This paper concerns the Mungong language, formally considered a variety of Nchane and spoken in Bum Subdivision, Menchum Division, in the North West Region of Cameroon.

ISO 639-3 language code: ncr
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<th>Description</th>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ø-</td>
<td>zero prefix</td>
<td>HORT</td>
<td>hortative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#σ</td>
<td>word initial syllable</td>
<td>IMP</td>
<td>imperative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>???</td>
<td>unanalyzed form</td>
<td>IMPF</td>
<td>imperfective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>class 1</td>
<td>INCL</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>class 2</td>
<td>IO</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>class 3</td>
<td>LOC</td>
<td>locative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>nasal archiphoneme, noun</td>
</tr>
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<td>first person singular</td>
<td>NEG</td>
<td>negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2s</td>
<td>second person singular</td>
<td>NEG1</td>
<td>negative 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3s</td>
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<tr>
<td>2p</td>
<td>second person plural</td>
<td>P0</td>
<td>past 0 (immediate past)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3p</td>
<td>third person plural</td>
<td>P1</td>
<td>past 1 (today past)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGR</td>
<td>agreement marker</td>
<td>P2</td>
<td>past 2 (medial past)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AM</td>
<td>associative marker</td>
<td>P3</td>
<td>past 3 (remote past)</td>
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<td>ANA</td>
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<td>POSS</td>
<td>possessive adjective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>consonant</td>
<td>PRO</td>
<td>pronoun</td>
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<td>CAUS</td>
<td>causative</td>
<td>QM</td>
<td>question marker</td>
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<td>COMP</td>
<td>complement particle</td>
<td>Rel</td>
<td>relative Pronoun</td>
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<td>DISTR</td>
<td>distributive</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DL</td>
<td>dual</td>
<td>Subj</td>
<td>subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DO</td>
<td>direct object</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>verb, vowel</td>
</tr>
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<td>EXCL</td>
<td>exclusive</td>
<td>ṽ</td>
<td>low tone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXT</td>
<td>verbal extension</td>
<td>Ṽ</td>
<td>extra low tone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F0</td>
<td>future 0 (immediate future)</td>
<td>Ṽ</td>
<td>mid tone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F1</td>
<td>future 1 (near future)</td>
<td>Ṽ</td>
<td>high tone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F2</td>
<td>future 2 (medial future)</td>
<td>Ṽ</td>
<td>high-low falling tone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F3</td>
<td>future 3 (distant future)</td>
<td>Ṽ</td>
<td>mid-low falling tone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FUT</td>
<td>future</td>
<td>VPart</td>
<td>verbal particle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HAB</td>
<td>habitual</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1 Introduction

1.1 Name of the language


1.2 Genetic affiliation

Mungong has the following genetic affiliation: Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Volta-Congo, Benue-Congo, Wide Bantu, Southern, Beboid, Eastern (Fennig, Lewis, and Simons 2013).

1.3 Sociolinguistic situation

1.3.1 Demography

The Mungong language area is comprised of the one village of Mungong with its own chief. There are approximately 1,500 speakers of the language.

1.3.2 Viability

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

1.3.3 Language attitudes

The Mungong people are positively disposed toward their language.

1.3.4 Multilingualism

A significant number of Mungong people may be fluent in the neighboring languages of Noni, Nchane and Bum. A majority of adult Mungong speakers may also have at least a minimum of functional fluency in Cameroonian Pidgin English, which is very often the language of use at neighboring markets.
1.4 Corpus and nature of the research

The current paper is an effort to describe the basics of Mungong grammar, particularly from a descriptive viewpoint. Data for the research comes primarily from a number of Mungong narrative texts, as well as from elicited sentences and words collected over a period of seven years, from 2007 to 2014. Significant data collection and analysis was accomplished as a result of a series of grammar workshops held in Misaje in late 2012. The texts and other language data were collected with the help of several language consultants, most notably Kemcha Gabriel, Nganti Joseph, Ngong Augustine, Sofa Cletus, Ferdinand Muchuo and San Linus Gabushi.

Certain conventions have been observed in the paper and the reader is encouraged to take note of the following items related to the presentation of the data. The data is generally presented utilizing orthographic forms. Of special note is palatalization, which is represented as a Ci+V sequence. Thus, any occurrence of CiV in the data should be interpreted as C’V. The function of Mungong tone is limited to a handful of grammatical features and lexical distinctions. Therefore, orthographic tone is included in the data, with the exception of examples illustrating tense, yes-no questions and hortative mood. Because of the important role tone plays in these areas, surface tone is given in these examples. The reader is directed to the *Mungong Orthography Guide* (Boutwell and Boutwell 2011) and the *Mungong Phonology Sketch* (Boutwell 2011) for aid in realizing phonetic forms.
2 Nouns and noun phrases

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

noun (possessor) (demonstrative) (number) (quantifier) (relative clause)

Each of these constituents, except for relative clauses, must take a noun class concord prefix, which agrees with the modified noun. Relative clauses are preceded by a relative pronoun, which corresponds to the class of the head noun.

2.1 Noun classes and genders

Mungong common nouns belong to eight distinct noun class pairings or genders. ‘Noun class’ refers to a system of classification in which all nouns are grouped, with the nouns of each group or class receiving an affix distinct to its class. ‘Noun gender’ refers to noun class pairings, usually consisting of singular and plural forms of the same noun. The noun class designations in this work are informed by Hombert (1980), which closely follows the Proto-Bantu numbering established by bantuists (Welmers 1973:163). A notable exception is class 25, which appears to be a creation of Hombert.

Nouns are typically marked by a prefix to indicate the number of the noun (i.e., singular vs. plural). Notable exceptions are classes 1, 3, 9 and 10. Classes 1 and 3 each take a zero morpheme to indicate singular, while the number for gender 9/10 nouns is indicated by distinctive tone. The singular forms are marked with relative low tone and plural forms with relative high tone.

Gender 3/4 displays three distinct subgroups, with different affixation on the nouns. The first subgroup, gender 3/4(a), is prevalent and marks singular nouns with a zero prefix and plural nouns with the prefix i-. Gender 3/4(c) indicates singular nouns by labializing the initial consonant of the noun stem, while plural nouns lack such labialization (and have no prefix). Gender 3/4(b) represents a transitional phase between genders 3/4(a) and 3/4(c). Singular nouns are marked by labialization and plural nouns by the prefix i-.
The examples below are representative of the three gender 3/4 groups.¹

1. a) Ø-tfuŋ     i-tfuŋ
   3-axe       4-axe
   ‘axe’       ‘axes’

   b) jwɔ     i-dzɔ
   3.mouth    4-mouth
   ‘mouth’    ‘mouths’

   c) gbɔ     Ø-gɔ
   3.root    4-root
   ‘root’    ‘roots’

   Classes 6a and 16 are worthy of special comment. Some liquids, and possibly certain other uncountable nouns, belong to the single class gender 6a. Nouns in this very small class take the prefix m(ə)-. Class 16 is a locative class and is marked by the prefix fə-. Nouns in this class often have no plural counterpart. When a plural exists, it often belongs to class 8, but other plural classes are observed as well. A number of body parts belong to this class. Below are some examples to illustrate.²

2. a) fa-njiŋ
   16-forehead
   ‘forehead’ (lit. at eyes)

   b) fa-ka
   16-palm
   ‘palm’ (of hand)

   c) fa-ŋka
   16-beginning
   ‘beginning’

¹ Note that backing of initial nonsonorant, alveolar consonants is observed in class 3 nouns of genders 3/4(b) and 3/4(c). Also note that in these two groups, class 3 labialization is realized as a labialvelar (kp or gb) when the initial consonant of the noun stem is velar (k or g). See Boutwell (2011) for more details. Furthermore, there appears to be a regularization of gender 3/4(c) to include only nouns with stem initial velar consonants.

² A small number of nouns is observed with a kə- prefix, corresponding to the locative class 17 (e.g., kə-njiŋ ‘the inside of the eye’).


