

## Táji Noun and Verb Morphology Overview

### Noun Gender:

Táji nouns are either masculine or feminine. Masculine nouns come with a variety of endings in their base form, while feminine nouns usually end in 'a' (with a high or low tone) or 'at:'

Lârù [la:ʋ.ru-ɬ] 'man' (masculine w/ù ending)

Gál [kaɬ] 'louse' (masculine w/consonant ending)

Lílà [li:la-ɬ] 'woman' (feminine)

However, some feminine nouns also end in -ê or -ě due to historical lenition of a syllable with e followed by a feminine -a ending:

Nàsê [na:se:ʋ] 'person, individual' (cf. PG Nasēnu/-a 'person')

Lê [le:ʋ] 'a celebration typically held at night' (cf. PG Lela 'night')

There are also irregular nouns in both genders ending in -â or -ă due to historical processes:

Wâ [wa:ʋ] 'flatbread, bread' (masculine, cf. PG waku ['wă.xu] 'bread')

Nâ [na:ʋ] 'river, stream' (feminine, cf. PG nala ['nä.lă] 'river')

### What does gender affect?

Noun gender affects agreement on adjectives. In the singular, most adjectives use -î with masculine nouns, and -íyà with feminine nouns:

Lâr-ù kîkh-î man-M sleep-ADJ.M.SG. 'A/the sleepy man'

Líl-à kîkh-íyà woman-F sleep-ADJ.F.SG. 'A/the sleepy woman'

This also elucidates the gender on words whose gender seems ambiguous:

Wâ gâmb-î bread.M dark-ADJ.M.SG. 'Burnt/Dark bread'

Nâ gâmb-íyà river.F dark-ADJ.F.SG. 'Murky/Polluted river'

Gender also impacts the copular clitic used in third person copular statements, with -khî v. -khíyà, and -sî v. -síyà:

Wâ gâmbî-khî 'The bread is burnt' v. Nâ gâmbíyà-khíyà 'The river is murky/polluted'

Lârù kîkhî-sî 'A/The man was tired' v. Lílà kîkhíyà-síyà 'A/The woman was tired'

### How do nouns mark role?

Nouns mark for role via case suffixes. The nominative case is unmarked other than the gender ending, if there is one, while the accusative and dative/oblique case regularly apply the suffixes -n and -m.

### Case System in Detail:

The nominative case is used to mark the subject of a verb, as well as the antecedent and predicate of a copular statement:

Kóvô íyîr-fâl-ètâ dust.M.NOM gather-PST-3SG 'Dust gathered'

Mâl-î-sî kóvô plenty-ADJ.M.SG.-COP.PST.M.3SG dust.M.SG. 'There was a lot of dust'

The accusative case is used to mark the direct object of a verb:

Kóvór-ù-n dég-ás-fál-ê dust-M-ACC leave-CAUS-PST-1SG 'I cleaned off the dust'

Of note is that a patient focus utterance still has the patient in the accusative case; it simply places the subject pronoun between the patient and the verb:

Kóvór-ù-n êyà dég-ás-fál-ê dust-M-ACC 1SG.NOM leave-CAUS-PST-1SG 'The dust was cleaned off by me'

The dative/oblique case has two main uses. The first is for indirect objects:

Lát-á-n Dílùh-á-m è-fél-fál-lì dress-F-ACC light-F-DAT 1SG-make-PST-1SG 'I made a dress for Dílùhá'

The second is for the objects of postpositions:

Mòb-á-m lài nù-dé-nù market-F-OBL to 1PL.EXCL-go-1PL.EXCL 'We (exclusive) are going to the market.'

### **What other things do nouns get marked for?**

Nouns also can be marked for specificity. This is accomplished via the affix -kh-, a relic of the masculine singulative marker -k- in PG:

Măyà 'the/some water' v. Măyàkh 'the/this (specific) water.'

### **How do you express number?**

Number in nouns varies between unmarked, definite/specific singulative (as discussed above), and marked plural. Generally, nouns stay in their unmarked form, while adjectives and/or verbs clarify the grammatical number of the nouns in an utterance:

Shár-à zár-íyà path-F length-ADJ.F.SG. 'A/the long path'

v.

