

Mende Grammar Essentials

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0.1. INTRODUCTION

0.2. Acknowledgments

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0.3. Location

The Mende language group is located in the area boarded 142 30' - 134 00' East Longitude and 3 40' - 3 50' South Latitude. The area lies between the Torricelli mountains to the north and the Sepik River plains and swamps to the south and is on the boarder of East Sepik and Sandaun Provinces. The nearest airstrip is at Nuku where the nearest Government Station is also located.

0.4. Classification

The Mende language is the western dialect of the Kwanga language, which has been classified as a Papuan language of the Sepik-Ramu Phylum, Sepik Sub-Phylum, Sepik Super-Stock, Middle-Sepik Stock and Nukuma family (Wurm 1982).

When we allocated in the language group we called the language Kwanga as it had been classified with this name. However, people in our area did not approve of this and kept on telling us that the Kwanga people are those on the East-Sepik side and that their own language is called Mende. Therefore we started to call the language Mende.

The Mende language is spoken by roughly 6,000 people who live in 15 villages in Nuku district, Sandaun Province. The Mende people communicate in vernacular with the people from the Tau 1, Tau 2 and Tau 3 villages and Kubiwat 1 and Kubiwat 2 villages in the East Sepik (5 villages and around 2,000 people). Other Kwanga dialects in the East Sepik Province are understood some what, but the language of communication with them is Tok Pisin . More detailed information about the dialect groupings and lexicostatistical data is in "Survey of the Kwanga Language Group", Hoel, Ikäheimonen and O'Rear, 1991.

0.4.1. Mende and the Language Universals:

The Mende language is an SOV language and it uses postpositions.

When the Mende language is compared to Greenberg's Language Universals (Universal of Language 2nd ed.) it seems that the Mende language agrees rather well to Greenberg's universals. The following universals correspond with the Mende language.

U1. In declarative sentences with nominal subject and object, the dominant order is almost always one in which the subject precedes object.

U4. With overwhelmingly greater than chance frequency, languages with normal SOV order are postpositionals.

U5. If a language has dominant SOV order and the genitive follows governing noun, then the adjective likewise follows the noun.

U19. When any or all of the items - demonstrative, numeral and descriptive adjective - precede the noun, they are almost always found in that order.

U24. If the relative expression precedes the noun either as the only construction or as an alternative construction, either the language is postpositional or the adjective precedes the noun or both.

U41. If in a language the verb follows both the nominal subject and nominal object as the dominant order, the language almost always has a case system.

The only instance where the Mende language differs from the Greenberg's universals is as follows:

U2. In languages with prepositions, the genitive almost always follows governing noun, while in languages with postpositions it almost always precedes.

In the Mende language the genitive can come either before or after the noun and it seems to be more usual to have the genitive after the noun than before it.

When the Mende language is compared to Wurm's General Papuan Characteristics (1982) the most important difference is as follows.

Wurm states that in the Sepik-Ramu Phylum it is fairly common to have subject markings on the verb through bound person markers. We do not have this feature in the Mende language.

0.5. Data Information

This paper is based mainly on collected texts: traditional stories, instructions (how to make an earthen pot, house, garden, etc.), descriptions of events (making sago etc.). The texts amount to 40 pages. Some elicited sentences have also been used. The informants have been both male and female and young and older people.

0.6. Abbreviations

ADJ = adjective
ADV = adverb
ADVL = adverbial
ALT = alteration particle
APNP = appositive noun phrase
APPN = affirmative personal pronoun ending
BEN = benefactive
CNP = co-ordinate noun phrase
COMPL = completion marker
MDL = medial verb
MNP = modified noun phrase
CONJ = conjunction
COND = conditional particle
CVP = common verb phrase
DEM = demonstrative pronoun
DUB = dubitative
FUT = future tense
HAB = habitual
HORT = hortative
IMP = imperative
INST = instrumental
INT = intensifier
INDEF = indefinite pronoun
LP = locative phrase
LOC = locative
NEG = negation
NPAST = near past tense
OBJ = object
ORD = order marker
PAST = past tense
PNP = possessive noun phrase
POSS = possessive
PPN = personal pronoun

PRS = present tense
PRG = progressive
RES = reason-result particle
QPPN = question personal pronoun ending
SIM = similarity particle
SPE = specifier particle
SUB = subordinator
TEMP = temporal
TNS = tense
TOP = topic marker
TP = temporal phrase
1s = first person singular
2s.m = second person singular masculine
2s.f = second person singular feminine
3s.m = third person singular masculine
3s.f = third person singular feminine
2d. = dual
1pl = first person plural
2pl = second person plural
3pl = third person plural

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1. PHONOLOGY

1.1. Introduction

The phonological data of the Mende language is represented in "Organized Phonology Data of Mende" (Hoel, Ikäheimonen, Nozawa, 1992). This paper was submitted to TSD in March 1993.

1.2. Orthography

Phonemic and Orthographic Inventory

/a e f h i j k ñ l m n ú ñ o p r s t tó t u w t_/
 <a e f h i y k,ng l m n ny n o p v r s t kl j u w j>
 <A E F H I Y K,Ng L M n Ny N O P V R S T Kl J U W J>*

Mende phonemes are displayed in the following charts.

Chart 1.2.1
Mende Consonants

	Bila	LDent	Alv	PsAlv	Palat	Vel	Glott
Plos p		t			k		
Nasl m		n		n	n		
Tril		r					
Fric p	f	s	s			h	
Appr					j		
LatAp			l				

Phonemes which do not fit in the chart:

/w/ [w] voiced labio-velar approximant

/ts/ [t] voiceless post-alveolar grooved affricate

/tl/ [tl] voiceless alveolar lateral affricate

Chart 1.2.2
Mende Vowels

Front	Mid	Back
i		u
e		o
	a	

1.3. Morphophonemics

There has not yet been extensive research on morphophonemics in Mende. The rules presented here are tentative and by no means exhaustive.

Rule 1: Vowel deletion in compound words. The last vowel of the first part of the compound word is often deleted. If the first part of the compound is a monosyllabic, the vowel deletion might not take place.

Examples:

- (1). *naku + sembe* -> *naksembe*
sago + uncooked 'raw sago'
- (2). *hi + sembe* -> *hisembe*
fire + uncooked 'fresh firefood'
- (3). *fa + ome* -> *foome*
river + meat 'fish'
- (4). *uku + tolo* -> *uktolo*
water + hold 'wash'
- (5). *naku + jira* -> *najira*
sago + stick 'stick for making sago'

Rule 2: Assimilation of the final voiced bilabial fricative [] (it is written with 'v' in orthography) in compound words. It becomes

- [b] -> voiced bilabial plosive [b] in front of nasals
- [p] -> voiceless bilabial plosive [p] in front of obstruents
- [] -> voiced bilabial fricative [] in front of vowels, laterals and trills.

Examples:

- (6). *avi + ari* -> *avari* 'kind of bird'
- (7). *avi + rese* -> *avrese* 'kind of bird'
- (8). *avi + munyari* -> *abmunyari* 'kind of bird'

- (9). hovo + ma -> hobma 'kind of snake'
 (10). hovo + kosi -> hopkosi 'kind of snake'
 (11). avi + nashi -> ab'nashi 'kind of bird'

Rule 3: The final vowel of the stem of first verb in reduplicated verbs is deleted.

Examples:

- (12). koro + koro -> korkoro
 pour pour 'keep on pouring'
 (13). misi + misi -> mismisi
 hear hear 'keep on hearing'

Rule 4: The insertion of a nasal in between the two nouns in compound nouns.

Examples:

- (14). kumba + bongo -> kumbabongo
 leg + small 'knee'
 (15). mambla + ji + nda -> mamblanjinda
 ear + hit +HAB 'naughty/ deaf'

Rule 5: Vowel harmony in medial verbs: the medial verb marker is h + the final vowel of the verb stem.

Examples:

- (16). tasa -> tasaha
 come.up come.up-MDL
 (17). heye -> heyehe
 look look-MDL
 (18). shi -> shihi
 cut cut-MDL
 (19). yoko -> yokoho
 wash wash-MDL
 (20). u -> uhu
 do do-MDL

Rule 6: Vowel harmony in co-ordinate clauses. When the similarity particle (SIM) hom is used on sentence level to co-ordinate two clauses, the verb of the first clause drops its final vowel and this vowel is replaced by the vowel -o which is in vowel harmony with hom.

Examples:

(21). *Nalombo kawu-k si wa-w-o hom mashi-n*
 Nalombo bed-LOC 2s.f sleep-NPAST-o SIM talk-OBJ

ni-mu kaye-ndu
 1pl-TOP write-PRG

'While Nalombo was sleeping in her bed, we kept on working'

(22). *hinyer nir mashi-n ni kaye-r-o hom korinna*
 yesterday 1pl talk-OBJ lp. write-PAST-o SIM Korinna

naku-n si likri-ri
 sago-OBJ 3s.f wash-PAST

'Yesterday while we were writing, Korinna was washing the sago.'

Rule 7: Free variation in the first syllable between e and o in some words for the sake of vowel harmony.

Examples:

(23). *nowe* <-> *newe* 'garden'

(24). *owe* <-> *ewe* 'put'

(25). *omena* <-> *emena* 'true'

Rule 8: In some compound words the voiceless post-alveolar grooved affricate [tʃ] (in the orthography this is written 'j') changes into voiceless velar plosive [k]. It should be noticed that in the Tau dialect 'yam' is called pake, whereas in Mende it is paje. It might be that this form has been the original form also in the Mende language. There are some occasions where [tʃ] and [k] are in free variation in Mende, like the third person plural question personal pronoun ending oj or ok.

Examples:

(26). *paje + aka* -> *pak'aka*
 yam house 'house for yam'

27). *paje + farme* -> *pak'farme*
 yam + sprout 'sprout of mami-yam'

2. STEM

2.1. Simple Stem

Most words in Mende are made up from a simple stem consisting of one root. The simple stem usually remains unchanged when suffixes are added to it.

Examples:

(28). *aka*
 house

(29). *paje*
 mami-yam

(30). *koro*
 to cut

(31). *ji*
 hit

2.2. Complex Stem

There are two kinds of complex stems in the Mende language: reduplicated and compounded stems.

2.2.1. Reduplicated Stem

Reduplication encodes, among other things, continual motion or intensity in verbs, intensity of quality in adjectives and adverbs. No reduplication has been observed in nouns. When verbs are reduplicated the leftmost part of the stem is repeated, unless the verb begins with *ana* = 'together', then the latter part is repeated. When the adjectives and adverbs are reduplicated either the whole adjective or the latter part of the adjective or adverb is repeated.

Infix *-ma-* may occur in reduplication and denotes quicker action.

Morphophonemic changes may take place. Sometimes it is difficult to make a rule for these changes, they just seem to happen.

The verb 'come' is either ta or ra. When the verb 'come' is reduplicated, it becomes either ta-ma-ra or ra-ma-ra, but *ra-ma-ta or *ta-ma-ta are impossible forms.

The adverb kolok 'quickly' can be reduplicated, and then it becomes kolo-ma-lok 'very quickly'.

Reduplicated stems:

<i>shirin-shirinya</i> 'run-run'	'keep on running'
<i>kor-koro</i> 'cut-cut'	'keep on cutting'
<i>u-ma-u</i> 'do-quickly-do'	'do someting quickly'
<i>hisha-kasha</i> 'think-think'	'keep on thinking'
<i>ana-saw-saw-sawe</i> 'talk together-talk-talk'	'keep on talking together'
<i>ana-ji-ji</i> 'fight toghether-fight'	'keep on fighting together'
<i>hama-hama</i> 'quickly-quickly'	'very quickly'
<i>kolo-ma-lok</i> 'quickly-quickly'	'very quickly'
<i>kava-kava</i> 'bad-bad'	'very bad'
<i>wasilaka-laka</i> 'big-big'	'very big'
<i>awarikanda-kanda</i> 'small-small'	'very small'

Examples:

(32).	<i>apsambu</i>	<i>ondo</i>	<i>ermba-k</i>	<u>ta-ra-ra</u>	<i>fa</i>
	cassowary	DEM	always-TEMP	come-come-PAST	river

oro-k uj-uja i-nda-ri
 there-LOC wash-wash go-HAB-PAST
 'The cassowaries used to go and wash in the river.'

(33). *lawe lopnivi-n la-la i-ndu-a lawe pushi-n*
 who banana-OBJ take-take go-HAB-INT who cucumber-OBJ

nur-nuru la-la i-ndu-a
 take-take go-HAB-PAST
 'Who keeps on coming and taking bananas and cucumbers?'

(34). *minja-n si war-war-ho am si grignyari-k*
 weeds-OBJ 3s.f weed-weed MDL now 3s.f become dark-SUB

si-mu ra-ka-r hunguaka-k
 3s.f-TOP come-down-PAST garden house-LOC
 'She kept on weeding until it become dark and then she returned to the garden house.'

2.2.2. Compounded Stem

Compound stems are formed by combining two or more roots. Compounds are distinguished from phrases by their unique stress placement and/or by the meaning of the compound. Morphophonemic changes take place in compounding.

Compound nouns:

lovo + kukwa => lopkukwa 'banana leaf'
 banana leaf

masi + kukwa => masikukwa 'hair'
 head leaf

ma + ome => maome 'body'
 man meat

paje + aka => pakaka 'yam house'
 mami yam house

aka+masu+pashi => akamasunpashi 'mouse'
 house top rat

naku+hindi => nakhindi 'stick for
 sago stick for making
 sago'

Compound verbs:

<i>uku + tolo</i> water hold	=> <i>uktolo</i>	'wash somebody'
<i>tolo + krumba</i> hold scratch	=> <i>tolkrumba</i>	'break' (by squeezing)
<i>tolo + tambana</i> hold hold fast	=> <i>toltambana</i>	'hold fast'
<i>usha + lasa + ya</i> shout look.for go.around	=> <i>ushalasaya</i>	'search and look for'

Compound adjectives:

<i>awari + kanda</i> small small	=> <i>awarikanda</i>	'small'
<i>fanyi + kanda</i> short small	=> <i>fanyikanda</i>	'short'

Examples:

(35). *or angop masi-kukwa-n or-hi njik or*
3s.m already head-leaf-OBJ 3s.m-POSS BEN 3s.m

koro-ri
cut-PAS
'He cut his own hair.'

(36). *aka-yanga-n sukla nak a ra-sa*
house-place-OBJ open so.that 1s come up
'Open the door so I can come up.'

(37). *fle-fu-k or ji-wa*
pig-teeth-INST 3s.m hit-NPAST
'He cut with a small knife.'

(38). *uk-sembe-n kor-ormbe*
water-green pour-throw
'Pour out water.'

(39). *asa hava-mba-k na-wa*
dog bone-stem-ADVL become-PAST
'The dog becomes skinny.'

- (40). jivi-kava-n ermbe-k na lai-hi na
 good-bad-OBJ throw-SUB 1s go.down-MDL 1s

 takatukuyi-ri
 fall.down-PAST
 'I went to throw away the rubbish and fell down.'
- (41). ma-ome hi u
 man-meat fire do
 'Skin is hot '
- (42). nir shir-in usha-lasa-ya-wa
 1pl dual-OBJ shout-search-go.around-NPAST
 'We looked for you.'

3. WORD

3.0. Introduction

A word in Mende is a construction in the grammatical hierarchy between stem level and phrase level.

3.1. Nouns

Nouns comprise a large open class of words in which the names of persons, places and things are members. There are some abstract nouns like lerawu 'work', but their usage is rare. The function of nouns is as heads of arguments of verbs. They may also function in phrases as predicates (Schachter, 1986), or they may function as heads in Locative Phrases. In the Mende language nouns are inflected by suffixes for accusative and genitive case. They are not inflected for number or gender.

Nouns are divided into two classes : Common Nouns, Class 1 and Proper Nouns, Class 2 based on semantic considerations and the distribution of the nouns.

Nouns in both classes may function as heads of noun phrases functioning as subject of intransitive, transitive and verbless clauses or as the object/recipient of transitive clauses. However the usage of the Class 2 nouns is semantically more restricted than the usage of the Class 1 nouns.

The nouns in Mende do not encode gender with grammatical markers. Some nouns with natural gender are marked by adding the word male/female after the noun (asa hula / asa noko 'dog male /dog female').

The Mende language does not mark plurality in nouns overtly. It is understood by the context or by a pronoun or a demonstrative, used to refer to it. This pronoun or demonstrative also reveals the gender of the noun.

Chart 3.1
Noun suffixes

Ö-----	Ū-----	Ū-----	Ū-----	Ū-----	Ū-----	İ
°obj.mkr	°poss.mkr	°inst.	°TOP	°intensif.		°
°	°	°loc.	°	°		°
û-----	é-----	é-----	é-----	é-----		À
° -n/-in	°-hi	°-k/-ik	°-mu	° -a		°
Ū-----	Ū-----	Ū-----	Ū-----	Ū-----		ì

The order of the suffixes if there are more than one is: possessive + object/locative/intensifier. The topic marker *-mu* cannot co-occur with other suffixes. A vowel is inserted before the object marker *-n* and before the locative marker *-k* when the noun ends in a consonant (*Wewak-ik a iku* = 'I go to Wewak').

Examples:

- (43). *asa limala-hi-n la-ha-ra*
dog limala-POSS-OBJ bring-MDL-came
'Bring Limala's dog!'
- (44). *aka korinna-hi-k layi*
house korinna-POSS-LOC go down
'Go into Korinna's house.'
- (45). *sunja-mu fle las fale-ra*
Stone-TOP pig one sniff-PAST
'Stone sniffed a pig.'

Class 1 nouns - Common Nouns, some examples

It seems that there is no grammatical distinction in how these groups are used.

Animate:

<i>hulayi</i>	'man'
<i>nokove</i>	'woman'
<i>fle</i>	'pig'
<i>inklavi</i>	'locust'

Inanimate:

<i>sunja</i>	'stone'
<i>ma</i>	'rain'
<i>suwa</i>	'wind'
<i>misambi</i>	'ground'
<i>naku</i>	'sago'
<i>siya</i>	'coconut'

Class 2 nouns - Proper Nouns, some examples

It seems that there is no grammatical distinction in how these groups are used. There are some cases where a pig has been given the name of the place where it has been bought. Both place names and proper names can get the locative suffix -k.

Place names:

Kwarko
Hamtava
Sepetala
Nalatava
Nalmi
Magrutava

Proper names:

Limala
Ambalango
Kalango
Wasmande
Nalombo

3.2. Pronouns

Pronouns are a closed class of words which substitute for or are in apposition to all types of noun phrases. The Mende language has a complex and diverse pronominal system. The language does not mark plurality in nouns nor are the verbs inflected according to person. Therefore, the pronominal system is the major means with which the language shows gender and number. It is very typical to repeat the pronoun subject twice in the beginning of the sentence and once at the end of the sentence. The subject pronoun may sometimes be left out, if the subject is known or implied by the context.

3.2.1. Personal Pronoun

Chart 3.2.1
 Personal Pronouns

Pers.	° Singular	° Dual	° Plural
-----é-----	-----é-----	-----é-----	-----é-----
1	° <i>an, na, a, nir, anir</i>	° <i>shir</i> incl.&excl.	° <i>nir</i> incl.&excl.
2masc.	° <i>mir</i>	° <i>shir, osh</i>	° <i>jir, oj/ok</i>
fem.	° <i>nyir</i>	° <i>shir, osh</i>	° <i>jir, oj/ok</i>
3masc.	° <i>or, nor, ri, ori</i>	° <i>frir, bri, op</i>	° <i>lir, ol</i>
fem.	° <i>sir, os</i>	° <i>frir, bri, op</i>	° <i>lir, ol</i>

Personal pronouns (PPN) may be inflected by genitive suffix -hi, object suffix -n, locative suffix -k, topic suffix -mu and intensified by the intensifier -a.

Personal pronouns encode person and number. Gender is indicated in the second and third person singular only.

Personal pronouns may function as subject, object and/or recipient constituents of the clause. They substitute for nouns, encode the possessive nouns or are in apposition to noun phrases.

The first person singular has five different subject pronouns: an, a, anir, na and nir. We are not, yet, all clear what is the difference in their usage, but it seems that an fills the first subject slot in a story and is used with possessive suffix -hi and with conjunction nga 'and'. Only an is possible in the object form; anir is used in lists and as the initial pronoun in declarative sentences when stronger emphasis is required, nir is used as final pronoun in declarative sentences; the other subject pronouns can occur elsewhere.

It seems that often the choice of pronoun is based on the phonology rather than on grammatical reasons. A and amu occur mostly when the previous word ends in a consonant. If the previous word ends with a velar plosive only a or amu can be used. Na and namu are used mostly when the previous word ends in a vowel or nasal.

The usage of or and nor in **the third person masculine singular** is similar: or seems to fill the first subject slot and it occurs after consonants, nor occur in the same slot, but after nasals and vowels, ri is used as final pronoun in declarative sentences. Sometimes ori or oria (ori = pronoun + a= INT) are used as final pronoun in declarative sentences. It looks like ori/oria are used when one wants to emphasize the sentence.

The dual pronoun shir means both 'we two' and 'you two'. The exact meaning is derived from the context. Osh is used in interrogative sentences.

The dual pronoun frir 'they two' seems to be used mostly as the subject pronoun. Bri seems to be used mostly as final pronoun in declarative sentences (it never occurs in the first subject pronoun slot) and op seems to be used mainly as final pronoun in questions (or it can fill the first subject slot only when followed by topic marker -mu).

Third person singular feminine pronoun os and dual op are used as subject pronouns only when they are followed by topic marker -mu.

It seems that the final -r drops off in **all pronouns** when they are followed by the possessive suffix -hi, when they occur immediately before a verb, and when the pronoun is followed by topic marker -mu.

The third person plural final pronoun oj seems to be in free variation with ok.

Inanimate things are most often referred to with the third person singular feminine pronoun.

