A Sketch Grammar of the Nchane Language

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Cameroon

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### Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ø-</td>
<td>zero prefix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#σ</td>
<td>word initial syllable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>???</td>
<td>Unanalyzed form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ana.)</td>
<td>Anaphoric demonstrative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1s</td>
<td>first person singular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2s</td>
<td>second person singular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3s</td>
<td>third person singular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1p</td>
<td>first person plural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2p</td>
<td>second person plural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3p</td>
<td>third person plural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGR</td>
<td>Agreement marker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AM</td>
<td>Associative marker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c1</td>
<td>Class 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c2</td>
<td>Class 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c3</td>
<td>Class 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Consonant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C&lt;sup&gt;w&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>labialized consonant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CL</td>
<td>class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comp</td>
<td>Complement Particle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cop</td>
<td>copula</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DO</td>
<td>Direct object</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F1</td>
<td>Future 1 (near future)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F2</td>
<td>Future 2 (medial future)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hab</td>
<td>Habitual aspect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IO</td>
<td>Indirect object</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inf</td>
<td>Infinitive marker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instr</td>
<td>Instrument</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loc</td>
<td>Locative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N-</td>
<td>nasal archiphoneme prefix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neg1</td>
<td>Negative 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neg2</td>
<td>Negative 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nom</td>
<td>Nominalizer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P1</td>
<td>Past 1 (immediate past)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P2</td>
<td>Past 2 (medial past)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P3</td>
<td>Past 3 (remote past)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pos</td>
<td>Possessive pronoun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prog</td>
<td>Progressive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QM</td>
<td>Question marker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QP</td>
<td>Quotative particle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rel</td>
<td>Relative Pronoun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>Subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subj</td>
<td>Subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>Verb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V&lt;sup&gt;o&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Vowel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ṽ or ŋ̄</td>
<td>Nasalized vowel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ĭ</td>
<td>Low tone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ŭ</td>
<td>Mid tone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ŭ̂</td>
<td>High tone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ŭ̇</td>
<td>High-Low falling tone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ŭ̆</td>
<td>Mid-Low falling tone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ŭ̇</td>
<td>High-Mid falling tone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VPart</td>
<td>Verbal particle</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1 Introduction

1.1 Name of the language

Nchane is a language spoken in the Misaje-Subdivision, Donga-Mantung Division, North West Region of Cameroon, West Africa. Dieu and Renaud (1983) in the Atlas Linguistique du Cameroun (ALCAM) list the language as: Ncane [873]. The Ethnologue (Gordon 2005) lists the following as language name variations: Ncane, Nchanti, Ntshanti, Cane (ISO 639-3 language code: ncr).

1.2 Genetic affiliation

Nchane has the following genetic affiliation: Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Volta-Congo, Benue-Congo, Wide Bantu, Southern, Beboid, Eastern (Gordon 2005).

1.3 Sociolinguistic situation

1.3.1 Demography

The language is spoken predominately in five villages: Nkanchi, Nfume, Chunghe, Bem and Kibbo. There are approximately 22,000 speakers of the language, although the exact number is unknown as there are reportedly sizeable clusters of people living outside the area, particularly in the Southwest Region.

1.3.2 Viability

Nchane is spoken by young people as well as old people and is the language of choice in Nchane homes. It is also frequently used in local churches and during community events.

1.3.3 Language attitudes

The Nchane people are positively disposed toward their language.

1.3.4 Multilingualism

A significant number of Nchane people may be fluent in Noni, the neighboring language group to the south. However, the majority of communication between the two people groups, as witnessed in common market places, is Cameroonian Pidgin English, which a majority of Nchane speakers can speak with at least a minimum of functionality.
1.4 Corpus and nature of the research

The current paper is an effort to describe the basics of Nchane grammar, particularly from a descriptive viewpoint. Data for the research comes primarily from a number of Nchane texts of various genres, as well as from elicited sentences and words collected over a period of four years, from 2006 to 2009, while the author was living in the village of Nfume. The texts and other language data were collected with the help of several language consultants, most notably Nji Enock Tanjong, Nfon Michael, Shey Tamfu Ephraim, Bekwa Oscar, and Emmanuel Chambang.

Certain conventions have been observed in the paper and the reader is encouraged to take note of following items related to the presentation of the data. Relative tone marking is used and no formal attempt has been made to account for tonal pertubations. Also, the data is generally presented utilizing orthographic forms. The reader is directed to the *Nchane Orthography Guide* (Boutwell and Boutwell 2008) for aid in realizing their phonetic forms.
2  Nouns and noun phrases

2.1  Types of nouns and their structures

Nchane nouns may be divided into those requiring a noun class prefix and those
which do not. Thus, the Nchane noun may be represented by the following schematic.

(CL-)stem

Proper names do not require any grammatical markings and so may be considered
morphologically the most basic noun type.

1.  Tātā

In other cases, nouns normally consist of a prefix designating the noun class, followed by
the stem.

2.  ki-ntā
   c7-chair
   ‘chair’

2.1.1  Proper names

Proper names include those given to people, as well as to places, and require no
grammatical marking. In other words, they do not take a noun class prefix. People names
may be considered to belong to class 1 and utilize the appropriate pronouns and concord
markers. Places are often named after the first settler of the place. As such, they possess
similar characteristics of people names. Some examples are given below.

3.  Chūŋ, Kwē, Nyēnsē, Ākű, Ǹkānchí, Bēm

While the above examples are morphologically simple, in many cases proper names
may possess a proverbial meaning reflecting the circumstances and/or the general sentiment
experienced at the time of the child’s birth. Similarly, places may be named after a common
activity or feature associated with the place. In these cases, the proper names may be
internally quite complex. However, these “noun phrases” have become lexicalized as proper
names and are treated morphologically and syntactically as their simpler counterparts.
Following are some examples along with their internal meanings.
4. **Tánjọŋ** ‘father of Njoŋ’
   **Bānéwɔ̄ŋmɛ̄** ‘it is the world that hates me’
   **Jọyībwítánā** ‘the stream of Tana’s mother’
   **Fēchīkò** ‘the forest of moles’

2.1.2 **Derived nouns**

Nchane nouns may be derived through the addition of a nominalizing prefix (Nom) to a verb. The resulting noun may be characterized by the following schematic.

\[ \text{CL-Nom-verb} \]

Below is a representative example.

5. **bā-n-shilè**
   \[ c2\text{-Nom-sit:Prog} \]
   ‘meetings’

2.1.3 **Compound nouns**

Compound nouns may be formed by joining a noun with another constituent such as an adjective, verb, or second noun. The resulting compound noun will be treated as a noun from the same noun class as the initial noun of the compound. Note that only nouns from gender 1/2 have been observed as the initial noun in the compound noun construction. Thus, this process may be restricted to nouns belonging to this gender.

6. a) **mūŋ-kwā**
   \[ c1\text{:man-money} \]
   ‘rich man’

b) **mūŋ-yēyē**
   \[ c1\text{:man-teach} \]
   ‘teacher’

c) **mwā-Nyọ**
   \[ c1\text{:child-God} \]
   ‘God’s son’
2.2 Functions of noun morphology

2.2.1 Derivational morphology on noun roots

Nouns may be derived from verbs by the addition of the nominalizing prefix \( N- \). When present, this prefix immediately precedes the noun root. The resulting noun belongs to gender 1/2 with the necessary noun class markers added to the newly formed noun stem.

