

# GRAMMAR ANALYSIS

Sisaalin̄ Tumulun̄

Margrit Frempong  
SILDEP/GILLBT Ghana

# Grammar Analysis

## Sisaala

### 1. The Clause

#### 1.1. Non-verbal Clause

- 1.1.1. Nominal Clause, demonstrative: Part. loc.  
temp. adj.

Dia nɛ ɲu. (part.)  
House focus this  
This is a house.

Tu-bal nɛ woruɲ. (adj.)  
Big tree focus very  
This is a very big tree.

U dia nɛ daha. (loc.)  
His house focus here  
Here is his house.

Che-bal nɛ juɲ. (temp.)  
Day big focus today  
It is a big day (festival) today.

- 1.1.2. Nominal Clause, descriptive (not common without verb)  
Diibie geem.  
Bird descr. for a long time  
The bird did this for a long time.

- 1.1.3. Equative Clause  
U yuru nɛ Hayugo.  
Her name focus Hayugo  
Her name is Hayugo.

- 1.1.4. Temporal Clause, demonstrative: part.  
temp.
- Cheɛ kala ɲu nɛ. (part.)  
Day every this focus  
It was like this every day.

U tapɔlaa batori nɛ juɲ.  
Its days three focus today

It is three days today.

ŋu nɛ deɛŋ deɛŋ chɛɛ-na kala.  
This focus for a long time day focus every  
It went on like this for a long time, every day.

## 1.2 Verbal Clause

### 1.2.1 Copulative

Ŋaa + complement (nom. phr.)  
descr. Adverb/adjective numeral

U ŋaa kv-bie nɛ. (nom. phr.) adj.  
It is thing small focus  
It is a small thing.

U ŋaa nyaaba nɛ. (nom. phr.) noun  
He is poor person focus  
He is a poor person.

Lee-la ŋaa fvu. (descr. adjective)  
Place the is descr. very quiet.  
The place is very quiet.

Baal-la ŋaa woruŋ. (adverb)  
Man the did well.  
The man did well.

Niaa ŋaa baliɔ nɛ. (numeral)  
The people are two focus.  
The people are two.

### 1.2.2 Intransitive

a) Uv fil nɛ. (action verb)  
He is jumping

b) U suma. (stative verb. The only expansion is an  
It is sweet. adverb or temperal)

### 1.2.3. Transitive

Baal-la nyua liiŋ.  
Man the drank water  
The man drank water.

### 1.2.4. Ditransitive

a) U pɪ baal-la kudiilee.  
He gave man the food.  
He gave food to the man.

b) U joŋ kudiilee pɪ baal-la.  
He took food gave man the

He gave food to the man.

- 1.2.5. Motion (absol.)  
Baal-la mva.  
Man the go (completive)  
The man has gone.
- 1.2.6. Motion (directed)  
Baal-la mv dia.  
Man the went (incompl.) home.  
The man went home.
- 1.2.7. Locative  
Mɪ nyumma he dia lɛ.  
My father is house in.  
My father is in the house.
- 1.2.8. Time  
Baal-la mv dia junu.  
Man the went home today.  
The man went home today.
- 1.2.9. Adverbial  
Baal-la ju v tuntunaa woru.  
Man the know his work well.  
The man knows his work well.
- 1.2.10. Baal-la hoŋ dume halu.  
Man the sat there descr. for a long time.  
The man sat there for a long time.
- 1.2.11. Instrumental  
Baal-la pɛrɛ lee-la arɪ pire.  
Man the hoe place the with hoe.  
The man hoed the place with a hoe.
- 1.3. Clause Expansions**
- 1.2.1 Temporal  
Final (focus part. not obligatory)
- a) Mɪ nav junu.  
or Mɪ nav junu nɛ.  
I saw him today (focus).  
I saw him today.
- b) Mɪ nav yɔbɔ chɛɛŋ.  
or Mɪ nav yɔbɔ chɛɛŋ nɛ.  
I saw him market day (focus).  
I saw him on market day.

Initial (focus part. obligatory)

a) Junuŋ nɛ mɪ naʋ.  
Today focus I saw him  
I saw him today.

b) Yɔbɔ chɛɛŋ nɛ mɪ naʋ.  
Market day focus I saw him  
I saw him on market day.

Medial form without object does not require the focus particle

a) Mɪ junuŋ naʋ.  
I today saw him.  
I saw him today.

### 1.3.2. Locative

Final (focus part. not obligatory)

Mɪ naʋ yɔbɔ nɛ.  
I saw him market in.  
I saw him in the market.

or Mɪ naʋ yɔbɔ lɛ nɛ.  
I saw him market in focus.  
I saw him in the market.

Initial (focus part. obligatory)

Yɔbɔ lɛ nɛ mɪ naʋ.  
Market in focus I saw him.  
I saw him in the market.

### 1.3.3. Adverbial

Final (adj. descr. or other)

U ŋaa fɛlɛlɛ.  
It is descr. for lukewarm  
It is lukewarm.

U tuŋ ʋ tuntuŋŋaa luma.  
He worked his work quickly.  
He did his work quickly.

Preceding the verb (+/- particle + modal verb) foc. obligatory

U faasa tuŋ ʋ tuntuŋŋaa nɛ. (modal verb)  
He intensely works his work focus  
He is a hard worker. (He works hard).

U yie faasa tuŋ ʋ tuntuŋŋaa nɛ.  
(part. + modal verb)  
He always intensely works his work foc.  
He always works hard.

