

# A Grammar of Eton

by

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## Acknowledgements / ɲǎɲ

*dǒ é'vwág dàá'té 'béd í'lé*

'One hand does not climb a tree.'

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## Abbreviations and conventions

This description uses the glossing conventions set forth in the Leipzig Glossing Rules (<http://www.eva.mpg.de/lingua/files/morpheme.html>), version of April 2003. Some abbreviations have been added or modified. For the sake of clarity, derivational morphemes are not separated from the stem and glossed separately, except in the morphological chapters. When dependent morphemes are introduced in these chapters, they are given in orthographic notation, augmented with the special symbols for morpheme boundaries and for morphophonemes and with the symbols V and C for vowels and consonants.

#	word boundary
‡	boundary between an expansion and the rest of the stem
=	clitic boundary
-	affix boundary
(sp.)	species
*	ungrammatical form
x	structural notation
~	unconditioned alternative
	<i>or:</i>
	boundary between two parts of a reduplicated stem
◆	discontinuity of speech / pause
C1	onset position of a prominent syllable
/x/	phonological notation
/ˈá/	downstepped high tone
< x >	orthographical notation (in the phonology chapter)
	<i>or:</i>
	infix boundary (elsewhere)
[x]	phonetic notation
ᵃ	nasalised vowel
<u>cvc</u>	prominent syllable (underlined)
x	orthographical notation (except in the phonology chapter)
I	agreement prefix of agreement pattern one
1	nominal prefix of gender one
1PL	first person plural
1SG	first person singular
AG	agentive noun derivational suffix
ANA	anaphoric modifier
AND	andative (quasi-auxiliary)

asa	as soon as
AU	augment
AUG	augmentative
CH	close to hearer
<i>chez</i>	at (somebody's place)
CMP	complementiser
CON	connective morpheme
CONC	concessive
COP	copula
CR	contrastive resultative
CPR	contrastive pronominal
CS	consecutive
DEM	demonstrative
DIM	diminutive
DP	discourse particle
F	focus reduplicant
FOC	focus particle
FPPR	final form of the personal pronominal
G	suffix or infix that occurs in several TAM-forms (see VII:2.2)
HAB	habitual (quasi-auxiliary)
HD	high distance
ID	intermediate distance
IDE	ideophone
IF	indefinite future
IMP	imperative
IMPF	imperfective
INC	inceptive
INF	infinitive
INT	interjection
INTS	intensifier
IPS	impositive suffix
LC	locative connective
LOC	locative
NEC	necessity (quasi-auxiliary)
NEG	negative
NF	suffix of the non-final form of the Hesternal and Hodiernal past perfective
NPOS	impossibility (quasi-auxiliary)
NPPR	non-final form of the personal pronominal
ONO	onomatopoeia
PAS	passive
PCOP	past form of the copula (hodiernal and remote)

PER	persistive (quasi-auxiliary)
PF	priority (quasi-auxiliary)
PL	plural
PN	pronominaliser
PNL	positional suffix
POL	politeness, deference (adverb)
POS	possibility (quasi-auxiliary)
PPR	personal pronominal
PR	present
PRO	prospective (quasi-auxiliary)
PRP	perfect of recent past (quasi-auxiliary)
PST	past tense
Q	interrogative particle
QP	quotative pronominal
RCOP	relative form of the copula
REL	relative verb form
REP	repetitive (quasi-auxiliary)
RL	relativiser
RP	remote past
RPOS	relative form of the quasi-auxiliary that expresses possibility
RS	resultative
SB	subjunctive
SCOP	persistive ('still') copula
SF	derivational suffix
SG	singular
SP	"southern" present
SPS	"southern" past
TIMPF	hodiernal past form of the imperfective auxiliary
TMN	terminative (quasi-auxiliary)
V	agreement prefix of agreement pattern five
VEN	venitive (quasi-auxiliary)
VIS	valency increasing suffix
VOL	volition (quasi-auxiliary)
VP	subject prefix
VRS	valency reducing suffix
Y	hesternal past form of the verb 'be' (same form as YCOP)
YCOP	hesternal past form of the copula
YIMPF	hesternal past form of the imperfective auxiliary

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# User manual

The text contains many references to other sections. References within the chapter consist of arabic numbers only (e.g. *see 1.1.1*). A reference to a section in another chapter begins with the number of the chapter in roman numbers (e.g. *see II:1.1.1*).

Table 1 provides an overview of gender markers and gender agreement markers. The following abbreviations are used: VP for the prefixes marking subject agreement on the verb, PPR for personal pronominals, DEM for adnominal demonstratives, ANA for the adnominal anaphoric marker and CON for the connective (“genitive”) proclitic.

Table 1. Nominal gender markers and forms agreeing in gender

gender	noun prefix	agreement pattern	VP	PPR	DEM	ANA	CON
1	ñ-	I	à-	ɲé	ɲó	ítê	à =
2	bè-	II	bé-	bó	bá	bétê	bé = /H =
3	ñ-/à-/ù-	III	ú-	wó	ɲú/ví	útê	H =
4	mì-	IV	mí-	mjó	mí	mítê	mí = /H =
5	è-/d-	V	é-/d-	dó	dí	étê	é = /H =
6	mè-	VI	mé-	mó	má	métê	mé = /H =
7	ì-	VII	í-	yó	yí	ítê	í = /H =
8	bì-	VIII	bí-	bjó	bí	bítê	bí = /H =
9		IX	ì-	jò	ɲí	ítê	ì =
10		X	í-	jó	ɲí	ítê	í = /H =

Since the verbal morphology of Eton is not entirely compositional (i.e. several morphemes occur in different, functionally unrelated (or hardly related) verb forms), the following list of TAM-forms may be handy. The glosses of the different verb forms are given in alphabetical order (ignoring ‘stem’). Note that glossed examples will have one of the following options instead of VP: 1SG, 2SG, 1PL, 2PL, or a roman number from I to X.

‘stem’-IMP	Imperative singular (monosyllabic stems)
‘stem’<IMP>	Imperative singular (other stem types)
SB-VP-‘stem’-SB	Subjunctive (monosyllabic stems)
SB-VP-SB‘stem’<SB>	Subjunctive (other stem types)
VP-CR-‘stem’-RS	Contrastive resultative
VP-‘stem’-CS	Consecutive
VP-‘stem’-G	Relative imperfective

VP-FUT INF-‘stem’	Future
VP-IF-‘stem’-IF	Indefinite future
VP-INC INF-‘stem’	Inceptive
VP-PR INF-‘stem’	Present
VP-PST-‘stem’	Hodiernal past perfective (in clause-final position)
VP-PST-‘stem’-G	Hesternal past perfective (in clause-final position) or Past imperfective (in all positions)
VP-PST-‘stem’-G-NF	Hesternal past perfective (in non-final position)
VP-PST-‘stem’-NF	Hodiernal past perfective (in non-final position)
VP-RP-‘stem’	Remote past perfective
VP-RP-IMPF INF-‘stem’-G	Remote past imperfective
VP-‘stem’-RS	Resultative
VP-SP-‘stem’	Southern present
VP-SP-PST-‘stem’	Southern past
VP-TIMPF INF-‘stem’-G	Hodiernal past imperfective
VP-YIMPF INF-‘stem’-G	Hesternal past imperfective

A note on the reliability of the glossing of verb forms: Very often the formal differences between different verb forms are neutralised, depending on the tonality of the verb stem and the subject prefix, the syllable structure of the verb stem and the right context of the verb form. In example IX(128), for instance, (reproduced below), the verb form *ùkwáb* is analysed and glossed as a Consecutive (ù-kób-H), but formally it could equally well have been a Hodiernal past perfective (|ù-H-kób|). In such cases the correct analysis has always been established by substituting parts of the verb form with a consultant. In this case, substituting *kwáb* ‘find’ by *kùz* ‘buy’ gave the form *ù’kùz*, clearly a Consecutive.

[Somebody would like to eat some meat, but sees that the pot is empty. His mother says:]

bén nâ ùsó ‘tédé bínùtèn bítán, ηgé ú’kwáb tíd

|bén nâ ù-H-só tédé bì-nútén bí-tán ηgé ù-kób-H tíd

if.CF CMP 2SG-PST-come simply 8-minute VIII-five then 2SG-find-CS [9]meat

‘If you had come five minutes earlier, you would have found meat.’

Finally, I wish to invite all users of this grammar who did not find the information they were looking for in this book to contact me with their questions and to check my website (currently at <http://webh01.ua.ac.be/markvandelde>), which contains among others a French-Eton dictionary.

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### 1. The Eton language

#### 1.1. Situation

Eton (*ìtón*) is spoken in the Lékié department of the Centre province of Cameroon, a densely populated area just north of the capital Yaoundé. The Lékié department is bordered in the north by a curve in the Sanaga river.

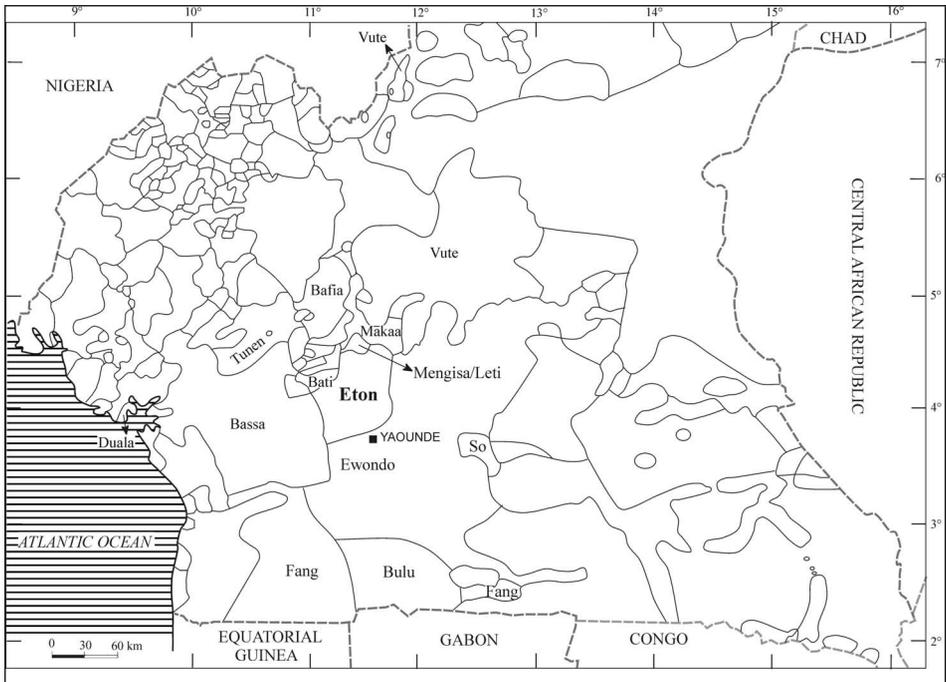


Figure 1. Eton and some neighbouring languages<sup>1</sup>

1. I wish to thank Jacqueline Renard of the RMCA in Tervuren who drew this map on the basis of a map from the Atlas linguistique de l'Afrique centrale.

## 2 Introduction

The number of Eton speakers is unknown. The Cameroonian government does not include ethnic/linguistic data in its censuses. Ethnologue (Gordon, Raymond 2005) cites 52.000 speakers (based on a 1982 count/estimate by SIL). This is certainly a very important underestimation. The number cited by Bernard Delpech (1985:261), viz. 250.000 inhabitants of the Eton area in 1985, seems to be much closer to reality, although it is not entirely clear on which data these figures are based.<sup>2</sup> In rural areas people still raise their children in Eton, but in Yaoundé the youngest generation of Eton people often speaks only French.

Eton is a Bantu language, numbered A71 in Guthrie's classification. Together with Mengisa, Eton forms the northernmost tip of the Beti-Bulu-Fang language cluster, which reaches south into Gabon. With some effort on the part of their speakers, the languages of this cluster are mutually intelligible. However, the borders between them are clear. The mutual intelligibility with Ewondo seems to be the principal reason why Eton has never been studied before. On the one hand, Ewondo sufficed as a language of Christianisation. On the other hand, the study of smaller, more endangered languages from lesser-known subfamilies in Cameroon has often been given priority.

Little can be said about the dialectal variation within Eton as long as no dialectological study is available. Nevertheless, Ethnologue cites four dialects: Essele, Mvog-Namve, Mvo-Nangkok and Beyidzolo. However, these are the (Ewondo!) names of some lineages, which have little to do with dialect subgroupings. Eton speakers themselves generally distinguish two dialects: a northern dialect *itón ñ'ké* and a southern dialect, which is closer to Ewondo, named *itón é'kwé*. Although the dialect situation is definitely more complex than this, I find the distinction useful and I will call these (super)dialects Northern Eton and Southern Eton respectively. The main differences between the subgroupings are phonological. Where Northern Eton has /ɕ/, Southern Eton often has /j/, as in /ɕèm/ versus /jèm/ 'know'. Some vocalic differences that seem spectacular at first sight are the result of different applications of the rule of glide formation as a strategy of vowel hiatus resolution. Thus, |mbóé| 'friend' is represented as /mbwé/ in Northern Eton and as /mbój/ in the Southern dialects (see Section II:6.3.2). In the Northern dialects, a non-initial |l| is often lenited to an /i/, which in turn causes raising and lengthening of the preceding vowel, giving rise to the opposition [swè:<sup>l</sup>] (Northern) ~ [swàli] (Southern) 'hide'. There are also some lexical differences and there is some dialectally

---

2. This is perhaps an extrapolation of the average of 80 inhabitants per square kilometre, which Delpech cites in the same article, probably excluding the important Eton community in Yaoundé (12% of the inhabitants in 1985). Given a rate of 2,5% of annual population growth in Cameroon, the number of Etons might have reached about 400.000 today.

conditioned allomorphy. The noun prefix of gender 5, for instance, is *è-* in Northern Eton and *l̥-* in Southern Eton. See Section VII:2.5 for a difference in tense-aspect morphology.

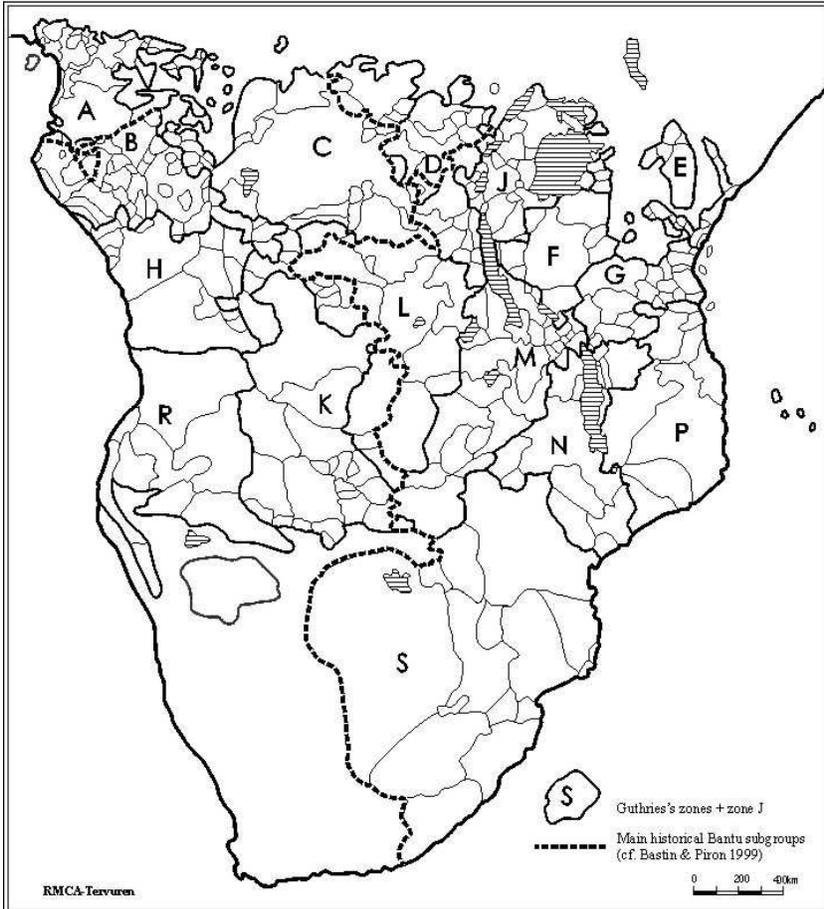


Figure 2. The Bantu languages. Eton is situated in the northern part of zone A

### 1.2. Brief typological sketch

Eton has in common with other North-Western Bantu languages that there are maximality constraints on stems, viz. three syllables in the case of Eton. This gave rise historically to a great number of closed syllables, which is untypical for Bantu languages. Moreover, it led to the merger of verbal derivational suffixes, which highly complicates the analysis of the verbal morphology. Erosion of segments in word-final position goes on today, giving rise to rules of word-final elision and lenition.

Eton has both tone and syllabic prominence. Every first syllable of the prosodic stem is prominent.<sup>3</sup> The phonetic correlate of prominence is consonant length. Onset consonants of prominent syllables are longer than other consonants, all other things being equal. The recognition of prominence is crucial for a successful description of the tone system of Eton. Prominent syllables can carry two structural tones, non-prominent syllables only one. There are two tone levels in Eton, low and high. These tones can combine in a falling pattern, a rising pattern and a downstepped high pattern. Structurally, three tones must be distinguished: low, high and dissimilating high. The opposition between structural low and high tones is equipollent. That is, a low tone cannot be analysed in terms of the absence of a high tone. Tone is the most robust part of the speech signal. When segmental material is deleted (either diachronically or synchronically) the tones that were initially linked to that material survive, giving rise to a very high number of floating tones. Nevertheless, the behaviour of tones often varies on the surface level between dialects, between idiolects but also within a single idiolect. The contrast between structural robustness and surface variability can be illustrated by means of the schematic example in (1), in which the following abbreviations are used: *v* vowel, *c* consonant, # word boundary, *c̣v* prominent syllable, *c̣v* non-prominent syllable, - affix boundary, *H* floating high tone. When the non-prominent stem vowel in (1a) is deleted, its high tone obligatorily survives. The surface realisation of the resulting underlying pattern can take at least four different forms. In all cases, the high tone that became floating attaches to the left and then copies to the right. This is directly reflected in the first surface pattern in (1b). The rising high melody can be simplified to low high, as in the second surface pattern in (1b). The first two surface patterns obey the rule that exists in some idiolects that tone copy across a word boundary does not feed into tone spread. The latter two surface patterns do not conform to this rule, giving rise to high tone plateauing on the prominent syllable of the second word (with or without simplification of the rising-high melody).

- (1) a. |c̣ṿ-c̣ṿc̣ṿ # c̣ṿ-c̣ṿ| → /c̣ṿ-c̣ṿc̣H # c̣ṿ-c̣ṿ/  
 b. [c̣ṿc̣ṿc̣ c̣ṿc̣ṿ] ~ [c̣ṿc̣ṿc̣ c̣ṿc̣ṿ] ~ [c̣ṿc̣ṿc̣ c̣ṿ<sup>+</sup>c̣ṿ] ~  
 [c̣ṿc̣ṿc̣ c̣ṿ<sup>+</sup>c̣ṿ]

Some of these alternatives are not described in the phonological chapter, because they were not found in the idiolects on which this description is mainly based. For instance, the tendency that a high tone does not spread if it is the result of floating high tone attachment across a word boundary (as in the first two patterns of (1b)) is stated as a rule in Chapter 2.

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3. The prosodic stem coincides with the morphological stem, unless the latter begins in a vowel. In that case, any prefix is incorporated in the prosodic stem.

As is typical for a Bantu language, Eton is a gender language. There are ten genders, of which eight are overtly marked. Eton does not have locative genders. Reduplication plays an important role in nominal derivation. There are no adjectives in Eton. Verbal derivation is rather complex and very few productive rules can be established. Moreover, it is not always clear where morphological boundaries have to be drawn. Verbal inflection is relatively restricted, certainly as compared to the agglutinative systems of most Eastern Bantu languages. The complex tense-aspect distinctions are expressed by combinations of auxiliaries and affixes. The form of inflectional suffixes depends on the syllable structure of the stem to which they are attached. Due to the large number of tense-aspect categories and the scarcity of transcribed texts, it is impossible to arrive at a reliable description of the tense-aspect system. Some features of the system are clear, however, such as the three-way division of past time reference and the opposition between perfective and imperfective forms in the past. However complex the system may be, it has in common with most other grammars of Niger-Congo languages that it is regular. Eton has very few words dedicated to the propositional act of modification, i.e. no adjectives and almost no manner, time or place adverbs.

As for word order, Eton is a very consistent head-before-dependent language, except that the subject precedes the verb. One type of connective construction (a construction that connects two nominals to each other) is a bit of a challenge to this generalisation, since the second nominal is the head of the construction from a semantic point of view (2).

- (2) ìsé'sáŋ í pùpó  
 |ì-sósáŋ í = pùpó|  
 7-unripe VII.CON=papaya  
 'an unripe papaya'

Regarding grammatical relations there are few or no clear syntactic criteria to distinguish between the different non-subject nominals in the clause, e.g. to distinguish between direct, indirect and oblique objects. Finally, a noteworthy characteristic of Eton syntax is the existence of numerous quasi-auxiliaries. These generally express aspect, manner or modality and are followed by the infinitive of the lexical verb. Quasi-auxiliaries are conjugated as other main verbs. They can occur in series. In that case, only the first is finite, the others being infinitival.

## 2. History, goals and methods

My descriptive work on Eton began when I was a student at the Université Libre de Bruxelles. When I made clear my intentions to make a language descrip-

tion, my teachers from the RMCA proposed Eton for two reasons. First, it was an undescribed language from a very interesting subgroup of the Bantu family. Second, there was a native speaker of Eton, Désiré Essono, who was then also a student at ULB and who was willing to invest time and effort in the description of his mother tongue as a language consultant. For my PhD research, I looked for a subject in the domain of word order typology. Still interested in Eton, I decided to make a study of word order (change) in the North-Western Bantu and Grassfields languages. Word order in these languages is interesting for several reasons. On clause level, the Cameroonian language Tunen is the only (described) Bantu language that has basic OV-order (see e.g. Mous 2003). On the level of the noun phrase, Grassfields languages present orders that are found nowhere else in the world (Rijkhoff 1990). However, it soon became clear that the languages of the region were not described well enough to allow for a thorough comparative study of their syntactic structures. Therefore, I decided that a continuation of my descriptive work on Eton was more relevant at this point.

To my knowledge, the only publication that contains data on the Eton language before my work is Klaus Piper's (1989) comparative study on the verbal morphology of the Beti-Bulu-Fang languages. This study is based on Piper's previous work on Bulu and on a fieldwork period of three months for data on the eleven other languages/dialects, including Eton. However, there are several descriptions of other Beti languages. For Mengisa (or *Njɔwi*), the closest relative of Eton, there is a doctoral dissertation by Geslin-Houdet (1984). There are also some published descriptions of Ewondo. I consulted Redden (1979) and Essono (2000).

The goal of this study is to provide a basically theory-neutral synchronic description of Eton that is useful for typologists and comparativists and that (hopefully) provides a solid base for any future research on the language. The term *theory-neutral* by no means implies that the work was carried out in ignorance of theoretical achievements in linguistics, or that its results lack theoretical relevance. Rather, it refers to the fact that this description is not meant to prove or to test the totality of claims made by a given framework. Moreover, the results are presented in a way that should remain easily interpretable long after the current theories have evolved or disappeared together with their formalisms and specific terminologies. Relatively little time was spent on finding the best term for grammatical phenomena (although I hope to have avoided using terms wrongly!), directing all the attention to the description of their function and use and to their illustration by means of contextualised examples.

The description of a language is hardly a goal in itself. As expected, the grammar of Eton contains elements that contribute to our understanding of human language and to our knowledge of the crosslinguistic variation in grammatical structures. The description of the gender system and of the grammatical behaviour of proper names, for instance, inspired a new analysis of gender in

Bantu that challenges the traditional approach to gender in both linguistic typology and comparative Bantu studies (Van de Velde 2006). However, in the current text these phenomena are discussed only to the extent that they are relevant for the synchronic description of Eton. A more elaborate discussion is or will be given in separate publications.

The position I held while working at this description required that I stay in Belgium most of the year. During two short field trips (each about seven weeks) I recorded texts, which I transcribed and analysed at home. Fortunately, there is a rather large community of Eton native speakers in Belgium, so that I could consult native speakers at all times. Most recordings were transcribed with the help of Pie-Claude Ondobo, who learned to use the spelling. Usually, Pie-Claude first made a provisional transcription with a free translation and then we listened to the recording together. I compared Pie-Claude's transcription with what I heard and we made corrections where necessary. This method allowed me to immediately elicit systematic data on new or problematic constructions encountered in the text.

Elicitation, observation and description can only be successful if they are steered by clear hypotheses. My pattern of expectations derives from a multitude of sources that often remain unacknowledged in the text. As a student at ULB, I was introduced to the structure of the Bantu languages by Yvonne Bastin and Baudouin Janssens and to the description of languages without a written tradition by Claire Grégoire. The most difficult and time-consuming part of this description was the (morpho-)phonology. Interest in the sound structure of languages is definitely an acquired taste. I acquired that taste in the courses of Didier Demolin. My description of Eton (morpho-)phonology is inspired by Meeussen (1954), Hyman (1985), Creissels (1994) and by discussions with Karel Van den Eynde and Piet Mertens. The morphological description, and especially the description of tense-aspect-modality, is shaped to a high extent by lengthy discussions with Dmitry Idiatov and thus indirectly by the Russian linguistic tradition in which he was educated. I also profited from the many discussions with my supervisors Willy Van Langendonck and Pierre Swiggers in the framework of our research project on word order typology. The general organisation of the grammar is inspired by Carlson's (1994) description of Supyire. Getting the mass of data organised was a major challenge in which the lexical database Shoebox proved to be of great help.

# Chapter 2

## Phonology

### 1. Introduction

The model used in this phonological description consists of three levels of analysis: a structural or morphophonological level (noted between vertical bars |a|), a phonological level (noted between slashes /a/) and a surface level (noted between square brackets [a]). Between the structural level and the phonological level there is a relation of representation: a structural form is represented by a phoneme, depending on its structural context. Between the phonological and the phonetic or surface level there is a relation of realisation: phonemes are realised by sounds, depending on the phonological context. This can be illustrated by means of the words *àbwĩ* ‘a lot’ and *m̀vwǎd* ‘body hair’.

à-bùí	Ñ-vǒd	STRUCTURAL LEVEL
	representation	
/àbwĩ/	/m̀vwǎd/	PHONOLOGICAL LEVEL
	realisation	
[àbũí]	[m̀vwǎd̥]	PHONETIC LEVEL

This model was chosen in order to keep the distance between structural forms and surface realisations as small as possible, with a minimal number of rules. This should allow the reader to check the consistency of the morphological analysis throughout the description and to be able to construct well-formed phrases on the basis of the available structural forms. In the case of alternative analyses, the simpler one was consistently chosen, sometimes to the detriment of higher generalisations. For example, the description makes use of a dissimilating high morphotoneme. This is a morphotoneme that is represented by a low toneme if preceded by a high morphotoneme and by a high toneme elsewhere. A less *ad hoc* solution would have involved a structural succession of a high and a low morphotoneme and a series of rules that apply only in the constructions now described with a dissimilating high morphotoneme. This alternative comes at the cost of complex rule orderings, which complicate the relation between structural forms and surface realisations, at the expense of expository clarity in the chapters on morpho-syntax, whereas nothing is gained in descriptive accuracy (see Section 7.2.6 for the dissimilating high morphotoneme).

The reader should keep in mind that there is a discrepancy between the IPA notation used in the phonology chapter and the practical orthography used elsewhere. The practical orthography conforms to the general guidelines set forth for the spelling of the languages of Cameroon (Hartell 1993). In cases where confusion is possible, angle brackets will mark the practical orthography <a>. The most cumbersome differences are those where the same symbol is used for different segments in the two notations:

IPA		Eton orthography
j  /j/ [j]	→	<y>
ɕ  /ɕ/ [ɕ]	→	<j>

Hence, /j/ alveolar approximant ≠ <j> voiced alveolar affricate. The practical orthography is presented in Section 8.

Words are separated by a space in this chapter, as everywhere in this description. This space does not have any phonological relevance. It is only meant to provide the reader with a first acquaintance with the morpho-syntactic structure of the language. Whenever a word boundary is morphophonologically relevant, it will be made explicit by the symbol #. Finally, it must be pointed out that tone marking is (evidently) phonological where square brackets point to a phonetic notation of segments. Sections 6 and 7 give an explicit account of the structural representation of tones. Section 7 also contains phonetic information on tone.

## 2. Phoneme inventory

### 2.1. Consonants

Consonants differ from vowels in that they need not be syllabic; i.e. they do not have to form the nucleus of a syllable. They are best divided into obstruents and sonorants. The former contain plosives and fricatives and can never be syllabic, the latter are nasals and approximants and can be syllabic either structurally (only nasals) or as the result of syllabification rules (see the discussion of examples (59-60)). Table 1 lists all consonant phonemes.

Table 1. Consonant phonemes

			labial	alveolar	palatal	velar	lab-velar
obstruent	stop	-voice	p	t	tʃ	k	k̠p̠
		+voice	b	d	ɟ	g	g̠b̠
	fricative	-voice		s			
		+voice	v	z			
son.	nasal		m	n	ɲ	ŋ	ŋm̠
	appr.			l	j		w

### 2.1.1. Discussion of some phonemes and oppositions

#### /tʃ/ & /ɟ/

Phonetically /tʃ/ and /ɟ/ are affricates. They contain a stop part and a fricative part. Phonologically, positing a separate class of affricates will lead to a proliferation of feature distinctions, so it is better to classify them as either fricatives or stops. The morphophoneme |S| is represented by /tʃ/ after |N| and by /s/ elsewhere. This alternation suggests that phonetic affricates are best categorised as fricatives phonologically (see Section 5.1.2.5).

- (1) a. |Ñ-Sílá| → /ɲtʃílá/ ‘question’  
 b. |mì-Sílá| → /mìsílá/ ‘questions’

However, since the number of fricatives is small in Eton, I chose to range the affricates with the stops. As for place of articulation, /tʃ/ and /ɟ/ belong phonetically to a class of their own as well. They are post-alveolar. For morphological reasons it is best to treat them as palatal consonants (see 5.1.1 & 5.1.2.3).

#### /k/ & /g/

The opposition between /k/ and /g/ carries a very low functional load. The distribution of /k/ is restricted to the onset of the initial syllable of prosodic stems (see Section 3.2.1). In this position, /g/ is always preceded by a non-syllabic velar nasal /ŋ/. If /k/ is preceded by a nasal, the latter is *structurally* always syllabic, but in one context this |Ñ-| is desyllabified on the phonological level.<sup>1</sup>

1. Namely where the gender 3 prefix Ñ- is retained after the gender 4 prefix mì-.

This gives rise, in theory, to minimal pairs. I found the following near-minimal opposition:

- (2) a. |m̀ə-ŋgól| → /m̀əŋgwál/ ‘pity (pl.)’  
 b. |m̀ìN-kól| → /m̀ìŋkwál/ ‘ropes’

It is possible to describe these facts in terms of a phonological opposition between /k/ and a prenasalised stop /ŋg/. There definitely is a strong phonological integration between a voiced stop and a preceding homorganic nasal, as illustrated by the rule of homorganic nasal branching onset formation and the resulting (phonetic) compensatory lengthening of any preceding prominent vowel (see 6.2) and by the retention of the segmental form of a gender 3 noun prefix after the prefix of gender 4 (see III:3.3.4).

/ɲ/ & /ŋ/

The phonotactic distribution of /ŋ/ and /ɲ/ is such that both phonemes are almost in complementary distribution. The palatal nasal can only be the onset of a stem-initial syllable (where it is never followed by a stop) or the phonological representation of a homorganic nasal morphophoneme. The velar nasal, on the other hand, occurs in all positions, but at the onset of prominent syllables it is always followed by the voiced velar stop /g/, except in the word *ŋŋál* ‘wife’, which is presented as an exception in 5.1.5.

### 2.1.2. Functional oppositions

The following list of forms illustrates that the occurrence of the consonant phonemes is not predictable from their context (v stands for *verb stem*):

/p/ vs. /t/

/pám/ ‘go out’ (v)

/tám/ ‘feather’

/p/ vs. /tʃ/

/pám/ ‘go out’ (v)

/tʃám/ ‘chase away’ (v)

/p/ vs. /k̄p/

/pám/ ‘go out’ (v)

/k̄pám/ ‘jump over’ (v)

/p/ vs. /k/

/pà/ ‘shine’ (v)

/kà/ ‘help’ (v)

**/p/ vs. /b/**

/pád/ ‘pick’ (v)

/bád/ ‘simulate’ (v)

**/t/ vs. /tʃ/**

/twàg/ ‘boil’ (v)

/tʃwág/ ‘misfire’ (v)

**/t/ vs. /kʰp/**

/tám/ ‘feather’

/kʰpám/ ‘cross’ (v)

**/t/ vs. /k/**

/tèg/ ‘weaken’ (v)

/kég/ ‘break’ (v)

**/t/ vs. /d/**

/dìŋ/ ‘love’ (v)

/tìŋ/ ‘weave’ (v)

**/t/ vs. /s/**

/tám/ ‘feather’

/sǎm/ ‘flower bud’

**/tʃ/ vs. /kʰp/**

/tʃám/ ‘chase away’ (v)

/kʰpám/ ‘jump over’ (v)

**/tʃ/ vs. /k/**

/tʃàmni/ ‘spread out’ (v)

/kàmni/ ‘prohibit’ (v)

**/tʃ/ vs. /tʃʒ/**

/tʃwág/ ‘misfire’ (v)

/tʃʒwág/ ‘construct’ (v)

**/kʰp/ vs. /k/**

/ùkʰpèŋ/ ‘hare’

/ùkèŋ/ ‘knife’

**/kʰp/ vs. /gʰb/**

/gʰbà/ ‘throw’ (v)

/kʰpāl/ ‘be talkative’ (v)

**/k/ vs. /g/**

/mìŋkwāl/ ‘ropes’

/mèŋgwāl/ ‘pity (pl.)’

**/b/ vs. /d/**

/bá/ ‘marry’ (v)

/dá/ ‘lose’ (v)

**/b/ vs. /tʃʒ/**

/báb/ ‘warm up’ (v)

/tʃʒàb/ ‘be long’ (v)

**/b/ vs. /gʰb/**

/bá/ ‘marry’ (v)

/gʰbà/ ‘throw’ (v)

**/b/ vs. /g/**

/díbân/ ‘be edible’ (v)

/dígá/ ‘sting’ (v)

**/b/ vs. /v/**

/bòm/ ‘hit’ (v)

/vòm/ ‘lose oneself’ (v)

**/b/ vs. /m/**

/lób/ ‘bite’ (v)

/lóm/ ‘send’ (v)

**/d/ vs. /ɖ/**

/dá/ ‘lose’ (v)

/ɖjá/ ‘be full’ (v)

**/d/ vs. /gb̩/**

/dá/ ‘to lose’ (v)

/gb̩à/ ‘to throw’ (v)

**/d/ vs. /g/**

/á bí<sup>4</sup>dí/ ‘in the food’

/á ‘lígí/ ‘to stay’

**/d/ vs. /z/**

/dĩŋ/ ‘love’ (v)

/zĩŋbá/ ‘hate’ (v)

**/d/ vs. /n/**

/dàn/ ‘cross’ (v)

/nán/ ‘grow’ (v)

**/d/ vs. /l/**

/dàn/ ‘cross’ (v)

/lán/ ‘read’ (v)

**/ɖ/ vs. /gb̩/**

/ɖjà/ ‘sing’ (v)

/gb̩à/ ‘lance’ (v)

**/ɖ/ vs. /g/**

impossible

**/ɖ/ vs. /ɲ/**

/ɖjàb/ ‘be long’ (v)

/ɲàb/ ‘tear apart’ (v)

**/ɖ/ vs. /j/**

/ɖjà/ ‘sing’ (v)

/àjá/ ‘pain’

**/gb̩/ vs. /g<sup>2</sup>/**

/ŋm̩gb̩él/ ‘witchcraft’

/ŋgéd/ ‘cruelty’

**/gb̩/ vs. /ŋm̩/**

/gb̩à/ ‘lance’ (v)

/ŋm̩ám/ ‘be acid’ (v)

**/gb̩/ vs. /w/**

/gb̩à/ ‘lance’ (v)

/wàz/ ‘comb’ (v)

**/g/ vs. /ŋ/**

/dígá/ ‘prick’ (v)

/mìmpĩjá/ ‘cover’

**/s/ vs. /z/**

/sám/ ‘flower bud’

/zám/ ‘pleasure’

**/v/ vs. /z/**

/vá/ ‘here’

/zá/ ‘who’

- 
2. A minimal pair is impossible, since /gb̩/ occurs only in the onset of prominent syllables and in that position both phonemes are always preceded by a homorganic nasal.

**/z/ vs. /n/**

/zà/ ‘hunger, famine’

/nâ/ ‘that’ (complementizer)

**/m/ vs. /n/**

/múŋ/ ‘smile’ (v)

/nùm/ ‘stink’ (v)

**/m/ vs. /ɲ/**

/múŋ/ ‘smile’ (v)

/ɲúŋ/ ‘drink’ (v)

**/m/ vs. /ŋm̄/**

/màn/ ‘finish’ (v)

/ŋmám/ ‘be acid’ (v)

**/m/ vs. /ŋ/**

/sùm/ ‘labour’ (v)

/sùŋ/ ‘discuss st’ (v)

**/n/ vs. /ɲ/**

/náj/ ‘grow’ (v)

/ɲáj/ ‘suckle (intr.)’ (v)

**/n/ vs. /ŋm̄/**

/ŋnàm/ ‘arm’

/ŋmám/ ‘eight’

**/n/ vs. /ŋ/**

/sùn/ ‘deteriorate’ (v)

/sùŋ/ ‘discuss’ (v)

**/n/ vs. /l/**

/náj/ ‘to grow’ (v)

/láj/ ‘to read’ (v)

**/ɲ/ vs. /ŋm̄/**

/ɲámá/ ‘melt (tr.)’ (v)

/ŋmám/ ‘be acid’ (v)

**/ɲ/ vs. /ŋ/**

/ŋɲám/ ‘preparation’

/ŋŋám/ ‘residue’

**/ɲ/ vs. /j/**

/ɲáj/ ‘suckle (tr.)’ (v)

/jàŋà/ ‘wait’ (v)

**/ŋm̄/ vs. /ŋ/**

/zàŋmám/ ‘seven’

/nɕjàŋá/ ‘tontine’

**/ŋm̄/ vs. /w/**

/ŋmám/ ‘be acid’ (v)

/wág/ ‘swim’ (v)

**/l/ vs. /j/**

/láj/ ‘read’ (v)

/jáj/ ‘grill’ (v)

**/l/ vs. /w/**

/àlóg/ ‘fishing technique’

/á ‘wóg/ ‘to hear’

**/j/ vs. /w/**

/jáj/ ‘grill’ (v)

/wáj/ ‘crawl’ (v)

## 2.2. Vowels

The vowel phonemes of Eton are summarised in table 2.

Table 2. Vowel phonemes

	front	mid	back
1	i i:		u u:
2	e e:		o o:
3	ɛ ɛ:	ə	ɔ ɔ:
4	a a:		

The opposition between the vowels of the second and the third degree carries a low functional load. In prefixes, /ɔ/ and /o/ do not occur. Elsewhere, their phonological status is lexically determined. There exist minimal pairs, but there are many other stems in which /ɔ/ and /o/ alternate freely, sometimes depending on the idiolect.<sup>3</sup>

(3) /tóg/ ~ /tóg/ ‘spoon’

The front vowels /e/ and /ɛ/ alternate freely in prefixes. Elsewhere, the relation between /e/, /ɛ/ and /ə/ is intricate (see Section 5.2.2). Treating them as three different phonemes is the simplest of a number of alternative analyses, even though the phonological status of schwa cannot be proved by means of minimal pairs. The front vowel of the second degree /e/ is rare. It was found only in monosyllabic stems, usually in closed word classes. There is a phonological opposition between long and short vowels. Long vowels are relatively rare. This section is concluded with a list of minimal pairs.

**/i/ vs. /e/**

/élén dî/ ‘this palm tree’

/ɛlén ‘dɛ/ ‘his palm tree’

**/i/ vs. /ɛ/**

/mbìd/ ‘filth’

/mbéd/ ‘traditional guitar’

**/i/ vs. /a/**

/zín/ ‘hatred’

/záŋ/ ‘dispute’

**/i/ vs. /ə/**

/dí/ ‘eat’ (v)

/dó/ ‘bury’ (v)

3. Therefore, there will be “inconsistencies” throughout the grammar in the notation of words with a back vowel of the second or third degree.

**/i/ vs. /u/**

/m̀pím/ ‘wall’

/m̀púm/ ‘blond’

**/i/ vs. /o/**

/ndím/ ‘blindness’

/ndóm/ ‘brother’

**/i/ vs. /ɔ/**

/mbí/ ‘palm nut’

/mbó/ ‘grain’

**/e/ vs. /ɛ/**

/wé/ ‘kill’ (v)

/wè/ ‘laugh’ (v)

**/e/ vs. /u/**

/wé/ ‘kill’

/wú/ ‘die’

**/e/ vs. /o/**

/í ˈdé/ ‘his one’

/îdò/ ‘member’

**/e/ vs. /ɔ/**

/wé/ ‘kill’ (v)

/wó/ ‘give birth’ (v)

**/ɛ/ vs. /a/**

/lèd/ ‘be difficult’ (v)

/làd/ ‘sew’ (v)

**/ə/ vs. /u/**

/və́/ ‘to give’

/vú/ ‘to resemble’

**/ə/ vs. /o/**

/və́/ ‘give’ (v)

/vó/ ‘declare’ (v)

**/ə/ vs. /ɔ/**

/m̀əpám/ ‘I left’

/m̀ə pám/ ‘boy’

**/u/ vs. /o/**

/vú/ ‘resemble’ (v)

/vó/ ‘declare’ (v)

**/u/ vs. /ɔ/**

/kú/ ‘chicken’

/kó/ ‘tuber’

**/o/ vs. /ɔ/**

/ŋkóŋ/ ‘rank’

/ŋkóŋ/ ‘pipe’

**/i/ vs. /i:/**

/tín/ ‘push’ (v)

/tì:nì/ ‘detach itself’ (v)

**/e/ vs. /e:/**

no minimal pair found

**/e/ vs. /ɛ:/**

/bèdí/ ‘put down!’

/bè:dí/ ‘bread’

**/a/ vs. /a:/**

/m̀ànà/ ‘finish (tr.)’ (v)

/m̀à:nà/ ‘swear’ (v)

**/u/ vs. /u:/**

/bùlà/ ‘accumulate’ (v)

/bù:là/ ‘stir vigorously’ (v)

**/o/ vs. /o:/**

/bónì/ ‘purge oneself’

/bònì/ ‘create’ (v)

### 3. The prosodic stem

#### 3.1. Introduction

The position of a syllable in the prosodic stem is the most important context specification in the (morpho-)phonology and tonology of Eton, in that the first syllable of the prosodic stem is prominent as compared to the others. The prosodic stem usually coincides with the morphological stem (4a).<sup>4</sup> When the morphological stem is vowel-initial, the first syllable of the prosodic stem has a prefixal onset (4b). Reduplicated stems contain two prosodic stems (4c). In this chapter, the first syllable of the prosodic stem is underlined in structural representation.

- (4) a. |m̀ə-kómgó| → /m̀ə̀kómgó/ ‘admiration’  
 b. |b-ìnngá| → /b̀ìnnǵá/ ‘women’  
 c. |ì-vú~vúmní| → /ìvúvúmní/ ‘family member’

This section will first discuss the phonotactic skewing linked to stem-initial prominence (3.2.) and then describe the major phonetic correlate of prominence, viz. length of the onset consonant (3.3.). The structural importance of initial prominence will be illustrated throughout the sections on realisation rules (4) and representation rules (5).

#### 3.2. Phonotactic generalisations

##### 3.2.1. Consonants

The most notable phonotactic generalisation is that almost half of the consonant phonemes are restricted to the onset of prominent syllables, either as the only segment or as part of a branching onset. These are /d͡ʒ/, /gb/, and /v/ and all voiceless consonants (/p, t, t͡ʃ, k̄p, k & s/). When /ɲ/ is not the onset of a prominent syllable, it is a syllabic homorganic nasal prefix immediately preceding it. The only exceptions to this generalisation are found in borrowings. In the following examples the segment that does not conform is bold.

- 
4. There are some cases of mismatch between the prosodic and the morphological structure of a word, especially in noun stems of which the first syllable formally resembles a gender prefix. Thus, the borrowing *m̀ə̀twá* ‘car’ is morphologically simple, but prosodically it contains a prefix and a stem. The first syllable contains a schwa in non word-final position and cannot carry more than one toneme, which are prosodic characteristics of prefixes. The second syllable begins in a consonant that normally occurs only in the onset of a prominent syllable.

- (5) a. /àlàpáɡá/ ‘rabbit’ < French *lapin*?  
 b. /î-nútêŋ/ ‘minute’ < German? *Minute*  
 c. /sítà/ ‘sister’ < English<sup>5</sup> *sister*  
 d. /pùlàsí/ ‘Frenchman’ < French? *français*  
 e. /zəkúlî/ ‘school’ < English? *school*  
 f. /dwáktêŋ/ ‘doctrine’ < French? *doctrine*  
 g. /lènkwód/ ‘raincoat’ < English *raincoat*

A survey in a sample of 1500 words did not show a clear preference for either voiced or unvoiced stops in the onset of prominent syllables (/p/ 31% versus /b/ 69%, but /t/ 61% versus /d/ 39%). The labiovelar consonants are relatively rare in the Eton lexicon. As has been said, the stops only occur in the onset of prominent syllables, the nasal also elsewhere in at least one word (*zàŋmál* ‘seven’). There are some more phonotactic restrictions concerning consonants: /d/ never shows up in suffixes and /z/ never in prefixes. The bilabial nasal /m/ is not often found at the onset of a prominent syllable, and when it is, this syllable tends to have a nasal coda.

### 3.2.2. *Vowels*

As in many Bantu languages Eton shows restrictions on the co-occurrence of vowels in a stem (i.e. a root plus any suffixes). Tables 3 and 4 show collocations of vowel phonemes<sup>6</sup> in bisyllabic stems, where the vowels are separated from each other by one and two consonants respectively. Since /e/ is restricted to monosyllabic stems, it is left out of the tables. Note that reduplications contain two prosodic stems. They are disregarded here. Sometimes a single exception on the restrictions was found, usually in borrowings. These are given below the tables.

- 
5. English borrowings most probably reached Eton via Pidgin English. For some borrowings, such as *zəkúlî*, it is not clear from which European language they come, the source language might be German as well.
6. In two cases the table rather represents vowel morphophonemes. First, the sequence /wa/ is often the representation of |ɔ| in a prominent syllable, and is treated as /ɔ/ in this table. An /ə/ that represents |ɛ| before a word boundary is treated as an /ɛ/ in this table. This has no consequences for the table, since the relevant representation rule is independent of the position of these vowels in the prosodic stem.

Table 3. Vowel collocations in bisyllabic stems (V<sub>1</sub>CV<sub>2</sub>)

$\sigma 1 \downarrow \backslash \sigma 2 \rightarrow$	i	u	o	ɛ	ɔ	a
i	+	-	-	- <sup>4</sup>	-	+
u	+	- <sup>1</sup>	- <sup>3</sup>	-	-	+
o	+	- <sup>2</sup>	+	- <sup>5</sup>	-	+ <sup>6</sup>
ɛ	+	-	-	+ <sup>7</sup>	-	+
ɔ	+	-	-	-	+	+ <sup>6</sup>
a	+	-	-	-	-	+

<sup>1</sup> è-ɲgúnû ‘tin can’, <sup>2</sup> òpùmá ‘orange’, <sup>3</sup> pùpò ‘papaya’, <sup>4</sup> bríké ‘lighter’, <sup>5</sup> twòně ‘do better’, <sup>6</sup> only in closed syllables, <sup>7</sup> this cell in the table refers to a lower mid central vowel, which will be analysed as a realisation of /a/ (see Section 4.2.6)

Table 4. Vowel collocations in bisyllabic stems (V<sub>1</sub>CCV<sub>2</sub>)

$\sigma 1 \downarrow \backslash \sigma 2 \rightarrow$	i	u	o	ɛ	ɔ	a
i	+	-	-		-	+
u	+	-	-		-	+
o	+	-	+	? <sup>1</sup>	-	+ <sup>3</sup>
ɛ	+	-	-	+ <sup>4</sup>	-	+
ɔ	+	-	+	?	+	+ <sup>3</sup>
a	+	-	-		-	+

<sup>1</sup>tólbé ‘noon’, <sup>2</sup>wágbê ‘rest’, kwàgè ‘do really’, <sup>3</sup> only in closed syllables, <sup>4</sup> this cell in the table refers to a lower mid central vowel, which will be analysed as a realisation of /a/ (see Section 4.2.6)

From these tables it can be concluded that only two structural vowels contrast in non-prominent stem syllables, viz. |i| and |a|.

### 3.3. Phonetic correlates

The phonetic correlate of prominence in Eton is consonant length. All other things being equal, onset consonants of prominent syllables (henceforth *prominent consonants*) are longer than consonants elsewhere. Table 5 presents measurements of the length of the consonants /b/, /l/ and /n/ in intervocalic position (in seconds, mean value of at least ten tokens). The left hand column gives the length of prominent consonants, the right hand column that of non-prominent

consonants.<sup>7</sup> The figures show that prominent consonants are more than twice as long as other consonants in the same conditions.

Table 5. Consonant length in spontaneous speech (mean values in seconds)

	<u>VCV</u>	VCV
b	.14	.06
l	.13	.05
n	.16	.07

By way of an experiment, I made a number of nonsense words with two occurrences of either /b/, /d/, /l/, /n/ or /m/, one of which is stem-initial. These nonsense words respect all phonotactic restrictions of Eton and are morphologically recognisable as nouns, consisting of an existing gender prefix and a non-existing stem, e.g. *è-nânâ* (sg.), *mè-nânâ* (pl.). In some of them, /m/ is a prefix that is integrated in the prosodic stem (6).

- (6) a. d-àná (sg.)  
b. m-àná (pl.)

These words were pronounced in isolation and in clauses where they agreed in gender with the verb, as predicted by their prefix, e.g. (7). Each word or clause was pronounced four times by one male speaker.<sup>8</sup>

- (7) ènânâ /mènânâ ‘an enana / enanas’  
màjén éânâ ‘I saw an enana.’  
màjéngí mánânâ ‘I saw enanas.’<sup>9</sup>

---

7. The number of consonants of which the length in different environments can be compared is limited, since half of the consonants are restricted to the onset of prominent syllables (see Section 2.1.1). Moreover, the other consonants are often subject to lenition if not in the onset of a prominent syllable. Note, however, that lenition is optional. The measurements for /l/ and /b/ in the right hand column of Table 5 are from non-lenited occurrences. There are different ways to measure the length of a consonant. Only the relative length differences are relevant here, all tokens of the same consonant have been measured in the same way.

8. Namely Pie-Claude Ondobo. Note that the measurements presented in table 5 are based on another speaker, Désiré Essono.

9. In order to have all consonants of the nonsense words in intervocalic position, also the prefix consonants, I used different past tenses.

ènànà ékû 'The enana fell.'  
 mènànà mákû 'The enanas fell.'

As expected, these nonsense words were all pronounced with stem-initial prominence. The voiced obstruents /d/ and /b/ were lenited in post-prominent position, but /l/ never was. This suggests that lenition of /l/ is no longer productive (see Section 5.1.3). The consonant lengths in the experiment, presented in Table 6, are comparable to those of spontaneous speech in Table 5. The mean value for prominent /m/'s in the table is calculated on the basis of the cases where /m/ is the initial consonant of the morphological stem only. Interestingly, when /m/ is a prefix consonant integrated in the prosodic stem, as in (6b), it is considerably longer, viz. 0.22 seconds on average.

Table 6. Consonant length in nonsense words

	<u>VCV</u>	VCV
b	.12	.06
l	.11	.06
n	.13	.06
m	.16	.08

The spectrogram of the nonsense noun /è-nànà/ in Figure 1 shows the difference in length between a prominent and a non-prominent /n/. In this example, the length and intensity of both stem vowels are more or less equal. This is not always the case. The second stem vowel is often reduced in intensity, especially when it is not followed by a pause. In contrast, the clear difference in length of prominent versus non-prominent consonants is exceptionless. Any reduction of non-prominent vowels must therefore be seen as a secondary phonetic correlate of prominence in Eton.

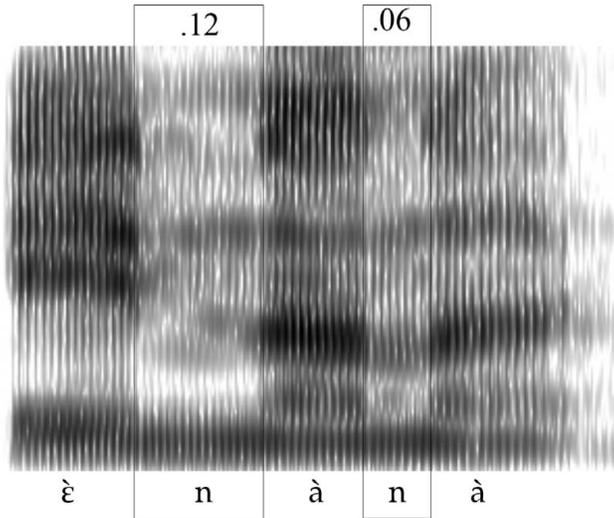


Figure 1. Consonant length in the nonsense word è-nànà

The length of prominent consonants is so salient that in some dialects and in some morphological contexts a prominent consonant can be reinterpreted as a succession of two consonants, as the following data illustrate. The preposition that precedes infinitives in the citation form of verbs is either *á* or *ǎ*, depending on the speaker (8a). One consultant (Pierre Tomo), however, has *ǎ* before stem-initial obstruents but no segmental preposition before stem-initial sonorants. In the latter context, the preposition consists of a floating high tone. The low tone prefix before the stem behaves as it does with other speakers: it downsteps a following high tone or merges with a following low tone, but the high tone attaches to the stem initial consonant and splits it in two. The first part becomes syllabic and the second part remains the onset of the stem-initial syllable (8b).

- (8) a. |á # L-lán| → /á 'lán/~ǎ 'lán/ 'to read' (stem: lán)  
 |á # L-wé| → /á 'wé/~ǎ 'wé/ 'to kill' (stem: wé)  
 b. /í'lán/ 'to read'  
 /w'wé/ 'to kill'

So far, the discussion was mainly restricted to consonants in the prosodic stem. As for their length, prefix consonants that are not part of the prosodic stem are somewhere in between prominent and non-prominent stem consonants. They are clearly shorter than stem-initial consonants in intervocalic position, but a bit longer than non-prominent stem consonants. The mean values of non-prominent prefix consonants in the experiment are 0.10 s for /m/ and 0.08 s for /b/. In sum, prefix consonants are non-prominent, but the difference with prominent consonants is less clear than within the prosodic stem.

The differences in length between consonants can be described by means of a realisation rule that weakens non-prominent consonants in intervocalic position. This weakening always involves shortening, sometimes also one of the lenition rules listed in 4.1.2.<sup>10</sup>

#### 4. Realisation rules

Realisation rules specify the speech sounds by which phonemes are realised, depending on their phonological context. The context specification does not only contain other phonemes, but also two auxiliary phenomena: discontinuity of speech (or pause, symbolised as ♦) and positional prominence.

##### 4.1. Consonants

###### 4.1.1. Devoicing of voiced obstruents

Voiced stops are gradually devoiced before a discontinuity of speech. The voiced alveolar fricative /z/ is totally devoiced to [s]. Gradual devoicing is noted with a [ ◌ ] below the consonant symbol. In this context voiced stops are often unreleased, symbolised by the diacritic [ ◌̚ ]. Figure 2 shows two successive repetitions of the word *mbóg* ‘clan, lineage’ in isolation. In (a) the final [g] is released, in (b) it is not.

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10. An alternative analysis could involve a rule that geminates the onset of prominent syllables, with a rule that blocks lenition of geminates. The latter rule appears to be universal (see e.g., Kirchner 2000). This alternative is unattractive for several reasons. It does not explain why consonants followed or preceded by a pause are as long as prominent intervocalic consonants. Moreover, there is no functional opposition between geminate consonant phonemes and non-geminates, so that geminates would have to be treated as successions of identical consonants. However, this would highly complicate syllable structure.

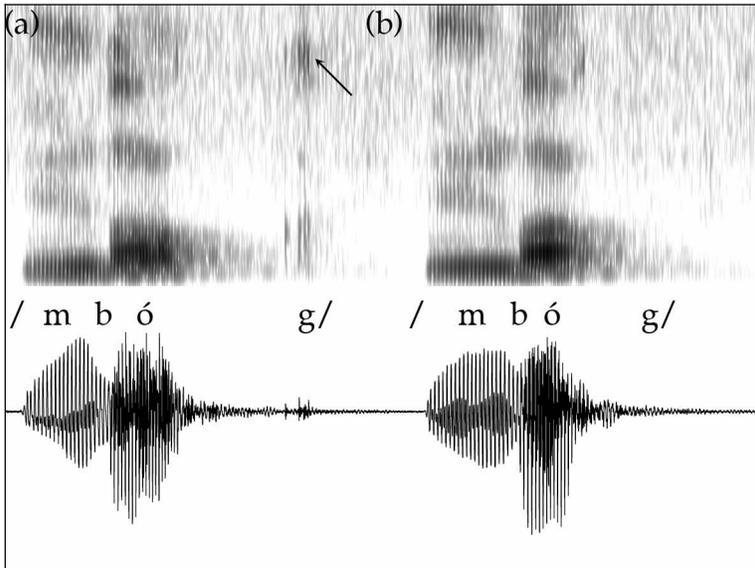


Figure 2. Released (a) and unreleased (b) final stop

The following examples show stems with a final obstruent before a pause and in another context. *NSP* means normal speech rate and *SSP* slow speech rate (see 4.1.2.).

- (9) a. /á 'béb/ 'to be bad' (citation form)  
 /\_\_♦/ → [á'béḃ] 'to be bad'  
 /\_\_C/ → [àbèḃgì] 'He has been bad.'
- b. /mòd/ 'man'  
 /\_\_♦/ → [mòḏ] 'man'  
 /\_\_C/ → [bòrbó'tákù] (NSP)  
 → [bòḏbó'tákù] (SSP) 'The men fall.'  
 /\_\_V/ → [mòràtókù] (NSP)  
 → [mòḏàtókù] (SSP) 'The man falls.'
- c. /á 'búg/ 'to break'  
 /\_\_♦/ → [á'búḡ] 'to break'  
 /\_\_V/C/ → [ìbúbúgà] 'broken'
- d. /á kùz/ 'to buy'  
 /\_\_♦/ → [ákùs] 'to buy'  
 /\_\_V/C/ → [àkúḥí'káḥ] (NSP)  
 → [àkúzí'káḥ] (SSP)  
 'He has bought a guinea-fowl.'

## 4.1.2. Lenition of voiced obstruents

Voiced obstruents optionally undergo lenition. However, lenition is blocked in two environments, viz. in the onset of a prominent syllable and adjacent to a pause. Lenition is as follows: the voiced bilabial stop /b/ becomes a voiced bilabial fricative [β], the alveolar stop /d/ is realised as an alveolar trill [r], the voiced velar stop /g/ is glided to [ɥ], and the voiced alveolar fricative /z/ is realised by the voiced glottal fricative [ɦ]<sup>11</sup> or simply not realised. In the latter case the preceding vowel is lengthened (10e).

/b/ → [β]  
 /d/ → [r]  
 /g/ → [ɥ]  
 /z/ → [ɦ] ~ Ø

The lenition rules are optional, but their application not entirely unpredictable. Speech rate is an important factor. The slower the speech rate and the more careful the pronunciation, the less likely the application of lenition rules. There are probably also differences between the rules. I have the impression that lenition of /z/ is less likely to occur than lenition of /d/, but a statistical analysis is needed to validate this observation. Moreover, lenition of /g/ (and perhaps to a lesser extent also of the other consonants) takes place less often after vowels of the first degree (/i, u/) than after other vowels. Other factors, such as word frequency, may play a role as well, but it falls outside the scope of this description to study these. Finally, lenition of /g/ does not occur immediately after a consonant (10f).

- (10) a. /b̂ b̂á't̂á 'sá/ → [b̂β̂á't̂á'sá] 'It is them who are working.'  
 b. /kádá/ → [kárá] 'crab'  
 c. /ibógî/ → [ibóɥî] 'chair'  
 d. /k̂p̂àk̂p̂àzà/ → [k̂p̂àk̂p̂àɦà] 'toothbrush'  
 e. /bibáz bí 'kwáz/ → [bìbá: bí 'kwás] ~ [bìbáɦ bí 'kwás]  
 'the scales of a fish'  
 f. /àkwâzgi/ → [àkwâɦgi] 'he coughed'

Note that the rule /d/ → [r] is never found in prefixes, because /d/ is always part of the prosodic stem, i.e. as a prefix consonant it occurs only before vowel-initial morphological stems.

11. The discourse particle *v̂* (more or less translatable as 'so' in English) has a free variant *ɦ̂*. Elsewhere, [ɦ] only exists as an allophone of /z/.

4.1.3. *Palatalisation of /w/*

The labiovelar approximant /w/ is realised as a labiopalatal approximant [ɥ] before /i/ and/or after the palatal nasal /ɲ/.

- (11) a. /ɛswĩ/ → [ɛsɥĩ] ‘ash’  
 b. /ɲwé/ → [ɲɥé] ‘snake’

4.1.4. *Labio-dentalisation of /m/*

The bilabial nasal /m/ is realised as [m̥] before /v/.

- (12) /m̀v̀ò:b̀ò/ → [m̥̀v̀ò:β̀ò] ‘breathing’

4.1.5. *Labialisation*

Some consonants are labialised before /o/. I found examples of /k/ → [k<sup>w</sup>], /v/ → [v<sup>w</sup>], /b/ → [b<sup>w</sup>] and /m/ → [m<sup>w</sup>]. The rule might be lexically conditioned. On the one hand, its application by Eton speakers appears to be optional. On the other hand, I was sometimes corrected when I did not labialise. Moreover, the range of consonants for which labialisation has been noted can hardly be called a natural class. Anyway, the opposition between labialised and unlabialised consonants is never differential.

- (13) a. /àkõl/ → [àk<sup>w</sup>õl] ‘foot’  
 b. /ùvón/ → [ùv<sup>w</sup>ón] ‘axe’  
 c. /àmõz/ → [àm<sup>w</sup>õs] ‘day’

4.1.6. *Affrication*

The alveolar stops /t/ and /d/ are slightly affricated before /i/. The fricative part is much less prominent in these consonants than in the genuine affricates.

- (14) /tíd/ → [tʰíd] ‘animal’

Figure 3 shows the spectrogram and the waveform of the verb form /àŋgâ tìl/ → [àŋgâ<sup>tʰ</sup>ìl] ‘she is writing’. A period of friction is clearly visible on the spectrogram.

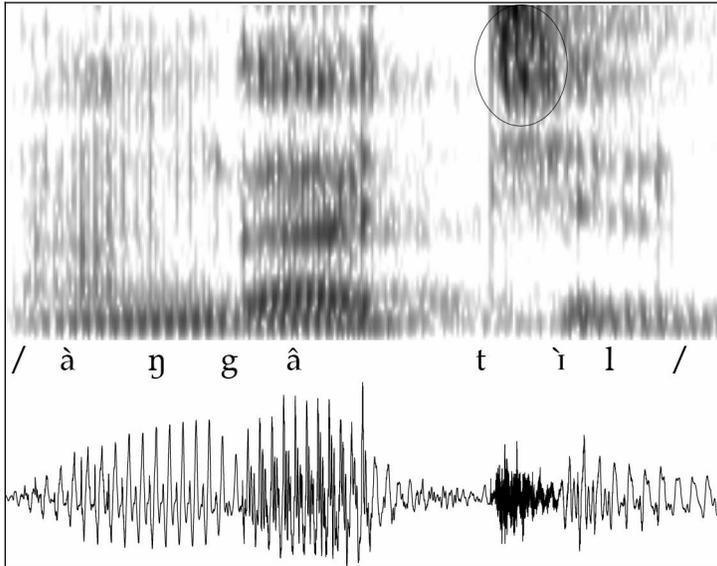


Figure 3. Affrication of /t/

#### 4.1.7. Elision

In a succession of two identical obstruents, none of which is syllabic, only one is realised. This rule also exists as a rule of representation (see Section 5.1.4).

(15) |à-ń-gbél-á| → /àŋmŋmélâ/ → [àŋmélê] ‘he already has’

#### 4.2. Vowels

Before discussing rules of allophony, the realisation of the vowels of Eton is illustrated by means of two vowel plots. Figure 4 shows all vowel phonemes of Eton (plus the allophone [ɜ] of the phoneme /ɛ/) as pronounced by Désiré Essono. The measurements were taken in different phonological contexts, with between 15 and 20 tokens per vowel. The recordings were made on DAT tape (42.000 Hz) and down sampled to 16.000 Hz. Since the difference between the back vowels /o/ and /ɔ/ is less difficult to hear in Pie-Claude Ondobo’s idiolect than in that of Désiré Essono, I made a vowel plot for the former’s back vowels as well (Figure 5). Pie-Claude’s voice was analogically recorded with a Nagra and then digitalised using the programme *Sound Edit*. Down sampling was also to 16.000 Hertz. The vowels are also measured in different contexts, with at

least 60 tokens per vowel. The plots were made with the programme *Akustyk*,<sup>12</sup> which operates in *Praat*. Note the relatively high F2 value for /u/ in both analyses.

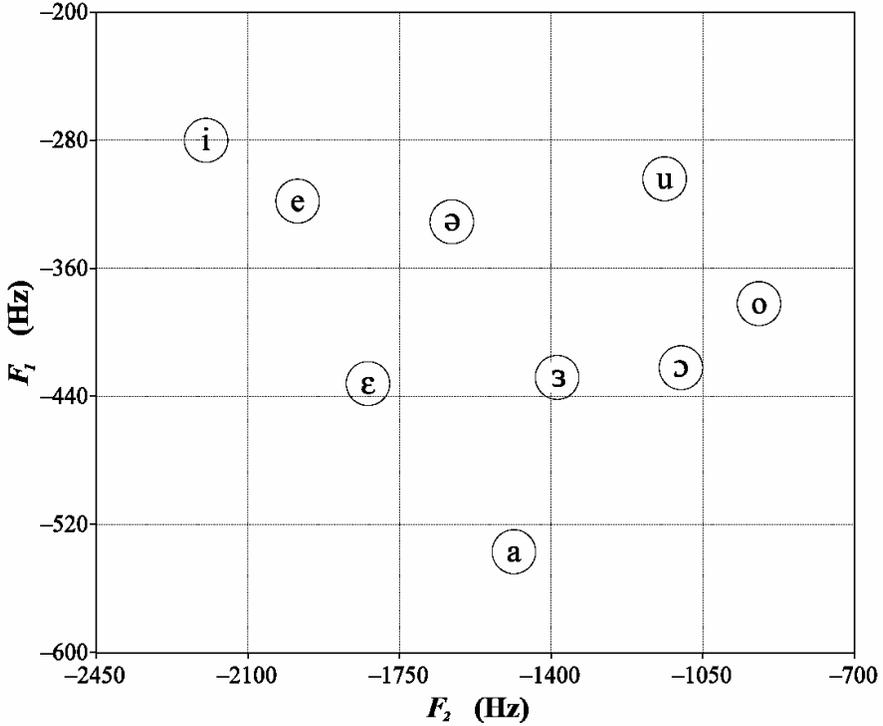


Figure 4. Vowel plot: all vowels, Désiré Essono-Biyebe

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12. I wish to thank Bartek Plichta, the maker of *Akustyk*, for making his programme available, for inserting the Eton vowel chart in the programme and for his help.

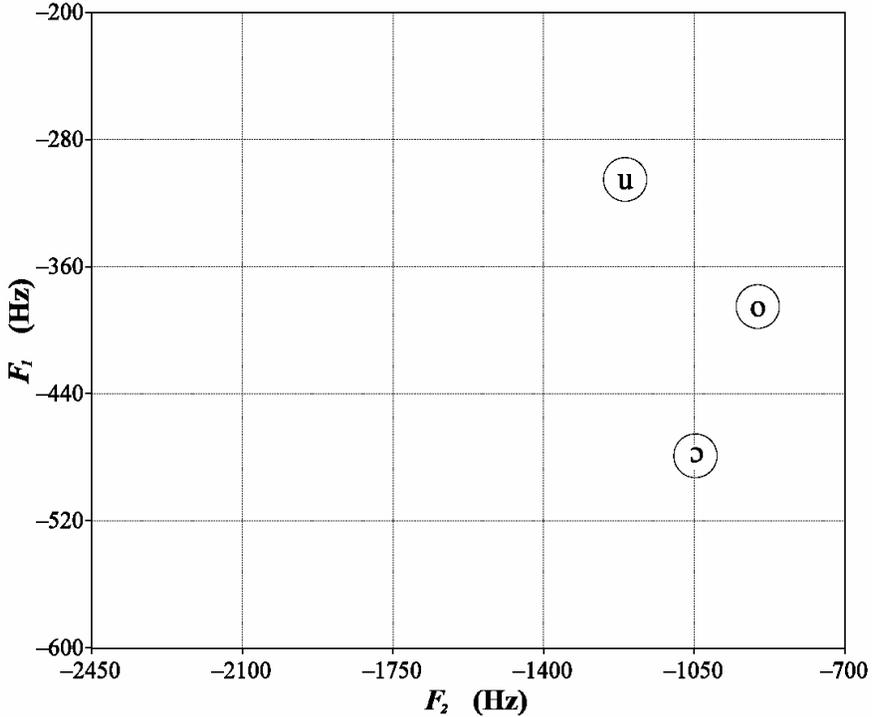


Figure 5. Vowel plot: back vowels, Pie-Claude Ondobo

#### 4.2.1. Centralisation of /ɛ/

The front vowel of the third degree is centralised to [ɜ] before labial and velar consonants and before /j/ if it is the nucleus of a prominent syllable.

- (16) a. |á # L-pɛ̀b| → /áɲɛ̀b/ → [áɲɛ̀b] ‘to be good’  
 b. |á # L-pɛ̀m| → /á pɛ̀m/ → [ápɛ̀m] ‘to dislike’  
 c. |ndé̄g| → /ndé̄g/ → [ndɛ̄g] ‘calabash’  
 d. |ù-ké̄ɲ| → /ùké̄ɲ/ → [ùkɛ̄ɲ] ‘knife’  
 e. |pé̄í| → /pé̄j/ → [pɛ̄j] ‘viper’  
 f. |à-vé̄í| → /àvɛ̄j/ → [àvɛ̄j] ‘red’

but:

- g. |è-bùm| → /ɛ̀bùm/ → [ɛ̀bùm] ‘belly’  
 h. |è-mán| → /ɛ̀mán/ → [ɛ̀mán] ‘cheek’  
 i. |è-kǎ̄ɲ| → /ɛ̀kwǎ̄ɲ/ → [ɛ̀kwǎ̄ɲ] ‘lance’  
 j. |è-ɲgóz| → /ɛ̀ɲgóz/ → [ɛ̀ɲgós] ‘heap’

4.2.2. *Nasalization*

Vowels are nasalized if in a prominent syllable and immediately followed by the velar nasal /ŋ/. Nasalization is symbolised by a diacritic [̃] under the vowel in order to avoid interference with tone marking.

(17) |ì-núŋá| → /ínúŋá/ → [ínúŋá] ‘dwarf’

Slight nasalization of /ɔ/ occurs after the palatal nasal /ɲ/ and nasalization of open vowels (3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> degree) between the labiovelar glide /w/ and any nasal consonant. This conditioning is not watertight and has to be refined.

(18) a. /ɲɔ̃/ → [ɲɔ̃] ‘your mother’  
 b. /ùnwǎ̃/ → [ùnwǎ̃] ‘bird’

4.2.3. *Final aspiration*

When followed by a pause, the close vowels /i/ and /u/ are sometimes followed by a considerable amount of friction. Figure 6 shows a spectrogram of the infinitive /á ‘búgî’ → [á‘búgî̃] ‘to have a fracture’.

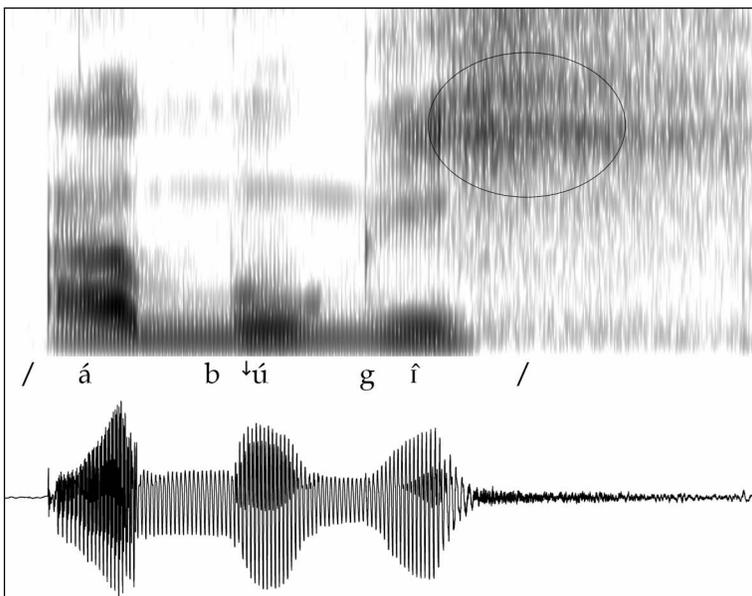


Figure 6. Final aspiration of /i/

#### 4.2.4. Backing of /a/ after /w/

The front open vowel /a/ is backed to [ɑ] after the bilabial glide /w/ (18a), except if the latter is the non-branching onset of a syllable (18b).

- (19) a. |Ñ-Bón| → /m̀mwán/ → [m̀mwán]  
 b. |è-wáí| → /èwáí/ → [èwáí]

#### 4.2.5. Phonetic lengthening

The nucleus of a prominent syllable is optionally lengthened when preceding a homorganic succession of a nasal plus oral consonant.

- (20) |à-H-láŋ-Lgì| → /àlâŋgì/ → [àlâŋgì] ‘he read’

#### 4.2.6. Realisation of /a/ in open, non-prominent stem syllables

When *a* occurs in an open, non-prominent stem syllable, it is harmonic with any mid vowel in the preceding syllable. This harmony is asymmetric, in that it is phonological when the controlling vowel is back (see Section 5.2.4.) and phonetic when the controlling vowel is front. That is, whereas |a| is clearly represented by /ɔ/ after a prominent syllable with a nucleus |ɔ| (and by /o/ after |o|), it is represented by the phoneme /a/ after |ɛ|, and this /a/ is realised centralised and slightly raised. This is not simply a kind of phonological reduction of /a/ in open, non-prominent syllables, since /a/ is clearly realised as a front, open [a] after a prominent /i/, /u/ or /a/.

- (21) |bé-là| → /bélà/ → [bélê] ‘cook (tr.)’

## 5. Morphophonology

Some structural items are always represented by the same phoneme, without having to take into consideration any morphophonological conditioning. Thus, |t| is always represented by /t/. This section lists all exceptions to such an automatic representation.

## 5.1. Consonants

5.1.1. *The homorganic nasal* |N| → /m, n, ɲ, ŋ, ŋ̃m/

The noun prefix of gender 1 and 3 is a syllabic homorganic nasal. Syllabicity is marked by the presence of tone marking (see 6.2 for a discussion of syllabicity). The following is a list of examples in which the prefix phoneme has the same place of articulation as the stem-initial consonant. If the stem begins in a vowel, the prefix is a bilabial nasal and loses its syllabicity.

- (22) a. |N| → /m/ / \_\_ V, C<sub>[labial]</sub>  
           |Ñ-pùŋ| → /m̀pùŋ/ ‘powder’  
           |Ñ-Bùŋ| → /m̀m̀ùŋ/ ‘cassava’  
           |Ñ-Vóŋ| → /m̀mwáŋ/ ‘one’ (agreement pattern III)  
           |Ñ-vò:bò| → /m̀vò:bò/ ‘respiration’  
           |Ñ-ìŋŋá| → /m̀ìŋŋá/ ‘woman’
- b. |N| → /n/ / \_\_ C<sub>[alveolar]</sub>  
           |Ñ-tóm| → /ǹtóm/ ‘hat’  
           |Ñ-lól| → /ǹnól/ ‘head’  
           |Ñ-lú-à| → /ǹlwâ/ ‘smith’
- c. |N| → /ɲ/ / \_\_ C<sub>[palatal]</sub>  
           |Ñ-jéglè| → /ɲ̀jéglè/ ‘teacher’  
           |Ñ-jóm| → /ɲ̀jóm/ ‘husband’  
           |Ñ-Sóm| → /ɲ̀ʃóm/ ‘hunt’
- d. |N| → /ŋ̃m/ / \_\_ C<sub>[labiovelar]</sub>  
           |Ñ-kpél| → /ŋ̃̀m̀kpél/ ‘grilled’  
           |Ñ-wáz| → /ŋ̃̀mwáz/ ‘shrimp’
- e. |N| → /ŋ/ / \_\_ C<sub>[velar]</sub>  
           |Ñ-kùg| → /ŋ̀kùg/ ‘breast’  
           |Ñ-ŋám| → /ŋ̀ŋám/ ‘residue’

5.1.2. *Initial morphophonemes of stems often preceded by* |N|

## 5.1.2.1. /B/

- (23) a. |B| → /m/ / N \_\_  
           |Ñ-Bùŋ| → /m̀m̀ùŋ/ ‘manioc tuber’

- b. |B| → /b/ / elsewhere  
 |mì-Bùŋ| → /mìbùŋ/ ‘manioc tubers’

#### 5.1.2.2. /V/

- (24) a. |V| → /m/ / N \_\_  
 |Ñ-Vóŋ| → /m̀mwág/ ‘one’ (III)<sup>13</sup>  
 b. |V| → /v/ / elsewhere  
 |mì-Vóŋ| → /m̀vwág/ ‘some’ (IV)

#### 5.1.2.3. /ʃ/

- (25) a. |ʃ| → /ɲ/ / N \_\_  
 |Ñ-ʃám| → /ɲ́nám/ ‘preparation’  
 b. |ʃ| → /ʒ/ / elsewhere  
 |mì-ʃám| → /m̀iʒám/ ‘preparations’

#### 5.1.2.4. /λ/

- (26) a. |λ| → /n/ / N \_\_  
 |Ñ-λán| → /ǹnán/ ‘story’  
 b. |λ| → /l/ / elsewhere  
 |mì-λán| → /m̀ilán/ ‘stories’

#### 5.1.2.5. /S/

- (27) a. |S| → /ʃ/ / N \_\_  
 |Ñ-Sòŋ| → /ǹʃòŋ/ ‘fish-trap’  
 b. |S| → /s/ / elsewhere  
 |mì-Sòŋ| → /m̀isòŋ/ ‘fish-traps’

#### 5.1.2.6. /vʃ/

- (28) a. |vʃ| → /ɲm/ / N \_\_  
 |Ñ-vʃǎn| → /ɲ́m̃mǎn/ ‘herb (sp.)’  
 |Ñ-vʃám| → /ɲ́m̃mǎm/ ‘bird (sp.)’  
 b. |vʃ| → /vj/ / elsewhere  
 |mì-vʃǎn| → /m̀ìvjǎn/ ‘herbs (sp.)’

13. The roman number between brackets stands for the agreement pattern to which the prefix belongs. The initial morphophoneme of this word can have still another phonological representation, presented as an exception in Section 5.1.5.

5.1.2.7.  $/\widehat{gb}/$ 

- (29) a.  $|\widehat{gb}| \rightarrow / \widehat{\eta m} /$  / N \_\_\_  
 $|\widehat{m\grave{e}-\acute{n}-gb\acute{e}l-\acute{a}}| \rightarrow / \widehat{m\grave{e}\eta m\acute{e}l\grave{e}} /$  ‘I already have’  
 b.  $|\widehat{gb}| \rightarrow / \widehat{gb} /$  / elsewhere  
 $|\widehat{m\grave{e}-gb\acute{e}l-\acute{a}}| \rightarrow / \widehat{m\grave{e}gb\acute{e}l\grave{e}} /$  ‘I have’

5.1.2.8.  $/j/$ 

- (30) a.  $|j| \rightarrow / \widehat{j} /$  / N \_\_\_  
 $|\widehat{\acute{n}-j\grave{i}n\acute{i}}| \rightarrow / \widehat{\acute{n}j\grave{i}n\acute{i}} /$  ‘plan, project’  
 b.  $|j| \rightarrow / j /$  / elsewhere  
 $|\widehat{m\grave{i}-j\grave{i}n\acute{i}}| \rightarrow / \widehat{m\grave{i}j\grave{i}n\acute{i}} /$  ‘plans, projects’

The morphophoneme  $|\widehat{vj}|$  is the only one that is sometimes represented by two phonemes.<sup>14</sup> For the time being, six examples of the morphological alternation in (28) have been found, all of them nouns of gender 3. These are:

- (31) singular (3) plural (4)<sup>15</sup>
- |                                      |                                   |                   |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------|
| $ \widehat{\eta m\eta m\acute{a}m} $ | $m\grave{i}v\acute{j}\acute{a}m/$ | ‘toucan(s)’       |
| $ \widehat{\eta m\eta m\acute{a}n} $ | $m\grave{i}v\acute{j}\acute{a}n/$ | ‘herb(s) (sp.)’   |
| $ \widehat{\eta m\eta m\acute{e}g} $ | $m\grave{i}v\acute{j}\acute{e}g/$ | ‘dyke(s)’         |
| $ \widehat{\eta m\eta m\acute{e}n} $ | $m\grave{i}v\acute{j}\acute{e}n/$ | ‘leg’             |
| $ \widehat{\eta m\eta m\acute{e}l} $ | $m\grave{i}v\acute{j}\acute{e}l/$ | ‘moonlight’       |
| $ \widehat{\eta m\eta m\acute{o}l} $ | $m\grave{i}v\acute{i}l/$          | ‘running contest’ |

The last example ( $\widehat{\eta m\eta m\acute{o}l}$ ) has a different vowel in the singular and in the plural. Moreover, a schwa does not normally occur in a closed prominent syllable. A possible way to account for this exceptional stem is to represent it without a vowel on the structural level  $|\widehat{vj}1|$ . In the singular an epenthetic schwa is inserted on the phonological level. Remember that a sonorant cannot be the

14. This is not an ideal situation, but there are no reasons to exclude it a priori. A possible way of avoiding this situation is to define a labiopalatal fricative phoneme  $|\widehat{vj}|$ , but this solution transfers the problem to a lower level of analysis instead of solving it. Moreover,  $|\widehat{vj}|$  has no psychological validity, i.e. speakers do not perceive it as one sound.

15. The number between brackets indicates the gender of the nouns in question, see Section III:3.

nucleus of a syllable that has an onset. In the plural, the phoneme /j/ occupies the nucleus, surfacing as [ɨ].<sup>16</sup>

The five morphophonemes defined in Section 5.1.2.1-5.1.2.5 are necessary, because [b], [v], [ɕ], [l] and [s] are not always represented by /m/, /ɲ/, /n/ and /tʃ/ respectively after [N]. There is a small number of lexical exceptions in the main idiolect on which this description is based, as well as some cases of free variation.

- (32) a. [N-ɕɔ̀ɔ̀] → /ɲɕɔ̀ɔ̀j/ ‘commander’  
 b. [N-sá-à] ~ [N-Sá-à] → /ɲsâ/ ~ /ɲtʃâ/ ‘worker’

### 5.1.3. Representation of [l]

The morphophoneme [l] is always represented by /l/ in prefixes and in the onset of prominent syllables.<sup>17</sup> Elsewhere, the morphophoneme [l] can be represented by either /l/ or /i/ or it can be left unrepresented. Zero-representation and representation by /i/ are clearly lenition rules. However, they cannot be treated along with the other lenition rules in Section 4.1.2 due to their problematic conditioning. The choice seems to be sometimes free or dialectally conditioned and sometimes lexically conditioned. Compare the verb stem in (33b) to stems like *tíl* ‘write’, *kpál* ‘be loquacious’ and *ɕòl* ‘be bitter’, in which the final [l] is obligatorily represented by /l/. Zero-representation gives rise to compensatory lengthening of the preceding vowel. Representation by /i/ results in glide formation of this phoneme, or in coalescence with the preceding vowel, which is thereby closed by one degree (and sometimes also lengthened and/or followed by a palatal glide).

- (33) a. [ɲgál] → /ɲgál/ → [ɲgál] ‘gun’  
           → /ɲgái/ → [ɲgé:]  
           → /ɲgá/ → [ɲgá:]  
 b. [tùl] → /tùl/ → [tùl] ‘be sharp’  
           → /tùì/ → [tùì:]  
 c. [è-wáli] → /è-wáli/ → [èwáli] ‘birth’  
           → /è-wáì/ → [èwê:]

16. This word could also be an argument to say that the morphophoneme [v̄j] is represented by the phoneme sequence /vi/ when not preceded by [N]. The front vowel then becomes a glide in order to avoid vowel hiatus (see 6.3.2).

17. [l] occurs in prefixes in Southern dialects only.

5.1.4. *Elision*

In a succession of two identical obstruents, none of which is syllabic, the first is not represented. This rule triggers compensatory lengthening of a preceding (prominent) vowel.

(34) |á # ɖ̀à̀b-bàn| → /á ɖ̀à̀:bàn/ ‘to be lengthened’

5.1.5. *Lexical exceptions*

Some isolated words present idiosyncratic alternations. It is possible to define special morphophonemes for these exceptions as well, but I will not do it explicitly:

(35) a. /ŋ̀jál/ ‘wife’                    /b̀jál/ ‘wives’  
 b. /pwág/ ‘one’ (IX, X) /-vwág/ ‘one’ (II, IV, V, VI, VII, VIII)

There is also a series of stems with an initial voiceless stop and related nouns of gender 9 with a stem-initial voiced stop (see Section III:4.3.2.2).

(36) a. /kàb/ ‘share’                    /ŋ̀gàb/ ‘sharing’  
 b. /p̀ò:nì/ ‘resemble’                /mb̀ò:ní/ ‘resemblance’  
 c. /î-kòb/ ‘skin’                    /ŋ̀gòb/ ‘shoe’

5.2. *Vowels*5.2.1. *Representation of vowels by a glide*

All structural vowels, except |a| and |ə|, can be represented by a glide; back vowels by /w/ and front vowels by /j/, because of hiatus resolution (see 6.3.2).

5.2.2. *Representation of |ɛ|*

The phoneme /ɛ/ does not occur before a word boundary, except after /w/, i.e. after a structural |w| or a structural vowel. In contrast, when the phoneme /ə/ occurs in a stem, it is always before a word boundary, except in a few borrowings such as /z̀ə̀kúli/ ‘school’ and /b̀ə̀zímí/ ‘police’, the initial syllable of which can be analysed as a prosodic prefix. This distribution can be accounted for by means of the representation rules in (37) and (38). Note that the related word forms in the examples provide extra evidence for these representation rules.

- (37) |ε| → /ə/ / C\_\_# (if C ≠ |w|)  
       |bɛ́| → /bá/ ‘cook (intr.)’  
       |kè| → /kà/ ‘go’ (stem)
- (38) |ε| → /ɛ/ / elsewhere  
       |bɛ́-là| → /bélà/ ‘cook (tr.)’  
       |kèní| → /kèní/ ‘go!’ (imperative singular)

It must be pointed out that the distribution of /ɛ/ and /ə/ is complementary in prefixes as well, be it in a totally different, phonotactic way. Whereas /ɛ/ occurs only in V-prefixes, /ə/ is restricted to CV-prefixes.

### 5.2.3. Representation of |ɔ|

The morphophoneme |ɔ| is represented by /wa/<sup>18</sup> if it is the nucleus of a prominent syllable and if it is not immediately followed by a word boundary. Elsewhere, it is represented by /ɔ/.

- (39) a. |bɔ́ #| → /bà/ ‘rot’  
       b. |bɔ́-là| → /bwàlà/ ‘destroy, make rot’
- (40) a. |̀n-kɔ́l| → /̀ŋkwál/ ‘rope’  
       b. |dɔ́ktèn| → /dwáktèn/ ‘doctrine’ < French doctrine
- (41) |̀n-Sɔ́bá| → /̀ŋfwábɔ́/ ‘mortar’

Both representations, /ɔ/ and /wa/, are possible when |ɔ| is followed by a velar consonant, with perhaps a preference for /ɔ/. The conditioning might be lexical here.

- (42) a. |̀i-nɔ́ŋ| → /̀inɔ́ŋ/ ~ /̀inwǎŋ/ ‘bed’  
       b. |ŋgɔ́g| → /ŋgwàg| ‘stone’ (??ŋgɔ́g)  
       c. |̀i-tɔ́ŋ| → /̀itɔ́ŋ/ ‘palm nut’ (??̀itwàŋ)  
       d. |̀i-bɔ́g| → /̀ibɔ́g/ ‘hip’ (??̀ibwàg)

Interestingly, the formation of reduplicated stems appears to be based on the phonological representation of source stems, rather than on their structural

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18. /wa/ or /ua/, it does not matter very much, see the note on reduplications at the end of this subsection for a possible argument in favour of /ua/.

form.<sup>19</sup> In nouns derived from another noun by means of reduplication the reduplicans consists of the first two segments of the base (43a), but when the first vowel of the base is non-close, the vowel of the reduplicans is reduced to schwa (43b). In (43c), the vowel of the reduplicans is /u/, not /ə/, although the structural vowel of the base is supposedly |ɔ|, as suggested by the proper name *ŋgwálɔ* derived from *ŋgwál* by means of the suffix *-a*. But see in this respect the discussion at the end of Section 5.2.4. of some cases of analogy concerning the representation of |ɔ|.

- (43) a. /zín/ ‘hatred’ versus /ñzínzín/ ‘enemy’  
 b. /î-bóŋ/ ‘paralysis’ versus /m̄m̄m̄m̄óŋ/ ‘paralytic’  
 c. /ŋgwál/ ‘pity’ versus /î-ŋgúŋgwál/ ‘unfortunate’

#### 5.2.4. Representation of |a|

When the morphophoneme |a| occurs in a non-prominent stem-final open syllable its representation depends on the quality of the preceding vowel: after mid back vowels it is harmonic (44), after non-mid back vowels it is represented by /a/ (45). In all other contexts, |a| is likewise represented by /a/ (46). In (46c), for instance, the first structural |a| is represented by /a/, because it is not in a stem-final syllable, whereas the representation of the second structural |a| derives its vowel quality from the first one.

- (44) a. |ñ-jón-à| → /ñjónô/ ‘somebody who cries’  
 b. |ɖʒón-là| → /ɖʒónlô/ ‘heat’  
 c. |sòl-bâ| → /swàlbò/ ‘hide oneself’
- (45) a. |nùm-là| → /nùmlà/ ‘smell (tr.)’  
 b. |ɖʒàb-à| → /ɖʒàbà/ ‘lengthen’  
 c. |díg-à| → /dígâ/ ‘burn (tr.)’
- (46) a. |sónd-àn| → /sónđân/ ‘be sharpened’  
 b. |à-lú| → /àlú/ ‘night’  
 c. |wóg-dànà| → /wógđânà/ ‘feel’

The examples showing harmony in (44) are all derived forms. Given that all non-initial stem vowels are either /i/, /a/ or a harmonic mid vowel, it makes

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19. This is a bit problematic for the choice of a structural representation for reduplicated stems. In accordance with the general principles set forth in the introduction of this chapter, I will use a structural representation that reflects the surface form as directly as possible.

sense to analyse all non-initial mid vowels as harmonic representations of |a|, as in the following examples. In other words, in non-prominent stem syllables only two structural vowels contrast, viz. |i| and |a|.

- (47) a. |Ñ-tómá| → /ñtómó/ ‘sheep’  
 b. |Ñ-ðŋá| → /mðŋó/ ‘child’  
 c. |ì-ŋgègà| → /ìŋgègè/ ‘dwarf’

Interestingly, |a| tends to be represented by /ɔ/ after prominent syllables that contain the sequence /wa/, also when the latter does not represent an underlying |ɔ|, even when /w/ functions as the onset of the prominent syllable. Consider, for instance, the forms of the first person singular possessive nominal modifiers in (48).

- (48) a. |d-ámà| → /dámâ/ ‘my’ (agreement pattern V)  
 b. |j-àmà| → /jàmà/ ‘my’ (agreement pattern IX)  
 c. |w-àmà| → /wàmò/ ‘my’ (agreement pattern I)

In (48c) the succession /wa/, which represents |w-a|, is analogically reinterpreted as representing |ɔ| in the application of vowel harmony. Another example is provided by noun stems that begin in /wa/. Since the initial syllable of (morphological) noun stems may be onsetless (contrary to that of verb stems), such a stem initial sequence can be analysed as representing either |ɔ| or |wa|. Usually the form of the nominal gender prefix shows which is the correct analysis in these cases. The prefix of gender 5, for instance, has two allomorphs, viz. è- before structural consonants and d- before structural vowels, as illustrated by the gender 5 nouns in (49).

- (49) a. |è-tŋ| → /ètŋ/ ‘knot’  
 b. |d-òb| → /dòb/ ‘sky’  
 c. |d-ùlà| → /dùlà/ ‘a walk’

When the stem of a gender 5 noun begins in /wa/, there are two possibilities:

- (50) a. |d-ǎd| → /dwǎd/ ‘furuncle’  
 b. |è-wǎlì| → /èwǎlì/ ‘birth’

Now consider the form of the following gender 5 word for another example of analogy in the application of vowel harmony.

- (51) |è-wǎgbá| → /èwǎgbó/ ‘pretext’

5.2.5. *Elision and reduction*

Postprominent vowel morphophonemes that are followed by a word boundary (but not by a pause) tend to be not represented.

- (52) a. |mè-H-jén-Lgì -H # jé| → /mèjéngó jê/ ‘I have seen him’  
 b. |á # L-móní # móní| → /á ‘mwán ‘mwání/ ‘to wait for money’  
 c. |à-H-bálí # H # ñ-kóg| → /àbál ñ<sup>h</sup>kwág/ ‘he wounded the antelope’

5.2.6. *Phonological lengthening*

A vowel morphophoneme is represented by a long vowel phoneme if followed by a succession of two identical obstruents, of which only one is represented.<sup>20</sup>

- (53) |bì-dí # bí-H-báb-bàn| → /bidí bíbá:bân/ ‘the food has been warmed up.’

## 6. Syllable structure

Sections 2, 4 and 5 dealt with the segmental phonology of Eton and Section 7 will describe the tonal phonology. This section describes how elements of the tonal and the segmental tiers combine into syllables. It will be argued that there are no structural syllables, i.e. there is no syllabic skeleton consisting of an underlying succession of syllabic (V, o) and non-syllabic (C, <) elements. Apart from the segmental tier and the tonal tier, a rhythmical tier is defined that contains only one kind of elements, viz. weight units (following Hyman 1985). Every segment is structurally linked to a weight unit, some of which also have a tone linked to them. Syllables are the outcome of syllabification rules. The relation between tones and weight units is intricate and it is difficult to describe one tier without some knowledge of the other. Readers who are unfamiliar with tone might want to read Section 7 first. For others, it suffices to know that the complex tone patterns of Eton are described by means of three structural tones: low, high and dissimilating high. These can be structurally linked to a weight unit or not. In the latter case, we will speak of floating tones. No claims are made here

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20. There is also phonological vowel lengthening before a non-realised /z/, see the rules of lenition of voiced obstruents in Section 4.1.2. There is a problem with levels of conditioning here (a representation rule conditioned by the result of a realisation rule). Most probably this should not be treated as a rule but as an inter-dialectal generalisation. Some dialects have a structural long vowel and no |z|, whereas others have a structural short vowel and |z|, which is represented by /z/ and realised as [fi].

as to the universal validity of the weight unit approach. I only see it as a relatively elegant way of visualising the tonal and syllabic facts of Eton.

### 6.1. Surface syllable structures

The syllable types in the following overview are the result of syllabification rules presented in Section 6.2. The number of tonemes a syllable can carry depends on whether it is prominent or not. Syllables are separated by a full stop in the examples given. The syllable schemes contain the following symbols:

- C any surface consonant
- G surface glide (subclass of S)
- N nasal consonant (subclass of S)
- P voiced stop (subclass of C)
- S surface sonorant consonant (subclass of C)
- V surface vowel

S

- ɲ.kõn 'tail'
- ń.tʃá 'ripe plantain banana'

V<sup>21</sup>

- è.lén 'palm tree'

CV

- mà.lén 'palm trees'

NPV

- ndá 'house'

CVC

- ì.věz 'bone'

NPVC

- ndúg.dâ 'heat'

NPGV

- ndwì 'bad news'
- ɲgwě 'centipede'

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21. This syllable type is not entirely unproblematic. It occurs only after a pause. However, after a pause vowels are sometimes preceded by a glottal stop.

NPGVC

**ndwág** ‘deafness’

CGV

**pwá.gó** ‘really’

CGVC

**pwág** ‘one’

CV:

**ì.dì:gà** ‘key’

NCV:

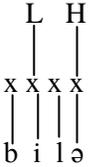
**mbò:ní** ‘resemblance’

This list can be summarised as follows. Syllables minimally consist of a nucleus, either a vowel or a sonorant consonant. A syllable with a consonantal nucleus cannot have an onset or a coda. If the nucleus is a vowel, any consonant can serve as an onset. Branching onsets consist either of a voiced stop preceded by a homorganic nasal, or of any consonant followed by a glide. Double branching onsets have a voiced stop preceded by a homorganic nasal and followed by a glide. The rime of a syllable with a vocalic nucleus can be a short vowel, a long vowel or a short vowel followed by a consonant. Onsetless syllables never have a coda. As has been said, many consonants can appear in the onset of prominent syllables only. Double branching onsets are equally restricted to prominent syllables. There are light syllables and heavy syllables, no super heavy syllables. That is, a syllable cannot have a phonologically long vowel *and* a coda. The onset, however complex, does not add to the weight of the syllable.

## 6.2. Weight units & basic syllabification

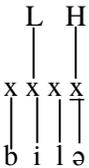
The minimal element on the rhythmical tier is the weight unit, symbolised as *x*. Tones and segments link to weight units, as in the following structural representation.

(54) |ḅi.ḷé| → /ḅiḷó/ ‘trees’



Weight units can be deleted during derivation, but not created. There is no perfect match between segmental timing slots and tonal attachment sites. Once again, the notion of prominence appears to be useful. The weight unit of the first vowel of every stem is prominent, unless it is immediately followed by another vowel. In that case prominence comes on the second vowel. (Remember that the major segmental manifestation of prominence lies on the preceding onset consonant, though). Prominent weight units have one segmental attachment site, but can link to two tones. Syllables can retain only one weight unit after derivation. Hence, the maximal number of tones that can be attached to a syllable is two. Prominent weight units will be underlined. The correct initial representation for the word *biló* is thus:

(55) /ḅi.ḷó/ ‘trees’

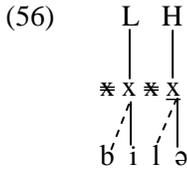


The first syllabification rule to be mentioned is the onset creation rule.

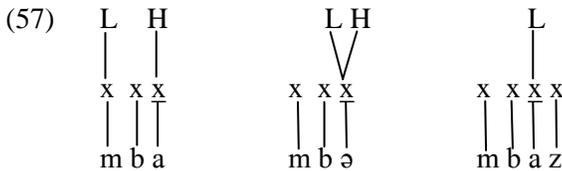
### Onset Creation Rule

The weight unit of a consonant is deleted when that consonant is followed by a vocalic segment. The consonant segment is then associated to the weight unit of the following vowel.

All elements that are deleted during derivation are marked by double strike-through.



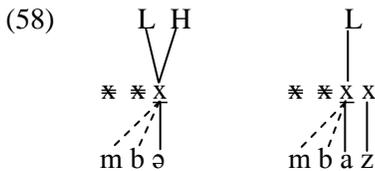
One of the advantages of a model based on weight units over models with a CV-tier, for instance, is that the syllabicity of a segment is not predetermined by its being linked to a basically syllabic or non-syllabic slot. Structurally syllabic sonorants and vowels can lose their syllabicity whereas non-syllabic sonorants can become syllabic during derivation. Structural syllabicity should be understood as the fact that a segment is structurally linked to a weight unit that is itself linked to a tone. The words  $|\dot{N}\text{-b}\acute{a}| \rightarrow /m\grave{b}\acute{a}/$  ‘ripe’ versus  $|\underline{m}\underline{b}\check{\acute{e}}| \rightarrow /m\breve{b}\check{\acute{e}}/$  ‘pot, saucepan’ and  $|\underline{m}\underline{b}\grave{a}\grave{z}| \rightarrow /m\breve{b}\grave{a}\grave{z}/$  ‘maize’ illustrate the difference between a structurally syllabic and non-syllabic nasal.



The syllabification of the words  $/m\breve{b}\check{\acute{e}}/$  ‘pot’ and  $/m\breve{b}\grave{a}\grave{z}/$  ‘maize’ in isolation involves a second onset formation rule.

**Homorganic Nasal Branching Onset Formation**

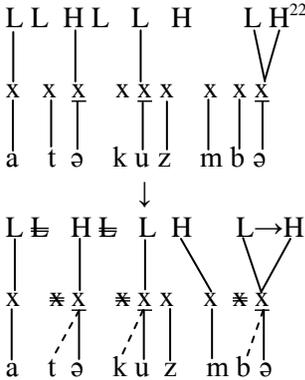
A nasal segment that has the same place of articulation as a following voiced stop is associated to the weight unit of the vowel that follows the voiced stop, unless the nasal is linked to a tone.



The original weight unit of the nasal is deleted in this example. The situation is more complicated if a word like  $m\breve{b}\check{\acute{e}}$  ‘pot’ is preceded by a floating high tone, as in  $|\grave{a}\text{-L}\acute{t}\acute{e} \# \text{L}\text{-k}\grave{u}\grave{z} \# \text{H} \# \underline{m}\underline{b}\check{\acute{e}}|$  ‘He buys a pot’. According to the tone rules the rising tone on  $m\breve{b}\check{\acute{e}}$  becomes a downstepped high tone (due to high tone plateauing, see 7.2.5). This downstepped high tone saturates the weight unit of

the stem, so that the preceding floating *H* has to attach to the left. In slow and deliberate speech this results in a rising tone on *kùz*: *àté kùz* 'mbé. In normal speech, however, the floating high tone attaches to the initial nasal consonant: *àté kùz m'bé*. Consequently, the structurally non-syllabic nasal will become syllabic.

(59) /àté kùz m'bé/ 'He buys a pot.' (NSP)

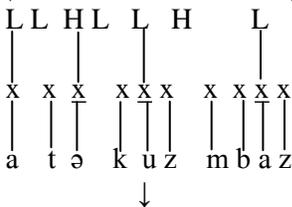


Interestingly, something similar can happen on a glide or liquid onset of a prominent syllable. This consonant is then split in a syllabic and a non-syllabic part. The latter forms the onset of the following syllable.

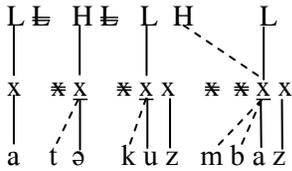
(60) |à-Ltɛ # L-kùàn # H # ù-ɔŋ| → /àté kwàn w'wóŋ/ (NSP)  
 → /àté kwǎn 'wóŋ/ (SSP)

Syllabification of an initial non-syllabic nasal as in (59) can take place only if all weight units to the right are saturated with tones. Otherwise, the floating high tone does not trigger syllable formation, but simply attaches to the existing syllable, as is the case when *mbàz* is inserted in the same phrase.

(61) |à-tɛ # L-kùz # H # mbàz| → /àté kùz mbàz/ 'He buys maize.'



22. The unattached L's on the tonal tier are floating low tone morphemes, which are irrelevant for the current discussion.

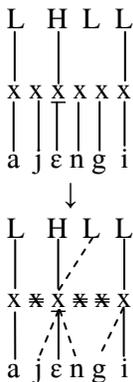


Homorganic nasal branching onset creation applies also when a syllabic nasal is preceded by a vowel. The nasal then loses its syllabicity. Its tone is delinked and its weight unit cancelled.

