The Humian language

The language of ancient Hum

Lucius and Mercury Moth

Text

an Cirsapsɨne gaggareyəyane ŋarrone an gaggareyəyayərɨ irkuyarɨbane

[an tʃʰiɾsapʰsɨne kakːaɾejəjane ŋarone an kakːaɾejəjajəɾɨ iɾkujaɾɨpane]

an Cirsapsɨ-ne gaggare-a-a-ne ŋarro-ne gaggare-a-a-yarɨ irku-yarɨ = bane

1S Cirsapsɨ-POSS.SG be.big-FACT-NMLZ-POSS.SG land-POSS.SG-ESS be.big-FACT-NMLZ-ESS *irku*-ESS = 3S.AN.POSS

“I, Cirsapsɨ of the great realm, I, its *irku*,”

zɨkukurɨwəwniyo atəyayə aŋarro Ikasa fɨmuayə akuku

[tʃɨkʰukʰuɾɨwəwnijo atʰəjajə aŋaro ikʰasa fɨmuajə akʰukʰu]

z-kukur-wəw-ni-o a = tə-a-a a = ŋarro Ikasa f-mu-a-a a = kuku

3S.AN.U-attack-IMPF-PROG-AND PROX = EXIST-FACT-NMLZ PROX = land Ikasa IMM.PST-do-FACT-NMLZ PROX = war

“attacking this Ikasa realm that has done this war.”

zarine ayambɨrəñe kusne zɨmɨmuŋgigirɨmatɨcabɨcɨt

[tʃaɾine ajampɨrəɲe kusne tʃɨmɨmuŋkikiɾɨmatʰɨtʃʰapɨtʃʰɨtʰ]

zari-ne a = ambɨray-ne kus-ne z-m-muŋgigi-r-m-a-tɨcabɨc-t

now-POSS PROX = sunrise-POSS month-POSS 3S.INAN.U-VEN-pay.tribute-IRR-FUT-HORT-OBL-3S.AN.A

“This sunlight of the month Ikasa was to give riches,”

aš ahi ašmug ən ayarne Cirsapsɨne fɨbekupawəmoa kukurabə

[aʃ axi aʃmuk ən ajaɾne tʃʰiɾsapʰsine fɨpekupʰawəmoa kʰukʰuɾapə]

aš ahi ašmug ən ayar-ne Cirsapsɨ-ne f-be-kupaw-a-m-o-a kukur-a-ba

1 and 3 hand myriad-POSS Cirsapsɨ-POSS IMM.PST-3P.U-teach-3P.A-FACT-AND-NMLZ attack-NMLZ-LOC.INAN

“and sixteen men that taught the dozens of Cirsapsɨ in an attack.”

damu zɨmɨmuŋgigit u ke Cirsapsɨk mɨbbušan manune ŋarrone

[tamu tʃɨmɨmuŋkikitʰ u kʰe tʃʰiɾsapʰsɨkʰ mɨpːuʃan manune ŋarone]

damu z-m-muŋgigi-t u ke Cirsapsɨ-k m-f-buš-an manu-ne ŋarro-ne

but 3S.INAN.U-VEN-pay.tribute-3S.AN.A NEG so Cirsapsɨ-ERG.SG VEN-IMM.PST-take-1S.A riches-POSS land-POSS

“But he was not giving, therefore Cirsapsɨ immediately seized the land’s riches.”

art nabe Cirsapsɨ

[artʰ nape tʃʰiɾsapʰsɨ]

art nabe Cirsapsɨ

PROX QUOT Cirsapsɨ

“So speaks Cirsapsɨ.”

1 Phonology

1.1 Consonants

Table 2.1 gives an overview on the consonant phonemes in Humian. It contains two symbols for each consonant: their pronunciation in the International Phonetic Alphabet, enclosed in /slashes/, and their transliteration, enclosed in ⟨brackets⟩.

Table 2.1. Consonants

manners of articulation	labial	alveolar	palatal	velar	glottal
nasals	m ⟨m⟩	n ⟨n⟩	ɲ ⟨ñ⟩	ŋ ⟨ŋ⟩	
plosives	p^h p ⟨p b⟩	t^h t ⟨t d⟩	$tʃ^h$ tʃ ⟨c z⟩	k^h k ⟨k g⟩	ʔ ⟨ʔ⟩
fricatives	f ⟨f⟩	s ⟨s⟩	ʃ ⟨š⟩	x ⟨h⟩	
semivowels	w ⟨w⟩		j ⟨y⟩		
tap		ɾ ⟨r⟩			

The consonant system of Humian consists of five points of articulation, which are labial, alveolar, palatal, velar, and glottal. Labial and velar consonants share some features together, and as such they are grouped together under the label *peripheral consonants*. In contrast, alveolar and palatal consonants are grouped together as *coronal consonants*. However, the phonemicity of the palatal consonants, except for /j/, are still in question as it has been demonstrated that they can be derived from alveolar consonants through phonological rules (§1.3.3). Because of this, the palatal consonants are enclosed in (parentheses) in **Table 2.1**.