### 1.3.4. Example of possible expansion:

U fa yie chuŋ v sɔpaan ŋu.  
 He asp. maker:long ago always stand his front like this  
 jɪŋɪglaan.  
 unexpectedly.  
 He always stood unexpectedly in front of him like this.

## 2. The Sentence

### 2.1. Coordination

Baal-la kaa via, ka v haala bira chaare.  
 Man the take refuse and (contrast) his wife again take out.  
 The man refused to take, and his wife took (them) out again.

Tumu sɪsele ka waa ne, ama v ha bi  
 Tumu now contin. marker grow focus, but it still not  
 dere.  
 finish  
 Tumu is growing now, but it is not finished yet.

Baala mv sɔpaan, an ka v haala mage haruŋ.  
 man go front but his wife stay back.  
 The man went ahead, but his wife stayed behind.

Wɪaa bi naa che, naa nu che wɪaa.  
 Trouble not people seek, people cont. seek trouble.  
 Trouble does not seek people, people seek trouble.

Lerɪŋ kala hɪla see vil-bala dɔndɔŋa ne keŋ luŋ.  
 Place all dry except well one only focus has water  
 The place is dry except one well which has water.

### 2.2. Subordination

#### 2.2.1. Condition/Time

Subordinate clause sentence initial:

(Du) ŋ ne bi mva, mi jaŋ ŋmobiŋ.  
 if you focus not go, I will beat you.  
 ('di' optional)  
 If you don't go, I will beat you.

(Du) ŋ ne mv Kumasi, yɔɔ geruŋ kaa kɔ pume. ('di' opt.)  
 When you focus go Kumasi, buy cloth take come give me.  
 When you go to Kumasi, buy a cloth for me.

(Du) ŋ ne kv mv Kumasi, yɔɔ geruŋ kaa kɔ pume  
 If you foc. come go Kumasi, buy cloth take come give me  
 If you happen to go to Kumasi, buy a cloth for me.

Subordinate clause sentence final: ('di' obligatory)

Ba bɪ yie dɪ baal-la ɕɪŋ ba sɪpaŋ  
They not reached when man the stood they front  
They had not reached when the man stood in front of them.

2.2.1.1. Two conditional clauses following each other:

(Dɪ) ɒ mɒ yɔbɔ koo (dɪ) ŋ mɒ baga,  
If you go market or if you go farm  
ŋ jaŋ naba.  
you will see them.  
If you go to market or if you go to farm, you will see them.

(Dɪ) v nu yi dia, dɪ ba tuo dɪmɛ,  
If he cont. reach house, if they not be there  
v jaŋ mure.  
he will return.  
If he reaches the house and they are not there, he will return.  
(First 'dɪ' optional, second 'dɪ' obligatory)

2.2.2. Relative

Relative clause sentence initial:

Baal-la sɪ he Kumasi lɛ, (v) chie  
Man the who is Kumasi in, he tomorrow  
jaŋ kɔ.  
will come.  
The man who is in Kumasi will come tomorrow.

Relative clause sentence final:

Baal-la tvɔŋ fa cheye v haala sɪ sɪ v  
Man the inside past sad his wife when said she  
jaŋ viiri.  
will go home  
The man was sad when his wife said she would go home.

Relative clause not marked: 'sɪ' optional.

Tapɔlu kala v (sɪ) yie ŋaa kudiilee,  
Day every he (when) always make food,  
ku-la kv nyɪsv.  
thing the came deceive him  
Every day when he was cooking, the thing came and deceived him.

2.2.3. Purpose: (high tone on 'dɪ' in contrast to cond./time which is low tone)

U tuŋ baal-la dɔv mɔ Kumasi.  
 He send man the that he go Kumasi.  
 He sent the man to Kumasi.

U tumba dí bá mɔ Kumasi.  
 He send them that they go Kumasi  
 He sent them to Kumasi.

2.2.3.1. Two 'di' sentences following each other:

Ba mɔ dia di ba saa kɔlvɔŋ di baal-la dii.  
 They go home that they cook tizet that man the eat  
 They went home to cook tizet so that the man could eat.

2.2.4. Indirect speech

Baal-la bula arti v jaŋ mɔ Kumasi.  
 Man the said that he will go Kumasi  
 The man said he would go to Kumasi.

2.2.5. Explanatory Clause

Laa lɔlvɔŋ arti ŋ sɪ kɛnla kaa mɔ Kumsai  
 We thank you that you rel.have us take go Kumasi  
 We thank you that you took us to Kumasi.

U ŋaa kudiilee arti v haala sɪ yie  
 He make food like his wife relat. always  
 ŋaa ŋu.  
 make like this.  
 He cooked food just like his wife always did.

2.2.6. Reason

U sɪ vɔ (dɔv) mɔ Kumasi nɛ,  
 He said that he go Kumasi focus,  
 ŋu nɛ tu v jɔv luori-la.  
 that's why he entered car the  
 He said he was going to Kumasi, that's why he entered the car.

Bile dia bi sikuuri mɔa, bɛɛ wɪaa v  
 Child the yesterday not school went, because he  
 bi doluŋ kɛnɛ.  
 not strength had.  
 The child did not go to school yesterday because he wasn't well.

2.2.7. Subordination without any markers

U hɔŋ dia lɛ halu, wɪa jɔv.



He sat house in descr. for a long time sun entered  
He was in the house for a long time, until the sun went down.

\*See also 2.2.2. final clause: Relative clause not marked.