7. a) \( bₜ\-n\-yɛ̀yɛ̀ \)
   c2-Nom-teach
   ‘teachings’

b) \( Ø\-n\-tɔ̂ \)
   c1-Nom-come
   ‘coming’

c) \( Ø\-j\-kásɛ̀ \)
   c1-Nom-return
   ‘returning’

d) \( bₜ\-m\-bɛ́mɛ̀ \)
   c2-Nom-believe
   ‘beliefs’

In a somewhat similar operation, some nouns may have their “basic” noun class markers removed and replaced with the gender 19/26 prefixes \( fi/mu\- \) resulting in a smaller version of the original noun. This process may also involve a change in the tone of the noun root, but no predictable change has yet been accounted for.

8. a) \( kᵢ\-ndɔŋ \)  \( \rightarrow \) \( fi\-ndɔŋ \)
   c7-neck
   c19-throat
   ‘neck’
   ‘throat’

b) \( n'yɔ́ \)  \( \rightarrow \) \( mû\-nyɔ́ \)
   c10:machete
   c26-machete
   ‘machetes’
   ‘small knives’
Nouns may also be derived from certain adjectival verbs by the simple addition of a noun class marker. The resulting noun belongs to gender 7/8 as may be seen in the examples below.

9. a) ki-béfɛ́
   c7-be.bad
   ‘badness/evil’

   b) ki-láŋyɛ́
   c7-be.happy
   ‘happiness’

2.2.2 Noun classes and genders

Nchane common nouns may be described as belonging to seven distinct noun class pairings or genders. ‘Noun class’ refers to a system of classification in which all nouns are grouped, with the nouns of each group or class receiving an affix distinct to its class. ‘Noun gender’ refers to noun class pairings, usually consisting of singular and plural forms of the same noun. The noun class designations in this work follow Hombert (1980:83-98), which closely follow the Proto-Bantu numbering established by bantuists (Welmers 1973:163). Notable exceptions are classes 25, 26 and 27, which appear to be creations of Hombert.

Nouns are typically marked by a prefix to indicate the number of the noun (ie, singular vs. plural). Notable exceptions are genders 3/4 and 9/10 and class 5. The number of gender 3/4 nouns is indicated by the presence or absence of labialization of the initial consonant. The presence of labialization, historically coming from a prefix, indicates singular number, while its absence indicates plural number. The distinction for gender 9/10 nouns is made by tone. The singular forms are marked with relative low tone and plural forms with relative high tone. Class 5 nouns appear to have no affixation, but may undergo morphological alternations. While the majority of class 5 nouns maintain the full root, more than half (~55%) of polysyllabic forms undergo a deletion (complete or partial) of the final syllable of the noun root. The range of class 5 morphological alternation may be seen in the examples below.
10. a) chɛ̄bɛ̀  
   c5: termite hill  
   ‘termite hill’  
   ā-chɛ̄bɛ̀  
   c6: termite hill  
   ‘termite hills’  

b) sōŋō  
   c5: palm tree  
   ‘palm tree’  
   ā-sōŋ  
   c6: palm tree  
   ‘palm trees’  

c) tɛ̄dē  
   c5: stone  
   ‘stone’  
   ā-tā  
   c6: stone  
   ‘stones’  

The full array of noun class markers with examples are given in Table 1 below. See also Hombert (1980).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Noun class marking</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ø-</td>
<td>nà</td>
<td>‘cow’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>ba-</td>
<td>bànà</td>
<td>‘cows’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>C“-</td>
<td>bwɛ̄ŋ</td>
<td>‘mosquito’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>C-</td>
<td>bɛ̄ŋ</td>
<td>‘mosquitos’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Ø-</td>
<td>gɛ̄nɛ̀</td>
<td>‘egg’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>a-</td>
<td>āɡíŋ</td>
<td>‘eggs’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>ki-</td>
<td>kīyɔ᷆</td>
<td>‘elephant’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>bi-</td>
<td>bīyɔ᷆</td>
<td>‘elephants’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>#σ̀</td>
<td>nyɔ̄</td>
<td>‘machete’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>#σ́</td>
<td>nyɔ́</td>
<td>‘machetes’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>bu-</td>
<td>būkɔ́</td>
<td>‘ladder’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>maN-</td>
<td>māŋkɔ́</td>
<td>‘ladders’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>fi-</td>
<td>fiŋkɔ̄</td>
<td>‘cup’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>mu(N)-</td>
<td>mūŋkɔ̄</td>
<td>‘cups’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>chi-</td>
<td>chisā</td>
<td>‘masks’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Noun Class Markers
2.2.3 Gender system

As suggested above, Nchane nouns may normally be grouped into singular/plural pairs referred to as genders. While there is overwhelming one-to-one correspondence between singular and plural classes, there is some overlap. A very small number of plural class 8 nouns appear to pair with the singular class 19 or with the plural class 6. In both cases these nouns are rather abstract in nature. Also of note is the plural class 27 which pairs with either the singular class 3 or with the singular class 5. There appears to be a fair amount of disagreement among speakers as to which class the singular forms of class 27 nouns pairs with. The genders may be seen in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>singular classes</th>
<th>plural classes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Nchane Genders
Most constituents that modify the noun must take a prefix that corresponds to the noun’s class. There appears to be some partial collapsing of the system, with classes 1 and 3 sharing prefixes for possessive pronouns, adjectives and numerals, but not for determiners. Likewise, classes 4 and 10 share concord prefixes and classes 5 and 27 also share concord prefixes. In many cases all the modifiers of nouns take the same prefix. But where morphologically different prefixes exist, the different form is normally seen in the prefixes for determiners.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Possessive Pronouns</th>
<th>Adjectives</th>
<th>Numbers</th>
<th>Determiners (anaphoric)</th>
<th>Determiners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>wu-</td>
<td>wu-</td>
<td>u-</td>
<td>(w)u-</td>
<td>wu-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>kfu-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>ba-</td>
<td>ba-</td>
<td>ba-</td>
<td>ba-</td>
<td>ba-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4, 10</td>
<td>yi-</td>
<td>i-</td>
<td>i-</td>
<td>i-</td>
<td>che-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>chi-</td>
<td>chi/i-</td>
<td>chi-</td>
<td>chi-</td>
<td>che-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>aw(u)-</td>
<td>a-</td>
<td>a-</td>
<td>a-</td>
<td>ka-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>ki-</td>
<td>ki-</td>
<td>ki-</td>
<td>ki-</td>
<td>ki-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>bi-</td>
<td>bi-</td>
<td>bi-</td>
<td>bi-</td>
<td>bi-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>yi-</td>
<td>i-</td>
<td>i-</td>
<td>i-</td>
<td>yi-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>b(w)u-</td>
<td>bu/bwi-</td>
<td>bu-</td>
<td>bu-</td>
<td>b(w)u-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>mu(g)-</td>
<td>man-</td>
<td>man-</td>
<td>man-</td>
<td>ma-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>fi-</td>
<td>fi-</td>
<td>fi-</td>
<td>fi-</td>
<td>fi-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>m(w)u-</td>
<td>mun-</td>
<td>mun-</td>
<td>mun-</td>
<td>mun-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>che-</td>
<td>chi/i-</td>
<td>chi-</td>
<td>chi-</td>
<td>che-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Nchane Gender Concord Markers

2.3 The structure of the noun phrase

The Nchane noun phrase consists of a noun followed by a number of optional constituents: possessor, demonstrative, quantifier, adjective(s), relative clause(s). The following schematic illustrates the noun phrase.

noun (possessor) (demonstrative) (quantifier) (adjective) (relative clause)
Each of these constituents, except for relative clauses, must take a noun class concord prefix, which agrees with the modified noun. Note that relative clauses are preceded by a relative pronoun, which corresponds to the class of the head noun.
2.4 Elements in the noun phrase

2.4.1 Possessives

Possessed nouns are immediately followed by the possessive pronoun which consists of a root and a prefix corresponding to the noun’s class.

