

5 The noun phrase

In the description of the parts of speech inventory (§4.2), we have already reviewed the different sub-types of nominals, namely four noun classes according to specifier root change, classifiers, and pronominals (unmarked, possessive and relative). An NP can consist of any of these alone (although often classifiers occur with an associated noun). Nouns and full NPs attract case in the form of postpositions, marking grammatical relations and oblique status (Ergative, Experiencer, Instrumental, Comitative, Sociative, Dative/Ablative, with Absolutive/Locative unmarked). As mentioned, pronouns rarely co-occur with verbal cross-referencing: where they do, they normally follow a ‘Nominative’ case marking pattern (i.e. are unmarked as both intransitive and transitive subjects), except in quotation contexts where they follow an Ergative/Absolutive marking pattern (more detail below, §5.2). They take special forms in the Dative/Ablative and Experiencer cases. NPs can also be built up into complex wholes, complete with relative clauses which can be attached to NPs in most case roles. Here we set aside relativization for later review (§8.1) and concentrate on the core NP.

5.1 The structure of the NP

5.1.1 Plurals, definites and indefinites

Nouns form plurals in a number of ways, respecting the distinction between dual and plural categories, which are usually marked distinctly, depending in part on animacy.

For inanimate nouns, the bare noun can be interpreted as a plural: *nkéli k:oo tpile ka tóó* ‘boat inside thing is/are sitting’, i.e., ‘there are things on the boat’, while the singular may need to be marked: *tpile ngmê ka tóó* ‘thing singular is sitting’, i.e., ‘a thing is sitting’. Hence the bare noun can collocate with a plural verb: *tpile ka pyede* ‘thing(s) are sitting-pl’. However, dual and plural marking are also possible: *tpile dê ka tóó mo* ‘thing dual are sitting dual’, *tpile dé ka pyede* ‘thing plural are sitting plural’.

For animate nouns, the bare noun can have singular reference, but is likely to be interpreted as ‘one or more’: *pi ka tóó* ‘There’s a man/there are people there’.

Explicit marking of plurality involves the use of the enclitics *ngmê* (one), *dê* (two), *dé* (three or more), e.g. *tpile ngmê* ‘one thing’, *tpile dê* ‘two things’, *tpile dé* ‘three or more things’. But there are classes of animate nouns that optionally form plurals in special ways:

- (i) Some nouns denoting humans can take plurals (three or more) in *-ma*, e.g. *dmââdîma* ‘girls’, *tp:eema* ‘boys’, *léma* ‘big men’ (but not e.g. kinterms like **a kênêma*, ‘my uncles’, but rather *a kênê dé/yoo*). Many human nouns lack this possibility (e.g. **pyââma*, rather *pyââ yoo* ‘women’).
- (ii) Some human nouns have suppletive forms for plurals, e.g. *pi* ‘man, human’ has the optional dual (specified, definite) *tpódu*, plural *tpókni* (in these cases no extra marking is possible).
- (iii) Human nouns also optionally take enclitic *yoo*, ‘(human) plural’, e.g. *kî pini yoo* ‘those men’ as equivalent of *kî pini dé*. However, it is Absolutive in case, and contrasts with *y:oo*, Ergative Plural, which then replaces it, but is not restricted to humans.
- (iv) There are special collective forms for human nouns, e.g. *Ghaapwé p:uu* ‘Ghaapwé and others’, *Ghaapwé mupwo* ‘Ghaapwé and family’ – see Part II, §11.5.
- (v) Animals can take collective plurals with enclitic *w:uu* ‘group of 3 or more animals’ (includes e.g. dogs, fish, birds), e.g. *w:ââ w:uu*, ‘some (3 or more) dogs, a pack of dogs’. Countable time units may take plurals in *pê*, e.g. *m:ââ pê* ‘(many) years’.
- (vi) Animate and inanimate nouns can form plurals with enclitic *knî*, which has an augmentative function (see §4.2.3; §5.1.2). It can co-occur with other plural markers as in *kî pini knî yoo* ‘Those men’, but alone can co-occur with singular forms of case markers (§5.2.1), so is not a normal plural marker.
- (vii) Some case postpositions build in dual/plural marking, e.g. *y:oo* ‘Ergative/Instrumental Dual/Plural’.

Definite marking is by use of a determiner or deictic specifier (see §4.2.2.3), or a possessor, which comes before the noun, triggering the specified form of the noun (§4.2.1.1): cf. *pyââ dé* ‘women (3 or more, indefinite)’ with *kî pyópu dé/yoo* ‘these plural (3 or more) women’. Indefinites are often expressed by the bare noun, but singular indefinites by the clitic *ngmê* which comes after the noun (this however is subject to quantifier floating into preverbal position). More details follow in the next sections.

5.1.2 The template for the simplex NP

The simplex (non-clausal, non-compound) noun phrase is built on the following ordered template:

Det/Possessor-(Noun)-Noun-SPECifier-Adjective-Classifier-Indefinite-Quantifier-PL-CASE.

Cases like the Ergative are obligatory, not optional (in an experimental picture-description task, in 1417 transitive clauses, there were just 37 missing or wrongly produced ergative cases, almost certainly production errors). The head noun (in bold in the template above) in the phrase usually occurs in second position after a determiner or possessor, if any, and nearly all other elements follow it in strict order. Only nominal modifiers, as in compound nouns, precede the head – in this case the specified form occurs not on the head but on the first nominal to the left (see §4.2.1.2). The head noun may appear alone, and if it is a common noun it is read as indefinite, or has a generic or universally quantified reading:

- (54) a. *awêde pi u ngwo daa tóó*
 today person/man its account not sitting/being(s/d)
 ‘For that reason today there are few people (on Sudest)’
 b. *pi ka lêpî (té)*
 person CERT3CI.PRS go.C. (3+)
 ‘Someone is going’ (or: ‘Some people are going’)
 c. *pi daa lêpî*
 person NEG go.C.
 ‘Nobody is going’

Interestingly, the head noun is not obligatory, and a noun phrase can consist solely of a case marker, or a classifier – indeed, apart from some dependencies between e.g. determiner and specifiers, and the obligatory occurrence of case markers, any part of the template above can be unrealized. Table 5.1 gives some examples of different possible selections from the template. For example, in row 9 is given the phrase:

- (55) *kî yi mbwi pââ ndîî limi knî y:oo*
 That tree spine body big five augmented INST.Plural
 ‘With those five big sticks’

We can consider *yi mbwi* a compound noun, with the classifier head *mbwi* followed by an adjectival phrase.²³ The adjectival phrase *pââ ndîî* is complex – *pââ*

²³ *mbwi* is a classificatory noun, but in fact *yi mbwi* is a frozen compound, and this is shown by the fact that the determiner does not trigger the expected specifier *-ni* on the noun *yi*. See below.

Table 5.1: Template for the NP with examples.

