Kísu, a language of Maíka

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A descriptive grammar

2022

Dedicated to Miacomet Pond

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Class: speedlang
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Contents

Chapter 0

Introduction

In this book I shall explore and describe the Kísu language of the Maí people.

0.1 Overview

In Ch. 0, I shall introduce the language, the conventions used in this book, and the history/context of the language (both internal and external).

0.2 Conventions

In this book, I shall use blue text for Kísu 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 (except in glosses), and blue-text angle brackets (⟨example⟩) are used for orthographic transcription.

Underlined text (which may sometimes be enclosed by 'single quotes') is used for translations, sans-serif text is used for important terms, *italicized* text is used for normal emphasis, and SMALL CAPS is used for glossed terms. "Scare quotes" are used for non-standard, ironic, or otherwise deviant usages of terms; and ‹chevrons› are used for certain notations.

Glosses are structured as follows:

(0.1) transcription
native script
morphemic transcription (object language)
morphemic transcription (metalanguage)
'translation'

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

When used as examples to demonstrate a particular grammatical feature, the morphemic metalanguage transcription will usually only contain the relevant information.

0.3 External history

The Kísu 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, March 18th, 2022, to Sunday, April 3rd,

2022. The challenge was proposed by *miacomet*, a.k.a. *u/roipoiboy*.

The following creative restraints have been made:

- diphthongs, distinct from vowel-vowel and/or vowel-glide sequences
- at least one phoneme with grammatically-determined distribution
- make use of root-template morphology
- include a class of discourse markers
- mark grammaticalized evidentiality

As well as the following tasks:

- (optional) make a script
- document and showcase the language
- translate five “syntax test” sentences, as provided by Zephyrus or some other acceptable source
- (optional) present a dialogue

The diphthong restraint is satisfied by the distinction between vowel-vowel sequences, such as /ai aɯ au/ (“diphthongs”), and vowel-glide sequences, such as /ay av/. The grammatically-distributed segment restraint is satisfied by the falling and rising tones /◌̂ ◌̌/, which only occur on verbs.

The root-template morphology restraint is expressed on verbs as tonal melodies, which they utilize grammatically. Discourse markers are detailed in § 5.1. Evidentiality surfaces in the past tenses, where reportative/hearsay evidentiality is distinguished.

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

A quick note: while I very much enjoy this lang, I have been somewhat busy with other things this past week. I have a lot of ideas for it, but I did not have the time to flesh them out, and they were not necessary for the speedlang aspect. Thus, this documentation is rather bare-bones at this point, with enough to pass as a speedlang, I suppose. The point is there is more to come.

Chapter 1

Phonology

In this chapter, I explore the sounds and related phenomena of Kísu. This includes abstract (phonemic[1]) and concrete (phonetic) forms, as well as suprasegmental units and orthographic conventions. I shall use (a modified) *[off]IPA* for phonemic transcription, and *[can]IPA*[2] for phonetic transcription.

1.1 Consonants

There are nine consonant phonemes in Kísu:

	labial		*dental*		*alveolar*		*dorsal*	
plosive			t	[t ʈʂ]			k, g	[k̡, g ʔ]
constrictive			z	[ð ʐ]	s	[ʂ]	h	[x ʂ ɦ]
sonant	v	[ʊ m]			n	[n ɾ ŋ]	y	[j]

- /v/ is labiodental, and may be bilabial
- /t z/ are laminodental, and may be laminoprepalatal
- /s n/ are apicoälveolar; /n/ may be velar
- /k g x/ are velar; /g h/ may be glottal or laminoprepalatal; /y/ is velopalatal

This inventory is notable for its rather diminutive size.

1.1.1 Consonant taxophony

Consonants experience a moderate amount of taxophony: voiceless sounds may spirantize, voiced sounds may trill, and glottalic sounds may nasalize.

