistory of Lower Fungom. It had already been noticed by Hamm et al. (2002: 12) that the status of Buu regarding its affiliation to Mufu-Mundabli was unclear, but Hamm et al. (2002: 12) did not draw any consequences from this and lumped the three together.
Although impressionistic judgements on the degree of closeness of Mufu and Mundabli on the one hand, and between Mufu-Mundabli and Buu on the other can be made, these statements are still hypothetical due to a lack of data on Mufu and Buu. While a comparison of some aspects of Buu and Mundabli phonology has been carried out by Ngako Yonga (2013) based on Buu data collected by herself and on my Mundabli data, a comparison of Mundabli or Buu with Mufu is more difficult because only very little Mufu data have been collected. Statements on the similarity between Mundabli and Mufu are based on my own intuitions, but also on statements of Mundabli speakers and, to a certain degree, on the collected Mufu data.

1.1.5 Classification

Mundabli (ISO 639-3: boe, Glottocode: mund1328) is part of the Southern branch of Bantoid, itself a subbranch of Benue-Congo in the Niger-Congo language phylum. Mundabli used to be included in the “Beboid” branch of Southern Bantoid; see Figure 1.2.

```
Niger-Congo
  ↓
  Bantoid
    ↓
    ... Southern ...
    ↓
    "Beboid" Grassfields Bantu ...
    ↓
    E-Beboid W-Beboid ...
    ↓
    Mundabli ...
```

Figure 1.2: Niger-Congo family tree, adapted from Schadeberg (2003: 155)

The term “Beboid” was first used by Hombert (1980). Hombert (1980) includes Mundabli in the group of “Western Beboid” languages, an alleged subgroup of what he refers to as the “Beboid” languages. However, former “Western Beboid” is no longer accepted by all as closely related to “Eastern Beboid”. For lack of substantiating evidence for either a “Western Beboid” subgroup or any close affinity between “Western Beboid” and “Eastern Beboid”, Good et al. (2011: 108) abandon the label “Western Beboid” - along with its associated genetic hypotheses - and instead propose the name ‘Yemne-Kimbi’
1.1. The Mundabli language

for this group of languages; see Figure 1.3. This label references two rivers that are found at the western and eastern borders of the Lower Fungom region. It is intended to be a purely referential label without any implications regarding the genetic affiliation or coherence of the languages it includes.

![Bantoid family tree](image)

Figure 1.3: Bantoid family tree, following Glottolog (Hammarström et al. 2017)

The Yemne-Kimbi group contains several clusters of closely related languages or dialects, one of which is the ‘Ji-cluster’. The Ji-cluster comprises the varieties Mundabli, Mufu and Buu. While Mundabli and Mufu are close enough to be considered dialects of a single language, Buu is different enough that it should be considered a separate language (Good et al. 2011: 105). In accordance with the purely referential character of the label “Yemne-Kimbi”, e.g. Glottolog (Hammarström et al. 2017) does not recognize a Yemne-Kimbi subgroup and instead lists all languages and language clusters which are subsumed under the reference label Yemne-Kimbi as isolates at the same level as Beboid (with the more recent interpretation of this term, which corresponds roughly to former “Eastern Beboid”), Grassfields and Bantu. Note that the sub-classification within all of Southern Bantoid is preliminary.

The Grassfields and Bantu languages are especially relevant because they are closely related to Mundabli and the Grassfields languages in particular are potential contact languages. Grassfields includes the Ring-languages, which
are spoken in the direct vicinity of the Lower Fungom region, where Mundabli and the other Yemne-Kimbi languages are spoken. The Grassfields languages have received some attention, even outside of Niger-Congo Studies, since the Grassfields Working Group did extensive fieldwork on these languages in the 1970s and 1980s (cf. Heine and Nurse (2000: 34) for details). There is an interesting historical link between the Bantu languages and the Grassfields and Yemne-Kimbi languages, as the area where the latter are spoken is believed to be the cradle of the Bantu languages.

1.2 Description and analysis of Mundabli

1.2.1 Previous research on Mundabli

Little work has been published exclusively on Mundabli. In the last decades, Mundabli was included in a survey of noun classes in what Hombert (1980) referred to as Beboid\(^4\) (Hombert 1980) and in survey work done by SIL (Hamm 2002; Hamm et al. 2002) which includes a word list for Mundabli, albeit without tone. More recently, a few articles have been published on specific aspects of Mundabli grammar, namely Voll (2010) on tonal inflection in the tense system, Voll (2014) on the grammaticalization of body part terms in Mundabli and an article on the structure of relative clauses in Mundabli and Mungbam (ISO 639-3 code: mij), a dialect cluster belonging to Yemne-Kimbi, which includes the dialects Munken, Ngun, Biya, Abar and Missong (Lovegren and Voll 2017).

Information on Mundabli is also included in some recent more general articles. Good et al. (2011) contains some basic grammatical information on Mundabli, including data on phonology, the noun class system and verb morphology. Good (2012) contains an overview of the Mundabli noun class system and a theoretical discussion of its implications. Di Carlo (2011), Di Carlo and Pizzioło (2012) and Di Carlo and Good (2014) discuss the settlement and migration history of Mundabli and the history of the Mundabli language.

In the last decade, some material has been published on other Yemne-Kimbi languages. An excellent multi-dialectal grammar of Mungbam has been published by Lovegren (2013) who has also written articles on specific aspects of Mungbam phonetics and phonology (Lovegren 2011b; a). Ngako Yonga (2013) has published a phonological and morphological sketch of Buu, which is of special relevance because Buu is one of the three dialects which supposedly make up the “Ji cluster”, the others being Mundabli and Mufu. Ngako Yonga (2013) also contains a brief comparison of some aspects of Mundabli and Buu phonology and morphology. Finally, Mve (2013) published a phonological description of Fán (ISO 639-3 code: fak), another Yemne-Kimbi language.

\(^4\)Hombert assumed that Beboid (Good et al. 2011) and Yemne-Kimbi (Good et al. 2011) were related. He referred to them accordingly as “Eastern Beboid” and “Western Beboid” which he believed made up the genealogical group “Beboid”.

The data resources I used other than my own recordings are restricted to a wordlist compiled by SIL (Hamm 2002) and recordings of elicitation sessions of about five hours each by Scott Farrar and Jeff Good. The work of Jesse Lovegren, who published his multi-lectal grammar of Mungbam in 2013, was a great inspiration.

1.2.2 Fieldwork setting

This description is based on recordings made during three field trips (2008, 2009 and 2012) to Cameroon totalling a period of 9 months. During these trips, I spent about half of my time in the Mundabli village and the other half in the nearby town of Wum, where I worked with Mundabli-speakers. While the village setting allowed me to make recordings of authentic natural speech data, working in town facilitated elicitation and transcription, especially because electricity is practically unavailable in Mundabli. Therefore, most stories and conversations were recorded in the Mundabli village and only a few in Wum. Recordings of spontaneous speech were transcribed and glossed with the help of consultants. Part of the translation and elicitation work was done in the Mundabli village with the help of my main consultant in Mundabli, Jacqueline Ntie Kimba and, to lesser parts, with Alfred Ngasha Shami and Barnabas Nyambong. The rest of the elicitation and translation work was done in Wum (and also in Bamenda during a later trip), where I worked together with my main consultant in town, Donatus Yung Kungmba, and, to a lesser extent, with Jonathan Yessa and a few other speakers. Elicitation was done partly in English and partly in Cameroon Pidgin. I am aware of the pitfalls of elicited data, such as the danger of direct translation from English/Cameroon Pidgin, or the possibility of eliciting unnatural utterances. Ideally, a description would be entirely based on natural speech data. However, elicitation allows one to selectively extract comprehensive information on specific topics, which is necessary given temporal restrictions.

My database comprises digital audio recordings of a total length of around 200 hours, of which a few hours are transcribed and glossed. It comprises recordings of spontaneous and planned speech, such as natural conversations, biographies, anecdotes, narratives, riddles, songs, and instructions, as well as numerous recordings of elicitation sessions. For a discussion of the use of elicited data vs. natural speech data, see Lovegren (2013: 8-10).

All recordings were made with a flash recorder (Edirol R-09), in wav quality. I used the in-built microphone to record natural conversations and more generally recordings with more than two speakers. For elicitation, I used either the in-built microphone of the flash recorder or a headset (Sennheiser PC 131). Only in a few cases, I used a directional condenser microphone (Rode NTG-2). I also made a video recording of one elicitation session. In order to transcribe and store the recordings, I later transferred the sound files to my computer. For notes and primary transcriptions, I used an old-fashioned paper note book, especially in the village, where access to electricity is strongly
restricted. For transcription and annotation, I used computer programs, such as ELAN and, to a lesser extent, Toolbox. Due to practical restrictions, not all recordings are translated, transcribed and glossed, yet.

1.2.3 Presentation of data

This description contains in-text examples and numbered examples. In-text examples are written in bold letters and, when they contain a translation, the translation is enclosed in single quotation marks. Other examples are numbered continuously, from the beginning to the end of the book. They consist of three lines: a source language line, a line with morphological glosses, and a translation in English. The English translation may in some cases contain Cameroon Pidgin terms which are attested neither in Standard British English nor in Standard American English. Elicited examples are marked with a small diamond symbol “⋄” preceding the translation. This is done in order to raise awareness: elicited data may be subject to interference from English or Cameroon Pidgin, which were used as meta-languages in elicitation.

1.2.4 Practical transcription

The current orthography is based on the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) but is partly adjusted to resemble the “General Alphabet of Cameroon Languages” (Tadadjeu and Sadembouo 1979), henceforth simply referred to as the ‘Cameroonian alphabet’, in order to try to conform to Africanist standards, to enhance comparability with other Cameroonian languages and, last but not least, to make this work more accessible to the language community and eventually make it easier for the language community to develop a practical orthography. Thus, the grapheme <y> is preferred over IPA <j> to represent a palatal approximant because it conforms both to its use in English (the language of education) and in orthographies of other local languages. The orthography was not discussed with the speech community and it is not meant to function as a practical orthography to be used for writing or in teaching the language. A practical orthography should be developed in collaboration with the speech community based on practical considerations, giving priority to language use rather than language description. The graphemes used here widely coincide with the IPA symbols. However, there are a few exceptions. In what follows, I first discuss vowel graphemes, then tone marks, and finally consonant graphemes.

The use of vowel symbols in the current orthography diverges only slightly from their use in the IPA or in Tadadjeu and Sadembouo (1979). Table 1.2 contains an overview of the vowel graphemes used in this book.

The diacritics which mark pharyngealized vowels in the left column are neither found in the Cameroonian alphabet (Tadadjeu and Sadembouo 1979), nor in the IPA. As there is no conventionalized symbol for pharyngealized
1.2. Description and analysis of Mundabli

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grapheme IPA symbol</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a a a</td>
<td>low front unrounded vowel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>æ æ æ</td>
<td>near-low front unrounded vowel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ε ε ε</td>
<td>low-mid front unrounded vowel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e e e</td>
<td>high-mid front unrounded vowel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>œ œ œ</td>
<td>mid central vowel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i i i</td>
<td>near-high near-front unrounded vowel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i̤ i̤ i̤</td>
<td>pharyngealized high front unrounded vowel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i̯ u u</td>
<td>high back unrounded vowel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i̤ u u</td>
<td>pharyngealized high back unrounded vowel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>u u u</td>
<td>high back rounded vowel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>u̯ u u</td>
<td>pharyngealized high back rounded vowel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o o o</td>
<td>close-mid rounded vowel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o̯ o o</td>
<td>low-mid back rounded vowel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a a a</td>
<td>low back unrounded vowel</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.2: List of vowel graphemes compared with IPA symbols and symbols used in the Cameroonian alphabet (Tadadjeu and Sadembouo 1979)

vowels, I had to find a different solution. The diacritic chosen here to represent pharyngealization, two dots arranged horizontally below the vowel, as in <i̤>, is the IPA diacritic for breathy voice. This diacritic was chosen because the articulation mechanisms of pharyngealization and breathy voice resemble each other and because, to the best of my knowledge, the two do not coexist in any language. Breathy voice is not attested in Mundabli and it is rare in this part of the world in general. The chosen diacritic also has a practical advantage: it occurs below the vowel and does not interfere with tone marking.

The second point in which the vowel transcription system used here does not conform with the IPA on the one hand and with the Cameroonian alphabet on the other is the use of the grapheme <i> to represent a high unrounded back vowel. The grapheme <i> was chosen rather than IPA <u>, because the former is commonly used in Cameroonian orthographies, while the use of the symbol <u> is not. Whereas Tadadjeu and Sadembouo (1979: 15) recommend the use of the grapheme <u> for a high back unrounded vowel, I chose to use <i> instead, because the IPA uses <u> to represent a rounded vowel.

The high front and back [-ATR] vowels are represented by the IPA symbols
The use of IPA symbols is necessary to distinguish between [+ATR] and [-ATR] vowels. Tadadjeu and Sadembouo (1979: 13) completely lack graphemes to express this distinction. Finally, the use of IPA <ɔ> to represent a low back rounded vowel is preferred over the use of <α>, as suggested by Tadadjeu and Sadembouo (1979: 13). In the IPA the symbol <α> corresponds to a low back unrounded vowel.

Tone is marked with diacritical tone marks. There are four tone levels: low, mid, high and superhigh, marked by diacritics above the vowels, as e.g. in ƙɛ̀ ‘leg’. Two tone marks can be combined to form a complex tone pattern, as shown in Table 1.3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>diacritic IPA</th>
<th>Tadadjeu and Sadembouo (1979) description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>̀ ̀ ̀</td>
<td>low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>́ ́ ́</td>
<td>high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>̋ ̋ ̋</td>
<td>superhigh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>̌ ̌ ̌</td>
<td>low-high rising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>̂ ̂ ̂</td>
<td>high-low falling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ᶢ ᶢ ᶢ</td>
<td>mid-low falling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ᶣ ᶣ ᶣ</td>
<td>mid-high rising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ᶦ ᶦ ᶦ</td>
<td>high-mid falling</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.3: List of tone marks compared with IPA symbols and symbols used in Tadadjeu and Sadembouo (1979)

Most consonants are also represented by IPA symbols. Only in a few cases did I choose to use symbols that fit better in a Cameroonian context. Table 1.4 shows the graphemes used to represent consonants.

For practical reasons, the tie-bars used in complex consonants in the IPA (cf. Table 1.4) are not used. Instead, complex consonants are simply represented by the relevant consonant combinations without tie-bars, as suggested by Tadadjeu and Sadembouo (1979). I chose to conform with the IPA in transcribing the affricates <tʃ> and <dʒ> rather than using the symbols <c> and <ʃ> (or <č> and <ʃ>), as suggested by Tadadjeu and Sadembouo (1979). This is done in order to avoid the impression that the consonants in question are palatal plosives. While palatal plosives ([c] and [ɟ]) are not attested in Mundabli, they are attested in Mufu. Having made this choice, I have decided to transcribe the palatal sibilant using <ʃ> rather than <sh> because it would be too awkward to have the sequences <tʃh> and <dʒh> represent single sounds, and it would be even worse to use <tʃ> for the

---

5Note that the distribution of palatal plosives in Mufu does not mirror the distribution of palatal affricates in Mundabli.
1.2. Description and analysis of Mundabli

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>current grapheme</th>
<th>IPA symbol</th>
<th>(Tadadjeu and Sadembouo 1979)</th>
<th>description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>p</td>
<td>p</td>
<td>p</td>
<td>voiceless bilabial plosive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>voiceless alveolar plosive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k</td>
<td>k</td>
<td>k</td>
<td>voiceless velar plosive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kp</td>
<td>kp</td>
<td>kp</td>
<td>voiceless labial-velar plosive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>voiced bilabial plosive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d</td>
<td>d</td>
<td>d</td>
<td>voiced alveolar plosive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g</td>
<td>g</td>
<td>g</td>
<td>voiced velar plosive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gb</td>
<td>gb</td>
<td>gb</td>
<td>voiced labial-velar plosive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>voiceless labio-dental fricative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s</td>
<td>s</td>
<td>s</td>
<td>voiceless alveolar fricative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j</td>
<td>sh</td>
<td>sh</td>
<td>voiceless post-alveolar fricative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ts</td>
<td>ts</td>
<td>ts</td>
<td>voiceless alveolar affricate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tj</td>
<td>c, č</td>
<td>c, č</td>
<td>voiceless post-alveolar affricate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dz</td>
<td>dz</td>
<td>dz</td>
<td>voiced alveolar affricate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dz</td>
<td>dz</td>
<td>dz</td>
<td>voiced post-alveolar affricate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>bilabial nasal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>alveolar nasal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ŋ</td>
<td>ŋ</td>
<td>ŋ</td>
<td>palatal nasal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ŋm</td>
<td>ŋm</td>
<td>ŋm</td>
<td>labial-velar nasal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l</td>
<td>l</td>
<td>l</td>
<td>lateral alveolar approximant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>y</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>palatal approximant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ʔ</td>
<td>ʔ</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>labial-palatal approximant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>w</td>
<td>w</td>
<td>w</td>
<td>labial-velar approximant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.4: List of consonant graphemes compared with IPA symbols and symbols used in Tadadjeu and Sadembouo (1979)

affricate but <sh> for the corresponding fricative. The graphemes for the palatal and velar nasal are identical with their IPA symbols <ŋ> and <ŋ>. On the one hand, this reflects their status as single segments and on the other hand, it eliminates ambiguity between the nasal [ŋ] and the sequence [ŋ]. The palatal approximant is represented by the grapheme <y> rather than IPA <j>. The use of <y> to represent a palatal approximant is standard in the area, whereas <j> commonly represents IPA [dʒ]. Finally, the IPA symbol for the labial-palatal approximant <ʔ> is sporadically used to show the phonetic realization, but the sound is usually written <yw> because it represents a consonant sequence rather than a single complex consonant (see §2.2). A nasal is syllabic when it bears a tone mark, otherwise it is not.
CHAPTER 2

Phonology

2.1 Tone

The tone system of Mundabli is characterized by four level tones and a number of contour tones. Tones are taken at their surface values. The only tonal process attested is low tone spread (see §3.4.2). Each syllable in Mundabli carries contrastive tone. Although nouns and verbs are nearly identical in their segmental setup, they differ considerably regarding their tonal behavior. While nouns generally retain their lexical tones, the tone patterns of verbs change depending on factors such as their syntactic position and the tense/mood/aspect in which they occur.

The remainder of the current section is organized as follows. Section 2.1.1 gives an overview of the tonal inventory, §2.1.2 deals with the phonetic realization of tones, and §2.1.3 briefly introduces noun and verb tone patterns. Noun and verb tone patterns are discussed in more detail in §3.2. An overview of all verb tone patterns is provided in Chapter 8.

2.1.1 Tonal inventory

The tone bearing unit in Mundabli is the syllable. There is no distinction in vowel length and the same tone combinations are possible in open and closed syllables. Mundabli has neither downstep nor phonetic downdrift. It is a “discrete level” language, i.e. tones are always realized at approximately the same pitch.
The four level tones are referred to as low (L), mid (M), high (H) and superhigh (S). Mundabli also has contour tones, namely a low-high rising tone (LH) and three falling tones: mid-low (ML), high-mid (HM) and high-low (HL). While the other contour tones are relatively common, HL is rare and occurs mainly in loanwords. Table 2.1 contains near-minimal pairs illustrating all level and contour tones.\(^1\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>tone</th>
<th>symbol</th>
<th>diacritic</th>
<th>example</th>
<th>gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>low</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>x̀</td>
<td>kù</td>
<td>'rope'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mid</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>x̄</td>
<td>kū</td>
<td>'ratmole'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>high</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>x́</td>
<td>kú</td>
<td>'home.loc'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>superhigh</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>x̌</td>
<td>kű</td>
<td>'belly'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>low-high</td>
<td>LH</td>
<td>x̌</td>
<td>kɔ̌</td>
<td>'grab' (clause-final)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mid-low</td>
<td>ML</td>
<td>x᷆</td>
<td>ku᷆</td>
<td>'clap' (clause-final)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>high-mid</td>
<td>HM</td>
<td>x᷇</td>
<td>kɔ᷇</td>
<td>'wisdom'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>high-low</td>
<td>HL</td>
<td>x̂</td>
<td>gâŋ</td>
<td>'gown'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.1: Tonal diacritics

The tone of a syllable is marked by diacritics on the vowel. In closed syllables, part of the tone is realized on the final sonorant. However, in the current orthography, the tone of a syllable is always marked on the (first) vowel, as e.g. in gɔ᷆ŋ 'spear' or dʒwǎn 'star', except when a syllable consists of a syllabic nasal, which then receives the tone mark.

### 2.1.2 Phonetic realization of tones

Whereas the mid, high and superhigh tones are phonetically level in both final and non-final position, the low tone is level in non-final position but phonetically falling before a pause. As this alternation is completely predictable, the low tone is always transcribed with a grave accent. A superhigh tone may be realized as LH when it is preceded by a low tone. In this case, it is transcribed as low-high rising tone. This process, which I refer to as low-tone spread, is described in §3.4.2.

Contour tones may occur in non-final position or before a pause. Their pronunciation is generally the same in final and in non-final position. Only the mid-low falling tone (ML) is realized as a mid tone (M) in non-final position unless followed by a low tone (L), so that the distinction between the ML and the M is neutralized in this context. In this case, I also transcribe it as a mid tone (M). Only before a pause or a low tone does the mid-low falling tone contrast with the mid tone, which is realized as phonetically level in final and non-final position. The nouns tɔ᷆ 'horn' and tō 'day', for example, bear different

\(^1\)Verbs are given with the tone pattern specific for non-final position. In this and the following example though, verbs are given with the tone pattern characteristic of clause-final position, see §3.2.2.2 for details.
tones when pronounced in isolation, but their tone patterns are identical when they are followed by a determiner as in tɔ̄kɔ́ ‘the horn’ and tēkɔ́ ‘the day’.

Table 2.2 and Table 2.3 contain approximate pitch values of all level and contour tones for a male (Yung Donatus Kungmba) and a female (Ntie Jacqueline Kemba) speaker, respectively. The values represent approximations based on measurements of several tokens for each tone pattern. Where the pitch changes, the values for the beginning and end point of the phonetic contour are given, separated by the greater-than symbol ‘>’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>prose</th>
<th>symbol</th>
<th>final pitch</th>
<th>non-final pitch</th>
<th>example</th>
<th>gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>low</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>115 &gt; 100</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>kù</td>
<td>‘rope’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mid</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>kū</td>
<td>‘ratmole’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>high</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>kū</td>
<td>‘home.loc’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>superhigh</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>kū</td>
<td>‘belly’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>low-high</td>
<td>LH</td>
<td>115 &gt; 145</td>
<td>115 &gt; 145</td>
<td>kē</td>
<td>‘fetch’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>high-mid</td>
<td>HM</td>
<td>145 &gt; 125</td>
<td>145 &gt; 125</td>
<td>tī</td>
<td>‘firewood’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mid-low/mid</td>
<td>ML/M</td>
<td>145 &gt; 100</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>kē</td>
<td>‘hand’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>high-low</td>
<td>HL</td>
<td>145 &gt; 100</td>
<td>145 &gt; 100</td>
<td>sē</td>
<td>‘front part of house’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.2: Approximate pitch values of level and contour tones for Yung Donatus Kungmba

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>prose</th>
<th>symbol</th>
<th>final pitch</th>
<th>non-final pitch</th>
<th>example</th>
<th>gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>low</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>220 &gt; 170</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>kù</td>
<td>‘rope’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mid</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>kū</td>
<td>‘ratmole’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>high</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>kū</td>
<td>‘home.loc’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>superhigh</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>kū</td>
<td>‘belly’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>low-high</td>
<td>LH</td>
<td>220 &gt; 280</td>
<td>220 &gt; 280</td>
<td>kē</td>
<td>‘fetch’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>high-mid</td>
<td>HM</td>
<td>310 &gt; 220</td>
<td>310 &gt; 220</td>
<td>tī</td>
<td>‘firewood’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mid-low/mid</td>
<td>ML/M</td>
<td>260 &gt; 200</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>kē</td>
<td>‘hand’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>high-low</td>
<td>HL</td>
<td>260 &gt; 200</td>
<td>260 &gt; 200</td>
<td>sē</td>
<td>‘front part of house’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.3: Approximate pitch values of level and contour tones for Ntie Jacqueline Kemba
In both speakers, although more clearly in the pronunciation of the female speaker (see Table 2.3), the level tones are not evenly distributed across the pitch range. The M and H tone are somewhat huddled up around the center of the pitch range with a relatively small distance between them. The difference amounts to something around 15 Hz for Yung Donatus Kungmba (male) and 20 Hz for Ntie Jacqueline Kemba (female). This leaves a bigger distance between these two ‘central’ tones and the ‘outlying’ tones, L and S. The distance between level L and M amounts to ca. 15 Hz for Yung Donatus Kungmba and 40 Hz for Ntie Jacqueline Kemba and the distance between H and S is around 25 Hz for Yung Donatus Kungmba and around 45 Hz for Ntie Jacqueline Kemba.

Furthermore, comparing the phonetic pitch of the ML and the HL falling tones, I could not discern a significant pitch difference between them in either of the two speakers. While ML is quite common, HL is rare and occurs mainly in loanwords. My consultant Yung Donatus Kungmba says that the two do sound different, i.e. that HL starts at a higher level and ML at a lower level. Even if ML and HL are phonetically identical, there is a phonological difference. ML is realized as level M in non-final position whereas HL is always realized as HL. Therefore, the two are transcribed as ML and HL, respectively. In general, the tone patterns are realized at a slightly lower pitch when the onset is voiced and slightly higher when the onset is voiceless.

2.1.3 Noun and verb tone patterns

Nouns and verbs show different tonal behavior. While nouns are lexically specified for noun class and retain their tonal patterns in all contexts (with the exception of Gender 9/10 nouns, cf. §3.2.1), each verb belongs to one of three tone classes (\(A\), \(B\) and \(C\)). The tone of all verbs belonging to the same tone class is identical in a given context. However, the tonal pattern of verbs depends on various factors, such as tense, aspect, syntactic position etc. (see Chapter 8 for details).

2.2 Consonants

Mundabli has a rich consonant inventory consisting of 21 consonant phonemes. These phonemes are presented in Table 2.4.

Consonant glide sequences and nasal consonant sequences are not included in Table 2.4 because they are analyzed as sequences rather than complex segments, cf. §2.2.3. The consonants in Table 2.4 are sorted according to place (columns) and manner (rows) of articulation. Voicing is distinctive in plosives, but the labial plosive \(b\) does not have a voiceless equivalent, thus leaving a gap in the inventory in the place of \(p\).\(^2\) The phonemes \(tʃ\) and \(dʒ\) are analyzed as alveo-palatal affricates rather than palatal stops. Their pronunciation differs phonetically from that of the palatal stops \([c]\) and \([j]\) which are attested in the Mufu variety. The Mundabli affricates are realized further to the front
Table 2.4: Inventory of consonant phonemes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Labial</th>
<th>Alveolar</th>
<th>Alveo-Palatal</th>
<th>Velar</th>
<th>Labial-velar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plosives</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>k</td>
<td>kp</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b</td>
<td>d</td>
<td>g</td>
<td>gb</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fricatives</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>s</td>
<td>j</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affricates</td>
<td>ts</td>
<td>tf</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>dz</td>
<td>dʒ</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nasals</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>ɲ</td>
<td>η</td>
<td>[ŋm]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approximants</td>
<td>l</td>
<td>y, [ʉ]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>w</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

than the Mufu palatal stops (, namely at the back of the alveolum) and they are released with more friction. Furthermore, the alveolar affricates ts and dz in Mundabli correspond to the palatal plosives c and j in Mufu cognates, not the alveo-palatal affricates tʃ and dʒ.

While most consonants in the chart are represented by IPA symbols, a few of the symbols in the chart do not adhere to IPA standards. Sounds in Table 2.4 which are represented by more than one consonant, such as kp or tʃ represent single phonemes. Orthographic conventions are described in detail in §1.2.4.

Table 2.4 includes two sounds in square brackets, namely the labiovelar nasal [ŋm] and the labial-palatal glide [ɥ]. They are included in order to give a representative overview of the sound system, but the square brackets indicate that they are not part of the phoneme inventory. The labiovelar nasal [ŋm] only occurs in NC clusters with labiovelar plosives preceded by homorganic nasals. It is predictable and not phonemic. The rare labial-palatal glide [ɥ] is also not phonemic. It only occurs in a few lexical items such as ywɔ̌ŋ [ɥɔ̌ŋ] ‘snake’ and njwàn [ɲwân] ‘bird’. In all cases the labial-palatal glide [ɥ] can be analyzed as a sequence of a palatal consonant and a labial glide.

### 2.2.1 Consonant phonemes and allophonic variation

This section contains descriptions of all consonant phonemes and their allophones. Since the morphology of Mundabli is mostly isolating, allophonic variation is restricted. Common allophonic alternations are spirantization of stops before the high vowels i and u, devoicing of coda sonorants and glottalization of final nasals. While the current section describes the realization of phonemes, allophonic variation as such is dealt with in §2.2.5.

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2The lack of a voiceless equivalent of b is an areal phenomenon. It has been attested in numerous other languages in the area, e.g. Mungbam, Ajumbu, Koshin, Naki, see Watters and Leroy (1989) and Good et al. (2011). The same gap is attested in most Beboid (former Eastern Beboid) languages, such as e.g., Noni (Hyman 1981: 17–18), Kemezung (Cox 2005), Mungong (Boutwell 2011), Nchane (Boutwell and Boutwell 2014), in Ring languages (Aghem (Hyman 1979) etc.) and in Grassfields languages (e.g. Limbum (Fransen 1995)). For a brief discussion of this phenomenon and a map of the world-wide distribution of languages with the same gap in their consonant inventory, see Maddieson (2011).
2.2.1.1 Plosives

With the exception of the labial-velar plosive \( \text{kp} \), voiceless plosives are slightly aspirated. Both voiced and voiceless plosives have a fricative release when they precede the [ + ATR] high vowels \( i \) and \( u \). This phenomenon is best seen as a side-effect of the friction which occurs throughout the vowels \( i \) and \( u \) (see §2.3.1).

**The consonant \( t \)** The voiceless alveolar plosive \( t \) is well represented by the IPA symbol [t] although its articulation varies slightly depending on the context. When it occurs in the onset, it is slightly aspirated. Examples are \( \text{tɛ̄} \) ‘walking stick’, \( \text{tɔ᷆} \) ‘horn’ and \( \text{ta̋ŋ} \) ‘buy’.

Before the high vowels \( i \) and \( u \), \( t \) is more strongly aspirated than otherwise. Before \( i \), it can be realized with slight affrication [tʰ] as in \( \text{tʰi} \) ‘his/her father’ which is realized as [tʰɪ] or as [tʰi] or \( \text{tʰi} \) ‘bed side of house’.

The setup of traditional Mundabli houses generally follows a strict pattern. The entrance is on the front side. The side closest to the entrance usually contains a bench. The bed is usually found on the side far from the door, and the back side inside of the house often serves as storage room for pots and other things. The noun \( \text{tí} \) refers to the side containing the bed. (see also §2.2.5.1 and §2.3.1). The friction in this case is weaker than in the affricate phoneme \( \text{ts} \). The phonemic affricate \( \text{ts} \) never precedes the vowel \( i \). Before \( i \), the distinction between \( \text{ts} \) and \( \text{tʃ} \) is neutralized and both are realized as \( \text{tʃ} \) (see also §2.2.1.2). The phoneme \( t \) occurs in the syllable coda only in ideophones such as \( \text{kàt} \) which expresses that fact that something has been completely destroyed. When \( t \) stands in coda position, the closure is not released. E.g., \( \text{kàt} \) is phonetically realized as [kàt’].

**The consonant \( k \)** The voiceless velar plosive \( k \) is pronounced [k]. Examples are \( \text{kàm} \) ‘monkey, sp.’, \( \text{kɛ̋} \) ‘leg’ and \( \text{kɔ᷆ŋ} \) ‘love’ (v.). Before the high vowels \( i \) and \( u \), it is more strongly aspirated and before \( u \) it can be slightly spirantized, in which case it has a bilabial release an is realized [kʰ] as e.g., in \( \text{kù} \) [kʰù] ‘clap’ or in \( \text{kù} \) [kʰù] ‘belly’. Just like \( t \), \( k \) is found in coda-position only in ideophones like e.g., \( \text{dʒɛ̌k} \) ‘sound of something breaking, collapsing’. In this case, the closure has no audible release and e.g. \( \text{dʒɛ̌k} \) is phonetically realized as [dʒɛ̌kʰ].

**The consonant \( \text{kp} \)** The voiceless labial-velar plosive \( \text{kp} \) is pronounced [kp]. It is a consonant with two simultaneous places of articulation. Unlike the other voiceless plosives, it is not aspirated. The labial and the velar closure are released nearly at the same time. Due to the two simultaneous closures, it is...
sometimes realized with a nonpulmonic, slightly ingressive airstream. Examples are kpā 'shoe', kpîn 'elbow' and kpî 'die'.

The consonant b  The voiceless bilabial plosive b is well-represented by IPA [b]. Examples of words containing b are bɔ̀ 'bag', bʊ̃ŋ 'ash' and bɨ̋ 'roll' (v.). Besides the most common pronunciation [b], b has two allophones. It is slightly affricated and pronounced [bβ] when it precedes the [+ATR] high front and back vowels i and u. This affrication is best explained as a side-effect of the friction occurring throughout the vowels i and u. Further, b may be softened and pronounced as approximant [ʋ] in fast speech, especially when it occurs in a non-prominent position, e.g. in the onset of the determiners of Class 2 or Class 8 (both bɔ̀) when they follow a noun.

The consonant d  The plosive d is well-represented by IPA [d]. It is a voiced alveolar plosive. Examples of d are də̃ 'machete' (in Pidgin 'cutlass'), dâm 'dream' (n.) and dô 'remain'.

The consonant g  The voiced velar plosive g is comparable to IPA [g]. Examples of words containing g are gīgi 'beard', gɔ̃ŋ 'spear' and gī 'put'.

The consonant gb  The consonant gb is a voiced labial-velar stop. It is well-represented by IPA [g̊b]. It is a single complex segment with two simultaneous closures. The two closures are released almost simultaneously. Sometimes a slight non-pulmonic ingressive airstream is created. Examples of gb are gbàn 'in-law', gbɛ 'pus' and gbû 'fall'.

2.2.1.2  Affricates

The consonant ts  The voiceless alveolar affricate ts corresponds to IPA [ts]. Although it is represented by two symbols, it is not a sequence of phonemes but one complex segment. Examples of words containing the affricate ts are tsà 'mud', tsɔ̃ 'witchcraft' and tsî 'pass the night'.

The consonant tf  The affricate tf is a complex alveo-palatal segment. It is articulated between the alveolus and palate and given the label “alveo-palatal”. It is well represented by IPA [tf] although it is a bit more frontal than e.g., English or German tf. Examples of words containing tf are tfuŋ 'ear', tfîtfî 'heel' and tfû 'come'. Before the high vowel i, it does not contrast with the alveolar affricate ts.

The consonant dz  The voiced alveolar affricate dz is pronounced [dʒ]. When it is preceded by a nasal, it is sometimes weakened and is pronounced [z], even in careful pronunciation. This happens e.g. in nouns like ndzi ((ndzi)~{nzì})
‘sheep’). Like ts, dz is not attested before the high front vowel i. Further examples of words containing dz are dzē ‘cutting grass’ (Thryonomys swinderianus), dzān ‘mosquito’ and dzʊ́ŋ ‘quarrel’ (v.).

**The consonant dz**  The voiced alveo-palatal affricate dz is well-represented by IPA [dʒ]. Like tʃ, it is articulated further in front than English dʒ. Examples of dz are dʒǐ ‘dog’, dʒǔ ‘goat’ and dʒi᷆ ‘put’.

### 2.2.1.3 Fricatives

**The consonant f**  The consonant f corresponds to IPA [f]. It is a voiceless labio-dental fricative, not different in pronunciation from its English equivalent. Examples of words containing f are fɔ̄ ‘head’, fufű ‘beans, sp.’ and fʊŋ ‘catch crabs (by hand)’.

**The consonant s**  The consonant s is comparable to IPA [s]. It is a voiceless alveolar fricative. Examples of s are sə᷆ ‘clothes’, sɔ̋ŋ ‘flue’ (in Pidgin ‘catarrh’) and sè ‘laugh’.

**The consonantʃ**  The consonantʃ is comparable to IPA [ʃ], i.e. it is a voiceless alveo-palatal fricative. Like the other alveo-palatal consonants, it is a bit more fronted than e.g., the English or the German fricative j. Examples of ʃ are ʃi᷆ ‘chicken’ (in Pidgin ‘fowl’), ʃάŋ ‘sand’ and ʃʊŋ ‘peel’ (v.).

### 2.2.1.4 Sonorants

Sonorants which occur in syllable-final position, i.e. the nasals m, n, ŋ and l are usually devoiced towards the end, often to such an extent that especially n tends to be overheard by someone who is not familiar with the language.

**The consonant m**  The bilabial nasal m is pronounced like IPA [m] when it occurs in the syllable-onset, as in mɔ̀ ‘person’, mān ‘name’ or māl ‘slide’ (v.). When it is in the coda, as in tʃm [tʃm] ‘axe’, dānm [dānm] ‘dream’ (n.) or mʊm [mʊm] ‘suck’, the nasal is slightly devoiced towards the end. The nasal m is also attested as the initial consonant of an NC-cluster in nouns, where it is followed by a labial obstruent, as in mbọŋ ‘cow’, mfọ ‘slave’ or mbọ ‘spark’.

**The consonant n**  The alveolar nasal n is well-represented by IPA [n]. In syllable-final position, it is devoiced more than other nasals. Examples of words containing n in syllable- and word-initial position are ni ‘my/our mother’, nǐng ‘thing’ and nám ‘work’ (v.). Examples of n in syllable- and word-final position are yān [yān] ‘leaf’, tsān [tsān] ‘arm’ and ɡān [ɡān] ‘go’. The nasal n also occurs in NC sequences where it precedes alveolar obstruents, as in the words ndʒän ‘Mundabli’, ntẹŋ ‘hawk’ and ndäm ‘tear(s)’.
Phonology

The consonant ɲ  The consonant ɲ corresponds to the palatal nasal [ŋ] in the IPA. Examples of ɲ are ɲǎ ‘thirst’, ɲǎŋ ‘bush fowl’ and ɲʊ́ŋ ‘hum’. The nasal ɲ is the only nasal which is not attested in coda position. The nasal ɲ is attested in monomorphemic NC-clusters followed by alveo-palatal consonants, e.g. in ndʒōm ‘things’, ntʃé ‘armpit’ and njfō ‘bird, sp.’.

The consonant η  The consonant η is a velar nasal, pronounced like IPA [ŋ]. While it is often found in initial NC sequences preceding a velar stop, it is only attested without a following obstruent in the syllable-onset of a handful of words. In all but one of these, namely ηǎ ‘boast’, it is followed by a labial glide, as in ɳwâ ‘write’ and ɳwâŋ ‘xylophone’. The velar nasal commonly occurs in syllable-final position, e.g. in sôŋ ‘basket’ (used for carrying seeds and collecting wild vegetables), tşŋ ‘ram’ (male sheep) and lâŋ ‘be happy’. The final devoicing attested in other final nasals is not quite as strong in velar nasals. Examples of η in NC-clusters are ɳgâ ‘quarter head’, ɳgâŋ ‘hill’ and ɳké ‘spoon’.

The consonant l  The lateral approximant l is pronounced [l]. It occurs in syllable-initial position in around thirty items, which is comparable to the frequency of e.g. kp in the onset. Examples are lôn ‘snot’, lôn ‘suffering’ and lô ‘go to the bush’. Whereas l is also attested in syllable-final position, my database contains only 15 cases of syllable-final l, which is a very low number compared to any of the final nasals. Examples of syllable-final l are kwôl ‘crocodile’, fyîl ‘whirlwind’ and tâl ‘pull’. The liquid l is the only non-nasal consonant which occurs in coda position in words other than ideophones. Just like the nasals, it is devoiced towards the end when it occurs in utterance-final position. Younger speakers have a tendency to drop final l. The omission commonly goes along with a fronting of the vowel. E.g., the verb tâl ‘pull’ is pronounced të by younger speakers (see §1.1.4 for details).

The consonant y  The palatal approximant y corresponds to IPA [j]. The symbol <y> was chosen here to avoid confusion. The use of <y> to represent a palatal approximant is standard in the area, while <j> commonly represents IPA [dʒ]. The palatal glide y is usually realized as an approximant, e.g. in the words yân ‘leaf’, yôm ‘bed’ and yô ‘throw’. However, when it precedes the high vowel i, the glide is spirantized and pronounced with friction, just like the vowel itself, e.g. yi [ʝi] ‘eat’. The palatal glide also occurs as the second consonant in CG-clusters, as in fyîl ‘whirlwind’, fyên ‘feast’ and lyân ‘flicker’ (of tongue). The palatal glide is not found in coda position.

The consonant w  The labial-velar approximant w corresponds to IPA [w]. It commonly occurs in syllable-initial position or as the second element in syllable-initial CG-clusters. Examples of words containing the onset w are wē
‘bark, peel’, wān ‘valley’ and wɔ᷆ŋ ‘squish’. Examples of words containing CG-onsets with w are gwɛ᷆n ‘feathers’, dʒwǎn ‘star’ and kwɔ᷆ŋ ‘snore’. The labial-velar glide is not found in coda position.

2.2.2 Minimal pairs

The selected (near) minimal pairs in Table 2.5 and Table 2.6 illustrate that the choice between the opposed sounds is not predictable from their context. Rather than comparing all consonant phonemes with each other, I present examples comparing only similar sounds, i.e. sounds of the same or a similar place and manner of articulation and sounds that are likely to be connected through sound changes, based on areal patterns of common sound changes. Where relevant, I also include NC sequences and consonant-glide clusters in the comparison. Verbs are given in the unmarked iθ tense (see §8.5.1) unless otherwise specified. In some cases the imperative form of a verb was chosen in order to create a (near) minimal pair.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>consonants</th>
<th>examples</th>
<th>gloss</th>
<th>examples</th>
<th>gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>t/k</td>
<td>tān</td>
<td>‘refuse’</td>
<td>kān</td>
<td>‘lack’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t/d</td>
<td>tɔ᷆</td>
<td>‘horn’</td>
<td>dɔ᷆</td>
<td>‘beans’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t/ts</td>
<td>tān</td>
<td>‘Fly!’ (IMP)</td>
<td>tsān</td>
<td>‘arm’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t/tʃ</td>
<td>tām</td>
<td>‘send’</td>
<td>tʃām</td>
<td>‘axe’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t/ŋt</td>
<td>tŋŋ</td>
<td>‘Buy!’ (IMP)</td>
<td>nt:tŋŋ</td>
<td>‘hawk’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k/kp</td>
<td>kē</td>
<td>‘hand, fingers’</td>
<td>kpē</td>
<td>‘pot’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k/g</td>
<td>kō</td>
<td>‘bone’</td>
<td>gō</td>
<td>‘fire’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k/gb</td>
<td>kē</td>
<td>‘hand, fingers’</td>
<td>gbē</td>
<td>‘wind’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k/ɡd</td>
<td>kē</td>
<td>‘hand, fingers’</td>
<td>ɡtʃē</td>
<td>‘women’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k/ŋk</td>
<td>kā</td>
<td>‘Fry!’ (IMP)</td>
<td>ŋkaŋ</td>
<td>‘corn beer’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kp/b</td>
<td>kpō</td>
<td>‘week’</td>
<td>bō</td>
<td>‘shoulder’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kp/ɡ</td>
<td>kpū</td>
<td>‘wooden bowl’</td>
<td>gō</td>
<td>‘fire’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kp/gb</td>
<td>kpē</td>
<td>‘pot’</td>
<td>gbē</td>
<td>‘wind’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kp/kw</td>
<td>kpā</td>
<td>‘shoe’</td>
<td>kwā</td>
<td>‘frog’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kp/ŋmkp</td>
<td>kpɔ̀ŋ</td>
<td>‘bulky part of head’</td>
<td>ŋmkpɔ́ŋ</td>
<td>‘stool (wooden)’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b/d</td>
<td>bɔ̀</td>
<td>‘bag’</td>
<td>dɔ᷆</td>
<td>‘beans’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>bɛ᷆</td>
<td>‘count’</td>
<td>gɛ᷆</td>
<td>‘corn’</td>
</tr>
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<td>‘bag’</td>
<td>gbɔ᷆</td>
<td>‘house’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b/mb</td>
<td>bān</td>
<td>‘waist’</td>
<td>mbàn</td>
<td>‘fence’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d/g</td>
<td>dūo</td>
<td>‘poison’</td>
<td>ɡūo</td>
<td>‘grind’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d/dʒ</td>
<td>dɔ᷆</td>
<td>‘beans’</td>
<td>dzɔ᷆</td>
<td>‘hides’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d/ŋd</td>
<td>dān</td>
<td>‘container’</td>
<td>dzān</td>
<td>‘connect pipes’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d/nd</td>
<td>dān</td>
<td>‘container’</td>
<td>ndān</td>
<td>‘branch’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gb/gb</td>
<td>gē</td>
<td>‘corn’</td>
<td>gbē</td>
<td>‘pus’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g/gw</td>
<td>gōŋ</td>
<td>‘spears’</td>
<td>gwɔ᷆ŋ</td>
<td>‘open’</td>
</tr>
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<td>g/ŋg</td>
<td>gāŋ</td>
<td>‘gown’</td>
<td>ŋɡāŋ</td>
<td>‘hill’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>consonants</td>
<td>examples</td>
<td>gloss</td>
<td>examples</td>
<td>gloss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gb/gw</td>
<td>gbé</td>
<td>‘wind’</td>
<td>gwěn</td>
<td>‘feathers’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gb/mŋgb</td>
<td>gbáŋ</td>
<td>‘Be spoiled!’</td>
<td>mŋgbáŋ</td>
<td>‘cheek’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ts/tʃ</td>
<td>tsé</td>
<td>‘pots’</td>
<td>tʃé</td>
<td>‘women’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ts/dz</td>
<td>tsé</td>
<td>‘pots’</td>
<td>dzé</td>
<td>‘cutting-grass’ (Thryonomye swinderianus)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ts/dʒ</td>
<td>tsű</td>
<td>‘hit’</td>
<td>dʒû</td>
<td>‘word’</td>
</tr>
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<td>ts/nts</td>
<td>tsǎ</td>
<td>‘shake a non-empty hollow object’</td>
<td>ntsǎ</td>
<td>‘cricket’</td>
</tr>
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<td>‘cackle’</td>
<td>tāŋ</td>
<td>‘buy’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tʃ/ntʃ</td>
<td>tʃé</td>
<td>‘women’</td>
<td>ntʃě</td>
<td>‘clay pot’</td>
</tr>
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<td>dzɔ̋</td>
<td>‘house’</td>
<td>dzɔ̋</td>
<td>‘bridge’</td>
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<td>dzwɔ̀ŋ</td>
<td>‘garden egg’</td>
<td>ndzwɔ̌ŋ</td>
<td>‘ball’</td>
</tr>
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<td>dʒ/ndʒ</td>
<td>dʒa᷆n</td>
<td>‘connect’</td>
<td>ndʒa᷆n</td>
<td>‘Mundabli’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t/s</td>
<td>wù tǎm</td>
<td>‘S/he has shot.’</td>
<td>sǎm</td>
<td>‘Play!’ (IMP)</td>
</tr>
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<td>‘send’</td>
<td>nām</td>
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<td>lǐ</td>
<td>‘power’</td>
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<td>sɔ̀</td>
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<td>‘borrow’</td>
<td>fwo᷆</td>
<td>‘detach’</td>
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<tr>
<td>f/mf</td>
<td>fá</td>
<td>‘shave’</td>
<td>mfá</td>
<td>‘inner stone in fire place’</td>
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<td>s/j</td>
<td>sìŋ</td>
<td>‘knife’</td>
<td>jìŋ</td>
<td>‘fill up’</td>
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<td>‘heart’</td>
<td>nām</td>
<td>‘work’</td>
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<td>s/l</td>
<td>sɔ̀</td>
<td>‘split’</td>
<td>lɔ᷆</td>
<td>‘go to the bush’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s/ns</td>
<td>sɔ̀</td>
<td>‘meat’</td>
<td>nsɔ̀</td>
<td>‘basket, sp.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j/tʃ</td>
<td>jű</td>
<td>‘outer stone in fire place’</td>
<td>tjű</td>
<td>‘come’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j/ŋʃ</td>
<td>jű</td>
<td>‘outer stone in fire place’</td>
<td>njű</td>
<td>‘palm tree, sp.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m/n</td>
<td>mān</td>
<td>‘name’</td>
<td>nǎn</td>
<td>‘ant, sp.’</td>
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<td>m/ŋ</td>
<td>mān</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>n/ŋ</td>
<td>nǎn</td>
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<td>jǎn</td>
<td>‘ant, sp.’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.2. Consonants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>consonants</th>
<th>examples</th>
<th>gloss</th>
<th>examples</th>
<th>gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>l/t</td>
<td>láŋ</td>
<td>'be happy'</td>
<td>tāŋ</td>
<td>'buy' (IPFV)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l/d</td>
<td>làŋ</td>
<td>'reflect'</td>
<td>dāŋ</td>
<td>'cross'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l/n</td>
<td>lē</td>
<td>'get lost'</td>
<td>nē</td>
<td>'straighten'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>w/y</td>
<td>wāŋ</td>
<td>'valley'</td>
<td>yān</td>
<td>'leaf'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.5: Onset minimal pairs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>consonants</th>
<th>examples</th>
<th>gloss</th>
<th>examples</th>
<th>gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>l/n</td>
<td>ta᷆l</td>
<td>(te᷆) 'pull'</td>
<td>tān</td>
<td>'fly' (v.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m/n</td>
<td>nām</td>
<td>'work' (v.)</td>
<td>nān</td>
<td>'tie' (v.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m/ŋ</td>
<td>bōŋ</td>
<td>'pick up'</td>
<td>bōm</td>
<td>'circumcise'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n/ŋ</td>
<td>bāŋ</td>
<td>'clean' (v.)</td>
<td>bāŋ</td>
<td>'close' (v.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.6: Coda minimal pairs

2.2.3 Consonant-glide (CG) sequences

Consonant-glide sequences and nasal-consonant sequences (§2.2.4) are the only kinds of consonant clusters attested. In the current analysis, there is no advantage in interpreting consonant glide sequences as complex segments, i.e. labialized and palatalized consonants rather than consonant clusters. While historically, consonant-glide sequences in Mundabli were probably derived in most cases, synchronically they are often mono-morphemic. Consonant-glide sequences are attested only in stem-initial position.

2.2.3.1 Cw sequences

Sequences of a consonant plus a labial glide Cw are common in Mundabli lexical roots. Table 2.7 shows all attested Cw sequences. Table 2.7 shows that the glide w can follow nearly any other consonant. Exceptions are the labial-velar plosives kp and gb. A phonological sequence of a palatal and a labial glide yw is phonetically realized as labial-palatal glide q, as in ywō [qwō] ‘bee’. Similarly, a sequence of a palatal nasal and a labial glide njw, as in njwān ‘bird’, is pronounced [νwāŋ]; see §2.2. For an overview of phonemes and their phonetic realizations, consult the introductory section of §2.2.

Some of the sequences are more common than others. The sequence ηw for example occurs only in three roots: ηwā ‘write’, ηwāŋ ‘xylophone’ and ηwā ‘colourful’. Examples and total of the attested Cw sequence are given in Table 2.8.
### Table 2.7: Attested Cw sequences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>consonants</th>
<th>examples</th>
<th>number of attested examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>kw</td>
<td>kwà ‘box’, kwén ‘ladder’</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bw</td>
<td>bwè ‘claw’, bwè ‘sky’</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gw</td>
<td>gwēn ‘feather’, gwēn ‘be sick’</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sw</td>
<td>swān ‘ceiling’</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ūw</td>
<td>ūwá ‘choke’, ūwín ‘wink with eye’</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tsw</td>
<td>tswān ‘monkey, sp.’</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tʃw</td>
<td>tʃwá ‘porridge’, tʃwín ‘answer’</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dʒw</td>
<td>dʒwān ‘star’, dʒwēn ‘Missong’</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mw</td>
<td>mwè ‘be sad’, mwèn ‘cat’</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nw</td>
<td>nwèl ‘hippopotamus’</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ɲw</td>
<td>ɲwàn ‘bird’, ɲwàn ‘beg’, ɲwè ‘knee’</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ŋw</td>
<td>ŋwàn ‘xylophone’, ŋwà ‘write’</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yw</td>
<td>ywɔ́n ‘snake’, ywèn ‘grass’, ywè ‘pour’</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 2.8: Examples and total of Cw sequences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>consonants</th>
<th>examples</th>
<th>number of attested examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>kw</td>
<td>kwà ‘box’, kwén ‘ladder’</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bw</td>
<td>bwè ‘claw’, bwè ‘sky’</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gw</td>
<td>gwēn ‘feather’, gwēn ‘be sick’</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sw</td>
<td>swān ‘ceiling’</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ūw</td>
<td>ūwá ‘choke’, ūwín ‘wink with eye’</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tsw</td>
<td>tswān ‘monkey, sp.’</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tʃw</td>
<td>tʃwá ‘porridge’, tʃwín ‘answer’</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dʒw</td>
<td>dʒwān ‘star’, dʒwēn ‘Missong’</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mw</td>
<td>mwè ‘be sad’, mwèn ‘cat’</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nw</td>
<td>nwèl ‘hippopotamus’</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ɲw</td>
<td>ɲwàn ‘bird’, ɲwàn ‘beg’, ɲwè ‘knee’</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ŋw</td>
<td>ŋwàn ‘xylophone’, ŋwà ‘write’</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yw</td>
<td>ywɔ́n ‘snake’, ywèn ‘grass’, ywè ‘pour’</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.2.3.2 Cy sequences

The number of attested Cy sequences is slightly smaller than that of Cw sequences. The labial-velar plosives kp and gb cannot be followed by a palatal glide, just as they cannot be followed by a labial glide. Further gaps in the inventory are shown in Table 2.9. Examples and total of the attested Cy sequences are given in Table 2.10.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Labial</th>
<th>Alveolar</th>
<th>Alveo-Palatal</th>
<th>Velar</th>
<th>Labial-velar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plosives</td>
<td>vcl.</td>
<td>ty</td>
<td>ky</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>vcd.</td>
<td>by</td>
<td>dy</td>
<td>gy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fricatives</td>
<td>vcl.</td>
<td>fy</td>
<td>fy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affricates</td>
<td>vcl.</td>
<td>tʃy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>vcd.</td>
<td>dzy</td>
<td>dʒy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nasals</td>
<td>my</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approximants</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lateral approx.</td>
<td>ly</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.9: Attested Cy sequences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>consonants</th>
<th>examples</th>
<th>number of attested examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ty</td>
<td>tyân ‘tear, be torn’</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ky</td>
<td>kye ‘look’, kyân ‘clear throat’</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>by</td>
<td>byân ‘breast’, mbyil ‘feces’</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dy</td>
<td>dyê ‘heal’, ‘cool down’ (intr.), ndyîŋ ‘edge’</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gy</td>
<td>gyân ‘heal’ (tr./intr.), gyâ ‘steal’</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fy</td>
<td>fyîŋ ‘be new’, fyên ‘feast’</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sy</td>
<td>none</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ly</td>
<td>lyâ ‘ankle’</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tʃy</td>
<td>tʃyé ‘know’</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dzy</td>
<td>dzyân ‘call people to help’</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dʒy</td>
<td>dʒyê ‘cook’, dʒyá ‘creep’</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>my</td>
<td>myê ‘oil’</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>nês ‘language’, nân ‘bush fowl’</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ny</td>
<td>none</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ly</td>
<td>lyân ‘flicker’ (of tongue)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.10: Examples and total of Cy sequences
2.2.4 Nasal-consonant (NC) sequences

Nasal-consonant (NC) sequences in Mundabli occur in three contexts:

1. Nominal stems belonging to certain noun classes commonly start in an NC sequence.
2. The prefixal part (N-) of the infinitive marker (see section 8.4.1) forms part of a word-initial poly-morphemic NC sequence.
3. The preverbal form of the first person singular (1.sg) pronoun N = is procliticized to the left edge of the verbal core, creating a polymorphemic NC sequence at the beginning of the verb or of a preceding TAM marker.

Whereas NC sequences are common in noun stems, in verb stems they are not attested at all.

Stem-initial prenasalized onsets occur in nouns of the following Genders:
1/2 (62 of ca. 150, e.g. ŋkʊ̌ŋ ‘chief’, nsʊ̄ŋ ‘friend’, ŋkɔ̀m ‘hoe’), 3/10 (4 of 9, e.g. ngâŋ ‘hill’, ñkwï̄n ‘mountain’), 7/8 (125 without an NC sequence and 24 with an NC sequence, e.g. ntsë ‘headpad’, ñmbbë ‘caterpillar’), 19/18a (nearly all underived nouns start in a nasal or an NC sequence, e.g. ntâm ‘fruit’, ntfô ‘wrist’) and 6 (all start either in N or in NC, e.g. ngi ‘water’, mbi ‘palm wine’).

Note that Class 9/10 nouns never start in an NC sequence in Mundabli. For more on noun classes, see Chapter 4.

In most of the listed noun classes, the stem-initial nasal cannot be analyzed as a prefix. First, it occurs both in singular and plural forms in all genders which exhibit a singular-plural distinction, such as in ñkë ‘spoon(s)’ (Gender 7/8, different agreement). Second, it commonly co-occurs with a noun class prefix, as in ŋkʊ̌ŋ ‘chief’ vs. b-ŋkʊ̌ŋ ‘chiefs’ in Class 2, 19 and 18a. Third, it does not occur in all stems of the noun classes in which it is attested (i.e. Class 1, 2, 3, 10, 19 and 18a). Only in the case of Class 6 nouns can the nasal be analyzed as a noun class prefix. There is no singular-plural distinction and all Class 6 nouns start in a nasal or a nasal consonant sequence. Only the possibility to combine class 6 nouns with the class 19 diminutive prefix fi could be interpreted in favour of its analysis as part of the stem, however, this could also just be a combination of two prefixes. While it is impossible at the current stage to decide for sure whether the initial nasal in Class 6 nouns is a prefix, I will assume it is not a prefix but part of the stem. Table 2.11 shows examples of monomorphemic NC(G) sequences.

---

4See Chapter 8 for more on the structure of the verbal complex.
### Consonants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consonant</th>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Number of Attested Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mb</td>
<td>mbɔ̀ ‘spark’ (cl1/2), mbɛ̀ ‘twin’ (cl1/2)</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mbw</td>
<td>mbwɛ̀n ‘flour’ (cl6)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mby</td>
<td>mbyɛ̀ ‘crust’ (cl7/8), mbyɛ̀ ‘feces’ (cl7/8)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nd</td>
<td>ndɛ̀m ‘tears’ (cl6), ndɛ̀n ‘branch’ (cl3/10)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ndy</td>
<td>ndyɛ̀n ‘edge’ (cl19/18a)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ndz</td>
<td>ndɛ̀n ‘‘worm, sp.’ (cl7/8), ndɛ̀n ‘urine’ (cl6)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ndzw</td>
<td>ndzwɛ̀n ‘ball’ (cl19/18a)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ndzy</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ndʒ</td>
<td>ndɛ̀n ‘Mundabli’ (cl1/2), ndɛ̀n ‘vegetable, sp.’ (cl1/2) (in Pidgin ‘green’)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ndʒw</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ndʒy</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mf</td>
<td>mfɛ̀ ‘inner stone in fire place’ (cl1/2), mfoŋ ‘yam, sp.’ (cl7/8) (in Pidgin ‘coco-yam’ or ‘kolokosha’)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mfw</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mfy</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ŋg</td>
<td>ŋgɛ̀ ‘water’ (cl6), ŋgɛ̀n ‘hill’ (cl3/10)</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ŋgw</td>
<td>ŋgwɛ̀ ‘blood relative’ (cl1/2), ŋgwɛ̀ ‘elephant grass’ (cl19/18a)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ŋgy</td>
<td>ŋgyɛ̀ ‘traditional shelf’ (cl1/2)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ŋmgb</td>
<td>ŋmbɛ̀n ‘jaw, cheek’ (cl7/8), ŋmbɛ̀n ‘upper grinding stone’ (cl1/2)</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ŋk</td>
<td>ŋkɛ̀ ‘corn beer’ (cl6), ŋke­ ‘spoon’ (cl7/8)</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ŋkw</td>
<td>ŋkwɛ̀ ‘ant, sp.’ (cl19/18a), ŋkwɛ̀ ‘chameleon’ (cl19/18a)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ŋky</td>
<td>ŋkyɛ̀ ‘ant, sp.’ (cl19/18a)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ŋmkp</td>
<td>ŋmkpɛ̀n ‘wooden stool’ (cl7/8), ŋmkpɛ̀n-tʃɛ̀n ‘jiggers’ (cl1/2)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nl</td>
<td>nlɛ̀n ‘cotton’ (cl1/2)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ns</td>
<td>nsɛ̀ ‘basket, sp.’ (cl7/8), nsɛ̀n ‘friend’ (cl1)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nsw</td>
<td>nswɛ̀n ‘friends’ (cl2)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nsy</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nt</td>
<td>ntɛ̀n ‘hawk’ (cl1/2), ntɛ̀n ‘fruit’ (cl19/18a)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ntw</td>
<td>ntwɛ̀ ‘throat’ (cl1/2)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nty</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nts</td>
<td>ntsɛ̀ ‘cricket, sp.’ (cl1/2), ntsɛ̀ ‘tarantula’ (cl1/2)</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ntsw</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ntsy</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 2.11: Monomorphemic NC(G) clusters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consonants</th>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Number of Attested Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>( _n\text{tf} )</td>
<td>( _n\text{tf}) ‘clay pot’ ( (\text{cl19/18a}) ), ( _n\text{tf}) ‘wrist’ ( (\text{cl19/18a}) )</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( _n\text{tfw} )</td>
<td>( _n\text{tfw} ) ‘fufu’ ( (\text{cl8a}) ) ( (\text{stiff porridge}) )</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( _n\text{fxy} )</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( _n\text{j} )</td>
<td>( _n\text{j} ) ‘palm tree, sp.’ ( (\text{cl3/10}) ), ( _n\text{j} ) ‘bird, sp.’ ( (\text{cl19/18a}) )</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( _n\text{fw} )</td>
<td>( _n\text{fw} ) ‘Lung person’ ( (\text{cl1/2}) )</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( _n\text{fy} )</td>
<td>( _n\text{fy} ) ‘rabbit’ ( (\text{cl1/2}) )</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.11 shows that some logically possible NCG sequences are attested only once and others not at all. The sequence \( _n\text{l} \) is only attested in one noun: \( _n\text{l}\text{etf} \) ‘cotton’. As its bisyllabic structure suggests, this word may be derived from a historical compound, possibly made up of an infinitive verb plus a noun. Thus, it is likely that the sequence in the example is historically polymorphemic.

In infinitive verbs, all onset consonants can follow the nasal in a nasal consonant sequence. In this case, the nasal’s place of articulation is assimilated to the following consonant. Thus, only nasal-consonant clusters occur which are identical in place of articulation. When the first person singular preverbal pronoun \( _n\text{=} \) is procliticized to the first element of the verbal core, which can be the verb or a TAM marker, it is assimilated in place of articulation to the consonant that follows it so that resulting clusters are identical in place of articulation.

### 2.2.5 Other issues relating to consonants

This section deals with phonetic or phonological questions. Some of these issues may be superficially treated in other sections but are repeated here in order to give them a more prominent place.

#### 2.2.5.1 The phonetic effect of the high vowels \( i, u, i̤ \) and \( ū \) on preceding consonants

The high vowels \( i \) and \( u \) and their pharyngealized equivalents \( i̤ \) and \( ū \), all of which involve a remarkable degree of friction (see §2.3.1) affect the phonetic realization of consonants which precede them. Consultants say that a consonant which precedes one of these vowels is generally “drawn out” or pronounced “stronger” than otherwise. This is a phonetic side-effect of the
2.2. Consonants

extreme degree of closure of the high vowels rather than a phonological process. In fact, the realization of the preceding consonant is a cue to vowel quality about as prominent as the vowel itself. While nearly all consonants are affected, the high and close vowels have different effects on different consonants. Plosives, for example, which precede one of these vowels usually have a fricative release whose place of articulation does not have to coincide with that of the plosive. The alveolar plosive t, for example, may be realized with strong aspiration or it may be slightly affricated, as in tǐ [tʰǐ] ‘father’, when it precedes the high front vowel i. Meanwhile, the velar plosive k may be realized with aspiration or with a palatal release in this context, as e.g. in kǐ [kʰǐ] ‘his’ (cl.7). Plosives which precede one of the high back vowels u and y have a bilabial release, e.g. kū [kʰû] ~ [kʰû] ‘belly’, kû [kʰû] ~ [kʰû] ‘fog’ and bû [bʰû] ~ [bʰû] ‘give birth’. The fricative release fades into the vowel which involves friction at least at the beginning and often throughout the vowel. My consultants say that consonants other than plosives, such as fricatives or nasals, “are usually drawn out” before i, u, i̤ and y̜, i.e., their closure phase is longer before these vowels than before other, more open vowels.

2.2.5.2 Prepausal devoicing of coda consonants

The sonorants m, n, ɳ and l are often devoiced towards the end when they are followed by a pause. Although no work exists which focuses specifically on this topic, utterance-final devoicing has been reported for other languages in the wider area (e.g. devoicing of voiced stops and of the vowels i and u in Eton, see (van de Velde 2008: 23,30); and devoicing of final b in Limbum, see (Fransen 1995: 52)).

2.2.5.3 Preglottalized nasals

Syllables of the structure Cam5 or Can are often pronounced with glottalization towards the end of the vowel. A few cases are also attested in which Cöm syllables are glottalized. The realization ranges from [Cam], [Can] and [Côm] without glottalization, via [Caʔm̥], [Caʔn̥] and [Caʔn̥], with a glottal closure preceding the nasal to [Caʔaʔm] and [Caʔaʔn] with an echo-vowel separating the glottal stop from the final nasal. Devoicing of final sonorants, which is common before a pause (see §2.2.5.2), is even stronger when it co-occurs with glottalization.6 It is not quite clear whether glottalization is associated with the nasal or the preceding vowel. The reason for the current analysis as

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4In contrast to this, in other languages (e.g. Limbum (Fransen 1995) and Mambila (Connell 2007)) a similar process has been described which is restricted to the high central vowel i.
5The letter C may represent any of the attested onset consonants.
6Breathy or “aspirated” nasals have been reported for Bantu and Khoisan languages (Ladefoged and Maddieson 1996: 106ff.).
part of the nasal is that it only occurs in syllables which end in the nasals m and n.

Although speakers are conscious of the phenomenon, I could not find any minimal pairs which are distinguished only by the presence vs. absence of glottalization. Therefore, I assume that glottalization is not phonemic. Furthermore, glottalization has been observed both on words with a mid tone, as e.g. wān [wāʔn] ‘child’, and words with a superhigh tone, such as kām [kāʔm] ‘squeeze’, which renders the possibility that glottalization could be an effect of the tonal pattern unlikely. The fact that glottalization occurs in words whose structure otherwise resembles their Proto-Grassfields cognates which lack glottalization, such as e.g. wān ‘child’ (Proto-Grassfields: *-án (Hyman 2007)) and kām ‘squeeze’ (Proto-Grassfields: *kám Hyman (2007)), suggests that the glottalized quality is not a phonological trace of a deleted consonant but rather a recent phonetic effect. This is further supported by the absence of glottalization in Mufu cognates.

2.3 Vowels

The Mundabli vowel inventory consists of thirteen plain and four pharyngealized7 vowels, i.e. seventeen vowels in total. These are shown below, in two separate charts for plain (Figure 2.1) and pharyngealized vowels (Figure 2.2). The location of the vowels in the vowel charts represents their phonological role rather than their exact phonetic pronunciation. Vowel length is not contrastive.

![vowel chart](image)

Figure 2.1: Inventory of plain vowel phonemes

A comparison of the two vowel charts in Figure 2.1 and Figure 2.2 reveals that only the high vowels i, i and u and the mid vowel o have pharyngealized equivalents. Contrasts between the vowels are illustrated by the minimal pairs in §2.3.2.

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7Pharyngealized vowels are transcribed with the diacritic commonly used to transcribe breathy vowels (e.g. according to IPA conventions), namely two horizontally arranged dots below the vowel symbol as in u.
2.3. Vowels

2.3.1 Vowel phonemes and allophonic variation

2.3.1.1 Plain vowels

The vowel *i*  The high unrounded front vowel *i* has a pronunciation that comes closest to IPA [i], but the tongue is raised higher than in IPA [i] and in most cases, the oral constriction is so small that the vowel is realized with friction, which can also affect preceding consonants. Examples of words containing the vowel *i* are `dʒɪ` 'dog', `tɪ` '(his/their) father' and `ʃɪ` 'fowl, chicken'. The friction usually starts off as affrication of the consonant preceding the vowel and fades into a more or less fricative vowel. In fact, the affrication or spirantization of the preceding consonant is often a more prominent clue for the vowel *i* than its actual vowel quality.

The behavior of verb stems containing the vowels *i* and *u* with regard to perfective vs. imperfective vowel alternations, as opposed to that of verb stems containing *ɪ* and *ʊ*, supports the hypothesis that the friction should indeed be analyzed as a feature of the vowel rather than of the consonant preceding it.

While the high vowels *i* and *u* in perfective stems are replaced by the pharyngealized vowels *i̤* and *ṳ* in the imperfective when they occur in syllable-final position, the [-ATR] vowels, *i* and *ʊ* do not change in the imperfective form.

The vowel *ɪ*  The vowel *ɪ* is more centralized than the vowel *i*. It is reasonably close to IPA [ɪ]. Depending on the speaker, it has either about the same phonetic vowel height as the more tense *i* or is articulated with the tongue somewhat lower and closer to the mid vowel *e*. Its quality varies depending on the speaker. In Mundabli, the most reliable criteria for distinguishing *i* from *ɪ* is the friction which is commonly present in the tense vowel *i*, but absent in the more lax vowel [ɪ]. The phonological difference between *i* and *ɪ* is analyzed as a difference in tongue root position with *i* having the value [+ATR] and *ɪ* the value [-ATR]. Words containing the vowel *ɪ* include `tɪ` 'my/our father', `mɪ` 'sprinkle' (of water) and `ʃɪ` 'storm'.
The vowel \( ɨ \) The vowel \( ɨ \) is a high central unrounded vowel. Although it is more centralized than the back vowel \( u \),\(^8\) it is perceptually closer to the latter than to the front vowel \( i \) and probably corresponds phonetically to IPA [uu] rather than the more central IPA [i]. The reason to choose the symbol \( ɨ \) rather than \( uu \) is discussed in §1.2.4. The vowel \( ɨ \) is analyzed as a [+ATR] vowel, in analogy with the other [+ATR] vowels, which also alternate with pharyngealized vowels in the imperfective. Examples of words containing the vowel \( ɨ \) are \( ɡɨ̋ \) ‘put’, \( kpɨ̋ \) ‘die’, \( ndzɨ̀ \) ‘sheep’ and \( dɨ̋ \) ‘be’.

The vowel \( u \) The vowel \( u \) is adequately represented by IPA [u] although, just like with the front high vowel \( i \), the tongue is raised higher than in IPA [u] and the vowel is usually realized with friction which can cause affrication of a preceding consonant (just like with the front vowel \( i \)). It is sometimes difficult to hear the difference between [+ATR] \( u \) and [-ATR] \( o \). The main clue is the friction present in [+ATR] \( u \) but absent in [-ATR] \( o \) rather than vowel height or quality. Words containing the [+ATR] high rounded back vowel are \( kʊ \) ‘ratmole’, \( mʊ \) ‘take’ and \( tʃʊ \) ‘come’.

The vowel \( o \) The high rounded back vowel \( o \) corresponds to IPA [ʊ]. As mentioned in the previous section, it is sometimes difficult to distinguish from the [+ATR] vowel \( u \) while in other cases it resembles the mid vowel [+ATR] vowel \( o \). Examples of words containing this vowel are \( mʊ \) ‘corner’, \( kʊ \) ‘bone’ and \( tʃʊ \) ‘iron’.

The vowel \( e \) The mid unrounded front vowel \( e \) can be adequately transcribed as IPA [e]. It is pronounced with a somewhat more raised tongue than IPA [e] and is perceptually close to the [-ATR] high front vowel \( i \). Examples of words containing \( e \) are \( ɲkɛ \) ‘spoon’, \( tsɛ \) ‘pots’ and \( tɛ \) ‘discuss’.

The vowel \( e \) The mid unrounded front vowel \( e \) is articulated lower than \( e \), essentially like IPA [ɛ]. Examples of words containing \( e \) are \( kɛ \) ‘devil’, \( tsɛ \) ‘foundation’ and \( tɛ \) ‘collect honey’.

The vowel \( a \) The mid unrounded central vowel \( a \) is perceptually close to the low central vowel \( a \). Nevertheless, it is more centralized and can be adequately transcribed as IPA [ə]. It is often difficult to distinguish from the low vowel \( a \) and sometimes also from \( ɔ \) when it occurs in an unstressed position, i.e. the preverbal subject pronoun \( bɔ \) or determiners like \( wɔ \), \( kɔ \), and so on. The following minimal pairs show that the distinction is indeed phonemic: \( la \) ‘announce’ vs. \( lɔ \) ‘do’ made’ and \( lɔ \) ‘go to the bush’. Examples of words containing \( a \) are \( gbɔ \) ‘body’, \( tsɔ \) ‘baboon’ and \( fɔ \) ‘give’.

\(^8\) Although the back vowels are all rounded, I do not see any advantage in calling them rounded rather than back vowels. The choice makes no difference for the current analysis.
2.3. Vowels

The vowel æ The unrounded near-open front vowel æ sounds somewhat like the Standard British English vowel æ as in [bæd] ‘bad’, but towards the end the vowel is pronounced with friction. It is adequately represented by the IPA symbol [æ]. It is very rare. One example is kæ ‘back of head’. The near minimal pair kɛ̋ ‘leg’ vs. kǽ ‘back of head’ shows that ɛ and æ are distinctive.

The vowel a The unrounded open front vowel a is articulated to the front of the oral cavity. It can adequately be characterized as IPA [a]. In open syllables, the vowel a is commonly pronounced with some aspiration towards the end.

In closed syllables, the vowel a is pronounced longer than other vowels. There may be a length contrast in closed syllables which contain the vowel a and end in m or n, but the data suggest that the contrast is in vowel quality, i.e. specifically between the vowels a and ə and that the difference in duration is merely a phonetic effect. Examples for this contrast are dzàm ‘grave’ vs. dzə́m ‘back’ and ndà́n ‘branches’ vs. n-də́-n ‘see’ (INF). Words which contain the vowel a are bà ‘sheath’, tsà́ ‘mud’ and là́ ‘announce’.

The vowel o The vowel o is pronounced relatively close and can at times be hard to distinguish from the [-ATR] high back rounded vowel ô. The vowel corresponds to IPA [o] and is analyzed here as a [+ATR] mid back rounded vowel. A minimal pair involving the vowels o and û is bû́ ‘gall’, ‘bile’ vs. bû́ ‘ask’. More examples of words with o include fô ‘hat’, cap, wố ‘traditional chalk’ and kố ‘cough’ (v.).

The vowel ɔ The vowel ɔ is lower and more centralized than its [+ATR] equivalent ô. It is also produced with less tension. It corresponds to IPA [ɔ]. The mid back vowels ɔ and ô are usually easy to distinguish. It is sometimes difficult to distinguish between ɔ and ə on the one hand and between ɔ and the low rounded back vowel ñ. The former is usually the case when the vowel occurs in less prominent syllables, as e.g. in the determiner (see also the paragraph on the vowel ə), especially in fast speech. In this case, ɔ can easily be mistaken for ə. Examples of words containing ɔ are bố ‘bag’, kɔ́ ‘Koshin’ (a neighboring village) and tsɔ́ ‘witchcraft’. Also the distal demonstrative/determiner consists of the root ɔ which takes a prefix that agrees in noun class with the noun it modifies, as in kɔ́ ‘that’ (cl.7) or wɔ́ ‘that’ (cl.2).

The vowel ô The vowel ô is a rounded back vowel and more open than ɔ. It is thus best represented by IPA [n]. In my data, it only occurs in eight CV-shaped nouns. Some speakers pronounce it very similar to the mid vowel ɔ or the pharyngealized vowel ô. Minimal pairs involving these vowels are dzɔ́ ‘mouths’ vs. dzố ‘dew’ and bố ‘wing’ vs. bố ‘shoulder’ (see also Table 2.12). A similar vowel has been reported for Aghem (Hyman 1979: 5-6)). Examples of words containing ô are dzố ‘dew’, kố ‘forest’ and kpố ‘money’.
One informant who has spent half of his life outside the village does not seem to distinguish between the low back rounded vowel ɒ and the pharyngealized vowel o̅. He instead pronounces both as o̅, e.g., the word dzɒ̋ ‘dew’ is pronounced as dző̅ by this speaker. For a few words, speakers also reported that there was variation between a pronunciation with ɔ and with o̅. In the speech of some informants, the vowel o̅ has slightly diphthongal qualities. It may in fact be a diphthong or historically derived from one. Note that one speaker pronounced words containing o̅ with uvular friction after the vowel resulting in [ɔɣ], where others pronounce ɒ. This is interesting, especially as the neighboring variety Mufu usually has final (velar or glottal) stops where older Mundabli speakers use o̅.

2.3.1.2 Pharyngealized vowels

The vowel i̤ The pharyngealized high unrounded front vowel i̤ comes close to what would be written [iˤ], following IPA conventions. While it is somewhat more centralized than i, sounding more like the [-ATR] vowel i with an additional constriction in the throat (or more specifically in the pharynx area), its alternation with the [+ATR] high vowel i suggests that it is better represented by i̤ rather than i. See §8.1.3 for details. At times, the vowel i̤ has a diphthongal quality with the place of articulation moving downward and backward, rendering [i͡əˤ].

The vowel i̤ is attested in two noun roots and three verb roots. Examples are yĩ̤ ‘ant, sp.’, tʃi̤᷆ ‘stir Akangwa soup’ and dzĩ̤ ḅ ‘travel’. It further occurs in the imperfective form of verbs which contain the vowel i in the perfective form. Some minimal pairs are yĩ (PFV) vs. yĩ́ (IPFV) ‘eat’, mĩ́ (PFV) vs. mĩ́ (IPFV) ‘swallow’ and ŋĩ (PFV) vs. ŋĩ́ (IPFV) ‘descend’.

The vowelɨ̤ The pharyngealized high unrounded central vowel ɨ̤ could be transcribed as IPA [ɨˤ]. It sounds like the mid vowel i with a constriction in the pharynx area, only a bit more fronted. Note that the mid vowel i has no [-ATR] equivalent.

The pharyngealized central vowel ɨ is neither found in noun stems nor in perfective verb stems. It is only attested in the imperfective form of CV-shape verbs whose perfective form contains the vowel i. Examples are gɨ́ (PFV) vs. gɨ́ (IPFV) ‘put, place’ and kɨ́ (PFV) vs. kɨ́ (IPFV) ‘die’.

The vowel ŋ The pharyngealized high rounded back vowel ŋ which could possibly be transcribed as [uˤ], following IPA conventions is more centralized, i.e. more fronted and lower, than its unmodified equivalent u. Additionally, there is a constriction in the back of the throat. It sounds somewhat like the IPA vowel ŋ with a constriction in the throat.

The vowel ŋ is found in seven nouns and six underived verb stems. Examples of ŋ in underived noun and verb stems are dũ ‘hole’, tṣũ ‘banana’ and lũ ‘bark’ (v.). The vowel ŋ further occurs in the imperfective form of CV-shape
verbs which contain the [+ATR] vowel u in their perfective form. Examples are tʃū (PFV) vs. tʃū (IPFV) ‘come’ and gbū (PFV) vs. gbū (IPFV) ‘fall’.

The vowel ˠ The pharyngealized mid rounded back vowel ˠ could also be transcribed as IPA [oˤ]. It is more centralised than the [+ATR] mid back vowel o sounding more like IPA œ with a pharyngeal quality. Like in all pharyngealized vowels, there is a constriction in the pharynx area.

The vowel ˠ is found in eight nouns and thirteen underived verb stems. Examples are fů ‘hair’, bó ‘shoulder’ or nů ‘fight’ (v.). The vowel occurs in an imperfective verb form only when it is also present in the perfective verb stem or when the vowel o in a CV-shape perfective verb stem is preceded by the labiovelar glide w (which may be phonetically realized as vowel [u]). Examples are kwů (PFV) vs. kwů (IPFV) ‘enter’ and dwů (PFV) vs. dwů (IPFV) ‘poison’ (v.). For a detailed discussion of the perfective vs. imperfective verb stem alternation, see §8.1.3.

2.3.2 Minimal pairs

The selected (near) minimal pairs in Table 2.12 illustrate the phonemic contrast between the vowels in the inventory. Rather than comparing all vowel phonemes with each other, in this table, I only compare similar vowels. Verbs are given in the unmarked t0 tense unless otherwise specified (see §8.5.1 for more on tenses). The table contains minimal pairs for all (plain and pharyngealized) vowels.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>vowels</th>
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<th>examples</th>
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<td>‘press’ (IPFV)</td>
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<td>fi</td>
<td>‘press’</td>
<td>fi</td>
<td>‘pass’</td>
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<td>kɨ</td>
<td>‘our’ (CL7:1PL.POSS)</td>
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<td>‘remove from fire’</td>
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<td>j/i</td>
<td>fi</td>
<td>‘press’ (IPFV)</td>
<td>fi</td>
<td>‘pass’</td>
</tr>
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<td>‘eye’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j/i</td>
<td>fi</td>
<td>‘press’ (IPFV)</td>
<td>fi</td>
<td>‘pass’ (IPFV)</td>
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<td>fi</td>
<td>‘press’ (IPFV)</td>
<td>fɨ</td>
<td>‘deceive’ (IPFV)</td>
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<td>‘die’</td>
<td>kpi</td>
<td>‘bend’</td>
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<td>fi</td>
<td>‘pass’</td>
<td>fũ</td>
<td>‘beans, sp.’</td>
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<td>sè</td>
<td>‘laugh’</td>
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<td>kpə</td>
<td>‘burn’</td>
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<td>‘laugh’</td>
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### Table 2.12: Minimal pairs for vowels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vowels</th>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>e/æ</td>
<td>kē</td>
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<td>‘raffia stem’</td>
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<td>‘scoop’</td>
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<td>‘be smart’</td>
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<td>fū</td>
<td>‘deceive’</td>
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<td>‘pass’</td>
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<td>fū</td>
<td>‘deceive’</td>
<td>fō</td>
<td>‘beans, sp.’</td>
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<td>‘ask’</td>
<td>bō</td>
<td>‘gall’, ‘bile’</td>
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<td>‘be smart’</td>
<td>tō</td>
<td>‘sting’</td>
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<td>bō</td>
<td>‘shoulder’</td>
<td>bē</td>
<td>‘Abar’ (a neighboring village)</td>
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<td>‘punch’</td>
<td>kpā</td>
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<td>‘hair’</td>
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<td>‘back’</td>
<td>dzām</td>
<td>‘war’</td>
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<td>a/ɔ</td>
<td>kā</td>
<td>‘fry’</td>
<td>kō</td>
<td>‘fold’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 2.3.3 Issues in vowel interpretation

In this section, a few unusual vowel characteristics are described in more detail.

#### 2.3.3.1 Individual speaker variation in the phonetic proximity between high and mid vowels

One of the most difficult tasks regarding the perception and description of Mundabli vowels is to distinguish the [-ATR] high front and back vowels i and ʊ from the [+ATR] high vowels i and u on the one hand, and from the [+ATR] mid vowels e and o, on the other. This may sound strange because it implies that the [-ATR] high vowels resemble the [+ATR] high vowels and the [+ATR] mid vowels at the same time.

However, this confusion can be explained by the unusual degree of individual speaker variation in the pronunciation of these vowels. While some speakers pronounce the [-ATR] high vowels i and ʊ closer to the [+ATR] high
vowels i and u, others pronounce these closer to the [+ATR] mid vowels e and o. This was suggested by a comparison of vowel plots for several speakers and is reflected by nearly identical F1 and F2 values for the respective pairs (i.e., for i and ì and u and ù, respectively, for some speakers, and ï and e and o and ò for others).

Figure 2.3 contains a vowel plot of all plain vowels (to the exclusion of pharyngealized vowels) of one speaker. The vowels i and ì are represented as ì and ò in the plot.

The plot in image 2.3 is based on single utterances of open syllable words containing the relevant vowels, uttered by a female speaker (Kemba Jacqueline Ntie) in 2012. Clear and representative tokens were selected, although the values are not statistically relevant because they were taken from a single recording.

The plot confirms some of my intuitive judgements. At least in the chosen utterances, the high front vowels i and ì cannot be distinguished on the basis of their F1 and F2 values alone. I had a hard time learning to distinguish

\(^9\)Thanks to Jesse Lovegren for creating this vowel plot.
between the two, and the distinction seems to be based on the presence vs. absence of friction more than anything else. The difficulty of distinguishing between the back vowels \( u \) and \( o \) on the one hand, and \( o \) and \( o \) on the other, are also reflected in their close proximity in the plot. The other vowels, which can be more easily distinguished from one another, are also further apart in the vowel plot.

2.3.3.2 Pharyngealized vowels: characteristics, distribution and origin

The existence of pharyngealized vowels has been reported for languages of several language families including Tungusic, Caucasian, Northern and Southern Khoisan (Ladefoged and Maddieson 1996: 306), but also for several Cameroonian languages including Mambay (Adamawa, Northern Bantoid, Niger-Congo, Anonby 2008) and Kwasio (Bantu (A80), Southern Bantoid, Niger-Congo, Duke and Martin 2012). The co-existence of an [ATR]-distinction on the one hand and pharyngealized vowels on the other, as attested for Mundabli, is unusual and might contribute new data to the theoretical discussion of pharyngealized vowels.

According to Ladefoged and Maddieson (1996: 306), pharyngealization involves active retraction of the tongue root. As Ladefoged and Maddieson (1996: 313) point out, [ATR], pharyngealized and strident vowels are characterized by some degree of pharyngeal narrowing and larynx raising and languages seldom use more than one of them. Mundabli seems to be one of the few exceptions to this tendency, having both a distinction in [ATR] and a distinction between plain vs. pharyngealized vowels. I am not aware of any other language which makes both of these distinctions.\(^{10}\)

Pharyngealized vowels are predominantly found in the imperfective form of verbs, but also in a few underived verb and noun stems. The perfective vs. imperfective verb stem alternation comprises a vowel alternation in which a plain [+ATR] high vowel (\( i \), \( i \) or \( u \)) in the perfective verb form alternates with a pharyngealized vowel (\( i̤ \), \( i̤ \) or \( ṳ \), respectively) in the imperfective form if it occurs in an open syllable, as in \( yi̤ \) (PFV) vs. \( yi̤ \) (IPFV) ‘eat’, \( tʃi̤ \) (PFV) vs. \( tʃi̤ \) (IPFV) ‘come’ and \( fi̤ \) (PFV) vs. \( fi̤ \) (IPFV). Notably, [-ATR] vowels do not take part in the alternation. While the alternation of [+ATR] high vowels with pharyngealized vowels is systematic, the picture becomes more complicated for non-high vowels due to the existence of the pharyngealized mid vowel \( o̤ \), which does not correlate with a plain vowel as clearly as the other pharyngealized vowels (see §3.3.5 for details).

There are two important restrictions on the occurrence of pharyngealized vowels: they are only found in lexical items and they are restricted to open syllables. Pharyngealized vowels are most commonly found in derived imper-

\(^{10}\)Ladefoged and Maddieson (1996: 313) propose !Xóõ, a Southern Khoisan language which distinguishes plain, pharyngealized and strident vowels but lacks an [ATR] distinction, as a counterexample to the rule. They admit that “the most suitable phonological parameters to use in describing these vowels were not clear to [them]” at the time of writing.
2.3. Vowels

Effective verb forms. They are only sporadically attested in nouns and underived verb stems such as bǒ́ ‘gorilla’, dzǐ́ ‘travel’, yǐ́ ‘ant (sp.)’ and dṳ́ ‘hole’.

While pharyngealized vowels have been attested in other Cameroonian languages, Mundabli is the only language with pharyngealized vowels in the immediate area (i.e., Lower Fungom and beyond). It is therefore not likely that the pharyngealized vowels have entered the language through contact. Instead, at least two factors point to their relatively recent emergence under the influence of a velar or glottal coda consonant and subsequent loss of that coda consonant. These factors are the presence of velar or glottal coda consonants in cognates in the related varieties Mufu and Buu (see §1.1.4 for more on these varieties and their relation to Mundabli; note that Mundabli allows obstruent codas only in ideophones) and the restriction of pharyngealized vowels to CV syllables.

Pharyngealized vowels are attested in two contexts: they occur in a few noun and verb stems of CV-shape and the imperfective form of a verb is derived from the perfective form by pharyngealizing the stem vowel under certain circumstances (stem vowels i, ɨ, u and sometimes o, and a CV-shaped verb stem, see §8.1.3 for details). In both contexts, the pharyngealized vowel in Mundabli correlates with a closed syllable ending in a velar or glottal stop.

When a Mundabli noun or verb stem contains a pharyngealized vowel, its Mufu cognate generally ends in a velar or glottal stop. Thus, for example, the word for ‘banana’ is tsṳ́ in Mundabli but cuk12 in Mufu.

In the case of imperfective verb forms, there is also a correlation. While in Mundabli the imperfective verb form is derived from the perfective form by pharyngealizing the stem vowel (under the given circumstances), the imperfective verb form in Mufu is marked by the suffix –k.13

While all these facts seem to suggest that Mundabli pharyngealized vowels in their current form have developed due to the influence of syllable-final k or q and subsequent loss of that final consonant, this scenario is hypothetical and more research (on both varieties as well as on Buu) is needed to determine what exactly was the historical scenario which led to the emergence of pharyngealized vowels in Mundabli.

Apart from my own preliminary investigations, practically no research has been done on Mufu. Issues which should be investigated in the future are e.g., whether the imperfective suffix in Mufu is also used with closed syllable verb stems, and whether it can co-occur with all stem vowels or whether its co-occurrence is restricted to a few stem vowels, like pharyngealization in Mundabli. An imperfective suffix -ko is also attested in Buu.14 The imperfec-

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11 Note that Mufu, unlike Mundabli, allows non-sonorant syllable codas.
12 The symbol c represents a voiceless palatal stop. Tone is not marked in Mufu examples. Coda stops in Mufu are usually unreleased.
13 The Mufu imperfective suffix is probably a reflex of the common Bantu marker -a(t)g-a (IPFV) (Nurse and Philippson 2006: pp.190-192)
14 This information is based on my own fieldwork and on an MA thesis on Buu phonology (Ngako
tive suffix -kə in Buu co-occurs with both open and closed syllables. I am not aware whether it co-occurs with all stem vowels or not.

2.4 Phonotactics

Mundabli has twenty-two consonant phonemes and seventeen vowel phonemes organized in syllables. Most words consist of a single syllable. This section contains a description of the syllable structures attested in stems and non-lexical items (including affixes) (§2.4.1), it deals with distributional restrictions on consonants (§2.4.2) and with possible CV sequences (§2.4.4), and it also contains sections on the phonotactics of ideophones (§2.4.5) and on loanword adaptation (§2.4.6).

