Grammatical sketch of Beng

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1. Introduction

Beng is a South Mande language of Côte d’Ivoire. The core Beng population lives in a compact area in the Prefecture of M’Bahia at the northern edge of the tropical forest zone in Côte d’Ivoire. Until now, descriptions of only some aspects of the structure of Beng, particularly phonology and, to some degree, morphology, have been available to the general reader. The current work makes the first attempt at a systematic description of Beng grammar, providing a typologically oriented overview of phonology, morphology, and the basic syntactic constructions of Beng. While the content of this sketch is primarily descriptive, it is intended for a broad linguistic audience, written in particular for typologically minded readers.

The research presented here is based on three field trips to Côte d’Ivoire in 2004, 2005, and 2006. My main Beng consultant was Kouadio Kouadio Destin (b. 1968), and a significant part of the data comes from Kouadio Kouadio Patrice (b. 1980). Both speakers represent the variety of Ouassadougou (Beng: Àságbē). In some cases I also used judgments by Augustin Yao Kouakou (b. 1967) from Totodougou (Beng: Tôtôgbē). Besides the original field data, I relied on previous scholarship on Beng, including unpublished materials (Paesler ms.), kindly provided to me by the Summer Institute of Linguistics, as well as the lexicographic notes of anthropologist Alma Gottlieb published in (Gottlieb, Murphy 1995).

The structure of this work is as follows. After a brief introduction (Section 1), I outline general information on Beng (Section 2), including basic sociolinguistic parameters and dialect divides, and then proceed to the history of the linguistic study of Beng (Section 3). Linguistic description proper begins with an outline of phonological inventory and phonological processes, both segmental and tonal (Section 4). Sections that follow deal with personal pronoun morphology (Section 5;
see also (Paperno 2005)), and the morphology of other parts of speech (Section 6); the discussion of inflection and productive derivation of verbs, adjectives and location nouns is interspersed, grouped by morphological expression rather than by part of speech, as the same morphological means (an affix or reduplication) can combine with different parts of speech with similar semantic effects. Section 7 discusses empirical tests for (syntactic) parts of speech, as morphological criteria have limited applicability in Beng. I argue for distinguishing not only nouns, adjectives, postpositions, and adverbs, but also intermediate and finer classes: locative nouns, temporal nouns, locative postpositions, and pure postpositions. Section 8 describes NP (DP) structure, covering various noun modifiers: possessors, locative modifiers, appositions, adjectives, and determiners. Section 9 is dedicated to nominal number, a ‘hidden’ grammatical category, which can be expressed analytically, via verb of adjective agreement, or pronoun doubling, but almost never in the noun itself, and to the related issue of agreement in Beng; I describe two kinds of agreement marking, plural reduplication and pronoun doubling. Section 10 discusses the syntax and the semantics of locative constituents. Section 11 briefly introduces Beng equivalents of ‘or’ (à lē è nī) and ‘and’, (nà ... lō, which is only applicable to certain constituent types; due to the absence of verb/VP conjunction and restrictions on converb use the expression of predicate conjunction falls upon clause compounding, in particular sentence juxtaposition and temporal clause subordination). Section 12 describes simple clause structure, including the encoding of sentential grammatical categories: tense, aspect, modality, and polarity. In the following sections I characterize clausal arguments and adjuncts, and overview the main syntactic relations (arguments): subject, direct object, secondary object, and indirect object. While Beng subjects do possess a number of salient features, some syntactic phenomena are “ergative”, uniting the direct object with the intransitive subject as opposed to transitive subject (these include control of secondary predicate, quantified NP float, and reduplicative plural agreement on the verb). Section 13 gives an overview of multiple predication in Beng, with a particular focus on temporal clause marking that is identical to information structure marking; I describe two positional classes of complementizers (such as the preposed complementizer kē ‘that’ and the postposed dēē ‘if’), which turn out to be motivated by the typical linear position of the subordinate clause relative to the main clause. Section 14 discusses information structure marking: topic, contrastive topic, and focus, which are, as is typical in African languages, expressed by dedicated morphemes. Section 15 contains two sample texts in Beng, and Section 16 reproduces Beng words and phrases originally published by Louis Tauxier (1921) along with corresponding modern data.
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2. General information

2.1. Beng people and their language

The South Mande language Beng is a minority language of Côte d’Ivoire, spoken by the ethnic group of the same name. The Beng people is isolated in space from all other South Mande speaking groups. The closest of them, Wan, is spoken about 200 kilometers west of the Beng territory. In historic times, another closely related linguistic community, the Gbin, populated a territory to the East of the Beng (Delafosse 1904). The Gbin were heavily assimilated by the neighboring Gur ethnic groups of the Northern Côte d’Ivoire, and their language reportedly went extinct in the early 20th century (Tauxier 1921). Culturally, modern Beng language and culture show a considerable influence from the neighboring Baule, a major ethnic group dominant in central Côte d’Ivoire. Among other things, the Beng borrowed Baule personal names given to the person according to the day of the week when one is born, the corresponding names for days of the week, as well as the seven-day week itself, which coexists in the core Beng area with the traditional six-day week. The Baule influence goes so far that the Beng share the belief that their ancestors had arrived to their current area from the East, implausible on geographical grounds since the Beng are by far the eastmost among the whole South Mande group. This legend might have been directly borrowed from the Baule who have indeed arrived from the east just a few centuries ago; cf. (Gottlieb, Murphy 1995; Gottlieb 1992).

The Beng language belongs to the Southern-Eastern branch of the Mande language (Niger-Congo phylum), as confirmed by the lexicostatistic method (Vydrin 2009) that uses (Swadesh-based) 100 word lists of basic vocabulary. At any rate, separation of Beng within South Mande occurred quite early, right after the South Mande linguistic unity dissolved.

The main Beng area is within the Prefecture of M’Bahiakro of Côte d’Ivoire. Before the Ivorian civil war started in 2002, Beng was the main language of everyday communication in eighteen villages: Bonguera, Dézidougou, Djonkro, Dondoni, Kamelesso, Kofidougou, Kossandougou, Kouakoudoudou, Koumadougou, Lendoukro, Manidougou, Mousobadougou, N’Dodougou, Sandougou-Kosia, Sialédougou, Toledougou, Totodougou, and Ouasadougou. In addition, five villages maintain Beng identity but are almost completely assimilated linguistically by the Baule; inhabitants of those villages (Anzandougou, Bonédougou, Kongidougou, Krohoukro, and Kouakou-Bédara) know Beng at best passively.

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3 Still, the six day cycle is deeply entrenched in the traditional Beng habits, determining market days and Earth adoration schedule.

4 The main source for sociolinguistic information is (Paesler 1992).
Beng dialects have never been subject to linguistic study, although students of Beng note the existence of some, primarily lexical, differences among varieties of individual villages. Paesler (1992) lists four dialects of Beng, selected primarily by self-identification of territorial groups of the Beng rather than by linguistic criteria:

- The Savanna dialect (Dézidougou, Kofidougou, Kouakoudougou, Kounmandougou, Moussobadougou, Sialédougou, Toledougou, Totodougou, and Ouassadougou).
- The Forest dialect (Bonguera, Dondoni, Ndodougou, Sandougou-Kosia, and Kossandougou).
- The dialect of Kamelesso and Lendoukro.
- The dialect of Djonkro.


The Savanna and the Forest dialects are reported to be fully mutually intelligible, with slight lexical differences. The distinction between those two dialects, whose names only approximately correspond to natural zones referred to in their names, is based exclusively on the group identities of two previously rival groups of the Beng, each of which used to have its own ‘king’ in the pre-colonization times. Members of both groups call Beng their native language.

The dialect of Kamelesso and Lendoukro, on the one hand, and the central dialects (Savanna and Forest), are reported to be mutually intelligible to some degree. The dialect of Djonkro is not mutually intelligible with any others. We have no
credible information on the linguistic distinctions underlying the dialectal segmentation. Gottlieb (1995: xiii) largely agrees with Paesler (1992: 2) when it comes to Beng dialects, with two differences. First, she does not mention the villages of Kamelesso, Lendoukro and Djonkro. Second, she considers the variety of Sandougou-Kossia ‘independent’ from the Forest-Savanna divide. Neither a synchronic description nor a historical analysis of the Beng dialects exists to date.

During the Ivorian civil war of 2002-2011 the Beng country was crossed by the armistice line (‘ligne de confiance’). Most of the Savanna and the Forest zones were under control of the “New Forces” (i.e. the rebels), with the Forest zone right on the armistice line, partially controlled by peacekeepers. Some villages closer to the line, including Ouassadougou, were almost completely abandoned; the inhabitants moved either north to other Beng villages or south to the part of the country loyal to president Laurent Gbagbo. A few thousand of the Beng found refuge in the nearby Prikro, a sous-préfecture center.

2.2. Sociolinguistic situation
Beng is spoken by about 14 thousand people (based on the 1988 census). The total Beng population was about 16 thousand according to Paesler (1992). Some Beng are spread out in bigger cities of Côte d’Ivoire, particularly Abidjan, but it’s hard to provide quantitative estimates on this part of Beng population.

The Beng are generally bi- or multilingual. The Beng’s second languages are most often Baule (Akan), Jula (Mande), and French (Indo-European); older people also speak Jimini (Gur) and Ando (Akan). Second languages are used in inter-ethnic contacts, French is the official language of Côte d’Ivoire and is taught in school.

Beng, like other languages of similar speaker base, is potentially endangered. Projecting the assimilation trends into the future, in particular taking into account the Baule influence, it is possible that Beng will get extinct through assimilation. However, its present state of conservation is quite satisfactory.

Beng has no official status and is used orally, mostly in everyday communication. No literary standard exists, even though there is a folklore tradition, represented by folktales, historical legends, proverbs, as well as songs. The Beng themselves consider the Beng song genre to be a recent innovation: songs used to be sung only in other languages such as Baule.

In the mid-1980s a Summer Institute of Linguistics scholar W. Paesler, the first linguist to do a systematic study of Beng, developed a Latin-based writing system, with the addition of letters ŋ, ë, è; and acute and grave diacritic marks for tone levels. In 2006 the Beng literacy enthusiast Kouadio Destin and I proposed a new variant of this orthographic system, with new features primarily in tone notation, which to my knowledge has never been used.
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Beng has no function in education. From 1980 till 1986 the Summer Institute of Linguistics published calendars in Beng. Later, adopting the orthography by W. Paesler, SIL published the first Beng primer (Kouadio, Kouakou 1997). The authors of the primer are Kouadio Kouadio Destin and Augustin Yao Kouakou, the first linguist of Beng provenance, who defended in the 1996/1997 academic year a D. E. A. degree thesis on his native language (Kouakou 1997). But despite the support from SIL and the enthusiastic efforts by Kouadio Kouadio Destin, massive literacy training in Beng was never organized.

2.3. Names of the language

Beng, a name of a people and its language, reproduces the native ethnic name bɛ̀ŋ̩; this name has been used in most recent works on Beng (Paesler 1989; 1991; 1992; Gottlieb, Murphy 1995). Beng, however, has been mentioned in the literature under other, similar or unrelated, names: bɛ̃, Ben, Gbëingn, Gan, Gã, Gan-né, Ganra, Ngã, Ngain, N’Gain, Ngen, Ngan, N’Guin, Ngin. These names are derived from words for ‘Beng’ in the neighboring peoples’ languages: ṭgê (Baule), gà (Jula), gbɔmlɔ (Jimini). The -né element in Gan-né is probably a plural marker from some Beng dialects, see 3.2.

3. The history of Beng studies

3.1. Students of the Beng language and society

The first publications to report on Beng language and people were motivated by the urge to systematize the languages and peoples of West Africa. Like many other varieties of Côte d’Ivoire, the Beng and the neighboring South Mande Gbin languages were first described by the French colonial administrative officer Maurice Delafosse (1904). His account of the Beng language included just a list of the first ten numerals. Twenty years later, another scholar and colonial administrator Louis Tauxier studied the area of Bondoukou more deeply, both as a linguist and as an ethnographer. Among other things, Tauxier published an extensive list of Beng words and phrases (Tauxier 1921: 658-683), along with a very detailed ethnographic and sociological study of the Beng people. Now, 100 years after these first publications, we are in the position to look back at their data and interpret it building on the progress in African linguistics made over the last decades. In section 3.2, I describe Delafosse and Tauxier’s Beng data and remark on what they are telling us about Beng dialects.

Beng’s position within the genetic classification was further scrutinized in the second half of the 20th century with the development of wider comparative studies (Prost 1953; Welmers 1958; Greenberg 1966). The last work mistakenly attributes Beng (referred to as Gan) to Voltaic languages.
Systematic study of Beng did not resume until the late 1970-es, when SIL-associated scholars produced preliminary grammatical notes (Bearth 1979), description of the tonal system (Flick 1979) and a phonological sketch (Ory 1981).

In 1979-1980 the then-PhD-student Alma Gottlieb spent fourteen months in Côte d’Ivoire doing anthropological fieldwork among the Beng. After another field trip to the Beng land in 1985, Gottlieb eventually published a monograph on Beng anthropology (Gottlieb 1992) and a Beng-English dictionary (Gottlieb, Murphy 1995). After her dissertation work, Gottlieb conducted further research among the Beng, focusing on the anthropology of childhood, which resulted in the monograph *The Afterlife Is Where We Come From: The Culture of Infancy in West Africa* (Gottlieb 2004). Gottlieb’s collaboration with her husband, writer Phillip Graham, produced two well-written popular accounts of their encounters with the Beng (Gottlieb and Graham 1994, 2012).

An SIL member Wolfgang Paesler started studying Beng in 1981. Within a few years he gained a deep understanding of many aspects of the structure of Beng language. Paesler published the first morphological description of some aspects of verb morphology of Beng (Paesler 1989), which covered the properties of the base form, the low tone form, nominalization, and the progressive. Paesler gave the first account of personal pronouns and TAM expression in his orthographic manual (Paesler 1991), was the first to publish a phonological description of Beng (Paesler 1992), and, last but not least, collected a vast amount of unpublished texts and lexicographic data (Paesler ms.).

Map 2. Beng and closely related Gbin, now extinct, according to Delafosse (1904).

### 3.2. Beng dialects according to reports from the early 1900s

This section reproduces the content of (Paperno 2008a). I focus on the aspects of historical phonetics that Beng data from (Delafosse 1904) and (Tauxier 1921) seem to reflect and, for the dialect documented by Tauxier, on morphological features they exhibit. Tauxier’s data also contains some information for a deeper grammatical analysis, but that would require more research on modern Beng dialects.
The present work, as well as the research of Wolfgang Paesler and of Alma Gottlieb and M. Lynne Murphy, represent a different dialect than those described by Tauxier and Delafosse, spoken in the prefecture of M’Bahiaakro, in the area centered around the village of Ouassadougou. As mentioned above, this area is divided into two socio-geographic units, «Forest» and «Savanna», and the literature (e.g. Paesler 1992) even speaks of two dialects, dialect of the forest and dialect of the savanna, but this distinction has never been justified by linguistic data. All the varieties of the area of Ouassadougou are mutually understandable; the only certain isogloss I know of does not strictly divide the two regions: the subject pronoun of 3rd person singular has the form /e/ in varieties of some «Savanna» villages, e.g. Totodougou, and /o/ in some «Forest» villages, but also in the variety of Ouassadougou, which is generally attributed to the «Savanna» zone. Unfortunately, more precise information about dialectal distribution of these pronoun forms is not available. Therefore, I am not going to distinguish here the varieties of Ouassadougou area (the «Forest» and the «Savanna» dialects). Since a uniform term for this dialect does not exist, I will write «Modern Ouassadougou Beng », abbreviating it as MOB.5

Now that MOB is relatively well studied, we are in the position to interpret the data Tauxier and Delafosse had published in their relation to MOB facts. It turns out that the dialects described by Delafosse and Tauxier are substantially different from MOB. Delafosse documented the variety of Beng spoken in the 1890-s in the village of Kamélinsou near the Comoé river (see Maps 1, 2), which one might tentatively identify with the present-day Kamelesso. L. Tauxier, on the other hand, left a rather extensive record of the data that he had gathered “dans le village gan de Pattakoro, situé sur la route de Bouaké à Bondoukou, entre Kongodian et Groumania,” and also later from “des Gans des villages environnants [de Groumania]” (Tauxier 1921: 372). It follows that data from more than one Beng dialect could make a way into Tauxier’s book, and it is impossible to reliably separate them without external evidence on modern varieties of these dialects (those have never been studied to date). Presumably, though, most of Tauxier's data rely on the variety of the neighbourhood of Groumania (he qualifies his records from Pattakoro as “notes succintes”). If this is correct, Tauxier's data may represent a variety of modern Lendoukro or Bénidougou, villages situated in the proximity of Groumania, west from the Comoé river, where Beng is still spoken. To the best of my knowledge, there is no scholarship of these dialects, and Tauxier's notes remain the only source. I will make reference to the

5 This is intended as a purely geographical label (Ouassadougou is the center of the area) distinguishing this variety of Beng from the dialects of Djonkro, Kamalesso, and Lendoukro.
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varieties documented by Delafosse and Tauxier by abbreviations BK (Beng of Kamélinsou) and BG (Beng of Groumania neighbourhood), correspondingly.

3.2.1. Delafosse: Beng of Kamélinsou. Delafosse was the first to publish any Beng data; his records, however, are very scarce. They consist of a list on numerals from one through ten provided to him by Dr. Maclaud, "qui l'a recueillie sur place durant son voyage de 1893-1894" (Delafosse 1904: 149). The list is not very informative other than that it reliably identifies the variety as being close to MOB.

Table 1.1. Numerals from 1 through 10 in Beng dialects and Gbin

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BK</th>
<th>BG</th>
<th>MOB</th>
<th>Gbin (Delafosse)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>do [do]</td>
<td>dô [do]</td>
<td>dô</td>
<td>do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pla [pla]</td>
<td>para [pala]</td>
<td>plâŋ̄</td>
<td>paa two</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ya [ya]</td>
<td>n’gan [ŋa]</td>
<td>ŋãŋ̄</td>
<td>ŋga, ŋa three</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>syî [sie]</td>
<td>syé [sie]</td>
<td>siéŋ̄</td>
<td>sye four</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sô [soŋ]</td>
<td>sôn [soŋ]</td>
<td>sóŋ̄</td>
<td>sôo five</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>so-do [sɔdo]</td>
<td>so-do [sɔdo]</td>
<td>sódô</td>
<td>sórũ-do six</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>so-pla [sɔpla]</td>
<td>so-fala [sɔfala]</td>
<td>sóplâ</td>
<td>sosowa seven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>so-ya [sɔya]</td>
<td>sowoua [sɔwa]</td>
<td>sówâ, këŋësiéŋ̄</td>
<td>kyenze eight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sisi [sisi]</td>
<td>sisi [sisi]</td>
<td>sîsî</td>
<td>sisi nine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ebu [ebu]</td>
<td>bou [bu]</td>
<td>bû, ëbû</td>
<td>bu ten</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Two peculiarities of BK deserve a comment. First, the Beng of Kamélinsou maintained the Proto-South-Mande form /ya/ for ‘three’ in ya ‘three’ and so-ya ‘eight’ (< ‘5 + 3’), as opposed to the innovative form /wa/, /ŋa/ in MOB ŋã-ŋ, BG n’gan [ŋa] ‘three’, MOB sô-wâ, BG sowoua [sɔ-wa] ‘eight’.

Second, BK added the final -N in the numerals syî [sie-ŋ] ‘quatre’ and sô [so-ŋ] ‘cinq’, like in MOB (siéŋ, sîŋ), cf. syé [sie], so [sɔ] in a closely related language Gbin

6 [f] in this numeral is the result of lenition of intervocalic /p/; unfortunately there are no other examples that would support such a phonological process in BG, except for the similar but non-identical development in bouala ‘twenty’, cf. MOB bûwlâ ‘twenty’ (< bû ‘ten’ + *plâ ‘two’).
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(Delafosse 1904: 149). The -N, however, has not expanded to the numerals pla ‘deux’ and ya ‘trois’, cf. MOB plā-ŋ̄ ‘two’, ŋ̄-ŋ̄ ‘three’.

3.2.3. Tauxier: Beng of Groumania neighbourhood. Tauxier performed a far more profound study of Beng than Delafosse did, publishing a list of around 800 words and phrases. I will now highlight some features of BG that distinguish it from other dialects.

Minimal phonetic differences can be established between BG and MOB. First, the syncope of a vowel before /l/ had hardly ever happened in BG; etymological CVLV feet are consistently transcribed with two vowels. Examples include BG pala ‘deux’, cf. BK pla, MOB plāŋ̄; BG iri ‘arbre’, cf. MOB yrí; BG sara ‘tabac à priser’, cf. MOB yrí; BG irinni ‘racine’, MOB yrí nîŋ̄; BG bēhian ‘chèvre’, MOB bēyàŋ̀; BG bēha-sia ‘bouc’, MOB bēyàŋ̀ sîá; BG sōmm [son] ‘animal sauvage’, MOB sōj̄; etc.

One consonantal phenomenon present in BG could have been prenasalization of [z] after a pause, compare BG n’zaon, n’zamm ‘rônier’ (MOB zàŋ̄ bēŋ̄), ouolé, ouoleignn ‘doigt’ (MOB wəlēŋ̄); BG bahoum ‘épaule’ (MOB bàŋ̀); BG beignn ‘menton’ (MOB gbēŋ̄); BG youm ‘visage’ (MOB yōŋ̄); BG lignn, li ‘femme’ (MOB lēŋ̄); n’zoulé ‘grande soeur’ (MOB zūlēŋ̄); BG pégnn // pain ‘mortier’ (MOB pēj̄), BG sarapoum ‘tabatière’, cf. MOB sra kpōj̄ ‘calebasse à tabac’, BG pēlou ‘voler (dans l’air)’ (MOB pēlōŋ̄). Not all of Tauxier’s transcriptions show the diphthongization/heightening of the vowel, so it was likely not regular, cf. the absence of diphthongization in BG lignn’gala ‘pagnre de femme’, MOB lēj̄ galā; BG galanké ‘tisser’, MOB glāŋ̄ çf (?) ‘créer le pagnre’; BG zini ‘maïs’, cf. MOB zrj̄; BG irikôm ‘écorce’, MOB yrí kōj̄; BG irinni ‘racine’, MOB yrí nîŋ̄; BG bēhian ‘chèvre’, MOB bēyàŋ; BG bēha-sia ‘bouc’, MOB bēyàŋ̄ sîá; BG sōmm [son] ‘animal sauvage’, MOB sōj̄; etc.

One consonantal phenomenon present in BG could have been prenasalization of [z] after a pause, compare BG n’zaon, n’zamm ‘rônier’ (MOB zàŋ̄), n’zoulé ‘grande soeur’ (MOB zūlēŋ̄), BG n’ziè ‘funérailles’ (MOB zîë), although Tauxier’s
Grammatical sketch of Beng

transcriptions don’t show it consistently, cf. BG zononzon ‘moustique’, MOB zúzú, zoumounou ‘magnan’, MOB zúnlúŋ, BG zazalé ‘disputer (se)’, MOB zázà.

Few morphological characteristics differentiate the Beng dialect described by Tauxier from MOB. We note in particular that personal pronouns are in some respects more archaic in BG than in MOB. BG maintained at least traces of inclusivity distinction in 1st person plural7, as testified by alternate BG translations kasisi and asisi for the French ‘nous’ (cf. Mwan 1st person plural inclusive pronoun kɔ́, exclusive ó; the final element sisi can be tentatively related to MOB sēsē ‘all’). The 3rd person plural pronoun, which features an innovative initial nasal in MOB (see 9.1 on the spread of plural ŋ in Beng), in BG preserves the original /w/8, compare BG Ouomicisipo? ‘Comment t’appelles-tu?’ and BG ouonion go parana ‘leur chien’ with their MOB counterparts:

(1a) BG Ou o mi si po?
   MOB ŋō mī sī p5?
   3PL: Hab+ 2SG call: L what
   ‘What is your name?’ (literally ‘What do they call you?’)

(1b) BG Ou o nion go [ŋaŋo < ŋaŋ + wo] parana
   MOB ŋō pāŋ ŋō kplăj-nā
   3PL EMPH 3PL flea-ATR
   ‘their dog’ (literally ‘their possessor of fleas’).

BG is also relatively conservative in introducing the numeral formative -N only in sōn [soŋ] ‘five’; see discussion of BK and examples in 3.2.1.

One morphological innovation of BG is the plural marker. The original marker nŋ (MOB nù, see 9.1 for the discussion of number marking in MOB) is only preserved after the final /N/; after a vowel a novel plural marker ŋe is used:

7 MOB, unlike most South Mande languages, uses a uniform 1st person plural pronoun ŋŋ regardless of clusivity. Besides Beng, clusivity distinction has also been lost in Gban (Vydrin 2006) and in the newly recognized South Mande language Goo (Vydrine 2013).

8 Compare 3rd person plural pronouns in three related languages: Mwan wōō, Gouro wò, Gban ɔ́ (with loss of /w/); Vydrin (2006) reconstructs 3PL stem *wo for Proto-South Mande.

9 In MOB like in GB the second (non-subject) pronoun accompanies the noun phrase expressed by the 3rd person plural emphatic pronoun.
Table 1.2. Plural forms of nouns in Beng of Groumania neighborhood

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BG</th>
<th>MOB</th>
<th>French</th>
<th>BG plural form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>pilana</td>
<td>kplá</td>
<td>ná</td>
<td>chien</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>soro</td>
<td>sóś</td>
<td></td>
<td>musulman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>méné</td>
<td>mlē</td>
<td></td>
<td>serpent</td>
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<tr>
<td>méné</td>
<td>mlē</td>
<td></td>
<td>poulet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>irí</td>
<td>yri</td>
<td></td>
<td>arbre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agni</td>
<td>Agni</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baoulé</td>
<td>Baoulé</td>
<td></td>
<td>Baoulenngüe, baoulégné = /baule + ŋe/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soron</td>
<td>sóś</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Stems ending in a vowel

To summarize, this section establishes several features that characterize the Beng dialects documented in the earliest literature in comparison to the well-studied Modern Ouassadougou Beng. The dialect of Kamélinsou has an archaic form of numeral ‘three’, and shares two innovations with MOB, syncope and wider spread of -N in numerals. The dialect of Groumania neighbourhood has several archaic features such as the absence of syncope, moderate use of -N in numerals, and the structure of the pronominal system. Tauxier’s data also allow us to establish some innovations unique to BG, both phonological and grammatical. MOB in turn shows more structural innovations than BG, corresponding to its central geographical position.

4. Beng phonology

4.1. Phonological inventory

Beng has a typical triangular vocalic system of seven oral and five nasal vowels.

Table 2.1. Vocalic phonemes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>oral</th>
<th>nasal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>front</td>
<td>back</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>high</td>
<td>i</td>
<td>u</td>
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<tr>
<td>mid</td>
<td>e</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lower-mid</td>
<td>ε</td>
<td>ò</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

multiply’ – fū ‘to take by surprise’, mīf ‘to drink’ – mē ‘to beat’ – mā ‘to hear’, dā ‘to cough’ – dō ‘to know’ – dū ‘to enter’.


In addition to oral and nasal vowels there is a syllabic nasal ŋ, realized as [ŋ] before a pause, a vowel, or a w. In other cases /ŋ/ undergoes place assimilation to the following consonant (but it is realized as dental [n] before a palatal consonant), compare: [m pū] ‘my field’, [ŋ dā] ‘my pot’, [ŋ jābō] ‘my water tank’, [ŋ kàfē] ‘my coffee’, [ŋm kpā] ‘my locust tree fruit’.

Vowel + ŋ combinations can be considered diphthongoids (combinations of two segments capable of bearing tone into one mora). Other diphthongs of Beng consist of /i/, /i/, /u/ or /u/ followed by a different vowel of matching nasality: /ia/, /ua/, /ia/, /u/, /ie/, /ue/, /ig/, /ug/, /ie/, /ue/, /io/, /uo/, /iu/, /ui/. In diphthongs, /i/ and /u/ tend not to combine with each other: combinations /iu/, /ui/, /ui/ are unattested, /ui/ occurs in one word only. Vowel /ɔ/ is only marginally attested in diphthongs: /iɔ/, /iɔ/, and /uɔ/ are unattested in underived forms, and /uɔ/ is found only in three words: pù ‘soft’ (by assimilation from */pùɛ̌/), Sù ‘female name’ and Tù ‘male name’. Combinations [uɔ] and [uɔ], however, do arise in complex forms as a result of /l/ deletion and accompanying vowel quality assimilation (see 4.2.2): [plù] < /plù lɛ̌/ ‘the stomach’, [ŋu lɔ] < /ŋu lɛ̌lɔ/ ‘coming’ (progressive). Examples of words with diphthongs: blūá ‘to tire’, fā ‘better’, klūà ‘to steal’, gbū ‘smoke’, fōlɛ ‘sacrificial package’, gū ‘friend’, ŋū ‘fetish’, kɔn ‘hunt’, si ‘personality’, sū ‘to uproot’, plōmio ‘pointed’, sū ‘house’, pō ‘soft, mobile’, sū ‘always’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2.2. Consonantal system</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>stops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>frica-tives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nasals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>liquids and glides</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The consonantal system distinguishes five places of articulation: labial, dental, palatal, velar and labiovelar. Labiovelar consonants are produced with double stop articulation, with air blockage created by lips, on the one hand, and tongue and soft palate, on the other hand.

Lateral [l] and vibrant [r] represent the same phoneme. In the speech of most speakers, they are distributed as follows:

- [r] after dental and palatal consonants;
- [l] otherwise.

[l] and [r] are written as $r$ and $l$ in Beng orthography according to the said distribution.

In fast, relaxed pronunciation the allophones [l]/[r] are not in complementary distribution. In fact both the [l] and the [r] variants are attested after any consonant, but only [l] is pronounced in the syllable onset position.

Consonant $h$ is attested only in interjections: $ḥ̣Greg ‘huh?’$, $ḥ̣a ̣Greg ‘oh!’$, $ḥ̣Greg ‘take this!’$, $ḥ̣Greg ‘wow!’$, $ḥọḥG ọḥ ‘ayayay!’$, $ḥụỵ ‘take this!’$. Only the first of those can be part of complex utterances, e.g. $a ̣ḍG ẹ ‘play it (e.g. drum), huh?’$, $ỵ mḷG ạṃ ‘dọ̄ ỵẹ g̣bḷG ạ ‘I saw a huge snake yesterday, huh!’$. Although Paesler (1992) and Murphy (1995) characterize /h/ as a voiceless fricative, it can in fact be pronounced both voiced and voiceless, usually without significant acoustic noise.

4.1.1. Tones. Beng has three tone levels, including low (marked L or with the grave diacritic: ˇ), mid (marked M or with the macron sign: ¯), and high (H or the acute sign: ´).

There are minimal triples distinguished just by tone levels, e.g. $ḅG ụỵ ‘trap’ – $ḅG ỵ ‘rope’ – $ḅG ỵ ‘shouldeR’; $p̣G ẹỵ ‘mortar’– $p̣G ỵ ‘tale’ – $p̣G ỵ ‘debt$. In accordance with their names, realization of the tones is manifested primarily in the pitch of the syllable. Pitch, however, also shows some contextual effects, including those of phrasal position. For instance, vocal cords do not immediately achieve the desirable vibration rate at the onset of an utterance, so level tones can be realized after a pause as raising to the corresponding level. The reverse effect of falling pitch can sometimes be observed before a pause, but is often obfuscated by a glottal stop optionally epenthesized before a pause. Consonantal context also plays a role in tone realization, so that pitch lowers automatically on voiced obstruents. In addition, transitions between tones tend to be smooth. Transitional effects particularly affect the low tone, which is normally realized after a non-low tone as a falling contour from the level of the preceding syllable to the low level:

\[(2a) /kli ḷe/ \Rightarrow [kli ḷe\�]\]

‘the king’
Grammatical sketch of Beng

(2b) /à dè lè/ ⇒ [aلدَ الوا]
   3SG father DEF
   'his father'

   The tendency for the low tone (L, ̀) to be realized in falling pitch is also observed in sequences of several low tone units. In this case all the low (L, ̀) tonemes except the last one are pronounced as low-mid tone, and the last L syllable is produced with pitch falling from the low to the ultra-low level, compare example (3):

(3) /À zrìŋ̀ ɛ̀/ ⇒ [a٧زَرِذُغَء]zrìŋ̀ ɛ̀
   3SG corn this.is
   'This is his corn'.