Shár-à zár-ĩ path-F length-ADJ.F.PL. 'The long paths'

However, there are a few times when plural forms are obligatory. One instance is with nouns referring to people:

Nàsê dīrīyà 'tall person' v. Nàsê dīrĩ 'tall people/individuals'

Plurals are also necessary when preceded by numbers higher than one:

Jàkhâ 'seed(s)' v. Kíní jàkhávà 'five seeds'

Marked plurals are also often used when the number isn't necessarily clear from context:

Látán èféllì 'I'm making a dress/dresses (ambiguous)'

Là-látán èféllì 'I'm making dresses'

When marked plurals are used, they are generally formed in three ways:

1: Yít 'ending' is the simplest method, and in its simplest form involves a shift in the high tone of a noun from non-final to final:

Shánkù 'fish(es)' -> shànkú 'fish(es) (animate/living)'

A subset of this paradigm is a change of non-final falling tones to rising, in addition to the change from final low to final high tone:

Gîwà 'moon(s)' -> Gǐwá 'moons'

Another subset of yít plurals that occurs in many inanimate masculine nouns is a shift from -ù to -à:

Shánkù 'fish(es)' -> Shánkà 'fishes (as food)'

2: A more unpredictable pluralization method is that of dô, or 'revealing.' Plurals of this form reveal an underlying root consonant:

Kúlû 'land, ground' -> Kúlúw-à 'lands, grounds'

Ínê 'sun(s)' -> Ínéwá 'suns'

3: The third method is dég, or 'pulling,' where the first consonant and its vowel are copied and 'pulled' to the start. The new syllable's tone is low, unless the initial consonant is an aspirated stop or voiceless fricative:

Ávâló 'dog(s)' -> Vávâló 'dogs'

Pùlá 'flower(s)' -> Púpùlá 'flowers'

### **Possession?**

Possession is expressed by placing lù after the possessee, followed by its possessor in the oblique case:

Bàù lù bín-ù-m hair of toddler-M-OBL 'The toddler's hair'

A clitic pronoun also indicates possession:

Bàù-tò hair-M.3SG 'his hair'

### **What do verbs get marked for? How do they work?**

Verbs are marked for valency, tense, aspect, mood, person, and number.

Valency changes marked on verbs include causative (making the object do something), reflexive (subject is its own object), and passive (subject is acted upon by an unknown agent).

Tense can be split into past, non-past, and marked future, with the past accounting for actions before the time of speech, non-past accounting for actions at the time of speech or after, and marked future denoting actions the speaker believes are guaranteed to happen after speech.

Aspects include perfect, which marks an action completed before the tense of the verb, and habitual, which marks an action repeated over time.

The two moods are indicative, for actions that are known by the speaker to occur, and subjunctive, which indicates doubt, wishes, or other feelings about the action.

Person includes first (speaker), second (addressee), and third (other). There is also a contrast between first person inclusive and first person exclusive in the plural. Number marking is for singular and plural.

### **How does your language express tense and aspect?**

Tense and aspect are mostly expressed via suffixation:  
shélèm-fál-ê write-PST-1SG 'I wrote'

The perfect aspect marker comes after the tense marker:  
shélèm-fál-yát-ê write-PST-PF-1SG 'I had (already) written'

On the other hand, the habitual aspect marker comes before the tense marker:  
shélèm-ís-fál-ê write-HAB-PST 'I used to write, I would write (often)'

No affix in main verbs implies a non-past tense with present or future meaning:  
shélèm-ê write-1SG 'I write, am writing, will write.'

An explicit way to mark future tense is by inserting the suffix mé' [meʔ] 'intend, plan,' between the verbal stem and the person/number suffix:  
shélèm-mé'-ê 'I **will** write.'

### **How does your language express mood/modality?**

Indicative mood is unmarked, while subjunctive mood gets marked in the present by -jò(w)- , and in the past by -dè(d)-:

shélèm-jòw-èkhá write-PRS.SJV-2SG 'You (sg.) might write'

shélèm-dèd-èkhá write-PST.SJV-2SG 'You (sg.) supposedly wrote'

### **How does negation work?**

A non-past main clause verb is simply negated via the prefix b(à):  
Bà-kìkh-èwá NEG-sleep-3PL 'they don't sleep'

In the past tense, however, all verbs, in a similar fashion to a small, closed class of two/one root consonant verbs, circumfix to show negation, person, and number. This paradigm also retains a past-tense stem that used to be productively formed in PG:

Bà-t-kâkh-î NEG-3-sleep.PST-3PL 'They didn't sleep'

Other words, as well as subordinate clause verbs, negate based off of use of m(à):

Wâ mà gâmbî-khî bread NEG dark-COP.PRS.M.3SG 'The bread isn't burnt'

Mà-t-gámàb-ás-ì-m wâ NEG-3-dark.PASS-CAUS-3SG-OBL bread.M. 'bread that wasn't burnt'