Examples:

Personal pronouns as subjects or in apposition to a subject:

- (46). an *kuyanga-k* a *i-ku-a* nir
 1s place-LOC 1s go-FUT-INT 1s-APPN
 'I'll go home'.
- (47). mir *nga an nga Nuku-k* shi *i-ku-a* shir
 2s.m and 1s and Nuku-to 2d go-FUT-INT 2d.APPN
 'We two will go to Nuku'.
- (48). *tawu-n* ni-mu *la-wa* *anir paul tarja*
 garden-OBJ 1lp-TOP work-NPAST 1s paul tarja
 'We did the garden work, me, Paul and Tarja.'
- (49). *fle nijava oso-n* *nga* fri-mu *anaji-ra*
 pig mother DEM-OBJ CONJ dual-TOP fight.together-PAST
 '(The snake and) the mother pig, they fought'.
- (50). *ma ovro* op-mu *anaji-mba-ra*
 men DEM dual-TOP fight.together-ASP-PAST
 'Those two men fought together'.
- (51). *nokove oso* os-mu *nowe-k* *lai-ra*
 woman DEM 2s.f-TOP garden-LOC go.down-PAST
 'That woman went down to the garden'.

(52). an *hinyer* *nurum* *shovo-n* na *foso-ho*
1s yesterday morning basket-OBJ 1s carry-MDL

nowe-k a-mu *i-ra*
garden-LOC 1s-TOP go-PAST
'Yesterday morning I took my limbum basket and went to
the garden'.

Personal pronouns as final pronouns in declarative sentences:

(53). *Tarja nga Hanna Marie nga nuku-k i-ri*
Tarja CON Hanna Marie CONJ Nuku-LOC go-PAST

bri-a/fri-a
dual.APPN-INT
'Tarja and Hanna Marie went to Nuku'.

(54). *max wasilaka ri-a*
max big 3s.m -INT
'Max is big'.

(55). *nowe-k a i-ku-a nir*
garden-LOC 1s go-FUT-INT 1s
'I'll go to the garden'.

(56). *Avuy Wasilaka-hi jikisi indingo ori-a*
father big-POSS child real 3s.m-INT
'He is really God's son'.

Personal pronouns as objects:

(57). *nir shir-in usha- lasa -ya- wa*
1pl dual-OBJ shout-search-go.around-NPAST
'We looked for you two.'

(58). *lawe mir. an-in*
who 2s.m 1s-OBJ
'Who is there? Me'.

(59). *jikisi sihi-n si ewe-he fri-mu wa-ra*
child 3s.f-OBJ 3s.f look.after-MDL dual-TOP stay-PAST
'She looked after her child and they (two) stayed.'

(60). *nyir-in na rupshi-w*
3s.f-OBJ 1s like-NPAST
'I like you'.

Personal Pronouns as locatives or in Locative Phrases:

- (61). *aka an-hi-k layi*
 house 1s-POSS-LOC go-down
 'Go into my house'.
- (62). *holi spirit mi ra-ka-ha an-ik layi...*
 holy spirit 2s.m come-down-MDL 1s-LOC come.down
 'Holy Spirit come down and come inside me...'

A special set of personal pronouns occur as final pronouns in interrogative sentences.

Chart 3.2.1.2
 Final Pronoun in Interrogative Sentences

Person	°	singular	°	dual	°	plural
	-----é-----		-----é-----		-----é-----	-----1
	° <i>on</i>	° <i>osh</i>		° <i>on</i>		
2 masc.	° <i>om</i>	° <i>osh</i>		° <i>oj</i>		
2 fem	° <i>ony</i>	° <i>osh</i>		° <i>oj</i>		
3 masc.	° <i>or</i>	° <i>op, fri, bri</i>		° <i>ol</i>		
3 fem	° <i>os</i>	° <i>op, fri, bri</i>		° <i>ol</i>		

Personal Pronouns in Questions:

- (63). *fandu-k nyi i- ku ony*
 river-LOC 2s.f go-FUT 2s.f
 'Are you going to the river?'
- (64). *nowe _ mi-hi mbasir mo home os*
 garden 2s.m-POSS near or far 3s.f
 'Is your garden near or far?'
- (65). *mbeek fehe or*
 where originate.from 3s.m
 'Where is he from?'
- (66). *obro mbeek fehe _ fri/bri*
 DEM where originate.from dual
 'Where are those two from?'
- (67). *_nyir nga hanna marie nga ra-wa ony/osh*
 2s.f CONJ hanna marie CONJ come-NPAST 2s.f/dual
 'Did you come with Hanna Marie?'

3.2.2. Possessive Pronouns

Chart 3.2.2
Possessive pronouns

Pers.	° Singular	° Dual	° Plural
1	° <i>an-hi</i>	° <i>shi-hi</i> incl.&excl.	° <i>ni-hi</i> incl.&excl.
2.masc.	° <i>mi-hi</i>	° <i>shi-hi</i>	° <i>ji-hi</i>
fem.	° <i>nyi-hi</i>	° <i>shi-hi</i>	° <i>ji-hi</i>
3.masc.	° <i>or-hi</i>	° <i>fri-hi</i>	° <i>li-hi</i>
fem.	° <i>si-hi</i> ,	° <i>fri-hi</i>	° <i>li-hi</i>

The possessive form PPN may be followed by the object marker -n, locative marker -k, topic marker -mu.

Examples:

- (68). *aka an-hi kasir*
house 1s-POSS here
'This is my house/my house is here'.
- (69). *aka an-hi-k layi*
house 1.s-POSS-LOC go.down
'Go down into my house'.
- (70). *asa an-hi-n la-ha-ra*
dog 1s-POSS-OBJ take-MDL-come
'Bring my dog!'
- (71). *asa an-hi nga fle nga fri anaji-ri-k*
dog 1s-POSS CONJ pig CONJ DUAL fight.together-PAST-SUB
- asa an-hi-mu fle oso-n or ji-ri*
dog 1s-POSS-TOP pig DEM-OBJ 3s.m bite-PAST
'When my dog and a pig fought together, my dog bit the pig'.
- (72). *kaso nyi-hi os*
DEM 3s.f-POSS 3s.f
'It this yours?'

3.2.3. Reflexive Pronouns

Reflexive pronouns are formed by adding a benefactive particle njik after the possessive pronoun.

Examples:

(73). an-hi njik a u-ri
 1s-POSS BEN 1s do-PAST
 'I did it by myself'.

(74). shi-hi njik shi u-ri-k or-mu
 dual-POSS BEN dual do-PAST-SUB 3s.m-Top

kavamisi-ri ri-a
 be.sick-PAST 3s.m-INT
 'It is the fault of you two that he got sick'.

(75). or angop or-hi njik uja-ri ri
 3s.m already 3s.m-POSS BEN wash-PAST 3s.m
 'He has already washed himself'.

3.2.4. Reciprocal Pronouns

The reciprocal pronouns are formed by adding a word ambek 'amongst' after the possessive pronoun.

Examples:

(76). jirwandi-k fehe-nda nga apigu-k
 jirwandi-LOC originate.from-HAB CONJ apigu-LOC

fehe-nda nga li-hi ambek li
 originate.from-HAB CONJ 3pl-POSS amongst 3pl

anaji-ri
 fight.together-PAST
 'People from Yirwandi and Apigu villages fought amongst themselves'.

(77). an nga or nga shi-hi ambek shi mba-ri
 1s CONJ 3m CONJ dual-POSS amongst dual speak-PAST
 'I and he talked amongst ourselves'.

3.2.5. Demonstrative Pronouns

Demonstrative pronouns (DEM) are a closed class of deictics which mark definiteness in all types of noun phrases. They encode number, gender and spatial proximity to the speaker.

The demonstrative pronoun system is the most complex pronominal system in the Mende language. The detailed function of the differences of the forms are not yet identified completely.

The demonstrative pronouns and other deictics seem to have an important role in clarifying the subject (number, gender and spatial proximity). They function often in Apposition and Two-stage Topic Phrases as a modifier to the first head (see p.56).

Chart: 3.2.5
Demonstrative Pronouns

spatial				
proximity	°masc.	° fem.	° dual	° pl.
	-----é-----	é-----	é-----	é-----
touched	° <i>kato</i>	° <i>kasó</i>	° <i>kabro</i>	° <i>kando</i>
	-----é-----	é-----	é-----	é-----
further	° <i>roto/toto</i>	° <i>roso/toso</i>	° <i>tobro</i>	° <i>rondo/tondo</i>
away	°	°	°	°
	-----é-----	é-----	é-----	é-----
distance	° <i>oto/orto</i>	° <i>oso</i>	° <i>obro</i>	° <i>ondo</i>
not relevant				

The prefix ka- denotes very near proximity (can be touched) and to- denotes proximity further away. It seems that the initial 't' and 'r' are in free variation here. Oto/orto seem to be in free variation, denoting that distance is not relevant.

Examples:

(78). *jikisi ondo nalmingrip hulayi numbu*
 child DEM three man both/all
 'There are three children all of them are males.'

(79). *andule kando an-hi ka-lir-a tondo mi-hi*
 knife DEM 1s-POSS here-3pl-INT DEM 2s.m-POSS

to-lir-a
 3s.m-POSS there-3pl-INT
 'These knives here are mine, those there are yours'.

(80). *avoko orto jikisi or-hi obro hulayi nga*
 father DEM child 3s.m-POSS DEM man CONJ

nokopji nga
 woman CONJ
 'That father has two children one of them is male and one female.'

(81). *obro mbeek fehe fri/bri*
 DEM where come from QPPN
 'Those two where are they from?'

(82). *kaso an-hi sir-a toso mi-hi sir-a*
 this 1s-POSS 3s.f-INT that 3s.m-POSS 3s.f-INT
 'This is mine and that is yours'.

3.2.6. Interrogative Pronouns

Interrogative pronouns are a small closed class of question words. Interrogative pronouns may be inflected by genitive suffix *-hi*, object suffix *-n*, locative suffix *-k*. They may be followed by the benefactive particle *njik*. The last vowel in the interrogative pronoun *mbele* is often dropped in quick speech. All interrogative pronouns, except *lawe* 'whose' occur at the beginning of the sentence. *Lawe* occurs at the end of the sentence.

<i>lawe-hi</i>	'whose'
<i>lawe-n</i>	'whom'
<i>lawe-n jik</i>	'for whom'
<i>mbele</i>	'what'
<i>mbele-n</i>	'what (as object)'
<i>mbele njik</i>	'for what'
<i>lawe nga</i>	'with whom'

Examples:

(83). *lawe-n njik nyi ishavaka-n la-ha-ra-wa?*
 who-OBJ BEN 2s.f greens-OBJ give-MDL-come-NPAST
 'For whom are you bringing greens?'

(84). *lawe mir?*
 who 2s.m
 'Who are you?'

(85). *aka roso lawe-hi?*
 house DEM who-POSS
 'Whose house is that?'

(86). *mbele hovo tosir-a?*
 what snake here INT
 'What snake is that?'

(87). *lawe kaso-n u-ri*
 who DEM-OBJ work-PAST
 'Who did that? '

(88). *lawe nga ji i-ku*
 who and 2pl go-FUT
 'With whom are you going?'

(89). *mbele njik ji ta-r*
 what BEN 3pl come-PAST
 'What did you come for?'

3.2.7. Indefinite Pronouns

Chart 3.2.7. Indefinite pronouns

masc.sing.	°	fem.sing.	°	dual	°	pl.
-----é-----é-----é-----						
kar	°	kas	°	kap	°	kal
lar	°	las	°	lap	°	lal

There are two set of indefinite pronouns (INDEF): *kar* (masc.s.), *kas* (fem.s.), *kap* (dual), *kal* (pl) and *lar* (masc.s.), *las* (fem.s.), *lap* (dual) and *lal* (pl).

Lar, *las*, *lap* and *lal* function like the non specific use of the indefinite article in English: they have the meaning 'any, some or one'. They are used with countable nouns.

Kar, *kas*, *kap* and *kal* are used with uncountable nouns and their meaning is 'part of the whole or some'

When indefinite pronouns are used as objects of the sentence, they cannot take the object marker *-n*.

These pronouns can be modified by *tonom/nom* 'only'.

Examples

(90). *nokove las jir-in heye-k ta-ri*
 woman INDEF 2pl-OBJ look-SUB come-PAST
 'A/one woman came to see you.'

(91). *kar a-ku ony*
 INDEF eat-FUT 2s.f
 'Do you want to eat some of this?'

(92). *jikisi lal nga ni ra-ri*
 children INDEF CONJ 1pl come-PAST
 'We came with some children'.

(93). *waswo kanda kar nom owe*
 salt small INDEF only put
 'put only a little bit of salt'.

(94). lal tonom ta-wa
INDEF only come-NPAST
'Only some came'.

(95). lap tonom ta-wa
INDEF only come-NPAST
'Only a few came'.

3.3. Adjectives

Adjectives (ADJ) are an open class of words, which encode states, qualities or quantities. Adjectives are distinguished as a separate word class based on their function in the adjective phrase, which may function as a noun phrase constituent modifying the head noun or as the predicate in a verbless adjectival clause.

Adjectives are divided into three classes based on their distribution within the adjective phrase.

Class 1 adjectives can occur in all the head positions within the adjective phrase. They can be modified by intensifiers re/te 'very', mende 'very' and tinga 'very'.

Class 2 adjectives cannot be modified by an intensifier or negation word as Class 1 adjectives, apart from the adjectives musha 'plenty' and warnje 'plenty', which can be modified by intensifiers mende and re. Class 2 adjectives can occur only in head 1 position within the adjective phrase. (see 4.4.)

Class 3 adjectives are the numerical quantifiers. They can be modified by nom 'only'. They can appear in head 1 and head 2 positions within the adjective phrase. (see 4.4.)

The Mende language does not use adjectives frequently. Very seldom do they use more than one adjective at the time. However, to express superlative form two or more adjective words are often used. Some common adjectives like, wasilaka 'big', awarikanda 'small', jivi 'good', kava 'bad' have a very wide scope of meaning. There seem to be five adjectives denoting colours. All the other colours are expressed with phrases.

The Mende adjectives have no comparative or superlative form. Comparison is expressed by two stative sentences following each other (juxtaposition). The superlative quality is expressed by the repetition of the adjective phrase, or by the extensive use of adjectival modifiers - up to three intensifiers one after another have been observed, or by using antonymous adjectives or by the more intense intonation.

Class 1 Adjectives

The following is the list of the Class 1 adjectives that have been observed so far. There might be many more quality and size adjectives that we have not heard yet, but the list of colours may be complete. Any other colour than the colours mentioned here must be expressed with a phrase like in example 102.

Colour:

<i>nalo</i>	'red'
<i>aflornivi</i>	'yellow'
<i>kle</i>	'black'
<i>avisha</i>	'white'
<i>nonklo</i>	'many coloured'

Size:

<i>wasilaka</i>	'big, strong'
<i>awarikanda</i>	'small'
<i>hombelaka</i>	'long/tall'
<i>fanyikanda</i>	'short'

Quality:

<i>jivi</i>	'good'
<i>kava</i>	'bad'
<i>arme</i>	'beautiful, clear'
<i>worna</i>	'streight'
<i>bango</i>	'crooked'
<i>agri</i>	'new'
<i>masi</i>	'old'
<i>hakla</i>	'dry'
<i>sembe</i>	'uncooked, raw, fresh'
<i>kwambu</i>	'strong'
<i>kumtiji</i>	'strong'
<i>hangu</i>	'soft, weak'
<i>blarsha</i>	'weak, thin'

Examples:

(96). *minja-kukwa sembe hom na-nda*
grass-leaf fresh SIM be-HAB
'Green' ,lit. like the fresh grass'.

(97). *fle nonklo limala-hi angop sembengala-k*
pig many.coloured limala-POSS already bush-LOC

i-ri

go-PAST

'Limala's many coloured pig went to the bush'.

- (98). *ma avisha oto asa kle frijip or-hi wasilaka*
man white DEM dog black two 3s.m-POSS big

bri-a

dual-INT

'That white man has two, big, black dogs'.

- (99). *lovo jivi-n ha nak a a-ka*
banana good-OBJ give so.that 1s eat-HORT
'Give me a good banana, so I'll eat it'.

- (100). *samhovo oto kanda ambu re wasilaka re fle*
kind.of.snake DEM small NEG INT big INT pig

jikisi-n or-mu tolo-ra
child-OBJ 3s.m-TOP hold-PAST

'The very big snake grabbed hold of the piglet'.

- (101). *mi hakla arme-k u-nda mi sembe arme-k*
tree dry nice-ADVL burn-HAB tree raw nice-ADVL

u-nda ambu
do-HAB NEG

'Dry fire wood burns nicely, wet fire wood doesn't
burn nicely'.

- (102). *aka masi an-hi angop lerta-wa*
house old 1s-POSS already break-NPAST
'My old house broke down'.

Class 2 Adjectives

Mass Quantifiers:

<i>amber</i>	'all'
<i>musha</i>	'many/plenty'
<i>warnje</i>	'many/plenty'
<i>kandakar</i>	'small amount'
<i>ebrebam</i>	'both'
<i>nom</i>	'only'
<i>tonom</i>	'only'

Examples:

- (103). *kumba elon-hi ebrebam angop hakla i-ri*
 leg elon-POSS both already dry go-PAST
 'Both Elon's legs have dried'.
- (104). *nokove musha mende re torok ra-ri*
 woman many INT INT here come-PAST
 'Very many women came here'.
- (105). *ma amber mashi oso-n misi-ri*
 men all talk DEM-OBJ hear-PAST
 'All the people heard this speech'.
- (106). *ma ondo warnje mende nga na-ri re*
 men DEM many INT CONJ be-PAST INT
 'There were very many men (there)'.

Class 3 Adjectives

Numerals:

<i>namdar/namdas</i>	'one'
<i>frijip</i>	'two'
<i>nalmingrip</i>	'three'
<i>tovro kavro</i>	'four' (literally this two - that two)
<i>tostava</i>	'five' (literally this hand)

Numbers above five are expressed with a phrase

<i>tostava tava yok namdar</i>	'six' (literally this hand and one from the other hand)
<i>tostava tava yok frijip</i>	'seven'
<i>tostava tava yok nalmingrip</i>	'eight'
<i>tostava tava yok tovro kavro</i>	'nine'
<i>tostava kastava</i>	'ten' (literally this hand - that hand)
<i>tostava kastava kumba yok namdar</i>	'eleven' (literally this hand -that hand and one from the foot)
<i>toskumba kaskumba</i>	'twenty' (literally this foot - that foot)

The only numeral that carries gender is *namdar* 'one' that has female form *namdas*. Numerals above five are not often used. *Musha* 'many' is used for higher numerals. And quite often Pidgin/English numerals replace the Mende numerals.

Examples:

(107). *jikisi mi-hi mbelmbel. frijip las kasir*
 child 2m.-POSS how.many two INDEF here

lar tori
 INDEF here
 'How many children do you have? Two, one (female) is
 here and one (male) is here.'

(108). *namdas nom*
 one only
 'Only one'.

(109). *niri mbelmbel orok ji wa-ku? niri frijip*
 night how.many there 2pl sleep-FUT night two
 'How many nights are you going to stay there? Two.'

Ordinal Systems

No ordinal numerals have been observed so far. The following adjectives are used to indicate the order.

<i>maifu</i>	'first'
<i>masmas</i>	'first'
<i>nindi</i>	'middle'
<i>kumasi</i>	'last, later'
<i>yerble</i>	'last'

Examples:

(110). *mashi yerble*
 talk last
 'Last talk'.

(111). *nokove maifu-k la-nda-ri*
 woman first-ADV take-HAB-PAST
 'The firstly taken woman = first wife'.

(112). *kumasi-k nuku-k ni i-ku-a*
 later-ADV nuku-LOC 1pl go-FUT-INT
 'Later we'll go to Nuku'.

(113). *nindi las wolo*
 middle INDEF time
 'Once upon a time...'

(114). *Paul maifu i-ri-k wasmande nindi or*
 paul first do-PAST-SUB wasmande middle 3s.m

iri-k an-mu kumasi i-ra
 go-PAST 1s-TOP last go-PAST
 'Paul went first, then came Wasmande and I came
 last'.

3.3.1. Adjectives Derived from Verbs

In the Mende language adjectives can be derived from verbs with the help of habitual action suffix -nda (HAB) together with adjective kava 'bad'. It seems that in this structure the adjective kava functions like an intensifier and it can be repeated for more emphasis.

Chart 3.3.1
 Adjectives derived from verbs

+ kava	+/-Noun	+ verb	+ HAB
			-nda

An adjective derived from verb consists of an obligatory adjective kava 'bad', followed by an optional noun, followed by an obligatory verb, followed by an obligatory habitual action suffix -nda.

Examples:

(115). *ambalango kava-mba-nda ri-a*
 ambalango bad- speak-HAB 3s.m-INT
 'Ambalango is a very talkative man'.

(116). *korinna kava-la-nda sir-a ermba- ermbak*
 korinna-bad-work-HAB 3s.f-INT always-always

lerawu-n la-nda
 work-OBJ work-HAB
 'Korinna is a hard working woman, she works always'.

(117). *lusi kava awu-n u-nda sir-a*
 lusi bad fight-OBJ do-HAB 3s.f-INT
 'Lusi is a good fighter'.

3.4. Adverbs

Adverbs (ADV) are a open class of words which modify the verb and have the verb alone under their scope. They usually occur before the verb they modify.

3.4.1. Manner Adverbs Derived from Adjectives

In the Mende language manner adverbs are derived from adjectives by means of a derivational suffix *-k*. They occur in front of the verb they modify and are part of the verb phrase. If the adverb is modified by intensifier *mende* 'very', then the suffix *-k* is attached to the intensifier and not to the adverb.

Examples:

arme 'beautiful, clear'
armek 'beautifully/clearly'

wasilaka 'big'
wasilakak 'greatly'

kava 'bad'
kavak 'badly'

(118). *an arme-k a u-ri ambu kava-k a*
 1s beautiful-ADV 1s do-PAST NEG bad-ADV 1s

u-ri
 do-PAST
 'I didn't do it well, I did it badly.'

(119). *ma wasilaka mende-k taka-ri*
 rain big very-ADV come.down-PAST
 'It rained heavily'.

(120). *si las-lasa-ha mende si heye-ri ambu angop*
 3s.f look-look-MDL NEG 3s.f look-PAST NEG already

arme mende-k or wainy-ri
 beautiful very-ADV 3s.m hide-PAST
 'She looked and looked and couldn't find it as he had hidden it so well.'

3.4.2. Non-Derived Manner Adverbs

In the Mende language there are manner adverbs that are not derived from adjectives. The adverbs listed below are those that we have discovered so far, the list is by no means complete.

