

Sparse notes on Baazəm

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1 Introduction

This document is a summary of the data collected concerning the Baazəm language, spoken in the village of Munka (Cameroon, Northwest Region, Menchum Division, Fungom Subdivision).¹ Baazəm is not listed in the Ethnologue (Lewis, 2009) or in ALCAM (Dieu and Renaud, 1983). In the Ethnologue, as well as one report from a conservation society (Ekinde et al., 2005: 7), the area is reported to be Isu-speaking [isu]. The possibility that there might be a non-Isu language within the Isu region became apparent when I happened upon a message on an internet bulletin board associated with the ECUDEM (Isu cultural development meeting) organization, containing the following passage:

Munkep/Gayam Region: This region was formed following a sensitization tour from the 2nd to the 4th of June 2006 by the Home Regional President, Vice and National Cultural Coordinator. The Munka people had to boycott this exercise, reason being that they are not Esu people, their language and culture different and none of the corpses of their relatives transported to the village...²

In May of 2012, while in Wum for fieldwork on Mungbam [mij], I attempted to visit the region, along with my guide, George Ngong, a native of Mekaf. In Isu, I met with the DO of Fungom Subdivision and the current Fon of Isu, who denied me permission to visit the region, citing security concerns. Mr. Ngong continued without me, and brought two natives of Munka to Wum where I could interview them for a day. The Baazəm speakers were two men, aged ~40 and ~50 years, both natives of the area. The two men were both sons of Baazəm fathers. One of them had a mother from K pep, while the other had a Baazəm mother. Both claimed to be able to speak Baazəm, Isu [isu], Njikum [jbu], K pep/Beezen [bnz], and Pidgin English [wes]. The interviews were conducted in Pidgin English.

Mr. Ngong reported that people speaking a language which was different from Isu and different from Njikum or Beezen/K pep were living in Munka village. He reported that the language was spoken throughout Munka by people of all ages, in all settings, and estimated the population of the village at 300–500. Gayama, which is further North and West of Munka, is said to be inhabited mostly by Isu speakers.

Baazəm speakers, residents of Munka, then, are surrounded on all sides by Isu speakers. They are also under the traditional authority of the Chief of Gayama (an Isu man), who is in turn answerable to the Fon of Isu. Isu people and Baazəm people give two different reasons for this situation. The Isu version, told to me by several different Isu people, is that at some time in the recent past, the Baazəm people, fleeing war, were granted exile in Isu territory, and given a portion of land to settle. As a condition of their admittance, Baazəm people were required to submit themselves to Isu political authority, and swear to a peace pact

¹ A map of the region is available in Breton (1993: 110).

² <http://dir.groups.yahoo.com/group/Ndzem-Usu/message/3678> (accessed 28-Mar-2012)

with the Isu, adopting the name Munka as a symbol of this pact. According to the Baazəm version of the story, Baazəm people were settled at their present site before Isu people were in the area. The Isu settled Gayama in an attempt to usurp control of the Baazəm territory, which divides Gayama from the center of the Isu fondon. Given the numerical superiority of the Isu, the Baazəm did not resist the encroachment, and agreed to a peace pact with the Isu. The two informants reported that the name Munka (Isu for ‘I have sworn’), which was given to them by the Isu, was not used within the Baazəm community. They further noted that the Baazəm, as a show of reciprocity, had adopted, in addition to their usual name **Ndiwum** for the Isu, a commemorative name **Múnóm** (Baazəm for ‘You lie’) for the Isu, mocking the Isu’s name for themselves, **Kónóm**.

The linguistic information reported here is based on only a one day interview, and must be treated as highly tentative. Normally, information of this quality would not be suited for wider circulation, except for three factors which favor immediate release of the information: First, the very existence of the language is not yet established in the linguistics literature or in the Ethnologue. Second, related languages are only beginning to be documented, and linguists concerned with those may find this information helpful. Finally, I do not expect to have the opportunity to make further inquiries in the future, so I would like to make this information available with the hopes of stimulating interest in other scholars.