   A sequence of phonologically low tones after a high or mid tone is realized as very smoothly lowering pitch from the level of the preceding syllable. One could treat this effect as a phonological rule ᴱ ᴷ ᵃ ᴷ v̀ v̀ v̀ ⇒ ᴱ ᴵ ᵃ ᴷ v̀ v̀ v̀ v̀, for example: /gōŋ bîlè/ ⇒ [gōm bîlè] ‘this man’, /ǐ ḡòlù dò cǐ/ ⇒ [ǐ ḡólù dò cǐ] ‘I carved out a walking stick’.

   However, a phonetic sequence of [H H L] (< H L L/) or [M M L] (< M L L/) of this nature does not cause downstep (see below) in the following syllable, so the [H H L] and [M M L] derived by tone spread behave differently from the underlying /H H L/ and /M M L/.

   In addition to level tones, Beng possesses four countour tones: HL (ѵ̂), ML (ѵ̊), LH (ѵ), MH (ѵ̃). The last one is very rare and occurs only in several units, historically bisyllabic but synchronically light (monomoraic), of the form CIV (< *CVLV): blä ‘to settle’, yrä ‘to stay’, zrä ‘to lose’, glë ‘difficult’, zrë ‘road’, blö ‘to drain, to press’, zrò ‘to wash’, bîml̃ ‘immediately’. Besides, a contour tone can appear as a result of vowel contraction, cf. stative pronominal series: 3SG ðó > ð, 2SG mî́ọ́ > mĩ́, ‘this’ ɲā́ > ɲā́.

   The falling tone HL (ѵ̂) is phonetically characterized by pitch lowering from the high level; despite the notation, this lowering usually does not reach the low pitch level phonetically. This is one phonetic feature distinguishing the realization of HL from the realization of L after H, which is also realized with pitch fall:

(4) /kl̃í zò/ ⇒ [kli٧زَوَال]
   king net
   ‘king’s net’

(5) /kl̃í zò/ ⇒ [kli٧ زَوَال]
   king mat
   ‘king’s mat’
We consider contour tones as phonologically decomposable into a sequence of two level tones. This interpretation simplifies the description of both tonal sandhi and morphologically conditioned tonal alternations, see below.

4.1.2. Syllable structure. Beng’s main prosodic unit is the syllable, which sometimes corresponds historically to a disyllabic foot of other South Mande languages as a result of a syncope CVLV>CLV. The maximum syllable structure is /ClU⁷/, where C stands for any consonant except /l/, l is the consonant /l/, U is any high vowel, V – is any non-high vowel, and ⁷ is a syllable-final nasal. Any of those components can be absent, as long as the syllable has one tone bearing element, i.e. at least one vowel, or consists of a syllabic nasal. A syllable usually carries one tonal unit, which the orthography (and the transcription system accepted here) marks on all potentially tone-bearing units. Thus [túà] ‘to stay’ consists of one syllable with a falling tone, and [āŋ] ‘us’ consists of one syllable with a mid tone.

4.1.3. Segmental sandhi. After /ŋ/, the syllable-initial /l/ becomes [n]. The resulting long [nn] can then shorten to [n]. This process is regular word-internally, in suffixes -le and -lî, and optional at word boundaries. Nasalization does not spread to vowels after the [n] resulting from such progressive nasal assimilation, contra the tendency for syllable-internal nasal harmony. Examples: /ŋ lá/ ⇒ [n ná] ‘my medicine’, /ŋŋ-lé/ ⇒ [ŋnè] ‘propping up’, |gëŋ-lè| ⇒ [gënè] ‘beauty’ (the last two examples involve the nominalizing suffix -le), /ŋ lé bèŋ/ ⇒ [n nè bëŋ] ‘I am Beng’.

The glide /w/ is optionally deleted at morpheme boundaries, especially in function words, e.g. /kléŋ wó wē/ ⇒ [kléŋ ó ē] ‘in the forest’ (‘forest IN there’). Dropping /w/ is regular after /ŋ/, less regular after vowels.

After a morpheme boundary, all vowels except high-mid /e/ and /o/ undergo progressive nasal assimilation following /ŋ/ or a nasal vowel, cf. bā ē ‘this is earth’ vs. /bāŋ ē/ ⇒ [bāŋè] ‘this is a cord’, /mlā ē/ ⇒ [mlāè] ‘this is a drum’. The nasal assimilation does not occur in the “nasal consonant+oral vowel” combinations that result from the abovementioned processes of /w/ deletion and /l/ nasalization.

Two adjacent vowels of the same quality optionally fuse into one. The tones of both underlying segments get realized on the resulting short vowel. Examples: dālō ⇒ dāló ‘seeding’ (progressive), wlālō ⇒ wlāló ‘laughing’ (progressive), bāá ⇒ bā ‘snake venom’, pāā ⇒ pā ‘this’, bā ā ⇒ bā ‘the earth’ (with the definite article).

4.1.4. Tonal sandhi. In Beng orthography, as well as in the transcription system accepted here, tone is marked on all segments that have the potential to bear tone, i.e. on all vowels and syllable-final /ŋ/. Phonologically however the tone bearing units are not segments but morae, which contain a short vowel, a diphthong of the form “high vowel+a different short vowel” (ie, ua etc.) or “vowel+ŋ”. Of course, tone is realized phonetically on all the voiced segments of a mora. Tone alternations,
Grammatical sketch of Beng discussed below, show that those segment combinations indeed function as single tone bearing units.

\[ \ddot{v} \Rightarrow \dot{v} | \_ \{\hat{v}; \ddot{v}\} (\neg L) \]

Rising tone (LH) becomes low [l] before the following tonal values: H, M, MH, ML, HL. The contexts can be generalized as “before a non-low”, assuming that low tone (L) constitutes part of the rising contour LH. Examples: dù ‘knife’ \( \Rightarrow [\ddot{d} \ddot{u} \_ L \_ M] \) ‘one knife’; dò wlá wà ‘he will destroy the house’ \( \Rightarrow [\_ \_ \_ L \_ \_ \_ M] \) ‘he has destroyed the house’, mà ñù́ŋ́ ni ò m flū́ə ‘I will get bored of rice’ \( \Rightarrow [\_ \_ \_ L \_ \_ \_ M] \) ‘I have got bored of rice’. The last example shows that the rising tone on a mora with two vocalic segments undergoes the change just like in a mora with one vocalic segment, as is the case in the examples above.

\[ \ddot{v} \Rightarrow \dot{v}, \ddot{v} \Rightarrow \dddot{v} | \_ \{\hat{v}; \dddot{v}\} (L) \]

Falling tones lose the descending part before a low tone element (i.e. before L and LH tones). Thanks to the assumption that contour tones can be decomposed into level units, this rule generalizes four distinct cases (HL and ML before L and LH). Examples: zò ‘mat’ \( \Rightarrow [\_ \_ \_ L \_ \_ \_ M] \) ‘this is a mat’, sì ‘oil palm’ \( \Rightarrow [\_ \_ \_ M \_ \_ \_ L] \) ‘this is an oil palm’.

Beng has downstep. Non-low level tones H and M are realized lower that usual after a falling tonal sequence /\dot{v}/, /\ddot{v}/, /\dddot{v}/, or /\dddot{v}/:

(6) /\ddot{N}-ó \ nū-\dddot{q}ló/ \Rightarrow [\ddot{n}̄ \dddot{nu}_{\ddot{q}}llə\dot{l}] \\
1SG-ST+ come-PROG
‘I am coming’.

As noted already by Paesler (ms.), the cases of downstep triggered by the underlying falling tone of the preceding syllable are phonetically opaque, in the sense that the lowering of pitch on the syllable with underlying falling tone is small, undistinguishable from the phonetically automatic transition to the lower (downstepped) pitch level, e.g. /zò ló/ HL H \( \Rightarrow [z̃ \_ l̄] H' H \) ‘over the mat’.

Sequences of two vowels that are not diphthongs are bimoraic, whether the two vowels have identical (e.g. bàá ‘snake venom’, píí ‘wee’) or different quality (dʒí ‘first’). Tone combinations on them are not subject to sandhi rules for contour tones.

The verb gū́ə ‘to remain’ is bimoraic (even though /ū/ can be a diphthong in other words), so /u/ and /ə/ in it behave as separate tone bearing units. For example, gū́ə does not lose the low tone before another low tone element.

4.2. Morphonology

4.2.1. ñC simplification. Combinations of the phoneme /ŋ/ with the following syllable-initial non-fricative consonant sometimes simplify into a nasal consonant

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Denis Paperno

homorganic with the second underlying consonant. This rule is regular word-
internally with nasals, /l/ and /w/, while with stops and /y/ its application has to be
specified lexically. Examples of the change within a compound: lēnrē ‘bride’ < lējē
‘woman’ + drē ‘new’, bànjū ‘shoulder joint’ < bànj ‘shoulder’ + nyū ‘head’; example
within a reduplicated form: plāmlāj ‘two each’ < /plāj plāj/ (reduplication of plāj
‘two’).

All examples of nC simplification on word boundaries include combinations with
a personal pronoun and could be interpreted as indications of pronoun cliticization –
however, even in this context the rule is still irregular, applying only to some frequent
object pronoun+verb or possessive pronoun+noun combinations. Some examples
include: nā ‘my mother, Mommy’ (form of address) < ŋ1 ‘1SG’ + dā ‘mother’; nē ‘my
father, Daddy’ (form of address) < ŋ1 ‘1SG’ + de ‘father’, ŋmā ‘give me’ < ŋ1 ‘1SG’ +
gbā ‘to give’, cf. combinations that do not undergo any phonological rules: mī gbā
‘give you’, ã gbā ‘give him’; compare also the form ānā ‘let’s go’ < ŋ1 ‘1PL’ and tā
‘to go’ (with a unique but phonologically sensible tonal change from ŋ1 ML tá H to
ānā M LH).

4.2.2. Deletion of /l/. Before /e/, phoneme /l/ optionally drops in two kinds of
morphological contexts:
- In the article lē, including its usage within the contrastive topic marker p̂ lē.
- In the progressive verb form ending in -leló (but not in the deverbal noun in -le!).

The deletion of /l/ is accompanied by the assimilation of the vowel /e/ after the /l/
to the preceding vowel in rounding, labialization, and nasalization. Examples: bā lē
⇒ [mīlō] ‘drinking’ (progressive), pe̱lēló ⇒ [pe̱lō] ‘saying’ (progressive), bālēló
⇒ [bālō] ‘provoking’ (progressive), blūlēló ⇒ [blūslō] ‘getting blurry’
(progressive), būlēló ⇒ [būlō] ‘educating’ (progressive).

4.2.3. High tone in the low tone form of verbs. Beng has a tonal rule that
applies in a specific morphosyntactic context and cannot be reduced to regular tonal
sandhi. This rule applies to the low tone form of verbs that immediately follow a
subject pronoun with a high or rising tone – or, in other words, that end in a high tone
element. In those cases, if the first mora of the verb bears the grammatical low tone, it
changes its tone to high or falling tone:

L ⇒ HL in verbs after a H or LH pronoun and before a suffix.
L ⇒ HL in verbs after a H or LH pronoun and before a pause.
L ⇒ H in verbs after a H or LH pronoun otherwise.

Examples:

(7a) |Ó nù| ⇒ ō nù
3SG:PST+ come:L

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Grammatical sketch of Beng

‘He came’. (before a pause)

(7b) |Wā  nû  ē|  ⇒  /wā nú ē|  ⇒  [wā nú ē]
  3SG:PST-  come:L  NEG
  ‘He didn’t come’. (No pause; regular sandhi L>H in the pronoun)

(7c) |Ó  nú  nɔ|  ⇒  Ó nú nɔ.
  3SG:PST+  come:L  here
  ‘He came here’. (no pause)

(8) |Ó  mɛ̞ lá|  ⇒  /ó mɛ̞ lá/[ɔ̞mɛ̞ lá]  
  3SG:PST+  fall:L
  ‘He fell down’ (where -lá is a verbal suffixoid10).

Note that the L>H, HL change in verbs is not related to regular sandhi. Most similar are examples of the regular rule of high tone spread over low tone sequences, HLL⇒HHL, which can be triggered, among other things, by high tone pronouns followed by low tone nouns and verbs. However, the HLL⇒HHL change is restricted to its structural description; unlike the low tone form of the verb, lexical low tone won’t undergo any change before a non-low tone, cf. (9) vs. (10):

(9) |Ó  mlà  wà|  ⇒  ó mlà wà
  3SG:PST+  drum  break:L
  ‘He broke a drum’.

(10) Ó  mlà  dɔ  wà
  3SG:PST+  drum  one  break:L
  ‘He broke a drum’.

Compare (10) with ó nú nɔ, example (7), where the underlying HLM tone sequence is identical but the L>H change does happen.

5. Personal Pronoun Morphology

The structure of personal pronouns in Beng was thoroughly described in (Paperno 2005). Here we reproduce pronoun paradigms with minimal comments on the usage of pronoun series.

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10 By ‘suffixoid’ I mean here the part of verbal stem that does not change its tone in the low tone form of the verb (see 6.4). Although historically such tonally inert parts of verb stems are indeed suffixes, there are no synchronic reasons to separate them into a separate morpheme.
### Table 3. Paradigms of personal pronouns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Series</th>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
<th>Predicative marker with a singular subject NP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>non-subject</td>
<td>ñ̄ mḭ̄ ā̰ á̰̄ kā̰̄ ŋ̄ò̰̄</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>possessive</td>
<td>m̃̊ mḭ̄̊̊̊ ap̃̊ ap̃̊̊̊ // ap̃̊̊̊ // ā̊ m̃̊̊̊</td>
<td>kā̰̄ ŋ̄ò̰̄</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reflexive</td>
<td>ñ̄ dr̘̊̊ mḭ̄ dr̘̊̊ ā̰ dr̘̊̊ ŋ̄ò̰̄̊̊̊ kā dr̘̊̊ ŋ̄ò dr̘̊̊</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>focus (independent)</td>
<td>mǎ̰̄ m̃̊ ā̰ // ā̰̊̊̊ // ā̰̊̊̊ // kā̰̄̊̊̊ // ŋ̄ò̰̄̊̊̊ // kā̰̄̊̊̊ // ŋ̄ò̰̄̊̊̊ //</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>existential</td>
<td>mǎ̰̄ m̃̊ ŋ̄̊̊̊ kā̰̄ ŋ̄ò̰̄</td>
<td>Ø</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preterite</td>
<td>+ ñ̄, m̃̊̊̊* mḭ̄̊̊̊ ŋ̄̊̊̊, ā̰̄ kā̰̄ ŋ̄ò̰̄</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-3 mǎ̰̄ mḭ̄̊̊̊ wǎ̰̄ ŋ̄̊̊̊ kā̰̄ ŋ̄ò̰̄</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>+3 mǎ̰̄ mḭ̄̊̊̊ ā̰ ŋ̄̊̊̊ kā̰̄ ŋ̄ò̰̄</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conditional</td>
<td>+ ñ̄, m̃̊̊̊* mḭ̄̊̊̊ ŋ̄̊̊̊ kā̰̄ ŋ̄ò̰̄</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>+3 mǎ̰̄ wǎ̰̄ ā̰ ŋ̄ò̰̄</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-3 (= habitual)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>habitual</td>
<td>+ ñ̄, m̃̊̊̊* mḭ̄̊̊̊ ŋ̄̊̊̊ kā̰̄ ŋ̄ò̰̄</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>+3 mǎ̰̄ wǎ̰̄ ā̰ ŋ̄ò̰̄</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stative</td>
<td>+ ŋ̄̊̊ mḭ̄̊̊̊ ŋ̄̊̊̊ ŋ̄̊̊̊ kā̰̄ ŋ̄ò̰̄ ◦ ŋ̄ò̰̄ lighten or ā̰ wā̰̄ ŋ̄ò̰̄ ŋ̄ò̰̄</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>+ ā̰ ŋ̄ò̰̄ kā̰̄ ŋ̄ò̰̄ ŋ̄ò̰̄ wā̰̄</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>+3 ŋ̄̊̊ m̃̊̊̊ wā̰̄ ā̰ ŋ̄ò̰̄ kā̰̄ ŋ̄ò̰̄ ŋ̄ò̰̄</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-3 ŋ̄̊̊ m̃̊̊̊ wǎ̰̄ ā̰ ŋ̄ò̰̄ kā̰̄ ŋ̄ò̰̄ ŋ̄ò̰̄</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes on the table: + marks «affirmative non-contracted forms»; - marks «negative non-contracted forms»; +3 marks «affirmative forms contracted with a 3SG object pronoun»; -3 marks «negative forms contracted with a 3SG object pronoun». More on contraction with a 3SG personal pronoun see below.

The non-subject series has the widest range of usages, including the direct object position, the object of postposition, and the prenominal possessor. The possessive series is used as an adnominal possessor or headlessly and puts additional emphasis on the possessor (‘as for MY …’, ‘it is HIS …’, ‘our thing’). The focus series is used
practically in all contexts where a noun phrase can be used, marking, in contrast to the regular subject or non-subject series, certain contrastive emphasis on the pronominal referent. I also recognize a distinct reflexive series, despite the fact that reflexive pronouns transparently consist of the non-subject pronouns followed by marker $\text{drà}$, which the consultants perceive as a separate word. The reason for such an interpretation is that $\text{drà}$ shows no morphosyntactic autonomy. It cannot change its position, be separated from its pronominal element, or attach to anything other than personal pronouns. Reflexive pronouns of Beng are exact functional counterparts of reflexive pronouns in European languages.

The remaining series are used in the subject position, distributed according to tense, aspect, modality, and polarity values (see Chapter 12 and especially section 12.1.3). Besides this, pronouns of the existential series have a special usage as the first conjunct in a coordinate NP with $A nà B lō$ marking.

5.1. On the allomorphy of the 1SG subject pronoun

The table above contains 1st person singular forms marked with an asterisk (*). These special 1SG forms have the stem $\text{mā}$ (instead of $ŋ$), and are used whenever the subject pronoun is followed by another personal pronoun (of non-subject or reflexive series) of 1SG, 2SG, 3SG, or 3PL:

(11) $Mā \ ŋ̄ d r̄̄ yè$.  
1SG:PST+ 1SG RFL see:L  
‘I saw myself’.

(12) $Mā \ mī yè$.  
1SG:PST+ 2SG see:L  
‘I saw you’.

(13) $Mā \ à yè$.  
1SG:PST+ 3SG see:L  
‘I saw him’.

(14) $ŋ̄ yè$.  
1SG:PST+ 1PL see:L  
‘I saw us’.

(15) $ŋ kā yè$.  
1SG:PST+ 2PL see:L  
‘I saw you (plural)’.

(16) $ŋò yè$.  
1SG:PST+ 3PL see:L  
‘I saw them’.
In those kinds of contexts the regular form with the stem $\eta$ is also marginally possible ($\eta \, \eta\text{-}d\text{-}r\text{à} \, \text{yè}$ etc.); acceptability judgments vary.

Note that the pronoun that triggers the selection of the 1SG stem $m_{\eta}$ is not always a direct object. It can also be in the possessor position of a direct object:

(17) \textit{Mâ} \, \eta \, \text{wlà} \, lè \, wà
\hspace{1cm} \text{1SG:PST+ 1SG house DEF break:L}
\hspace{1cm} ‘I broke my house’.

The distribution of $\eta$ vs. $m_{\eta}$ can be considered to be a manifestation of the contrastive strategy for coding core participants (along with the doubtlessly dominant accusative strategy of Beng), see (Vydrin 2006). However, there are more serious reasons for such an analysis in the case of Guro than in the case of Beng, because in Beng the choice of the 1SG form is fully determined by the morphological context and can be described as allomorphy\textsuperscript{11}.

5.2. Contraction with 3SG object pronoun

The 3SG object pronoun can contract with the preceding subject pronouns forming portemanteaus, e.g.:

(18) \textit{Mâ} \, \eta \, pê! \ (< \, m\dot{a} \, à \, pê)
\hspace{1cm} \text{1SG:HAB+3 say 1SG:HAB+ 3SG say}
\hspace{1cm} ‘Let me say it!’

(19) \textit{Mî} \, \eta \, pê! \ (< \, m\dot{i} \, à \, pê)
\hspace{1cm} \text{2SG:HAB+3 say 2SG:HAB+ 3SG say}
\hspace{1cm} ‘Let you say it!’

(20) \textit{ŋ-â} \, pê. \ (< \, \eta\text{-}ô \, à \, pê)
\hspace{1cm} \text{1SG-ST+3 say 1SG-ST+ 3SG say}
\hspace{1cm} ‘I will say it’.

The portemanteau forms are not obligatory. Non-contracted alternatives are also acceptable, although infrequent.

Since contracted forms are not fully transparent, Table 3 lists them as distinct pronoun series (PST+3, PST-3, HAB+3 etc., where «3» stands for «contracted with a 3SG pronoun»).

\textsuperscript{11} The «ergative» pronouns in Guro are triggered not just by morphological but also by semantic factors, including the referential status of the direct object, an independently known ergativity/accusativity factor. See (Vydrin 2006) for more detail.
5.3. Subject series of pronouns

Information on the usage of subject pronoun series depending on clause type, tense, aspect, modality, and polarity (TAMP), is for reasons of brevity given in Tables 4 and 5 below. For sentential examples for each clause type, as well as for the full TAMP paradigm of a sentence, see Chapter 12.

### Table 4. Subject pronoun usage in verbal sentences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>construction</th>
<th>polarity:</th>
<th>affirmative</th>
<th>negative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>preterite</td>
<td>PST+</td>
<td>PST-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>perfect</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>imperative/optative</td>
<td>HAB+</td>
<td>HAB- = CND-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>habitual</td>
<td>CND+</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>future, progressive,</td>
<td>ST+</td>
<td>ST-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stative</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 5. Subject Pronouns in Non-Verbal Clauses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>clause type</th>
<th>polarity:</th>
<th>affirmative</th>
<th>negative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>adverbial</td>
<td>ST+</td>
<td>ST-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adjectival</td>
<td>HAB+ or ST+</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>existential</td>
<td>Ex+</td>
<td>Ex-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.4. Stative pronouns with verbs tā, nū

Beng exhibits relics of an affirmative stative predicative marker alternative to ó. It is used instead of ó with just two verbs. Before the verb nū ‘to come’, the stative marker can have the form yé, as in mī yénú ‘you (singular) will come’, mī yénúɔ̀ló ‘you (singular) are coming’, etc. The verb nū ‘to come’ is also compatible with the

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12 Sentences with predicative adjectives show both stative and habitual subject pronouns. The choice of the pronoun series depends on the adjective in question. Some adjectives require the stative series, others require the habitual series, several (e.g. jàlí ‘stupid’) show variation. The choice of series might be related to the semantic distinction of temporary vs. permanent property denoted by the adjective; one could identify this distinction with the individual vs. stage-level classification of predicates by (Carlson 1977). This hypothesis has not been thoroughly tested but some examples are suggestive (individual-level gēj ‘beautiful’ requires a habitual pronoun, stage-level fɔ̀ŋ̀vɔ̀ ‘shaded’, gblu ‘cloudy’, a stative one). If the distinction were driven by a semantic contrast of this kind, this could motivate the neutralization of the distinction under negation – indeed, when absence of a property is asserted, the temporary vs. permanent status of the absent property is irrelevant.
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regular stative marker ó, as in mǐō nǔ, mǐō nǔɔ̊ló. The verb tá ‘to go’ fuses with the preceding stative marker into yrá (<*yɛ́ tá instead of *ó tá). Compare: mǐ yrá ‘you (singular) will go’, mǐ yráló ‘you (singular) are going’. Before the verbs tá ‘to go’ and nǔ ‘to come’, the final ȓ of first person pronouns fuses with the initial /y/ of the stative marker: ȶrá (< ŋ̄ yrá) ‘I will go’, ǹẹ̊nũ (< ŋ̄ yẹ̊nũ) ‘we will come’.

6. Morphology of content words

Much of Beng’s inflexional and derivational morphology is suffixal. Beng suffixes include the inflexional -nã̊ (affirmative perfect), -lɛ̀ (stative), -leló (progressive), -sà (negative perfect), and the derivational -le (nominalization), -ya (location nominalization), -pɔ (means nominalization), -yà (goal converb), -lí (agent nominalization), -lɛ̀ (participle), -dɛ̃g̣ (profession suffix), -lɛ́ (suffix that forms temporal adverbs from nouns that refer to parts of day cycle, e.g. drúlɛ̀ ‘in the morning’ from drú ‘morning’).

Beng also has elements that could be labeled as ‘verbal prefixes’, which precede the verb stem and form a semantic unit with it, e.g. wó ‘in’ within wólã ‘to ask about,’ literally ‘to ask in,’ yɛ́ ‘mouth’ on yɛ̀bũ ‘to feed,’ literally ‘to carry mouth’. Such ‘prefixes’ do not change their tone in the low tone form. However, structurally such elements are not true prefixes but (part of) a direct object of the verb since they can be separated from the verb stem under passivization. The semantic object of predicates like wólã ‘to ask about’ can therefore be seen structurally as the possessor of the dummy noun rather than a full direct object.

The morphemes discussed here as suffixes are defined on distributional basis, with the main criterion being separability: unlike free standing morphemes from closed classes, e.g. personal pronouns, determiners, postpositions, etc., suffixes cannot be separated from the heads they combine with. For instance the negation marker follows the main verb of a sentence but can be separated from it by adverbs, indirect objects, etc.; on the other hand, verbal suffixes of positive or negative perfect, stative, or nominalization suffixes, always attach at the end of the verb stem and cannot be separated from it by any material. Similarly, while determiners and postpositions can be separated from the noun they combine with by adjectives, suffixes -dɛ̃g̣ and -lɛ́ always attach to the noun stem and don’t allow for interveners.

I also discuss below one element, nã̊, that fails to show unseparability from the head it combines with, but has tonal behavior typical for suffixes. So nã̊ cannot be characterized as a suffix but rather as a phrasal suffix, since it combines with phrases rather than stems; see examples below.
6.1. Tonal changes in suffixation

6.1.1. Mobile tone suffixes. Some suffixes bear a high or a low tone depending on context. Those suffixes, which I call mobile tone suffixes, have a high tone after H, LH, MH, i.e. after a high tone element, and a low tone otherwise.

Another unit that exhibits the same tonal behavior is the attributive marker \( n\ddot{a} \). This phrasal suffix attaches to noun phrases (which can consist of a single noun), forming adjective phrases with the meaning ‘having X’, ‘characterized by X’, for example: \( j\ddot{r}\ddot{\acute{a}} \) ‘poverty’ – \( j\ddot{r}\ddot{\acute{a}} \ddot{n}\ddot{\ddot{a}} \) ‘poor’, \( bl\ddot{\dot{u}} \) ‘sorcery’ – \( bl\ddot{\dot{u}} \ddot{n}\ddot{\ddot{a}} \) ‘sorcerer’, \( l\ddot{\acute{e}}\ddot{\acute{y}} \ddot{p}\ddot{\acute{\ddot{a}}n\ddot{\ddot{a}}} \) ‘two children’ – \( l\ddot{\acute{e}}\ddot{\acute{y}} \ddot{p}\ddot{\acute{\ddot{a}}n\ddot{\ddot{a}}} \) ‘having two children’. These constituents exhibit the behavior of adjective phrases: they typically modify a noun (although, as with other adjectives one also finds them substantivized), and when modifying a noun they are always postposed rather than preposed; as discussed in 7.2, fixed position with respect to the modified noun is a feature distinguishing nouns from adjectives in Beng. When attaching to placenames, the attributive marker \( n\ddot{a} \) produces the meaning ‘resident of’, e.g., \( \ddot{A}s\ddot{\acute{a}}gb\ddot{e} \) ‘Ouassadougou’ – \( \ddot{A}s\ddot{\acute{a}}gb\ddot{e} \ddot{n}\ddot{\ddot{a}} \) ‘resident of Ouassadougou’, \( b\ddot{\ddot{a}} \ddot{w}\ddot{\ddot{o}} \) ‘savanna’ – \( b\ddot{\ddot{a}} \ddot{w}\ddot{\ddot{o}} \ddot{n}\ddot{\ddot{a}} \) ‘savanna dweller’. The attributivizer can also attach to full noun phrases with determiners:

(21) \( \ddot{l}\ddot{j} \) (\( gb\ddot{\ddot{e}} \) \( b\ddot{\ddot{e}} \ddot{b}\ddot{i\ddot{l}}\ddot{e} \) \( n\ddot{\ddot{a}} \) \( d\ddot{\ddot{o}} \) \( y\ddot{\ddot{e}} \) \( g\ddot{b}\ddot{l}\ddot{\ddot{e}} \).

1SG :PST+ village big this ATR one see:L yesterday ‘I saw one resident of this big village yesterday’.

6.1.2. Low tone suffixes. One syllable suffixes with a low tone undergo a shift of a H tone element of a preceding contour tone, so that LH.L>L.HL and MH.L>M.HL. Examples: \{\( d\ddot{r}\ddot{\ddot{u}} \) (LH) + \( s\ddot{\dot{a}} \) [I]\} \( \Rightarrow /d\ddot{r}\ddot{\ddot{u}} \) [I] \( s\ddot{\dot{a}} \) (HL)/ (negative perfect form of the verb ‘to walk’), \{\( z\ddot{r}\ddot{\ddot{a}} \) (MH) + \( \ddot{y}\ddot{\ddot{a}} \) [I]\} \( \Rightarrow /z\ddot{\ddot{r}}\ddot{\ddot{a}} \) (M) \( \ddot{y}\ddot{\ddot{a}} \) (HL)/ (goal converb of the verb ‘to lose’). In verbal reduplication, the right reduplicant also shows tonal behavior of a low tone suffix, cf. the reduplicated form of the same verb ‘to walk’ \{\( d\ddot{r}\ddot{\ddot{u}} \) (LH) + \( d\ddot{r}\ddot{\ddot{u}} \) [I]\} \( \Rightarrow /d\ddot{r}\ddot{\ddot{u}} \) [I] \( d\ddot{r}\ddot{\ddot{u}} \) (HL)/ ‘to walk back and forth’.

6.1.3. Other suffixes. Suffixes with lexical high (-\( \ddot{l}\ddot{\ddot{i}} \), agent nominalization) or mid tone (-\( n\ddot{\ddot{a}} \), perfect), show no tone alternations.

6.1.4. Stems ending in L tone. The final L tone element of a verb stem is deleted before the attachment of suffixes. If the L is part of a contour tone, L simplifies, and the contour tone becomes level, e.g. \( t\ddot{\ddot{u}}\ddot{\ddot{a}} \) ‘to leave’ – \( t\ddot{\ddot{u}}\ddot{\ddot{a}}\ddot{l}\ddot{\ddot{e}} \) (nominalization). If the low tone characterizes a whole syllable, the tone of the preceding syllable spreads to replace L. The latter situation is typical for reduplicated verbs, cf. examples of nominalization of such verbs: \( w\ddot{l}\ddot{\ddot{a}}\ddot{l}\ddot{\ddot{a}}\ddot{l} \) ‘to smile’ – \( w\ddot{l}\ddot{\ddot{a}}\ddot{l}\ddot{\ddot{a}}\ddot{l}\ddot{\ddot{e}} \), \( m\ddot{\ddot{m}}\ddot{\ddot{m}} \) ‘to suck’ – \( m\ddot{\ddot{m}}\ddot{\ddot{m}}\ddot{l}\ddot{\ddot{e}} \).
6.1.5. The verb *blö* ‘to press out’. The verb *blö* ‘to press out’ changes its lexical tone from MH to H when combining with suffixes, cf. the progressive form *blósló* instead of the regular *blósló,* nominalization *blólé* instead of the regular *blólé* etc.

6.2. Nominalization in -lɛ

The suffix –lɛ forms action (or event) nominalization of verbs:

(22) [Dr̃̄ wò-lɛ] d̃̄ gēŋ.
      work  do-NMLZ  3SG:HAB+ good
      ‘To work is good’.

(23) À gbě tá-lɛ zá fũ̄ aŋ̄ wó.
      3SG village leave-NMLZ matter suprise:L 1PL in
      ‘His departure from the village took us by surprise’.

      Kofi St+ trap set-NMLZ show-PROG Kouadio BENEF
      ‘Kofi teaches Kouadio to set traps’.

(25) Bè-lɛ kā ō mī mà?
      run-NMLZ need St+ 2SG CONT
      ‘Do you want to run?’