2.4.1 Syllable structure

Mundabli has four syllable types: (N)C(G)V, (N)C(G)VC, V and N. The only coda consonants attested are the nasals m, n and ŋ and the lateral approximant l. In order to describe the syllable adequately one must distinguish between lexical stem syllables and non-stem syllables (syllabic prefixes and suffixes, clitics and function words).

Most lexical stems are monosyllabic, so that in most cases the stem syllable is identical with the whole stem. The following syllable structures are attested in stem syllables: (N)C(G)V and (N)C(G)VC. Stem syllables always have an onset. This onset may consist of a consonant or one of the attested consonant clusters, i.e. a nasal consonant sequence, a consonant glide sequence or a combination of the two. Onset consonants in stem syllables are not restricted, i.e. any consonant or any attested consonant cluster can form the onset of a stem syllable. However, homorganic NC sequences and CG sequences are prevalent stem-initially. Unlike the range of onset consonants, the range of attested coda consonants is very restricted. Coda nasals are far more common than the liquid l which is only found in a few stems, e.g. bwól ‘dust’, fyïl ‘whirlwind’, māl ‘slide’ (v.) and bōl ‘castrate’. Younger speakers (up to the age of around forty) drop the final l in certain CVl words. In this case, the vowel in the resulting open syllable is usually more closed than in the original syllable with a coda l. Examples are bwēl ~ bwē ‘calabash used as oil container’ and tāl ~ tē ‘pull’. All vowels are attested in stem syllables.

Non-stem syllables, i.e. syllables in prefixes, suffixes, clitics and function words are subject to other restrictions than stem syllables. In non-stem syllables, only the syllable patterns CV, V and N are attested. Consonant clusters are not attested at all. Unlike stem syllables, non-stem syllables may lack an onset, such as e.g. the preverbal negative marker ā or the locative marker ũ. A non-lexical syllable may also consist of a nasal only, as in the case of the

(Yonga 2013).
44

2.4. Phonotactics

preverbal first person singular pronoun clitic which consists of a nasal, homorganic with the first element of the verbal core (i.e. either the verb or a TAM marker, see Chapter 8 for more on the verbal core) and which can be syllabic and bear a superhigh tone under certain circumstances, as in the following example: \( \text{ŋ} = \text{kə̀kʊ᷆} \) ‘I cried.’ (p3); see also §6.1.

The syllable-structure of syllables in ideophones, interjections and unintegrated loans may diverge from those described above. For more on ideophones, loanwords and interjections, see §2.4.5, §2.4.6 and §10.7, respectively.

2.4.2 Distributional restrictions on consonants

This section deals with the distributional restrictions on the two most restricted consonants, the velar nasal \( \text{ŋ} \) (§2.4.2.1) and the palatal nasal \( \text{n} \) (§2.4.2.2).

2.4.2.1 Distributional restrictions on the velar nasal \( \text{ŋ} \)

The velar nasal \( \text{ŋ} \) is frequently attested as syllable rhyme. It is also commonly found in stem-initial NC sequences, preceding a homorganic velar stop (as in e.g., \( \text{ŋgə̄} \) ‘quarter head’ and \( \text{ŋkə̄ŋ} \) ‘salt’). However, it rarely constitutes an onset on its own. Syllable-initial \( \text{ŋ} \) without a subsequent velar stop is only found in three words. Only in one of these, \( \text{ŋa᷆} \) ‘boast’, \( \text{ŋ} \) alone constitutes the onset. In the other two cases, \( \text{ŋ} \) is followed by a labial glide: \( \text{ŋwə̄} \) ‘write’ and \( \text{ŋwǎŋ} \) ‘xylophone’. In functional items, syllable-initial \( \text{ŋ} \) is not attested at all.

2.4.2.2 Distributional restrictions on the palatal nasal \( \text{n} \)

The palatal nasal \( \text{n} \) is restricted to stem-initial position; it is thus neither attested in the onset of non-stem syllables nor in coda position. It can either constitute an onset on its own, as in \( \text{nū} \) ‘field’ and \( \text{nām} \) ‘fufu’, or it can be part of a syllable-initial consonant cluster, in which case it can be followed by a labial glide within a consonant glide sequence (e.g., \( \text{nwɛ́} \) ‘fields’ and \( \text{nwǎŋ} \) ‘beg’), or a homorganic obstruent (e.g., \( \text{ndʒa᷆n} \) ‘Mundabli’ and \( \text{njɛ́} \) ‘armpit’).

2.4.3 Restrictions on VC sequences

As pointed out in §2.4.1, only the nasals \( \text{m}, \text{n} \) and \( \text{ŋ} \) and the lateral approximant \( \text{l} \) are attested as coda consonants. Table 2.13 shows which vowels co-occur with which of the attested coda consonants and where there are gaps. Vowels are given in the first row, coda consonants are given in the first column. Sequences marked by a checkmark are attested, those marked with a hyphen are not.

Except for the vowel \( \text{g} \), pharyngealized vowels are restricted to open syllables. The vowel \( \text{g} \) is attested before coda \( \text{m} \) in a handful of words, including
### Table 2.13: Possible combinations of vowels and coda consonants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>i</th>
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<th>ɨ</th>
<th>ɨ̤</th>
<th>u</th>
<th>ʊ</th>
<th>e</th>
<th>o</th>
<th>o̤</th>
<th>ɛ</th>
<th>ɔ</th>
<th>æ</th>
<th>ə</th>
<th>a</th>
<th>ɒ</th>
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<td>-</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**dôm** ‘cure’, **nôm** ‘bite’ and **wôm** ‘shout’. While [-ATR] vowels such as i, u, e and o are commonly attested in closed syllables and can be followed by all coda consonants, the [+ATR] vowels i, u, e and o are only rarely attested in closed syllables. Examples are **nswên** ‘friend’ and **twôm** ‘stomach’.

As shown above, not all combinations of vowels and coda consonants are attested. In fact, the set of vowels that can be combined with a particular coda consonant varies strongly. For example the range of vowels which are attested before coda l is very restricted (see below). In its degree of co-occurrence restrictions, l is followed by the velar nasal ŋ which can only be preceded by the following vowels: i, i̤, ɨ, ɨ̤, u, ʊ, e, ɛ, a and ə. Finally, m and n show the least restrictions. Coda n can be preceded by i, ɨ, ɪ, ʊ, ɛ, ɔ, ə and a. Like ŋ and in addition by e. Coda m can be preceded by i, ɨ, ɪ, ʊ, ɛ, ɔ, ə and a, like ŋ and n and additionally by o, ɒ and o̤. Notably, the mid high vowel i, which seems to have the status of a [+ATR] vowel, is attested before all coda nasals, unlike the other [+ATR] high vowels i and u, whose occurrence in closed syllables is very restricted.

| kwâl~kwê | ‘rat, sp.’ |
| nwâl     | ‘hippopotamus’ |
| bwôl     | ‘dust’ |
| wôl      | ‘beige’ |
| kwôl     | ‘crocodile’ |
| kwâl     | ‘sacred grove’ |
| bwôl~bwê | ‘calabash used as oil container’ |
| mbyîl    | ‘feces’ |
| fylîl    | ‘whirlwind’ |
| fîl      | ‘wisdom’ |
| mîl      | ‘slide’ |
| sál~sé   | ‘be hot’, ‘heat (up)’ |
| tâl~tê   | ‘pull’ |
| yîl      | ‘be black/blue/green’ |
| yîl      | ‘tickle’ |
| bûl      | ‘castrate’ |

**Table 2.14: CVl words**
As mentioned above, the range of vowels which can occur in CVl-syllables is especially restricted. However, the small number of vowels attested in CVl-syllables may be due to the small number of words (or syllables) ending in a lateral approximant. Only the vowels a, a, e and o are attested before coda l. Table 2.14 contains all words ending in l. The loanword skūl ‘school’ is not listed in the table because it is an unadapted loanword.¹⁵

### 2.4.4 Restrictions on CV sequences

While the range of segments which can form a syllable coda is very restricted (see §2.4.1), the onset of a syllable can be represented by any of the attested consonants or consonant sequences. However, not all onset consonants can co-occur with all vowels. Table 2.15 shows which consonant-vowel sequences are attested and where there are gaps. Vowels are found in the first row and the onset consonants which precede them are found in the first column. Combinations marked with a checkmark are attested, those marked with a hyphen are not attested. Table 2.15 contains only simple onsets; at least some of the gaps may be accidental.

#### 2.4.4.1 Neutralization of alveolar and alveo-palatal sibilants and affricates before the vowels i and u

The alveolar sibilants and affricates s, ts and dz generally do not precede the [+ATR] high vowels i and u; see Table 2.15. Instead, the alveo-palatal sibilants and affricates (ʃ, tʃ, dʒ) are commonly attested before these vowels, e.g. in ʃi ‘market’, tʃu ‘come’ and dʒu ‘goat’. Thus, there seems to be a strong tendency to neutralize the opposition between alveolar and alveo-palatal sibilants in the given context. In other contexts, the distinction between alveolars and alveo-palatal is contrastive and thus phonemic. Due to the general lack of segmental morphology in Mundabli, no active process of alternation between alveolar and alveo-palatal consonants can be observed. While neutralization before i and u is the rule, my data contain two words in which an alveolar affricate precedes the [+ATR] high vowel u, namely tsū ‘slap’ and tsú ‘contribute’.

### 2.4.5 Phonotactics of ideophones

The phonological structure of ideophones differs from that of both lexical and function words in several aspects including their syllable structure, their number of syllables and the occasional prolongation of segments. Ideophones may

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¹⁵While the word also exists in Mundabli in a phonotactically more adapted shape, jükulu, younger speakers prefer the less adapted form skul which is closer to the Standard English pronunciation. It is unknown whether the older word was originally borrowed as jükulu from an earlier version of Cameroon Pidgin or whether its phonotactics were adapted when it was borrowed (whether from Pidgin or from a neighboring language). See §2.4.6 for more on loanword adaptation.
also contain segments which are not part of the regular phoneme inventory. Ideophones are treated in detail in §10.5.

Unlike other words, ideophones and unadapted loanwords allow coda consonants other than \( m, n, ŋ \) or \( l \) (see also §2.4.6). Final obstruents are attested exclusively in monosyllabic ideophones, such as \( kpàʔ \) ‘sound of grabbing’ and \( kǎt \) ‘showing that something is completely finished or destroyed’. Coda stops generally do not have an audible release.

Furthermore, ideophones frequently involve multiple reduplication and, unlike other words in the language, are often polysyllabic. Examples of such polysyllabic ideophones in the following utterances are underlined:\(^{16}\) $\Diamond$ dzíŋ ȳs myá áńá w̄ŋw̄ŋw̄ŋ(...), $\Diamond$ 'Heavy rain is falling continuously.' and $\Diamond$ 'ŋkà m̄s m̄bò áńá ts̄ats̄ats̄a', 'That corn beer tastes awful.'. Cases of multi-syllabic aside from reduplications commonly occur in sound imitation, often in combination with reduplication, such as e.g., $\Diamond$ 'náŋkàŋkèŋkèŋkèŋ ‘call of bush fowl (nàŋ)’.

In order to add emphasis and make the conversation more lively, syllable rhymes in ideophones can be prolonged. This happens primarily in monosyl-

\(^{16}\)The diamond marks elicited examples.
2.4. Phonotactics

Labic ideophones. In open syllables, the vowel is extended, as e.g. in ‘ki dzi aná ḓiˈjūʊʊʊ’ ‘It was really cold.’ or ‘nǐŋ ká yìl ḓiˈiŋ ŋu’ ‘That thing is pitch-black.’. In closed syllables, a final sonorant can be drawn out, as in ‘we ŋu ḓiˈná ɲàŋŋŋ’ ‘The sun is burning down.’.

Finally, ideophones may exhibit sounds which are not part of the general phoneme inventory, such as the voiceless labial plosive p, as in tāp–pāp ‘showing that something is full up to the rim’, or the glottal stop ?, as in kpā? ‘sound of grabbing’.

2.4.6 Loanword adaptation

Loanwords are adapted to Mundabli phonotactics to varying degrees. In some cases, different forms of the same loanword which are adapted to different degrees co-exist in the language, as in the case of the word for ‘school’ which has various realizations: skul–skulu–ʃukulu. In fact, there are two more, probably older words for school, namely ɲwàtì (same as ‘book’) and tākèdā (from Hausa takàr̃dā ‘paper’). The choice of a variant depends on various factors such as speakers’ age and level of education. This section is divided into loans from English and Cameroon Pidgin on the one hand, and loans from other languages on the other. However, I am much more familiar with English and Pidgin than with the other source languages (except for French) and I therefore do not say much about loanwords from other languages. More research is needed to identify loans from other local languages or to exactly determine when and how loans made it into the language.

2.4.6.1 Loans from English and Cameroon Pidgin

For most if not all loanwords with English cognates, it is hard (if not impossible) to tell whether a loanword has been borrowed from English (locally known as ‘grammar’) or from Cameroon Pidgin, or whether it has been adopted from a neighboring language which had already borrowed the term from one of the two and then passed it on. Thus, it is in fact unclear to what extent the difference between the loanwords and their original sources is really due to loanword adaptation in Mundabli, and to what extent changes had happened before the words entered the language. In the remainder of this section, the changes are described assuming they were due to direct adaptation of English words to Mundabli phonotactics. Adaptation strategies include elimination of consonant clusters and obstruent-final syllables and replacement of foreign segments. The loanword kɛʃîmān ‘Christmas’ illustrates various strategies of loanword adaptation, see sections below.

17Some of the loans whose ultimate source is assumed to be Hausa also exist in Fulfulde. Translations are taken from Newman (1990). The Hausa words are written in the standard Hausa orthography: <ā> denotes a long /a/, only low tones are marked, and unmarked tones are high.
Avoidance of consonant clusters  Consonant clusters other than syllable-initial nasal consonant and consonant glide sequences do not exist in Mundabli. Therefore, they are usually eliminated in loanword adaptation, e.g. by means of consonant deletion or vowel epenthesis. An example for this is the word kɛ̌ʃimán ‘Christmas’. The r in the first syllable of ‘Christmas’ was deleted in order to avoid an onset cluster. In the more conservative pronunciation jukulu ‘school’ a vowel is inserted between the two initial consonants in order to break up the initial sk cluster. However, many younger speakers use less adapted forms like skulu or skul. In the words fen ‘fence’ and dzɪ̂ŋ ‘zinc’ the final consonants, s and k, respectively, are deleted to avoid clusters in the coda.

Avoidance of obstruent-final syllables  Various strategies are employed to avoid closed syllables. In the example kɛ̌ʃimán ‘Christmas’ for example, two different strategies are used. The obstruent coda of the initial syllable of the word ‘Christmas’ is turned into the onset of a new syllable by means of vowel epenthesis. The obstruent coda s of the final syllable on the other hand is simply replaced by the sonorant n, resulting in a well-formed CVN syllable. In the pronunciations jukuru and skulu for ‘school’, a vowel is inserted in final position, resulting in an open syllable even though native words may end in the liquid l.

Replacement of foreign segments  The third strategy for loanword adaptation is the replacement of alien segments with native ones. An example is the word dzɪ̂ŋ ‘zinc’ in which the voiced fricative z, which is not part of the Mundabli inventory, is replaced by the voiced affricate dz.

2.4.6.2  Loans from languages other than English or Cameroon Pidgin

I cannot say much about the grade of adaptation of loans from languages other than English or Cameroon Pidgin, because I do not know enough about their original forms in the source languages and, in many cases, I may not even be aware that they are loanwords. The few examples I am aware of do not violate Mundabli phonotactics. Among these are nāsɛ̄ ‘white person’ (orig. nāsār, Hausa) and nānā ‘pineapple’ (orig. ananas, French). While the latter two loanwords have lost a syllable in the process, it is not known whether this happened when they were integrated into Mundabli or in another language from which they were then borrowed into Mundabli.

Another example is one of the words for school, tākèdā (from Hausa takàr̃-dà ‘sheet of paper, letter, book’). It is unclear whether this word was borrowed directly from Hausa or whether it was borrowed from another local language which may have borrowed it from another local language (possibly several times in turn) after it was borrowed from Hausa. And even if it was directly borrowed from Hausa, it is unclear which dialect form was borrowed.
In order to look at morpheme structure constraints, morphemes are subdivided into lexical stems, affixes and function words. Given the general lack of segmental morphology, the number of morphophonological alternations in Mundabli is comparatively small. However, morphophonological alternations may not only apply within words (§3.3) but also across word boundaries (§3.4). The remainder of this chapter deals with various aspects of morphophonology and phrasal phonology. Section 3.1 describes the phonological structure of morphemes, §3.2 deals with the interaction of morphology and tonal phonology, §3.3 deals with phonological alternations which apply when morphemes combine to form words, and §3.4 deals with phonological processes which work across word boundaries.

3.1 Morpheme structure constraints

Phonotactic patterns of words depend on their morphological structure. In order to describe them adequately, it is not enough to refer to phonological domains, such as the foot or the syllable. One has to refer to morphemes, morpheme types and type-specific morpheme structure constraints. A comparison of the different morpheme types in Mundabli shows that lexical roots, affixes and function words are subject to different morpheme structure constraints, i.e. each of the three has a specific phonological make-up and specific phonotactics. Thus, while e.g. NC and CG clusters are frequently attested in stem-initial position (§3.1.1), they are completely absent from affixes (§3.1.2)
and function words (§3.1.3). This section describes the phonological structure of the three in turn.

3.1.1 Structure of lexical roots

The great majority of lexical roots are monosyllabic. The structure of nominal and verbal roots is nearly identical, although the two show different tonal behaviour (see §3.2). Root-syllables follow the template (N)CGV(S), where N represents a nasal homorganic with C, C representing any consonant, G represents a glide, and S represents a syllable-final sonorant (m, n, ŋ or l). Root syllables always have an onset and they may have a coda, too. Morpheme structure constraints applying to lexical roots may affect the root-initial onset (§3.1.1.1), the root-final coda (§3.1.1.2) or the core vowel (§3.1.1.3).

3.1.1.1 Root-initial position

All consonants are attested in root-initial position, either on their own, as in the examples in Table 3.1, or in combination with a homorganic nasal, a glide or both. In fact, tautomorphemic consonant clusters are restricted to root-initial position. They are not attested in affixes or function words.

Table 3.1 contains examples of nominal and verbal stems beginning with the different consonants. Verbs are given in their perfective form unless marked otherwise. Table 3.2 contains some examples of root-initial (N)CG sequences. For exhaustive lists of root-initial CG and NC sequences with examples, see §2.2.3 and §2.2.4, respectively.

Whereas nominal and verbal stems are otherwise identical in structure, initial NC sequences are restricted to nominal stems. Verbs never start in a tautomorphemic NC sequence. A few examples of nouns starting in an NC(G) sequence are provided in Table 3.3.

---

1The term ‘morpheme structure constraints’ is inspired by Booij (2011), but is used here in the literal sense, i.e. to refer to constraints on the phonological structure of morphemes.
### Table 3.1: Stem-initial consonants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consonants</th>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>t</td>
<td>tàn</td>
<td>‘fly’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k</td>
<td>kǎ</td>
<td>‘fry’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kp</td>
<td>kpā</td>
<td>‘shoe’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>bā</td>
<td>‘sheath’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d</td>
<td>dǎn</td>
<td>‘rhizome’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g</td>
<td>gā</td>
<td>‘be(come) fat’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gb</td>
<td>gbàn</td>
<td>‘in-law’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f</td>
<td>fá</td>
<td>‘cut hair’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s</td>
<td>sǎ</td>
<td>‘defecate’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s</td>
<td>sān</td>
<td>‘grass’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ts</td>
<td>tsā</td>
<td>‘mud’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tj</td>
<td>tjāŋ</td>
<td>‘cackle’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dz</td>
<td>dzān</td>
<td>‘mosquito’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dʒ</td>
<td>dʒān</td>
<td>‘connect’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m</td>
<td>mān</td>
<td>‘name’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>nān</td>
<td>‘wear’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j</td>
<td>jà</td>
<td>‘hurt’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ñ</td>
<td>ñà</td>
<td>‘boast’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l</td>
<td>là</td>
<td>‘announce’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>y</td>
<td>yā</td>
<td>‘intestines’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>w</td>
<td>wā</td>
<td>‘saw’ (n.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 3.2: Examples of stem-initial CG sequences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>dzwɔ̀ŋ</td>
<td>‘garden egg’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kwɔ᷆ŋ</td>
<td>‘snore’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fyàŋ</td>
<td>‘canine’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kyɛ̄n</td>
<td>‘soul’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dʒwǎn</td>
<td>‘star’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 3.3: Examples of stem-initial NC(G) sequences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mfɔ̀</td>
<td>‘slave’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mbɔ̀ŋ</td>
<td>‘cow’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ndām</td>
<td>‘tear(s)’ (n.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ñkǎŋ</td>
<td>‘oath’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ñkwǐn</td>
<td>‘mountain’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ñgyā</td>
<td>‘traditional shelf’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ñgwɛ̄n</td>
<td>‘elephant grass’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ñmgbɛ̀</td>
<td>‘upper grinding stone’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.1.1.2 Root-final coda position

Tautomorphic closed syllables are only found in lexical roots. All coda consonants, i.e., the nasals m, n and ŋ and the lateral glide l are attested in root-final position. Examples of lexical roots consisting of a closed syllable are māl ‘slide’ (v.), bɔ̀m ‘antelope’, dʒwǎn ‘star’ and mbɔ̀ŋ ‘cow’. For more examples of closed syllable roots, see §2.2.1.4 and the comprehensive list of CVI roots in Table 2.14.

3.1.1.3 Root-vowels

The range of vowels attested in lexical roots exceeds the range attested in prefixes and function words. All attested vowels and vowel combinations can be found in roots. For restrictions on the co-occurrence of root-vowels with the different coda consonants, see §2.4.3. For examples of lexical roots with all attested vowels, see §2.3.1. Pharyngealized vowels are restricted to lexical items.

3.1.2 Structure of affixes

Mundabli has almost exclusively prefixes. Only the infinitive marker can be realized either as prefix N- or as circumfix N-...-n, depending on the structure of the verb (see §3.1.2.3 for details). Prefixes may consist of a consonant or of a CV syllable. Only the Class 6 and Class 18 prefixes have the shape CVN (for details, see §3.1.2.1). In the current section, affixes are subdivided into syllabic and non-syllabic prefixes. Special sections are devoted to the infinitive marker N-...(-n) and the clitical first persons singular preverbal pronoun N=.

3.1.2.1 CV(N)- prefixes

Prefixes of the shape CV(N)- include noun class markers, such as the Class 19 prefix fì- in fìdʒi ‘little dog’ or the Class 6 prefix mùN- in mùŋgi ‘a little bit of water’. Concord markers on adjectives and numerals also have the shape CV(N)- (see §4.2 for an overview).

CV(N)- Prefixes always have simple onsets. The following consonants are attested initially in prefixes: b, f, k, m, w, y. Thus, the range of initial consonants attested in prefixes is much smaller than the range for lexical roots.

The range of vowels attested in prefixes is also more restricted than that in lexical roots. Not only are pharyngealized vowels completely absent from prefixes, but the range of simple vowels attested in prefixes is also very restricted. Only the vowels i, u, ŋ and ŋ are attested.

The prefix-final nasal which is only found in Class 6 and 18 prefixes is integrated into the onset of the first root syllable upon prefixation.

\(^2\)Compare ngi ‘water’ without diminutive.
3.1.2.2 Non-syllabic prefixes

CV noun class prefixes drop their vowels when they are prefixed to vowel initial roots, such as the demonstrative roots -en ‘this’ and -ɔ ‘that’ or non-first person pronouns. Examples are niŋ k-ɛ́n ‘that thing’ (cl.7), gbɔ́w w-ɛ́n (c1.3) ‘this house’ and wān w-ɔ̄n ‘that child’ (cl.1). The concord prefix also bears a specific tone which determines the tone of the resulting demonstrative/determiner. A more detailed discussion of consonantal concord prefixes is found in §5.2. Table 3.4 gives an overview of consonantal prefixes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>noun class</th>
<th>prefix</th>
<th>proximal demonstratives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>w-</td>
<td>wɛ́n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/8</td>
<td>b-</td>
<td>bɛ́n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3(/5)</td>
<td>w-</td>
<td>wɛ́n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/10</td>
<td>y-</td>
<td>yɛ́n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(6/)7</td>
<td>k-</td>
<td>kɛ́n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8/2</td>
<td>b-</td>
<td>bɛ́n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>y-</td>
<td>yɛ́n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>f-</td>
<td>fɛ́n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6a/18a</td>
<td>m-</td>
<td>mɛ́n</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.4: Consonantal agreement in demonstratives

The consonants of these consonantal prefixes are the same as those of CV-shaped concord prefixes.

3.1.2.3 The infinitive marker N-...-n/ N-

Apart from its specific tone pattern, the infinitive is characterized by a nasal infinitive affix which is realized either as a homorganic prefix N- or as a circumfix N-...-n. The vowel quality of the stem syllable and the presence vs. absence of a stem-final coda determine the shape of the affix. The criteria which condition the preference of the prefix over the circumfix are the same as those which condition ablaut in imperfective verb stems, see §3.3.5. The resulting imperfective stems usually do not meet the criteria for the use of the circumfix and instead take the homorganic prefix in the infinitive. Infinitives based on verbs of tone class b and c are realized with a ML falling tone, while verbs of class a are realized with a low tone (L), no matter whether the infinitive is based on the perfective or on the imperfective stem form.

In principle, both perfective and imperfective stem forms can serve as a base for the infinitive. However, the distinction between perfective and imperfective only surfaces in verbs which undergo ablaut in the imperfective. For all other verbs, the purely tonal distinction between perfective and imperfective is neutralized in the infinitive for which the tone pattern depends only on the tone class of the verb which forms its base, not on its aspectual form.
Regarding the criteria which determine the choice between prefix and circumfix, the circumfix is only used with verb stems which end in i, i, u, o or in one of the sequences wo or ye, as exemplified by the infinitive forms in Table 3.5. It is never used with closed syllable stems. The lower case letters behind the translations in this and the following table represent the three verb tone classes (a, b and c) (see §2.1.3).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>perfective</th>
<th>infinitive</th>
<th>gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>yí</td>
<td>n-yí-n</td>
<td>‘eat’ (b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kpi</td>
<td>njm-kpi-n</td>
<td>‘die’ (b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ku</td>
<td>nj-kú-n</td>
<td>‘clap’ (a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kwó</td>
<td>nj-kwó-n</td>
<td>‘enter’ (c)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>myé</td>
<td>m-myé-n</td>
<td>‘lick’ (c)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tʃye</td>
<td>n-tʃye-n</td>
<td>‘know’ (c)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tsí</td>
<td>n-tsi-n</td>
<td>‘copulate’ (c)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yó</td>
<td>n-yó-n</td>
<td>‘climb’ (c)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dà</td>
<td>n-dà-n</td>
<td>‘see’ (a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yì</td>
<td>n-yì-n</td>
<td>‘bury’ (a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tsɔ</td>
<td>n-tsɔ-n</td>
<td>‘show’ (a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sɔ</td>
<td>n-sɔ-n</td>
<td>‘split’ (a)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.5: Infinitives with the infinitive circumfix

In all other cases, including imperfactive stems with ablaut, the prefixal form of the infinitive marker is used. More specifically, this is the case when the root consists of a closed syllable or the root syllable ends in a vowel or in a vowel sequence other than the ones listed above. This includes stems ending in i, u, e, e, a, o without a preceding w, or e without a preceding y and the few perfactive stems which contain pharyngealized vowels. For a representative list of infinitive forms with the prefixal form of the infinitive marker, see Table 3.6; infinitives based on perfactive open syllable stems are found above the dashed line, infinitives based on imperfactive open syllable stems are found below the first dashed line, and those based on closed syllable stems are found below the second dashed line.

3.1.2.4 The first person singular preverbal clitic N =

The first person singular preverbal pronoun is a homorganic nasal N = which is phonologically attached to the left edge of the first element of the verbal core (see Chapter 8 for a definition of the verbal core), i.e. usually a TAM marker or the verb itself. The clitic is usually not syllabic except for specific exceptional cases in which it is syllabic and bears a superhigh tone (cf. §6.1.1).
Table 3.6: Infinitives with a prefix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>perfective</th>
<th>infinitive</th>
<th>gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>bï</td>
<td>m-bï</td>
<td>'exit' (b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kʊ</td>
<td>ŋ-kʊ</td>
<td>'cry' (a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kã</td>
<td>ŋ-kã</td>
<td>'fry' (b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dzê</td>
<td>n-dzê</td>
<td>'say' (b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yó</td>
<td>ŋ-yô</td>
<td>'run' (c)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fũ</td>
<td>m-fũ</td>
<td>'tell' (a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ë</td>
<td>n-ë</td>
<td>'bark' (a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kyɛê</td>
<td>ŋ-kyɛê</td>
<td>'look' (c)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yɪ</td>
<td>ŋ-yɪ</td>
<td>'eat' (b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mũ</td>
<td>m-mũ</td>
<td>'drink' (b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mɑf</td>
<td>m-mɑf</td>
<td>'slide' (a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yãm</td>
<td>ŋ-yãm</td>
<td>'yawn' (a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bãm</td>
<td>m-bãm</td>
<td>'agree' (c)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kʊŋ</td>
<td>ŋ-kʊŋ</td>
<td>'hunt' (c)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.1.3 Structure of functional items

Functional items include TAM markers, negation markers, clause linking particles, and others. They commonly consist of a single syllable, and rarely of two. The structure of function words differs from that of lexical roots in several regards. For example, neither complex onsets nor closed syllables – both common in lexical roots – are attested in functional items. This section contains a detailed description of structural constraints on function words.

3.1.3.1 Initial position in function words

Unlike lexical roots, function words may lack an onset. This is the case for words of the segmental shape a (including the second person preverbal pronoun à, the preverbal negative marker ā, the clause-final polar question marker à, a variant of the hesternal past marker à~nà, the comitative marker ā and the adverbializer ā, the locative particle ī, and a few bisyllabic items, namely the conjunction āmi and the particles áná ‘like that’ and āká ‘like’.

Function words may have onsets, too, but they only allow simple onsets. They never start in an NC or CG sequence. Furthermore, the range of consonants attested in the initial onset is much smaller in function words than it is in lexical stems. Many consonants (e.g., g, ts, s) are not attested in the onset of functional items. Table 3.7 contains an exhaustive list of initial consonants attested in functional items with examples. For a comprehensive list of functional items, see the Lists of affixes, clitics and particles at the beginning of this book.
3.2. Morphotonology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>onset</th>
<th>example</th>
<th>gloss</th>
<th>gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>d</td>
<td>dɨ̋</td>
<td>f1</td>
<td>hodiernal future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f</td>
<td>fə̋</td>
<td>f1</td>
<td>hodiernal past</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k</td>
<td>kə̀</td>
<td>p3</td>
<td>distant past</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m</td>
<td>mɨ̄</td>
<td>CONSEC</td>
<td>consecutive, ‘and (then)’, clausal conjunction for p3, f1 and f2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>nà ~ à</td>
<td>P2</td>
<td>hesternal past</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t</td>
<td>tə́</td>
<td>VER.FOC</td>
<td>verum focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>w</td>
<td>wɔ̄</td>
<td>NEG</td>
<td>negative particle, follows the verbal core, generally co-occurs with preverbal negation marker ā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>y</td>
<td>yɛ̄</td>
<td>COMP</td>
<td>complementizer, precedes quotations and complement clauses</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.7: Initial consonants in function words

3.1.3.2 Lack of codas in function words

Syllables in function words are always open. Function words typically consist of one open syllable (e.g., the distal past marker kə̀ or the comitative preposition ā) or rarely two (e.g., the conjunctions āmɨ̀ ‘and’ and āká ‘like’).

3.1.3.3 Vowels in function words

The most striking thing regarding vowels in function words is the fact that pharyngealized vowels are completely absent from function words. The range of non-pharyngealized vowels found in functional items is also smaller than that found in lexical roots. Only the vowels i, ɔ, a, a and e are attested. The lack of pharyngealized vowels has an interesting parallel in the lack of closed syllables in function words. It may have implications for the phonological status of pharyngealized vowels (see §2.3.3.2 for a detailed discussion of pharyngealized vowels).

3.2 Morphotonology

While nouns and verbs are identical in most cases regarding their segmental shape – both usually being monosyllabic – they behave quite differently as regards their tonal setup. This section contains descriptions of the tonal behavior of nouns and verbs.

3.2.1 Noun tone patterns

Monosyllabic noun stems, which account for the great majority of nouns, may bear any of the eight single and contour tones. While more complex tonal
Morphophonology and phrasal phonology

patterns are attested in bisyllabic noun stems, this is probably due to their morphological complexity, since have are usually arisen from historical compounds.

Nouns usually retain the same tone in all contexts. The tone of a noun is generally not influenced by adjacent elements or prosodic boundaries. However, M and ML nouns are only distinguished in utterance-final position and before a low tone (see below).

3.2.1.1 Tone of segmental noun class prefixes

While the nouns of most noun classes do not have segmental prefixes, a few classes, namely Class 2, 19 and 18, have retained their prefixes. All these segmental noun class prefixes (i.e., bə̀- cl.2, fì- cl.19 and mù- cl.18) carry a low tone, which does not affect the tone of the root. Low tone spread (see §3.4.2) from the prefix to a superhigh root does not apply.

3.2.1.2 Tone in monosyllabic nouns of genders other than Gender 9/10

The respective singular and plural forms of nouns belonging to genders other than Gender 9/10, including their tones, are identical, apart from a few exceptions. They bear one of the tones shown in Table 3.8.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>utterance-final</th>
<th>non-final</th>
<th>example</th>
<th>gloss</th>
<th>gender</th>
<th>number of lexemes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>ṅkɔ̀</td>
<td>'fist(s)'</td>
<td>7/8</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LH</td>
<td>LH</td>
<td>ṅkǎn</td>
<td>'oath(s)'</td>
<td>7/8</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>mbʊŋ</td>
<td>'river(s)'</td>
<td>1/2</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ML</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>bì</td>
<td>'fish(es)'</td>
<td>3/7a</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>bá</td>
<td>'sheath(s)'</td>
<td>7/8</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HL</td>
<td>HL</td>
<td>dʒû</td>
<td>'word(s)'</td>
<td>1/2</td>
<td>7 (mainly loans)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HM</td>
<td>HM</td>
<td>fọ</td>
<td>'cap(s)'</td>
<td>7/8</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>yí</td>
<td>'eye(s)'</td>
<td>3/7a</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.8: Tones of nouns belonging to genders other than Class 9/10 in utterance-final vs. non-final position

As Table 3.8 shows, the distinction between M and ML falling nouns is neutralized in non-final position, where both are realized with a level mid tone (M).

The HL and the HM falling tones are not as frequent as the other tones. The HL falling tone is only attested in three nouns which are not obviously borrowed (sè ‘house front’, ṅgyà ‘traditional shelf’ and dʒû ‘word’). The other nouns with a HL contour tone are all borrowings from Cameroon Pidgin or English, such as gāŋ ‘gown’, kɔ̀ ‘cup’ or dzìŋ ‘zinc, corrugated iron sheet’.
The HM falling tone is also less frequent than the other tones, but the attested cases are native nouns (of Gender 1/2 and 7/8). Examples are fó ‘cap’ and wé ‘bark’.

There are a few exceptional nouns which belong to genders other than Gender 9/10 and which show different tones in their singular and plural forms; see Table 3.9. One noun of Gender 1/2 and three nouns of Gender 3/7a have a mid tone in the singular and a high tone in the plural. They are the only nouns which show this singular-plural tone change. All of them also involve singular-plural stem alternation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>singular gloss</th>
<th>plural gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>wān ‘child’ (cl1)</td>
<td>nwɔ́m ‘children’ (cl2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fɔ́ ‘head’ (cl3)</td>
<td>fá ‘heads’ (cl7a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>njū ‘farm’ (cl3)</td>
<td>nwé ‘farms’ (cl7a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tjyē ‘stone’ (cl3)</td>
<td>té ‘stones’ (cl7a)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.9: Mid tone singular, high tone plural nouns

Furthermore, there are three words (two of Gender 1/2 and one of Gender 3/10) which have a low tone in the singular and a mid-low falling tone in the plural. They are listed in Table 3.10. Again, all these nouns also are subject to a singular-plural stem alternation. The same singular-plural tonal alternation is common in Gender 9/10 nouns, see section 3.2.1.4 for details. Interestingly, all these nouns also have a stem alternation. Some other Gender 1/2 and Gender 7/8 nouns exhibit less systematic tonal alternations, see Table 3.11.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>singular gloss</th>
<th>plural gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mɔ̀ ‘person’ (cl1)</td>
<td>mbɛ́ ‘people’ (cl2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gbàn ‘in-law’ (cl1)</td>
<td>gbwɔ́m ‘in-laws’ (cl2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ndɔ̀n ‘branch’ (cl3)</td>
<td>ndàn ‘branches’ (cl10)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.10: Low singular, mid-low plural nouns

The singular-plural tonal alternation attested in the first two nouns, mbɛ́ and ntɛ́ (both nouns translate roughly as ‘twin’), with a rising tone in the singular (Class 1) and a superhigh tone in the plural (Class 2), is also attested in Gender 9/10 nouns. However, the other two nouns, kpɔ́ ‘wife’, which has a ML falling tone in the singular (Class 2) and a mid tone in the plural (Class 2), and syàŋ ‘squirrel, sp.’ with a low tone in the singular (Class 7) and a mid tone in the plural (Class 8) are the only nouns showing these tonal alternations.
Morphophonology and phrasal phonology

Table 3.11: Other tonal stem changes in non-Gender 9/10 nouns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singular Gloss</th>
<th>Plural Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mbɛ́ 'twin' (cl 1)</td>
<td>mbɛ́ 'twins' (cl 2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ntɛ́ 'twin' (cl 1)</td>
<td>ntɛ́ 'twins' (cl 2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kpɔ́ 'wife' (cl 1)</td>
<td>kpɔ́ 'wives' (cl 2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>syəŋ 'squirrel, sp.' (cl 7)</td>
<td>syəŋ 'squirrels, sp.' (cl 8)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.2.1.3 Tone of polysyllabic nouns of Genders other than Gender 9/10

There are only a few bisyllabic nouns. The majority of these belong to Gender 1/2, Gender 7/8 or Gender 9/10. However, this may be accidental and the distribution may just reflect the relation of the quantity of lexical items assigned to these Genders (see §4.3). Table 3.12 contains examples of all tone patterns attested in nouns of Gender 1/2 and Gender 7/8, which generally have identical tone patterns in singular and plural forms. Gender 9/10 nouns will be treated separately in §3.2.1.4.

Table 3.12: Tonal patterns of bisyllabic nouns (in isolation)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SG/PL Tone</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>SG</th>
<th>PL</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
<th>Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>L.L</td>
<td>didóm</td>
<td>didóm</td>
<td>'chest'</td>
<td>7/8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L.H</td>
<td>kpákɔ́</td>
<td>kpákɔ́</td>
<td>'papaya'</td>
<td>1/2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.M</td>
<td>kükwá</td>
<td>kükwá</td>
<td>'raffia fruit'</td>
<td>7/8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H.H</td>
<td>kúkú</td>
<td>kúkú</td>
<td>'butterfly'</td>
<td>7/8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.S</td>
<td>mbũntshá</td>
<td>mbũntshá</td>
<td>'fishing net'</td>
<td>1/2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H.L</td>
<td>fúfú</td>
<td>fúfú</td>
<td>'beans, sp.'</td>
<td>7/8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.L</td>
<td>tɔ́tɔ́</td>
<td>tɔ́tɔ́</td>
<td>'pepper'</td>
<td>1/2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L.M</td>
<td>kàkwə́</td>
<td>kàkwə́</td>
<td>'toad'</td>
<td>7/8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L.H</td>
<td>tʃĩtʃɛ́</td>
<td>tʃĩtʃɛ́</td>
<td>'grandparent'</td>
<td>1/2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L.HL</td>
<td>dɔ́kɔ́</td>
<td>dɔ́kɔ́</td>
<td>'donkey'</td>
<td>1/2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L.H.L</td>
<td>ndzándzà</td>
<td>ndzándzà</td>
<td>'worm'</td>
<td>7/8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L.H.M</td>
<td>niŋlɔ́</td>
<td>niŋlɔ́</td>
<td>'evening'</td>
<td>1/2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L.H.H</td>
<td>náná</td>
<td>náná</td>
<td>'pineapple'</td>
<td>7/8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.ML</td>
<td>bwákə́</td>
<td>bwákə́</td>
<td>'fingernail'</td>
<td>7/8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.H</td>
<td>gɔ́ŋlɔ́</td>
<td>gɔ́ŋlɔ́</td>
<td>'dragon fly'</td>
<td>7/8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.S</td>
<td>ŋmgbĩŋbṹŋ</td>
<td>ŋmgbĩŋbṹŋ</td>
<td>'millipede'</td>
<td>7/8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.L</td>
<td>lǐtɔ́</td>
<td>lǐtɔ́</td>
<td>'bottle'</td>
<td>1/2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.M</td>
<td>lɔ́kɔ́</td>
<td>lɔ́kɔ́</td>
<td>'cassava'</td>
<td>7/8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.H</td>
<td>kpūkpɔ́</td>
<td>kpūkpɔ́</td>
<td>'woodpecker'</td>
<td>7/8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L.M.L</td>
<td>ndzɔ́kə́</td>
<td>ndzɔ́kə́</td>
<td>'knuckle'</td>
<td>1/2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The nouns above the dashed line in Table 3.12 have tonal patterns which are commonly attested in monosyllabic stems. The tone patterns of the nouns below the dashed line, on the other hand, differ from those found in monosyllabic stems. The reason for this is probably that they are partly historically derived from compounds and partly results of reduplication. Some are also loanwords, such as nānā 'pineapple' and lītā 'bottle'.

The number of nouns with more than two syllables is too small to make any generalizations. There are only a handful of trisyllabic nouns which are not or at least not obviously compounds: fūkūrū ‘school’ (cl.1/2), tʃikə̀lə̀ ‘strainer’ (cl.7/8), kʊŋkʊ̄lʊ̄ŋ ‘tortoise’ (cl.7/8), and tɑ̂kèdā ‘paper, letter, school’ (cl.1/2). While the origin of tʃikə̀lə̀ and kʊŋkʊ̄lʊ̄ŋ is unclear, fūkūrū and tɑ̂kèdā are borrowings.

3.2.1.4 Tone in Gender 9/10 Nouns

Unlike nouns of other genders, Gender 9/10 nouns show a tonal singular-plural alternation. This alternation concerns both monosyllabic and bisyllabic words.

Monosyllabic Gender 9/10 Nouns  Class 9 (singular) and 10 (plural) nouns are distinguished from each other only by their tones. The tone of a Class 9 noun is usually lower relative to that of the corresponding Class 10 noun.

However, about a third of the Gender 9/10 nouns have a M tone in singular and plural (see Table 3.13). Table 3.13 shows the singular-plural tonal alternations of monosyllabic Gender 9/10 nouns.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>tone</th>
<th>tone</th>
<th>cl.9 example</th>
<th>cl.10 example</th>
<th>gloss</th>
<th>number of lexemes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(sg)</td>
<td>(pl)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>ML</td>
<td>kù</td>
<td>kù</td>
<td>‘rope/s’</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LH</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>tsô</td>
<td>tsô</td>
<td>‘baboon/s’</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>kū</td>
<td>kū</td>
<td>‘ratmole/s’</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ʃî</td>
<td>î</td>
<td>dzâŋ</td>
<td>dzâŋ</td>
<td>‘sugar cane/s’</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LH</td>
<td>ML</td>
<td>tsâŋ</td>
<td>tsâŋ</td>
<td>‘palm kernel/s’</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.13: Tones of Gender 9/10 Nouns (in isolation)

The rightmost column shows how many lexemes with a given singular-plural tonal opposition are attested. Cases with stem alternation (see this section, below) are not counted.

The tonal patterns shown above the dashed line in Table 3.13 are attested frequently. The patterns below the line are exceptional, and are attested only once. The first noun below the dashed line, dzâŋ ‘sugar cane’, bears a high tone, which is not common in nouns of Gender 9/10. Unlike other Gender 9/10 nouns, it bears the same tone in singular (Class 9) and plural (Class
10). It has possibly only recently been reinterpreted as belonging to Gender 9/10. The other exceptional noun shows an irregular tone change. While the singular (Class 9) LH rising tone of *tsän* ‘palm kernel’ is regularly attested in Class 9 nouns, we would expect the plural to bear a superhigh tone rather than a ML falling tone (compare the regular tone change shown in the second row in Table 3.13). For a Class 10 (plural) noun with ML falling tone like *tsän* ‘palm kernels’, on the other hand, we would expect the corresponding Class 9 (singular) noun to bear a low tone (as in the regular tone change shown in the first row. Finally, there is one noun, not included in the table, namely ‘ankle’ which shows a regular form with a superhigh tone in the plural (Class 10, *fyä*) but which has two tonal variants, *fyä* and *fyä* in the singular (Class 9). While the first variant has a LH rising tone as expected, the other tone pattern, with a H tone is irregular.

Two Gender 9/10 nouns (which are not included in the numbers given in the table) show stem alternation. The word for ‘meat’ is suppletive and has two different unrelated forms in the singular (Class 9: *näm*) and the plural (Class 10: *sĩ*). The word for ‘road’ or ‘path’ also has two different forms, but in this case, they are related: *dʒî* (sg/cl 9) and *dzê* (pl/cl 10). These two nouns also show tonal alternations: the singular stem for ‘meat’ has a L tone and the plural stem has a ML falling tone, i.e. it has one of the common patterns found above the dashed line in Table 3.13. The singular (Class 9) stem for ‘road’ has a M tone and the plural (Class 10) stem a ML falling tone. This change does not match the common Class 9/10 tonal alternations.

**Polysyllabic Gender 9/10 nouns** The number of bisyllabic Gender 9/10 stems is extremely small. I know of only three bisyllabic Gender 9/10 stems which seem to be neither compounds nor loanwords. Their tonal patterns (see Table 3.14) are variations on the frequent tonal patterns of monosyllabic Gender 9/10 stems shown above the dashed line in Table 3.13.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>tone</th>
<th>tone</th>
<th>cl 9</th>
<th>cl 10</th>
<th>gloss</th>
<th>number of lexemes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>cl 9</td>
<td>cl 10</td>
<td>example</td>
<td>example</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(sg)</td>
<td>(pl)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L.L</td>
<td>M-ML</td>
<td>tāmâ</td>
<td>tāmâ</td>
<td>‘lion’</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L.LH</td>
<td>S.S</td>
<td>lâmbû</td>
<td>lâmbû</td>
<td>‘orange’</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.14: Tonal patterns of bisyllabic nouns of Gender 9/10 (in isolation)

The same pattern is either squeezed onto the second syllable or stretched out across two syllables. The third pattern which is commonly attested in monosyllabic Gender 9/10 nouns, in which both singular and plural bear a mid tone (see Table 3.14), is absent from bisyllabic Gender 9/10 nouns. However, this is probably just due to the small number of bisyllabic words.

There is one more bisyllabic Gender 9/10 word, *sîsyän* ‘spider’, which does not appear to be a compound synchronically. While the singular tone is L.LH,
there are two variants of the plural. It may either be interpreted as a Class 10 compound noun (sisyāŋ) with the tonal pattern M.S, or as a monomorphemic Class 8 noun (sisyāŋ), with the same tonal pattern as the singular form, L.LH.

Words consisting of more than two syllables are rare. I know of only two trisyllabic Gender 9/10 nouns: sābīlī ‘soap’ (loan; from Hausa sābulū ~ sābulī) and ʃîŋkə̄lə̄-ʃîŋkə̄lə̄ ‘termite, sp.’. Their tonal patterns, L.H.L and M.M.M, respectively, are the same in singular and plural.

3.2.2 Verb tone patterns

3.2.2.1 Verb tone classes

Verbs are practically always monosyllabic. They can be subdivided into three verb tone classes (a, b and c). All verbs of a given tone class have the same tone pattern in a given context. The tone pattern changes systematically, depending on tense, aspect and other factors. Table 3.15 contains examples of all three verb tone classes. The tonal patterns in the table are representative of perfective verbs in p0 tense in utterance-final and non-final position.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>verb tone class</th>
<th>final tone pattern</th>
<th>example</th>
<th>non-final tone pattern</th>
<th>example</th>
<th>gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>ML</td>
<td>ʃì</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>ʃì</td>
<td>‘descend’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>LH</td>
<td>mű</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>mű</td>
<td>‘take’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>kʊŋ</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>kʊŋ</td>
<td>‘hunt’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.15: Verb tone classes with examples of perfective present tense verbs in utterance-final and non-final position

While the distinction between verb tone classes can be neutralized in certain cases, e.g. in the infinitive verb form where verbs of Class a carry a low tone while those of Class b and c carry a mid-low falling tone (see §8.4.1), the constitution of the tone classes never changes. Verb tone patterns are not affected by adjacent words but, in some cases, tonal patterns depend on the syntactic position, with different tone patterns in utterance-final vs. non-final position.

3.2.2.2 Final vs. non-final verb tone patterns

As shown in Table 3.15, the tone pattern of a verb in non-final position (compare examples in (1)) is often different from its tone pattern in utterance-final

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3In this case, the sequence is probably best analyzed as compound consisting of two stems, which results in the tonal patterns L-LH in the singular (Class 9) and M(L)-S in the plural (Class 10).
position (see examples in (2)), irrespective of the type of part of speech element following the verb (i.e. whether it is an object, an adverbial phrase, etc.) and of its tonal pattern.

(1) a. bì nám nū
   1PL work(a) cl3/7a.farm
   °‘We have (just) tilled the field.’

b. bì kā jī
   1PL fry(b) cl9.chicken
   °‘We have (just) fried a chicken.’

c. bì kyɛ̀ mɔ̀
   1PL look(c) cl1.man
   °‘We have (just) watched a man.’

(2) a. bì nám
   1PL work(a)
   °‘We have (just) worked.’

b. bì kā
   1PL fry(b)
   °‘We have (just) fried [something].’

c. bì kyɛ̀
   1PL look(c)
   °‘We have (just) looked [at something].’

The distinction of final and non-final tone patterns is not only attested in the p0 tense. It permeates nearly all TAM forms which distinguish at least two tone patterns and in which the verb can occur in final position. This excludes e.g. the future tenses, in which the tone class distinctions are completely neutralized, and most negative forms, as the latter involve postverbal negative markers, so that the verb cannot occur in utterance-final position. In the imperative, there is no tonal distinction between final and non-final verbs, either.

The different tone patterns of final vs. non-final verbs cannot be explained by utterance-final phonetic effects such as final lowering or the like. For instance, Class b verbs, which bear a superhigh tone (S) in non-final position, have a LH rising tone in final position. This cannot be due to the influence of a low boundary tone at the end. Instead, it looks as if the rise might be caused by a low tone (L) preceding the superhigh-toned verb (recall that a superhigh tone is usually realized as LH rising when it follows a low tone, see §3.4.2 for details).

Furthermore, a word bearing a mid-low falling tone (ML) in utterance-final position would be expected to bear a level mid (M) tone in non-final position, not a low tone (L) as in (1a), because a phonological rule causes non-final mid
3.2. Morphotonology

tones, e.g. in nouns, to be realized as ML falling tones in utterance-final position (see §2.1.2). The opposition of final vs. non-final tone patterns has parallels with the conjoint-disjoint opposition mainly reported to exist in Bantu languages, but also in some other Niger-Congo languages. Although I am not aware of another language in which the conjoint-disjoint opposition is represented by a purely tonal contrast, having stripped down its morphology to a minimum, it would not be too surprising if Mundabli synchronically realized former segmental marking of conjoint vs. disjoint verb forms with a purely tonal distinction. However, following up on this hypothesis requires further investigation.

The tonal patterns of final and non-final verbs in the various TAM forms are described in Chapter 8.

3.2.2.3 Perfective vs. imperfective verb tone patterns

Another tonal opposition in verbs is the tonal difference between perfective and imperfective verb forms. The verb tone patterns of perfective and imperfective verbs in utterance-final and non-final position are shown in Table 3.16.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>verb tone class</th>
<th>perfective (final)</th>
<th>perfective (non-final)</th>
<th>imperfective (final)</th>
<th>imperfective (non-final)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>ML</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>ML</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>LH</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.16: Perfective/imperfective tone patterns

Imperfective verbs do not generally show an opposition between final vs. non-final tone patterns. Only Class A verbs are pronounced differently in final vs. non-final position. However, this is due to a regular phonological process. If a word is realized with a ML falling tone in final position, it is always realized with a M tone in non-final position, see §2.1.2. Thus, there is no tonal distinction between final and non-final verbs in the imperfective. The tonal distinction between Class B and C verbs is completely neutralized in the imperfective.

3.2.2.4 Tone sandhi in verb sequences

Imperative verbs of Class A are subject to tone sandhi, a phonological process by which lexical tones exhibit contextually determined alternations, when

\footnote{My choice of the term ‘sandhi’, which is more commonly associated with Sinitic languages, is influenced by Lovegren’s (2013) description of a comparable phenomenon in Missong (a dialect of Mungbam), (Lovegren 2013: p.91, footnote 10).}
they occur in non-initial position in a verb sequence. Declarative verbs are not subject to tone sandhi – at least not in the present/immediate past tense ($p0$); see §9.3 for more on the tonal realization of declaratives in verb sequences.

The tone pattern of an imperative Class $A$ verb changes from LH to M whenever it occurs in non-initial position in a sequence of verbs, irrespective of the tone class of the preceding verb. Examples of Class $A$ verbs preceded by another Class $A$ verb, a Class $B$ verb and by a Class $C$ verb, respectively, are given in (3)-(5).

(3) $\text{yē gān bəŋ jū wān ně w}-5$
   \text{comp go(a) call(a) come(b) cl1.child cl1.mother.2poss cl1-det}$
   
   ‘[She said]: go and call your sister!’

(4) $\text{tʃū jī míŋ gbə}$
   \text{come(b) go_down(a) 1.sg.pp house.loc}$
   
   ‘Come down to my house!’

(5) $\text{kyɛ́ yá gān f}-5\text{ ywǔ, fì-yān}$
   \text{look(c) go_up(c) go(a) prox-det cl1/2.hanging.dryer cl19-leaf}$
   \text{dzú dí fí, ā mū jī}$
   \text{certain be(b) there 2sg take(a) go_down(a)}$
   
   ‘Look up at the hanging dryer! There is a certain leaf. You should take it down.’

In a sequence of three or more Class $A$ verbs, not only the second verb in the sequence but all subsequent verbs take a mid tone, i.e. the altered tone pattern, as in (6).

(6) $\text{gān bəŋ jī nòngfū}$
   \text{go(a) call(a) go_down(a) N.}$
   
   ‘Go and call down to Nyungfu!’

The tone sandhi patterns described here resemble those attested by Lovegren (2013: pp.91-93) for Missong,\(^5\) but they differ from the latter in several regards. In Missong, “[s]et $A$ verbs in their irreals form (a category which includes imperatives, remote past, and some types of subordinate clauses [...] undergo a tone change which is triggered by an immediately preceding verb” Lovegren (2013: p.91). Thus, in Missong, just as in Mundabli, tone sandhi is

\(^5\)Note that Missong is the only one among the Mungbam dialects which has tone sandhi in verb sequences.
attested in imperatives, but not in perfective declaratives in $v_0$ tense,\textsuperscript{6} and in both, only Class A verbs are subject to tone sandhi.\textsuperscript{7}

The main difference however, is that whereas imperative Class A verbs in Mundabli always take the sandhi tone when they occur in non-initial position, in Missong sandhi tone is only triggered by preceding Class A and Class C verbs.\textsuperscript{8} Further, whereas in Mundabli all non-initial verbs in a sequence of three or more verbs are realized with sandhi tone, in Missong only every other verb in a sequence of Class A verbs is realized with sandhi tone. Finally, while the process of tone sandhi underlies similar rules in Missong and in Mundabli, the tonal patterns in the two languages differ from each other. In Missong, irrealis Class A verbs take a mid tone in initial position, whereas in sandhi context, they take a superhigh tone. In Mundabli on the other hand, initial imperative Class A verbs take a LH rising tone when not subject to sandhi, but a mid tone in sandhi context.

Future research on tone in verb sequences may lead to a more revealing analysis of the Mundabli verb tone system in the style of Lovegren's analysis of the Mungbam system. Furthermore, the parallels between sandhi tone in Missong and in Mundabli in combination with the individual differences call for a comparative study.

\section*{3.3 Morphophonological alternations}

This section deals with phonological processes which apply at morpheme boundaries. Due to the low degree of segmental morphology, the number of morphophonological alternations is restricted.

\subsection*{3.3.1 Place assimilation of nasals in NC sequences}

While morpheme-internal NC sequences are only attested in nominal stems, there are several contexts in which an NC sequence arises when morphemes are conjoined to form words. In word-internal NC sequences,\textsuperscript{9} whether tau-tomorphemic or not, the nasal assimilates in its place of articulation to the following consonant. It does not play a role whether the nasal is syllabic or not. However, place assimilation is not attested across word boundaries, except for a few exceptional lexically determined cases. Nominal stems contain-

\textsuperscript{6}Whereas it is possible that Mundabli, just like Missong, also has an irrealis category and that all irrealis verbs are subject to tone sandhi, more research is needed in order to verify this.

\textsuperscript{7}The tone classes in Mungbam and Mundabli widely coincide regarding labels and constellation, i.e., the constellations of the tone classes in the two varieties roughly coincide, with cognate verbs forming roughly the same sets. Verb tone classes in Mundabli and in Mungbam (Lovegren 2013) which contain cognate verbs are assigned the same labels in the two languages.

\textsuperscript{8}To be precise, imperfective Class s verbs also trigger sandhi in Missong (Lovegren 2013: 92). It is unclear whether imperfective verbs also trigger sandhi in Mundabli.

\textsuperscript{9}This concept requires some explanation. The term “word” here refers to the phonological word. It is meant to include sequences of the first person singular preverbal proclitic N = plus its phonological host.
ing NC sequences are treated in §2.2.4. The current chapter only deals with polymorphemic NC sequences. Such polymorphemic NC sequences arise in the following contexts:

1. The prefixal part (N-) of the infinitive marker, which is realized either as a circumfix N-...-n or as a prefix N- (in combination with a specific tonal pattern), forms part of a word-initial poly-morphemic NC-sequence.

2. The preverbal form of the first person singular (1sg) pronoun N= is procliticized to the left edge of the verbal core, creating a polymorphemic NC sequence at the beginning of the verb or a preceding tense/aspect marker.

3. When the first stem of a nominal compound ends in a nasal, the result can be a polymorphemic NC sequence at the stem-boundary.

4. NC sequences arise between words when a word ending in a nasal is followed by another word which starts in a consonant, e.g. between a subject noun and a following TAM marker, between two verbs in a serial verb construction or between a verb and its object.

The prefixal part N- of the infinitive marker, which is realized either as circumfix N-...-n or as prefix N- on the verb stem, is a non-syllabic homorganic nasal. Its place of assimilation adapts to that of the initial consonant of the verb root it attaches to, see Table 3.17.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb Stem</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>m-bì-n</td>
<td>‘to exit’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m-bù-n</td>
<td>‘to give birth’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m-fò</td>
<td>‘to blow’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n-kù-n</td>
<td>‘to clap’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n-yî-n</td>
<td>‘to eat’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n-ʃî-n</td>
<td>‘to descend’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>èn-m-kpî-n</td>
<td>‘to die’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>èn-m-gbû-n</td>
<td>‘to fall’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.17: Homorganic nasals in infinitive verb forms

The examples in Table 3.17 are all based on the perfective stem form, although the infinitive can be derived from both the perfective and the imperfective stem form. For more on the infinitive verb form, see §8.4.1.

Another case of a tautomorphemic NC sequence arises when the first person singular preverbal pronoun N= is phonologically attached to whatever stands at the left edge of the verbal core, i.e. the verb itself or a preceding TAM marker. Example (7) contains three instances of the first person singular

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10See Chapter 8 for more on the structure of the verbal complex.
3.3. Morphophonological alternations

Preverbal pronoun in bold face, each articulated at a different place of articulation which is in each case identical with that of the following consonant, i.e. the initial consonant of the verb or TAM marker it is attached to.

(7) \( n = d̄i \) f-án, \( ã = t̄jyé \) w̄ō n̄ō \( η = k̄ō \)
\( 1SG = be(b) \) PROX-here NEG \( 1SG = know(c) \) NEG SUBORD \( 1SG = ?? \)
lā nā
do(a) as

‘I am here, I don’t know what I can do.’

The clitic \( N = \) is usually not syllabic. Only in certain contexts can it be syllabic and bear a high tone (see sections §2.2.4 and §6.1.1 for details).

Another context in which nasal consonant sequences arise is when the first stem of a compound noun ends in a nasal and the second starts in an obstruent. In this case, the nasal is not integrated into the first syllable of the second stem. It remains a coda nasal and retains its place of articulation rather than assimilating to the following consonant. Examples are \( wān-bwē \) ‘baby’ and \( wān-kpē \) ‘girl’.

Finally, nasal consonant sequences arise at the intersection of two words where one word ends in a nasal and a subsequent one starts in an obstruent. In general, there is no assimilation in this context. Thus, in examples (8a) and (8b) the nasals in NC sequences arising at word boundaries are not affected. The subject nominal \( wān \) in 8a and 8b is followed by the tense marker \( k̄a p̄3 \) and the verb \( b̄ōm \) ‘agree’, respectively. In both cases, the stem-final nasal of the subject nominal retains its place of articulation and does not adapt to the initial consonant of the following word.

(8) a. \( m̄i \) \( wān \) k̄a t̄j̄ā l̄ē
\( 1SG \) cl.1.child \( p̄3 \) long ago get_lost(a)

‘My child got lost long ago.’

b. sēsān̄ j̄ b̄ōm
cl.9.spider agree(c)

‘The spider agreed.’

However, there are certain cases of lexicalized singular-plural stem alternations in which the stem-final nasal changes so that it is identical in place of articulation with the initial consonant of the corresponding concord marker both in the singular and in the plural. Table 3.18 shows three of the seven Gender 7/8 nouns which show-singular plural stem alternations.

However, this alternation is not due to a synchronic phonological process, but is rather lexicalized. It is restricted to a few stems and occurs irrespective of the presence or absence of the subsequent determiner. In most nouns of this gender, the final nasal does not change and thus differs in place from the
Morphophonology and phrasal phonology

Table 3.18: Historical nasal assimilation across word boundaries in Gender 7/8 nouns

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| nɪŋ (kɔ́) | 'that' | ndzɔ́m (bɔ́) | 'those'
| tʃʊ̋ŋ (kɔ́) | 'that' | tʃɔ́m (bɔ́) | 'those'
| ndžiŋ (kɔ́) | 'that' | ndzə́m (bɔ́) | 'those'

Table 3.19: Lack of nasal assimilation in Gender 7/8 nouns

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| mfʊ̌ŋ (kɔ́) | 'that' | mfɛ́n (bɔ́) | 'those'
| ɲwɑ́n (kɔ́) | 'that' | ɲwɔ̀m (bɔ́) | 'those'
| swɒ́m (kɔ́) | 'that' | ʃwɔ́m (bɔ́) | 'those'

3.3.2 Initial consonant mutation in Gender 3/10 nouns

A handful of Gender 3/10 nouns undergo stem-initial consonant mutation, i.e. the initial consonant alternates between a labial-velar plosive in the singular (Class 3) and an alveolar affricate in the plural (Class 10). The alternation is described in more detail in §4.3.6. Table 3.20 shows examples of Gender 3/10 stems which exhibit this kind of consonant mutation.

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| kpān | tswān | 'tree, firewood, drum'
| kpɛ́ | tsɛ́ | 'pot'
| gbɔ́ | dzɔ́ | 'house'
| gbì | dzì | 'rope'
| gbìŋ | dzìŋ | 'root'

Table 3.20: Examples of Gender 3/10 consonant mutation (taken over from §4.3.6)

3.3.3 Consonant mutation in the numerals ‘two’ and ‘three’

There is a palatalization process in numerals which is similar to the one found in Gender 3/10 nouns (see §3.3.2 and §4.3.6 for details), except that numerals bear concord prefixes while nouns have lost the historical prefixes which are likely to have originally caused the palatalization process. See Kießling
(2010b) for a description and analysis of comparable processes in some other Yemne-Kimbi languages\footnote{As the article was written before the term Yemne-Kimbi was introduced, Kießling (2010b) refers to them as Beboid languages.} and other Southern Bantoid languages.

The stem-initial consonant in the numerals mfye ‘two’ and ntl ‘three’ (citation forms) is palatalized when the stem is preceded by a concord prefix of the segmental shape yi-, i.e. the Class 4 prefix yi- and the Class 10 prefix yi-. Prefixes of the segmental shape ki-, such as the Class 7 prefix ki- do not cause palatalization. When the numeral roots -fye ‘two’ and -tɔ ‘three’ are preceded by a prefix of the shape yi-, they are realized as fye and tsɔ, respectively, as in dʒi̋ yi̋fye ‘two dogs’ and dʒu yi̋tsɔ ‘three goats’.

Examples (9) and (10) show the realization of the numeral root ‘two’ after the Class 2 prefix bə̋- and after the Class 10 prefix yi̋-, respectively.

\begin{table}[h]
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
\textbf{gender} & \textbf{conconcs} & \textbf{‘one’} & \textbf{‘two’} & \textbf{‘three’} & \textbf{‘four’} \\
\hline
1/2 & w-/b- & wů-mwɔ & bɔ̋-fye & bɔ̋-tɔ & bɔ̋-ǹdə \\
\hline
3/10 & w-/y- & wů-mwɔ & yf-ʃye & yf-tsɔ & yf-ǹdə \\
\hline
3/7a & w-/k- & wů-mwɔ & ki̋-fye & ki̋-tɔ & ki̋-ǹdə \\
\hline
7/8 & k-/b- & ki̋-mọ & bi̋-fye & bi̋-tɔ & bi̋-ǹdə \\
\hline
9/10 & ḣ-/y- & yi̋-mwo & yf-ʃye & yf-tsɔ & yf-ǹdə \\
\hline
19/18 & ḣ-/m- & mũm-fye & mũn-tɔ & mũ-ǹdə \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Table 3.21: Agreement in numerals (adopted from §7.1.5)}
\end{table}
3.3.4 Pharyngealization in the numeral ‘one’

Table 3.21 shows that the stem of the numeral mwɔ ‘one’ may also change to mo̤ in the presence of a preceding concord marker. Unlike in the case of the numerals ‘two’ and ‘three’, the change in the numeral ‘one’ is triggered by the Class 7 prefix ki-. Thus, ‘one goat’ (cl 9) is referred to as dʒù yì-mwɔ̀ but ‘one thing’ (cl 7) is nɨ́ŋ ki̋-mó̤. Note that the numeral ‘one’ is mak in the related variety Mufu. This is especially relevant as Mundabli words which end in pharyngealized vowels commonly have Mufu cognates ending in velar stops.

3.3.5 Ablaut in perfective vs. imperfective verbal stems

Verb stems can occur in the perfective or in the imperfective form. Even infinitives can take either of the two as their base (see §8.4.1). The opposition between perfective and imperfective verb roots is encoded by different tone patterns on the one hand, and ablaut on the other. The same tone changes apply to all verbs belonging to the same verb tone class, irrespective of their segmental shape. Ablaut is restricted to certain open syllable stems. It commonly (but not always) involves an alternation between a plain and a pharyngealized vowel (see §2.3.3.2 for more on pharyngealized vowels). This section deals only with ablaut. The tonal changes involved in the perfective/imperfective opposition are discussed in §3.2.2.3.

Ablaut never occurs in closed syllables, and among open syllable roots, it is restricted to syllables containing the following vowels: i, i, u, a, ɔ, and the sequences wo and ye. Other stems (i.e., syllables containing i, u, e, ɛ, a, ɗ, ɔ, ə without preceding w, or e without preceding y and the few verbs which contain pharyngealized vowels in the perfective) do not alternate. Table 3.22 shows examples of verbs which do not undergo stem changes and whose segmental shape is thus identical in the perfective and imperfective.

The verb forms in Tables 3.22-3.25 were elicited by asking for the form of the verb in the frames we have X-ed and we are X-ing, with the indicated verb tones being the tones in sentence-final position.

Of the verb stems which show alternation in perfective vs. imperfective forms, those with the vowels i, i and u and those with the sequences wo and ye are fully predictable. The basic vowels i, i, u and the sequence wo in the perfective form alternate with their pharyngealized equivalents i̤, i̤, ʋ and wo̤ in the imperfective form. The sequence ye in perfective verb stems alternates with the sequence yæ in their imperfective equivalents. Examples of such regular perfective/imperfective alternations involving pharyngealization are given in Table 3.23.

I have no explanation as to why the sequences wo and ye in perfective stems alternate with wo and yæ, respectively, in imperfective stems, but stems containing only the vowels o and e without preceding w and y, respectively, do not undergo ablaut (see Table 3.22).
3.3. Morphophonological alternations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>perfective</th>
<th>imperfective</th>
<th>gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>bɔ́m</td>
<td>bɔ́m</td>
<td>‘agree’ (c)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kʊ̌ŋ</td>
<td>kʊ́ŋ</td>
<td>‘kneel’ (b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bán</td>
<td>bán</td>
<td>‘twist’ (c)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wɛ́n</td>
<td>wɛ́n</td>
<td>‘peel’ (a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yɪ᷆l</td>
<td>yɪ᷆l</td>
<td>‘tickle’ (a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dzé</td>
<td>dzé</td>
<td>‘speak’ (b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ŋō</td>
<td>ŋō</td>
<td>‘blow’ (b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kʊ</td>
<td>kʊ</td>
<td>‘cry’ (a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wɛ́</td>
<td>wɛ́</td>
<td>‘argue’ (c)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wɪ́</td>
<td>wɪ́</td>
<td>‘whistle’ (c)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ŋō</td>
<td>ŋō</td>
<td>‘tell, report’ (a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ŋ ŋ</td>
<td>ŋ ŋ</td>
<td>‘lie, deceive’ (a)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.22: Perfective vs. imperfective stems without ablaut

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>perfective</th>
<th>imperfective</th>
<th>gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>bi᷆</td>
<td>bi̤᷆</td>
<td>‘exit’ (a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yǐ</td>
<td>yí</td>
<td>‘eat’ (b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kpɪ</td>
<td>kpɪ</td>
<td>‘die’ (a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tsɪ</td>
<td>tsɪ</td>
<td>‘spit’ (b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kʊ</td>
<td>kʊ</td>
<td>‘clap’ (a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bʊ</td>
<td>bʊ</td>
<td>‘give birth’ (c)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gwʊ̀</td>
<td>gwʊ̀</td>
<td>‘grind’ (a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kwó</td>
<td>kwó</td>
<td>‘enter’ (c)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>byɛ́</td>
<td>byɛ́</td>
<td>‘crack peanuts’ (b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dʒyɛ́</td>
<td>dʒyæ᷆</td>
<td>‘cook’ (a)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.23: Regular ablaut in perfective/imperfective stems

More irregular cases of ablaut involve the vowels ɔ and ə in perfective stems. As Table 3.24 shows, the vowel ɔ in open syllable perfective stems usually corresponds to the sequence ya in imperfective stems. In the verb yɔ̀ ‘throw’ it alternates with the sequence wa instead. However, two cases are attested in which ɔ alternates with the pharyngealized vowel ŋ (see examples below the dashed line in Table 3.24).

The vowel ə in perfective stems does not always correspond to the same vowel in imperfective stems, either. Sometimes it corresponds to the vowel a (see examples above the first dashed line in Table 3.25), sometimes it corresponds to the sequence ya (just like perfective ɔ), and in two cases it corresponds with the vowel ae in the imperfective (see examples below the second dashed line in Table 3.25).

If one summarizes all attested ablaut patterns, one finds the patterns shown
Table 3.24: Ablaut with \( \circ \) in perfective stems

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>perfective</th>
<th>imperfective</th>
<th>gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>fɔ᷆</td>
<td>fya᷆</td>
<td>‘carve’ (a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lɔ᷆</td>
<td>lyā ᷆</td>
<td>‘go to the bush’ (a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sɔ̌</td>
<td>syā ᷆</td>
<td>‘swim’ (b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tɔ̌</td>
<td>tyā ᷆</td>
<td>‘sting’ (b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yɔ᷆</td>
<td>ywa᷆</td>
<td>‘throw’ (a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kɔ̌</td>
<td>kó̤</td>
<td>‘catch’ (b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tsɔ᷆</td>
<td>tso̤᷆</td>
<td>‘show’ (a)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.25: Ablaut with \( \circ \) in perfective stems

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>perfective</th>
<th>imperfective</th>
<th>gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>kpə᷆</td>
<td>kpa᷆</td>
<td>‘burn’ (a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gbə᷆</td>
<td>gba᷆</td>
<td>‘cut’ (a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yə́</td>
<td>yá ᷆</td>
<td>‘climb’ (c)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tsə̌</td>
<td>tsá ᷆</td>
<td>‘pass’ (b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>də᷆</td>
<td>dya᷆</td>
<td>‘see’ (a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fə̌</td>
<td>fyā ᷆</td>
<td>‘give’ (b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pə̌</td>
<td>næ ᷆</td>
<td>‘leave’ (a)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

in Table 3.26. While in some cases the alternation is very systematic, in others the alternation is not completely predictable.

Table 3.26 covers only vowel alternations in open syllable stems. Perfective vowels which show no alternation in perfective vs. imperfective open syllable stems are shown above the first dashed line in Table 3.26, vowels which show a one-to-one correspondence with different (often pharyngealized) vowels in the imperfective are shown in between the two dashed lines, and vowels in the perfective form which have several correspondents in the imperfective are given below the second dashed line.

Although imperfective aspect is not encoded by a segmental affix, one can say that perfective verbs are morphologically unmarked, as is typical for Bantu languages (Nurse 2007: 164), containing plain “unmarked” vowels, while imperfective verb stems are more marked, often containing pharyngealized “marked” vowels. Pharyngealized vowels are marked both typologically and in the language itself. Apart from imperfective verb forms, they only occur in a few lexical stems. Furthermore, a comparison of Mundabli with related varieties suggests that synchronic pharyngealized vowels have their historical origin in CVk(V) sequences and eventually replaced the final velar stops.

Historically, the pharyngealized vowels probably arose simultaneously with the loss of an imperfective verb suffix cognate with the common Bantu marker
3.4 Phrasal phonology

Table 3.26: Overview of perfective/imperfective ablaut patterns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perfective</th>
<th>Imperfective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i</td>
<td>i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e</td>
<td>e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e</td>
<td>e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ð</td>
<td>ð</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ñ</td>
<td>ñ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i</td>
<td>i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i</td>
<td>i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>u</td>
<td>u</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ye</td>
<td>ye</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wo</td>
<td>wo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ɓ</td>
<td>ɓ/ŋ/ya/a?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e</td>
<td>e/ya/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

-a(ŋ)g-a (IPFV) (Nurse and Philippson 2006). In the neighboring dialect Mufu, the imperfective form of an open-syllable verb is formed by suffixing -k (or sometimes [-ŋ] or [-ʔ]) to the verb stem.

3.4 Phrasal phonology

While the major domain for morphophonological alternations are words, morphophonological alternations can sometimes be observed when words are joined to form phrases or clauses. This section deals with vowel elision (§3.4.1) and low tone spread (§3.4.2), both processes which apply across word boundaries.

3.4.1 Vowel elision across word boundaries

Vowel elision is the only segmental phonological process which applies across rather than within word boundaries. Depending on its vowel quality, the final vowel of a word may be elided when it is followed by a functional word of the segmental shape a (i.e. the second person preverbal pronoun à, the preverbal negative marker à, the clause-final polar question marker à, a variant of the hesternal past marker à, the comitative marker à and the adverbializer å), in order to avoid vowel hiatus. The few other attested onsetless words, namely the locative preposition f, the conjunction åmi and the particles åná 'like that'
and ɗiká ‘like’ do not cause elision. This elision process is only attested in fast speech. When the same sequence is pronounced carefully, the vowel is not elided. Furthermore, the process is restricted to certain vowels. Only the vowels ɨ, ɔ and ə undergo elision when they precede an element of the shape a. Other vowels are not affected.

At least in some cases compensatory lengthening makes up for the loss of the vowel. Examples (11) - (13) show the elision of different vowels before a. In example (11), the vowel ɨ of the copula verb dĩ ‘be’ is elided before the comitative marker ā. Example (12) shows the elision of the final vowel ɔ of the relative pronoun bɔ before the comitative marker ā. The final vowel of the conditional marker ka also frequently gets elided when it precedes the second person singular preverbal pronoun à, as shown in example (13).

(11) wān wū bām yē n=dāā mānō
    CL1.child CL1;3SG.Poss accept(c) comp 1SG-COP.COM CL1.male

    ‘Her child confirmed: I do have a husband.’

(12) à dā ndʒɔm b̥ b-āā wā
    2SG see(a) CL8.things CL8 pass(b) CL8-DET.COM 2SG

    ‘You have seen the things that have happened to you,...’

(13) kāa mū jú g ē w-ō à mī
    COND.2SG take(a) come(b) CL3/7a.mai ze CL3-DET 2SG CONSEC
    kpè wū ngī mī sī yī-fyē
    soak(a) CL3 CL6.water in CL9/10.day CL10-two

    ‘When you take the corn and soak it in water for two days,...’

As pointed out above, vowels other than ɨ, ɔ or ə are not elided. E.g., in (14), the final vowel u of tʃu ‘come’ does not merge with the comitative marker ā.

(14) wū tʃu ā mbū b̥ mū
    CL1 come(b) COM CL6.palm_wine CL2 drink(b)

    ‘He brought wine [and] they drank.’

3.4.2 Low tone spread

A low tone causes a following superhigh tone to be realized as a LH rising tone. This happens, e.g. when a low tone subject pronoun like e.g., the third person singular (Class 1) pronoun wù ‘he/she’, precedes a superhigh verb of the tonal class a, as in example (15b).
(15) a. bɔ̀ tfū f-ání
   Cl.2 come(b) PROX-this_way
   ‘They have come here.’

b. wù tfū f-ání
   Cl.1 come(b) PROX-this_way
   ‘He has come here.’

When it is preceded by a low tone pronoun like the third person singular (Class 1) pronoun wù ‘he/she’, as in example (15b), the verb is realized with a rising tone (see 15b). When preceded by a non-low subject pronoun, the verb is realized with a superhigh tone (see 15a), unless is stands in utterance-final position.

However, low tone spread does not always apply when a low tone precedes a superhigh tone. It does not apply e.g. between a prefix and the nominal root it attaches to, between two nominal roots in nominal compounds or between two nominal roots in associative constructions. Superhigh nominal roots are not realized with a rising tone after low tone prefixes such as the Class 2 prefix bɔ̀-, as e.g. in bɔ̀-ni̋ ‘mothers’. Nominal stems which usually bear a superhigh tone also retain their superhigh tone in the diminutive, which is formed by adding the low-toned Class 19 prefix fì- to the stem. This can be seen in the following examples: fì-ŋkāŋ ‘a bit of salt’, fì-ŋkē ‘little spoon’ and fì-tsāŋ ‘little stick’ (rather than *fì-ŋkāŋ, *fì-ŋkē and *fì-tsāŋ). Furthermore, a superhigh root is not affected by a preceding low tone within a possessive construction or a nominal compound based on one, as in dzɔ̀-yī ‘eyelid’, bɔ̀ ni ‘the mother’s bag’ and bɔ̀ ηkīŋ ‘my bag’ (Cl.7).
Mundabli has a fully-fledged agreement system, almost like a Bantu language. However, in some regards the Mundabli system differs considerably from a typical Bantu-like noun class system. In a Bantu-like noun class system, agreement is usually marked both on modifiers within the noun phrase and on the verb. Typically, noun classes are also overtly marked by prefixes (and/or suffixes) on the noun itself. Example (16) (taken from Corbett (1991: 43), ultimate source Welmers (1973: 171)) shows agreement marking in Swahili, a typical Bantu language. In example (16) the prefix *ki-* marks agreement or noun class, respectively, on the nominal modifiers, on the verb and on the noun itself.

(16)   *ki*kapu *ki*kubwa *ki*moja *ki*lianguka
       basket big     one    fell
   ‘One large basket fell.’

In Mundabli, the agreement system is fully intact. Agreement is marked by segmental or, for Gender 9/10,\(^1\) tonal prefixes. However, agreement in Mundabli is restricted to noun modifiers. The verb does not agree with its subject or object. Whereas this is not unusual for a Bantoid language, what is more unusual is the lack of noun class marking on the noun itself. Noun classes in Mundabli are in most cases covert, i.e. they are not detectable from the shape of the noun alone. Whereas most Yemne-Kimbi languages have a somewhat reduced nominal morphology and have lost overt noun class marking for some

\(^1\) Singular-plural class pairings are referred to as “genders”, see §4.2 for details.
noun classes\(^2\) (Good et al. 2011), Mundabli and Mufu are the varieties whose overt noun class marking shows the highest degree of formal attrition.

The remainder of this chapter contains a section on previous treatments of Yemne-Kimbi noun class systems (§4.1) and an overview of the Mundabli noun class system (§4.2). It further contains descriptions of noun classes and noun class pairings (§4.3), a section on the noun class assignment of borrowed nouns (§4.4) and a section on the secondary classification or ‘derivational’ use of noun classes (§4.5). The last section contains a discussion of the current analysis of the noun class system and a comparison with an alternative purely language-internal analysis based on agreement classes (§4.6).

### 4.1 Previous treatments of Yemne-Kimbi noun class systems

The noun class systems of Yemne-Kimbi languages were first described in Hombert (1980), which is a description of the noun class systems of some languages belonging to a putative grouping which Hombert referred to as the “Beboid” languages (see §1.1.5 for details). His conspectus contains data from Buu, another Ji-variety (see §1.1.5 for clarification but none from Mundabli (or Mufu). A more recent overview of noun class systems of the Yemne-Kimbi languages, which includes a section on the Mundabli noun class system is provided in Good et al. (2011). Both Hombert (1980) and Good et al. (2011) adopt a comparative approach, analyzing the noun class systems in a way which focusses on possible relations with the reconstructed Proto-Bantu system and with noun class systems of other Bantoid languages. Analysis and numbering of noun classes in the current work differ in certain respects, such as e.g. the absence of a plural Class 4, from those in Good et al. (2011). Differences are pointed out in the relevant sections.

Aside from these more general works, there are two more recent works which also treat their noun class systems, one on the Ji-variety Buu (Ngako Yonga 2013) and one on Mungbam, a dialect cluster including the varieties Abar, Biya, Missong, Munken and Ngun (Lovegren 2013). Ngako Yonga (2013) describes the phonology and the noun class system of Buu, which she also compares with the noun class system of Mundabli, as described in Good et al. (2011). Lovegren (2013) is a multi-dialectal grammar of Mungbam. It contains a detailed description and analysis of the noun class system(s) of the Mungbam varieties and skillfully relates them to the reconstructed Proto-Bantu system and to noun class systems of related languages.

\(^2\)Buu, another Ji variety, has retained most noun class prefixes, but they are dropped when the noun is modified by a possessive pronoun or a demonstrative (Ngako Yonga 2013: 111). Similar processes have been reported for Aghem (Ring, Hyman 1979: 27) and Ajumbu (Yemne-Kimbi, Good et al. 2011: 138). Whereas in Mundabli nominal prefixes sometimes alternate with zero, a clear correlation with the presence of noun modifiers, as in Buu is not discernible.
4.2 Overview of the noun class system

The aim of this section is to give an overview of the noun class system. The current description of the noun class system differs in some respects from descriptions in earlier publications, such as Good et al. 2011. A discussion of the current analysis and a comparison with a purely morphological noun class system can be found in §4.6.

Following Bantuist tradition (see e.g., Maho 1999 and Katamba 2003), the current analysis of the noun class system is based on agreement classes and numeral distinctions, however, class labels diverge from the traditional system in some cases. All nouns which have the same number value (singular, plural or uncountable) and show the same agreement patterns are assigned to a common noun class. Groups of nouns with identical agreement but different number values are split up into classes which are uniform regarding the number values of their members, i.e. all singular nouns are in one class and all plural nouns are in another, even if they trigger the same agreement patterns. In general, odd numbers represent singular classes and even numbers represent plural classes (classes of uncountable nouns are exempt from this rule).

Regarding noun class labels, when two or more classes show the same agreement but are distinguished based on their number values, their labels contain the same number, first plain, then accompanied by the lower case letters a and b. Thus, in the current system there is e.g., a singular Class 7, a plural Class 7a and an uncountable Class 7b (see Table 4.1). Only in the case of Class 6, which contains liquids and triggers the same agreement as Class 18, is the label Class 6 preferred over Class 18a because of its historical connection with Proto-Bantu Class 6a (see §4.3.7 for details). As in earlier publications, noun class labels are reminiscent of the Proto-Bantu noun classes to which they relate. As commonly done among Bantuists, I refer to singular-plural pairings of noun classes, such as e.g., Class 1 and Class 2 or Class 3 and Class 10 as “genders”. In this system, a noun class may be part of two genders at the same time, such as singular Class 3, which pairs with plural Class 7a and plural Class 10 (see Table 4.1).

The current description treats the category ‘number’ as basically derivational (which is common practice among Bantuists). Section 4.6 relates the current analysis to an alternative analysis in which number is treated as inflectional category.

Table 4.1 lists all noun classes together with their nominal prefixes and pronouns³ in order to give an overview of the current analysis of the noun class system. The low tone symbol in the prefix slot for Class 9 does not exactly represent a low tone prefix, but is meant to symbolise that there is a systematic

³Pronouns were chosen over agreement prefixes because pronouns show the greatest differentiation of noun classes. Agreement prefixes (both consonantal and syllabic) always neutralise the distinction between at least two classes, see Chapter 5 for details.
tonal opposition between Class 9 (singular) and Class 10 (plural) nouns with the tone patterns of Class 9 (singular) nouns tending to be lower than those of the corresponding Class 10 (plural) nouns.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>singular noun class</th>
<th>noun class prefix</th>
<th>pronoun</th>
<th>plural noun class</th>
<th>noun class prefix</th>
<th>pronoun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>wù</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Ø-, bò-</td>
<td>bɔ̋</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>wū</td>
<td>7a</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>kī</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>wū</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>yī</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Ø-, kī-</td>
<td>kī</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Ø-, bī-</td>
<td>bī</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>yī</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>yī</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Ø-, fī-</td>
<td>fī</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Ø-, mū(N)-</td>
<td>mū</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>mū</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8a</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>bī</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3a</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>wū</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7b</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>kī</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9a</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>yī</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10a</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>yī</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1: Noun classes with corresponding nominal prefixes and pronouns

In Table 4.1, the noun classes are arranged in singular-plural pairings or genders with singular and unpaired classes on the left and plural classes on the right. Class 3 and Class 10 occur twice in the table because each of them is part of two singular-plural pairings. Unpaired classes or single genders are found below the dashed line. Each of the unpaired classes has agreement patterns found in one of the paired classes as well. The subdivision of nouns into noun classes as found in Table ?? as well as noun class labels in the current system differ slightly from those in earlier publications, such as e.g., Good et al. (2011). Motivations for the current classification and differences with earlier analyses are discussed in the relevant sections, see §4.3.1-§4.3.9.

Table 4.2 contains examples of nouns of all noun classes, exemplifying the shape of the noun and the presence vs. absence of a noun class prefix. The most common case is that noun class marking is completely covert, i.e. the noun does not bear a prefix and the noun class cannot be inferred from the shape of the noun itself, but is only detectable through agreement marking on noun modifiers.
### Table 4.2: Examples of noun classes showing noun class marking on the noun or lack thereof

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singular noun class prefix</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Plural noun class prefix</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 -</td>
<td>ŋkʊ̌ŋ ‘chief’</td>
<td>2 - Ø-, bə- ?nkʊ̌ŋ</td>
<td>~bəŋkʊ̌ŋ ‘chief’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 -</td>
<td>yɛ̋n ‘tooth’</td>
<td>7a -</td>
<td>yɛ̋n ‘teeth’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 -</td>
<td>gbɔ ‘house’</td>
<td>10 -</td>
<td>dzɔ ‘houses’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 - Ø-, ki-</td>
<td>bɔ ‘bag’</td>
<td>8 - Ø-, bĩ-</td>
<td>bɔ ‘bags’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 -</td>
<td>ywɔ̌ŋ ‘snake’</td>
<td>10 -</td>
<td>ywɔ̌ŋ ‘snakes’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 Ø-, fi-</td>
<td>ntsĩ ‘louse’</td>
<td>18 Ø-,</td>
<td>ntsĩ ‘lice’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 -</td>
<td>ŋgi ‘water’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8a -</td>
<td>ntsɔ ‘medicine’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3a -</td>
<td>bũ ‘hunger’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7b -</td>
<td>kwũ ‘fog’,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9a -</td>
<td>yũ ‘vapour’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10a -</td>
<td>ntsɔ ‘medicine’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2: Examples of noun classes showing noun class marking on the noun or lack thereof

### 4.3 Noun class pairings (‘genders’) and unpaired classes (‘single genders’)

Most nouns can be assigned to singular-plural pairings of noun classes, in the following referred to as ‘(paired) genders’. A smaller number of nouns form unpaired noun classes or ‘single genders’. Figure 4.1 shows all attested pairings of noun classes and all unpaired classes. Singular classes (left) and plural classes (right) are connected with lines, each line representing a paired gender. Unpaired classes or ‘single genders’ are found in the lower half of the table. They are not assigned a number value (singular or plural).

As Figure 4.1 shows, there is a near one-to-one correspondence between singular and plural classes. Only Class 3 and Class 10 are connected to more than one other class. Class 3 nouns may take their plural form either in Class 7a or in Class 10 and Class 10 nouns may take their singular form either in Class

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4Some of the noun classes are given different labels than in earlier publications, as e.g. Good et al. (2011). The noun class labels used here are discussed for each gender separately in §4.3.1-§4.3.9.
4.3. Noun class pairings and unpaired classes

9 or in Class 3. The dashed line connecting Class 3 with Class 10 in Figure 4.1 symbolises an exceptional gender which is made up of a small number of nouns. Only nine nouns are attested whose singular form triggers Class 3 agreement and whose plural form triggers Class 10 agreement. The number of Gender 3/7a nouns, on the one hand, and Gender 9/10 nouns on the other is much bigger than this (cf. Table 4.3). Gender 3/10 is also remarkable for another reason. Some Gender 3/10 nouns are subject to stem-initial consonant mutation, which suggests a historical connection with Proto-Bantu Gender 3/4, see §4.3.6 for details.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>paired gender</th>
<th>number of nouns</th>
<th>percentage of total</th>
<th>unpaired gender</th>
<th>number of nouns</th>
<th>percentage of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/2</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/7a</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8a</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9a</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7/8</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>7b</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/10</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>3a</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19/18</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10a</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.3: Relative frequency of singular-plural noun class pairings

The quantity of lexical items within each gender is shown in Table 4.3. Paired genders are listed in the first column, and single genders in the fourth column. Each of these columns is followed by a column with the number of nouns they contain and a column with their percentage of the total number of nouns in the subsequent columns.
Gender 1/2 and Gender 7/8 are the most common genders. They contain almost the same amount of lexical items. They are followed by Gender 9/10 and Gender 3/7a in the given order. Gender 19/18 contains 34 non-derived members, but the amount of lexical items within this gender is flexible because it also contains diminutives derived from nouns of the other noun classes. Of the paired genders, the irregular Gender 3/10 is by far the smallest. Unpaired genders generally contain fewer members than paired genders. The only exception to this rule is Gender 3/10 which, with only nine nouns, contains fewer nouns than some of the single genders. The single gender with the largest amount of lexical items is Gender 8a (with 19 nouns) which contains terms for uncountable substances and abstract (deverbal) nouns. It is closely followed by Gender 6 which contains mainly liquids. The smallest single gender is Gender 10a with only two nouns. Special sections are devoted to Gender 6 (§4.3.7) and Gender 8a (§4.3.8) because of their large frequency and their prominent role with regard to the history of the Mundabli noun class system. The remaining single genders are subsumed in §4.3.9. Finally, §4.3.1-§4.3.9 describe noun class marking and labels and discuss the history of the synchronic noun classes.