Adverbs:

simbalesik 'altogether'
naman 'slowly'
kolok 'quickly'
mbermbar ' " '
kolomalok ' " '

<i>hamahama</i>	' "
<i>minyominyo</i>	'in a hurry'
<i>manyam</i>	'secretly, quietly'
<i>men</i>	'just'
<i>erem</i>	'like that'
<i>karem</i>	'like this'
<i>nalok</i>	'slowly'
<i>yawur</i>	'well'
<i>nagrem</i>	'together, alike'
<i>angop</i>	'already'

Examples:

(121). *naman mba nak a misi*
 slowly speak.IMP so.that 1s hear
 'Speak slowly so that I hear.'

(122). *mbermbar a*
 quickly eat.IMP
 'Eat quickly.'

(123). *men li harka-wa hala*
 just stay.IMP play-NPAST NEG
 'Do not play around, just stay.'

(124). *or si-hi or heye-he manyam manyam*
 3s.m stand-MDL 3s.m look-MDL quietly quietly

or wanyi-ri
 3s.m hide-PAST
 'He stood and looked and quietly he hid (the feathers).'

(125). *erem mba-wa hala*
 like.that speak-NPAST NEG
 'Don't speak like that.'

(126). *karem u*
 like.this do
 'Do like this.'

(127). *nalok layi*
 slowly go.down
 'Go down slowly'.

(128). *kaso-n yawur a u-r ambu*
 DEM-OBJ well 1s do-PAST NEG
 'I didn't do this well'.

3.4.3. Locatives

Locative adverbs (LOC) are a small closed class of words that mark concrete positions. The list below might not be exhaustive, but it lists those locative adverbs that we have discovered so far. Some of the locative adverbs have been derived by the suffix *-k* and some of them are lexicalised words whose origin is unknown.

Locatives have been determined to be a separate class of their own based upon their function in the Locative Phrase, denoting the location, or direction of the predication.

Locatives:

<i>home</i>	'far'
<i>mbasir</i>	'near'
<i>mava</i>	'near'
<i>akayangak</i>	'near the place' (lit. at the door step)
<i>torok</i>	'there'
<i>orok</i>	'there' (further than torok)
<i>karok</i>	'here'
<i>siyok</i>	'underneath'
<i>heyek</i>	'on top'
<i>akomek</i>	'inside'
<i>hikrik</i>	'outside'
<i>nindik</i>	'in the middle'
<i>mayok</i>	'on one side'
<i>yok</i>	'at the side'
<i>mashik</i>	'to/at a place'
<i>mishik</i>	'to/at a place'
<i>kundiyok</i>	'on top'
<i>sayok</i>	'down'
<i>metenjek</i>	'on top' (lit. on the tree branch)

Examples:

(129). *hinguaka mashi-k ni-mu rasa-wa*
 greenhouse place-LOC 1pl-TOP come.up-NPAST
 'We came up to the garden house'.

(130). *SDA lotu u-nda-ri mishi-k ni-mu*
 SDA.church do-HAB-PAST place-LOC 1pl-TOP

lau-ra
 come.up-PAST
 'We came to the place where SDA's have their church services'.

(131). *torok taka-li*
 there sit.down-rest
 'Sit down there'.

(132). *antonia akomek li-w*
 antonia inside stay-NPAST
 'Antonia is inside the house'.

(133). *fle oso aka siyok sugnya-w*
 pig DEM house underneath sleep-NPAST
 'That pig sleeps under the house'

(134). *hikri-k tala-i*
 outside came-go
 'Come outside and go!'

A special group of locative adverbs are the directionals, which encode both the distance and the direction. The following chart may not be complete, but it shows the directionals discovered so far.

Chart 3.4.3
 Directionals

distance	°	near	°	further away	°	furthest away
-----é-----		-----é-----		-----é-----		-----é-----
upwards	°	kasa uk	°	kasaw karok	°	kasaw karokop
-----é-----		-----é-----		-----é-----		-----é-----
level	°	kasa ik	°	kasai karok	°	kasai karokop
-----é-----		-----é-----		-----é-----		-----é-----
downwards	°	kasa lik	°	kasal karok	°	kasal karokop

Examples:

(135). *aka or-hi mbeei? kasal karok si-ndu*
 house 3s.m-POSS where over there stand-PRG
 'Where is his house? Over there'.

(136). *mbeek mi i-ku? kasa uk a lawu-ku*
 where 3s.m go-FUT up.there 1s go.up-FUT
 'Where are you going to? I'm going up there'.

3.4.4 Temporals

Temporal adverbs (TEMP) are a small closed class of adverbial time words. Some of these are derived with the help of suffix -k and some of them are lexicalized words, whose origin is unknown. Some of them have the ending -kop that seems to denote that something happens a little bit later.

They have been determined as a separate class of their own based on their function in the temporal phrase.

The temporal adverbs listed below are those that we have discovered so far. The list might not be by no means complete.

Temporals:

<i>ter</i>	'just now'
<i>am</i>	'now'
<i>avak</i>	'now'
<i>avakop</i>	'now, a bit later than <u>avak</u>
<i>kumak</i>	'later'
<i>kumakop</i>	'later in the future'
<i>nursembuk</i>	'in the morning'
<i>ushok</i>	'tomorrow'
<i>humnyanak</i>	'the day after tomorrow'
<i>karkal</i>	'two days ago'
<i>kartalik</i>	'three days ago'
<i>hinyer</i>	'yesterday'
<i>hinfleher</i>	'the day before yesterday'
<i>mas</i>	'once'
<i>hoje</i>	'long time ago'
<i>hovok</i>	'some time later / one day'
<i>hovok kasik</i>	'some time later(unknown time)'
<i>wolo wolo</i>	'time to time'

Examples:

(137). ushok Nuku-k a i-ku-a nir
tomorrow Nuku-to 1s go-fut-INT 1s-APPN
'I will go to Nuku tomorrow.'

(138). ter ni-mu i-ku-a
now 1p-TOP go-FUT-INT
'We'll go now.'

(139). avakop farava-k ni-mu i-ku-a
now river-to 1p-TOP go-FUT-INT

'We'll go to the river later on today/ in a while we'll go...'.
'

(140). avak hominak hantava-k ni-mu i-ku-a
now afternoon Hantava-to lp-TOP go-FUT-INT
'We'll go to Hantava this afternoon.'

(141). hinfleher maprik-ik ni-mu ra-ri
day.before.yesterday maprik-LOC lp-TOP come-PAST
'We came from Maprik yesterday.'

(142). avoko mi-hi or wa-ndu? Wahaw hoje
father 2s.m-POSS 3s.m stay-PRG NEG long time ago

mende or ha-ri
NEG 3s.m die-PAST
'Is your father still alive? No, he died very long time ago.'

3.4.5. Derivational Suffix -k

The most used derivational suffix in Mende language is the suffix -k. It is used to mark oblique arguments of the verb. It can be used to form adverbs out of adjectives (ADV), to form a locative phrase (LOC), or temporal phrase (TEM), instrumental phrase (INST) or mark the subordinate clause (SUB).

Examples:

(143). sarere-k nuku-k a i-ku-a nir-a
Saturday-TEMP nuku-LOC 1s go-FUT-TOP 1s-APPN-INT
'I'll go to Nuku on Saturday.'

(144). mbele wolo-k or ta-kwa
what time-TEMP 3s.m come-FUT
'At what time is he coming?'

(145). andule-k or shi-wa
knife-INST 3s.m cut-NPAST
'He cut with a knife.'

(146). arme-k si sili-wa
good-ADVL 3s.f ask-NPAST
'She asked nicely.'

(147). ni nindi las wolo-k tamo nowe minja-n
1pl middle INDEF time-TEMP taro garden grass-OBJ

waro-k *u-ri-k* *ni-mu* *i-ra*
 weed-SUB do-PAST-SUB 1pl-TOP go-PAST
 'One day we went to taro garden in order to weed
 grass.'

3.5. Interrogatives

Interrogatives are a small closed class of question words. Interrogative constructions are primarily used to elicit new information and tend to be in the context of presupposed information (Givon 1985:259; Comrie 1981:56). Interrogative pronouns are discussed under section 3.2.6.

The interrogative word *mberem* 'why' may carry negative connotations and it is often used when one is angry with another person. Then the question 'why did you do that' means actually 'you shouldn't have done it'. It seems that the more intensive the intonation is the more it strengthens the negative meaning of the sentence.

The interrogative words may also be used in rhetorical questions like: *mberem a ukwa na* 'what on earth shall I do!'
 why 1s do-FUT INT

There are two classes of interrogatives based on their usage.

Class 1:

<i>mberem</i>	'why'
<i>mbele</i>	'what'
<i>mbeek</i>	'where (direction)'

Class 2:

<i>mbeei</i>	'where (stative)'
<i>mbeImbel</i>	'how many/much'

Class 1 interrogative words are used in transitive and intransitive clauses. They occur at the beginning of the sentence.

Class 2 interrogative words are used in stative clauses. They occur in predicate position, i.e. replacing the argument that is asked for.

Examples:

- (148). *aka manamta-hi mbeei*
house manamta-POSS where
'Where is Manamta's house?'
- (149). *mbeek or i-w*
where 3s.m go-NPAST
'Where did he go?'
- (150). *jikisi mi-hi mbelmbel*
child 2s.m-POSS how many
'How many children do you have?'
- (151). *shir mberem u-shi-ri-k torok shi ra-r*
dual why do-MDL-PAST-SUB here dual come_PAST
'Why did you come here = you shouldn't have come here' (implies negative connotation)
- (152). *shir mbele shi la-k u-ri-k torok shi*
dual what dual work-SUB do-PAST-SUB here dual

ra-r
come- PAST
'What did you come here to do? / What is the reason of your coming here' (no negative connotation)
- (153). *mbele ka-sir*
what here-3s.f
'What is this here?'

3.5.1. Special Usages of Interrogative Words

Some of the interrogatives have also special usages.

Mbele 'what' can be used as a generic noun meaning 'all kind of things'. In these cases *mbele* is always reduplicated.

- (154). *mbele mbele-n nga ji ra-ri*
what what-OBJ CONJ 3pl. come-PAST
'You came with all kinds of things'.

Mbele can also be used with indefinite pronouns when the object in question is unknown. In these cases *mbele* is never reduplicated, but the indefinite pronoun may be reduplicated i.e. both masculine and feminine form of the indefinite pronoun may be used.

- (155). *mbele kas ta-ka-ndu-a*
what INDEF come-down-PRG-INT

'What (on earth) is coming down there?' (you hear just the noise)

- (156). *mbele kas kar ta-ka-ndu-a*
what INDEF INDEF come-down-PRG-INT
'What (on earth) is coming down there?'

Mberem 'why' may be used as a kind conjunction between two sentences: the first sentence describes a situation and the second sentence describes a consequence or reason of this situation. In these situations *mberem* can often be translated into English as 'therefore' or 'because'. It looks like these sentences could sometimes be used as rhetorical questions. Further investigation is needed to discover the full meaning of the usage of *mberem* in these cases. *Mberem* is also used as an exclamation 'word' like in examples 157 and 158. It can be translated into English as 'how on earth'.

Examples:

- (157). *naku-n na a-ha amangre-w paje mberem*
sago-OBJ 1s eat-MDL be.tired-NPAST mami.yam why

a a-kwa kom
1s eat-FUT NEG
'I ate sago and I'm full up, therefore I cannot eat any yams (even if I'd like to) or 'How an earth can I eat any yams? I have eaten so much sago that I'm full up'.
- (158). *mberem a u-ku-a a-mu hisha-ndu te*
why 1s do-FUT-INT 1s-TOP know -PRG INT
'How on earth shall I do it, I don't remember/know!'
- (159). *bulmakau li-nda-ri mishi-k fri wa-ri.*
cow stay-HAB-PAST place-LOC dual stay-PAST

mberem u-shi-ri-k tenje-aka oso angop
why do-ORD-PAST-SUB middle-house DEM already

hoje-ri
be.full-PAST
'They stayed in the stable, because the guest house was full up' (lit. they stayed in the stable. Why was this? The guest house was full up)

Mbeek 'where' is used as a kind of intensifier in sentences that start with the word hako 'yes' or 'but'.

(160). *hako wahaw te ma avisha mbeek-o lerawu-n*
yes NEG INT men white where-INT work-OBJ

la-nda ambu andule-n la-ha tawu-n la-nda
work-HAB NEG knife-OBJ bring-MDL garden-OBJ work-HAB

ambu
NEG
'White skins do not carry knife and do garden work.'

(161). *hako mbeek li ta-ri ambu*
yes where 3pl come-PAST NEG
'..., but they didn't come (even though they had promised to come).'

3.6. Responses

Responses are words which are used to encode a response in conversational discourse.

Responses:

<i>hey</i>	'yes'
<i>hako</i>	'yes/all right/but'
<i>wako</i>	'yes'
<i>meya</i>	'all right'
<i>mende</i>	'no'
<i>wahaw</i>	'no'
<i>wa</i>	'all right'

Examples:

(162). *aka-k ji-mu wa-nda-ndu*
house-in 3pl-TOP stay-HAB-PRG
'Are you at home?'

hey aka-k ni-mu wa-nda-ndu
yes house-in 1pl-TOP stay-HAB-PRG
'Yes, we are at home.'

(163). *wa apsambu las a ji-shi nak*
all.right cassowary INDEF 1s kill-ORD so.that

a-kw-om

eat-FUT-QPPN(3s.m)

'All right, if I kill a cassowary will you eat it ?'

(164). wako shir lerawu hava kava mende-n la-nda shir-a
yes dual work bone bad very-OBJ do-HAB dual-INT
'Yes, you two are hard working.'

(165). meya kolok ji i
OK now 3pl go
'All right, you go now'.

3.7. Negatives

Negatives are a closed class of words. There are nine negative words which have different functions and different scopes.

Negatives:

ambu: occurs always after the verb and its scope of negation is the previous proposition. It can be followed by affirmative PPN or an intensifier re/te.

(166). hinyer nowe-k a i-r ambu
yesterday garden-LOC 1s go-past NEG
'I didn't go to the garden yesterday.'

(167). ishavaka mende mbele ni a-kwa ambu
greens NEG what 1l. eat-FUT NEG
'We don't have any greens what are we going to eat?'

(168). wa lawe nga na kisha i-ku ambu
all.right who and 1s carry go-FUT NEG
'I don't have anybody with whom to carry it together.'

(169). jivi-k a u-ri ambu re
good-ADV 1s do-PAST NEG INT
'I didn't do it at all well'.

(170). nuku-k a i-ku-a ambu nir
nuku-LOC 1s go-FUT-INT NEG 1s-APPN
'I'm not going to go to Nuku'.

mende: may occur in predicate position of a stative clause and negate the existence of the subject or it may occur following any sentence negating its truth value.

In example 171 mende alone would be a sufficient response to the previous sentence. In this kind of sentences the negation word mende would quite often be repeated twice as if to assure the hearer that the proposition he/she has suggested will not happen.

A sentence like example 172 is actually an indirect request. It states the lack of something with the implication that the hearer should act upon the need of the speaker.

(171). *avak nyi takatukuyi-kwa. mende (a takatukuyi-kwa*
now 2s.f fall.down- fut NEG 1s fall.down-FUT

ambu)

NEG

'Now you are going to fall down. No (I'm not going to fall down).'

(172). *waswo mende*
salt NEG

'I don't have salt.'

(173). *ishavaka mende mbele ni a-kwa ambu*
greens NEG what 1pl eat-FUT NEG

'We do not have any greens, what are we going to eat.'

nambes/nembes: 'not but' occurs in predicate position. Its scope is to negate the previous statement. Alternative can follow or be implied.

(174). *paulon nembes walantala*
paulon NEG walantala
'It wasn't Paulon but Walantala.'

(175). *an tonom ura-nda nembes amber mahasanje an-hi*
1s only work-HAB NEG all brothers 1s-POSS

jikanoka an-hi ol-mu i oso-n la-kwa

sisters 1s-POSS 3pl-TOP come 3s.f-POSS work-FUT

'I won't do it by myself all my siblings and sisters will come and do the work with me.'

wahaw: occurs sentence final preceded by an alteration particle mo 'or'. It gives an alternative to the previous proposition. It can also occur after a negated sentence where ambu is used as the negation word. Then its scope is to strengthen the negative predication of the previous sentence.

(176). *nowe-k mi i-ku mo wahaw*
garden-LOC 2s.m go-FUT or NEG
'Are you going to garden or not?'

(177). *torok li ta-ri ambu. wahaw*
here 3pl came-PAST NEG NEG
'They did not come here. No, they didnt' come here'

hala: occurs sentence final in imperative sentences and it functions as a prohibitive. It can also occur by itself (without the verb).

(178). *hala*
NEG
'Don't do that!'

(179). *an-in aje-wa hala*
1s-OBJ be afraid-NPAST NEG
'Don't be afraid of me.'

kom: occurs after the verb. It expresses that the event in question did not take place, although the speaker would have liked it to happen. It may also imply the speakers intention or wish.

(180). *solwara-k a uja-wa kom te*
sea-LOC 1s wash-NPAST NEG IN
'I'd like to have a swim in the see/ I wish I could swim in the sea.'

(181). *am a misi-wa kom*
now 1s hear-NPAST NEG
'I didn't hear.'

(182). *hantava-k ni i-wa kom*
Hantava-LOC 1pl go-NPAST NEG
'We didn't go to Hantava (but we would have liked to)'

mor: cannot occur by itself, but it occurs together with the negative words *ambu* or *kom* (the order is *mor*+ verb+ *ambu/kom*). This combination functions as a double negative and the meaning is positive.

(183). *job mor a-nda ambu re*
job NEG eat-HAB NEG INT
'Job eats a lot'.

(184). *jikisi mor kla-wa kom te*
child NEG cry-NPAST NEG INT
'The child cried a lot'.

namber: 'not yet' occurs after the verb at the end of a subordinate clause. A clause that finishes with namber is not a complete sentence, but needs another clause to complete the sentence.

(185). *mashi-n or misi namber angop i-ri*
talk-OBJ 3s.m hear NEG already go-PAST
'He had not yet heard the talk when he left'.

(186). *akwa-n na u namber a hala-shi-hi a-mu*
food-OBJ 1s do NEG 1s leave-ORD-MDL 1s-TOP

layi-wa
go.down-NPAST
'I had not yet eaten when I left and went away'.

-fu: an aspect suffix -fu 'in vain' is used as a negator (3.9.6.). It occurs after the verb stem (before the tense markers) and it indicates that a particular action was done in vain. *-Fu* cannot co-occur with any other negation word.

(187). *hinyer ni-mu kar-in nikishi-nikishi-fu-ri*
yesterday 1pl-TOP car-OBJ wait -wait-in vain-PAST
'Yesterday we waited for the car in vain.'

3.8. Particles

Particles are a close set of words which are often difficult to classify. They cannot usually be affixed.

3.8.1. Conjunction Particles

3.8.1.1. Coordination (on Phrase Level)

There are two conjunction particles which function within the coordinated Noun Phrase i.e. nga and fre both of them can be translated into English as 'and'.

The conjunction particle (CONJ) *nga* occurs frequently in all text types. It functions on phrase level and co-ordinates noun phrase constituents (both proper and common nouns). It seems that nga cannot be used to coordinate more than two proper nouns at the time, but it can coordinate up to four or five common nouns. Nga has to occur following each constituent it coordinates.

Fre is used only to coordinate two proper nouns. If there are more than two proper noun constituents nga cannot be used to coordinate all of them. In these situations the conjunction particle fre is needed to group two of the proper nouns as a unit which then can be coordinated with other nominals using nga (see example 198a and 198b).

We are not yet clear whether nga could function as an accompaniment and further investigations are needed.

Examples:

(188). *nokove_las_nga_hulayi_lar_nga_op-mu_nowe-k*
 woman one CONJ man one CONJ 2d.-TOP garden-LOC

i-ra
 go-PAST
 'A woman and a man went to the garden.'

(189). *kuyanga_oso_jivi_mende_siya_nga_ware_nga*
 place DEM good very coconuts CONJ breadfruit CONJ

aka_nga_ma_nga_li_li-nda_mishi
 house CONJ men CONJ 3pl stay-HAB place
 'That place is a good place, it has coconuts breadfruits, houses and people.'

(190). *fle_nijava_oso_jikisi_nga_si_lai_si-mu*
 pig mother DEM child CONJ 3.s.f go gown 3s.f-TOP

lai-ri
 go- down- PAST
 'Mother pig went down with her piglet'.

(191). *Emil_fre_Rosa_jikisi_fri-hi_nokpji_numbu*
 Emil CONJ Rosa children dual-POSS female all
 'Emil and Rosa have only daughters'.

(192a). *Clement_fre_Limala_op-mu_Patrick_nga_fandu-k*
 Clement CONJ Limala dual-TOP patrick CONJ river-LOC

i-ra
 go-past
 'Clement, Limala and Patrick went to the river'.

(192b). *Limala_fre_Patric_op-mu_Clement_nga_fandu-k*
 limala CONJ patric dual-TOP clement CONJ river-LOC

i-ra
go-PAST
'Limala, Patric and Clement went to the river'.

3.8.1.2. Particles at Clause Junctions

3.8.1.2.1. Purpose/Negative Purpose

There are two purpose particles in Mende, one negative and one positive: unak 'lest, so that not' and nak 'so that', which both function on sentence level.

The function of unak has not been completely discovered, but it seems that this conjunction is used to express negative purpose. It can be translated into English as 'lest' or 'so that not'.

Examples:

(193). *kwarkla-n ha nak si tolo unak*
kwarkla-OBJ give so.that 3s.f hold so.that.not

si kla-ku
3s.f cry-FUT
'Give it to Kwarkla so she can hold it and she will not cry'.

(194). *masiji-n tivi unak si horngo-ku-a*
hair-OBJ tie so.that.not 3s.f loosen-FUT-INT
'Tie the hair so that it won't loosen.'

The conjunction particle nak is used in purpose clauses. The main clause precedes the purpose clause, which is marked by conjunction nak 'so that' at the beginning of the clause. It should be noted that the verbs both in the main clause as well as in the subordinate clause are tenseless. The verb in main clause could be interpreted as an imperative.

Examples:

(195). *akayanga-n sukla nak a rasa*
door-OBJ open so.that 1s come.up
'Open the door so that I can come in'.

(196). *muku nak a heye*
show so.that 1s see
'Show me so I see (how it is done).'

3.8.1.2.2. Conditonal Particles

In the Mende language there are three different conditional particles: nahi, na and kop. The Conditonal particle (COND) nahi or the combination of conditional particles na + kop are used in real conditionals. The hypothetical is formed by using the particle kop, which imply the speaker's wish of the event (see 6.2.2.1.).

