

Romèpkò

tubendo

October 25, 2020



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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

This document is a grammar of Romèpkò [rõ].mɛ:pʌ.ko\], constructed for Speedlang Challenge 7. Below I will discuss the requirements for the challenge, and how my conlang satisfies them. There were the following phonological requirements:

- A pitch accent-type tonal system.
- A vowel system with some feature other than frontness, height, or roundedness that is not orthogonal to those other features.

Romèpkò has a pitch accent (Section 2.2), with a two tone accent, contrasting rising and falling tones on the stressed syllable, and it also has oral and nasal vowels contrasting (Section 2.1), with degrees of height neutralisation for front and back vowels, and low and low-mid nasal vowels collapsing to a single phoneme, thus, making a non-orthogonal constrative feature.

There were also some grammatical requirements:

- Differential object marking.
- At least two types of converb.
- Commonly used ablaut/apophony.

The language is ergative/absolutive in alignment, however, it has traces of a split-ergative system, as inanimate patients take a preposition that distinguishes them from animate patients (Section 4.3). The language also

utilises four converbs, marking events before, after, while and as the goal of the main verb, to construct dependent adverbial clauses (Section 7.8). The use of apophony (both vowel and consonant alternations) to mark plurality in nouns (Section 4.2) and tense in verbs (Section 5.2) is non-productive, but pervasive throughout the language.

There was also a diachronics DLC, which I have completed, alongside the other requirements:

- Influx of nativised loan words.
- Grammaticalisation process akin to Jespersen’s cycle.
- Documentation on the history of the language.

Appendix B discusses loanwords from another language into Romèpkò, and how they have been nativised, and how these contrast with non-loaned words. Throughout the grammar, specific grammatical differences between earlier and later coinages in terms of marking is discussed, but for specific examples, see Sections 4.2, 5.1 and 5.2. Romèpkò underwent a large amount of shifts, where the original case system was eliminated outside of pronouns (Section 4.1) and superceded by an equivalent prepositional system (Section 4.3). The same can be said about voice and modality marking, and to a lesser degree tense (Section 5.2) and plurality (Section 4.2), which have retained some of the older forms, but have multiple markers dependent on the age and prevalence of the word, and in the case of plurality, the new marker has become mandatory (Section 4.2). There is also an actual case of Jespersen’s cycle occurring, where negative markers have been replaced not once, but twice (Section 3.1). See Chapter 3 for a discussion of diachronic change in the language, both in terms of grammatical changes (Section 3.1) and sound changes (Section 3.2).

Finally, there were some tasks assigned:

- Document and showcase your language.
- Translate and gloss five example sentences.
- Include an explanation of your conlang’s number system and how counting and enumerating work in your conlang.

I chose from Zephyrus’ syntax test sentences, and translated them into Romèpkò (Appendix A), and explained the number system (Section 7.3).

## Chapter 2

# Phonology

### 2.1 Phonemic Inventory

The consonant inventory is as follows, with a complete series of stops/affricates and fricatives for each place of articulation. Obvious spots where there are missing consonants are the velar nasal, which is lacking.

	Labial	Coronal	Palatal	Dorsal
Nasal	m n	n ɲ	ɲ ñ	
Stop	p ɸ	t t		k k
Affricate		ts z	tʃ c	
Fricative	ɸ f	s s	ʃ x	x h
Trill		r r		
Approximant	w w	l l	j y	

The vowel inventory contains only monophthongs, and has a contrast between oral and nasal vowels. Any vowel preceding a nasal is nasalised, and nasal vowels also exist independently of nasal consonants. There is a clear reduction in the number of vowels when nasalised, with high and high-mid vowels merging as high-mid nasal vowels, and all mid-low and low vowels merging as a central low nasal vowel.

Note for purposes of these changes, **ɸ** is treated as a low-mid vowel, despite its production being clearly high-mid, and **u** is treated as a back vowel rather than a front vowel. These oddities are due to a chain shift that pulled the back vowels up and to the front in the case of /y/, originally /u/, which is respected in the orthography, which marks the vowels as they were before this shift. It should be noted that when nasal-initial

morphemes combine with vowel final morphemes, vowels are nasalised. Orthographically, nasal vowels, when not preceded by a nasal consonant, where they simply appear as the same as their orthogonic vowels (**en** > **e**, **an** > **a**, **on** > **o**), have the appearance **Vn**, and throughout this grammar, I describe morphemes that are nasal vowel final as ending with **-n**, but this should not be taken to mean they end with /n/.

	Oral Vowels			Nasal Vowels		
	Front	Central	Back	Front	Central	Back
High	i i y u		u o			
Mid	e e		o ɔ	ẽ en		õ on
Open	ε ɛ	a a			ẽ an	

## 2.2 Pitch Accent & Stress

Romèpkọ has a pitch accent, which coincides with stress, which is always initial on stems, though it is not word-initial always due to affixation. There are two contrasting two tones, the falling and rising tone. The rising tone is perceived the base tone, and all borrowings will take the rising tone unless they predated tonogenesis. The pitch accent is defined by where the high tone on the word falls, which for falling tones, is on the tonic syllable, and for rising tones, is on the post-tonic syllable. Thus, falling tones are just that, falling on the tonic syllable, while rising tones are opposite, rising on the tonic syllable. These rises and falls in tone are limited to words, and prefixes can partake in these changes in pitch, where, for example, a falling tone stem will have the a preceding, prefixed syllable rising in tone to meet the falling tone of the tonic syllable.

These two tones originated from a contrast that appeared when aspirated sounds caused the pitch of a stressed syllable to substantially drop, but as aspiration was lost as a contrastive feature, tone became phonemic. Due to their diachronic history, some initial phonemes will always coincide with falling tonesyllables, being /ɸ/ and /x/, coinciding with historic aspirated stops that were fricated in medial positions. Note that these two features of tone and frication will only coincide in words with prefixes, as stress and tone occur on the initial syllable of a stem.

Orthographically, the falling tone is marked on the stressed syllable with an acute accent over the vowel, like **á**, while the rising tone is only



marked with a grave accent, like à, when the stressed syllable is not initial.

## 2.3 Phonotactics

The syllable structure of Romèpkò is rather simple, following the basic structure of  $(C^1)(j)V(C^2)(C^3)$ , where  $C^1$  is any consonant barring /j/,  $V$  is any vowel,  $C^2$  is one of /r l/, and  $C^3$  is any obstruent. Note there are some exclusionary rules with what /j/ can cluster with. It can cluster with labials and velars, but cannot occur after alveolar, post-alveolar and palatal consonants.

## 2.4 Allophony

- Obstruents are voiced intervocalically.
- Front high vowels /i y/ are centralised to /i u/ if followed by velar consonants, including /w/.
- Stressed vowels are longer than unstressed vowels.
- Pitch variations can spread to unstressed syllables outside of the phonological word they occur in, where a falling tone syllable preceded by an unstressed syllable, that syllable can appear as rising in pitch. The opposite is true of rising tone syllables, where if they occur finally, a following unstressed syllable can appear as falling in pitch.

## 2.5 Internal Variation

Depending on speech conservatism, progressivism, and dialect, the phonology of Romèpkò varies. Note that the examples shown in this documentation detail the standard, or moderately conservative form of the language, which does not undergo any of the sound changes detailed below.

### Features in dialects

- Some dialects do not undergo the vowel shift that standard Romèpkò has, and thus, the graphemes <o u> represent /ɔ o u/ instead.

- Some dialects retain a contrast between high and high-mid nasal vowels, thus, their nasal vowel inventories are / $\bar{e}$   $\bar{e}$   $\bar{o}$   $\bar{i}$   $\bar{u}$ / instead. Other dialects, always those that retain the high nasal vowels, only collapse nasalised /a/ & /ɔ-o/ and thus, / $\bar{e}$ / is retained as a phoneme.
- Some dialects have their intervocalic clusters reduced, tending toward more sonorous sounds, and this phonemicises voiced obstruents, if intervocalic voicing exists. It is rarer for [fricative] + [consonants] to be reduced than other obstruents.
- Some dialects show a retention of labiovelar stops, though this is very rare. In these dialects, labiovelars still merge with plain velars before /i/ and sometimes /e/.
- Some dialects show an alternate collapsing of the traditional long vowel system, where there is no contrast between / $\epsilon$ / & /e/, and /ɔ-o/ & /o-u/. These dialects also do not raise the etymological long /a:/ to /ɔ/. In these dialects, only / $\bar{a}$ / becomes / $\bar{e}$ /, while what would have been / $\epsilon$ / & /ɔ-o/ become / $\bar{e}$ / & / $\bar{o}$ / instead of merging with / $\bar{e}$ /.
- Some dialects drop coda stops, though a glottal stop is retained in its place, and these lost stops influence the pitch accent if the dropping occurs on the tonic syllable. Syllables where the drop occurs if falling become a new third tone, dipping, where the pitch drops momentarily on the tonic syllable to rise on the post-tonic syllable.
- Some dialects feature a phonemic distinction between /i/ & /i/ and /y/ & /ʌ/, coinciding with the dropping of coda stops.
- Some dialects aspirate stops initially, and some soften intervocalic stops into fricatives. These features are not mutually exclusive, and tend to occur together.
- Some dialects have /r/ realised as /ɹ/, which causes assimilation with alveolar consonants /n t ts s l/, making them retroflex /ŋ ʈ tʂ ʃ ʌ/, which is assumed to be an influence from Nāḍar (see Appendix B for more).
- A few dialects retain the earlier coda nasals /n/ and /m/, though it is more common for dialects to retain them medially, where they form homorganic clusters with adjacent consonants.

### Features in progressive speech

- /y/ & /i/ can merge, though their pre-velar allophones [i] & [ɨ] do not merge, with /u/ merging with [ɨ] as a new phoneme /ɯ/. This feature is rare, but growing in commonality. Note that just like with the original pre-velar context, /ɯ/ is backed to [u].
- Intervocalic clusters are reduced, tending toward more sonorous sounds, and this phonemicises voiced obstruents. It is rarer for [fricative] + [consonant] to be reduced than other obstruents.
- Allophonic lengthening is restricted to stressed open syllables.
- Unstressed vowel reduction, where /e ε o/ merge as /ə/ in unstressed syllables. This also causes a syllabification of /r/ & /l/ when preceded by /ə/. With this feature, final /ə/ is dropped unless an illegal cluster is formed.
- Mutually exclusive with cluster reduction is cluster assimilation, where consonants of the same manner of articulation will assimilate it terms of place leftward.
- Stops can be aspirated in initial position, a feature adopted from neighbouring dialects.
- Softening of intervocalic voiced stops to fricatives is common.
- /ɛ/ merging with /e/ as /ɛ/ occurs in some progressive speech, though only in unstressed syllables. Note that this sound change is superceded by the above mid vowel to schwa merger.



## Chapter 3

# Historical Changes

### 3.1 Grammatical History

#### Ancestral Morphology

The ancestral language had a completely agglutinative head-final nominal morphology, with cases and number marked on the head, lacking agreement for its dependents. The case system was eroded by sound changes and later lost, with only pronouns retaining any kind of case marking/agreement, and even then, the pronouns can be marked as either absolutive, ergative or oblique. In the modern language, prepositions, like verbs, agree with the person of their absolutive argument. Possessive pronouns still agree with a degree of suffixaufnahme, but only for these three cases.

	Singular	Plural
Absolutive	-∅	-i
Ergative	-da	-i-da
Dative	-ɲa	-i-ɲa
Genitive	-ŋu	-i-ŋu
Instrumental	-bi	-i-bi
Allative	-ku	-i-ku
Ablative	-ga	-i-ga
Essive	-t <sup>h</sup> a	-i-t <sup>h</sup> a
Incessive	-si	-i-si

The verbal morphology, like the nominal morphology, is head-final, and has valency, mood and tense marked onto the stem, in that

order. The causative/antipassive and applicative voices are marked by reduced affixes that depend on whether the stem is vowel or consonant final. Mood is marked by an affix, deriving from auxiliary verbs that were merged with the verb, and the past tense marker has a similar origin.

