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# The Noun and Verb Phrase in Chrambo (Bambalang)

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## Contents

List of tables.....	3
Abbreviations.....	4
Acknowledgements.....	5
1. Introduction.....	6
1.1 Language Classification and relation to neighbouring languages.....	6
1.2 Background to previous linguistic work.....	6
1.3 The people of Bambalang.....	7
2. The Noun.....	8
2.1 Morphological Structure of the Noun.....	8
2.2 Noun classes.....	10
2.2.1 Singular noun classes.....	11
2.2.2 Plural noun classes.....	12
2.3 Gender.....	14
2.4 Agreement.....	16
3. The Noun Phrase.....	18
3.1 Structure of the noun phrase.....	18
3.2 Noun Phrase Modifiers.....	18
3.2.1 Demonstratives.....	19
3.2.2 The anaphoric demonstratives.....	22
3.2.3 Possessives.....	24
3.2.4 Adjectives.....	27
3.2.5 Numerals.....	29
3.2.6 Relative Clauses.....	30
3.3 Negation in the Noun Phrase.....	33
3.4 The Associative Noun Phrase.....	34
3.5 Pronouns.....	38
3.5.1 Subject pronouns.....	38
3.5.2 Direct Object Pronouns.....	39
3.5.3 Indirect object pronouns.....	40
3.5.5 Emphatic pronouns.....	41
3.5.6 Compound pronouns.....	41
3.6 Co-ordination.....	44
3.6.1 Co-ordination of Noun Phrases.....	44

3.6.2 Co-ordination of pronoun and noun phrase.....	45
4. Locatives .....	46
4.1 Locative tone marking on certain nouns .....	46
4.2 Other Locative markers.....	47
4.3 Locative Pronouns .....	48
5. The Verb .....	50
5.1 Morphological structure of the verb .....	50
6. The Verb Phrase .....	52
6.1 Verb Tense.....	53
6.2 Aspect.....	56
6.3 Mood .....	58
6.3.1 Hortatives.....	59
6.3.2 Imperatives (commands).....	59
6.4 Serial Verb Phrase .....	60
6.4.1 Direction .....	61
6.5 Auxiliary Verbs.....	62
6.6 Negation .....	63
6.6.1 Negation of statements.....	64
6.6.2 Negation of hortatives.....	66
6.6.3 Negation of commands.....	66
7. Simple clauses.....	67
7.1 Simple clause structure.....	67
7.2 Interrogative sentences (questions).....	68
8. Conclusion and further research needs.....	70
Bibliography.....	71

## List of tables

TABLE 2.1 NOUN PREFIXES AND CONCORDS .....	10
TABLE 2.2 NOUN CLASS CONCORDS OF CHRAMBO AND BAFANJI.....	10
TABLE 2.3 DOUBLE CLASS NOUN GENDERS .....	14
TABLE 2.4 THE CONCORD SYSTEM.....	17
TABLE 3.1 GENDER 9/2 DEMONSTRATIVES .....	19
TABLE 3.2 DEMONSTRATIVES NOUN CLASS CONCORD .....	19
TABLE 3.3 DEMONSTRATIVES PRECEDING THE NOUN.....	20
TABLE 3.4 ANAPHORIC DEMONSTRATIVES - TYPE 2 .....	23
TABLE 3.5 ANAPHORIC DEMONSTRATIVES - TYPE 3 .....	24
TABLE 3.6 NON-EMPHATIC POSSESSIVES .....	25
TABLE 3.7 EMPHATIC POSSESSIVES.....	26
TABLE 3.8 SUBJECT PRONOUNS .....	38
TABLE 3.9 DIRECT OBJECT PRONOUNS.....	39
TABLE 3.10 INDIRECT OBJECT PRONOUNS.....	40
TABLE 3.11 EMPHATIC PRONOUNS.....	41
TABLE 3.12 COMPOUND PRONOUNS.....	44
TABLE 4.1 LOCATIVE PRONOUNS .....	48
TABLE 6.1 VERB TENSE PARADIGM FOR <i>SHÀ'Á</i> CROSS AND <i>SHÁ'À</i> JUDGE, RULE .....	53
TABLE 6.2 PROGRESSIVE ASPECT FOR THE VERB <i>NYÍÁ</i> 'COOK' .....	57
TABLE 6.3 HORTATIVE FORM OF <i>PÌNÍ</i> 'RETURN' (L TONE VERB).....	59
TABLE 6.4 HORTATIVE FORM OF <i>PÍNÍ</i> 'DANCE' (H TONE VERB).....	59
TABLE 6.5 NEGATION OF STATEMENTS .....	64
TABLE 6.6 NEGATION OF STATEMENTS WITH PROGRESSIVE ASPECT MARKER .....	65

## Abbreviations

ˊ H	high tone	HORT	hortative mood
ˋ L	low tone	ID	indirect object
ˊˋ ˋH	downstepped high tone	IMP	imperative mood
ˆ HL	falling tone from H to L	INCL	inclusive
ˆ HˋH	falling tone from H to ˋH	INST	instrument
ˋ LH	rising tone from L to H	INT	interrogative
1DL	1 <sup>st</sup> person dual	LOC	locative
1PL	1 <sup>st</sup> person plural	N-	homorganic nasal prefix
1SG	1st person singular	N1	1 <sup>st</sup> noun in associative NP
2PL	2 <sup>nd</sup> person plural	N2	2 <sup>nd</sup> noun in associative NP
2SG	2nd person singular	NEG	negative marker
3PL	3 <sup>rd</sup> person plural	NON-EMPH	non-emphatic
3SG	3rd person singular	NP	noun phrase
ACC	accompaniment	NUM	numeral
ADJ	adjective	P	past tense marker
AM	associative marker	P0	unmarked tense
ANAP	anaphoric demonstrative	P1	recent past tense
C1	noun class 1, etc.	P2	mid past tense
CON	concord marker	P3	far past tense
DEM	demonstrative	PERF	perfective aspect
DET	determiner	PL	plural marker
DO	direct object	POSS	possessive
EMPH	emphatic	PREP	preposition
EXCL	exclusive	PRO	pronoun
F	future tense marker	PROG	progressive aspect
F1	near future tense	REL	relative pronoun / marker
F2	mid future tense	SS	same subject morpheme
F3	far future tense	VP	verb phrase
FAR	far tense marker	*	ungrammatical sentence
HAB	habitual aspect		

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## 1. Introduction

This paper presents a description of the noun and verb phrase in Chrambo, the language spoken by the people of Bambalang in the North West Region of Cameroon. The Chrambo examples are all written in the Chrambo orthography (Grove 2007). In this paper tone is marked on all syllables, although it is not yet being marked in the Chrambo orthography. The tone marked is the surface tone and not the underlying phonemic tone, and the tone marking is somewhat tentative; I am not 100% confident of the tone marking on all my examples, especially since they come from several different speakers.

### 1.1 Language Classification and relation to neighbouring languages

Chrambo is an Eastern Grassfields Bantu language spoken by an estimated 29,000 speakers (Gordon 2005) in the village of Bambalang, Ndop Subdivision, Ngoketunja Division, North West Region, Cameroon. It is listed in the Ethnologue of World Languages as ‘Bambalang’ under the ISO code [bmo], classified as follows:

NIGER-CONGO: ATLANTIC-CONGO: VOLTA-CONGO: BENOUE-CONGO,  
BANTOID, SOUTHERN, WIDE GRASSFIELDS, NARROW GRASSFIELDS,  
MBAM-NKAM, NUN: Bambalang (Gordon 2005).

The Bambalang people call their language ‘Chrambo’ and it will be referred to as Chrambo throughout this paper.

Chrambo is closely related to the other Nun languages: Baba, Bafanji, Bamali, Bamenyam, Bamun, Bangolan and Mungaka (Gordon 2005).

The neighbouring language groups to Bambalang are Bamunka (a South Ring language) to the North, Bangolan to the North East, Bamun to the East and South, Bafanji to the West, and Bamali to the North West.

The official language of the region is English, which is the language of education. However English is only spoken by the well educated and is usually only used in formal situations. Pidgin English is normally used as the language of wider communication between people from different villages.

### 1.2 Background to previous linguistic work

The only previous linguistic works on Chrambo known to the author are a survey paper (Grant 1993), an orthography paper (Grove 2007) and a phonology paper (Ayafor 2002). I have also consulted Jen Luider who is currently working on a phonology and tone paper which she expects to finish this year.

Several articles have been published on various aspects of the grammar of Bafanji (Nchufie), a neighbouring Nun language, in Koopman and Murat’s ‘Aspects of Nchufie grammar’ (1994). I have also made use of some initial notes on the noun classes of Bafanji (Cam Hamm, p.c.) and Bamali (Donatus Taloh and Cam Hamm, p.c.), another Nun language. A Noun Class Paper has been done on

the neighbouring language of Bamukumbit, which is classified as an Ngemba language (Devisser 2006) and a full grammar analysis has been done on the South Ring language of Babungo (Shaub, 1985). In addition a Noun Phrase paper and a Verb Phrase paper are in progress in Bamali (Donatus Taloh). At least some phonology and orthography work has been carried out in most of the neighbouring languages (Bafanji: Hamm 2007, Bamukumbit: Simpson 2006, Bamunka: Sorsamo 2006, Baba: Njeck and Hedinger 2006, Bangolan: Njeck 2004, Bamessing: DeVries 2008, Babessi: Njeck and Hedinger 2007, Bamali: Achotia 2005).

There is a considerable amount of literature on other less-closely related Grassfields languages, including several full grammar analyses and some more general comparative papers covering several languages. The ones I have referred to are listed in the bibliography.

### **1.3 The people of Bambalang**

The people of Bambalang are mostly agriculturalists, although fishing and palm wine tapping are also common occupations among the men of the community. Driving motorbikes is another source of income for many young men. Other forms of employment come from schools, the three health clinics in the village which provide basic healthcare and maternity care, and shops or bars.

The agriculture is mainly subsistence farming with some cash crops such as peanuts (groundnuts), rice and coffee. The main food crops are maize, peanuts, beans, rice, cassava and various yams. Other common crops include tomatoes, okra, 'five finger', egusi, bananas and plantains and other tropical fruits. The staple food is corn fufu, made from ground corn (optionally mixed with a little ground cassava) and water. This is eaten with any of a number of sauces, such as njama njama, 'five finger', bitterleaf or fish.

Like the surrounding villages, Bambalang has a Fon as the traditional ruler and the palace is central to the community and the culture of the people.



## 2. The Noun

### 2.1 Morphological Structure of the Noun

A noun consists of a noun class prefix and the lexical stem.

e.g.1. *ṅdĩŋ* ‘brother’ or ‘relative’ is made up of the morphemes:

ṅ-<sup>1</sup> + *lĩŋ*  
C1 prefix + noun root

(Note: there is a phonological rule  $l \rightarrow d / \_n \_*$ )

e.g. 2. *míkòkò* ‘lizard’ is made up of the morphemes:

mí- + *kòkò*  
C9 prefix + noun root

In Chrambo, for the majority of nouns, the prefixes have become part of the stem and are no longer functional. Therefore the nouns have the same prefix in both singular and plural.

e.g. 3.

<i>ṅkrǎ</i>	<i>yĩ</i>		<i>ṅkrà</i>	<i>pí</i>
C9.drum	C9.3SG.POSS		C2.drum	C2.3SG.POSS
‘his drum’			‘his drum’	

(Note: there is a phonological tone rule  $LH \rightarrow L / \_H$  at least in certain circumstances.)

The only noun class prefix that is still functional for most nouns is the class 1 prefix. Many nouns in the gender 1/2 have a class 1 prefix when singular and no prefix when plural.

e.g. 4.

Singular:

ṅ-	+	<i>lĩŋ</i>	→	<i>ṅdĩŋ</i>
C1	+	relative	→	C1.relative

Plural:

∅	+	<i>lĩŋ</i>	→	<i>lĩŋ</i>
C2	+	relative	→	C2.relationships

There are only three nouns known to the author which take a C2 prefix when plural. All are in the gender 1/2. These are the following:

*mìmbîa* ‘man’ → *pĩmbîa* ‘men’

---

<sup>1</sup> N- stands for a homorganic nasal prefix. The term ‘homorganic’ means that the nasal is produced at the same place of articulation as the following phoneme, e.g. if followed by a velar consonant, it will be realised as the velar nasal ŋ.

mìṅgwé ‘woman’ → pǐṅgè ‘women’  
 múùṅ ‘child’ → púòṅ ‘children’  
 (In all of these the stem also changes.)

In addition, *pílě* ‘peanuts’ seems to have a C2 prefix which has become part of the stem even when in the singular noun class C9 (see section 2.2.1). There may be more instances of a C2 prefix which the author is not yet aware of.

Some nouns have a combination of two prefixes. This is very evident in the following example:

e.g. 5.

Singular:

mí- + Ñ- + lli → míndì  
 ? + C1 + noun root → ‘C1.elder’

In the plural the C1 prefix is not present, but the initial prefix *mí-* remains:

mí- + Ø + lli → míllì  
 ? + C2 + noun root → ‘C2.elders’

This is probably the case in other nouns where the prefix *mí-* is followed by a homorganic nasal, such as *míṅgú* ‘dog’, *míṅgùd* ‘chicken’ and *míṅkunyà* ‘pig’. In the case of *míṅkunyà* and a few other animals, the *mí* prefix is optional.

Watters (2003) states that in Eastern Grassfields languages there are no high tone prefixes, however Chrambo has the prefix *mí-*. In most cases this occurs in C9, however there is at least one example in C1: *míndì* ‘elder’ (above). This prefix may have come into the language as a result of influence from one of the neighbouring languages.

In several of the nouns which have this *mí-* prefix followed by a high tone on the noun root, the root is downstepped, showing that there is a floating low tone before the root of the noun.

e.g. 6.

mí’shwéishwéi ‘story’  
 mí’nwí ‘knife’

In some of the borrowed nouns, a floating low tone is at the end rather than the beginning of the root, causing downstep on a following high tone.

e.g. 7.

míbûshì ‘púgú ‘their cat’  
 nínâshì ‘púgú ‘their pineapple’

At least five nouns have a tonal distinction between their singular and plural forms. Four of them are gender 9/2 nouns:

míṅgú ‘dog’                      mîṅgù ‘dogs’  
 míṅgùd ‘chicken’              mîṅgùd ‘chickens’  
 mímbí ‘goat’                      mîmbì ‘goats’  
 mîṅgrâ ‘antelope (sg)’      mîṅgrâ ‘antelope (pl)’

In each case, the tone on the prefix changes from H in the singular to HL in the plural, and the tone on the root changes from H or HL in the singular to L in the plural.

The fifth is a noun from gender 1/2:

ḡ̀gàṅ ‘person who usually does something’ plural: ghǎṅ

e.g. 8. ḡ̀gàṅ píṅ ‘hunter’ ghǎṅ píṅ ‘hunters’

This may be considered an associative noun phrase, in which case the high tone in the plural example may be the c2 associative marker (see section 3.4).

## 2.2 Noun classes<sup>2</sup>

Like the other Nun languages (Watters 2003), Chrambo has a reduced noun class system in comparison with some other Eastern Grassfields languages. Five noun classes have been identified, three singular and two plural, however it is clear that class 2 is taking over as the main plural class, and class 7 is taking over as the main singular class. The noun classes have been identified on the basis of the possessives and demonstratives which agree with the noun class of the head noun. The prefixes and concords<sup>3</sup> of the noun classes are summarised in table 2.1.

Table 2.1 Noun prefixes and concords

Noun Class	Prefix	Concord
1	Ṇ-, mì-, mí-	ṿ
2	∅, p̣í-	p̣
6	∅	ṃ
7	∅, l-, Ṇ-	ỵ
9	mí-, Ṇ-, ∅	ỵ

The noun class concords are particularly similar to those of Bafanji which is also a Nun language, as shown in table 2.2.