The full array of noun class markers with examples are given in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Noun class marking</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ø-</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>‘cow’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>bə-</td>
<td>bəna</td>
<td>‘cows’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Ø-/(Ø-)</td>
<td>taka</td>
<td>‘fish bone’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>i-/(Ø-)</td>
<td>itaka</td>
<td>‘fish bones’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>ki-</td>
<td>kiyu</td>
<td>‘elephant’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>bi-</td>
<td>biyu</td>
<td>‘elephants’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>#ő</td>
<td>bi</td>
<td>‘goat’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>bő</td>
<td>bí</td>
<td>‘goats’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>b(v)u-</td>
<td>bu-di</td>
<td>‘bridge’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>məN-</td>
<td>məndi</td>
<td>‘bridges’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>fi(N)-</td>
<td>fiñtaŋ</td>
<td>‘fruit’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18a</td>
<td>mu(N)-</td>
<td>muntaŋ</td>
<td>‘fruits’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>fə-</td>
<td>fañĩŋ</td>
<td>‘wrist’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6a</td>
<td>m(ə)-</td>
<td>mañtaŋ</td>
<td>‘saliva’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Noun Class Markers
2.2 Gender system

As suggested above, Mungong nouns may normally be grouped into singular/plural pairs referred to as genders. There is overwhelming one-to-one correspondence between the singular and plural classes. In other words, the singular-plural pairings are quite simple and rigid, with class 1 pairing only with class 2, class 3 pairing only with class 4, etc. This is in contrast with other Eastern Beboid languages like Nchane, where class 3 pairs with both class 4 and class 27 (Boutwell 2010). Note that several classes that normally belong to singular-plural genders have been observed with nouns lacking a singular or plural counterpart (i.e., single class genders). However, this area needs more exploration at this time. Classes 6a and 16 form single class genders. As noted above, class 6a nouns are generally mass nouns, which are semantically constrained from making a singular-plural distinction. A few class 16 nouns can be distinguished as singular, and generally pair with class 8 for their plural form.

The genders may be seen in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>singular classes</th>
<th>plural classes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>18a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16, 6a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Mungong Genders

Most constituents that modify the noun must take a prefix that corresponds to the noun’s class. Note that when the root of the modifier begins with a vowel, the vowel of the concord marker is deleted leaving only the consonant of the concord marker.
There appears to be some collapsing of the system, with classes 1 and 3 sharing concord markers. Likewise, classes 4 and 10 share concord markers and classes 6a and 25 also share concord markers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Numbers, Quantifiers, Demonstratives</th>
<th>Possessive Adjectives</th>
<th>Associative Markers, Relative Pronouns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1, 3</td>
<td>wu-</td>
<td>wu-</td>
<td>wu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>ba-</td>
<td>ba-</td>
<td>ba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4, 10</td>
<td>yi-</td>
<td>yi-</td>
<td>yi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>ki-</td>
<td>ki-</td>
<td>ki</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>bi-</td>
<td>bi-</td>
<td>bi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>yi-</td>
<td>yi-</td>
<td>yi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>bu-</td>
<td>bu-</td>
<td>bu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6a, 25</td>
<td>maN-</td>
<td>ma-</td>
<td>ma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>fi-</td>
<td>fi-</td>
<td>fi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18a</td>
<td>muN-</td>
<td>mu-</td>
<td>mu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>fa-</td>
<td>fa-</td>
<td>fa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Mungong Class Concord Markers

2.3 Possessives

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

3. a) Ø-na  
   1-cow  1-1sPOSS
   ‘my cow’

   w-agh  
   1-cow  1-3sPOSS
   ‘his cow’

   Ø-na  w-i

b) ki-ba  
   7-bag  7-1sPOSS
   ‘my bag’

   k-agh  
   7-bag  7-3sPOSS
   ‘his bag’

Note that the third person singular and third person plural possessive adjectives have two forms each—a long form and a shorter, presumably contracted, form. The third person singular short forms consist of the noun class consonant followed by i, e, ɛ, or ɨ, likely phonological variants of the possessive adjective root vowel. The third person plural short forms simply delete the final ɮ from the root. Note also that initial observations suggest that classes 1 and 9 have low tone, while the other classes have relatively higher tone, following
the pattern seen in other languages in the area. However, more research is needed to confirm this.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>1s</th>
<th>2s</th>
<th>3s</th>
<th>1p</th>
<th>1p + 1s</th>
<th>1p + 2s</th>
<th>2p</th>
<th>3p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>waŋ</td>
<td>wo</td>
<td>wi/wus(ɔ)</td>
<td>wusa</td>
<td>wusabem</td>
<td>wusabew</td>
<td>wuna</td>
<td>wuba/wubala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>baŋ</td>
<td>bo</td>
<td>be/basi</td>
<td>basa</td>
<td>basabem</td>
<td>basabew</td>
<td>bana</td>
<td>baba/babala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>yaŋ</td>
<td>yo</td>
<td>yi/yisi</td>
<td>yisa</td>
<td>yisabem</td>
<td>yisabew</td>
<td>yina</td>
<td>yiba/yibala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>kaŋ</td>
<td>ko</td>
<td>ke/kisi</td>
<td>kisa</td>
<td>kisabem</td>
<td>kisabew</td>
<td>kina</td>
<td>kiba/kibala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>biaŋ</td>
<td>bio</td>
<td>bi/bisi</td>
<td>bisa</td>
<td>bisabem</td>
<td>bisabew</td>
<td>bina</td>
<td>biba/bibala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>yaŋ</td>
<td>yo</td>
<td>ye/yisi</td>
<td>yisa</td>
<td>yisabem</td>
<td>yisabew</td>
<td>yina</td>
<td>yiba/yibala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>bwaŋ</td>
<td>bwo</td>
<td>bwi/busi</td>
<td>busa</td>
<td>busabem</td>
<td>busabew</td>
<td>buna</td>
<td>buba/bubala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>maŋ</td>
<td>mo</td>
<td>mc/masi</td>
<td>masa</td>
<td>masabem</td>
<td>masabew</td>
<td>mana</td>
<td>maba/mabala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>fiaŋ</td>
<td>fio</td>
<td>fii/fisi</td>
<td>fisa</td>
<td>fisabem</td>
<td>fisabew</td>
<td>fina</td>
<td>fiba/fibala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>faŋ</td>
<td>fo</td>
<td>fii/fosi</td>
<td>fasa</td>
<td>fasabem</td>
<td>fasabew</td>
<td>fana</td>
<td>faba/fabala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>maŋ</td>
<td>mo</td>
<td>mc/masi</td>
<td>masa</td>
<td>masabem</td>
<td>masabew</td>
<td>mana</td>
<td>maba/mabala</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. Mungong Possessive Adjectives

2.4 Demonstratives

Demonstratives immediately follow the noun in the noun phrase, except in the relatively rare case that there is an accompanying possessive, in which case they follow the possessive. There are three distinct stem forms distinguishing three degrees of distance, near the speaker (proximal), near the hearer (distal) and away from both speaker and hearer (far distal).

The proximal demonstrative has the underlying form na³, the distal demonstrative has the underlying form i, and the far distal demonstrative has the underlying form ɔk. These three demonstratives must be marked with a prefix corresponding to the noun class of the modified noun. In the case of the distal demonstrative, this leads to vowel harmony in some cases. And in the case of the far distal demonstrative, this results in the loss of the normal concord prefix vowel.

---

3 A shortened version of the proximal is observed that has the root ŋ.
4. a) Ø-na  
Ø-na  
Ø-na
wu-na
wi-i
w-ɔkɔ

1-cow  1-this
1-cow  1-that
1-cow  1-that (far)

‘this cow’
‘that cow’
‘that cow’ (far)

b) bɔ-na  
ba-na
be-ɛ
be-ɛ

2-cow  2-this
2-cow  2-that
2-cow  2-that (far)

‘these cows’
‘those cows’
‘those cows’ (far)

c) i-gɔŋ
yi-na
yi-
i

4-spear  4-this
4-spear  4-that
4-spear  4-that (far)

‘these spears’
‘those spears’
‘those spears’ (far)

The addition of the concord prefix to the distal demonstratives results in labialization in classes 14 and 18a. Similarly, palatalization occurs in classes 8 and 19. Note that palatalization is represented here as CiV sequences. Thus, for example, fi-i ‘19-that’ should be interpreted as f+I.