### 2.2.8. Combination of subordinate clauses

Laa ləllvɲ arɪ ɲ sɪ ɲaa kudiilee  
we thank you that relat. you made food give  
pɪla dɪ la dii.  
us that we eat.  
We thank you that you cooked food for us so that we could eat.

Dɪ ɲ kə dia see dɪ ɲ saa kʊlvɲ.  
When you come home unless that you make tizet  
When you come home, you should make tizet.

## 2.3. Sequences of non-full clauses to make a sentence.

### 2.3.1. Subject missing

Badere saa sii a keɲ neɲ-la a kaa  
Spider then get and had cow the and take  
kpɒ a saa joɲ nyuɲ a...  
kill and then took head and...  
Then the spider got up and took the cow and killed it and then took  
the head and...

U mɒ bəga aɲ bɪ pɛɛ.  
He went farm and (contrast) not hoe.  
He went to the farm but did not hoe.

U bɪ bəga mva juɲ aɲ to mɒ yoɲo-la.  
He not farm went today and rather went to funeral  
the.  
He did not go to farm today but rather went to the funeral.

### 2.3.2. Predicate missing

Mɪ dʊndʊɲa bɪ jaɲ mɒ Kumasi, see mɪ  
I alone not will go Kumasi, unless we  
dɪ mɪ nandɔɲɔ.  
and my friend  
I will not go to Kumasi alone, I will only go with my friend.

### 2.3.3. Full clause + temporal

Mt jaŋ mv dta see chie.  
 I will go home, unless tomorrow  
**or**  
 Mt jaŋ mv dta ka dt chie.  
 I will go home and so (contrast) tomorrow.  
 I will go home until tomorrow.

### 3. Main elements of the Clause

#### 3.1. Nominal phrase

##### 3.1.1. Pronoun system

Pronouns, subject/object:

	sg. unemph.	sg. emph.	pl. unemph.	pl. emph.
1 pers.	Mt	mt-na	la	la-na
2 pers.	ŋ	ŋ-na	ma	ma-na
3 pers.	v	v-na	ba	ba-na

##### 3.1.2. Articles

sg: noun stem plus suffix “-la”  
 eg. baala ‘man’  
 baal-la ‘the man’

pl: noun plural minus last vowel/consonant, plus suffix ‘-la’ (plus suffix ‘-liŋ’, irreg.)  
 eg. baalaa ‘men’  
 baala-la ‘the men’  
 ktaa ‘things’  
 ktaalŋ ‘the things’

##### 3.1.3. Demonstratives

sg.	deeŋ	‘this’	baala deeŋ	‘this man’
pl.	deemba	‘these’	baalaa deemba	‘these men’
sg.	dŋŋ	‘other’	baala dŋŋ	‘another man’
pl.	dŋŋvŋ	‘other’	baalaa dŋŋvŋ	‘other men’

##### 3.1.4. Predicatives

sg./pl. ŋu ‘that, like that’ Ptaa ne ŋu. ‘Those are yams.’  
 sg./pl. ŋ-la ‘this, like this’ Ptaa ne ŋ-la. ‘These are yams.’

##### 3.1.5. Numerals

one sg. kubala (pl: kubalaba ‘some’)  
 baal kubala ‘one man’  
 baalaa kubalaba ‘some men’

two balia/baltamŋ

nua balia 'two people'  
 nua baliamu 'two people' or 'these two people'  
 (with article the form with "-u" is usually used.)

mva 'little'  
 yuge 'many'  
 kuḱeḱeḱe 'plenty'

3.1.6. Adjective or adverb  
 (use is very restricted)

woruḱ 'very'

Tu-bal	nɛ	woruḱ.	("woruḱ" in this position in the
Tree big	focus	very.	clause only occurs following This
is a very big tree.			compound noun + focus marker,
stem + adjective root + foc.)			

3.1.7. Interrogative

kuḱɛɛ nɛ	'who'	Kuḱɛɛ nɛ?
bɛɛ nɛ	'what'	Who foc. marker
nu nɛ	'where'	Who is it?

3.1.8. Indefinitive

affirm.	kuḱkala	'everything'
neg.	kuḱkala bi	'nothing'
affirm.	nuḱkala	'everybody'
neg.	nuḱkala bi	'nobody'

3.1.9. Order of elements in the Nominal Phrase

3.1.9.1. With noun as head

-/+ poss. + noun -/+ demonstr. -/+ loc. -/+ num. (sequence) or woruḱ (adj.)

v	hambiisiḱ	deemba	batori	kala	(kala	kala)
His	children	these	three	all	all	all
all	his	three	children			

v	hambiisiḱ	deemba	batori	dunduḱa
his	children	these	three	only
only	these	three	children	

taḱ-la	daha	zomɔ
town the	loc.	is good
This part of the town here is good.		

taḱ	deḱ	daha	zomɔ
town	this	here	is good.

This town here is good.

ku-bie	deen	ku-biisiŋ	deemba
thing small	this	thing small (pl.)	these
this small thing		these small things	

tu-bal nɛ woruŋ  
tree big focus very.  
this tree is a very big tree

v-na baala deen  
he emph. man this

3.1.9.2. Without noun as head  
Pronoun replacing noun:

Ba kala nɛ kɔ.  
They all focus came.

Ba baliamuŋ kala nɛ kɔ.  
They two all focus came.  
All the two came.

Ba kala batorimuŋ deemba nɛ kɔ.  
They all three these focus came.  
All these three came.

Number replacing noun:

Ba	nɛ	kɔ.	mva	mva	ka.
Two	focus	came.	Small	small	left.
Two	came.		Little	is	left.

