A sketch of the Kohim language

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Abstract

This paper provides a grammatical sketch of Kohim, a language spoken by a small colony of cryptids in my attic. I shall give a short introduction to the speakers and their culture in order to give context to the language, and then provide a brief overview of the phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics of the language. I will also provide a short, non-exhaustive lexicon. Data is sourced primarily from natural and elicited speech from interviews with a select group of native speakers who reside in my attic.

Keywords: cryptid languages, cryptids, grammatical sketch, attic

The Kohim language is spoken by the Kuuɓi cryptids , known locally as Trotterkopfs or trotterheads. They are distant cousins to the European goblin; more specifically, the bedgoblin. As with most cryptids, they are somewhat supernatural in appearance and disposition, although they are mostly humanoid. In fact, they could easily pass as a rather tall, moderately underfed human, and—according to them—they often do.

These specific Trotterkopfs reside inside my attic (henceforth referred to simply as Kuuɓi), with a community comprised of around twenty members (some were away on business). They seem to be able to access some sort of pocket dimension localized in the aforementioned attic; from what I can tell, it is a passageway, but I have not dared (or bothered) to venture across it—that's not my area of expertise[1].

The pocket dimension is quite nicely-furnished; better so than the attic in which it resides. According to my informants, the Kuuɓi of this colony really only venture out into the human realm to look at cool bugs and steal socks. The traditional practices of haunting and harming people has been gradually phased out, at least in this colony.

They admit, however, that there are other colonies that do not have such good intentions. Even so, they hope that the recording and dissemination of their language may help humans, scholars and conspiracy theorists alike, to communicate and connect with other Trotterkopfs. Their pocket dimension, with all its amenities, does not have very good internet connection. They also made a passing remark that Bigfoot may be at least partially fluent in a dialect of Kohim, which seems promising for the sasqualogy division.

I would like to thank my four primary informants, Saasa, Noona, Konok, and ƀukimu, as well as the Trotterkopf colony in my attic in general. I would also like to thank my wife, Holly Satner-Ecke, who got lost in the temporal anomaly that brought me to the 21st century.

[1] To that end I defer to the Department of Interdimensional Wumbology.

Contents

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 On Trotterkopfs

Trotterkopfs are fairly humanoid in appearance, although slightly taller and thinner than the average human. They are also significantly lighter, and have keener olfactory and auditory senses, but a less-than-stellar visual ability. As noted before, they are sometimes called trotterheads, and are sometimes confused with the European bedgoblin, although the latter are somewhat smaller.

Traditional local belief has it that certain prayers ward off Trotterkopfs, but the Kuuβi say that these actually have no effect other than something akin to a polite request to leave.

They have many supernatural qualities: for instance, they do not leave footprints[1], and they possess excellent camouflaging capabilities. They are able to alter the color and texture of their skin to varying degrees, primarily of various mottled shades of black, brown, green, and gray; the exact range seems to depend on the individual.

However, their most notable trait is the ability to travel between planes/dimensions/what-have-you. In addition to pocket dimensions (which have static entry- and exit-points), such as the one in my attic, they may also freely travel between our world and the oneiric plane, or dream-world, which they may enter and exit at will. This is where they natively reside, and it is also relevant to their diet.

As we all know, when a sentient being sleeps, it enters the oneiric plane or dream-world. Within this plane, beings excrete oneirofecal matter, or dream-poop. The oneirofecal matter of sapient beings (especially of humans) is of particular interest to beings such as the Trotterkopfs: they primarily feed on this matter[2].

While some factions of Trotterkopfs prefer to obtain their food via eating human corpses (a significant source of oneirofecal matter, especially when fresh), many do so by feeding on sleeping humans, which is generally harmless (or, less harmful) to the object of sustenance. The Kuuβi are one such group, and also supplement this diet with various wild animals, mainly bugs and fish.

Even so, the effects of having been fed on by an extraplanar being can be rather discomforting; common side-effects are sleep paralysis, headaches, toothaches, insomnia, hypersomnia, and an inability to recall one's dreams (as they have been eaten).

[1] Specifically, footprints; they can still leave handprints.

[2] The oneirofecal matter excreted by beings of our plane (inter-oneirofecal matter) is different than the kind excreted by those native to the oneiric plane (intra-oneirofecal matter). Trotterkopfs feed only on the former; thus, they and other such oneiric beings do not and cannot feed on their own fecal matter.

1.2 The language

As far as cryptid languages, the Kohim language is fairly human-like. Its sound inventory is not particularly alien, nor is its grammar. However, until I can study more Trotterkopf languages, I cannot remark upon its place among its own linguistic context. According to the Kuuɓi, it may be typologically unusual among their people to have such a human-friendly inventory; apparently western Trotterkopf languages utilize whistle consonants (both whistled sibilants and true whistles). Further research is pending.

In terms of (human language) typology, it demonstrates an SOV word order, although this is not strict. Arguments may be moved to either extremity of the clause for discourse-pragmatic effects. There is also a complex system involving verbal voice, argument placement, and argument markers.

There are two primary word classes: nouns and verbs; pronouns are a subset of the former, and the latter is divided into transitive and intransitive verbs. Nouns take a handful of markers, while verbs take an entire suite of markers, with a maximum of five slots of inflection. These word class divisions are fairly salient, with little in the way of productive inter-class derivation, although there are a few fossilized processes.

The lexicon (at least, from what I could collect) seems to be comprised of the garden-variety of semantic spaces; I mainly collected words pertaining to Trotterkopf life, such as everyday events and terms for local wildlife. There is also additional semantic space for terms useful for oneiric beings such as the Trotterkopfs themselves. Interestingly, there seem to be a handful of loanwords from English and Pennsylvania German. These are comprised mainly of terminology related to human technology and lifestyle. For instance, kokin, from English ‘clothing’ (or ‘coating’); Trotterkopfs themselves do not use and have no use for clothing.

1.3 Conventions

In this paper, I shall use blue text for Kohim words, whether they be in orthographic transcription or non-bracketed phonemic transcription (common). Forward slashes with blue text (/example/) are used for phonemic transcription, square brackets ([example]) are used for phonetic transcription, blue-text pipes (|example|) are used for morphemic transcription, and blue-text angle brackets (⟨example⟩) are used for orthographic transcription. Underlined text is used for translations, *italicized* text is used for normal emphasis, and SMALL CAPS is used for glossed terms[3].

Glosses are structured as follows:

(1.1) *transcription*
native script
morphemic transcription (object language)
morphemic transcription (metalanguage)
‘translation’

Ungrammatical, infelicitous, or otherwise “bad” glosses are preceded by an asterisk ‹*›.

[3] ACC accusative, GEN genitive, OBL oblique, TOP topical, SCA scalar, EXC exclusive, 1 first-person, 2 second-person, 3 third-person, SG singular, DU dual, PL plural, RFL reflexive, NF non-finite, AV actor voice, UV undergoer voice, SV stative voice, LA location applicative, GA goal applicative, IA instrument applicative, CAU causative, PAS passive, NEG negative, POT potential, VOL volitive

Chapter 2

Phonology & orthography

2.1 Consonants

There are ten consonant phonemes in Kohim:

		labial	*lingual*	*glottal*	
plosive	*voiceless*		k	ʔ	⟨𐑓 𐑒⟩
	voiced	b	d		⟨𐑔 𐑕⟩
	ingressive	ɓ		(ʔ)	⟨𐑖⟩
constrictive			s	h	⟨𐑒 𐑗⟩
nasal		m	n		⟨𐑙 𐑚⟩
sonant		w	r		⟨𐑝 𐑘⟩

This inventory features a coalescence of the coronal and dorsal places of articulation; these consonants pattern together and may thus be considered to comprise a single group. Also notable is the behavior of the glottal stop /ʔ/, which behaves both as a voiceless and ingressive plosive; this is relevant to lenition (§ 2.3.4.2).

To summarize consonant allophony:

- /k/ surfaces as [g] before /b d/
- /k d s n/ surface as [t̪ d̪ʑ ɕ n̪] before /i/
- /h/ surfaces as [x] after a consonant
- /n/ surfaces as [ŋ] before /k ʔ ɓ s h/ or a word boundary
- /r/ surfaces as [l̪] before /b d ɓ m n i/ or a word boundary
- otherwise, /k ʔ b d ɓ s h m n w r/ surface as [k ʔ b d̪ ʂ h m n̪ ʊ ɾ̪]

The Kuuβi were gracious enough to not only show me their native orthography, but also lend me a font file for it for usage in my (and, hopefully, others') studies. They claim to have inherited the script from a human-like group of people they call the Kamiku, who reside in the Trotterkopfs' native

plane[1]. The system is fairly straightforward, being alphabetic in nature. There is little in the way of punctuation and word separation, although sentences are generally separated by a space ⟨ ⟩.