5. a) bu-di  
bu-di
bu-di
bu-di

14-bridge  14-this
14-bridge  14-that
14-bridge  14-that (far)

‘this bridge’
‘that bridge’
‘that bridge’ (far)

b) mun-kɔ  
mun-ŋa
mw-inŋ
mw-ɔkɔ

18a-cup 18a-this
18a-cup 18a-that
18a-cup 18a-that (far)

‘these cups’
‘those cups’
‘those cups’ (far)

c) bi-ti  
bi-na
bi-
i
bi-ɔkɔ

8-tree  8-this
8-tree  8-that
8-tree  8-that (far)

‘these trees’
‘those trees’
‘those trees’ (far)

d) fi-musɔ
fi-na
fi-
i
fi-ɔkɔ

19-cat  19-this
19-cat  19-that
19-cat  19-that (far)

‘this cat’
‘that cat’
‘that cat’ (far)
A fourth demonstrative, with the underlying form juŋ, is used with nouns that have previously been mentioned in the discourse. Like the spatial demonstratives, this anaphoric demonstrative is marked with a prefix which corresponds to the noun class of the modified noun. The distal demonstrative is used in anaphoric reference as well, as illustrated in 6b below, and may actually be the preferred demonstrative for this function. Preliminary observations suggest that these two demonstratives may be used interchangeably with no change in meaning. Further research needs to be done to know if there is any actual difference between them when used in making anaphoric reference.

   3s just enter in 3.farm 3-ANA it remove
   ‘He just entered the (aforementioned) farm and removed some (ground nuts).’

   b) M-bo mbəkɔ wi-i wii.
   1s-descend 1.hill 1-that slow
   ‘I descended the (aforementioned) hill slowly.’

The following table gives the demonstrative forms for each of the classes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>this/these</th>
<th>that/those (far)</th>
<th>that/those (anaphoric)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>wunə</td>
<td>wii</td>
<td>wəkɔ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>bənə</td>
<td>bee</td>
<td>bəkɔ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>wunə</td>
<td>wii</td>
<td>wəkɔ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>yina</td>
<td>yii</td>
<td>yəkɔ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>kina</td>
<td>kii</td>
<td>kəkɔ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>bina</td>
<td>bii</td>
<td>bəkɔ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>yina</td>
<td>yii</td>
<td>yəkɔ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>yina</td>
<td>yii</td>
<td>yəkɔ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>bunə</td>
<td>bwi</td>
<td>bəwəkɔ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>mənə</td>
<td>mee</td>
<td>məkɔ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>fənə</td>
<td>fii</td>
<td>fəkɔ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18a</td>
<td>mənə</td>
<td>mwiŋ</td>
<td>məwəkɔ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>fənə</td>
<td>fee</td>
<td>fəkɔ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6a</td>
<td>mənə</td>
<td>mee</td>
<td>məkɔ</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5. Mungong Demonstratives
2.5 Numerals

Mungong numerals typically immediately follow the noun they modify. The numbers 1-5 always agree with the modified noun, while the numbers 6-9 do not take concord.

7. Ø-na wu- mbwaka ‘one cow’
   ña-na ña- tələ ‘three cows’
   ña-na ña- ə ‘four cows’
   ña-na nya ‘eight cows’
   ña-na bvukə ‘nine cows’

Numbers above ten are formed through the use of ntso ‘plus’, joining numbers in the one’s position with those in the ten’s position.

8. yufə ntso mbaka ‘eleven’ (ten plus one)
   yufə ntso nya ‘eighteen’ (ten plus eight)

In numbers higher than ten, the numbers 1-7 in the one’s position agree with the noun modified, when a noun is present. Otherwise, they are generally marked with the class 2 concord prefix bə-

9. yufə ntso ña- tələ ‘thirteen’ (ten plus three)
   yufə ntso ña- ə ‘fourteen’ (ten plus four)

   ña- tələ ‘thirteen palm nuts’
   ña- ə ‘fourteen palm nuts’

Numbers above one hundred use the word bə ‘and’ to join numbers in the higher positions with those in the lower positions when not modifying a noun; otherwise ntso is used.

10. gbeŋ bə mbaka ‘one hundred and one’

    bə-na gbeŋ ntso wu-mbwaka ‘one hundred and one cows’
The numbers in the hundred’s position are treated as nouns belonging to gender 3/4, and numbers in the thousand’s position are treated as nouns belonging to gender 1/2.

11. *gben*  
   ‘one hundred’  

   *ge fe*  
   ‘two hundred’

   *Ø-nchukə*  
   ‘one thousand’

   *bo-nchukə bo-fe*  
   ‘two thousand’

This is maintained even when modifying a noun.

12. *blan gben*  
   ‘one hundred palm nuts’

   *blan ge fii*  
   ‘two hundred palm nuts’

   *blan Ø-nchukə*  
   ‘one thousand palm nuts’

   *blan bo-nchukə bo-fe*  
   ‘two thousand palm nuts’

Some class concord markers apparently effect morphophonological changes to the numeral ‘one’. Classes 1, 3, and 14 concord results in labialization of the initial consonant of the root. Class 9 concord results in palatalization of the initial consonant of the root.

13. *mbaka*  
   ‘one’

   *na wu-mbwaka*  
   ‘one cow’(1)

   *blan yi-mbiaka*  
   ‘one palm nut’(9)
Table 6 below presents a partial list of Mungong cardinal numerals used for counting, along with the numerals as they appear when modifying a noun.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Numeral</th>
<th>‘cow___’ (Gender 1/2)</th>
<th>‘palm nut___’ (Gender 9/10)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 mbaka</td>
<td>na wumbwaka</td>
<td>bian yimbiaka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 fe</td>
<td>bana bafe</td>
<td>bian yife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 təle</td>
<td>bana bətəla</td>
<td>bian yitäla</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 nə</td>
<td>bana bəna</td>
<td>bian yina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 tɨŋ</td>
<td>bana bətiŋ</td>
<td>bian yitɨŋ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 so</td>
<td>bana buso</td>
<td>bian buso</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 fwe</td>
<td>bana busofwe</td>
<td>bian busofwe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 nya</td>
<td>bana nya</td>
<td>bian nya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 bvukə</td>
<td>bana bvukə</td>
<td>bian bvukə</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 yufə</td>
<td>bana yufə</td>
<td>bian yufə</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 yufə ntso mbaka</td>
<td>bana yufə ntso wumbwaka</td>
<td>bian yufə ntso yimbiaka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 yufə ntso bəfe</td>
<td>bana yufə ntso bəfe</td>
<td>bian yufə ntso yifii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 yufə ntso bətəla</td>
<td>bana yufə ntso bətəla</td>
<td>bian yufə ntso yitàla</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 yufə ntso bəna</td>
<td>bana yufə ntso bəna</td>
<td>bian yufə ntso yina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 yufə ntso bətiŋ</td>
<td>bana yufə ntso bətiŋ</td>
<td>bian yufə ntso yitɨŋ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 yufə ntso bəso</td>
<td>bana yufə ntso bəso</td>
<td>bian yufə ntso bəso</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 yufə ntso bəsofwe</td>
<td>bana yufə ntso bəsofwe</td>
<td>bian yufə ntso bəsofwe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 yufə ntso nəya</td>
<td>bana yufə ntso nəya</td>
<td>bian yufə ntso nəya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 yufə ntso bvukə</td>
<td>bana yufə ntso bvukə</td>
<td>bian yufə ntso bvukə</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 mbaŋ fi</td>
<td>bana mbəŋ fi</td>
<td>bian mbaŋ fi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 mbaŋ fi ntso mbaka</td>
<td>bana mbaŋ fi ntso wumbwaka</td>
<td>bian mbaŋ fi ntso yimbiaka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 mbaŋ fi ntso bəfe</td>
<td>bana mbaŋ fi ntso bəfe</td>
<td>bian mbaŋ fi ntso yifii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100 gbeŋ</td>
<td>bana gbeŋ</td>
<td>bian gbeŋ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101 gbeŋ bə mbaka</td>
<td>bana gbeŋ ntso wumbwaka</td>
<td>bian gbeŋ ntso yimbiaka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200 ge fe</td>
<td>bana ge fe</td>
<td>bian ge fe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1000 nchukə</td>
<td>bana nchukə</td>
<td>bian nchukə</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000 banchukə bəfe</td>
<td>bana banchukə bəfe</td>
<td>bian banchukə bəfe</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6. Mungong Numerals
2.6 Quantifiers