		Non-past	Past
Active	Indicative	-∅	-ŋa
	Negative	-bu	-bu-ŋa
	Hortative	-mu	-mu-ŋa
	Prohibitive	-p <sup>h</sup> aj	-p <sup>h</sup> aj-ŋa
	Hypothetical	-sajt <sup>h</sup>	-sajt <sup>h</sup> -ŋa
Antipassive	Indicative	-l(i)	-l(i)-ŋa
	Negative	-l(i)-bu	-l(i)-bu-ŋa
	Hortative	-l(i)-mu	-l(i)-mu-ŋa
	Prohibitive	-l(i)-p <sup>h</sup> aj	-l(i)-p <sup>h</sup> aj-ŋa
	Hypothetical	-l(i)-sajt <sup>h</sup>	-l(i)-sajt <sup>h</sup> -ŋa
Applicative	Indicative	-g <sup>w</sup> (a)	-g <sup>w</sup> (a)-ŋa
	Negative	-g <sup>w</sup> (a)-bu	-g <sup>w</sup> (a)-bu-ŋa
	Hortative	-g <sup>w</sup> (a)-mu	-g <sup>w</sup> (a)-mu-ŋa
	Prohibitive	-g <sup>w</sup> (a)-p <sup>h</sup> aj	-g <sup>w</sup> (a)-p <sup>h</sup> aj-ŋa
	Hypothetical	-g <sup>w</sup> (a)-sajt <sup>h</sup>	-g <sup>w</sup> (a)-sajt <sup>h</sup> -ŋa

Generally, the syntax follows a head-final pattern, with the core arguments appearing in the order Oblique/Lative > Ergative > Dative > Absolutive, with the verb appearing finally, followed by any auxiliaries.

### Grammatical Changes

*Note that the numbers given in brackets indicate at which sound change these grammatical changes occurred.*

- (<17) The allative case is extended to be a complementiser for non-finite verbs, later comes to mark infinitives on verbs.
- (<17) The word order shifts first to AVE, and the syntax generally becomes head-initial.
- (<17) Suffixaufnahme is superseded by a periphrastic genitive formed by the preposition ha: (mod. ɛ-) ‘from’.

- (17) Auxiliary verbs begin to merge into the verbal stem, forming new aspects and verbal moods. These verbs are unstressed, and are prefixed onto the stem.
- (17) The genitive preposition *he* becomes a prefix *ha:-* (mod. *ɛ-*).
- (17) A suppletive plural is formed via prefixing *as-* ‘all’, leaving the original plural to only remain in pronouns, and some irregular, highly common nouns such as *wa/wɛ* ‘man’ and *pɛt/pɛs* ‘meat’
- (25) A new negative auxiliary, *teh* (mod. *te*) ‘abandon, leave’ supercedes the conjugated negative, though negative forms remain in the copula. This affix becomes conjugated to the verb like other modal affixes.
- (25) Imperative constructions made periphrastically with imperative marked copula.
- (29) Intensifier object *womɣ* (mod. *wan*) ‘nothing’ added to negative forms of intransitive verbs, later extended to transitive verbs.
- (35) Definite article is grammaticalised from preposed demonstrative *ru:* (mod. *ru*) ‘that’, and becomes affixed to the head of the noun phrase, which is always the noun.
- (35) Prepositions (from semantically bleached verbs) supersede the old case system, which remains in a reduced form only in the pronoun system.
- (35) The absolutive patient/theme is marked with a preposition if it is animate, arguably the beginnings of a split-ergative alignment.
- (39) Original negative prefix becomes optional, with the negative intensifier becoming mandatory, and considered part of the verb phrase.
- (39) Due to reduction, the weak plural is mostly lost with indefinite nouns, and thus, is superceded by a new periphrastic

plural using the word *me* (mod. *mɛ*) ‘some’ before the noun. It later becomes mandatory to have any plural marking as well as this marker. Another periphrastic construction *pák hé mɛ X* ‘group of X’ is used to form collectives, becoming *pák emɛ X* in the modern language, which makes plurals that are grammatically singular.

- (39-45) The word order shifts to VAE, and the language becomes solely head-initial.
- (45) Absolutive person becomes marked on the VP via post-clitic pronouns, as well as prepositions taking personal marking.
- (>45) Negative prefix is lost entirely, except for in fossilised constructions.

## 3.2 Phonological History

### Ancestral Phonology

	Labial	Coronal	Palatal	Velar	Labiovelar
Nasal	m	n	ɲ	ŋ	ŋ <sup>w</sup>
Aspirated stop	p <sup>h</sup>	t <sup>h</sup>	c <sup>h</sup>	k <sup>h</sup>	k <sup>wh</sup>
Tenuis stop	p	t	c	k	k <sup>w</sup>
Voiced stop	b	d	ɟ	g	g <sup>w</sup>
Voiceless fricative		s			
Voiced fricative		z			
Approximant		l	j		w
	Front	Central	Back		
High	i i:		u u:		
Open		a a:			

Phonotactically, the language follows the structure of  $(C^1)(j)V(C^2)(C^3)$ .  $C^1$  can be any consonant but /j/,  $C^2$  can be any continuant (glide, fricative or nasal), while  $C^3$  can only be a stop. All nasal/obstruent clusters are homorganic when in the same syllable, thus hypothetical words like \*kanp or \*suɲ<sup>h</sup> are not permitted.

1. Stress falls on the penultimate syllable.



## 2. Vowel harmony based on the height of the stressed vowel.

$$\begin{array}{l}
 a(:) \rightarrow i(:) / \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \left[ \begin{array}{l} + \text{vowel} \\ + \text{stress} \\ + \text{high} \end{array} \right] \dots \_ \\ \dots \left[ \begin{array}{l} + \text{vowel} \\ + \text{stress} \\ + \text{high} \end{array} \right] \end{array} \right. \\
 i(:) \rightarrow e(:) / \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \left[ \begin{array}{l} + \text{vowel} \\ + \text{stress} \\ + \text{low} \end{array} \right] \dots \_ \\ \dots \left[ \begin{array}{l} + \text{vowel} \\ + \text{stress} \\ + \text{low} \end{array} \right] \end{array} \right. \\
 u(:) \rightarrow o(:) / \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \left[ \begin{array}{l} + \text{vowel} \\ + \text{stress} \\ + \text{low} \end{array} \right] \dots \_ \\ \dots \left[ \begin{array}{l} + \text{vowel} \\ + \text{stress} \\ + \text{low} \end{array} \right] \end{array} \right.
 \end{array}$$

## 3. Palatal and labiovelar nasals merge with coronal and labial nasals respectively. The velar nasal is lost in all positions.

$$\eta^w \rightarrow m$$

$$ɲ \rightarrow n$$

$$\eta \rightarrow \emptyset$$

## 4. Vowels in hiatus merge.

$$\left[ \begin{array}{l} + \text{vowel} \\ - \text{long} \end{array} \right]_2 \rightarrow \left[ \begin{array}{l} + \text{vowel} \\ + \text{long} \end{array} \right]$$

$$ae \ ao \ ea \ oa \ ui \ u\ddot{i} \ i\ddot{u} \ i\ddot{i} \ i\ddot{i} \ i\ddot{u} \rightarrow a: \ a: \ e: \ o: \ u: \ u: \ i: \ i: \ i: \ i:$$

## 5. Stressed open syllables are lengthened.

$$\left[ \begin{array}{l} + \text{vowel} \\ + \text{stress} \\ - \text{long} \end{array} \right] \rightarrow \left[ \begin{array}{l} + \text{vowel} \\ + \text{stress} \\ + \text{long} \end{array} \right] / \left[ \begin{array}{l} - \text{coda} \end{array} \right]$$

## 6. Voiced stops are softened to fricatives.

$$b \ d \ ɟ \ g \ g^w \rightarrow \beta \ \delta \ ɟ \ ɣ \ ɣ^w$$

## 7. Non-sibilant fricatives are either glottalised or merge with approximants.

$\beta \delta j y \gamma^w \rightarrow w h j h w$

8. If glides are not adjacent to a vowel, they are vocalised.

$j w \rightarrow i u / [ -\text{vowel} ]_ - [ -\text{vowel} ]$

9. Vowel harmony is no longer productive.

10. Vowels are reduced in unstressed syllables, with non-high vowels reduced to /ə/.

$\begin{bmatrix} +\text{vowel} \\ -\text{long} \\ -\text{high} \\ -\text{stress} \end{bmatrix} \rightarrow \text{ə}$

$\begin{bmatrix} +\text{vowel} \\ -\text{long} \\ +\text{central} \\ +\text{high} \\ -\text{stress} \end{bmatrix} \rightarrow \text{ə}$

$\begin{bmatrix} +\text{vowel} \\ +\text{long} \\ -\text{stress} \end{bmatrix} \rightarrow \begin{bmatrix} +\text{vowel} \\ -\text{long} \\ -\text{stress} \end{bmatrix}$

11. High vowels drop to mid vowels if short.

$\begin{bmatrix} +\text{vowel} \\ +\text{front} \\ +\text{high} \\ -\text{long} \end{bmatrix} \rightarrow \text{e}$

$\begin{bmatrix} +\text{vowel} \\ +\text{back} \\ +\text{high} \\ -\text{long} \end{bmatrix} \rightarrow \text{o}$

12. If /h/ is final and preceded by a consonant, a schwa is inserted.

$\emptyset \rightarrow \text{ə} / [ +\text{cons} ]_ - \#$

13. Schwa/glide clusters become short monophthongs

$\text{əj əw} \rightarrow \text{e o}$

14. /z/ becomes /r/.

$z \rightarrow r$

15. Palatal stops shift to post-alveolar affricates.

$$c^h \ c \rightarrow \widehat{t}^h \widehat{t}^f$$

16. /ə/ is either lost or merges with /a/, while /i/ is dropped and

$$\text{backed. } \text{ə} \rightarrow \emptyset / \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \left[ \begin{array}{l} + \text{vowel} \\ - \end{array} \right] \_ \\ \_ \left[ \begin{array}{l} + \text{vowel} \\ \end{array} \right] \\ \left[ \begin{array}{l} + \text{vowel} \\ \end{array} \right] \left[ \begin{array}{l} + \text{cons} \\ \end{array} \right] \_ \left[ \begin{array}{l} + \text{cons} \\ \end{array} \right] \left[ \begin{array}{l} + \text{vowel} \\ \end{array} \right] \\ \# \_ \left[ \begin{array}{l} + \text{cons} \\ \end{array} \right] \left[ \begin{array}{l} + \text{vowel} \\ \end{array} \right] \\ \left[ \begin{array}{l} + \text{vowel} \\ \end{array} \right] \left[ \begin{array}{l} + \text{cons} \\ \end{array} \right] \_ \# \end{array} \right.$$

$$\text{ə i} \rightarrow \text{a } \text{ɹ}$$

17. Stress falls on the initial syllable.

18. /h/ causes tenuis stops to become aspirated.

$$\left[ \begin{array}{l} + \text{stop} \\ - \text{asp} \end{array} \right] \{h\} \rightarrow \left[ \begin{array}{l} + \text{stop} \\ + \text{asp} \end{array} \right]$$

$$\{h\} \left[ \begin{array}{l} + \text{stop} \\ - \text{asp} \end{array} \right] \rightarrow \left[ \begin{array}{l} + \text{stop} \\ + \text{asp} \end{array} \right]$$

19. Syllables with more than two syllables (long with coda) lose length if unstressed.

$$\left[ \begin{array}{l} + \text{vowel} \\ - \text{stress} \\ + \text{long} \end{array} \right] \rightarrow \left[ \begin{array}{l} + \text{vowel} \\ - \text{stress} \\ + \text{short} \end{array} \right] / \_ \left[ \begin{array}{l} + \text{cons} \\ + \text{coda} \end{array} \right]$$

20. Vowels are lengthened by preceding glides merging with them.

$$\left[ \begin{array}{l} + \text{vowel} \\ - \text{long} \end{array} \right] \{j, w\} \rightarrow \left[ \begin{array}{l} + \text{vowel} \\ + \text{long} \end{array} \right] / \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \_ \left[ \begin{array}{l} + \text{cons} \\ \end{array} \right] \\ \_ \# \end{array} \right.$$