11. a) nyɔ́ y-āŋ
    nyɔ́ y-è
    c9:machete c9-1sPos     c9:machete c9-3sPos
    ‘my machete’         ‘his machete’

   b) fi-nyɔ̄ŋē fi-āŋ
    fi-nyɔ̄ŋē fi-è
    c19-pig c19-1sPos    c19-pig c19-3sPos
    ‘my pig’             ‘his pig’

The full set of possessive pronouns may be seen in Table 4 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>1s</th>
<th>2s</th>
<th>3s</th>
<th>1p</th>
<th>2p</th>
<th>3p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>wàŋ</td>
<td>wɔ̀</td>
<td>wè</td>
<td>wūsè</td>
<td>wūnà</td>
<td>wūbɔ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>bàŋ</td>
<td>bɔ̀ŋ</td>
<td>bè</td>
<td>bēsà</td>
<td>bānà</td>
<td>bābɔ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>wāŋ</td>
<td>wɔ̄</td>
<td>wē</td>
<td>wūsē</td>
<td>wūnē</td>
<td>wūbɔ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>yāŋ</td>
<td>yɔ̄</td>
<td>yi</td>
<td>yēsē</td>
<td>yēnē</td>
<td>yēbɔ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>chàŋ</td>
<td>chūŋ</td>
<td>chè</td>
<td>chēsā</td>
<td>chēnā</td>
<td>chibɔ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>āwāŋ</td>
<td>āwɔ̄</td>
<td>āwī</td>
<td>āwūsē</td>
<td>āwūnā</td>
<td>ābɔ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>kāŋ</td>
<td>kūŋ</td>
<td>kè</td>
<td>kēsà</td>
<td>kēnā</td>
<td>kēbɔ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>biāŋ</td>
<td>biūŋ</td>
<td>biè</td>
<td>bēsā</td>
<td>bēnā</td>
<td>bēbɔ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>yāŋ</td>
<td>yɔ̀</td>
<td>yè</td>
<td>yēsè</td>
<td>yēnè</td>
<td>yēbɔ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>yāŋ</td>
<td>yɔ̀</td>
<td>yè</td>
<td>yēsè</td>
<td>yēnè</td>
<td>yēbɔ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>bwāŋ</td>
<td>bwɔ̀ŋ</td>
<td>bwè</td>
<td>būsà</td>
<td>bwēnā</td>
<td>bvūbɔ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>m(w)lāŋ</td>
<td>mɔ̀ŋ</td>
<td>mwè</td>
<td>müsā</td>
<td>mùnà</td>
<td>mɔ̄ŋbɔ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>fīāŋ</td>
<td>fīòŋ</td>
<td>fīè</td>
<td>fisā</td>
<td>finā</td>
<td>fībɔ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>mwāŋ</td>
<td>mwɔ̀ŋ</td>
<td>mwè</td>
<td>müsā</td>
<td>münà</td>
<td>mwūbɔ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>chāŋ</td>
<td>chūŋ</td>
<td>chè</td>
<td>chēsā</td>
<td>chēnā</td>
<td>chēbɔ</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. Nchane Possessive Pronouns
2.4.2 Demonstratives

Demonstratives immediately follow the noun in the noun phrase, except in the relatively rare case that there is an accompanying possessive, in which case they follow the possessive. There are three distinct stem forms, each taking concord marking related to the noun class of the noun it modifies.

The proximal demonstrative has the underlying form ne and the distal demonstrative has the underlying form ge. These two demonstratives combine with a set of noun class concord prefixes, which in some cases are morphologically unique from the “normal” concord system.

12. a) nà wú-nē
   c1:cow c1-this
   ‘this cow’

   Ø-nà wú-gē
   c1-cow c1-that
   ‘that cow’

b) bà-nà bá-nē
   c2-cow c2-this
   ‘these cows’

   bà-nà bā-gâ
   c2-cow c2-that
   ‘those cows’

c) tútú chē-nē
   c5:potato c5-this
   ‘this potato’

   tútú chē-gê
   c5:potato c5-that
   ‘that potato’

d) ā-tútú kā-nē
   c6-potato c6-this
   ‘these potatos’

   ā-tútú kā-gâ
   c6-potato c6-that
   ‘those potatos’

   The third demonstrative type may be described as anaphoric and is used with nouns that either have previously been mentioned in the discourse or those which can be accessed through contextual means. This second case can be seen in the example sentences below, in which the “news” in the second sentence refers to the event which took place in the first sentence.
13. Bì-lọŋ bì-dɔ̀lè jìŋ bì Bùm gɛ̀ lìì à ṣhyàŋ yè
c8-years c8-many back people.of.Bum P3 enter Loc c9:territory c9AM

éra bīdɔ̀lè jìŋ Bùm gɛ̀ lìì à ṣhyàŋ yè

‘Many years ago, the Bum people trespassed into Nkanchi territory. When the Nfume people heard this news, they left and came to the disputed area.’

The anaphoric demonstrative generally takes the “normal” noun class concord prefixes. Some examples are given below.

14. a) gwāŋ wú-yú
c3:hill c3-this(ana.)
‘this hill’

gāŋ t-yú
c4:hill c4-this(ana.)
‘these hills’

b) jό t-yú
c9:river c9-this(ana.)
‘this river’

ejó t-yú
c10:river c10-this(ana.)
‘these rivers’
The following table gives the demonstrative forms for each of the classes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Proximal</th>
<th>Distal</th>
<th>Anaphoric</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>wúnē</td>
<td>wûge</td>
<td>wûyú</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>bánē</td>
<td>bâga</td>
<td>bâyú</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>kfûnē</td>
<td>kfûgē</td>
<td>wûyú</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>chênē</td>
<td>chêgē</td>
<td>ïyú</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>chênē</td>
<td>chêgē</td>
<td>chïyú</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>kânē</td>
<td>kàgâ</td>
<td>ãyú</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>kînē</td>
<td>kîgê</td>
<td>kîyú</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>bînē</td>
<td>bîgê</td>
<td>bîyú</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>yînē</td>
<td>yîgê</td>
<td>ïyú</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>chênē</td>
<td>chêgē</td>
<td>ïyú</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>búnē</td>
<td>bùgê</td>
<td>bûyú</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>mánē</td>
<td>màgê</td>
<td>mànyû</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>fînē</td>
<td>fîgê</td>
<td>fîyû</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>mûnē</td>
<td>mùngê</td>
<td>múnyû</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>chênē</td>
<td>chêgē</td>
<td>chïyú</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5. Nchane Demonstratives

2.4.3 Numerals

Nchane numerals typically immediately follow the noun they modify. When used for counting, the numbers 1-5, when occurring in the one’s position in numbers higher than 10, are marked with the gender 19/26 concord prefixes fi/mun-. This may be representative of the gender 19/26 noun ‘thing’, which seems to appear in mbang fiyɛ ‘twenty’ or literally ‘twenty thing’.