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

14. a) bi-ti  \textit{bi-chi}  
   c8-tree  8-all  
   ‘all trees’

   b) m-uŋ  \textit{mun-chi}  
   18a-thing  18a-all  
   ‘all things’

15. a) ba-ni  \textit{ba-mba}  
   2-person  2-some  
   ‘some people’

   b) i-soŋ  \textit{yi-mba}  
   4-palm trees  4-some  
   ‘some palm trees’

16. a) ba-ni  \textit{ba-che}  
   2-person  2-few  
   ‘few people’

   b) i-soŋ  \textit{yi-che}  
   4-palm trees  4-few  
   ‘few palm trees’

17. a) bi-ti  \textit{bi-yəŋnə}  
   8-tree  8-many  
   ‘many trees’

   b) ba-ni  \textit{ba-yæŋnə}  
   2-person  2-many  
   ‘many people’
In certain contexts, these quantifiers can give slightly different senses than the basic ones. The example below shows how chi ‘all’ can be used with some singular nouns to indicate the entirety of the modified noun.

18. *ki-tì  ki-chì*
   7-tree  7-all
   ‘the whole tree’

Below, we see *mbà* ‘some’ modifying a singular noun and giving a discriminating sense.

19. a) *Ø-sogò  wu-mbHà*
    3-palm tree  3-some
    ‘one of the palm trees’

   b) *Ø-mù  wu-mbHà*
    1-person  1-some
    ‘a certain person’

The quantifier *che* ‘few’ can be used to modify many singular nouns and indicates that the noun is small in size.

20. *Ø-le  wu-che*
    3-compound  3-few
    ‘small compound’

   When used to modify a mass noun, the quantifiers *che* ‘few’ and *yaŋìa* ‘many’ express the amount of the noun, often relative to the size of the container. With some nouns, this can also include a comment on the perceived stinginess or liberality of the quantity. For example, if palm wine is provided for guests in a less than expected quantity, the use of *che* indicates that the amount is not sufficient.

21. a) *me  mən-che*
    6a.oil  6a-few
    ‘a small amount of oil’

   b) *me  mən-yaŋìa*
    6a.oil  6a-many
    ‘a large amount of oil’
The following table provides a summary of the Mungong quantifiers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>‘all’</th>
<th>‘some’</th>
<th>‘few’</th>
<th>‘many’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>wuchi</td>
<td>wumbə</td>
<td>wuche</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>bəchi</td>
<td>bəmbə</td>
<td>bəche</td>
<td>bəyanəə</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>wuchi</td>
<td>wumbə</td>
<td>wuche</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>yichi</td>
<td>yimbə</td>
<td>yiche</td>
<td>yiyanəə</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>kichi</td>
<td>kimbə</td>
<td>kiche</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>bichi</td>
<td>bimbə</td>
<td>biche</td>
<td>biyənəə</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>yichi</td>
<td>yimbə</td>
<td>yiche</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>yichi</td>
<td>yimbə</td>
<td>yiche</td>
<td>yiyanəə</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>buchi</td>
<td>bumbə</td>
<td>buche</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>fichi</td>
<td>fimbə</td>
<td>finche</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18a</td>
<td>munchi</td>
<td>mumbə</td>
<td>munchə</td>
<td>munyaŋəə</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>fəchi</td>
<td>fəmbə</td>
<td>fache</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6a</td>
<td>mənchi</td>
<td>məmbə</td>
<td>mənchə</td>
<td>mənyaŋəə</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7. Mungong Quantifiers

2.7 Adjectives

While more research needs to be conducted, no true adjectives in Mungong have been identified in the current data corpus. Attributive words generally have predicate-like qualities and are often seen in relative clause constructions.
2.8 Associative noun phrases

Two nouns may be joined together by an intervening associative marker (AM) to form associative noun phrases. The AM agrees with the class of the first noun. Usually, the noun class prefix of the second noun is deleted.4 Note that the class of the second noun is given in parentheses following the noun in the examples below.

22. a) fi-uj fi mu
   19-thing 19AM person(1)
   ‘person’s thing’

   b) shaj yi chej
   9.heart 9AM monkey(9)
   ‘heart of monkey’

c) ki-ntase ki mbe
   7-spoon 7AM soup(9)
   ‘ladle’

d) mun-taj mu kɔ
   18a-fruit 18aAM forest(7)
   ‘fruits of forest’

The second noun of the associative noun phrase may be a nominalized verb or a gerund, as illustrated below.

23. a) bo-ni bo n-uj
   2-person 2AM NOM-to send(1)
   ‘messengers’

   b) ki-mbaŋ ki tu-kɔ
   7-cane 7AM pound-IMPF(1?)
   ‘pestle, pounding stick’

4 A small number of examples of N2 maintaining the noun class prefix are observed. Presently, it is not known why the noun class prefix is maintained in these cases.
2.9 Compound nouns

Compound nouns may be formed by joining a noun with a second noun. The resulting compound noun will be treated as a noun from the same noun class as the initial noun of the compound. Note that only nouns from gender 1/2 have been observed as the initial noun in the compound noun construction. Thus, this process may be restricted to nouns belonging to this gender. Furthermore, some compound nouns apparently can not be pluralized, indicating that this process is fairly constrained.

24. a) \( ba\text{-}tsi\text{-}le \)
   2-father-compound
   ‘compound heads’

   b) \( \emptyset\text{-}mu\text{-}n\text{-}yeya \)
   1-person-NOM-teach
   ‘teacher’

   c) \( \emptyset\text{-}mwa\text{-}Nywa \)
   1-child-God
   ‘God’s son’
2.10 Derivational morphology on noun roots

Nouns may be derived from verbs by the addition of the nominalizing prefix $N$-. When present, this prefix immediately precedes the noun root. The newly formed noun stem then will take the appropriate noun class prefix. Most derived nouns belong to gender 1/2, although they are found in other genders as well.

25. a) $\emptyset$-m-bi
   1-NOM-ask
   ‘question’

   b) bɔ-n-shiya
   2-NOM-insult
   ‘insults’

   c) fa-ŋ-ka
   16-NOM-begin
   ‘beginning’

   d) ki-n-teʃə
   7-NOM-gather
   ‘wedding’

   e) bi-m-bashə
   8-NOM-saw (wood)
   ‘wood saws’

In a somewhat similar operation, some nouns may have their “basic” noun class markers removed and replaced with the gender 19/18a prefixes fi-/mu- resulting in a smaller version of the original noun. This does not appear to be very productive in Mungong when compared with some other Eastern Beboid languages.
26. a) nyúŋ → mu-nyúŋ
   10. cutlass 18a-cutlass
   ‘cutlasses’ ‘small knives’

   b) ki-ŋka → fi-ŋka
   7-half 19-piece
   ‘half’ ‘piece’

c) th-na → fi-na
   1-cow 19-cow
   ‘cow’ ‘small cow’

d) ba-na → mu-na
   2-cow 18a-cow
   ‘cows’ ‘small cows’

e) shi → fi-shiti
   9.fowl 19-fowl
   ‘fowl’ ‘small fowl’

2.11 Relative clauses

Relative clauses follow the modified noun and are marked by a relative pronoun. The relative pronouns agree in class with the head noun. Subject as well as object nouns may be relativized.