Table 2.2 Noun class concords of Chrambo and Bafanji

Noun Class	Chrambo	Bafanji
1	ṿ	ẉ
2	p̣	p̣
3		ẉ
6	ṃ	ṃ
7	ỵ	ỵ
9	ỵ	ỵ

---

<sup>2</sup> Nouns are classified into classes on the basis of the noun modifiers (such as possessives, demonstratives, etc) which agree with them. There is a noun class numbering system used for comparison of all Bantu languages and the noun classes in Chrambo have been numbered according to that system.

<sup>3</sup> A noun class concord is the prefix (in Chrambo one phoneme and an associated tone) which agrees with the class of the noun and is affixed to the elements which agree with the noun (possessives, demonstratives, etc.)

The justification for identifying these five noun classes is based on the noun class systems of other Eastern Grassfields Bantu languages, as explained below.

### 2.2.1 Singular noun classes

**Class 1** - Prefixes: Ñ-, mì-, mí-, m-. Concord: v̀

Class 1 includes most of the singular human nouns, as is true in most Bantu languages. Class 1 nouns in Eastern Grassfields languages typically have a nasal prefix (Watters 2003:29) and in Chrambo many of the human nouns have the prefix Ñ-. There are also at least two nouns with the prefix mì-, two nouns with the prefix m- and one noun with the prefix mí-. The concord marker is v- with a low tone which corresponds to the w- with a low tone in some other languages such as Bafut (Tamanji 2001:161), Ngiemboon (Anderson 2001:51), Bamukumbit (Devisser 2006:2) and Bafanji (Hamm, p.c.).

Examples of nouns with prefix Ñ-:

ñdĩŋ ‘relative’	ñdĩŋ v̄ ‘his relative’
ñdáòŋ ‘husband’	ñdáòŋ v̄ ‘his husband’

Nouns with prefix m-:

múùŋ ‘child’	múùŋ v̄ ‘his child’
mùúŋ ‘mother’	mùúŋ v̄ ‘his mother’

Nouns with the prefix mì-:

mìmbià ‘man’	mìmbià v̄ ‘that man’
mìŋgwé ‘woman’	mìŋgwé v̄ ‘that woman’

Example of noun with the prefix mí-:

míndì ‘elder’	míndì v̄ ‘his elder’
---------------	----------------------

**Class 7** – Prefixes: Ø, l-, Ñ-. Concord: ý

Class 7 includes abstract nouns, body parts and other material nouns. Classes 5 and 7 seem to have combined into one noun class, since the prefix l- is typical of class 5 in the other languages I have looked at (Ngiemboon, Bafut and Bamukumbit) and the Ø prefix probably comes from class 7, which in the three languages mentioned above has a vocalic prefix. In Chrambo the vocalic prefix seems to have dropped out, as the language has no vowel initial lexical items. The fact that there is no segmental prefix on these nouns does not exclude the possibility that there is a floating tone prefix. My work on the associative noun phrase suggests the presence of floating tones attached to the beginning or end of certain nouns (see section 3.4). A few nouns with a nasal prefix are also in this noun class; they may have originally come from class 3. The concord ý is the same as the other four languages I have looked at.

Examples of nouns with Ø prefix:

thó ‘head’	thó yí ‘his head’
kúoŋ ‘bed’	kúoŋ yí ‘his bed’

Examples of nouns with prefix l-:

lìná ‘knowledge’	lìná yí ‘his knowledge’
------------------	-------------------------

lè ‘hat’

lè yí ‘his hat’

Examples of nouns prefix Ñ-:

m̀bbó ‘arm’

m̀bbó yí ‘his arm’

ḥkhì ‘song’

ḥkhì yí ‘his song’

**Class 9** – Prefix: *mí-*, Ñ-, Ø Concord: *y`*

As is typical in Bantu languages, class 9 includes the majority of the animals. Most of the animals and a few other nouns have the prefix *mí-*. The nouns which have a homorganic nasal prefix are abstract or material nouns. In Bantu languages, class 9 usually has a nasal prefix and according to Tamanji (2001:160) in some languages the prefix consists of a nasal plus vowel. There is at least one noun in this class without a class 9 or class 3 prefix; *pílě*. *Pí-* in *pílě* may be a c2 prefix which has become integrated in the stem. There are also a small number of nouns with no prefix. The concord marker for this class in Chrambo is *y-* with a low tone which is also the class 9 concord marker in Bafanji, Bafut, Ngiemboon and Bamukumbit.

Examples of nouns with prefix *mí-*:

mímíbí ‘goat’

mímíbí yí ‘his goat’

míli`ì ‘shadow’

míli`ì yí ‘his shadow’

Examples of nouns with prefix Ñ-:

ḥjèḥj ‘dream’

ḥjèḥj yí ‘his dream’

ḥdá ‘house’

ḥdá yí ‘his house’

Examples of nouns with Ø prefix:

gù ‘death’

gù yí ‘his death’

chàchùḥj ‘cassava’

chàchùḥj yí ‘his cassava’

chòyéi ‘forehead’

chòyéi yí ‘his forehead’

Example of noun with prefix *pi-*:

pílě ‘peanuts’

pílě yí ‘his peanuts’

When nouns such as *pílě* ‘peanut’, *shíe* ‘corn’, *námbwà* ‘banana’, and several other food items which are in gender 7/2 or 9/2 are in the singular noun class, they do not just refer to a single peanut, banana, or cob of corn; rather they refer to one quantity of it, for example a bag or a bowl of peanuts, a hand or a head of bananas, a basket or a bag of corn. In the plural noun class they refer to more than one of these quantities of the item.

### 2.2.2 Plural noun classes

**Class 2** – Prefixes: Ø, *pí-*, *p-* Concord: *p´*

Class 2 seems to be the general plural class as there are nouns from all singular classes which have class 2 plurals. The noun class prefixes *pí* and *p-* and concord marker *p-* correspond to the *p-* in Ngiemboon and Bafanji and *b-* in Bafut and Bamukumbit.

Examples of nouns with c2 prefix pĩ-:

pĩmbìà            'men'  
pĩŋgè            'women'

Example of noun with c2 prefix p-:

púòŋ            'children'

However in Chrambo most c2 nouns have no prefix. As explained in section 2.1, for the majority of nouns in Chrambo the singular noun class prefix has become part of the stem and is not removed when the noun is in the plural class 2. The exceptions are the human nouns that fall into the gender 1/2.

Examples of gender 7/2 and gender 9/2 nouns where the prefix has become part of the stem and is always present:

Gender 7/2:    m̀bàóŋ 'egg' → (pà)\* m̀bàóŋ 'eggs'  
                  m̀bbó 'arm' → (pà) m̀bbó 'arms'

Gender 9/2:    míŋgú 'dog' → (pà) míŋgù 'dogs'  
                  mímí 'goat' → (pà) mímí 'goats'

\*See below for explanation of this plural marker

Examples of gender 1/2 nouns where the class 1 prefix is only present in the singular class 1 noun:

̀ndáóŋ 'husband' → láóŋ 'husbands'            (note: [d] is underlyingly /l/)  
̀ŋgwé 'wife' →        gwé 'wives'

### The plural marker *pà*:

There is a plural marker *pà* which precedes the noun but is not affixed to it. This plural marker has the c2 concord marker *p-*, but can be used with any plural noun from c2 or c6. It is optional when it is clear from the context that the noun is plural. It is not considered to be a prefix because it can be separated from the head noun as in example 10.

e.g. 9.

lìŋ	pâŋ	OR	pà	lìŋ	pâŋ
c2.relative	c2.my		PL	c2.relative	c2.my
'my relatives'				'my relatives'	

e.g. 10.

pà pì-châi    ŋgwà<sup>4</sup>  
PL    c2-some    c2.people  
'some people'

---

<sup>4</sup> In most of the examples in this paper tone is not marked on nasal prefixes because in context the nasal is not syllabic.

e.g. 11.  
 pà mbbó mâ  
 PL C6.hand C6.my  
 'My hands'

**Class 6 - Prefix: Ø Concord: mí**

As already stated, class 2 seems to be taking over as the main plural class and class 6 nouns now have no C6 prefix (they retain their singular prefix), but optionally take the class 2 plural marker pà. The class 6 concord system is greatly reduced and the only noun modifiers with a class 6 concord are the non-emphatic possessives and demonstratives. When class 6 single gender nouns, such as mbínì 'milk' and ñthí 'decision', are with other noun modifiers they take the class 7 concord markers (see examples 19 and 25). Gender 7/6~2 nouns (paired body parts) can optionally take class 6 or class 2 agreement for the non-emphatic possessives, and must take class 2 agreement for the other noun modifiers (see examples 20 and 24). The concord marker for class 6 in Chrambo is m- with high tone. This is the same as in Bafanji, Bafut, Ngiemboon and Bamukumbit. The nouns that have class 6 plurals are almost all body parts (including milk which comes from the word for breast). Eggs can optionally be in this plural class but are more commonly in class 2.

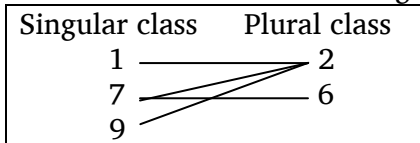
**Examples:**

m̀bbó 'arms'	m̀bbó mí 'C6.his arms'	(OR m̀bbó pí 'C2.his arms')
kwò 'legs'	kwò mí 'C6.his legs'	(OR kwò pí 'C2.his legs')
m̀bíní 'milk'	m̀bíní mí 'his milk' (animal milk, not breast milk)	

**2.3 Gender**

On the basis of the above noun class system there are 4 double class genders. These are shown in table 2.3 with examples below.

Table 2.3 Double class noun genders



**Class 1/2 – human nouns**

̀ndĩj vĩ 'his relative'	lĩj pí 'his relatives'
̀ndádòj vĩ 'her husband'	ládòj pí 'her husbands'
̀nchĩ vĩ 'his relative by marriage'	chĩ pí 'his in-laws'
̀jgũj vĩ 'his mother-in-law'	̀jgũj pí 'his mother-in-laws'
̀jgwé vĩ 'his wife'	gwé pí 'his wives'
m̀mbíà vĩ 'her man'	pĩmbíà pí 'her men'
m̀jngwé vĩ 'his bride'	pĩjngé pí 'his brides'
m̀míndì vĩ 'his elder'	míllì 'pí 'his elders'
m̀múj vĩ 'his child'	púòj pí 'his children'

Class 7/2 – material nouns

kúoŋ yí ‘his bed’	kúoŋ pí ‘his beds’
fɔ̄ yí ‘his leaves’	fɔ̄ pí ‘his leaves’
lè yí ‘his hat’	lè pí ‘his hats’
̀̀khì yí ‘his song’	̀̀khì pí ‘his songs’
thí yí ‘his tree’	thí pí ‘his trees’
fí yí ‘his wound’	fí pí ‘his wounds’
kúoŋ yí ‘his beans’	kúoŋ pí ‘his beans’
kwíe yí ‘his flock’	kwíe pí ‘his flocks’
̀̀bàoŋ yí ‘his egg’	̀̀bàoŋ pí ‘his eggs’*

\*̀̀bàoŋ can optionally be in the gender 7/6, especially in folk stories.

Class 7/6~2 – body parts

líí yí ‘his eye’	líí mí ~ líí pí ‘his eyes’
tóná yí ‘his ear’	tóná mí ~ tóná pí ‘his ears’
kwò yí ‘his leg’	kwò mí ~ kwò pí ‘his legs’
̀̀bbó yí ‘his arm’	̀̀bbó mí ~ ̀̀bbó pí ‘his arms’

Class 9/2 – animals and other material nouns

míngú yí ‘his dog’	míngù ‘pí ‘his dogs’
mímbí yí ‘his goat’	mímbì ‘pí ‘his goats’
míkòkò yí ‘his lizard’	míkòkò pí ‘his lizards’
míngùò yí ‘his chicken’	míngùò ‘pí ‘his chickens’
mímpà’ò yí ‘his machete’	mímpà’ò pí ‘his machetes’
míli’i yí ‘his shadow’	míli’i pí ‘his shadows’
mí’shwéishwéi yí ‘his story’	mí’shwéishwéi pí ‘his stories’
̀̀jèŋ yí ‘his dream’	̀̀jèŋ pí ‘his dreams’
̀̀dá yí ‘his house’	̀̀dá pí ‘his houses’
̀̀jìeŋ yí ‘his axe’	̀̀jìeŋ pí ‘his axes’
̀̀dúà yí ‘his cup’	̀̀dúà pí ‘his cups’
píle yí ‘his peanuts’	píle pí ‘his peanuts’

There are also at least 3 single class genders. Some examples are given below:

Most of them are non-count nouns:

Class 6:

̀̀bíní mí ‘his milk’

*̀̀bíní* can also be the plural of *píní* ‘breast’ but in this case it is a gender 7/6~2 noun. *̀̀bíní* ‘milk’ could sometimes be used as a count noun if it is referring to cups of milk, but it would be more normal to use the word *̀̀dúà* ‘cup’ and say e.g. *pàá ̀̀dúà ̀̀bíní* ‘two cups of milk’.

Class 7:

líná yí ‘his knowledge’

̀̀jí yí ‘his strength’

lí’é yí ‘its light’ (light in general, not electric light)

Class 9:

̀̀gǎ’í yí ‘his suffering’

̀̀dìi yí ‘his time’



jíjwé yǐ ‘his breath’

There are some single gender count nouns:

Class 6:

míní mí ‘his face’ or ‘his eyes’

pàá míní mí ‘his two eyes’

̀nthí mí ‘his decision’

pàá nthí mí ‘his two decisions’

Body parts are a special case. The paired body parts such as eyes, arms, legs, etc, are in the gender 7/6~2 as already explained. However body parts which we have only one of such as head, nose, mouth, etc, under normal circumstances are in the same noun class (c7) for singular and plural. This is logical because if the possessive pronoun is dual or plural it can be assumed that the body part must be also, since one head cannot be possessed by more than one person. However, under exceptional circumstances it is possible for these nouns to be in the gender 7/2 if the possessor of the body part has more than one of them. For example, it is believed by some people that there is a type of snake which has two heads. If you were talking about this kind of snake, then to refer to its two heads you would use the c2 possessive, as shown below:

e.g. 12.

thó yí ‘its c7.head’

thó yúgú ‘their c7.heads’ (each snake has one head)

thó pí ‘its c2.heads’

thó púgú ‘their c2.heads’ (each snake has two heads)

Note: *thó* is one of the nouns which has a locative form and can take the locative pronouns so *thò pùgù* means ‘on their heads’ which is different from *thó púgú* above (see section 4 on locatives).

## 2.4 Agreement

The elements which agree with the noun class of the head noun are the possessives, demonstratives, relative pronoun used with adjectives (see section 3.2.4), numerals and interrogatives ‘which?’ and ‘how many?’. However this concord system is greatly reduced as the class 7 and 2 concord markers are taking over, and in the case of the interrogative ‘which’ and the relative pronoun used with adjectives, it now shows only a simple singular/plural distinction. The concord markers for numbers show a human/non-human distinction (see section 3.2.5).

Table 2.4 shows the concord system. The non-emphatic possessives are the only area that shows the full noun class system, therefore they have been used as the main basis for distinguishing noun classes. The demonstratives still exist for most classes but class 7 and 9 have merged and the class 7 demonstratives can optionally be used with class 1. All these noun modifiers will be explained in more detail in section 3.

