

**MINISTRY OF SCIENTIFIC
AND TECHNICAL RESEARCH**

**KOM LANGUAGE
GRAMMAR SKETCH
PART 1**

George Shultz

SIL

**B.P. 1299, Yaounde
Republic of Cameroon**

1997

Contents

| <u>Topic</u> | <u>Page</u> |
|--|-------------|
| 1. Generalities | |
| 1.1 Name of language | 3 |
| 1.2 Language classification | 3 |
| 1.3 Number and distribution of speakers | 3 |
| 1.4 Ethnographic information | 3 |
| 1.5 Dialects and language variation | 4 |
| 1.6 Language use and multilingualism | 4 |
| 1.7 Language contact | 4 |
| 1.8 Language vitality | 5 |
| 2. Phonology | |
| 2.1 Segmental phonemes | 5 |
| 2.2 Suprasegmental phonemes | 5 |
| 2.3 Phonological processes | 5 |
| 2.4 Syllable structure | 6 |
| 2.5 Orthographic conventions | 6 |
| 2.6 Transcription system used in this sketch | 6 |
| 2.7 Abbreviations used in this sketch | 7 |
| 3. Morphology and word structure | |
| 3.1 Morphemes | 7 |
| 3.2 Affixation | 7 |
| 3.3 Other morphological processes | 8 |
| 3.4 Portmanteau morphemes | 10 |
| 3.5 Derivational processes | 10 |
| 3.6 Compounding processes | 10 |
| 3.7 Clitics | 10 |
| 4. Word classes | |
| 4.1 Noun | 11 |
| 4.1.1 Structure of the noun | 11 |
| 4.1.2 Noun classes | 12 |
| 4.1.3 Number | 12 |
| 4.1.4 Case | 13 |
| 4.1.5 Referentiality / deixis | 13 |
| 4.1.6 Agreement categories | 13 |
| 4.1.7 Nominalizing derivational processes | 13 |
| 4.1.8 Denominalizing processes | 14 |
| 4.1.9 Noun compounding | 14 |
| 4.2 Verb | |
| 4.2.1 Structure of the verb | 14 |
| 4.2.2 Verb classes and subclassification | 14 |
| 4.2.3 Tense / aspect / mood | 16 |
| 4.2.4 Voice: valency-changing processes | 18 |
| 4.2.5 Agreement patterns | 18 |
| 4.2.6 Deverbalizing processes | 18 |

| <u>Topic</u> | <u>Page</u> |
|---|-------------|
| 4.3 Adjective | 18 |
| 4.3.1 Adjective root | 19 |
| 4.3.2 Comparative | 19 |
| 4.3.3 Superlative | 19 |
| 4.3.4 Agreement patterns | 19 |
| 4.4 Adverb | 19 |
| 4.5 Preposition | 21 |
| 4.6 Pronoun | 22 |
| 4.6.1 Pronoun system | 22 |
| 4.6.2 Possessive pronouns | 23 |
| 4.6.3 Demonstrative pronouns | 24 |
| 4.6.4 Indefinite pronouns | 25 |
| 4.6.5 Interrogative pronouns | 25 |
| 4.6.6 Reflexive and / or reciprocal pronouns | 26 |
| 4.6.7 Logophoric pronouns | 26 |
| 4.6.8 Pro-clauses and other substitutive elements | 26 |
| 4.7 Numerals | 27 |
| 4.7.1 Numbers for counting | 27 |
| 4.7.2 Cardinal numbers | 27 |
| 4.7.3 Ordinal numbers | 28 |
| 4.8 Noun and verb modifiers and noun and verb phrase elements | |
| 4.8.1 Article | 28 |
| 4.8.2 Determiners | 28 |
| 4.8.3 Demonstratives | 29 |
| 4.8.4 Possessives | 29 |
| 4.8.5 Quantifiers | 30 |
| 4.8.6 Auxiliaries | 31 |
| 4.8.7 Copula | 31 |
| 4.8.8 Predicators | 31 |
| 4.8.9 Existential marker | 32 |
| 4.8.10 Verbal particles | 32 |
| 4.9 Other grammatical classes | |
| 4.9.1 Coordinators | 33 |
| 4.9.2 Complementizers | 33 |
| 4.9.3 Relativizers | 34 |
| 4.9.4 Adverbializers | 35 |
| 4.9.5 Interjections | 35 |
| 4.9.6 Ideophones | 36 |
| 4.9.7 Negators | 36 |
| 4.9.8 Question markers | 37 |
| 5. Bibliography | 38 |
| 6. Appendix | 39 |

Kom Language Grammar Sketch

Part 1, Preliminary

George Shultz, SIL
17 October 1997

This paper is a preliminary edition of Part 1 of a grammar sketch of the Kom language. Part 1 discusses general information about the language, gives a brief overview of the phonology, discusses the general morphological characteristics of the language, and describes the word classes of the language and the morphological characteristics of each class. Comments are being sought from Kom speakers and linguists in order to improve and verify the description given here. Part 2 of this sketch grammar, which will describe the phrase structure, clause structure, discourse features, and residue, will follow in the near future.

1. Generalities

The Kom language is spoken by the Kom people located in Boyo Division, Northwest Province, Cameroon, Africa.

1.1 Name of language

The language is referred to as “Kom” to outsiders, the same designation given to the people group. It is referred to as “Itanjikom” (*the speech of Kom*) by speakers of the language.

1.2 Language classification

The Kom language may be classified as one of the Central Ring languages of Grassfields Bantu, Bantoid, Benue-Congo, Niger-Congo, Niger-Kordofanian (Dieu and Renaud). Others prefer to classify Kom as Southern Bantoid, Wide Grassfields, Narrow Grassfields, Ring, Center (Watters and Leroy).

1.3 Number and distribution of speakers

The 1984 Ethnologue listed 127,000 speakers of the Kom language. Current estimates are between 150,000 and 200,000 speakers.

1.4 Ethnographic information

The majority of the population live near the main road which runs from Mbingo, in the south, to beyond Fundong, in the north. The area is divided into three distinct valleys. The Belo valley, in the south, is the largest, with the village of Belo serving as the subdivisional headquarters. The village of Njinikom serves as the administrative headquarters for Njinikom valley. Fundong is located in the Abasakom valley and serves as the divisional headquarters.

The original settlement of the Kom people in the 18th century was in the Abasakom region in the area called Laikom. Later in that century the people began to migrate southward into the Njinikom valley in search of additional farm land. The Kom people engaged in tribal warfare with numerous chiefdoms that surrounded them in the early 19th century. The Kijem (Babanki) people were

forced to leave the area that is now known as Belo. The other smaller chiefdoms remained but became subservient to the Kom fon (king).

Farming remains the primary occupation with women tending small farms to supply food for family consumption and men tending to the cash crop, coffee. The people maintain their rich, traditional culture, including their traditional religion which plays a large role in their daily life. Electricity was introduced in the major villages in 1990 and an improved road was completed in 1995. This development is introducing change into the society. It is now possible for Kom people to travel outside and foreigners to travel to Kom more easily. More goods are available for sale now within the Kom area.

Mr. Loh Pius and Mr. Yisa Manfred have served as the primary language assistants for this research.

1.5 Dialects and language varieties

There is one major dialect of the language which serves 95% of the population. There is very little variation in pronunciation and no difference in lexical items within this dialect. A secondary dialect, spoken in the village of Mbesa, is very closely related to Itanjikom. The people of the village of Ake also speak a variation of the Kom language. Both Mbesa and Ake are very remote villages.

1.6 Language use and multilingualism

The Kom language is used in all domains of society among Kom people. Pidgin may be used with non-Kom speakers in marketing. English (and very little French) may be used in conducting government business with non-Kom speakers. Most church services are conducted in Kom. In the larger villages, the services are conducted in English or Pidgin and translated into Kom.

1.7 Language contact

The small surrounding chiefdoms have maintained their own languages but nearly all the inhabitants are bilingual, also speaking the Kom language. More and more Kom people are learning to speak Pidgin or English but there does not seem to be an interest in speaking neighboring Cameroonian languages. Some Kom people know a bit of the surrounding languages (Bum, Oku, Nso, Babanki, etc.) but do not use those languages in conversation. The lexicon of the Kom language is being expanded somewhat through the use of loan words from English and French.

1.7.1 Loan words

The following list of borrowed words exemplifies how this phenomenon is expanding the lexicon of the language.

- “lâm,” from ‘lamp,’ used of a kerosene lamp;
- “lûm,” from ‘room,’ used by some to indicate a room of a house;
- “mitù,” from ‘motor,’ used to refer to a road vehicle;
- “aflyoŋ,” from ‘avion,’ used to refer to a flying machine;
- “sugèy’sì,” from ‘soldier,’ used to refer to ‘gendarmes;’
- “ìkfàlà,” from Pidgin, used to refer to prostitutes;
- “nfamasi,” literally ‘eights’ but used to speak of ‘AIDS;’
- “ifi,” literally ‘leaf’ but used to speak of ‘leave,’ ‘congé’

1.8 Language vitality

The Kom language will continue to be a viable language well into the future. The people are very proud of their language and culture and seek to preserve it from outside changes. It is the first and only language used in the home by small children. It is being used to teach the skills of reading and writing to over 5,000 primary school children at this time. Many adults, especially women, are attending literacy classes to learn to read and write their language. The Kom Language Development Committee has considerable influence and is seeking to promote literacy in the Kom language and is producing many titles in the language.

2. Phonology

2.1 Segmental phonemes

There are 19 consonants and 6 vowels in the Kom language. See charts below:

Chart 1.

| CONSONANTS | labial | alveolar | palatal | velar |
|-----------------------------------|--------|----------|---------|-------|
| noncontinuant, voiceless | | t | c | k |
| noncontinuant, voiced | b | d | j | g |
| continuant, voiceless | f | s | | |
| continuant, voiced | v | z | | ɣ |
| noncontinuant, sonorant | m | n | ɲ | ŋ |
| sonorant, continuant, nonsyllabic | w | l | y | |

Chart 2.

| VOWELS | non back | back unrounded | back rounded |
|----------|----------|----------------|--------------|
| high | i | ɨ | u |
| non high | e | a | o |

All of the consonant phonemes occur in the syllable initial position except for the palatal nasal. The following phonemes occur in the syllable final position: /m, n, l, ɲ, f, s, k/.

2.2 Suprasegmental phonemes

Kom is a tonal language. There are three level tones (high, mid, low) and three primary contour tones (low-falling, high-low, high-mid). Other contour tones rarely occur as a result of tone modification within the phrase. Only low and high-low tones are marked in the orthography.

Vowel lengthening occasionally occurs in conjunction with a high-low tone or an emphatic utterance. This is not marked separately from the high-low tone mark. Stress is heard only in emphatic speech but is not marked.

2.3 Phonological processes

Vowel coalescence:

The sequence /iu/ is realized as [ü] and is written as “ue”; the sequence /io/ is realized as [œ], and the sequence /ia/ is realized as [æ]. These three sounds are of low frequency in the language. Native speakers prefer to write these three coalesced sounds, “ue,” “œ,” æ,” so that there are nine vowels in the orthography.

Alveolar nasal:

The sequence of alveolar nasal plus high front vowel is realized as a single phoneme /ɲ / and is written as “ny” in the orthography.

Complex vowels:

There is a series of vowels with a high front vowel off-glide or a sequence of two vowels which occur primarily before /ɲ / but also before verb suffixes. This is represented phonemically as, for example, /woɲ / but written as “woyn.”

Glottal stop:

The voiceless velar stop becomes a glottal stop in syllable final position except that there is a neutralization of contrast after the segment /i /. This glottal stop is written in the orthography for sociolinguistic reasons.

Assimilation:

The nasal assimilates to the same point of articulation as the following consonant.

Vowel modification:

Vowels are lowered in closed syllables.