Demonstrative:

Dɔŋɔ	nɛ	kɔ.	Dɔnsuŋ	nɛ	kɔ.	Deen	zɔmɔ.
other	focus	came	Others	focus	came.	This	good.
The other	one	came.	The others	came.	This one	is	good.

3.1.9.3. With relative Clause

Baala-la batori sɪ mʊ Kumasi.  
Man the three who went Kumasi  
The three men who went to Kumasi.

3.1.9.4. Coordinate Nominal Phrase

La dɪ mɪ ŋaana  
We and my younger brother  
I and my younger brother

Haala-la arɪ baala-la kala  
Women the and men the all

All the women and men

3.1.9.5. Associative Nominal Phrase

baal-la nyumma  
man the father  
the man's father

baal kubala nyumma dia  
man certain father house  
a certain man's father's house  
haalaa deemba balia nyumma dia  
women these two father house  
These two women's father's house

3.1.9.6. Loc. Nominal Phrase

Yaŋ tʊŋ ktaa  
Bush inside things  
Bush animals

3.2 Order of elements in the Verbal Clause

3.2.1. Preverbal Particles

3.2.1.1. Aspect markers

future	hist. past	hist. intentional
jaŋ	fa (perfect)	fa jaŋ
	faa (imperfect)	
mɪ jaŋ kə	mɪ fa kə nɛ	mɪ fa jaŋ kə
I will come.	I had come	I would have come

Imperfective aspect markers

If a pronoun is preceding the verb, the pronoun is lengthened, and the stress marker “nɛ” is added at the end of the phrase.

Uv mʊ yəbɔ nɛ He is going to market  
(Contrast: U mʊ yəbɔ He went to market)

Otherwise: nu OR ka nɛ  
Haal-la nu mʊ yəbɔ. The woman is going to market.

OR  
Haal-la ka mʊ yəbɔ nɛ. The woman is going to market.

Negative: order: neg. object verb  
Haal-la bɪ yəbɔ mʊ. The woman is not going to market.

OR  
Haal-la bɪ yəbɔ ka mʊ. The woman is not going to market.

Haal-la fa bɪ yəbɔ mʊa. The woman had not to the market.

BUT:

Haal-la fa bi jaŋ mv yɔbo. The wom. would not have gone the market.

3.2.1.2. Particles which show the relation of the clause and which precede the neg. marker if the sentence has neg. form.

U yie bi dia ka mv.  
He always not home go  
He never goes home.

U yie mv dia.  
He always went home  
He always goes home.

U saa bi dia mva.  
He then not home went  
He therefore did not go home.

U saa mv dia.  
He then went home.  
He therefore went home.

U bira bi dia mva.  
He again not home went.  
He did not go home again.

U bira mv dia.  
He again went home.  
He went home again.

U yaan bi dia mva  
He not at all not home went  
He did not go home at all.

U yaan mv dia.  
He habitually went home  
Her egularly went home.

U paala bi dia mva.  
He even not home went  
He even did not go home.

U paala mv dia.  
He even went home  
He even went home.

U ha bi dia mva.  
He still not home went  
He has not gone home yet.

U ha he dume  
He still is there  
He is still there.

Two particles:

U yie bira chiche kiaa.  
He always again (cont.) look for things.  
He is always looking for things again.

U yie bira bi kiaa ka che.  
He always again not things cont. part. look for  
He is never looking for things again.

U yie bira bi diaa mv.  
He always again not home(cont.) go.  
He is not going home any more.

Time words in medial position also fill in this slot.

U dia bi yɔbɔ mva. U dia mv yɔbɔ.  
 He yest. not market went. He yest. go market.  
 He did not go to market yesterday. He went to market yesterday.

U dia paala bi yɔbɔ mva.  
 He yest. even not market went  
 He did not even go to market yesterday.

3.2.1.3.

Modal verbs

There may be a sequence of two modal verbs.

eg. fiela 'slowly'  
 faasa 'intensely etc.'

If the clause has neg. form, modal verbs follow the neg.marker 'bi'.

U fiela venɛɛ mv dia nɛ.  
 He slowly walking go home focus  
 He is walking home slowly.

Negative

U bi fiela venɛ mv dia.  
 He not slowly walk go home.  
 He is not walking home slowly.

Two modal verbs:

U mura fiela venɛ mv dia.  
 He again slowly walk go home  
 He walked again home slowly.

U bi mura fiela venɛ mv dia  
 He not again slowly walk go home.  
 He did not walk home slowly again.

3.2.1.4.

Auxiliary verbs.

order: auxiliary verb-verb

or auxiliary verb-complement-verb

keŋ 'have' can be preceded by verb "wuo" 'can'

joŋ 'take'

kv 'come' verb: kɔ

joŋo ku! 'put it down!' (take put down)

joŋo pu! 'take give!'

kv juu! 'come enter!'

U joŋ pupoiŋ ku tinteŋ.  
 He take pot put down ground.  
 He put the pot on the ground.

U keŋ v nandɔŋɔ kaa mv dia.  
 He have his friend take go home.  
 He took his friend home.

U jaŋ wuo joŋ bile mʋ dia.  
He will can take child go home.  
He will be able to take the child home.

U joŋ kudiilee pɪ v nandɔŋɔ.  
He take food give his friend.  
He gave food to his friend.

### 3.2.2

#### Serial verbs

There can be many verbs in a series without any particle in between.

Fá mʋ kaa mʋ pʋ.  
Run go take go give him.  
Run and give it to him.