Table 2.4 The concord system

Class	NEAR SPEAKER DEM	NEAR HEARER DEM	DISTANT DEM	ANAP DEM 1	ANAP DEM 2	3SG NON- EMPH POSS	1SG EMPH POSS	ADJ REL PRO	NUM CONCORD	Which
1	vêi	ví'né	vínî	vé	viè	vĩ	vâŋ			
2	pêi	pí'né	pínî	pé	piè	pí	pâŋ	pì	pí	pâi
6	mêi	mí'né	míŋî			mí				
7	yêi	yí'né	yínî	yé	yíè	yí	nyâ	yì	yí	yâi
9	yêi	yí'né	yínî	yé	yíè	yĩ	nyâ	yì	yí	yâi

Notes on table 2.4:

1. The c1 nouns can optionally follow the c7 agreement pattern for all noun modifiers except the possessives. They obligatorily follow the c7 pattern for their adjective concord, number concord and 'which'.
2. The c6~2 plural nouns follow the c2 agreement pattern for all noun modifiers except the non-emphatic possessives.
3. The c6 single gender nouns follow the c6 agreement pattern for the near speaker, near hearer and distant demonstratives and the non-emphatic possessives; for the other areas of concord they follow the c7 agreement pattern.
4. c7 and c9 are the same except for the tone on the non-emphatic possessives.

### 3. The Noun Phrase

A noun phrase consists of a noun or pronoun plus modifiers and can occupy any noun constituent position in a sentence (subject, object, etc.) The main noun in the noun phrase is called the “head noun”. In Chrambo a noun can be a noun phrase by itself without any modifiers.

e.g. 13.

à fé pìeŋ nì míyǎ  
3sg give c7.bag to c9.girl  
'He gives the bag to the girl.'

The noun phrases in the above sentence are the pronoun *à* 'he', *pìeŋ* 'bag' and *míyǎ* 'girl'.

However a noun may be modified by the presence of a determiner, adjective or other noun phrase modifier. These will be described in this section.

#### 3.1 Structure of the noun phrase

The basic unmarked noun phrase word order is:

(NUM)<sup>1</sup> NOUN (ADJ)<sup>2</sup> (POSS) (DET) (RELATIVE CLAUSE)

1. Numbers can come either before or after the noun (see section 3.2.5).
2. The majority of adjectives follow the noun, but a very limited set precede it (see section 3.2.4).

e.g. 14. (noun phrase indicated in square brackets)

[NOUN ADJ DET]  
pè'í [n'dúà pìpíe yí'né], n-jói  
IMP.look [C9.cup red C9.that] SS-see  
'Look at that red cup'

e.g. 15.

[NOUN POSS DET]  
[mbàoŋ mâ ghó] hìŋ?  
[C6.egg C6.my ANAP] where  
'Where is that my egg?'

#### 3.2 Noun Phrase Modifiers

In this section the noun modifiers will be described, including their position and function in the sentence and their place in the noun class concord system.

The determiners in Chrambo include demonstratives, the anaphoric demonstratives and numerals. Other noun phrase modifiers include adjectives, the possessive pronouns and relative clauses.

### 3.2.1 Demonstratives

The main use of the demonstratives is to make reference to an object or person visible at the time of speaking. There are three levels of spatial deixis; near speaker, near hearer and distant. Therefore for each noun there are six demonstratives, three singular and three plural.

For example the demonstratives for the noun *mímpà'ò* 'machete' are the following:

Table 3.1 Gender 9/2 demonstratives

	Singular (C9)	Plural (C2)
near speaker	yêi	pêi
near hearer	yí'né	pí'né
distant	yínî	pínî

Examples:

e.g. 16. Near speaker:

lí [mímpà'ò yêi] n-jói

IMP.look [C9.machete C9.this] SS-see

'Look at this machete' (When the machete is close to the speaker)

e.g. 17. Near hearer:

lí [mímpà'ò yí'né] n-jói

IMP.look [C9.machete C9.that] SS-see

'Look at that machete' (When the machete is close to the hearer)

e.g. 18. Distant:

lí [mímpà'ò yínî] n-jói

IMP.look [C9.machete C9.that] SS-see

'Look at that machete' (When the machete is close to neither speaker nor hearer)

The full set of demonstratives for all noun classes is shown in table 3.2. Note that the demonstratives for classes 7 and 9 are the same, and gender 7/6~2 nouns take the class 2 demonstratives when plural; only single gender class 6 nouns take the class 6 demonstratives.

Table 3.2 Demonstratives noun class concord

Noun Class	Near Speaker	Near Hearer	Distant
1	vêi	ví'né	vínî
2, 6	pêi	pí'né	pínî
6	mêi	mí'né	mínî
7, 9	yêi	yí'né	yínî

Note: When people are talking they often drop the first consonant. E.g. múuŋ ví'né → múuŋ-í'né, ndúa yí'né → ndúe-<sup>h</sup>né

e.g. 19. C6 single gender noun with C6 demonstrative

mbíní mēi  
c6.milk c6.this  
'This milk.'

e.g. 20. gender 7/6~2 plural noun with C2 demonstrative

kwò pēi  
c2.leg c2.these  
'These legs.'

These demonstratives usually follow the noun, as shown in example 21 below, but they can precede the noun if the intention is to indicate a specific object from a group, as in example 22.

e.g. 21.

To point out a book that is lying on a table you could say:

lí [ŋwà'àli yínî]  
IMP.look [c7.book c7.that]  
'Look at that book'

e.g. 22.

To point out one specific book from a group of three books that are on the table, you could say:

lí [yínî ŋwà'àli]  
IMP.look [c7.that c7.book]  
'Look at that book'

Another example of the demonstrative preceding the noun is the following question which asks if a person likes a particular book from a group:

e.g. 23.

ò khwǎ [yēi ŋwà'àli?]  
2SG like [c7.this c7.book]  
'Do you like this book?'

Note that as shown in table 3.3, there are no class 6 emphatic demonstratives; when the demonstrative precedes the noun, single gender nouns in class 6 take the class 7/9 demonstratives, and plural nouns in the gender 7/6~2 take the class 2 demonstratives.

Table 3.3 Demonstratives preceding the noun

Noun Class	Near Speaker	Near Hearer	Distant
1	vēi	ví'né	vínî
2, 6	pēi	pí'né	pínî
6, 7, 9	yēi	yí'né	yínî

Examples of class 6 and gender 7/6~2 nouns with class 2 and class 7 demonstratives:

e.g. 24.

pêi kwò  
c2.these c2.leg  
'these legs'

e.g. 25.

yêi mbínì  
c7.this c6.milk  
'this milk'

The demonstratives can also be used as demonstrative pronouns, as in the following examples:

e.g. 26.

ó 'khwâ [yêi ηwà'àlì?] η-khwă pì [yí'né]  
2SG like [c7.which c7.book?] 1SG-like just [c7.that one]  
'Which book do you like?' 'I just like that one.'

In the answer to this question, *yí'né* 'that one' is a pronoun standing in the place of *ηwà'àlì yí'né* 'that book'.

e.g. 27.

Á [pêi kwô míbúshì] ηâ à fà'ó ηgô'ì?  
3SG [c2.which c2.leg c9.cat] REL 3SG have c9.suffering  
'Which of the cats legs are hurt?'

Á [pí'né]  
3SG [c2.those ones]  
'It's those ones.'

#### Other uses of the demonstratives:

The demonstratives are usually used to refer to material objects visible at the time of speaking. However they can also be used in a discourse to refer to an abstract concept being discussed.

e.g. 28. While talking about the progress of one of his students, Emmanuel gave an example of an area of improvement and then said:

Yí'né thó nóη nú ηâ à thô η-kàa n-jí yáoη  
**that** PROG SS.show PROG REL 3SG prog SS-try SS-know c7.thing

m-bìgî nú ndô há'àη à nì fùoη m-bò nè  
SS-add PROG as REL 3SG P2 first SS-be REL

'That shows that she is trying to know more than what she did at first.'

*Yí'né* at the start of this sentence is referring back to the whole example that he had given.

In addition the distant demonstratives can be used with the temporal meaning of 'next' or 'last' in phrases such as 'next year', 'last year', 'the day after tomorrow', etc.

e.g. 29.

ηγά'ò yínî

C7.year C7.DEM

'next year' OR 'last year'

(ηγά'ò yínî is usually pronounced ηγά'òenî)

e.g. 30.

yúa yínî

C7.tomorrow/yesterday C7.DEM

'the day after tomorrow' OR 'the day before yesterday'

(yúa yínî is usually pronounced yú-énî)

Yínî can also be used to describe relative distance in a narrative even though the situation described is not visible at the time of speaking.

e.g. 31.

Múuη ηkhî ghó ghâ m-bò nènne, **njîeη** **yínî** pó mǒη lá'à.

small C9.water ANAP HAB SS-be so **C9.side** **C9.DEM** be LOC C7.village

'The other side of that small stream is in the village.'

Here *njîeη yínî* has the meaning of the 'other side'.

### 3.2.2 The anaphoric demonstratives

The anaphoric demonstratives are used to refer to a specific noun which has already been referred to. There are three types of anaphoric demonstrative in Chrambo.

1. *Ghó* (sg) or *pìghó* (pl) are used to refer to a noun which has already been mentioned in the current conversation. It always follows the head noun, and agrees with it in number (singular/plural).

e.g. 32.

pìgì fú'ú ηgùóη máòη mòη mmé píè Ø-ní'îη mòη **múuη píè...**  
1PL.EXC remove all C2.things LOC big C7.boat SS-put in LOC **small C7.boat...**

ń-tú'ò **múuη píè** **ghó** tí Ø-má'àη mòη **múuη ηkhî** chǎi ...  
SS-push **small C7.boat** ANAP until ss-send LOC **small C9.water** certain

**Múuη ηkhî** **ghó** ghâ m-bò nènne, njîeη yínî pó mǒη lá'à.  
**small C9.water** ANAP HAB SS.be so C9.side other be LOC C7.village

'We removed all the things from the big boat and put them into a **small boat...** we pushed **the small boat** into a **small stream...** The other side of **that small stream** is in the village.'

In this example, in the first sentence a small boat is mentioned and when this is referred to again in the second sentence, the anaphoric demonstrative *ghó* is used. A small stream (water) is then mentioned and referred to again in the third sentence with the anaphoric demonstrative.

2. The second anaphoric demonstrative *yé*, *vé* or *pé* agrees with the noun class of the head noun. It is more general and the noun may have been referred to in the current conversation or a previous conversation.

Table 3.4 Anaphoric demonstratives - type 2

Noun Class	ANAP
1*	vé
2, (6)	pé
7, (9), (6)	yé

\*Class 1 nouns can optionally take the class 7 anaphoric demonstrative.

e.g. 33.

[mínɡú 'yé] kwò phî  
 [C9.dog C9.ANAP] PERF give birth  
 'That dog has already given birth.'

The use of *yé* here implies that the speaker and hearer have already talked of the specific dog that is being referred to.

This second anaphoric demonstrative can either precede or follow the noun and I have not yet found evidence of a difference in meaning between these possible word orders, so in the above example the person could also say:

e.g. 34.

[yé mínɡú] kwò phî  
 [C9.ANAP C9.dog] PERF give birth  
 'That dog has already given birth.'

It can also stand alone as a pronoun without the noun.

e.g. 35.

Á [yâi 'mínɡú] ñâ ò khwá?  
 3SG [C9.which C9.dog] REL 2SG like  
 'Which dog is it you like?'

Á [yé] ñâ ndĩŋ à nì n-júoŋ né  
 3SG [C9.ANAP] REL C1.brother C1.my P2 SS-buy rel  
 'It is the one that my brother bought.'

This anaphoric demonstrative is often used with nouns modified by a relative clause, if the noun is specific in reference.

e.g. 36.

À nì ñ-gâ m-bò nò yê táŋ ñâ pìǐ lùǐ n-dò hêŋ  
 3SG P SS-when SS-be PREP C7.ANAP C7.week that 3PL.EXC end SS-leave here

ñ-gâi 'né, ñkhì yá ñ-kù'ò.  
 SS-go REL c9.water be really SS-be high

'The week that we left here, the water was really high.'

(More literally: 'When it was the week that we left here and went, the water was really high.')



3. The third type of anaphoric demonstrative also agrees with the head noun, according to table 3.5.

Table 3.5 Anaphoric demonstratives - type 3

Noun Class	ANAP
1	víè
2	píè
7,9	yíè

This demonstrative has only recently come to the attention of the author and requires further investigation to determine its function(s).

Examples:

e.g. 37.

Mbó                                    nì    n-chú'ó    tiɛŋ    ŋgwǎ  
Bambalang people    P    SS-send    five    C2.people

ŋâ    'púgú    ghâi    n-chrà    púgú    pà    tiɛŋ    ŋgwǎ    Là'à Míkàgà.  
that    3PL    go    SS-talk    3PL    PL    five    C2.people    LOC.Bamunka

**Píè**        **ŋgwà**        ghâi    n-jói    vùgǔ,    púgú    'púgú    chrà.  
C2.ANAP    C2.people    go    SS-see    3PL    3PL    3PL    talk

'Bambalang sent five people to go and talk to five people in Bamunka. Those (Bambalang) people went and saw them and they talked with them.'

e.g. 38.

Mbó                                    nì    n-chú'ó    tiɛŋ    ŋgwǎ  
Bambalang people    P    SS-send    five    C2.people

ŋâ    'púgú    ghâi    n-chrà    púgú    pà    tiɛŋ    ŋgwǎ    Là'à Míkàgà.  
that    3PL    go    SS-talk    3PL    PL    five    C2.people    LOC.Bamunka

**Péi**        **ŋgwà**        ghâi    n-jói    **píè**        **ŋgwǎ**,        púgú    'púgú    chrà.  
C2.DEM    C2.people    go    SS-see    C2.ANAP    C2.people    3PL    3PL    talk

'Bambalang sent five people to go and talk to five people in Bamunka. Those (Bambalang) people went and saw those (Bamunka) people and they talked with them.'

It can also be used as an anaphoric pronoun, and in this case it can be combined with the first anaphoric demonstrative described above, *ghó*.

e.g. 39.

À    chwíé    **yíè**    '**ghó**    pá'á    'nnú    M'bó        lǒ    ŋ-'gái    shì.  
3SG    cause    ANAP    ANAP    NEG    thing    Bambalang    NEG    SS-go    forward

'That is what stops Bambalang from moving forward' (lit.'It is that that causes Bambalang not to go forward')

### 3.2.3 Possessives

There are two sets of possessive adjectives: non-emphatic and emphatic. As explained below, the emphatic possessives are used to show contrast. The possessives agree with

the noun class of the head noun and of all the elements that agree with the head noun the non-emphatic possessives show the biggest differentiation of noun classes, as there are five distinct sets.

**Non-emphatic possessives:**

The full set of non-emphatic possessives is shown in table 3.6 below. They always follow the noun.

Table 3.6 Non-emphatic possessives

Noun Class	1.sg	2.sg	3.sg	1.dl	1.pl.inc	1.pl.exc	2.pl	3.pl
1	à	ghò	ví	vògò	viâ	vìgí	vǎi	vùgǔ
2	pâŋ	pô	pí	pógò	piâ	pígí	pái	púgú
6	mâ	mô	mí	móŋò	miâ	mígí	mói	múŋú
7*	â	yô	yí	yógò	yiâ	yígí	yói	yúgú
9*	à	yò	yí	yògò	yiâ	yìgí	yǎi	yùgǔ

\*Note: the only difference between the class 7 and class 9 non-emphatic possessives is tonal.

e.g. 40.

Mìmbià yé nì n-jói [ndĩŋ vǐgí] yùà  
 C1.man C7.ANAP P SS-see [C1.brother C1.1PL.EXCL.POSS] yesterday  
 ‘That man saw our brother yesterday.’

e.g. 41.

Lǐ [mĩmbì piâ] n-jói  
 IMP.look [C9.goat C2.1PL.INCL.POSS] SS-see  
 ‘Look at our goats.’

e.g. 42.