21. /a(:)/ is raised to and merges with /ɹ(:)/ if followed by a nasal.

$$a(:) \rightarrow \text{ɹ}(:) / \_ \left[ \begin{array}{l} + \text{consonant} \\ + \text{nasal} \end{array} \right]$$

22. /a:/ is fronted to /ɛ:/.

$$a: \rightarrow \text{ɛ:}$$

23. Velars are fronted before /i/, and velar-/j/ clusters become palatal stops.

$$k^h k \rightarrow c^h c / \_ \left[ \begin{array}{l} + \text{vowel} \\ + \text{high} \\ + \text{front} \end{array} \right]$$

$$k^h j k j \rightarrow c^h c$$

24. Post-alveolar affricates become alveolar.

$$\widehat{t}^h \widehat{t} \rightarrow \widehat{ts}^h \widehat{ts}$$

25. /s/ is debuccalised to /h/ in final position.  $s \rightarrow h / \left[ + \text{vowel} \right] \_ \#$

26. Stops assimilate in aspiration leftward, and /s/ and /h/ deaspirate and aspirate respectively.

$$\left[ \begin{array}{l} + \text{stop} \\ + \text{asp} \end{array} \right] \rightarrow \left[ \begin{array}{l} + \text{stop} \\ - \text{asp} \end{array} \right] / \left[ \begin{array}{l} + \text{obs} \\ - \text{asp} \end{array} \right] \_$$

$$\left[ \begin{array}{l} + \text{stop} \\ - \text{asp} \end{array} \right] \rightarrow \left[ \begin{array}{l} + \text{stop} \\ + \text{asp} \end{array} \right] / \left[ \begin{array}{l} + \text{obs} \\ + \text{asp} \end{array} \right] \_$$

27. Aspiration causes a tonal contrast, where unaspirated stops cause preceding stressed vowels to be high tone, while otherwise stressed vowels are low tone.

$$\left[ \begin{array}{l} + \text{vowel} \\ + \text{stress} \\ - \text{tone} \end{array} \right] \rightarrow \left[ \begin{array}{l} + \text{vowel} \\ + \text{stress} \\ + \text{high tone} \end{array} \right] / \left[ + \text{asp} \right] \_$$

$$\left[ \begin{array}{l} + \text{vowel} \\ + \text{stress} \\ - \text{tone} \end{array} \right] \rightarrow \left[ \begin{array}{l} + \text{vowel} \\ + \text{stress} \\ + \text{low tone} \end{array} \right] / \left[ - \text{asp} \right] \_$$

28. Aspirated stops/affricates become fricatives intervocalically.

$$\left[ \begin{array}{l} + \text{stop} \\ + \text{asp} \end{array} \right] \rightarrow \left[ + \text{fric} \right] / \left[ + \text{vowel} \right] \_ \left[ + \text{vowel} \right]$$

29. Dental and alveolar fricatives merge.

$$\theta \rightarrow s$$

30. Labiovelar obstruents and labial obstruents harmonise leftward, and thus become mutually exclusive in words.

$$k^{wh} k^w x^w \rightarrow p^h p \phi / \_ \dots \left[ \begin{array}{l} + \text{stop} \\ + \text{bilabial} \end{array} \right]$$

$$p^h p \phi \rightarrow k^{wh} k^w x^w / \_ \dots \left[ \begin{array}{l} + \text{stop} \\ + \text{velar} \\ + \text{round} \end{array} \right]$$

31. Aspirated and unaspirated stops merge and are both produced tenuis.

$$\begin{bmatrix} + \text{stop} \\ + \text{asp} \end{bmatrix} \rightarrow \begin{bmatrix} + \text{stop} \\ - \text{asp} \end{bmatrix} / \begin{bmatrix} - \text{stress} \end{bmatrix}$$

32. /r/ assimilates to adjacent /l/.

$$r \rightarrow l / \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \bar{1} \\ 1\_ \end{array} \right.$$

33. Before /i/ and /j/ labiovelar stops delabialise to plain velars.

$$k^w \ x^w \rightarrow k \ x / \_ \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \begin{bmatrix} + \text{vowel} \\ + \text{high} \\ + \text{front} \end{bmatrix} \\ -j \end{array} \right.$$

34. Alveolar consonants are palatalised by merging with a preceding /j/.

$$nj \ tsj \ tj \ sj \ lj \rightarrow n \ \bar{tj} \ \bar{tj} \ \bar{s} \ \bar{l}$$

35. Vowels are dropped medially where they would only create two-consonant clusters, finally where they would create permissible clusters, and initially where they would make clusters of either fricatives-stops or obstruents-sonorants.

$$\begin{bmatrix} + \text{vowel} \\ - \text{stress} \\ - \text{short} \end{bmatrix} \rightarrow \emptyset / \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \begin{bmatrix} + \text{vowel} \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} + \text{cons} \end{bmatrix} \_ \begin{bmatrix} + \text{cons} \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} + \text{vowel} \end{bmatrix} \\ \# \_ \begin{bmatrix} + \text{fric} \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} + \text{stop} \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} + \text{vowel} \end{bmatrix} \\ \# \_ \begin{bmatrix} + \text{obs} \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} + \text{son} \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} + \text{vowel} \end{bmatrix} \\ \# \_ \begin{bmatrix} + \text{cons} \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} + \text{vowel} \end{bmatrix} \\ \begin{bmatrix} + \text{vowel} \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} + \text{cont} \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} + \text{obs} \end{bmatrix} \_ \# \\ \begin{bmatrix} + \text{vowel} \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} + \text{cons} \end{bmatrix} \_ \# \end{array} \right.$$

36. Glides are dropped and compensatorily before vowels when in the coda.

$$\begin{bmatrix} + \text{vowel} \\ - \text{long} \end{bmatrix} \{j, w\} \rightarrow \begin{bmatrix} + \text{vowel} \\ + \text{long} \end{bmatrix} / \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \_ \begin{bmatrix} + \text{cons} \end{bmatrix} \\ \_ \# \end{array} \right. \{j, w\} \\ \rightarrow \emptyset / \begin{bmatrix} + \text{vowel} \\ + \text{long} \end{bmatrix} \_$$

37. If a consonant is surrounded by other consonants, it is dropped.

$$\begin{bmatrix} + \text{cons} \end{bmatrix} \rightarrow \emptyset / \begin{bmatrix} + \text{cons} \end{bmatrix} \_ \begin{bmatrix} + \text{cons} \end{bmatrix}$$

38. If the stressed syllable is low tone, the following syllable is made high tone, and all other syllables are low tone. If the stressed syllable is high tone, all other syllables are low tone.

$$\begin{aligned} \begin{bmatrix} + \text{vowel} \\ - \text{stress} \\ - \text{tone} \end{bmatrix} &\rightarrow \begin{bmatrix} + \text{vowel} \\ - \text{stress} \\ + \text{high tone} \end{bmatrix} / \begin{bmatrix} + \text{syllable} \\ + \text{stress} \\ + \text{low tone} \end{bmatrix} - \begin{bmatrix} + \text{vowel} \\ - \text{tone} \end{bmatrix} \\ &\rightarrow \begin{bmatrix} + \text{vowel} \\ - \text{low tone} \end{bmatrix} / \begin{bmatrix} - \text{stress} \end{bmatrix} \end{aligned}$$

39. Initial clusters are reduced so that only Cj clusters are allowed.

$$\begin{aligned} \begin{bmatrix} + \text{fricative} \\ + \text{obstruent} \end{bmatrix} &\rightarrow \emptyset / \# \begin{bmatrix} + \text{stop} \\ + \text{nasal} \end{bmatrix} \end{aligned}$$

40. /h/ followed by semivowels assimilate to fricatives of respective articulation.

$$hj \quad hw \rightarrow \zeta \quad \phi$$

41. /h/ is dropped and lengthens a preceding vowel if it is the coda.

$$\begin{bmatrix} + \text{vowel} \\ - \text{short} \end{bmatrix} \{h\} \rightarrow \begin{bmatrix} + \text{vowel} \\ + \text{long} \end{bmatrix}$$

42. /h/ is lost entirely as a phoneme.

$$h \rightarrow \emptyset$$

43. /ɰ/ merges with /j/.

$$\mathfrak{h} \rightarrow j$$

44. /ʌ(:)/ merges with /o(:)/.

$$\mathfrak{h}(:) \rightarrow o(:)$$

45. Aspiration is lost as a contrastive feature.

$$\begin{bmatrix} + \text{stop} \\ + \text{asp} \end{bmatrix} \rightarrow \begin{bmatrix} + \text{stop} \\ - \text{asp} \end{bmatrix}$$

46. Vowels are nasalised before nasals.

$$\begin{bmatrix} + \text{vowel} \\ - \text{nasal} \end{bmatrix} \rightarrow \begin{bmatrix} + \text{vowel} \\ + \text{nasal} \end{bmatrix} / - \begin{bmatrix} + \text{cons} \\ + \text{nasal} \end{bmatrix}$$

47. Nasals are dropped in coda position.

$$\begin{bmatrix} + \text{cons} \\ + \text{nasal} \end{bmatrix} \rightarrow \emptyset / \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \begin{bmatrix} + \text{vowel} \\ + \text{vowel} \end{bmatrix} - \begin{bmatrix} + \text{cons} \end{bmatrix} \\ \begin{bmatrix} + \text{vowel} \end{bmatrix} - \# \end{array} \right.$$

48. Vowel length is superseded by height/tenseness as the contrastive feature, and /a:/ is backed and raised to /ɔ/.  
 a: ε: e: o: i: u: a e o i u → ɔ ε e o i u a ε ɔ ɪ ʊ
49. High nasal vowels merge with mid-high nasal vowels, while mid-low and low nasal vowels all merge as /ẽ/.  
 ɪ̃ ĩ ʊ̃ ã → e ẽ ẽ o õ õ  
 {ã, ẽ, õ} → ẽ
50. Palatal obstruents are fronted.  
 c ç → tʃ ʃ
51. Labiovelar obstruents merge with labial obstruents.  
 k<sup>w</sup> x<sup>w</sup> → p φ
52. Back vowels move in a chain shift, where /u/ pulls the remaining back vowels up, and it is fronted to /y/. u → y  
 o → u  
 ɔ → o
53. Obstruents are voiced intervocalically.  

$$\begin{bmatrix} + \text{obs} \\ - \text{voice} \end{bmatrix} \rightarrow \begin{bmatrix} + \text{obs} \\ + \text{voice} \end{bmatrix} / \begin{bmatrix} + \text{vowel} \end{bmatrix} \_ \begin{bmatrix} + \text{vowel} \end{bmatrix}$$
54. High front vowels are backed before velars, including /w/.  

$$\begin{bmatrix} + \text{vowel} \\ + \text{front} \end{bmatrix} \rightarrow \begin{bmatrix} + \text{vowel} \\ + \text{central} \end{bmatrix} / \_ \begin{bmatrix} + \text{consonant} \\ + \text{velar} \end{bmatrix}$$
55. Stressed vowels are lengthened in all positions.  

$$\begin{bmatrix} + \text{vowel} \\ + \text{stress} \end{bmatrix} \rightarrow \begin{bmatrix} + \text{vowel} \\ + \text{stress} \\ + \text{long} \end{bmatrix}$$





## Chapter 4

# Nominal Morphology

### 4.1 Pronouns

Pronouns, unlike nouns, are marked for case synthetically. Note that when a pronoun is marked for a specific case, then that pronoun cannot take the respective preposition- the two markings are mutually exclusive. That means that the ergative, absolutive and dative marked pronouns cannot use prepositions. Inflected prepositions are constructed with the absolutive forms of the pronouns.

The genitive forms of pronouns are rather unusual, as they take suffixaufnahme marking, agreeing with number and case for the ergative and dative cases, however, if a possessive pronoun is used with a case other than the ergative/dative, it simply uses absolutive marking, but still has agreement for number with its head.