Examples:

(197). *am nyi a nahi paknuku lap obro awu-k*
now 2s.f eat COND bottom.of.yam INDEF DEM pot-LOC

a lafale-wa bri-a
1s put down-NPAST APPN 2d-INT
'If you have eaten everything else there are still
two bottoms of yam, which I put into the little pot.'

(198). *fome mende nyi lo-shi-wa kop na a-wa*
fish NEG 2s.f take-ORD-NPAST COND 1s eat-NPAST

nir
APPN-1s
'There is no fish, if you would have cought some , I
would have eaten it.'

(199). *julius or li-nda kop akamasunpashi-n or*
julius 3s.m stay-HAB COND rat-OBJ 3s.m

shi-a-rako-wa
kill-eat-COMPL-NPAST
'If Julius would be alive he would kill and eat all
the rats.'

(200). *Ma michiyo-hi raka-ha-nda na kop*
men michiyo-POSS come.down-MDL-HAB COND COND

indik i-ku-a lir
again go-FUT-INT 3pl
'When Michiyo's people have come, are they going
to go back again?'

(201). *kumbaari ovro-n job-in mi ha na kop*
shoes DEM-OBJ job-OBJ 2s.m give COND COND

or-mu rupshi-mende-kwa ri
 3s.m-TOP rejoice-very-FUT 3s.m
 'When you give those shoes to Job, he will rejoice'.

3.8.1.2.3. Reason-Result Particle

In Mende there are two reason-result (RES) particles: osik and onik, which are used in reason result clauses. The reason clause preceding the result clause is unmarked and it is followed by particle osik/onik (RES), which seem to mean 'therefore'; followed by result clause.

It seems that onik can be used only in the near past tense and when the subject is first person singular. Osik is used with other tenses and persons.

Examples:

(202). *hinyer arme-k a sugnya-r ambu osik*
 yesterday good-ADV 1s sleep-PAST NEG therefore

wavu nga os a-mu ambramba si-ndu-a
 heart CONJ 3s.f 1s-TOP fool stay-PRG-INT
 'I didn't sleep well last night, therefore I'm sleepy now.'

(203). *lerawu kraha-k a la-w onik lerawu*
 word straight-ADL 1s do-NPAST therefore work

os-mu jivi mende-k na-ndu-a
 3s.f-TOP good very-ADVL become-HAB-INT
 'I do the work well, therefore it goes on well'.

3.8.2. Alteration Particle

The Alteration Particle mo (ALT) 'or' signals clause alteration. The speaker's intent is to elicit a response from the hearer by asserting two alternative choices. The clause ellipsis occurs with the second clause when a yes-no response is expected. The alteration particle is used also as a conjunction between two co-ordinate clauses (did he come or not).

Examples:

- (204). *nowe-k mi i-ku mo wahaw*
 garden-LOC 2s.m go-FUT ALT NEG
 'Are you going to the garden or not.'
- (205). *james hinyer ta-r or mo wahaw*
 james yesterday come-PAST 3s.m ALT NEG
 'Did James came yesterday or not?'
- (206). *fle oso-n am a ji-wa-s mo mi*
 pig DEM-OBJ now 1s kill-NPAST-3s.f ALT tree
- hakla yeje-n na ji-wa-n mo*
 dry side-OBJ 1s kill-NPAST-1s ALT
 'Did I kill that pig or did I just hit the side of
 the dry tree?'

3.8.3. Intensifier Particles

Three different Intensifier Particles (INT) mende 'very', tinga 'very' and re/te 'very' have been observed. They intensify (strengthen) the proposition they modify.

mende is used with adjectives and adverbials

re/te are in free variation and they are used with adjectives and negatives.

tinga is used with nouns and adjectives. It seems that tinga is never used alone, but it always accompanies either mende or te/re or both of them.

Mende , tinga and re/te can co-occur. If they co-occur, they occur in the following order: mende + tinga + re/te.

Examples:

- (207). *jivi mende re*
 good INT INT
 'Very good.'
- (208). *nokove arme mende tinga re*
 woman beautiful INT INT INT
 'A very, very beautiful woman'
- (209). *ome tinga re*
 true INT INT
 'Very true'.

- (210). *wahaw te*
not INT
'Not at all'.
- (211). *or ta-riambu re*
3s.m came-PAST not INT
'He surely didn't come'.

3.8.4. Dubitative Particle

The Dubitative Particle *mbe* (DUB) expresses the speakers uncertainty of an event and it is often followed by the phrase *ma am te* 'I don't know'. The dubitative particle occurs in clause level.

Examples:

- (212). *Mbele wolok or ta-kwa Sarere-k mbe sande-k*
what time 3s.m come-FUT Saturday-TEMP DUB Sunday-

mbe
DUB

'When is he coming? On Saturday or on Sunday.'

- (213). *ma raka-ku-nda-s mbe, ma am te*
rain come down-FUT-HAB-3s.f DUB
'Will it rain, I don't know.'

3.8.5. Specifier Particle

The Specifier Particle (SPE) *kop* are used in phrase level to specify and limit the noun they modify. Another use of this particle is in hypothetical and real conditional clauses (6.2.2.1.2).

Examples:

- (214). *ni-hi mashi kop mba-wa*
1pl-POSS talk SPE speak-IMP
'Speak only in your language!'

- (215). *nombo kop ni-mu i-ku-a*
road SPE 1p-TOP go-FUT-INT
'We'll go by road/on foot.'

- (216). *naktonklo mende kop warhakla wasmande-n*
sago.stem NEG SPE dry.kapiak wasmande-OBJ

mandinkorme-ri sir-a
kill-PAST 3s.f-INT

'If the sago stem had not been there, the dry kapiak would have killed Wasmande.'

3.8.6. Similarity Particle

The Similarity Particle (SIM) hom is used in phrase level to express similarity between two things that are compared together. The Similarity Particle hom is also used as a conjunction to coordinate two sentences (with different actors) which happen simultaneously (see 6.2.1.3).

Examples:

(217). *nokove hom foso-nda*
woman SIM carry-HAB
'He carries like a woman.'

(218). *lona kawu-k si wa-wo hom mashi-n ni-mu*
lona bed-LOC 3s.f sleep-NPAST SIM talk-OBJ 1pl-TOP

kaye-ndu.
write-PRG
'While Lona was sleeping we wrote stories.'

(219). *hinyer nir mashi-n ni kaye-ro hom korinna*
yesterday 1pl talk-OBJ 1pl write PAST SIM Korinna

naku-n si ligri-ri
sago-OBJ wash-PAST
'Yesterday while we were writing Korinna washed sago.'

(220). *solwara lersuwu hom na-nda*
sea cloud SIM be-HAB
'Sea is like clouds = looks like clouds'.

3.8.7. Benefactive Particle

The benefactive particle njik (BEN) is used after the objective form of personal pronoun to denote that something is done for somebody, or it is used after the possessive form of personal pronoun to form reflexive pronouns.

Examples:

(221). *ishavaka an njik la-ha-ra*
greens 1s BEN take-MDL-bring
'Bring me (some) greens!'

(222). *an-hi njik a u-ri*
1s-POSS BEN 1s do-PAST
'I did it by myself'.

3.9. Verbs

Verbs are a large open class of words, which express actions, processes, and the like. They are defined as a separate word class on the basis of their function as the head of VP, and because of the affixation they take. The verbs in the Mende language are divided into two classes transitive and intransitive based on the number of nominal arguments each verb can take

Based on inflection there are two types of verbs, medial and non-medial.

First, however, I will describe the internal structure of the verb in Mende.

3.9.1. Internal Structure of Verb Words

Based on internal structure there are five types of verb words: simple, reduplicated, compound, directional and lexicalized verb words.

3.9.1.1. Simple Stems

The largest group of verbs is verbs consisting only of a simple stem. The aspect and tense markers are added to this stem. It should be noted that in the Mende language no morphophonemic changes occur when the stem is affixed with tense and aspect marker. The verb stem ends always in a vowel and the markers start with a consonant and as the basic syllable pattern is CV, no changes occur. The basic imperative form is the stem.

Examples:

u	'do'
a	'eat'
yoko	'wash'
mba	'speak'
ji	'hit'
sangla	'jump/hop'
arkunya	'swallow'

3.9.1.2. Reduplicated Verbs

Some of the verb words are reduplicated verbs. Reduplicated verbs are used to express duration or quickness of the action or to denote that the action is done repeatedly. Usually the simple stem is the last part of the reduplicated verb. Quite often the verb is just repeated twice, but sometimes slight morphophonemic changes may also occur. Sometimes an infix -ma- denoting quick action may be added in between the two stems. In the following examples the simple stem is the underlined form. The underlined forms can be used 'alone' and that is the simple stem of the verb.

The verb 'come' is either ta or ra , these forms seem to be in free variation. Other verbs derived from the verb 'come' are also in free variation: taka/raka 'come down' and tasa/rasa 'come up'. When the infix -ma- is inserted, one can say either ta-ma-ra or ra-ma-ra, but *ra-ma-ta or *ta-ma-ta are not acceptable.

Examples:

<u>shirin-shirinya</u>	'run-run'
<u>lau-lau</u>	'go up- go up'
<u>kor-koro</u>	'cut-cut'
<u>u-ma-u</u>	'do-quickly-do'
<u>ta-ma-ra</u>	'come-quickly-come'
<u>hisha-kasha</u>	'think-think'
<u>ana-sa-sa-sawe</u>	'talk together-talk-talk'
<u>ana-ji-ji</u>	'together-fight-fight'
<u>nur-nuru</u>	'pick up'
<u>ndura-ma-ra</u>	'to be fed up quickly'
<u>uj-uja</u>	'wash-wash' (wash body)
<u>yok-yoko</u>	'wash-wash' (wash other things)
<u>hayi-mbayi</u>	'laugh-laugh'

3.9.1.3. Compounded Verbs

Some of the verb stems are a compound of two or more verb stems.

Examples:

<u>uku + tolo</u>	=> <u>ukutolo</u>	'wash somebody'
water hold		

'Go up that coconut, take (one) and come down'. (the object is higher than the speaker)

(225). *li klo-nda ondo-n li haw-ewe-he ol-mu*
3pl peel-HAB DEM-OBJ 3pl up.put-MDL 3pl-TOP

nil-ik tiri-wa
nail-INSTR hit-NPAST
'Then they nail the ones they have peeled and put them up'. (the object will be higher than the speaker)

3.9.1.5. Lexicalized Verbal Forms

The fifth group of verbs word are lexicalized verbal forms. They are verbs that have a lexicalized medial marker in the middle of the two verb stems. It seems that these constructions are needed to avoid confusions. This is especially the case when the latter part of the serial construction is the verb ra 'come', which could easily be confused with the near past (NPAST) tense marker -ra.

Examples:

i-hi-ra 'go and come back'
go-MDL-come

i-ra 'went'
go-NPAST

la-ha-ra 'take and bring'
bring-MDL-come

la-ra 'took'
take-NPAST

3.9.2. Intransitive Verbs

Intransitive verbs are a large open class of words that normally occur with a single nominative argument, i.e. subject. They can not take a second nominal argument. Intransitive verbs denote states, processes or events involving the subjects.

Examples:

(226). *obro hantava-k i-wa bri-a*
DEM hantava-LOC go-NPAST 2d.-INT
'They two went to Hantava.'

- (227). *max or-mu ese-ndu-a*
 max 3s.m-TOP walk-PRG-INT
 'Max is walking (knows how to walk).'
- (228). *ma oto nokove or-hi angop ha-ri*
 man DEM woman 3s.m-POSS already die-PAST
 'That man's wife died.'
- (229). *a shirin-shirinya-ha na layi-ri fle oso*
 1s run-run-MDL 1s go down-PAST pig DEM

angop jikisi nga i-ri
 already child CONJ go-PAST
 'I ran and ran, but the pig went away with its piglet.'
- (230). *masikormbo avoko laka or-mu aka-k wa-ra*
 masikormbo father old 3s.m-TOP house-LOC stay-PAST
 'An old man called Masikormbo stayed in his house'

3.9.3. Transitive Verbs

Transitive verbs are a large open class of words that can take two nominal arguments of subject and object. The object is usually marked with suffix -n (-in if the stem ends in a consonant). Transitive verbs may also have a third nominal argument i.e. indirect object.

We have not established a third verb class i.e. ditransitive verb class, because in the Mende language there are no special ditransitive object forms nor are there any verbs that would necessarily require two objects. It is rather common that the indirect object is implied in the first clause and made overt only in the following clause like in examples 231 and 232. The indirect object may also be expressed with benefactive like in example 233

Examples:

- (231). *akwa-n or ha-ri-k a-mu a-ra*
 food-OBJ 3s.m give-PAST-SUB 1s-TOP eat-NPAST
 'He gave food (for me = implied) and I ate (the food).'
- (232). *akwa ondo-n si la-ha-ra-ri nukmango*
 food DEM-OBJ 3s.f give-MDL-bring-PAST daughter.in.law

si-hi si ndura-ri
 3s.f-POSS 3s.f be.fed.up-PAST
 'She brought food (for her daughter-in-law), but her daughter-in-law didn't like it (the food she brought).'

- (233). *kowe kaso-n an njik si ha-ri*
 clothes DEM-OBJ 1s BEN 3s.f give-PAST
 'She gave me this dress/piece of clothing'.
- (234). *ma lar pita-hi akwa-n hirnya-ri*
 man INDEF pita-POSS food-OBJ steal-PAST
 'Somebody stole Peter's food.'
- (235). *asa sunja fle-n or-mu fale-ra*
 dog stone pig-OBJ 3s.m-TOP sniff-PAST
 'Stone (dog) sniffed a pig.'
- (236). *li rasa-ha ol-mu ari li-hi-n*
 3pl come up-MDL 1pl-TOP feather 3pl-POSS-OBJ
 o-ra
 wear-PAST
 'They came up and put on their feathers.'

3.9.4. Medial verbs

In the Mende language there are medial verbs (MDL) that occur in the middle of the sentence. They mark that the sentence is not finished, but something else is going to follow. Medial verbs can be preceded by all aspect markers.

Medial verbs do not get any tense endings. Tense is obvious only when one gets at the end of the sentence where there is the final verb that carries the tense. The medial verbs are marked with h+ the final vowel of the verb stem. The clause ending with a verb suffix -hV (= -ha, -he, -hi, -ho, -hu) always has raising intonation.

Same Subject Sequential action:

The medial verb system in Mende is very rudimentary and medial verbs are used only when actions happen one after the other, i.e: in sequence and the subject is always the same.

It should be noted that some of these medial verbs have become lexicalized items i.e. verb words (*i-hi-ra* 'go and come back', *la-ha-ra*, take and bring'). In these cases the intonation does not go up, but stays level.

Examples:

- (237). *nokove oso kombe las shoko-ho kowen si*
 woman DEM stick INDEF carry-MDL bag-OBJ 3s.f
- tomboko-ho* *masiji-n kowe-k* *ishi-tivi-hi*
 carry-MDL head-OBJ cloth-INSTR tie-make.knot-MDL

os-mu i-ra
 3s.f-TOP go-PAST
 'That woman carries a stick and a bag and ties her
 hair and goes (away).'

(238). *li rasa-ha ol-mu ari li-hi-n*
 3pl come up-MDL 3pl-TOP feather 3pl-POSS-OBJ

o-ra
 wear-PAST
 'They came up and put on their feathers.'

(239). *an sarnjava na kisha-ha na-mu lau-shi-hi*
 1s bow-OBJ 1s carry-MDL 1s-TOP go up-ORD-MDL

na-mu flefar i-ra
 1s-TOP pig.hunting go-PAST
 'I took my bow (and arrow) and went hunting pig.'

(240). *a shirin-shirinya-ha na layi-ri fle oso*
 1s run-run-MDL 1s go down-PAST pig DEM

angop jikisi nga la-ha i-ri
 already child CONJ take-MDL go-PAST
 'I ran and ran and went down the mountain, but the
 mother pig had already gone away with its piglet.'

Different Subject Sequential Action:

In the case of different subject sequential action two non-medial clauses must be used. The first clause is subordinated to the second clause.

Examples:

(241). *akwa-n or ha-ri-k a-mu a-ra*
 food-OBJ 3s.m give-PAST-SUB 1s-TOP eat-NPAST
 'He gave food (for me = implied) and I ate it.'

(242). *karem or mba-ri-k si-mu mba-ra*
 like.this 3s.m speak-PAST-SUB 3s.f-TOP speak-NPAST
 'As he had spoken like this, then she spoke...'

Same subject simultaneous action:

In cases of same subject simultaneous action a medial construction is not used, but a construction yok...yok 'both ...and' is used . See section Co-ordination with yok (6.2.1.2).

Different Subject simultaneous action:

In cases of different subject simultaneous action a medial construction is not used either, but a similarity particle hom is used. See section Co-ordination with hom (6.2.1.3).

3.9.5. Auxiliary Verbs

In the Mende language there are three verbs that can be used as auxiliary verbs.

3.9.5.1. Verb u 'do'

The verb u 'do' is used as an auxiliary verb in purpose clauses , clauses that express that something nearly happened, and with Pidgin loan verbs.

Chart 3.9.5.1.

Chart: Purpose/nearly happened

verb1+ <u>-k</u>	<u>u</u> +TNS	+ <u>-k</u>	verb2+ TNS
------------------	---------------	-------------	------------

The first verb stem has subordinator -k (SUB) attached to it and is followed by verb u +appropriate tense, followed by the second verb+appropriate tense.

Examples:

(243). *ma raka- k u- wa-k u-ndu-a*
rain come.down-SUB do-NPAST-SUB do-PGR-INT
'It is nearly raining'.

(244). *hinyer ma raka-k u-ri-k u-ri*
yesterday rain come.down do-PAST-SUB do-PAST
'Yesterday it nearly rained'.

(245). *nindi las woloK ma an-hi-n a laninguap-ik*
middle INDEF time man 1s-POSS-OBJ 1s laninguap-LOC

heye-k u-ri-k a i-ri
look-SUB do-PAST-SUB 1s go-PAST
'Once I went to see my friend at Laninguap'.

(246). *avak nurum hunguaka-k Roni-n a heye-k*
now morning garden.house-LOC Roni-OBJ 1s see-SUB

u-wa-k a i-wa
do-NPAST-SUB 1s go-NPAST

'In the morning I went to see Roni at the
gardenhouse'.

(247). *hinyer AOG-ik ni lotu-k uri-k*
yesterday AOG-LOC 1pl worship-SUB do-PAST-SUB

ni i-ri
1pl go-PAST

'Yesterday we went to church to AOG'.

(248). *beten u* 'pray'

(249). *lotu u* 'worship'

3.9.5.2. Verb na 'become'

The verb na 'become' is used as an auxiliary verb to form the existential verb phrase (see 4.5.2.). Na functions also as an ordinary verb.

Examples:

(250). *ma wasilaka-k si raka-ri-k kowe*
rain big-ADV 3s.f come.down-PAST-SUB clothes

uku-nga-na-ri sir
water-CONJ-become-PAST 3s.f

'It rained heavily and clothes got wet'.

(251). *job jere-nga-na-wa*
job mud-CONJ-be-NPAST
'Job is muddy'.

3.9.5.3. Verb i 'go'

So far we have found three occasions where the verb i 'go' is used as an auxiliary verb. It is used with the adjective hakla 'dry' and the meaning is 'become dry'.

(252). *kowe angop hakla i-ri*
clothes already dry go-PAST
'The clothes dried up'.

It is used denoting how the body gets rid of its waste. In these cases *i* has become *yi*. It should be noted that this feature is found also in Kwanga II dialect (see Manabe, 1979).

(253). *maku-yi* = *ma-uku-yi* 'to urinate'
man-water-go

(254). *se-yi* 'to excremen
faeces'

3.9.6. Verb Suffixes

The following chart illustrates the order of different suffixes.

Chart 3.9.6.
Verb suffixes

stem +/-	-fu-	----->	-----	î		Ö>- +/-	-MDL-
°	-krestafa-			û>	+/-ORD-	-Ä	
û--->---	+/-	-rako-	+/-	-ndirna-	°	°	
°				-ndirsa-	°	Û-	+/- TNS
°				-î			
°						Ö-	+/- TNS
Û->---	+/-	-HAB-	-----	-----	-----	Û	

The mood suffix *mba* is not in this chart, see discussion under Mood (3.9.6.4.).

Up to now it has been observed that only one verb, *rupshi* "rejoice, be happy" seem to be able to get a modifier (intensifier) *mende* "very" between the verb stem and the tense markers, i.e. *a rupshi-mende-ra* 'I was very happy'.

Examples:

(255). *hinyer ni-mu kar-in nikisi-nikisi-fu-ri*
yesterday 1pl-TOP car-OBJ wait-wait-in.vain-PAST
'Yesterday we waited for the car in vain.'

(256). *naku-n or a-rako-shi-ri-k nowe-k or*
sago-OBJ 3s.m eat-COMPL-ORD-PAST-SUB garden-LOC 3s.m

i-ri

eat-PAST

'When he had finished eating the sago, he went to the garden'.

(257). *hinyer ni ta-ndirsa-ha ni-mu lotu u-ra*
 yesterday 1pl come-together-MDL 1pl-TOP worship-PAST
 'Yesterday we gathered together and worshipped'.

(258). *mas naku-n na a-nda-ri ter naku-n na*
 before sago-OBJ 1s eat-HAB-PAST now sago-OBJ 1s

a-nda ambu
 eat-HAB NEG

'Previously I used to eat sago. Now I do not eat sago
 /I do not have the habit of eating sago'.

There is no concord between subject and verb. There are no prefixes.

3.9.6.1. Aspect Suffixes

In Mende both transitive and intransitive verbs can take aspect suffixes. The aspect suffixes came immediately after the stem and are followed by the tense suffixes if any.

The following **aspect suffixes** have been observed.

-rako-: marks completion of an action (COMPL). The Tok Pisin equivalent would be '*pinisim pinis*'. It means that something has been done completely. For example the food has been completely eaten = there is nothing left of it. It can be used both with intransitive and transitive verbs.

Examples:

(259). *naku-n or a-rako-ri*
 sago-OBJ 3s.m eat-COMPL-PAST
 'He ate all the sago'.

(260). *ma amber i-rako-ri*
 men all go-COMPL-PAST
 'All the people had gone'. (There was no one left).