Lǐ [mʰbbó má] n-ʰjói  
 IMP.look [C6.arm C6.1SG.POSS] SS-see  
 ‘Look at my arms.’

e.g. 43.

Lǐ [lèi yí] n-jói  
 IMP.look [C7.chair C7.3SG.POSS] SS-see  
 ‘Look at his chair.’

e.g. 44.

Lǐ [ʰmĩngú yì] n-jói  
 IMP.look [C9.dog C9.3SG.POSS] SS-see  
 ‘Look at his dog.’

### Emphatic possessives:

The emphatic possessives are used to show contrast and they precede the noun.

Table 3.7 Emphatic possessives

Noun Class	1.sg	2.sg	3.sg	1.dl	1.pl.inc	1.pl.exc	2.pl	3.pl
1*	vàŋ	vhò	vhì	vògò	vià	vìgì	vèi	vùgù
2	pâŋ	phò	phì	pógò	piâ	pígí	péi	púgú
6*								
7/9*	nyâ	jò	jí	yógò	yíâ	yígí	yéi	yùgú

\*Notes on table 3.7:

1. For some class 1 nouns, the class 7 emphatic possessives can optionally be used. e.g. *nyâ múuŋ* 'my child', *nyâ tàá* 'my father'.
2. For gender 7/6~2 nouns, the class 2 emphatic possessives are used with plural nouns (the paired body parts).
3. The class 7 emphatic possessives are used with gender 6 nouns such as *mbíní* 'milk' and *nthí* 'decision'.
3. There is no tonal contrast between the emphatic possessives for classes 7 and 9.

e.g. 45.

In a conversation between two mothers, the first mother says:

[púoŋ páŋ] tìnì thó ŋ-gà'à  
 [C2.children C2.my.NON-EMPH] strong C7.head ss-be much  
 'My children are very stubborn.'

Here the non-emphatic possessive pronoun is used and it follows the noun.

Then the second mother replies:

[Vâŋ múuŋ] 'póró thó ŋ-gà'à  
 [C1.my.EMPH C1.child] soft C7.head ss-be  
 much

OR

[Nyâ múuŋ] 'póró thó ŋ-gà'à  
 [C7.my.EMPH C1.child] soft C7.head ss-be much  
 'My child is very obedient'.

Here the emphatic possessive pronoun is used which precedes the noun. The emphatic pronoun shows that she is contrasting her own child with the child of the other woman. Note that the possessive used can optionally be from C1 or C7.

The emphatic possessives are also used predicatively.

e.g. 46.

Á jò?  
 3SG C7.yours  
 'Is it yours?'

### 3.2.4 Adjectives

#### Non-derived adjectives:

There is a very limited set of non-derived adjectives in Chrambo; the majority are derived from stative verbs. Of the non-derived adjectives, some precede the head noun and some follow it.

The following non-derived adjectives precede the noun:

mmé 'big'

ntàaŋ 'tall'

e.g. 47.

mmé píè

big c7.boat

'big boat'

ntàaŋ ɲòŋ

tall c1.person

'tall person'

Another word that precedes the noun is *múuŋ* 'small'. This is either an adjective derived from the noun *múuŋ* 'child' or is in fact still a noun that is used in an associative noun phrase.

e.g. 48.

múuŋ píè

small c7.boat

'small boat'

The following non-derived adjectives follow the noun:

fê 'fresh'

fî 'new'

e.g. 49.

Á mbə̀gà fê

3sg c9.njama njama **fresh**

'It is fresh njama njama'

#### Derived adjectives:

The majority of adjectives are derived from stative verbs. All derived adjectives follow the noun.

e.g. 50.

À (p̂) ɲòŋ

**kwí-kwí'ì**

OR

Á ɲòŋ

**kwí-kwí'ì**

3SG (be) c1.person **short**

3SG c1.person **short**

'He is a short man.'

'He is a short man.'

Note: the copular verb *p̂* is optional in this sentence and is usually not present. When it is not present, the 3SG pronoun *a* has high tone.

A stative verb is a verb which describes an attribute of a noun. Adjectives also describe attributes of nouns but they have a different grammatical function in a sentence. In Chrambo, when the attribute is the predicate, the main new information in the sentence, a stative verb is usually used.

e.g. 51.

Shéndáoŋ	<b>frà</b>	Shéndáoŋ	thô	<b>frà</b>	‘nú
C9.road	<b>be narrow</b>	C9.road	PROG	<b>be narrow</b>	PROG

‘The road is narrow’                      ‘The road is getting narrower’

When the attribute is not the predicate, but is simply describing one of the nouns in a sentence about something else, an adjective is used.

e.g. 52.

À	thô	shwì’ì	‘nú	mòŋ	shéndáoŋ	<b>fá-frâ</b>
3SG	PROG	go down	PROG	LOC	C9.road	<b>narrow</b>

‘He is going down the narrow road.’

Adjectives can be derived from stative verbs in more than one way. One process is reduplication, usually of the first syllable or the whole word if it is monosyllabic.

e.g. 53.

Shéndá	<b>tàŋ</b>
C9.floor	<b>be clean</b>

‘The floor is clean.’

In this sentence *tàŋ* ‘to be clean’ is a verb and it is the predicate of the sentence.

e.g. 54.

Á	(pô)	n’dwímà’à	<b>táŋ-tàŋ</b>
3SG	(be)	C9.shirt	<b>clean</b>

‘It is a clean shirt’

In this sentence *táŋtáŋ* is an adjective. The whole noun phrase *ndwímà’à táŋtáŋ* ‘a clean shirt’ is the predicate of the sentence.

Sometimes an adjective can be derived from a verb without reduplication.

e.g. 55.

Nyí’á	<b>yáŋ</b>	pô	ŋkùŋ	táprè
C9.fish	<b>dry</b>	be	on	C7.table

‘The dried fish is on the table.’

This process still needs to be investigated further.

When an adjective is used to specify a particular object or objects the following structure is used:

e.g. 56.

Ndwímà’à	yí’né	(pô)	yì	<b>‘táŋ-tàŋ</b>
C9.shirt	C9.DEM	(be)	PRO	<b>clean</b>

‘That shirt is the clean one.’

e.g. 57.

Ndwímà’à	pí’né	(pô)	pì	<b>‘táŋ-tàŋ</b>
C2.shirt	C2.DEM	(be)	PRO	<b>clean</b>

‘Those shirts are the clean ones.’

It is not clear exactly what the structure is, however one possibility is that *yì* is a relative pronoun which agrees with the noun in number, *yì ‘táŋtáŋ* would therefore be a headless relative clause.

### 3.2.5 Numerals

The cardinal numbers can either precede or follow the noun and this does not seem to affect the meaning. When they follow the noun they have a noun class concord marker and when they precede the noun they do not.

e.g. 58.

Á [táprè yí tíɛŋ] ndà  
3SG [c2.table CON five] LOC.house

‘There are five tables in the house.’

Here the number comes after the noun and has a concord marker.

e.g. 59.

Á [tìɛŋ táprě] ndà  
3SG [five c2.table] LOC.house

‘There are five tables in the house.’

Here the number is before the noun and has no concord marker.

Rather than differentiating noun classes, the concord marker now shows a human/non-human distinction. The class 7 concord *yí* is used with non-human nouns, and the class 2 marker *pí* is used with human nouns.

e.g. 60.

À fà’ò [lìŋ pí pí páà]  
3SG have [c2.brother c2.his CON two]

‘He has two brothers.’

e.g. 61.

À fà’ò [l’í yí yí páà]  
3SG have [c7.calabash c7.his CON two]

‘He has two calabashes.’

When the number is ‘one’, for non-human nouns the number can still either precede or follow the noun, but for human nouns it usually precedes the noun.

e.g. 62.

[Tà’à táprè] pô ndà  
[one c7.table] be LOC.house

OR

[Táprè yí mù’ò] pô ndà  
[c7.table CON one] be LOC.house

‘One table is in the house.’

e.g. 63.

[Tà’à ɲòŋ] pô ndà  
[one c1.person] be LOC.house

‘One person is in the house.’

To say *ŋòŋ yí mù’ò pô ndà* (with the number following the human noun) would sound strange.

The numbers can also stand alone. In this case they have a concord marker.

e.g. 64.

Pí ghà n-dóḡḡ 'múuḡ thí shíná, à táoḡ ['yí páà]  
3PL HAB SS-pick up small C7.stick cut 3SG come out [CON two]  
'They take a small stick and cut it into two.'

### Ordinal Numbers:

The ordinal numbers always come in front of the head noun.

e.g. 65.

[Fùḡḡ 'lé] shá'á tán ghâ m-bó Vínkhwà. [Mbrá lé] pó Vínḡḡḡḡ.  
[first C7.day] cultural HAB SS-be Vínkhwa [second C7.day] be Vínḡḡḡḡ  
week

'The first day of cultural week<sup>5</sup> is Vínkhwa. The second day is Vínḡḡḡḡ.'

For ordinal numbers higher than *mbrá* 'second', people usually use the English word 'number' followed by the Chrambo number.

e.g. 66.

mùúḡ â nì m-bó [nòmbà tièḡ ḡḡḡ] nô chèḡ nù.  
C1.mother C1.my P2 SS-be [number five C1.person] PREP arrive PROG  
'My mother was the fifth person to arrive.'

However it can be said without using the borrowed English word:

e.g. 67.

mùúḡ â nì m-bó [tièḡ ḡḡḡ] nô chèḡ nù.  
C1.mother C1.my P2 SS-be [five C1.person] PREP arrive PROG  
'My mother was the fifth person to arrive.'

### 3.2.6 Relative Clauses

A relative clause is a subordinate clause which describes or qualifies one of the nouns in a main clause. In Chrambo a relative clause is introduced by a relative pronoun after the noun it describes and it is ended by the relative clause marker *né*. The relative clauses in the examples that follow are inside square brackets. (See also e.g.36)

e.g. 68.

ḡkhwǎ yè míngú [ḡâ ndǐḡ â nì n-júoḡ né]  
1SG.like C9.anap C9.dog [REL C1.brother C1.my P2 SS-buy REL]  
'I like the dog [that my brother bought.]'

There are two relative pronouns, *há'àḡ* and *ḡâ*. Of these *ḡâ* is the general subordinate clause connective and it is the more commonly used of the two relative pronouns. *Há'àḡ* is used by some people in the same context as *ḡâ* as in example 69. In addition in certain phrases such as *ndò há'àḡ* 'like'/'as'/'since' and *kéiḡ ndò há'àḡ* 'how'/'the way that', *há'àḡ* is usually used, as in examples 70 and 71.

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<sup>5</sup> Cultural week is a traditional annual celebration.

e.g. 69.

Pàì shwé ñòŋ [há'àŋ à thó m-bà'à ñkìŋkàa né.  
2PL point c1.person [REL 3SG PROG SS-weave c7.basket REL  
'Point to the person who is weaving a basket.'

e.g. 70.

pí yé'í 'ghó kēiŋ ndò [há'àŋ à nthê ò tígí ñ'gwá né]  
3SG teach you way as [REL 3SG be possible 2SG teach c2.people REL]  
'They teach you how you can teach people.'

e.g. 71.

Ndò [há'àŋ Shù'ò nì ñ-gwéiŋ nì pàá mbbó né]...  
as [REL Nso P2 SS-take PREP two c6.hand REL]...  
'Since Nso took it with two hands...' (i.e. took it seriously)

Any of the nouns in a main clause may be modified by a relative clause. The head nouns of the relative clauses are highlighted in bold in the following examples.

e.g. 72. head noun is the subject of the main clause:

Mìmbià yé [ñâ à nì n-jói ndĩŋ à 'yúa né],  
c1.man c7.ANAP [REL 3SG P2 SS-see c1.brother c1.my yesterday REL]

fà'ò míngú.

have c9.dog

'The man [who saw my brother yesterday] has a dog.'

e.g. 73. head noun is the direct object of the main clause:

Ndĩŋ â nì n-jói mìmbià yé  
c1.brother c1.my P2 SS-see c1.man c7.ANAP

[ñâ à fà'ò míngú 'né] yúa.  
[REL 3SG have c9.dog REL] yesterday

'My brother saw the man [who has a dog] yesterday.'

e.g. 74. head noun is the indirect object of the main clause:

ndĩŋ â nì Ø-fé pièŋ nì mìmbià yé  
c1.brother c1.my P2 SS-give c7.bag PREP c1.man c7.ANAP

[ñâ à nì n-jói yúa né].

[REL 3SG P2 SS-see yesterday REL]

'My brother gave a bag to the man [that he saw yesterday].'

e.g. 75. head noun is not an argument of the verb in the main clause:

ndĩŋ â nì Ø-fé pièŋ nì mìmbià lé yé  
c1.brother c1.my P2 SS-give c7.bag PREP c1.man c7.day c7.ANAP

[ñâ pí nì shá'á táŋ né].

[REL people P2 cultural week REL].



‘My brother gave a bag to the man on the day [that cultural week began].’

As can be seen from the examples above, the structure of a relative clause is the same as for a main clause. When the head noun is the direct object of the relative clause, it does not have to be referred to by a pronoun in the relative clause, but in all other cases the head noun must be referred to by a pronoun within the relative clause. These pronouns are highlighted in bold in the following examples.

e.g. 76. head noun is the subject of the relative clause:

mìmbià yé [ɲâ à pô ndà nè],  
 C1.man C7.ANAP [REL 3SG be C7.house REL]

ndĩŋ â nì n-jói ví ‘yúá.  
 C1.brother C1.my P SS-see 3SG yesterday

‘My brother saw [the man who is in the house] yesterday.’

In this example, à ‘he’ in the relative clause refers to the head noun *mìmbià* ‘man’.

Note: this example also shows that the noun with the relative clause can be moved to initial position in the sentence. This appear to be a type of focus construction and requires further research.

e.g. 77. head noun is the direct object of the relative clause:

mìmbià yé [ɲâ ndĩŋ â nì n-jói ∅ yùá né]  
 C1.man C7.ANAP [that C1.brother C1.my P2 SS-see (DO) yesterday REL]

pô n’dá.  
 be C7.house

‘The man who my brother saw yesterday is in the house.’

Here there is nothing in the relative clause to refer to the head noun *mìmbià*.

e.g. 78. head noun is direct object of the relative clause

Shwě ‘míŋgú ‘yé [ɲâ múuŋ mìmbià khwă ∅ né].  
 Point C9.dog C9.ANAP [that small C1.man like (DO) REL]

‘Point to the dog [that the boy likes].’

Here there is no pronoun in the relative clause to refer to the head noun *míŋgú* ‘dog’.

e.g. 79. head noun is the indirect object of the relative clause:

ò jí mìmbià yé [ɲâ ndĩŋ â nì ∅-fé piɛŋ ghó né]?  
 2SG know C1.man C7.ANAP [that C1.brother C1.my P2 SS-give C7.bag 3SG REL]

‘Do you know the man [that my brother gave the bag to]?’

Here *ghó* refers to the head noun *mìmbià*.

e.g. 80. head noun is the locative in the relative clause

ndá yé [ɲâ ndĩŋ â lá’á nú fɔ né] pwâ.  
 C9.house C9.ANAP [that C1.brother C1.my live PROG there REL] be good

‘The house [that my brother lives in] is nice.’

Here *fɔ* refers to the head noun *ndá* ‘house’.

### 3.3 Negation in the Noun Phrase

Negation can be expressed at noun phrase level with the negative marker *kâŋ*. This must be accompanied by a clause level negative marker (see section 6.6). Negation is often expressed only at clause level, so for all the examples below two alternatives are given, the first with negation expressed at noun phrase and clause level, the second with it only marked at clause level. The negated noun phrases in the examples are in bold.