27. a) Bema nji kə ngwə [yi Nywə nya kə bema] nə.
   1p+1s6 eat just 9.food 9Rel God give to 1p+1s LOC
   ‘We eat only food that God gives to us.’

   b) Wo gəŋə nəŋ fo wo shi nsaŋ bə mu [wu chi ki-ti wi] la.
   2s travel how to 2s stay 9.friend with 1.person 1Rel live 7-tree up ???
   ‘How can you be friends with someone who lives in a tree?’

c) Mu wi-i [wu ka si-li bi-ti bi-i] bi to.
   1.person 1-that 1Rel PAST cut-IMPF 8-tree 8-that come.out come
   ‘That person who was cutting those trees came out.’

5 The analysis of ‘1p+1s’ is based on paradigmatic evidence, with bemə ‘1p+2s’, commonly described as ‘1p Inclusive’, and bewu ‘1p+3s’, commonly described as ‘1p Exclusive’, well attested. Further research is needed to understand the practical difference between the complex bemə ‘1p+1s’ and the simple be ‘1p’.
3 Verbs and verb phrases

3.1 The Mungong verb

Mungong verbs are rather simple in their morphology. They may occur with subject agreement marking and imperfective aspect or a verbal extension.

   1s-go-IMPF
   ‘I am going.’

The Mungong verb may be illustrated by the following schematic.

   (AGR-root(-EXT)(-IMPF))

3.2 The structure of the verb phrase

The Mungong verb phrase consists of at least one verb or verb-like element. Preceding the verb may be a verbal particle indicating tense or aspect, which may be preceded by a subject agreement marker, but only in first singular person. Also preceding the verb may be a second subject agreement marker and a negative marker (NEG1). Following the verb may be one or more of the following: secondary negative marker (NEG2), adverb.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subj clitic</th>
<th>VPart</th>
<th>Subj clitic</th>
<th>NEG1</th>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>NEG2</th>
<th>Adverb</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

3.3 Subject marking

Subjects in Mungong sentences are often indicated by a pronoun once the subject has been presented the first time. These pronouns replace the subject noun and agree with the understood subject in person, number and noun class.

\[\text{\textsuperscript{6} Data containing both, a verbal extension and the imperfective suffix, is limited to DISTR+IMPF, realized by the fused form -}\text{shi. I assume the order of EXT-IMPF based on the maintenance of the DISTR suffix consonant in the fused form. This analysis is also supported by the order observed in neighboring languages. See section 3.6.2 for more discussion.}\]

\[\text{\textsuperscript{7} The second subject agreement marker generally occurs when there is a verbal particle present.}\]
29. a) **Wu** suŋ-na **kpaŋ**.
   3s cut-IMPF 3.firewood
   ‘He is cutting firewood.’

   b) **Bo** yəsí yó yi bo **chunə**.
   3p greet 10.skin 10AM 3p well
   ‘They greeted each other well.’

   Subject agreement marking normally precedes the verb and any tense or aspect markers when the subject is first person singular. Subject agreement marking for other subjects precedes the verb only when the verb is preceded by some kind of “helping” verb that gives additional tense or aspectual information.

30. a) **Mə** m-bi n-suŋ-na **kpaŋ**.
   1s 1s-P3 1s-cut-IMPF 3.firewood
   ‘I was cutting firewood.’

   b) **Wu** bi-li **wu-suŋ-na **kpaŋ**.
   3s come.out-IMPF 3s-cut-IMPF 3.firewood
   ‘He shall be cutting firewood.’

3.4 **Tense**

   Tense is primarily indicated through the use of various verbal particles. These tense particles precede the verb and are usually marked with subject agreement when the subject is first person singular as mentioned in the above section. Note that the examples in this section are marked with surface tone.

   Immediate past is expressed through the presence of the tense particle **nə** (P0). This particle is often left out of the phrase and can be considered optional. However, when present, it is morphologically identical with the immediate future tense, differing only in tone. The immediate past tense carries a relatively lower tone on the main verb compared to the immediate future tense.

31. **Bi** nó ndzi **gloŋ**.
   9.goat P0 eat 10.grass
   ‘The goat ate grass.’ (just now or recently)
Events that occurred one to several hours ago are indicated through the particle \( bɨ \) (P1). It is generally limited to events which occurred on the same day as the utterance.

32. Mō \( m-bɨ \ n-sūŋ\-nā \ kpəŋ. \\
1s 1s-P1 1s-cut-IMPF 3.firewood  \\
‘I was cutting firewood.’ (earlier today)

Events that occurred one day to about 2 weeks ago are indicated by the particle \( yɨ \) (P2).

33. \( Bɨ \ yɨ \ ndzî \ gîŋ. \\
9.goat P2 eat 9.grass  \\
‘The goat ate grass.’ (several days ago)

Events that occurred longer than two or three weeks ago are indicated by two particles, \( kα \) and \( bɛ \) (P3). The particle \( kα \), when used alone, expresses a past event with a somewhat indistinct time of occurrence. So, in example 34a, the actual time of the event is likely known, while in 34b, it is not known if the event happened several days ago or several years ago. \( kα \) alone can also be used when the actual time of the event is not considered very important.

34. a) \( Bɨ \ kα \ bɛ \ ndzî \ gîŋ. \\
9.goat PAST P3 eat 9.grass  \\
‘The goat ate grass.’ (a long time ago)

b) \( Bɨ \ kα \ ndzî \ gîŋ. \\
9.goat PAST eat 9.grass  \\
‘The goat ate grass.’ (sometime in the past)

Future tense marking is complex, formed by the future marker \( nə \) (FUT) and usually followed by a second tense marker, which indicates the degree of future. An event that will occur very shortly is indicated by the particle \( nə \) only, which precedes the main verb.

35. \( Bɨ \ nə \ ndzî \ gîŋ. \\
9.goat FUT eat 9.grass  \\
‘The goat will eat grass.’ (soon)

An event that will occur in one to three days is indicated by \( nə \) followed by the particle \( fə \) (F1).
36. Bi ná fó ndzi gnàŋ.  
9.goat FUT F1 eat 9.grass  
'The goat will eat grass.' (tomorrow)

An event that will occur in 4 days to a week or two is indicated by ná followed by the particle bí (F2).

37. Bi nā bí ndzi gnàŋ.  
9.goat FUT F2 eat 9.grass  
'The goat will eat grass.' (next week)

An event that will occur a long time from now is indicated by nā followed by the particle tó (F3).

38. Bi nā tó ndzi gnàŋ.  
9.goat FUT F3 eat 9.grass  
'The goat will eat grass.' (next year)

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tense</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
<th>Time Frame</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P3</td>
<td>Bē kà bè wúyā nà.</td>
<td>We killed the cow.</td>
<td>weeks or years ago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1p PAST P3 kill 1.cow</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bē yí wúyā nà.</td>
<td>We killed the cow.</td>
<td>1-14 days ago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1p P2 kill 1.cow</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P1</td>
<td>Bē bí wúyā nà.</td>
<td>We killed the cow.</td>
<td>earlier today</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1p P1 kill 1.cow</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P0</td>
<td>Bē nā wúyā nà.</td>
<td>We killed the cow.</td>
<td>recently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1p P0 kill 1.cow</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F0</td>
<td>FUT kill 1.cow</td>
<td>We will kill the cow.</td>
<td>soon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F1</td>
<td>FUT F1 kill 1.cow</td>
<td>We will kill the cow.</td>
<td>later today</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F2</td>
<td>FUT F2 kill 1.cow</td>
<td>We will kill the cow.</td>
<td>1 day to 2 weeks from now</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F3</td>
<td>FUT F3 kill 1.cow</td>
<td>We will kill the cow.</td>
<td>weeks or years from now</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8. Mungong Tense Forms
3.5 Aspect

The primary aspectual distinction made in Mungong is between Perfective and Imperfective (IMPF). Perfective aspect receives no special marking. Imperfective aspect marking is complicated, with several morphological forms. The most prevalent forms observed are: -i/i, -ə, -iə, -nə, -ki/kə, -gə. Presumably, these variations can be explained as morphophonemic alternations (Hyman 1981; Boutwell 2010). The phonological motivation for the alternations is beyond the scope of this current work and an area for further research.