(261). *li taje-he li taje-rako-nda-k ol-mu siri-n*
 3pl put-MDL 3pl put-COMPL-HAB-SUB 3pl-TOP morota-OBJ

ta-wa
 bring-NPAST
 'They put them up, and when they had put them all up
 (finished this), they brought morota'.

-ndirna-: marks that something happens quickly and takes only a short time. It seems that -ndirna can be used only with verbs of perception (see, hear).

Examples:

(262). *kar ta-wa-k a heye-ndirna-ha a-mu*
car come-NPAST-SUB 1s look-quick.action-MDL 1s TOP

layi-wanyi-wa
go.down-hide-NPAST

'When the car came I looked at it quickly and hid myself'.

-ndirsa- : marks the gathering together of something.

Examples:

(263). *hinyer ni ta-ndirsa-ha ni-mu lotu u-ra*
yesterday 1pl come-together-MDL 1pl-TOP worship-PAST
'Yesterday we gathered together and worshipped together'.

(264). *ma amber tala-ndirsa-ri-k ni-mu*
men all come.up-together-PAST-SUB 1pl-TOP

mashi-n sawe-ra
talk-OBJ speak-PAST

'After all the men had gathered together we started the meeting'.

-fu-: marks that something has happened in vain (NEG)

Example:

(265). *hinyer ni-mu kar-in nikishi-nikishi-fu-ri*
yesterday 1p-TOP car-OBJ wait-wait-in.vain-PAST
'Yesterday we waited for the car in vain.'

-krestafa-: is an aspect marker that marks that something almost happened.

(266). *avi-n a heye-wa mi-k si li-wa-k a*
bird-OBJ 1s see-NPAST tree-LOC 3s.f stay-NPAST-SUB 1s

ji-krestafa-ha mi tava-yeje-n a-mu
shoot-almost-MDL tree hand-side-OBJ 1s-TOP

ji-wa
shoot-NPAST
'I saw a bird sitting on a branch, I shot and almost got it, but I shot the branch of the tree'.

(267). *jini nom a heye-krestafa-ri-k simbalesik*
tail only 1s look-almost-PAST-SUB altogether

boska-k si hongo-shi-ri-k na-mu lau-hu
grass-LOC 3s.f stretch-ORD-PAST-SUB 1s-TOP go.up-MDL

kar nombo-k a-mu lau-ra
car road-LOC 1s-TOP go.up-PAST
'I saw only the tip of its tail (snake) when it went to the grass, and I went up to the car road'.

(268). *a raka-wa-k minja-n a ese-wa-k*
1s come.down-NPAST-SUB grass-OBJ 1s step-NPAST-SUB

si sereko-wa-k a es-krestafa-ha
3s.f be.slippery-NPAST-SUB 1s step-almost-MDL

a-mu tukuji-k-mba u-wa
1s-TOP fall-SUB-speak do-NPAST
'I was coming down and stepped on the grass, which was slippery, I nearly slipped and fell down'.

-nda-: marks habitual action (HAB). It is also used in nonrestrictive relative clauses (see) and as a derivational suffix when adjectives are derived from verbs (see 3.3.1). The general meaning of -nda- seems to encode a 'state', but it might well be that -nda- has many other functions, too, and further investigations are needed.

Examples:

(269). *andy naku-n a-nda ambu*
andy sago-OBJ eat-HAB NEG
'Andy doesn't eat sago = he hasn't got a habit of eating sago'.

(270). *hanna-maria kar-in tolo-nda sir-a*
hanna maria car-OBJ hold-HAB 3s.f-INT
'Hanna Maria knows how to drive car= drives car'.

(271). *an kar-in tolo-nda ambu nir-a*
 1s car-OBJ hold-HAB NEG 1s-INT
 'I don't drive'.

-shi-: marks the order in which the action takes place (ORD).

Examples:

(272). *an nga nalombo nga tarja-n shi-mu mba-shi-*
 1s CONJ nalombo CONJ tarja-OBJ dual-TOP speak-ORD-

ri-k hunguaka-k si-mu lau-ra
 PAST-SUB gardenhouse-LOC 3s.f-TOP go.up-PAST
 'When I and Nalombo had told Tarja to go to the
 gardenhouse, she went up there'.

(273). *akwa-n na u namber a hala-shi-hi a-mu*
 food-OBJ 1s do NEG 1s leave-ORD-MDL 1s-TOP

layi-wa
 go.down-NPAST
 'I had not yet eaten when I left and went away'.

(274). *naku-n or a-rako-shi-hi or-mu i-ra*
 sago-OBJ 3s.m eat-COMPL-ORD-MDL 3s.m-TOP go-PAST
 'After he had eaten the sago he went'.

3.9.6.2. Tense suffixes:

In the Mende language the tense markers are attached to the verb stem. If there are any aspect markers they do occur before the tense marker. The only suffix that can occur after the tense markers is the subordinator *-k* (SUB) followed optionally by intensifier *-a* or *-o*.

Chart 3.9.6.2
 Tense suffixes

past	near past	present/present progressive		future
PAST	NPAST	PRS	PRG	FUT
-ri	-w	-ndu	-ndu	-ku
-ra	-wa	-ndow	-ndow	-kwa

The present tense (PRS) is *-ndu* and *-ndow* (or this might be *-ndu-w*). At this stage it is difficult to say whether there are two different present tense markers or whether these two markers

are in free variation. Presently we hear these two and the people say that they mean the same thing.

It seems that the **present tense** covers both **present** and **present progressive** (PRG). In those examples where the progressive tense has been the more natural English translation it has been glossed as PRG. In other examples it has been glossed as PRS.

The present tense is used when describing something that is happening at the moment of speaking or just before or after.

Examples:

(275). *mbele mi u-ndow*
what 3s.m do-PRG
'What are you doing?'

(276). *naku-n na a-ndow*
sago-OBJ 1s eat-PRG
'I'm eating sago'.

(277). *max or-mu ese-ndu-a*
max 3s.m-TOP walk-PRS-INT
'Max is walks/knows how to walk.'

The near past tense (NPAST) -w / -wa is used as 'today's past', when talking about a past event that has happened very recently - during the same day. It seems that -wa and -w are in free variation, -wa seems to have more emphasis than -w.

Sometimes there seems to be no great difference between the usage of the near past tense and the present tense. Example 286 is said in a situation where a child started to cry after another child had hit him. Quite often we have heard that the present tense has been used in a similar situation i.e. lawe ji-w (who hit-NPAST), lawe ji-ndow (who hit-PRG) and lawe ji-ndu-a (who hit-PRS-INT) seem to be all acceptable in this situation.

Examples:

(278). *mbeek or i-w*
where 3s. m go-NPAST
'Where did he go (just now)?'

(279). *nyr-in aje-w*
2s.f-OBJ be.afraid-NPAST
'(He) is afraid of you'.

- (280). *lawe ji-w*
 who hit-NPAST
 'Who hit him (just now)?'
- (281). *lawe naku-n a-rako-wa.*
 who sago-OBJ eat-COMPL-NPAST
 'Who ate the sago (all of it..')

The remote past tense (PAST) markers *-ri* and *-ra* are not interchangeable, we are still working on this and trying to find out what the difference is, it seems that *-ri* denotes something that happens earlier than *-ra*.

It might be that the time is not at all the most important feature that determines whether *-ri* or *-ra* is used. It seems that *-ra* is used in opening quotes and *-ri* in close quotes (see more in discourse features). It could be that *-ra* is used in foregrounding and *-ri* in backgrounding. Further investigations are needed to get a clearer picture.

Examples:

- (282). *ma lar pita-hi akwa-n hirnya-ri*
 man INDEF pita-POSS food-OBJ steal-PAST
 'Somebody stole Peter's food'.
- (283). *ma oto nokove or-hi angop ha-ri*
 man DEM wife 3s.m-POSS already die-PAST
 'That men's wife has died'.
- (284). *ta am si layi-ri-k si grinya-ri-k*
 sun now 3s.f go.down-PAST-SUB 3s.f become.dark-PAST-SUB
- kuyanga-k ni-mu ra-ra*
 village-LOC 3pl-TOP come-PAST
 'When the sun had gone down and it had become dark we came to the village'.

The future tense (FUT) marker *-ku* and *-kwa* (FUT) are used when describing actions that will happen in future. It seems that it is also used in questions to ask somebody's preferences (polite question).

At this stage we do not know whether there are two different future tense markers or whether *-ku* and *-kwa* are in free variation or whether *-kwa* is actually *-ku-a* (future+intensifier).

Examples:

(285). *ushok nuku-k a i-ku-a nir*
tomorrow nuku-LOC 1s go-FUT-INT 1s-APPN
'I'll go to Nuku tomorrow'.

(286). *kaso-n nyi a-ku*
this-OBJ 3s.f eat-FUT
'Do you want to eat this?'

(287). *kar a-ku ony*
INDEF eat-FUT 3s.f-QPPN
'Do you want to eat some of this?'

(288). *mbeek mi i-ku*
where 3s.m go-FUT
'Where are you going?'

(289). *fandu-k a i-ku*
river-LOC 1s go-FUT
'I'm going to the river'.

3.9.6.3. The Medial Verb Marker (MDL) is h+the last vowel of the verb stem. Tense and MDL cannot co-occur.

3.9.6.4. Mood Suffix mba

So far we have discovered only one mood suffix, i.e. the verb 'speak' mba, which is used as a mood suffix denoting the speakers wish/want. It seems to function like a kind of subjunctive marker.

Mba follows another verbal stem, which has the suffix -k (SUB) attached to it. Mba can be followed only by the medial verb marker. The clause expressing the wish/want cannot stand by itself as an independent clause, but it is always followed by a main clause (= the clause that carries the tense markers).

Examples:

(290). *hinyer ni bred-in la-k-mba-ha, hamtava-k*
yesterday 1pl bread-OBJ get-SUB-say-MDL Hamtava-LOC

ni-mu lau-ri
1pl-TOP go.up-PAST
'We wanted to buy break so we went to Hamtava yesterday.'

(291). *hinyer li beten u-ri-k a i beten*
yesterday 3pl pray do-PAST-SUB 1s go pray

u-k-mba-ha na hishi-ri
do-SUB-speak-MDL 1s think-PAST
'When they had a prayer meeting yesterday, I wanted
to go, too, and I thought of going.'

3.9.7. Serial Verbs.

The Mende language makes frequent use of serial verb constructions. Often the actions are described very much in detail and the use of serial verb constructions highlights this. Reduplication is used very often to describe the length or speed of an action. The following two structures have been defined as Serial Verb Constructions in Mende: juxtaposition and reduplication.

3.9.7.1. Juxtaposition of Verb Stems

The first way of forming a Serial Verb s by making a compound verb word by joining several verb stems one after another.

Examples:

(292). *taka-li-masi*
come.down-stay-rest
'Sit down and rest'.

(293). *kor-ormbe*
cut-throw
'Pour'.

(294). *si-masi*
stand-rest
'Stand and rest'.

(295). *u-hey*
do-look
'Learn (try to do)'.

(296). *a-hey*
eat-look
'Taste (try to eat)'.

3.9.7.2. Reduplication of the Verb Stem

The second way of forming a Serial Verb is by reduplication of the verb stem or part of it. This is done to describe duration of an event or for the sake of emphasis. Up to four or five repetitions have been observed in oral speech.

Four different ways of duplication have been observed so far.

1. Simple Repetition

nikishi-nikishi-fu-ri
wait-wait- NEG-PAST 'kept on waiting in vain'

shirinya-shirinya
run-run 'keep on running'

2. Part of the verb is repeated

ana-saw-saw-sawe (anasawe = talk together)
together-talk-talk-talk keep on talking together

3. Slight sound change or omission of vowel

senga-sangashi 'squeeze'

hisha-kasha 'forget'

harka-sarka 'tickle'

saw-sawe 'talk a long time'

4. Insertion of infix -ma, which denotes quick action, between verbs.

u-ma-u
do-quickly-do 'to do something quickly'

ndura-ma-ra
be.tired-quickly-come 'be tired quickly'

Examples:

(297). *si las-lasa-ha si las-lasa-ha mende si*
3s.f look-look-MDL 3s.f look-look-MDL NEG 3s.f

heye-ra ambu
look-PAST NEG
'She looked and looked, but couldn't find'

- (298). *apsambu ondo ermbak ta-ra-ra fa orok*
 cassowary DEM always come-come-come river there
- uj-uja i-nda-ri*
 wash-wash go-HAB-PAST
 'The cassowaries had a habit of coming to that river
 for a wash'.
- (299). *lawe pushi-n nur-nuru la-la-i-ndu-a*
 who cucumbers-OBJ pick-pick take-take-go-HAB-INT
 'Who keeps on taking the cucumbers?'
- (300). *ta-ma-ra*
 come-quickly-come
 'Come quickly!'
- (301). *ma oto mashi-n or saw-sawe-ri*
 man DEM talk-OBJ 3s.m speak=speak-PAST
 'That man talked for a long time'.
- (302). *am a hisha-kasha-ndu te*
 now 1s think-think-PRG INT
 'Now I don't know it'. (I'm forgetting it now)
- (303). *kolomalok or-mu ndura-ma-ra-ri*
 quickly 3s.m-TOP be.tired-quickly-come-PAST
 'He got tired very quickly'.

4. PHRASE

4.0 Introduction

The phrase is composed of an obligatory nuclear constituent (head) and a periphery of optional modifying constituents. Phrases are typically constituents of the next higher level, the clause, though there may be embedding of one phrase into another (recursion).

4.1. Noun Phrase

There are four basic classes of noun phrases displayed in Mende: the modified noun phrase (4.1.1.), the possessive noun phrase (4.1.2.), the appositional noun phrase (4.1.3.) and the coordinate noun phrase (4.1.4.).

4.1.1. Modified Noun Phrase

The most frequently occurring phrase is the modified noun phrase (MNP). All slots are optional except the head slot. The MNP may function as subject, object or recipient in clauses or as the head of locative and temporal phrases. The structure of the MNP is displayed in Chart 4.1.1.

Chart 4.1.1
Modified Noun Phrase

+Head	+/-Modifier	+/-Modifier	+/-Modifier
N	ADJP	DEM	INT
Pron	*rel.clause		
PNP			

* the relative clause may come either before or after the head.

The modified noun phrase consists of an obligatory head manifested by a noun, pronoun or possessive noun phrase, followed by optional modifiers : a relative clause, an adjective phrase, demonstrative and/or intensifier.

(304). asa wasilaka nalmingrip ondo mor mayele-wa ambu
dog big three DEM NEG bark-NPAST NEG
'Those three big dogs barked a lot'.

(305). telemba oso awari ambu wasilaka hom na-nda
mountain DEM small NEG big SIM be-HAB
'That mountain is not small it is big'.

(306). *pusi oso mas ni la-ha-ra-ri angop li*
 cat DEM before 1pl take-MDL-come-PAST already 3pl

ji-a-ri
 kill-eat-PAST
 'They ate the cat that you previously brought here'.

(307). *fle nom flenoko nom os a-mu heye-ra*
 pig only female.pig only 3s.f 1s-TOP see-PAST
 'I saw only the female pig.'

4.1.2. Possessive Noun Phrase

Possessive noun phrase (PNP) consists of two obligatory elements: head (= the thing possessed) and the possessor. The possessive noun phrase in Mende is marked by the possessive case suffix *-hi*, which is attached to the noun/pronoun denoting the possessor.

Kinship terms are obligatory possessed. Body parts are not obligatory possessed in the Mende language.

There are three different ways of forming a possessive noun phrase in Mende. Their internal structure varies in the following way in decreasing frequency.

Chart 4.1.2.
 Possessive Noun Phrase

1.	+ Head NP		+ Possessor pronoun+ <u>hi</u> noun+ <u>hi</u>
2.	+ Possessor NP	+ Head NP	+ Possessor pronoun copy of the head of the NP+ <u>hi</u>
3.	+ Possessor noun+ <u>hi</u>		+ Head NP

Type 1 is the basic possessive noun phrase: the obligatory head, manifested by a noun phrase is followed by the possessor, manifested by a noun or pronoun+ possessive case marker *-hi*.

Examples of Type 1:

(308). aka agri an-hi ka-sir-a
house new 1s-POSS here-3s.f-INT
'My new house is here'.

(309). mundala korinna-hi
brother Korinna-POSS
'Korinna's brother.'

Type 2 is the most productive possessive noun phrase. The possessor is first 'introduced' by a noun phrase, the first noun phrase is followed by a head, manifested by a noun phrase, followed by possessor, which is the pronoun copy (marked with possessive case -hi) of the head of the first noun phrase.

The use of this two stage possessive phrase is very typical in Mende. It is the only possible way to express multiple possessive phrases (Korinna's sister's husband). It seems to be a preferred way of introducing a new subject/topic in two stages. The first topic is given, pre-topic, which is not the true final topic of the clause, but it is the possessor of the second, final topic of the clause. The possessive phrase defines that relation between pre-topic and the final topic overtly.

Examples of Type 2:

(310). korinna mundala si-hi
Korinna brother 3s.f-POSS
'Korinna's brother.'

(311). nokove oso mundala si-hi
women DEM brother 3s.f-POSS
'That woman's brother'

(312). ma avisha oto nokove or-hi oso nga
man white DEM woman 3s.m-POSS DEM CONJ

op-mu jikisi fri-hi frijip
dual-TOP children dual-POSS two
'That white man and his wife have two children.'

(313). tavambongo nga jikisi si-hi nga fri-mu mba-ra
tavambongo and child 3s.f-POSS and 2d-TOP speak-PAST
'Tabambongo and her child talked (together).'

(314). julian nokove or-hi sanje si-hi
julian wife 3s.m-POSS older.sibling 3s.f-POSS
Julian's wife's older sister.'

(315). korinna sanje si-hi tekla hulayi
Korinna older.sibling 3s.f-POSS Tekla man

si-hi Moses jikisi fri-hi peter nella
3s.f-POSS Moses child 2d.-POSS Peter Nella

roberta

Roberta

'Korinna's older sister's Tekla's and her husband's
Moses's children are Peter, Nella and Roberta.'

(316). ma oto nokove or-hi oso angop ha-ri
man DEM wife 3s.m-POSS DEM already die-PAST
'That man's wife died/ the wife of that man died'.

(317). yasumbu oso jikisi si-hi or-mu angop
2nd.wife DEM child 3s.f-POSS 3s.m-TOP already

wasilaka-k na-r

big-ADV become-PAST

'The second wife's child became adult'.

Type 3 is the opposite of the type 1. Here the possessor, manifested by a noun + possessive case marker -hi comes before the head, which is manifested by a NP. The possessor cannot be a pronoun. It seems that this type of the possessive noun phrase is not used very frequently.

Examples of Type 3:

(318). korinna-hi mundala
korinna-POSS brother
'Korinna's brother.'

4.1.3. Appositional Noun Phrase

The appositional noun phrase (APNP) is a construction where two noun phrases refer to the same person or thing. The head of the appositional noun phrase is the left-most NP with the appositional co-referent juxtaposed to the right. The APNP may function as subject, object or recipient together with its co-referential head. The structure of the APNP is as follows:

Chart 4.1.3.
Appositional Noun Phrase

+ Head	+ Apposition
MNP	NP consisting of Pronoun or Proper Noun
PNP	
CNP	

The appositional noun phrase consists of an obligatory head element manifested by modified noun phrase (MNP), possessive noun phrase (PNP) or co-ordinate noun phrase (CNP) followed by an obligatory apposition manifested by a pronoun or proper noun.

Examples:

(319). *ma oto or-mu wanje tava-ra*
 man DEM 3s.m-TOP kind.of.rope break-PAST
 'That man broke a rope'.

(320). *korinna sanje si-hi tekla, hulayi*
 Korinna older.sibling 3s.f-POSS Tekla man

si-hi Moses, jikisi fri-hi peter nella
 3s.f-POSS Moses child 2d.-POSS Peter Nella

roberta

Roberta

'Korinna's older sister Tekla and her husband
 Moses's children are: Peter, Nella and Roberta'.

(321). *yasumbu-hi nokove os-mu gria-ra*
 2nd.wife-POSS woman 3s.f-TOP argue-PAST
 'The second wife's (son's) wife argued'.

(322). *Clement fre Limala op-mu Patrick ng a fanduk*
 Clement CONJ Limala d.-TOP patrick CONJ river-LOC

i-ra

go-past

'Clement, Limala and Patrick went to the river'.

4.1.4. Co-ordinate Noun Phrase

Co-ordinate noun phrases (CNP) are serial constructions where different co-ordinated terms have the same semantic role or function (Dik 1980:192).

The CNP consists of two or more obligatory constituents manifested by a MNP. Each MNP has an obligatory co-ordinate conjunction *nga* or *fre* attached to it.

Chart 4.1.4.
Co-ordinate Noun Phrase

Type 1:	MNP1 +nga MNP2 +nga MNP3 +nga PNP
sub type	MNP1 MNP2 +nga PNP
Type 2:	Proper N1 +fre +Proper N 2
or	
Type 3:	Proper N1 +fre +Proper N2 + MNP 2 +nga

There is a subtype to type 1, where only the last nga 'and' is obligatory. This subtype shows accompaniment rather than co-ordination (examples 326 and 327).

Nga is used when there are more than two obligatory constituents that need to be co-ordinated. It seems that nga cannot be used to coordinate more than two proper nouns at the time. If there are more than two proper noun constituents fre is needed too.

Fre is used only to co-ordinate two proper noun constituents.

Examples of Type 1:

- (323). or nga mahako nga fri-mu raka-ra
3s.m.CONJ Mahako CONJ 2d.-TOP come.down-PAST
'He and Mahako came down'.
- (324). wasklokowe oso nga jikisi si-hi nga
devil woman DEM CONJ child 1s.f.-POSS CONJ
'That devil woman and her child'.
- (325). kuyanga oso jivi mende siya nga ware nga
place DEM good very coconut CONJ breadfruit CONJ

aka nga ma nga li li-nda mishi
house CONJ man CONJ 3.p. stay-HAB place
'That place is a good place, it has coconuts,
breadfruits, houses and people'.
- (326). fle nijava oso jikisi nga si layi shi-mu
pig mother DEM child CONJ 3s.f go gown 3s.f-TOP

layi-ri
 go- down- PAST
 'Mother pig went down with its piglet'.

(327). *ma avisha oto nokove or-hi oso nga*
 man white DEM wife 3s.m-POSS DEM CONJ
 'That white man with his wife...'

Examples of Type 2:

(328). *Emil fre Rosa jikisi fri-hi nokpji numbu*
 Emil CONJ Rosa children dual-POSS female all
 'Emil and Rosa have only daughters'.