(62) |á**b̀̀** # ñ-díndím| → /áb̀̀ ñdíndím/ ‘at the blind person’s place’

Note that this kind of branching onset creation does not occur when a nasal has a different place of articulation than the following consonant, as in the Hesternal past perfective of the verb *jén* ‘see’.

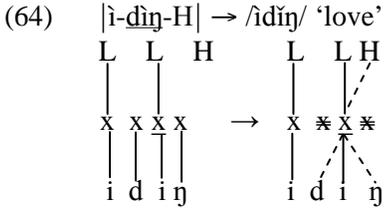
(63) |à-jén-Lgì| → /à.jèn.gì/ ‘he saw’



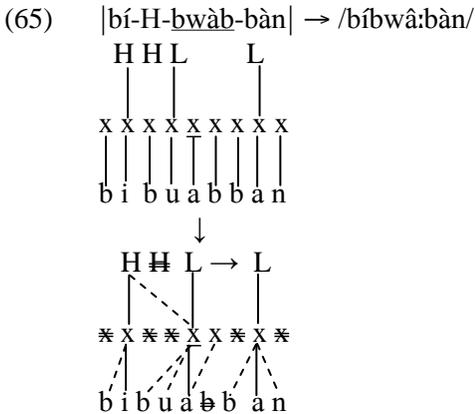
Example (63) also shows that if a consonant is preceded by a vowel and it is not subject to an onset formation rule, it automatically regroups with that vowel. This is called *coda formation*.

**Coda Formation**

A consonant that follows a vowel and that is not subject to an onset formation rule attaches to the weight unit of the preceding vowel and loses its own weight unit.



That all segments are structurally linked to a weight unit, also obstruents, is added by an instance of compensatory vowel lengthening. When the first segment of a succession of two identical obstruents is deleted (see 5.1.4), its weight unit survives if preceded by a prominent weight unit. The preceding vowel then spreads to the liberated weight unit, as in the verb form *bíbwâ:bàn* 'we were beaten', where the verb stem is *bwàb* 'beat' and the passive suffix is *-bàn* (*bí-* being the first person plural subject prefix and H the past tense prefix).



### 6.3. Hiatus resolution

As in many languages, successions of vowels are avoided in Eton. This section discusses the strategies of hiatus resolution, including vowel elision, glide formation (also called semivocalisation) and vowel coalescence (see Casali 1997 for this terminology). It is confined to offering general tendencies rather than a detailed description, because apparently too many parameters play a role to envisage them all: vowel quality, speech rate, word frequency, morpho-syntactic boundaries, number of syllables per word and probably also lexical collocations. Hiatus resolution never gives rise to compensatory lengthening of the surviving vowel. Not only the segment is deleted, but also its weight unit. Therefore, the original tone of the deleted or glided vowel has to find an alternative attachment site.

6.3.1. *V<sub>1</sub> elision*

When the strategy of vowel elision is used to avoid a succession of two vowels, it is always the first vowel that drops. *V<sub>1</sub>* elision is the most important strategy when two underlying vowels are separated by a word boundary (#). I found no restrictions as to the quality of one of the vowels.

- (66) a. |zəkúli # à-Lté # L-pèd| → /zəkúl àtə pèd/  
 ‘the school is closed’  
 b. |á # è-pàn| → /épàn/ ‘in the forest’  
 c. |à-kúmá # ú-Lté # L-jèb| → /àkúm ú’tə jèb/  
 ‘wealth is nice’  
 d. |í-nè # ì-vóí| → /ín ìvój/ ‘it is empty’  
 e. |ḍè # ù-H-ḍí| → /d ùdí/ ‘have you eaten?’  
 f. |ndógò # á # ḍ-ǎd| → /ndóg ‘á ‘ḍǎd/  
 ‘the mango on the basket’

Note that examples (66a, c & f) are likewise explained by the representation rule in Section 5.2.5 (elision of final, non-prominent stem vowels).

6.3.2. *Glide formation*

Glide formation is the most common hiatus resolution strategy within stems and between prefix and stem. However, a succession of two identical vowels within a word is subject to *V<sub>1</sub>* elision. Otherwise, the first of the adjacent vowels semi-vocalises, except when both vowels are of the second or third degree. In that case it depends mainly on the dialect. In “Northern Eton” it is mostly the second vowel, in “Southern Eton” mostly the first.

- (67) a. |ù-ěj|<sup>23</sup> → /wěj/ ‘honey’
- |    | “Northern”     | “Southern” |             |
|----|----------------|------------|-------------|
| b. | mbóé  → /mbój/ | /mbwé/     | ‘friend’    |
| c. | m-òé  → /mǒj/  | /mwě/      | ‘names’     |
| d. | ngòé  → /ngǒj/ | /ngwě/     | ‘pig’       |
| e. | ngòé  → /ngǒj/ | /ngwě/     | ‘centipede’ |

Sometimes glide formation resolves hiatus across a word boundary. This appears to be most often the case when the first vowel is |u|.

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23. The final segment of this word might also be /i/. I see no arguments in favour of one of the two underlying representations for the moment.

(68) |ású # H = ì-sáh # w-ě| → /ásw ísá 'wé/ 'for his work'

### 6.3.3. Vowel coalescence

Coalescence is attested only between words, when the second vowel is the front close vowel |i| and the first a front or central vowel. Front vowels are closed by one degree and central vowels are fronted. Vowel coalescence is in free alternation with elision of the first vowel.

(69) a. |mbě # ì-tàgà| → /mbě tàgə/ ~ /mbĩ tàgə/ 'pipe, lit. tobacco pot'  
 b. |ndá # í-bùl| → /ndé bùl/ 'nine houses'

There is considerable variation in the phonetic detail of phrases such as the last one. Sometimes the second vowel does not entirely merge with the first, but influences it (assimilation) and forms a diphthong with it [ndé bù:].

## 6.4. Syllable combinations

The chapters on nominal and verbal morphology (Chapter 3 and 4 respectively) start with a description of the syllable structure of underived stems. This section gives a more general overview of possible syllable combinations. Eton has a strict maximality constraint of three syllables on uninflected stems. By far the most common stem type is monosyllabic, followed by bisyllabic stems. Only one type of inflected stems can attain the absolute maximum of four syllables, viz. those with a suffix *-əŋgàná*.

Successions of three consonants (other than a double branching NPG<sup>24</sup>-onset in prominent syllables) are not allowed, with one exception, in the word *mìŋgá* 'woman'. Table 7 gives an overview of the attested combinations of two consonants with an intermediary syllable boundary. The combinations in the dark grey cells are unattested across syllables due to two rules discussed in this chapter, viz. branching onset creation and the elision rule discussed in Section 5.1.4. The light grey columns pointing to the absence of /m/ and /ŋ/ as the second consonant in a succession of two are due to the non-existence of suffixes and expansions that begin in these consonants (see Section III:2.1 for the notion of *expansion*). The other unattested successions are not predictable in a similar way. If they are not coincidental, they point to a dispreference for successions of coronal consonants (except if the second is /n/), marked by shading in Table 7. For the exceptional succession /z.l/, the lexical database contains only two examples, the verbs /jèzlanà/ 'reprimand' and /vázlâ/ 'throw away'. Both have an alternative pronunciation (in another dialect?) without /z/ and with a phonol-

24. NPG = Nasal - Voiced oral stop - Glide.

ogically long stem vowel: /jè:lànà/ and /vâ:lâ/. Three empty cells remain, all involving /z/. The absence of /z.b/ and /z.g/ might be due to the unstable nature of non-prominent /z/'s, whereas the absence of /b.z/ is easily explained by the rarity of expansions and suffixes that begin in /z/.

Table 7. Successions of consonants across a syllable boundary

$\sigma 1 \downarrow$ \ $\sigma 2 \rightarrow$	m	n	ŋ	b	d	g	z	l
m	■	√	■	■	√	√	√	√
n	■	■	■	√	■	√	▨	▨
ŋ	■	√	■	√	√	■	√	√
b	■	√	■	■	√	√		√
d	■	√	■	√	■	√	▨	▨
g	■	√	■	√	√	■	√	√
z	■	√	■		▨		■	√
l	■	√	■	√	▨	√	▨	■

## 7. Tone

### 7.1. Introduction

The tone patterns of Eton will be described by means of three structural tones: a low tone (L), a high tone (H) and a dissimilating high tone (D). At the end of the derivation every syllable must carry at least one tone. No special rules are needed to fulfil this requirement. Quite the contrary, sometimes Eton tonology seems to be a struggle to get every distinctive tone attached before the end of the derivation is reached. Tonal information is generally more robust than segmental information. Tones can only be deleted when they are identical to adjacent tones, i.e. when they do not contribute to a certain melody. A syllable can be associated to one of five different surface tone patterns: low (à), high (á), low-high (ǎ), high-low (â) and downstepped high (<sup>4</sup>á).<sup>25</sup> Downstepped high tones are tones that are slightly lower than a preceding high tone. This lowering

25. Perhaps a sixth pattern has to be added, viz. downstepped falling (<sup>4</sup>â). The possibility exists in theory, but at present I fail to hear a clear difference between a downstepped high tone and a downstepped falling pattern, provided that the latter exists.

is functional. High tones following a downstep within the same intonation unit<sup>26</sup> are never higher than that downstepped high tone. Moreover, downstepped high tones can never follow a low tone (whether isolated or in a high-low combination).<sup>27</sup> The following words and phrases illustrate the differential function of tone.

- (70) /zám/ ‘pleasure’  
 /zàm/ ‘raffia’  
 /zǎm/ ‘leprosy’  
 /pám/ ‘go away!’  
 /pâm/ ‘man’  
 /ndá ì mìnṅá/ ‘the house of the woman’  
 /ndá í ‘mínṅá/ ‘the houses of the woman’<sup>28</sup>  
 /ìlá/ ‘a/the glass’  
 /ílá/ ‘1) ‘this glass’, 2) three’<sup>29</sup>  
 /í‘lá/ ‘in the glass’

Contrary to segmental phonemes, tonemes cannot be described as relatively discrete regions in a continuum. Tonal differences are always relative. A high tone at the end of an utterance with falling intonation can be acoustically lower than a low tone at the beginning of that utterance. As long as it is distinctly higher than the low tones in its immediate environment, it functions as a high tone.

A final introductory remark concerns borrowings from European languages. I have not found any link between stress in the source word and tone in Eton, but this might be because it is often impossible to know whether a certain word is borrowed from French or from (Pidgin) English.

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26. This is a notion that needs further investigation. I have not yet studied the relation between intonation units and syntactic units.

27. The term downstep refers to non-automatic downstep in this description, not to downdrift.

28. These phrases are in a phonological notation of slow and deliberate speech, with pauses between the words, in which hiatus resolution strategies do not apply.

29. These forms do not appear in isolation. In the first translation it is the noun *ìlá* preceded by the augment, which marks a noun as an antecedent of a relative clause, among other things. In the second translation, *íílá* is the form of agreement pattern X of the adnominal numeral ‘three’.

## 7.2. Tone rules

The tone rules describe how floating tones attach to the available segmental material. Possible outcomes of these rules are the formation of complex tones (rising or falling), downstep of high tones, high tone plateauing and delinking of underlyingly attached tones, sometimes involving their elision. It is impossible to formulate the tone rules without reference to prominence and morphosyntactic boundaries. Suffixed floating tones attach to the left and prefixed floating tones to the right, i.e. attachment within the word is always in the direction of the prominent syllable. Attachment of floating tones across words is normally to the right. Prominent syllables have two attachment sites for tones. Non-prominent syllables can carry one tone only, except in some cases where tonal material risks being lost due to an insufficient number of available attachment sites. Before describing the tone rules proper, we must discuss a rule that creates floating tones: the rule of high tone copy.

7.2.1. *High tone copy*

A word final high tone is copied to the right, i.e. every word with a final high tone is followed by a floating high tone. There is also high tone copy between a high prefix and a following syllable.

$$\begin{aligned} c\acute{v} \# &\rightarrow c\acute{v}H \#^{30} \\ c\acute{v}- &\rightarrow c\acute{v}H- \end{aligned}$$

Examples (71-75) illustrate high tone copy across a word boundary in a variety of syntactic structures. Examples (71c) and (72b) are meant to prove that no floating high tone morphemes are at stake. The floating high tone that results from high tone copy is not represented in the structural notation. In example (71b) the prefix of the anaphoric modifier has an underlying high tone, so that high tone copy has no audible effect. The underlying high tone causes high tone spread onto the stem of the modifier. Example (71a) illustrates that floating high tone attachment across a word or clitic boundary does not feed into high tone spread (see 7.2.4).

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30. Syllable structure is irrelevant for the application of tone rules. For the sake of simplicity all syllable schemes that illustrate the tone rules are made up of CV-syllables. In these schemes the nature of morphological boundaries is made explicit only where relevant. Elsewhere boundaries are marked by a space. The rule  $H \underline{c\acute{v}c\acute{v}} \rightarrow {}^{\prime}c\acute{v}c\acute{v}$ , for instance, applies whether the floating high tone is prefixed, cliticised or separated by a word boundary. Conversely, the word boundary between H and the following syllable is part of the following rule:  $H \# c\grave{v} \rightarrow c\acute{v} L$ .

- (71) a. |tíd # ì-tè| → /tíd ítè/ ‘that animal’  
 b. |tíd # í-tè| → /tíd ítê/ ‘those animals’  
 c. |zwàg # ì-tè| → /zwàg ítè/ ‘this elephant’
- (72) a. |m-ìnngá # ì-móg| → /mìnnngá ‘mwág/ ‘one woman’  
 b. |pî # ì-móg| → /pjâ mwág/ ‘one avocado’
- (73) |àné # kòpí| → /ànó kôpí/ ‘like coffee; coffee, for instance’
- (74) |à-H-vé-H # mbán # pà| → /âvâ mbán pâ/ ‘She gave her co-wife a machete.’
- (75) |tíd # ì=nàg| → /tíd î nàg/ ‘cow meat’

I distinguish between high tone copy and high tone spread, which takes place within the stem (see 7.2.4). The main difference is that a high tone can spread onto a following non-prominent syllable without delinking the original tone of that syllable, whereas high tone copy always results in the delinking of the tone of a non-prominent syllable.

High tone copy is blocked in the case of a following floating low tone, as illustrated by the citation form of the verb in (76a) and the Remote past imperfective in (76b).

- (76) a. |á # L-pàm| → /á pàm/ ‘to be furious’  
 b. |mè-ngá-bé # L-sòm-Lgì| → /mèngábé sòmgi/ ‘I was hunting.’

This also applies to the situation where a low syllabic nasal loses its syllabicity because of a preceding vowel (77).

- (77) |á # ì-tèn| → /á ntèn/ ‘precisely’ (\*/á ‘ntèn/)

Moreover, high tone copy is not obligatory between a word and certain following verb forms. This word can be (part of) the subject of the verb (78), the antecedent of a relative clause (79), or a subordinator (80), among others. The verb forms include the Present, the Present resultative and the Consecutive. Note that tone copy is always possible in these cases.<sup>31</sup>

31. I found some examples that suggest that there is optional tone spread instead of tone copy in this context. In the phrase *ngân íté ‘pám á m’ndím* ‘The crocodile gets out of the water’ I noted a falling tone on the subject prefix *i-*, which is a non-prominent syllable. Tone copy would have resulted in the form *í ‘t’é ‘pám*. If this is correct, tone spread is not restricted to the domain of the word.

- (78) a. /mìnnǵá àbógô í<sup>h</sup>bógí/ (no high tone copy)  
 b. /mìnnǵá á<sup>h</sup>bógô í<sup>h</sup>bógí/ (high tone copy)  
 ‘The woman is sitting on a chair.’
- (79) a. /ítíd mǵtǵ ‘jén/ (no high tone copy)  
 b. /ítíd mǵ<sup>h</sup>tǵ ‘jén/ (high tone copy) ‘the animal that I see.’  
 c. /í byém mǵtǵ dǵǵ ‘jǵg èèj bjó í<sup>h</sup>tǵ bí-nǵ nǵ/  
 (no high tone copy) ‘The things that I need most there are...’
- (80) /ǵǵá ànè ùjǵb/ (no high tone copy) ‘when she is far away’

Example (81) proves that the optional floating high tone before the subject prefix is not a tonal morpheme, but the result of tone copy. When the preceding word ends in a low tone, the variant with a low subject prefix is the only option.

- (81) /ímǵd mǵtǵ ‘jén/ ‘the person I see’ (\*/ímǵd mǵ<sup>h</sup>tǵ ‘jén/)

When a word with a final high tone precedes other verb forms, such as a Hesternal past perfective, tone copy is obligatory (82). Without high tone copy the clause has a different reading. In (83) two readings are possible. Either the verb form is interpreted as a (dependent) Consecutive (83a), or the subject is extraposed (83b).

- (82) /mìnnǵá á<sup>h</sup>ǵǵám bí<sup>h</sup>dí/ ‘The woman prepared a meal.’
- (83) /mìnnǵá àǵǵám bí<sup>h</sup>dí/  
 a. ‘... and the woman prepared a meal.’  
 b. ‘The woman, she prepared a meal.’

One of the complexities of the Eton tonal system is that a single surface melody can be the outcome of different underlying representations and tone rules. The following list of second person singular possessives illustrates how the rule of tone copy can neutralise underlying tonal oppositions, in this case between *ì-*, the prefix of agreement pattern IX (singular) in (84c) and *í-*, the prefix of agreement pattern X (plural) in (84d).

- (84) a. |kǵb # ì-ǵ| → /kwàb jǵ/ ‘your hook’  
 b. |kǵb # í-ǵ| → /kwàb jǵ/ ‘your hooks’  
 c. |mbéd # ì-ǵ| → /mbéd jǵ/ ‘your guitar’  
 d. |mbéd # í-ǵ| → /mbéd jǵ/ ‘your guitars’

## 7.2.2. Floating high tone attachment

Floating high tone suffixes attach to the left. If the preceding syllable carries a low tone there are two possibilities. If it is prominent, the floating high tone suffix adds to the low tone in order to form a rising tone (85). In case of a non-prominent preceding syllable, the suffix deletes the preceding low tone and takes its place (86). This is because prominent syllables can carry two tones and non-prominent syllables only one. Examples can be found in deverbal nominal derivation (85a, 86a) and in some verb forms such as the Consecutive (85b, 86b).

(c̀-)c̀-H → (c̀-)c̣  
 (c̀-)c̀c̀-H → (c̀-)c̀c̣

- (85) a. /sòm/ ‘hunt’  
 |̀-Sòm-H| → /ɲɔ̃sòm/ ‘hunting’  
 b. |̀-ɲòŋ-H pó kô lè-lén| → /... àɲòŋ pó kô lèlén/  
 ‘... and he also takes a palm nervure’
- (86) a. /bjàni/ ‘despise’  
 |̀-bjàni-H| → /ibjàní/ ‘contempt’  
 b. /bèglè/ ‘carry’  
 |̀-Lté L-ɲòŋ N-úná à-bèglè-H ɲé| → /átá ɲòŋ múná àbèglé ɲâ/  
 ‘He takes the child and carries her.’

If the preceding syllable carries a high tone, the floating high tone suffix is simply deleted. The presence of a floating high tone suffix can only be established by analogy.

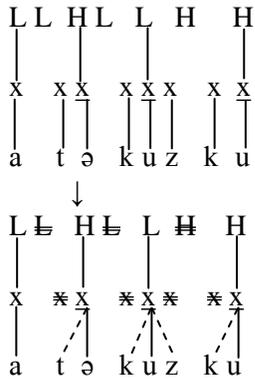
c̣c̣-H → c̣c̣  
c̣-H → c̣

- (87) |̀-wú-H| → /àwú/ ‘death’

Floating high tones that are not suffixed to a stem attach to the right. If the following syllable carries a high tone, the floating high tone is deleted.

H c̣ → c̣  
 H c̣ → c̣

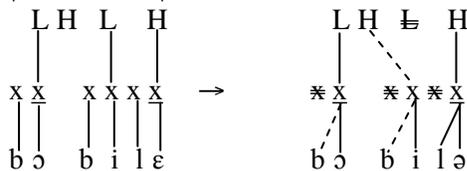
(88) |à-Ltḗ # L-kùz # H # kù| → /àtḗ kùz kù/ ‘He buys a chicken.’



If the following syllable carries a low tone there are several possibilities. I will first discuss attachment to a non-prominent syllable (i.e. a prefix). In this case the boundary between the floating H and the following prefix is an important factor. If this is a clitic or affix boundary, the low tone of the prefix is deleted (89-90). In case of a word boundary the low tone of the prefix is delinked, but not deleted (91-92). The difference can be seen when the first syllable of the following stem carries a high tone. If the original low tone of the prefix is delinked without being deleted, it downsteps the following high tone.

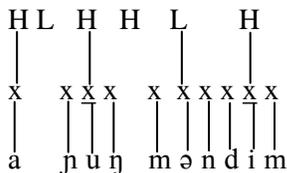
- H # cḗ → cḗ L
- H = cḗ → cḗ
- H-cḗ → cḗ

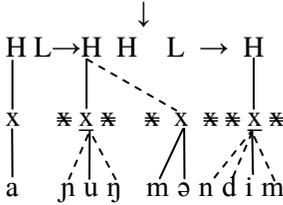
(89) |b-ḗH = bḗ-lḗ| → /bḗ bílḗ/ ‘small trees’



(90) |í-bḗ-lḗ # bí| → /íbílḗ bí/ ‘these trees’

(91) |á # L-nún # H # mḗ-ndím| → /á ʔnún móʔndím/ ‘to drink water’



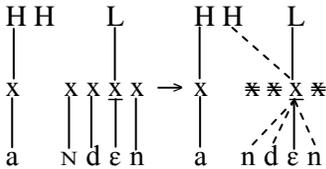


(92) |á # bì-lé| → /á bí'ló/ 'in the trees'

The last situation to be described is when a floating H attaches to the right to a prominent syllable which carries a low or rising tone.<sup>32</sup> The rules of high tone plateauing apply if the stem has a low-high tone pattern or when it is followed by a floating high tone (see 7.2.5). I will here only discuss the situation in which the stem is entirely low and not followed by a floating high tone. In that case the floating H attaches to the low tone of the prominent syllable in order to form a falling tone.

H # cŷ(cv̂) → cŷ(cv̂)  
 H = cŷ(cv̂) → cŷ(cv̂)  
 H-cŷ(cv̂) → cŷ(cv̂)

(93) |á # ndèn| → /á ndên/ 'in the cobweb'



(94) |mè-H-krèlì| → /màkrèlì/ 'I hurt myself'

### 7.2.3. Floating low tone attachment

Floating low tone suffixes and infixes behave as floating H suffixes. If preceded by an identical tone, they are deleted, as illustrated by the verbal infix |Lg| in (95).

cvcv̂-L → cv̂cv̂  
 cv̂-L → cv̂

32. The term rising tone is used for short to mean a succession of a low and a high tone.

(95) |m̀ə-H-b̀èb̄ <Lg> è| → /m̀əb̀èb̄g̀ə/ ‘I looked at it.’

The -L suffix attaches to a preceding high prominent syllable forming a falling tone. I found no examples of a floating low tone suffix that attaches to a high bi- or polysyllabic stem.

$c\acute{v}\text{-L} \rightarrow c\grave{v}$

(96) |m̀ə-k̀ód <Lg> ò| → /m̀ək̀òd̄g̀ò/ ‘I left’

Prefixed<sup>33</sup> floating low tones attach to the right. If followed by a low tone they are deleted.

$L\text{-}c\grave{v} \rightarrow c\grave{v}$

$L\text{-}c\grave{v} \rightarrow c\grave{v}$

As with floating high tones the most complex situation arises when a floating low tone has to attach to the right to a syllable that carries the opposite tone, in this case a high tone. The left context is important here. When the floating *L* is preceded by a low syllable, it is deleted. If preceded by a high tone, the floating low tone prefix downsteps the following high tone (97).

$c\grave{v} L\text{-}c\acute{v} \rightarrow c\grave{v} c\acute{v}$ <sup>34</sup>

$c\acute{v} L\text{-}c\acute{v} \rightarrow c\acute{v} \text{ } ^\flat c\acute{v}$

(97) |à-Lt̀é # L-d̀í| → /àt̀ó \textsuperscript{ }^\flat d̀í/ ‘She is eating.’

#### 7.2.4. *High tone spread*

Within the word a high tone spreads over to a following syllable if the latter is low. The outcome is always a falling tone, also if the receiving syllable is not prominent. This is a major difference between high tone copy and high tone spread.

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33. Floating low tones are always either affixed or the result of delinking or vowel elision. There are no free morphemes that consist of a low tone only, nor is there a rule of low tone copy. In this sense one could say that low tones are less marked than high tones.

34. Accent is irrelevant for this rule.

$c\acute{v}\text{-}c\grave{v}(c\grave{v}) \rightarrow c\acute{v}\text{-}c\hat{v}(c\grave{v})$   
 $c\acute{v}c\grave{v} \rightarrow c\acute{v}c\hat{v}$   
 $c\acute{v}\text{-}c\grave{v} \rightarrow c\acute{v}\text{-}c\hat{v}$

(98) |bá-nè # já| → /bónê já/ ‘How are they?’

(99) |ndógò| → /ndógô/ ‘mango’

The preference of non-prominent syllables to carry maximally one tone is not violated by tone spread if one assumes that it is the preceding syllable that carries the high tone and that the latter simply influences the pronunciation of the following low tone. Tone copy, in contrast, involves the creation of a new tone. A non-prominent syllable can be pronounced with a falling tone only if the preceding syllable is high. This restriction does not hold for prominent syllables. The difference between copy and spread can be schematised as follows:

High tone copy



High tone spread



Floating high tone assignment across an affix boundary feeds into high tone spread (100), assignment across a word or clitic boundary does not (101).<sup>35</sup>

(100) |H-à-kòm # ví| → /ákwâm ví/ ‘this akwam tree’

(101) a. |è-tó # H = m̀-ndèn| → /ètó m̀ndèn/ ‘a drop of saliva’

b. |H # è-pàn| → /épàn/ ‘in the forest’

There are some environments in which high tone spread does not apply, viz. between a stem and some suffixes and expansions.

35. Together with the rule that high tone attachment across a word boundary delinks a following low tone on a non-prominent syllable, this rule justifies a distinction between three types of boundaries: word, clitic and affix.

- (102) a. /môɣnð ~ mðɣnð/ ‘banana sprout’  
 b. /ɕémni ~ ɕêmnì/ ‘be rare’  
 c. /ìlógzò ~ ìlǒgzò/ ‘container to evacuate water’

Note that the first syllable of these words is always closed or has a long vowel. A rule that blocks high tone spread from such syllables is mistaken, however:

- (103) a. /îvúɣlâ/ ‘wind’  
 b. /sílâ/ ‘pot’  
 c. /wó:lô/ ‘gather’

Hyman (2003:261) describes a similar situation in the Cameroonian Bantu language Basaá and argues that high tone spread “provides a window into the underlying syllable structure of a form” in these cases. The argument is that the stems with impermeable expansions or suffixes have three underlying syllables, the latter two of which are low. High tone spread is from the first to the second syllable. The nucleus of the second syllable is then deleted by the following rule of syncope:  $v \rightarrow \emptyset / VC \_ CV$

$c'vc'v\hat{c}v \rightarrow c'vc'v\hat{c}v \rightarrow c'vc\hat{c}v$

This works well for Eton also, where CVCVCV-successions are avoided in basic stems.<sup>36</sup> Evidence for this can be found in words like *ɣɣélgí* ‘sand’, *ɕòngí* ‘toad’ and participles such as *néngí* ‘being big’. These have an alternative pronunciation (at least in “Southern” Eton) in which the final *ì* is absent and there is a harmonic vowel before the final *g*. In one case the second syllable of the alternative form is a syllabic nasal (104d).

- (104) a. /ɣɣélg/ ‘sand’  
 b. /ɕòng/ ‘toad’  
 c. /néng/ ‘being big’  
 d. /nùmni ~ nùmni/ ‘raw’

Usually the low tone of the deleted vowel attaches to the left, but there is some variability (see the examples in 102). This explains the tonality of the so called G-form of verbs (see Section VII:2.2).

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36. The term basic stems is meant to exclude borrowings (e.g. *kálâdâ* ‘book’) and reduplications (e.g. *ì-kù~kùmà* ‘rubbish dump’).

## 7.2.5. High tone plateauing

High tone plateauing occurs when a stem with a rising tone pattern is preceded by a floating high tone. This floating high tone can be the result of high tone copy or spread. The high part of the rising tone pattern on the stem can be caused by a *-H* suffix. In this situation, the final high tone of the stem copies to the left, until it reaches the first low tone of the stem. This low tone is pushed to the left (delinked) and then downsteps the following high tone.

H  $\underline{c\grave{v}c\acute{v}}$  →  $\acute{c\acute{v}c\acute{v}}$   
 H  $\underline{c\check{v}}$  →  $\acute{c\acute{v}}$   
 $c\acute{v}$ - $\underline{c\grave{v}c\acute{v}}$  →  $c\acute{v}$ - $\acute{c\acute{v}c\acute{v}}$   
 $c\acute{v}$ - $\underline{c\check{v}}$  →  $c\acute{v}$ - $\acute{c\acute{v}}$

- (105) a.  $|\grave{n}\text{-}k\grave{o}b \# H = \underline{mw\grave{a}n\acute{i}} | \rightarrow /ŋkw\grave{a}b \acute{m}w\grave{a}n\acute{i}/$  ‘cashbox’  
 b.  $|\grave{n}\text{-}p\grave{a}g\text{-}n\acute{i} \# H = \underline{v}j\grave{o}g | \rightarrow /m\grave{p}\acute{a}g\acute{n}\acute{i} \acute{v}j\grave{o}g/$  ‘the extraction of clay’  
 c.  $|\acute{a} \# \underline{d}\text{-}\check{s} | \rightarrow /á \acute{d}\acute{s}/$  ‘in the hand’  
 d.  $|\grave{n}\text{-}k\acute{u}\sim\underline{Nk\check{o}n} | \rightarrow /ŋk\acute{u}\acute{ŋ}kw\grave{a}n/$  ‘ill person’  
     cf. /ùkw\grave{a}n/ ‘disease’  
 e.  $|\grave{n}\text{-}z\grave{a}\sim\underline{Nz\grave{a}m} | \rightarrow /n\grave{z}\acute{a}\acute{n}z\grave{a}m/$  ‘leprosy sufferer’  
     cf. /z\grave{a}m/ ‘leprosy’  
 f.  $|\underline{H}\text{-}\grave{a}\text{-}\underline{d\grave{u}m} \# \underline{v\grave{i}} | \rightarrow /á\acute{d}\acute{u}m \acute{v}\acute{i}/$  ‘this adum tree’

As has been said, a downstepped high tone cannot follow a low tone. Therefore the floating high tone that triggered high tone plateauing must attach to the left in case it is preceded by a low syllable.

$\underline{c\grave{v}} H \underline{c\grave{v}c\acute{v}} \rightarrow \underline{c\check{v}} \acute{c\acute{v}c\acute{v}}$

- (106) a.  $|\underline{d\grave{e}} \# \grave{u}\text{-}L\acute{t}\acute{e} \# L\text{-}\underline{d\check{z}\acute{e}m} \# H \# \underline{m\check{o}d\check{z}\acute{a}n} | \rightarrow /d \grave{u}t\acute{e} d\check{z}\acute{e}m \acute{m}\acute{o}\acute{d}\check{z}\acute{a}n/$  ‘Do you know my brother?’  
 b.  $|\grave{n}\text{-}k\grave{a} \# H = \underline{d\check{z}\acute{a}d} | \rightarrow /ŋk\grave{a} \acute{d}\check{z}\acute{a}d/$  ‘The handle of the basket’

A complication arises when the previous syllable is a low prefix. One would expect that the floating high tone that triggers high tone plateauing replaces the tone of the prefix, as in the following scheme.

$c\grave{v}\text{-}H\text{-}\underline{c\check{v}c} \rightarrow *c\acute{v}\text{-}\acute{c\acute{v}c}$

However, depending on the construction, something else happens. In the non-final form of the Hodiernal past perfective and the Hesternal past perfective

tive, the delinked low tone of the verb stem is simply deleted when the subject prefix is low, as in (107).

$c\grave{v}\text{-}H\text{-}c\grave{v}c\text{-}H \rightarrow c\grave{v}\text{-}c\acute{v}c$  (Hodiernal past perfective)

(107)  $|m\grave{e}\text{-}H\text{-}p\grave{a}\eta\text{-}H \# \eta g\grave{o}g| \rightarrow /m\grave{e}p\acute{o}\eta \eta g\acute{w}\hat{a}g/$  ‘I took a stone.’

With a high subject prefix, everything goes according to rule (108).

(108)  $|b\acute{o}\text{-}H\text{-}p\grave{a}\eta\text{-}H \# \eta g\grave{o}g| \rightarrow /b\acute{o}'p\acute{o}\eta \eta g\acute{w}\hat{a}g/$  ‘They took a stone.’

The tonality of Contrastive resultative verb forms is even more surprising, in that it violates the preference of non-prominent syllables to carry maximally one toneme. Examples (109a) and (110a) contain a Resultative verb form with a low root, a low subject prefix and a high suffix. The Contrastive resultative forms in (109b) and (110b) are derived from that by means of the prefix  $|_{NH}\text{-}|$ . The floating high tone of this prefix triggers high tone plateauing and then attaches to the left where it forms a rising tone on the preceding subject prefix.

(109) a.  $|nd\acute{o}g\grave{o} \# \grave{i}\text{-}b\grave{e}d\text{-}\acute{a} \# \acute{a} \# \text{ɕ}\text{-}\acute{a}d| \rightarrow /nd\acute{o}g\grave{o} \grave{i}b\grave{e}d \acute{a} \text{'}\text{ɕ}\acute{a}d/$   
‘The mango lies on the basket.’

b.  $|nd\acute{o}g\grave{o} \# \grave{i}\text{-}NH\text{-}b\grave{e}d\text{-}\acute{a} \# \grave{a}j\grave{a} \# \acute{a} \# \text{ɕ}\text{-}\acute{a}d| \rightarrow /nd\acute{o}g\grave{o} \text{'}\acute{a}m\acute{e}d \grave{a}j \grave{a} \text{'}\text{ɕ}\acute{a}d/$   
‘The mango already lies on the basket.’

(110) a.  $|nd\acute{o}g\grave{o} \# \grave{i}\text{-}p\grave{u}d\text{-}\acute{a} \# \acute{a} \# \text{ɕ}\text{-}\acute{a}d| \rightarrow /nd\acute{o}g\grave{o} \grave{i}p\grave{u}d\acute{a} \acute{a} \text{ɕ}\acute{a}d/$   
‘The mango is in the basket.’

b.  $|nd\acute{o}g\grave{o} \# \grave{i}\text{-}NH\text{-}p\grave{u}d\text{-}\acute{a} \# \grave{a}j\grave{a} \# \acute{a} \# \text{ɕ}\text{-}\acute{a}d| \rightarrow /nd\acute{o}g\grave{o} \text{'}\acute{a}mp\acute{u}d \grave{a}j \grave{a} \text{'}\text{ɕ}\acute{a}d/$   
‘The mango is already in the basket.’

As has been said, floating high tone attachment across a word or clitic boundary does not feed into high tone spread. This explains the absence of high tone plateauing on *ítǝŋ* and *béǝǝ* in the following examples.

(111)  $|N\text{-}b\acute{o}n \# H = \grave{i}\text{-}t\check{o}\eta| \rightarrow /m\grave{m}w\acute{a}n \acute{i}t\check{o}\eta/$  ‘palm oil’

(112)  $|à\text{-}\eta g\acute{a}\text{-}v\acute{e} \# b\grave{e}\text{-}\text{t}\check{s}\acute{i} \# b\text{-}\check{e} \# b\text{-}\acute{o}n \# b\acute{a} = k\acute{a}bd\grave{i}| \rightarrow$   
 $/\grave{a}\eta g\acute{a}v\acute{a} b\acute{o}\text{t}\check{s}\acute{i} \text{'}b\acute{e} bw\acute{a}n b\acute{o} k\acute{a}bd\grave{i}/$   
‘He has given young goats to his in-laws.’

### 7.2.6. Representation of a dissimilating high tone

The dissimilating high tone (or better *morphotoneme*, marked with a double high tone accent on the vowel:  $\acute{\acute{a}}$ ) is represented by a low tone when it follows a structural high tone. Elsewhere, it is represented by a high toneme.

$c\acute{v} \acute{\acute{v}} \rightarrow c\acute{v} c\grave{v}$   
 $H c\acute{\acute{v}} \rightarrow H c\grave{v}$   
 $c\grave{v} \acute{\acute{v}} \rightarrow c\grave{v} c\acute{v}$   
 $c\acute{\acute{v}} \rightarrow c\acute{v}$

(113) |H-m̀̀-lú # má| → /m̀́lú mâ/ ‘these days (lit. these nights)’<sup>37</sup>

(114) a. |ñ-kúl # wámà| → /ñkúl wám̀̀/ ‘my log drum’  
 b. |ñ-pàn # wámà| → /ñpàn wám̀̀/ ‘my arrow’

(115) |à-Lté # L-b̀̀-ɲ # H # ɲé| → /àtə b̀̀ɲ ɲâ/ ‘She chases him.’

### 7.2.7. Tonetics: simplification and inertia

We have seen a number of rules that delete a floating tone in the presence of an adjacent identical tone, e.g.  $c\grave{v} L\text{-}c\acute{v} \rightarrow c\grave{v} c\acute{v}$ . These rules are exceptionless. There is also an amount of optional simplification, which is not applied in slow and deliberate speech. When a syllable with a falling tone is followed by a syllable with a low tone, the final low part of the falling tone is often deleted, so that the pattern falling-low is simplified to high-low. In addition, a rising tone can be pronounced low before a syllable that carries a high tone. Conversely, simplification never applies to the left. A rising tone will never be pronounced high because it is preceded by a low tone. The example in (116) shows that simplification occurs on surface level, after the application of all other rules. The dissimilating high morphotoneme on the possessive modifier *mámà* is represented by a low tone, which becomes falling due to high tone copy. Finally the rising tone of the head noun is simplified to low.

(116) |m-ĩz # mámà| → /mĩz mầ̀m̀̀/ → [mĩfĩm̀̀m̀̀] ‘my eyes’

Another surface rule that can be mentioned here is inertia. In a succession of a low tone and two high tones, e.g. /m̀̀zázĩ/ ‘enemies’, the first high tone tends to be somewhere in between the low tone and the second high tone. Although the F0 difference between the first and the second high tone can be big-

37. Note that these examples also involve tone copy.

ger than that between a high tone and a following downstepped high tone, the former difference is far more difficult to hear once one is acquainted with Eton phonology, obviously because it is functionally irrelevant.

### 7.2.8. Successions of floating tones

In case of a succession of floating high tones that attach to the right the rightmost H decides the outcome. The others are deleted. Example (117a) is a simple connective construction. The floating high tone connective morpheme attaches to the prefix of the modifying noun, thereby deleting the original low tone of the prefix. Since this connective morpheme is a proclitic, not a prefix, high tone attachment does not feed into tone spread. In (117b) the connective is followed by the augment, a floating high tone prefix. The augment attaches to the gender prefix of the modifying noun, deleting its low tone and feeding into high tone spread. The connective H is then deleted because it precedes an attached high tone.

- (117) a. |ì-dì:gà # H=lè-ṅgòṅ| → /ìdì:gà lṅgòṅ/ ‘the key of the padlock’  
 b. |ì-dì:gà # H=H-lè-ṅgòṅ # dí-lí | → /ìdìgà lṅgòṅ dílí/  
 ‘the key of that padlock’

Remember also the rule that high tone copy is blocked before a floating low tone.

### 7.2.9. Optional tone patterns as a sign of lexicalisation

There are many connective constructions that have acquired a specialised meaning. A certain amount of lexicalisation of connective constructions is equally visible in the tonology, also when the semantics of the construction is perfectly compositional. Examples (a) and (b) are equally acceptable in (118-119). The (a)-examples are the forms as predicted by the rules: the attachment of the connective floating high tone does not feed into high tone spread. In the (b)-examples the connective morpheme behaves as if it were a prefix, rather than a proclitic. In example (119c) there are no options, since the stem of the first modifying noun (*àṅùṅ* ‘mouth’) is tonally saturated due to the following H.

- (118) a. |ì-bwágzì # H=à-kǒl| → /ìbwágzì ákǒl/ ‘ankle’  
 b. |ì-bwágzì (#) H-à-kǒl| → /ìbwágzì á’kól/ ‘ankle’

- (119) a.  $|\grave{\text{i}}\text{-}\text{ɕ}\acute{\text{ɛ}} \# \text{H} = \grave{\text{a}}\text{-}\text{n}\grave{\text{u}}\eta| \rightarrow /i\text{ɕ}\acute{\text{ɛ}} \acute{\text{a}}\text{n}\grave{\text{u}}\eta/$  ‘lip’  
 b.  $|\grave{\text{i}}\text{-}\text{ɕ}\acute{\text{ɛ}} (\#) \text{H}\text{-}\grave{\text{a}}\text{-}\text{n}\grave{\text{u}}\eta| \rightarrow /i\text{ɕ}\acute{\text{ɛ}} \acute{\text{a}}\text{n}\acute{\text{u}}\eta/$  ‘lip’  
 c.  $|\grave{\text{i}}\text{-}\text{ɕ}\acute{\text{ɛ}} \# \text{H} = \grave{\text{a}}\text{-}\text{n}\grave{\text{u}}\eta \# \text{H} = \text{mb}\acute{\text{ɛ}}\eta| \rightarrow /i\text{ɕ}\acute{\text{ɛ}} \acute{\text{a}}\text{n}\acute{\text{u}}\eta \text{ } ^\text{t}\text{mb}\acute{\text{ɛ}}\eta/$  ‘labium’

### 7.2.10. Summary

It has been shown, I hope, that the rather complex tonology of Eton can be described by means of a minimal set of structural tones (*L*, *H* and *D*) and some simple rules that may refer to three types of morphological boundary in their context specification: affix, proclitic and word. The rules require a minimal amount of mutual ordering, summarised as follows:

#### 1. High tone copy and High tone dissimilation

$\text{c}\acute{\text{v}} \# \rightarrow \text{c}\acute{\text{v}}\text{H} \#$   
 $\text{c}\acute{\text{v}} \# \text{c}\acute{\text{v}}\text{-} \rightarrow \text{c}\acute{\text{v}} \# \text{c}\grave{\text{v}}\text{-}$   
 $\text{c}\grave{\text{v}} \# \text{c}\acute{\text{v}}\text{-} \rightarrow \text{c}\grave{\text{v}} \# \text{c}\acute{\text{v}}\text{-}$

#### 2. Floating tone attachment within the word

$\text{c}\acute{\text{v}}\text{c}\acute{\text{v}}\text{-H} \rightarrow \text{c}\acute{\text{v}}\text{c}\acute{\text{v}}$   
 $\text{c}\acute{\text{v}}\text{-H} \rightarrow \text{c}\acute{\text{v}}$   
 $(\text{c}\grave{\text{v}}\text{-})\text{c}\grave{\text{v}}\text{-H} \rightarrow (\text{c}\grave{\text{v}}\text{-})\text{c}\acute{\text{v}}$   
 $(\text{c}\grave{\text{v}}\text{-})\text{c}\grave{\text{v}}\text{c}\grave{\text{v}}\text{-H} \rightarrow (\text{c}\grave{\text{v}}\text{-})\text{c}\grave{\text{v}}\text{c}\acute{\text{v}}$   
 $\text{H}\text{-c}\acute{\text{v}} \rightarrow \text{c}\acute{\text{v}}$   
 $\text{H}\text{-c}\acute{\text{v}} \rightarrow \text{c}\acute{\text{v}}$   
 $\text{H}\text{-c}\grave{\text{v}} \rightarrow \text{c}\acute{\text{v}}$   
 $\text{H}\text{-c}\grave{\text{v}}(\text{c}\grave{\text{v}}) \rightarrow \text{c}\acute{\text{v}}(\text{c}\grave{\text{v}})$   
 $\text{c}\grave{\text{v}}\text{c}\grave{\text{v}}\text{-L} \rightarrow \text{c}\grave{\text{v}}\text{c}\grave{\text{v}}$   
 $\text{c}\grave{\text{v}}\text{-L} \rightarrow \text{c}\grave{\text{v}}$   
 $\text{c}\acute{\text{v}}\text{-L} \rightarrow \text{c}\acute{\text{v}}$   
 $\text{L}\text{-c}\grave{\text{v}} \rightarrow \text{c}\grave{\text{v}}$   
 $\text{L}\text{-c}\acute{\text{v}} \rightarrow \text{c}\acute{\text{v}}$   
 $(\text{c})\grave{\text{v}}\text{-}\acute{\text{v}}(\text{c}) \rightarrow (\text{c})\text{G}\acute{\text{v}}(\text{c})$   
 $\text{c}\grave{\text{v}} \text{L}\text{-c}\acute{\text{v}} \rightarrow \text{c}\grave{\text{v}} \text{c}\acute{\text{v}}$   
 $\text{c}\acute{\text{v}} \text{L}\text{-c}\acute{\text{v}} \rightarrow \text{c}\acute{\text{v}} \text{ } ^\text{t}\text{c}\acute{\text{v}}$   
 $\text{H}\text{-c}\grave{\text{v}}\text{c}\acute{\text{v}} \rightarrow \text{ } ^\text{t}\text{c}\acute{\text{v}}\text{c}\acute{\text{v}}$   
 $\text{H}\text{-c}\acute{\text{v}} \rightarrow \text{ } ^\text{t}\text{c}\acute{\text{v}}$   
 $\text{c}\acute{\text{v}}\text{-c}\grave{\text{v}}\text{c}\acute{\text{v}} \rightarrow \text{c}\acute{\text{v}}\text{-} \text{ } ^\text{t}\text{c}\acute{\text{v}}\text{c}\acute{\text{v}}$   
 $\text{c}\acute{\text{v}}\text{-c}\acute{\text{v}} \rightarrow \text{c}\acute{\text{v}}\text{-} \text{ } ^\text{t}\text{c}\acute{\text{v}}$

## 3. High tone spread

$c\acute{v}\text{-}c\grave{v}(c\grave{v}) \rightarrow c\acute{v}\text{-}c\hat{v}(c\grave{v})$   
 $c\acute{v}c\grave{v} \rightarrow c\acute{v}c\hat{v}$   
 $c\acute{v}\text{-}c\hat{v} \rightarrow c\acute{v}\text{-}c\hat{v}$

## 4. Floating tone attachment across clitic and word boundaries

$H\ c\acute{v} \rightarrow c\acute{v}$   
 $H\ c\acute{v} \rightarrow c\acute{v}$   
 $H = c\grave{v} \rightarrow c\acute{v}$   
 $H \# c\grave{v} \rightarrow c\acute{v}L$   
 $H\ c\grave{v}(c\grave{v}) \rightarrow c\hat{v}(c\grave{v})$   
 $H\ c\grave{v}c\acute{v} \rightarrow \text{'}c\acute{v}c\acute{v}$   
 $H\ c\check{v} \rightarrow \text{'}c\acute{v}$   
 $c\grave{v}\ H\ c\grave{v}c\acute{v} \rightarrow c\check{v}\ \text{'}c\acute{v}c\acute{v}$   
 $c\grave{v}\ H\ c\check{v}c\acute{v} \rightarrow c\check{v}\ \text{'}c\acute{v}c\acute{v}$   
 $H\text{-}cv(cv)\ \#\ H\ \# \rightarrow c\acute{v}(c\acute{v})$

## 5. Simplification (optional)

$c\check{v}\ c\acute{v} \rightarrow c\grave{v}\ c\acute{v}$   
 $c\hat{v}\ c\grave{v} \rightarrow c\acute{v}\ c\grave{v}$ .

**8. Practical orthography**

The practical orthography used in this grammar and in the lexicon is entirely phonological for the notation of tones and consonants. Some vocalic oppositions with low functionality are neutralised. The phonemes /e/ and /ə/ are both written as <e>, as is the [ɜ] allophone of /ɛ/, because of its phonetic resemblance with [ə]. The [ɛ] allophone of /ɛ/ is written <ɛ>. One of the advantages of this convention is that it neutralises some dialectal differences.

- (120) /ɛlén ˈdɛ/ → <èlén ˈdɛ> ‘his palm tree’  
 /báˈtá ˈjén/ → <béˈté ˈyén> ‘they see’  
 /m̀pég/ → [m̀pég] → <m̀pég> ‘bag’

All other vowels are written with the same symbols as their phonological notation. Long vowels are doubled.

- (121) /i/ → <i>  
 /a/ → <a>  
 /u/ → <u>  
 /o/ → <o>  
 /ɔ/ → <ɔ>  
 /a:/ → <aa>

Some consonants are written with a different symbol in orthography than in phonological notation.

- (122) /j/ → <y>  
 /ɕ/ → <j>  
 /tʃ/ → <c>

This convention harmonises the spelling of Eton with that of the other Cameroonian languages. Ligatures are never written in practical orthography.

- (123) /k̄p/ → <kp>  
 /ḡb/ → <gb>  
 /w̄j/ → <vy>  
 /ŋ̄m/ → <ɲm>

The same combination of letters <gb> can refer to the phoneme /ḡb/ and to the combination of phonemes /gb/.

- (124) /á ḡbè/ → [á ḡbè] → <á gbè> ‘to grasp’  
 /á tègbà/ → [á tɛɯbà] → <á tègbè> ‘to be lazy’

The position in the word always disambiguates the spelling. Labiovelar stops only occur in prominent position, where the succession of /g/ and /b/ is impossible. All consonants not mentioned before are spelled with their phonological symbols.

- (125) /p/ → <p>  
 /t/ → <t>  
 /b/ → <b>  
 /ɲ/ → <ɲ>  
 /ŋ/ → <ŋ>  
 etcetera

Finally, non-prominent structural stem vowels that are subject to elision (see 5.2.5) are normally written in the practical orthography. This principle is a

source of uncertainty and inconsistency that will have to be remedied by means of a number of more explicit rules if the orthography were ever to be used on a larger scale.

# Chapter 3

## Nouns

### 1. Introduction

As in other Bantu languages the core of the category of nouns is easy to recognise. Every noun belongs to one of a limited set of morphological classes, identifiable through a prefix (or the absence of one). They typically control agreement. Since their primary pragmatic function is reference and not predication, they cannot combine with affixes that mark tense and/or aspect. As in most languages the borders of the category of nouns are less easy to recognise than the core. I made no effort to define necessary and sufficient conditions to identify a word as a noun. Rather, words will be discussed in the places where users of the grammar are most likely to look for them. For instance, all question words are listed in Chapter 5, even though *zá* ‘who’ and *jé* ‘what’ can formally hardly be distinguished from nouns. The same is true for numbers. Numbers from 1 to 6 agree in gender with their head noun, but numbers higher than 6 are formally identical to nouns, in that they are invariable, they belong to one of the nominal morphological classes and they have a gender of their own, e.g.

- (1) è-wóm ‘ten’ (5)  
mè-wóm ‘tens’ (6)

All numbers are discussed in Sections v:2.3 & v:4.1. Some of the words discussed in this chapter are not prototypical nouns, since their primary pragmatic function is modification rather than reference. The noun *ì-cícîgà*, for instance, which is derived from the verb *cíg* ‘cut’ (see 4.3.1), can be used to refer to something that was cut, but usually it modifies the meaning of another noun (2a) or of a finite verb (2b). Note that although *ìcícîgà* semantically modifies *jǎ* ‘fingernail’ in (2a), it is the head of the nominal syntactically (see VI:3.1.1.2).

- (2) a. ìcícîg í ‘já ‘a cut fingernail’  
b. á ‘cíg í ‘cícîgà ‘to cut in a disorderly way’

## 2. The structure of the underived noun

### 2.1. Introduction

Nouns minimally consist of a stem. In addition, most nouns have an obligatory gender prefix. In some syntactic contexts the gender prefix (or, in its absence, the stem) is preceded by the prefix *í-*, called the *augment* (see 3.5). Derived stems sometimes have a derivational suffix (see Section 4). The term *root* will be used to refer to the stem without any derivational suffixes. In underived words root and stem are identical. Some roots can be formally divided into a first syllable, which belongs to an open set, and a second syllable taken from a limited number of possibilities. In the Bantuist terminology on verbal morphology the latter is called an *expansion* (or *formal suffix*), whereas the former is referred to as the *radical* (Meeussen 1967:85-90, Schadeberg 2003:71). I will adopt this terminology and extend its use to the nominal morphology. Note that expansions are a phonotactic reality, rather than a morphological one. The expansion is separated from the radical by means of the symbol †.

$$[[\text{radical}(\dagger\text{expansion})]_{\text{root}} (-\text{suffix})]_{\text{stem}}$$

This section describes the form of underived noun stems, excluding borrowings, at least those of which the origin is known. It consists of two parts: Section 2.2 discusses non-reduplicated stems and Section 2.3 presents reduplicated stems.

### 2.2. Non-reduplicated noun stems

The following description is based on a collection of 720 nouns with an underived, non-reduplicated stem, which have not been identified as borrowings (henceforth *basic stems*). The tone scheme of basic stems is either high (43%), low (30%), high-low (9%) or low-high (18%), irrespective of the number of syllables. More complicated tone patterns, such as high-low-high, are not permitted. Table 1 shows that there is no clear correlation between the initial consonant of noun stems and their first tone. Only 584 of the 720 basic noun stems are inserted in the table, because stems with an initial vowel or CG-sequence have not been counted and historically related stems count as one token.

Table 1. Initial tone versus initial consonant in basic noun stems (N=584)

	p	t	c	k	kp	b	d	j	g	gb	
H	14	40	6	49	4	37	18	13	10	7	
L	14	20	10	42	5	51	13	23	21	0	
	s	v	z	m	n	ɲ	ŋ	ŋm	l	j	w
H	27	16	6	3	3	10	3	0	22	10	8
L	26	6	12	2	12	7	0	2	8	1	3

### 2.2.1. Canonical forms

Based on frequency, basic noun stems can be subdivided into canonical and non-canonical types. The former account for 86 percent of the basic nouns and consist of three types: CV, CVC and CVCV. The vowels are always short. The initial C of every scheme may be a branching onset: NC (4%) or CG (13%).<sup>1</sup> Of the canonical stems, 68 percent is CVC, 17 percent CV and 15 percent CVCV.

- (3) a. sí ‘ground’  
       ngá ‘wife’  
       è-swè ‘chigoe’  
 b. ì-lád ‘type of haircut’  
       ù-ŋgòn ‘breastbone’  
       zwàg ‘elephant’  
 c. ì-kódí ‘thirst’  
       ì-lwábí ‘swamp’  
       ndàmà ‘catapult’

According to the phonotactic distribution of consonant phonemes laid out in Section II:3.2.1, the second position of CVC and CVCV stems can be one of 10 consonants, three of which are nasals. In 59 percent of the CVC stems the second consonant is a nasal against 35 percent in CVCV stems. This means that the number of nasal consonants in second position of CVC stems is disproportionately high.<sup>2</sup>

1. Where N is a nasal consonant, G a glide and C any consonant, except a nasal if preceded by a nasal. The percentages refer to the canonical basic noun stems (total: 616).

2. I asked my colleague Gert De Sutter whether this skewing is significant. On the basis of the chi-square test for goodness of fit he concluded that it is highly significant ( $X^2 = 167.22$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p\text{-value} < 2.2e-16$ ). I wish to thank Gert for his help.

2.2.2. *Non-canonical forms*2.2.2.1. *CVC.CV*

Fourteen percent of the basic stems have a non-canonical syllable structure. Of these, 42% can be described as CVC÷CV. This group can be further subdivided into six subsets according to the form of the expansion. The first subset contains seven nouns. Its expansion is ÷/a, the tone of which is identical to the tone of the radical (4a), except in one case (4b).

- (4) a. ì-kòg÷lò ‘peelings, skin of a fruit’  
       ṅ-kóṅ÷ló ‘very long’  
       sàṅ÷là ‘maize dish’  
       ì-ndég÷lé ‘punishment’  
       ì-tíḃ÷lá ‘suffering’  
       jì-cèm÷lè ‘big fruit’ or ‘bunch’<sup>3</sup>  
   b. bò kòg÷ló ‘stools of a baby’

The second group of CVC.CV stems is the largest with 20 members. They have a ÷gV expansion, the vowel of which is either *i* or *a*, without any apparent conditioning. Nothing can be said about the tone of the expansion, except that it blocks tone spread (see the end of Section II:7.2.4). The expansion of the nouns in (5b) can optionally be pronounced as ÷Vg, where *V* is the same vowel as that of the radical, but often reduced (i.e. centralised). The syllable structure of the alternative form is CV.CVC instead of CVC.CV, with tone spread between the first and the second syllable.

- (5) a. ì-kòd÷gì ‘bush on an old field’

---

3. The final vowel here and in *indéglé* ‘punishment’ is phonologically /a/. According to the rule outlined in Section II.4.2.6, an /a/ in an open non-prominent stem syllable is realised harmonic with the preceding vowel. When I designed the current practical orthography, I still analysed this rule as a reposition rule, hence the final <e>.

- ì-kùd†gà ‘sieve’
- ì-vùd†gá ‘rancour’
- ì-kún†gà ‘package of stalks’
- kún†gí ‘toucan (sp.)’
- è-ndúm†gí ‘corner’
- zè†gà ‘beard on an ear of maize’
- è-†géd†gí ‘waist’
- †gè-kén†gà ‘organic waste’
- è-kwád†gí ‘small fruit or brunch’
- cín†gí ‘river bank’
- mè-léb†gá ‘advice’
- ì-swà†gè ‘grimace’
- ì-wà†gè ‘flattery’
- c. mè-†gól†gí ‘urine’ ~ mè-†gól†g
- mbàd†gì ‘mud’ ~ mbàd†g
- †gè-cél†gí ‘sand’ ~ †gè-cél†g
- †gè-†gí ‘toad’ ~ †gè-†g
- †gè-kón†gí ‘dish’ ~ †gè-kón†g

One English borrowing is adapted by analogy to these examples.

- (6) mí†gí ‘milk’ (< Eng.) ~ mí†g

Finally, there is one word in which *-gV* should be considered a suffix rather than an expansion, because it is opposed to a floating high tone suffix in a cognate word.

- (7) ì-sàm†gà ‘blossom’  
săm ‘flower bud’

The other groups are much smaller, containing five instances or less. The third type involves a *†nì* expansion, formally identical to the deverbal derivational suffix described in Section 4.3.5. There are only three instances, of which one is of gender 3, also the target gender of deverbal derivation by *-nì*. However, there is no verb stem from which these nouns could be derived.

- (8) a. †gè-†gám†nì ‘new’  
b. nùm†nì ‘raw’  
ndóm†nì ‘adolescent’

One basic noun stem looks very similar, with a final *†mì* instead of *†nì*.

- (9)
- $\eta\grave{m}\grave{-}gb\acute{e}l\ddot{+}m\acute{i}$
- ‘type of basket’

A fourth type consists of stems with a  $\#d\grave{a}$  expansion, which does not block tone spread.

- (10)
- $\grave{i}\text{-}b\acute{i}g\ddot{+}d\grave{a}$
- ‘vehicle’
- 
- $nd\acute{u}g\ddot{+}d\grave{a}$
- ‘heat’
- 
- $m\grave{e}\text{-}k\acute{e}m\ddot{+}d\grave{a}$
- ‘sap’

Fifth, there is an expansion  $\#ba$ , without a specific tone and that does not block tone spread. The database contains three tokens:

- (11)
- $s\acute{i}l\ddot{+}b\grave{a}$
- ‘pot’
- 
- $zw\grave{a}g\ddot{+}b\grave{o}$
- ‘plantain banana (sp.)’
- 
- $m\grave{e}\text{-}w\acute{a}g\ddot{+}b\acute{o}$
- ‘pretext’

Finally, there is a group of noun stems that contain a totally idiosyncratic expansion. At best one can recognize a  $\#zV$  and a  $\#nV$  expansion.

- (12)
- $\grave{i}\text{-}bw\acute{a}g\ddot{+}z\acute{i}$
- ‘joint’
- 
- $\grave{n}\text{-}tw\grave{a}g\ddot{+}z\grave{o}$
- ‘fresh leaf’
- 
- $\grave{i}\text{-}y\grave{e}g\ddot{+}z\grave{a}$
- ‘chin’
- 
- $sw\grave{a}m\ddot{+}n\grave{o}$
- ‘complaint’
- 
- $m\grave{e}\text{-}b\acute{a}d\ddot{+}n\acute{a}$
- ‘byname’
- 
- $\grave{i}\text{-}t\acute{o}n\ddot{+}d\acute{o}$
- ‘eggplant leaf’

Note that  $\grave{i}y\grave{e}gz\grave{a}$  can also be pronounced  $\grave{i}\text{-}y\grave{e}g\grave{e}z$ .

### 2.2.2.2. *Basic stems with an initial vowel*

Some basic noun stems begin in a vowel. If they are not the stem of genderless nouns, they are preceded by a C- or CG- prefix. This prefix is integrated in the prosodic stem, forming one of the basic noun stem schemes discussed in this section, canonical (13) or non-canonical (14).

- (13) a.
- $d\text{-}\grave{z}$
- ‘hand’; pl.
- $m\text{-}\grave{z}$

- b. j-öm ‘thing’; pl. l-öm  
 d-àm ‘thing’; pl. m-àm  
 w-ẓ̌η ‘fear’  
 j-äd ‘basket’; pl. by-äd  
 d-âg ‘charcoal’; pl. m-âg  
 m-ál ‘proa’  
 d-öy ‘nose’
- c. m-ẓ̌ηó ‘child’; pl. b-ẓ̌ηó  
 d-úmá ‘baobab’; m-úmá  
 d-ùmá ‘nest’; pl. m-ùmá
- (14) a. d-òngò ‘whitlow’  
 m-ẓ̌ηnò ‘banana sprout’; pl. b-ẓ̌ηnò  
 m-ágnì ‘agreement’  
 m-ìnggá ‘woman’; pl. b-ìnggá

In the following word, the consonant prefix is also morphologically integrated in the stem. The gender 5 prefix is *d-* before a vowel and *é-* before a consonant. That of gender 6 is *m-* and *mè-* respectively. One would therefore expect either *èdáz/mèdáz* or *dáz/máz*.

- (15) dáz ‘present, compensation’; pl. mè-dáz

Section 2.2.2.6 discusses some other stems with an initial vowel, which are all genderless.

### 2.2.2.3. Basic stems containing a long vowel

There is a very small list of basic noun stems that contain a long vowel. They are all of gender 7 (plural: 8) and all but one are disyllabic. Given that gender 7 is a typical target gender for deverbal nouns (see 4.3) and that suffixation results in compensatory lengthening if the stem-final consonant is identical to the suffix initial one (see II:5.2.6), some of these stems might be (historically) derived. The second syllable *nì* could be identified as the reciprocal suffix *-nì*, which lengthens the vowel of any CV-stem to which it attaches. No possible source verb has been recorded, though.

- (16) a. ì-sùùnì ‘tontine’ (7)  
 ì-wóòdè ‘caterpillar (sp.)’ (7)  
 b. ì-bùù ‘nine’ (7)

One example that differs from the others is most probably a borrowing (from French *peigne*):

(17) páágà ‘comb’

#### 2.2.2.4. CV.CVC

Another marginal syllable scheme is CV.CVC. These words need more analysis. Most probably they are either borrowings or compounds/phrasal nouns, at least historically. This is especially clear in the example in (19), which has an exceptional tone scheme. Note that the onset of the second syllable is branching (NC, CG, NCG) in *ìbàndùm*, *tíswân*, *ùpìngòn* and *kóŋwáz*.

(18) ì-bàndùm ‘new year’s celebration’  
 ì-díkâz ‘pickaxe’  
 tíswân ‘town’  
 ù-pìngòn ‘small fly (sp.)’  
 kóŋwáz ‘sticky seeds’  
 bàkán ‘armpit’

(19) ì-ká’sáj ‘unripe’

#### 2.2.2.5. CVC.CVC

The four stems with a CVC.CVC structure have in common that they end in *≠Can*, the only example of a CVC-expansion in the nominal morphology. Note that the expansion does not block high tone spread.

(20) ngòm‡zàn ‘preparations’ (9)  
 ì-tóm‡dân ‘dirty trick’ (3)  
 kág‡dân ‘congestion’ (9)  
 màb‡gán ‘crossroads’ (9)

#### 2.2.2.6. Others

All basic stems that do not conform to one of the above templates are of genderless nouns (see 3.2). Many stems of genderless nouns have an initial syllable that is formally identical to one of the gender prefixes, except that it sometimes carries a high tone instead of a low one. There are reasons to believe that this initial syllable is a historical prefix that has been integrated into the stem. Without this initial syllable, most of the genderless stems enumerated here conform to a canonical type (21a-c), whereas some conform to the non-canonical type

with a  $\neq CV$  expansion (21d). The example in (21e) is most probably a borrowing. Example (22), finally, has the exceptional syllable structure CVCVCV and a vowel pattern that does not conform to the phonotactic principles described in Chapter 2. It conforms much better, however, when split up in a prosodic CV-prefix and a prosodic CVCV-stem. Then, only the realisation of the final /a/ is exceptional, since it cannot be pronounced centralised, as the harmony rules would have predicted.

- (21) a. újô ‘sweet banana’  
       ńcô ‘lizard’  
       ńtwí ‘diarrhoea’  
 b. úkûl ‘plant (sp.), Euphorbia hirta’  
 c. ùsàŋà ‘lemon grass, Cymbopogon citratus’  
       òwòndò ‘groundnut’  
       òpùmá ‘citrus fruit’  
       àzàŋà ‘wild mango tree’  
       ńjàŋá ‘tontine’  
       ńkùlà ‘tempest’  
 d. lésómlô ‘bronchitis’  
       àtwàdnò ‘sweet banana (sp.)’  
 e. àlàpágá ‘rabbit’
- (22) bábélá ‘truth’ (variant: bábéé)

### 2.3. Reduplicated noun stems

Four percent of the underived noun stems (excluding borrowings) is reduplicated. The base of reduplicated stems has the form of a basic noun stem (canonical or not). The reduplicant precedes the base. It is a copy of the initial CV-cluster of the base. However, when the first structural vowel of the base is non-high (i.e. if it is not *i* or *u*), the vowel of the reduplicant is schwa. The gender prefix -if there is one- precedes the reduplicant, but if the prefix is a nasal, it is also repeated before the base. The base is as much affected as the reduplicant by any morphological changes triggered by the prefix, as is illustrated by (23).

- (23) ɲ-cí~<sup>1</sup>ɲcím ‘shadow, silhouette’ (3); pl. mìn-si~<sup>1</sup>nsím (4)

The set of reduplicated stems has many members that refer to animals (25) and plants (26). Most of the animals are (flying) insects. The large number of underived reduplications of gender 7 is noteworthy. Gender 7 is the target gender of deverbal derivation with reduplication. This might be an indication that many of the words in (24-26) are historically derived.

- (24) ì-vé~vô ‘shadow’  
 tì~tímâ ‘boat’  
 ñ-nú~‘núm ‘rainbow’  
 ù-té~tê ‘star’  
 bì-tè~tâ ‘shoulders’  
 ì-bè~bòm ‘a cold’  
 ì-bù~bú ‘easy’  
 ì-bù~bwà ‘stupidity’  
 ì-vè~vèz ‘light, not heavy’  
 ì-zè~zè ‘idiot, nil, useless’  
 ì-ké~kóngí ‘bump’  
 ì-kù~kùnà ‘rubbish dump’  
 ì-té~tóg ‘blister’  
 ì-vú~vúmní ‘family member’  
 ké~kírâ ‘morning’; var. kí~kírâ  
 ñgú~ñgúgô ‘evening’  
 kpè~kpàzà ‘toothbrush’  
 mbú~mbwâ ‘delay’
- (25) mbú~mbûŋ ‘bee’; var. mbém~bóŋ?  
 pé~pé ‘cockroach’  
 mìn-té~ntólóg ‘ant (sp.)’ (var. mìnólóg, mìnólógí)  
 ì-ŋé~ŋóŋ ‘mosquito’  
 bè~bâ ‘frog (sp.)’  
 cì~cílá ‘wasp (sp.)’  
 ñgé~‘ñgé ‘firefly’
- (26) ì-zé~záŋ ‘tree (sp.)’  
 ì-té~tám ‘okra, Abelmoschus Esculentus’  
 ì-té~tób ‘tree (sp.)’  
 ì-tù~tùgà ‘vegetable’  
 kù~kùmà ‘plant (sp.), Amaranthus’

### 3. Morphological classes & genders

#### 3.1. Introduction

The nouns of Eton are divided over twelve morphological classes, according to their prefix.<sup>4</sup> Either they have no prefix, or one of the following eleven prefixes:

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4. The analysis presented here differs in some respects from the traditional descriptions of gender and nominal morphology in Bantu. See Van de Velde (2006) for a comparison and a more elaborate discussion.

*â-*, *bè-*, *bì-*, *d-*, *è-*, *ì-*, *j-*, *mè-*, *mì-*, *ṅ-*, *ù-*. The morphological class of a noun is a fairly good indication for the gender (or noun class) to which a noun belongs. Genders are defined by a set of nouns that trigger the same agreement pattern. Eton has ten different agreement patterns (numbered from I to X), defining ten genders (numbered from 1 to 10).<sup>5</sup> Tables with agreement prefixes can be found in Sections V:2 (pronominal) and VIII:2 (verbal). For reasons outlined in Van de Velde (2006), some nouns are analysed as genderless. Genderless nouns lack a prefix and trigger agreement pattern I. Nouns of gender 9 and 10 do not have a prefix either. If a noun has a syllabic homorganic nasal prefix, it can be either of gender 1 or of gender 3. Nouns of gender 5 take either *è-* or *d-*, those of gender 7 either *ì-* or *j-*, depending on the initial segment of their stem. In all other cases there is a straightforward relation between gender and morphological class. This is summarised in Table 2 (ordered alphabetically according to the form of the overt gender marker).

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5. By definition, the number of genders can never exceed the number of agreement patterns in a language.

Table 2. Genders, morphological classes and agreement patterns

Example	Morph. class	Gender	Agreement pattern	number pairing
kálâda	∅	genderless	I	
ndógô (pl.)	∅	10	X	pl. of 9
ndógô (sg.)	∅	9	IX	sg. of 10 & 6
à-púb	à	3	III	sg. of 6
bè-yéglé	bè	2	II	pl. of 1
bì-bwàn	bì	8	VIII	pl. of 7
d-ǎ	d	5	V	sg. of 6; pl. of 3u
è-kòŋ	è	5	V	sg. of 6; pl. of 3u
ì-bwàn	ì	7	VII	sg. of 8
j-ǎd	j	7	VII	sg. of 8
mè-púb	mè	6	VI	pl. of 5 & 9
mì-bùŋ	mì	4	IV	pl. of 3n
mè-mùŋ	ṅ	3	III	sg. of 4
ṅ-ṅéglé	ṅ	1	I	sg. of 2
ù-vwón	ù	3	III	sg. of 5

Gender and number are intimately linked. If one knows the gender of a noun, one knows whether the noun is singular or plural.

- (27) ì-kwájó 'ladle' (7)  
 bì-kwájó 'ladles' (8)

There is one major exception: gender 5 contains both singular nouns and plural nouns.

- (28) è-bóg 'party' (5)  
 è-nùŋ 'fingers' (5)

Non-count nouns tend to be of gender 6 in the case of liquids and of gender 3 (morphological class ù-) in the case of abstract nouns.

- (29) mè-ndím 'water' (6)  
 ù-lún 'anger' (3)

Genderless nouns are pluralized by means of a preposed plural word *b̀̀*, which triggers agreement pattern II (see V:4.5.2.1).

- (30) kwábd̂ ‘cupboard’ (<Eng.) (genderless)  
 b̀̀ kwábd̂ ‘cupboards’ (genderless)

There are typical gender combinations, such as 3/4 and 7/8, in which the odd gender contains the singular forms of the even gender. An overview of these gender combinations is given in Section 3.4. An alternative for this analysis would be to treat singular-plural pairings like 3/4 and 7/8 as genders. See Van de Velde (2006) for arguments against this alternative analysis.

The gender assignment of a noun cannot be predicted from its semantics. Singular nouns with human reference, for instance, are found in gender 1 (29,5%), gender 3 (32,5%), gender 5 (1,5%), gender 7 (20%) and gender 9 (10%). The remaining 6,5% are genderless or ethnic names of gender 2. Similarly, nouns for body parts are spread over all genders, except gender 1, with no gender clearly being preferred to the others. Conversely, the genders show no semantic coherence, except the small gender 1, in which seventeen out of the eighteen nouns have human reference.

### 3.2. Genderless nouns

As has been said, nouns that have no gender prefix, that trigger agreement pattern I in the singular and that form their plural by means of the plural word *b̀̀* are genderless in Eton.<sup>6</sup> All proper names, most deictic kinship terms, the question word *zá* ‘who’, as well as half of the borrowings from European languages belong to this category. Deictic kinship terms are kinship terms the stem of which contains a specification for person, e.g.,

- (31) a. nà, màńá ‘my mother’  
 b. ńǎ ‘your mother’  
 b̀̀ ńǎ ‘your (pl.) mothers’  
 c. ńǎ ‘his/her mother’  
 d. tàdá ‘my father’  
 e. í’só ‘your father’  
 f. í’sá ‘his/her father’

The deictic kinship terms that refer to same-sex siblings are slightly more complex. Their form obligatorily contains the diminutive proclitic *m̀̀H=*, plu-

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6. Traditionally these nouns are attributed to a subgender of gender 1, called *class 1a* in Bantu studies.

ral *bəH=*. The diminutive is the head of the construction and decides on the gender assignment of the whole, viz. gender 1 in the singular and 2 in the plural (see Section V:2.2.3).

Names for nationalities or ethnic groups are also genderless. Due to their collective meaning they trigger agreement pattern II, rather than I.<sup>7</sup> To designate a member of an ethnic group, the group name is preceded by the gender 1 diminutive proclitic *məH=* (see Section V:4.5.2.2).

- (32) *pùlàsí* ‘the French, Frenchmen’  
*pùlàsí bésó* ‘The French have come.’  
*pùlàsí bé‘bá* ‘two Frenchmen’  
*mə̀ pùlàsí* ‘a Frenchman’  
*\*bə̀ pùlàsí*
- (33) *kwáló* ‘the Ewondo’  
*mə̀ kwáló* ‘Ewondo person’

There is also a group of genderless nouns that does not at first sight belong to one of the categories mentioned above. Some of these might be borrowings, but their origin could not be established. They sometimes denote imported concepts, such as *sá‘ηgélézí* ‘underwear’, *kwáló* ‘tie’, *wún* ‘breakdown lorry’, *cábá* ‘home made rifle’ and *lélé* ‘nail varnish’. Others have a deviant form in that the first syllable of their stem is a syllabic nasal, which is normally reserved for prefixes, e.g. *ɲjàɲá* ‘tontine’. Even more exceptionally, most of the time this syllabic nasal carries a high tone, as in *ɲkúlà* ‘tempest’, *ɲtíwí* ‘diarrhoea’, *ɲícô* ‘lizard’ and *ɲícá* ‘ripe plantain banana’. The initial high tone of these nouns is also found in proper names based on a phrasal lemma, such as *ɲínó dóbô* ‘the moon’ (see 4.4.1). Since the list contains words for natural elements and (possibly personified) species, a proper name origin is not unlikely.

Almost all words for species of banana are genderless, some of them are clearly borrowings (e.g. *ɲəmàwán* < Eng. number one), others are based on a phrase (e.g. *èsàɲ mwágɔ̀*), the origin of others is still obscure (e.g. *újó*, *mpídámpím*, *àtwàdnɔ̀*). An interesting case is the word for ‘enclosure’ *ù-ηgóló* (gender 3; plural *mè-ηgóló*, gender 6), which, by metonymy, is the Eton name for the Cameroonian capital Yaoundé. This word, in both senses, has a genderless variant *ηgóló*, plural *bə̀ ηgóló*. Finally, there is a group of nouns, mostly borrowings and kinship terms, that are genderless in the plural, but that belong to a gender in the singular. Examples are: *màkíd* ‘market’ (6, plural *bə̀ màkíd*), *tóɲ* ‘tuna’ (9, plural *bə̀ tóɲ*), *à-dǔm* ‘tree (sp.)’ (3, plural *bə̀ dǔm*) and *ndóm* ‘brother of a girl’ (9, plural *bə̀ ndóm*).

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7. These nouns could also be analysed as nouns of gender 2 without a nominal prefix.

The possibility of genderless nouns in a gender language is controversial. A detailed justification for the analysis proposed here falls outside of the scope of a descriptive grammar, but can be found in Van de Velde (2006). In a nutshell, the argument consists of two equally important parts. The first part shows how the existence of genderless nouns is theoretically possible. In this case it answers the question “If genders are defined by the sets of nouns that trigger the same agreement pattern, then how is it possible that a set of nouns that trigger agreement pattern I does not belong to gender 1?”. A description of the multifunctionality of agreement patterns in Bantu provides the answer. A given agreement pattern can be selected for several reasons, not only for agreement in gender. Throughout the Bantu family agreement pattern I can be selected for agreement with a controller that is not in need of referential disambiguation, as is illustrated in the following examples from Mongo and Luba. In (34) agreement pattern I is selected for agreement with an interjection, a word that is by definition genderless, because it is not a noun. The Mongo example in (35) shows that agreement pattern I (35b) provides an alternative to gender agreement (35a) when the controller is not in need of referential disambiguation, in this case due to its generic meaning.

- (34) a. 'aaa' a-na-mv-eka (Luba, Corbett 1991:208)  
       'aaa' I-PST-hear-PASSIVE  
       'An 'aaa' was heard.'
- b. a-na-mu-mva 'mayo' (Luba, Corbett 1991:208)  
       I-PST-I.OBJ-hear crying-sound  
       'He heard a crying sound.'
- (35) a. mpulú é-tóngá júmbu (Mongo, Hulstaert 1966:17)  
       [9]bird IX-build nest  
       'The bird is building a nest.'
- b. mpulú á-tóngá júmbu (Mongo, Hulstaert 1966:17)  
       [9]bird I-build nest  
       'Birds build nests (general truth).'

The second part of the argument is to identify a group of nouns in Eton as genderless. The deviant plural formation of the nouns traditionally called *class*

*Ia* is an important indication of their exceptional status.<sup>8</sup> One of the major arguments is provided by proper names, which form the prototypical core of the genderless nouns. Their assignment to “class 1a” is exceptionless, irrespective of whether they are ancient toponyms or improvised nicknames derived from a common noun. This is in very sharp contrast to the assignment of nouns to genders, which is arbitrary in the Bantu languages.

### 3.3. The genders

This section discusses the ten genders individually. In many cases there is a one-to-one relation between gender and morphological class (viz. in gender 2, 4, 6 and 8). For the sake of brevity I will say that a certain gender is marked by a prefix *x-* in these cases. This is short for “nouns of the morphological class marked by the prefix *x-* belong to gender *y*”.

#### 3.3.1. Gender 1

Gender 1 contains about 1,5 percent of all singular nouns. All gender 1 words belong to the morphological class marked by *ṅ-*. Their plural is always of gender 2. Nouns of gender 1 are never plural. This is the only gender that can be satisfactorily defined semantically. Almost all gender 1 nouns have human reference (but only a small percentage of the nouns with human reference is of gender 1). There are roughly three subtypes. The first could be called basic level terms for humans, such as *m-ìṅgá* ‘woman’, *m-ḡṅḡ* ‘child’ and *m-òd* ‘person’. Remarkably, all nouns of this type have a vowel-initial stem. The second type are words for in-laws (three nouns): *ḡ-cí* ‘parent in law’, *ḡ-ḡóm* ‘husband’ and *ḡ-ḡál* ‘wife’. The largest group is formed by deverbal nouns, e.g. *m-mòni* ‘ancestor’ (> *bòni* ‘found’), *ḡ-lwá* ‘smith’ (> *lú* ‘bend’) and *ḡ-ḡéglé* ‘teacher’ (> *yéglé* ‘teach’). One noun does not have human reference, but might be related to *m-ḡṅḡ* ‘child’, viz. *m-ḡṅḡḡ* ‘sprout of a banana plant’.

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8. The absence of overt gender marking (i.e. of a noun prefix) cannot be used as an argument for genderless status, because overt gender marking is by no means a prerequisite for the existence of gender distinctions. Nevertheless, it is useful to point out that the so-called class 1a nouns differ from other nouns without overt gender marking (e.g. those of gender 9 & 10 in Eton) in that they already lacked a nominal prefix in Proto-Bantu.

## 3.3.2. Gender 2

Gender 2 is as small a class as gender 1. It contains the plurals of the words of gender 1. The prefix of gender 2 is *bè-* before stems that start in a consonant and *b-* before vowel-initial stems.

- (36) *bè-bònì* ‘ancestors’  
*b-ìnnǵá* ‘women’  
*b-òǵó* ‘children’  
*b-wán* ‘children’  
*b-òd* ‘people’

## 3.3.3. Gender 3

After gender 7, gender 3 is the biggest singular gender, which might be due partly to the fact that it is the target gender for deverbal derivation by means of the suffix *-ní* (see 4.3.5). Nouns of gender 3 are always singular. They are distributed over three morphological classes. One set of gender 3 nouns belongs to the same morphological class as the nouns of gender 1 (prefix: *ṅ-*). These nouns have a plural of gender 4.

- (37) *mè-mòg* ‘prison’      pl. *mì-bòg* (4)  
*mè-pàn* ‘arrow’      pl. *mìm-pàn* (4)  
*ṅ-tól* ‘first born’      pl. *mìn-tól* (4)  
*ṅ-nàṅ* ‘albino’      pl. *mì-nàṅ* (4)

All nouns of the morphological class marked by the prefix *à-* are assigned to gender 3. This morphological class contains many nouns that refer to properties or abstract notions, which have no plural (38). The others have a plural of gender 6 (39).

- (38) *à-bwád* ‘slimness’  
*à-těg* ‘laziness’  
*à-tí* ‘honesty’  
*à-yá* ‘pain’
- (39) *à-nùṅ* ‘mouth’      pl. *mè-nùṅ* (6)  
*à-lú* ‘night’      pl. *mè-lú* (6)  
*à-kwàm* ‘tree (sp.)’      pl. *mè-kwàm* (6)

Gender 3 also contains the nouns that belong to the morphological class marked by *ù-*. These nouns have a plural of gender 5 (41). This relatively small

group equally contains some nouns with abstract reference that do not have a plural (40).

- (40) ù-lún ‘anger’  
 ù-jó ‘sleep’

- (41) ù-kpāl ‘partridge’ pl. è-kpāl (5)  
 ù-nǔŋ ‘finger’ pl. è-nǔŋ (5)

One gender 3 noun, *gbéb* ‘theft’, is exceptional because it does not have a prefix and its plural belongs to gender 10 (*gbéb*) or 6 (*mè-gbéb*). Finally, gender 3 contains three nouns without a prefix, of which the stem begins in *vy*, viz. *vyàn* ‘sun’, *vyǒg* ‘clay’ and *vyûg* ‘dark black’.

### 3.3.4. Gender 4

All gender 4 nouns have the prefix *mì-*, or, if they begin in a vowel *my-*. They are always the plural of gender 3 nouns with a nasal prefix, except in the case of the single-gender words in (42). Note the initial *vy* in the stem of *mìvyáz*.

- (42) mì-ntá ‘pain’  
 mì-ntàg ‘joy, happiness’  
 mì-sǒŋ ‘sissongo sprouts’  
 mì-vyáz ‘twins’

The nasal prefix of gender 3 nouns is incorporated into the stem of the nouns of gender 4 (43a), except before |B|, |V|, |j|, |λ|, |S| and |v̄j| (43b). For the sake of uniformity in the notation of stems this nasal is systematically written before the hyphen that marks the border between prefix and stem, also in the dictionary.

- (43) a. m̀- p̀àn ‘arrow’ (3)  
 m̀m- p̀àn ‘arrows’ (4)  
 b. m̀- m̀d̀g ‘prison’ (3)  
 m̀- b̀d̀g ‘prisons’ (4)

### 3.3.5. Gender 5

Gender 5 nouns with a vowel-initial stem belong to the morphological class marked by *d-*. Those with an initial consonant take the prefix *è-* (*lè-* in the southern dialects). The *è-* variant is taken as the norm for dictionary entries. In example sentences all variants are used. Gender 5 words have a plural of gender

6. One exception is *d-wálǎ* ‘piece of five francs’ that is genderless in the plural: *bǎ dwálǎ*.

- |      |                              |                        |
|------|------------------------------|------------------------|
| (44) | <i>d-ùmá</i> ‘nest’          | pl. <i>m-ùmá</i> (6)   |
|      | <i>d-ǎ</i> ‘hand’            | pl. <i>m-ǎ</i> (6)     |
|      | <i>d-àm</i> ‘thing’          | pl. <i>m-àm</i> (6)    |
|      | <i>è-bùdà</i> ‘sweet potato’ | pl. <i>mè-bùdà</i> (6) |
|      | <i>è-kùŋ</i> ‘owl’           | pl. <i>mè-kùŋ</i> (6)  |

Gender 5 also contains plural nouns that have their singular in gender 3 (morphological class *ù-*).

- |      |                           |                       |
|------|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| (45) | <i>è-kwǎn</i> ‘diseases’  | sg. <i>ù-kwǎn</i> (3) |
|      | <i>è-tàn</i> ‘bats (sp.)’ | sg. <i>ù-tàn</i> (3)  |

One gender 5 noun, a borrowing from (Pidgin) English, has no prefix in the singular.

- |      |                         |                    |
|------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| (46) | <i>jwáz</i> ‘judgement’ | pl. <i>mè-jwáz</i> |
|------|-------------------------|--------------------|

There are two gender 5 nouns that begin in *l-*. In one case this initial liquid can be clearly identified as a prefix (48). It might be the Southern form of the prefix *lè-*, the vowel of which dropped according to the rules of vowel hiatus resolution. Note, however, that the normal gender 5 prefix for stems with an initial vowel is *d-* in all dialects.

- |      |                                  |
|------|----------------------------------|
| (47) | <i>l(-)òŋ</i> ‘hair’ (mass noun) |
|------|----------------------------------|

- |      |                          |
|------|--------------------------|
| (48) | <i>l-òm</i> ‘things’ (5) |
|      | <i>j-òm</i> ‘thing’ (7)  |

### 3.3.6. Gender 6

The prefix of gender 6 nouns is *mè-* (*m-* before vowels). Most nouns of gender 6 are the plural of a gender 5 noun, but there is also a considerable number of mass nouns. The first example in (49), *m-ál*, is ambiguous as to number. It can mean ‘canoe’ or ‘canoes’.<sup>9</sup> Finally, some gender 6 nouns have their singular counterparts in gender 3 (morphological class *à-*) (50).

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9. Note that canoes are not or rarely used by the Eton.

- (49) m-ál ‘canoe’  
 mèn-dím ‘water’  
 mèn-tĩŋ ‘promise’  
 mèn-ŋmgbém ‘child disease’
- (50) mèn-bè ‘thighs’                      sg. à-bè (3)  
 mèn-jòz ‘edible caterpillars (sp.)’    sg. à-jòz (3)  
 mèn-tán ‘village’                        sg. à-tán (3)

### 3.3.7. Gender 7

Gender 7 is the largest set of singular nouns. This is partly due to some derivational processes that have 7 as their target gender. The gender 7 prefix is *ì-* before consonants and *j-* before vowels. The plural of gender 7 nouns is of gender 8, but some gender 7 nouns do not have a plural due to their semantics. Examples include mass nouns such as *ì-vúvúz* ‘foam’, *ì-kwán* ‘white clay’ and words like *ì-kódí* ‘thirst’, *ì-jwǎn* ‘mist’ and *ì-lěz* ‘slovenliness’. One gender 7 word has a plural of gender 5: *j-ǒm* ‘thing’, *l-ǒm* ‘things’.

- (51) ì-nàm ‘arm’                              pl. bì-nàm (8)  
 ì-kpèbè ‘sweet pepper’                pl. bì-kpèbè (8)  
 j-ǎd ‘basket’                                pl. by-ǎd (8)  
 j-ǒ ‘yam’                                      pl. by-ǒ (8)

### 3.3.8. Gender 8

All nouns of gender 8 have the prefix *bì-* (prevocalic allomorph *by-*). Gender 8 nouns are always the plural of gender 7 nouns, except in the case of the three monogender nouns *bì-dí* ‘food’, *bì-dĩm* ‘mystery’ and *bì-jém* ‘miserliness’.

### 3.3.9. Gender 9

Gender 9 contains singular nouns without a prefix. These nouns have two plural forms: one of gender 10 and one of gender 6, in free variation.

- (52) a. mbél ‘mushroom’                    pl. mbél (10) ~ mèn-mbél (6)  
 b. ŋmgbélmí ‘corn loft’                pl. ŋmgbélmí (10) ~ mèn-ŋmgbélmí (6)  
 c. ndwân ‘fire’                            pl. ndwân (10) ~ mèn-ndwân (6)  
 d. pyàṅà ‘joke’                            pl. pyàṅà (10) ~ mèn-pyàṅà (6)  
 e. tóg ‘spoon’                              pl. tóg (10) ~ mèn-tóg (6)

Gender 9 nouns rarely begin in a voiced stop, since initial voiced stops are almost always preceded by a homorganic nasal (53). On a total of eighty gender 9 words with an initial stop, there are only six counterexamples (54), two of which are clearly borrowings and one of which contains an affricate.

- (53) mbél 'mushroom'  
 mbí 'palm nut'  
 ndómní 'young man'  
 ndég 'calabash'  
 ηgwì 'bat (sp.)'  
 ηgùn 'filth'  
 ηmgbél 'witchcraft'

- (54) byàη 'magic'  
 dwáb 'navel'  
 b̀̀nì 'amoebiasis'  
 j̀̀ngí 'toad'  
 b̀̀̀̀̀dí 'bread'  
 b̀̀̀̀̀dád 'band(age)'

The initial nasal is the reflex of a Proto-Bantu prefix that was preserved only before voiced stops in Eton. Synchronically I do not analyse it as a morphological class prefix, because it never commutes with such a prefix. The plural of gender 9 words either has the same form as the singular, or it is formed by adding the prefix *m̀̀-* to the gender 9 form (including the initial nasal), see the examples in (52).<sup>10</sup> As for *n-* as a possible derivational prefix, things are a bit more complicated. In denominal derivation by means of motion, the initial nasal of gender 9 words rarely commutes with another prefix.<sup>11</sup> Nouns derived from gender 9 words have their prefix before the entire gender 9 word, including the nasal. See examples (100a) and (101a) in Section 4.2.3. In deverbal derivation, however, there is a fair amount of examples in which the derived (or cognate) noun of gender 9 has an initial homorganic nasal that the verb stem lacks. In some cases the mapping between verb stem and noun stem is irregular, in that the voiceless initial consonant of the verb is voiced in the noun (see the examples in (112), Section 4.3.2.2). This derivation type is synchronically not productive and therefore nothing can be concluded from it as to the status of the initial nasal in the gender 9 nouns. Another pair of examples involves gender 9

10. Also prosodically, the initial nasal of these nouns apparently belongs to the stem, since it appears in the reduplicans of reduplicated stems, e.g. *ηgwál* 'pity' versus *ηgúηgwál* 'unfortunate'.

11. The pair *i-kòb* 'skin' (7) – *ηgòb* 'pair of shoes' (9) is a possible counterexample.

nouns with an initial nasal that are cognate to verb stems that also have this initial nasal (see example (116)). Finally, the lexicon contains a number of deverbal nouns of gender 9 for which the initial nasal is unquestionably a derivational prefix (55). However, this does not necessarily mean that it has to be analysed as a gender prefix (or more accurately, a prefix that defines morphological class). In order to avoid unnecessary complications in the phonology, it will not be analysed as such.

- |      |                        |                       |
|------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| (55) | bèglè ‘carry’          | m-bèglè ‘luggage’     |
|      | bàgnì ‘be provocative’ | m-bàgnì ‘provocation’ |
|      | bémí ‘warn’            | m-bémí ‘warning’      |

Since gender 9 does not have a prefix, it is not surprising that many borrowings are inserted in that gender (56), although many more remain genderless. Many of the loans in gender 9 are optionally genderless in the plural (57).<sup>12</sup> One gender 9 borrowing from (Pidgin) English acquired an initial nasal by analogy (58).

- |      |                          |                               |
|------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| (56) | cwáz ‘church’            |                               |
|      | kód ‘coat’               |                               |
|      | kòpí ‘coffee’            |                               |
|      | kíní ‘quinine’           |                               |
|      | lám ‘blade’ (< Fr. lame) |                               |
|      | cén ‘chain’              |                               |
| (57) | tíkêd ‘ticket’           | pl. mèt-tíkêd (6) ~ b̀d tíkêd |
|      | sêm ‘same thing’         | pl. sêm (10) ~ b̀d sêm        |
|      | tónj ‘tuna’              | pl. b̀d tónj                  |
| (58) | ngádna ‘garden’          |                               |

Especially gender 9 nouns with human reference tend to have a genderless plural (optional).

- |      |                     |                |
|------|---------------------|----------------|
| (59) | kál ‘sister’        | pl. b̀d kál    |
|      | mbóy ‘friend’       | pl. b̀d mbóy   |
|      | ndóm ‘brother’      | pl. b̀d ndóm   |
|      | ndómní ‘adolescent’ | pl. b̀d ndómní |

---

12. Only the plural forms that have been recorded are given here. Probably these words all have three possible plural forms: one of gender 10, one of gender 6 and one genderless.

## 3.3.10. Gender 10

Apart from some words such as *ɲʝɔy* ‘scissors’, words of gender 10 are always the plural of gender 9 nouns. Gender 10 nouns have no prefix.

## 3.4. Gender combinations

When one knows the gender and morphological class of a noun with singular reference, one can usually predict the gender to which the plural belongs and vice versa. This section provides an overview of the gender combinations, classified according to their relative frequency. Genders that contain mass nouns, pluralia tantum and/or singularia tantum are listed as well. Note that thirteen percent of the nouns is genderless (excluding the open category of proper names). The following overview differentiates according to gender *and* morphological class. The latter is marked by means of an undercase letter.

Major combinations (each more than 5% of all nouns):

7/8 (22%); 3n/4 (18%); 9/10,6 (15%); 5/6 (9%)

(60) ì-bǎŋ ‘pebble’ (7)  
bì-bǎŋ ‘pebbles’ (8)

(61) ñ-těŋ ‘line’ (3n)  
mìn-těŋ ‘lines’ (4)

(62) dwáb ‘navel’ (9)  
dwáb (10) ~ mè-dwáb (6) ‘navels’

(63) è-bóŋ ‘knee’ (5)  
mè-bòŋ ‘knees’ (6)

Minor combinations (each between 1 and 5% of all nouns):

6 (4%); 3u/5 (3%); 9 (3%); 5 (2%); 3u (2%); 3a (2%); 1/2 (2%); 3a/6 (1,5%); 7 (1%)

(64) mè-jèb ‘anguish’ (6)

(65) ù-kpǎl ‘partridge’ (3u)  
è-kpǎl ‘partridges’ (5)

(66) kpèm ‘cassava leaves dish’ (9)

- (67) è-swĩ ‘ashes’ (5)
- (68) ù-lùgá ‘respect’ (3u)
- (69) à-vól ‘speed’ (3a)
- (70) jì-jóm ‘husband’ (1)  
bè-jóm ‘husbands’ (2)
- (71) à-möz ‘day’ (3a)  
mè-möz ‘days’ (6)
- (72) ì-jwǎn ‘mist’ (7)

Marginal combinations (each less than 1% of all nouns):

3n; 4; 3u/6; 8; 5/genderless; 7/5; 9/10,genderless; 9/genderless; 3a/genderless;  
2; 3/10,6; 9/6,genderless

- (73) m̀-vòb̀ ‘respiration’ (3n)
- (74) m̀-vyáz ‘twins’ (4)
- (75) ù-lám ‘trap’ (3u)  
mè-lám ‘traps’ (6)
- (76) bì-jém ‘miserliness’ (8)
- (77) dwálô ‘coin of five francs (< Eng. *dollar*)’ (5)  
b̀ dwálô ‘five francs coins’ (genderless)
- (78) j-ôm ‘thing’ (7)  
l-ôm ‘things’ (5)
- (79) sêm ‘the same thing’ (9)  
sêm (10) ~ b̀ sêm (genderless) ‘the same things’
- (80) ndóm ‘brother (of a girl)’ (9)  
b̀ ndóm ‘brothers (of a girl)’ (genderless)
- (81) à-dũm ‘tree (sp.)’ (3a)  
b̀ dũm ‘trees (sp.)’ (genderless)

- (82) bè-kwè ‘pygmies’ (2)
- (83) gbé́b ‘theft’ (3)  
gbé́b (10) ~ m̀è-gbé́b (6) ‘thefts’
- (84) t́íkêd ‘ticket’ (9)  
m̀è-t́íkêd (6) ~ b̀ò t́íkêd (genderless) ‘tickets’

### 3.5. The augment

In some syntactic environments nouns have an obligatory prefix *í-*, called the *augment*. This prefix does not agree in gender. See Chapter VI for its use. The augment precedes any prefix marking morphological class. It copies its high tone onto the following syllable. Since it is a prefix, the resulting high tone feeds into high tone spread. If a noun has a vocalic gender prefix the preceding augment does not have segmental form and is represented by a floating high tone only.

- (85) í-<sup>4</sup>m-ínŋá n̄ɔ̄  
|í-N-ínŋá n̄ɔ̄|  
AU-1-woman III.DEM  
‘this woman’
- (86) í-m-òd àtè sòm  
|í-N-òd à-Lt́é L-sòm|  
AU-1-person I-PR INF-hunt  
‘a hunter’

## 4. Nominal derivation

### 4.1. Introduction

Many derivational processes described in this section involve a target gender. I only discuss singular nouns explicitly. It is assumed that the plural of the derived word can be retrieved according to the canonical gender combinations, unless specified otherwise. Where there is no one-to-one relation between gender and morphological class, both will be specified: 3a, 3u, 3n. Most of the time it is possible to know which noun is derived from which between two related nouns, because one of the two has an extra morpheme. However, in the case of motion, i.e. when the only formal difference between related nouns is their morphological class and/or gender, this cannot be done on an objective basis.

## 4.2. Denominal derivation

4.2.1. *Denominal derivation with reduplication*

From a noun denoting a property, action or object a noun can be derived for a person related to this property, object or action. The derivation involves reduplication and change of gender (if the source noun is not of gender 3n). The source noun can be of any gender, the target noun is always of gender 3n. The prefix of the source word is replaced by the prefix of gender 3n. No suffix is added. The reduplicated form conforms to the following scheme:

source stem		reduplicated noun (including gender 3 prefix)
$-C_xV_y^*$	→	$\dot{N}-C_xV_yN C_xV_y^*$

The asterisk stands for anything following the initial CV-sequence of the stem. The subscript characters  $_x, _y$  indicate identity of segments. This scheme is not entirely accurate in that the vowel of the reduplicant is reduced (centralised). Reduction is less strong in close vowels. If the stem has a non-close vowel, the vowel of the reduplicant will be written as <e>. Note that the gender 3 prefix attaches to the reduplicant, but is also retained before the base, where it loses its syllabicity due to the preceding vowel. This nasal is equally retained in gender 4 (88). Little can be said about the tones of this schema because no example has an entirely low pattern in the source noun. Nevertheless, the examples with a rising tone on the source stem suggest that the reduplicant is obligatorily high. The base retains the tones of the stem. If the stem has a rising tone, there will be high tone plateauing with initial downstep due to tone spread from the reduplicant, as in (87).

- (87) a. ù-kwǎn ‘disease’ (3u)  
           ḡ-kú~<sup>h</sup>ḡkwán ‘ill person’ (3n)  
       b. zǎm ‘leprosy’ (9)  
           ḡ-zé~<sup>h</sup>nzám ‘leprosy sufferer’ (3n)

The vowel of the reduplicant is the first *structural* vowel of the stem, which on the surface might be glided due to hiatus resolution, as in (87a, 88g-h). The vowel of the reduplicant, whether reduced or not, is often nasalized, especially when the form of the gender 3 prefix is a velar nasal. Especially in the case of /u/ followed by /ŋ/ I found it difficult to hear whether a nasal consonant is really present, or whether the vowel is simply strongly nasalized. It must be noted that the first consonant of both the reduplicant and the base undergoes any morphological change triggered by the syllabic nasal prefix of gender 3 (88d-g).

- (88) a. à-kúmá ‘wealth’ (3a)  
       ḡ-kú~ḡkúmá ‘chief’  
       pl. mìn-kú~ḡkúmá
- b. n-dím ‘blindness’ (9)  
       ḡ-dí~ndím ‘blind person’  
       pl. mìn-dí~ndím
- c. zíḡ ‘hatred’ (9)  
       ḡ-zí~nzíḡ ‘enemy’  
       pl. mìn-zí~nzíḡ
- d. ḡmgbél ‘witchcraft’ (9)  
       ḡm~ḡmḡ~ḡmḡl or ḡm~ḡbḡ~ḡmgbél ‘sorcerer’  
       pl. mìnḡm~ḡbḡ~ḡmgbél
- e. ì-bóg ‘paralysis’ (7)  
       mḡ~mḡ~móg ‘paralytic’  
       pl. mḡ~mḡ~móg
- f. gbḡb ‘theft’ (3)  
       ḡmḡ~ḡmḡ~ḡmḡb ‘thief’ [ḡmḡḡmḡḡmḡbḡ]  
       pl. mḡ~ḡmḡ~ḡmḡb
- g. mḡ~bwá ‘poverty’ (6)  
       mḡ~mḡ~mwá ‘poor person’  
       pl. mḡ~bḡ~bwá
- h. ndwág ‘deafness’ (9)  
       ḡ-dú~ndwág ‘deaf person’  
       pl. mìn-dú~ndwág

There are some rare examples of denominal derivation involving reduplication that do not denote humans. Their target gender is not necessarily 3, but they follow the same scheme of reduplication. The source word and the target word are near synonyms. Note that both nouns are associated with repetitive actions in (89).

- (89) a. è-páb ‘wing’ (5)  
       ì-pḡ~páb ‘wing’ (7)
- b. ì-bóg ‘board’<sup>13</sup> (7)  
       ì-bḡ~bóg ‘board’ (7)
- (90) à-jwág ‘ferocity, fierce’ (3)  
       ḡ-ḡú~ḡwág ‘ferocity, fierce’ (3)

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13. This is a carved out wooden board that is used for mashing or crushing food.

The reduplicated noun in (91) is derived from the noun *à-těg* ‘laziness’, which in turn is derived from the verb *tэг* ‘become tired’ (or *tэгbè* ‘be lazy’) by means of a floating high tone suffix (see Section 4.3.3).

(91) *ù-tě~<sup>h</sup>tэг* ~ *ù-té~<sup>h</sup>tэг* ‘slowly’ (3)

It is not entirely certain whether the reduplicated words in (92) are derived from the proposed source nouns, but in both cases the analysis fits formally and makes sense semantically.

- (92) a. *ì-báz* ‘scale’ (7)  
       *ì-bé~báz* ‘shoulder bone’ (7)  
       b. *ηgwál* ‘pity’ (9)  
       *ì-ηgú~ηgwál* ‘unfortunate’ (7)

Finally, there is one example that differs formally from the others, in that it takes a suffix, which is more typical (but not obligatory) for deverbal derivation with reduplication (see Section 4.3.1). Probably the derived noun has emphatic connotations.

- (93) *ì-tám* ‘solitude, lonely’ (7)  
       *ì-té~támá* ‘solitude, lonely’ (7)

#### 4.2.2. Proper name formation

Proper names can be derived from any common noun by means of the suffix *-a*. The tone of the suffix is low, except when it attaches to a monosyllabic stem with a rising tone. In that case the suffix carries the high part and the stem the low part of the rising tone.<sup>14</sup>

- (94) *è-nwǎn* ‘birds’  
       |*ènǒn-a*| → *ènwàno* ‘Birds’

Moreover, the source noun loses its gender specification in the process of derivation and becomes genderless. Its original prefix is incorporated in the

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14. This peculiar tonal behaviour is historically explainable. Final stem vowels eroded in Eton and the surrounding languages, except in proper names, which tend to be conservative. The final vowel of proper names has been morphologically reinterpreted as a suffix. Rising tones on monosyllabic stems are the result of the historical loss of the final vowel of CVCV-stems with a low-high tone pattern.

stem of the proper name. As all other genderless nouns, proper names form their (associative) plural by means of the plural word *b̀̀*.

(95) *b̀̀ ènwàń* ‘Birds and his friends’

In some fairy tales the animal characters are named by proper names derived from the name of their species by means of the derivational suffix.