When numbers are used to modify a noun, the numbers 1-5 in the one’s position always agree with the modified noun, even the single digit numbers. Also note that numbers in the hundred’s position are treated as full nouns belonging to gender 3/4, and numbers in the thousand’s position are treated as full nouns belonging to gender 1/2. Numbers above ten are formed through the use of nchɔ ‘plus’, joining numbers in the one’s position with those in higher positions.
Table 6 below presents a partial list of Nchane cardinal numerals used for counting, along with the numerals as they appear when modifying a noun.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Numeral</th>
<th>Gender 1/2 ('cow___')</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>mémà ná ūmūmwa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>fɛ̄ bànà bāfɛ̄</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>tɛ̀dē bànà bātɛ̄</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>nɛ̀ bànà bánɛ̂</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>tɛ̀ŋ bànà bātɛ̂ŋ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>būsɔ̀ bànà būsɔ̄</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>būsɔ̀shwẽ bànà būsɔ̀shwe᷆</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>nyā bànà nyā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>bvūgɛ̀ bànà bvūgɛ̀</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>yúfɛ̀ bànà yúfɛ̀</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>yúfɛ̀ ǹchɔ̀ fīmímīà bànà yúfɛ̀ ǹchɔ̀ ūmūmwa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>yúfɛ̀ ǹchɔ̀ mūnfɛ̀ bànà yúfɛ̀ ǹchɔ̀ bāfɛ̀</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>yúfɛ̀ ǹchɔ̀ mūntɛ̀ðē bànà yúfɛ̀ ǹchɔ̀ bātɛ̀dē</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>yúfɛ̀ ǹchɔ̀ mūnɛ̀ bànà yúfɛ̀ ǹchɔ̀ bánɛ̀</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>yúfɛ̀ ǹchɔ̀ mūntɛ̀ŋ bànà yúfɛ̀ ǹchɔ̀ bātɛ̀ŋ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>yúfɛ̀ ǹchɔ̀ būsɔ̀ bànà yúfɛ̀ ǹchɔ̀ būsɔ́</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>yúfɛ̀ ǹchɔ̀ būsɔ̀shwẽ bànà yúfɛ̀ ǹchɔ̀ būsɔ̀shwe᷇</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>yúfɛ̀ ǹchɔ̀ nyā bànà yúfɛ̀ ǹchɔ̀ nyā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>yúfɛ̀ ǹchɔ̀ bvūgɛ̀ bànà yúfɛ̀ ǹchɔ̀ bvūgɛ̀</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>mbāŋ fīyɛ̀ bànà mbāŋ fīyɛ̀</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>mbāŋ fīyɛ̀ ǹchɔ̀ fīmímīà bànà mbāŋ fīyɛ̀ ǹchɔ̀ ūmūmwa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>mbāŋ fīyɛ̀ ǹchɔ̀ mūnfɛ̀ bànà mbāŋ fīyɛ̀ ǹchɔ̀ bāfɛ̀</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>gwīi bànà gwīi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101</td>
<td>gwīi bè fīyɛ̀ fīmímīà bànà gwīi bè ǹchɔ̀ ūmūmwa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200</td>
<td>gifɛ̀ bànà gifɛ̀</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1000</td>
<td>ǹchūgɛ̀ bànà ǹchūgɛ̀</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>bàńchūgɛ̀ bāfɛ̀ bànà bàńchūgɛ̀ bāfɛ̀</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6. Nchane Numerals

In some cases, the roots of cardinal numerals undergo morphological changes related to the vowels of the noun class prefix. This process is illustrated in the examples below.
15. a) Ø-ná  u-mūmwā  
   c1:cow  c1-one
   ‘one cow’

   b) fi-nyí  fi-mīmià
   c19:bird  c19-one
   ‘one bird’

   c) bī  i-mīmià
   c9:goat  c9-one
   ‘one goat’

bà-nà  bā-fē  
   c2-cow  c2-two
   ‘two cows’

   mū-nyī  mūn-fē
   c26-bird  c26-two
   ‘two birds’

   bī  i-fīé
   c10:goat  c10-two
   ‘two goats’

2.4.4 Quantifiers

Nchane quantifiers immediately follow the modified noun and take a prefix corresponding to the noun’s class.

16. a) bī-tē  bī-chīī
   c8:tree  c8-all
   ‘all trees’

b) mwēŋ  mūn-chīī
   c26:thing  c26-all
   ‘all things’

17. a) bā-mī  bā-mū
   c2:people  c2-some
   ‘some people’

b) àsòŋ  á-mūŋ
   c6:palm trees  c6-some
   ‘some palm trees’

18. a) bī-tē  bī-dūlē
   c8:tree  c8-many
   ‘many trees’

b) bā-mī  bā-dūlē
   c2:people  c2-many
   ‘many people’
In certain contexts, these quantifiers can give slightly different senses than the basic one. The example below shows how chii ‘all’ can be used with some singular nouns to indicate the entirety of the modified noun.

19. ki-tē    ki-chii
   c7-tree   c7-all
   ‘the whole tree’

Below we see –mi ‘some’ modifying a singular noun and giving a discriminating sense.

20. sōgō    chī-mīŋ
   c5:palm tree   c5-some
   ‘one of the palm trees’

The following table provides a summary of the Nchane quantifiers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>‘all’</th>
<th>‘some’&lt;sup&gt;1&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>‘many’&lt;sup&gt;2&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>wùchii</td>
<td>wùmūŋ</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>bàchii</td>
<td>bàmīŋ</td>
<td>bàdūlē</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>wùchii</td>
<td>wùmūŋ</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>ichern</td>
<td>īmīŋ</td>
<td>ìdūlē</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>chichii</td>
<td>chīmīŋ</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>ichern</td>
<td>ichern</td>
<td>ādūlē</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>ichern</td>
<td>ichern</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>bichii</td>
<td>bīmīŋ</td>
<td>bīdūlē</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>ichern</td>
<td>īmīŋ</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>ichern</td>
<td>īmīŋ</td>
<td>ìdūlē</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>bùchii</td>
<td>būmūŋ</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>mānchii</td>
<td>māmūŋ</td>
<td>māndūlē</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>fichii</td>
<td>fīmīŋ</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>mūnchii</td>
<td>mūmūŋ</td>
<td>mūndūlē</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>chichii</td>
<td>chīmīŋ</td>
<td>chīdūlē</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7. Nchane Quantifiers

<sup>1</sup>Note that the partitive quantifier mii ‘some’, undergoes morphological changes in some cases, presumably due to vowel harmony.

<sup>2</sup>Some singular nouns may be modified by the quantifier –dule ‘many’ resulting in a plural sense. At this time, it is unclear as to the meaning and use of this construction.
2.4.5 Adjectives

While more research on the Nchane adjective needs to be conducted, it appears that there are only a few true adjectives in Nchane. Adjectives follow the modified noun and are marked with a prefix that corresponds to the modified noun’s class.

21. a) ḋwâ  wú-fwâŋ
   c1:book  c1-new
   ‘new book’

   b) ṅjū  yé-yûfê
   c10:clothes  c10-warm
   ‘warm clothes’

   c) bû-jû  bû-dêmê
   c14-place  c14-flat
   ‘place flat’

2.4.6 Relative clauses

Relative clauses follow the modified noun and are marked by a relative pronoun. The relative pronouns agree in class with the head noun.