The addition of the Imperfective suffix generally renders a present continuative sense.

39. a) Bə bu-ŋə mun-tsənə.
    3p plant-IMPF 18a-groundnuts
    ‘They are planting groundnuts.’

    b) Nywə kəŋ-ə be.
    God love-IMPF 1p
    ‘God loves us.’

    Habitual aspect is expressed through the use of the verbal particle tu (HAB), which means ‘to come’ when used as the main verb. The verb apparently must also be in the Imperfective form.

40. a) Tata tu gi-la nyanj.
    Tata HAB buy-IMPF 9.meat
    ‘Tata always buys meat.’

    b) Be tu be nyi shi-i ki- tô wi.
    1p HAB 1p leave remain-IMPF 7-tree up
    ‘We always leave (our hearts) up in the tree.’

---

8 This example is from a folktale. A monkey is riding on the back of a fish to go visit the fish’s home. The fish reveals that he wants to eat the monkey’s heart. In an effort to escape, the monkey tells the fish that monkeys don’t travel with their hearts, but leave them up in the tree.
3.6 Verbal extensions

3.6.1 Causative

The causative suffix has apparently become almost completely unproductive. The example below is the only instance observed.

\[ \text{bo} + \text{si} \rightarrow \text{boksi} \]

\text{descend} \quad \text{CAUS} \quad \text{‘lower (something)’}

Remnants of the suffix can be seen in a number of verbs such as tsaksi ‘raise’ and kushe ‘loosen’. These verbs are always active and never occur without the causative element.

3.6.2 Distributive

The distributive suffix -shə indicates that an action is performed multiple times. The action can involve a single agent performing the action multiple times to the same patient or to several different patients or for several beneficiaries. Or the action can be carried out by multiple agents (e.g., a crowd of people standing at more or less the same time).

Often, the context must be used for obtaining the correct interpretation. The examples below illustrate this point. Both sentences express the same action. However, in 42 b), there is a focus on the action of ‘dividing’ occurring multiple times as well as an implication that there are many children involved.

\[ \text{Tsiboŋ} \quad \text{ga} \quad \text{bvu-shə} \quad \text{kə boŋ} \quad \text{nə}. \]

\text{1.father} \quad \text{divide} \quad \text{14-inheritance} \quad \text{to} \quad \text{2.child} \quad \text{LOC}

‘The father divided the inheritance between the children.’

\[ \text{Tsiboŋ} \quad \text{ga-shə} \quad \text{bvu-shə} \quad \text{kə boŋ} \quad \text{nə}. \]

\text{1.father} \quad \text{divide-DISTR} \quad \text{14-inheritance} \quad \text{to} \quad \text{2-child} \quad \text{LOC}

‘The father divided the inheritance between each of the children.’

In some cases, a sense of completion or entirety can be observed, with the action understood to be carried out so many times as to complete the work of the action (e.g., cutting down a forest).

When the distributive suffix and the imperfective suffix (described above) are used together on the same verb, the final vowel is replaced with i resulting in the form shi. This is illustrated below.
43. **Boŋ bi-shi bə-mbi.**
   - 2.child ask-DISTR + IMPF 2-question
     
     ‘The children are asking (many) questions.’

     This suffix is not overly productive. There are, however, some verbs with the suffix apparently permanently attached. Below is a partial list of these frozen forms.

44. bashə ‘chop into pieces’
    shenshə ‘shake (something)’
    shunshə ‘mumble’

3.7 **Verb phrase level negation**

Negation in Mungong involves the negative markers *kə* (NEG1) and *yi* (NEG2). The secondary negative marker *yi* is usually present and always follows the verb being negated. The primary negative marker *kə* sometimes occurs before the negated verb and usually at the end of the clause. However, sometimes it is considered optional. Thus, it might provide emphasis when present.

45. a) **Be chéŋ kə gash-ə yi bə shəŋ yi-sə kə.**
    - 1p 10.monkey NEG1 travel-IMPF NEG2 with 9.heart c9-1pPOSS NEG1
    
    ‘We monkeys do not travel with our hearts.’

    b) **Njiŋ yi mu wu ki-mbiə wulo yi kə.**
    - 4.eye 4AM 1.person 1AM 7-sin clean NEG2 NEG1
    
    ‘The eyes of a sinner are not clean.’

    Example 46 below shows the use of NEG2 alone.

46. **ŋ-wu-ki yi nə bə manchiŋ bee-lə la.**
    - 1s-hear-IMPF NEG2 as 3p 1.machine cry-IMPF ???
    
    ‘I did not hear the sound of the machine (chainsaw).’

    Another element involved with negation is the word *bee*, which is a past tense negative copula.

47. **Ki-ti ki-i bee wuyə kə be.**
    - 7-tree 7-that NEG kill NEG1 1p
    
    ‘That tree did not kill us.’
3.8 Serial verb constructions

Two verbs can be placed adjacent to each other to express a single action. In these verb phrases the two verbs share a common subject. Tense, if present, precedes the first verb of the verb phrase. The second verb is usually semantically the main verb. Verbs of motion are common as the first verb in these verb phrases. Below are some examples.

48. a) $Ba\ jiŋ\ bi\ ju\ tina$.  
   3p go reach 9.water middle  
   ‘They reached the middle of the water.’

   b) $Biɛfwo\ to\ bi\ yi\ tyre\ w-aŋ\ wu\ kaɛ-wi\ ne$.  
   8-leaf come reach on 1.tyre 1-1sPOSS 1AM 17-front LOC  
   ‘Leaves reached my front tyre.’

   c) $Baɛ-baa\ baɛ-mba\ gbiŋ-nə\ tu$.  
   2-father 2-some asc-IMPF come  
   ‘Some old men came up.’

   d) $Nfæŋ\ ny啜\ tfuŋ\ tshə\ ny啜$.  
   1.chief 10.animal call gather 10.animal  
   ‘The chief of animals called all the animals together.’

3.9 Adverbs

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

49. a) $Ba\ yasi\ yi\ yi\ bə\ chuna$.  
   3p greet 10.skin 10AM 3p well  
   ‘They greeted each other well.’

   b) $Mɛ-bo\ mboko\ wi-i\ wii$.  
   1s-descend 1.hill 1-that slowly  
   ‘I descended that hill slowly.’

Some adverbs may be reduplicated to express emphasis or intensity.

50. $Fiɛŋ\ bi-nə\ tu\ nyikî\ nyikî$.  
   19-hare asc-IMPF come gently gently  
   ‘The hare climbed coming very gently.’
4 Clauses

4.1 Basic order of clause elements

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

51. a) Intransitive sentence

\[ S \quad V \]
\[ Bə \ bəŋ. \]
\[ 3p \quad work \]
\[ ‘They worked.’ \]

b) Transitive sentence

\[ S \quad V \quad DO \]
\[ Cheŋ \quad biŋ \quad ki-ti. \]
\[ 9.m \quad ascend \quad 7-t \]
\[ ‘The monkey climbed the tree.’ \]

c) Ditransitive sentence

\[ S \quad V \quad IO \quad DO \]
\[ Wu \quad ka \quad nya \quad mwa \quad kwa. \]
\[ 3s \quad PAST \quad give \quad 1.ch \quad 3.m \]
\[ ‘He gave money to the child.’ \]

The following schematic provides a summary of Mungong word order.

Subject  Verb  Indirect Object  Direct Object
4.2 Declarative clauses

Mungong declarative clauses are basic with no special morphosyntactic markings.

4.2.1 Active clauses

Active clauses are those which express actions, movements or processes.