2.4 Syllable structure

The syllable is composed of a nucleus, an optional initial margin and an optional final margin. The nucleus may be simple (a single vowel) or complex (vowel offglide or vowel coalescence). The initial margin may be simple (a single consonant) or complex (consonant cluster). The final margin is always filled by a single consonant. The most common syllable patterns are: CV,CVC, CCV, and CCVC.

The phonological word can be composed of one to four syllables, although words or more than two syllables are rare. The most common word patterns are: V.CV , V.CVC , CV.CV , CV.CVC , CCVC,CV , CCV.CV.

2.5 Orthographic conventions

The orthography consists of 29 graphemes plus two tone diacritics. Some of the differences between the phonemic representation and the orthographic representation were described in 2.3 above. In addition, the phoneme “y” is written as “gh” and the phoneme “c” is written as “ch.” Many of the punctuation conventions of the English language are used when writing the Kom language.

2.6 Transcription system used in this sketch

Phonetic information will be given between square brackets, [īwé]. Phonemic information will be given between backslash markers, / iwe /. Orthographic information will be given between quotation marks, “iwe” when found in a descriptive paragraph. Other numbered orthographic examples will be written without quotation marks. English translations of Kom words will be expressed with single quotation marks.

2.7 Abbreviations used in this sketch

The following abbreviations are used in this paper:

| | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Agr = agreement marker | Inc = incompletive aspect marker |
| Asp = aspectual marker | Ind = indefinite pronoun |
| Ass = associative marker | Loc = locative |
| Comp = completive aspect marker | Q = question marker |
| Conj = conjunction | Ref = anaphoric reference marker |
| Dur = durative aspect marker | Seq = sequential marker |
| Emph = emphatic marker | Top = topicalization marker |
| Ger = gerund | Ex = existential marker |

3. Morphology and word structure

3.1 Morphemes

Morphemes, as the smallest meaningful unit in the speech of the Kom language, tend to be written as separate words with the exception of noun class affixes and verb suffixes, which are bound morphemes. Morphemes may have a lexical role or a grammatical role (functor).

3.2 Affixation

The Kom language has thirteen different noun classes. Most noun classes are identified by a noun class affix. See Chart 5 under section 4.1.2 for a complete list of the noun class affixes.

Generally words are formed by joining a noun root and a noun class prefix. In these cases both the root and the prefix are bound morphemes, they must always occur together. Some noun roots in class 9 are free morphemes and have a zero prefix. Nouns in classes 1, 2, and 10 do not require a noun class prefix. The plural morpheme suffix of class 10 is a bound morpheme.

There are four verb suffixes that are bound morphemes. They are optionally joined to free verb stems to produce a new verb of related meaning. The chart below summarizes these suffixes.

Chart 3.

| verb suffix | aspect | verb stem example | meaning | derived verb stem | meaning |
|-------------|----------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------------|
| - sī | causative | ko' | 'go up' | ko'sī | 'make go up' |
| - tī | diminutive or iterative | kàf bif | 'scratch' 'ask' | kàbtī bibtī | 'scratch a bit' 'ask repeatedly' |
| - lī | diminutive | nyim | 'smile' | nyimli | 'smile a bit' |
| - nī | various | bol | 'be soft' | boynī | 'be easy' |

The verb suffix “nī” is not easily categorized as it has a variety of functions.

The nominalizing derivational prefixes, “n-,” and “i-,” are described in 3.5 below.

According to the established orthographic rules of the language, the incompletive verb aspect marker, -a, is written as an inflectional suffix to the verb stem, as shown below.

1. Aṅena nin lafà. ‘They are getting dressed.’
they Asp dress.Inc

The orthographic rules also require that the noun class agreement marker is written as a suffix to the adjective in a noun phrase, as shown below.

2. Wù n-kôṅ afo a yini-a. ‘He wants something to eat.’
he Asp-like thing Ass eat.Ger-Agr

3.3 Other morphological processes

3.3.1 Alternation:

As a result of the noun class system in Kom there are many different plural morphemes (see 4.1.3 for a listing and distribution of the plural morphemes), demonstrative morphemes (see 4.6.3, 4.8.3), associative morphemes (see 4.1.6, 4.3.4, 4.6.2, 4.8.4), and relativizer morphemes (see 4.9.3).

The derivational morpheme, /n-/, ‘agent, one who does something,’ (see 3.5 below) has three different allomorphs that are the result of phonologically defined alternation, [n-], [m-], [ŋ-]. The nasal morpheme is assimilated to the point of articulation of the initial consonant of the following verb stem.

3. [ŋgàm̀tì] , ‘helper’ from /n/ + /gàm̀tì/ , ‘help’
 4. [mbē ʔlī] , ‘seller’ from /n/ + /beiʔli/ , ‘sell’
 5. [ntsì] , ‘blacksmith’ from /n/ + /tsi/ , ‘do smithing’

The progressive / temporal aspect marker /nin/ has two allomorphs; “n-” is used after a CV pronoun subject and the durative marker and is prefixed to the following verb, while “nin” as a separate word is used in all other situations.

6. Gheli nin mâ’ nyamsi ta bzisi si nà bey’li-â fî kfila.
people Asp raise animals as goats Inf Dur sell-Inc again eat.Inc
 ‘People raise animals like goats to be selling and eating.’
 7. Wà n-ghi àfô a bi-a. ‘You are good for nothing.’
you Asp-be thing Ass bad-Agr

3.3.2 Metathesis:

The first person subject pronoun /ma/ has two allomorphs; “ma” is the unmarked usage, occurring in most situations and “mi” occurs before the “n-” allomorph of the progressive / temporal aspect marker (see above). This second allomorph is a result of a type of metathesis where the /i/ phoneme of the aspect marker “nin” replaces the /a/ phoneme of the first person pronoun before a verb, expressed as follows:

$$ma + nin > mi n-(verb)$$

Example 8. below is the unmarked case and example 9. shows the metathesized allomorph.

8. Ma fê’tì sî và na ivî wom nin ti a kî jvâ.
I tell to you that feet my Asp stand on floor stream
 ‘I told you that my feet were standing on the floor of the stream.’
 9. Mi n-ti tèyn ivî wom kûm isas i jva.
I Asp-stand so feet my touch bottom Ass stream
 ‘I am standing like this my feet are touching the bottom of the stream.’

Another example of metathesis occurs when a noun of class 1, 3 or 8 is combined with a modifier in a noun phrase. The noun class agreement suffix moves from the final position and is manifested as labialization of the first consonant of the modifier, as shown below.

10. iwuyn, ‘body’ + to, ‘strong’ > /iwuyn i to-i/ > iwuyn i two, ‘healthy body’
 11. wul, ‘person’ + li, ‘other’ > /wul i li-ì/ > wul i lvì, ‘a certain person’

3.3.3 Labialization:

Labialization occurs at the word level in conjunction with noun classes 1, 3, and 8, that is, those classes that use “i-” as the noun class prefix and /or the associative marker. Labialization appears to be a phonological feature which occurs with these classes. The proto-Bantu noun class prefixes contains a labial element for these three classes.

12. abayn, ‘loaf of fufu’ (NC 7) + ī - > ibwayn, ‘loaves of fufu’ (plural, NC 8)
 13. ilweŋ, ‘bamboo’ (singular, NC 3) but cf. ileŋ, ‘bamboos’ (NC 4)

3.3.4 Epenthesis and loss of phoneme:

When a CV suffix, beginning with an alveolar continuant or nasal, is joined to a noun or verb morpheme that ends with an alveolar continuant, a palatal continuant appears and the alveolar continuant is lost. This occurs with the verbal suffixes shown in Chart 3 and the plural suffix of noun class 10. This may also be expressed as:

∅ → pal. cont. / alv. cont. ___ suffix and
 alv. cont. → ∅ / ___ pal. cont. + suffix

14. mbàl, ‘mask’ + [sī], ‘plural’ > mbàysi, ‘masks’
 15. yès, ‘sweep’ + [-lī], ‘diminutive’ > yèylì, ‘touch lightly’
 16. yeyn, ‘see’ + [-nī], ‘iterative’ > yeynni, ‘see again’
 17. bàs, ‘cut’ + [-tī], ‘diminutive’ > bàytì, ‘cut into pieces’

3.3.5 Alternation:

Labial alternation occurs when a syllable final labial continuant of a verb root becomes a noncontinuant before a verbal suffix.

18. dyèf, ‘be long’ + [-li], ‘for plural noun subjects’ > dyèblì, ‘be long (many)’
 19. bif, ‘ask’ + [ti], ‘repetition’ > bibtì, ‘ask many times’

3.3.6 Reduplication:

The entire verb stem is reduplicated to indicate and emphasize an action currently in progress.

20. Mì n-ghayni ghàyni. ‘I am strolling (now).’
 I Asp-stroll stroll
 21. Wù n-buni bùni. ‘He is sleeping (now).’
 he Asp-sleep sleep

3.3.7 Tone perturbation:

The shape of the morpheme can differ in respect to tone as it is affected by surrounding tones. This is a widespread form of allomorphic alternation. For

example, the durative marker, [nà], may appear as [nā] in certain environments, for example, the tone is raised following a Low tone.

22. Wul i lvi nà ghi, ... ‘A certain man was, ...’ (unmarked)
person Ass other Dur be
23. à na kîŋ nō mî ndà sî jùmtî ma, ... ‘Who ever is wanting to follow me, ...’
it Dur want Emph any who Inf follow me
24. Wà na kôŋ sî nà ma’ bzi sî wa nà kya na à n-ghi ifèl to nō sî a ŋaŋ.
you Dur like Inf Dur raise goats you Dur know Comp it Asp-be work strong Emph to it much
 ‘You like to be raising goats you should know that it is very hard work.’

3.4 Portmanteau morphemes

A type of portmanteau morpheme occurs in certain noun phrases where the head noun and the associative marker coalesce, as shown below. This usually occurs when the head noun has a word final voiceless continuant.

25. isas, ‘bottom’ + ndo, ‘house’ > /isas i ndo/ > [isæ ndo], ‘family’

3.5 Derivational processes

There are instances where a derivational affix, attached to a root morpheme, causes the root morpheme to change word classes, from a verb to a noun. The nominalizing prefixes “i-” and “n-” are examples of this type of process.

26. sî gàmtî, ‘to help,’ + i- > igàmtî, ‘help’
 27. sî gàmtî, ‘to help,’ + n- > ngàmtî, ‘helper’

The suffix “-ni” attached to a verb stem causes the verb to become a gerund, as shown below.

28. sî yî, ‘to eat,’ + -ni > yîni, ‘eating,’ ifwo a yîni, ‘things of eating’ > ‘food’

3.6 Compounding processes

A compound stem or word is composed of two stems that function as a unit. Most of the words commonly used in the language that may be thought of as compound words are actually noun phrases in which the associative marker which joins the head noun and the modifier has been dropped. Some common examples are:

29. nàwàyn, ‘mother’ literally ‘mother of child’
 30. wayn-na, ‘brother’ or ‘sister’ literally ‘child of mother’
 31. bòbè, ‘sir’ literally ‘lord of compound’

There are some rare cases where stems are combined to form a new and distinctive unit, as shown below. The associative marker is retained in these cases.

32. nwò’ i ngumi, ‘name of a certain kind of large bird,’
 literally ‘a catcher of grasshopper.’

3.7 Clitics

The morpheme “ki,” ‘only’ or ‘just,’ is an example of a clitic in the Kom language in that it is somewhat like a root and somewhat like an affix and somewhat like a word. It is not isolatable, that is, it cannot be spoken alone as a response to an utterance, but it has an independent grammatical function, that of delimiting or emphasizing another word, and it can be separated from the morpheme to which it is bound. It has a wide distribution and function in that it is used with subject nouns, object nouns, verbs, adverbs, complementizers, temporal phrases and locative phrases.