2 Is Baazəm different from other reported languages?

The name of the language is suspiciously similar to Beezen (referred to as “Kpep talk” by my consultants), which is spoken at Kpep. The two informants claimed that they were able to understand and speak Kpep, and that people from Munka have little difficulty in learning Kpep. Since I used the standard wordlist included in SIL rapid appraisal surveys, it is possible to compare what data there is for Baazəm with the published wordlists for Beezen (Brye, 2004: 11–4). A glance at table 1 shows that, even allowing for errors in transcription or elicitation (especially the sources for both languages are from authors with very little exposure to the languages), it should be clear that Baazəm and Beezen are distinct, albeit related, languages. For the meantime, then, Baazəm might be classified as a sister of Beezen, under the Kuteb-Yukuben subbranch of Jukunoid.

3 Segmental phonology

No careful investigation was made into the number of possible vowel contrasts. Consequently, there are probably fewer contrastive vowels than the transcriptions symbols in the tables below suggest. Particularly, it seems doubtful that there is actually a contrast between **i** and **ə** in closed syllables. The second-degree vowels **e** and **o** probably do contrast with **ɛ** and **ɔ**, though the former two are not attested in very many words. The high vowels **i** and **u** are usually produced with some frication, which is not uncommon in languages of this area. Languages further south have some particularly subtle vowel distinctions, so it would also not be surprising if two distinct vowels have been merged in my transcriptions.

Likewise, the consonant system is far from fully understood. It is not known, for example, whether there is actually a contrast between **v** (the transcription symbol chosen for a bilabial spirant approximant (IPA β)) and **w**. Some interesting properties, however, are immediately noticeable with a short exposure to the data. First, the language contains coda obstruents, with **r**, **p**, **x** (in order of increasing frequency) attested. Second, the language contains doubly-articulated labial-coronal stops **tp** and **db**, which are of course far from common cross-linguistically. Another interesting observation is of the presence of non-

	English gloss	Baaazəm	(sg)	· · · (pl)	Beezen (Brye, 2004)
1	mouth	ū-ndzū	ī-ndzū	úpnú	
2	eye	kī-đ̄ī	ē-đ̄ī	kíyí	
3	head	kī-ṭ̄ī	ē-ṭ̄ī	kìjì	
4	hair	ō-zēj		ùsùn	
5	tooth	kē-d̄īj	ā-d̄īj	kízíj	
6	tongue	kē-mī	ā-mī	kájnám	
7	nose	kē-fāwā	ā-fāwā	kéñ	
8	ear	kō-tūj	ā-tūj	kótój	
9a	neck	ū-tsū		kìkímítsú	
9c	throat	ō-vāj	ē-vāj	úmìnítsú	
10	breast	kī-mjōj	ē-mjōj	kímyám	
11	arm/hand	kū-bū	ē-bū	kibú	
12	claw/nail	kí-pú	é-pú	ázíp	
13a	leg	kū-tpī	ī-tpī	kígún	
13b	foot	kē-tpjōj kū-tpī		kíwárögún	
14	buttock	kē-tā	ā-tā	kékú	
15	belly	ké-lúj	á-lúj	kéwúré	
16	navel	bī-bjúkūr		ùhú	
17	intestines	ē-dzīm		ízím	
18	blood	bō-jōj		béyój	
19	urine	bā-dzīm		bézím	
20	bone	kē-kōp	ā-kōp	kíkíp	
21	skin	kō-kpā	ā-kpā	éyéró	
22	wing	kō-vār	ā-vār	kábáb	
23	feather	ká-túj	á-túj	éhíj	
24	horn	ū-đ̄ī	ī-đ̄ī	ókún	
25	tail	ū-līj	ī-līj	órán	

Table 1: Some body part terms in Baazəm and in Beezen.

homorganic nasal-stop sequences, e.g. in the verb **i-nbì** ‘hit’.³

In some contexts an intervocalic consonant can be softened. The most salient manifestation of this process is the spirantization of word-final **p**, which is realized as **v** at times. Word final **x** is voiced to **w** or omitted entirely when softened.