1.2 Vowels

The articulatory space for vowels can be divided into three levels of height (close, mid, and open), and three levels of backness (front, central, and back). **Figure 1.2** provides an overview of the vowel system of Humian.

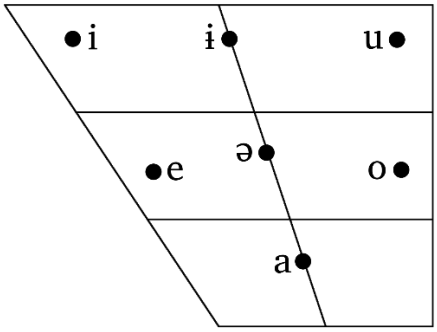

Figure 1.2: Vowel chart for Humian

1.3 Phonological rules

Certain phonological processes were present in Humian, causing some changes to the surface forms of words. These are called *phonological rules*, and there are seven known phonological rules operating in Humian. They are discussed in separate sections, with examples.

1.3.1 Phonological rule 1

Phonological rule 1 affects the peripheral fricatives /f/ and /x/, as shown below.

Phonological rule 1

$$\mathrm{F}[+\text{peripheral}] \rightarrow \begin{Bmatrix} P\left[\begin{smallmatrix} +PoA \\ -aspiration \end{smallmatrix}\right] / \_ \begin{Bmatrix} N \\ P \end{Bmatrix} \\ \mathrm{F}[-\text{voiced}] \end{Bmatrix}$$

The first part of the rule changes a peripheral fricative into a tenuis plosive when it occurs before a nasal or another plosive. It only applies to alternating forms and causes complete phonemic overlap in the specified environments. The second part of the rule keeps the fricatives

intact in all other environments, i.e. word-initially and finally, intervocalically, and next to other consonants not covered by the first part of the rule.

1.3.2 Phonological rule 2

Phonological rule 2 describes the assimilation of nasals before certain plosives, as shown below.

Phonological Rule 2

$$//\text{N}// \rightarrow [+\text{PoA}] \,/ \begin{cases} \{P[+palatal] \\ /t/ \\ /k/ \end{cases}$$

Phonological rule 2 states that a nasal //N// assimilates to the point of articulation of certain following plosives, which include the coronal plosives /t t͡ʃ t͡ʃʰ/, as well as the tenuis velar stop /k/. Since //N// signals a neutralised contrast, it follows that no heterorganic articulation precedes these plosives.

1.3.3 Phonological rules 3 and 4

Phonological rules 3 and 4 describe the emergence of palatal consonants from assimilation of clusters.

Phonological Rule 3

$$\left\{ \begin{matrix} jC[+alveolar] \\ C[+alveolar]j \end{matrix} \right\} \rightarrow [+\text{palatal}]$$

Phonological rule 3 stipulates that any cluster consisting of an alveolar consonant and /j/ coalesces into a single consonant with a palatal point of articulation. This consequently casts doubt on the underlying phonemicity of palatal consonants, as all segments containing palatal consonants can be put forward as underlyingly coalesced Cy/yC clusters.

Phonological rule 4, meanwhile, describes the assimilation of an alveolar consonant to an adjacent palatal consonant, resulting in a cluster of palatal consonants:

Phonological Rule 4

C[+alveolar] → C[+palatal] / C[+palatal]_

1.3.4 Phonological rule 5

Phonological rule 5 describes the dissimilation of /a/ after another /a/ following it anywhere in a word:

Phonological Rule 5

/a/ → [ə] / a..._ ! a...ɨ..._

The following /a/ becomes raised to a schwa [ə] by the following /a/. This process was blocked by an intervening central vowel /ɨ/ and only occurred intermorphemically, meaning that it did not occur within a single morpheme.

1.3.5 Phonological rules 6 and 7

Phonological rules 6 and 7 describe the occurrence of vowel sequences and their constraints. The summary of these vowel sequences are shown in **Table 1.3**, where beige indicates the operation of phonological rule 6, red for the operation of phonological rule 7, and green for neither.