In the practical romanization (for use in names and such), the characters mostly follow the phonemic transcription; the phonetically-motivated exceptions being /k/ [t̪ g] ⟨t g⟩ and /d r/ [ȡ l̪] ⟨j l⟩ (i.e., showing their regular allophony).

2.2 Vowels

There are four vowel phonemes in Kohim:

i	o	u	⟨ɒ ɛ ɖ⟩
	a		⟨ɔ⟩

They experience little significant allophony, and primarily surface as [ɪ ɤ^β u a]; /o/ is compressed, while /u/ is rounded.

2.3 Phonological profile & processes

The phonological profile may be modeled as follows:

$$\#\left[_{\omega}\left[_{\varphi}\left[_{\sigma}\mathrm{C}_1\mathrm{V}(\mathrm{C}_2|\mathrm{V})^{?}\right]\left[_{\varsigma_1}\mathrm{C}_1^{?}\mathrm{V}\right]\left[_{\varsigma_2}(\mathrm{C}_1\mathrm{V})|\mathrm{C}_2\right]\right](\varphi|\sigma)^{*}\right]\#$$

- # a word boundary
- ω a phonological word; φ a foot; σ an on-syllable; ς an off-syllable
- [ ] a domain
- $\circ^{?}$ zero or one; $\circ^{*}$ zero or more
- C_1 a consonant; C_2 /k ʔ b d m n w r/
- V a vowel

Wherein phonological words are composed of feet (φ), which are in turn composed of on- and off-syllables (σ, ς). Feet may be mono-, bi-, or trisyllabic, and bi-, tri-, or tetramoraic. That is, they may consist of one, two, or three syllables, consisting of one on-syllable, one on- and one off-syllable, and one on- and two off-syllables, respectively. These combinations have a mora weight of two, three, or four. Additionally, consonant clusters are only allowed foot- and word-medially[2]. This gives the following foot shapes:

[1]The one, presumably, on the other side of my attic's pocket dimension.

[2]That is, although the above profile allows for a foot- and word-final CC, this is not actually allowed; a more thorough diagram would require a more complicated notation, and both writing and reading that is probably unnecessary.

	bimoraic	*trimoraic*	*tetramoraic*
monosyllabic	CVV, CVC	CVVV, CVVC	CVVVC
bisyllabic	CVCV	CVVCV, CVCCV, CVCVC	CVVVCV, CVVCCV, CVVCVC, CVCCVC
trisyllabic		CVCVCV	CVVCVCV, CVCCVCV

An important distinction to make is the phonological word and the morphological word: a phonological word consists of a root and its affixes (if present); a morphological word consists of a root, its affixes (if present), and its clitics (if present). Phonological processes, such as stress-assignment, occur only on the level of the phonological word, while morphophonemic processes, such as nasal metathesis, occur on both the phonological and morphological word levels.

2.3.1 Distribution of segments

There is a strict ban on word-initial vowels as shown in the phonological profile model; all words must begin with a consonant.

The segments /n r/ are exceptionally rare word-initially. So far, I have only found one root for each: for /n/, the intransitive verb nuu be big; and for /r/, the noun riiru, riru eel.

The coda consonants /b d w r/ do not occur in roots, they only occur as a result of nasal metathesis (detailed in the next section). Additionally, due to nasal metathesis, the sequences /mb md mw mr nb nd nw nr/ never occur except underlyingly.

2.3.2 Consonant clusters & nasal metathesis

The following consonant clusters occur:

→	k	ʔ	b	d	ɓ	s	h	m	n	w	r
k	kk	kʔ	kb	kd	kɓ	ks	kh	km	kn	kw	kr
ʔ	ʔk	ʔʔ	ʔb	ʔd	ʔɓ	ʔs	ʔh	ʔm	ʔn	ʔw	ʔr
m	mk	mʔ	bm	bn	mɓ	ms	mh	mm	mn	wm	wn
n	nk	nʔ	dm	dn	nɓ	ns	nh	nm	nn	rm	rn

Most of the clusters behave straightforwardly. However, when a coda nasal /m n/ clusters with an onset voiced plosive or sonant /b d w r/, their features metathesize. This is most evident when they are heterorganic in place of articulation: were it full segment metathesis, one would expect |md| to metathesize to /dm/. However, it is primarily the nasality of the coda consonant that metathesizes, returning instead /bn/; their places of articulation stay constant, but their manners of articulation metathesize.

2.3.3 Vowel clusters

Bimoraic vowel clusters may be any combination VV, including long vowels V:. However, trimoraic vowel clusters may only consist of a long vowel and a non-identical vowel V:V.

This gives the following vowel clusters:

→	i	o	u	a
i	ii	io	iu	ia
o	oi	oo	ou	oa
u	ui	uo	uu	ua
a	ai	ao	au	aa

→	i	o	u	a
ii		iio	iiu	iia
oo	ooi		oou	ooa
uu	uui	uuo		uua
aa	aai	aao	aau	

2.3.4 Moraic constraint

Content words (noun and verb roots) have a minimality constraint on their morphological mora count.

Nouns are minimally trimoraic, requiring a mora weight of at least three; while verbs are minimally bimoraic. Vowels and coda consonants have weights of one, and onset consonants have a weight of zero.

Verbs rigidly conform to their requirement and do not undergo any processes suggesting they have underlyingly illegal forms.

Nouns are not so stable; there are many nouns which that may be analyzed as behaving bimoraically, even though their surface citation forms meet the minimal requirement. When taking an affix or clitic, however, the underlying bimoraic form surfaces (as the affix/clitic augments the word enough to satisfy the constraint).

There are two repair strategies that these nouns use to become trimoraic: lengthening and reduplication.

2.3.4.1 Lengthening

Lengthening is the process by which underlyingly CVV, CVCV roots become trimoraic, in which the first vowel is lengthened |CV:V, CV:CV|. This gives the shapes CVVV, CVVCV.

2.3.4.2 Reduplication

Reduplication is the process by which underlyingly CVV, CVC roots become trimoraic, in which the first CV unit is reduplicated and suffixed |CVV~CV , CVCV~CV|. This gives the shapes CVVCV, CVCVCV.

Notable about this strategy is that the reduplicated |~CV| unit undergoes lenition, in which certain consonants alternate with other consonants. This applies to the following consonants:

radical	k	ʔ$_1$	b	d	ɓ	ʔ$_2$
lenited	s	h	w	r	m	n

For instance, the root bon reduplicates to bormo food; the latter is derived from the former by suffixation of |~wo| (from /*bo/), and then nasal metathesis applies.

The glottal stop has two lenited forms: /h/ and /n/. The choice of form is lexically-determined and cannot be otherwise predicted. For example, the root ʔum reduplicates to ʔumhu human, but the root ʔai reduplicates to ʔaina light.

2.3.5 Stress & clitics

Stress in Kohim is characterized by an increase primarily in pitch of the final vocalic mora of the stressed syllable. It is marginally-contrastive, and always falls on the last syllable of the phonological word. When relevant, stress shall be indicated as /ó/.

Contrast occurs when observing the behavior of affixes and clitics, together referred to as markers. Markers that are part of the phonological word (and thus, shift stress) are termed 'affixes'; while markers that are outside of the phonological word (and do not shift stress) are termed 'clitics'. Take the following:

			=ʔi	TOP		damóʔi
daamó (da:mo)	tree	+	wi=	1SG	→	widamó
			-ko	ACC		damokó
			=nu	EXC		ʔudánu
ʔudanú (ʔuda~nu)	squirrel	+	bo=	2SG	→	boʔudá
			-mi	GEN		ʔudamí

In which the first two of each set demonstrate clitics (the topical enclitic and a possessive proclitic pronoun), and the last one demonstrates a suffix (the accusative suffix). The proclitic, being attached to the left edge of the word, has no visible effect on stress, but the other two markers do.

Clitics also differ in that they are less bound to that which they modify. The specifics for nominal enclitics and pronominal proclitics are detailed in their respective sections.

Chapter 3

Nouns

Nouns are roots that denote entities. They may take a handful of clitics and affixes that indicate roles and relationships.

suffixes		*enclitics*	
ACC	-ko	TOP	=ʔi
GEN	-mi	SCA	=bu
OBL	-ra	EXC	=nu

Nouns may maximally take one of each.

3.1 Suffixes

Nominal suffixes denote semantic and syntactic roles.