### 4.3.1 Gender 1/2

Gender 1/2 is the most common gender, closely followed by Gender 7/8. Most nouns referring to humans belong to this gender, but Gender 1/2 also contains numerous non-human nouns. The majority of loanwords are assigned to Gender 1/2.\(^5\) Table 4.4 contains a selection of Gender 1/2 nouns.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class 1</th>
<th>gloss</th>
<th>Class 2</th>
<th>gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mfɔ̀</td>
<td>‘slave’</td>
<td>mfɔ̀</td>
<td>‘slaves’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ńkọ̀ŋ</td>
<td>‘chief’</td>
<td>ńkọ̀ŋ</td>
<td>‘chief(s)’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tʃindọ̀</td>
<td>‘assistant of the chief’</td>
<td>tʃindọ̀</td>
<td>‘assistants of the chief’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bɛ̀</td>
<td>‘traditional cup’</td>
<td>bɛ̀</td>
<td>‘traditional cups’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kąką</td>
<td>‘taro’</td>
<td>kąką</td>
<td>‘taros’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mbɔ̀ŋ</td>
<td>‘cow’</td>
<td>mbɔ̀ŋ</td>
<td>‘cows’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mɔ̀</td>
<td>‘person’</td>
<td>mbɛ́</td>
<td>‘people’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wān</td>
<td>‘child’</td>
<td>ɲwɒ́m</td>
<td>‘children’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kpé</td>
<td>‘woman’</td>
<td>kpé~tʃé</td>
<td>‘women’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.4: Singular-plural pairings of Gender 1/2 nouns

The ratio of nouns with vs. nouns without stem alternations in Table 4.4 is not representative. In reality, the great majority of Gender 1/2 nouns have identical stem forms in Class 1 (singular) and Class 2 (plural) and only a handful of nouns show irregular stem alternation.

\(^5\)Interestingly, a considerable amount of loanwords are also assigned to Gender 7/8. See §4.4 for more on the noun class assignment of loanwords.
4.3. Noun class pairings and unpaired classes

Class 1 (singular) nouns do not take a prefix. Although around a third of the Gender 1/2 nouns (like e.g., ŋkʊ̌ŋ ‘chief’, mbɔ̀ŋ ‘cow’, ŋkɔ̀m ‘hoe’) start in a nasal, there are no morphological arguments for treating the nasal as a prefix in the synchronic system. It is present in the singular (Class 1) and the plural form (Class 2) and is not replaced by the Class 2 (plural) prefix bə-, e.g. in bə-ŋkʊ̌ŋ ‘chiefs’ or by the diminutive Class 19 prefix fì-, e.g. in fì-mbɔ̀ŋ ‘a little cow’ (Class 19). Although a nominal prefix exists which can be used with most if not all Class 2 nouns (including irregular stem forms, such as nwim ‘children’), this prefix is not often used. Class 2 (plural) nouns more commonly take the form of bare stems. What exactly conditions the presence vs. absence of the Class 2 prefix is not quite clear. The only Class 2 nouns which commonly take a prefix in my data are the nouns bə-nĩ ‘mothers’, bə-tĩ ‘fathers’ and bə-ŋkʊ̌ŋ ‘chiefs’, see e.g. example (17) and nouns which refer to nationalities or ethnic groups such as bə-nâsɛ́ ‘white people’, cf. example (18)

(17) bə-ŋkʊ̌ŋ bɔ́ tjú́ (yě) bã gɔ̀
   cl2-cl1/2.chief also come(b) comp impers divide(a)
   ‘The chiefs, too, came to divided [the land].’

(18) bə-nâsɛ́ b-ʒ jĩŋ tʃĩn mĩ áná
   cl2-cl1/2.white_person cl2-det fill_up(b) there in like_that
   ‘Whites are packed in it, like that.’

In combination with names and deictic noun stems, such as bə-nĩ ‘mothers’ and bə-tĩ ‘fathers’ etc. the Class 2 prefix can function as an associative marker, as e.g. in bə-Nyũfũ á Mán ‘Nyũfũ á Mán and his associates’, see e.g. example (23). The interrogative pronoun ndɛ̀ ‘who’ can also take a Class 2 prefix when it clearly refers to a group of people, as in (19). This could also be an instance of associative semantics.

(19) wɔ̀ bə-ndɛ̀
   wash(b).ipfv cl2-who
   ‘Who are [those who are] washing?’

4.3.2 Gender 3/7a

Gender 3/7a contains body parts and tools but also various other things such as yĩŋ ‘egg/s’, kpó ‘week/s’ or nũ ‘field’, which can hardly be subsumed under a common term. With 62 attested nouns,7 Gender 3/7a is the fourth most common gender (directly following Gender 9/10). Gender 3/7a nouns are not marked by segmental or tonal prefixes (see Table 4.5).

---

6This phrase is commonly used to warn people when approaching a stream where people are bathing naked.
7Compared with this, the nine nouns attested for the Gender 3/10 form an exception. See §4.3.6 for more on the exceptional Gender 3/10.
The noun class system

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class 3 gloss</th>
<th>Class 7a gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>tʃə̋m</td>
<td>tʃə̋m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'axe'</td>
<td>'axes'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yiŋ</td>
<td>yiŋ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'egg'</td>
<td>'eggs'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bi</td>
<td>bi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'fish' (sg)</td>
<td>'fish' (pl)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wʊ̋ŋ</td>
<td>wʊ̋ŋ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'nose'</td>
<td>'noses'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kpó</td>
<td>kpó</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'week'</td>
<td>'weeks'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.5: Singular-plural pairings of Gender 3/7a nouns, examples of identical singular and plural forms

While most Gender 3/7a nouns are identical in Class 3 (singular) and Class 7a (plural) (see Table 4.5), my database contains 9 nouns which exhibit stem alternations including ablaut and consonant alternations, sometimes in combination with tonal changes. As Table 4.6 shows, stem alternations in Gender 3/7a nouns are not as systematic as the initial consonant mutation displayed by some Gender 3/10 nouns (see §4.3.6).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class 3 gloss</th>
<th>Class 7a gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>njū</td>
<td>njwɛ̋</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'field'</td>
<td>'fields'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tʃyē</td>
<td>tɛ́</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'stone'</td>
<td>'stones'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fɔ́</td>
<td>fá</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'head'</td>
<td>'heads'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>byɛ᷆</td>
<td>byɛ᷆</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'foot'</td>
<td>'feet'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wǐn</td>
<td>gwɛn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'feather'</td>
<td>'feathers'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wɔ᷆ŋ</td>
<td>gɔ᷆ŋ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'spear'</td>
<td>'spears'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fu᷆</td>
<td>fo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'raffia stem'</td>
<td>'raffia stems'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pū</td>
<td>njwɛ̋</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'knee'</td>
<td>'knees'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dān</td>
<td>dwɔŋ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'rhizome'</td>
<td>'rhizomes'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.6: Irregular singular-plural stem alternation in Gender 3/7a nouns

The plural class in this noun class pairing is named 7a due to its formal resemblance with singular Class 7. Nouns of these two classes trigger the same agreement patterns and lack nominal prefixes. Thus, the label 7a is chosen for language-internal reasons and is not meant to imply that this class is historically derived from Proto Bantu Class 7. It is likely that Mundabli Class 7a may be cognate with Proto Bantu Class 13. The reader is referred to the discussion in Lovegren (2013: 137-141) for a detailed discussion of the issue for parallel phenomena in Mungbam languages.

4.3.3 Gender 7/8

Gender 7/8 contains inanimates and numerous other things, such as body parts, (mainly small) animals, fruit, nuts and vegetables, among others. Around
one quarter of all loanwords are also assigned to Gender 7/8 (see §4.4 for more on the gender assignment of loanwords).

Gender 7/8 contains nearly the same amount of lexical items as Gender 1/2. Together, these two form the most common genders with around 130 members each. Nouns in Gender 7/8 generally do not take noun class prefixes (see below for exceptions). Their tonal pattern is the same in the singular (Class 7) and in the plural (Class 8), see Table 4.7.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class 7 gloss</th>
<th>Class 8 gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>kō  ‘bone’</td>
<td>kō  ‘bones’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dō  ‘machete’</td>
<td>dō  ‘machetes’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tō  ‘horn’</td>
<td>tō  ‘horns’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kē  ‘leg’</td>
<td>kē  ‘legs’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bō  ‘bag’</td>
<td>bō  ‘bags’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fō  ‘hat’, ‘cap’</td>
<td>fō  ‘hats’, ‘caps’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kǎm  ‘horse’</td>
<td>kǎm  ‘horses’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tōŋ  ‘ram’ (male sheep)</td>
<td>tōŋ  ‘rams’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tākpm  ‘bean, sp.’, ‘stick bean’</td>
<td>tākpm  ‘beans, sp.’, ‘stick beans’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gōnlän  ‘dragonfly’</td>
<td>gōnlän  ‘dragonflies’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.7: Singular-plural pairings of Gender 7/8 nouns, examples of identical singular and plural forms

While nouns are generally identical in the singular and the plural (Class 7 and Class 8), my data contain seven Gender 7/8 nouns which involve singular-plural stem alternations. The attested cases are shown in Table 4.8.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class 7 gloss</th>
<th>Class 8 gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>njwān  ‘bird’</td>
<td>njwōm  ‘birds’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tʃōŋ  ‘ear’</td>
<td>tʃōm  ‘ears’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>njŋ  ‘thing’</td>
<td>ndʒm  ‘things’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ndziŋ  ‘house fly’</td>
<td>ndzōm  ‘house flies’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>swōm  ‘palm nut’</td>
<td>jwōm  ‘palm nuts’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mfŋ  ‘coco yam’</td>
<td>mfɛn  ‘coco yams’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dzē  ‘mouth’</td>
<td>dzē  ‘mouths’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.8: Singular-plural pairings of Gender 7/8 nouns, examples of irregular stem alternation

Some of these irregular Gender 7/8 nouns end in a velar nasal (ŋ) in Class 7 (singular), but not in Class 8 (plural), while some end in a bilabial nasal (m) in Class 8, but not in Class 7. This may be due to the assimilatory effect of former Class 7 and 8 suffixes or of agreement prefixes starting in velar (Class 7) and bilabial stops (Class 8), respectively. For the rest, Gender 7/8 stem alternation does not seem very systematic.
Only two Gender 7/8 nouns with prefixes are attested: bì-lúŋ ‘suffering’ (20) and bi-tsə̄m ‘boma snakes’ (21). These forms co-exist with the prefix-less forms lúŋ and tsə̄m which can have the same (plural) meaning.

(20) wù fyá bì-lúŋ ɲwám b-ŋ lā
   cl1 give(b).1pfv cl8-cl7/8.suffering cl2.children cl2-det dat
   ā mòmòŋ, gē ɲwám nī kə  wù kə
   advlz very.much while cl2.children cl1.mother without cl1 hab
   tývé bɔ
   know(c) frust

   ‘She made them suffer, not knowing that they were her siblings.’

(21) bi-tsə̄m b-ŋ ā mī ɲgɔ
   cl8-cl7/8.boma_snake cl8-det still 1sg.pp upon

   ‘The big snakes are also on me.’

The interrogative pronoun mān ‘what’ can also (optionally) take a Class 7 prefix, rendering ki-mān ‘what’ (22). It is unclear what determines the presence vs. absence of a prefix in this case.

(22) dǐ ki-mān nō [ā yē kē dzōŋ k-ŋ  kī ʃ]
   be(b) cl7-what subord 2sg.start(a) return(c) again cl7-rel cl7 loc
   t-ān mī
   prox-here in

   ‘What is it that you are starting again in here?’

Regarding the historical origin of Class 7 and 8, it is likely that they are cognate with the Proto-Bantu singular-plural class pairing 7/8. The sporadic noun class prefixes attested in Mundabli Gender 7/8 nouns, ki- and bi- strongly resemble the prefixes reconstructed for Proto-Bantu Gender 7/8 *ki and *βì (Maho 1999: 51) and the concords are also consistent with this. The semantic content of the Mundabli and Proto-Bantu Gender 7/8 also coincide, at least to a certain extent.

4.3.4 Gender 9/10

Gender 9/10 is the third most frequent gender with 90 nouns. It contains animals and insects, but also various other things, such as body parts (ʃyǎ ‘ankle’, tsān ‘arm’, dzām ‘back’, ʃn ‘calf of leg’) and other things which cannot be easily subsumed under a common term. Very few loanwords are found in this gender (see §4.4 for more on the gender assignment of loanwords). Finally,
4.3. Noun class pairings and unpaired classes

Gender 9/10 also contains deverbals (other than infinitives), such as nàm ‘work’ (n) (plural nàm) and kpì ‘death’ (plural kpì).

Gender 9 (singular) and Gender 10 (plural) nouns are, with a few exceptions, segmentally identical but they involve systematic tonal alternations. The tone of a Class 9 (singular) noun is generally lower than that of a Class 10 (plural) noun, as can be seen in Table 4.9.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class 9</th>
<th>gloss</th>
<th>Class 10</th>
<th>gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>bɔ̀m</td>
<td>‘antelope’</td>
<td>bɔ᷆m</td>
<td>‘antelopes’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dzwàn</td>
<td>‘disease’</td>
<td>dzwân</td>
<td>‘diseases’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tsɔ</td>
<td>‘baboon’</td>
<td>tsɔ̋</td>
<td>‘baboons’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sɔŋ</td>
<td>‘basket, sp.’</td>
<td>sɔ̋ŋ</td>
<td>‘baskets, sp.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sām</td>
<td>‘heart’</td>
<td>sām</td>
<td>‘hearts’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tsō</td>
<td>‘toilet’</td>
<td>tsō</td>
<td>‘toilets’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ʃī</td>
<td>‘chicken’</td>
<td>ʃi᷆</td>
<td>‘chickens’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tsǎŋ</td>
<td>‘palm kernel’</td>
<td>tsǎn</td>
<td>‘arms’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.9: Singular-plural pairings of Gender 9/10 nouns showing tonal stem alternation

Most Gender 9/10 nouns bear one of the three tone patterns found above the dashed line in Table 4.9. The tone patterns low (L), mid (M) and low-high rising (LH) in Class 9 (singular) nouns correspond to a mid-low falling tone (ML), a mid tone (M) and a superhigh tone (S) in Class 10 (plural) nouns. For a detailed discussion of tonal alternations in Gender 9/10 nouns, see §3.2.1.4.

In addition to these regular tonal alternations, Table 4.9 contains two examples of irregular tonal alternations below the dashed line. Each of the two irregular tonal stem alternations is only found in two nouns: tsǎŋ ‘arm’ and tsǎŋ ‘palm kernel’ have a low-high rising tone in Class 9 (singular) and a mid-low falling tone in Class 10 (plural), and jī ‘chicken’ and dʒī ‘road’ have a mid tone in Class 9 (singular) and a mid-low falling tone in Class 10 (plural). ‘road’ also involves a segmental stem change (dʒī/dzē ‘road’/ ‘roads’). So far, I have no explanation for these irregular tone patterns. However, it is worth noting that the tone patterns of the singular (cl9) and plural (cl10) forms of these nouns, i.e. M and LH for Class 9 (singular) nouns and ML for Class 10 (plural) nouns are all common in this Gender.

4.3.5 Gender 19/18

Gender 19/18 contains, most conspicuously, derived diminutives which are characterized by Class 19/18 nominal prefixes (see also §4.5.2 on diminutive derivation). However, Gender 19/18 also contains a number of nouns which are lexically specified as Gender 19/18 nouns and do not have diminutive semantics. These undervived Gender 19/18 nouns form a rather random array of things, including e.g., njmbū ‘vein’ (cl19), njkǎŋ ‘oath’ (cl19), fn ‘billy goat’
(cl.19), ntsìŋ ‘bead’ (cl.19), etc. Underived Gender 19/18 nouns do not take nominal prefixes. They are segmentally and tonally identical in the singular (Class 19) and in the plural (Class 18). Examples are given in Table 4.10.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class 19</th>
<th>gloss</th>
<th>Class 18</th>
<th>gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ŋmgbə̀</td>
<td>‘wether’</td>
<td>ŋmgbə̀</td>
<td>‘wethers’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nǎŋ</td>
<td>‘bush fowl’</td>
<td>nǎŋ</td>
<td>‘bush fowls’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ŋkǎn</td>
<td>‘oath’</td>
<td>ŋkǎn</td>
<td>‘oaths’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fɛn</td>
<td>‘billy goat’</td>
<td>fɛn</td>
<td>‘billy goats’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ntsǐ̄</td>
<td>‘louse’</td>
<td>ntsǐ̄</td>
<td>‘lice’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ɲfǒŋ</td>
<td>‘necklace’</td>
<td>ɲfǒŋ</td>
<td>‘necklaces’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nta̋m</td>
<td>‘fruit’</td>
<td>nta̋m</td>
<td>‘fruits’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.10: Singular-plural pairings of underived Class 19/18 nouns (without prefix)

Nominal prefixes for Class 19/18 are productively used to derive diminutive forms of nouns which are lexically specified as belonging to any noun class pairing, including Gender 19/18 itself, as in mwɪ̌n ‘cat’ (Class 19) vs. ŋ-mwɪ̌n ‘little cat’ (Class 19). Examples of derived Gender 19/18 nouns are given in Table 4.11. In addition to the derived nouns and their translations, Table 4.11 contains the lexical classes of the source nouns. In cases where singular and plural stems differ, the noun class marker is prefixed to the number-specific stem form (see Table 4.11). Diminutive derivation is discussed in more detail in §4.5.2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class 19</th>
<th>gloss</th>
<th>lexical noun class</th>
<th>Class 18</th>
<th>gloss</th>
<th>lexical noun class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ŋ-mntsǐ̄</td>
<td>‘little louse’</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>mǔ-ntsǐ̄</td>
<td>‘little lice’</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ŋ-mmɔ̀</td>
<td>‘little man’</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>mǔ-mbɛ᷆</td>
<td>‘little men’</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ŋ-gbɔ᷆</td>
<td>‘little house’</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>mǔ-dzɔ᷆</td>
<td>‘little houses’</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ŋ-dʒi̋</td>
<td>‘little dog’</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>mǔ-dʒi̋</td>
<td>‘little dogs’</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ŋ-ŋkʊ̌ŋ</td>
<td>‘little chief’</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>mǔ-ŋkʊ̌ŋ</td>
<td>‘little chiefs’</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.11: Singular-plural pairings of derived Gender 19/18 nouns (with prefix)

Mundabli Class 19 is formally similar to Proto-Bantu (henceforth PB) Class 19 (*pì̧-) (Maho 1999: 51) and indeed, Class 19 is one of the “most oft-occurring diminutive classes” in Bantu (Maho 1999: 88). The label 18 for the plural Class corresponding to singular Class 19 was chosen based on the formal similarity of the derivational Class 18 prefix to the prefix of Proto-Bantu Class 18 (*mù-). However, it is not meant to imply that the two are cognate. In earlier works on comparable issues in related languages, this has been dealt
with by assigning names other than Class 18 to this class. While Hombert (1980: 92) refers to this class as 26, it is labelled 12 in Hyman's description of Noni (Hyman 1981: 15), but renamed Class 18a in Hyman (1980: 186). Hyman states clearly that "[...] it is identical in form to PB "mu-" but he does "not mean to suggest that the two are cognate in any way" (Hyman 1980: 187). I chose to call it Class 18 rather than 18a because the label 18a would imply that there is another class 18 in Mundabli, which there is not (although the spatial deictic meaning in may be related to the PB locative class 18, see §10.4). Instead, the use of lower case letters following the noun class number is reserved for cases in which two noun classes have identical agreement but differ with respect to their number value.

4.3.6 The exceptional Gender 3/10

With only nine nouns, Gender 3/10 is by far the smallest paired gender. Gender 3/10 nouns do not take nominal prefixes. Of the nine attested Gender 3/10 nouns, four have identical singular and plural forms. The remaining five exhibit a peculiar kind of stem-initial consonant alternation.9 In these five nouns, the stem-initial consonant alternates between a labiovelar stop (kp, gb) in Class 3 (singular) nouns and an alveolar affricate (ts, dz) in Class 10 (plural) nouns (see Table 4.12).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class 3</th>
<th>gloss</th>
<th>Class 10</th>
<th>gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>kpe</td>
<td>'pot'</td>
<td>tse</td>
<td>'pots'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gbɔ</td>
<td>'house'</td>
<td>dzɔ</td>
<td>'houses'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gbɪ</td>
<td>'rope'</td>
<td>dzɪ</td>
<td>'ropes'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gbɨŋ</td>
<td>'root'</td>
<td>dzɨŋ</td>
<td>'roots'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kpān</td>
<td>'tree, firewood, drum'</td>
<td>tswān</td>
<td>'trees, etc.'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.12: Singular-plural pairings of Class 3/10 nouns, examples showing initial consonant mutation

In four cases, the alternation is completely regular with kp alternating with ts and gb with dz. However, in the case of kpān ‘tree’, the affricate in the Class 10 (plural) stem tswān ‘trees’ is followed by a labial which is absent from the singular (Class 3) form. Gender 3/10 initial consonant mutation is described in more detail in §3.3.2.

Of the other four nouns which make up this gender, three are identical in singular (Class 3) and plural (Class 10), and one, namely ndɔ̀n ‘branch’, involves ablaut and a tone change but no consonant mutation (see Table 4.13). This is the only stem attested in this gender which also involves a tonal

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9See Kießling (2010b) for a description and analysis of comparable processes in some other Yemne-Kimbil languages (which he refers to as Beboid languages) and other Southern Bantoid languages.
singular-plural opposition reminiscent of the tonal opposition typical of Gender 9/10 nouns.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class 3</th>
<th>gloss</th>
<th>Class 10</th>
<th>gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ndɔ̀n</td>
<td>‘branch’</td>
<td>ndàn</td>
<td>‘branches’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ƞkwùn</td>
<td>‘mountain’</td>
<td>ƞkwùn</td>
<td>‘mountains’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ƞgàŋ</td>
<td>‘hill’</td>
<td>ƞgàŋ</td>
<td>‘hills’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ɲʃù</td>
<td>‘palm tree, sp.’</td>
<td>ɲʃù</td>
<td>‘palm trees, sp.’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.13: Singular-plural pairings of Class 3/10 nouns, examples without consonant mutation

In opposition to earlier treatments (e.g., Good et al. (2011)), the current analysis does not use the plural Class 4. What was formerly referred to as Gender 3/4 is renamed Gender 3/10 in the current analysis, even if this might conceal the historical origin of Gender 3/10. The plural forms of nouns lexically assigned to Class 3 and Class 9 trigger the same agreement and therefore form a single noun class synchronically. In fact, the initial consonant mutation encountered in Gender 3/10 nouns probably reflects the existence of former Class 3 and 4 prefixes with a rounded and an unrounded vowel. However, in the current state of the language, Class 4 has merged with Class 10.

Of all the languages exhibiting comparable stem alternations, Mundabli seems to be the only one in which all alternating nouns start in a labiovelar stop in the singular (Class 3). At least two other Yemne-Kimbil languages, Koshin and Fang, also have a noun class pairing 3/4 which involves stem-initial consonant mutation with a plain labial consonant in Class 3 nouns and a plain palatal consonant in Class 4 nouns (cf. Good et al. 2011). However, the Mundabli cognates of those nouns which belong to Gender 3/4 in these languages and which show stem-initial consonant mutation but do not start in a labiovelar stop, such as wi ‘eye’ (Koshin, Class 3) and dʒ́f́i ‘eyes’ (Koshin, Class 4), wìn ‘leaf, tooth’ (Koshin, Class 3) and dʒ́ín ‘leaves’, ‘teeth’ (Koshin, Class 4) (cf. Good et al. 2011: 144, Hombert 1980: 89 and Kießling 2010b: 25) fall into Mundabli Gender 3/7a which does not involve any stem changes. For a detailed discussion of stem-initial consonant mutation in Ring and Yemne-Kimbil languages, see Kießling (2010b).

4.3.7 Single Gender 6

Class 6 is not part of a singular-plural pairing. It forms a so-called ‘single gender’ consisting of only one class, unspecified for number. Class 6 contains mainly liquids and a few other non-countables, such as ɲim ‘smoke’, mbwín

---

10The Proto-Bantu prefixes for Class 3 and Class 4 are *mù- and *mì-, respectively (Maho 1999: 51).

11The original <j> in the Koshin examples has been replaced by [dʒ] here.
‘flour’ and ɲkāŋ ‘salt’. My data contains the twelve\(^{12}\) Class 6 nouns listed in Table 4.14.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class 6</th>
<th>gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ɲgī</td>
<td>‘water’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ɲkà</td>
<td>‘corn beer’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mbī</td>
<td>‘palm wine’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>myē</td>
<td>‘oil’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ɲkɨ̄ŋ</td>
<td>‘palm kernel oil’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ntʃwá</td>
<td>‘porridge’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ndzē</td>
<td>‘urine’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mfɒ̋m</td>
<td>‘blood’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ndām</td>
<td>‘tears’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ɲɪ̋m</td>
<td>‘smoke’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mbwín</td>
<td>‘flour’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ɲkāŋ</td>
<td>‘salt’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.14: Class 6 nouns

As Table 4.14 shows, all attested Class 6 nouns start with a nasal. Although the nasal is interpreted here as noun class prefix, it cannot be tested whether the nasal is a prefix or part of the stem because the noun only occurs in Class 6. Thus, there is no alternation in which an initial prefix would possibly get dropped. When the diminutive is derived by adding the Class 19 prefix, the nasal is not dropped.

Although plural Class 18 and unpaired Class 6 trigger the same agreement patterns, they are given different labels. Following the chosen conventions, I could have consequently labelled this class “18a”. However, I decided to use the label “Class 6” in order to stay closer to common Bantoid conventions of noun class labelling. In fact, the liquid class, referred to as Class 6 here, is more commonly labelled 6a in the Bantoid literature. It can supposedly be traced back to the Proto-Benue-Congo liquid/mass class *ma- (PBC Class 6a) which has merged with the PBC class *a- in Narrow Bantu (Hyman 1980: 180). I do not include the lower case letter ‘a’ in the label in order to keep closer to the adopted conventions. However, I do not doubt that historically, Mundabli Class 6 is related to Proto-Benue-Congo liquid/mass class *ma- (commonly referred to as Class 6a, see e.g. Hyman 1980), rather than Proto-Bantu Class 6 (*mà-) (Maho 1999: 51). What is commonly referred to as Class 6 by Bantoid scholars, i.e. a reflexes of the PBS *a- class, is not attested in Mundabli.

\(^{12}\)The low number of Class 6 nouns may be due to the nature of data collection which did not involve intense discussion of liquids other than water, beer and palm wine.
4.3.8 Single Gender 8a

Class 8a contains mass nouns, such as tsā ‘mud’ and bwūl ‘dust’, nouns denoting abstract concepts, such as dām ‘dream’ and tsā ‘witchcraft’, and deverbal manner nouns, such as ḏʒū ‘shortness’, ḏʒīŋ ‘length’ and dzōŋ ‘beauty’. With nineteen attested members, of the unpaired classes Gender 8a contains the largest amount of lexical items. Table 4.15 contains some examples of Gender 8a nouns.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class 8a</th>
<th>gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ɲām</td>
<td>‘fufu’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ḏʒīŋ</td>
<td>‘length’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dē–də̄l</td>
<td>‘weight’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lī</td>
<td>‘power’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ḏjē</td>
<td>‘language’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tsā</td>
<td>‘mud’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mā</td>
<td>‘clay’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dām</td>
<td>‘dream’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ḏʒō</td>
<td>‘bridge’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bwūl</td>
<td>‘dust’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dzōŋ</td>
<td>‘beauty’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gā</td>
<td>‘fatness’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ḏʒū</td>
<td>‘shortness’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tsō</td>
<td>‘witchcraft’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dzō̰</td>
<td>‘dew’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.15: Class 8a nouns

As Table 4.15 shows, Class 8a nouns do not take prefixes. As the name suggests, Class 8a nouns and Class 8 nouns trigger the same agreement patterns. Neither of the two shows noun class marking on the noun. In order to be consistent, I refer to this Class as “Class 8a” because it differs from Class 8 only regarding its number value. Alternatively, this class could have been labelled “Class 14” because it seems to be related to Proto-Bantu Class 14 (and PBC Class “bu-” (Wolf 1971)). Many abstract nouns, such as li ‘power’ and tsō ‘witchcraft’ are found in Mundabli Class 8a, just like in PB Class 14 (Maho 1999: 77). But even a few concrete nouns are found in this class. Among them is the noun ḏʒō “bridge” which is also part of PB Class 14. The formal resemblance between Mundabli Class 14 (bi-) and PB Class 14 (*bū-) is also strong enough to support a connection between the two. However, note that Mundabli Class 8a triggers the agreement prefix bi-, just like Class 8, rather than bu- or something similar.13

Good et al. (2011) show that unpaired Class 8a = 14 and plural Class 8 have identical agreement in some Yemne-Kimbilanguagages, but not in others.
4.4. Noun class assignment of borrowed nouns

4.3.9 Unpaired noun classes (single genders) other than Class 6 and 8a

There are a few other nouns which show no singular-plural distinction but whose agreement pattern is not that of Class 6 or Class 8a. They can be divided into small groups of nouns which trigger the same agreement patterns. All of them share their agreement patterns with those of a certain singular or plural class. However, due to their not having a singular-plural opposition, they are analyzed as distinct noun classes which form distinct single genders. Tables 4.16-4.19 contain comprehensive inventories of all remaining unpaired genders: Gender 3a, Gender 7b, Gender 9a and Gender 10a. Following the adopted conventions, the labels for these unpaired are composed of the number describing the singular/plural class with identical agreement plus the minor case letter ‘a’, or ‘b’ if ‘a’ is already taken.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class 3a</th>
<th>gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>bū</td>
<td>‘hunger’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bwē</td>
<td>‘sky’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wē</td>
<td>‘sun’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gbē</td>
<td>‘wind’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fū</td>
<td>‘beans, sp.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dɔ᷆</td>
<td>‘beans, sp’, ‘rice’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tswān</td>
<td>‘bitter leaf’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bōŋ</td>
<td>‘ash’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dʒʊ᷆m</td>
<td>‘honey’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dzĭŋ</td>
<td>‘saliva’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.16: Single gender 3a, comprehensive list

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class 7b</th>
<th>gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>gbə̀m</td>
<td>‘God’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fō</td>
<td>‘hair’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tɔ́</td>
<td>‘cliff’, ‘rocks’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gbɛ᷆</td>
<td>‘pus’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kwŭ</td>
<td>‘fog’, ‘mist’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.17: Single gender 7b, comprehensive list

4.4 Noun class assignment of borrowed nouns

Apart from a few exceptions like tākèdā ‘book’ and tāsā ‘enameled bowl’, this treatment of loanwords is restricted to loans from English, Cameroon Pid-
The number of French loanwords is restricted because the official language in the Northwest province is English. I sporadically include loanwords from other source languages when I am aware of them. However, in the light of my very limited knowledge of the other possible source languages, the origins of loanwords indicated in this section are based on my intuitions and should be taken with a grain of salt. To further complicate the issue, it is not easy in most cases to tell whether a loan is adopted from English or from Cameroonian Pidgin or from another local language which has itself borrowed the word from English or Pidgin (or possibly from another local language which has borrowed it earlier, and so on). The same holds, of course, for loans from the other source languages. Table 4.20 contains selected examples of nominal loanwords from English and Pidgin and a few nominal loans from other source languages. English and Pidgin are given as alternative sources because it is (at this stage) impossible to tell them apart. The source languages listed in Table 4.20 should be taken as educated guesses and may sometimes represent the ultimate sources of words borrowed into Mundabli indirectly via other languages.

As Table 4.20 shows, borrowed nouns are assigned to three noun class pairings. While most loanwords (around three quarters of them) are assigned to Gender 1/2, a relatively large number of nouns (around one quarter) are assigned to Gender 7/8. Only very few loanwords are assigned to Gender 9/10. The number of loans in Gender 9/10 is so small (only 2, of which one (yə̆) may not be a loan) that I regard them as exceptions. Nevertheless, Gender 9/10 loans should be borne in mind during future investigations on loanwords in Mundabli.
### Table 4.20: Selected nominal loans

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>example</th>
<th>gloss</th>
<th>gender</th>
<th>origin</th>
<th>source language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>kɔ̂~kɔ̂p</td>
<td>‘cup’</td>
<td>1/2</td>
<td>cup</td>
<td>English/Pidgin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(old-fashioned word)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(&lt; Tuareg &lt; Latin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&lt; Greek)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>skūl</td>
<td>school</td>
<td>1/2</td>
<td>‘school’</td>
<td>English/Pidgin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>~ʃukūrù</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>~sūkūlù</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dʒākā</td>
<td>‘donkey’</td>
<td>1/2</td>
<td>jākā ‘female donkey’</td>
<td>Hausa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bōṭi</td>
<td>‘bottle’</td>
<td>1/2</td>
<td>bottle</td>
<td>English/Pidgin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jūgà</td>
<td>‘sugar’</td>
<td>1/2</td>
<td>sugar</td>
<td>English/Pidgin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gāŋ</td>
<td>‘gown’</td>
<td>1/2</td>
<td>gown</td>
<td>English/Pidgin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mūtū</td>
<td>‘car’</td>
<td>1/2</td>
<td>moto</td>
<td>Pidgin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>~mūntū</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tābā</td>
<td>‘tobacco’</td>
<td>1/2</td>
<td>tābā</td>
<td>Hausa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tāsā</td>
<td>‘enameled bowl’</td>
<td>1/2</td>
<td>tāsā</td>
<td>Hausa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nāsē</td>
<td>‘white person’</td>
<td>1/2</td>
<td>nāsāra ‘Christian, white person’</td>
<td>Hausa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(orig. Arabic)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lītā</td>
<td>‘bottle’</td>
<td>1/2</td>
<td>liter ‘1 liter’</td>
<td>Pidgin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ŋēbī</td>
<td>‘table’</td>
<td>7/8</td>
<td>ŋēbī ‘table’</td>
<td>English/Pidgin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dzīŋ</td>
<td>‘corrugated iron sheet’</td>
<td>7/8</td>
<td>dzīŋ ‘corrugated iron sheet’</td>
<td>English/Pidgin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kūnām</td>
<td>‘pig, pork’</td>
<td>7/8</td>
<td>kunyam</td>
<td>Pidgin (regional variety)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nānà</td>
<td>‘pineapple’</td>
<td>7/8</td>
<td>ananas ‘year’</td>
<td>French</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yā (pl. yā)</td>
<td>‘year’</td>
<td>9/10</td>
<td></td>
<td>English/Pidgin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sābūlī</td>
<td>‘laundry soap’</td>
<td>9/10</td>
<td>sābulū~sābulī</td>
<td>Hausa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(orig. Arabic)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As nouns of most noun classes in Mundabli (may) lack noun class prefixes, there is no particular class of prefix-less nouns which might attract the equally prefix-less loanwords as may happen “if a language has a [single] class in which nouns are devoid of overt class marker[s]” (Grinevald and Seifart 2004: 253). However, borrowed nouns are assigned to Gender 1/2 and Gender 7/8 which (like most other genders) generally lack overt noun class marking. It is possible that the nouns were borrowed during different periods and that the distribution of loans across two noun class pairings reflects a synchronic change in the noun class system. In other Bantoid languages borrowed nouns are also commonly assigned to the pairing 1/2 (e.g., Bafut (Tamanji 2009: 25) and Mankon (Leroy 1977: 81)), “just like all over the Bantu area” (Maho 1999: 54). Thus, the assignment of borrowed nouns to Gender 1/2 may have been the older strategy and loans may have been assigned to the pairing 7/8 more recently based on evidence from other constructions. Gender 7/8 is the default gender synchronically. Another possibility is that Mundabli has been in contact with a language using a different strategy for the noun class assignment of loanwords and has adopted the strategy of that other language. However, I am not aware of any language in the wider area in which loanwords are assigned to Gender 7/8. Whatever the exact scenario may have looked like, the assignment of borrowed nouns to Gender 7/8 may have been introduced only recently. More research is needed to clearly determine the motivations behind the assignment of borrowed nouns to specific genders and the implications of the assignment of borrowed nouns to two different genders.

4.5 ‘Derivational’ use of noun classes

Some noun class prefixes can be used ‘derivationally’, i.e. they can change the meaning of a noun. This meaning change goes along with a change of agreement patterns, as e.g. in mɔ̀ w-ɔ́ ‘the man’ (cl1) vs. fì-mɔ̀ f-ɔ́ ‘the little man’ (cl19), unless the noun which forms the base of derivation already belongs to the derivational noun class, as e.g. in mwɪ̀n f-ɔ́ ‘the cat’ (cl19) vs. fì-mwɪ̀n f-ɔ́ ‘the little cat’ (cl19).

4.5.1 Associative plural with the Class 2 prefix (bə-)

The Class 2 prefix bə- is most commonly used with names and deictic expressions like ‘father’, ‘mother’ and ‘chief’ to express the “associative plural”. As Daniel and Moravcsik (2011) define it, “[a]ssociative plural constructions

14 In fact it is usually 1a/2. Bantuists use the label 1a for nouns which show the same agreement as Class 1 nouns but which do not take a noun class prefix. However, Class 1 nouns in Mundabli generally do not bear prefixes, so I do not distinguish between Class 1 and 1a.
15 A Class 7 pronoun occurs as the default subject when no agent is involved. When resolving “gender conflict”, i.e. a conflict in the choice of agreement which arises when two nouns are conjoined which are assigned to different noun class pairings, Class 8 is the plural class chosen to represent two non-human nouns of different genders.
4.5. ‘Derivational’ use of noun classes

consist of a noun X (typically of human reference, usually a person’s name or a kin term) and some other material, most often an affix, a clitic, or a word. The meaning of the construction is ‘X and other people associated with X’.

Example (23) shows the associative use of the Class 2 prefix in Mundabli. The Class 2 prefix in (23) is attached to the name ɲʊŋfù-ā-Mán with the resulting associative noun bə̀-ɲʊŋfù-ā-Mán meaning “Nyungfu-a-Man and his associates”.

(23) ká bə̀-ɲʊŋfù-ā(n)-mán tjú kʊŋ kwó, tjú kʊŋ Cond CL2-N.-Com-M. come(b) hunt(c) enter(c) come(b) hunt(c) kwó tjú sə bʊ̃ŋmù mǐ à mbɛ̀ bə̀-dʒwē b-ʃ enter(c) come(b) first B. 1SG COM CL2.people CL2-many CL2-Det

‘When Nyungfu-a-Man and his associates caught up, Bungmu and all those many people were the first ones to catch up with me.’

Associative plural constructions with relational nouns are shown in example (24).

(24) then əká ɲwám bì-lʊŋ bɔ̀, bɔ̀ kān b-ʃ then like CL2.children CL8a-suffering also CL2.PVB lack(b) CL2-REL bɔ̀-tʃì ā bɔ̀-nì bɔ̀ əmì mbɛ̀ dzwàn CL2-father COM CL2-mother 3PL.POSS and CL2.people CL10.illness āmì mbɛ̀ bi-lʊŋ and CL2.people CL8a-suffering

‘[...] and also, for example, children who are suffering, who do not have parents, and sick people, and suffering people.’

More research is needed to determine the exact character and meaning of associative plural constructions in Mundabli.

4.5.2 Diminutive derivation with the Class 19/18 prefixes fi- and mü-

The diminutive of a noun is derived by adding the Class 19 prefix fi- for singular nouns or the Class 18 prefix mü(N)- for plural nouns to the stem, as shown in (25)-(26). The same applies to inherent Gender 19/18 nouns, as e.g. in (26), which lack a noun class prefix (see §4.3.5) and do not have a diminutive meaning.

---

16 The name ɲʊŋfù-ā-Mán is composed of the name of the man himself, ɲʊŋfù, and the name of his mother, mán. It means “Nyungfu with Man”. The name bʊ̃ŋmù literally means “pick-take”. It is probably a nickname.
The noun class system

(25) ká wù kpā jī gū w-Î tfāŋ,
cond cl1 light(a) go_down(a) cl3/7a.fire cl3-det cl1/2.fireplace
nī wū tēn bī jī
3poss.mother cl1;3sg.poss drip(c) exit(b) go_down(a)
fi-ngī sē
cl19-cl6.water cl3/7a.attic

‘When she lit the fire in the fireplace, her mother let a little bit of
water drop down from the attic.’

(26) wū kwē jū ā mū-dānʧēn
cl1 return_from_bush(c) come(b) com cl18-cl19/18.berry
mūɲ-dʒwē
cl18-many

‘She came home with lots of little Dantshen berries.’

Segmental prefixes of other noun classes are dropped when the diminutive
is derived, as in (27) where the diminutive of a Class 2 noun is formed by
adding the Class 18 prefix mū(N)- to the bare stem. Example (27) also
shows that the derived noun triggers Class 19/18 agreement, just like an
inherent Class 19/18 noun.

(27) a. bə̀-ŋkʊ̌ŋb-ɔ́ ‘those chiefs’
    b. mū-ŋkʊ̌ŋm-ɔ́ ‘those little chiefs’

In cases of singular-plural stem alternations (such as attested in the excep-
tional gender 3/10), the number-specific stem forms the base for affixation17,
as in (28).

(28) a. fi-gbɔ ‘little house’
    b. mū-dzɔ ‘little houses’
    c. fi-dʒi ‘little goat’
    d. mū-dʒi ‘little goats’

The diminutive can be used in a derogatory way, e.g. when calling someone
fi-dʒi ‘little dog’ can also be used to refer to a person in this way.

17 The use of number-specific stems as the base for the diminutive is an argument for the exis-
tence of number as a grammatical category in Mundabli. As Maho (1999: 3) mentions in a
footnote, “[n]ot all people agree that Bantu noun class pairings mark a singular-plural distinc-
tion”
4.6. Discussion of the current analysis of the noun class system

4.5.3 Use of Gender 7/8 pronouns for derogatory reference

Gender 7/8 pronouns are commonly used for derogatory reference, as e.g. in (29).

(29) bi a wį w5 n5 nį CL8 NEG hear(b).1PFV NEG CL8a.talk CL1/2.mother

‘They are not listening to their mother’s advice.’

In (29) a Class 8 pronoun is used to refer to modern girls, who are considered stupid because they destroy their lives rather than listen to their mothers’ advice. The use of the Class 8 pronoun expresses a dismissive attitude.

4.6 Discussion of the current analysis of the noun class system

This section compares the current analysis, which distinguishes noun classes based - among other factors - on numeral distinctions, with a noun class system based on agreement only. Basing noun classes not only on agreement but also on number distinctions and on singular-plural noun class pairings may be confusing for anyone not familiar with this practice. As common in the Bantuist tradition, I split up agreement classes into groups of nouns with the same number value. Agreement Class k(i)-, for example, is split up into Class 7, which contains only singular nouns, Class 7a, which contains only plural nouns, and Class 7b, which contains uncountables, see Table 4.21 (based on Table 4.1). Table 4.22 compares the system used in the current publication with a pure agreement system, using a language-internal numbering system.

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18Gender 7/8 also sporadically serves for augmentative derivation. However, this derivation process is not very productive and further research is required.
The noun class system

Table 4.21: Noun classes, current system

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>noun class</th>
<th>pronoun</th>
<th>noun class</th>
<th>pronoun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>wù</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>bɔ̋</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>wū</td>
<td>7a</td>
<td>kī</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>kī</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>bī</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>yī</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>yī</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>fī</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>mū</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>mū</td>
<td>8a</td>
<td>bī</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3a</td>
<td>wū</td>
<td>7b</td>
<td>kī</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9a</td>
<td>yī</td>
<td>10a</td>
<td>yī</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.22: Agreement classes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>agreement class</th>
<th>pronoun</th>
<th>singular-plural class pairings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AGR1</td>
<td>wù</td>
<td>singular nouns &gt; plural in AGR2; uncountables (only infinitives)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGR2</td>
<td>bɔ̋</td>
<td>plural nouns &gt; singular in AGR1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGR3</td>
<td>wū</td>
<td>singular nouns &gt; plural in AGR4 or (a small group) in AGR7; uncountables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGR4</td>
<td>kī</td>
<td>singular nouns &gt; plural in AGR5; plural nouns &gt; singular in AGR3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGR5</td>
<td>bī</td>
<td>plural nouns &gt; singular in AGR4; uncountables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGR6</td>
<td>yī</td>
<td>singular nouns &gt; plural in AGR7; uncountables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGR7</td>
<td>yī</td>
<td>plural nouns &gt; singular in AGR6 or (a small group) in AGR3; uncountables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGR8</td>
<td>fī</td>
<td>singular nouns (incl. sg diminutives) &gt; plural in AGR9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGR9</td>
<td>mū</td>
<td>plural nouns (incl. pl diminutives) &gt; singular in AGR8; uncountables (liquids)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mundabli has an elaborate system of noun class agreement. However, agreement is basically restricted to the noun phrase. The only exception is pronouns, which agree with their antecedents in noun class. Although pronouns are not usually covered in an agreement chapter, I include them here. Pronouns are treated in more detail in Chapter 6. Possessive pronouns are only treated in the current chapter, in §5.1.2, and in Chapter 7.

As overt noun class marking, i.e. marking on the noun itself, has been widely lost (see Chapter 4) and the verb does not agree with any of its arguments, either, agreement within the noun phrase is often the only means to identify the noun class of a noun. Agreement prefixes can consist of a purely tonal prefix, a consonant accompanied by a tone, or a whole syllable. This chapter gives an overview of the different agreement patterns encountered in noun modifiers and pronominal elements.

The agreement patterns are most clearly represented by personal pronouns. Unlike noun modifiers, which always neutralize the distinction between at least two noun classes, personal pronouns reflect all existing agreement distinctions. If two noun classes are represented by the same pronoun, their agreement patterns are also the same.\(^1\) Table 5.1 gives an overview of the attested agreement patterns illustrated by personal pronoun forms.

Noun classes are found in the first column and the personal pronouns which represent them are found in the second column. Where more than one noun class label is found in the first column, these noun classes trigger the same

\(^1\)In the current analysis nouns which are represented by the same personal pronoun but have different number values are considered to belong to different classes.
5.1. Agreement in pronouns

Table 5.1: Overview of agreement patterns, illustrated by pronouns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>noun class</th>
<th>pronoun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>wù</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>bɔ̋</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>wū</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>yī</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7,7a</td>
<td>kī</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8,8a</td>
<td>bī</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>yī</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>fī</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18,6</td>
<td>mū</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

agreement pattern but are distinguished due to their different number values. As Table 5.1 shows, there are nine different agreement patterns. The number of noun classes is higher than nine because, apart from agreement, noun classes are also based on number distinctions. As pointed out earlier, in this adopted system, a noun class can only contain nouns of one number value (singular, plural or undefined, cf. §4.2). The remainder of this chapter contains descriptions of the different forms of agreement found in pronouns (§5.1) and nominal modifiers (§5.2–§5.4) and ends in an overview of agreement patterns and a section on gender conflict resolution.

5.1 Agreement in pronouns

Unlike noun modifiers, pronouns agree with a mix of two intertwining agreement systems. While the third person pronouns agree with the noun class of their antecedent, first and second person pronouns agree with their antecedent in person and number. This section only deals with noun class agreement in personal pronouns and possessive pronouns. Person and number agreement is treated in Chapter 6.

5.1.1 Agreement in 3rd person singular personal pronouns

Third person singular personal pronouns lack a prefix-root structure. Instead, they look like bare prefixes. Third person singular personal pronouns represent the full variety of agreement patterns. If the 3SG personal pronouns of two classes are identical, then their agreement patterns are also the same.

The Class 1 and 9 non-preverbal 3SG pronouns have a low tone. All other non-preverbal 3SG pronouns bear a superhigh tone. Preverbal 3SG pronouns differ from the non-preverbal ones only regarding their tonal patterns. The Class 1 and Class 9 preverbal pronouns also bear a low tone. However, pre-
Table 5.2: Agreement in preverbal and non-preverbal third person singular pronouns for all noun classes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>noun class</th>
<th>preverbal</th>
<th>non-preverbal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>wù</td>
<td>wù</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>bɔ̋</td>
<td>bɔ̋</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>wū</td>
<td>wű</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>yī</td>
<td>yǐ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7,7a</td>
<td>kì</td>
<td>kǐ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8,8a</td>
<td>bì</td>
<td>bǐ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>yǐ</td>
<td>yǐ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>fì</td>
<td>fǐ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18,6</td>
<td>mū</td>
<td>mū</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

verbal 3sg pronouns of other classes have a mid tone, except for the Class 2 pronoun which bears a superhigh tone. A few examples of sentences containing 3sg personal pronouns (both preverbal and non-preverbal) are provided in (30)-(32). The pronouns are enclosed by square brackets.

(30) [wù] kà dī ā pwām bɔ̋
    cl1 p3 be(b) com cl2.children cl2;3sg.poss
    ‘She had her children.’

(31) [wū] jíŋ fì ā jīŋ
    cl3 be_full(c) pass(b) advlz inf-be_full(c)
    ‘It was still full.’

(32) any nǐŋ bǐ nǐŋ k-ş [kì], bǐ kā kàn [kì]
    any cl7.thing 1pl want(c) cl7-rel cl7 1pl f2 have(c) cl7
    ‘Anything we want, we will have it.’

The tonal difference between the preverbal pronouns in (30) and in (31) reflects tonal noun class agreement, with a low tone in Class 1 and a mid tone in Class 3. The non-preverbal Class 7 pronoun in (32) bears a superhigh tone.

5.1.2 Agreement in possessive pronouns

Just like personal pronouns, possessive pronouns belong to two intertwining agreement systems, agreeing with their antecedent (the possessor) in person and number, and with the modified noun (the possessee) in noun class. Table 5.3 gives an overview of all possessive pronouns. Only human possessors are considered.
5.1. Agreement in pronouns

Possessive pronouns can be subdivided into four groups which mark agreement in different ways. The first (and most atypical group) is represented by the third person plural (or Class 2) possessive pronoun bɔ̌ ‘their’. As shown in the last column of Table 5.3, this pronoun always has the same shape bɔ̌, just like English ‘their’. It does not agree with the modified noun (i.e., the possessee). The second group contains possessive pronouns whose stem consists only of a vowel, namely the first person plural possessive pronoun with the stems form -ɪ, the second person singular possessive pronoun with the stems form -a and the second person plural possessive pronoun with the stems form -ɛn (see Table 5.3). These vowel-initial stems take consonantal prefixes which may come with their own tone.

In these possessive pronouns whose stem consists only of a vowel, Class 1 and Class 9 pronouns can only be distinguished from Class 3 and Class 10 pronouns by their different tonal realizations. All possessive pronouns bear a mid tone when they modify a noun of Class 1 or Class 9, whereas in all other cases they bear a superhigh tone, as e.g., the second person singular possessive pronouns for Class 1 and 3 wā (Class 1) vs. wā (Class 3) and for Class 9 and 10 yā (Class 9) vs. yā (Class 10).

The third group is represented by third person singular possessive pronouns. They lack a prefix-root structure and look as if they consisted only of agreement prefixes, just like third person personal pronouns. The tone is mid for Class 1 and 9 possesseees and superhigh for all others; see Table 5.3.

Examples (33)-(36) show the use of 3sg/cl.1 possessive pronouns. The Class 1 and Class 9 possessive pronouns in (33) and (35) bear a mid tone, and the Class 7 and Class 18 possessive pronouns in (34) and (36) bear a superhigh tone. The possessive phrase in the examples is enclosed by square brackets.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>noun class</th>
<th>my</th>
<th>your (sg)</th>
<th>his/her</th>
<th>our</th>
<th>your (pl.)</th>
<th>their</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>ŋgɨ̄</td>
<td>wā</td>
<td>wū</td>
<td>wī</td>
<td>wēn</td>
<td>bɔ̌</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>mɨŋ</td>
<td>bā</td>
<td>b̌</td>
<td>bī</td>
<td>bēn</td>
<td>bɔ̌</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>ŋgɨ̄</td>
<td>wā</td>
<td>wū</td>
<td>wī</td>
<td>wēn</td>
<td>bɔ̌</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7,7a</td>
<td>ŋkɨ̄</td>
<td>kā</td>
<td>ǩ</td>
<td>kī</td>
<td>kēn</td>
<td>bɔ̌</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8,8a</td>
<td>mɨ̋ŋ</td>
<td>bā</td>
<td>b̌</td>
<td>bī</td>
<td>bēn</td>
<td>bɔ̌</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>ŋgɨ̄</td>
<td>yā</td>
<td>yī</td>
<td>yī</td>
<td>yēn</td>
<td>bɔ̌</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>ŋgɨ̄</td>
<td>yā</td>
<td>yī</td>
<td>yī</td>
<td>yēn</td>
<td>bɔ̌</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>mɨ̋ŋ</td>
<td>fā</td>
<td>f̌</td>
<td>fī</td>
<td>fēn</td>
<td>bɔ̌</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18,6</td>
<td>mɨŋ</td>
<td>mā</td>
<td>mū</td>
<td>mī</td>
<td>mēn</td>
<td>bɔ̌</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.3: Agreement in possessive pronouns
Finally, the fourth and last group is constituted by first person singular possessive pronouns. Whereas tonally they behave just like regular possessive pronouns, with a mid tone in Class 1 and 9 and a superhigh tone in all other classes, their segmental agreement marking is rather special. Their structure is not simply decomposable into prefix and stem. Instead, they all start in a nasal, or a nasal consonant sequence and some end in a velar nasal (see Table 5.4).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>noun class</th>
<th>1sg pronoun</th>
<th>prefixes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1, 9</td>
<td>ꎥŋf</td>
<td>w-, y-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2, 8, 8a, 18, 6</td>
<td>ꎨŋ</td>
<td>b-, b-, m-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3, 10</td>
<td>ꎥŋf</td>
<td>w-, y-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7, 7a</td>
<td>ꎥŋkŋ</td>
<td>k-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>ꎥmfŋ</td>
<td>f-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.4: Agreement in 1sg possessive pronouns

In the first person singular possessive pronoun, some of the agreement distinctions found in other constructions are neutralized. Only five forms of the first person singular possessive pronoun are distinguished (see Table 5.4), instead of nine as in other pronouns. A few rules can be extracted which govern the realization of the first person singular possessive pronoun as compared to
the other possessive pronouns: for all noun classes whose agreement prefix starts in a glide (w or y), the segmental form is ŋgi, as in (37). Thus, the possessive pronouns for Class 1 and Class 9 ŋgi and those for Class 3 and Class 10 ŋgi are identical, with the first (Class 1/9) differing from the second (Class 3/10) only regarding its tonal realization. Thus, the tonal pattern is the same as in other possessive pronouns. For all noun classes whose agreement prefix otherwise starts with a labial stop (b- or m-), namely Class 2, 8, 8a, 18 and 6, the form of the pronoun is mɨ̋ŋ, as in (38). For Class 7 and 7a, whose agreement prefix otherwise starts with k, the form is ŋkɨ̋ŋ, as in (39), and for Class 19, whose agreement prefix starts within f, the form is mfɨ̋ŋ. The possessive phrase in the examples is enclosed in square brackets.

(37) ní, [ɲwám ŋgi] dɨ̋ f-án
   cl1.mother, cl1/2.husband cl1;1sg.poss be(b) PROX-here
   ‘Mother, my husband is here.’

(38) tǔ ndɛ̀ [ŋgī mɨ̋ŋ] yɛ̄
   scoop(b) who cl6.water cl6;1sg.poss quot.q
   ‘Who has carried my water?’

(39) f-ɔ́ prox-det here be(b) subord cl7/8.story cl7;1sg.poss pass(b)
   f-ɔ́ loc-rel
   ‘This is where my story ends.’

A different construction is attested for the noun wān ‘child’. Rather than the expected wān ŋgi, it is more common to find the head-final construction mɨ wān, in which the noun wān ‘child’ is simply juxtaposed to the non-preverbal form of the first person singular pronoun mɨ. This construction is only attested with the noun wān ‘child’. Postpositional phrases involving derived postpositions, such as wū dzé ‘in his/her mouth’ present a similar construction. They seem to be related to possessive phrases and often involve part-whole relations. Like the exceptional possessive construction mɨ wān, these constructions are head-final. However, note that pronouns generally bear a high tone when headed by a postposition. For more on postpositions, see §10.2.2.

Furthermore, the relational nouns ni ‘mother’, ti ‘father’ and wān ni ‘sibling’ have special stem forms which entail possessive meaning and person. For a more detailed description of the exceptional possessive constructions listed here with examples, see §7.2.1.3 and §10.2.2.1.
5.2 Agreement in demonstratives and determiners

The demonstratives -ɛ́n PROXIMAL and -ɔ́ DISTAL take consonantal agreement prefixes. In addition to the consonant, the prefix may bear a tone which affects the tone of the stem it is attached to. Table 5.5 shows agreement in demonstratives.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>noun class</th>
<th>prefix</th>
<th>PROXIMAL</th>
<th>DISTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>w-</td>
<td>wɛ́n</td>
<td>wɔ́</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>b-</td>
<td>bɛ́n</td>
<td>bɔ́</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>w-</td>
<td>wɛ́n</td>
<td>wɔ́</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>y-</td>
<td>yɛ́n</td>
<td>yɔ́</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7,7a</td>
<td>k-</td>
<td>kɛ́n</td>
<td>kɔ́</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8,8a</td>
<td>b-</td>
<td>bɛ́n</td>
<td>bɔ́</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>y-</td>
<td>yɛ́n</td>
<td>yɔ́</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>f-</td>
<td>fɛ́n</td>
<td>fɔ́</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18,6</td>
<td>m-</td>
<td>mɛ́n</td>
<td>mɔ́</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.5: Consonantal agreement in demonstratives

The consonantal agreement prefix is found in the second column. The low tone on the Class 1 and Class 9 prefixes does not represent an actual low tone, as the change from a high tone to a mid tone cannot be accounted for by the presence of a low tone. Instead, it is meant to signify that the demonstratives for Class 1 and 9 are relatively lower than those for the other classes. In fact, Class 1 and 9 demonstratives bear a mid tone, whereas demonstratives of all other (agreement) classes are realized with a high tone.

Examples of the proximal demonstrative -ɛ́n ‘this’ are found in (40)-(43). The Class 1 demonstrative in (40) has a mid tone. All the others have a high tone.

(40) [wān w-ɛ́n], dí wà nā ỳ à lā w-ɔ́ n̂
   cl1.child cl1-dep.prox be(b) 2sg subord 2sg make(a) cl1-rel as
   mī wān w-ɔ́ lɛ́ f-ān gbɔ́
   1sg cl1.child cl1-det get_lost(a).ippv prox-here cl13.house
   kʊŋ behind_house.loc
   ‘Child, you are the one who made my [other] child get lost here behind the house.’

(41) [dɔ́ w-ɛ́n] dǐ nā ānā
   cl3a.beans cl3a-dep.prox be(b) as like_that

   ‘As this bean is like this, [...]’
5.3 Agreement in adjectivals

Adjectivals include a small closed group of adjectives (cf. §7.1.4 for details) and other noun modifiers which are formally similar to them, such as non-numeral quantifiers and the interrogatives mwān ‘which’ and -mɨŋ ‘how many’. Adjectivals take purely tonal agreement prefixes for Class 1 and 9 and syllabic agreement prefixes for all other classes. In fact, in Mundabli it is only in adjectivals that the distinction between Class 9 and 10 is not purely tonal.\(^2\)

\(^2\)In most other Yemne-Kimbil languages, the distinction between Class 9 and 10 is purely tonal. Ngun, Abar and Ajumbu, in which the prefixes have different vowel qualities form an exception (Good, p.c.)

(42) à dî yá ŋ [dɔ̃ b-ën] mî
2SG f1 go_up(c) LOC CL8a.bridge CL8a-DEM.PROX IN
‘You will go up on this bridge.’

(43) [kwé b-ën] ŋà t-án sé
CL7/8.rat CL8-DEM.PROX boast(a) DIST-here CL3/7a.attic
t-án, n = dî lá kpí mé [kwé
dist-this_way 1SG = f1 make(a) die(b) finish(a) CL7/8.rat
b-ën] t-án sé ŋ
CL8-DEM.PROX DIST-here CL3/7a.attic EMPH
‘These rats which are showing off [up] there in the attic, I will kill all of them!’

It is rare to find examples in which the distal demonstrative (also used as determiner) clearly has a deictic meaning, as in (44) and (45). In (44), the demonstrative follows the possessive pronoun wū. Again, the Class 1 determiner in (44) bears a mid tone while the Class 7 determiner in (45) bears a high tone.

(44) wān kpé w-ɔ̄ gān mū mē wū wù
CL1.child CL1.woman CL1-DET go(a) take(a) finish(a) CL1 CL1
bān dzǣ [nsūŋ wū w-ɔ̄]
lock(b) CL7.mouth CL1.friend CL1;3SG.Poss CL1-DEM.DIST
‘The woman went and closed the mouth of her friend.’

(45) dɔ̃ y-ɔ̄ nō̤ bɔ̋ kə̀ bān
CL9.goat SUBORD CL2 f3 make(a) die(b) CL9-REL CL7/8.day
k-ɔ́
[ŋgɔ᷆ bān]
upon kə̀ bān áná būbūbūbū
CL7-DEM.DIST upon f3 be_white(b) like_that IDEO
‘The goat which they killed on that day was completely white.’
While the syllabic prefixes (i.e. prefixes other than Class 1 and 9) are segmentally identical for all adjectivals, the tone may vary across different modifiers. While most adjectival prefixes bear a mid tone (pattern A), high tone and low tone prefixes are restricted to the interrogatives -miŋ ‘how many’ and mwān ‘which’, respectively, see Table 5.6.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>noun class</th>
<th>adjectives and ‘all’, ‘many’, ‘a few’, ‘any’, ‘other’</th>
<th>-miŋ ‘how’</th>
<th>mwān ‘which’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><code>-</code></td>
<td><code>-</code></td>
<td><code>-</code></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>bā-</td>
<td>bā-</td>
<td>bā-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>wū-</td>
<td>wū-</td>
<td>wū-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7,7a</td>
<td>kī-</td>
<td>kī-</td>
<td>kī-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8,8a</td>
<td>bī-</td>
<td>bī-</td>
<td>bī-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td><code>-</code></td>
<td><code>-</code></td>
<td><code>-</code></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>yī-</td>
<td>yī-</td>
<td>yī-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>fī-</td>
<td>fī-</td>
<td>fī-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18,6</td>
<td>mūN-</td>
<td>mūN-</td>
<td>mūN-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.6: Agreement prefixes in adjectivals, three different tone patterns: mid, high and low

The low tones given for Class 1 and 9 in Table 5.6 and in the following tables do not exactly represent low tone prefixes. While some tonal stem changes, such as the realization of the high tone stem łỹŋ ‘new’ as łỹŋ with a rising tone following the tonal prefixes (see §5.3.1), can be accounted for by the presence of a low tone prefix, for others, such as the realization of lō ‘all’ as lō when it modifies a Class 1 or Class 9 noun (see §5.3.2), there is no simple explanation. Mid tones are usually not influenced by preceding low tones. Thus, a low tone in the purely tonal prefixes in Table 5.6 is meant to show that the stems are generally realized with a relatively lower tone than those modifying nouns of other classes.

Adjectivals can be used attributively, directly modifying a noun, or they can be used predicatively, in which case they are preceded by a copula which is usually omitted in the present tense. However, adjectives are attested in a third construction which is actually very common. Adjectivals can occur within adverbial phrases, in which case they are preceded by the adverbializer ā. An example is (46).

---

3A superhigh is commonly realized as low-high rising when preceded by a low tone, see §3.4.2
5.3. Agreement in adjectivals

In the following sections, adjectivals with obligatory mid tone prefixes are dealt with first, followed by adjectivals with non-obligatory mid tone prefixes and the prefix-less modifier do which can be roughly translated as ‘a certain’. Then interrogatives with high and low tone prefixes are dealt with.

5.3.1 Agreement in adjectives

There is a small and closed group of adjectives which describe property concepts (most property concepts are expressed by verbs). Table 5.7 contains a non-exhaustive list of adjectives. See §7.1.4 for a more detailed treatment of adjectives.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>adjective</th>
<th>gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>tsɨŋ</td>
<td>‘big, great, important’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dʒū</td>
<td>‘short’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dʒɨŋ</td>
<td>‘long’, ‘tall’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fyɨŋ</td>
<td>‘new’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kū</td>
<td>‘old’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dzɨŋ</td>
<td>‘good’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bō</td>
<td>‘bad’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bān</td>
<td>‘white’, ‘clear’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yɨl</td>
<td>‘black’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wʊ́l</td>
<td>‘beige’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ɲwǎ</td>
<td>‘multi-coloured’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tsám</td>
<td>‘dirty’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ntʃim</td>
<td>‘thick (for fluids)’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.7: List of adjectives (not exhaustive)

Adjectives can be used attributively (directly modifying a noun) and predicatively (with a copula which is commonly omitted in the present tense). In addition, they are commonly attested in adverbial phrases, preceded by the adverbializer ā. In all these constructions, adjectives take a low tone prefix when they modify a noun of Class 1 or 9 and a syllabic prefix with a mid tone for all other classes. An example of an underived adjective is the word -fyɨŋ ‘new’, see Table 5.8. Like other adjectives, it takes either a low tone prefix (Class 1 and 9) or a syllabic prefix with a mid tone (all other classes).

\[
\begin{array}{ll}
\text{mò } & \text{w-ēn } \text{nò } \text{wù lā } \text{w-5 [ndʒɨm} \\
\text{cl1.man} & \text{cl1-dem.prox subord cl1 do(a).ipfv cl1-rel cl8.things} \\
\text{bī-dzɨŋ } & \text{ā } \text{bī-dʒwè } \text{bī } \text{bē} \\
\text{cl8-good advlz cl8-many exit(b) Abar} \\
\end{array}
\]

‘This man, who has done so many good things, is from Abar.’
Agreement

Table 5.8: Agreement prefixes and tonal alternation in adjectives, illustrated by the adjective -fyɨ̋ŋ 'new'.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>noun class</th>
<th>prefix</th>
<th>example</th>
<th>gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>` -</td>
<td>ŋkʊ̌ŋ fyɨ̋ŋ</td>
<td>‘a new chief’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>bə̄-</td>
<td>ŋkʊ̌ŋ bə̄fyɨ̋ŋ</td>
<td>‘new chiefs’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>wū-</td>
<td>kpān wūfyɨ̋ŋ</td>
<td>‘a new tree’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7,7a</td>
<td>ki-</td>
<td>nɨ́ŋ kīfyɨ̋ŋ</td>
<td>‘a new thing’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8,8a</td>
<td>bī-</td>
<td>ndʒձm bīfyɨ̋ŋ</td>
<td>‘new things’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>` -</td>
<td>dʒǐ fyɨ̋ŋ</td>
<td>‘a new dog’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>yi-</td>
<td>tswān yiżyɨ̋ŋ</td>
<td>‘new trees’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>fi-</td>
<td>mwɪ̌n fifyɨ̋ŋ</td>
<td>‘a new cat’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18,6</td>
<td>mūN-</td>
<td>mbɪ múmfyɨ̋ŋ</td>
<td>‘new palmwine’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examples of adjectives in context are given in (47)-(51). In certain cases, the low tone prefix causes the adjective root to take on a low-high rising tone,\(^4\) as in (48) and (51).

(47) bə̄ jā dzē kō [nɨ́ŋ kī-bō]

Impers Prohib say(b) even Cl7.thing Cl7-bad

‘They shouldn’t even say anything bad.’

(48) nsʊ̄ŋ wū dzē wū lā yē wà, à dī

Cl1.friend Cl1;3SG.Poss say(b) Cl1PP DAT COMP 2SG, 2SG be(b)

[kpē bō]

Cl1.woman Cl1.bad

‘Her friend said to her: you are a bad woman!’

(49) ndʒān dī [mbē bə̄-bō] ō

Mundabli be(b) Cl2.people Cl2-bad EMPH

‘The Mundabli are bad people!’

(50) [dz̃ y-én yī-fyɨ̋ŋ] y-ỳ

Cl10.house Cl10-DEM.PROX Cl10-new Cl10-Det

‘these new houses’

(51) [dʒĩ ɲɡī fyɨ̋ŋ] y-ỳ

Cl9.dog Cl9;1SG.Poss Cl9.new Cl9-Det

‘my new dog’

\(^4\)The change from superhigh to low-high rising can be explained by a regular process in which a low tone spreads right onto a following superhigh syllable, causing a rise on that syllable, see §3.4.2. However, I do not have an explanation for the change from a mid to a rising tone, as in bō ‘bad’ in (48).
5.3. Agreement in adjectivals

The tone of the adjectives bō ‘bad’ and fyĩ̋ŋ ‘new’ is rising in (48) and (51) where they modify a Class 1 and a Class 9 noun, respectively. When the adjective modifies a noun of any other class, it bears a different tone: a mid tone for bō ‘bad’ and a superhigh tone for fyĩ̋ŋ ‘new’. While the change of a superhigh to a rising tone following a low tone is a regular process, the change from mid to rising is not.

5.3.2 The quantifier -lō ‘all’

Like the other adjectivals described so far, the quantifier -lō ‘all’ (also ‘every’ or ‘whole’) takes a tonal agreement prefix for Class 1 and 9 and a mid tone syllabic prefix for all other classes, see Table 5.9. See §5.3 for reasons why I refer to quantifiers as adjectivals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>noun class</th>
<th>prefix</th>
<th>example</th>
<th>gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>mɔ̀ lō</td>
<td>‘a whole person’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>bō-</td>
<td>mbɛ̄ bɛ̄lō</td>
<td>‘all people’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>wū-</td>
<td>kpān wūlō</td>
<td>‘a whole tree’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>yi-</td>
<td>tswān yilō</td>
<td>‘all trees’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7,7a</td>
<td>k̂i-</td>
<td>yĩ̋ŋ kilō</td>
<td>‘a egg’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8,8a</td>
<td>bí-</td>
<td>yĩ̋ŋ bilō</td>
<td>‘all eggs’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>dʒũ̍ lō</td>
<td>‘a whole goat’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>fi-</td>
<td>mwin filō</td>
<td>‘a whole cat’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18,6</td>
<td>mũN-</td>
<td>mbĩ mũnlō</td>
<td>‘the whole palmwine’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.9: Agreement prefixes and tonal alternation in the quantifier -lō ‘all’

As Table 5.9 shows, the root lō, which otherwise bears a mid tone, has a low-high rising tone when it modifies a Class 1 or a Class 9 noun. Unlike the change from superhigh to rising, the change from a mid tone to a rising tone is not a regular process and cannot be accounted for by the presence of a preceding low tone.

(52) tõ bí-lō à mwē më m-mwē
cL7/8.day Cl8-all 2SG.grieve(a) only INF-grieve(a)

‘Every day you are only sad.’

In fact, this and other modifiers are rarely attested directly modifying a noun. More frequently, they are preceded by the particle a which generally precedes adverbial phrases. In this case, they do not belong to the same noun phrase as the noun; however, they still agree with it in noun class. The use of an adverbial phrase suggests some degree of definiteness. An example is (53).
And they will be begging things from us, the Mundabli, because they [the Mundabli] will feed all the people in this oil palm area.

5.3.3 The quantifier -dʒwē ‘a lot of’

Just like lō ‘all’, the quantifier -dʒwē ‘a lot of’ (also ‘much’ or ‘many’) takes a tonal agreement prefix for Class 1 and 9 and a mid tone syllabic prefix for all other classes, see Table 5.10.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>noun class</th>
<th>prefix</th>
<th>example</th>
<th>gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><code>-</code></td>
<td>ŋgm dʒwē</td>
<td>‘a lot of plantain’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>bā-</td>
<td>tʃē bōdʒwē</td>
<td>‘many women’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>wū-</td>
<td>kpe wūdʒwē</td>
<td>‘a lot of pot’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7,7a</td>
<td>ki-</td>
<td>moŋ kidʒwē</td>
<td>‘a lot of liver’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8,8a</td>
<td>bi-</td>
<td>bō bōdʒwē</td>
<td>‘many bags’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td><code>-</code></td>
<td>dʒʊ dʒwē</td>
<td>‘a lot of meat’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>yi-</td>
<td>tswān yīdʒwē</td>
<td>‘many trees’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>fi-</td>
<td>ntʃē fidʒwē</td>
<td>‘a lot of clay pot’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18,6</td>
<td>mūN-</td>
<td>ŋkā mǔɲdʒwē</td>
<td>‘a lot of corn beer’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.10: Agreement prefixes and tonal alternation in the quantifier -dʒwē ‘a lot of’

As Table 5.10 shows, the root dʒwē, which otherwise bears a mid tone, has a low-high rising tone when it modifies a Class 1 or a Class 9 noun (just like lō ‘all’). As pointed out in §5.3.2, the change from a mid tone to a rising tone is not a regular process and an explanation why this change is attested with several adjectivals has yet to be found. Examples of the use of dʒwē are given in (54), (55) and (56).

(54) wū kwē ḫū ā [mū-dāntʃēn
cl1 return_from_bush(c) come(b) com cl18-Dantshen_berry
mūŋ-dʒwē]
cl18-many

‘She came home with lots of little Dantshen berries.’
5.3. Agreement in adjectivals

(55) bikɔ [kpɔ wǔ-dʒwē] dǐ ná, wǔ dǐ ā
because cl3/7a.money cl7a-much be(b) as cl7a be(b) com
sātān wǔ yǔ ā mò̀-mò̀
cl1/2.satan cl7a.pp behind adlvz one-red

‘Because a lot of money is like that, it always has plenty of devils
behind it.’

(56) ká bɔ̀-ɲųfũ-ä-mān tʃū kɔŋ kwó, tʃū kɔŋ
cond cl2-N.-com-M. come(b) hunt(c) enter(c), come(b) hunt(c)
kwó tʃū sɔ̀ bǔŋmù mī ā [mbɛ̀ bɔ̀-dʒwē b-3]
enter(c) come(b) first B. 1SG COM CL2.people cl2-many cl2-det

‘When Nyungfu-a-Man and his associates came walking and met up,
Bungmu first came to meet me with those many people.’

5.3.4 The quantifier -ɲtʃɪ́ŋ ‘few’

The quantifier -ɲtʃɪ́ŋ ‘few’ (also ‘small’ or ‘a little’ and sometimes realized as
-ɲtʃīn with final n) takes a mid tone syllabic prefix for all classes except for
Class 1 and 9, just like the adjectivals described above. However, the existence
of a low tone prefix or a lowering of some sort for Class 1 and 9 cannot be
ascertained because the tone of the root is the same for all classes. The root
tʃīn ‘small’ bears a high tone, no matter which noun it modifies, see Table
5.11.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>noun class</th>
<th>prefix</th>
<th>example</th>
<th>gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><code>-</code></td>
<td>mɔ̀ ɲtʃɪ́ŋ</td>
<td>‘a small person’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>bɔ̀-</td>
<td>ɲgōm (bɔ̀)ɲtʃɪ́ŋ</td>
<td>‘a few plantains’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>wǔ-</td>
<td>yɪ̀ŋʃī wũntʃɪ́ŋ</td>
<td>‘a small egg’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7,7a</td>
<td>yɪ-</td>
<td>dʒǔ yɪntʃɪ́ŋ</td>
<td>‘small goats’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8,8a</td>
<td>bɔ̀-</td>
<td>ndʒǔm bɪntʃɪ́ŋ</td>
<td>‘small things’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td><code>-</code></td>
<td>dʒǔ ɲtʃɪ́n</td>
<td>‘a small goat’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>fi-</td>
<td>mwn fiɲtʃɪ́ŋ</td>
<td>‘a small cat’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18,6</td>
<td>mʊN-</td>
<td>mwn mʊntʃɪ́ŋ</td>
<td>‘small cats’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.11: Agreement prefixes on -ɲtʃɪ́ŋ ‘a few’, ‘a bit’, ‘a little’

While a tone change from high to rising (or anything else) after a low tone
is not expected, the same is the case for the mid tone roots described above,
which are realized with a rising tone when they modify a Class 1 or Class 9
noun. Examples of ntʃɪ́n ‘few’ are provided in (57) and (58).

5The VSO word order in the main clause expresses constituent focus on Bungmu; see Chapter
14 for more on information structure.
(57) ká wù dʒè kond wù là, kond kí-mán
cond CL1 cook(a) even CL8a.fufu CL8a-DET CL1PF DAT even CL7-what
dō, ká wù yí wù yí wù yí, wù mǔ
remain(b) cond CL1 eat(b) CL1 eat(b) CL1 eat(b) CL1 take(a)
jú [nsâm mʊ-ɲtʃín m-ʃ], wù fō gàn
come(b) CL19.crumb CL19-small CL19-DET CL1 give(b) go(a)
jwɔ́m b-ʃ lá
CL2.children CL2-DET DAT

′When she cooks, even fufu, for herself, even whatever [small thing] remains, when she eats, she eats and eats, she takes [only] small crumbs and gives them to the children.′

(58) gām kú nō wù dī w-ʃ [kwē ā
Wum village.LOC SUBORD CL1 be(b) CL1-REL CL3/7a.village ADVLZ
fi-ɲtʃín], kī ā ɲtʃin wǎ
CL18-small CL7 NEG be_far(a) NEG

′Wum, which is a small town, it is not far.′

5.3.5 The nominal modifier -dzú ‘other’, ‘certain’

In elicitation, forms with and without segmental agreement prefixes were provided for dzú ‘other’, ‘certain’ (also ‘some’). However, in unelicited examples, dzú generally takes an agreement prefix. The pattern is the same as for other adjectivals, with a purely tonal (low-tone) prefix for Class 1 and 9 and syllabic mid-tone prefixes for the other classes. Whereas in Class 1 and 9, the stem bears a mid tone, for the other classes, it bears a high tone, whether the prefix is present or not; see Table 5.12.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>noun class</th>
<th>prefix</th>
<th>example</th>
<th>gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>ŋgōm dzú</td>
<td>a certain/another plantain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>bā-</td>
<td>ŋgōm (bā)dzú</td>
<td>‘certain/other plantains’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>wū-</td>
<td>kpē (wū)dzú</td>
<td>‘a certain/other pot’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>yī-</td>
<td>tsē (yī)dzú</td>
<td>‘certain/other pots’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7,7a</td>
<td>ki-</td>
<td>yĩ́ŋ (ki)dzú</td>
<td>‘certain/other eggs’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8,8a</td>
<td>bī-</td>
<td>mó̃ (bī)dzú</td>
<td>‘certain/other livers’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>`-</td>
<td>sō dzú</td>
<td>‘certain/other meat’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>fī-</td>
<td>mwǐn (fī)dzú</td>
<td>‘a certain/another clay pot’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18,6</td>
<td>mǔN-</td>
<td>mwǐn (mǔN)dzú</td>
<td>‘certain/other cats’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.12: Agreement prefixes on the modifier -dzú ‘certain’, ‘other’

6The language spoken in Wum is Aghem. The name Aghem is also sometimes used to refer to the town.
Examples (59)-(61) are taken from natural texts. When dzú modifies a Class 1 noun, it takes on a mid tone, as in (59). For classes other than Class 1 or 9, the stem takes a mid-tone syllabic prefix and retains its high stem tone, as in (60) and (61).

(59) [kpé dzú] kɔ̀ dì̄ fin
   cl1.woman cl1.certain pɔ̀ be(b) there

    ‘There once was a woman.’

(60) ndtʊŋkwɪn w-ɔ́ ywó gàn nɪm ʒ̃ [kpān wʊ́-dzú]
   cl1/2.owl cl2-det run(c) go(a) sit(a) go_down(a) cl3.tree cl3-other wɔ́ on

    ‘The owl went and sat down on another tree.’

(61) [dzɔ́ yí-dzú  y-ɔ́] kɔ̀ bɔ̀ m-bɔ̀,
   cl10.houses cl10-other cl10-det pɔ̀ burn(b) inf-burn(b)
   y-ɛ́n tā kwà  dì̄ n̠-kwà
   cl10-dem.prox ver.foc break(a) be(b) inf-break(a)

    ‘The other houses burnt down, these ones broke.’

5.3.6 The nominal modifier -dóm ‘some’

Just like for dzú, forms with and without agreement prefixes were also given in elicitation for -dóm ‘some’ (also ‘other’ or ‘any’); see Table 5.13.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>noun class</th>
<th>prefix</th>
<th>example</th>
<th>gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>ṇgóm dó́m</td>
<td>‘some/any plantain’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>bá-</td>
<td>ṇgóm (bá)dóm</td>
<td>‘some/any plantains’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>wʊ̀-</td>
<td>kpé (wʊ́)dóm</td>
<td>‘some/any pot’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7,7a</td>
<td>kí-</td>
<td>yɪ̀ŋfi (kí)dóm</td>
<td>‘some/any eggs’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8,8a</td>
<td>bi-</td>
<td>mó̀ (bi)dóm</td>
<td>‘some/any livers’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>s̀ dó́m</td>
<td>‘some/any meat’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>yí-</td>
<td>tʃ̀ hɪ́m (yí)dóm</td>
<td>‘some/any pots’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>fí-</td>
<td>mwin (fí)dóm</td>
<td>‘some/any clay pot’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>mʊN-</td>
<td>mwin (mʊ́N)dóm</td>
<td>‘some/any cats’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.13: Agreement prefixes on -dóm ‘some’, ‘any’, ‘other’

When an agreement prefix is present, it takes the most common form of adjectival agreement with a zero (or tonal) prefix for Class 1 and 9 and a mid-tone syllabic prefix for the other classes. The tone of dó́m is always high, even in Class 1 and 9. Thus, it behaves like -ntf̩ m̩ ‘small’ which also retains its tone,
Agreement

no matter which noun it modifies. However, spontaneous text examples generally do not show agreement, see (62) and (63). If dó̄m did show agreement, the form would be ki-dó̄m in both examples, but it doesn’t.

(62) [tō̄ dó̄m] là̄ bō̂ yē n-dzūŋ, bō̂ ă cl7/8.day some dat cl2 start(a) inf-quarrel(c) cl2 com
neighbour wū cl1.neighbour cl1;3sg.poss

‘One day they started quarrelling, she and her neighbour.’

(63) n=sēn bū mā ă, fā̂ dī̂ [nī̂ŋ dó̄m] ā fā̂ plan 1sg=then ask(b) cs.quot q, p1 be(b) cl7.thing some 2sg p1 plan ā quot.q

‘I then asked [him]: Is it something that you planned?’

5.3.7 The nominal modifier dó̄ ‘certain’

The adjective-like dó̄ ‘certain’, although similar in usage and meaning to -dzú and -dó̄m, does not agree with the noun it modifies, see e.g. (64). It simply consists of the stem dó̄ which never changes and does not take an agreement prefix. If dó̄ did show agreement, the expected form in (64) would be kidó̄, but this is ungrammatical.

(64) n=lyā̂ ná f-ān, n=dā̂ wū wū̂ yḕ 1sg=go.to.bush(a).ipfv as prox-here 1sg=f1;neg hear(b) neg comp bēn fā̂ mú̂ jū̂ kpē̂ tsyē̂ w-ēn cl2.pl p1 take(a) cl3.pot cl1.father.2poss cl3-dem.prox w-ō̂ wū̂ kwē̂ w-ō̂ yē̂ bēn lā [nī̂ŋ dó̄] tʃī̂n cl3-that cl3-home cl3-that comp 2pl do(a) cl7.thing certain there mī̂ in

‘As I am going to the bush, I don’t want to hear [when I come back] that you have taken your father’s traditional pot in order to do something in it.’

5.3.8 The interrogative quantifier -mīŋ ‘how much’, ‘how many’

In elicitation, the interrogative quantifier -mīŋ ‘how much’/‘how many’ was often given without an agreement prefix. However, in unelicited text examples, it usually takes an agreement marker. When it modifies a Class 1 or a
Class 9 noun, mɨŋ takes a zero (or tonal) prefix. For all other classes, the prefix is syllabic and bears a high tone (not a mid tone, like in the adjectivals treated so far). It is unclear whether there is a tonal prefix in Class 1 and 9 or not because the prefix has no effect on the tone of the root mɨŋ.

Examples (65) and (66) show how mɨŋ agrees with Class 2 and Class 7a, respectively. I have not found any unelicited example in which mɨŋ is used attributively.

(65) ȁʔà, mbɛ d séjour bɔ̀ kpà f-án, wù bɛŋ ye INTERJ CL2.people many CL2 abound(b?) PROX-here CL1 call(a) COMP [bɔ̄-mɨŋ] be(b) CL2.how_many

‘People, too many of them - she is saying that [they] are how many?’

(66) bɛ̀ ɡān yɨŋ-fi k-ɔ̀, kî dî count(a) go(a) CL3/7a.egg-CL9/10.chicken CL7a-DET CL7a be(b) [kî-mɨŋ] CL7a.how_many

‘Count those eggs! How many are they?’

5.3.9 The selective interrogative mwān ‘which’

The selective interrogative -mwān ‘which’ takes a zero (or tonal) prefix in Class 1 and 9, and a syllabic prefix with a low tone in all other classes. It is unclear whether there is a tonal prefix in Class 1 and 9 or not. The prefix has no effect on the tone of the root -mwān. It is unusual to have a low tone on agreement prefixes for noun classes other than Class 1 and 9.

Examples of the use of mwān are given in (67)–(69). Example (67) shows the lack of a segmental prefix when mwān modifies a Class 9 noun. Examples (68) and (69) show the low-toned prefix attested in noun classes other than Class 1 and 9.

(67) dî [siŋ mwān y-3] à lɛ̀ y-3 ɲgɔ́ be ɛ CL9.knife CL9.which CL9-DET 2SG do(a).IPFV CL9-REL upon

‘Which knife do you use?’ (lit.: It is which knife that you do [it] with?)

(68) [ʃaŋ yi-mwān y-3] CL10.sand CL10-which CL10-DET

‘Which sand?’

(69) [fɔ̀ wù-mwān w-3] CL3.head CL3-which CL3-DET

‘Which head?’
In elicitation, m̃mwān was given as an alternative form which can be used for all noun classes. This form does not agree with the noun class of the modified noun.

5.4 Agreement in numerals

When they modify a noun, numerals from one to nine\(^7\) take syllabic agreement prefixes, which are nearly identical in shape with the third person personal pronouns; see Table 5.14.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>noun class</th>
<th>prefix</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>wù-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>bɔ̋-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>wù-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7,7a</td>
<td>kĩ-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8,8a</td>
<td>bĩ-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>yĩ-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>yĩ-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>fĩ-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18,6</td>
<td>mũN-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.14: Numeral agreement prefixes

The agreement prefixes for Class 1 and 9 bear a low tone, while all others bear a superhigh tone. The root m̃wo ‘one’ bears a low tone in Class 1 and 9 and a high tone in all other noun classes. Table 5.15 contains an overview of the numerals ‘one’ to ‘four’ in all noun classes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>noun class</th>
<th>prefix</th>
<th>‘one’</th>
<th>‘two’</th>
<th>‘three’</th>
<th>‘four’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>wù-</td>
<td>wù-mwɔ̀</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>bɔ̋-/bɔ́-</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>bɔ̋-fyɛ</td>
<td>bɔ̋-tɔ́</td>
<td>bɔ̋-ǹdɛ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>wù-</td>
<td>wù-mwɔ̀</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7,7a</td>
<td>kĩ-</td>
<td>kĩ-mō</td>
<td>kĩ-fyɛ</td>
<td>kĩ-tɔ́</td>
<td>kĩ-ǹdɛ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>bĩ-</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>bĩ-fyɛ</td>
<td>bĩ-tɔ́</td>
<td>bĩ-ǹdɛ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>yĩ-</td>
<td>yĩ-mwɔ̀</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>yĩ-</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>yĩ-fyɛ</td>
<td>yĩ-tsɔ́</td>
<td>yĩ-ǹdɛ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>fĩ-</td>
<td>fĩ-mwɔ́</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>mũ(N)-</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>mũ-ʃye</td>
<td>mũn-tɔ́</td>
<td>mũ-ǹdɛ</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.15: Noun class agreement in numerals

\(^7\)For more on numerals including higher numerals, see §7.1.5.
5.4. Agreement in numerals

As Table 5.15 shows, the Class 10 prefix causes palatalization of root-initial \( f \) and \( t \).\(^7\) The shape of the root for ‘two’ changes from \(-fyē\) to \(-fyē\), as in \( y̆f̆fyē\) and shape of the root for ‘three’ changes from \(-tō\) to \(-tsō\). The numeral prefix is the only agreement prefix which such a process is attested for, although the Class 3/10 stem alternation must have a similar origin.\(^9\) This morphophonological process is treated in detail in §3.3.3.

When the numeral modifies a noun of Class 7 or 7a a root-change is also attested. In this case, the numeral root \( mwō \) ‘one’ is realized as \( mq \). As pharyngealization is a by-product of the historical loss of a final velar (or glottal) stop, I suspect that the root-change in the numeral for ‘one’ may be due to the influence of a former Class 7 (or 7a) suffix -k on the numeral root (cf. §3.3.4).

Example (70) contains instances of two different numbers and noun classes: \( wū-mwō \) ‘one’ (cl1) and \( bō-fye\) ‘two’ (cl2). The tone of the Class 1 (and 9, see (71)) prefix is lower, as is generally the case. Example (71) also contains two examples of numerals modifying nouns. The first, \( yī-mwō \) ‘one’ shows the low tone typical for Class 9, the second example, \( bō-tō \) shows an unexpected tone on the prefix. While we would expect a superhigh tone, the tone on the prefix is rising. This rise may be caused by a low tone on the preceding noun \( mbē \) ‘people’, which is realized \( mbē \) in isolation.

\begin{verbatim}
(70) bō kà dī [bō-fye], [wān mǎn Ś wū-mwō] āmī [wān cl2 pō be(b) cl2-two cl1.child cl1.man cl1-one and cl1.child kpē wū-mwō] cl1.woman cl1-one

‘They were two, one boy and one girl.’
\end{verbatim}

\begin{verbatim}
(71) [sī yī-mwō] ánā [mbē bō-tō] bī fī cl9/10.day cl9-one like_that cl2.people cl2-three exit(b) pass(b) gān go(a)

‘On one day like that, three people die.’
\end{verbatim}

\( ^7f \) is realized as \( ŋ \) and \( t \) changes to \( ts \) after the Class 10 prefix \( yī-\). This process does not exactly fit the common pattern of palatalization. However, it is unclear what determines the precise consonant alternations.