#### 1st person

	Singular	Plural
Absolutive	é	wɔl
Ergative	ésa	wɔla
Dative	ésna	wɔlna
Genitive Sg.	ís	wul
Genitive Pl.	ésu	wɔlu
Genitive Erg. Sg.	ésu	wɔlu
Genitive Erg. Pl.	ésu	wɔlu
Genitive Dat. Pl.	éson	wɔlon
Genitive Dat. Pl.	éson	wɔlon

<b>2nd person</b>		
	Singular	Plural
Absolutive	ár	ér
Ergative	ára	ári
Dative	árna	áran
Genitive Sg.	ér	ári
Genitive Pl.	áru	árie
Genitive Erg. Sg.	áru	ári
Genitive Erg. Pl.	áru	ári
Genitive Dat. Sg.	áron	áren
Genitive Dat. Pl.	áron	áren

  

<b>3rd person animate</b>		
	Singular	Plural
Absolutive	zo	o
Ergative	zoa	asa
Dative	zu	asna
Genitive Sg.	zu	es
Genitive Pl.	zue	su
Genitive Erg. Sg.	zu	su
Genitive Erg. Pl.	zoi	su
Genitive Dat. Pl.	zon	son
Genitive Dat. Pl.	zuen	son

  

<b>3rd person inanimate</b>		
	Singular	Plural
Absolutive	ké	ké
Ergative	ké	kó
Dative	kón	kón
Genitive Sg.	ké	kóo
Genitive Pl.	kóe	kóe
Genitive Erg. Sg.	kó	kó
Genitive Erg. Pl.	kó	kóu
Genitive Dat. Pl.	kón	kón
Genitive Dat. Pl.	kón	kóon

The word **ón/ánu**, meaning ‘person, human being’, functions as an indefinite pronoun, which could be translated to the English ‘one’, though etymologically, the construction is the same to the use of ‘man’ in most Germanic languages. This word is used with determin-

ers to construct personal correlatives, equivalent to words in English such as ‘who’, ‘anyone’, ‘this one’, ‘whoever’ and so on. This word functions like a pronoun, but lacks all of the case marking usually prescribed to pronouns.

There are also three locative pronouns, describing places that contrast in distance to the speaker and addressees. These are the proximal locative **éron**, referring to a location near the speaker medial locative **laron**, referring to a location near both the speaker and addressees, and distal locative **taron**, referring to a location not near the speaker or addressees, derived from early compounding of the locative suffix **-ron** with the earlier forms of the spatial deixis determiners, which is why the vowel sounds in the determiners and locative pronouns do not match up.

Note that a feature of progressive speech is that instead of using independent possessive pronouns that agree with their possessee, the same marking that verbs and prepositions take are suffixed to the end of the noun. Importantly, unlike verbs or prepositions, 3rd person inanimate arguments are marked with the suffix **-ke**, for both singular and plural possessors.

(1) **Conservative form:**

Mɔlzo tion zu. [ˈmo:l̩.t̩su̯ ˈti:l̩.õn̩ ˈtsy̯]

mɔl-zo            tion    zu  
be.ill-3SG.ANIM partner 3SG.ANIM.GEN

‘His/her partner is ill.’

(2) **Progressive form:**

Mɔlzo tionzo. [ˈmo:l̩.t̩su̯ ˈti:l̩.õn̩.t̩su̯]

mɔl-zo            tion-zo  
be.ill-3SG.ANIM partner-3SG.ANIM

‘His/her partner is ill.’

## 4.2 Number

Nouns can inflect for plurality in a number of ways. The first and most important rule is that all plural nouns take the determiner **mɛ**

at the start of their noun phrase, with the exception being nouns that are inherently plural, such as *le* ‘eyes’ or collective nouns. This determiner is not used when another determiner that is explicitly plural is used, such as *zə*, *tet* and *su*.

After this, nouns are considered to be marked with either strong, weak or irregular plural marking. Weak marking is where only the mandatory particle is used to form a plural, and the majority of words are pluralised this way. The strong plural, however, is more complex, and causes alternations that are somewhat predictable; when a strong plural form is not predictable, it is simply called an irregular plural, though not all irregular plurals follow the same basic patterns as strong plurals.

The strong plural is formed regularly in the following ways, for nouns that lack an article only:

- Nouns that have a falling tone and start with either a stop or affricate shift their tone to rising tone.
- Nouns that have a rising tone and start with either a stop or affricate shift are invariable.
- Nouns that start with a vowel are prefixed with an initial *s-*, unless they are falling tone, in which case, they are prefixed with *as-* instead.
- Nouns that start with *y-* change the *y-* to *x-*.
- Nouns that start with *s-* are prefixed with *as-*.
- Nouns that start with a sonorant other than *y-* are invariable.

The irregular plural has a wide variability, most commonly being a variation of vowels in the singular/plural stems, and/or the insertion of a final *-u*, *-i* or *-e*, with final consonant alternations relatively common, usually where a stop will shift to its respective fricative, mutually exclusive to final vowel insertion.

When a definite strong noun is pluralised, the definite article itself varies, due a merging of the original plural prefix and the definite

article. When pluralised the definite article in this context takes a final **-s**, becoming **rus**. Exceptions exist when the stem begins with **y-**, where **y-** becomes **x-** and there is no final **-s** on the article, and when the stem begins with a vowel or **s-** when instead, the definite article becomes **ras**.

This phenomena is in the process of generalisation by analogy, where plurality is being marked on the definite article in all plural NPs via **-s**, no matter whether the noun is strong or not, and is a sign of progressive speech. Among speakers with this grammatical feature, **mę** is only mandatory for indefinite NPs, and thus **mę** is effectively an indefinite plural marker for these speakers.

(3) **Conservative form:**

Çocéq ronapu ko lę rakkqron. [tʃoʌ.tʃe:ʌ.o] rōʌ.na:ʌ.buʌ  
'ku:ʌ 'lɛ:ʌ 'ra:kʌ.koʌ.rōʌ]

ço-ce-ç ro-napu ko lę r-akkqron  
FUT-march-3PL.ANIM DEF-COW.PL ALL MED DEF-paddock

‘The cows will be driven to this paddock.’

(4) **Progressive form:**

Çocéq rusnapu ko lę rakkqron. [tʃoʌ.tʃe:ʌ.o] rysʌ.na:ʌ.buʌ  
'ku:ʌ 'lɛ:ʌ 'ra:kʌ.koʌ.rōʌ]

ço-ce-ç ru-s-napu ko lę rakkqron  
FUT-march-3PL.ANIM DEF-PL-COW.PL ALL MED DEF-paddock

‘The cows will be driven to this paddock.’

### 4.3 Cases & Prepositions

All cases except the genitive are marked with prepositions, while the genitive case is marked via a prefix, **ę-**. This contrast is important, as prepositions take personal marking, like verbs, while the genitive prefix is invariable, and prepositions are stressed, unlike the genitive prefix, which is phonologically dependent on its head. Below

are each of the prepositions with their personal conjugations; prepositions, as originating from verbs, may have originally been conjugated like other verbs, but are no longer so.

The following shows personal marking for prepositions, which originates from absolutive case pronouns:

	Singular	Plural
1st	-e	-wɔl
2nd	-ar	-er
3rd anim.	-zo	-o
3rd inan.	-∅	-∅

The absolutive case is unmarked when used intransitively, but inanimate referents in the position of patient or theme are marked with the preposition **et**, derived from a verb meaning ‘seize, catch’. The absolutive case marks the intransitive subject, transitive patient and ditransitive theme of a verb, or the promoted recipient in an applicative construction, or the promoted agent in an antipassive or causative construction.

The ergative case is marked with the preposition **e**, derived from a verb meaning ‘come from’, and is of common etymology with the original ablative case in the ancestral language. As the ergative argument is not the primary one, it cannot be moved from its case, unless a causative or antipassive construction is used, in which case it is promoted to the absolutive.

The dative case is marked with the preposition **re**, derived from a verb meaning ‘give’, and is of common etymology with the applicative prefix. The dative argument can be shifted to the absolutive case if an applicative construction is used. The dative case marks the recipient or beneficiary of an action, and does not mark allative referents (goals of a verb of a motion), which take another preposition.

The ablative case is marked with the preposition **pál**, derived from a verb meaning ‘leave, exit, come from’. The ablative case marks the lative source of an action, as well as the commander of a non-volitional action, which would be marked with the ergative case

in a causative construction.

The allative case is marked with the preposition **ko**, derived from a verb meaning ‘go, move’, and is of common etymology with the original allative case in the ancestral language, as well as the infinitive suffix. The allative case marks the goal of an action.

The essive case is marked with the preposition **tɔ**, derived from a verb meaning ‘stand, be at’. The essive case marks the location at which an action occurs as well as a demoted absolutive argument in an applicative, antipassive or causative construction.

The superlative case is marked with the preposition **sɔk**, derived from a verb meaning ‘go over, go across’. The superlative case marks the location which a verb of motion moves over or across, as well as the topic or contents of a verb of speech.

The sublative case is marked with the preposition **pát**, derived from a verb meaning ‘go under’. The sublative case marks the location which a verb of motion goes under or through, in terms of liquids or something prototypically like a tunnel, hallway, forest or other kinds of locations where motion is through the referent rather than across a referred surface.

The abessive case is marked with the preposition **wu**, derived from a verb meaning ‘lack, lose’, and is of common etymology with the polar question particle. The abessive case marks an argument that is lacked, and this lacking is in relation to the course of an action, which could be an instrument or one its participants, usually referring to the intransitive subject or transitive agent.

The instrumental case is marked with the preposition **wɔ**, derived from the conjunction ‘and’, which makes it a doublet of **wa**, **wɔ** being the stressed counterpart of this word. The instrumental case consists of tools used to complete actions, or accomplices to the action, meaning it covers a comitative meaning as well as an instrumental one.

## 4.4 Definiteness

Definiteness, as described in Section 4.2, is marked by the article **ru-** which can be called a prefix, given it is phonologically merged with the head noun. The definite article has an allomorph of **r-** when the stem starts with a vowel. The definite article is used with all definite referents, except for personal names, which are by virtue of their nature definite. Poetically, the definite article can be used with personal names, but it is not very common, and if ever used, it is usually jocular or mocking in nature, given the association of definite articles with titles, giving the person a false air of authority. The definite article is mandatory, and indefinite referents are unmarked, which forms the contrast between the two. See Section 4.2 for a discussion on how plurality effects form, and how progressive speech treats the definite article.



## Chapter 5

# Verbal Morphology

### 5.1 Stem & Affix Allomorphy

When a stem takes a prefix, it can cause allomorphy with the initial consonant as well as the tone of the stem. The following affixes cause alternations that will be described here, and should be taken to be completely regular, but only when these specific prefixes are adjacent to the stem. Note that each stem has a nasal allomorph, which is how a stem appears if it is preceded by a nasal consonant. If in the following description of prefixes, a nasal allomorph is not mentioned, it likely doesn't exist, which is the case for consonant final prefixes. All falling tone stems have initial stops or affricates shift to fricatives, except when described below. If any of the given stems here has a slash, that means that the second form is the usual alternation when the prefix is preceded by another prefix.

- Past tense (**ne-**): There are no stem allomorphs associated with this prefix.
- Future tense (**co-**): If the stem is rising tone and starts with a stop or affricate, the stem becomes falling tone, and the stop or affricate becomes a fricative. In this same context, the affix becomes **c-** if preceded by another prefix ending in an oral vowel. The prefix itself alternates to **co-** when the stem begins with a stop/affricate and is falling tone. This affix prevents an ordinary falling tone initial stop/affricate from becoming a fricative

despite appearing between vowels. There is a specific combination alternation which occurs when **cɔ-** is preceded by **pɔ-**, causing **pɔ-cɔ-** to become **pɔxo-**, or when preceded by a rising tone stop or affricate, become **pɔx-**.

- Perfective aspect (**yɛ-**): There are no stem allomorphs associated with this prefix.
- Continuous aspect (**mu-**): There are no stem allomorphs associated with this prefix.
- Habitual aspect (non-past) (**pɔ-/fɔ-**): If the stem is rising tone and starts with a stop or affricate, the stem becomes falling tone, and the stop or affricate becomes a fricative. In this same context, the affix becomes **f-** if preceded by another prefix ending in an oral vowel. This affix prevents an ordinary falling tone initial stop/affricate from becoming a fricative despite appearing between vowels. The prefix itself alternates to **po-/fo-** when the stem begins with a stop/affricate and is falling tone.
- Habitual aspect (past) (**wi-**): There are no stem allomorphs associated with this prefix.
- Conditional mood (**xak-**): There are no stem allomorphs associated with this prefix.
- Inferential mood (**kɛr-/hɛr-**): Causes a following **cɔ-** to become **yɔ-**.
- Antipassive & Causative voice (**rɛ-**): There are no stem allomorphs associated with this prefix. This prefix is always initial, and thus, is not affected by other affixes.
- Applicative voice (**wɛ-**): There are no stem allomorphs associated with this prefix. This prefix is always initial, and thus, is not affected by other affixes.