3.1.1 Accusative

The accusative suffix is used to mark the object of a verb in independent clauses when it is specific. A specific noun is one that is unique within a given context; non-specific nouns do not take the accusative. Names (personal and otherwise) always take the accusative suffix when they are verb objects.

When the accusative is present, it triggers antiagreement; agreement morphology is stripped from the verb.

(3.1) *kaamo waak kohinoti*

kaamo waak kohino -ki
bear fish eat -3

'the bear is eating some fish'

(3.2) *kaamo waakko kohino*

kaamo waak -ko kohino
bear fish -ACC eat

'the bear is eating a fish'

(3.3) *woi haao miranotiwada*

woi haao mirano…wada -ki
1SG bug look for -3

'I'm looking for a bug' (any bug)

(3.4) *woi haoko ɓitinowada*

woi hao -ko ɓikinowada
1SG bug -ACC look for

'I'm looking for a bug' (a specific bug)

It is also used for syntactically-heavy objects (§ 6.2), regardless of specificity.

(3.5) *woi waak ɓitinoti*

woi waak ɓikino -ki
1SG fish see -3

'I see fish'

(3.6) *woi waakko haao kaikohi ɓitino*

woi waak -ko haao kaikohi ɓikino
1SG fish -ACC bug eat see

'I see fish that eat bugs'
'I see a fish that eats bugs'

3.1.2 Genitive

The genitive suffix is used to form nominal-nominal relationships. It is most often used possessively, but is also used to denote part-whole relationships and material composition.

(3.7) *ʔummi salisa*

ʔum -mi sarisa
human -GEN arm

'the human's arm'
Or: 'the arm of the human'

(3.8) *damomi kunni*

damo -mi kunni
tree -GEN leaf

'the leaves of the tree'
Or: 'the tree's leaves'

(3.9) *haomi kooko*

hao -mi kooko
bug -GEN colony

'the colony of bugs'

The genitive noun is usually placed before the noun it modifies, but may be placed after it for focal reasons. Compare:

(3.10) *woi ʔummi saliko ɓitino*

woi	ʔum	-mi	sariko	ɓikino
1SG	human	-GEN	arm	see

'I see the human's arm'

(3.11) *woi saliko ʔummi ɓitino*

woi	sariko	ʔum	-mi	ɓikino
1SG	arm	human	-GEN	see

'it is the human's arm that I see' (as opposed to another creature's arm)

It is also used to mark the eject of causative verbs.

(3.12) *tiɓisi lirumi wikohinowodo*

kiɓisi	riru	-mi	wikohinowo	=do
child	eel	-GEN	I caused to eat	=CAU

'I make the child eat eel'

3.1.3 Oblique

The oblique suffix is used for all non-core (oblique) arguments, which are often placed in the postverbal position. It is most often used to mark locations and instruments.

(3.13) *dooliwo damora*

dooriwo	damo	-ra
I stand	tree	-OBL

'I'm standing at the tree'

(3.14) *kohisiwo salira*

kohisiwo	sari	-ra
I ate	hands	-OBL

'I ate with (my) hands'

With verbs of transfer, it denotes either the recipient or the donor. This is modulated lexically; the prototypical transfer verbs are moru carry to and haru carry from

(3.15) *woi miidu morunoti kamora*

woi	miidu	morunoki	kamo	-ra
1SG	corn	carry to	bear	-OBL

'I am giving corn to the bear'

(3.16) *woi miidu harunoti kamora*

woi	miidu	harunoki	kamo	-ra
1SG	corn	carry from	bear	-OBL

'I am taking corn from the bear'

3.2 Enclitics

Enclitics denote nominal relationships and pragmatic roles. The lack of such an enclitic is generally used for pragmatically-neutral arguments, as well as for simple topics and foci. Take the following example, in which neither subject nor object bear any particular pragmatic significance.

(3.17) *kaamo waakko kohino*

ᏃᏧᏂᏋᏣᏧᏧᏃᏃᏋᏃᏋᏒᏁᏎᏋ

kaamo waakko kohino
bear fish eat

'the bear is eating a fish'
'the bear, it is eating a fish'

They may go on any (pragmatically-applicable) nominal argument.

3.2.1 Topical

The topical enclitic (TOP) is used primarily to mark contrastive topics, which are used to signal a change in topic or to reintroduce an old one.

(3.18) *kamoʔi waakko kohino*

ᏃᏧᏂᏍᏁᏣᏧᏧᏃᏃᏋᏃᏋᏒᏁᏎᏋ

kamo =ʔi waakko kohino
bear =TOP fish eat

'as for the bear, it is eating a fish'

It is used for simple topics involved in a double-subject construction, in which the topic serves to modify the (non-topical) subject, usually in a relationship of possession or part-whole composition. The presence or absence of the genitive suffix modulates contrastiveness; contrastive double-subject topics take the genitive. Compare:

(3.19) *damoʔi kunni nuuliti*

ᏫᏧᏂᏍᏁᏃᏤᏎᏤᏧᏤᏁᏃᏁ

damo =ʔi kunni nuuriki
tree =TOP leaves be big

'the tree, (its) leaves are big'

(3.20) *damomiʔi kunni nuuliti*

ᏫᏧᏂᏗᏍᏁᏃᏤᏎᏤᏧᏤᏁᏃᏁ

damo -mi =ʔi kunni nuuriki
tree -GEN =TOP leaves be big

'as for the tree, (its) leaves are big'

3.2.2 Scalar

The scalar enclitic (SCA) is used primarily to mark scalar and additive focus.

(3.21) *Nonabu waak kohinoti*

nona	=bu	waak	kohinoki
Noona	=SCA	fish	eat

'even Noona is eating fish'

(3.22) *Noona haobu kohinoti*

noona	hao	=bu	kohinoki
Noona	bug	=SCA	eat

'Noona is eating bugs also'

It is also used to coördinate nouns conjunctively (and), in which the last coördinated noun takes the enclitic.

(3.23) *kaamo haobu*

kaamo	hao	=bu
bear	bug	=SCA

'the bear and the bug'

3.2.3 Exclusive

The exclusive enclitic (EXC) is used primarily to mark exclusive focus.

(3.24) *Sasanu haao kohinoti*

sasa	=nu	haao	kohinoki
Saasa	=EXC	bug	eat

'only Saasa is eating bugs'

It is also used to coördinate nouns disjunctively (xor), in the same manner as the scalar enclitic.

(3.25) *kaamo haonu*

kaamo	hao	=nu
bear	bug	=EXC

'the bear or the bug'

Chapter 4

Pronouns

Pronouns are words that substitute nouns. There are two sets of pronouns: emphatic and proclitic.

emphatic

<table>
<tr><th></th><th>SG</th><th>DU</th><th>PL</th></tr>
<tr><td>1EX</td><td rowspan="2">woi</td><td>nak</td><td>winu</td></tr>
<tr><td>1IN</td><td>mau</td><td rowspan="2">mana</td></tr>
<tr><td>2</td><td>bosa</td><td>bom</td></tr>
<tr><td>3</td><td>kadi</td><td colspan="2">kono</td></tr>
</table>

proclitic

<table>
<tr><th></th><th>SG</th><th>PL</th></tr>
<tr><td>1</td><td>wi=</td><td rowspan="2">maa=</td></tr>
<tr><td>2</td><td>bo=</td></tr>
<tr><td>3</td><td>kai=</td><td>ko=</td></tr>
</table>

Pronouns do not take suffixes, but may take enclitics (the same ones as nouns proper).

(4.1) *woiʔi haao kohinoti*

woi	=ʔi	haao	kohinoki
1SG	=TOP	bug	eat

‘as for me, I’m eating bugs’

Generally, the emphatic pronouns are used as subjects, while the proclitic pronouns are used as objects. However, emphatic pronouns may be used as objects for focal reasons.

(4.2) *woi kaikohinoti*

woi	kai=	kohinoki
1SG	3SG=	eat

‘I’m eating it’

(4.3) *woi kaji kohinoti*

woi	kadi	kohinoki
1SG	3SG	eat

‘I’m eating it’ (as opposed to s.t. else)

And proclitic pronouns may be used for subjects of intransitive verbs, as well as transitive verbs with a dropped object (i.e., when the subject is adjacent to the verb).

(4.4) *kainuusiti*

kai= nuusiki
3SG= be big
'it is big'

(4.5) *wikohinoti*

wi= kohinoki
1SG= eat
'I'm eating (s.t.)'

This does not occur when the object is moved (such as for topicalization), however.