\( ^9 \)Palatalization is also attested in the few irregular Gender 3/10 nominal roots which show initial consonant mutation (see §3.3.2 and §4.3.6). However, the prefixes that must have originally caused palatalization in those Class 10 nouns which have their singular in Class 3, have disappeared.
5.5 Overview of agreement patterns

This section summarizes the previous sections, giving an overview of agreement patterns and the similarities and differences between them. Table 5.16 gives an overview of the regular agreement patterns, using examples from different types of noun modifiers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>noun class</th>
<th>adjectives (here: ‘new’)</th>
<th>demonstratives (here: distal)</th>
<th>numerals (here: ‘one’ and ‘two’)</th>
<th>indep. pronouns (here: preverbal form)</th>
<th>3sg.poss pronouns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>fyɨŋ</td>
<td>wɔ̄</td>
<td>wùmwɔ̀</td>
<td>wù</td>
<td>wù</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>bəfyɨŋ</td>
<td>bɔ́</td>
<td>bɔ̃fye᷇</td>
<td>bɔ̃</td>
<td>bɔ̃</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>wúfyɨŋ</td>
<td>wó</td>
<td>wùmwɔ́</td>
<td>wù</td>
<td>wù</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7,7a</td>
<td>kîfyɨŋ</td>
<td>kɔ́</td>
<td>kîmó̤</td>
<td>kî</td>
<td>kî</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8,8a</td>
<td>bîfyɨŋ</td>
<td>bɔ̃</td>
<td>bîfyê</td>
<td>bî</td>
<td>bî</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>fyɨŋ</td>
<td>yɔ̄</td>
<td>yîmwɔ̀</td>
<td>yî</td>
<td>yî</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>yîfyɨŋ</td>
<td>yɔ̇</td>
<td>yi̋ʃye᷇</td>
<td>yî</td>
<td>yî</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>fîfyɨŋ</td>
<td>fɔ̇</td>
<td>fîmwɔ́</td>
<td>fî</td>
<td>fî</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18,6</td>
<td>mûmfyɨŋ</td>
<td>mɔ̇</td>
<td>mûmfyê</td>
<td>mû</td>
<td>mû</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.16: Overview of agreement patterns, including prefixes and tonal changes, exemplified by different types of noun modifiers

Adjectives and numerals take syllabic agreement prefixes, but they differ in several respects. First of all, adjectives have no segmental prefixes for Class 1 and 9. Instead, the stem tone is commonly lower when the adjective agrees with a Class 1 or a Class 9 noun. Whether this is due to a low tone prefix is still unclear (see discussion below). The same agreement pattern is attested with other adjectivals, such as the quantifiers -lō ‘all’, -dʒwē ‘a lot of’. However, there is no simple explanation for the tonal alternations attested in other adjectivals.

Demonstratives, with their vowel-initial roots, take segmental agreement prefixes. As with the other nominal modifiers, the stem tone is generally lower when a demonstrative modifies a noun of Class 1 or Class 9, than when it modifies a noun of another noun class. Finally, both personal and possessive pronouns consist of an agreement prefix only. In their preverbal form, the pronouns for Class 1 and 9 bear a low tone, while the others bear a mid tone, except for the 3pl or Class 2 pronoun which bears a superhigh tone. In non-preverbal position, the 3pl/Class 2 pronoun has the same tone as the other non-Class 1/9 pronouns. Possessive pronouns bear a mid tone for Class 1 and 9 and a superhigh tone for all other classes.
Most of the tonal stem alternations between nominal modifiers of Class 1 and 9 nouns on the one hand, and nouns of other classes on the other, cannot be accounted for by the effect of tonal prefixes. Given the existence of a general process called ‘Low tone spread’ (see §3.4.2), which changes a superhigh to a low-high rising tone after a low tone, the stem change from underlying *fyɨŋ ‘new’ to *fyɨŋ could be accounted for by the existence of a low tone prefix for Class 1 and 9. However, the change from high to mid, as attested in the quantifier -ntʃɪ́ŋ ‘few’ (see §5.3.4) and in demonstratives, is not a regular process. Neither is the change from mid to rising, as attested in the quantifiers -lō ‘all’ and -dʒwê ‘a lot of’ (see §5.3.2 and 5.3.3, respectively). For the other modifiers, the tonal opposition between Class 1 and 9 and the other noun classes cannot simply be accounted for by the existence of tonal prefixes, either. Thus, neither the change from mid to low in personal pronouns nor the change from superhigh to mid in possessive pronouns can be accounted for at this point.

5.6 Gender conflict resolution

Gender conflict arises when two nominals belonging to different genders (or noun class pairings) are conjoined, so that the resulting NP triggers agreement. Different languages use different strategies to resolve this problem. As agreement in Mundabli is restricted to the noun phrase, gender conflict can only arise within the noun phrase, as well.

In principle, there are two possible cases in which gender conflict could arise in Mundabli: (a) when a noun modifier modifies a conjunction of nominals belonging to different genders or (b) when a conjunction of nominals belonging to different genders is represented by a pronoun. In fact, I have not found a single example of a modifier modifying a conjunction of nouns or noun phrases of different genders. Instead each member of the conjunction tends to have its own modifier.

However, it is possible for conjunctions of nouns of different genders to be represented by a single pronoun, even though this is rarely the case in spontaneous speech. Therefore, this discussion will be restricted to gender-conflict in pronouns.

In a (symmetrical) conjunction of nominals, two nominals are connected with the conjunction *āmɨ̀ (see (72) and (73)). In these and the following examples, the conjunction is surrounded by square brackets.

(72) bɔ̋ kà dì bɔ̋-fyē, [wān mɔ̀nɔ̄ wù-mwò *āmɨ̀ wān kpē wù-mwò] [cl2 v3 be(b) cl2-two cl1.child cl1.man cl1-one and cl1.child cl1.woman cl1-one]

‘They were two - one boy and one girl.’
Agreement

(73) wù dzé ăãá, yë m=búŋ [mfɔ̀ 1/2.slave 1;1.sg.poss ŋgî kpé āmî mfɔ̀ 1/2.slave 1;1.sg.poss mòn5]

cl1.female and cl1/2.slave cl1;1.sg.poss cl1.male

‘She said: Wow! I have picked my slave boy and my slave girl.’

However, when two nominals of different genders are involved, a comitative construction is preferred, with the second nominal occurring within a comitative phrase headed by the comitative marker ā ‘with’, as in (74).

(74) [sɔ̀ 9.meat y-ɔ̄ 9-det ā ɲām b-ɔ́]

cl9.meat cl9-det comp cl8a.fufu cl8a-det

‘the meat with the fufu’

The use of the comitative construction is more appropriate than the symmetrical construction when referring to nouns of different genders. Whereas Maho (1999: 114) lists the comitative construction as one means to avoid gender conflict by avoiding a conjunction, in Mundabli the use of the comitative construction does not resolve gender conflict. While, in this asymmetrical construction, the first nominal forms the head of the whole noun phrase, agreement is not (always) with the head noun, as shown in (75) where a Class 2 (or 3pl) pronoun represents the conjunction of a Class 1 and a Class 9 noun.

Instead, the choice of a pronoun representing a comitative construction depends on animacy. When nouns referring to humans and non-human animates are conjoined, they are represented by a Class 2 pronoun; see (75). Conjunctions of humans and non-animates are not attested in spontaneous speech.

(75) [mɔ̀ 1.man ā com dʒǔ 9.goat 9-ɔ̄]

cl1.man comp cl9.goat cl9-DET 1SG = F1 see(a) cl2pp.dat

‘The man with the goat, I saw them.’

Comitative constructions involving two (or more) nouns referring to inanimate objects are usually represented by a Class 8 pronoun, as shown in (76).

(76) a. sɔ̀ 9.meat y-ɔ̄ ɲām b-ɔ́, n=dǐf 1.f 1.eat(b) cl8

cl9.meat cl9-det comp cl8a.fufu cl8a-det 1SG = F1 eat(b) cl8

‘The meat with the fufu, I will eat them.’

b. sɔ̀ 9.meat y-ɔ̄ 1.5k3 b-ɔ́, n=dǐf 1.f 1.eat(b) bǐ cl8

cl9.meat cl9-det comp cl8a.cassava cl8a-det 1SG = F1 eat(b) cl8

‘The meat with the cassava, I will eat them.’
5.6. Gender conflict resolution

c. sò y-5 ã d3wö, n = dĩ yí bĩ
   cl.9.meat cl.9.det com cl.1/2.ŋkɛnɛŋkɛnɛ 1SG = f1 eat(b) cl.8
   □‘The meat with the ŋkɛnɛŋkɛnɛ,¹⁰ I will eat them.’

A comitative construction involving two or more nominals, of which at least one refers to an animal (or other non-human animate) can be represented either by a Class 8 pronoun or by a Class 2 pronoun; see (77).

(77) a. n = dĩ lá kpi yī
   1SG = f1 make(a) die(b) cl.10
   □‘I will kill them [goats].’

b. n = dĩ lá kpi mū
   1SG = f1 make(a) die(b) cl.18a
   □‘I will kill them [cats].’

c. n = dĩ lá kpi b5
   1SG = f1 make(a) die(b) cl.2
   □‘I will kill them [goats and cats].’

d. n = dĩ lá kpi bĩ
   1SG = f1 make(a) die(b) cl.8
   □‘I will kill them [goats and cats].’

Examples (77a) and (77b) show the agreement of the nominals themselves when no comitative construction is involved. Examples (77c) and (77d) show the two possibilities that are available when the comitative construction is represented by a pronoun. A comitative construction involving two nominals of different genders, but both with animate referents, can be represented either by a Class 2 pronoun, as in (77c), or by a Class 8 pronoun, as in (77d).

¹⁰The Cameroon Pidgin word ‘ŋkɛnɛŋkɛnɛ’ refers to a soup with a slimy consistency, similar to okra soup.
This chapter deals with pronouns, i.e. forms which replace a noun or, more specifically, a whole noun phrase. While pronouns usually stand on their own, they can also occur in apposition with a noun. They cannot function as noun modifiers. Noun modifiers which also sometimes head a noun phrase, such as e.g. demonstratives, possessive pronouns etc. are treated in Chapter 7. Personal pronouns, which were discussed in §5.1.1 with regard to agreement, are treated here in more detail (§6.1). They make up the greatest part of this chapter. Shorter sections are devoted to the tonal dummy subject (§6.2), the impersonal subject pronoun (§6.3), interrogative pronouns (§6.4) and indefinite pronouns (§6.5).

6.1 Personal pronouns

I use the term 'personal pronouns' to refer to all first, second and third person preverbal and non-preverbal pronouns, including third person pronouns of noun classes other than Class 1 or Class 2. Personal pronouns are morphologically and semantically simple, consisting of a single morpheme and representing nouns with single referents. In Mundabli, first and second person personal pronouns inflect for number while third person pronouns inflect for noun class. Table 6.1 gives an overview of all personal pronouns.

1While earlier accounts, such as Good et al. (2011: 128-129) posited the existence of compound pronouns, I think that the phenomenon can be better described as a phrasal phenomenon, namely inclusory conjunction of pronouns. For details, see §7.2.2.2.
6.1. Personal pronouns

In order to keep things simple, Table 6.1 contains only non-preverbal forms. Mundabli personal pronouns distinguish three forms: a preverbal (\textit{p vb}) form, a non-preverbal (\textit{npvb}) form, and a third form which is used when a pronoun is the object of a postposition (for more on postpositions and postpositional phrases, see §10.2.2 and §11.3). The distinction between so-called preverbal pronouns, which occur in direct preverbal position, and non-preverbal pronouns, which occur elsewhere, is attested in all Yemne-Kimbi languages. As Good et al. (2011: 113) point out, “all the languages of the area show at least a partial distinction between two sets of pronouns [...]. Functionally, the distinction falls roughly along the lines of subject/non-subject pronouns, but subjects can take on the non-preverbal forms in certain contexts (e.g., when they are in focus, which often entails not being immediately preverbal).” Table 6.2 and Table 6.3 show these three forms for all pronouns.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>person</th>
<th>gender</th>
<th>SG</th>
<th>PL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>mɨ̄</td>
<td>bɨ̄</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>wà</td>
<td>bɛ̄n</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>1/2 wù</td>
<td>bɛ̄</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3/10 wū</td>
<td>yǐ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3/7a wū</td>
<td>kɨ̄</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7/8 kɨ̄</td>
<td>bɨ̄</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9/10 yì</td>
<td>yǐ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19/18 fi</td>
<td>mũ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.1: Overview of personal pronouns (non-preverbal forms)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>person</th>
<th>gender</th>
<th>SG</th>
<th>PL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>mɨ̄</td>
<td>bɨ̄</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>wà</td>
<td>bɛ̄n</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>1/2 wù</td>
<td>bɛ̄</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3/10 wū</td>
<td>yǐ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3/7a wū</td>
<td>kɨ̄</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7/8 kɨ̄</td>
<td>bɨ̄</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9/10 yì</td>
<td>yǐ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19/18 fi</td>
<td>mũ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.2: Preverbal, non-preverbal and object of postposition forms for 1st and 2nd person personal pronouns and paired genders
Table 6.3: Preverbal, non-preverbal and object of postposition forms of single gender personal pronouns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>gender</th>
<th>pvb</th>
<th>npvb</th>
<th>pp</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6a</td>
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<tr>
<td>10a</td>
<td>yī</td>
<td>yī</td>
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<tr>
<td>7b</td>
<td>kī</td>
<td>kī</td>
<td>kī</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The following features, which are relatively frequent in the wider area, do not exist in Mundabli: Mundabli has neither logophoric pronouns nor reflexive pronouns. Although logophoric pronouns are common in the wider area (e.g., Aghem (Hyman 1979: 50-51), Noni (Hyman 1981: 15-16) and Bafut (Tamanji 2009: 57-59)), they have not been reported for any of the Yemne-Kimbi languages. Whether a pronoun is used in a logophoric or non-logophoric sense in Mundabli can only be inferred from the context. Thus, a sentence like (78) has two possible interpretations.

(78) wū dzē  yē   wū dî tfú
c1l1 say(b) comp c1l1 f1 come(b)
She, says that she or will come (later today).

Reflexivity is not encoded grammatically. In some contexts in which other languages might use reflexive constructions, Mundabli uses constructions involving the nouns gbə ‘body’, as in (79), or fɔ ‘head’, often in conjunction with a possessive pronoun.

(79) wū jí  gbə  wū
c1l1 rub(c) c1l3.body c1l3;3sg.poss
‘She put on lotion.’ (lit.: She rubbed her body.)

The lack of reflexive pronouns is not surprising as reflexive pronouns are not common in the area. They are neither attested for Noni (Beboyd; Hyman 1981: 18) nor for Bafut (Mbam-Nkam; Tamanji 2009: 57-59, 70-74) or for any of the other Yemne-Kimbi languages.

Furthermore, Mundabli distinguishes neither inclusive and exclusive, nor dual and plural pronouns. However, in Mundabli, inclusive or exclusive meanings are sometimes contained in the semantics of inclusory conjunction constructions. E.g., the inclusory conjunction bī by-ā wā could be translated as ‘you and I’, thus expressing the same reference as a first person dual inclusive pronoun in other languages (see §7.2.2.2 for details).

2The language Naki, on the other hand, which is spoken in lower Fungom but grouped with the Beboyd languages, does have an antilogophoric pronoun (Good et al. 2011: 154).
3An inclusive/exclusive distinction does exist in Noni (Beboyd; Hyman 1981: 15) and Aghem (Ring; Hyman 1979: 47).
6.1. Personal pronouns

6.1.1 Preverbal pronouns

The segmental shape of preverbal pronouns differs from that of non-preverbal pronouns only in the case of the first and second person singular pronoun. Preverbal pronouns take the shape N for the first person singular and à for the second person singular. The corresponding non-preverbal pronouns are mì and wà. The difference between the two forms reflects what Good et al. have observed for all Yemne-Kimbil languages: “[...] Preverbal pronouns tend to be phonologically reduced and, impressionistically, show prosodic dependence on the following verb, while Non-preverbal pronouns tend to be prosodically free.” (Good et al. 2011: 113).

Table 6.4 gives an overview of all preverbal pronouns. The second person singular pronoun à and the Class 1 and Class 9 pronouns wù and yì bear a low tone. The other pronouns bear a mid tone, except for the Class 2 (or third person plural) pronoun bɔ̋ which bears a superhigh tone. There is no simple explanation in terms of floating tones for the tonal difference between preverbal and non-preverbal pronouns. Neither of the two can be derived from the other by referring to regular tonal processes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>person</th>
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<th>SG</th>
<th>PL</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>bì</td>
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<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>à</td>
<td>bën</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>1/2</td>
<td>wù</td>
<td>bɔ̋</td>
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<td>3/10</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3/7a</td>
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<td>fì</td>
<td>mù</td>
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<td>6a</td>
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<td>10a</td>
<td>yì</td>
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<tr>
<td>7b</td>
<td>kì</td>
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</table>

Table 6.4: Preverbal forms of personal pronouns

The first person preverbal pronoun N differs from the other pronouns regarding both its phonological and its syntactic behaviour. It is usually not syllabic and, specifically in negative sentences, its syntactic behaviour is different from that of other pronouns. Instead of preceding the negative marker à like other pronouns do, see (80a) and (80b), the first person preverbal pronoun follows the negative marker, thus directly preceding the first element.

---

4The first person singular pronoun can in rare cases be syllabic, in which case it bears a super-high tone. However, it is not quite clear under which conditions this is the case. This grammar does not contain an example.
Pronouns

of the verbal core (80c). The relevant pronouns in these and the following examples are underlined.

(80)  a. bɔ́  ɑ tʃyê  wɔ́
      cl2  NEG  know(c)  NEG
   ‘He doesn’t know.’

   b. wà  ɑ tʃyê  wɔ́
      2sg  NEG  know(c)  NEG
   ‘You don’t know.’

   c. ɑ  n=tʃyê  wɔ́
      neg  1sg  =know(c)  neg
   ‘I don’t know.’

Examples (81)-(84) contain instances of preverbal pronouns.

(81)  ź,  n=dɨ̀  f-án,  n=kʊ  kʊ pʰi  mĩ
      interj  1sg =be(b)  prox here  1sg  hab  cry(a)  cl9/10.death  1sg  wān
      cl1.child
   ‘Oh! I am here mourning my child’s death.’

(82)  bɪ kʊ  dzɨ́  ɡàn  kyɛ̄n  mĩ
      1pl  cry(a)  walk around(b)  go(a)  cl7/8.soul  in
   ‘We are crying in the soul.’

(83)  wù  sé  dzɛ́  ɑ mɔ̀  mɔ̀
      cl1  be_hot(c)  cl7.mouth  advlz  one  red
   ‘She is very active!’ (lit.: She is very hot in her mouth.)

(84)  bɔ́  dzɨ́  mɛ̀  mǔntù  mĩ mǔntù  mĩ
      cl2  travel(b)  only  cl7/8.car  in  cl7/8.car  in
   ‘They only ever travel by car.’

It is worth noting that second person singular pronouns take a mid tone when they form the subject of an “irrealis clause”, as in (85) and (86). More research is needed to determine the exact nature of this tone change.

(85)  n=dɨ̀  kɔ̀ fɔ̀  dzì  wā  lá  yɛ̀  ɑ  gàn
      1sg =be(b)  nmlz-report(a)  cl9.road  2sg.pp  dat  subord  2sg  go(a)
      dɔ̃  wān  w-ɑ  yɛ̀
      see(a)  cl1.child  cl1-2sg.poss  quot.q

5See Lovegren (2013: pp.91-93) on the ‘irrealis’ category in Mungbam.
6.1. Personal pronouns

‘Can I show you the way to your child?’

(86) Pē ɓɔŋ kɛ̀ gān wù yɛ̀ ní ǹkó byé yɛ̀
P.call(a) return(c) go(a) cl1.comp cl1.mother N. B. comp
yá tʃú ā tʃú mù mù mù mbí
go_up(c) come(b) 2sg.come(b) take(a) drink(b) cl6.palm_wine

‘Pe called her to come back: Mother of Ngko of Bie! You should come and drink your wine.’

6.1.2 Non-preverbal pronouns

Only the first and second person singular non-preverbal pronoun differ segmentally from the respective preverbal pronouns. Table 6.5 gives an overview of all non-preverbal pronouns. Like in the preverbal forms, the second person singular pronoun and the Class 1 and Class 9 pronoun bear a low tone and the other non-third person pronouns (first person singular and plural and second person plural) bear a mid tone. Unlike the respective preverbal pronouns, all other non-preverbal (third person) pronouns bear a superhigh tone.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>person</th>
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<th>pl</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>bì</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>wà</td>
<td>bɛ̀</td>
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<td>1/2</td>
<td>wù</td>
<td>bǝ́</td>
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<td>3/10</td>
<td>wù</td>
<td>yì̀</td>
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<td>7b</td>
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</table>

Table 6.5: Non-preverbal forms of personal pronouns

Examples (87)-(90) show non-preverbal pronouns in context. The non-preverbal pronouns in the examples are underlined.

(87) yì̀ gàn tsè mì̀ ā ntsìm mù-ŋ-gè–ŋ-gè
    comp go(a) find(a) 1sg.com cl6.soil cl6-N-be_red(a)–red

‘...: Go and find me some red soil!’

6Pe is the short form for ‘Petrus’.
Pronouns

(88) tó ə́ kɔ́ dì ỳɛ́ bɔ̀ kà ɓú sɔ̀ wù ąká
there p3 be(b) comp impers p3 give_birth(c) first cl.1 like
‘If they had born him first instead of...’

(89) ká bɔ̀ kɔ̀ mǔ kpān, wù tsú bɔ̀
cond cl.2 p3 drink(b) be_full(b) cl.1 hit(b) cl.2
‘When they had drunk enough, he beat them.’

(90) à mǐ tɛ́n wù kyà mǐ
2sg consec dry(c) cl.3 cl.9.basket in
‘and then you dry it [the soaked corn] in a basket.’

6.1.3 Pronouns as objects of the comitative preposition ā

All third person pronouns which normally bear a superhigh tone in non-preverbal position, i.e. all third person pronouns of classes other than Class 1 and 9, are realized with a LH rising tone when they are the object of a comitative preposition, as e.g. in (91).

(91) wù gān [ā bɔ̀] dʒwō
3sg go(a) com cl.2 cl.1/2.water_place
‘[and] he went with them to the stream.’

Pronouns with low tones retain their tones after the comitative preposition and nouns generally don’t change their tone patterns. It is possible that the underlying tone pattern of the comitative preposition ā is in fact ML. The falling tone ML is commonly pronounced like a mid tone when it occurs in non-final position. A floating low, on the other hand, docks to the right, turning a subsequent superhigh tone into a LH rising tone, cf. §3.4.2. For more on the comitative construction, see §10.2.1.1 and §11.3.3.

6.1.4 Pronouns as objects of postpositions

Table 6.6 shows the form of pronouns when they are the object of a postposition. Segmentally, they are identical with the non-preverbal pronouns, but their tones differ. The Class 2 (or third person plural) pronoun is realized bɔ̀ with a low/high rising tone and all other pronouns bear a high tone when headed by a postposition. Thus, the distinction between Class 1 and Class 3/3a and the distinction between Class 9 and Class 10/10a are neutralized when the pronoun is the object of a postposition.

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7While the speaker was trying to come up with the name, the listener intervened: “Cypren”.
### Table 6.6: Forms of personal pronouns when they are the object of a postposition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>person</th>
<th>gender</th>
<th>SG</th>
<th>PL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>mɨ́</td>
<td>bɪ́</td>
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<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>wá</td>
<td>bɛ́n</td>
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<td>1/2</td>
<td>wú</td>
<td>bɔ́</td>
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<td>3/10</td>
<td>wú</td>
<td>yí</td>
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<td>fí</td>
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<td>kí</td>
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</table>

Examples (92)-(96) contain various instances of pronouns which are the object of a postposition. Postpositional phrases in the examples are enclosed in square brackets.

(92)  wú fɔ̃ tʃù [mí lǎ], yɛ̀ lʊ̀ŋ b-ɔ́

CL1 tell(a).IPFV come(b).IPFV 1SG.PP DAT COMP CL8.suffering CL8-DET

yí nɪm tɪ mɪ
eat(b).IPFV sit(a).IPFV surprisingly 1SG

'She told me: I am suffering.'

(93)  bɔ̀ fɔ̃ tʃù [bɪ́ lǎ] yɛ̀ bɔ́ tsè

CL2 tell(a).IPFV come(b).IPFV 1PL.PP DAT COMP CL2 search(a)
dᴢì gàn kpɔ̀
walk_around(b) go(a) CL3/7a.money

'They are telling us that they are searching for money.'

(94)  à bɔ̀ŋ gàn kpé (é), wù dźé tʃù

2SG call(a) go(a) CL1.woman INTERJ CL1 say(b).IPFV come(b).IPFV

[wá lǎ] yɛ̀ (o) kpɔ̀ wū dɪ mɛ̀
2SG.PP DAT COMP INTERJ CL3/7a.money CL3;3SG.POSS be(b) only
kām bĩ-kpɔ̀n, bɔ̃
CL7/8.thousand CL8-five CL1/2.friend

'If you call a woman, she will tell you that her price is always 5000 francs, my friend.'
Pronouns

(95) nsʊ̄ŋ wū dzé [wú lā] yě wà, à dì
c1.1.friend c1.1;3sg.poss say(b) c1.1pp dat comp 2sg, 2sg be(b)
kpé bọ
c1.1.woman c1.1.bad

‘Her friend said to her: You are a bad woman!’

(96) bə̄ dzé gàn [bə̄ lā] yě bān bọ ā
impers say(b) go(a) cl2pp dat comp cl1/outside be_bad(a) advlz
kí-li
nmlz-be_strong(a)

‘They are telling them that [the world] outside is very bad.’

The postposition lá, which roughly translates into English as ‘for’, is the postposition which is most common with pronominal objects. Other postpositions occur more commonly with full nouns as objects. However, there are also examples of pronouns as objects of other postpositions; see (97) and (98).

(97) à mî nîm jì bā dè nā bō
2sg.consec sit(a) go_down(a) exactly cl9.place subord impers
kpā f-ʒ gū, ā fi-ngī [wá
light_fire(a).1pfv loc-rel cl3/outside a.fire com cl19-water 2sg.pp
kān
hands.loc

‘Then (you will) sit down exactly where they make fire, with a bit of water in your hand.’

(98) yā nō ŋ jì y-ʒ kā kpū y-ʒ
cl9/10.year subord cl9/10.fowl cl10-det ʒ3 die(b) cl10-rel
[yī mī] ...
c1.10.pp in ...

‘The year in which the chickens died ...’

The first person pronoun is realized as mîŋ with a final velar nasal when it precedes a postposition which begins with a velar consonant, see (99).

(99) m = bū mā à, dī mān nō à tān k-ʒ
1sg=ask(b) cs.quot q be(b) what subord 2sg refuse(b) cl7-rel
mbī m-ʒ [mîŋ kān] ā
cl6.wine cl6-det 1sg.pp hands.loc quot.q

‘I asked [her]: Why is it, that you refuse the wine from my hands?.’

The postposition kān, as contained in (97) and (98), meaning roughly ‘in someone’s hands’ is derived from the noun kē ‘hand/s’. It is one of several
postpositions derived from body parts, many of which are formally identical to the body part nouns. The postpositional phrase involving the owner of the body part as the object of the postposition differs structurally from the possessive phrase involving body part and owner. For more on comparable constructions, see §10.2.2.1.

6.1.5 Benefactive pronouns

The first person singular pronoun mi ‘1sg’ and the interrogative pronoun ndɛ̀ ‘who’ have special benefactive forms. The label benefactive is meant to show that the referent of the pronoun is commonly the recipient or benefactor of an action. The forms are ndá for the first person singular pronoun and ndye᷇n for the interrogative pronoun ‘who’. The choice between the first person singular non-preverbal pronoun and the first person singular benefactive pronoun in this context seems to be free, but the benefactive pronoun is clearly preferred. For illustration, examples are given in (100). The postpositional phrase is enclosed in square brackets in this and the following examples. While example (100a) employs the first person singular non-preverbal pronoun, (100b) uses the special benefactive pronoun. The first person singular benefactive pronoun is followed by the postposition lā ‘for’. Benefactive forms in this and the following examples are glossed dat.

(100)  
a. à mī tʃū fɔ̀ [mī lā]  
2sg consec come(b) give(b) 1sg.pp lā  
‘[...] and then you come and give it to me!’
b. gbàm ká mī tɔ̀ dʒī dzáŋ [ndá lā]  
c17b.God cond consec show(a) c19.way c19.good 1sg.dat dat  
first, ...
first  
‘First, God would show me the right way...’

The interrogative benefactive pronoun ndye᷇n ‘for/to whom’ can be followed by a postposition but is usually not. It often stands alone, representing the whole “postpositional phrase” as seen in (101b), which contrasts with (101a). Like with the first person singular pronoun, the use of the benefactive form ndye᷇n is not obligatory, but it seems to be preferred.

(101)  
a. fɔ̀ fɔ̀ ndɛ̀ kpɔ̀ [tī ntī lā]  
p1 give(b) who cl3.money loc n. dat  
‘Who gave Ntie money (earlier today)?’
b. ñuŋfu fɔ̀ kpɔ̀ w-ɔ̀ [ndye᷇n]  
n. p1 give(b) cl3.money cl3-det who dat  
‘Who did Nyungfu give the money to (earlier today)’
The benefactive object can be preceded by the locative marker ḋ̋, as in (102). However, the presence of the marker is not obligatory. For more on the encoding of benefactives (or datives), see §10.2 and §11.3.5.

(102) ṛ dʒũ vũ ṣgŏ nŏ wù kâ dzé w-ỹ
advlz cl3.word cl3;3sg.poss upon subord cl1 p3 say(b) cl3-rel
[ĭ ndá là] yê bî kâ kán gbũ school
loc 1sg.dat dat comp 1pl f2 have(c) cl3.house cl1.school

‘According to what he said to me, that we will have a school, [...]’

6.1.6 Compound pronouns

What had been analyzed as compound pronouns in (Good et al. 2011: 128-129) has been reanalyzed as a special case of inclusory conjunction and is treated accordingly in §7.2.2.2.

6.2 The dummy subject

The dummy subject consists of a floating low tone which precedes the verbal complex when the subject follows the verb. This is the case when the subject is in focus (see §14.2.3 for details). The dummy subject directly precedes the verb complex and causes a subsequent element with a superhigh tone, such as e.g., a class 3b verb, like tsũ ‘hit’ in (103) or the hodiernal past (p1) marker fō in (104), to be realized with a LH rising tone. When the subsequent element does not have a superhigh tone, as e.g. in (105), its tone pattern is not affected and the dummy subject is not detectable.

(103) tsũ Ṉkũ ṃũfũ
ds3.hit(b) N. N.

‘NGKO hit Nyungfu.’

(104) fō fō ndé kpō ḋ̋ nti là
d3.p1 give(b) who cl3/7a.money loc N. dat

‘Who gave money to Ntie?’

(105) yĩŋ ndé gbũ w-čũ
ds3.build(c) who cl3.house cl3-dem.prox

‘Who built this house?’

I use the term ‘dummy subject’ for convenience, although I am aware that the Mundabli phenomenon does not meet the common definition of the term. In the long run, it would be good to revise the current analysis. In fact, the phenomenon seems to be more reminiscent of the ‘disfluentive verb forms’ described in Good (2010: pp.8-10 and 18) for the related language Naki.
6.3 The impersonal subject pronoun bə̄

The impersonal subject pronoun bə̄ is used when the identity of the agent is irrelevant, e.g. in cases where some languages would employ a passive. Examples of the impersonal subject pronoun bə̄ are found in (106) and (107). The agent in both examples is human, but it is not a specific person or group of people. The impersonal pronoun bə̄ is formally distinct from the Class 2 (or third person plural) pronoun bɔ̋.

(106) *then* wù mì mū ɳmkpɔŋ k-ʒ bə̄ kō nǐm
then CL1 CONSEC take(a) CL7/8.stool CL7-DET IMPERS HAB sit(a)
k-ʒ kī w5, wù mū dë y-ʒ bə̄ kō nǐm
CL7-REL CL7-PPL on CL1 take(a) CL9.place CL9-DET IMPERS HAB sit(a)
f-ʒ, wù mū fy̆ dʒi ʃi ʃi dʒō
LOC-REL CL1 take(a) turn(c) put(a) go_down(a) LOC down

‘Then he took the stool that people sit on, he took the part that one sits on, he took it and turned it upside down.’

(107) à mī gàn d à gbɔ̄ wān w-ā
2SG CONSEC go(a) see(a) CL3.house CL1.child CL1-2SG.POSS
sè bə̄ nàn tsā fīn and then
house_front.LOC IMPERS fix(a) CL7/8.bundle_of_grass and then
bə̄ mī dʒi mú-ɲa̋m ʃi gbɔ̄ w-ā
IMPERS CONSEC put(a) CL18-cloth_strip LOC CL3.house CL3-DET
sè
house_front.LOC

‘You will then go and see on the frontside of your child’s house that a bundle of grass is fixed there, and small long strips of cloth are attached to the front of the house.’

In fact, the use of the impersonal pronoun in Mundabli essentially corresponds to the use of the French impersonal pronoun on. Like French on, it is also used in hortative-like constructions, as in (108).

(108) tʃū, bə̄ yī
come(b) IMPERS eat(b)

‘Come, let us eat!’

6.4 Interrogative pronouns

Mundabli uses two interrogative pronouns: ndè ‘who’ and mān ‘what’. While interrogatives are treated in detail in Chapter 15.1, here I will discuss those aspects which are relevant to the general discussion of pronouns.
The interrogative pronouns mān ‘what’ and ndɛ̀ ‘who’ are treated in some detail in §15.1.2.10 which deals specifically with agreement in interrogative pronouns. They allow, or even require, noun class marking under certain circumstances. However, as pointed out in §15.1.2.10, both interrogative pronouns can only take one of the agreement prefixes, namely ki- (Class 7) for mān and bo- (Class 2) for ndɛ̀. The agreement prefixes are used when the speaker already has a referent in mind, i.e. it implies a certain degree of definiteness. Examples (109) and (110) illustrate the use of interrogative pronouns with and without agreement prefixes.

(109) ṇunjufó mān ntí lá
N. give(b) what N. DAT
ο“What did Nyungfu give Ntie?’

(110) di ki-mān, ṇunjufó fō k-ɔ́ ntí lá
be(b) CL7-what N. p1 give(b) CL7-REL LOC N. DAT
ο“What is it that Nyungfu gave to Ntie?’

6.5 Indefinite pronouns

The indefinite pronoun kimān ‘whatever’ or ‘anything’ is identical to the prefix-bearing form of the interrogative pronoun. This is a so-called ‘free-choice indefinite’ (Haspelmath 2011). As Haspelmath points out, “[i]ndefinites that express free choice, and more generally indefinites that translate as any-indefinites in English, seem to have a greater tendency to be interrogative-based than indefinites that are used in affirmative declarative realis sentences (roughly corresponding to English some-indefinites)”. Mundabli seems to confirm this observation, since only its free-choice indefinites are based on interrogatives. Examples of indefinite pronouns are presented in (111) and (112).

(111) ká wù dỳẹ̀ kẹ́ nám b-ɔ́ wù lá, kẹ́ ki-mān
COND CL1 cook(a) even CL8a.fufu CL8a-DET CL1PP DAT even CL7-what
dò, ká wù yì wù yì wù yì, wù mù
stay(b)COND CL1 eat(b) CL1 eat(b) CL1 eat(b) CL1 take(a) come(b)
nöm mù-ntjìn m-ɔ́, wù fō gàn njwóm
CL19/18.crumb CL18-small CL18-DET CL1 give(b) go(a) CL2.children
b-ɔ́ là
CL2-DET DAT

‘When she cooks, even [if it’s only] fufu, for herself, even whatever [small thing] remains, when she eats, she eats and eats, she takes [only] little crumbs and gives [them] to the children.’
6.5. Indefinite pronouns

(112) à dzê ki-mān wú lā, wú ā wú w5
2SG say(b) 7-what clPP DAT cl1 NEG hear(c).IPFV NEG
‘Whatever you say to him, he does not listen.’
Noun modifiers and noun phrase structure

Noun phrases are “syntactic constituents which serve as arguments of the verb” (Dryer 2007b: 151). In Mundabli, they are usually headed by nouns or pronouns, but under certain circumstances, they may lack a head noun and instead be headed by noun modifiers, such as demonstratives, adjectives, numerals or possessive pronouns. Personal pronouns usually represent a minimal noun phrase of their own.

This chapter contains a section on simple noun phrases (§7.1), one on complex noun phrases (§7.2),\(^1\) and one on word order in the noun phrase (§7.3).

### 7.1 Simple noun phrases

Simple noun phrases contain a noun or a pronoun with or without simple modifiers, such as articles, demonstratives, adjectives or numerals. As pronouns have already been treated in some detail in Chapter 6, the discussion of pronouns in this chapter will be restricted to their role as NP heads and to the modifiers which are attested in noun phrases headed by pronouns.

\(^1\)The distinction between simple and complex noun phrases is based on Dryer (2007b: 151). However, whereas Dryer lists also noun phrases containing relative clauses among the complex noun phrases, these are not included in the current chapter. They are instead dealt with in Chapter 12. Unlike Dryer, I include conjoined NPs among the complex NPs in this chapter.
7.1. Simple noun phrases

7.1.1 Lexical Nouns

Lexical nouns consist either of a bare stem or, more rarely, of a stem plus a noun class prefix. Although nouns often lack a prefix, they always belong to a lexical noun class or noun class pairing which triggers agreement on noun modifiers (see §4.2 and §4.3 for more on noun classes and §5.2-§5.4 for more on agreement). A lexical noun can form a noun phrase of its own, as in (113) and (114), or it can head a noun phrase in which it is modified by adjectives, determiners, numerals, etc. (see examples in the following sections). In the examples in this section, the noun is underlined.

(113) bɔ̋ cl2 contribute(c) cl3a.beans
dʒ

‘They contributed beans.’

(114) bɔ̋ cl2 gān mū jú kpè cl3a.go(a) take(a) come(b) pot

‘They went to take the pot.’

A derived noun can also head a noun phrase, as e.g. in (115) and (116), where infinitives\(^2\) form the heads of noun phrases.

(115) so bɔ̋ mī yē m-mū so IMPERS CONSEC start(a) INF-drink(b) .IPFV

‘So, people will then start drinking.’

(116) [n-kwō-n INF-enter(c)-INF SUBORD 1PL p3 enter(c) go(a) CL1-REL 1SG.PP gbMUX, wū bū mà kpā ngī dī nā house.LOC CL1 ask(b) QUOT;Q CL1.wife CL1;1SG.Poss be(b) where

‘Just as we were entering into my house, she asked where my wife was.’

In (116), the deverbal infinitive noun is modified by a relative clause. The relativizer wɔ̄ shows Class 2 agreement with the head nominal. The verb ‘start’, which takes an infinitive as its object in (115), can also take a pronominal object, like e.g. kī in the relative clause in (117).

(117) dī kl-mān nō [à yē kē dzēŋ k-ŋ kī ds.be(b) CL7-what SUBORD 2SG start(a) return(c) again CL7-REL CL7 fī tān mī] loc there in

‘What is it that you are starting again in here?’

\(^2\)Infinitives can be derived from perfective or imperfective verb stems. See §8.4.1 for more on infinitives.
7.1.2 Pronouns in appositive constructions

Pronouns can be followed by an appositive noun phrase, as in (118) and (119).

(118) bə̄ kā ꞏnwán [bɨ̄ ndʒān] lā nó bə̄ ʒ feed
  impers i2 beg(b) 1pl Mundabli dat subord cl2 feed
  tōm swōm á bi-lō
  cl7/8.palm_villages cl7/8.palm advlz cl8-all

  ‘And they will be begging things from us, the Mundabli, because they
  [the Mundabli] will feed all the people in this Mbanga area.’

(119) kə́ gbɔ̄ w-έn dǐ ná áná [bɛ̄n ꞏnwɔ́m
  cond cl3.house cl3-dem.prox be(b) as like_that 2pl cl2.children
  b-3], bɛ̄n yɛ̄n yō t-ś tʃi t-ś
  cl2-det 2pl build(c) go_up(c) dist-there up dist-det

  ‘As this house is like this, you, the children, you would be building up
  on top.’

7.1.3 Demonstratives

Mundabli has two demonstrative stems: -ɛn ‘this’/‘these’ (near speaker; from
here or simply ‘this’) and -ɔ ‘that’/‘those’ (far from speaker, also ‘the afore-
mentioned’; from here on ‘that’). The demonstrative stems take a consonantal
prefix which agrees in noun class with the head noun) see Table 7.1. Table
7.1, is an adapted version of Table 5.5 in §5.2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>gender</th>
<th>‘this’/‘these’ (close to speaker)</th>
<th>‘that’/‘those’ (far from speaker)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SG</td>
<td>PL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/2</td>
<td>wɛ̄n</td>
<td>bɛ́n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/10</td>
<td>wɛ́n</td>
<td>yɛ́n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/7a</td>
<td>wɛ́n</td>
<td>kɛ́n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7/8</td>
<td>kɛ́n</td>
<td>bɛ́n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/10</td>
<td>yɛ́n</td>
<td>yɛ́n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19/18</td>
<td>fɛ́n</td>
<td>mɛ́n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>mɛ́n</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3a</td>
<td>wɛ́n</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8a</td>
<td>bɛ́n</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9a</td>
<td>yɛ́n</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7b</td>
<td>kɛ́n</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7.1: Demonstratives

3 The speaker is explaining the concept of multiple story buildings.
Mundablilo does not have a third ‘that’ (near hearer) demonstrative (as e.g., Noni (Hyman 1981)). It does not distinguish between different degrees of remoteness in distal demonstratives and it does not have an intensified form of the demonstrative (as has been reported to exist in Bafut (Tamanji 2009: 60ff.)).

Demonstratives can be used to modify a noun, as in (120)-(123) or as demonstrative pronouns, representing the whole noun phrase in the absence of a nominal head, as in (124)-(126). When used as modifiers, demonstratives generally follow the noun.\(^4\) In the examples, noun phrases containing a demonstrative (either as head or modifier) are enclosed in square brackets.

\[(120)\] \(ká \ à \ mū \ jú \ [gē \ w-5] \ à \ mǐ\)
\(\text{COND 2SG take(a) come(b) CL3/7a.maize CL3-DET 2SG CONSEC}\)
\(kpē \ wū \ ŋi\̥ \ mī \ sī \ yī-\̥\-yē\)
\(\text{soak(a) CL3 CL6.water in CL9/10.day CL10-two}\)

‘When you take the corn and soak it in water for two days, ...’

\[(121)\] \(wū \ kā \ tsé \ dyá \ bò \ [tsū \ b-5]\)
\(\text{CL1 P3.HAB search(a) see(a)IPFV FRUST CL7/8.banana CL8-DET}\)

‘He was searching for the bananas but he couldn’t find them.’

\[(122)\] \(\text{[kpē \ w-5] \ sé \ dzé \ kpī}\)
\(\text{CL1.woman CL1-DET be_hot(c) CL7.mouth very_much}\)

‘That woman is very active.’

\[(123)\] \(\text{[dzū \ y-ēn], \ [kwē \ w-ēn] \ à, \ ā}\)
\(\text{CL10.houses CL10-DEM.PROX CL3/7a.home CL3-DEM.PROX Q ADVLZ}\)
\(wū-lō \ à, \ wē \ à \ tā \ là \ mī \ ē\)
\(\text{CL3-whole Q INTERJ P2 VER.FOC do(a) 1SG QUOT.Q}\)

‘These houses, this whole compound? Did I do it?’

\[(124)\] \(\text{dzū \ yī-dzú \ y-5 \ kā \ bō \ m-bō,}\)
\(\text{CL10.houses CL10-other CL10-DET P3 burn(b) INF-burn(b)}\)
\(\text{[y-ēn] \ tā \ kwà \ dī \ ŋ-kwà}\)
\(\text{CL10-DEM.PROX VER.FOC break(a) be(b) INF-break(a)}\)

‘The other houses burnt down, these ones broke.’

\(^4\)For exceptions from the general N + DET order, see \(\S 7.3\).
Noun modifiers and noun phrase structure

(125) [k-ɛ́n] dì ŋkʊŋ k-5, níŋ n̋
cL7-DEM.PROX be(b) CL7;1SG.POSS CL7-DET CL7.THING SUBORD
fi= d̋ k-3 k̄p
1SG = see(a) CL7-DET CL7

‘This is my own, the thing that I see.’ (roughly: “This is the way I see it.”)

(126) à  m̋ tʃyé y̆ [w-5] gb̄ wān
2SG CONS.EQ know(c) COMP CL3-DEM.DIST CL3.HOUSE CL1.CHILD
w-ā yā
CL1-2SG.POSS EMPH

‘And then you know that that [is] your child’s house, you hear?’

The range of meanings covered by the distal demonstrative -ɔ ‘that’ includes that of demonstratives and of definite articles in other languages. In narrative texts, the distal demonstrative -ɔ is most frequently used for anaphoric reference (‘the aforementioned’) or to refer to a previously established discourse topic, rather than for deictic reference, see e.g. (120)-(121).

While the demonstrative -ɔ ‘that’ also serves as a definiteness marker, lack of a demonstrative is not always interpreted as marking indefiniteness; see (127). Example (127) is taken from an elicitation session using the picture story “Frog, where are you?” by Mercer Mayer (1980). At the time of utterance, the referent of the frog has already been established so that the translation ‘He shook [the jar], [but] he still did not see ANY frog.’ would not be appropriate. Although the noun kwá ‘frog’ in (127) refers to a specific frog and is thus a case of definite reference, the definite marker kɔ́ ‘CL7.that’ is not used. As Dryer (2007b: 155) points out, it is cross-linguistically typical that demonstratives which are used as definiteness markers are not obligatory.

(127) wú m̋, wú dā dā w̄k̄ lā
CL1 shake_empty(a) CL1 BE(b) NEG see(a) NEG CL7/8.FROG DAT

‘He shook [the jar], [but] he still did not see the frog.’

There is no indefinite article. Instead, indefinite noun phrases generally lack a demonstrative or determiner. Examples (128) and (129) contain indefinite NPs without determiners: kyà ‘basket, sp.’ (128) and yǎn nḡɔ́m ‘banana leaves’ (129). The examples are taken from a recipe for corn beer. In both cases, the noun phrases are introduced for the first time here and do not refer to specific entities.

(128) à  m̋ tén w̄ [kȳ] m̋
2SG CONS.EQ drip(c) CL3 CL9/10.BASKET IN

‘You then pour it [the corn beer] into a basket [to remove all the water].’
7.1. Simple noun phrases

(129) after, à mî tân tfū [yán ng5m]
    afterwards 2SG CONSEC cut(b) come(b) CL3/7a.leaf CL1/2.plantain

‘After that, you collect plantain leaves.’

7.1.4 Adjectives

While most of the words that denote what is often called property concepts
are grammatically verbs in Mundabli, there is a small and closed class of ad-
jectives. A (non-exhaustive) list of adjectives is provided in Table 7.2. Most
of these adjectives belong to one of the four core semantic types which are
typically associated with both large and small adjective classes: dimension,
age, value and color. This is exactly what one would expect from a small and
closed class of adjectives according to Dixon (2010: 73).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>adjective</th>
<th>gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>tsîŋ</td>
<td>‘big, great, important’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dʒū</td>
<td>‘short’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dʒîŋ</td>
<td>‘long’, ‘tall’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fyîŋ</td>
<td>‘new’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kū</td>
<td>‘old’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dzåŋ</td>
<td>‘good’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bō</td>
<td>‘bad’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bân</td>
<td>‘white’, ‘clear’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yîl</td>
<td>‘black’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wôl</td>
<td>‘beige’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ñwâ</td>
<td>‘multi-coloured’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tsåm</td>
<td>‘dirty’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ntfîm</td>
<td>‘thick (for fluids)’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7.2: List of adjectives (not exhaustive), repeated from Table 5.7, §5.3.1

Adjectives always take an agreement prefix. The agreement prefix is purely
tonal for Class 1 and Class 9 nouns, see e.g. (130), and syllabic for nouns of all
other classes, see (131). When an adjective is used attributively, as in (130)
or (131), it agrees with the subject, and when it modifies a noun, it agrees
with its head nominal. For a detailed treatment of agreement in adjectives,
see §5.3.

(130) nsōŋ wū dzê wū lā yē wâ, â dî
    CL1.friend CL1;3SG.POSS say(b) CL1PP DAT COMP 2SG, 2SG.be(b)
    [kpé bō]
    CL1.woman CL1.bad

‘Her friend said to her: “You are a bad woman!”’
Adjectives can form a noun phrase of their own in the absence of a nominal head, as in (132). As when they modify a noun, adjectives in elliptical constructions agree in noun class with the (omitted) head noun.

Example (132) is taken from a story in which the antelope asks the girl to bring her some moist red soil for her to lick. The reduplicated adjective mūN- mūmfyɨŋ ‘the sweet one’ in the example refers to this soil. Table 7.3 contains adjective agreement prefixes and examples of adjectives for all noun classes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>noun class</th>
<th>prefix</th>
<th>example</th>
<th>gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>ɲkʊŋ fyɨŋ</td>
<td>‘a new chief’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>bɔ̄-</td>
<td>(bɔ̄)kʊŋ bɔ̄fyɨŋ</td>
<td>‘new chiefs’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>wū-</td>
<td>gbɔ̄ wʊfyɨŋ</td>
<td>‘a new house’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7a</td>
<td>ki-</td>
<td>dzɔ̄ yiːfyɨŋ</td>
<td>‘new houses’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>ki-</td>
<td>nɨ̊ŋ kiːfyɨŋ</td>
<td>‘a new thing’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>bi-</td>
<td>ndʒɔ̄m bɪfyɨŋ</td>
<td>‘new things’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>dʒiɬ fɪfɨŋ</td>
<td>‘a new dog’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>yi-</td>
<td>dʒiɬ yiːfyɨŋ</td>
<td>‘new dogs’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>fi-</td>
<td>mwin fɪfɨŋ</td>
<td>‘a new cat’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>mūN-</td>
<td>mwɪn mʊmfyɨŋ</td>
<td>‘new cats’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6a</td>
<td>mūN-</td>
<td>ñi mʊmfyɨŋ</td>
<td>‘new water’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8a</td>
<td>bi-</td>
<td>ñɛm bɪfyɨŋ</td>
<td>‘new fufu’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7.3: Adjective agreement prefixes

Note that, although in some cases homophonous, agreement prefixes in adjectives differ formally from subject pronouns (see §6.1.1). The same holds...
for noun and adjective prefixes. Most nominal prefixes are segmentally identical with the equivalent adjective prefix. However, the two generally have a different tonal structure. Whereas nominal prefixes always have a low tone, the corresponding segmental adjective prefixes have a mid tone. Only the non-segmental Class 1 and 9 adjective prefixes have a low tone.

It has already been mentioned that adjectives can be used predicatively or attributively. Predicative adjectives require the use of a copula, as in (133). While the copula is often omitted, only adjectives can possibly co-occur with a copula. When adjectives are used attributively, they generally follow the noun, as in (134) and in (131) above. There is no special marking strategy; they are simply juxtaposed to the noun they modify.

(133) [gbɔ̄ 3/7.1]  w-ɔ́ [wū-bán] CL3.house CL3-DET p3 be(b) CL3-white

‘The house was white’

(134) mɔ̀ 3/9 nō̤ wù kə̀ p3 y-ɔ̄ 3-loc sīŋ [mɔ̀ kū] N. dat p3 be(b) CL1.man CL1.old

‘The man who gave Nyungfu the knife was an old man.’

Adjectives can also be reduplicated, which has the effect of intensification. In this case, the fully reduplicated adjectival root is preceded by the adjective prefix which agrees in noun class with the head noun, see (135)-(137).

(135) n=ʧű 3/1 sg=come(b) ā 3 [kwō dzú kī-bán~bán] ki 1SG = COM CL7/8.rooster certain CL7-white~RED CL7 kān yɔ̀ kō have(c) CL9.voice CL1/2.juju

‘I’ve come with a very white rooster. It has the voice of a juju.’

(136) bɔ̀m 3/9 tàm n-tsò̄ 3/1 INF-show(a).IPFV CL9.road CL9.good~RED wù láu CL1.PP DAT

‘The antelope refused to show her the right way.’

(137) yɛ̄ gān tsē mī ā 3 [ntsɔ̃m mū-ŋ-gē~ŋ-gē] comp go(a) find(a) 1SG COM CL6.soil CL6-N-be_red~RED

‘...: Go and find me some red soil!’
In (136), the reduplicated adjective modifies a Class 9 noun. Based on analogy, I assume that the adjective takes a purely tonal prefix, although the presence of a tonal prefix is not detectable from the tonal shape of the root in this example.

7.1.5 Numerals

Mundabli has a decimal numeral system, i.e. the numeral 10 is used as a base to form higher numbers according to the pattern $x \cdot 10^n + y$. Just like English, Mundabli makes use of exponentiation of the base with a special term for $10^2$, namely $gbi$ ‘hundred’, as well as one for $10^3$, namely $kām$ ‘thousand’. Both terms are linguistically opaque, i.e. nothing formally relates these exponentials to their base. However, see §7.1.5.3 for more on the etymology of these and other numerals.

Numerals in Mundabli have different morphosyntactic structures. Only the basic numerals from 1 to 10 function as noun modifiers (see §7.1.5.1). The word for 10, as employed in multiples of 10 (different from the numeral 10 itself) and the words for 100 and 1000 are represented by numeral nouns. Complex numerals, i.e. numerals representing two- or multi-digit numbers, in which at least two digits are represented by a number other than zero, are represented by numeral phrases which combine the relevant subparts. Basic and complex numerals are described in turn. Numerals were also discussed in earlier sections with regard to palatalization processes in §3.3.3 and agreement patterns in §5.4.

7.1.5.1 Basic numerals

Basic numerals, i.e. numerals which are morphologically simple, include all numerals from 1 to 10. The numerals 1-9 consist of a numeral stem plus a prefix. Only the numeral $dzōfɨ̄$ ‘ten’ does not take a prefix. Nevertheless, it is analyzed as a numeral rather than a noun because it cannot itself be multiplied. Instead, an alternative nominal form ($mbāŋ$) is used when referring to multiples of ten (see §7.1.5.2). The numeral $dzōfɨ̄$ is only used as noun modifier and in counting.

When used for counting or absolute calculations, the numeral stems for ‘one’, ‘two’ and ‘three’ take a low tone nasal prefix which assimilates in place of articulation to the following consonant. The stem $ǹdē$ ‘four’ also starts with a low-toned nasal, however its stem starts with a low-toned nasal anyway, and thus it is not possible to tell whether the nasal prefix is present in the absolute form or not. The numerals 5-10 in their absolute form consist of the bare numeral stems without a prefix. Table 7.4 lists all basic numerals (from 1 to 10) in their absolute form, i.e. the form used in calculating or counting.

---

7Information on the base of the numeral system is based on criteria listed in Comrie (2011).

7Some of the basic numerals actually seem to be based on historically complex forms, see §7.1.5.3. However, synchronically the forms are opaque.
7.1. Simple noun phrases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>number</th>
<th>form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>m̀mò</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>m̀fye᷇</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>ǹtɔ᷇</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>ǹdē</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>kpšn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>tʃītā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>nʃtʃ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>nènè</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>kpānè</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>dzōfì</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7.4: The numerals 1 to 10 in their absolute form

When they modify a noun, the numerals 1-9 take an agreement prefix which agrees in noun class with the head noun (see Table 7.5 for an illustration of the agreement patterns).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>gender</th>
<th>'one'</th>
<th>'two'</th>
<th>'three'</th>
<th>'four'</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/2</td>
<td>wù-mwɔ̀</td>
<td>bɔ̀-fye᷇</td>
<td>bɔ́-tɔ᷇</td>
<td>bɔ́-ǹdē</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/10</td>
<td>wű-mwɔ́</td>
<td>yi̋-ʃye᷇</td>
<td>yi̋-tsɔ᷇</td>
<td>yi̋-ǹdē</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/7a</td>
<td>wű-mwɔ́</td>
<td>ki̋-fye᷇</td>
<td>ki̋-tɔ᷇</td>
<td>ki̋-ǹdē</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7/8</td>
<td>ki̋-mó̤</td>
<td>bi̋-fye᷇</td>
<td>bi̋-tɔ᷇</td>
<td>bi̋-ǹdē</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/10</td>
<td>yi̋-mwɔ̀</td>
<td>yi̋-ʃye᷇</td>
<td>yi̋-tsɔ᷇</td>
<td>yi̋-ǹdē</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19/18</td>
<td>fi̋-mwɔ́</td>
<td>múm-fye᷇</td>
<td>mún-tɔ᷇</td>
<td>mú-ǹdē</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7.5: Agreement in the numerals 1 to 4

Table 7.5 shows noun class agreement in numerals, as exemplified by the numerals 1-4. The numerals 5-9 are not included in the table for reasons of space and because they do not exhibit any irregularities (such as stem changes). They bear the same prefixes as the numerals 2-4, shown in Table 7.5. Note that the Class 2 prefix bears a high tone when it precedes the root ǹdē ‘four’ while it bears a superhigh tone with all the other roots found in the table just like all the other prefixes, except for the Class 1 and 9 prefixes. I have no explanation for this tonal irregularity, shows even more tonal irregularities.

The stem forms of the numerals 1, 2 and 3 in Table 7.5 display some irregularities. The numeral ‘one’, whose stem generally takes the shape m(w)ɔ́, exhibits a stem change when it modifies a noun of Class 7. In this case, the numeral takes the agreement prefix ki̋- and the form of the stem is mó with a pharyngealized vowel. This vowel change is probably due to the historical loss of a final velar stop which is still pronounced in the neighboring variety Mufu. The change is comparable to vowel alternations in perfective vs.
imperfective verb forms in which the imperfective verb form frequently involves pharyngealization or diphthongization of the stem vowel (see §3.3.5). A different stem change can be observed in the numerals for 2 and 3, here the initial consonant of the numeral root is palatalized after the Class 10 prefix yi- (but not after other prefixes containing the vowel i, such as ki- or fi-). Thus, -fyē 'two' and -ts5 'three' are realized as -fyē and as -ts5, respectively, when they agree with Class 10. In (138)-(139), the numeral is used attributively.

(138) [si yi-mwɔ] áná [mbē bɔ-t5] bī fī gān
cl9.day cl9-one like_that cl2.people cl2-three exit(b) pass(b) go(a)

‘On one day, three people die.’

(139) kə ŋ=kpɨ́ 1 sg =die(b).IPFV leave(a).IPFV pass(b) cl2.people Mundabli
kán [yɔ̀ yi-mwɔ̀] have(c) cl9.voice cl9-one

‘If I die, the Mundabli people should have one voice.’

7.1.5.2 Complex numerals

All numerals greater than 10 are complex, i.e. they combine at least two numerals by multiplication or addition.

As pointed out earlier, 10 in multiples of 10 from 20 upwards (the numeral 10 itself has a different form which is not related to the noun), 100 and 1000 are represented by the numeral nouns mbāŋ ‘multiple of ten’ (cl10), gbi (cl3) ‘hundred’, with the plural form dzí (cl10) and kām (cl7/8) ‘thousand’.

Multiples of 10, 100 and 1000 are formed by multiplication. The numeral noun is followed by the basic numeral between 1 and 9, by which it is multiplied. The latter agrees in noun class with the numeral noun (both in absolute calculations and when the numeral phrase modifies a noun).

Thus, multiples of 10, 100 and 1000 always have the same shape, no matter whether they are used in absolute counting or to modify a noun, and irrespective of the noun class of the modified noun. This can be seen e.g. in (140) where the numeral phrase is the complement of the copula. As of yet, I have no good explanation for the tonal irregularities in the numeral agreement prefixes in Table 7.6.

(140) kpɔ́ wū dī mē [kām bi-kpɔ̀n],
cl3/7.money cl3/3sg.poss be(b) only cl7/8.thousand cl8-five
bwē
cl1/2.friend

‘Her price is always 5000 francs, my friend.’

As Class 9 contains only singular nouns, the numerals 2 and 3 never modify a Class 9 noun.
7.1. Simple noun phrases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>number</th>
<th>form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>mbāŋ yífyé</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>mbāŋ yítsɔ̄</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>mbāŋ yíndē</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>mbāŋ yíkpɔ̄n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>mbāŋ yítʃītā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>mbāŋ yíŋstɔ̄</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80</td>
<td>mbāŋ yíŋenɛ̀</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90</td>
<td>mbāŋ yíkpānɛ̀</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>gbi wǔmó</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200</td>
<td>dzi yífyé</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300</td>
<td>dzi yítsɔ̄</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>400</td>
<td>dzi yíndē</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500</td>
<td>dzi yíkpɔ̄n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>600</td>
<td>dzi yítʃītā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>700</td>
<td>dzi yíŋstɔ̀</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>800</td>
<td>dzi yíŋenɛ̀</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>900</td>
<td>dzi yíkpānɛ̀</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1000</td>
<td>kām (kǐmó)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>kām bǐfyé</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3000</td>
<td>kām bǐtɔ̀</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4000</td>
<td>kām bǐndē</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5000</td>
<td>kām bǐkpɔ̄n</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7.6: Multiples of 10, 100 and 1000, the numeral nouns

More complex numerals combine multiples of thousand, hundred and ten with each other, starting with the highest digit and ending with the lowest. The numeral nouns are followed by basic numerals, and the resulting phrases are connected to each other with the comitative/instrumental preposition ā ‘with’. The only exception is when the tens digit is 1, i.e. when the numeral phrase ends in 10. In this case, the complex numeral ends in the basic numeral dzōfī ‘ten’ which is preceded by ā ntɔ̀, just like the single-digits (see below). The examples in Table 7.7 illustrate the described pattern. See Table 7.8 for an example of a numeral combining more than two multiples.

A basic numeral which modifies a numeral noun (e.g., mbāŋ ‘multiple of ten’ (c1.9/10), gbi ‘a hundred’ (c1.3/10) or kam ‘a thousand’ (c1.7/8)) agrees in noun class with the numeral noun and not with the noun modified by the whole numeral phrase. Thus, when a multiple of 10, 100 or 1000 modifies a noun, there is no agreement with the modified noun, see e.g. (141) and (142).
Table 7.7: A few examples of complex numerals combining multiples of 10, 100 and 1000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>number</th>
<th>form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>110</td>
<td>gbì wùmwɔ̀ ndsɔ̀ dzɔ̀fi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>120</td>
<td>gbì wùmwɔ̀ mbɔ̀n yʧyε</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1500</td>
<td>kàm kímpɔ̀ dzï yîkpɔ̀n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4070</td>
<td>kàm bìndê mbɔ̀n yínɔ̀tɔ̀</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(141) dɔ̀ yì-kpɔ̀n  
cl.10.dogs cl.10.multiple_of_ten cl.10-five  
‘fifty dogs’

(142) kwɔ̀ yì-kpɔ̀n  
cl.8.frogs cl.10.multiple_of_ten cl.10-five  
‘fifty frogs’

When referring to money, the noun yàn is used for 100 Francs CFA instead of gbì (pl. dzi) ‘hundred’. While older people use yàn only when counting money, younger people sometimes also use it when counting things other than money. While it is possible that the noun yàn may develop into a numeral, synchronically it is not a proper numeral, as it is generally restricted to counting money. The noun yàn ‘a hundred Francs’ is probably derived from yàn (cl.3/7a) ‘leaf’ (or ‘leaves’). The use of the word for leaf to refer to 100, 1000 or a million seems common in the area (Good p.c.). Mungbam also uses a word meaning ‘leaf’ with the meaning 1000 (or possibly 1,000,000 francs when used to refer to a sum of money); see Lovegren (2013: 164).

When a complex numeral ends either in 10 or in a one digit other than zero, the last non-zero digit is usually preceded by ŋ ndsɔ̀. The word ndsɔ̀ may be dropped, but in most cases it is not. The single-digit numerals (1-9) show noun class agreement with the head noun when the numeral phrase modifies a noun or with the antecedent when the numeral is argument of the copula verb di ‘be’. When the complex numeral is used in counting or for absolute calculations, the single-digit numeral has the same form as the basic numeral in counting or for absolute calculations, i.e. 1-3 take a nasal prefix, 4-9 consist of the bare stem (see above). The origin of the word ndsɔ̀ is unclear. However, the fact that the single-digit numeral agrees with the head noun rather than with ndsɔ̀ shows that it is not a numeral noun. For more on the etymology of ndsɔ̀, see §7.1.5.3.

A semantic connection between the two is conceivable - a bill looks somewhat like a leaf. 100 Franc notes were used in Cameroon until they were replaced by coins in 1971 (Wikipedia 2017)
7.1. Simple noun phrases

Table 7.8: Complex numerals which combine higher digits with the basic numeral 10, or with a single-digit numeral

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>number</th>
<th>form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>dzōfì á ntsɔ̀ mımó</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>dzōfì á ntsɔ̀ mìfyè</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>dzōfì á ntsɔ̀ ǹtò</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>dzōfì á ntsɔ̀ ǹdè</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>dzōfì á ntsɔ̀ kpɔ̀n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>dzōfì á ntsɔ̀ tʃıtā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>dzōfì á ntsɔ̀ nɔ̀tò</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>dzōfì á ntsɔ̀ nènè</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>dzōfì á ntsɔ̀ kpànè</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>mbāŋ ɨ́fỳè á ntsɔ̀ ımìóm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>mbāŋ ɨ́fỳè á ntsɔ̀ ɪmìfyè</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>mbāŋ ɨ́fỳè á ntsɔ̀ ǹtò</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>mbāŋ ɨ́fỳè á ntsɔ̀ tʃıtā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>98</td>
<td>mbāŋ yikpànè á ntsɔ̀ nènè</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>110</td>
<td>gbì wùmwɔ̀ á ntsɔ̀ dzōfì</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>108</td>
<td>gbì wùmwɔ̀ á ntsɔ̀ nènè</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>kām bìfyè á nènè</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1523</td>
<td>kām kìmò á dzi yikpànè á mbāŋ ɨ́fỳè á ntsɔ̀ ǹtò</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The numerals in Table 7.8 are in their absolute form, i.e. the form used for absolute calculations or counting. In the referential form, on the other hand, the single-digit numeral agrees in noun class with the modified noun.

When the complex numeral contains a single-digit numeral preceded by á ntsɔ̀ (or simply á), the final simple numeral agrees in noun class with the noun modified by the whole phrase. This shows that ntsɔ̀ is not a numeral noun, as one might suspect. Examples (143)-(146) show that the single-digit numeral agrees with the noun modified by the complete numeral phrase.

(143) ɗʒɪ dzōfì á ntsɔ̀ yì-kpɔ̀n  
CL10.dogs ten COM unit CL10-five  
\textit{fifteen dogs’}

(144) kwā dzōfì á ntsɔ̀ bì-kpɔ̀n  
CL8.frogs ten COM unit CL8-five  
\textit{fifteen frogs’}
Noun modifiers and noun phrase structure

(145)  
\[ \begin{array}{c}
dʒi̋
\text{cl.10.dogs} \text{ cl.7/8.thousand cl.7-one COM cl.10.hundred cl.10-five} \\
\text{ā} \text{ mbāŋ} \text{ yī-ʃye ḇā} \text{ ntsō yi-κpān} \\
\text{COM cl.10.multiple_of_ten cl.10-two COM unit cl.10-five} \\
\end{array} \]

°‘one thousand five hundred and twenty-five dogs’

(146)  
\[ \begin{array}{c}
kwā
\text{cl.7/8.frog(s) cl.7/8.thousand cl.7-one COM cl.10.hundred cl.10-five} \\
\text{ā} \text{ mbāŋ} \text{ yī-ʃye ā ntsō bi-κpān} \\
\text{COM cl.10.multiple_of_ten cl.10-two COM unit cl.8-five} \\
\end{array} \]

°‘one thousand five hundred and twenty-five frogs’

7.1.5.3 Etymology of numerals

The numerals 6 to 9 appear to be morphologically complex. The root tʃītā ‘six’ involves the numeral ‘three’, nɔ̌tɔ̄ ‘seven’ is composed of ‘four’ and ‘three’, nènè ‘eight’ probably comes from a reduplication of āndē ‘four’ and kpānè ‘nine’ is composed of kpān ‘five’ and āndē ‘four’. Thus, in this domain, the system is not decimal but 5-based.

The form of the numeral dzōfɨ̄ ‘ten’ is almost the same as Naki dzofu (Jeff Good, p.c.) and similar to the forms used in Noni yoofo (Hyman 1981: 28) and in the Mungbam dialects Abar (dʒūhɛ́) and Missong (dʒóhò). The other three dialects use forms which are not cognate with dzōfɨ̄; see Lovegren (2013: 162).

The origin of the word ntsō, which precedes the last numeral in several-digit numbers, is unclear. My best guess is that it could be related to the verb tsɔ́ ‘show’.\(^{10}\)

Although ntsō is always preceded by the comitative preposition ā ‘with’, it does not seem to be a noun. Unlike with the numeral nouns, the following numeral (between 1 and 9) does not agree with ntsō, but with the noun modified by the whole numeral phrase.

The etymology of mbāŋ ‘multiple_of_ten’ is unclear. Lexical items which are similar in shape are bāŋ ‘meet’ (c), bāŋ ‘lock’ (b) and mbāŋ ‘door’.\(^{11}\) The numeral noun gbi (pl. dzǐ) ‘hundred’, on the other hand, is clearly derived from the noun gbi (pl. dzǐ) ‘rope/string’. A word for ‘hundred’ derived from

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\(^{10}\) A word similar in form and function has been reported for Ajumbu (Chan 2013), Noni (Hyman 1981: 21)(ncw) and Bafut (Tamanji 2009: 85): ntsō. In Bafut, ntsō has been interpreted as a conjunction meaning ‘and’, although it seems to be restricted to this context. In Bafut, it is the only element connecting the multiple of ten with the single-digit number. The interpretation as a conjunction does not work for Noni where the numeral 10 is completely replaced by ncnw in the numerals between 11 and 19. However, numerals above 20 have the same pattern as Bafut numerals, with only ncnw connecting the multiple of ten and the single digit numbers. In Mundabli, ntsō does not replace the numeral for 10. Furthermore, it is always preceded by the comitative preposition ā. It can hardly be interpreted as a noun because the following numeral (between 1 and 9) does not agree with its noun class.
the noun ‘rope’ has also been reported for other languages in the area, such as Mungbam (Lovegren 2013: 118). Finally, the noun kām ‘thousand’ is identical in form to the noun kām ‘crab’. It even belongs to the same noun class pairing (Class 7/8). However, this is probably a coincidence. It is more likely that it is related to the word njōm, which describes a special kind of basket, usually referred to as ‘Kenja’ in Pidgin (Good, p.c.). Naki also uses the same word for ‘thousand’ and for some kind of basket. While Bafut also uses a similar form (njōm) for 1,000,000, different forms are attested in Mungbam, Noni and Aghem.

7.1.5.4 Borrowing of numerals

Apart from the existing indigenous numerals, numbers are commonly borrowed from Cameroon Pidgin English. Mainly, but not exclusively ‘multiples of ten’ and ‘hundreds’ are borrowed. In this process, simple numerals are simply replaced by English numerals, while numeral nouns are replaced by English numerals which are reinterpreted as nouns and trigger agreement in their modifiers. In the elicited examples (147) and (148) borrowed numerals are combined with the indigenous numeral bafye and the numeral noun gbī ‘hundred’ to form complex numeral phrases. The borrowed numerals in the examples are underlined.

(147) gbī wū-mwō ṣā ten bē-fyē ṣā fai
    cl3.hundred cl3-one com cl1/2.ten cl2-two com five
    □ ‘one hundred and twenty-five’

(148) gbī wū-mwō ṣā ten
    cl3.hundred cl3-one com cl1/2.ten
    □ ‘one hundred and ten’

This kind of borrowing is especially common in younger generations but can also be observed among older speakers. It is especially common in counting money, see (149).

(149) tsū b-ṑ kà dī seventy-five
    cl7/8.banana cl8-det p3 be(b) seventy-five
    ‘The bananas were 75 francs.’ (It was bananas for 75 Francs.)

7.1.5.5 Finger counting and signing numbers

There are two methods used in finger counting. The first is used as memory aid when actually counting and the second is used for signing numbers to others using one’s fingers.

Note that Noni (Beboid) also uses a similar form (mbēy) for multiples of ten, see Hyman (1981: 28).
Counting (up to 10) is done by bending the fingers of one hand, one after
the other, starting with the little finger of the left hand, using the index finger
of the other. When signing numbers to others, the technique presented in Table
7.9 is used.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>number</th>
<th>sign</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>index finger stretched out, the others bent with thumb holding the rest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>index and middle finger stretched out, the others bent with thumb holding the rest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>little, ring and middle finger stretched out, the others bent with thumb holding the rest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>all fingers stretched out, thumb bent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>all fingertips of one hand joined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-9</td>
<td>5 + x either signed with both hands simultaneously or in sequence with the same hand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>all fingertips of both hands joined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-19</td>
<td>10 + x signed in sequence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>10 + 10 signed in sequence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>10 + 10 + 5 signed in sequence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7.9: Signing numbers to others

7.1.6 Adverbials as noun modifiers

Certain adverbials can also modify a noun. Examples include the spatial demonstratives ɔ́ and ɔ́ and the spatial adverbials ɓan and ɓan. Like other modifiers, they follow the noun they modify. In (150), the spatial adverbial ɓan modifies the pronoun ɓi ‘we’.

(150) yɛ́ [ɓi t-án] ɓi lì a mò̤~mò̤
      comp 1pl dist-here 1pl be_strong(a) advlz one~red

“That we here, we are very strong.’

7.2 Complex noun phrases

This section treats complex noun phrases, i.e. noun phrases which contain more complex sorts of modifiers like possessive modifiers or phrasal modifiers, but also conjoined NPs, as the conjunction of NPs results in more complex NPs. Relative clauses also represent complex modifiers. However, they are not included in this chapter, as they are dealt with in detail in Chapter 12.
7.2. Complex noun phrases

7.2.1 Associative constructions

Associative constructions consist of a possessor and a possessum. The possessor can be represented by a noun or a pronoun. Associative constructions with nominal and pronominal possessors are treated in turn in 7.2.1.1 and 7.2.1.2. Pronouns have been dealt with in §5.1.2; the focus here is mainly on nominal possessors.

There is no general distinction between alienable and inalienable possession in Mundabli, although certain constructions, such as reversed word order and an unmarked pronoun form in ‘my child’ (see §7.2.1.3) and constructions involving postpositions derived from body parts (see §10.2.2.1), suggest that the distinction plays a limited role.

7.2.1.1 Associative constructions with nominal possessor

When the possessor is represented by a full noun, possessum and possessor are juxtaposed to each other in the order Possessum – Possessor without an intervening segmental marker. Comparative evidence (cf. Meeussen 1967: 106) suggests that there once was a segmental marker. However, synchronically, it is absent and only minor tone changes have been discovered in the associative construction.

Examples (151)-(153) illustrate the structure of the associative construction.

(151) n'fə tʃū bʃ f-án kpɨ̄ cl1.mother.3poss p2 come(b) exit(b) prox-here cl9/10.death Pa ŋgɔ̀ Fa̋n

‘His mother came here for the death of Pa Fan.’

(152) bī ñ wʊ wɔ̄ nj cl8.neg hear(b).ipfv neg cl8a.talk cl1/2.mother

‘[...] they will not be hearing their mother’s advice.’

(153) ǎyì, bɔ̋ dɨ̋ wɔ̄ ŋ dɛ̀ fwen

‘No, they don’t have a place to clear.’

There are two cases in which the tone of a noun in a genitive/associative construction differs from its tone in isolation. If the first noun, i.e. the possessum, has a superhigh tone in isolation, this tone changes to a high tone in the associative construction, irrespective of the tonal pattern of the possessor noun; see (154).

12Pa’ is a respectful title for elder men, which is adopted from Pidgin.
Noun modifiers and noun phrase structure

(154) wān  w-ɔ̄  gān  mū  jú  dzɔ̋ŋa̋  ā
   cl1.child  cl1-Det  go(a)  take(a)  come(b)  again  COM
   kpū     tlf,  wú-mbɛ̋  w-ɔ̄
   cl3/7a.wooden_bowl  cl1.father  cl3-country_fashion  cl3-Det

   ‘The child went again to bring its father’s traditional wooden bowl.’

The second change also takes place in the first noun (i.e. the possessum). Where a possessum is pronounced with mid-low falling tone in isolation, it is pronounced with a level mid tone within the associative construction where it precedes the possessor; see (155). The noun gbɔ̄ ‘house’ is realized with a mid-low falling tone in isolation. In the example though, it bears a mid level tone. This process is not restricted to associative constructions (see §2.1.2).

(155) à  mɨ̄  gàn  dà  [gbɔ̄  wān  w-ā]
   2sg  consec/go(a)  see(a)  cl3.house  cl1.child  cl1-2sg.poss
   sè  bɔ̄  nān  tsɔ̏  fin
   house_front.loc  impers  fix/decorate(a)  cl7/8.bundle_of_grass  there

   ‘You will then go and see that a bundle of grass is fixed [on the door] on the frontside of your child’s house,’

Thus, associative constructions in Mundabli are not complicated by tonal associative markers, such as is the case in Fe’fe’-Bamileke (Hyman 1972) and other Grassfields languages.

7.2.1.2  Associative phrase with pronominal possessor

Possessive pronouns were already discussed with regard to noun class agreement in §5.1.2. They are used mainly as noun modifiers. Their use as pronouns, representing a whole noun phrase, is not very frequent in Mundabli. Possessive pronouns inflect for the person and number of the possessor on the one hand, and for the noun class of the possessum on the other. Possessive pronouns generally carry a mid tone when the possessum belongs to Class 1 or 9 and a superhigh tone when it belongs to any of the other noun classes. Only the third person plural possessive pronoun has the invariant form bɔ́ irrespective of the noun class of the possessum. In the first person singular possessive pronoun some of the noun class distinctions are neutralized. The structure of the possessive pronoun itself has been discussed in detail in §5.1.2. The current section therefore focuses on the morphosyntax of the whole phrase, and not on the pronoun itself.

Possessive pronouns occur very frequently as noun modifiers in spontaneous conversation. Like in N + N associative phrases, the order in N + PRO associative phrases is generally Possessum + Possessor, see e.g. (156)-(158). The associative phrase in the examples is enclosed in square brackets.
7.2. Complex noun phrases

(156) wù tsē dō [wān wū] bò
cl1 search(a) see(a) cl1.child cl1;3sg.poss frust

‘She did not find her child.’

(157) [gbàn ɲgì] tsú mī sūtēee
cl1.in-law cl1;1sg.poss beat(b) 1sg so much

‘My in-law beat me seriously.’

(158) [kɛ́ bi̋] b-ɔ́ nā ānā dī ngāŋ
cl7/8.leg cl8;3sg.poss cl8-det hurt(a) like that be(b) cl3/10.hill
y-ɔ́ ē
cl10-det emph

‘Her feet are hurting because of those hills.’ (lit.: Those her feet hurt like that, [it] is those hills.)

While the tone of the possessive pronoun remains constant (and is determined by the noun class of the possessum, see above) the possessum exhibits the same tone changes as in a N + N associative phrase. Thus, a superhigh possessum is lowered to a high tone, as e.g. in (159) and (160). Both ‘name’ and ‘eyes’ are pronounced with a superhigh tone in isolation.

(159) yɛ́ [mán mű] dī têlâ mwôm
comp cl18/19.name cl18;3sg.poss be(b) T. M.

‘[and the daughter said:] “His name is Tela Mwom.”’

(160) [yí kî] bān bī ŋțu mē wū
cl3/7a.eye cl7;3sg.poss clean(b) exit(b) come(b) finish(a) cl1
yîŋ yô gbû wū
build(c) go_up(c) cl3.house cl3;3sg.poss

‘Let his eyes clear up, then he will build a house of his own.’

7.2.1.3 Special cases of possessive marking

There are a few cases of possessive marking which deviate from the regular pattern. Among them are the construction mî wān ‘my child’ with its reversed word order and a few relational nouns which have special possessive forms. Derived locative postpositions will also be discussed, as they resemble possessive phrases and may have been derived from them historically.

In the construction mî wān ‘my child’ the order of possessor and possessum is reversed and instead of the expected possessive pronoun, an independent pronoun is used (cf. 161 and 162, with the relevant phrase enclosed in square brackets).

13The expression ‘let his eyes clear up’ means roughly ‘wait until he grows up’.
Noun modifiers and noun phrase structure

(161) [mɨ̄ wān] kò tʃ́á lé
1SG CL1.child p3 long ago get_lost(a)

'My child got lost long ago.'

(162) wù dzé yɛ̄, wɛ́ɛ́ n=ɗ tá f-án, n= kš
CL1 say(b) COMP INTERJ 1SG = be(b) as PROX-here 1SG = HAB
dʒ́i̍ kpĩ [mɨ̄ wān]
mourn(a) CL9/10.death 1SG CL1.child

'She said: Alas! I am here, I am crying for the death of my child.'

In (162), the irregular possessive phrase mɨ̄ wān forms the possessor within the bigger possessive phrase kpĩ mɨ̄ wān. This construction is also dealt with in §7.3.1.1.

A few nouns mark possession by a stem change. This phenomenon is limited to a few lexical items, namely the relational nouns nɨ̄ 'mother', tĩ 'father' and wān nĩ 'sibling'. These nouns have special stem forms which are used when the possessor is in the second person, nɛ̂ 'your mother' and tyě 'your father', or in the first person, wɛ́ 'my sibling'. Although the special possessive form is more commonly attested without a modifier, as in (163) and (164), it may also co-occur with a possessive pronoun, as in (165).

(163) yɛ̄ gān bǒŋ jũ wān nɛ̂ w-5
COMP go(c) call(a) come(b) CL1.child CL1.mother.2POSS CL1-DET

'[...] Go and call your sister!'

(164) yɛ̄ wɛ̄ fǒ gān twǒ kpē
cOMP CL1/2.sibling.1SG.POSS p1 go(a) carry(b) CL3.pot
tĩ wū-mbɛ̋ w-5
CL1.father.3POSS CL3-twin CL3-DET

'[...] that "my sibling(s) went and carried their father's twin pot"'

(165) n=lyā ná f-án, n= dā wú w₅ yɛ̄
1SG=go_to_bush(a).1PFV as PROX-here 1SG=FL1;NEG hear(b) NEG COMP
bën fǒ mũ jũ kpẽ tyẽ w-ěn
2p1 p1 take(a) come(b) CL3.pot CL1.father.2POSS CL1-2PL.POSS
w-5 wū-kwẽ w-5, yɛ̄ bēn lũ nĩ̄ dũ ɗj́ tʃín
CL3-DET CL3-home CL3-that COMP 2PL do(a) CL7.thing certain there
in

"As I am going to the bush, I don't want to hear [when I get back] that you have taken your father's traditional pot in order to do something inside."
Finally, postpositional phrases with derived locative postpositions should be discussed here, as they structurally and semantically resemble possessive constructions, and it may be that they were historically derived from the latter.\footnote{Postpositional phrases involving postpositions derived from body part nouns are analyzed as a special case of possessive phrases in Voll (2014).} Locative postpositions are derived from body parts, meronyms and, in a few cases, toponyms. The postposition is often formally identical with the original noun and differs in grammatical behavior. When the postposition is modified by a pronoun, the pronoun appears in its independent segmental form but with a special tonal pattern; see (166). When it is modified by a noun, the noun is realized with the same tone pattern as in any non-utterance-final context; see (168). Postpositional phrases resemble possessive phrases in which two nouns are simply juxtaposed to each other because the postposition looks like a noun. However, unlike in a possessive phrase, the order is reversed and the phrase is head-final.

(166) *wù tũ fō [wú fɔ̄]*
\text{CL1 grow(b) CL7b.hair CL1PP head.LOC}

‘She let the hair on her head grow.’

(167) *wān w-š tũ bĩ ŋ í d₃ w-š*
\text{CL1.child CL1-DET spit(b) exit(b) go_down(a) CL3a.bean(s) CL3a-DET}
\text{[wú dzɛ̂]}
\text{CL1PP mouth.LOC}

‘The child spit out the bean from her mouth.’

(168) *ká kò jɛ yɛ l₃ bĩ fwɛ́n w-š, cond p₃ want(a) comp go_to_bush(a) 1PL CL3.clearing(b) CL3-DET m=fwɛ́n [m̩ nũ] 1SG=clear(b) CL1.mother farm.LOC*

‘When we went to the clearing, I cleared on my mother’s field.’

All the postpositions included in these examples are segmentally identical with the nouns included in their locative meaning. It may be that postpositional phrases were originally derived from special inalienable possessive constructions in which the word order was reversed. This would also fit in well with the reversed word order in *mí wān ‘my child’. However, synchronically, the two constructions are different. The pronoun in *mí wān* does not bear a high tone, as it would if it were part of a postpositional phrase. Derived postpositions are treated in more detail in §10.2.2.1.

### 7.2.2 Conjunctive coordination of noun phrases

This section deals with different kinds of noun phrase conjunctions, namely conjunctions with *āmì* (§7.2.2.1) and inclusory conjunctions (§7.2.2.2).
Noun modifiers and noun phrase structure

When two noun phrases are conjoined, they together form a complex noun phrase. There are two ways in which noun phrases can be conjoined: (a) by use of the conjunctive element āmɨ̀ ‘and’ or (b) within a form of inclusory conjunction (cf. Haspelmath 2007: 30). The two strategies are dealt with in §7.2.2.1 and §7.2.2.2.

Various factors play a role in the choice between the two conjunction strategies: (i) whether one of the conjuncts is a pronoun, (ii) the topicality of both referents, (iii) whether one, both or neither of the conjoined noun phrases has a human referent and (iv) the existence or absence of a conceptual connection between the referents of the conjoined noun phrases or of their actions. Agreement patterns for coordinated noun phrases are discussed in §5.6.

7.2.2.1 Conjunctive coordination of noun phrases with āmɨ̀ ‘and’

Two noun phrases can be conjoined with the conjunction āmɨ̀ ‘and’. The conjunction āmɨ̀ is a medial connective, i.e. it stands between the conjoined noun phrases, connecting them. While the medial connective is by far the most prominent option in overt marking of noun phrase conjunction world-wide, in sub-Saharan Africa, the strategy is a minor one, (cf. Stassen 2011).

When two noun phrases are connected with āmɨ̀, both A āmɨ̀ B and B āmɨ̀ A are syntactically equivalent. Of course, discourse factors will be involved in the positioning of the conjuncts, but this is not a syntactic issue. In this regard, the conjunction āmɨ̀ differs from the preposition ā ‘with’. The use of the preposition ā ‘with’ implies a certain imbalance, with the main agent modified by the prepositional phrase.

Examples (169)-(171) show instances of noun phrases conjoined with āmɨ̀ ‘and’.

(169) wù dzé ndʒān āmɨ̀ jī dʒwèn
cL1 say(b) C18a.language Mundabli and C18a.language Missong
‘She speaks Mundabli and Missong.’

(170) bɔ̋ kə̀ dɪ bə̋-fye, wə̋ mɔ̀nɔ̄ wù-mwò āmɨ̀ wə̋n
cL2 p3 be(b) C1.2-two C1.1.child C1.1.male and C1.1.child
kpé wù-mwò
cL1.woman C1.1-one
‘There were two of them, a boy and a girl.’

(171) wù dzé ã̊åå, ye m = bʊ̀ŋ mʊ̃ ŋgɪ
C1.1 say(b) INTERJ COMP 1SG = pick(b) C1.1/2.slave C1.1;1SG.POSS
kpé āmɨ̀ mʊ̃ ŋgɪ mɔ̀nɔ̄
c1.1.woman and C1.1/2.slave C1.1;1SG.POSS C1.1.male
‘She said: Wow! I have picked my slave boy and my slave girl.’
Although conjunctive coordination with āmî is symmetrical, since the order of the coordinands is not fixed and both noun phrases “have the same semantic relations with other surrounding elements” (Haspelmath 2007: 1), the coordinator āmî is prepositive on the second coordinand (cf. Haspelmath 2007: 6). This is illustrated here by cases of discontinuous order, as encountered in (172) and (173), where the whole conjunction is split up and the coordinator āmî aligns with the second coordinand, showing that it forms a constituent with the second coordinand rather than the first (see Haspelmath (2007: 8) for a list of constituency tests which are applicable to Mundabli).

In (172), the first coordinand wān dzū ‘a certain child’ stands alone at the end of the first clause. The rest of the complex noun phrase consisting of conjunctive element āmî and the second coordinand djî yi ‘his dog’, follows as an afterthought, at the end of the utterance.

(172) tʃí b-ɔ́ cl7/8.picture cl8-Det 1SG = see CL1.child CL1.certain CL1 hold(b) kē njmgbåŋ kí ŋg5, [āmî djî yi] cl9/10.hand CL7.jaw cl7;3SG.POSS upon and cl9.dog cl9;3SG.POSS

‘In the picture I see a child - he holds his jaws in his hands - and his dog.’

(173) wù gān də̄ gbɔ̄ cl1 go(a) see(a) cl3.house cl1.child CL1;3SG.POSS cl1-Det Dat Com [mü-ɲa̋m m-ɔ́ cl18-stripe_of_cloth cl18-Det cl3.house house_front.loc and tsà] cl7/8.bundle_of_grass

‘She went in and saw the child’s house with the pieces of cloth in front of the door and the traditional grass bundle.’

In most cases, when multiple noun phrases are conjoined, all but the last coordinator are omitted, as shown in the elicited examples (174) and (175).

(174) ʧî=kə̀ tāŋ [gɛ ᵃmî ŋkāŋ] 1SG = p3 buy(b) cl3/7a.corn cl7/8.groundnuts and cl6.salt

‘I bought corn, groundnuts and salt.’

(175) ʧî=kə̀ də̄ [mbɔ̀ŋ kʊŋam ᵃmî djî] 1SG = p3 see(a) cl1/2.cow cl7/8.pig and cl10.goats

‘I saw cows, pigs and goats.’
7.2.2.2 Inclusory conjunction

In addition to conjoining of noun phrases with amí ‘and’, there is another strategy which is used to conjoin noun phrases, a special type of conjunction referred to as an ‘inclusory conjunction’ by Haspelmath (2007: 33). Inclusory conjunctions involve a coordination-like pairing of pronouns or nouns or combinations of the two. However, the interpretation of the coordinated pronouns is not strictly additive, since the first pronoun always has an incorporative interpretation. This incorporative reading is characteristic of inclusory conjunctions.\(^{15}\) While it has been claimed in earlier publications (Good et al. 2011: 128-129) that Mundabli has compound pronouns, I now think that the constructions in question simply form a special case of inclusory conjunction constructions because their structure does not differ from inclusory conjunction constructions involving nouns. The underlying structure of the inclusory conjunction construction is analyzable as \(\text{NP}^1 \text{PRO}^1 \bar{\text{a}} \text{NP}^2\). The first noun phrase (\(\text{NP}^1\)) may represent an inclusory plural pronoun or an inclusory plural noun (referring to the whole conjunct), or it may be a non-inclusory singular noun (referring only to the first conjunct). The conjunctive element \(\text{PRO}^1 \bar{\text{a}}\) is composed of an inclusory pronoun \(\text{PRO}^1\) whose reference includes both conjuncts, merged with the preposition \(\bar{\text{a}}\) ‘with’.\(^{16}\) The second noun phrase (\(\text{NP}^2\)) refers to the (second) conjunct and may be represented by a pronoun or by a noun.

I will start off by describing inclusory conjunction constructions involving two pronouns and combinations of pronouns and nouns, as these seem to be typologically more common patterns, and then treat the typologically more unusual case of inclusory conjunction constructions involving two full noun phrases.

In inclusory conjunction constructions conjoining two pronouns, \(\text{NP}^1\) is represented by an inclusory plural pronoun identical with \(\text{PRO}^1\). Thus, their structure is analyzable as \(\text{PRO}^1 \text{PRO}^1 \bar{\text{a}} \text{PRO}^2\), where \(\text{PRO}^1\) is an inclusory plural pronoun, phonologically merged with the preposition \(\bar{\text{a}}\) ‘with’ in the conjoining element, and \(\text{PRO}^2\) represents the second conjunct, as in (176).

\[(176) \quad \text{bǐ by-ā wù lù} \]
\[1\text{pl} \ 1\text{pl}-\text{com} \ 1\text{l} \ \text{go to bush(a)}\]

‘He and I went to the bush.’

Table 7.10 shows all combinations of pronouns attested in inclusory conjunction constructions. These data are based on elicitation and should be taken with a grain of salt. Furthermore, they were only elicited in preverbal position. Thus, it is unclear whether the equivalent non-preverbal forms differ in tone or not.