	Det	(N+spec)	Head N	Spec	Classif	Adj	Clasif	Indef	Indef Quant	Quant	Hum-an Plural	Augmented	Case
1	<i>yí</i>		<i>tpile</i>		<i>dyuu</i>	<i>pââ ntîî</i>				<i>limi</i>		<i>knî</i>	
	<i>Those</i>		<i>things</i>		<i>pile</i>	<i>big</i>				<i>five</i>		<i>AUG</i>	
		'Those five big piles of things'											
2	<i>kî</i>		<i>Yidika</i>										
	<i>That</i>		<i>Yidika</i>										
		'That Yidika' (not the other guy with the same name)											
3			<i>pi</i>							<i>pyile</i>		<i>knî</i>	<i>y:oo</i>
			<i>person</i>							<i>three</i>		<i>AUG</i>	<i>ERG.PL</i>
		'Three people (did it)'											
4	<i>yí</i>		<i>pi</i>	<i>-ni</i>						<i>dê</i>			
	<i>Those</i>		<i>person</i>	<i>SPEC</i>						<i>Dual</i>			
		'Those two persons'											
5	<i>kî</i>		<i>w:ââ</i>	<i>-m</i>						<i>dé</i>		<i>knî</i>	
	<i>Those</i>		<i>dog</i>	<i>SPEC</i>						<i>PL</i>		<i>AUG</i>	
		'Those dogs (three or more)'											
6							<i>yoo/w:uu</i>			<i>limi</i>			
							<i>group animal/human</i>			<i>five</i>			
							'Five human/animal groups'						

(continued)

Table 5.1 (continued)

Det	(N+spec)	Head N	Spec	Classif	Adj	Clasif	Indef	Indef Quant	Quant	Hum-an Plural	Augment-ed	Case
7		<i>pi</i>					<i>ngmê</i>		<i>dê</i>			
		<i>person</i>					<i>INDF</i>		<i>Dual</i>			
		'Two people'										
8	<i>yí</i>	<i>pi</i>	<i>-ni</i>					<i>yíŋ</i>	<i>yintómu</i>			
	<i>those</i>	<i>person</i>	<i>SPEC</i>					<i>many</i>	<i>all</i>			
	'All those many people'											
9	<i>kî</i>	<i>yí</i>	<i>mbwi</i>		<i>pââ ntîŋ</i>				<i>limi</i>		<i>kní</i>	<i>y:oo</i>
	<i>those</i>	<i>tree</i>	<i>CLF spindly</i>		<i>big</i>				<i>five</i>		<i>AUG</i>	<i>INST</i>
	'With those five big sticks'											
10												<i>y:oo</i>
												<i>ERG.PL</i>
												'They (did it)'
11	<i>yí</i>	<i>yí-ni</i>	<i>yââ</i>			<i>dmi</i>						
	<i>that</i>	<i>Tree-SPEC</i>	<i>leaves</i>			<i>bunch</i>						
	'That bunch of tree leaves'											
12							<i>ngmê</i>					<i>ngê</i>
							<i>INDF</i>					<i>ERG</i>
							'Someone (did it)'					

13	<i>n:ii</i>		<i>ngê</i>
	indeclinable pronoun		<i>ERG</i>
	‘The one (or who)’ (did it)		
14	<i>nyi</i>		<i>ngê</i>
	<i>2s</i>		<i>ERG</i>
	‘You (did it)’		
15	<i>Yidika</i>	<i>Stephen</i>	<i>y:oo</i>
	<i>name</i>	<i>name</i>	<i>ERG.PL</i>
	‘Yidika and Stephen (did it)’		
16		<i>yoo</i>	<i>knî</i>
		<i>humans</i>	<i>AUG</i>
		‘People (did it)’	

is a nominal meaning something like ‘body, volume’ and normally accompanies the adjective ‘big’. (*Pââ* has classifier uses, but the example in row 1 of Table 5.1 shows that this adjectival phrase occurs when the classifier slot is already filled – here *pââ* is clearly part of the adjectival phrase.) There follows a quantifying phrase, with the numeral ‘five’, which obligatorily takes a somewhat mysterious augmentative particle *knî*, which only occurs with plural nouns (3 or more referents) but does not perhaps itself have the primary job of signalling plurality. (This is shown by the example in row 16, *yoo knî y:oo* ‘PL.Animate AUG ERG.PL’ or ‘Some (people) (did it)’, where *yoo* is a plural marker for animates.) In final position comes the case marker, here the plural Ergative/Instrumental marker.

As mentioned, one of the most surprising properties of the NP is that it can be represented by a case marker alone (as with ERG *y:oo* ‘They (did it)’), but this must then occur immediately before a verbal proclitic. Equally surprising perhaps is that an indefinite marker like *ngmê* can occur with the ergative marker alone as in *ngmê ngê a péé dpî nya ngê* ‘INDF ERG my basket 2/3IMP fetch 3MFS.3OIMP’, i.e. ‘Someone should get my basket’. The ergative marker with personal pronouns is restricted to explicit or implicit quotation contexts (see below, §5.2.2).

Determiners are essentially deictic or anaphoric markers, as listed in §4.2.2; possessors are in complementary distribution. The lack of a determiner or the specifier suffix on the noun (triggered by the deictic determiners), or possessor, implies indefiniteness. For example:

kî pi-ni ‘that man there’, *yî pi-ni* ‘that mentioned man’, or *Cheme pi-ni* ‘the (chief) man of Cheme village’ contrasts with *pi ngmê* ‘some/a man’, or *pi ka lêpî* ‘Someone is going’.

One of the more surprising things about Yéli NPs is that they can consist of quantificational clitics alone, as in (56)a. below, where the initial NP might gloss in English ‘some plural’, or in (56)b. where it might gloss ‘a’:

- (56) a. *knî ngmê, wunê a*
 AUG some/one of several long_ago 3snear/REM.PI.CLS
yéé dnye,
 marry (get married) plSPI(PostN)
 ‘Some people have married long ago,
yî naa daa kuwo t:oo
 their bride_price not have feast PF3plO.PI.PROX/HAB(PostN)
 but haven’t yet had a (marriage) feast’

- b. *ngmê ngê timber pee dyuu adê chapî*
 Indef ERG timber piece pile FUT3CI cutting
 ‘One of them will be cutting a pile of timber pieces’

The following examples show systematic reductions of complex NPs, with impermissible patterns asterisked. In different cases, NPs have slightly different ranges of complexity. First, consider a large and complex NP in Instrumental case and its successive simplifications exemplifying some of the patterns in Table 5.1 above.