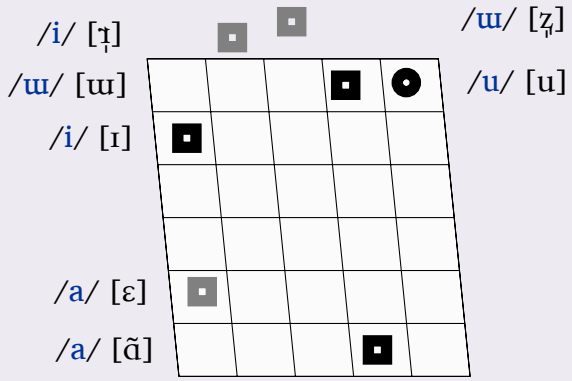
- /t z h/ surface as [ʈʂ ʐ ʂ] before /i/
- /g h v/ surface as [ʔ ɦ m] before /a/; /g/ surfaces as [ʔ] before a consonant or word boundary; and /vv vn/ surface as [mm mn]
- /n/ surface as [ɾ] between a vowel or /v y/ and one of /i ɯ u/; it surfaces as [ŋ] before a consonant (except /n/) or a word boundary
- otherwise, /t k g z s h v n y/ surface as [t k̡ g ʂ ð x ʊ n j]

[1] Wherein a phoneme is a strictly *contrastive unit* that is abstracted to succinctly represent various but related phonetic surface forms.

[2] See *Natural Phonetics* on *canipa.net*.

1.2 Vowels

There are eight phonemic vowels in Kísu, each of which can be long, and two diphthongs:



The vowel inventory is notable for its size and spread; the majority of the vowels are in the top of the vowelspace, even approaching the consonantal space.

Word-initially, a null onset surfaces as a glottal semi-stop or approximant of some description, notated as [ˀ]; before /a/, this null onset surfaces as a seminasal [ŋ̍].

Vowel-vowel sequences are maximally bimoraic (containing two members), although they may contain any combination of vowels. They contrast with vowel-glide sequences: /ai aɯ au/ are distinct from /ay av/.

1.2.1 Vowel taxophony

Vowels also experience taxophony: high vowels variously raise and lower in certain environments.

- /i ɯ/ surface as [ɪ̟ ʐ̟] after /s n/ and before a consonant or word boundary, except coda /v n y/
- /a/ surfaces as [ɛ] after /y/
- otherwise, /i ɯ u a/ surface as [ɪ ɯ u ɑ̃]

1.3 Tone

There are two tones in Kísu, although they combine in various ways depending on environment.

The high tone (H) /◌́/ surfaces as high [◌̄], while the unmarked tone (∅, L) /◌/ surface as low [◌̲]. The falling tone (HL) /◌̂/ is the result of tone spreading effects in verbs, and surfaces as falling [◌᷄]. The rising tone (LH) /◌̌/ is similarly resultant from tone spreading, and surfaces as low-rising [◌᷅].

Tones are distributed differently based on word class. In non-verb classes, tone is lexical, immutable, and the tone-bearing unit is the vocalic mora, which may be high or unmarked. Each mora's tone is independent, and there are no spreading effects to form the falling tone.

In verbs, tone is grammatical and mutable, and the tone-bearing unit is the word. Verbs may take one of three tonal melodies, or none at all, which determines the tones across the word; these melodies surface differently depending on the number of moras they span. They are as follows:

	μ	μμ	μμ…μ
∅	μ	μμ	μμ…μ
HLL	μ̂	μ́μ	μ́μ…μ
HHL	μ́	μ́μ̂	μ́μ́…μ
LLH	μ̌	μμ́	μμ…μ́

The unmarked melody surfaces as unmarked low tones on all moras. The high-low-low melody (HLL) surfaces as a high tone on the initial mora, and low tones on all other moras; in monomoraic words, it surfaces as a falling tone. The high-high-low melody (HHL) surfaces as a low tone on the final mora, and high tones on all other moras; in bimoraic words words, it surfaces as a high tone followed by a falling tone. The low-low-high melody (LLH) surfaces as a high tone on the final mora, and low tones on all other moras.

1.4 Phonotactics

Phonotactics describe the ways phonemes are organized in relation to each other and structured within domains

1.4.1 Phonological profile

The profile of the phonological word is as follows[3]:

$$\#\left[C_2 \left[T^{?} C_1^{?} V_1 (C_2|V)^{?} \right]_{\sigma} \sigma^{*} \right]_{\omega} \#$$

Wherein:

- # a word boundary
- ω a phonological word
- σ a syllable
- [ ] a domain
- $\circ^{?}$ zero or one
- $\circ^{*}$ zero or more
- T tone (§ 1.3)
- C_1 a consonant

[3] I shall use a modified (i.e., in conjunction with regex-like conventions) version of *Recursive Baerian Phonotactics Notation* (RBPN), a non-standard but infinitely more useful notation; see *Blumire & Baer (2017)*.