Examples of Type 3:

(329). *Clement fre Limala op-mu Patrick nga fanduk*
 Clement CONJ Limala d.-TOP patrick CONJ river-LOC

i-ra
 go-past
 'Clement, Limala and Patrick went to the river'.

(330). *lona fre pricilla aray fri-hi nga*
 lona and pricilla grandmother 2d.-POSS CONJ

nowe-k i-ri bri-a
 garden-LOC go-PAST dual-INT
 'Lona and Pricilla went to the garden with their
 grandmother.'

4.2. Locative Phrase

The Locative phrase (LP) fills the locative slot in the clause. Its structure is displayed in the following formula.

Chart 4.2
 Locative Phrase

Type 1	+ Head MNP PNP	+ Margin -k/-yok/mashi-k
Type 2	clause	+ mishi-k/-yok

There are two types of locative phrases. One consists of an obligatory head which is manifested by a modified noun phrase or a possessive noun phrase followed by either locative suffix -k (denotes the place; the English equivalent would be 'at') or -yok (means 'by' or 'at side') or by the noun mashi 'place' + the suffix -k.

The other type consists of an obligatory head manifested by a clause followed by the noun mishi 'place' + -k/-yok. The location phrase may occur either at the beginning or the end of a clause.

Examples of Type 1:

(331). *na-mu rala nombo laka-k plango-ho na-mu*
 1s-TOP come.in road big-LOC to.come.up-MDL 1s-TOP

rasa-ha hunguaka mashi-k a rasa-ri
 come.up-MDL gardenhouse place-LOC 1s come up-PAST
 'I came up to the main road and then I came up to the garden house'.

(332). *fatombo-yok ni-mu layi-ra fanuku-yok*
 down.stream LOC 1pl-TOP go.down-PAST upstream LOC

ni-mu li-ra
 1pl-TOP stay-PAST
 'We went down stream of the river, (but) stayed at the upper part of the river.'

(333). *asamu oro-yok a i-hi sirwoshi oro-yok a*
 asamu that-LOC 1s go-MDL sirwoshi that-LOC 1s

ya-ya-fu na-mu rasa hunguaka mashi-k a
 look-look-NEG 1s-TOP go.up gardenhouse place-LOC 1s

rasa-wa
 go.up-NPAST
 'I searched (for the pig) at the side of Asamu and Sirwoshi, I looked and looked and couldn't find anything then I came up to the garden house.'

Example of Type 2:

(334). *an yanga os foome-n li frungau-nda mishi-k a*
 1s place DEM fish-OBJ 3pl sell-HAB place-LOC 1s

layi-wa
 go.down-NPAST

'I went to the place where they sell fish'.

4.3. Temporal Phrase

The temporal phrase (TP) functions to specify the time when an event takes place. The temporal phrase consists of a head which is manifested by a temporal adverb or by a modified noun phrase or by a clause followed by a temporal suffix -k or temporal word wolo 'time' + suffix -k.

A temporal phrase may be formed by juxtaposing two time words, the more general first followed by the more specific. When referring to last or next year the directional word kasaik 'over there' is used for both. The right meaning is derived from the verb tense. The temporal phrase may occur either at the beginning of the clause or at the end.

Examples:

(335). mbele wolo-k or ta-kwa
what time-TEMP 3s.m come-FUT
'When is he coming?'

(336). a kavamisi-ri na li-ri wolo-k michiyo nga
1s feel.bad-PAST 1s stay PAST time-TEMP Michiyo CONJ

hanna marie nga hamtava-k fri lau-ri
Hanna Marie CONJ Hamtava-LOC 2d. go.up-PAST

bri-a
dual-INT
'At the time I was sick Michiyo and Hanna Marie went to Hantava.'

(337). hovok ukarumpa-k ni-mu i-ku-a
later Ukarumpa-LOC 1pl-TOP go-FUT-INT
'Later on we'll go to Ukarumpa.'

(338). avak nursumbu-k asa oto pashin or shi-wa
now morning-TEMP dog DEM rat-OBJ 3s.m kill-NPAST
'This morning that dog killed a rat'.

(339). asama kasaik kuyanga-k a-mu i-ku-a
year over.there place-LOC 1s-TOP go-FUT-INT
'Next year I will go home'.

(340). asama kasaik michiyo-mu i-ra yanga
 year over.there michiyo-TOP go-PAST place

si-hi-k
 3s.f-POSS-LOC
 'Michiyo went to here country last year'.

(341). torok shi li-wa-k asama nalmingrip ol-mu
 here dual stay-NPAST-TEMP year three 3pl-TOP

i-ndu-a
 go-HAB-INT
 'We have been here for three years'.

4.4. Adjective Phrase

The adjective phrase fills the first modifying position in an MNP and the predicative slot in an adjectival verbless clause. Its function is to modify the head noun. The structure of the adjective phrase is displayed in the following chart:

Chart 4.4
 Adjective Phrase

+ Head	+/-NEG	+/-INT	+/-	Head2	+/-	Head3	+/-	Head4
*Adj1	ambu	re/te		Adj1		Adj1		Adj1
Adj2		mende		Adj3				
Adj3								

* see 3.3. Adjective word for groupings of adjectives

The adjective phrase consists of an obligatory head constituent manifested by an adjective followed by an optional negation word (only negation word ambu is possible), followed by optional intensifiers (re/te/mende), followed by optional Head 2 (followed by optional negation word and optional intensifiers), followed by optional Head3 (followed by optional negation word and optional intensifiers) and so on.

An adjective phrase can have up to four heads and up to three intensifiers after one another have been observed.

The string of adjective heads tend to occur in antonymic pairs. This seems to indicate superlative quality of the adjective.

Examples:

- (342). *nokove arme mende tinga re*
 woman beautiful INT INT INT
 'A very very beautiful woman'.
- (343). *samhovo oto kanda ambu re wasilaka re oto fle*
 snake DEM little NEG INT big INT DEM big

jikisi-n or-mu tolo-ra
 child-OBJ 3s.m-TOP hold-PAST
 'The very big snake caught the piglet'.
- (344). *telemba ondo awari ambu wasilaka wasilaka hom*
 mountain DEM small NEG big big SIM

na-nda
 become-HAB
 'Those mountains aren't small, they are very big mountains'.
- (345). *kowe laka oso kanda ambu oso panduhu nom*
 bag big DEM small NEG DEM kind.of.seeds only

hoje-ri
 be.full-PAST
 'That very big bag was full of seeds only'.
- (346). *nombo oso wasilaka awarikanda ambu jivi mende kava*
 road DEM big small NEG good INT bad

ambu re
 NEG INT
 'That is a very, very good road'.

4.5. Verb Phrase

The verb phrase functions as the head of the clause and is filling the predicate slot. The Verb Phrase is usually the last element of the clause, Mende being an SOV language.

4.5.1. Common Verb Phrase

The structure of the common verb phrase (CVP) is indicated in the following chart.

Chart 4.5.1
 Common Verb Phrase

+/- periphery	+ Head	+/- NEGATIVE	+/- intensifier
NEG(mor)	V	ambu	re/te
adv		hala	
		kom	

The common verb phrase consists of an obligatory head manifested by a verb. The optional periphery of the head may consist of an adverbial of manner, or the negation word mor, which is used together with another negation word (either ambu or kom) making the proposition positive. The head can be optionally followed by a negation particle ambu/hala or kom, and/or by intensifiers re/te.

It should be noted that the negative particle ambu cannot co-occur with the adverbial angop 'already'. There is no structural difference between transitive and intransitive verb phrases.

Examples:

(347). *li uja-rako-ho li rasa-ha kuyanga*
 3pl wash-COMPL-MDL 3pl get.up-MDL place

li-hi-k li i-ri
 3pl-POSS-LOC 3pl go-PAST
 'They finished washing and got up and went to their village'.

(348). *solwara-k a uja-wa kom te*
 see-LOC 1s wash-NPAST NEG INT
 'I'd love to have a wash in the see'.

(349). *hinyer nukuk a i-r ambu*
 yesterday nuku-LOC 1s go-PAST NEG
 'I didn't go to Nuku yesterday'.

(350). *men li*
 only stay
 'Be still'.

4.5.2. Existential Verb Phrase

The function of the existential verb phrase is to describe the state of the subject or to describe the state of a general situation. It functions in the existential verb phrase. It is formed as follows:

Chart 4.5.2
Existential Verb Phrase with the verb *na* 'become'

+Head	+CONJ	+Verb	+TENSE	+/-NEG	+/-	PRON	+/-INT
Noun	<i>nga</i>	<i>na</i>	<i>wa</i>	<i>ambu</i>		pron	<i>re/te</i>
Adj							
Clause							

The existential verb phrase consists of an obligatory head manifested by a noun, adjective, or a ranksifted clause, followed by an obligatory conjunction *nga* 'and', followed by an obligatory auxiliary verb *na* 'become', optionally followed by a word *ambu*, pronoun and/or intensifier.

At present we are writing the head (in the case of a ranksifted clause only the verb), the conjunction *-nga* 'and', verb *na* 'become' as one word.

Examples:

(351). *ma wasilaka-k si raka-ri-k kowe*
rain big-ADV 3s.f come.down-PAST-SUB cloth

uku-nga-na-ri sir
water-CONJ-become-PAST 3s.f-APPN
'It rained heavily and clothes got wet'.

(352). *mas andi oje-nga-na-wa ter oje-nga-na-waambu*
once andi sore-CONJ-be-NPAST now sore-CONJ-NPAST NEG
'Once Andy had sores, but now he hasn't got any'.

(353). *ma mir-in kisha-lau-kwa-nga-na-waambu re*
men 2s.m-OBJ carry-go.up-FUT-CNJ-become-NPAST NEG INT
'There are no men to carry you (up to the hospital)'.

(354). *ma ol aka-n u-kwa-nga-na-waambu re*
men 3pl house-OBJ do-FUT-CONJ-become-NPAST NEG INT
'There are no men to do the house'.

(355). *an kwambu-nga-na-waambu re*
1s strong-CONJ-become-NPAST NEG INT
'I didn't have strength'.

5. CLAUSE

5.0 Introduction

The clause level is between the phrase and sentence levels. It is the basic syntactic unit and is defined as having only one obligatory predication or equation constituent with its optional nuclear arguments. Generally one or more clauses occur together to form a sentence, although one clause may be a sentence by itself.

A clause may be rankshifted and occur as a modifying argument in a nominal phrase or as the head of an existential phrase.

Clause subordination and co-ordination, and clauses containing medial verbs are considered a sentence level phenomenon and are handled under sentence.

It has also been observed that when a clause is functioning as ob object it is marked at the end of the clause with the object marker -n.

The unmarked word order in Mende is subject-object-verb (SOV).

5.1 Intransitive Clause

An intransitive clause is defined here as that clause which typically has one nominal argument, i.e. subject. It cannot have an object. The structure of the unmarked intransitive clause is displayed in the following chart.

Chart 5.1
Intransitive Clause

<u>+/-</u> TEMP/LOC	<u>+/-</u> SUBJ	+ PRED
TP/LP	NP	VP _{intr} .

An intransitive clause consists of an optional temporal or locative, manifested by a temporal phrase or location phrase; followed by an optional subject, manifested by any noun phrase; followed by an obligatory predicate constituent, manifested by an intransitive verb phrase. The optional temporal and locative phrases can be either at the beginning of the clause or at the end of the clause.

Examples:

(356). *jikisi-n* or *la-ha* *kuyanga-k*
 child-OBJ 3s.m take-MDL place-LOC

fri-mu ra-ra

2d-TOP come-PAST
 'He took the child and they returned to the village.'

(357). jikisi am wasilaka-k na-r
 child now big-ADVL become-PAST
 'The child grew up.'

(358). *ma oto nokove or-hi* oso angop ha-ri
 man DEM wife 3s.m.-POSS 3s.f already die-PAST
 'That man's wife died.'

(359). *abegu-k josef-in heye-shi-hi* ni-mu ra-ra
 Abegu-LOC Josef-OBJ look-ORD-MDL 1pl-TOP come-PAST

kuyanga-k
 place-LOC
 'We came home after we had seen Josef in Apegu'.

(360). niri las wolo-k asa or-mu i-ra sembengala-k
 night one time-TEMP dog 3s.m-TOP go-PAST bush-LOC
 'One day the dog went to the bush.'

5.2. Transitive Clause

A transitive clause is defined as the clause that normally requires two nominal arguments. It may also take a third nominal argument i.e. indirect object. If the indirect object is present the unmarked word order is:

S O IO V (direct object comes before the indirect object).

However, one or both nominal arguments may be absent for pragmatic reasons, especially in the imperative; but the arguments are always recoverable from the preceding context or from shared knowledge between the speaker and listener(s).

The structure of the unmarked transitive clause is displayed in the following chart.

Chart 5.2
 Transitive Clause

+/-TEMP/LOC	+/-SUBJ	+/-OBJ	+/-IO	+ PRED
TP/LP	NP	NP-n	NP-n	VPtransitive
			BEN	
			NP+njik	

A transitive clause consists of an optional temporal or locative element, manifested by a temporal phrase or locative phrase; followed by an optional subject, manifested by any noun phrase; followed by an optional object, manifested by a noun phrase which has an object suffix *-n*; followed by an optional indirect object manifested either by a noun phrase, which has an object suffix *-n* or by benefactor, manifested by a noun phrase, which has a benefactive particle *-njik*; followed by an obligatory predicate, manifested by a transitive verb phrase. The optional temporal or locative elements can be either at the beginning of the clause or at the end of the clause.

The **unmarked word order is SOV**, but the object or benefactive can sometimes occur before the subject or after the verb for the sake of emphasis (see 7.1).

Examples:

(361). *nijava os-mu jikisi-n ewe-he li-ra*
 mother 3s.f-TOP child-OBJ look.after-MDL stay-PAST
 'The mother looked after the child'.

(362). *lona layi-hi uku-n an njik tarmu-hu*
 lona go.down-MDL water-OBJ 1s BEN pour-MDL

la-ha-rasa-ri
 take-MDL-bring-PAST
 'Lona went down and brought water for me'.

(363). *niyaka li-hi asa or-hi oso-n si-mu*
 moon stay-MDL dog 3s.m-POSS DEM-OBJ 3s.f-TOP

ji-hi si-mu a-ra
 hit-MDL 3s.f-TOP eat-PAST
 'The moon killed that man's dog and ate it'.

(364). *kowe kaso-n an-in si ha-ri*
 clothes DEM-OBJ 1s-OBJ 3s.f give-PAST
 'She gave me these clothes'.

(365). *kowe kaso-n an jik si ha-ri*
 clothes DEM-OBJ 1s BEN 3s.f give-PAST
 'She gave me these clothes'.

(366). *job oto kumbaari njik or kla-ri*
 job DEM shoes BEN 3s.m cry-PAST
 'That Job cried for shoes'.

5.3. Existential Clause

The existential clause is used to describe a state of being or a state of possessing something. It is formed as follows:

Chart 5.3
Existential Clause

+/- TEMP/LOC	+/-SUBJ	+PRED
TP/LP	NP	Existential VP

The existential clause consists of an optional adverbial element, manifested by a temporal phrase or locative phrase, followed by an optional nominal phrase functioning as subject, followed by an obligatory predication, manifested by an existential verb phrase.

In the case of the head slot of the VP existential being filled by a ranksifted clause, the existential clause has no subject.

Examples:

(367). *ma wasilaka-k si raka-ri-k kowe*
rain big-ADV 3s.f come.down-PAST-SUB cloth

uku-nga-na-ri sir
water-CONJ-become-PAST 3s.f-APPN
'It rained heavily and clothes got/became wet'.

(368). *mas andi oje-nga-na-wa ter oje-nga-na-wa ambu*
once andi sore-CONJ-be-NPAST now sore-CONJ-NPAST NEG
'Once Andy had sores, but now he hasn't got any'.

(369). *an kar-nga-na-wa ambu*
1s car-CONJ-become-NPAST NEG
'I don't have a car'.

(370). *ma mir-in kisha-lau-kwa-nga-na-wa ambu re*
men 2s.m-OBJ carry-go.up-FUT-CNJ-become-NPAST NEG INT
'There are no men to carry you (up to the hospital)'.

5.4. Verbless Clause

In the Mende language there are four different types of verbless clauses: adjectival, locational, possessive and equative verbless clauses. The verbless clause indicates a state of being

or describes the relationship between the subject/topic and the complement, i.e. it functions as a stative clause.

A typical stative clause includes a subject/topic and a complement. In the Mende language there are no copula verbs that would link the subject and the complement, so the verb slot remains empty. Instead the verbless clause takes an obligatory affirmative personal pronoun ending (APPN) or question personal pronoun (QPPN) at the end of the clause.

5.4.1. Adjectival Verbless Clause

In an adjectival verbless clause an adjective phrase fills the slot of the complement.

Chart 5.4
Adjectival Verbless Clause

+Subject	+ Complement	+Pron. ending
NP	ADJphrase	APPN QPPN

An adjectival verbless clause consists of an obligatory subject, manifested by a noun phrase; followed by an obligatory complement, manifested by an adjective phrase, followed by an obligatory affirmative or question personal pronoun ending.

When an adjectival verbless clause is negated, the negation happens inside the adjectival phrase by using antonymous adjectival pairs (see 4.4. Adjective Phrase).

Examples:

(371). paulon awarikanda ri-a
paulon small 3s.m.-APPN-INT
'Paulon is small'.

(372). paulon wasilaka ambu awarikanda ri-a
paulon big NEG small 3s.m-APPN-INT
'Paulon isn't big, (he) is small'.

(373). paulon awarikanda walantala wasilaka ri-a
paulon small walantala big 3s.m-APPN-INT
'Paulon is small, W. is big = Walantala is bigger than Paulon'.

5.4.2. Locative Verbless Clause

The locational verbless clause expresses the location of the subject.

Chart 5.4.2.1
Locational verbless clause: Spatial Relationships

Spatial proximity:	touched	further away	not relevant
	ka-	to-/ro-	o-

The obligatory compliment part of the clause may consist of a directional suffix (ka-, to-/ro- or o-) attached to pronoun ending APPN or QPPN (copy of the subject).

Chart 5.4.2.2
Locative Verbless Clause

+Subject	+ Complement	+Pron. ending
NP	LOCprefix	APPN QPPN

A locative verbless clause consists of an obligatory subject, manifested by a noun phrase; followed by an obligatory compliment with an obligatory locative prefix, followed by an obligatory affirmative or question personal pronoun ending.

When a locative verbless clause is negated the negation happens inside the noun phrase functioning as the subject of the clause. See examples 375 and 376.

Examples:

(374). *kaso an-hi ka-sir-a toso mi-hi*
this 1s-POSS here-3s.f-INT that 2s.m-POSS

to-sir-a
there-3s.f-APPN--INT
'This here is mine, that there is yours'.

(375). *kaso an-hi ambu toso an-hi sir-a*
This 1s-POSS NEG that 1s-POSS 3s.f-APPN-INT
'This here is not mine, that ther is mine'.

(376). *nombolaka ambu sembengala nombo sir-a*
big.road NEG bush road 3s.f-APPN-INT
'This is not a main road, it is a bush road'.

- (377). kando an-hi ka-lir-a tondo mi-hi
 these 1s-POSS here-3pl-INT those 2s.m-POSS
to-lir-a
 there-3pl-APPN-INT
 'These here are mine, those thre are yours'.7
- (378). mbele to-sir
 what here-3s.f-QPP-INT
 'What is that here?'
- (379). mbele ka-li-a
 what there-3pl-QPPN-INT
 'What are these?'
- (380). o-sir-a
 there-3s.f-APPN-INT
 'That's it!'
- (381). nowe an-hi torok/akayanga-k
 garden 1s-POSS here/door.step-LOC
 'My garden is here/near'.

5.4.3. Possessional Verbless Clause

A possessional verbless clause states that somebody possesses something. It is formed as follows:

Chart 5.4.3
 Possessional Verbless Clause

+ Possessor	Possessed	+/- NEG	+ PRON
NP	NP- <u>nga-shi</u>	<u>ambu</u>	APPN QPPN

The obligatory noun phrase (possessor) is followed by another obligatory noun phrase (the thing that is possessed), marked by nga 'and' and -shi (which is most likely the dual pronoun), followed by an optional negation word ambu, followed by an obligatory affirmative or question pronoun ending (marks the possessor).

Examples:

- (382). an aka-nga-shi nir-a
 1s house-CONJ-dual 1s-APPN-INT
 'I have a house'.

(383). *mir nokove-nga-shi om*
 2s.m woman-CONJ-dual 2s.m-QPPN
 'Do you have a wife?'

(384). *lir kar-nga-shi ambu lir*
 3pl car-CONJ-dual NEG 3pl-APPN
 'They do not have a car'.

5.4.4. Equative Verbless Clause

An equative verbless clause is used in Mende to describe the equational relationship between two noun phrases that refer to the same thing.

Chart 5.4.4.
 Equative Verbless Clause

+ Subject	+ Complement	+Pron. ending
NP	NP	APPN
		QQP

An equative verbless clause consists of an obligatory subject manifested by a noun phrase, followed by an obligatory complement manifested by a noun phrase, followed by an obligatory personal pronoun ending (APPN or QPPN).

The order of the subject and the complement is reversible. When an equative verbless clause is negated the negation happens inside the NP functioning as the subject. See example 387.

Examples:

(385). *nokove oso tiksa sir-a*
 woman DEM teacher 3s.f-APPN-INT
 'That woman is a teacher'.

(386). *tiksa oso nokove sir-a*
 teacher DEM woman 3s.f-APPN-INT
 'That teacher is a woman'.

(387). *nokove oso tiksa ambu sista sir-a*
 woman that teacher NEG sister 3s.f-APPN-INT
 'That woman is not a teacher, (she) is a sister.'

(388). *limala sanje laka ri-a*
 Limala elder sibling big 3s.m-APPN-INT
 'Limala is the older brother.'

5.5. Relative Clause

A relative clause modifies a nominal phrase functioning as subject, object or locative. In Mende there are no special relative pronouns that would mark the clause as a relative clause. The surface structure of a relative clause is like the surface structure of an ordinary clause.

It seems that in Mende the lack of conjunctions or temporal sequence markers or subordinative markers between two clauses that are logically connected proves that the clause is a relative clause.