(4.6) *hao?i woi kohinoti*

hao =?i woi kohinoki
bug =TOP 1SG eat
'as for bugs, I'm eating them'

4.1 Person

First-person pronouns (1) refer to the speaker, speakers, or speaker(s)-and-listener(s). In the emphatic set, these make a clusivity distinction: the exclusive forms (EX) exclude the listener(s), while the inclusive forms (IN) include the listener(s).

Second-person pronouns (2) refer to the listener. In both sets in the plural, the 1(IN) and 2 are effectively merged; this is glossed as ½PL. They warrant the second-person agreement, |-mo|.

Third-person pronouns (3) refer to all other referents, and are also used resumptively in relative clauses (§ 6.3).

4.2 Number

The singular number (SG) refers to one entity. The dual number (DU) refers to exactly two entities, and is usually reserved for natural or expected pairs, such as paired body parts. Third-person pronouns do not have a distinct dual form, and the dual effectively merges for all persons with the plural in the proclitic set. The plural number (PL) refers to entities of an amount greater than one.

4.3 Possession

Proclitic pronouns may be used possessively:

(4.7) *wisali*

wi= sarisa
1SG= arm
'my arm'

(4.8) *bomidu*

bo= midu
2SG= corn
'your fish'

(4.9) *kaiwaak*

kai= waak
3SG= fish
'their fish'

The third-person proclitics may be used to link two nouns possessively, much like the genitive case. However, these two constructions cannot coexist.

(4.10) *kaamo kaiwaak*

kaamo kai= waak
bear 3SG= fish

'the bear's fish'

(4.11) *kamomi waak*

kamo -mi waak
bear -GEN fish

'the bear's fish'

(4.12) **kamomi kaiwaak*

kamo -mi kai=
bear -GEN 3SG=
waak
fish

'the bear's fish'

Unlike the genitive construction, proclitics can only be used to denote possession, never part-whole or compositional relationships.

(4.13) *waak kaikoko*

waak kai= koko
fish 3SG= group

'the group's fish'
Intended: 'the group of fish'

4.4 Oblique pronouns

When taking the role of an oblique, pronouns usually take the emphatic form and are placed in the postfield, like oblique nouns.

(4.14) *saasa sadoliti kaji*

saasa sadoriki kadi
saasa climb 3SG

'Saasa is climbing it'

(4.15) *noona sasako morusi kaji*

noona sasaka morusi kadi
Noona Saasa gave 3SG

'Saasa gave it to Noona'

However, in the presence of a pronominal proclitic as a core argument or the lack of overt core arguments altogether, the oblique pronoun becomes a pronominal proclitic, and attaches either to the core pronominal proclitic, or the verb itself. Since pronominal proclitics cannot stack, the core proclitic becomes a full emphatic pronoun to which the oblique proclitic attaches.

(4.16) *kaiwoi sadoliwo*

kai= woi sadoriwo
3SG= 1SG I climb

'I'm climbing it'

(4.17) *kaisadoliwo*

kai= sadoriwo
3SG= I climb

'I'm climbing it'

(4.18) *noona kaiwoi morusiwo*

noona kai= woi morusiwo
Noona 3SG= 1SG I gave

'I gave it to Noona'

(4.19) *noona kaimorusiwo*

noona kai= morusiwo
Noona 3SG= I gave

'I gave it to Noona'

Although it normally occurs with an intransitive subject proclitic or a transitive object proclitic, it may also occur with a transitive subject proclitic (wherein the object is dropped).

(4.20) *kaibosa morusiwo*

kai= bosa morusiwo
3SG= 2SG I gave

'I gave it to you'

4.5 Reflexive

Reflexive pronouns (RFL) are not a separate set of pronouns per se, but are formed regularly by attaching a proclitic pronoun to the corresponding emphatic pronoun[1]. Thus:

	SG	DU	PL
1EX	wiwoi	winak	maawinu
1IN		maamau	maamana
2	bobosa	maabom	
3	koikadi	kokono	

These take the expected gloss with an additional RFL tacked on[2].

As the name suggests, these pronouns are used to form reflexive constructions, in which the agent and patient are the same or act upon each other. Regardless of voice, they are always situated as the object of the clause. They are generally not subject to processes such as topicalization. Because they are the object, the verb agrees with them; however since the agent and patient (thus, the subject and object) are semantically identical, the subject may freely be dropped.

(4.21) *wiwoi ɓitinowo*

ɓikino -wo
see -1SG

'I see myself'

(4.22) *konok kaikaji ɓitinoti*

konok kaikadi ɓikino -ki
Konok 3SG.RFL see -3SG

'Konok sees themselves'

[1] Interestingly, the dual first-person exclusive nak takes the singular proclitic |wi=|, while the dual first-person inclusive mau takes the plural proclitic |maa=|.

[2] I have chosen to treat as their own units because they behave differently than their happenstance counterparts, which may occur in relative clauses or with an oblique proclitic pronoun.

Chapter 5

Verbs

Verbs express events, and are divided into two categories: transitive and intransitive.

transitive		*intransitive*	
NF	∅	NF	∅
AV	-no	SV	-ri
UV	-si		

Both types of verb start out as infinitives, and may be variously marked for different voices, agreement, and may take a variety of auxiliaries.

5.1 Transitivity

Transitivity describes the number of core arguments a verb may take. Transitivity is lexical, with verbs being inherently one or the other. Transitive verbs tend to be action events with a highly-effected patient or a stimulus, while intransitive verbs tend to be states.

transitive		*intransitive*	
kohi	eat	doo	stand
dano	hit	sik	sleep
ɓiki	see	nuu	be big

Transitive verbs take two arguments, a subject and an object. The roles of these arguments are determined by the voice of the verb; the roles are agent (AGT) and patient (PAT).

Intransitive verbs take one argument, a subject. The role of this subject is determined lexically by the verb, instead of morphologically by its voice; this role is called the experiencer, although it is analogous to both the agent and patient roles.

There are two classes of intransitive verbs: agentive and patientive. Agentive verbs (A) take an agent-like subject, while patientive verbs (P) take a patient-like subject.

5.2 Non-finite

The non-finite form (NF) is the default, citation form of all verbs. It is used primarily in the formation of relative clauses (§ 6.3).

Syntactically, it behaves like the stative voice (for intransitives) or the undergoer voice (for transitives); for the latter, it designates the subject as the patient, and the object as the agent. It may take applicatives, but does not encode any information regarding the temporal structure of the event.

(5.1) *kaamo kaidoo*

kaamo kaidoo
bear stand.NF

'the bear that stands'

(5.2) *kaamo haao kaikohi*

kaamo haao kaikohi
bear bug eat.NF

'the bear that eats bugs'

It is also used in independent clauses for questions and polite commands; in the latter application, it is often accompanied by the potential auxiliary. In these cases, it does take agreement.

(5.3) *kohimo*

kohi -mo
eat.NF -2

'did you eat?'

(5.4) *kohimoliko*

kohi -mo =riko
eat.NF -2 =POT

'please eat!'

5.3 Actor

The actor voice (AV) designates the subject as the agent, and the object as the patient. It confers an imperfective meaning, indicating that the event is incomplete or viewed as having internal structure.

(5.5) *kaamo waakko kohino*

kaamo waakko kohi -no
bear fish eat -AV

'the bear is eating a fish'

It may be used for strong imperatives, which are generally reserved for those of lower social standing (younger Trotterkopfs, humans, animals).

(5.6) *kohinoti*

kohi -no -ki
eat -AV -3

'eat!'

5.4 Undergoer

The undergoer voice (UV) designates the subject as the patient, and the object as the agent. It confers a perfective meaning, indicating that the event is complete or viewed as a whole.

(5.7) *waak kamoko kohisi*

ᏣᎫᎫᏃᏃᏦᎵᏃᎵᏃᎵᎦᎾᏂᎾ

waak kamoko kohi -si
fish bear eat -UV

‘the bear ate a fish’

5.4.1 Applicatives

Applicatives are modifiers to the undergoer voice or patientive intransitive verbs that alter the role of the subject, giving it the semantics of an oblique argument (roles such as location, goal, etc.). This opens them up for various processes such as relativization, questioning, and so on.

LA -sau

GA -dii

IA -wako

With transitive verbs, the object stays as the agent. With both types of verb, a patient may be reintroduced as a true oblique.

5.4.1.1 Location

The location applicative (LA) promotes a location or source argument.