(96) *ù-bàm* ‘sparrow hawk’ → *ùbàmà* ‘Sparrowhawk’

Both the addition of the *|-à|* suffix and the extraction from the gender system are part of the derivation, but only the latter seems to be strictly necessary. In one fairy tale where no proper name suffix was added to the words for animal species, the agreement of the latter remained that of normal common nouns (i.e. not necessarily agreement pattern I), but in another one (the first text in the texts section) agreement pattern I is consistently used for the animal characters although their names do not end in *|-à|*.

Note that not all proper names are derived from a common noun, e.g. the ancestral names *isónô*, *twàmń*, *ùńmđ*. See Section 4.4 for the derivation of names from phrases.

#### 4.2.3. Motion

There are many groups of nouns that have the same stem, but that belong to a different morphological class and gender. The most regular examples are singular-plural pairs, but it is not clear whether these can be called instances of derivation. Anyway, the difference between plural formation (or singular formation) and uncontroversial examples of motion<sup>15</sup> is not clear-cut. An intermediate case is that of the derivation of gender 5 partitives from gender 6 mass nouns.

- (97) a. *mè-ńdím* ‘water’  
       *è-ńdím* ‘drop of water’  
       b. *mè-cĩ* ‘blood’  
       *è-cĩ* ‘drop of blood’  
       c. *mè-té* ‘saliva’  
       *è-té* ‘drop of saliva’  
       d. *mè-kàlà* ‘doughnut batter’  
       *è-kàlà* ‘doughnut’

---

15. *Motion* refers to derivation by means of a change in gender (see Greenberg 1978:53).

Similarly, there is one example of a singulative gender 5 noun derived from a collective gender 6 noun.

- (98) m̀è-njáj̃ ‘marimba’  
 è-njáj̃ ‘bar, wooden piece of a marimba’

Note that the plurals of these partitives and singulatives are of gender 6.

- (99) a. m̀è-ndím ‘drops of water’  
 b. m̀è-kàlà ‘doughnuts’

Many of the examples that do not involve number or nominal aspect oppositions, such as *à-vín* ‘(the colour) black’, *ì-víní* ‘black person, African’, *ì-vívíní* ‘(the property) black’, are also related to a verb, in this case *vín* ‘be black’. They will be treated as deverbal nouns in Section 4.3. The few cases where no related verb is involved have a metonymical relation between the source word and the target word, e.g.

- (100) a. ηgwàn ‘girl’ (9)  
 è-ηgwàn ‘coquetry, girlish manners’ (5)  
 b. ñ-kúz ‘widow’ (3n)  
 è-kúz ‘ritual imposed on a widow’ (5)

Furthermore, there are two instances of words for trees that are derived from the word for their fruits by being put in gender 3a.

- (101) a. ndógô ‘mango’ (9)  
 à-ndógô ‘mango tree’ (3a)  
 b. sá ‘plum’<sup>16</sup> (9)  
 à-sá ‘plum tree’ (3a)

There are some other gender 3a words for (unidentified) tree species, but it is not clear whether these are derived, i.e. no possible source word has been recorded: *à-dũm*, *à-kwàm* and *à-tú*.<sup>17</sup>

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16. This is the fruit of the *Pachylobus Edulis*; an oval, purple-black piece of fruit that has to be grilled before consumption.

17. Also, one pair of nouns was found in which one seems to be derived from the other by means of a suffix, with retention of the original gender, viz. *ñ-tɔ̃ŋ* ‘long’ (3) / *ñ-tɔ̃ŋlɔ̃* ‘very long’ (3). The suffix is formally and semantically identical to the verbal suffix *-la* (see IV:3.1.2).

## 4.3. Deverbal derivation

## 4.3.1. Deverbal derivation with reduplication

Deverbal derivation with reduplication is rather common in Eton. The target gender is mostly gender 7. Reduplicated nouns derived from CVC-verb stems are formed according to the following scheme.

$$C_xV_yC_z \rightarrow \grave{i}-C_xV_y\sim H-C_xV_yC_z-\grave{a}$$

The tone on the reduplicant is identical to the tone on the verb stem. The base always receives a low tone, but is preceded by a floating high tone prefix. The derived noun usually denotes a property or anything that has this property. In the former case it often occurs as the first noun in connective constructions of the type described in Section VI:3.1.1.2.

- (102) a. sàl ‘split’  
           ì-sè~sâlà ‘(something) split’  
 b. búg ‘break’  
           ì-bú~bùgà ‘(something) broken’  
 c. cíg ‘cut’  
           ì-cí~cígà ‘(something) cut’  
           see also ìcîgà ‘incision’ in Section 4.3.6  
 d. jòl ‘be bitter’  
           ì-jè~jòlò ‘(something) bitter’  
           see also àjòl ‘bitterness’ in Section 4.3.3  
 e. sàŋ ‘be acid’  
           ì-sè~sâŋà ‘(something) acid’  
 f. vín ‘be black’  
           ì-ví~vîná ‘(something) black’  
 g. wól ‘curdle’  
           ì-wé~wòlò ‘curds’  
 h. pám ‘come out’  
           ì-pé~pâmà ‘new, novelty, skin swelling’

In one case the derivation does not involve a suffix -à and the derived noun does not denote a property.

- (103) vúz ‘swell’  
           ì-vú~vûz ‘foam’

When the verb stem has more than one syllable, the reduplicated noun does not have the suffix *-à* either. Apart from that, the derived nouns follow the same scheme as those derived from a CVC-verb (104).

- (104) a. júglànà ‘make turbid’  
           ì-jé~jûglànà ‘(something) turbid’  
       b. dígá ‘burn’  
           ì-dí~dígà ‘(something) burnt’  
       c. kwâlò ‘talk’  
           ì-kú~kwâlò ‘rumour’

Only one example was found in which the base is a CV-verb. The derived noun does not have a suffix and the base is not preceded by a floating high tone.

- (105) kù ‘fall’  
           ì-kù~kù ‘(something) fallen’

There are also some pairs of words in which the noun is reduplicated and formally related to the verb, but not directly derived from it, e.g. because a verbal suffix is missing in the noun.

- (106) a. zègbàn ‘be sweet’<sup>18</sup>  
           ì-zè~zèg ‘sweet’  
       b. bwàdbàn ‘dawdle’  
           ù-bù~bwàd ‘indolence’

#### 4.3.2. *Deverbal derivation without suffixation*

##### 4.3.2.1. *Resultative nouns of gender 5*

Resultative nouns of gender 5 can be derived from verbs denoting accomplishments or achievements. These nouns are used only in adverbial time clauses, in which they are the antecedent of a relative clause (see Section IX:5.1.4). The stem of the main verb of this relative clause is the source from which they are derived.

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18. This verb might be related to *zèg* ‘pineapple’.

- (108) kpàgì ‘clear’ → è-kpàgì  
 dō vó mwàn újàm àngákpàgè zën. lékpàgè mwàn újàm àngámâ kpàgè ‘zén  
 vâ, béngénâ á léjòmí  
 |dō vó m-òñH=ù-ɕàm à-ngá-kpàgì zën H-lè-kpàgì|  
 DP donc 1-DIM=3-squirrel I-RP-clear [9]path AU-5-clearing  
 |m-òñH=ù-ɕàm à-ngá-mâ L-kpàgì H zën vâ|  
 1-DIM=3-squirrel I-RP-TMN INF-clear LT [9]path here  
 |bé-ngénâ á lè-jòmí|  
 II-be.already LOC 5-foliage<sup>19</sup>  
 ‘Then the little squirrel cleared the path. As soon as the little squirrel had  
 finished clearing this path, they were under the foliage.’

- (109) dàŋ ‘cross’ → è-dàŋ ‘crossing’  
 lédàŋ béngámâ dàŋ ú‘só, dō bápám á ‘mábǵán  
 |H-lè-dàŋ bó-ngá-mâ L-dàŋ H ù-só|  
 AU-5-crossing II-RP-TMN INF-cross LT 3-river  
 |dō bó-à-pám á màbǵán|  
 DP II-SP-arrive LOC [9]crossroads  
 ‘Once they had crossed the river, they arrived at a crossroads.’

#### 4.3.2.2. Cognate words

Numerous stems are both verb stems and noun stems. When they function as noun stems, they have a nominal prefix, otherwise they take verbal inflectional morphology. In contrast with clear cases of derivation, there is no target gender. Nouns that share their stem with verbs can be of any gender. Any generalisations about gender assignment are obviously also valid for these nouns. It is no surprise that the word for ‘a drink’ is of gender 6.

- (110) núŋ ‘drink’  
 mè-núŋ ‘drink’

The precise meaning of a related noun cannot be predicted on the basis of the meaning of the verb, but the semantic relations are always transparent. Examples abound. The following is a small selection. More examples can be found in the dictionary, where cross-references are provided.

19. *lèjòmí* (~ *lèjwǎm*) is a kind of tree.

- (111) a. dí ‘eat’  
 bì-dí ‘food’ (8)  
 è-dí ‘meal’ (5)  
 ì-dí ‘bait’ (7)
- b. bóló ‘ask’  
 m̀-̀móló ‘question’ (3)
- c. j̀g̀g ‘damn’  
 ì-j̀g̀g ‘cursing, curse’ (7)
- d. yén ‘see’  
 ì-yén ‘mirror’ (7)
- e. bá ‘marry’  
 è-bá ‘marriage’ (5)  
 (see also example (133b) m̀-báání (3))
- f. kwàm ‘do’  
 è-kwàm ‘manner’ (5)
- g. kàb ‘distribute’  
 à-kàb ‘distribution, generous’ (3a)  
 (see also ng̀àb (9) below)
- h. céní ‘change (money)’  
 céní ‘change (money)’ (9)

In some nouns of gender 9 the initial consonant of the noun stem is voiced, whereas the initial consonant of the cognate verb stem is voiceless (112, 117c, nt. 11). Depending on the case the noun stem has undergone voicing under the influence of the preceding homorganic nasal, or the consonant in question was originally voiced and then unvoiced, except after a nasal.<sup>20</sup>

- (112) a. kàb ‘distribute’ vs. η-g̀àb ‘distribution’ (9)  
 b. p̀d̀d̀ǹ ‘resemble’ vs. m-b̀d̀d̀ǹ ‘resemblance’ (9)  
 c. t́n̄ ‘tell’ vs. n-d́n̄ ‘story, account’

An interesting case of a stem initial opposition is that of ‘to walk’ versus ‘a journey’. The noun stem begins in a vowel, which is split into glide + vowel in order to fill the onset position in the verb stem.

- (113) ẁl̀à ‘walk’  
 d-̀l̀à ‘journey, stroll’

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20. E.g. Proto-Bantu \*p̀ú-àn ‘resemble’ > p̀d̀d̀ǹ ‘resemble’, m̀b̀d̀d̀ǹ ‘resemblance’ and \*g̀òb̀b̀ ‘skin, tissue’ > ηg̀òb̀ ‘shoe’, ì-k̀òb̀ ‘skin’.

A less straightforward example of a consonant alternation can be found in (114):

- (114) yég ‘bar’  
 ὴm̀-ὴm̃ěg ‘dyke’(3) pl. m̀-vyěg (4)

There is one pair of cognates in which the nasal prefix of the noun is incorporated in the verb stem (115).

- (115) ὴm̃gbèg ‘belch’  
 ὴm̀-gbèg ‘belch’ (3)

The noun might be derived from the verb with morphological reinterpretation of the initial consonant cluster, but this is very unlikely, if only because of the rarity of verb stems with an initial NC-cluster. Almost certainly the verb is historically derived from the noun, with the usual strong phonological link between oral consonant and preceding homorganic nasal preventing the latter from being dropped. In example (116a) the initial nasal was a nominal prefix historically, but it no longer is today, as in (116b), where the verb is derived from the noun by means of the Positional suffix *-bà* (see Section IV:3.5).

- (116) a. mbóónò ‘purge’  
 mbóónò ‘enema syringe (made of a calabash)’ (9)  
 b. ndwàgb̀ ‘be greedy’  
 ndwàg ‘greed’ (9)

#### 4.3.3. Deverbal derivation with a floating high tone suffix

An important number of nouns is derived from a verb by means of a floating high tone suffix. The behaviour of the floating high tone suffix after a low tone depends on the syllable structure of the stem (see Section II:7.2.2).

- (117) a. sòm ‘hunt’  
 ɲ̀-çòm ‘hunting’ (3)  
 b. tìg ‘be thick (of a liquid)’  
 è-tĩg ‘sediment, leftover in a recipient’ (5)  
 c. tìmzàná ‘explain’  
 ndìmzàná ‘meaning, explanation’ (9)
- (118) a. k̀èlbà ‘cling, clutch’  
 m̀-è-k̀èlbá ‘pretext’ (6)

- b. byàni ‘despise’  
 ì-byàní ‘contempt’ (7)

- (119) tóbnì ‘meet’  
 ndób<sup>+</sup>ní ‘meeting’ (9)  
 var. lètóbní, ndób<sup>+</sup>nó

When the final syllable of the stem carries a high tone, it is impossible to know whether the suffix is present. The following examples might have been inserted equally well in Section 4.3.2.2.

- (120) a. wú ‘to die’  
 à-wú ‘death’  
 b. vól ‘be quick’  
 à-vól ‘speediness’

Many of these nouns derived by -H are of gender 3u or 3a.

- (121) a. jàb ‘be long’  
 à-jǎb ‘length, height’ (3a)  
 ù-jǎb ‘far, long distance’ (3u)  
 b. jòl ‘be bitter’  
 à-jǒl ‘bitterness’ (3a)  
 c. pùm ‘be white’  
 à-pǔm ‘(the colour) white’ (3a)  
 d. vyè ‘redden’  
 à-vyě ‘(the colour) red’ (3a)  
 e. sàŋ ‘be acid’  
 à-sǎŋ ‘acidity’ (3a)  
 f. kwàn ‘be ill’  
 ù-kwǎn ‘illness’ (3u)  
 g. lùgà ‘respect’  
 ù-lùgá ‘respect’ (3u)

For the abstract gender 3a word *àjòm* ‘age’, no source verb was found, only a verb form related to the probable source verb (viz. *jòmbò* ‘grow old’). The word for ‘laziness’ is semantically closer to the derived verb *tègbè* ‘be lazy’ than to the apparent source verb *tèg* ‘get tired’. As for example (122c), there is no verb *nàl* in Eton. In all these cases the nominal suffix -H is opposed to the Stative verbal suffix -bà.

- (122) a. jòm-bò ‘grow old’<sup>21</sup>  
 à-jòm ‘old age’ (3a)  
 b. tèg-bè ‘be lazy’  
 à-těg ‘laziness’ (3a)  
 c. nàl-bà ‘lie’  
 ò-nǎl ‘lie’ (3n)

Another interesting example is *m̀pě̀d* ‘doubt’. Formally it seems to be derived from the verb *pě̀d* ‘close’, but semantically it relates better to *pě̀dnì* ‘close oneself, doubt’.

- (123) pè̀dnì ‘doubt’  
 m̀-pě̀d ‘doubt’ (3)

Example (124) is noteworthy because the initial consonant of the source verb was reinterpreted as the nominal prefix.

- (124) jà ‘sing’  
 j-ǎ ‘song’ (7) pl. by-ǎ (8)

Finally, there is one exceptional form, unexplainable by means of the tone rules of Eton:

- (125) pùm ‘be white’  
 m̀-putm ‘(the colour) white’ (synonym of à-pùm)

#### 4.3.4. Deverbal derivation with the suffix -à (agentive nouns)

Agentive nouns can be derived from verbs by means of the suffix -à. This derivation type is very productive. The target gender is usually gender 1. Sometimes there are two alternative derivations, one of gender 1 and one of gender 3.

- (126) a. kòm ‘make’  
 ñ-kòmò ‘creator, repairer’  
 b. sùm ‘labour’  
 ò-sùmà ‘labourer’  
 c. sòm ‘hunt’  
 ò-sòmò ‘hunter’  
 d. lú ‘to bend’  
 ò-lwâ ‘smith’

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21. This verb does not have a resultative form meaning ‘be old’.

After non-close final vowels, the agentive suffix has a floating low tone allomorph *-L*. Example (127a) was found in a recorded dialogue. The falling tone on the last syllable is the result of high tone spread.

- (127) a. sílá ‘ask’  
           jì-cílâ ‘asker’  
       b. vé ‘give’  
           mè-vê ‘giver, donor’

The structural form of the derived noun stem can vary. In the following example the stem-initial morphophoneme is alternatively  $|\lambda|$  and  $|l|$ .

- (128) lòd ‘pass’  
       n-nòdò ~ n-lòdò ‘passer-by’

#### 4.3.5. Derivation by means of the suffix *-ní* or *-éngáná*

Another productive derivation type is that of the formation of nouns by suffixing *-ní* to a verb stem. The form of the suffix alternates freely between *-ní* and *-én* (see II:7.2.4). Gender 3 is the target gender of this derivation, without exceptions. Depending on the meaning of the source verb, the derived noun can denote an action (129), a state (130), manner (131), or something else (132). These nouns are used after verbs like ‘learn’ or ‘teach’ or after a copula, where European languages tend to use an infinitive or a participle.

- (129) a. ácòg ‘to think’  
           n-cògní ‘thought, thinking’  
       b. dù ‘baptise’  
           n-dùuní ‘baptism’  
       c. kwàm ‘do’  
           mìŋ-kwàmni ‘action, act’  
       d. pág ‘dig’  
           m-pàgní ‘excavation, extraction of clay’  
       e. lán ‘read’  
           n-lánni ‘reading’  
           àté ‘yégi ní’lání  
           |à-Lté L-jégi H n-lání|  
           I-PR INF-learn LT 3-reading  
           ‘He learns to read.’

- f. lám ‘set a trap’  
 ñ-lámní ‘trapping’  
 àté jê yéglê ñ‘lámní  
 |à-Lté jé L-jéglê H ñ-lámní|  
 I-PR I.PPR INF-teach LT 3-trapping  
 ‘He teaches him to set a trap.’
- (130) vàŋ ‘roll up, pack’  
 m̀-vaŋní ‘rolled up’  
 lèká lé újò lénê m̀vaŋní  
 |lè-ká ló = úǰò ló-nè ñ-vaŋní|  
 5-leaf V.CON=banana V-COP 3-rolled.up  
 ‘The banana leaves are rolled up.’
- (131) a. bwád ‘dress’  
 m̀-bwádní ‘way of being dressed’  
 see also m̀-mwád ‘garment’  
 b. bímî ‘hit, kick’  
 m̀-bímní ‘kicking technique (soccer)’
- (132) a. kàŋ ‘be grateful’  
 ñ-kàŋní ‘praise’  
 b. dùgà ‘deceive’  
 ñ-dùgní ‘deception, trickery’
- When the source verb has a CV-stem, the stem vowel is lengthened in the derived noun (symbolised by the vowel length symbol in the form of the suffix).<sup>22</sup>
- (133) a. tú ‘to pierce, to drill’  
 ñ-túúní ‘the fact of being pierced’  
 b. bá ‘marry’  
 m̀-báání ‘married person, marrying’  
 c. bwí ‘singe’  
 m̀-búúní ‘singed leaf’  
 d. ló ‘call’  
 ñ-lóóní ‘designation’  
 see also: ñ-nwánó ‘call’ (3)

22. Thus, this nominalising suffix is at least segmentally a perfect homonym of the reciprocal suffix described in Section IV:3.5. The only difference is that the latter is never represented as *-en*, but this is possibly due to the fact that verb stems never have a CV.CVC syllable structure.

- e. té ‘uproot’  
 ñ-tééní ‘uprooting’  
 f. yì ‘want’  
 ñ-pììní ‘wish, project, intention’

The word for ‘European, white person’ *ñ-táǵní* conforms formally to the target nouns under consideration, but in present day Eton there is no verb from which it can be derived, except perhaps *táǵá* ‘to worry’. According to Baudouin Janssens (p.c.) this noun must be derived from a verb meaning ‘count’. The noun *táǵ* means ‘calculation’ in Eton, but ‘count’ is translated by *láǵ*, which also means ‘read’. However, in nearby Ewondo, *táǵ* means ‘count’. The case of *è-néni* ‘volume, corpulence’, derived from *nén* ‘be fat’ should also be mentioned. This derivation is not of the type under consideration, because the target gender is 5 instead of 3. But *è-néni* does not conform to any other derivational mechanism either.

Nominalisations on *-ní* from source verbs with expansions or suffixes have not been recorded. In constructions where CV- and CVC-verbs use the nominalisations on *-ní*, these verbs are represented by an infinitive form marked by the prefix *L-*.

- (134) a. bèǵlè ‘carry’  
 àté ‘yéǵí bèǵlè  
 |à-Lté L-jéǵí H L-Bèǵlè|  
 I-PR INF-learn LT INF-carry  
 ‘He learns to carry.’  
 b. yóǵlò ‘warm up (food)’  
 àté ‘yéǵí ‘yóǵlò  
 |à-Lté L-jéǵí H L-jóǵlò|  
 I-PR INF-learn LT INF-warm.up  
 ‘He learns to warm it up.’

In some cases there is an alternative form with the suffix *-éǵáná* instead of *-ní*. This alternative seems to exist irrespective of the form of the source verb. Speakers find it difficult to perceive a difference in meaning.<sup>23</sup>

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23. A hypothesis that is in need of further research is that the difference is aspectual, the variant with *-éǵáná* being imperfective. This can be translated by means of emphasis on manner.

- (135) àté 'yéǵí n'láǵnéǵáná  
 |à-Lté L-jéǵì H N-láǵnéǵáná|  
 I-PR INF-learn LT 3-reading  
 'He learns (the way) to read.'

#### 4.3.6. Derivations involving the suffix -Lǵà

A small number of nouns is derived from a verb by means of the suffix *-Lǵà*. The target gender is most often gender 7. In CVCV- verb stems, *-Lǵ* is inserted before the final stem vowel, and might therefore better be called an infix. The form of these nouns is remarkably similar to that of the G-form of verbs (see Section VII:2.2). Note also that when a verb has an expansion or suffix, its G-form is made by means of the suffix *-éǵǵàná*, which is at least segmentally identical to one of the suffixes described in the previous section.

- (136) a. búǵá 'be covered'  
           ì-búǵǵà 'lid' (7)  
       b. sàl 'split'  
           ì-sàlǵà 'split' (7)  
       c. cǵ 'cut'  
           ìcǵǵà 'incision'

The tone on the noun stem in (137) is surprising.

- (137) náj 'grow'  
           ì-nàáǵǵà 'youngster' (7)

One example has a high tone on the suffix and the same vowel lengthening as described in the previous subsection.

- (138) jù 'forgive'  
           bì-jùùǵá 'excuses' (8)

It is not clear whether (139) belongs in this derivation type, since both the target gender and the tonality are deviant.

- (139) kómô 'admire'  
           mè-kómǵó 'admiration' (6)

Finally, the word *ì-sàǵǵà* 'flower bud' formally resembles a deverbal noun of this type, but there is no verb stem in present day Eton from which it can be

derived. However, there is a synonym *sǎm* that might also be deverbal, judging from its rising tone.

#### 4.3.7. *Isolated cases*

There is a very small number of nouns that are derived from a verb by means of an idiosyncratic suffix. These suffixes formally resemble expansions and/or suffixes found in the verbal morphology.

- (140) a. *lóg* ‘fish’  
           *ì-lógzò* ‘fishing instrument’<sup>24</sup> (7)  
       b. *jèm* ‘know’  
           *ù-jèmlà* ‘knowledge’ (3)  
       c. *vò* ‘play’  
           *ì-vǒy* ‘game’ (7)  
       d. *ló* ‘call’  
           *òn-nwánó* ‘call’ (3)

In one pair the element that is added to the noun stem does not resemble any existing suffix or expansion.

- (141) *vyé* ‘sweep’  
           *ì-vyág* ‘broom’ (7)

#### 4.3.8. *Deverbal nouns with a complement*

Deverbal nouns can have a complement. The meaning of these noun-complement combinations is often specialised. In the dictionary they are treated as idioms. Note with respect to the agentive nouns in (142) that post-prominent vowels are usually deleted if not followed by a pause.

- (142) a. *jà-cíg nàg* ‘butcher’  
           *cíg* ‘cut’, *nàg* ‘bullock’  
       b. *jà-câ mètúb* ‘farmer’  
           *sá* ‘work’, *mètúb* ‘fields’
- (143) *ìcàm èkàg* ‘breakfast’ (7)  
           *càm* ‘chase away’, *èkàg* ‘bad breath’

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24. The verb *lóg* means to fish by isolating part of a small brook by means of a dam and then removing all the water from it. The receptacle with which the water is removed is called *ìlógzò*.



- (146) a. *ńtwáj zûdà*  
 |H-Ñ-túáj H = zùd-à|  
 ?-3-long III.CON=[9]buttock-SF  
 ‘chilli pepper (sp.), *Capsicum Frutescens*’
- b. *ńńó dóbô* ‘moon’ lit. ‘head of the sky’  
 from ñ-ńó ‘head’ (3n); d-òb ‘sky’ (5)
- c. *ńkêg mèbò*  
 |H-Ñ-kêg mè-bò|  
 ?-3-breaker 6-ebo.grain  
 ‘bird (sp.)’ lit. ‘breaker of èbò grains’

The name of a herb in (147) also has an initial high tone and a proper name suffix, but the latter exceptionally appears on the first component of the phrasal compound. Surprisingly, the initial high tone replaces the low tone of the source noun *pàd* ‘buffalo’. This example differs from the others also in the sense that it is the only one in which the second component denotes the category of the whole.

- (147) *pádà ìlwág*  
 ‘herb (sp.), *Ageratum Conyzoides*’ lit. ‘Buffalo herb’  
 from *pàd* ‘buffalo’ (9) and ì-lwág ‘herb’ (7)

The proper name suffix can also be attached to a verb phrase, as in the beautiful name for mimosa in (148).

- (148) *wú ú’swánô*  
 |wú-H ù-són-à|  
 die-IMP 3-shame-SF  
 ‘plant (sp.), *Mimosa Pudica*’

The name for a species of plantain bananas in (149) contains a verb stem. This name is exceptional because the suffix is attached to a word group that does not constitute a grammatical phrase.

- (149) *àlú vínâ*  
 |à-lú vín-à|  
 3-night be.black-SF  
 ‘plantain banana (sp.)’

There are also instances of phrasal compounds derived from a verb phrase without a suffix. The initial *à* in the examples in (150) is probably the subject

prefix of agreement pattern I followed by the Southern present tense prefix *à-* (see VII:2.5). The structural forms given below are tentative.

- (150) a. *àbwàl zwàg*  
 |*à-à-bəl zəg*|  
 I-SP-destroy [9]elephant  
 ‘plant (sp.), (Mamea africana?)’  
 b. *àvwàd mbèglè*  
 |*à-à-vùəd mbèglə*|  
 I-SP-stop [9]transportation  
 ‘plantain banana (sp.)’

Since these phrasal compounds are all genderless, their plural is formed by means of the plural word *bə*. Pluralization usually shows that the phrases from which phrasal names are derived are not or only partly fossilised. In the plural of the name for chilli pepper given in (146a), the first component *n̄twáŋ* is pluralized (and loses its initial high tone) and the following connective morpheme agrees with it (151). Nevertheless, the plural word precedes the entire construction. Similarly, the first component of the phrasal compound in (145b) is pluralized *and* preceded by the plural word (152). Note, however, that the number ‘one’ does not agree with the preceding noun, neither in the singular nor in the plural. The number always has a prefix of agreement pattern I.

- (151) *bə m̄ntwáŋ mí zùdà*  
 |*bə m̄n-tùàŋ mí = zùd-à*|  
 PL 4-long IV.CON=[9/10]buttock-SF  
 ‘chilli peppers (sp.)’

- (152) *bə mè-sàŋ mwágə*  
 |*bə mə-sàŋ móg-à*|  
 PL 6-hand.of.bananas one-SF  
 ‘horn plantains (sp.)’

# Chapter 4

## Verbs

### 1. Introduction

The number of underived verbs in the lexicon is about two thirds of the number of basic nouns.<sup>1</sup> Given that the lexicon was partly gathered by means of questionnaires, which most probably favours the collection of nouns, this is an important percentage. Examples cited in this chapter are semantically characterised by means of one English translation equivalent. For some of them, a more elaborate description can be found in the dictionary (not in this volume). Auxiliaries and inflectional morphemes are treated in Chapter 7. See also Section IX:2.2 for quasi-auxiliaries. Note, finally, that the morphological analysis provided in this chapter will usually be omitted in the glosses in later chapters, except for the resultative suffix, which will normally be marked as such.

### 2. The structure of the underived verb

Verb stems follow the same template as noun stems (see III:2.1).

$$[[\text{radical}(\neq\text{expansion})]_{\text{root}} (-\text{suffix})]_{\text{stem}}$$

In comparative Bantu studies (e.g., Meeussen 1967:85-90, Schadeberg 2003:71) the combination of root and suffix(es) is called *base*. The base forms a stem together with an obligatory final vowel morpheme. Since Eton lacks this morpheme, the distinction between base and stem is immaterial here. Example (1) shows the structure of the verb stem *cìŋlànà*, which is derived from the verb *cìŋlàn* ‘rotate (intr.)’ by means of the suffix *-à*. The underived stem can be formally divided in the radical *cìŋ* and the expansion *≠làn*.

(1) *cìŋ≠làn-à* ‘rotate (tr.)’

The citation form of verbs is *á* plus the infinitive form of the verb, which is *L-STEM*. As in English, this citation form originates in a locative construction.

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1. At the time of writing, my lexicon contained 441 underived verbs.

- (2) a. á cìŋlànà  
 |á L-tŋɿlàn-à|  
 LOC INF-rotate-VIS  
 ‘to rotate (tr.)’  
 b. á ‘bémî  
 |á L-bémî|  
 LOC INF-warn  
 ‘to warn’

### 2.1. Stems without an expansion

Eighty percent of the underived Eton verb stems do not have an expansion. These stems fall apart in three syllabic types: CV (16%), CVC (59%) and CVCV (25%).<sup>2</sup> As for the last type, some arguments could be adduced to treat it as CVCɿV, i.e. as a type with an expansion. This is because only two elements can occur in V<sub>2</sub> position: |ì| (55%) or |à|. Moreover, some suffixes replace the final vowel of CVCV stems instead of adding to them (see 3.2). However, both observations are due to the general word prosodic structure of Eton (the distribution of vowel morphophonemes and maximality constraints) and therefore they should not be used as arguments for treating the last vowel of CVCV verb stems as an expansion.

Only the first structural tone of a verb stem can be high. Hence, there are no verb stems with a rising tone pattern and only monosyllabic stems can be entirely high. Contrary to noun stems, monosyllabic verb stems do not carry compound tones. The few exceptions that were found have a structural final ÿ, which is glided due to hiatus resolution, e.g. *lây* ~ *léê* ‘tell’ and *téy* ‘leave a place’. Among the monosyllabic stems, the numbers of high and low stems are roughly equivalent. An example of each underived stem type without an expansion is given in (3).

- (3) jà ‘sing’  
 vé ‘give’  
 tùg ‘rub’  
 pún ‘be afraid’  
 cìlà ‘forbid’  
 kómô ‘admire’

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2. N=352

Four of the CVC verbs begin with an NC cluster (4) and 14% have a CG-onset (5).

- (4) ndèm ‘fly’  
 ɲmgbèg ‘belch’  
 ɲgéb ‘indulge’  
 ndéɲ ‘try hard, endeavor’
- (5) bwàb ‘hit’  
 jwág ‘construct’

Finally, there are ten monosyllabic verb stems that do not fit in any of the three schemes outlined above.<sup>3</sup> Some have a long vowel (6); some have a CVV structure with two different vowels (7). Which one of the two vowels is diphthongised in order to avoid vowel hiatus depends on the dialect. If the first vowel is an /a/ and the second an /i/, then the first is usually raised.

- (6) v àà ‘remove’  
 tèè ‘glide’  
 sî ‘oil oneself’
- (7) n ày ‘keep’ [nèj]  
 lây ‘tell’  
 téèy ‘leave’

## 2.2. Stems with an expansion

Underived stems with an expansion come in four syllabic types: CVC.CV, CVV.CV,<sup>4</sup> CVC.CVC and CVC.CV.CV.

Stems with a CVC.CV structure can have one of six different expansions: *ɸlà*, *ɸdà*, *ɸbà*, *ɸzà*, *ɸnà* or *ɸnì*. Examples are given in (8-13). There are only two stems with an expansion *ɸzà*, which are formally and semantically almost identical. The stem *sùgzà* ‘shake’ is used when bigger objects are shaken, i.e. a tree in order to make its fruit fall. Note that there is no high tone spread from the first stem syllable onto expansions that begin in *n*, i.e. *ɸnà* and *ɸnì*.

- (8) bàgɸlà ‘conserve’  
 kògɸlò ‘bite’

3. Note that stems for which there are cognate forms are not counted here, e.g. *tii* ‘detach’, because of *tinɸdà* ‘attach’.

4. Where VV stands for a long vowel.

- vúŋɛlâ 'blow'  
 ɲwàmɛlò 'tickle'  
 ndégɛlê 'disturb'
- (9) sùgɛzà 'shake'  
 sègɛzè 'shake'
- (10) déŋɛbê 'watch'  
 vidɛbà 'sag, cave in'
- (11) límɛdâ 'pull'  
 sòŋɛdô 'sharpen'<sup>5</sup>  
 bánɛdâ 'convoke'
- (12) bèlɛnì 'use'  
 jémɛnì 'be rare, be lacking'<sup>6</sup>  
 yâbɛnì 'hurt (intr.)'
- (13) kèdɛnè 'adjust'  
 ndámɛnà 'spoil'  
 pèlɛnè 'explain'  
 tídɛnà 'expel'

Some of these expansions are formally identical to an existing suffix, but the syllable that precedes the expansion is not a morpheme, i.e. there are no stems with the same initial syllable and a related meaning. The verb stems in (14) illustrate this. In (14a) *pèm-nì* is derived from the stem *pèm* by means of the reciprocal suffix *-nì*. *Sáŋnì* (14b) is formally similar to *pèm-nì*, but the initial syllable *sáŋ* is not an existing stem, nor is there any other stem that begins in *sáŋ*. This was checked with an informant whom I presented a number of possible verb stems beginning in *sáŋ*. The situation is slightly different in (14c) where the initial syllable of the form *kàm-nì* is an independent verb stem. Nonetheless, there is no obvious semantic relation between the two verb stems, so that the formal identity of the initial syllable of both stems is likely to be homonymic.

- (14) a. *pèm-nì* 'detest each other'  
*pèm* 'detest sb.'

5. This verb might be related to the noun *è-sǎŋ* 'tooth'.

6. This verb resembles the verb *jéŋ* 'look for', semantically and formally, except for the final consonant. It is not excluded that *jém-nì* is historically derived from *jéŋ*.

- b. sáŋɛ̀nì ‘be worried’
- c. kàmɛ̀nì ‘prohibit’  
kàm ‘capture’

Although suffixes and expansions must be distinguished, the difference between them is evidently not very clear-cut, in the sense that the analysis of individual verbs may depend on coincidence. One can ignore the existence of cognate verbs and a more thorough lexical-semantic analysis can bring to the fore semantic ties that are not immediately obvious. The only criterion used here to decide whether a form is a suffix or an expansion is whether there is a known cognate stem.

No syntactic-semantic generalisations can be made concerning the CVC.CV stems discussed above, except perhaps that stems with an expansion *ɛ̀lâ*, *ɛ̀dâ* or *ɛ̀nâ* tend to be transitive.

The expansion *ɛ̀nì* is remarkably prominent in stems with a CVV.CV structure (in 13 out of 17 CVV.CV stems, i.e. 75%). Since the suffix *-nì* lengthens the vowel of any CV-stem to which it attaches (see 3.5), the forms in (15) –and by analogy all stems with an expansion– most likely reflect older stem+suffix combinations that merged into a single morpheme.

- (15) sááɛ̀nì ‘bicker’  
yáàɛ̀nì ‘yawn’  
ɲòòɛ̀nì ‘straighten up’

The expansions *ɛ̀bâ* and *ɛ̀lâ* are found after a long vowel as well.

- (16) bùùɛ̀lâ ‘stir strongly’  
vòòɛ̀bò ‘breathe’

Stems with a CVC.CVC structure have one of four different expansions: *ɛ̀gân*, *ɛ̀lân*, *ɛ̀bân* or *ɛ̀zân*. These can be further subdivided in C+*ân*. In three of the four *ɛ̀CVC* expansions the initial consonant is identical to the initial consonant of one of the *ɛ̀Câ* forms discussed above. The expansion *ɛ̀bân* is formally identical to the suffix *-bân* (see 3.2.2).

- (17) sîlɛ̀gân ‘shiver’  
búlɛ̀gân ‘lose one’s temper’  
kògɛ̀lân ‘implore’  
pùbɛ̀lân ‘gesticulate’  
ɲànɛ̀bân ‘jolt’  
sáŋɛ̀zân ‘become pale’  
séɛ̀gɛ̀zân ‘breathe with difficulty’

The CVC.CV.CV-stems, finally, have one of the previous  $\neq C\grave{a}n$  expansions followed by  $\neq\grave{a}$ . All examples available at the moment of writing are listed in (18).

- (18)  $y\acute{e}g\neq l\grave{a}n\grave{a}$  ‘imitate mockingly’<sup>7</sup>  
 $y\grave{e}z\neq l\grave{a}n\grave{a} \sim y\grave{e}\grave{e}l\grave{a}n\grave{a}$  ‘reprimand’  
 $j\acute{u}g\neq l\grave{a}n\grave{a}$  ‘make unclear’  
 $m\acute{a}n\neq g\grave{a}n\grave{a}$  ‘quibble’  
 $\grave{t}\grave{u}m\neq z\grave{a}n\grave{a}$  ‘explain’

### 3. Verbal derivation

The difference between the formally complex verbs treated in the previous section and those treated in this section is that the latter are (known to be) related to verbs that have the same root.

#### 3.1. The suffix $-\grave{a}$

The causative suffix  $-\grave{a}$  usually attaches to CVC-stems, as in (21b). In a few cases  $-\grave{a}$  attaches to a verb with a  $\neq CVC$ -expansion (22b).

- (19) a.  $\eta\acute{a}\eta$  ‘suck at (mother’s breast)’  
 b.  $\eta\acute{a}\eta-\grave{a}$  ‘breast-feed, suckle’
- (20) a.  $c\grave{i}\eta l\grave{a}n$  ‘turn (intr.)’  
 b.  $c\grave{i}\eta l\grave{a}n-\grave{a}$  ‘turn (tr.)’

The meaning of the derived verb is causative proper. I found no clear examples of a permissive causative reading.

- (21) a.  $d\acute{i}g$  ‘burn (int.)’  
 $d\acute{i}g-\grave{a}$  ‘burn (tr.)’  
 b.  $s\grave{u}z$  ‘diminish (int.)’  
 $s\grave{u}z-\grave{a}$  ‘diminish (tr.)’  
 c.  $j\grave{a}b$  ‘be long’  
 $j\grave{a}b-\grave{a}$  ‘lengthen’

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7. These and the previous examples might also have been written with additional formal boundaries, e.g.  $j\acute{e}g\neq l\neq\grave{a}n\neq\grave{a}$ .

- (22) a. ànúŋ  
|à-H-núŋ|  
I-PST-drink  
'He drank.'
- b. mènúŋá nê  
|mè-H-núŋ-à-H nɛ́|  
1SG-PST-drink-VIS-NF I.PPR  
'I gave him to drink.'
- (23) a. mèjwàg mé'té jòl  
|mè-ɕʒòg mɔ́-Lté L-ɕʒòl|  
6-wine VI-PR INF-be.bitter  
'The wine is bitter.'
- b. ìbàg í'té jòlò méjwàg  
|ì-bàg í-Lté L-ɕʒòl-à H mè-ɕʒòg|  
7-ibag VII-PR INF-be.bitter-VIS LT 6-wine  
'Ibag<sup>8</sup> makes the wine bitter.'

The number of verb stems that can serve as a source verb for this derivation is rather restricted. A periphrastic causative can always be formed by means of the verb *kwàm* 'do', followed by the complementiser *nâ* and a subjunctive verb form (24, 25a) (see also Section IX:4.1). This usually expresses mediated causation. The causation is more direct if *kwàm* is followed by a pronominal complement (25b).

- (24) àkwám nâ kál íyôn  
|à-H-kùàm-H nâ kál H-ì-jón-L|  
I-PST-do-NF CMP [9]sister SB-IX-cry-SB  
'He made his sister cry.'
- (25) a. mèkwám nâ ánúŋ  
|mè-H-kùàm-H nâ H-à-nùŋ-L|  
1SG-PST-do-NF CMP SB-I-drink-SB  
'I made him drink.'
- b. mèkwám nê nâ ánúŋ  
|mè-H-kùàm-H nɛ́ nâ H-à-nùŋ-L|  
1SG-PST-do-NF I.PPR CMP SB-I-drink-SB  
'I made him drink.'

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8. *Ibag* is the bark of a tree that is added to palm wine in order to make it ferment.

3.2. The suffix *-lâ*

The suffix *-lâ* is mostly used as a causative marker.<sup>9</sup> Whether *-â* is used or *-lâ* for valency increasing derivation appears to be determined mainly by the form of the source verb. If it ends in a vowel *-lâ* is always used, if the source verb ends in a coronal consonant the causative suffix is *-â* after a non-coronal final consonant the choice between *-lâ* and *-â* cannot be predicted at present.<sup>10</sup> Interestingly, the root of the derived verb in (26e) has a long vowel, whereas in the other *-lâ* causatives derived from a CV-stem there is no vowel lengthening. The term causative is used here in the broad sense as a mechanism that adds a subject to the valency of the underived verb. This subject does not necessarily fulfil the role of causer. In (26c), for instance, it is an experiencer.

- (26) a. bé ‘cook (intr.)’  
       bé-lê ‘cook (tr.)’  
       b. bô ‘rot’  
       bwâ-lô ‘make rot, destroy’  
       c. nùm ‘stink, smell (intr.)’  
       nùm-lâ ‘smell (tr.)’  
       d. jóŋ ‘be hot’  
       jóŋ-lô ‘heat’  
       e. já ‘be full, fill up (intr.)’  
       jáá-lâ ‘fill (tr.)’

As already noted in Section 2.1 the derivational suffix replaces the final vowel of a CVCV-stem (27).

- (27) yégî ‘learn’  
       yéglê ‘teach’

When *-lâ* is suffixed to a transitive source verb, it can yield a meaning of intensity and/or repetition.

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9. It might be derived from the Proto-Bantu applicative suffix *\*-ed*, possibly in combination with the Final vowel morpheme. Another hypothesis, put forward by Bastin (1986:127), is that the vowel of this suffix was originally *\*-i* and that the final *d* of monosyllabic verb stems was lost except before *i*. This *d* was then reinterpreted as part of the causative suffix following CV-verb stems (and evolved to *l*).

10. There seems to be no straightforward semantic conditioning either. See for instance *dígâ* ‘burn (tr.)’ (from *díg* ‘burn (intr.)’) versus *jóŋlô* ‘heat’ (from *jóŋ* ‘be hot’) and *bélê* ‘boil (tr.)’ (from *bé* ‘boil. (intr.)’).

- (28) a. pùmì ‘uproot (tubers)’  
       pùm-là ‘uproot vigorously’  
 b. bòm ‘beat, hit’  
       bòm-lò ‘hammer, hit strongly’  
 c. sàŋ ‘cut, groove’  
       sàŋ-là ‘cut in pieces’

Note that the suffix *-la* with an intensive meaning (but with a high tone) is also found in a noun.

- (29) a. ñ-tóŋ ‘long’ (3)  
       b. ñ-tóŋ-ló ‘very long’ (3)

One stem that ends in *lâ* has an intensive meaning, but is not related to a stem without *lâ*, so that *lâ* can better be analysed as an expansion here.

- (30) vúm+lâ ‘throw violently’

In one case the meaning of *-lâ* is idiosyncratic and apparently valency reducing.

- (31) víb ‘suck’  
       víb-lâ ‘(of a swelling) fill with pus’

### 3.3. The suffix *-i*

The form *-i* suffixed to a verb can have two radically different functions (each in itself probably polysemic), one valency reducing (3.3.1.) and one valency increasing (3.3.2.). I prefer to make no claims as to whether these are two homonymic morphemes or one polysemic one. Intuitively, the semantic differences between them call for a treatment in terms of homonymy, but typologically it is not that rare to find diachronic links between derivational suffixes with seemingly opposite functions. Note in this respect that Meeussen (1967:92) reconstructs two different, but formally identical suffixes that correspond to the two uses of *-i* in Eton, viz. *\*-ek* ‘neuter’ and *\*-ek* ‘impositive’. Their formal identity in both Proto Bantu and in Eton seems unlikely to be due to chance.

#### 3.3.1. *Valence reducing use*

The valence reducing suffix *-i* most often has an anticausative value, i.e. it eliminates the agent argument of the underived verb.

- (32) a. *nàb* ‘tear apart (tr.)’  
       *nàb-ì* ‘tear apart (intr.)’  
 b. *líg* ‘abandon’  
       *líg-î* ‘stay’  
 c. *búg* ‘break (tr.)’  
       *búg-î* ‘break (intr.), have a fracture’  
 d. *tú* ‘pierce’  
       *tw-î* ‘burst, break through’  
 e. *yén* ‘see’  
       *yén-î* ‘show oneself, be apparent’

There is a rather large group of transitive verbs with a *CVCnà* structure that have an intransitive counterpart marked by the suffix *-ì*, which replaces the final *à*. The transitive verbs can be analysed as *CVC≠nà* or as *CVC≠n-à*, where *-à* is a causative suffix. In the latter analysis neither of the two related verbs is morphologically simpler than the other. Note that again *-ì* mostly has an anticausative value in the examples in (33), except in (33d), where its value can be described as reflexive. There is no special reflexive suffix. A transitive verb can usually be used with a reflexive meaning without any morphological marking (see v:2.1.4).

- (33) a. *càm*n(-)à ‘scatter (tr.)’  
       *càm*n-ì ‘scatter (intr.)’<sup>11</sup>  
 b. *wàdn*(-)ò ‘administer an enema’  
       *wàdn*-ì ‘undergo an enema’  
 c. *kàln*(-)à ‘transmit’  
       *kàln*-ì ‘spread, change (e.g. trains or buses)’  
 d. *bóón*(-)ò ‘purge somebody’  
       *bóón*-ì ‘purge oneself’

In one pair of examples the meaning of the derived verb is idiosyncratic, but the result of the derivation is also a decrease in valency.

- (34) *dúgn*(-)à ‘pay back’  
       *dúgn*-ì ‘come back, do again’

### 3.3.2. Valence increasing use (“*Impositive*”)

The valency increasing suffix *-ì* is a specific kind of causative that means ‘put in a position’. It is sometimes called *Impositive* in the Bantu literature (Schade-

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11. These verbs are probably related to *càm* ‘chase away’.

berg 2003). None of the verbs with an Impositive suffix has an underived cognate. Cognate verbs always have either a Autocausative suffix *-bà* (3.6.2) or a Resultative suffix *-ǎ* (3.7). Compare the examples in (35-40) with the cognate verbs in (67-72) and (73-78).

- (35) a. jòg-ì ‘leave lying about, put down’  
 b. síg-î ‘put in a leaning position’  
 c. lw-î ‘tilt’  
 d. sòn-î ‘make sb. squat’  
 e. bèd-ì ‘load sb. or st. with st.’
- (36) bóg-î ‘seat, make sb. sit’  
 á ‘bógî múńá ásí  
 |á L-bóg-ì N-úńá ásí|  
 LOC INF-sit-IPS 1-child down  
 ‘to make a child sit down’
- (37) kèl-ì ‘hang (tr.)’  
 mèté kèlì í‘jé yámâ í‘lé  
 |mè-Lté L-kèl-ì H ì-ǔǔé jǎmà á ì-lé|  
 1SG-PR INF-hang-IPS LT 7-dress VII.my LOC 7-tree  
 ‘I hang my dress on a tree.’
- (38) swàl-ì ‘hide sth./sb.’  
 mèté swàlì mwání wâmò  
 |mè-Lté L-sòl-ì H móní wàmà|  
 1SG-PR INF-hide-IPS LT money I.my  
 ‘I hide my money.’
- (39) bàg-ì ‘affix, glue, stick’  
 àńgábàgì zítám á lé‘péb á yó  
 |à-ńgá-bàg-ì zítám á lè-péb á jó|  
 I-RP-put-IPS stamp LOC 5-paper LOC [5]sky  
 ‘He put a stamp on the paper.’
- (40) búd-î ‘cover’  
 àté ‘búdí míz ‘mé ‘She closes her eyes.’

### 3.4. The suffix *-bàn*

The suffix *-bàn* is most probably the result of a merger of the suffixes *-b(à)* (in its autocausative use, see 3.6.2) and *-àn* (the *m* part of the reciprocal suffix *-mì*

discussed in Section 3.5). It has two allomorphs conditioned by the syllable structure of the stem to which it is attached. After canonical stems (i.e. stems without an expansion) *-bàn* is used (41). After CVC.CV stems the suffix is *-àn* (42). No clear examples of its use after other types of verb stems have been found.

- (41) a. bwàb ‘beat’  
       bwàà-bàn ‘be beaten’  
       b. tág ‘arrange’  
       tág-bân ‘be arranged’  
       c. wé ‘kill’  
       wé-bân ‘be killed’
- (42) bàglà ‘conserve’  
       bàgl-àn ‘be conserved’

Due to the maximality constraints on stems, this suffix is reduced to *-b* in certain tense-aspect forms, such as the Hesternal past perfective (see VII:2.3.3) (43). Note that the vowel of the verb *dú* ‘baptise’ in (44a) is lengthened before the passive suffix. The vowel of CV-stems is sometimes slightly lengthened before *-bàn*, but most often it is not (cf. example 41c). This might be lexically conditioned.

- (43) a. dú ‘baptise’  
       àdúùbèngàn ‘He was baptised.’  
       b. pèn ‘plait’  
       àpènbèngàn ‘She got herself plaited.’  
       c. kódo ‘leave’  
       átán úkódbèngàn ‘The village was left.’

The suffix *-bàn* can have a passive meaning (41-43, see also Section VIII:3.4.2) or one of the middle meanings reflexive (44, 45c) and potential (46). All are very rare in spontaneous discourse. The verb form in (45c) could be used, for instance, when somebody exclaims that he cannot be at two places at the same time: “I can’t tear myself apart.” Some verbs use the suffix *-ni* to derive a middle with potential meaning (47).

- (44) a. mèkêṅbàn  
       |mè-H-kêṅ-bàn|  
       1SG-PST-shave-VRS  
       ‘I shaved.’

- b. məkəŋbàn zəl  
 |mə-H-kəŋ-bàn-H zəl|  
 1SG-PST-shave-VRS-NF [9]beard  
 ‘I shaved my beard.’
- (45) a. ɲàb ‘tear apart’ (transitive)  
 b. ɲàbì ‘tear apart’ (anticausative, see 3.3.1)  
 c. ɲààbàn ‘tear oneself apart’ (reflexive)
- (46) a. àté ‘dībàn  
 |à-Lté L-đí-bàn|  
 I-PR INF-eat-VRS  
 ‘It is edible. (lit. It is eaten.)’  
 b. ùwònò àté pùm-bàn ávól  
 |ùwònò à-Lté L-pùm-bàn H à-vól|  
 groundnut I-PR INF-uproot-VRS LT 3-quick  
 ‘Groundnuts harvest easily.’  
 c. mējwàg méléń máá’té bàglàn ímmèŋ  
 |mə-ɕòg H=mə-lén má-áá-Lté L-bàglà-àn H ñ-Bèŋ|  
 6-wine VI.CON=6-palm VI-NEG-PR INF-keep-VRS LT 3-good  
 ‘Palm wine does not preserve well.’
- (47) mējwàg méléń máá’té nènì ímmèŋ  
 |mə-ɕòg H=mə-lén má-áá-Lté L-nái-nì H ñ-Bèŋ|  
 6-wine VI.CON=6-palm VI-NEG-PR INF-keep-VRS LT 3-good  
 ‘Palm wine does not preserve well.’

With the verb *kwàm* ‘do’ the suffix *-bàn* can have an existential meaning

- (48). This might be semantic calque from French ‘se produire’.

- (49) tìndìŋ àkwámbán á ‘ɲwáj  
 |tìndìŋ à-H-kòm-bàn-H á ñ-ɲóŋ|  
 multiple.crash I-PST-do-VRS-NF LOC 3-street  
 ‘There has been a multiple crash in the street.’

### 3.5. The suffix *-mĩ*

Probably the most productive suffix of Eton (i.e. the suffix that is most likely to yield a possible/existing verb if added to a stem) is the suffix *-mĩ*. Typically this suffix derives a reciprocal verb. The derived verb in (50d) can be used, for instance, when two machetes are rubbing over each other (e.g., because they are in the same bag) and thereby sharpening each other.

- (50) a. *dìŋ* ‘love sb.’  
       *dìŋ-nì* ‘love each other’  
 b. *jèm* ‘know sb.’  
       *jèm-nì* ‘know each other’  
 c. *jàm* ‘cover (zool.)’  
       *jàm-nì* ‘mate’  
 d. *jèb* ‘sharpen’  
       *jèb-nì* ‘sharpen each other’

The suffix *-nì* has a number of allomorphs, conditioned by the syllable structure of the stem to which it attaches. The outcome of the derivation is always a bisyllabic stem, the first syllable of which is heavy. The form of the different allomorphs can be explained by the fact that the reciprocal suffix derives historically from a combination of two suffixes, viz. *-àn-ì*. The first, *-àn*, is the reciprocal suffix in most Bantu languages, including the other A70 languages.<sup>12</sup> The second, *-ì*, might be the valency reducing suffix described in Section 3.3.1. Describing this suffix synchronically as  $|\text{-àn}|$  would yield wrong surface realisations.

After CV-stems, the reciprocal suffix takes the allomorph *-nì*, where *:* means that the preceding stem vowel is lengthened.

- (51) a. *bó* ‘destroy’  
       *bòd̀nì* ‘destroy each other’  
 b. *gbè* ‘grasp’  
       *gbè̀è̀nì* ‘grasp each other’  
 c. *yà* ‘sing’  
       *yà̀̀nì* ‘sing for each other’  
 d. *jù* ‘forgive’  
       *jù̀̀nì* ‘forgive each other’

The derived form of the verb *wé* ‘kill’ is *wò̀̀d̀nì* ‘kill each other’, and in *vè̀̀è̀nì* ‘give to each other’ the vowel of the stem *vé* is exceptionally not represented by /ɛ/ but by /ə/.

The reciprocal suffix has the same form as the passive suffix after CVC.CV stems, viz. *-àn* (52), except when the expansion begins in /n/, in which case the suffix is *-nì* (53). CVC.CV.CV stems, i.e. stems that end in *-ànà*, lose their final *à* (54). In order to make clear without ambiguity that a reciprocal meaning is in-

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12. In many Bantu languages, including A70 languages such as Ewondo, the reciprocal suffix *-nà* can also express plurality of agents, i.e. ‘do together, do all at the same time’ (in fact, this might well be the original meaning of the suffix). The suffix *-nì* in Eton does not have this alternative meaning.

tended, the pronominal *bó* (*èèy*) *bó* ‘they (with) they’ can be added (55) (see Section V:2.1.4).

- (52) a. *kòglò* ‘bite’  
       *kòglàn* ‘bite each other’  
 b. *ɲwàmlò* ‘tickle’  
       *ɲwàmlàn* ‘tickle each other’  
 c. *déɲbê* ‘watch’  
       *déɲbân* ‘watch each other’
- (53) a. *kàmni* ‘forbid’  
       *kàm-nì* ‘forbid each other’  
 b. *tóbnò* ‘meet sb.’  
       *tób-nì* ‘meet’
- (54) *yéglànà* ‘imitate mockingly’  
       *yéglân* ‘imitate each other mockingly’
- (55) *bé<sup>4</sup>té tìnzàn bô bó* ‘They are explaining each other.’

After CVC and CV.CV stems the reciprocal suffix is *-nì* (see the examples in 53). The *-ànì* origin of this allomorph is visible in the fact that it does not permit high tone spread from the previous syllable.<sup>13</sup> The following examples illustrate the rule of compensatory lengthening of a prominent vowel followed by a deleted consonant. The final consonant of the stem is deleted because of its identity with the suffix consonant (see II:5.1.4). Note that the tone of the second stem vowel is retained after the elision of this vowel and that it surfaces on the lengthened first stem vowel.

- (56) a. *kónî* ‘greet somebody’  
       *kóò-nì* ‘greet each other’  
 b. *cénî* ‘change’  
       *céè-nì* ‘exchange’

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13. Note that the nominal suffix *-ní* can always surface as *-én*. This is not the case for the verbal suffix *-nì*, possibly due to the fact that the syllable scheme CV.CVC is unattested in verbs.

Sometimes the valency rearrangement induced by the suffix is more complex than in the above examples. In the following pairs the patient of the source verb is not part of the subject of the derived verb.<sup>14</sup>

- (57) a. *ɲúŋ* ‘drink’  
           *ɲúŋ-nì* ‘be in a relationship of exchanging drinks with somebody’  
 b. *dí* ‘eat’  
           *dí-nì* ‘be in a relationship of exchanging food with somebody’  
 c. *lây* ‘tell’  
           *lââ-nì* ‘chat, talk’

There are also some cases in which the suffix *-nì* adds an additional meaning. The derived verb in (58) has either a reciprocal meaning or a habitual (deobjective) one. Note that the derived verbs in (57a-b) have a habitual meaning as well, but in combination with a reciprocal meaning.

- (58) *dùgà* ‘deceive’  
        *dùg-nì* ‘1) deceive each other, 2) be deceitful’

In (59) the valency reducing suffix *-nì* is added to an intransitive source verb, yielding a meaning of intensity and/or repetition. Note the similarity with the suffix *-lâ* when suffixed to a transitive verb.<sup>15</sup>

- (59) *yàgì* ‘scratch oneself’  
        *yàg-nì* ‘scratch oneself everywhere’

I found some transitive verbs, e.g. *cíg* ‘cut’, for which both *-ì* and *-nì* can be used as a valency reducing suffix expressing middle (anticausative) voice. In the examples in (60), the form in *-ì* (60a) would be used when the rope breaks while being hung with the clothes, whereas the *-nì* form is probably more appropriate when the rope unexpectedly breaks afterwards.

- (60) a. *ɲkwǎl ú'té 'cígî èy àdìd bíjé*  
           |*ɲ-kǎl* *ú-Lté* *L-t'íg-ì*       *èèj* *à-dìd* *H = bì-ɕǎé|*  
           3-rope III-PR INF-cut-VRS with 3-heavy III.CON=8-dress  
           ‘The rope breaks under the weight of the clothes.’

14. In all available examples the source verb is ambitransitive. It is equally possible to say that the reciprocal forms are derived from the intransitive use of the source verb.

15. The intensity/repetition meaning of *-nì* here is related to the pluractional meaning that the suffix *-ân* often has in the Bantu languages.

- b. ñkwǎl ú'té 'cígñì èèy àdìd bíjé  
 |Ñ- kǎl ú-Lté L-tǝí-g-nì èèj à-dìd H=bì-ɕǝé|  
 3-rope III-PR INF-cut-VRS with 3-heavy III.CON=8-dress  
 'The rope breaks under the weight of the clothes.'

Some verbs that have the suffix *-nì* can be used with a prepositional complement introduced by *èèy*, in which case they have a different meaning. For instance, the verb *díñi* in (55b) means 'swindle' when followed by *èèy mòd* 'with somebody'. *díñi* 'love each other' acquires the inverse meaning 'dislike' before *èèy mòd* and *tòbni* 'meet each other' becomes 'happen to somebody' (61).<sup>16</sup>

- (61) ùté jèm ídâm ìtòbnéngáná èèy mǎ ààngògí?  
 |ù-Lté L-ɕǝm H í-d-àm ì-H-tòbn-n-èngà-nà-H|  
 2SG-PR INF-know LT AU-5-thing IX-PST-meet-VRS-G-NF  
 |èèj mǎ ààngògí|  
 with 1SG.FPPR yesterday  
 'You know what happened to me yesterday?'

### 3.6. The suffix *-bà*

The suffix *-bà* has two rather distinct meanings. One derives stative verbs from both verbs and nouns. The other forms the autocausative counterpart of verbs with an Impositive suffix *-ì* (cf. Section 3.3.2).<sup>17</sup>

#### 3.6.1. Stative *-bà*

Derivation of a stative verb from another verb by means of *-bà* is not very common. In all available examples the derived stative verb has more than one cognate verb (62-65), and it is not always clear from which basic verb it is derived (64-65). Interestingly, the group of cognates in (65) contains both a stative *-bà* form (65a) and an autocausative one (65c).

- (62) a. tègbè 'be lazy'  
 b. tèg 'weaken (intr.), become tired'  
 c. tègnì 'weaken (tr.), be tiring'

16. But this example could also be analysed by means of the valency reducing suffix *-ì*, i.e. as *tòbnò-ì*.

17. Essono (2000:371) describes a change-of-state meaning for this suffix in Ewondo, which he calls *translatif*. I found no examples of the suffix *-bà* with this meaning in Eton.

- (63) a. yémbê 'be stuck, be solid'  
 b. yémê 'be solid' (resultative)  
 c. yém 'jam, block'  
 d. yémlâ 'stay'
- (64) a. tìibà 'be attached'  
 b. tyă 'be attached' (resultative)  
 c. tìṅdà 'attach'  
 d. tìṅ 'weave'  
 e. tìi 'untie (tr.), detach (tr.)'  
 f. tìini 'get loose, come untied'
- (65) a. vyèèbè 'be awake'  
 b. vyă 'be awake' (resultative)  
 c. vèbè 'wake up (intr.)'  
 d. vèlè 'wake up (tr.)'

The stative verbs in (66) do not have related verbs, but there is a related noun that lacks the Stative suffix. *-bà* can be analysed as a denominal suffix in these examples.

- (66) a. nàl-bà 'lie, tell a lie'  
 n-ńăl 'lie' (3)  
 b. ndwàg-bò 'be greedy'  
 ndwàg 'greed' (9)  
 c. tóṅ-bô 'be slow'  
 à-tóṅ 'slowness' (3)  
 d. bún-bâ 'be sulky'  
 m-è-bún 'sulkiness' (6)  
 e. jòm-bò 'grow old'  
 ṅ-nóm 'old person, old age' (3)  
 f. zíṅ-bâ 'be hateful'  
 zíṅ 'hatred' (9)  
 g. tógbô 'be small'  
 n-tógbô 'small' (3)

### 3.6.2. *Autocausative -bà*

The second usage of *-bà* is to form verbs that mean 'assume a position' or 'come into a state' (sometimes called *Static* in Bantu studies). Verbs with this suffix usually have a cognate with the Impositive suffix *-i* and one with a Resultative suffix *-ǎ*. Normally there is no morphologically simpler (underived) cog-

nate. The examples below are presented in the same order as that of their cognates in Section 3.3.2.

- (67) a. jòg-bò ‘lie down’  
 b. síg-bâ ‘assume a leaning position’  
 c. lúú-bâ ‘bow, bend’  
 d. sòn-bô ‘squat, crouch’  
 e. bèd-bè ‘settle, put oneself onto st.’

Note the long vowel in (67c) versus the short vowel in *vèbè* ‘wake up’ (65c). This suggests that the form of the autocausative suffix is *-bà* or *-:bà*, with a purely lexical conditioning. The same remark was made for the passive suffix *-bàn* in Section 3.4, so that it makes sense to analyse the latter as a combination of *-(:)bà* plus *-àn*, at least historically.

- (68) bóg-bô ‘sit down’  
 mèté ‘bógbô vá  
 |mè-Lté L-bóg-bà vǎ|  
 1SG-PR INF-sit-PNL here  
 ‘I sit down here.’

- (69) kèl-bè ‘hang (intr.)’  
 ndógò ìkélbé á ntèm ílé  
 |ndógò ì-H-kèl-bà-H á N-tèm H=ì-lé|  
 [9]mango IX-PST-hang-PNL-NF LOC 3-branch III.COP=7-tree  
 ‘The mango got stuck behind a branch.’

- (70) swàl-bò ‘hide oneself’  
 àté mâ swàlbò  
 |à-Lté mà L-sòl-bà|  
 I-PR 1SG.PPR INF-hide-PNL  
 ‘She hides herself from me.’

- (71) bàg-bà ‘press oneself against, stick oneself onto st.’  
 ngwì ité bàgbà é‘lén  
 |ngwì ì-Lté L-bàg-bà á è-lén|  
 [9]bat IX-PR INF-stick-PNL LOC 5-palm.tree  
 ‘The bat sticks itself to the palm tree.’

- (72) búd-bâ ‘cover oneself, lie down’  
 àté ‘búdbâ èyèy lèbùm ‘He lies down on his belly.’

3.7. The suffix *-ǎ*

Verbs with an autocausative suffix *-bà* and the verbs *gbè* ‘grasp, catch’, *pèd* ‘close’ and *pùdì* ‘put’ have a Resultative cognate derived by means of the suffix *-ǎ*.<sup>18</sup> The Resultative form of *gbè* ‘grasp’ is exceptional in that the stem tone becomes high. The majority of resultative forms are subject resultatives; only *tyǎ* ‘be attached’ and *pèdé* ‘be closed’ are object resultatives. Resultative verbs cannot be conjugated as other verbs (see Section VII:2.4 for their defective inflectional behaviour). They have an infinitive form (marked by the prefix *L-*), but no citation form, i.e. the infinitive preceded by the locative preposition *á*. The following examples are given in the same order as their cognates in Sections 3.3.2 and 3.6.2.

- (73) a. *jòg-ó* ‘lie down’  
*ndógò ìjògò évêl é* ‘*jád* ‘The mango lies next to the basket.’  
 b. *síg-â* ‘lean’  
*mèsígâ á mpìm* ‘I am leaning against the wall.’  
 c. *lw-â* ‘bow, bend’  
*mèlwâ* ‘I’m bending over.’  
 d. *són-ô* ‘squat, crouch’  
 e. *bèd-é* ‘be somewhere’  
*ndógò ìbèdè á* ‘*jád* ‘The mango lies on the basket.’
- (74) *mèbógò*  
 |*mè-bóg-ǎ*|  
 1SG-sit-RS  
 ‘I am sitting.’
- (75) *ndógò ìkèlè á ntèm ílé*  
 |*ndógò ì-kèl-ǎ á N-tèm H=ì-lé*|  
 [9]mango IX-hang-RS LOC 3-branch III.CON=7-tree  
 ‘The mango is stuck behind a branch.’
- (76) *ìpágì í<sup>+</sup>swálò*  
 |*ì-págì í-sòl-ǎ*|  
 7-present VII-hide-RS  
 ‘The present is hidden.’

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18. The list is probably not exhaustive. Another candidate is the verb *tál* ‘perceive’, but this needs to be checked.

- (77) ɲgwì ìbàgá é+lén  
 |ɲgwì ì-bàg-á á è-lén|  
 [9]bat IX-stick-RS LOC 5-palm.tree  
 ‘The bat is on the palm tree.’
- (78) búdá ‘be covered, lie’  
 mèbúdá èyè lèbùm ‘I am lying on my belly.’

## 3.8. Minor suffixes

Some suffixes were found in only one or two verbs. As most other suffixes they are formally identical to an existing expansion, which again illustrates the coincidental character of the boundary between suffixes and expansions. Three unique suffixes, two of which with a *Càn*-form, have a valency reducing function (79-81).

- (79) a. pógó ‘move (tr.)’  
 póg-zân ‘move (intr.)’  
 b. jèm ‘know’  
 jèm-zàn ‘get used, adapt oneself to a situation’
- (80) sám ‘stretch (tr.)’  
 sám-lân ‘stretch oneself, lie down’
- (81) a. dà ‘make cross, help to cross’  
 pèpá mbámá àté dà múṅá ú+só  
 |pèpá mbámá à-Lté L-dà H N-úṅá ù-só|  
 dad grandparent I-PR INF-cross LT 1-child 3-river  
 ‘Grandfather makes the child cross the river.’  
 b. dà-ŋ ‘cross’  
 bèbònì bèèní bé+dáṅgí úsá+náṅá  
 |bè-bònì b-èèní bó-H-dà-ŋ-Lgì-H ùsánṅá|  
 2-ancestor II-our II-PST-cross-VRS-G-NF Sanaga  
 ‘Our ancestors crossed the river Sanaga.’

The suffixes *-dà* and *-dànà* have no clear effect on the valency of the source verb.

- (82) a. dùd ‘pull, smoke’  
 dùù-dà ‘pull back’  
 b. wóg ‘hear, understand’  
 wóg-dànà ‘feel’

#### 4. Notes on the final root consonant in cognate verbs

Some verb roots have a *CV(l/ŋ)*-structure, i.e. they have a final /l/ or /ŋ/ in some stems, but not in others. When the root vowel is /a/ the absence of final /l/ triggers umlaut (85).

- (83) a. bó ‘break (tr.)’  
       bólí ‘break (intr.)’ (decausative)  
       bólbân ‘be broken’ (passive)
- b. gbè ‘catch, grasp, get hold of’  
       gbèlì ‘be caught, surrender’ (decausative)  
       gbélê ‘have, possess’ (resultative)
- c. tébê ‘stand up, get up’  
       télí ‘put in an upright position’  
       télê ‘stand’  
       (related to *té* ‘lift’?)
- (84) a. nìŋ ‘live’  
       nyà ‘save, rescue’
- b. jî ‘enter’  
       jîŋlâ ‘insert’
- c. náŋ ‘grow’  
       nálâ ‘breed’
- (85) wé / wó ‘give birth’  
       wál-î ‘be born’  
       (èwálî ‘birth’)

# Chapter 5

## Other word classes

### 1. Introduction

This chapter discusses most of the word types that were not discussed in the two previous chapters. More than elsewhere, the classification proposed here is one of several possible classifications. The main distinction among the “other” word classes is between inflectional forms (Section 2) and uninflected words (Sections 3&4). In the first category there is another important distinction, viz. that between pronominals and adnominals. This distinction is not very clear-cut in that most adnominals can also function as pronominals (but not vice versa). Note that all forms in the tables in this chapter are structural forms.

### 2. Inflectional forms

Pronominals and adnominal modifiers are multigender words. They always agree with a noun endo- or exophorically. Although inflectional forms consist of a more or less uniform final part and an initial segment that varies according to gender, it is often cumbersome to describe them in terms of a stem and a prefix. The analysis is generally easier for adnominal forms than for the pronominals. Still, five series of agreement prefixes are needed for the adnominal forms (see Table 1).<sup>1</sup>

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1. It is possible, obviously, to reduce this set of five series, to four, three or even two series (with a high number of allomorphs for agreement pattern 1). However, the gain of generalisation here would have to be compensated in the morphophonology, where a number of ad-hoc rules should be added, which is more undesirable than the greater number of similar prefix series here.

Table 1. Agreement prefixes of adnominal modifiers

	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
I	ù	w	Ñ	á	ì	II	bó	b	bè	bó	bó
III	ú	w	Ñ	ú	ú	IV	mí	mj	mì	mí	mí
V	dH	d	è	é	é	VI	mó	m	mè	mó	mó
VII	í	j	ì	í	í	VIII	bí	bj	bì	bí	bí
IX	ì	j		í	í	X	í	j		í	í

Series 1 is used in the formation of the possessive modifiers of the second person singular. The other possessive modifiers (except those of the first person singular) and the promodifier *áη* ‘how many’ are formed by means of Series 2. The essential difference between both series is that the prefixes of Series 1 have a tone of their own, whereas those of Series 2 do not. The prefixes of Series 3 are used in the formation of the interrogative promodifier *pè* ‘which’ and in the quantifiers ‘1’ and ‘single’. These words have in common that their stem begins in *p*, at least in the form of agreement patterns IX and X. Note that the prefixes of Series 3 are formally identical to the nominal prefixes. Series 4 is used in the formation of the modifier *sè* ‘all’. Series 5, finally, intervenes in the formation of the anaphoric modifier *tè* ‘this, the one in question’. Note that the number of series can be reduced to three in the “plural” agreement patterns (i.e. II, IV, VI, VIII & X), one high, one toneless and one low. The high series is used with cardinal numbers from 2 to 6. Note also that the most irregular agreement pattern is I.

The other inflectional forms can be analysed in terms of prefix and stem only if one accepts that the first vowel of their stem is structurally toneless. The form of the prefixes of the personal pronominals and the first person singular possessives would then be as in Table 2. Another series of such prefixes would be needed for the contrastive pronominals. Since toneless vowels do not occur elsewhere in the grammar I decided to analyse these modifiers as suppletive forms without morphological structure, a solution that imposed itself for the demonstrative modifiers anyway.

Table 2. Possible agreement prefixes for personal pronominals and first person singular possessive modifiers (structural forms)

I	ù	II	bó
III	ú	IV	mí
V	dD	VI	mó
VII	í	VIII	bí
IX	ì	X	í

## 2.1. Pronominals

This section describes pronominals, i.e. multigender words that can take the place of nominals (i.e. noun phrases) in a clause and that agree in gender with the head of the nominal they represent. The default forms of pronominals are those of agreement pattern V and VII, most probably because the word for ‘thing’ *d-àm* is of gender 5, with a synonym *j-òm* of gender 7 (see also Section VIII:2). The default form of pronominals is used in case the pronominal represents a non-prototypical agreement controller, such as a complement clause, or when the represented nominal is not retrievable.

- (1) d̂h màkâd  
 |H-d̂h m̂h-à-H-kàd|  
 AU-V.PPR 1SG-SP-REL-say  
 ‘That’s what I’m saying!’

2.1.1. *Personal pronominals*

Personal pronominals can function as complements of verbs (2), as complements of prepositions<sup>2</sup> (3) and, in topic & focus constructions, as subjects (4). Eton has no object agreement affixes. Complements are expressed *either* by a nominal or complement clause, *or* by a personal pronominal. As has been said, the pronominals of agreement patterns II-X might have been described in terms of a toneless stem *ɔ*, preceded by a prefix from Table 2. Instead, they will be glossed as a simplex suppletive morpheme in this description. The pronominal of agreement pattern I is *ɲé*, sometimes realised as *ɲí*.

Table 3. Personal pronominals: genders (structural forms)

I	ɲé	II	b̂h
III	ŵh	IV	m̂ĵh
V	d̂h	VI	m̂h
VII	ĵh	VIII	b̂ĵh
IX	ĵh	X	ĵh

First and second person personal pronominals have two forms, the conditioning for this allomorphy is in need of further description. Roughly, one of the two forms appears before (pro)nominals (including infinitives) (2a, 2b, 3b) and one appears elsewhere (2c, 3a). These will be called the *non-final form* (NPPR)

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2. But see Section 4.4.2 for an exception.

and the *final form* (FPPR) respectively (see Section VIII:5.1 for further remarks on the conditioning).

Table 4. Personal pronominals: participants (structural forms)

	non-final		final	
	SG	PL	SG	PL
1	mà	bî	mǎ	bíǎ
2	wò	mîn	wǒ	mínǎ

- (2) a. èèy mà vé í‘págí  
 |à-è:j mà L-vé H ì-págí|  
 I-FUT 1SG.NPPR INF-give LT 7-present  
 ‘He will give me a present.’
- b. èèy vé mâ yó  
 |à-è:j L-vé H mà jǒ|  
 I-FUT INF-give LT 1SG.NPPR VII.PPR  
 ‘He will give it to me.’
- c. èèy vé ‘má  
 |à-è:j L-vé H mǎ|  
 I-FUT INF-give LT 1SG.FPPR  
 ‘He will give it to me.’
- (3) a. èèy sá èèy mǎ  
 |à-è:j L-sá èèj mǎ|  
 I-FUT INF-work with 1SG.FPPR  
 ‘He will work with me.’
- b. èèy sá èèy mà kídí  
 |à-è:j L-sá èèj mà kídí|  
 I-FUT INF-work with 1SG.NPPR tomorrow  
 ‘He will work with me tomorrow.’
- (4) [Asked somebody who makes a medicine out of lianas.]  
 wò ùté kwàm èèy mìvyǎŋ yá?  
 |wò ù-Lté L-kòm è:j mì-vjǎŋ já|  
 2SG.NPPR 2SG-PR INF-do with 4-liana what  
 ‘What do you do with the lianas?’

Personal pronominals represent fully specified nominals and therefore cannot receive any further specification. This is an important difference between personal pronominals (5a) and pronominalised adnominal demonstratives in their endophoric function (5b). Both examples are formally relative construc-

tions. Example (5a) is a focus construction, in which the relative clause does not restrict the reference of its antecedent.<sup>3</sup> In (5b) on the other hand, the relative clause is restrictive.

- (5) [about a hook kwàb (9)]
- a. yô ité yàb  
 |H-jǒ      ì-Lté L-jàb|  
 AU-IX.PPR IX-PR INF-be.long  
 ‘This is the long one.’
- b. íní ité yàb  
 |í-íní      ì-Lté L-jàb|  
 AU-IX.DEM IX-PR INF-be.long  
 ‘a/the long one’

### 2.1.2. *Contrastive pronominals*

There is a series of pronominals that occur only in subject position and that are translated in Cameroonian French by a personal pronominal followed by *aussi* ‘too’. But most of the time when this pronominal is used, the use of *aussi* is inappropriate in European French. Note also that this pronominal, which I will provisionally call *contrastive*, cannot be used as an independent utterance. The forms of the contrastive pronominal are given in Table 5. They are here presented as monomorphemic, suppletive forms, just as the other pronominals, but obviously they could also have been analysed in terms of a stem *-àgà* and a prefix from a series dedicated to the contrastive pronominals (surprisingly containing a /w/ in agreement patterns II, V & VI). In the harmonic representation of the final |a|, any /wa/ sequence in the first syllable is reinterpreted as the representation of |ɔ|.

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3. The form of personal pronominals in this construction is in need of further analysis (in fact, there may be arguments to analyse them as a separate class of pronominals, e.g. *contrastive focus pronominals* rather than *personal pronominals*). Analysing them as regular personal pronominals preceded by the augment accounts for their falling tonality. However, the augment normally occurs only before antecedents of *restrictive* relative clauses. Moreover, it is not clear why the augment vowel *i-* is absent before personal pronominals, whereas it appears before other consonant-initial inflected forms.

Table 5: Contrastive pronominals (structural forms)

1SG	màgà	1PL	byágà
2SG	wàgà	2PL	myágà
I	ɲágà	II	bwágà
III	wágà	IV	myágà
V	dwágà	VI	mwágà
VII	yógà	VIII	byágà
IX	yògà	X	yógà

The number of available examples is too restricted for a satisfying description of their function. It can be pointed out that they tend to be used when the subject of a clause does not have the same reference as the subject of a preceding clause.<sup>4</sup> Hence, a possible translation equivalent for the pronominal *ɲágà* could be ‘(s)he, in turn’.

- (6) a. bé'té 'sílà, ɲágà àyéblé  
 |bó-Lté L-sílà ɲágà à-jéblà-H|  
 II-PR INF-ask I.CPR I-answer-CS  
 ‘They ask a question and she answers.’
- b. íyòŋ àyéglèngàna ñkúŋkúma, ɲágà àbèbgè ɲé  
 |H ì-jòŋ à-H-jégl-əngàna ñ-kúŋkúma ɲágà à-bèb <g> à ɲé|  
 AU 7-time I-PI-imitate-G 3-chief I.CPR I-watch<G> I.PPR  
 ‘While he was imitating the chief, the latter watched him.’
- (7) [ɲà mbámá wàmò àŋgábé ŋwân ì mbóg ìbòdé. dō ɲé, àŋgásó á lé'ba á mbóg béci, dō àŋgáwó nâ,  
 ‘My grandmother was a girl from the Ebodé lineage. She, she came to marry in Mbog Beti and she gave birth to mother.’]  
 dō, nâ, ɲágà àŋgáké wó 'byá ísògò á ñkòl ñ'gwán  
 |dō nâ ɲágà à-ŋgá-kè L-wó H bíǎ|  
 DP mother I.CPR I-RP-go INF-give.birth LT 1PL.PPR  
 |á ísògò á ñkòl'íngwǎn|  
 LOC Isogo LOC Nkolngwan  
 ‘Then, mother, in turn, went to Isogo in Nkolngwan to give birth to us.’

4. But note that this pronoun cannot be used in order to disambiguate between a logophoric and a non-logophoric reading in sentences like *ákád nâ ɲágà àsó*. ‘He<sub>x</sub> said that he<sub>x/y</sub> came as well.’

2.1.3. *Quotative pronominals*

Direct speech can be introduced by means of a special pronominal, optionally followed by the complementiser *nâ*, the vowel of which is usually lengthened with a final rising tone: *nâââ*. This pronominal is called here the quotative pronominal. There are six forms, viz. first, second and third person singular and plural.

Table 6: Quotative pronominals (structural forms)

1SG	mân	1PL	bjân
2SG	wân	2PL	mjân
I	ɲîn	II	bwân

- (8) *dó bákê pám á'tán, bwân nâ*: “*yî mòd àtán ànè vé? zá áyî bì lédê môd àtán?*”

|*dó bó-à-kè L-pám H á à-tán bwân nâ jî N-òd*|  
 then II-SP-go INF-arrive LT LOC 3-village II.QP CMP Q 1-person  
 |*à = à-tán à-nè vé zá à-à-jì bì L-lédê*|  
 I.CON=3-village I-be where who I-SP-want 1PL.PPR INF-show  
 |*N-òd à = à-tán*|  
 1-person I.CON=3-village

‘So they arrive in a village and say: “Where is the village chief? Who will show us the village chief?”’<sup>5</sup>

Often, the quotative pronominal follows a coreferential nominal.

- (9) *mbwàm í'bá bwân nâ*: “*mòd àbé 'wú ɲjǔg.*”

|*mbòm í-bá bwân nâ N-òd à-bě L-wú ñ-ɖǔg*|  
 [10]boa X-two II.QP CMP 1-person I-NEG INF-die 3-trouble

‘The two boas said: “Nobody should worry about it.”’

The quotative pronominal can also be used with the question word *yá* ‘how’ in order to question direct speech (10) or to report that somebody asked for an explanation (11).

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5. Note that the speaker who uttered this sentence (viz. grand-père Essono Biyebe) does not have a rule that blocks high tone spread across a floating low tone, hence *áyî* instead of *áyì*.

- (10) jîn yá  
 |jîn jǎ|  
 I.QP how  
 ‘What did/does he say?’
- (11) byân yá?  
 |bjân jǎ|  
 IPL.QP how  
 ‘(We asked:) what’s the problem?’

Quotative pronominals can introduce both direct (12a) and indirect (12b) speech.

- (12) a. mwán nâ: ànè ìtùṅà  
 |mwán nâ à-nè ì-tùṅà|  
 ISG.QP CMP I-COP 7-fool  
 ‘I say/said: “He’s a fool”.’
- b. bwân báyi mòd àtán  
 |bwân bǎ-à-jì n-òd à = à-tán|  
 II.QP II-SP-want 1-person I.CON=3-village  
 ‘They say they want the village chief.’

The quotative pronominal can be omitted if the identity of the speaker is clear from the context. Only the complementiser remains as a marker of direct speech in that case. However, the complementiser cannot immediately follow a nominal that refers to the speaker without the mediation of a quotative pronominal.

- (13) mǒ'jǎŋ 'wǒbní á'ngákê bó jǒŋ nâ: mìní'dyá nâm nú mìnízâgà jwág á  
 cingí jwǎŋ mû. mìní'té 'só kwàm jé?  
 |mǒHjǎŋ wǒbní-à-ŋgá-kè bǒ L-jǒŋ nâ mìní-diá á H-Ŋ-nàm|  
 brother I-their I-RP-and II.PPR INF-take CMP 2.PL-being LOC AU-3-land  
 |nú mìní-zá-gà jóg á ʔíngí L = ʔǒŋ mú|  
 III-DEM 2PL-come-G build LOC [9]bank IX.CON=Sanaga here  
 |mìní-Lté L-só L-kòm ʔé|  
 2PL-PR INF-VEN INF-do what  
 ‘Their brother went to take them and said: “Being in this country and coming to install you here on the bank of the Sanaga, what are you doing here?”’

When the addressee is specified, a personal pronominal is used for the speaker, rather than a quotative. The addressee is then introduced by the preposition *èèy*.

- (14) *ɲé èèy wò nâ: mèsé kwàm dɔ́.*  
 |ɲɛ̀ è:j wò nâ mɛ̀-sɛ̀ kòm dɔ́|  
 I.PPR with 2SG.NPPR CMP 1SG-NPOS do V.PPR  
 ‘He told you: “I can’t do that.”’

- (15) *ɲé èèy mbán nâ: zùgá!*  
 |ɲɛ̀ è:j mbán nâ zùgá|  
 I.PPR with [9]co-wife CMP come.IMP  
 ‘She says to her co-wife: “Come.”’

#### 2.1.4. *Indefinites, reflexives and reciprocals*

There are no dedicated indefinite, reflexive or reciprocal pronominals in Eton. The English indefinite pronominals *somebody/nobody*, *somewhere/nowhere* and *something/nothing* are expressed by the nouns *mòd* ‘person’, *vôm* ‘place’ and *dàm / jòm* ‘thing’ respectively.

- (16) *mòd àsé vâ*  
 |N-òd à-sɛ̀ vǎ|  
 1-person I-not.be here  
 ‘There is nobody here.’
- (17) *mìnívê mòd ásê ídâm àdí*  
 |mìní-vé-L N-òd á-sɛ̀ í-d-àm à-à-dí|  
 2PL-give-SB 1-person I-all AU-5-thing I-SP-eat  
 ‘You should give everybody something to eat’
- (18) *mèjéɲ vôm ásê púúúúm, màáyén dâm*  
 |mɛ̀-H-ɕjɛɲ-H vôm á-sɛ̀ púúm mɛ̀-ǎ:-jén d-àm|  
 1SG-PST-look-NF place I-all DIE 1SG-NEG-see 5-thing  
 ‘I sought everywhere, but I did not find anything.’
- (19) *vôm m̀pébê*  
 |vôm m̀-ɛ̀bɛ̀|  
 place I-other  
 ‘somewhere else’

To these nouns can be added the particle *zìŋ* ‘any’ in order to obtain a free choice indefinite pronominal (see also Section 4.2).

- (20) a. *vôm zìŋ* ‘anywhere, somewhere’  
 b. *mòd zìŋ* ‘anybody, somebody’
- (21) *ŋgé jóm zìŋ yándèglè wǒ, ...*  
 |*ŋgé ɕ-óm zìŋ í-à-ndèglà wǒ*|  
 if 7-thing any VII-SP-bother 2SG.FPPR  
 ‘If anything bothers you, ...’

For a reflexive reading the intensifier *í’mén* can be added to a personal pronominal.

- (22) a. *àmé bèbgà né í’mén í’yén*  
 |*à-mé L-bèb <g> à ɲě íměn á ì-jén*|  
 I-YIMPF INF-watch<G> I.PPR INTS LOC 7-mirror  
 ‘She watched herself in the mirror.’  
 b. *àbáŋdá né í’mén*  
 |*à-H-báŋdà-H ɲě íměn*|  
 I-PST-invite-NF I.PPR INTS  
 ‘He invited himself.’

The meaning ‘each other’ (reciprocal) can be expressed explicitly by the construction personal pronominal - preposition *èèy* - personal pronominal, literally ‘them with them’.

- (23) a. *bé’té dùgnì*  
 |*bó-Lté L-dùgnì*|  
 II-PR INF-fight  
 ‘They are fighting.’  
 b. *bé’té dùgnì bó èèy bó*  
 |*bó-Lté L-dùgnì bó è:j bó*|  
 II-PR INF-fight II.PPR with II.PPR  
 ‘They are fighting each other.’
- (24) *bé’té ‘bààni bó èèy bó*  
 |*bó-Lté L-bààni bó è:j bó*|  
 II-PR INF-marry II.PPR with II.PPR  
 ‘They marry each other (e.g. expatriates).’

In some cases the verb acquires a habitual meaning then.

- (25) a. bé'té 'yéènì  
 |bó-Lté L-jê:mì|  
 II-PR INF-see  
 'They see each other'
- b. bé'té yéènì bó èy bó  
 |bó-Lté L-jê:mì bó è:j bó|  
 II-PR INF-see II.PPR with II.PPR  
 'They often meet.'

## 2.2. Adnominals

Adnominal inflectional forms modify a noun. Some can never be used pronominally, others only when they receive extra morphological marking, viz. an augment.

### 2.2.1. The anaphoric modifier -tè

The stem of the anaphoric modifier *-tè* is preceded by a prefix from Series 5 (see Table 1). This is the only inflected form for which agreement pattern I has a prefix *ì-*.

Table 7. The anaphoric modifier *-tè* (structural forms)

I	ì-tè	II	bó-tè
III	ú-tè	IV	mí-tè
V	é-tè	VI	mó-tè
VII	í-tè	VIII	bí-tè
IX	í-tè	X	í-tè

- (26) a. mòd itè  
 |N-òd ì-tè|  
 1-person I-ANA  
 'this person'
- b. ñkàd útè  
 |Ñ-kàd ú-tè|  
 3-exam III-ANA  
 'this exam'
- c. mèlén métè  
 |mè-lén mó-tè|  
 6-palm.tree VI-ANA  
 'these palm trees'

This word is called *anaphoric demonstrative* in Essono's (2000:286) description of Ewondo. I avoid the term *demonstrative* here, since the anaphoric modifier cannot normally be used deictically (see Dixon 2003). A possible English translation equivalent of the anaphoric modifier is *the aforementioned*. I did not find any examples of cataphoric use in the small corpus. Demonstratives, described in Section 2.2.2, can be used anaphorically as well, and speakers see little difference between anaphoric modifiers and demonstratives in their anaphorical function. Since the anaphoric modifier is often a dependent of a proper name, its function might be to ensure the topical cohesion of discourse, rather than referential disambiguation, as in the dialogue in (27).

- (27) a. d̥ p̥pá pí á<sup>+</sup>ngábé <sup>+</sup>gbélé kál púp<sup>w</sup>ágó ðó?  
 |d̥ p̥pá pí à-ngá-bé L-gbélé kál púpógá = áá|  
 DP papa Pius I-RP-IMPF INF-have [9]sister single=Q  
 'So father Pius had only one sister?'
- b. m̥m̥m̥, íbá máyèm b̥ kál bé<sup>+</sup>bá bèkón̄ kdisón̄ bèkón̄ itè vó  
 béngáyòlò mí<sup>+</sup>ná  
 |m̥m̥m̥ í-bá m̥-à-jèm b̥ kál b̥-bá bèkón̄ kdisón̄|  
 no AU-II.DEM 1SG-SP-know PL [9]sister II-two Bekono Créence  
 |bèkón̄ itè vó b̥-ngá-jòlò mín̄|  
 Bekono I-ANA then II-RP-name 2PL.PPR  
 'No, those that I know of..., two sisters Bekono Créence ... It's this Bekono after whom they named you.'
- c. màyèm mèmá bé<sup>+</sup>kón̄ itè  
 |m̥-à-jèm mèmá bèkón̄ itè|  
 1SG-SP-know mother Bekono I-ANA  
 'I know this mother Bekono.'

More than half of the occurrences of the anaphoric determiner in texts are in the nominal *iyòŋ íté*, which means 'then, at that time'.

- (28) m̥ngáwó kóléd. d̥ àwó úngáyí tébê m̄. iyòŋ íté j̄cì wám̄ à pâm àté  
<sup>+</sup>kódò ásí j̄n̄ n̄ àyì kùd mbóg n̄m̄j̄n̄  
 |m̥-ngá-wó kóléd d̥ à-wó ú-ngá-jì L-tébê m̄|  
 1SG-RP-deliver Colette DP 3-childbirth III-RP-VOL INF-stand 1SG.PPR  
 |ì-jòŋ í-tè ñ-t̄j̄ wám̄ à = pâm à-Lté L-kódò|  
 7-time VII-ANA 3-parent.in.law 1SG.my I.CON=[9]man 1SG-PR INF-leave  
 |ásí j̄n̄ n̄ à-à-jì L-kùd mbóg n̄m̄j̄n̄|  
 up I.QP CMPT I-SP-VOL INF-convene [9]lineage Namnye  
 'I had given birth to Colette. Then it seemed as if childbirth had finished for me. At that time my father-in-law stands up and says he will convene the Namnye lineage.'

Another recurrent combination is with *jóm* ‘thing’ or *byém* ‘things’, referring to what has been said in preceding discourse. The utterance in (29), for instance, was preceded by a description of the effects of a medicine.

- (29) *jóm ítê bé'té 'kád nâ tèt wò nèm'nè*  
 |ǫ-óm í-tèt bót-Ltét L-kád nâ tèt wò nèm'nè|  
 7-thing VII-ANA II-PR INF-say CMP NEG 2SG.PPR exaggerate  
 ‘That’s why they say: “Don’t exaggerate”.’

### 2.2.2. *Demonstratives*

The demonstrative modifiers are described here in terms of suppletion.<sup>6</sup> The demonstrative of agreement pattern III has two free allomorphs: *ɲú* and *ví*. Example (30) shows how these allomorphs are used in the same clause, one adnominally, the other pronominally.

- (30) *ńtóm ví únê ɲnú wámâ*  
 |H-ń-tóm ví únê í-ɲnú wámâ|  
 AU-3-hat III.DEM III-COP AU-III.DEM III.my  
 ‘This hat is mine.’<sup>7</sup>

The form of pattern I surfaces as /ɲwa/ before a suffix, otherwise as /ɲɔ/ (see II:5.2.3). As for their tone, all demonstratives have a dissimilating high tone, also those of agreement pattern 1 and 9.<sup>8</sup> Therefore the form of agreement pattern IX is identical to that of pattern X. The forms are presented in Table 8.

- 
6. An analysis in terms of prefix and stem is not impossible, but at the cost of a high number of allomorphs. It can be formulated as follows: the stem of the demonstrative determiner is *-j* in the agreement patterns that have a front vowel in their prefix (IV, V & VII-X). If the prefix has a central vowel, the stem of the demonstrative is *-a* (II & VI). If the prefix contains a back vowel, the stem of the demonstrative is *-u* and the demonstrative of agreement pattern I has a suffix *-a*, which merges with the stem vowel according to the rules of hiatus resolution.
7. Note that there is a tonal difference between adnominal and pronominal demonstratives, the former have a structural dissimilating high tone and the latter a structural high tone (see Section VI:3.2)
8. Compare with the tonality of the first person singular possessive modifier in 2.2.3.1.

Table 8. Demonstratives (structural forms)

I	ɲǒ	II	bǎ
III	ɲú / ví	IV	mí
V	ǎí	VI	mǎ
VII	ǎí	VIII	bí
IX	ǎí	X	ǎí

The examples in (31) illustrate the form of the demonstrative after head nouns with different genders and tone patterns. When the word that precedes the demonstrative has a final high tone, the dissimilating high tone of the demonstrative stem is represented by a low tone. The final high tone of the preceding word copies to the right (see II:7.2.1). Note that nouns that are modified by a demonstrative obligatorily take the augment (see Section VI:3.2).

- (31) a. í<sup>h</sup>mínŋá ɲô ‘this woman’ (1)  
 b. ímwâŋnò ɲó ‘this banana sprout’ (1)  
 c. í<sup>h</sup>bínŋá bâ ‘these women’ (2)  
 d. íbwâŋnò bá ‘these banana sprouts’ (2)  
 e. ɲpég ɲû / ɲpég vî ‘this bag’ (3)  
 f. ɲmêglè ɲú ‘this charge’ (3)  
 g. ídúm ǎí ‘this nest’ (5)  
 h. ésâŋ dí ‘this bunch of bananas’ (5)  
 i. íkâbđí ɲí ‘this goat’ (9)  
 j. íŋgáz ɲî ‘this wire’ (9)

Differences in distance are expressed by means of suffixes. The suffix *-lí* marks intermediate distance from the speaker and can be followed by *-jà* in order to mark high distance. The far suffix *-jà* cannot be used without preceding *-lí*. When a referent is situated far from the speaker, but close to the addressee, the demonstrative modifier takes the suffix *-lá*. Note that these suffixes also attach to demonstrative pro-adverbials (see Section 3.1). Note also that distal demonstratives with the suffix combination *-líjà* clearly have three syllables, notwithstanding the dispreference for CVCVCV-stems that is apparent in the nominal morphology of Eton.

- (32) a. í<sup>h</sup>bínŋá ‘bálí  
 |í-b-ìŋŋá bǎ-lí|  
 AU-2-woman II.DEM-IM  
 ‘those women’

- b. í<sup>+</sup>bínngá <sup>+</sup>bálíyâ  
 |í-b-ìnnngá bǎ-lí-jà|  
 AU-2-woman II.DEM-IM-HD  
 ‘those women (far away)’
- c. í<sup>+</sup>mínngá <sup>+</sup>ɲwǎlós  
 |í-N-ìnnngá ɲǒ-lá|  
 AU-1-woman I.DEM-CH  
 ‘that woman (close to you)’

Demonstratives can also be used predicatively (see VIII:3.1) and, when preceded by the augment, pronominally (see VI:3.2). When they are used predicatively and their subject is a first or second person, they are of agreement pattern I in the singular and II in the plural, e.g. *mà ɲó* ‘here I am’.

Demonstrative modifiers are used either as deictics, or as endophoric markers. The fragment in (30) illustrates the latter use.

- (33) ngá í<sup>+</sup>sá àngásá úwònò. dǒ úwònò ɲó, dǒ í<sup>+</sup>míníngá ɲǒ àngátú. dǒ àngákê á lé<sup>+</sup>wǎlós, àlíg ɲ<sup>+</sup>ɲóm àjǒgós á dwábdǒ. íyǒng àngákê á lé<sup>+</sup>wǎlós, dǒ úwònò ɲó á<sup>+</sup>ngámâ lígì àvèy.
- |ngá L=ísǎ à-ngá-sá ùwònò dǒ H-ùwònò ɲǒ dǒ í-N-ìnnngá|  
 wife I.CON=father I-RP-work peanut DP AU-peanut I.DEM so AU-1-woman  
 |ɲǒ à-ngá-tú dǒ à-ngá-kè á lèwǎlósà-H-líg-H ñ-ɲóm à-ǫ̀g-ǎ|  
 I.DEM I-RP-flee DP I-RP-go LOC Duala I-PST-leave-NF 3-husband I-lie-RS  
 |á dóbdà (...) dǒ H-ùwònò ɲó à-ngá-mâ L-lígì à-vèy|  
 LOC hospital ... DP AU-peanut I.DEM I-RP-TMN INF-stay 3-red  
 ‘Her father’s wife cultivated groundnuts. So, these groundnuts..., this woman fled. She went to Douala, leaving her husband in hospital. When she had gone to Douala, these groundnuts stayed to ripen.’

The suffixed distance markers can have several meanings in endophoric use. A far demonstrative, for instance, can be used to refer to an event that took place a long time ago, or to something the speaker wishes to distance himself from, etc.

Finally, demonstratives can be used as modal adverbs expressing (mainly?) surprise, translated in Cameroonian French as *maintenant* ‘now’. In this case they follow the non-subject arguments of the verb, and they are neither pronominalised (they lack the augment), nor functioning as adnominal modifiers. They agree with the noun referring to the source of surprise (see e.g. VIII(129)). In the absence of such a noun, they take the default agreement pattern V (exemplified by the demonstrative *dí* in the first line of (5) in the first text, p399).

2.2.3. *Possessives*

Before describing the possessive modifiers of Eton, it is useful to point out the existence of deictic kinship terms. These are kinship terms that contain information on both participants involved in the kinship relation. One participant is defined by means of a concept (e.g. ‘father’), the other is deictically identified in terms of discourse participants (34). The forms used for the third person, i.e. *ɲǎ* and *í’sá* are also the default forms. They can be used for the other persons as well, when combined with the appropriate possessive modifier (35). Deictic kinship terms are genderless in Eton.

- (34) a. *tàdá* ‘my father’<sup>9</sup>  
       *í’só* ‘your father’  
       *í’sá* ‘(his/her) father’  
   b. *ɲǎ* ‘your mother’  
       *ɲǎ* ‘(his/her) mother’
- (35) a. *í’sá wâmò* ‘my father’  
       *í’sá wô* ‘your father’  
       *í’sá wé* ‘her/his father’  
   b. *ɲǎ wâmò* ‘my mother’  
       *ɲǎ wô* ‘your mother’  
       *ɲǎ wé* ‘her/his mother’

The words for same-sex siblings are slightly more complicated, since they are obligatorily preceded by the gender 1 diminutive proclitic *mòH=* (33). Their plurals behave as gender 2 nouns preceded by the diminutive proclitic (34). These nouns cannot be used without the diminutive morpheme, but if the latter were left out, their morphological forms would be [ǰǎŋ], [ɲ-ǰǎŋ] and [ɲ-ǰǎŋ] in the singular and [bè-ǰǎŋ], [bè-ǰǎŋ] and [bè-ǰǎŋ] in the plural. Note that the form of the first person without the diminutive would be genderless in the singular and gender 2 in the plural.

- (36) a. *mǎ ǰǎŋ* ‘my same-sex sibling’<sup>10</sup>  
       b. *mǎ ǰǎŋ* ‘your same-sex sibling’  
       c. *mǎ ǰǎŋ* ‘his/her same-sex sibling’

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9. But this might be a vocative.

10. For siblings of the opposite sex, male speakers use the word *kál* ‘sister’ and female speakers *ndóm* ‘brother’. These are not deictic kinship terms.



- d. ɲò íbwàn ìsọ  
 |ɲòH ì-bòn ì-H-sọ|  
 your 7-lover IX-PST-come  
 ‘Your lover came.’

- (46) a. mbán ‘co-wife’ (genderless)  
 b. ɲò mbán ‘your co-wife’  
 c. mbán yô ‘your co-wife’

Since it can be used only with relational nouns, this construction permits to distinguish relational from non-relational nouns, e.g. the difference between *mwán* ‘child, somebody’s offspring’ and *mùṅà* ‘child, very young person’.

- (47) a. ɲò mwán ‘your child’ (1)  
 b. mwàn wô ‘your child’
- (48) a. \*ɲò mùṅà ‘your child’  
 b. múṅá wô ‘your child’ (1)
- (49) a. ì-bèbwàg ‘newly born’ (7)  
 b. \*ɲò íbèbwàg ‘your newly born’
- (50) a. ɲ-ɲéglê ‘teacher’ (1)  
 b. \*ɲò ɲéglê ‘your teacher’

Since I did not find a relational noun with human reference with a low prefix and a high first stem syllable, it is impossible to know whether *ɲǎ* behaves as a proclitic from a tonal point of view. The noun *ìvúvúmní* ‘family member’ appeared to be non-relational.

Usually, the third person form *ɲǎ* cannot be used in this construction (51). Nevertheless, there are some examples, like the vocative in (52).

- (51) \*ɲà mbán ‘her co-wife’
- (52) à ɲá mbwé ‘Hey, my friend’

The following subsections describe adnominal possessive modifiers.

### 2.2.3.1. First person singular

In order to avoid structurally toneless vowels, the first person singular possessive modifiers are treated as suppletive forms here (See Table 9). Evidently,

other solutions are possible. For instance, a stem *-àmà* preceded by a prefix that carries a low tone in agreement pattern I and IX and a dissimilating high tone elsewhere. A special rule would then be needed that deletes a tone after a dissimilating high tone across a morpheme boundary and with no intervening consonants. Another possibility would be to define a number of allomorphs for the stem, which are preceded by a prefix of Series 2.

The forms with a dissimilating high tone on the first syllable have a (dialectal?) variant with a high tone on the first syllable.<sup>11</sup> My main consultant, Pie-Claude Ondobo, uses both variants.

Table 9. Possessive modifiers: 1<sup>st</sup> person singular (structural forms)

I	wàmò	II	bámà
III	wámò	IV	mjámà
V	dámà	VI	mámà
VII	jámà	VIII	bjámà
IX	jàmà	X	jámà

- (53) a. ñkúl wàmò  
 |ñ-kúl wámà|  
 3-drum III.my  
 ‘my log drum’
- b. m̀pàn wámò  
 |ñ-pàn wámà|  
 3-arrow III.my  
 ‘my arrow’
- c. kálâdà wàmò  
 |kálâdà wámà|  
 book I.my  
 ‘my book’

### 2.2.3.2. *Second person singular*

The second person singular possessive modifier has a stem *-ò*, which is preceded by a prefix of Series 1.

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11. This cannot be explained in terms of variability in the representation of D, since speakers who accept the high variant of the first person singular possessive modifier do not accept an entirely high variant of personal pronominals, for instance. Unless, of course, D can always be represented by a high toneme in the first syllable of disyllabic words, which should be investigated.