There are some other features, too, that indicate that the clause in question is not functioning on the sentence level: the object inside the relative clause is usually not marked with an object marker -n and the subject does not carry the topic marker -mu. Furthermore, in a 'normal' indicative clause the intonation falls at the end of the clause. However, when the clause is functioning as a relative clause the intonation stays level.

5.5.1. Restrictive Relative Clause

A restrictive relative clause serves to limit the scope of a nominal. The head of the relative clause may occur both before or after the relative clause when it functions as a subject or object. In the case that the head of a relative clause is part of the subject and is a proper noun, this head must come before the relative clause. It seems that when a head of a relative clause functions as locative it must occur after the relative clause.

Examples:

(389). Felix or ha-ri jikisi or-hi gefry
felix 3s.m die-PAST child 3s.m-POSS gefry

to-ri-a

here-3s.m-INT

Felix, who died, his son Gefry is here'

(390). hulayi oto nuku-k mi hinyer heye-ri lawe
man DEM nuku-LOC 2s.m yesterday look-PAST who

ri

2s.m

'Who was the man you saw in Nuku yesterday?'

- (390b) Nuku-k mi heye-ri hulayi oto lawe ri
 nuku-LOC 2s.m see-PAST man DEM who 3s.m
 'Who was the man you saw at Nuku yesterday?'
- (391a). ma avisha oto torok ta-ha-nda oto avak indik
 man white DEM here come-MDL-HAB DEM now again

 ta-kwa ri
 come-FUT 3s.m
 'Does the white man that used to come here come back?'
- (391b). torok ta-ha-nda ma avisha oto avak indik
 here come-MDL-HAB man white DEM now again

 ta-kwa ri?
 come-FUT 3s.m
 'Does the white man that came here previously come back?'
- (392). hinyer lovo nyi la-ha-ra-ri jivi
 yesterday banana 2.s.f bring-MDL-come-PAST good

 mende lir-a
 very 3pl-INT
 'The bananas that you brought yesterday were very good.'
- (393a). asa oso mas ni la-ha-ra-ri angop li
 cat DEM before 1pl take-MDL-come-PAST already 3pl

 ji-a-ri
 kill-eat-PAST
 'They killed and ate the cat that you previously brought here'
- (393b). mas ni la-ha-ra-ri asa oso angop li
 before 1p bring-MDL-come-PAST cat DEM already 3pl

 ji-a-ri
 kill-eat-PAST
 'They killed and ate the cat that you previously brought here'.
- (394). pashi-n mi a-wa jivi os
 rat-OBj 2s.m eat-NPAST good 3s.f.
 'Was the rat that you ate good?'

- (395). hinyer naku-n li naktonklo-k la-ha-ra-
 yesterday sago-OBJ 3pl sagostem-LOC take-MDL-bring
ri oso jivi mende sir-a
 -PAST DEM good INT 3s.f-INT
 'The sago that they brought yesterday from the sago
 making place is very good'.
- (396). hinyer a a-ri parkakisha jivi mende lir-a
 yesterday 1s eat-PAST aupa good INT 3pl-INT
 'That aupa that I ate yesterday was very good'.

The head of the relative Clause functioning as a locative:

- (397). aka-n a u-ku-a mishi sir-a
 house-OBJ 1s do-FUT-INT place 3s.f-INT
 'It is the place where I'll build a house'.
- (398). kowe-n yoko-nda mishi ka-sir-a
 clothes-OBJ wash-HAB place here-s.3.f-INT
 'This is the place to wash clothes'.
- (399). emma pricilla si-wa mishi-k kasai si-ndu
 emma pricilla stand-NPAST place-LOC there stand-PRG
 'Emma stands there in that place where Pricilla
 stood'.

5.5.2. Non-Restrictive Relative Clause

In the Mende non-restricted relative clauses that are formed by the help of the habitual action suffix **-nda** (HAB).

There is a similar construction functioning on word level (see 3.3.1.), where the habitual suffix **-nda** is used to derive adjectives from verbs.

Examples:

- (400). ma balus-in tolo-nda ri-a
 man plane-OBJ hold-HAB 3s.m-INT
 'pilot'
- (401). ma mashi-n la-ha-sawe-ya-nda ri-a
 man talk-OBJ bring-MDL-talk-go.around-HAB 3s.m-INT
 'the one that comes and brings talk = messenger'
- (402). ma ondo ma aka-n u-nda li-a

men DEM men house-OBJ do-HAB 3pl.-INT
'Those men are the builders'.

(403). *ma paje-n kumba-nda angop mas-mas*
men yam-OBJ plant-HAB already before-before

nowe-k i-wa li-a
garden-LOC go-NPAST 3pl-INT
'The planter's of yam went already to the garden'.

6. SENTENCE

6.0 Introduction

The sentence is the next level of Mende grammatical structure above the clause. It is the minimal communication unit. A sentence contains at least one predication, i.e. the minimal sentence will be described as a one-clause sentence. Affirmative and declarative sentences end with falling intonation.

Mende uses a chaining structure to join sentences together. In a chaining structure a sentence typically ends in a dominating verb of fuller structure than any of the preceding verbs. These preceding verbs are commonly referred to as medial verbs while the dominating verb at the end is known as a final verb (Longacre, p.238). However, Mende is not a pure chaining language. It seems that the chaining structure only occurs when the subject of the joined clauses is the same and the event occurs in sequence. The change of subject is indicated by a new sentence.

As the medial verb structure is very rudimentary in Mende, clauses may also be joined into sentences by subordinating and coordinating relationships which are manifested by the use of particles, juxtaposition or (a) dependent clause marker(s) and/or with intonation.

Sentences may end with suffixes -a/-o. At this stage it is not quite clear if these are really intensifiers or if they function just as 'something to finish the sentence'. Some people say that they strengthen the meaning of the sentence, some say that they are just 'pullim tok'.

Sentences may be modified for illocutionary force. In Mende we have found declarative, imperative, prohibitive, hortative and interrogative sentences.

6.1. Narrative Sentence

The narrative sentence is the most common type of sentence in Mende and it is used in all types of narrative texts. The narrative sentences carries on the story and describes events that happen one after another in sequence.

The basic structure of a narrative sentence is as follows:

Chart 6.1.
Narrative Sentence

+/- (Clause-MDL) _n + Clause
--

The narrative sentence consists of one or more clauses, which have the same subject and occur in sequence. The last clause carries the tense and often the subject of this clause is marked with a topic marker -mu. The other clauses that come before this clause end in medial verb markers that indicate that the clause is not complete, yet.

Examples:

(404). *hinyer nakyele-n a tomboko-ho a-mu*
yesterday sago.seedling-OBJ 1s carry-MDL 1s-TOP

i-ra wonklemashi-k
go-PAST wonklemashi-LOC
'Yesterday I took (some) sago seedlings and carried them and went to Wonklemashi'.

(405). *an nga nalombo nga shovo-n shi*
1s CONJ nalombo CONJ limbum.basket-OBJ dual

amele-he shi-mu si-ra
be.under-MDL dual-TOP stand-PAST
'I and Nalombo stood underneath the limbum basket'.

(406). *nowe-k a raka-ha korinna fre-n*
garden-LOC 1s come.up-MDL korinna others-OBJ

taka-heye-la-ha na-mu ra-ra
come.up-look-take-MDL 1s-TOP come-PAST
'I went up to the garden to see and bring (home) Korinna and the others'.

(407). *li rasa-ha ol-mu ari li-hi-n*
3pl come up-MDL 3pl-TOP feather 3pl-POSS-OBJ

o-ra

wear-PAST

'They came up and put on their feathers.'

(408). an sarnjava-n a kisha-ha na-mu lau-shi-hi
1s bow-OBJ 1s carry-MDL 1s-TOP go up-ORD-MDL

na-mu flefar i-ra
1s-TOP pig.hunting go-PAST

'I took my bow and arrow and went hunting pig'.

6.2. Non-narrative Sentence Types

A non-narrative sentence consists of more than one clause. They may be co-ordinated or one may be subordinated to the main clause.

6.2.1. Co-ordination

A co-ordinate sentence includes two or more main or independent clauses linked together. In the Mende language there are several ways of forming co-ordination on sentence level.

6.2.1.1. Co-ordination of Stative Clauses with Juxtaposition

Two or more stative clauses may be co-ordinated using only juxtaposition. The subjects of these clauses are always different.

(409). paulon awarikanda, walantala wasilaka ri-a
paulon small walantala big 3s.m-INT
'Walantala is bigger than Paulon'.

(410). kaso an-hi ka-sir toso nyi-hi to-sir
this 1s-POSS here-3s.f that 3s.f-POSS there-3s.f
'This here is mine and that there is yours'.

6.2.1.2 Co-ordination with yok

When **the subject of the sentences is the same and the action happens simultaneously**, the clauses may be co-ordinated with *yok...yok* 'both...and'.

Examples:

(411). Michiyo kowe-n si_ yok klap-klava mashi-n yok
Michiyo clothes-OBJ 3s.f both sew-sew story and

misiw.

listen-PAST

'Michiyo listened the story and sew clothes at the same time.'

6.2.1.3. Co-ordination with hom

Sentences that imply that **two different actions with two different subjects happen simultaneously** have similarity particle hom after the first sentence. The last vowel of the first sentence changes into -o for the sake of vowel harmony.

(412). *lona kawu-k si wa-wo hom mashi-n ni-mu*
lona bed-LOC 3s.f sleep-NPAST SIM talk-OBJ 1p-TOP

kaye-ndu

write-PRG

'While Lona was sleeping we wrote stories.'

(413). *hinyer nir mashi-n ni kaye-ro hom korinna*
yesterday 1pl talk-OBJ 1pl write-PAST SIM Korinna

naku-n si ligri-ri
sago-OBJ 3s.f wash-PAST

'Yesterday while we were writing Korinna washed sago.'

(414). *_ma yok si ya-ro hom fa yok si*
rain side 3s.f go.around-PAST SIM river side 3s.f

tasa-ri sir

come-up-PAST 3s.f.

'It was raining heavily and the river was rising at the same time.'

6.2.1.4. Co-ordination with hako

Sentences that express frustration or contrast to expectation are co-ordinated by the response word hako 'all right'. The first sentence implies what should happen or what should have happened. This sentence is marked with an intensifier te or -a at the end of the sentence. The first sentence is followed by the response word hako (with raising intonation) + the second sentence, which might often be a question 'why' or 'where'.

Examples:

(415). *manamta rais-in ewe-k mba-ha mba-r or*
manamta rice-OBJ plant-SUB speak-MDL speak-PAST 3s.m

te hako mberem u-shi-wa-k or hala-wa
INT all.right why do-ORD-NPAST 3s.m leave-NPAST
'Manamta said he would like to plant rice, but why
didn't he do it?'

(416). *pamela kaso shir nga i-k mba-ha mba-r*
pamela DEM dual CONJ go-SUB speak-MDL speak-PAST

os te hako mberem u-shi-wa-k fanduk si
3s.f INT all.right why do-ORD-NPAST river-LOC 3s.f

i-wa
go-NPAST
'Pamela promised to come with us, but why did she go
to the river?'

(417). *james ta-ha lerawu-n or la-k mba-ha anton*
james come-MDL work-OBJ 3s.m do-SUB speak-MDL anton

mba-r or a hako am ta-ku-nda-r
speak-PAST 3s.m INT all.right now come-FUT-HAB-3s.m

mbe hala-shi-li-ku-nda-r mbe
DUB leave-ORD-stay-FUT-HAB-3s.m DUB
'Anton said that James would come and work (with
you), but (we'll) see if he comes or not.'

6.2.2 Subordination

The typical way of marking subordination within sentences is by using subordination conjunctions or by using the derivational suffix *-k* (SUB). The suffix *-k* is used to express temporal relationships, purpose and reason-result sometimes together with other features of the language.

Some subordinate conjunctions are subordination particles *unak* 'lest', *nak* 'so that and purpose particles *osik/onik* 'therefore' and *hanak* 'wait until'. It seems that the subordinate clause usually precedes the main clause, but this is not the case in every situation. The clause break comes after the conjunction, if any.

However, we will start this section by outlining the conditional sentence, which makes use of its own conjunctions.

6.2.2.1. Conditional Sentence

The semantic role of the conditional clause is to express a hypothesis or a condition (Crystal 1980). It seems that in the Mende language there are two types of conditional clauses; those which refer to **real** ('if it rains, we won't go') and those which refer to **contrafactual or hypothetical** situations ('if my father were alive, he would talk with you').

The negative conditional will be described as a third type of conditional.

6.2.2.1.1. Real Conditional

The real conditionals are formed either by using the conditional particle (COND) nahi or by using the conditional particles na + kop. The conditional clause is tenseless and the main clause has future tense. It seems that this type of construction is used for 'when clauses', too.

At this stage we are not sure why there are two ways of expressing the real conditional. It could be that nahi is used when the conditional sentence is more like a 'when sentence'. Whereas na + kop sentence has more conditional quality in it. This assumption is a pure hypothesis and further investigations are needed.

These conjunctions occur at the end of the conditional clause.

Examples:

(418). *ta ji nahi usitamok ni-mu iku-a ma*
sun hit COND Usitamo-LOC 1pl-TOP go-FUT-INT rain

raka nahi ni-mu li-ku-a
come.down COND 1pl-TOP stay-FUT-INT
'If the sun shines we'll go to Usitamo if it rains
we'll stay at home.'

(419). *am nyi a nahi paknuku lap obro awu-k*
now 2s.f eat COND bottom.of.yam two DEM pot-LOC

a lafale-wa bri-a
1s put down-NPAST APPN 2d-INT

'If you have eaten everything else there are (still) two bottoms of yam, which I have put into the little pot.'

- (420). *paul sembengala-k or i fle las or ji nahi*
paul bush-LOC 3s.m go pig INDEF 3s.m kill COND

ni-mu a-ku-a
1pl-TOP eat-FUT-INT
'If Paul goes to the bush and kills a pig we will eat it.'

- (421). *Ma michiyo-hi raka-ha-nda na kop indik*
men michiyo-POSS come.down-MDL HAB COND COND again

i-ku-a lir
go-FUT-INT 3pl
'When Michiyo's people will have come, are they going to go back again?'

- (422). *kumbaari ovro-n job-in mi ha na kop*
shoes DEM-OBJ job-OBJ 3s.m give COND COND

or-mu rupshi-mende-kwa ri
3s.m-TOP rejoice-very-FUT 3s.m
'When you give those shoes to Job, he will rejoice'

- (423). *lerawu oso mende-k si na-shi na kop ni-mu*
work DEM finish-ADVL 3s.f become COND COND 3pl-TOP

limasi-kwa nir
rest-FUT 1pl
'When this work has been finished, we'll rest'

- (424). *nokove oso akayanga-n si sukla na kop aka-k*
woman DEM door-OBJ 3s.f open COND COND house-LOC

a lau-kwa nir
1s go.up-FUT 1s
'When/if that woman will open the door, I'll go up to the house.'

- (425). *a i-shi na kop michiyo raka-kwa sir*
1s go-ORD COND COND michiyo come.down-FUT 3s.f
'When I have gone, Michiyo will come'

6.2.2.1.2. Hypothetical Conditional

The hypothetical conditionals express a counterfactual or hypothetical event. They are formed by using the conditional particle kop, which imply the speaker's wish of the event. Kop is placed at the end of the subordinate clause, which precedes the main clause.

Both the main clause and the conditional clause have near past tense.

Examples:

(426). an usha-wa mi ra-wa kop mi ma-
1s call-NPAST 2s.m com -NPAST-kop 3s.m rain-

ya-shi-hi mi nijira-wa
go.around-ORD-MDL-3s.m be.cold-NPAST
'If I had called you, you would have come and you would have gotten wet and you would have been cold'.

(427). fome mende nyi lo-shi-wa kop na a-wa
fish NEG 2s.f take-ORD-NPAST COND 1s eat-NPAST

nir
APPN
'There is no fish, if you would catch some I would eat it'.

(428). an avi kop a-mu fru-hu i-wa
1s bird COND 1s-TOP fly-MDL go-NPAST
'If I were a bird I would fly.'

(429). Paul sembengala-k or i fle las or ji-wa
Paul bush-LOC 3s.m go pig INDEF 3s.m kill-NPAST

kop ni-mu a-wa
COND 1pl-TOP eat-NPAST
'If Paul would go to the bush and catch a pig we would eat it.'

(430). julius or li-nda kop akamasunpashi-n or
julius 3s.m stay-HAB COND rat-OBJ 3s.m

shi-a-rako-wa
kill-eat-COMPL-NPAST
'If Julius would be alive he would kill and eat all the rats.'

6.2.2.1.3. Negative conditionals

When the real conditional is negated the negation word *ambu* is placed before the conditional particle *nahi*.

The *na* before the negation word *ambu* could be the conditional particle *na*, but as there seems to be no valid reason why a another conditional particle should be used here, it is most likely an 'added syllable', because the verb stem ends with a vowel and the negation word starts with a vowel. However, further investigations are needed to get a clear picture of this.

(431). *ma raka na ambu nahi usitamo-k ni-mu*
rain come.down COND NEG COND usitamo-LOC 1pl-TOP

i-ku-a

go-FUT-INT

'If it doesn't rain, we'll go to Usitamo.'

6.2.2.2. Sentence Containing Temporal Clause

Temporal clauses are formed in two different ways: a temporal clause can be marked by the time word *wolo* 'time' + *-k* (SUB) or by using only *-k* (SUB) at the end of the clause. A temporal clause usually precedes the main clause.

Examples:

(432). *wewak-ik ji li-ri wolo-k martina enok-in*
wewak-LOC 2p stay-PAST time-TEMP martina enok-OBJ

si wa-ri

3s.f give.birth- PAST

'When you were in Wewak Marina gave birth to Enok.'

(433). *jir angop ji i-shi-ri-k pater emilio*
2pl already 2pl go-ORD-PAST-SUB father emilio

jir-in heye-k raka-wa ri

2pl-OBJ look-SUB com down-NPAST 3s.m

'You had just left when Father Emilio came to see you.'

(434). *emma aka-k si rasa-wa-k goljat*
emma house-LOC 3s.f come.up-NPAST-SUB goljat

hikri-k layi-wa

outside-LOC go.down-NPAST
'When Emma came in Goljat went out'

It should be noticed that sometimes it is difficult to distinguish the meaning between an if-clause, which is marked with nahi and a temporal clause.

(435). *radio-k mi sawe-ku nahi mi*
radio-LOC 2s.m speak-FUT COND 3s.m

sawe-shi-hi antenna-n kla-ku
speak-ORD-MDL antenna-OBJ take away-FUT
'When/if you speak in the radio, take away the
antenna after you have finished speaking.'

6.2.2.3. Sentence Containing Purpose Clause

Purpose sentences are used to express the purpose of an action, event, intention or desire. In the Mende language there are two ways to express purpose.

1) The subordinating suffix -k + auxiliary verb u 'do' (with appropriate tense + subordination suffix -k) is attached to the final verb of the purpose clause, which precedes the main clause.

Examples:

(436). *karo wolok naku-n likri-k u-ri-k ni-mu*
that time sago-OBJ wash-SUB do-PAST-SUB 1pl-INT

lau-ra
go.up-PAST
'That time we went to wash sago'.

(437). *hinguaka-k _ sir-in heye-k u-ri-k ni-mu*
garden.house-LOC 3s.f-OBJ see-SUB do-PAST-SUB 1p-TOP

lau-ra
go.up-NPAST
'We went to the garden house in order to see her'.

(438). *fa-k huk-in ermbe-k u-wa-k a*
river-LOC huk-OBJ throw-SUB do-NPAST-SUB 1s

layi-wa
go.down-NPAST
'I went to the river to fish (with a hook).'

2) The main clause precedes the purpose clause, which is marked by conjunction particle nak 'so that' at the beginning of the clause. It should be noted that the verbs both in the main clause as well as in the subordinate clause are tenseless. The verb in the main clause could be interpreted as an imperative.

Examples:

(439). *akayanga-n sukla nak a rasa*
door-OBJ open so.that 1s come.up
'Open the door so that I can come in'

(440). *muku nak a heye*
show so.that 1s see
'Show me so I see (how it is done)'

A special type of sequential construction is expressed as purpose. This construction starts with hala nak or ha nak 'leave/wait so that'. It seems that hala nak and ha nak are in 'free variation'. The meaning of the sentence is 'let me do this first so that we'll be able to do something else'. It seems that hala nak is put at the beginning of the first clause and the second clause follows. The pronoun in the second clause has the suffix -vai, which seems to indicate that the second action will take place later on. Also in this case the verb following hala nak is tenseless.

Examples:

(441). *akwa-n a u-wa ambu hala nak a layi*
food-OBJ 1s do-NPAST NEG leave so.that 1s go.down

akwa-n a u-shi-hi tasa-ha ni-vai
food-OBJ 1s do-ORD-MDL come.up-MDL 1p-

ana-sawe
together.talk
'I haven't cooked, let me go and cook, then I'll come and we'll talk together'.

(424). *uku mende hala nak uku si ele nak*
water NEG leave so.that water 3s.f come so.that

ji-vai tarmu
2pl- pour
'There is no water, let's wait until the water comes and then we'll draw water.'

6.2.2.4. Negative Purpose

One of the subordinating conjunction particles, which function we have not completely discovered, is unak, but it seems that it is used to express negative purpose. It can be translated into English as 'lest' or 'so that not'. When unak functions as a negative purpose conjunction the verb in the main clause is in future tense.

Examples:

(443). *kwarkla-n ha nak si tolo unak*
kwarkla-OBJ give so.that 3s.f hold so.that.

si kla-ku-ambu
3s.f cry-FUT.not

'Give it to Kwarkla so that she can hold it, then she won't cry'

(444). *masiji-n tivi unak si horngo-ku-a*
hair-OBJ tie so.that.not 3s.f loosen-FUT-INT
'Tie the hair so that it won't loosen.'

Unak might have some other functions, too, and further investigation is needed. It seems that sometimes unak and nak could be interchangeable: in the following examples both nak and unak are acceptable. The verb following unak/nak is tenseless.

(445). *nijava os-mu mba-r mir nga ew-ehe shi li*
mother 3s.f-TOP speak-PAST 2s.m CONJ look-MDL 2d stay

unak/nak a i-hi minja-n na waro
so that 1s go-MDL grass- OBJ 1s clean

'The mother said, "You two stay so that I can go and weed grass/otherwise I cannot go'

(446). *mir awarsi unak/nak na i-hi anandi-n na*
2s.m. wait so that 1s go-MDL another-OBJ 1s

la-ha-ra
bring-MDL-come

'You wait until I bring another one/ otherwise I cannot bring...'