The affricate to fricative initial change is slightly irregular, as some very common verbs beginning with **c-** do not show this shift, though they do show the shift from rising to falling tone. These verbs are small enough in number to be counted out below:

- **cọ** ‘slice up, divide’  
**reọc** ‘I am dividing it.’ vs. **reọc** ‘I divide.’
- **cu** ‘be slow, be stuck’  
**cue** ‘I am stuck.’ vs. **po cúe** ‘I am slow.’
- **cén** ‘heave, carry’  
**reécéme** ‘I am carrying it.’ vs. **reọcécéme** ‘I carry things.’
- **cọ** ‘call out, shout, request demandingly’  
**cọe** ‘I am calling out.’ vs. **po cọe** ‘I call out.’
- **cól** ‘paint, cover with a material’  
**reọcól** ‘I am painting it.’ vs. **reọc** ‘I paint.’
- **cir** ‘clean, prepare’  
**reécire** ‘I am cleaning it.’ vs. **reọcécire** ‘I clean.’

## 5.2 Tense

In terms of tense inflection, depending on what class a verb belongs to, it will inflect differently for tense. The original conjugations for moods and voice were lost, and superceded by periphrastic constructions.

Strong verbs conjugate for their past tense form irregularly, involving stem alternations, which can be rather mundane, such as vowel alternations, or more irregular, such as the seeming insertion of vowels and consonants, or palatalisation. In the dictionary, each strong verbs non-past and past forms are given, and the patterns can be described as following:

- Ablaut, where the stem vowel usually has the following non-past/past pairs: **a/ę**, **ę/i** or **o/u**.
- There is secondary ablaut pattern, which is less predictable than the former: **ę/o**, **i/e**, **i/i**, **u/u** and **u/o**.
- Nasal vowel ablaut, where the following vowels alternate: **an/en**, **an/on**.

- Stems that begin with **k** may start with **c** in their past tense forms if the second vowel is **e**, **en** or **i**. The opposite can occur as well.
- A similar alteration can occur with **p** turning into **k**, where **p** can become **k** when preceded by **e**, **en** or **i**.
- Nasal vowel final stems can have a syllable added at the end, where the final vowel can be **e**, **i** or **u**. The stem vowel can still alternate, but the stem vowel will most likely shift from **en** or **on** to **a(n)**.

Weak verbs conjugate for their past tense regularly, with the prefix **ne-** (nasal allomorph: **non-**) marking the past tense. The future tense is marked similarly to the past, with the prefix **co-** (nasal allomorph: **con-**) but unlike it, is not mandatory when the verb is pragmatically describing future events, and is usually used to disambiguate the temporal order of events. Note that as with all verbal affixes, tense markers do not take stress, but it can have effects on the allomorphs of preceding affixes, that being mood and aspect markers.

### 5.3 Aspect

Aspect marking is dependent on tense, as some aspects are inferred to be associated by zero-marking with certain tenses. For example, the future and past tenses are assumed to be perfective, and thus, they lack perfective marking, while the present tense lacks continuous marking. All tenses can take habitual marking.

The perfective aspect is marked with the prefix **ye-** (nasal allomorph: **yon-**). The continuous aspect is marked with the prefix **mu-** (nasal allomorph: **mon-**). The habitual aspect is derived from the copula, and thus, has different forms depending on whether the verb is past or non-past. If the verb is non-past, then the prefix **po-** (nasal allomorph: **pon-**) is used, and when verb is past, then the prefix **wi-** (nasal allomorph: **wen-**) is used.

## 5.4 Mood

Modal marking, like other TAM categories, is formed by prefixes. The indicative mood is unmarked, and the hortative and hypothetical moods are constructed with a marked copula + infinitive marked verb, the forms of which are described in the Copula section below. Other moods, however, are constructed with prefixes. There are two moods marked by prefixes: the conditional mood and the inferential mood.

The conditional mood, marked with the prefix **xak-**, is used in conditional constructions to describe an event dependent upon another event, marked in a coordinate clause with the conjunction **to** ‘if, when’. If describing a counterfactual, then the first clause will take the hypothetical mood.

- (5) Rəxakwìrə, to wìşet ñalk wan. [rɛɿ.ʒakɿ.'wi:ʌ.re\ tuɿ 'wi:ʌ.zet\ 'ɲa:lk/ wãɿ]

rə-xak-wìr-e                      to wìşet-Ø                      ñalk  
 ANTIP-COND-cook.PST-1SG if COP.HYPO-3SG.INAN rain-INF  
 wan  
 NEG

‘I would have cooked it, if it were not raining.’

- (6) To wìşete cuk wan, wa xakneçèn ésa. [toɿ 'wi:ʌ.sɛ\ .tɛɿ 'tʃy:k/ wɛɿ waɿ ʃakɿ.nɛɿ.'tʃɛ:ʌ 'ɛ:\.zaɿ]

to wìşet-e                      cu-k                      wan wa  
 if COP.HYPO-1SG stuck-INF NEG then  
 xak-neçèn-Ø                      ésa  
 COND-PST-carry-3SG.INAN 1SG.ERG

‘If I had not been stuck, then I would have carried it.’

The inferential mood, marked with the prefix **kər-**, is used to mark non-witnessed events, and thus, makes the occurrence of an event to be uncertain, but believed to have occurred. With negation, the inferential mood can mark belief in the non-occurrence of a

given event, or simply, to deny its occurrence.

The hortative mood, constructed with the hortative copula, marks events the speaker desires to occur, or believes ought to occur. When used with a second person agent or subject, then it marks a command, thus, the imperative mood. When used with a non-second person agent/subject, then the hortative is simply an optative or desiderative.

The hypothetical mood, constructed with the hypothetical copula, can describe events that are possible, whether in terms of likelihood or ability for an event to occur. Thus, it comes both deontic and epistemic modality e.g. 'He can throw it.' vs. 'He may throw it.', though the distinction between the two can usually be distinguished by tense, as the future tense usually co-occurs with epistemic constructions, while the present tense usually co-occurs with deontic constructions.

## 5.5 Voice

One of the most basic valency operations is unmarked, that being detransitivisation, which is the equivalent of passivisation in a nominative-accusative language. Detransitivisation occurs when the ergative argument of a transitive verb is dropped, and thus the verb becomes intransitive in appearance, even if there is an implied agent by the nature of the verb. Valency-changing operations are marked by a prefix on the verb.

The antipassive and causative prefixes are the same, **re** (nasal allomorph: **ron-**) which derives from a verb meaning 'make, do'. The difference between the two is that in causative constructions, the causer is marked with the ergative case, while in anti-passives, there is no ergative argument, only a demoted absolutive, marked with the preposition **kí**.

(7) Reçizo kí ésa rupàhò. [rɛɲ. tʃi:ʌ. dzuʋ 'ɛ:ʋ. zaɲ 'ki:ʋ ryɲ. 'ba:ʌ. yòʋ]

rɛ̀-cì-zo                                      ɛ̀sa      kí-∅                      ru-pàhọ  
 CAUS-break.PST-3SG.ANIM 1SG.ERG ALL-3SG.INAN DEF-pot

‘I made him/her break the pot.’

(8) Rɛ̀cìzo kí rupahọ. [rɛ̀.ɿ.ṽtʃi:ʌ.ḍzuṽ 'ki:ṽ ry.ɿ.'ba:ʌ.yoṽ]

rɛ̀-cì-zo    kí-∅                      ru-pahọ  
 ANTIPAS-break.PST-3SG.ANIM ALL-3SG.INAN DEF-pot

‘He/she broke the pot.’ or ‘He/she tried to break the pot.’

The applicative prefix is **wɛ̀-** (nasal allomorph: **won-**). The applicative promotes an indirect object (dative argument) to the absolutive case, while, like in the antipassive and causative, the demoted absolutive is marked with the preposition **kí**.

(9) Wɛ̀xétar ɛ̀sa kí. [wɛ̀ʌ.'zɛ̀:ṽ.dar] 'ɛ̀ṽ.za] 'ki:ṽ]

wɛ̀-xét-ar                                      ɛ̀sa      kí-∅  
 APPL-throw.PST-2SG 1SG.ERG ALL-3SG.INAN

‘You were thrown it by me.’

## 5.6 Personal Marking

Each non-finite verb will take personal marking via a number of suffixes that attach to the stem of a verb. These personal markers agree with the absolutive argument of the verb, that being the intransitive subject, transitive patient and distransitive theme, though valency constructions can allow for other roles to be marked via promotion to the absolutive case. Those suffixes that are vowel initial (1SG, 2SG, 2PL & 3PL.ANIM) cause alternations with nasal vowel final stems, as they gain ‘phantom consonants’, which are lost in other conjugations. These alternations, however, are rare, and only occur

with common verbs, as otherwise, they have been lost due to analogy. These suffixes are indistinguishable from the personal markings found on prepositions, and that is because they are the same.

	Singular	Plural
1st	-e	-wɔl
2nd	-ar	-ɛr
3rd anim.	-zo	-o
3rd inan.	-∅	-∅

## 5.7 Infinitives

Verbs all conjugate with infinitive forms, which is moderately regular. Most stems will simply suffix **-k** for vowel/sonorant final stems, and **-kɔ** for obstruent final stems. Due to analogy, this rule applies every new verb borrowed into the language, and has so for quite some time, and irregularities in native stems have been mostly lost due to analogy.

Some stems show phantom consonants, the most common of which is /s/, which was historically lost in final positions, and lengthened preceding vowels. There are also phantom vowels, which in infinitives were historically stressed, but in non-finite forms, were unstressed and lost. These vowels are predictable from strong past tense forms. In some stems, always ending in a historical long vowel, **-k** can be realised as **-h**, though this has mostly been lost due to analogy. Due to historic stress alterations, stems can vary, though these unusual stem shifts have been for the most part lost due to analogy, only occurring in very common verbs, most of which happen to be monosyllabic, and thus, these issues rarely arise.

(10) Pómɔ xátkɔ (ára). [ˈpõ:\.mo] ˈʃaʎt.ko] ˈa:\.ra]

pómɔ-∅                      xát-kɔ      (ára)  
 COP.IMP-3SG.INAN throw-INF (2SG.ERG)

‘(You must) throw it!’ lit. ‘It must be thrown (by you)!’



## 5.8 Copula

In Romèpkọ, the copula is marked for far more categories than ordinary verbs, and two suppletive stems in its conjugation, **pó-** for the non-past stem and **wi-** for the past tense stem, with the infinitive using another stem, **as-**. Note that the hypothetical non-past can be used to state a future event one believes to be possible (epistemic modality), while the hortative non-past can be used to state a future event one desires to occur (epistemic + optative modality).

	Indicative	Negative	Hortative	Hypothetical
Non-past	pó	pófọ	pómọ	póset
Past	wi	wẹwu	wamu	wisẹt
Infinitive	áskọ	áswok	ásmuk	ássek



## Chapter 6

# Derivational Morphology

Note that in the following description of derivational morphemes, slashes indicate singular/plural forms for nouns/adjectives and non-past/past tense forms for verbs. If there is no plural for a noun, it is only marked with the weak plural/**rus** construction, and if there is no past tense for a verb, it is marked with the weak past tense. When a prefix is vowel final and followed by a vowel, the final vowel of the prefix is dropped, unless the vowel is stressed in the prefix.

*\*An affix takes stress, and thus, its first syllable becomes the tonal syllable.*

### 6.1 Noun to Noun

- **-tar/-tər**: an intensifier/augmentative for nouns and adjectives, which can function as an honorific when used with names and titles.
- **-ke/-ci**: a diminutive for nouns and adjectives, derived from **ke** ‘child’, which can function as an familiarity-marker when used with names and titles.
- **-ron/-ramə**: location associated with a noun or deverbal noun.

