

# **Additional Sursurunga Grammar Notes**

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## THE BASIC GRAMMATICAL UNIT - 1

Since the verb or verb phrase is the one obligatory component of every clause type, and since it is the most complex of the units in the lower part of the grammatical hierarchy, it will be used in determining the basic grammatical unit of Sursurunga.

There are two approaches to analyzing the Sursurunga verb. One is to include everything within the pause/breath group as part of the verb itself. This makes for a much longer word than Sursurungas generally like, e.g.

kāpvautelugurguran 'I don't usually wash the clothes.'

Literate Sursurungas don't write this way and would have difficulty reading words like this with ease and speed.

On the other hand, we can limit the verb boundary to include only the verb stem and the bound morphemes which immediately precede or follow it (what can also be called the first order affixes; there are no further orders of affixes which cannot be understood as separate words.). This produces a basically simple verb and also corresponds with the word breaks generally made by literate Sursurungas. I think this will prove to be a more reasonable solution, and one which will make the grammar correspond more closely with the orthography.

The basic premise then is that the pause/breath group generally consists of a phrase or clause rather than just a

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THE BASIC GRAMMATICAL UNIT - 2

word, and the phrase or clause becomes the basic unit of Sursurunga grammatical construction. The word is recognized as a stem plus any bound morphemes attached to that stem (i.e. that cannot be uttered in isolation without attachment to that stem or another stem of the same class (?)).

ADDITIONAL NOTES ON SURSURUNGA GRAMMAR 26 April 1977  
(References are to Sursurunga Grammar Essentials)

p. 12, Section 2.2.2.2 Inalienable Nouns

We have struggled with the issue of saying that possession is indicated by compounding, as in lalin-rum 'under the house' on p. 13. At this point, I still feel that this is a type of possession, and an additional reason for this is the form of the initial word in the compound. These words always end in ~~rum~~ -Vn, a common feature of the 3rd singular possessive form of other inalienable nouns. When not used as possessives, the form ends without that suffix, -Vn.

<u>Normal</u>	<u>Possessive</u>	
lal	lal-in	'bottom'
yät	yät-in	'top'

Although not all of the words we are including in this category have been observed with a "normal" form as opposed to a "possessive" one, all do end in the -Vn form or in another 3rd singular possessive form. Perhaps I shouldn't say all -- one exception is kuir 'piece, part'.

All words in this category do have the characteristic of never occurring without a stated ~~pos~~ possessor, either adjacent in the utterance or previously in the context or clearly understood by both speaker and hearer. In addition, the possessive and the possessor can never be separated by additional tagmemes; they always occur adjacent to each other.

In addition to the above, my intuition and feel for the language tells me that these are actually possessive constructions, and not another type of compounding or phrase.

## Additional Notes, Sursurunga Grammar (Cont)

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## p. 14, Section 2.3.2 Class Changing

After more exposure to the language, I feel that the ar- is primarily an intransitivizer for some transitive verbs, and only at times and incidentally a reciprocal indicator.

## p. 20, Section 2.3.6 Verb Compounding

Bottom paragraph -- I'm still a bit puzzled about the use of on, which I feel is basically a 3rd singular direct object pronoun, and its use following intransitive verbs. It could be simply the form which occurs following intransitive verbs, as opposed to the -i on the ends of transitive verbs, which makes them transitive.

Same place -- I've decided that the nai is most probably a transitivizer which occurs as a suffix on some intransitive verbs to make them transitive. I can't think of any exceptions to the following: the intransitive verb stems which occur preceding nai (or na when followed by a proper name or pronoun) are always themselves preceded by a transitive verb stem or a causative prefix. For example,

IntransitiveWhen transitivizedkuluk 'to be good'a-kuluk-nai 'to make good'melek 'to be quick'kip melek-nai 'to get quickly'

The -i on the end of nai can be translated as 'it, him, her' just like the -i on the ends of transitive verbs.