The suffix -lɛ nominalizes various predicates. It can attach to verbs (*ŋũ* ‘to come’ – *ŋûlè* ‘(the) coming’), adjectives (*gēŋ* ‘beautiful’ – *gẽnė* ‘beauty’), and a few nouns (*lũ* ‘slave’ – *lðlɛ* ‘slavery’).

In some usages, verbal stems with the suffix -lɛ function like participles, relativizing the semantic object:

(26) gũ̃ wî-lɛ
      foot swell-NMLZ
      ‘swollen foot’ (can also be interpreted as ‘swelling of feet’)

(27) 1ŋ-ô zriŋ kásìé-lɛ lũ.
      1SG-ST corn roast-NMLZ buy
      ‘I’ll buy roasted corn’.

(28) 1ŋ-ô ū gũ yrû-lɛ bûẽnló.
      1SG-ST+ 1SG foot wrench-NMLZ steam.PROG
      ‘I am steaming my wrenched foot’.

Interestingly, there are examples where the definite article *lɛ* and the demonstrative element *bì,* which normally follow all adjectives in a noun phrase,
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precede the “participial” nominalization in -lɛ, and the semantic head can even be doubled by an object pronoun, as is regular for direct objects:

(29) Ń-ó [zrįŋ bî-lɛ̀]ₜₐ kásiɛ́-lɛ̀ₜₐ lú.
   1SG-ST+ corn this-DEF 3SG roast-NMLZ buy
   ‘I will buy this roasted corn’.

The determiners can also follow the “participial” deverbal noun:

   1SG-ST+ corn roast-NMLZ this-DEF 3SG buy
   ‘I will buy this roasted corn’.

Native speakers report a subtle contrast between (29) and (30), whereby (29) can be interpreted as ‘I will buy this corn roasted’. The exact syntactic structure of (29) is not entirely clear. We might be dealing with some kind of partitive or possessive construction (‘the roast of this corn’), as indicated by the tentative syntactic bracketing in (29). On the other hand, the translation of (29) suggests that kásiɛ́lɛ̀ might be a secondary predicate, although the preverbal position of kásiɛ́lɛ̀ contrasts with all well-established instances of secondary predicates in Beng (see 12.2.4), which follow the main verb of the sentence rather than precede it as does kásiɛ́lɛ̀ in (29). I leave the question of whether the preverbal position of secondary predicates, as attested in cognate languages, is also available in Beng, for further study. Whatever the exact syntactic structure of (29), it is clear that the semantic contrast is based on the relative syntactic scope of the determiner and the “participle”: in one case, one talks about the (this corn) roasted, while in the other case we hear about this (roasted corn), reflecting the ordering of the two attributes of corn.

6.3. Locative nominalization in –ya

The mobile tone suffix –ya combines with verbs, adjectives, all locative nouns including locative postpositions, and a few nouns denoting social relations. From the distributional viewpoint derivatives in -ya are locative nouns, i.e. nouns that can be used in adverbial positions without a postposition:

(31) Ńŋ nú pɔ bî-yà.
   1SG:PST+ come:L thing eat-PLC
   ‘I came to the eating place’.

When derived from a verb, the –ya form refers to the place or time of an event. There’s a systematic ambiguity between the temporal and the spacial readings, although context often helps to differentiate the two:
(32) ḅó zrō-yā dō-ōlō.
    1SG-ST+ wash-PLC build-PROG
    ‘I build a bathing place’.

(33) Mā zrō-yā yè è.
    1SG:PST- wash-PLC have:L NEG
    ‘I had no time (or no place) to wash’.

A derived form in –ya referring to the time of an action and used in an adverbial position indicates simultaneity of two events:

(34) ḅō trī-yā nā ṣō-ō dā ī lō nə.
    3PL return-PLC TOP 3PL-ST find 1SG on here
    ‘On the way back (literally ‘returning’) they will find me here’.

When the derived form in -ya is used in this function of a simultaneity converb, and the subject of action referred to in the ya-form is not overtly mentioned in a pronoun or a full NP, the said subject has to be coreferential with the subject of the main clause, cf.:

(35) ō/*j Drē wō-yā nā māj, ṣōj yè.
    work do-PLC TOP 1SG:PST+ 3PL see:L
    ‘I saw them when I (*they) worked’.

In case the subject of the ya-converb is overt, it does not have to be coreferential with the main clause subject, cf. (35) and (36):

(36) ḅōj drē wō-yā nā māj, ṣōj yè.
    3PL work do-PLC TOP 1SG:PST+ 3PL see:L
    ‘I saw them when they worked’.

The form in –ya derived from adjectives refers to the place in which the property denoted by the adjective is localized, e.g.:

(37) Bānē yā nā ā gēp-yā pē
    Bane EMPH TOP 3SG beautiful-PLC FOC
    ō lē ā lōkēlē lè è
    3SG:PST+ COP:L 3SG neck DEF FOC
    ‘Bane’s neck makes him beautiful’ (literally: As for Bane, it is the place of his beauty, his neck).

With locative nouns, –ya has the meaning of ‘extended localization’ and is an exact semantic equivalent of the suffix -da/-dar- in Bezhta (Daghestanian; Kibrik, Testelec 2004) which is added to suffixes of localization like ‘in’, ‘on top of’, etc.,
and means ‘in (the direction of) the area of whatever is specified by localization proper’, compare märāLʾā ‘on top of the mountain’ vs. mārāLʾādā: ‘(somewhere) in the area on top of the mountain’ (Kibrik 2003: 44). Compare:

(38a) Kósā tá-nā  wlá.
     Kosan 3SG:PST+::go-PRF house
     ‘Kosan has gone home’.

(38b) Kósā tá-nā  wlá-yá.
     Kosan 3SG:PST+::go-PRF house-PLC
     ‘Kosan has gone towards home’.

(39a) Kósā tá-nā  zič ĺū.
     Kosan 3SG:PST+::go-PRF kapok under
     ‘Kosan has gone under the kapok tree’.

(39b) Kósā tá-nā  zič  lū-yā.
     Kosan 3SG:PST+::go-PRF kapok under-PLC
     ‘Kosan has gone towards the area under the kapok tree’.

(40a) Ö jé  wlá  wē.
     3SG:PST+ pass house there
     ‘He passed through the house’.

(40b) Ö jé  wlá-yá  wē.
     3SG:PST+ pass house-PLC there
     ‘He passed by the house’.

Finally, –ya derived forms from some nouns denoting social relations adverbs with the meaning ‘according to the social relation X’:

(41) Ñó  nó  gbà  blè  lè  sī-ya.
     3PL:PST+ 3PL give:L  wine  DEF  in.law-PLC
     ‘They gave them wine according to in-lawhood’ (e.g. everyone gave wine to his mother-in-law).

(42) Dāŋ ni  yrámā  ná  nó  léy  nūŋ  bō  sōlāsí  lā-yā.
     war  DEF  time  TOP 3PL:HAB+  child  PL  extract  soldier  slave-PLC
     ‘During war, one selected children for military service by slave status’ (in other words: One chose slave kids to become soldiers).
6.4. Predicative forms of verbs

Beng uses six different verb forms in the predicate position, distinguished on the basis of tense, aspect, modality, and polarity. For more information on their usage, see 12.1.

Two of the predicative forms do not bear affixes and are distinguished by tone. In one of those affix-free forms, the tone is lexically specified. I call this form the base form. The other form bears a low grammatical tone; I call it the low tone form. Here are some examples of the two affix-less forms of several verbs: mī, mī ‘to drink’; tā, tā ‘to go’; dā, dā ‘to drop’; zrō, zrō ‘to wash’; jātē, jātē ‘to respect’. Several verb stems keep a high tone on the last syllable constant in the low tone form, compare yālō, yālō ‘to stand up’, mēlā, mēlā ‘to fall on the ground’. Paesler (1989) calls such syllables ‘suffixes’, although it might be more precise to characterize them as ‘suffixoids’ as there aren’t sufficient reasons to consider them distinct morphemes from the synchronical viewpoint: they are not productive and it is hard to to differentiate their exact semantic contribution. All verbs with suffixoids share the semantics of movement; compare the status of an etymologically identical element in Tura (Idiatov 2009).

Four predicative forms bear suffixes, and can be given more functional labels: stative; affirmative perfect; negative perfect; and progressive.

The stative suffix –lè and the negative perfect suffix –sà are low tone suffixes. The suffix of affirmative perfect nā (or sometimes ā) bears a constant mid tone. The suffix nā also differs from all other suffixes in that the stem-final low tone of the verb is not elided before it, contra the general rule (cf. 6.1.4): mīmī ‘to suck’ – mīmī nā, drūdrū ‘to walk a lot’ – drūdrū nā, tūā ‘to leave’ – tūā nā. An idiosyncratic exception is the verb gūā ‘to remain’, perfect form gūā nā).

The progressive marker –lelō consists of two elements: –lō, grammaticalized from the postposition ‘on’, and –le, derived from the nominalization marker, which bears a mobile tone and has surface variants -lée and -ée (the latter can be seen as the result of [l] deletion). The vowel in the -ée variant normally assimilates to the immediately preceding vowel in nasality and quality. It becomes a after a and o after rounded vowels, and remains e after front vowels.

Along with mobile tone, the progressive form is also attested with low tone on the -lée / -ée component. So along with the more frequent progressive form táalō, the verb tā ‘to go’ has a rare form tāalō, the progressive drūslō of drū ‘to walk’ has a rare variant drūsλo, etc.

Verbs with a low tone on the last syllable and a mid tone on the penultimate syllable (mostly reduplicated verbs), have a special tonal behavior in the progressive. Unlike in other suffixixed forms, the final low tone of those verbs is not deleted, cf. the
progressive *mǐṃjēlō* of *mǐṃ* ‘to suck’ vs. L deletion in the nomilization *mǐṃjēlè*, location nominalization *mǐṃjēyà* etc.

The progressive marker is clearly segmentable into the nominalization suffix -*le* and the locative postposition ìó. However, the [l] deletion and the abovementioned tonal idiosyncrasies (the *mǐṃjēlō* and *drūjō* types) formally distinguish the progressive from nominalization.

### 6.5. The goal converb

The goal of motion converb is derived with the low tone suffix -*yà*, distinct from the location nominalization suffix –*ya* that bears a mobile tone. For the verbal stems ending in a non-high tone element the two forms are identical. E.g. *mīyà*, the location nominalization, is at the same time the goal converb of *mī* ‘to drink’. For stems ending in a high tone, the two forms differ, cf. *jōyá* ‘time or place of talking’ (locative nominalization) vs. *jōyà* ‘in order to talk’ (goal converb) from *jō* ‘to talk’.

The goal converb’s distribution is limited to combinations with only three motion verbs. With the verbs *tá* ‘to go’ and *nū* ‘to come’ the converb indicates the goal of motion. The combination of these two verbs with the goal converb can also be used as a periphrastic future construction similar to the English *to be going to*, see 12.1.5.

With the verb *bɔ* ‘to come (from)’ the goal converb indicates the subject’s actions at the point of departure:

(43a) ̀Ng̃̄nũ̀drùyà.
1SG:PST+ come:L walk-GL

‘I came for a walk’.

(43b) (*̀Ng̃̄dr̃̄wòdrùyà.*)
1SG:PST+ work do:L walk-GL

(*I worked to walk.)

(44) ̀Ng̃̄bɔ̀drùyà.
1SG:PST+ come.form:L walk-GL

‘I came from a walk’.

### 6.6. Agent and means nominalizations

In addition to the event nominalization in -*le* and the location/time nominalization in –*ya*, which we have already discussed, Beng also has suffixes for the agent and the means nominalizations.

The means nominalization, formed with the mobile tone suffix –*pɔ* (derived from the noun *pɔ*‘thing’), can refer to the instrument, the means, or the cause of an event:
(45) Bèyā à lē̄ā tuá-pɔ̄ lè bɬ̄è lè.
Beyan 3SG woman leave-MEN 3SG:PST+COP:L wine DEF

‘Alcohol was the reason of Beyan’s divorce’.

(46) Ź yā-pɔ̄ dɔ̄ lù.
1SG:PST move-MEN one buy:L

‘I bought an instrument for moving around’ (this could be shoes, a car, a bicycle etc.).

The agent nominalization in -lí relativizes the subject and can have arbitrary aspectual or temporal interpretation:

(47) Ź pɔ̄ bɬ̄è-lí lè yè.
1SG:PST+ thing eat-AG DEF see:L

‘I saw the eater’ (the one who eats / was eating / will eat etc.).

But usually, the agent nominalization refers to the habitual rather than episodic agent:

(48) pɔ̄ bɛ́ bɬ̄è-lí, drɛ̄ wɔ̄-lí, sɔ̄ŋ̄ dɛ́-lí, jɔ́-lí
thing big eat-AG work do-AG human kill-AG talk-AG
‘glutton, worker, murderer, talker’

(49) Délà ó lè vɔ̄lɔ̄ vlɔ̄-lí bɛ́ dɔ̄.
Dela 3SG:PST+ COP:L worry-AG big one

‘Dela (male name) is easy to disturb’. (literally: ‘Dela is a great worryer’.)

6.7. Relics of the participle

The suffix -lè forms adjectives with resulting state meanings from several verbs. The verb’s stem changes its tone from M to L when combining with -lè. Here are all the attested examples:

\begin{itemize}
  \item gə́ ‘to die, to dry out’ – gàlè ‘dead, dry’
  \item mə́ ‘to boil’ – màlè ‘boiled’
  \item mə́mə́ ‘to ripen’ – mə́mə́lè ‘ripe’
  \item nə́nə́ ‘to burn’ – nə́lè ‘burned’
  \item pə́ ‘to fill’ – pə́lè ‘filled’
  \item tə́ ‘to close’ – tàlè ‘closed’
  \item trə́ ‘to redden, to ripen’ – trə́lè ‘red, ripe’
  \item vɔ́ ‘to rot’ – vɔ́lè ‘rotten’
\end{itemize}

Suffix -lè combined with the verb bə́ ‘to bear fruit’ produces a somewhat irregular meaning: bə́lè, pɔ́bə́lè ‘seeds, plants’
6.8. Reduplication

6.8.1. The formal aspect of reduplication. In Beng, reduplication is generally full, applying to stems of adjectives, verbs, numerals, and some adverbs and nouns. The major exception to the full reduplication pattern is the fact that in verb reduplication, only the segmental base is repeated. The tonal pattern of the original stem stays on the first part of the reduplicated verb, while the second part gets a low tone: mį́ ‘to drink’ – mũmĩ́ ‘to suck’, gā́ ‘to dry out’ – gāgā́ ‘to dry out (referring to multiple objects)’, só́ ‘to chew’ – sòsò ‘to thin down’, yāló ‘to stand up’ – yālóyālò ‘to stand up (referring to multiple people)’. If the last syllable of the original verb stem has a contour tone, the latter component of the contour tone spreads to the following syllable, by general rule (see 6.1.2): fā́ ‘to strip’ → fāfāá → fāfā́ ‘to strip repeatedly’, dā́ ‘to drop’ → dādā́ → dādā́ ‘to put in (multiple objects)’, blā́ ‘to stick in’ → blāblā́ → blāblā́ ‘to stick in (multiple objects)’. Reduplicated verb stems form all predicative and derivational verb forms by general rules.

Adjective reduplication is usually complete with respect to both segmental and tonal patterns, compare: gēn̄ ‘beautiful’ – gēngēn̄ ‘beautiful (plural)’, cā́ ‘short’ – cācā́ (plural), blūā ‘blue’ – blūāblūā́ (plural). However, long vowels at the end of adjectives can shorten in reduplicated forms. The conditions of this shortening are not clear. Sometimes reduplicated adjectives do not exhibit any shortening, cf. fēfēfḗ ‘very narrow’ (in reference to a hole) from fḗ ‘narrow’ (in reference to a hole), pūpūú ‘very tiny’ from pū ‘tiny’, fōófōó ‘very deep’ from fōó ‘deep’, pōrōpṑpṑ ‘very malleable’ from pṓrṓ ‘malleable’. Sometimes shortening occurs only in the first part of the reduplicated form, cf. tētḗ ‘very red’ from tḗ ‘red’, fīffī́ ‘very narrow’ from fīffī́ ‘narrow’, kōttīkōttī́ ‘very little’ from kōttī́ ‘little’, tīttī́ ‘very black’ from tī́ ‘black’, yōyṓ ‘very cool’ from yṓ ‘cool’. The third group of adjectives shorten the final vowel in both parts of the reduplicated form: bētēbētē ‘very slow’ from bētḗ ‘slow’, kpōsōkpṑsō ‘very grainy’ from kpōsṓ ‘grainy (texture)’, mōtōmōtō ‘very soft’ from mṓtṓ ‘soft’, nōkōnṑkṓ ‘very elastic’ from nōkṓ ‘elastic’. For pū́ ‘white’, two reduplicated forms are attested in my notes, pūpū́́ in the sense of ‘very white’ and pūpū́ in the sense of ‘white (plural)’. It is not clear if there is a regular relation between the shortening pattern and the intensive vs. plural interpretation that this pair of examples seems to point at.

Stem-final /ŋ/ can cause a change in the first consonant of the second half of a reduplicated form. Some of those forms exhibit ŋC simplification (see 4.2.1), e.g. plāmlā́ŋ ‘two each’ < /plāŋ plāŋ/ (reduplication of plāŋ ‘two’), būāmūāŋ ‘thirty each’ < /būāŋ būāŋ/ (reduplication of būāŋ ‘thirty’); such simplification is not regular, cf. būkēn̄sēi̊n̄būkēn̄sēi̊ (‘eighty each’ (reduplication of būkēn̄sēi̊ ‘eighty’) without simplification. Fricatives are not subject to ŋC simplification but undergo voicing
after /ŋ/ in a reduplicated form, e.g. /fɔ́ŋfɔ́ŋ/ ‘cloudy’ < /fɔ́ŋ/ ‘having shade’; /sɔ́ŋsɔ́ŋ/ ‘five each’ < /sɔ́ŋ/ sɔ́ŋ/ (reduplication of sɔ́ŋ ‘five’).

Two adjectives, glé ‘difficult’ and bée ‘big’, are exceptions to full reduplication at the tone level. Their reduplicated forms are gléglé and béebée respectively.

6.8.2. Semantics of reduplication. The semantic effect of reduplication is similar across parts of speech, always adding a quantitative component to the meaning. In adjectives, reduplication may indicate plurality (‘more than one object’), cf. (50a) and (51), or property intensity (52b):

(50a) sɔ́ŋ gë̄n̄gë̄ (nùŋ)
  person beautiful~Pl  PL
  ‘handsome people’

(50b) sɔ́ŋ gë̄n̄ nùŋ
  person beautiful  Pl
  ‘handsome people’

(51) sɔ́ŋ gbë̄n̄gbë̄n̄ // gbë̄n̄ nùŋ
  person tall~Pl  tall  PL
  ‘tall people’

(52a) gɔ̄gë̄n̄dɔ́i
  man  first
  ‘the first man’

(52b) gɔ̄dɔ́i~dɔ́i
  man  first~very
  ‘the very first man’

For some adjectives, the reduplicated form is used only in the function of plural, cf. the ungrammatical NP *sɔ́ŋ gbë̄n̄gbë̄n̄ dɔ́ ‘one (very) tall person’.

The adjective bée ‘big’ is unique in restricting the non-reduplicated form to the singular and allowing only the reduplicated one in the plural (kló ‘little’ shows a similar number distinction but produces the plural form by suppletion, not reduplication). Unlike gbë̄n̄, which shows variation in the plural, bée has complementary distribution of the two forms:

(53a) gɔ̄bée (/ *bée~bée) dɔ́
  man  big/*big~Pl  one
  ‘one big man’
Apart from irregular idiomatic meaning, verb reduplication can add iterativity, as in (54b), or plurality of a participant, as in (55b,d):

(54a) Iŋ-ó drú-ɔló.  
1SG-ST+ walk-PROG  
‘I am walking’.

(54b) Iŋ-ó drú~drú-ɔló.  
1SG-ST+ walk~ITER-PROG  
‘I am walking (repeatedly back and forth)’.

(55a) Ō bè-ɛló.  
3SG:ST+ run-PROG  
‘He is running’.

(55b) Ō bè~bè-ɛló.  
3SG:ST+ run~ITER-PROG  
‘He is running (repeatedly back and forth)’ (event plurality).

(55c) Ō bè-ɛló.  
3SG:ST+ run-PROG  
‘They are running’.

(55d) Ō bè~bè-ɛló.  
3SG:ST+ run~PL~/~ITER-PROG  
‘They are running’ (participant plurality) or ‘They are running (back and forth)’ (event plurality).

Verb reduplication indicating participant plurality can be seen as ergative number agreement, i.e. the participant that controls the agreement is the direct object or the intransitive subject. This agreement is semantic rather than syntactic in nature.

Reduplication of cardinal numerals produces distributive ones:

(56) Nà gõŋ blèŋà ηò nà plämläŋ nāŋāŋ.  
DT man rich 3PL:HAB+ wife two~DISTR three~DISTR  
‘Rich people used to have two or three wives each’.
Denis Paperno

(Note two instances of $\eta C$ simplification in reduplicated forms in example 56; see 4.2.1.)

Finally, the reduplicated form of temporal nouns (see 7.1 for a brief discussion of this class) also has a distributive interpretation (‘on Fridays’, ‘nightly’, etc.). This reduplication pattern is productive for the following classes of words: a) names of days in the traditional six-day week; b) names of days in the seven-day week borrowed from the Baule; and c) names of parts of the day cycle painstaking ‘daytime’, painstaking ‘evening’, painstaking ‘morning’, painstaking ‘night’. Example of usage:

(57) $\text{Yrú~yrú ná ŋ́ yí.}$

‘At night I (generally) sleep’.

7. Part of speech criteria

Inflectional criteria differentiate only three classes of words in Beng: personal pronouns, verbs, and inflectionally invariable words (I’m setting aside the problematic inflectional status of reduplication for the moment). Let me now turn to the distributional criteria that allow us to distinguish parts of speech within the inflectionally invariable class.

I avoid here any discussion of ideophones in Beng which may constitute one or several additional grammatical classes. Let me note only the existence of onomatopoeic words that imitate various noises, e.g. $\text{cócó}$ ‘gnash’, $\text{kúkù}$ ‘cry of wild pigeon’, $\text{bà}$ ‘sound of machete’ and that seem to be able to be included in larger syntactic structures, and of interjections like $\text{bócé}$ and $\text{crólcó}$ ‘exactly!’, or $\text{écé}$ ‘oh really!’. There is also a pattern, probably of Baule origin, of apparently onomatopoeic adjectives CVClVCV where all consonants (stops), vowels and tones have to match, e.g. $\text{kàklàkà}$ ‘enormous,’ $\text{gbègbègbè}$ ‘big and flat’, $\text{jàjràjà}$ ‘huge’ (of a person), $\text{kèkèkè}$ ‘thin’, $\text{kèkèkè}$ ‘hard on the inside’, $\text{pàplàpà}$ ‘wide and flat’, $\text{píplípí/pìplìpì}$ ‘fat and short’.

7.1. Nouns vs. Adverbs vs. Postpositions

Beng lacks dedicated nominal morphology that would mark case, number, definiteness, or agreement, even if some of those notions are not entirely alien to Beng grammar (see 8.3, 9 below). Therefore part of speech criteria have to be purely distributional. Let me now proceed to the description of distributional classes of Beng nominals and adverbials.

I take the direct object position as the distinctively nominal position in Beng. One could also rely on other nominal positions such as the subject position; however, the subject slot is less appropriate to use in an operational definition of nominal status.
because, being leftmost in the clause, it is not always superficially distinct from the topic slot.

The postverbal modifier position is characteristic for adverbs, and for postpositions the core context is combination with a noun phrase into a postverbal sentential modifier. All postverbal modifiers can also function as predicates in locative sentences, see 12.4. (We count as postverbal modifiers all phrases that occur after the sentence’s main verb, with the exception of several special cases discussed in 12.2 below where noun phrases without a postposition can occur postverbally in a number of functions: secondary object, nominal predicate, floating quantifiers, and arguments of ɣuₕ ‘to stay, to be left’. Indeed none of those are sentential modifiers semantically but rather arguments or predicates, so we ignore them here).

However, the distinctions between the three a priori classes (nouns, adverbs, and postpositions) are not as straightforward empirically. Some words that typically occur in adverbial contexts are also found in nominal ones, compare:

(58a) ɣû̄ nu wē.
1SG :PST+ come:L there
‘I came there’.

(58b) ɣû̄ wē yè.
1SG :PST+ there see:L
‘I saw that place’.

Several postpositions exhibit similar position variability:

(59a) ɣû̄ nû kléý nî wô.
1SG :PST+ come forest DEF in
‘I came to the forest’.

(59b) ɣû̄ kléý nî wô yè.
1SG :PST+ forest DEF in see:L
‘I saw the space of the forest’.

Lastly, some words occur in all three kinds of context – both as direct objects and as sentential modifiers, and furthermore, either with a dependent noun phrase or without one:

(60a) ɣû̄ pûu lu.
1SG :PST+ field buy
‘I bought a field’.

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(60b) ñṵ pɔ́ ñṵ.  
1SG :PST+ come:L field  
‘I came to a field’.

(60c) ñṵ ṃi pɔ́ ñṵ.  
1SG :PST+ come:L 2SG field  
‘I came to your field’.

So there are two criteria for distinguishing nouns from adverbs and postpositions: position in the sentence (object, modifier, or both) and dependent NP (none, obligatory, or optional). The two three-valued criteria give rise to three potential classes shown in Table 6 below. For each class, Table 6 lists examples and an estimate of class size.

Table 6. Logically possible classes of nominal and adverbial elements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Syntactic position</th>
<th>Dependent NP</th>
<th>Impossible</th>
<th>Optional</th>
<th>Obligatory</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Only nominal:</td>
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<tr>
<td>NOUNS</td>
<td>1. deictic noun</td>
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<td></td>
<td>ñrê ‘this’</td>
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<td>2. absolute noun</td>
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<td>bábá ‘sheep’, Kòlá</td>
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<td></td>
<td>‘Kola’ (name)</td>
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<td>( &gt;1000)</td>
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<td>Nominal or</td>
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<td>Adverbial NOUNS</td>
<td>4. adverbial</td>
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<td>deictic noun wë</td>
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<td></td>
<td>‘there’, gblè</td>
<td>(&lt;20)</td>
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<td>‘yesterday’</td>
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<td>5. absolute adverbial</td>
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<td>noun Bùàkè</td>
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<td>‘Bouake’, wlá</td>
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<td></td>
<td>‘house’, fê ‘day’</td>
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<td>Adverbial only:</td>
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<td>Adverbs and</td>
<td>7. pure ADVERB</td>
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<tr>
<td>Postpositions</td>
<td>bátú ‘soon’, dìnjììj</td>
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<td></td>
<td>‘nearby’ (&lt;50)</td>
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<td>8. adverb /</td>
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<td></td>
<td>postposition</td>
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<td>9. pure</td>
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<td></td>
<td>POSTPOSITION nì</td>
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<td></td>
<td>‘for’, lò ‘with’</td>
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<td>(&lt;10)</td>
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</table>

As indicated in the table, Beng has only seven out of the nine potential classes. There are no relational nouns with an obligatory possessor, and no items that have only sentence modifier uses and oscillate between pure adverbs and postpositions. This observation is non-trivial as both of the classes absent in Beng are attested in other languages; absence of relational nouns is unexpected for a Mande language.

Among absolute adverbial nouns there are two groups with distinct syntactic properties: temporal nouns and locative nouns. Temporal nouns are found in the adverbial position with dependants such as adjectives, determiners, and quantifiers:
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(61) ũ̍ nũ̍ kũ̍ gẽ̄ȳ bĩ-lẽ̄.
    1SG :PST+ come:L year good this-DEF
    ‘I arrived in this good year’.

(62) ũ̍ nũ̍ kũ̍ sẽk̔pá.
    1SG :PST+ come:L year every
    ‘I came every year’.

In contrast, whenever locative nouns combine with an adjective, a determiner, or a quantifier, they cannot be used in an adverbial position unless accompanied with a postposition:

(63a) Ŭ̍ o̍ pũ̍ bĩ-lẽ̄ *(wó).
    3SG:ST+ field this-DEF IN
    ‘He is in this field’.

(63b) Ŭ̍ pũ̍ sẽk̔pá *(wó).
    3SG:ST+ field every IN
    ‘He is in every field’.

(64) ũ̍ tå̍ Àsågbô̍.
    1SG :PST+ go Ouassadougou
    ‘I went to Ouassadougou’.

(65) ũ̍ tå̍ Àsågbô̍ bàmâ lẽ̄ *(wó).
    1SG :PST+ go:L Ouassadougou great DEF IN
    ‘I went to the great Ouassadougou’.

The incompatibility of postmodification with adverbial modifier position (without a supplemental postposition) also characterizes locative postpositions:

(66) Z̆̄zo̍ lẽ̄ ṽ̍ tåbâlî ló̍ tii̍ lẽ̄ *(ló)
    mosquito DEF 3SG:ST+ table SUPER black DEF SUPER
    ‘The mosquito is on the black surface of the table’.

7.2. Adjectives vs. nouns

In many languages of the world the distinction between nouns and adjectives is based on rather subtle criteria. In some languages morphology comes to help, for instance, adjectives can have gender agreement markers absent in nouns in gender. However, in Beng morphology does not reliably differentiate nouns from adjectives.

Syntactic criteria are also often unsatisfactory. Prototypical adjectives modify head nouns while a prototypical noun is a head of its own noun phrase. But then
adjectives can more or less routinely undergo substantivation, thereby functioning and NP heads, while nouns can be appositive modifiers of other nouns.

For Beng, two criteria are found differentiating nouns from adjectives. First, in the predicative position nouns (except for locative ones) require a copula verb, while adjectives can be predicated without a verbal copula, cf. (67) vs. (68a,b):

(67) \( \text{Ô gêŋ} \).
3SG:HAB+ beautiful
‘He is handsome’.

(68a) \( \text{Ô lê ū dē-gbọ} \).
3SG:PST+ COP:L 1SG father-old
‘He is my father’s elder brother’.

(68b) \( \text{Ô lē bèj} \).
3SG:PST+ COP:L Beng
‘He is Beng’.

Predicative adjectives contrast with verbs in that they lack typical verbal morphology. For example, if there were a verb meaning ‘to be handsome’, it would have to bear a low grammatical tone in examples like (67), to mark habitual aspect. Also, sentences with predicative adjectives are always indicative and have default time reference to the present. To express e.g. future tense or imperative, a copula verb has to be injected into a sentence with a predicative adjective, see 12.1.

Another contrast between nouns and adjectives is that in the modifier function, adjectives always follow the head noun while nouns can precede or follow the noun they modify:

(69a) \( klúálí gēŋ \) // \*gēŋ klúálí
thief beautiful beautiful thief
‘handsome thief’

(69b) \( Dēlā klúálí \) // \( klúálí Dēlā \)
Dela thief thief Dela
‘Dela the thief’

According to these criteria, as well as in other aspects, cardinal numerals are a special case of adjectives, compare the fixed order of the numeral plāŋ ‘two’ and the head noun sọj ‘person’: sọj plāŋ vs. \*plāŋ sọj. Like adjectives, numerals occur in the predicative position without a copula verb, and participate in the partitive construction (8.2). What distinguishes cardinal numerals from adjectives is special
behavior with respect to number (9.1), the ability to form complex numerals and to trigger the float of quantified NPs (12.2.6).

8. Noun phrase structure.

The order of constituents in the (maximal) noun phrase structure is as follows: possessor + nominal modifiers + head noun and appositive modifiers + adjectives + determiners + relative clause.

8.1. Possessors and nominal modifiers

Possessor is expressed with a noun phrase and / or a personal pronoun. There is no special possession or alienability marking, so possessor NPs are distinguished from e.g. direct object NPs only in syntactic position.

Nominal modifiers can:
– refer to matter, as in pēnį́į́ŋ́̃sř̊ ‘iron needle’, or
– be adverbial noun phrases, pointing to the relation of an object to a particular time or place, e.g. gbľ̊ḕzùnālī ‘yesterday’s newspaper’, or (70a):

(70a) kléį́ nì  wó  sòŋ̄
    forest  DEF  IN  animal
    ‘forest animal’ (*literally*: ‘animal in the forest’).

(70b) Bíè  lòmlè  lè  à  kléį́  wó  pɔ̄  wé.
    elephant  lemon  Def  3SG  forest  IN  thing  exist
    ‘There’s a wild variety of grapefruit’ (*lit.*: ‘Grapefruit, its thing in the forest exists’).