6.2.2.5. Reason-Result Sentence

In the Mende language there are three ways of forming reason-result clause.

1) The reason clause is marked with the Subordinator (SUB) suffix -k and it usually precedes the result clause, which is unmarked. This could just as well mark temporal sequence of the events and not be a reason-result relationship at all i.e. it is ambiguous (see 6.2.2.2).

Examples:

(447). nindi shi-shi-ri-k or kla-ri
centipede bite-ORD-PAST-SUB 3s.m cry-PAST
'He cried because centipede bit him.'

(448). stone erenha-ri-k akwa-n or-mu hirnya-ri
Stone hungry-PAST-SUB food-OBJ 3s.m-TOP steal-PAST
'Stone (dog) stole food because he was hungry.'

2). The reason clause preceding the result clause is unmarked and it is followed by reason particle osik/onik (RES) 'therefore', followed by result clause. It seems that onik can be used only in the near past tense and when the subject is first person singular. Osik is used with other tenses and persons.

Sometimes instead of osik/onik one hears wosik/wonik, uwosik/uwonik or even undosik/uhundosik. The people claim that all these forms are interchangeable. It is highly likely that some speakers insert a consonant w in the beginning of osik/onik when it follows a word that finishes on a vowel to make pronunciation easier (as the basic syllable pattern in Mende is CV). It is not yet clear if undosik/uhundosik are just variations of osik or whether there is a verb u 'do' inside this construction. Further investigations are needed. It should be noted that forms like *undonik/*uhundonik have not been observed.

Examples:

(449). hinyer arme-k a sugnya-r ambu osik
yesterday good-ADVL 1s sleep-PAST NEG therefore

wavu nga os a-mu ambramba si-ndu-a
heart CONJ 3s.f 1s-TOP fool stay-PRG-INT
'I didn't sleep well last night, therefore I'm sleepy now.'

(450). lerawu kraha-k or la-w osik lerawu
word straight-ADL 3s.m do-NPAST therefore work

os-mu jivi mende-k na-ndu-a
 3s.f-TOP good very-ADVL become-HAB-INT
 'He did the work well, therefore it goes on well'.

(451). *nokopji lal ishavaka-n li la-ha-ra-wa ambu*
 women INDEF greens-OBJ 3pl bring-MDL-come NEG

osik nir ishavaka-nga-shi ambu
 therefore 1pl greens-CONJ-dual NEG
 'Women did not bring any greens, therefore we do not
 have any greens'.

(452). *nurum nowe-k a i-w onik*
 morning garden-LOC 1s go-NPAST therefore

ta ji-wa kop a-mu rasa-ndu-a
 sun hit-NPAST only 1s-TOP come.up-PRG-INT
 'I went to the garden in the morning, therefore I'm
 coming up late =when the sun is up'.

(453). *asa roto ma-n shi-nda undosik*
 dog DEM man-OBJ bite-HAB therefore

mbeek ma musha torok ta-nda ambu
 where man many here come-HAB NEG
 'That dog bites men, therefore many people do not
 come here'.

3. The question word *mberem* 'why' is used like a conjunction between two sentences. The first sentence describes the result, the second clause gives the reason. *Mberem* is used in the middle as a conjunction or question trigger.

(454). *bulmakau li-nda-ri mishi-k fri wa-ri.*
 cow stay-HAB-PAST place-LOC dual stay-PAST

mberem u-shi-ri-k tenje-aka oso angop
 why do-ORD-PAST-SUB middle-house DEM already

hoje-ri
 be.full-PAST
 'They stayed in the stable, because the guest house
 was full up' (lit. they stayed in the stable. Why
 was this? The guest house was full up)'.
 'They stayed in the stable, because the guest house
 was full up' (lit. they stayed in the stable. Why
 was this? The guest house was full up)'.

6.2.2.6. Complement Sentence

In the Mende language sentences expressing abstract verbs, e.g.. 'he thinks' have not been observed. These constructions are usually expressed with direct quotation 'He says,".....". That is what he said'.

However, when we started to do translation people insisted upon that they can use the verb hishi 'think' to say sentences like 455 and 456. The example 457 has been heard in 'natural' flow of speech. It seems that further investigations are needed to find out how the complement sentences are used - if they are used at all.

Examples:

(455). *Josep or li-hi mashi oso-n or-mu hishi-ra*
 josep 3s.m stay-MDL talk DEM-OBJ 3s.m-TOP think-PAST
 'Josef thought about the talk he had heard'.

(456). *josep or-mu li-hi hishi-ra oso-n*
 josep 3s.m-TOP stay-MDL think-PAST DEM-OBJ
 'Josef thought about what he had heard'.

(457). *wavu-k ni-mu hishi-ra*
 heart-LOC 3pl-TOP think-PAST
 'We thought (about it) in our hearts'.

6.2.2.7. Embedded Quotations

Only direct quotations have been observed. Quotations are typically signalled by an introductory clause 'he said', which may occur either before and/or after the actual quotations. Karem 'as/like' may be added at the beginning of the introductory clause. It seems that karem is obligatory when the introductory clause follows the direct quotation.

Example:

(458). *ol-mu mba-ra* *wahaw kando ni-hi ka-lir*
 3p-1TOP speak-PAST NEG these 1p-POSS here-3pl

karem ol-mu mba-ra
 like this 3pl-TOP speak-PAST
 'They said, No these are ours.'

(459). *os-mu arme-k sili-r* *mberem or u-wa-k*
 3s.f-TOP nice-ADVL ask-PAST why 3s.m. do-NPAST-SUB

mi i mi takatukuyi-w

2s.m go 2s.m fall over-NPAST
'She asked nicely, what did he do that you fell
over?'

6.3. Sentence Modification

Sentence modifications will be described as occurring on a single clause sentence, although that is not necessarily the case.

6.3.1. Affirmative Sentence

In Mende affirmative sentences are used to express a simple statement. Normally they have the unmarked word order i.e. SOV. The intonation goes down at the end of the sentence.

Examples:

(460). hinyer ma wasilaka-k raka-ri
yesterday rain big-ADV came.down-PAST
'It rained heavily yesterday'.

6.3.2 Imperative Sentence

The imperative sentence is used as a manipulative device to suggest, ask or command another participant. It has only been observed in the second person singular and plural. The imperative optionally takes the second person personal pronoun. If the imperative sentence has an object, the object is marked in the same way as in an affirmative sentence.

The basic construction of an imperative sentence is to have a transitive or intransitive clause as nucleus. Normally a verb in the imperative sentence consists of a verb stem only. If the speaker wants to strengthen his command he can add the imperative suffix -wa (IMP) at the end of the sentence for more emphasis.

An imperative sentence has stress on the first syllable and the intonation goes down at the end of the sentence. Probably the intonation of an imperative sentence is not as important as the force or intensity used to say the sentence.

The verb ha 'give' in an imperative sentence has two forms depending on whether the recipient is the speaker or the third person, handa for the former and ha for the latter.

Examples:

- (461). pa-wa
 speak-IMP
 'Speak !'
- (462). nyir usa-si
 2.s.f get.up -stand
 'You get up and stand!'
- (463). usa-si-wa
 get.up-stand-IMP
 'Get up!'
- (464). handa nak a heye
 give so that 1s look
 'Give it to me so.that I can see!'
- (465). sir-in ha nak si heye
 3s.f-OBJ give so.that 3s.f look
 'Give it to her that she can see!'
- (468). fle-n loso
 pig-OBJ chase
 'Chase away the pig!'

6.3.3. Prohibitive Sentence

The prohibitive is formed by adding the imperative suffix -wa to the stem of the verb and the negative word hala at the end of the sentence. The prohibitive sentence can have both a subject and an object. The intonation goes down at the end of a prohibitive sentence

Examples:

- (467). an-in aje-wa hala
 1s-OBJ be.afraid-IMP NEG
 'Don't be afraid of me!'
- (468). kaso-n tolo-wa hala
 this-Obj touch-IMP NEG
 'Don't touch this!'
- (469). jir harka-wa hala
 3pl play-IMP NEG
 'You,don't play!'
- (470). torok i-wa hala

there go-IMP NEG
'Don't go there!'

6.3.4. Hortative Sentence

The hortative sentence is formed by adding the hortative suffix -ka (HORT) at the end of the verb stem. Often the sentence also starts with a particle ka. This first -ka seems to be an abbreviation of the conjunctive nga 'and', which is usually used together with either proper nouns or pronouns (an nga mir nga shi i-ku 'me and you, we two go'). The intonation in a hortative sentence goes down at the end of the sentence.

Examples:

(471). ka ni i-ka
CONJ 1pl go-HORT
'Let's go!'

(472). akwa-n a-ka
food-OBJ eat-HORT
'Let's eat!'

(473). waskavu-n sawe-ka
story-OBJ tell-HORT
'Let's tell a story!'

6.3.5. Interrogative Sentence

There are five types of interrogatives in Mende: Yes-No Questions (6.3.5.1.), Content Questions (6.3.5.2.), Alternative Yes-No Questions (6.3.5.3.), Negative Questions (6.3.5.4.) and Rhetorical Questions (6.3.5.5.).

6.3.5.1. Yes-No Questions

Yes-no questions anticipate either a "yes" or "no" answer from the listener. The interrogative sentence is typically marked by rising intonation sentence finally and an optional interrogative QPPN particle may also occur sentence finally.

Examples:

(474). nowe-k mi i-ku om
garden-LOC 2s.m go-FUT QPPN-3s.m.
'Are you going to the garden?'

(475). uku oso jivi os

water DEM good QPPN -3s.f.
'Is that water good?'

(476). hinyer ukmashi-k layi-ri oj
yesterday waterhole-LOC go down QPPN-3pl
'Did you go to the waterhole yesterday?'

(477). wa apsambu las a ji-shi-hi nak a-ku
OK cassowary INDEF 1s hit-ORD-MDL so.that eat-FUT

om
2s.m

'If I'll kill a cassowary will you eat it?'

6.3.5.2. Content Questions

Content questions anticipate a response of information from the listener. This type of sentence is usually signalled by an interrogative word which occurs either sentence initial or final (mbelmbel 'how many' and mbeei 'stative where' occur always sentence finally). When interrogative words are used to form a content question, the sentence does not have rising intonation.

Examples:

(478). mbeek mi i-ku
where 2s.m go-FUT
'Where do you go?'

(479). jikisi mi-hi mbelmbel
children 2s.m how many
'How many children do you have?'

(480). mberem or u-wa-k mi i mi rakatukuyi-w
why 3 s.m do-PAST-SUB 2s.m go 2s.m fall down-NPAST
'What did he do to you that you fell down?'

(481). mbele-n nyi lasa-ha mba-ndu
what-OBJ 2s.f look for-MDL speak-PRG
'What are you looking for?'

(482). mberem u-wa-k mi ra-ndu
why do-PAST-SUB 2s.m come-PRG
'Why did you come?'

(483). aka lawe-hi
house who-POSS
'Whose house?'

(484). lawe sir
who 3s.f
'Who is there?'

6.3.5.3. Alternative Yes-No Questions

At the end of a sentence the alternation particle mo 'or' may be added, followed by optional wahaw 'not'. When wahaw is not used at the end of the sentence, the sentence is left unfinished and the speaker waits for the response of the hearer. This type of sentence ends with rising intonation.

Examples:

(485). Nuku-k mi i-ku mo wahaw?
Nuku-LOC 3s.m go-FUT ALT NEG
'Are you going to Nuku or not?'

(486). aray, wako an-hi wa-nda-l mo wahaw
grandmother lizard 1s-POSS stay-HAB-3pl ALT NEG
'Grandmother, is my lizard here or not?'

(487). kaso-n mi a-ku mo
DEM-OBJ 3s.m eat-FUT ALT
'Do you eat this or...'

6.3.5.4 Negative Questions

The negative question is formed by adding a negation word ambu after the main verb. The intonation is raising. . If these sentences are said loudly and angrily they get negative meaning and function as reprimands.

Examples:

(488). akwa-n nyi u-waambu ony
food-OBJ 2s.f do-NPAST NEG 2s.f
'Aren't you going to make any food?'

(489). kaso-n mi a-kuambu om
DEM-OBJ 2s.m eat-FUT NEG 3s.m
'Aren't you going to eat this?'

6.3.5.5 Rhetorical Questions

There seems to be rhetorical questions that are more like interjections in some kind of question form. The speaker does not expect the listener to reply to the question. There seems to be two ways of forming these: either by using a question word mberem

'why' or by using the dubitative particle mbe at the end of the sentence.

Example 413 ends with an intensifiers -sa or -na. It is most likely that a consonant has been added before the intensifier -a, because the previous morpheme ends in a vowel.

Examples:

(490). mberem a u-ku-a sa/na
why 1s do-FUT-INT
'What shall I do?'

(491). ma raka-ku-nda-s mbe
rain come.down-FUT-HAB-3s.f DUB
'I wonder if it is going to rain?'

(492). Sarere-k mbe?
saturday-TEMP DUB
'On Saturday or not?'

7. Discourse Features

7.0 Introduction

The discourse level of the Mende grammar has not yet been studied in detail. The following observations are very tentative and by no means exhaustive.

7.1. Object Lift

It seems that the basic word order is SOV. However when the object is emphasized then it is moved either to the end of the clause after the verb or to the beginning of the clause. If occurring clause final, there is a slight pause in the flow of speech just before the object and the intonation goes down at the end of the clause/sentence.

This feature became obvious when we started to translate scripture, the translators seemed to prefer the object after the verb, although they accepted it in the 'normal' position (before the verb), too.

In example 495 a clause functions as an object and it is marked at the end of the clause with object marker -n.

Examples:

(493). *jir amber ji rupshi-ka avuy wasilaka ji-hi-n*
3pl all 3pl love-HORT father big 3pl-POSS-OBJ
'You must love God'.

(494). *hinyer angop li sawe-rako-ri misambi mashi*
yesterday already 3pl speak-COMPL-PAST ground talk

oso-n

DEM-OBJ

'Yesterday they finished talking about the land argument'.

(495). *mir avak aje-wa hala maria oso-n mi*
2s.m now be.afraid-IMP leave maria 3s.f-OBJ 2s.m

la-kwa-n

take-FUT-OBJ

'Don't be afraid of taking that Maria (as your wife)'.

(496). *parkakisha ondo shir-in nyi ha-ri ondo kava*
aupa DEM dual-OBJ 3s.f give-PAST DEM bad
'The greens that you gave us(=we two) were bad.'

7.2. Head-Tail Linkage

In a discourse the previous sentence is very often linked with the following sentence by repeating the last clause at the beginning of the following sentence. There are various ways of doing this:

1. Referring back with suffix *-k*

The Mende language uses the chaining structure to join together various sentences, which have the same subject. Usually this chaining structure is used in a narrative discourse to describe various events that usually happen in sequence. It is very common to have three, four or even five sentences joined together. The last sentence carries the tense and/or aspect markers, whereas the previous sentences are marked with medial markers.

When a new sentence starts, the last clause of the previous sentence is repeated at the beginning of this sentence. The suffix *-k* (SUB) is added at the beginning of this first clause of the new sentence. The **tense** of the verb **changes from near past to remote past**. The clauses ending with the suffix *-k* have a raising intonation. Quite often the clause marked with *-k* will also get

an intensifier -o at the end of it. It is difficult to say at this stage what is the function of -o : whether it has a grammatical function or whether it is used 'just' to help to 'pull' the intonation. The new sentence refers back to the previous one. This might also be a way of expressing the temporal sequence of the two sentences.

However, sometimes one will find a string of clauses/sentences marked with medial markers, followed by a clause/sentence marked with tense + suffix -k. It seems that it is possible to 'jump over' one step i.e. instead of ending the sentence with a verb that carries the tense and starting a new sentence with this verb + suffix -k, one can leave out the sentence that ends with a finite verb + the tense markers and go directly to the next step i.e. change the tense from near past to remote past and put the suffix -k at the end of the sentence. However, the full construction with a finite verb + tense is always recoverable. It seems that this is a way of shortening the story and it is used rather frequently.

Examples:

(497). *ma wasilaka-k raka-wa. ma raka-ri-k*
 rain big-ADV come.down-NPAST rain come.down.PAST
 'It rained heavily. When it rained heavily...

(498). *asa obro-n a tambu-hu lau-shi-hi nombo laka*
 dog dual-OBJ 1s follow-MDL go.up-MDL road big

kop a i-hi lau-ri-k hokonu oso
 only 1s go-MDL go.up-PAST-SUB kind.of. snake DEM

nombo laka-k si-mu wa-ra
 road big 3s.f-TOP stay-NPAST

'I took two dog and went up the main road and kept on going and (when) I had gotten up to the road (I saw) the snake that was lying on the main road'.

See more examples in the stories in the appendix: hovo.txt sentences 3 and 4; snake.txt sentences 2,3 and 8.

2. The Use of Adverbial karem

The adverb *karem* 'like this' starts a new sentence and it is followed with the verb mba 'speak' or u 'do' in appropriate tense.

Quite often this construction is used also in between of the clauses to 'carry on the story'.

Examples:

(499). *karem mba-ri-k-o or-mu mba-r*
like.this speak-PAST-SUB-INT 3s.m-TOP speak-PAST
'As he had spoken like this he spoke...'

(500). *karem u-hu shi mandinkorme-he karem*
like.this do-MDL 2d. kill-MDL like.this

u-hu shi ewe-shi-wa-k or -li-wa-k
do-MDL 2d. put-ORD-NPAST-SUB 3s.m stay-NPAST-SUB

tawu-n shi-mu la-wa
garden-OBJ 2d.-TOP do-NPAST
'We did like this: we killed (the snake), we put it
(on the ground?), and it stayed (there) and we worked
in the garden'.

7.3 Some Observations about Sentence Intonation

It seems that the raising intonation in a statement implies that the sentence is not complete. It is used when chaining two or more clauses with medial verb marker (MDL) *h+V* (the last vowel of the previous verb stem). When the sentence is completed there is falling intonation and the last verb gets the tense markers.

The clauses ending with the suffix *-k* have also a raising intonation. Quite often the clause marked with *-k* will also get an intensifier *-o* at the end of it. It is difficult to say at this stage what is the function of *-o*: whether it has a grammatical function or whether it is used 'just' to help to 'pull' the intonation.

Examples:

(501). *wormbo-n li korme-he la-ha-ra-owe-he*
stilts-OBJ 3pl cut-MDL bring-MDL-come-put-MDL

mi-n shi-hi la-ha-ra-owe-nda-k ol-mu
tree-OBJ cut-MDL bring-MDL-come-put-PAST-SUB 3pl-TOP

wormbo-wa-n koro-wa
stilt-hole-OBJ dig-NPAST
'First they cut the posts for the house, bring them,

cut the trees and bring them, when they have done
this they dig the holes for the posts.

(502). *ma wasilaka-k raka-wa. ma raka-ri-k*
rain big-ADV come.down-NPAST rain come.down.PAST
'It rained heavily. When it rained heavily...'

7.4. The Given Topic Marked with Suffix -mu

The suffix -mu (TOP) functions as a topic marker. It seems to mark the given topic and is used very commonly in appositive noun phrases, where the subject is first introduced with noun+ demonstrative, and then repeated by a noun or pronoun followed by -mu.

Quite often in a narrative sentence the subject is first introduced in the first clause with a proper noun or with a pronoun and then in the main clause (that carries the tense markers) the subject is marked with the topic marker -mu.

Examples:

(503). *jikisi kanda oso wasilaka mende os-mu hayi-ra*
child small DEM big NEG 3s.f-TOP laugh-PAST

tarble-n le-ra
tongue-OBJ pull out-PAST
'That baby is big, he smiled and hung out his
tongue.'

(504). *Jisas leuku Galili-k or i-hi hulayi frijip*
Jesus lake Galili-LOC 3s.m go-MDL men two

obro-n or-mu heye-ra
DEM-OBJ 3s.m-TOP see-NPAST
'Jesus went to lake Galili and he saw two men'.

(505). *ma lar hi or-hi warengon or-mu asa-n*
man one name 3s.m-POSS Warengon 3s.m-TOP dog-OBJ

la-ha i-ra
take-MDL go-PAST
'A man called Warengon took his dog and went.'

8. Residue

In Mende the person is not usually marked on the verbs. However, there are some cases - usually connected with clauses with the dubitative particle mbe and alteration particle mo - where there seems to be a person marker at the end of the verb stem. It is difficult to say whether this is really a person marker or whether it is a personal pronoun, which has lost its vowel as it comes straight after a verb stem ending in a vowel.

Examples:

(506). ma raka-ku-nda-s mbe, ma am te
 rain come down-FUT-HAB-3s.f. DUB I don't know
 'Will it rain, I don't know.'

(507). fle oso-n am a ji-wa-s mo mi
 pig DEM-OBJ now 1s kill-NPAST-3s.f ALT tree

hakla yeje-n na ji-wa-n mo
 dry side-OBJ 1s kill-NPAST-1s ALT
 'Did I kill that pig or did I just hit the side of
 the dry tree?

(508). helen ta- ku- nda-s- mbe mo raka- ku- nda-
 helen come-FUT-HAB-3s.f-DUB ALT come.down-FUT-HAB-

ambu-s- mbe
 NEG-3s.f DUB
 'Will Helen come or won't she come.'

(509). ni nikisi-fu- ku- nda-s- mbe
 1pl. waite- NEG-FUT-HAB-3s.f DUB
 'I don't know if Helen comes or nor, if will wait
 for her'.

Another thing that we are not yet clear is the use of the er. At the moment we are not even sure how to call this and in which level it functions. It seems to be a word or particle (?) that is added in front of the subject. At one point we thought that this could be 'related' to temporal word ermba ermbak 'always' or adverbial ebrebmam 'both', but we are not sure. People say that one can use it or leave it out, in both cases the meaning is the same.

Examples:

(510). an a heye-r ambu er a hisha-shi-hi na
 1s 1s see-PAST NEG ? 1s think-ord-MDL 1s

i-ri-k men er si waha-nda-ri-k....
go-PAST-SUB just ? 3s.f stay-HAB-PAST-SUB
'I didn't see (it), I walked (deep) in my thoughts,
it just stayed there (on the ground)...'

(511). *jeruku hakla i-nda ambu er si-nda*
mountain.water dry go-HAB NEG ? stay-HAB
'Mountain water doesn't dry, it stays (always).'

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