#### Negated noun phrase in subject position:

e.g. 81.

**Kâŋ** **tà'á** **yáòŋ**      lǎ      m-bó      ŋkùòŋ      táprè  
NEG **one** **C7.thing**    NEG    SS-be    on      C7.table  
'There is nothing on the table.'  
(More literally: 'Not one thing is on the table.')

OR

Shèshě      yáòŋ      lǎ      m-bó      ŋkùòŋ      táprè  
any          C7.thing    NEG    SS-be    on          C7.table  
'There is nothing on the table.'

#### In direct object position:

e.g. 82.

N-dǎ          n-jì'í      n-jói      **kâŋ**      tà'à      ŋwà'àlì.  
1SG-P0.NEG    SS-NEG    SS-see    NEG    **one**    C7.book

OR

N-dǎ          n-jì'í      n-jói      shèshě      ŋwà'àlì.  
1SG-P0.NEG    SS-NEG    SS-see    any      C7.book  
'I cannot see any books.'

#### In direct object position in a co-ordinate clause:

e.g. 83.

Mí      nǐ      n-thó      n-dî          fítǔ          thí          mòŋ      ŋwà'àlì,  
1SG    P1    SS-prog    SS-look for    C7.picture    C7.tree    in      C7.book

ndô      pà'á      n-dô      n-'jói      **kâŋ**      tè'í.  
but    NEG    SS-NEG    SS-see    NEG    **one**

OR

Mí      nǐ      n-thó      n-dî          fítǔ          thí          mòŋ      ŋwà'àlì,  
1SG    P1    SS-PROG    SS-look for    C7.picture    C7.tree    in      C7.book

ndô      pà'á      n-dô      n-'jói      shèshě  
but    NEG    SS-NEG    SS-see    any

'I was looking for a picture of a tree in a book, but I did not see any.'

**In indirect object position:**

e.g. 84.

À lǎ n-jí'í Ø-fě 'máon njí nì kân tà'à míngú.  
3SG P0.NEG SS-NEG ss-give c2.food to NEG one c9.dog

OR

À lǎ n-jí'í Ø-fé 'máon njí nì shèshě míngú.  
3SG P0.NEG SS-NEG ss-give c2.food to any c9.dog  
'She has not given food to any of the dogs.'

**3.4 The Associative Noun Phrase**

An associative noun phrase consists of two nouns linked by an associative marker. This can have various functions, such as possession, kinship relations, source or place of origin, purpose, etc. (see Tamanji 2001). Some of these semantic relations are shown in the examples below:

e.g. 85. Possession

ndá mìngwé  
c9.house c1.woman  
'the woman's house'

In this example where the associative noun phrases shows possession, the first noun (N1) is the thing possessed and the second noun (N2) is the possessor.

e.g. 86. Kinship relation

ndǐŋ tàa à  
c1.brother c1.father c1.my  
'my father's brother'

e.g. 87. Place of origin

chră M'bô (usually written *Chrambo*)  
c7.talk Bambalang  
'the Bambalang language'

In this and the following example, N2 is the place of origin of N1.

e.g. 88. Place of origin

ŋòŋ Mbô  
c1.person Bambalang  
'a person from Bambalang'

e.g. 89. Purpose

ŋkhwă pínà  
c7.cooking stick c7.fufu  
'fufu stick' (stick for cooking fufu)  
Here, N2 gives the purpose of N1.

e.g. 90. Substance

kǎŋ nchì'à

C7.pot C7.soil

'clay pot'

In this and the following example, N2 is the substance that N1 is made from.

e.g. 91.

kǎŋ shimî

C7.pot C9.cement

'metal pot'

e.g. 92. Dependent

kwǒ 'míngú

C7.leg C9.dog

'a dog's leg'

In this and the following example, N1 is a part of N2.

e.g. 93. Dependent

thó n'dá

C7.head C9.house

'roof'

For some kinds of associative noun phrase, such as possessives and dependents, either noun may be modified by an adjective independently.

e.g. 94.

ndâ mǐngwé kwí-kwí'ì

C9.house C1.woman short

'The short woman's house.'

The adjective *kwíkwí'ì* 'short' describes the woman, not the woman's house.

e.g. 95.

ndâ kwí-kwí'ì mǐngwé

C9.house short C1.woman

'The woman's short house.'

In this sentence the adjective *kwíkwí'ì* 'short' describes the house.

e.g. 96.

kwǒ 'míngú shí

C7.leg C9.dog black

'The black dog's leg'

The adjective *shí* describes the dog, not the dog's leg.

e.g. 97.

kwò shí 'míngú

C7.leg black C9.dog

'The dog's black leg'

Here the adjective *shí* describes the dog's leg.

However for other types of associative noun phrase, such as substance, purpose and place of origin, the phrase is treated as a whole so any adjectives will refer to the whole phrase, not just one part of it.

e.g. 98.

ɲkhwǎ                    ʼpínà      kwí-kwíʼi

c7.cooking stick    c7.fufu    short

‘The short fufu stick.’

This time the adjective *kwíkwíʼi* does not refer to the fufu but to the fufu stick.

e.g. 99.

ɲòɲ                    Mbô                    kwí-kwíʼi

c1.person    Bambalang    short

‘The short Bambalang man’

The adjective *kwíkwíʼi* does not refer to Bambalang but to the Bambalang man.

e.g. 100.

kǎɲ      nchìʼá      shá-shínà

c7.pot    c7.soil    broken

‘the broken clay pot’

The adjective *sháshínà* refers to the clay pot, not to the clay/soil.

### The Associative marker:

In Chrambo the associative marker is purely tonal. Please note that the analysis of tone in this section is very basic and a lot more needs to be done to properly understand it.

For c2, c6 and c7 nouns the associative marker is a floating high tone. The floating high tone affects the first noun in the following ways:

If N1 has lexical low tone, then the floating high tone will attach to it causing the tone to become rising.

e.g. 101.

ɲgì            +    Ḥ            +    kwò            →    ɲgǐ kwò

c7.hair    +    AM            +    c7.leg            →    ‘leg hair’

e.g. 102.

kwò            +    Ḥ            +    míyǎ            →    kwǒ míyǎ

c7.leg    +    AM            +    c9.girl            →    ‘girl’s leg’

If N1 has lexical falling tone, then the floating high tone will attach to it causing the tone to become level high tone.

e.g. 103.

kúɔɲ            +    Ḥ            +    múuɲ            a            →    kúɔɲ múuɲ a

c7.beans    +    AM            +    c1.mother    c1.my    →    ‘my mother’s beans’

If N1 has lexical rising tone, then there is no change to the tone on N1.

e.g. 104.

ghràó            +    Ḥ            +    nchò            →    ghràó nchò

c7.skin/shell    +    AM            +    c7.mouth    →    ‘lip’

If N1 has lexical high tone, then there is no change to the tone on N1.

e.g. 105.

kwéré + H + kwò → kwéré kwò  
c7.joint + AM + c7.leg → 'knee'

Note: According to Hyman and Tadadjeu (1976:78), a floating high tone usually gets grounded to the left when the final tone on N1 is low, and to the right when the final tone on N1 is high. Therefore in the last two cases (rising tone on N1 and high tone on N1) it would be expected that the floating H would be grounded to the right to N2, however I have found no evidence in Chrambo of it spreading to the right even when the final tone on N1 is high and the first tone on N2 is low, as in the example *kwéré kwò* 'knee' above.

### **Class 1 and class 9 nouns:**

For nouns from classes 1 and 9 it would be expected that the associative marker is a floating low tone (Hyman and Tadadjeu 1976:75). So far I have not found evidence of this floating low tone in Chrambo. The following examples of class 9 high tone and class 1 rising tone nouns followed by a second high tone noun show no evidence of a floating low tone:

e.g. 106.

míngú + míyǎ → míngú míyǎ  
c9.dog + c9.girl → 'a girl's dog'

e.g. 107.

mímíbí + míyǎ → mímíbí míyǎ  
c9.goat + c9.girl → 'a girl's goat'

e.g. 108.

ndá + mójó → ndá mójó  
c9.house + c7.fire → 'kitchen'

e.g. 109.

tàá + míyǎ → tàá míyǎ  
c1.father + c9.girl → 'the girl's father'

When N1 is a class 1 or class 9 noun ending in a low tone, there is also no change to the tone.

e.g. 110.

mífrào + míyǎ → mífrào míyǎ  
c9.billy goat + c9.girl → 'a girl's billy goat'

e.g. 111.

njèŋ + mímíbà → njèŋ mímíbà  
c9.dream + c1.man → 'a man's dream'

e.g. 112.

míndì + mímíbà → míndì mímíbà  
c1.elder + c1.man → 'the man's elder'

Therefore from the examples I have it appears that there is no associative marker at all for class 1 and class 9 nouns.

**Downstep:**

The situation is in fact a lot more complicated than what has been stated above, because in many but not all of my examples there is downstep of a high tone in the second noun. This probably means that in these cases there is a floating low tone prefix on the second noun and/or a floating low tone at the end of the first noun. More analysis of lexical tone needs to be done before this can be understood.

Some examples are:

e.g. 113.

mbbó      ʹthí  
 c7.arm   c7.tree  
 ‘branch’

e.g. 114.

ghràó              ʹthí  
 c7.shell/skin   c7.tree  
 ‘bark’

e.g.115.

fùú              ʹnínâshì  
 c7.skin   c9.pineapple  
 ‘pineapple skin’

**3.5 Pronouns**

In this section the form and use of personal pronouns will be described. There are five sets of personal pronouns in Chrambo; subject pronouns, direct object pronouns, indirect object pronouns, emphatic pronouns and locative pronouns. The locative pronouns are described in section 4.3, the others will be described in this section.

It is significant to note that Chrambo appears to have lost the noun class agreement system in the pronouns, as the same 3rd person pronouns are used for all noun classes. There is however a distinction between animate and inanimate in the direct object (see section 3.5.2).

**3.5.1 Subject pronouns**

The 3rd person subject pronouns shown in Table 3.8 are the same for all noun classes.

Table 3.8 Subject pronouns

	singular	dual (inc)	plural (exc)	plural (inc)
1 <sup>st</sup>	Ñ-	p̀d̀g̀ǎ	p̀ìg̀ǐ	p̀ìǎ
2 <sup>nd</sup>	ǎ		p̀ǎi	
3 <sup>rd</sup>	à <sup>1</sup>		p̀úg̀ú p̀í <sup>2</sup>	

Notes:

1. à is also the impersonal pronoun
2. pí is a pronoun which refers to people in general. It is the equivalent to the impersonal pronoun 'one' in English, but can sometimes be translated as 'people' or 'they'.

e.g. 116.

**pìgĩ**    nì n-chwié    pà    mí'chwé  
 1PL.EXCL P    SS-do    PL    c9.drama  
 'We did some dramas.'

e.g. 117.

**à**    nì    η-gói    tàη?  
 3SG P    SS-go    LOC.market?  
 'Has she gone to market?'

e.g. 118.

**à**    nì m-bó    pàá    táη    ηjìη...  
 3SG P    SS-be    two    c7.week    ago  
 'Two weeks ago...'

e.g. 119.

**pí**    nì    η-gá    η-gèi    fí,    **pí**    yé'í    ghó...  
 3PL P    SS.HAB    SS-go    there    3PL    teach    2SG  
 'When people go there, they teach you...'

### 3.5.2 Direct Object Pronouns

In the 3<sup>rd</sup> person direct object pronouns there is a distinction between human/animal and non-human nouns. No pronoun is necessary to refer to a non-human in the direct object. Animals can come into either category depending on the context, as explained below.

Table 3.9 Direct object pronouns

	singular	dual	plural (exc)	plural (inc)
1 <sup>st</sup>	á	vógǒ	vígí	víǎ
2 <sup>nd</sup>	ghó		vóí	
3 <sup>rd</sup>	ví (human/animal*) ∅ (non-human)		vúgú (human/animal) ∅ (non-human)	

\*When the direct object is an animal or animals, the pronoun can be used only where there is no potential for confusion with human nouns. For example if the last human noun referred to was plural and the last animal referred to was singular, then the direct object pronoun could be used to refer to the animal, but if both were singular then it could only be used to refer to the human.



Example: Compare the meaning of the following two sentences:

e.g. 120.

Shéngwé nì n-júon míngú. Mì nì n-jǎi ∅.

Shéngwé P SS-buy C9.dog 1SG P2 SS-see 3SG

‘Shéngwé bought a dog. I saw it.’

Here the lack of a direct object pronoun in the second sentence implies that it was the dog that was seen.

e.g.121.

Shéngwé nì n-júon míngú. Mì nì n-jǎi ‘ví.

Shéngwé P SS-buy c9.dog 1SG P2 SS-see 3SG

‘Shéngwé bought a dog. I saw her.’

Here the direct object pronoun *ví* refers to Shéngwé, not the dog.

In this third sentence the pronoun *ví* can be used to refer to the dog, because to refer to the humans, a plural pronoun would be used, so there is no potential confusion.

e.g. 122.

Shéngwé púgú Ìgwáfè’ì nì n-júon míngú. Mì nì n-jǎi ‘ví.

Shéngwé 3PL Ìgwafè’i P SS-buy c9.dog 1SG P SS-see 3SG

‘Shéngwé and Ìgwafè’i bought a dog. I saw it.’

Other examples of direct object pronouns:

e.g.123.

pìgǐ nì n-jé’í vúgú nò trè lé mbì

1PL.EXCL P SS-teach 3PL PREP three C7.day ?

‘We taught them for three days.’

e.g. 124.

Mínwì khwá víà

c9.God love 1.PL.INCL

‘God loves us.’

### 3.5.3 Indirect object pronouns

Table 3.10 Indirect object pronouns

	singular	dual	plural (exc)	plural (inc)
1 <sup>st</sup>	vǎi	nì pògô	nì pìgǐ	nì pìâ
2 <sup>nd</sup>	vè		nì pǎi	
3 <sup>rd</sup>	ghó		nì púgú	

Note: In the plural the indirect object must be preceded by the preposition *nì*. When the indirect object is a noun in singular or plural it will also take the preposition *nì*.

e.g. 125.

fé ñkhì vǎi

IMP.give c9.water 1SG

‘Give me water.’



The same structure can be used after the verb to have the meaning of ‘with’ if one of the participants is the subject of the sentence, as in the following example:

e.g. 130.

̀ shĩ ȷ-gǎi pǎi ‘yú  
2SG F SS-go 2PL 3SG  
‘You will go with him.’

**When compound pronouns are NOT used:**

It should first be noted that if only the speaker and hearer(s) are involved then the first person inclusive pronouns are used and no compound pronoun is necessary.

e.g. 131.

pǎgǎ fà’ǎ nyiɛȷ ká’á  
1DL.INCL work C7.farm together  
‘We (you sg and I) worked the farm together.’

e.g. 132.

pǎ fà’ǎ nyiɛȷ ká’á  
1PL.INCL work C7.farm together  
‘We (more than two people) work the farm together.’

Note the distinction between these sentences is simply whether there are two or more than two people involved. If there are more than two, it does not show whether it is ‘I and you (PL)’, ‘we and you (SG)’ or ‘we and you (PL)’.

It is possible to specify this by changing the structure of the sentence to make one party the subject:

e.g. 133.

m-fà’ǎ nyiɛȷ pǎ  
1SG-work C7.farm 1PL.INCL  
‘I work the farm with you (PL).’

e.g. 134.

̀ fà’á nyiɛȷ pǎgǎ  
2SG work C7.farm 1DL.INCL  
‘You (SG) work the farm with me.’