- C_2 /t k s v n y/
- V a vowel

Legal C_2C_1 consonant clusters are as follows:

→	t	k	g	z	s	h	v	n	y
t	tt	tk							
k	kt	kk			ks				
g	gt	gk		gz	gs		gv	gn	gy
s		sk			ss				
v	vt	vk	vg	vz	vs	vh	vv	vn	vy
n	nt	nk	ng	nz	ns	nh	nv	nn	ny
y	yt	yk	yg	yz	ys	yh	yv	yn	yy

The clusters /tt tk kt kk ks sk ss/ generally occur only in roots; affixes often have repair strategies that avoid such clusters. The clusters /tt kk ks sk ss/ may additionally occur word-initially. Word-initially, an epenthetic voiceless schwa [ə̥] is often inserted before the geminated plosives /tt kk/.

Chapter 2

Orthography

The native orthography of Kísu is a semisyllabary; some glyphs encode CV clusters, while others encode single C or V segments.

The syllabic components distinguish vowel quality via rotation; various legs and bars are also used as distinguishing features. The character for /n/ is graphically unique in that it consists solely of a bar; this may be due to its common occurrence as a coda.

Spaces ⟨ ⟩ of any consistent capacity are not commonly used except in learning material and children's books, although they may be used to highlight or emphasize a word or phrase; this is especially done with names. There is a single punctuation mark, the ksi, ⟨•⟩, which is used to terminate sentences, and also to separate discourse particles from a clause.

Chapter 3

Verbs

Verbs are content words that describe events.

The verb phrase is structured as follows:

object	preverb	**verb**	*mode*

All verb roots are inherently intransitive, encoding a single patient argument (object); they may be transitivized with a preverb (**??**).

Verbs are toneless in the non-finite citation form. They inflect for mode via changes in tonal melody (§ 1.3), and for aspect via suffixes, as follows:

mode		*aspect*	
NF	∅	PRF	∅
NPS	HLL	NPF	-(t)i
PAS	HHL	DIS	-kau, -ɯ
REP	LLH		

Wherein the indicate affixes surface as |-ti, -kau| after a vowel, and as |-i, -ɯ| after a consonant.

3.1 Mode

Mode encodes finiteness and tense.

3.1.0.1 Non-finite

The non-finite mode (NF) is the citation form of verbs, and is used for dependent and insubordinated clauses.

(3.1) hává tu uni

hává	tu	uni
rabbit	eat:NF	ocelot

'the ocelot that ate a rabbit'

3.1.0.2 Non-past

The non-past mode (NPS) is used for present and future reference.

(3.2) unigu hává tû

unigu hává tû
ocelot rabbit eat:NPS
'the ocelot will eat a rabbit'

(3.3) unigu hává túti

unigu hává túti
ocelot rabbit eat:NPS
'the ocelot is eating a rabbit'

3.1.0.3 Past

The past mode (PAS) is used for past reference.

(3.4) unigu hává tú

unigu hává tú
ocelot rabbit eat:PAS
'the ocelot ate a rabbit'

3.1.0.4 Reported past

The reported past mode (REP) is used for past reference in which the speaker did not directly participate.

(3.5) unigu hává tŭ

unigu hává tŭ
ocelot rabbit eat:REP
'the ocelot ate a rabbit' (so I heard)

3.2 Aspect

Aspect describes the structure of time.

3.2.0.1 Perfective

The perfective aspect (PRF) indicates that the topic time contains event time. With the non-past tense, it has future and gnomic/habitual meanings.

(3.6) unigu hává tû

unigu hává tû
ocelot rabbit eat:NPS.PRF

'the ocelot will eat a rabbit'

(3.7) unigu hává áhu

unigu hává áhu
ocelot rabbit eat:NPS.PRF

'ocelots eat rabbits'

The the past tenses, it is used as a general past perfective.