Table 10. Possessive modifiers: 2<sup>nd</sup> person singular (structural forms)

I	ù-ò	II	bó-ò
III	ú-ò	IV	mí-ò
V	dH-ò	VI	má-ò
VII	í-ò	VIII	bí-ò
IX	ì-ò	X	í-ò

- (54) a. b̀̀ kálâdà b̀̀  
 |b̀̀ kálâdà b̀̀-ò|  
 PL book II.your  
 ‘your books’
- b. ìsínâ ỳ̀  
 |ì-sínâ í-ò|  
 7-cat VII.your  
 ‘your cat’
- c. kál ỳ̀  
 |kál ì-ò|  
 [9]sister IX-your  
 ‘your sister’
- d. kwàb ỳ̀  
 |k̀̀b ì-ò|  
 [9]hook IX-your  
 ‘your hook’

2.2.3.3. Third person singular

The third person singular possessive modifier is formed by the stem -ě, preceded by a prefix of series 2. There is no formal difference between the forms of pattern IX and X, or between those of pattern I and III.

Table 11. Possessive modifiers: 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular (structural forms)

I	w-ě	II	b-ě
III	w-ě	IV	mj-ě
V	d-ě	VI	m-ě
VII	j-ě	VIII	bj-ě
IX	j-ě	X	j-ě

- (55) múǰá ‘wé  
 |N-úǰá w-ě|  
 1-child I-her  
 ‘her child’

2.2.3.4. *First and second person plural*

The possessive modifier of the first person plural is formally identical to that of the second person plural. It can be described as a stem *-è:ní*, preceded by a prefix of Series 2. Alternatively, it can be analysed as the third person singular possessive pronominal plus a suffix *-ní*, with retention of the tone pattern. Apart from its tone this suffix is formally identical to the reciprocal verbal suffix described in Section IV:3.5, which also lengthens the vowel of a preceding CV-stem. The second analysis is also corroborated by the form of the third person plural possessive, which also ends in *ní*.

Table 12. Possessive modifiers: 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> person plural (structural forms)

I	w-è:ní	II	b-è:ní
III	w-è:ní	IV	mj-è:ní
V	d-è:ní	VI	m-è:ní
VII	j-è:ní	VIII	bj-è:ní
IX	j-è:ní	X	j-è:ní

Pie-Claude Ondobo (a speaker of “Southern Eton”) does not accept the form *wèèní* for agreement pattern I and III, but pronounces it as *wòòní*.<sup>12</sup>

- (56) a. kálâdà wèèní  
 |kálâdà w-è:ní|  
 book I-our  
 ‘our book’
- b. ñkúl ‘wééni  
 |ñ-kúl w-è:ní|  
 3-drum III-our  
 ‘our log drum’

In order to disambiguate between first and second person, a connective construction is used including the personal pronominals *byâ* and *mí<sup>4</sup>ná*, which can be translated as ‘of us’ and ‘of you’ respectively.

12. Essono (2000:295) describes the stem *-áán* in Ewondo and notes: “la quantité vocalique résulte de la chute du segment /s/ de la forme complète *-ásán* encore attestée en eton et mengisa, dialectes de l’ewondo.” (the vowel length is due to the deletion of the /s/ of the full form *-ásán* still attested in the Ewondo dialects Eton and Mengisa). I did not record any forms with an intervocalic /z/ (note that /s/ occurs only in the onset of prominent syllables), but their existence in certain dialects or idiolects would not surprise me. In non-prominent position, /z/ is very unstable.

- (57) a. *bò kálâdà bé 'byá*  
 |*bò kálâdà bó = bíǎ*|  
 PL book II.CON=1PL.PPR  
 'our books'
- b. *bò kálâdà bé mí'ná*  
 |*bò kálâdà bó = mínǎ*|  
 PL book II.CON=2PL.PPR  
 'your (pl.) books'
- c. *ḡgál í 'byá*  
 |*ḡgál í = bíǎ*|  
 [10]gun X.CON=1PL.PPR  
 'our guns'

2.2.3.5. *Third person plural*

The third person plural possessive modifier is formed by means of a prefix of Series 2 and the stem *-èbní*. This might be further analysed into a stem *-èb* and a suffix *-ní*. In agreement pattern I and III the stem is *-ðb*.

Table 13. Possessive modifiers: 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural (structural form)

I	w-ðbní	II	b-èbní
III	w-ðbní	IV	mj-èbní
V	d-èbní	VI	m-èbní
VII	j-èbní	VIII	bj-èbní
IX	j-èbní	X	j-èbní

- (58) *àtán 'wóbní*  
 |*à-tán w-ðbní*|  
 3-village III-their  
 'their village'

2.2.4. *Interrogative promodifiers*

This section presents the two inflected adnominal question words that exist in Eton, viz. 'which' and 'how many'. Eton does not have a special word that questions ordinal numbers ('how-manieth').

## 2.2.4.1. ‘Which’

The stem of the interrogative promodifiers meaning ‘which’ is *-pè*. It is preceded by a prefix of series 3. In Southern dialects the tone of this promodifier is high: *-pé*.

- (59) a. *dàm èpè?* ‘which thing?’ (“Northern”)  
 b. *dàm lèpé?* ‘which thing?’ (“Southern”)

Table 14. The interrogative promodifier *-pè* ‘which’ (structural forms)

I	m̀- <i>pè</i>	II	b̀- <i>pè</i>
III	m̀- <i>pè</i>	IV	m̀- <i>pè</i>
V	è- <i>pè</i>	VI	m̀- <i>pè</i>
VII	ì- <i>pè</i>	VIII	b̀- <i>pè</i>
IX	<i>pè</i>	X	<i>pè</i>

- (60) *ùté kwàl ñ<sup>+</sup>kwál mpè?*  
 |ù-Lté L-k̀l H ñ-k̀l m̀-*pè*|  
 2SG-PR INF-speak LT 3-language III-which  
 ‘Which language do you speak?’
- (61) *àbógô á ndá pè?*  
 |à-Bóg-á á ndá pè|  
 I-stay-RS LOC [9]house IX.which  
 ‘In which house does she live?’

This form can be used independently (i.e. pronominally) as well, without taking the augment (62b). The stem vowel tends to be lengthened in this use.

- (62) a. *lèbóg lé<sup>+</sup>pé?*  
 |l̀-*bóg* l̀-*pé*|  
 5-party V-which  
 ‘which party?’
- b. *lèpé lé<sup>+</sup>dánjí nèb?*  
 |l̀-*pé* l̀-*H-dàn-Lgì-H* L-*nèb*|  
 V-which V-PST-cross-G-NF INF-be.good  
 ‘Which one was the nicest?’

The interrogative pronomeral *-áŋ* ‘how many’ cannot be used with mass nouns. Instead, ‘how much’ is rendered as ‘which quantity of’ (63).



2.2.5. *The modifier ‘other’*

The modifier meaning ‘other’ has a stem *-pébè*, preceded by a prefix of Series 3.

Table 16. The modifier *-pébè* ‘other’ (structural forms)

I	m̀- <i>pébè</i>	II	b̀- <i>pébè</i>
III	m̀- <i>pébè</i>	IV	m̀- <i>pébè</i>
V	è- <i>pébè</i>	VI	m̀- <i>pébè</i>
VII	ì- <i>pébè</i>	VIII	b̀- <i>pébè</i>
IX	<i>pébè</i>	X	<i>pébè</i>

- (67) m̀d m̀pébê  
 |<sub>N</sub>-òd m̀-*pébè*|  
 1-person I-other  
 ‘somebody else’

## 2.3. Quantifiers

The quantifiers discussed in this section are all inflected for gender. They can be used adnominally and pronominally without any additional marking. (The numbers from seven to ten, hundred and thousand are uninflected. All other numbers, i.e. eleven to ninety nine and 101 to 999, are phrasal. See Section 4.1.1.)

2.3.1. *The cardinal number ‘one’*

The adnominal cardinal numbers from one to six are inflected. This section first discusses the number ‘one’ and a quantifier derived from it; and then describes the numbers from two to six.

The stem of the number ‘one’ has three allomorphs: *pwág* in agreement patterns IX and X, *mwág* in pattern I and III and *vwág* elsewhere (68). This stem selects the prefixes of Series 3.

Table 17. The cardinal number ‘one’ (structural forms)

I	m̀- <i>móg</i>	II	b̀- <i>vóg</i>
III	m̀- <i>móg</i>	IV	m̀- <i>vóg</i>
V	è- <i>vóg</i>	VI	m̀- <i>vóg</i>
VII	ì- <i>vóg</i>	VIII	b̀- <i>vóg</i>
IX	<i>póg</i>	X	<i>póg</i>

- (68) a. kálâdà mwág<sup>13</sup>  
 |kálâdà m̀- ḿóg|  
 book I-one  
 ‘one book’
- b. m̀nngá ‘mwág  
 |m̀- nngá m̀- ḿóg|  
 1-woman I-one  
 ‘one woman’
- c. èlén é‘vwág  
 |è- lén è- v́óg|  
 5-palm.tree V-one  
 ‘one palm tree’
- d. tíd pwág  
 |tíd ṕóg|  
 [9]animal IX.one  
 ‘one animal’

When modifying a noun with plural semantics, this quantifier means ‘some’ or ‘other’.

- (69) a. b̀òd b̀èvwág  
 |b̀- òd b̀è- v́óg|  
 2-person II-one  
 ‘some people’
- b. tíd pwág  
 |tíd ṕóg|  
 [10]animal X.one  
 ‘some animals’

### 2.3.2. The quantifier ‘single’

A quantifier that means ‘a single, one and only one’ in the singular and ‘the only’ in the plural is derived from the number ‘one’ by means of reduplication and addition of the suffix *-á*. The reduplication is based on the three different allomorphs of the number ‘one’, viz. *pwág* in agreement pattern IX and X, *mwág*

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13. The reader is reminded that the practical orthography ignores some phonological and phonetic rules in order to show the underlying structures and to ensure a homogeneous written image. The nominal ‘one book’ is never pronounced the way it is written here. In normal speech the final /a/ is dropped, giving [kálâr n̄mwák]. In slow and careful speech the final /a/ can be retained, but then the pronominal prefix loses its syllabicity [kálârà mwák].

in agreement pattern I and III and *vwág* elsewhere. The reduplicated quantifier takes the same pronominal prefixes as its source number, viz. those of Series 3.

Table 18. The quantifier ‘single’ (structural forms)

I	m̀- <i>múmógá</i>	II	bè- <i>vúvógá</i>
III	m̀- <i>múmógá</i>	IV	mì- <i>vúvógá</i>
V	è- <i>vúvógá</i>	VI	mè- <i>vúvógá</i>
VII	ì- <i>vúvógá</i>	VIII	bì- <i>vúvógá</i>
IX	púpógá	X	púpógá

- (70) a. m̀dí ʔkóg m̀<sup>+</sup>múmwágó  
 |m̀-*H-dí-H*    ñ-*kóg*    m̀-*múmógá*|  
 1SG-PST-eat-NF    3-cane    III-single  
 ‘I ate a single sugar cane.’
- b. m̀d m̀múmwágó á<sup>+</sup>só  
 |*Ñ-òd*    m̀-*múmógá*    à-*H-só*|  
 1-person    I-single    I-PST-come  
 ‘Only one person has come.’
- c. àkwám ʔkàd m̀múmwágó  
 |à-*H-kóm-H*    ñ-*kàd*    m̀-*múmógá*|  
 I-PST-do-NF    3-exam    III-single  
 ‘She passed only one exam.’
- d. m̀g̀bél-á kál púpógá  
 |m̀-*g̀bél-á*    kál    púpógá|  
 1SG-grasp-RS    [9]sister    IX.single  
 ‘I have only one sister.’

This quantifier can be used pronominally without extra morphological marking, i.e. without the augment.

- (71) m̀múmwágó á<sup>+</sup>kábá á ʔkàd  
 |*Ñ-múmógá*    à-*H-kàbà-H*    á    ñ-*kàd*|  
 I-single    I-PST-pass-NF    LOC    3-exam  
 ‘Only one passed the exam.’

### 2.3.3. Cardinal numbers from ‘2’ to ‘6’

The numbers *-bá* ‘two’, *-lá* ‘three’, *-nà* ‘four’, *-tán* ‘five’ and *-sàm(n)ì* ‘six’ are inflected by means of a high pronominal prefix (i.e. of Series 1, 4 or 5). Surprisingly, there is high tone spread between the agreement prefix and *-sàm(n)ì* ‘six’, but not between the prefix and *-nà* ‘four’.

- (72) a. bìnṅgá bésâmì ‘two women’ (2)  
 b. ṅgwàg í‘bá ‘two stones’ (10)  
 c. tíd ílá ‘three animals’ (10)  
 d. èkèṅ éná ‘four knives’ (5) (\*èkèṅ éná)  
 e. b̀ káládà bétán ‘five books’ (genderless)  
 f. m̀ntóm mísâmì ‘six hats’

Numbers from one to six are also inflected in phrasal numbers involving the preposition è̀y ‘with’. Interestingly, the number ‘one’ in complex numbers such as 11 and 21 agrees in gender with the singular counterpart of the head noun.<sup>14</sup>

- (73) a. tíd léwôm è̀y í‘bá  
 |tíd l̀- wôm è̀j í- b́|  
 [10]animal 5-ten with X-two  
 ‘twelve animals’  
 b. bìnṅgá lé‘wóm è̀y m̀mwág  
 |b- ìṅgá l̀- wóm è̀j m̀- móg|  
 2-woman 5-ten with I-one  
 ‘eleven women’  
 c. mbú é‘wóm è̀y pwág  
 |mbú è̀- wóm è̀j póg|  
 [10]dog 5-ten with IX.one  
 ‘eleven dogs’

#### 2.3.4. Numbers from 1 to 6 in counting and mathematical use

There is some variability in the form of numbers in counting and calculating, perhaps due to the marginal status of these procedures in Eton society.<sup>15</sup> Sometimes a form without prefix is given. In that case the stem vowel of the numbers is usually lengthened. The stem of ‘one’ is that of agreement pattern IX in this

14. During elicitation, the intuitions of Désiré Essono were not very firm on this issue. For the translation of ‘11 kola nuts’, for instance, he doubted between *mèbél éwôm è̀y pwág* and *mèbél éwôm è̀y è̀vwág*. Both are singular forms (pattern IX and V respectively), but only the second form is expected on the basis of regular gender combinations. Since the form of ‘one’ in isolation is variable, it cannot be entirely excluded that the number ‘one’ is not inflected at all in these complex structures, but that it is simply the enumerative form.

15. Note that these are typically scholarly activities and that all education is in French, starting from the first year.

case. Note the low tone on the number ‘two’. Most numbers have alternative forms.

- (74) 1 pwág  
 2 bàà / bèè  
 3 láá / léé  
 4 nèènè / ɲìnà  
 5 táán  
 6 sàmna / sàmì

Sometimes, speakers use pronominals for counting. These have the prefix of the default agreement patterns VII (singular) and VIII (plural).

- (75) 1 ìvwág  
 2 bíbá  
 3 bílá  
 4 bínà  
 5 bítán  
 6 bísâmì

The same alternatives exist in calculations.

- (76) ìbùù éné ɲmàm ùbág í'vwág  
 |ìbù: é-nè ɲmàm ù-bág-H póg|  
 nine V-COP eight 2SG-add-CS one  
 ‘Nine is eight plus one.’
- (77) mètóm 'bá éné èwóm ùbùlá bíjòɲ bí'bá  
 |mèt-wóm bã é-nè è-wóm ù-bùlà-H bì-ɕjòɲ bí-bă|  
 6-ten two V-COP 5-ten 2SG-multiply-CS 8-time VIII-two  
 ‘Twenty is two times ten.’
- (78) pwág ùbùlá bíjòɲ bí'bá éɲgâ páám bí'bá  
 |póg ù-bùlà-H bì-ɕjòɲ bí-bă é-ɲgâ L-pám bí-bă|  
 XI.one 2SG-multiply-CS 8-time VIII-two V-INC INF-come.out VIII-two  
 ‘Two times one is two.’

I found no correspondence between the items that are counted and the form of the numbers. When, for instance, children are counted, one would never use forms of agreement pattern I or II.

2.3.5. *The quantifier -sè ‘all, entire, every, each’*

The quantifier *-sè* can be used with count and uncounted nouns. With count nouns it means ‘whole’ in the singular and ‘all’ or ‘every’ in the plural. It takes the agreement prefixes of Series 4. There is tone spread between the prefix and the stem.

Table 19. The quantifier *-sè* ‘all’ (structural forms)

I	á-sè	II	bó-sè
III	ú-sè	IV	mí-sè
V	é-sè	VI	mó-sè
VII	í-sè	VIII	bí-sè
IX	í-sè	X	í-sè

- (79) a. pùpó ásê  
 |pùpó á-sè|  
 papaya I-all  
 ‘the entire papaya’ or ‘every kind of papaya’
- b. b̀̀ pùpó bésê  
 |b̀̀ pùpó bó-sè|  
 PL papaya II-all  
 ‘all papayas’
- c. b́̀sìn ásê  
 |b́̀sìn á-sè|  
 basin I-all  
 ‘the entire basin’
- d. m̀̀m̀̀glè úsê  
 |Ǹ̀-B̀̀̀glè ú-sè|  
 3-luggage III-all  
 ‘all the luggage/the entire charge’
- e. bé<sup>+</sup>té <sup>+</sup>vé múḡá ásê kálàdà  
 |bó-Lté L-vé N-úḡá ásè kálàdà|  
 II-PR INF-give 1-child I-all book  
 ‘They give each child a book.’

The quantifier *-sè* can be used pronominally without any additional morphological marking.

(80) [Talking about arrows (mìm-pàn (4))] (Which should I take?)

ɲǎŋ mí-sê  
 |ɲǎŋ-H mí-sê|  
 take-IMP IV-all  
 ‘Take all.’

#### 2.4. The connective proclitic

The connective proclitic is a morpheme that relates two nominals to each other. See VI:3.1.1 for a more elaborate description of its function. Table 17 gives the segmental forms of the connective morpheme in all agreement patterns. The connective of agreement pattern III does not have a segmental form. It appears only as a floating high tone. Note that the segmental forms of the connective are identical to the forms of the subject prefix. The examples in (81) illustrate that the difference between the connectives of pattern IX and X is purely tonal.

- (81) a. ɲgèŋ ùwònò  
 |ɲgèŋ L = ùwònò|  
 [9]bean IX.CON=peanut  
 ‘a peanut’
- b. ɲgèŋ úwònò  
 |ɲgèŋ H = ùwònò|  
 [10]bean X.CON=peanut  
 ‘peanuts’

Table 20. Connective proclitics (structural forms)

I	à	II	bó
III	H	IV	mí
V	é	VI	mó
VII	í	VIII	bí
IX	ì	X	í

The segmental form of connectives is very unstable. Depending on the form of the noun to which they cliticise, they retain their *V-* or *CV-* form or they are reduced to a floating tone. A clitic obligatorily retains its segmental form before a noun without a prefix or with a *C-*prefix, i.e. before a prominent syllable (82). *CV-*clitics retain their segmental form before nouns with a *V-*prefix, but due to the general rules of hiatus resolution the clitic vowel is deleted (83). Before nouns with a *CV-*prefix the *CV-*clitic is normally reduced to a floating high tone (84). However, it can optionally retain its *CV-*form, for instance in order to disambiguate a phrase, as can be seen in (85b). A vocalic connective proclitic

drops its vowel before a *v*-prefix. This might be attributed to hiatus resolution, but syllabic nasal prefixes behave as *v*-prefixes in this respect, although they do not trigger vowel hiatus resolution (86). Finally, a vocalic proclitic is optionally dropped before a *CV*-prefix (87). See Section II:7.2 for a description of the behaviour of clitic tones.

- (82) a. èbèŋ é lôŋ  
 |è-bèŋ é = lôŋ|  
 5-beauty V.CON=[5]hair  
 ‘beautiful hair’  
 \*èbèŋ l-ôŋ
- b. díz é mbâz  
 |d-íz é = mbâz|  
 5-eye V.CON=[9]maize  
 ‘maize grain’  
 \*díz mbâz
- c. mènđím mé zóŋ  
 |mè-ndím mé = zóŋ|  
 6-water VI.CON=[9]eggplant  
 ‘eggplant soup’  
 \*mè-ndím zóŋ
- (83) a. mèpó mé áwú  
 |mè-pó mé = à-wú|  
 6-message VI.CON=3-death  
 ‘obituaries’  
 \*mèpó áwú
- b. mèpàb mé únwăn  
 |mè-pàb mé = ù-năn|  
 6-wing VI.CON=3-bird  
 ‘the wings of a bird’  
 \*mè-pàb ú-nwăn
- (84) a. mìnkwád mébóŋ  
 |mìn-kód H = mè-bóŋ|  
 4-crooked IV.CON=6-knee  
 ‘crooked knees’  
 \*mìn-kwád mí mé-bóŋ

- b. bǐjǎjólò méjwàg  
 |bì-ɕǎɕóló H = mǎ-ɕùàg|  
 8-bitter VIII.CON=6-wine  
 ‘bitter wine’  
 \*bì-jǎjólò bí mé-jwàg
- c. mèjwàg mélén  
 |mǎ-ɕǎg H = mǎ-lén|  
 6-wine VI.CON=6-palm.tree  
 ‘palm wine’  
 \*mè-jwàg mé mé-lén
- (85) a. mǐntàg mí ɲkúɲkú má  
 |mǐ-ntàg mí = ɲ-kúɲkú má|  
 4-joy IV.CON=3-chief  
 ‘the joy of the chief’
- b. mǐntàg mí míɲkúɲkú má  
 |mǐ-ntàg mí = mǐɲ-kúɲkú má|  
 4-joy IV.CON=4-chief  
 ‘the joy of the chiefs’
- (86) ì-vèvèz ɲpég  
 |ì-vèvèz H = ɲ-pég|  
 7-light VII.CON=3-bag  
 ‘a light bag’
- (87) è-bím mé-jwàg  
 |è-bím H = mǎ-ɕǎg|  
 5-quantity V.CON=6-wine  
 ‘a quantity of wine’  
 ~ è-bím é mé-jwàg

A connective proclitic forms a prosodic unit with the second noun of the connective construction. There can be a pause between the first noun and the connective, but not between the connective and the second noun. Also syntactically proclitics form a tight bond with the following noun. Nothing can be put between them. Nevertheless, proclitics consist of a prominent syllable, as can be seen in (88), where high tone copy from the preceding noun on the connective morpheme results in a falling tone, instead of a high tone.

- (88) a. tám î kú  
 |tám î=kú|  
 [9]feather IX.CON=[9]chicken  
 ‘a chicken feather’
- b. tíd î jàg  
 |tíd î=jàg|  
 [9]meat IX.CON=[9]cow  
 ‘beef’

### 3. Uninflected pro-forms: pro-adverbials and interrogatives

#### 3.1. Demonstrative and endophoric pro-adverbials

There are three demonstrative pro-adverbials, two for place *vǎ* and *mú* and one for manner *nǎ* ~ *nâ*. These words have in common with the adnominal demonstratives discussed in 2.2.2 that they carry a dissimilating high tone and that they can take the suffixes *-lí*, *-lá* and *-jà* for marking greater distance from the speaker.<sup>16</sup>

- (89) a. ñkòm ñgòb àbógô bèbè vá  
 |Ñ-kòm ñgòb à-Bóg-ǎ bèbè vǎ|  
 3-maker [9]shoe I-stay-RS close here  
 ‘The shoemaker lives nearby.’
- b. zùgá vâ  
 |zùgá vǎ|  
 come here  
 ‘Come here!’
- (90) úsúsúá ìnâ ñ-ñéblè kâtólíkâ wǒ ázù mú  
 |úsúsúá ìnâ ñ-ñéblè kâtólíkâ wǒ à-à-zù mú|  
 before 1-religion catholic I.PPR I-SP-came here  
 ‘Before the Catholic religion arrived here.’

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16. But there seem to be restrictions on which suffixes they can take. With *vǎ* and *nǎ* I found only the suffix *-lá*, which does not occur with *mú* in my data. This has to be checked. The tonality of the manner pro-adverbial is very often falling, also in the long form *nala*, which means that the suffix must be structurally low. The description of this pro-adverbial must be reconsidered. Perhaps the suffix *-la* is not the same as the intermediate distance suffix *-lá* found in demonstrative modifiers.

- (91) a. mèté kwàm nâ  
 |mè-Lté kòm nâ|  
 1SG-PR INF-do thus  
 ‘I do it this way.’
- b. tònṭón áⁱngábé mòd â múṅá nâ: ànèngì. dṣ íyṅṅ vó méⁱngáwó jê  
 ànèngì nálá  
 |tònṭón à-ṅgá-bé m-òdH à = m-úṅá nǎ à-nén-Lgì dṣ í-ì-jṅṅ|  
 Tonton I-RP-COP 1-AUG I.CON=I-child thus I-be.big-G DP AU-7-time  
 |vó m-ṅgá-wó jǎ à-nén-Lgì nǎ-lá|  
 then 1SG-RP-give.birth I.PPR I-be.big-G thus-ID  
 ‘Tonton was a big child, very big. So, when I gave birth to him, being big like this, ...’

The locative demonstrative pro-adverbials have in common with the interrogative prolocative *vě* (see 3.2.3) that the locative preposition *á* can optionally precede them, without apparently adding anything to their meaning.<sup>17</sup> Exact location is expressed by *vǎ* and approximate location by *mũ*.

- (92) a. vá / á vâ ‘here’  
 b. vǎlá / á ‘vǎlá’ ‘there (intermediate)’  
 c. vǎláyâ / á ‘vǎláyâ’ ‘there (far)’
- (93) a. mú / á mû ‘about here’  
 b. múlí / á ‘múlí’ ‘about there’  
 c. múláyâ / á ‘múláyâ’ ‘there’

Demonstrative pro-adverbials have some nominal characteristics, viz. they can occur in subject position, and hence they are agreement controllers. Just as other locatives they can freely trigger either agreement pattern I or III.

- (94) a. á ‘múlí úⁱté jèb  
 |á mũ-lí ú-Lté L-jèb|  
 LOC there-ID III-PR INF-be.good

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17. A brief historical note can be illuminating here. The locative demonstrative pro-adverbials were once demonstrative adnominal modifiers of gender 16 (*vǎ*) and 18 (*mũ*), which no longer exist in contemporary Eton. From a historical perspective, the function of the locative preposition before the pro-adverbials is the same as that of the augment before the demonstrative modifiers, turning adnominals into pronominals.

- b. á 'múlí àté jèb  
 |á mú-lí à-Lté L-jèb|  
 LOC there-ID I-PR INF-be.good  
 'Around there it is nice.'
- (95) a. vá ú'té jèb  
 |vá ú-Lté L-jèb|  
 here III-PR INF-be.good  
 b. vá àté jèb  
 |vá à-Lté L-jèb|  
 here I-PR INF-be.good  
 'Here it is nice.'
- (96) nálâ wátììni nâ...  
 |ná-là ú-à-tììni nâ|  
 thus-ID III-SP-mean CMP  
 'This means that...'
- (97) nálâ ànè nâ bòd béngákwalô àbwĩ mâm  
 |ná-lá à-nè nâ b-òd bô-ngá-kólò à-bùí H=m-àm|  
 thus-ID I-be CMP 2-person II-RP-say 3-many III.CON=6-thing  
 'This (i.e. what I said before) means that the people had said many things  
 (i.e. gossiped a lot).'

However, the demonstrative pro-adverbials are rather low on the scale of possible subjects. For instance, 'it is cold here' will usually not be translated by means of the verb *sín* 'be cold' with 'here' as its subject, as in (98a). More often a copular construction is used in which the noun *è-véb* 'cold' is the subject (98b).

- (98) a. vá àté 'sín  
 |vá à-Lté L-sín|  
 here I-PR INF-be.cold  
 'It is cold here.'  
 b. èvèb éné vá  
 |è-véb é-nè vá|  
 5-cold V-be here  
 'It is cold here.'

Locative demonstrative pro-adverbials are often in apposition to another locative.

- (99) a. mǘlí átán ‘ɲǘlíyâ  
 b. átán ‘ɲǘlíyâ á ‘mǘlí  
 c. átán ‘ɲǘlíyâ mǘlí  
 ‘There, in that village.’
- (100) í swánô àmé lòdǵì èbá émé átán vâ  
 |í sǒnò à-mé L-lòd-Lǵì è-bá é-mé á à-tán vǎ|  
 AUSunday I-YIMPF INF-pass-G 5-marriage V-be LOC 3-village here  
 ‘Last Sunday there was a marriage in the village.’
- (101) wàábógô vá. ùnè á úyòmábàŋ á ‘yád ‘vǎlá<sup>18</sup>  
 |ù-àá-Bóg-ǎ vĕ ù-nè á ùjòmábàŋ á jád vǎ-lá|  
 2SG-NEG-stay-RS here 2SG-be LOC Uyomabang LOC [9]side there-ID  
 ‘You don’t live here. You’re at the other side of Uyomabang.’
- (102) á ɲkòm sí á yó ‘vǎlá  
 |á ɲ-kòm H=sí á jó vǎ-lá|  
 LOC 3-side III.CON=[9]earth LOC [9]sky there-ID  
 ‘There, on top of the bank.’
- (103) ùtélí mǘŋá á mékǒl mǘ  
 |ù-téì-H N-úŋá á mǘ-kǒl mǘ|  
 2SG-put-CS 1-child LOC 6-foot here  
 ‘You put it here, on the child’s feet.’

The demonstrative manner pro-adverbial *nǎ* is mostly used with the suffix expressing proximity to the hearer, i.e. as *nǎlá*. It can usually be translated as ‘thus’ or ‘this way’, either accompanying a demonstration of how something is done or referring back to a chunk of discourse in which something is explained. It can also mean ‘correct’, in sentences like (104-105).

- (104) nǘm dàm lèvwág lénè vǎlá. íjóm ùté kàd ínè nǎlá.  
 |nǘm d-àm lè-vóg ló-nè vǎ-lá í-ǵ-óm|  
 yes 5-thing V-one V-be there-ID AU-7-thing  
 |ù-Lté L-kàd í-nè nǎ-lá|  
 2SG-PR INF-say VII-COP thus-ID  
 ‘Yes, there is something there. What you say is correct.’

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18. I do not know where the downstep on ‘*yád*’ comes from. This examples comes from an interview with a speaker of a Southern dialect. It is possible that *yád* has an underlying rising tone in her dialect. There are many nouns with a high tone in one dialect and a rising in another.

- (105) yî h́ó áně 'náló  
 |jî v́ó à-ně nǎ-lá|  
 FOC then I-RCOP thus-ID  
 'That's how it is.'

As a discourse deictic, *náló* does not have to refer to procedural discourse, it can be used instead of any other discourse deictic, e.g. *váló* in (97). In the following example *nǎ* occurs twice, once as a demonstrative (106b) and once as a discourse deictic (106c).

- (106) a. kê nâ j̀càŋ úŋgápám 'má, àné j̀càŋ ú'té 'pám 'bóŋó  
 |kê nâ Ñ-tj̀àŋ ú-ŋgá-pám mǎ àné Ñ-tj̀àŋ |  
 DP 3-swelling III-RP-come.out 1SG.PPR like 3-swelling  
 |ú-Lt́é L-pám H b-òŋó|  
 III-PR INF-come.out LT 2-child  
 'Truly a swelling appeared on me, like swellings appear on children'
- b. d̄ô j̀càŋ úŋgápám únũŋ á yó, nâ  
 |d̄ô Ñ-tj̀àŋ ú-ŋgá-pám á ù-nũŋ á jó nǎ|  
 DP 3-swelling III-RP-come.out LOC 3-toe LOC [9]sky thus  
 'So this swelling came out right on top of my toe, like this'
- c. m̀eŋgênâ c̀c̀c̀àd, íyòŋ úŋgápám 'náló  
 |m̀e-ŋgênâ t̄j̀ə̀t̄j̀əd í-ì-j̀òŋ ú-ŋgá-pám nǎ-lá|  
 1SG-SCOP small AU-7-time III-RP-come.out thus-ID  
 'I was still very small, when it came out like this.'

There are also two endophoric markers, *wě* and *í'té*, that are used with reference to locatives. Demonstrative *vǎ* and *mú* relate to endophoric *wě* and *í'té* as the adnominal demonstratives discussed in Section 2.2.2 relate to the anaphoric modifier *-tè* discussed in 2.2.1. That is, *vǎ* and *mú* can be used endophorically, but *wě* and *í'té* cannot be used exophorically. *wě* is used as a modifier of a locative (107), or, when preceded by the locative preposition *á*, independently as a pro-adverbial (108).

- (107) a. á'púb á'tán 'wé  
 |á à-púb á à-tán wě|  
 LOC 3-field LOC 3-village that  
 'in a field, in the village in question'
- b. á tíswn̄ wě  
 |á tísòn wě|  
 LOC town that  
 'there in town'

- (108) a. á 'wé ú'té jèb  
 |á wě ú-Lté L-jèb|  
 LOC that III-PR INF-be.good  
 'It is nice there (i.e. in the aforementioned place).'
- b. àngákê wé bô ngwàn bé'bá á 'wé, sè nálâ.  
 |à-ηgá-kè L-wé bô ηgòn bô-bă á wě sè nă-lá |  
 I-RP-go INF-give.birth PL girl II-two LOC that DP thus-ID  
 'She went to give birth to two girls there, didn't she.'

The endophoric marker *í'té* has a long variant *í'tédé*, which has the same meaning and use as the short form. When used adverbially, *í'té* has the same meaning as *á 'wé*, viz. 'in/at the place in question'. Location is not restricted to the spatial domain. In (110) *í'té* refers to the *mètâmná*, a phrasal name that is given to a child immediately after birth and that often consists of a comment on the conditions of pregnancy.

- (109) lón ndá í'té  
 |lón-H ndá ítă|  
 build-IMP [9]house there  
 'Build the house there.'
- (110) ηgé jóm zìη yándèglè wă, wòyì pwágó 'twáb íjóm 'wópúdi í'té  
 |ηgé ɕ-óm zìη í-à-ndèglà wă ù-à-jì|  
 if 7-thing any VII-SP-bother 2SG.PPR 2SG-SP-want  
 |pógó L-tób H í-ɕ-óm ù-à-pùdi ítă|  
 really INF-choose LT AU-7-thing 2SG-SP-put there  
 'If there is anything that bothers you, you will really choose what you put into it.'

In examples like (110-111) *í'té* fulfils the same role as stranded prepositions in English and in (113) it is used with an existential meaning.

- (111) bí'té yì í'lá nâ bíèèyńúη í'té  
 |bí-Lté L-jì H ì-lá nâ bí-è:j L-ńúη ítă|  
 1PL-PR INF-want LT 7-glass CMP 1PL-FUT INF-drink there  
 'We want a glass to drink from.'

- (112) vé mâ ndég nâ mé<sup>4</sup>púdí mé<sup>4</sup>cí mé kú mâ í<sup>4</sup>té<sup>19</sup>  
 |vé-H mà ndég nâ H-mè-L-pùd <H> ì|  
 give-IMP 1SG.PPR [9]calabash CMP SB-1SG-SB-put<SB>  
 |mè-tʃĩ má = kú má ítǎ|  
 6-egg VI.CON=[9]chicken VI.DEM there  
 ‘Give me a calabash to put these eggs in.’

- (113) mèbálá ménḡábé dyà í<sup>4</sup>té  
 |mè-bálá mḡ-ḡá-bé L-díá ítǎ|  
 6-medicine VI-RP-IMPF INF-be there  
 ‘There were medicines.’

When used as a modifier of a locative phrase, the meaning of *í<sup>4</sup>té* is different. If the locative phrase refers to a container, *í<sup>4</sup>té* means ‘inside’ (114-115), synonymous with the complex preposition *á ‘ném* + connective morpheme ‘at the heart of’ (116). If the locative phrase is not a container, *í<sup>4</sup>té* offers a precision of the location. The phrase in (117), for instance, could mean ‘alongside the road’ if there were only the locative preposition *á*. *í<sup>4</sup>té* specifies that it is *on* the road.

- (114) jé í<sup>4</sup>né á mé<sup>4</sup>ndég í<sup>4</sup>té  
 |ḡ-é í-ně á mḡ-ndég ítǎ|  
 7-what VII-REL.be LOC 6-calabash there  
 ‘What is in the calabashes?’

- (115) á ndá ìtè í<sup>4</sup>tédé  
 |á ndá ì-tè ítǎdǎ|  
 LOC [9]house IX-ANA there  
 ‘in the house in question’

- (116) á ndá ìtè á ‘ném  
 |á ndá ì-tè á Ñ-λém|  
 LOC [9]house 9-ANA LOC 3-heart  
 ‘in the house in question’

- (117) á ‘zén í<sup>4</sup>té  
 |á zěn ítǎ|  
 LOC [9]road there  
 ‘on the road’

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19. I had expected a falling tone on the last syllable of the subjunctive verb form, i.e. *mé<sup>4</sup>púdí*.

Finally, *í'té* can modify a nominal, in which case it usually means ‘the inside of’. In (120) *í'té* means ‘among them’. The noun *ndimzàná* ‘meaning’ is typically accompanied by *í'té*.

(118) *dó í'té*

|d-ó í'tě|

5-hand there

‘hand palm’

(119) *ndá í'tédé ìté jèb*

|ndá í'těđé ì-Lté L-jěb|

[9]house there IX-PR INF-be.good

‘The inside of the house is nice.’

(120) *ngé 'mwág í'té àkè wú*

|ngé ñ-móg í'tě à-à-kè L-wú|

if I-one there I-SP-go INF-die

‘if one of them were to die...’

(121) *ndimzàná í'té wàgò wò tề yêm?*

|ndimzàná í'tě wàgà wò tềH jěm|

[9]meaning there 2SG.CPR 2SG.PPR NEG know

‘Its meaning, don’t you know it?’

### 3.2. Question words

Typically, question words can hardly be called a part-of-speech category on morphosyntactic grounds, since their distribution depends on the elements they question. Because of their functional resemblance, they are discussed together here, except for the interrogative promodifiers, which were treated in Section 2.2.4. See VIII:7 for more information on the use of question words.

#### 3.2.1. Interrogative pronominals

The interrogative pronominals *zá* ‘who’ and *jé* ‘what’ are nouns from a morphosyntactic point of view. They can occur in subject position and they are agreement controllers. *zá* ‘who’ is genderless. *jé* ‘what’ belongs to gender 7 and could be analysed as *j-é* (nominal gender 7 prefix *j-* + stem *é*). Dialectal variants are *jè* and *yá*.<sup>20</sup>

20. *yá* could be analysed as *y + á*, but then the prefix is pronominal, rather than nominal.

- (122) *jé á'ngábé 'ságâ*  
 |ɕ-é à-ŋgá-bé L-sá-gà|  
 7-what I-RP-IMPF INF-work-G  
 'What was he doing?'

Contrary to *jé*, *zá* can be pluralized, viz. by means of the plural word *bò*.

- (123) a. *zá àté zù*  
 |zá à-Lté L-zù|  
 who I-PR INF-come  
 'Who is coming?'  
 b. *bò zá bé'té zù*  
 |bò zá b'á-Lté L-zù|  
 PL who II-PR INF-come  
 'Who are coming?'

Interrogative pronominals can be complements of prepositions, for instance in order to translate 'why?', lit. 'for what'.

- (124) *ùsò ású jé?*  
 |ù-H-só-H ású H=ɕ-é|  
 2SG-PST-come-PST for III.CON=7-what  
 'Why did you come?'
- (125) *ású zá á'yám ítid jî?*  
 |ású H=zá à-H-jám-H í-tíd jǐ|  
 for III.CON=who I-PST-cook-PST AU-[9]meat IX.DEM  
 'For whom did she prepare this meat?'
- (126) *èèy jé á'kwámgi í'sá jî?*  
 |è:j ɕ-é à-H-kòm-Lgì-H ì-sá ɕǐ|  
 with 7-what I-PST-do-G-NF 7-work VII.DEM  
 'With what did she do this job?'
- (127) *ùbé ábò zá?*  
 |ù-bé ábò zá|  
 2SG-be chez who  
 'With whom were you?'

As in English, the choice between 'who' and 'what' is not merely a matter of human versus non-human reference. For instance, the question word *jé* 'what' is used for asking for the gender of a newly born, not *zá* 'who' (128). This is be-

cause one asks for a categorisation, rather than an identification. Conversely, the use of *zá* in (129) might be explained by the fact that the dwelling referred to by the interrogative pronominal is already fully identified, but the choice might also be lexically determined. Anyway, the use of *jé* is excluded in (129). More data are needed to describe the choice between *zá* and *jé*.

(128) ànè jé? dè pâm dè mìnḡá  
 |à-nè ɕ-é dè pâm dè N-ìḡḡá|  
 I-COP 7-what Q [9]man Q 1-woman  
 ‘What is it, a boy or a girl?’

(129) zá íbègá íbógí hó mèbógó nâ?  
 |zá ì-bègá í=ì-bógí vó mð-Bóg-á ná|  
 who 7-kind VII.CON=7-dwelling then 1SG-stay-REL.RS thus  
 ‘What kind of damned place am I living in!’

The question word *jé* can be used adnominally with the meaning ‘what kind of’ (see example VIII:129).

### 3.2.2. *General question markers*

The general question markers *dè* and *yì*, which are most probably dialectal variants, introduce polar questions.

(130) a. dè ùwágð?  
 |dè ù-H-wágð|  
 Q 2SG-PST-wash  
 ‘Did you wash yourself?’  
 b. dè ùté ‘wóg zâ?  
 |dè ù-Lté L-wóg H zâ|  
 Q 2SG-PR INF-feel LT hunger  
 ‘Are you hungry?’

### 3.2.3. *The interrogative pro-locative vé*

The interrogative prolocative *vé* is formally similar to the demonstrative proadverbials (see Section 3.5). It carries a dissimilating high tone and it is optionally preceded by the locative preposition *á*, without an apparent change in meaning or function. *vé* can question location, origin and destination. There is also a variant *vé*.

- (131) a. ànè vé?  
 |à-nè vé|  
 I-be where  
 ‘Where is she?’
- b. àké vê?  
 |à-H-kè-H vé|  
 I-PST-go-NF where  
 ‘Where did she go?’

Sometimes (*á*) *vé* combines with a question marker. No clear conditioning has been found at present.

- (132) yí mènè kùz ‘béédí á vê?  
 |jí mènè L-kùz H bè:dí á vé|  
 Q 1SG-POS INF-buy LT bread LOC where  
 ‘Where can I buy bread?’

### 3.2.4. The interrogative *yá* ‘how’

The interrogative *yá* ‘how’ is always in final position in questions. Sometimes it co-occurs with the general question marker *yí*, which introduces the question.

- (133) yí í ‘mén béngábé ‘káàgì vé bójó dwé lé métàmná yá?  
 |jí ímèn bə-ŋgá-bé L-káz <Lg>ì L-vé H b-óŋó|  
 Q INTS II-RP-IMPF INF-begin<G> INF-give LT 2-child  
 |d-óé ló = mən-tàmná já|  
 5-name V.CON=6-metamna how  
 ‘How exactly did they attribute a metamna to children?’

- (134) pèpá wə àngábé ‘dwé yá?  
 |pèpá ú-ə à-ŋgá-bé d-òé já|  
 father I-your I-RP-COP 5-name how  
 ‘How was your father called?’

- (135) àně íyòŋ ùté ‘yáŋ íbăb, mébálá ùté kwàm èyè mó ménê yá?  
 |àně í-ì-jòŋ ù-Lté L-jáŋ H ì-băb H-mə-bálá|  
 like AU-7-time 2SG-PR INF-heal LT 7-ibab AU-6-medicine  
 |ù-Lté L-kòm è:j mó mó-nè já|  
 2SG-PR INF-do with 6.PPR VI-COP how  
 ‘For instance, when you heal ibab, the medicines with which you do it, how are they?’

*yá* is also used in indirect questions (136) and in utterances that express surprise or disbelief (137).

- (136) *kăd bí'á yî bô tàdá béngábé nìngì yá?*  
 |kàd-H bíă jî bô tàdá bó-ŋgá-bé L-nìŋ-Lgì já|  
 say-IMP 1PL.PPR FOC PL father II-RP-IMPF INF-live-G how  
 'Tell us how our elders lived.'

- (137) *yî ùté 'sílâ ípàà á'á ndán yá?*  
 |jî ù-Lté L-sílâ H ì-pă: áă ndán já|  
 FOC 2SG-PR INF-ask LT 7-side LC [9]ndan how  
 'How is it possible that you ask (me) questions about ndans!?'

### 3.2.5. *The interrogative ídén 'when'*

The question word *ídén* comes at the end of an interrogative clause. It is not related to an existing noun.

- (138) *wèèy sô ídén?*  
 |ù-è:j L-sô ídén|  
 2SG-FUT INF-come when  
 'When will you come?'

## 4. Other uninflected words

### 4.1. Quantifiers

#### 4.1.1. Cardinal numbers from 7 upward

The Eton data confirm the typological generalisation that the higher a number is, the more it is like a noun (see, for instance, Corbett 1991:135). Numbers lower than 7 can be excluded from the category of nouns on purely morphological grounds. For the sake of cohesion, all cardinal numbers starting from 7 will be treated in this section, although they show considerable differences in behaviour.

The numbers 7 (*zâŋmál*), 8 (*ŋmàm*) and 9 (*ibũl*) are always uninflected. They do not have a plural form. The word for 10 *è-wóm* (*lè-wóm* in Southern dialects) has a prefix of gender 5. In the plural its prefix is of gender 6 (*mè-wóm*). However, *èwóm* does not trigger gender agreement on a modifier, as a genuine noun would do. This is shown in (139):

- (139) m̀̀wóm ʼbá ʼ20ʼ  
 \*m̀̀wóm méʼbá

Moreover, the non-phrasal cardinal numbers lower than and including 10 never have agreement on the verb. The copula in (140) does not agree in gender with the number. Rather it has the default subject prefix that appears when no subject is present, as for instance in presentational clauses.

- (140) m̀̀wóm ʼbá é̀nê è̀wóm ù̀bùlá bí̀j̀d̀j̀ bíʼbá  
 |m̀̀-wóm bǎ é-nè è-wóm ù-bùlà-H bì-ǰ̀d̀j̀ bí-bǎ|  
 6-ten two V-COP 5-ten 2SG-multiply-CS 8-time VIII-two  
 ‘Twenty is ten times two.’

Subject agreement can also be exophoric. The number in (141) refers to children, and agreement is as if the word *b̀̀j̀j̀* ‘children’ were in subject position.

- (141) zà̀j̀mál bésó è̀y mǎ  
 |zà̀j̀mál bǎ-H-sǎ-H è:j mǎ|  
 seven II-PST-come-NF with 1SG.FPPR  
 ‘Seven came with me.’

In this respect, the word for 10 differs from those for 100 (*ǹ̀-̀̀t̀̀d̀*) and 1000 (*twágsîn*). The former has a gender 3 prefix in the singular. The plural is regularly of gender 4 (*m̀̀ǹ̀-̀̀t̀̀d̀*). *twágsîn* is obviously a borrowing (either from German or from (Pidgin) English). It belongs to gender 9. Contrary to *è̀wóm*, the numbers *ǹ̀t̀̀d̀* and *twágsîn* do trigger agreement on a following dependent number and on the verb.

- (142) a. m̀̀ǹ̀t̀̀d̀ míʼbá  
 |m̀̀ǹ̀-̀̀t̀̀d̀ mí-bǎ|  
 4-hundred IV-two  
 ‘two hundred’  
 b. twágsîn íʼbá  
 |tógsìn í-bǎ|  
 [10]thousand X-two  
 ‘two thousand’

- (143) ǹ̀t̀̀d̀ tóg únê twágsîn  
 |ǹ̀-̀̀t̀̀d̀ H=tóg ú-nè tógsìn|  
 3-hundred III.CON=spoon III-COP thousand  
 ‘One hundred spoons cost thousand (francs).’



For ‘6’ the form of the ordinal number is identical to that of the adnominal cardinal one: *sàmmi*. The ordinal number ‘4<sup>th</sup>’ is formally identical to the cardinal number ‘4’ in isolation: *nèè nè/piìnà*. ‘First’ *ùsú/ùsúswâ* and ‘last’ *m̀búmbúzâ* are nouns derived from the word for *àsú* ‘face’ and *mbúz* ‘back’ respectively.

#### 4.1.3. *béŋ* & *ìtétámá* ‘only’

The quantifier *béŋ* ‘only’ follows the noun it modifies. It can also function as an adverb (see Section 4.3.1.3) and in one example it functions as a genderless noun, in that it is the head of a connective construction and determines agreement with the demonstrative predicate (148). *ìtétámá*, which is a reduplication of the noun *ítám* ‘solitude’, has the same meaning and morphosyntactic behaviour.

- (146) *b́ŋ́ b́é<sup>+</sup>bá b́éŋ b́é<sup>+</sup>kásbá á ŋkàd*  
 |b-óŋ́ b́é-bă b́éŋ b́é-H-kàbà-H á Ñ-kád|  
 2-child II-two only II-PST-succeed-NF LOC 3-exam  
 ‘Only two children passed the exam.’

- (147) a. *ŋé b́éŋ àgbélê mètŵá á<sup>+</sup>tán*  
 |ŋé b́éŋ à-gbél-á mètúà á à-tán|  
 I.PPR only I-grasp-RS car LOC 3-village  
 b. *ŋé í<sup>+</sup>tétámá àgbélê mètŵá á<sup>+</sup>tán*  
 |ŋé ì-tétámá à-gbél-á mètúà á à-tán|  
 I.PPR 7-only I-grasp-RS car LOC 3-village  
 ‘He is the only one who has a car in the village.’

- (148) *b́éŋ à ŋgòb ùně kùz m̀ú ńóló*  
 |H-b́éŋ à = ŋgòb ù-ně L-kùz H m̀ú ńó-lá|  
 AU-only I.CON=[10]shoe 2SG-RCOP INF-buy LT here I.DEM-CH  
 ‘These are the only shoes you can buy here.’

#### 4.2. Indefinite modifiers

There are two uninflected adnominal modifiers that might be called indefinite, viz. *zìŋ* ‘any’ and *í<sup>+</sup>zá* ‘of somebody else’. Surprisingly, *í<sup>+</sup>zá* precedes the noun it modifies. These modifiers are in need of more thorough description. A hypothesis for the analysis of *í<sup>+</sup>zá* is that it is the interrogative *zá* ‘who’ preceded by the series of prefixes *í-L-* (in which *í-* is the augment) that is used to pronominalise possessive modifiers. The entire construction of *í<sup>+</sup>zá* plus noun could be analysed in terms of apposition.

(149) í'zá ntóm 'somebody else's hat'

(150) vôm zìŋ 'anywhere'  
kán zìŋ 'any kind'

### 4.3. Adverbs

The parts-of-speech category of adverbs, i.e. words that are mostly or exclusively used as adverbs, has very few members. Adverbs can be defined as invariable modifiers of predicates that are not specified for gender. Clear examples of such words always have a modal-discursive function (see Section 4.3.1). Manner, temporal and locative notions are normally expressed by means of quasi-auxiliaries (see IX:2) or by means of a noun in complement position (151). Nouns with an adverbial meaning are mostly of gender 3 (prefix *à-* or *ù-*). See Section VIII:3.5 for morphosyntactic differences between nouns that function as complements and those that function as adverbial adjuncts.

(151) àbé tìlgì ùtétég  
|à-bé L-tìl-Lgì ù-tétég|  
I-TIMPF INF-write-G 3-slow  
'He wrote slowly.'

#### 4.3.1. Modal adverbs

This section gives a very basic description of the functions of two of the most frequent modal adverbs in Eton. Some others are simply listed in 4.3.1.3.

##### 4.3.1.1. *vɔ* / *fiɔ*

The adverb *vɔ* has a free variant *fiɔ*. Its translation equivalent in Cameroonian French is *donc*. A possible English equivalent is *then*, at least in some contexts. In one of its functions *vɔ* could be translated as 'as planned' or 'as expected' (in negative utterances: 'contrary to what was planned/expected').

(152) [A planned to see B's brother. B asks]  
a. dè ùtóbneŋgáná vɔ èy mǎ'jáj?  
|dè ù-H-tóbn-əŋgàná-H vɔ è:j mǎʒǎŋ|  
Q 2SG-PST-meet-G-NF then with my.brother  
'So, did you meet my brother?'

- b. mètóbnéngáná vó èèy jé  
 |mè-H-tóbn-èngàná-H vó è:j jɛ́|  
 1SG-PST-meet-G-NF then with I.PPR  
 ‘(Yes,) I met him.’
- c. màájé vó tóbni èèy jé  
 |mè-àá-ǫ́ǫ́ vó tóbni è:j jɛ́|  
 1SG-NEG-IMPF then meet with I.PPR  
 (No,) I didn’t meet him.’

In (153) the vowel of the adverb is lengthened in the same way as final vowels in questions are (see VIII:7.1). This phrase is uttered at the end of an interview on traditional medicine after the interviewer tells the interviewee that he does not intend to become a healer himself, but that he is simply interested in the history and culture of the Eton.

- (153) wò tè yáj vó òó!  
 |wò tè jáj vó=ǎ:|  
 2SG NEG heal then=Q  
 ‘You don’t heal, then!?’

A second use of *vó*, probably related to the first one, is in combination with an utterance-initial temporal marker such as *dò*, *iyòŋ íté* or *iyòŋ*. The first, *dò*, is a discourse particle that links events in a narrative succession. The second literally means ‘at that (*ité*) time (*iyòŋ*)’, and the third is the noun for ‘time’ in the antecedent position of a relative clause, i.e. ‘the time that...’. Here, the function of *vó* is most probably that of marking focus on the temporal marker. The clause following the one that is introduced by the combination temporal marker plus *vó* often contains the adverb *vó* as well.

- (154) [iyòŋ ùké ‘wú àyǎ nà ònàm úyém nà ùbwò ásí  
 ‘When you already died, and the village knows that you are dead,]  
 iyòŋ íté vó bé<sup>+</sup>té ‘lòŋò  
 |ì-jòŋ í-tè vó bɔ́-Lté L-lòŋò|  
 7-time VII-ANA then II-PR INF-call  
 ‘it is then that they will call (i.e. spread the news of your death by means of a two-tone log drum)’

- (155) ìyòŋ ítê vó 'mátébé á ñkòm sí á yó 'válá, mènghá vó 'lónjò 'wó  
 |ì-jòŋ í-tè vó mè-à-tébè á Ñ-kóm H=sí|  
 7-time VII-ANA then 1SG-SP-stand LOC 3-side III.CON=[9]earth  
 |á jó vǎ-lá mè-ŋghá vó L-lónjò H wó|  
 LOC [9]sky there-ID 1SG-INC then INF-call LT 2SG.PPR  
 'So then I will stand on the bank there, and I will call you.'

Sometimes *vó* follows another focus marker, which it seems to reinforce. The examples in (156) come from an interview in which the meaning of names is explained. These formulas come at the end of the discussion of a name.

- (156) a. yî vó dwé lé tontón lé'né 'náló  
 |jî vó d-óé ló=tontón ló-nè nǎ-lá|  
 FOC then 5-name V.CON=Tonton V-COP thus-ID  
 'This is how the name Tonton can be explained.'  
 b. yî vó mènùŋ mé'té tìnzàná náló.  
 |jî vó mè-nùŋ mǎ-Lté L-tìnzàná nǎ-lá|  
 FOC then 6-mouth VI-PR INF-mean thus-ID  
 'This is what Mouths means.'  
 c. yî hó áně 'náló  
 |jî vó à-ně nǎ-lá|  
 FOC then I-RCOP thus-ID  
 'This is how it is.'

Sometimes, still another type of element is focused by means of *vó*, such as the discourse particle in (157) and the nominal complement in (158). Example (157) was uttered by an old woman who talks about the far past, i.e. before she was born.

- (157) sè vó úsúsúâ mín miníŋghá bí lô ítètègà jò ná ùsúsúâ.  
 |sè vó úsúsúâ mín miní-ŋghá bí L-ló ítètègà jò|  
 DP then before 2PL.NPPR 2PL-INC 1PL.PPR INF-call now  
 |ná úsúsúâ|  
 CMP before  
 'It is not the *before* that you use now when you refer to us as *before*.'

- (158) m̀pàŋ íbúg vó mèté wò kǎd 'núlá<sup>21</sup>  
 |ñ-pàŋ H=ì-búg vó mè-Lté wò L-kàd H jǔ-lá|  
 3-important III.CON=7-word then 1SG-PR 2SG.PPR INF-say LT III.DEM-ID  
 'This is an important thing (lit. word), what I am telling you.'

21. or: *kàd jí'núlá*.

Finally, in several examples, *vó* seems to express irritation. In example (159), a woman complains that all she asks in return for helping people is two bottles of beer, which are never given.

- (159) *mân nâ: zùgá tò èyè bô byâ bé'ba. békáàngà! nímá àyă njũg vó ðó!*  
 |mân nâ zùgá tò èj bô bíâ bó-bă|  
 1SG.QP CMP come.IMP perhaps with PL beer II-two  
 |bó-káj <Lg> à Ì-má àjà Ì-ɕũg vó = ă:|  
 II-stay <G> 3-terrible already 3-pain then = Q  
 'I say: "Come, perhaps, with two beers." They stay away (i.e. the beers)!  
 A real pain!'

- (160) *zá íbègá íbógí hó mèbógó nâ?*  
 |zá ì-bègá í=ì-bógí vó mà-Bóg-á ná|  
 who 7-kind VII.CON=7-dwelling then 1SG-stay-REL.RS thus  
 'What kind of damned place am I living in!'

- (161) *wàgò ùnè vó tè wóg ívôm mèté wô kàd*  
 |wàgà ù-nè vó tè wóg í-vôm mà-Lté wò L-kàd|  
 2SG.CPR 2SG-be then NEG hear AU-place 1SG-PR 2SG.PPR INF-say  
 'You too, you don't understand what I am telling you.'

According to one speaker, it can depend on the position of *vó* in the clause whether or not it expresses irritation.

- (162) a. *mèté wô ló vó*  
 |mà-Lté wò L-lô vó|  
 1SG-PR 2SG.PPR INF-call then  
 'So I call you.'  
 b. *mèté 'vó lójó 'wó<sup>22</sup>*  
 |mà-Lté vó L-lójó wǒ|  
 1SG-PR then INF-call 2SG.PPR  
 'I am calling you! (irritated)'

#### 4.3.1.2. *pwágó*

The adverb *pwágó* usually expresses positiveness and/or insistence and can often be translated as 'really' in English.

22. The tonality of this phrase does not reflect the proposed underlying structure. The downstepped high tone that appears on the adverb *vó* was expected to appear on the first syllable of the verb *lójó*. I have no explanation for this at present.

(163) bɛ́'bóm pwágó wɔ̀ mètàmná á ɲól 'vǎlá  
 |bɛ́-H-bòm-H pógó wɔ̀ mɛ̀-tàmna á ɲól vǎ-lá|  
 II-PST-tap-NF really 2SG.PPR 6-metamna LOC [9]body there-ID  
 'They really imposed a metamna on you (i.e. you couldn't choose one yourself).'

(164) yì á sú pwágó nâ mà mègbégbèlè nó  
 |jì á sú pógó nâ mà mɛ̀-gbél-á ñ-λó|  
 Q for really CMP 1SG.PPR 1SG-grasp-RS 3-head  
 'Is it really because I have a good memory (that you ask me all these things)!?'

(165) wɔ̀ ̀̀ɲɔ̀ɲ pwágó, ̀̀kɛ̀ èy ɲé á dwábdɔ̀  
 |wɔ̀ ̀̀ɲɔ̀ɲ-H pógó ̀̀kɛ̀-H è:j ɲé á dɔ̀bdɔ̀|  
 2SG.PPR 2SG-take-CS really 3SG-go-CS with I.PPR LOC hospital  
 'You really take him and you bring him to hospital.'

(166) àné mé'kád pwágó 'wó  
 |ànó mɛ̀-H-kàd-H pógó wɔ̀|  
 like 1SG-PST-say-NF really 2SG.PPR  
 'Exactly as I told you.'

*pwágó* can also be used as a quantity adverb meaning 'just, only', which makes it very likely that this adverb is derived from the number *pwág* '1'. The example in (167) is the answer to a question about the traditional name of somebody's husband. The woman answers that she only knows his Christian name. *pwágó* is often used in combination with the adverb *vè*, which can also be translated as 'only' and which it probably reinforces (167, 169).

(167) mà màyèm pwágó vè nâ màgà mènɲák wáb àdyǎ dwé nâ: ábdòn càlà  
 |mà mɛ̀-à-jèm pógó vè nâ màgà mɛ̀-ɲgá-kób|  
 1SG.PPR 1SG-SP-know really simply CMP 1SG.CPR 1SG-RP-find  
 |à-dǎá d-óé nâ ábdòn tʃàlá|  
 I-COP 5-name CMP Abdon Tsala  
 'I only know that me too I found him being called Abdon Tsala.'

(168) wàpùdì pwágó ítùn í tóg ñtáɲní  
 |ù-à-pùdì pógó ì-tùn í=tóg L=ñ-táɲní|  
 2SG-SP-put really 7-part VII.CON=[9]spoon IX.CON=3-European  
 'You put in just half a tea spoon.'

- (169) ínê pwágó vè nâ ...  
 |í-nè pógó vè nâ|  
 VII-be really simply CMP  
 'It's just that...'

4.3.1.3. *tédé, jǎm, kíg, vè, béŋ, and pé*

This subsection lists some other modal adverbs. A study of the function of these adverbs would be very useful, since they are relatively frequent and they can have a considerable influence on the meaning of an utterance. Due to a lack of sufficient corpus data, this subsection will be limited to a list of examples.

The modal adverb *tédé* has a short form *té*. It is difficult to find a suitable translation equivalent for *tédé*. In (171) the adverb *tédé* somewhat weakens the imperative.

- (170) mèyè té 'só  
 |mè-è:j tǎ L-só|  
 1SG-FUT anyway INF-come  
 'I will come anyway.'

- (171) vé tédé mâ ìlá méndím  
 |vé-H tǎdǎ mà ì-lá H = mè-ndím|  
 give-IMP POL 1SG.PPR 7-glass VII.CON=6-water  
 'Please give me a glass of water.'

The modal adverb *jǎm* usually co-occurs with a modal quasi-auxiliary of possibility. It can express low probability. This adverb is only used in Southern dialects of Eton. Speakers of Northern dialects would use *vó* instead (see 4.3.1.1).

- (172) a. bènê dǎ 'jǎb  
 |bǎ-nè dǎ L-ǎjǎb|  
 II-POS V.PPR INF-steal  
 'They can steal it.'
- b. bènê jǎm 'jǎb dǎ  
 |bǎ-nè ǎjǎm L-ǎjǎb dǎ|  
 II-POS possibly INF-steal V.PPR  
 'They could steal it.'

- (173) yì ndán ìnè ìyòlò; íyòlò béngábé jǎm kàlnà?  
 |jì ndán ì-nè ì-jòlò í-ì-jòlò bó-ḡgá-bé ɖǎm L-kàlnà|  
 Q [9]ndan IX-COP 7-name AU-7-name II-RP-POS possibly INF-transmit  
 ‘Is the ndan a name, a name that one could pass on?’

Possible translation equivalents for the adverb *kíḡ* (variant: *cíḡ*) are *even*, *rather* and *really*. It could be described as an emphatic adverb.

- (174) dǎ bòd bĕ bááyèm cĭḡ jé ndán  
 |dǎ b-òd b-ĕ bó-ǎ:-à-jĕm ʃĭḡ jĕ ndán|  
 DP 2-person II-his II-NEG-SP-know even I.PPR [9]ndan  
 ‘Even his people don’t know his ndan.’

- (175) àné íyòḡ mèlóm ‘wó: kèní ú‘só, kèní kíḡ vòm zìḡ!  
 |ànó í-ì-jòḡ mǎ-H-lóm-H wǒ kèní|  
 like AU-7-time 1SG-PST-send-NF 2SG.PPR go.IMP  
 |á ù-só kèní kíḡ vòm zìḡ|  
 LOC 3-river go.IMP rather place any  
 ‘When, for instance, I sent you: go to the river, or rather go somewhere else (“wherever”).’

Other modal adverbs are *vĕ*, usually translatable as *only* (176), and *bĕḡ* *just*, *simply* (177). The commonest translation equivalent of *pĕ* is *also*, or, in clauses with negative polarity, *anymore* (178).

- (176) mĕḡgáwó jé? vĕ bò ḡgwàn bò ḡgwàn!  
 |mǎ-ḡgá-wó ɖĕ-é vĕ bò ḡḡn bò ḡḡn|  
 1SG-RP-give.birth 7-what only PL girl PL girl  
 ‘What have I given birth to? Only girls!’

- (177) àáḡbĕlĕ zám bìdí, àté bĕḡ ‘mángànà  
 |à-ǎ:-ḡbĕl-ǎ zám L=bì-dí à-Lté bĕḡ L-mángànà|  
 I-NEG-grasp-RS [9]appetite IX.CON=8-foods I-PR simply INF-nibble  
 ‘He isn’t hungry, he’s just nibbling at his food.’

- (178) bóḡḡ mèlú mâ báá‘té pĕ lùgà bĕbòni  
 |b-óḡḡ H=mǎ-lú má bó-ǎ:-Lté pĕ|  
 2-child VI.CON=6-night VI.DEM II-NEG-PR anymore  
 |L-lùgà H bĕ-bòni|  
 INF-respect LT 2-parent  
 ‘Children do not respect their parents anymore.’

### 4.3.2. Place adverbs

I found only one word that could be analysed as a locative adverb, viz. *bèbè* ‘close’. Subsection 4.3.2.2. describes two prepositional constructions that function as locative adverbs. Demonstrative pro-adverbials such as ‘there’ are discussed in Section 3.1.

#### 4.3.2.1. *bèbè* ‘close’

The following examples show *bèbè* as a modifier of a verb (179) and as a predicate (180-181).

(179) síbâ bèbè èy táblé  
 |síb <H> à bə̀bə̀ è:j táblə̀|  
 approach<IMP> close with table  
 ‘Come near to the table.’

(180) mòd àsè bébè  
 |N-òd à-sě̀ bə̀bə̀|  
 1-person I-NEG.be close  
 ‘There is nobody around.’

(181) mènè bèbè nâ màkè ú‘jò  
 |mè-nə̀ bə̀bə̀ nâ mə̀-à-kè á ù-ɕjò|  
 1SG-be close CMP 1SG-SP-go LOC 3-sleep  
 ‘I am about to go to sleep.’

#### 4.3.2.2. Location in vertical space

Eton does not have adpositions that translate *on*, *above* or *under*. Instead, the noun of which the referent has to be situated in vertical space is followed by the locative preposition *á* (see Section 4.4.1) and a noun for the environmental landmarks ‘sky’ or ‘earth’. For instance, ‘above X’ is termed as ‘at X, in the sky’. Surprisingly, the prepositional construction *á sí* ‘under’ (lit. ‘on the ground’) can be replaced by a form *àsí*, which can best be analysed as a noun of gender 3 (185). No conditioning for the choice between *á sí* and *à-sí* has been found at present. The difference is probably dialectal. More on location can be found in Section 3.1 on the pro-adverbials meaning ‘here’, ‘there’ and ‘in there’, in Sections 4.4.1, 4.4.4 and 4.4.5 on locative prepositions and in Section 4.5.3 on the locative connective.

- (182) *dô ñcàŋ úŋgápám únŋŋ á yó*  
 |*dô ñ-tʃaŋ ú-ŋgá-pám á ù-nún á jó*|  
 DP 3-swelling III-RP-come.out LOC 3-toe LOC [5]sky<sup>23</sup>  
 ‘So, the swelling came out on the toe.’

- (183) *í'lé á 'dób*  
 |*á ì-lé á d-öb*|  
 LOC 7-tree LOC 5-sky  
 ‘above the tree’

- (184) *í'lé á sí*  
 |*á ì-lé á sí*|  
 LOC 7-tree LOC [9]ground  
 ‘under the tree’

- (185) *pùdí 'dóm á tēbl àsí*  
 |*pùdì-H d-öm á tēblè à-sí*|  
 put-IMP 5-package LOC table 3-ground  
 ‘Put the package under the table.’

These prepositional/nominal constructions can also modify a predicate, as in (186-188). Note that *à-sí* is used for movement in vertical space, both up (188) and down (187).

- (186) *béédê dš á 'dób*  
 |*bé:d<H>è d-š á d-öb*|  
 lift<IMP> 5-hand LOC 5-sky  
 ‘Put your hand in the air.’

- (187) *bógbô àsí*  
 |*bógb<H>ò à-sí*|  
 sit<IMP> 3-ground  
 ‘(Please,) Sit down.’

- (188) *àté 'tébê á'sí*  
 |*à-Lté L-tébè H à-sí*|  
 I-PR INF-stand LT 3-ground  
 ‘He stands up.’

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23. The noun *yó* ‘sky’ is exceptional because it is a gender 5 noun without overt gender marking.

## 4.3.3. Time adverbs

The situation with time adverbs is very similar to that of place adverbs. True adverbs are very rare if not non-existent. For the sake of completeness, some constructions that provide temporal information are briefly described here.

4.3.3.1. *ítètègè nɔ́*

The form *ítètègè* is always followed by a demonstrative modifier of agreement pattern I. The initial high *í-* can therefore be recognised as (the trace of) an augment. However, there is no noun *ì-tètègè* (7) or *tètègè* (1, 9 or genderless). The demonstrative can have the distal suffix *-lá*.

- (189) *bwán* ‘bé yì mè vò pè tìmní yèm bó *ítètègè*nɔ́!?’  
 |b-ón b-ě jì m-ò-vò p-ê L-tìmní H L-j-èm|  
 2-child II-his Q ISG-POS also INF-do.again LT INF-know  
 |bɔ́ í-t-èt-è-g-è nɔ́|  
 II.PPR now I.DEM  
 ‘His children, would I still recognise them now!?’

- (190) *ítètègè nɔ́wáló*  
 |ít-èt-è-g-è nɔ́-lá|  
 ‘in a minute’

4.3.3.2. *Nouns with temporal reference*

Most time-adverbial notions are expressed by means of nouns that follow the verb and that are not marked differently from typical complements. The noun *kídí* means ‘(this) morning’ or ‘tomorrow’, depending on the context. *ú’ján* can mean ‘the day after tomorrow’ or ‘the day before yesterday’, and *àná* is ‘today’. Only the noun for ‘evening’ *àngògí* has a special form when used adverbially, viz. with a long initial *à*: *ààngògí*. In example (191) *àná* ‘today’ is focused by means of a cleft construction.<sup>24</sup> The agreeing personal pronominal clearly shows that *àná* controls gender 3, which makes it reasonable to analyse its initial *a* as the nominal gender 3 prefix *à-*.

24. Not all speakers accept this utterance, saying that the only acceptable pronominal is *nɛ* here. This may be either because for them *àná* triggers agreement pattern I, or because it cannot be focused by means of a resumptive focus pronominal, in which case *nɛ* must be interpreted as coreferential with the subject.

- (191) é-nê à-ná wǒ à-Lté L-sù:nì  
 |é-nè à-ná wǒ à-Lté L-sù:nì|  
 V-COP 3-today III.PPR I-PR INF-come  
 ‘It’s *today*, that he comes.’

#### 4.4. Prepositions

Eton has a relatively small set of prepositions. There are no postpositions.

##### 4.4.1. *The locative preposition á*

Contrary to many other Bantu languages, but rather typically for the North-western area, Eton does not have locative genders. There are morphotological and morphosyntactic reasons to analyse *á* as a preposition rather than as a (gender) prefix. The high tone of *á* is copied to the right, where it delinks the low tone of any following non-prominent syllable. This behaviour is typical of floating high tone attachment across a word boundary (see II:7.2.2).

- (192) á bí'lé  
 |á bí-lé|  
 LOC 8-tree  
 ‘in the trees’

A phrase introduced by the locative preposition *á* can be the subject of some verbs. This might be a remnant of the probable origin of the locative preposition in the Proto Bantu nominal prefix of (locative) gender 16. Locatives trigger agreement pattern I or III, in free variation.

- (193) a. á tíswân únê mèn  
 |á tíswân únê mèn|  
 LOC town III-COP 3-good  
 ‘It is nice in town.’  
 b. á tíswân ànè nìmèn  
 |á tíswân ànè nìmèn|  
 LOC town I-COP 3-good  
 ‘It is nice in town.’

With most verbs, however, nominals preceded by *á* cannot normally be subjects. Moreover, *á* is never a controller of agreement on nominal modifiers. In the nominal in (194), for instance, the connective morpheme agrees in gender with the first noun, not with the initial locative element.

- (194) á lévèl lé 'jád  
 |á lè-vél ló = ɕ-ǎd|  
 LOC 5-side V.CON=7-basket  
 'next to the basket'

The preposition *á* is the default locative preposition. Its exact meaning is determined by the semantics of the nominal of which it is the head and/or of the verb on which it depends. This can be location in, at or on something (195), goal or direction (196). Elsewhere, *á* can be translated as 'through' (197), 'via' (198) or 'between' (199). A noun with human reference cannot be a complement of *á* (see 4.4.4).

- (195) ànè á ndá  
 |à-nè á ndá|  
 I-be LOC [9]house  
 'She is at home.'

- (196) a. àké á lépàn  
 |à-H-kè-H á lè-pàn|  
 I-PST-go-NF LOC 5-forest  
 'He went into the forest.'
- b. dō bápám á 'mábgán  
 |dō bó-à-pám á màbgán|  
 DP II-SPS-come.out LOC [9]crossroads  
 'Then they arrive at a crossroads.'
- c. bé'má kè á ñcòm  
 |bó-H-mà-H L-kè á ñ-tfòm|  
 II-PST-TMN-NF INF-go LOC 3-hunt  
 'They went to the hunt.'

- (197) mùṅá á'bé déṅbèṅgàṅà mǎ é'jónṅ  
 |N-ùṅá à-bé L-déṅb-èṅgàṅà mǎ á è-ɕónṅ|  
 1-child I-IMPF INF-watch-G 1SG.PPR LOC 5-hole  
 'The child watched me through the hole.'

- (198) yì íyónṅ béléṅṅò mòd àné á tèlefón...<sup>25</sup>  
 |jì H-ì-jónṅ bó-H-ló-Lgà N-òd àné á tèlefón|  
 Q AU-7-time II-PST-call-G 1-person like LOC phone  
 'like when they called somebody by phone...'

---

25. The verb form in this example is the so-called Past imperfective. See Section VII:2.3.7.

- (199) á 'mó  
 |á m-ǝ|  
 LOC 6-hand  
 'in/between the hands'

There are some extensions of the spatial domain that are also commonly found in English, e.g. the use of the preposition *on* with the meaning 'concerning', which in Eton can likewise be expressed by means of the locative preposition *á* (200).

- (200) a. á bûnì, ìtétób ítê yô ùté mǎ 'ké sàṅ íṅgâ páṃ  
 |á bûnì ì-tétób í-tè H-jǝ ù-Lté|  
 LOC [9]amoebiasis 7-itetob VII-ANA AU-VII.PPR 2SG-PR  
 |L-mà H L-ké H L-sàṅ í-ṅgâ L-pám|  
 INF-TMN LT INF-AND LT INF-carve VII-INC INF-come  
 'Concerning amoebiasis, it is this itetob (a plant) that you go and  
 carve, it (the sap)<sup>26</sup> comes out.'
- b. mèkád wô nâ mèté yì nâ màtìl bô kálàdà ínìṅ ítón  
 |mè-H-kàd-H wǝ nâ mè-Lté L-jì|  
 1SG-PST-dire-NF 2SG.PPR CMP 1SG-PR INF-want  
 |nâ mè-à-tìl bô kálàdà á ì-nìṅ H=ì-tón|  
 CMP 1SG-SP-write PL book LOC 7-life VII.CON=7-Eton  
 'I told you that I want to write books on Eton life.'

The preposition *á* can introduce temporal adverbials as well (201). And it is found in several idioms, such as (202).

- (201) a. àsó á tólbé  
 |à-H-sǝ-H á tólbé|  
 I-PST-come-NF LOC noon  
 'He came at noon.'
- b. á mǎwòlò mǎsâmì  
 |á mǎ-wòlò mǎ-sâmì|  
 LOC 6-hour VI-six  
 'at six o'clock'

---

26. Although 'it' clearly refers to sap here, there is, to my knowledge, no word for 'sap' that is of gender 7. The prefix of agreement pattern VII on the verb is most probably selected because of its default value rather than for its agreement with *ite-tob*.

- (202) á 'dóy 'dé  
 |á d-òí d-ě|  
 LOC 5-name V-his  
 'due to him' (lit. in his name)'

For expressing precise, non-vertical location Eton makes use of nouns for body parts, which are preceded by the locative preposition and followed by a connective proclitic and the noun that is situated in space (see Section 2.4 for connectives). Thus, 'behind X' is literally expressed as 'at the back of X'. The preposition *ású*, described in Section 4.4.2, originated in this construction, deriving from *á* + *à-sú* 'face'. See Section 4.3.2.2 for the expression of vertical location.

- (203) á mbúz ñkǒl  
 |á mbúz L = ñ-kǒl|  
 LOC [9]back IX.CON=3-hill  
 'behind the hill'
- (204) á mbúz î cwáz  
 |á mbúz î = tʃʒz|  
 LOC [9]back IX.CON=[9]church  
 'behind the church' or 'after mass'
- (205) á lévèl lé 'jád  
 |á lè-vèl ló = ɕ-ǎd|  
 LOC 5-side V.CON=7-basket  
 'next to the basket'

- (206) ké màyì tébê á zùd ì ndá á vâ.  
 |ké mǎ-à-jì L-tébè á zùd ì = ndá á vǎ|  
 DP 1SG-SP-wantINF-stand LOC [9]buttocks IX.CON=[9]house LOC there  
 'I will certainly go and stand there at the back of the house.'

- (207) á 'ném 'jád  
 |á ñ-λém H = ɕ-ǎd|  
 LOC 3-heart III.CON=7-basket  
 'inside the basket'

Another common combination with *á* that could be considered a complex preposition is *átáŋ*, which has the variants *átá* and *átáŋí*. The noun *táŋ* means 'calculation', or 'number, amount'. The combination *átáŋ* often introduces adverbials that contain a quantifier or a quantity noun.

- (208) àkwázgí átá 'ḡúmâ éwòlò  
 |à-H-kó-z-Lgì-H átá Ñ-wúmá H=è-wòlò|  
 I-PST-cough-G-NF during 3-entire III.CON=5-hour  
 'He coughed for an hour.'

- (209) àjám átá bòd bènà  
 |à-H-ǰám-H átá b-òd bó-nà|  
 I-PST-cook-NF for 2-person II-four  
 'She cooked for four persons.'

The two following examples are taken from a recorded conversation on traditional medicines.

- (210) ùté kwàm ḡê átáḡ mèlú máḡ?  
 |ù-Lté L-kòm H ḡé átáḡ mè-lú m-áḡ|  
 2.SG-PR INF-make LT I.PPR during 6-night VI-how.many  
 'You make them for him in how many days?'

- (211) tè pùdì átáḡ ḡjúmá tóg  
 |tèH pùdì átáḡ Ñ-wúmá H=tóg|  
 NEG put as.much.as 3-entire III.CON=[9]spoon  
 'Don't put as much as an entire spoon.'

#### 4.4.2. *The preposition ású*

As has been said, the preposition *ású* comes from the noun *à-sú* 'face', preceded by the locative preposition *á*. It is treated as a separate preposition, rather than as a locational noun, because if it were a succession of preposition and noun today, it should have had a downstepped high tone on the second syllable, instead of a high one. However, *ású* preserved a formal characteristic of the construction from which it derives, viz. the agreement pattern III connective proclitic *H=* before its complement.

- (212) ású míḡkúḡkúma  
 |ású H=mìḡ-kúḡkúma|  
 for III.CON=4-chief  
 'for the chiefs'

This preposition can mark a beneficiary (213) or a purpose (214).

- (213) àkóm d̄ô ású j̄ê  
 |à-H-kòm-H d̄ó ású H=j̄é|  
 I-PST-do-NF 5.PPR for III.CON=I.PPR  
 ‘He did it for her.’
- (214) a. bé<sup>4</sup>má <sup>4</sup>jám ábù méjwàg ású ébóg  
 |b̄é-H-mà-H L-ɕám H à-bùí H=m̄-ɕɔ̀g|  
 II-PST-TMN-NF INF-prepare LT 3-much III.CON=6-wine  
 |ású H=è-bóg|  
 for III.CON=5-party  
 ‘They made a lot of wine for the party.’
- b. úkêŋ j̄ú ú<sup>4</sup>té bèl̄nì ású j̄cígí n̄âg  
 |í-ù-kèŋ j̄ú ú-Lt̄é L-bèl̄nì ású H=ñ-t̄ígní j̄n̄âg|  
 AU-3-knife III.DEM III-PR INF-be.used for III.CON=3-cutting [9]beef  
 ‘This knife is used for cutting meat.’

When the complement of *ású* is of the first person singular, it is not expressed by means of a personal pronominal, but by a pronominal that is formally identical to the adnominal possessive modifier. However, this possessive is not preceded by the augment, in contrast to other contexts where it is pronominalised (see Section VI:2.2).

- (215) èèy sá ású wám̄ô í<sup>4</sup>ŋgégógô jí  
 |à-èj L-sá ású H=wám̄ò í-ŋgégógò jí|  
 I-FUT INF-work for III.CON=I.my AU-[9]evening IX.DEM  
 ‘He will work for me this evening.’

The combination of the preposition *ású* and the question word *jé* (*yá* in Southern dialects) means ‘why’ (see 3.2.1).

- (216) ású jé? ‘why’

Note that *ású* is not followed by a connective morpheme when it functions as a subordinator.

- (217) a. ású mékúd  
 |ású H=m̄-kúd|  
 for III.CON=6-lunatic  
 ‘for the lunatics’

- b. ású mé<sup>4</sup>kúd  
 |ású mǎ-H-kúd|  
 because 1SGPST-bend  
 ‘because I bent’

4.4.3. *The preposition èèy*

The preposition *èèy* usually translates as ‘with’, expressing accompaniment (218) or introducing instruments (219) or ingredients (220).

- (218) àdí pyâ èèy nǎmùŋ  
 |à-H-dí-H pîâ è:j ñ-Bùŋ|  
 I-PST-eat-NF avocado with 3-cassava  
 ‘She ate the avocado with cassava.’

- (219) a. àsó èèy mèkǒl  
 |à-H-só-H è:j mǎ-kǒl|  
 I-PST-come-NF with 6-foot  
 ‘He came on foot.’  
 b. àté wùlà èèy ñtúm  
 |à-Lté L-wùlà è:j ñ-túm|  
 I-PR INF-walk with 3-stick  
 ‘He walks with a stick.’

- (220) mìsòŋ mínê ñjámní èèy mǎmwán bí-tòŋ  
 |mì-sòŋ mí-nê ñ-ǰámní è:j ñ-Bón H = bì-tòŋ|  
 4-sissongo IV-COP 3-preparation with 3-oil III.CON=8-palm.nut  
 ‘The sissongo has been prepared with palm oil.’

Some verbs have an obligatory complement introduced by *èèy*, e.g. *bèlnì* ‘use’ and *yág* ‘need’.

- (221) mèté bèlnì èèy kwàb  
 |mǎ-Lté L-bèlnì è:j kǎb|  
 1SG-PR INF-use with [9]hook  
 ‘I use a hook.’

- (222) á ‘yág èèy jòm  
 |á L-jág è:j ǰ-òm|  
 LOC INF-need with 7-thing  
 ‘to need something’

After passive verb forms the agent is likewise introduced by *èèy*.

- (223) àbámbéngán èèy ìsá ‘wé  
 |à-H-bám-b-èngàn-H è:j ìsá w-ě|  
 I-PST-rebuke-PASS-G-NF with father I-his  
 ‘He was rebuked by his father.’

Nominals are never coordinated in Eton.<sup>27</sup> When they are linked, it is by means of the preposition *èèy*. See Section VIII:2 for more examples.

- (224) bí èèy wó  
 |bí è:j wó|  
 1PL with 2.SG  
 ‘you and I (lit. we with you)’

- (225) àngáwó bô ngwàn bé<sup>4</sup>bá: ñkwòlò bô èèy nèmí  
 |à-ngá-wó bô ngòn bô-bă ñkwòlò bô èèj nèmí |  
 I-RP-give.birth PL girl II-two Nkolo II.PPR with Nemi  
 ‘She gave birth to two girls: Nkolo and Nemi. (lit. Nkolo, they with Nemi)’

Non-verbal predicates can be optionally preceded by the preposition *èèy* when they express a property, as in (226-228).

- (226) a. ùsò únê ìdwág  
 |ù-só ú-nè ì-dóg|  
 3-river III-COP 7-depth  
 b. ùsò únê èèy ìdwág  
 |ù-só ú-nè è:j ì-dóg|  
 3-river III-COP with 7-depth  
 ‘The river is deep.’

- (227) a. ànè lèbùm  
 |à-nè lè-bùm|  
 I-COP 5-belly  
 b. ànè èèy lèbùm  
 |à-nè è:j lè-bùm|  
 I-COP with 5-belly  
 ‘She is pregnant.’

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27. Except in the case of disjunctive coordination meaning ‘either ... or’, as illustrated in example (258).

- (228) a. ìvúṅlâ ínê èvéb  
 |ì-vúṅlâ í-nè è-véb|  
 7-wind VII-COP 5-cold
- b. ìvúṅlâ ínê èèy èvéb  
 |ì-vúṅlâ í-nè è:j è-véb|  
 7-wind VII-COP with 5-cold  
 ‘The wind is cold.’

The complement of some nouns is introduced by *èèy*.

- (229) múṅá ànè mìntàg èèy ḡm̀kpámgí káàyê wě  
 |N-úṅá à-nè mì-ntàg è:j ñ-kpámgí H=kâjê w-ě|  
 1-child I-COP 4-satisfied with 3-new III.CON=notebook III-her  
 ‘The child is proud of her new notebook.’

The preposition *èèy* preceded by the negative particle *tè* translates as ‘without’.

- (230) tè èèy ndwán  
 |tè è:j ndón|  
 NEG with [9]success  
 ‘without success’
- (231) àké mèdyă tè èèy jé  
 |à-H-kè-H m̀-ḡiá tè è:j jé|  
 I-PST-go-NF 1SG-being NEG with I.PPR  
 ‘He left without me. (lit. me being without him)’

#### 4.4.4. *The preposition ábô*

When a location, source (232) or destination (233) is human, the preposition *ábô* is used rather than *á*. This preposition translates in French as ‘chez’.

- (232) ḡkúṅkú má á<sup>4</sup>kúz kálàdà ábô m̀m̀òm m̀èṅgàṅ  
 |N-kúṅkú má à-H-kùz-H kálàdà ábò ñ-Bòm L=m̀-ḡgàṅ|  
 3-chief I-PST-buy-NF book from 1-maker I.CON=6-magic  
 ‘The chief bought a book from the witch doctor.’
- (233) màkè ábô ḡkúṅkú má  
 |m̀-à-kè ábò ñ-kúṅkú má|  
 1SG-SP-go to 3-chief  
 ‘I am going to the chief.’

*ábô* developed from the combination of the locative preposition *á* with the plural word *bô*. This is still reflected in the fact that nouns that are genderless in the plural are not preceded by the plural word if they follow the preposition *ábô*.<sup>28</sup>

- (234) a. mbóy ‘friend’ (9)  
 b. bô mbóy ‘friends’ (genderless)
- (235) a. mèté kè ábô mbóy yàmà  
 |mè-Lté L-kè ábô mbóí jámà|  
 1SG-PR INF-go to [9]friend IX.my  
 ‘I’m going to my friend.’  
 b. mèté kè ábô mbóy bàmà  
 |mè-Lté L-kè ábô mbóí bámà|  
 1SG-PR INF-go to friend II.my  
 ‘I’m going to my friends.’

The complement of some nouns, such as *è-pìdí* ‘confidence’, is introduced by *á* if it is non-human and by *ábô* when it has human reference.

- (236) a. mègbélé lèpìdí á zèkúlí  
 |mè-gbé-l-á lè-pìdí á zèkúlí|  
 1SG-grasp-RS 5-confidence LOC school  
 ‘I have confidence in the school.’  
 b. mègbélé lèpìdí ábô òtí  
 |mè-gbé-l-á lè-pìdí ábô ò-tí|  
 1SG-grasp-RS 5-confidence in 1-lord  
 ‘I have confidence in the Lord.’

The same complementarity between *á* and *ábô* exists for their use of introducing a new topic, translatable as ‘concerning’.

- (237) ábô twàmó, ...  
 |ábô tòmó|  
 on Tomo  
 ‘Concerning Tomo, ...’

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28. This is also reflected in Cameroonian French, where proper names are pluralized after the preposition *chez*, e.g. *chez les Désirés* ‘at Désiré’s place’.

4.4.5. *The preposition vwàz ‘until, as far as, up to’*

When it has a spatial directional meaning, the preposition *vwàz* ‘as far as’ precedes a locative, i.e. either a prepositional phrase introduced by *á* or *ábâ*, or a locative adverb or interrogative prolocative. In my notes, this preposition never receives tone copy. Therefore it may have an initial structural floating low tone *Lvùàz*. This needs to be checked.

(238) *bébé bèngì ñm̀ñm̀éméb vwàz á ndá ‘yé*  
 |bá-bé L-bèŋ-Lgì Ñ-ñm̀éméb Lvòz á ndá j-ě|  
 II-TIMPF INF-follow-G 3-thief until LOC [9]house IX-his  
 ‘They followed the thief up to his house.’

(239) *màkè vwàz ú‘ñgóló*  
 |mà-à-kè Lvóz á ùñgóló|  
 1SG-SP-go until LOC Yaoundé  
 ‘I’m going as far as Yaoundé.’

(240) *vwàz mú*  
 |Lvòz mú|  
 until here  
 ‘up to here’

(241) *vwàz á vè?*  
 |Lvòz á vế|  
 until LOC where  
 ‘up to where’

With a temporal meaning *vwàz* is simply followed by a temporal adverb or noun.

(242) *vwàz àná*  
 |Lvòz à-ná|  
 until today  
 ‘until now’

(243) *vwàz ídén íí?*  
 |Lvòsz ídén = í:|  
 until when=Q  
 ‘until when?’

For expressing the meaning ‘until X, X included’, *vwàz* is followed by the preposition *èèy*.

- (244) *mèté* ‘*lígí* *vwàz* *èèy* *kídí*  
 |*mè-Lté* *L-lígì* *Lvòz* *è:j* *kídí*|  
 1SG-PR INF-stay until with tomorrow  
 ‘I stay until tomorrow, tomorrow included.’

- (245) (Everything was destroyed, )  
*vwàz* *èèy* *ndá*  
 |*Lvòz* *è:j* *ndá*|  
 until with [9]house  
 ‘up to and including the house.’

Finally, *vwàz* can be used as an adverb meaning ‘endlessly, towards infinity’.

- (246) *àkâzgì* *á* ‘*màbgán* *vwàz*  
 |*à-káz* <*Lg*>*ì* *á* *màbgán* *Lvòz*|  
 I-start<G> LOC [9]crossroads on  
 ‘starting from the crossroads, endlessly’

#### 4.4.6. The preposition *àné* ‘like’

The preposition *àné* ‘like, as’ is used in the expression of comparison of equality.

- (247) *ànè* *ngùl* *àné* *í*‘*ngbém*  
 |*à-nè* *ngùl* *àné* *ì-ṅmgbém*|  
 I-COP [9]strong like 7-lion  
 ‘He’s strong as a lion.’
- (248) *àgbélê* *sêm* *ì* *mètûâ* *àné* ‘*má*  
 |*à-gbél-á* *sêm* *ì=mètúâ* *àné* *mă*|  
 I-grasp-RS [9]same IX.CON=6-car as 1SG.FPPR  
 ‘He has the same car as I have.’

## 4.5. Grammatical words

4.5.1. *The link tone H*

The link tone is a floating high tone that stands between an infinitive (L-stem) and an immediately following nominal, irrespective of whether there is a syntactic relation between both (but this needs to be checked with more speakers).. Formally this link tone behaves as a word. If it were a suffix of the infinitive, it would attach to the left (i.e. to the infinitive), which it does not. If it were a prefix or proclitic on the nominal, it would delete any following non-prominent low tone instead of pushing it to the right. The link tone might be called a pseudo-word, since it has no function.

- (249) àṅgâ tìl bô kálàdà  
 |à-ṅgâ L-tìl H bô kálàdà|  
 I-INC INF-write LT PL letter  
 ‘He is writing letters.’

Example (250b) proves that link tone occurs only if a nominal *immediately* follows an infinitive and example (251) shows that there can be link tone between an infinitive and a nominal even if there is no syntactic relation between the two. Not all speakers accept this, however.

- (250) a. àté kùl bìkòb bí tíd  
 |à-Lté L-kùl H bì-kòb bí=tíd|  
 I-PR INF-clean LT 8-skin VIII.CON=[9]animal  
 ‘He cleans the skins.’  
 b. àté kùl vè bìkòb  
 |à-Lté L-kùl vè bì-kòb|  
 I-PR INF-clean only 8-skin  
 ‘He cleans only the skins.’
- (251) àté pàd ímòd àté sòm bíbùmá  
 |à-Lté L-pàd H í-N-òd à-Lté L-sòm H bì-bùmá|  
 I-PR INF-pick LT AU-1-person I-PR INF-hunt LT 8-fruit  
 ‘She picks fruit for the hunter.’

4.5.2. *Number words*

The plural word *bò*, the diminutive proclitic *mòH* and the augmentative *mòdH* are here treated together because they share some morphosyntactic and semantic similarities. Moreover, from a typological point of view, it is not rare that these

words together form a minor part-of-speech category (see Dryer 1989). From a syntactic point of view, number words are the head of the noun they quantify. It is the number word that defines external agreement.

#### 4.5.2.1. *The plural word b̀̀*

Genderless nouns are pluralized by means of the plural word *b̀̀* (Van de Velde in press). The plural word is always immediately followed by a genderless noun, which may be a phrasal name. It cannot be used in isolation, e.g. deictically or anaphorically. Nothing can be inserted between the plural word and the noun it pluralizes.<sup>29</sup> From a syntactic point of view the plural word is the head of the noun it pluralizes. It is the gender 2 plural word that determines gender agreement, not the following noun, which is genderless. Moreover, any augment is prefixed to the plural word, not to the following noun.

- (252) *íb̀̀ kálàdà bá*  
 |í-b̀̀ kálàdà bá|  
 AU-PL book II.DEM  
 ‘these books’

Since *b-* is the prefix of gender 2 before vowel initial stems, *b̀̀* could be analysed as *b-̀̀* (2-PL).

#### 4.5.2.2. *The diminutive proclitic m̀̀H*

The diminutive proclitic *N-̀̀H=* (plural *b-̀̀H=*) can be put in front of any full noun in order to form a diminutive or singulative. It has a variant *N-̀̀nH=*.

- (253) a. *ílé* ‘a tree’  
           *m̀̀ ílé* ‘a small tree’  
       b. *b̀̀ilé* ‘trees’  
           *b̀̀ bílé* ‘small trees’

A combination of diminutive proclitic and noun triggers agreement pattern I in the singular and II in the plural. This is explained by the origin of the diminu-

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29. The plural word might be a proclitic, but the difference between words and proclitics is only visible in Eton if they carry a final high tone.

tive proclitic, viz. the gender 1 noun *m-àḡǝ* ‘child’, which also explains the tonality of the proclitic.<sup>30</sup>

- (254) a. *m̀ èlén àté kù*  
 |<sub>N-ḡH</sub> = è-lén      à-Lté L-kù|  
 1-DIM=5-palm.tree I-PR INF-fall  
 ‘The small palm tree falls.’
- b. *b̀ mèlén bé’té kù*  
 |<sub>b-ḡH</sub> = m̀-élén      b́-Lté L-kù|  
 2-DIM=6-palm.tree II-PR INF-fall  
 ‘The small palm trees fall.’
- c. *b̀ méjwág*  
 |<sub>b-ḡH</sub> = m̀-ǝǝǝǝ|  
 2-DIM=6-wine  
 ‘some wine’

Before genderless words for ethnic groups the diminutive has a singulative function.

- (255) a. *p̀ùlási* ‘the French’  
*m̀è p̀ùlási* ‘a Frenchman’
- b. *háydên* ‘pagans, heathens’  
*m̀è háydên* ‘a pagan’
- c. *kwálô* ‘the Ewondos’  
*m̀è kwálô* ‘an Ewondo’

In the plural, the diminutive word can also be used as a quantifier, meaning ‘few, little’, as in:

- (256) *tíd* ‘animal(s)’  
*b̀è tíd* ‘small animals / few animals’

#### 4.5.2.3. *The augmentative noun mòdH*

The augmentative is expressed by a gender 1 noun *m-òdH*, that is formally identical to the noun for ‘person’, except for its final floating high tone. Its plural is *b-òdH* (gender 2). A connective proclitic links the augmentative noun to the following (modified) noun.

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30. Note that H cannot be a connective morpheme here, since the connective of agreement pattern I has a low tone. Nevertheless, it is very likely that the diminutive proclitic originates in a connective construction.

- (257) a. mòd â mòd  
 |N-òdH à=N-òd|  
 1-AUG I.CON=1-person  
 ‘a big person’
- b. bőd bé bőd  
 |b-òdH b́= b-òd|  
 2-AUG II.CON=2-person  
 ‘big people’

#### 4.5.3. The locative connective

A special, uninflected linking morpheme can be used instead of the connective when a modifying element denotes the location or the origin of the modified nominal. The form of this locative connective is hard to analyse and even hard to transcribe, since its tone and its vowel quality are variable. The basic form seems to be á'á.

- (258) bød á'á tíswân  
 |b-òd áǎ tísn|  
 2-person LC city  
 ‘city dwellers’

- (259) bød á'á mû  
 |b-òd áǎ mú|  
 2-person LC here  
 ‘the people from here’

- (260) mǎnǎn mǎndím èè í'té, tǎ nǎn mé'ndím èè ú'só  
 |mǎ-à-nǎn mǎ-ndím èè ítǎ tǎH L-nǎn H mǎ-ndím èè á ù-só|  
 1SG-SP-take 6-water LC there NEG INF-takeLT 6-water LC LOC 3-river  
 ‘I take the water from there. Don't take river water!’

- (261) ùté 'cíg ηgé únǎη, ηgé jóm áá nól ì kú  
 |ù-Lté L-tǎg ηgé ù-nǎη ηgé ǎ-óm áá nól ì=kú|  
 2SG-PR INF-cut if 3-toe if 7-thing LC [9]body IX.CON=[9]chicken  
 ‘You cut either a toe, or something (else) from the body of the chicken.’

#### 4.5.4. The vocative particle

The particle *a* can be preposed to a proper name or a noun with human reference in order to make an address form. As it seems from the few examples available,

this particle has a dissimilating high tone, the representation of which depends on the tone of the *following* syllable, rather than the preceding one.

- (262) a. mádkûz ‘Mark’  
           à mádkûz ‘hey, Mark!’  
       b. wǒ ‘you’  
           á ‘wó ‘hey, you!’  
       c. j̄péglê ‘teacher’  
           á ‘j̄néglê ‘Sir/Miss (to a teacher)’  
       d. twàmó ‘Tomo’  
           á ‘twámó ‘hey, Tomo’

Often the final vowel of a proper name drops in vocative use, whether the name is preceded by the particle *a* or not.

- (263) a. ùndwábô ‘Ondobo’  
           ú‘ndwáb ‘hey, Ondobo’  
       b. ìsónô ‘Essonô’  
           ìsón ~ í‘són ‘hey, Essonô’

# Chapter 6

## Nominals

### 1. Introduction

Following Creissels (1991:40) I will use the term nominals for words or fragments of an utterance that are syntactically equivalent to a personal proper name. This is an alternative (and I think more exact) term for what is usually called *noun phrase*, or *determiner phrase*. This chapter first presents the words that can function as nominals in themselves (the simple nominals) and then discusses the combinations of words that can function as a nominal. Many of the data that are relevant here have already been described in Chapter 5 and will not be repeated. The chapter concludes with a section on word order and a section on agreement within complex nominals.

### 2. Simple nominals

Simple nominals can be divided into words that do not need extra marking in order to function as a nominal and words that do. The latter are adnominal modifiers that are made independent (i.e. that can be pronominalised) by means of the augment *í-*. The augment cannot be used with an unmodified noun, e.g. to make it definite or specific.

#### 2.1. Non-augmented simple nominals

Evidently, nouns and pronominals can constitute a nominal by themselves. In addition, the following word classes can be pronominalised without any further marking: the interrogative promodifiers  $|-p\grave{e}|$  ‘which’ (V:(62b)) and  $|-á\eta|$  ‘how many’ (1); the modifier  $|-p\acute{e}b\grave{e}|$  ‘other’ (2) and quantifiers (3-5). However, ordinal numbers cannot be used independently (e.g. to translate English nominals such as *the fifth*).

- (1) yáj íjíbân?  
|j-áη í-H-ǫ́íb-bàn|  
X-how.many X-PST-steal-VRS  
‘How many have been stolen.’ (e.g. goats)



## 2.2. Augmented simple nominals

Possessive adnominal modifiers can be pronominalised by means of the augment *î-* followed by a floating low tone prefix, which is here glossed as PN *pronominaliser* (6).

- (6) [ kâbdì yàmà àtú  
 ‘My goat escaped.’]  
 íyàmà ìtyǎ mèn̄  
 |í-L-jàmà ì-tì-ǎ Ñ-Bèŋ|  
 AU-PN-IX.my IX-attach-RS 3-good  
 ‘Mine is well attached.’

- (7) í‘wámô ‘mine’ (III)  
 í‘myámâ ‘mine’ (IV)  
 íwò ‘yours’ (I)  
 íwô ‘yours’ (III)  
 íwě ‘his’ (I, III)

## 3. Complex nominals

The head of a complex nominal is either a noun or an augmented (i.e. pronominalised) demonstrative modifier. Pronominals such as personal pronominals cannot be modified.

### 3.1. Non-augmented complex nominals

This section discusses complex nominals, the head of which is not augmented, i.e. all complex nominals with a nominal head, except those that contain a demonstrative determiner and/or a relative clause. Determination by means of a possessive determiner, a quantifier, an interrogative promodifier or a connective phrase does not entail the appearance of the augment before a noun or pronominal. Much of the information that is relevant here was given in Chapter 5 and will not be repeated. This includes modification by an anaphoric (v:2.2.1) or possessive (v:2.2.3) modifier, quantifiers (v:2.3 & v:4.1),<sup>1</sup> interrogatives (v:2.2.4), locative connectives (v:4.5.3), and indefinite modifiers (v:4.2).

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1. Nouns modified by an ordinal number might require an augment for some speakers. This needs to be checked.

3.1.1. *Connectives*

A connective construction establishes a relation between two nominals by means of a connective morpheme. The form of the connective proclitic is described in Section V:2.4. The meaning of this relation depends on the meaning of the two nominals. This section provides a non-exhaustive typology of connective relations. External agreement of a connective construction is always determined by the first nominal, i.e. the noun *ìvèvèz* in example (8).

- (8) *ìvèvèz m'pég í'té kù*  
 |ì-vèvèz H=N-pég í-Lté L-kù|  
 7-light VII.CON=3-bag VII-PR INF-fall  
 'The light bag falls.'

3.1.1.1. *"Genitive" relations*

The first type of relation expressed by connectives is what might be called *genitive*. This includes ownership, part-whole relations (9), family relations (10), partitive relations (11), classifying relations (12) and others (13).

- (9) *mèkòl mé twàlàsí 'wé*  
 |mè-kòl mé=twàlàsí w-ě|  
 6-leg VI.CON=trousers I-his  
 'the legs of his trousers'
- (10) a. *ìyòlò í cālā ísè*  
 |ì-jòlò í=tʃālā í-sè|  
 7-namesake VII.CON=Tsala VII-every  
 'every namesake of Tsala'
- b. *ɲgwàn ì píúž ìlúná*  
 |ɲgòn ì=píúž ìlúná|  
 [9]girl IX.CON=Pius Eloundou  
 'Pius Eloundou's daughter'
- (11) a. *běŋ vè ìtùn ɲkwāl ítê*  
 |běŋ-H vè ì-tùn H=N-kòl í-tè|  
 pursue-IMP only 7-piece VII.CON=3-rope VII-ANA  
 'Only pursue this piece of root.'
- b. *díz lé mbâz*  
 |d-íz lé=mbâz|  
 5-eye V.CON=[9]maize  
 'a grain of maize'

- c. àbwĩ bôd  
 |à-bùí H = b-òd|  
 3-many III.CON=2-person  
 ‘many people’
- (12) èkǎŋ é kéká  
 |è-kǎŋ é = kéká|  
 5-drying.shed V.CON=cocoa  
 ‘drying shed for cocoa’
- (13) lèbòní lé bôd bô  
 |lè-bòní ló = b-òd bô-ò|  
 5-origin V.CON=2-person II-your  
 ‘the origin of your family (lit. people)’

### 3.1.1.2. Modification: the first nominal denotes a property

In the second major type of connective the first nominal denotes a property of the second nominal. This kind of relation is typically expressed by adjectives in languages that have such a word class.