(5.8) *biina kamoko kohisisau*

ᎦᎾᎾᎵᏃᏃᏦᎵᏃᎵᏃᎵᎦᎾᏂᎾᏃᏧ

biina kamoko kohi -si -sau
lake bear eat -UV -LA

‘the bear ate (s.t.) at the lake’

(5.9) *daamo harusiwosau*

ᎠᏃᏃᏦᎵᎦᏬᏧᎾᏂᎾᏃᏧ

daamo haru…wo -si -sau
tree I took -UV -LA

‘I took (s.t.) from the tree’

5.4.1.2 Goal

The goal applicative (GA) promotes a goal or benefactive argument.

(5.10) *ʔudanu morusijiiwo*

ᏉᏧᎠᏂᏧᏬᏧᏂᎾᎾᏬᏧᎵ

ʔudanu moru…wo -si -dii
squirrel I gave -UV -GA

‘I gave (s.t.) to the squirrel’

(5.11) *Saasa Nonako karusijii*

ᏎᏃᏎᏂᏏᎵᏃᎵᏃᎵᏬᏧᎾᏂᎾᎾ

saasa nonako karu -si -dii
Saasa Noona have -UV -GA

‘Noona has s.t. for Saasa’

5.4.1.3 Instrument

The instrument applicative (IA) promotes an instrument or malefactive argument.

(5.12) *salisa kohisiwakowo*

[illegible]

salisa	kohi…wo	-si	-wako
hands	I ate	-UV	-IA

'I ate (s.t.) with (my) hands'

(5.13) *Konok Ɓukiko kawosiwako*

[illegible]

konok	ɓukiko	kawo	-si	-wako
Konok	Ɓukimo	break	-UV	-IA

'Ɓukimo broke s.t. for Konok'

5.5 Stative

The stative voice (SV) behaves as a combination of the actor and undergoer voices for intransitive verbs. Agentive verbs behave as though they take the actor voice, while patientive verbs behave as though they take the undergoer voice. This is evident by the fact that only patientive intransitive verbs may take applicatives.

5.6 Agreement

	SG	PL
1	-wo	-ba
2	-mo	
3	-ki	

Agreement tracks the subject of intransitive verbs, and the object of transitive verbs (including those verbs derived by vocals). In transitive independent clauses, the inclusion of agreement is dependent on the presence or absence of the accusative marker on the object: when the accusative occurs, agreement does not.

In relative clauses, the inclusion of agreement is dependent on the headedness of the relative clause: agreement only occurs in headless relative clauses.

5.7 Auxiliaries

Auxiliaries are verbal enclitics. There are two categories of auxiliaries: vocal and modal.

vocal		*modal*			
CAU	=do	NEG	=miki		
PAS	=ha	POT	=riko	POT.NEG	=rimi
		VOL	=wada	VOL.NEG	=wamo

Verbs may maximally take one of each.

5.7.1 Vocals

Vocals[1] are auxiliaries that modify the relationship between arguments and the verb.

5.7.1.1 Causative

The causative vocal (CAU) is a valency-increasing operation, introducing a causer role.

With transitive verbs, it derives a ditransitive verb, or a verb with three core arguments: the subject, the object, and the eject[2]. The eject is always marked with the genitive case (§ 3.1.2) or the emphatic pronoun form (Ch. 4). It is usually placed directly before the object (giving the order subject-eject-object-verb), if not moved by topicality.

With the actor voice, the subject is the agent-causee, the object is the causer, and the eject is the patient. In this construction, the agent is understood to lack control, while the patient has control or is control-neutral.

(5.14) *tiɓisi lirumi wikohinowodo*

kiɓisi	riru	-mi	wi=	kohi…wo	-no	=do
child	eel	-GEN	1SG=	eat	-AV	=CAU

‘I make the child eat eel’ (they do so unwillingly)

With the undergoer voice, the subject is the patient-causee, the object is the causer, and the eject is the agent. In this construction, the patient is understood to lack control, while the agent has control or is control-neutral.

(5.15) *liiru tiɓimi wikohisiwodo*

riiru	kiɓi	-mi	wi=	kohi…wo	-si	=do
eel	child	-GEN	1SG=	eat	-UV	=CAU

‘I made the child eat eel’ (they do so willingly)

The causative is also used for verbs of transfer, wherein the causer is understood to be the recipient (of giving) or the donor (of taking).

(5.16) *woi midumi kamoko morunodo*

woi	midu	-mi	kamoko	moru	-no	=do
1SG	corn	-GEN	bear	carry to	-AV	=CAU

‘I give corn to the bear’

With intransitive verbs, it derives a transitive verb that takes a subject and an eject. The subject is the causer, and the eject is the experiencer.

[1] Yes, I made this up; I am very proud of this usage.

[2] So-called because it takes the role of the underived object (of transitive verbs) or subject (of intransitive verbs).

(5.17) *woi tiɓimi sikliwodo*

woi	kiɓi	-mi	sikriwo	=do
1SG	child	-GEN	sleep	=CAU

'I made the child sleep'

The intransitive subject causer may also be dropped, leaving only the eject. Which agentive intransitive verbs, this is used to derive spontaneous or non-volitional events. Compare:

(5.18) *ʔumhu wuuriti*

ʔumhu	wuuriki
human	light a fire

'the human lit a fire'

(5.19) *ʔummi wuuritodo*

ʔum	-mi	wuuriki	=do
human	-GEN	light a fire	=CAU

'the human started a fire' (by accident)

With patientive intransitive verbs, it is used to derive changes-of-state. Compare:

(5.20) *daamo nuuliti*

daamo	nuuriki
tree	be big

'the tree is big'

(5.21) *damomi nuulitido*

damo	-mi	nuuriki	=do
tree	-GEN	be big	=CAU

'the tree is growing'
Or: 'the tree becomes big'

5.7.1.2 Passive

The passive vocal (PAS) is a valency-reducing operation.

With transitive verbs, it derives an intransitive verb whose subject patterns as the subject of the underived transitive verb; that is, with the actor voice, the passive subject patterns as the agent, and with the undergoer voice, it patterns as the patient. The demoted argument may be reintroduced as an oblique.

With the actor voice, it denotes a habitual or job-like event; the derived meanings are often idiosyncratic and imply some sort of archetypal patient. For instance, the actor voice passive of kohi eat takes on a culture- and species-specific meaning of feeding on oneirofecal matter.

(5.22) *kohinowoha*

kohi…wo	-no	=ha
I eat	-AV	=PAS

'I'm feeding on oneirofecal matter'

It may also take on a general habitual meaning, especially when an overt patient is introduced obliquely.

(5.23) *kohinowoha midura*

kohi…wo	-no	=ha	midu	-ra
I eat	-AV	=PAS	corn	-OBL

'I eat corn'
'I used to eat corn'

With the undergoer voice, it usually imparts a sense of humility or suffering.

(5.24) *wibon kohisitiha*

wibon	kohisiki	=ha
my food	eat	=PAS

'my food was eaten' (and because of this, I am suffering)

With intransitive verbs, it derives impersonal verbs; like with actor voice passives, there is often some sort of implied archetypal argument. These verbs take no core arguments, but are notable in that they take the first-person singular agreement, regardless of their semantic referent.

(5.25) *saraliwoha*

sarari	-wo	=ha
fall	-1SG	=PAS

'it's raining'
Literally: '(it) falls'

5.7.2 Modals

Modals are auxiliaries that modify the semantics of the verb.

5.7.2.1 Negative

The negative modal (NEG) is used to negate clauses.

(5.26) *wisikliwomiti*

wi=	sikriwo	=miki
1SG=	sleep	=NEG

'I'm not asleep'

(5.27) *kaamo waakko kohinomiti*

kaamo	waakko	kohino	=miki
bear	fish	eat	=NEG

'the bear is not eating a fish'

The potential and volitive modals have additional negated forms, which behave identically (but negated). However, they also have additional uses specific to the negated forms, especially when used with the non-finite verb form. The negative potential may be used for formal or polite questions, used when speaking to a social superior, and the negative volitional is used for strong prohibitives.

(5.28) *kohimolimi*

kohimo =rimi
eat =POT.NEG

'did you eat?'

(5.29) *kohimowamo*

kohimo =wamo
eat =VOL.NEG

'don't eat!!'

The latter is stronger than simply using a non-finite imperative with the negative modal.

(5.30) *kohimomiti*

kohimo =miki
eat =NEG

'don't eat!'

5.7.2.2 Potential

The potential modal (POT) is used for inherent ability and possibility, as well as polite imperatives with the non-finite verb form.

(5.31) *woi miidu kohinotiliko*

woi miidu kohinoki =riko
1SG corn eat =POT

'I can eat corn' (inherently)
'I might eat corn'

(5.32) *kohimoliko*

kohimo =riko
eat.NF =POT

'please eat!'