(3.8) unigu hává tú

unigu hává tú
ocelot rabbit eat:PAS.PRF

'the ocelot ate a rabbit'

(3.9) unigu hává tŭ

unigu hává tŭ
ocelot rabbit eat:REP.PRF

'the ocelot ate a rabbit' (so I heard)

3.2.0.2 Imperfective

The imperfective aspect (NPF) indicates that the event time contains the topic time. With the non-past, it has present ongoing and near-future reference.

(3.10) unigu hává túti

unigu hává tú -ti
ocelot rabbit eat:NPS -NPF

'the ocelot is eating a rabbit'
'the ocelot is about to eat a rabbit'

The the past tenses, it is used as a general past imperfective.

(3.11) unigu hává tútî

unigu hává tú -tî
ocelot rabbit eat:PAS -NPF

'the ocelot was eating a rabbit'

(3.12) unigu hává tutí

unigu hává tu -tí
ocelot rabbit eat:REP -NPF

'the ocelot was eating a rabbit' (so I heard)

3.2.0.3 Discontinuous

The discontinuous aspect (DIS) indicates that the event has terminated in some way. With the non-past, it indicates that the speaker has experienced the event, that it no longer holds true, and that it is repeatable. It may also indicate frustration.

(3.13) ná túki túkau

ná túki tú -kau
1SG flatbread eat:NPS -DIS

'I have eaten flatbread before'

(3.14) ná túki távaikau

ná túki távai -kau
1SG flatbread hold:NPS -DIS

'if only I had a flatbread'

The the past tenses, it is used to indicate discontinuity, that the result state of the event is no longer true. It is also used for past habits (that no longer occur habitually).

(3.15) ná túki táváíkáu

ná túki távái -káu
1SG flatbread hold:PAS -DIS

'I had a flatbread' (but this is no longer the case)

(3.16) ná túki áhúkáu

ná túki áhú -káu
1SG flatbread eat:PAS -DIS

'I used to eat flatbread'

3.3 Preverbs

Preverbs are used to introduce and/or modify arguments by way of voice and agreement. There are two sets of three:

	SG	PL	WH
DIR	t(a)-	k(i)-	a(h)-
NDR	gi(y)	tun-	zu-, zav-
MED	u-, v-		ɯ-, s-

Wherein the indicated affixes surface as |ta-, ki-, a-, gi-, zu-, u-, ɯ-| before a consonant, and as |t-, k-, ah-, giy-, zav-, v-, s-| before a vowel.

In the absence of a preverb, verbs are intransitive, taking a single patient-like core argument, which patterns like a transitive subject in case-marking (with the nominative, § 4.1.2), but like a transitive object in semantics (being patient-like).

(3.17) túkigu ú

túkigu ú
flatbread eat

'the flatbread was eaten'

3.4 Voice

Preverbal voice primarily introduces a subject argument with actor semantics, and secondarily modifies the role of the object. Verbs may take a primary voice, which is noted in the lexicon; this corresponds to their prototypical transitive meaning. Verbs that do not take a primary voice are largely used intransitively. Most verbs can usually also take one of the other voices for different meanings, and substantially-idiosyncratic meanings are noted in the lexicon as well.

3.4.1 Direct

The direct voice (DIR) introduces a basic agent argument, and indicates that the patient is highly-affected. This is often used for prototypically-transitive events, in which the patient undergoes a change-of-state.

(3.18) unigu hává tú

unigu hává t- ú
ocelot rabbit DIR- eat

'the ocelot ate a rabbit'

3.4.2 Indirect

The indirect voice (NDR) introduces a stimulus argument, and indicates that the patient is not highly-affected. This is often used for sensory events.

(3.19) unigu hává gínû

unigu hává gi- nû
ocelot rabbit NDR- see

'the ocelot saw a rabbit'

It may also indicate non-culmination on prototypically-transitive events.

(3.20) unigu hává gíyû

unigu hává gíy- û
ocelot rabbit NDR- eat

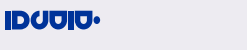
'the ocelot ate a rabbit' (but didn't finish)
'the ocelot tried to eat/almost ate a rabbit'

3.4.3 Medial

The medial voice (MED) introduces a causee argument. This has a variety of functions depending on what arguments are present. It does not distinguish singular and plural agreement, and is glossed simply as MED vs. MED.WH.