33. A kà' a ghal kì wul i wi ì kfa nì nyeyn ...
 it able so hold just person Ass female and go.home with it [bound to emphatic subject]
 'It is only a woman that can hold it and take it home ...'
34. Wu yeyn kì ngò'sì. 'He saw only stones.'
 he see just stones [bound to object]
35. Aṇena nà gvi kì gvi bòm ta ... 'They were just coming because ...'
 they Dur come just come for as [bound to reduplicated verb]
36. Nkò' nin ghi fim kì tèyn. 'The juju is very black.'
 juju Asp be be.black just so [bound to adverb]
37. Wàyn nâ wèyn i bè kì na bò vzi bè na ...
 child Ref that say just that father his say that [bound to complementizer]
 'That child say just that his father said...'
38. Wu ... chwo yisi zini kì achi nâ ghè ...
 he pass spend.day be.confused just day Ref there [bound to temporal phrase]
 'He passed just that (whole) day being confused...'
39. Aṇena kasi chfiṅ kì afu. 'They came back and hung (it) just there.'
 they return hang just there [bound to locative]
40. A n-ghi kì nô wul i lwema. 'It is just a very old person.'
 it Asp-be just Emph person Ass grown [bound to semantic subject but separated from it by the emphatic particle]

4. Word classes

4.1 Noun

4.1.1 Structure of the noun

The structure of the noun in the Kom language can be described as follows:

- a. + noun class prefix + noun root, or
- b. + noun root + noun class suffix
- c. + derivational suffix + verb (see 3.5)
- d. + verb + derivational suffix (see 3.5)

An example of a. above is the noun root “-saṅ” a bound morpheme, which has the basic meaning of ‘corn’ but never occurs in that form, always with a noun prefix, “i-” or “a-” as in “isaṅ,” singular, or “asaṅ,” plural.

An example of b. above is a noun from class 10, “kayn + si,” ‘monkeys.’

4.1.2 Noun classes

The Kom language has thirteen different noun classes. The affixes pertaining to each class are shown in the chart below.

A specific number of objects is indicated by the use of an associative noun phrase construction, that is, the head noun + the associative marker (noun class specific) + numeral, as shown below.

43. ifwol, ‘hats,’ ifwol i bwò , ‘two hats’ N.B. labialization of the number
 44. bisì, ‘dogs,’ bisì sî tal , ‘three dogs’

4.1.4 Case

The Kom language does not make use of a system for marking nouns phrases and first and second person pronouns which relates these elements to the verb and/or other parts of the sentence. Nominals do not have a set of affixes or separate words that indicate function in Kom. There is, however, a set of subject pronouns and a different set of object pronouns for third person. See 4.6.

4.1.5 Referentiality / deixis

No distinctions of referentiality, definiteness, or deixis is indicated in the noun itself in the Kom language. Referentiality is indicated by noun modifiers within the noun phrase. See 4.8. There is no distinction between proper and common nouns. Proper nouns function in phrases as class 9 nouns.

4.1.6 Agreement categories

All nouns are classified by noun class and all nominal modifiers show agreement with the class of the head noun. This is manifested by an agreement suffix, or concord marker, determined by the noun classes, but in some cases the agreement marker is not expressed. This occurs with certain modifiers, possibly a class of true adjectives, with nouns from classes 1, 2, 3, 6a, 8, and 9, as in 48. below. See also 4.3.

45. afo a kema, ‘my thing’
 thing Ass my.Agr
 46. ifo i yemi, ‘my cutlass,’
 cutlass Ass my.Agr
 47. atu a wula, ‘a person’s head’
 head Ass person.Agr
 48. wul ì jùṅ, ‘a good person’
 person Ass good

4.1.7 Nominalizing derivational processes

As described in 3.5, some nouns are derived from verbs by the addition of a nominalizing prefix. A nasal prefix is used to indicate the agent, the one who performs the action, as shown below.

49. sî fê’tî, ‘to help,’ nfê’tî, ‘teller’

The prefix “i-” is used to indicate the result or outcome of the action, as shown below.

50. sî kfà’tî, ‘to think,’ ikfà’tî, ‘thought’

This latter process can function like a gerund, as shown below.

51. sî yvìtî, ‘to rest’
 52. Iyvitì i nin jofà nì lùm. ‘Resting is good in the dry season.’
 rest Top Asp good.Inc with heat

4.1.8 Denominalizing processes

There is no process in the Kom language whereby a noun is changed to another word class.

4.1.9 Noun compounding

Nouns are not joined together to form compound words in the Kom language. As stated in 3.6 above, most of the words commonly used in the language that may be thought of as compound words are actually noun phrases in which the associative marker which joins the head noun and the modifier has been dropped.

53. wul achi, ‘chairman’ from ‘person’ + ‘bench’

54. wul atu, ‘leader’ from ‘person’ + ‘head’

There are some rare cases where stems are combined to form a new and distinctive unit, as shown below.

55. njwò ì ifo, ‘bat’
flesh Ass cave

4.2 Verb

4.2.1 Structure of the verb

The structure of the verb in the Kom language can be described as:

+ verb root ± verb suffix

An example of this is the verb root “fì,” ‘come out’ which is a free morpheme and common lexical item. The addition of an optional verb suffix, “-si,” changes the meaning of the verb, “bring out.”

As stated in 3.2 above, there are four such verb suffixes that are bound morphemes, “-si, -ti, -li, -ni.” They can be joined to free verb stems to produce a derived stem that is in the same semantic domain of the stem. Chart 3 is reproduced below.

Chart 3.

| verb suffix | aspect | example verb stem | meaning | derived verb stem | meaning |
|-------------|----------------------------|-------------------|-----------|-------------------|------------------|
| - sī | causative | ko’ | ‘go up’ | ko’si | ‘make go up’ |
| - tī | diminutive or iterative | kàf | ‘scratch’ | kàbtì | ‘scratch a bit’ |
| | | bif | ‘ask’ | bibtì | ‘ask repeatedly’ |
| - lī | diminutive | nyim | ‘smile’ | nyimli | ‘smile a bit’ |
| - nī | misc. | bol | ‘be soft’ | boyni | ‘be easy’ |

4.2.2 Verb classes and subclassification

Verbs in Kom can be classified as intransitive, both transitive and intransitive, or ditransitive.

An intransitive verb expresses an action where there is no stated patient toward which the action is directed. A transitive verb is one that expresses an action and the action passes from the agent to a patient (object).

For purposes of classification of Kom verbs, a transitive verb is a verb that requires an object. An intransitive verb does not permit an object. A verb that allows an optional object is considered to be both transitive and intransitive. A verb that allows two objects (direct and indirect object) is ditransitive.

In the Kom language there are many intransitive verbs that describe and that express motion. There are many verbs that are both transitive and intransitive, that is, the verb may take an object but it frequently does not (the presence of the object is determined by the context). There are few verbs that are ditransitive. There are no verbs that are transitive, as defined above. The following chart lists a few of the common verbs according to category. See examples below.

Chart 6.

| intransitive verbs (do not permit an object) | | transitive / intransitive (allow an object) | | ditransitive (allow two objects) | |
|---|------------|--|--------------|-------------------------------------|--------|
| ndù | ‘go’ | ki | ‘look’ | bè | ‘say’ |
| lù | ‘leave’ | we | ‘put inside’ | fè’tì | ‘tell’ |
| fì | ‘come out’ | zue | ‘kill’ | bif | ‘ask’ |
| gvì | ‘come’ | kfè | ‘cook’ | fu | ‘give’ |
| se’ | ‘go’ | yì | ‘eat’ | | |
| kfa | ‘go home’ | yeyn | ‘see’ | | |
| kasi | ‘return’ | nì | ‘do’ | | |
| kàlì | ‘go down’ | tum | ‘send’ | | |
| ko’ | ‘go up’ | jàn | ‘call’ | | |
| zi | ‘enter’ | lì | ‘take’ | | |
| ziti | ‘begin’ | gàmtì | ‘help’ | | |
| timi | ‘stand’ | fayti | ‘make’ | | |
| baṅ | ‘be red’ | kiṅ | ‘want’ | | |
| gha’ | ‘be big’ | cho’ | ‘choose’ | | |

56. Nàwàyn nin lam abayn. ‘Mother is stirring fufu.’
subject aspect verb direct object
mother.child Asp stir fufu
57. Wù lam meyn. ‘She has stirred (it).’
she stir Comp
58. Yi gha’ ki tèyn. ‘It is very big.’
it big just so
59. Wù n-bê iwo sî ṅweyn. ‘He is saying something to him.’
he Asp-say thing to him

Verbs in the Kom language can also be classified as roots or stems which are free morphemes, and derived stems, as described in 4.2.1. above.

60. bèyn, root, ‘turn something’ root or stem
61. bèynsì, inflected stem, ‘turn over’ derived stem
62. bèynlì, inflected stem, ‘turn around’ derived stem
63. bèyntì, inflected stem, ‘respond repeatedly’ derived stem

Verbs can also be classified according to tonal patterns. There are high tone verbs and low tone verbs. The high tone verbs have a mid-level tone in the infinitive form but have a high tone in the imperative form. The low tone verbs are marked with a low tone in the infinitive form. The imperative form of a low tone verb has a mid-level tone on the last syllable.

64. si yem, ‘to sing’ si yèm, ‘to wake up’
 65. si yviti, ‘to listen’ si yvìtì, ‘to rest’

4.2.3 Tense / aspect / mood

Tense, aspect, and mood are not indicated in the verb itself but by free morphemes that are written as separate words (with the exception of the incomplete aspect marker, see below).

Chart 7.

| Tense | | Aspect | | Mood | |
|---------|----|-------------|------|---------------|-----------|
| present | | progressive | nin | imperative | high tone |
| past | P1 | durative | nà | hortative | high tone |
| | P2 | incomplete | a | optative | verbal |
| | P3 | completive | meyn | interrogative | a |
| | P4 | unrealized | si | | ma |
| future | F1 | | | | |
| | F2 | | | | |

N.B. The P2 and F2 tense markers are homophonous. F2 always occurs with the progressive / temporal aspect marker.

Present tense is indicated by aspectual markers and context. There are no overt present tense markers.

66. Aḡena nìn gvì lvîyn. ‘They are coming now.’ present progressive
they Asp come now
 67. Aḡena gvì lvîyn. ‘They have come now.’ present perfect
they come now

There are four past tense particles, “nì, là, ti, læ,” as shown below.

68. nì, Aḡena nì gvì nì nchùe. ‘They came during the day.’ recent past
P1 they P1 come with sunshine
 69. là, Aḡena là gvì bisì bisì. ‘They came early.’ today past
P2 they P2 come early early
 70. tí, Aḡena tí gvì iyonì. ‘They came yesterday.’ yesterday past
P3 they P3 come yesterday
 71. læ, Aḡena nìn læ gvì nì bèḡ. ‘They came in the rainy season.’ remote past
P4 they Asp P4 come with year

There are two future tense markers, “nî, læ,” as shown below.

72. nî, Aḡena nin nî gvì nì ntu’. ‘They will come tonight.’ near future
F1 they Asp F1 come with night
 73. læ, Aḡena nin læ gvì a libis. ‘They will come tomorrow.’ remote future
F2 they Asp F2 come on tomorrow

The progressive / temporal aspectual marker “nin” is used to establish or resume a temporal point of reference. The most common semantic function is to indicate the idea of “at that time” or “now,” setting a time frame or conveying a progressive idea. This marker never occurs with the past tense particles P1-P3 but it always is present with P4.

74. nin, Aḡena nin gvì-à. ‘They are coming (now).’
Asp they Asp come-inc

Another temporal aspect marker is “si,” which expresses the idea that the action of the verb was expected to happen but has not yet been realized. This is only used in the present tense.