- (1) a. à-nāj āmī à-lōp
PR-be 3sg PR-fear
“It is him who is afraid.”
- b. mā-lōv ò
2sg.PR-fear Q.POLAR
“Are you afraid?”
- c. ū-tīp
I.sg-spear
‘spear’

³ This could of course be an error in transcription, with the correct (assimilated) form being **i-ndbì**.

- d. ū-tīvə wú
 I.sg-spear DEM.SG
 ‘this spear’

4 Tonal contrasts

Tone was only studied in a systematic way for nouns. This means that throughout this report, tonal transcriptions should be considered more or less accurate on nouns (and then only for those nouns given in tables 2–7), but cannot be fully trusted for all other word types. A group of eighty seven nouns were checked for tone and divided into groups having the same tonal melody. Almost all nouns so considered were disyllabic with a syllabic prefix and a monosyllabic stem. Six categories were formed by the grouping process, each of which is characterized by a sequence of two “level” tones drawn from the set (L, M, H). Since the smallest category contains only one noun, there is a good chance that the six categories identified do not exhaust all the possible two-tone sequences in the language. That being said, there are two more secure generalizations that can be drawn. The first is that there is good evidence that the language can be classified as a “three tone level” language, and probably not a two- or four- tone level language. The second is the clear dominance of the M–M group, which contains close to 70% of all of the nouns considered. Because of this fact, the overall entropy of the tonal contrasts is only 1.57 bits/word, which is the same as that for a system where only three categories (rather than six) contrasted, with the relative frequencies of the categories being more or less evenly distributed.

ū-lū	‘man’	ōkwō	‘woman’	ū-gbūŋ	‘child’
ū-ndzū	‘mouth’	kī-dʒī	‘eye’	kī-tʃī	‘head’
ō-zēŋ	‘hair’	kē-dīŋ	‘tooth’	kē-mī	‘tongue’
kē-fāwā	‘nose’	kō-tūŋ	‘ear’	ō-vāŋ	‘throat/pipe’
ū-tsū	‘front of neck’	ō-tpī	‘harmattan’	ū-dʒī	‘horn’
ī-wū	‘body’	ō-fū	‘house’	ō-lē	‘fire/gun’
bū-lō	‘war’	bī-dʒī	‘animal’	ē-lē	‘louse/lice’
ō-tʃī	‘tree’	kī-ʃī	‘egg’	bē-tʃēmō	‘fish’
bī-gjū	‘snake’	ū-tīp	‘spear’	ē-jūī	‘husband’
kō-vār	‘wing’	kō-kpā	‘skin’	ō-vī	‘path’
kū-bū	‘hand’	kē-tā	‘buttocks’	kū-tpī	‘leg’
ē-dzīm	‘intestines’	ī-mbī	‘honey’	ō-lāχ	‘rope’
ē-zāχ	‘pepper’	ū-kjīp	‘vein/root’	ō-kē	‘money’
kē-kōχ	‘bark’	kī-mjōŋ	‘breast’	ū-līŋ	‘tail’
ū-kū	‘firewood’	ē-lū	‘days’	bā-kpā	‘sky’
ō-zē	‘shah’	bwō-tōŋ	‘ash’	kītīm	‘tailfeathers’
ō-gbūŋ	‘wind’	bō-mūŋ	‘water’	ē-wūŋ	‘rain’
bē-nāŋ	‘iron’	ū-ŋgī	‘person’	bō-jōŋ	‘blood’
kē-kōp	‘bone’	ō-ŋgbōχ	‘farm’	ō-dbī	‘moon’
bā-dzīm	‘urine’	bā-dzīp	‘salt’		

Table 2: M–M melody: 59 nouns

ó-záj	'friend'	kó-vóχ	'country bowl'	bó-ŋgí	'oil'
kí-pú	'claw'	ké-lúŋ	'belly'	ké-vóχ	'dark'
ká-túŋ	'feather'	ó-kpúŋ	'fowl'	á-gbá	'fat'
bí-kóm	'corn'	bí-kjóŋ	'cocoyams'		

Table 3: H–H melody: 11 nouns

í-jí	'ground'	bā-mì	'dew'	kē-pòχ	'cloud'
kē-ŋgbà	'leaf'	bwō-zòŋ	'smoke'		