**Compound pronouns when there is a third person involved:**

Compound pronouns are used when one of the parties referred to is in the third person. The first of the two pronouns is always inclusive of everyone involved and therefore has to be plural. It can be any of the following:

*pǎgǎ* includes the speaker and a third party but not the listener.

e.g. 135.

pǎgǎ ‘yú fà’ǎ nyiɛȷ  
1PL.EXCL 3SG work C7.farm  
‘He and I work the farm with’

*pǎi* refers to the hearer and a third party but not the speaker.

e.g. 136.

*pǎi* 'yú fà'ǎ nyìɛŋ  
2PL 3SG work C7.farm  
'you and he work the farm'

*púgú* refers to two third parties but not the speaker or hearer.

e.g. 137.

*púgú* 'yú fà'ǎ nyìɛŋ  
3PL 3SG work C7.farm  
'they (he and he) work the farm'

*pǎ* refers to speaker, hearer and a third party.

e.g. 138.

*pǎ* 'púgú fà'ǎ nyìɛŋ  
1PL.INCL 3PL work C7.farm  
'We work the farm.'

The second pronoun is always in the third person and does not refer to one individual/group in particular but simply shows if the total number of people is two or more than two. In the first three examples above, the second pronoun *yú* shows that two people are involved. In the fourth example the second pronoun is plural *púgú* because at least three people are involved. It would be senseless to say *pǎ* 'yú because *pǎ* has to include at least three people.

More examples:

e.g. 139.

*pǎi* 'púgú shǐ fà'ǎ  
2PL 3PL F work

*Pǎi* means that the hearer(s) are included in the group of workers and the speaker is not.

*Púgú* means that at least three people will work.

Therefore this has three possible interpretations:

1. you (PL) and he will work
2. you (SG) and they will work
3. you (PL) and they will work

e.g. 140.

*pìgǐ* 'púgú fà'ǎ nyiêŋ  
1PL.EXCL 3PL work C7.farm

*Pìgǐ* means that the speaker is included and the hearer is not.

*Púgú* means that at least three people will work.

The possible interpretations are:

1. They and I work the farm
2. We (EXCL) and he work the farm
3. We (EXCL) and they work the farm

These can be disambiguated by making one of the participants the subject.  
e.g. 141.

m-fà`ǎ nyìeŋ pìǐ 'púgú  
1SG-work C7.farm 1PL.EXCL 3PL  
'I work the farm with them.'

All the compound pronouns are shown in table 3.12.

Table 3.12 Compound pronouns

Person	Dual	Plural
1 and 2	pògǔ	pǎ
1 and 3	pìǐ 'yú	pìǐ 'púgú
2 and 3	pǎi 'yú	pǎi 'púgú
3 and 3	púgú 'yú	púgú 'púgú
1 and 2 and 3	---	pǎ 'púgú

### 3.6 Co-ordination

#### 3.6.1 Co-ordination of Noun Phrases

A co-ordinate noun phrase is a noun phrase in which two or more nouns share a constituent position in a sentence (such as subject, object, etc) and function as one phrase. In Chrambo the conjunctions used in co-ordinated noun phrases are the 3rd person plural pronoun *púgú* and the preposition *nì*.

e.g. 142.

pàá pǐngè púgú pàá míkè`ì nì pàá pǐmbià ghǎi tàŋ  
two C2.women 3PL two C2.children and two C2.men go LOC.market  
'Two women, two children and two men went to market.'

Here there is a co-ordination of three noun phrases in the subject position. A similar meaning can be expressed by putting only one of the noun phrases in the subject position and moving the other two to the end of the sentence.

e.g. 143.

pàá pǐngè ghǎi tàŋ púgú pàá míkè`ì nì pàá pǐmbià  
two C2.women go LOC.market 3PL two C2.children and two C2.men  
'Two women went to market, and two children and two men.'

Any or all of the nouns in a co-ordinate noun phrase can be modified by adjectives, numerals etc. If the same adjective applies to both nouns then it must be repeated for each noun.

e.g. 144.

pà púoŋ 'mǐŋgú púgú pà púoŋ 'míbûshì pó là`à pìǐ  
PL small C9.dog 3PL PL small C9.cat be LOC.compound LOC.our  
'There are some small dogs and cats at our compound.'

### 3.6.2 Co-ordination of pronoun and noun phrase

A co-ordinated noun phrase consisting of a pronoun and a noun has a similar structure to a compound pronoun. The pronoun comes first and refers to all participants involved, and the full noun follows the pronoun.

e.g. 145.

Pìgǐ      mùúŋ      à      nì    ŋ-góì    tàŋ  
1PL.EXCL C1.mother C1.my P    SS-go    LOC.market  
'My mother and I went to market.'

In the above example, the co-ordinated noun phrase *pìgǐ mùúŋ à* 'My mother and I' is the subject of the sentence. A similar sense can be expressed in a different structure with 'I' as the subject, as follows:

e.g. 146.

Mì    nì    ŋ-góì    tàŋ      pìgǐ      mùúŋ      à.  
1SG P    SS-go    LOC.market 1PL.EXCL C1.mother C1.my  
'I went to market with my mother.'

e.g. 147.

Pìgǐ      nì    n-chwé    pà    mí'chwé    pìgǐ      pà    míkà'ì    pì-ghó  
1PL.EXCL P    SS-play    PL    C9.game 1PL.EXCL PL    C1.child    PL-ANAP  
'We played some games with the children.'

When the coordinated noun phrase is the object of the sentence, the structure is slightly different.

e.g. 148.

Mì    nì    n-jáì    'ghó    pǎi    ndĩŋ      yó      tàŋ      yùà.  
1SG P    SS-see 2SG 2PL C1.brother your    LOC.market yesterday  
'I saw you and your brother in the market yesterday.'

Here the pronoun *ghó* 'you (SG)' is present before *pǎi* 'you (PL)' which refers to all participants. Therefore *pǎi* is functioning more like a conjunction in this sentence.



e.g. 151.  
à yóì táŋ  
3SG sees C7.market  
'He sees the market.'

e.g. 152.  
à ghóì tàŋ  
3SG go LOC.market  
'He went to the market.'

e.g. 153.  
Púgú ghǎŋ lá'á  
3PL surround C7.compound  
'They surrounded the compound.'

e.g. 154.  
Púgú kú'ò lá'á  
3PL go up LOC.compound  
'They went up to the compound.'

e.g. 155.  
Míŋkúnyà thô ndà khwímangàŋ  
C9.pig come LOC.house tortoise  
'Pig came to the tortoise's house.'

#### 4.2 Other Locative markers

The most frequently used locative marker is m̀òŋ meaning 'in' or 'at'. This and the other locative markers are listed below with examples. This may not be an exhaustive list.

m̀òŋ 'in', 'at' (usually glossed as LOC)  
ŋkùòŋ 'on'  
`lá'ó<sup>6</sup> 'under'  
ŋkíŋ 'around'/'beside'  
njìŋ 'behind'  
shì 'near', 'in front of'  
`yóì 'beside' (very near)  
mbrũ 'beside' (at the side of)

e.g.156.  
chó-'chó ŋkùòŋ lèi  
IMP.sit on C7.chair  
'Sit on the chair.'

---

<sup>6</sup> a tone mark over a space preceding a word indicates a floating tone.





e.g. 162.

à ghêi ndă yù  
3SG go LOC.house LOC.his  
'He went to his house.'

The fact that the same set of pronouns is used both as possessive pronouns with the locative nouns and as pronouns with the locative markers, is evidence that the locative markers which take these pronouns may be derived from nouns.

### **The 3SG inanimate locative pronoun**

When the noun referred to is inanimate, the pronoun *ghó* is used for 3SG. This pronoun can optionally be omitted. For 3PL there is no pronoun.

e.g. 163.

à pô njìŋ ghó  
3SG be behind it  
'It is behind it.'

e.g. 164.

à pô njìŋ  
3SG be behind  
'It is behind (it or them).'

## 5. The Verb

Verb roots in Chrambo can be monosyllabic or disyllabic. The verbs can be classified into two lexical tone groups, H tone and L tone. Some examples are shown below (the citation form shown for verbs throughout this paper is the imperative form (see section 6.3.2)).

### L tone verbs:

kwà'â - 'hope'  
 shà'â - 'cross'  
 yùòŋ - 'wake up'  
 kènâ - 'roll'  
 `gwê\* - 'laugh'  
 pìnâ - 'return'  
 ghâi\* - 'go'  
 fè'î - 'quarrel'  
 pìrî - 'trap'  
 mì'ânŋ - 'throw away'

### H tone verbs:

kwá'â - 'clap'  
 shá'â - 'rule'  
 yúòŋ - 'buy'  
 kánâ - 'hurry'  
 gwê - 'wear'  
 pínì - 'dance'  
 yâi - 'see'  
 fú'ù - 'remove'  
 ywérè - 'listen'  
 ghá'â - 'be difficult'

\*For monosyllabic L tone verbs the initial L tone is only realised in certain forms of the verb. In a declarative sentence unmarked for tense or aspect, a floating low tone is shown by downstep on the verb after a high tone noun.

e.g. 165.

mìŋgwé	'ghâi	mìŋgwé	yâi
C1.woman	go	C1.woman	see
'the woman goes'		'the woman sees'	

### 5.1 Morphological structure of the verb

Chrambo is a mainly isolating language, meaning that grammatical functions such as tense and aspect are mainly marked in separate words rather than affixed to the verb. However the verb may have one of two kinds of homorganic nasal prefix, the first person singular subject prefix and the same subject prefix; these are described below. In addition certain grammatical functions are marked by a tonal morpheme attached to the verb, for example tense (see section 6.1) and hortative mood (see section 6.3.1).

#### The 1sg prefix *N-*

The subject pronouns are listed in section 3.5.1. All but 1SG are analysed as pronouns rather than prefixes, because when the subject is a full noun the 3rd person pronoun is usually not present. The 1SG marker is analysed as a prefix because it is a homorganic nasal.

e.g.166. *kíè* 'fry'  
 ñ-kíè mbàóŋ  
 1SG-fry c7.egg  
 'I fried an egg.'

e.g.167. *pìnî* 'return'

*m̀-̀bìnî*      *là'̀à*

1SG-return    LOC.compound

'I returned to the compound.'

(Note: there is a phonological rule  $p \rightarrow b / m\_*$ )

### **The same subject prefix *Ń-***

When the subject of a verb is the same as that of the previous verb, the same subject morpheme *Ń-* is used. This is the case whether the verb is in the same clause, for example in a serial verb phrase (see section 6.4 below) or in a separate sentence. Therefore a different subject pronoun or noun will usually only be used when the subject changes to a different person or thing.

e.g.168.

*À*    *ghǎi*    *ń-kíe*    *mbàón*

3SG    go      ss-fry    c7.egg

'She went and fried an egg.'

In this example *kíe* 'fry' is marked by the same subject prefix to show that the subject is the same as that of the previous verb *ghǎi* 'go'.

Most of the tense, aspect and negation particles cause the presence of this same subject prefix on the following verb or verb particle so it is very likely that these particles have come from auxiliary verbs. In this case the prefix does not really carry the meaning of same subject as it would be impossible for a tense particle to have a different subject from the main verb, however in this paper they are still glossed as ss for 'same subject' because it is essentially the same grammatical morpheme.

## 6. The Verb Phrase

The verb phrase as described in this section refers to the main verb and all other verb particles in a clause. These include tense, aspect and negation markers and various other non-main verbs. Only the verb phrase in main clauses is described in this section; other types of clauses and complex sentences are beyond the scope of this paper.

A verb phrase can be a main verb by itself as in examples 166 and 167 above or a sequence of verbs called a serial verb phrase (see section 6.4) There are a number of auxiliary verbs in Chrambo several of which express concepts which are expressed by adverbs in English, such as ‘already’ and ‘again’. These will be described in section 6.5.

The basic verb phrase structure is shown below. In the examples which follow, the verb phrases are indicated in square brackets.

(TENSE) (POLARITY) <sup>7</sup>	(ASPECT)	(AUXILIARY VERB(S))	MAIN VERB	(PROG ASPECT)
------------------------------------	----------	---------------------	-----------	---------------

Notes: 1. Tense may be marked by either one or two particles, as may negation. Tense and polarity are grouped together because certain negative markers are fusional morphemes which include tense (see section 6.6).

2. In the future tense the negative marker precedes the subject of the verb (see section 6.6).

3. Auxiliary verbs usually come immediately before the main verb, however it is possible for an auxiliary verb to precede an aspect marker, as in e.g.171.

e.g. 169.

	[TENSE	ASPECT	MAIN VERB	ASPECT]
Púgú	[nì	n-thó	n-jé’ì	nú]
3PL	[P	SS-prog	SS-learn	PROG]

‘They were learning.’

e.g.170.

[ASPECT	AUX	MAIN VERB]			
[ń-thó	ŋ-gú’ó	shwè]	pí	tà’à	yàòŋ
[SS-PROG	SS-only	SS.point]	just	one	C7.thing

‘and was only pointing at one thing.’

e.g. 171.

	[AUX	ASPECT	MAIN VERB]				
Mínkúnyà	[wù’ò	nthó	ntôu]	shè	nì	nchò	yí
C9.pig	[still	SS-PROG	SS-dig]	C9.ground	with	C7.mouth	C7.his

‘Pig is still digging the ground with his mouth.’

In a serial verb phrase, it is possible for the verb phrase to be split by the object of the first verb. See section 6.4 for examples.

<sup>7</sup> Polarity refers to whether the sentence is positive or negative.

## 6.1 Verb Tense

There are 7 tenses in Chrambo as shown in table 6.1 for the verbs *shà'â* 'cross' (a L tone verb) and *shá'à* 'judge', 'rule' (a H tone verb). In this table all sentences are based on the sentences 'he/she crosses' in the first column and 'he/she judges/rules' in the second column.

Table 6.1 Verb tense paradigm for *shà'â* cross and *shá'à* judge, rule

	shà'â 'cross'	shá'à 'judge / rule'
F3	à shǐ 'má shà'ǎ 3SG F FAR cross	à shǐ 'má 'shá'á 3SG F FAR cross
F2	à shǐ n'dé shà'ǎ 3SG F F2 cross	à shǐ n'dé 'shá'á 3SG F F2 cross
F1	à shǐ shà'ǎ 3SG F cross	à shǐ 'shá'á 3SG F cross
P0	à shà'â 3SG cross	à shá'à 3SG cross
P1	á nǐ shà'â 3SG P1 cross	á nǐ shá'à 3SG P1 cross
P2	à nì shà'â 3SG P cross	à nì shá'à 3SG P cross
P3	à nì má shà'ǎ 3SG P FAR cross	à nì má 'shá'á 3SG P FAR cross

Tense is marked by a combination of tense markers which precede the main verb, and a tense tone which attaches to the end of the main verb. In P1 there is also a H tone marker on the subject noun or pronoun. As can be seen in the table above, there are two tone patterns on the main verb, one pattern for all the future tenses and the far past (P3) tense, and one pattern for the other non-future tenses, P0, P1 and P2. The surface tone on the verbs is different for H tone and L tone verbs. The meaning and form of each tense is explained below.

### Past tenses:

P0

P0 is unmarked for tense. For active verbs if unmarked for aspect, it usually has the meaning of an action recently completed that is still relevant, similar to the present perfect in English. Therefore it's usual time frame for active verbs is the very recent past, usually earlier today.

e.g. 172.

À jî pínà

3SG eat c7.fufu

'He has eaten fufu.'

This tense can sometimes be used for further in the past if it is still relevant, for instance the following example would be acceptable for as long as the person was still in Bamenda.

e.g. 173.

à ghêi Tìshù

3SG go Bamenda

'She has gone to Bamenda' (and is still there).

Stative verbs which are unmarked for tense are understood as referring to the present time.

e.g. 174.

Mínwì khwá víà

c9.God love us

'God loves us.'

See section 6.2 on aspect for more examples.