75. si, Wà si gvi-à. ‘You are (already) coming.’
Asp you Asp come-Inc

Incompletive aspect is indicated by the particle “a.” It is written as a verbal suffix but it could also be written as a separate word.

76. -a, Aḡena nìn yema. ‘They are singing.’
Inc they Asp sing-Inc

Imperfective aspect is indicated by the durative marker, “nà.” The context may indicate that the tense need not be overtly marked.

77. nà, Aḡena nà n-kiḡ si tim nyam ngwô. ‘They were wanting to spear an antelope.’
Dur they Dur Asp-want Inf shoot animal antelope

Perfective aspect is indicated by the completive marker, “meyn.”

78. meyn, Aḡena ti meyn gvi iyoni. ‘They had come yesterday.’
Comp they P3 Comp come yesterday

The declarative mood is the unmarked mood.

The imperative mood is expressed by a high (raised) tone on the verb.

79. si gvì, ‘to come’
 80. gvi, [gvī], ‘come!’

The hortative mood is expressed in the same way as the imperative mood, that is, a high (raised) tone is applied to the verb. The imperative is stated in the second person, while the hortative is stated in the first or third person. There are no modal particles that indicate the hortative mood.

81. Ghesinà tsiyn! ‘Let us push!’ (many people)
we(incl) push
 82. Wul i wi guf! ‘Let the woman pull!’
person Ass female pull
 83. Aḡena tsiyn! ‘Let them push!’ (many people)
they push
 84. Ghesivà tsiyn! ‘Let’s you and I push!’
we(dual) push
 85. Aḡena tsiyn ki ghi bô! ‘Let the two of them push!’
they push just Ass two

The optative mood, the mood of possibility, can be expressed in two ways: by a verb, “kà” ‘be able,’ or by a clause beginning with the phrase “ilvi i li,” [lɪfɪlɪ]. This noun phrase literally means ‘time other,’ or ‘some time.’

86. Wù ka’ a wù chwo bey’li ibi i li iwe. ‘He could sell some kola in the market.’
he can so he pass sell kola Ass other market
 87. Ibam i iyviti ilvi i li wù fayti gveyn ḡweyn.
behind Ass rest time Ass other he make farm his
 ‘After resting, he may prepare his farm.’

The interrogative mood is expressed by special interrogative particles or interrogative pronouns. See 4.6.5.

4.2.4 Voice: valency-changing processes

There are no verbal affixes that indicate voice. The unmarked use of any verb is the active voice. The use of indefinite pronoun, “ghi,” accomplishes what a passive verb would do, that is, to de-emphasize the agent of the action or mark the subject as the semantic goal of the action.

88. Ghi zue meyn ηweyn. ‘He has been killed.’ or ‘They have killed him.’
Ind kill Comp him

4.2.5 Agreement patterns

There are generally no grammatical features that show agreement between the verb and the other elements of the clause.

4.2.6 Verb-forming derivational processes

Verbs are the basis upon which many nouns and adjectives are derived but verbs are not derived from other word classes in the Kom language. There are no compound verbs. The basic meaning of stem verbs is modified by verbal suffixes to indicate repetition, a small amount of activity, etc. See 3.2 and 4.2.1.

4.2.7 Deverbalizing processes

Verbs may be transformed into nouns with the addition of a nominalizing prefix. See 4.1.7. Verbs may be transformed into a verbal noun with the addition of a derivational suffix. See 4.3.1.

4.3 Adjective

There are very few, if any, roots that are true adjectives in the Kom language. Many adjectival ideas are expressed by verbs, for example:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 89. si baŋ, | ‘to be red’ |
| 90. si be, | ‘to be big’ |
| 91. si læ, | ‘to be small’ |
| 92. si to, | ‘to be hard’ |
| 93. si sayn, | ‘to be cold’ |
| 94. si dvi, | ‘to be many’ |
| 95. si leyn, | ‘to slide’ |
| 96. ìnkâ’ si nà leyna, | ‘the wood is smooth,’ |
| <small>wood Asp Dur slide.Inc</small> | |
| 97. ìnkâ’ in leynni, | ‘smooth wood’ |
| <small>wood Ass slide.Ger</small> | |

Possible true adjectives include the following words that never function as a verb (i.e., never occur in the verb position nor occur with tense and aspect markers). These words also do not occur with the noun class agreement suffix when used to modify head nouns of classes 1, 2, 3, 6a, 8, and 9.

- | | |
|------------------|------------|
| 98. li | ‘other’ |
| 99. juŋ | ‘good’ |
| 100. bi | ‘bad’ |
| 101. fi | ‘new’ |
| 102. mu | ‘old’ |
| 103. mivil in fi | ‘new wine’ |

4.3.1 Adjective root

The verb is the root for most adjectival constructions. The suffix “-ni” is added to the verb to form a gerund which is joined to the head noun by the associative marker.

104. wul i baṅni(-i), ‘a red person’ baṅ, ‘to be red’ + ni + Agr
person Ass red.Ger
105. afo a baṅni-a ‘a red thing’ baṅ + ni + agreement marker
thing Ass red.Ger-Agr

4.3.2 Comparative

The description of an object is usually accomplished by a verb.

106. Ibi i ṅweyni nin jofà. ‘His kola is good.’
kola Ass his.Agr Asp good.Inc

The comparative is also expressed verbally by a periphrastic morpheme, using a serial verb construction of the main verb and the verb “chwò,” ‘to pass.’ The item that is the object of comparison may not be stated in the comparative sentence but it is known from the wider context.

107. Ibi i ṅweyni nin jofa chwò. ‘His kola is good pass (better).’
kola Ass his.Agr Asp good.Inc pass

Certain verbs, due to their semantic relationships, express comparison in another way, putting the item that is the object of comparison in a prepositional phrase following the verb.

108. Wul i lùmnì nìn ghi lema sî woyn da. ‘The man is older than the children.’
person Ass male Asp be grow.old to children

4.3.3 Superlative

The superlative adjectival idea is also expressed verbally. A concessive phrase is added to the comparative clause to form the superlative. In this case the items that are the objects of comparison are stated in the same sentence.

109. Ibi i ṅweyni nin jofa chwò nò mi ibi ì kà antêynì tibi afêyn iwe.
kola Ass his.Agr Asp good.Inc pass Emph any kola Ass which inside kolas here market
 ‘His kola is good pass even any which kola among the kolas in the market here.’

4.3.4 Agreement patterns

The derived adjectival will always agree with the head noun. This is usually indicated by an agreement marker, based on the noun classes, that is suffixed to the modifier. Certain modifiers (true adjectives) do not occur with the agreement suffix for noun classes 1, 2, 3, 6a, 8, and 9. See discussion above.

110. wul i choṅni-i, ‘a thief’ si choṅ, ‘to steal’ (written as “wul i choṅni”)
person Ass steal.Ger-Agr
111. achi a li-a, ‘another day’ ‘a certain day’
day Ass other-Agr

4.4 Adverb

Verbs are commonly used to express adverbial ideas in the language. Certain verbs occur as auxiliary verbs in a serial verb construction.

112. nyaṅsi ndu, ‘go quickly’
do quickly go
 from the verb “si nyaṅsi,” ‘to do something quickly or frequently’

A prepositional phrase may also be used to express an adverbial idea.

113. ko’ i ndu nì isanlì i, ‘to go happily (with happiness)’

go up Seq go with joy Top
from the verb, “si sanli,” ‘to be happy’

There are certain words that express adverbial ideas that seem to be verbs because of their position in the clause, for example, “lum,” ‘always,’ and “jas,” ‘seldom.’

114. Aḡena lum jæ se’ ibyem i li bisi se’ nì nseyinsi.
they always before go hunting Seq take dogs go with them
‘They always take dogs when they go hunting.’

115. ... àḡena se’ jas i ku kayn.
they go seldom Seq catch monkey
‘... they seldom catch a monkey.’

Locative adverbs are commonly used in the Kom language. They frequently occur in the final position in the clause.

116. afêyn, ‘here’ Gvi ichfi i ndo afêyn. ‘Come to the door here.’
come mouth Ass house here

117. afi, ‘there (near)’ Ma ye’i ìtof i yemi sî a ikfi a nyamàbo kî a kî n-nyin afi.
I learn wisdom Ass my to in death in leopard which it Asp-lie
there

‘I learned my wisdom from the death of the leopard that is lying there (within sight).’

118. afu, ‘there (remote)’
Ghes ì bò wom lù i na si ndu a ndô ḡwà’lì. Ghì ndu afu, ma yeyn woynnda ...
we(excl Conj father my) leave Seq Dur Asp go to house book Ind go there I see children
‘My father and I left and went to the school. Going there I saw children ...’

119. awu, ‘there (very remote)’

120. abe, ‘outside’ Ghì bà’lì ikaḡ abe. ‘The ceiling was built outside.’
Ind build ceiling compound

121. asi, ‘before, in front of’ A nì gvì mà afêyn si asi.
it P1 come me here so front
‘It was me who came here to the front (first).’

Associative noun phrases are also commonly used in the same contexts as the locative adverbs.

122. ibàm, ‘behind’ Wù n-ti ibàm i mbàyn. ‘He is behind the fence.’
he Asp-stand behind Ass fence

123. isas, ‘under’ Bò àku i fayti ivis isas i bò afî.
lord forest Seq make fire under Ass bag there
‘The lord of the forest made a fire under the bag there.

124. atu, ‘on, over, above’ Kayn i du’ atû fikà’. (atu à fikà’)
monkey Seq sit head tree
‘The monkey is sitting on the tree.’

Temporal adverbs are commonly used in the Kom language. They occur in the final position in the clause.

125. lvîyn, ‘now’ Aḡena gvì lvîyn. ‘They have come now.’
they come now

126. bisì-bisì, ‘early today’ Aḡena làè gvì bisì-bisì. ‘They came early today.’
they P2 come early early

4.5 Preposition

Various prepositions are used in the language to express direction, location, means, time, coordination, association, purpose and accompaniment.

a. *sî* , ‘to’

127. (indirect object)’ Fu *sî* *ŋweyn*. ‘Give it to him.’
give to him

128. (addressee)’ Bò àku *i* bè *sî* bòbè ...
lord forest Seq say to lord.compound
 ‘The lord of the forest said to the master of the compound ...’

b. a , general locative

129. Finjânjæ *fî* gvì *i* faŋ *ki* a *ŋweyn* atùŋlì ...
fly Top come Seq stay just Loc his ear
 ‘The fly came and stayed just on his ear ...’

130. Wu n-dù’*i* a *ndo*. ‘He is sitting in the house.’
he Asp-sit Loc house

131. Mbam ndù a *jva* ... ‘The snake went to the stream.’
snake go Loc stream

c. a , temporal

132. Ghi nî ghi nyâŋsì tim keysì a mîchi mì ìtu’ *i* ila’.
Ind do Ind frequent sew baskets on days Ass day Ass country
 ‘Fufu baskets are frequently made on country days.’

d. nî , temporal

133. A nà ghi nî nchùe, wu ndu kini yeyn na ...
it Dur be with sunshine he go examine see that
 ‘It was during the day, he went to see that ...’

