



### Available morphology – Aux Constructions

(1) *ǫm ǫtré* 'I am eating'  
*ǫm ǫ ǫt-ré*  
 1SG PROG C6-eat

(2) *ǫm ǫgǫtré* 'I was eating'  
*ǫm ǫ-g ǫt-ré*  
 1SG PROG-PST C6-eat

### Available morphology – Aux Constructions

(3) *ǫm détré* 'I will be eating'  
*ǫm dé ǫt-ré*  
 1SG FUT C6-eat

(4) *ǫm déǫtré* 'I should be eating'  
*ǫm déǫtré ǫt-ré*  
 1SG FUT C6-eat

### Insights from a sample text

- Past tense *-g/-tè* is used for introductory material and commentary on events.
- The low tone plural argument suffix *-nè* is used when characters do some action together at the same time.
- The high tone exclusive suffix *-é/-né* is used by characters when they claim 'they were the only one'
- The purpose marker *-ǫt* occurs in dependent purpose clauses.
- Auxiliary constructions are used for commentary throughout and to describe simultaneous action

### TA marked introduction

Aux	Px	Root	Sx	Classification of verb marking	Free Translation of Clause
		V	-g	PST NEG Copula	There was a time (They did a time) when there was no land
			-g	PST	There were three living things (They did three animals)
		V	-g	PST	who did a debate
	ǫm-	V		Verbal Noun	about who coming first to this land.
		V	-né	Plural Argument	The names of the three living things were together Spider, Frog and Chameleon.

### Unmarked main events

Aux	Px	Root	Sx	Classification of verb marking	Free Translation of Clause
		V			<b>A day was set</b>
déǫtré	ǫr-	V		Aux + Verbal Noun	that everyone should gather
		V	-ǫt	Purpose	in order to hear them
		V			<b>Wild Dog was appointed</b> (They put Wild Dog)
		V			to give the invitation that
		V			all of the wild animals gather in one place
		V			to get knowledge of the beginning of the world

### Unmarked main events

Aux	Px	Root	Sx	Classification of verb marking	Free Translation of Clause
		V	-né	Plural Argument	Everyone arrived that day from everywhere
		V			<b>They listened</b>
		V	-ǫt	Purpose	in order to hear the things
dé	ǫt-	V		Fut Impv	that they will be saying
		V			<b>Room was made for everyone</b>
déǫtré	ǫr-	V		Aux + Verbal Noun	to be able to see from the view of all the animals.

### Unmarked main events

Aux	Px	Root	Sx	Classification of verb marking	Free Translation of Clause
		V	-tʃn	Past + Distance	There, Spider shot his web into the middle of all of the animals
		V			<b>He said,</b>
		V			"I am Spider
		V			<b>Every one followed me to the place</b>
		V	-tʃ		where I suspended my web
				Neg Copula	No one has knowledge of the beginning (Lit: There is no one with knowledge.)

### Unmarked main events

Aux	Px	Root	Sx	Classification of verb marking	Free Translation of Clause
		V	-é	Exclusive	When I (only me) came to this world
		V		Neg Copula	that time there was no land
		V			until I shot my web
		V			<b>I followed it.</b>
		V			<b>I traveled to any place..."</b>
		V			<b>He silenced them. (Lit: He killed movement.)</b>

### Present Progressive Forms – commentary

Aux	Px	Root	Sx	Classification of verb marking	Free Translation of Clause
		V			<b>All of the animals looked at one another</b>
		V		Verbal Noun	amazed (Lit: raising ears to god.)
ʃ		V	-sə	Present Progressive	Some are wagging their tails.
ʃ		V	-sə	Present Progressive	Some are raising their heads to god.
ʃ		V	-də	Present Progressive	Some are shaking their ears.
ʃ	ət-	V		Present Progressive	Some are jumping joyfully.
		V			As they got knowledge of how the lands beginning.

### Distal Suffix

- Use of the distal verb ending *-ʃn* has been found in main event line when a character "arrives from somewhere else onto the scene"
- The distal suffix has only been found following a past tense marker and therefore contradicts the idea that only bare forms move the narrative along.
- Because this is the only time the form is used in the current data and the entrance of a new character often marks the start of a new episode, this TA marked form may appear for the additional location information

### Other discourse comments

- Passive-like construction. Non-specific subject pronoun with *nʃng* 'do.PST'
- Arrival of new characters can be marked by *kʃnà* 'there'
- Partial *bʃ* occurs scattered throughout clauses describing the peak event. More

### Further considerations

- Passive-like construction. Non-specific subject pronoun with *nʃng* 'do.PST'
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## Revised Hypotheses

- #1 Clauses of the main event line, i.e., propositions which move the narrative chronologically forward, **are often not marked with TA segmental or tonal morphology, but may follow a marked verb.**
- #2 This unmarked form **is perfective?**
- #3 Clauses that are morphologically marked for TA are used for the initial clause of an episode, background information, commentary and conclusion.

Thanks!

## References

- Bybee, Joan, Revere Perkins, & William Pagliuca. 1994. *The evolution of grammar: Tense, aspect, and modality in the languages of the world*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Lewis, M. Paul (ed.). 2009. Ut-Ma'in: A language of Nigeria. *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*, 16<sup>th</sup> edition. Dallas, Tex.: SIL International. Online version: [http://www.ethnologue.com/show\\_language.asp?code=gel](http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=gel).
- Smith (Paterson), Rebecca Dow. 2007. *The noun class system of Ut-ma'in*. MA dissertation, University of North Dakota.