P1 – near past

The time frame for P1 is from earlier today back to sunset the previous evening. This is the only tense that has clear boundaries in time. It is marked by the tense marker *nĩ* (with tone H<sup>4</sup>H), a H tone attached to the end of the subject noun or pronoun and a HL tone attached to the end of the verb.

e.g. 175.

á nĩ ŋ-gêi Tìshù shì'à

3SG P1 SS-go Bamenda today

'He went to Bamenda today.'

e.g. 176.

mìmbiã nĩ ŋ-gêi tàn

C1.man P1 SS-go LOC.market

'A man went to market (today).'

P2

The time frame for P2 starts from last night, therefore it overlaps with P1. The end of the time frame is very vague and overlaps with P3. It can sometimes be used to refer to events which occurred several years ago, but usually refers to events within the last couple of years. It is marked by one of two tense particles, *nì* or *kì* and a HL tone attached to the end of the verb. Of the two P2 markers, *nì* is more common and like the other tense markers, causes the presence of the same subject prefix on the following verb or verb particle, as in example 177. *Kì* is less common, and although it can take either of the verb prefixes *N-* (1SG subject) or *N-* (same subject), it does not cause the same subject prefix on the following verb as shown in example 178.

e.g. 177.

à nì ŋ-gêi Tìshù ká'a shì'à

3SG P SS-go Bamenda a week ago

'He went to Bamenda a week ago.'

Note: *nì* is glossed as P rather than P2 because it also occurs in the P3 tense (see below).

e.g. 178.

ŋ-kì ghònô ntàaŋ ndì nì míshéi-n'jú'ò  
1SG-P2 be ill long C9.time with gastric  
'I was ill for a long time with gastric.'

P3

P3 is the remote past tense. It can start from three days ago but is usually used for events which took place last year or before. It is marked by a sequence of two particles, *nì má* and a H tone on the verb. *Nì* is the same past tense marker that is used in P2 and *má* is the tense marker used in both the far future F3 and far past P3 tenses.

e.g. 179.

à nì má ŋ-gǎi Tìshù nì ŋgà'ò yìní  
3SG P FAR SS-go Bamenda prep C7.year C7.DEM  
'He went to Bamenda last year.'

### Future tenses:

F1

F1 is the general future tense. It is used to refer to the near future, but its time frame is quite vague because it can be used to refer to events in several months time or even in a few years time. The meaning of this tense compared with the other future tenses has been explained in different ways by different people, and no firm conclusions have been reached. Some people say the choice of whether to use F1 or F2 depends on how soon the time is that you are talking about, while other people say that the distinction is more related to how certain it is that what you are talking about will take place and that this tense shows more certainty than F2 or F3. The use of the future tenses is an area for future research for which it would be useful to collect a larger corpus of texts to include more in the future tenses. F1 is marked by the future tense particle *shǐ* and a H tone on the verb.

e.g. 180.

à shǐ ŋ-gǎi Tìshù  
3SG F SS-go Bamenda  
'He will go to Bamenda.'

F2

The time frame for F2 starts the day after tomorrow. As with P2, the end boundary for this tense is quite vague and overlaps with F3. F2 is marked by the sequence of two tense particles, *shǐ n'dé* and a H tone on the verb.

e.g. 181.

à shǐ n-'dé ŋ-gǎi 'Tìshù  
3SG F SS-F2 SS-go Bamenda  
'He will go to Bamenda (after some time e.g. next week).'

According to one Chrambo speaker, for this sentence and e.g.182 below, the speaker may not be certain that the person will actually go to Bamenda, whereas in example 180 above the speaker is showing a greater degree of certainty that the person will actually go.



F3

F3 is the remote future tense. The time frame for F3 starts three days from now, but it is more commonly used for events to take place next year or later. F3 is marked by the sequence of tense particles, *shǐ* 'má, and a H tone on the verb.

e.g. 182.

à shǐ 'má ŋ-gǎi 'Tíshù  
3SG F FAR SS-go Bamenda

'He will go to Bamenda (a long time from now e.g. in three years time).'

## 6.2 Aspect

Aspect in Chrambo can be divided into perfective and imperfective aspects, and imperfective can be subdivided into progressive and habitual. Perfective aspect is unmarked. Imperfective is marked by progressive and habitual markers, as described below.

### Unmarked aspect

All verbs have an inherent aspect in their unmarked form. Stative verbs express ongoing states, whereas active verbs express perfective situations.

For example, the following stative verbs describe an ongoing situation:

e.g.

Ñ-chí'á 'ví  
1SG-admire him

'I admire him.'

e.g.

Ndá yǐ ghá'ò  
c9.house c9.his be big

'His house is big.'

The following active verbs are inherently perfective, meaning that when an active verb is unmarked for tense or aspect it will be understood that the action is complete, but still relevant to the present.

e.g.

à pìnî  
3SG return

'He has come back.'

e.g.

à chí à  
3SG push me

'He (just) pushed me.'

## Progressive aspect

Progressive aspect is marked in the same way in all tenses. There are two progressive markers but they are not always both present. The use of the progressive markers depends on whether there is a direct object in the sentence. The aspect markers affect the tone on the verb, however further investigation is needed to determine if this change is grammatical or phonological. Progressive aspect marking in the seven tenses is shown for the verb *nyia* ‘cook’ in table 6.2; all sentences in this table are based on the sentences ‘he is cooking fufu’ in the first column, and ‘he is cooking’ in the second and third columns. These constructions are described in more detail below.

Table 6.2 Progressive aspect for the verb *nyia* ‘cook’

Tense	<i>nyia pına</i> ‘cook fufu’	<i>nyia</i> ‘cook’	<i>nyia</i> ‘cook’
F3	à shǐ ‘má n’t hó nyia pına 3SG F FAR PROG cook C7.fufu	à shǐ ‘má n’t hó nyia nú 3SG F FAR PROG cook PROG	à shǐ ‘má ‘nyia nú 3SG F FAR cook PROG
F2	à shǐ n’dé n’t hó nyia pına 3SG F F2 PROG cook C7.fufu	à shǐ n’dé n’t hó nyia nú 3SG F F2 PROG cook PROG	à shǐ n’dé ‘nyia nú 3SG F F2 cook PROG
F1	à shǐ n’t hó nyia pına 3SG F PROG cook C7.fufu	à shǐ n’t hó nyia nú 3SG F PROG cook PROG	à shǐ ‘nyia nú 3SG F cook PROG
P0	à thô nyia pına 3SG PROG cook C7.fufu	à thô nyia nú 3SG PROG cook PROG	à nyia nú 3SG cook PROG
P1	á nǐ nthó nyia pına 3SG P1 PROG cook C7.fufu	á nǐ nthó nyia nú 3SG P1 PROG cook PROG	á nǐ nyia nú 3SG P1 cook PROG
P2	à nì nthó nyia pına 3SG P PROG cook C7.fufu	à nì nthó nyia nú 3SG P PROG cook PROG	à nì nyia nú 3SG P cook PROG
P3	à nì má nthó nyia pına 3SG P FAR PROG cook C7.fufu	à nì má nthó nyia nú 3SG P FAR PROG cook PROG	à nì má nyia nú 3SG P FAR cook PROG

### Verbs with no direct object

Verbs with no direct object are marked for progressive aspect by the progressive marker *nú*. They may also be marked by the progressive marker *thô*, as shown below. (Some people consistently use *chô* instead of *thô*, but throughout this paper *thô* has been used.)  
e.g. 183.

à ghài nú Tìshù  
3SG go PROG Bamenda  
‘He is going to Bamenda.’

à thô ŋ-gâi nú Tìshù  
3SG PROG SS-go PROG Bamenda  
‘He is going to Bamenda.’

e.g. 184.

Nǎngré thô n-jwèrè nú  
Nangre PROG SS-listen PROG  
‘Nangre is listening.’

Note: following *thô* a H tone verb such as *ywèrè* has L tone. This needs further analysis.

Nǎṅgré ywérè nú  
Nangre listen PROG  
'Nangre is listening.'

### Verbs with a direct object

The progressive marker *nú* cannot coexist with a direct object, therefore when there is a direct object following the verb, progressive aspect is marked only by the progressive marker *thô*.

e.g. 185.

Nǎṅgré thô n-jwèrè mí'shwéishwéi  
Nangre PROG SS-listen C9.story  
'Nangre is listening to a story.'

e.g. 186.

Nthô m-bìgî ṅkhĩ  
1SG.PROG SS-add C9.water  
'I am adding water.'

### Habitual aspect

Habitual aspect is not marked in the same way in all tenses. There is a habitual marker *ghà* which only occurs in the present tense.

e.g. 187.

à ghà ṅ-gôî 'táj  
3SG HAB SS-go LOC.market  
'He (habitually) goes to market.'

The habitual marker does not co-occur with any other tense markers and is always interpreted as present. When there is a tense marker, the progressive markers are used and the context will determine if they are to be interpreted as progressive or habitual.

e.g. 188. P2 progressive:

à nì n-thó ṅ-gôî nú 'Tíshù 'yúà  
3SG P SS-PROG SS-go PROG Bamenda yesterday  
'He was going to Bamenda yesterday'

e.g. 189. P2 habitual:

à nì n-thó ṅ-gôî nú 'Tíshù ṅgégè  
3SG P SS-PROG SS-go PROG Bamenda time.time  
'He used to go to Bamenda'

## 6.3 Mood

Mood refers to sentence type: declarative (statement), interrogative (question), imperative (command), etc. In sections 6.1 and 6.2 above all the examples have been declarative sentences. In this section hortatives and imperatives will be discussed. Interrogative sentences will be covered under section 7 on the simple sentence.

### 6.3.1 Hortatives

Hortative sentences are usually suggestions that somebody should do something. An example from English is ‘let’s go’. In Chrambo hortative mood is marked by a change in tone on the pronoun and a H tone attached to the start of the verb. This results in a H pattern for H tone verbs, and a HL pattern for L tone verbs, as shown in tables 6.3 and 6.4 for the L tone verb *pìní* ‘return’ and the H tone verb *píní* ‘dance’.

Table 6.3 Hortative form of *pìní* ‘return’ (L tone verb)

	sg	dl.incl	pl.incl	pl.excl
1 <sup>st</sup>	mbínì	pògò pínì	pà pínì	pìgì pínì
2 <sup>nd</sup>	ɔ ‘pínì			pèi pínì
3 <sup>rd</sup>	á ‘pínì			púgú pínì

Table 6.4 Hortative form of *píní* ‘dance’ (H tone verb)

	sg	dl.incl	pl.incl	pl.excl
1 <sup>st</sup>	mbíní	pògò píní	pà píní	pìgì píní
2 <sup>nd</sup>	ɔ ‘píní			pèi píní
3 <sup>rd</sup>	á ‘píní			púgú píní

The meaning of this mood is shown in the following examples:

e.g. 190.

pògò ghâi  
 1DL.INCL HORT.go  
 ‘Let’s go’

e.g. 191.

púgú píní  
 3PL HORT.dance  
 ‘They should dance.’

e.g. 192.

ŋ-gé ŋâ ɔ ‘pínì  
 1SG-think that 2PL HORT.return  
 ‘I think that you should return.’

e.g. 193.

pèi ghâi  
 2PL HORT.go  
 ‘Go!’ or ‘You (PL) should go’.

### 6.3.2 Imperatives (commands)

There is only an imperative form for 2SG commands; for the 2PL command hortative mood is used, as shown in e.g.193 above. The imperative is marked by a HL tone attached to the end of the verb. This leads to a HL pattern for H tone verbs and LHL for L tone verbs.

e.g. 194. H tone verb:

ywéré!	p̀̀i	ywéré!
IMP.listen	2PL	HORT.listen
'listen!' (one person)		'listen!' (two or more people)

e.g. 195. L tone verb:

p̀̀nĩ!	p̀̀i	p̀̀nĩ
IMP.come back	2PL	HORT.come back
'come back!' (one person)		'come back!' (two or more people)

Negative commands will be discussed under negation (see section 6.6).

#### 6.4 Serial Verb Phrase

A serial verb phrase is a verb phrase in which a sequence of verbs is used within the same clause to refer to a single action or concept. After the first verb, all following verbs will have the same subject prefix (described in section 5.1 above). Sometimes a serial verb phrase can consist of two main verbs.

e.g. 196.

à	pwâ	à	ghá'à
3SG	be good	3SG	be too much
	'It is good.'		'It is too much.'

à	pwá	ŋ- <sup>4</sup> gá'á
3SG	be good	ss-be too much
	'It is really good.'	

However in many instances of serial verb phrases all but the final verb are auxiliary verbs which cannot stand alone. These will be described in more detail in section 6.5.

e.g. 197.

à	yá	m-bwà
3SG	be really	ss-be good
	'It is really good.'	

*à	yá
3SG	be really
	'It is really.'

(Yá cannot be used as a main verb so this sentence is incomplete.)

Sometimes a serial verb phrase can be split by the presence of an argument of one of the verbs, as in examples 198 and 207-209.

e.g. 198.

Pìgĩ	shà'á	ŋkhĩ	ŋ-gói	Ŋgwà
1PL.EXC	cross	C9.water	ss-go	Bangolan
	'We crossed the water to Bangolan.'			

#### 6.4.1 Direction

In Chrambo direction is always expressed in the verb rather than in a preposition / locative marker (see section 4). Some verbs have inherent direction, as in examples 199-202.

e.g. 199.

nú'óη ηkùoη táprè  
IMP.put on c7.table  
'Put it on the table.'

e.g. 200.

píí ηkùoη táprè  
IMP.remove on c7.table  
'Take it off the table.'

e.g. 201.

à kú'ò tàη  
3SG go up LOC.market  
'He went up to market.'

e.g. 202.

à shú'ì tàη  
3SG go down LOC.market  
'He went down to market.'

Other verbs which do not have inherent direction can be used in a serial verb phrase with a directional verb such as *ghâi* 'to go', *thô* 'to come', *pîñî* 'to return', *kú'ò* 'go up', or *shú'ì* 'go down'.

e.g. 203.

À nì n-thó n-'chéη Là'à M'bô  
3SG P SS-come SS-arrive Bambalang  
'He (came and) arrived in Bambalang.'

e.g. 204.

À nì η-gói n-'chéη Tìshù  
3SG P SS-go SS-arrive Bamenda  
'He (went and) arrived in Bamenda.'

Verbs which express the manner of motion are often used in serial verb phrases with directional verbs, in this case they will precede the directional verb as in the following examples.

e.g. 205.

À kóné η-'kú'ó tàη  
2SG hurry SS-go up LOC.market  
'He hurried up to the market.'

e.g. 206.

À tēi ŋ-gǎi m-<sup>h</sup>bárá ví  
3SG run SS-go SS-meet him  
'He ran to meet him.'

In the following examples the serial verb phrase is split by the object of the first verb.

e.g. 207.

À nyíɛŋ <sup>h</sup>shé ŋ-gǎi tàŋ  
3SG walk C9.ground SS-go LOC.market  
'He walked to market.'

e.g. 208.

pìǎ nì n-chwí píè ŋ-gǎi Mbìshǎ  
1PL.EXCL P SS-punt C7.boat SS-go Mbissa  
'We punted our boat to Mbissa.'

e.g. 209.

pìǎ nì n-tíɛŋ máoŋ píǎ m-bínì nò Mbàshù'ò  
1PL.EXCL P SS-carry C2.things C2.our SS-return with it Mbashu'ò  
'We carried our things back to Mbasho.'

## 6.5 Auxiliary Verbs

There are several auxiliary verbs in Chrambo, some of which are listed below. Some have more than one meaning depending on the context.