134. Wù gvìmi meyn mèsì nà *ŋweyn* nî ntu’.
he bury Comp finish mother his with night
 ‘He finished burying his mother at night.’

e. nî , possession

135. Wu zì abu’ nî fîndùm. ‘He entered the hole of the rat.’
he enter hole of rat

f. nî , accompaniment

136. Tikaynakayn nî yvisi *i* fî ‘Wasps and bees came out’
wasps with bees come out

137. Gvì nî ifwo nâ wèyn. ‘Come with these things.’
come with things Ref these

g. nî , means (instrument)

138. Aŋena nin felà nî ifisi àŋena. ‘They are working with their hoes.’
they Asp work.Inc with hoes their

139. Wu n-ghi jelà *ki* nî ivi. ‘He is traveling on (by) foot.’
he Asp-be move.Inc just with feet

h. *ŋêyn* , accompaniment

140. Nsom *ŋêyn* Soŋ nin ghi afêyn. ‘Nsom with Song are here.’
Nsom with Son Asp be here

i. antêynî, locative

141. Ghi we ngolsi antêynì mîkâl. ‘Snail shells are put inside the beer.’
 Ind put shells inside corn beer

j. bôm, purpose

142. Ma gvi afêyn bôm iwo nâ yèynì. ‘I came here for (because of) this thing.’
 I come here for thing Ref this

4.6 Pronoun

4.6.1 Pronoun system

The pronoun system is displayed in the following charts. Chart 8 describes the first, second, and third person subject and object (direct, indirect, and object of preposition) pronouns.

Chart 8.

| noun class | | first person | | second person | | third person | |
|------------|--------------------|--------------|---------|---------------|--------|--------------|---------|
| | | subject | object | subject | object | subject | object |
| 1 | wùl ‘person’ | mà | mà | wà | và | wù | ŋweyn |
| 2 | gheli ‘people’ | ghesìnà | ghesìnà | yì / zì | zì | àŋena | àŋena |
| 3 | ikwo ‘money’ | | | | | wù | ŋweyn |
| 4 | ileŋ ‘bamboos’ | | | | | yì | inyeyni |
| 5 | ichi ‘stick’ | | | | | yì | inyeyni |
| 6 | awo ‘things’ | | | | | kì | ankeyn |
| 6a | mivil ‘oil’ | | | | | mì | meyn |
| 7 | afol ‘hat’ | | | | | kì | ankeyn |
| 8 | ifwol ‘hats’ | | | | | wù | ŋweyn |
| 9 | mbam ‘snake’ | | | | | yì | nyeyn |
| 10 | mbamsi ‘snakes’ | | | | | sì | nseyysi |
| 13 | tichi ‘sticks’ | | | | | tì | nteynti |
| 19 | fikâ ‘tree’ | | | | | fì | nfeynfi |

The first person singular personal pronoun is coalesced with the temporal aspect marker “nin” in the present tense and is written as “Mì n-.” See 3.3.

The first person plural personal pronouns can be further categorized as inclusive, dual, and exclusive. See Chart 9.

Chart 9.

| first person plural pronouns | inclusive | dual | exclusive |
|------------------------------|---------------------|--|-----------------------------------|
| | ghesìnà 'we all' | ghesivà 'I and you (we)' | ghès 'we only' |
| | | ghes ì ñweyn 'I and he / she (we)' | ghes ì àñena 'I and they (we)' |
| | | ghes ì (+ name or title) 'I and (name) (we)' | |

143. Ma ti meyn fu ankeyn sî ñweyn.
I P3 Comp give it (6,7) to him

'I gave it to him yesterday.'

144. Ghes ì ñweyn nin ndu a mò'.
we (I Conj him) Asp go in one

'He and I (we) are going together.'

4.6.2 Possessive pronouns

The possessive pronoun system is displayed in Chart 10. Each category of possessive pronoun (i.e., first person plural) has ten different forms based on the noun class of the possessed item. These possessive pronouns are used in place of an associative possessive noun phrase, that is, 'mine' rather than 'my people,' 'ours' rather than 'our people.'

Chart 10.

| noun class | | first person | | second person | | third person | |
|------------|--------------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------|-----------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| | | singular | plural | singular | plural | singular | plural |
| 1 | wùl 'person' | iwôm 'mine' | iwês 'ours' | ivâ 'yours' | ivzi 'yours' | iwû ñweyn 'his' | iwû àñena 'theirs' |
| 2 | gheli 'people' | ighem 'mine' | ighesi 'ours' | ighya 'yours' | ighi 'yours' | ighi ñweyn 'his' | ighi àñena 'theirs' |
| 3 | ikwo 'money' | iwom | iwesi | iva | ivzi | iwu ñweyn | iwu àñena |
| 4 | ilen 'bamboos' | iyemi | iyesi | izæ | izi | iyi ñweyn | iyi àñena |
| 5 | ichi 'stick' | iyemi | iyesi | izæ | izi | iyi ñweyn | iyi àñena |
| 6 | awo 'things' | akema | akesa | akya | aki-a | aki ñweyna | aki àñena |
| 6a | mivil 'oil' | imêm | imês | imyâ | imzî | imî ñweyn | imî àñena |
| 7 | afol 'hat' | akema | akesa | akya | aki-a | aki ñweyna | aki àñena |
| 8 | ifwol 'hats' | iwom | iwesi | iva | ivzi | iwu ñweyn | iwu àñena |
| 9 | mbam 'snake' | iyêm | iyês | izyâ | izî | izî ñweyn | izî àñena |
| 10 | mbamsi 'snakes' | isemsi | iseysi | isyasi | isisi | isi ñweynsi | isi àñenasi |
| 13 | tichi 'sticks' | itemti | iteyti | ityati | itsiti | iti ñweynti | iti àñenati |
| 19 | fikâ 'tree' | ifemfi | ifeyfi | ifyafi | ifsifi | ifi ñweynfi | ifi àñenafi |

All the first person plural forms shown in the chart are exclusive forms. The dual form is, for example, “iwû ghes ì vâ” (class 1). The inclusive form is, for example, “iwû ì ghesinà” (class 1).

145. A n-ghi imêm. ‘It is mine.’ (i.e., my oil)
it Asp-be mine (6a)
146. A n-ghi ighi ànena. ‘They are theirs.’ (i.e., their children)
it Asp-be theirs (2)
147. Imzî nin ghi abe. ‘Yours (pl.) is outside.’ (i.e., your oil)
yours (6a) Asp be compound
148. Akesa nin ghi atû tebli. ‘Ours (excl.) is on the table.’ (i.e., our eggs)
ours (6,7) Asp be head table
149. Iyemi nin ghi a ndo. ‘Mine is in the house.’ (i.e., my banana)
mine (4,5) Asp be in house

4.6.3 Demonstrative pronouns

The demonstrative pronoun system is displayed in Chart 11 below. There is a three-way spatial and visibility distinction in this system. Group one is the set of demonstratives that indicate an object that is near and visible (+ near, + visible). Group two is the set of demonstratives that indicate an object a bit removed from the speaker yet still visible (-near, + visible). Group three is the set of demonstratives that indicate an object that is remote and not visible (-near, -visible). This group of demonstratives is distinguished by a low tone. A further distinction is made between the nominal form and the adjectival form. Both are shown in Chart 11 for ease of comparison. Each type of demonstrative pronoun has ten different forms based on noun class distinctions.

| noun class | | + near + visible | | -near + visible | | -near -visible | |
|------------|--------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| | | adjectival | nominal | adjectival | nominal | adjectival | nominal |
| 1 | wùl ‘person’ | wèyn ‘this person’ | iwèyn ‘this one’ | ì vzi ‘that person’ | ìvzi ‘that one’ | ì vzi ‘that person’ | ìvzi ‘that one’ |
| 2 | gheli ‘people’ | gheyen ‘these people’ | igheyen ‘these ones’ | ghi / zi ‘those people’ | ighi ‘those ones’ | ghì ‘those people’ | ighì ‘those’ |
| 3 | ikwo ‘money’ | wèyn | iveyn | vzi | ìvzi | vzi | ìvzi |
| 4 | ileŋ ‘bamboos’ | yeyni | iyeyni | zi | izi | zi | izi |
| 5 | ichi ‘stick’ | yeyni | iyeyni | zi | izi | zi | izi |
| 6 | awo ‘things’ | keyna | akeyna | ki | akî | kì | akì |
| 6a | mivîl ‘oil’ | mèyn | imeyn | mzi / mi | imzi / imi | mzi | imzi |
| 7 | afol ‘hat’ | keyna | akeyna | ki | akî | kì | akì |
| 8 | ifwol ‘hats’ | wèyn | iveyn | vzi | ìvzi | vzi | ìvzi |
| 9 | mbam ‘snake’ | yèyn | iyeyn | zi | izi | zi | izi |
| 10 | mbamsi ‘snakes’ | sèynsì | isèynsì | sisi | isisi | sìsì | isìsì |
| 13 | tichi ‘sticks’ | tèyntì | itèyntì | tsiti | itsiti | tsitì | itsitì |
| 19 | fikâ ‘tree’ | fèynfî | ifèynfî | fsifi | ifsfifi | fsifì | ifsfifì |

The nominal forms are composed of the associative marker plus the adjectival form. The adjectival forms are always anaphoric but the nominal forms may be either cataphoric or anaphoric.

150. Ifëynfi nìn ghi fikâ'. 'This is a tree.'
this (19) Asp be tree

151. Mi n-kôḡ bi yèyn. 'I like this dog.'
I Asp-like dog this (9)

The demonstratives also have a specific discourse function, that of reactivating a participant or of referring to a participant that had been mentioned earlier in the discourse. The anaphoric referential marker “nâ” is used with a demonstrative of any noun class in a noun phrase for this purpose.

152. Wul i wi nin beysi awo ḡeyn wul i lùmnì nâ wèyn ta wu du'i isas i fikâ'.
person Ass female Asp say things with person Ass male Ref this as he sit under Ass tree
 'A woman is conversing with this (mentioned earlier) man sitting under a tree.'

4.6.4 Indefinite pronouns

The indefinite pronoun, “ghi,” serves to de-emphasize the agent of the action, accomplishing what a passive verbal construction would do. See 4.2.4 above. It can be used in place of any noun and may also be translated as ‘they.’

153. Ghi jàḡ finjânfæ i bif iwo sî ḡweyn.
Ind call fly Seq ask thing to him
 'The fly was called and asked something.' or
 'They (i.e. people, members of the council) called the fly and asked him something.'

Another indefinite pronoun, “à,” functions as a dummy subject for stative clauses emphatic subject clauses, and for subject interrogative ‘who’ sentences.

154. à n-ghi mà. 'It is me.'
it Asp-be me

155. à n-zìti kî àḡena ghi bò sî nù. 'It was just the two of them that started to fight.'
it Asp-begin just them Ass two Inf fight

156. à nì chùf nda a? 'Who carved?'
it P1 carve who Q

4.6.5 Interrogative pronouns

There are several interrogative pronouns used in the Kom language. They commonly occur at the end of the clause, followed only by the question particle.

157. A nì chùf nda a? 'Who carved (it)?'
it P1 carve who Q

158. Wu nì chuf gha a? 'What did he carve?'
he P1 carve what Q

159. Wu nì chùf iswe' a? 'How many did he carve?'
he P1 carve how many Q

160. Wu nì chùf afo à kà à? 'Which thing did he carve?'
he P1 carve thing Ass which Q

4.6.6 Reflexive and / or reciprocal pronouns

Reflexive actions are indicated by the use of the morpheme “ngeŋ,” ‘self,’ (plural = “ngeŋsi,” ‘selves’) in a noun phrase. Reciprocal action is indicated by the morpheme “ke” having the meaning of ‘each.’

161. Mi n-kôŋ ngeŋ yem. ‘I love my self.’
 I Asp-like self my
162. Aŋena bif sî ngeŋsî àŋenasî nâ, ... ‘They asked themselves (one another) that ...’
 they ask to selves them.Agr that
163. Aŋena dù’î i na si bè ki sî àŋena ngeŋsi na ...
 they sit Seq Dur Asp say just to them selves that
 ‘They sat down and were saying just to themselves that ...’
164. Aŋena kè i bif sî kè nâ, ... ‘They each asked to each that, ...’
 they each Seq ask to each that

4.6.7 Logophoric pronouns

There is a set of logophoric pronouns used in indirect speech in the Kom language. Noun classes 1,3, and 8 make use of the following logophoric pronouns: subject, “yî,” object, “zî,” and the possessive, “vzî.” The possessive pronoun for noun classes 6 and 7 is “kya.”