- (57) a. *yi ngomo k:ââ ghi dyuu pââ ndîi limi*
 those house post part pile large five
knî y:e, ngomo dê wó
 AUG INST.PL house 3IMMPI built
 ‘With those five big piles of house posts, he built the house’
- b. *yi ngomo k:ââ ghi pââ ndîi limi knî y:e,*
 those house post part large five AUG INST.PL
ngomo dê wó
 house 3IMMPI built
 ‘With those five big house posts, he built the house’
- c. *yi ngomo k:ââ ghi pââ ndîi limi y:e, ngomo*
 those house post part large five INST.PL house
dê wó
 3IMMPI built
 ‘With those five big house posts, he built the house’
- d. *yi ngomo k:ââ ghi pââ ndîi knî y:e, ngomo*
 those house post part large AUG INST.PL house
dê wó
 3IMMPI built
 ‘With those five big house posts, he built the house’
- e. *yi ngomo k:ââ ghi pââ ndîi ngê, ngomo dê wó*
 that house post part large INST house 3IMMPI built
 ‘With that (single) large house post he built the house’
- f. *yi ngomo k:ââ ghi knî ngê, ngomo dê wó*
 those house post part AUG INST house 3IMMPI built
 ‘With those house posts, he built the house’
- g. *yi k:ââ ghi knî ngê, ngomo dê wó*
 those post part AUG INST house 3IMMPI built
 ‘With those posts he built the house’
- h. **yi ghi knî ngê, ngomo dê wó*
 those part AUG INST house 3IMMPI built
 **‘With those parts he built the house’ (classifier-like *ghi* requires nominal)

- i. *k:ââ ghi knî ngê, ngomo dê wó*
 post part AUG INST house 3IMMPI built
 'With house posts, he built the house'
- j. **knî ngê, ngomo dê wó*
 AUG INST house 3IMMPI built
 *'With them, he built the house'
- k. *yi ngê, ngomo dê wó*
 tree INST house 3IMMPI built
 'With a tree, he built the house'

The following show possible and impermissible reductions of an NP in Ergative case, with meaning changes, and some effects of word order changes:

- (58) a. *pi pââ ndĩ ngmê knî y:oo a chênê dê*
 person big INDF AUG ERG.PL my nephew 3IMMPI
vya ngmê
 hit.FOL PFS3sO.PROX.PI
 'Some big people (more than three) hit my nephew'
- b. *pi pââ ndĩ knî ngmê y:oo a chênê dê*
 person big AUG INDF ERG.PL my nephew 3IMMPI
vya ngmê
 hit.FOL PFS3sO.PROX.PI
 (different word order, same meaning)
- c. *pi pââ ndĩ knî y:oo a chênê dê*
 person big AUG ERG.PL my nephew 3IMMPI
vya ngmê
 hit.FOL PFS3sO.PROX.PI
 (same meaning without INDF marker)
- d. *pi pââ ndĩ ngmê y:oo a chênê*
 person big INDF ERG.PL my nephew
dê vya ngmê
 3IMMPI hit.FOL PFS3sO.PROX.PI
 (same meaning without AUG)
- e. **pi pââ ndĩ y:oo a chênê dê*
 person big ERG.PL my nephew 3IMMPI
vya ngmê
 hit.FOL PFS3sO.PROX.PI
 (unacceptable without either AUG or INDF)

- f. *pi ngmê knî y:oo a chênê dê*
 person INDF AUG ERG.PL my nephew 3IMMPI
vya ngmê
 hit.FOL PFS3sO.PROX.PI
 ‘Some people (3 or more) hit my nephew’
- g. *pi knî y:oo a chênê dê*
 person AUG ERG.PL my nephew 3IMMPI
vya ngmê
 hit.FOL PFS3sO.PROX.PI
 (same meaning as above, without INDF)
- h. **pi ngmê y:oo a chênê dê*
 person INDF ERG.PL my nephew 3IMMPI
vya ngmê
 hit.FOL PFS3sO.PROX.PI
 (unacceptable without AUG)
- i. *ngmê knî y:oo a chênê dê*
 INDF AUG ERG.PL my nephew 3IMMPI
vya ngmê
 hit.FOL PFS3sO.PROX.PI
 ‘Some people hit my nephew’
- j. *knî ngmê y:oo a chênê dê*
 AUG INDF ERG.PL my nephew 3IMMPI
vya ngmê
 hit.FOL PFS3sO.PROX.PI
 ‘Some people hit my nephew’
- k. **knî y:oo a chênê dê vya ngmê*
 AUG ERG.PL my nephew 3IMMPI hit.FOL PFS3sO.PROX.PI
 (unacceptable without INDF)
- l. **ngmê y:oo a chênê dê vya ngmê*
 INDF ERG.PL my nephew 3IMMPI hit.FOL PFS3sO.PROX.PI
 (unacceptable without AUG)
- m. **pi y:oo a chênê dê vya ngmê*
 person ERG.PL my nephew 3IMMPI hit.FOL PFS3sO.PROX.PI
 (unacceptable without either AUG or INDF)
- n. *y:oo dê vya ngmê, a chênê*
 ERG.PL 3IMMPI hit.FOL PFS3sO.PROX.PI my nephew
 ‘They are the ones who hit my nephew’
 (Note: *y:oo* ERG.PL in pre-verb-complex position seems to have a special focus meaning)

- o. *a chênê y:oo dê vya ngmê*
 my nephew ERG.PL 3IMMPI hit.FOL PFS3sO.PROX.PI
 ‘They are the ones who hit my nephew’ (similar to above)
- p. *?y:oo a chênê dê vya ngmê*
 ERG.PL my nephew 3IMMPI hit.FOL PFS3sO.PROX.PI
 (? indicates order not clearly acceptable)
- q. *pi ngmê ngê a chênê dê vy:a*
 person INDF ERG my nephew 3IMMPI hit
 ‘Some one (singular) hit my nephew’
- r. *pi ngê a chênê dê vy:a*
 person ERG my nephew 3IMMPI hit
 ‘Some one (singular) hit my nephew’
- s. *ngmê ngê a chênê dê vy:a*
 INDF ERG my nephew 3IMMPI hit
 ‘Somebody else, one of them hit my nephew’
- t. **ngê a chênê dê vy:a*
 ERG my nephew 3IMMPI hit
 (unacceptable ERG alone)
- u. **ngê dê vy:a a chênê*
 ERG 3IMMPI hit my nephew
 (unacceptable ERG alone)

The following show some successive reductions of an Absolutive NP in object function:

- (59) a. *pi ngmê ngê tp:ee pââ ndĩĩ limi knî dê*
 person INDF ERG boy big five AUG 3IMMPI
vya té
 hit.FOL MFS.3plOprox
 ‘Someone hit the five big boys’
- b. *pi ngmê ngê tp:ee pââ ndĩĩ knî dê*
 person INDF ERG boy big AUG 3IMMPI
vya té
 hit.FOL MFS.3plOprox
 ‘Someone hit the big boys’
- c. *pi ngmê ngê tp:ee limi knî dê*
 person INDF ERG boy five AUG 3IMMPI
vya té
 hit.FOL MFS.3plOprox
 ‘Someone hit the five boys’