It is also used for predictive future reference and conditional apodosis. Predictive futures and conditionals are those that are hypothetical or *a posteriori*.

(5.33) *saralihaliko*

sarariha =riko
rain =POT

'it might rain'

(5.34) *saraliha, sikoliwoliko bamara*

sarariha | sikoriwo =riko bamara
rain I walk =POT home

'if it rains, I will go home'

5.7.2.3 Volitive

The volitive modal (VOL) is used for circumstantial ability and events in which the agent has a large degree of control, as well as strong commands with the non-finite verb form..

(5.35) *woi ɓitinomowada*

woi ɓikinomo =wada
1SG see you =VOL

'I can see you' (circumstantially)
'I'm looking for you'

(5.36) *kohimowada*

kohimo =wada
eat.NF =VOL

'eat!!'

It may induce an inchoative meaning in transitive verbs.

(5.37) *woi bonko kohinotiwada*

woi bonko kohinoki =wada
1SG food eat =VOL

'I'm beginning to eat my meal'

It is also used for definite future reference and conditional apodosis. Definite futures and conditionals are those that are factual or *a priori*.

(5.38) *saralihawada*

sarariha =wada
rain =VOL

'it will rain'

(5.39) *saraliha, malilimoʔuwada*

sarariha | maririmoʔu =wada
rain you become wet =VOL

'if it rains, you will get wet'

It is often used to strengthen sensory verbs, such as ɓiki <u>see</u> and buʔma <u>hear</u>.

5.8 Derivation

Generally, the separation of transitive and intransitive verbs is rather strict. Although the passive and causative vocals may be used to derive verbs of the opposite transitivity, these are chiefly grammatical in nature: they do not generate new roots.

However, there are a few fossilized verbal alternations, in which some roots are clearly derived from others.

There is a small, closed class of transitive-intransitive verb pairs that are clearly related via the lenition or deletion of a consonant. In this class, transitive verbs take the shape C_1VC_2V; the corresponding intransitive verb is derived by leniting the C_2 (if it is one of /k ʔ b d ɓ/), or deleting it entirely, forming a CVcV or CVV root (wherein c denotes a lenited consonant). Some of the CVV vowel sequences simplify to long vowels, and some of the meanings have shifted considerably.

So far I have found nine such verb pairs:

dano	hit		doo	stand
kawo	break		kao	be hurt
ɓiki	see		ɓisi	be conspicuous
hoʔi	cover		honi	be covered
sada	throw	→	sara	fall
woru	set aflame		wuu	light a fire
mosi	put in water		moi	be in water
kiɓo	put in a tree		kimo	be in a tree
ʔamu	put in the ground		ʔau	be in the ground

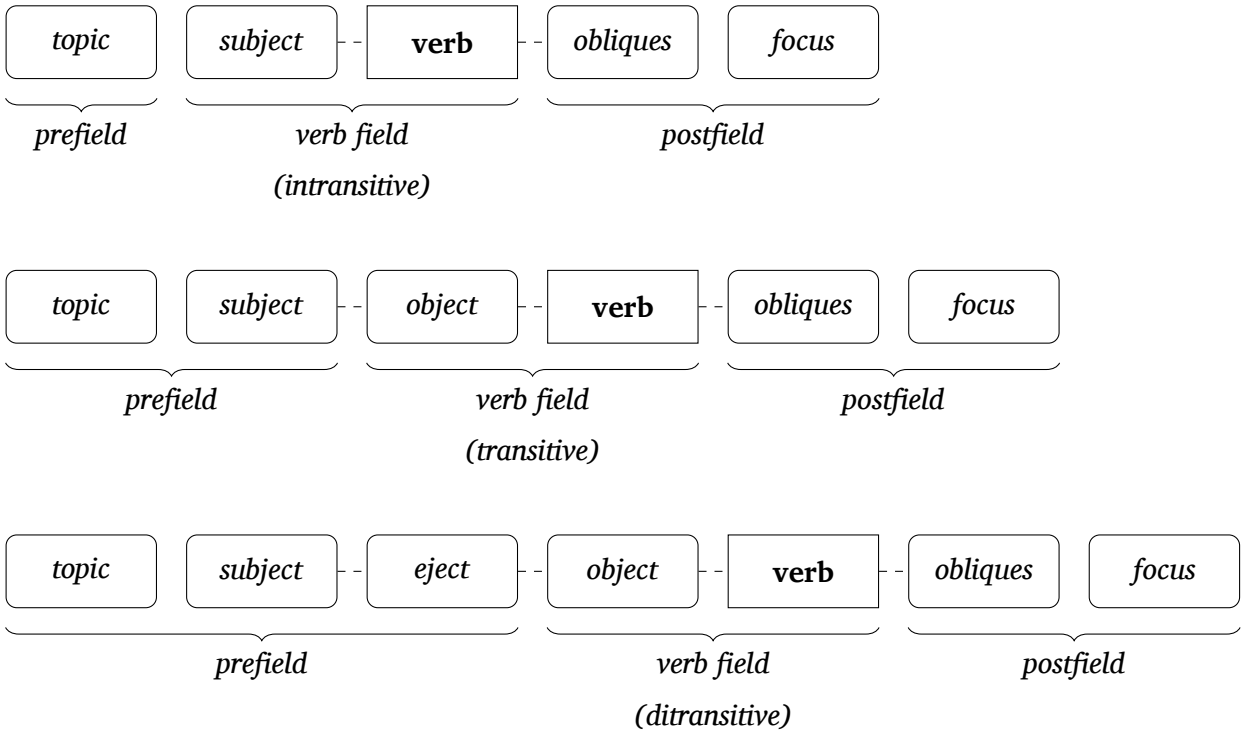
There is also a derivational affix |-m|, which nominalizes verbs. It is also non-productive, and seems to be used mostly to derive body parts and generic nouns.

kohi	eat		kohim	mouth
ɓiki	see		ɓikim	eye(s)
dano	hit	→	danom	finger(s)
siko	walk		sikom	terrestrial animal
doba	swim, fly		dobam	non-terrestrial animal
doo	stand		doom	place

Chapter 6

Syntax

The order and structure of constituents in intransitive, transitive, and ditransitive clauses are as follows:



These arrangements are not concrete, however, as arguments may move around for pragmatic reasons (§§ 6.4 and 6.5). It is important to note that the verb is the only overtly obligatory element; all other elements may be dropped or are non-obligatory.

The prefield consists of the topic of intransitive clauses, the topic and subject of transitive clauses, and the topic, subject, and eject of ditransitive clauses. The subject of the clause is often the topic, although they may be different, such as in double-subject constructions.

The verb field consists of the verb and the subject of intransitive clauses, and the verb and the object of (di)transitive clauses.

The postfield consists of oblique arguments and the focus.

6.1 Argument-dropping

Core arguments in Kohim may freely be dropped if considered irrelevant or unimportant. This does not affect transitivity.

Most often, proclitic pronouns are dropped when they are objects, and the verb agrees with them. Oblique arguments are also commonly dropped, as they are usually of less importance than core arguments.

6.2 Syntactic weight

Arguments in a clause have certain weights: they may be either light or heavy.

Syntactically-light arguments include:

- a noun with no modifiers
- a noun with a genitive modifier
- a noun with an intransitive relative clause
- a noun with a passivized transitive relative clause
- all headless relative clauses

And syntactically-heavy arguments include:

- two or more coördinated nouns
- a noun with a transitive relative clause
- a noun with a causativized intransitive relative clause

This affects the assignment of the accusative case (§ 3.1.1), as well as movement involved in topicalization.

6.3 Relative clauses

Relative clauses are clauses formed with a non-finite verb (§ 5.2) that modify a noun or stand on their own (headless). Arguments are ordered the same as in independent clauses, except that the relativized argument is moved to the front. Although they are limited in voice and agreement, relative clauses may otherwise freely take applicatives and auxiliaries.

As they take a non-finite verb, relative clauses behave syntactically similar to the undergoer voice, but contain no aspectual information. Also, within relative clauses, objects do not take the accusative, even if specific.

All relative clauses include a pronoun that takes the place of the relativized noun; that is, it is resumptive. Both the subject and the object may be relativized. The form of the pronoun (emphatic or proclitic) modulates restrictiveness.