165. Mbàm bè na yî ni ndù dù’î a jvâ nâ nû’tî àfî à kya ta ilvâ i vzî nin yaf ...
 snake say that he P2 go sit at stream Dur prepare medicine Ass his as stomach Ass his Asp pain
 ‘The snake said that he went to sit at the river to prepare his medicine because his stomach was hurting ...’

4.6.8 Pro-clauses and other substitutive elements

The morpheme “ateyn” has many functions. It serves as a definite determiner (see 4.8.2) and as a demonstrative (see 4.8.3) and as a substitute for nouns of location, as shown below. See also 4.9.3.

166. Wù na si ki dyaŋ ndu nî ntè’ zî a àŋena lu ateyn.
 he Dur Asp look across go of village which they leave there
 ‘He was looking across at the village which they left from there.’

4.7 Numerals

4.7.1 Numbers for counting

The following chart lists a sample of the numbers used for counting in isolation.

Chart 12.

| digits | teens | twenties |
|--------------|--|--|
| one nò' | eleven njvâ ì mò' / njvâ ì mò' ivim | twenty- one mivim in bò njvâ ì mò' / njvâ ì mò' mivim in bò |
| two bò | twelve njvâsì bò / njvâsì bò ivim | twenty- two mivim in bò njvâsì bò / njvâsì bò mivim in bò |
| three tal | thirteen njvâsì tal / njvâsì tal ivim | twenty- three mivim in bò njvâsì tal / njvâsì tal mivim in bò |
| four kâe | fourteen njvâsì kâe / njvâsì kâe ivim | twenty- four mivim in bò njvâsì kâe / njvâsì kâe mivim in bò |
| five tâyn | fifteen njvâsì tâyn / njvâsì tâyn ivim | twenty- five mivim in bò njvâsì tâyn / njvâsì tâyn mivim in bò |
| six ntufa | sixteen njvâsì ntufa / njvâsì ntufa ivim | twenty- six mivim in bò njvâsì ntufa / njvâsì ntufa mivim in bò |
| seven nsombô | seventeen njvâsì nsombô / njvâsì nsombô ivim | twenty- seven mivim in bò njvâsì nsombô / njvâsì nsombô mivim in bò |
| eight nfama | eighteen njvâsì nfama / njvâsì nfama ivim | twenty- eight mivim in bò njvâsì nfama / njvâsì nfama mivim in bò |
| nine bulamô' | nineteen njvâsì bulamô' / njvâsì bulamô' ivim | twenty- nine mivim in bò njvâsì bulamô' / njvâsì bulamô' mivim in bò |
| ten ivim | twenty mivim in bò | thirty mivim in tal |

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| thirty mivim in tal | one hundred and one ivi nì mò' |
| forty mivim in kâe | one hundred and two ivi nì bò |
| fifty mivim in tâyn | one hundred and ten ivi nì ivim |
| sixty mivim in ntufa | one hundred and ninety ivi nì mivim in bulamô' |
| seventy mivim in nsombô | two hundred ighi i bò |
| eighty mivim in nfama | two hundred and one ighi i bò nì mò' |
| ninety mivim in bulamô' | three hundred ighi i tal |
| one hundred ivi | nine hundred ighi i bulamô' |
| | one thousand nkam |
| | two thousand nkamsi sî bò |

4.7.2 Cardinal numbers

The number system that is used to indicate quantity is much the same as the system used for counting in isolation. The numbers 1 to 5 and those over 10 are joined to the head noun by the associative marker.

167. ìngom i mò' 'one banana'
banana Ass one
168. tìngom tì tâyn 'five bananas'
bananas Ass five
169. tìngòm ivim 'ten bananas'
bananas ten
170. tìngòm ivi nì ìngom i mò' 'one hundred and one bananas'
bananas hundred with banana Ass one
171. Fu ŋwà'lisì sî bò sî mà. 'Give me two books.'
give books Ass two to me

4.7.3 Ordinal numbers

The Kom language has a very limited system to indicate position in a series, that is, first, second, third, etc. It has a means of expressing ‘first,’ ‘next,’ and ‘last.’ A descriptive phrase must be used to express concepts such as ‘third,’ ‘fourth,’ etc.

172. Fu ɲwà’lì yi asi. ‘Give (me) the first book.’
give book it front

173. Fu ànkùmtì à ɲwà’lì. ‘Give (me) the next book.’
give following Ass book

174. Fu ɲwà’lì i go’sini. ‘Give (me) the last book.’
give book Ass last.Ger

175. Fu ɲwà’lì zì a yi n-ghi ibàm i ɲwà’lì nâ yèyn.
give book which it Asp-be behind Ass book Ref this
‘Give me the book which is after this book.’

4.8 Noun and verb modifiers and noun and verb phrase elements

4.8.1 Article

In languages in general, a definite article may be used to indicate a noun that has already been mentioned in the context or is common knowledge. An indefinite article may be used to introduce a new participant. However, the Kom language does not have a system of definite and indefinite articles. The context, or another type of determiner, see section 4.8.2, indicates whether or not a given noun is to be considered as definite or indefinite.

176. Bòbè nìn nî wu là’ì ghilùmnì ghi se’ i tem.
master Asp do he invite Ass.male Ind go Seq clear

‘(A) master of a compound invites (some) men to go and clear (a farm).

N.B. This is the first time that “bòbè” and “ghilùmnì” are mentioned in the context so they are considered as indefinite nouns.

177. Bzìkem nìn ku meyn ntîmkìbù’. ‘The lion caught a wolf.’
lion Asp catch Comp wolf

N.B. This is the second time the noun “bzìkem” is used in the context so it is considered to be a definite noun; this is the first time the noun

“ntîmkìbù” is used in the context so it is considered an indefinite noun.

Only the context reveals whether or not the noun phrase is definite or indefinite.

4.8.2 Determiners

The Kom language does make use of other modifiers that limit, specify, particularize, or determine the head noun (other than articles and demonstratives). These do not occur with demonstratives. Such modifiers may be used to specify the definiteness or indefiniteness of a noun for purposes of clarity or emphasis. Indefiniteness may be indicated by the use of an associative noun phrase using the word ‘other’ to modify the head noun. This same morpheme may be used to introduce a new participant. Definiteness may be indicated by the use of the morpheme “ateyn” to modify the head noun.

178. Aɲena zi meyn i ndu a ndo nì wul i wi i lvi.
they enter Perf and go in house of person Ass female Ass other

‘They entered a house of a certain woman. (N.B. first occurrence of ‘woman’)

179. Wul i wi ateyn nìn fu meyn ifwo i yini sî àɲena.
person Ass female there Asp give Perf things Ass eating to them

‘The woman gave them food.’ (N.B. subsequent occurrence of ‘woman’)

4.8.3 Demonstratives

Kom has an elaborate system of modifiers that point out or focus on the noun. The demonstrative pronoun system and its various forms was described earlier in section 4.6.3. and in Chart 11. As stated above, there is a three-way spatial and visibility distinction in this system. See the following examples of the use of these demonstrative modifiers.

180. Ba, gwòtì nyam sèynsì. ‘Friend, share these animals.’ (+ near, + visible)
friend share animal these
181. Mì n-kiŋ ɲwà’lì zì. ‘I need that book.’ (-near, + visible)
I Asp-want book that

A much more common use of the demonstrative modifiers is that of reactivating a participant in a discourse or of referring to a participant that had been mentioned earlier in the discourse. The anaphoric referential marker “nâ” is used with a demonstrative of any noun class in a noun phrase for this purpose.

182. Gheli nâ ghèyn kfa meyn. ‘These people (referred to earlier) have gone home.’
people Ref these go.home Comp
183. Wu waŋ mu nâ mzi, mi faŋ tì tas.
she sprinkle water Ref that it stay Neg seal
 ‘She sprinkled that water (referred to earlier) it did not seal.’

4.8.4 Possessives

The possessive noun modifiers are described in Chart 13. (See also 4.6.2.) Possession is expressed by an associative noun phrase composed of the head noun + associative marker (noun class specific) and the possessive pronoun. Once again the form of the possessive pronoun agrees with the noun class of the head noun. Only the associative marker and the pronoun are shown in the body of Chart 13.

190. people Ass all
gheli ghi tal ‘three people’
people Ass three

4.8.6 Auxiliaries

There are few auxiliary verbs in Kom, that is, a verb in a determining relation to another verb. (There are many serial verb constructions that will be described later.) The verb “keli,” ‘have,’ can be used in this sense. When used as an auxiliary it expresses the concept of obligation. It occurs before the main verb of the clause and carries the tense and / or aspect markers.

191. Wù n-keli si kasi si gvì nì bzi ateyn. ‘He must bring back the goat.’
he Asp have Inf return Inf come with goat there

4.8.7 Copula

The copula is a marker that is used by a predicator that is lexically non-verbal and grammatically uninflected for tense and aspect to complete a construction in which a verb is required. The sentence subject is linked (copula) to a complement by this marker. In Kom, the copula, “ghi,” is only a grammatical element that is used to carry tense and aspect. It occurs in stative constructions to express existence and location and in equative constructions to express identity.

| | |
|---------------|-----------------|
| noun | |
| pronoun | + copula + noun |
| demonstrative | |

a. equative

192. Nsom nin ghi wul achi. ‘Nsom is the chairman.’
Proper n Asp be person seat
193. Wù n-ghi wul ijèl nì mà`. ‘He is my friend.’
he Asp-be person travel of me
194. A n-ghi àjvà. ‘It is a tomato.’
it Asp-be tomato
195. Iwèyn nin ghi bòbè. ‘This is a compound head.’
this (1) Asp be lord.compound

b. stative

196. Nàwàyn nin ghi a ndo. ‘Mother is in the house.’
mother.child Asp be in house
197. Bò wom ndù a ndo ghè a atu a ndyèynsì-à nà ghi ateyn.
father my go in house where head Ass teachers-Agr Dur be there
‘My father went into the house where the principal was.’

c. existential

198. Wùl i lvi nà ghi, iziyn i nweyni nin ghi Kfà'timeyn.
person Ass other Dur be name Ass his.Agr Asp be think.first
‘There was a man, his name was Thinkfirst.’

4.8.8 Predicators

There are three types of predicators in the Kom language. The first is a verb that has an object, that is, it expresses an action that passes from an agent to a patient. The second is a verb that expresses an action but has no patient to which it is

directed. The third type is the copula that links two elements. These are described in 4.2.2 and 4.8.7.

4.8.9 Existential marker

The copula may be used as an existential marker in Kom and it frequently occurs in this role with an existential conjunction, “ma.” The copula may be used to emphasize the state of being (i.e. location) of the subject. Compare the two following examples.

199. Nkwo nin ghi ti isas i fikâ’. ‘The basket is standing under the tree.’
basket Asp be stand under Ass tree
200. Nkwo nin tî isas i fikâ’. ‘The basket stands under the tree.’
basket Asp stand under Ass tree

The existential conjunction “ma,” joins the subject existential clause with the clause that describes the state of existence of the subject. It acts as a type of complementizer in that it makes a comment about the noun being modified.

201. Nà ηweyn nin ghi ma wu bey’i meyn nkwo a ηweyn atu.
mother his Asp be Ex she carry Comp basket on her head
 ‘His mother is carrying a basket on her head.’
 literally, ‘his mother is that she has carried a basket on her head.’

It should be noted that when the copula is used for this function, it always occurs with the temporal aspect marker, “nin.” The clause beginning with the conjunction “ma” is a comment clause and it always contains the completive morpheme “meyn,” which indicates background information in the discourse structure, or “kà’,” ‘able,’ which expresses a potential or possible action.