\(^{15}\)It is also characteristic of compound pronouns (Cysouw 2003: 171).

\(^{16}\)While the merged form is transparent in most cases, the form that results when \(\text{PRO}^1\) is represented by the second person plural pronoun bɛ̄n, namely bɛ̄, is not transparently composed of bɛ̄n and ā.
### Table 7.10: Inclusory conjunction of pronouns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>pronoun</th>
<th>gloss</th>
<th>interpretation</th>
<th>gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>bì byá wà</td>
<td>'1pl 1pl.with 2sg'</td>
<td>1sg + 2sg</td>
<td>'me and you (sg)'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bì byá bën</td>
<td>'1pl 1pl.with 2pl'</td>
<td>1sg/pl + 2pl</td>
<td>'me/us and you (pl)'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bì byá wù</td>
<td>'1pl 1pl.with 3sg'</td>
<td>1sg + 3sg</td>
<td>'me and him'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bì byá bɔ́</td>
<td>'1pl 1pl.with 3pl'</td>
<td>1sg/pl + 3pl</td>
<td>'me/us and them'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bɛ̄nbɛ̄bɔ́</td>
<td>'2pl 2pl.with 3sg'</td>
<td>2sg + 3sg</td>
<td>'you (sg) and him'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bɛ̄nbɛ̄wù</td>
<td>'2pl 2pl.with 3pl'</td>
<td>2sg/pl + 3pl</td>
<td>'you (sg/pl) and them'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bɔ̋báāwù</td>
<td>'3pl 3pl.with 3sg'</td>
<td>3sg + 3sg</td>
<td>'him, and him'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bɔ̋báāmɨ̄</td>
<td>'3pl 3pl.with 1sg'</td>
<td>3sg + 1sg</td>
<td>'him and me'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bɔ̋báāwà</td>
<td>'3pl 3pl.with 2sg'</td>
<td>3sg + 2sg</td>
<td>'him and you (sg)'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The underlying structure of the forms in Table 7.10 may be analyzable as PRO¹ PRO¹-with PRO², where the first part is a full plural pronoun, the second part consists of a repetition of the initial pronoun phonologically fused with the preposition ǎ 'with', and the last part is the second pronoun. However, if we adopt such an interpretation, it is somewhat obscure why the fusion of bɛ̄n and ǎ should result in the second person plural “intervening” form bɛ̄.

Inclusory conjunction of pronouns in Mundablí seems to contradict attested universals of inclusory conjunction structure. According to Haspelmath (2007: 34), the inclusory pronoun in inclusory conjunction is always higher on the person hierarchy (given the following scale: 1 > 2 > 3) than the final pronoun which represents the second coordinand. The forms in Table 7.10 which start in bì ’we’ and bɛ̄n ’you (pl)’ confirm this claim. However, in the forms below the dashed line in Table 7.10, the final (non-inclusory) pronouns mɨ̄ ’I’ and wà ’you’ are higher on the person hierarchy than the inclusory pronoun bɔ́ ’they’. These two forms are also paradigmatically “redundant” since their semantics overlap with some of the forms above the dashed line in Table 7.10.

It remains to be verified whether Mundablí really contradicts the established universal tendencies for inclusory conjunction, or whether the collected data are insufficient. The data are only based on elicitation. In fact, inclusory conjunction of pronouns is hardly attested at all in non-elicited texts. The only spontaneous example of a compound pronoun is in (177). There, the compound pronoun is added as an apposition, in order to add more detail to a simple pronoun already present in the phrase. In this example, the compound pronoun is enclosed in brackets and the co-referent simple pronoun bì is underlined.
Noun modifiers and noun phrase structure

169

wù dzé yē wù nîŋ mî gbô yē n=ŷi
cl.1 say(b) comp cl.1 want(c) 1sg house.loc comp 1sg = go_down(a)
ŷu yē bĩ kân té,
[bĩ by-ā wù]
come(b) comp 1pl hold(c) cl.? discussion 1pl 1pl-comp cl.1

‘She said that she wants me in the house, that I should come down, that we should have a talk, her and me.’

While there is neither a dual form nor an inclusive/exclusive distinction in Mundabi, it is possible in some cases to express an inclusive/exclusive distinction or dual meaning by the use of an inclusory conjunction construction. The first pronoun in bĩ byā wà has an inclusive reading as in ‘us including you (sg)’, meaning ‘the two of us’.

Inclusory conjunction constructions involving a noun and a pronoun have the following structure: PRO\(^1\) PRO\(^1\)-ā NP\(^2\). It is almost identical with inclusory conjunctions of pronouns with an inclusory pronoun representing PRO\(^1\), the only difference being that the second conjunct NP\(^2\) is represented by a full noun phrase, instead of a pronoun, see e.g. (178).

bĩ by-ā mbɛ̌ fə̋ lɔ̀ go_to_bush(a)
1pl 1pl-comp M. pl go_to_bush(a) cl.3.field

‘Me and Mbeh went to the field (earlier today).’

When two full noun phrases are conjoined by an inclusory conjunction, the structure is NP\(^1\) PRO\(^1\)-ā NP\(^2\). Just like in the constructions discussed so far (i.e. inclusory conjunction of two pronouns or of a pronoun and a noun), PRO\(^1\) is represented by a plural inclusory pronoun, phonologically merged with the preposition ā and NP\(^2\) is represented by the second coordinand, which is a noun in this case. It differs from an inclusory conjunction only by NP\(^1\) being represented by a noun instead of a pronoun, and in that noun may be either an inclusory plural noun (see (179)), or a singular noun representing the first conjunct (see (180)). In the other constructions, where NP\(^1\) is represented by a pronoun, it is always the plural inclusory pronoun, i.e. the same as PRO\(^1\).

The children said: No. Our fathers and mothers said if anybody comes here in the afternoon, we should not give [them anything].’
The use of inclusory conjunctions seems to be restricted to human referents. When two (human) nouns are conjoined by an inclusory conjunction, the inclusory pronoun PRO\(^1\) is a Class 2 pronoun.

When the first noun phrase is singular, the second noun phrase is obviously not included in its reference. In this respect, inclusory conjunctions of nouns differ from inclusory conjunctions in which at least the first coordinand is a pronoun. In the latter, the first (pronominal) conjunct is always inclusory (i.e. it includes the referent of the second noun phrase) and thus always plural.

Inclusory conjunction constructions do not always form a single constituent since the two conjuncts may also be split up. In this case, the conjunctive element á ‘with’ aligns syntactically with the second coordinand with which it forms a single ‘phonological word’. This can be seen in (181)-(185), where the inclusory conjunction is split up and the conjunctive element aligns with the second coordinand. Examples (181)-(184) contain inclusory conjunctions of two nouns; in (185), a pronoun and a noun are conjoined. In all given examples where two nouns are coordinated, the first is a singular noun and represents the first coordinand.

(180) ɲgàʃǎ b-ā/báā ñùŋfù] à lyà ɲū
N. cl2-com N. p2 go_to_bush(a).ipfv cl3.farm

‘Ngasha and Nyungfu went to the farm.’

(181) ɲwám b-ɔ́ dzé āy, [nif] bɔ̃ jë wù
cl2.children cl2-det say(b) no cl1.mother 3pl.poss want(a) cl1
lo [bɔ́-ā ʈī] bɔ̃ mī dzé yë kā
go_to_bush(a) cl2-com cl1.father cl2.consec say(b) comp cond
mō tjú f-án nslā yë bī jā
cl1.person come(b) prox-here cl1/2.afternoon comp 1pl prohib
fā nũŋ dō ʈ wp lā
give(b) cl7.thing some loc cl1.pp dat

‘The children said: No, before our mother and father left for the bush, they told us that, if anybody comes here in the afternoon, we should not give him anything!’

(182) wān w-ɔ̄ dzé [nif] lā yē [bɔ́-ā ʈī]
ccl1.child cl1-det say(b) cl1.mother dat comp cl2-com cl1.father
lā yē mô fā tjú f-án nslā
dat comp cl1.person pl come(b) prox-here cl1/2.afternoon

‘The child said to her mother and father: “A man came here in the afternoon.”’
Noun modifiers and noun phrase structure

(183) wān w-5 dzé [nǐ] lá [b5-ā tī]  
cL1.child cl1-det say(b) cl1.mother dat cl2-com cl1.father  
mɛ̀ bɛ̄n dā yē  
ncs.quot.q 2pl see(a) quot.q

'The child said to her mother and father: Do you see?'

(184) f-án f-īn dī nā [wān w-5] gbū kwō  
prox-here prox-here be(b) as cl1.child cl1-det fall(a) enter(c)  
jī f-ī dʒwō mī gbū kwō jī  
go_down(a) loc-rel cl1.stream in fall(a) enter(c) go_down(a)  
dʒwō [b5-ā dʒī yī y-5]  
cl1.stream cl2-com cl9.dog cl9;3.sg.poss cl9-det

'This is where the child fell into the stream, the child and his dog.'

(185) [b5] kā té, [b5 ā tʃɔ̄m yī]  
cl2 p3.hab discuss(c) cl2 com cl9.co-wife cl9;3.sg.poss

'They discussed, she and her co-wife.'

Inclusory conjunctions in Mundabli are unusual regarding both areal and universal patterns. The Mundabli structure pattern has not been reported to exist in any other language. Inclusory conjunction of pronouns, as attested in Mundabli, may at first sight be mistaken for an instance of compound pronouns, a (semi-)grammaticalized form of inclusory conjunction of pronouns (Cysouw 2003: 340), which are “a clearly areal phenomenon” of “central-western Cameroon” (Cysouw 2003: 167,171). However, inclusory conjunctions in Mundabli differ from compound pronouns in several regards. This concerns, first of all, the structure of the inclusory conjunction construction. When two pronouns are conjoined within an inclusory conjunction construction, the structure is analyzable as PRO₁ PRO₁-ā PRO₂, with the inclusory pronoun repeated and the second instance contracted with the following preposition ā ‘with’. In all languages in which compound pronouns have been claimed to exist, they are analyzable as something along the lines of PRO₁ (with) PRO₂, where the first pronoun is an inclusory plural pronoun. While the use of a conjoining element a is common in Bantoid compound pronouns (Cysouw 2003: 181), the repetition of the first pronoun, as attested in Mundabli, is unusual. Only in Mundabli, does seem to be possible to use the same construction to conjoin a pronoun with a noun or even two nouns with each other. Of course, it is possible that such cases exist in other languages, but simply have not been reported in the literature. This remains an interesting topic for further research. However, for now I assume that comparable constructions do

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not exist in other languages with compound pronouns. The fact that pronouns are conjoined using the same inclusory conjunction construction as used when conjoining nouns suggests that what may be mistaken for compound pronouns is just an instance of inclusory conjunction. While the apparent violation of the person hierarchy (see Table 7.10) also argues against a compound pronoun analysis,\(^\text{18}\) it does not support an inclusory conjunction analysis, as the universality of the person hierarchy has been claimed for inclusory conjunction (Haspelmath 2007: 34). Overall, although the forms associated with this construction are functionally comparable to compound pronouns in nearby languages, they show salient formal and functional differences.

There is an interesting parallel between the structure of inclusory conjunction constructions in Mundabli, with the inclusory pronoun repeated, and reported cases of pronominal inclusory conjunctions used for conjoining two full noun phrases. Haspelmath (2007: 35) reports that “[s]ome languages (apparently especially in Polynesia) use pronominal inclusory conjunction also for conjoining two [full] NPs. The first conjunct precedes the inclusory pronoun, which is then followed by the other included conjunct(s) in the usual way”. Thus, inclusory conjunction of two full noun phrases in those Polynesian languages, has exactly the same structure as inclusory conjunction in Mundabli, namely \text{NP}^1 \text{PRO} \text{-ā} \text{NP}^2, see example (186) from Samoan (taken from Mosel and Hovdhaugen (1992: 680), as cited in Haspelmath (2007: 35)).

\[
\text{Peni lau ma Ruta} \\
\text{Peni they.DU with Ruta}
\]

‘Peni and Ruta’

Haspelmath (2007) cites examples from Samoan (Mosel and Hovdhaugen 1992: 680) and Maori (Bauer et al. 1993: 128). As I have shown above, Mundabli, just like Samoan and Maori, uses pronominal inclusory conjunctions not only to conjoin pronouns but also to conjoin two full noun phrases. This strategy is quite rare cross-linguistically and its existence in Mundabli is remarkable as, to the best of my knowledge, it has not been reported to exist anywhere else in Africa. This may mean either that Mundabli is a unique case, or that researchers describing African languages have simply overlooked these constructions and more research would be needed to uncover them.

Thus, the formal strategy which Mundabli employs to use pronominal inclusory conjunction in order to conjoin two full noun phrases is actually exactly the same as in the Polynesian cases described by Haspelmath (2007: 35). What is unusual about Mundabli is that this strategy seems to have been generalized, so that even when the first conjunct is an inclusory pronoun (as in inclusory conjunction of a pronoun and a full noun phrase or of two full noun phrases), it is followed by a second (identical) instance of the same pronoun.

\(^{18}\)In other reported cases of compound pronouns in the area, the first pronoun is never lower in the person hierarchy than the second pronoun (Cysouw 2003: 166–184).
7.2.3 Comitative phrases with the preposition ā ‘with’ as noun modifiers

A comitative phrase headed by the preposition ā ‘with’ may modify a nominal, “indicating some kind of material accompaniment or adornment”, as Lovegren (2013: 293) puts it; see (187).

(187) wù gân dâ [gbɔ̄ cl1 go(a) see(a) cl3.house cl1.child cl1;3sg.poss cl1-det dat com mù-ɲa̋m m-ŋ ɲa̋m gbɔ̄ sè āmì cl18-strip_of_cloth cl18-det cl3.house house_front.loc and tsà] cl7/8.bundle_of_grass

‘She went in and saw the child’s house with the pieces of cloth in front of the door and the traditional grass bundle.’

Example (187) is complicated by the fact that the postposition lá breaks up the noun phrase, thus dividing the prepositional phrase (the second within square brackets) from the noun phrase it modifies (the first within square brackets). However, it is the only example I have of such an adornment construction. The same is the case for all examples Lovegren (2013: 293-294) provides for Mungbam. Here, the modifier of the comitative preposition is itself also modified by a locative phrase referring back to the affected part of the head nominal of the whole construction.

While the preposition ā ‘with’ covers both comitative and instrumental functions, only in its function as a comitative marker, can it modify a noun. A more comprehensive description of the use of ā ‘with’ (also including its instrumental function) can be found in §10.2.1.1.

7.2.4 Postpositional phrases with ŋgɔ ‘upon’ can modify nouns

This section deals with the postposition ŋgɔ ‘upon’ only as the head of a noun-modifying postpositional phrase. For more on the postposition ŋgɔ, see §10.2.2.

When a postpositional phrase headed by the postposition ŋgɔ ‘upon’ modifies a noun, it always follows the head noun. The use of a postpositional phrase with ŋgɔ shows accompaniment, but is restricted to food.19

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19The use of the postposition ŋgɔ ‘upon’ strongly reminds me of prepositions used in an unusual sense in German, but only in connection with Haute cuisine, as in “Pfifferling-Steinpilzrisotto an Salat” which literally means ‘chanterelle-porcini-risotto at salad’ instead of “Pfifferling-Steinpilzrisotto mit Salat”, literally ‘chanterelle-porcini-risotto with salad’, which would be the more common thing to say. Nevertheless, Mundablî only allows ŋgɔ ‘upon’ only to be used in this context.
The first noun phrase, i.e. the head of the complex NP which refers to the main dish or food item is followed by its modifier, a postpositional phrase consisting of a noun phrase referring to the side dish or supplement, headed by the postposition ŋgɔ ‘upon’ as shown in the elicited examples (188) and (189) and in example (190) which is taken from a narrative.

(188) wù fō yí nām b-ŋ [tswān ŋgɔ̀]
cL1 p1 eat(b) cl8a.fufu cl8a-det cl3a.bitter_leaves upon

‘He ate the fufu with bitter leaves.’

(189) wù fō yí nām b-ŋ [mān ŋgɔ́]
cL1 p1 eat(b) cl8a.fufu cl8a-det what upon

‘He ate the fufu with what?’

(190) kpé w-ŋ mū wù mū wù mū wù mū
cl1.woman cl1-det drink(b) cl1 drink(b) cl1 drink(b) cl1 drink(b)
wù mū nām b-ŋ [ŋgī m-ŋ ŋgɔ́]
cL1 drink(b) cl8a.fufu cl8a-det cl6.water cl6-det upon

‘The woman drank and drank and drank; she drank the fufu with the water.’

7.2.5 Locative postpositional phrases headed by derived postpositions as noun modifiers

A postpositional phrase headed by a derived postposition (see §10.2.2.1 for details) may also modify a nominal, as in (191) and (192).

(191) ká à gān, à mī yá sé, à mī nīm
cond 2sg go(a) 2sg consec go_up(c) cl3/7a.attic 2sg consec sit(a)
jī bā dē nā bā kpā f-ŋ
go_down(a) exactly cl9/10.place subord cl2 light_fire(a) loc-rel
gū, ā [f-ŋgī wā kān]
cL3/7a.fire com cl19-cl6.water 2sg hands.loc

‘When you go, you will go up to the attic. Then (you will) sit down exactly where they make fire, with a bit of water in your hand.’

---

20Fufu dissolved in water is probably the simplest dish and is consumed when other food is either not available or just not practical, as e.g., during the lunch break when working in the fields.
(192)  wù gān dā gbɔ̀ wān wū  w-ɔ̀ lā ā
cl1 go(a) see(a) cl3.house cl1;3sg.poss cl1-det dat com
[mù-ɲa̋m gbɔ̀ cl3.house m-ɔ́ gbɔ̀ sè āmì
cl18-strip_of_cloth cl18-det cl3.house house_front.loc and
tsà]
cl7/8.bundle_of_grass

‘She went in and saw the child’s house with the pieces of cloth in front
of the door and the traditional grass bundle.’

7.3 Word order in the noun phrase

Modifiers within the noun phrase normally occur in a fixed order. Noun modi-
fiers generally follow the head noun, except for a few exceptional cases which
will be discussed in §7.3.1. If one considers the most common noun modifiers,
the word order within the noun phrase is as shown in (193).

(193)  Noun + Possessive Pronoun/Possessor noun + Demonstrative +
Adjective + Determiner + Numeral + Relative clause

Examples which contain more than two or three modifiers are only attested
in elicitation; see (194).

(194)  a.  dzɔ̀  n̥gĩ̀  y-én  yī-fyr̥ y-ɔ̀
cl10.house cl10;1sg.poss cl10-dem.prox cl10-new cl10-det
yī-tsɔ̀
cl10-three

‘these three new houses of mine’

b.  dzɔ̀  y-ɔ̀ yī-tsɔ̀ n̥ bǐ kà yĩ̆
cl10.house cl10-det cl10-three subord 1pl p3 build(c)
y-ɔ̀ yĩ̆
cl10-rel cl10

‘these three new houses of mine which we built’

The determiner occurs toward the end of the noun phrase, following the ad-
djective but preceding any numeral and/or relative clause. The relative clause
generally stands at the end of the noun phrase.

7.3.1 Non-canonical word order

In at least three constructions, the word order deviates from the pattern de-
scribed above. Such exceptions may be lexically motivated (see §7.3.1.1), they
may have semantic effects, changing the semantics of the whole noun phrase
(see §7.3.1.2), or they may have pragmatic effects (see §7.3.1.3).
7.3.1.1 Possessor + possessed order in possessive constructions

An exception from the given word order can be observed in certain possessive constructions, such as the possessive construction combining the relational noun wan ‘child’ with a 1sg possessor, as in mɨwān ‘my child’. In this construction, the order of possessor and possessee is reversed and the possessor is represented by the independent 1sg pronoun mɨ rather than by the possessive pronoun ŋgɨ. For a more detailed discussion of this case, see §7.2.1.3.

Derived locative postpositions constitute a similar phenomenon. In postpositional phrases headed by locative postpositions derived from nouns, the postposition is preceded by an NP representing the whole within a part-whole relationship, e.g. the possessor of a body part. Some of these derived postpositions coexist with a noun of the same shape. In this case in particular, the postpositional phrase strongly looks like a possessive construction, only that the order between possessum and possessor is inverted, just as in mɨwān ‘my child’. For details, see §7.2.1.3 and §10.2.2.1.

7.3.1.2 Determiner + noun order with distributive reading

Rather than occurring in its canonical position, the determiner can also precede the noun so that it occurs at the beginning of the noun phrase. In the case of a singular noun phrase, this may result in a distributive reading; see e.g. (195) (the noun phrases with determiner + noun order are enclosed in square brackets).

(195) bọ dyë mē, [w-5 wan] bī wù gān mū
c12.cook(a) finish(a) c11-det c11.child exit(b) c11.go(a) take(a)
jū kpū bō gbā
come(b) c13/7a.wooden_pot c12.pp house.loc

‘They finished cooking. Each child went out and brought a wooden pot from their home.’

As Lovegren (2013: 182) points out for Mungbam, the relative rareness of the determiner + noun construction may be due to the existence of a comparable construction involving the loan any. The same holds for Mundablī, cf. (196)-(198).

(196) [any nīŋ] nā kpē w-5 lā k-5 gbā,
any c17.thing subord c11.woman c11-det do(a) c17-rel house.loc

‘Anything the woman does in the house’, [⋯]

(197) any nīŋ [bī nīŋ k-5 kī], bī kā kān kī
any c17.thing 1pl want(c) c17-rel c17 1pl 2 have(c) c17

‘Anything we want, we will have.’
Noun modifiers and noun phrase structure

(198) any wān, wù dzě, nǐ dzé wú lā yě ká
any cl1.child cl1 say(b) cl1.mother say(b) cl1.pp  dat comp cond
mǒ tjú f-án f ns5lā yě wù jwán
cl1.person come(b) prox-here loc cl1/2.afternoon comp cl1 beg(b)
ben jā fā
2pl. prohib give(b)

‘The mother told each child: if anyone comes here in the afternoon to
beg, you should not give [them anything].’

The loan modifier any also precedes the noun. Semantically, the two con-
structions are roughly equivalent. The loan ‘any’ is translated into English as
‘any’, see e.g. (196) and (197), or as ‘each, every’, as in (198).

7.3.1.3 Numerals detached from the rest of the noun phrase

Numerals, which usually occur close to the end of the noun phrase following
determiners and preceding relative clauses, may occur outside the NP in post-
verbal position, when they are focused, such as e.g., in (199) (the rest of
the NP is enclosed in square brackets, the detached numeral is underlined).
Further investigations are required in order to determine whether other noun
modifiers can also occur in post-verbal position, detached from the rest of the
noun phrase.

(199) [d5] gbū bī jī wū-mwó
cl3a.beans fall(a) exit(b) go_down(a) cl3a-one

‘One of the beans fell down.’

---

21The post-verbal position is an inherent focus position; see §14.2.2.1 for details.
This chapter deals with the structure of the verb and the verbal complex, i.e. the verbal core and the elements that are closely associated with it like tense, mood and aspect markers, the bipartite negative marker, as well as, in the case of 1sg subjects, the subject marker (see §8.3). In the current chapter, the verbal core is mostly restricted to a single verb. Complex verbal cores or serial verb constructions are described in Chapter 9.

The current chapter contains descriptions of the verb stem and of verbal inflection (§8.1), the markers within the verbal complex (§8.2), the order of elements in the verbal complex (§8.3) and finally the constructions in which the markers are combined with verb stems, and their functions (§8.4 and §8.5).

8.1 Verb morphology

8.1.1 Segmental structure of the uninflected verb stem

Nearly all verbs in Mundabli consist of a bare monosyllabic stem. Stem syllables start in a consonant or a consonant glide sequence. Only nasal-consonant sequences are not attested word-initially in verbs. Verb stems may end in a vowel, a nasal or, in a few cases, the lateral glide l, thus representing nearly the whole range of attested syllable patterns. Table 8.1 contains examples of monosyllabic verb stems.

I am aware of only two bisyllabic verbs: mwanka ‘forget’ and fʊŋmu ‘help’. Whereas synchronically they cannot be decomposed into two morphemes, I
suspect that they were historically complex, consisting of two stems (fuŋmu) or a stem plus a suffix (mwanka).

Verbs in Mundabli lack predicative concord or any other segmental inflections, although it is debatable whether preverbal pronouns and tense markers are phonologically bound or independent. Only the first person singular preverbal pronoun has the status of a nasal clitic which phonologically attaches to the first onset of the verbal complex.\(^1\) There is no verbal derivation, except for derivation of the two non-finite verb forms, the infinitive (§8.1.4.1) and the ability verb form (§8.1.4.2). Some semantic concepts which are expressed by derivational affixes in Bantu languages and in other Bantoid languages are expressed by periphrastic constructions, such as reciprocal meaning, which is expressed by a derivational affix in the Grassfields language Bafut (Tamanji 2009: 109-126), or by serial verb constructions (see Chapter 9). Verbal inflection is marked by tone changes (see §8.1.2) and ablaut (§8.1.3).

### 8.1.2 Verb tone classes and tonal inflection of verbs

Each Mundabli verb belongs to one of three inflectional classes, henceforth referred to as verb tone classes\(^2\) or simply tone classes (\(\lambda\), \(\beta\) and \(\gamma\)). This is best illustrated with imperatives (Table 8.1). The tone of imperatives is always the same, whether they occur at the end of an utterance or not.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>tone class</th>
<th>tone</th>
<th>example</th>
<th>gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(\lambda)</td>
<td>LH</td>
<td>găn</td>
<td>‘Go!’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>nā</td>
<td>‘Leave!’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>dāŋ</td>
<td>‘Cross (over)!’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>dʒyɛ</td>
<td>‘Cook!’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(\beta)</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>tʃū</td>
<td>‘Come!’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>yī</td>
<td>‘Eat!’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>bʊ̄ŋ</td>
<td>‘Pick up!’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>fwɛ̄n</td>
<td>‘Clear (farm)!’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(\gamma)</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>yóm</td>
<td>‘Sing!’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>yó</td>
<td>‘Run!’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>kʊŋ</td>
<td>‘Hunt!’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>té</td>
<td>‘Discuss!’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8.1: Tone patterns of (monosyllabic) imperative verbs of tone classes \(\lambda\), \(\beta\) and \(\gamma\) with examples

Some examples of imperative verbs are given in (200) and (201).

---

\(^1\)The first person singular preverbal pronoun does not attach to the onset-less preverbal negative marker ā.

\(^2\)The verb tone classes were briefly mentioned in §2.1.3.
Verb morphology and the verbal complex

bɪ̄ bɔ̌ lā, yē mî nî ă
1PL CONSEC speak(b) go(a) cl2PP DAT COMP sit(a) IMP.PL COM
mî kwē
cl1.man cl3/7a.home.village

‘We are telling them: Stay and get married to a native man!’

yē gān kwō kō mî
COMP go(a) enter(c) cl7/8.forest in

‘[She said]: go into the forest!’

Tonal patterns vary from construction to construction, with all verbs of a single tone class showing the same tonal pattern in a certain construction. In some constructions, the distinction between two or all three verb tone classes is neutralized; e.g. imperfective verbs of class b and c bear the same tone pattern (see Table 8.2) and in the future tenses (f1 and f2) the distinction between the tone classes is completely neutralized and verbs of all three verb tone classes bear the same tone (see §8.5.1.6 and §8.5.1.7).

The tone patterns of the imperfective verbs given in Table 8.2 are characteristic of utterance-final position. In non-final position, Class A verbs bear a mid tone rather than a mid-low falling tone. The tone patterns of verbs often depend, among other factors, on their position in the sentence, i.e. whether they are in sentence-final position or not.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>tone class</th>
<th>tone</th>
<th>example</th>
<th>gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>ML</td>
<td>dyā</td>
<td>‘see’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>wūį</td>
<td>‘feel, hear’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>k‘ę</td>
<td>‘return ’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8.2: Tone patterns of imperfective verbs of all three verb tone classes in utterance-final position with examples

8.1.3 Ablaut in perfective vs. imperfective verb stems

Roughly a third of all verb stems have two segmental shapes: the perfective and the imperfective stem form. Most verb forms (including e.g., infinitives and imperatives) may be based either on the perfective or on the imperfective stem form. The habitual construction is the only construction which only allows the imperfective verb form.

Imperfective verbs are characterized by tonal patterns which distinguish them from perfective verbs and by ablaut. Verb stems may undergo ablaut in the imperfective, depending on their syllabic structure and on the vowels they contain. Ablaut is restricted to open syllable stems containing one of a
restricted set of vowels. In this section, an overview of the more regular alternations (see Table 8.3) should suffice. For more detail, the reader is referred to §3.3.5, where all alternations are described in detail.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>perfective</th>
<th>imperfective</th>
<th>gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>bì</td>
<td>bì</td>
<td>‘exit’ (a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yì</td>
<td>yì</td>
<td>‘eat’ (b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kpì</td>
<td>kpì</td>
<td>‘die’ (a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tsì</td>
<td>tsì</td>
<td>‘spit’ (b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kū</td>
<td>kū</td>
<td>‘clap’ (a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bú</td>
<td>bú</td>
<td>‘give birth’ (c)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gwò</td>
<td>gwò</td>
<td>‘grind’ (a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kwò</td>
<td>kwò</td>
<td>‘enter’ (c)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>byè</td>
<td>byè</td>
<td>‘crack groundnuts’ (b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d3yè</td>
<td>d3yè</td>
<td>‘cook’ (a)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8.3: Regular ablaut in perfective/imperfective stems, repeated from Table 3.23

The perfective verb form is used without regard to the internal structure of the described action or event. In the absence of a preverbal marker, a perfective clause usually encodes perfect of recent past or perfect of result; see §8.5.1.2 for details. The imperfective verb form focusses upon the internal structure of the action or event.

Other constructions containing imperfective stem forms (e.g., the habitual construction 8.5.2.2) are described in §8.5.2.

### 8.1.4 Linear verb morphology (in non-finite verb forms)

Linear verb morphology, i.e. affixes on the verb stem, are restricted to non-finite verb forms, i.e. the infinitive and the prefixed verb form found in ability constructions.

#### 8.1.4.1 The nasal infinitive prefix N- or circumfix N-...-n

The infinitive verb form is characterized by a specific tonal pattern (see §8.4.1) on the one hand and by a nasal prefix N- or circumfix N-...-n on the other. Either the perfective or the imperfective stem form can be the base for the infinitive. In both cases, verbs of Class a take a low tone and verbs of Class b and c take a mid-tone in non-final and a mid-low falling tone in utterance-final position. The nasal prefix or the preverbal part of the circumfix is homorganic with the initial consonant of the verb stem. The post-verbal part of the circumfix is an alveolar nasal. The choice between prefix and circumfix depends on the shape of the stem. Closed syllable stems only take a prefix. In open syllable stems, the choice between prefix and circumfix depends on the vowel quality;
see §3.1.2.3 for details. The occurrence of the circumfix N-…-n is restricted to open syllable stems ending in the vowels i, i, u, wo, ye, ə or ɔ; see Table 8.4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>perfective</th>
<th>infinitive</th>
<th>gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>yí</td>
<td>n-yí-n</td>
<td>'eat' (b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kpi</td>
<td>ɲm-kpi-n</td>
<td>'die' (b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kù</td>
<td>ɲ-kù-n</td>
<td>'clap' (a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kwó</td>
<td>ɲ-kwó-n</td>
<td>'clap' (c)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>myé</td>
<td>m-myé-n</td>
<td>'lick' (c)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tfye</td>
<td>n-tfyē-n</td>
<td>'know' (c)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tsì</td>
<td>n-tsì-n</td>
<td>'copulate' (c)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yō</td>
<td>n-yō-n</td>
<td>'climb' (c)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dā</td>
<td>n-dā-n</td>
<td>'see' (a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yī</td>
<td>n-yī-n</td>
<td>'bury' (a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tsā</td>
<td>n-tsā-n</td>
<td>'show' (a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sō</td>
<td>n-sō-n</td>
<td>'split' (a)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8.4: Infinitives with circumfix, repeated from Table 3.5, §3.1.2.3

The letters in parentheses behind the glosses represent the three verb tone classes (a, b and c), see §2.1.3 and 8.1.2. All infinitives in 8.4 and 8.5 are based on perfective stems. In all other cases, i.e. when the root syllable ends in a different vowel, including o or e without preceding w and y, respectively, or when a coda is present, the infinitive is marked by a prefix, see Table 3.6.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>perfective</th>
<th>infinitive</th>
<th>gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>bǐ</td>
<td>m-bǐ</td>
<td>'exit' (b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kù</td>
<td>ɲ-kù</td>
<td>'cry' (a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kā</td>
<td>ɲ-kā</td>
<td>'cry' (b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dzē</td>
<td>n-dzē</td>
<td>'say' (b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yō</td>
<td>n-yō</td>
<td>'run' (c)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fō</td>
<td>m-fō</td>
<td>'tell' (a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lū</td>
<td>n-lū</td>
<td>'bark' (a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kyē</td>
<td>n-kyē</td>
<td>'look' (c)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>māl</td>
<td>m-māl</td>
<td>'slide' (a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yām</td>
<td>n-yām</td>
<td>'yawn' (a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bōm</td>
<td>m-bōm</td>
<td>'agree' (c)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kōŋ</td>
<td>ɲ-kōŋ</td>
<td>'hunt' (c)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8.5: Infinitives with prefix, repeated from Table 3.6, §3.1.2.3
8.1.4.2 The prefix kə̄- on non-finite verbs expressing ability

Ability (or dynamic modality) is expressed by the use of a periphrastic construction involving the copula verb dɨ̋ and a main verb with the prefix kə̄-. The current section deals only with the prefixed verb form. The complete construction and its functions are described in §8.4.2.

The prefix kə̄- is prefixed to the verb stem. The prefix always has the same shape, both segmentally and tonally. The tone of the stem is mid for Class A and superhigh for Class B. I have not found any examples of a Class C verb in this construction. However, this is probably due to insufficient data. Table 8.6 illustrates the tone patterns of ability verb forms belonging to the three verb tone classes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>tone class</th>
<th>tone</th>
<th>example</th>
<th>gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>kə̄-bɔŋ</td>
<td>'call'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>kə̄-dze̋</td>
<td>'say'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c</td>
<td>ML</td>
<td>kə̄-bɔᵐ</td>
<td>'agree'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8.6: Tone patterns of Class A, B and C ability verb forms

8.2 Tense markers and other preverbal markers

This section contains inventories and descriptions of tense markers (§8.2.1) and other markers which occur in the slot between subject and verb (§8.2.2).

8.2.1 Tense markers

Tense is marked by segmental tense markers, which immediately precede the verbal core (unless they are followed by a preverbal negative marker which separates them from the verbal core), and by tonal inflection of the verb stem. Mundabli has two future tenses (p1 and p2) and four non-future tenses (p0, p1, p2, p3) (see 8.7). Only p0 lacks a segmental marker.

Table 8.7 contains only “true” tense markers. Other preverbal markers, such as the consecutive and the conditional markers, are described in §8.2.2.

The p2 marker has two realizations, à and nà, which seem to be in free variation. Due to low-tone spread (see §3.4.2), tense markers with an underlying superhigh tone, such as flesai and divver (see 202)), are realized with a low-high rising tone when preceded by a low tone (see 203)).

3The label p0 is preferred over ‘present’, because (a) p0 does not always semantically represent present tense and (b) grouping it with the past tenses better reflects the different behaviour of the future vs. the non-future tenses with respect to tone.
Verb morphology and the verbal complex

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>tense marker</th>
<th>label</th>
<th>period of time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>p3</td>
<td>kə̀</td>
<td>remote past</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p2</td>
<td>à ~ nà</td>
<td>hesternal past</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p1</td>
<td>fā</td>
<td>hodiernal past</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p0</td>
<td>∅</td>
<td>present, immediate past</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f1</td>
<td>dī</td>
<td>hodiernal future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f2</td>
<td>kā</td>
<td>remote future</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8.7: Tense markers

(202) bɔ̀ dǐ tán dʒǔ yē bɔ̀ kpī
cl2 p1 buy(b) cl9.goat comp cl2 make(a) die(b)

○ ‘They will buy a goat in order to kill it.’

(203) à dĩ yó ū dʒɔ̀ b-ɛ̀n mī
t2sg.pvb f1 go_up(c) loc cl8a.bridge cl8a-dem.prox in

‘You will go up on this bridge.’

Interestingly, superhigh markers are also realized with low-high rising tone when the tense marker starts the sentence and the subject follows the verb, as in (204); see §14.2.3 for details.

(204) fɔ̀ fɔ̀ ndè kpō ū Ntī lā
p1 give(b) who cl3/7a.money loc Ntie dat

○ ‘Who gave Ntie money?’

A case of non-predictable tonal alternation is attested in the hodiernal past p1, where the tone of the tense marker depends on the position of the verb, i.e. whether it is in utterance-final position or not. The tense marker fā, which usually bears a superhigh tone, is realized with a high tone fā when the verb is in utterance-final position, as in (205).

(205) wù fā gān
cl1 p1 go(a)

‘She went.’

The interplay of tense markers and tonal inflection will be dealt with in §8.4, where the resulting constructions are described.
8.2.2 Other preverbal markers

This section deals with markers other than tense markers which are closely related to the verb. Some of these markers occupy the same slot as the tense markers, while others may co-occur with the latter. The discontinuous negation marker ə...wɔ̀ forms a special case, as it embraces the verbal core.

Whereas negation is expressed in different ways depending on tense and other factors, the current section only deals with the canonical negation marker, i.e. with the discontinuous marker ə ... wɔ̀. Other negation strategies are dealt with in §8.5.3 and in §15.3. Table 8.8 contains a list of preverbal markers which occur in the slot between the subject and the object. The discontinuous negation marker is not included.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>marker</th>
<th>gloss</th>
<th>function</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>kə́/kə́</td>
<td>HAB</td>
<td>habitual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mɨ́/mɨ́</td>
<td>CONSEC</td>
<td>consecutive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tó</td>
<td>VER.FOC</td>
<td>verum focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kó</td>
<td>COND</td>
<td>conditional</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8.8: Non-tense preverbal markers and their functions

While tone and segmental structure of the conditional marker and the marker for verum focus are constant, the tone of the habitual and the consecutive marker may vary.

The habitual marker, which usually takes a superhigh tone, is realized with a rising tone when it follows a low tone subject (for an explanation, see §3.4.2). This is a purely phonological effect and completely predictable. In certain contexts however, the tone of the habitual marker is high rather than superhigh or rising, irrespective of the preceding tone. This seems to be the case whenever the habitual marker precedes a Class A verb, whether the latter stands in clause-final position or not (see (206) vs. (207)) and when it precedes a clause-final verb of Class B or C, as in (208) and (209). At the current stage, I cannot offer an explanation for this tonal alternation.

(206) wù ká kpè
cl1 HAB soak(a).IPFV
‘He frequently soaks [things].’

(207) wù ká kpè ə mɨ́
cl1 HAB soak(a).IPFV COM 1SG.NPVB
‘He frequently soaks [things] with me.’

(208) ŋgī m-ọ́ kó dʒí
cl6.water cl6-Det HAB be_cold(b).IPFV
‘The water is usually cold.’
Verb morphology and the verbal complex

(209) ŋī m-ọ́ kó sé
   cl6.water cl6-det hab be_hot(c).ipfv
   ‘The water is usually hot.’

The second marker which shows a variable tone pattern, namely the consecutive marker, may bear either a mid tone (mī) or a high tone (mɨ́). In this case, the choice depends on the tense of the preceding tense marked clause. The marker bears a high tone mɨ́ when the preceding clause is in p0 or p1 (cf. (258), p0) and a mid tone mī for all other tenses, namely p2-p3 and p1-p2 (see e.g., (256) for p3 and (257) for p1). More on the tone patterns of this and comparable constructions as well as on the consecutive tense marker can be found in §8.5.2.1 and §8.5.2.3.

The discontinuous marker ā ... wɔ̄ is used to negate declarative clauses in the present/recent past tense p0. It embraces the verbal core, which often consists of a single verb (210). However, the discontinuous marker is not a circumfix. It embraces the verbal core, rather than just a single verb. Negation is treated in more detail in section §8.5.3.

(210) wɛ́, wū ā dī́ wɔ́ gbɔ́ kúŋ ō
   interj cl1 neg be(b) neg cl3.house house_backside.loc interj
   ‘Alas! She is not behind the house!’

8.3 Order of elements in the verbal complex

The verbal complex consists of the verbal core and the elements that are closely associated with it, like tense, mood and aspect markers, the bipartite negative marker, as well as, in the case of 1sg subjects, the subject marker. The verbal core consists of all subsequent verbs within a predicate. In serial verb constructions this may include several verbs. Multi-verb cores, i.e. serial verb constructions are dealt with in Chapter 9. The current section is mainly restricted to single verb phrases. The verbal core is represented as V in schemes presenting the verbal complex.

The order of the elements within the verbal complex is TAM–V, as in (211). In all examples in this section, the verbal complex under discussion is enclosed in square brackets.

(211) bī [ā bī yǝ́] ntō–ntō yē bī l3
   1pl p2 exit(b) go_up(c) cl1/2.morning red comp 1pl go_to_bush(a)
   fwēn clear(b)
   ‘We got up in the morning in order to go to the field and weed.’
In negated main clauses, the verbal complex including negation markers, generally has the structure: TAM–NEG1–V–NEG2, i.e. the subject is followed by the TAM marker(s), which are in turn followed by the verb, embraced by the discontinuous negation marker (NEG1 + NEG2), cf. (212).

\[
(212) \text{wù [fő́ ā gân wɔ̄] dʒwō njwén cl1 p1 NEG go(a) NEG cl1/2.stream today}
\]

‘She did not go to the stream today.’

However, the structure of negated clauses differs from the given scheme when the subject is in the first person singular and when tense and aspect are not marked segmentally. When no TAM marker is present, the preverbal 1SG pronoun procliticizes to the verb stem, following the first part of the negative marker, rather than preceding it: NEG1–1SG=V–NEG2, cf. (213).

\[
(213) \text{wù dzé gàn ní lá yě̄, cl1 speak(b) go(a) cl1/2.mother.3 POSS DAT COMP}
\]

\[
\text{ní, [ā n=dɨ̋ wɔ̄] ā mɔ̀nɔ̄ cl1.male}
\]

‘The daughter will say to her mother: “Mother, I don’t have a husband”.’

### 8.4 Constructions involving non-finite verb forms

This and the following section (§8.5) deal with constructions in which segmental verb forms, tonal inflection and segmental markers interact. Both form and function of specific constructions are considered. The current section focuses on constructions with non-finite verb forms.

#### 8.4.1 The infinitive

The segmental and tonal structure of the infinitive verb form has been described in some detail in §3.1.2.3 and §8.1.4.1. The infinitive verb form is derived from the canonical stem by means of a homorganic nasal prefix N- or a circumfix N-...-n, depending on the shape of the stem (see §8.1.4.1 for details).

Agreement in the post-verbal determiner in relative clauses (as e.g. in example (214)) shows that the infinitive is a deverbal noun of Class 1. The relative clause in (214) is enclosed in square brackets and the infinitive and the agreeing post-verbal determiner is underlined.
Infinitives may describe an action or an activity, and they also occur as uninflected main verbs in certain constructions like e.g. the progressive construction (see §8.4.1.3).

The segmental affixes (i.e. prefix or circumfix) co-occur with specific tonal patterns. Only two different patterns are distinguished in the infinitive. The distinction between verb tone classes a and c is neutralized. Infinitives of Class a bear a low tone both in utterance-final and in non-final position, while those of Class b and c bear a mid tone in non-final position and a mid-low falling tone in utterance-final position. Table 8.9 gives an overview of the tonal patterns of the infinitive in non-final and in utterance-final position. The letter v in this table stands for ‘verb’. Infinitive verbs form parts of various constructions which are described in the following sections.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>verb tone class</th>
<th>non-final</th>
<th>final</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>v̀</td>
<td>v̀</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>v̄</td>
<td>v᷆</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>v̄</td>
<td>v᷆</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8.9: Tone patterns of the infinitive in utterance-final and non-final position, the contrast between Class b and c is neutralized

8.4.1.1 Infinitives as complements of ‘start’ and ‘know’

A few verbs, like ye᷆ ‘start’ (a) in examples (215) and (216) and tʃyé ‘know’ (c) in (217), take an infinitive verb as their argument.⁴

(215) sèsāŋ yē n-dā dʒɔ᷆
     cl9/10.spider start(a) INF-braid(a) cl8a.bridge

‘The spider started to braid a bridge (with his rope).’

⁴Like the English verb ‘know’, the verb tʃyé is used to express both acquaintance and knowledge or ability, albeit the former is much more frequent.
8.4. Constructions involving non-finite verb forms

(216) tō dōm lā bǐ gē n-dzọŋ, bǐ ā
    cl7/8.day certain dat cl2 start(a) inf-quarrel(c) cl2 com
    neighbor wū
    cl1.neighbor cl1;3sg.poss

‘One day they started quarrelling, her and her neighbor.’

(217) mĩ nō m = bĩ w--signed f dʒwẹ̄n kū
    1sg.npvb subord 1sg.pvb = exit(b) cl1-rel loc Missong village.loc
    f = tfye n-dzē p5 pdzan
    1sg.pvb = know(c) inf-speak(b) cl8a.language Mundabli

‘I, who I am from Missong, speak Mundabli.’

8.4.1.2 Infinitives as heads of preposed relative clauses, used to express simultaneity

Infinitives also surface in a subordinating construction used to express simultaneity. In this construction, an infinitive modified by a relative clause containing its finite equivalent precedes the main clause, as in (214) and (218). Agreement on the relative clause-internal determiner wō shows that infinitives belong to Class 1.

(218) [m-mù-n nō mānfrē kō mű fī bī w-signed tʃām w-signed jwẹ̄n], Dăn ā nTụŋ sēn tʃù kō Pē
    cl3/7a.axe cl3-det now D. com T. then come(b) hold(c) P.
    jwẹ̄n now

‘Just as Manfred took out the axe now, Dan of Ntung came and held Pe now.’ (lit.: Taking that Manfred took out the axe, …)

8.4.1.3 Infinitives in the progressive construction

The infinitive verb form also forms part of the progressive construction. The progressive is expressed periphrastically and combines the finite auxiliary fā, which may be translated as something along the lines of ‘be occupied’, with the relevant infinitive verb form, introduced by the preposition ā ‘with’, as in (219). The auxiliary is realized as fā with a LH rising tone when it is preceded by a low tone (see §3.4.2 for an explanation).

(219) [nĩ wū kō fā ā n-jwōm]
    cl1.mother cl1;3sg.poss p3 be.occupied(b) com inf-stir(b)
    jwōm
    cl8a.fufu

‘Her mother was stirring fufu.’
The progressive can be combined with any of the tenses. In such cases, the tense marker precedes the auxiliary, as in (220), where the remote past tense marker kā directly precedes the auxiliary faç (here realized as fā).

(220) nf wū kā [fā ā n-jwōm]
c1.mother cl1;3sg.poss p3 be_occupied(b) com inf-stir(b)
ndm
cl8a.fufu

‘Her mother was stirring fufu.’

Note that in progressive SVCs, only the first verb in the sequence is in the infinitive; see (221).

(221) ntsōŋkwīn w-5 ywō gān nim jī kpān wū-dzū
c1/2.owl cl1-det run(c) sit(a) go_down(a) cl3.tree cl3-other
w5, wū [fā ā n-kyē kwō jī]
on cl1.pvb be_occupied(b) com inf-look(c) enter(c) go_down(a)
nīŋ wū lē k-5 kī
c17.tree cl1.pvb make(a).ipfv cl7-det cl7.np

‘The owl went and sat down in another tree. It was looking down on what he [the child] was doing.’

In order to negate the progressive, the auxiliary faç is negated with the common discontinuous marker ā ... wō (see (222)). Otherwise, the construction is the same as when not negated.

(222) wū ā faç wō ā n-īŋ
cl1.pvb neg be_occupied(b) neg com inf-go_down(a).ipfv

‘He is not going down.’

8.4.1.4 Infinitive as the object of its finite equivalent, for contrastive verb focus

The infinitive can be the object of its own finite equivalent, as in (223). This construction encodes verb focus.

(223) dzū yī-dzū y-5 kā bō m-bō,
c10.houses cl10-other cl10-det.p3 burn(b) inf-burn(b)
y-ēn tā kwā dī nj-kwā
c10-det.prox ver.foc break(a) be(b) inf-break(a)

‘The other houses BURNT DOWN, these ones BROKE.’

Usually, the finite verb is directly followed by the infinitive, as in bō m-bō in (223). The construction kwā dī nj-kwā in the same example, with a copula
intervening, is rare. In many examples, the post-verbal adverb mɛ̌ ‘only’ occurs between the finite and the infinite verb, see (224) and (225).

(224) tō  bī-lō  ā  mwē  mɛ̌  m-mwē
    CL7/8.day  CL8-all  2SG.PVB  be_sad(a)  only  INF-be_sad(a)

‘Every day you are only sad.’

(225) ānā  wù  kà  fō  bī  gān  āná,  kpé  w-5
    like_that  CL1  f3  tell(a)  go_out(b)  go(a)  like_that  CL1.woman  CL1-DET
    kpī  mɛ̌  ɲ-kpī-n
    die(b)  only  INF-die(b)-INF

‘Immediately when she was reporting like that, the woman died on
the spot.’

8.4.1.5 Infinitive inside adverbial phrase for emphasis

Example (226) is the only instance in my data of an infinitive verb being in-
troduced by the adverbializer ą. In this example, the adverbial phrase follows
a sequence of the finite equivalent of the infinitive and the verb fɨ̋ ‘pass’.

(226) dɔ̄  w-5  ʃîŋ  fî  ə  n-ʃîŋ
    CL3a.beans  CL3a-DET  fill/be_full(c)  pass(b)  ADVLZ  INF-fill/be_full(c)

‘The beans still filled up [the pot].’

8.4.1.6 Infinitive as subject or object

The infinitive may be an argument of the verb, describing the action typically
connected with the equivalent finite verb.

(227) wù  kàŋ  n-sɔ
    CL1.PVB  love(a)  INF-swim(b)

‘S/he likes swimming.’

(228) m-bɔ̀ŋ  ə  lì  wɔ̀
    INF-read(a)  NEG  be_strong(a)  NEG

‘Reading is not difficult.’

8.4.2 The ability construction with auxiliary and prefixed
main verb

The ability construction contains another non-finite verb form which only oc-
curs in this construction. The non-finite verb in this case consists of the verb
stem with the prefix kɔ-. It is introduced by the auxiliary dî ‘be’; see (229)
and (230).
Verb morphology and the verbal complex

(229) mm, ɲ = tfyé wɔ̄ yɛ̄ bɔ̋ dí kã-găn ɿ
INTERJ NEG 1SG.PVB = know(C) NEG COMP CL2 be(b) ABIL-go(a) COM
byɛ̄ ɿ
COMP CL7a.foot EMPH

‘I didn’t know that they can still travel by foot.’

(230) wù dí kã-dó bɔ̀
CL1 be(b) ABIL-stay(b) FRUST

‘She cannot sit still.’

The tone of the verb stem in this construction is mid for Class A verbs (229) and superhigh for Class B verbs (230). I have not found any examples of Class C verbs in this construction.

The ability verb form is not adjectival (otherwise, it would take an agreement prefix). However, the prefix in the ability verb form is always kã-. The verb form is not nominal either, as it can take an object argument, as e.g. in (231).

(231) n=dí kã-fõ̥ dʒì wá lá yɛ̄ ɿ
1SG.PVB = be(b) ABIL-report(a) CL9.road 2SG.POSS DAT COMP 2SG.PVB
găn dō wān w-ā yɛ̄
go(a) see(a) CL1.child CL1-2SG.POSS QUOT.Q

‘Can I show you the way, so that you [can] go see your child?’

The ability construction generally expresses dynamic modality, i.e. ability in the sense of the internal ability or willingness to do something (as in (229) and (230)). However, e.g. in (231), the ability construction is used in a deontic sense, when the spider is asking the woman for permission to show her the way to where her child has gone.

8.5 Constructions involving finite verb forms

The current section deals with the combination of TAM markers and verb morphology. It contains descriptions of constructions involving tense markers (§8.5.1) and other preverbal markers (§8.5.2), considering both form and function of such constructions. Both of these sections contain a description of the relevant verb tone patterns followed by individual descriptions of form and function.
8.5. Tense marking constructions

8.5.1 Verb tone patterns of tense marking constructions

This section is meant to give an overview of verb tone patterns attested in the various tenses. Subsequent sections simply refer back to this summary.

The tone pattern of a perfective verb depends on its tone class and (among other things) on its tense. Mundabli has six tenses, two future tenses \( f1-f2 \) and four non-future tenses \( p0-p3 \). §8.2.1 contains an overview of the segmental markers and the meaning of the tenses. The functions of individual tenses are treated in more detail in §8.5.1.2-§8.5.1.7. In connection with the tenses, three combinations of tone patterns are attested: one for the future tenses \( (f1-f2) \) one for \( p0-p2 \), and one for the distant past \( p3 \). Within each of these tense ranges, a verb of a specific tone class always bears the same tone. Table 8.10\(^5\) contains an overview of the tone patterns attested across the tenses. The table also contains a column with the tense markers in order to illustrate possible effects of these markers on the tonal pattern of verbs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>tense</th>
<th>tense marker</th>
<th>non-final</th>
<th>final</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( p0 )</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( p1 )</td>
<td>( f)</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( p2 )</td>
<td>( a-n)</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>[LH]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( p3 )</td>
<td>( k)</td>
<td>LH</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( f1 )</td>
<td>( d)</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( f2 )</td>
<td>( k)</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8.10: Segmental tense markers and tone patterns of final and non-final perfective verbs of tone classes \( A, B \) and \( C \) in all tenses \( (p0-p3 \) and \( f1-f2)\)

To start with the least complicated case, in the future tenses, \( f1-f2 \), the distinction between the three verb tone classes is completely neutralized, and all verbs bear a high tone. In \( p0-p2 \), each verb tone class is assigned two tone patterns, depending on the position of the verb within the clause. In non-final position, Class \( A \) verbs are realized with a low tone, Class \( B \) verbs with a superhigh tone, and Class \( C \) verbs with a high tone. In utterance-final position, Class \( A \) verbs are realized with a mid-low falling tone, Class \( B \) verbs with a low-high rising tone, and Class \( C \) verbs with a high tone. Finally, in \( p3 \) the verb tone patterns in utterance-final position are the same as in the other past tenses for all three verb tone classes (see Table 8.10). However, the tonal patterns of non-final \( p3 \) verbs of Class \( A \) and \( B \) differ considerably from those of non-final verbs in the other past tenses. Non-final Class \( A \) verbs bear a low-high rising tone instead of a low tone, as in \( p0-p2 \). Non-final Class \( B \) verbs, which bear a

\(^5\)Tone pattern in square brackets may be phonetic, and thus different from underlying patterns.
superhigh tone in the other past tenses, bear a mid tone in \( p3 \). Only Class c
verbs carry a high tone in \( p3 \), just like in the other past tenses.

As Table 8.10 shows, the division into three tense combinations above is
not completely water-tight. The tone pattern combination in \( p2 \) actually dif-
ers from those in \( p0-p1 \) because Class b verbs bear a low-high rising tone
rather than a superhigh tone, in non-final position. This could be due to the
influence of the preceding low tone \( p2 \) marker \( ã\sim nà \), which causes the under-
lying superhigh to be realized as low-high rising tone, as implied by the square
brackets around the rising tone, which indicate that the rise is phonetic, (see
(232)).

\[
(232) \quad \text{wù ã tʃū nántɔ̄} \\
\text{cl1.pvb p2 come(b) yesterday} \\
\text{‘He arrived yesterday.’}
\]

However, there is a problem with this explanation: the corresponding neg-
ative verb form also bears a low-high rising tone. In this case however, the
explanation with the rising tone caused by the low-toned marker does not
work, because in this case, the low-toned tense marker is separated from the
verb by the mid tone negative marker \( ã\); see §8.5.3.1 for details. The fact that
the negative verb form has an underlying rising tone suggests that the same
is the case for the affirmative verb. In this case, the rise cannot be explained,
and \( p2 \) should be assigned its own characteristic combination of verb tone
patterns, even if it deviates only slightly from those of \( p0-p1 \).

Tone patterns of negated verbs are generally the same as those of the cor-
responding non-final affirmative verb forms. Only in \( p3 \) are the tone patterns
of negated Class a and b verbs not the same as those of the corresponding
non-final affirmative verbs. In \( p3 \), negated verbs of Class a and b bear a low
and a low-high rising tone, respectively, instead of a low-high rising and a mid
tone, like the non-final affirmative verb forms; see Table 8.11. For a detailed
treatment of negation, see §8.5.3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>verb tone class</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>non-final affirmative</td>
<td>LH</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>negated</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>LH</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8.11: Tone patterns of non-final affirmative perfective verbs and of
negated perfective verbs in \( p3 \)

As pointed out above, the tonal identity of affirmative and negative Class
b verbs in \( p2 \) is rather surprising. It suggests that affirmative Class b verbs also
have an underlying low-high rising tone in \( p2 \), and that \( p2 \) should be assigned
its own combination of tone patterns.
8.5. Constructions involving finite verb forms

8.5.1.2 P0 (present/immediate past) constructions without a segmental marker

The absence of a segmental tense marker in combination with the verb tone pattern characteristic of P0-P2 (see §8.5.1.1) marks verbs referring to actions or events which either took place directly before the time of the utterance, as in (233), or which are a precondition for the state of things at the time of the utterance.

(233) ń = dà ń-lāpìn ńgʒī f-ʒā ń lā, ńyọŋmì
1SG.PVB = see(a) CL19-plastic_bag upon LOC-DET DAT thank
k-ā
CL7-2SG.POSS

‘I’ve seen the plastic bag. Thank you!’

(234) bɔ̀m tān n-tsɔ̀ dzī dzɔ̀ŋ~dzɔ̀ŋ wú
CL9.antelope refuse(b) INF-show(c).1PFV CL3.road good—RED CL1.PP
lā
DAT

‘The antelope refused to show her the right way.’

Example (233) is taken from a spontaneous conversation. The speaker was looking for a plastic bag and uttered the sentence when she finally found it. The sentence refers to an action that has taken place in the immediate past and is still relevant in the present. In this construction, it thus fulfills functions that are commonly assigned to perfect verb forms, namely the perfect of recent past and the perfect of result (Comrie 1976: 56ff). Example (234) is taken from a story which is set in the distant past tense. However, the present tense is used for stylistic reasons. Within the framework of the story, the example may refer to something that is taking place within the context of the story’s time frame or that had taken place just before the utterance.

8.5.1.3 P1 (hodiernal past) constructions with the P1 marker ńfā

The marker ńfā in combination with the verb tone pattern characteristic for P0-P2 (see §8.5.1.1) marks verbs which refer to actions or events that have taken place on the same day, i.e. the hodiernal past tense, but not immediately preceding the utterance, as in (235) and (236).

(235) ye wɛ̀ ńfā gān twō kpē
COMP CL1/2.sibling.1SG.POSS P1 go(a) carry(b) CL3.pot
tī
wū-mbɛ̀ w-ṣ
CL1.father.1SG.POSS CL3-twin CL3-DET

‘[She said]: my siblings went and carried my father’s twin pot.’
The first example (235) is taken from a story. When the mother comes back from the farm in the evening, the smallest child tells her what her siblings have done in the afternoon. The second example (236) is taken from a conversation and is a response to the claim: “She [the researcher] did not go to the stream today”. The tone of the \(v1\) marker is always high when nothing follows the verb, as in (236) (see also §8.2.1 and Table 8.12).

### 8.5.1.4 \(v2\) (nonhodiernal past) constructions with the marker \(\ddot{a} - \ddot{n}\)

The marker \(\ddot{a}\) or \(\ddot{n}\) occurs in combination with the tone pattern characteristic for \(v0-v2\) (see §8.5.1.1). The two forms (\(\ddot{a}\) and \(\ddot{n}\)) seem to be freely interchangeable. The \(v2\) marker in combination with the \(v0-v2\) tone pattern marks verbs which refer to actions or events that have taken place either on the preceding day (see example (232)), or earlier, as in (237), but are perceived by the speaker as relatively recent (in contrast with events marked as \(v3\))

\[
(237) \quad \text{nì} \quad \ddot{a} \quad \text{tʃū} \quad \text{bī} \quad \text{f-ān} \quad \text{kpī} \quad \text{pà fān} \\
\text{cl1.mother.3POSS} \quad \text{v2} \quad \text{come(b)} \quad \text{exit(b)} \quad \text{PROX-here} \quad \text{cl9/10.death Pa F.} \\
\text{ŋgɔ̀} \quad \text{upon}
\]

‘His mother came here for the death of Pa Fan.’

The elicited example in (232) refers to an event that took place on the preceding day, as shown by the temporal adverbial \(\text{nántō} \) ‘yesterday’. Example (237), which is part of a conversation, refers to an event that took place weeks before the conversation. The distinction between \(v1\) and \(v2\) is clear-cut, with \(v1\) only referring to actions or events which have taken place on the same day, and \(v2\) only referring to actions or events which have taken place at least one day earlier. The distinction between \(v2\) and \(v3\), however, is blurry. Sometimes the same action/event can be referred to either by a \(v2\) verb or by a \(v3\) verb, depending on its perception by the speaker as relatively recent or relatively long ago. Thus, the English sentence ‘He arrived last week.’ can be translated with a \(v2\) clause, as in (238), or with a \(v3\) clause, as in (239), depending on the perception of the speaker.

\[
(238) \quad \text{wù} \quad \ddot{a} \quad \text{tʃū} \quad \text{kpō} \quad \text{wù-dzū} \quad \text{w-ʃ} \quad \text{ŋgɔ̀} \\
\text{cl1.pvb} \quad \text{v2} \quad \text{come(b)} \quad \text{cl3/7a.week} \quad \text{cl3-other} \quad \text{cl3-det} \quad \text{upon}
\]

\(\ddot{a}‘\) ‘He arrived last week.’
8.5. Constructions involving finite verb forms

(239)  wù kà tfū kpó wū-dzu w-ŋ ngɔ̀
cl1.pvb p3 come(b) cl3/7a.week cl3-other cl3-det upon

‘He arrived last week.’

A phrase in p2 looks slightly different when the subject is in the first person singular. In this case, the 1sg preverbal pronoun is procliticized to the p2 tense marker à~nà as well as to the first verb, as in (240).

(240)  n=nà  n=dà  wù f-án nàntɔ̄
1sg.pvb = p2 1sg.pvb = see(a) cl1.npvb prox-here yesterday

‘I met him here yesterday.’

Example (240) is taken from Dahl’s TAM questionnaire (Dahl 1985). It is the answer to the question ‘Did you meet my brother here yesterday [as expected]?’.

8.5.1.5 p3 (distant past) constructions with the marker kə̀

The preverbal marker kə̀, which usually (in the perfective) occurs in combination with the p3 tonal pattern (see §8.5.1.1), marks events which took place relatively long ago, i.e. at least a few days before the utterance, but often months or years before.

(241)  Pè kà wè fīn ánà fyafyà
P. p3 breathe(a) there like that ide

‘Pe was breathing there like this: fyafya.’

(242)  kpé dzū kà dì fīn
c11.woman cl1.certain p3 be(b) there

‘There once was a woman.’

Example (241) is part of a report of an event that took place less than a week before the utterance. However, the speaker is using the distant tense, p3. Example (242) is taken from a story and refers to something that happened long ago (if it happened at all). p3 is never used to refer to actions or events of the same day. However, the choice between p2 and p3 often depends on the subjective perception of the speaker; see §8.5.1.4 for details.

8.5.1.6 f1 (hodiernal future) constructions with the F1 marker dìf

The marker dìf in combination with the f1-f2 tone pattern (see §8.5.1.1) marks verbs referring to events or actions which will take place later on the day of the utterance, i.e. f1. As shown in §8.5.1.1, the distinction of verb tone classes is completely neutralized in the future tenses and all verbs are realized with
a high tone. The position of the verb, i.e. whether it is utterance-final or not, does not play a role either. All perfective verbs are realized with a high tone in both future tenses. This is shown for f1 verbs of all three tone classes in (243)-(245).6

(243) n = [dɨ̋ tsɔ́ ʃí dʒī dɛ̀ nō]\n1SG.PVB = f1 show(a) go_down(a) CL3.road CL9/10.place SUBORD\none 2SG.who \n`I will show you the way to the place where your child is.'

(244) bɔ̋ [dɨ̋ fáŋ] dʒǔ yɛ̄ lā kpɨ̄\n1CL2 v1 buy(b) CL9.goat COMP CL2 make(a) die(b)\n`They will buy a goat in order to kill [it].'\

(245) à [dɨ̋ fá] í dʒɔ́ b-ɛ́ mī\n2SG.PVB f1 go_up(c) LOC CL8a.bridge CL8a-DEM.PROX in\n`You will go up on this bridge.'

Examples (243) and (245) represent direct speech quotations, taken from a narrative. Both refer to actions that are to be carried out immediately after the time of utterance. Example (244) is elicited and also refers to something that will take place on the day of the utterance.

8.5.1.7 f2 (non-hodiernal future) constructions with the f2 marker kǎ

The preverbal marker kǎ in combination with the f1-f2 verb tone pattern (see §8.5.1.1) marks verbs referring to events or actions which will take place after the day of the utterance, i.e. on the next day or later. As pointed out earlier (§8.5.1.1 and §8.5.1.6), the distinction of verb tone classes is completely neutralized in the future tenses, and all verbs are realized with a high tone. This and the function of f2 are shown in (246)-(248).

(246) bì [kā dà] nō ndʒām kǎ fyé ná ndʒān kǔ\n1PL v2 see(a) SUBORD CL8.things f2 turn(c) as Mundabli home.LOC\nf-án PROX-here\n`[...] we will see how things will be changing here in Mundabli.'

6In (245), the hodiernal future marker df (f1) is realized with a low-high rising tone due to low-tone spread (see §3.4.2).
200 8.5. Constructions involving finite verb forms

(247) bɔ̀ [ká Ṽwán] bí ndʒān ló nó [bɔ̀ feed cl2 f2 beg(b) 1PL.pp Mundabli dat subord cl2 feed tóm sw̃m ā bi-lō] cl7/8.palm_villager cl7/8.palm advlz cl8-all

‘And they will be begging things from us, the Mundabli, because they [the Mundabli] will feed all the people in this Mbanga area.’

(248) ānỳ nīŋ bī nîŋ k-ō kĩ, bí [kÁ kÁn] kĩ any cl7.thing 1PL want(c) cl7-det cl7 1PL f2 have(c) cl7

‘Anything we want, we will have it.’

Examples (246)-(248) are taken from accounts of speakers in which they were asked to give their opinion on what life might look like in the Mundabli village 50 years into the future. All three refer to a distant (and in this case imagined) future. Another example of f2, taken from a conversation is (249).

(249) bɔ̀ ká mú jí ā bɔ̀ cl2 f2 take(a) descend(a) com cl2

‘They shall bring them down.’

In (249), the speaker claims that a boy from the village will bring his siblings down to his place once he is old enough to build a house.

8.5.1.8 Overview of tense markers and verb tone patterns in all tenses

This section gives an overview of the segmental tense markers and the verb tone patterns connected with them. Table 8.12 contains example sentences containing perfective verbs of all three verb tone classes in all tenses (p0-p3 and f1-f2), in utterance-final and in non-final position. All examples given in Table 8.12 are elicited.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>tone class</th>
<th>position</th>
<th>tense</th>
<th>example</th>
<th>gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>final</td>
<td>p0</td>
<td>bì kpê</td>
<td>We just soaked.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>p1</td>
<td>bì fô kpê</td>
<td>We soaked (earlier today).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>p2</td>
<td>bì à kpê</td>
<td>We soaked (yesterday).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>p3</td>
<td>bì kà kpê</td>
<td>We soaked (long ago).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>r1</td>
<td>bì dî kpê</td>
<td>We will soak (later today).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>r2</td>
<td>bì kà kpê</td>
<td>We will soak (at today).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>non-final</td>
<td></td>
<td>p0</td>
<td>bì kpê gê</td>
<td>We just soaked corn.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>p1</td>
<td>bì fô kpê gê</td>
<td>We soaked corn (earlier today).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>p2</td>
<td>bì à kpê gê</td>
<td>We soaked corn (yesterday).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>p3</td>
<td>bì kà kpê gê</td>
<td>We soaked corn (long ago).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>r1</td>
<td>bì dî kpê gê</td>
<td>We will soak corn (later today).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>r2</td>
<td>bì kà kpê gê</td>
<td>We will soak corn (after today).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>final</td>
<td>p0</td>
<td>bì yî</td>
<td>We just ate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>p1</td>
<td>bì fô yî</td>
<td>We ate (earlier today).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>p2</td>
<td>bì à yî</td>
<td>We ate (yesterday).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>p3</td>
<td>bì kà yî</td>
<td>We ate (long ago).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>r1</td>
<td>bì dî yî</td>
<td>We will eat (later today).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>r2</td>
<td>bì kà yî</td>
<td>We will eat (after today).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>non-final</td>
<td></td>
<td>p0</td>
<td>bì yî nâm</td>
<td>We ate fufu.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>p1</td>
<td>bì fô yî nâm</td>
<td>We ate fufu (earlier today).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>p2</td>
<td>bì à yî nâm</td>
<td>We ate fufu (yesterday).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>p3</td>
<td>bì kà yî nâm</td>
<td>We ate fufu (long ago).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>r1</td>
<td>bì dî yî nâm</td>
<td>We will eat fufu (later today).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>r2</td>
<td>bì kà yî nâm</td>
<td>We will eat fufu (after today).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>final</td>
<td>p0</td>
<td>bì yîn</td>
<td>We just built.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>p1</td>
<td>bì fô yîn</td>
<td>We built (earlier today).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>p2</td>
<td>bì à yîn</td>
<td>We built (yesterday).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>p3</td>
<td>bì kà yîn</td>
<td>We built (long ago).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>r1</td>
<td>bì dî yîn</td>
<td>We will build (later today).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>r2</td>
<td>bì kà yîn</td>
<td>We will build (after today).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>non-final</td>
<td></td>
<td>p0</td>
<td>bì yîn gbɔ</td>
<td>We just built a house.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>p1</td>
<td>bì fô yîn gbɔ</td>
<td>We built a house (earlier today).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>p2</td>
<td>bì à yîn gbɔ</td>
<td>We built a house (yesterday).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>p3</td>
<td>bì kà yîn gbɔ</td>
<td>We built a house (long ago).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>r1</td>
<td>bì dî yîn gbɔ</td>
<td>We will build a house (at tod.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>r2</td>
<td>bì kà yîn gbɔ</td>
<td>We will build a house (aft. tod.).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8.12: Elicited example of verb-final and non-verb-final simple clauses containing perfective verbs of verb tone classes A, B and C, in all tenses (p0-p3 and r1-r2)
8.5.2 Constructions with preverbal markers other than tense markers

This section deals with constructions involving preverbal markers other than tense markers. Section 8.5.2.1 deals with the verb tone patterns in these constructions. The constructions are described in detail in §8.5.2.2-§8.5.2.5.

8.5.2.1 Verb tone patterns of constructions with markers other than tense markers

Not all constructions are given equal attention in this section. The presence of the verum focus marker, for example, has no influence on the form of the verb or the tense marker. Therefore, the verum focus construction (see §8.5.2.4) is not treated here at all. Due to a lack of data, the tone patterns of conditional verbs are not treated either, so that this section is restricted to the tone patterns of imperfective verbs, tonal variation in the habitual marker and the tone patterns of consecutive verb forms. Imperfective verbs, which feature in habitual constructions are also commonly used in other constructions, without the habitual marker.

In finite imperfective verbs, the distinction between Class b and Class c is neutralized. Class A verbs bear a mid-low falling tone in utterance-final position and a low tone in non-final position, as in (250). Class b (cf. (251)) and Class c (cf. (252)) imperfective verbs always bear a high tone. Note that in perfective stems, the high tone is associated with verbs of Class c (see Table 3.16).

(250) wǔ kǒ lyà á ntô
cl1.pvb hab go_to_bush(a).ipfv advlz cl1/2.morning

‘He goes to the bush at night’

(251) yì kǒ bán á mì ṣgɔ
cl3/7a.moon hab shine(b).ipfv advlz 1sg.pp upon

‘the moon shines on me, [...]’

---

7The habitual marker bears a superhigh tone kɔ (cf. (251)), but is realized as kɔ (cf. (250)) with a low-high rising tone when preceded by a low tone. This is due to a regular process of low tone spread in which a superhigh tone is realized as low-high rising when preceded by a low tone (see §3.4.2 for details).
(252) **wù fyá bílúŋ ɲwóm b-ɔ́ lā́ ā**

cl1 give(b).ipfv cl8.suffering cl2.children cl2.det dat advlz

mò̤ mò̤, gë ɲwóm ní kà wù kà

one-red be_there cl2.children cl1.mother however cl1.pvb hab

tfyé bō

know(c).ipfv frust

‘She made those children suffer, not knowing that they were her siblings.’

When the verb stands in utterance-final position, a Class A verb bears a mid-low falling tone (see (253)).

(253) **wù kà kpē**

cl1 hab soak(a).ipfv

⋄ ‘He frequently soaks [things].’

In certain contexts, the tone of the habitual marker is high rather than superhigh or rising, irrespective of the preceding tone. For details, see §8.5.1.

Consecutive verbs also have their own specific tone pattern.⁶ The tonal pattern of verbs introduced by a consecutive marker is different from that of the preceding tense marked clause. Table 8.13 gives an overview of the utterance-final verb tone patterns of perfective consecutive verbs across the tenses and compares them with the tone patterns of non-consecutive verbs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>tense</th>
<th>marker</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>non-consecutive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p₀</td>
<td></td>
<td>ML</td>
<td>LH</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p₁</td>
<td>fā</td>
<td>ML</td>
<td>LH</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p₂</td>
<td>ẫ̃̃ nā</td>
<td>ML ([LH])</td>
<td>H</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p₃</td>
<td>kā</td>
<td>ML ([LH])</td>
<td>H</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f₁</td>
<td>dī</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f₂</td>
<td>kā</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>consecutive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p₀</td>
<td>mī</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>LH</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p₁</td>
<td>mī</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>LH</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p₂</td>
<td>mī</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>HM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p₃</td>
<td>mī</td>
<td>ML</td>
<td>LH</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f₁</td>
<td>mī</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f₂</td>
<td>kā mī</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8.13: Tone patterns of final perfective consecutive verbs in all tenses (p₀-p₃ and f₁-f₂)

⁶See §8.5.2.3 for the function of consecutive verbs.
The tone of the consecutive marker depends on the tense of the preceding tense-marked clause. The marker bears a high tone (mɨ́) when the preceding clause is p0 or p1 (cf. (258), p0) and a mid tone (mɨ̄) when for all other tenses, namely p2-p3 and f1-f2 (see e.g. (256) for p3 and (257) for f1). For more on consecutive constructions, see §8.2.2 and §8.5.2.3.

### 8.5.2.2 The marker kō and the habitual aspect construction

The preverbal marker kō in combination with the imperfective verb form and its characteristic tonal and vocalic patterns (see §8.5.2.1 and §8.1.3, respectively) marks habitual aspect. The marker is found in constructions like those in (254) and (255). The habitual marker does not co-occur with a tense marker, i.e. its use is restricted to the unmarked present tense (p0). The habitual construction is the only construction which requires the imperfective verb form.9

\[(254)\] wù kō lyā ā ntō  
\[
\text{CL1.PVB HAB go_to_bush(a).IPfv ADVLZ CL1/2.night}
\]

‘He [regularly] goes to the bush at night.’

\[(255)\] bā jō bā fyē nō bō kō  
\[
\text{IMPERS want(a).IPfV IMPERS learn(a) SUBORD IMPERS HAB}
\]
\[
\text{lā ṇā ṇkā make(a).IPfV AS CL6.corn_beer}
\]

‘We want to learn how one makes corn beer.’

The use of the habitual construction with the habitual marker kō and the imperfective verb, as in (254) and (255), implies that an action is carried out regularly or constantly over a longer period of time.

### 8.5.2.3 The marker mɨ/mí and consecutive constructions

The consecutive tense marker mɨ/mí occurs in the same slot as the regular tense markers. It cannot co-occur with the latter. A sequence of one or more consecutive clauses always follows a tense-marked clause in a clause chain. The consecutive tense marker expresses the fact that the events or actions described in the individual clauses take place in the chronological order corresponding to the order of the clauses. The subsequent clauses may have the same subjects (as in (256) and (257)) or they may have different subjects (see (258)).

---

9In other tenses, habitual semantics are either expressed periphrastically or they are conveyed by the imperfective verb form alone, as in f1 and f2.
Verb morphology and the verbal complex

(256) kpé dzū kò dĩ fin [...] kpé cl1.woman cl1.certain p3 be(b).p3 prox-there? [...] cl1.woman w-5 mĩ dzě nwőm bĩ b-5 là cl1-det consec say(b).consec cl2.children 3sg.poss cl2-det dat yě comp

‘There once was a woman. [...] The woman said to her children: ... ’

(257) à dĩ yó f dʒǔ b-én mĩ, à mĩ 2sg.pvb f1 go_up(c) loc cl8a.bridge cl8a-det.prox in 2sg consec gān dā gbō wān wā sē, go(a) see(a) cl3.house cl1.child cl1-2sg.poss house_front.loc bā nān tsā fin impers decorate(a) cl7/8.grass_bundle there

‘You will go up on this bridge. You will then go and see that a grass bundle is fixed to the frontside of your child’s house.’

(258) nwőm ně tjū yě bũ nĩm ā wā, cl2.children mother.2poss come(b) comp cl2 live(a) comp 2sg ā mĩ mũ bũ, ā mĩ gi yě dĩ 2sg.pvb consec take(a) cl2 2sg.pvb consec put(b) comp be(b) mũ y-ā cl9.slave cl9-2sg.poss

‘Your siblings have come to stay with you and you take them and make them your slaves.’

In (258) and (257), the actions or events described by the clauses marked by a consecutive marker follow those in the preceding clause in a temporal sequence. But the relation is not always one of chronological order, cf. (256). This can also be seen in the elicited example (259) where the first clause contains the subordinator nō ‘as, when’ and the temporal relation is one of simultaneity rather than sequence.

(259) bũ kò dĩ nō jì mĩ bũ mĩ tāng cl2.pvb p3 be(b) as cl9/10.market in cl2.pvb consec buy(b) dʒǔ cl9.goat

‘When they were at the market, they bought a goat.’

The future consecutive is often used to give polite instructions. In this function, the consecutive clause most commonly follows a conditional clause (260), but it may also follow an f1 or f2 clause (257), or an imperative clause (261).
8.5. Constructions involving finite verb forms

(260) ká mű bí s̀i yí-hdè or yi-kpɔ̀n
cond cl6 germinate(b).cond cl9/10.day cl10-four or cl10-five
à mĩ mũ kɛ̀ b̀i yá mũ, à
2sg.pvb consec take(a) return(c) go_out(b) go_up(c) cl6a 2sg.pvb
mĩ gwɔ̀
consec grind(a)

'When it [the corn] has germinated for four or five days, you remove
it and grind [it].'

(261) yɛ̀ gán tɔ̀ mĩ à ntsɔ̀m mũ-ŋ-gɛ̀-ŋ-gɛ̀
comp go(a) find(a) 1sg.npvb with cl6a-soil cl6a-N-be_red--red
à mĩ tʃù fɔ̀ ndá lá yɛ̀ m=mĩ
2sg.pvb consec come(b) give(b) 1sg.pp dat comp 1sg.pvb = consec
myɛ̀ mùn-dzɔ̀ŋ--dzɔ̀ŋ
lick(c) cl6a-good--red

'...: Go and find me some red soil! Then you will come and give [it] to
me so that I will then lick the sweet [soil].'

8.5.2.4 The marker tɔ̀ and truth focus constructions

The marker tɔ̀ marks truth focus. It precedes the verb, and when a segmental
tense marker is present, the truth focus marker precedes it, too. The presence
of the marker has no influence on the form of the verb or the tense markers.
Examples of constructions involving the marker tɔ̀ are given in (262)-(264).

(262) tɛ̀lɔ̀ mɔ̀n dzé hà yi, dzé gbàn ŋgì lá yɛ̀
T. M. say(b) interj say(b) cl1.in-law cl1.1sg.poss dat comp
n=tɔ̀ tʃù
1sg.pvb=ver.foc come(b).1pfv

'Tela Mwom said: No! Tell my in-law that I am coming!'

(263) wù tɔ̀ yá kwɔ̀ tʃù, wù a kù wɔ̀
cl1.pvb ver.foc go_up(c) enter(c) come(b) cl1.pvb neg cry(a) neg
kɛ̀ b̀i
cl7/8.leg cl8/3sg.poss

'She has reached [here]. Is she not complaining [that] her legs [are
hurting]?'
Verb morphology and the verbal complex

(264) yɛ̄, kó wù tō mē tʃū, wù tā ā comp cond cl1 Irr grow_up(b) finish(a) come(b) cl1 ver. foc neg lá kɔ̀ wɔ̄ sǎm, wù dǐ mɔ́sɨ́ nɨ̄m gbɔ́ námsám, cl1/2 play cl1 f1 must build(c) cl3 house like that nǐ tʃū nǐm cl1/2 mother.3poss come(b) live(a)

‘[...] that when he will have grown up fully, he will not play, he must build a house and bring down his mother.’

Example (262) is in the present tense and contains an imperfective verb. The tone of the Class b verb is high, as expected for an imperfective verb (see §8.5.2.1). The example is taken from a story and is an example of direct speech. When Tela Mwɔm’s mother-in-law requests to see him, he first rejects her request. When his mother-in-law insists, Tela Mwɔm gives in (see (262)). By the use of the truth focus marker, he stresses that he will come to meet her. Example (263) is taken from a spontaneous conversation. The speaker pointed out that the researcher had indeed reached the village (on foot) and inquired whether she was complaining about her legs aching.

In example (264), which is taken from the same conversation as (263), the speaker is quoting a boy, Dya, who was telling everyone that when he will have grown up, he will build a house and have his mother move into the house. The speaker uses the truth focus particle in order to show how Dya was trying to convince people that he was serious.

8.5.2.5 The preverbal conditional marker kó

The conditional ‘tense’ marker kó may either occur in clause-initial position only, preceding the subject, or it may be repeated after the subject. The current section only deals with the second case, in which the marker is repeated after the subject, because we are mainly concerned here with the verbal complex, i.e. the verb and the markers in close association with it. Due to a lack of data, the tone patterns of conditional verbs are not described systematically.

In the construction under discussion, the marker kó occurs twice in the conditional clause, once before the subject pronoun and once in preverbal position. The subsequent clause, which expresses the consequences, also contains an instance of the conditional marker, see (265).
8.5. Constructions involving finite verb forms

(265)  

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{COND~1.SG.PVB} & = \text{COND~die(b)~prox-here~2.PL.PVB~COND~take(a)} \\
tjũ & = \text{džäm,~běn~kó~mù~dʒì~jì~f-án,~prox~here} \\
tʃū & = \text{ā~dʒám,~běn~kó~mù~dʒì~jì~f-com~cl~9/10.grave~9;1.sg.poss~on} \\
\end{align*}
\]

‘If I die here, you will bring a calabash seed, and then you will plant [the seed] on my grave.’

The conditional clause ‘If I die here’ in (265) expresses a hypothetical condition. The consequences are expressed by two clauses, ‘you will bring a calabash seed’ and ‘and then you will plant [the seed] on my grave’, each of which contains a conditional marker.

8.5.3 Negation in constructions involving finite verb forms

As pointed out in §8.2.2, the most basic form of negation is the discontinuous negative marker ā ... wō. However, the realization of negation may vary.

8.5.3.1 Negation in tense marking constructions

In negative clauses, the preverbal tense marker is often merged with the preverbal negative marker ā. When the markers merge, the vowel a of the negative marker replaces the original vowel of the tense marker. The resulting tonal pattern of the combined marker is neither simply a combination of the tone of tense and the negation marker,\(^\text{10}\) nor does the tone of one replace that of the other; see Table 8.14 for an overview of merged tense and negative markers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>tense</th>
<th>tense marker</th>
<th>negation + tense marker</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>p0</td>
<td>ā</td>
<td>ā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p1</td>
<td>fā</td>
<td>fā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p2</td>
<td>ā-nā</td>
<td>nā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p3</td>
<td>kā</td>
<td>kā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f1</td>
<td>dā</td>
<td>dā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f2</td>
<td>kā</td>
<td>kā</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8.14: Tense markers and merged tense + pre-core negation markers

\(^{10}\)Although the tone pattern of the merged marker is not exactly a combination of the two tone patterns involved, it reflects the relative height of the tones of the two markers, with e.g. a higher tone followed by a lower tone in the case of p1 fā or a lower tone followed by a higher tone in p2 nā.
As I have no simple explanation for the tonal changes, I restrict myself here to their description. Examples of p1 and p3 negative phrases with merged tense and negation markers are (266) for p1 and (267) for p3.

(266) wù [fa ñ gàn w5] dʒwō njwén
  CL1 p1; NEG go(a) NEG CL1/2.stream today

‘She did not go to the stream today.’

(267) ŋ = wò mì yē wù dzé l5−l5 bìk3
  1SG.PVB = think ? SUBORD CL1 say(b) empty−RED because
  ŋ = [kā tʃyē w5] yē njwàntl dī ná, dī
  1SG.PVB = p3;NEG know(c) NEG COMP CL7/8.book be(b) as be(b)
  nǐŋ kā-dʒōŋ
  CL7.thing CL7.good

‘So I was thinking that he was lying because I didn’t know at that point that it is good to know how to read and write.’ (lit.: [...] that book is like, is a good thing)

While the subject usually precedes the tense marker and the negative marker, the first person singular preverbal pronoun N= follows the first part of the negative marker ā and cliticizes to the verb when no preverbal TAM marker is present, i.e. in p0. In this case, the 1SG pronoun directly precedes the verbal core, as in (268) (copied from (80c)), see §6.1.1 for more on preverbal pronouns.

(268) [ā ŋ = tʃyē w5]
  NEG 1SG.PVB = know(c) NEG

‘I don’t know.’

Table 8.15 compares the tone patterns of affirmative non-final verbs with those of negated verbs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>negated</th>
<th>affirmative non-final</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tense</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p0</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p1</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p2</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>LH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p3</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>LH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f1</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f2</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8.15: Tone patterns of negated and of affirmative non-final perfective verbs of tone classes A, B and C in all tenses (p0−p3 and f1−f2)
In most tenses, the tone of the affirmative verb form in non-final position and that of the negative verb form are identical. However, in two of the tenses, \( p_2 \) and \( p_3 \), the tone of the negative verb is different than expected. In the first case, the non-hodiernal past \( p_2 \), the verb tone patterns of negative \( p_2 \) clauses are the same as those of affirmative \( p_2 \) clauses (see Table 8.15 for an overview of affirmative and negative tone patterns and Tables 8.16 and 8.17 for examples). However, while the low-high rising tone in affirmative \( p_2 \) clauses could have been derived from an underlying superhigh tone, due to the effect of the preceding low \( p_2 \) marker \( \text{à} \sim \text{nà} \) (see §8.5.1.1), this explanation is not available for the low-high rising tone in negative \( p_2 \) clauses, where the \( p_2 \) marker is merged with the negative marker, resulting in \( \text{nà} \). In this case, the low tone of the \( p_2 \) marker should have no effect on the following verb. An example of a negated Class \( a \) verb in \( p_3 \) is in (269), which is taken from Table 8.17.

(269) \[ \text{bì nà yì wɔ̄} \]  
1PL.PVB p2;NEG eat(b) NEG

‘We didn’t eat [yesterday].’

The second case of non-identical affirmative and negative verb tone patterns is the distant past \( p_3 \). In \( p_3 \), which also differs tonally from the other past tenses in affirmative clauses (see Table 8.15), the tones of affirmative non-final verbs and negative verbs are not the same for Class \( a \) and Class \( b \) verbs.

While the tone of verbs in affirmative \( p_3 \) clauses is low-high rising for Class \( a \) and mid for Class \( b \), the tones for the respective verb tone classes in negative \( p_3 \) clauses are low for Class \( a \) (see (270)) and low-high rising for Class \( b \) (see (271)); see also Table 8.15, Table 8.16 and Table 8.17. Class \( c \) verbs always bear a high tone.

(270) \[ \text{wù kā jì wɔ̄} \]  
CL1.PVB p3;NEG go_down(a) NEG

‘He did not go down.’

(271) \[ \text{wù kā jì wɔ̄} \]  
CL1.PVB p3;NEG spend_day(b) NEG

‘He did not spend the day at home.’

Table 8.16 contains elicited examples of non-final affirmative verbs and Table 8.17 contains examples of negative verbs of verb tone classes \( a \), \( b \) and \( c \).

\(^{11}\) When negated, the verb is followed by the post-verbal negation marker \( wɔ̄ \) and thus non-final.
Verb morphology and the verbal complex

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>verb tone class</th>
<th>tense</th>
<th>example</th>
<th>gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>p0</td>
<td>bɪ̄ kpê gê</td>
<td>'We just soaked corn.'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>p1</td>
<td>bɪ f̄ ŋ kpê gê</td>
<td>'We soaked corn (earlier today).'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>p2</td>
<td>bɪ à kpê gê</td>
<td>'We soaked corn (yesterday).'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>p3</td>
<td>bɪ kà kpê gê</td>
<td>'We soaked corn (long ago).'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>f1</td>
<td>bɪ d̄ ŋ kpê gê</td>
<td>'We will soak corn (later today).'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>f2</td>
<td>bɪ kāá kpê gê</td>
<td>'We will soak corn (after today).'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>p0</td>
<td>bɪ̄ y̋ yi̋ ñâm</td>
<td>'We just ate fufu.'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>p1</td>
<td>bɪ f̄ ŋ y̋ ñâm</td>
<td>'We ate fufu (earlier today).'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>p2</td>
<td>bɪ à y̋ ñâm</td>
<td>'We ate fufu (yesterday).'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>p3</td>
<td>bɪ kà y̋ ñâm</td>
<td>'We ate fufu (long ago).'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>f1</td>
<td>bɪ d̄ ŋ y̋ ñâm</td>
<td>'We will eat fufu (later today).'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>f2</td>
<td>bɪ kāá y̋ ñâm</td>
<td>'We will eat fufu (after today).'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>p0</td>
<td>bɪ̄ y̋ ŋ gbɔ</td>
<td>'We just built a house.'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>p1</td>
<td>bɪ f̄ ŋ y̋ ŋ gbɔ</td>
<td>'We built a house (earlier today).'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>p2</td>
<td>bɪ à y̋ ŋ gbɔ</td>
<td>'We built a house (yesterday).'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>p3</td>
<td>bɪ kà y̋ ŋ gbɔ</td>
<td>'We built a house (long ago).'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>f1</td>
<td>bɪ d̄ ŋ y̋ ŋ gbɔ</td>
<td>'We will build a house (later today).'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>f2</td>
<td>bɪ kāá y̋ ŋ gbɔ</td>
<td>'We will build a house (after today).'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8.16: Elicited examples of affirmative non-verb-final simple clauses containing perfective verbs of Class A, B and C in all tenses (p0-p3 and f1-f2)

### 8.5.3.2 Negation in constructions with preverbal markers other than tense markers

The negative habitual is not marked by a discontinuous marker. Instead it only has the post-core negative marker wɔ̄. Thus, only the preverbal habitual marker kə̋ and the post-core negative marker wɔ̄ are present (cf. (272) and (273)).