Table 4: M–L melody: 5 nouns

ù-wòχ	'chimpanzee'	ù-wùŋ	'cow'	ù-pùŋ	'bird'
kò-kà	'soup'	ò-ndàχ	'elephant'		

Table 5: L–L melody: 5 nouns

ò-gbòχ	'dog'	ù-mū	'goat'	ò-kpòm	'god'
ù-vīm	'stream'	ù-kwōp	'knife'	kì-kwīn	'tortoise'

Table 6: L–M melody: 6 nouns

é-lūŋ	'sand'
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Table 7: H–M melody: 1 noun

5 Noun classes

All of the nouns elicited have a noun class prefix. The noun class prefixes have shape V-, kV-, or bV-. A fully accurate understanding of the noun class system is at this point not possible, due to several factors, including (i) my limited exposure to the data, (ii) the degenerate nature of the concord system, (iv) an apparent vowel harmony process which makes it difficult to treat with certainty prefixes having different vowels as belonging to different classes. Though the sketch of the noun class system offered here will certainly undergo revision as more information about the language becomes available, what is offered here will have to serve as a stopgap measure until such a time comes. I discuss separately the prefix system and the concord system.

5.1 Prefixes

Table 8 lays out almost all of the attested singular/plural prefix pairs. It seems very likely that an analysis based on more evidence would have fewer genders, since it seems likely that several of the pairs of prefixes might be related by a rule of vowel harmony. The basic observation motivating a vowel harmony analysis is that the prefixes containing high vowels (**i** and **u**) are (with very few exceptions) only associated with noun stems which themselves contain a high vowel (**i**, **u**, or **í**). A vowel harmony analysis is a bit complicated by the fact that some of the prefixes with non-high vowels are associated with noun stems containing a high vowel (whence the conservativeness of table 8).

There is one noun where the stem vowel alternates in the singular/plural forms: **ɔ-logwə / e-legwə** ‘cas-sava’. This is also the only noun which is transcribed with second degree vowels **e/o**. Stem vowel mutations of this sort are more widespread in Beezen (Jeff Good, p.c.). It may be that in Baazəm the process is

Gender	sg. prefix	pl. prefix
I	u-	i-
II	ɔ-	ɛ-
III	u-	bɔ-
IV	ɔ-	ba-
V	ka-	kɔ-
VI	ki-	ɛ-
VII	kɛ-	ɛ-
VIII	ku-	ɛ-
IX	kɛ-	a-
X	kɔ-	a-
XI	bi-	bu-
XII	bi-	i-
XIII	bɛ-	ɛ-

Table 8: Some singular-plural noun class prefix pairs

generally in effect as well, except that only **e/o** are targets of the assimilation process.

5.2 Concord

Noun class concord has been observed on numerals, adjectives, and demonstratives. The variety of concord forms, however, are not as extensive as the variety of prefixes, and the consultants were not fully consistent in producing concord forms. However, very little time was dedicated to careful elicitation of concord forms, so these points should only be considered as provisional.

5.2.1 Concord on numerals

Numerals 1–10 were elicited for four different nouns. These showed variation in their prefixes, clearly some kind of concord effect, but the concordant prefixes were not very consistent (see table 9).

	fowl(s) (ɔ- / ba-)	egg(s) (ki- / ɛ-)	snake(s) (bi- / bu-)	spear(s) (u- / i-)
one	ɔ-jəŋ	ó-jəŋ	í-jəŋ	ú-jəŋ
two	éví	éví	éví	éví
three	bā-tàχ	ɛ-tàχ	ɛ-tàχ	ɛ-tàχ
four	bō-nđì	nđì	nđì	i-nđì
five	bō-tōŋ ~ í-tōŋ	ɛ-tōŋ	í-tōŋ	í-tōŋ
six	í-tōŋ ójəŋ	tōŋ ójəŋ		
seven	í-tōŋ éví	í-tōŋ éví		
eight	í-tōŋ ètàχ	í-tōŋ ètàχ		
nine	í-tōŋ enđì			
ten	í-ŋgjíp			

Table 9: Numerals 1...5

5.2.2 Concord on demonstratives

Forms of the proximal demonstrative (translatable as **dis** in Pidgin English) were also elicited for a handful of nouns.⁴ The limited data suggest that there is one singular form **wú** which applies to nouns belonging to any gender, and two different plural forms, **jí** and **bá**. The latter corresponds to nouns with gender III prefix **bɔ-**, while the former corresponds to nouns with any V- or kV- plural prefix. Unfortunately, forms corresponding to nouns with **ba-** or **bu-** plural prefixes were not elicited. There is, however variability, as the same noun is observed with both of the possible plural prefixes.