The state of a subject may be emphasized by the use of certain verbs that are semantically stative, such as

- | <u>marked</u> | | <u>unmarked</u> | |
|--|---------------------|--|----------------------|
| 202. si baŋ | ‘to be red’ | cf. afo a baŋni-a | ‘a red thing’ |
| 203. si gha’ | ‘to be big’ | cf. afo a gha’ni-a | ‘a big thing’ |
| 204. si to | ‘to be strong’ | cf. afo a toni-a | ‘a hard thing’ |
| 205. Afo ateyn nin baŋa. <small>thing there Asp red.Inc</small> | ‘The thing is red.’ | A n-ghi afo a baŋni-a. <small>it Asp-be thing Ass red.Ger-Inc</small> | ‘It is a red thing.’ |

4.8.10 Verbal particles

There are several verbal particles that are commonly used, that is, words that are part of the verb phrase that are not inflected and which are not a noun, verb, adjective, adverb, preposition, or conjunction. There is the infinitive marker, “si.”

206. Aŋena nin ghi jel i ndu-à si dyàŋ a jva ...
they Asp be move and go-Inc Inf cross at stream
 ‘They were traveling and going to cross at the stream ...’

The particle “kæ” may serve as a type of development marker in the discourse structure, translated as ‘then,’ indicating that the following action is the next in a series of actions in a given story line.

207. Mbam i kæ fu si ya’i ìngàl ì bò.
snake Add then give Inf reach times Ass two
 ‘The snake then gave (some) two times.’

A homophonous particle “kæ” may serve as a hypothetical marker, indicating that the following action may not occur.

208. Wù ti kæ gìŋ gvisì a yi atu ki fôê ...
 he Asp if lay maggots on his head it rot
 ‘If he lays maggots on his head and it rots ...’

4.9 Other grammatical classes

4.9.1 Coordinators

A coordinate phrase consists of two similar head constituents that are joined by a coordinator. A serial phrase consists of more than two head constituents. The coordinating preposition “nì” occurs between each head constituent in Kom in both types of phrases.

NP + coord prep + NP + coord prep + NP ...

209. Njwò ìfò ì jaŋtì mìnuyyn nì nyamsi. ‘The bat called birds and animals.’
 flesh cave Seq call birds with animals
210. A n-læ nà ghi itu’ ì fì li bzìkem nì nyàmàbo nì bì ì se’ ibyem.
 it Asp-P4 Dur be day Ass other lion with leopard with dog Seq go hunting
 ‘One day a lion and a leopard and a dog went hunting.’

Another coordinating preposition, “nêyn,” can be used to emphasize the idea of accompaniment.

211. Njwò ìfò nêyn nyamsi nì mìnuyûyn ì dyàyn lâmsì.
 flesh cave with animals and birds Seq light lamps
 ‘The bat with the animals and birds lit lamps.’

The coordinator that expresses disjunction, “kèsa,” is used in the same type of construction, that is, joining two nouns with a common function.

212. Wu n-to’ asaŋ kèsa akuyn a. ‘She is planting corn or beans.’
 she Asp-plant corn or beans Top

The idea of two negative alternatives is expressed with a negative morpheme and “kèsa.”

213. Wu n-to’ wi asaŋ kèsa akuyn a. ‘She is planting neither corn nor beans.’
 she Asp-plant Neg corn or beans Top

The idea of two positive alternatives being selected is expressed simply by the coordinating preposition “nì,” as shown above.

214. Wu n-to’ asaŋ nì akuyn a. ‘She is planting (both) corn and beans.’
 she Asp-plant corn and beans Top

4.9.2 Complementizers

A sentential complement clause, an embedded clause that functions as an object of a verb, is introduced by a marker that is called a complementizer. There are no subject complement clauses in Kom.

The most frequent occurrence of the object complementizer is that it introduces the content of speech verbs, but it can also introduce the content of verbs of perception and volition.

| | | | |
|--------|---------|--------|---------|
| bè | ‘say’ | kfà’tì | ‘think’ |
| bif | ‘ask’ | yeyn | ‘see’ |
| fè’tì | ‘tell’ | kiŋ | ‘want’ |
| bèynsì | ‘reply’ | nì | ‘cause’ |

215. Wù bè na yi ni nà du’ atù fikà’, yèyn fīndùm yi ko’ a kfiyn nì nchue.
 he say that he P1 Dur sit head tree see rat it go up on hill with sunshine
 ‘He said that he was sitting in the tree and saw a mole climb the hill ...’
216. Ghì yeyn na yi gha’ i meyn. ‘They saw that it was big.’
 Ind see that it big Comp

The particle “ta,” ‘as,’ can also function as a complementizer, introducing the content of a verb of perception.

217. Fīndùm i yeyn ta wù n-zì gvì i le’ fī ki ji a nchya.
 rat Seq see as it Asp-enter come Seq go away come out just way in private
 ‘The mole saw as it (not mole) entered and (mole) escaped by a private way.’

The infinitive marker “si” can also introduce object complement clauses, much as “want to + verb” is used in English.

218. Ghì kiŋ njàm i nà si kiŋ si gvèl ŋweyn ateyn.
 Ind want ax Seq Dur Asp want Inf chop him there
 ‘They looked for an ax and were wanting to split him with it.’

4.9.3 Relativizers

A relative clause is introduced by a relativizer. The relativizer has nine different forms based on the noun class system and is composed of the group 3 demonstrative pronouns (-near, -visible) plus the particle “a” which also serves to introduce a clause that states a conclusion. The relative clause consists of this relativizer plus a full clause with a pronoun subject. The relative clause modifies a head noun, either the subject, object (direct, indirect, object of preposition), or locative, that was previously specified in the context.

| | | | |
|--|-------|---|-----------------------|
| relative clause = Group 3 demonstrative pronoun + “a” + subordinate clause | | | |
| class 1,3,8 | vzì | a | pronoun + verb ± obj. |
| class 2 | ghì | a | |
| class 4,5,9 | zì | a | |
| class 6,7 | kì | a | |
| class 6a | mzì | a | |
| class 10 | sìsì | a | |
| class 13 | tsìtì | a | |
| class 19 | fsìfì | a | |

| |
|--|
| relative clause = locative pronoun, ghè + “a” + subordinate clause |
|--|

219. Nò mi nyam i kà zì a yi nyiŋ lì asi, a yì na ghi fòyn.
 Emp Emp animal Ass which Rel it run take front so it Dur be king [modify subject of main clause]
 ‘Which ever animal that runs and takes first, it will be king.’

220. *Mi n-kôŋ ngvi zì a yì n-ghì a ndo.* ‘I like the fowl that is in the house.’
 I Asp-like fowl Rel it Asp-be in house [modify object of main clause]
221. *Wù gvi nì ìwo zì a wù n-kiŋ.* ‘He come with the thing that he wants.’
 he come with thing Rel he Asp-want [modify object of preposition]
222. *Yi leŋ mamtî fintânbuyn alè’ ghè a fi n-du’ ateyn.*
 it hit make.flat starling place Adv it Asp-sit there [modify location]
 ‘It hit and flatten the starling on the place where it was sitting.’

4.9.4 Adverbializers

An adverbial clause is introduced by an adverbial conjunction called an adverbializer. The adverbializer is not specific to any class of verbs but it does differ as to function. The adverbializer serves to introduce adverbial clauses of time, reason, purpose, and concession. These clauses refer to the setting or the circumstances of the verb of the main clause. There are no grammatical markers to indicate that the adverbializer introduces a subordinate clause.

| Adverbializer | translation | function |
|------------------------------|---------------|------------|
| <i>ilvi ta / à nà ghi ta</i> | ‘when’ | time |
| <i>bòm ta</i> | ‘because’ | reason |
| <i>ta ka / si</i> | ‘so that’ | purpose |
| <i>nô mi ta</i> | ‘even though’ | concession |

223. *Ilvi ta nàwàyn lam abayn na ŋweyn lum ŋweyn i yi.*
 time as mother.child stir fuf that she husband her Seq eat
 ‘When the mother prepares fufu she and her husband will eat.’
224. *A nà ghi ta àŋena byem ì mèsi, àŋena nin su’i meyn dù’i si yvitì.*
 it Dur be as they hunt and finish they Asp go.down Comp sit Inf rest
 ‘When they finished hunting, they sat down to rest.’
225. *Wul ì lùmnì nin ku a jûŋ bòm ta wu na yvitì isas i fikâ’.*
 person Ass male Asp catch it good for as he Dur rest under Ass tree
 ‘The man is feeling well because he was resting under the tree.’
226. *Wà na keli ghìkì ghì bò ta ka wà na yi kula.*
 you Dur have women Ass two as you Dur eat tie.Inc
 ‘You should have two wives so that you will eat well.’
227. *Wù ma’ ngèè si yisi isas i ndo nì ŋweyn ateyn.*
 she scatter seed Inf feed under Ass house of her there
 ‘She planted seeds in order to feed her family.’
228. *Wù ba’tî ifèl i ŋweyn nô mi ta wu n-yvitì.*
 he plan work Ass his Emph any as he Asp-rest
 ‘He is planning his work even though he is resting.’

4.9.5 Interjections

There are exclamatory words that are capable of standing alone, without the other elements of a sentence, such as “ayòŋnì,” ‘thanks,’ “ngañ,” ‘no,’ and “si ijya,” ‘sorry.’

229. *Ayòŋnì.* ‘Thanks.’
 full form, ‘*Mi n-fu àyòŋnì si vâ.*’ ‘I give thanks to you.’
 I Asp-give thank to you
230. *Woyn-nà ŋweyn be na, ngañ. Ka wu n-kasi ki bòm ta ...*
 children-mother his say that no Neg he Asp-return look for as
 ‘His brothers said, no. He should not look back because ...’
231. *Si ijya.* ‘Sorry.’ ‘Take it easy.’ ‘Greetings.’

4.9.6 Ideophones

There is a class of words which express the idea of noises or intense feelings. The following examples express the noise of hitting something and calling out to someone, “wo,” the feeling of fear, “wi,” and a strong negative response, “ay.”

232. Kù àteyn fe a ngò' tèyn na bìk. ‘The trunk fell on the rock like so, “bìk”.’
trunk there fall on stone so that
233. Wo gheli ghem, a yi na fi-a! ‘Wo, my people, come out!’
people my so you Dur come out-Inc
234. Wi, bò àkù i bem tèyn! ‘Wi, the lord of the forest is terrible!’
lord forest Seq terrible so
235. Ay! Mì n-kya wi. ‘No! I do not know.’
I Asp-know Neg

4.9.7 Negators

There are four commonly used particles that express negation that can be used alone or in combination with other negators.

| <u>Negator</u> | <u>Aspect</u> | <u>Negator</u> | <u>Aspect</u> |
|----------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|
| wi | imperfective | | |
| bu | perfect | bu ... fi | finality |
| tì | perfective | bu ... tì | unrealized |
| ka | imperative | | |

The negator “wi” is used in present tense (imperfective) constructions.

236. Wù n-gvî wì. ‘He is not coming.’
he Asp-come Neg

The negator “bu” is used in past tense (perfect) constructions.

237. Wù bù gvì. ‘He has not come.’
he Neg come

The negator “tì” is used in past tense (perfective) constructions.

238. Wù faṅ tì gvì. ‘He did not come.’
he stay Neg come

The negators “bu” and “tì” can be used in combination in a past tense construction with present implications that conveys unrealized expectations.

239. Wù bù du’ tì gvì. ‘He has not yet come.’
he Neg sit Neg come

The negator “bu” is used in combination with “wi,” the repetitive morpheme, “fi,” and a future tense marker to indicate a negative finality.

240. Wù n-læ bu fi gvì wì. ‘He will never come again.’
he Asp-F2 Neg again come Neg

There is also the negative imperative marker “ka” with a future sense that occupies the initial position in the clause. The fundamental role of this particle is to counter an expectation or anticipated action that is based on a previous action or stated intention.