- d. *pi ngmê ngê tp:ee knî dê*
 person INDF ERG boy AUG 3IMMPI
vya té
 hit.FOL MFS.3plOprox
 ‘Someone hit the (three or more) boys’
- e. **pi ngmê ngê knî dê vya té*
 person INDF ERG AUG 3IMMPI hit.FOL MFS.3plOprox
 (unacceptable with AUG alone)
- f. *pi ngmê ngê tp:ee dê vya té*
 person INDF ERG boy 3IMMPI hit.FOL MFS.3plOprox
 ‘Someone hit the (three or more) boys’ (plurality coded in verbal enclitic)
- g. *pi ngmê ngê tp:ee ngmê knî dê*
 person INDF ERG boy INDF AUG 3IMMPI
vya té
 hit.FOL MFS.3plOprox
 ‘Someone hit (three or more indefinite) boys’
- h. *pi ngmê ngê ngmê knî dê*
 person INDF ERG INDF AUG 3IMMPI
vya té
 hit.FOL MFS.3plOprox
 ‘Someone hit them (three or more indefinite)’
- i. **pi ngmê ngê ngmê dê vya té*
 person INDF ERG INDF 3IMMPI hit.FOL MFS.3plOprox
 (unacceptable INDF with plural verbal enclitic)
- j. *pi ngmê ngê ngmê dê vy:a*
 person INDF ERG INDF 3IMMPI hit
 ‘Someone hit him (singular indefinite)’
- k. *pi ngmê ngê dê vy:a*
 person INDF ERG 3IMMPI hit
 ‘Someone hit him (singular)’

Notice in the above examples how the indefinite marker *ngmê* can occur happily with plural augmentative *knî* (as in (59)g.), but when it occurs alone, as in (59)j. it must have a singular reading (hence (59)i. with plural verb agreement is ill-formed).

Quantification presents special difficulties. Here are some of the wrinkles:

- (i) NPs with numerals take plurals in *knî* (‘augmented’), not *yoo* (‘animate plural’): e.g. *yi pini limi knî* ‘those people five augmented’

- (ii) humans take plurals (3 or more) in *yoo* – but *yoo* can be extended to artifacts and things when they can inflict injury – e.g. snakes, burning houses, falling coconuts or trees
- (iii) humans alone can take (irregular) plurals in *-ma* (as in *dmââdî-ma* ‘girl-s’)
- (iv) *yîlî* ‘many’ and classifiers like *dyuu* ‘pile’ often force singular verb agreement. Consider the following pair of utterances:

- (60) a. *pi pyââ miyó kiyedê p:êê nj:ii (*mo)*
 man woman two CERTCL.PROX story telling *dS.Intrans
 ‘A man and woman the two of them are telling stories’
- b. *pi pyââ kiyedê p:êê nj:ii mo*
 man woman CERTCL.PROX story telling dS.Intrans
 ‘A man and woman are telling stories’

The sentence in (60)a. above with an explicit quantifier does not take dual agreement on the verb, while an implicit quantification in the verbal enclitic occurs when the quantifier is missing.

The particle *knî* presents special puzzles. It is obligatory in specified plural NPs (with deictics) followed by numerals, thus in *ki pini limi knî* (‘those people five *knî*’), but not in other quantified phrases like *kî pini yintómu* (‘those people all’), *pi yîlî* (‘people many’), and not in the unspecified **pi limi knî* despite the numeral, except in a question. It is not obligatory in unspecified NPs with numerals like *pi limi* (‘people five’). It can (but need not) occur with the indefinite *ngmê* ‘some, one’, as in *pi ngmê knî* ‘some people’, where it pluralizes (three or more), contrasting with singular *pi ngmê* ‘one person’. Yet it can co-occur with other plural markers, as in *tp:ee ma (knî) y:oo* ‘boy PL *knî* ERG+PL’, although not with plural marker *yoo* (**tp:ee knî yoo*). Its position is to the right of all quantifiers which it may occur with (the numbers in particular). It is a possible candidate for some kind of definiteness marker. *Knî* however raises many puzzles, since it can also occur alone with a case marker.

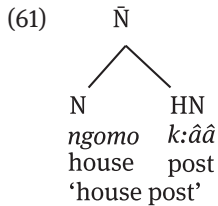
The Indefinite marker *ngmê* is not an indefinite article, since, as mentioned, it occurs happily with plural nouns – it must be thought of rather as a quantifier, with the gloss ‘a, some’.

5.1.3 Structural properties of the simplex NP

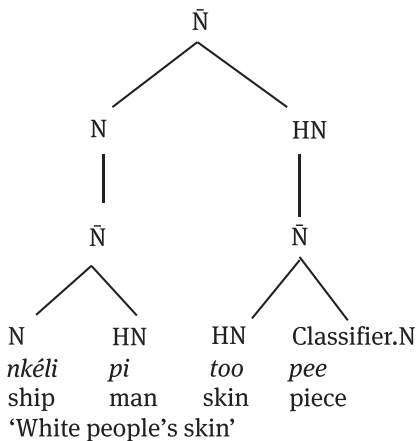
From what has been said, it is clear that one cannot use substitution tests to establish the head of a nominal phrase: just about any element other than modifying adjectives or nominals can stand alone for the whole phrase (thus, determiner,

classifier, indefinite marker, quantifier, human-plural marker *yoo*, augmentative plural, or even just the case marker!). There are some marked dependencies, with a determiner governing the specified form of the noun, but this doesn't work as a test of headship because it attaches to the first N rather than the head N. Classifiers and quantifiers may cancel plural marking indicating other governing relations, but these don't pick out the head either.

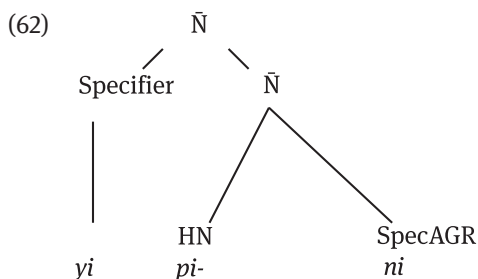
Nevertheless, given that there is a (more or less fixed) ordered template for the noun phrase, and using semantic intuitions about what must be understood despite widescale ellipsis, some kind of constituent structure seems evident. A basic fact is that in a sequence of Ns, the last is the head, the others modifiers: where the last element is a classifier, it may also be construed as the head. It seems reasonable to suppose that the NP has a phrase structure of the X-bar kind, but it is clearly quite complex. Consider for example that Ns can modify Ns in compounds such as the following (HN = Head Noun):



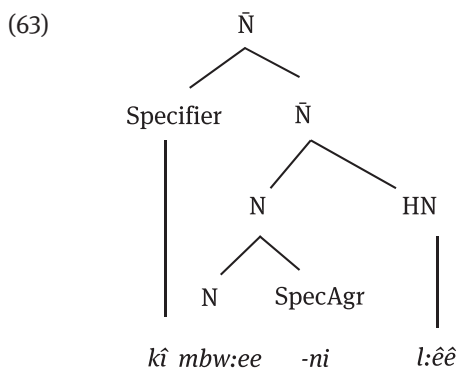
and this is recursive:



We have already noted that the presence of a determiner (or specifier) plays an important role, forcing the specified form of the noun (see §4.2.1.1), which might be thought of as a kind of concord, as in:



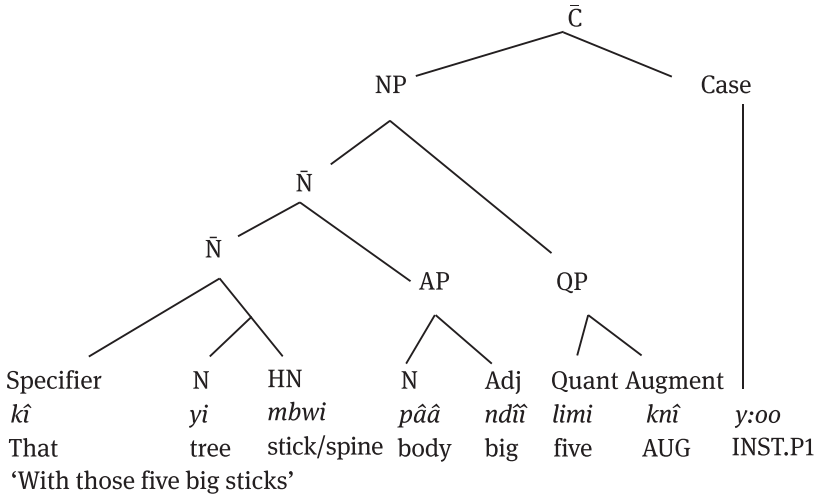
But where the N is compound, the specified-marking occurs not on the head N but on the first N, as in:



(realized as *kî mbwéni l:êê*, ‘this river pool’).

Consider again the example in row 9 of Table 5.1 in the prior section. Such a phrase might have a structure of the following kind – such a suggestion is tentative, but it is clear that, whatever the exact optimal analysis, the noun phrase has a precise constituent structure.

(64) Cased-NP



The discussion of the NP so far has been restricted to simplex NPs, without recursion. The structure of complex NPs based on various kinds of recursion is introduced in §5.3.

NPs (together with their case or local adpositions) are major constituents which, despite their internal rigidity, can be freely moved with little innuendo or shifts of pragmatic effect – for example the following locations for an Instrumental-case-marked NP (in bold) with an Ergative and Absolutive NP are all natural enough:

- (65) a. *pi ngmê ngê a chênê dê vy:a yi*
 person INDF ERG my nephew 3IMMPI hit tree
 mbwi ngê
 spine INST
 ‘Someone hit my nephew with a stick’
- b. ***yi mbwii ngê*** *pi ngmê ngê a chênê dê vy:a*
- c. *pi ngmê ngê* ***yi mbwii ngê*** *a chênê dê vy:a*
- d. *a chênê pi ngmê ngê* ***yi mbwii ngê*** *dê vy:a*
- e. *a chênê pi ngmê ngê dê vy:a* ***yi mbwii ngê***
- f. *a chênê dê vy:a* ***yi mbwii ngê*** *pi ngmê ngê*
- g. *a chênê dê vy:a pi ngmê ngê* ***yi mbwii ngê***

5.2 Postpositional cases on NPs and the marking of grammatical relations

As already noted (§4.2.2), some pronouns (the Unmarked personal ones) in Yéli Dnye basically function on a ‘Nominative’ basis as free pronouns (except in embedded contexts considered below); cross-referencing clitics flanking the verb also function on a partially Nominative basis. However, full lexical NPs are marked strictly on an Ergative/Absolutive basis. The Ergative marking of NPs seems to be exceptional for an outlier Papuan language in the Island Melanesia area, however it is a common feature of Highland Papuan languages, where the Ergative marker is typically the same as the Instrumental (Foley 1986:107; see e.g. Suter 2010). But in the Highland languages, the Ergative is typically optional (Foley 2000), and seems to serve various pragmatic functions, e.g. to foreground or background a participant (see McGregor 2010, Rumsey 2010), while in Yéli Dnye it is essentially obligatory, apart from some pronominal subjects mentioned below.²⁴ Although the Ergative and Instrumental postpositions (in a typical cross-linguistic pattern) may appear to be homophonous, they are not formally identical in Yéli Dnye, since the forms differ in the plural. Nevertheless, an utterance like *kí pini chēêpî ngê ka vyee* (the man-ABS stone-INST/ERG is hitting) is ambiguous between ‘(someone) hit the man with a stone’ and ‘the stone struck the man’.

5.2.1 Case marking of lexical NPs

Case markers on NPs are treated here as either postpositions or clitics rather than suffixes, on the grounds that they can alter the stress pattern of the NPs to which they are attached (e.g. *Yidika* → *Yidikaa ngê*) but not in accord with word-internal stress rules (see §3.4). Such stress marking should be considered part of the case-marking system, as e.g. in Australian languages like Guugu Yimidhirr (Haviland 1979b:48ff). The basic forms of case markers are given in Table 5.2:

²⁴ The one other place where Ergative marking can be relaxed is where a list of more than two names occurs in the agent role, as in ‘X and Y and Z did it’:

- (i) *Steve Yidika Chris k:ii nt:uu ntémwintwémi ka*
Steve Yidika Chris banana ripe.fruit DISTRIB 3CIPprox
pîpî ngmê
 eating PolyfocalS3sOCIProx
 ‘Steve, Yidika and Chris are each eating a banana’

Table 5.2: Case-marking postpositions.

NP+ngê				
	ERGATIVE	INSTRUMENTAL	EXPERIENCER	TOPIC
	NP+ <i>ngê</i>	NP+ <i>ngê</i>	NP+ <i>ngê/ka</i>	NP+ <i>ngê</i>
Dual	NP + <i>y:oo</i>	NP+ <i>y:oo/y:e</i>	NP+ <i>y:e</i>	
Plural forms	NP+ <i>y:oo</i>	NP + <i>y:e</i>	NP + <i>y:e</i>	(none?)
	ABSOLUTIVE	LOCATIVE		
	NP+ \emptyset	NP+ \emptyset		
Dual/Plural	NP+ <i>dê/dé</i>	NP+ \emptyset		
NP+ <i>ka</i>	SOURCE/GOAL(non-Locative Dative/Ablative)			
Plural form	NP + <i>ye</i>			
NP+ <i>k:ii</i>	COMITATIVE			
NP+ <i>kê</i>	SOCIATIVE (with a person)			

(Note that ‘to you’, 2nd person singular plus the experiencer or source/goal marker *ka* becomes *nga*, underlyingly N+ka.)