U fá mʋ jʋʋ dia.  
He run go entered house.  
He ran and entered the house.

Sii joŋ kudiilee kaa mʋ dia.  
Get up take food take go home.  
Get up and take the food home.

#### 3.2.2.1.

Verbs which are always at the end of a series:

U che naa ka.  
He looked for people failed.  
He looked for people and failed.

U tuŋ v tuŋtuŋɔaa dɛɛ.  
He worked his work finished.  
He finished his work.

U fá lel.  
He ran lost  
He ran away.

#### 3.2.2.2.

Same verb repeated in a series:

U che che naa ka.  
He look for look for people failed.  
He looked and looked for people and failed.

### 3.2.3.

#### Adjectival Verbs

These are intransitive verbs and don't take the perfective form when negative.

U jaŋ zɔŋ.	It will be good.	comp. U jaŋ juɪ.	He will climb.
U zɔmɔ.	It is good.	U juɪa.	He climbed.
U bɪ zɔŋ.	It is not good.	U bɪ juɪ.	He did not climb.



(\*U bi zomɔ not possible)

U suma.			It is sweet.	
U faasa	suma	kɔkɛŋ	kɔkɛŋ.	It is still very, very
It intensely sweet	very much	very much		sweet (nice).

### 3.2.4. Positional verbs

hɔŋ 'to sit'  
chuŋ 'to stand'

These verbs have to be followed by a loc. phrase, and they cannot take imperfective aspect.

U	hɔŋ	ɗa	lɛ.
He	sat	house	in.
He	sat in the house.		

## 3.3. Relational Phrases

### 3.3.1. Locative Phrase

Noun phrase as head	noun + loc. noun						
	loc. particle						
U	hɔŋ	ɗa	tɔŋ.	U	hɔŋ	ɗa	lɛ.
He	sat	house	inside.	He	sat	house	in.
He sat inside the house.				He sat in the house.			

U	hɔŋ	ɗa	harɔŋ.
He	sat	house	back.
He sat at the back of the house.			

Location word as head:

Dumɛ 'there'	U he dumɛ.
	He is there.
daha 'here'	U he daha.
	He is here.

### 3.3.2. Temporal Phrase

Clause initial and clause final:

Head: time noun

Tapulu	kɔbala	v	mɔ	Kumasi.
day	one	he	went	Kumasi.
One day	he went to Kumasi.			

Head noun phrase + time noun:

U tapɔlaa batori cheɛŋ nɛ.	U tapɔlaa batori cheɛŋ ba sii viiri.
Its days three day focus.	On the third day they got up and
On the third day	went home

A whole clause:

Chvchvɔŋ	a	kaa	mv	dɔdaanɔŋ
Morning	and	take	go	evening
From morning to evening				

Temp. phrase which can be initial, medial or final:

temp. word:	dia	‘yesterday’
	duo	‘the day before yesterday, etc.’

### 3.3.3

Adverbial phrase clause final  
rel: art + N. P. Or a nage + N.P.

Mv art yarɪfɛlaa.	U vene a nage v nyumma
Go with health.	He walk and like his father
Go in peace!	He walked like his father.

head + adverb

worɔŋ	‘much, very’	repeated:	kɔŋkɔŋ kɔŋkɔŋ
kɔŋkɔŋ	‘much’		
gel gel	‘lightly’		

Descriptive adverbs/adjectives can be added to ordinary verbs, but many following the verb *ɲaa* ‘is’.

U ɲaa	fɛlɛlɛ nɛ.
It is	descrip. almost cold, lukewarm
It is lukewarm.	

U ɲaa	kɔbine nɛ	firi firifiri.
It is	black focus	very very very black (only used with kubine)
It is very, very black.		

Clause medial modal verbs have adverbial character:

(see modal verbs):	U fɛla venɔŋ.
	He slowly walked.
	He walked slowly.

# Morphology

## 1. The Nominal

### 1.1. Formation of singular and plural

Singular: sg. stem + sg. suffix      baal-a 'man'    suuŋ 'guinea fowl'

sg. with article + sg. stem  
+ art. suffix '-la'      baal-la 'that man'  
                                    suuŋ-la 'that guinea fowl'

plural: sg. stem + pl. suffix      baal-aa 'men'

pl. with sing: stem + (pl. suffix minus last cons. or V) + -la or -liŋ

baala-la	'the men'
suunuŋ	'guinea fowl'
suunu-la	'the guinea fowls'

but:

naa	'people'
na-liŋ	'the people'

### 1.2 Noun classes

Noun stems can be divided into four classes according to the plural suffixes they take.

- group 1 -VV
- group 2 -CVŋ
- group 3 -ba
- group 4 no suffix

Only nouns of group 3 and group 4 belong to semantic groups.

#### 1.2.1. Group 1

This group takes -VV for plural and either Vŋ or V for singular.

##### 1.2.1.1

Consonant final stems except stems ending with 'm' and 'b'  
These take -Vŋ or -V in the singular. The plural -VV is just added to the stem without change of the stem.

Examples:	peel-iŋ	peel-ee	'mountain'
	tapvɫ-vŋ	tapvɫ-aa	'day'
	hɔl-vŋ	hɔl-oo	'charcoal'
	haal-a	haal-aa	'woman'
	kuor-o	kuor-oo	'charcoal'
	pies-e	pies-ee	'sheep'

1.2.1.2. Stems ending with ‘m’ or ‘b’  
The ‘m’ or ‘b’ is changed into ‘ηη’ in plural

Examples:	hem-η	heηη-εε	‘arrow’
	jim-η	jiηη-εε	‘chicken’
	tom-η	toηη-εε	‘beard’
	leb-η	leηη-εε	‘shelter’

1.2.1.3. Stems ending with two vowels.  
These take –η in the singular and –VV in plural.

Subgroup 1: Second vowel drops in plural form:

Examples:	pu-η	pu-aa	‘yam’
	su-η	si-aa	‘eye’
	bii-η	bi-ee	‘seed’

Subgroup 2: Second vowel doesn’t drop in plural form.