(70c) ỳ  dè  pɔ̄  drỳŋ̄ŋ̄
    1SG  father  thing  older.brother
    ‘my father’s elder brother’ (*literally*: ‘My father’s thing older brother’).

All preposed modifiers, including possessors, locative modifiers, etc., can be accompanied with the semantically empty noun pɔ̄ ‘thing’, which nominalizes premodifiers (70b) and can turn them structurally into appositive modifiers (70c). Combination of non-subject pronouns with pɔ̄ ‘thing’ gives rise to the possessive pronoun series.

8.2. Adjectives and appositives in noun phrases

Adjectives can not only modify nouns but can also function as the head of a noun phrase in the absence of a noun. Adjectival modifiers – as well as adjectives in other positions – can have degree modifiers, for example:
A special usage of adjectives (or numerals, as a subclass of adjectives) as effective NP heads is the partitive construction, whereby an adjective or a numeral is accompanied by a definite NP with the postposition wó, compare:

(72a) ṣij bábá ŋāj (nij)
     1SG sheep three DEF
     ‘my three sheep’

(72b) ṣij bábá ŋò wó ŋāj
     1SG sheep 3PL IN three
     ‘three of my sheep’

The partitive construction with an adjective head and a definite article is the way to express superlative degree in Beng:

(73) Sòŋ nùŋ ŋò wó sòklò lè
     person PL 3PL IN inert DEF
     ‘the most inert person’ (literally ‘the inert among the people’).

An appositive modifier can be any NP without determiners. The order of appositive modifiers and the head is free, but for nouns indicating the gender of a person or an animal postposition is preferable:

(74) Sòŋ pújí gāŋ dō
     person white man one
     ‘a white man’.

8.3. Determiners

NP-final determiners follow the linear sequence

bi > tè > DEF > nùŋ > dō

The determiners in this sequence have the following functions. bi is a deictic marker ‘this / that’; tè is an intensifier ‘even, one/him/her/itself’. Both require the presence of a definite article, which can then be absent only under the influence of overriding factors: before a relative clause or in a plural NP. Both cases block the definite article lè.

DEF stands for the definite article. Overt definite article is generally optional, unless preceded by bi or tè. There are two overt allomorphs of the definite article in Beng: nì is used after ŋ (in singular or plural NPs), and lè is used after vowels, but only in singular NPs. In plural NPs after a vowel no overt article is used.
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\( nụ̣ŋ̀ \) is a plural marker. In most cases it is also optional, see more on the expression of number below.

\( dō \) is the numeral ‘one’, which doubles as an indefinite article. It can also accompany a plural NP:

\[
(75) \quad  \begin{array}{c}
1\text{SG:PST+} \\
\text{woman} \\
\text{PL} \\
\text{one} \\
\text{3PL} \\
\text{see}
\end{array} 
\]

‘I saw (some) women’ (plural interpretation even in the absence of \( nụ̣ŋ̀ \)).

The article \( dō \) is incompatible with determiners other than the plural marker.

In the absence of any determiners a noun phrase can receive the ‘non-arithmetic’ interpretation (Polivanova 1983), i.e. the number of objects in question can only be inferred from the context.

Names of substances usually occur without determiners, but can also be used with determiners, including articles and the plural marker: \( yí lè \) ‘the water’, \( yí nụ̣ŋ̀ \) ‘water in several containers’. Some of these cases are clearly instances of productive conversion ‘substance X’ > ‘mass of substance X’ or ‘object made of X’. This conversion is quite regular. For example, \( gə̀ \) ‘plastic’ can also be a name for a plastic bucket, a plastic pin, etc., functioning as a count noun.

9. Number and agreement

9.1. Number expression within a noun phrase

Generally, the number of a noun phrase is not manifested in the head noun. The single exception is the suppletive pair:

\[
(76) \quad  \begin{array}{c}
lọkłọ \quad ‘\text{child}’ \\
lọmłọŋ̀ \quad ‘\text{children}’ 
\end{array} 
\]

It is clear however that historically even this pair contains an invariable noun and a number-marked adjective \( kló \) (singular) / \( plé \) (plural) ‘little’. The plural form also incorporates two copies of \( ŋ̀ \), probably a reduced version of the plural marker \( nụ̣ŋ̀ \), so the plural form \( lọmłọŋ̀ \) is derived from *\( lọ-ŋ̀-plé-ŋ̀ \). The same \( ŋ̀ \), although not a productive plural marker synchronically, might be responsible for the final consonant in Beng numerals such as \( plə̣ŋ̀ ‘\text{two}’ \), the initial consonant of the 3PL pronoun \( ŋò \), and the final consonant of the 1PL pronoun \( ạŋ̀ \). Other South Mande languages have no nasal sonorant in cognate forms, compare for instance Mwan forms \( plè ‘\text{two}’ \), 3PL pronoun \( ọ \), 1PL exclusive \( ọ \), Dan-Gwetaa \( plè ‘\text{two}’ \), 3PL pronoun \( wọ \), 1PL exclusive \( yí \), Yaure \( flí ‘\text{two}’ \), 3PL pronoun \( ọ \), 1PL exclusive \( kò \), etc. (Vydrin 2006, 2009), (Perexval’skaja ms.). The only South Mande language that seems to consistently share the “nasal plural” element with Beng is Wan, with \( pḷọŋ̀ ‘\text{two}’ \), \( ọ ‘\text{three}’ \), 3PL pronoun \( ạ \), 1PL exclusive \( kà \) (Nikitina ms.); Gban has an odd nasality in \( fə̣ŋ̄ ‘\text{two}’ \) but not in \( yíǎ ‘\text{three}’ \), 3PL \( ọ \) or 1PL \( ụ \).
The most universal marker of plurality is nùŋ̰̀ŋ̰̀:

(77) glāŋ̰̀ púû nùŋ̰̀
    loincloth white PL
‘white loincloths’

The plural marker is optional when followed by an NP-doubling plural pronoun (see (Paperno 2005) for more detail):

(78) Ñ-ó mlâ (nùŋ̰̀) ŋò yë-lè.
    1SG-ST+ drum PL 3PL see-RES
‘I see drums’.

Here’s another striking example showing optionality of the plural marker nùŋ̰̀:

(79) Bíè ŋò nà cîyà ŋò lÛ ŋó nû.
    elephant 3PL and bushbuck 3PL with 3PL:PST come:L
‘Elephants and bushbucks came’,

with three instances of the 3PL pronoun: one doubling the NP ‘elephants’, another one doubling the NP ‘bushbucks’, and the third one doubling the coordinate NP ‘elephants and bushbucks’. The sentence does not contain a single instance of the plural marker nùŋ̰̀.

Noun phrases with numerals behave as singular when semantically indefinite and as plural when definite. This includes numerals used both as attributes within a noun phrase and a predicates.

9.2. Reduplication as number agreement

Plural number of a noun phrase can be manifested through the reduplication of adjectives in that NP. Plural-marking reduplication is also observed in predicative adjectives and verbs, where reduplication marks the plurality of a direct object or an intransitive subject:

(80) Bléŋ̰̀ nùŋ̰̀ ŋò-ó drà~drá-lè.
    chair PL 3PL-ST+ fall~PL-RES
‘Chairs are fallen’.

(81) *Bléŋ̰̀ dô ŋò ŋò drà~drá-lè.
    chair one 3SG-ST+ fall~PL-RES
(‘A chair is fallen’).

So adjective and verb reduplication functions as number agreement. At least in the case of verbs such agreement seems to be semantic in nature; the NP whose plurality is signalled by reduplication can have no other indication of plurality:
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(82) ŋò-ó kój blâ~blâ.
3SG-ST+ peg stick~PL/ITER
‘They will stick in pegs’.

(multiple pegs; another possible reading is event plurality whereby the sentence may refer to multiple acts of sticking in the same peg).

(83) ŋò-ó kój dō blâ.
3SG-ST+ peg one stick
‘They will stick in a peg’.

In most cases, while the reduplicated form may indicate participant plurality, the corresponding stem without reduplication does not imply singular number of the participant. A handful of verbs, however, strictly associate presence or absence of reduplication with plural vs. singular participant, compare:

(84) ū blânâ dê yrí-drâ lè ló.
1SG:PST+ banana put:L tree-fall DEF SUPER
‘I put a banana/*bananas on the fallen tree’.

(85) ū blânâ dê~dê yrí-drâ lè ló.
1SG:PST+ banana put~PL:L tree-fall DEF SUPER
‘I put bananas/*a banana on the fallen tree’.

In a similar vein, while many adjectives use reduplication as a form of plural agreement marking, only two have a specialized form restricted to singular NPs: bée ‘big’, plural bébé, and kló ‘little’, plural plé.

9.3. Pronominal doubling and the status of pronouns

Pronominal doubling is widespread in Beng. Personal pronouns are often used after a full NP, as if backing it up. Literal translation of some sentences with pronominal doubling is something like “David he is a pagan”, “I see horses them”, “Kola she goes to her uncle him”.

So Beng personal pronouns are functionally analogous to agreement affixes of other languages. Can Beng pronouns themselves be analyzed as affixes? The idea has certain appeal; indeed, personal pronouns largely immediately precede their syntactic host: direct object pronouns precede the verb, possessor pronouns precede the head noun, other ones precede postpositions; subject pronouns can be treated as TAMP particles with personal agreement affixes, and similarly for other pronominal series. Unavailability of pronominal doubling (e.g. in the secondary object position – see 12.2 below) can be explained by the lack of syntactic head in those positions that could host agreement markers.
However, some syntactic facts speak in favor of their autonomous status. First, direct object pronouns can be separated from the verb by certain particles, including gbɔ́ ‘also’ and kló ‘a bit’ (86a,b,c). Second, possessor pronouns are separated from the head noun by temporal and locative modifiers that can be syntactically complex, so we are sure that we are dealing with phrasal modification and not compounding (86d). Third, in nominalization the subject is expressed as a possessor; in particular, it can be instantiated as a non-subject pronoun. Then in nominalization direct object is expressed immediately before the verb stem, just like in a finite clause, so the Subject – Object – Verb order is maintained in nominalization. In addition, in nominalization clausal modifiers can precede the nominalized verb and its direct object (86e), separating them from the pronominal subject. An indirect object with a postposition can also intervene between the subject and the verb stem in nominalization (86f). Since direct and indirect objects, as well as clausal modifiers, can be arbitrarily complex, and can also combine with each other, it turns out that the non-subject pronoun that corresponds to the subject of a nominalized verb can be separated from the head by indefinitely long chunks of syntactic structure (in practice, many of the longer interveners would probably be hard to process because of the center-embedding structures they introduce, but that does not diminish the argument).

(86a) À gbɔ́ blē.  
3SG also eat  
‘Eat that too’.

(86b) Mà à kló yè.  
1SG:HAB+ 3SG little see:L  
‘I see that a bit’.

(86c) À kló lē kpèsè.  
3SG little make big  
‘Increase it a bit’.

(86d) mī kùènŋ pɔ́ ɔ̀ lè  
2SG this.year POS field DEF  
‘your field of this year’

(86e) Mī pɔ̀ù Kòfī yè-lè ò gēŋ.  
2SG field Kofi see-NMLZ 3SG:HAB+ beautiful  
‘It’s good that I saw Kofi in the field’.

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9.4. Constraints on the distribution of personal pronouns

Factors of overt expression of personal pronouns include:

- syntactic position;
- presence of a noun phrase doubled by the pronoun (if a syntactic position is obligatory to fill by overt material but no full NP is present, a pronoun is unavoidable);
- number and definiteness of the NP to be doubled by a pronoun. Indefinite singular NPs usually aren’t doubled by pronouns. Doubling of definite singular NPs is optional, and doubling of plural NPs is almost always obligatory:

\[(87a) \quad \text{i-ô} \quad \text{mlè} \quad \text{lè} \quad (\text{à}) \quad \text{yè-lè.} \]
\[1\text{SG-ST+ drum DEF (3SG) see-RES} \]
\[\text{‘I see the drum’}. \]

\[(87b) \quad \text{i-ô} \quad \text{mlè} \quad \text{nùù} \quad \text{ŋò*/Ø} \quad \text{yè-lè.} \]
\[1\text{SG-ST+ drum PL 3PL see-RES} \]
\[\text{‘I see (the) drums’}. \]

As already mentioned, a 3PL pronoun can be the only formal exponent of NP plurality, and the plural marker nùù is optional in the presence of a pronoun.

Information on pronoun usage in different context are summarized in Table 7. Additional remarks are provided below the table.

| Syntactic positions                                         | NP doubled | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
|                                                             | none       | SG indefinite | SG definite | PL |
| possessor                                                   | OK (11.6.5)| OK            | OK          | !! |
| direct object, object of postposition, conjunct, contrastive topic | !!         | *             | OK          | !! |
| subject (except presentative clauses)                      | !!         | OK (see 9.4.1)| OK (see 9.4.1)| !! |
| focus, non-contrastive topic, subject in presentative clauses, nominal predicate | !! (focus series only) | * | * | * |
| postpositionless secondary object                           | *          | *             | *           | *  |
Notes. * – personal pronoun is ungrammatical; OK – personal pronoun is optional; !! – personal pronoun is obligatory.

9.4.1. Personal pronouns in the subject position. Subject position must always be filled, so a 3SG pronoun can be omitted only if it doubles a full NP, as in the following example:

(88) \[ \text{À léį́ ō ġā-nā}. \]
3SG child 3SG:PST+ die-PRF
‘His child has died’.

Note however that although the subject pronoun is absent at segmental level, it still leaves a trace: a tonal change in the low tone form of the verb in (89b) (see 4.2.3). It might be preferable to analyze those examples as pronoun elision rather than pronoun optionality.

(89a) | \(\text{À léį́ ō ġā} \) \rightarrow \(\text{À léį́ ō ġā}.\)
3SG child 3SG:PST+ die:L
‘His child died’.

(89b) \(\text{À léį́ ġā}.\)
3SG child die:L
‘His child died’.

Recall however that subject pronouns serve in part to express TAMP value of the clause. If they were to be omitted freely, certain TAMP constructions would end up being indistinguishable. The need to differentiate TAMP motivates additional constraints:

– conditional pronouns are always overt; otherwise conditional mood would merge with the optative;
– negative series are always present (except for the stative series);
– 3SG stative pronouns can be freely omitted, but a stative predicative marker is always present:

(90) \(\text{À léį́ ō ġā-àiłō}.\)
3SG child ST+ die-PROG
‘His child is dying’.

– (affirmative) preterite and habitual pronouns are omitted only in intransitive clauses, where TAMP value can be inferred from the tone change of the verb stem.

Imperative is a special case: the 2SG pronoun \(mį́\) is usually absent in affirmative clauses expressing imperative; the pronoun is obligatory under negation and in embedded uses of the optative/imperative mood.
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9.4.2. Possessor. The possessor position in Beng does not have to be overtly filled even in the case of semantically relational nouns such as kinship terms and body parts, for which the possessor can be inferred. This optionality is the only feature that distinguishes the possessor position from other positions listed in the second row of Table 7, such as the direct object position:

(91) Ḇó (mī̃) dē lè à yē-lè.
1SG:ST+ 2SG father DEF 3SG see-RES
‘I see (your) father’.

(92a) */Runtime* Ø yē-lè.
1SG:ST+ see-RES
(‘I see’).

(92b) Ḇó dē lè (à) yē-lè.
1SG:ST+ father DEF (3SG) see-RES
‘I see the father’.

(92c) Ḇó *(à)* yē-lè.
1SG:ST+ 3SG see-RES
‘I see him’.

10. Locative phrases

10.1. Distribution

A locative phrase consists of either a locative noun, which may or may not have syntactic dependents on the left, or a noun phrase with a locative postposition. On top of that, locative phrases also usually have a deictic marker on the right edge, see 10.3. Locative phrases occur in a variety of contexts: as postverbal modifiers, as predicates in clauses of adverbial type (see 12.4), as prenominal modifiers, or referentially in all NP positions.

10.2. Semantics.

Locative phrases refer to a localization only. The semantic role of the localization, also known as its orientation (e.g. as the goal or the source of motion), is not marked in the locative phrase and has to be inferred from the verb modified by the locative phrase. With the verb ḫè ‘to pass’ locative phrases refer to a location which the trajectory of motion crosses. With the verbs bɔ̀ ‘to come from, to leave’, and wlò ‘to move out’, locative phrases refer to the source of motion. When combining with ngɔ ‘to come’, tá ‘to go’, srɔ̀ ‘to arrive’, drɔ̀ ‘to fall’, locative phrases define the goal, or the final point, of motion. With all other verbs, including manner
of motion verbs like bé ‘to run’, dōŋ̀ ‘to swim’, locative phrases describe the location of the event (‘swim near the village’). Compare:

(93)  \[ Ó  nú  lɔ́  wó  wé. \]
- 3SG:PST+ come marker IN there
  ‘He came to the market’.

(94)  \[ Ó  bɔ́  lɔ́  wó  wé. \]
- 3SG:PST+ come.from market IN there
  ‘He came from the market’.

(95)  \[ Ó  jé  lɔ́  wó  wé. \]
- 3SG:PST+ pass market IN there
  ‘He passed through the market’.

(96)  \[ Ó  dɔ́  lɔ́  wó  wé. \]
- 3SG:PST+ stop market IN there
  ‘He stopped at the market’.

So each Beng verb has exactly one semantic slot for a location (contrasting with verbs of European languages that can have multiple locative modifiers that correspond e.g. to the source and the goal of motion, as in the English *The Liszt family left Vienna for Paris*). In Beng, if a verb is modified with more than one locative phrase, they always describe the same location:

(97)  \[ Ó  nú  Àbijá  wlá  wé. \]
- 3SG:PST+ come Abidjan house there
  ‘He came home to Abidjan’.

The semantic rigidity of the combinations of verbs with locative phrases obviously places limitations on what can be expressed in a single verbal clause. For example, it is not possible to specify in one clause both the source and the goal of motion (*Antonio Canova came from Rome to Paris*), or the goal and the manner of motion (*The child ran to the village*). If it is necessary to express such complex meanings, one has to revert to complex syntactic structures, and juxtapose two or more clauses (‘The child ran, it came to the village’). In this respect Beng represents a pattern typical for languages of Sub-Saharan Africa, cf. Cresseils (2006), especially his examples 8 and 9 from Tswana and Baule.

Locative phrases used as predicates or when modifying nouns, again, only denote location (‘a field in the forest’, ‘the sheep are near the river’). Secondary uses of adpositions primarily used to describe movement events, as in the English *the man from Amsterdam*, are absent in Beng and the corresponding meanings have to be
expressed by other means (e.g. with the attributive marker na, see 6.1). Interestingly, I managed to find one case in which the distinction encoded by source of motion vs. location oriented preposition in English (and similar European languages) can be expressed by different Beng postpositions: ṭįŋ gbě ḋe wó zrē (with an IN postposition) translates as “road in our village”, while ṭįŋ gbě ḋe mù̀ zrē (with a CONT postposition) translates as “road to our village”. It is obvious, however, that the distinction between the adpositions has distinct semantic grounding in Beng as opposed to English: Beng postpositions encode the actual physical location of the road (‘inside the village’ vs. ‘in physical contact with the village’), while the English usage is based on the common PATH – MOTION metonymy.

The meanings of locative postpositions, and glosses for them, are as follows. Postposition wó IN can be translated as ‘in, inside’, mù̀ CONT means ‘on’, in the sense of contact with a surface of the reference object, ló SUPER means ‘over, above’ or ‘on TOP of’, ḋf APUD is ‘near, around’, lù SUB is ‘under’, klē POST means ‘behind’, but also ‘with (someone)’ as in ‘the knife is with me’, and wōlì POSS means ‘in (someone’s) possession’. Finally, the locative postposition yé, which is identical to the noun ‘mouth’, when combining with a container type of object, indicates a location of the edge of the object, e.g. ‘on the edge of (a bowl)’, ‘on the bank of (the river)’, ‘at the entrance to (a tree hollow)’. Besides the productive ‘edge’ sense, yé is also idiosyncratically required by several nouns of locative meaning (zrē yé ‘on the road’, gbě yé ‘in the village’, etc.).

### 10.3. The grammatical category of deixis

In Beng, the category of deixis characterizes only locative phrases. Regular NPs don’t mark proximity, unless they contain a relative clause with a locative statement ‘which is here’. The most common demonstrative element bì ‘this, that’ is unmarked for proximity.

Locative phrases (except for toponyms and deictic locative nouns themselves) are often accompanied by deictic locative nouns wē ‘there’, nũ ‘here’ u blɔ ‘right here, right there’. The deictic element is usually not obligatory, but speakers tend to judge examples with a deictic as more natural than ones without it. For example, (98) is judged superior to (99), and (100) considerably superior to (101):

(98) Ō tå kléŋ nì wó wě.

3SG:PST+ go:L forest DEF IN there

‘He went to the forest’.

13 As an anonymous reviewer suggests, deictic doubling of locative phrases is probably induced by contact with Baule.
The degree to which the deictic element is obligatory varies depending on the locative noun involved. The factors behind the usage of the deictics are yet to be explored; one of them could be the frequency of the locative noun: the more frequent the locative noun, the more freely it can occur without a deictic element. For example, a very frequent locative postposition \( w\ò \) ‘in’ freely occurs without a deictic, while with relatively rare locative postpositions like \( d\í \) ‘near’, deictics are more preferable. In a similar vein, deictic \( wè \) ‘there’, \( n\ò \) ‘here’, and \( h\í \) ‘right here, right there’ are just preferable with the frequent locative noun \( w\lá \) ‘house’, but obligatory with the rare \( tùwâ \) ‘quarter’.

11. Coordination

The default way to conjoin constituents A and B in Beng is the construction \( A nà B lô \), literally ‘A together with B’. This construction conjoins noun phrases (102b), adjective phrases, as well as adverbal constituents. Verbs and verb phrases never conjoin in Beng, so that the meaning of corresponding constructions of European languages has to be expressed via clause combination of one kind or another (102c). Clause-level conjunction in its turn has to be expressed via juxtaposition of sentences, or, alternatively, as temporal subordination (see 13.5). Such differentiation of conjunction patterns by the syntactic category of the conjunction is common in languages of Sub-Saharan Africa (Haspelmath 2005b), which is the biggest area with a systematic contrast between nominal and verbal coordination.

The first conjunct in a coordinate NP is doubled by pronouns of the existential series, the second by the non-subject series.

Disjunction, in contrast to conjunction, does not distinguish sharply between nominal and sentential domains; NPs, postpositional phrases, and full sentences are disjoined with the same marker (102b,c). The disjunctive coordinator is structurally a conditional clause \( à lë é nģ \), literally ‘if it is not’, which can undergo shortening to
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àlénĩ. So Beng has a remarkably compositional semantics of its disjunction, as
indeed, Boolean disjunction in logic (A or B) is equivalent to a combination of a
genation and an implication (not A => B). Sometimes one uses the alternate
disjunction nĩŋɛ̄ (104e). Extraposition of the second disjunct with the disjunction
marker (104e) is common (though never found with overt conjunction), and perhaps
could be analyzed as sentential disjunction under ellipsis; more inquiry into the
structure of such sentences is needed.

Examples in (102) illustrate uses of conjunction and disjunction. (102a) presents
a coordinate structure with a wh-element:

(102a) [Mĩ nà dē lō] fë ká gù kā wlá wē
     2SG and who with Rel 2PL:PST+ stay 2PL house there

fłɔ̃ɔ nā?
today  TOP

‘Who did you stay with at home today?’ (literally ‘You and who that you stayed
at your house today?’).

(102b) Ŭ tō lē ŭ dē nā ŭ
     1SG name DEF 1SG father and 1SG

dā lō pē ŋā kà ē.
mother with FOC 3PL:PST+ put:L FOC

‘My name, it was my father and my mother who gave it to me’ (literally: ‘it was
my father and my mother who put it’).

(102b) Gblē nā Siālū ō plēŋ dō blē
     yesterday  TOP Sialu 3SG:PST+ projectile one throw

ziē yāá lō ō gblēŋmlēŋ dō dē.
kapok this SUPER 3SG:PST+ hornbill one kill:L

‘Yesterday Sialu threw a projectile onto this kapok tree and killed a hornbill’.

(102c) Wā bēsé è yēwɔ [glē lē lō]
     2SG:HAB+3 machete DEF sharpen:L rock DEF on

à lē-nĩ [kłāwā à lō].
3SG:PST- COP:L:NEG-if.not whetstone DEF with

‘She sharpens her machete on the rock or with the whetstone’.

(102d) nō srtōbḕ à lē ē nǐ
     1SG:ST+ leave 3SG:PST- COP:L NEG if.not
12. Clause structure

12.1. Tense, Aspect, Modality, Polarity

12.1.1. Polarity. The clause-final particle ɛ́ is the default negation marker in Beng. The only sentence type that doesn’t use it is the identity statement, marked by clause-final particle ɛ̀ in the affirmative polarity and by ni in the negative polarity.

In a sequence of two or more negative particles ɛ́, which happens when both a matrix clause and its embedded clause are negative, the last one is replaced by an allomorph ni(103c).

Apart from the negation marker, polarity is also marked within subject pronouns, where it is expressed cumulatively with TAM. Tables 4 and 5 (section 5.3) indicate which pronoun series is used in what type of sentence, depending on polarity.

Finally, sometimes the verb form itself signals the presence of negation, thereby adding the third marker of polarity in addition to the negative particle and the pronoun series. Example (103a) exhibits all three exponents of polarity at once:

(103a) Mā nū-sà ɛ́
       1SG:PST- come:PrfNeg NEG
‘I have not come’.

(103b) Ḯ nū-nā
       1SG:PST+ come:PRF
‘I have come’.

(103c) Mā pē [kē mà nū ɛ́] ni
       1SG:PST+3 say:L that 1SG:PST- come:L NEG NEG
‘I did not say that I did not come’.

Out of the sixteen logically possible verb forms (8 TAM values × 2 polarity values), there are only six distinct finite forms. Just the four affixal ones invite some substantive labels. The remaining two are called the ‘base form’ and the ‘low tone form’, based on their formal properties. The usage of the six verb forms is summarized in Table 8.
Table 8. Usage of finite verb forms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TAM value</th>
<th>affirmative</th>
<th>negative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>preterite</td>
<td>low tone (\dot{V})</td>
<td>low tone (\dot{V})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>habitual</td>
<td>low tone (\dot{V})</td>
<td>low tone (\dot{V})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conditional</td>
<td>base (V)</td>
<td>low tone (\dot{V})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>optative</td>
<td>base (V)</td>
<td>(V)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>future</td>
<td>base (V)</td>
<td>(V)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>progressive</td>
<td>progressive (V-lêlô)</td>
<td>(V)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>perfect</td>
<td>affirmative perfect</td>
<td>(V-nê)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stative</td>
<td>stative</td>
<td>(V-lê)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Beng has the so-called negative concord whereby words translating negative indefinites require negative polarity marking of the clause. In Beng, all such negative elements contain a reduplicated element. They include: \(pɔ̄p\) ‘nothing’ (reduplication of \(p\) ‘thing’); \(kɛ̀kɛ̀\) ‘no’ (reduplicated form that does not have a non-reduplicated counterpart), and finally a construction that involves reduplicating a noun with the word \(tɔ\) ‘the rest’ between the two copies: \(sɔ̰ŋ̄tɔ sɔ̰ŋ̄\) ‘nobody’ (from \(sɔ̰ŋ̄\) ‘person’), \(pîŋ̄\) \(tɔ pîŋ̄\) ‘not a weed’ (from \(pîŋ̄\) ‘weed’). Examples:

(104a) \(ljà sɔ̰ŋ̄ tɔ sɔ̰ŋ̄ yɛ-lề è\).  
1SG:ST- person rest person see-RES NEG ‘I see nobody’.

(104b) \(Mà pîŋ̄ tɔ pîŋ̄ sɔ̀ è\).  
1SG:HAB- weed rest weed chew:L NEG ‘I don’t eat anything’ (literally I don’t eat a weed.)

(105) \(Mű drɛ̀ wɔ̀ yrâmà kɛ̀kɛ̀ wɔ̀ è\).  
1SG:PST- work do:L time no IN NEG ‘I never worked’.

12.1.2. Tense and mood. Mood in independent sentences encodes modality, i.e. the relation of the situation described in the sentence to the actual world. Beng has a relatively limited modality spectrum, distinguishing the indicative (for situations that hold in the actual world) and the optative (for situations that the speaker considers necessary or desirable). Imperative in Beng is minimally formally distinguishable from the optative (see 12.1.3). In addition to indicative and optative, Beng also has conditional mood, which is used only in embedded clauses.
Each statement has a time reference point, call it T. Depending on T’s position on the time scale relative to the utterance time, we can talk about the past, the present, or the future time reference.

Only verb clauses express the full spectrum of TAM values. Adjective, adverbial, existential, and presentative types of clauses express only indicative, and, along with certain aspectual values in verbed clauses, are interpreted with present time reference by default.

When it is necessary to indicate past tense, one can use the clause-initial temporal shift marker :`~nà` which replaces default present time reference with past time reference; one consultant also accepted the future interpretation of temporal shift:

(106)  
```
~nà ŋ-ó  pɔ̄  lú-5ló.
```

DT 1SG-ST+ thing buy-PROG

‘I was buying’.

(107)  
```
~nà ŋ̄pɔ̄ci.
```

DT 1SG:HAB+ thing cut:L

‘I used to mow’.

(108)  
```
~nà māŋ̄ è.
```

DT 1SG:EMPH esto

‘It was me’.

(109)  
```
~nà ŋ̄gɛ̄ŋ̄gɔ́.
```

DT 1SG:HAB+ beautiful

‘I was handsome’.

However, the temporal shift marker is not obligatory for changing the time reference of sentences with default present interpretation. If the context explicitly refers to the time, this can suffice to shift the time reference of a statement, cf.:

(110)  
```
Gāmlà  ó  gbɛ̄  gbɔ́.
```

chimpanzee ST+ village old

‘Chimpanzee used to live in the village’ (literally ‘Lomg ago, chimpanzee is in the village’).

(111)  
```
ŋọ  klóó ná, ŋ̄ dá  ó  gbénɛ́  zɔ
```

1SG:ST+ little when 1SG mother 3SG:HAB+ manioc pound:L

fɛ̄  sɛkpá.

day every

‘When I was little my mother would pound manioc every day’.
Grammatical sketch of Beng

In order to express various temporal and aspectual meanings in sentences that are normally expressed verblessly, they have to be paraphrased using copular verbs \textit{yrä} ‘to be located, to take place’ (corresponding to existential and adverbial clauses) and \textit{lē} ‘to be, to make’, corresponding to adjectival and identification clauses:

(112a) \textit{Māŋ} \textit{ɛ}.
1SG:EMPH this.is
‘This is me’ (presentative).

(112b) \textit{Ô-ô lē māŋ}
3SG-ST+ COP 1SG:EMPH
‘This will be me’. (copula verb)

(113a) \textit{ŋ̄ḡeŋ̄}.
1SG:HAB+ beautiful
‘I am handsome’ (adjectival).

(113b) \textit{ŋ̄l̄e gēŋ̄}.
1SG:HAB+ COP beautiful
‘Let me be handsome!’ (copula verb).

(113c) \textit{a. Ňó pāũ}.
1SG:ST+ field
‘I am in the field’ (adverbial).

(113d) \textit{ŋ̄ó yrā pāũ}.
1SG:ST+ take.place field
‘I will be in the field’ (copula verb).

The copula verb \textit{lē} ‘to be’ has an idiosyncratic peculiarity of tense interpretation, shared by no other verb, using the preterite form to express present tense:

(114) \textit{ľ̄ lē bēj̄}.
1SG:PST+ COP:L Beng
‘I am Beng’. (note the past tense form with present meaning)

12.1.3. TAM values and their expression. Verbal sentences formally distinguish eight TAM values, briefly characterized below. Table 9 gives a TAMP paradigm of a sentence along with structural formulae of TAMP constructions.