Non-restrictive relative clauses use the emphatic pronouns:

(6.1) *kaamo kaji nuu*

kaamo	kadi	nuu
bear	3SG	be big

'the bear, which is big'

(6.2) *kaamo haao kaji kohi*

kaamo	haao	kadi	kohi
bear	bug	3SG	eat

'the bear, which eats bugs'

(6.3) *haao kaji kaamo kohi*

haao	kadi	kaamo	kohi
bug	3SG	bear	eat

'the bug, which is eaten by bears'

While restrictive relative clauses take pronominal proclitics:

(6.4) *kaamo kainuu*

kaamo	kai=	nuu
bear	3SG=	be big

'the bear that is big'

(6.5) *kaamo haao kaikohi*

kaamo	haao	kai=	kohi
bear	bug	3SG=	eat

'the bear that eats bugs'

(6.6) *haao kaikamo kohi*

haao	kai=	kaamo	kohi
bug	3SG=	bear	eat

'the bug that is eaten by bears'

Headless relative clauses differ from normal relative clauses in that the former takes agreement, the latter does not. As headless relatives are inherently restrictive, they only take resumptive pronominal proclitics.

(6.7) *kainuuti*

kai=	nuu	-ki
3SG=	be big.NF	-3

'that which is big'

(6.8) *haao kaikohiti*

haao	kai=	kohi	-ki
bug	3SG=	eat	-3

'that which eats bugs'

(6.9) *kaikamo kohiti*

kai=	kamo	kohi	-ki
3SG=	bear	eat	-3

'that which is eaten by bears'

In restrictive clauses with non-resumptive pronominal arguments, it is (theoretically) possible to get two adjacent pronominal proclitics. This is repaired by making the non-resumptive pronoun emphatic.

(6.10) * *haao kaiwikohi*

haao	kai=	wi=	kohi
bug	3SG=	1SG=	eat

'the bug that I ate'

(6.11) *haao kaiwoi kohi*

haao	kai=	woi	kohi
bug	3SG=	1SG	eat

'the bug that I ate'

6.4 Topicalization

The topic of a clause is old information that designates what the clause is about.

Simple topics generally do not move, but topics using the topical enclitic (usually contrastive topics) are obligatorily accompanied by movement.

A topically-marked noun is always placed first in the clause. This works for all nouns within a clause, even those within other constructions, such as genitives, coördination, and relativization.

With syntactically-light constructions, the topical argument may be moved while the rest of the construction stays in place.

(6.12) *damomiʔi woi kunniko ɓitino*

$damomi_1$	=ʔi	woi	t_1	kunniko	ɓikino
tree	=TOP	1SG		leaves	see

'as for the tree, I see its leaves'

With syntactically-heavy constructions, the construction is first moved to the front of the clause, and then the topical argument is moved to the front of the construction.

This is not overly important for coördinated nouns, as they can go in any order, but it does affect heavy relative clauses significantly. In both cases, if the construction is moved from an object position and the subject is pronominal, the pronoun stays emphatic; it is blocked from being reduced to a proclitic.

(6.13) *hao?i kamoko kaikohi woi ɓitino*

[hao$_2$ =?i kamoko t_2 kaikohi]$_1$ woi t_1 ɓikino
bug =TOP bear eat 1SG see

'as for bugs, I see the bear that eats them'

(6.14) *kamoko?i waakkobu woi ɓitino*

[kamoko$_2$ =?i t_2 waakko =bu]$_1$ woi t_1 ɓikino
bear =TOP fish =SCA 1SG see

'as for the bear, I see it and the fish'

6.5 Focalization

The focus of a cause is new information that serves to answer the question-under-discussion.

Unlike topics, foci are not obligatorily moved. They may, however, be optionally backed into the postfield for emphasis.

(6.15) *woi haao kohinoki*

woi haao kohinoki
1SG bug eat

'I'm eating bugs'

(6.16) *woi kohinoki haao*

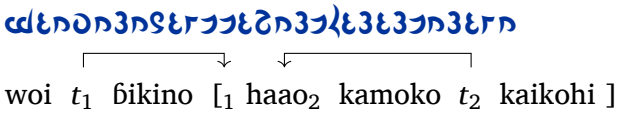
woi t_1 kohinoki haao$_1$
1SG eat bug

'it's bugs that I'm eating'

In the first example, focus is ambiguous or neutral; in the second example, the focus of the clause is explicitly designated as haao bugs, as it has been shifted into the postfield.

Like with topicalization, syntactically-heavy constructions are moved with their focalized argument. The construction is moved to the back of the clause, and then the focal argument is moved to the front of the construction.

(6.17) *woi ɓitino haao kamoko kaikohi*



woi t_1 ɓikino [$_1$ haao$_2$ kamoko t_2 kaikohi]
1SG see bug bear eat

'I see the bear that eats bugs' (as opposed to eating s.t. else)

6.6 Biclausal constructions

Biclausal constructions are pairs of clauses in which one, usually the second, is used to modify the other.

6.6.1 Positional past markers

The intransitive positional verbs moi be in water, kimo be in a tree, and ʔau be in the ground have a special usage when they take the passive vocal: they may modify the temporal reference of an adjacent clause, usually the one directly preceding. Specifically, they reference the past in various shades. They are never obligatory, but are often used to specify the temporal reference of intransitive verbs (since they do not have a salient voice distinction).

The verb moiriwoha is used for incomplete past events.

(6.18) *sikoliwo, moiliwoha*

ʔɔ3ɛʊɔɯɛ ɻɛɔʊɔɯɛɾɔ

sikoriwo	moiri	-wo	=ha
I walk	be in water	-1	=PAS

'I was walking'

The verb kimoriwoha is used for past events with present relevance, usually of an experiential or resultative nature.

(6.19) *sikoliwo, kimoliwoha*

ʔɔ3ɛʊɔɯɛ 3ɔɻɛʊɔɯɛɾɔ

sikoriwo	kimori	-wo	=ha
I walk	be in a tree	-1	=PAS

'I have walked before'
'I have walked' (and I am now here)

(6.20) *honiliti, kimoliwoha*

ɾɛʂɔʊɔ3ɔ 3ɔɻɛʊɔɯɛɾɔ

honiriki	kimori	-wo	=ha
it was covered	be in a tree	-1	=PAS

'it has been covered' (and thus, I cannot find it)

The verb ʔauriwoha is used for complete past events, and states that no longer hold true.

(6.21) *sikoliwo, ʔauliwoha*

ʔɔ3ɛʊɔɯɛ ʔɔɻʊɔɯɛɾɔ

sikoriwo	ʔauri	-wo	=ha
I walk	be in the ground	-1	=PAS

'I had walked'
'I was walking' (but I no longer am)

(6.22) *sikliwo, ʔauliwoha*

sikriwo	ʔauri	-wo	=ha
I sleep	be in the ground	-1	=PAS

'I was asleep' (but this is no longer the case)

6.6.2 Reciprocal clauses

Reciprocal clauses are those in which referents perform an action upon or among each other. They are formed using either dano hit, do or doo stand; the former for transitive clauses, the latter for intransitive clauses.

When used reciprocally, the transitive verb dano takes the opposite voice of the modified clause. Both dano and doo agree for the subject of the modified clause.

(6.23) *saasa nonako ɓitisi, danonoti*

saasa	nonako	ɓiki	-si	dano	-no	-ki
Saasa	Noona	see	-UV	hit	-AV	-3

'Saasa and Noona saw each other'

(6.24) *mana kililimo, doolimo*

mana	kiriri	-mo	doori	-mo
½PL	lean	-2	stand	-2

'we all leaned against each other'

This contrasts with the reflexive construction:

(6.25) *maamau ɓitinoba*

maamau	ɓikino	-ba
1IN.DU.RFL	see	-1PL

'you and I see ourselves'

(6.26) *mau ɓitinoba, danosiba*

mau	ɓiki	-no	-ba	dano	-si	-ba
1IN.DU	see	-AV	-1PL	hit	-UV	-1PL

'you and I see each other'