Phonological Rule 6

∅ → [j] / V_1[−back]_V_2 // V_2 is identical to, or lower than, V_1

Phonological rule 6 stipulates that an epenthetic /j/ must be inserted between forbidden vowel sequences. By that rule, underlying sequences of identical vowels, and sequences of a non-back vowel followed by a vowel of lower articulation than the first, are all separated by the epenthetic /j/.

Phonological Rule 7

V → ∅ / V[mid], _{i, o}; u, _e; a, _o; ! ɨ, _ɨ

Phonological rule 7 stipulates the elision of vowels in certain vowel sequences. However, phonological rule 7 is less a unified rule but more of a description of elision processes. Though there are patterns, as shown in **Table 1.3**, as to which vowel sequences result in elision. For instance, all vowel sequences with *-u* as the second element, save for those with *o-* or itself as the first element, result in elision. The same goes for *-ɨ*, with only **-ɨɨ-* not resulting in elision but in *-ɨjɨ-*.

Table 1.3. Allowed vowel sequences

V_1	V_2						
	-i	-e	-ɨ	-ə	-a	-u	-o
i-	*-iji-*	*-ije-*	*-ɨ-*	*-ijə-*	*-ija-*	*-u-*	*-ijo-*
e-	*-i-*	*-eje*		*-eə-*	*-eja-*		*-o-*
ɨ-		*-ɨje-*	*-ɨjɨ-*	*-ɨjə-*	*-ɨja-*		*-ɨjo-*
ə-		*-əe-*	*-i-*	*-əjə-*	*-əja-*		*-o-*
a-	*-ai-*	*-ae-*		*-aə-*	*-aja-*		
u-	*-ui-*	*-e-*		*-uə-*	*-ua-*	*-uju-*	
o-	*-oi-*			*-oə-*	*-oa-*	*-ou-*	*-ojo-*

1.3.6 Phonological rule 8

Phonological rule 8 states that illegal consonant clusters are broken up with an epenthetic *-ɨ-* when they are not either of: word-medial nasal-plosive cluster, a plosive-fricative cluster, an intramorphemic geminate, a cluster beginning with a fricative, a semivowel-initial cluster, or a word-medial or –final cluster consisting of /r/ and a following consonant.

2 Nominal morphology

2.1 Introduction

The noun phrase is defined as a group of nominals and clitics that jointly fulfill a functional role as one unit in the clause. They are composed of a noun phrase base at its core, followed by a case marker. The composition of the noun phrase base is discussed in §2.2, while cases are discussed in §2.3.

2.2 The noun phrase base

The noun phrase base, hereafter shortened to *NPB*, is itself a phrase to which phrasal clitics are attached. It is a structure made up of functional slots, the general form of which is shown in **Table 2.1**.

Table 2.1: The noun phrase base

-4	-3	-2
Demonstrative	Differential	Quantifier
Demonstrative root Demonstrative clitic	*uə* ‘other, another, some other’ *oskɨw* ‘opposite, the other’	Quantifiers and numerals
-1	0	+1
Modifiers	Phrase head	Partitives
Subordinate clause Possessive phrase	Noun stem Compound stem Nominalised verb	*-mtu* ‘portion of’ *-ñimbak* ‘portion of the length of’

2.2.1 Demonstratives

The demonstrative is the leftmost element in the NPB. Defined as any lexical item with deictic reference and mainly spatial function, Humian has a small set of demonstratives centered around a two-way distinction between proximal and distal deictic reference, along with a set of interrogative demonstratives. They are shown in **Table 2.2**.

Table 2.2. Demonstratives

reference	pronoun	adverbial	allative	ablative	clitic
PROX	*art*	*artiko*	*ado* *adori*	*ada*	*a-*
DIST	*urt*	*urtiko*	*udo* *udori*	*uda*	*u-*
INT	*men*	*menko*	*mendo* *mendori*	*menda*	*me-*

They can be used pronominally or adnominally. When used pronominally, they act as the NPB head, but can only be marked for a subset of cases. They can then be inflected for certain cases, which are the dative, instrumental, comitative, privative, and essive cases. Their inflected forms are shown in **Table 2.3**.

In addition, there are the adverbial demonstratives (e.g. *urtiko* 'there') with their own dedicated forms for the ablative (*uda* 'thence, from there') and allative (*udo* 'thither, to there'). There is also another set of allatives, called terminatives, whose forms end in a *-ri*, and signify 'until' (*udori* 'up to there, until there'). These adverbials are used to modify verbs.