- (2) a. ō-kwō wú
IV.sg-woman DEM.SG
'this woman'
 - b. kō-kpā wú
X.sg-skin DEM.SG
'this skin'
 - c. kū-bū wú
VIII.sg-hand DEM.SG
'this hand'
- (3) bō-ŋgi bá
bō-ŋgi jí
III.pl-person DEM.PL
'these people'

5.2.3 Concord on adjectives

A few nouns modified by the adjective **-tʃī** 'white', which shows concord with the noun it modifies, were elicited.

ù-wùŋ ù-tʃī	'white cow'	bò-wùŋ bā-tʃī	'white cows'
kī-dīŋ ō-tʃī	'white egusi (sg)'	ē-dīŋ ētʃī	'white egusi (pl)'
kē-dīŋ ō-tʃī	'white tooth'	ā-dīŋ ītʃī	'white teeth'
bí-kjóŋ ō-tʃī	'white cocoyam'	bú-kjóŋ ētʃī	'white cocoyams'
		bá-tóŋ bā-tʃī	'white mimbo'

Table 10: Concord on adjective **-tʃī** 'white'

⁴ The elicited forms might instead be definite determiners, though there was no time to look for different forms associated with demonstratives and determiners.

5.3 List of nouns w/ singular/plural pairs, grouped approximately by gender

	sg. prefix	pl. prefix		sg. prefix	pl. prefix
	u-	i-		ki-	ɛ-
man	ū-lū	ī-lū			
mouth	ū-ndzū	ī-ndzū	eye	kī-dʒī	ɛ-dʒī
horn	ū-dʒī	ī-dʒī	head	kī-ʃī	ɛ-ʃī
spear	ū-tīp	ī-tīp	egg	kī-jī	ɛ-jī
tail	ū-līj	ī-līj	breast	kī-mjōj	ɛ-mjōj
stream	ù-vīm	ì-vīm	claw	kí-nú	ɛ-nú
firewood	ū-kū	ī-kū	tortoise	kī-kwīn	ɛ-kwīn
root/vein	ū-kjīp	ī-kjīp	egusi	kī-dīj	ɛ-dīj
	ɔ-	V _{front} -	plantain	kē-zōj	ɛ-zōj
throat	ɔ-vāj	ɛ-vāj	palm nut	ké-tóχ	ɛ-tóχ
path	ɔ-vī	ī-vī	foot...	kε-tpjōj	ɛ-tpjōj
house	ɔ-fū	ɛ-fū		ku-	V _{front} -
fire	ɔ-lē	ɛ-lē	hand	kū-bū	ɛ-bū
rope	ɔ-lāχ	ɛ-lāχ	foot	kū-tpī	ī-tpī
palm	ɔ-uāχ	ɛ-uāχ	song	kū-wūj	ɛ-wūj
juju	ɔ-kēm	ɛ-kēm		kV-	a-
cassava	ɔ-logwə	ɛ-legwə	tooth	kē-dīj	ā-dīj
moon	ɔ-dbī	ɛ-dbī	tongue	kē-mī	ā-mī
sun	ɔ-lū	ɛ-lū	nose	kē-fāwā	ā-fāwā
	ɔ-	bV-	buttock	kē-tā	ā-tā
friend	ɔ-záj	bá-záj	belly	ké-lúj	á-lúj
dog	ɔ-gbōχ	bà-gbōχ	bone	kē-kōp	ā-kōp
tree	ɔ-ʃī	bā-ʃī	bark	kē-kōχ	ā-kōχ
god	ɔ-kpēm	bā-kpēm	leaf	kē-ŋgbà	ā-ŋgbà
elephant	ɔ-ndàχ	bà-ndàχ	grass	kē-tōm	ā-tōm
fowl	ɔ-kpúj	bá-kpúj	ear	kō-tūj	ā-tūj
money	ɔ-kē	bā-kē	skin	kō-kpā	ā-kpā
woman	ɔ-kwō	bō-kwō	wing	kō-vār	ā-vār
	u-	bV-	soup	kò-kà	à-kà
child	ū-gbūj	bō-gbūj	country bowl	kó-wóχ	á-wóχ
cow	ù-wùj	bò-wùj	feather	ká-túj	á-túj
goat	ù-mū	bò-mū		bV-	V _{front} -
bird	ù-jùj	bò-jùj	animal	bī-dʒī	ī-dʒī
knife	ù-kōp	bò-kōp	fish	bē-ʃēmō	ɛ-ʃēmō
chimpanzee	ù-wòχ	bò-wòχ		bi-	bu-
	ɛ-	bV-	snake	bī-gjū	bū-gjū
husband	ɛ-jvī	bō-jvī	cocoyam	bí-kjéj	bū-kjéj
	ka-	kō-	thing	kī-jīm	bū-jīm
cutlass	ká-tāχ	ká-tāχ	iron	bē-nāj	bō-nāj
cap	kā-káj	kō-káj			