Table 9. TAMP paradigm of the sentence ‘you play drum’ (‘you see drum’ in stative)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>affirmative</th>
<th>scheme</th>
<th>negative</th>
<th>scheme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>preterite</td>
<td>mí mlá dè</td>
<td>PST+, V:L</td>
<td>mí mlá dè è</td>
<td>PST-, V:L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>perfect</td>
<td>mí mlá dè nā</td>
<td>PST+, V nā</td>
<td>mí mlá dè sā è</td>
<td>PST-, V sà</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stative</td>
<td>(mijo mlà yē.lè)</td>
<td>ST+, V.lè</td>
<td>(mīā mlà yē.lè è)</td>
<td>ST-, V.lè</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>progressive</td>
<td>mí mlà dèlo</td>
<td>ST+, V/</td>
<td>l</td>
<td>elo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>future</td>
<td>mí mlà dè</td>
<td>ST+, V</td>
<td>mí mlá dè è</td>
<td>ST-, V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>optative</td>
<td>(mī) mlà dè</td>
<td>HAB+, V</td>
<td>mī mlá dè è</td>
<td>= preterite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conditional</td>
<td>mí mlá dè</td>
<td>CND+, V</td>
<td>mī mlá dè è</td>
<td>= habitual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>habitual</td>
<td>mí mlá dè</td>
<td>HAB+, V:L</td>
<td>mī mlá dè è</td>
<td>HAB-, V:L</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Preterite** has past time reference, with perfective or habitual aspectual meaning. Beng does not mark telicity.

(115) Žá pè.
1SG:PST+ matter say:L
‘I said something / I used to say something’.

**Progressive** refers to an ongoing activity and has default present time reference:

(116) -ó kálè lú-öló.
1SG -ST+ peanuts buy-PROG
‘I am buying peanuts’.

A progressive statement accompanied by a clause-initial marker ŋgō produces the aspectual value of **cancelled result**, an unexpected derivative of progressive:

(117) ŋgō prā-ló.
NGO 1SG:go-PROG
‘I almost went’.

(118) Lā ó bā nā ŋgō ŋlēlē ŋụ nỳ ọrọ s̀r bè́l-ló.
      rain ST+ fall Top NGO worm PL 3PL-ST+ appear-PROG
‘When it was raining the worms almost appeared’ (‘they started to appear but they can’t be seen anymore’).

The same element ŋgō marks the main clause of counterfactual conditional statements. For example, (119) contains no irrealis marker besides ŋgō:

(119) Lā ó bā dè ŋgō ŋlēlē ŋụ nỳ ọrọ s̀r bè́l-ló.
      rain ST+ fall if NGO worm PL 3PL-ST+ appear-PROG
‘If it were raining now, the worms whould have been appearing’.

64
Expression of cancelled result, or ‘antiresultative’, by means of progressive (even in combination with an additional marker ŋ’gô) is typologically unique and deserves explanation, which shall likely involve the fact that progressive, unlike other aspectual meanings, has no implications about the result of an action, e.g. “John crossed the street” implies “John has been on the other side of the street” but “John was crossing the street” does not have such an implication (John might have changed his mind and never finished crossing). Usually, antiresultative include past, perfect, or perfective forms, cf. especially examples in Šošitajšvili (1998: 92-105).

**Habitual** marks regularly repeated events or stable states, and has default time reference to the present.

(120) ņ̃ pĩñ̄ ci.  
1SG:HAB+ weed cut:L  
‘I (usually) mow’.

**Future** has future time reference and is compatible with any aspectual meaning.

(121) ņ̃-ó jó.  
1SG:ST+ talk[BSQ]  
‘I will talk’.

**Stative**, or **resultative**, has default time reference to the present and refers to a state. For most verbs this is the resulting state of the event named by the verb; see more on the stative below.

(122) Jrā õ-ô dē-lē.  
lion 3SG-ST+ kill-RES  
‘The lion is killed’.

**Conditional** is used in certain cases in temporal and conditional subordinate clauses, see 13.5 for more detail.

(123) Mìn mī wš-lëjí ci nā mì wåjí yè.  
2SG:CND 2SG hand-child cut[BSQ] TOP 2SG:HAB+ blood see:L  
‘When you cut your finger you see blood’.

**Optative** expresses a wish when used in an independent clause:

(124) ņ̃ wlà.  
1SG:HAB+ laugh[BSQ]  
‘Let me laugh!’

**Imperative** is largely formally identical to the optative:
(125) Kà drū.
2PL:HAB+ walk[Bsq]
‘Go for a walk!’ (to more than one addressee or to an elderly person)

There are however minor differences in subject pronoun realization between the imperative and the optative. Indeed, imperatives are peculiar compared to all other TAM values. First, in the imperative the 2SG subject pronoun is omitted. Second, 1PL imperatives distinguish the number of the addressee. When addressing a single person urging her to do something together with the speaker, one uses the regular 1PL pronoun ăŋ̀ (which one could also call 1st person dual). When the speaker addresses more than one person, or one elderly person in a polite way, Beng uses a combination of 1PL and 2PL pronouns ăŋ̀ kà instead of a single subject pronoun to mark a request to something together with the speaker:

(126) Āŋ̀ drū.
1PL:HAB+ walk:L
‘Let’s go for a walk!’ (to one person)

(127) Āŋ̀ kà drū
1PL:HAB+ 2PL:HAB+ walk:L
‘Let’s go for a walk together!’ (to more than one addressee or to an elderly person).

Perfect has default time reference to the present and expresses perfect aspect (similar to the English Present Perfect).

(128) Ḣ nū-nā
1SG:PST+ come-PRF
‘I have come’.

12.1.4. Stative vs. perfect. Stative, or resultative, refers to a state; usually but not always this state results from an event denoted by the verb. Perfect refers to a recent event that hasn’t yet lost its relevance to the speaker; usually the resulting state of that event is still present. So stative and perfect are applicable to similar classes of situations, and are interchangeable in many contexts without affecting truth conditions. Still, the two constructions have different semantics, and therefore also have some contrasting properties.

First, the perfect aspect refers to an event leading to the result state and combines with modifiers that describe that event (129); stative/resultative cannot (130):

(129) Yrī lè ő drà-nā gblē.
tree DEF 3SG:PST+ fall-PRF yesterday
‘The tree fell yesterday’ (and is still lying on the ground).
Second, perfect and stative have pragmatic differences. Perfect is not used if the event of entering the resulting state is not relevant. For example, the verb ‘to know’ is usually used in the stative, since the event of getting to know something is comparatively rarely at issue. In an evidential scenario where the occurrence of an event is inferred from the resulting state (‘the tree obviously fell as evidenced by the fact that it’s lying on the ground’), again stative is used since the resulting state is more salient than the event itself. Similarly, stative/resultative is used to describe present results of distant events that are no longer relevant themselves. However, if the result of an event is the very fact of its occurrence (‘Yes I have been to Paris’), the event can be relevant for an indefinitely long time, an in this case perfect (the so-called experiential perfect), not stative, is used.

Third, while every verb can be used in the perfect, not all verbs occur in the stative. Verbs that enter the causative-inchoative alternation (see 12.2.2) are used in the stative intransitively but not transitively. Perfect is formed regardless of transitivity, compare:

(131a) \( ŋ̃́ ŋlū trī-nā. \)
\( 1SG:PST+ \) head blacken-PRF
‘I have colored my hair black’.

(131b) \( ŋ̄ dr:j ŋi̱ ō trī-nā. \)
1SG shirt 3SG:PST+ blacken-PRF
‘My shirt has gotten black (dirty)’.

(132a) \( *ŋ- ŋlū trī-lē. \)
1SG-ST+ head blacken-RES
(‘I have a black head’.)

(132b) \( ōk ŋ dr:j ŋi̱ ō trī-lē. \)
1SG shirt 3SG-ST+ blacken-RES
‘My shirt is black (dirty)’.

(133) \( Ń klē drā-nā. \)
1SG:PST+ bag drop-PRF
‘I have dropped a bag’.
(134) Ŋ klé ̄ drà-nà.
   1SG bag 3SG:PST+ drop-PRF
   ‘My bag has dropped’.

(135a) *Ŋ-ó klé drà-lè.
       1SG-ST+ bag drop-RES
   (‘I have a bag dropped’.)

(135b) Ōk Ņ klé ő-ő drà-lè.
       1SG bag 3SG-ST+ drop-RES
   ‘My bag is lying dropped’.

These restrictions have a simple semantic explanation if we assume that a clause describing an eventuality can’t include among its syntactic arguments one that is not a semantic participant of the eventuality. Stative/resultative, as already mentioned, denotes a state. States that the causative-inchoative verbs introduce have only one semantic participant, the patient, expressed by the subject of the inchoative use of the verb and the object of the causative use. The event leading to that state can have either one participant, the patient, in the intransitive use or two, the patient and the causer, in the transitive use. In other words, in causative-inchoative verbs there is an asymmetry between the event and its resulting state: while the event can include the causer among the semantic participants, the result state normally won’t. This lines up perfectly with the facts in (131-135): the stative, denoting a state, can only combine with the patient but not the causer that is not a participant of the state, so only intransitive usages are allowed. The perfect, which refers to an event, can combine with both participants of the event, so it is compatible with transitive uses.

As I just argued, admissibility of stative has semantic explanation; transitivity of the verb is a factor only as long as it correlates with the event structure. Indeed, stative construction is perfectly legitimate if both the subject and the object of the verb correspond to participants of the resulting state:

(136a) Ņ-ő mī dğ-lè.
       1SG-ST+ 2SG know-RES
   ‘I know you’.

(136b) Ņ-ő mī yē-lè.
       1SG-ST+ 2SG see-RES
   ‘I see you’.
(137a) Ù-ô ṵ̈ dînè.
3SG-ST+ 1SG send.courier-RES
‘I am his courier’.

(137b) Ï-ô lê̱j dôdô-lè.
1SG-ST+ child put.on.back-RES
‘I have a child on my back’.

Conversely, if a verb is intransitive but atelic, i.e. does not come with a natural resulting state, it does not form the stative:

(138) *Ï-ô drù-lè.
1SG-ST+ walk-RES
*(‘I am walked’.)

One more class of cases where the stative of a transitive verb is acceptable includes resulting states that are not simply caused by an agent’s action but are maintained with the agent’s involvement, cf. :

(139a) Ù-ô à méľá-lè.
3SG-ST+ 3SG fall-RES
‘He is keeping him on the ground’ (‘he is keeping him fallen’),

compare the simple preterite construction of the same verb :

(139b) Ù à méľá.
3SG:PST+ 3SG fall
‘He felled him on the ground’.

12.1.5. Periphrastic expression of tense and aspect. In addition to the fully grammaticalized constructions for TAM values described earlier, Beng also has periphrastic ways of expressing progressive and future tense. The alternative progressive construction consists of the stative series of pronouns followed by a verb phrase where the verb bears the event nominalization suffix and is accompanied by the postposition mà. This “progressive II” is structurally similar to the “progressive I” construction, with the difference that it employs postposition mà, not lò as the standard progressive I does. Another difference is that progressive I has phonological peculiarities (see 6.4) that no longer allow to clearly separate it into a combination of a nominalized verb form with a postposition; indeed, speakers do not perceive the mà progressive form as one word but as two (pêlè mà ‘saying’), the way they perceive the lò progressive form (pêlèlò). There is a subtle semantic difference between progressive I and progressive II: the latter tends to imply that the eventuality has been going on for a while, so it could be labelled ‘continual progressive’, for example:
Periphrastic future with intentional flavor, similar to the English *to be going to* construction, is expressed by combinations of verbs *tá* ‘to go’ or *nů* ‘to come’ and the goal converb:

(141) \[ Nrá-ló \ dê \ cíf-yâ. \]

1 SG:ST+:go-PROG (kind of a tree) cut-Gl

‘I am going to cut down the dê tree’.

The auxiliary verb in the periphrastic future construction varies, producing slightly different semantics.

- The verb *nů* ‘to come’ in periphrastic future implies that the action will take place where the subject is now; the verb *tá* ‘to go’ implies that the action will take place elsewhere.
- The auxiliary can be in the progressive form or in the future. Progressive indicates the intention to start the action immediately, while the future form signals that the action would be started in the future.

### 12.2. Argument structure of verbal clauses

#### 12.2.1. Subject.

The syntactic subject in Beng has several features that distinguish it from other NP positions.

- The subject NP is doubled by subject series of pronouns.
- The subject binds reflexive pronouns in direct or indirect object positions:

(142) \[ Ò \ â-drâ \ bò \ fiâ \ sə̀j \ sê \ mà. \]

3 SG:HAB+ 3 SG-Refl raise:L better person all SUPER

‘He believes himself to be better than all the people’.

(143) \[ Mj \ vî \ mî-drâ \ nî. \]

2 SG:HAB+ love:L 2 SG:Refl BENEF

‘You love yourself’.

- The sentential subject binds the subject of the goal converb (used only with a few motion verbs, see 6.5):

(144a) \[ ñî \ drü-yâ. \]

1 SG:PST+ come:L walk-Gl

‘I came for a walk’.
(144b) *_texts that exceed the available space will be marked as such.*

\[1sg:pst+ \text{ work do:L walk-GL}
\]

(*I worked for a walk.*)

- The sentential subject controls the null subject participant of verb nominalization with certain matrix predicates:

(145) \[m˨ \text{ pš dù-lé njũbí.}
\]

\[2sg:pst+ \text{ thing cook-NMLZ begin:L}
\]

‘You began to cook’.

- The sentential subject controls the null subject of the locative nominalization used as a converb of simultaneous action:

(146) \[∅ ■ j Dr̄ wカテゴリー yà nά nj-ó j ŋò j yè.
\]

\[work do:PLC \text{ TOP 1sg:pst+ 3pl see:L}
\]

‘I saw them while working’ (I, not them, was working).

When the subject of the converb is not null, it does not have to be coreferent to the sentential subject:

(147) \[ŋò j dr̄ wカテゴリー yà nά mά j njò j yè.
\]

\[3pl \text{ work do:PLC TOP 1sg:pst+ 3pl see:L}
\]

‘I saw them while they were working’.

(148) \[ŋò j trí-yά nά nj-ó dά njò j lo j nš.
\]

\[3pl \text{ return-PLC TOP 1sg:pst+ find[BSQ] 3pl SUPER here}
\]

‘When they will be going back I will find them here’.

12.2.2. Direct object and lability in Beng. Direct object in Beng always precedes the verb and can never be omitted. A transitive verb requires a direct object in the form of an overt NP, an object pronoun, or both. Direct object is equally obligatory with all derivatives of transitive verbs (goal converb, agent nominalization, nominalizations in -ya and -lɛ). If the object is semantically underspecified or irrelevant (as in The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy), one has to employ in the direct object position semantically impoverished nouns sɔŋ ‘person’ (for animate objects, including people and animals), pš ‘thing’ (for inanimate objects), žά ‘matter’ (for abstract objects). These nouns function essentially as indefinite pronouns. Examples:

(149) \[ŋ-ó pš blē.
\]

\[1sg:st+ \text{ thing eat}
\]

‘I will eat’.
(150) Ḍò sỳ̀ dè.
    3PL:HAB person kill:L
    ‘They kill’.

(151) Ó zá pè.
    3SG:PST matter say:L
    ‘He said (something)’.

(152) Dé fə̃ o pɔ̄ cǐ ŋ̣ bè̃̀ sè̃ ˈ o lɔ̀ nà?
    who Rel 3SG:PST+ thing cut:L 1SG machete DEF with TOP
    ‘Who has been cutting with my machete?’

With verbs cá ‘to watch’, yē ‘to see’, klù ‘to dig’, klůklù ‘to dig, to clean up’, tů̀
‘to leave’, and wľā ‘to sweep’, the semantically impoverished object can be expressed
not only with the generic pɔ̄ ‘thing’ but also with bľī ‘place’ (pɔ̄ / bľī yē ‘to see
(something)’, pɔ̄ / bľī cá ‘to watch (something)’, pɔ̄ / bľī wľā ‘to sweep (someplace)’);
native speakers find no semantic contrast between the variants with pɔ̄ and bľī used as
an underspecified object with these verbs.

Beng has a handful of A-labile verbs, i.e. verbs that occur both transitively and
intransitively without any change in the semantic role of the subject. Here is a list of
such verbs with examples of optional objects in parentheses: (dr̃) blǎ ‘to stop
(work)’; a recent Baule borrowing (pɔ̄) fɔ̀tú ‘to give advice’; (sỳ̀) kákà ‘to cause
itching (in someone)’; (pɔ̄) lǎmɔ ‘to step over (something)’, (zá) zázà ‘to argue (on
something)’. All of these verbs except for the borrowing fɔ̀tú, show A-lability in only
one word sense out of several. Two other lexically A-labile verbs of Beng are (pɔ̄)
klůg ‘to steal (something)’ and (sỳ̀) pòpò ‘to ask (somebody)’.

Verbs wľā ‘to laugh’ and wľāwľā ‘to smile’ are also A-labile, with the added
direct object expressing the semantic role of stimulus (‘to laugh at someone’, ‘to
smile at someone’).

A-lability is a regular property of manner of motion verbs in Beng. In their
transitive use, the direct object takes the semantic role of path, as in the following
example:

(153) Ó pɔ̄ dú drù.
    3SG:PST+ field walk
    ‘He walked through a field’,

    where pɔ̄ is a direct object; compare

(154) Ó dú pɔ̄ dú.
    3SG:PST+ walk field
‘He walked in a field’,
where pū is a sentential modifier.
The verb gbā ‘to give’ is A-labile in passive usages, see below.

There is another group of predicates, in addition to the verbs mentioned above, that exhibit a superficially A-labile pattern but differ in internal structure. Predicates of this group are idiomatic phrases that consist of a verb and noun in the direct object position, with an optional object filling essentially the noun’s possessor slot. Such complex verbs include: (X) gblój dā ‘to pay a fine (optional object: with X)’ (the word gblój is never used outside of this expression; dā is a polysemous verb which participates in many idiomatic expressions), (X) kój bō ‘to revenge (for X)’ (kój ‘revenge’, bō ‘to take out’), (X) yé suá ‘to pray (for someone)’ (yé ‘mouth’, suá ‘splash’). In all of those the semantic object is optional, for instance:

(155) Ó (à dě lě) kój bō.
3SG:PST+ 3SG father DEF revenge V:L
‘He took revenge (for his father)’.

In contrast to the limited scope of A-lability in Beng, P-lability, i.e. the alternation between the subject of an intransitive verb and the direct object of a transitive usage of the same verb expressing the same semantic role, is widespread. Most verbs that can have transitive uses (457 out of 55314) can also have intransitive uses characterized by P-lability. Semantically, there are three types of relation between the transitive and the intransitive usages:

• reflexive: Ó lě́j ṇ̣̀ ṇ̣̀ zṛ̣̀. ‘He washed the child’. – Ó zṛ̣̀. ‘He washed’;
• (de)causative: Ó kp̣̣̀́j ṇ̣̀ ṭ̣̀. ‘He opened the door’. – Kp̣̣̀́j ṇ̣̀ ó ṭ̣̀. ‘The door opened’;
• passive: Ó j̣̣̣́j̣̣̣ ḷ̣̣ ḍ̣̣̣. ‘He killed the lion’. – J̣̣̣̣ j̣̣̣ ḷ̣̣́ ḍ̣̣̣. ‘The lion was killed’.15

The distinction between passive and decausative can be hard to draw in practice: passive (J̣̣̣ j̣̣̣ ḷ̣̣́ ḍ̣̣̣. ‘The lion was killed’) implies involvement of an agentive

---

14 Units counted here and below are word senses, since different senses of the same verb often differ in the argument structures they admit.

15 Agent cannot be expressed in the ‘passive’ usages of P-labile verbs in Beng, so according to Xolodovič (1970) this passive type should be called ‘object quasipassive’ (‘passive’ proper in Xolodovič’s system is reserved to passives with an overt agent). However, this agentless type of passive is known to be typologically more common than the ‘proper’ passive with an oblique agent phrase, to the extent that Keenan and Dryer (2007) even call agentless passives ‘basic’ and generalize that if a language has any passives it has basic, agentless, ones.
participant\(^{16}\), while decausative (‘the door opened’) does not imply the presence of an agent or even the fact of causation. But whether a statement logically implies a cause or an underlying agent’s activity can be a hard judgment.

The boundary between decausative and reflexive is also somewhat blurry (Letučij 2006: 25). And indeed, under closer consideration reflexive usages of P-labile verbs reveal the availability of decausative or passive interpretation; for example, the paradigmatic case of reflexive interpretation, sentence ő zrô, normally interpreted as ‘S/he washed (himself/herself)’, can also mean ‘She was washed (by someone)’, and is used with this meaning when referring to ritual bathing of girls during initiation.

To summarize, the \textit{a priori} distinction between the semantic types of P-lability turns out to be quite blurry in reality. It would be desirable to treat the three variants semantically in a uniform way as the alternation between ‘S does V to O’ and ‘V occurs to O’, and to leave to pragmatics the subtle questions on whether ‘V occurs to O’ implies an S that does V (passive), and whether that S is identical to O (reflexive).

\textbf{12.2.3. Secondary object in Beng in the light of the typology of ditransitive constructions.} Ditransitive constructions, i.e. clauses that realize a predicate with its agent, recipient, and theme (object of transfer), have not been subject to typologuical scrutiny until recently. I rely here on the terminology introduced in (Haspelmath 2006a). Haspelmath distinguishes three strategies of ditransitive marking: indirective (theme is marked as a direct object, recipient as an indirect object), secundative (recipient is marked like a direct object, theme as a ‘secondary’ object), and neutral (recipient and theme have the same marking). The main ditransitive strategy in Beng is secundative: the recipient takes the direct object position, and the theme (object of transfer) occupies a special postverbal secondary object position. The secondary object is a noun phrase, never followed by a postposition or a doubling pronoun, which immediately follows the verb. Unlike the secondary object of the ditransitive construction, other indirect objects are marked with postpositions. Most often the secondary object is a dependent of the verb gbà ‘to give’, but at least two other verbs, \textit{blī} \textit{pōpō}, are also attested in the secundative ditransitive construction, compare:

\begin{align*}
(156a) & \quad \text{Ó} & \quad \text{mī} & \quad \text{gbà} & \quad \text{yí}. \\
& \quad 3\text{SG:PST+} & \quad 2\text{SG} & \quad \text{give:L} & \quad \text{water} \\
& \quad \text{‘He gave you water’}.
\end{align*}

\begin{align*}
(156b) & \quad \text{Ó} & \quad \text{ī} & \quad \text{pōpō} & \quad \text{wált} \\
& \quad 3\text{SG:PST+} & \quad 1\text{SG} & \quad \text{ask:L} & \quad \text{money}
\end{align*}

\(^{16}\) More precisely, the participant whose semantic role equals that of the subject of the verb in the transitive usage.
Grammatical sketch of Beng

‘He asked me for money’.

(156c)  Mpà  bì  mlè.
   2SG:PST+  3SG bury:L chicken

‘You sacrificed a chicken for his funeral’ (literally ‘You buried him with a chicken’).

From the viewpoint of case and adposition marking (so-called ‘flagging’), the ditransitive construction in Beng is neutral: both the recipient and the theme are zero-marked. This is a strong areal trait of languages of sub-Saharan Africa (Haspelmath 2005a).

From the viewpoint of word order and pronominal agreement (‘indexing’) this construction is secundative: the preverbal recipient is doubled by object pronouns like preverbal direct objects of transitive verbs, while the ditransitive theme is never doubled with a pronoun:

(157)  Ó  Kòlá  gbà  lókló  bì  lè  (*à).
   3SG:PST+  Kola  3SG give:L child this DEF 3SG

‘He gave this child to Kola’.

Beng, like the 22 languages from Haspelmath’s sample with secundative indexing (Haspelmath 2006a; 12), has no agreement with the theme, not distinctive agreement marking that would contrast with that of the recipient.

Besides, the recipient, like the object of a typical transitive verb, has to be overtly expressed, while the object of transfer can be omitted. Moreover, personal pronouns, even emphatic ones, are banned from the secondary object position:

(158)  Ó  à-yá.
   3SG:PST+  1PL give  3SG-EMPH

‘He gave it to us’ (pronoun after the verb is degraded).

Compare the superficially similar postverbal position of nominal predicate with the copular verb lè ‘to be, to make’ where emphatic pronouns can be used:

(159)  Ó  lè  à-yá.
   3SG:PST+  COP:L  3SG-FOC

‘It was him’ (postverbal pronoun can’t be omitted).

In case it is necessary to name the object of transfer with a pronoun, it can only be done periphrastically, in a structure that closely resembles one found in Baule (Creissels, Kouadio 1977):

(160)  Ó  kàsrà  ó  jà  dà  gbà.
   3SG:PST  2PL take:L  3SG:PST  1SG mother give:L
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‘He gave you (plural) to my mother’ (literally: ‘He took you, he gave to my mother’).

The fact that personal pronouns can’t be secondary objects contrasts them with non-pronominal NPs. In a sense, Beng shows “split ditransitivity”. As in the other cases of split ditransitivity, as well as in many cases of split transitivity, it is the definiteness scale that determines the split, personal pronouns being an extreme point on the scale.

Typologically, the combination of secundative strategy for pronominal elements (ban on pronouns in the secondary object position contrasts with the direct object position in transitive and ditransitive clauses) and a neutral strategy (in terms of adposition marking) for full NPs is in accordance with the universal tendency: higher ranked elements from the definiteness scale tend towards more secundative marking and lower ranked elements gravitate towards more indirective marking (Haspelmath 2006b: 15). For instance, Maltese uses the neutral strategy for personal pronouns, and the indirective strategy for other NPs (Comrie 2004). Another example is French that employs the neutral strategy for locutor pronouns (*me, te, nous, vous*) and indirective marking for all other elements (*le: lui, les: leur*, NP:*à + NP*).

The ditransitive construction alternates in a way that closely resembles P-lability. However, it is the secondary object, not the direct object, that gets promoted into the subject position. The direct object under such a ‘passive’ transformation is optional:

(161) Wáli  lè  ó  (mí)  gbà.
    money  DEF  3SG:PST+  2SG  give:L
    ‘The money was given (to you)’.

12.2.4. Nominal predicate. Immediately following the main verb, one can also find the secondary predicate, expressed by an NP, an emphatic (focus) pronoun, an adjective phrase, or a stative verb form. Semantically, a nominal predicate can either depend on the copula verb *lè* ‘to be, to make’ or be a secondary predicate:

(162) Ó  lè  ī  dē.
    3SG:PST+  COP  1SG  father
    ‘This is my father’.

(163) Ó  lè  māŋ̄.
    3SG :PST+  COP  1SG:EMPH
    ‘It was me’.

(164) Ó  à  lè  klō.
    3SG :PST+  3SG  COP  little
Grammatical sketch of Beng

‘He made it little’.

(165) Ọ à yè yātró-lè.
3SG :PST+ 3SG see sit-RES
‘He saw him sitting’.

(166) Ọ à lù klû-pə.
3SG :PST+ 3SG buy dig- MEN
‘He bought this to dig’ (literally ‘as a digging tool’).

The subject of the nominal predicate is always coreferent to the direct object or to the intransitive subject of the main verb.

12.2.5. Sentential modifiers and arguments with postpositions. Many verbs (also adjectives in the comparative construction, see the section on adjectival clauses in 12.4) govern indirect objects with a postposition. Almost any postposition can be selected for, with the exception of kúmà ‘because of’. Postposition choice can be idiosyncratic and lack semantic motivation. For instance, gbé ‘to exceed’ selects for the postposition mī (used only with this verb), the verb dà ‘to fall’ when used in the sense ‘to help’ selects the postposition dî which usually expresses APUD localization ‘near’), the verb kàflê ‘to ask for protection’ selects postposition mà (regular meaning CONT ‘on’). Examples:

(167) Ìò-ò gbé bū mì.
3PL-ST+ exceed ten P
‘There will be more than ten of them’.

(168) Ọ-ò dà mī dî.
3SG-ST+ fall 2SG APUD
‘He will help you’.

(169) Ìò-ò kàflê ì mà.
3PL-ST+ trust 1SG CONT
‘They will ask me for protection’.

Emotion predicates tend to require not a direct object but an indirect object with the benefactive postposition nî (X in the examples below stands for the NP argument of the verb): fëë sî X nî ‘to be beware of X’, kókò X nî ‘to worry for X’, kpɔ X nî ‘to hate X’, prɔ X nî ‘to be disgusted with X’, vî X nî ‘to love X’, yëŋ X nî ‘to be afraid of X’, yëŋre X nî ‘to be ashamed for X’.

This is somewhat unexpected typologically, since crosslinguistically the argument of an experiential predicate marked like a benefactive is the experiencer, cf. literature
on dative subjects (Bhaskararao, Subbarao 2004), (Verma, Mohanan 1990), etc. On the other hand, the intransitive status of emotion verbs in Beng fits well into Tsunoda’s transitivity hierarchy (Tsunoda 1985): Direct effect > Perception > Pursuit > Knowledge > Feeling > Relationship > Ability. In Beng, the line between transitive and intransitive verbs is drawn to the left of Feeling verbs, while in European languages this line is on the right of the Feeling class.

The emotion verbs listed above are just one semantically motivated class of Beng verbs that select for postpositions but translate as transitive verbs in European languages. In fact, Beng verbs that govern an indirect object which corresponds to a direct object in European languages are numerous. Examples (170-173) provide several illustrations:

(170)  
\[ Òzú ñ̄lù. \]
3SG:PST+ offend:L 1SG SUB

‘He offended me’.

(171)  
\[ Òlîlá ñ̄mà. \]
3SG:PST+ beat.up:L 1SG CONT

‘He beat me up’.

(172)  
\[ Òm\[l̃]ò ñ̄lô. \]
3SG:PST+ meet:L 1SG c

‘He met me’.

(173)  
\[ Òdå ñ̄lô. \]
3SG:PST+ find 1SG SUPER

‘He found me’.

Of course, in some of those cases one can find metaphorical motivation for the particular postposition used, some of which even find analogs in better-known languages. For example, postposition lô selected by the verb då ‘to fall’ when used in the sense of ‘to find’ has an exact equivalent in the Russian prefix na- in najti ‘to find;’ both lô and na- can be translated into English as on, and the Beng and the Russian expressions of ‘to find’ have similar literal meanings (‘to fall on something’ and ‘to come/step on something’). In both cases the SUPER localization is motivated by the prototypical situation of finding an object on the ground, at the finder’s feet. Postposition lô ‘with’ of the verb m\[l̃] ‘to meet’ is motivated by the symmetry of the roles of two participants of the meeting event, etc.

At least 30 Beng verbs select an indirect object that corresponds to a direct object in English, French, and Russian (4% among the 705 verb senses in my database).
There are also converse cases, where a direct object in Beng corresponds to an indirect object in European languages, compare:

\[
\begin{align*}
(174) & \quad \overset{\text{3SG:PST+}}{O} p\ddot{s} b\ddot{a} \overset{\text{L}}{\ddot{y}} m\ddot{a}. \\
& \quad \text{3SG:PST+ thing touch:L 1SG CONT}
\end{align*}
\]

‘He touched me with something’ (literally ‘He touched some thing on me’), compare transitive French *toucher*, Russian *trogat’* etc.

\[
(175) \quad \overset{\text{1SG neck}}{\ddot{y}} \overset{\text{3SG:PST+}}{l\ddot{o}} \ddot{o} \overset{\text{L}}{\ddot{y}} s\ddot{e}.
\]

‘My neck ached’ (literally ‘My neck ached me’).

In contrast to the direct/indirect object, subjects of Beng verbs are almost always translated into English, French, or Russian as syntactic subjects. We observe that subjects are more cross-linguistically stable as compared to direct objects. This fact can be seen as an argument for greater semantic grounding of the notion of subject. In Aleksandr Kibrik’s terminology (Kibrik 2004), the Principal hyperrole expressed by the subject is no less semantically motivated than the Patientive hyperrole marked as the direct object, despite the greater semantic abstractness of the former that raises understandable doubts in its existence (Testelec 2003: 33).

Non-locative postpositions *nì, mà, lò, kúmà*, and *wó* (*mà* and *wó* also admit locative usages) are used in semantically transparent ways to form modifiers of sentences or indirect objects.

The postposition *nì* has a general benefactive meaning:

\[
(176) \quad \overset{\text{1SG:PST+}}{\ddot{y}} \overset{\text{run}}{b\ddot{e}} \overset{\text{2SG}}{m\ddot{i} \ddot{n} \ddot{i}}.
\]

‘I ran for you’.

\[
(177) \quad T\ddot{a} \overset{\text{go earth little one}}{b\ddot{a}} \overset{\text{dig 1SG}}{k\ddot{u} \ddot{y} \ddot{n} \ddot{i}}.
\]

‘Go dig a bit of earth for me’.

\[
(178) \quad \overset{\text{1SG:ST+}}{N\ddot{r} \ddot{a}} \overset{\text{go trap DEF}}{b\ddot{a} \ddot{j} \ddot{n} \ddot{i}} \overset{\text{set-GL 3PL}}{k\ddot{\ddot{a}}-y\ddot{a} \ddot{y} \ddot{n} \ddot{i} \ddot{f}l\ddot{u} \ddot{z} \ddot{z}}.
\]

‘I am going to set traps for them tomorrow’.