When the object is the reflexive pronoun (§ 4.3), it indicates reflexivity: the subject is both agent and patient, acting upon itself.

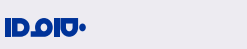
(3.21) ná vúnû



ná v- ú- nû
1SG R- MED- see
'I saw myself'

When the object is not the reflexive pronoun, the medial voice indicates reciprocity: the subject and object act upon each other.

(3.22) ná kúnû



ná k- ú- nû
1SG 2- MED- see
'you and I saw each other'

The medial voice may also derive various idiosyncratic meanings, which are noted in the lexicon.

It may also be used to induce inchoative-causative meanings: inchoative when intransitive, and causative when transitive; the former takes the reflexive pronoun.

(3.23) kúyʉ́ vútísɯ

kúyʉ́ v- ú- tîsɯ
tree R- MED- be big
'the tree grew'

(3.24) ná kúy útîsɯ

ná kúy ú- tîsɯ
1SG tree MED- be big
'I grew the tree'

3.5 Agreement

Preverbal agreement tracks the number (§ 4.2) of the object. Prototypically, the singular agreement (SG) is used for singular-marked objects, while the plural agreement (PL) is used for plural-marked objects.

(3.25) unigu hává tú

unigu hává t- ú
ocelot rabbit.SG SG- eat
'the ocelot ate a rabbit'

(3.26) unigu hávátí kú

unigu hává -tí k- ú
ocelot rabbit -PL PL- eat
'the ocelot ate some rabbits'

However, there are some situations in which there is a mismatch in agreement, usually involving quantification.

3.6 Serialization

3.7 Copulas

Copulas (COP) are defective verbs that are used to express identity and existence. They do not express mode, and as such they do not have non-finite forms. There are three kinds:

continuous

	SG	PL	WH
DIR	tav	kiv	hu
NDR	giv	tuv	zav
MED	vá		su

discontinuous

	SG	PL	WH
DIR	tta	kki	aga
NDR	gíyɯ	túnɯ	záɯ
MED	vɯ		sɯ

irrealis

	SG	PL	WH
DIR	tí	kí	hí
NDR	gǐy	zuí	zaí
MED	ví		sí

Although these forms are derived from aspectual distinctions, some of them have taken on meanings unique to copulas. There is no perfective/imperfective distinction: these are subsumed by the continuous form, which derives from the perfective of normal verbs. This contrasts with the still-distinct discontinuous. Verbs have innovated an irrealis form, which is derived from the imperfective. TODO

They otherwise behave like other transitivized verbs, taking a subject and an object that inflect normally; the object takes the role of the complement, or predicate nominal.

Voice also confers different semantics than with regular verbs. The direct voice is used for essential states, inherent qualities, and identity/membership relationships.

(3.27) unigu zín hu

unigu zín hu
ocelot animal COP.DIR

‘ocelots are animals’

The indirect voice is used for existential states, such as locations and temporary qualities. TODO

The medial voice is used for changes-of-state, specifically the initiation of a state. TODO

Chapter 4

Nouns

Nouns are content words that describe entities. They come in three morphosemantic classes: possessed, common, and neuter.

Possessed nouns obligatorily take a bound pronoun indicating possessor. Semantically, they are often such things as body parts, kinship terms, and other important entities. Common nouns may optionally take a bound possessor, and neuter nouns never take one; possession of neuter nouns must be expressed periphrastically. Semantically, common and neuter nouns encompass everything else, with the neuter tending toward more-inanimate and abstract entities.

The noun phrase is structured as follows:

Wherein ‹possessor$_1$› is an optional overt possessor, ‹possessor$_2$› is the bound possessor pronoun, and ‹dependent› is a nominal dependent clause (§ 6.7).

They inflect for case and number, with each class taking their own inflection paradigm.

possessed

	SG	DU	PL
OBL	∅	-(z)u	-(t)í
NOM	-káú, -úı	-(k)ú	

common

	SG	PL
OBL	∅	-(t)í
NOM	-(g)u	

neuter

	SG	PL
OBL	∅	-(t)í
NOM	-káú, -úı	
LOC	-(z)ú	

Wherein the affixes surface as |-zu, -tí, -káú, -kú, -gu, -zú| after a vowel, and as |-u, -í, -úı, -ú, -u, -ú| after a consonant.