(272) mɔ̀ [kə̋ dyà wɔ̄] wú lā

```
CL1.person HAB see(a).IPFV NEG CL1.PP DAT
```

'Nobody [ever] sees him.'
8.5. Constructions involving finite verb forms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>verb tone class</th>
<th>tense</th>
<th>example</th>
<th>gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>p0</td>
<td>bɪ̄ a kpè wɔ̄</td>
<td>‘We did not just soak.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>p1</td>
<td>bɪ̄ fā kpè wɔ̄</td>
<td>‘We did not soak (earlier today).’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>p2</td>
<td>bɪ̄ nā kpè wɔ̄</td>
<td>‘We did not soak (yesterday).’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>p3</td>
<td>bɪ̄ kā kpè wɔ̄</td>
<td>‘We did not soak (long ago).’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>f1</td>
<td>bɪ̄ dā kpè wɔ̄</td>
<td>‘We will not soak (after today).’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>f2</td>
<td>bɪ̄ kā kpè wɔ̄</td>
<td>‘We will not soak (after today).’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>p0</td>
<td>bɪ̄ a yĩ wɔ̄</td>
<td>‘We did not just eat.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>p1</td>
<td>bɪ̄ fā yĩ wɔ̄</td>
<td>‘We did not eat (earlier today).’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>p2</td>
<td>bɪ̄ nā yĩ wɔ̄</td>
<td>‘We did not eat (yesterday).’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>p3</td>
<td>bɪ̄ kā yĩ wɔ̄</td>
<td>‘We did not eat (long ago).’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>f1</td>
<td>bɪ̄ dā yĩ wɔ̄</td>
<td>‘We will not eat (after today).’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>f2</td>
<td>bɪ̄ kā yĩ wɔ̄</td>
<td>‘We will not eat (after today).’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>p0</td>
<td>bɪ̄ a yɨ́ŋ wɔ̄</td>
<td>‘We did not just build.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>p1</td>
<td>bɪ̄ fā yɨ́ŋ wɔ̄</td>
<td>‘We did not build (earlier today).’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>p2</td>
<td>bɪ̄ nā yɨ́ŋ wɔ̄</td>
<td>‘We did not build (yesterday).’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>p3</td>
<td>bɪ̄ kā yɨ́ŋ wɔ̄</td>
<td>‘We did not build (long ago).’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>f1</td>
<td>bɪ̄ dā yɨ́ŋ wɔ̄</td>
<td>‘We will not build (after today).’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>f2</td>
<td>bɪ̄ kā yɨ́ŋ wɔ̄</td>
<td>‘We will not build (after today).’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8.17: Elicited examples of negative simple clauses containing perfective verbs of Class A, B and C in all tenses (p0-p3 and f1-f2)

(273) Pě kõ së gán mõ w-5 yɛ
      P. p3.HAB insult(c).IPFV go(a).IPFV CL1.person CL1-DET COMP
      mõ mõ w-5 [kõ nàm tʃyɛ yɛ]
      NCS.QUOT.Q CL1.person CL1-DET HAB work(a).IPFV know(c).IPFV NEG
      ná wù táŋ dzí tsũ yɛ
      as CL1.PVB buy(b) travel(b) CL7/8.banana QUOT.Q

‘Pe was insulting the man [asking] whether the man doesn’t know how to work as he [aimlessly] buys banana?’

In (272), the semantics are clearly habitual. The sentence could be translated literally as ‘A person always does not see him’. The semantics of (273) are less obviously habitual.

The negative habitual, like the affirmative habitual requires the imperfective form of the verb. The tone patterns of verbs in the negative habitual are the same as in the affirmative habitual: low for Class A and high for Class B and C.

Due to a lack of data, this section only contains a description of the negated habitual. The description of negated consecutive, negated truth focus and
negated conditional constructions has to be postponed until more data is available.

8.5.3.3 Frustrative

Another way to express negation is the frustrative construction. This construction is marked by the right-modifying minor coverb də̆ ‘see’ and of the postverbal frustrative marker bɔ̀, cf. example (274). A preverbal negation marker is not present. The use of the frustrative construction implies that someone has tried to do something and failed.

(274) wù kə̀ [tsé dyá] bɔ̀ tsú b-ɔ́
   CL1 P3.HAB search(a).IPFV see(a).IPFV FRUST CL7/8.banana CL8-DET
   ‘He was searching for the bananas but couldn’t find them.’

While the frustrative marker more commonly immediately follows the verbal core, thus preceding the object as in (274), it may also follow the object, as in (275). The choice between these two options seems to be free. It is unclear how the choice between these two options influences the meaning, if at all.

(275) wù [tsē dā] wān wū bɔ̀
   CL1 search(a) see(a) CL1.child CL1;3SG.POSS FRUST
   ‘She did not find her child.’

In certain contexts, the frustrative marker occurs without the minor coverb də̆ ‘see’. This is the case, e.g., when the ability construction is negated, as in example (230) in §8.4.2. When the main verb is also a verb of cognition, such as tʃyé ‘know’ in (276), the minor coverb is absent.

(276) ā̀ n = kū bì yḗę́ má
   INTERJ 1SG.PVB = cry(a) go_out(b) INTERJ CS.QUOT
   m = bwān mĩŋ gbɔ̀ ā bɔ̇̄ bɔ̇, 1SG.PVB = get_wounded(a) 1SG.NPVB? house.LOC ADVLZ empty–RED
   kɛ̀ n = kɔ́ tʃyé bɔ̀ nĩŋ nɔ̀ n = lɔ̀ even 1SG.PVB = HAB know(c) FRUST CL7(thing) SUBORD 1SG.PVB = do(a)
   k-ɔ́ ḱ
   CL7-REL CL7.SG
   ‘Ah! I cried out. Yeoh! I got wounded in my house for no good reason. I don’t even know what I have done.’

8.5.3.4 The not-yet tense

In order to express the fact that an event has not yet taken place, or that an action has not yet been carried out, a different construction is used that
employs the common post-verbal negation marker \( \text{wɔ̄} \) in combination with the special preverbal marker \( \text{dā} \) (glossed ‘not yet’, cf. (277)). The marker \( \text{dā} \) is probably a merged form derived from the copula verb \( \text{dɨ̋} \) ‘be’ and the common preverbal negation marker \( \text{ā} \). When the marker \( \text{dā} \) is preceded by a low tone preverbal pronoun, as in (278), it is realized with a rising tone.

\[
(277) \quad \text{bō dā jī wɔ̄} \\
\text{cl1.pvb not_yet go_down(a) neg}
\]

‘They have not yet gone down.’

\[
(278) \quad \text{wū dā jī wɔ̄} \\
\text{cl1.pvb not_yet go_down(a) neg}
\]

‘He has not yet gone down.’
Serial verb constructions and verbal adverbs

This chapter presents a first inventory of Mundabli serial verb constructions (in the following referred to as SVCs). It also treats verbal adverbs, which, like verbs, form part of the verbal core but are considered adverbials.

Serial verb constructions are split up into asymmetrical and symmetrical SVCs. The bulk of SVCs in Mundabli are asymmetrical but symmetrical SVCs are also attested. An integral part of my analysis are so-called covers. My use of the term ‘cover’ is adopted from Lovegren (2013: footnote 3, 215). It describes any verb which forms part of a serial verb construction. The term ‘major cover’ thus refers to the ‘major verb’ of an asymmetrical SVC, i.e. the verb from a semantically unrestricted class which determines the semantic core of the asymmetrical SVC, and ‘minor cover’ refers to the verb from a semantically restricted class which modifies the major cover. Thus a ‘cover’ in this sense is simply a verb which forms part of a serial verb construction. An asymmetrical SVC consists of one major cover and one or more minor covers. The major cover comes from a semantically unrestricted class and determines the semantics of the whole construction. The minor cover comes from a semantically restricted class. It semantically modifies the major cover. Minor covers have a fixed place with respect to the major cover. Depending on whether they precede or follow the major cover, they may be referred to as right- or left-modifying covers. With one exception, minor covers in Mundabli are right-modifying. Symmetrical SVCs consist of two or more verbs from a semantically unrestricted class. Both together make up the semantics of the whole symmetric SVC. While the order of verbs in symmetrical SVCs is iconic,

1Kießling (2011: 241) refers to these verbal adverbs as ‘hybrid adverbials’.
216

9.1. Asymmetrical SVCs

Asymmetrical SVCs consist of one verb from a relatively large, open, or otherwise unrestricted class and one or more verbs from a semantically or grammatically restricted (or closed) class. Thus, an asymmetrical SVC may contain several minor coverbs. Their order is discussed in the relevant sections. However, the current description focusses mainly on asymmetrical SVCs with two verbs.

In Mundabli, the verb from the restricted class, i.e. the minor coverb, generally follows the verb from the unrestricted class, i.e. the major coverb, except for the causative construction whose unusual order may be due to its recent origin in a bi-clausal construction. Thus, minor coverbs are generally right-modifying. Semantic categories expressed by asymmetrical SVCs in Mundabli are motion (§9.1.1), aspectuality or aspect-related meanings (§9.1.2), valency (§9.1.3) and manner (§9.1.4).

2Kießling (2011) presents a detailed description and analysis of serial verb constructions in Isu (West-Ring), a closely related language spoken in the close vicinity of Mundabli. This chapter profits a lot from this work, as the structures of the two languages are extremely similar and of course, Kießling (2011) treats the topic at a depth which cannot be achieved in a general descriptive grammar.
9.1.1 Motion

One of the semantic fields expressed by asymmetrical SVCs in Mundabli is motion. As Aikhenvald (2006: 22) points out, this semantic field, which she refers to as “direction and orientation”, “is extremely common in most productively serializing languages”. Motion is understood to include deictic orientation (§9.1.1.1) and path (§9.1.1.2). Manner of motion is not usually expressed by coverbs in Mundabli because, on the one hand, many motion verbs conflate motion and manner and, on the other hand, manner is commonly expressed by clause-final manner adverbs like à mò~mò in (279). See §10.1 for more on manner adverbs.

(279) gbó ñgì à wè mì ā mò~mò
cl3/7a.body cl3;1sg.poss p2 pain(c) 1sg advlz one~red

‘My body was hurting me very much.’

9.1.1.1 Deictic orientation

The motion verbs tʃū ‘come’ and gân ‘go’ are used as right-modifying coverbs and express spatial deixis, i.e. movement to or away from the deictic center. In this function, they co-occur with path verbs like ‘go up’, ‘go down’, ‘return’, etc., with verbs expressing a transfer of custody, such as ‘take’, ‘give’, ‘sell’ etc., and with speech verbs like ‘say’, ‘ask’, ‘call’, etc. in the function of a major coverb.

The verb tʃū ‘come’ encodes movement towards the deictic center when it is used as a right-modifying coverb in an asymmetrical SVC, as e.g. in (280)-(282). The right-modifying coverb is usually pronounced fū, starting with a fricative rather than an affricate. This pronunciation is only attested in the coverb and not when ‘come’ is used as a main verb. However, when pronounced carefully, the minor coverb may also be pronounced tʃū. Otherwise, the form of the verb is the same, whether it is used as minor coverb or as independent verb.

(280) after, à mì [tàn jʊ] yán ñg5m
after 2sg consec cut(b) come(b) cl3/7a.leave cl1/2.plantain

‘After that, you collect plantain leaves.’
218  9.1. Asymmetrical SVCs

(281)  n=lyā  ná f-án,  n=dā  wù  w5  yē  
1SG=go_to_bush(a).IPFV  as  PROX=here  1SG=FL.NEG  hear(b)  NEG  COMP
bēn  fō  [mù  jū]  kpē  tsyē  w-ēn
CL2.PL.P1  take(a)  COME(b)  CL3.POT  CL1.father.2.POSS  CL1-2.PL.POSS
w-ʒ  wū-kwē  w-ʒ  yē  bēn  lō  nǐ  dó  tʃīn
CL3-DET  CL3-home  CL3-DET  COMP  2.PL  do(a)  CL7.thing  certain  there
mī
in

‘As I am going to the bush, I don’t want to hear that you have taken
your father’s traditional pot in order to do something inside.’

(282)  wū  [kē  tʃū],  wū  dzē  n̥  lā  yē
CL1  return(c)  COME(b)  CL1  say(b)  CL1.mother.3SG/PL.POSS  DAT  COMP

‘She returned and said to her mother.’

In (280), the use of the minor coverb ‘come’ implies that the banana leaves
are cut off in order to be kept rather than dropped or thrown away. In (281),
‘come’ is used as minor coverb to convey the meaning ‘bring’ rather than ‘take
(away)’, and in (282), the child returns into the house (to the deictic center)
after having briefly gone outside behind the house to look for her sister.

An example of the use of tʃū ‘come’ as single core verb is (283). Here, the
verb ‘come’ surfaces in its imperfective form.

(283)  tʃū  n=tə́  1SG=FOC  tʃū
T.  M.  say(b)  INTERJ  say(b)  CL1.in-law  CL1.1SG.POSS  DAT  COMP

‘[...] Tela Mwom said: Tell my in-law that I am coming!’

The use of the right-modifying coverb gān ‘go’ conveys direction of move-
ment away from the deictic center, as, e.g. in (284) - (286).

(284)  kwō  gān  tō  mī
enter(c)  GO(a)  there  in

‘Go in there!’

(285)  dyā  [yά  gān]  tʃūn,  wù  sè  ā  mō  mō
D.  climb(c)  GO(a)  there  CL1  be_hot(c)  ADV.LZ  one~red

‘Dya goes up there, he is really hot.’

3Dya’ is the short form for ‘Dieudonné’.
Serial verb constructions and verbal adverbs

(286) wù [bí gān] gbɔ̃ kʊ́n
cl1 exit(b) go(a) cl3.house house_backside.LOC

'She went outside behind the house.'

The use of the right-modifying coverb 'go' in (284)-(286) shows that the subject in each of these examples moves away from the deictic center.

Examples of 'go' as a main verb are found in (287) and (288).

(287) wān w-ɔ̄ bɪ́, wù gān gbɔ̃ kʊ́n
cl1.child cl1-Det exit(b) cl1 go(a) cl3.house behind_house.LOC

'The child went out. She went behind the house.'

(288) yɛ̄ gān, kwó kō mĩ
comp go(a) enter(c) cl7/8.forest in

'[It said]: go into the forest'

The verbs in (288) are interrupted by a pause and are therefore interpreted as independent verbs rather than parts of an SVC.

The right-modifying coverbs 'come' and 'go' may also be used when the major coverb is a verb of speech, like e.g. 'call' or 'say' in (289) and (290). These examples illustrate very well how discourse participants are assigned to the deictic center or not. Each of these examples contains two asymmetrical SVCs, each of which has a different subject, the first forming part of the deictic center while the second does not. Accordingly, in both examples, the right-modifying coverb of the first asymmetrical SVC is 'go', and that of the second is 'come'.

(289) à [bɔ̀ŋ gàn] kpé (é), wù [dzé]
2sg.call(a).ipfv go(a).ipfv cl1.woman interj cl1 say(b).ipfv
tʃù wá lä yɛ̄ (o)
come(b).ipfv 2sg.pp dat comp interj

'You call a woman, [and] she will tell you that [...]'

(290) bĩ mĩ [dzē gàn] bɔ̃ lä, yɛ̄ nǐm nĩ ?url
1pl.consec speak(b) go(a) cl2pp dat comp sit(a) imp.pl.com
mɔ̀ kwe̋ cl1.man cl3/7a.home_village interj cl2 speak(b) come(b).ipfv
bĩ lä yɛ̄, ním mʊ̃ kwe̋ ?url
1pl.pp dat comp cl2.husbands cl3/7a.home_village neg
fyá tĩ wɔ̃ bĩ
give(b).ipfv surprisingly neg 1pl

'We are telling them: Stay and get married to a local man! They are telling us: The local men do not give us [anything].'
The deictic center in (289) is the addressee. The addressee's call "goes" out to a woman, while her answer "comes" back to the addressee. In (290), the use of the deictic coverbs establishes the speaker and those he refers to by the first person plural pronoun bī as the deictic center.

The verbs 'come' and 'go' are also found in initial position in SVCs, such as in (291) and (292). One logical option would be that 'come' and 'go' are variable minor coverbs which may be either right- or left-modifying. However, this is unlikely, because minor coverbs in Mundabi are generally right-modifying. And indeed, when these verbs occur at the left edge of the verbal core, they do not semantically modify the other verbs within the SVC like minor coverbs in asymmetrical SVCs do, and like 'come' and 'go' do when they are at the right edge of the verbal core. Instead, the SVCs in this case have a sequential or purposive reading, which suggests that we are dealing with symmetrical serial verb constructions. Thus, the movement verb 'go', in this case, represents the initial coverb of a symmetric serial verb construction (see §9.2) rather than a left-modifying coverb in an asymmetrical SVC.

(291) yē [gān tsē] mī ā ntsīm mū-ŋ-gē~ŋ-gē à comp go(a) search(a) 1SG COM CL6-soil CL6-N-be_red~red 2SG mī [tʃú fū] ndā lā consec come(b) give(b) 1SG.DAT DAT

'[She said]: go and search for some red soil for me, and then you come and give [it] to me!'

(292) bō [gān mū jū] kpē comp go(a) take(a) come(b) CL3.pot

'They went to take the pot.'

Example (291) contains two SVCs. One starts with 'go', and the other with 'come'. Both can have a sequential or purposive reading. In (292) the verb-core initial verb 'go' co-occurs within one SVC with the verb-core final right-modifying coverb 'come'. According to the current analysis, this SVC consists of an asymmetrical SVC 'take - come' which is nested on a larger symmetrical SVC. This analysis is supported by the fact that the verb-core initial verb 'go' co-occurs within one SVC with the verb-core final right-modifying coverb 'come'. This supports the current analysis of verb core-initial deictic motion verbs as major coverbs of symmetrical SVCs rather than left-modifying minor coverbs of asymmetrical SVCs, because, having a deictic function, 'come' and 'go', which are antonyms, cannot co-occur as minor coverbs within the same asymmetrical SVC. For more on symmetrical SVCs, see §9.2.

9.1.1.2 Path

Path is encoded by asymmetrical SVCs employing motion verbs as right-modifying coverbs. Types of path expressed by asymmetrical SVCs are vertical di-
rection, goal-bounded path and source-bounded path. Path verbs are often clustered, i.e. several path verbs co-occur as minor coverbs in an asymmetrical SVC. The order of these clusters is fixed (at least to a certain extent). Path coverbs always occur in the following order: GOAL - SOURCE - VERTICAL, as can be seen in (307).

**Vertical Direction**  Vertical direction is encoded by the right-modifying coverbs yá ‘ascend’ (293)-(294) and šì ‘descend’ (295)-(297).

(293) à mī [wū bī yā] mū 2SG CONSEC drain(c) exit(b) go_up(c) CL6

‘You then take it [the corn] out and drain it [...].’

(294) kā mū gé à [tū fī bī yā] fū COND CL6 settle(b) 2SG scoop(b) pass(b) exit(b) go_up(c) CL3.head w-ʒ CL3-DET

‘When it has settled, you remove the head.’

(295) wān w-ʒ [tsǐ bī jī] dū w-ʒ CL1.child CL1-DET spit(b) exit(b) go_down(a) CL3.bean(s) CL3-DET wū dzê CL1 pp mouth.LOC

‘The child spit the bean out of her mouth.’

(296) wū [gī jī] tē kī gbū CL1 put(b) go_down(a) CL7/8.walking_stick CL7;3SG.POSS CL3.house sè house_front.LOC

‘Then she put her traveling stick down in front of the house.’

(297) kā wū [kpə̄ jī] gū w-ʒ tfōn, when CL1 light(a) go_down(a) CL3/7.fire CL3-DET CL1/2.fireplace nī wū [tén bī jī] fī-ŋi CL1.mother CL1.CL1.POSS drip(c) exit(b) go_down(a) CL6.water sè CL3/7a.attic

‘When she lit the fire in the fire place, her mother let a little bit of water drip down from the attic.’

---

4The verbs yá ‘ascend’ and šì ‘descend’ are glossed in the examples as ‘go_up’ and ‘go_down’, respectively.
9.1. Asymmetrical SVCs

The coverbs encode the vertical direction of the action described by the main verb. The extent to which the encoding of vertical direction is obligatory is still unclear. The path coverbs yə́ 'ascend' and ʃi᷆ 'descend' are often preceded by a goal or source bounded coverb such as bi̋ 'exit' or kwó 'enter', as in (293), (294) and (295).

Examples of yə́ 'ascend' and ʃi᷆ 'go_down' as main verbs are found in (298) and (299), respectively.

(298) à dì yá ɪ dʒí b-én mì
2SG f1 go_up(c) LOC cl8a.bridge cl8a-DEM.PROX in

‘You will go up on this bridge.’

(299) Dyā sé ɣə̀, kà wù kán dó niŋ ṇŋ3
D. be_hot(c) COMP COND cl1 hold(c) cl7.thing upon
nì' kà ʃì cl1.mother.3POSS f2 descend(a)

‘Dya is very determined. If he continues like that, his mother will come down.’

The minor coverb ʃi᷆ 'descend' may also co-occur with non-movement verbs, such as the major coverbs 'ask', 'show' and 'call' in examples (300)-(302).

(300) nì' [bú ʃí] tí wù là, ɣə̀ mì
cl1/2.mother ask(b) go_down(a) surprisingly cl1.pp DAT comp 1SG
wān, pwóm w-ā dì fū nà (o) cl1.child cl1.husband cl1-2SG.POSS be(b) surprisingly where INTERJ

‘Her mother will ask her: My child, where is your husband?’

(301) n= dú [tsì ʃí] dʒí dè nŋ1 wān
1SG=f1 show(a) go_down(a) cl3.road cl9.place subord cl1.child
w-ā dì f-ɔ̄ cl1-2SG.POSS be(b) PROX-REL

‘I will show you the way to where your child is.’

(302) wù [gān bɔ̄ŋ ʃí] dz5ŋ̄ təlā mwóm
cl1- go(a) call(a) go_down(a) again T. M.

‘She went again to call Tela Mwom.’

What exactly the coverb contributes to the overall meaning is unclear. In (300) and (301), ʃi᷆ may be translatable as something like ‘reveal’. In (302), ʃi is used either because she is calling down to Tela Mwóm⁶ or because she is calling him to come down from where he is.

⁵In the given context, 'hot' means something along the lines of 'eager, determined'.
⁶Tela Mwóm is in the bush, which is usually lower than the village, as villages are often situated on hills tops.
Goal-bounded path

As stated in Kießling (2011: 112), “[g]oal bounded path verbs incorporate reference to an endpoint of the motion [...]”. Attested goal-bounded path coverbs are kwó ‘enter’ and kɛ́ ‘return’.

The verb kwó ‘enter’ denotes movement into a container and acts as the antonym of bi̋ ‘exit’. As minor coverb in asymmetrical SVCs, kwó ‘enter’ adds its meaning of ‘movement into a hollow object’ to the meaning of the core-verb, as in (305), (303) and (304).

(303) wān kpé w-5 wù kà dì w-5
   cl1.child cl1.woman cl1-det cl1 p3 be(b) cl1-rel
   bwé–bwé wù kà mǒm w-5 byən, wù mǔ
   cl1.toddler–red cl1 p3 suck(b) cl1-rel cl3/7a.breast cl1 take(a)
   dō w-5, wù [bǎŋ kwō] wú dzé
   cl3.beans cl3-det cl1 lock(b) enter(c) cl1 pp cl7.mouth

‘The baby girl, who was nursing, took the bean and put [it] into her mouth.’

(304) kā à dzỳẹ kpé mǔ à mǐ mǔ jú
   cond 2sg cook(a) complete(a/c?) cl6 2sg consec take(a) come(b)
   ŋkā mú-nkɔ̀n mǒ à mǐ [nōŋ]
   cl6.corn_beer cl6-strong_corn_beer cl6-det 2sg consec add(a?)
   kwó jì tfìn ngò
   enter(c) go_down(a) there upon

‘When you have completed cooking, you then take the strong corn beer and you mix it in there.’

(305) tsə̀m b-5 [tʃú kwō] gbá, tsũ
   cl7/8.python cl8-det come(b) enter(c) house.loc hit(b)
   kpè w-5 áná tsũ wù áná tsũ wù áná,
   cl1.woman cl1-det like that hit(b) cl1 like that hit(b) cl1 like that
   lýfm wù, kũ wû
   wrap_around(b) cl1 tie(a) cl1

‘The pythons came into the house, they beat the woman like that, beat her like that, beat her like that, wrapped around her and tied her.’

All attested SVCs with the minor coverb kwó ‘enter’ take a locative object, i.e. a locative phrase consisting of a noun plus a postposition, or the locative form of a noun, as in (305), just like the independent verb. An example of the independent use of kwó ‘enter’ is in (306).

(306) wù kwō gbá
   cl1 enter(c) house.loc

‘She entered the house.’
The verb kẹ́ ‘return’ denotes movement back to a place which was visited earlier. It is used as a minor coverb in an asymmetrical SVC when movement back to a certain location is involved, as in (307) and may also be used when an event or action is repeated, as in (308).  

(307) ká mű bí sì yi-àndé or yì-kpōn, à  
cond cl.6 germinate(b) cl.9/10.day cl.10-four or cl.10-five 2sg  
mì (mű kẹ́ bí yá) mű, à mű gwò  
consec take(a) return(c) exit(b) go_up(c) cl.6 2sg consec grind(a)  

‘After germinating for four or five days, you then take it out again and grind [it].’

(308) bọ̀ yíŋ yá gbɔ̀, bọ̀ [yíŋ kẹ́ yá]  
cl.2 build(c) go_up(c) cl.3.house cl.2 build(c) return(c) go_up(c)  
t-5 tʃi tɔ̀  
dist-there up dist-det  

‘They build the house upwards. They build and go up again, up there.’

In example (308), the speaker explains how, in Europe, houses have several floors. In this case, tɔ̀ tʃi tɔ̀ ‘up there’ refers to Europe.

The verb ‘return’ is attested as major coverb, as e.g. in (309) and as independent verb in elicited sentences.

(309) wù [kẹ̀ tʃú], wù džé n𝑓 lā yɛ̀  
cl.1 return(c) come(b) cl.1 say(b) mother.3sg/pl.poss dat comp  
‘She returned and told her mother: …’

In (309), kẹ́ heads an asymmetric verb construction. The girl, who had left the house and gone behind it, returns into the house, and thus into the deictic center. This explains the use of the minor coverb tʃú.

Source-bounded path  Source-bounded path coverbs incorporate a reference to the initial point of a motion. The source-bounded path coverbs attested in Mundabli are bɪ́ ‘exit’ and tɔ̀ ‘away, off’.

The verb bɪ́ ‘exit’ denotes movement out of a container. It is commonly used as path-specifying coverb, as e.g. in (310)-(313).

(310) wān w5 [tsí bɪ́ tʃí] d5 w-5  
cl.1.child cl.1-det spit(b) exit(b) go_down(a) cl.3.bean(s) cl.3-det  
wù džè  
cl.1 pp cl.7.mouth  

‘The child spit out the bean from her mouth.’

While a repeated action or event may be marked by the minor coverb kẹ́ ‘return’, it is more commonly expressed by the hybrid adverbial dzʊŋà ‘again’; see §9.4.1.4.
Serial verb constructions and verbal adverbs

(311) dɔ̄ cl.3.beans fall(a) exit(b) go_down(a) cl.3-one

‘One of the beans fell down.’

(312) kə́ cl.1 when light(a) go_down(a) cl.3-7a.fire cl.3-det cl.1/2.fireplace ń̥ cl.3-wē [t̥́n b̥́ f̌í] fi-ngĩ cl.1.mother cl.1/3sg.poss drip(b) go_down(a) cl.6-water š̌ cl.3/7a.attic

‘When she lit the fire in the fireplace, her mother let a little bit of water drop down from the attic.’

(313) kə̀ cl.3 mū b̥́ š̌ yí-ndē or yĩ-kp̌n cond cl.6 germinate(b).cond cl.9/10.day cl.10-four or cl.10-five à mĩ [mũ ǩe b̥́ yã] mũ ā mĩ 2sg.consec take(a) return(c) exit(b) go_up(c) cl.6 2sg.consec gwō grind(a)

‘After germinating for four or five days, you then remove it and grind.’

In all these examples, b̥́ is understood in its literal sense as movement out of a container. Note also that, in all these examples, ‘exit’ co-occurs with a vertical coverb (see 9.1.1.2).

The coverb b̥́ ‘exit’ can also be used in a figurative sense, as in (314) and (315).

(314) kə́ wù cl.1 ń̥ b̥́ wū nǧĩ ť̌mĩ, dɛ̀ nũ̌ wū cond cl.1 shake(a) exit(b) cl.1pp upon there cl.9.place subord cl.1 ǩ̌ dĩ f-ã, kp̌e w-ĩ gb̌̊ gb̌̊ p̌̌ be(b) prox.rel cl.1.woman cl.1-det house.loc cl.3/7a.body wū š̌, gb̌̊ wū yè cl.3/3sg.poss be_hot(c) cl.3/7a.body cl.3/3sg.poss start(a) n-sè inf-be.hot(c)

‘When he shook his body where he was, the woman in the house felt hot, she started feeling hot.’ (lit.:...the woman in the house, her body was hot, her body started being hot.)
9.1. Asymmetrical SVCs

(315) ānā wù kò [fǒ̤ bì gǎn] āná, kpé w-5
like_that cl1 p3 tell(a) exit(b) go(a) like_that cl1.woman cl1-det
kpì mè ŋ-kpì-n
die(b) only inf-die(b)-inf

‘Immediately when she was reporting like that, the woman died on
the spot.’

In (314), bì is used together with the major coverb bì ‘shake’. The exact
function of bì here is unclear. In (315), where bì co-occurs with the major
coverb fǒ̤ ‘tell’, it probably means something like ‘reveal’.

An example of bì ‘exit’ as an independent verb is found in (316)

(316) w-5 wān bì, wù gān mù jū
cl1-det cl1.child exit(b) cl1 go(a) take(a) come(b)
kpū bɔ̃ gbà
cl3/7a.wooden_pot 3pl.poss house.loc

‘Each child went out and brought a wooden pot from the house.’

The verb tɔ̄ which means ‘kick’ when used as an independent verb, func-
tions as a sort of centrifugal marker when used as a right-modifying coverb
in an asymmetrical SVC. In this case, it is translatable as something along the
lines of ‘away, off’, see e.g. (317) and (318).

(317) wù bʊ́ŋ tɛ̄ k-ɔ́, wù [yɔ̄ tɔ̄]
wù bʊ́ŋ tɛ̄ k-ɔ́, wù [yɔ̄ tɔ̄]
c1 pick(b) cl7.walking_stick cl7-det cl1 throw(a) away(b)

‘Then she picked up the stick and threw [it] away [from herself].’

(318) yɛ̄ wù kwō gbà, wù dā bō kò [yā tɔ̄]
yɛ̄ wù kwō gbà, wù dā bō kò [yā tɔ̄]
comp cl1 enter(c) house.loc cl1 see(a) impers p3 sweep(a) away(b)

‘When she was about to enter the house, she saw [that] someone had
swept her house.’

In (317), the centrifugal meaning is straightforward. In (318), the coverb
illustrates the dirt being swept away. It seems that some kind of movement
away from the body is implied. The same coverb tɔ̄ is commonly used in a non-
literal sense, meaning something like ‘cease to exist’ or ‘be(come) useless’, as
in (319) and (320), respectively.
Serial verb constructions and verbal adverbs

(319)  wù dzé  āy,  n=dî  yó  tfín sè,  n=gân  
      cl1 say(b) interj 1SG = fî go_up(c) there cl3/7a.attic 1SG = go(a)  
      dâ nîn  kî  [lâm  nîm  tō]  
      see(a) cl7.thing cl7 make(a).ipfv stop_burning(c).ipfv away(b).ipfv  
      k-ð  gū  w-ð  
      cl7-REL cl3/7a.fire cl3-Det  

'She said: Shiish! I will go up into the attic and find out myself what is putting out the fire.' (lit.: ‘[…] the thing which is putting out the fire.’)

(320)  but  bī  mî  kâän  mbē  kî-dʒîn  ā  bû-dʒwê  bû  
      but 1PL consec have(c) cl2.people adjvz-?? advlz cl2-many cl2  
      nûn  b-ð  yë  bû  [lâ  bô  tâ]  ndʒûm  
      want(c) cl2-REL subord cl2 do(a) be_bad(a) away(b) cl8.things  
      b-f  
      cl8-1PL-Poss  

'But we have so many people who are hating us, who want to spoil our things.'

In (319), the coverb tô accompanies the major verb njîm ‘stop burning’; in (320), it implies that the things referred to will be useless once they have been spoiled. The function of tô ‘kick, away’ resembles that of fî ‘pass’, which is often translatable as ‘disappear’ or ‘cease to exist’ (see below). I cannot provide a spontaneous example of the independent use of tô ‘kick’, but it is attested in elicitation.

**Center-bounded path**  Center-bounded path coverbs integrate a reference point along their path which is neither its beginning nor its end (Kießling 2011: 150). Center-bounded path verbs in Mundabli are fî ‘pass’, tsâ ‘surpass’ (but is only attested in combination with fî) and dâŋ ‘cross’.

The semantics of the verb fî ‘pass’ are somewhat blurred when the verb is used as a minor coverb; see (329). The coverb can often be translated as ‘disappear’ or ‘cease to exist’, as in (321) and (322).

(321)  í  nsîlâ  mî  wân  mî  [lê  fî]  
      loc cl1/2.afternoon 1SG cl1.child consec get_lost(a) pass(b)  

‘And in the afternoon, my child went missing.’

(322)  sî  yi-mwô  ânâ  mbē  bû-tô  [bi  fî]  
      cl9/10.day cl9-one like_that cl2.people cl2-three exit(b) pass(b)  
      gân  
      go(a)  

‘On one day, three people pass away.’
In (321), the use of fɨ implies that the child is gone. The same holds for (322). The same coverb is also used in a figurative sense, implying that something is ‘lost’, i.e. that it is either gone or useless beyond repair, as in (323) and (324).

(323) mò nō fɨ=kà mū w-5 wān wū
  cl1.man subord 1sg = p3 marry(a) cl1-rel cl1.child cl1.cl1.poss
  kà [fɛl fɨ] p3 be_blind(a?) pass(b)

  ‘The man whose daughter I married was blind.’

(324) ndʒɔmyīn (nō) wù kà fɛ b-5 yē wū yī kà
  cl8.food subord cl1 p3 want(a) cl8-rel comp cl1 eat(b) p3
  [bō fɨ] be(com)e_bad(a) pass(b)

  ‘The food which he wanted to eat was spoiled.’

The minor coverb fɨ is also used to express comparative, as in (325) and (326).

(325) bì dzé gàn bō læ yē, [tō fɨ] ā
  1pl speak(b) go(a) cl2pp dat comp be_smart(b) pass(b) com
  yū y-ā (ö)
  cl9/10.buttock cl9-2sg.poss interj

  ‘We always tell them that they should be more careful with their sex-life.’

(326) piṭà dzé yē wū ā fyá wō fɨ mbī
  P. say(b) comp cl1 neg give(b).ipfv neg cl19-palm_wine
  f-ō mī læ, yē fɨ [siŋ fɨ]
  cl19-det 1sg.pp dat comp cl19 be_small(a) pass(b)

  ‘Peter said that he is not giving me that bit of wine, that it is too little.’

The verb tsɔ ‘surpass’ is only attested together with fɨ, which suggests that tsɔ fɨ is a fixed expression rather than a combination of verbal adverb and verb. In combination with the coverb fɨ ‘pass’, tsɔ expresses comparative semantics, see e.g. (327).

(327) gbɔ ŋgî [gã tsɔ fɨ] gbɔ
  cl3.house cl3;1sg.poss be_fat(b) surpass(b) pass(b) cl3.house
  w-ā læ
  cl3-2sg.poss dat

  ‘My house is bigger than yours.’
Serial verb constructions and verbal adverbs

(328)  wù [yám ts̃̄ f̃]  
       cl.1 sing(b) surpass(b) pass(b)  
       ◊‘She sings most [of all].’

An example for the independent use of f̃ ‘pass’ is found in (329).

(329)  ŋ̃ = tʃyé d̃̃ ñ̃ wù f̃ f-ɔ́  
       1SG = know(c) cl.9.place SUBORD cl.1 pass(b) PROX-REL  
       ‘I know the place which she had passed [through].’

The right-modifying minor coverb dǎn ‘cross’ may specify the direction of a movement verb, as in (330).

(330)  wù f̃̃  ā [ŋ-w̃̃ d̃̃]  
       cl.1 be_occupied(b) COM INF-smuggle(c) cross(a)  
       ◊‘He is crossing secretly.’

Like f̃ ‘pass’, the coverb dǎn ‘cross’ may also express comparative semanticts (331).

(331)  kp̃̃ tʃá̃ m̃̃ y-ɔ́ ā [l̃̃ d̃̃]  
       cl.9/10.death Tsham cl.10-DET PROX-DET p̃̃ be_strong(a) cross(a)  
       b̃̃i, h̃̃̃y  
       exit(b) INTERJ  
       ‘Death in Tsham is really strong, hey!’

An elicited example of the independent use of dǎn ‘cross’ is found in (332).

(332)  m̃̃ w-ɔ̄ ā n-dǎn mbʊ̄ŋ ɪ̃  
       cl.1.person cl.1-DET be_occupied(b) COM INF-cross(a) cl.1/2.river LOC  
       d̃̃ ŋ̃̃ m̃̃  
       cl.8a.bridge in  
       ◊‘The man is crossing the river via the bridge.’

9.1.2 Aspectuality or aspect-related

Asymmetrical serial verb constructions in Mundabli may also encode aspectuality or aspect-related meanings, which is cross-linguistically common for asymmetrical SVCs (Aikhenvald 2006: 23). Among the meanings expressed by asymmetrical SVCs are continuative (§9.1.2.1), completive (§9.1.2.2) and persititive (§9.1.2.3). Just like in other languages, posture verbs (‘stay’, ‘sit’) and verbs of termination (‘finish’) surface as coverbs in the relevant constructions (Aikhenvald 2006: 23).
9.1.2.1 ᵇ dō ‘stay, remain’

When it is used as a right-modifying coverb in an ASVC, the verb ᵇ dō ‘stay, remain’ conveys continuative semantics, meaning roughly ‘to keep on doing something’, as in (333) (repeated here from (299)) and (334).

(333) .dyà sé yē, kà wù [kán ᵇ dō] nìŋ ng5
  D. be_hot(c) COMP COND CL1 hold(c) stay(b) CL7.thing upon
  ní’ kà ſí
  CL1.mother.3POSS f2 descend(a)

‘Dya is very determined. If he keeps on like this, his mother will come down.’.

(334)  m= [bī yā ᵇ dō] njwén sūtēe tšin njwén, kě
  1SG = exit(b) go_up(c) stay(b) now so.much there now even
  n=kà yā bī bò t-ší wū t-ší
  1SG = P3 go_up(c) exit(b) FRUST DIST-there CL1? DIST-DET

‘I’ve gotten up and stayed here for so long today, I did not even reach up there.’

Examples of ᵇ dō ‘stay’ as a main verb are found in (335) and (336).

(335) wān w-ši mī ᵇ dō ā w5m
  CL1.child CL1-DET CONSEC stay(b) ADVLZ alive?

‘The child stayed alive.’

(336) ᵇ dō kī-dzōŋ
  stay(b) ADVLZ-good(b)

‘Stay well!’

The phrase in (336) is a greeting often used upon departure.

9.1.2.2 mē ‘finish’

The verb mē ‘finish’, when used as a right-modifying coverb, expresses completive aspect, as in (337)-(340). As Aikhenvald: 23 points out, this is cross-linguistically common for coverbs with similar semantics (Aikhenvald 2006: 23).

(337) yē n= [njw5m mē] nām b-ší
  COMP 1SG = stir(b) finish(a) CL8.fufu CL8-DET

‘[Tell her] that I’ve finished stirring the fufu!’
Serial verb constructions and verbal adverbs

(338) bɔ̀ yi d5 w-ɔ̀, bɔ̀ yi bɔ̀ yi bɔ̀ yi bɔ̀
    cl2 eat(b) cl3.beans cl3-det cl2 eat(b) cl2 eat(b) cl2 eat(b) cl2
    yi, bɔ̀ [yì mɛ́]
    eat(b) cl2 eat(b) finish(a)

‘They ate the beans. They ate and ate and ate until they had finished.’

(339) ká à [wɔ́ŋ mɛ́], kó m=mú, mɛ́ n=tsɔ̀
    cond 2sg squash(a) finish(a) cond 1sg=drink(b) 1sg 1sg = show(a)
    dɛ̀ nʊ̀ wān w-ɔ̀ kà fì f-ɔ̀
    place subord cl1.child cl1-det p3 pass(b) prox-rel

‘After you have finished squishing, after I have drunk, I will show you
where your child has gone.’

(340) yɛ̀ gbiŋ dì [kó yi mé] bɛ̀n
    comp cl9.leopard f1 catch(b) eat(b) finish(a) 2pl.

‘[...] that the leopard will catch and eat all of you.’

The use of this coverb implies that the action described by the main verb
is not carried on, i.e. it is either completed or interrupted. The verb mɛ́ ‘finish’
is also attested as an intransitive main verb.

9.1.2.3 nǐm ‘sit’

The right-modifying coverb nǐm ‘sit’ when used as a main verb, conveys per-
sistent meaning, i.e. it shows that an action has been ongoing for a while and
is still ongoing at the time of reference, as e.g. in (341) and (342).

(341) wù [kʊ̀ nǐm mɛ́] n-kò
    cl1 cry(a) sit(a) only inf-cry(a)

‘She was still only crying.’

(342) à [lə̀ nǐm] màn
    2sg do(a).ipfv sit(a).ipfv what

‘What are you still doing [here]?’

Examples of ním as a main verb are (343) and (344).

(343) bɔ̀ ním sūtēee, bɔ̀ tũ̀ nũwɛ̀n nswɛ̀n
    3pl sit(a) extensively 3pl come(b) now cl2.friends

‘They stayed [together] for a long time, they now have become friends.’
(344) à mī [nim jī] bā dê nō bō  
2sg consec sit(a) go_down(a) exactly cl.9.place subord impers  
kōn f-3 gu, ā fi-ngī wā kān  
līght_fire(a) prox-rel cl.3/7.fire com cl.19-water 2sg.pp hands.loc  

‘Then (you will) sit down exactly where they make fire, with a bit of water in your hand.’

While in example (343), nim is the only verb, in (344), it forms the major verb of an asymmetrical SVC.

9.1.3 Valency

9.1.3.1 Causative SVCs with lō ‘do, make’

The only attested verb of causation in causative SVCs is lō ‘do, make’, which means that the initial coverb of a causative SVCs is extremely restricted. The second coverb in a causative SVC with lō ‘make’ is always intransitive; see e.g. (345)-(347). Causation of transitive verbs is expressed by multi-clausal constructions; see (350).

(345) why wū [lō bwān] mī yē  
why cl.1 make(a) be_wounded(a) 1sg quot.q  

‘Why has he injured me?’

(346) kwē b-ēn ī nā t-ān sē  
cl.7/8.rat cl.8-dem.prox boast(a) dist-here cl.3/7a.attic  
t-ānī, n - df [lō kpī mē] kwē  
dist-this_way 1sg = f1 make(a) die(b) finish(a) cl.7/8.rat  
b-ēn t-ān sē ō  
cl.8-dem.prox dist-here cl.3/7a.attic emph  

‘These rats which are showing off in this attic - I will kill all of them!’

(347) ngī m-ō [lā nīm tō] gu  
cl.6.water cl.6-det make(a) stop_burning(c) away(c) cl.3.fire  
w-ō yā  
cl.3-det interj  

‘The water will put out the fire.’

The verb lō ‘do, make’ in causative asymmetrical SVCs represents the only attested case of a left-modifying coverb.

The verb ‘do, make’ is also attested as an independent main verb; see e.g. (348), which contains the imperfective form of the verb.
Serial verb constructions and verbal adverbs

(348) kpé  w-ën,  à  kɔ̀  lè  mān
cl1.woman  cl1-dem.prox  2sg  hab  do(a).ipfv  what

‘Woman, what are you doing?’

As already pointed out, causation may also be expressed by a multi-clause construction involving the verb lə ‘make’ in the first clause, see e.g. (349) and (350).

(349) wān  w-ën,  dī  wà  nṑ  à  lā  w-5  nó  mī
cl1.child  cl1-dem.prox  be(b)  2sg  subjord  2sg  do(a).cl1-rel  as  1sg
wān  w-5  lē  f-ān  gbɔ̀
cl1.child  cl1-det  get_lost(a).ipfv  prox-here  cl3.house
kùŋ
backside_of_house.loc

‘Child, you are the one who made my child get lost behind this house.’

(350) mī  wān  kà  lā  mī  n=tsű  wù
1sg  cl1.child  p3  make(a)  1sg  1sg  =beat(b)  cl1sg

‘My child, made me beat her.’

In (349), cause and effect clauses are linked by the connective nō which translates roughly as ‘as’. In (350), cause and effect clauses are simply juxtaposed to each other. In the latter example, a multi-clause construction is the only possible solution because the effect verb tsű is transitive and causative SVCs only allow intransitive second verbs. However, the use of a multi-clause construction is also possible when the second verb is intransitive.

9.1.4 Manner

Manner may be expressed by clause-final manner adverbs (see §10.1) or by manner SVCs. Manner SVCs involve minor coverbs which describe the way in which the action referred to by the main verb is performed. However, adverbs are much more common. Only a very restricted inventory of manners can be expressed by manner SVCs. These are described in the current section.

9.1.4.1 dzǐ ‘travel; aimlessly’

The use of the right-modifying coverb dzǐ ‘travel’ implies that something is done aimlessly, as in (351)-(353).

(351) bī  bù̆  gān  bō  lā,  yē  bēn  [lā  dʒĩ]
1pl  ask(b)  go(a)  cl2.pp  dat  comp  2pl  do(a).ipfv  walk_around(b).ipfv
tí  mān
surprisingly  what

‘We are asking them: What are you doing [aimlessly]?’
9.1. Asymmetrical SVCs

(352) bɔ̀ fò tʃù bí lá yē bɔ̀ [tse cl2 tell(a).IPFV come(b).IPFV 1PL,PP DAT COMP CL2 search(a)]
dzì gàn] kpö walk_around(b) go(a) CL3/7a.money

‘They are telling us that they are searching around for money.’

(353) Pè kō sè gàn mô w-š yē
Petrus p3;HAB insult(c).IPFV go(a).IPFV CL1.man CL1-DET COMP mē mô w-š kō nām tʃyē wǒ nā wù
NC5.QUOT.Q CL1.man CL1-DET HAB work(a) know(c) NEG as CL1
[tān dzì] tsū yē
buy(b) travel(b) CL7/8.banana QUOT.Q

‘Petrus was insulting the man [asking] whether the man doesn’t know how to work as he [aimlessly] buys banana?’

In all these examples, the coverb dzì adds a meaning of aimlessness to the meaning of the major verb. The verb dzì ‘travel’ is also frequently used as main verb, as in (354).

(354) bɔ̀ dzì mē mǚntù mī mǚntù mī
cl2 travel(b).IPFV only CL7/8.car in CL7/8.car in

‘They only ever travel by car.’

9.1.4.2 bān ‘be clean; be white; shine; clearly’

The verb bān, which may mean ‘shine’, ‘be white’ or ‘be clean’ when used as a main verb, means as much as ‘clearly, really’ when used as right-modifying coverb in an asymmetrical SVC; see e.g. (355). and (356). It can also have evidential meaning, as in (356).

(355) n=[gān dā bān] nīŋ kī lē nīm
1SG = go(a) see(a) be_clean(b) CL7.thing CL7 do(a).IPFV exit(c)
tō k-š gū w-š
away(b) CL7-REL CL3/7.fire CL3-DET

‘I will go to see clearly what is putting out this my fire.’

(356) yē ń=[nīŋ bān] yē n=dā wū lā
COMP 1SG = want(c) be_clean(b) COMP 1SG = see(a) CL1 PP DAT

‘[She said]: I really want to see him.’

The verb bān ‘clean; white’ is also used as a main verb, as e.g. in (357).

(357)
Serial verb constructions and verbal adverbs

9.2 Symmetrical SVCs

Following Aikhenvald (2006: 22), a serial verb construction is classified as a symmetrical serial verb construction (or symmetrical SVC) if all its components come from unrestricted classes. Unlike in asymmetrical SVCs, the order of components in symmetrical SVCs tends to be iconic, reflecting the temporal sequence of subevents. As Aikhenvald points out, symmetrical serial verb constructions are not ‘headed’ in the way asymmetrical ones are: all their components have equal status in that none of them determines the semantic or syntactic properties of the construction as a whole. A symmetrical SVC may contain an embedded asymmetrical SVC, as in (358), (359) or (360). Note that, in this case, the symmetrical SVC, strictly speaking, contains verbs from a restricted class, namely the minor coverbs in the embedded asymmetric SVCs. In Mundabli, symmetrical SVCs are rare as compared to asymmetrical SVCs. Only sequential events are expressed by symmetrical SVCs (§9.2.1). Fixed expressions which have the structure of symmetrical SVCs are described in §9.2.2.

Boundaries of symmetrical SVCs and embedded asymmetrical SVCs in the examples in this section are marked by square brackets. In asymmetrical SVCs, the major coverb is underlined.

9.2.1 Sequential events

Symmetrical serial verb constructions in Mundabli generally encode sequential events, i.e. they refer to a sequence of actions; see e.g. (358)-(360). In some cases, such as in (358), they may also have a purpose reading.

(358) yē gbɨŋ dɨ [kɔ́ yí mɛ́] bɛn, […]
comp cl9.leopard f1 catch(b) eat(b) finish(a) 2pl.

‘...that the leopard will catch and eat all of you, […]’
9.2. Symmetrical SVCs

The symmetrical SVCs in (358) and (359) consist of major coverbs (kò ‘catch’ and tém ‘shoot’, respectively) followed by asymmetrical SVCs with right-modifying coverbs (yí mé ‘eat-finish’ and kwé jú ‘return home from the bush-come’, respectively). In (360), the asymmetrical SVC kwé jú ‘return home from the bush-come’, also with a right-modifying coverb, precedes the second major coverb dà ‘see’.

9.2.2 Fixed expressions

This section deals with fixed expressions which have their origin in lexicalized symmetrical serial verb constructions. The verbs that make up these SVCs frequently co-occur. I am aware that it is problematic to assume that these are all symmetric SVCs. When one of the verbs does not occur on its own, it is hard to determine whether the whole SVC is symmetrical or not. I classify them here as symmetric SVCs because none of the verbs they consist of belongs to a closed class; however, the criteria which distinguish asymmetric from symmetric SVCs are somewhat problematic. The fixed expressions are listed in (361)-(364). In the headings they are provided without tone.

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8In this paragraph, verbs are given with the tone patterns they bear in the relevant examples.
(361) **nim kɔ̀m** ‘wait’:

Pē dzé yē bī [nīm kâm] áyān, yē mò
Petrus say(b) COMP 1PL sit(a) wait(?) like_that COMP CL1.person
nàm, dʒībri jē wū tān tsú
CL9.animal Gabriel want(a) CL1 buy(b) CL7/8.banana

‘Pe said that we should wait, that animal man, Gabriel, wants to buy banana.’

(362) **fʊŋ mu** ‘help’:

hē, yē gbām [fʊŋ mû] mî
INTERJ COMP CL7.God ?? take(a) 1SG.NPBV

‘Hey! God has helped me.’

(363) **bî ya** ‘get up’:

bī à [bî yô] nțōntō yē bī l5
1PL F2 exit(b) go_up(c) CL1/2.morning COMP 1PL go_to_bush(a)
fwēn
clear(b)

‘We got up in the morning in order to go to the bush and clear [the field].’

(364) **bɔŋ wu** ‘pray’:

kā ŋ=kā kân kpō ā wū-dʒwē first nîŋ
COND 1SG =COND have(c) CL3.money ADVLZ CL3-much first CL7.thing
ŋ=kā lá k-5 kī dî yē ŋ=kâ [bōŋ wû]
1SG =F2 do(a) CL7-REL CL7 be(b) COMP 1SG =F2 call(a) hear(b)
gbām
CL7A.God

‘If I had a lot of money, the first thing I would do, I would pray to God.’

Fixed expressions derived from SVCs may contain verbs which are not attested on their own, such as **kâm** in (361) and **fʊŋ** in (362). However, it may also be the case that all verbs within a fixed expression are attested on their own, as in (363) and (364). In any case, the meaning of a fixed expression cannot be readily derived from the meaning of their parts. The meaning of **bî ya** in (363), for example, is ‘get up’, not just ‘go out upwards’.
9.3 Expression of grammatical categories in SVCs

While some grammatical categories are only expressed once for the entire SVC, others are marked on each verb individually. Some categories also involve a combination of both.

9.3.1 Tone and mood in SVCs

Under certain circumstances, verbs which occur in non-initial position within a sequence of verbs may undergo sandhi phenomena. In particular, this is the case for imperative Class a verbs. For a detailed description of tone sandhi in imperatives, see §3.2.2.4. Declarative verbs are not subject to tone sandhi - at least not perfective verbs in the present/immediate past tense (p0). Other tenses and imperfective verbs have not been checked for tone sandhi. The tone pattern of perfective verbs in p0 declaratives is not altered when they occur within a sequence of verbs (see §8.5.1.8 for an overview of perfective verb tone patterns). Only phonetic effects can be observed, which are caused by adjacent tones and phrase boundaries (low tone spread is described in §3.4.2 and phrase-final vs. non-final tone patterns are described in §3.2.2.2). Due to a process referred to as low tone spread, perfective Class b verbs, which bear a superhigh tone in their canonical form, bear a rising tone when they are preceded by a low tone subject or by a Class a verb. In the case of Class a verbs, their position influences their tonal realization.

9.3.2 Perfective/imperfective aspect marking in SVCs

Verbs within an SVC may be perfective or imperfective. Perfective verbs, which represent the unmarked case, take the canonical stem form and are not explicitly marked in the gloss. In the unmarked case, all verbs within an SVC are in the perfective, as in (365). In imperfective aspect SVCs, the imperfective is marked on all verbs within SVC by specific tonal patterns, as in (366), and often by ablaut as well, as in the second verb in sequence in (366). For more on tone changes and ablaut in imperfective verbs, see §3.2.2.3 and §3.3.5, respectively.

(365) wù [tšē dɔ] wān wū bō  
 cl1 search(a) see(a) cl1.child cl1;3sg.poss frust  
 ‘She did not find her child.’

(366) wù kō [tšē dyā] bō tsū b-5  
 cl1 p3.hab search(a).ipfv see(a).ipfv frust cl7/8.banana cl8-det  
 ‘He was searching for the bananas but couldn’t find them.’
It is unclear whether aspect may also switch from imperfective to perfective (or the other way around) within an SVC, as reported for Isu (Kießling 2011: 77-79).

### 9.3.3 Tense and polarity in SVCs

Tense is marked by a preverbal segmental tense marker (§8.2.1) and by specific verb tone patterns (§8.5.1.1). In the case of SVCs, a preverbal segmental tense marker precedes the complete verbal core, as in (367), and all verbs within the SVC take the appropriate tone pattern. Verbs within an SVC cannot take different tense markers.

(367) ɣiɣ gbɨŋ dɨ kɔ́ yi mɛ́ bɛ̄n, [...]  
\[\text{COMP CL9.leopard f1 catch(b) eat(b) finish(a) 2pl.}\]  
‘...that the leopard will catch and eat all of you, [...]’

Polarity is marked by the discontinuative marker ă ... wɔ̄, which embraces the verbal core. In the case of serial verb constructions, the marker ă precedes the initial element of the verbal core, which may be either the first verb of the sequence or a verb-core-initial adverbial. The marker wɔ̄ follows the verbal core. To the best of my knowledge, verbs within SVCs cannot be individually marked for polarity. Thus, all verbs within an SVC take the same polarity value.

(368) tɒ̋m ă bî-lō fán ă bɔ́m mũ  
\[\text{CL7/8.palm_village ADVZ CL8-all here NEG agree(c).IPFV take(a).IPFV wɔ̄ mĩ kĩ-mõ}  
\[\text{NEG 1SG.NPVB even CL7-one}\]  
‘None of the villages here agree with me – not a single one.’

### 9.3.4 Nominalization in SVCs

When SVCs are nominalized, only the first verb in the sequence takes a segmental marker. SVCs in infinitive constructions and in the ability construction are treated in §9.3.4.1 and §9.3.4.2.

#### 9.3.4.1 Infinitive constructions involving SVCs

When an SVC occurs in the infinitive, as e.g. in the progressive construction\(^9\) in (369), the segmental infinitive marker is affixed to the first verb of the sequence. All verbs within the SVC take the tone patterns characteristic for infinitives; see Table 8.9 in §8.4.1 for an overview of infinitive verb tone patterns.

\(^9\)For more on progressive constructions, see §8.4.1.3.
### 9.4. Verbal adverbs

Verbal adverbs form part of the verbal core, as in (371), as opposed to manner adverbs (see §10.1) and adverbial clauses, which are generally found at the end of an utterance. The verbal adverb mɛ́ ‘only’ in (371) occurs at the right edge of the verbal core, preceding the post-core negative marker wɔ̄. In (371), the proximate future (f1) marker dɨ̋ and the pre-core negative marker ā are fused. The inner brackets mark the boundaries of the verbal core, the outer brackets mark those of the verbal complex.

(371)  n = [dā  [yí mɛ́] wɔ̄] jām
       1SG = F1,NEG  eat(b) only NEG  CL.8.fufu

‘I will not only eat fufu.’

Table 9.1 contains a non-exhaustive list of verbal adverbs. While the great majority occur at the right edge of the verbal core, I also found one verbal adverb which occurs in core-initial position. First the verb-core-final verbal adverbs are treated (§9.4.1), and then the verb-core-initial adverb sɛ́n (§9.4.2).

In analogy with Kießling’s (2011) analysis of what he refers to as ‘hybrid adverbials’ in Isu (West-Ring), I assume that at least part of the verbal adverbs have their origin in the minor coverbs which they have developed out of

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(369)  wù  fā  ā  [n-kyē  kwō  ŋi]
        CL.1.PVB be_occupied(b) COM  INF-look(c) enter(c) go_down(a)

nɨ́ŋ  wù  lē  k-ş  kɨ̃
        CL.7.thing CL.1.PVB make(a).IPFV CL.7-DET CL.7.NPV

‘It [the owl] was looking down on what he [the child] was doing.’

### 9.3.4.2 Ability constructions involving SVCs

In the ability construction (see §8.4.2), the first verb of a verb sequence also hosts the nominalizing prefix characteristic of the ability construction, as in (370). All verbs of the sequence bear the tone pattern characteristic for nominalized verbs in ability constructions.

(370)  mō  kpā  ngī  lā  nî  fī,
        CS.QUOT CL.1.wife CL.1;1SG.POSS go_to_bush(a) leave(a) pass(b)

mō  ā  n = dī  wɔ̄  [kɔ-gān mū]  ā  mî  ndʒɛ́n
        CS.QUOT NEG 1SG = be(b) NEG ABIL-go(a) take(a) ADVLZ 1SG alone

‘[I said]: my wife has gone to the bush, [I said] that I cannot go and take [the corn] on my own.’

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10I use the term ‘verbal adverbs’ for the equivalent of Kießling’s ‘hybrid adverbials’ in Mundabli in order to stress their similarity to verbs.
Serial verb constructions and verbal adverbs

In order for a verb-like word which forms part of a complex verbal core to be assigned to the group of verbal adverbs rather than being analyzed as coverb in an asymmetrical SVC, it must meet at least one of the following two criteria:\(^{12}\) The first criterion concerns the tonal pattern of the verb. While verb stems inflect tonally, depending on their tense/mood/aspect, adverbials do not exhibit comparable tone changes. The second criterion is syntactic independence, i.e. the ability to occur without another verb. Unlike adverbials, verbs can stand alone, as the main and only verb of a clause.

I have chosen to apply two criteria rather than just one, because neither criterion suffices on its own. Although they are analyzed as verbs, I have no evidence that some of the coverbs listed in the previous sections are attested as independent main verbs. On the other hand, coverbs of tone class \(c\) do not inflect tonally and thus do not pass the test for tonal inflection. The distinction between coverbs and verbal adverbs is not always clear-cut. More detailed research would probably result in a more fine-grained distinction, although a fuzzy boundary between the two is likely to remain (see Kießling (2011: 241) for a comparable situation in the Ring languages).

The remainder of this section describes verb-core-final (§9.4.1) and verb-core-initial adverbials (§9.4.2).

### 9.4.1 Verb-core-final verbal adverbs

As Table 9.1 shows, the majority of verbal adverbs occur in verb-core final position. The current section treats the listed verb-core final verbal adverbs in turn. They are listed by form and semantics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>simplex (perfective)</th>
<th>position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>tī ‘surprisingly’</td>
<td>core-final</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fūbɔ̌, bɔ̌ ‘also’</td>
<td>core-final</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mɛ̌ ‘only’</td>
<td>core-final</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dzɔ̋ŋa̋, dzɔ̄ŋ ‘again’</td>
<td>core-final</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bā ‘exactly’</td>
<td>core-final</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tá ‘only’</td>
<td>core-final</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sén ‘then, subsequently’</td>
<td>core-initial</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9.1: Verbal adverbs

Through grammaticalization. However, this assumption is highly speculative with regard to Mundabli.\(^{11}\)

\(^{11}\) For a detailed account of the origin of verbal adverbs or ‘hybrid adverbials’ in Isu, which this assumption is based on, see Kießling (2011: 241).

\(^{12}\) An additional criterion for verbal status may be the existence of perfective forms involving ablaut as described in §8.1.3. However, for the current study, the two listed criteria should be sufficient.
9.4. Verbal adverbs

9.4.1.1 tɪ́ ‘surprisingly’

While the verbal adverb tɪ́ bears a high tone and is thus tonally not distinguishable from a verb of the tonal class c, tɪ́ does not exist as an independent verb and is therefore analyzed as an adverbial. In all attested examples, i.e. (372)-(375), tɪ́ occurs at the end of the verbal core. In (375), it further precedes the postverbal negation marker wɔ̄. The adverb tɪ́ is used to express astonishment or counter-expectancy.

(372) mɨ̄ wān [gān fī tɪ́] nā, mɨ̄ wān [gān 1SG CL1.child go(a) pass(b) surprisingly where 1SG CL1.child go(a) fī tɪ́] nā pass(b) surprisingly where

‘Where is my child going? Where is my child going?’

(373) bɪ̀ bù gān wū lā, yē nī̀, à [gwān 1PL ask(b) go(a) CL1PP DAT COMP CL1/2.mother 2SG be_sick(a) tɪ́] mān yē surprisingly what QUOT.Q

‘We ask her: mother, why are you ill?’

(374) bɪ̀ bù gān bō lā, yē bēn [lā̀ dzī́ 1PL ask(b) go(a) CL2PP DAT COMP 2PL do(a).IPFV walk_around(b).IPFV tɪ́] mān surprisingly what

‘We are asking them: What are you doing [aimlessly]?’

(375) bō dzḗ jū̀ bî̀ lā yḕ, nwām CL2 speak(b) come(b).IPFV 1PL.PP DAT COMP CL2.husbands kwḕ a [fyā tɪ́] wɔ̄ bî́ CL3/7a.home_village NEG give(b).IPFV surprisingly NEG 1PL

‘They are telling us: The local men do not give us [anything].’

9.4.1.2 fúbɔ̀, bɔ̀ ‘also’

The adverb fúbɔ̀ (see (376)-(378)) translates as ‘also’. It has a tone pattern which does not fit in with any of the verb tone classes. Its tone pattern never changes either, unlike those of verbs of Class a and b. This and the fact that it is not attested as an independent verb support its status as an adverb.
Serial verb constructions and verbal adverbs

(376) lʊ̀ŋ b-ɔ́ yí̤ nɪm tɪ́ bɪ̋ (e), bɪ̋
cL8.suffering CL8-that eat(b).IPFV sit(a) surprisingly CL8 INTERJ CL8
[ yí̤ fúbɔ̌ ] bɪ̋ (o)
eat(b).IPFV also 1PL INTERJ

’Suffering is eating them up and it is also eating us up.’

(377) à kyɛ́ wān nɛ̌ yū
cL1.child CL1/2.mother, CL9/10.buttock INTERJ
mɔ̀ dzō [kyɛ́ fúbɔ̌ ] à yū
cL1.person CL1.other look(c) also 2SG.PP CL9/10.buttock

‘If you look at your siblings buttocks, somebody will also look at your buttocks.’ (meaning: “If you talk against your brother or your sister, somebody will also talk against you.”)

(378) tɔ́ kə̀ dṹ tṹ kɔ̀ [kwɛ́ fúbɔ̌ ]
there be(b) CL1.father CL1.POSS P1 return_from_bush(c) also
tṹ wṹ [tʃṹ tsṹ bɔ̌ ] wān w-ɔ̄
cL1.father CL1.POSS come(b) beat(b) also CL1.child CL1-DET

‘When her father had also returned from the bush, her father came and also beat the child.’

The first syllable of the adverbial may be dropped so that the adverb is shortened to bɔ̌, see e.g. (378).

9.4.1.3 mɛ́ ‘only’
The adverb mɛ́ translates into English as ‘only’ or ‘just’. Although it is segmentally identical with the verb mɛ̆ ‘finish’, I do not think that the two are related. Whereas the verb mɛ̆ ‘finish’ exhibits the characteristic tonal inflections of a Class A verb, the adverb mɛ́ ‘only’ always retains the same tone pattern. Furthermore, mɛ́ ‘only’ is not attested as main verb. Therefore, it is analyzed as an adverb.

(379) bɔ̂ [dzí mɛ́] műntù mĩ műntù mĩ
cL2 travel(b).IPFV only CL7/8.car in CL7/8.car in

‘They only ever travel by car.’

(380) à [ mṹ mṹ mɛ́ ] ŋgī
2SG take(a) drink(b) only CL6.water

‘You should only drink water.’

13The Class 8 pronoun is used to refer to groups of people in an abusive way.
9.4. Verbal adverbs

(381) \[n = \{dë \quad më\}\] Pé kà kwô gbó áná mwàŋ
1SG = see(a) only Petrus P3 enter(c) house.LOC like_that iDEO

‘I just saw Petrus entering into the house’

9.4.1.4 dzõŋá~dzõŋ ‘again’

The adverb dzõŋá~dzõŋ (see (382)-(384)) marks repetition of an action that has been carried out earlier and can be translated into English as ‘again’. It does not fulfill the test for syntactic independence as it always co-occurs with another verb. It also always has the same tone pattern, which consists of a superhigh tone on both syllables (rather than a high tone, like a Class c verb). Therefore, it clearly qualifies as an adverb rather than a verb.

(382) wù [gān bǒŋ jí dzõŋá] têlâ mwôm
  cl1 go(a) call(a) go_down(a) again Tela Mwom

‘She went to call Tela Mwom again.’

(383) bɔ̋ [gān mū jú dzõŋá] kpê
  cl2 go(a) take(a) come(b) again cl3.pot

‘They went again to take a pot.’

(384) dɔ̄ w-ɔ́ [ʃɨ᷇ŋ fi dzõŋá]
  cl3.beans cl3-det fill/be_full(c) pass(b) again

‘The beans were again more than the pot.’

Note that this adverb has an alternative monosyllabic form dzõŋ, which bears a mid tone, instead of a superhigh tone like the bisyllabic form; see (385)-(386).

(385) à jā [dzē dzõŋ]
  2SG PROHIB say(b) again

‘Don’t say [that] again!’

(386) dĩ kì-mân nō à [yē kē dzõŋ] k-ɔ́ k-ǐ be(b) cl7-what SUBORD 2SG start(a) return(c) again cl7-rel cl7 LOC
  t-ân mī
  DIST-here in

‘What is it that you are starting again in here?’

It is still unclear what exactly determines the choice between the bisyllabic and the monosyllabic form of the adverbial and why the tonal patterns of the two are different.
9.4.1.5 bā ‘exactly’

The adverb bā (see (387)-(389)) roughly translates into English as ‘exactly’. It always bears a superhigh tone, whereas verbs of Class c always bear a high tone. Verbs of other classes change their tonal pattern. Furthermore, bā never stands alone but always accompanies a verb. In all examples, it occurs at the end of the verbal core.

(387) à mī [nim ḫī bā] dē nō bā 2SG CONSEC sit(a) go_down(a) exactly CL9.place SUBORD IMPERS kpā f-ā gu, ā fi-ngī wā light_fire(a) PROX-REL CL3/7a.fire COM CL19-CL6.water 2SG.pp kān hands.LOC

‘Then (you will) sit down exactly where they make fire, with a bit of water in your hand.’

(388) kpē w-ēn, [dī bā] mān ā mwē k-ā CL1.woman CL1-DEM.PROX be(b) exactly what 2SG be_sad(a) CL7-REL tō ā bī-lō yē CL7/8.day ADVLZ CL8-all QUOT.Q

‘Woman, why are you sad every day?’ (literally: This woman, what exactly is it that you grieve everyday?)

(389) n=tō kā mú jū, m=[bī yē bā] 1SG = VER.FOC P3 take(a) come(b) 1SG = exit(b) go_up(c) exactly tūjī, n=tū yē ngī m-ôme on_top 1SG = scoop(b) go_up(c) CL19.water CL19-DET sūŋ mī CL9/10.calabash in

‘I then brought, I got up, really up, I carried up the water in a bowl.’

9.4.1.6 tá ‘really’

The adverbial tá roughly translates as ‘really’. It bears a high tone just like a Class c verb. However, it cannot occur without another verb, which gives reason to believe that it has adverbial status. Examples for the use of tá are found in (390) and (391).

(390) bēn nēn láŋ because bēn nīŋ yē bēn [yī tá] 2PL maybe be_happy(c) because 2PL want(c) COMP 2PL eat(b) really ā bēn ndgēn ADVLZ 2PL.pp alone

‘Maybe you guys are happy because you just want to eat alone.’
9.4. Verbal adverbs

(391) bì mí ním fān’f (ë), bì dzé ním tí mě
1PL CONSEC sit(a) here? INTERJ 1PL speak(b) sit(a) surprisingly only
yë, lòn bò [dë tā mě] yěn lā, bì kwó
COMP CL8.suffering CL8-DET be(b) really only Y. DAT CL8 enter(c)
fǔbō bì ŋgā
also 1PL.PP upon

‘And we are sitting here, saying that only Yain is suffering, but the
suffering has also attacked some of us.’

In (390), tā stands at the right edge of the verbal core, while in (391), it is
followed by the verbal adverb mě ‘only’.

9.4.2 The verb core-initial adverb sën ‘then’

My data contain only one verbal adverb which stands at the beginning rather
than at the end of the verbal core, namely sën ‘then’ (see (392)-(394)). The
adverbial sën translates into English as ‘then, subsequently’. It always bears
a high tone and, on first glance, it would appear to be a verb of tone class c.
However, it cannot stand on its own without a subsequent verb and is therefore
analyzed as an adverb.

(392) n= [sēn bū] mā à, dī nīŋ dōm à fā plan
1SG=then ask(b) CS.QUOT Q, be(b) CL7.thing some 2SG P1 plan

‘I then asked [him]: Is it something that you planned?’

(393) m-mù-n nō mànfrè kā mū fī bī w-5
INF-take(a)-INF SUBORD M. pū take(a) pass(b) exit(b) CL1-REL
tjūm w-5 pən, dān ā nīŋ [sēn tī kū] pē
CL3/7A.axe CL3-DET now D. COM N. then come(b) hold(c) P.
pən
now

‘Just as Manfred took out the axe now, Dan of Ntung then came and
held Pe, now.’

(394) w-5 time nō kpā ngī [sēn tū
CL1-DEM CL1/2.time SUBORD CL1.wife CL1;1SG.POSS then come(b)
kā kān kwō më] mā sām pən ānā
catch(b) hold(c) enter(c) only 1SG heart/middle.LOC now like_that

‘That was the time that my wife came and held me in the middle now,
like this.’
This chapter deals with all those word classes which have not been dealt with in the preceding chapters: adverbs (§10.1), adpositions (§10.2), temporal deictics (§10.3), spatial deictics (§10.4), ideophones (§10.5), the interjections ‘yes’ and ‘no’ (§10.6) and other interjections (§10.7).

10.1 Adverbs

This section deals exclusively with clause-final manner adverbs which are introduced by the adverbial marker á. In certain cases, manner can also be expressed by serial verb constructions (§9.1.4). Furthermore, there is a second type of adverbs called verbal adverbs. They are dealt with in §9.4. Finally, ideophones may also fulfill the function of manner adverbs. Ideophones are treated in §10.5.

Manner adverbs modify the meaning of the verb (cf. Givón (1984: 77,78)). They always occur in clause-final position, introduced by the particle á which is glossed ‘ADVlz’ and may also introduce adverbial phrases. Clause-final manner adverbs are usually derived. They may be based on adjectives or they may be based on reduplicated monosyllabic stems, mostly of unclear origin, as in (395). The tonal pattern of manner adverbs with reduplicated stems is always Low - Low..
10.2. Adpositions

Mundabli has prepositions and postpositions. However, postpositions far outnumber prepositions. Prepositions are discussed in §10.2.1 and postpositions in §10.2.2.