Arguably, there may be other cases. For example, it might be possible to recognize a Benefactive case, marked by the expression *u(/yi) l:ee dîy:o* – this phrase, acting like a postposition, introduces an additional benefactive participant:

- (66) a. *Ngmidimuwó ngê nté dê chono*
 (Woman’s name) ERG food 3IMMPI cook
u moo u l:êê dîy:o
 3Poss husband 3Poss reason
 ‘Ngmidimuwó cooked for her husband’
- b. *Kakan Ghaalyu y:oo nté numo u l:êê dîy:o dê*
 Kakan Ghaalyu ERG+PL food RECP its reason 3IMM
ch:ee ngmê
 cook PFS_3sOPROX(tvPostN)
 ‘Kakan and Ghaalyu cooked for each other’

Note that in (66)b. the phrase introduces a reciprocal, which makes it look less like a periphrastic adjunct.

But the main cases are those listed above. Despite the many roles that the clitic *ngê* plays, these roles are formally distinguishable in the dual/plural forms as shown, which in turn derive from the special forms of the pronouns in these functions (e.g. *ye* ‘plural source/goal’ also means ‘from/to them’, *y:e* ‘Instrumental dual/plural’ also means ‘Experiencer dual/plural’). For example:

- (67) a. *Yidika Weta y:oo dê d:uu ngmê*
 Yidika Weta ERG.PL 3IMMPI do PFS3sO.PROX
 'Yidika and Weta did it'
- b. *tuu dê y:e dê d:uu*
 axe DUAL INST.Dual/Pl 3IMMPI do
 'He did it with two axes'

There is no case stacking, e.g. no Ergative + Comitative – under these circumstances the Comitative takes precedence (see Henderson 1995:62). The constructions taking particular cases are further described below, but some brief notes (labelled A–G) may be helpful here:

(A) Both animate and inanimate subject NPs of transitive verbs must be marked with the Ergative. Example (68) shows an inanimate Ergative NP.

- (68) *yópu ngê kpââli ∅ ngma a*
 wind ERG branch ABS INDF.CLS Pl.PST3.CLS
y:ângo ∅
 take+REM 3s3sREM
 'The wind took off a large bough'

The only exceptions to the marking of transitive subjects with the Ergative case are personal pronouns, which are left unmarked unless they are in quotation or embedded contexts, or are understood that way:

- (69) *apu, nyi ngê Muwó dî vy:a*
 3QUOT 2s ERG Muwó(ABS) 3IMM hit
 'It is said that you hit Muwó'
- (70) *a lama ka tóó, nyi ngê*
 1sPoss knowledge CERT.3PRSCI sitting 2s ERG
pi ka pîpî
 person CERT.3PRSCI eating
 'I know that you are still eating people' (said by colonial official)

The exact contexts under which such Ergative marking is possible on pronouns are discussed below. Note for example (71)a. and b., where the question excludes Ergative marking and the statement encourages it:

- (71) a. *u yi nga a kwo (*nyi ngê) wa*
 its desire 2s.EXP 3sCI standing (*you ERG) IRR
nyi d:uu?
 2s do
 ‘Do you want to do it?’ (lit. ‘Is its desire to you standing: you will do it?’)
- b. *u yi a nga a kwo nyi*
 its desire 1s. EXP 3sCI standing you
ngê wa d:uu
 ERG IRR do
 ‘I want you to do it’ (lit. ‘Its desire to me is standing: you do it’)

(B) Intransitive subjects and transitive objects are in Absolutive case. The Absolutive NP is unmarked, as in the example below, but as illustrated there the marking is further indicated by the attraction of an indefinite determiner of an Absolutive NP into the pre-verbal clitic of the verb complex. Thus *ngma* (*ngme+a*) indicates that there is an indefinite Absolutive NP which may be elsewhere in the sentence (recall that phrase order is free, and adverbs are likely to occur before the pre-verbal clitic):

- (72) *yópu ngê kpââlî Ø lîmîlîmî ngê*
 wind ERG branch ABS quickly ADV
ngma a y:ângo
 INDF.CLS PI.PST3.CLS take.REM
 ‘The wind quickly took off a large bough’

(C) The Instrumental case marks inanimate instruments. Note that more than one NP can occur with a single dual/plural Instrumental marker (for which there are special forms, *y:oo* or *y:e* for dual, *y:e* for plural):

- (73) *Mwonî tuu taa y:e dî vy:a*
 Mwonî axe bushknife INST-PL PI.IMM3s.hit kill
 ‘He killed Mwonî with an axe and with a knife’

The unambiguously Dual form of the Instrumental is more likely to be used where the instruments are of the same type:

- (74) a. *tuu dê y:oo dnye kpono Ø*
 axe DUAL INST.dl 1pl.PI.IMM cutIMM MFS.3sO
 ‘We3 cut it with these two axes’

The notion ‘Instrument’ is broad, the case need not mark a tool or anything so restricted:

- b. *taa wêê ngê a ndê too*
 sword blood INST Close paint.REM MF3plOREM.PI
 ‘They painted the swords with blood’

(D) The Experiencer case marks the subjects of experiencer clauses, e.g. constructions of fearing, wanting, being hungry, etc.

- (75) *Stephen Yidika y:e dómu a t:a*
 Stephen Yidika EXP.d/pl hunger Close3sPROXCI is hanging
 ‘To Stephen and Yidika hunger is located – i.e. they are hungry’

Experiencer case in the singular may be marked either by *ngê* (like the Ergative/Instrumental) or by *ka* (like the Dative/Ablative), while the dual/plural form is *y:e*, as here illustrated. There are special forms of (some of) the pronouns, as in the paradigm given above in §4.2.2. The main uses of the Experiencer case are described in §7.5.

(E) Locative NPs, e.g. place names, are unmarked for source or goal of motion, or location.

- (76) *nimowa kêdê ndê, misima dî lê*
 Nimowa Def.3sIMMPI leave Misima 3sIMMPI go
 ‘He’s just left Nimowa and gone to Misima’

Recollect though that many nouns have suppletive forms indicating locative marking, e.g. *ndê* ‘fire’ ~ *ndiya* ‘in the fire’.

(F) Non-spatial Sources or Goals – which might be labelled ‘Datives’ or ‘Ablatives’ – are not differentiated, both being marked with *ka*, as in clauses of giving, saying, taking. Motion to a person may also take *ka*, but not motion to a place.

- (77) *ndapî Ø Yidika Kpââmwele ye kî*
 shell.money ABS Yidika Kpââmwêlê GOAL-PL CERT
Nî y:ângo
 IsPI.PST gave.to3rd.REM
 ‘I gave the money to Yidika and Kpââmwêlê’

- (78) *Peter ka nî pwila ngê*
 Peter SOURCE 1sPPast buyPast MFS.3sO.WEAK
 ‘I bought it from Peter’

- (79) *Mboo ka n:aa danêmbum*
 Mboo GOAL 1sCIImmFUT talking.
 ‘I am talking to Mboo’ (from Henderson 1995:63)

(G) Comitative is the case marking for animate companions, as in ‘go with so-and-so’.