4.1 Case

Case determines the function of a noun in a clause or phrase. There are three: the oblique, the nominative, and the locative, although the latter only occurs on neuter-class nouns. TODO

4.1.1 Oblique

The oblique case (OBL) marks the object of a clause.

It is also used as a general marker of peripheral arguments, and subsumes the qualities of the locative case in possessed and common nouns.

4.1.2 Nominative

The nominative case (NOM) marks the subject of a clause. It does not distinguish dual and plural in possessed nouns, glossed as NOM.PL.

It is also used to mark the possessor of a noun, in addition to a bound pronoun possessor marking the possessed noun (§ 4.3).

4.1.3 Locative

The locative case (LOC) marks locations and times. It only occurs on neuter nouns.

4.2 Number

Number describes the amount of an noun.

The singular number (SG) denotes exactly one entity, the dual number (DU) denotes exactly two entities, and the plural number (PL) denotes more than one entity. In the common and neuter plural, the oblique and nominative cases merge, and is glossed as PL for both classes.

When marking objects, verb agreement generally corresponds to the marked number, with dual objects agreeing as plural. Number-agreement mismatches are addressed in the relevant section (§ 3.5). TODO

4.3 Pronouns

Pronouns are a subtype of noun used to reference speech act participants and other nouns. There are two kinds: free and bound.

free

	SG	PL
1	ná	tái
2	kai	
3	kíy	

bound

	SG	PL
1	na-, g-	si-, t-
2	hi-, k-	
3	ka-, h-	
R	u-, v-	

Wherein the indicated affixes surface as |na-, si-, hi-, ka-, u-| before a consonant, and as |g-, t-, k-, h-, v-| before a vowel. The pronoun tái is glossed as SAP.PL (speech act participant, plural).

Number is identical to that of nouns. The personal distinctions are as follows: the first person (1) refers to the speaker(s), the second person (2) refers to the listener(s), and the third person refers to other entities (3). The reflexive person (R) is unique in that it is the only bound pronoun that does not have a corresponding free form. It is used primarily to induce a reflexive meaning in medial voice verbs (§ 3.4.3), where it serves as the object of the verb. TODO

The distribution of free vs. bound pronouns is regulated primarily by the role of the pronoun. Most prototypically, free pronouns are used as subjects, and bound pronouns are used as objects; bound object pronouns are affixed to the verb. TODO

Bound pronouns are also used on nouns to mark possessors on possessed and common nouns. TODO

The reflexive bound pronoun is used on possessed nouns to indicate that they have no salient possessor, or that they possess themselves; on common nouns, it indicates an unknown or indefinite possessor. TODO

Chapter 5

Particles

Particles are immutable function words with variable placement and a variety of uses.

5.1 Discourse

Discourse particles relate to the context in which an utterance is spoken. They are placed in external positions, either at the very beginning or the very end of a sentence. There are three:

MIR	sɯ
EMP	ká
REL	hí
DIM	i

5.1.1 Mirative

The mirative discourse particle (MIR) is used to express surprise, skepticism, and/or uncertainty toward the listener.

(5.1) sɯ, kíy uni tav

sɯ kíy uni tav
MIR 3 ocelot COP

'ah, an ocelot!'

It is also used to ask for input from the listener, with the hope that it is positive input.

(5.2) kíy nái hí, sɯ

kíy nái hí sɯ
3 food COP MIR

'there might be food' (but what do you think?)

5.1.2 Emphatic

The emphatic discourse particle (EMP) is used to remind the listener of contradictory information, and/or to refute their statement.

It is also used to indicate obvious statements, and to urge the listener.

5.1.3 Relevance

The relevance discourse particle (REL) is used to remind the listener of previous information that has become currently-relevant.

5.1.4 Diminishing

The diminishing discourse particle (DIM) is used to express uncertainty toward the speaker. It is also used to ask for input and/or clarification from the listener, with the expectation that it is negative input.

It is used to soften commands (§ 6.7.1.1).

It is also used as a filler word, in which case it may appear mid-sentence.