The last class of demonstratives is the bound *clitic demonstrative*, which is used for identification and can attach to various elements, such as nouns and verbs. But it is more often

Table 2.3. Inflected demonstratives

cases	PROX	DIST	INT
DAT	*artɨgi*	*urtɨgi*	*meŋgi*
INSTR	*artɨgmuri*	*urtɨgmuri*	*memmuri*
COM	*artɨgsa*	*urtɨgsa*	*mensa*
PRIV	*artɨgguri*	*urtɨgguri*	*meŋkuri*
ESS	*artɨzari*	*urtɨzari*	*meñari*

found attached to the existential verb, forming a unit called the *demonstrative identifier*. In this construction it is often found after the main verb in the clause. It also exhibits agreement with another element in the clause, which is either a demonstrative element or an element marked with an adnominal or clitic demonstrative. Examples of such identifiers include *atət* 'they^{SG} are here' and *utə* 'it is there'.

Of the clitic demonstratives, however, *me-* is very semantically flexible. As a clitic demonstrative, it can attach to the existential to form a question. However, when attached to a verb in the imperative, *me-* takes on a generally discouraging tone, either as an apprehensive 'you might…' or a full vetative 'do not…' with the negative hortative *-wis-*.

2.2.2 Quantifiers and numerals

The quantifier subclass typically contains lexical items that modify nouns in terms of quantity and scope. They fall into two subclasses: non-numerical quantifiers, from here simply termed quantifiers, and numerical quantifiers, from here simply termed numerals. They are united by their syntactic ability to take the distributive postposition *zizaŋ*, which is roughly equivalent to 'each, every'.

2.2.2.1 Quantifiers

There are a handful of quantifiers in Humian, which are *ŋarro* ‘nothing’, *arɨ* ‘single, alone’, *inda* ‘few’, *dufin* ‘many, plenty’, and *arɨmarɨ* ‘all’. They precede the nouns they modify. Though all of them theoretically can take the distributive postposition *zizaŋ*, the quantifier *ŋarro* is semantically incapable of doing so.

Quantifiers are set apart from numerals in that they can take the instrumental case marker *-murɨ* to derive adverbs. This may co-occur with the distributive, and in this case the order is sometimes confused, as *-murɨ* can occasionally attach to *zizaŋ* instead, resulting in *zizaŋmurɨ*. Additionally, quantifiers may be reduplicated to emphasise plurality.

The quantifiers *inda* ‘few’, *dufin* ‘many, plenty’, are also set apart from the other quantifiers in that they may take the privative case marker *-kurɨ*, which acts as a negator/antonymic marker, resulting in *indakurɨ* ‘not few, not so few’, and *dufinkurɨ* ‘not many, not so many’ which convey moderation. However, these two seem to be fossilised to some extent, as they are capable of taking on further case markers. Similarly with *-murɨ*, *-kurɨ* may also be confused in order and attach to *zizaŋ* instead, resulting in *zizaŋmurɨ*.

2.2.2.2 Numerals

Humian has a numeral system that can be characterised as quinary-vigesimal, making use of a mix of base-5 and base-20 numerals. Some of the numbers are listed in **Table 2.4**. This results in a dual system of sorts: for instance, *ən* ‘hand’ is 5, 10 is *mug ən* ‘two hands’, but 20 is *kulabbu*. There is no evidence for native higher base numbers such as 100, and they were probably instead borrowed from the Sumerians, though there was *ayar* ‘myriad’ which was an unspecified large amount.

Numerals can take the same morphology as quantifiers. They can take the distributive postposition *zizaŋ*, the instrumental case marker *-murɨ*, or both. However, numerals are set apart in that they take classifiers, and can also take the associative case marker *-na* to derive ordinal numerals. These ordinals can act as adjectives, and similarly to the privative quantifiers *indakurɨ*

Table 2.4: Humian numerals

value	number
1	*aš*
2	*mug*
3	*ašmug*
4	*ramu*
5	*ən*
6	*aš ənda*
10	*mug ən*
11	*aš ahi mug ən*
20	*kulabbu*

and *dufinkuri*, are also capable of taking on further case marking, usually the instrumental *-muri*, which derives adverbs. Lastly, the numeral *aš* 'one' can also be used to denote 'one way', 'for good', or 'forever'.