- (80) *John Njó k:ii lee knî*
 John Joe COM go.FOL dS.Intrans.NrPAST.PI
 ‘The two of them, John and Joe, went (yesterday)’

- (81) *nyi, ng:ii*
 2s N(2s)+k:ii
 ‘You, you are one of them’

- (82) *ye nyi ngmê, _ng:ii nmye*
 DEM(near2) 2s one 2s+COM 2pl
nt:amênt:amê nyédi
 song.type PFS.3plO.CIHAB
 ‘You are one of them, you all habitually sing nt:amê with you (singular)’

- (83) *Tili m:aa k:ii ka lêpî mo*
 Tili my.father COM 3CI.PROX going CI.PROX.d
 ‘Tilly is going with my father’

Note that the NP+k:ii construction, where Comitative occurs with the subject, includes the oblique NP in the number of the verb agreement.

The Comitative is restricted to humans, gods and animate companions (dogs are the only normal non-human candidates). The just slightly irregular paradigm for pronouns with the Comitative is as follows:

Table 5.3: Comitative pronouns.

	Sing	Dual	Plural
1 st	<i>a k:ii</i>	<i>nyi k:ii</i>	<i>nmî k:ii</i>
2 nd	<i>ng:ii</i> (in Imperatives) <i>m:uu</i> (in Declaratives)	<i>dpî k:ii</i>	<i>nmyi k:ii</i>
3 rd	<i>u k:ii</i>	<i>yi k:ii</i>	<i>yi k:ii</i>

- (84) a. *a k:ii lee knî*
 ‘Let’s go with me’ i.e. ‘Let us2 go’
 b. *a k:ii lee kmîle* ‘You2 or more come with me’
 c. *dpî k:ii lee kmîle* ‘Let’s go with you2’
 d. *ng:ii nyi k:ii*
 N+k:ii nyi k:ii
 2sPOSS dual COM
 ‘Are you (with) (coming) with us2?’

The postposition *p:uu*, ‘attached to’, is used in a comitative sense with verbs of accompanying as below (it takes pronouns in the normal Absolutive form):

- (85) a. *a p:uu keeli*
 1s attached.to accompany.IMP
 ‘Accompany me!’
 b. *m:uu n:aa kelekele*
 N(2sPOSS)+p:uu 1sCIPROX.MOT accompanying.CI
 ‘I am accompanying you’

5.2.2 Case marking of pronouns

As described in §4.2.2, there are distinct personal pronouns for the Unmarked (‘Nominative’), Genitive (Possessive), Dative/Ablative, and Experiencer cases. Most other pronouns, like interrogative, reflexive, reciprocal and relative pronouns, take the standard case marking as for nominals, except that there are special forms for the Dative/Ablative reciprocal (*noko*) and the Ergative interrogative personal pronoun (*nanê* ‘Who-ERG?’).

The case marking of personal pronouns is in fact a matter of some complexity. Many ergative languages, like the Australian ones, mark lexical NPs on an ergative/absolutive basis, and pronouns on a nominative/accusative basis,

exhibiting one common enough kind of ‘split ergativity’. But in Yêlî Dnye, while interrogative, relative and other pronouns are always marked with the Ergative case, personal pronouns may or may not be, according to context. The essential rules seem to be:

- (i) Personal pronouns in A-function (subjects of transitive verbs) are not marked with the Ergative case unless they are embedded or in an implicit quotation context,
- (ii) All other pronouns in A-function (including demonstrative, relative and Wh- pronouns) are marked with the Ergative case (unless they have a special Ergative form of their own).

As an example of a context where personal pronouns would likely be marked with the Ergative, consider:

- (86) a. *Yidika ka dpî vi – kwi, nê ngê*
 Yidika DAT 2IMP.Defd say – say.IMP 1s ERG
Ghaalyu dê vy:a
 Ghaalyu 3IMM hit
 ‘Tell Yidika, say: I (Ergative) beat Ghaalyu’
- b. *Stephen ngê a ka da Yidika ka dpî*
 Stephen ERG me DAT QUOT3s Yidika DAT 2IMP.Defd
vi (nê ngê) Ghaalyu dê vy:a
 say 1s ERG Ghaalyu 3IMM hit
 ‘Stephen said to me: Tell Yidika I (Ergative) hit Ghaalyu’
- c. *Yidika ka dpî vi – kwi, nê ngê Ghaalyu*
 Yidika DAT 2IMP.Defd say – say.IMP 1s ERG Ghaalyu
wa vy:a
 3FUT hit
 ‘Tell Yidika, say: I (Ergative) will beat Ghaalyu’

Here I instruct an intermediary with sentence (86)a. and he delivers the message to Yidika with sentence b. (note that in b. the explicit personal pronoun with its Ergative marking could be omitted). An interesting feature of these sentences is that the verb agreeing with the Ergative pronoun does not agree in person – it takes 3rd person agreement. Although the phonetic difference between 1st and 3rd person agreement is slight in a. and b. (*dî* vs. *dê*), in c. the 3rd person proclitic *wa* would be *anî* in the 1st person future.

Or, in another context where I have heard that you hit Ghaalyu:

- (87) a. *Apu, nyi ngê Ghaalyu dê vy:a*
 QUOT3.PROX 2s ERG Ghaalyu 3IMMPI hit
 ‘They say you (Ergative) are the one who hit Ghaalyu’
- b. *nyi ngê chókó dê vy:a*
 2s ERG self 3IMMPI hit
 ‘(they say) You (Ergative) yourself hit him’

Here again the Ergative marking is licensed, even if, as in (87)a, the quotation is not really embedded but merely follows a quotation particle, or as in b., the quotation context is entirely implicit. Thus the Ergative marking is not really syntactically conditioned, but is perhaps related to an external point of view.²⁵

Nevertheless, other embedding contexts also seem to permit Ergative marking of pronouns, for example under predicates of knowing and wanting:

- (88) a. *a lama ka tókó, nyi ngê*
 my knowledge 3.PROXCI sitting, 2s ERG
pi ka pîpî
 person 3.PROXCI eating
 ‘I know you (Ergative) are eating people’
- b. *u yi a nga a kwo nyi*
 its desire 1sEXP 3.PROXCI standing 2s
ngê d:uu ngê
 ERG do MFS3sO
 ‘I want you (Ergative) to do it’

²⁵ It is interesting in this regard to note that explicit, stressed pronouns themselves seem to presuppose quotation contexts – thus while either a. or b. below can occur outside quotation contexts, c. with a pronoun plus emphatic seems to require such a context implicitly:

- (i) a. *chókó dî vy:a*
 my self 1sIMM hit
 ‘I myself hit him’
- b. *nê dî vy:a*
 1s 1sIMM Hit
 ‘I hit him’
- c. *nê a chókó dî vy:a*
 1s my self 1sIMM hit
 ‘I myself, I hit him’

- c. *u yi a nga a kwo nê (*ngê)*
 Its desire 1sEXP 3.PROXCI standing 1s ERG
*d:uu (*ngê)*
 do (MFS3sO)
 ‘I want to do it’ (*‘I want I-ergative do it’)
- d. *u yi nga a kwo (*nyi ngê)*
 its desire 2sEXP 3.PROXCI standing 2s ERG
wa nyi d:uu
 FUT 2s do
 ‘Do you want to do it?’ (lit. ‘Its desire to you is standing that you (not you-Ergative) do it’)

Note though how, in (88)c. and d., where only one person’s point of view is expressed, Ergative marking seems to be ruled out.