5.2 Modal

Modal particles express various forms of modality. They are placed in secondary position: they always directly follow the first constituent of the clause. This may be the topic, the subject, or the object; in the latter case, the modal particle becomes the host for bound object pronouns (§ 4.3).

POL	zú
a	gá
b	yin

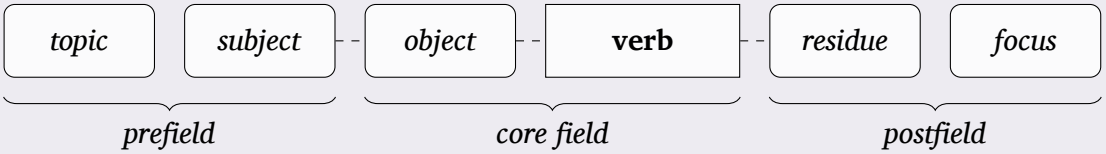
TODO

Chapter 6

Syntax

Syntax describes how words are ordered and how they relate to one another.

The order and structure of constituents of a clause is as follows:



Syntax is driven strongly by information structure (§ 7.1), and is separated into three distinct fields.

6.1 Prefield

The prefield contains the topic and the subject of the clause (which may be the same argument). The subject is the more agent-like argument of the verb, the actor.

6.2 Core field

The core field contains the predicate of the clause, which consists of an object, the verb, and a verbal modifier; only the verb is mandatory. The object is the more patient-like argument of the verb, the undergoer.

6.3 Postfield

The postfield contains syntactic residue, such as peripheral arguments, verbal dependent clauses (§ 6.7), and foci.

6.4 Topicalization

TODO

6.5 Focalization

TODO

6.6 Object-dropping

TODO

6.7 Dependent clauses

TODO

6.7.1 Insubordination

TODO

6.7.1.1 Imperatives

TODO

6.8 Interrogatives

TODO

6.9 Conditionals

TODO

6.10 Negation

TODO

Chapter 7

Pragmatics

Pragmatics are concerned with how the language is used in context. Information structure is especially important in Kísu, and is highly associated with syntax.

7.1 Information structure

Information structure is concerned with how information is arranged within a clause, in relation to concepts such as newness, givenness, and the universe of discourse.

7.1.1 Focus

The focus of a clause is the information being said about the topic. It often consists of new information, or information being introduced into the universe of discourse. Foci usually serve to answer the question-under-discussion (whether implicit or explicit).

7.1.2 Topic

The topic of a clause is the concept about which is being discussed. It often consists of old and/or known information, or information already within the universe of discourse[1]. Topics usually serve to set up a discussion by establishing shared knowledge.

Topics in Kísu are frequently dropped, especially simple topics.

[1] That is, the shared information between the speaker(s) and listener(s)

Appendices

Appendices A, B, and C are lexicons of intransitive verbs, nouns, and ideophones, respectively; appendix D details the semantic divisions of certain concepts, and appendix E gives various example sentences.

Compounds, derivations, idioms, etc., are considered distinct lemmas. Definitions are separated by a double dagger ‹‡›.

Lemma entries are structured as follows:

⟨native orthography⟩ root/stems : definition(s)

Appendix A

Verbs

Actions

⟨ ⟩ u (DIR) : be eaten

⟨ ⟩ nu (NDR) : be seen, heard ‡ (MED) meet, intersect

⟨ ⟩ vai (NDR) : be held, carried ‡ (MED) move

⟨ ⟩ kɯn (NDR) : be spoken ‡ be read

⟨ ⟩ gua (NDR) : be touched, felt

Position

⟨ ⟩ zuu : stand ‡ (MED) align, arrange in a line

States

⟨ ⟩ tis : be big ‡ (MED) grow, become big

⟨ ⟩ ssu : be asleep ‡ (MED) fall asleep

⟨ ⟩ kaha : be awake, alert, lucid ‡ (MED) wake up

Appendix B

Nouns

People

⟨𐤍𐤏⟩ táú (COM) : person

⟨⟩ : child, baby, infant (gender irrelevant)

Family

Professions

⟨⟩ (COM) : priest, doctor, sorcerer; a practitioner of religious rites, medicine, or magic