## 6.2 Noun/Adjective to Verb

- **él/ále-\***: Inchoative (intr.) or creation (trans.) verbaliser, derived from **él/ále** ‘get, receive, acquire, become, cause to be’.
- **pó-/wi-\***: State of being verbaliser, derived from **pó/wi** ‘be’. This verb is innately habitual, and doesn’t take aspect marking.

## 6.3 Noun to Adjective

- **wet-\***: Adjectivising prefix, meaning ‘be like, behave like, appear like’.
- **-po**: A suffix with the same meaning as **wet-**, but is nonproductive and only derives from old, native nouns. Pseudo-productive in the sense it can be used to derive new adjectives, but usually only from monosyllabic words, with a jocular, humorous meaning. For something similar in English, see *schm-* derivation. This marker is still productive when doubled with the deverbal nominaliser to create a combined suffix **-kupo**, creating an adjective meaning ‘inclined to do’.

## 6.4 Verb to Noun

- **-k(ɔ)**: Infinitive marking, doubles as a deverbal nominaliser, where the use of prepositions specifies its case. It can refer to the result or state of an action.
- **-on/-anu**: Agentive nominalisation, derived from **ón** ‘person, human being’.
- **ón-/án(u)-\***: Animate patientive nominaliser, derived from **ón** ‘person, human being’.
- **kó-/ké-\***: Inanimate patientive nominaliser, derived from **kó** ‘3rd person inanimate singular’.

## 6.5 Verb to Adjective/Adverb

- **-k(ø)**: Infinitive marking, extended from verbs to adjectives/adverbs, where it marks a clause as being done in the manner of the verb, or a noun in being in the state of such a verb.

## 6.6 Adjective to Adjective

- **-wal**: Adjective intensifier, marking a more extreme quality or abundance of a given adjective.

## 6.7 Adjective to Adverb

- **wet-\***: Extended from the adjectivising prefix, where adjectives can be marked to become adverbs.



## Chapter 7

# Syntax

### 7.1 Head-Directionality & Word Order

The language is primarily head-initial, the verb preceding its arguments in all contexts, though infinitives are treated like objects, and thus can be freely placed after the verb, though within the core part of the clause. Within noun phrases, the noun goes first and is followed by all its dependents, except for demonstratives and the definite article, which precede the head. The core of the clause contains the absolutive, ergative and dative arguments, as well as any infinitives, and this is preceded by the finite matrix verb. Infinitives usually follow the matrix verb, and will only ever not in the case that an argument is focal. The order of these arguments is usually absolutive, ergative, dative, and the latter two are marked via prepositions, and thus, can be fronted. The oblique arguments usually go in the following order: lative arguments, temporal arguments and finally adverbial arguments of the matrix clause, which are marked with preposed converbs.

### 7.2 Nominal Modifiers

Determiners, like the definite article, precede their head noun. Determiners are contrastive in terms of spatial relations, and there are proximal, medial and distal determiners. The proximal determiner, *í*, marks referents that are close to the speaker specifically, medial

determiner, **le**, marks referents close to the addressee or in the general area where both speakers are located, and distal determiner, **te**, marks referents not near either the speaker or addressees.

There are a few other determiners, such as **me**, the indefinite plural determiner, which has come to mandatorily mark plurality, **ze**, the distributive determiner, **tet**, the universal determiner, **su** the elective determiner, and **pe**, the interrogative determiner. Each of these can be used periaphrastically to create anaphoric referents, such as **pe on** ‘who’ lit. ‘which person’ or **su on** ‘anyone’ lit. ‘any person’. Quantifiers, like determiners, precede their head noun, and generally come after any other marking on the noun.

Adjectives modify nouns, and follow them, and the most common of them agree with their head in number, though this form of agreement has faded with the adoption the determiner **me** to mark plurality. Those adjectives that do agree, use strong noun plural marking, so check that section to see how these adjectives ought to be marked. In the dictionary, if an adjective takes plural marking, this form will be marked with a slash, the second being plural.

### 7.3 Numerals

Numerals are vigesimal, where the number system follows base-20, thus, each higher scale of numeral is by the power of 20. Thus, instead of having higher numeral categories by  $10^n$ , such as, ‘10, 100, 1000, 10000, 100000’, you have  $20^n$  ‘20, 400, 8000, 160000, 3200000’. Numerals precede their head noun, like other quantifiers.



	Cardinal	Ordinal
0	xú	∅
1	u	u
2	sə	sə
3	wen	wenwə
4	cí	cí
5	ton	tonwə
6	yan	yanwə
7	túr	túrwə
8	astal	astəlwə
9	wanlu	wanloswə
10	pan	panwə
11	upan	opanwə
12	səpan	sapanwə
13	wenpan	wanpanwə
14	cípan	cépanwə
15	tonpan	tonpanwə
16	yanpan	yanpanwə
17	túrpan	tórpanwə
18	astəpan	astalpanwə
19	wenlospan	wanlaspanwə
20	ki	kiwə
40	saki	səkwi
60	wenki	wenkewi
80	céki	cékwi
100	tonki	tonkewi
120	yan ki	yan kewi
140	túr ki	túr kewi
400	kitar	petarwə
800	sə petar	sə kitri
1200	wen petar	wen kitri
8000	ki petar	ki kitri

## 7.4 Adverbs

Adverbs, depending on origin will either follow directly after the matrix verb, or at the end of the verbal phrase. Adverbs constructed with infinitives, easily noticeable with the suffix **-k(ə)**, will follow

directly after the main verb, but other adverbs are placed after the verb phrase. Adverbs modifying adjectives will follow their given adjective.

## 7.5 Negation

Negation is marked with the particle **wan** which follows the verbal phrase, following the final infinitive, which itself may follow some arguments of the clause. This particle can be doubled to create a softened positive, or to refute a question with the particle.

## 7.6 Comparatives & Superlatives

Comparatives and superlatives are both constructed with a complex mixture of prepositions and determiners. The comparative marks the compared argument with the ablative preposition, and has the compared element in the absolutive case, with the determiner **cor** preceding the argument to mean ‘more X’, with the copula the matrix verb of such a construction. The superlative is constructed the same way, except the compared element is given the definite article.

- (11) Pó ət cor ápkupo zoa pálar. [ˈpuː\ ˈɛːt/ tʃor] ˈaːp\ky].buː  
[tsuː/ˌa\ ˈpaː\lar]]

pó-∅	ət-∅	cor	ápkupo
COP-3SG.INAN	INAN.ABS-3SG.INAN	more	wise
zoa	pál-ar		
3SG.ANIM.ERG	ABL-2SG		

‘He/she is wiser than you.’

## 7.7 Questions

Wh-questions, where a certain argument of a clause is questioned, the questioned argument undergoes fronting, placed at the front of the sentence, before the matrix verb. Polar questions, however, are constructed with the particle **wu**, which etymologically was a negation word, but came to mark questions, semantically deriving from

an original meaning of ‘CLAUSE (or) not?’. Due to the nature of the language’s pitch accent, rising tone at the end of a clause does not mark a question. When the clause is already negative, the expected answer to the question is assumed to be positive, while the opposite is true when there is no negation.

(12) Copósetwɔl páttuk wu? [ˈtʃuʌ.buːʌ.zet.ʌ.wol] ˈpa:tʌ.tʌk ˈwy:ʌ]

cɔ-póset-wɔl páttu-k wu  
FUT-COP.HYPO-1PL play-INF Q

‘Will we play (at some point in the future)?’

(13) Ẽt pɛ wɛr ára? [ˈɛ:tʌ ˈpɛ:ʌ wɛ:rʌ ˈa:ʌ.ra]

ɛt-∅ pɛ wɛr-∅ ára  
INAN.ABS-3SG.INAN which cook-3SG.INAN 2SG.ERG

‘What are you cooking?’

## 7.8 Converbs

There are four converbs used in Romèpkɔ, covering the areas of actions done at the same time as another, before another, after another, and being the purpose of another. These converbs are:

- After: **lark**
- Before: **ók**
- While: **pɛlk**
- In order to: **pók**

Converbs are always in infinitive form, and function as adjuncts to a clause, and can take objects and prepositional phrases. The conjunction **to** is required before converbs to construct a subordinate clause. Note that normal tense/aspect/mood marking isn’t allowed for infinitives outside of the copula, which can take the hypothetical and hortative moods with a converb to describe a potential or desired event.

- (14) Copále lark yək ñalk. [tʃu/ɫ.ba:ʋ.le] 'la:rk/ 'je:k/ 'ña:lk/]  
 co-pál-e lark yə-k ñalk  
 FUT-leave-1SG do.after.INF stop.INF rain  
 'I'll leave after the rain stops.'
- (15) Wicózo to ọuk rak comen zu. [wi/ɫ.'dʒo:ʋ.ɔzo] to] 'o:ʋ.ɯk/ 'ra:k/ 'tʃō:ɫ.mē/ 'tsy:ʋ]  
 wi-có-zo to ọuk  
 HAB.PST-demand.PST-3SG.ANIM when do.before.INF  
 rak comen zu  
 make.INF lord 1SG.GEN.SG  
 'He/she was demanding before he/she became our lord.'
- (16) Pósete mepkọ pɛk pɛrk. ['pu:ʋ.zɛ].te] 'mɛ:p/ɫ.ko/ pɛ:lk/ pɛ:rk/]  
 póset-e mep-kọ pɛk pɛr-k  
 COP.HYPO-1SG speak-INF do.while.INF climb.INF  
 'I can speak and climb at the same time.'
- (17) Wir ɛt rupɛt ɛsa pók mɛfɛk tion ís. ['wi:r/ɫ 'ɛ:t/ ry].bɛ:t/ 'ɛ:ʋ.za] pu:k/ 'mɛ:ɫ.βɛk/ 'ti:ɫ.ō/ 'i:s/]  
 Wir ɛt ru-pɛt ɛsa pók  
 cook.PST INAN.ABS DEF-meat 1SG.ERG do.in.order.to.INF  
 mɛfɛ-k tion ís  
 be.happy-INF partner 1SG.GEN  
 'I cooked the meat so my partner would be happy.'

## 7.9 Conjunctions & Clause Coordination

There are number of conjunctions used in Romèpkọ, the most common of which being **wa** which fills the semantic categories of the English conjunctions 'and', 'then' and 'thus'.

It can be used to coordinate clauses, as well elements within a noun phrase. When used with verbal infinitives, **wa** can be used to make serial verb constructions, where each verb takes the absolutive argument of the head, and each of its arguments are marked



‘You’re either a soldier or an officer.’

**ko** is the complementiser, which marks subordinated clauses, which unlike ordinary infinitives, will have its own matrix verb with tense and personal marking. This conjunction is used to mark full complements, rather than simple infinitives, which can function as complements without it.

(21) Mipɔ́ éсна sɔk ko pɔ́ ɛt ɛtkɔ́ emɛ́ ánu ɛ rolk. [ˈmi:ʌ.boʌ  
ˈɛ:sʌ.naʌ ˈso:kʌ kuʌ ˈpo:ʌ ˈɛ:tʌ ˈɛ:tʌ.koʌ ˈɛ:.ʌ.meʌ ˈɛ:ʌ.nyʌ ˈɛ:ʌ ˈro:lkʌ]

mip-ɔ́	éсна	sɔk-∅	ko
say.PST-3PL.ANIM	1SG.DAT	SUP-3SG.INAN	COMP
pɔ́-∅	ɛt-∅	ɛt-kɔ́	e-mɛ́
COP-3SG.INAN	INAN.ABS-3SG.INAN	catch-INF	GEN-PL
ánu	ɛ-∅	rol-k	
person.PL	ERG-3SG.INAN	arrest-INF	

‘They told me that arresting is catching people.’