As a spinoff of the benefactive meaning, *nì* can mark the role of addressee:

\[
(179) \quad \overset{\text{3SG:PST+}}{O} \overset{\text{matter this DEF}}{z\ddot{a} \ddot{b} \ddot{i} \ddot{l} \ddot{e} \ddot{p} \ddot{e} \ddot{m} \ddot{\ddot{i} \ddot{n} \ddot{i}}.
\]

‘He told me about this matter’.
The addressee is encoded with the postposition n̂i with the following predicates (X in the examples strands for the NP variable): kó̃li dà X n̂i ‘to express condolences to X’, ftú X n̂i ‘to tell the truth to X’, fštìu X n̂i ‘to give advice to X’, klɔ̃ŋ̄ bí X n̂i ‘to tell a secret to X’ (literally ‘to stick a nail to X’), lā X n̂i ‘to show X (something), to teach X (something), to introduce (someone) to X’ etc. The only verb of speech that is not compatible with a n̂i-marked addressee is the intransitive jò ‘to talk’ which requires postposition lò ‘with’ to mark the addressee.

The postposition lò expresses the semantic role of instrument (132, 137), means (133, 135), comitative (134, 136) or manner (157):

(180) Ṭ-ó dré wò-ɔ̀ló kpálé lò.
1SG-ST+ work do-PROG hoe with
‘I am working with a hoe’.

(181) Ō ū bòyà mlé dō lò.
3SG:PST 1SG gift:L chicken one with
‘He gave me a chicken’.

(182) Dé ó yrā-lè mì lò?
who ST+ be.located-RES 2SG with
‘Who lives with you?’

(183) Ṭ-ó nū ū bèŋ̄ nì ză dā à lò.
1SG:HAB+ come 1SG barn DEF mat fall 3SG with
‘I will make of it a mat for my barn’.

(184) Ṭó nú léŋ̄ dūtēnēŋ̄ pé lò.
3PL:PST+ come:L child only just with
‘They came with only one child’.

(185) Ṭà zì jë tòŋbóí lò kā pɔũ zrē lè yë ě.
3PL:HAB- can pass car with 2PL field road DEF mouth NEG
‘One can’t drive a car on your field road’.

The postposition mà competes with the benefactive n̂i in addressee marking with several predicates: yé súá ‘to pray’, klɔ̃ŋ̄ bí ‘to tell a secret’, n̂imùŋ̄ ‘to insist’ etc. For example, mà is interchangeable with n̂i in the following sentence:

(186) Ō à klɔ̃ŋ̄ bí-n̂i ū mà.
3SG:PST+ 3SG nail stick-PRF 1SG CONT
‘He told me about this as a secret’.

80
The postpositions wó ‘in’ and klé ‘behind, after’ have temporal meanings besides the locative ones:

(187) mĩ tá-lé klé
2SG go-NMLZ POST
‘after your departure’,

bàāŋ wó ‘during the dry season’, kpāŋā wó ‘in the third month of the traditional calendar’, yímí lè wó ‘in Ramadan’ etc. Postposition wó can also mark the stimulus of the following reaction predicates: gblé X wó ‘to complain (to someone) about his action X’, dɔ X wó ‘to accept X’, yé ká X wó ‘to discuss X’, kɔ̀ŋ bō X wó ‘to take revenge for X’, wē X wó ‘to agree with X’, yēdā X wó ‘to reply to (person) X’.

Lastly, the postposition kúmā marks the cause of a situation:

(188) Ó drá mĩ kúmā.
3SG:PST+ fall 2SG because.of
‘He fell because of you’.

12.2.6. NPs in postverbal position. There are a few classes of non-locative NPs that can occur postverbally. One case is temporal nouns:

(189) Ó nú yrú.
3SG:PST+ come:L night
‘He came at night’.

Another case is NPs with numerals (or sometimes bare numerals) which exhibit a special case of quantifier float where the whole quantified NP (QNP) is floated:

(190) Ājú nú sêŋ plāŋ.
1PL:PST+ come:L person two
‘We came, the two of us’.

Often a floated quantified NP is accompanied by a personal pronoun of the non-subject series. The pronoun marks the person and number of the referent that the quantified NP describes:

(191) Ājú à wò ōŋ sêŋ plāŋ.
1PL:PST+ 3SG do :L 1PL person two
‘We did it, the two of us’.

In the absence of a pronoun the floated QNP is coreferent with the subject of a one-place predicate or the direct or indirect object of a transitive verb. (Speakers do not have an intuition on the interpretation of floated QNPs with the ditransitive verb ‘to give’: such examples do not seem to occur naturally and when presented with a constructed example, the speakers find it difficult to grasp its exact meaning.)
Practically any NP with a numeral can be found in the floated QNP context, effectively binding one of the pronoun arguments of the verb. The grammatical number of the QNP is determined by the semantic definiteness of its referent (not by the formal marking as articles are typically absent from NPs with numerals): indefinite QNP are singular and require a singular pronoun, while definite QNPs are plural:

(193) M̀̀lè́ yè lè́ yā̀̀.  
2SG:PST+ 3SG have:L child three  
‘You had three children’.

(194) M̀̀lè́ yè lè́ yā̀̀.  
2SG:PST+ 3PL have:L child three  
‘Your children were three in number’.

Besides the temporal NPs and QNP float, postverbal NPs include subjects of the verb gū̀̀ ‘to remain’, which allows almost any NP to be used postverbally as the semantic subject, while the surface subject position is filled by the “expletive” 3SG pronoun:17

(195) Ó̀ gū̀̀-nā Kòlā.  
3SG:PST+ remain-PRF Kola  
‘Kola remains’.

12.2.7. Adverbs. Finally, the postverbal position hosts adverbs such as kpà̀ ‘a lot’ or drū̀-lè̀ ‘in the morning’:

(196) Àbà wálè̀ lè́ ó́ tó kpà̀.  
father yam DEF 3SG:PST+ yield:L much  
‘My father’s yam produced a great yield’.

(197) Í́ nú drú-lè̀́.  
1SG:PST+ come:L morning-TEMP  
‘I came in the morning’.

17 An anonymous reviewer notes that in many West African languages, ‘remain’ is the only intransitive verb allowing for a construction with an inverted subject and an expletive 3rd person pronoun in the canonical subject position. So the construction with postverbal subjects of ‘remain’ seems to be an areal syntactic feature.
12.3. Word order in verbal sentences

Beng has a strict Subject Object Verb order. Other constituents follow the verb. Their relative order is in turn subject to constraints.

The secondary object (theme in the ditransitive construction) cannot be separated from the verb by any constituent:

\[(198a) \quad \text{Ó} \quad \eta m\dot{\text{à}} \quad \text{wápló} \quad gbl\dot{\text{ë}} \quad \text{3gs:PST+ 1SG:give:L fufu yesterday} \]

(‘He gave me fufu yesterday’.)

\[(198b) \quad *\text{Ó} \quad \eta m\dot{\text{à}} \quad gbl\dot{\text{ë}} \quad \text{wápló} \quad \text{3gs:PST+ 1SG:give:L fufu yesterday} \]

(‘He gave me fufu yesterday’. (198b) is acceptable only in the reading ‘He gave me yesterday’s fufu’ where gblë ‘yesterday’ modifies wápló ‘fufu’).

Other elements that can’t be separated from the verb include nominal predicates and indirect objects with a postposition selected by the verb, for example:

\[(199a) \quad \text{Ó} \quad \text{vì} \quad \text{wápló} \quad \text{nì} \quad \text{Kòlåå kúmåå.} \quad \text{3SG:HAB+ love:L fufu BENEF Kola because.of} \]

(‘He loves fufu because of Kola’).

\[(199b) \quad *\text{Ó} \quad \text{vì} \quad \text{Kòlåå kúmåå} \quad \text{wápló} \quad \text{nì}. \quad \text{3SG:HAB+ love:L Kola because.of fufu BENEF} \]

(‘He loves fufu because of Kola’).

\[(200a) \quad \text{Ó} \quad \text{zú} \quad \text{mì} \quad \text{lù} \quad \text{Kòlåå kúmåå.} \quad \text{3SG:PST+ offend 2SG SUB Kola because.of} \]

(‘He offended you because of Kola’).

\[(200b) \quad *\text{Ó} \quad \text{zú} \quad \text{Kòlåå kúmåå} \quad \text{mì} \quad \text{lù}. \quad \text{3SG:PST+ offend Kola because.of 2SG SUB} \]

(‘He offended you because of Kola’).

Indirect objects that are not idiosyncratically selected by the verb can be separated. Separability correlates with the traditional argument vs. adjunct distinction but the real factor seems to be not the semantic obligatoriness of the participant, compare examples (201-202), but whether the postposition has its own semantic contribution or is syntactically selected by the verb.

\[(201a) \quad \text{Ó} \quad \text{à} \quad \text{pè} \quad gbl\dot{\text{ë}} \quad \text{g} \quad \text{nì}. \quad \text{3SG:PST+ 3SG say:L yesterday 1SG BENEF} \]

(‘He told this to me yesterday’).
Another restriction on modifier ordering is that temporal modifiers never precede locative ones:

(203a) \( \text{Ó } z\text{rā } n\text{ū } gb\text{lē}. \)
\[ \begin{align*}
3\text{SG:PST+} & \quad 3\text{SG} \quad \text{get.lost:L} \quad \text{here} \quad \text{yesterday} \\
\end{align*} \]
‘He got lost here yesterday’.

(203b) *\( \text{Ó } z\text{rā } gb\text{lē } n\text{ū}. \)
\[ \begin{align*}
3\text{SG:PST+} & \quad 3\text{SG} \quad \text{get.lost:L} \quad \text{yesterday} \quad \text{here} \\
\end{align*} \]

The relative order of both temporal and locative modifiers with respect to other sentential adjuncts is free:

(204a) \( \text{Ó } z\text{rā } m\text{i } k\text{ūmā } n\text{ū}. \)
\[ \begin{align*}
3\text{SG:PST+} & \quad 3\text{SG} \quad \text{get.lost:L} \quad 2\text{SG} \quad \text{because.of} \quad \text{here} \\
\end{align*} \]
‘He got lost here because of you’.

(204b) \( \text{Ó } z\text{rā } n\text{ū } m\text{i } k\text{ūmā}. \)
\[ \begin{align*}
3\text{SG:PST+} & \quad 3\text{SG} \quad \text{get.lost:L} \quad \text{here} \quad 2\text{SG} \quad \text{because.of} \\
\end{align*} \]
‘He got lost here because of you’.

(205a) \( \text{Ó } z\text{rā } m\text{i } k\text{ūmā } gb\text{lē}. \)
\[ \begin{align*}
3\text{SG:PST+} & \quad 3\text{SG} \quad \text{get.lost:L} \quad 2\text{SG} \quad \text{because.of} \quad \text{yesterday} \\
\end{align*} \]
‘He got lost here yesterday because of you’.

(205b) \( \text{Ó } z\text{rā } gb\text{lē } m\text{i } k\text{ūmā}. \)
\[ \begin{align*}
3\text{SG:PST+} & \quad 3\text{SG} \quad \text{get.lost:L} \quad \text{yesterday} \quad 2\text{SG} \quad \text{because.of} \\
\end{align*} \]
‘He got lost here yesterday because of you’.
Complement and goal clauses (see 13.1) are always clause-final, although I was able to elicit marginally acceptable examples with a sentential modifier after such an embedded clause:

(206) ³A pè [kē mī nū ē] gblē.
3SG:PST+3 say:L that 2SG:PST- come:L NEG yesterday
‘He said yesterday that you hadn’t come’.

However, embedded clauses always precede the negative particle ē that occupies the ultimate rightmost position in the clause, as in (207):

(207) Wà pè [kē mī nū] ē.
3SG:PST-3 say:L that 2SG:PST+ come:L NEG
‘He didn’t say that you had come’.

To summarize, the constituent order in simple clause is as follows:
Subject + direct object + verb + secondary object / nominal predicate / strongly selected postpositional phrase + modifiers + embedded clauses + negation.

12.4. Types of verbless clauses
12.4.1. Identity (presentative) statement. Identity statement has the structure NP + particle ē (ńi in negative sentences) ‘this is’, kā ē ‘here is’, ɲḗɛ ‘now that’s’. Examples:

(208) ŧ̄dē ē.
1SG father this.is
‘This is my father’.

(209) Maŋ̄ ē.
1SG:EMPH this.is
‘This is me’.

With the addition of a second NP, such clauses become statements of reference identity or express nominal predication, compare:

(210) [Lēŋ gəŋ yāŋ] [səŋ jàtē-lî bē̃ dō] ē.
child man this person respect-AG big one this.is
‘This boy is very polite’ (literally: ‘This boy is a big respecter of people’).

12.4.2. Adverbial clause. Aderbial clauses employ NP subjects doubled with stative pronouns or stative markers, followed by an adverbial predicate: a locative phrase, an adverb phrase, a postpositional phrase, or an NP headed by an adverbial noun. Examples:
(211) Mi-ó  gbòyò lè wó.
    2SG-ST+  garden  DEF   IN
‘You (singular) are in the garden’.

(212) Kā-ā  nā  ĕ.
    2PL-ST-  here   NEG
‘You (plural) are not here’.

(213) Āŋ-ó  wlá.
    1PL-ST+  house
‘We are at home’.

(214) Ṭ-ó  à  lō.
    1SG-ST+  3SG  with
‘I am with him’.

12.4.3. Existential statements. Existential statements consist of the subject NP or a pronoun of the existential series, followed by particle wé (wā under negation):

(215a) Wlù  wé
    heat  exist
‘It is hot’.

(215b) Wlù  wā  ĕ
    heat  exist.NEG  NEG
‘It is not hot’.

A distinctive series of subject pronouns is used in existential statements, compare:

(216) Māyì  wé.
    1SG:Ex  exist
‘I exist’.

(217) Mī  wé.
    2SG:Ex  exist
‘You exist’.

(218) Ô  wé.
    3SG:Ex  exist
‘S/he exists’.
When it is necessary to use an adverbial constituent restricting the domain of existential quantification in a statement of existence, an adverbial clause is used, e.g.

(219) P5 vɔ-lè dô ó nĩ.
thing rot-NMLZ one ST+ here
‘There is something rotten here’.

Notably, the same pronouns are used under negation:

(220) Māŋ wā é.
1SG:EX exist.NEG NEG
‘I do not exist’.

(221) Mī wā é.
2SG:EX exist.NEG NEG
‘You do not exist’.

(222) Ó wā é.
3SG:EX exist.NEG NEG
‘S/he does not exist’.

12.4.4. Adjectival statements. Adjectives can be used predicatively, combining with subject NPs or subject pronouns; an optional modifier specific to this clause type is comparison reference, discussed below. Examples:

(223a) Ó gēŋ.
3SG:HAB+ beautiful
‘It is good’.

(223b) Wà-a gēŋ é.
3SG-ST- beautiful NEG
‘It is not good’.

Some words can be predicates in structures of this type but are not admitted to modify nouns. I call such words predicative adjectives:

(224a) Mī jàà!
2SG crazy
‘You are crazy!’

(224b) *gēŋ jàà dô
man crazy one
(intended: ‘a crazy man’)
Indirect object with predicative adjectives introduces the reference of comparison. It is marked with postposition ma.

(225) Àságbè bèè Gbágbè mà.
Ouassadougou big Moussobadougou CONT
‘Ouassadougou is bigger than Moussobadougou’.

With the adjective gblɛŋ ‘tall’ the reference of comparison can also take postposition ló:

(226) Làŋzè, mì gblɛŋ Bēyā ló.
Lanze 2SG:HAB+ tall Beyan SUPER
‘Lanze, you are taller than Beyan’.

12.4.5. WH question. Beng interrogative words usually occur in situ, but there is also a sentence type that provides an analog of wh fronting in the sense that the interrogative constituent takes the first position. Such wh clauses consist of a wh constituent accompanied by an optional relative clause. One could interpret such examples as instances of wh movement outside of the relative clause, but then for uniformity one should also accept that head nouns are always extracted from relative clauses that modify them. The head-internal analysis for all relative clauses has indeed been proposed on independent grounds (Kayne 1994), but has yet to earn wide acceptance. Here are two examples of wh-questions:

(227) Pɔ̀ [fɛ̀ ó sró dóbǎ lò āŋ klɛ̀ wó nɔ̃̃ ná]?
what Rel 3SG:PST+ exit:L monkey with 1PL land IN here TOP
‘What happened to the monkey in this land?’

(228) Dé [fɛ̀ ó ŋ wálɛ klùà ná]?
who Rel 3SG:PST+ 1SG yam steal TOP
‘Who stole my yam?’ (literally: ‘who that he stole my yam?’)

The exact same meaning can be expressed with wh-words in situ, in ordinary nominal or adverbial positions:

(229) Dé ó ŋ wálɛ klùà?
who 3SG:PST+ 1SG yam steal:L
‘Who stole my yam?’

(230) Kà yì̀ yè mà?
2PL:HAB+ water see:L where
‘Where do you find water?’ (literally. ‘you find water where?’)
Grammatical sketch of Beng

The special type of wh sentence must have originated in Beng as a result of interference with other languages. Compare the structure of wh questions in Baule, a language that many Beng actively use (quoted from (Creissels, Kouadio 1977: 227)):

(231) Wān yē ɔ bā-li ə?
    who 3SG come-PRF 3SG

‘Who came?’

13. Complex sentences

13.1. Postverbal embedded clauses

This chapter describes various types of complex sentences attested in Beng. Two types of subordinate clauses, complement and goal clauses, can be properly embedded inside another clause in a postverbal position inside the main clause, while temporal and conditional clauses occupy a position before the main clause.

13.1.1. Complement clauses. Complement clauses are marked by complementizers kē, kēsā, sā and sā, which appear to be mutually interchangeable. Often, the complement clause is coreferent with a 3SG pronoun in an argument position in the same clause:

(232) ņà pè kē mì nū.
    1SG:PST+ 3SG say:L that 2SG:PST+ come:L

‘I said that you had come’ (literally ‘I said it that you came’).

(233) ò-ó ŋ̀ nì kē mì nū.
    3SG-ST+ 1SG BENEF that 2SG:HAB+ come

‘I want you to come’ (literally ‘It’s for me that you come’).

Such Beng sentences with complement clauses are reminiscent of the English sentences with embedded clause extraposition, and the 3SG pronoun seems analogous to the dummy it in English. The pronoun is not always present in sentences with complement clauses, but only when required by the argument structure of the main predicate. For instance, the verb ‘to say’ as in (232) is transitive, and requires the direct object position to be filled in, and the subject position is obligatory in the volitive construction in (233). In contrast, the intransitive verb wē ‘to reply’ does not select for a direct or indirect object with the semantic role of content of response, and it combines with a complement clause without any ‘dummy’ pronoun present:

(234) Ó wē kē à nū ē.
    3SG:PST+ reply that 3SG:PST- come:L NEG

‘He replies that he wasn’t coming’.
Furthermore, complement clauses can combine with arbitrary verbs, adding the speech component to the sentence meaning regardless of whether the main verb has anything to do with speech:

(235) Ó bé kē ó mlē yē-nā.
3SG:PST+ run:L that 3SG:PST+ snake see-PRF
‘He was running saying that he had just seen a snake’ (literally: ‘He ran that he has seen a snake’).

13.1.2. Goal clauses. The main strategy of marking goal clauses uses complementizer nà followed by a clause in optative mood:

(236) Zrūg nà mị gbô pl.
hunker for.to 2SG:HAB+ feces excrete
‘Hunker down in order to defecate’.

(237) Ñ-ọ sỳ hà cícá-ló nà wà wó cá ị nị.
1SG- person search- for.to 3SG:HAB+3 IN watch 1SG BENEF ST+ PROG
‘I am looking for someone to read me this letter’.

(238) Ñ-ọ nụɛ dâ nà sỳ bi-lè ọ gâ.
1SG-ST+ fetish fall for.to person this-DEF 3SG:HAB+ die
‘I will pray the fetish for this person to die’.

Complementizer nà can be omitted if the subject or the direct object of the matrix clause is coreferent to one of the participants of the goal situation:

(239) Í ọ kpɛ-pó ụ ị léŋ gọgọ
1SG:PST+ play-Mns buy:L 1SG child man
nị (nà) ị drɛ wọ mịdâlè lọ.
BENEF for.to 1SG:HAB+ work do calmness with
‘I bought my son toys in order to work undisturbed’.

(240) Í kópɛ ụ ị léŋ gọgọ
1SG:PST+ hoe buy:L 1SG child man
nị (nà) ọ drɛ wọ ị lọ.
BENEF for.to 3SG:HAB+ work do 3SG with
‘I bought my son a hoe to work with’.
When such coreference does not hold, the complementizer is obligatory, compare (241) where the subject of the goal clause is not coreferent to the subject or the direct object of the matrix clause but to the indirect object:

(241) ersistent kópé lù ě lě́jí gṹjí
    1SG:PST+ hoe buy:L 1SG child man

    nì nà / *Ø ò drë wō
    BENEF for.to 3SG:HAB+ work do

‘I bought my son a hoe in order for him to work’.

Sometimes, the goal semantics is expressed with the complementizer kē followed by a sentence in optative mood, but it has an additional semantic component in addition to the goal. kē is only compatible with a verbalized goal:

(242) ersistent kópé lù ě lě́jí gṹjí
    1SG:PST+ hoe buy:L 1SG child man

    nì kē ò drë wō à lō.
    BENEF that 3SG:HAB+ work do 3SG with

‘I bought my son a hoe (saying) that he should work with it’.

Essentially, this goal usage of kē is a special case of its function, described in 13.1.1, of adding the speech component to the meaning of the sentence. The goal semantics in this case is just a pragmatic consequence of the optative.

13.2. Ways of encoding clausal arguments

Strategies of encoding clausal arguments include:

- complement clause with kē / sā / kēsā, with various matrix predicates:

(243) ő-ó pô kē mì nū.
    3SG-ST+ necessary that 2SG:HAB+ come[BSQ]

‘You have to come’. (literally ‘It is necessary that you come’.)

(244) Mû à lâ kē ò nû?
    1SG:PST+ 3SG ask:L that 3SG:PST+ come:L

‘I asked if he had come’.

- nominalization is used in NP positions:

(245) Më [mì vź̄jô ɗê-š̄] mà
    begin 2SG hole build-NMLZ CONT

‘Start to dig your yam field!’
(246) Ó [sèwè pè-le] tùà
3SG:PST+ paper say-NMLZ leave:L ‘He stopped reading’.

- subordinate clauses with the goal complementizer nà or often asyndetical are used with predicates of causation:

(247) À tùà [ŋò drë wô].
3SG leave 3PL:HAB+ work do ‘Make them work!’

(248) Ó mī gblè [nà ŋ̱̣ tà mī lô].
3SG:PST+ 2SG force:L for.to 1SG:HAB+ go 2SG with ‘He forced you to go with me’.

- verb phrases with verbs in the base form are used with the verb zī ‘can’:

(249) Mâ zî yâtrz ̣̆ flɔ̃̆ ɦ.
1SG:HAB- can:L sit[BSQ] today NEG ‘I cannot sit today’.

13.3. Serial construction

Beng has a very limited instantiation of the serial construction in the form of “nū or tā + verb phrase”. The verb nū ‘to come’ or tā ‘to go’ has the same morphological form as the second verb:

(250) Ó tā à wô.
3SG: PST+ go:L 3SG do:L ‘He went and did it’.

Another constraint on the serial construction is that it is used only in those TAM values where the verbs are not marked by suffixes: in the preterite, the habitual, the optative, and the conditional; so the two verbs not only have identical form but the form is suffixless. In other TAM constructions (perfect, progressive, stative, and future) a goal converb (see 13.4) of the second verb is used instead of the serial construction with identical verb forms:

(251) Ó tā-nā drë *wô-nā /*wô/ ̂ ɔ̄k wô-yà.
3SG:PST+ go-PRF work do-PRF do[BSQ] do-GL ‘He went and worked / He went to work’.
13.4. Converb constructions

A goal converb can depend on three verbs: with tá ‘to go’ and nũ ‘to come’ it describes the goal of movement; with bɔ ‘to come from’ it depicts the subject’s activity at the point of departure:

(252a) ń́ nũ drù-yâ.
1SG:PST+ come:L walk-GL
‘I came to walk’.

(252b) (*Ĵ́ drɛ wò drù-yâ).
1SG:PST+ work do:L walk-GL
(‘I worked to walk’.)

(253) Ū́ bɔ́ drù-yâ.
1SG:PST+ come.from:L walk-GL
‘I came from a walk’.

The goal converb cannot be separated from the motion verb by any constituent, behaving as a typical argument, rather than a modifier (see 12.2; compare (Gusev 2004)).

As mentioned in 6.2, the locative nominalization in –ya can be used to express action simultaneity, although this usage is rare:

(254) Ū́-ó jàtèlí ké-ló drù-yâ.
1SG-ST+ thought V-PROG walk-PLC
‘I am thinking while walking’.

13.5. Temporal and conditional clauses

This section describes subordinate clauses that precede the main clause and are structurally outside of it. Goal and complement clauses that are embedded inside the main clause have already been characterized; interestingly, the preposed vs. embedded subordinate clauses are marked with two distinct positional classes of complementizers. Embedded clauses (such as goal clauses) have a complementizer on the left edge; preposed subordinate clauses have a complementizer on the right edge. The distinction follows the predictions of J. Hawkins’ theory of word order whereby the head of a subordinate constituent should gravitate towards linear proximity to the head of the superordinate phrase (Hawkins 1990).

13.5.1. Temporal clause: the topic construction. It is noteworthy that two common constructions (not counting juxtaposition) that express temporal relations between clauses are marked exactly like information structure relations of topic and focus. The main temporal complementizer is nŋ, identical to the topic marker:
Gbong went to the field and got lost in the forest. Beng’s fields are often located quite far from their villages, and there are even special temporary settlements for people working in those remote fields.

'I came and washed' (literally: ‘When I came, I washed’).

The selection of TAM values in the main clause (after ná) follows general TAM semantics. TAM marking in the embedded clause adheres to special rules. If the situation of the subordinate clause precedes that of the main clause, as in (256), the preterite construction is used in the subordinate clause. Simultaneity of the two situations is marked in the subordinate clause by the future (sic!) construction, which has in this case progressive interpretation, or with a semantically appropriate construction with default present time reference (stative, adverbial clause, etc.). Clearly, this usage of the future construction reflects the fact that the future construction historically had a progressive meaning, even though it was replaced in the core progressive contexts by a newly grammaticized form in -lɛlo, and was only retained in subordinate contexts and as a future form. Compare (255) and (257a):

Gbong got lost when he was going to the field.

Finally, conditional mood is used in the sense of habitual aspect:

‘When Gbong goes to the field he usually gets lost in the forest’.

Particle fe when added to a temporal clause gives it a conditional flavor, which can be expressed in English with the complementizer since: 
13.5.2. Temporal subordinate clause: the focus construction. Temporal sequence of two clauses can also be marked by a special construction marked in the same way as the focus construction: clause A + ɲɛ̰̄ + clause C + ĝ, meaning ‘A, then C’. Example:

\[ F \varepsilon \quad \partial \quad \text{pè} \quad \text{wà-ā} \quad \text{tá} \quad \text{é} \quad \text{nú}, \partial \text{dé} \]

Rel 3SG:PST+3 say:L 3SG-St- go NEG Top who

\[ ó \quad \text{blō} \quad \text{nà} \quad \partial \quad \text{à} \quad \text{bē} \quad \text{srà} \quad ĝ? \]

St+ here for.to 3SG:HAB+ 3SG trace take FOC

‘Since he said he’s not going, who’s here to replace him?’

13.5.3. Conditional clause. The structure of conditional clauses is protasis + conditional complementizer + apodosis. There are two conditional complementizers, dɛ́ɛ̄, used with protasis in affirmative polarity and nī̄, used with negated protasis. Before the protasis one can also find an optional marker fɛ̰̄ or ì dɔ̄ kē, literally ‘let it be set that…’

TAM marking in the apodosis follows the general semantics of TAM. Protasis exhibits some special rules of TAM marking:

• in case of a condition in the past or present that the speaker believes can be true (‘real conditional’), the same TAM constructions are used as in independent clauses:

\[ F \varepsilon \quad \text{mlʒ} \quad \text{à} \quad \text{lō} \quad \text{é} \quad \text{nī} \]

Rel 3SG:PST meet:L 3SG with NEG if.NEG

\[ wà-ā \quad \text{à} \quad \text{jréj} \quad \text{dʒ-lē} \quad \text{é}. \]

3SG-St- 3SG enough know-RES NEG

‘If he didn’t meet her he doesn’t know much’ (the protasis exhibits regular preterite construction);

• in case of a condition in the future or a habitual condition without concrete time reference (‘potential conditional’), protasis is marked with conditional mood (or more rarely with the appropriate indicative TAM constructions, future or habitual):

\[ F \varepsilon \quad \partial \quad \text{srō} \quad \text{déɛ̄} \quad \text{ŋó} \quad \text{nū} \quad \text{gbɔ}. \]

Rel 3SG:CND arrive if 1SG-St+ come also
‘If he comes I am coming too’.

(262b) Mỳ gò sòỳ mà déè Ècì è ó mì yè-lè.
2SG:CND hide person CONT if sky DEF ST+ 2SG see-RES
‘If you hide from people, God still sees you;’

• in case of a condition that the speaker believes to be false (counterfactual condition), protasis is marked with optative mood when referring to past events, or appropriate indicative forms when referring to the present. Besides TAM, counterfactual conditionals are obligatorily marked with particle ŋ̄gò after the conditional complementizer (this particle can also optionally appear with potential future conditions that only possibly can be false). Example:

(263) ̰ỳ yí ɲí-lè lú déè
1SG:HAB+ water cool-NMLZ buy[BSQ] if

ŋ̄gò wálí wā ́j wɔ̄lì drè é.
NGO money St- 1SG POSS anymore NEG
‘If I had bought cold water, I wouldn’t have money anymore’.

(protasis is marked with optative mood expressed by a combination of a habitual subject pronoun with the base form of the verb).

13.6. Relative clause
Discussion in this section follows (Paperno 2008b), omitting the relativizing function of nominalizations that have been briefly characterized in sections 6.2, 6.3, 6.6, and 6.7.

13.6.1. Head-external relative construction. Relative clauses are marked with the combination of a preposed particle ƒ̄ɛ (which can also be thought of as a relative determiner, see 13.6.2 for arguments to this effect) and a postposed marker ɲà that equals the topic marker. The ɲà element can be omitted before a pause, and is always omitted before another ɲà marker in the topic-marking function. The relativized position in the relative clause is filled by a resumptive pronoun that agrees in person and number with the head NP if a pronoun is possible in the given position or left empty otherwise. Rarely, when the noun phrase is topicalized and separated by a pause, the complementizer can, but does not have to, be omitted (264b).

As mentioned above, the most common complementizer in relative clauses is ɲà. Relative clauses can also employ a conditional complementizer déè /nî (déè occurs after affirmative conditional clauses and nî after negative conditional clauses). Relative clauses with the conditional (déè) differ in meaning from the main type of relative clauses (with ɲà) and include a conditional element in their semantics (246d). Unlike in relative clauses with ɲà, the statement expressed by a relative clause with a
conditional is not presupposed to be true. Relative clauses with déé (examples 264d,e) can be roughly rendered in English using words whenever, whichever, etc. All of the following examples come from real texts; all of them feature topicalization of the whole relative construction.

The conditional construction can be used to modify a noun with reference to a future event (264e), even when there is no sense of uncertainty as to whether this event will happen (uncertainty as to whether condition would hold seems to be a common meaning element of English conditionals). Compare (264e) to an analogous example but with a past event in the relative clause (264f), and no conditionality involved (the relative clause is presupposed true); ná is used in this case. Examples:

(264a) Ó blànâ [fɛ̄ ɲó à klà Kùàsií dí ná] klùjà.
3SG:PST+ banana Rel 3SG:PST+ 3SG put Kouassi APUD TOP steal:L
‘He stole the banana that had been put next to Kouassi’.