Examples:	jeeη	jey-ee	‘wall’
	boi-η	boy-ee	‘gate’
	bubui-η	bubuy-aa	‘duck’

(“i” interpreted as “y” in plural form)

Subgroup 3: Consonant ‘r’ is added to the stem in plural form:

Examples:	lu-η	lur-aa	‘water’
	nʊʊ-η	nʊʊr-aa	‘sheanut butter’
	nii-η	niir-ee	‘mouth’

1.2.2. Group 2

This group takes –CVη for plural. The sing. Suff. is –η or –V or #

Examples:	suu-η	suu-nuη	‘guinea fowl’
	too-η	too-nuη	‘pig’
	lɪɪ-η	lɪɪ-suη	‘fence’
	nyil-e	nyil-liη	‘horn’
	dundol-o	dundol-luη	‘hill’
	kʊkʊ-η	kʊkʊ-suη	‘wing’

1.2.2.2. These nouns have the singular suffix #. The stem changes in different ways when the plural suffix is added.

1.2.2.2.1. The last CV of the singular stem drops in plural form.

Examples:	fehe	fe-siη	‘stomach’
	kaha	ka-suη	‘grass’
	gentine	gentin-siη	‘tree trunk’

(One can usually see what the noun stem consists of from the way the article is added)

	fehe-la	‘the stomach’ (not fe-la)
	pire-la	‘the hoe’
<u>but:</u>	nyil-la	‘the horn’ (from nyile ‘horn’)

- 1.2.2.2.2. The last V of the singular stem changes into a transitional vowel in plural form.  
 Examples:   pire            piri-sij       ‘hoe’  
               baga            bagi-suj       ‘farm’  
               chuga          chugv-suj     ‘load’
- 1.2.2.2.3. The singular stem is not changed in pl. form, exc. for changing η to n  
 Examples:   berε           berε-suj       ‘trap’  
               daboro       daboro-sij     ‘wood’  
               lonj           lon-nuj        ‘gourd’  
               gugonj       gugon-nuj     ‘gugon-nuj’
- 1.2.2.2.4. Heterogenous vowels become homogenous.  
 Examples:   dia            du-suj        ‘house’  
               bie            bii-rij        ‘child’  
               tia            tu-suj        ‘tree’
- 1.2.2.2.5. Some nouns with ending –CVC have the stem final consonant changed in plural form, but not all of them.  
 Examples:   geruj           gen-nuj        ‘dress’  
               mɔr-uj       mɔ-suj        ‘straw’  
               ηmenuj       ηmε-suj       ‘rope’  
               but: ηmen-uj     ηmε-nεε      ‘okra’
- 1.2.3.       Group 3  
 This group takes –ba in the plural form and # in the singular. (Mainly kinship terms and borrowed words)  
 Examples:   ηaaj           ηaam-ba       ‘mother’  
               nyumma       nyumma-ba    ‘father’  
               nyumma       nyumma-ba    ‘bucket’ (engl.)  
               amanɪ       amanɪ-ba      ‘small fish’ (Twi)
- 1.2.4.       Group 4  
 This group takes no plural form.  
 (mainly abstract words, diseases, verbal nouns, collective nouns, etc.)
- abstract nouns:   doluuj           ‘strength’  
                       fawolluj        ‘fear’
- diseases:         tuturuuj        ‘catarrh’  
                       twɔ-lenni        ‘disentry’
- verbal nouns:    duunuuj        ‘drumming’  
                       yura            ‘meeting’
- others:           daaruuj        ‘soup’  
                       yamuuj         ‘sour water’

### 1.3. Adjectives

There are only descriptive adjectives.

Examples: Lerij kala ŋaa fɔu nɛ.  
Place all is descr. very quiet  
The place is very quiet.

Numerals can be added to the noun, there is no concordance, except for numbers where there is an optional concordance. See 3.1.5.

niaa yuge ‘many people’  
piaa mva ‘a few yams’

### 1.4. Concordant morphemes following the noun:

Only demonstratives. See 3.1.3.

### 1.5. Compound nouns

#### 1.5.1. Noun—Adjective Compounds

There are two kinds of adj. noun compounds:

1. Noun stem + bound adj. root + sg. or pl. suffix

Examples: tu-bal-ɯj ‘big tree’ tia ‘tree’  
Tu-bal-aa ‘big trees’ -bal- ‘big’  
kv-bal-ɯj ‘big thing’ kvɯj ‘thing’  
kv-bal-aa ‘big things’ kva ‘thing’

2. Noun stem + root of stative verb plus sg./ or pl. suffix

Examples: kv-zɔm-ɯj ‘good thing’ zɔŋ ‘to be good’  
(imperfect)  
kv-zɔŋŋ-ɔɔ ‘good things’ zɔmɔ ‘to be good’  
(perfect)

#### 1.5.2. Verbal nouns

1. noun stem + verbal noun

Examples:

pupoi-mɛɛɛ ‘potter’ (pot moulder) mɛɛɛ to put together  
du-saara ‘builder’ (house builder) saa to build  
pie-daara ‘shepherd’ (sheep watcher daa ‘to look after’)