The following verbs can only be used as auxiliary verbs:

wù'ó - still, just/only

ghá - when

yá - really

yúo - a little bit

ká'ò - just

nú'ú - again

kwô\* - already

ká\* - instead, just/recently

\**Kwô* and *ká* are different from the other verbs in that they do not cause the presence of the same subject morpheme on the following verb, however they can be prefixed by the same subject morpheme when following another verb particle.

Examples:

e.g. 210. wù'ó meaning 'still'

N-thó ŋ-gú'ó n-jwèrè khwè ghó  
1SG-PROG SS-still SS-listen answer ANAP

'I am still waiting for that answer.'

(Note: There is a phonological rule  $w \rightarrow gw / \eta\_*$ )

e.g. 211. *wù'ó* meaning 'just'

Púgú ghà η-gù'ó η-'ká pí pà fó 'thí  
3PL HAB SS-just SS-pick just PL C7.leaf C7.tree  
'They just pick some leaves.'

e.g. 212. *kwô* 'already'

Ŋgwà kwô lé gháo  
C2.people already sleep all  
'Everyone is already asleep.'

The following main verbs can be used as auxiliary verbs:

yì'ê - be easy

pórò - be calm, gentle, gradual

e.g. 213.

À yì'é finí  
3SG be easy SS.sell  
'She sold it easily.'

The following main verbs can be used as auxiliary verbs, with a change in their meaning:

*thô* ('come') – future tense

*tà'á* ('look for') – 'intend to', 'want to'

*pìñí* ('return') – 'again' (when used together with *nú'ú*)

Examples

e.g. 214. *thô* - future tense

À thô η-gói Tìshù  
3SG come SS-go Bamenda  
'He is going to go to Bamenda.'

e.g. 215. *tà'á* – intend to / want to

À tà'á η-gói Tìshù  
3SG want SS-go Bamenda  
'He wants/intends to go to Bamenda.'

e.g. 216. *pìñí 'nú'ú* – 'again'

Khwímâṅgàṅ pìñí 'nú'ú m-ffí 'ví  
Tortoise return again SS-deceive him  
'Tortoise deceived him again.'

## 6.6 Negation

There are several different negative markers in Chrambo and the choice of negative markers depends on the tense, aspect and mood of the verb. In some cases more than one combination of negative markers is possible.



The negative morphemes express both negation and tense. Therefore some of the tense markers described in section 6.1 above for positive sentences cannot occur in negative sentences. These are the future marker *shí*, and the past tense markers *ní*, *nì* and *kì*. However, the F2 marker *lé* and the far future / far past marker *má* are used together with negative morphemes. The habitual aspect marker *ghà* cannot co-occur with a negative morpheme, but the other aspect markers can, as explained below.

### 6.6.1 Negation of statements

#### Perfective aspect:

Table 6.5 shows negation in each of the seven tenses for the verb *ghâi* ‘go’. All sentences are based on the sentence ‘he does not go to Bamenda’. Note that for F1, P0, P1 and P2 the second negative marker *yì’í* or *njì’í* is optional.

The negative sentence is not always the exact opposite of the positive sentence. For example if unmarked for aspect, when the future tenses F2 and F3 and the past tense P3 are negated they have the meaning of ‘never’.

Table 6.5 Negation of statements

F3	Mbá’á à ‘má η’gâi Tìshù F.NEG 3SG FAR SS.go Bamenda	He will never go to Bamenda
F2	Mbá’á à ‘lé ηgâi Tìshù F.NEG 3SG F2 SS.go Bamenda	He will never go to Bamenda
F1	Mbá’á à (yì’í) (η)gâi Tìshù F.NEG 3SG (NEG) (SS).go Bamenda	He will not go to Bamenda
P0	À lǝ (njì’í) ηgâi Tìshù 3SG P0.NEG (NEG) SS.go Bamenda	He has not gone to Bamenda
P1	À lǝ (njì’í) ηgâi Tìshù 3SG P1.NEG (NEG) SS.go Bamenda	He did not go to Bamenda (today)
P2	À lǝ (njì’í) ηgâi Tìshù 3SG P.NEG (NEG) SS.go Bamenda	He did not go to Bamenda (before today)
P3	À lǝ má η-gâi Tìshù* 3SG P.NEG FAR SS-go Bamenda	He has never been to Bamenda

Note: P1 differs from P2 only in the tone on the negative marker: lǝ in P1 and lǝ̃ in P2.

#### Imperfective aspect:

These negative markers can be combined with the normal progressive aspect markers as shown in table 6.6. Like in the positive construction, some of these can be interpreted as either progressive or habitual, depending on the context. As with the perfective aspect, the meaning of the negative sentence is not always the exact opposite of the positive sentence. Table 6.6 gives the possible meanings of the seven tenses for the basic sentence ‘he is not going to Bamenda’.

Table 6.6 Negation of statements with progressive aspect marker

F3	Mbá'á à 'má (n-thó) η-gôî nú Tìshù F.NEG 3SG FAR (SS-PROG) SS-go PROG Bamenda	He will never be going to Bamenda
F2	Mbá'á à 'lé (n-thó) η-gôî nú Tìshù F.NEG 3SG F2 (SS-PROG) SS-go PROG Bamenda	He will never be going to Bamenda
F1	Mbá'á à (yì'í) (n-thó) η-gôî nú Tìshù F.NEG 3SG NEG (SS-PROG) SS-go PROG Bamenda	1. He will not be going to Bamenda (progressive) 2. He will not be going to Bamenda (habitually)
P0	À lǒ (n-jì'í) (n-thó) η-gôî nú Tìshù 3SG P0.NEG (SS-NEG) (SS-PROG) SS-go PROG Bamenda	He is not going to Bamenda
P1	À lǒ (n-jì'í) (n-thó) η-gôî nú Tìshù 3SG P1.NEG (SS-NEG) (SS-PROG) SS-go PROG Bamenda	He was not going to Bamenda (today)
P2	À lǒ (n-jì'í) (n-thó) η-gôî nú Tìshù 3SG P.NEG (SS-NEG) (SS-PROG) SS-go PROG Bamenda	1. He was not going to Bamenda (progressive) 2. He was not going to Bamenda (habitually)
P3	À lǒ má (n-thó) η-gôî nú Tìshù 3SG P.NEG FAR (SS-PROG) SS-go PROG Bamenda	He did not used to go to Bamenda (habitually a long time ago)

The present habitual aspect marker *ghà* cannot be combined with a negative marker. There is a negative marker *shí'á* meaning 'never' which has the opposite meaning of habitual aspect.

e.g. 217.

À shí'á η-'gôî Tìshù  
3SG never SS-go Bamenda  
'He never goes to Bamenda.'

#### Other negative markers:

Two further negative markers are *ná'á* and *shí*.

*Ná'á* 'yet' has the opposite meaning of *kwô* 'already'. It can sometimes be used together with *yá'à* 'yet' as in e.g.219.

e.g. 218.

À lǒ ná'á η-gôî Tìshù  
3SG P0.NEG yet SS-go Bamenda  
'He has not gone to Bamenda yet.'

e.g. 219.

Púgú lǒ n-jì'í ná'á η-'gôî shíkú yá'à  
3PL P0.NEG SS-neg yet SS-go school yet  
'They have never been to school.'

*Shì* has the meaning of 'never' in the past tense.

e.g. 220.

Shì lǒ ná'á 'má η-gôî Tìshù  
1SG.never P0.NEG yet FAR SS-go Bamenda  
'He has never been to Bamenda.'

### 6.6.2 Negation of hortatives

There are two possible negation markers for hortative sentences: *kí'í* and *jí*. Both precede the subject. The tone on the verb is the same as for the positive hortative sentence. This is shown below for the H tone verb *píní* 'dance' and the L tone verb *pìnì* 'return'.

e.g. 221.

<i>kí'í</i>	<i>'púgú</i>	<i>píní</i>	OR	<i>jí</i>	<i>'púgú</i>	<i>píní</i>
NEG	3PL	HORT.dance		NEG	3PL	HORT.dance
'Let them not dance.' or 'They should not dance.'						

e.g. 222.

<i>kí'í</i>	<i>'púgú</i>	<i>pìnì</i>	OR	<i>jí</i>	<i>'púgú</i>	<i>pìnì</i>
NEG	3PL	HORT.return		NEG	3PL	HORT.return
'Let's not go back.'						

### 6.6.3 Negation of commands

As with the positive commands, the negative 2PL command is expressed by hortative mood. A negative 2SG command has one of the same two negative markers *kí'í* and *jí* that are used to negate hortative sentences. For 2SG, as with the positive form of the imperative, there is no subject pronoun, however there is a nasal prefix on the verb which is glossed as *N-* in the examples below. The negative 2SG imperative has a H tone attached to the end of the verb, resulting in a LH pattern for L tone verbs and a H pattern for H tone verbs. This is different from the tone pattern used in the positive 2SG command. The form of the verb in this negative 2SG command seems to be the same as the form used in consecutive verb sequences, so it may be an infinitive form of the verb. This form of the verb has not been discussed in this paper and is an area which requires further research.

e.g. 223.

<i>jí</i>	<i>m-bìńǎ</i>	<i>jí</i>	<i>pèi</i>	<i>'pínì</i>
NEG	N-come back	NEG	2PL	HORT.come back
'Don't come back!' (to 1 person)		'Don't come back!' (to more than 1 person)		

e.g. 224.

<i>jí</i>	<i>ŋ-'kéné</i>	<i>jí</i>	<i>pèi</i>	<i>'kéné</i>
NEG	N-hurry	NEG	2pl	HORT.hurry
'Don't hurry!' (to 1 person)		'Don't hurry!' (to more than 1 person)		

## 7. Simple clauses

For the purpose of this paper a simple clause is defined as a main clause with only one main verb. Complex sentences consisting of more than one clause and the verb forms which only occur in non-main clauses are beyond the scope of this paper.

### 7.1 Simple clause structure

In this section the basic unmarked simple clause structure is described. More analysis could be done to include focus constructions, different kinds of adverbials, etc.

#### Basic word order

The unmarked word order in a simple clause is SVO (subject, verb, object).

e.g. 225.

S	V
À	lê
3SG	sleep

'She has slept.'

e.g. 226.

S	V	DO
À	chí'ó	múuŋ mimbíà ví'né
3SG	despise	small C1.man C1.that

'He despises that boy.'

When the verb is ditransitive, the indirect object follows the direct object.

e.g. 227.

S	V	DO	IO
À	fé	pìeŋ	nì tǎa ví
3SG	give	C7.bag	to C1.father C1.his

'He gave a bag to his father.'

#### Adverbial phrases

Adverbial phrases usually occur after the core elements of the clause (i.e. subject, verb and objects). However certain types of adverbial phrase can occur in other positions. The examples below show some different types of adverbial phrases.

Examples 228-232 show adverbial phrases following the core elements:

e.g. 228.

S	VP	DO	LOC	TIME
Pìgǐ mǔuŋ à	nì mbbǐ	pílě	mòŋ ŋyǐeŋ	yùà
1PL.EXCL C1.mother C1.my	P SS-plant	C9.groundnut	LOC C9.farm	yesterday

'My mother and I planted groundnut on the farm yesterday.'

e.g. 229.

S	V	DO	TIME	LOC
Pìgǐ 1PL.EXCL	fú'ú remove	máòŋ píjí c2.things c2.our	kì'é then	mòŋ píè ghó LOC c7.boat ANAP

'We removed our things then from that boat.'

e.g. 230.

S	V	ACC	LOC
Pìgǐ 1PL.EXCL	kwêi return	nì ŋgùóŋ máòŋ píjí with all c2.things c2.our	héiŋ here

'We returned with all our things here.'

e.g. 231.

S	VP	DO	MANNER
Pìgǐ 1PL.EXCL	yá n-chwí really SS-punt	píè yíjí c7.boat c7.our	shíshí'ì well

'We really punted our boat well.'

e.g. 232.

S	V	DO	INST	LOC
Shéngwé Shengwe	chú'ú pound	kúòŋ c7.beans	nì ŋkhwǎ with c7.pestle	mòŋ ghíní LOC mortar

'Shengwe pounded the beans with the pestle in the mortar.'

In examples 233 and 234, the time phrase precedes the core elements.

e.g. 233.

TIME	S	VP	LOC
Ká'á shí'à 'next week'	pìgǐ 1PL.EXCL	shǐ ŋgǎi F SS-go	Mbàshù'ò Mbasho

'Next week we will go to Mbasho.'

e.g. 234.

TIME	S	VP
Nd̄hì ŋâ pí nì ŋkwrí á mfé Mbishà né, C9.time REL 3PL P transfer me SS-give Mbissa REL	túá à emotions my	yá mbigì. really SS-be bad

'At the time that they transferred me to Mbissa, I was really angry.'

## 7.2 Interrogative sentences (questions)

There are two main types of questions, polar ('yes / no') questions and content ('wh') questions. The content questions which ask for information about something have question words such as 'what?', 'where?', etc. Polar questions ask for a 'yes' or 'no' answer.

### Polar questions

Polar questions in Chrambo are marked by a lengthening of the sentence-final vowel. They otherwise have exactly the same structure as statements.

e.g. 235.

À pìnî  
3SG return  
'He has returned.'

À pìnîî?  
3SG return.INT  
'Has he returned?'

e.g. 236.

À shà'á ñkhĩ  
3SG cross C9.water  
'He has crossed the water.'

À shà'á ñkhĩî?  
3SG cross C9.water.INT  
'Has he crossed the water?'

### Content questions

The question words in Chrambo are:

*khóò* 'what'

*gò* 'who'

*hàŋ* 'where'

*néiŋ* 'how'

*yâi* 'which' (*pâi* for plural nouns)

*Khóò* and *gò* can be preceded by the class 2 plural marker *pà* if they are substituting a plural noun.

*Khóò* 'what' can also be used in the following question phrases:

*kí'í khóò* 'when' (i.e. which day?)

*ndîi khóò* 'when' (i.e. what time?)

*nthé khóò* 'why' (i.e. because of what?)

Content questions have the same word order as statements, except when the noun phrase questioned is the subject of the sentence (see below). However the tone on the verb is not the same as a statement: both high and low tone verbs have LH tone in content questions in P0. In addition, the tone of the subject pronouns is affected.

e.g. 237.

Vêi Mìmbíà ghăi hàŋ?  
C1.this C1.man go where  
'Where is this man going?'

e.g. 238.

ś yùóŋ khóò?  
2SG buy what  
'What are you buying?'

e.g. 239.

Á nì ñgâi néiŋ?  
3SG P ss-go how  
'How did it go?'

e.g. 240.

Pǎi ghǎi ndìi khôo?  
2PL go C9.time what  
'What time are you (pl) going?'

When the subject is questioned, a different word order must be used, as these question words can never come in clause-initial position. The third person singular pronoun *a* is the subject of the sentence and the question word follows the verb.

e.g. 241.

á ghài gó tàŋ?  
3SG go who C7.market  
"Who is going to market?"

e.g. 242.

Á (pó) pà khóò ŋkùoŋ táprè?  
3SG (be) PL what on C7.table?  
"What is on the table?"

## 8. Conclusion and further research needs

This paper has presented an initial analysis of the noun and verb phrase in the Bambalang language, Chrambo. Although several aspects of the noun and verb phrase have been included in this research, much remains to be done. Some areas which require further research in the noun phrase are derived nouns and adjectives and compound nouns. In the area of verbs, nothing has so far been done on the function of reduplication, which is a common feature of the language. Further research would be valuable in the use of the various tenses and aspects, in particular in the future tenses. Hortative mood also requires more investigation. At clause level, focus constructions and relative clauses need further research. Only main clauses have been described in this paper, therefore a large area for future research would be complex sentences, including different types of subordinate clauses and consecutive verbs. Finally, only basic analysis of certain uses of grammatical tone has been carried out and described here; there is much still to be done to better understand the use of tone in the grammar of the Chrambo language.

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