(264b) Zrē [fɛ̄ mǐ-ó à yē], mǐ mǐ [zrē bì-ɛ̄], yā.
way Rel 2SG-ST+ 3SG on 2SG:HAB+ 2SG way this-DEF walk
‘Walk on the way you’re standing on’.

(264c) Ṣi bábá nùŋ [fɛ̄ mǐ ɲò dè ná], ɲmā ɲò yā.
1SG sheep PL Rel 2SG:PST+ 3PL kill:L TOP 1SG:give 3PL other
‘Give me the replacement for the sheep you killed’.

(264d) Pōbē [fɛ̄ ő yōno déé] wà zìn gō ɛ.
scar Rel 3SG:ST+ forehead if 3SG:HAB- can:L hide NEG
‘You can’t hide a scar on your forehead’ (literally: ‘Whichever scar is on a forehead, it can’t be hidden’).

(264e) Yrāmā [fɛ̄ bāŋāŋjíjyé lè ő pó]
time Rel end.of.rain.season DEF 3SG:CND come
déé], wà mǐ wàle lè gá.
if 3SG:HAB- 2SG:HAB+ yam DEF pick
‘When the rain season ends, gather yams’ (literally: ‘whenever there’s end of the rain season, gather yams’).

(264f) Glē [fɛ̄ ū ziē yā ló wē cà]
yesterday Rel 1SG:PST+ kapok this on there look
sīj njá] ū dòbà dò yè wē.
closely TOP 1SG:PST+ monkey one see:L there
‘Yesterday while watching this kapok tree closely, I saw a monkey there’.

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13.6.2. Head-internal $fə̅$-construction with $dɛ́ɛ̀$ and other arguments for treating $fə̅$-constructions as originally head-internal. Some properties of $fə̅$ suggest that it is not simply a relative clause marker but a relative determiner. For instance, before $fə̅$, the definite article $lè$ is blocked. After a demonstrative, $lè$ is generally required, but $lè$ is absent in the presence of a relative clause, cf. (265a) vs. (265b).

(265a) $[P5$ $bi$ $fə̅$ $mí$ $à$ $lù$ $ná]_{NP}$ $wà-ā$ $gëŋ$ $é$.
thing this Rel 2SG:PST+ 3SG buy:L TOP 3SG-ST- good NEG
‘This thing that you bought, it is not pretty’.

(265b) $P5$ $bi$ *(lè) $wà-ā$ $gëŋ$ $é$.
thing this DEF 3SG-ST- good NEG
‘This thing is not pretty’.

The interaction of $fə̅$-relativization with the expression of the definite article can be explained if $fə̅$ is, at least historically, a determiner occupying the same position as the article $lè$. And $fə̅$ does occupy the position of a determiner (after the head noun) in a rare variant of the relativization construction with $dɛ́ɛ̀$, in which a head NP with $fə̅$ is found within the relative clause (such constructions are head internal):

(265c) $[Ô$ $[p5$ $fə̅]_{NP}$ $srá$ $dɛ́ɛ̀]$ $wà$ $klà$ $à$ $bëló$ $é$.
3SG:CND thing Rel take if 3SG:HAB- put:L 3SG place NEG
‘He doesn’t put things where they belong’ (literally: ‘whatever thing he takes, he doesn’t put it in its place’).

(265d) $[Tɔ̃$ $wà$ $[sɔ̀b]_{NP}$ $fə̅]_{NP}$ $mà$ $é$ $nî]$
curse ST- person Rel on NEG if

$yròbítà$ $wà$ $sɔbì$ $é$.
water.snake 3SG:HAB-3 bite:L NEG
‘If there’s no curse on a person, a water snake won’t bite him’ (literally: ‘If a curse is not on whichever person…’).

(265e) $[Mî$ $wlô$ $[gbɛ̀$ $fə̅]_{NP}$ $wó$ $dɛ́ɛ̀]$
2SG:CND move village Rel in if

$ŋà$ $gbôpì$ $à$ $yɛ̀$ $é$.
3PL:HAB- defecate:L 3SG in NEG
‘One doesn’t defecate in the village one is moving from’ (literally: ‘whatever village you are moving from …’).

These examples suggest that even when the head noun is outside the relative clause, $fə̅$ might still be a determiner of the head NP.
Another instance of head internal relativization can be seen in relative clauses with presentative markers like ë́ ‘this is’:

(265f) \[[p\̣̄ f\̣̄]\_{NP} \: ë̄ \: nā]\_{Rel} \: wā-ā \: p\̣̄ \: bī-lē \: dū-lē \: ë̄ \: ɛ̀\n
\('This thing (lit. the thing that this is), he doesn’t know this thing’\).

Since ë́ cannot function as a full sentence on its own, we have to assign this relative clause a structure where the head noun is its subject. This construction is essentially idiomatic, functioning as a complex demonstrative. Such demonstrative relativizations form a closed class, so they could be treated as lexicalized relics of head-internal ë́-relativization.

An additional piece of evidence comes from topicalization of phrases modified by relative clauses. Such topicalized phrases are never accompanied by an additional topic marker (nā), to which the complementizer nā at the end of relative clauses is phonologically identical. The topic marker nā can often be omitted, but it is usually present in topicalization of adverbial elements (265h). However, such a topic marker is not introduced if the topicalized adverbial is modified by a relative clause, compare (265g) vs. (265h). Topic markers are not used after relative clauses with the complementizer déé, either, compare (265i) vs. (265j).

(265g) \[[Flɔ̌̄ ɔ̌̄ ̄]\_{NP} nā, ɔ̌̄ ̄ vī-lī ɛ̀\n
\('Today when I have her daughter she is my friend’\).

(265h) \[Flɔ̌̄ ɔ̌̄ ̄]\_{NP} nā, ɔ̌̄ ̄ vī-lī ɛ̀\n
\('Today she is my friend’\).

(265i) \[Fɛ̌ dō]\_{NP} nā mī nā à lō kâ blē mūŋ.\n
\('Some day you and she agree again’\).

(265j) \[Fɛ̌ f\̣̄]\_{NP} ë̄ à têtët ɔ̌̄ à bōl ɔ̌̄ à yūō]\n
\('Some day you and she agree again’\).
Denis Paperno

\[mî \ nà \ â \ lô \ kâ \ blê \ mû:j?\]

2SG and 3SG with 2SG:HAB+ agree:L again

‘The day she (mother-in-law) says “I took her (your wife) away”, will you and she agree again?’

The facts outlined above can be given a straightforward interpretation: the relativization marker \(f\) is, at least historically, a determiner; the most widespread relativization strategy features an extraction of the NP with \(f\) from the relative clause.

The original syntax of relative clauses could have been correlative which is still found in the cases discussed above, examples (265c-265f):

\[
\ldots[N \ f\]_{NP} \ldots \ Comp]_S S_2
\]

with the option of topicalizing the \(f\) noun phrase:

\[
[[N \ f\]_{NP} \ldots \ Comp]_S S_2, cf. example (265j).
\]

These types of sentences could have been reanalyzed as involving a topicalized noun phrase with a relative clause, extracted from the main clause \(S_2\):

\[
[N \ [f\ldots \ Comp]_S]_{NP} S_2
\]

Undoing such topicalization gives the basic relativization pattern:

\[
\ldots[N \ [f\ldots \ Comp]_S]_{NP}...\ldots]_S_2, \text{see example (264a).}
\]

The development proposed here is reminiscent of the scenario proposed by Nikitina (2012) for what she labels as ‘the rise of clause-internal correlative’ in Southeastern Mande languages.

To summarize the argument of this section, relative clauses in Beng are originally head-internal, at least in the historical sense. The argument can also be interpreted in favor of analyzing relative clauses as originally head-internal in syntactic derivation (Kayne 1994). Historical and derivational interpretations of head-internal syntax of relative clauses are compatible but not isomorphic, reminiscent of the relation between historical and derivational processes in phonology.

There is one argument in favor of the historical rather than synchronic interpretation of the head-internal status of Beng relative clauses. One important piece of evidence used in the argument above was that the determiner \(lɛ\) is not used in the presence of a relative clause marker \(f\). However, the definite article \(nî\) (variant of \(lɛ\) after /ŋ/, see 8.3), is attested before \(f\).

\[(265k) \ bô\ baba \ lɛ \ â \ s仟nîn \ lɛ \ fà\]

1SG sheep DEF 3SG mark 3SG:PST+:COP:L 3SG
Grammatical sketch of Beng

\[
\text{left ear DEF Rel 3SG:St+ cut-Res TOP FOC}
\]

‘The mark of my sheep is its left ear which is cut’.

Examples like this suggest that the incompatibility of \( f \) and determiners is not strict, and the determiner status of \( f \) might not be synchronically valid but could rather be a historical relic.

14. Information structure

This section gives a preliminary overview of the ways to express information structure in Beng. I do not attempt to undertake a proper semantic analysis of the constructions in question, only providing their rough equivalents in English.

Usually, a constituent \( F \) marked for its information structure status is located before the rest of the sentence \( S \). If \( F \) is a verb phrase, which has to take the form of nominalization when topicalized or focalized, compare (266), \( F \) is replaced in the main clause \( S \) by the verb \( wō \) ‘to do’ in the appropriate form with a 3SG pronoun as a direct object. If \( F \) is a nominal or an adverbial constituent, the position that the constituent \( F \) would have occupied in a communicatively neutral sentence \( S’ \) is left filled by a coreferent personal pronoun, except for the secondary object position from which personal pronouns are banned. Examples:

(266a) \( \text{[}\text{Sàāŋ yří lē]}_i \text{ FOC [bāāŋ wōl ŋē [ō}_i \text{ bà } O_j \text{] ē.} \)

\( \text{saang tree DEF dry.season IN Foc 3SG:HAB+ yield:L FOC} \)

‘It’s during the dry season that the \( Sāāŋ \) tree yields fruit’.

(266b) \( [\text{Pīŋ cí-lē}]_i \text{ ŋē [ō }_i \text{ à wō] ē.} \)

\( \text{grass cut-NMLZ FOC 3SG:PST+ 3SG do:L FOC} \)

‘It’s mow that he did’.

The case described above, where the pragmatically marked constituent \( F \) can be inserted into a vacant position in the sentence \( S \), is typical but far from universal. In reality many examples would not support such insertion. Sometimes the position in \( S \) is filled by a full-fledged syntactic constituent coreferent to \( F \):\(^{18}\)

---

\(^{18}\) An anonymous reviewer notes that example 267 might not illustrate topicalization but a special correlative construction. Indeed, as discussed in 13.6 above, fronted relative constructions in Beng can have special properties, such as availability of complementizer dēē ‘if’ and possibility of head-internal structure. These properties can be seen as manifesting an independent correlative construction. On the other hand, in most cases correlatives are indistinguishable from the topicalization of an NP with a relative clause, and
Second, the position F can host a whole clause that cannot be substituted for any constituent in S, compare a typical folktale ending:

(268) [Nà  gāmlà  ô  nũ  gūà  kléj̩  wó  nā]_{TOP}

for.to chimpanzee 3SG:HAB+ come stay forest IN TOP

[à  dĩ-le  ô  bɔ  kpĩj̩  mə]_{FOC}

3SG cause-DEF 3SG:PST+ come.from:L door CONT

ŋè  gāmlà  ô  gūà  kléj̩  wó  ē.
FOC chimpanzee 3SG:PST+ stay:L forest IN FOC

‘So Chimpanzee stayed in the forest because of the story with the door’ (literally: topic ‘For Chimpanzee to come and stay in the forest’, focus ‘the reason for this comes from the door’, main clause ‘(that) Chimpanzee stayed in the forest’).

Example (268) is quite typical: the content of a sentence can be divided entirely into the topic and the focus; the topic and the focus (expressed here as full clauses) are marked appropriately, followed by a syntactically obligatory but semantically redundant main clause that basically repeats the topic.

14.1. Topic

Let us now turn to specific information structure marking constructions of Beng. The first one, topic, is expressed by particle nā placed after the topicalized phrase F that precedes the main clause S.

Information structure notions are notoriously hard to characterize precisely. The topicalized phrase F in Beng signals the theme of utterance, its ‘aboutness’. In English, one analog of the Beng topic is the sentence-initial position of sentential modifiers as in *At the lab we conducted a few experiments* (as opposed to the more neutral *We conducted a few experiments at the lab*). Examples of topics:

(269) [Gblè  nā]  tõñòbì  plañ̩  yò  pà  cĕñ̩  mà.

yesterday TOP car two 3PL:PST+ hit:L each.other CONT

‘Yesterday two cars collided’.

even, as argued in 13.6, the main relativization strategy probably arose in Beng through a reinterpretation of the correlative construction as a topicalized NP with a relative clause.
As (270) shows, the topic marker na is sometimes omitted. Conditioning factors for its omission are yet to be studied. I observe preliminarily that topicalized noun phrases tend to be unmarked, while other types of constituents, in particular adverbial phrases (including temporal and locative) tend to have an overt topic marker.

14.2. Contrastive topic

The contrasted NP, which can be doubled by personal pronouns following general rules, occupies the possessor position of the vacuous noun pɔ̀ ‘thing’ which is followed either by the definite article lè or by drē na and the main clause S. Contrastive topics do not have to be full NPs but can also be pronominal; combinations of personal pronouns with pɔ̀ ‘thing’ are possessive pronouns, in which the final /ŋ/ obligatorily (1SG) or optionally (1PL) fuses with the initial /p/ (mɔ̀, .Adapterɔ̀/Amɔ̀). pɔ̀ lè can be translated ‘as for’; pɔ̀ drē na marks contrastive change of topic, translated roughly ‘and as for’:

(271) Mɔ̀ lè ʃ i nǔ-nǎ.
    1SG:POS DEF 1SG:PST+ come-PRF
    ‘As for me, I have come’.

(272) Dóbǎ  pɔ̀ lè wà  fà  gblé-èn
  monkey POS DEF 3SG:HAB+3 crack:L squirrel-DEF

  pɔ̀ drē na wà  sò  lólo wè.
  POS EMPH TOP 3SG:HAB+3 chew:L on.TOP there
  \{in a discussion of animals that steal corn\} ‘Monkeys tear it apart and squirrels eat it on trees’.

14.3. Focus construction

The focused constituent F is marked by a postposed particle ŋẽ and the main sentence S is followed by particle ē or ną, so the two markers of focus embrace the main sentence. Analogs of focus construction in English are sentence-level pitch accent and it-clefts. Example of a focus structure:

(273) [Gbè bě~bě ŋò  yé], ną [síɛŋájûti]
  village big~PL 3PL mouth TOP coal

  ló]j  nɔ̄  [ŋò  sìé  tù  ɔ̄  ɔ̄  ] ē,
with FOC 3PL:HAB+ fire plant:L FOC
with FOC 3PL:HAB+ fire plant:L FOC

‘In towns, they make fire with coal; in villages, they make fire with wood’.

The focused construction accompanied by preposed sápē ‘except’ expresses the meaning of ‘only’ in Beng:

(274) Sápē wålē pē mà blē ē.
except yam FOC 1SG:HAB+3 eat:L FOC
‘I eat only yams’.

14.4. Non-syntactic expression of emphasis

The semantic effect comparable to that of topicalization and focalization can also be achieved by other means, in particular, by independent personal pronouns (pronouns of the focus series) in situ, i.e. in a regular NP position rather than in a topicalized or focalized position. Independent pronouns in NP positions are accompanied in NP positions by pronoun doubling, compare:

(275) Sēsē ə mĩə mĩ sò.
every 3SG:HAB+ 2SG:EMPH 2SG chew:L
‘You, everyone bites’. or ‘It’s you that everyone bites’.

(276) Mĩə mĩ nũ-nũ.
2SG:EMPH 2SG:PST+ come-PRF
‘You, you came’.

(277) Ṣpũə ə nũ-nũ.
3SG:EMPH 3SG:PST+ come-PRF
‘Him, he came’ or ‘It is him who came’.

Exceptions to overt pronoun doubling are 1SG and 3SG pronouns that are not doubled by overt non-subject series of pronouns, apparently for phonological reasons.

The dectic marker blɔ ‘right here’, ‘right there’ used after a locative phrase has a similar effect to focusing the locative phrase:

(278) Lɔmlɛŋ nũŋ ɲó kpɛ nɛmán blɔ gblɛ.
children PL 3PL:PST+ play:L 1SG:before there.FOC yesterday
‘Children played right in front of my door yesterday’.
(279) ḟọ klá mĩ́ dí́ blọ́
    3PL put 2SG APUD here.FOC
    ‘Put them right in front of you’.

(280) Kàlà bëë lè ò-ò́ blọ́
    old big DEF 3SG-ST+ there.FOC
    ‘The elder is right there’, compare

(281) Kàlà bëë lè ò-ò́ wë́
    old big DEF 3SG-ST+ there
    ‘The elder is there’.
15. Appendix. Sample texts in Beng

15.1. Text in transcription: Two people on a trip

The humorous story was recorded by Wolfgang Paesler in November 1981 from Kouassi Jean Clement, transcribed by Kouadio Kouadio Destin, and translated by Kouadio Kouadio Patrice into French.

1. Sɔŋ plāŋ ŋó tá blī-mà.
   person two 3PL:PST+ go:L place-CONT
   ‘Two people went somewhere’.

   Commentary. tá blīmà is an idiomatic expression ‘to take a trip’, literally ‘to go someplace’, related to the usage of blī ‘place’ as an indefinite pronoun.

2. Ńó sró wē ná ŋó ɡbà pɔ-blē-lè.
   3PL:PST+ arrive:L there TOP 3PL:PST+ 3PL give:L thing-eat-NMLZ
   ‘When they got there they were given food’.

   Commentary. pɔblēlè is structurally relativization of the direct object using event nominalization, literally ‘thing eaten’, or ‘eating something’, compare 6.2.

3. Dō ā pè sá ó kā-nā.
   one 3SG:PST+3 say:L that 3SG:PST+ get.satiated-PRF
   ‘One of them said he was full’.

   Commentary. The portemanteau pronoun ā contains the obligatory 3rd person direct object of the speech verb, literally ‘He said it that he was full’.

4. Dō-lè drē ā wō pɔ ó pɔ-lè blē.
   one-DEF EMPH 3SG:PST+3 hand wash:L 3SG:PST+ thing-DEF eat:L
   ‘The other one washed his hands and ate’.

   Commentary. Here, the portemanteau pronoun ā contains a possessive pronoun, literally ‘He washed his hand’. Note juxtapotation of two clauses as the translation equivalent of verb phrase conjunction. Also notable is the usage of drē as a topic switch marker.

5. Gēŋ kló ná dō lē ó yūó bō.
   beautiful little TOP do DEF 3SG:PST+ oral.cavity extract:L
   ‘After a little while, the first one yawned’.

   Commentary. Gēŋ kló is an idiomatic expression ‘a little later’. It is marked by an overt topic marker, as usual with topicalized adverbial elements. yūó bō is an idiomatic expression ‘to yawn’. The semantic motivation of the expression is transparent: when someone yawns, the oral cavity becomes visible.
6. *Pɔ̀-bl̂e-łí lè à là kɛ̃gá ɔ̀ lé ɓwá*.
   thing-eat-AG DEF 3SG:PST+3 ask:L that 3SG:PST+ COP:L how
   ‘The one who had eaten asked him what the matter was’.

   Commentary. *ɔ̀ ɗé ɓwá*? is the idiomatic Beng expression for ‘why’, literally ‘How
   is it?’ . The portemanteau pronoun *à* includes a direct object: “He asked *him*”. Note the
   specific event reference in the interpretation of the agent nominalization in -lí.

7. *A pè: pɔ́pɔ́.*
   3SG:PST+3 say:L nothing
   ‘He said: «Nothing.»’

   Commentary. *pɔ́pɔ́* ‘nothing’ is derived by reduplication from *pɔ́* ‘thing’.

8. *Ó yúó bò mû́jí.*
   3SG:PST+ oral.cavity extract:L again
   ‘He yawned again’.

   thing-eat-AG DEF 3SG:PST+3 ask:L again 3SG:PST+3 say:L nothing
   ‘The one who had eaten asked him again’, ‘and he said: «Nothing.»’

10. *Ŋò-ó bl̂é dêé à pè yì í ɔ̀ í dè.*
    3PL-ST+ there.FOC if 3SG:PST+3 say:L hunger 3SG:PST+ 1SG kill:L
    ‘They were there, and the other one said he was hungry’.

    Commentary. Here complementizer *dêé* ‘if’ is used in the sense of ‘when’. The
    verb *dê* (base sense ‘to kill’) is used in the sense of ‘experience’ with nouns of
    feelings and senses like ‘hunger’, ‘fear’, ‘heat’, etc. as subjects, and the experiencer
    in the direct object position.

11. *Pɔ̀-bl̂e-łí lè à pè*
    thing-eat-AG DEF 3SG:PST+3 say:L
    ‘The one who had eaten said:’

12. *sá mà pé mí nì é?*
    that 1SG:PST-3 say:L 2SG BENEF NEG
    ‘Hadn’t I told you?’

    Commentary. The structure of the preterite TAM construction is obscured by
    high tone spread to the verb stem and the tone sandhi, whereby instead of the original
    *mà pè* (LH L) we see *mà pé* (L H).
13. Sá ṣó tá bli mà ná,
that 3PL:CND+ go place CONT TOP
‘That when one goes somewhere’,

Commentary. Conditional mood is used here according to the general rule of marking habitual aspect in temporal and conditional clauses.

ŋà yèn rè pò-blē-lè lō ē.
3PL:HAB- be.ashame:L thing-eat-NMLZ with NEG
‘one is not shy of eating’.

Commentary. The verb yèn rè selects postposition lō. Note the interpretation of pòblēlē contrasting with the object nominalization interpretation in sentence 2.

14. Ñó zrē è pòpò nyē njó tá ē ná,
3PL:PST+ road DEF request:L FOC 3PL:PST+ go:L FOC TOP
‘When they said goodbye and went away’,

Commentary. To “request the road” is a common formula for guests asking permission to leave from their host in West Africa. Here the focus (and the topic) constructions are used to mark temporal sequence of events.

à gōlō lē ó bédà zrē lè yē,
3SG friend DEF 3SG:PST+ lie:L road DEF mouth
‘his friend lay down on the road’,

Commentary. zrē is one of the nouns that requires locative postposition yē without the ‘on the edge’ meaning of the latter.

15. ná wà zì yā drē ē.
DT 3SG:HAB- can:L walk anymore NEG
‘he could not walk anymore’.

Commentary. Particle drē is the way to express ‘anymore’ in Beng in the context of the negative particle ē.

15.2. Text in orthography: Chimpanzee’s house

This folktale was recorded by Wolfgang Paesler in November 1981 from Kouassi Jean Clement, transcribed by Kouadio Kouadio Destin, and translated by Kouadio Kouadio Patrice into French. For comparison with 15.1, this text is reproduced in the orthography (Kouadio, Kouakou 1997) and in phonological transcription, to provide a sample of this orthography.
Grammatical sketch of Beng

1. *Ganmlàn o gbèe gbè.*
   *Gāmlà ó gbě gbó.*
   chimpanzee St+ village old
   ‘Of old, Chimpanzee used to live in the village’.
   Commentary. See 12.1.2 for discussion of time reference.

2. *O suo dò*
   *Ó súó dò*
   3SG:PST house build:L
   ‘He built a house’,
   *fen sònỳ nùnỳ ño tà à cà nan,*
   *fè sònỳ nùnỳ nò tà à cà ná,*
   Rel person PL 3PL:PST+ go:L 3SG watch:L TOP
   ‘and when people came to see it’,
   Commentary. The sentence features a serial construction where one subject pronoun shares two verbs in the same (low tone) form.

3. *ŋò à pè san*
   *ŋó à pè sá*
   3PL:PST+ 3SG say:L that
   ‘They said:
   *ganmlàn, mí suò lè o lè geŋ.*
   *gāmlà, mí súó lè ó lè geŋ.*
   chimpanzee 2SG house DEF 3SG:PST+ COP:L beautiful
   ‘Chimpanzee, your house is nice’.

4. *Drè o guan nan pò do.*
   *Drē ó gūā-nā pō dā.*
   but 3SG:PST+ remain-PRF thing one
   ‘But one thing is missing’.
   Commentary. Note the postverbal subject NP with a preverbal subject pronoun, peculiarity of the verb *gūā* ‘to remain’.
5. *Ganmlàn aà pè san: pò pò pò?
Gāmlà à pè sá: pò pò pò?
chimpanzee 3SG:PST+3 say:L that like what like
‘Chimpanzee said: «Like what?»’
Commentary. *pò X pò* ‘like X’ expresses comparison in Beng, usually occurs in nominal positions.

6. *Sònj nûnj ñò à pè san pò kpïŋ pò.*
Sɔnj nûnj ñò à pè sá pò kpïŋ pò.
person PL 3PL:PST+ 3SG say:L that like door like
‘The people said: “Like a door.”

7. *Ganmlàn aà pè san:*
Gāmlà à pè sá:
chimpanzee 3SG:PST+3 say:L that
‘Chimpanzee said:’

8. *pɔ̀ fëñ ñà sì kpïŋ nan,*
pɔ̀ fëñ ñà sì kpïŋ ná,
thing Rel 3PL:HAB+3 call:L door TOP
“The thing that they call door,”

*mâŋ màn nyreën tɔ man sà do e.*
*mâŋ mà prê tɔ mâ-sà dɔ̀ ě.*
1SG:FOC 1SG:PST- this name hear-PRF- one NEG
“me, I have never heard this word.”

Commentary. *prê* is a demonstrative noun, here used as an appositive modifier of *tɔ* ‘name’. Adverbial *dɔ̀*, identical to the numeral ‘one’, combines with perfect aspect and means ‘ever’.

9. *Aà pè san:*
Aà pè sá:
3SG:PST+3 say:L that
‘He said:’

*nyreën pɔ dren bee bi-lè màn zîn à wɔ̀ e.*
*prê pɔ̀ drê bễ bi-lè mà zî à wṑ ě.*
this thing work big this-DEF 1SG:PST- can 3SG do NEG
“This big work, I can’t do.”

Commentary. Modal *zî* ‘can’ is exceptional as it combines with preterite subject pronouns while itself staying in base form, selecting a verb phrase in a base form, and
having present semantics. \( z \) is also attested in the regular habitual construction, while still selecting a base form verb phrase.

10. *Nyen ganmlân o wlo*

\[ Né gâmlà ō włó \]

FOC chimpanzee 3SG:PST move.out:L

‘And Chimpanzee left’

\[
\begin{align*}
o & \quad \text{dà} \quad \text{kleŋ} \quad \text{nín} \quad \text{wo} \quad \text{é}. \\
ó & \quad \text{dà} \quad \text{kléj} \quad \text{nǐ} \quad \text{wó} \quad \text{é}.
\end{align*}
\]

3SG:PST+ reach:L forest DEF IN FOC

‘and reached the forest’.

11. *Nàn ganmlàn ō nun guàn kleŋ wo nan*

\[ Nà gâmlà ō nū guà kléj wó nū \]

for.to chimpanzee 3SG:HAB+ come remain forest IN TOP

‘For Chimpanzee to stay in the forest’,

\[
\begin{align*}
à & \quad \text{din-ľè} \quad \text{o} \quad \text{bò} \quad \text{kpiŋŋ} \quad \text{màn} \\
à & \quad \text{dif-ľè} \quad \text{ó} \quad \text{bò} \quad \text{kpiŋŋ} \quad \text{mà}
\end{align*}
\]

3SG cause-DEF 3SG:PST+ come.from:L door CONT

‘the reason came from the door’

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{nyen} & \quad \text{ganmlàn} \quad \text{o} \quad \text{guàn} \quad \text{kleŋ} \quad \text{wo} \quad \text{é}. \\
\text{né} & \quad \text{gâmlà} \quad \text{ó} \quad \text{guà} \quad \text{kléj} \quad \text{wó} \quad \text{é}.
\end{align*}
\]

FOC chimpanzee 3SG:PST+ remain:L forest IN FOC

‘that Chimpanzee stayed in the forest’.

Commentary. The last sentence of this text was reproduced and discussed earlier as example (268).

16. Appendix. Word lists from Tauxier (1921)

This Appendix reproduces Beng data originally published by Louis Tauxier, as discussed in 3.2.3 above. The data come from a dialect which I label “Beng of Groumania neighborhood” (BG), different from the Modern Ouassadougou Beng (MOB) studied throughout the current work. The novelty of this publication is that all data from Tauxier (1921) are accompanied by MOB equivalents. This is intended to facilitate the use of Tauxier’s old but unique data on the BG dialect for modern comparative studies.

16.1. Word list

I list here expressions from Tauxier (1921) in bold in comparison with identical elements from Modern Ouassadougou Beng in italics. In case MOB equivalents are
not related to those reported by Tauxier, they are given in parentheses. I generally retain Tauxier’s original French translations, but when the meaning of the MOB equivalent does not exactly correspond to Tauxier’s translation, I also provide an English equivalent of the MOB word in single quotes. When the MOB equivalent is unknown, I put a --- mark.