2. verbal root + noun ending

Examples: cho-nuɯj ‘love’ cho ‘love’  
suɯ-ŋ ‘death’ suɯ ‘to die’  
laataa-ra ‘saviour’ laa...ta ‘to save’

3. noun stem + verb (perfective form))  
 Examples: nyu-yelle (pillow) ‘head leaner’ yelli-yelle ‘to lean against’  
 kv-pva ‘rotten thing’ pva pva ‘to get rotton’  
 kv-wuolo ‘empty thing’ wuoli wuolo ‘to get empty’

4. noun stem + verbal root + adverb + noun  
 Examples: wv-bul-kujken kujken tuna ‘big talker’  
 thing speak much much owner  
 (with ‘tuna’ many other combinations can be made,  
 nyu-kpulvɛn tuna ‘bold headed person’  
 head sth. like a ball owner

1.5.3. Compound nouns which are formed from two noun stems of nouns

1. uncontracted roots

- Examples: dia tolo ‘mouse’ dia ‘house’  
 tolo ‘daughter’

The meaning of the compound noun has changed in this case.

- gɔgv-pire ‘iron hoe used as a musical instrument’  
 gɔgv ‘musician’  
 pire ‘hoe’

The meaning of the compound noun has not changed in this case.

2. Contracted roots

- Examples: ha-tolo ‘young woman’ root: haal- ‘woman’  
 tolo ‘daughter’  
 ba-vire ‘man’s granary’ root: baal- ‘man’  
 vire granary

3. noun stem + noun

- Examples: lu-nɛɲ hippopotamus (water cow)  
 lu-ɲ ‘water’  
 nɛɲ ‘cow’  
 bagul-nɛɲ bush cow  
 bagul-a ‘bush animal’  
 nɛɲ ‘cow’

(a transitional vowel connects the two nouns in this last case).

## 2. The Verb

### 2.1 Aspects and Tenses

Aspects:      imperfective                  continuous or habitual action  
                          perfective                          completed action  
 Tenses:      actual, historical, intentional (future), historical  
                          intentional, imperative.

Focus:            Every verb can have two forms: focus and no focus.

A chart about aspects, tenses and focus with examples follows.

### 2.2. Verb changes in imperfective/perfective aspects:

imperfective:	perfective:
CV	CVV*
CVC	CVCV*
CV(V)CV	CV(V)CV*
CVCVCV	CVCVCV*

\*harmonizing high vowel

Examples

imperfective

high tone verbs:

ùú mú! ne	he is going
ùú jí! né	he is climbing
ùú víiri! né	He is going home
ùú kíri! né	He is calling

perfective

high tone verbs:

ù mva	he went
ù jla	he climbed
ù vìré	he went home
ù kùrìsé	he called (the chickens)

(! means down step)

low tone verbs: k`o to come    fíl to fly    yìgì to push

ùú kó né	he coming	ù kó ne	he came
ùú fíl né	he is flying	ù fílé	he flew
ùú yígí né	he is pushing	ù yígé	he pushed
ùú kárimé né	he is reading	ù kárimá ne	he read

### 2.3. Imperative affirmative and negative:

<u>affirmative</u>		<u>negative</u>		<u>negative</u>
high	low	high	low	CV
mú	k`o	sí mú	sí kó	
jíl	fíl	sí jí!l	sí fíl	low tone changes to
víiri	yìgì	sí víiri	sí yígú	high tone

to  
high

kíri!si                                  sí kíri!sú\*

kàrìme                                  sí kárimé

\*! means high downstep

CVCV

last vowel changes to u, high tone to high downstep



Rules for forming imperfective and perfective (affirmative) aspects

a. Imperfective affirmative

	Actual	Historical	Intentional	Hist. Intentional	Imperative
Focus	High tone on the first syllable of the verb. Lengthened vowel with high tone on the pronoun or particle, 'ká' or 'nú' precedes the verb. Obligatory foc. marker 'ne' follows the verb it is now preceded by 'nú'.	low tone 'fà' a is added or ka or nu.			
Non focus		low tone fà	ján	fà ján	intentional form of verb
Focus	Úú díí né bie ká díí né bie níí díí ùú bènè né	ù fàa díí né ù fà ká díí ù fà nu díí ù fàa bènè né			
Non focus	ù dídíí ù bíbènè	ù fà dídíí ù fà bíbènè	ù ján dídíí ù ján bíbènè	ù fà ján dídíí ù fà ján bíbènè	(ù) dídíí (ù) bíbènè

b. Perfective Affirmative

	Actual	Historical	Intentional	Hist. Intentional	Imperative
Focus	ù diè (díí) ù bènè (bènè) ù fà jílá (jíl)	ù fà diè (díí) ù fà bènè (bènè) ù fà jílá (jíl)	U ján hónó gberè (he will sit wait) ù ján jílá h`òṅ he will climb and sit	ù fà ján hónó gberè (he would sit wait)	
Non focus	ù díí ù bènè	ù fà díí ù fà bènè	ján díí ù ján bènè	ù fà ján bènè ù fà ján díí	má díí má bènè

The form in brackets occurs when an object follows the verb.

Examples: U dia díí kúaa. 'He ate yesterday.'  
he yest. ate things

U dia diè. 'He ate yesterday.'  
he yest. Ate

## 2.4 Serial Verbs

When verbs occur in series, all the polysyllabic verbs with exception of the last one in the series take perfective suffixes. If the series is in focus, only the first verb takes focus tone. If the series is out of focus, all the verbs take non-focus tone.