10.2.1 Prepositions

There are only two prepositions: ā ‘COM’, which unites comitative and instrumental function and is roughly equivalent to English ‘with’ and the general locative preposition f, which is usually optional and which always co-occurs in combination with a more specific locative or benefactive postposition within a circumpositional construction. In the examples, pre- and postpositions are underlined and their NP complement is enclosed in square brackets. The prepositions and their glosses and meanings are shown in Table 10.1. In the examples

```plaintext
(395) m = bwa n 1SG = get_wounded(a) mɨ́ 1SG house.loc gbə̆ 1SG loc a̋ 1SG advlz lɔ̀ ~ lɔ̀, empty~ red kɛ̌ 1SG even
1SG = hab know(c) n̋ = lə̄ 1SG = do(a) k- 1SG - cl7 REL cl7

'I got wounded in my house for no good reason. I don’t even know what I had done.'

Monosyllabic adverbials may be repeated several times for emphasis, as in (396). The repetition in this case is not to be confused with the reduplication found in other adverbs. This is confirmed by the fact that the tone here is not low, as in the latter (see above). The adverbial dzú in this example is probably related to the postposition dzó ‘under’.

(396) ǹ = kwóm gən ā dzú dzú dzú, ǹ 1SG = creep(c) go(a) ADVLZ down down down CL3/7a. storm k- 1SG kó̤ jú mɨ̄ a kɛ̌ 1SG catch(b). IFPV come(b). IFPV 1SG COM CL9/10. hand like kó̤ mbɛ́ catch(b). IFPV CL2. person

'I crept [going] down [very low]. The storm was catching me with its hands as if it were people catching [me].'

The adverb mò̤ ~ mò̤ ‘very much’ (397) could be derived from the numeral mò̤ ‘one’, however, its synchronic meaning is not related to the numeral.

(397) wù sé dzé ā mò̤ ~ mò̤ 1CL1 be_hot(c) CL7. mouth ADVLZ one ~ RED

'She is very active!’ (Lit.: She is very hot in her mouth.)
in this section, pre- and postpositions are underlined and their NP complement is enclosed in square brackets.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>preposition</th>
<th>gloss (meaning)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>å</td>
<td>'COM' ('with', comitative or instrumental)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ō</td>
<td>'LOC' (general locative marker)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10.1: The two prepositions with glosses and meanings

10.2.1.1 The comitative/instrumental preposition å ‘with’

The preposition å with heads a prepositional phrase and may have comitative or instrumental function. Class pronouns for noun classes other than Class 1 and 9, which normally bear a superhigh tone in non-preverbal position, are realized with a LH rising tone when they are the object of the comitative preposition, as in §6.1.3.

The comitative phrase usually stands at the end of a clause, as in (398) and (399), but exceptions are possible; see (400).

(398) wù tʃú å [mbf], bɔ́ mú
  cl1 come(b) com cl6.palm_wine cl2 drink(b)
  ‘He came with wine [and] they drank.’

(399) mɔ̀ w-ɔ̄ yi̋ ndʒɔ᷇mɲīn å [kē yī]
  cl1.man cl1-DET eat(b) cl8.food com cl10.fingers cl10/3sg.poss
  ‘The man eats the food with his hand.’

(400) ⬤=lɔ̀ å [mboŋ mɨŋ] yɨṁ
  1sg=go_to_bush(a) com cl1/2.cow(s) cl2/1sg.poss cl1/2.bush
  ‘I am going to the bush with my cows.’

In (400), the comitative phrase directly follows the verb, preceding the locative adjunct yɨṁ ‘bush’.

The preposition å also occurs in a certain construction with a transitive verb. Here, the direct object represents the benefactor of the action and the preposition å introduces the undergoer in the form of an oblique argument, as in (401).

(401) yɛ̄ gān tsē mī å [ntsɔ̋m mū-ŋ-gɛ̄-ŋ-gɛ̄]
  comp go(a) find(a) 1sg com cl6a-soil cl6a-N-be_red-red
  ‘...: Go and find me some red soil!’
The same may be expressed by a different construction in which the undergoer is the direct object and directly follows the verb while the recipient is embedded in a circumpositional construction with the general locative preposition ḝ preceding it and the dative postposition lā following it. For more on this construction, which is characteristic for the verb ‘give’, see §11.1.2.

10.2.1.2 The locative preposition ḝ

The general locative preposition ḝ is always part of a circumpositional construction in which it co-occurs with a semantically more specific postposition. The postpositions with locative semantics which co-occur with the preposition ḝ include wɔ̄ ‘on’ in (402) and mɨ ‘in’, and even derived postpositions, such as sê ‘house_front.loc’ and the benefactive postposition lā ‘for’; see (404) and (405). Its use is generally optional.

(402) kə̀ n̥=kə̀ kpí ḝ-án bëṅ kə̀ mū ḝ jī ā
COND 1SG = COND die(b) PROX-here 2PL COND take(a) come(b) COM
dʒá̄m, bëṅ kə̀ mī dʒi jī ḝ
CL7/8.calabash_plant 2PL COND CONSEC put(a) go_down(a) LOC
[dʒám n̥ɡjí] wɔ̄
CL9/10.grave CL9/10.GSG.POSS on

‘If I die here, you will bring a calabash seed, and then you will plant [it] on my grave.’

(403) wù dà bà ƙà gí tê ḝ [gbɔ̄]
c1 see(a) IMPERS P3 put(b) CL7/8.walking.stick LOC CL3.house
sê front.LOC

‘She saw that someone had put a walking stick in front of the house.’

(404) kpé w-ɔ̄ dʒyè ndʒɔmyín ḝ [mɔ̀ w-ɔ̄] lā
c1.woman CL1-DET cook(a) CL8.food LOC CL1.man CL1-DET DAT

‘The woman cooks food for the man.’

(405) nwàm wà̀n wù dʒé ḝ [gbàn
c1.husband CL1.child CL1;3SG.POSS say(b) LOC CL1/2.in-law
wù] lâ yê
c1;3SG.POSS DAT comp

‘Her child’s husband said to his in-law: ...’

Certain speakers sometimes pronounce the locative preposition a rather than ḝ. This may be due to contact influence from Missong, where the general locative preposition has the form á (Lovegren 2013: 279ff.).
All postpositions are monosyllabic. Postpositions are often historically derived from nouns and in many cases, they are segmentally identical with the latter (see §10.2.2.1). Table 10.2 provides a list of all known postpositions and their glosses. A comparison of postpositions and cognate nouns is found in §10.2.2.1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>postposition</th>
<th>gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ʃī</td>
<td>'in front of'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dzə̄m</td>
<td>'behind'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gyɨ́ŋ</td>
<td>'next to'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dzō</td>
<td>'under'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wɔ̄</td>
<td>'on'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mɨ̄</td>
<td>'in', ‘inside’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yā</td>
<td>'in' (rare)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ŋgɔ᷆</td>
<td>'upon, at, on, by’, ‘with’ (instrumental, comitative)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yū</td>
<td>'behind' (following someone)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sām</td>
<td>'in the middle of'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gbō</td>
<td>'in house’, ‘at home’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sē</td>
<td>'in front of' (only with dwelling)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kūŋ</td>
<td>'behind' (only with dwelling)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kú</td>
<td>'in home village'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kān</td>
<td>'in hands’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fɔ̄</td>
<td>'on head’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dzæ̋</td>
<td>'in mouth’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wúŋ</td>
<td>'in nose’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kūŋ</td>
<td>'around neck’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bān</td>
<td>'around waist’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>là</td>
<td>'for’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10.2: comprehensive list of postpositions with glosses

Postpositions head postpositional phrases. They directly follow the noun phrase they head and they usually encode spatial location, as in (406)-(407).

(406) səsǎŋ dā kwō wū yō kwō [bwē] yā
c9.spider braid(a) climb(c) enter(c) c1.1 enter(c) c1.3a.sky in

‘The spider braided [the bridge] until it reached heaven.’

(407) bìkɔ́ kpɔ̋ wū-dʒwē dǐ ná, wū dǐ ā
because c1.3/7a.money c1.3.much/many be(b) as c1.3 be(b) COM
sātàn [wū] yū ā mô ¬ mô ¬
c1.1/2.satan c1.3.pp behind ADV LZ one ¬ RED

‘Because a lot of money always has many devils behind it.’
All postpositions may co-occur with the optional locative marker ḣ, as in (408); see §10.2.1.2.

(408) wù nēn kwō ḣ [dzé] dzō
c11 hide(a) enter(c) loc c13/7a.rock under

‘He hid under a rock.’ (lit.: He hid entered rock under.)

Most postpositions have static spatial semantics. They express location relative to their complement NP. Direction of movement is not encoded by adpositions, but instead by verbs like ‘come’/‘go’, ‘ascend’/‘descend’, ‘enter’/‘exit’ etc., which form part of serial verb constructions (see Chapter 9 for more on serial verb constructions).

The postposition kān ‘hands.loc’ can be used in a metaphorical sense, as exemplified in (409) and in (410). In (409), kān is translated as ‘away from’. A better translation would probably be ‘from the clutches of’. Recall that direction is never marked on the locative phrase. Thus ‘from the hands’ is no different from ‘in the hands’.

(409) wù yó tí [kū y-3] kān
c11 run(c) surprisingly c19.ratmole c19-det hands.loc

‘He ran away from the rat mole!’

(410) kɔ̀ Koshin kə̀ p3 yó tʃū dzɔ̀m
c3 run(c) come(b) 9/10.war hands.loc cl2 consec
tʃū kwō kōŋ bî yô
come(b) enter(c) hunt(c) go_out(b) go_up(c)

‘The Koshin people ran away from war. They then came in[to this area] and chased away [the Nshwen].’

Only two postpositions are also used in a non-spatial sense: the postposition ŋgɔ̀ and the postposition lā. The former may be used in a spatial sense, as in (411), or in a temporal sense, as in (412).

(411) wē w-5 bán [mif] ŋgɔ̀ ā kâ-li
c3a.sun c3a-det shine(b) 1sg.pp upon advlz nmlz-strong

‘The sun is shining on me strongly.’

(412) mɔ̀ wù kâ dzé w-5 dʒû gbàm [ tô
c11.man c11 p3 say(b) c11-rel c13/7a.word c17b.God c17/8.day
k-3] ŋgɔ̀ kâ dî pà pîtå kyā
c17-dem.dist upon p3 be(b) Pa P. K.

‘The person who was preaching on that day was Pa Peter Kia.’
It may also mark an instrumental noun phrase, as in (413). Example (413) is complicated by the fact that the postposition is part of a relative clause and its object NP is omitted, so that the postposition is stranded. When the object of the postposition ki is realized, the postposition bears its usual mid-low falling tone. When it is absent, as in (413), the high tone of the omitted object is realized on the postposition, replacing the tone of the postposition itself.

(413) dɨ̌ [siŋ mwān y-3] ła y-5 ng5
be(b) cl.9.knife cl.9.which cl.9-DAT 2SG do(a).IPFV cl.9-REL upon

"Which knife do you use?" (lit.: It is which knife that you do with?)

The non-spatial postposition lā ‘for’ marks the recipient of an action, i.e. a dative/benefactive argument, as in (414). This construction is discussed in more detail in Chapter 11.

(414) kpé w-5 d3yè ndʒmyin f [mò w-3] lā
cl.1.woman cl.1-DAT cook(a) cl.8.food loc cl.1.man cl.1-DAT dat

"The woman cooks food for the man."

10.2.2.1 Postpositions vs. nouns

Many, perhaps all, postpositions in Mundabli are historically derived from nouns. Often, the origin nouns refer to body parts or other meronyms. Such postpositions may coexist with a noun of identical segmental shape or with a noun similar in shape. Table 10.3 compares postpositions with the nouns they are derived from.

While postpositions are derived from nouns and are in some cases even segmentally identical with them, they differ from the latter in several regards. Specifically, they differ in syntactic behavior, and the tonal pattern of a postposition is often different from that of the corresponding noun, as in kūŋ ‘around neck’ vs. kūŋ ‘neck’. The syntactic behavior of postpositions is different from that of nouns. This is illustrated with the noun yū ‘buttocks’ in (415) and the postposition yū ‘behind’ in (416) which are formally identical, but differ in syntactic behavior.

(415) yū yī
cl.9/10.buttocks cl.10;3SG.POSS

"his buttocks"

(416) wù bāŋ [kwā kī k-3] yū
cl.1 follow(b) cl.7.frog cl.7;3SG.POSS cl.7-DAT behind

‘He followed his frog.’
When a noun is modified by another NP in a possessive construction, the resulting noun phrase is head-initial, i.e. the possessor precedes the possessor, as in (415) where the noun yū ‘buttocks’ is followed by a possessive pronoun. A postpositional phrase, on the other hand, is head-final, i.e. the noun phrase precedes the postposition, as in (416), where the postposition yū ‘behind’ is preceded by the dependent noun phrase kwāki̋k-ɔ́ ‘that his frog’.

Finally, postpositions have a specific tonal effect on dependent pronouns. Pronouns which are the object of a postposition always bear a high tone. Their segmental shape is the same as that of independent pronouns (see §6.1 for details).

While there is a clear case for postpositions to be considered a different word class from nouns, grammaticalization is clearly underway with some postpositions.

### 10.3 Temporal deictics

Temporal deictics allow the speaker to specify the time of an event more precisely than grammatical tense. They are adjuncts, and their position within the sentence is relatively flexible. Table 10.4 contains a few selected temporal deictics.

Examples of temporal deictics are given in (417)-(422). They usually occur at the end of the clause, as in (417), but not necessarily so, see e.g., (419) where njwén ‘now, today’ is followed by a manner adverb. The temporal deictic in each example is underlined.
Other word classes

### Temporal Deictics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Temporal Deictic</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ɲwén</td>
<td>'now, today'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ɲántɔ̀</td>
<td>'yesterday'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ŋgwé</td>
<td>'tomorrow'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tywőm</td>
<td>'long time away, past or future'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10.4: Selected temporal deictics

(417) mɔ̀ cl 1.person w-ɔ̄ cl 1-det táŋ cl 8.banana tsù cl 8-det ɲwén

‘The man bought the banana now.’

(418) wù fɔ̄ ã ɡàn w5 dʒwō ɲwén cl 1 p1 neg go(a) neg cl 1/2.stream today

‘She did not go to the stream today.’

(419) yū cl 9/10.buttock y-ɔ̄ cl 9-det bò be_bad(a) ɲwén a̋ advlz kɪ̄-lɪ̄ nmlz -be_strong(a) (e) interj

‘Sex is very dangerous these days.’

(420) wù à tʃũ ɲántɔ̀ cl 1 p2 come(b) yesterday

‘He arrived yesterday.’

(421) wù kã jí ŋgwé cl 1 p2 spend_day(b) tomorrow

‘He will spend the day at home tomorrow.’

(422) só n̋=tʃyé yɛ mì wān kã kpì tywőm so 1SG = know(c) comp SG cl 1.child p3 die(b) long ago

‘So I know that my child died long ago.’

### Spatial Deictics

Spatial deictics have not been elicited in detail. However, some of them occur commonly in natural speech. These include tʃin, fɔ and tɔ, all of which translate roughly as ‘there’. The deictics are given here without tones because their tones may vary. Historically, fɔ and tɔ must have functioned as deictic
demonstratives, with the demonstrative root -ɔ́ and the agreement prefixes f- (PB class 16) and t- (PB class 17). However, synchronically, they do not modify nouns. Instead, they are adjuncts.

Historically the difference was probably one between closeness (fɔ́) and distance (tɔ́). Examples (423)-(426) contain instances of fɔ́, tɔ́ and tʃɪ́n. The deictic in the examples is underlined.

(423) kwó gān t-ɔ́ mɨ̄
enter(c) go(a) DIST-DET in

‘Go in there!’

(424) wān w-ɔ̄ yām mě́ t-ɔ́ gbɔ́ kūŋ
cl.1.child cl.1-DET sing(c) only DIST-DET cl.3.house behind house.LOC

‘The child continued to sing behind the house.’

(425) tō mɨ̄ wé jī tī (e),
cl.7/8.day consec dawn(b).ipfv go_down(a).ipfv surprisingly INTERJ
wū kūm nǐm f-ɔ́ gbɔ́,
interj cl.1 cry(a) sit(a) prox-there house.LOC INTERJ

‘When day has broken, she is there in the house crying.’

(426) ṅkwīn nō̤ bɔ́ nǐm w-ɔ̄ wū/tʃín w5
cl.1.hill subord cl.2 live(a) cl.1-rel cl.1-PP/there on

‘the hill on which they live’

fɔnɪ and tɔnɪ are two other forms used as spatial deictics and derived from fɔ́ and tɔ́, see e.g. (427)-(429). Unlike fɔ́ and tɔ́, which function as nominal modifiers or represent a whole NP, the locative adverbials fɔnɪ and tɔnɪ (also fanɪ and tanɪ) are adverbials and generally occur in clause-final position. They often co-occur with prenominal fɔ́ tɔ́, fán or tán, as in (428)\(^1\) and (429).

(427) bī mǐ nim fɔnɪ (ē), bī dzé nim tī mě́
1PL consec sit(a) here INTERJ 1PL speak(b) sit(a) surprisingly only
yē, lōŋ bō dī tá mě́ yēn lā, bī
comp cl.8.suffering cl.8-DET be(b) specifically only Y. DAT cl.8
kwó fūbɔ́ bi ɲgɔ́
enter(c) also 1PL upon

‘And we are sitting here, saying that only Yain is suffering, but the suffering has also attacked some of us.’

\(^1\)The italics on mɔ́sɨ́ ‘must’ show that the word is a borrowing. Obligation is usually expressed by a different construction.
Other word classes

(428) Dyā kò dzē  tʃīn,  ŋ-kò  dī  ná tʃīn t-ʒ
D.  pʒ say(b) there 1SG = pʒ be(b) as there DIST-there
ŋkwǐn  wŋ tɔ̀ndí,  yɛ̀,  kò  wʊ  tō  mɛ̀
cL1/2.mountain on there COMPOUND CL1IRR grow_up(b) finish(a)
tʃū  wʊ tā  lá  kɔ̀ wʊ sɔm,  wʊ dí m̙s̙í
come(b) CL1 VER.POCNEG do(a) ?? NEG CL1.play CL1 F1 must
yin̙  gbɔ̀  áná  n̙  tʃū  n̙m
build(c) CL3.house like that mother.3POSS come(b) live(a)
‘Dya said on that hill when I was there, that when he will have grown up fully, he will not play, he must build a house and bring down his mother.’

(429) kwɛ̀  b-ɛn  nà  tān  sɛ̀  tānì,
cL7/8.rat CL8-DEM.PROX boast(a) there CL3/7a.attic there
n̙ = dὲ  lá  kpi̙ mɛ̀  kwɛ̀  b-ɛn  tān
1SG.PVB = F1 make(a) die(b) finish(a) CL7/8.rat CL8-DEM.PROX there sɛ̀  ɔ
CL3/7a.attic EMPH
‘These rats which are showing off in this attic - I will kill all of them!’

While ɓɔ and ɗɔ seem to be widely interchangeable, in some contexts only one of them renders a grammatical construction. An example is the use of ɓɔ in relative clauses. The spatial deictic ɓɔ is used as obligatory postverbal demonstrative in relative clauses which relativize on a locative expression. In this case, the spatial deictic ɓɔ occurs immediately after the verb of the relative clause, forming part of a paradigm with relativizers in the form of distal demonstratives which occupy this slot and which agree with the head of the relative clause in noun class, as in (430) and (431). The use of ɗɔ in this context is not attested. For more on relative clauses, see Chapter 12 and Lovegren and Voll (2017).

(430) ŋ = tʃyé  dɛ̀  nɔ̀  [wʊ ŋ  t-ʒ]
1SG = know(c) CL9.place SUBORD CL1 pass(b) PROX-REL
‘I know the place which she had passed (through).’ (lit.: ...where she had passed.)
10.5 Ideophones

Ideophones are used frequently in narratives and in spontaneous conversations. However, speakers differ in the quantity of ideophones they use, with a tendency for old people to use them more frequently than younger people. Ideophones are often accompanied by specific gestures. Some examples of ideophones are given in (432)-(435). In (432) and (433), the ideophones follow the adverbial pro-form áná ‘like that’, which links them with the rest of the sentence.

(431) à mī nim jì bā ḍë nā [bā] 2SG CONSEC sit(a) go_down(a) exactly CL9.place there CL2 kpā f-ọ̀ gù], â ọ̀-ngi̠ wa light_fire(a).IPFV PROX-there CL3/7a.fire COM CL19-water 2SG.PP kàn hands.LOC

‘Then (you will) sit down exactly where they make fire, with a bit of water in your hand.’

10.5 Ideophones

Ideophones are used frequently in narratives and in spontaneous conversations. However, speakers differ in the quantity of ideophones they use, with a tendency for old people to use them more frequently than younger people. Ideophones are often accompanied by specific gestures. Some examples of ideophones are given in (432)-(435). In (432) and (433), the ideophones follow the adverbial pro-form áná ‘like that’, which links them with the rest of the sentence.

(432) n=dō mē pé kà kwō gbọ́ ḍỌ́ná mwàŋ 1SG=see(a) only P. ọ̀-enter(c) house.LOC like_that IDEO

‘I just saw Pe entering the house like that: “mwàŋ”.’

(433) pé kà wḗ fìn áná fyafyà P. ọ̀-breath(a) there like_that IDEO

‘Pe was breathing there like this: “fyafya”.’

The ideophone mwàŋ as in (432), often with a drawn out nasal coda mwàŋŋŋŋŋ, depicts speed. The ideophone fyafyà in (433) imitates the sound of heavy breathing, as after physical strain. In examples (434) (which contains two ideophones) and (435), the ideophones are simply attached to the end of the clause; the adverbial pro-form áná is not used.

(434) pé dẹ̀jì jì mbf m-ọ̀ a the very P. put(a) descend(a) CL6.palm_wine CL6-DET ADVLZ the very mbf nọ́ m-ọ̀ nọ́ tọ́ntọ́, byẹ̀-a-nti mū jú CL6.palm_wine upon CL6-DET upon IDEO B.-COM-N. take(a) come(b) kpàʔ, wù mú IDEO CL1 drink(b)

‘Pe put in the wine, still the very wine, the same one, exactly. Bie-a-Ntie grabbed it, “kpaʔ”, and she drank.’
The ideophones in (434) and (435) tɨ̄ntɨ̄n are very specific ideophones expressing strong resemblance (tɨ̄ntɨ̄n) and grabbing (kpàʔ) or imitating the sound of the storm (wǎaawǎaa). Most ideophones consist either of a single open or closed syllable or of two or more repetitions of a single syllable. Note that ideophones may end in an obstruent, as in kpàʔ (434) or kāt. This is an exception from the general phonotactics of Mundabli. Normally, a syllable can end only in a nasal or in the liquid l, see §2.4. The ideophone kāt illustrates that something is completely destroyed. Vowels and final nasals in ideophones may be drawn out for intensity, such as in mwàŋ in (432) or wǎaawǎaa in (435) with multiple a and ŋ representing single segments with an exceptionally long duration.

Ideophones can be subdivided according to semantic criteria into expressions of visible impressions, temperature impressions, smell and taste impressions and audible impressions, as done in the first column of Table 10.5. The second column contains ideophones either isolated or in context. Here, the ideophones are written in bold letters. The third column contains descriptions of their use.

\footnote{The ideophone kāt is usually followed by the following gesture: lips are pursed and the index finger of the right hand is bent and moved over the pouch-ed lips from right to left.}
260

semantic
criteria
visible

audible

10.5. Ideophones

ideophone

description

būbūbūbū
fììììì
ŋàŋŋŋŋ
tìŋtìŋtìŋ
wùùùùù

‘pure white’
‘pure black’
‘burning down of sun; bright red’
‘strong resemblance’
‘light storm or strong wind blowing’
‘light storm or strong wind blowing’
‘strong storm blowing’
‘rain falling heavily (before it
stops abruptly); sound of water
being pushed away with force’
‘rain falling heavily and continuously.’
‘rain falling lightly but continuously.’
‘call of a bushfowl species called
nyǎŋ’
‘someone talking a lot’
‘someone talking a lot’
‘someone shouting a lot’
‘sound of blowing one’s nose’
‘really cold’
‘really hot’
‘really hot’
‘bad smell’

wàààààà
ŋgɨ ̀ŋgɨ ̀ŋgɨ ̀ŋgɨ ̀ŋgɨ ̀ŋ
wàààà
wɔ̌ŋwɔ̌ŋwɔ̌ŋ(...)
tʃàtʃàtʃàtʃàtʃàtʃàtʃà
nyǎŋkàŋkɛ̀ŋkɛ̀ŋkɛ̀ŋ
bya̋bya̋bya̋bya̋bya̋bya̋
kpàkpàkpàkpàkpà
wàwàwàwàwàwàwàwà
fya̋tfya̋t
temperature dʒűűűűű
tsùtsùtsùtsùtsùtsù
kpə̀kpə̀kpə̀kpə̀kpə̀
smell and
tsàtsàtsà
taste
other
tìtìtìtì(tì(tì))
kɨ ̀ŋkɨ ̀ŋkɨ ̀ŋkɨ ̀ŋ
ta̋p∼
̚ pa̋p̚
kǎt̚
kpàʔ

‘waiting for a long time’
‘walk stamping ones feet; work
heavily; be healthy’
‘full to the rim’
‘completely finished or destroyed’
‘sound of grabbing something
quickly’

Table 10.5: Ideophones, partly in context, with descriptions, sorted according
to semantic criteria


10.6 ‘Yes’ and ‘No’

The words for ‘yes’ and ‘no’ (see Table 10.6) can serve as one-word answers to polar questions, can introduce more elaborate answers to polar questions, or can serve as general markers of agreement or disagreement, either on their own or followed by a more elaborate explanation. They thus have an ambiguous status between formulaic expressions and interjections.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>variants</th>
<th>gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>hm̀, ē, ēhè</td>
<td>‘yes’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ngàŋ, āy<del>āyi, ?mìʔm</del>ʔmìʔmì~hmìʔmì</td>
<td>‘no’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10.6: Variants of ‘yes’ and ‘no’

The form hm̀¹ is used to express agreement or confirmation; the interjection ē ‘yes’ is more commonly used to signal interest and to encourage another speaker to continue, e.g. when reporting an event. The word ngàŋ ‘no’ is hardly ever used in spontaneous speech, except sometimes for emphasis. Among the other forms, āyi expresses more emphasis than āy. Both āyi and āy are stronger than the nasal forms (ʔmìʔmì~ʔmìʔmì~hmìʔmì). In (436)-(439), hm̀ ‘yes’ is used to express agreement, accompanied by a complete sentence.

(436) hm̀, wù dí kā-fí
      INTERJ CL1 be(b) ABIL-descend(a)
      ‘Yes, she can come down.’

(437) hm̀, wù kà dí f-án
      INTERJ CL1 P3 be(b) PROX-here
      ‘Yes, she was here.’

(438) hm̀, wù kà tū tū jí fān
      INTERJ CL1 P3 come(b) pluck(a) CL9/10.fowl there
      ‘Yes, she came and plucked feathers here.’

(439) ?míhń ?mì, bɔ kān dè yǐn lá gbɔ
      yes INTERJ CL2 lack(b) CL9.place build(c) DAT CL3.house
      ‘Yes. They don’t even have space to build houses.’

In (440)-(443), āy~āyi is used to mark disagreement. In all these examples, it is accompanied by a complete sentence.

³What is written here as <h> is phonetically a voiceless bilabial nasal.
10.7 Interjections

In this section, I describe a few very salient interjections, in order to provide an impression of interjections in Mundabli. Interjections are used frequently in conversation, e.g. in order to express one’s feelings or one’s attitude or to express agreement or disagreement. Interjections expressing agreement or disagreement were already discussed in §10.6 and will not be repeated here. Many of the common interjections in Mundabli also exist in the regional variety of Cameroon Pidgin and probably in other languages in the area. Among these are *wɛ́* (444) which expresses dismay and *àʔa* (445) which expresses amazement and disbelief with negative connotations. The interjection *ò* (444), which expresses emphasis and occurs at the end of a sentence, is also attested in Cameroon Pidgin.

(444)  *wɛ́, wù, à dì̀ w5 gbɔ̀ kùŋ ò*

*interj cl1 neg be(b) neg cl3.house house.backside.loc interj*

‘Alas! She is not behind the house!’
(445) yɛ wù kwọ gbà, wù dà bẹ kò
COMP CL1 enter(c) CL3.house.LOC CL3:3SG.ess see(a) IMPERS P3
jyà tọ gbọ wụ, ọ?à, wù bụ yɛ
sweep(a) away(c) house CL3.CL3:3SG.ess INTERJ CL1 ask(b) COMP
mẹ, à n=dị wọ à nị à n=dị
NCS.QUOT.Q NEG 1SG=be(b) NEG COM CL1.mother NEG 1SG=be(b)
wọ à tị à n=dị wọ à wẹ à
NEG COM CL1.father NEG 1SG=be(b) NEG COM CL1.sibling NEG
n=dị wọ à mọ dzụ, mịgbẹ
1SG=be(b) NEG COM CL1.person CL1.certain 1SG house.LOC
jyà gị ndẹ yɛ
sweep(a) put(a) who QUOT.Q

‘When she was about to enter the house, she saw that someone had swept her house. Huh! She asked [herself]: I am [here] without a mother, without a father, without a sibling, without anyone. Who has swept my house?’

Examples (444) and (445) are taken from the same narrative. Example (444) contains two interjections, wɛ and ọ. The first interjection wɛ expresses dismay at the fact that the sister is not behind the house as expected but has instead gone missing. The sentence-final interjection ọ emphasizes the statement and gives it more weight. Example (445) contains the interjection ọ?à expressing consternation and disbelief by the main character of the story at the fact that someone must have entered and swept her house while she was on the farm. Dismay or disbelief may also be expressed by ululation, which is widespread in the area. The interjection ‘Wonderful!’ [wàndàfùl], adopted from Pidgin and translatable as ‘amazing, incredible’ is more neutral and without necessarily having a negative or a positive connotation. Finally, an interjection which, to the best of my knowledge, does not exist in Pidgin or in related languages is ọọọ, cf. (446) and (447). It expresses ignorance or lack of knowledge.

(446) nım, bạ kà nìm a wān w-ọ, tjyẹ bọ
YES IMPERS P3:hab sit(a).IPFV COM CL1.child CL1-DET KNOW(c) CL2
kà fàn yị wù è, ọọọ
CL2 sell(a) eat(b) CL1 INTERJ

‘Yes. They kept the child [of the gorilla]; whether they sold [it] and [someone] ate it? I don’t know!’

(447) tjyẹ bọ kà yi è, ọọọ, à n=dị wọ
KNOW(c) IMPERS P3 eat(b) INTERJ INTERJ NEG 1SG=be(b) NEG
kà-tjyẹ
ABIL-KNOW(c)

‘Whether they ate [it]? I don’t know! I cannot know.’
The interjection òǒō is equivalent to saying ‘I don’t know’ or ‘I have no idea’ or shrugging one’s shoulders. There are also volitive interjections which are conventionally used to chase away different animals or even people. The sound ŋŋŋ is used to chase away fowl. Goats and sheep are chased away with the interjection tsi, and in order to chase away dogs or people (mostly children), the imperative form bì ‘Go out!’ is used.
CHAPTER 11

Basic clause structure

This chapter deals with the structure of basic clauses, i.e. pragmatically un-marked declarative main clauses. The discussion is restricted to verbal predicates. Non-verbal predicates are dealt with in Chapter 13. The current chapter starts off with a description of the attested types of argument frames (§11.1). Following this is a section on constituent order within the clause (§11.2), which is in turn followed by a detailed description of the different attested syntactic constituents (§11.3). Finally, the last section discusses the status of grammatical relations in Mundabli (§11.4).

11.1 Types of argument frames

This section deals with the argument structure of verbs. However, it is restricted to nominal arguments. In the case of complex verbal cores (or serial verb constructions), arguments should be understood as arguments of the whole verb complex rather than arguments of specific individual verbs. For ease of reference, I will simply refer to these complex verbal cores as verbs in this chapter. Lovegren (2013: 320) offers an account on how the argument structure of a verbal core can be deduced from the argument structure of the verbs it contains for the related language Mungbam. As the two languages behave nearly identically as regards the argument structure of verbs, his findings can most likely be transferred one-to-one to Mundabli.

A valency distinction based on the minimal number of core arguments makes no sense in Mundabli because arguments other than the subject can always be omitted when their content can be inferred from the context. This
includes not only oblique arguments, but also the second core argument, the object. Instead of a distinction based on the minimal number of core arguments, a distinction based on the maximal number of arguments is adopted. Verbs are thus regarded as intransitive only if they cannot take an object and they are regarded as transitive when they can take an object. This rather uncommon definition of transitive vs. intransitive verbs is based on Lovegren (2013: 280ff.) who proposes this definition for Mungbam and provides more elaborate argumentation in favour of such a definition. Intransitive verbs only have the subject as an argument,\(^1\) cf. e.g., ɓį ‘exit’ in (448). Transitive verbs can take two arguments: a subject and an object, like e.g., tsú ‘contribute’ and mű ‘take’ in (449) and (450).

(448) wān w-ɗ ɓį  
\(\text{CL1.child CL1-DET exit(b)}\)  
‘The child went outside.’

(449) bɓ tsú dụ  
\(\text{CL2 contribute(c) CL3.beans}\)  
‘They contributed beans.’

(450) wụ mű fẹŋfẹŋ  
\(\text{CL1 take(a) CL3/7a.fufu_stick}\)  
‘She took the fufu stick.’

As pointed out above, the object in a transitive clause can always be omitted when it is understood from the context, as e.g. in the second clause in (451). There are no syntactic restrictions on object omission.

(451) wụ bʊŋ tɛ k-ɗ, wụ yẹ tụ  
\(\text{CL1 pick(b) CL7/8.walking_stick CL7-DET CL1 throw(a) away(c)}\)  
‘She then picked up the stick and threw [it] away [from herself].’

In addition to simple intransitive and transitive verbs, there are extended transitive and intransitive verbs. Extended intransitive verbs take a subject and an oblique constituent, but no object. Extended transitive verbs take a subject,\(^1\) It has been stated for other languages that any verb can occur with a cognate noun as object, see Heath (2013: 149ff.) for the Dogon of Beni and Lovegren (2013: 350-351) for Mungbam. This would mean that there are no real intransitive verbs. At first glance, I thought the same was the case in Mundabli. Mundabli has what I call the cognate deverbal noun construction (cf. §14.3.1) which expresses verb focus by adding an infinitive deverbal noun to the end of an intransitive or transitive clause. However, I believe that the deverbal noun is not an object in the case of Mundabli, because it can co-occur with an object in a transitive clause, in which case it generally follows the object. As it is not otherwise possible to have two objects in one clause, I believe that the infinitive in the cognate deverbal noun construction in Mundabli has an adverbial function, and that therefore there are true intransitive verbs which cannot take an object argument.
an object and an oblique constituent. This distinction was made by Dixon and Aikhenvald (2000: 3) and was adopted by Lovegren (2013) for Mungbam. The current chapter is strongly inspired by Lovegren’s treatment of the same issues in Mungbam; see Lovegren (2013: 314ff.).

11.1.1 Extended intransitive verbs

There are a few extended intransitive verbs, i.e. verbs which take an oblique argument but no object. This section only deals with oblique arguments which are included in the verb semantics, although formally, they are no different from obliques which are not included in the verb semantics. The oblique argument in the examples is enclosed in square brackets.

The verb də ‘see’ usually takes a dative complement (452) rather than an object. However, the undergoer, which is usually expressed as dative, may also take the form of a direct object, in which case the verb is transitive (453). In (453), the verb is part of a relative clause and takes the cl7 pronoun kɨ as its object.

(452) tō dóm lā bâm dō [wū lā], wū kɔ kàn
c17/8.day some dat c19.antelope see(a) cl1.ppf dat cl1.fʒ go(a) 
dʒwō
cl1/2.water_place

‘One day, an antelope saw her when she went to the stream.’

(453) k-ɛ̃ dɨ̋ n̋=də̄ 1sg=see(a)
c17/7-dem.prox be(b) cl7;1sg.poss c17-det c17.thing subord
k-ɔ̃ k-Jeremy [kf]
1sg = see(a) c17-rel c17

‘This is my own thing that I see.’

Another example of an extended intransitive verb is fɨ̋, which takes a comitative complement when it means ‘happen’ (454).³

(454) à dā mē nā ndʒām bɨ fɨ̋ b-ʒ [ā wà]
2sg see(a) finish(a) as cl8.things cl8 pass(b) cl8-rel com 2sg

‘As you have already seen what happened to you...’

The movement verb yó ‘run’ is also attested as an extended intransitive, taking a locative postpositional phrase as its oblique argument, as in (455). In this case, it basically means ‘run away from, escape’.⁴

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²A less literal but better translation might be ‘This is the way I see things.’
³In combination with other verbs in an SVC, fɨ̋ can mean ‘disappear’ or ‘be useless’.
⁴The verb yó ‘run’ is also attested as a simple intransitive verb.
11.1. Types of argument frames

(455) kə̀ kà yó tʃū [dzə̀ m kə̀n] bɔ̀ mɨ̀
Koshin pɔ̀ run(c) come(b) cl.9/10. war hands. LOC cl.2 consec
 tʃū kwó kʊ́ŋ bɨ̀ yş
come(b) enter(c) hunt(c) go_out(b) go_up(c)

‘The Koshin people ran away from war, then they came in[to this area] and chased away [the Nshwen].’

(456) ë, wù ywó tì [kù y-5 kə̀n]
yes cl.1 run(c) surprisingly cl.9. ratmole cl.9-DET hands. LOC

‘Yes, he ran away from the ratmole.’

The verb nɨ̀m ‘be located, stay’ is also attested as extended intransitive verb, in which case it takes a comitative complement (457).

(457) nɔ̀m nɛ̀ tʃū yɛ̀ bɔ̀ nɨ̀m [ə̀ wə̀], à
cl.2. children mother.2poss come(b) comp cl.2 live(a) comp 2sg 2sg
mɨ̀ mʊ̀ bɔ̀, à mɨ̀ gï yɛ̀ dì mɔ̀
consec take(a) cl.2 2sg consec put(b) comp be(b) cl.9. slave
y-ā
cl.9-2sg. poss

‘Your siblings have come to stay with you and you make them your slaves.’

11.1.2 Extended transitive verbs

There is at least one extended transitive verb, namely fɔ̀ ‘give’. The verb fɔ̀ accepts two different argument frames, both of which involve an object and an oblique constituent.\(^5\) One possibility is for the object to represent the recipient and for a prepositional phrase with the comitative preposition ə to represent the theme, as in (458). The second possibility is for the object to represent the theme and for an adpositional dative phrase to represent the recipient, as in (459) (see §11.3.5 for more on dative constituents).

(458) nʉ̀nfu fɔ̀ ntì [ə kpɔ̀]
N. give(b) N. comp cl.3/7a. money

‘Nyungfu gave Ntie money.’

(459) nʉ̀nfu fɔ̀ kpɔ̀ [ɪ ntì lə̀]
N. give(b) cl.3/7a. money loc N. dat

‘Nyungfu gave money to Ntie.’

\(^5\)This alternation seems to be found throughout Lower Fungom (and in Naki) (Good, p.c.).
The choice between these two constructions is determined pragmatically. While adpositional phrases are not usually considered to be arguments of the verb, verbs like ‘give’ represent borderline cases, as their use demands the presence of an adpositional phrase. The verb ‘give’ is also attested as an extended transitive verb with the locative noun/postposition kān ‘in hands’ as the locative argument (460). The object in (460) is not realized. Verbs of placement like gī ‘put’ or tén ‘pour’ take locative complements, cf. e.g., (461) or (462).

(460) wù fó [wān nī wū-bwé dzū cl1 give(b) cl1.child cl1.mother.3SG.POSS cl1.toddler cl1.other kān] hands.LOC

‘She gave [it] to her little sister.’

(461) wù dà bō kā gī tē [ī gbō cl1 see(a) IMPERS 3 put(b) cl7/8.walking_stick LOC cl3.house sē] front.LOC

‘She saw that someone had put a walking stick in front of the house.’

(462) à mī tén wū [kyà mī] 2SG CONSEC pour(c).SUBJ cl3 cl9/10.basket in

‘and you pour it into a basket [to remove all the water].’

11.2 Constituent order within the clause

The basic constituent order in Mundabli is SVO. The schema in Figure 11.1 shows the unmarked constituent order of a positive declarative main clause with neutral focus.

Subject – [...[V]_verbal core...}_verbal complex – (Object) – (Oblique Argument) – (X)

Figure 11.1: Basic word order

While the presence of subject and verb are obligatory, none of the constituents following the verbal complex in the above schema have to be present, as indicated by the parentheses. Oblique arguments include dative or comitative arguments like ā kō6 ‘with a knife’ in (463). The X in Figure (11.1) represents adverbial phrases (e.g., temporal and locative phrases), such as njwēn

6The noun kō refers to a specific type of knife used by the so-called ‘Aku people’. According to IWGIA (2017), the local term ‘Aku’ refers to the ‘Galegi’, a subgroup of the Mbororo. However, the source of this information is unclear.
‘now’ in (464). Alternatively, temporal adverbials can occur at the beginning of the sentence.

(463) yɛ̄ wù bwól bì yā bǐ ā
comp cl1; f1 remove(c) exit(b) cl7/8.intestines cl8;3sg.poss com kō
cl3/10.aku_knife

‘[...] that he, will remove his intestines with a knife.’

(464) mɔ̀ w-ɔ̄ táŋ tsù b-ɔ́ njwén
cl1.person cl1-det buy(b) cl7/8.banana cl8-det now

‘The man bought the banana now.’

Comparison with constituent order patterns in related languages shows that SVO constituent order, as attested in Mundabli, is typical for Grassfields languages (Watters 2003: 248). Looking at universal patterns of constituent order, the more detailed constituent order shown in Figure (11.1) is typical for SVO languages in general (Hyman 1981: 76). Different constituent order patterns are attested in clauses with a marked information structure. When the subject is focussed, it may occur after the verbal complex, i.e. in immediate after verb (IAV) position, which is the prominent focus-position. When the object or an oblique argument are topicalized, the topicalized elements occur at the beginning of the sentence, before the verbal complex. Marked patterns of constituent order are discussed in Chapter 14, which deals with information structure. With no case marking and no agreement on verbs, constituent order is the only clue to the grammatical role of a full NP not functioning as the object of an adposition.

11.3  Syntactic arguments

This section gives an overview of syntactic arguments and their structure. While the arguments include subject, object and oblique constituents, the only obligatory argument in Mundabli is the subject. All other arguments, including the object, can be omitted when they can be inferred from the context. If one took obligatoriness as a criterion for argument status, i.e. if one considered only the minimally present constituents of a phrase as arguments, only the subject could ever be considered an argument of the verb. However, if we consider the maximally present constituents which can occur with a verb instead, more than one argument may be supported. While some verbs, such as

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7In example (463), the subject pronoun wù and the f1 marker dɨ̋ are contracted. The resulting form wù integrates the tone of the f1 marker with the shape of the subject pronoun. Phonological mergers like this are occasionally attested.

8For an explanation of this term, see first footnote in Chapter 14 of this thesis.
Basic clause structure 271

mwè ‘be sad’ and kwé ‘return from the bush’ in (465)-(466) can take only one argument, namely a subject, others, such as tsu ‘contribute’, dʒye ḋ ‘cook’ and mū ‘take’ in (467)-(469) can take an object as well.9 If the object is omitted, as in (479), it is still semantically present, which supports the status of objects as verb arguments.

(465) wù mwè  
  cl1 be_sad(a)  
  ‘She was sad.’

(466) kpé  w-ɔ̄ kwé dzɔŋa  
  cl1.woman cl1-DET return_from_bush(c) again  
  ‘The woman came back again.’

(467) bɔ̋ tsū  dɔ̄  
  cl2 contribute(c) cl3.beans  
  ‘They contributed beans.’

(468) bɔ̋ dʒyē dɔ̄  w-ɔ́  
  cl2 cook(a) cl3.beans cl3-DET  
  ‘They cooked the beans.’

(469) wù mū  ʃɨ̄ɲām  
  cl1 take(a) cl3/7a.fufu_stick  
  ‘She took the fufu stick.’

A syntactic distinction between non-core (oblique) constituents and adverbial phrases (or adjuncts, in each case non-arguments) is not warranted by formal criteria. For convenience, I will refer to all constituents other than the subject and object, i.e. all constituents which are formally flagged,10 as non-core or oblique constituents. The following constituents are thus attested:

9 Verbs in isolation are given with their citation tones, which differ in some cases from their tones in the examples.
10 I use the term ‘flag’ as explained by (Haspelmath 2008: 506): “There is no widely accepted cover term for cases and adpositions, but the terms flag and relator have sometimes been used as terms which are neutral with respect to the case/adposition distinction.”
11.3. Syntactic arguments

1. Subject (unflagged constituent, usually directly precedes the verb)
2. Object (unflagged constituent, usually directly follows the verb)
3. Comitative (preceded by the particle ā)
4. Locative (optionally preceded by the preposition ī, followed by a spatial postposition; or unmarked)
5. Dative (optionally preceded by the preposition ī, followed by the dative postposition lā)

Locative and Dative are both optionally preceded by the preposition ī (glossed LOC) and obligatorily followed by a postposition. While one could lump them together, I chose to split them because this allows for a more detailed treatment. In the remaining sections, the listed constituents are discussed in the given order.

11.3.1 Subject

The subject is a bare noun phrase which, in a sentence with neutral information structure, precedes the verb complex, as in the intransitive sentence in (470) and the transitive sentence in (471).

(470) mɨ̄ wān kà tjiā kpi
   1SG CL1.child p3 long_ago die(b)
   ‘My child died long ago.’

(471) nǐ w-ɔ̄ njwɔ́m ndām b-ɔ́
   CL1.mother CL1-DET stir(b) CL8a.fufu CL8a-DET
   ‘The mother stirred the fufu.’

When the subject is in focus, it occurs in the position immediately after the verb complex (472) with the object following it.\textsuperscript{11}

The canonical subject position immediately before the verb complex is then filled with a purely tonal dummy subject. However, consisting of a low tone, this dummy subject is only detectable when it precedes a Class a verb and only in certain inflectional forms, causing the superhigh tone of the Class a verb to be realized as low-high rising tone, as e.g., in (472) (cf. §3.4.2 and §14.2.3 for details).

(472) tsū ɲk3 ɲʊnfū
d3.hit(b) N. N.
   ‘NGKO hit Nyungfu.’

\textsuperscript{11}See §14.2.3 for more on subject focus.
The subject is the only obligatory argument. While objects are freely omitted when they can be inferred from the context, subjectless sentences are extremely rare. The only two cases of subject ellipsis attested are (473) and (474). This strategy seems to be restricted to stylistic repetition and enumeration. Subject ellipsis is neither attested in multi-clause sentences, nor in sequences of main clauses.

(473) wù tsú wù sűte̋e, tsű wù tsű wù tsű wù
cl1 hit(b) cl1 so_much hit(b) cl1 hit(b) cl1 hit(b) cl1

‘She beat her, so much, beat her again and again.’

(474) tsäm b-5 tʃú kwô gbá, tsű
cl7/8.python cl8-det come(b) enter(c) house.loc hit(b)
kpè w-5 áná tsű wù áná tsű wù áná,
cl1.woman cl1-det like_that hit(b) cl1 like_that hit(b) cl1 like_that
lyṯm wù, kù wù
wrap_around(b) cl1 tie(a) cl1

‘The pythons came and entered the house. They beat the woman like this, beat her like this, beat her like this, wrapped themselves around her and tied her up.’

### 11.3.2 Object

Just like subject NPs, object NPs are not marked by adpositions. The object is distinguished from the subject mainly by its characteristic position within the sentence. In basic clauses, i.e. simple declarative clauses with pragmatically unmarked word order, the subject precedes the verbal complex, while the object follows it, as in (475). Only when the subject is in focus does it occur in the position immediately after the verb complex (cf. §11.3.1 and references therein).

(475) nṯ w-5 jwōm nṯm b-5
cl1.mother cl1-det stir(b) cl8a.fufu cl8a-det

‘The mother stirred the fufu.’

When the object is defocalized, it precedes the verbal complex (476), which, in a subject focus sentence, results in O(X)VS order (477). For more on information structure and word order alternations, cf. §14.2. In clauses which are syntactically ambiguous and can be alternatively interpreted as SVO or OVS clauses, the structure is sometimes disambiguated by the presence of a tonal dummy subject (see §11.3.1).

(476) nṯm b-5 yǐ mī
cl8a.fufu cl8a-det eat(b) 1sg

‘I ate the fufu.’
11.3. Syntactic arguments

The object of a verb is frequently omitted when it can be inferred from the context, cf. e.g. (478) and (479)). There are no known formal restrictions on the omission of an object.

(478) yē gān tsē mī ā ntsīm mū-ŋ-gē-ŋ-gē, ā
com go(a) search(a) 1SG COM CL6-soil 6-N-be_red-N-be_red 2SG
mī tʃū fō ndā lā
consec come(b) give(b) 1SG.DAT DAT

‘[She said]: go and search for some red soil for me, and then you come and give [it] to me!’

(479) wū bóŋ tē k-5, wū yūs tū
cl1 pick(b) cl7.walking_stick cl7-DET cl1 throw(a) away(c)

‘She picked up the stick and threw [it] away [from herself].’

11.3.3 Comitative

The label “comitative” is chosen to indicate a constituent whose most common semantic interpretation is indeed comitative, but which may also have an instrumental function or may represent the theme in a transfer event. In the remainder of this section, a description of the structure of comitative constituents, illustrated mainly by examples with comitative semantics is followed by examples of the instrumental function and transfer events. Comitative phrases are headed by the preposition ā. The preposition can take either a full noun phrase (480) or a pronoun (481) as its object. Pronouns with a superhigh tone (i.e. non-preverbal pronouns of all noun classes other than Class 1 and 9) are realized with a low-high rising tone when they are the object of the comitative preposition, like e.g. the Class 7 non-preverbal pronoun kū in (481).

These and other data suggest that pronouns participate in a kind of case system, see §11.4.1 for more on this. Unlike postpositions, the preposition ā never gets stranded (cf. §12.3 on adposition stranding in relative clauses).

(480) wū tʃū [ā mbi], bū mú
cl1 come(b) COM CL6.palm_wine CL2 drink(b)

‘He brought wine [and] they drank.’

12This tone change is described in §6.1.3.
Basic clause structure

(481) bə̄ mǐ kwé jū [ā kī]
impers consec return_from_bush(c) come(b) com cl.7

‘They then returned home with it.’

The comitative constituent generally follows the verb and the object, occurring towards the end of the clause. Its position relative to other oblique constituents is not fixed. In (482), the comitative argument directly follows the verb, preceding the unmarked locative phrase dʒwō ‘water place’ (cf. §11.3.4 on unmarked locative phrases).

(482) wù gān [ā bō] dʒwō
cl.1 go(a) com cl.2 cl.1/2.water_place

‘He went with them to the stream.’

Comitative constituents can also have other semantic functions. They can represent an instrument, as in (483) and (484), or the theme in a transfer event, as in (485) and (486).

(483) jī k-ş kó jū mǐ [ā kē]
cl.3/7a.storm cl.7a-det catch(b),ipfv come(b) 1sg com cl.9/10.hand ākō kō mbē
like catch(b).ipfv cl.2.person

‘The storm was catching me with its hands as if it were people catching [me].’

(484) n=dzē Pē là yē wù fā dzē dzēn, mā w-ś
1sg =say(b) P. dat comp cl.1 prohib say(b) again cl.1.man cl.1-det kā twō kū wū f-án [ā
abl? pierce(a) cl.3/7a.stomach cl.3/3sg.poss prox-here com kō]
cl.3/10.aku_knife

‘I told Pe that he should not talk again, so that the man shouldn’t pierce
his stomach with a knife.’

(485) n=dzē mó the best nīŋ dē mē kā ā
1sg =say(b) cs.quot the best cl.7.thing be(b) only cond 2sg
tjū gbō kō ndʒɔ̄ŋmŋin ā dī wō bō kān
come(b) house.loc cond cl.8.food neg be(b) neg impers have(c)
yē bō tū fō mē wā [ā ngi]
comp impers fetch_water(b) give(b) only 2sg com cl.6.water

‘I said that the best thing can only be, if you come home, if there is no
food, they have to carry water and give it to you.’
11.3. Syntactic arguments

(486) Ḳbí yā tʃî, Ḳtá kò bì yá tʃî tʃî
P. exit(b) go_up(c) up P. VER.FOC p3 exit(b) go_up(c) surprisingly up
ā, Ḳfà kò mî [ā blō]
?? P. give(b) catch(b) 1SG COM 1/2.blow

‘Pe got up. As Pe got up, Pe gave me a punch.’

11.3.4 Locative

Locative constituents combine the optional general locative preposition Ḳ with either a noun phrase followed by a locative postposition, as in (487-489), or a locative noun form, as in (490), which combines the function of a noun phrase and a postposition (cf. §10.2.2). While the optional particle Ḳ is used only in (489), its use would be grammatical in all these examples.

(487) à mî tén wû [kyà mî]
2SG CONSEC pour(c) CL3 CL9.basket in

‘And then you pour it into a flat basket.’

(488) wû kwó [mbâŋ mî]
cL1 enter(c) CL7/8.door in

‘She entered the space behind the door.’

(489) wû dā bô kà gî tê [Ī gbɔ̄
cL1 see(a) IMPERS p3 put(b) CL7/8.walking_stick LOC CL3.house
sè]
house_front.pp

‘She saw that someone had left a walking stick in front of the house.’

(490) wû kwô [gbá]
cL1 enter(c) house.LOC

‘She entered the house.’

The main function of locative constituents is to create a locational setting, i.e. to represent the ground in an event of motion or location. By extension, locative constituents are sometimes used to create a temporal setting (491).

13Refer to §10.2.2 for more on postpositions (including a list of locative postpositions) and locative noun forms.
14Early during the process of making corn beer, the corn is poured into a flat basket which functions as a strainer, in order to remove the water which the corn has soaked in for a couple days.
15The term ‘ground’ was first introduced by Talmy. It refers to “the entity which acts as a spatial reference point for the motion/location of [a] figure” (Talmy 1972), as critically revised in (Croft et al. 2010: 2).
Occasionally, locative constituents are attested which consist of a bare noun phrase, marked neither by the general locative preposition nor by a postposition, cf. e.g. (492) and (493). The relevant locative phrases in these examples are enclosed in square brackets. Example (493) contains two unflagged locatives: tfəŋ 'fire place' and sɛ ‘attic’.

(492) tō dōm lā bām dā wú lā, wù kə̀ pə̄ go(a).IPFV? CL1/2.water_place
w-ɔ́ cl3-DET upon pə̄ be(b) P. K.
‘One day, an antelope saw her. She was going to the stream.’

(493) kə̀ wù kpə̄ jì gū w-ɔ́ [tfəŋ],
when CL1.light(a) go_down(a) CL3/7a.fire CL3-DET CL1/2.fire_place
nǐ wù tén bí jì
CL1.mother.3SG.POSS CL1;3SG.POSS drip(c) exit(b) go_down(a)
fi-ngī [sf]
CL19-CL6.water CL3/7a.attic
‘When she lit the fire in the fire place, her mother let a little bit of water drop down from the attic.’

11.3.5 Dative

The dative constituent is followed by the dative postposition lā and can be preceded by the optional locative preposition f. Thus, formally, the dative constituent is a special type of locative constituent. However, due to its special function, it is treated as a separate type of constituent and is dedicated a separate section.

The main semantic function of the dative is to indicate the recipient or beneficiary of an action, although it is also attested with other semantic functions. The dative adposition can take a full NP, as in (494) and (495), or a pronoun, as in (496) and (497), as its complement.

(494) fə̋ fə̋ nde kpə̋ [f nti lā]
dē.p1 give(b) who CL3/7a.money LOC N. DAT
‘Who gave money to Ntie?’
11.3. Syntactic arguments

(495) wù fyá bí-lúŋ [nə̀wêm b-ɔ̀ lá] ā
    cl1 give(b).ipfv cl1.8-suffering cl2.children cl2-det dat advlz
mò̤~mò̤,  gə̀  nə̀wêm nî   kə̀ wù  kə́ tʃyé
    very_much be_there^{16} cl2.children cl1.mother ?? cl1 hab know(c)
bô  frust

'She made them suffer, not knowing that they were her siblings.'

(496) nsʊ̄ŋ wū dz [wú lá] yē wà, à dī
    cl1.friend cl1:3sg.poss say(b) cl1pp dat subord 2sg, 2sg be(b)
kpé  bô
    cl1.woman cl1/9.bad

'Her friend said to her: You, you are a bad woman!'

(497) bɔ̀ fô tʃú [bí lá] yē bɔ̀ tsè
    cl2 tell(a).ipfv come(b).ipfv 1pl.pp dat comp cl2 search(a).ipfv
dzî  gàn kpě
    travel(b).ipfv go(a).ipfv cl3/7a.money

'They are telling us that they are searching for money.'

Examples (494)-(497) contain verbs which commonly take a dative complement, such as fə̋ 'give' (494 and 495), dzé 'say' (496) and fô 'report' (497) (cf. §11.1). However, any active verb can take a dative complement in order to express the benefactor of the action, as in (498). This happens in a context where related Bantu languages would add a derivational applicative affix to the verb.

(498) kpé w-ɔ̄ dzîyê ndɔ̀mnyin [fí mò̤ w-ɔ̄
    cl1.woman cl1-det cook(a) cl8.food loc cl1.person cl1-det
lá]  dat

"The woman prepares food for the man."

The dative exhibits a case-like alternation in two pronouns. The 1sg pronoun mî and the interrogative pronoun ndè 'who' have special dative forms, namely ndó for the 1sg dative pronoun (499) and ndyên for the dative interrogative pronoun (500) (cf. §6.1.5 for details). These forms are only used in the dative. They cannot occur in (other) locative phrases.

The dative interrogative pronoun ndyên behaves differently from the dative 1sg pronoun in that it is obligatory in dative constituents and the postposition is absent when the dative interrogative pronoun is used. In (500), the

^{16}A special section is devoted to the locative copula gə, cf. §13.2.5.4.
two forms of the interrogative pronoun, ndɛ̀ (Subject) and ndyén (Dative) are contrasted.

(499) gbàm kó mǐ tɔ̀ ɗʒi̅̈ dʒ ((ndá lā) first cl7.God f2 consec show(a) cl9.way be_good(b) 1sg.dat dat first

‘First, God will show me the right way.’

(500) ɗā ndɛ̀ kà-mān [ī ndyén]
  ḍs.give(b) who cl7-what loc who.dat

‘Who gave what to whom?’

While the use of the dative form ndyén is obligatory in dative contexts, the 1sg dative pronoun form is in free variation with the unmarked 1sg pronoun mī, cf. (501).

(501) à mī tfụ̣̃ fā [mī lā]
  2sg consec come(b) give(b) 1sg.pp dat

‘[...] and then come and give it to me!’

11.4 Grammatical relations

Mundabli is a non-prototypical marked nominative language (cf. König (2006) for more on marked nominative languages). It has nominative-accusative alignment, but canonical subject pronouns are functionally more marked than object pronouns. Evidence for grammatical relations is relatively weak and evidence for the subject is stronger than for the object. The label “marked nominative” for Mundabli is based on the pronominal forms. While case is not marked in full NPs, the shapes of pronouns vary, depending on their syntactic function. The form used for out-of-focus preverbal subjects is used only in this function, while the form used for objects covers various functions, including postverbal in-focus subjects and elicitation forms. Overt coding properties for grammatical relations in Mundabli are word order and - in pronouns only - case morphology. Mundabli has no verb agreement. Noun phrases other than pronouns are not marked for case.

11.4.1 Case morphology in pronouns

Mundabli pronouns have various different case forms, including special dative forms for the 1sg pronoun mī and the interrogative pronoun ndɛ̀ ‘who’. Mundabli makes a distinction between preverbal pronouns and non-preverbal pronouns. The preverbal pronoun forms directly precede the verb complex. These forms only refer to topical subjects. They have no other syntactic function. The non-preverbal forms are used elsewhere for pronouns which are not
the object of a pre- or postposition. When a pronoun is the object of a (locative or dative) postposition, or of the comitative preposition ā, respectively, it surfaces with the same segmental shape as the non-preverbal forms, but with alternated tonal patterns. For an overview of such forms, see Table 11.1.

<table>
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<td>NPVB</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>wū</td>
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<td>9/10</td>
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<td>19/18</td>
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</table>

<table>
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<th>NPVB</th>
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<th>COM</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 11.1: Preverbal, non-preverbal, object of postposition and object of comitative preposition forms of all personal pronouns, adapted from Table 6.2

When a pronoun which would otherwise bear a superhigh tone in non-preverbal position, i.e. any third person pronoun of a noun class other than Class 1 and 9, is the object of the comitative preposition ā, it is realized with a LH rising tone; otherwise the tone is the same as that of the non-preverbal pronoun; see also §11.3.3.

When they are the object of a postposition, all pronouns except for the Class 2 (or third person plural) pronoun bear a high tone. The Class 2 (or third person plural) pronoun is realized bō (with a low-high rising tone). All other pronouns bear a high tone when headed by a postposition.

When they are the object of the dative postposition lā, pronouns generally take the same form as when they are the object of a locative postposition. Only the first person singular pronoun mī ‘1SG’ and the interrogative pronoun ndē ‘who’ also have special dative/benefactive forms; see Table 11.2.

While ndyēn may occur on its own without a postposition, the 1sg benefactive pronoun ndā always co-occurs with the dative postposition lā. Whereas the 1sg benefactive pronoun ndā can always be replaced by the “object of postposition”-form of the 1sg pronoun mī, the dative form ndyēn ‘to/for
Basic clause structure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>unmarked form</th>
<th>dative/benefactive form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1sg mì</td>
<td>ndá</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1sg ndè</td>
<td>ndyén</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11.2: Special dative/benefactive pronoun forms

whom’ must be used to express the dative/benefactive of the interrogative pronoun ndè.
The current chapter is meant to give an overview of the most important characteristics of Mundabli relative clauses. The bulk of its content is nearly identical with the section on Mundabli relative clauses in Lovegren and Voll (2017). However, the current account contains some new information, especially regarding tone, the dummy subject and negation in relative clauses. In the remainder of this chapter, I treat the following typologically relevant parameters of relative clauses in turn: the linear order of the relative clause with respect to the head noun and with respect to other nominal modifiers (§12.1), marking of the relative clause, i.e. the elements that mark a relative clause as such (§12.2), representatives of the head nominal within the relative clause, i.e. the status of what are typically referred to as resumptive pronouns or “representative nominals” (§12.3) and the accessibility of different types of formally distinct grammatical relations to relativization (§12.4). Finally, §12.5 describes how various inflectional categories, including tense and aspect, focus marking, illocutionary force and negation, are marked in relative clauses, and how this compares to main clauses. For a comparison of relative clauses in the two Yemne-Kimbi languages Mundabli and Mungbam and a more elaborate analysis, see Lovegren and Voll (2017).

1Here I refer to the concept developed in the works of Keenan and Comrie (1977; 1979a;b).
12.1 Position of the relative clause

In order to frame the following discussion on Mundabli relative clauses, it is important to take a look at the structure of the noun phrase and the position of the relative clause relative to the head nominal and to other noun modifiers.

As shown in §7.3, in the unmarked case, all modifiers within an NP occur to the right of the head noun. The head noun may be modified by possessive pronouns, demonstratives, adjectives, numerals and/or the definite determiner, all of which show concord with the noun class of the head noun, and by relative clauses. The relativizer also shows concord with the noun class of the head noun. See Chapter 4 for an overview of the Mundabli noun class system. Like all noun modifiers, the relative clause follows the head nominal. In nearly all examples of relative clauses found in spontaneous texts, the relative clause is the only noun modifier and is thus placed directly after the noun. If other modifiers are present the relative clause occurs at the end of the noun phrase, following all other noun modifiers, including the determiner.

The schema in Figure (12.1) shows the unmarked order of noun modifiers. Given that no other modifier follows the relative clause, it is difficult to determine whether the relative clause is to be treated as embedded in, or adjoined to, the matrix NP. However, it does not seem to be possible for anything to intervene between the relative clause and the rest of the NP.

\[
\begin{array}{cccccc}
N & \rightarrow & Poss & \rightarrow & Adj & \rightarrow \\
& & Dem & \rightarrow & Num & \rightarrow \\
& & Det & \rightarrow & Rel
\end{array}
\]

Figure 12.1: Position of the relative clause relative to the head nominal and to other noun modifiers

(502) ŋwàtì bì bi-fyìŋ b-én bì-t5 b-ş
\underline{cl7/8.book} \underline{cl8;3SG.POSS} \underline{cl8-NEW} \underline{cl8-DEM.PROX} \underline{cl8-THREE} \underline{cl8-DET}

\[nō [wù f3 tāŋ b-ş Bāmēndā]
\underline{SUBORD CL1 P1 buy(b) CL8-REL Bsmanda}

‘these three new books of hers which she bought in Bamenda’

In all examples in this chapter, the head nominal and the representative of the head nominal within the relative clause (i.e., the resumptive pronoun) are underlined. In (502), the resumptive pronoun is omitted (see §12.3 for details). It is worth noting that the semantically bleached nouns niŋ ‘thing, matter’ and dē ‘place’ are frequently used as head nominals in cases where other languages might use a headless relative clause. Although head-less relative clauses are possible, they are rather uncommon.
12.2 Relative clause-marking

Having shown how the relative clause relates to its environment, this section discusses relative clause marking, i.e., the strategies used to identify a relative clause as such. Every relative clause is marked by a relativizer, which agrees in noun class with the head nominal and which I refer to as the “postverbal relativizer”. It immediately follows the verbal complex. In addition, relative clauses are optionally introduced by the subordinating conjunction nō̤, which does not show agreement. It also introduces certain kinds of adverbial clauses.

12.2.1 Postverbal relativizer

The postverbal relativizer, exemplified in (503), is identical in shape with the definite determiner and the distal demonstrative (cf. §5.2). It agrees with the head nominal in noun class and must immediately follow the verb complex of the relative clause, irrespective of the definiteness of the matrix NP or of the syntactic-semantic role of the head noun within the relative clause.

(503) wù dzé äyi, n=dî yó t̪jín sê, n=gân
cl1 say(b) no 1SG=f1 go_up(c) there cl3/7a.attic 1SG=go(a)
dâ bân nîn [kî lê pîm]
see(a) clearly cl7.thing cl7 make(a).ipfv stop_burning(c).ipfv
tô k-ʃ gû w-ʃ]
move_away(b).ipfv cl7-rel cl3/7a.fire cl3-det

‘Shesaid: No! I will go up to the attic and find out what is putting out the fire.’

The postverbal relativizer is not to be confused with a resumptive pronoun. Firstly, as Table 12.1 shows, the two clearly differ in shape. The resumptive pronoun is represented by the second column in Table 12.1, headed preverbal pronoun, and the postverbal relativizer is represented by the third column, headed determiner/relativizer, as determiners and relativizers are identical in shape. Secondly, although the resumptive pronoun is often absent, there are numerous cases (e.g., (504)) of relative clauses containing both a postverbal relativizer and a representative nominal in the form of a pronoun.

(504) first nîn nô [n=kâ lâ k-ʃ kî] dî yê
first cl7.thing subord 1SG=f2 do(a) cl7-rel cl7 be(b) comp

‘The first thing I will do is: [...]’
12.2. Relative clause-marking

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>noun class</th>
<th>preverbal pronoun</th>
<th>determiner/relativizer</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>wù</td>
<td>wɔ̄</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 12.1: Preverbal pronouns and determiners/relativizers

Although the postverbal relativizer is cognate with the definite determiner and the distal demonstrative, the postverbal relativizer does not modify the head nominal. This is supported by its position in the middle rather than at the end of the relative clause (see (503) and (504)) and by the fact that the postverbal relativizer is always present, irrespective of the definiteness of the matrix NP or of the ability of the head nominal itself to be modified by a determiner. This latter point is illustrated by examples such as (505), which contains a postverbal relativizer even though the head nominal is a 2SG pronoun, which cannot be modified by a demonstrative or a determiner.  

(505) wān w-ɛ̄n, dì wà nɔ̀ [à lɔ̀ w-ɔ̀ ná mì wān w-ɛ̄n lɛ̀ f-àn gbɔ̀ kǔŋ]  
cl1.child cl1-DEM.PROX be(b) 2SG SUBORD 2SG make(a) cl1-REL AS 1SG cl1.child cl1-DET get_lost(a).IPFV PROX-here cl3.house behind  

‘Child, you are the one who made my [other] child get lost here behind the house.’

---

3 Relative clauses modifying pronouns as in (505) are possible, though not common. When the head nominal is a first or second person pronoun, the relative marker always shows Class 1 agreement.

4 The phrase mì wān ‘my child’ is a fixed lexicalized expression. While possessive phrases are usually head-initial, consisting of a head noun followed by a possessive pronoun which agrees with the noun class of the head nominal, in this fixed expression, the noun ‘child’ is simply juxtaposed to the focus form of the 1SG pronoun.
12.2.2 Clause-initial subordinating conjunction

Relative clauses can be additionally introduced by the subordinating conjunction no5 (glossed 'SUBORD'), as in (506). However, when introducing a relative clause, this subordinator always co-occurs with a postverbal relative marker; it never functions marks a relative clause on its own.

(506) dʒụ̀ nọ̀ [bà̀ kà ụ̀ kpì̀ y-5 (yì) tò]
   昝.goat subord imper P3 make(a) die(b) cl9-rel cl9 cl7/8.day
   b-5 ngẹ̀ kà bān ụnà bùbùbù
   cl8-dist.dem upon P3 be_white(b) like_that ideo.white

○'The goat which was killed on that day was completely white.'

Every relative clause can be introduced by this subordinator, but it is frequently absent and its presence is never obligatory. The same subordinator also introduces certain adverbial clauses, such as reason clauses and specific kinds of time and manner clauses.

12.3 The representative of the head nominal

According to (Keenan 1985: 147), the encoding of the role of the head noun in the embedded sentence is one of the most significant parameters from the viewpoint of typological variation. In Mundabli, the head nominal can nearly always be represented within the relative clause. The only exception is a certain type of locative relative clause (see below). The head nominal is generally represented by a pronoun which occupies the same position in the relative clause as in a main clause.

The presence of a representative nominal is obligatory when the representative nominal functions as the subject of the relative clause, as in (507), and when it functions as the possessor in a genitive phrase, as in (508).

(507) mọ̀ [wù kà dzé w-5 dʒụ̀ gbàm]
   cl1.man cl1 P3 say(b).IPFV cl1-rel cl3a.word cl7/8.god
   tò k-5 ngẹ̀ kà dị̀ pụ̀ta kyà
   cl7/8.day cl7-det upon P3 be(b) P. K.

○'The person who was preaching on that day was Pa Peter Kia.'

(508) mọ̀ nọ̀ [f̀=kà mú w-5 wān]
   cl1.man subord 1sg.pro =P3 marry(a) cl1-rel cl1.child
   wù̀ kà ụfà ụfà
   cl1-cl1poss P3 be_blind(a) pass(b)

○'The man whose daughter I married was blind.'

5The subordinator has a phonetic variant nà which often occurs in fast speech. The two variants occur in free alternation.
In all other types of relative clause, the use of a representative head nominal is optional. However, the conditions under which the resumptive pronoun may be omitted differ, according to the grammatical function of the representative nominal within the relative clause. While e.g., a resumptive pronoun in object function may simply be left out, this is not possible when the resumptive pronoun is the object of a comitative prefix. In this case, only the whole adpositional phrase can be dropped. In the remainder of this section, I describe the conditions under which a representative head nominal may be omitted, treating object relative clauses, dative relative clauses, different types of locative relative clauses and comitative relative clauses in turn.

An object relative clause, like in (506) may or may not contain a representative head nominal, i.e. the representative head nominal may simply be omitted.

A dative phrase is optionally introduced by the locative preposition ᵁ̃, as in (509a), and requires the dative postposition ᵇ̃. When the representative head nominal in a relative clause is the argument of a dative phrase, it can be omitted so that the dative phrase is stranded (509b). In this case, the locative marker ᵁ̃ is usually omitted as well, so that the dative postposition ᵇ̃ is left alone (509b). It is not possible to omit the whole dative phrase.

(509) a. mbɛ́ nō [wù kə dʒyɛ́ b-⁵ (f) b̃̃ cl.2.people subord cl.1 p̃ cook(a).ipfv cl.2-rel (loc) cl.2.loc ᵇ̃̃ kə fạ̄̃̃ dat cl.2 p̃ be_rich(a)

○‘The people for whom she used to cook were rich.’

b. mbɛ́ nō [wù kə dʒyɛ́ b-⁵ ᵇ̃̃], b̃̃ kə cl.2.people subord cl.1 p̃ cook(a).ipfv cl.2-rel dat cl.2 p̃ fạ̄̃̃ be_rich(a)

○‘The people for whom she used to cook were rich.’

There are two different kinds of locative relative clauses: those which contain a locative postposition and which describes location in relation to a certain object or location and those which do not contain a locative postposition and which describe location at a certain place rather than in relation to an object or location.

In a locative relative clause of the former type, the object of the locative phrase may be omitted, as indicated by the parentheses in (510). In this case, the locative phrase is stranded. The use of the locative preposition ᵁ̃ (omitted in (510)) in this type of locative phrase is, as always, optional, so that the respective locative postposition may get stranded either together with the locative preposition or on its own, as in (510). The resumptive pronoun can also be replaced by the locative pro-form tʃɪ́n ‘there’.

288  12.3. The representative of the head nominal
Relative clauses

(510) kpē w-Ͽ nō [bɔ̋ dĩ kwō fǐ w-Ͽ]
cl3.pot cl3-det subord cl2 p1 put(a) go_down(a) cl3-rel
dĩ w-Ͽ (wǔ mǐ), wǔ fǐ gā ā mōmō
c1.l3a.beans cl1a-det cl3 in cl3 p1 be_big(b) advlz very

°‘The pot into which they put the beans was very big.’

Unlike the type of locative relative clause exemplified by (510), locative relative clauses which do not contain a locative postposition and which describe location at a certain place rather than in relation to an object or location, henceforth referred to as absolute locative relative clauses, never contain a representative nominal. They are unique in this regard. Absolute locative relative clauses always take the semantically bleached noun dɛ̀ ‘place’ as their head nominal and their postverbal relativizer fɔ́ shows locative agreement (511).6

(511) kā ā wāŋ mē, kō m=mū, mī n=tsō
cond 2sg squish(a) finish(a) cond 1sg =drink(b) 1sg 1sg =show(a)
dē nō [wān w-ā kā fū f-Ͽ]
c1l9/10.place subord cl1.child cl1-2sg.poss p3 pass(b) loc-rel

‘After you have finished squishing [the small berries], after I have drunk [the juice], I will show [you] where your child has gone.’

Finally, in a comitative relative clause, the representative nominal can be omitted only if the comitative marker ā,7 is also absent, as shown by the parentheses in (512) (see (516) for an example of a comitative relative clause in which the comitative phrase is not omitted).

(512) sǐŋ nō [wǔ fū tān y-Ͽ sō y-Ͽ (ā yī)]
c1l9.knife subord cl1 1p cut(b) cl1-9-rel cl9.meat cl9-det com cl9
kā be_sharp(b)

°‘The knife that she cut the meat [with] was sharp.’

The way in which representative nominals may be omitted in relative clauses has strong parallels in the possibility to omit pronouns in main clauses. Thus, for example, the subject, which cannot be omitted in a relative clause, is also the only obligatory argument in a main clause. Also stranding of locative phrases is possible in main clauses as well as in relative clauses. Alternatively, in both, the locative phrase can be omitted entirely. Concerning absolute locatives, the non-existence of locative pronouns may account for the absence

6It is likely that fɔ́ is a remnant of Proto-Bantu locative class 16, which encodes location
7Although the marker has instrumental semantics in (512), I refer to this marker as comitative because this is its main semantic function.
of representative head nominals in absolute locative relative clauses. Finally, in a main clause, just like in a relative clause, a comitative phrase cannot be stranded. The comitative argument may only be omitted if the comitative marker is also omitted.

12.4 Accessibility to relativization

Another typologically relevant factor in relative clause structure concerns the permissible grammatical functions of the head nominal within the relative clause (Andrews 2007: 207). In Mundabli, there is no restriction on the grammatical relation of the representative nominal within the relative clause. The representative nominal within a relative clause may be the subject, the object, the dative argument or the comitative argument of the relative clause, it may be the argument of a locative phrase or the possessor in a genitive phrase (see (513), (514) which repeats (506), (515), (516), (517) and (518), respectively).

(513) mò [wù kò dzé w-5 dṣú gbàm cl1.man cl1.p3 say(b).ipfv cl1-rel cl3a.word cl7/8.god tò k-3 ng3] kò dì pà pità kyà cl7/8.day cl7-dem.dist upon p3 be(b) Pa P. K.

‘The person who was preaching on that day was Pa Peter Kia.’

(514) dṣú nō [bā kà lā kpī y-5 (yì) tō cl9.goat subord impers p3 make(a) die(b) cl9-rel cl9 cl7/8.day b-5 ng3] kà bān áná bùbùbùbù cl8-det upon p3 be_white(b) like_that ideo.white

○‘The goat which was killed on that day was completely white.’ (repeated from example (506))

(515) wàn w-5 nō [m=f[f s w-5 kpō cl1.child cl1-det subord 1sg=p1 give(b) cl1-rel cl3/7a.money f’ wù là] kè tfù ā kè-kè loc cl1.loc dat return(c) come(b) advlz cl9.hand~red

○‘The child who I gave the money to came back with empty hands.’

(516) nkòm nō [ntf f[s l5 w-5 ā wù] kwà cl1/2.hoe subord N. p1 go_to_bush(a) cl1-rel com cl1 break(a) fì pass(b)

○‘The hoe which Ntie went to the farm with broke.’
Relative clauses

(517) kpē w-ő nō [bō fō dō kwō fī w-ő cl3.pot cl3-det subord cl2 pī put(a) enter(c) go_down(a) cl3-rel
   dō w-ő mfj, wū fō gā ā mōmō cl3a.beans cl3a-det in cl3 pī be_big(b) advlz very

○’The pot which they put the beans into was very big.’

(518) wān nō [mān mū dī w-5 ngāfā cl1.child subord cl19/18.name cl18;3sg.poss be(b) cl1-rel N.
   fō lā jū pī gō_to_bush(a) cl3/7a.farm

○’The child whose name is Ngasha went to the farm.’

In Mundabli, it is impossible to form a relative clause with a head noun that plays no obvious grammatical role within the relative clause.8

12.5 Asymmetries between main and relative clause properties

Relative clauses and main clauses in African languages commonly differ regarding their inflectional or focus marking possibilities. Typically, fewer possibilities are available in relative clauses as compared to main clauses (Hyman and Watters 1984).

In Mundabli, inflectional possibilities are nearly the same in both main and relative clauses. All temporal and aspectual distinctions exist in main and relative clauses. However, while segmental tense markers are identical in main and relative clauses, tonal inflections in relative clauses differ from tonal inflections in main clauses. Focus marking is expressed in the same way in main and relative clauses, and interrogative relative clauses are also possible; these have basically the same structure as interrogative main clauses. Only the way in which negation is marked differs considerably between main and relative clauses. The remainder of this section treats all these aspects in turn.

Mundabli has no restrictions on the occurrence of temporal or aspectual distinctions in relative clauses. Tense is marked by preverbal particles and specific tone patterns on the verb, both in main and relative clauses. All tenses can occur in main clauses and in relative clauses, and the aspectual perfective/imperfective distinction marked by ablaut and specific verb tone patterns, also exists in both. However, while segmental tense markers are identical in main and relative clauses, tonal inflection in relative clauses differs partly from tonal inflection in main clauses. Table 12.2 compares tonal inflection in perfective verbs across tenses in main and relative clauses. While the overall

8This is worth mentioning because it is possible in the related language Mungbam; for details see Lovegren and Voll (2017).
structure of tonal inflections is the same in main and relative clauses, the actual tone patterns may differ. Imperfective verbs show the same tone patterns, namely mid for Class A verbs and high for Class B and Class C verbs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>tense</th>
<th>tense marker</th>
<th>main clause</th>
<th>relative clause</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>p0</td>
<td>fō</td>
<td>L S H M S</td>
<td>HM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p1</td>
<td>à~nà</td>
<td>L LH H LH M</td>
<td>H M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p2</td>
<td>kā</td>
<td>LH M H LH M</td>
<td>H M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p3</td>
<td>dī</td>
<td>H H H H H H</td>
<td>H(/HM)³⁹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f1</td>
<td>kā</td>
<td>H H H H H H</td>
<td>H M</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 12.2: Segmental tense markers and tone patterns of non-final perfective verbs of verb tone classes A, B and C in all tenses (p0-p3 and f1-f2) in main and relative clauses.

The word order of the relative clause is the same as that of a main clause, and even focus-induced word order changes are possible. Focus marking is basically the same in main and relative clauses. In order to be focused, the subject of a main clause can occur in IAV position (cf. §14.2.3). The same happens in relative clauses, as can be seen in (519) and (520) which are opposed to a relative clause with an unmarked word order in (521). In (519), the representational nominal is in focus; in (520), a nominal other than the representational nominal is in focus. Note that the post-verbal relativizer precedes the focused subject.

(519) bɪ tsè mà nō [fō gyā w-ğ wù dʒù pl 1.man search(a) cl1.man subord p1 steal(a) cl1-rel cl1 cl9.goat y-ʒ]
cl9-det
⁹'Well look for the man that [he] stole the goat.'

(520) n̋=kɔ̀ŋ sā k-ʒ (nō) [tāŋ k-ʒ n̋n̋fù 1sg=love(a) cl7/8.clothes cl7-det subord buy(b) cl7-rel N. (kō)]
cl7
⁹'I like the clothes that Nyungfu bought.'

³⁹The tone of a Class c noun in f1 depends on the form of the tense marker. More research is needed to determine which contexts the form of the tense marker varies in.
Main clauses with subject focus, i.e. with the subject in IAV position, contain a tonal dummy subject which consists of a low tone and occupies the canonical subject position before the verb complex (cf. §6.2 on the dummy subject and §14.2.3 on main clauses with subject focus). The dummy subject causes a subsequent superhigh tone to be realized as a low-high rising tone. In any other context, it has no perceivable effect. Unlike main clauses with subject focus, relative clauses with subject focus, i.e. with the subject in IAV position, do not contain a dummy subject. Therefore, the p1 marker f in (519) and the verb taŋ ‘buy’ in (520) are realized with a superhigh rather than a low-high rising tone, like in the equivalent main clauses in (522) and (523). Defocalization, i.e. movement of canonically post-verbal constituents to immediate before verb (IVB) position10 (see §14.2.2.2 for details), is not attested in relative clauses.

Verum focus (cf. §14.4.2) can also be expressed in relative clauses, as in (524). However, this is is not very common. Just like in a main clause, truth focus is marked by the particle tə́, which occurs at the beginning of the verbal complex.

Interrogative relative clauses are attested as well. Apart from the presence of a relativizer which follows the relative verb, the same construction is used to express content questions in main clauses, as in (525), and relative clauses, as in (526) (cf. §15.1.2 for more on interrogatives).

10For an explanation of this term, see first footnote in Chapter 14.
12.5. Asymmetries between main and relative clause properties

(525)  a. mɔ̀ cl.1.man nō̤ cl.1REL gbɔ́ cl.1-REL ndɛ̀ gbɔ́ cl.3.house who die(b)

°“The man who built whose house died?”

b. wù yɨń gbɔ́ cl.1 build(c) cl.3.house who

°“Whose house did he build?”

(526)  a. y-ɛ́n cl.9-this dɨ̋ be(b) bā cl.9.REL what nď̄ cl.9 talk ni̋ cl.1.mother.3sg.poss

°“This is the knife that they cut what with?”

b. bā fā tán mān ā yî impers p1 cut(b) what cl.9
gbɔ́ cl.2 do(a).IPFV

°“What was cut with it?”

While main and relative clauses are nearly identical regarding tense, aspect and focus marking, the two differ with regard to negation. The regular negation strategy (see §8.5.3), which employs the circumfixal negative marker ā...wɔ̀, as employed in (527), is not attested in relative clauses. However, there is one exception to this generalization, namely when the head of a relative clause belongs to Class 1. See below for details.

(527)  bī ā wú cl.8 NEG wū cl.9 NEG nī cl.8 talk cl.1.mother.3sg.poss

°“They are not listening to their mother’s advice.”

Rather than a negated main verb, negated relative clauses contain a positive copula verb followed by the post-verbal relativizer. Negation is instead expressed within an adverbial phrase containing a non-finite negative verb which is introduced by the adverbializer ā and followed by the post-verbal negative marker wɔ̀, as in (528a). Example (528b) shows the ungrammaticality of the regular negation strategy in a comparable but ungrammatical construction.

(528)  a. jīn wâm nō bū dē b-ˈ ā gān wū cl.2.children cl.2 REL be(b) cl.2REL ADVLZ go(a) NEG

°“The children who do not go to school, what are they doing?”

bī a 5’ nī cl.1/2.school cl.2 do(a).IPFV what

11The Class 8 pronoun can be used in a pejorative manner to refer to human beings, equating them with inanimate things.
Relative clauses

b. *ɲwám nō ḅ'ā ğı́n (ḅ-5) ẉ5 skūl, cl2.children subord cl2 NEG go(a) (cl2-rel) NEG cl1/2.school ḅ'ā læ mān cl2 do(a).IPFV what

intended: °“The children who do not go to school, what are they doing?”

However, there is one exception to the absence of the unmarked negation construction in relative clauses, i.e. there is one case in which the unmarked negation construction with the circumfixal marker ā ... ẉ5 is attested in a relative clause. This is when the head nominal of the relative clause belongs to Class 1, as in (529). In this case, it is possible to use the regular negation strategy. As usual, the relative clause is optionally introduced by the subordinator nō̤. The main verb of the relative clause is preceded by the preverbal negative marker ā, and followed by ẉ5, a word which could be interpreted either as a post-verbal Class 1 relative marker or as a post-verbal negation marker. The two are identical in shape, and in this special context, a single form seems to fulfil both functions.

(529) wān nō mān mū ŋā dī ẉ5 cl1.child subord cl18.name cl18;3sg.poss neg be(b) cl1-rel;neg nüpūɗ dī gbō N. be(b) house.LOC

°“The child whose name is not Nyungfu is at home.’

Another example of a negative relative clause with a Class 1 head noun which contains a regular negation construction is (530).

(530) kpé nō wū fā nām ẉ5 dā yī ẉ5 cl1.woman subord cl1 p1.neg work(a) neg f1;neg eat(b) neg nām cl1a.fufu

°“The woman who did not work will not eat fufu.’

Negative relative clauses with a Class 1 head nominal can alternatively be formed by employing the unmarked relative clause negation strategy; cf. (531) and (532).

(531) wān nō mān mū dī ẉ5 ɗ̣ n̄nüpūɗ dī gbō be situated(a) neg N. be(b) house.LOC

°“The child whose name is not Nyungfu is at home.’
12.5. Asymmetries between main and relative clause properties

A construction similar to the one employed in negated relative clauses is used in main clauses to imply that an action or event has not yet taken place, as in (533) (cf. §8.5.3.4). In this case, the content verb is introduced by \( \text{dā} \). This most likely represents a merger of the copula verb \( \text{dī} \) and the adverbializer \( \text{ā} \), rendering a construction comparable to the one attested in negative relative clauses.

(533) \( n = \text{dā} \quad \text{pām} \quad \text{wā} \quad \text{nām} \)
1SG = be(b).ADVZ stir(b) NEG CL8b.fufu

\( ^{\circ} \)‘I have not stirred fufu yet.’

The most probable reason for the near lack of true negative relative clauses is the fact that the post-verbal negation marker and the post-verbal relative marker compete for the same slot. The fact that the only exception to this rule, i.e. the only case of a true negative relative clause (using the regular negation strategy), are relative clauses headed by Class 1 head nominals, seems to confirm this. When the head nominal belongs to Class 1, the agreeing relative marker \( \text{wā} \) is identical in shape with the post-verbal negative marker \( \text{wā} \). While it is still not possible for the two to co-occur, the construction employs a single post-verbal form \( \text{wā} \) which simply fulfils both (completely unrelated) functions. This is an interesting phenomenon and I am not aware of any other case in which a single word fulfils the function of two formally identical but semantically unrelated items simultaneously.
CHAPTER 13

Copulas and nonverbal predicates

This chapter deals with nonverbal predicate constructions, i.e. clauses whose predicate is not a verb but e.g., a noun, an adjective or a locative phrase. Although the predicate in these clauses is not a verb, they do frequently contain a copular verb. As copula verbs are an integral part of these constructions, the chapter starts of with a description of copula verbs (§13.1). As the use of these copula verbs is not restricted to nonverbal predicates, their functions in other constructions are presented at the end of the chapter, in §13.3. The attested types of nonverbal predicate constructions are described in turn in §13.2. and Lovegren (2013: Ch.14).

13.1 Copula verbs

Mundabli has a general copula dɨ̂ ‘be’ which is used in all kinds of nonverbal predicate constructions. This copula is a fully-fledged verb, behaving like a regular verb regarding tense, mood and aspect marking (see §8.1). It belongs to verb tone class b (see §3.2.2.1). The copula may be omitted in presentational equative constructions (see §13.2.1), i.e. in clauses which can be translated as ‘This/that is a/the...’, and in adjectival predicates (see §13.2.2). In all other contexts, the use of the copula is obligatory. The etymology of the copula verb is unclear. It is not obviously related to a stative verb like e.g., nim ‘sit’ or dō ‘stay’. The use of the copula dɨ is not restricted to nonverbal predicate constructions. It is also attested in a number of other constructions (see §13.3). Apart from the copula verb dɨ, there is at least one semi-copula, namely the verb tʃû ‘come, become’ (see §13.2.6).
There is another copula gɛ which surfaces in locative predicates in the broader sense, i.e. including existential predicates and possessive predication. In this context, it is used in exactly the same constructions as dɨ but, in addition to its function as a copula, it seems to be associated with simultaneity. Apart from its use as a copula, gɛ is also attested as a clause linker. The use of gɛ including its use in locative nonverbal constructions and as a conjunction for clause linking is dealt with in §13.2.5.4.

13.2 Nonverbal predicate constructions

This section describes the different types of nonverbal predicates attested in Mundabli. All non-verbal predicates in Mundabli are at least optionally, and often obligatorily, introduced by the copula verb dɨ ‘be’ (Class b). Locative attributes can alternatively be introduced by the particle gɛ (Class a). This copula is not formally a verb because, although it co-occurs with tense markers like a verb, it does not fit into any of the three verb tone classes and, its tone being constant across tenses, it does not exhibit any of the characteristic tone changes. Its use is restricted to situations in which two simultaneous events are described (see §13.2.5.4). When a clause containing a verbless predicate does not contain a copula, and is thus a true verbless clause, the predicate directly follows the subject NP. When a copular clause lacks an overt subject, a purely tonal low tone dummy subject (cf. §6.2) precedes the copula.

I describe the various constructions in turn, starting off with equative constructions (or nominal predicates) (§13.2.1), followed by adjectival predicates (§13.2.2), then similitative predicates (§13.2.3) and numeral predicates (§13.2.4). Following these, locative predicates, existentials and predicative possession are dealt with in (§13.2.5). Finally, I conclude this section with a description of the semi-copula tʃũ ‘become’ and the constructions it occurs in (§13.2.6). Wherever relevant, copulas are underlined and the relevant clause is enclosed in square brackets.

13.2.1 Equative constructions

Equative constructions express the identity of the referents of two noun phrases. Equative constructions are formed with the copula verb dɨ. The predicate is represented by a noun phrase ((534) and (536)).

(534) mî tɛ̋m ɲuŋfù n = dɨ f-án, [n = dɨ ŋkʊŋ ndʒa]n
1SG T. N. 1SG = be(b) PROX-here 1SG = be(b) c.l.1.chief Mundabli

‘I, Tem Nyungfu, I am here. I am the chief of Mundabli.’
Copulas and nonverbal predicates

(535) neighbour wū kà tʃyé [ɲwɔ́m b-én] cl.1.neighbour cl.1;3SG.POSS P3 know(c) cl.2.children cl.2-DEM.PROX dǐ ɲwɔ́m nf] be(b) cl.2.children cl.1.mother.3POSS

‘Her neighbour knew that these children were her siblings.’

(536) ndʒān dǐ ná áná, [ndʒān dǐ ndʒān] Mundabli be(b) as like_that, Mundabli be(b) Mundabli

‘Mundabli is like that. Mundabli is Mundabli.’

Equational predicates may lack a full NP subject. However, in this case, a purely tonal low tone dummy subject (cf. §6.2) precedes the verb complex, which causes the Class b copula verb dǐ ‘be’ in p0 tense to be realized with a low-high rising tone, as in (537) and (538).

(537) bɔ̋ dzé tì yɛ̄ [dǐ bɛ̄n] cl.2 say(b).1PFV surprisingly comp ds.be(b) 2PL

‘They are [instead] saying that [it] is you!’

(538) [dǐ tá bɛ̄n ndʒān à] ds.be(b) only 2PL Mundabli Q

‘Is it only you Mundabli [people]?’

Mundabli does not make a formal distinction between “true equational clauses”. In other words, clauses with a referential nominal predicate, as in (534)-(536), and “clauses with true nominal predicates” (Dryer 2007a: 233), i.e. clauses with non-referential nominal predicates, as in (539)-(540), are expressed in exactly the same way.

(539) nsʊ̄ŋ wū dzé wū lā yɛ̄ wà, [à dǐ] cl.1.friend cl.1;3SG.POSS say(b) cl.1PP DAT COMP 2SG, 2SG be(b) kpé bô] cl.1.woman cl.1/9.bad

‘Her friend said to her: You, you are a bad woman.!’

(540) n̂= wò m̃o ỹe wō dzé l5~l5 bik̃̃ ŋ̃= k̃o ă 1SG = think CS.QUOT COMP cl.1 say(b) lie~RED because 1SG = P3 NEG tʃyé w5 yɛ ñwàtì dǐ ná, [dǐ ñŋ k̃-dzɔ̄ŋ] know(c) NEG COMP cl.7/8.book be(b) as be(b) cl.7.thing cl.7-good

‘So I was thinking that he was telling a lie because back then, I did not know that literacy is a good thing.’

1This is supposed to mean that Mundabli and its people are the way they are. This cannot be changed and it will always be like that.
Although this is not often the case, the copular verb dɨ̋ can be omitted in positive declarative present tense equative clauses. In all other tense-mood-aspect combinations, the use of dɨ̋ is obligatory because the copula verb serves as the host for TAM morphology. All attested examples of equative constructions which lack a copula verb are presentational constructions, i.e. the subject is represented by a demonstrative pronoun and the translation starts with ‘This/that is a...’, as in (541)-(544).

(541) [w-ēn ŋkʊŋ ʃān] cl1-dem.prox cl1.chief here?
‘This here is a/the chief.’

(542) à mĩ tʃyɛ yɛ [w-ʒ gbɔ wān w-ā]
2sg consec know(c) comp cl3-det cl3.house cl1.child cl1-2sg.poss yā
interj
‘And then you know that that [is] your child’s house, you hear?’

(543) [k-ʒ nĩ nō wù tʃũ k-ʒ]
cl7-det cl7.thing subord cl1 come(b) cl7-rel
‘...that is the thing [because of] which he came.’

(544) ā dɨ wō yē bi-lʊŋ dɪ jī yī
neg be(b) neg comp cl8-cl7/8.suffering f1 go_down(a) eat(b).ipfv
wù t-ān ánā, [w-ēn ʃān] cl1 dist-here like_that cl3-dem.prox cl3/7a.boldness
‘It is not that suffering would come down and eat him there like that, this would be a bold thing to claim.’

### 13.2.2 Adjectival predicates

Adjectival predicates may be introduced by the copula verb dɨ̋ (545) or they may directly follow the subject NP without a copula, as in (546)-(547). The adjective is marked by an agreement prefix, which is tonal for Class 1 and 9 and segmental for all other agreement classes (cf. §5.3.1).

(545) [mɔ w-ēn dɨ bō]
cl1.person cl1-dem.prox be(b) cl1/9.bad
‘This person is bad.’

(546) [yū y-ʒ bō nwēn ā kī-li]
cl9/10.buttock cl9-det cl1/9.bad now advlz nmlz-be_strong(a)
‘Sex is very dangerous these days.’
Copulas and nonverbal predicates

(547) bɔ̄ dzé gàn bɔ̀ lá yē [bán bɔ̀
impers speak(b) go(a) CL2.DAT DAT COMP CL1/2.outside CL1/9.bad
ā kí-li]
ADV LZ NM LZ-be_strong(a)

“They are telling them that [the world] outside is very bad.’

However, cases of adjectival predicates are rare. This is partly due to the small number of adjectives (cf. §5.3.1). However, even with few adjectives, predicative use is marginal. It is more common to use a nominal predicate in which the noun is modified by the relevant adjective, as in (539).