52. a) Action

\[ \text{Wu bvusi \hspace{2mm} mu-nts\text{\textepsilon}ny}. \]

3s remove 18a-groundnut

‘He is removing (harvesting) groundnuts.’

b) Movement

\[ \text{Bi\text{\textepsilon}ŋ bi t\text{\textepsilon} k\text{\textepsilon} ju}. \]

9.fish exit come from 9.water

‘The fish came out from the water.’

c) Process

\[ \text{Fin-taŋ ts\text{\textepsilon}ŋ-\text{\textepsilon}}. \]

19-fruit spoil-IMPF

‘The fruit is spoiling.’

4.2.2 Non-active clauses

Non-active clauses are used to express various kinds of information other than action or movement. Some of these are illustrated below.

53. a) Attributive

\[ \text{Nf\text{\textepsilon}ŋ \hspace{2mm} wu-sa \hspace{2mm} gw\text{\textepsilon}n-\text{\textepsilon}}. \]

1.chief 1-1pPOSS sick-IMPF

‘Our chief is sick.’

b) Equative

\[ \text{Ignatius \hspace{2mm} n\text{\textepsilon} \hspace{2mm} mu-n-ycy\text{\textepsilon}}. \]

Ignatius be 1.person-NOM-teach

‘Ignatius is a teacher.’
c) Existential

\[ \text{ŋgwə na lo.} \]
9.food be FOC
‘There is food.’

d) Locative

\[ \text{Nyâŋ na yə.} \]
10.animal be 9.house
‘The animals are in the house.’

e) Possessive

\[ \text{Wu ka kama ngə wu-m}\text{βə.} \]
3s PAST have 1.trouble 1-some
‘He had some problem.’

\[ \text{Mu bə bvu-ngə.} \]
1.person with 14-power
‘The man has power.’ (lit. is with power)

4.3 Agent suppression

The prominence of Mungong agents can be reduced through the use of the indefinite 3p pronoun bə, referring to ‘people’ in general.

54. Bə tsoko fiu.
3p wash 9.dish
‘They (someone) washed the dishes.’
4.4 Focus

The post verbal position may be considered the focus position. Thus, we see in the examples below, that example a) places focus on Tata (“Who gave the money?”), while example b) emphasizes the money (“It was not wine that he gave, but money.”).

55. a) Wu ka nya Tata kwa.
   3s P3 give Tata 3.money
   ‘He gave Tata money.’

   b) Wu ka nya kwa kə Tata.
   3s P3 give 3.money to Tata
   ‘He gave money to Tata.’

In certain cases, the agent may be placed in the post verbal position for focus. In these cases, the direct object is moved to the subject position and the verb must be put into the imperfective form.

56. a) Wu wuyə ki-bug
   3s break 7-calabash
   ‘She broke the calabash.’

   b) Ki-bug wuy-i wu.
   7-calabash break-IMPF 3s
   ‘She broke the calabash.’

This construction is particularly used in answer to the question of “who” (e.g., “Who broke the calabash?”). The same or similar construction is observed in the related languages of Noni (Hyman 1981:107-108) and Naki (Good 2010:42-46).
4.5 Interrogative clauses

There are two main types of Mungong interrogative clauses: yes-no questions and content questions. Each is treated separately below, along with tag questions, a special type of yes-no question.

4.5.1 Yes-no questions

Yes-no questions are differentiated from their declarative counterparts by the presence of a floating low tone clitic. This floating low tone is often realized as a falling tone on the final syllable of the clause. Note that the examples below are presented with surface tone.

57. a) Chɛŋ bo.
   9.monkey descend
   ‘The monkey came down.’

   b) Chɛŋ bo?
   9.monkey descend.QM
   ‘Did the monkey come down?’

4.5.2 Content questions

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

When la is used without any other question morphemes it gives the basic sense of ‘what’.

58. Wɤ nji la?
   2s eat what
   ‘What are you eating?’
When the la is used in conjunction with a time word, then the question conveyed is “when”.

59. Nfɔŋ nɔ tɔ ki-siki la?
   1.chief FUT come.IMPF 7-time what
   ‘When will the chief come?’ (lit. ‘The chief will be coming at what time?’)

60. Wu ka tu bvu la?
   3s PAST come 14.day what
   ‘When did he come?’ (lit. ‘He came on what day?’)

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

61. Wɔ jin-ə ndɔŋ la?
   2s go-IMPF reason what
   ‘Why are you going?’ (lit. ‘You are going for what reason?’)

   “Which” is also expressed by the use of la.

62. Nɔ mwa wu-la wɔ bi suŋ?
   is 1.child 1-what 2s P1 beat
   ‘Which child did you beat?’

   “Who” and “whose” is expressed by the use of wŋ.

63. Bilŋ bw-i bi nji wŋ?
   14.fufu 14-that P1 eat who
   ‘Who ate the fufu?’

64. Bi yi-nɔ nɔ yi-wŋ?
   9.goat 9-this is 9-who
   ‘Whose goat is this?’

   “Where” is expressed by the use of the word foŋ.

65. Wu bi jin foŋ?
   3s P1 go where
   ‘Where did he go?’
‘How’ questions are formed through the use of noŋ ‘how’.

66. Ma nə n-fə noŋ fə bewə kwi la?
   1s FUT 1s-make how before 1p+2S go.home ???
   ‘How will we go to your home?’

The quantity of mass nouns is also expressed through the word noŋ.

67. Wə kama mee noŋ?
   2s have 6a.oil how
   ‘How much oil do you have?’

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

68. Wə kama bəŋ bə-mə?
   2s have 2.child 2-how.many
   ‘How many children do you have?’

4.5.3 Tag questions

Tag questions may be formed by the addition of the phrase nə kə ne ‘is not so’ or a similar variation. The tag remains negative regardless of the polarity of the statement.

69. a) Biliŋ bu-nə yufi, nə kə ne?
   14.fufu 14-this hot be NEG1 so
   ‘This fufu is hot, isn’t it?’

b) Biliŋ bu-nə yufi yi, nə kə ne?
   14.fufu 14-this hot NEG2 be NEG1 so
   ‘This fufu is not hot, is it?’

70. a) Wu chu-łə kəŋ, nə yi wu?
   3s carry-IMPF 4.firewood be NEG2 3s
   ‘He carries firewood, doesn’t he?’

b) Wu chu-łə yi kəŋ, nə yi wu?
   3s carry-IMPF NEG2 4.firewood be NEG2 3s
   ‘He carries firewood, doesn’t he?’
Another strategy for making tag questions is to use *ntsŋ ntsŋ* ‘true true’ as the tag. In this case, the tag remains positive for positive as well as negative statements.

71. a) *Wu chu-la kəŋ, ntsŋ ntsŋ?*
   3s carry-IMPF 4.firewood true true
   ‘He carries firewood, right?’

   b) *Wu chu-la yi kəŋ, ntsŋ ntsŋ?*
   3s carry-IMPF NEG2 4.firewood true true
   ‘He doesn’t carry firewood, right?’

4.6 Mood

4.6.1 Imperative clauses

Imperative clauses generally lack a constituent in the subject slot when the subject is singular. The second person plural pronoun *me* precedes the verb when the subject is plural.9

72. a) *Lee.*
   sleep.IMP
   ‘Sleep.’

   b) *Me jwa shi yi-na.*
   2p take.IMP 9.chicken 9-this
   ‘You(pl) take this chicken.’

9 There may be a high tone on the end of imperative verbs when the subject is singular. More research is needed to confirm this.
4.6.2 Hortative clauses

Exhortation is accomplished by a low tone clitic, which is normally realized on the final syllable of the verb and sometimes over the entire verb. Note that the examples in this section are marked with surface tone.

73. a) Wə jʊŋ-nə.
   2s go-IMPF
   ‘You are going.’

   b) Wə jʊŋ-nə.
   2s go-IMPF.HORT
   ‘You should be going.’