241. Ka wa gvì. ‘Don’t come!’
Neg you come
242. Ka wu n-gvì. ‘He should not come.’
Neg he Asp-come

4.9.8 Question markers

There are two types of questions in the Kom language: affirmative/negative response questions and content questions. The affirmative/negative question is formed by the addition of a clause final question marker, usually “a” but in some cases “ma.” The marker “ma” occurs when the speaker is expecting some supplemental information in addition to the affirmative or negative response. The normal declarative sentence word order is maintained.

243. Wù ni meyn gàm̀tì n̄weyn a? ‘Did he help him?’
 he P1 Comp help him Q

244. Wù n-là gvì a libis ma? ‘Will he come tomorrow (or ...)?’
 he Asp-F2 come on tomorrow Q

Content question markers are words that substitute for other words in a declarative sentence, either a noun phrase, or a word, phrase or clause that expresses the idea of time, location, reason, manner, or number. This type of question anticipates a response of some specific information.

| | | | |
|----------|------------|-------------------|--------------|
| ghà | ‘what’ | | |
| ìlvi gha | ‘time’ | + ‘what’ | = ‘when’ |
| bòm ghà | ‘for’ | + ‘what’ | = ‘why’ |
| ti a | ‘how’ | + question marker | = ‘how’ |
| se’ a | ‘how many’ | + question marker | = ‘how many’ |
| kà | ‘which’ | | |
| wo | ‘where’ | | |
| ndà | ‘who’ | | |

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------|
| 245. Wu nì chuf gha? | ‘What did he carve?’ | noun phrase |
| he P1 carve what | | |
| 246. A nì chùf ndà a? | ‘Who carved (it)?’ | noun phrase |
| it P1 carve who Q | | |
| 247. Wu nì chuf afo à kà? | ‘Which thing did he carve?’ | noun phrase |
| he P1 carve thing Ass which | | |
| 248. Wù nì chuf ìlvi gha? | ‘When did he carve (it)?’ | temporal |
| he P1 carve time what | | |
| 249. Wù nì chùf wo? | ‘Where did he carve (it)?’ | locative |
| he P1 carve where | | |
| 250. Wu nì chuf bòm ghà? | ‘Why did he carve (it)?’ | reason |
| he P1 carve for what | | |
| 251. Wù nì chùf ti a? | ‘How did he carve (it)?’ | manner |
| he P1 carve how Q | | |
| 252. Wù nì chùf iswe’ a? | ‘How many did he carve?’ | number |
| he P1 carve how many Q | | |

All of these content questions markers occur in the clause final position or may be followed only by the question marker. They also maintain the word order of the declarative sentence except for the question word “ndà,” ‘who.’ If the subject of the declarative clause is being questioned, the subject of the interrogative clause is an indefinite pronoun and the ‘who’ question word is clause final. If this question contains an object, the object follows the question word and the sentence ends with the question marker. If the object of the declarative clause is being questioned, the ‘who’ question is formed just as the other content questions, subject + verb + ‘who.’ If the indirect object or the object of the preposition of the declarative

clause is being questioned, the ‘who’ question is formed in a similar way to the object question, subject + verb + preposition + ‘who.’

253. A nì gàm̀tì ndà ηweyn a? ‘Who helped him?’
it P1 help who him Q
254. Wù yeyn ndà a? ‘Whom did he see?’
he see who Q
255. Wù ndu àlè’ ηêyn ndà a? ‘He went to the place with whom?’
he go place with who Q

An object is implied in the content questions but is not stated unless it is specifically in focus, in which case a noun or pronoun follows the question word and the sentence ends with the question marker.

256. A nì chùf nda ankeyn a? ‘Who carved it?’
it P1 carve who it (6,7) Q

5. Bibliography

- Dieu, Michel and Patrick Renaud, 1983, Situation linguistique en Afrique centrale, inventaire préliminaire: le Cameroun, Paris, Yaounde: ACCT CERDOTOLA DGRST (Atlas linguistique de l’Afrique centrale: Atlas linguistique du Cameroun).
- Elson, Benjamin and Velma Pickett, 1983, Beginning Morphology and Syntax, SIL, Dallas, Texas.
- Grammar Sketch Outline, SIL Cameroon, Linguistics Dept.
- Grimes, Barbara F., 1984, Ethnologue, Wycliffe Bible Translators, Dallas, Texas.
- Matthews, P. H., 1981, Syntax, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, Great Britain.
- Nkwi, Paul N. and J.P. Warnier, 1982, Elements for a History of the Western Grassfields, University of Yaounde, Yaounde, Cameroon.
- Shultz, George, 1993, Notes on the phonology of the Kom language, unpublished manuscript, SIL, Yaounde, Cameroon.
- Shultz, George, 1993, Kom linguistic and sociolinguistic survey, unpublished manuscript, SIL, Yaounde, Cameroon.
- Shultz, George, 1997, Notes on discourse features of Kom narrative texts, unpublished manuscript, SIL, Yaounde, Cameroon.
- Watters, John R. 1989, Southern Bantoid, In John Bendor-Samuel, ed., 1989, The Niger-Congo Languages, University Press of America, Lanham, MD.
- Welmers, Wm. E., 1973, African Language Structures, University of California Press, Berkeley, California, U.S.A.

6. Appendices

Reading text Ref: 001

wul nìn du' achi.
wul nìn du' achi
person prog sit chair
n asp v n

"A person is sitting on a chair. "

Ref: 002

wul i lùmnì nìn du' achi jaṅ ḡwà'lì.
wul i lum +nì nìn du' achi jaṅ ḡwà'lì
person Ass male+Ger prog sit chair read book
n con n +suf asp v n v n

"A man is sitting on a chair reading a book. "

Ref: 003

woyn ḡweyn nìn ki i ḡweyn ta wu n-jaṅ ḡwà'lì.
woyn ḡweyn nìn ki i ḡweyn ta wu nìn +jaṅ ḡwà'lì
children 3sobj prog look.at Seq 3sobj as 3ssub prog+read book
n pro asp vt con pro conj pro asp +v n

"His children are looking at him as he reads the book. "

Ref: 004

wù n-ghì ma wu tuṅ meyn ḡvisivì nì ḡweyn nì
wù nìn +ghì ma wu tuṅ meyn ḡvi +sì +ivì nì ḡweyn nì
3ssub prog +be Ex 3ssub put.on Comp cover+3pl+feet of 3sobj with
pro asp +vs conj pro vt asp n +pro+n prep pro prep

wì ḡweyn na jaṅ ḡwà'lì.
wì ḡweyn na jaṅ ḡwà'lì
female 3sobj Dur read book
n pro asp v n

"He is there, having put on his shoes, with his wife reading a book. "

Ref: 005

wayn i lùmnì nìn li meyn awu ḡweyn lem a jem nì wayn i wi.
wayn i lum +nì nìn li meyn awu ḡweyn lem a jem nì wayn i wi
child Ass male+Ger prog other Comp hand 3sobj put on back of child Ass female
n con n +suf asp adj asp n pro vi prep n prep n con n

"The boy took his hand and put it on the girl's back. "

Ref: 006

wayn i wi nìn ghì ma wu ma' gyaṅ na ki ta bo àṅena nìn jaṅ ḡwà'lì.
wayn i wi nìn ghì ma wu ma' gyaṅ na ki ta bò àṅena nìn jaṅ ḡwà'lì
child Ass fem prog be Ex 3s wear dress Dur look.at as father 3pl prog read book
n con n asp vs conj pro vt n asp vt conj n pro asp v n

"A girl is there, wearing a dress, looking as their father reads a book. "

Ref: 007

àṅena nìn ki ḡwà'lì ateyn no nì adya' a.
àṅena nìn ki ḡwà'lì ateyn nô nì adya' a
3pl prog look.at book there Emph with power Top
pro asp vt n dem adv prep n asp

"They are looking at the book with great interest. "

Traditional doctor text

Ref: 001

à n-ghi a aliŋsi afêyn, à n-ghi wùl ì ngàŋ ateyn.
 a nin + ghi a aliŋsi afêyn a nin + ghi wul ì ngàŋ ateyn
 it prog +be in picture here it prog +be person Ass medicine there
 pro asp +vs prep n loc pro asp+vs n con n dem

"In this picture, there is a medicine man. "

Ref: 002

wùl ì ngàŋ nâ wèyn ghi-a ma wu ndu meyn nì àfî
 wul ì ngàŋ na wèyn ghi+a ma wu ndù meyn nì afî
 person Ass medicine that this be +Inc Ex 3ssub go Comp do medicine
 n con n rel dem vs suf part pro vi asp vt n

si wùl ì iko'ini, iwuyn nì wùl ì iko'ini.
 si wul ì i +ko'i+ni iwuyn nì wul ì i +ko'i+ni
 to person Ass nom+sick +Ger body of person Ass nom+sick +Ger
 prep n con pre+vi +suf n prep n con pre+vi +suf

"This medicine man went to apply medicine to a sick person, to the body of a sick person. "

Ref: 003

wul ì iko'ini la' nì ŋweyn nì ngvisi.
 wul ì i +ko'i+ni la' nì ŋweyn nì ngvi +si
 person Ass nom+sick +Ger pay with 3sobj with chicken+nc
 n con pre+vi +suf v prep pro prep n +suf

"The sick person paid him with fowls. "

Ref: 004

wù bala meyn ngvisi ateyn a ŋweyn a jim, ghal ì bò
 wù bala meyn ngvi +si ateyn a ŋweyn a jim ghal ì bò
 3ssub carry Comp chicken+nc there on 3sobj on back hold Seq bag
 pro v asp n +suf dem prep pro prep n v +con n

àfî nì ŋwèyn a ŋweyn awu, waf fînyùe a ŋweyn a ichibi
 afî nì ŋweyn a ŋweyn awu waf fînyùe a ŋweyn a ichibi
 medicine of 3sobj in 3sobj hand hang knife on 3sobj on side
 n prep pro prep pro n v n prep pro prep n

na si kasi kfa si a ŋweyn a ndo.
 na si kasi kfa si a ŋweyn a ndo
 that Asp return go.home to in 3sobj in house
 rel part vi vi prep prep pro prep n

"He carried those fowls on his back, holding a bag of medicine in his hand, hanging a knife on his side and is going home to his house. "

Traditional doctor text

Ref: 005

wu n-ghi jela ki nì ivi.
 wu nin + ghi jèl + a ki nì ivi
 3ssub prog+be walk+incomp just with feet
 pro asp +vs vi +asp adv prep n

"He is moving on foot. "

Ref: 006

wu bu la' mitu si a jel ateyn.
 wu bu la' mitu si a jèl ateyn
 3ssub neg pay vehicle to so walk there
 pro adv v n prep conj vi dem

"He has not paid a car to be traveling in it. "

Ref: 007

wù ndu meyn chwaynti iwuyn i wul i iko'ini nì rèysì
 wù ndù meyn chwaynti iwuyn i wul i i +ko'i+ni nì rèysì
 3ssub go Comp cut body Ass person Ass nom+sick+Ger with razor
 pro vi asp v n con n con pre+vi +suf prep n

bleydì ni afi si wul i iko'ini a tì kasi na
 bleydì nì afi si wul i i +ko'i+ni a ti kasi na
 blade do medicine to person Ass nom+sick +Ger so thus return Dur
 n v n prep n con pre+vi +suf conj adv vi asp

si kfa si a ndo nì bò àfi nì ηweyn ta wu keli
 si kfa si a ndo nì bò afi nì ηweyn ta wu keli
 asp go.home to in house with bag medicine of 3sobj as 3ssub have
 part vi prep prep n prep n n prep pro conj pro v

si a ηweyn awu.
 si a ηweyn awu
 to in 3sobj hand
 prep prep pro n

"He went and cut the skin of the sick person with a razor blade and put medicine to the sick person and so is going back home to the house with his bag of medicine that he had in his hand. "