13.2.3 Similarative predicates

Similarative predicates obligatorily include the copula verb dɨ̋. Similarative predicates also require an adverbial constituent consisting of two particles ná and áná which are glossed ‘as’ and ‘like that’, respectively, as in (548)-(550).

(548) wān w-5 mí dzē nī lá yē
CL1.child CL1.DET CONSEC say(b) CL1.mother.3.POSS DAT COMP
[dī w-ēn dī nā áná] n=tō jē yē
CL3.beans CL3.DEM.PROX be(b) as like_that 1SG = FOC want(a) COMP
m=fō jū wā lá, yē k-̣ nṁ nō
1SG = tell(a) come(b) 2SG DAT COMP CL7.DET CL7.thing SUBORD
wān w-5 fō là k-5 f-ān f nsìlā
CL1.child CL1.DET P1 DO(a) CL7-REL PROX-HERE LOC CL1/2.afternoon

‘The child told the mother: as these beans are like this, I want to tell you what your child has done here in the afternoon.’

(549) kā [gbŏ w-ēn dī nā áná] bēn ŋwōm
COND CL3.house CL3.DEM.PROX be(b) as like_that 2.PL CL2.children
b-5, bēn yīn yā t-5 tā jī t-5
CL2.DET 2.PL build(c) GO_UP(c) DIST-there up DIST-DAT

‘As this house is like this, you, the children will be building it up (adding on top of the house).’

(550) ŋwōm w-5 kpān jū, ākā [dʒwēn kū
CL1.husband CL1.DET be_correct(b) come(b) like Missong home.LOC
dī nā áná]
be(b) as like_that

‘The husband came as near as Missong, like that.’

This construction is similar to Lovegren’s “Gesture-framing construction” in Mungbam (Lovegren 2013: 445). However, I am not aware that any of the
clauses in the examples above has a hand gesture as its predicate. Instead, the predicate is the adverbial proform ánà ‘like that’, and it is always specified by a subsequent sentence describing what the adverbial proform ánà ‘like that’ refers to, i.e. what the subject of the copula clause is like.

13.2.4 Numeral predicates

Numeral predicates are introduced by the copula verb dî. I am not aware of any instances of numeral predication in which the copula is omitted. The numeral in a numeral predicate construction takes a concordant noun class prefix,\(^2\) as in (551)-(553).

(551) [bɔ̋ kp1 r1 be(b) cl1.2 two cl1.1 man cl1.1 one and cl1.1 child kpé wù-mwò cl1.1 woman cl1.1 one

‘They were two, one boy and one girl.’

(552) [bì a cl8 neg be(b) again neg cl8 two

‘They [the frogs] are no more two of them.’

(553) bê gān yîŋ jî k-3, [ki dî count(a) go(a) cl3/7a.egg cl9.9.chicken cl7a.det, cl7a be(b) kî-mîŋ], [ki dî dzōfî ten cl7a-how_many, cl7a be(b) ten

‘Count those eggs! How many are they? There are ten.’

The presence of a full NP subject is not obligatory in numeral predication (554). However, the use of a tonal dummy subject (cf. §6.2) is required if no subject NP is present.

(554) wù dzê yê [dî bî-mîŋ]

‘He said that [there] were how many?’

13.2.5 Locative predicates and existential clauses

Locative predicates and existential clauses have the same form. Both contain locative constituents, but existential clauses co-occur with locative proforms

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\(^2\)The irregular numeral dzōfî ‘ten’ does not take a noun class prefix (see (553)). For more on numeral agreement prefixes, see §5.4.
Copulas and nonverbal predicates

more frequently, while predicative possession constructions contain comitative phrases. Locative predicates and existential clauses, including predicative possession constructions, are the only nonverbal predicates which allow the use of the simultaneous-locative copula $gɛ$ as an alternative to the copula verb $dɨ̌$. The use of the copula $gɛ$ is described in §13.2.5.4.

13.2.5.1 Locative predicates

A locative predicate is introduced by the copula verb $dɨ̌$, as in (555)-(557). Locative predicates require the presence of a locative constituent (cf. §11.3.4) and a copula verb.

(555) \[wɛ́, \{wù ě dɨ̌ w5 gb5 kʊŋ ṭ\} \]
\[INTERJ CL1 NEG be(b) NEG CL3.house house_back.LOC INTERJ\]
‘Alas! She is not behind the house!’

(556) \[wù ě (f) ŋi ě mī\]
\[CL1 be(b) LOC CL9/10.market in\]
‘She is at the market.’

(557) \[gbàn w-ā wú-kpé w-5 dɨ̌ gbə̄ ṭ\]
\[CL1.in-law CL1-2SG.POSS CL1-female CL1-DET be(b) house.LOC INTERJ\]
\[yɛ̄ wù nɨŋ yɛ̄ wú dā wā lā ṭ\]
\[COMP CL1 want(c) COMP CL1 see(a) 2SG.PP DAT INTERJ\]
‘Your mother-in-law is in the house [saying] that she wants to see you!’

The locative constituent can be represented by a locative proform, such as $fán$ ‘here’ in (558) or the interrogative pronoun $nā$ ‘where’ in (559).

(558) \[n=dɨ̌ f-ān], \ n=dɨ̌ Tela Mwɔm\n\[1SG=be(b) PROX here 1SG=be(b) T M\]
‘I am here. I am Tela Mwom.’

(559) \[nī bù ŋi tī wú lā\]
\[CL1.mother.3POSS ask(b) go_down(a).IPFV surprisingly CL1.PP DAT\]
\[yɛ̄ mî wān, [nώm w-ā dɨ̌ tī COMP 1SG CL1.child CL1.husband CL1-2SG.POSS be(b) surprisingly nā (ò)]\]
\[where INTERJ\]
‘Her mother will ask her: My child, where is your husband?’
13.2.5.2 Existential

Existential clauses are not formally different from locative clauses. However, they usually have a presentative function by introducing discourse participants. This is reflected in the frequent use of the modifier dzū ‘a certain’ in (560)-(562), to modify the subject, as characteristic for thetic clauses (cf. §14.5). Existential clauses express the existence of the subject referent, either in general, as in (561), or in a specific place, as in (562). They employ the copula verb dɨ̋ and usually require a locative constituent, as in (560)-(563). However, the presence of a locative constituent is not obligatory. The locative phrase in existential clauses is commonly represented by the spatial proform fɪ̋n ‘there’, as in (see (560)-(562)), and less frequently by a more elaborate locative phrase, as in (563).

(560) [kpé dzū kà dī fɪ̋n] CL1.woman CL1/9.INDEF P3 be(b) there

‘There once was a woman.’

(561) [mɔ̀ dzū dī fɪ̋n] wù kān tɔ5 à CL1.person CL1/9.INDEF be(b) there CL1 lack(b) CL7/8.witchcraft Q

‘Is there any person who does not possess witchcraft?’

(562) kyɛ́ yá gān f-ɔ̋ ywʉ́, [fi-yáŋ look(c) go_up(c) go(a) PROX-there CL1/2.hanging_dryer CL19.leaf dzū dī fɪ̋n], ā mū jì CL19.INDEF be(b) there 2SG take(a) go_down(a)

‘Look up at the hanging dryer! There is a certain leaf. You should take it down.’

(563) Pë dzé yɛ́ [mb̃ dī wù gbǭ] P. say(b) COMP CL6.wine be(b) CL1.pp house.LOC

‘Pe said that there was wine in his house.’

When an existential predicate is negated, the locative constituent is absent (see (564) and (565)).

(564) Pë kō dăm jū yɛ́ wù jũ kwô P. P3.HAB shake(?).IPFV come(b).IPFV COMP CL1RR come(b) enter(c) kė gbǭ, [dũ kā dī wɔ̄] return(c) house.LOC CL3.way P3;NEG be(b) NEG

‘Pe was ravaging [places] in order to come back into the house but there was no way.’
Copulas and nonverbal predicates

(565) tō nō̤ Ŀʊ̀ŋ kɔ̋ b-ɔ́ wù,

\[kām b-ɔ́ bî-kp3n ā dī w5\]

\[kām b-ɔ́ bî-kp3n ā dī w5\]

\[cl7/8.thousand cl8-det cl8-five neg be(b) neg\]

“The day that suffering attacks her, the 5000 francs are not there.”

13.2.5.3 Predicative possession

Predicative possession is expressed by a copula in combination with a comitative phrase. The copula in predicative possession constructions is dī, as in (567).

(566) [wù kā dī ā jnwūm b5]

\[cl1 p3 be(b) com cl2.children cl2;3sg.poss\]

“She had children of her own.”

(567) n̄ wū bū wū lā yē mà, [ā cl1.mother cl1;3sg.poss ask(b) cl1.pp.dat comp ncs.quot.q 2sg kā dī ā mānō yē]

\[p3.hab be(b) com cl1.male quot.q\]

“Her mother asked her: Do you have a husband?”

Predicative possession can also be expressed by the verb kān ‘have, hold’, as in (568).

(568) bī kā kān .ngū, school, any nīŋ bī nīŋ k-ś

\[1pl f2 have(c) cl6.water school any cl7.thing 1pl want(c) cl7-rel kī bī kā kān kī\]

\[cl7 1pl f2 have(c) cl7\]

“We will have water, a school, anything we want, we’ll have it.”

There is no semantic difference between the two possessive constructions described above, as shown in (569) where both are used in sequence by the same speaker, describing the same state of affairs. Here, the speaker is telling other villagers that people in Europe do not have land to clear and grow crops.

(569) a. āyī, [b5 ā dī wū ā dē fwe]n

\[no cl2 neg be(b) neg com cl9.place clear(b)\]

‘No! They don’t have a place to clear.’

b. b5 ā kān wū

\[cl2 neg have(c) neg\]

‘They don’t have [any]!’
The difference between the two constructions in (569a) and (569b) seems to be a pragmatic one. Note that is possible to omit the object when the verb **kân** is used, as in (569a). This is not possible when possession is expressed by the copula verb **dɨ** in combination with a comitative phrase, as in (569a).

### 13.2.5.4 The locative copula **gɛ**

There is a second copula **gɛ** which can be used as an alternative to **dɨ** in locative non-verbal predicates in the wider sense, i.e. including locative predicates, existential predicates and predicative possession. This copula is not formally a verb because, although it co-occurs with tense markers like a verb, it does not fit into any of the three verb tone classes and, its tone being constant across tenses, it does not exhibit any of the tone changes characteristic of verbs. It has a mid tone in non-final position and a mid-low tone in final position, irrespective of the tense it occurs in.

At first glance, the copula **gɛ** seems to be simply a locative copula which is used as an alternative to the copula verb **dɨ** in locative, existential and predicative possession constructions. However, while **dɨ** is always grammatical, the copula **gɛ** cannot be used in the first clause of a sequence. It seems to be associated with simultaneity somehow. It is only used in contexts in which the second of two simultaneous events is described by a verbless predicate construction. However, it is unclear what exactly the semantic relation between the two events is. Furthermore, all attested examples are in the distant past or **p̣3** tense. While more research is needed in order to determine the exact function of **gɛ**, the examples provided in this section should provide a first impression. Examples of location encoded by the locative copula **gɛ** are in (570) and (571). Each example contains at least the clause containing the verbless predicate construction (in square brackets) and the clause preceding it.

(570) \[ n = ts Elo, n = sÉn dō kwō jī tʃsam, lsg = search(a) lsg = then see(c) go_down(a) cl3/7a.axe [tʃsam kō gɛ mē mū mī ān], cl3/7a.axe p̣3 be_there(a) only cl3/10.corner in like_that tʃsam bō syā w-ś kpān n̂gō cl3/7a.axe impers split(a).ipfv cl3-rel cl3.wood upon \]

'I then searched and saw an axe down in [the corner]. The axe was just there in a corner of the house like that, the axe that they split wood with.'

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\(^3\)The copula **gɛ** can occur in clause-final position when it is used with the full predicate meaning ‘be there’, as in (572).
Copulas and nonverbal predicates

(571) tō dóm lā wū gān dā sèsāŋ, [sèsāŋ cl7/8.day other dat cl1 go(a) see(a) cl9/10.spider cl9/10.spider kà gē dyŵó] p3 be_there(a) cl1/2.water_place

‘One day she went and saw a spider. The spider was at the water place.’

Just like the copula verb dī, gē is also attested as a full predicate, as in (572).

(572) nī wū kà fā ā n-jiwśm cl1.mother.3sg.poss 3sg.poss f3 be_occupied(b) com inf-stir(b) nām, [wān nī gē], wū yī cl8.fufu cl1.child cl1.mother be_there(a) cl1 rearrange_fire(c).ipfv gū cl3/7a.fire

‘Her mother was stirring fufu. Her sister was there. She was rearranging the fire.’

Examples of possessive predication with the simultaneous-locative copula gē are found in (573)-(574).

(573) ókè, byé-ā-ntí twó yō, [wū kà gē ā okay b.-com-n. carry(b) go_up(c) cl1 f3 be_there(a) com mù-gē mū dzū ɪ sāks-ā-mōtò mī] cl18.maize cl18;3sg.poss cl18.indef.loc s.-com-m. in

‘O.K., Bie-a-Ntie carried up [the corn]. She had her small corn with her in a Sacks & Motor bag.’

(574) è, wū mù yā byān wū āná, wū yes cl1 take(a) go_up(c) cl3.breast cl3;3sg.poss like_that cl1 fā gān wān wū w-5 là, [wū gē give(b) go(a) cl1.child cl1;3sg.poss cl1-det dat cl1 be_there(a) ā wān wū] com cl1.child cl1;3sg.poss

‘Yes. She [the mother gorilla] takes up the breast like this and gives [it] to the child. She had a child.’

The particle gē, which is identical in segmental shape with the simultaneous locative copula, functions as a linking element in clause combinations which combine two clauses describing simultaneous events, as in (575).

4“Sacks & Motor Bag” refers to a sturdy plastic bag with the company name “Sack & Motor” imprinted on it. These bags are commonly used in this area for carrying things over great distances.
13.3. Other grammatical functions of copula verbs

The copula verb dɨ̋ occurs in several constructions in addition to nonverbal predicate clauses. The general copula verb dɨ̋ can be a hodiernal tense marker (§13.3.1), and is found in compound tense and counterfactual conditional constructions (§13.3.2) as well as in a construction expressing ability (§13.3.3). Cleft constructions are also formed with the general copula dɨ̋, cf. §14.6.

13.3.1 f1 future marking

The f1 future marker dɨ̋ is identical in shape with the copula verb dɨ̋. Like all tense markers, it occurs at the beginning of the verb complex, preceding the verbal core, as in (578)-(580). For more on tense marking, cf. Chapter 8.

(578) n = dɨ̋ tɔ́ sɔ́ jì dʒi dɛ̀ nɔ̀
    1SG = f1 show(a) go_down(a) CL.3.road CL.9/10.place SUBORD
    wâŋ wâ dɨ̋ f-ɔ́
    CL.1.child CL.1-poss be(b) PROX-REL
    ‘I will show you the way to where your child is.’
Copulas and nonverbal predicates

(579) à dì yá ì dìg b-én mì
2sg f1 go_up(c) LOC CL8a.bridge CL8a-DEM.PROX in

‘You will go up on this bridge.’

(580) kwé b-én ñà t-án sè
CL7/8.rat CL8-DEM.PROX boast(a) DIST-here CL3/7a.attic

1sg=mì lá kpí më kwé
dist-this_way 1sg=f1 make(a) die(b) finish(a) CL7/8.rat
b-én t-án sè ̄
CL8-DEM.PROX there CL3/7a.attic emph

(581) t-ɔ́ dist
det
kə̀ pk3 dì̄ be(b) tǐ cl1.father

wū cl1.poss kə̀ pk3 kwe᷇ return_from_bush(c) also
tǐ wū tʃú come(b) tsú bɔ̌ also wān cl1.child w-ɔ̄ cl1-det

‘When her father had also returned from the bush, her father came and also beat the child.’

(582) t-ɔ́ dist
det
kə̀ pk3 sè̄səŋ kə̀ dzé wū lā yè
dist-det p3 be(b) CL1.spider p3 say(b) CL1PP DAT COMP

‘The spider had told her: ...’

(583) kά dì n=ká ñwà më ñwàtì k-ɔ́
f2 be(b) 1sg=p3? write(a) finish(a) CL7/8.book CL7-DET

‘I will (then) have finished writing the letter.’

13.3.2 Compound tense and counterfactual conditional constructions

The copula verb dì is used as auxiliary in compound tense constructions, as in (see (581)-(583)). These compound tense constructions consist of a copula clause which is complemented by a whole clause without overt subordinate marking. The copula clause in compound past perfect constructions starts with the locative proform tɔ́ ‘there’. The subordinate clause follows the copula dì, which in turn is preceded by the relevant tense marker, as in (581)-(582). In the future perfect construction, the locative proform is absent so that the tense marker or the copula verb occurs at the beginning of the sentence, as in (583). The tonal pattern of the f2 future tense marker makes it impossible to tell whether a tonal dummy subject (cf. §6.2) is present or not.
A very similar construction is used to express counterfactual conditionals, as in (584). The counterfactual conditional construction differs from the compound tense constructions by having a subordinate clause introduced by the complementizer yɛ.

(584) t-ɔ́ dist-det p3 be(b) comp impers p1 deliver(c) first cl1 like C.

‘If he had been delivered before Cypren...’

### 13.3.3 The ability construction

The copula verb dɨ is also found in a construction which expresses ability (see also §8.4.2). In this construction, dɨ functions as a copula followed by a non-finite verb which is marked by the proclitic kə= and which may in turn be followed by an object (585) or by an oblique argument (586). As example (585) shows, the ability construction can also have a deontic interpretation.

(585) n=dɨ kə=fō̤ dʒī wā lā yē ā gān
1sg=be(b) nomlz=report(a) cl9.road 2sg.pp dat comp 2sg go(a)
dā wān w-ā yē
see(a) cl1.child cl1-2sg.poss quot.q

‘Can I show you the way to your child?’

(586) ā n=tʃye wā yē bō dɨ kā-gān ā byē
neg 1sg=know(c) neg comp cl2 be(b) nmlz=go(a) com cl7a.feet

‘I wasn’t aware that they are able to walk on foot.’

The ability construction can be negated either with the unmarked negation strategy, as in (587), involving a preverbal and a postverbal negative marker bracketing the copula verb, or with a post-verbal frustrative marker, as in (588).

(587) má ā n=dɨ wā kā-gān mū ā mí
cs.quot neg 1sg=be(b) neg nmlz=go(a) take(a) advlz 1sg.pp
ndʒēn
alone

‘I said that I cannot go and take [the corn] on my own.’

(588) wū dɨ kā=dō bō
cl1 be(b) nmlz=stay(b) frust

‘She cannot sit still.’
14.1 Introduction

In the last couple decades, a lot of progress has been made in research on information structure in African languages, cf. e.g., Abah et al. (2007), Fiedler and Schwarz (2010) and more recently Kalinowski (2015). Among the African languages, Cameroonian languages have attracted considerable attention due to their elaborate focus marking systems. Early works dealing with Cameroonian languages are e.g., Watters (1979) and Hyman and Watters (1984). More recent works include Good (2010), Kießling (2010a) and Lovegren (2013: Chapter 11). Bond and Anderson (2014) deal with cognate head-dependent constructions which can mark focus in African languages, including several Cameroonian languages. See Foley (2007) for a brief typologically oriented overview and Lambrecht (1996) for a more detailed general treatment of information structure. I understand focus as referring to “information judged by the speaker not to be shared by the listener” (Hyman and Watters 1984: 239). I also adopt Hyman and Watters’ (1984: 239) notion of assertive vs. contrastive focus. They define assertive focus as “asserted information against a neutral background”. In contrastive focus on the other hand, “a non-neutral background is assumed by [speaker2]. That is, [speaker2] judges that [speaker1] has filled the focus slot with a conflicting value.” The distinction between these two types of focus is important because in some cases, the two are encoded differently. Hyman and Watters (1984: 240) claim that “in many languages [...] contrastive focus is realized by an addition to, or an operation on, the assertive focus structure.” Following Lovegren (2013: 339-340) and Hyman and
Watters (1984), I distinguish between constituent focus on the one hand and auxiliary focus on the other. Just like in Mungbam, auxiliary focus in Mundabli is restricted to truth/verum focus. There are no distinct focused tenses. Like Lovegren, I divide constituent focus into argument focus and verb focus, i.e. focus on the action described by the verb or on the lexical content of the verb.

Informational status in Mundabli is marked by various means including constituent order, dedicated syntactic constructions, and particles. Mundabli has various focus marking strategies.

Mundabli can also defocalize canonically postverbal constituents by moving these to the position immediately before the verbal complex (following the subject if the latter is not moved to immediate after verb (IAV) position).

I refer to this construction as defocalization rather than topicalization because the term topicalization is widely used for left-dislocation, i.e. movement to the beginning of the clause rather than to IBV position.

This chapter is intended to provide a first inventory of strategies employed to express the informational status of phrases and clauses. It is based on both spontaneous and elicited data. Its structure is strongly influenced by Lovegren (2013: Ch.11), and is divided into six sections. Following this introduction, there are three sections on the different types of focus: argument focus (§14.2), which also contains sections on canonical (§14.2.1 and non-canonical constituent order (§14.2.2), verb focus (§14.3), and truth focus (§14.4). The two remaining sections deal with thritic sentences (§14.5) and cleft constructions (§14.6).

### 14.2 Argument focus

The primary means employed to express argument focus are word order alternations. Non-object arguments can be moved to the IAV focus position in order to be put in focus, while non-subject arguments, which follow the verb in the unmarked case, can be moved to IBV position, in order to be defocalized. Another strategy used to defocalize an object is to simply omit it, cf. §14.2.8. Argument focus can also be expressed by using a cleft-construction. As they are not restricted to argument focus, cleft-constructions are dealt with in a separate section §14.6. The remainder of this section starts with a description of canonical (§14.2.1) and non-canonical (§14.2.2) constituent order. Following this, there is a section on focalization and defocalization for the relevant con-

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1"Immediate after verb position" (short IAV) and "immediate before verb position" (short IBV) are terms coined by Watters (1979). In Watters’ use, they refer to the positions immediately following and preceding the verb. I use these terms with a slightly modified meaning. In this thesis they refer to the positions immediately following and preceding the verbal complex. The verbal complex includes preverbal tense and negation markers, as well as verbal adverbs and the post-verbal negation marker. For details, see §8.3.


14.2.1 Canonical constituent order

The unmarked word order of an intransitive sentence is Subject-Verb(-other) and that of a transitive sentence is Subject-Verb(-other); see (589) for examples of both. The preverbal field in Mundabli is inherently topical and the IAV position is inherently focused. Thus, in clauses with canonical constituent order, the preverbal subject represents the topic while the postverbal object is focused.

(589)  n=sén bí yā jwén, n=kò Pē jwén  
1SG=then exit(b) go_up(c) now 1SG=catch(b) P. now
‘I then got up now, I caught Pe now, […]’

Canonical intransitive sentences express assertive verb focus (590). Contrastive verb focus requires a cognate deverbal noun construction (cf. §14.3.1). Example (590) is uttered after the children in the narrative finally found a pot which was big enough to fit all the beans which they had contributed.

(590)  dɔ̄ cl 3.beans w-ɔ́ cl 3-det kpán  
cl3.beans cl3-det fit(b)
‘The beans fit.’

Transitive sentences with SVO(X) constituent order may express focus on the object, as in (591), on the verb, as in the main clause in (592), or on the whole predicate (verb plus object), as in (593). The focused items in these examples are enclosed in square brackets.

(591)  bā kā lá kpī [nī wū] n5  
impers p3 make(b) die(b) mother.3sg.poss cl1;3sg.poss qtag
‘They killed the mother, didn’t they?’

(592)  kā bō kā mū kpān, wū [tsū] bō  
cond cl2 p3 drink(b) be_full(b) cl1 hit(b) cl2
‘When they had drank enough, he beat them.’

(593)  bō [tsū] dɔ̄  
cl2 contribute(c) cl3.beans
‘They contributed beans.’
Example (591) is uttered in reaction to an inquiry whether a certain gorilla baby had been killed. The speaker clarifies that it was the gorilla mother who was killed, while the gorilla baby had been brought to the village alive. The focus in this example is on the object. In this case, it is contrastive focus, but assertive focus can be expressed in the same way. Example (593) is taken from a narrative and mentions for the first time that each of the story’s children brings beans to cook. Focus is thus on the whole predicate (verb plus object).

14.2.2 Non-canonical constituent order

In addition to canonical SVO word order, other word orders are attested, as well. A non-object constituent may occur in IAV position (§14.2.2.1), in order to be focused. A non-subject constituent can precede the verb complex, which has the effect of defocalization (§14.2.2.2).

14.2.2.1 Immediate after verb (IAV) focus position

The immediate after verb (IAV) position is a focus position in Mundabli. In canonical word order, this position is occupied by the object; see §14.2.1. However, other constituents can occur in IAV position when they are in focus. The non-object constituent which most commonly occupies the IAV position is the subject, as in (594). However, obliques occasionally occur in IAV position, as well; cf. §14.2.6.

(594) bə̄Impers lə̄do(a) surprisingly tìāgān, kà lə̌āká tì gbàm

‘What should we do? It was created by God.’

The passive translation given by a consultant reflects the focus structure of the original example (Mundabli uses an impersonal pronoun where other languages might use a passive construction (cf. §6.3)).

14.2.2.2 Defocalization of canonically postverbal constituents

Object and oblique constituents follow the verb in canonical sentences. They may also occur immediately before the verb complex, which has the effect of topicalization. As the canonical position of the subject is before the verb anyway, this operation is not applicable to subjects. Either a single or multiple non-subject constituents may precede the verb, as in (595) and (596), respectively.
When multiple non-subject constituents are topicalized, they must occur in the same order as they would if they followed the verb complex.

14.2.3 Subject focus

In clauses with canonical constituent order, the subject is equivalent to the topic of the clause and occurs in IPBV position. When it is in focus, the subject occurs in the IAV focus position, as can be seen in the question-answer pair in (597).

(597)  a. tsù ndè ɲùŋfu
      ds.hit(b) who N.
      "WHO [did just] hit Nyungfu?"

(596) [kpɔ̋ w-ɔ́] [ī ntí lā] fō fō [ndɛ̀]
      cl3/7a.money cl3-det loc N. dat p1 give(b) who
      "Who gave money to Ntie?"

When the subject occurs in IAV focus position, followed by the object in the case of a transitive verb, the verb complex is preceded by a purely tonal low tone dummy subject. The low tone causes subsequent superhigh-toned verbs of inflection class b and superhigh-toned tense markers to be realized with a low-high rising tone. When the object is defocalized and occurs in IBV position (cf. §14.2.4), the low tone dummy subject is absent or does not have any perceivable effect. However, when an oblique constituent occurs in IBV position (cf. §14.2.5), the dummy subject is present and has the same effect as before the verbal complex. Spontaneous text examples with VS constituent order and focus on the subject are found in (598)-(599). The focused subject in the examples is underlined.
14.2. Argument focus

(598) ḟi k-ṣ kó ḟu mī ā
"
cl3/7a.storm cl7a-det catch(b).ipfv come(b).ipfv 1sg com
kē ākō kó mbē
cl10.hand like catch(b).ipfv cl2.person

‘The storm was catching me with its hands as if it were PEOPLE catching [me].’

(599) dzō y-ēn, kwē w-ēn ā
"
cl10.houses cl10-dem.prox cl3/7a.home cl3-dem.prox q advlz
wū-lō ā, wē ā, tā là mī ē
cl3-whole q cl1.sibling q ver.foc do(a) 1sg quot.q

‘These houses, this whole compound, sister, did I do it?’

Interrogative subject pronouns are obligatorily moved to IAV position; see (600)-(602).

(600) fā fā ndē kpō ī ntī lā
"
ds.p1 give(b) who cl3/7a.money loc n. dat

‘Who gave money to Ntie?’

(601) yīn ndē gb5 w-ēn
"
ds.build(c) who cl3.house cl3-dem.prox

‘Who has built this house?’

(602) fā fā ndē wā ā kpō
"
ds.p1 give(b) who 2sg com cl3/7a.money

‘Who gave you money [earlier today]?’

Another strategy used to focus the interrogative subject pronoun is clefting; see §14.6. However, subject clefts are rare. Clefting is more commonly used to focus on objects or obliques.

14.2.4 Defocalization of objects

The object can be defocalized by moving it to IBV position. When the object precedes the verbal complex, no dummy subject is present. Consequently, there is no formal difference between an OVS clause (with a defocalized object) and a canonical SVO clause. However, in most cases the context suffices to disambiguate between the two possible interpretations. Defocalization of the object often coincides with subject focus, as e.g. in (603), repeated here from (595b). The object in these examples is enclosed in square brackets.
Information structure

(603) [nām b-ʒ] yĩ mĩ
   cl8a.fufu cl8a-det eat(b) 1sg

°I ate the fufu.’

However, defocalization of the object is also possible in combination with an in situ subject, as in (604).

(604) mɔ̀ w-ɔ̄ [tʃyē w-ɔ́] kɔ̋
   cl1.person cl1-det cl3.stone cl3-det catch(b) com cl10.hand(s)

°The man [indeed] caught the stone WITH HIS HANDS.’

In (604) defocalization of the object leaves the oblique constituent in the IAV focus position. According to my consultant, (604) would be an appropriate answer to the question ‘Did he really catch the stone WITH HIS HANDS?’.

14.2.5 Defocalization of obliques

Obliques occur at the end of the clause in the canonical constituent order, but may be dislocated to IBV position for defocalization, as in (605). The oblique constituent in this and the following examples is enclosed in square brackets. While the comitative phrase in this example occurs at the beginning of the clause, examples with an in-situ subject, such as (604), show that it is the position immediately before the verb rather than clause-initial position which defocalized constituents are moved to. When an oblique constituent stands in IBV position, a tonal dummy subject\(^2\) precedes the verb, which causes a subsequent superhigh tone on verbs of the tonal inflection class b in p0 and p1 perfective verbs to change to a rising tone.

(605) [ā nɪŋ k-ʒ] fɔ̀ ndɛ̀ wà
   com cl7.thing cl7-det ds.give(b) who 2sg

°Who gave you that thing?’

A sentence as in (605) could be used e.g. when the speaker has seen the listener with some object and wants to know where she got it, suspecting that someone must have given it to her.

14.2.6 Oblique focus

Focused oblique constituents commonly remain in situ at the end of the clause. If an object is present, they usually follow it, as in (606)\(^3\) and (607).

\(^2\)A dummy subject is also present when the subject occurs in IAV focus position, cf. §14.2.3.
\(^3\)Example (606) is ambiguous. It can be interpreted as an inquiry about the gadget used or about the meat or sauce which were served with the fufu.
14.2. Argument focus

However, in order to be explicitly marked for focus, obliques can be clefted (cf. §14.6) or they may occur in IAV position. An oblique constituent may occur in IAV position when no object follows the verb, i.e. in a transitive clause, when the object is moved to IBV position for defocalization, as in (608),\(^4\) when the object is omitted, as in (609) or when the order of object and oblique is inverted, as in (610).

(608) mɔ̀ w-ɔ̄ tʃyē w-ɔ́ kɔ̋ [ā ke]  
\(\text{CL1.person CL1-det CL3.stone CL3-det catch(b) COM CL10.hand(s)}\)  
‘The man [really] caught the stone WITH HIS HANDS.’

(609) yɛ̄ gǎn tsē mɨ̄ mɨ̄ 6a-N-be_red-N-be_red à  
\(\text{COMP go(a) search(a) 1SG COM CL6-soil 6a-N-be_red-N-be_red 2SG mɨ̄ tʃū fō [ndā lā]}\)  
\(\text{CONSEC come(b) give(b) 1SG.PP DAT}\)  
‘[She said]: go and search for some red soil for me, and then you come and give [it] to me!’

(610) wù tsɔ̀ [mɨ́ lā] dʒɔ̌n  
\(\text{CL1 show(a) 1SG.PP DAT J.}\)  
‘She introduced John to me.’ (lit.: She showed John to me.)

14.2.7 Modifier focus

It is also possible to focus on only a part of the subject NP, i.e. on a noun modifier, as done in (611). Here, the numeral modifier \(\text{wůmwó}\) is focalized by being moved out of the preverbal subject NP to IAV focus position (see also §7.3.1.3). The focused modifier is enclosed in square-brackets.

(611) dū gbũ bí jī [wů-mwó]  
\(\text{CL3.beans fall(a) exit(b) go_down(a) CL3-one}\)  
‘One of the beans fell down.’

\(^4\)The first example (608) is repeated from (604). An explanation of the context is given in §14.2.4.
In the more unmarked case, the noun modifier directly follows the noun, as in (612). However, this sentence has no explicit partitive semantics.

(612) dɔ̄ cl3.beans wű-mwó gbū cl3-one bí jī cl3-fall(a) exit(b) go_down(a)

○ ’One bean fell down.’

14.2.8 Omission of topical objects

The informational status of noun phrases also influences the choice of a noun or a pronoun vs. zero reference to represent the object. In Mundabli topical objects are commonly omitted, as in (613b) and (614b).

(613) a. yǐ ndɛ̀ɲām
    eat(b) N. cl8.fufu

    ○ ’NYUNGFU ate fufu.’

b. yǐ ndɛ̀ɲfù
    eat(b) N.

    ○ ’NYUNGFU ate [it].’

(614) a. tsǔ mî wû
    hit(b) 1sg cl1

    ○ ’I hit him.’

b. tsǔ mî
    hit(b) 1sg

    ○ ’I hit [him].’

Examples (613) and (614) each contain two alternative answers to the questions yi ndɛ̀ɲàm ’Who ate fufu?’ and tsǔ ndɛ̀ɲfù ’Who hit Nyungfu?’, respectively. The preferred option is indeed to omit the object, as in (613b) and (614b).

14.3 Verb focus

Verb focus can be expressed by canonical clauses, i.e. clauses with SV(O)(X) word order, cf. §14.2.1. However, explicit focus on the lexical meaning of the verb can only be expressed by a cognate deverb al noun construction.
14.3 Verb focus

14.3.1 Cognate deverbal noun constructions

The cognate deverbal noun construction\(^5\) involves the presence of an infinitive deverbal noun (cf. §8.1.4.1) which is cognate with the finite verb of the clause and which follows the verb complex, as in (615), or the object, as in (616), if one is present. It marks contrastive verb focus (cf. §14.1).

(615) dzɔ̄ yí-dzú y-ɛ́ kə̀ m-bɔ̅,
\[\begin{array}{llllllllllll}
\text{CL10.houses} & \text{CL10-other} & \text{CL10-DET} & \text{p3} & \text{burn(b)} & \text{INF-burn(b)} \\
y-én & \text{t-án} & \text{kwā} & \text{tī} & \text{ŋ-kwā} \\
\text{CL10-DEM.PROX} & \text{DIST here} & \text{break(a)} & \text{INF-break(a)}
\end{array}\]

‘The other houses BURNT DOWN, these ones BROKE DOWN.’

(616) a. à gyà k̀f
\[2\text{SG steal(a) CL7} \]
\[\text{"You stole it.‘}\]

b. ŋgāŋ, n=tāŋ k̀f n-tāŋ
\[1\text{SG =buy(b) CL7 INF-buy(b)} \]
\[\text{"No, I BOUGHT it.‘}\]

The fact that the cognate deverbal noun may co-occur with an object, as e.g. in (616b), shows that the cognate deverbal noun is not a direct object of the verb. Mundabli does not allow multiple unflagged objects\(^6\). Instead, the deverbal noun forms an unflagged oblique constituent, comparable with an unflagged adverbial or locative phrase.

Cognate deverbal noun constructions are also attested in relative clauses, as in (617).

(617) ŋ=ndå m̀ nō̊ wù fə̌ tāŋ w-5 dzũ
\[\begin{array}{llllllllllll}
1\text{SG =see(a) CL1.man SUBORD CL1 P1 buy(b) CL1-DET CL19.goat} \\
tāŋ, & ā & \text{df} & w5 & m̀ & nō̊ & wù & fə̌ & fān & w-5 \\
\text{INF-buy(b)} & \text{NEG} & \text{be(b)} & \text{NEG} & \text{CL1.man SUBORD CL1 P1 sell(a) CL1-DET} \\
yī & \text{m-făn} & \text{CL19 INF-sell(a)}
\end{array}\]

\[\text{"I saw the man who BOUGHT the goat, not the man who SOLD it.’}\]

While the use of the cognate deverbal noun construction seems to be preferred in the given context, its use is not obligatory. Contrastive verb focus can also be expressed by an unmarked SVO clause. The presence of the adverbial mɛ̀ ‘only’ in a cognate deverbal noun construction, implies exclusive

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\(^5\)See Bond and Anderson (2014) for a typology of comparable constructions and their functions in African languages. Bond and Anderson refer to these constructions as “Cognate Head-Dependent Constructions”.

\(^6\)see §11.3 for a comment on the term “flag”
focus semantics (Bond and Anderson 2014: 239) rather than verb focus. The examples in (618) and (619) express exclusive situation, indicating that “the situation (i.e., event or state) described by the predicate is in focus, to the explicit exclusion of other (higher-ranked) situations.” (Bond and Anderson 2014: 241).

(618)  wù kō  nǐm  mě  n-kō
  cl1 cry(a) sit(a) only inf-cry(a)
  ‘She was still only crying.’

(619)  åná  wù kō fō  bì  gān  åńá, kpé  w-ş
  like_that cl1 p3 tell(a) go_out(b) go(a) like_that cl1 woman cl1-det
  kpī  mē  n-kpī-n
  die(b) only inf-die(b)-inf
  ‘Immediately as she was reporting [that], the woman died on the spot.’

As there is no attested example with a transitive verb in my data, it is unclear whether this construction allows the presence of an object. Note that a cognate deverbal noun can also be used to describe the manner in which something is done, as in (620).

(620)  or  à  sé  mū  n-sē  kwē  mī
  or 2sg heat(c) cl6 cl1.inf-heat(c) cl3/7a home in
  ‘[...] or you prepare it in the local traditional way.’

This construction is different from the cognate deverbal noun construction. The deverbal noun co-occurs with a modifier and forms part of a locative phrase headed by the postposition mī ‘in’.

14.4  Truth focus

Truth focus is focus on the truth value of a clause. In Mundabli, this can be achieved by using a serial verb construction involving the right-modifying coverb bān ‘clearly’ (cf. §14.4.1) or the particle tō (cf. §14.4.2).

14.4.1  Serial verb constructions with bān ‘clearly’

Truth focus can be expressed by use of a serial verb construction involving the right-modifying coverb bān ‘clearly’, as in (621)-(623); cf. also §9.1.4.2.

(621)  yē  ŋ = nîŋ  bān  yē  [n = dā  wū  lā]
  comp 1sg = want(c) clearly(b) comp 1sg = see(a) cl1.pp dat
  ‘[She said]: I really want to see him.’
322  14.4. Truth focus

(622)   wù  fǎ  yǐ  bǎn  nǎm  w-5
        CL1.PRO P1 eat(b) clearly(b) CL3.fufu CL3-DET

‘He DID eat fufu.’

The coverb bǎn which expresses truth focus may be combined with subject focus, see e.g. (623).

(623)   (dī)  yǐn  yá  bǎn  mǐ  gbā  nǐgī
        (f1)  build(c)  go_up(c)  clearly(b)  1SG  CL3.house  CL3;1SG.POSS

‘I will be the person to build my house.’ (or rather: It will really be me who will build my house.)

14.4.2 The particle tó

The particle tó, alternatively pronounced té or tá, expresses something like truth focus.7 The particle occurs at the beginning of the verb complex, following the subject and preceding tense and negation markers, as (624)-(626). The particle in the examples is underlined.

(624)   tʃù  n=m  dzé  háyi,  dzê  gbān  nǐgī  lá  yē
        T.  M.  say(b)  INTERJ  say(b)  CL1.in-law  CL1.1SG.POSS  DAT  COMP
        n = tó  tʃù  
        1SG = VER.FOC  come(b).IPFV

‘Tela Mwɔm said: No! Tell my in-law that I am coming!’

(625)   byé-ā-ní  bɔ̄ŋ  jú  yē  bābā  dwò  yē  wù  tó  fǎ
        B.-COM.N.  call(a)  come(b)  COMP  Papa D.  COMP  CL1. VER.FOC  P1
        ŋè  yē  wù  jî  nî  fî,  wù  tó  wù  want(a)  COMP  CL1.  go_down(a)  leave(a)  pass(b)  CL1. VER.FOC  hear(b)
        tʃù  yɔ̀  nǐgī,  k-5  nī  nǐ  nù  wù  come(b)  CL9/10.voice  CL9;1SG.POSS  CL7-DET  CL7.thing  subord  CL1.
        tʃù  k-5
        come(b)  CL7-REL

‘Bie-a-Ntie called out: Papa Duo! [She said] that she was about to go down when she heard my voice. That is why she came.’

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7 Truth focus is also known as “polarity focus”, see e.g., Bond and Anderson (2014: 215).
The sentence in (624) quotes Tela Mwom’s words to his wife uttered after a lively discussion finally agreeing to meet his mother-in-law. The particle emphasizes that he will ultimately come to meet her, even if he does not think that this is a good idea. In (625), the speaker stresses that Bie-a-Ntie had not been planning to come, but that she was (really) on the way to somewhere else and that she only came to meet the speaker because she had (really) heard the speaker’s voice. Here the focus in the first clause is on the truth of the claim that she was on the way down, and the focus in the second clause is on the truth of the claim that she had heard the speakers voice. Finally, in (626), the particle serves to emphasize the truth of Dya’s claim that he will not play - even if this is contrary to what people expect from a young boy.

14.5 Thetic sentences

Thetic sentences have unmarked SV(O)(X) constituent order. Syntactically, they are not different from canonical sentences. However, when the topic of a narrative is introduced or when the topic of a conversation is (abruptly) changed, the noun phrase referring to the newly introduced topic commonly contains the modifier dzū ‘a certain’, as in (627) and (628).

(627) kpé dzū kà dì fīn
cl1.woman cl1.certain p3 be(b) there

‘There [once] was a woman.’

(628) kyé yá gān fā ywǔ, fi-yān
look(c) go_up(c) go(a) there cl1/2.hanging_dryer cl19-cl3/7a.leaf
dzū dī fīn, ā mū jī
cl19.certain be(b) there 2sg take(a) go_down(a)

‘Look up at the hanging dryer! There is a leaf. You should take [it] down!’
14.6 Cleft constructions

Another strategy for expressing constituent focus is to use a cleft construction. This way, not only can the subject be explicitly focused on, as in (629), but also other constituents like the object, as in (630), or an oblique constituent, as in (631). Cleft constructions require the use of an impersonal dummy subject consisting only of a low tone which causes a subsequent superhigh-toned Class b verb, like the copula verb dɨ̌, or a superhigh-toned tense marker, like the p1 marker fə̌, to be realized with a LH rising tone.

(629) dɨ̌ ndynfù wù yi ̌ w-5 pəm
  ds.be(b) N. cl1 eat(b) cl1-rel cl8.fufu

‘It is Nyungfu who ate the fufu.’

(630) dɨ̌ pəm wù fə̌ yi
  ds.be(b) cl8.fufu cl1 p1 eat(b)

‘It is fufu he ate.’

(631) dɨ̌ a ke wù fə̌ yi pəm
  ds.be(b) COM cl9/10.finger cl1 p1 eat(b) cl8.fufu

‘It is with his hands that he ate fufu.’

In content questions, the focus on the question word may also be expressed by use of a cleft construction, as in (632) and (633).

(632) dɨ̌ ki-mən nə̌ å ye ke dzəŋ k-ə kə n
  ds.be(b) cl7-what subord 2sg start(a) return(c) again cl7-rel cl7
  loc there in

‘What is it that you are starting again in here?’

(633) ɗgwə mən5 mən å mə w-5 wù ye
  ds.be(b) cl1/2.sort cl1.man what 2sg take(a) cl1-rel cl1 comp
  mə kə dyå w5 wù lə ye
  cl1.person HAB see(a).IPFY NEG cl1.pp DAT QUOT.Q

‘What sort of husband is it that you have married, so that nobody sees him?’

A cleft construction can also be used to express truth focus. In this case a whole complement clause is clefted. This is mostly done to express negative truth focus, as in (634).
(634) ă ɗi̍ wō yē ɓi-lūŋ ɗi̍ jí
NEG be(b) NEG comp CL8-CL7/8.suffering f1 go_down(a).IPFV
yī ɗu t-án ɗá̄, w-ēn
eat(b).IPFV CL1SG DIST-here like_that CL3-DEM.PROX
lyē
CL3/7A.impertinence

‘Not that he will be suffering there like that. [Saying] this [would be] impertinent.’
CHAPTER 15

Non-declarative clauses

The current chapter deals with various kinds of non-declarative clauses. Section 15.1 deals with questions and question words. Polar questions (§15.1.1) and content questions (§15.1.2) are dealt with separately, followed by a section on questions in reported speech (§15.1.3). The imperative is described in §15.2, which is followed by sections on the prohibitive (§15.3) and on the jussive (§15.4). Imperatives and jussives with plural addressee are devoted a special section (§15.5) at the end of the chapter.

15.1 Questions and question words

The basic word order of questions is the same as that of declarative clauses: SVO. Polar questions are marked by a clause-final question particle and content questions contain a question word. The two types are described in §15.1.1 and §15.1.2, respectively.

15.1.1 Polar questions

Polar questions are distinguished from declaratives by the clause-final question marker à. Their word order is the same as that of pragmatically unmarked declarative sentences: Subject – Verb – Object, and there are no special intonational effects. However, the low-toned question marker à causes a characteristic pitch-drop at the end of a polar question. Three examples are provided in (635)-(637).
(635) wù fó gān  à  
c1.1 p1 go(a) q

‘Did she go?’

(636) mò  dzū  dǐ  fǐn  wù  kān  tsĩ  à  
c1.1.person certain be(b) there c1.7/8. witchcraft q

‘Is there any person who does not posses witchcraft?’

(637) bā  kà  ʧyé  yē  wù  dǐ  fĩ  jũ  à  
impers p3 know(c) comp c1.1 go.down(a) come(b) q

‘Was it known that she will come down?’

Certain polar questions are conventionally used as greetings or as part of formulaic exchanges. Examples are found in (638), (639) and (640).

(638) à  fĩ  à  
2sg spend_day(b) q

‘Have you spent the day [at home]?’

(639) à  fĩ  lĩ  à  
2sg spend_day(b) be_strong(a) q

‘Have you spent the day [at home] well?’

(640) à  kwé  à  
2sg return_from_bush(c) q

‘Have you returned from the bush?’

15.1.1.1 Tag questions

Payne defines a tag question as “a yes-no question consisting of a declarative clause plus a “tag” that requests confirmation or disconfirmation of the declarative clause” (Payne 1997: 297). Like polar questions, positive tag questions consist of a declarative clause, followed by the question tag nĩ, as in (641). The question tag is most likely borrowed from English ‘no’ via Cameroon Pidgin English, where it serves the same function.¹

(641) mò  dzū  kà  dĩ  fǐn  nĩ  
c1.1.person c1.indef p3 be(b) there qtag

‘There [once] was a person, right?’

¹The same particle is also attested with the same function in Mungbam (Lovegren 2013: 458).
Non-declarative clauses

It is possible, although less common, to insert the tag in a complex tag question at the end of a non-final subordinate clause, as done in (642). The initial clause in (642), introduced by the particle nā ‘as’, is subordinate to the main interrogative clause.

\[
(642) \text{nā accident w-5 d̥ f-án nɔ́, b̥ nā ā kā̭}
\]

\[
as \text{accident cl1-det be(b) as prox-here qtag 1sg p2 neg have(c) wɔ́ neg cl1/2.quarrel 1pl 1pl;com p. excl}
\]

‘As the accident is here - right? - we did not have any quarrel, me and Pe.’

15.1.2 Content questions

Content questions require the use of a question word. They do not contain a question marker like polar questions. A comprehensive list of attested question words can be found in Table 15.1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>question word</th>
<th>gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ndɛ̀</td>
<td>‘who’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mān</td>
<td>‘what’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nā</td>
<td>‘where’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bɛ̀n</td>
<td>‘when’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mān, why</td>
<td>‘why’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>āgān</td>
<td>‘how’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(-)mwān</td>
<td>‘which one’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(-)miŋ</td>
<td>‘how much’, ‘how many’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 15.1: Comprehensive list of question words

The word order of content questions is basically the same as that of declarative clauses; see e.g. (643).

\[
(643) \text{à yɔ̀ tʃyē w-5 ndɛ̀ n̥ɛ̄ḡ}
\]

\[
2sg throw(a) cl3.stone cl3-det who upon
\]

‘At whom did you throw the stone?’

However, the question word is often focused. Focusing is obligatory in subject interrogatives. Two different strategies are available to express constituent focus. The first is dislocation to immediate after verb (IAV) position, as in (644), which only applies to subject interrogatives and which results in VS order. The second is cleft-constructions, as in (645), which can be used to focus on any constituent. See Chapter 14 for more on information structure and word order.
15.1. Questions and question words

15.1.2.1 The interrogative pronoun mān ‘what’

The interrogative pronoun mān ‘what’ mainly functions as an interrogative pronoun, as in (646). It may also function as an interrogative modifier (see below). Because it represents inanimate participants, the interrogative pronoun mān ‘what’ more commonly functions as an object than as a subject. As pointed out in the introduction of §15.1.2, When it does not function as subject, the interrogative pronoun mān may remain in situ, as in the object interrogatives in (646) and (647), or it is are put in focus by using a cleft construction, as in (648).

(646) kpé w-čn, à kā lè mān cl1.woman cl1-dem.prox 2sg hab do(a).ipfv what

‘Woman, what are you doing?’

(647) à dzē mān 2sg say(b) what

‘What did you say?’

(648) kpé w-čn, dī bā mān à mwē k-ś cl1.woman cl1-dem.prox be(b) really what 2sg be_sad(a) cl7-rel tō ā bī-tō yē cl7/8.day advlz cl8-all quot.q

‘Woman, why are you sad every day?’ (lit.: This woman, what is [it] really that you grieve for every day?)

Examples like (648) and (649) are best translated by an English ‘why’-question. An alternative way to ask for the reason of something is to use the word why, loaned from English (see §15.1.2.6).

(649) à kō mān 2sg cry(a).ipfv what

‘What are you crying [for]?’
Of the interrogative pronouns, mān ‘what’ is the only one which, parallel to other personal pronouns (see §6.1.4), has a special tonal form mán with a high tone instead of a mid tone. It is used when the pronoun is object of a postposition, as in (650).

(650) gbà ndè mān mán ngbà cut(a) who what.pp upon

‘Who cut what with what?’

Finally, mān ‘what’ can also function as a nominal modifier which best translated as ‘what type of’. It is used in combination with the noun ngwò ‘type’ and it is unclear whether it is used to modify any other nouns. NPs containing the modifier mān may remain in situ, be dislocated to immediate after verb position or be clefted, as in (651).

(651) dì [ngwò mán5 mān] à mū w-5 wù yē
be(b) cl1.type cl1.person what 2sg take(a) cl1-rel cl1 comp
mō kō dyà wō wū là yē
cl1.person hab see(a).ipfv neg cl1.pp dat quot.q

‘What sort of husband is it that you have married, so that nobody sees him?’

The interrogative pronoun mān ‘what’ can take the class 7 prefix ki-. The prefix is used, e.g. if the speaker already has a referent for the question pronoun in mind. The use of the Class 8 (plural) prefix, i.e. the form *biman is not attested at all. Examples (652) and (653) show contexts in which the prefix-less form and the form with the prefix are used, respectively.

(652) npmù fō [mān] nti là
N. give(b) what N. dat

‘What did Nyungfu give to Ntie?’

(653) dì [ki-mān] npmù fō fō k-ɔ́ i nti là
be(b) cl7-what N. pl1 give(b) cl7-rel loc N. dat

‘What is it that Nyungfu gave to Ntie?’

In (652), the thing asked for is not yet established and the question comes out of the blue. In (653), the speaker and listener are both aware that Nyungfu gave something to Ntie and the question is only what he gave her.

Example (654) is similar to (653). It is a sort of “repetition question”. It is clear that something fell down, but it is unclear what exactly it was.

(654) à dzè yē gbù [ki-mān]
2sg say(b) comp fall(a) cl7-what

‘What did you say fell?’
Examples (655) and (656) are a bit different, but ultimately of the same kind. It is clear in (655) that the addressee is starting something (here: trouble), and in (656) it is obvious that something has happened, but it is unclear what exactly it is that he is starting or what exactly has happened, respectively.

(655) dɨ̌ [ki-mān] nǭ å yie kɛ̄ dzāŋ k-ɔ́ k-ì à
be(b) CL7-what subord 2SG start(a) return(c) again CL7-REL CL7 LOC
there in

‘What is it that you are starting again in here?’

(656) wān w-đ tå kā nîm wû kyê yê mɛ̀
CL1.child CL1-DET VER.FOC P3 sit(a) CL1 look(c) COMP NCS.QUOT Q
dɨ̌ [ki-mān] kí bì k-ɔ́ yān yê
be(b) CL7-what CL7 exit(b) CL7-REL like that QUOT Q

‘The child was there watching [and asking herself]: What has happened like that?’

Furthermore, kimān is also used as a noun modifier in non-interrogative contexts, where it means as much as ‘whatever’; see §6.4.

15.1.2.2 The interrogative pronoun ndɛ̀ ‘who’

The interrogative pronoun ndɛ̀ ‘who’ is most commonly attested in subject function, as it represents an animate participant, which is likely to coincide with the agent. In this case, it is always put in focus, most commonly by dislocation to immediate after verb position. It precedes the object, as in (657), unless the object is defocalized and moved to preverbal position, as in (658) and (659). For clarity, the interrogative pronoun ndɛ̀ ‘who’ in (657)-(659) is underlined, and other constituents are enclosed in square brackets.

(657) tʊ ndɛ̀ [ŋgī mîŋ] yê
scoop(b) who CL6.water CL6;1SG.POSS QUOT Q

‘Who has carried my water?’

(658) [tẽ] [gbɔ̀ ŋgî sè] à
CL7/8.walking_stick CL3.house CL3;1SG.POSS house_front.LOC P2
gî ndɛ̀ yê
put(b) who QUOT Q

‘The stick in front of my house, who put it [there]?’

(659) [mîŋ gbɔ̀] jà gî ndɛ̀ yê
1SG CL3.house.LOC sweep(a) put(a) who QUOT Q

‘Who has swept in my house?’
The interrogative pronoun ndɛ̀ ‘who’ does not bear a noun class prefix unless it has a plural referent, as in (660).2

\[(660) \ wós bò-ndɛ̀ \]
\[wash(b).IPFV CL2-who \]

‘Who are those who are washing?’ (lit.: Who are washing?)

As mentioned in §15.1.2, the interrogative pronoun ndɛ̀ ‘who’ has a special dative form ndyeń; see §6.1.5 and §11.4.1.

15.1.2.3 The interrogative word nā ‘where’

The interrogative word nā ‘where’ usually occurs toward the end of the clause, just like the locative phrase it represents; see e.g., (661) and (662).

\[(661) \ wù bɔ̄ŋ mɛ̇, nā nàn fǐ nā \]
\[call(a) CS.QUOT.Q CL1.mother N. pass(b) where \]

‘She called out: Where has the mother of Nan gone?’

\[(662) \ m̋=bʊ̋ 1sg=ask(b) go(a) CL1.ppp DAT COMP CL1/2.friend 2sg go(a).IPFV fǐ tì surprisingly nā \]
\[pass(b).IPFV surprisingly where \]

‘I ask her: Friend, where are you going?’

In some cases, the question word ‘where’ is modified by the locative modifier fɔ́ (see §10.4; NP in square brackets). What exactly determines the presence of this modifier is unclear and requires further investigations.

\[(663) \ n=dɨ̋ fǐ [nā f-s] yē \]
\[1sg=be(b) pass(b) where PROX-DET QUOT.Q \]

‘Where will I go?’

15.1.2.4 The interrogative word bèn ‘when’

The interrogative word bèn ‘when’ occurs in-situ, towards the end of a clause, just like the adverbial phrase it represents, as in (664). It does not take a prefix.

\[(664) \ à nà bèn \]
\[2sg leave(a).IPFV when \]

‘When are you leaving?’

---

2This sentence or an equivalent cleft construction is called out by people before they approach a stream where people are known to wash, in order to warn them and not to embarrass anyone.
15.1.2.5 The interrogative word āgān 'how'

The interrogative word āgān 'how' occurs in focus position, directly following the verb complex, as in (665) and (666). In the case of a transitive verb, as in the latter example, they precede the object NP. Unlike the interrogative word, adverbs generally occur at the end of the clause (see §10.1).

(665) yē mè dzī dī [āgān] yē
  COMP NCS.QUOT.Q CL3/7a.journey be(b) how QUOT.Q

  ‘How was your journey?’

(666) à sīŋ [āgān] mbī
  2SG tap(a) how CL6.palm_wine

  ‘How do you tap palm wine?’

15.1.2.6 The borrowed interrogative word why

The function of the English interrogative word 'why' is mainly covered by the interrogative pronoun mān 'what', as mentioned in §15.1.2.1. However, a relatively common alternative to this is the use of the clause-initial loanword 'why' (borrowed from English, most likely via Cameroon Pidgin English), followed by a normal declarative clause, as in (667) and (668).

(667) why à fō ts5 mī lā yē bēn fā dzī dī ñ fī
  why 2SG P1.show(a) 1SG.PP DAT COMP 2PL P1.cook(a) CL3a.beans LOC
  nsālā
  CL1.afternoon

  ‘Why did you show me that you [children] cooked beans in the afternoon?’

The interrogative word 'why' occurs in clause-initial position, just like in English. This is untypical for Mundabli which tends to position focused elements behind the verb complex.

(668) why wū lō bwān mī yē
  why CL1 make(a) be_wounded(a) 1SG QUOT.Q

  ‘Why has he injured me?’

15.1.2.7 The interrogative nominal modifier -mwān ‘which’

The interrogative word -mwān ‘which’ functions as a nominal modifier and is used to identify a specific referent within a group of the same kind. Its function is different from that of the noun modifier mān ‘what’ (§15.1.2.1), which is better translated as ‘what type of’ when it modifies a noun; see §15.1.2.1.
Like other interrogative modifiers, -mwān ‘which’ takes a noun class prefix. However, in the case of -mwān, prefixes for most noun classes can be replaced by a low-toned syllabic nasal prefix. The choice seems to be optional. For an overview of agreement prefixes, see §5.3. In (669), the modified NP occurs in situ. In (670), it is put in focus using of a cleft-construction.

(669) à kɔ̀ŋ [wān kpé m-mwān/wù-mwān]
   2SG love(a) CL1.child CL1.female CL1-which
   ◦ ‘Which girl do you love?’

(670) dī [siŋ yī-mwān/m-mwān y-3] à lē y-3
   be(b) CL9.knife CL9-which CL9-DET 2SG do(a).IPFV CL9-DET
   ngɔ
   upon
   ◦ ‘Which knife do you use?’ (lit.: It is which knife that you do [it] with?)

In both of the above examples, the noun class prefix and the nasal prefix are interchangeable. The order of the alternative forms in the examples reflects their naturalness. The first forms are the ones that were used spontaneously by the speakers.

15.1.2.8 The interrogative noun modifier mĩŋ ‘how much, how many’

The question word mĩŋ ‘how much, how many’ functions as noun modifier. It always takes a noun class prefix. It can co-occur with a head noun or stand on its own, as in (671). See §5.3 for an overview of prefix forms.

(671) ãʔa mbɛ dʒwɛ b-ɔ̌ kpā f-án, wù bŋɔ
   INTERJ CL2.people many CL2-DET abound(b) PROX-here CL1 call(a)
   yɛ dī bɔ-mĩŋ
   COMP be(b) CL2-how_many
   ‘People, too many of them - she is saying that [it] is how many?’

15.1.2.9 Multiple interrogative words

It is also possible to combine multiple interrogative words in a single interrogative clause. However, this is not done frequently. An elicited example is found in (672).

(672) gbɔ ndɛ mān mān ŋgɔ
   cut(a) who what what.pp upon
   ◦ ‘Who cut what with what?’
A question like (672) could be uttered by someone who joins into a conversation, missing most of the information and hearing merely that someone cut something. The subject interrogative is dislocated to immediate after verb position, while the other interrogative phrases remain in situ.

15.1.2.10 Plural forms of interrogative words

The interrogative pronouns mān ‘what’ and ndɛ̀ ‘who’ sometimes take noun class prefixes. However, the interrogative pronoun mān ‘what’ is only attested with the Class 7 prefix ki-, and ndɛ̀ ‘who’ is only attested with the Class 2 prefix bɔ-. Agreement in cognate question words has also been reported for Noni (Hyman 1981: 104-105) and Mankon (Leroy 2007: 128).

15.1.3 Questions in reported speech

Questions in reported speech (or ‘quoted interrogatives’) receive special question markers, which are different from question markers in direct speech. A formal distinction is made between current speaker vs. non-current speaker quoted interrogatives, just like in quoted declaratives.\(^3\)

Current speaker quotations (i.e., the speaker is quoting themselves) are introduced by the general-purpose complementizer yɛ̄. Non-current speaker quotations (i.e., the speaker is quoting someone else) are instead introduced by the non-current speaker quoted question marker mɛ̀, which serves no other function. Reported speech declaratives receive no other marking.

Questions in non-current speaker quotations are introduced by the complementizer yɛ̄ plus the non-current speaker quoted question marker mɛ̀\(^4\) and followed by the quoted question marker yɛ̄ (which sometimes takes the shape ā or, more rarely, ē). Whereas in direct speech, only polar questions take a final question marker (ā), in reported speech, content questions (673) and polar questions (674) are marked in the same way.

(673) wù bú yɛ̄ mɛ̀, b-én nʧɔ́m mɨ́ŋ
cl1 ask(b) comp ncs.quot.q cl8-dem.prox cl8.things 1sg.pp
gbɔ̀ ̀ à là ndɛ̀ yɛ̄
house.loc p2 do(a) who quot.q

‘Then she asked [herself]: All these things in my house, who has done them?’

\(^3\)Apart from the current section, quotatives are not discussed in this thesis. For some findings on quotatives, see Voll (2017).

\(^4\)The markers yɛ̄ and mɛ̀ can phonologically merge under certain circumstances.
Non-declarative clauses

(674) ní wū bú wú lá yè mè, à
c1.mother c1:3SG.POSS ask(b) c1PP DAT COMP NCS.QUOT.Q 2SG
kā dī ā mō nō yè
p3.HAB be(b) COM c1:PERSON c1:male QUOT.Q

‘Her mother asked her: Do you have a husband?’

Questions in current speaker quotations are introduced by the current speaker quotative marker mə́, which may or may not be followed by a particle of the shape à. I gloss this particle q because it has the same shape as the direct speech interrogative particle à. Questions in non-current speaker quotations are followed by the quoted question marker yè or a variant thereof, just like current speaker quoted questions (see above). An example of a current speaker quoted question is found in (675).

(675) n=dzé mó [...] mó à bō kí k-şi
1SG = say(b) CS.QUOT [...] CS.QUOT Q CL7:bag CL7:3SG.POSS CL7:DET
mī dī mān wū twō k-şi yè
in be(b) what CL1 carry(b) CL7:REL QUOT.Q

‘I said that [if she was going to come up that I was going to come up as well]. I asked [her]: in that bag of hers, what was it that she carried [in it]?’

15.2 The Imperative

The imperative form of a verb consists of the segmentally unmarked stem and a specific imperative tone pattern. Table 15.2 contains examples of imperatives of all three verb tone classes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>verb tone class</th>
<th>imperative example</th>
<th>gloss</th>
<th>citation form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>găn</td>
<td>‘Go!’</td>
<td>găn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>nò</td>
<td>‘Leave!’</td>
<td>nò</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>tʃū</td>
<td>‘Come!’</td>
<td>tʃū</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>yì</td>
<td>‘Eat!’</td>
<td>yì</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>yám</td>
<td>‘Sing!’</td>
<td>yám</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>yò</td>
<td>‘Run!’</td>
<td>yò</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 15.2: Imperative verb forms in single verb cores

The tonal patterns in Table 15.2 are representative of simple core imperatives, i.e. of imperative clauses whose verbal core contains no more than one verb, and of initial verbs in complex core imperatives, i.e. of imperatives
whose verbal core contains two or more verbs. Examples for Class $A$ and $B$ imperative verbs in simple verbal cores taken from spontaneous texts are given in (676) and (677).

(676) ńĩ wū dzé yē, nã
c.1.mother.3SG/PL.Poss c.1;3SG.Poss say(b) comp leave(a)

‘The mother said: Leave!’

(677) tɛ́là mwɔ́m dzé hāyi, dzē gbàn ṅgī là yē
T. M. say(b) interj say(b) c.1.in-law c.1.SG.Poss dat comp
n=tō tfú
1SG=VER.FOC come(b).1PFV

‘Tela Mwom said: No! Tell my in-law that I am coming!’

Imperative verbs in serial verb constructions show a different tonal behavior than imperative verbs in single-verb cores. Examples (678) and (679) illustrate imperative clauses with complex verbal cores. This special tonal behavior of non-initial verbs in verb sequences is not attested in declaratives (at least not in the present tense). For more on this, see §3.2.2.4.

(678) [găn tsē] mǔ-dāntʃén
go(a) find(a) c.1.18-berry

‘Go and find [some] Dantshen berries!’

(679) yē [găn bɔ̄ŋ jū] wān nē
comp go(a) call(a) come(b) c.1.child c.1.mother.2SG/PL.Poss
w-ʒ ʒ 1CL-DET

‘[...] Go and call your sister!’

My data do not contain any examples of imperatives with a verbal core starting in a Class $B$ verb. Therefore, I cannot say for sure whether initial verbs in imperative clauses always have the same tone pattern as imperative verbs in single-verb cores, although this seems likely since it is the case for Class $A$ and Class $C$ verbs. The data show that the tonal pattern of non-initial imperative verbs in complex verbal cores differs from that of imperative verbs in single-verb cores. Non-initial verbs of Class $A$ and $B$ bear a mid tone (see (678) and (679)). In short, the tone pattern of imperative Class $A$ verbs in non-core-initial position differs from their tone pattern in core-initial position. They bear a rising tone in initial position and a mid tone in non-initial position, so that, in non-initial position, the tonal distinction between Class $A$ and Class $B$ verbs is neutralized. It is unknown what exactly causes the irregular tone patterns of Class $A$ verbs in SVCs.
15.3 The Prohibitive

The prohibitive uses segmentally unmarked verb forms, just like the imperative, but requires a subject pronoun. The tonal pattern of prohibitive verbs is the same as that of non-initial verbs in imperative SVCs: Class A and B verbs bear a mid tone and Class C verbs a high tone. Instead of the circumfixal negative marker ā...wɔ̄ as used in declarative clauses, the prohibitive employs the preverbal prohibitive marker já, which is sometimes realized as tâ. Table 15.3 contains examples of the prohibitive for all three verb tone classes. Table 15.3 only contains examples of prohibitions aimed at the second person, but note that the same form is also used to issue negative commands to third and first person referents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>verb tone class</th>
<th>example</th>
<th>gloss</th>
<th>citation form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>à já jî</td>
<td>‘Don’t go down!’</td>
<td>jî</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>à já tʃû</td>
<td>‘Don’t come!’</td>
<td>tʃû</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>à já yó</td>
<td>‘Don’t run!’</td>
<td>yó</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 15.3: Examples of second person prohibitives with single verb cores

Spontaneous text examples of the prohibitive are given in (680)-(682). The examples illustrate that not only the second person singular (680), i.e. the addressee of the utterance, may be the object of the negative command, but also the third person plural (681) or the first person plural (682), i.e. people other than the addressee, including the speaker.

(680) [à já dzē] dzēŋ
2SG PROHIB say(b) again

‘Don’t say [that] again!’

(681) [bɔ̋ tsî] f-án jwên i kwê
CL2 PROHIB spend_night(b) PROX-here today LOC CL3/7a.village
w-ën mî
CL3-DEM.PROX in

‘They must not spend the night in this village tonight.’
15.4. The Jussive

The jussive is mainly used to issue commands concerning first or third person referents. However, it is also used when an order is issued by wish of someone else. It requires a subject pronoun combined with the segmentally unmarked verb form and the same verb tone pattern as attested in non-initial imperative verbs (§15.2) and prohibitives (§15.3): Class A and B verbs bear a mid tone and Class C verbs a high tone.

The first person plural jussive makes use of the impersonal pronoun bā (see §6.3) rather than the first person plural pronoun bît. Example (684) contains two jussive clauses, one with a third person singular subject and one with a first person plural subject, each enclosed by square brackets.

(682) \[ nwám b-ť dzé yě āy, bā-ti bò ā cl2.children cl2-DET say(b) COMP no cl2-father cl2-POSS COM nĩ fĩ dzë kō mā tfū fān cl1.mother p1 say(b) COND cl1.person come(b) here nsīlā wù jwān nīŋ dō bī lā yě [bī cl1/2.afternoon cl1 beg(b) cl7.thing certain 1PL.pp DAT COMP 1PL jā fā] PROHIB give(b) \]

‘The children said: No, our fathers and mothers said if anybody comes here in the afternoon, we must not give [anything].’

Prohibitions can also be formulated in an indirect way, as in (683). Here a negated future verb form is employed to imply that something shouldn’t happen.

(683) \[ n=lyā ná f-án, n=dā wū w5 yě 1SG=go_to_bush(a).1PFV as prox here 1SG=PL;NEG hear(b) NEG COMP bēn fū mū kū kōpē tsyě w-ēn 2PL p1 take(a) come(b) cl3.pot cl1.father.2PL.POSS cl1-2PL.POSS w-5 wū-kwē w-5 yě bēn lō nīŋ dō tfūn cl3-DET cl3-home cl3-DET COMP 2PL do(a) cl7.thing certain there mī in \]

‘As I am going to the bush, I don’t want to hear [when I come back] that you have taken your father’s traditional pot in order to do something inside.’

15.4 The Jussive
Non-declarative clauses

When used with the impersonal pronoun *bɔ̄* as its subject, the jussive is best translated as 'Let us ...'.

As pointed out above, the jussive is used for second person subjects when an order is issued by wish of someone else. In this case, the order is introduced by the complementizer *yɛ̄*, as in (685).

The presence of a main clause such as the initial clause in (685) is not obligatory. However, the use of the complementizer is obligatory in this case, even if the main clause is omitted.

### 15.5 Imperatives and jussives with PL addressee

A plural addressee in imperatives, as in (686) and jussives, as in (687) is marked by the post-verbal particle *nɨ̋*. Here, the clause containing the plural addressee is enclosed in square brackets and the particle *nɨ̋* is underlined. These examples contain the only two attested instances of this particle.

(686) *bì mì dzë gàn bɔ̀ là, yɛ̀ [nîm nî̀ a] 1PL CONSEC speak(b) go(a) CL2.PF DAT COMP sit(a) IMP.PL COM mò kwɛ̀ CL1.man CL3/7a.home

‘And we keep telling them: Stay with a native man!’

(687) *ká bɔ̀ kà mû kpān, wù tsú bɔ̀ yɛ̀ [bɛ̀n nā cond CL2.P3 drink(b) be_full(b) CL1 hit(b) CL2 COMP 2PL leave(a) nî] IMP.PL

‘When they had drunk enough, he beat them saying: Leave!’
16.1 Song by Yung Henrik, “It is eating me up”

16.1.1 Introduction
This song was written by Yung Henrik who died from a disease shortly after this song was recorded. Besides being a farmer, Yung Henrik was a gifted musician who composed his own songs and accompanied them on the guitar. The song is a so-called ‘bottle-dance’, which is a popular music style of North-West Cameroon. During the performance, the audience taps the rhythm on bottles. The song treats some of the problems society is facing due to more and more young girls leaving the village in search of a better life.

16.1.2 Text

(1) ṇ = bó gàn wù lā, yē bwē à gàn
1SG = ask(b) go(a) CL1PP DAT COMP CL1/2.friend 2SG go(a).IPFV
fī tī nā
pass(b).IPFV surprisingly where

‘I ask her: friend, where are you going?’
16.1. Song by Yung Henrik, "It is eating me up"

(2) wù fɔ̃ tjú mí lā, yē lōŋ b-ʒ̃ cl1 tell(a).ipfv come(b).ipfv 1sg.pp dat comp cl8.suffering cl8-det yī n̩ mā ti mī eat(b).ipfv sit(a).ipfv surprisingly 1sg

‘She told me: I am suffering.’

(3) n̩ ŋiŋ n̩ mā tsā kū̥, yē cl1/2.mother cl1;1sg.poss live(a).ipfv Tsā home_village.loc comp n̩ ŋiŋ n̩ mā tsā kū̥, cl1/2.mother cl1;1sg.poss live(a).ipfv Tsā home_village.loc bwē cl1/2.friend

‘My mother lives in Tsaku. My mother lives in Tsaku, my friend.’

(4) m̋=bū gān wū lā, yē n̩, à gān 1sg=ask(b) go(a) cl1.pp dat comp cl1/2.mother 2sg go(a).ipfv f̃ Ŧ nā ̱ Ŧ pass(b).ipfv surprisingly where interj

‘I asked her: mother where are you going?’

(5) n̩ m̋ mā fɔ̃ tjú mí lā, yē mī cl1/2.mother consec tell(a).ipfv come(b).ipfv 1sg.pp dat comp 1sg wān, Ŧ =lyā f̃ Ŧ ṅ cl1.child 1sg =go_to_bush(a).ipfv pass(b).ipfv leave(a).ipfv b̃ Ŧ ngi̇ cl3/7a.stroll cl3;1sg.poss

‘My mother told me: my child, I am wandering.’

(6) lōŋ b-ʒ̃ yī n̩ mā ti mī, cl8.suffering cl8-det eat(b).ipfv sit(a).ipfv surprisingly 1sg lōŋ b-ʒ̃ yī n̩ mā ti mī cl8.suffering cl8-det eat(b).ipfv sit(a).ipfv surprisingly 1sg

‘Suffering is eating me up. Suffering is eating me up.’

(7) better n̩ mā gān mā lā, yē Ŧ ṅ=dzē better sit(a) go(a) 1sg.pp dat comp 1sg =miss_track(c).ipfv Ŧ ṅ tōm b-ʒ̃ Ŧ yiŋ get_lost(a).ipfv leave(a).ipfv cl7/8.palm_village cl8-det bush.loc

‘It would be better for me to leave and get lost in the bush of any village.’
(8) bì kù dzí  gàn kyēn  mǐ, yē  bì kù  
cl8 cry(a) walk_around(b) go(a) cl7/8.soul in  comp cl8 cry(a)  
dzí  gàn kyēn  mǐ  
walk_around(b) go(a) cl7/8.soul in  

‘She is crying in her soul. She is crying in her soul.’

(9) bì mì nim f-ānī (ē), bì dzé nim tī 
1pl consec sit(a) prox-there interj 1pl speak(b) sit(a) surprisingly  
mē yē, lōn̄ bō dī tā mē yēn là, bī  
only comp cl8.suffering cl8-det be(b) specifically only Y.  dat cl8  
kwō  fūbō bī  ṭgā 
enter(c) also  1pl.pp upon  

‘And we are sitting here, saying that only Yain is suffering, but the suffering has also attacked some of us.’

(10) lōn̄  b-Ā yǐ  fūbō bī (e), bī dzé nim  
cl8.suffering cl8-det eat(b).ipfv also 1pl interj 1pl speak(b) sit(a)  
mē ā mā  wū-mwō  
only comp cl1.person cl1-one  

‘The suffering is also eating us up and we are only talking about one person.’

(11) à kyē  wān nē  yū (e),  
2sg look(c) cl1.child cl1/2.mother.2sg.poss buttock.loc interj  
mō  dzū  kyē  fūbō ā  yū  
cl1.person cl1.other look(c) also 2sg.pp buttock.loc  

‘If you talk against your brother or your sister, somebody will also talk against you.’

(12) bì kù dzí  gàn kyēn  mǐ, yē  
1pl cry(a).ipfv walk_around(b).ipfv go(a).ipfv cl7/8.soul in  comp  
bì kù dzí  gàn kyēn  mǐ, yo  
1pl cry(a).ipfv walk_around(b).ipfv go(a).ipfv cl7/8.soul in  interj  

‘We are crying in our soul, we are crying in our soul.’

(13) bà dzé  gàn bō  lá yē bán  bō ā  
impers say(b) go(a) cl2pp dat comp cl1/2.outside be_bad(a) advlz  
kī-ľī  nmlz-be_strong(a)  

‘They are telling them that [the world] outside is very bad.’
(14) bɔ́ fô tʃú bí lá yē bɔ̀ tsè  
\[\text{CL2 tell(a).IPFV come(b).IPFV 1PL_PP DAT COMP CL2 search(a)}\]  
dzí gān kpò  
walk_around(b) go(a) CL3/7a.money  
‘They are telling us that they are searching for money.’

(15) tō nō dzwàn k₅ b-ɔ́ bɔ̀ (e), bɔ̀  
\[\text{CL7/8.day SUBORD CL9.illness catch(b) CL8-REL CL2 INTERJ CL2} \]  
mī nīm gān tì f-ɔ̋ gbō (e)  
\[\text{CONSEC sit(a) go(a) surprisingly PROX-there house.LOC INTERJ }\]  
‘The day that an illness has attacked them they will be there, staying in the house.’

(16) bɔ̀ tī bɔ̀ yī nīm tī lʊ̀ŋ  
\[\text{CL2-father 3PL.POSS eat(b).IPFV sit(a) surprisingly CL8.suffering} \]  
(e), nīm bɔ̀ yī nīm tī  
\[\text{INTERJ CL1/2.mother 3PL.POSS eat(b).IPFV sit(a) surprisingly} \]  
lʊ̀ŋ (è)  
\[\text{CL8.suffering INTERJ }\]  
‘Their father will be suffering and their mother will be suffering.’

(17) tō mī wē fū tì (è), wū  
\[\text{CL7/8.day CONSEC dawn(b) go_down(a) surprisingly INTERJ CL1} \]  
gwān nīm f-ɔ̋ gbō (o)  
be_sick(a) sit(a) PROX-there house.LOC INTERJ  
‘When the day has dawned, she is there with an illness in the house.’

(18) bī bú gān wū lá, yē nī, à  
\[\text{1PL ask(b) go(a) CL1PP DAT COMP CL1/2.mother.1SG/PL.POSS 2SG} \]  
gwān tī mān yē  
be_sick(a) surprisingly what QUOT.Q  
‘We ask her: mother, why are you ill?’

(19) bī dzé gān bɔ̀ lá yē, tō fī ā  
\[\text{1PL speak(b) go(a) CL2PP DAT COMP be_smart(b) pass(b) COM} \]  
yū y-ā (ò)  
\[\text{CL9/10.buttock CL9-2SG.POSS INTERJ }\]  
‘We always tell them that they should be very careful with their sex life’
(20) yū y-ɔ̄ bò ɲwén a̋ kí-li
CL9/10.buttock CL9-det be_bad(a) now ADVLZ NMLZ-be_strong(a)
(e) INTERJ

‘Sex is very dangerous these days.’

(21) lʊ̀ŋ b-ɔ́ yí̤ nɪm tī bī (e),
CL8.suffering CL8-det eat(b).IPFV sit(a).IPFV surprisingly 1PL INTERJ
bī yí̤ fūbō bī (o)
CL8 eat(b).IPFV also 1PL INTERJ

‘Suffering is eating them up and it is also eating some of us up.’¹

(22) à bōŋ gàn kpé (è), wù dzé tʃū
2SG call(a) go(a) CL1.woman INTERJ CL1 say(b).IPFV come(b).IPFV
wā là ỵ (e)
2SG.pp DAT COMP INTERJ

‘If you call a woman, she will tell you that’

(23) kpō wǔ dī mē kām bi-kpɔ̄n,
CL3/7a.money CL3;3SG.POSS be(b) only CL7/8.thousand CL8.five
bwē CL1/2.friend

‘her price is always 5000 francs, my friend.’ (lit.: her money)

(24) tō nō lʊ̀ŋ kām b-ɔ́ wǔ
CL7/8.day SUBORD CL8.suffering catch(b) CL8-REL CL1
kām b-ɔ́ bi-kpɔ̄n a dī wǔ
CL7/8.thousand CL8-det CL8.five NEG be(b) NEG

‘The day that suffering attacks her, the 5000 francs are not there.’

(25) ṇ̣ fī mī yị̄ nɪm tī
CL1/2.mother;3SG.POSS CONSEC eat(b).IPFV sit(a).IPFV surprisingly
lʊ̀ŋ (è), tī mī yị̄
CL8.suffering INTERJ CL1/2.father.3SG.POSS CONSEC eat(b).IPFV
nɪm tī lʊ̣̣ (e)
sit(a).IPFV surprisingly CL8.suffering INTERJ

‘Her mother is suffering and her father is suffering.’

¹The Class 8 pronoun is used to refer to a group of people in an abusive way.
16.1. Song by Yung Henrik, “It is eating me up”

(26)  tọ mī wē ṣì ti (e), cl7/8.day consec dawn(b).ipfv go_down(a).ipfv surprisingly interj
wù kō nīm f-ṣ gb’s, (o)
c1 cry(a) sit(a) prox-there house.loc interj

‘When day has broken, she is still there in the house crying.’

(27) n’ bū ṣì ti wú lā, yē cl1/2.mother.3poss ask(b) go_down(a) surprisingly cl1pp dat comp
mī wān, npwām w-ā dī ti nā 1sg cl1.child cl1.husband cl1-2sg.poss be(b) surprisingly where (o)
interj

‘And the mother will ask her: My child, where is your husband?’

(28) wù dzé gān nī là yē, cl1 speak(b) go(a) cl1/2.mother.3poss dat comp
nī, ā n=dī w5 ā mānū cl1/2.mother.1poss neg 1sg=be(b) neg comp cl1.male

‘and the daughter will say: Please mother, I don’t have a man.’

(29) bī mī dzē gān bō là, yē nīm nī ā 1pl consec speak(b) go(a) cl2pp dat comp sit(a) imp.pl comp
mō kwē (e)
c1.man cl3/7a.home_village interj

‘We are telling them: Stay and get married to a native man!’

(30) bō dzē ḥū bī là yē, npwām cl2 speak(b).ipfv come(b).ipfv 1pl.pp dat comp cl2.husbands
kwē ā fyá ti w5 bī cl3/7a.home_village neg give(b).ipfv surprisingly neg 1pl

‘and they are telling us that native men are not giving us.’

(31) better dī yē bī bī nē gān better be(b) comp 1pl go_out(b).ipfv leave(a).ipfv go(a)
tōm b-ṣ yīn (...)
cl7/8.palm_village cl8-det bush.loc

‘It is better for us to go out to other home villages.’
(32) tō mī wē ʃì ti (e), bō cl7/8.day consec dawn(b) go_down(a).ipfv surprisingly interj cl2 tʃʊ ti bē bē (e)
come(b).ipfv surprisingly cl7/8.half=red interj

‘And then day has broken and they will be coming back half way.’
(i.e. attacked by illness, lost weight)

(33) tō mī wē ʃì ti (e),
c7/8.day consec dawn(b) go_down(a).ipfv surprisingly interj
lʊŋ b-ɔ́ nīm ti ʔā bō cl8.suffering cl8-det eat(b).ipfv sit(a) surprisingly advlz cl2
(e) interj

‘And then day has broken and the suffering is only attacking them.’

(34) bī kū dzì gān kyēn mī (ė), bī 1pl cry(a) walk_around(b).ipfv go(a) cl7/8.soul in interj 1pl
kū dzì gān kyēn mī (ė) cry(a) walk_around(b).ipfv go(a) cl7/8.soul in

‘They are crying in their soul, they are crying in their soul.’

(35) bī bú gān bō lā, yē bēn lē dzì 1pl ask(b) go(a) cl2pp dat comp 2pl do(a).ipfv walk_around(b).ipfv
ti mān surprisingly what

‘We are asking them: What are you doing [aimlessly]?’

(36) lʊŋ b-ɔ́ nīm bō (e), lʊŋ cl8.suffering cl8-det eat(b).ipfv sit(a) cl2 interj cl8.suffering
b-ɔ́ yī fūbō bī (e)
cl8-det eat(b).ipfv also 1pl interj

‘The suffering is still eating them up and it is also eating us up.’

(37) bī dzé gān bō lā, yē nī, 1pl speak(b) go(a) cl2pp dat comp cl1/2.mother.1sg/pl.poss
lʊŋ b-ɔ́ yī bī (e)
c7/8.suffering cl8-det eat(b).ipfv 1pl interj

‘We are telling them: Please, the suffering is eating us up.’
16.1. Song by Yung Henrik, “It is eating me up”

(38) wù dzé tjú mí lá, yě lōŋ b-5
cl1 say(b).ipfv come(b).ipfv 1sg.pp dat comp cl8.suffering cl8-det
yí fúbɔ mǐ (e)
eat(b).ipfv also 1sg interj

‘And she will also tell us that the suffering is also eating her up.’

(39) bì kù dzí gàn (e)
cl8 cry(a).ipfv walk_around(b).ipfv go(a) interj

‘They are crying’

(40) bì dzé gàn tí (e)
cl8 say(b) go(a) surprisingly interj

‘and they keep on talking.’

(41) bì mǐ dzě tjú wá lá yě, bān
1pl.consec say(b) come(b) 2sg.pp dat comp cl1/2.outside
bò ā kī-li
be_bad(a) advlz nmlz-be_strong(a)

‘We are talking to you, saying that [the world] outside is very bad.’

(42) bĕn mù kǔ bén fā yě
2pl.take(a) cl8a.intelligence 2pl.pp head.loc quot

‘You should be careful and put some sense in your heads.’

(43) tō mǐ wē jī tí (e)
cl7/8.day consec dawn(b) go.down(a).ipfv surprisingly interj

‘When day has broken’

(44) ně mǐ dzě gàn wá lá (e)
cl1.mother.2sg.poss consec speak(b) go(a) 2sg.pp dat interj

‘your mother will tell you.’

(45) bì ā wū w5 ni5 nǐ
cl8 neg hear(b).ipfv neg cl8a.talk cl1/2.mother

‘They will not be hearing their mother’s advice.’

(46) bǐ mǐ kù nǐm tí (e), nǐ
cl2 consec cry(a) sit(a) surprisingly interj cl1/2.mother.1poss
mǐ kù nǐm tí (e)
consec cry(a) sit(a) surprisingly interj

‘They will still be crying, and our mother will still be crying.’
‘and you will still be exposing your teeth, and you will still be exposing your teeth.’

‘Your mother will still be crying: Where is my child going?’

‘Where is my child going? Where is my child going?’

‘It is eating me up, it is eating me up.’

‘It is eating me up, it is eating me up.’
16.2 Recipe for corn beer

16.2.1 Introduction

The following text is a spontaneous presentation of a recipe for corn beer. As such, it is not necessarily a correct or complete recipe, but serves to present Mundabli in use.

16.2.2 Text

(1) bə jā bə fyē nā bō kō
   IMPERS want(a).IPFV IMPERS learn(a) SUBORD IMPERS HAB
   lē nā ŋkā
   make(a).IPFV as cl6.corn_beer

   ‘We want to learn how to make corn beer.’

(2) kā à mū jū gē w-şi à mī
   cond 2SG take(a) come(b) cl3/7a.maize cl3-DET 2SG CONSEC
   kpē wū ŋgī mī sī yī-fyē
   soak(a) cl3 cl6.water in cl9/10.day cl10-two

   ‘When you take the corn and soak it in water for two days,’

(3) à mī wū bǐ yā mú
   2SG CONSEC drain(c) go_out(b) go_up(c) cl6

   ‘you then remove it [the corn],’

(4) à mī tān wū kyā mī
   2SG CONSEC pour(c) cl3 cl9/10.basket in

   ‘and put it into a basket.’

(5) after, à mī tān tʃū yān ŋg5m
   after 2SG CONSEC cut(b) come(b) cl3/7a.leave cl1/2.plantain

   ‘After that, you collect plantain leaves.’

(6) à mī bān kī tʃin w5
   2SG CONSEC lock(b) cl7 there on

   ‘and you cover the corn with them.’

---

2In order to drain out the water.
‘After it has germinated for four or five days, you then remove it [the corn] and grind [it].’

‘When you have ground it, either in the machine or on the grinding stone, you then mash it.’

‘There are two ways of making corn beer:’

‘either you wash and leave it to settle, then you remove the head and cook the chaffs with the thick one (liquid)’

‘or you cook it in the local traditional way.’

‘Then after you’ve finished cooking, the first day’

‘the first day when you’ve finished cooking’
16.2. Recipe for corn beer

(14) then, kó tó wé kē ḫi, à mī then Cond cl7/8.day dawn(b) return(c) go_down(a) 2sg Consec d3yē kpē mū cook(a) complete(a) cl6

‘then the next day you finish cooking.’

(15) ká à d3yē kpē mū, à mī mū jū Cond 2sg cook(a) complete(a) cl6 2sg Consec take(a) come(b) nkā mū-nkɔn m-ɔ, à mī nʊŋ cl6.corn_beer cl6.strong_corn_beer cl6-det 2sg Consec add(a) kwó ḫi tʃiŋ ŋgō enter(c) go_down(a) there upon

‘When you are done with cooking, you take the strong corn beer and add [it].’

(16) then kó tó wé kē ḫi mū mī then Cond cl7/8.day dawn(b) return(c) go_down(a) cl6 Consec nim ḫ bā kā mū sit(a) loc Impers so_that drink(b)

‘then the next day it will be ready for drinking’

(17) so bā mī yē m-ɔ m-ɔ Impers Consec start(a) inf-drink(b).ipfv

‘So, people will then start drinking.’


References


References


References


References


Dit proefschrift omvat een descriptieve grammatica van Mundablí, een Zuid-Bantoïde taal die door ongeveer 350 à 450 mensen gesproken wordt in het gelijknamige dorp in de Noordwestelijke provincie van Kameroen. Deze grammatica behandelt een groot aantal onderwerpen, zoals de fonologie, morfofonologie, naamwoordclassificatie, concordantie, het pronominaalsysteem, nominale modificeerders en de structuur van nominale constituen tenen, werkwoordsmorfologie en het verbale complex, seriële werkwoordconstructies, kleinere woordklassen zoals bijwoorden, ideofonen, basiszinstructuur, bijzinnen, koppelwerkwoorden en niet-verbale predicaten. Daarnaast bevat dit proefschrift hoofdstukken over informatiestructuur en niet-declaratieve zinnen.

De introductie schetst de achtergrond van de taal, haar sprekers, en haar classificatie. Hoewel Mundablí (ook wel bekend onder het endonym ndʒan) voorheen werd gerekend tot de Westelijk Beboïde taalfamilie heeft een recentere herclassificatie ertoe geleid dat de taal nu geschaard wordt onder een geografische eenheid Yemne-Kimbi genaamd die Zuid-Bantoïde talen zonder duidelijke affiliatie verenigt. Het tweede deel van dit hoofdstuk (Section 1.2) behandelt het eerdere onderzoek naar Mundablí. Daarnaast geeft dit deel weer hoe het veldwerk is verricht, hoe de data gepresenteerd worden, en wat het gehanteerde transcriptiesysteem is. De data die de basis vormen voor dit proefschrift zijn verzameld tijdens veldwerk in het dorp Mundablí en de nabijgelegen stad Wum. Het corpus dat zo gevormd is bevat zowel spontane als uitgelokte uitingen die als geluidsbestanden opgenomen zijn. De gebruikte orthografie is gebaseerd op het International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA), met enkele aanpassingen, zodat het beter aansluit op het ‘General Alphabet of Cameroon Languages.’

De fonologie van Mundablí staat centraal in hoofdstuk 2. Hierin worden verscheidene aspecten van de fonologie beschreven, waaronder toon, klinkers en medeklinkers, en fonotaxis. Mundablí heeft vier level tonen en een aantal contour-tonen, maar geen downstep of fonetische downdrift; het is een zogenaamde discrete level taal, hetgeen betekent dat tonen altijd op min of meer
dezelfde hoogte gerealiseerd worden. In Mundabli is toon contrastief op elke lettergreep. Daar waar naamwoorden over het algemeen hun lexicaal toon behouden, verandert het toonpatroon van werkwoorden onder invloed van zaken zoals de positie in de uiting, en tense/mood/aspect.

De consonantinventaris van Mundabli bevat 21 segmenten. Stemhebbendheid is contrastief in de plofklinken, hoewel de labiale stop b geen stemloze variant heeft; dit levert een gat in het fonologische systeem op. Er zijn een aantal algemene allofone alternaties aan te wijzen, zoals de spirantisatie van stops voor de hoge klinkers i en u, de verlies van stemhebbendheid van sonoranten in coda-positie, en de glottalisering van finale nasalen. Ook het aantal klinkers is aanzienlijk, met 13 gewone en vier faryngale klinkers (Mundabli is de enige taal in de Yemne-Kimbi-groep met faryngale klinkers). De faryngale klinkers komen alleen voor in open lettergrepen, en zijn vermoedelijke ontstaan door het wegvallen van velare coda’s, die in cognaten in het verwante Mufu wel worden aangetroffen. Het klinkersysteem van Mundabli is verder nog complexer door de hoge mate van variatie tussen sprekers in de uitspraak van de hoge- en midklinkers.

Mundabli staat niet veel clusters toe: alleen sequenties van consonanten gevold door glijklanken en van nasalen gevold door stops worden aangetroffen, en dan alleen in lettergreep-initiële positie. Lettergrepen zijn open, of hebben een nasaal of l in de coda.

Hoofdstuk 3 behandelt de restricties op morfeemstructuur, de interactie tussen morfologie en fonologie, en fonologische processen die over woordgrenzen heen plaatsvinden. Lexicaal stammen, affixe en functiewoord zijn onderhevig aan verschillende structurele beperkingen. Zo zien we in stam-initiële positie regelmatig consonant-glijklank sequenties, terwijl deze in affixe en functiewoord volledig afwezig zijn. Gesloten lettergrepen en faryngale klinkers vinden we alleen in lexicaal stammen, waartegenover staat dat lettergrepen zonder onset alleen in functiewoord zijn toegestaan.

Prefixen zijn de enige soort affixe, met als uitzondering het infinitiefmorfem, dat onder bepaalde omstandigheden als circumfix wordt gerealiseerd. Nomina in gender 9/10 hebben een tonale alternantie tussen enkelvoud en meervoud (waarbij de toon in klasse 9 meestal lager is dan die in klasse 10), in plaats van een segmenteel prefix.

Monosyllabische naamwoordstammen kunnen acht verschillende toonpatronen hebben, die in vrijwel alle omstandigheden behouden blijven. Werkwoorden zijn bijna altijd monosyllabisch, en zijn onder te verdelen in drie tonale klassen: a, b en c. Alle werkwoorden binnen een klasse zijn identiek qua toonpatroon, en vertonen dezelfde tonale alternaties onder invloed van onder andere tijd en aspect.

Er zijn ook een aantal morfologische alternaties. Zo is er een groep gender 3/10 nomina die stam-initiële consonantmutatie vertoont, waarbij de initiële consonant alterneert tussen een labiovelaire plosief in het enkelvoud (klasse 3) en een palataal (of vergelijkbare klank) in het meervoud (klasse 10). Werkwoordstammen bestaan in een perfectieve en een imperfectieve vorm. Die
tegenstelling wordt in vormen met een open lettergriep onder andere weergegeven door middel van ablaut, zoals bijvoorbeeld de alternantie tussen een gewone en faryngale klinker. Fonologische processen op het niveau van de frase zijn beperkt tot incidentele klinker-ellipsis en het spreiden van een lange toon naar een volgende superhoge lettergriep.


Concordantie wordt verder behandeld in hoofdstuk 5. Werkwoorden congrueren met geen enkele van hun argumenten, maar nominale modificeerders congrueren met de nominale klasse van het hoofdnaamwoord. Concordantie wordt gerealiseerd door prefixen, die kunnen bestaan uit een hele lettergriep, een consonant gepaard met een toon, of alleen een toon. Alleen bij de persoonlijke voornaamwoorden vinden we het hele palet van concordantie, terwijl bij nominale modificeerders sommige naamwoordklassen samenvallen.

Pronomina, die zelfstandig of in appositie met een naamwoord kunnen voorkomen, worden behandeld in hoofdstuk 6. In persoonlijk voornaamwoorden bestaat een soort van naamvalssysteem, met vier verschillende tonen voor de volgende zinsposities: preverbaal, niet-preverbaal, volgend op de comitative prepositie $ā$ en voor een locatieve of dative postpositie. De pronomina voor 1sg en 2sg zijn segmenteel gereduceerd.


De structuur van de nominale frase en de nominale modificeerders (waaronder demonstratiefen, adjectieven, numeralia en adverbia) staan centraal in hoofdstuk 7. Demonstratiefen onderscheiden dichtbij en veraf. Mundabli heeft een kleine gesloten klasse van adjectieven. Deze nemen een syllabisch prefix, met uitzondering van klasse 9 (sg) en klasse 10 (pl), waarbij het prefix tonaal is. Sommige telwoorden hebben een vorm van stamallomorfie, afhankelijk van de klasse van het nominale prefix. Zo vinden we vormen als mbɛ̀ bā-fyē ‘twee mensen’ (cl.2) and dʒi̋ yi̋-fye ‘twee honden’ (cl.10).

Hoewel nominale frases meestal door een eenvoudige conjunctie āmī samen gevoegd worden, vinden we ook een inclusieve conjunctieconstructie om combinaties te vormen van pronomina, nomina, of combinaties van beiden. Nominalesfrases zijn meestal hoofd-initieel, hoewel in een beperkt aantal constructies (zoals de possessief) de volgorde omgekeerd is.

In hoofdstuk 8 wordt de verbale morfologie behandeld, alsmede het verbale complex. Vrijwel alle werkwoordstammen zijn monosyllabisch, en er
Samenvatting in het Nederlands

Bestaan drie inflectionele klassen: a, b en c. Alle werkwoorden binnen een inflectionele klasse hebben eenzelfde toonpatroon voor een gegeven constructie. De imperfectief wordt gevormd door ablaut, hetgeen resulteert in faryngale klinkers.

Er zijn in Mundabli twee toekomstige en vier niet-toekomstige grammaticale tijden, die geclassificeerd worden door middel van preverbale partikels en tonale inflectie. Negatie wordt meestal uitgedrukt door de discontinue markeerder ā ... wɔ̄, die zich om de verbale kern heen vormt.

Een groot aantal constructies wordt beschreven in dit hoofdstuk, waaronder verschillende constructies van tijd, en constructies met preverbale markeers die andere zaken aangeven dan tijd, zoals habitualis, opeenvolging, focus en voorwaardelijkheid. Daarnaast passeren meer gemaakte de negatie-constructies de revue.

Na de verbale morfologie gaat hoofdstuk 9 verder in op werkwoordconstructies en adverbia. Seriële werkwoordconstructies in Mundabli bestaan uit een ononderbroken blok werkwoorden. Het vaakst komen symmetrische seriële werkwoordconstructies voor, waarbij alle verba een gelijke status hebben. Asymmetrische constructies komen echter ook voor, waarin een of meer werkwoorden de interpretatie van het hoofdwerkwoord beïnvloeden. In de symmetrische constructies is de woordvolgorde vaak iconisch, maar in de asymmetrische constructies is dat niet het geval: De bepalende werkwoorden, die zaken als beweging, aspectualiteit, valentie en wijze uit kunnen drukken, staan meestal rechts van het hoofdwerkwoord. Symmetrische seriële werkwoordconstructies zijn vaste uitdrukkingen, of drukken opeenvolgende gebeurtenissen uit. Sommige grammaticale categorieën worden slechts eenmaal per werkwoordconstructie geclassificeerd, terwijl andere op elk individueel werkwoord voorkomen. Daarnaast zijn er categorieën die van beide mogelijkheden gebruik maken. Verbale adverbia staan meestal in de laatste positie van de core.


In hoofdstuk 11 wordt de structuur van de basale (dat wil zeggen, pragmatisch onge markerde en declaratieve) zin beschreven. Het onderscheid dat ik maak in valentie is gebaseerd op het maximale aantal argumenten, en niet op het minimale aantal. Het enige verplichte argument in Mundabli is het subject. Intransitieve werkwoorden hebben geen object, terwijl een object optioneel is voor transitieve werkwoorden. Er zijn ook afgeleide intransitieve en transitieve werkwoorden, die daarnaast ook een obliek argument
Samenvatting in het Nederlands

hebben. De standaardwoordvolgorde is S-V-O-(OBL)-(X), en in zinnen met gemaakte informatiestructuur komen ook andere woordvolgordes voor. Er is geen syntactisch onderscheid tussen non-core (oblieke) constituenten en adverbiale frases. Alleen non-core argumenten hebben postposities. Op de pronomina is een naamvalysysteem van toepassing; verschillende vormen worden gebruikt in preverbale posities, niet-preverbale posities, wanneer een pronom geregeld wordt door een comitatie prepositie, of door een datieve of benefactieve postpositie. Mundabli is een atypische marked nominative taal, met nominatief/accusatief alignment. Evidentie voor grammaticale verhoudingen is relatief zwak, maar sterk voor het subject dan voor het object. Het 1SG pronom en het interrogatieve pronom voor ‘wie’ hebben speciale datevormen.

Betrekkelijke bijzinnen worden behandeld in hoofdstuk 12. Deze volgen op het hoofdnaamwoord, en alle nominale modificerders. Typologisch gezien zijn betrekkelijke bijzinnen in Mundabli bijzonder aangezien ze gemaakt worden door zowel een (optionele) initiële subordinator en een verplichte interne postverbale markeerder die concordeert met de klasse van het hoofdnaamwoord, onafhankelijk van de grammaticale rol van het hoofdnaamwoord in de bijzin. Vrijwel alle betrekkelijke bijzinnen kunnen een vervanger van het hoofdnaamwoord bevatten, maar dit is alleen verplicht wanneer het hoofdnaamwoord het subject is in de bijzin, of de beziter in een genitieve frase. Deze voorwaarden zijn vrijwel gelijk in de hoofdzin. Er is geen beperking op de grammaticale relatie van het hoofdnaamwoord in de betrekkelijke bijzin. Het is niet mogelijk om een bijzin te vormen waarbij het hoofdnaamwoord niet een duidelijke grammaticale rol heeft in de bijzin. De mogelijkheden voor inflectie, focus marking en bevraging zijn vrijwel gelijk in betrekkelijke bijzinnen. Alleen de reguliere negatiewegelijkt wordt niet aangetroffen in betrekkelijke bijzinnen, met een enkele uitzondering, namelijk wanneer het hoofdnaamwoord deel uitmaakt van naamwoordklasseklasse 1 en de relatieve markeerde dezelfde vorm heeft als de post-verbale bijzinarkeerder.


frase naar de positie direct na het werkwoordcomplex om focus te krijgen. Topicale objecten worden regelmatig weggelaten. Werkwoordfocus wordt uitgedrukt door canonieke zinnen of door cognate deverbale nominale constructies. Waarheidsfocus wordt uitgedrukt door het adverbium bán of door het focuspartikel tā.

In hoofdstuk 15 tenslotte, worden de verschillende niet-declaratieve zinntypes behandeld: vraagzinnen (en vraagwoorden), het imperatief, het prohibitief en de aanvloegende wijs. In vraagzinnen is de woordvolgorde meestal gelijk aan die van declaratieve zinnen. Polaire vragen zijn te herkennen aan de zinsfinale markeerder à. Inhoudelijke vragen hebben een vraagwoord, dat in de focuspositie direct na het werkwoord staat wanneer het subject bevraagd wordt, en anders zowel in situ als in de focuspositie kan voorkomen. In reported speech krijgen vraagzinnen speciale vraag-markeerders, waarbij onderscheid bestaat tussen vragen die geciteerd worden van de huidige spreker, of een andere. Imperatieve worden gevormd door de (segmenteel ongekerde) werkwoordstam, in combinatie met een toonpatroon dat imperatief uitdrukt — hoewel imperatieve werkwoorden die niet in de eerste positie staan andere toonpatronen hebben. De prohibitief wordt gekenmerkt door een preverbale markeerder, fā, in combinatie met de imperatieve vorm van het werkwoord. Een subject pronomen is daarbij verplicht. De aanvloegende wijs wordt voornamelijk gebruikt om opdrachten te uiten aan referenten in de eerste of derde persoon, of om een opdracht, die in eerste instantie door iemand anders werd gegeven, door te geven. Het wordt uitgedrukt door middel van een subject pronomen, in combinatie met het toonpatroon van niet-initiële imperatieve werkwoorden in serieënte constructies. Imperatieve en aanvloegende wijs vormen met een meervoudige referent worden gecmarkeerd door de postverbale markeerder nī.

De grammatica wordt gecompleteerd door twee gean noteerde teksten in hoofdstuk 16.
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