## 7.10 Relative Clauses

Relative clauses follow the noun phrase they modify, and are marked with the particle **ru**, which is the same root as the definite article, the primary difference being that this particle is stressed. This particle precedes a relative clause, which will be distinct from a non-relative clause in a number of key ways:

- Relative clauses drop the referent they are modifying within the relative clause, if that argument is the absolutive.
- If an argument is core but non-absolutive, that being ergative or dative, then an antipassive or applicative construction respectively is used to ensure that it is the most salient argument, and thus can be dropped.
- If referred to argument is an oblique argument, then it cannot be dropped, and must be doubled, but a full modified noun phrase does not need to be used, but rather a resumptive pronoun will suffice.

- In theory one can not use a valency shifting operation if the referred to argument isn't absolutive, but the given argument cannot be dropped, and must be explicitly marked with a resumptive pronoun. However, in practice, this would come off as unnatural to a speaker of Romèpkò, unless the context was in poetry, where it would be sensible to retain an argument to ensure a rhyme or meter.

(22) Tízo ésa rukè ru monɛfáttuzo tɔ rakkoron ér. [ˈtiː\̩.ð̩zuː  
 ˈɛː\̩.zaːˌ ryː\̩.keː\̩ ˈryː\̩ mɔ̃ː\̩.nɛː\̩.ˈβaːt\̩.tyː\̩.ð̩zuːˌ ˈtoː\̩ ˈraːk\̩.koː\̩.rɔ̃ː\̩  
 ˈɛːr\̩]

tí-zo                                      ésa        ru-kè        ru  
 look.at.PST-3SG.ANIM 1SG.ERG DEF-child REL  
 mo-nɛ-fáttu-zo                                      tɔ-∅                                      r-akkoron ér  
 CONT-PST-play-3SG.ANIM ESS-3SG.INAN DEF-land 2SG.GEN

‘I saw the child who was playing on your land.’

## 7.11 Focus Movement

In Romèpkò, every phrase within a sentence can be moved around, as long as it doesn't precede the verb, unless in a wh-question. However, phrase internal movement is not allowed, and phrases must not be discontinuous. The verb phrase, however, with its infinitives, can be discontinuous, as the infinitives are considered to be equal to other arguments of the matrix verb. Certain aspects of the verb phrase cannot be moved around, however, such as negative marker, which has to be at the end of the verb phrase, that being, after the last infinitive. Adverbs are another example of words that cannot be moved around freely, unlike in English, where infinitive derived adverbs will follow the matrix verb directly with no noun or prepositional phrases allowed in between, while non-infinitive derived adverbs will simply follow the verb phrase, like the negation particle **wan**.





## Appendix A

### Examples

Note: The examples here are moderately conservative Romèpkò, and thus, do not show the progressive plural forms that are common amongst some speakers.

(23) Yèlòtò èr wèrk wu? [je.ɿlu:ʌ.doʋ 'erʋ 'wɛ:rkʌ 'wy:ʌ]

yè-lòtò-∅                      èr              wèrk              wu  
PFV-attain-3SG.INAN 2SG.ERG be.warm-INF Q

138. 'Are you warm enough now?'

(24) Nècezo pák emè karno sòk rupèrk sòk ràkkòron. [nɛɿ.ðʒe:ʌ.ðzuʋ  
pa:kʋ eɿ.'mɛ:ʋ ka:rʌ.nuʋ 'so:kʌ ryʌ.'pɛ:rkʋ 'so:kʌ 'ra:kʌ.koʋ.rõ]

nè-ce-zo                      pák                      e-mè      karno  
PST-march-3SG.ANIM human.group GEN-PL soldier.PL  
sòk-∅                      ru-pèrk sòk-∅                      r-àkkòron  
SUP-3SG.INAN DEF-hill SUP-3SG.INAN DEF-field

121. 'A company of soldiers marched over the hill and across the meadow.'

(25) Pósete páttuk to lark pálkò é pál rélapkòron. ['pu:ʋ.zɛɿ.deɿ  
'pa:tʋ.tʌkɿ toɿ 'la:rkʌ 'pa:lʋ.koɿ 'e:ʋ 'pa:lʋ 'rɛ:ʋ.lapɿ.koɿ.rõ]

póset-e                      páttu-k to      lark                      pál-kò  
COP.HYPO-1SG play-INF when do.after-INF leave-INF  
é                      pál-∅                      r-élapkòron  
1SG.ABS ABL-3SG.INAN DEF-school

44. 'I can play after school.'

(26) Yẽnal [jɛ̃.ɲa:l]

yẽ-ñal-∅

PFV-rain-3SG.INAN

21. 'The rain has stopped.'

(27) Ékuɔ tet ruci wuzo Mɛri. [ˈeː.ɳ.gỹ.ɔ̃ ˈtet ɛ̃.ˈmɛː rỹ.ˈd͡ziː  
ˈwyː.ˈd͡zu ˈmɛː.ri]

éku-ɔ

tet ru-ci

wu-zo

Mɛri

come.PST-3PL.ANIM all DEF-child.PL ABESS-3SG.ANIM Mary

141. 'All the children came except Mary.'

## Appendix B

### Loanwords

Romèpkò heavily borrowed from another language, **Nāḍar**, spoken by a population which invaded the lands inhabited by the Rutèt (the speakers of Romèpkò). This language primarily influenced Romèpkò lexicon in terms of its words concerning trade, government, military, technology, astronomy, and religion. This language at the time was a moderately head-initial. NPs are generally head-final, but otherwise, the language is strongly head-initial, with a V2 word order. The language has a complex verbal morphology, and its presumed that the lack of cases in Nāḍar may have led to them being dropped entirely in Romèpkò due this contact.

These borrowings occurred around the time of sound change 24, at which point, the nominal morphology was still rather synthetic, but had become rather irregular and most of the lative cases were lost. All nominal borrowings at this point took the strong plural, and were treated exactly like native words in that regard, but none took the older archaic plural. All verbs borrowed became weak verbs, taking the past tense prefix instead of alternating their roots. Below is a basic sketch of Nāḍar's phonology at the time, and after that, how its sounds were treated when borrowed and nativised into the language.

## B.1 Nāḍar Phonology

	Labial	Alveolar	Retroflex	Palatal	Velar
Nasal	m <b>m</b>	n <b>n</b>	ŋ <b>ṅ</b>	ɲ <b>ñ</b>	ŋ <b>ṅ</b>
Aspirated stop	p <sup>h</sup> <b>p</b>	t <sup>h</sup> <b>t</b>	t̪ <sup>h</sup> <b>ṭ</b>	c <sup>h</sup> <b>c</b>	k <sup>h</sup> <b>k</b>
Tenuis stop	p <b>b</b>	t <b>d</b>	t̪ <b>ḍ</b>	c <b>j</b>	k <b>g</b>
Laterals		l <b>l</b>	ɭ <b>ḷ</b>		
Approximants	w <b>w</b>		ɻ <b>r</b>	j <b>y</b>	
	Front	Back			
High	i ī i: ī	u ū u: ū			
Mid	e: ē	o: ō			
Open	a ā a: ā				

Nāḍar had a permitted syllable structure of (C)V(C), and was mora timed with pitch highest on the stressed syllable. Any consonant is permitted at the start of the word, however aspirated stops cannot occur in clusters, and do not occur in the coda, though all other consonants do, except for /j/ and /w/, which were historically assimilated into their preceding vowels. Medially nasals are required to be homorganic with other consonants, and retroflex consonants cannot co-occur with alveolar consonants in a medial cluster, and always assimilate toward retroflex consonants. However, stems tend to show retroflex/alveolar harmony, where the series would shift in rightward harmony. Due to a lack of a respective approximant, the dropping of /ɻ/ would cause a doubling of the other consonant in the cluster. An important allophonic feature of Nāḍar was the retraction of front vowels adjacent to retroflexes, meaning that /a a: i i: e:/ become [ɐ ɐ: ī ī: ə:]. Vowels were not allowed in hiatus, and merged into long vowels, with high vowels in hiatus with /a/ becoming mid vowels of respective frontness/backness.

## B.2 Borrowing Rules

Words from Nāḍar undergo the following changes when borrowed into this earlier form of Romëpkə:

- Centralised front vowels merge to accommodate to phonology [ɐ ɐ: ī ī: ə:] → [a ɻ: u u: ɻ:].

- Alveolar, retroflex, palatal and velar nasals merge as the coronal nasal.
- Retroflex and alveolar stops merge as coronal stops.
- The retroflex approximant becomes the alveolar trill.
- The alveolar and retroflex laterals merge as the coronal lateral.

### B.3 Borrowed Lexicon

Each of the following items of lexicon are written in the following format:

- **Nāḍar form** (word class) - morphemes | GLOSSED FORM, meaning > *borrowed form*  
**Romèpkò form** (word class) *sub categories* - meaning

The following are a sample of words borrowed from Nāḍar; each of the borrowings has undergone semantic shifts, and some of these words superceded native terms that covered the same category. Note that the abbreviations here are the same as in the Dictionary (see Appendix C).

- **aṅam** (n) - aṅ-am | hold-AGT, ‘guard, parent, overseer’ > \*á-nam  
**anan/sanan** (n) *anim. strong* - guard, judicial officer
- **cud** (n) - ‘thank, praise’ > \*c<sup>h</sup>út  
**cót** (v) *tr. weak* - praise, pray to, worship
- **ṭā** (n) - ṭa-w(a) | protect-GER.INF, ‘armour, shielding, defence’ > \*tʏ:  
**tò** (n) *inan. weak* - armour, cuirass
- **jē** (v) - ‘move, walk’ > \*jé:  
**ce** (v) *intr. weak* - march, move non-volitionally
- **jumēm** (n) - jumi-am | own-AGT, ‘master, owner’ > \*cúme:m  
**comen** (n) *anim. weak* - lord, ruler, despot
- **kar** (n) - ‘spear, weapon’ > \*k<sup>h</sup>ár  
**kár/kar** (n) *anim. strong* - weapon, power, military force

- **karṇē** (n) - kar-nē | spear-warrior, ‘spearman, foot-soldier’ > \*k<sup>h</sup>árny:  
**kárno/karno** (n) *anim. strong* - enlisted soldier
- **gōn** (n) - gō-n | lead-ATTR.INF, ‘leading, first’ > \*kó:n  
**kon** (mod) *adj* - top, most important, leading, greatest
- **gōnnē** (n) - gō-n-nē | lead-ATTR.INF-warrior, ‘military leader’ > \*kó:nne:  
**kone** (n) *anim. weak* - governor, military commander
- **liram** (n) - lir-am | ride-AGT, ‘horse-rider, cavalryman’ > \*l<sup>h</sup>ram  
**lōran** (n) *anim. weak* - commissioned officer
- **ludā** (v) - lu-dā | VEN-touch, ‘reach, grasp at’ > \*lúty:  
**lotō/lotok** (v) *tr. weak* - attain, achieve, realise, complete
- **ludilwa** (n) - lu-dil-w(a) | VEN-be.dark-GER.INF, ‘twilight, dusk’ > \*lúdilwa  
**lotelwa** (n) *inan. weak* - twilight, dusk, nightfall, late evening
- **paddū** (v) - pad-rū | fool-COP, ‘be foolish, act foolishly’ > \*p<sup>h</sup>át-tu:  
**páttu/páttuk** (v) *ambitr. weak* - play, have fun, enjoy oneself, play with (with inst. prep), socialise with (with inst. prep)
- **rēl** (n) - ‘grab, take’ > \*r<sup>h</sup>yl  
**rol/rolk** (v) *tr. weak* - arrest, detain, hold prisoner
- **ṭarinrag** (n) - tari-n-rag | be.bright-ATTR.INF-wolf, ‘Ṭarinrag, lit. the bright wolf’ > \*t<sup>h</sup>árnyrak  
**táranrak** (n) *anim. proper noun* - Táranrak, the brightest star in the night sky
- **yagam** (n) - yag-am | offer-AGT, ‘attendant, lit. the one who offers’ > \*jákam  
**yakan/xakan** (n) *anim. strong* - priest, member of the clergy, custodian of a religious site

## Appendix C

# Dictionary

### Abbreviations

- n = noun
- v = verb
- pro = pronoun
- adj = adjective
- adv = adverb
- mod = nominal modifier
- prep = preposition
- part = particle
- det = determiner
- quan = quantifier
- num = numeral
- tr. = transitive verb
- intr. = intransitive verb
- ambitr. = ambitransitive
- anim. = animate noun