- (14) ìzèzèg í pùpó  
 |ì-zèzèg í = pùpó|  
 7-sweet VII.CON=papaya  
 ‘a sweet papaya’

The dependency relations in such connectives are a bit ambivalent. Semantically, the second noun is clearly the head, which is reflected in the fact that the first noun can be replaced by an interrogative promodifier, not the second (except perhaps in echo questions). In contrast, there are many arguments to call the first nominal the head from a syntactic point of view. As has been said in the introduction of Section 3.1.1, the agreement that a connective construction triggers depends on its first noun. Although agreement marking within a dependency cluster provides no clues for the recognition of the head (Hudson 1993:290), agreement between the dependency cluster as a whole and its head does. On the paradigmatic axis, the entire connective construction can be replaced by a pronominal of the same gender as the first noun. Referring to the light bag of example (8) one can say:

- (15) mèté 'yéń yô  
 |mè-Lté L-jén jǒ|  
 1SG-PR INF-see VII.PPR  
 'I see it.'

There are several types of property denoting nouns, which will be listed below. I found no correlation between the form of a property noun and the kind of property it expresses. As is the case with quasi-auxiliaries (see IX:2), some of these nouns are found in a modifying construction only, whereas others can be used independently as well. In view of the typological interest in the expression of "adjectival" notions cross-linguistically, this section provides many examples. See Section V:4.5.2.3 for the augmentative number word |mòdH|, which is also the head of a property denoting connective construction.

Property denoting nouns are very often gender 3 nouns with the nominal prefix à-. Most (if not all) of these nouns are derived from, or at least related to, an intransitive verb (16-20).

- (16) lèd 'be hard'  
 àlèd ńgàlà  
 |à-lèd H = ńgàlà|  
 3-hard III.CON=[9]wood  
 'hard wood'
- (17) díd 'be heavy'  
 àdíd mǐpég  
 |à-díd H = ñ-pég|  
 3-heavy III.CON=3-bag  
 'a heavy bag'
- (18) yón 'be warm'  
 àyǒń bídí  
 |à-jǒń H = bì-dí|  
 3-hot III.CON=8-food  
 'hot food'
- (19) yòl 'be bitter'  
 àyǒl ká  
 |à-jǒl H = ká|  
 3-bitter III.CON=[10]leaf  
 'bitter leaves'

- (20) yàb ‘be long’  
 àyǎb ‘zén  
 |à-jǎb H = zǎn|  
 3-long III.CON=[9]road  
 ‘a long road’

Note that the existence of a gender 3a property-denoting noun does not entail that it can be used in this kind of connective construction. The nominal in (21c), for instance, cannot mean ‘big belly’.

- (21) a. lèbùm lénê ànén  
 |lè-bùm lǎ-nè à-nén|  
 5-belly V-COP 3-big  
 ‘His belly is big.’  
 b. mòd â lèbùm  
 |N-òdH à = lè-bùm|  
 1-AUG I.CON=5-belly  
 ‘a big belly’  
 c. ?ànén lébùm  
 |à-nén H = lè-bùm|  
 3-big III.CON=5-belly  
 ‘the big size of the belly’

Another frequent type of property-denoting nouns is gender 3 nouns derived from a verb by means of the suffix *-ní*, or *-éngán* (see III:4.3.5, see also VII:2.4. for the use of these nouns in resultative constructions).

- (22) tègbè ‘be weak’, tèg ‘weaken’  
 òtègní ngàlà  
 |N-tègní H = ngàlà|  
 3-weak III.CON=wood  
 ‘soft wood’ or ‘a small piece of wood’
- (23) tìg ‘be thick’  
 òtìgní jám  
 |N-tìgní H-N-jám|  
 3-thick III.CON=3-sauce  
 ‘a thick sauce’

(24) púb ‘be clean’  
 mpúbní swád  
 |ñ-púbní H = sód|  
 3-clean III.CON=shirt  
 ‘a clean shirt’

(25) kwán ‘be smooth’  
 ñkwáání nól  
 ñkwánbéngán nól  
 ‘a smooth body’

A third common type of property-denoting nouns is nouns that are derived by means of reduplication, either from a noun (26-28) or from a verb (29-32). Most of these derived nouns are of gender 7.

(26) ñgwál (9) ‘pity’  
 ñgúñgwál í môd  
 |ì-ñgúñgúál í = N-òd|  
 7-miserable VII.CON=1-person  
 ‘a miserable person’

(27) wǎŋ (3) ‘fear’  
 ñwú<sup>+</sup>wǎŋ môd  
 |ñ-wúwǎŋ H = N-òd|  
 3-timorous III.CON=1-person  
 ‘a timorous person’

(28) à-sǎŋ ‘acid, acidity’  
 sàŋ ‘be acid’  
 ìsé<sup>+</sup>sǎŋ ópùmá  
 |ì-sósǎŋ H = òpùmá|  
 7-unripe VII.CON=orange  
 ‘an unripe orange’

(29) tèle ‘stand’ (resultative form)  
 té<sup>+</sup>télé à zën  
 |tótélé à = zën|  
 straight I.CON=[9]road  
 ‘a straight road’

(30) wú ‘die’  
 ìwúwúô ‘withered’

- (31) sîn ‘be cold’  
 ìsísín bídí  
 |ì-sísín H=bì-dí|  
 7-cold VII.CON=8-food  
 ‘cold food’
- (32) dígâ ‘burn (tr.)’  
 ìdídígâ í ‘mbé  
 |ì-dídígâ í=mbě|  
 7-burnt VII.CON=[9]pot  
 ‘a burnt pot’

Note that derived nouns such as *ìdídígâ* can usually be used independently as well. *ìdídígâ* then means ‘a burnt thing, something burnt’.

Finally, there are some other property denoting nouns that do not differ formally from other nouns. Gender 3 (morphological class |Ñ-|) is very well represented in this group.

- (33) ñjúmâ éwòlò  
 |Ñ-wúmâ H=è-wòlò|  
 3-entire III.CON=5-hour  
 ‘an entire hour’
- (34) m̀púm ndá  
 |Ñ-púm H=ndá|  
 3-white III.CON=[9]house  
 ‘a white house’
- (35) ínê ñtól ndómní wámò  
 |í-nè Ñ-tól H=ndómní wámò|  
 VII-be 3-old III.CON=[9]young.man III.my  
 ‘It’s my oldest son.’
- (36) ñm̀kpámgi ndá  
 |Ñ-ḱpámgi H=ndá|  
 3-new III.CON=[9]house  
 ‘a new house’
- (37) ñtù ndá  
 |Ñ-tù H=ndá|  
 3-old III.CON=[9]house  
 ‘an old house’

- (38) ñṅóm mbú  
 |ñ-ṅóm H = mbú|  
 3-husband III.CON=[9]dog  
 ‘male dog’
- (39) ìkàgá íkóm í kpèm  
 |ì-kàgá í = ì-kóm í = kpèm|  
 7-withered VII.CON=7-package VII.CON=[9]cassava.leaves  
 ‘a package of cassava leaves that passed the night’
- (40) ìbwàl í ṅgâlà  
 |ì-bwàl í = ṅgâlà|  
 7-rotten VII.CON=[9]wood  
 ‘rotten wood’
- (41) cìṅlàn ‘circle around’  
 ñṅìṅlàná à táblà  
 |ñṅìṅlàná à = táblà|  
 round I.CON=table  
 ‘a round table’

Sometimes related words of the different types outlined above exist next to each other.

- (42) ñsòlńí pám  
 ìsèsòl ṅpám  
 ‘a thin sauce’

There are no special words for most colours and shapes. Instead, complex descriptions have to be used, e.g. ‘oval’ in (43) and the complex colour terms in Section 3.1.1.3.

- (43) ítáblê àně lé\*bím àné léci lé kú  
 |í-táblê à-ně lè-bím àné lè-tʃi ló = kú|  
 AU-table I-RCOP 5-volume like 5-egg V.CON=[9]chicken  
 ‘an oval table’

### 3.1.1.3. *Modification: the second nominal denotes a property*

Very rarely is the order in modifying connective constructions the inverse of the previous type, i.e. entity-property. The property denoting nouns express either human propensity (44-46) or colour (47).

(44) ònàŋ míntàg  
 |N-nàŋ H = mì-ntàg|  
 3-albino III.CON=4-satisfaction  
 ‘a happy albino’

(45) mòd ìdĩŋ  
 |N-òd L = ì-dĩŋ|  
 1-person I.CON=7-love  
 ‘a friendly person’  
 but: \*ànè ìdĩŋ ‘He’s friendly’

(46) mòd lèwúmni  
 |N-òd L = lè-wúmni|  
 1-person I.CON=5-friendly  
 ‘a friendly person’  
 = mòd lèwáí

As always, the modifying noun can itself be modified by a connective construction, as in the complex colour term in (47). Some other complex colour terms are listed in (48).

(47) m̀pég jól î d̀b  
 |N-pég jól î = d-òb|  
 3-bag [9]colour IX.CON=5-sky  
 ‘a blue bag’

(48) a. jól î sí  
 |jól î = sí|  
 [9]colour IX.CON=[9]earth  
 ‘brown’  
 b. jól îsúg  
 |jól î = ì-súg|  
 [9]colour IX.CON=7-palm.nut.pulp  
 ‘brownish yellow’  
 c. jól î ká bílé  
 |jól î = ká H = bì-lé|  
 [9]colour IX.CON=[10]leaf X.CON=8-tree  
 ‘green’



- (54) a. mòd ndêngì  
 |N-òd ndêngì|  
 1-person great  
 ‘a great person’  
 b. bòd ndêngì  
 |b-òd ndêngì|  
 2-person great  
 ‘great persons’

The word *m̀m̀èŋ* ‘good’ is used only in a limited set of idiomatic expressions (55-57).

- (55) ìkúŋkú má èè mèlú má ànè dàm m̀m̀èŋ  
 |N-kúŋkú má áá H-mè-lú má à-nè d-àm N-Bèŋ|  
 3-chief LC AU-6-night VI.DEM I-COP 5-thing 3-good  
 ‘The current chief is good.’
- (56) bènè dàm m̀m̀èŋ  
 |b-è-nè d-àm N-Bèŋ|  
 II-COP 5-thing 3-good  
 ‘They are nice’
- (57) a. m̀m̀è mà kídí  
 |N-m̀è mà H=kídí|  
 3-good III.CON=[9]morning  
 ‘good morning’  
 b. kídí m̀m̀èŋ  
 |kídí N-Bèŋ|  
 morning 3-good  
 ‘good morning’ (answer to (a))

The word *cècàd* ‘small’ can be used as a nonverbal predicate, as an adverb, and as a postmodifier of a very limited set of nouns. Probably it is a noun of gender 9.

- (58) b̀ b̀ŋó cècàd  
 |b̀H = b-ŋó tʃəʔʃəd|  
 AUG=2-child [9]very.small  
 ‘very small children’

The noun *ntèd* ‘hundred’, finally, can be either the head of a connective construction (59a) or a postposed modifying noun (59b), with no difference in meaning.

- (59) a. *ntèd bôd*  
 |*ntèd* H=*b-òd*|  
 3-hundred III.CON=2-person  
 ‘one hundred people’  
 b. *bòd ntèd*  
 |*b-òd ntèd*|  
 2-person 3-hundred  
 ‘one hundred people’

### 3.1.3. Modification by means of a preposed non-agreeing word

I found two modifying words that precede their head noun: *í'zá* and *bèbè*. See Section V:4.2 for a discussion of *í'zá*.

- (60) *í'zá bí'dí bí'té dǎŋ nɛ̀b kwám ísê*  
 |*ízá* *bì-dí* *bí-Lté* L-dǎŋ H L-nɛ̀b *kóm* *í-sè*|  
 others' 8-food VIII-PR INF-cross LT INF-be.good [10]time X-all  
 ‘Somebody else’s food is always better.’  
 (61) *ànè bèbé míntàg*  
 |*à-nè* *bèbó* *mìn-tàg*|  
 I-COP very 4-happy  
 ‘He is very happy.’

### 3.1.4. Apposition

The appositive construction exemplified in this section does not differ formally from the one presented in Section 3.1.2, except that the second noun has to be a proper name. The most important difference is that there is no modifying relation between both nouns here.

- (62) *ɲnéglê tò mó*  
 |*nt-jéglê* *tò mó*|  
 3-teacher Tomo  
 ‘master Tomo’

- (63) mǎʹjáj̄ tò mó  
 |mǎʹǰáj̄ tò mó|  
 my.brother Tomo  
 ‘my brother Tomo’

Compare (63) to (64).

- (64) mǎʹnáj̄ à tò mó  
 |mǎʹnáj̄ à = tò mó|  
 his.brother I.CON=Tomo  
 ‘Tomo’s brother’

### 3.2. Augmented complex nominals

Nouns and pronominals determined by an adnominal demonstrative (65) and/or a relative clause (66) are obligatorily preceded by the augment.

- (65) mà yè m íʹjáj̄ j̄t̄  
 |mǎ-à-j̄èm í-ǰ-ǎ ǰí|  
 1SG-SP-know AU-7-song VII.DEM  
 ‘I know this song.’

- (66) íʹjáj̄ mèté yè m, ínè dwě nâ mèkónì  
 |í-ǰ-ǎ mǎ-Ltè L-j̄èm í-nè d-òé nâ mèkónì|  
 AU-7-song 1SG-PR INF-know VII-COP 5-name CMP Mekoni  
 ‘The song that I know is called Mekoni.’

Personal pronominals cannot be modified. Instead, a demonstrative, pronominalised by means of the augment, is used. Interestingly, pronominalised demonstratives have a structural high tone, rather than a dissimilating high.<sup>2</sup> The phrase in (67) introduces the second question (*j̄icílá* (3)) at the beginning of an interview. Instead of an augmented possessive modifier (68a), as described in Section 2.2, one can also use an augmented demonstrative modified by a possessive (68b). The anaphoric modifier *-tè* cannot be used pronominally, but it may modify a pronominalised demonstrative (69).

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2. It is as if the same floating low tone prefix that pronominalises the possessive modifiers triggers the high tone representation of the morphotoneme D and then disappears. See Section VIII:6.2.1 for a form of the personal pronominal that might be described as augmented.

- (67) ínú bâ  
 |í-ínú      bâ|  
 AU-III.DEM second  
 ‘the second one’
- (68) a. íwàmò  
 |í-L-wàmà|  
 AU-PN-I.my  
 ‘mine’  
 b. íńó wàmò  
 |í-ńó      wàmà|  
 AU-I.DEM I.my  
 ‘mine’
- (69) íńwáńó itè àńó  
 |í-ńó-lá      ì-tè      à-H-só|  
 AU-I.DEM-CH I-ANA I-PST-come  
 ‘The one in question came.’  
 \*itè àńó
- (70) íbí bí<sup>+</sup>vwág  
 |í-bí      bí-vǒg|  
 AU-VIII.DEM VIII-other  
 ‘the others (about trees bílé (8))’

#### 4. Word order in complex nominals

The order in nominals is head-modifier, with only one or two examples of pre-modifiers (see 3.1.3). The only strict rule for the internal ordering of postmodifiers is that the demonstrative modifier has to come at the right extremity of the nominal, immediately preceded by the relative clause. In other words, nothing can come after the relative clause, except the demonstrative, which *must* follow it (71-72). It is undoubtedly no coincidence that the two rightmost modifiers are the ones that trigger the augment on the head noun.

- (71) bíbáz bí yó bí<sup>+</sup>té <sup>+</sup>vín bí  
 |H-bì-báz      bí=jó      bí-Lté      L-vín      bí|  
 AU-8-scale VIII.CON=[5]sky VIII-PR INF-be.black VIII.DEM  
 ‘these black clouds’



- (76) \*àpúb wámô mbâz  
 |à-púb wámà H = mbâz|  
 3-field III.my III.CON=[9]corn  
 ‘my corn field’
- (77) \*jĩcĩ wâmò à pâm  
 |ñ-tfĩ wàmà à = pâm|  
 1-in-law I.my I.CON=[9]man  
 ‘my father-in-law’

### 5. Agreement in complex nominals

Gender agreement is not always predictable in complex nominals. This Section discusses some of the problems, without, however, offering a complete description. The first problem is found in the connective constructions described in 3.1.1.2, the head of which is a property denoting noun. There are two types. In the first, the two nouns involved must agree in number in order to have a property-denoting interpretation of the first noun (if agreement is the appropriate term here). If the second noun is plural and the first, property denoting noun singular, the connective expresses a genitive relation (78c).

- (78) a. ìṅgúṅwál í môd (repeated from (25))  
 |ì-ṅgúṅgól í = N = òd|  
 7-miserable VII.CON=1-person  
 ‘a miserable person’
- b. bṅgúṅwál bí bôd  
 |bì-ṅgúṅgól bí = b-òd|  
 8-miserable VIII.CON=2-person  
 ‘miserable people’
- c. ìṅgúṅwál í bôd  
 |ì-ṅgúṅgól í = b-òd|  
 7-miserable VII.CON=2-person  
 ‘the misery of the people’

In one example of this construction (79), the property denoting noun can be singular (79a) or plural (79b). This is most probably because the second noun is a mass noun. According to one informant, when explicitly asked about it, there is a difference in meaning between (79a) and (79b), in that (79b) would have an augmentative reading, i.e. ‘lots of turbid water’. This intuition needs to be double-checked.

- (79) a. ìjéjúglànà méndím  
 |ì-ḡḡḡùglànà H = mḡ-ndím|  
 7-turbid VII.CON=6-water
- b. bìjéjúglànà méndím  
 |bì-ḡḡḡùglànà H = mḡ-ndím|  
 8-turbid VIII.CON=6-water  
 ‘turbid water’

In the second type, the property denoting noun is always singular, irrespective of the number of the second noun.

- (80) a. àdíd mǐpég  
 |à-díd H = ñ-pég|  
 3-heavy III.CON=3-bag  
 ‘a heavy bag’
- b. àdíd mímpég  
 |à-díd H = mím-pég|  
 3-heavy III.CON=4-bag  
 ‘heavy bags’  
 \*mèdíd mímpég

- (81) àbwád méjwàg  
 |à-bód H = mḡ-ḡḡg|  
 3-little III.CON=6-wine  
 ‘a small quantity of wine’  
 \*mèbwád méjwàg

The second problem concerning agreement in complex nominals also involves connective constructions. When a noun is modified by a connective and another agreeing postmodifier, the latter can sometimes agree with the head noun (82a) and sometimes with the second noun in the connective construction (82b).

- (82) a. àá'té 'wóg ímímêmè méndónj mî  
 |à-àá-Lté L-wóg í-mì-mèmḡ H = mḡ-ndónj mî|  
 I-NEG-PR INF-hear AU-4-good IV.CON=6-message IV.DEM
- b. àá'té wóg ímímêmè méndónj mâ  
 |à-àá-Lté L-wóg í-mì-mèmḡ H = mḡ-ndónj mâ|  
 I-NEG-PR INF-hear AU-4-good IV.CON=6-message VI.DEM  
 ‘She doesn’t hear these good messages.’

Usually, however, only agreement with the head noun is accepted.

- (83) á'yáb 'zén ví  
 |H-à-jáb H = zěn ví|  
 AU-3-long III.CON=road III.DEM  
 'this long road'  
 \*á'yáb 'zén jí
- (84) m̀púbńí ndá wámô  
 |N-púbńí H = ndá wámà|  
 3-clean III.CON=[9]house III.my  
 'my clean house'  
 \*m̀púbńí ndá yámà

Perhaps it depends on the first noun whether agreement with the second noun is possible. But more probably, rejection of agreement with the second noun is an artefact of elicitation.

A final interesting agreement phenomenon in nominals involves agreement with complex numerals. The form of the numeral *vwág* 'one' in complex numerals such as 'eleven' is always of a singular agreement pattern. One possible way to account for this, is that gender combinations such as 5/6 form one gender and that numerals agree in gender and in number with the noun they modify. Another possibility would be to say that the numeral 'one' agrees exophorically with the singular counterpart of the head noun.

- (85) a. m̀kàlà èwóm èy mé'ba  
 |m̀-ka-là è-wóm è:j má-bă|  
 6-doughnut 5-ten with VI-two  
 'twelve doughnuts'
- b. m̀kàlà èwóm èy ìvwág ~ èvwág  
 |m̀-ka-là è-wóm è:j ì-vóg ~ è-vóg|  
 6-doughnut 5-ten with VII-one ~ V-one  
 'eleven doughnuts'
- c. bìnṅá é'wóm èy m̀mwág  
 |b-ìṅṅá è-wóm è:j m̀móg|  
 2-woman 5-ten with I.one  
 'eleven women'

## Chapter 7

# Tense, aspect, mood and negation

### 1. Introduction

In his crosslinguistic study on tense and aspect Dahl (1985) remarks that the Bantu languages have the most complex TAM (tense-aspect-mood) systems in his sample. For instance, they often have several remoteness distinctions in the past and future and many categories that tend to be expressed by means of adverbs in the languages of the world, have a special “tense” prefix or auxiliary in the Bantu languages. Therefore it is “difficult to fit the Bantu languages into a universal scheme. The different dimensions of the system interact in rather complex ways, and the large number of possibilities results in small numbers of examples for each category” (Dahl 1985:175). Eton is no exception and has the additional difficulty of dialectal differences and a complex tonology. However, the overwhelming list of TAM-forms becomes a well structured and relatively simple system if one distinguishes between auxiliaries (obligatory/paradigmatic) and quasi-auxiliaries (optional) and between absolute tense and relative tense. The basic forms, i.e. those involving TA-prefixes and auxiliaries, are treated in this chapter, whereas the optional distinctions, which involve a quasi-auxiliary, are treated in Section IX:2. This chapter discusses indicative forms (Section 2), non-indicative moods (Section 3) and negation (Section 4).

Tense-aspect-mood distinctions in Eton can be formally expressed by means of affixes (both prefixes and suffixes) and auxiliaries. The conjugation of the verb ‘be’ involves a high degree of suppletion. Dahl (1985:176) notes that the distinction between what counts as a prefix and what as an auxiliary is often mainly one of orthography in Bantu studies. In this grammar, the two will be strictly distinguished. Prefixes can be distinguished from auxiliaries on phonological and syntactical grounds. The phonological criterion is based on prominence. TAM-morphemes that consist of (or begin with) a prominent syllable cannot be prefixes. See Section 2.3.8 (the Present) for a slightly problematic case. From a syntactic point of view, a TAM-morpheme must be considered to be an auxiliary rather than a prefix if it can be separated from the following lexical verb by means of one or more pronominals and/or an adverb; and/or when it is followed by an infinitival form of the verb. Note that pronominals consist of a prominent syllable. There are no object affixes in Eton.

The TAM-system is the only part of the grammar of Eton that has received attention in a published source, viz. Piper (1989), which is a comparative study of aspect in the Beti-Bulu-Fang language cluster. Unfortunately, this study proved to be of little use, mainly because of its comparative character. On the one hand, Piper made little effort to give a functional characterisation of the verb forms he found in the different languages. On the other hand, the formal description of the constructions he discusses suffers from lack of general insight in the phonology and morphology of Eton, which sometimes results in a proliferation of (successions of) floating tones.

Some examples in this chapter are elicited by means of the questionnaires in Dahl (1985) and Dahl (1992). These are marked by the code TMAQ (Dahl 1985) and FTRQ (Dahl 1992), followed by the number of the item in Dahl's questionnaire. These examples, and some others, are provided with a context that was presented to a native speaker, but that is not translated. This context is given between square brackets; any irrelevant aspects of the context in the questionnaire, such as the visibility of the object under discussion, are left out. Not all sections in this chapter are organised in the same way. When I found that different functions or meanings of the same category or construction are more or less strictly separable from each other, I enumerated them by means of four-digit subtitles (as in Section 2.6.1). Functions or meanings that are not clearly separable are introduced in running text and are marked by means of small caps (as in Section 2.1.2). Names of (usually polysemic) verbal constructions (sometimes called *tiroirs* in French) are chosen on the basis of their most salient meaning and are capitalised, e.g. Hodiernal past perfective. Some tense-aspect affixes occur in more than one verbal construction (a very recurrent feature of Bantu verbal morphology). They always receive the same gloss.

## 2. Indicative forms

This Section starts with a discussion of the basic tense and aspect distinctions that shape the Eton verbal system (2.1). This is followed by the description of a suffix/infix that occurs in a number of semantically unrelated verbal constructions and that has a number of allomorphs, the choice of which depends on the syllable structure of the stem to which it attaches (2.2). For ease of reference, the combination of stem plus this morpheme is called the G-form of the verb, since the phoneme /g/ is all the different allomorphs have in common. Then comes an overview of the nine basic constructions with absolute tense (2.3). Constructions that are not basic in the sense that they involve defective verb forms, viz. the Resultative and the Contrastive resultative form, are treated in Section 2.4. Section 2.5 provides a description of a verbal form that is found only in the Southern dialects, close to the Ewondo area. Finally, relative tense

constructions are treated in 2.6. These should not be confused with the special verb forms that occur in relative clauses, which are described in Section IX:3.

## 2.1. Basic distinctions

Every finite predication with absolute time reference must be specified with respect to the basic tense-aspect distinctions outlined in this section.

### 2.1.1. Tense

The category tense could be argued to be more prominent than aspect in Eton (in so far it makes sense to make such a distinction), because no aspectual distinction is relevant in all tenses. The primary temporal distinction is between past and non-past. The past is further subdivided into three parts, in ascending order of remoteness from the reference point: the hodiernal past (or today's past), the hesternal past (or yesterday's past) and the remote past. It must be stressed that these are basically temporal distinctions. Contrary to what Essono (2000:512) claims for the Ewondo language, present relevance or continuation into the present is not a defining characteristic of the hodiernal past (at least not in Eton). However, this does not exclude that a verb in the hodiernal past can have a perfect reading.<sup>1</sup>

- (1) (TMAQ 59) [Looking from the window, we see that the ground is wet.]  
 mbèŋ inwáj  
 |mbèŋ ì-H-nóŋ|  
 [9]rain IX-PST-rains  
 'It has rained.'

Similarly, completion of an action is not a condition for the use of the remote past (against Essono 2000:508 for Ewondo). The following phrase, which has imperfective aspect, is in the remote past, because the speaker experienced the temperature of the water a long time ago. Nothing is implied as to the current temperature of the water.

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1. This is because the verb form called *Hodiernal past perfective* (see 2.3.5) is polysemic: it can express the perfect and the perfective of the hodiernal past tense.

- (2) (TMAQ 33) [Speaking of a lake.] (The first time I swam in this lake, years ago)  
 m̀̀ndím m̀̀ngábé s̀̀ngì  
 |m̀̀-ndím m̀̀-̀ngá-bé L-s̀̀n-Lgì|  
 6-water VI-RP-IMPF INF-be.cold-G  
 ‘The water was cold.’

Note, however, that speakers of Eton translate the remote past by means of the *plus-que-parfait* (pluperfect) in French. Moreover, when I translate it by means of an *imparfait* form, I am usually corrected. The reason for this is that the *plus-que-parfait* has a remote past meaning in Cameroonian French, not a past-in-the-past meaning. Apparently the French tense-aspect system has been adapted to that of the original Cameroonian languages in this respect. The link between the French *plus-que-parfait* and the remote past in Eton is due to an implication linked to the pluperfect, “which requires a situation to be located prior to a reference point which is itself in the past, thus giving the impression of a more distant past” (Comrie 1985:84).

Now that it is clear that hodiernal past, hesternal past and remote past are purely temporal categories, it must be established how exactly they divide the timeline. The difference between hodiernal and hesternal past is rigid and is based on objective grounds, i.e. on actual time rather than perceived temporal distance. The hodiernal past is used only for situations that occurred on the same day as the temporal reference point. The choice between hesternal past and remote past is more subjective. No temporal cut-off point between them can be established. This might be why Redden (1979: 84) uses the term *recent past* for Ewondo, rather than *hesternal past*. It is true that the hesternal past reaches further back than ‘yesterday’. Yet, in characterising hesternal and remote past, one should shift attention from the limits of these temporal categories to their focal points, which are ‘yesterday’ and ‘long ago’ respectively. Note that it is not impossible to use the remote past for an action that took place the day before the temporal reference point. It seems, on the basis of elicited material, that the relevant temporal reference point for the choice of a past tense is always the time of speaking. For instance, if a person A arrived in town long ago and B asks A today what had happened on the day of A’s arrival, A cannot use the hodiernal past in his answer. In other words, the temporal reference point that is relevant for the choice of a past tense cannot be the time of A’s arrival in town, but must be the time of speaking. The following examples illustrate the three past tenses, respectively hodiernal (3), hesternal (4) and remote (5).

- (3) àné byábé kwâlgò àná...  
 |àné bíá-bé L-kól <Lg> à|  
 like 1PL-TIMPF INF-talk<G>  
 ‘For instance, what we were discussing today ...’
- (4) (TMAQ 32) [Talking about a lake in which the speaker swam yesterday]  
 (Today the water is warm, but yesterday)  
 mëndím mémé sîngì  
 |mè-ndím mǎ-mé L-sín-Lgì|  
 6-water VI-YIMPF INF-be.cold-G  
 ‘The water was cold.’
- (5) (TMAQ 20) (What did your brother usually do after breakfast last year?)  
 àṅgábé ðiṅgì tìl bô kálàdà  
 |à-ṅgá-bé L-ðiṅ-Lgì L-tìl H bô kálàdà|  
 I-RP-IMPF INF-HAB-G INF-write LT PL letter  
 ‘He usually wrote letters.’

A subdivision of non-past tenses is typically more delicate than a temporal subdivision of the past, since it is not clear whether the category referred to as *future* can be qualified as a tense, i.e. as a purely temporal category. Speaking about the future inevitably involves some speculation, which brings things into the domain of modality. Ewondo is claimed to have a symmetric tense system, centred around the present tense, where three future tenses mirror the three past tenses (Essono 2000:478; Redden 1979:95).<sup>2</sup> There is no clear evidence for this in Eton. The Ewondo forms that Redden calls *definite future* and *indefinite future* also exist in Eton (see Sections 2.3.9 and 2.3.10 respectively), but as far as I know the form that he calls *probable future*, which involves a nasal tense prefix in Ewondo, does not. I distinguish present tense from future tense in this description, since some forms always have future time reference.<sup>3</sup>

### 2.1.2. Aspect

The only aspectual opposition that cuts across a number of tenses is the opposition perfective-imperfective in the past and relative tenses. Contrary to the perfective forms, the imperfective forms present an action or state as unbounded. This general characterisation is further elaborated here. Some readers might first

2. But Redden remarks that the future verb forms are not tenses, “since they do not refer to time, except in a general way” (Redden 1979:95).

3. This criterion is not watertight, however, since present tense forms can be used with future time reference.

want to read Sections 2.2-2.6, which give an overview of the forms used to express the basic tense-aspect distinctions.

The perfective-imperfective opposition is a matter of viewpoint aspect. As has been said, an imperfective form construes a situation as unbounded, or at least does not highlight the beginning or the end of a situation. An imperfective verb in an isolated clause such as (6) receives a PROGRESSIVE reading, where the focus is on the process of eating. The perfective form in (7) rather states that the action took place in the past.

- (6) àbé 'dígâ ndógô  
 |à-bé L-dí-gà ndógò|  
 I-TIMPF INF-eat-G [9]mango  
 'She was eating a mango.'

- (7) àdígá ndógô  
 |à-H-dí-gà-H ndógò|  
 I-PST-eat-G-NF [9]mango  
 'She ate a mango.'

When more context is provided, the differences between perfective and imperfective become clearer, and one has to rely less on translation equivalents.

- (8) íyôṅ mènííní á ndá, àbé 'dígâ ndógô  
 |H-ì-jòṅ mè-H-ṅí:nì-H á ndá à-bé L-dí-gà ndógà|  
 AU-7-time 1SG-PST-enter-NFLOC [9]house I-TIMPF INF-eat-G [9]mango  
 'When I entered the house, she was eating a mango.'
- (9) íyôṅ mènííní á ndá, àdí ndógô  
 |H-ì-jòṅ mè-H-ṅí:nì-H á ndá à-H-dí-H ndógà|  
 AU-7-time 1SG-PST-enter-NFLOC [9]house I-PST-eat-NF [9]mango  
 'When I entered the house, she ate a mango.'

The focus on the process of eating established by the imperfective verb in the second clause of (8) implies SIMULTANEITY with the action of entering the house. The perfective form *àdí* in (9) construes the action of eating as bounded. The sentence can have two possible interpretations, depending on whether the action of eating is bounded in the beginning (10a) or at the end (10b). The perfective then has a CONSECUTIVE reading or implies ANTECEDENCE respectively. The consecutive interpretation (10a) seems to be the most likely one when this sentence is uttered in isolation.

- (10) a. I entered the house and then she ate a mango.  
 b. When I entered the house, she had eaten a mango.

A very recurrent difference between perfective and imperfective forms, both in texts and in questionnaires, is that imperfective forms have a HABITUAL reading. This is the difference between (11), where a perfective past is used and (12), where the verbs have an imperfective form.

- (11) (TMAQ 101) [Last year, the boy's father sent him a sum of money.]  
 ij̄ɔ̄ŋ m̄ɔ̄ p̄am àŋgágbê mwàní, d̄ɔ̄ àŋgákúɔ̄ m̄ɔ̄ 'mínŋgá é'tóm  
 |H-ì-ɕ̄ɔ̄ŋ m-ɔ̄H=pàm à-ŋgá-gbè m̄ɔ̄ní d̄ɔ̄ à-ŋgá-kùɔ̄|  
 AU=7-time 1-DIM=[9]man I-RP-take money DP I-RP-buy  
 |m-ɔ̄H=N-ìŋŋá è-tóm|  
 1-DIM=1-woman 5-present  
 'When the boy got the money, he bought a present for the girl.'
- (12) (TMAQ 102) [The boy used to receive a sum of money now and then.]  
 ij̄ɔ̄ŋ m̄ɔ̄ p̄am àŋgábé gbègè mwàní, d̄ɔ̄ àŋgábé kùɔ̄zì m̄ɔ̄ 'mínŋgá é'tóm.  
 |H-ì-ɕ̄ɔ̄ŋ m-ɔ̄H=pàm à-ŋgá-bé gbè-gà m̄ɔ̄ní d̄ɔ̄ à-ŋgá-bé|  
 AU-7-time 1-DIM=[9]man I-RP-IMPF take-PTCP money then I-RP-IMPF  
 |L-kùɔ̄-Lgì m-ɔ̄H-m-ìŋŋá è-tóm|  
 INF-buy-G 1-DIM=1-woman 5-present  
 'Each time the boy got the money, he bought a present for the girl.'

The following fragment of a conversation shows a similar opposition. The interviewer asks Miss Judith Akini about the "telephone name" *ndán*, which has almost disappeared in modern society. The way in which people usually gave a *ndán* to somebody (13) is compared to the way in which they gave the name *Akini* to the interviewee (14). The main verb in (13) is in the Remote past imperfective, the one in (14) in the Remote past perfective.

- (13) yì béŋgábé yòlgò mòd ndán àné pé báýòlò mòd m̄pébè?  
 |yì b̄é-ŋgá-bé L-jòl<Lg>ò m-òd ndán àné pé b̄é-à-jòlò|  
 Q II-RP-IMPF INF-name<G> 1-person [9]ndan like also II-SP-name  
 |N-òd m̄-pébè|  
 1-person I-other  
 'Did they give somebody a ndan the same way as they name somebody else,'

- (14) àné béngáyòlò wò lèkíní?  
 |àné b́-ṅgá-jòlò wò lèkíní|  
 like 2v-RP-name you Akini  
 ‘like they named you Akini?’

An isolated sentence in an imperfective past, such as the one in (15), can receive either a habitual interpretation (16a) or a progressive one (16b). For an unambiguously habitual formulation one can use the habitual quasi-auxiliary *dìṅ*, as in (17), see Section IX:2.2.1.

- (15) m̀ṅgábé l̀òd̀gì v́á  
 |m̀-ṅgá-bé L-l̀òd-Lgì v́á|  
 1SG-RP-IMPF INF-pass-G here  
 ‘I (Remote past imperfective) PASS by here.’
- (16) a. ‘I used to pass here.’  
 b. ‘I was passing by here.’
- (17) m̀ṅgábé d̀ìṅgì l̀òd̀ v́á  
 |m̀-ṅgá-bé L-d̀ìṅ-Lgì L-l̀òd H v́á|  
 1SG-RP-IMPF INF-HAB-G INF-pass LT here  
 ‘I used to pass here.’

Note that habitual must be distinguished from ITERATIVE. Iterative actions in the past appear to be expressed preferably by means of a perfective verb form, at least in the presence of an iterative adverbial (18-20). In the absence of an adverbial, however, the *imperfective* can add an iterative meaning (21a).

- (18) (TMAQ 91) [What was your brother’s reaction when you gave him the medicine (yesterday)?]  
 àkwázgì íj̀ḁḁ ìv́wág  
 |à-H-kwáz-Lgì-H ì-ḁḁ ì-v́g|  
 I-PST-cough-G-NF 7-time VII-one  
 ‘He coughed once.’
- (19) (TMAQ 92) [same context as TMAQ 91]  
 àkwázgì bíj̀ḁḁ bí‘bá  
 |à-H-kwáz-Lgì-H bì-ḁḁ bí-bá|  
 I-PST-cough-G-NF 8-time VIII-two  
 ‘He coughed twice.’

- (20) (TMAQ 94) [same context as TMAQ 91]

àkwázgí bíjòṅ àbwĩ  
 |à-kwáz-Lgì-H bì-ḑòṅ à-bùí|  
 I-PST-cough-G-NF 8-time 3-lot  
 'He coughed many times.'

- (21) mènḡábé tòbnèṅgà à èy jé

|mè-ṅgá-bé L-tòbn-Lèṅgà è:j jé|  
 1SG-RP-IMPF INF-meet-G with I.PPR  
 a. 'I met him many times.'  
 b. 'I used to meet him.'

The presence of an iterative adverbial does not exclude the use of an imperfective form (22), at least not in elicited utterances.

- (22) mènḡábé tòbnèṅgà èy jé bíjòṅ àbwĩ

|mè-ṅgá-bé L-tòbn-èṅgà è:j jé bì-ḑòṅ à-bùí|  
 1SG-RP-IMPF INF-meet-G with I.PPR 8-time 3-many  
 'I used to meet him many times.'

Similarly, a time adverbial provides boundedness and consequently naturally goes together with a perfective verb form (23), but again the less preferred form is not impossible (24) (both examples elicited).

- (23) (TMAQ 95) [same context as TMAQ 91, example (18)]

àkwázgí átá 'ḡúmâ éwòlò  
 |à-H-kwáz-Lgì-H átá ñ-wúmâ H=è-wòlò|  
 I-PST-cough-G-NF for 3-whole III.CON=5-hour  
 'He coughed for an hour.'

- (24) àbé kwázgì átá 'ḡúmâ éwòlò

|à-bé L-kúáz-Lgì átá ñ-wúmâ H=è-wòlò|  
 I-TIMPF INF-cough-G for 3-whole III.CON=5-hour  
 'He was coughing for an hour.'

DURATIVITY also plays a role in the choice of aspect. Activities and accomplishments with a certain duration are more likely to be in the imperfective (25), while non-durative situations are usually in the perfective aspect (26).

(25) (TMAQ 28)

mèngábé yààngà á ncèŋ mǝ'náŋ wâmǝ àtìlgì bǝ kálâdà  
 |mǝ-ŋgá-bé L-jàŋ <Lg> à á ñ-tʃɛŋ mǝnáŋ wàmà|  
 1SG-RP-IMPF INF-wait<G> LOC 3-court my.brother I.my  
 |à-tìl-Lgì bǝ kálâdà|  
 I-write-G PL letter  
 'I was waiting outside while my brother was writing letters.'

(26) jǝŋ mènǝgákúwázì dǝ àŋgákù

|ʤǝŋ mǝ-ŋgá-kǝzì dǝ à-ŋgá-kù|  
 when 1SG-RP-cough DP I-RP-fall  
 'Just when I coughed, he fell.'

Consequently, the presence of an adverbial like *ùtétég* 'slowly' makes the use of the imperfective more likely (27).

(27) (TMAQ 29) [Did your brother finish the letter quickly? "No,"]

àbé tìlgì ùtétég  
 |à-bé tìl-Lgì ù-tǝtég|  
 I-TIMPF write-G 3-slow  
 'He wrote it slowly.'

The terminative quasi-auxiliary *mà* in (28) focuses on the result of the accomplishment 'write letters', which explains the use of the perfective, notwithstanding the presence of the adverbial *ùtétég*.

(28) àmá tìl bǝ kálâdà ùtétég

|à-H-mà-H L-tìl H bǝ kálâdà ù-tǝtég|  
 I-PST-TMN-NF INF-write LT PL book 3-slow  
 'He has written the letters progressively.'

The use of an imperfective verb form in combination with the terminative quasi-auxiliary in turn highlights the process of arriving at a result. Depending on the context, example (30) can mean that the speaker had difficulties to read the book entirely (e.g., due to lack of time, or because it was difficult or boring).

(29) àŋgábé màgà tìl kálâdà

|à-ŋgá-bé L-mà-gà L-tìl kálâdà|  
 I-RP-IMPF INF-TMN-G INF-write letter  
 'He was finishing the letter.'

- (30) mèmé màgà lán kálàdà  
 |mè-mé mà-gà L-lán kálàdà|  
 ISG-YIMPF TMN-G INF-read book  
 'I read the book reluctantly/with difficulty.'

Similarly, the imperfective can impose durativity or a progressive reading on verbs expressing achievements, which are usually conjugated in the perfective.

- (31) àdíb 'mwání á 'nón  
 |à-H-díb-H m̀nì á Ñ-'nón|  
 I-PST-find-NF money LOC 3-street  
 'She found money in the street.'

- (32) àbé swàmgi mwání á 'nón  
 |à-bé L-sòm-Lgì m̀nì á Ñ-'nón|  
 I-TIMPF INF-find-G money LOC 3-street  
 'She was finding money in the street.'

Achievement verbs sometimes become activity verbs in the imperfective, as illustrated by means of *kàbà* 'pass, succeed' in (33-34). Note that an imperfective form of *lód* 'pass' could also be used in (33). In order to arrive at a resultative meaning of *kwàm* 'do' the terminative quasi-auxiliary *mà* is needed.

- (33) àkábá á ñkàd  
 |à-H-kàbà-H á Ñ-kàd|  
 I-PST-pass-NF LOC 3-exam  
 'She passed the exam.'  
 = àlód á ñkàd  
 |à-H-lód-H á Ñ-kàd|  
 I-PST-pass-NF LOC 3-exam

- (34) àbé kàbgà á ñkàd  
 |à-bé L-kàb <Lg> à á Ñ-kàd|  
 I-TIMPF INF-pass<G> LOC 3-exam  
 'She was taking the exam.'  
 = àbé kwàmgi ñkàd  
 |à-bé L-kòm-Lgì á Ñ-kàd|  
 I-TIMPF INF-do<G> LOC 3-exam

With stative verbs expressing qualities the distinction between perfective and imperfective is a bit more delicate. For many verbs that predicate properties, both perfective and imperfective forms are possible. By analogy of the cases

discussed so far, one could expect that perfective forms have an inchoative/change-of-state or a cancelled result meaning, as in (35a-b), and that the imperfective is the default case in which no such meanings are implied (36).

- (35) àṅgánén  
 |à-ṅgá-nén|  
 I-RP-be.fat  
 a. ?‘He has gained weight.’  
 b. ?‘He used to be fat.’

- (36) àṅgábé nêngì  
 |à-ṅgá-bé L-nén-Lgì|  
 I-RP-IMPF INF-be.fat-G  
 ‘He was fat.’

However, the first is at most a very weak implication, as the perfect acceptability of (37a) shows. Note that (37b) is equally acceptable. In order to have a clear change-of-state meaning, the terminative quasi-auxiliary *má* is needed (38).

- (37) a. àṅgánén, àṅgénâ nêngì  
 |à-ṅgá-nén à-ṅgénâ L-nén-Lgì|  
 I-RP-be.fat I-PER INF-be.fat-G  
 ‘He was fat, and he still is.’  
 b. àṅgábé nêngì, àṅgénâ nêngì  
 |à-ṅgá-bé L-nén-Lgì à-ṅgénâ L-nén-Lgì|  
 I-RP-IMPF INF-be.fat-G I-PER INF-be.fat-G  
 ‘He was fat, and he still is.’

- (38) àṅgámâ nén  
 |à-ṅgá-mâ L-nén|  
 I-RP-TMN INF-be.fat  
 ‘He has become fat.’

Conversely, the context in (TMAQ 32) spontaneously triggered an imperfective form, notwithstanding the cancelled result meaning (39). The perfective alternative was accepted as well (40).

- (39) (TMAQ 32) [Of a lake in which the speaker swam yesterday. “Today the water is warm, but yesterday”]  
 mèndím mémé sîngì  
 |mè-ndím mǝ-mé L-sín-Lgì|  
 6-water VI-YIMPF INF-be.cold-G  
 ‘The water was cold.’
- (40) mèndím mésîngì  
 |mè-ndím mǝ-H-sín-Lgì|  
 6-water VI-PST-be.cold-G  
 ‘The water was cold.’

When qualities are permanent, perfective aspect becomes much less acceptable. The available examples suggest that a “permanent quality” is either a quality that can never be changed (43), or one that only an external agent can change (41, 42). Somebody can paint a house or expand it, but it will never change colour or expand by itself.

- (41) (TMAQ 3) [Talking about the house in which the speaker used to live but which has now been torn down.]  
 a. ìngábé nêngì  
 |ì-ngá-bé L-nén-Lgì|  
 IX-RP-IMPF INF-be.big-G  
 ‘It was big.’  
 b. \*ìngánén  
 |ì-ngá-nén|  
 IX-RP-be.big  
 ‘It was big.’
- (42) ndá ìngábé pùmgi  
 |ndá ì-ngá-bé L-pùm-Lgì|  
 [9]house IX-RP-IMPF INF-be.white-G  
 ‘The house was white’
- (43) [About a person you met.]  
 àngábé vîngì  
 |à-ngá-bé L-vín-Lgì|  
 I-RP-IMPF INF-be.black-G  
 ‘He was black.’

Note that the normal way of saying (43) would be as in (44). Sentence (45) can be used, for instance, with reference to an African plum tree, when it is full

of ripe plums, because the ripening (blackening) of the plums does not involve an external agent.

- (44) àṅgábé í'vínî  
 |à-ṅgá-bé ì-vín-à|  
 I-RP-COP 7-be.black-AG  
 'He was African.'

- (45) úṅgávín  
 |ú-ṅgá-vín|  
 III-RP-be.black  
 'It was black.'

The form in (41b) is hardly acceptable in the context of (TMAQ 3), but in (46b) the perfective is used in a comparable situation. The difference is that the permanent quality of the stone in (46b) is relevant with respect to a situation that can be easily construed as bounded. This could be a metonymical use of the perfective, where the boundedness of an action is transposed onto a permanent state with direct relevance to that action.

- (46) [Of a notoriously strong person.] (I saw him lift a stone.)
- a. ṅwàg ìṅgábé òdìgì àbwĩ  
 |ṅgòg ì-ṅgá-bé L-dìd-Lgì à-bùí|  
 [9]stone IX-RP-IMPF INF-be.heavy-G 3-a.lot  
 'The stone was awfully heavy.'
- b. ṅwàg ìṅgádîd àbwĩ  
 |ṅgòg ì-ṅgá-dìd à-bùí|  
 [9]stone IX-RP-be.heavy 3-a.lot  
 'The stone was awfully heavy.'

This brings us to the discourse function of the opposition perfective-imperfective. In narratives and other types of discourse, the imperfective can BACKGROUND situations, while the perfective can FOREGROUND them. In other words, when a situation is reported in order to provide a setting for other reported situations, it is more likely to be in the imperfective aspect. An example in case is the imperfective form *mémé wùlgà épàn* 'I was walking in the forest' in (83) below, which provides the background for an encounter with a snake in the following sentences.

It can be concluded that the relation between Aktionsart (or inherent aspect) and viewpoint aspect is very loose in Eton. Depending on the imagination of a speaker, almost every proposed combination is accepted or can be elicited in a fieldwork session. The likeliness of occurrence of utterances as (32) in sponta-

neous discourse is another question, and one that is at present impossible to answer with certainty, due to the small size of the corpus and the high amount of different verb forms. Nevertheless it is safe to assume that verbs expressing properties are more often in the imperfective, whereas activities, achievements and accomplishments are more often in the perfective. Perhaps the opposition is not privative, with imperfectivity being the default for states and perfectivity elsewhere.

## 2.2. The G-form

The *G-form* of the verb<sup>4</sup> is used in the Hesternal past perfective (2.3.3), in the Past imperfective (2.3.7), the Relative imperfective (2.6.3) and in the participial involved in the formation of past imperfective verb forms (2.3.2, 2.3.4 & 2.3.6). The formation of the G-form depends on the syllable structure of the stem. CV-stems take a *-gà* suffix (47). Stems with a CVC-structure take the suffix *-Lgì* (48).<sup>5</sup> In CVCV-stems the infix *<Lg>* is inserted between the second consonant and the stem-final vowel, irrespective of whether the latter is a root vowel or a derivational suffix (49). In accordance with the general tone rules of Eton, the floating low tone part of the suffix/infix attaches to the left. Verbs with a more complex syllable structure, finally, have a suffix of the form *-èngàn(à)*, which replaces any material after the first CVCC-sequence (50). Speakers tend to be uncertain about the presence or absence of the final *-à*, and no conditioning, not even a lexical one, could be found at present.<sup>6</sup> Note that the same holds for the Imperative and Subjunctive plural suffix *-éngán(à)* (see Sections 3.1 & 3.2). There are some tonal complications in stems with an impermeable expansion (i.e. one that blocks tone spread). In the Hesternal past perfective, high tone spread from the stem onto the suffix is optional. In the other forms it is always absent. When high tone spread is absent, a high tone on the stem becomes falling. At present I see no other solution than to propose two allomorphs: *-èngànà* and *-Lèngànà* (51). The suffix/infix that forms the G-form of stems is generally called *Prefinal* in comparative Bantu studies (see Sebasoni 1967 for an overview).

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4. The *G-form* is named after the only stable segment in the suffix/infix that marks this form of the verb. In earlier versions of this description I have used the terms *participial form* and *suffixed form*, both of which were potentially misleading.
  5. There is some (dialectal?) variation in the pronunciation of the vowel of this allomorph, which can be *ə* rather than *i*.
  6. Perhaps the underlying form of the suffix is always *-èngànà*, but the final *-à* usually drops due to the maximality constraint on verb stems.

	basic form	G-form
(47)	bá	bágâ 'marry'
	bà	bàgà 'cut in pieces'
	bé	bégê 'fry (intr.)'
	jó	jógô 'vomit'
	dù	dùgà 'baptise'
(48)	dùd	dùdgi 'drive; smoke'
	cóg	còdgi 'think'
	kód	kòdgi 'dry (intr.)'
	kàb	kàbgi 'divide'
	yém	yémgi 'block'
(49)	bálí	bàlgi 'hurt oneself'
	sùz-à	sùzgà 'diminish'
	bèbè	bèbgè 'look at'
	wágô	wáàgò 'wash'
	káŋà	kààngà 'stay'
	kódô	kòdgo 'leave'
(50)	bèglè	bèglèngàn(à) 'carry'
	kòglò	kòglèngàn 'bite'
	vúmlâ	vúmlèngànà 'throw violently'
	sòŋdô	sòŋdèngànà 'sharpen'
	sùgzà	sùgzèngàn 'shake'
	vòòbò	vòòbèngàn 'breathe'
	sègzàn	sègzèngàn 'breathe heavily'
	yéglânà	yéglèngànà 'imitate'
(51)	ndámni 'deteriorate'	
	Hesternal past perfective:	
	í-ndámni-èngàn ~ í-ndámni-èngàn	'it deteriorated'
	Relative imperfective:	
	í-ndámni-èngàn	'deteriorating'

The difference between certain verbs is neutralised in the G-forms.

(52)	j̀d̀gi 'put down'	G-form: j̀d̀d̀gi
	j̀d̀g 'damn'	G-form: j̀d̀d̀gi

The G-form of some CV-verbs shows that the form of their stem is the result of umlaut. Sometimes this is still audible in the form of the stem, which can

have a closing diphthong, the final part of this diphthong being a trace of the segment that triggered umlaut.

(53)	basic form	G-form
	nè [nè <sup>j</sup> ]	nàgà ‘keep’
	gbè [gbè <sup>j</sup> ]	gbègè [gbèu <sup>j</sup> ] ‘grasp’
	lây ~ léè	lágâ ~ léégì ‘tell’
	wé	wógô ‘kill’
	wé	wágô ‘give birth’
	wè	wàgò ‘laugh’

The G-form of stems that have a succession of structural vowels might provide insight in the way they evolved. In some cases, they behave as simple CV-stems, i.e. the suffix *-gà* is added after the initial CV-sequence (54a). The verb [bùì] in (54b) has two alternative G-forms, one as if it were based on the stem *bú* and the other as if derived from the stem *búgì*. A similar situation occurs with the near-homonyms in (54c).

(54)	a. nyà	nìgà ‘save’
	twî	túgâ ‘burst’
	b. bwí	búgâ ~ búgì ‘singe’
	c. kwè ~ kòy	kògò ‘light’
	kòy	kògò ‘shell, pod’

The verb *nè* ‘be’ does not have a G-form. Its stem takes the form *dyǎ* in the Relative imperfective and the Past imperfective and *mé* in the Hesternal past perfective.

## 2.3. Absolute tense constructions

2.3.1. *The Remote past perfective*

The Remote past perfective is formed by means of the subject prefix, followed by the prefix *ngá-* and the verb stem.<sup>7</sup> The stem of the verb *né* ‘be’ is *bé* in the Remote past perfective. The morpheme *ngá* must be analysed as a prefix, i.e. not as an auxiliary, for several reasons. First, nothing can stand between *ngá* and the following verb stem. Second, if it had been an auxiliary, it would have been followed by an infinitive form of the lexical verb, implying a *L-* prefix before the stem and link tone, both of which are absent in the Remote past perfective (56).

VP-*ngá*-STEM

- (55) *dô* àngábéd. *dô* vó mwàn újàm àngákpàgì zě̀n  
 |*dô* à-*ngá*-béd *dô* vó ñ-òñH = ù-ɕàm à-*ngá*-kpàgì zě̀n|  
 DP I-RP-climb DP then 1-DIM=3-squirrel I-RP-clear [9]path  
 ‘Then he climbed. Then the little squirrel cleared the path.’

- (56) a. àngálán bô kálâdà  
 |à-*ngá*-lán bô kálâdà|  
 I-RP-read PL book  
 ‘He has read the letters.’  
 b. àngátíl bô kálâdà  
 |à-*ngá*-tíl bô kálâdà|  
 I-RP-write PL book  
 ‘He wrote the letters.’  
 c. àngádí ébà̀nà  
 |à-*ngá*-dí è-bà̀nà|  
 I-RP-eat 5-macabo  
 ‘He has eaten the macabo.’

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7. There is tone spread from the prefix onto the verb stem, which makes it in principle impossible to know whether the Remote past perfective has a *H-* prefix, as the other past perfectives do. However, since the Remote past perfective behaves differently from the other past perfectives from a tonal point of view (it lacks the non-final suffix -H), it is reasonable to assume that there is no floating high tone prefix in the Remote past perfective. All forms discussed in this section take a subject prefix. This will not always be explicitly repeated. The subject prefixes are discussed in Section VIII:1.

- d. àṅgábê èbàṅà  
 |à-ṅgá-bè è-bàṅà|  
 I-RP-plant 5-macabo  
 ‘He has planted the macabo.’

### 2.3.2. *The Remote past imperfective*

Like all past imperfectives, the Remote past imperfective is formed by means of a past form of the imperfective auxiliary *né* (in this case the remote past form) and a participle formed by the G-form of the main verb stem with a prefix *L-*. The prefix of this participle is at least formally identical to the prefix of infinitives. Since it also marks a non-finite form of the verb, it will be glossed as INF. Note, however, that this participle does not trigger link tone, contrary to infinitives (see v:4.5.1). The periphrastic past imperfective forms (Remote, Hesternal and Hodiernal) differ from other complex verb forms in that no pronominal can stand between the auxiliary and the lexical verb.

VP-ṅgá-bé L-GFORM

- (57) àṅgábé ‘dígâ ndógô  
 |à-ṅgá-bé L-dí-gâ ndógâ|  
 I-RP-IMPF INF-eat-G [9]mango  
 ‘He was eating a mango.’

### 2.3.3. *The Hesternal past perfective*

In the Hesternal past perfective the G-form of the verb stem is preceded by a floating high tone prefix. When this verb form is not in clause-final position, it has a floating high tone suffix (the non-final form). The hesternal past form of the verb *né* ‘be’ is *mé*. The examples in (58-59) show the difference between clause-final Hesternal past perfective forms (58a, 59a) and clause-internal forms (58b, 59b). The presence of the floating high tone suffix does not say anything about the syntactic status of the following element within the clause.

VP-H-GFORM-H (non-final)  
 VP-H-GFORM (clause-final)

- (58) a. àkêngì  
|à-H-kèn-Lgì|<sup>8</sup>  
I-PST-go-G  
'He went.'
- b. àkéngí á mákíd  
|à-H-kèn-Lgì-H á mákíd|  
I-PST-go-G-NF LOC market  
'He went to the market.'
- (59) a. àkǒl úyábnêṅgàn  
|à-kǒl ú-H-jábn-ṅgànà|  
3-foot III-PST-hurt-G  
'The foot hurt.'
- b. àkǒl úyábnéṅgán 'má  
|à-kǒl ú-H-jábn-ṅgànà-H mǎ|  
3-foot III-PST-hurt-G-NF 1SG.FPPR  
'My foot hurt.'

There is high tone plateauing between the *H*-affixes in the non-final form of the Hesternal past perfective, as is illustrated in (60) and in the previous examples (see Section II:7.2.5).

- (60) àkódgí múṅá á mé<sup>4</sup>ndím  
|à-H-kòd <Lg> ì-H N-úṅá á mē-ndím|  
I-PST-save<G>-NF 1-child LOC 6-water  
'He saved the child from the water.'

Note that the difference between low and high stems is neutralised in clause-final Hesternal past perfective forms (61), except for *CV*-stems. In non-final position the difference is audible only if the subject prefix carries a high tone, in which case a low stem surfaces with a downstepped high tone and a high stem with a high tone (62).

- (61) a. pám 'go out'  
àpâmgì  
|à-H-pám-Lgì|  
I-PST-go.out-G  
'He went out'

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8. The stem for 'go' has different allomorphs depending on the TA-form. In the Present, for instance, it is *kè*. Together with *nè* 'be' and *zù* 'come' it is the only irregular verb in Eton.

- b. pàm ‘be furious’  
 àpâmgì  
 |à-H-pàm-Lgì|  
 I-PST-be.furious-G  
 ‘He was furious.’
- (62) a. àpámgí ààngògé  
 |à-H-pám-Lgì-H à:ngògé|  
 I-PST-go.out-G-NF yesterday  
 ‘He went out yesterday.’
- b. bépámgí ààngògé  
 |bó-H-pám-Lgì-H à:ngògé|  
 II-PST-go.out-G-NF yesterday  
 ‘They went out yesterday.’
- c. àpámgí ààngògé  
 |à-H-pàm-Lgì-H à:ngògé|  
 I-PST-be.furious-G-NF yesterday  
 ‘He was furious yesterday.’
- d. bé‘pámgí ààngògé  
 |bó-H-pàm-Lgì-H à:ngògé|  
 II-PST-be.furious-G-NF yesterday  
 ‘They were furious yesterday.’

The clause-internal *-H* suffix should not be confounded with link tone. High tone copy from the verb creates the illusion of link tone, but contrary to the *-H* suffix, link tone does not appear before prepositional phrases (63). Moreover, link tone attaches to the right, instead of to the left, and consequently never triggers high tone plateauing on a preceding stem. Thus the clause-internal form of the Hesternal past perfective does not contradict the generalisation that link tone occurs only between an infinitive and a following noun or pronominal.

- (63) a. mètùlǵá èyǵ jé  
 |mè-H-wùl <Lg> -à-H è:j jé|  
 1SG-PST-walk<G>-NF with I.PPR  
 ‘I walked with her.’
- b. mèté wùlà èyǵ jé  
 |mè-Lté L-wùlà è:j jé|  
 1SG-PR INF-walk with I.PPR  
 ‘I’m walking with her.’

2.3.4. *The Hesternal past imperfective*

The Hesternal past imperfective is formed by means of the hesternal past form of the past imperfective auxiliary (i.e. the verb ‘be’), viz. *mé*, followed by the participle of the main verb.

VP-mé L-GFORM

- (64) àmé ‘dígâ ndógô  
 |à-mé L-dí-gâ ndógà|  
 I-YIMPF INF-eat-G[9]mango  
 ‘He was eating a mango.’

2.3.5. *The Hodiernal past perfective*

The Hodiernal past perfective is formed like the Hesternal past perfective, except that the simple stem is used instead of the G-form of the stem. As its Hesternal counterpart, the Hodiernal past perfective has a *H-* past prefix and in non-final position also a *-H* suffix. The stem of the verb *né* ‘be’ is *bé* in the Hodiernal past perfective (67).

VP-H-STEM-H (non-final)

VP-H-STEM (clause-final)

- (65) mètâ àbómló mújá á ‘nóŋ  
 |mètâ à-H-bòmlò-H N-újá á Ñ-nóŋ|  
 car I-PST-hit-NF 1-child LOC 3-street  
 ‘The car hit the child in the street.’
- (66) mèkpé é‘lén  
 |mè-H-kpè-H è-lén|  
 1SG-PST-fell-NF 5-palm.tree  
 ‘I felled a palm tree.’
- (67) àbé míntàg  
 |à-bé mìn-tàg|  
 I-COP 4-satisfaction  
 ‘He was satisfied.’

The Hodiernal past perfective construction is polysemic. One use is to report a situation that held before the moment of speaking, but during the same day, with perfective viewpoint aspect, i.e. a HODIERNAL PAST PERFECTIVE use (68).

- (68) àjâ  
 |à-H-ɕjà|  
 I-PST-sing  
 ‘She sang (today).’

Secondly, the Hodiernal past perfective can be used to express the PERFECT. The perfect expresses the present relevance of a past situation. It must be strictly distinguished from the past forms, in which temporal remoteness is obligatorily specified. For instance, the situation predicated in (69) can be the same as the one in (70). In other words, the perfect can be used in order to say that somebody is dead when that person died a long time ago. The Hodiernal past perfective in its hodiernal past perfective use would be unacceptable here.

- (69) àwú  
 |à-H-wú|  
 I-PST-die  
 ‘He has died.’ / ‘He died. (recently)’

- (70) àṅgáwú  
 |à-ṅgá-wú|  
 I-RP-die  
 ‘He died.’

- (71) dè ùbá àyă?  
 |dè ù-H-bá-H àjă|  
 Q 2SG-PST-marry-NF already  
 ‘Are you married already?’

- (72) dè ùnè mbáání?  
 |dè ù-nè ñ-bá:ní|  
 Q 2SG-COP 3-married.state  
 ‘Are you married?’

### 2.3.6. *The Hodiernal past imperfective*

The Hodiernal past imperfective is formed by means of the hodiernal past form of the imperfective auxiliary followed by the participial form of the main verb that is used in the other past imperfectives.<sup>9</sup>

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9. According to Redden (1976:94) the high tone on the auxiliary is downstepped in Ewondo. This is not the case in Eton.

## VP-bé L-GFORM

- (73) à-bé 'dígâ ndógô  
 |à-bé L-dí-gà ndógà|  
 I-TIMPF INF-eat-G [9]mango  
 'He was eating a mango.'

2.3.7. *The Past imperfective*

There is a construction that neutralises the remoteness distinctions between the three past imperfective constructions and that often expresses a habit in the past. This form will be simply called Past imperfective for the time being. It is formed by means of the past prefix *H-* and the G-form of the stem.

## VP-H-GFORM

The formal difference between the Past imperfective and the Hesternal past perfective is visible only in clause-internal position, where the Past imperfective lacks a *-H* suffix. Compare the Past imperfective in (74a) with the Hesternal past perfective in (74b). Also compare these forms with the Relative imperfective in (74c), see Section 2.6.3.

- (74) a. mèkêngì èèy jé  
 |mè-H-kèn-Lgì è:j jé|  
 1SG-PST-go-G with I.PPR  
 'I used to go with her.'
- b. mèkéngí èèy jé  
 |mè-H-kèn-Lgì-H è:j jé|  
 1SG-PST-go-G-NF with I.PPR  
 'I went with her.'
- c. mèkêngì èèy jé  
 |mè-kèn-Lgì è:j jé|  
 1SG-go-G with I.PPR  
 '(me) going with her'

2.3.8. *The Present*

The Present is formed by means of the auxiliary *Lté* and the infinitive of the main verb. The present auxiliary most probably developed from the Resultative verb form *télé* 'stand' and originally must have expressed a present progressive, as opposed to a simple present expressed by means of the prefix *à-*, which has now disappeared in most dialects (but see Section 2.5).

## VP-Lté L-STEM

- (75) àté 'dí ndógò  
 |à-Lté L-dí H ndógà|  
 I-PR INF-eat LT [9]mango  
 'She is eating a mango.'

Complement pronominals and adverbs are preferably placed between *Lté* and the main verb, which is evidence for calling |Lté| an auxiliary rather than a prefix (76-77). The initial /t/ of the Present marker provides further evidence for this analysis, because this phoneme is restricted to the onset of prominent syllables. The origin of this auxiliary is most probably the verb *tébé* 'stand', which first evolved to a marker of present progressive and then simply present.

- (76) mèté wò yén  
 |mè-Lté wò L-jén|  
 1SG-PR 2SG.NPPR INF-see  
 'I see you.'

- (77) àté pwágó jàb  
 |à-Lté pógá L-ǰàb|  
 I-PR really INF-be.tall  
 'He is really tall.'

Interestingly, I heard some instances of the Present auxiliary being pronounced with an initial [r], i.e. where it is not a prominent syllable, so that its onset consonant is subject to the lenition rules. When I repeated these cases, they were accepted by all speakers (sometimes with the label *dialectal*), but never with a pronominal complement or an adverb preceding the main verb. This can be interpreted as an ongoing morphologization from auxiliary to tense prefix. Note that the same speakers never produce or allow lenition of the initial /t/ or /d/ of a lexical verb.

The Present is the default construction for expressing present time reference, for all verbs, irrespective of their inherent aspect (78-80), but Resultative and Contrastive resultative verbs cannot combine with the Present auxiliary (see 2.4.1). Speakers generally use the Present when asked to translate present tense phrases in isolation. In spontaneous discourse the Inceptive is often selected instead of the Present (see 2.6.2) and in Southern dialects there is an alternative present tense construction (see 2.5).

- (78) m̀̀ndím mé<sup>4</sup>té <sup>4</sup>sín  
 |m̀̀-ndím m̀̀-Lté L-sín|  
 6-water VI-PR INF-be.cold  
 ‘The water is cold.’
- (79) m̀̀tè yàṅà á ncèṅ, àtìlgì b̀̀ kálàdà  
 |m̀̀-Lté L-jàṅà á Ì-tjèṅ à-tìl-Lgì b̀̀ kálàdà|  
 1SG-PR INF-wait LOC 3-court I-write-G PL letter  
 ‘I am waiting in the garden, while he is writing letters.’
- (80) twàmó àté <sup>4</sup>bímì ndàmà  
 |t̀̀mó à-Lté L-bímì H ndàmà|  
 Tomo I-PR INF-hit LT ball  
 ‘Tomo hits the ball.’

Present time is a time frame that includes the moment of speech, but can go well beyond. Therefore the Present is also used to predicate permanent qualities.

- (81) àté bàṅnì  
 |à-Lté L-bàṅnì|  
 I-PR INF-provoke  
 ‘He’s an agitator.’

The Present is typically used in performative speech acts.

- (82) m̀̀tè ẁ̀ j̀̀  
 |m̀̀-Lté ẁ̀ L-ɕ̀̀|  
 1SG-PR 2SG.NPPR INF-forgive  
 ‘I forgive you.’

The Present can have past time reference when it is used as a narrative present, as in (83b) in the following short narrative. The narrative is set in the hesternal past in (83a). Once the action starts, the speaker switches to the narrative present and then continues with Consecutive forms (83c) (see 2.6.1 for the Consecutive).

- (83) (TMAQ B1)  
 a. ùtè j̀̀m ídàm ítóbnéṅgáná éyè má ààng̀̀gì ìì? m̀̀mè ẁ̀lgà épàn  
 |ù-Lté L-ɕ̀̀m í-d-àm è-H-tóbn-éṅgáná-H|  
 2SG-PR INF-know AU-5-thing V-PST-meet-G-NF

|è:y má à:ngògí ì: m̀-é L-wùl <g>à H è-pàn |  
 with 1SG.PPR yesterday Q 1SG-YIMPF INF-walk<G> LOC 5-forest  
 ‘Do you know what happened to me yesterday? I was walking in the forest.’

- b. d̀ mé'té b̀m̀ngànă wùlă 'j̀y á j̀ól. d̀ í'té mâ lób á '̀m̀én.  
 |d̀ m̀-Łté L-b̀m̀ngànă H L-wùlă H j̀ól |  
 DP 1SG-PR INF-do.suddenly LT INF-walk LT [9]snake  
 |á j̀ól d̀ ì-Łté mà L-lób á Ñ-vj̀én |  
 LOC [9]body DP IX-PR 1SG.PPR INF-bite LOC 3-leg  
 ‘Suddenly, I stepped on a snake. It bit me in the leg.’
- c. d̀ mé'j̀ón ̀ngwâg, d̀ m̀lúm 'j̀y. d̀ í'wú.  
 |d̀ m̀-̀j̀ón-H ̀ngòg d̀ m̀-łúm-H j̀ól d̀ ì-wú-H |  
 DP 1SG-take-CS [9]stone DP 1SG-throw-CS [9]snake DP IX-die-CS  
 ‘I took a stone and threw it at the snake. It died.’

The Present can also be used with reference to situations that will hold in the future. In this case the Present expresses a present intention (84), prediction or certainty (85), or a present directive for future behaviour (86). The example in (85) is a so-called timetable future.

(84) (FTRQ 91)

m̀'j̀án àté kàd nâ àté kè á t̀swân kídí  
 |m-ðH = ɕǎŋ à-Łté L-kàd nâ à-Łté L-kè á t̀sòn kídí |  
 my.brother I-PR INF-say CMP I-PR INF-go LOC town [9]tomorrow  
 ‘My brother says he goes to town tomorrow.’

(85) (FTRQ 90) [According to the timetable,]

j̀cínâ àté kè á t̀lbé  
 |j̀tj̀ínâ à-Łté L-kè á t̀lbé |  
 train I-PR INF-go LOC noon  
 ‘The train leaves at noon.’

(86) (FTRQ 88) [To go to my brother's place, ]

ùté c̀làn á mé'yál á 'm̀bgán  
 |ù-Łté L-tj̀làn á m̀-ǰál á m̀bgán |  
 2SG-PR INF-turn LOC 6-left LOC [9]crossing  
 ‘You turn left at the crossing.’

### 2.3.9. The Future

The Future is formed by means of the auxiliary *èy* and the infinitive of the main verb.

## VP-èèy L-STEM

- (87) èèy mà dɔ́ ʔyágnà dyâ  
 |à-è:j mà dɔ́ L-jágnà H dɔ́|  
 I-FUT 1SG.PPR V.PPR INF-pay LT expensive  
 ‘He will pay it dearly to me.’
- (88) [Of a house in construction.]  
 ndá yè:y nén  
 |ndá ì-è:j L-nén|  
 [9]house IX-FUT INF-be.big  
 ‘The house will be big.’
- (89) béèy dàŋ épàn  
 |bó-è:j L-dàŋ H è-pàn|  
 II-FUT INF-cross LT 5-forest  
 ‘They will cross the forest.’

The future is not subdivided into temporal domains the same way as the past is (90-92). When asked to translate a French phrase in the future into Eton, a native speaker will never ask further temporal precisions, but will simply use the Present or the Future. There is a construction that can imply that a situation holds in the far future, but its use is not obligatory in clauses that are set in the far future (see 2.3.10).

- (90) a. byéèy kè úʔngóló ítétègè nɔ́  
 |bí-è:j L-kè H á ùngòlò ítétègè nɔ́|  
 1PL-FUT INF-go LT LOC Yaoundé now I.DEM
- b. bí'té kè úʔngóló ítétègè nɔ́  
 |bí-Lté L-kè H á ùngòlò ítétègè nɔ́|  
 1PL-PR INF-go LT LOC Yaoundé now I.DEM  
 ‘We will go to Yaoundé in a moment.’
- (91) a. byéèy kè úʔngóló kídí  
 b. bí'té kè úʔngóló kídí  
 ‘We will go to Yaoundé tomorrow.’

- (92) a. byèèy kè ú'ngóló á mbúz î ngwàn í'bá  
 |bí-è:j L-kè á ùngóló á mbúz ì=ngòn í-bă|  
 IPL-FUT INF-go LOC Yaoundé LOC back IX.CON=[10]month X-two
- b. bí'té kè ú'ngóló á mbúz î ngwàn í'bá  
 |bí-Lté L-kè á ùngóló á mbúz ì=ngòn í-bă|  
 IPL-PR INF-go LOC Yaoundé LOC back IX.CON=[10]month X-two  
 'We will go to Yaoundé in two months.'

The future auxiliary developed out of the lexical verb *yì* 'want' preceded by the present tense prefix *à-*, which still exists in Southern variants of Eton (see Section 2.5). In these dialects the form VP-*à-yì* STEM exists as well. The same construction with *a*-umlaut (VP-*èè-yì* STEM) can be heard in all dialects. This less grammaticalised form can have both a predictive (93a) and an intentional reading (93b).

- (93) *màyì dí* (Southern dialects) ~ *mèyèyì dí*  
 a. 'I will eat something.'  
 b. 'I would like to eat something.'

In the Southern construction *màyì dí*, *yì* functions as a quasi-auxiliary (see IX:2.2.15).

The reason for discussing the origin of the Future auxiliary is that the difference between a genuine future tense and intentional modality or prospective aspect is difficult to make. An argument in favour of analysing the Future as a construction marking future tense (as its main function) is that the Future can be used where both a volitional or intentional reading and a prospective aspect reading are excluded, as in (94).

- (94) (TMAQ 36) [You should not try to bathe in the lake tomorrow.]  
 mëndím méyèy pwágó 'sín  
 |mè-ndím mó-è:j pógá L-sín|  
 6-water VI-FUT really INF-be.cold  
 'The water will be really cold.'

When a clearly intentional utterance is elicited, the Future is only one of many possible constructions (95c). In (95d) Future *èyèy* is used as a quasi-auxiliary. This is the only example I have of this use. Therefore, it is not treated in Section IX:2 on quasi-auxiliaries.

- (95) (FTRQ 31) [What are your plans for tonight?]
- a. mèté yĩ tìl kálàdà  
 |mè-Lté L-jì H L-tìl H kálàdà|  
 1SG-PR INF-VOL LT INF-write LT letter
- b. màyì tìl kálàdà  
 |mè-à-jì L-tìl kálàdà|  
 1SG-SP-VOL INF-write letter
- c. mèèy tìl bô kálàdà  
 |mè-è:j L-tìl H bô kálàdà|  
 1SG-FUT INF-write LT PL letter
- d. mèté èéy tìl bô kálàdà  
 |mè-Lté L-è:j H L-tìl H bô kálàdà|  
 1SG-PR INF-VOL LT INF-write LT PL letter  
 ‘I am going to write a letter.’

In contrast, some facts might be interpreted as arguments against analysing the Future as a future tense marker. For instance, the copula and Resultative forms cannot be conjugated in the Future (96b).

- (96) a. mèbógô á mbóg yàmà  
 |mè-Bóg-á á mbóg jámà|  
 1SG-stay-RS LOC [9]home IX.my  
 ‘I stay at my place.’
- b. mèté yĩ ‘bógbô á mbóg yàmà  
 |mè-Lté L-jì H L-Bógbà á mbóg jàmà|  
 1SG-PR INF-want LT INF-stay LOC [9]home IX.my  
 ‘I will stay at my place.’
- (97) a. ànè mìnàg  
 |à-nè mìnàg|  
 I-COP satisfaction  
 ‘He is satisfied.’
- b. èèy bógbô mìnàg  
 |à-è:j L-Bógbò H mìnàg|  
 I-FUT INF-stay LT satisfaction  
 ‘He will be satisfied.’

The Future differs in this respect from the present and past tenses and resembles non-indicative forms such as the Imperative (98) and the Subjunctive (99).

- (98) bógbô m̀ntàg è̀yèy ì̀tìlgà ỳh  
 |Bógb <H> à m̀ntàg è̀j ì̀tìlgà í-ò|  
 stay<IMP> satisfaction with 7-life VII-your  
 ‘Be satisfied with your life!’
- (99) á'bógbô m̀ntàg è̀yèy ì̀tìlgà ỳě  
 |H-à-L-Bógb <H> à m̀ntàg è̀j ì̀tìlgà j-ě|  
 SB-I-SB-stay<SB> satisfaction with 7-life VII-his|  
 ‘May he be happy with his life.’

In a sequence of events, the Future is interchangeable with the Subjunctive (see 3.1), rather than with the Consecutive relative tense form (see 2.6.1).

- (100) [Somebody is preparing to go and visit a friend and says:]  
 a. á mbú́z 'v́alá m̀è̀yèy ḱé á'púb  
 |á mbú́z v́alá m̀-è̀j L-k̀è á à-púb|  
 LOC [9]back that 1SG-FUT INF-go LOC 3-field  
 b. á mbú́z 'v́alá m̀é̀k̀é á'púb  
 |á mbú́z v́alá H-m̀-è̀j L-k̀è-L á à-púb|  
 LOC [9]back that SB-1SG-go-SB LOC 3-field  
 ‘After that I will go to the field.’

Finally, in some uses of the Future, future time reference (or future in the past) seems to be a derived meaning, rather than a basic one, as when the Future is used in a purpose clause.

- (101) bé'té ỳà̀nà nà b̀è̀yèy m̀n ỳén  
 |b́-é-L-té L-j̀à̀nà nà b̀-è̀j m̀n L-j̀én|  
 II-PR INF-wait CMP II-FUT 2PL.NPPR INF-see  
 ‘They are waiting in order to see you.’
- (102) bé'ỳá̀n(á) nà b̀è̀yèy m̀n ỳén  
 |b́-H-j̀à̀nà-H nà b́-è̀j m̀n L-j̀én|  
 II-PST-wait-NF CMP II-FUT 2PL.NPPR INF-see  
 ‘They waited in order to see you.’

### 2.3.10. *The Indefinite future*

The Indefinite future is formed by means of the prefix *LjgáL-*, preceded by the subject prefix and followed by the stem, which takes a *-H* suffix. The floating low tones surrounding the segmental form of the Indefinite future prefix are reminiscent of the form of auxiliaries (where the second *L* would be the infiniti-

val prefix of the following main verb). Nevertheless, *LɲgáL-* must be analysed as a prefix, since nothing can stand between this marker and the following verb stem. Furthermore, the main verb cannot be analysed as an infinitive, because it is never followed by a link tone.

VP-LɲgáL-STEM-H

- (103) àɲgá'wé yô  
 |à-LɲgáL-wé-H jǒ|  
 I-IF-kill-IF IX.PPR  
 'He will slaughter it (i.e. the animal).'  
 \*àɲgá yò wé

Since I found very few examples in texts, it is hard to provide a reliable description of its function. The Indefinite future is sometimes used to report on situations that will take place in a future far away from the moment of speech. It cannot be combined with time adverbials referring to a near future (105).

- (104) àɲgá 'wé ɲâg, ábâ.  
 |à-LɲgáL-wé-H ɲâg H-à-bà-L|  
 I-IF-kill-IF [9]cow SB-I-cut.up-SB  
 'He will slaughter the cow and cut it up.'

- (105) \*àɲgá 'wé ɲâg kídí.  
 |à-LɲgáL-wé-H ɲâg kídí|  
 I-IF-kill-IF [9]cow tomorrow  
 'He will slaughter the cow tomorrow.'

The main function of the Indefinite future is most probably to express hypothetical events. It can be translated by means of a *conditionnel* in French, or *would*-periphrasis in English (106). See IX(126) for an example from a recorded dialogue.

- (106) a. [What if I climbed in this tree?]  
 mɛɲgá'béd pɛ í'lé  
 |mɛ-LɲgáL-béd-H pɛ H ì-lé|  
 1SG-IF-climb-IF also LOC 7-tree  
 'I would also climb in the tree.'

- b. bwán 'bé yì mènḡgátìmní yèm bó [ḡḡé béyén 'má]?  
 |b-ḡn bḡ yì mḡ-LḡḡáL-tìmnì-H L-jèm bḡ|  
 2-child II.her Q 1SG-IF-REP-IF INF-know II.PPR  
 'Her children, would I still recognise them [if they saw me]?'<sup>10</sup>

#### 2.4. Constructions involving Resultative verbs

Resultative verbs (see IV:3.7) are used in the present and the past, never in future tenses. Possession, for instance, is expressed by means of the resultative form of the verb *gbè* 'grasp, catch' in the present (107a) and past (107b). In the future, the stem *gbè* is used, so that 'I will have' is literally rendered as 'I will acquire' (108).

- (107) a. mḡgbéle mál  
 |mḡ-gbél-á m-ál|  
 1SG-grasp-RS 6-canoe  
 'I have a canoe.'  
 b. mènḡgábé 'gbéle mál  
 |mḡ-ḡḡá-bé L-gbél-á m-ál|  
 1SG-RP-IMPF INF-grasp-RS 6-canoe  
 'I had a canoe.'
- (108) mḡy gbè mál  
 |mḡ-ḡ:j L-gbé H m-ál|  
 1SG-FUT INF-grasp LT 6-canoe  
 'I will have a canoe.'

Other verbs use a nominal strategy in order to express a resultative meaning, involving a copula and a deverbal noun, very often derived by means of the suffix *-ní* (see III:4.3.5). Deverbal nouns derived by *|-ní|* usually have a synonym on *|-ḡḡán|*, as in (109).

- (109) bòd 'draw (water)'  
 a. mènḡm mḡnḡ mbòdní  
 |mḡ-ndím mḡ-nḡ ḡ-bòdní|  
 6-water VI-COP 3-drawn

10. Example (106b) is formed on the basis of a spontaneous utterance (given as example IX(121)), where I replaced a complex predicate involving a quasi-auxiliary expressing possibility by the Indefinite future. This is perfectly possible, according to consultants, if the time adverbial in the original utterance is left out.

b. mëndím ménê mbòdnéḡán  
 |mè-ndím mǎ-nè Ì-bòdnéḡán|  
 6-water VI-COP 3-drawn  
 ‘The water is drawn.’

(110) bàl ‘weed (tr.)’  
 àpúb únê mbàlní  
 |à-púb ú-nè Ì-bàlní|  
 3-field III-COP 3-weeded  
 ‘The field is weeded.’

(111) vǎḡ ‘roll up’  
 a. àté vǎḡ lé<sup>4</sup>ká lé újô.  
 |à-Lté L-vǎḡ H lǎ-ká lǎ = úḡò|  
 I-PR INF-roll.up LT 5-leaf V.CON=banana  
 ‘He rolls up the banana leaves.’  
 b. lèká lé újô lénê mvǎḡní  
 |lǎ-ká lǎ = úḡò lǎ-nè Ì-vǎḡní|  
 5-leaf V.CON=banana V-COP 3-rolled.up  
 ‘The banana leaves are rolled up.’

(112) bǎ ‘rot’  
 ndǎḡô ìnè ìbwǎl  
 |ndǎḡò ì-nè ì-bǎlH|  
 [9]mango IX-COP 7-rotten  
 ‘The mango is rotten.’

#### 2.4.1. *The Present resultative*

In the Present resultative a Resultative verb is preceded by a subject prefix (113-116). See Section IV:3.7 for more examples.

(113) wàtéli àpèdé  
 |wàtéli à-pèd-ǎ|  
 market I-close-RS  
 ‘The market is closed.’

(114) kábèdì yàmà ìtyǎ ìmèḡ  
 |kábdì jàmà ì-tì-ǎ Ì-Bèḡ|  
 [9]goat IX-my IX-attach-RS 3-good  
 ‘My goat is well attached.’

- (115) àbógô bèbè vá  
 |à-Bóg-á bèbè vá|  
 I-stay-RS close here  
 ‘She lives nearby.’
- (116) ndógô ìpùdá á ‘jád  
 |ndógà ì-pùd-á á ɕ-äd|  
 [9]mango IX-put-RS LOC 7-basket  
 ‘The mango lies in the basket.’

Just as the Present, the Present resultative can have future time reference (117a).

- (117) a. zèkúlí àpèdè kídí  
 |zèkúlí à-pèd-á kídí|  
 school I-close-RS tomorrow  
 ‘The school will be closed tomorrow.’
- b. zèkúlí àtè pèd kídí  
 |zèkúlí à-Lté L-pèd kídí|  
 school I-PR INF-close tomorrow  
 ‘The school will close down tomorrow.’

#### 2.4.2. Past resultatives

The Past resultatives are formed by means of a form of the auxiliary *né*, either in the hodiernal (118a), hesternal (118b) or remote (118c, 119) past, and a Resultative verb.

- (118) a. àbé ‘bógô á’sí  
 |à-bé L-Bóg-á ásí|  
 I-TIMPF INF-sit-RS down
- b. àmé ‘bógô á’sí  
 |à-mé L-Bóg-á ásí|  
 I-YIMPF INF-sit-RS down
- c. àṅgábé ‘bógô á’sí  
 |à-ṅgá-bé L-Bóg-á ásí|  
 I-RP-IMPF INF-sit-RS down  
 ‘He was seated.’

- (119) ɲgé í'só á'ɲgábé gbélê ndán, ...  
 |ɲgé ísɔ̀ à-ɲgá-bé gbél-ǎndán|  
 if your.father I-RP-IMPF have-RS [9]ndan  
 'If your father had a ndan, ...'

#### 2.4.3. *The Contrastive resultative*

Some Resultative verbs have a related Contrastive resultative form, which is often used in combination with the adverb *àyǎ* 'already'. It expresses contrastivity with a previous situation or with the speaker's expectations. The form of the Contrastive resultative is derived from the Resultative verb by means of the prefix *ń-*. A very frequent and important Contrastive resultative form is the Contrastive resultative of *bógbô* 'stay', viz. *mógô* (see Section VIII:4). When a contrastive resultative form follows the auxiliary of an imperfective past it takes a subject prefix, rather than the infinitive prefix *L-* (see example (92) in Chapter VIII).

- (120) a. ndógô ìbèdè á 'jád  
 |ndógà ì-Bèd-ǎ á ɕ-ǎd|  
 [9]mango IX-put-RS LOC 7-basket  
 'The mango lies on the basket.'
- b. ndógô ǐ'médá àyǎ á 'jád  
 |ndógà ì-ń-Bèd-ǎ àǎ á ɕ-ǎd|  
 [9]mango IX-CR-put-RS already LOC 7-basket  
 'The mango lies already on the basket.'
- (121) a. ndógô ìpùdá á 'jád  
 |ndógà ì-pùd-ǎ á ɕ-ǎd|  
 [9]mango IX-put-RS LOC 7-basket  
 'The mango lies in the basket.'
- b. ndógô ǐ'mpúdá àyǎ á 'jád  
 |ndógà ì-ń-pùd-ǎ àǎ á ɕ-ǎd|  
 [9]mango IX-CR-put-RS already LOC 7-basket  
 'The mango lies already in the basket.'
- (122) a. mègbélê mètŵâ  
 |mè-gbél-ǎ mètúâ|  
 1SG-have-RS car  
 'I have a car.'

- b. mɛ̀ŋmélâ àyǎ mé<sup>4</sup>twá  
 |mɛ̀-ń-gbéł-ǎ àǎ mɛ̀túà|  
 1SG-CR-have-RS already car  
 ‘I already have a car.’
- c. àŋmélâ àyǎ lòn lɛ̀pùmǵì  
 |à-ń-gbéł-ǎ àǎ lòn ló-pùm-Lǵì|  
 1SG-CR-have-RS already [5]hair V-grey-G  
 ‘He already has grey hairs.’

- (123) a. mɛ̀télê  
 |mɛ̀-tél-ǎ|  
 1SG-stand-RS  
 ‘I am standing.’
- b. mɛ̀ntélê àyǎ  
 |mɛ̀-ń-tél-ǎ àǎ|  
 1SG-CR-stand-RS already  
 ‘I am standing already.’

## 2.5. “Southern” forms

The Southern dialects have a TA-prefix *à-*, used in a present tense construction (VP-*à*-STEM), henceforth the Southern present; and a past tense construction (VP-*à-H*-STEM), the Southern past. This prefix is the normal present tense marker in Ewondo (see e.g. Essono 2000:517). In the Southern dialects of Eton the constructions with *à-* exist next to the other TA-constructions. Hence, ‘I eat’ can be translated as *màdí* or as *mèté* ‘*di*. A Present and a Southern present form can be used in the same chunk of discourse, as in the following example.

- (124) válá í<sup>4</sup>sá àbèǵlé nê; dô àté ‘ló, jín nâ: “pèpâá” jé èyè jé nâ: “m̃” jín nâ:  
 “màkàd wǎ nâ: ndán yâmà inè nâ: ...”  
 |vá-lá ísá à-bèǵlè-H jé dô à-Lté L-ló jín nâ pèpá jé|  
 there father I-carry-CS I.PPR then I-PR INF-call I.QP CMP dad I.PPR  
 |èj jé nâ m̃ jín nâ m-à-kàd wǎ nâ ndán jàmà|  
 with I.PPR CMP yes I.QP CMP 1SG-SP-tell 2SG.FPPR CMP [9]ndan IX.my  
 |ì-nè nâ|  
 IX.be CMP

While her father is carrying her, she calls him and says: “dad!”, he says: “yes”. She says: “I tell you that my *ndan* is: ...”

The choice between the Present and the Southern present seems to be free in the Southern dialects, in the sense that one is never excluded if the other is possible. Probably, the Present is used more as a present progressive, whereas the

Southern present is used with a meaning of habitual, permanent or potential (which could be summarised as non-situational). An appropriate context for question (125a), for instance, would be that two people prepared a text to be read in public and that one of them suggests that the other should read it, or informs whether the other is willing to read it. It is less appropriate for asking somebody whether he is engaged in the activity of reading. For such a question the Present is preferred. Another probable interpretation of (125a) is a habitual one, i.e. ‘can you read’ or ‘do you like to read’.

- (125) a. wàláj ìì?  
 |ù-à-láj ìì|  
 2SG-SP-read Q  
 ‘Do you read?’
- b. ùtḗ ‘láj ìì?  
 |ù-Ltḗ L-láj ìì|  
 2SG-PR INF-read Q  
 ‘Are you reading?’

## 2.6. Relative tense constructions

The constructions discussed in this section have in common that they have no inherent tense specification. They derive their temporal interpretation from previous verb forms. Nevertheless, the Inceptive (2.6.2) and Relative imperfective (2.6.3) can be used in isolation. Then they have a present time reading. The opposition between both constructions in their relative tense use is aspectual, the Inceptive being the perfective counterpart of the Relative imperfective. The Inceptive and the Relative imperfective can be used after verbs in the past, present and future tenses. The Consecutive only after past and present tenses. Neither relative tense form needs to have the same subject as the preceding verb form.

### 2.6.1. Consecutive

The Consecutive consists of a subject prefix and a verb stem followed by a floating high tone suffix.

VP-STEM-H

In line with the general tone rules described in Chapter 2, the floating high tone suffix attaches to the left. When preceded by a high tone it is deleted (126a). A preceding low tone is deleted if it is not attached to a prominent syllable (126b). The floating high tone suffix forms a rising tone with a preceding low tone on a

prominent syllable (126c). The examples in (126a-b) are elicited. Example (126c) is taken from a piece of recorded procedural discourse. The three dots before the example point out that (126c) is not logically independent.

- (126) a. àté j̀nd̩ nd́ógò àdí  
 |à-Lté L-j̀nd̩ nd́ógò à-dí-H|  
 I-PR INF-take [9]mango I-eat-CS  
 ‘He takes a mango and eats it.’
- b. àté j̀nd̩ múńá àbèglè j̀nè  
 |à-Lté L-j̀nd̩ H N-úńá à-bèglè-H j̀nè|  
 I-PR INF-take LT 1-child I-carry-CS him  
 ‘She takes the child and carries him.’
- c. ... àj̀nd̩ pé k̩ lèlén  
 |à-j̀nd̩-H pé k̩ L=lè-lén|  
 I-take-CS also [9]vein IX.CON=5-palm.tree  
 ‘... and he also takes a palm vein’

### 2.6.1.1. Subsequent events

The Consecutive is often used in narratives (127) and procedural discourse (128), for sequences of actions. In the fragment in (128), Judith Akini explains how she treats a child that suffers from *ibǎb* ‘asthma’. The general time frame is set in (a) by a verb in the Present and reasserted in (e), with a Southern present, and in (m). All other verb forms that are part of the procedural sequence are in the Consecutive (14 instances). The Hodiernal pasts and non-indicative verb forms all occur in relative clauses (i, m, o), in reported speech (c, i, j), or in an interruption in which the speaker addresses a second person (e, f).

- (127) mbú ité gbè kú ìkògló y̩  
 |mbú ì-Lté L-gbè H kú ì-kòglà-H j̩  
 [9]dog IX-PR INF-catch LT [9]chicken IX-devour-CS IX.PPR  
 ‘The dog catches a chicken and devours it.’
- (128) a. j̀níná mé‘té ‘tádí wúd; m̀níní; m̀ngá ké ‘pág  
 |j̀níná m̀-Łté L-tádí H L-wúd m̀-j̀níná-H|  
 as.soon.as 1SG-PR INF-begin LT INF-massage 1SG-enter-CS  
 |m̀-ngá L-ké H L-pág|  
 1SG-INC INF-go LT INF-dig  
 ‘As soon as I begin to massage, and I enter, I go and dig’

- b. ímá mé 'ɲkwál, ímá mé ká; mèmă 'pág  
 |í-má mǎ = ñ-kǎl, í-má mǎ = kǎ|  
 AU-VI.dem VI.CON=3-rope AU-VI.DEM VI.CON=[10]leaf  
 |mǎ-mǎ-H L-pág  
 1SG-TMN-CS INF-dig  
 'that (i.e. the medicine: mǎ-bálá) of the liana, that of the leaves, I dig.'
- c. mà èèy wǎ nǎ: zùgá èèy múǵá.  
 |mǎ èj wǎ nǎ zùgá èj N-úǵá|  
 1SG.PPR with 2SG.NPPR CMP come.IMP with 1-child  
 'and I say to you: come with the child.'
- d. mètádí 'bóónò ñê mébálá mà,  
 |mǎ-tádí-H L-bó:nò H ñé H = mǎ-bálá má|  
 1SG-begin-CS INF-purge LT I.PPR AU-6-medicine VI.DEM  
 I begin to administer these medicines to him,
- e. màṅṅ lèbǒg létê... tǎ ṅṅ ná ṅgǎ àné cǎcǎd  
 |mǎ-à-ṅṅ lǎ-bǒg lǎ-tǎ tǎH ṅṅ nǎ ṅgǎ à-né cǎcǎd|  
 1SG-SP-take 5-time V-ANA NEG take thus if I-COP small  
 'at that moment I take... don't take as much as this in case he is still very small'
- f. tǎ pǎdí á tǎṅ ṅṅmǎ tóg. mǎpǎdí á jóm,  
 |tǎH pǎdí á tǎṅ ñ-wúmǎ tóg mǎ-pǎdí-H á ǧ-óm|  
 NEG put as.much.as 3-entire [9]spoon 1SG-put-CS LOC 7-thing  
 'Don't put the quantity of an entire spoon! I put it in the thing'
- g. mǎbóónó ñê. mǎṅṅ ímá mé'vwág  
 |mǎ-bó:nò-H ñé mǎ-ṅṅ-H í-má mǎ-vǒg  
 1SG-purge-CS I.PPR 1SG-take-CS AU-VI.DEM VI-other  
 'and I purge him. (Then) I take the others,'
- h. mǎvé 'wǎ. mǎ èèy wǎ nǎ:  
 |mǎ-vé-H wǎ mà èj wǎ nǎ|  
 1SG-give-CS 2SG.FPPR 1SG.NPPR with 2SG.NPPR CMP  
 'and I give them to you. And I tell you:'
- i. kǎ ùyén lé'bím mé'pǎdí á 'jóm ìì?  
 |kǎ ù-H-jén-H lǎ-bím mǎ-H-pǎdí-H á ǧ-ǒm = ìì|  
 DP 2SG-PST-see-NF 5-quantity 1SG-PST-put-NF LOC 7-thing=QS  
 'You have seen the dose that I put in the thing, haven't you?'
- j. wǎgǎ ùkǎngì kwàm ñê. múǵá àmǎ 'vwábì.  
 |wǎgǎ ù-kǎn-Lgì L-kóm ñé N-úǵá à-mǎ-H L-vǒbì  
 2SG.CPR 2SG-go-G INF-do I.PPR 1-child I-TMN-CS INF-cool.down  
 'You too, you go and do it for him.' The child calms down.'

- k. mèmă pē tìmnì kpèlì  
 |mè-mà-H pē L-tìmnì H kpèlì|  
 1SG-TMN-CS also INF-do.again LT injure  
 ‘I injure (the child) again.’
- l. jìná ú‘ké gbè jíçð, ùsó. ùsó èèy jé  
 |jìná ù-kè-H L-gbè jíçð ù-só-H|  
 as.soon.as 2SG-go-CS INF-catch lizard 2SG-come-CS  
 |ù-só-H èèj jé|  
 2SG-come-CS with I.PPR  
 ‘As soon as you go and catch a lizard, you come. You come with him.’
- m. í vôm mèmá jé kpèlì. ìyðŋ ítê mèté jðŋ jíçð  
 |í-vôm mè-H-mà-H jé L-kpèlì ì-jðŋ í-tè|  
 AU-place 1SG-PST-TMN-NF I.PPR INF-injure 7-time VII-ANA  
 |mè-Lté L-jðŋ H jíçð|  
 1SG-PR INF-take LT lizard  
 ‘to the place where I injured him. At that moment I take the lizard.’
- n. àmă mìn, àmă ‘víb  
 |à-mà-H L-mìn à-mà-H L-víb|  
 I-TMN-CS INF-swallow I-TMN-CS INF-suck  
 ‘It swallows. It sucks’
- o. íbwán méçí bépám í‘té  
 |í-b-ónH = mè-tçí bó-H-pám-H ítè|  
 AU-2-DIM=6-blood II-PST-come.out-NF there  
 ‘the little bit of blood that came out of there.’

### 2.6.1.2. Conditional

In one type of conditional clause, the verb of both the protasis and the apodosis can be in the Consecutive. The result is a correlative structure with two deranked clauses.

- (129) àmă ‘láj kálàdà, àyèm lé‘yéglé  
 |à-mà-H L-láj kálàdà à-jèm-H lè-jéglé|  
 I-TMN-CS INF-read book I-know-CS 5-subject  
 ‘If he reads the book, he will know the subject.’

Elsewhere, the Consecutive is used in the protasis only (see Section IX:5.4 for more on conditional clauses).

- (130) a.  $\eta g\acute{e}$  á'báglá mâ bìdí, mèèy gbè ídâm màdí kídí  
 | $\eta g\acute{e}$  à-bàglà-H mà bì-dí mà-è:j L- $\overline{gb\grave{e}}$ |  
 if I-keep-CS 1SG.NPPR 8-food 1SG-FUT INF-grasp  
 |í-d-àm mà-à-dí kídí|  
 AU-5-thing 1SG-SP-eat [9]tomorrow
- b. àbàglá mâ bìdí, mégbê ídâm màdí kídí  
 |à-bàglà-H mà bì-dí H-mè- $\overline{gb\grave{e}}$  í-d-àm mà-à-dí|  
 I-keep-CS 1SG.NPPR 8-food SB-1SG-grasp AU-5-thing 1SG-SP-eat  
 |kídí|  
 [9]tomorrow  
 'If he keeps some food for me, I will have something to eat tomorrow.'

### 2.6.1.3. *Simultaneity*

The Consecutive form has also been found instead of the Relative imperfective in adverbial clauses introduced by *válá*, which here means 'while'.

- (131) *válá* àbèglé mújá á 'zén î zèkúlí, mò mújá á' $\eta g\acute{a}b\acute{e}$  yôngì<sup>11</sup>  
 |*válá* à-bèglà-H N-újá á zén î=zèkúlí|  
 while I-carry-CS 1-child LOC [9]road IX.CON=school  
 |mòH=N-újá à- $\eta g\acute{a}$ -bé L-jón-Lgì|  
 DIM=1-child I-RP-IMPF INF-cry-G  
 'While he was carrying the child to school, the small child was crying.'

### 2.6.2. *Inceptive*

The Inceptive is formed by means of the auxiliary  *$\eta g\acute{a}$*  and the infinitive of the main verb. Adverbs and pronominal complements can stand between the auxiliary and the main verb.

VP- $\eta g\acute{a}$  L-STEM

- (132) a. mèn $\eta g\acute{a}$  wò yén  
 |mè- $\eta g\acute{a}$  wò L-jén|  
 1SG-INC 2SG.NPPR INF-see

11. The tone on this verb is downstepped-falling, i.e. '*yôngì*', rather than simply falling. Cases such as these must be transcribed again and an orthographic convention must be sought for downstepped-falling tones.

- b. mènḡâ yén ‘wó  
 |mè-ḡâ L-jén wǒ|  
 1SG-INC INF-see 2SG.FPPR  
 ‘I see you.’
- (133) mènḡâ àyǎ zù  
 |mè-ḡâ àǎ L-zù|  
 1SG-INC already INF-come  
 ‘I am already coming.’

There is no Inceptive form of the copula. Instead, the form *mógô* ‘become’ is used.<sup>12</sup>

- (134) àmógô àyǎ ‘jéglè  
 |à-ń-Bóg-ǎ àǎ ñ-jéglè|  
 I-CR-stay-RS already 3-teacher  
 ‘He is already a teacher.’

The name *Inceptive* was chosen because Redden (1979:112) uses this term for the related verb form in Ewondo. Note, however, that Redden’s Inceptive also includes the forms that are here called *Resultative*. The use of the Inceptive excludes any tense marking so that its temporal interpretation depends on the context, i.e. usually on the tense marking of preceding verb forms. The default temporal interpretation in the case of total absence of context is the present.

The Inceptive encodes a number of meanings, the most central of which is probably INCHOATIVE. In the following elicited example, the Inceptive form highlights the beginning of the action of writing. Nothing is implied as to the achievement of the action.

- (135) (TMAQ 13) [When you visited your brother, what he DO after you had dinner?]  
 íjòḡ àḡgámâ dí, àḡgâ tìl bô kálâdà  
 |H=ì-ḡḡḡ à-ḡgâ-mâ L-dí à-ḡgâ L-tìl H bô kálâdà|  
 AU=7-time I-RP-TMN INF-eat I-INC INF-write LT PL letter  
 ‘When he had finished eating, he started writing letters.’

Example (136) is from a recorded conversation, in which Pie-Claude On-dobo asks his aunt whether a child could choose his own *mètâmná* (a name). Since the *mètâmná* is given shortly after birth, a child cannot choose it himself. The villagers give one to the child and begin to use it to call him. The temporal

12. This is the Contrastive resultative form of the verb *bógbô* ‘stay’.

interpretation of the Inceptive in (136b) is an immediate future in the past, and it was translated for me by means of a future tense in French. The sense is clearly inchoative.

- (136) a. bé<sup>4</sup>bóm pwágó wò mètàmná á nól <sup>4</sup>válá,  
 |bé-H-bòm-H pógó wò mèt-tàmná á nól vǎlá|  
 II-PST-hit-NF really 2SG.PPR 6-metamna LOC [9]body there  
 ‘They really imposed a mètàmná on you,’  
 b. mó béngâ wò ló  
 |mó bǎ-ngâ wò L-ló|  
 VI.PPR II-INC 2SG.PPR INF-call  
 ‘the one by which they will call you.’