Examples: Two verbs in series:

Perf. focus:	ù jílá jùv ná.	He climbed, entered saw.
no focus:	ù jílà jùv ná.	He climbed, entered saw.
	dùv jùv ná né.	So that he is climbing in order to enter and see
no focus:	· àá jí <sup>·</sup> d'ú <sup>·</sup> jùv ná.	and is climbing in order to enter and see.
	jíl	'to climb' (high tone)
	jùv	'to enter' (low tone)

## 3. Adjuncts

Over extended adverbs: They are common.

Examples: hali<sup>iii</sup> 'for a long time'  
fui<sup>iii</sup> 'very quiet' (often nazalised)

Particles: Nearly all the particles can be lengthened if preceding a verb in imperfective aspect.

Example:

ba kala sìi àá ñàa kùdíilée né.  
they all got up and were making food.  
They all got up and were cooking.

## 4. Transformation

### 4.1 Question

#### 4.1.1 Question words

Any phrase in the clause can be replaced by a question word or phrase. If the question phrase or word replaces the subject, the focus form of the verb has to be used, otherwise the non-focus form is used.

Examples: Bɛɛ kuŋ nɛ dia télé?  
What thing focus yest. fell?  
What fell yesterday?  
tèl 'to fall'  
télé 'perfective focus'

Tu bɛɛ nɛ ŋmama dia jɪl?  
tree what emph. monkey yesterday climb?  
jíl 'to climb'  
jílà 'perf. focus'

If the locational phrase is replaced by a question phrase, the subject can be in focus in imperfective aspect, but not in perfective aspect. The verb always has non-focus tone.

Examples:	Nu ɛ ne ùú fil?	imperf. focus	Where is he flying?	two
	Nu ɛ ne ù fifil?	imperf. no focus	Where is he flying?	possibilities
	Nu ɛ ne ù fil?	perf. non focus	Where did he fly?	only this form is possible

4.1.2. A statement can be changed into a question by change of intonation only and lengthening of the last phoneme of the clause.

Examples:	U mu día né.	He went home.
	U mu día nee?	Did he go home?
	U mu día ne kóo?	Did he go home? or (Here the question word ‘or’ has been added).

Sometimes the emph. particle at the end falls away in question form, but the last consonant or vowel is lengthened.

Examples:	Mí hɔ́ŋ ɛ.	I am sitting down.
	Mí hɔ́ŋ?	Can I sit down?

4.2. Imperative

4.2.1. Direct command:

The negative particle ‘bɪ’ becomes ‘sí’. The low tone verb becomes high, the high tone verb high downstep. See morphology in 2.3.

If there is an object in the clause, the object is front shifted and precedes the verb.

Examples:	Sí lúorì yígù!	Don’t push the lorry!	low tone v. vIgi
	sí tènìŋ ɛmónsú!	Don’t write the letter!	low tone v.
	sí jíŋɛ́e kírí!sú!	Don’t call the chickens!	high tone v.

As mentioned in 2.3. the phoneme ‘i’ changes into ‘u’ in polysyllabic verbs.

4.2.2. Indirect command:

It is expressed by a high tone dí at the beginning of the clause.

Examples:

Mi bula pi haal-la díú k`ɔ.  
I told the woman the that she come.  
I told the woman to come.  
dí ú becomes dúb.

Mi bula pu dúb díi ktaa.  
I told him to eat (things).

4.3. Negative

4.3.1 No object in the clause:

Imperfective aspect: high tone bí

Perfective aspect: low tone bì

Examples: mì mú né I am going  
mì bí mú I am not going.  
mì múà (né) I went (ne not obligatory, but used often).  
mì bì òa múà I did not go. (emph. part falls away).

4.3.2. Object in the clause

The object precedes the verb instead of following it in the neg. form.  
Subj. neg. part. 'bi' –obj.- verb

Imperfective aspect: Either the object preceding the verb is lengthened or the object is followed by the particle 'ka'.

Perfective aspect: The verb has perfective suffix (it is clause final).

In both aspects the neg. particle 'bi' has got low tone, no emph, particle 'ne' clause final.

Examples:

imperf. aspect:	mì mú día né	I am going home
	mì bì òáa mú	I am not going home
or	mì bì día ká mú	I am not going home
perfective aspect:	mì mú día (né)	I went home
	mì bì día múà	I did not go home.

### 4.3.3. Object + locational particle

If a locational particle or another particle follows the object, this particle is also front shifted and precedes the verb.

Examples:	mɪ chʋa bʌgʌ lɛ nɛ	I stayed on the farm for the night.
	Mɪ bɪ bʌgʌ lɛ chʋa.	I did not stay on the farm for the night.
	mì pé ù lé né	I helped her.
	mì bì ù lé pɛɛ	I did not help her.
		pɛ lɛ ‘to help’

### 4.3.4. Serial verbs with objects

If two verbs precede an object in affirm. clause, the object is not front shifted.

Examples:	Mɪ venɛ mʋ dɪa nɛ.	I walked (went) home.
	Mɪ bɪ venɛ mʋ dɪa.	I did not walk home.

If two verbs precede an object and the first one is an aux. verb, the object is front shifted.

Examples:	Mɪ	joŋ	tenij	nɛ	bil.	I put the
	I	take	paper	emph.	put down	paper down.
	Mɪ	bɪ	tenij	joŋo	bil.	I did not
	I	not	paper	take	put down	put the paper