6 Proforms

Proforms corresponding to subjects, objects, and possessors were elicited. It is not known whether these labels will turn out to be correct once more is known about the language; they are chosen on the basis of English translation equivalents.

	Subject	Possessor	Object
1sg	mb-	āmbè	mbè
1pl	đī	ɛđī	đī
2sg	mō	ōndū	mō
2pl	jī		jī
3sg	mi	īndjī	mī
3pl	wù	ēvā	wà

Table 11: Proforms

As will be noted in the following section, the first person singular subject cannot be said to have an associated vowel, as its vowel has the same quality of the prefix vowel of the associated verb.

7 Verbs

Interestingly, verbs in Baazəm show a kind of prefix-stem structure. The prefix is a vowel (**i**, **u**, **ə** or **a**). In imperatives, the prefix is omitted, and in clauses with a first person pronominal subject, the prefix coalesces with the first person subject pronoun. With other subject pronouns, the coalescence seems to be optional. When the subject is a lexical NP, or a proform other than 1sg, the full prefix+stem form is observed.

- (4) a. ɪgbā ɪ-mbī
drink I/XII-honey
“Drink honey [beer]!”
- b. ū-ɪgī wú à-ɪgba ɪ-mbī
III.sg-person DEM.SG PR-drink I/XII-honey
“This man drinks honey [beer]”
- (5) a. mbù-tsū ē-tsàŋ
1sg.PR-spit saliva
“I have spit.”
- b. ū-ɪgī wú ū-tsū ē-tsàŋ
III.sg-person DEM.SG PR-spit saliva
“This man has spit.”
- (6) a. tūŋ ū-lāχ
pull II.sg-rope
“Pull the rope!”
- b. mbà-tūŋ ū-lāχ
1SG.PR-pull II.sg-rope
“I have pulled the rope.”

- (7) a. gbōm mbè
push 1SG.OBJ
“Push me!”
- b. ū-ŋgī wú à-gbōm mbè¹
III.sg-person DEM.SG PR-push 1SG.OBJ
“The man has pushed me.”
- a. mō a-ləv ìŋgì
2sg.sbj fear who
“Whom do you fear?”
- b. mā-kù jí ì
2sg.PR-fall PRF Q.POLAR
“Have you just fallen?”