## p. 81, Section 5.2.5 Numbers

The Decade Number Phrase looks like a Referent Phrase --

## Additional Notes, Sursurunga Grammar (Cont)

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could they or should they be combined into one???

The particle ma is still somewhat of a puzzle in that we are not sure just how and when to use it correctly. It might signal the end of a major thought in sentence or paragraph or discourse, that is, separating 2 major thoughts.

The main realization that I've come to since writing these Essentials is that there are more verbs in the language than I thought previously. This means a change in several places in the paper, and a suspicion in several others that needs further investigation. The following are the areas affected:

p. 28, 2.5.1, can these direction words be verbs or are they used as components in Stative clauses, etc.?

p. 29, top, Manner adverbs are most likely verbs

p. 37, chart, Qual<sub>1</sub>, Aspect, and Qual<sub>2</sub> slot fillers are all in suspicion of being verbs. Also manadv in Modf slot.

p. 43, 4.3.1.5, delete this phrase type because all items in the Expansion slot are verbs. The bottom example on that page, showing discontinuous manifestation, needs to be accounted for elsewhere -- it might fit into the clause formulas nicely.

p. 49, 4.3.2.6, delete this phrase type because all items in the Relater slot are verbs.

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p. 55, 4.3.5.3, this can probably be deleted because ngoro is a verb. This might cause a Modified Clause to occur in places not yet listed as possibilities, so this needs to be checked out to see if it's the best explanation or if this phrase type does need to be retained.

p. 57, top, mai and mam are probably verbs. Mam occurs preceding Specific Direct Objects (proper names, etc.) and mai before Non-specifics. The same rules apply to them as apply to verbs. The -i ending also means 'it, him, her'. I'm not at this time sure about tur<sup>h</sup>n.

p. 57, 4.3.5.5, are uri and suri verbs? This is only speculation at this point as I've not definitive proof except that, like verbs, the -i drops off before proper names & pronouns.

p. 69, 5.2.2, could the Relaters in this chart be verbs?? The above items I've mentioned as being (or possibly being) verbs occur immediately following previously known verbs, or immediately preceding them. This means they can be considered simply components of a compound verb. I've not checked all occurrences of all these items to see if this is true in every case, so this needs yet to be done. If it's not true, then I need to make a judgment on the best way to analyze it. In some cases, the "new" verbs could be considered the initial component in a Modified Clause. In some instances, notably no 'to be all', the -i ending occurs on the verb to make it part of the Verb Phrase: kip no-i 'to get it all', an no-i 'to eat it all'.

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Verb - 5

✓ Semivowels become vowels word finally.

Voiced stops devoice syllable finally.

Since Subclass 2 must be based on Class 3 forms, attempts were made to do the same in Subclass 3 and try to predict Class 4 forms from Class 3. However, this made for more involved rules and caused more verbs to be put into Subclass 1 (Exceptions).

Examples of Subclass 3:

bāsāi	bās	'to pound'
kosoi	kos	'to answer, to repay'
daki	dak	'to singe'
matai	mata	'to dislike'
siwi	siu	'to clean'
ubi	up	'to beat'

*in Essentials.*

VERBS

How the explanation would look for Subclass 3 if Class 3 forms are taken as basic:

CHc → CHCHi

CoC → CoCoI

#CV → #CVI

#CVC → #CVCi

(where V ≠ h or ɔ)

h becomes ɰ preceding i

# = rest of the word (can be ∅)

VC words behave as if they are h-initial (as they are in the bush dialect).



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Verb - 6

The following verbs would have to be moved to Subclass 1  
(Exceptions):

bälbäi	bälbäli
dos	dosi
dus	dusäi
up	ubi (morphophonemic rule inappropriate here because of <u>kurkip</u> - <u>kurkini</u> )

Reasons why Class N basic is preferred over Class S basic  
in Subclass 3 of transitive verbs:

1. Morphophonemic rules concerning semivowels and  
voiced stops line up with the actual phonology of the language  
better than "u becomes w preceding i".

2. It eliminates a few verbs from Subclass 1.