22. a) Bɔ̄  bé  bɔ̀  chōŋ  jì  [yì  mɛ̄  kɛ̄  gù.]
   3p  P1  3p  steal  c9:hoe  c9Rel  1s  Inf  buy
   ‘They stole the hoe that I bought.’

   b) Gvûnɛ̄  lē  fû-yê  [fû  bà  chù-lê  ìgû  yû.].
   c5:chaff  be  c19:thing  c19Rel  c2  ignite-Prog  c9:fire  with
   ‘The chaff is something that people use to light fires with.’

   c) Sôŋô  nyá-dá  bì  bè  bi-ŋkân  bì  à-sôŋ  [bì  bā  ji].
   c5:palm tree  give-Prog  1p  with  c8:beetle  c8AM  c6:palm tree  c8Rel  c2  eat
   ‘The palm tree gives us palm beetles that people eat’
3 Verbs and Verb Phrases

3.1 Verbs and their structures

Nchane verbs are rather simple in their morphology. They may occur with subject agreement marking and progressive aspect.

23. Tō!
   come
   ‘Come!’

24. Ň̄-gē-nè.
   1s-go-Prog
   ‘I am going.’

The Nchane verb may be illustrated by the following schematic.

(AGR-)stem(-Prog)

3.2 Functions of verb morphology

3.2.1 Derivational morphology

No affix for deriving Nchane verbs has been identified. However, some nouns may be used as verbs normally by simply removing any noun class affix.

25. a) Bì  gē  yēŋ  chi-mbiáŋ  ch-ē  lē.
    2p  P3  see  c27-lie  c27-3pPos  there
    ‘We discovered (lit. saw) his lies.’

   b) Wù  gē  mbiāŋ  chi-mbiāŋ.
    3s  P3  lie  c27-lie
    ‘He told (lit. lied) lies.’
Some of these verbs must occur with the progressive marker as seen in the below example where the noun jiśe ‘eye’ when used as a verb is found with the progressive suffix.

26. a) Jiśe  ch-ē  gè  bē  yè  kwà  lē  bāāŋ.
   c5:eye  c5-3sPos  P3  be  on  c3:money  there  very.much
   ‘His eye was very much on money.’

   b) Wū  jē-ŋē  kwā.
   3s  look-Prog  c3:money
   ‘He is looking at (lit. eyeing) the money.’

3.2.2 Tense and aspect morphology

The bare form of a verb may be considered as having an immediate past sense, but generally not asserting how long ago.

27. a) Bī  yū  nā.
   1p  kill  c1:cow
   ‘We killed the cow.’ (just now or recently)

   b) Wū  kē  bū- láāŋ.
   3s  cook  c14-food
   ‘She cooked food.’

   The addition of the progressive suffix renders a present continuative sense.

28. Wū  kē-ńē  bū- láāŋ.
   3s  cook-Prog  c14-food
   ‘She is cooking food.’

   The progressive aspect suffix is morphologically complex and has the following forms: -nc, -ęc, -lę, -VV. Hyman (1981) reports that Noni, a neighboring language, also has a number of progressive aspect forms that generally arise from phonological conditioning. While some phonological conditioning can be observed in the Nchane progressive aspect suffix set, the form for many of the verbs is unpredictable. Below we present the verb types that can be predicted phonologically. The verbs are presented in the infinitive form, which is preceded by the infinitive marker ńę, followed by the verbs in the present progressive form. And finally we offer examples of the irregular forms.
When the radical ends with a nasalized vowel (CṼ), the progressive suffix is realized as –nɛ:

\[ \begin{align*}
\text{kɛ́ kɛ̃̀} & \quad \text{‘to cook’} \\
\text{kɛ̄nɛ́} & \quad \text{‘be cooking’} \\
\text{kɛ́ yã̀} & \quad \text{‘to vomit’} \\
\text{yánɛ̀} & \quad \text{‘be vomiting’}
\end{align*} \]

Radicals ending with the alveolar nasal (CVn) also take –nɛ for the progressive:

\[ \begin{align*}
\text{kɛ́ bīn} & \quad \text{‘to dance’} \\
\text{bīnɛ́} & \quad \text{‘be dancing’}
\end{align*} \]

Verbs ending with the velar nasal (CVŋ) are marked with either –nɛ or –ŋɛ in their progressive form. It is unclear at this point if it is possible to predict which form will be used with which verb.

\[ \begin{align*}
\text{kɛ́ sòŋ} & \quad \text{‘to beat’} \\
\text{sōŋɛ́} & \quad \text{‘be beating’} \\
\text{kɛ́ tōŋ} & \quad \text{‘to burn’} \\
\text{tōnɛ́} & \quad \text{‘be burning (st)’}
\end{align*} \]

Verbs with non-nasalized open syllables (CV) are marked for progressive aspect with –le or vowel lengthening, depending on the tone pattern. When the radical possesses a contour tone -le will be used. When the tone is level then the vowel will be lengthened³.

\[ \begin{align*}
\text{kɛ́ bī} & \quad \text{‘to ask’} \\
\text{bīlɛ́} & \quad \text{‘be asking’} \\
\text{kɛ́ bì} & \quad \text{‘to follow’} \\
\text{bíí} & \quad \text{‘be following’} \\
\text{kɛ́ chū} & \quad \text{‘to light a fire’} \\
\text{chūlɛ́} & \quad \text{‘be lighting a fire’} \\
\text{kɛ́ jù} & \quad \text{‘to fight’} \\
\text{júú} & \quad \text{‘be fighting’}
\end{align*} \]

There is a relatively small number of verbs that may be inherently progressive. Their infinitive form appears to be the same as their progressive form.

\[ \begin{align*}
\text{kɛ́ kēŋɛ̀} & \quad \text{‘to be having’} \\
\text{kēŋɛ́} & \quad \text{‘be having’} \\
\text{kɛ́ jēŋɛ̀} & \quad \text{‘to be looking’} \\
\text{jēŋɛ́} & \quad \text{‘be looking’}
\end{align*} \]

³ Verb roots that receive a lengthened vowel for progressive may also receive an accompanying high tone. More research needs to be done to confirm this.
The following examples show irregular forms in which the progressive suffix is not predictable.

\[
\begin{align*}
  kɛ́tɛ̃̀ & \quad \text{`to call'} & tɛ̄ngɛ́ & \quad \text{`be calling'} \\
  kɛ́bɔ̀ & \quad \text{`to descend'} & bɔ̄gɛ́ & \quad \text{`be descending'} \\
  kɛ́lɛ᷆ŋ & \quad \text{`to work'} & lɛ́mɛ̄ & \quad \text{`be working'}
\end{align*}
\]

The progressive suffix in the following examples takes the form of \(-\text{dɛ}\). This is likely a variety of \(-\text{lɛ}\), as some speakers prefer to use \(-\text{lɛ}\) with these verbs. But it should be noted that only a small subset of verbs taking \(-\text{lɛ}\) display the \(-\text{dɛ}\) variety as an option.

\[
\begin{align*}
  kɛ́fwɛ̀ & \quad \text{`to burn'} & fwɛ̀dɛ̄ & \quad \text{`be burning'} \\
  kɛ́kɔ & \quad \text{`to catch'} & kɔ̀dɛ̄ & \quad \text{`be catching'}
\end{align*}
\]

### 3.3 The structure of the verb phrase

The Nchane verb phrase consists of at least one verb. Preceding the verb may be a verbal particle indicating tense or aspect, which may be preceded by a subject agreement marker, but only in first singular person. Also preceding the verb may be a second subject agreement marker\(^4\) and a negative marker (Neg2). Following the verb may be one or more of the following: primary negative marker (Neg1), indirect object, direct object, locative phrase, adverb, final negative marker (Neg1).

\[
\begin{align*}
29. \quad Wū \ [gɛ̄\ bááŋ\ kɛ̄\ gɛ́\ mɛ́\ bū-lāāŋ\ chēɡé\ chēɡé\ gɛ].\newline
3s\ P3\ Neg2\ cook\ Neg1\ 1s\ c14-food\ quick\ quick\ Neg1\newline
\quad \text{`He did not cook food for me very quickly.'}
\end{align*}
\]

The order of these constituents are summarized in the chart below.

\[
\begin{array}{cccccccccccc}
\text{Subj} & \text{clitic} & \text{VPart} & \text{Subj} & \text{clitic} & \text{Neg2} & \text{Verb} & \text{Neg1} & \text{IO} & \text{DO} & \text{LOC} & \text{Adverb} & \text{Neg1} \\
\end{array}
\]

\(^4\) The second subject agreement marker generally occurs when there is a verbal particle present.