The list also includes information about the borrowing source of Beng words, both where noted by Tauxier and where it was possible to identify otherwise. I acknowledge Valentin Vydrin's help in identifying borrowings from Jula.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Beng Word</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Jula Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>aba</td>
<td>père</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agni</td>
<td>Agni</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>agniabiri</td>
<td>enterrment</td>
<td>ãŋã bli ‘that.Emph bury’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>agoba</td>
<td>(ou agogba)</td>
<td>poursuivre ---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>alenngué</td>
<td>iguane (d’eau)</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>anion</td>
<td>lui ãŋã (Emph)</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>apa</td>
<td>lit àkpâ ‘apatame’</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>avoninnlè</td>
<td>sage</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ba</td>
<td>cuisse gbá</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ba</td>
<td>terre bã</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>babá</td>
<td>mouton bába</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>babá-da</td>
<td>mouton, brebis bába dã</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>babalé, babalegn</td>
<td>mouton, agneau bába léý</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>babá-sia</td>
<td>mouton, bélier bába síá</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>babélé</td>
<td>silure</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bahoum</td>
<td>épaule bàŋ ‘bras’</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bakaouté</td>
<td>singe rouge (káá)</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bala</td>
<td>flûte</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>balanda</td>
<td>banane bláná &lt; Jula</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>balanda-ouapor</td>
<td>tô (à la banane) bláná wápló</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bama, bamon</td>
<td>chef de canton bã mà ‘earth chief’</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bán</td>
<td>corde bãŋ</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ban</td>
<td>tambour gros</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ban, baon</td>
<td>société secrète</td>
<td>--- BG &lt; Jula</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bandara</td>
<td>non musulman bànrà ‘Senoufo, Djimini, Tagbano’</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bang-oûlé</td>
<td>grêle bàŋã wlé</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bangiénn</td>
<td>barbe gbëŋ céý</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bani</td>
<td>indigotier (liane) bâŋéý ‘liane’</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>banngo</td>
<td>cheval kpâŋ ñ &lt; Baoulé</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>banngo-da</td>
<td>cheval, jument kpâŋ ñ dã</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>banngo-lè</td>
<td>cheval, poulain kpâŋ ñ léý</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>banngo-nou</td>
<td>cheval, poulieche</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>banngo-sia</td>
<td>cheval, étalon kpâŋ ñ síá</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>banon-bani</td>
<td>caoutchouc (liane à) bâŋéý ‘liana’</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>batara</td>
<td>biche-cochon bâtrã MOB ‘oryx’</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>batoubatou</td>
<td>vite bârùbàtù</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bè</td>
<td>danser bë ‘(a) dance’</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bé</td>
<td>famille totale gbë ‘village’</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bè</td>
<td>fuir, s’enfuir bë</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bè</td>
<td>tam-tam (danses, etc.) (mlâ)</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bègn</td>
<td>singe noir bèý</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bèda</td>
<td>coucher (se) bèdã</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bègn</td>
<td>enfant bèý ‘fruit’</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bègn</td>
<td>trompe bèý</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bèhann-da</td>
<td>chèvre bëyãŋ dã</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bèha-nnlè</td>
<td>chèvre, chevreaux bëyãŋ léý</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bèha-nou</td>
<td>chèvre, chevrette</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bèha-sia</td>
<td>chèvre, bouc bëyãŋ síá</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bëhian</td>
<td>chèvre bëyãŋ</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>beign</td>
<td>menton gbëŋ</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bélé</td>
<td>chaise bléý</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
bélé hier gblè
béléfédou rasoir ---
bélenngo nord blè̃ yó ‘on the left’
béléwa van ---
béma, béman chef de famille totale gbè mà ‘village chief’
abemousá pas longtemps à bëmò sá (é) ‘it has not been a while’
benndé manioc gbéné
béré biche-cochon blè ‘duiker’
béré boisson blè ‘wine’
Bérébéré doucement, lentement blèblè
bérémili ivrogne blè mi lî ‘drunk’
béréna ivre blè nà
bétè faible bêtè ‘soft’
bia lourd gbìá
biéso ivoire bié sò
bihé éléphant biè
bilarigon hôte (qui reçoit) blàlì gôô
biliyé voir blï yè
bimbiribéré cidre (de mil) ---
bimbiri-ousi farine de mil --- (ŋò ñisì)
bimmbiri mil (gros) (ŋò)
binnzambé minngo (fruit de) ?gôô jàj ‘odor ronier fruit’
binnzaon minngo ---
birané cadeau (sàmâ)
biri porc-épic blì
bô singe cynécophile ---
bobéléři vautour (charognard) àpètè kùàsì, gbô blè-li ‘old eat-Ag’
bo-bona jadis, autrefois gbôgbô nà (topic marked)
bolo mosquée (enclos de prière) blòj ‘covered space’
bomboroso variole --- BG < Jula
bôn rocher gbô
bôni mauvais, méchant, laid vûnì
boro crapaud (lôtrò)
Borofou Blanc blôôì
boso pêcheur (dùwléj-dëjì) BG < Jula
boti termite bôtè
boulounégn coeur blônûj
boumm derrière (kpêmì)
boungànn coeur (de porteur) ?gbô ‘dish to carry on the head’
bouo bambou --- BG < Jula
bourofépé papaye bôflè
bouroféé-iri papayer bôflè yrí
bourouna sorcier (mangeur d’âmes) blû nà
bourouniè heureux blônûj (verb in MOB)
da oseille --- BG < Jula
dabodabo canard dàbòdàbò
dada filet (p. la pêche) ---
dadignn’ iguane (de terre) dàdîj ‘crocodile’
dakouè koba --- < Jula
dalo arc-en-ciel dàlò ‘rooftop’
damisa tomate-cerise dîmísá ‘aubergine’ amer’ < Jula
danalla venger (se) (kòbò)
dango toge dàñò
danien cuivre rouge (sùà gbô) BG < Jula
daon guerre dànj
dasana vaincu (zè ‘to win’)
dénéouo travailler drë wô
dénéouoli travailleur drë wôlí
dénévooroi cultivateur drë wôlí ‘worker’
denndé escargot dênè
dennuéyé natte (zô)
déou plomb ---
déré neuf, nouveau drê
dia bête jáà
diangouma chat jānnmà (compare Jula jakuma)
diara lion jrā
diasa cimetière (bliyà) < Jula jása ‘fence’
diawafila oignon jāfła
dié pintade jě
diégnn calebasse (à cailloux) jéfj ē ~ e
MOB ‘rattle’
diénnétouga pigeon (domestique) --- < Jula
diéri griot --- BG < Jula
diérifoué héritier ---
dignn’ javelot ---
dini demain dřěŋ

dinnguéré caverne děŋ yrē’mountain hole’
diobélilé (ou diobiliré) parler jó
diobiliré dire (jó)
diommbolo xylophone jómlo < Baoule
do arreter (s’) dš

do masque (religieux) (jmló) < Jula dō
‘secret society’ (generic name)
dō serpent cracheur dōd ‘cobra’
doba singe dōbā
dōmm nager dōŋ

dorongui boubou drŋi

doû, douhou couteau dű

douniao jamais drŋ ō wó (dō) ‘on earth’
douninien monde drŋ < Jula
dourou matin drū
dourou promener (se) drū

dowoué, dowouégnn gombo dweŋ

dyabérina noyer (se) yí à blē nā ‘it has gotten drowned’
edien loin wāa à dǐ ē ‘that’s not close to it’
ediné obeir (à drà māmā)

egbana vieux ē gbō nā ‘s/he has gotten old’
égeinn bon ē gēŋ ‘it is good’
égeinn lâche ---
égueré fort ē gē ‘it is strong’
epodôn intelligent ē pō dō ‘s/he knows things’
fain-ho moitié ---
fainnguissié semaine fē kēnčslēŋ ‘eight days’
faon fourreau, gaine fāŋ
fēmmbé fête fē bēē
finnalolo lampe (fītrā) MOB < Jula
fitinân, BG < Jula fitinân + lōlō ‘pot’
finnsésé toujours fē sé̥šē
fōmm oeuf fōŋ
fōnì fonio ---
fono aujourd’hui ʧōş
foué samedi fūē
fouroufou soufflet ---
fouroulé marier (se) (lēŋ wē)
g’bé pays gbē
ga mourir gā
ga tuer gā ‘die’
gāfā pied gāfā
gafankokoli cordonnier, peaussier gāfāŋ
kōkōli ‘sandal turn-Ag’
gakina rat (aulacode) gācīnā ‘cane rat’
galanké tisser gāŋ c’f ‘cut/make loincloth’
gamana nain (de la brousse) gāmlā
‘chimpanzee’
gamana singe chimpanzée gāmlā
gan jambe gā
ganfaon sandale gā fāŋ

gankélé raconter gāklē ‘news’
ganndi anneau de cheville gā dǐ jā

gara indigo --- < Jula gāra

gara-iri indigotier ---
Grammatical sketch of Beng

garankéli tisserand glăŋ̄ çfli ‘loincloth cut-Ag’
gari, gali cadavre gàlē
gbé (ou goué) village gbě
gbé marteau gbídī
gbé vert gbě
gbèè gros, large bèè
gbéma, gbémon chef de village gbě mà
gbéné grand blēn ‘much’
gbéré milieu gbĩ
g‘bérignn porte (en bois) (kpi̞ŋ̄)
gbo ancien gbò
géinn, gééinn bon, beau gěŋ̄
agogon imiter à gbɔ̄̄ ‘3sg imitate’
goli guitare (jitā) BG < Jula, MOB < French
golibo lutter gôlî bɔ
gon homme (mâle) gōŋ̄ MOB: ‘man’
agogoué brave à gōŋ̄ gěŋ̄ ‘he is handsome’
gôngo tourterelle ---
gônngo pigeon (sauvage) gònën
gottogotouga sénégal ---
gounouboumban cervelle (kùmà)
gouro pirogue gbô
gourofala paggie wlûfà ‘ladle for preparing kabato sauce’
agpain, akouin jouer à kpɛ ‘3sg play’
guélè enclave glë ‘rock’
guérdé pierre gbô
guérdé mardi jšlè
guerrenguéldé caillou glĕŋ̄lè ‘gravel’
gûésé coton jèsè
gûésé-iri cotonnier jèsè yri
Guimini Guimini (bânra)
guin esprit (de la brousse) --- BG < Jula
guiti, guité, guitein plancochère, potamochère jîtē

hain jour fĕ
hié bouche yè
houé jeudi wàê
hyenndi larme yōn̄yī
cyi famine, fain yī
cyà vendredi yáà
insonkalari groupe des ménages yī sōŋ̄ klâːl ‘1sg people team’
irí arbre yri
tiibiénn’ fruit yři běŋ̄ ‘tree fruit’
iri-gòn branche yri gōŋ̄
tiikìépo hache yri cî-pɔ ‘tree cut-Men’
tiikôm écorce yri kōŋ̄
tiinni racine yri niŋ̄
irîvōn fleur yři vuŋ ‘tree flower’
ivono-méné serpent d’eau yī vuŋ lō mlë ‘water hole SUPER snake’
kalakalouna vantard ---
kanien cire --- BG < Jula
kanion vous kā nà (Emph)
kanngalay perdrix kâŋlə
tiikanbutou souvent (yémâyémá)
akaara poser à klá ‘3sg put’
tiagarouon vieillard kâlă gōŋ̄
tiakarmoro fabricant de gris-gris, marabout ---
tiakasisi, asiis nous āŋ̄ sēsè ‘we all’, kā sēsè ‘you all’
tiakélenzô buffle kľěŋ̄ zô
kénénkéna circoncis kľěŋ̄lę nà
kennéwa araignée kěněwà < Baoulé
tiak cuir, peau séchée cĩ
kia petit cã ‘short’
tiak pont (pɔ̄ŋ̄)
tiakbāo célibataire cēgbã nà
kïépala lève yēplàj
kïápala mentir cînà pêlî
tiaknāp mentir cînà pē
kirigon chef de famille totale klí gîñj
   MOB ‘king’
kirilegnn’ noble klí léñj ‘member of the
   Kli clan’
kissié lundi kisiè
ko dos kô
kobali sacrificateur pô gbâlî
kobâré sacrifice pô gbâlê
kohou tortue kôú
koko taro (mânîñj) MOB < Jula
akoko gratter (se) à kôkô ‘3sg scratch’
kokorobété rat (du Gambie) kôklôbêté
   ‘centipède’
kolon puits (yî yrêj) BG < Jula kolon
koloninnga millepatte klôñînîñj
kondoro brun ---
kônié chasser kôni
kônié chasseur kôni-eñj
konien, kognien caïman, crocodile
konoli voler (dérober) klûjîlî ‘thief’
konosogolo autruche --- < Jula
kopè houe (a fer pointu) kôpê
kôri laver (pô) BG < Jula kôli ‘washing’
korowè bonnet ---
koro hibou klû
koti scorpion (noir) kô tîi ‘black back’
koto poing kôtrô
kouan fleuve (yî bâñj) BG < Jula kô
   ‘brook, small river’?
koumbé tomate (tômâtî) MOB < French
kouroudiara ceinture de femme klûjâ
   ‘loincloth with a belt’
kourousi culotte klûsî
koutoukou case (à toit en paille) ---
kowa hameçon ---
kyé année kûè

tyêlado siècle kûè làà dô ‘one hundred
   years’
lâ médicament, gris-gris, gris-gris (contre
   les sorciers) là ‘medicine’
lâ pluie, tempêtê là
ala demander à là ‘3sg ask’
ala interroger à là ‘3sg ask’
labangbana tonnerre là bëbë nà ‘it has
   rained a lot’
lalo sauterelle làlôj
lamain fabricant de gris-gris, médecin
   (lîtrô)
lamba vérole --- BG < Jula
lamoro parent (sêñj) BG < Jula à là màgô
   ‘his/her person’ (?)
lana feuille láná
lasié éclair là sîè
lasiri coutume --- BG < Manding lâsiâri
   ‘pregnance; origin, reason’
lâtirîna nuage là trî nà ‘it has gotten
   cloudy’
leî-allè faire l'amour lêñ jê
lékolo bilakoro (Jula ‘uncircumcised
   boy’) lôklô ‘child’
lélé chanson lêlêj
lèlè chanter lêlêj ‘song’
lélêdali chanteur lêlêj dàlí
lélêgn’ épine lêlêj
lemmbélé minuit lêmîlê
lémmmbélé tabouret lêñ blêñj ‘child chair’
lengôn fils lêngôñj
lenndali sorcier (se changeant en bête) ---
lenndinn fille lêñ lêñj
lenngué-touroupon dot lêñ nùñj ?trôpô
   ‘child Pl raise-Men’
lignn, li femme lêñj
lignn’gala pagne (de femme) lêñ glâñj
livuili chapeaux (en paille) (kowlê)
Grammatical sketch of Beng

lo captif, esclave, captif de traite lɔ
lɔ cou lɔ
lɔ kola lɔ
lɔ-iri kolatier lɔ yrí
lolé captif de case lɔ léj slave child’
lolo canari, pot lɔlɔ
loloba argile ---
lommba fronde ---
louangarapo maintenant (klêmã)
malo riz mànûj < Jula
mama, manman grand’mère mamã
mana tambour mlã
manain mercredi mlãã
manangbo tambour en forme de sablier
mlã gbɔ‘drum old’
manapô mulot mlépô
manapo souris mlépô
mandiga arachide (kâlè)
manyon rêver, avoir un rêve nɔ
massakou patate (ålènà) BG < Jula, MOB < Baule
m’ba canton, province ñ bã ‘1sg earth’
m’bèsé, bèsé matchette bèse
m’bié sel ñ bî ‘1sg salt’
m’bo mère (nã)
m’bôn encore mûj
amè frapper à më ‘3sg hit’
mémbouna longtemps ñ bêmõ nã ‘it has been a while ago’
méné poulet mlẽ
méné serpent mlẽ
méné-da poulet, poule mlẽ dã
méné-da serpent python mlẽ dã
ménéfõmm œuf de poule mlẽ fõj
méné-lé poulet, poussin mlẽ léj
méné-sia poulet, coq mlẽ siá
ménésuo pouluiller mlẽ suó
ami boire à mǐ ‘3sg drink’
ammi boisson à mǐ ‘3sg drink’
mien toi mĩj (Emph)
miman comprendre mǐ mã ‘2sg understand’
miman écouter mǐ mã ‘2sg hear’
mimiso corps mĩsõj
mini herbe mlũj ‘straw’
misiri mosquée mlũri< Jula
mivoua urétrite mlẽwã
mokégnn poil céj
molè étoile mõ léj
mòn lune mõ
môn moi mǎj (Emph)
môn mois mõ
monanvi nègre ---
môné dimanche mõlè
mougousawala chausson (gãfũj shoes’)
mouin tombeau mûj
mounou-ouele. crâne ñlwúlé
m’véli ami ñ vîl ‘1sg love-Ag’
na épouse nã
n’aïn mariage (lẽj drẽ)
nanamm langue nàmãj
n’dà mère ñ dã ‘1sg mother’
n’dékoror oncle (frère du père) ñ dê-klô
‘1sg father-little’
n’dérélinn soeur (grande) ñ drélẽj ‘1sg older.sister’
n’dié père ñ dẽ ‘1sg father’
n’dó sauce ñ dɔ ‘1sg sauce’
n’dôn oncle (frère de mère) ñ dɔj ‘1sg maternal.uncle’
n’dorongo frère (grand) ñ drɔŋɔj ‘1sg elder.brother’
n’dé neveu (fils de frère) ñ dẽ léj ‘paternal parallel cousin’
n’dëi, n’deînggn colline, montagne dẽj
n’dëînggn camarade (gɔlõ)
n'déré grimper *drēŋ*
*n'di* franc *(srê)*
*n'dioté* argent *jétè* < Baoulé
né-a-louinn fille ---
nééné froid *néné*
*n'gani* arc *(nûu)*
*n'go* corbeille *ŋ gɔ̀* ‘1sg fish.trap’
*n'gô* huile de palme *(ɲrɔ̃)*
*n'gogaléda* jurer *ŋ̀ ɔ̅lè* ‘I swear by the dead’
*n'goligana* oublier *ŋ̄ wɔ̀lé* ‘I forgot’
*n'gon-noléïnn* ver *(de terre)* *ŋl̩ɛ̃* ‘sand throw-Ag’
nié aigle *(mêґ)*
nié nez *ŋé*
niénina pauvre *(jrà nà)*
niépê moucher *(se)* ---
ninaba malheureux --- BG < Jula
nini ombre *(d'un être vivant)* *nînîŋ̄*
ninn, né fils *ŋ lēŋ* ‘1sg child’
ninon, ninaon ombre *(d'un être inanimé)* *(nîŋ̄)*
niolé rêve *ŋÔlé*
niomihî salive *ɲîmî*
niomoûti mouche *ɲûmûtîi*
nion sein *ŋ̀*
niono-iri karité *ŋrî yrlî*
nionon graisse *jrî*
nionon karité *(beurre du, fruit du)* *ŋrî* ‘grease’
nio-ousi farine de maïs *ŋɔ̀ wîsî* ‘millet flour’
niopinn cheveux *(cëŋ)*
nokia regarder *ŋɔ̀ cà* ‘to look inside’
non ici *ŋ̀*
nôn ventre *ŋ̀*
nono lait *nûŋ̀*
nnon-lè maigre *nûnîlé*
nou venir *nû*
noualou acheter *lîu*
nouin incendier *ŋûâ* ‘to burn’
nowa boyaux *nûwāŋ* ‘intestine’
nyobéré cidre *(de maïs)* *ŋû blê* ‘millet wine’
n'zanalignn jeune fille *zānnàŋ mèŋ*‘youth’
n'zanango jeune bomme *zānnàŋ gôŋ* ‘young man’
n'zaommbéï rônier *(fruit du)* *zàŋ bèŋ*
n'zaon, n'zamm rônier *zàŋ*
n'zélo papillon *(bàmàlîm)*
n'zéli vaincre *zêlí* ‘win-Ag’
n'zi poisson, poisson dit capitaine *ziŋ*
n'zian, n'sien mari *ŋ žîŋ* ‘1sg husband’
n'zie fromager *ziè*
n'zié funérailles *zië* ‘funeral’
n'zi lait *zi* ‘1sg husband’
n'zié boeuf *zô* ‘kind of tree’
n'zô-da vache *zô dà*
n'zô-lè vache *zôt lèŋ*
Grammatical sketch of Beng

n'zomana  savon  zàmlâ
n'zoro   laver (se)  zrô
n’zosisé pique-boeuf ---
n’zô-tola boeuf, taureau  zô sóá BG < Jula
n’zou poitrine zû
n’zou frère (petit)  ğ  zû ‘1sg younger.sibling’
n’zoulé  soeur (petite) ğ  zû-lêj ‘1sg younger.sibling-woman’
oua-bè étroit  wàâ béê ‘it is not big’
ouabia léger  wàâ gbîá é ‘it is not heavy’
ouaguingo sud wâ  gëjî wo ‘on the right’
ouakénékénékaré incirconcis  wàâ klêkklê  kàlé  é ‘she is not circumcised’
oualé igname wàlé
oualé-gon ignamier  wàlé  gà ‘yam stem’
oualémanga bague (en fer) wàléj mà  gà ‘finger CONT ring’
oualémanguiété bague (en argent) wàléj mà jëtê ‘finger CONT silver’
oualémansua bague (en or) wàléj mà sùà ‘finger CONT gold’
oualé-ousi farine d’igname wàlé wisî
ouamm sang  wàj
ouansébao collier (en verroterie) ---
ouanzivouélé cauri
ouangouélélilali devin (se servant de cauris) wànỳjîlìlìlì ‘cowry throw-Ag’
ouaporo tô (à l’igname) wàplô
ouara (ou ouala) maison  wîlà
ouara groupe des ménages  wîlà
ouara ire  wîlà
ouarakara chef de groupe familial  wîlà kàlêl ‘elder of a matriclan’
ouarama, ouaraman chef de groupe familial  wîlà mà ‘head of a matriclan’
ouara-ouara bleu (clair) blûâ
ouata voyager  tà bli mà
ouatana colporteur ---
ouégnn mot, parole  wëj
ouéré os  wlé
ouéré parc (à boeufs) wëjë ‘corral’ < Manding wëre
ouo bras  wà
ouodakon ongle  wàndîkojî
ouodaonou pouce  wà  dà  ghà
ouodinn  bracelet  wà jî  gà
ouofo  main  wàfà
ouolé, ouoleignn. doigt  wàlêj
ouongué  reposer (se)  wànjû
ouonion ils, eux  gò  pà (Emph)
ouonou (ou mounou) tète  ghà
ouousi  farine  wîsî
oupè pleurer  bû pé
ourou ancêtre  wàû  MOB ‘fantom’
ourou chaud, sueur  wàû ‘heat’
ouruso captif de case  wàlôsò ‘slave clan’
pa manche  pà
paa, pà néré  kpà
paa-ousi  néré (farine du)  kpà  wàsî
paa-ousi néré (farine du)  kpà
paapouloum néré (gousse du) ---
palé houe (à fer large)  kpâlè
palépa manche de daba  kpâlè  pà
palo jour  pàló
pangoloma poteau (tûtûtûwà)
parana-n’zi poisson-chien ---
parëbëri, parëbri vendre  plëblê
parë boîte  kplàkô
pëgnalo débiteur  pëj ò à ló ‘he is in debt’
pëgnn (ou pain) mortier  pëj
pëgnn pëj
peëgnn bâton  pëj ‘bud’
peënggn conte, fable  pëj
pëlé soumbara  kplë
pëlégnn calebasse  plëj ‘goblet’
pëlou voler (dans l’air)  pêlûj

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péné pilon  pénérý
péni fer  péný
péninndo forgeron  pénīň
pénitè cuivre jaune  péný tè té ‘red iron’
pénna créancier  pěŋ nà
pénon neveu (fils de soeur)  pënà ‘cross-cousin’
péré métier à tisser  ālī ‘piece of tissue to put on one’s head to carry things’
pilana, parana chien (sō-nà)
pilana-da chiennne (sō)-nà dà
pirimmbiri bien portant  mplēŋmlēŋ
piti oreiller  piti
pōba sacrifier  pāgbā
pobéléré nourriture  pōblēlē
pobiri, pobili gourmand  pō blēlī
apobiri manger  pō blē
po-dā semer  pō dā
pohio caoutchouc  pūyō
poho brousse  pō ‘champ’
poho, poo brousse  pō ‘field’
pomana tambour calebasse ---
opon nombril  plōŋ q–0
poro peau  kplō
poro tō wāplō
poro-bégnn baobab (fruit du)  pō blēŋ
poro-iri baobab  pō yřī
poro-ouisi baobab (farine du)  pō sīsī
apototo ? pourquoi? (ó lé lōwā)
potoroupo animal domestique  pō trōp ‘thing breed-Men’
pouou blanc  pūū
povières caoutchouc (arbre à) --- BG < Jula
sain malade  sē
sambasé tamarinier ---
sambé poison (volatil) ---
sanndé lièvre  sānē

sapobélé hydromel  sōmō blē
sara tabac (à priser)  srā ‘tobacco powder’
< Jula or Baule
asara prendre à srā ‘3sg take’
sarali fou srālí
asaramika habiller (s’) à srā m j kā ‘take it and put it on!’ (imperative)
sarandani devin, devin (se servant d’eau)  srāŋ dālī ‘diviner consult-Ag’
sarapoum tabatière (sra)  kpōŋ ‘tobacco calabash’
sei jaune (dālē) BG < Manding  sāy ‘jaundice’
sépē gris-gris  sēpē ‘kaolin’
asésé insulter, injurier à sēsē ‘3sg insult’
sī palme à huile  sī
asi appeler à sī ‘3sg call’
asi attraper à sī ‘3sg take’
asi donner à sī ‘3sg take’
si-bélé vin de palme  sīblē
sié feu  sī
si-ouéré palmier (fruit de)  sī wīlé
sirina gris-gris (pour attacher) ---
siya race  sīyā
so dent  sō
so-dérē porte (ouverture) ---
sofalē âne --- BG < Jula sō-fālī ‘mule’
sombatana-ousi poudre (à fusil)  sāmlāj wīsī
sōmm animal sauvage  sōŋ
sōmm viande  sōŋ
sōn champ  sō ‘yam patch’
son homme (mâle)  sōŋ MOB: ‘person’
songbana fusil  sāmlāj
songolo-ouélé léopard, panthère (jātā)
sopoda abeille  sōmō dā ‘mother of honey’, MOB:  sōmō wīlé
soron Dyouula, musulman sâsô
soso haricot sô < Jula sâsô
soua bananier blâna sûà
soua or sûà ‘non-iron metal’
soualignn’ veuve sûâléñj
souhana riche sûà nà
souo (ou sio) case sûó
souoba mur sûô bà
syé oiseau sièj
ta aller, partir tâ
tà tabac tàà < French
takara allumette taklay < Jula tákala
talo pipe tàà lô ‘with tobacco’
tazimmbo pêcher tà ziìj bô ‘to go fishing’
téé (ou tédin) rouge tèé
téni hôte (qui est reçu) tènîj ‘foreigner’
tennde pigeon (vert) ---
tienngono poison (biâ) BG < Jula
timmbana tambour de village ?? mlà
tiômm, tiohon flèche (ngûè wlè)
tokobi sabre ---
tominé vagin tômîlé
tôn termitière tôfì
tona notable tô nà ‘name ATR’
tonina paresseux tôñîñj nà
topé moquer (se) tô pé ‘to call names’
toro oreille tròjà
toro verge trò ‘penis’
torommmbou champignon tròjà pûú ‘white mushroom’
torovi testicules tròfì
torowa hotte ---
tyà biche rayée cîyà ‘bushbock’
tyi bleu (foncé) tìì = ‘noir’
tyi noir tôì
viaon, viamm carquois ---
viêdananî orgueilleux, insolent ---
avouè cueillir à wè ‘3sg gather’
yà marcher yà
yalo lever (se) yâló
yamm joue yàj
yamm scorpion (jaune) yàj j ‘tarantula’
yara asseoir (s’) yrà
yéramadoma plus tard, quelquefois
yârmà dô mà
yéré trou yré
yéta taire (se) yé tà
yéti (ou yéki) ciel ècì
yétigboulé foudre, foudre (pierre de la)
ècì glè
yì dormir yì
yibéda midi yîgbîé dô nà ‘sun has arrived’
yi-bihé hippopotame yî biè
yîgbéboyà est yîgbîé bôyà
yîgbényoua ouest yîgbîé zûyà
yîi (ou yî) eau yì
yîi, n’zan marigot yî’water’; zàj
yîgbé soleil yîgbîé
yîômm front yôj ‘face’
yîômm grenouille
yonodi soir yên’dì
yoroum pois souterrain yrôj
youm visage yôj
yourou nuit yrä
yourouyali hyène yrûyâli ‘nocturnal being’
yovouyròe oeil yôwlè
azarà jeter à zrà ‘3sg throw’
zazàlè disputer (se) zàzàlè (nominalization)
ziì maïs zriì
azon piler à zô ‘3sg pound’
zonzon moustique zôzô
zôù, zouhou margouillat (têmîlèsìà)
azou lancer à zû ‘3sg throw’
zoumounou magnan zûmplûj
16.2. Phrases with MOB equivalent and gloss

BG  mon  parana  ‘mon chien’, ‘my dog’

MOB  māŋ  sō-nā

gloss  1SG.EMPH tooth-ATR

BG  miem  parana  ‘ton chien’, ‘your (sg.) dog’

MOB  mīŋ  mī  sō-nā

gloss  2SG.EMPH 2SG  tooth-ATR

BG  anion  parana  ‘son chien’, ‘his/her dog’

MOB  àŋn  sō-nā

gloss  3SG.EMPH tooth-ATR

BG  asisi  parana  ‘notre chien’, ‘our dog’

MOB  āŋ sēsē  āŋ  sō-nā

gloss  1PL ALL 1PL  tooth-ATR

BG  kanion  ka  parana  ‘votre chien’, ‘your (pl.) dog’

MOB  kā-nā  kā  sō-nā

gloss  2PL-EMPH 2PL  tooth-ATR

BG  ouo  nion  go  parana  ‘leur chien’, ‘their dog’

MOB  nō  nāŋ  nō  sō-nā

gloss  3PL EMPH 3PL  tooth-ATR

Note: GB word for *dog* corresponds to MOB *kplán-nā* ‘possessor of fleas’. A common word for dog in MOB is *sō-nā*, literally ‘possessor of teeth’.

**Ouomisipo?**  ‘Comment t’appelles-tu?’  ‘What is your name?’

nō  mī  sī  pō?

3PL:HAB+ 2SG call:L what

literally: ‘what do they call you?’

**Mibobikao?**  ‘De quel village es-tu?’  ‘What village do you come from?’

mī  bō  gbē  kāpō  wō?

2SG:PST+ come.from:L village which IN

literally: ‘which village do you come from?’
Grammatical sketch of Beng

**Miboma?** ‘D’où viens-tu?’ ‘Where do you come from?’

\[ mì \ bò \ má \]

2SG:PST+ come.from:L where

**Mi yarama ?** ‘Où vas-tu?’ ‘Where are you going?’

\[ mì \ yrá \ má \]

2SG St+.go where

Note the presence of \( yrá \) as a contraction of a stative aspect marker and \( tá \) ‘to go’.

**Manalémian ?** ‘De quelle race es-tu?’ ‘What is your ethnicity?’

\[ má \ ná \ lé \ mī́́\]

where ATR PST+:COP:L 2SG.EMPH

In this and following five examples, note the reversal of predicate and subject.

**Soron dé mien ?** ‘Es-tu musulman?’ ‘Are you Muslim?’

\[ sṓ́ \ lé \ mī́́\]

Muslim PST+:COP:L 2SG.EMPH

**Kafiri lé mien?** ‘Es-tu fétichiste?L ‘Are you pagan?’

\( (kafiri) \ lé \ mī́́\)

pagan PST+:COP:L 2SG.EMPH

**Benn’dé mien?** ‘Es-tu Gan?’ ‘Are you Beng?’

\[ bè́́́ \ lé \ mī́́\]

Beng PST+:COP:L 2SG.EMPH

**Hon-hon, Benn’dé mahi.** ‘Oui, je suis un Gan’. ‘Yes I’m Beng’.

\[ ū́́́ \ bè́́́ \ lé \ mā́́́\]

yes Beng PST+:COP:L 1SG.EMPH

**Benndé lé mahi.** ‘Non, je ne suis pas Gan’. ‘No I’m not Beng’.

\[ bè́́́ \ à́́́ \ lé \ mā́́́ \ ́́\]

Beng 3SG.PST- COP:L 1SG.EMPH NEG

**Mé vinani ?** ‘Es-tu content?’ ‘Are you satisfied?’

\[ mì́ \ vī́́ \ nā́́ \ à \ nį́́\]

2SG:PST+ love PERF 3SG BENEF

literally: ‘Did you like it?’

**Mi bourama ?** ‘Es-tu fatigué ?’ ‘Are you tired?’

\[ mì́ \ blùà \ nā́́\]
Denis Paperno

2SG:Pst+ tire  PERF

N'bourana. ‘Je suis fatigué’. ‘I am tired’.

ŋ̀ bəlùə nə

1SG:Pst+ tire  PERF

Mamboura sâ. ‘Je ne suis pas fatigué’. ‘I am not tired’.

mə bəlùə sə ɛ

1SG:Pst- tire  PERF.Neg Neg

N'démi hi guén? ‘Comment vas-tu?’ (à un homme) ‘How are you doing Sir?’

ŋ̀ də mbə gëŋ?

1SG father 2SG:Hab+ beautiful

literally: ‘My father, are you good?’

Ndami hi guén ? ‘Comment vas-tu?’ (à une femme) ‘How are you doing Ma’am?’

ŋ̀ dā mbə gëŋ?

1SG mother 2SG:Hab+ beautiful

literally: ‘My mother, are you good?’

Niguénn. ‘Je vais bien’. ‘I’m doing well’.

ŋ̀ gëŋ.

1SG:Hab+ beautiful

literally: ‘I am good’.

Aniasâ. ‘Ce n'est pas fini’. ‘It is not over’.

ə pəŋ- sə ɛ.

3SG:Pst- finish- PERF.Neg Neg

Eniana. ‘C'est fini’. ‘It is over’.

ɛ pə nə

3SG:Pst+ finish PERF
Grammatical sketch of Beng

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</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST</td>
<td>stative series</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUB</td>
<td>localization SUB ‘under’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUPER</td>
<td>localization SUPER ‘on, over’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOP</td>
<td>topic marker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>verb stem or verb within an idiomatic expression</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Grammatical sketch of Beng

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Denis Paperno


Denis Paperno. **Grammatical sketch of Beng**

The sketch provides a description of the Beng language on all levels of grammar. Individual sections are dedicated to phonology, morphology, and key aspects of syntax of the language, including simple and complex clauses. The paper is based on field work.

*Keywords*: Beng language, Mande languages, syntax, morphology, phonology, field description, pronominal series, reduplication, aspect, argument structure, information structure

Денис Аронович Паперно. **Грамматический очерк бен**

Данный очерк, написанный на основе полевой работы, содержит описание языка бен на всех грамматических уровнях. Отдельные разделы посвящены фонологии, морфологии и базовым аспектам синтаксиса, включая структуру простого и сложного предложения.

*Ключевые слова*: язык бен, языки манде, синтаксис, морфология, фонология, полевая лингвистика, местоименные серии, редупликация, аспект, информационная структура

Denis Paperno. **L’esquisse grammaticale du beng**

Cet esquisse est basée sur les données de terrain et représente une description du beng à tous les niveaux de grammaire. Il comporte des chapitres sur la phonologie, morphologie, les fondements du syntaxe, y compris la structuire de l’énoncé simple et complexe.

*Mots clé*: langue beng, langues mandé, syntaxe, morphologie, phonologie, linguistique de terrain, séries pronominales, aspect, structure informationnelle