Lexicon

Nouns

k

kaamo, kamo : black bear

kiibo, kibo : table, chair : human furniture

kiɓisi, kiɓi : younger being : Trotterkopf child

kiina, kina : tree branch

kohim : mouth : language

kooko, koko : group, colony (especially of animals)

korabu : lake trout

kokin : clothing

kunni : leaf

kuuɓi, kuɓi : being : Trotterkopf

ʔ

ʔaina, ʔai : light

ʔiira, ʔira : potable water

ʔiima, ʔima : bucket : water vessel

ʔoada : wood, timber

ʔudanu, ʔuda : gray squirrel

ʔumhu, ʔum : human

b

baama, bama : house, home, shelter

babowa, babo : parent

biina, bina : lake, pond; medium to small body of water

booi, boi : pie

booʔo, boʔo : sun

bormo, bon : food : oneirofecal matter

d

daamo, damo : tree

danom : finger(s)

daʔro : impotable water

dobam : non-terrestrial animal

donɓa : moon

doom : place, location

ɓ

ɓikim : eye(s)

s

saai, sai : cooking vessel

sarisa, sari : arm(s), hand(s)

sauri : oneiric being

siiʔu, siʔu : sleeping human

sikom : terrestrial animal

h

haao, hao : wug (worms and bugs)

hasamo : sand : beach

hirohi, hiro : leg(s), foot/feet

hooro : dog

hosuri : oneiric scavenger

m

maaon : blueberry

maduʔ : bird

masuma, masu : oneiric cryptid

miidu, midu : corn

w

waak : brook trout

wiini, wini : housecat

wokon : head

r

riiru, riru : eel

Transitive verbs

k

karu : hold, have : own, possess

kawo : break, damage, injure

kiɓo : put in a tree

kohi : eat : (AV,PAS) feed on oneirofecal matter

ʔ

ʔamu : put in the ground

b

bara : cut, break cleanly

buʔma : hear, listen to

d

dano : hit : make, do : (AV,PAS) work, perform an expected task

ɓ

ɓiki : see, look at

s

sada : throw : lose : (AV,PAS) skip stones

sii : be attractive, beautiful

h

haru : carry from : take

ho?i : cover, hide

m

mira : look for, search for

moru : carry to : give

mosi : put in water

w

woru : set aflame : (AV,PAS) light a fire

Intransitive verbs

k

kao (P) : be hurt

kimo (P) : be in a tree

kiri (A) : lean

?

?oma (A) : enter the oneiric plane

?adi (P) : be dirty

?au (P) : be in the ground

?ido (A) : sit with legs down

b

bun (P) : be comfortable

d

dim (A) : hang

doba (A) : swim : fly : move through a fluid

doma (A) : exit the oneiric plane

doo (A) : stand

dui (P) : be cold : be nighttime

ɓ

ɓisi (P) : be conspicuous, obvious; stick out

s

saɓa (A) : sit with legs up

sado (A) : climb, ascend/descend; move vertically

sara (A) : fall : (PAS) rain

sawi (A) : crouch, squat

sik (P) : sleep

siko (A) : walk

h

honi (P) : be covered, hidden

m

mabu (A) : lie down

maiɓu : be warm : be daytime

mako (P) : be tied (to s.t.)

mari (P) : be wet, damp, moist

midu (P) : boil

moi (P) : be in water

modi (P) : be clean : (CAU) clean, wash

n

nuu (P) : be big

w

wuu (A) : light a fire

Example sentences

(6.27) (5MOYD #1557)

"Don't give money to the man who did not work!"

kuuɓi kaidanomiti morumomiti borna

kuuɓi	kai=	dano	=miki	moru	-mo	=miki	bon	-ra
being	3SG=	do	=NEG	carry to	-2	=NEG	food	-OBL

'don't give food to the being who did not do (anything)!'

(6.28) (5MOYD #1555)

"As soon as the water boils, put the dumplings in the cooking-pot!"

ʔirami midulitido, korabuko mosiliko saira

ʔira	-mi	midu	-ri	-ki	=do	|	korabu	-ko	mosi	=riko	sai	-ra
water	-GEN	boil	-SV	-3	=CAU		fish	-ACC	put in water	=POT	cooking vessel	-OBL

'(when) the water starts to boil, put the fish in the cooking vessel'

(6.29) (5MOYD #1552)

"Molla started cutting the branch on which he was sitting."

moora tinako kaji kaiʔidosau baranowada

moora	kina	-ko	kadi	kai=	ʔido	-sau	bara	-no	-wada
Molla	branch	-ACC	3SG	3SG=	sit	-LA	cut	-AV	-VOL

'Molla began cutting the branch he was sitting on'

(6.30) (5MOYD #1548)

"We may have lost it on the beach."

sadasibaliko hasamora

sada	-si	-ba	=riko	hasamo	-ra
lose	-UV	-1PL	=POT	beach	-OBL

'we might have lost it at the beach'

(6.31) (5MOYD #1540)

"She fetched the wood as a favour for my mother."

wibabo harusijii ʔoadora

wi=	babo	haru	-si	-dii	ʔoada	-ra
1SG=	parent	carry from	-UV	-GA	wood	-OBL

'(s.o.) took wood for my parent'

(6.32) (5MOYD #1515)

"I hang my dress on a tree."

woi kotinmi jiwnitido, timoliti

woi	kokin	-mi	dim	-ri	-ki	=do	|	kimo	-ri	-ki
1SG	clothing	-GEN	hang	-SV	-3	=CAU		be in a tree	-SV	-3

'I hang (my) clothing on a tree'

(6.33) (5MOYD #1514)

"You are not allowed to wash blueberries."

maaonmi mojilimodowamo

maaon	-mi	modi	-ri	-mo	=do	=wamo
blueberries	-GEN	be clean	-SV	-2	=CAU	=VOL.NEG

'(you) are not allowed to wash blueberries'

(6.34) (5MOYD #1512)

"The dog lies below the table."

hooro mabuli tibora

hooro	mabu	-ri	kibo	-ra
dog	lie down	-SV	table	-OBL

'the dog is lying below the table'

(6.35) (5MOYD #1510)

"This clothing was white, but it has got dirty."

kotin mojiliti, ʔauliwoha, ʔajiliti

kokin	modi	-ri	-ki	|	ʔau	-ri	-wo	=ha	|	ʔadi	-ri	-ki
clothing	be clean	-SV	-3		be in the ground	-SV	-1	=PAS		be dirty	-SV	-3

'the clothing was clean, but this is no longer the case; it is dirty'

Meta

Dedicated to Mi□comet

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Class: speedlang
Version: 0.9
Date: 31 October, 2021
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The Kohim language is a speedlang (a conlang created within a time restraint) created by me, Mareck (M.M.N.H.). It was created within the timeframe of Friday, October 15, 2021, to Sunday, October 31, 2021. The challenge was proposed by Miacomet, a.k.a. u/roipoiboy.

Like last speedlang, I have veered off from my usual aesthetic. Unlike last time, I have opted for a more modern appearance. Still with some trademark quirks that I was sorely missing last time, such as colored text (but used sparingly).

There is a backstory as to why my in-universe character is now in 2011, but that's for me to know and you to not know. Also notable is the script that is used, which you may recognize if you have done your homework.

The following creative restraints have been made:

- an asymmetrical set of plosives
- featural metathesis
- phonological constraint on minimum word size/shape, with some underlyingly-illegal forms
- symmetrical voice system
- morphological marking via absence
- grammaticalized causative

I also chose to "do" the "non-human language DLC":

- include a sound "not pronounceable by humans or a contrast that's not producible/perceivable by humans"
- include at least ten words that are relevant to the non-human speakers

As well as the following tasks:

- document and showcase the language
- translate five “syntax test” sentences, as provided by Zephyrus or some other acceptable source

The asymmetry of the plosives is self-evident (§ 2.1); there is even a surplus of labials, which is unusual for me. Featural metathesis is realized as nasal metathesis (§ 2.3.2). I am no stranger to minimal phonological word constraints, although this time I chose a minimal trimoraic foot (§ 2.3.4). The symmetrical voice system (§§ 5.3 and 5.4) takes inspiration from I-type symmetrical voice systems, as detailed in the relevant subreddit post. The absential marking is realized as a form of antiägreement triggered by the presence of the accusative case; this was personally approved by Mia, who said “This is cool so I’ll say yes”. The grammaticalized causative is realized as the causative vocal (§ 5.7.1.1).

As for the non-human DLC, I chose to make this conlang centered around Trotterkopfs, or trotterheads, a local (to my area) cryptid with very little information about it. They’re mentioned once in this old Pennsylvania Dutch book filled with prayers and remedies for things like burns and cow theft. Anyways, I just think they’re neat.

I’m actually really dissatisfied with all my attempts at non-human sounds, so I elected to ignore the non-human sound part of the DLC. I’m not actually using the DLC to skip a requirement anyways, I just thought it would be a fun extra.

The vocabulary relevant to Trotterkopfs are: kuuɓi, kuɓi Trotterkopf, kiɓiki, kiɓi Trotterkopf child, bormo, bon oneirofecal matter, kohi feed on oneirofecal matter (AV,PAS), sauri oneiric being, sii?u, si?u sleeping human, masuma, masu oneiric cryptid, hosuri oneiric scavenger, ?oma enter the oneiric plane, doma exit the oneiric plane.

This document itself documents and showcases the language, satisfying the related task; and acceptably-sourced example sentences are found in § 6.6.2.