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3.4 Elements in the verb phrase

3.4.1 Verbal particles

3.4.1.1 Tense

Tense is primarily indicated through the use of various verbal particles. Events that occurred between several minutes and several hours ago are indicated through the particle bi (P1), which may come from the verb ‘to follow’.

30. a) Kībbó bi wū-bēŋ fwē.
   Kibbo P1 3s-climb ahead
   ‘Kibbo went ahead.’

   b) Bi bi bi-bōŋ bi-nfūnē.
   1p P1 1p-plant c8-maize
   ‘We planted maize.’

Events that occurred one to three days ago are indicated by the particle chi (P2).

31. a) Chīlá chi wū-gù nyàng.
   Chila P2 3s-buy c9:meat
   ‘Chila bought meat.’

   b) Jāŋ chi ì-tō.
   c9:rain P2 c9-come
   ‘The rain came.’

Events that occurred four days or more ago are indicated by the presence of ge (P3), which comes from the verb ‘to go’. Note that with P3, there is generally no subject agreement marker preceding the main verb as occurs with the other tenses.

32. a) Bī ge jī ø-bèlèkāŋ.
   1p P3 eat c1-papaya
   ‘We ate papaya.’

   b) Bá-mí bà Ñchànē ge tō wōŋ wù Tikālē lē.
   c2-person c2AM Nchane P3 come c3:tribe c3AM Tikari there
   ‘The Nchane people came from the Tikari tribe.’
An event that will occur very shortly is indicated by the particle *le* (F1).

33. a) Áŋkāŋ  *lé*  wū-kāsè.
     Ankang  F1  3s-return
     ‘Akang will return.’

     b)  Bɔ̀  *lé*  bɔ̄ògū  fīòmbì
     3p  F1  3p-buy  c19-cola.nut
     ‘They will buy a cola nut.’

An event that will occur in one to three days is indicated by the particle *bu* (F2), which when used as a main verb means ‘to arrive at’, and precedes the F1 particle *le*. Note that the verb *la* in 34a indicates that the subject is going somewhere with a goal or purpose in mind.

34. a) Chīlā  *bū*  *lé*  wū-lā  kɛ᷆ŋ.
     Chila  F2  F1  3s-go  c4:firewood
     ‘Chila will go for firewood.’

     b) Bī  *bū*  *lé*  bī-sēkē  bī.
     3p  F2  F1  3p-slaughter  c9:goat
     ‘We will slaughter the goat.’

Table 8 below provides a summary of the Nchane tense forms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tense</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P1</td>
<td>Wù  bíf wù-jī bù-lāāŋ.</td>
<td>She has eaten food. (some hours ago)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3s  P1 3s-eat  c14-food</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P2</td>
<td>Wù  chí wù-jī bù-lāāŋ.</td>
<td>She has eaten food. (yesterday or some days ago)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3s  P2 3s-eat  c14-food</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P3</td>
<td>Wù  gě jī bù-lāāŋ.</td>
<td>She has eaten food. (more than several days ago)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3s  P3  eat  c14-food</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F1</td>
<td>Wù  lé wù-jī bù-lāāŋ.</td>
<td>She will eat food. (shortly)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3s  F1 3s-eat  c14-food</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F2</td>
<td>Wù  bū lé wù-jī bù-lāāŋ.</td>
<td>She will eat food. (tomorrow or next week)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3s  F2  F1 3s-eat  c14-food</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8. Nchane Tense Forms
3.4.1.2 Aspect

Habitual aspect is expressed through the use of the verbal particle to (Hab), which means ‘to come’ when used as the main verb.

35. Tàtá tō wù-gù-łè nyàŋ.
   Tata Hab 3s-buy-Prog c9:meat
   ‘Tata always buys meat.’

Note that progressive aspect, which was treated above, is expressed through the addition of the suffix –ne. We know of no other aspects in Nchane, although others may exist.

3.4.2 Verb phrase level negation

Negation in Nchane involves the negative markers ge (Neg1) and baaŋ (Neg2). When the first negative marker occurs alone with the bare form of the verb (ie, immediate past), it is found at the end of the phrase and gives a negative state sense.

36. a) Wū múŋ lɔ̂
    3s drink:Prog ???
    ‘He drinks.’

   b) Wū múŋ gë̄.
    3s drink:Prog NEG1
    ‘He does not drink.’ (eg, alcohol)

   This marker is often found twice in the same phrase bracketing the negated constituent, be it a nominal object or a complement clause.

37. a) Wū ké wɔ̀.
    3s know 2s
    ‘He knows you.’

   b) Wù ké [gë̄ wɔ̀ gë̄].
    3s know Neg1 2s Neg1
    ‘He does not know you.’
38. a) Wù ké lē bà má yē.
   3s know how c2 build:Prog c10:houses
   ‘He knows how to build houses.’ (lit. ‘how they build houses.’)

   b) Wù ké [gē lē bà má yē gē].
   3s know Neg1 how c2 build:Prog c10:houses Neg1
   ‘He does not know how to build houses.’

   The first negative marker may also occur alone at the end of the phrase in a sentence with a past tense marker. In this case, it implies that the negative aspect was true in the past but is not true in the present.

39. a) Wù chí múŋ gē.
   3s P2 drink:Prog Neg1
   ‘He should be now drinking.’

   In the above example, the speaker expresses knowledge that the subject was not drinking several days earlier (possibly due to an illness or some other physical difficulty), but now there is the expectation that the subject is able to drink.

   The Neg1 marker may also be used with the second negative marker baaŋ (Neg2). It is often used in past tense, relating an action or event that did not happen.

40. a) Wù gē bááŋ múŋ gē Øōkāŋ gē.
   3s P3 Neg2 drink Neg1 beer Neg1
   ‘He did not drink the beer.’

   b) Ñsáŋ yē yī gē bááŋ yēyē gē fī-yē fī-mī gē.
   c10:friend c10:poss c10 P3 Neg2 learn Neg1 c19:thing c19-any Neg1
   ‘The friends did not learn anything from that act.’
3.4.3 Adverbs

Adverbs normally follow the direct object if present, otherwise they follow the verb.

41. Wù kɛ̄ŋé kwà chûlè.
   3s have-Prog c3:money strong
   ‘He handles money well.’

Many adverbs may be reduplicated to express emphasis or intensity.

42. a) Wū gɛ́ gɛŋ a jô chègé chègé.
   3s P3 go to c9:water quick quick
   ‘He went very quickly to the stream.’

   b) Wū gɛ̄ jɛnyé wɛ  wɛ́.
   3s P3 walk:Prog slow slow
   ‘He was walking very slowly.’