The Inceptive is often used where one might expect a Consecutive verb form and the two tend to be interchangeable as non-initial verb form in a series of subsequent actions, although I never encountered series of Inceptives in texts,<sup>13</sup> in contrast to the abundance of sequences of Consecutives. It is hard to find translation equivalents that capture the difference in meaning between the Inceptive and the Consecutive in such cases. Most probably the Inceptive is selected for its inchoative meaning here (137c).

- (137) a. ùté pwágó nòŋ, ùmǎ <sup>4</sup>pózi àné mí<sup>4</sup>ŋkóg,  
 |ù-Lté pógó L-nòŋ ù-mà-H L-pózi àné mì-ŋkóg|  
 2SG-PR really INF-take 2SG-TMN-CSINF-peel like 4-sugar.cane  
 ‘You really take (the lianas), you peel (them) like sugar canes,’  
 b. ùté mǎ <sup>4</sup>cág còb còb còb.  
 |ù-Lté L-mà H L-tǎg tǎb tǎb tǎb|  
 2SG-PR INF-TMN LT INF-pound ONO  
 ‘you pound,’  
 c. ùngâ nòŋ mí<sup>4</sup>ŋám èé í<sup>4</sup>té  
 |ù-ŋgâ L-nòŋ H mì-ŋám èé íté|  
 SG-INC INF-take LT 4-peel LC there  
 ‘you take out the remaining peels’  
 d. ùmyàdgi mèndím.  
 |ù-mjàd-Lgi mè-ndím|  
 2SG-press-G 6-water  
 ‘while pressing out the water.’

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13. Series of Inceptives are possible, though, as in the following elicited example: *bé<sup>4</sup>té <sup>4</sup>cíg nǎg, béngâ bà, béngâ jám, béngâ dí* ‘They kill the cow, they cut it in pieces, they prepare it and they eat it’.

In isolation the focus of attention of the Inceptive form in (138) will rather be on the result of the subject having started writing and the Inceptive functions as a progressive. Since she started writing, she is writing now. This might be called the INCHOATIVE-RESULTATIVE or the PROGRESSIVE use.<sup>14</sup>

- (138) àṅgâ tîl bô kálàdà  
 |à-ṅgâ L-tîl H bô kálàdà|  
 I-INC INF-write LT PL letter  
 ‘She is writing letters.’

The following *ndan* of a Mbog Namnye chief illustrates an interesting extension of the progressive use.

- (139) bitùtùgà bíṅgâ bwág á lébùm  
 |bì-tùtùgà bí-ṅgâ bóg á lè-bùm|  
 8-vegetable VIII-INC coil LOC 5-belly  
 ‘The vegetables hurt in the belly.’

When I tried to figure out with Pie-Claude Ondobo why the Inceptive is used here, rather than the Present, he said that the use of the Present would (potentially) give this phrase a general-truth reading, i.e. ‘vegetables give belly-ache’. The Inceptive, on the contrary, grounds the verb in an anecdote that must have been at the origin of this *ndan*. Therefore, the Inceptive, in its present progressive use, can have a more unambiguously present time reference than the Present, even though it is a relative tense form. The number of examples of each use of the Inceptive is rather small, however, and does not permit one to be very sure of this interpretation.

The inchoative-resultative function of the Inceptive makes verbs expressing a quality or a state acquire a change-of-state meaning, as in the following examples involving the verbs *vín* ‘be black’ and *kwàn* ‘be ill’.

- (140) ṅǔṅgúgô ìṅgâ vín  
 |ṅǔṅgúgô ì-ṅgâ L-vín|  
 [9]evening IX-INC INF-be.black  
 ‘The evening falls. (lit. becomes black)’

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14. The Inceptive functionally resembles the Contrastive resultative in this use.

- (141) íyòŋ ùtú, ú'má vèŋzàn lé'véŋ, úŋgâ kwàn  
 |H-ì-jòŋ ù-tú-H ú-mà-H L-vèŋzàn H lè-véŋ|  
 AU-7-time 2SG-pierce-CS III-TMN-CS INF-transform LT 5-wound  
 |ú-ŋgâ L-kòŋ|  
 III-INC INF-be.ill  
 'When you pierce it, it (i.e. a sore) transforms into a wound, it gets worse.  
 (lit. becomes sick)'

Similarly, experiencer verbs such as *yèm* 'know' and *wóg* 'hear, understand' mean 'come to know or understand something, thanks to relevant information that was presented'. The example in (142) follows an elaborate explanation of how the disease *ibǎb* can heap up in the body of a child and transform in a more threatening variant called *ibǎb í kwé*, announced by shivering and other symptoms. Probably the sentence in (142) must be interpreted as 'now that I told you how *ibǎb* can heap up in the body, you have begun to understand why somebody can get an epileptic fit'.

- (142) sè pê yǎ ùŋgâ wóg nâ sîmkálá àté 'páz káná  
 |sè pê já ù-ŋgâ L-wóg nâ sîmkálá|  
 DP also how 2SG-INC INF-hear CMP somebody  
 |à-Lté L-páz H káná|  
 I-PR INF-fall LT [9]epilepsy  
 'So now you understand that somebody can have an epileptic fit.'

- (143) àmá 'lǎŋ kálâdà, àŋgâ yèm lé'yéglê  
 |à-H-mà-H L-lǎŋ H kálâdà à-ŋgâ L-jèm H lè-jéglà|  
 1SG-PST-TMN-NF INF-read LT book I-INC INF-know LT 5-subject  
 'He read the book, he knows the subject.'

Change-of-state verbs are often in the Inceptive, in order to focus on the beginning of the process, but the Present can also be used.

- (144) a. ńkùlà àŋgâ sùz  
 |ńkùlà à-ŋgâ L-sùz|  
 tempest I-INC INF-diminish  
 b. ńkùlà àté sùz  
 |ńkùlà à-Lté L-sùz|  
 tempest I-PR INF-diminish  
 'The tempest is calming down.'

- (145) wàtélf àngâ màn  
 |wàtélf à-ŋgâ L-màn|  
 market I-INC INF-end  
 ‘The market is coming to an end.’

Another meaning related to the inchoative and resultative is that of contrast with a preceding situation. The following phrase uttered in isolation can imply that a while ago the water was not cold, e.g. that somebody recently put it in the fridge.

- (146) mëndím méngâ sìn  
 |mè-ndím mǎ-ŋgâ L-sìn|  
 6-water VI-INC INF-be.cold  
 ‘The water is cold.’

This contrastivity can be reinforced by means of the adverb *àyǎ*, which is translated as *déjà* ‘already’ in Cameroonian French.<sup>15</sup> Whether in combination with this adverb or not, the Inceptive frequently has a counterexpectational value.

- (147) [To a visitor who has just arrived and already prepares to leave again.]  
 ùngâ kè àyǎ àà!?  
 |ù-ŋgâ L-kè àjǎ = à:|  
 2SG-INC INF-go already=Q  
 ‘You are already leaving!?’

- (148) [To somebody who is ill and claimed to have no appetite:]  
 ùngâ dí íí!?  
 |ù-ŋgâ L-dí = í:|  
 2SG-INC INF-eat=Q  
 ‘You are eating!?’

Note that the adverb *àyǎ* can be used also with other verb forms, for instance with a Hodiernal past perfective in order to express an experiential perfect.

- (149) a. dè ùté jëm ‘mó’jǎn?  
 |dè ù-Lté L-ǰëm H mǎǰǎn|  
 Q 2SG-PR INF-know LT my.brother  
 ‘Do you know my brother?’

---

15. Note that the use of *déjà* in Cameroonian French differs from its use in European French. This difference is in need of a thorough description.

- b. mètóbnó áyă èèy jé  
 m̀-*H*-tóbnà-*H* àjă è:j jě  
 1SG-PST-meet-NF already with him  
 ‘(Yes,) I already met him.’

### 2.6.3. *The Relative imperfective*

The Relative imperfective is a participial form that consists of a subject prefix followed by the G-form of the verb.

#### VP-GFORM

The relative imperfective is used in participial complement clauses, the subject of which is the complement of the main clause (150). Note that the Relative imperfective does not need to have an overt head nominal. It can also agree euphorically (151b) (see also Section VIII:3.3).

- (150) a. békwb́ ‘má m̀tìlgì b̀ kálàdà  
 |b̀-*H*-kób-*H* mǎ m̀-*tìl*-*Lgì* b̀ kálàdà|  
 II-PST-find-NF 1SG.PPR 1SG-write-G PL letter  
 ‘They found me writing letters.’
- b. lèèy kwáb jê àtìlgì b̀ kálàdà  
 |l̀-è:j L-kób H jě à-*tìl*-*Lgì* b̀ kálàdà|  
 1PL-FUT INF-find LT I.PPR I-write-G PL letter  
 ‘We will find him writing letters.’
- (151) a. m̀yéngí jê àságâ  
 |m̀-*H*-jén-*Lgì*-*H* jě à-sá-gà|  
 1SG-PST-see-NF I.PPR I-work-G  
 ‘I saw him working.’
- b. m̀tè ‘yén àságâ  
 |m̀-*Ltè* L-jén à-sá-gà|  
 1SG-PR INF-see I-work-G  
 ‘I see him working.’

Another use of the Relative imperfective is in adverbial clauses expressing simultaneity (25, repeated as 154).

- (152) mènǵábé yààǵà á ǵcèǵ, mǵ'ǵáǵ wâmǵ àtìǵì bǵ kálàdà  
 |mǵ-ǵǵá-bé L-jàǵ <Lǵ> à á N-tǵèǵ mǵǵáǵ wámà|  
 1SG-RP-IMPF INF-wait<G> LOC 3-court brother I.my  
 |à-tìl-Lǵì bǵ kálàdà|  
 I-write-G PL letter  
 'I was waiting outside while my brother was writing letters.'

Related to these cases is the use of the Relative imperfective in secondary predicates. The clause in (154) is the introductory utterance of an interview on proper names in Eton. The interviewer says he wants information on the *ndan* and on the *metamna*.

- (153) àmá 'lǵáǵ kálàdà, àyèmǵì lèyégìé  
 |à-H-mà-H L-lǵáǵ H kálàdà à-jèm-ǵì lǵ-jégìlǵ|  
 I-PST-TMN-NF INF-read LT book I-know-G 5-matter  
 'He has read the book, knowing the matter.'

- (154) mèté yì mé'ndán, mèyìǵà mètàmǵá  
 |mǵ-Lté L-jì H mǵ-ndán mǵ-jì-ǵà mǵ-tàmǵá|  
 1SG-PR INF-want LT 6-ndan 1SG-want-G 6-nickname  
 'I want the ndan, I also want the nicknames. (lit. wanting the nicknames)'

- (155) a. àǵúǵ mé'ǵúǵ 'mé médyǵ bí'sín  
 |à-H-núǵ-H mǵ-núǵ mě mǵ-díá bǵ-sín|  
 I-PST-drink-NF 6-drink VI.his VI-being 8-cold  
 'He drank his drink cold.'  
 b. àdyǵ múnǵà ànǵǵǵì ú'bálá  
 |à-díá N-únǵà à-H-nìǵ-Lǵì á ùbálá|  
 I-being 1-child I-PST-live-G LOC Obala  
 'As a child he lived in Obala.'

As could be expected, the Relative imperfective can be used as an adnominal modifier. The Relative imperfective can have a complement in this use as much as in all its other uses (157).

- (156) ndá ìnèǵì  
 |ndá ì-nén-Lǵì|  
 [9]house IX-be.big-G  
 'a big house'

- (157) múǵá àyàgà byǎ àté 'só  
 |N-úǵá à-jà-gà bì-ǎ à-Lté L-só|  
 I-child I-sing-G 8-song I-PR INF-come  
 'A child singing songs arrives.'

### 3. Non-indicative moods

#### 3.1. Subjunctive

The formation of the Subjunctive does not involve any segmental affix, except the obligatory subject prefix, but is tonally rather complex (as in most Bantu languages). The subject prefix is always high in the Subjunctive. The tone pattern on the stem depends on its syllable structure. The Subjunctive of monosyllabic verb stems can be described by means of a floating low tone suffix.

H-VP-STEM-L<sup>16</sup>

The high tone of the subject prefix spreads onto the stem, forming a falling tone, illustrated in (159) with the verb *yèm* 'know, understand'. Consequently, the difference between high and low monosyllabic stems is neutralised in the Subjunctive, compare (158) to (159).

- (158) lé'té 'sílâ nâ údí ású nâ únâŋ  
 |lô-Lté L-sílâ nâ H-ù-dí-L ású nâ H-ù-nâŋ-L|  
 V-PR INF-ask CMP SB-2SG-eat-SB for CMP SB-2SG-grow-SB  
 'You should eat in order to grow.'

- (159) métâ wò vúl 'vé 'mbùlná, úyê<sup>17</sup>  
 |H-mè-tá-L wò L-vúl H L-vé H mbùlná|  
 SB-1SG-PF-SB 2SG.NPPR INF-do.quickly LT INF-give LT [9]example  
 |H-ù-jèm-L|  
 SB-2SG-know-SB  
 'I first give you an example quickly, so that you understand (it).'

16. The *H-* prefix before the subject marker is apparently absent before the subject marker of the second person plural *mìná-*.

17. This example is taken from a recorded conversation. According to one consultant, it is not entirely grammatical, since the subjunctive verb form should be preceded by the complementiser *nâ*.

The difference between high and low stems is neutralised in stem types with more than one syllable as well. All syllables between the subject prefix and the final syllable are high, with a downstep on the first stem syllable. Three floating tones are needed in order to arrive at the correct surface tonality in all instances: a high tone before the subject prefix, a low tone after the subject prefix and an infixed H after the first CVC(C)-sequence of the stem.

H-VP-L-CVC(C)<H>V...

- (160) í'té 'sílà nâ ú'báŋdê bó  
 |í-Lté L-sílà nâ H-ù-L-báŋd <H>à bó|  
 VII-PR INF-ask CMP SB-2SG-SB-invite<SB> II.PPR  
 'You should invite them.'

- (161) í'té 'sílà nâ ú'báŋlê tíd  
 |í-Lté L-sílà nâ H-ù-L-bàŋl <H>à tíd|  
 VII-PR INF-ask CMP SB-2SG-SB-conserve<SB> [9]meat  
 'You should conserve the meat.'

Most often the Subjunctive is used as a dependent verb form, e.g. in certain types of complement clause. When used independently, the Subjunctive often conveys a wish. With a first person plural subject prefix the Subjunctive is used as a so-called cohortative or optative, which can be translated in English by means of the *let's*-periphrasis (162a). This form can take a plural suffix *-(é)ngán(à)*, which replaces any material after the first CVCC-sequence of the stem (163b). The initial *é* of the suffix appears after consonants only. The difference between the form with and without the suffix has nothing to do with clusivity,<sup>18</sup> or with a number opposition between dual and plural. As its use in the Imperative shows, the suffix *-éngánà* simply pluralizes the implied second person participant. There is no way to know whether this suffix is preceded by a floating high tone morpheme.

- (162) a. édí bìbùmá  
 |H-é-dí-L bì-bùmá|  
 SB-1PL-eat-SB 8-fruit  
 'Let's eat some fruit.'

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18. The term *clusivity* is a recently coined cover term for the inclusive-exclusive distinction in the typological literature.

- b. é'díngân bìbùmá  
 |H-é-L-dí-ngánà bì-bùmá|  
 SB-1PL-SB-eat-PL 8-fruit  
 'Let's eat some fruit (all of us).'

### 3.2. Imperative

The Imperative is the only independent verb form that can lack a subject prefix. It is formed by means of a floating high tone, which is a suffix after monosyllabic stems (163a) and an infix elsewhere (163b).

CV(C)-H  
 CVC(C)<H>v...

In violation of the rules observed elsewhere, the high tone infix seems to attach to the right, creating a falling tone on the following non-prominent syllable. A possible way to account for this otherwise embarrassing tonality is to say that the H infix attaches to the left, thereby creating a rising tone on the first stem syllable. Subsequently the high part of this rising tone spreads to the right and the entire tone pattern is then regularly simplified.

c̣vc <H> ÷̣ → c̣vc̣ ÷̣ → c̣vc̣v̂ → c̣vc̣v̂

- (163) a. sǒ  
 |sò-H|  
 clean-IMP  
 'Clean it!'  
 b. bèbê  
 |bèb <H> à|  
 look<IMP>  
 'Look!'

As in the Subjunctive the suffix *-(é)ngán(à)* marks the plural (164b).

- (164) a. bèglê mèbàṅà  
 |bègl <H> è mè-bàṅà|  
 carry<IMP> 6-macabo  
 'Carry the macabos!'  
 b. bègléngân mèbàṅà  
 |bègl <H> éngánà mè-bàṅà|  
 carry<IMP>PL 6-macabo  
 'Carry (pl.) the macabos!'

The verbs *kè* ‘go’ and *zù* ‘come’ have an irregular imperative, viz. *kèní* (pl. *kèngán*) and *zùgá* (pl. *zùngán*) respectively.

#### 4. Negation

##### 4.1. The negative prefix *àá*

The Inceptive and all indicative absolute tense constructions can form their negative counterpart by means of the prefix *àá-*, which comes immediately after the subject prefix. The present tense negative copula is a suppletive form *sé*. Below, the use of the negative prefix is illustrated for the Present (165a), the present tense form of *nè* ‘be’ (165b), different past perfective (166) and past imperfective forms (167), the Past imperfective (168) and the Indefinite future (169). Resultative and Contrastive resultative forms are also negated by means of *àá-* (170).

- (165) a. *àá<sup>+</sup>té<sup>+</sup>sá*  
 |à-ǎ:-Lté L-sá|  
 I-NEG-PR INF-work  
 ‘He’s not working.’
- b. *àsé vâ*  
 |à-sé vǎ|  
 I-NEG.be here  
 ‘She isn’t here.’

- (166) a. *màáṅgápám*  
 |mè-ǎ:-ṅgá-pám|  
 I SG-NEG-RP-leave  
 ‘I didn’t leave.’
- b. *àámé vâ*  
 |à-ǎ:-mé vǎ|  
 I-NEG-Y.be here  
 ‘She wasn’t here.’

- (167) *bááṅgábé vògò*  
 |bá-ǎ:-ṅgá-bé L-vògò|  
 II-NEG-RP-IMPf INF-play  
 ‘They were not playing.’

- (168) màápâmgì  
 |mè-ǎ:-pám-Lgì|  
 1SG-NEG-leave-G  
 ‘I didn’t (usually) go out.’
- (169) àà’ngá’jwág ndá  
 |à-ǎ:-LngáL-jóg-H ndá|  
 I-NEG-IF-build-IF [9]house  
 ‘He will never build a house.’
- (170) a. àágbélê mètwa  
 |à-ǎ:-g̃bél-ǎ mètúà|  
 I-NEG-grasp-RS car  
 ‘He doesn’t have a car.’
- b. àáṅmêl ndá ‘yé  
 |à-ǎ:-N-g̃bél-ǎ ndá j-ě|  
 I-NEG-CR-grasp-RS [9]house IX-his  
 ‘He doesn’t have his own house yet.’

The negative form of the Future is problematic. For the time being, I will describe it using an allomorph *à* of the Future auxiliary *èèy* (171).

- (171) a. ndá yàâ nén  
 |ndá ì-ǎ:-à L-nén|  
 [9]house IX-NEG-FUT INF-be.big  
 ‘The house will not be big.’
- b. ndá yàâ pwágó ‘nén  
 |ndá ì-ǎ:-à pógá L-nén|  
 [9]house IX-NEG-FUT really INF-be.big  
 ‘The house will really not be big.’

In past imperfective verb forms the negative prefix *àá* can be followed by the special negative imperfective auxiliary *jé*, instead of one of the past forms of the auxiliary *né* (see example VIII(87b)). This construction does not distinguish between hodiernal, hesternal and remote past. Possibly the use of this auxiliary is restricted to Southern dialects.

#### 4.2. Negation in non-indicative moods: the negative auxiliary *bé*

Negation of non-indicative verb forms involves the auxiliary *bé* followed by the infinitive form of the main verb. In the subjunctive, the negative auxiliary takes

a subject prefix (172). The subject prefix is optional in the imperative singular and obligatory in the plural (173).

- (172) a. lé'té 'sílá nâ údí ású nâ ùbé kwàn  
 |lɔ-Lté L-sílá nâ H-ù-dí-L ású nâ ù-bé L-kòñ|  
 V-PR INF-ask CMP SB-2SG-eat-SB for CMP 2SG-NEG INF-be.ill  
 'You have to eat in order not to be ill.'
- b. àyá ùté kwàm nâ àbé 'dí  
 |à-já ù-Lté L-kòm nâ à-bé L-dí|  
 3-pain III-PR INF-do CMP I-NEG INF-eat  
 'Due to the pain, she doesn't eat.'

- (173) a. bé 'pám  
 |bé L-pám|  
 NEG INF-leave  
 'Don't leave!'  
 or: ùbé 'pám
- b. mìníbé pè wú nâ mìnálóŋɔ jé ndán pébè  
 |mìní-bé pè L-wú nâ mìní-à-lóŋɔ jé ndán pébà|  
 2PL-NEG also INF-die CMP 2PL-SP-call I.PPR ndan IX.other  
 'Don't make an effort to give him another ndan.'

#### 4.3. The negative adverb *tè*

Negation can also be expressed by means of the negative adverb *tè*. It is not entirely clear yet in which conditions *tè* can be used and how it differs semantically from the other negative constructions. Therefore, this subsection is limited to some examples of its use. In Southern dialects I found examples of *tè* followed by an indicative verb form in order to express a prohibitive or a negative subjunctive (174). Compare (172a) with (174a). The negative adverb *tè* is also used in combination with *nè* 'be' and *ngénà* 'still be' (175). Since I am not sure yet about the correct underlying representation for the examples in (175), I do not provide glosses for them.

- (174) a. lé'té 'sílá nâ údí ású nâ tè wàkwàn  
 |lɔ-Lté L-sílá nâ H-ù-dí-L ású nâ tè ù-à-kòñ|  
 V-PR INF-ask CMP SB-2SG-eat-SB for CMP NEG 2SG-SP-be.ill  
 'You have to eat in order not be ill.'
- b. jé íkwâmgì nâ tè àsó lé'bóg  
 |ɕ-é í-H-kòm-Lgì nâ tè à-H-só-H H lè-bóg|  
 7-what VII-PST-do-G CMP NEG I-PST-come-NF LOC 5-party  
 'How come she didn't come to the party?'

- c. tè wàyà í'já 'yílá  
|tè ù-à-jà í-ǰ-ǎ jǐ-lá|  
NEG 2SG-SP-sing AU-7-song VII.DEM-CH  
'Don't sing that song!'

- (175) a. mènǵénê tè páam  
'I'm not leaving yet.'  
b. mènè tè páam  
'I'm not leaving.'

# Chapter 8

## The clause

### 1. Introduction

This chapter provides basic information on the structure of the Eton clause. Syntax and morphology cannot be treated completely separately, so that a lot of syntactic information is to be found in previous chapters, especially V and VII, and, obviously, VI. The chapter starts with a discussion of subjects (Section 2). In Section 3, which discusses non-subject complements (and, to a certain extent, adjuncts), it is claimed that there are no clear syntactic arguments to define grammatical relations other than subject. Section 4 discusses non-verbal clauses and Section 5 copular clauses. The chapter concludes with sections on focus (Section 6) and questions (section 7).

### 2. Subjects

Defining the subject is uncontroversial in Eton. The only formal characteristics of subjects are their preverbal position and the agreement they trigger on the verb. Nothing can stand between a finite verb and its overt subject. There is no difference in marking between subjects of intransitive verbs and subjects of transitive verbs. Very often the subject is an animate agent or experiencer (1), but many other kinds of subjects are also possible (2).

- (1) mòd àtán á'ngápám ítùn í ndá  
|N-òd à=à-tán à-ngá-pám ì-tùn í=ndá|  
1-person I.CON=3-village I-RP-come.out 7-part VII.CON=[9]house  
'The chief came out of the room.'

- (2) a. nála ú'té tìni nâ, ...  
|nála ú-Lté L-tì:nì nâ|  
thus III-PR INF-mean CMP  
'This means that, ...'

- b. (What happened to your hand?)

pà ìcíg mâ ùnŋ  
 |pà ì-H-tʃíg-H mà ù-nŋ|  
 [9]machete IX-PST-cut-NF 1SG.NPPR 3-finger  
 ‘A machete cut my finger.’

Apart from imperatives, every finite verb obligatorily has a subject prefix, whether a nominal subject is present (3a) or not (3b).

- (3) a. j̀néglê àté pàm  
 |̀-̀jég̀lê à-Lté L-pàm|  
 1-teacher I-PR INF-be.furious  
 ‘The teacher is furious.’
- b. àté pàm  
 |à-Lté L-pàm|  
 I-PR INF-be.furious  
 ‘He is furious.’

This prefix agrees with the subject in gender (4a), or, if the subject is a first or second person, in person and number (4b).

- (4) a. dô mwàn újàm à̀ngátébê, j̀n nâ:  
 |dô N-̀nH=ù-̀çàm à̀-̀ngá-tébà j̀n nâ|  
 DP 1-DIM=3-squirrel I-RP-stand I.QP CMP  
 ‘Then the little squirrel stood up and said.’
- b. “mă mákpâgì mìn zën.”  
 |mă m̀-à-̀kpâgì mìn zën|  
 1SG.FPPR 1SG-SP-clear 2PL.PPR [9]path  
 ‘I will clear the path for you.’

Tables 1 and 2 present the subject prefixes. The first person plural prefix has several variants. On the one hand, there are two free allomorphs *ê-* and *bí-*. On the other hand these allomorphs have dialectal and idiolectal variants. The prefix *ê-* is pronounced as *lê-* in Southern dialects and *bí-* is sometimes pronounced with a low or a rising tone, depending on the speaker. There is no semantic difference between these variants, no opposition between dual and plural, for instance.

Table 1. Subject prefixes (structural forms)

I	à	II	bó
III	ú	IV	mí
V	é	VI	mé
VII	í	VIII	bí
IX	ì	X	í

Table 2. Subject prefixes: first and second person (structural forms)

1SG	mè	1PL	è, bí
2SG	ù	2PL	mìní

I use the term *agreement* in its broadest sense, including local and non-local agreement. Sometimes the term *anaphoric agreement* is used for the latter (e.g., in Bearth 2003:122, citing Bresnan and Mchombo 1987:741), but non-local agreement can be exophoric as well. Thus, the subject prefix can index a referent that is retrieved from the context by agreeing in gender with a noun that can refer to that referent. In case no nominal controller can be retrieved, agreement pattern V or VII is selected, in free variation. The subject prefix of the second verb in (5a), for instance, is of agreement pattern VII. The speaker had asked somebody for delicate information and understands that his interlocutor will not provide it without a compensation (“something should be thrown on the ground”). The prefix *í-* in *í'té* ‘*sílâ*’ refers to the entire situation. In example (5b) from the same recorded conversation a subject prefix of pattern V is used.

- (5) a. *ùté kàd nâ í'té 'sílâ nâ métâ gbà dâm ásí*  
 |ù-Lté L-kàd nâ í-Lté L-sílâ nâ H-mè-tá-L|  
 2SG-PR INF-say CMP VII-PR INF-ask CMP SB-1SG-PF-SB  
 |L-gbà H d-àm á sí|  
 INF-throw LT 5-thing LOC [9]ground  
 ‘You say that this demands that I first throw something on the ground.’
- b. *tò lénê òcù, tò lénê ìvú í'mén pwágó, ...*  
 |tò ló-nè Ñ-tfù tò ló-nè ì-vú ímën pógá|  
 DP V-COP 3-poison DP V-COP 7-ivu INTS really  
 ‘Even if it is poison, even if it is really *ìvu* itself, ...’

Likewise, in verbal presentative clauses and in questions like (6b), the subject prefix of the copula is of agreement pattern V or VII, also when the predicate is a plural nominal.

- (6) a. ínê / éñê bì bé<sup>4</sup>bá  
 |í-nè / é-nè bì bǎ-bǎ|  
 VII-COP / V-COP 1PL.PPR II-two  
 ‘It’s the two of us.’
- b. ínê mìnngá mpè?  
 |í-nè N-ìnnngá Ñ-pè|  
 VII-COP 1-woman I-which  
 ‘Which woman is it?’

In constructions with an impersonal subject, the subject prefix is that of agreement pattern II.

- (7) bé<sup>4</sup>má <sup>4</sup>bó bô bájàsálêm  
 |bǎ-H-mà-H L-bó H bô bájàsálêm|  
 II-PST-TMN-NF INF-chase LT PL retailer  
 ‘They chased away the retailers.’

Nouns with animate (or human) reference have no specific (semantic) agreement rules, but simply agree in their grammatical gender as all other nouns do. See, for instance, the agreement triggered by the gender 3 noun *ὴὴμέὴμέβ* ‘thief’ in (8).

- (8) ὴὴμέὴμέβ úñí á ndá íwúnâ ñǒ  
 |Ñ-ὴὴμέὴμέβ ú-H-ñí-H á ndá á í-wúnâ ñǒ|  
 3-thief III-PST-enter-NF LOC [9]house LOC AU-window I.DEM  
 ‘The thief entered the house through that window.’

However, I found one lexical exception to this generalisation. When the subject is the gender 3 noun *ὴkúὴkú má* ‘chief’ the verb usually has a prefix of agreement pattern I instead of III, as if *ὴkúὴkú má* were a noun of gender 1.

- (9) ὴkúὴkú má àté kwàn  
 |Ñ-kúὴkú má à-Lté L-kòn|  
 3-chief I-PR INF-be.ill  
 ‘The chief is ill.’

Note that within nominals, *ὴkúὴkú má* always triggers gender 3 agreement.

- (10) ὴkúὴkú má ñû  
 |H-ñ-kúὴkú má ñû|  
 AU-3-chief III.DEM  
 ‘this chief’

The gender 4 plural *mìṅkúṅkú má* ‘chiefs’ triggers agreement pattern IV, according to the general rules of agreement.

- (11) *mìṅkúṅkú má mí'té kwàn*  
 |mì-ṅkúṅkú má mí-Lté L-kòn|  
 4-chief IV-PR INF-be.ill  
 ‘The chiefs are ill.’

The reason for this exception can be sought in the fact that there is usually only one chief in a given situation, which drastically restricts the number of possible referents. Thus, unique reference might be the semantic reason for the choice of agreement pattern I, not animacy (see the discussion of genderless nouns in III:3.2). This also explains why the word for ‘chief’ does not trigger agreement pattern II in the plural.

There is no coordinating conjunction that translates ‘and’ in Eton. Complex subjects are formed by means of the comitative preposition *èèy*. Speaker intuitions about agreement with complex subjects are not very stable. Contrary to what could be expected, there is never simply agreement with the head noun. The verb agrees with both subject nominals. Semantic agreement seems to be always possible and is as follows. If the two conjuncts are human, agreement pattern II is selected (12a), otherwise it is agreement pattern VIII (12b-d).

- (12) a. *mbóy yàmà èèy mǝ'jáṅ bé'má 'bá*  
 |mbóé jàmà èèj mǝǝǝṅ bǝ-H-mà-H L-bá|  
 [9]friend IX.my with my.sibling II-PST-TMN-NF INF-marry  
 ‘My friend and my cousin married each other.’
- b. *mbé èèy bìlá bí'má kù*  
 |mbé èj bì-lá bí-H-mà-H L-kù|  
 [9]pot with 8-glass VIII-PST-TMN-NF INF-fall  
 ‘The pot and the glasses fell.’
- c. *mbé èèy ìlá bíkù*  
 |mbé èj ì-lá bí-H-kù|  
 [9]pot with 7-glass VIII-PST-fall  
 ‘The pot and the glass fell.’
- d. *ìlá èèy mbé bíkù*  
 |ì-lá èj mbé bí-H-kù|  
 7-glass with [9]pot VIII-PST-fall  
 ‘The glass and the pot fell.’

However, when the two subject nouns belong to the same gender, they can trigger gender agreement if they are both plural, or agreement with the corresponding plural gender if they are both singular (13).

- (13) èbò èy dúmá mé'té jò épàn  
 |è-bò è:j d-úmá mó-Lté L-ɕò á è-pàn|  
 5-ebo with 5-baobab VI-PR INF-grow LOC 5-bush  
 'Ebo and baobab grow in the bush.'

In complex subjects, first person pronominals precede second person pronominals, which in turn precede third persons. In such a comitative construction, the first person is always plural.

- (14) bì èy wǎ bìsɔ́ 'bógbô vá  
 |bì è:j wǎ bì-H-sɔ́-H L-Bógbô vǎ|  
 1PL.NPPR with 2SG.FPPR 1PL-PST-come-NF INF-stay here  
 'You and I, we came to stay here.'

### 3. Non-subject complements

After a brief general note on transitivity (3.1), this section describes how verbs can acquire an extra complement (3.2) and in which cases a complement can be left unexpressed (3.3). The following subsections treat a number of often used object diagnostics that do not provide solid arguments to define the grammatical relation *object* in Eton. Finally, in (3.5) I discuss some differences between nominal complements and nominal adjuncts.

#### 3.1. Transitivity

Verbs can be classified into intransitive (15), transitive (16), ditransitive (17) and ambitransitive (18) verbs depending on their most typical use.

- (15) a. dáj 'get lost'  
 mèdáj  
 |mè-H-dáj|  
 1SG-PST-get.lost  
 'I got lost.'
- b. pà 'shine'  
 ɲgwàn íté pà  
 |ɲgòn ì-Lté L-pà|  
 [9]moon IX-PR INF-shine  
 'The moon shines.'

- (16) a. ɲòŋ ‘take’  
 àté ɲòŋ mé<sup>+</sup>bálá  
 |à-Lté L-ɲòŋ H mà-bálá|  
 I-PR INF-take LT 6-medicine  
 ‘She takes the medicine.’
- b. swàm ‘find’  
 múŋá á<sup>+</sup>swám léswě  
 |m-úŋá à-H-sóm lə-sòé|  
 1-child i-PST-FIND 5-hiding.place  
 ‘The child has found the hiding place.’
- (17) vé ‘give’  
 mbwé ‘yé í<sup>+</sup>végé ɲê iyé  
 |mbóé j-ě ì-H-vé-gà-H ɲě ì-jé|  
 [9]friend IX-her IX-PST-give-G-NF I.PPR 7-dress  
 ‘Her friend gave her a dress.’
- (18) a. mèté ‘dí  
 |mè-Lté L-dí|  
 1SG-PR INF-eat  
 ‘I am eating.’
- b. mèté ‘dí kpêm  
 |mè-Lté L-dí H k̄pèm|  
 1SG-PR INF-eat LT [10]cassava.leaf  
 ‘I am eating cassava leaves.’

Typically, most verbs can have different argument structures, depending on their meanings or on the construction in which they occur. The verb *yòlò* in the elaborate question in (19), for instance, has slightly different meanings reflected by different argument structures. In (19a), there are two complements ‘person’ and ‘ndan’ (a type of name) and *yòlò* can best be translated as ‘give’. The meaning of *yòlò* is ‘give a name to’ in (19b), where there is only one complement. In (19c) the complement is followed by a proper name that functions as secondary predicate. *Yòlò* can be translated as ‘call’ here. Finally, in (19d) there is a complement and an oblique introduced by the preposition *á* and the verb is translatable as ‘provide sb. with a name’.

- (19) a. yì béŋgábé yòlgò mòd ndán  
 |jì bə-ŋgá-bé L-jòl <g> à N-òd ndán|  
 QII-RP-IMPF INF-name<G> 1-person [9]ndan  
 ‘Did they give somebody a ndan’

- b. àné pé báýòlò mòd m̀pébê,  
 |àné pé bá-à-jòlà N-òd m̀-épébè|  
 like also II-SP-name 1-person I-other  
 ‘the way they also name somebody else,’
- c. àné béngáyòlò ẁd l̀kíní,  
 |àné bá-ṅgá-jòlà ẁd l̀kíní|  
 like II-RP-name 2SG.NPPR Akini  
 ‘the way they named you Akini’
- d. yì bènê jã́m ỳlò mòd á ndán ‘nalá?  
 |jì bá-nè ɕã́m L-jòlà H N-òd á ndán ná-lá|  
 QII-POS possibly INF-name LT 1-person LOC [9]ndan thus-ID  
 ‘Is it possible to attribute somebody a ndan like this?’

The variation in argument structures illustrated by means of the verb *ỳlò* is lexically determined. The following two sections describe more systematic variation in the argument structure of verbs. Section 3.2 discusses some types of complements that can be added to a wide range of verbs and Section 3.3 points out that complements can often be left out without changing the semantics of the verb.

### 3.2. Extra complement

#### 3.2.1. Internal complement

Many verbs can take an internal complement. Thus, a usually intransitive verb can be used transitively (20) and a usually transitive verb ditransitively (21). According to Essono (2000:381) all regular verbs can take such an internal complement in Ewondo, but efforts to elicit evidence for this generalisation in Eton were unsuccessful. An internal complement is sometimes morphologically related to the verb, as in (20c), but mostly not.

- (20) a. m̀ékú m̀èg  
 |m̀-è-H-kú-H ñ-Bèg|  
 1SG-PST-fall-NF 3-fall  
 ‘I fell.’
- b. m̀èvyé mé‘nólgí  
 |m̀-è-H-vjé-H m̀-é-nólgí|  
 1SG-PST-urinate-NF 6-urine  
 ‘I urinated.’

- c. béwûlgâ. mèywàŋ méwûlgâ vè dùlà.  
 |bâ-(H)-wùl <g> à mè-jòŋ mǎ-(H)-wùl <g> à vè d-ùlà|  
 II-(PST)-walk<G> 6-clan VI-(PST)-walk<G> simply 5-walk  
 ‘They walked. The clans simply walked.’

- (21) àbálí ‘ŋkwág lé<sup>+</sup>véŋ á bídò á mbúz  
 |à-H-báli-H ñ-kóg là-véŋ á bì-dò á mbúz|  
 I-PST-wound-NF 3-antelope 5-wound LOC 8-limb LOC [9]back  
 ‘He wounded the antelope at its posterior limbs.’

The internal complement is not always the result of the action expressed by the verb. In example (22) it is rather an instrument that is intimately linked to the action.

- (22) a. ìsíŋá íwódí wò byá  
 |ì-síŋá í-H-wòdì-H wò bj-á|  
 7-cat VII-PST-scratch-NF 2SG.NPPR 8-nail  
 ‘The cat scratched you.’  
 b. ìsíŋá íwódí wò byá ákòl  
 |ì-síŋá í-H-wòdì-H wò bj-á á à-kòl|  
 7-cat VII-PST-scratch-NF 2SG.NPPR 8-nail LOC 3-leg  
 ‘The cat scratched your leg.’

Note that in all these examples the internal complement can be left out without a clear difference in meaning.

### 3.2.2. *Applicatives*

We saw in section IV:3 that Eton does not have an applicative derivational suffix. However, complements that typically can be added to the valency of a verb by means of an applicative suffix in other Bantu languages can be added without any morphological marking on the verb in Eton. These “applicative” complements are not marked differently from other complements of the verb. They can be added to intransitive (23) and transitive verbs (24-25).

- (23) índónŋ ní ité mà béb  
 |í-ndónŋ ní ì-Lté mà L-béb|  
 AU-[9]news IX.DEM IX-PR 1SG-NPPR INF-be.bad  
 ‘This news is bad for me.’

(24) *mèté tìl wò kálàdà*

|mè-Lté L-tìl H wò kálàdà|  
 1SG-PR INF-write LT 2SG.NPPR letter  
 ‘I am writing you a letter.’

(25) a. *mèté kòm wò mé<sup>4</sup>bálá mâ*

|mè-Lté L-kòm H wò H-mè-bálá má|  
 1SG-PR INF-make LT 2SG.NPPR AU-6-medicine VI.DEM  
 ‘I am making you this medicine.’

b. *bé<sup>4</sup>má <sup>4</sup>bág békwàm bé ísá <sup>4</sup>mwání*

|bé-H-mà-H L-bág H bè-kòm bé = ì-sá m̀nì|  
 II-PST-TMN-NF INF-add LT II-do II.PPR=7-work money  
 ‘They augmented the workers’ pay.’

The applicative complement has almost always a benefactive or malefactive semantic role (see e.g. (23-25)). Depending on the semantics of the verb, some other roles are also possible, as in (26b). I did not find and was not able to elicit clear cases of an applicative complement with an instrumental role.

(26) *twàmó àkúz ηgwân ndógô*

|tòmá à-H-kùz-H ηgòn ndógà|  
 Tomo I-PST-buy-NF 9.girl 9.mango

a. ‘Tomo bought mangoes for the girl.’

b. ‘Tomo bought mangoes from the girl.’

There are lexically conditioned restrictions on applicativization, which are in need of further study. In general, it seems that if a complement can express a semantic role present in the inherent valency of the verb, it *must* express this role, i.e. it cannot be alternatively interpreted as an applicative complement with a bene/malefactive role. For instance, the verb *sá* is ambitransitive. Used intransitively it means ‘work, perform work’. Used transitively it subcategorises for a patient, meaning ‘work on/at’. It is impossible to add an applicative complement to intransitive *sá*, since this complement will necessarily be interpreted as the patientive complement of transitive *sá* (at least; an applicative complement could not be *elicited* in this position. A search in a large corpus might contradict this generalisation.).

(27) *àté <sup>4</sup>sá ndá*

|à-Lté L-sá H ndá|  
 I-PR INF-work LT [9]house

‘He works at (builds/renovates) the house.’

\*‘He works for (in order to be able to purchase) a house.’

- (28) àté 'sá ndá î bòd  
 |à-Lté L-sá H ndá î=b-òd|  
 I-PR INF-work LT [9]house IX.CON=2-person  
 'He establishes a family.'  
 \*'He works for his family.'

Similarly, the human complement can be interpreted as a beneficiary in (29), where it is a highly unlikely patient, but not in (30), where a beneficiary is necessarily introduced by the preposition *ású* 'for'.<sup>1</sup>

- (29) àjám 'má  
 |à-H-ǫ́ám-H mǎ|  
 I-PST-cook-NF 1SG-FPPR  
 'She cooked for me.'

- (30) a. àté bèbè 'byá  
 |à-Lté L-bèbè H bíǎ|  
 I-PR INF-look LT 1PL.FPPR  
 'He is looking at us.'
- b. àté bèbè ású 'byá  
 |à-Lté L-bèbè H ású H=bíǎ|  
 I-PR INF-look LT for III.CON=1PL.FPPR  
 'He is looking for/on behalf of us.'

Another type of lexically conditioned restriction can be seen in examples such as (23) where *mâ* '(for) me' as an applicative complement can be replaced only by other unquestionably definite nominals. A possibly indefinite nominal would be interpreted as a secondary predicate (31a), rather than as an applicative complement (31b).

- (31) ??'índón̄ jí itè 'béb 'mínngá  
 |í-ndón̄ jí ì-Lté L-béb H m-ìnnngá|  
 AU-[9]news IX.DEM IX-PR INF-be.bad LT 1-woman  
 a. 'This news is a bad woman.' (lit. 'This news is bad as a woman.')
- b. \*'This news is bad for the woman.'

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1. Passivisation adds some complications. In contrast to its active counterpart, the form *mèjám̄bân* receives a patientive interpretation 'I was cooked.' out of context, unless the patient is explicit, as in *mèjám̄bân kpêm* 'lit. I was cooked cassava leaves for.'

- (32) a. àté mâ tègbè  
 |à-Lté mà L-tègbà|  
 I-PR 1SG.NPPR INF-be.lazy  
 ‘He is lazy to my disadvantage. (where ‘I’ must be ‘his’ superior)’
- b. àté tègbè í’sónó  
 |à-Lté L-tègbà H ìsónó|  
 I-PR INF-be.lazy LT Essono  
 ‘He is lazy to the disadvantage of Essono.’
- c. àté tègbé ‘mínngá  
 |à-Lté L-tègbà H m-ìnnngá|  
 I-PR INF-be.lazy LT woman  
 ‘She is a lazy woman.’ (lit. ‘She is lazy as/for a woman.’)

Finally, I found examples of a circumstantial applicative construction, in which a complement expressing cause is added to the basically intransitive verb *wú* ‘die’. In (33) Miss Judith Akini explains how she treats a disease with the root of a plant called *wogzo-wogzo*. When digging for this type of root, one has to be careful to pick out one single root, follow it and dig it out entirely. If you mix up two roots, somebody will die because of your lack of care. The example in (34a) with the same verb *wú* ‘die’ can have a variety of interpretations. The subject might have died due to a dog bite, after eating dog, or due to an accident caused by a dog, etc. If he or she was killed by a dog, a passive construction would be more appropriate (34b). Note that the causer-complement does not have to be animate (35).

- (33) ɲgé úʔɲɔŋ ɲkǎŋ mʔpébè, ùyèmgi nâ íʔzá môd àwú ʔwó  
 |ɲgé H-ù-ɲɔŋ-H ɲ-kǎŋ mʔpébè ù-jèm-Lgi nâ ízá N-òd|  
 if 2SG-take-CS 3-rootIII-other 2SG-know-GCMP sb.else’s 1-person  
 |à-à-wú wǔ|  
 I-SP-die 2SG.FPPR  
 ‘If you take another root, you must know that somebody else’s child will die because of you.’
- (34) a. àwú mbú  
 |à-H-wú-H mbú|  
 I-PST-die-NF [9]dog  
 ‘He died due to a dog.’
- b. àngáwébân èy mbú  
 |à-ɲgá-wé-bân èj mbú|  
 I-RP-kill-VRS with [9]dog  
 ‘He was killed by a dog.’

- (36) àwú úkèŋ  
 |à-H-wú-H ù-kèŋ|  
 I-PST-die-NF 3-knife  
 'He was killed with a knife (or: due to a knife).'

In a survey of fifteen intransitive verbs, the only other verb for which a similar construction could be elicited is *jón* 'cry' (37).

- (37) múŋá àtè 'jón zâ  
 |N-úŋá à-Lté L-ɕjón H zâ|  
 1-child I-PR INF-cry LT hunger  
 'The child cries because he is hungry.'

### 3.2.3. Possessor raising

Possessor raising, as illustrated in examples (38-40), is very pervasive in Eton. It is almost always possible and most of the time it is preferred over the corresponding construction with an adnominal possessor. The possessed element can be a subject (38), a nominal complement (39) or a prepositional complement (40). Note that the possessor is expressed twice in (38b), once as the raised complement of the verb and once as a possessive modifier in the subject nominal.

- (38) a. íjòŋ vó bwǎn béŋgábé 'wúgâ jé, ...  
 |í-ì-ɕjòŋ vó b-ǒn bǎ-ŋgá-bé L-wú-gâ jě|  
 AU-7-time DP 2-child II-RP-IMP INF-die-G I.PPR  
 'When his children were dying, ...'
- b. ínâŋ yě íbúúgì í'té nê yábni  
 |í-ì-nâŋ jě í-búúg <g>ì í-Lté jě L-jábni|  
 AU-7-arm VII.his VII-break<G> VII-PR I.PPR INF-hurt  
 'His broken arm hurts.'
- c. ònó úbéb 'má  
 |ò-λó ú-H-béb-H mǎ|  
 3-head III-PST-be.bad-NF 1SG.FPPR  
 'I have had a bad dream.'
- (39) pùdí jê mèkǒl á bô háŋkwâb  
 |pùdì-H jě mà-kǒl á bô háŋkòb|  
 put-IMP I.PPR 6-foot LOC PL handcuff  
 'Put his feet in handcuffs.'

- (40) a. *dô mètè bùmṅgàná wùlă ʹjóny á jól*  
 |*dô mètè-Ltè L-bùmṅgàná H L-wùlă H jòé á jól*|  
 DP 1SG-PR INF-do.suddenly LT INF-walk LT [9]snake LOC [9]body  
 ‘Then all of a sudden I stepped on a snake.’
- b. *ìsínâ íʹjínlâ mà bj-ă á à-köl*  
 |*ì-sínâ í-H-jínlâ-H mà bj-ă á à-köl*|  
 7-CAT VII-PST-plant-NF 1SG-NPPR 8-nail LOC 3-leg  
 ‘The cat planted its nails in my leg.’
- c. *íyôṅ ìbăb íʹmá lòd môd á jól*  
 |*í-ì-jôṅ ì-băb í-mâ-H L-lòd H N-òd á jól*|  
 AU-7-time 7-asthma VII-TMN-CSINF-surpassLT 1-person LOC [9]body  
 ‘When “asthma” exceeds in a person’s body, ...’

The result of possessor raising is comparable to that of applicativisation, viz. the addition of a (first) complement. It seems that if a complement could in theory be interpreted either as a raised possessor or as a benefactive applicative complement, only the first interpretation is acceptable (41) (see also example (42) where the reading ‘He gave the child a present for me.’ is excluded).

- (41) *àsó wô méʹtwâ*  
 |*à-H-só-H wô H mètúà*|  
 I-PST-come-NF 2SG.NPPR LOC car  
 ‘He came in your car.’  
 \*‘He came for you by car.’

Note that possessor raising can also occur with ditransitive verbs, resulting in a construction with three complements.

- (42) *àvé mà múṅá íʹpágâ*  
 |*à-H-vé-H mà N-úṅá ì-págâ*|  
 I-PST-give-NF 1SG.NPPR 1-child 7-present  
 ‘He gave my child a present.’
- (43) *àvé mà jé dô*  
 |*à-H-vé-H mà jě dô*|  
 I-PST-give-NF 1SG.NPPR I.PPR V.PPR  
 ‘He gave it (“me”) him.’

### 3.3. Zero anaphora

Pronominal complements tend to be omitted when readily retrievable from the context, especially, but not exclusively, when they refer to inanimates. See (45)

for an animate example. A corpus study would be needed to find out exactly which contexts favour the absence of an overt complement.

- (44) vé 'má  
 |vé-H má|  
 give-IMP 1SG.FPPR  
 'Give it to me.'
- (45) [ínê nâ "bon", mènè múńá. dǒ mèté wǒ kwàn vâ. wàáyì tá kàd nâ métâ kè èyèy múńá ábǒ ísímkaà nǒlí, á'bébá mà né.  
 'Let's say I am your child, okay? And I am ill. You're not going to say: Let me first take him to Mr X there, so that he examines him for me.']  
 wǒ ùńǒń pwágó, ùkě èyèy né á dwábdǒ  
 |wǒ ù-ńǒń-H pǒgǒ ù-kè-H è:j né á dǒbdà|  
 2SG.PPR 2SG-take-CS really 2SG-go-CS with I.PPR LOC hospital  
 'You really take [him] and bring him to hospital!'

### 3.4. Possible object diagnostics

Eton has no sets of morphosyntactic characteristics (sometimes referred to as *object diagnostics*) common to certain postverbal nominals that clearly call for the definition of syntactic relations other than that of *subject*. First, there is no object agreement or case. Second, the mutual ordering of post verbal nominals is defined mainly by their semantic role, so that any reference to syntactic relations for the description of the mutual order of complements and adjuncts is superfluous (3.4.1). Third, the passive has a very low text frequency and consultants are often reluctant to produce elicited passive forms, so that passivability is probably not a criterion that should be given a lot of weight in syntactic argumentation (3.4.2). Fourth, a number of tonal phenomena that occur between certain verb forms and a following nominal do not differentiate between postverbal nominals (3.4.3). However, non-subject arguments do differ from each other in whether they are marked by a preposition or not (and this has repercussions for word order) (3.4.4).

#### 3.4.1. Word order

In the postverbal domain complements precede adjuncts and nominal complements<sup>2</sup> precede prepositional complements (see Section 3.4.4. for examples). Among two nominal complements the order is Goal-Theme, also when the Goal is an applicative complement or the result of possessor raising. That is, semantic

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2. The term *nominal complements* includes pronominals.

roles *typically* fulfilled by a more animate participant precede semantic roles that are *typically* lower in animacy.

(46) mèèy ní dō vé (preferred word order)

|mè-è:j ní dō L-vé|  
1SG-FUT I.PPR V.PPR INF-give

‘I will give it to him.’

= mèèy ní ‘vé dō

= mèèy vé ní dō

\*mèèy dō ní vé

\*mèèy vé dō ní

In case of an unusual relationship between a semantic role and the meaning of the nominal that fulfills it, semantic roles dictate word order (47b).

(47) a. àvé múḡá íbùḡá

|à-H-vé-H m-úḡá ì-bùḡá|  
I-PST-give-NF 1-child 7-fruit

‘He gave the child a piece of fruit.’

b. ?àvé íbùḡá múḡá

|à-H-vé-H ì-bùḡá m-úḡá|  
I-PST-give-NF 7-fruit 1-child

‘He gave a child to the piece of fruit.’

The result of possessor raising always precedes other complements (48).

(48) a. àvé mâ múḡá í‘páḡá

|à-H-vé-H mà N-úḡá ì-páḡá|  
I-PST-give-NF 1SG.NPPR 1-child 7-present

‘He gave my child a present.’

b. àvé mâ ḡé dō

|à-H-vé-H mà ḡé dō|  
I-PST-give-NF 1SG.NPPR I.PPR V.PPR

‘He gave it to him.’

The form of a nominal has no influence on its position. Heavy nominals do not have a tendency to move to the right.

(49) a. mèkúz sóḡá wâmò yó

|mè-H-kùz-H sóḡá wàmà jḡ|  
1SG-PST-buy-NF aunt I.my VII.PPR

‘I bought it for my aunt.’

- b. àté pàd ímôd àté sòm bíbùmá  
 |à-Lté L-pàd í-N-òd à-Lté L-sòm H bì-bùmá|  
 I-PR INF-pick AU-1-person I-PR INF-hunt LT 8-fruit  
 ‘She picks fruit for the hunter.’

However, pronominal complements are preferably placed in between an auxiliary and a lexical verb, whereas nominal complements follow the lexical verb, so that a pronominal Theme can precede a nominal Goal.

- (50) mèté bô vé jégìlê  
 |mè-Lté bŏ L-vé H ñ-jéglà|  
 1SG-PR II.PPR INF-give LT 1-teacher  
 ‘I give them (e.g. the books) to the teacher.’

### 3.4.2. *Passivisation*

The passive is very rare in spontaneous discourse, and even in elicited translations of French passive forms. The usual strategy when the agent is unknown or less relevant, is to use an impersonal construction marked by the third person plural subject prefix (see Section 2). Focalisation is mostly used to achieve topic continuity (see Section 6.2). Even though the passive’s conditions of use are in need of additional description, it seems justified to affirm that passivisability should not be given too much importance in the study of the syntactic structure of Eton clauses.

### 3.4.3. *Link tone and non-final verbal and pronominal forms*

There are two formal characteristics that at first sight might mark objects differently from other complements, viz. link tone and the tone of first and second person pronominals. However, link tone turns out to mark nominals as opposed to non-nominals after an infinitive form of the verb (see V:3.7.1). The examples in (51) illustrate the absence of link tone when an infinitive is not immediately followed by a nominal. Note that the second infinitive is preceded by link tone in a succession of infinitives, which suggests that the infinitive prefix |L-| developed from a nominal prefix (in many Bantu languages the infinitive prefix is a nominal prefix synchronically). This allows one to formulate the hypothesis that link tone is the reflex of a connective morpheme (see also Piper 1989:60).

- (51) a. àté mâ bàgì èy mèsě  
 |à-Lté mà L-bàgì è:j mè-sě|  
 I-PR 1SG.NPPR INF-provoke with 6-insult  
 ‘He provokes me with insults.’

- b. àté 'bámbân àné 'mó múǵá  
 |à-Lté L-bámbân àné N-ǵH = N-úǵá|  
 I-PR INF-be.told.off like 1-DIM=1-child  
 'He gets told off like a child.'

As has been said in Section v:2.1.1, personal pronominals of the first and second person have a final (52b) and a non-final (52a) form. When such a pronominal is placed after the main verb and when it is followed by another postverbal element, its form can be either final or non-final, thus providing a possible distinction between second objects and other postverbal elements. However, the conditioning turns out to be similar to that of link tone. The examples in (53) show that the non-final form appears before a noun, also when that noun functions as a secondary predicate (53b). The prepositions in (54) are preceded by the final form of the personal pronominal. Temporal adverbials are preceded by the non-final form if expressed by a noun (55), otherwise by the final form (56).

- (52) a. àté wô yén  
 |à-Lté wô L-jén|  
 I-PR 2SG.NPPR INF-see  
 b. àté 'yéń 'wó  
 |à-Lté L-jén wǒ|  
 I-PR INF-see 2SG.FPPR  
 'She sees you.'
- (53) a. èèy vé wô ìpáǵí  
 |à-èèj L-vé H wô ì-páǵí|  
 I-FUT INF-give LT 2SG.NPPR 7-present  
 'He will give you a present.'  
 b. àné béńǵáyôlò wô lèkíní?  
 |àné bó-ńǵá-jòlò wô lèkíní|  
 like II-RP-name 2SG.NPPR Akini  
 '...like they named you Akini?'
- (54) a. àté yǎń 'má èèy mǒ'ńáń  
 |à-Lté L-jàńà H má è:j mǒńǎń|  
 I-PR INF-wait LT 1SG.FPPR with his.brother  
 'He waits for me with his brother.'  
 b. àté yǎń 'má ábò mǒ'ńáń  
 |à-Lté L-jàńà H má ábò mǒńǎń|  
 I-PR INF-wait LT 1SG.FPPR at his.brother  
 'He waits for me at his brother's.'

- c. àté yǎŋ ‘má á’tán  
 |à-Lté L-jàŋà H mǎ á à-tán|  
 I-PR INF-wait LT 1SG.FPPR LOC 3-village  
 ‘He waits for me in the village.’
- (55) a. mèté ‘yén wô kídí  
 |mè-Lté L-jén H wò kídí|  
 1SG-PR INF-see LT 2SG.NPPR [9]morning  
 ‘I’ll see you tomorrow.’
- b. mèté yàŋ wô ŋǒ‘ŋǒgô  
 |mè-Lté L-jàŋà H wò ŋǒŋǒgô|  
 1SG-PR INF-wait LT 2SG.NPPR [9]evening  
 ‘I’ll wait for you in the evening.’
- (56) ìnàm í’té ‘yábní ‘má ítètègè ɲó  
 |ì-nàm í-Lté L-jábní mǎ ítètègè ɲó|  
 7-arm VII-PR INF-hurt 1SG.FPPR now  
 ‘My arm hurts now.’

However, the (elicited) examples in (57) present some complications. In (57a) the non-final form appears before a complementiser and in (57b) before an adverb. More research is needed in order to refine the conditioning of the appearance of the non-final form.

- (57) a. àtónj mà nâ béèy kàg lé‘bóg  
 |à-H-tónj-H mà nâ bó-è:j L-kàg H lè-bóg|  
 I-PST-say-NF 1SG.NPPR CMP II-FUT INF-organise LT 5-party  
 ‘She told me that they are going to organise a party.’
- b. mèvè wô vó ɲê  
 |mè-H-vè-H wò vó ɲé|  
 1SG-PST-give-NF 2SG.NPPR then I.PPR  
 ‘So I gave it to you (as planned).’

#### 3.4.4. Lack of marking by a preposition

A difference between inherent and applicative benefactive complements is that the latter (58-60), but not the former (61) can be expressed by means of a prepositional phrase introduced by *ású* ‘for’. However, this does not correlate with any other morphosyntactic difference between the two.

- (58) a. àjám tíd  
 |à-H-ɕám-H tíd|  
 I-PST-prepare-NF [9]meat  
 ‘She prepared meat.’
- b. àjám mà tíd  
 |à-H-ɕám-H mà tíd|  
 I-PST-prepare-NF 1SG.NPPR [9]meat  
 ‘She prepared meat for me.’
- c. àjám tíd ású wámô  
 |à-H-ɕám-H tíd ású H = wàmà|  
 I-PST-prepare-NF [9]meat for III.CON=I.my  
 ‘She prepared meat for me.’
- (59) a. mèkúz sòḡó wàmò yó  
 |mè-H-kúz-H sòḡá wàmà jǒ|  
 1SG-PST-buy-NF aunt I.my VII.PPR  
 ‘I bought it (e.g. the chair) for my aunt.’
- b. mèkúz yô ású sòḡó wàmò  
 |mè-H-kúz-H jǒ ású H = sòḡá wàmà|  
 1SG-PST-buy-NF VII-PPR for III.CON=aunt I.my  
 ‘I bought it (e.g. the chair) for my aunt.’
- (60) a. àté ‘yám ‘jóm kpêm  
 |à-Lté L-jám H ñ-jóm kpêm|  
 I-PR INF-cook LT 3-husband [9]cassava.leaves  
 ‘She prepares cassava leaves for her husband.’
- b. àté ‘yám kpêm ású jóm  
 |à-Lté L-jám H kpêm ású H = ñ-jóm|  
 I-PR INF-cook LT [9]cass.leaves for III.CON=3-husband  
 ‘She prepares cassava leaves for her husband.’
- (61) a. àvé ‘múná ìbùmá  
 |à-H-vé-H N-úná ì-bùmá|  
 I-PST-give-NF 1-child 7-fruit  
 ‘She gave the child a piece of fruit.’

- b. àvé íbùmá ású múǵá  
 |à-H-vé-H ì-bùmá ású H=N-úǵá|  
 I-PST-give-NF 7-fruit for III.CON=1-child  
 ‘She gave (somebody) a piece of fruit for the child.’  
 \*‘She gave a piece of fruit to the child.’<sup>3</sup>

### 3.5. Distinguishing nominal complements from adjuncts

Eton does not have a special lexical category of manner/time adverbs. Verbal adjuncts are mostly expressed by means of an unmarked noun that does not differ formally from a noun acting as a complement of the verb. Compare the two clauses in (62), which both contain the noun *ǵámá*, which means ‘line, row’ or ‘together, at the same time’, depending on the construction.

- (62) a. bé<sup>+</sup>té ʼjwán ǵámá  
 |bó-Lté L-ǵón H ñ-Sámá|  
 II-PR INF-join LT 3-line  
 ‘They join the line.’  
 b. bé<sup>+</sup>té ʼkwál ǵámá  
 |bó-Lté L-kólà H ñ-Sámá|  
 II-PR INF-talk LT 3-together  
 ‘They are all talking at the same time.’

The difference in use of the word *ǵámá* between these clauses is reflected in its possible replacements. In (62a), but not in (62b), *ǵámá* can be replaced by its plural *misámá*. Both uses of *ǵámá* also differ in their possible replacements by pro-forms. In (62a) it can be replaced by the personal pronominal of agreement pattern III ‘it’ (63a) and in (62b) by the pro-adverbial *nálà* ‘thus’ (63b). In (64a) and (64b) respectively *nálà* and *wô* cannot be interpreted as replacements of *ǵámá*. Likewise, *ǵámá* is questioned by the interrogative pro-form *jé* ‘what’ in (62a) and by *yá* ‘how’ in (62b).

- (63) a. bé<sup>+</sup>té ʼjwán wô  
 |bó-Lté L-ǵón H wô|  
 II-PR INF-join LT III.PPR  
 ‘They join it.’  
 b. bé<sup>+</sup>té ʼkwál nálà  
 |bó-Lté L-kólà H nálà|  
 II-PR INF-talk LT thus  
 ‘They are talking like that.’

---

3. Prepositions other than *ású* are not possible here.

- (64) a. bé'té 'jwán nâlà  
 'They join it like this.'  
 b. bé'té 'kwál wô  
 'They speak it (e.g. a language).'

#### 4. Non-verbal clauses

##### 4.1. Clauses with a demonstrative predicate

Presentative clauses with a demonstrative predicate consist of a subject and a demonstrative, in that order. Since the demonstrative is predicative, i.e. it does not modify the noun, the subject noun does not have an augment. Any nominal can be the subject of a demonstrative predicate. Predicative demonstratives<sup>4</sup> have the same form as adnominal demonstratives. They agree in gender with their subject (65). There is some (possibly dialectal) variation in the form of the subject pronominals in this construction, as shown in (65a). One variant, viz. *dô* in (65a), can be analysed as the form of the personal pronominal. The other variant, which has a falling tone in all agreement patterns except pattern IX, apparently forms a separate paradigm of subject pronominals (not discussed in Chapter 5), which are segmentally identical to the personal pronominals. They can be described by means of a pronominal stem *ɔ̃* preceded by an agreement prefix of Series 1 (see V:2), except in agreement pattern I, where the form of the pronominal is *ɲɛ̃*.

- (65) a. dô dí ~ dó dǐ  
 |dô dǐ| ~ |dó dǐ|  
 V.PPR V.DEM ~ V.PPR V.DEM  
 'Here it is. (e.g., the palm tree (5))'  
 b. yò jí  
 |jò jí|  
 IX.PPR IX.DEM  
 'Here it is. (e.g., the animal (9))'  
 c. yô jí  
 |jô jí|  
 X.PPR X.DEM  
 'Here they are. (e.g., the animals (10))'

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4. See Diessel (1999:10) for this term. Alternative terms are *demonstrative identifiers* and *deictic predicators*.

- d. m̀pég nũ ~ m̀pég vî  
 |N̄-pég nũ ~ N̄-pég ví|  
 3-bag III.DEM ~ 3-bag III.DEM  
 ‘Here’s the bag.’
- e. ípàdà àbálgá bì ńó  
 |í-pàdà à-H-bál <Lg> à-H bì ńó|  
 AU-priest I-PST-marry<G>-NF 1PL.NPPR I.DEM  
 ‘This is the priest who married us.’
- f. tóg yàmà jí  
 |tóg jàmà jí|  
 [9]spoon IX.my IX.DEM  
 ‘Here’s my spoon.’
- g. jícílá úsú ‘vílá  
 |H-N̄-tjílá úsú ví-lá|  
 AU-3-question first III.DEM-CH  
 ‘That is the first question.’<sup>5</sup>

First and second person pronominal subjects trigger agreement pattern I in the singular (66a-b) and II in the plural (66c-d). The non-final forms of these pronominals are selected.

- (66) a. mà ńó  
 |mà ńó|  
 1SG.NPPR I.DEM  
 ‘Here I am’
- b. wò ńó  
 |wò ńó|  
 2SG.NPPR I.DEM  
 ‘Here you are’
- c. bì bá  
 |bì bá|  
 1PL.NPPR II.DEM  
 ‘Here we are.’
- d. mîn bá  
 |mîn bá|  
 2PL.NPPR II.DEM  
 ‘Here you (pl.) are.’

---

5. The presence of the augment was not expected here. Elicitation made clear that it is optional. Anyway, the (optional) presence of the augment is due to the modifier *úsú*, not to the demonstrative predicate.

The suffixes that express remoteness distinctions on adnominal demonstratives can also attach to predicative demonstratives (67).

- (67) a. wò nwá lí(yâ)  
 |wò nwá lí(-jà)|  
 2SG.PPR I.DEM-ID(-HD)  
 ‘There you are.’
- b. nê nwá lí(yâ)  
 |nê nwá lí(-jà)|  
 I.PPR I.DEM-ID(-HD)  
 ‘There he is. (e.g. my brother)’
- c. yô jí lí(yâ)  
 |jô jí lí(-jà)|  
 VII.PPR VII.DEM-ID(-HD)  
 ‘There it is. (e.g., the chair)’

Note that this construction can only be used in presentational utterances, i.e. in utterances that are demonstrative in the strict sense of the word (Dixon 2003). Identificational and existential utterances are expressed by means of verbal clauses.

#### 4.2. Identity statements involving a proper name

Personal proper names can act as predicates in identity statements without the mediation of a copula.

- (68) ísá wâmà lúkáz ùngéná  
 |ísá wâmà lúkáz ùngéná|  
 father I.my Lucas Ongena  
 ‘My father is Lucas Ongena.’
- (69) ímôd àngábônì bó bêtí bénàngà  
 |í-m-òd à-ngá-bònì bó bêtí bénàngà|  
 AU-1-person I-RP-found II.PPR Beti Benanga  
 ‘The person who founded them (i.e. their clan) is Beti Benanga.’

This construction cannot be used with place names or for identity statements that do not involve a proper name. In both cases the use of a copula is obligatory (70).

- (70) ísá wâmò ànè òjéglê wě  
 |ísá wàmà à-nè ò-jéglà w-ě|  
 father I.my I-COP 3-teacher III-his  
 ‘My father is his teacher.’

Note that the use of a copula is never unacceptable.

- (71) ísá wâmò ànè lúkáz òngéná  
 |ísá wàmà à-nè lúkáz òngéná|  
 father I.my I-COP Lucas Ongena  
 ‘My father is Lucas Ongena.’

## 5. Copular clauses

In copular clauses a subject is linked to a nonverbal predicate by means of a copula. There is number agreement between the subject and the predicate.

- (72) a. ànè òjéglê  
 |à-nè ò-jéglà|  
 I-COP 3-teacher  
 ‘She is a teacher.’  
 b. bènè bèyégglê  
 |bá-nè bè-jéglà|  
 II-COP 2-teacher  
 ‘They are teachers.’

Note that the term *copula* is used here not with reference to certain verbs, but only with reference to a function of certain verbs, viz. to link a subject to a nonverbal predicate. For instance, there are two forms of the verb *nè* ‘be’ in (73), but neither functions as a copula. The first form *bé* is a past imperfective auxiliary and the second form *dyǎ* an intransitive verb meaning ‘exist’, or in this case rather ‘live’. In (74) *nè* is a modal quasi-auxiliary. In example (75), the verb *nè* links the subject *jǎd* ‘basket’ to the nominal predicate *ìvóy* ‘empty’, and therefore functions as a copula.

- (73) íyòŋ nà àngábé dyǎ, ...  
 |í-ì-jòŋ nà à-ngá-bé dìá|  
 AU-7-time mother I-RP-be being  
 ‘When mother was still alive, ...’

- (74) ànè jǎm 'yégnè métàmná 'mé yá!?  
 |à-nè ǫǎm L-jégnà H mǎ-tàmná m-ě já|  
 I-POS possibly INF-ignore LT 6-metamna VI-his how  
 'How can somebody not know her own metamna!?'

- (75) jǎd ínê ìvóy  
 |ǫ-ǎd í-nè ì-vóí|  
 7-basket VII-COP 7-empty  
 'The basket is empty.'<sup>6</sup>

Admittedly, the distinction between lexical verb and copula is to a certain extent intuitive. The semantics of the verb decides whether it will be analysed as a copula or not. If the verb has an existential or related locative meaning, it is not treated as a copula (76-79).

- (76) màyèm nâ nà yú ànè íbǒd.  
 |mǎ-à-jèm nâ nà jú à-nè H ìbǒd|  
 ISG-SP-know CMP mother Judy I-be LOC Ibod  
 'I know that Mother Judy is in Ebod.'

- (77) mècì mésé jê á jól  
 |mǎ-tʃî mǎ-sé jě á jól|  
 6-blood VI-NEG.be I.PPR LOC [9]body  
 'He is anaemic. (lit. Blood isn't him in the body.)'

- (78) bójó bènê bán á zèkúlí?  
 |b-ójó bǎ-nè b-áj á zèkúlí|  
 2-child II-be II-how.many LOC school  
 'How many children are there at school?'

- (79) mòd àsé vâ  
 |N-òd à-sé vǎ|  
 1-person I-NEG.be here  
 'There is nobody here.'

According to this criterion, the prepositional phrases *íbǒd* and *á jól* are adjuncts of the intransitive verb *nè* in (76-77), whereas the prepositional phrase *á mbúz* is a nonverbal predicate in (80).

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6. Note that there is no gender agreement between *ìvóy* 'empty(ness)' and *jǎd* 'basket' in this example. Both are gender 7 nouns.

- (80) mǒʹjǎŋ ànè á mbúz ású dínâ  
 |mǒʹǰǎŋ à-nè á mbúz ású H=dínâ|  
 my.brother I-COP LOC [9]back for III.CON=dinner  
 ‘My brother is late for dinner.’

In some copular clauses the copula links its subject to a fully referential element. These may be called equational or identifying clauses. The two nominals linked by the copula in an equational clause are typically interchangeable, i.e. both can assume the function of subject. Since definiteness is not expressed in the grammar of Eton, this interchangeability is the only formal characteristic of equational clauses.

- (81) cǎlá ànè ñkúnkúmá átán  
 |ʧǎlá à-nè ñ-kúnkúmá H=à-tán|  
 Tsala I-COP 3-chief III.CON=3-village  
 a. ‘Tsala is a village chief.’  
 b. ‘Tsala is the village chief.’

- (82) ñkúnkúmá átán ànè cǎlá  
 |ñ-kúnkúmá H=à-tán à-nè ʧǎlá|  
 3-chief III.CON=3-village I-COP Tsala  
 ‘The village chief is Tsala.’

Both types of copular clauses, identificational/equational and classifying, should in turn be distinguished from presentational ones, which have a dummy subject. For lack of an agreement controller, the copula takes a default subject prefix, i.e. one of pattern V or VII (83-84).

- (83) ínê íʹmǒʹjǎŋ àně má úʹsú  
 |í-nè í-mǒʹǰǎŋ à-ně má ù-sú|  
 VII-COP AU-my.brother I-RCOP 1SG.PPR 3-front  
 ‘It’s my oldest brother’

- (84) a. éné újô  
 |é-nè úǰò|  
 V-COP sweet.banana  
 ‘It’s a sweet banana.’
- b. ínê ñjúmâ zêkúlî  
 |í-nè ñ-wúmâ H=zêkúlî|  
 VII-COP 3-entire III.CON=school  
 ‘It’s an entire school (i.e. very complicated).’

Copular clauses can be further classified according to their copula and according to the type of their predicate.

Three verbs can serve as a copula in Eton: *nè*, *ngénâ* and *bógbô*. The difference between these copulas is aspectual. The use of *ngénâ* is easiest to characterise semantically. It expresses persistent aspect and can be translated as ‘still be’.

- (85) a. lé<sup>4</sup>bóg múńá àngénâ mǎ ‘jóm  
 |H-là-bóg N-úńá à-ngénà N-ðH = ɕ-ǒm|  
 AU-5-time 1-child I-SCOP 1-DIM=7-thing  
 ‘When the child is still small.’
- b. [We gave him a present for his birthday.]  
 àngénâ mǐntàg  
 |à-ngénà mǐ-ntàg|  
 I-SCOP 4-happy  
 ‘He is still happy.’
- c. [Is she retired?]  
 àyá, àngénâ ñnéglê  
 |àjá à-ngénà Ñ-jéglè|  
 no I-SCOP 3-teacher  
 ‘No, she is still a teacher.’

Note that the verb *ngénâ* can also function as a quasi-auxiliary before the participial form *dyǎ* of the copula *nè*.

- (86) a. àngénâ dyǎ mǎ múńá  
 |à-ngénà L-díá N-ðH = N-úńá|  
 I-PER INF-being 1-DIM=1-child  
 ‘She is still a small child.’
- b. àngénâ dyǎ mǐntàg  
 |à-ngénà L-díá mǐ-ntàg|  
 I-PER INF-being 4-happy  
 ‘He is still happy.’
- c. àyá, àngénâ dyǎ ñ<sup>4</sup>néglê  
 |àjá à-ngénà L-díá Ñ-jéglà|  
 no I-PER INF-being 3-teacher  
 ‘No, she is still a teacher.’

The opposition between *nè* and *bógbô* as the copula in the past tenses is one of imperfective versus perfective.

- (87) a. ñkád úbé / úmé / úngábé ìvè̀vè̀z  
 |Ñ-kád ú-bé / ú-mé / ú-ŋgá-bé ì-vè̀vè̀z|  
 3-exam III-PCOP / III-YCOP / III-RP-PCOP 7-light  
 ‘The exam was easy.’
- b. ñkàd wáábé / wáámó / wááŋgábó ìvè̀vè̀z  
 |Ñ-kàd ú-ǎ:-bé ì-vè̀vè̀z |  
 3-exam III-NEG-PCOP 7-light  
 ‘The exam wasn’t easy.’
- (88) a. ñkàd úbógbò ìvè̀vè̀z  
 |Ñ-kàd ú-Bógbò ì-vè̀vè̀z|  
 3-exam III-COP 7-light  
 ‘The exam was easy.’
- b. ñkàd wáájé ‘bógbò ìvè̀vè̀z  
 |Ñ-kàd ú-ǎ:-ǳé L-Bógbò H ì-vè̀vè̀z|  
 3-exam III-NEG-NIMPF INF-COP LT 7-light  
 ‘The exam wasn’t easy.’

In the present the copula *nè* has a stative reading, whereas *bógbò* is dynamic. The latter is usually translated as ‘become’.

- (89) àngá bógbò àyǎ ‘já môdò  
 |à-ŋgá L-Bógbò àjǎ já môdò|  
 I-INC INF-COP already adult  
 ‘He is already becoming an adult.’<sup>7</sup>

The copula *nè* cannot be used in combination with the adverb *àyǎ*, the English translation equivalent of which is *already*. Instead, the Contrastive resultative form *mógô* of the copula *bógbò* is used.

- (90) àmógô àyǎ ‘já môdò  
 |à-ń-Bóg-ǎ àjǎ já môdò|  
 I-CR-COP-RS already adult  
 ‘He has already become adult.’

7. The petrified phrase *já môdò* is glossed as a single word here in order not to complicate the glosses. Its historical meaning is ‘real person’, lit. ‘mother of a person’.

- (91) mèmógô àyă té'télá  
 |mè-ń-Bóg-ǎ àjă tètélá|  
 1SG-CR-COP-RS already straight  
 'I'm already up/standing.'
- (92) cālà àngábé àmógô àyă n'jéglê wàmò  
 |tʃàlà à-ŋgá-bé à-ń-Bóg-ǎ àjă ñ-jéglà wàmà|  
 Tsala I-RP-IMPF I-CR-COP-RS already 1-teacher I.my  
 'Tsala was already my teacher.'

Rather surprisingly, the Resultative form *bógô* is never used as a copula as far as I have been able to check, and the Contrastive resultative form is used where a Resultative could be expected.

- (93) ìkèl ímógô èy lèvíl  
 |ì-kèl í-ń-Bóg-ǎ è:j lè-víl|  
 7-abscess VII-CR-COP-RS with 5-pus  
 'The abscess has ripened. (lit. has become with pus)'
- (94) dè ùmógô ìtùṅà?  
 |dè ù-ń-Bóg-ǎ ì-tùṅà|  
 Q 2SG-CR-COP-RS 7-madman  
 'Have you become crazy?'

There is no future form of the verb *nè*. With future time reference the verb *bógbô* is used instead, whether as a copula or in intransitive locative predicates.

- (95) èy bógbô míntàg  
 |à-è:j L-bógbò H mì-ntàg|  
 I-FUT INF-COP LT 4-happy  
 'He will be happy.'

Any nominal can be a nonverbal predicate. In the examples in (96), for instance, the nonverbal predicate is a noun and in (97) it is a demonstrative. A proper name formed out of a clause, such as the *ndan* in (98), is as good a nominal predicate as any other noun. In (99) the nonverbal predicate is pronominal.

- (96) a. ùnè kán!  
 |ù-nè kán|  
 2SG-COP [9]type  
 'You're one of a kind!'

- b. *dwálô ésé dâm*  
 |dólà é-sé d-àm|  
 5.francs V-NEG.COP 5-thing  
 ‘Five francs is nothing. (lit. isn’t a thing)’
- c. *jóm ísê á’á sí ínê mèbálá*  
 |ɕ-óm í-sè áá sí í-nè mè-bálá|  
 7-thing VII-every LC [9]earth IX-COP 6-medicine  
 ‘Everything of the earth is a medicine.’
- d. *bòd bènênjũg*  
 |b-òd bá-nè ñ-ɕũg|  
 2-person II-COP 3-difficulty  
 ‘People are complicated.’
- e. *ngé ànè ùyăb ...*  
 |ngó à-nè ù-jăb|  
 if I-COP 3-distance  
 ‘If she is far away...’
- (97) *ìvwág ínê íjí mètè ‘búg mí’ nó*  
 |ì-vóg í-nè í-ɕí mètè-Lté L-búg H mìn-λó|  
 VII-one VII-COP AU-VII.DEM 1SG-PR INF-crush LT 4-head  
 ‘One is that (herb) of which I crush the heads.’
- (98) *ìyòlò í cālá ísê ínê “bìtùtùgà bíngâ bwág á lèbùm”*  
 |ì-jòlà í=ɕàlá í-sè í-nè|  
 7-namesake VII.CON=Tsala VII-every VII-COP  
 |bì-tùtùgà bí-ngâ L-bóg á lè-bùm|  
 8-vegetable VIII-INC INF-roll.up LOC 5-belly  
 ‘Every namesake of Tsala is “the vegetables hurt in the belly”.’
- (99) *ànè mǎ á mbúz èy mìm-bú mí’bá*  
 |à-nè mǎ á mbúz è:j mìm-bú mí-bǎ|  
 I-COP 1SG.PPR LOC [9]back with 4-year IV-two  
 ‘He is two years younger than I.’

Not only nominals can be nonverbal predicates. Other possibilities include a clause introduced by a complementiser (100-101), a question word (102, 78) and a prepositional phrase (80).

- (100) íbyém mètè dǎŋ ʼyág èy byó íʼté bínê nâ: yí íʼmén bénggábé ʼkáàgì vé  
 bóŋj dwé lé métàmná yá? jé íkwámgi nâ bévé bó dwé lé métàmná?  
 |í-bí-ém mǎ-Lté L-dǎŋ H L-jág è:j bjó ítě bí-nè|  
 AU-8-thing 1SG-PR INF-cross LT INF-need with VIII.PPR there VII-COP  
 |nâ jí ímǎn bǎ-ŋgá-bé L-káz <Lg>ì L-vé H b-òŋá d-óé|  
 CMP Q INTS II-RP-IMPF INF-begin<G> NF-give LT 2-child 5-name  
 |lǎ = mǎ-tàmná já ǎ-ǎ í-H-kòm-Lgì nâ H-bǎ-vé-L bǎ|  
 IV.CON=6-metamna how 7-what VII-PST-do-G CMP SB-II-give-SB II.PPR  
 |d-óé lǎ = mǎ-tàmná|  
 5-name V.CON=6-metamna  
 ‘The things that I need most here are: How did they bestow a  
 metamna to children, what was at the origin of the metamna?’

- (101) dô vó ñjíní wámò únê nâ mà mékê ààpág métùm mé nàm ásí  
 |dô vó ñ-jíní wámà ú-nè nâ mà H-mǎ-kè-L|  
 DP then 3-hope III.my III-COP CMP 1SG.PPR SB-1SG-go-SB  
 |à:pág H mǎ-tùm mǎ = ñ-nàm á sí|  
 INF-dig<sup>8</sup> LT 6-habit VI.CON=3-country LOC [9]earth  
 ‘So, my hope is that I go and dig profoundly into the habits of the country...’

- (102) mébálá ùté kwàm èy mó ménê yá?  
 |H-mǎ-bálá ù-Lté L-kòm èj mǎ mǎ-nè já|  
 AU-6-medicine 2SG-PR INF-do with VI.PPR VI-COP how  
 ‘The medicines with which you heal, they are how?’

One construction deserves special mention. In order to say how somebody or something is called, the copula is followed by *dwé* ‘name’ or the word for another type of name, the complementiser *nâ* and a proper name. So, ‘my name is Mark’ is literally termed as ‘I am (the/a) name that Mark’.

- (103) dô vó, isàmà ànè ndán ʼvǎlá nâ kéigèégèè  
 |dô vó isàmà à-nè ndán vǎlá nâ kèi...|  
 DP then Essama I-COP [9]ndan there-CH CMP ...  
 ‘So, Essama’s ndan is (cry of tone pattern)’

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8. The morpheme *àà-* glossed as an infinitive prefix here remains to be described. Infinitives formed by means of this prefix (sequence of prefixes) are translated by means of a present participle in French.

- (104) mènè dwé nâ ùndwábó  
 |mè-nè d-óé nâ ùndóbá|  
 1SG-COP 5-name CMP Ondobo  
 ‘My name is Ondobo.’

Alternatively, the word for ‘name’ can be the subject of the copular clause. The use of the complementiser is still required.

- (105) màkàd wò nâ: ndán yàmà ìnè nâ: ùwònò àpò mèlígí  
 |mè-à-kàd wò nâ ndán jàmà ì-nè nâ|  
 1SG-SP-say 2SG.PPR CMP [9]ndan IX.my IX-COP CMP  
 |ùwònà à-à-pò mè-lígí|  
 groundnut 1-SP-abound 6-leftovers  
 ‘I tell you: my ndan is: “the groundnuts are abandoned for many reasons”.’

When a pro-word, such as a question word or a manner adverbial like *nálá* ‘thus’, takes the place of the proper name in this construction, it is not preceded by the complementiser.

- (106) ìlé ítê ínê dwé yâ?  
 |ì-lé í-tê í-nè d-óé já|  
 7-tree VII-ANA VII-COP 5-name how  
 ‘What (lit. how) is the name of this tree?’

- (107) bísê kómgó, yí mbóy ìngábé ndán ‘nálá  
 |bí-sè kóm <Lg> <H> ò jî mbóé ì-ngá-bé ndán ná-lá|  
 VIII-all admire<G><IMP> FOC [9]friend IX-RP-PCOP [9]ndan thus-CH  
 ‘Admire everything’ That’s how his namesake was called.’

See Section VII:2.4.1 for another important type of copular clause, viz. resultative clauses with a deverbal noun as predicate.

## 6. Focus

### 6.1. Verbal focus

Verbs can be focalised by reduplicating their stem. As in nominal reduplication, the reduplicant precedes the base and consists of the first two segments of the latter. The vowel of the reduplicant is often reduced (less often if it is a close vowel). The reduplicant has the same tone as the first syllable of the base, except in some cases when the latter is rising. The reduplicant then carries the low part and the base the high part, as with the negative copula *sě* in (114), but note the reduplicated form of the participle |dǎ́| in the same example. In combination with the adverb *àǎ* verb reduplication can be translated as ‘always’. The phrase in (108), for instance, could be an answer to the remark *The water is cold today*.

- (108) mèndím mé<sup>+</sup>té <sup>+</sup>sésín àǎ  
 |mè-ndím mé-Lté L-sí-sín àǎ|  
 6-water VI-PR INF-F~be.cold already  
 ‘The water has always been cold / is always cold.’

- (109) a. dè ùmógô ìtùṅà  
 |dè ù-ń-Bóg-ǎ ì-tùṅà|  
 Q 2SG-CR-COP-RS 7-madman  
 ‘Have you become crazy?’  
 b. àyá, mètè dǐdǐṅ àǎ <sup>+</sup>bógbô ìtùṅà  
 |à-já mètè-Lté L-dǐṅ~dǐṅ àǎ H L-Bógbá H ì-tùṅà|  
 3-pain 1SG-PR INF-F~HAB already LT INF-stay LT 7-crazy  
 ‘No, I’ve always been crazy.’

- (110) mètè <sup>+</sup>sésá àǎ  
 |mètè-Lté L-sá~sá àǎ|  
 1SG-PR INF-F~work already  
 ‘I have always worked. / I have the habit of working all the time.’

- (111) àté bǐbyàṅi àǎ <sup>+</sup>má  
 |à-Lté L-bi~biàṅi àǎ H má|  
 I-PR INF-F~despise already LT 1SG.FPPR  
 ‘She has always looked down upon me.’

Another use of verbal reduplication is to convey insistence. The reduplicated verb is then optionally accompanied by the adverb *pwágó* ‘really’, or, with a negative verb form, *kǐg* ‘at all’. Example (115) needs some contextualisation. It

is an exclamation by an elderly woman, Judith Akini, whom the interviewer asked many questions about the history of her family and other things from the past. The phrase must be interpreted as ‘why do you ask *me* all these questions?’

(112) àté ‘sésá

|à-Lté L-sá~sá|  
I-PR INF-F~work  
‘He *does* work.’

(113) mëndím mé’té ‘sésín

|mè-ndím mǎ-Lté L-sí~sín|  
6-water VI-PR INF-F~be.cold  
‘The water is really cold.’

(114) àsèsé kíg vá. bènâ jé àdǐ’dyá vá, mèlédó wò jé.

|à-sǎ~sǎ kíg vá bènâ à-dǐ~dǐá vá mè-lédà-H wò jé|  
I-F~NCOP at.all here if I-F-being here 1SG-show-CS 2SG.NPPR I.PPR  
‘(about a herb) It really isn’t here. If it were here, I would have shown it to you.’

(115) yì ású pwágó nâ mà mègbégbêlè ònó

|jì ású pógá nâ mà mè-gbè~gbél-ǎ ò-λó|  
Q for really CMP 1SG.NPPR 1SG-F~grasp-RS 3head  
‘Is it really because I have such a good memory?’

Verbal reduplication can also convey approbation, as in (116).

(116) àté ‘jéjáb

|à-Lté L-ǎǎ~ǎǎ|  
I-PR INF-F~be.big  
‘(That’s right,) He *is* big.’

Finally, my corpus contains one example of the same type of focus on a numeral (117).

(117) ìtón békê dǎn ná, bésèsámà

|ìtón bó-H-kè L-dǎn nǎ bó-sǎ~sámà|  
Eton II-PST-AND INF-cross thus II-F~six  
‘The Eton crossed (the river being) only six!’

## 6.2. Nominal focalisation and topicalisation

6.2.1. *Subjects*

Eton uses basically the same strategies to focalise and to topicalise nominals. For subjects this can be done in three ways. In the first, the subject prefix is preceded by a coreferential personal pronominal (118-121). If there is a nominal subject, the pronominal follows it (121).

(118) bó bé'té 'sá

|bɔ́ bɛ'-L-té L-sá|  
 II.PPR II-PR INF-work  
 'They are working.'

(119) àngábé dwě nâ iséńá. jé àngákê wú á mbóg nàmɲè. jé àngálig bwán.

|à-ńgá-bé d-dé nâ iséńá jé à-ńgá-kè L-wù|  
 I-RP-COP 5-name CMP Essengue I.PPR I-RP-AND INF-die  
 |á mbóg nàmɲè jé à-ńgá-líg b-ón|  
 LOC [9]clan Namnye I.PPR I-RP-leave 2-child  
 'She was called Essengue. It is she who passed away in Mbog Namnye. It is she who left children.'

(120) wò ùté kwàm èy mivýǎj yá?

|wò ù-L-té L-kòm èj mì-vjǎj já|  
 2SG.NPPR 2SG-PR INF-do with 4-liana how  
 'What do you do with the lianas?'

(121) yì mòd jé àté kwàm jóm jé tē yēm?

|jì N-òd jé à-L-té L-kòm H ɕ-óm jé təH jèm|  
 Q 1-person I.PPR I-PR INF-do LT 7-thing I.PPR NEG know  
 'Do people do things without understanding them!?'

In the second type of subject topic/focus construction, the subject prefix is likewise preceded by a personal pronominal, but the latter always has a falling tone (122), also when it is of agreement pattern IX. Moreover, when the verb is *nè* 'be' (124) or a Southern present (123), it has the tonality of a relative verb (see Section IX:3 for the form of verbs in relative clauses). Therefore, the personal pronominal with invariable falling tonality can best be analysed as the augmented antecedent of a relative clause. This is the only situation in which a personal pronominal can be augmented and "modified". This focus construction is more contrastive than the previous one. When the topic/focus pronominal is preceded by a subject nominal that ends in a high tone, while being followed by

a verb form that does not have a special relative form, there is no formal difference between the two types of subject topic/focus constructions (125).

- (122) mèmá sèsánâ jê àṅgábé 'gbéîê mèbálá métê  
 |mèmá sèsánâ H-jě à-ṅgá-bé L-ḡbél-ǎ m̀-̀bálá m̀-̀tè|  
 mother Suzanne AU-I.PPR I-RP-IMPF INF-grasp-RS 6-medicine VI-ANA  
 'It's mother Suzanne who possessed these medicines.'

- (123) iyòṅ ítê màwúd. ṅm̀wúdnéṅgáná útê wò wákwám nâ ìbǎb ítêṅ  
 |ì-jòṅ í-tè m̀-̀à-wúd Ñ-wúdnóṅgáná ú-tè|  
 7-time VII-ANA 1SG-SP-massage 3-massage III-ANA  
 |H-wó ú-à-H-kòṁ nâ ì-bǎb H-í-tèḡ-L|  
 AU-III.PPR III-SP-REL-make CMP 7-asthma SB-VII-weaken-SB  
 'Then I massage. It's this massage that weakens the asthma.'

- (124) jê àně ímòd àwé  
 |H-jě à-ně í-m-òd à-à-H-wé|  
 AU-I.PPR I-RCOP AU-1-person I-SP-REL-kill  
 'He is the murderer.'

- (125) iyòṅ ítê mèté pùḡ íjí á yásó mé'ndím jî. zá jê àtè 'yégnè? lèséṅ!  
 |ì-jòṅ í-tè m̀-̀L-té L-pùḡ H í-ḡjí á í-à-H-só|  
 7-time VII-ANA 1SG-PR INF-knead LT AU-VII.DEM RL VII-SP-REL-ooze  
 |m̀-̀ndím ḡjí zá (H-?)jě à-L-té L-jèḡni lè-séṅ|  
 6-water VII.DEM who (AU-?)I.PPR I-PR INF-ignore 5-leseng  
 'Then I knead the one (i.e. a liana) that oozes water. Who on earth  
 doesn't know (it's name)?... Leseng!'

The third way to focus subjects is by means of a cleft, in which a personal pronominal precedes the subject prefix of the main verb (126).

- (126) ínê ùkèṅ wó újíbàn  
 |í-nè ù-kèṅ wó ú-H-jí:bàn|  
 VII-COP 3-knife III.PPR III-PST-be.stolen  
 'It's a knife that is stolen.'

6.2.2. *Complements and adjuncts*

Complements and adjuncts can be focused or topicalised simply by assuming clause-initial position.

- (127) kídí mèté kè  
 |kídí mèté-Lté L-kè|  
 [9]tomorrow 1SG-PR INF-go  
 ‘Tomorrow I leave.’
- (128) mwé mènè wò jǎm ‘vé  
 |m-óé mènè wò ǰǎm L-vé|  
 6-name 1SG-POS 2SG.NPPR possibly INF-give  
 ‘The names I can give you.’
- (129) ñkwǎg jé í’mén bí’té dàŋ nù!?  
 |ñ-kǎg ǰé ímën bí-Lté L-dàŋ H nù|  
 3-trunk what INTS 1PL-PR INF-cross LT III.DEM  
 What kind of trunk are we crossing here!?’<sup>9</sup>

Often, such a preposed complement is followed by the adverb *vó*.

- (130) bèkwónó ìtè vó béŋgáyòlò mí’ná  
 |bèkóná ì-tè vó bə-ŋgá-jòlà mínǎ|  
 Bekono I-ANA then II-RP-name 2PL.FPPR  
 ‘It’s this Bekono after whom they called you guys.’<sup>10</sup>

Alternatively, preposed complements can be followed by an augmented personal pronominal. As with subjects, the following verb is relative (if it has a special relative form). The proverb in (131) is a nice illustration. It means that relationships between people of equal importance are most likely to be successful. When a focused complement is pronominal, it is always preposed and augmented (133c).

9. This example comes from the same story as example (132), viz. the history of the Eton. At one point the ancestors of the Eton have to cross the Sanaga river. They find a trunk across the river, which turns out to be a giant snake.

10. The sister of the interlocutor is called Bekono.

- (131) bílé bí<sup>4</sup>né <sup>4</sup>nté, byô kwé í<sup>4</sup>té kàlnì  
 |H-bì-lé bí-ně N-té H-bjǒ kóé í-Lté L-kàlnì|  
 AU-8-tree VIII-RCOP 3-height AU-VIII.PPR [10]monkey X-PR INF-change  
 ‘Monkeys jump between trees of the same height.’
- (132) jwé yô zàmá á<sup>4</sup>ngálóm nâ bédâŋ jé á mbúz  
 |j<sup>9</sup>óé H-jǒ zàmá à-ngá-lóm nâ H-bá-dàŋ-L jě á mbúz|  
 [9]snake AU-IX.PPR God I-RP-send CMP SB-II-cross-SBI.PPR LOC [9]back  
 ‘The snake, God sent it so that they could cross (the river) on its back.’
- (133) a. wòyèm wògzówògzó òó?  
 |ù-à-jèm wògzówògzó = ò:|  
 2SG-SP-know wogzowogzo=Q  
 ‘Do you know Wogzo-Wogzo (a plant)?’
- b. m̀ màyèm wògzówògzó.  
 |m̀ m̀-à-jèm wògzówògzó|  
 yes 1SG-SP-know wogzowogzo  
 ‘Yes, I know Wogzo-Wogzo.’
- c. jê ùtè <sup>4</sup>pág!  
 |H-jě ù-Lté L-pág|  
 AU-I.PPR 2SG-PR INF-dig  
 ‘That’s the one you dig up!’

A preposed focused complement can also be followed by the focus particle *yí*. The use of this focus particle is in need of further description. The example in (134) shows two additional characteristics of nominal focus. First, subject focus and complement focus can be combined. The complement precedes the subject in this case. Second, when a complement of a preposition is preposed to focus position, a resumptive pronominal obligatorily takes its place.

- (134) mwé yí mà mèté dǎŋ <sup>4</sup>yág éyè mó. mwé yí mà mèté yì.  
 |m-óé jî mà m̀-Łté L-dǎŋ H L-jág|  
 6-name FOC 1SG.NPPR 1SG-PR INF-cross LT INF-need  
 |H è:j mǒ m-óé jî mà m̀-Łté L-jì|  
 LT with VI.PPR 6-name FOC 1SG.NPPR 1SG-PR INF-want  
 ‘It’s the names I need most! The names I want.’

Finally, complements and adjuncts can also be focused by means of a cleft construction.

## 7. Questions

### 7.1. Polar questions

#### 7.1.1. Basic structure of polar questions

There are two ways to form a polar question. The first is with an initial question marker *dè* or *yì* (135a-b) (see Section v:3.2.2). The second way is by means of an enclitic on the last word of the clause (135c).

- (135) a. *dè* *ùtè* *dìŋ* *ndógô*?  
 |*dè* *ù-Lté* *L-dìŋ* *H ndógà*|  
 Q 2SG-PR INF-like LT [10]mango
- b. *yì* *ùtè* *dìŋ* *ndógô*?  
 |*jì* *ù-Lté* *L-dìŋ* *H ndógà*|  
 Q 2SG-PR INF-like LT [10]mango
- c. *ùtè* *dìŋ* *ndógô* *òó*?  
 |*ù-Lté* *L-dìŋ* *H ndógà = ǝ:*|  
 2SG-PR INF-like LT [10]mango=Q  
 ‘Do you like mangoes?’

The form of the question clitic depends on the word to which it is attached. If the latter ends in a consonant the clitic has the form of a long /i/ (136). If it ends in a vowel, the latter is lengthened (137). The intonation is either rising or low. The question clitic is noted as a long vowel, usually with a rising tone (e.g. <í>). However, it tends to be longer than a long vowel and the tonality is usually more dynamic and variable than in the case of a normal low-high sequence. Sometimes the timbre of the question clitic resembles that of the vowel in the preceding word even if the latter ends in a consonant (138).<sup>11</sup> Note that the final form of the Hodiernal and Hesternal past perfective appears before the interrogative clitic.

- (136) a. *wàláŋ* *íí*?  
 |*ù-à-láŋ = í:*|  
 2SG-SP-read-Q  
 ‘Are you reading? / Would you read?’

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11. The tonality/intonation of this interrogative clitic needs additional study. I heard instances with a falling intonation, but I have not been able to establish whether this variation is conditioned, and, if so, how.

- b. à-bógô á'tán íí?  
 |à-Bóg-ǎ́ á à-tán = ǐ:|  
 I-stay-RS LOC 3-village=Q  
 'Does he live in the village?'
- c. ùyén ìì  
 |ù-H-jén = ǐ:|  
 2SG-PST-see=Q  
 'Did you see it?'
- (137) a. àgbéìé àkúmá àá?  
 |à-ǵbéì-ǎ́ à-kúmá = ǎ:|  
 I-grasp-RS 3-wealth=Q  
 'Is she rich?'
- b. ùté 'yén í'lé = èé?  
 |ù-Lté L-jén H ì-lé = ǎ:|  
 2SG-PR INF-see LT 7-tree=Q  
 'Do you see the tree?'
- (138) ùté 'dí ú'léz èè?  
 |ù-Lté L-dí H ù-léz = ǎ:|  
 2SG-PR INF-eat LT 3-rice=Q  
 'Are you eating the rice?'

Negative polar questions are formed by adding one of the above polar question markers to a negative statement.

- (139) wàánjí kè íbòm íí?  
 |ù-ǎ:-nǵí L-kè á ì-bóm = ǐ:|  
 2SG-NEG-PST INF-go LOC 7-market=Q  
 'Didn't you go to the market?'

### 7.1.2. Leading questions

Leading questions can be formed by means of an assertive clause followed by a tag question. All available examples of this construction were elicited. If a positive answer is expected, the assertive clause has positive polarity and is followed by the tag *sè náìá = àá*.

- (140) ùbé yèmgì ìyàlná, sè náìáá?  
 |ù-bé L-jèm-Lgì ì-jàlná sè ná-lá = ǎ:|  
 2SG-TIMPF INF-know-G 7-answer DP thus-ID=Q  
 'You knew the answer, didn't you?'

In case of an expected negative answer, the assertive clause has negative polarity and the tag question is *ngǎ 'náló*.

- (141) a. wàánjí sò bí'yé, ngǎ 'náló  
 |ù-ǎ:-ndǒjí L-sò H bì-jé ngǎ nǎ-lá|  
 2SG-NEG-IMPF INF-wash LT 8-clothing isn't thus-ID  
 'You didn't do the laundry, did you?'  
 b. wàánjí 'vwálí kál yô, ngǎ 'náló  
 |ù-ǎ:-ndǒjí L-vólì H kál ì-ò ngǎ nǎ-lá|  
 2SG-NEG-IMPF INF-help LT sister IX-your isn't thus-ID  
 'You did not help your sister, did you?'

In the following example the same particle *ngǎ* is used at the beginning of a clause. Apparently the clause it introduces is an indirect speech act, asking a question via the expression of doubt. The example is taken from an interview in which the interviewer interrogates a senior member of his family about the disappearing culture of the Eton. Here he introduces the delicate subject of traditional medicine with a lot of hesitation:

- (142) dô màbé yìgà sílá nâ ... màbé sílgà nâ...  
 |dô mà-à-bé L-jì-gà L-síla nâ mà-à-bé síl-Lgà nâ|  
 DP 1SG-SP-TIMPF INF-want-G INF-ask CMP 1SG-SP-TIMPF ask-G CMP  
 'So I was wanting to ask whether... I was asking whether...'  
 ngǎ wô ùnè jǎm yèm bwàn mé'bálá bé'tí  
 |ngǎ H-wò ù-nè ɕǎm L-jëm b-òH=mè-bálá H=bòtí|  
 DP AU-2SG.PPR 2SG-POSpossiblyINF-know 2-DIM=6-medicine VI.CON=Beti  
 'might it be that you, you could possibly know some Beti medicines'  
 íbá bé'né kè ààyáŋ pwágó 'bóŋó, nâ ...  
 |í-bá bó-ně L-kè à:-jány pógá b-òŋó nâ|  
 AU-II.DEM II-RPOS INF-ALL ?-heal really 2-child CMP  
 'Those that can really heal children, that ...  
 ngé bá'yóŋ, ngé kíg nâ mòd àkwàn  
 |ngé bó-à-jóŋ ngé kíg nâ m-òd à-à-kòŋ|  
 if II-SP-be.warm if rather CMP 1-person I-SP-be.ill  
 'if they have fever, or rather if somebody is ill'

7.2. Constituent questions

Section V:3.2 on question words provides a description of constituent questions. This section will be restricted to two brief remarks concerning constituent questions. First, it must be pointed out that question words can be fronted (143b). When they are preceded by a preposition, the latter is fronted as well (144b, 145).

- (143) a. ùyén zǎ  
 |ù-H-jén-H zǎ|  
 2SG-PST-see-NF who  
 b. zǎ ú'yén  
 |zǎ ù-H-jén|  
 who 2SG-PST-see  
 'Whom did you see?'

- (144) a. ùsǒ ású jé?  
 |ù-H-sǒ-H ású H = ǔ-é|  
 2SG-PST-come-NF for III.CON=7-what  
 b. ású jé ú'sǒ?  
 |ású H = ǔ-é ù-H-sǒ|  
 for III.CON=7-what 2SG-PST-come  
 'Why did you come?'

- (145) èy bǒ zǎ á'ké á mákíd?  
 |è:j bǒ zǎ à-H-kè-H á mákíd|  
 with PL who I-PST-go-NF LOC market  
 'With whom (plural) did she go to the market?'

Second, the modifying nominal in a connective construction can be replaced by a question word in order to question it. There are no adnominal interrogative pro-possessives such as English *whose*.