Body

⟨𐤃𐤌⟩ aí (POS) : stomach

⟨𐤓𐤃𐤉⟩ yán (POS) : head

⟨𐤃𐤊𐤊⟩ aktu (POS) : back, spine

Apparel

Food

⟨𐤉𐤃𐤌⟩ náí (NEU) : food, meal

⟨𐤊𐤒⟩ túki (COM) : flatbread

Animals

⟨𐤓𐤍𐤉⟩ zín (COM) : animal, creature, non-human(oid) entity

⟨𐤏𐤅𐤍⟩ uni (COM) : ocelot

⟨𐤍𐤃𐤅𐤃⟩ hává (COM) : rabbit

Animal products

Plants

⟨𐤒𐤓⟩ kúy (NEU) : tree

Concepts

Emotion

Colors

Numerals

Locations

⟨𐤎𐤊⟩ ksi (NEU) : hole, indentation, furrow

Time

⟨𐤒𐤓⟩ tiy (NEU) : night, nighttime

Terrain

Nature

Technology

⟨𐤉𐤍𐤓𐤒𐤒⟩ ínzuú (COM) : paper ‡ book

Appendix C

Example sentences

(C.1) (5MOYD #1630)

"I read Pamuk's book, but didn't read the one by Oe."

ná ukavukɯ́ hínzuú gíkɯ̂n, vuikáú zú gikɯn tí

ná	u-	kavuk	-ɯ́	h-	ínzuú	gí-	kɯ̂n	v-	ui	-káú	zú	gi-
1SG	R-	*Pamuk*	-NOM.SG	3-	book	NDR.SG-	read:PAS	R-	*Oe*	-NOM.SG	POL	NDR.SG-

kɯn	tí
read:NF	IRR.NDR.SG

'I read Pamuk's book, I didn't read Oe's'

(C.2) (5MOYD #1631)

"You intended to go, but they didn't give the reindeer."

kai gá vúvái, kíy zú hává givai tí

kai	gá	v-	ú-	vái	kíy	zú	hává	gi-	vai	tí
2SG	MOD	R-	MED.SG-	move:PAS	3	POL	rabbit	NDR.SG-	carry:NF	IRR.NDR.SG

'you wanted to go, they didn't carry the rabbit'

(C.3) (5MOYD #1634)

"I fell asleep... and in the middle of the night, I woke up."

ná vússúkáu, vúkáha tiyɯ́ kayán

ná	v-	ú-	ssú	-káu	v-	ú-	káha	tiy	-ɯ́	ka-	yán
1SG	R-	MED.SG-	fall asleep:PAS	-DIS	R-	MED-	wake up:PAS	night	-NOM.SG	3-	head

'I fell asleep, I woke up in the middle of the night'

(C.4) (5MOYD #1646)

"Miss Lulu was once fat. Until now, Miss Lulu still remains fat."

uzuzu tísɯ̂, uzuzu tísɯ

u-	zuzu	tís	-ɯ̂	u-	zuzu	tís	-ɯ
R-	*Lulu*	be big:PAS	-DIS	R-	*Lulu*	be big:NPS	-DIS

'Lulu used to be fat; Lulu has been fat'

(C.5) (5MOYD #1647)

“I stroked the cat on its back.”

ná unigu haktu gígúáti

ná	uni	-gu	h-	aktu	gí-	gúá	-ti
1SG	ocelot	-NOM.SG	3-	back	NDR.SG-	touch:PAS	-NPF

‘I was touching the cat’s back’

To do…

- ☐ TODO irrealis, copulas as auxiliaries (page 16)
- ☐ TODO example (page 16)
- ☐ TODO example (page 16)
- ☐ TODO example sentences (page 17)
- ☐ TODO this (page 18)
- ☐ TODO example (page 18)
- ☐ TODO example (page 18)
- ☐ TODO example (page 19)
- ☐ TODO example (page 19)
- ☐ TODO modal stuffo (page 21)
- ☐ TODO topicalization (page 23)
- ☐ TODO focalization (page 23)
- ☐ TODO dropping (page 23)
- ☐ TODO dependent (page 23)
- ☐ TODO insubordinate (page 23)
- ☐ TODO do this! (page 23)
- ☐ TODO this? (page 23)
- ☐ TODO if this (page 23)
- ☐ TODO not this (page 23)