Some adverbs are formed from verbs and may also involve reduplication.

43. Bɔ́ gɛ́ jā lēgɛ̀ lēgɛ̀ bɔ̄ lí à Bûm.
   3p P3 leave run run 3p enter Loc Bum
   ‘They left immediately for Bum.’

3.4.4 Complements

Complements are introduced by lɛ (Comp). This particle follows verbs of cognition or desire such as “to think”, “to know”, “to see”, or “to want”.

44. a) Bī kwají lɛ [kî-lη kî-tîlê bî nù kê bî bûsê
   1p think:Prog Comp c7-year c7-coming 1p Cop Inf 1p publish
   á-jî à Ø-jwà wû Ňchânê].
   c6-eye c6AM c1-book c1AM Nchane
   ‘We think that in the coming year we are to publish the Nchane alphabet.’

   b) Ńgɔ̀né lɛ [wɔ́ lâ jègé à mênê à jô gê].
   1s-want:Prog Comp 2s go visit Loc my.place Loc c9:water ???
   ‘I want you to visit me in the water.’
When it occurs with other kinds of verbs, it serves to introduce the purpose or goal of the verb.

45. \[\text{Mɛ́ ŋògɛ́ ŋòdú mùŋ wú gé chí-dē lē} \]
   1s 1s-P3 1s-say c1:person c1Rel P3 drive-Prog there

\[\text{lē wú fē Ø-àyŋ wú bósē fē kū è kū} \]
Comp 3s make c1-airplane 3s descend:Prog Loc ground Loc ground

\[\text{lē [mɛ́ n-yeśē bēŋ bāŋ lē fē mēnē].} \]
Comp 1s 1s-greet c2:child c2V1sPos ??? Loc my.place
‘I asked the pilot to descend so that I could greet my children at my compound.’

3.4.5 Valence changing operations

3.4.5.1 Causatives

Causative constructions are accomplished by moving the subject to the object position along with the “main” verb, adding a subject and replacing the main verb with the verb \(fē\) ‘to make’.

46. a) \[\text{Mwá gé lē.} \]
   c1:child P3 sleep
   ‘The child slept.’

b) \[\text{Bwî gé fē mwá lē.} \]
   c1:mother P3 make c1:child sleep
   ‘The mother made the child to sleep.’

47. a) \[\text{Mɛ́ ŋ-gé ŋ-yū ţà.} \]
   1s 1s-P3 kill c9:snake
   ‘I killed a snake.’

b) \[\text{Wù gé fē mē ŋ-yū ţà.} \]
3s P3 make 1s 1s-kill c9:snake
‘He made me to kill a snake.’

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4 Clauses

4.1 Basic clause types and their structures\(^5\)

4.1.1 Declarative clauses

Nchane declarative clauses are basic with no special morphosyntactic markings.

48. a) ŋ̄-kɔ̄dɛ̀        bíɛ́ŋ.
    1sVcatch-VProg   c10:fish
    ‘I am catching fishes.’

b) Chīlā  gɛ̄  tò       bɛ́      bī
    Chila  P3    come  with  c10:goat
    ‘Chila brought the goats.’

4.1.2 Predicate adjectives

Many Nchane adjectives may serve a predicate function. In the following examples, the verb position is filled by an adjective that expresses a particular state or quality.

49. a) Mùŋ      láŋéyɛ̀.
    c1:man  happy
    ‘The man is happy.’

b) Wú  kùgē.
    3s    big
    ‘He is big.’

c) Ć̄-témɛ̀.
    1s-strong
    ‘I am well.’

\(^5\) It has been observed that a lengthened vowel in the verb may give a hortative sense. However, this remains to be confirmed.
4.1.3 Imperative clauses

Imperative clauses generally lack a constituent in the subject slot when the subject is singular. The second person plural pronoun bɛŋ precedes the verb when the subject is plural.\footnote{There may be a high tone on the end of imperative verbs when the subject is singular. More research is needed to confirm this.}

50. a) Nyá mɛ́ kìòntā.
   give 1s c7-chair
   ‘Give me a chair.’

b) Gɛ̄lɛ́ Øònà à kí-tāŋ lē.
   put c1-cow Loc c7-fence there
   ‘Put the cow inside the fence.’

c) Bɛ᷄ŋ jò shì yí-nē.
   2p take c9:chicken c9-this
   ‘You (pl) take this chicken.’

4.1.4 Interrogative Clauses

There are two main types of Nchane interrogative clauses: yes-no questions and content questions. Each are treated separately below.

4.1.4.1 Y/N Questions

Yes/no questions are differentiated from their declarative counterparts by the presence of a floating low tone clitic. This floating low tone is often realized as a falling tone on the final syllable of the clause.

51. a) Wɔ̄ jì-ì Ø-bèlèkāŋ.
   2s eat-Prog c1-papaya
   ‘You are eating papaya.’

b) Wɔ̄ jì-ì Ø-bèlèkāŋ?
   2s eat-Prog c1-papaya:QM
   ‘Are you eating papaya?’
4.1.4.2 Content questions

Content questions are formed by the addition of some question word or phrase, which normally occurs at the end of the phrase. The word la ‘what’ is quite productive and combines with other words and phrases to provide a number of semantic concepts including time and purpose.

When la is used without any other question morphemes it gives the basic sense of ‘what’. There is some flexibility with word order as the question marker may appear at the beginning or at the end of the phrase. However, the question particle appearing at the end of the phrase appears to be preferred.

52. a) Fi-nē lē lā?
c19-this be what
‘What is this?’

b) Lē lā fi-nē?
be what c19-this
‘What is this?’

53. Lā fī yī wɔ̄?
what c19 pain 2s
‘What (thing) pains you?’ (or ‘What are you sick from?’)

When the la is used in conjunction with a time word, then the question conveyed is “when”.

54. Ø-Ñfôn tō ségé lā?
c1-chief come time what
‘When will the chief come?’ (lit. ‘The chief comes at what time?’)

55. Ø-Ñfôn tō jū chí lā?
c1-chief come c5:day c5:AM(?) what
‘When will the chief come?’ (lit. ‘The chief comes on what day?’)

Why questions are formed by njɛ ‘reason’ followed by la.

56. Wɔ̄ bǎŋ jō k5-dē gē ŋjɛ lā?
2s Neg3 c9:water carry-Prog Neg1 reason what
‘Why have you not carried water?’ (lit. ‘For what reason have you not carried water?’)
Who and whose is expressed by the use of ye.

57. Wù-nè lè yè?
c1-this be who
‘Who is this?’

58. Wù-nè lè mwà yè?
c1-this be c1:child who
‘Whose child is this?’

Where is expressed by the use of the word fɔnɛ.

59. Wô gê-nè fɔnɛ?
2s go-Prog where
‘Where are you going?’

60. Chí j-ɔŋ lé fɔnɛ?
c1-father c1-your be where
‘Where is your father?’

The quantity of countable items is expressed through the use of me, which takes the class prefix of the item in question.

61. Wô lè bɛ̀ bɔ̀ŋ bàò mɛ?
2s be with c2:child c2-how.many
‘How many children do you have?’

62. Lè bi-gè bi-mɛ?
be c8-teeth c8-how.many
‘How much does it cost?’

The quantity of mass nouns is expressed through the word nɛɛ ‘how’.