- (146) a. àbógô á ndá ì zǎ?  
 |à-Bóg-ǎ á ndá ì = zǎ|  
 I-stay-RS LOC [9]house IX.CON=who  
 'In whose house does he stay?'  
 b. àbógô á ndá ì bǒ zǎ  
 |à-Bóg-ǎ á ndá ì = bǒ zǎ|  
 I-stay-RS LOC [9]house IX.CON=PL who  
 'In whose (pl.) house does he stay?'

The entire connective construction can be fronted (147).

(147) á ndá ì zá àbógô?

|á ndá ì=zá à-Bóg-á|

LOC [9]house IX.CON=who I-stay-RS

‘In whose house does he stay?’

# Chapter 9

## Complex constructions

### 1. Introduction

This chapter provides a succinct description of complex constructions, including complex predicates (Section 2), relative clauses (Section 3) and complex sentences (Sections 4-6).

### 2. Complex predicates: quasi-auxiliaries

#### 2.1. Introduction

Many aspectual, manner-adverbial and modal notions are expressed by means of lexical verbs instead of affixes, auxiliaries or adverbs. For lack of a better term, I will call these verbs *quasi-auxiliaries*. Quasi-auxiliaries obligatorily take an infinitival complement (L-stem), which may be regarded as the main predicate from a semantic point of view. Many verbs can be used as an independent verb or as a quasi-auxiliary, but some exclusively function as quasi-auxiliaries. Every element that can stand between an auxiliary and its infinitival complement can also stand between a quasi-auxiliary and its complement, e.g. the adverb *pwágó* and the pronominal *mâ* in (1).

- (1) àvúl pwágó mâ yàlnà  
|à-H-vúl-H            pógá    mà            L-jàlnà|  
I-PST-do.quickly-NF really    1SG.NPPR    INF-answer  
'He really answered me quickly.'

This section discusses the most frequently used quasi-auxiliaries. A first distinction is based on formal grounds, i.e. whether the quasi-auxiliary is conjugated as a regular verb (2.2) or as a Resultative form (2.3). The quasi-auxiliaries in Section 2.2 are ordered according to their meaning: aspectual (2.2.1-2.2.4), manner-adverbial (2.2.5-2.2.12) and modal (2.2.13-2.2.16). Some quasi-auxiliaries are glossed by means of an English translation equivalent, others by means of an abbreviated grammatical term in small caps, depending on their frequency and the availability of a grammatical term or a translation equivalent.

## 2.2. Non-resultative quasi-auxiliaries

Non-resultative quasi-auxiliaries are conjugated as normal verbs. This means that in the Present, the Future and the Inceptive they are the infinitival complement of a TA-auxiliary. Their complement in turn is also an infinitive, so that there is a link tone between the quasi-auxiliary and the “main” verb. Since the “main” verb has the infinitive prefix *L-*, the link tone cannot attach to the right and must instead be attached to the left. The following schema illustrates this for the Present. The quasi-auxiliary is represented by two low syllables, its “main” verb complement by one high syllable.

$$c\grave{v}\text{-}L\acute{t}\acute{e} \# L\text{-}c\grave{v}c\grave{v} \# H \# L\text{-}c\acute{v} \rightarrow c\grave{v}\acute{t}\acute{e} \ c\grave{v}c\acute{v} \ ^\prime c\acute{v}$$

When the quasi-auxiliary is monosyllabic and when it has a low tone, the result is a rising tone on the quasi-auxiliary, in accordance with the general tone rules of Eton.

$$c\grave{v}\text{-}L\acute{t}\acute{e} \# L\text{-}c\grave{v} \# H \# L\text{-}c\acute{v} \rightarrow c\grave{v}\acute{t}\acute{e} \ c\check{v} \ ^\prime c\acute{v}$$

However, in some varieties (dialects?) the tone is downstepped high instead of rising if the previous syllable is high.

$$c\grave{v}\text{-}L\acute{t}\acute{e} \# L\text{-}c\grave{v} \# H \# L\text{-}c\acute{v} \rightarrow c\grave{v}\acute{t}\acute{e} \ ^\prime c\acute{v} \ ^\prime c\acute{v}$$
2.2.1. *dìŋ* iterative, habitual

The quasi-auxiliary *dìŋ*, which means ‘love, like’ in main verb usage, is used in order to express iterative or habitual aspect. The iterative meaning of the quasi-auxiliary is fully grammaticalised, as is shown by example (2), where it is very unlikely that the subject likes the action:

- (2) (TMAQ 98) [Why did you think yesterday that your brother had caught a cold?]  
 àmé dìŋgì kwázî  
 |à-mé L-dìŋ-gì L-kózi|  
 I-YIMPF INF-HAB-G INF-cough  
 ‘He coughed often.’

It is my impression that the verb *aimer* has the same meaning in many varieties of African French.

2.2.2. *zèzà habitual*

Contrary to *dìŋ* the quasi-auxiliary *zèzà* does not exist as an independent verb. It also expresses habitual aspect. The difference with *dìŋ* is probably that *zèzà* adds a sense of regularity, i.e. ‘have the habit of doing something regularly’. This quasi-auxiliary is usually accompanied by the adverb *àyǎ*. The form of the main verb is in need of additional description. It seems to be the stem preceded by a low *à*. This might be a nominalization of the main verb (of gender 3).

- (3) àté zèzà àyǎ à yám kpêm  
 |à-Lté L-zèzà àjǎ H à jám H kpém|  
 I-PR INF-HAB already LT ? cook LT [9]cassava  
 ‘She has the habit of regularly preparing cassava leaves.’

2.2.3. *mà terminative*

The terminative quasi-auxiliary *mà*, which cannot be used as an independent verb, is related to the independent verb *mànà* ‘end (tr.), terminate’. Judging by the available corpus of spontaneous and elicited speech, this is the most frequently used quasi-auxiliary. *mà* has a number of related functions. First, it can simply add the meaning of the independent verb from which it developed, i.e. ‘finish doing something’ or ‘stop being in a certain state’. The tense of the quasi-auxiliary depends on when the situation designated by the main verb came/comes to an end.

- (4) a. àmágá kwàn  
 |à-H-mà-gà-H L-kòn|  
 I-PST-TMN-G-NF INF-be.ill  
 ‘He was ill (and recovered some time ago).’  
 b. àmá kwàn  
 |à-H-mà-H L-kòn|  
 I-PST-TMN-NF INF-be.ill  
 ‘He was ill (and recovered recently).’

Second, *mà* can construe an event as being telic, i.e. as having a built-in terminal point (see Comrie 1976:44). Example (5b) can also mean ‘he finished eating’, when *mà* is used in its finish-doing-something meaning.

- (5) a. àdí  
 |à-H-dí|  
 I-PST-eat  
 ‘He ate it.’

- b. àmá 'dí  
 |à-H-mà-H L-dí|  
 I-PST-TMN-NF INF-eat  
 'He ate it up.'
- (6) a. jàbá  
 |ǰàbà-H|  
 lengthen-IMP  
 'Lengthen it.'
- b. mǎ jàbà  
 |mà-H L-ǰàbà|  
 TMN-IMP INF-lengthen  
 'Lengthen it completely.'

When used with events that are already telic, the terminative quasi-auxiliary highlights the completion of the event.

- (7) ídí kál yàmà ìṅgámâ cág rímùṅ, mènḡâ dí  
 |ídí kál jàmà ì-ṅgá-mà L-tǰág H N-Bùṅ mèn-ṅgâ L-dí|  
 after [9]sister IX.my IX-RP-TMN INF-pound LT 3-cassava 1SG-INC INF-eat  
 'After my sister pounded the cassava, I ate it.'

Note that the completive quasi-auxiliary is compatible with imperfective aspect, when one wishes to highlight the internal structure of the completion of a telic event, especially when this completion is or was cumbersome.

- (8) àṅgábé màgà tìl kálâdà  
 |à-ṅgá-bé L-mà-gà L-tìl H kálâdà|  
 I-RP-IMPF INF-TMN-G INF-write LT letter  
 'He was finishing writing the letter.'
- (9) àté mǎ tìl bô kálâdà  
 |à-Lté L-mà H L-tìl H bô kálâdà|  
 I-PR INF-TMN LT INF-write LT PL letter  
 'He is finishing writing the letter.'

The terminative quasi-auxiliary *mà* is very frequently present in past perfective clauses expressing a telic event or an achievement, but can always be omitted without a clear difference in meaning.



- (16) *màm ménḡâ mã 'cénî*  
 |m-àm mǎ-ḡâ L-mà H L-tʃéni|  
 6-thing VI-INC INF-TMN LT INF-change  
 'Things are changing.'

Finally, one example was found in which the quasi-auxiliary means 'end up with' (17).

- (17) *yó mèmáḡá 'gbélê àná*  
 |jǒ mà-H-mà-ḡà-H L-ḡbél-ǎ à-ná|  
 VII.PPR 1SG-PST-TMN-G-NF INF-grasp-RS 3-today  
 'It's this one (i.e. this name) that I ended up having.'

In the above examples, the terminative quasi-auxiliary occurs with every tone pattern that is possible on a single syllable, i.e. high (10), falling (12), low (8), rising (14) and downstepped high (11). These patterns are the result of the regular application of the tone rules described in Section II:7.2. In some dialects (or idiolects?), *mà* carries a downstepped high tone where it has a rising tone in the examples above. These are dialects in which a *L*-prefix does not block high tone copy from a preceding syllable.

#### 2.2.4. *dúḡnì, báḡbâ and tìmnì repetitive*

The quasi-auxiliaries *dúḡnì*, *báḡbâ* and *tìmnì* mean 'do again'. As an independent verb *dúḡnì* and *tìmnì* mean 'come back' and *báḡbâ* 'add'. Contrary to *báḡbâ* *dúḡnì* and *tìmnì* as quasi-auxiliaries express an exact repetition of an action. For instance, *bébáḡbá 'jìb métwâ* means 'They stole a car again.', whereas *bédúḡnì 'jìb métwâ* would mean 'They stole the (same) car again.'

- (18) *àté 'dúḡnǐ 'dí*  
 |à-Lté L-dúḡnì H L-dí|  
 I-PR INF-REP LT INF-eat  
 'He's eating again.'
- (19) *àté 'báḡbǎ 'dí*  
 |à-Lté L-báḡbà H L-dí|  
 I-PR INF-REP LT INF-eat  
 'He's eating again.'

2.2.5. *kè andative*

The andative quasi-auxiliary *kè* is frequently used, sometimes in contexts where its semantic contribution is not very clear. *kè* can be used as an independent verb as well, where it means ‘go’. Interestingly, my consultants prefer a down-stepped high tone instead of a rising tone where *kè* is followed by link tone, whereas they prefer a rising tone with other low quasi-auxiliaries. A possible explanation for this could be that *ke* can have an underlying high tone when it functions as a quasi-auxiliary. This does not work, however, since *kè* is always clearly low in contexts where it is not followed by a link tone (21).

- (20) mèté ‘ké ‘sá á ngâdnè  
 |mè-Lté L-kè H L-sá á ngâdnè|  
 ISG-PR INF-AND LT INF-work LOC garden  
 ‘I’m going to work in the garden.’

- (21) mènḡákê sá á ngâdnè  
 |mè-ḡákê L-sá á ngâdnè|  
 ISG-RP-AND INF-work LOC garden  
 ‘I went to work in the garden.’  
 \*mènḡáké ‘sá á ngâdnè

In the imperative, the form of the andative quasi-auxiliary differs from that of the main verb *kè* ‘go’. Whereas the imperative of the quasi-auxiliary is regularly formed by means of the imperative suffix |-H| (22), the main verb has the irregular form *kèní* (23).

- (22) kě ‘twáǵí bíjèḡ  
 |kè-H L-túǵí H bì-jèḡ|  
 AND-IMP INF-take LT 7-match  
 ‘Go and look for matches.’  
 \*kèní ‘twáǵí bíjèḡ

- (23) kèní ‘go!’  
 \*kě

Sometimes, *kè* is followed by a main verb conjugated in the Southern present. The form of the lexical verb with its initial long vowel in (24) is in need of further description (consequently the glossing of (24) is only tentative).

- (24) àtè 'páz káná. àkè ààvázì, àkè ààkù ásí, ìvúvúz yákè yá'pám ánùŋ.  
 |à-Lté L-páz H káná à-à-kè à-à-vázì à-à-kè |  
 I-PR INF-fall LT [9]epilepsy I-SP-AND I-SP-stumble I-SP-AND  
 |à:kù ásí ì-vúvúz í-à-kè í-à-pám á à-nùŋ  
 INF-fall down 7-foam VII-SP-AND VII-SP-go.out LOC 3-mouth  
 'He has an epileptic fit. He stumbles, he falls down, foam comes out of his mouth.'

### 2.2.6. dāŋ 'a lot', 'most of all'

The stem *dāŋ* means 'cross' as an independent verb, and has the meaning 'most of all' or 'a lot' as a quasi-auxiliary.

- (25) mètè dāŋ dīŋ bô újô  
 |mè-Lté L-dāŋ H L-dīŋ H bô újô|  
 1SG-PR INF-cross LT INF-like LT PL sweet.banana  
 'I like sweet bananas a lot.'
- (26) lénè n'cógñí ú'té mà dāŋ 'yág á 'nnó  
 |lò-nè H-Ñ-t'ǵgní ú-Lté mà L-dāŋ H L-jág á Ñ-λó|  
 V-COP AU-3-idea III-PR 1SG.NPPR INF-cross LT INF-interest LOC 3-head  
 'It's an idea that is very dear to me.'

### 2.2.7. béb 'badly, wrongly'

Used as a main verb, the stem *béb* means 'be ugly' or 'be bad'. As a quasi-auxiliary it means 'badly' or 'wrongly'.

- (27) àbéb 'lón í'bém  
 |à-H-béb-H L-lón H ì-bém|  
 I-PST-be.bad-NF INF-build LT 7-cabin  
 'He has built the cabin badly.'

Note that *ɲéb* 'be good' cannot be used as a quasi-auxiliary. The English adverb *well* is translated by the noun *mèmèŋ* in Eton, or by means of the quasi-auxiliary *kwàgdò*, which is described in the next section.

- (28) àmá tìl bô kálàdà mèmèŋ  
 |à-H-mà-H L-tìl H bô kálàdà Ñ-Bèŋ|  
 I-PST-TMN-NF INF-write LT PL letter 3-good  
 'He wrote the letters well.'

2.2.8. *kwàgdò* & *twónê* ‘well, correctly’

There is no related independent verb for the quasi-auxiliary *kwàgdò*, which has a manner-adverbial meaning ‘well’ and a modal meaning ‘utterly, downright’.

- (29) àté kwàgdó swàlbò  
 |à-Lté L-kògdà H L-sòlbà|  
 I-PR INF-do.well LT INF-hide  
 ‘He hides himself well.’  
 or: ‘He is really hiding himself!’

In Southern dialects the quasi-auxiliary *twónê* is used rather than *kwàgdò*. This form does not have a related independent verb either.

- (30) àté ‘twóně swàlbò  
 |à-Lté L-túóně H L-sòlbà|  
 I-PR INF-do.well LT INF-hide  
 ‘He’s really hiding himself.’

2.2.9. *kún* ‘early’

Used independently, *kún* means ‘leave early’. As a quasi-auxiliary it means ‘do something early’.

- (31) àté ‘kún ‘sá  
 |à-Lté L-kún H L-sá|  
 I-PR INF-do.early LT INF-work  
 ‘She works early in the morning.’

2.2.10. *vúlâ* ‘quickly’

The stem *vúl(â)* cannot be used as an independent verb. As a quasi-auxiliary it means ‘quickly’ or ‘early’.

- (32) àté ‘vúl ‘dí  
 |à-Lté L-vúl H L-dí|  
 I-PR INF-do.quickly LT INF-eat  
 ‘He eats quickly.’

- (33) ùtílîm ú<sup>+</sup>té <sup>+</sup>vúl <sup>+</sup>nán  
 |ù-tílîm                      ú-Lté L-vúl                      H L-nán|  
 3-young.palm.tree III-PR INF-do.quickly LT INF-grow  
 ‘The young palm tree grows rapidly.’

- (34) mèté <sup>+</sup>vúl <sup>+</sup>téb á<sup>+</sup>sí  
 |mè-Lté L-vúl                      H L-tébè                      ásí|  
 1SG-PR INF-do.quickly LT INF-stand up  
 ‘I get up early.’

### 2.2.11. *bùlà* ‘a lot’, ‘most of all’

The verb *bùlà* means ‘multiply’ or ‘accumulate’. When used as a quasi-auxiliary, it has the same meaning as *dàn* (see 2.2.6).

- (35) àté bŭl dìŋ kpêm  
 |à-Lté L-bùl                      H L-dìŋ                      H k̄pêm|  
 I-PR INF-do.most LT INF-love LT [9]cassava.leaves  
 ‘She likes cassava leaves a lot.’

### 2.2.12. *bùmŋàná* ‘with a start’, ‘with a jump’, ‘suddenly’

When used independently, *bùmŋàná* means ‘wake up with a jump’ or ‘shiver’. As a quasi-auxiliary it adds ‘with a start’, ‘with a jump’, ‘suddenly’.

- (36) [mèmé wùlgà épàn  
 ‘I was walking in the bush.’]  
 d̄d̄ mèté bùmŋàná wùlǎ <sup>+</sup>ŋóy á <sup>+</sup>ŋól  
 |d̄d̄ m̄è-Lté L-bùmŋàná                      H L-wùlà                      H ŋòè                      á                      ŋól|  
 DP 1SG-PR INF-do.suddenly LT INF-walk LT [9]snake LOC [9]body  
 ‘Then all of a sudden I stepped on a snake.’

### 2.2.13. *yèèni* *necessity*

Necessity is expressed by means of the quasi-auxiliary *yèèni*, which as a main verb means ‘be necessary’ or ‘be desirable’.

- (37) a. ùté yèèní <sup>+</sup>sá  
 |ù-Lté L-jè:nì                      H L-sá|  
 2SG-PR INF-NEC LT INF-work  
 ‘You have to work.’ (deontic necessity)

- b. àté yèèní 'sá  
 |à-Lté L-jè:nì H L-sá|  
 I-PR INF-NEC LT INF-work  
 'He must be working.' (epistemic necessity)

Epistemic necessity is often expressed by the combination of the quasi-auxiliaries *nè* (see 2.2.14) and *yèèni*, instead of *yèèni* alone. It is not yet clear to me what the quasi-auxiliary *nè* adds here.

- (38) [You hear somebody entering the house]  
 éné yèèní kwám 'twámó  
 |é-nè L-jè:nì H L-kòm H tòmá|  
 V-NEC INF-NEC LT INF-do LT Tomo  
 'It must be Tomo.'

The use of a negative form of *yèèni* negates the proposition expressed by the main verb, rather than the modality, just like English *mustn't*.

- (39) ímúǵá ǵò ànè mbìd, àá'té yèèní ǵíínì á ndá  
 |í-N-úǵá ǵó à-nè mbìd à-ǎ:Lté L-jè:nì|  
 AU-1-child I.DEM I-COP [9]dirt I-NEG-PR INF-NEC  
 |H L-ǵí:nì á ndá|  
 LT INF-enter LOC [9]house  
 'This child is dirty, he mustn't enter the house.'

#### 2.2.14. *nè* possibility

The verb *nè* can function as a main verb (where it means 'exist'), as a copula, as an auxiliary and as a quasi-auxiliary. In the latter case it has a modal meaning, expressing possibility. The negative form of the verb (*sé*) expresses impossibility (42).

- (40) ànè kwàm dâm lésê  
 |à-nè L-kòm H d-àm ló-sè|  
 I-POS INF-do LT 5-thing V-every  
 'He's capable of everything.'
- (41) í'lóm bòd bé'né 'dí  
 |í-l-òm b-òd bé-ně L-dí|  
 AU-5-thing 2-person II-RPOS INF-eat  
 'edible things'

- (42) mèsé yèm  
 |mè-sé L-jèm|  
 1SG-NPOS INF-know  
 ‘I don’t know.’ (lit. ‘I can’t know.’)

In its use as a quasi-auxiliary expressing possibility, *nè* has a synonym *vò* (possibly in Southern dialects only), which I found in one example, viz. example v:(189).

### 2.2.15. *yì volition*

The quasi-auxiliary *yì*, which means ‘want’ in its main verb usage, usually expresses volition.

- (43) mèté yǐ ‘dí  
 |mè-Lté L-jì H L-dí|  
 1SG-PR INF-VOL LT INF-eat  
 ‘I would like to eat.’

With an inanimate subject it can have a prospective aspect reading, pointing to a present inclination towards, or potential for future behaviour, without implying immediate realisation, however.

- (44) ndá ité yǐ sùglàn  
 |ndá ì-Lté L-jì H L-sùglàn|  
 [9]house IX-PR INF-VOL LT INF-collapse  
 ‘The house will collapse (since it is obviously shabby now).’

In still another use, exemplified in example v:(28), the quasi-auxiliary *yì* translates the French verb *faillir* in the sense ‘almost happen’.

### 2.2.16. *tá priority*

The frequently used quasi-auxiliary *tá* is mostly found in non-indicative moods and in the Future. Most of the time it marks an activity as having priority, from which a reading of immediate future derives (45). This quasi-auxiliary probably derives from the verb *tádfi* ‘begin’.

- (45) bétâ dí  
 |H-bé-tá-L L-dí|  
 SB-II-PF-SB INF-eat  
 ‘Let them eat first.’

- (46) métâ ké 'dí  
 |H-mè-tá-L L-kè H L-dí|  
 SB-1SG-PF-SB INF-AND LT INF-eat  
 'I'm going to eat first.'

The priority quasi-auxiliary can be used twice in the same phrase, probably in order to insist on the priority of the action.

- (47) bétâ tá 'dí  
 |H-bé-tá-L L-tá H L-dí|  
 SB-II-PF-SB INF-PF LT INF-eat  
 'Let them eat first.'

### 2.3. Resultative quasi-auxiliaries

There are two forms, *ɲkúná* and *ndòmó*, that can function only as quasi-auxiliaries, i.e. not as independent verbs, and whose form recalls the Resultative forms described in Section VII:2.4.1. In the present tense they do not take the auxiliary *-Lté*. The first resultative quasi-auxiliary, *ɲkúná*, cannot be used in the past. The second, *ndòmó* is preceded by the auxiliary *nè* in the past, just as Resultative forms. The forms *ɲgénéâ* and *gbélé* are not exclusively quasi-auxiliaries.

#### 2.3.1. *ɲgénéâ* *persistive*<sup>1</sup>

Based on its conjugation and form, the verb *ɲgénéâ* could be analysed as a Contrastive resultative form (see VII:2.4.2), possibly of the verb *nè* 'be'. But semantically it differs from the other Contrastive resultatives, meaning 'still', rather than 'already'. It can be used as a main verb (48), as a copula (see Section 3) or as a quasi-auxiliary. When used as a quasi-auxiliary, it is followed by the participle (i.e. the G-form preceded by the infinitive prefix *L-*) of the main verb, not by the simple infinitive. This it has in common with the verb *nè* when used as a past imperfective auxiliary.

- (48) mènɲgénéâ  
 |mè-ɲgénéâ|  
 1SG-still.be  
 'I'm still there.'

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1. This term is widely used in Bantu studies for a TAM-morpheme or a construction used for a situation that "persists from a non-present time to the present, and is likely to extend to the [f]uture." (Muzale 1998:163, cited via Rose et al. 2002:64).

- (49) mènḡábé ṽḡḡénâ ḡbélê mètḡâ  
 |mè-ḡḡá-bé L-ḡḡénâ ḡbél-ǎ mètúà|  
 1SG-RP-IMPF INF-PER grasp-RS car  
 ‘I still had a car.’

- (50) (When I arrived at his place this morning)  
 àbé ṽḡḡénâ díḡḡâ  
 |à-bé L-ḡḡénâ L-dí-gà|  
 I-IMPF INF-PER INF-eat-G  
 ‘He was still eating.’

### 2.3.2. ḡkúná *prospective*

The quasi-auxiliary *ḡkúná* is followed by the stem of the main verb, not the infinitive form. It expresses what Comrie (1976:64) calls *prospective aspect*, in which a state is linked to a subsequent situation. This quasi-auxiliary is probably the Contrastive resultative form of the verb *kún* ‘leave early, leave on time’, with the formal complication that its final vowel has a structural high tone, instead of a dissimilating high one.

- (51) mènḡkúná dí ébàḡà  
 |mè-ḡkúná dí è-báḡá|  
 1SG-PRO eat 5-macabo  
 ‘I’m about to eat the macabo.’

- (52) mbèḡ ṽḡkúná nwán  
 |mbèḡ ṽ-ḡkúná nḡḡ|  
 [9]rain IX-PRO rain  
 ‘It’s about to rain.’

### 2.3.3. ndòmó/ndómá *perfect of recent past*

The quasi-auxiliary *ndòmó* expresses the perfect of a recent past (see Comrie 1976:60). The form of this quasi-auxiliary and that of the following main verb needs to be checked. I noted *ndòmó* and *ndómá*, which might be dialectal variants. The form *ndòmó* looks like a Contrastive resultative form (but there is no verb *dóm*). It is followed by a main verb that takes a prefix *à-*. Example (54) gives the forms of the hodiernal past (54a), the hesternal past (54b) and the remote past (54c).



## 2.4. Combinations of Quasi-auxiliaries

As example (55) illustrates, quasi-auxiliaries can combine. Only the first quasi-auxiliary is conjugated, the next ones are infinitival, just like the main verb. Every infinitive is the complement of the preceding infinitive in such a sequence. The order of quasi-auxiliaries is free or pragmatically conditioned, although there seems to be a preference for modal quasi-auxiliaries to precede the others.

- (58) àyèèni vúl 'yám  
 |à-à-yè:nì L-vúl H L-jám|  
 I-SP-NEC INF-do.quickly LT INF-cook  
 'She has to cook quickly.'
- (59) àndòmó mǎ tìmní 'pén ndá  
 |à-ndòmó L-mà H L-tìmnì H L-pén H ndá|  
 I-PRP INF-TMN LT INF-do.again LT INF-paint LT house  
 'She has just repainted the house.'
- (60) ànè jǎm 'vúl 'céní bí'yé  
 |à-nè ǫǎm L-vúl H L-tj'énì H bì-jé|  
 I-POS possibly INF-do.quickly LT INF-change LT 8-clothing  
 'He might have changed clothes quickly.'
- (61) a. àté 'dúǰně kwàgdó swàlbò  
 |à-Lté L-dúǰně H L-kògdà H L-sòlbà|  
 I-PR INF-do.again LT INF-do.well LT INF-hide  
 b. àté kwàgdó 'dúǰně swàlbò  
 |à-Lté L-kògdà H L-dúǰně H L-sòlbà|  
 I-PR INF-do.well LT INF-do.again LT INF-hide  
 'He really hides himself again.'
- (62) mènè jǎm 'twóné 'láj, nítê mèbóg(ò) á'sí  
 |mè-nè ǫǎm L-túónè H L-láj H-ñ-tè mè-bóg-ǎ á'sí|  
 1SG-POS possibly INF-do.well LT INF-read AU-3-time 1SG-sit-RS down  
 'I can read better when I'm seated.'

### 3. Relative clauses

All relative clauses are externally-headed in Eton. Four verbal constructions have a special relative form. The first is the present affirmative form of the verb *nè* 'be', which has a rising tone instead of a low one in relative clauses (63). Then there is the Southern present, in which the stem is preceded by a floating high tone prefix in relative clauses (64). Third, the form of the Future auxiliary is *èèy* in relative clauses, instead of *èèy* (65). Note that the Southern present is formed by the same morpheme as the Present in Ewondo and that in Ewondo verbal constructions regularly have a relative form. The Future auxiliary in Eton contains a reflex of this morpheme. Finally, the suffix of Resultative forms is high rather than dissimilating high in relative clauses. Head nominals precede the relative clause. When the relative clause is restrictive, its head nominal is marked by the augment, if headed by a noun, since pronominals do not take the augment (63-65). The head noun of non-restrictive relative clauses is not marked, so that any marking of the verb form is the only formal clue for recognising non-restrictive relative clauses (66).

- (63) a. íkòpí íně nól î kpèm  
 |í-kòpí ì-ně nól ì=kpèm|  
 AU-[9]coffee IX-RCOP [9]colour IX.CON=[9]cassava.leaves  
 'green coffee'  
 b. íyðŋ àně á lé'bá  
 |í-ìjðŋ à-ně á lə-bá|  
 AU-7-time I-RCOP LOC 5-marriage  
 'when she is married'

- (64) íyðŋ màyêm nâ wèy só, ...  
 |í-ì-jðŋ mà-à-H-jèm nâ ù-è:j L-só|  
 AU-7-time 1SG-SP-REL-know CMP 2SG-FUT INF-come  
 'When I know that you will come, ...'

- (65) a. ímètŵà mēy kùz  
 |í-mètúà mà-èèj L-kùz|  
 AU-car 1SG-REL.FUT INF-buy  
 'the car I will buy'  
 b. ívôm mēbógó  
 |í-vôm mà-Bóg-á|  
 AU-place 1SG-stay-REL.RS  
 'the place where I live'

- (66) tò àné bémé kàdgi bì nâ ndán ìmé dyă àné télèfòn àně méléú mâ  
 |tò àné bós-mé L-kàd-Lgi bì nâ ndán|  
 DP like II-YIMPF INF-say-G 1PL.NPPR CMP [9]ndan  
 |ì-mé ãiá àné télèfòn à-ně H-mè-lú má|  
 IX-YIMPF being like phone I-RCOP AU-6-night VI.DEM  
 Although we have been told that the ndan was similar to today's tele-  
 phone (lit. the telephone, which exists these nights).'

Relative clauses are normally not introduced by a relativiser in Eton (63-67). However, some examples were found in which a relative clause is preceded by a word *á* (68, 69). In these examples there is usually some separation between the relative clause and its head, which is always maximally specific. In example (68) the head nominal is a personal pronominal in focus position that refers to a herb. In the little dialogue in (69) the antecedent is a proper name, *Pius Eloundou*, which is separated from the relative clause by a change in speaker. The conditions in which the relativiser *á* must/can appear remain to be described. Probably *á* appears only in Southern dialects, under the influence of Ewondo.

- (67) ívôm mèté 'sá  
 |í-vòm mèté L-sá|  
 AU-place 1SG-PR INF-work  
 'the place where I work'
- (68) yô mèté 'pád, á mèté bùm á ndwân, á mé'kád nâ í'té yàgnì.  
 |H-jó mèté L-pád á mèté L-bùm á|  
 AU-VII.PPR 1SG-PR INF-pluck RL 1SG-PR INF-braise LOC  
 |ndôn á mèté H-kád-H nâ í-Lté L-jàgnì|  
 [9]fire RL 1SG-PST-say-NF CMP VII-PR INF-itch  
 'That's the one that I pluck, that I braise on the fire, of which I said that it  
 itches.'
- (69) A: nă píúz ìlúná  
 |nă píúz ìlúná|  
 mother Pius Eloundou  
 'the mother of Pius Eloundou'  
 B: á'ngábé í'só  
 |á à-ngá-bé ísǒ|  
 RL I-RP-IMPF your.father  
 'who was your father'

A: á'ngábé pèpá!  
 |á à-ngá-bé pèpá|  
 RL I-RP-IMPF daddy  
 'who was daddy!'

There are few constraints on accessibility to relativisation. The following examples illustrate some possible antecedents, viz. a second complement in (70), a so-called raised possessor in (71a) and an optional benefactive complement in (71b). In example (72) the antecedent is a time adverbial (see also examples (63b-64)). If the head nominal is the complement of a preposition, a resumptive pronominal must take its place in the relative clause (73). However, if the head noun is a complement of the locative preposition *á*, the latter is simply omitted in the corresponding relative clause (74b). Examples (75) and (76) illustrate relativising on possessors and constituents of subordinate clauses respectively.

(70) iyòŋ ítê màlòŋ wǎ índán mé'ngápùdì wǎ.  
 |í-jòŋ í-tè mǎ-à-lòŋà wǎ í-ndán|  
 7-time VII-ANA 1SG-SP-call 2SG-FPPR AU-[9]ndan  
 |mǎ-ngá-pùdì wǎ|  
 1SG-RP-put 2SG.FPPR  
 'At that time I call you by the ndan that I had given you.'

(71) a. ìvwág ínê íjí mèté 'búg mín'ló  
 |ì-vóg í-nè í-ǫí mǎ-Lté L-búg H mìn-λó|  
 VII-one VII-COP AU-VII.DEM 1SG-PR INF-break LT 4-head  
 'One is that (herb) of which I break the heads.'  
 b. jí'jéglê ñkúkú má á'kúz kálàdà ànè mèbú àbwǎ  
 |H-ñ-jéglà ñ-kúkú má à-H-kùz-H kálàdà à-nè mǎ-bù à-bùí|  
 AU-3-teacher 3-chief I-PST-buy-NF book I-COP 6-poor 3-very  
 'The teacher for whom the chief bought a book is very poor.'

(72) á'móz é'kéngí úngábé jèbgi  
 |H-à-möz è-H-kèn-Lgì-H ú-ngá-bé L-jèb-Lgì|  
 AU-3-day 1PL-PST-go-G-NF III-RP-IMPF INF-be.good-G  
 'The day on which we left was beautiful.'

(73) a. íbyém mèté ðǎŋ 'yág èy byó í'té bínê nâ: ...  
 |í-bj-ém mǎ-Lté L-ðǎŋ H L-jág è:j|  
 AU-8-thing 1SG-PR INF-cross LT INF-need with  
 |bj-ǒ ítǎ bí-nè nâ|  
 VIII-PPR there VIII-be CMP  
 'The things that I need most are: ...'

- b. mébálá ùté kwàm èèy mó, ménê yá?  
 |H-mə-bálá ù-Lté L-kòm è:j m-ǝ má-nè já|  
 AU-6-medicine 2SG-PR INF-do with VI-PPR VI-COP how  
 ‘The medicines with which you heal, they are how?’
- c. rímôm mènǵàŋ ñkúnkú má á+kú zǵí kálàdà ábò. né àté nèb dâm  
 |H-ŋ-Bòm mə-ŋǵàŋ ñ-kúnkú má à-H-kùz-Lgì-H|  
 AU-3-maker 6-magic 3-chief I-PST-buy-G-NF  
 |kálàdà ábò né à-Lté L-nèb d-àm|  
 book chez I.PPR I-PR INF-be.good 5-thing  
 ‘The marabout from whom the chief bought a book is nice.’
- (74) a. ñkúnkú má á+kú zǵí kálàdà á mákíd  
 |ñ-kúnkú má à-H-kùz-Lgì-H kálàdà á m-ákíd|  
 3-chief I-PST-buy-G-NF book LOC 6-market  
 ‘The chief bought the book on the market.’
- b. ímákíd ñ+kúnkú má á+kú zǵí kálàdà ménê ùjàb vá  
 |í-m-ákíd ñ-kúnkú má à-H-kùz-Lgì-H kálàdà má-nè ù-ǵàb vǎ|  
 AU-6-market 3-chief I-PST-buy-G-NF book VI-be 3-far here  
 ‘The market where the chief bought the book is far from here.’
- (75) ímòd mèté ñǵ ñǵwân àté mâ pèm  
 |í-N-òd mə-Lté L-ñǵ H ñǵòn à-Lté mà L-pèm|  
 AU-1-man 1SG-PR INF-like LT [9]girl I-PR 1SG.NPPR INF-detest  
 ‘The man whose daughter I like detests me.’
- (76) í+mó ‘mínǵá ùté còg nâ mèté ñǵ àá+té nèb  
 |í-N-ǵH=m-ìnnǵá ù-Lté L-ǵòg nâ mə-Lté L-ñǵ|  
 AU-1-DIM=1-woman 2SG-PR INF-think CMP 1SG-PR INF-like  
 |à-ǎ:-Lté L-nèb|  
 I-NEG-PR INF-be.good  
 ‘The girl you think I like is not nice.’

#### 4. Complementation

##### 4.1. Complement clauses introduced by the complementiser *nâ*

The complementiser *nâ* ‘that’ is formally identical to (and most probably derives from) the demonstrative manner pro-adverbial *nâ*. When the predicate of the matrix clause is manipulative (77) or commentative (78), the verb of the complement clause introduced by *nâ* has to be in the subjunctive, except if the matrix clause has an imperfective verb form (including the Present). In that case

the verb of the complement clause can also be in the Relative imperfective (with a habitual meaning) (77d).

- (77) a. *jé íkwâmgì nâ bévê bó dwé lé métâmná?*  
 |ɕ-é í-H-kòm-Lgì nâ H-bó-vé-L bó|  
 7-what VII-PST-make-G CMP SB-II-give-SB II.PPR  
 |d-óé ló = m̀-̀tâmná|  
 5-name V.PPR=6-metamna  
 ‘Why did they give them a metamna?’
- b. *àté kàd bôd nâ b́ézú*  
 |à-Lté L-kàd H b-òd nâ H-bó-zù-L|  
 I-PR INF-tell LT 2-person CMP SB-II-come-SB  
 ‘He tells the men to come.’
- c. *nà wâmd̀ àté ‘yéblê nâ m̀épâmd̀ ààlú úsê*  
 |nă wàmà à-Lté L-jéblà nâ H-m̀-̀pám-L à:lú úsê|  
 mother I-my I-PR INF-accept CMP SB-1SG-go.out-SB at.night  
 ‘My mother allows me to go out at night.’
- d. *nà wâmd̀ àté ‘yéblê nâ m̀épâmgì ààlú úsê*  
 |nă wàmà à-Lté L-jéblà nâ m̀-̀pám-Lgì à:lú úsê|  
 mother I-my I-PR INF-accept CMP 1SG-go.out-G at.night  
 ‘My mother (generally) allows me to go out at night.’
- e. *m̀ètê kòglàn èy wǒ nâ ùbé kwàm bídũŋ ààlúsê*  
 |m̀-̀Lté L-kòglàn è:j wǒ nâ ù-bé L-kòm H bì-dũŋ|  
 1SG-PR INF-beg with 2SG.FPPR CMP 2SG-NEG INF-make LT 8-noise  
 ‘I beg you not to make noise at night.’
- (78) a. *dô vó, í'té 'sílâ nâ úvê dwé dô, ...*  
 |dô vó í-Lté L-sílâ nâ H-ù-vé-L d-óé dH-ò|  
 DP VII-PR INF-ask CMP SB-2SG-give-SB 5-name V-your  
 ‘So, it is preferable that you give your name, ...’
- b. *lénê m̀m̀èŋ nâ úkâ mà èy ísá yí*  
 |lâ-nè ñ-Bèŋ nâ H-ù-kâ-L mà è:j H-ì-sá jǐ|  
 V-COP 3-good CMP SB-2SG-help-SB 1SG.NPPR with AU-7-work VII.DEM  
 ‘It’s nice that you help me with this job.’

In the periphrastic causative construction, the subject of the complement clause can optionally be raised to complement position in the matrix clause.

- (79) a. *àkwámgé mâ nâ mé'júgì*  
 |à-H-kòm-Lgì-H mà nâ H-m̀-̀jùg <H>ì|  
 I-PST-made-G-NF 1SG.NPPR CMP SB-1SG-suffer<SB>  
 ‘He made me suffer.’

- b. ùtàblà àkwámgé (wô) nâ úsâ  
 |ùtàblà à-H-kòm-Lgì-H nâ H-ù-sá-L|  
 Otabla PST-made-G-NF CMP SB-2SG-suffer-SB  
 ‘Otabela made you work.’

Utterance predicates (80), propositional attitude predicates (81), immediate perception predicates (82) and predicates of knowledge (83) can come with an indicative verb form in the *nâ*-clause.

- (80) a. àmém nâ mèté kàd bábélá  
 |à-H-mém-H nâ mè-Lté L-kàd bábélá|  
 I-PST-admit-NF CMP 1SG-PR INF-say truth  
 ‘He admitted that I’m right (lit. that I’m saying the truth).’
- (81) a. àté pèdnì nâ mèndím mé<sup>+</sup>té <sup>+</sup>sín  
 |à-Lté L-pèdnì nâ mè-ndím m<sup>+</sup>-Lté L-sín|  
 I-PR INF-doubt CMP 6-water VI-PR INF-be.cold  
 ‘He doubts that the water is cold. (i.e. he suspects that it is warm.)’
- b. màákàŋ nâ èyè só  
 |mè-ǎ-à-kàŋ nâ à-è;j L-só|  
 1SG-NEG-SP-believe CMP I-FUT INF-come  
 ‘I don’t think he will come.’
- (82) àté <sup>+</sup>wógdàná nâ mèndím mé<sup>+</sup>té <sup>+</sup>sín  
 |à-Lté L-wógdàná nâ mè-ndím m<sup>+</sup>-Lté L-sín|  
 I-PR INF-feel CMP 6-water VI-PR INF-be.cold  
 ‘He feels that the water is cold.’
- (83) mà màyèm pwágó vè nâ màgà mènǵákwb àdyǎ dwé nâ: ábdòn càlà  
 |mà mè-à-jèm pógá vè nâ màgà mè-ŋgá-kób|  
 1SG.NPPR 1SG-SP-know only simply CMP 1SG.CPR 1SG-RP-find  
 |à-díá d-óé nâ ábdòn tǵàlà|  
 I-being 5-name CMP Abdon Tsala  
 ‘Me, I really only know that me too I found him being called Abdon Tsala.’

An indicative verb form (often in the Future) is also used after a volitional predicate.

- (84) a. *mèté yì nâ mètèy dí*  
 |mè-Lté L-jì nâ mèt-è:j L-dí|  
 1SG-PR INF-want CMP 1SG-FUT INF-eat  
 ‘I want to eat.’
- b. *àáté jè nâ èyèyì pám*  
 |à-àá-Lté L-ɕè nâ à-è:j L-pám|  
 I-NEG-PR INF-want CMP I-FUT INF-leave  
 ‘He doesn’t want to leave.’
- c. *jícílá úsúsúwâ mèté yì nâ màsílá wǒ únê nâ: ...*  
 |H-N-Sílá úsúsúà mè-Lté L-jì nâ mèt-à-sílá wǒ ú-nè|  
 AU-3-question first 1SG-PR INF-want CMP 1SG-SP-ask 2SG.FPPR III-be  
 ‘The first question I want to ask you is...’

Note that the complement of an utterance predicate is always introduced by the complementiser *nâ*, there is no difference in this respect between direct and indirect speech.

- (85) a. *kǎd nâ pâm*  
 |kàd-H nâ pâm|  
 say-IMP CMP *pam*  
 ‘Say *pâm*!’
- b. *dúgnî kàd nâ pâm*  
 |dúgn<H>ì L-kàd nâ pâm|  
 REP<IMP> INF-say CMP *pam*  
 ‘Say *pâm* again!’
- (86) *dô ímôd mwág á’ngábé í’té ázù síl nâ íjóm bí’té dàŋ dí ínê jé?*  
 |dô í-N-òd mèt-móg à-ŋgá-bé ítě à-à-zù L-síl nâ|  
 DP AU-1-person I-one I-RP-be there I-SP-VEN INF-ask CMP  
 |í-ɕ-óm bí-Lté L-dàŋ ǎí í-nè ɕé|  
 AU-7-thing 1PL-PR INF-cross VII.DEM VII-COP what  
 ‘Then one person who was there asks: “What is this thing we are crossing?”’

If the verb in the complement clause has a complement, it can be extracted.

- (87) a. *àkád nâ àkúz mé’twâ*  
 |à-H-kàd-H nâ à-H-kùz-H mètúà|  
 I-PST-say-NF CMP I-PST-buy-NF car  
 ‘He said he bought a car.’

- b. jé àkád nâ àkûz  
 |ɕʒé à-H-kàd-H nâ à-H-kùz|  
 what I-PST-say-NF CMP I-PST-buy  
 ‘What did he say he bought?’
- c. mètwa jé békád nâ békûz  
 |mètúà jé bó-H-kàd-H nâ bó-H-kùz|  
 car I.PPR II-PST-say-NF CMP II-PST-buy  
 ‘A car they said they bought.’

Several clausal complements of utterance verbs introduced by *nâ* can be juxtaposed.

- (88) nǎ wámò àtè 'tón nâ áá'té kwàn, ànè vè òtén'tég; nâ í'sá wámò àgbéla nâ àbwàbgì jé.  
 |nǎ wàmà à-Lté L-tón nâ à-ǎ:-Lté L-kòn à-ne vè|  
 mother I.my I-PR INF-say CMP I-NEG-PR INF-be.ill I-COP simply  
 |N-tóntéǵ nâ ísǎ wàmà à-gbéla nâ à-bòb-Lgì jé|  
 3-lazy CMP father I.my I-NEC CMP I-beat-G I.PPR  
 ‘My mother says he is not ill, but only lazy and that my father should beat him.’
- (89) kál yàmà ité kàd nâ àánjí 'jìb tíd, vèdá nâ ìjónbàn éèy mbú  
 |kál jàmà ì-Lté L-kàd nâ à-ǎ:-nɕí L-ɕjìb tíd|  
 [9]sister IX.my IX-PR INF-say CMP I-NEG-NIMPF INF-steal [9]meat  
 |vèdá nâ ì-H-jónbàn-H è:j mbú|  
 but CMP IX-be.taken-NF by [9]dog  
 ‘My sister says that she did not steal the meat, but that it has been taken by the dog.’

#### 4.2. Complement clauses introduced by the complementiser (*à*)né

The particle (*à*)né, generally translatable as ‘like’, introduces complement clauses with a finite indicative verb form.

- (90) àtè 'wógdàna né mé'ndím mé'té 'sín.  
 |à-Lté L-wógdàna né mǎ-ndím mǎ-Lté L-sín|  
 I-PR INF-feel like 6-water VI-PR INF-be.cold  
 ‘He feels how cold the water is.’

- (91) ànè vè àné àté kwàn  
 |à-nè vè àné à-Lté L-kàn|  
 I-COP simply like I-PR INF-be.ill  
 ‘He looks ill.’ (lit. ‘He is simply like he is ill.’)

#### 4.3. Complement clauses introduced by the complementiser *ngé*

The complementiser *ngé* introduces ‘whether’-clauses. In the available examples the verb of the whether-clause is not specially marked (i.e. it has any of the forms that can also appear in a simple main clause). See (27) in the dialogue in the texts-section for another example.

- (92) àté jèm ngé mèn<sup>4</sup>ndím mé<sup>4</sup>té <sup>4</sup>sín  
 |à-Lté L-ɕèm ngé mèn-ndím mé-Lté L-sín|  
 I-PR INF-know CMP 6-water VI-PR INF-be.cold  
 ‘He knows whether the water is cold.’
- (93) àté yì nâ èèy jèm ngé wèèy só á lé<sup>4</sup>bóg <sup>4</sup>dé  
 |à-Lté L-jì nâ à-è:j L-ɕèm ngé ù-è:j L-só|  
 I-PR INF-want CMP I-FUT INF-know CMP 2SG-FUT INF-come  
 |á lè-bóg d-ě|  
 LOC 5-party V-her  
 ‘She wants to know whether you will come to her party.’

#### 4.4. Complement clauses without a complementiser

Some complement taking verbs can take a complement clause that is not introduced by a complementiser. The verb of this complement clause is non-finite, it is either an infinitive or a Relative imperfective.

- (94) mbwé yâmà ìvwálí mâ lón ndá  
 |mbóé jàmà ì-H-vwálì-H mà L-lón H ndá|  
 [9]friend IX.my IX-PST-help-NF 1SG.NPPR INF-build LT [9]house  
 ‘My friend helped me build the house.’

Intuitively, there is a difference between complex clauses such as the one in (94) and the complex predicates involving a quasi-auxiliary described in Section 2, although at first sight the two are formally identical. This is due to the semantics of the quasi-auxiliaries, which express notions such as manner and aspect. The difference can be illustrated with the verb *dìŋ* which means ‘love, like’ when used as an independent predicate, but which expresses habitual aspect when used as a quasi-auxiliary (cf. 2.2.1).

- (95) àṅgábé òṅgè mà kùz bí'págì  
 |à-ṅgá-bé L-dìṅ-Lgì mà L-kùz H bì-págì|  
 I-RP-IMPF INF-like/HAB-G 1SG.NPPR INF-buy LT 8-present  
 'He liked to buy me presents.' *or* 'He often bought me presents.'

With a past perfective verb form, the habitual reading is ruled out, but this is due to the imperfective meaning of *dìṅ* when used as a quasi-auxiliary, rather than to the fact that it is part of a complex predicate.

- (96) àṅgádìṅ kùz mà bipágì  
 |à-ṅgá-dìṅ L-kùz H mà bì-págì|  
 I-RP-like INF-buy LT 1SG.NPPR 8-present  
 'He liked to buy me presents.'

It could be hypothesized that complement clauses can be focalised in contrast to the second part of a complex predicate, but the little data available at present seems to contradict this hypothesis. However, in contrast to a complement clause, the second part of a complex predicate has to be replaced by the semantically empty verb *kwàm* 'do' when focalised.<sup>2</sup>

- (97) a. àté òṅgè 'dá bídìgà byě  
 |à-Lté L-dìṅ H L-dá H bì-dì:gà bj-ě|  
 I-PR INF-HAB/like LT INF-lose LT 8-key VIII-his  
 'He often loses his keys.' *or* <sup>??</sup>'He likes to lose his keys.'
- b. dá bídìgà byě àté òṅgè kwàm  
 |L-dá H bì-dì:gà bj-ě à-té òṅgè L-dìṅ H L-kòm|  
 INF-lose LT 8-key VIII-his I-PR V.PPR INF-HAB LT INF-do  
 'Lose his keys is what he often does / \*what he likes to do.'
- c. á 'dá bídìgà byě àté òṅgè  
 |á L-dá H bì-dì:gà bj-ě à-té òṅgè L-dìṅ|  
 LOC INF-lose LT 8-key VIII-his I-PR V.PPR INF-like  
<sup>?</sup>'Lose his keys is what he likes to do / \*what he often does.'

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2. As can be seen in examples (95-97) the infinitive head of the focalised phrase is sometimes in citation form (i.e. preceded by the locative preposition *á*), sometimes not. It is not yet clear how this variation is conditioned. Another instance of variation in need of further description is the form and position of the resumptive pronoun. In (97b) the resumptive pronoun agrees with the complement of the focalised infinitival phrase and precedes the main clause, whereas in the other examples it is of the default agreement pattern V and functions as a complement in the main clause.

- (98) á kùz bí'págî àté dō dīŋ  
 |á L-kùz H bì-págî à-Lté dō L-dīŋ|  
 LOC INF-buy LT 8-present I-PR V.PPR INF-like  
 a. 'To buy presents is what he likes.'  
 b. \*'To buy presents is what he usually does.'
- (99) a. bébágbá 'jīb mé'twâ  
 |bó-H-bágbà-H L-ɕíb H mètúà|  
 II-PST-REP-NF INF-steal LT car  
 'They stole a car again.'  
 b. á 'jīb mé'twâ jé bébágbá kwàm  
 |á L-ɕíb H mètúà jě bó-H-bágbà-H L-kòm|  
 LOC INF-steal LT car I.PPR II-PST-REP-NF INF-do  
 'Steal a car is what they did again.'

In the absence of a large corpus of spontaneous speech it is impossible to measure whether the preferred position of pronominal complements provides a way to distinguish between complex sentences and complex predicates. In example (95), for instance, the pronominal complement *mà* 'me' can be either a complement of the complex predicate *dīŋ kùz* 'buy often' (with *bí'págî* 'presents' as a second complement) or a complement of *dīŋ* 'like' (with *kùz bí'págî* 'buy presents' as a second complement). There is no clear difference in interpretation depending on the position of *mà* before or after *kùz*. If *mà* 'me' is replaced by a noun, e.g. *bòŋɔ* 'the children', this noun has to come after *kùz*, whatever the interpretation of the sentence.

## 5. Adverbial clauses

### 5.1. Time clauses

#### 5.1.1. *When*

When-clauses are typically expressed by means of a relative clause headed by the word *iyòŋ* 'time, occasion'.<sup>3</sup>

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3. Remember that the head noun of a relative clause takes the augment. In some elicited when-clauses, the nominal prefix of *iyòŋ* is left out. I did not find this in texts yet.

- (100) íyðŋ hó bì bìzùgà mpág á'á àfrīg mû, biázù, biá'jéŋ mézëŋ, bí'ábógbô  
 |H-ì-jòŋ fíó bì bì-H-zù-gà N-pág áá àfrīg mú ...|  
 AU-7-time then 1PL.NPPR 1PL-PST-come-G 3-sideLC Africa here ...  
 'So when we arrived here in (this part of) Africa, we came, we searched  
 the paths, we settled'
- (101) m̀m̀èŋ. íyðŋ ùně á úyòm-ábàŋ á'yád múliá  
 |N-Bèŋ H-ì-jòŋ ù-ně á ùjòm ábàŋ ájád múliá|  
 3-good AU-7-time 2SG-REL.be LOC Oyom-Abang other.side there  
 'Right, when you are there, at the other side of Oyom-Abang...'

Such an *ijðŋ*-clause can also be used with a conditional meaning in generic sentences.

- (102) íyðŋ mòd àté wô síŋ, àsé kàd ídâm lápèb á nól yô  
 |H-ì-jòŋ N-òd à-Lté wô L-síŋ à-sé L-kàd|  
 AU-7-time 1-person I-PR 2SG.NPPR INF-hate I-NPOS INF-say  
 |í-d-àm lã-à-ŋèb á nól ì-ð|  
 AU-5-thing V-SP-be.good LOC [9]body IX-your  
 'When somebody hates you, he cannot say anything nice about you.'

The word *vén* introduces a time clause that seems to express the current relevance of a past event and that often contains the adverb *àyă* 'already'. The verb in this subordinate clause is always in the Hodiernal past perfective, which has a perfect meaning in this case (see VII:2.3.5). The terminative quasi-auxiliary *mà* is also frequently encountered in *vén*-clauses.

- (103) àvé mà m̀ndím, vén m̀dì àyă  
 |à-H-vé-H mà m̀-ndím vén m̀-ndì àjă|  
 I-PST-give-NF 1SG.NPPR 6-water when I-PST-eat already  
 'She gave me water when I had already eaten.'

### 5.1.2. *While*

Simultaneity can be expressed in two ways. One strategy to encode simultaneous actions by means of a complex sentence is to use a verb in the Relative imperfective or Present resultative in the backgrounded clause. The order of the two clauses is free, although there seems to be a certain preference for any clause with a first person subject to come first.

- (104) mèté 'dí, mèwòògì mèzìg  
 |mè-Lté L-dí mè-wóg-Lgì mèzìg|  
 1SG-PR INF-eat 1sg-listen-G music  
 'I'm eating, while listening to music.'
- (105) mènḡábé 'wòògì mèzìg, àdíḡâ  
 |mè-ḡgá-bé L-wóg-Lgì mèzìg à-dí-gà|  
 1SG-RP-IMPF INF-listen-G music I-eat-G  
 'I was listening to music, while she was eating.'
- (106) mènè jãm 'twóné 'láj, mèbóg(ò) á'sí  
 |mè-nè ɕǎm L-túónè H L-láj mè-bóg-ǎ ásí|  
 1SG-POS possibly INF-do.well LT INF-read 1sg-sit-RS down  
 'I can read better while seated.'

When the while-clause contains a resultative verb form, it is always a so-called Present resultative, also when the main clause contains a Past resultative.

- (107) a. àbé 'télê, mèbóg á'sí  
 |à-bé L-tél-ǎ mè-bóg-ǎ ásí|  
 I-TIMPF INF-stand-RS 1SG-sit-RS down  
 'She was standing, while I was sitting.'
- b. àbé 'télê, mèbé 'bóg á'sí  
 |à-bé L-tél-ǎ mè-bé L-bóg-ǎ ásí|  
 I-TIMPF INF-stand-RS 1SG-TIMPF INF-sit-RS down  
 'She was standing and I was sitting.'  
 \*'She was standing, while I was sitting.'

The other way to express simultaneity is by means of a relative clause headed by a noun that refers to time, e.g. *ńtè* 'duration, period' or *èbǒg* 'time, hour'. The relative clause can either precede or follow the matrix clause.

- (108) ńtè mèté yàn ḡ'kúḡkúamá, màláj cêcàd  
 |H-ń-té mè-Lté L-jàḡà ḡ-kúḡkúamá mè-à-láj ɕḡɕḡad|  
 AU-3-period 1SG-PR INF-wait 3-chief 1SG-SP-read a.bit  
 'While I'm waiting for the chef, I'm reading a bit.'

5.1.3. *As soon as*

*As soon as*-clauses are introduced by the subordinator *ɲiná*. The verb of the *ɲiná*-clause is finite. There seem to be no TAM-restrictions.<sup>4</sup>

(109) *mèngâ wó 'lónj 'wó. ɲiná mé'lónj 'wó índán mé'ngávé 'wó, ùyéblá. mà èèy wò nâ: zùgó'ó!*

|*mè-ɲgâ fíó L-lónj wǒ ɲiná mà-H-lónj wǒ*|  
1SG-INC then INF-call 2SG.FPPR as.soon.as 1SG-PST-call 2SG.FPPR

|*í-ndán mà-ɲgá-vé wǒ ù-jéblà-H...*

AU-[9]ndan 1SG-RP-give 2SG.FPPR 2SG-answer-CS...

'Then I call you. As soon as I called you by the ndan I had given to you, you answer. And I say to you: come!'

(110) a. *ɲiná mékpèli ìyòŋ ítê mèté gbè nâ*

|*ɲiná mà-H-kpèli ì-jòŋ í-tê mà-Lté L-gbè ná*|  
asa 1SG-PST-injure 7-time VII-ANA 1SG-PR INF-grasp thus

'As soon as I injured him, at that time I grasp him like this.'

b. *á lévèl lébùm. màgbè nâ. ìyòŋ ítê*

|*á lè-vèl H=lè-bùm mà-à-gbè nâ ì-jòŋ í-tê*|  
LOC 5-side V.CON=5-belly 1SG-SP-grasp thus 7-time VII-ANA

'at the side of his belly. I grasp him like this. Then'

c. *màkpèli mǎ 'mbáŋ í'té. ɲiná mékpèli ìyòŋ ítê*

|*mà-à-kpèli N-òH=mbăŋ íté ɲiná mà-H-kpèli ì-jòŋ í-tê*|  
1SG-SP-injure DIM=[9]scratch there asa 1SG-PST-injure 7-time VII-ANA

'I make this little scarification there. As soon as I have injured (him) there.'

d. *màgbê ɲícó mèbè mí. ɲícó àmă 'víb*

|*mà-à-H-gbè ɲítʃó mà-bèmi-H ɲítʃó à-mà-H L-víb H*|  
1SG-SP-PST-grasp lizard 1SG-fix-cs lizard I-TMN-CS INF-suck LT

'I took the lizard and fixed it, and the lizard sucks up'

e. *mé'cí mépám. mènɔŋ ɲícó mèwǒ.*

|*H-mà-tʃí mǎ-H-pám mà-ɲòŋ-H ɲítʃó mà-wò-H*|  
AU-6-blood VI-PST-come.out 1SG-take-CS lizard 1SG-throw-CS

'the blood that had come out. I take the lizard and I throw him away.'

f. *mè èèy ɲé nâ: kèní èèy ú'kwán 'ɲúlá!*

|*mà è:j ɲé nâ kèní è:j H-ù-kǒn ɲú-lá*|  
1SG.NPPR with I.PPR CMP go.IMP with AU-3-disease III.DEM-CH

'I tell him: "Go with this disease!"'

4. The text fragment in example (108) is the continuation of example (128) in Chapter 7, which contains other examples of 'as soon as'-clauses.



- (114) à̀sògò 'pám á mbúz m̀lú m̀lá nâ í'sá ákê  
 |à-sò-gà-H L-pám á mbúz m̀lú m̀lá nâ ísǎ à-H-kè|  
 I-VEN-G-NF INF-arrive LOC [9]back 6-night VI-three CMP father I-PST-go  
 'He arrived three days after his father left.'

### 5.1.5. *Before*

'Before'-clauses are introduced by *úsúswâ inâ*, which consists of the reduplicated word *úsúswâ* 'very first' (related to *àsú* 'face'); and the complementiser *nâ* preceded by *ì-* (probably a shortened form of *èèy* 'and, with'). According to one consultant, the verb of the 'before'-clause is obligatorily in the Future, but apparently the (Southern) present can be used as well.

- (115) à̀mágá kwàgdó bèbè ngé môd à̀ngábé 'dyá úsúswâ inâ à̀pîmì  
 |à-H-mà-gà-H L-kògdà H L-bèbà ngé N-òd|  
 I-PST-TMN-G-NF INF-do.well LT INF-look whether 1-person  
 |à-ǎ:-ngá-bé L-díá úsúsúà inâ à-à-nî:nì|  
 I-NEG-RP-IMPF INF-being before I-SP-enter  
 'He made sure there was nobody before going in.'

### 5.2. Manner clauses

Manner clauses are introduced by *àné* 'like' (see VIII(19) for another example).

- (116) ìyòŋ ítê vò bé'té 'lòŋò ndán àné mé'kád pwágò 'wò  
 |ì-jòŋ í-tê fìò bò-Lté L-lòŋà ndánàné m̀-à-H-kád pógá wò|  
 7-time VII-ANA then II-PR INF-call ndanlike 1SG-PST-say really 2SG.FPPR  
 'It is then that they call (play) the ndan, really the way I told (you).'

- (117) kè nâ j̀càŋ úŋgápám 'má, àné j̀càŋ ú'té 'pám 'bòŋó  
 |kè nâ ñ-tʃàŋ ú-ŋgá-pám mǎ àné ñ-tʃàŋ|  
 DP CMP 3-mange III-RP-come.out 1SG.FPPR like 3-mange  
 |ú-Lté L-pám H b-òŋó|  
 III-PR INF-come.out LT 2-child  
 'Certainly, this mange appeared on me, as mange appears on children.'

### 5.3. Location clauses

Locative clauses are expressed by means of a relative clause headed by a noun that refers to a place.

- (118) béswágô mpág béngábônì  
 |bá-só-gà H-Ñ-pág bá-ηgá-bònì|  
 II-come-G AU-3-side II-RP-found  
 ‘They came from where they (i.e. their clans) had been founded.’
- (119) jé àáyè̀m mpág á<sup>4</sup>lígì ú<sup>4</sup>ηgólò mú  
 |jě à-ǎ-à-jèm H-Ñ-pág à-à-lígì H ùηgólò mú|  
 I.PPR I-NEG-SP-know AU-3-side I-SP-stay LOC Yaoundé here  
 ‘He, where he stays, here in Yaoundé, doesn’t know (anything about it).’
- (120) ùté bàgì ñcô ívóm ùmá kpèlì  
 |ù-Lté L-bàgì jífḡ ñvôm ù-H-mà-H L-kpèlì|  
 2SG-PR INF-stick lizard AU-place 2SG-PST-TMN-NF INF-injure  
 ‘You stick the lizard where you have injured (the child)...’

#### 5.4. Conditional clauses

Conditional clauses are introduced by *ηgé*, except when they are concessive (see below). The verb form can be Consecutive in both the protasis and the apodosis (121); in the protasis but not in the apodosis (122, 123); or neither in the protasis nor in the apodosis (125). I found no examples with an absolute tense form in the protasis and a Consecutive verb in the apodosis, but this might be due to accident (see below, example (128) for counterfactual conditionals). If the protasis has a Consecutive verb form, the conditional word *ηgé* can be left out (124).

- (121) a. ηgé bí<sup>4</sup>né àné á lépàn, mèlédé <sup>4</sup>wó nâ dàm símá dàm kàlà  
 |ηgé bí-nè-H àné á lè-pàn mè-lédà-H wḡ|  
 if 1PL-be-CS like LOC 5-bush 1SG-show-CS 2SG.FPPR  
 |nâ dàm símá dàm kàlà |  
 CMP this.and.that  
 ‘If we were in the bush, for instance, I would show you this and that.’
- b. [ùwònò àté pò mé<sup>4</sup>lígì,] ηgé àálígì ásì, àlígì á léngùnà  
 |ηgé à-ǎ-lígì-H á sí à-lígì-H á lè-ηgùnà|  
 if I-NEG-stay-CS LOC [9]ground I-stay-CS LOC 5-granary  
 [‘Peanuts are often abandoned:] if they don’t stay in the earth, they stay in the granary.’

- (122) [bèvwág bé'té yòlò íkúkwâlò.] ñgé ú'wóg pê mòd bélwágò nâ íkúkwâlò,  
 nálá ànè nâ bòd bɛ́ngák'wálò àbwĩ mām.  
 |ñgé ù-wóg-H pɛ̀ N-òd bɔ́-ló-gà nâ íkúkòlà|  
 if 2SG-hear-CS simply 1-person II-call-G CMP Ikukwalo  
 |ná-lá à-nè nâ b-òd bɔ́-ñgá-kólò à-bùí H=m-àm |  
 thus-ID I-be CMP 2-person II-RP-say 3-many III.CON=6-thing  
 ['Some give [their child] the name *Gossip*.] If you ever hear somebody  
 being called *Gossip*, this means that people had talked a lot (i.e. before  
 the birth about the mother being infertile).'
- (123) [ñkwóló itè ààngábé á lé'bá úyám àléné èě? yí àngákê wú úyám àléné.]  
 ['This Nkolo wasn't she married in Uyam Alene? Certainly, she died in  
 Uyam Alene.]  
 bwán 'bé yì mèvò pɛ̀ tìmní yèm bó ítétègèní? ñgé béyén 'má ... ñgé  
 bɛ́ngéná á 'vyá, ñgé yá?  
 |b-ón bɛ̀ yì mɔ̀-vò pɛ̀ L-tìmnì H L-jèm bó ítétèg.jí|  
 2-child II.her Q 1SG-POS simply INF-REPLT INF-know II.PPR now  
 |ñgé bɔ́-jén-H mǎ ñgé bɔ́-ñgénà-H áviá ñgé já|  
 if II-see-CS 1SG.FPPR if II-still.be alive if how  
 Her children, would I still recognise them now if they would see me, if  
 they are still alive, if how...'
- (124) lé'bóg bô nâ bɛ́ngábé, bévé múṅá í'vú, wàyì bèglè  
 |H-lò-bóg bò nâ bɔ́-ñgá-bé bɔ́-vé-H N-úṅá ì-vú|  
 AU-5-time PL mother II-RP-be II-give-CS 1-child 7-ivu  
 |ù-à-yì L-bèglà|  
 2SG-SP-FUT INF-carry  
 'At the time when our mothers lived, if they gave a child *ivu*, you will  
 carry (this child to the doctor).'<sup>6</sup>
- (125) ñgé wàyì nâ wàṅṅ, màyì kàd wò nâ...  
 |ñgé ù-à-jì nâ ù-à-ṅṅ mɔ̀-à-jì L-kàd H wò nâ|  
 if 2SG-SP-want CMP 2SG-SP-take 1SG-SP-FUTINF-say LT 2SG.NPPR CMP  
 'If you want to take [it], I will tell you that...'

Hypothetical conditionals can be expressed by means of the so-called "In-  
 definite future" (see VII:2.3.10).

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6. Ivu is a type of magical force given to some young children during an initiation.

- (126) *dô íjóm mètè 'yág èèy yó nâ màyì til á kálàdà wàmò, ñgé ñágà àngá'pám*  
 |*dô í-ɕ-óm m̀-Łté L-jág è:j jǒ nâ m̀-à-jì L-til*|  
 DP AU-7-thing 1SG-PR INF-need with VII.PPR CMP 1SG-SP-FUT INF-write  
 |*á kálàdà wàmà ñgé ñágà à-LñgáL-pám-H*|  
 LOC book I.my if I.CPR I-IF-come.out-IF  
 'So, what I need to write in my book, if ever it will appear, ...'

An exhortation is often expressed by means of a Relative imperfective verb form rather than by an Imperative in the apodosis of a conditional clause, but an Imperative verb form seems to be always possible as well (127), see also VIII(34). This is probably because the exhortation is not meant to incite immediate action in such a context, but rather to give general guidelines for behaviour in the situation expressed in the protasis.

- (127) *ùjùgà mǎ ñgé màsílà wǒ, ású dô í'mén dô mètè dǎñ 'yág èèy dó*  
 |*ù-ɕù-gà mǎ ñgé m̀-à-sílà wǒ ású dǒ*|  
 2SG-excuse-G 1SG.FPPR if 1SG-SP-ask 2SG.FPPR because V.PPR  
 |*íměñ dǒ m̀-Łté Ldàñ H L-jág èèj dǒ*|  
 INTS V.PPR 1SG-PR INF-cross LT INF-need with V.PPR  
 'Excuse me if I ask you, because it is especially that that interests me'

Counterfactual conditionals are introduced by *bén (nâ)* (128, 129).

- (128) *bén nâ ñé àdì'dyá vâ, m̀lédé wǒ ñé*  
 |*bén nâ ñé à-dìdiá vǎ m̀-lédà-H wǒ ñé*|  
 if.CF CMP I.PPR I-F~being here 1SG-show-CS 2SG.NPPR I.PPR  
 '(about a herb) If it had been here, I would have shown it to you.'
- (129) A. [*ílé wǒ ùté 'ké 'pád jóm ínê dwé yá? mà mètè dǎñ 'yág èèy mwé bilé à nâ!*]  
 [The tree on which you go and harvest the thing (i.e. the ingredient for a medicine), how is it called? I really need the names of the trees, mother!]
- B. [*mà mèsè pè yèm m̀. íjí 'á á b̀nì, ...*]  
 [I don't know them. The one of (i.e. for healing) amoebiasis]  
*bén nâ ùyèmgi té jóm ínê vǎlá: ìtétób.*  
 |*bén nâ ù-jèm-Lgì tǒ ɕ-óm í-nè vǎ-lá ì-tótób*|  
 if.CF CMP 2SG-know-G anyway 7-thing VII-be here-CH 7-itetob  
 'Even if you had known it... the thing is here: *itetob*'

In example (129) speaker [B] assumes that [A] does not know the tree she uses to make her medicine and wonders what sense it makes to tell him its

name, even in case he had known the tree.<sup>7</sup> The verb in this clause is in the Relative imperfective. In some elicited examples of conditionals the apodosis is introduced by *ngé*, whereas the protasis takes alternatively *ngé* or *bén nâ* (130, 131).

(130) [Somebody would like to eat some meat, but sees that the pot is empty. His mother says:]

bén nâ ùsò 'tédé bínùtèn bítán, ngé ú'kwáb tíd  
 |bén nâ ù-H-só tédó bi-nútén bí-tán ngé ù-kób-H tíd|  
 if.CF CMP 2SG-PST-come simply8-minute VIII-five then 2SG-find-CS [9]meat  
 'If you had come five minutes earlier, you would have found meat.'

(131) [The speaker knows that the boy was expecting money and that he did not get it]

ngé/bén nâ m̀ pâm àgbégé 'mwání, ngé á'kùz m̀ 'mínngá é'tóm  
 |ngé m-òH = pâm à-H-gbé-gà-H m̀nì ngé H-à-kùz-L|  
 if 1-DIM=[9]man I-PST-grasp-G-NF money then SB-I-buy-SB  
 |m̀òH = N-ìngá è-tóm|  
 DIM=1-woman 5-present  
 'If the boy had got the money, he would have bought a present for the girl.'

### 5.5. Concessive clauses

Concessive clauses are introduced by *t̀*, whether they are conditional ('even if') (132-135), definite ('although') (136-137) or indefinite ('X-ever') (139-143). I found no restrictions on verb forms either in the concessive clause or in the main clause. In both clauses the Consecutive is often used. In definite concessive clauses *t̀* is followed by *àné* 'like', compare (138a-b).

(132) t̀ miní'púdí ngwâg m̀pég ǹ, wáàyi ǹb̀i  
 |t̀ miní-pùdì-H ngòg H H-ñ-pég ǹ ó ú-ǎ-à-jì L-ǹb̀i|  
 CONC 2PL-put-CS [9]stone LOC AU-3-bag III.DEM III-NEG-SP-FUTINF-tear  
 'Even if you put a stone in this bag, it will not tear apart.'

<sup>7</sup> I had asked my collaborator to take interviews on a number of subjects in order to gather a small text corpus. Unfortunately I suggested traditional medicine as one of the possible topics (mainly in order to collect some plant names), unaware of the delicacy of the subject until I transcribed the interviews. Examples (128) and (129) illustrate the reluctance with which people discuss it. I will not publish the interview, but thought that taking some isolated examples from the long text can do no harm.

- (133) [wàyèm íjóm bé<sup>+</sup>té 'lò nâ: kúkwé? kúkwé!  
 'Do you know this thing they call *kukwe*? Kukwe!]  
 tò mènè tè yêm! mwé yí mà mèté dǎŋ 'yág èyè mǒ.  
 |tò mǎ-nè tɛH jɛm m-óé jî mà mǎ-Ltɛ L-dǎŋ|  
 CONC 1SG-COP NEG know 6-name FOC 1SG.NPPR 1SG-PR INF-cross  
 |H L-jág H èj mǒ  
 LT INF-need LT with VLPPR  
 'Even if I don't know (it)! It's the names I need most.'
- (134) tò lénê ɲcù, tò lénê ìvú í<sup>+</sup>mén pwágó,  
 |tò lǎ-nè ñ-Sù tò lǎ-nè ì-vú ímɛn pógá|  
 CONC V-COP 3-poison CONC V-COP 7-ivu INTS really  
 'Even if it is poison, even if it really is *ivu* itself,'  
 [íyôŋ àyì ké dùùdà, àvázlá dâm létɛ  
 'when he draws it (i.e. a vein of a palm leaf the healer inserted in a patient's throat) back, he throws this thing (i.e. that causes the disease) away.']
- (135) tò ípé màáwú, mèpám kón.  
 |tò í-pé mǎ-ǎ:-H-wú mǎ-pám-H kón|  
 CONC AU-[IX]place 1SG-NEG-PST-die 1SG-come.out-CS [IX]ghost  
 'Even if I am not dead, my spirit appears.' (saying which means 'Even if I didn't do anything, I am being accused.')
- (136) ànè jǎm wùlà tò àné á<sup>+</sup>té kwàn  
 |à-nè ɕǎm L-wùlà tò àné|  
 I-POS possibly INF-walk CONC like  
 'He can walk, although he is ill.'

(137) [dô vó, í'té 'sílá nâ úvê dwé dô, dwé lé bétí dô, dwé lé míswân. tán mímú myô? mìnngá à jé ùně? ηgwàn ì jé ùně?

So, it would be best if you gave your name, your traditional name, your Christian name, your age. Where were you married, where do you come from?']

tò àné màábé pé nâ mèsìlgà wò té ímálá. vè dâ í'té jèb mòd í'mén àkwâlgò

|tò àné mà-ǎ:-bé pé nâ mà-síl <Lg> à wò tǝ í-má-lá|  
CONC 1SG-NEG-be also CMP 1SG-ask<g> 2SG.NPPR POL AU-VI.DEM-CH

|vè dâ í-Lté L-jèb N-òd ímën à-kól <Lg> à

however VII-PR INF-be.good 1-person INTS i-speak<G>

'even though I don't need to ask you all this. However, it is good that the person herself is speaking (i.e. introducing herself).'8

(138) [Tomo went to the market to buy meat for a very big party.]

a. tò àmá kùz tíd ísê, ...

'Even if he has bought all the meat,'

b. tò àné á'má kùz tíd ísê, ...

'Although he bought all the meat,'

[it is still not enough for the party.]

One of the argument positions of indefinite concessive clauses is filled with a question word. The vowel of this question word tends to be lengthened. *tò* is never followed by *àné* in indefinite concessives.

(139) tò mìní'kád jê jéé, àá'té yàlnà.

|tò mìní-kád-H jéé ɕjé à-ǎ:-Lté L-jàlnà|

CONC 2PL-say-CS I.PPR what I-NEG-PR INF-answer

'Whatever you say to him, he does not answer.'

(140) tò mìní'púdí jéé á 'mpég, wàá'té jàbì

|tò mìní-pùdì-H ɕjé á ñ-pég ù-ǎ:-Lté L-jàbì|

CONC 2PL-put-CS what LOC 3-bag III-NEG-PR INF-tear.apart

'Whatever you put in the bag, it will not tear apart'

7. Note that the complement clause 'it is good that the person herself is speaking' is not introduced by a complementiser (see Section 4.4) and that apparently there is no link tone in between the final infinitive of the matrix clause and the initial noun of the complement clause. This needs to be checked.

- (141) tò ùnè vé mèlón̄ jê á ndán  
 |tò ù-nè vé mè-lón̄-H jê á ndán|  
 CONC 2SG-be where 1SG-whistle-CS I.PPR LOC [9]ndan  
 ‘Wherever you are, I call him by the ndan.’
- (142) tò zá á’só vâ (ù)bé ‘yázî mmè ndà  
 |tò zá à-só-H vâ (ù-)bé L-jázi H Ì-mè H=ndá|  
 CONC who I-come-CS here (2SG-)NEG INF-open LT 3-door III.CON=[9]house  
 ‘Whoever comes here, you don’t open the door.’
- (143) tò ùs é‘bóg é‘pé, wèèy kwáb môd  
 |tò ù-só-H è-bóg è-pé ù-è:j L-kób H Ì-òd|  
 CONC 2SG-come-CS 5-time V-which 2SG-FUT INF-find LT 1-person  
 ‘Whenever you come, there will be somebody.’

Definite concessive clauses are introduced by *sè àné* rather than *tò àné* when they are used interpersonally, i.e. when the speaker wishes to express a contradiction in their own discourse or flow of thoughts.

- (144) [íyôn̄ dwábdô àté ‘yán, ìbăb í‘né íyôn̄ jí, dwábdô àsě ‘yán  
 ‘When the doctor heals..., Now it is “asthma”, the doctor cannot heal it.]  
 sè àné máwóg íyôn̄ jí nâ àngâ yán  
 |sè àné mè-à-wóg í-ì-jôn̄ đí nâ à-ngâ L-ján|  
 CONC 1SG-SP-hear AU-7-time VII.DEM CMP I-INC L-heal  
 ‘although I hear that nowadays he already can heal it...’

Finally, the particle *tò* that introduces concessive clauses can also occur optionally at the beginning of clauses with a negative verb form, probably expressing disappointment or surprise.

- (145) tò mòd mémwágó àánjí ‘sò ààngògí  
 |tò Ì-òd m-mámógá à-à-nđí L-só à-ngògí|  
 CONC 1-person I-single I-NEG-IMP INF-come yesterday  
 ‘Nobody came yesterday.’

## 5.6. Reason & Purpose clauses

Reason (146) and purpose (147-148) clauses can be introduced by *nâ* or by the combination of *ású* or *ámú* ‘for’ and *nâ*. In reason clauses, but not in purpose clauses, *nâ* is optional after *ású/ámú*. I found no restrictions on the occurrence of TAM-forms in reason and purpose clauses.



- (151) ɲkâd nú úŋgábé lèdgi àbwĩ úlòdgi ímí mí<sup>+</sup>vwág  
 |H-Ñ-kâd nú ú-ŋgá-bé L-lèd-Lgi à-bùí ú-lòd-gì|  
 AU-3-exam III.DEM III-RP-IMPF INF-be.hard-G 3-a.lot III-surpass-G  
 |í-mí mì-vóg|  
 AU-III.DEM III-other  
 ‘This exam was more difficult than the others.’

## 6. Coordination

There is no interclausal coordination conjunction like English *and* in Eton. Instead, coordinated clauses are simply juxtaposed (152). Successive stages in a narrative are introduced by the discourse particle *dâ*. Ample illustration can be found in the folk tale in the text section. The English coordination conjunction *or* is translated as *ŋgé* in Eton, both in coordinated clauses and coordinated phrases (153). English *but* is *vè dâ* (154).

- (152) tòmó á<sup>+</sup>dí ndógò, kál <sup>+</sup>yé (ídí) újò  
 |tòmó à-H-dí ndógò kál j-ě (ì-H-dí) újò|  
 Tomo I-PST-eat [9]mango [9]sister IX-his (IX-PST-eat) banana  
 ‘Tomo ate a mango and his sister (ate) a banana.’

- (153) mèèj kũz <sup>+</sup>ŋgwé ŋgé kú  
 |mè-è:j L-kũz H ŋgòé ŋgé kú|  
 1SG-FUT INF-buy LT [9]pig or [9]chicken  
 ‘I’ll buy a pig or a chicken.’

- (154) dàm létê lénê mbùlná àné môd, vè dá ínê mìmâ ɲcì<sup>+</sup>ɲcím  
 |d-àm ló-tè ló-nè mbùlná àné N-òd vè dá í-nè|  
 5-thing V-ANA V-COP [9]appearance like 1-person but IX-COP  
 |Ñ-Bâ Ñ-SínSím|  
 3-terrible 3-spirit  
 ‘This looks like a man, but it is a spirit.’



# Lexicon

## 1. Introduction

Due to limitations of space, the description of the Eton lexicon is here restricted to a short word list containing only words from the open word classes *noun* and *verb*, with the most basic grammatical information. Every Eton word is followed by a parts-of-speech label (*n.* for *noun* and *v.* for *verb*) and, for nouns, by the genders of the singular entry and (after the slash) the corresponding plural noun. The abbreviation *n.g.* (‘no gender’) is used for genderless nouns. All entries are full words, rather than stems, and are arranged alphabetically as such.

## 2. Eton-English lexicon

**à-bè** *n.* 3/6. thigh.

**à-bwád** *n.* 3/6. slender, slenderness.

**à-bwĩ** *n.* 3. a lot, many, very.

**à-dũm** *n.* 3/n.g. tree (sp.).

**à-jǎb** *n.* 3. length, height.

**à-jǒl** *n.* 3. bitter, bitterness.

**à-jǒm** *n.* 3. old age.

**à-jój** *n.* 3. heat; fever.

**à-jòz** *n.* 3/6. caterpillar (edible sp.); tree (sp.) that hosts the caterpillar with the same name.

**à-kàb** *n.* 3/6. sharing; generosity, generous.

**à-kǒl** *n.* 3/6. foot; ankle; leg (also of pants).

**à-kúmá** *n.* 3. wealth.

**à-kwàm** *n.* 3/6. very robust tree (sp.).

**àlàpágá** *n.* n.g. /n.g. rabbit.

**à-ló** *n.* 3/6. ear.

**à-lóg** *n.* 3/6. type of fishing.

**à-lú** *n.* 3/6. night; very soon.

**àmèdkán** *n.* n.g. American; America; protestant, protestant missionary; Protestantism.

**à-mǒz** *n.* 3/6. day.

**à-ná** *n.* 3. today.

**à-ndógô** *n.* 3/6. mango tree.

**à-nùj** *n.* 3/6. mouth.

**à-púb** *n.* 3/6. field.

**à-pùm** *n.* 3. the colour white.

**à-sá** *n.* 3/6. “plum” tree (*Pachylobus edulis*).

**à-sǎj** *n.* 3. acid, acidity.

**à-sú** *n.* 3/6. face.

**à-súg** *n.* 3. intellectual laziness.

**à-tán** *n.* 3/6. village.

**à-těg** *n.* 3. laziness.

**à-tí** *n.* 3. honesty, integrity.

**à-tón** *n.* 3. slowness.

**à-tú** *n.* 3. tamarind tree.

**àtwàdnò** *n.* n.g. /n.g. sweet banana (sp.).

**à-vín** *n.* 3. black.

**à-vól** *n.* 3. speediness, quickly.

**à-vyě** *n.* 3. red.

**à-wú** *n.* 3. death; mourning.

**à-yá** *n.* 3. physical pain.

**àzàṅà** *n.* n.g. /n.g. wild mango tree.

**bá** *v.* marry.

**bà** *v.* cut up; sculpt, carve.

**báb<sup>1</sup>** *v.* heat up (*vt.*).

**báb<sup>2</sup>** *v.* massage, rub.

**bábélá** *n.* n.g. /n.g. truth.

**bád** *v.* simulate.

**bág** *v.* add.

**bàgbà** *v.* stick (*vi.*).

**báḡí** *v.* branch off, fork off.

**bàḡì** *v.* glue, affix; hassle.

**bàḡlà** *v.* keep, conserve.

**bàḡnì** *v.* be provocative.

**bàl** *v.* weed.

**bálâ** *v.* marry (*vt.*).

**bálí** *v.* hurt oneself; hurt.

**bám** *v.* scold, grumble.

**bàmlà** *v.* be very hot, burn.

**bándád** *n.* 9/6. bandage.

**bàṅdâ** *v.* invite, convene.

**bé** *v.* fry (*vi.*).

**bè** *v.* plant.

**béḃ** *v.* be bad; be ugly.

**bèbâ** *n.* n.g. /n.g. frog (sp.).

**bèbè** *v.* look at.

**bég** *v.* break.

**bèḡlè** *v.* carry, transport.

**bè-kwè** *n.* 2. pygmies.

**bémî** *v.* warn, caution, inform.

**bèmì** *v.* introduce.

**bèṅ** *v.* pursue, chase; chase away.

**bèzìmì** *n.* n.g. uniformed person, policeman, soldier.

**béd** *v.* climb up.

**bèdì** *v.* load; put, place.

**béédè** *v.* raise, lift, augment.

**bèèdí** *n.* 9. bread.

**bélè** *v.* fry (*vt.*).

**bèlṅì** *v.* be used; ( \_ èèy 'with') use.

**bèn** *v.* refuse.

**bénî** *v.* inform, announce.

**bì-dí** *n.* 8. food.

**bì-dím** *n.* 8. mystery, mysterious event.

**bíḡdâ** *v.* roll.

**bì-jém** *n.* 8. stingy, cupidity.

**bì-jùùḡá** *n.* 7/8. excuses.

**bímî** *v.* hit.

**bìṅì** *v.* sieve, sift.

**bísín** *n.* n.g. /n.g. basin.

**bó<sup>1</sup>** *v.* destroy, break.

**bó<sup>2</sup>** *v.* accuse.

**bòd** *vt.* draw (liquid).

**bóḡbô** *v.* sit down; stay.

**bógó** *v.* sit; live.

**bóló** *v.* ask.

**bòm** *v.* beat (musical instrument).

**bòmmlò** *v.* hammer.

**bómni** *v.* make love.

**bón** *v.* bark.

**bònì** *v.* create, found, beget.

**bógbô** *v.* lie down.

**bóónì** *v.* purge (med.).

**bò** *v.* rot (*vi.*).

**bǒ** *n.* n.g. /n.g. brain.

**bò kògló** *n.* n.g. stool.

**bò ndwô** *n.* n.g. vomit.

**bóg** *v.* block, clog (*vt.*).

**bòg** *v.* extract (digging).

**briké** *n.* n.g. /n.g. lighter.

**búdâ** *v.* be covered.

**búdbâ** *v.* cover oneself.

**búdí** *v.* cover.

**búg** *v.* break.

**bùlà** *v.* multiply.

**búlgán** *v.* bridle (fig.), be irritated.

**búlgànà** *v.* cloud, make murky.

**bùm** *v.* braise.

**bùmgàn** *v.* wince.

**búnbâ** *v.* be sulky.

**bùnì** *n.* 9. amoebiasis.

**bùùlà** *v.* knead.

**bwàb** *v.* hit, birch.

**bwád** *v.* dress (*vi.*).

**bwàdí** *n.* n.g. /n.g. bra.

**bwág** *v.* roll up.

**bwàlò** *v.* make rot.

**bwáj** *v.* lose weight, grow (extremely) skinny.

**bwí** *v.* singe (*vt.*).

**byâ** *n.* n.g. /n.g. beer.

**byàni** *v.* despise.

**byànj** *n.* 9/6. magic.

**cábâ** *n.* n.g. /n.g. handcrafted rifle.

**cág** *v.* crush, pound.

**càm** *v.* chase away.

**càmna** *v.* scatter (*vt.*).

**càmni** *v.* scatter (*vi.*).

**cééni** *v.* mix up.

**cén** *n.* 9/10, 6. chain.

**céni** *n.* 9/10, 6. change.

**céni** *v.* change.

**cicilà** *n.* 9/10. small wasp (sp.).

**cíg** *v.* cut (*vt.*).

**cígí** *v.* cut (*vi.*).

**cilà** *v.* forbid.

**cíngí** *n.* 9/10, 6. river bank.

**cínj** *n.* 9/10. neck; voice.

**cìnlàn** *v.* turn, pivot.

**còg** *v.* think; remember something

**cúgzêd** *n.* n.g. /n.g. worker.

**cwáz** *n.* 9/10, 6. church; mass.

**dá** *v.* lose (cease to have).

**dà** *v.* make cross.

**d-âg** *n.* 5/6. piece of charcoal.

**dál** *v.* wear.

**dálâ** *v.* dress (*vt.*).

**d-àm** *n.* 5/6. thing.

**dánj** *v.* get lost, disappear.

**dāŋ** *v.* cross.

**dáz** *n.* 5/6. present, compensation.

**dè** *v.* bury.

**dénbê** *v.* watch.

**dí** *v.* eat.

**dīb** *v.* find; close.

**d-íblá** *n.* 5. darkness.

**díd** *v.* be heavy.

**díg** *v.* burn (*vi.*).

**dígâ** *v.* burn (*vt.*).

**dímâ** *v.* ignore.

**dínâ** *n.* n.g. /n.g. dinner.

**dīŋ** *v.* love.

**dīŋnì** *v.* love each other.

**d-íz** *n.* 5/6. eye.

**d-òb** *n.* 5. sky.

**d-òm** *n.* 5/6. parcel.

**d-òngò** *n.* 5. whitlow.

**d-òy<sup>1</sup>** *n.* 5/6. name.

**d-òy<sup>2</sup>** *n.* 5/6. nose.

**d-ò** *n.* 5/6. hand; arm.

**dù** *v.* baptise; soak.

**dùd<sup>1</sup>** *v.* attract; smoke.

**dùd<sup>2</sup>** *v.* drive.

**dúg** *v.* be dying.

**dùgà** *v.* mislead, deceive.

**dúgnà** *v.* reimburse.

**dúgnì** *v.* come back.

**d-ùlà** *n.* 5/6. stroll; journey.

**d-úmá** *n.* 5/6. baobab.

**d-ùmá** *n.* 5/6. nest.

**dùùdà** *v.* loiter.

**dwáb** *n.* 9/10, 6. navel.

**dwábdô** *n.* n.g. /n.g. doctor; hospital.

**d-wăd** *n.* 5/6. furuncle.

**dwăktên** *n.* n.g. /n.g. doctrine, catechism

**dwálô** *n.* 5/n.g. piece of five francs.

**è-bá** *n.* 5/6. marriage.

**è-bám** *n.* 5/6. wooden board, plank.

**è-bàŋà** *n.* 5/6. cocoyam.

**è-bé** *n.* 5/6. breast.

**è-bèŋ** *n.* 5. beauty.

**è-bèŋí** *n.* 5/6. bell.

**è-běí** *n.* 5/6. kola nut.

**è-bí** *n.* 5/6. dropping.

**è-bím** *n.* 5/6. quantity, dose.

**è-bìn** *n.* 5/6. testicles and scrotum.

**è-bòní** *n.* 5/6. origin.

**è-bò** *n.* 5/6. trace, track.

**è-bóg** *n.* 5/6. party.

**è-bòg** *n.* 5/6. time.

**è-bóŋ** *n.* 5/6. knee.

**è-bùdà** *n.* 5/6. sweet potato.

**è-bùm** *n.* 5/6. belly.

**è-bwăg** *n.* 5/6. pumpkin.

**è-cí** *n.* 5/6. egg.

**è-dí** *n.* 5. meal.

**è-dīŋ** *n.* 5/6. knot.

**è-jà** *n.* 5/6. fish trap.

**è-ján** *n.* 5/6. green mamba.

**è-jăŋ<sup>1</sup>** *n.* 5. fraternity.

**è-jăŋ<sup>2</sup>** *n.* 5/6. onion.

**è-jéb** *n.* 5/6. financial crisis, poverty.

**è-jóm** *n.* 5/6. kinship; community.

**è-jón** *n.* 5/6. hole.

**è-jòn** *n.* 5/6. clan.

**è-kàlà** *n.* 5/6. doughnut.

**è-kǎn** *n.* 5/6. buttock.

**è-kàn** *n.* 5. rheumatism.

**è-kǎŋ** *n.* 5/6. drying rack.

**è-kémdá** *n.* 6. sap.

**è-kèlbá** *n.* 5/6. pretext.

**è-kǎ** *n.* 5/6. tine.

**è-kǎŋ** *n.* 5/6. lance.

**è-kúd** *n.* 5/6. madman.

**è-kùŋ** *n.* 5/6. owl.

**è-kúz** *n.* 5/6. ritual imposed on widows.

**è-kwád** *n.* 5/6. bend (in road).

**è-kwádgí** *n.* 5/6. small fruit, ear or bunch of a cultivated plant.

**è-kwàm** *n.* 5/6. manner, way.

**è-kwě** *n.* 5. upriver, uphill.

**è-lámá** *n.* 5/6. lamp.

**è-lén** *n.* 5/6. palm tree.

**è-lóg** *n.* 5/6. potato yam, aerial yam.

**è-lõŋ** *n.* 5/6. river snail.

**è-máj** *n.* 5/6. cheek.

**è-ndúmgí** *n.* 5/6. corner.

**è-néní** *n.* 5. fatness, obesity, largeness.

**è-nján** *n.* 5. slat, key of a balafon.

**è-nèd** *n.* 5/6. pinworm found in palm trees.

**è-ŋgàŋ** *n.* 5/6. magic.

**è-ŋgèŋ** *n.* 5/6. old piece of garment.

**è-ŋgédgí** *n.* 5/6. waist.

**è-ŋgòŋ** *n.* 5/6. padlock.

**è-ŋgóz** *n.* 5/6. heap.

**è-ŋgùnà** *n.* 5/6. granary (in the form of a bamboo basket).

**è-ŋgwàn** *n.* 5. coquetry.

**è-pǎb** *n.* 5/6. wing.

**è-pàn** *n.* 5/6. forest.

**è-péb** *n.* 5/6. paper, sheet of paper.

**è-pìdí** *n.* 5. confidence; hope; faith, belief.

**è-pólô** *n.* 5/6. place; time, moment.

**è-põm** *n.* 5/6. wasp (sp.).

**è-púná** *n.* 5/6. package.

**è-sàŋ** *n.* 5/6. hand of bananas.

**è-sól** *n.* 5/6. yam (sp.).

**è-sõŋ** *n.* 5/6. tooth.

**è-swí** *n.* 5. ash.

**è-té** *n.* 5/6. spittle.

**è-tín** *n.* 5/6. stem, shank.

**è-tóm<sup>1</sup>** *n.* 5/6. parcel.

**è-tóm<sup>2</sup>** *n.* 5/6. meanness.

**è-tó** *n.* 5/6. drop.

**è-twán** *n.* 5/6. stain.

**è-vá** *n.* 5. baldness.

**è-véb** *n.* 5. cold.

**è-véŋ** *n.* 5/6. wound.

**è-vèl** *n.* 5/6. side, rim.

**è-víl** *n.* 5. pus.

**è-vó** *n.* affair.

**è-vóŋ** *n.* 5. grease, fat.

**è-vùl** *n.* 5/6. hair (animals); body hair, pubic hair.

**è-vwád** *n.* 5/6. net.

è-wálf *n.* 5/6. birth; date of birth.

èwálf *n.* n.g. Duala.

è-wóm *n.* 5/6. ten.

è-yán *n.* 5. baldness.

è-yégbé *n.* 5/6. support.

gbà *v.* throw.

gbè *v.* take hold of, grasp.

gbéb *n.* 3/10, 6. theft.

háṅkwáb *n.* n.g. /n.g. handcuffs.

ì-bà<sup>1</sup> *n.* 7/8. bamboo.

ì-bà<sup>2</sup> *n.* 7/8. carving; sculpting.

ì-báb<sup>1</sup> *n.* 7/8. piece.

ì-báb<sup>2</sup> *n.* 7/8. children's disease  
(translated as "asthma").

ì-bàmà *n.* 7. debauchery.

ì-bán *n.* 7/8. stakes, pawn.

ì-bàn *n.* 7/8. long period.

ì-bàndùm *n.* 7/8. celebration of the  
new year.

ì-báṅ *n.* 7/8. stone, pebble.

ì-báz *n.* 7/8. fish scale.

ì-bé *n.* 7/8. hole.

ì-bébáz *n.* 7/8. shoulder blade.

ì-bèbègè *n.* 7. plant.

ì-bèbég *n.* 7/8. numerous, rather big.

ì-bèbòm *n.* 7/8. cold (viral infection).

ì-bèbwàg *n.* 7/8. baby.

ì-bègá *n.* 7/8. kind, category.

ì-bégí *n.* 7/8. tear.

ì-běm *n.* 7/8. shed, cabin.

ì-bígdâ *n.* 7/8. vehicle.

ì-bóg *n.* 7/8. lame.

ì-bógf *n.* 7/8. chair; home.

ì-bòm *n.* 7/8. periodical market.

ì-bòm kwàdgdò *n.* 7/8. wasp (sp.).

ì-bóṅ *n.* 7/8. sleeping; sex.

ì-bóg *n.* 7/8. paralysed.

ì-bòg *n.* 7/8. hip.

ì-búá *n.* 7. dew.

ì-bùbù *n.* 7/8. ease.

ì-búbùgà *n.* 7/8. broken thing.

ì-búbúlgí *n.* 7. dazzle, vertigo.

ì-bùbwà *n.* 7/8. stupidity.

ì-búdga *n.* 7/8. lid, cover.

ì-búg *n.* 7/8. word.

ì-bùlà *n.* 7/8. multiplication.

ì-bùmá *n.* 7/8. piece of fruit; guava.

ì-bwàb *n.* 7/8. beating; defeat.

ì-bwágzì *n.* 7/8. joint (anatomy).

ì-bwál *n.* 7/8. rot.

ì-bwàm *n.* 7/8. tree (sp.); fruit (sp.) of  
the tree with the same name.

ì-bwàn *n.* 7/8. lover.

ì-byàní *n.* 7. contempt, disdain.

ì-cè *n.* 7/8. iron, iron object.

ì-cì *n.* 7/8. ban.

ì-cícìgà *n.* 7/8. cut.

ì-cígá *n.* 7/8. very high and loud voice,  
used to call somebody by his ndan.

ì-cilà *n.* 7/8. weaning.

ì-dàṅ *n.* 7/8. flea.

ì-dàṅdîté *n.* 7/8. identity (card).

ì-děm *n.* 7. self-conceit.

ì-dí *n.* 7/8. bait.

ì-díb *n.* 7/8. wave.

ì-dìbgâ *n.* 7/8. cap (bottle).

ì-dídíḡà *n.* 7/8. burnt (thing).

ì-dìḡà *n.* 7/8. key.

ì-díkâz *n.* 7/8. pick.

ì-dīḡ *n.* 7/8. love.

ì-dò *n.* 7/8. limb.

ì-dù *n.* 7/8. mouse.

ì-dúḡ *n.* 7/8. toilet.

ì-dūḡ *n.* 7/8. noise.

ì-dwág *n.* 7/8. depth, deep.

ìḡíptèn *n.* n.g. Egypt.

ì-jám *n.* 7/8. residue.

ì-jé *n.* 7/8. piece of clothing.

ì-jèjòlò *n.* 7/8. bitter.

ì-jéjùḡlànà *n.* 7/8. murky, cloudy.

ì-jém *n.* 7/8. domestic animal;  
crippled.

ì-jôy *n.* 7/8. command, power.

ì-jòḡ *n.* 7/8. curse.

ì-jòḡ<sup>1</sup> *n.* 7/8. time.

ì-jòḡ<sup>2</sup> *n.* 7/8. company.

ì-jöy *n.* 7/8. spine, thorn.

ì-jwàḡ *n.* 7/8. cutting (botany).

ì-jwǎn *n.* 7. mist, fog.

ì-kà *n.* 7/8. collective help.

ì-kàblí *n.* 7/8. horse.

ì-kád *n.* 7. crown.

ì-kàḡá *n.* 7/8. leftover (food).

ì-kàlì *n.* 7/8. weave, mat.

ì-ká'sán *n.* 7/8. unripe.

ì-kèḡ *n.* 7/8. molar.

ì-kékóngí *n.* 7/8. bump.

ì-kèl *n.* 7/8. abscess.

ì-kòb *n.* 7/8. skin.

ì-kòḡḡì *n.* 7/8. wasteland formed on an  
abandoned field.

ì-kódí *n.* 7. thirst.

ì-kòḡlò *n.* 7/8. peel; pod, shell.

ì-kòmò *n.* 7/8. dish made of corn and  
peanuts.

ì-kóngó *n.* 7/8. helmet.

ì-kóg *n.* 7/8. coccyx.

ì-kpèbà *n.* 7/8. chilli.

ì-kpékpèlì *n.* 7/8. hurt.

ì-kpélí *n.* 7/8. tease.

ì-kúd bwáj *n.* 7/8. elbow.

ì-kúdâ *n.* 7/8. blow, knock.

ì-kùḡḡà *n.* 7/8. sieve, strainer.

ì-kùḡ *n.* 7/8. quinine tree.

ì-kùkùn *n.* 7/8. garbage dump.

ì-kú'kúḡ *n.* 7/8. caterpillar.

ì-kúkwâlò *n.* 7/8. rumour.

ì-kùm *n.* 7/8. beating.

ì-kũm *n.* 7/8. stump.

ì-kwàb *n.* 7/8. hoe.

ì-kwán *n.* 7. clay.

ì-kwàn *n.* 7/8. unripe plantain banana;  
plantain banana plant.

ì-kwájó *n.* 7/8. big spoon, dipper.

ì-kwázi *n.* 7/8. cough.

ì-lá *n.* 7/8. glass.

ì-lád<sup>1</sup> *n.* 7/8. pubic louse.

ì-lád<sup>2</sup> *n.* 7/8. type of hairdo.

ì-läd *n.* 7/8. plantain banana (sp.).

ì-láj *n.* 7/8. anus.

ì-làn *n.* 7/8. joke, funny story.

- ì-lánǎ *n.* 7/8. census.  
 ì-lé *n.* 7/8. tree.  
 ì-lěz *n.* 7. neglect, carelessness.  
 ì-líg *n.* 7/8. inheritance.  
 ì-lógzò *n.* 7/8. calabash used to clear water from a pit or from behind a barrage.  
 ì-lóŋ *n.* 7/8. whistle.  
 ì-lúm *n.* 7/8. fork.  
 ì-lwábí *n.* 7/8. swamp.  
 ì-lwág *n.* 7/8. grass.  
 ì-lwàlì *n.* 7/8. duck.  
 ì-mbón *n.* 7. overdramatic.  
 ì-nàángà *n.* 7/8. young person.  
 ì-nàm *n.* 7/8. arm.  
 ì-ndàm *n.* 7/8. big.  
 ì-ndéglé *n.* 7/8. punishment.  
 ì-nè *n.* poison (for arrows).  
 ì-nìŋ *n.* 7/8. life.  
 ì-nǒŋ *n.* 7/8. bed.  
 ì-nùm *n.* 7/8. smell.  
 ì-núnǎ *n.* 7/8. dwarf.  
 ì-nútên *n.* 7/8. minute.  
 ì-nég *n.* 7/8. fold.  
 ì-nèm *n.* 7/8. match.  
 ì-néŋǒŋ *n.* 7/8. mosquito.  
 ì-núm *n.* 7/8. yam (sp.).  
 ì-ŋgègè *n.* 7/8. dwarf.  
 ìŋgélzì *n.* n.g. /n.g. angel.  
 ì-ŋgòŋ *n.* 7/8. gullet.  
 íŋgrízí *n.* n.g. English people.  
 ì-ŋgùlì *n.* 7/8. trap.  
 ì-ŋgúŋgwál *n.* 7/8. unfortunate.  
 ì-ŋmgbán *n.* 7/8. mockery.  
 ì-ŋmgbém *n.* 7/8. lion.  
 ì-págá *n.* 7/8. present.  
 ì-pàgà *n.* 7/8. kipper, herring.  
 ì-pàtilá *n.* 7/8. shop.  
 ì-pé'páb *n.* 7/8. wing.  
 ì-pwàgó *n.* 7/8. enclosed plot of land.  
 í'sá *n.* n.g. /n.g. father; paternal uncle.  
 ì-sá *n.* 7/8. work.  
 ì-sà<sup>1</sup> *n.* 7/8. smell.  
 ì-sà<sup>2</sup> *n.* 7/8. hangar, shed.  
 ì-sàlgà *n.* 7/8. slit, fissure; operation.  
 ì-sámá *n.* 7/8. group, party.  
 ì-sàmǎ *n.* 7/8. blossom.  
 ì-sǎŋ *n.* 7/8. hibiscus.  
 ì-sǎŋz *n.* 7. fuel.  
 ì-sě *n.* 7/8. batch of grass and herbs.  
 ì-sèb *n.* 7/8. dry season.  
 ì-sěg *n.* 7/8. half serving, half full glass or plate.  
 ì-sègzè *n.* 7/8. sieve.  
 ì-sèsàlà *n.* 7/8. slit.  
 ì-sèsàŋà *n.* 7/8. acid, sour.  
 ì-sínǎ *n.* 7/8. cat.  
 ì-só *n.* 7/8. plate.  
 ì-sòm *n.* 7/8. toddler.  
 í'só *n.* n.g. /n.g. your father.  
 ì-sóŋ *n.* 7/8. plantain banana (sp.).  
 ì-sòŋ *n.* 7/8. plant (sp.) (Pennisetum purpureum).  
 ì-súg *n.* 7/8. palm nut sauce.  
 ì-sùùni *n.* 7/8. tontine.  
 ì-swág *n.* 7/8. cutting (botany).