74. a) Wə jì yì yɛyə.
   2s P2 teach
   ‘You taught.’

   b) Wə jì yì yɛyə.
   2s P2 teach.HORT
   ‘You should have taught.’

4.7 Coordinating clauses

4.7.1 Coupling

Clauses are joined together in a coupling relationship through juxtaposition. Simultaneous as well as successive events can be expressed in this way, as seen in the examples below.

75. Be shì wə jìshi,
   1p stay there road.LOC

   mu wu manchiŋ wi-i ɡə-shə bvusi bi-ti bi-i wə jìshi.
   1.man 1AM 1.machine 1-that cut-DISTR remove 8-tree 8-that on road.LOC
   ‘We remained there on the road and the man with the chainsaw cut all the branches on the road.’

76. Biŋ taka jìŋ, chẹŋ biŋ.
   9.fish show back 9.monkey climb
   ‘Fish showed his back and Monkey climbed on.’
4.7.2 Alternating

Coordination of clauses in an alternating relationship is accomplished through the use of lo ‘or’.

77. \( \text{Wo na jiŋ \=na, lo m n-suŋ wə la.} \)

2s FUT go 1.school or 1s 1s-beat 2s ???
‘You will go to school or I will beat you.’

78. \( \text{Mə na n-yiŋ lo mə m-biŋ la.} \)

1s FUT 1s-sing or 1s 1s-dance ???
‘I will sing or I will dance.’

4.7.3 Contrasting

Contrast between clauses is expressed through the conjunction nəkəla ‘but’.

79. \( \text{Wu gunə chu ki-ti, nəkəla ki njila.} \)

3s want carry 7-chair but 7PRO be.heavy
‘He wanted to carry the chair, but it was heavy.’

80. \( \text{Bita ka jiŋ \=na, nəkəla wu ka be ye\=ya kə fi-ŋ.} \)

Peter PAST go 1.school but 3s PAST P3 learn NEG1 19-thing
‘Peter went to school, but he did not learn anything.’

4.7.4 Concessive

The word nəkəla may also be used to express a concessive relationship. In this case, the subordinate clause is sentence initial.

81. \( \text{Nəkəla Ngong gunə wu jwə Nan, bə-tsisi faŋ wu.} \)

but Ngong want 3s marry Nan 2-parent refuse 3s
‘Although Ngong wanted to marry Nan, her parents refused him.’
4.7.5 Conditional

Conditionals are formed by using the word \textit{fa} ‘if’. The main clause must be marked with future tense when it precedes the “if” clause, otherwise it is unmarked for tense.

82. a) \textit{Fa} Fwa \textit{yiŋ}, \textit{ma} m-b\textit{ĩj}.  
\begin{align*}
\text{if} & \quad \text{Fwa sing 1s 1s-dance}  \\
\text{‘If Fwa sings, I will dance.’}
\end{align*}

b) \textit{Ma nə} m-b\textit{ĩj}, \textit{fa} Fwa \textit{yiŋ}.  
\begin{align*}
1s & \quad \text{FUT 1s-dance if Fwa sing}  \\
\text{‘I will dance, if Fwa sings.’}
\end{align*}

4.7.6 Reason

Reason clauses are formed by using the word \textit{ndzə} ‘reason’. The subordinate clause must follow the main clause.

83. \textit{ŋ-}gun\textit{ə} m-bo mbk\textit{ɔ} wi-i wú bə bu-ng\textit{a}.  
\begin{align*}
1s-want & \quad 1s-descend 1.hill 1-that 1PRO(bike’s.gear) with 14-power  \\
\text{ndzə} & \quad \text{ki-siki ka fi-}l.  \\
\text{reason 7-time PAST pass-IMPF}  \\
\text{‘I wanted to descend that hill with force (or speed), because time was passing.’}
\end{align*}

4.7.7 Time

There are multiple strategies for expressing events that occur simultaneously. One common strategy is through the use of time words or particles. In the following example, the word \textit{siki} ‘time’ introduces an adverbial clause.

84. \textit{Ma} m-b\textit{ĩ} n-yin-ə \textit{[siki wu bi tu-ki mwa.]}  
\begin{align*}
1s & \quad 1s-P1 1s-sing-IMPF 7.time 3s \quad P1 \text{hit-IMPF 1.child}  \\
\text{‘I was singing when he was hitting the child.’}
\end{align*}

The particle \textit{bə} is quite productive and has multiple senses and functions. The particle can occur with the particle \textit{nə} ‘as, like’ to give a simultaneous sense.

85. \textit{[Lə m-bin-ə ji-nə nə], bə sii-li ki-ti ki-i nɛ.}  
\begin{align*}
\text{when 1s-ascend-IMPF go-IMPF like 3p cut-IMPF 7-tree 7-that so}  \\
\text{‘Just as I was climbing (the hill), they were felling a tree.’}
\end{align*}
The particles la and na can also be used to express sequential events. Presumably, context helps to determine a simultaneous or sequential interpretation.

86. Fi bo jiŋ,
19PRO descend go

[lə wu jiŋ wu yan na mu ləŋ ki-ntsə] then 3s go 3s see as 1.person work 7-marsh
‘It (squirrel) went down, then he saw someone working a farm.’

Another way of expressing sequential events is illustrated in the below example, in which the word bvu ‘day’ is used along with the word mwo ‘then’. Here, the adverbial clause precedes the main clause.

87. [Bvu diło kasha], mwo n-dza n-jwə manchiŋ w-aŋ y-yi n-jiŋ.
14.day as reach then 1s-stand 1s-take 1.machine 1-1sPOSS 1s-leave 1s-go
‘As the day came, I took my machine and left.’

4.8 Complements

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

88. a) Bema yan la [bvu-gbwema bvunỹ ndzonỹ yɨ ki-luŋ ki-nə].
1p+1s see COMP 14-hunt 14-this good NEG2 7-year 7-this
‘We have seen that hunting is not good this year.’

b) Wə guna la [wə wuyə be]?
2s want COMP 2s kill 1p
‘Did you want to kill us?’

When it occurs with other kinds of verbs, it serves to introduce the purpose or goal of the verb.

89. Mwo m-bee nyú y-aŋ n-jee la [bewu ka nə bvunjwa] just 1s-remove 10.clothes 10-1sPOSS 1s-put COMP 1p+3s begin as fight
‘I removed my clothes so that we could begin fighting.’

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Complement clauses may also sometimes be formed by the use of a gerund as seen in the below example.

90. [k-fɔ].
   1s-like-IMPF sleep-IMPF
   ‘I like sleeping.’

Quoted speech is also introduced using the complementizer la. The particle occurs with verbs like di ‘to say’ and chu ‘to reply’ and immediately precedes the quoted clause or clauses.

91. a) Cheŋ dzɔmɔ la, “M-bɔŋ n-jiŋ n-te-e kɔ bə-ni b-aŋ na.”
   Monkey say.?? COMP 1s-also 1s-go 1s-tell-IMPF INF 2-person 2-1sPOSS LOC
   ‘Monkey said, “I also will tell this to my people.”’

   b) Mwo m-bi kɔ wu-na la,
      just 1s-ask to 1-this COMP

      “Wə gunə wə wuyə be?”
      2s want 2s kill 1p
      ‘I asked this (man), “Did you want to kill us?”’

Indirect quotations are marked the same way, with the complementizer immediately preceding the quoted clause.

92. Wu mwo kaksi chu la
   3s just turn reply COMP

   wu bi bvusɪ mu wu bɔwʊ lan-ą la wu biliŋ jishi.
   3s P1 remove 1.person 1Rel 3p+3s work-IMPF COMP 3s stand road.LOC
   ‘He replied that he had asked (lit. removed) the man with whom he was working to come out and stand on the road.’

In some cases, the quote verb can be left out altogether, resulting in something like drama.

93. Biŋ la, “Mə nə n-chu wə.”
   Fish COMP 1s FUT 1s-carry 2s
   ‘Fish (said), “I will carry you.”’
5 Conclusion

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