63. a) Wô kâmɛ Œ-jkâŋ nɛɛ?
2s have c1-beer how
‘How much beer are you having?’

b) Jò lè i-shê nɛɛ a shiâŋ lè?
C9:water be c9-amount how Loc c9:pot there
‘How much water is remaining in the pot?’
4.2 Functions of elements in the clause

4.2.1 Grammatical relations

Nchane grammatical relations are largely differentiated by word order. Subjects of intransitive as well as transitive sentences precede the verb. Objects follow the verb, with indirect objects occurring first and the direct object occurring last.

64. a) Intransitive sentence

\[ \text{Mwá} \quad \text{gɛ́} \quad \text{là}. \]
\[ \text{c1:child} \quad \text{P3} \quad \text{sleep} \]
\[ \text{‘The child slept.’} \]

b) Transitive sentence

\[ \text{Wù} \quad \text{gɛ́} \quad \text{nyā} \quad \text{kwa.} \]
\[ \text{3s} \quad \text{P3} \quad \text{give c3:money} \]
\[ \text{‘He gave money.’} \]

c) Ditransitive sentence

\[ \text{Wù} \quad \text{gɛ́} \quad \text{nyā} \quad \text{mwà, kwà.} \]
\[ \text{3s P3} \quad \text{give c1:child c3:money} \]
\[ \text{‘He gave money to the child.’} \]

The following schematic provides a summary of Nchane word order.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Indirect Object</th>
<th>Direct Object</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

4.2.2 Adverbial elements

Simple time words and other adverbial phrases are typically phrase final.

65. a) Wɔ̀  chè  wɔ̀tɔ̀  fànè  [Būākɔsē].
   3s  P2  3s-come  here  Buak̡osē
   ‘He came here on Buak̡osē.’

   b) Wɔ̀  chè  wɔ̀tɔ̀  fànè  [fɔ̄shɛ̄-ŋgùfɛ].
   3s  P2  3s-come  here  two.days.ago
   ‘He came here two days ago.’

The example below shows the adverbial phrase in a postposition clause with ye ‘in’ as its head.

66. Bá-mì  bā-nè  bā-fwè  gē  bí  bò  fùnè  à  O-àfyòn lè
   c2-person  c2-four  c2-first  P3  ???  3p  fly  by  c1-airplane  ???
   kë-gè  Misājē  bò  gèŋ  Ákwětò  bò  kāsè  bò  tü  Misājē
   start-Prog  Misaje  3p  go  Akweto  3p  come.back  3p  return  Misaje
   [yē  bì-bò  bí  jù  lè  mbàŋnyè  nchò  bì-tèŋ].
   in  c8-arm  c8AM  c9:watch  ???  forty  plus  c8-five
   ‘The four persons flew from Misaje town, to Akweto, and back to Misaje in 45 minutes.

   More complex adverbials often precede the main clause. These generally relate the action in the main clause to a different action in the adverbial clause. The two adverbial words taŋ ‘time’ and le ‘while’ are productive.

67. a) [Tāŋ  wū  bì  nōŋ  ā  jō],  bí  jī-ŋē  ki-shǔshē.
   time  c1Rel  1p  throw  Loc  c9:water  2p  watch-Prog  c7-float
   ‘When we threw it (the hook) into the water, we watched the float.’

   b) [Tāŋ  wū  bā  sōŋ],  bā  gē  jō  yā.
   time  c1Rel  2p  pound  2p  put  c9:water  inside
   ‘After they pound (the palm nuts), they pour water (on them).’

7 Buak̡osē is a day of the week in the Nchane eight-day week system.
68. a) [Lɛ̀ yí jɛ̀nyè ā jō], yí yɛ̀ chǎŋ yí jì mū-ntāŋ
while c9 move:Prog Loc c9:water c9 see c9:monkey c9 eat c26-fruit
yí kí-tē lē.
c9AM c7-tree there
‘While he was moving in the water, he saw a monkey eating fruit in a tree.’
b) [Lɛ̀ bá gē bí Fēwọŋ], mūŋ gē nyá O-ńtāŋ fē wū lē gęŋ
while 3p P3 be Fewong c1:man P3 give c1-thought where 3s F1 go
wū lęŋ mwē fō̄̄.
3s cultivate c3:farm Loc
‘While they were at Fewong, each person thought of where he would go to cultivate a garden.’

Other time words expressing concepts like ‘day’ and ‘week’ are followed by le ‘there’.

69. a) [Yé ki-mā kī-fwè lē], bá gē yēyē kēnē bā-nchē.
in c7-week c7-first there 3p P3 teach about c2-laws
‘The first week, they taught about the laws.’
b) [Jū chī-fwè chī mē n̄gē ō-lā bięŋ lē],
c9:day c9-first c9Rel 1s 1s-P3 1s-go c10:fish there
ńsàŋ yà-ń wū gē jō mē.
c9:friend c9-1sPos 3s P3 take 1s
‘The first time(day) that I went fishing, my friend took me.’

4.2.3 Clause level particles

4.2.3.1 Conjunctions

Coordination of clauses is most often done by simple juxtaposition.

70. Nchănē gē jēmē jē l-mīmìù b5 gî-l mwēŋ nōmàà.
Nchane P3 speak c9:language c9-one 3p do-Prog c26:thing same
‘The Nchane people spoke the same language and were doing the same things.’
However, in some cases the conjunction be ‘and/with’, which is most often seen joining two or more nouns, may join two clauses.

71. **Wù ké lē bā md yē bē lē wū lēŋ mwē nē.**  
3s know how 3p build c10:house and how 3s work c3:farm  
‘He knows how to build houses and how to work the farm.’

Coordination of clauses may also be accomplished through the use of ge ‘or’.

72. **Ké müŋ kēŋə sōŋō tānlē nyūŋ bū-shē,**  
Inf c1:man have c5:palm be:able Cop(Past) c14-inheritance  
fi-yê fi müŋ yēlē, ge fi-yê fi müŋ gū bē kwà.  
c19-thing C19Rel c1:man plant or c19-thing c19Rel c1:man buy with c3:money  
‘One can own palm trees from inheritance, plant his own or buy an estate with money.’

73. **Chē táŋ lē bā kfùŋ bā jī gē bā lā wāāŋ yū.**  
c10:kernals always ??? 3p crack 3p eat or 3p go c5:market Instr  
‘Kernels can be cracked and eaten or taken to the market.’

4.2.3.2 Quotative Particles

Quoted speech may be introduced using the quotative particle le (QP). This particle occurs with verbs like du ‘to say’ and chu ‘to reply’ and immediately precedes the quoted clause or clauses. It is related to the complementizer.

74. **Yì dú le, “Ǹfòn gɔ̀òné le wū jí shīɛŋ yòɔ̄.”**  
c9 say QP c1:chief want-Prog Comp 2s eat c9:heart c9:2sPos  
He (monkey) said this, "The chief wants to eat your heart."

75. **Áblàḥam chú le, “Músè bê bā-mī bā Ø-n-fējè**  
Abraham reply QP Moses and c2-man c2AM c1-Nom-preach  
bō fējè bō lē.”  
3p preach:Prog 3p there  
‘Abraham responded, “Moses and the prophets are teaching them.”’

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5 Conclusion

Like most languages, the grammar of Nchane is quite complex. As such, the goal of this paper has been to provide only a preliminary study of the basics of the grammar. Many interesting elements remain unaddressed entirely, while still others have been treated here with a cursory examination. For example, clause combining operations need further analysis, as do clause level particles. The subject of deictics has not been formally mentioned and the role of tone in Nchane grammar remains to be fully researched. However, the richness of the Nchane language may be seen from this introductory research.
References