i-tsōm	‘hurt’	u-gjòχ	‘count’	a-lōp	‘fear’
a-dū	‘say’	a-tū	‘sing’	a-tūŋ	‘pull’
a-gbōm	‘push’	a-mbù	‘swell’	u-vōχ	‘blow’
u-tsū	‘spit’	a-mā	‘suck’	a-kpà	‘vomit’
a-ŋgbā	‘drink’	a-nđī	‘eat’	ə-vāp	‘roast’
i-tōm	‘send’	a-kù	‘fall’	u-gū	‘pass the night’
a-nāŋ	‘pass the day’	i-jì	‘go’	u-wən	‘fly’
u-kwí	‘run’	a-ʈā	‘leave’	i-vī	‘pour’
i-ndzə	‘bite’	u-gōχō	‘hear’	u-tóχò	‘show’
u-mūŋ	‘wash’	i-dzāχ	‘split’	a-ndā	‘give’
i-đì	‘steal’	u-mbù	‘squeeze’	i-gjīp	‘work’
i-nđì	‘bury’	u-tsóχà	‘burn’	a-kōm	‘urinate’
a-tā	‘tell story’	a-gba	‘excrete’	i-tpī	‘tie’
i-nbì	‘hit’	u-ŋgjù	‘kick’	u-kjū	‘die’

Table 12: Some verbs

8 Basic clause structure

The basic word order in simple declarative clauses is SV in intransitive clauses and SVO in transitive clauses.

- (8) ū-gbūŋ à-lōp
III.sg-child PR-fear
“The child is afraid.”
- (9) ū-ŋgī wú ū-mbù ī-mbī
III.sg-person DEM.SG PR-squeeze I/XII-honey
“The man has squeezed honey.”

One sentence suggests that focus-induced changes in constituent order might be expected:

- (10) ɔ-kā wú mō ì-dʒì kà
IV.sg-money DEM.SG 2SG PR-steal where
“[from] Where did you steal this money?”

Some verbs require or allow “dummy” objects representing an instrument or theme associated with the event they denote.

- (11) a. ū-ŋgī ú ì-ndzəm mbè (kē-dīj)
III.sg-person DEM.SG PR-bite 1SG.OBJ (IX.sg-tooth)
“This man bit me.”
- b. ū-ŋgī ú ì-nbì ù-wùŋ kū-bū
III.sg-person DEM.SG PR-hit COW VIII.sg-hand
“This man hit a cow.”
- c. ū-lū ú ū-ŋgjù mbèkū-tpī
I.sg-man DEM.SG kick 1SG.OBJ VIII.sg-foot
“This man kicked me.”
- d. mbā-gba á-mūŋ
1SG.PR-excrete excrement
“I have excreted.”
- e. ū-ŋgī ú ù-tsū ḥtsàŋ
III.sg-person DEM.SG PR-spit saliva
“This man has spit.”

9 Questions

I elicited sentences corresponding to polar questions, emphatic polar questions, and content questions.

Polar questions are formed with a low sentence-final boundary tone and a lengthening of the final vowel or nasal consonant of the sentence. If the sentence ends in a consonant, a vowel is added:

- (12) a. mū-gū ðí ì
2sg.PR-stay.night PRF Q.POLAR
“Have you slept?” (customary greeting in morning)
- b. mā-kù ù
2sg.PR-fall Q.POLAR
“Did you fall?”
- c. kū-bū ï-tsīm mō ï-tsīm ì
VIII.sg-hand PR-hurt 2SG.OBJ PR-hurt Q.POLAR
“Does your hand hurt??”
- d. mā-lōv ò
2sg.PR-fear Q.POLAR
“Are you afraid?”

Emphatic polar questions are formed by repeating the main verb the end of the sentence. In some cases, the repeated verb bears a different prefix from the main verb. This possibly suggests that the repeated verb is or was a nominalized form.

- (13) a. ké-lúŋ jí-tsím mō jí-tsím mì
IX.sg-belly PR.-hurt 2sg.OBJ PR.-hurt Q.POLAR
“Does your belly hurt??”
- b. mō á-kù é-kù ù
2SG PR-fall PR-fall Q.POLAR
“Did you fall??”
- c. à-náŋ ámí ù-kjū kí-kjū ù
PR-be 3sg PR-die PR-die Q.POLAR
“Is it him who fell??”

Question words appearing in content questions are shown in table 13. Content questions where the questioned element functions as a subject were not elicited. In content questions where the questioned element functions as an object, the question word is in situ.

- (14) mō vēp èjà
2sg fear what
“What are you afraid of?”

íŋgì	‘who?’
èjà	‘what?’
kà	‘where?’

Table 13: Interrogative words

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