- inan. = inanimate noun
- irreg. = irregular plural
- acc. = when marked with an inanimate absolutive preposition
- erg. = when marked with an ergative preposition
- dat. = when marked with an dative preposition
- abl. = when marked with an ablative preposition
- all. = when marked with an allative preposition
- ess. = when marked with an essive preposition
- sup. = when marked with an superlative preposition
- sub. = when marked with an sublative preposition
- ins. = instrumental preposition
- posd. = when possessed by a genitive argument

## A

- **ak/ək/akk** (v) *tr. strong* - reap, cut, mow, clear
- **akk/sakk** (n) *inan. strong* - clearance, mowing, cutting
- **akkoron/akkorame** (n) *inan. irreg.* - cleared land, meadow, field, pasture, paddock
- **anan/sanan** (n) *anim. weak* - guard, judicial officer
- **astal** (mod) *numeral* - 8
- **astelwe** (mod) *numeral* - 8th
- **astelpan** (mod) *numeral* - 18
- **astalpanwe** (mod) *numeral* - 18th



## Á

- **ár** (pro) *person* - 2nd person
- **áp/ép/ápko** (v) *tr. irreg.* - discern, be wise
- **ápko** (n) *inan. weak* - wisdom, prudence
- **ápkuo** (mod) *adj* - wise, thoughtful, of sound judgement
- **ápkuowal** (mod) *adj* - genius, divinely-inspired

## C

- **ce** (v) *intr. weak* - march, move non-volitionally
- **céki** (mod) *numeral* - 80
- **cékwi** (mod) *numeral* - 80th
- **cén/cénk** (v) *tr. weak* - heave, carry
- **cépanwe** (mod) *numeral* - 14th
- **cir/cirk** (v) *tr. weak* - clean, prepare
- **cit/keṭu** (n) *inan. irreg.* - tree, woody plant
- **cí** (mod) *numeral* - 4
- **cí** (mod) *numeral* - 4th
- **cípan** (mod) *numeral* - 14
- **comen** (n) *anim. weak* - lord, ruler, despot
- **cót** (v) *tr. weak* - praise, pray to, worship
- **coṭ/coṣko** (v) *tr. weak* - call out, shout, request demandingly
- **coṛ** (mod) *det* - more
- **cól/cúl/cólk** (v) *tr. strong* - paint, cover with a material
- **cu/cuk** (v) *intr. weak* - be slow, be stuck

**É**

- **é** (pro) *person* - I/me, 1st person singular

**Ē**

- **ē** (prep) - ergative case preposition
- **ēt** (prep) - inanimate patient/theme preposition
- **ēt/it/ētko** (v) *tr. strong* - seize, ensnare, catch
- **ētko/sētko** (n) *inan. strong* - trap

**Ė**

- **ė/ó/ók** (v) *tr. strong* - lead, direct
- **ėl/ále/álek** (v) *tr. strong* - get, receive, acquire, become, cause to be
- **ėlap/álap/ėlapko** (v) *tr. weak* - teach, make wise
- **ėlapko** (v) *tr. weak* - teaching, education
- **ėlapkōron/ėlapkōrame** (n) *inan. irreg.* - school, educational institution
- **ėron** (pro) *locative* - here, proximal locative
- **ėrt** (n) *inan. mass* - dirt, soil, loess

**Í**

- **í** (mod) *det* - proximal determiner
- **ík/ėku** (v) *intr. strong* - come to, arrive

## K

- **kár/kar** (n) *anim. strong* - weapon, power, military force
- **kárno/karno** (n) *anim. strong* - enlisted soldier
- **ke/ci** (n) *anim. irreg.* - child
- **kewi** (mod) *numeral* - n x 20th
- **ki** (mod) *numeral* - 20
- **kiwe** (mod) *numeral* - 20th
- **kitar** (mod) *numeral* - 400
- **kitri** (mod) *numeral* - n x 400th
- **ko** (prep) - allative case preposition
- **ko/ky/koh** (v) *intr. strong* - go, come
- **ko** (conj) - complementiser
- **kon** (mod) *adj* - top, most important, leading, greatest
- **kone** (n) *anim. weak* - governor, military commander
- **kó** (pro) *person* - it, 3rd person inanimate
- **kór/kúr** (n) *anim. irreg.* - bull, male bovine

## L

- **lark** (v) *converb* - do after
- **laron** (pro) *locative* - there, medial locative
- **le** (n) *inan. pl. only* - eyes, vision
- **le** (mod) *det* - that, medial determiner
- **lotelwa** (n) *inan. weak* - twilight, dusk, nightfall, late evening
- **lotó/lotok** (v) *tr. weak* - attain, achieve, realise, complete
- **loran** (n) *anim. weak* - commissioned officer

**M**

- **man/men/mank** (v) *intr. strong* - remain, stay, rest, visit
- **mę** (mod) *det* - some, a small quantity of
- **męf/męfe/męfek** (v) *intr. strong* - be glad, be happy, be in wonder, smile
- **męp/mip/mępkọ** (v) *intr. strong* - speak, talk, chatter, argue
- **mępkọ** (n) *inan. weak* - language, utterance, speech
- **mọl/mul/mọlk** (v) *intr. strong* - be ill, be poor, be weak
- **mọlk** (n) *inan. weak* - illness, weakness
- **mọlkupo** (n) *inan. weak* - ill, poor, weak

**N**

- **nęp/napu** (n) *anim. irreg.* - auroch, bovine, cow

**Ñ**

- **ñal/ñel** (n) *inan. irreg.* - rain
- **ñal/ñel/ñalk** (v) *intr. strong* - rain
- **ñan/ñon/ñank** (v) *intr. irreg.* - be young, be small
- **ñank** (n) *inan. weak* - youth
- **ñankupo** (n) *inan. weak* - small, young, youthful
- **ño/ñu/ñoskọ** (v) *tr. strong* - be acquainted with, be familiar with, be friends with

## O

- **ok/sok** (n) *inan. strong* - blade, scythe, tool

## Ó

- **ó/ús** (mod) *adj* - new, recent
- **ón/ánu** (n) *anim. irreg.* - person, human being
- **ón/ánu** (pro) *person* - indefinite
- **óño/ánuño** (v) *anim. irreg.* - acquaintance, friend

## Ọ

- **ọ** (pro) *personal* - they, 3rd person animate plural

## Ó

- **óuk** (v) *converb* - do before

## P

- **pásza/pasza** (n) *inan. strong* - beach, seaside
- **pan/pen** (n) *inan. irreg.* - head, top of an object
- **panwọ/penwe** (n) *anim. irreg.* - headman, village leader
- **pan** (mod) *numeral* - 10
- **páttu/páttuk** (v) *ambitr. weak* - play, have fun, enjoy oneself, play with (with inst. prep), socialise with (with inst. prep)
- **pák/pak** (n) *anim. strong* - group, gang, organisation

- **pál** (prep) - ablative case preposition
- **pál/pél/pálk** (v) *intr. strong* - leave, exit, come from
- **pát** (prep) - sublative case preposition
- **pát/pét/pátko** (v) *tr. strong* - go under, go through, swim
- **paho** (noun) *inan. weak* - pot, vase, vessel of liquid
- **petarwe** (mod) *numeral* - 400th
- **pe** (mod) *det* - interrogative determiner
- **pełk** (v) *converb* - do while
- **peť/peš** (n) *inan. irreg.* - meat, flesh
- **pé** (mod) *adj* - big, large, wide
- **pérk/pęrk** (n) *inan. strong* - high point, apex, hill
- **pęrktař/pęrkter** (n) *inan. irreg.* - mountain
- **pęro/pęra/pęrk** (v) *intr. strong* - rise, ascend, climb
- **pók** (v) *converb* - do in order to
- **pó/wi/ássek** (v) *tr. irreg.* - copula
- **pó/po** (n) *inan. strong* - riverbank

## R

- **re** (prep) - dative case preposition
- **rol/rołk** (v) *tr. weak* - arrest, detain, hold prisoner
- **ru** (det) - definite article
- **ru** (part) - relativiser

## S

- **saki** (mod) *numeral* - 40
- **sapanwe** (mod) *numeral* - 12th
- **sę** (mod) *numeral* - 2
- **sę** (mod) *numeral* - 2nd
- **sękwi** (mod) *numeral* - 40th
- **sępan** (mod) *numeral* - 12
- **sok** (prep) - superlative case preposition
- **sok/suk/sokko** (v) *intr. strong* - go over, go across, traverse
- **su** (mod) *det* - any, elective determiner

## T

- **taron** (pro) *locative* - yonder, distal locative
- **táranrak** (n) *anim. proper noun* - Táranrak, the brightest star in the night sky
- **té/tí/ték** (v) *tr. strong* - look at, witness, observe
- **te** (mod) *det* - yon, distal determiner
- **tet** (mod) *det* - all, every, universal determiner
- **tet** (n) *anim. weak* - people, nation, community
- **ti/taę/taęk** (v) *tr. strong* - wed, marry
- **tion/tianu** (v) *tr. strong* - one's husband/wife
- **to** (conj) - if, when
- **ton** (mod) *numeral* - 5
- **tonwe** (mod) *numeral* - 5th

- **tonki** (mod) *numeral* - 100
- **tonkewi** (mod) *numeral* - 100th
- **tonpan** (mod) *numeral* - 15
- **tonpanwe** (mod) *numeral* - 15th
- **tórpanwe** (mod) *numeral* - 7
- **tɔ** (prep) - essive case preposition
- **tɔ/tɛ/taskɔ** (v) *intr. strong* - be at, locative copula
- **túr** (mod) *numeral* - 7
- **túrpan** (mod) *numeral* - 17

## U

- **u** (mod) *numeral* - 1
- **u** (mod) *numeral* - 1st
- **upan** (mod) *numeral* - 11
- **upanwe** (mod) *numeral* - 11th

## W

- **wa** (conj) - then, thus, and
- **wanlu** (mod) *numeral* - 9
- **wanloswe** (mod) *numeral* - 9th
- **wanlaspan** (mod) *numeral* - 19th
- **wanpanwe** (mod) *numeral* - 13th
- **wen** (mod) *numeral* - 3



- **wenwẹ** (mod) *numeral* - 3rd
- **wenki** (mod) *numeral* - 60
- **wenkewi** (mod) *numeral* - 60th
- **wenlospan** (mod) *numeral* - 19
- **wenpan** (mod) *numeral* - 13
- **wẹr/wir/wẹrk** (v) *intr. strong* - be warm, be hot
- **wẹr/wir/wẹrk** (v) *tr. strong* - cook, heat up
- **wọ** (prep) - instrumental case preposition
- **wọ/wẹ** (n) *anim. irreg.* - adult male, (posd.) male friend
- **wọke/wọci** (n) *anim. irreg.* - adolescent boy
- **wọl** (pro) *person* - we/us, 1st person plural
- **wu** (part) - polar question particle
- **wu** (prep) - abessive case preposition

## X

- **xát/xét/xátkọ** (v) *tr. strong* - throw
- **xálp/xáلكọ** (v) *intr. weak* - shine, be pale, be coloured white
- **xọ/xẹ** (v) *tr. strong* - till, dig
- **xu** (conj) - or, disjunction marker
- **xú** (mod) *quantifier* - zero, none, nil
- **xú/xúk** (v) *tr. weak* - lack, lose

**Y**

- **yakan/xakan** (n) *anim. strong* - priest, member of the clergy, custodian of a religious site
- **yan** (mod) *numeral* - 6
- **yanpan** (mod) *numeral* - 16
- **ye/yek** (v) *ambitr. weak* - finish, complete, end, stop
- **yon/axan** (n) *inan. strong* - day, period from sunrise to sunset, any period of time

**Z**

- **zat/zet** (v) *tr. strong* - cover, wrap with fabric, dress
- **zo** (pro) *person* - he/she, 3rd person animate singular
- **zo/zę** (n) *anim. irreg.* - adult female, (posd.) female friend
- **zoke/zoci** (n) *anim. irreg.* - adolescent girl
- **ze** (mod) *det* - each, distributive determiner
- **zi** (n) *inan. weak* - edge, boundary, coast