- ì-swáz** *n.* 7/8. mucus.  
**ítályèn** *n.* n.g. /n.g. Italian; Italy.  
**ì-tályèn** *n.* 7/8. amulet with a Christian image.  
**ì-tám** *n.* 7. lonely, loneliness.  
**ì-tàm** *n.* 7/8. source, well.  
**ì-tánj** *n.* 7/8. basket that hangs over the fireplace in order to smoke different kinds of food that are kept inside (e.g. maize, fish,..).  
**ì-ténj** *n.* 7/8. sprouting, shoot, seedling.  
**ì-tétám** *n.* 7/8. okra, gumbo.  
**ì-tétámá** *n.* 7/8. lonely.  
**ì-tétób** *n.* 7/8. tree (sp.).  
**ì-tétóg** *n.* 7/8. blister.  
**ì-téy** *n.* 7/8. position.  
**ì-tíblá** *n.* 7/8. suffering.  
**ì-tíndiz** *n.* 7/8. heel.  
**ì-tòdò** *n.* 7/8. unripe.  
**ì-tón** *n.* 7 Eton.  
**ì-tó** *n.* 7/8. tree (sp.).  
**ì-tóndó** *n.* 7/8. eggplant leaf (edible).  
**ì-tòj** *n.* 7/8. palm nut, bunch of palm nuts.  
**ì-túl** *n.* 7/8. shoulder.  
**ì-tùn** *n.* 7/8. part; half; short.  
**ì-tùnjà** *n.* 7/8. mad, madman.  
**ì-tùtùgà** *n.* 7/8. vegetable, edible plant.  
**ì-twàm** *n.* 7/8. brawl, fight.  
**ì-vág** *n.* 7 insistence, stubbornness.  
**ì-vèglà** *n.* 7/8. drawing.  
**ì-vévô** *n.* 7/8. shadow, shade.  
**ì-vélfí** *n.* 7/8. black person with a lighter skin colour.  
**ì-věž** *n.* 7/8. bone.  
**ì-vín** *n.* 7/8. piece of bark used as door, lid or container.  
**ì-vínî** *n.* 7/8. black person.  
**ì-vívínî** *n.* 7/8. black.  
**ì-vóbó** *n.* 7/8. silence.  
**ì-vóy** *n.* 7/8. empty.  
**ì-vöy** *n.* 7/8. game.  
**ì-vú** *n.* 7/8. type of magical power.  
**ì-vùdǵá** *n.* 7/8. rancour.  
**ì-vúnjlá** *n.* 7/8. wind; air.  
**ì-vúvúmní** *n.* 7/8. family member.  
**ì-vúvûz** *n.* 7. foam.  
**ì-vyág** *n.* 7/8. broom.  
**ì-wág<sup>1</sup>** *n.* 7/8. shoulder strap.  
**ì-wág<sup>2</sup>** *n.* 7/8. callosity.  
**ì-wàngò** *n.* 7/8. cajolery.  
**ì-wàz** *n.* 7/8. comb.  
**ì-wóódè** *n.* 7/8. edible caterpillar (sp.).  
**ì-wúdâ** *n.* 7/8. massage.  
**ì-wúwòlò** *n.* 7/8. curdled.  
**ì-yàlná** *n.* 7/8. answer.  
**ì-yázi** *n.* 7/8. house under construction.  
**ì-yègzè** *n.* 7/8. chin.  
**ì-yém** *n.* 7/8. beast, animal; cripple.  
**ì-yén** *n.* 7/8. mirror.  
**ì-yòlò** *n.* 7/8. name.  
**ì-yóm** *n.* 7/8. gift that blocks witchcraft.  
**ì-zézáj** *n.* 7/8. tree (sp.).  
**ì-zèzè** *n.* crappy.  
**ì-zèzèg** *n.* sweet.  
**ì-zímí** *n.* 7/8. coffin, casket.

- já<sup>1</sup>** *v.* fill up.  
**já<sup>2</sup>** *v.* heal, recover (*vi.*).  
**jà** *v.* sing.  
**j-ǎ<sup>1</sup>** *n.* 7/8. song.  
**j-ǎ<sup>2</sup>** *n.* fingernail.  
**jàálá** *vt.* fill.  
**jàb** *vi.* be high, be long.  
**jàbà** *vt.* make longer, lengthen.  
**j-ǎd** *n.* 7/8. basket.  
**jàgì** *v.* ask, beg.  
**jám** *v.* cook, prepare food.  
**jàm** *v.* mate.  
**jàmni** *v.* mate.  
**jè** *v.* want.  
**jèb** *v.* sharpen.  
**jéblé** *v.* accept, answer a call.  
**jégi** *v.* talk.  
**jéglàná** *v.* imitate.  
**jém** *v.* dance.  
**jèm** *v.* know; recognise.  
**jémlá** *v.* accustom, get used.  
**jémni** *v.* be rare, lack, be absent.  
**jènzàn** *v.* get used, accustom.  
**jéŋ** *v.* search, look for.  
**jéŋbàn** *v.* miss.  
**jèzlàná** *v.* reprimand.  
**jélf** *v.* jump.  
**jì** *v.* check traps or fishing lines.  
**jíb** *v.* steal.  
**jìdì** *v.* pinch.  
**jó** *v.* vomit.  
**jò** *v.* grow.
- jò** *v.* stack, pile, heap.  
**j-ǒ** *n.* 7/8. yam.  
**jògbò** *vi.* lie down.  
**j-ògì** *v.* let, allow.  
**j-ògò** *v.* lie.  
**j-òl** *v.* be bitter.  
**j-òm** *n.* 7/5. thing.  
**jón** *v.* cry.  
**jónj** *v.* be hot.  
**jónjló** *v.* heat up.  
**j-òmbò** *v.* grow old.  
**j-òg** *v.* damn.  
**j-òngí** *n.* 9/10, 6. toad.  
**j-ónj** *v.* feel hot; have fever.  
**j-ù** *v.* excuse, pardon.  
**j-ùgì** *v.* suffer.  
**j-ùglàná** *v.* make turbid.  
**jwáb** *v.* fish.  
**jwág<sup>1</sup>** *v.* build.  
**jwág<sup>2</sup>** *v.* swim.  
**jwáz** *v.* judge.  
**jwáz** *n.* 5/6. judgment.  
**ká** *n.* 9/10. leaf, green vegetables.  
**ká** *v.* prevent.  
**kà<sup>1</sup>** *v.* help.  
**kà<sup>2</sup>** *v.* climb.  
**káángá** *n.* 9/10. roast.  
**káb** *v.* catch.  
**kàb** *v.* divide.  
**kábâ** *n.* n.g. /n.g. ten cents.  
**kàbà** *n.* n.g. /n.g. dress.  
**kàbà** *v.* succeed, pass a test.

**kábdì** *n.* 9/10. goat.

**kábiná** *n.* n.g. /n.g. carpenter.

**kàd** *v.* say.

**kádá** *n.* n.g. /n.g. crab.

**kàg** *v.* promise.

**kâg** *n.* 9/10. flyswatter (chasse-mouches).

**kágdân<sup>1</sup>** *n.* 9. obstruction.

**kágdân<sup>2</sup>** *v.* be squeezed.

**kál** *n.* 9/n.g. sister.

**kálá** *v.* pay attention.

**káládà** *n.* n.g. /n.g. paper, book, letter.

**kàlâsínâ** *n.* n.g. petroleum.

**kàlì** *v.* to ask a participation or contribution.

**kàlnà** *v.* transmit.

**kàlnà** *v.* light (fire).

**kâlnà** *v.* make incantations.

**kàlnì** *v.* change, transfer.

**kàm** *vt.* catch.

**kàmni** *v.* prohibit.

**kán** *n.* 9/10. type, kind.

**kàn** *v.* swear.

**káná** *n.* 9. epilepsy.

**kàn** *v.* believe.

**kánâ** *vi.* stay.

**kásín** *n.* cuisine, cooking.

**kázi** *v.* begin.

**kè** *v.* go.

**kég** *v.* break open.

**kègì** *v.* taste (*vt.*).

**kèká** *n.* n.g. cocoa; cocoa tree; cocoa plantation.

**kékídâ** *n.* 9/10. morning.

**kèñ** *v.* do somebody's hair.

**kèdnà** *v.* aim.

**kèlbè** *v.* hang (*vi.*).

**kèlì** *v.* hang (*vt.*).

**kén** *v.* have an erection.

**kídí** *n.* 9. tomorrow.

**kíní** *n.* 9. quinine.

**kód** *v.* dry (*vi.*), become dry.

**kód** *n.* 9/6. coat.

**kòdì** *v.* save, liberate.

**kódô** *v.* leave. leave.

**kòglàn** *v.* pray, beg.

**kòglò** *v.* bite.

**kòlì** *v.* lend; borrow.

**kòm** *v.* make.

**kómô** *v.* admire.

**kón<sup>1</sup>** *n.* n.g. /n.g. ghost, spirit of a dead person.

**kón<sup>2</sup>** *n.* 9/10. bean.

**kóní** *v.* greet.

**kòòbàn** *v.* alight, burning.

**kóòni** *v.* greet each other.

**kòpí** *n.* 9. coffee; coffee tree.

**kòy<sup>1</sup>** *v.* shell peanuts.

**kòy<sup>2</sup>** *v.* light a fire.

**kó<sup>1</sup>** *v.* harvest.

**kó<sup>2</sup>** *n.* 9/10, 6. tuber.

**kô** *n.* n.g. /n.g. plant vein, nervure.

**kpàdà** *n.* corn beer.

**kpàgì** *v.* clear a path.

**kpál** *v.* be loquacious.

- kpám** *v.* pass over, overcome.
- kpè** *v.* fell.
- kpèkpàzà** *n.* n.g. /n.g. traditional toothbrush.
- kpèm** *n.* 9. cassava leaves.
- kpèlì** *v.* hurt, wound.
- kú** *n.* 9/10. chicken.
- kù** *v.* fall.
- kúb** *v.* pour.
- kúbí** *v.* pour out.
- kúd** *v.* fold, bend.
- kùd** *v.* beat; convene, summon by means of a log drum.
- kúgá** *n.* cook, prepare food.
- kùkùmà** *n.* n.g. /n.g. amaranth.
- kùm** *v.* beat.
- kún** *v.* leave early.
- kúngí** *n.* 9/10. hornbill (sp.).
- kùni** *v.* avenge.
- kùz** *v.* buy.
- kwáb** *v.* find.
- kwáb** *n.* cup.
- kwàb** *n.* 9/10, 6. hook.
- kwábdò** *n.* n.g. /n.g. cupboard.
- kwád** *v.* turn around.
- kwàd** *v.* collect.
- kwàdòwádó** *n.* n.g. /n.g. bird (sp.) that lives in swamps and bamboo woods.
- kwág** *n.* 9/10. occiput, back of the head.
- kwàg** *v.* crush.
- kwáló** *n.* n.g. Ewondo person.
- kwálò** *n.* n.g. /n.g. tie.
- kwálò** *v.* speak.
- kwám** *n.* 9. instant, moment; long time.
- kwàm** *v.* do; act.
- kwàn** *v.* be ill; suffer of sth.
- kwáná** *n.* n.g. /n.g. corner.
- kwáz** *v.* cough.
- kwǎz** *n.* 9/10, 6. fish.
- kwé<sup>1</sup>** *n.* 9/10. ape.
- kwé<sup>2</sup>** *n.* 9/10. snail.
- kwóòndò** *v.* compile.
- láànì** *v.* chat.
- láb** *v.* introduce.
- lád** *v.* be sticky.
- làd** *v.* sew.
- lám** *v.* make traps.
- lám** *n.* 9/10, 6. blade.
- lámá** *n.* n.g. /n.g. lamp.
- láj** *v.* count, calculate.
- lây** *n.* n.g. /n.g. garlic.
- lây** *v.* tell.
- lé** *v.* play.
- léb** *v.* advice.
- lélé** *n.* n.g. /n.g. nail varnish.
- lèlúá** *n.* n.g. /n.g. smith.
- lè-màlá** *n.* misfortune, trouble.
- lèj** *v.* draw, fill a container with a liquid; collect palm wine.
- lésómlò** *n.* n.g. /n.g. bronchitis.
- lè-swè** *n.* 5/6. chigoe.
- lè-swě** *n.* 5. hiding place.
- lèd<sup>1</sup>** *v.* be hard, be difficult.
- lèd<sup>2</sup>** *v.* heal, recover.

**lèdà** *v.* make hard.

**lédé** *v.* show; introduce.

**lèŋkód** *n.* n.g. /n.g. raincoat

**lí** *v.* bring into cultivation, clear land.

**líg** *v.* leave, abandon.

**lígí** *v.* stay.

**lím dá** *v.* pull.

**lób** *v.* bite.

**lòd** *v.* pass; win; happen.

**lógô** *n.* n.g. /n.g. button.

**lóm** *v.* send.

**lón** *v.* build.

**lòn** *n.* 5. hair.

**ló** *v.* call.

**lò** *v.* inhale.

**lón** *v.* whistle, crow (cock).

**lú** *v.* bend, twist.

**lúg** *v.* marry.

**lùgà** *v.* respect.

**lúm** *v.* throw; shoot.

**lúmni** *v.* struggle.

**lwáz** *v.* lose, not win.

**màbgán** *n.* 9/10. crossroad.

**m-âg** *n.* 6. charcoal.

**m-ágni** *n.* 6. agreement; appointment, scheduled meeting, payment, salary.

**mákíd** *n.* n.g. , 6/n.g. market.

**m-ál** *n.* 6. proa, canoe.

**màn** *v.* finish (*vi.*).

**mànà** *v.* end (*vt.*).

**màŋá** *n.* n.g. /n.g. my mother.

**másís** *n.* matches.

**mbà** *n.* 9/10, 6. flank.

**mbâ** *n.* 9/10. mature, aged (person).

**mè-báání** *n.* 3/4. married person.

**mbàdgi** *n.* 9. mud.

**mbàgni** *n.* 9/10, 6. provocation.

**mbàkán** *n.* 9/10, 6. armpit.

**mbán** *n.* n.g. /n.g. co-wife.

**mbăŋ** *n.* 9/10, 6. scarifications.

**mbàz** *n.* 9/10. corn.

**mbě** *n.* 9/10,6. pot.

**mbèglè** *n.* 9/10, 6. luggage.

**mbémí** *n.* 9/6. notice, warning.

**mbèŋ** *n.* 9. rain.

**mbéd** *n.* 9/10. mvet, traditional string instrument.

**mbél** *n.* 9/10, 6. mushroom.

**mběl** *n.* 9/10, 6. vagina.

**mbéni** *n.* 9/6. law.

**mbí** *n.* 9/10, 6. palm nut.

**mbìd** *n.* 9. dirt.

**mbóg** *n.* 9/10, 6. lineage.

**mbòní** *n.* 9/10, 6. coconut; coconut tree.

**mbóóni** *v.* sympathize.

**mbòdòni** *n.* 9/10, 6. resemblance.

**mbóy** *n.* 9/n.g. friend.

**mbó** *n.* 9. grain, seed, bean.

**mböŋ** *n.* 9/10, 6. squirrel.

**mbú** *n.* 9/10,6. dog.

**mbùlná** *n.* 9/10, 6. example.

**mbùm sí** *n.* 9/10, 6. pubis.

**mbúmbúá** *n.* 9. delay, late.

**mbúmbúŋ** *n.* 9/10, 6. bee.

**mbúz** *n.* 9/10, 6. back (body part).  
**mbwàb̀̀** *n.* 9/10. dead leaf.  
**mbwàgí** *n.* 9?. healthy, fine, doing alright.  
**mbwàm** *n.* 9/10, 6. boa (snake).  
**mbwǎm** *n.* 9/10, 6. luck.  
**mè-bádná** *n.* 6. surname.  
**mè-bálá** *n.* 6. medicine.  
**mè-bán** *n.* 6. upper part of the back.  
**mè-bí** *n.* 6. droppings.  
**mè-búá** *n.* 6. poverty.  
**mè-bún** *n.* 6. sulkiness.  
**mè-cǐ** *n.* 6. blood.  
**méèni** *v.* groan.  
**mè-jèb** *n.* 6. anguish.  
**mè-jóm** *n.* 6. right (side).  
**mè-jwàg** *n.* 6. wine.  
**mè-kàlà** *n.* 6. doughnut batter.  
**mè-kází** *n.* 6. beginning.  
**mè-kémdá** *n.* 6. sap (from a “bleeding” piece of fruit).  
**mè-kómgó** *n.* 6. admiration.  
**mè-kó** *n.* 6. harvest.  
**mè-lébgá** *n.* 6. advice.  
**mè-ló** *n.* 6. stubbornness.  
**mèm** *v.* admit.  
**mè-ndèn** *n.* 6. saliva.  
**mè-ndím** *n.* 6. water.  
**mè-njáj** *n.* 6. marimba.  
**mè-nám** *n.* 6. milk.  
**mè-nólgí** *n.* 6. urine.  
**mè-núnj** *n.* 6. drink.  
**mènjà** *v.* wheedle.

**mè-pyàd** *n.* 6. indigence.  
**mè-pyǎd** *n.* 6. conjunctivitis.  
**mè-sèb** *n.* 6. basil.  
**mè-tádí** *n.* 6. beginning.  
**mè-té** *n.* 6. saliva.  
**mè-tǐj** *n.* 6. promise.  
**mè-tódó** *n.* 6. potato.  
**mètwa** *n.* n.g. /n.g. car.  
**mè-wágbó** *n.* 5/6. pretext.  
**mè-wóg** *n.* 6. respect.  
**mè-yál** *n.* 6. left.  
**mè-zíg** *n.* music.  
**mè-zwê** *n.* 5/6. indigence.  
**méngân** *v.* worsen.  
**mílig** *n.* milk.  
**mìn** *v.* swallow.  
**m-ìnggá** *n.* 1/2. woman.  
**mì-ntá** *n.* 4. pain.  
**mì-ntàg** *n.* 4. happy.  
**míswân** *n.* n.g. /n.g. mission.  
**mì-vyáz** *n.* 4. twins.  
**mè-mà** *n.* 3/4. drum.  
**mè-mǎj** *n.* 3/4. nut; kernel of a palm nut.  
**mè-mé** *n.* 3/4. entry, opening.  
**mè-mèn** *n.* 3/4. good.  
**mè-mim** *n.* 3/4. corpse.  
**mè-mínj** *n.* 3/4. edible caterpillar (sp.).  
**mè-mól<sup>1</sup>** *n.* 3/4. dry.  
**mè-mól<sup>2</sup>** *n.* way, manner.  
**mè-móló** *n.* 3/4. question.  
**mè-móm** *n.* 3/4. snout; mouth (animal); banana flower.

**m̀-̀m̀d̀m̀** *n.* 3/4. musician.  
**m̀-̀m̀óm̀ôg̀** *n.* 3/4. lame.  
**m̀-̀m̀d̀ǹì** *n.* 1/2. ancestor.  
**m̀-̀m̀óg̀** *n.* 3/4. hole.  
**m̀-̀m̀d̀g̀** *n.* 3/4. prison.  
**m̀-̀m̀d̀j̀** *n.* 3/4. big container for storing water.  
**m̀-̀m̀ú** *n.* 3/4. year.  
**m̀-̀m̀ú́m̀ú́á** *n.* 3/4. poor person.  
**m̀-̀m̀ùj̀** *n.* 3/4. cassava tuber.  
**m̀-̀m̀wád** *n.* 3/4. dress.  
**m̀-̀m̀wám<sup>1</sup>** *n.* 3/4. package.  
**m̀-̀m̀wám<sup>2</sup>** *n.* vegetable (sp.).  
**m̀-̀m̀wán** *n.* 3/4. oil.  
**m̀-̀m̀wùd** *n.* 3/4. person without teeth.  
**m̀-̀d̀d̀** *n.* 1/2. person.  
**m̀óg̀d̀** *v.* become.  
**m̀d̀'jáj** *n.* n.g. /n.g. same-sex sibling.  
**m̀d̀'jáj** *n.* n.g. /n.g. same-sex sibling.  
**m̀-̀d̀j̀ǹd̀** *n.* 1/2. banana sprout.  
**m̀-̀d̀j̀ó** *n.* 1/2. child: boy or girl less than 10 years old; junior (after a name); child: daughter or son of somebody, whatever the age.  
**m̀-̀pág** *n.* 3/4. part, side.  
**m̀-̀págní** *n.* 3/4. extraction.  
**m̀-̀pàn** *n.* 3/4. arrow.  
**m̀-̀pàj** *n.* 3/4. rich, important; true.  
**m̀-̀pég** *n.* 3/4. bag.  
**m̀-̀pěd** *n.* 3/4. doubt.  
**m̀-̀pèn** *n.* 3/4. braid.  
**m̀-̀pí** *n.* 3?. usefulness.  
**mpídámpím** *n.* n.g. /n.g. sweet banana (sp.).

**m̀-̀pím** *n.* 3/4. wall.  
**m̀-̀pìj́á** *n.* 3/4. cover.  
**m̀-̀póì** *n.* 3/4. tree (sp.).  
**m̀-̀púbńí** *n.* 3/4. tidy.  
**m̀-̀púm** *n.* 3/4. white.  
**m̀-̀pùj** *n.* 3/4. powder.  
**m̀-̀pyáj** *n.* 3/4. sauce, soup.  
**m̀új** *v.* smile.  
**m̀-̀vòd̀b̀d̀** *n.* 3. respiration.  
**mwán** *v.* watch (*vi.*), be on the lookout.  
**m̀-̀wán** *n.* 1/2. child, in the sense of offspring (not of 'very young person'); also for animals.  
**mwání** *n.g.* /n.g. Monday.  
**mwání** *v.* wait.  
**mwàní** *n.* n.g. /n.g. money.  
**myád** *v.* squeeze.  
**nà** *n.* n.g. /n.g. (my) mother, Mum.  
**nálá** *v.* raise.  
**nàlbà** *v.* lie.  
**nàmà** *v.* touch.  
**náj** *v.* grow.  
**ndá** *n.* 9/10. house.  
**ndàmà** *n.* n.g. /n.g. catapult; rubber.  
**ndám̀nà** *v.* spoil (*vt.*), damage.  
**ndám̀nì** *v.* spoil (*vi.*).  
**ndǎn** *n.* 9/10. unripe.  
**ndég** *n.* 9/10. calabash; box.  
**ndéglê** *v.* disturb, vex.  
**ndèm** *v.* fly.  
**ndèm** *n.* 9/10,6. example.  
**nděm** *n.* 9. sperm.  
**ndéj** *v.* balance.

- ndèn** *v.* be somnolent.
- ndèn** *n.* 9/10, 6. cobweb.
- ndím** *n.* 9. blindness.
- ndimzàná** *n.* 9/10, 6. signification; translation.
- ndíndím** *n.* 3/4. blind person.
- ndó<sup>4</sup>bén** *n.* n.g. /n.g. encounter.
- ndóm** *n.* 9/n.g. brother.
- ndómní** *n.* 9/10, n.g. adolescent, young man; son.
- ndógô** *n.* 9/10, 6. mango.
- ndón** *n.* 9/6. news.
- ndónj** *n.* n.g. /n.g. type of small trap for catching fowls.
- ndúgdá** *n.* 9/10, 6. heat.
- ndùgní** *n.* 3/4. lie, deception.
- ndúndwág** *n.* 3/4. deaf person.
- ndùní** *n.* 3/4. baptism.
- ndwág** *n.* 9. deafness; stubbornness.
- ndwágbô** *v.* be stubborn.
- ndwágbò** *v.* be greedy for food.
- ndwân** *n.* 9/10, 6. fire.
- ndwán** *n.* 9/10, 6. story.
- ndwí<sup>1</sup>** *n.* 9/6. medical powder.
- nd-dwí<sup>2</sup>** *n.* 3/4. bad news, sad message.
- ndè** *vi.* be, exist, live.
- ndèmnà** *v.* exaggerate.
- ndén** *v.* be big, become big, become bigger.
- ndénê** *v.* magnify, enlarge.
- ndèy** *v.* keep.
- ndìj** *v.* live.
- ndjámni** *n.* n.g. German; Germany.
- nji** *n.* n.g. gorilla.
- njínjâ** *n.* n.g. /n.g. ginger.
- nd-lê** *n.* 1. storyteller.
- nd-lúá** *n.* 1/2. smith.
- nd-nǎl** *n.* 3/4. lie.
- nd-nàm** *n.* 3/4. country; village.
- nd-nán** *n.* 3/4. tale, story.
- nd-nàn** *n.* 3/4. albino.
- nd-ném** *n.* 3/4. heart.
- nd-nó** *n.* 3/4. head.
- nd-nódóbó** *n.* n.g. moon.
- nd-nònj** *n.* 3/4. bucket.
- nd-nòmè** *n.* 3/4. bottle.
- nd-nú<sup>1</sup>núm** *n.* 3/4. rainbow.
- nd-nwí** *n.* 3/4. roof.
- ndóbô** *v.* shit. (vulgar)
- ndòmàwán** *n.* n.g. /n.g. species of sweet banana (“Number One”).
- ndónj** *v.* rain.
- nd-sàlní** *n.* 3/4. blessing.
- nd-tánjá** *n.* 3/4. moaning.
- nd-tánjní** *n.* 3/4. white person, European.
- nd-té** *n.* 3/4. size; duration.
- nd-tég** *n.* bladder.
- nd-tèm** *n.* 3/4. branch.
- nd-téd** *n.* 3/4. bedridden.
- nd-těñ** *n.* 3/4. line, stroke.
- nd-tí** *n.* 1/2. lord.
- nd-tól** *n.* 3/4. eldest, firstborn.
- nd-tóm** *n.* 3/4. hat; headscarf.
- nd-tómdân** *n.* 3/4. practical joke.
- nd-tómó** *n.* 3/4. sheep.

̀̀-̀̀ *n.* 3/4. long, high.  
 ̀̀-̀̀ *n.* 3/4. full.  
 ̀̀-̀̀ *n.* 3/4. cassava paste.  
 ̀̀-̀̀ *n.* 3/4. cane, walking stick.  
 ̀̀-̀̀ *n.* 3/4. gluttonously.  
 ̀̀-̀̀ *n.* 3/4. young leaf of a tree or a herb.  
 ̀̀-̀̀ *n.* 3/4. dibble; long.  
 ̀̀ *n.* n.g. /n.g. diarrhoea.  
 ̀̀ *v.* stink.  
 ̀̀ *v.* smell (*vt.*).  
 ̀̀ *n.* 9/10. raw, unprocessed.  
 ̀̀ *n.* n.g. /n.g. number.  
 ̀̀-̀̀ *n.* 3/4. massage.  
 ̀̀ *v.* save.  
 ̀̀-̀̀ *n.* 3/4. leper, leprous.  
 ̀̀-̀̀ *n.* 3/4. hateful person; enemy.  
 ̀̀ *n.* n.g. /n.g. mother; real.  
 ̀̀ *v.* tear apart (*vt.*).  
 ̀̀ *v.* tear apart (*vi.*).  
 ̀̀ *n.* 9/10, 6. buffalo.  
 ̀̀ *n.* 9/10, 6 ox.  
 ̀̀ *v.* melt.  
 ̀̀ *v.* bump, jolt.  
 ̀̀ *v.* suckle.  
 ̀̀ *v.* breastfeed.  
 ̀̀ *n.* n.g. /n.g. ripe plantain banana.  
 ̀̀-̀̀ *n.* 3/4. twig, small branch.  
 ̀̀-̀̀ *n.* 3/4. looting.  
 ̀̀-̀̀ *n.* potato pest.  
 ̀̀-̀̀ *n.* 3/4. bunch; large, heavy-set.  
 ̀̀-̀̀ *n.* 3/4. line, row.

̀̀-̀̀ *n.* 3/4. savannah.  
 ̀̀-̀̀<sup>1</sup> *n.* 3/4. mange.  
 ̀̀-̀̀<sup>2</sup> *n.* 3/4. kick.  
 ̀̀-̀̀ *n.* 3/4. bracelet.  
 ̀̀-̀̀ *n.* 3/4. sand.  
 ̀̀-̀̀ *n.* 3/4. big fruit, bunch or ear of a cultivated plant.  
 ̀̀-̀̀ *n.* 3/4. yard, garden, court; audience.  
 ̀̀-̀̀ *n.* 3/4. scratch.  
 ̀̀-̀̀ *n.* 1/2. in-law.  
 ̀̀-̀̀ *n.* 3/4. question.  
 ̀̀-̀̀ *n.* 1/2. a person who asks questions.  
 ̀̀ *n.* n.g. train.  
 ̀̀-̀̀<sup>1</sup> *n.* 3/4. shadow of a person or object.  
 ̀̀-̀̀ *n.* 3/4. vein.  
 ̀̀-̀̀ *n.* 3/4. fresh maize porridge.  
 ̀̀-̀̀ *n.* 3/4. hunt.  
 ̀̀-̀̀ *n.* 3/4. flesh.  
 ̀̀ *n.* n.g. /n.g. lizard.  
 ̀̀-̀̀ *n.* 3/4. naked.  
 ̀̀-̀̀ *n.* 3/4. mortar.  
 ̀̀-̀̀<sup>1</sup> *n.* 3/4. beak; point; nipple.  
 ̀̀-̀̀<sup>2</sup> *n.* 3/4. fish-trap.  
 ̀̀-̀̀ *n.* 3/4. poison.  
 ̀̀-̀̀ *n.* 3/4. fart.  
 ̀̀-̀̀ *n.* 3/4. penis.  
 ̀̀-̀̀<sup>1</sup> *n.* 3. snuff.  
 ̀̀-̀̀<sup>2</sup> *n.* 3. flair.  
 ̀̀-̀̀ *n.* 3/4. worm.  
 ̀̀-̀̀ *n.* 3/4. peddling.

- jèb** *v.* be good.
- jùfìni** *v.* enter.
- jǎn** *n.* 9/10. head louse.
- jà-jôy** *n.* 1/2. commander.
- njòy** *n.* 10. scissors.
- jà-jǔg** *n.* 3/4. difficulty.
- jà-nà** *n.* 3/4. intestine.
- jà-nè** *n.* 3/4. limit.
- jà-nébé** *n.* 3/4. main part of the house.
- jà-néblá** *n.* 1. religion.
- jà-néglé** *n.* 1/2. teacher.
- jà-néjwág** *n.* 1/2. wild, savage.
- jà-néj** *n.* 1/2. foreigner.
- jà-nèj** *n.* 3/4. pumpkin plant or leaves.
- jà-nìní** *n.* 3/4. plan; hope.
- jà-nóm** *n.* 1/2. husband.
- jà-nòm** *n.* 3/4. old person.
- jà-nón** *n.* 3/4. tear.
- jà-nónj** *n.* 3/4. road.
- jà-nwáb** *n.* 3/4. fishing.
- jóí** *n.* 9/10, 6. colour.
- jǎ** *n.* n.g. /n.g. your mother.
- jól** *n.* 9/10, 6. body.
- jòj** *v.* take.
- jòy** *n.* 9/10. snake.
- júj** *v.* drink.
- jawàmlò** *v.* tickle.
- jawí** *n.* 9. orphanage, the state of being an orphan.
- ngá** *n.* n.g. spouse.
- ngàb** *n.* 9. distribution, sharing.
- ngádà** *n.* 9/6. garden.
- ngál** *n.* 9/10, 6. gun; thunder.
- ngàlà** *n.* 9. wood.
- ngám** *n.* 9/10, 6. mygale spider.
- ngǎn** *n.* 9/10, 6. crocodile.
- ngánj** *n.* 9/10. young, stage in the growth of a palm tree, when the tree has reached a height of about one meter and a half.
- ngǎj** *n.* 9. thanks.
- ngáz** *n.* 9/10, 6. wire.
- ngàz** *n.* 9. body hair.
- ngéj** *v.* indulge in smth, tuck into.
- ngèj** *n.* 9/10. bean.
- ngéd** *n.* 3. cruelty.
- ngélàpíz** *n.* n.g. Bamileke person.
- ngòb** *n.* 9/10. pair of shoes, shoe.
- ngólò** *n.* n.g. /n.g. fence, enclosure; Yaoundé.
- ngòm** *n.* 9/10. porcupine.
- ngòmzàn** *n.* 9/10, 6. preparations.
- ngöy** *n.* 9/10, 6. pig.
- ng-dògí** *n.* 3. evening; yesterday.
- ngómndò** *n.* n.g. /n.g. civil servant, prefect.
- ngöy** *n.* 9/10, 6. centipede.
- ngúl** *n.* 9. force, power.
- ngùn** *n.* 9/10. filth.
- ngǔngúgò** *n.* 9/10, 6. evening.
- ngwàg** *n.* 9/10, 6. stone.
- ngwál** *n.* 9. pity.
- ngwàn**<sup>1</sup> *n.* 9/10. girl; daughter.
- ngwàn**<sup>2</sup> *n.* 9. moon.
- ngwánj** *n.* 9/10, 6. shinbone.
- ngwì** *n.* 9/10. bat (sp.).

**ɲ-kàbní** *n.* 3/4. success.  
**ɲ-kàd** *n.* 3/4. exam.  
**ɲ-kàg** *n.* 3/4. spinal column.  
**ɲ-káj** *n.* 3/4. guinea-fowl.  
**ɲ-kǎj** *n.* 3/4. root.  
**ɲ-kàɲní** *n.* 3/4. praise.  
**ɲ-káz** *n.* 3/4. whip.  
**ɲ-kél** *n.* 3/4. handle.  
**ɲ-kód** *n.* 3/4. dry.  
**ɲ-kóg** *n.* 3/4. sugar cane.  
**ɲ-kól** *n.* 3/4. hill.  
**ɲ-kóm** *n.* 3/4. rock.  
**ɲ-kòmò** *n.* 1/2. creator, repairer.  
**ɲ-kõn** *n.* 3/4. tail.  
**ɲ-kóɲ** *n.* 3/4. age.  
**ɲ-kõj** *n.* 3/4. caterpillar.  
**ɲ-kòz** *n.* 3/4. pencil.  
**ɲ-kò** *n.* 3/4. bachelor.  
**ɲ-kóngí** *n.* 3/4. dish.  
**ɲ-kóɲ** *n.* 3/4. pipe.  
**ɲ-kũ** *n.* 3. salt.  
**ɲ-kùg** *n.* 3/4. breast; part of stem of tree.  
**ɲ-kúl** *n.* 3/4. log drum.  
**ɲkùlà** *n.* n.g. /n.g. storm.  
**ɲ-kùm** *n.* 3/4. tree trunk.  
**ɲ-kúnkú má** *n.* 3/4. chief.  
**ɲ-kú\*ɲkwán** *n.* 3/4. ill person.  
**ɲ-kúz** *n.* 3/4. widow.  
**ɲ-kùz** *n.* 3/4. purchase.  
**ɲ-kwád** *n.* 3/4. crooked.  
**ɲ-kwág** *n.* 3/4. antelope.

**ɲ-kwǎg** *n.* 3/4. stem of a fallen tree.  
**ɲ-kwǎl** *n.* 3/4. rope.  
**ɲ-kwálò** *n.* 3/4. language.  
**ɲ-kwáj** *n.* 3/4. tap.  
**ɲ-kwájó** *n.* 3/4. frog (sp.).  
**ɲmám** *v.* be acid.  
**ɲmgbèg** *v.* belch.  
**ɲmgbèg** *n.* 9/10. belch.  
**ɲmè-gbéɲmgbél** *n.* 3/4. sorcerer.  
**ɲmgbél** *n.* 9/10, 6. witchcraft.  
**ɲmè-kpálá** *n.* 3/4. ridicule.  
**ɲmè-kpámgí** *n.* new.  
**ɲmè-kpél** *n.* 3/4. roasted.  
**ɲmè-ɲmǎn** *n.* 3/4. liana (sp.).  
**ɲmè-ɲměg** *n.* 3/4. dam.  
**ɲmè-ɲmél** *n.* 3/4. running contest.  
**ɲmè-ɲmël** *n.* 3/4. burrow.  
**ɲmè-ɲméméb** *n.* 3/4. thief.  
**ɲmè-ɲmël** *n.* 3/4. moonlight.  
**ɲmè-ɲmén** *n.* 3/4. leg.  
**ɲmè-ɲmúmâ** *n.* 3/4. entire.  
**ɲmè-wǎz** *n.* 3/4. shrimp.  
**ɲ-ɲál** *n.* 1/2. wife.  
**ɲ-ɲám** *n.* 3/4. grounds, sediment.  
**ɲ-ɲém** *n.* 3/4. bat (sp.).  
**ɲ-ɲúmâ** *n.* entire.  
**òpùmá** *n.* n.g. /n.g. orange.  
**òwòndò** *n.* n.g. peanut.  
**pà<sup>1</sup>** *v.* shine.  
**pà<sup>2</sup>** *n.* 9/10, 6. machete.  
**páágà** *n.* 9/10, 6. comb.  
**pád** *v.* pick.

- pàdà** *n.* priest.
- pàdì** *v.* wrest, take away by force.
- pág** *v.* dig.
- págá** *v.* offer.
- págí** *v.* remove.
- pám** *v.* go out; arrive (at).
- pàm** *v.* be angry.
- pâm** *n.* 9/10. man, male adult.
- pámâ** *v.* release.
- pàzì** *v.* remove.
- pé** *n.* forest.
- pèg** *n.* 9. wisdom.
- pèm** *v.* loathe.
- pèŋ** *v.* rock.
- pépé** *n.* 9/10. cockroach.
- péy<sup>1</sup>** *n.* 9/10. viper.
- péy<sup>2</sup>** *n.* 9/10. place; bush.
- pèd** *v.* close (*vt.*).
- pèdnì<sup>1</sup>** *v.* close (*vi.*).
- pèdnì<sup>2</sup>** *v.* doubt; discuss.
- pèlnà** *v.* explain.
- pén** *v.* paint.
- pèn** *v.* braid.
- pěz** *n.* 9/10. okra.
- pyâ** *n.* n.g. /n.g. avocado; avocado tree.
- pìb** *v.* be thick.
- pìbâ** *n.* n.g. fever.
- pìdì** *v.* have confidence in sb.; hope.
- pímí** *v.* wipe out.
- pó** *n.* 9/10. rat.
- pò** *v.* be plenty.
- póblô** *v.* cradle.
- pógô** *v.* move (*vt.*); stir.
- pógzân** *v.* move (*vi.*).
- póm** *v.* pump.
- pòdònì** *v.* resemble.
- pó** *n.* 9/6. message.
- pó** *v.* open.
- pósóbó** *v.* be open.
- pózì** *v.* peel.
- púb** *v.* be clean.
- pùg** *v.* knead.
- pùlá'dé** *n.* n.g. /n.g. Friday.
- pùlàsí** *n.* n.g. the French.
- pùláwô** *n.* n.g. /n.g. flower.
- pùlúz** *n.* n.g. police.
- pùm** *v.* be white.
- pùmì** *v.* dig, uproot tubers or peanuts.
- pún** *v.* be afraid.
- pùpó** *n.* n.g. /n.g. papaya.
- pwàd** *v.* fuck (*vulg.*).
- pwám** *n.* 9/10. ant (sp.), small ant that stings.
- pyàŋà** *n.* 9/10, 6. joke.
- rènkód** *n.* n.g. /n.g. raincoat.
- sá<sup>1</sup>** *v.* work; do, be engaged in an activity; cure, look after, take care of.
- sá<sup>2</sup>** *n.* 9/10. oval, purple-brown fruit with a somewhat acid taste that should be grilled before consumption, generally called *prune* 'plum' in Cameroonian French.
- sàbsábá** *n.* n.g. /n.g. sour sop.
- ság** *v.* be large, be robust, be burly.
- sàl** *v.* split (*vt.*); operate.
- sám** *v.* stretch out.

**sám** *n.* 9/10. flower bud; blossom.

**sán** *v.* sign.

**sànà** *n.* n.g. /n.g. loincloth.

**sánjá** *n.* n.g. /n.g. aunt.

**sànjà** *v.* cut up.

**sánjì** *v.* worry (*vi.*).

**sáz** *n.* species of herb that itches a lot.

**sàz** *v.* jumble.

**sègzè** *v.* shake (*vt.*).

**sêm** *n.* 9/10, n.g. same.

**séj** *v.* doubt.

**sédadé** *n.* n.g. /n.g. Saturday.

**séli** *v.* peel with a knife; carve a palm tree in order to harvest palm wine; eat gluttonously.

**sèn** *v.* glide.

**sí** *n.* 9/10,6. ground.

**síbá** *v.* approach.

**síl** *n.* 9/10, 6. termite (sp.).

**sílá** *v.* be preferable; ask; ask a question.

**sílbâ** *n.* 9/10 calabash.

**sín** *v.* be cold; be wet.

**síngì** *n.* n.g. /n.g. piece of one franc (colonial money).

**síj** *v.* hate.

**sò** *v.* wash, clean.

**sòb** *v.* come/go back.

**sóló** *n.* n.g. /n.g. wooden plate.

**sòm** *v.* hunt.

**só** *v.* come.

**só** *n.* 9/10. palm nut.

**swábó** *n.* soap.

**sónbô** *v.* squat.

**sòŋ** *v.* load (gun).

**sónđô** *v.* sharpen.

**sùd** *n.* cotton.

**súglâ** *v.* push down.

**sùglàn** *v.* collapse.

**sùgzà** *v.* shake (*vt.*).

**sùn** *v.* rot.

**sùz** *v.* diminish (*vi.*).

**sùzà** *v.* diminish (*vt.*), lower; pay a contribution.

**swád** *n.* n.g. /n.g. shirt.

**swádí** *v.* take off.

**swâdnì** *v.* topple (*vi.*).

**swàlbò** *v.* hide oneself.

**swàlì** *v.* hide (*vt.*).

**swàm** *v.* find; find back.

**swâmnò** *n.* 9/6. complaint.

**swánò** *n.* n.g. /n.g. Sunday.

**swàŋ** *n.* 9/10, 6. tomb.

**swánjó** *n.* n.g. /n.g. aunt.

**swáz** *v.* suck.

**tàd** *v.* bleat (goat).

**tàdá** *n.* n.g. my father.

**tádí** *v.* begin.

**tág** *v.* order, stow away.

**tàgà** *n.* n.g. tobacco.

**tágl<sup>1</sup>** *v.* shell.

**tágl<sup>2</sup>** *v.* lay (egg).

**tál** *v.* perceive.

**tám** *n.* 9/10,6. feather.

**tám** *v.* wish.

**tàmna** *v.* congratulate.

**táj** *n.* 9. calculation. number. price.

**té** *v.* lift.

**tébé** *v.* get up; be fine.

**téblé** *n.* n.g. /n.g. table.

**tèè** *v.* be slippery.

**téèy** *v.* leave; come from.

**tèg** *v.* weaken.

**tègbè** *v.* be lazy.

**télé** *v.* stand.

**télí** *v.* put; ask a question; stop.

**tíblá** *v.* make suffer.

**tíd** *n.* 9/10,6. animal; meat.

**tìg** *v.* be thick.

**tìi** *v.* detach.

**tìibà** *v.* be attached.

**tìinì** *v.* dissociate oneself.

**tíkêd** *n.* 9/6, n.g. ticket.

**tìl** *v.* write.

**tìmnì** *v.* come back, go back.

**tìmzàna** *v.* explain; translate.

**tín** *v.* push.

**tìŋ** *v.* weave.

**tìŋdà** *v.* attach.

**tíswân** *n.* n.g. /n.g. town.

**tìtímâ** *n.* n.g. /n.g. boat.

**tó** *n.* 9. chest.

**tó** *v.* follow, come after in a list or classification (e.g. regarding the order of birth of siblings).

**tóbnì** *v.* meet each other; happen to sb.

**tóbnò** *v.* meet sb.

**tóg** *n.* 9/10, 6. spoon.

**tólbí** *n.* 9? noon.

**tòmád** *n.* n.g. /n.g. tomato.

**tó** *v.* drip.

**tógbô** *v.* be small.

**tóŋ** *v.* say; affirm.

**tóŋ** *n.* 9/n.g. tuna.

**tòŋ<sup>1</sup>** *v.* feed.

**tòŋ<sup>2</sup>** *v.* pursue.

**tóŋbô** *v.* be slow.

**tú<sup>1</sup>** *v.* flee, escape.

**tú<sup>2</sup>** *v.* pierce.

**túd** *v.* pronounce, utter.

**tùg** *v.* rub.

**túgâ** *v.* smoke, emit smoke.

**tùl** *v.* be blunt.

**túlí** *v.* aggravate, make worse.

**túúdi** *n.* n.g. period, era.

**twáb** *v.* gather; select.

**twàg** *v.* boil (*vi.*).

**twàgdò** *v.* boil (*vt.*).

**twágî** *v.* collect.

**twalàsí** *n.* n.g. /n.g. trousers.

**twî** *v.* burst.

**ù-běŋ** *n.* 3u/5. dove.

**ù-bìlì** *n.* 3u. constraint.

**ù-bòm** *n.* 3u/5. traditional skirt made of bark.

**ù-dí'dígâ** *n.* 3u/5. valour.

**ù-dúg** *n.* 3u. loin.

**ù-jăb** *n.* 3u. distance.

**ù-jàm** *n.* 3u/5. squirrel (sp.).

**ú'ján** *n.* n.g. day before yesterday; day after tomorrow.

ù-jém *n.* 3u/5. tongue (anatomy).

ù-jèmlà *n.* 3u. knowledge.

újô *n.* n.g. /n.g. sweet banana.

ù-jó *n.* 3u. sleepiness.

ù-jǒm *n.* 3u. lemon grass.

ù-ká *n.* 3u/5. leaf.

ù-kálá *n.* 3u. attention.

ù-kàlà *n.* 3u. age.

ù-kǎŋ *n.* 3u/5. grove.

ù-kèŋ *n.* 3u/5. knife.

ù-kpád *n.* ant (sp.).

ù-kpǎl *n.* 3u/5. partridge.

ù-kwǎn *n.* 3u/5. disease.

ù-lám *n.* 3u/6. trap.

ù-léz *n.* 3u/5,6. rice.

ù-lòŋ *n.* 3u/5. ladder.

ù-lùgá *n.* 3u. respect.

ù-lún *n.* 3u. anger.

ùndùndò *n.* n.g. /n.g. needle.

ùndúndwá *n.* n.g. /n.g. chilli.

ù-nǔŋ *n.* 3u/5. finger; toe.

ù-nwǎn *n.* 3u/5. bird.

ù-nǎŋ *n.* 3u/5. cataract.

ù-ŋgòn *n.* 3u/5. breast bone.

ùsàŋà *n.* n.g. /n.g. lemon grass  
(*Cymbopogon citratus*).

ù-só *n.* 3u/5. river.

ù-sòd *n.* 3u/5. clitoris.

ù-sún *n.* 3u/5. horsefly.

ù-swán *n.* 3u. shame.

ù-tàd *n.* 3u/5. wrinkle.

ù-tàn<sup>1</sup> *n.* 3u/5. umbrella.

ù-tàn<sup>2</sup> *n.* 3u/5. bat (sp.).

ù-tétég *n.* 3u. slow, slowly.

ù-tétêy *n.* 3u/5. star.

ù-tìl *n.* 3u. writing.

ù-tílim *n.* 3u. young palm tree.

ù-tú *n.* 3u. resin.

ù-vùg *n.* 3u. flour.

ù-vwón *n.* 3u/5,6. axe.

ù-zánŋ *n.* 3u. desire.

úzèlè *n.* n.g. /n.g. zebra.

váj *v.* do on purpose.

vàng *v.* bandage, wrap.

váz *v.* defecate.

vé *v.* give.

vébè *v.* evaporate.

vèbè *v.* wake up (*vi.*).

véblá *v.* yell, cry.

vèèbè *v.* have insomnia.

vèlè *v.* wake sb. (up).

víb *v.* suck.

vidá *n.* n.g. /n.g. smoke.

vín *v.* be black.

vó *v.* declare.

vò *v.* play.

vógló *v.* listen.

vóló<sup>1</sup> *v.* be sharp.

vóló<sup>2</sup> *v.* be quick.

vôm *n.* n.g. /n.g. place.

vòòbò *v.* breathe.

vúmlá *v.* throw.

vùn *v.* search through.

vúnà *v.* forget.

**vùŋ** *v.* freak out.

**vùŋlâ** *v.* blow.

**vùvú** *n.* n.g. /n.g. couscous.

**vùz** *v.* be mistaken; miss.

**vùzà** *v.* hurl.

**vwábí** *v.* become cold, cool; heal, calm down.

**vwàd** *v.* cease, stop.

**vwálí** *v.* help.

**vyàn** *n.* sun.

**vyàŋlàn** *v.* turn back (*vi.*).

**vyé<sup>1</sup>** *v.* urinate.

**vyé<sup>2</sup>** *v.* brush.

**vyè** *v.* be red; redden; ripen.

**vyèèbè** *v.* live, survive.

**vyǒg** *n.* 9. potter's clay.

**vyûg** *n.* 9. dark black.

**wágbê** *v.* rest.

**wággô** *v.* wash oneself.

**wàgò** *n.* chimpanzee.

**wálí** *v.* be born.

**wáŋ** *v.* crawl.

**wàtélí** *n.* n.g. /n.g. market.

**wàz** *v.* comb.

**wé** *v.* kill.

**w-ěy** *n.* 3u. honey.

**wé** *v.* beget, this verb is usually translated in French as *accoucher* 'give birth', but the father is usually the agent of this action.

**wè** *v.* laugh.

**wòdì** *v.* gnaw.

**wól** *v.* coagulate, curdle.

**wóólô** *v.* gather.

**wò** *v.* throw.

**wóg** *v.* hear; perceive

**wógdânà** *v.* feel.

**w-ǒŋ** *n.* 3u. fear.

**wú** *v.* die.

**wúd** *v.* massage (with medicinal leaves).

**wúdá** *n.* n.g. /n.g. type of trap.

**wùlà** *v.* walk.

**wúnâ** *n.* n.g. /n.g. window.

**yàànì** *v.* yawn.

**yábni** *v.* hurt (*vi.*); be difficult.

**yád** *n.* 9/10, 6. side.

**yág** *v.* be conceited; need something

**yágî** *v.* crawl (babies), to walk on four feet.

**yàgì** *v.* scratch oneself.

**yàlnà** *v.* answer a question.

**yánî** *v.* dry (*vt.*), to make dry.

**yán<sup>1</sup>** *v.* fry; grill.

**yán<sup>2</sup>** *v.* care for.

**yàŋà** *v.* wait.

**yàŋni** *v.* need.

**yázi** *v.* open.

**yéblé** *v.* answer a call; accept.

**yég** *v.* block; support.

**yégbé** *v.* lean.

**yégi** *v.* learn.

**yéglê** *v.* teach.

**yégnè** *v.* ignore, not know.

**yém** *v.* jam.

**yémbê** *v.* be stuck.

**yélí** *v.* fly away.

**yén** *v.* see; realise.

**yó** *n.* 9. sky.

**yòlò** *v.* call, give a name.

**yón** *v.* cry.

**yón** *v.* be hot; have fever.

**zà** *n.* n.g. hunger, famine.

**zám** *n.* 9. pleasure; appetite.

**zàm** *n.* 9. raffia.

**zám** *n.* 9/10. leprosy.

**zámá** *n.* n.g. /n.g. God.

**zán** *n.* 9/10. dispute.

**zán** *n.* 9/10, 6. centre, half.

**zě** *n.* 9/10. panther.

**zèg** *n.* 9/10. pineapple.

**zègbàn** *v.* be sweet.

**zèkúlí** *n.* n.g. /n.g. school.

**zézélá** *n.* n.g. /n.g. little finger.

**zèl** *n.* 9/10. beard.

**zě** *n.* 9/10, 6. path.

**zín** *n.* 9. hatred.

**zínbá** *v.* be spiteful.

**zítám** *n.* n.g. /n.g. stamp.

**zítwágnì** *n.* n.g. /n.g. sock.

**zón** *n.* 9/10. eggplant.

**zù** *v.* arrive.

**zùd** *n.* 9/10, 6. genitals, private parts, buttocks.

**zwàg** *n.* 9/10. elephant.

**zwàgbò** *n.* n.g. /n.g. plantain banana (sp.).

# Texts

## 1. Everybody contributes his share of the work

### 1.1. Introduction

This folktale (*nnáŋ*) was recorded in December 2000 at the village Noya II (Ngoyassi, arrondissement Okola). The storyteller is the late Grand-père Essono Biyebe, then 84 years old.

The characters in this fairy tale are personified animals. They trigger agreement pattern I, rather than the agreement pattern normally triggered by the name for their species. However, the nouns by which the characters are designated do not have a proper name suffix. Note that the application of tone rules is sometimes slightly different from those described in the phonology section. This might be due to Ewondo influence.

### 1.2. Text

1. *dô vó ású bí'sá nâ, àné, môd àságâ àsú ísá 'wé,*  
|*dô vó ású H=bì-sá inâ àné N-òd à-sá-gà àsú ísá w-ě*|  
DP for III.CON=8-work CMP like 1-person I-work-G work.place II-his  
So, as for work we could say, like, everybody does their part of the job,<sup>1</sup>

*nnánj í'té wô byăzù wóg íyôŋ jí.*  
|*ŋ-láŋj ítě wố bíá-à-zù L-wóg H-ì-jòŋ ɕí*|  
3-story there III.SUB 1PL-SP-VEN INF-hear AU-7-time VII.DEM  
it's a story about this that we are going to hear this time.

2. *dô vó béŋgábé nâ .... bákè á nàm ùyăb. bákè bá'tjéŋ*  
|*dô vó bô-ŋgá-bé nâ bó-à-kè á ñ-nàm ù-jăb bó-à-kè bó-à-ɕjéŋ*|  
DP II-RP-be CMP II-SP-go LOC 3-country 3-distance II-SP-go II-SP-search  
So, they were about to go to a far away country. They are going to look for

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1. *àsú ísá* literally means 'face of the work' (except that normally in this phrase the tone on *sá* should be downstepped). It normally refers to a part of the field allocated to one member of the family during collective work on the field.

á<sup>4</sup>kúmá. dō báyî ké <sup>4</sup>pám ípâha àkúmá ú<sup>4</sup>né.  
 à-kúmá dō bó-à-jì L-ké L-pám ípâhà à-kúmá ú-ně  
 3-wealth DP II-SP-VOLINF-AND INF-arrive AU-place 3-wealth III-REL.be  
 wealth. They want to arrive at the place where the wealth is.

## 3. dō zěn ínè kágdân.

|dō zěn ì-nè kágdân|  
 DP [9]path IX-COP obstruction  
 But the path is blocked.

4. dō bēngátá kòm bó bésâmì ì-sámá nâ: “bí<sup>4</sup>kéngán!”

|dō bó-ngá-táL-kòm H bó bó-sâmì ì-sámá nâ bí-kè-H-ngán  
 DP II-RP-PF INF-makeLT II.SUB II-six 7-line CMP 1PL-go-IMP-PL  
 They first made a group, the six of them, saying “Let’s go!”<sup>2</sup>

## 5. dō bēngábógbô bēngâ sílà nâ: “íyòŋ bíbôg á vâ dí

|dō bó-ngá-bógbò bó-ngâ L-sílà nâ H-ì-jòŋ bí-bógò á vâ dí|  
 DP II-RP-sit.down II-INC INF-ask CMP AU-7-time 1PL-sit here V.DEM  
 Then they sat down and they ask themselves: “Now that we are here,

byáyì kè, í<sup>4</sup>zén byákê, zá áyì bí  
 |bí-à-yì L-kè í-zěn bí-à-kè zá à-à-jì bí  
 1PL-SP-VOL INF-go AU-[9]path 1PL-SP-go who I-SP-FUT 1PL.SUB  
 and we want to go, the path we take, who will

kpàgì <sup>4</sup>zén nâ bíkéké pâm ínâm byákê?”

|L-kpàgì H zén nâ bí-ké pám-L H H-ñ-nâm bí-à-kè|  
 INF-clear LT [9]path CMP 1PL-AND arrive-SB LT AU-3-country 1PL-SP-go  
 clear the path for us so that we can arrive in the country where we are go-  
 ing?”<sup>3</sup>

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2. The word *isámá* is a dialectal (possibly Ewondo) variant of *ñcámá*.

3. The form *bíkéké pâm* is a bit problematic. I asked a consultant to repeat the utterance with a first person singular subject, which gave *mékéké pâm*. The only possible analysis I see for this form is that the subjunctive circumfix *H- ...-L* is affixed to the complex predicate consisting of the andative quasi-auxiliary *ké* and the main verb, rather than to the quasi-auxiliary alone. This is the only example I found of such a use of the subjunctive circumfix.

6. dō mwàn újàm àṅgátébé, jîn: “mǎ ‘mákpàgì  
 |dō N-ḏnH = ù-ḏjàm à-ṅgá-tébà jîn mǎ mǎ-à-H-kpàgì|  
 DP 1-DIM=3-squirrel I-RP-stand.up I.QP 1SG.FSUB 1SG-SP-REL-clear  
 Then Little squirrel stood up and said: “I will clear  
 mîn zěn.”  
 |mîn zěn|  
 2PL.NSUB [9]path  
 the path for you.”
7. dō àṅgábéd. dō vó mwàn újàm àṅgákpàgì zěn.  
 |dō à-ṅgá-béd dō hí N-ḏnH = ù-ḏjàm à-ṅgá-kpàgì zěn  
 DP I-RP-climb DP then 1-DIM=3-squirrel I-RP-clear [9]path  
 Then he climbed up and so Little squirrel cleared the path.
8. lékpàgì mwàn újàm àṅgámâ kpàgé ‘zén vâ,  
 |H-lè-kpàgì m-ḏnH = ù-ḏjàm à-ṅgá-mâ L-kpàgì H zěn vǎ|  
 AU-5-clearing 1-DIM=3-squirrel I-RP-TMN INF-clear LT [9]path here  
 As soon as Little squirrel had finished clearing this path,
- béṅgénâ á léjòmí  
 |bé-ṅgénâ á lè-jòmí|  
 II-be.already LOC 5-foliage  
 they were under the jomi-foliage.
9. dō bákê pá m í’syǎ lèḏiṅ lémâ pèdgàn.  
 |dō bǎ-à-kè L-pám H ì-sě lè-ḏiṅ lǎ-mâ L-pèdgàn|  
 DP II-SP-AND INF-arrive LT 7-batch.of.herbs 5-knot V-TMN INF-clutter  
 Then they arrive at a batch of herbs in an unpenetrable knot.
10. “(í’sé) yí byǎyí lòd yá léḏiṅ dí?  
 |H-ì-sě jì biá-à-jì L-lòd H já lè-ḏiṅ dí  
 AU-7-batch Q 1PL-SP-FUT INF-pass LT how 5-knot V.DEM  
 (the batch) “How are we going to pass this knot?  
 í’sé íkú á ‘zén yí, zá àyì...”  
 |H-ì-sě í-H-kù á zěn jí zá à-à-jì  
 AU-7-batch VII-PST-fall LOC [9]path VII.DEM who I-SP-FUT  
 This batch that fell on the path, who will...”

11. ηḡwé jîn: “mă mákê vǎlá”

|ηḡóé jîn mă mə-à-kè vǎlá  
[9]pig I.QP 1SG.FSUB 1SG-SP-go there  
Pig says: “I will go there.”

12. dō ηḡwé àηḡáláb í+nó.

|dō ηḡóé à-ηḡá-láb ñ-λó  
DP [9]pig I-RP-plunge 3-head  
And Pig plunged his head in.

13. bélébḡì ñnó í’syá, á+ké ‘pám nâ

|bó-láb-Lḡì ñ-λó á ì-siá á L-kè H L-pám nâ  
II-plunge-G 3-head LOC 7-batch LOC INF-AND LT INF-arrive CMP  
Plunging their head into the batch, arriving at

ìtètâḡ á ‘zén

|ì-tètâḡ á zěn|  
7-pool LOC [9]path  
a pool on their path:

14. dō “zá áyî bí dà ítètâḡ?”

|dō zá à-à-jì bí L-dà H ì-tètâḡ|  
DP who I-SP-FUT 1PL.NSUB INF-make.cross LT 7-pool  
“Who will make us cross this pool?”

15. mbwàm í‘bá bwân nâ: “mòd àbé ‘wú njǔḡ!”

|mbòm í-bá bwân nâ N-òd à-bé L-wú H ñ-ḡǔḡ|  
[10]boa X-two II.QP CMP 1-person I-NEG INF-die LT 3-trouble  
The two boas say: “Nobody should bother about it.”<sup>4</sup>

16. dō mbwàn íḡḡábúdbâ ú’só. bó èèy bó nâ “dànḡán!”

|dō mbòn í-ηḡá-búdbâ á ù-só bó èèj bó nâ dàn-H-ηḡán|  
DP [10]boa X-RP-stretch LOC 3-river II.SUB with II.SUB CMP cross-IMP-PL  
Then the boas stretched over the river and said to them: “Cross!”

17. léđân léḡḡámâ dàn ú’só, dō bápám

|H-lê-dân bó-ηḡá-mâ L-dân H ù-só dō bó-à-pám|  
AU-5-crossing II-RP-TMN INF-cross LT 3-river DP II-SP-arrive  
As soon as they had crossed the river, they arrive

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4. Lit. ‘Let nobody die of trouble.’

á 'mábgán mé 'zén. báyèm nâ... màbgán  
 |á m-àbgán mǎ = zǎn bǎ-à-jǐm nâ m-àbgán|  
 LOC 6-crossing VI.CON=[10]path II-SP-know CMP 6-crossing  
 at a crossing of paths. They know that... a crossroads

mé 'zén mé'bá báyì kè pē  
 |mǎ = zǎn mǎ-bǎ bǎ-à-jì L-kè H pē|  
 VI.CON=[10]path VI-two II-SP-FUT INF-go LT IX-which  
 of two paths. Which will they take?

18. dō mǐnkód mí mbú mí'bá míngásó.  
 |dō mǐ-ŋkód mí = mbú mí-bǎ mí-ŋgá-só|  
 DP 4-skinny IV.CON=[10]dog IV-two IV-RP-come  
 Then two skinny dogs came.

19. bǎ èyè bǎ nâ: "ǐní yǎ byàkê."  
 |bǎ èyè bǎ nâ í-ńí yǎ bì-à-H-kè|  
 II.SUB with II.SUB CMP AU-IX.DEM IX.SUB 1PL-SP-REL-go  
 They said to them: "This one we will take."

20. dō mǐnkód mí mbú mí'té 'tébê úsú,  
 |dō mǐ-ŋkód mí = mbú mí-Lté L-tébà úsú|  
 DP 4-skinny IV.CON=[10]dog IV-PR INF-place in.front  
 The skinny dogs went ahead

21. béngákê èyè bǎ  
 |bǎ-ŋgá-kè èyè bǎ|  
 II-RP-go with II.SUB  
 They went with them.

22. dō bákê pá m á'tán  
 |dō bǎ-à-kè L-pám H à-tán|  
 DP II-SP-AND INF-arrive LT 3-village  
 And they arrive in a village.

23. bwân nâ: "yí mòd àtán ànè vé?  
 |bwân nâ yí N-òd à = à-tán à-nè vǎ|  
 II.QP CMP Q 1-person I.CON=3-village I-be where  
 They say: "Where is the village chief?"

“zá áyî bì lédê môd àtán?”

|zá à-à-jì bì L-lédà H N-òd à=à-tán|  
 who I-SP-FUT 1PL.NSUB INF-show LT 1-person I.CON=3-village  
 “Who will show us the village chief?”

24. lèdú lé<sup>4</sup>bá bwân nâ: “bî làyî mîn lédê”

|lè-dú ló-bǎ bwân nâ bì là-à-jì mîn L-lédà|  
 5-pigeon V-two II.QP CMP 1PL.NSUB 1PL-SP-FUT 2PL.NSUB INF-show  
 Two pigeons say: “We will show you.”

25. dô lèdú lé<sup>4</sup>bá léngábéd èyè jɛ̀ɛ̀n úsê: dwâg dwâg dwâg

|dô lè-dú ló-bǎ ló-ŋgá-béd èyè ñ-tʃɛ̀n ú-sè dwâg dwâg dwâg|  
 DP 5-pigeon V-two V-RP-climb with 3-court III-entire ONO  
 Then the two pigeons mounted the entire courtyard: tap tap tap...

26. bákê pè tébé vè á <sup>4</sup>mé ndá

|bó-à-kè pè L-tébà vè á ñ-mé H=H-ndá|  
 II-SP-AND also INF-stand simply LOC 3-door III.CON=AU-[9]house  
 They go and stop exactly before the door

môd àtán á<sup>4</sup>ngábé.

|N-òd à=à-tán à-ŋgá-bé|  
 1-person I.CON=3-village I-RP-be  
 of the house where the village chief was.

27. dô béngájí.

|dô bó-ŋgá-jí|  
 DP II-RP-enter  
 And they went in.

28. bwân báyî môd àtán.

|bwân bó-à-jì N-òd à=à-tán|  
 II.QP II-SP-want 1-person I.CON=3-village  
 They said they wanted the village chief.

dô môd àtán á<sup>4</sup>ngápám ítùn í ndá

|dô N-òd à=à-tán à-ŋgá-pám ì-tùn í=ndá|  
 DP 1-person I.CON=3-village I-RP-come.out 7-piece VII.CON=[9]house  
 and the village chief came out of the room.

29. nîn: “mà nǎ.”

|nîn mà nǎ|  
 I.QP 1SG.NSUB I.DEM  
 He says: “Here I am.”

30. bá'yám bô bìdí.

|bá-à-jám bǒ bì-dí|  
 II-SP-prepare II.SUB 8-food  
 They prepare food for them.

31. “bídí bî, zá áyì bî yèm?”

|H-bì-dí bí zá à-à-jì bî L-jèm|  
 AU-8-food VIII.DEM who I-SP-FUT 1PL.NSUB INF-know  
 “This food, who will test it for us?”

32. ndè béngámâ pùdì jícù bí'dí

|ndè bǎ-ŋgá-mâ L-pùdì H ñ-tǔ H bì-dí|  
 indeed II-RP-TMN INF-put LT 3-poison LOC 8-food  
 And indeed, they had put poison in the food.

33. nâ bàmâ bǒ 'wé.

|nâ bǎ-à-mâ bǒ L-wé|  
 CMP II-SP-TMN II.SUB INF-kill  
 in order to kill them.

34. dô “byáyì kwàm yá?”

|dô bí-à-jì L-kòm já|  
 DP 1PL-SP-FUT INF-do how  
 “How are we going to do it?”

35. dô ñkòmŋǎn á'ŋgásó, nîn nâ: “ídílá dô lénê jé?”

|dô ñkòmŋǎn à-ŋgá-só nîn nâ í-dí-lá dǒ ló-nè ǫǫé|  
 DP [9]crocodile I-RP-come I.QP CMP AU-V.DEM-ID V.SUB V-COPwhat  
 Then Crocodile came, and said: “This is what?”

36. dô àŋgánûmlà; jín nâ: “ñcú únê íbídí bî.”

|dô à-ŋgá-nûmlà jín nâ ñ-tǔ únê H í-bì-dí bí|  
 DP I-RP-smell I.QP CMP 3-poison III-be LOC AU-8-food VIII.DEM  
 Then he smelled, and said: “There is poison in this food.”

“mòd tè dí”  
 |N-òd tèH dí|  
 1-person NEG eat  
 “Nobody eat!”

37. dō béngámâ bógbô  
 |dō bó-ngá-mà L-bógbô|  
 DP II-RP-TMN INF-sit.down  
 Then they sat down.

bwân nâ: “làá+bógbô pé vá!”  
 |bwân nâ lè-àá-à-bógbô pé vá|  
 II.QP CMP 1PL-NEG-SP-stay anymore here  
 and said: “We are not staying here any longer.”

“bî lènè vè èèy ñkèní ú’sú”  
 |bî lè-nè vè èèj ñ-kèní ùsú|  
 1PL.NSUB 1PL-be only with 3-walking ahead  
 “We simply continue our march ahead.”

38. lékê béngákê pám; béngálôd átán nû  
 |H-lè-kè bó-ngá-kê L-pám bó-ngá-lòd H-à-tán nû|  
 AU-5-march II-RP-AND INF-leave II-RP-pass AU-3-village III.this  
 Once they arrived at that point, they passed this village

39. dō bákê pám í’lé bálô ùmàn... ùdù  
 |dō bó-à-kè L-pám ì-lé bó-à-lò ù-màn ù-dù|  
 DP II-SP-AND INF-arrive 7-tree II-SP-call 3-umang 3-udu  
 and they arrived at a tree called *umang* or *udu*.

40. ú’té yàb ábwíí! á lépàn, á bí’lé lépàn  
 |ú-Lté L-jàb H à-búí á lè-pán á bì-lé H = lè-pàn|  
 III-PR INF-be.long LT 3-big LOC 5-forest LOC 8-tree VIII.CON=5-forest  
 It is very big, in the forest, among the trees of the forest.

41. dō bé’té kě ‘pám údù, bwân:  
 |dō bó-Lté L-kè H L-pám H ù-dú bwân|  
 DP II-PR INF-AND LT INF-arrive LT 3-udu II.QP  
 So they arrive at an *udu*, and say

“zá áyî bì dà údù,”

|zá à-à-jì bì L-dà H ù-dù  
 who I-SP-FUT 1PL.NSUB INF-make.cross LT 3-udu  
 “Who will make us cross the udu,

“lékê nâm làkê?”

|H-lè-kè-L H-ñ-nàm là-à-H-kè  
 SBJ-1PL-go-SBJ AU-3-country 1PL-SP-REL-go  
 in order for us to go to the country where we are heading?”

42. ndèlè jîn nâ: “mă ‘mákê èèy mí‘ná.”

|ndèlâ jîn nâ mă mē-à-ké èèj mìnâ|  
 [9]swallow I.QP CMP 1SG.FSUB 1SG-SP-go with 2PL.FSUB  
 Swallow says: “Me, I go with you.”

43. dō ndèlè àngátwágî bó,

|dō ndèlâ à-ŋgá-tógî bó|  
 DP [9]swallow I-RP-take II.SUB  
 Swallow took them up

àkě sùzà á mbúz á’yád

|à-kè-H L-sùzâ á mbúz á’yád|  
 I-AND-CS INF-put.down LOC [9]back at.other.side  
 and put them down behind, at the other side.

44. yî wó wótá ‘tébê vǎlá.

|jî wó ú-à-tá L-tébâ vǎlá|  
 DP III.SUB III-SP-PF INF-stand here-ID  
 It first stops here.

## 2. Dialogue on names

### 2.1. Introduction

The following dialogue was recorded in December 2002 in the village of Ngwabo (arrondissement de Monatélé). I was interested in the traditional naming system of the Eton and was discussing it with some guys from the village. Their knowledge turned out to be very incomplete. They were especially uncertain about the difference between two types of name (*ndán* and *mètámná*) so they decided to go and ask the grandmother of one of them, who lived just next door. She was willing to explain things to us and everybody agreed that I re-

corded the conversation. See Van de Velde (2003) for a short description of the different types of names in the Eton naming system. The two types of names that are discussed here are the *ndán* and the *mètàmná*. The *ndán* is a very long name consisting of a motto or short anecdotal part and a genealogical part in which notable family members and ancestors are summed up. It was mainly used to call somebody over a long distance, either by reproducing the tone pattern of the ndan on a two-tone hollow log drum or by crying the tone pattern in a high voice (this is glossed as *whistle* in the following text). As far as I know, the ndan is no longer used today. Ndans will not always be glossed in the following text, because they generally consist of enumerations of the same type of elements. A *mètàmná* is a type of name given immediately after birth. It consists of a short phrase that typically comments on the conditions of birth or pregnancy.

## 2.2. Text

(Pie-Claude)

1. kán í mwé pê bòd bé úsú béngábé

|kán í=m-óé pè b-òd bó=úsú bó-ηgá-bé|

[10]type X.CON=6-name X.which 2-person II.CON=before II-RP-IMPF

Which type of names did the people of yore

bèlnèngàn èèy yó, íyòη mòd àngábé ‘wógô bwăn?

|L-bèlnì-àngànèèj jǒ H-ì-jòη N-òd à-ηgá-bé L-wó-gà b-ǎn|

INF-use-G with X.SUB AU-7-time 1-person I-RP-IMPF INF-beget-G 2-child

use when somebody gave birth to children?

(Jacqueline Amos)

2. íyòη mòd àngábé ‘wógô bwăn, àné ‘má,

|H-ì-jòη N-òd à-ηgá-bé L-wó-gà b-ǎn àné mǎ|

AU-7-time 1-person I-RP-IMPF INF-beget-G 2-child like 1SG.FSUB

When somebody gave birth to children... in my case...

àngávé ‘má vè mwě “m”

|à-ηgá-vé mǎ vè m-òé|

I-RP-give 1SG.FSUB only 6-name

He (i.e. my father) only gave me names *mmm* (shows two fingers).

(Pie-Claude)

3. bí\* bá!

|bí-bǎ|

VIII-two

Two!

(Jacqueline Amos)

4. vè ndán, vè mètàmna vè

|vè ndán vè mètàmna vè|

only [9]ndan only 6-metamna only

Only a ndan and a metamna.

5. mètàmna mé 'múńá, mō mēńgákáńá èèy mō.

|mètàmna mō = N-ùńá H-mō mē-ńgá-káńá èèj mō

6-metamna VI.CON=1-child AU-VI.SUB 1SG-RP-stay with VI.SUB

The children's metamna, with that I stayed (my entire life),

nā bwán béńgábé 'wúgā.

|nā b-ńn bō-ńgá-bé L-wú-gā |

CMP 2-child II-RP-IMPF INF-die-G

because the children died.

6. íjòń vó bwǎń béńgábé 'wúgā ńé,

|H-ì-jòń vó b-ńn bō-ńgá-bé L-wú-gā ńé

AU-7-time then 2-child I-RP-IMPF INF-die-G 1.SUB

So when his children were dying (lit. when the children were dying him),

dó á'ńgáwó 'má àlóm 'ńá wāmò ábá mòd m̀pébè.

|dóà-ńgá-wó mǎ à-lóm-H ńǎ wàmà ábá N-òd m̀pébè

DP I-RP-beget 1SG.FSUB I-send-CS my.mother I.my chez 1-person I-other

he begot me and sent my mother to another person.

7. dō mòd ité ńgákê wó bí 'bé' bá: pām èèy ńgwàn.

|dōN-òd ì-té à-ńgá-kê L-wó bí bō-bǎ pām èèj ńgòń|

DP 1-person I-ANA I-RP-AND INF-beget 1PL.NSUB II-two man with girl

So, this person gave birth to the two of us: a boy and a girl.

8. dó 'ńóm pām ńgáwú, dó mǎ mēńgálígí.

|dó N-ńóm L=pām à-ńgá-wú dó mǎ mē-ńgá-lígí

DP 1-husband I.CON=[9]man I-RP-die DP 1SG.NSUB I-RP-stay

The boy died and I stayed.

9. dɔ́ á'ngávé mâ mètàmna ná àmǒz mé'yád,

|dɔ́ à-ngá-vé mà mètàmna ná à-mǒz H=mè-jád  
DP I-RP-give 1SG.NSUB 6-metamna CMP 3-day III.CON=6-sham  
So he (the father) gave me the metamna *Day of sham*,

*mèyád mégbélé mã.*

|mè-jád mǎ-gbélé mã|  
6-sham VI-possess 1SG.FSUB  
*the sham possesses me.*

10. ùsɔ́ 'válá ná á'yólô wò mà ná,

|ù-sɔ́-H vǎ-lá ná H-à-L-jòl <H>ò wò mà ná|  
2SG-come-CS here-ID CMP SB-I-SB-name<SB> 2SG.NSUB 1SG.NSUB CMP  
If you came here with the intention that he give me your name,

11. ùsɔ́ ná: “jòlô mà í'mújá nǎ.” àbèn!

|ù-sɔ́-H ná ɕjòl <H>ò mã í-N-újá nǎ à-bèn-H|  
2SG-come-CS CMP name<IMP> 1SG.NSUB AU-1-child I.this I-refuse-CS  
if you came to say: “Give this child my name.” he refused!

12. nɛ́ èèy wò ná: “mèsé kòm dɔ́.”

|nɛ́ èèy wò ná mà-sé L-kòm dɔ́|  
I.SUB with II.NSUB CMP 1SG-NPOS INF-do V.SUB  
He would say to you: “I can't do that.”

13. dɔ́ màgà mènǵákáŋà vè ná àmǒz mé'yád.

|dɔ́ màgà mà-ngá-káŋà vè ná àmǒz mǎjád|  
DP 1SG.CPR 1SG-RP-stay simply CMP Amoz Meyad  
So, as for me, I simply stayed Amoz Meyad.

14. mènè hó ngwân ì mbóg nàmɲè, mbóg í'nómó

|mènè-nè fíó ngòn ì=mbóg nàmɲè mbóg ònómó|  
1SG-COP then [9]girl IX.CON=[9]lineage Namnye [9]lineage Nomo  
I'm a woman of the Namnye lineage, the Nomo lineage.

(Pie-Claude)

15. àmǒz jé? ndán ítè ìnè yá?

|à-mǒz H=ɕjé ndán í-tè ì-nè já|  
3-day III.CON=what [9]ndan IX-ANA IX-COP how  
Day of what? This ndan, how is it?

(Jacqueline Amos)

16. ndán yàmà?

|ndán jàmà|  
 [9]ndan IX.my  
 My ndan?

17. ìnè nâ: *béṣó wá ànùṅ ùṅgá ké 'só*

|ì-nè nâ bṣ-pó wṑ à-nùṅ ù-ṅgá L-ké L-só|  
 IX-COP CMP II-open 2SG.NSUB 3-mouth 2SG-INC INF-AND INF-come  
 It is: *They open your mouth and you bring it back*

*úṗṑ? ṅgwàn ìsìmà mùṅṑ mṑ kál ùnómṑ*

|ú-pṑ ṅḡn L=ìsìmà L=N-ùṅṑ N-ḡH=kál L=ùnómṑ|  
 3-open [9]girl IX.CON=Isima I.CON=1-child 1-DIM=[9]sister I.CON=Uonomo  
*open? Daughter of Essimi Junior, little cousin of Onomo*

*à mùṅṑ, mṑ ṅgwân à mbóg ùnàn nḡà,*

|à=N-ùṅṑ N-ḡH=ṅḡn à=mbóg L=ùnàn nḡà|  
 I.CON=1-child 1-DIM=[9]girl I.CON=[9]lineage I.CON=Onana Ndzana  
*Junior, little niece of the Onana Ndzana lineage*

*mṑ kál ùnómṑ à mùṅṑ.*

|N-ḡH=kál ùnómṑ à=N-ùṅṑ|  
 1-DIM=[9]sister Onomo I.CON=1-child  
*Cousin of Onomo Junior.*

(Petit Pays)

18. ndán 'jílá! mètàmṑá mṑ á'bé káàḡi kàd

|ndán jílá mṑ-tàmṑá mṑ à-bé L-káz<Lg>ì L-kàd|  
 [9]ndan IX.DEM-CH 6-metamna VI.SUBI-TIMPF INF-start<G> INF-say  
 That's the ndan. She first said the *metamna*.

(Pie-Claude)

19. tá 'dúḡnì ḡḡḡ mètàmṑá nâ!

|tá-H L-dúḡnì H L-ḡḡḡ H mṑ-tàmṑá nâ|  
 PF-IMP INF-REP LT INF-take LT 6-metamna mother  
 Try to take up the *metamna* again, mother.

*mètàmṑá mṑ ménê yá?*

|mṑ-tàmṑá mṑ mṑ-nè já|  
 6-metamna VI.SUB VI-COP how  
 The *metamna*, how is it?

(Jacqueline Amos)

20. àmǒz mé'yád mènè àmǒz mé'yád  
 |àmǒz mǎjǎd mèn-nè àmǒz mǎjǎd|  
 Amoz Meyad 1SG-COP Amoz Meyad  
 Amoz Meyad, I am Amoz Meyad.

(Pie-Claude)

21. ùdyǎ ngwân ì jè? ùnè ngwàn ì jè?  
 |ù-díá ngǒn ì=ǫè ù-nè ngǒn ì=ǫè|  
 2SG-being [9]girl IX.CON=what 2SG-COP [9]girl IX.CON=what  
 Being a daughter of what? You are a daughter of what?

(Jacqueline Amos)

22. mènè ngwàn ì mbóg nàmnye, ngwàn mbóg ònómó á 'múŋábé  
 |mèn-nè ngǒn ì=mbóg nàmnye ngǒn L=mbóg ònómó á...|  
 1SG-COP [9]girl IX.CON=lineage Namnye [9]girl  
 IX.CON=lineage Nomo LOC...  
 I'm a daughter of the Namnye lineage, a daughter of the Nomo lineage in  
 Mungabe.

(Pie-Claude)

23. pèpá wê àngábé 'dwé yá?  
 |pèpá ù-ð à-ngá-bé d-òé já|  
 dad I-your I-RP-COP 4-name how  
 Your dad, how was he called?

(Jacqueline Amos)

24. ìsìmà mùŋó, nǎ wàmò dwè nâ mèsíná  
 |ìsìmà L=N-ùŋó nǎ wàmà d-òé nâ mèsíná|  
 Isima I.CON=1-child mother I.my 5-name CMP Mesina  
 Essimi Junior, my mother is called Mesina.

(Pie-Claude)

25. dǒ báánjí wê vé 'dwé lé mísŋwân ìì  
 |dǒ bǎ-àá-nǫí wè L-vé d-òé lǒ=mísŋn=ì:|  
 DP II-NEG-NEG 2SG.NSUB INF-give 5-name V.CON=mission=Q  
 So they didn't give you a Christian name?

(Jacqueline Amos)

26. mènè zóŋlíná àmǒz

|mè-nè zóŋlíná àmǒz|

1SG-COP Jacqueline Amoz

I am Jacqueline Amoz.

(Pie-Claude)

27. dō bí bìbé yìgà nâ byááyì jèm ŋgé

|dō bí bì-bé L-jì-gà nâ bí-à-jì L-ɕɛm ŋgé|

DP 1PL.SUB 1PL-TIMPF INF-want-G CMP 1PL-SP-FUT INF-know whether

We would like to know whether

ndán èèy mètàmna ménê dàm lèvévógá?

|ndán èèj mè-tàmna mó-nè d-àm lè-vévógá

[9]ndan with 6-metamna VI.COP 5-thing V-single

the ndan and the metamna are one and the same thing.

(Jacqueline Amos)

28. é èè ndán inè kán í 'tám, mètàmna mé'dyá kán í'tám

|ndán i-nè kán itám mè-tàmna mó-diá kán itám|

[9]ndan IX-COP [9]kind alone 6-metamna VI-being [9]kind alone

No, the ndan is one kind, the metamna being a kind on itself.

29. idé ú'té 'wó mwán, dō ú'té yòlò né dwè

|idé ù-Lté L-wó H N-ón dō ù-Lté L-jòlò né d-òè|

when 2SG-PR INF-begetLT 1-child DP 2SG-PR INF-name I.SUB 5-name

When you give birth to a child, and you call him

nâ: zǎ 'kájá tò wàtìmnì ké yòlò mǎ'jón,

|nâ zǎ kájá tò ù-à-tìmnì L-ké H L-jòlò mǎjón|

CMP *placeholder* even.if 2SG-SP-REP INF-AND LT INF-name your.sibling

X. Even if you rename him after your sibling,

ŋgé í'só, ŋgé 'jón

|ŋgé ísǒ ŋgé jón|

if your.father if your.mother

or your father, or your mother.

30. ùtádí 'vé jê mètàmna.

|ù-tádì-H L-vé H jé mè-tàmna|

2SG-begin-CS INF-give LT I.SUB 6-metamna

You first give him a metamna.

31. jìná métàmná métê mé'mân, jìná á'pám môd  
 |jìná mètàmná mót-tè mót-H-màn jìná à-H-pám  
 as.soon.as 6-metamna VI-ANA VI-PST-finish as.soon.as I-PST-arrive  
 As soon as this (stage of) metamna is finished, as soon as he is grown up

ijòŋ ítê yó bé'té jê vé ndán.  
 |ì-ɕòŋ í-tè jɔ́ bót-Lté jě L-vé ndán|  
 7-time VII-ANA VII.SUB II-PR I.SUB INF-give [9]ndan  
 at that time they give him a ndan.

32. tò ùnè vé mèlón jê á ndán  
 |tò ù-nè vé mèt-lón-H jě á ndán|  
 even.if 2SG-be where 1SG-whistle-CS I.SUB LOC [9]ndan  
 Wherever you are, I call him by the ndan.

(Pie-Claude)

33. nálá únê nâ íjòŋ mùŋá á'pám áyă môd  
 |nálá únè nâ H-ì-ɕòŋ N-ùŋá à-H-pám-H àjă N-òd  
 thus III-be CMP AU-7-time 1-child I-PST-arrive-NF already 1-person  
 This means that when a child has already grown up

yó bé'té jê vé ndán?  
 |jɔ́ bót-Lté jě L-vé ndán|  
 VII.SUB II-PR I.SUB INF-give [9]ndan  
 it's then that they give him a ndan?'

(Jacqueline Amos)

34. íjòŋ àmógò ìsòm í môd, nâ àŋgáyágí, íyòŋ  
 |H-ì-ɕòŋ à-N-Bóg-á ì-sòm í=N-òd nâ H-ì-jòŋ  
 AU-7-time I-CR-stay-RS 7-toddler VII.CON=1-person CMP AU-7-time  
 When he is already a toddler, i.e. when

àŋgá wùlà ijòŋ ítê yô bé'té jê vé ndán  
 |à-ŋgá L-wùlà ì-ɕòŋ í-tè jɔ́ bót-Lté jě L-vé H ndán|  
 I-INC INF-walk 7-time VII-ANA VII.SUB II-PR I.SUB INF-give  
 LT [9]ndan  
 he walks already, at that time they give him a ndan.

(Pie-Claude)

35. yì mòd ásê ànè jám 'lɔ̀ mòd á ndán?

|jì N-òd á-sè à-nè ɕǎm L-lò H N-òd á ndán|  
 Q 1-person I-every I-POS possibly INF-CALLLT 1-person LOC [9]ndan  
 Can everybody call a person by the ndan?

(Jacqueline Amos)

36. bé'té 'lɔ̀ŋɔ̀. ɲé məwú vâ ítêtègà ɲó, ɲé kí mènè vòm

|bɔ̀-Lté L-lɔ̀ŋɔ̀ ɲó mə-à-wú vâ ítêtègà ɲó ɲé kí gíg mə-nè vóm  
 II-PR INF-whistle if I.SG-SP-die here now if INTS 1SG-be place  
 They whistle. If I die now, for instance, ... or if I am somewhere

á dũlà, dɔ̀ 'ɲéŋà àpúmɲé 'má, bé'té má

|á d-ùlà dɔ̀ Ñ-jéŋà à-púmɲà-H mǎ bɔ̀-Lté mà  
 LOC 5-journey DP 1-stranger I-find.absent-CS 1SG.FSUBII-PR 1SG.NSUB  
 on a journey and a stranger comes to see me. They call

lɔ̀ŋɔ̀ á ndán, ɲé á ɲ'kúl.

|L-lɔ̀ŋɔ̀ á ndán ɲé á Ñ-kúl  
 INF-whistle loc [9]ndan if loc 3-log.drum  
 me by the ndan or on the drum.

(Pie-Claude)

37. tɔ̀ 'ɲéŋà ànè wò lónɔ̀ á ndán ìí?

|tɔ̀ Ñ-jéŋà à-nè wò L-lɔ̀ŋɔ̀ á ndán = ìí|  
 even 1-stranger I-POS 2SG.NSUB INF-call LOC [9]ndan=Q  
 Even a stranger can call you by the ndan!?

(Jacqueline Amos)

38. ɲé áté jèm ndán yàmà ké àlɔ̀ŋɔ̀

|ɲé à-Lté L-ɕèm H ndán jàmà ké à-lɔ̀ŋɔ̀|  
 if I-PR INF-know LT [9]ndan IX.my DP I-whistle  
 If he knows my ndan, let him call!

(Pie-Claude)

39. dè ùnǰí mèn'dán mé bôd bèvwág á ndé

|dè ù-nɕí mə-ndán mó = b-òd bə-vóg á ndá  
 Q 2SG-know 6-ndan VI.CON=2-person II-one LOC [9]house  
 Do you know the ndans of some persons in your

ì bòd yò? bwàn bô, dè ùnjí mé'ndán 'mábní?

|ì = b-òd ì-ò b-òn b-ò dè ù-ndǎí m-ndán m-àbní  
IX.CON=2-person IX-your 2-child II-your Q 2SG-know 6-ndan VI-their  
family? Your children, do you know their ndans?

tò bò bé'jón , tò bònjón, tò...?

|tò bò b-ónjón m-ndán m-èbní|  
even PL sibling 6-ndan VI-their  
As well as your siblings, their ndans?

(Jacqueline Amos)

40.ndán î tàdá í'ngábé nâ: zíj lèbùm, zíj á mbúz

|ndán î=tàdá ì-ngá-bé nâ zíj H l-èbùm zíj á mbúz  
[9]ndan IX.CON=my.father IX-RP-beCMP [9]hate LOC 5-belly [9]hate LOC [9]back  
My father's ndan was *Hate in the belly, hate in the back*'

ìsìmà à mùnjò mǎ'jónj lèbùm ìsìmì mǎ'jónj njódá àyí'zí, mwàn índò,  
'Essimi Junior, brother of the same belly as Essimi, brother of Djodo Ay-  
issi, child of the Endo family,'

àngábá ngwàn ábâ njál zògò yògò á mbóg 'kání mètán  
'he married a girl with the wife of Zogo in Mbog Kani in the villages'

àkê lúg ñgwân ì mbóg ñnàmà.  
'He went to marry a girl from the Nama lineage.'

41.ású á'ngábá já wàmò àdyǎ ñgwân ì mbóg ñnàmà

|ású à-ngá-bá já wàmà à-díá ñgèñ ì=mbóg ñnàmà  
for I-RP-marry mother I.my I-being [9]girl IX.CON=[9]lineage Nama  
Because he married my mother, who is a woman from the Nama lineage.

42.ndóm yàmà à-ngá-tó 'má àngábá 'míníngá àdyǎ 'ndíndím

|ndóm jàmà à-ngá-tó mǎ à-ngá-bá m-ìngá à-díá ñ-díndím  
brother I-my I-RP-follow 1SG.FSUB I-RP-marry 1-woman I-being 3-blind  
My brother, who followed me (i.e. in age), married a blind woman,

né mèbógò nâ, tè yén. dó á'ngábòl nâ ... dó á'ngáñjón ndán nâ:

|né m-è-bóg-ó nâ tè jén dó à-ngá-bólò nâ dó à-ngá-ñjón ndán nâ  
like 1SG-stay-RS thus NEG seeDP I-RP-ask CMP DP I-RP-take [9]ndan CMP  
like I am, without seeing. So he asked himself... he took the following ndan

í 'mwán í'bógî mè-bógô nâ mwàn ísîmî, ndómní ìsîmî à mùnjó.  
 'This home where I live, Little Essimi, son of Essimi Junior'

nâ ìbógî í'té jê béb  
 |nâ ì-bógî í-Lté jě L-béb  
 CMP 7-home VII-PR I.SUB INF-be.bad  
 because he wasn't at ease at home.

43. d̄ò àṅgáṅṅ ndán nâ zá íbègà íbógî hó mèbógô nâ?

|d̄ò-à-ṅgá-ṅṅ ndán nâ zá ì-bègá í=ì-bógî vó mè-Bóg-á nǎ  
 DP I-RP-take [9]ndan CMP who 7-kind VII.CON=7-home then 1SG-stay-REL.RS thu  
 So he took the ndan *What kind of damned place am I living in.*

44. íṅó 'mwág nâ Appolinaire ìsîmî, àṅṅ nâ:

|í-ṅó m̄-móg nâ appolinaire isimi à-H-ṅṅ nâ  
 AU-I.DEM I-one CMP Appolinaire Essimi I-PST-take CMP  
 One (brother), called Appolinaire Issimi, took the ndan:

èkàl d̄ó é'té w̄ó síṅ èkàl d̄ó é'té w̄ó pèm, mè ísîmî à mùnjó  
 'Your equals hate you, your equals loathe you, Little Essimi Junior'

46. àṅgábé kòdnèṅgàn èȳȳ d̄òb á mbòg m̀bílónḡ á mbóg ùṅgénâ

|à-ṅgá-bé L-kòdn-èṅgàn èȳȳ d-òb á mbòg m̀bílónḡ á...|  
 I-RP-IMPF INF-fight... with 5-sky LOC [9]lineage Mvilongo LOC ...  
 He suffered at the Mvilongo family, at the Ongena family.

ású béṅgágbê jé àdyǎ 'múná nâ ákê L-sá

|ású bó-ṅgá-gbè jé à-díá N-ùṅá nâ H-à-ké-L L-sá  
 for II-RP-grasp I.SUB I-being 1-child CMP SB-I-AND-SB INF-work  
 Because they had seized him as a child in order to work (for them)

(Onomo)

47. á máṅgtúm.

|á máṅgtúm|  
 LOC Mentsum  
 In Mentsum.

(Jacqueline Amos)

48. àkè bèglè bíkwàn. bìkwàn bíngénà bèglèngàn.

|à-H-ké L-bèglè H bì-kòn bì-kòn bí-H-ngénà bègl-èngàn|  
I-PST-AND INF-carry LT 8-plantain 8-plantain VIII-still.be carry-G  
He went to carry plantain bananas. Plantains were still carried (in those days).

49. mwàn ísímà mùṅó mò ngwân à mbóg í'nwág ùnăn 'njáná

'Little Essimi Junior cousin of the Nuag Onana Ndzana family'

mò kál èlú 'mbéná úngéná àpúbá mò típǎnyà yànà

'Nephew of Elu Mbena Onguéne Apuba, child of Stéphanie Yana.'

(Pascal)

50. íní mèmá ìnè yâ?

|í-jí L = mèmá ì-nè já  
AU-IX.DEM IX.CON=mom IX-COP how  
How is Mom's?

(Jacqueline Amos)

51. íní mèmá wámò?

|í-jí L = mèmá wàmà|  
AU-IX.DEM IX.CON=mom I-my  
That of my Mom?

(Pascal)

52. mèmá wámò, mèmá ántònyă, ngwàn yò

|mèmá wàmà mèmá ántòniá ngòn ì-ḍ|  
mom I.my mom Antoinette [9]girl IX-your  
My Mom, mother Antoinette, your daughter!

(Jacqueline Amos)

53. íní yě ìnè nâ:

|í-jí L = j-ě ì-nè nâ|  
AU-IX.DEM IX.CON=IX-her IX-COP CMP  
Hers is:

bèjèm b álú sê béngácìlà yén môd ìngéngwál

'The savants of the middle of the night denied themselves the sense of pity.'

ngwàn ì nómó mèsàṅǎ, m̀ ñgwán à mbóg nàmṅè, m̀ kál à mbógô à mùṅó  
*‘daughter of Nomo Messanga, cousin of the Mvog Namnye, niece of Mvogo Junior’*

54. íbòd bá! bábélá à zàmá

|í-b-òd bá bábélá à = zàmá|  
 AU-2-person II.DEM truth I.CON=God  
 These people..., really!

(Pie-Claude)

55. m̀mèṅ d̀ m̀tè ‘bólò nà, ùnè jèm ébòní

|ṅ-Bèṅ d̀ m̀-Łté L-bólò nà ù-nè L-ḡèm H è-bòní|  
 3-good DP 1SG-PR INF-ask CMP 2SG-POS INF-know LT 5-origin  
 Good! Then I ask whether you know the origin

índòò, éjòṅ índò?

|H = ìndò = ò H = è-ḡòṅ H = ìndò|  
 V.CON=Endo=Q V.CON=5-clan V.CON=Endo  
 of the Endo?, of the Endo clan.

(Jacqueline Amos)

56. éjòṅ índòò?

|H = è-ḡòṅ H = ìndò = ò|  
 V.CON=5-clan V.CON=Endo=Q  
 of the Endo clan?

(Onomo)

57. àsè jèm! éné nà àsè ‘mínṅǎ índò

|à-sè L-ḡèm é-nè nà à-sè m-ìṅǎ ìndò|  
 I-NPOS INF-know V-be CMP I-NCOP 1-woman Endo  
 She doesn’t know. The thing is, she isn’t an Endo woman.

58. ngwàn yè yò ñgázû bá vâ.

|ṅḡòṅ j-ě jò ì-ṅǎ-zù L-bá vâ|  
 [9]daughter IX-her IX.SUB IX-RP-VEN INF-marry here  
 It’s her daughter who came to marry here.

(Jacqueline Amos)

59. mà mèsè ‘mínṅǎ ìndò. ngwàn yàmà yò ñgázû

|mà m̀-ě m-ìṅǎ ìndò ṅḡòṅ jàmà jò ì-ṅǎ-zù|  
 1SG.NSUB 1SG-NCOP 1-womanEndo [9]daughter IX.my IX.SUB IX-RP-VEN  
 I’m not an Endo woman. It’s my daughter who came

bá vâ. mètè jèm ...

|L-bá vǎ mǎ-Lté ɕǝm|  
 INF-marry here 1SG-PR INF-know  
 to marry here

60. àngázû bá índò. bǝnǝ mbóg nǝmǎlá mbóg ñkòlò

|à-ngá-zù L-bá H índò bǎ-nǝ mbóg nǝmǎlá mbóg ñkòlò|  
 I-RP-VEN INF-marry LT Endo II-COP[9]lineage Mbala [9]lineage Nkolo  
 She married the Endo. They are the Mbala family, the Nkolo family.

bó bǝnǝ bǝ cími bàltàzàar.

|bǝ bǎ-nǝ bǝ tʃími bàltàzâ:r|  
 II.SUB PL II-COP Tsimi Balthazar  
 They, they are the (relatives of) Tsimi, Balthazar.

(Pie-Claude)

61. wǝ ùkád nǎ ùnǝ ñgwàn ì jǝ?

|wǝ ù-H-kád nǎ ù-nǝ ñgǝn ì=ɕǝé|  
 2SG.NSUB 2SG-PST-say CMP 2SG-COP [9]girl IX.CON=what  
 You said you are a woman from where (lit. what)?

(Jacqueline Amos)

62. mǝnǝ ñgwàn ì mbóg nǝmǝnǝ, mbóg ñnómó.

|mǎ-nǝ ñgǝn ì=mbóg nǝmǝnǝ mbóg ñnómó|  
 1SG-COP [9]girl IX.CON=[9]lineage Namnye [9]lineage Nomo  
 I am a woman from the Namnye family, the Nomo family.

(Pie-Claude)

63. bítá kólǝ ídí lé mbóg nǝmǝnǝ.

|H-bí-tá-L L-kólǝ í-dí lǝ=mbóg nǝmǝnǝ|  
 SB-1PL-PF-SB INF-talk AU-V.DEM V.CON=[9]lineage Namnye  
 Let's talk about that (i.e. the origin) of the Namnye lineage.

bó bǝ'té 'sǝ vé? ùnǝ yèm ébòní 'dǝbní?

|bǝ bǎ-Lté L-sǝ vé ù-nǝ L-jèm H è-bòní d-ǝbní|  
 II.SUB II-PR INF-come where 2SG-COP INF-know LT 5-origin V-their  
 Where do *they* come from? Do you know their origin?

(Jacqueline Amos)

64. èbòní mbóg nàmɲè? yí!

|è-bòní H=mbóg nàmɲè jí|  
 5-origin v.con=[9]lineage Namnye INT  
 The origin of the Namnye lineage!?

65. mèté 'wóg nâ mbóg nàmɲè béngátêy á cingí

|mè-Lté L-wóg nâ mbóg nàmɲè bə-ŋá-téi á tʃíngí|  
 1SG-PR INF-hear CMP [9]lineage Namnye II-RP-come.from LOC [9]bank  
 I hear that the Namnye lineage comes from the banks

î jwǎm nâ béngáké ɲɔŋ ...

|î=ɕǒm nâ bə-ŋá-ké L-ɲɔŋ H|  
 IX.CON-Sanaga CMP II-RP-VEN INF-take LT  
 of the Sanaga, because they came to take...

66. mǒ'ɲáŋ wǒbní á'ŋgákê bó ɲɔŋ nâ: mìní'dyá nâm

|mǒHɲáŋ wǒbní à-ŋgá-kè bǒ L-ɲɔŋ nâ mìní-díá á H-ŋ-nâm|  
 brother I-their I-RP-and II.SUB INF-take CMP 2.PL-being LOC AU-3-land  
 Their brother went to take them and said: "Being in this country

ɲû mìnízágà jwág á cingí jwǎŋ mù.

|ɲû mìní-zá-gà jóg á tʃíngí L=ɕǒŋ mú|  
 III-DEM 2PL-come-G build LOC [9]bank IX.CON=Sanaga here  
 and coming to install you here on the bank of the Sanaga,

mìní'té 'só kwàm jé?

|mìní-Lté L-só L-kòm ɕé|  
 2PL-PR INF-VEN INF-do what  
 what are you doing here?"

67. ìjɔŋ ítê dǒ béngámâ sòb á mbóg nàmɲè

|ì-ɕɔŋ í-tè dǒ bə-ŋgá-mà L-sòb á mbóg nàmɲè|  
 7-time VII-ANA DP II-RP-TMN INF-come.back LOC [9]lineage Namnye  
 Then they came back to the Namnye lineage,

mbóg ń'nómó, bé'dyá nâ mbóg ñnómó.

|mbóg ñnómó bə-díá nâ mbóg ñnómó|  
 [9]lineage Nomo II-being CMP [9]lineage Nomo  
 the Nomo lineage, they being the Nomo lineage.

(Pie-Claude)

68. wàánjí dwé 'mó'náŋ 'wóbní ìtè?

|ù-àá-à-ndzí d-óé H = mǝHnáŋ w-ðbní ì-tè|  
 2SG-NEG-SP-know 5-name V.CON=brother I-their I-ANA  
 You don't know the name of this brother of theirs?

(Jacqueline Amos)

69. í'mó'náŋ 'wóbní á'ngákê nǝŋ bǝ?

|í-mǝHnáŋ w-ðbní à-ngá-kè L-nǝŋ H bǝ|  
 AU-brother I-their I-RP-AND INF-take LT II.SUB  
 Their brother that went to take them?

(Pie-Claude)

Oui.  
 Yes.

(Jacqueline Amos)

70. ìsìmì à ngáyíí.

|ìsìmì à = ngá jí:|  
 Isimi I.CON= Nga Ayissi  
 Essimi of Nga Ayissi.

71. bǝ tǝdá béngábé dwé é'vénwágó: íjǝ ná ìsìmì, íjǝ ná ìsìmì

|bǝ tǝdá bǝ-ngá-bé d-óé è-véwǝgá í-jǝ ná ìsìmì í-jǝ ná ìsìmì|  
 PL father II-RP-COP 5-name V-single I-DEM CMP Essimi I-DEM CMP Essimi  
 My fathers had the same name: this one Essimi, this one Essimi.

72. mó'náŋ 'wóbní àdyǎ ná ìtí à ngáyíí

|mǝHnáŋ w-ðbní à-díá ná ì-tí à = ngá jí:|  
 brother I-their I-being CMP 3-lord I.CON=Nga Ayissi  
 Their brother being Nti of Nga Ayissi.

73. á! mbóg 'tǝdá! mé'té mà mǎ kè vúúnì.

|á mbóg tǝdá mé-Ltǝ mà L-mà H L-kè L-vú:nì|  
 INT [9]lineage father VI-PR 1SG.NSUB INF-TMN LT INF-AND INF-be.forgotten  
 Oh my brothers (lit. the family of my father)! They (the names) are slipping  
 away from my memory.

àbù míncǝgní

|à-bùí H = mìn-tʃǝgní|  
 3-many III.CON=4-thought  
 Lots of thoughts!

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