5.3 Recursion in the noun phrase: Conjunction, compounds, possession, and relativization

Conjunction is achieved either by apposition, with case marking and verbal agreement reflecting the plurality, or with one NP in Comitative case, also with plural agreement:

- (89) a. *Yidika Mwonî y:oo dê vy:a ngmê*
 Yidika Mwonî ERG.PL 3IMMPI hit PFS3sOPI.PROX
 ‘Yidika (and) Mwonî hit something’
- b. *Yidika Mwonî Pikuwa y:oo dê vy:a ngmê*
 Yidika Mwonî Pikuwa ERG.PL 3IMM.PI hit PFS3sOPI.PROX
 ‘Yidika, Mwonî and Pikuwa hit something’
- c. *Yidika Mwonî dê lee knî*
 Yidika Mwonî 3IMM.PI go dPI.Intrans
 ‘Yidika and Mwonî went’
- d. *Yidika Mwonî k:ii dê lee knî*
 Yidika Mwonî COM 3IMM.PI go dPI.Intrans
 ‘Yidika and Mwonî went’

- e. (*Yidika ngê) Mwonî k:ii dê
 (*Yidika ERG) Mwonî COM 3IMM.PI
 vya ngmê
 hit.FOL PF3sOProx
 ‘They killed that thing with Mwonî’
 (singular ERG NP clashes with PF enclitic)
- f. *tuu kaa y:e dê vy:a ngmê*
 axe spear INSTRpl 3IMM.PI hit PFS3sOPI.PROX
 ‘They hit it with a spear and an axe’
- g. *Yidika ngê ó apê Mwonî ngê dê*
 Yidika ERG or perhaps Mwonî ERG 3sIMM.PI
 vy:a Ø
 hit (MFS3sOPI.PROX)
 ‘Either Yidika or Mwonî hit it’

Note that in (89)d. above, the Comitative case-marked NP is counted with the subject for the purposes of number agreement in the verb, suggesting that it is structurally linked to the subject NP ((89)e. shows that the same is true with Comitatives associated with Ergative subjects, but in this case the subject NP cannot be overt). NPs conjoined with the Comitative case also agree in person with the head noun (so one says ‘I with Yidika we. . .’). Disjunctions as in (89)g. have a different structure, with separate case-marking on each disjunct and agreement consistent with only one disjunct.

An alternative strategy for conjunction is to indicate the number with the first conjunct and add the second conjunct after, as in *Taapwé pini dê Ghaalyu* ‘Taapwé person two Ghaalyu i.e. Taapwé and Ghaalyu’.

Noun phrases of arbitrary complexity can be built by compounding, possession, relativization and nominalization of verbs. The latter two topics are dealt with extensively below (§8.1 and §8.7), but here are initial examples:

- (90) a. *pi pîpî dono*
 person eating bad
 ‘Eating people is bad’
- b. *pini [n:ii dê t:a] a mbwêmê*
 person-SPEC REL 3IMM.PI arrive my pig
dê t:âmo
 3IMM.PI stole
 ‘The man who came stole my pig’

As can be seen in (90)a. above, nominalized verbs, which are formed from the continuous aspect root, can carry some of their arguments with them. Relative clauses, as in (90)b., normally follow the head noun, and the relative pronoun carries the case marking appropriate to the embedded clause.

The possessive can be used to build NPs of arbitrary size:

- (91) a. *Kakan u mî u kêpyââ u kênê*
 Kakan 3Poss father 3Poss grandmother 3Poss uncle
 ‘Kakan’s father’s grandmother’s uncle’
 b. *nee u pyoo u nkoo ghi pwaa ngmê*
 canoe 3Poss mast 3Poss top part broken RES
 ‘The canoe’s mast’s top part is broken’
 c. *nee pyoo nkwo do ghi pwaa ngmê*
 canoe mast top part broken RES
 ‘The canoe mast top part is broken’

However for inanimate possessors, nominal compounding as in (91)c. above is the preferred structure. Compounding can be recursive, but in practice the limit is about four or five Ns forming one compound nominal with head to the right. Many place names are built on compounding (e.g. *Ntono kpâpu* ‘nuwo ‘village name, lit. Ntono hill point’, or *K:aa mbwee vyilêvyilê têtê* lit. ‘taro old reheating place’), as are technical terms like those used in house or canoe building (e.g. *ghêêdî mbw:ee pââ*, ‘joists, cross-bearers’), and a few species terms (*njini kpiyé* ‘tree type, lit. njini large.tree’).

The possessor, if explicit, must precede the possessive pronoun. The possessor need not be explicit, in which case it is usually understood anaphorically or deictically, not normally cataphorically. Thus the normal expression for ‘afterwards’ is *u kuwó dini ghi ngê*, lit. ‘It’s following time part ADVERBIALIZER’ where the possessive is anaphoric to the preceding mentioned event. Quite a number of conjunctive phrases are built on this principle.

An exception to anaphoric interpretation is the role of possession in complex ‘wanting’ constructions (see §7.5.1), where an embedded clause (below shown in square brackets) is the object of desire, and the possessive cataphorically refers to this clause. Here, as shown in (92)b. below, the cataphoric possessive pronoun fails to agree with the number of desired events, unlike the anaphoric agreement with the number of desired objects in c.

- (92) a. *u yi a nga a kwo [Abeleti nê lê]*
 3Poss desire 1sEXP 3CIPROX standing [Abeleti 1s go]
 ‘I want to go to Abeleti’, lit. ‘It’s desire to me is standing, I go to Abeleti’

- b. *u yi ye a kwo*
 3Poss desire to.them 3CIPROX standing
[Abeleti nmî lee dmi, yed:oo Tam
[Abeleti 1Pl go Pl.PROXplS then Tam
nm:uu lee dmi]
 1pl.MOT go Pl.PROXplS]
 ‘They want to go to Abeleti and then to Tam’,
 lit. ‘It’s desire to them is standing, we go first to Abeleti and then to Tam’
- c. *nee dê yi yi dê a nga a*
 canoe Dual 3d/plPOSS desire Dual 1sEXP 3Cl.PROX
kwo mo
 stand 1/2/3d
 ‘I want two canoes’, lit. ‘Two canoes their desire is standing-dual to me’