2.2.3 Classifiers and measure words

A classifier in Humian is a clitic accompanying nouns in counting, appearing right after the numeral. The classifier acts to specify the nature or class of items being counted, and the numeral cannot appear without it. Humian has an extensive system of classifiers and measure words, some of which are listed in **Table 2.5**. Aside from these, however, Humian also borrowed some units of measurement from Sumer, including the shekel (*GIN*$_2$ ), the mina (*MA.NA* ), and the talent (*GUN* ).

Table 2.5. Classifiers in Humian

classifier	domain	example nouns
aggu	animals and their body parts	sheep, gazelle, fish, leg, head
anih	humans and their body parts	man, woman, child, eye, arm, head
arbuza	flying birds	cormorant, heron, lark
askɨb	a measurement the size of a person's hand	
asom	a measurement of depth equivalent to a person's instep	
cugut	trees, plants	oak, date palm, barley, wheat
huc	round and round-like objects	boulders, stones, balls of mud or clay
ik	long, slender objects	spear, plough, stick
oripa	flat objects	tree bark pieces, clay tablet, blade
surindɨ	a winding of rope, thread	
une	a measurement of volume, for liquid or mass nouns	

Classifiers can cause the meaning of a word to change and create distinctions. For instance, the *kombas* tree, Euphrates poplar (*P. euphratica*), uses the classifier *cugut*. However, when the sticks and branches of the *kombas* tree are referred to, the classifier *ik* is used instead, and for bark, *oripa*. Similarly, with the noun *nɨhuma* 'leg', it either appears with *aggu* when referring to animal legs, such as that of chickens, *anih* when it refers to human legs, and *ik* when referring to something like the leg of a table.

2.2.4 Other NPB elements

Aside from demonstratives and quantifiers, there are some other elements present in the noun phrase base. These are the differentials and the partitives.

The differentials are particles that are roughly equivalent to English ‘other, some other’. There are two differentials, which are *oŋkɨr* and *uə*. While *oŋkɨr* simply refers to a different instance of the noun it is attached to, *uə* specifically refers to the other one of a pair, and as such is only used for nouns that appear in pairs. As a result, *uə* is more commonly used for body parts, which usually appear in pairs, such as eyes, hands, feet, and so on.

Humian partitives serve to indicate a part of a noun, as opposed to a whole. There are two partitives, *-mtu* and *-ñimbak*, which serve slightly different purposes. *-mtu* indicates a more general partitive, a portion of the physical form of a noun, such as with cuts of meat. *-ñimbak*, on the other hand, specifically refers to a lengthwise portion, such as with portions of cloth or rope.

2.2.5 Personal pronouns

Personal pronouns form a closed sub-class of nominals distinguishing three persons in both singular and plural number. It also distinguishes between an animate third-person and an inanimate third-person. Personal pronouns have distinct forms for certain cases, which are the absolutive/ergative, dative, possessive, locative, allative, ablative, comitative, privative, and associative. The full set of formatives for the first- and second-person pronouns is listed in **Table 2.6**.

Table 2.6. First- and second-person pronouns

cases	1S	1P	2S	2P
ABS/ERG	*an*	*anim*	*ak*	*akim*
DAT	*aŋgi*	*aniŋgis*	*aggi*	*akiŋgis*
POSS	*aŋgine*	*aniŋgine*	*aggine*	*akiŋgine*
LOC	*animba*	*animsimba*	*akimba*	*akimsimba*
ALL	*anindo*	*animsindo*	*akindo*	*akimsindo*
ABL	*aninda*	*animsinda*	*akinda*	*akimsinda*
COM	*aŋginissa*	*aniŋginissa*	*agginessa*	*akiŋginissa*
PRIV	*aŋgiŋkuri*	*aniŋgikuri*	*aggiŋkuri*	*akiŋgikuri*
ASS	*aŋginer*	*aniŋginena*	*agginer*	*akiŋginena*

As mentioned before, Humian distinguishes between an animate third-person and an inanimate third-person. The full set of formatives for the third-person pronouns is shown in **Table 2.7**. Worth of note is the third-person possessives, which have been reduced to clitics.

As one would notice in both tables, the contrast between the ergative and absolutive cases has been neutralised. Additionally, as with other pronominal elements, the pronouns inflected for the possessive, comitative, privative, and associative cases are built on the dative pronouns, with a medial *-gi-* element.

Table 2.7. Third-person pronouns

cases	3S.AN	3P.AN	3S.INAN	3P.INAN
ABS/ERG	*bi*	*bine*	*zi*	*zine*
DAT	*bigi*	*biŋgis*	*zigi*	*zaniŋgi*
POSS	*=bane*	*=bemnek*	*=zane*	*=zemnek*
LOC	*bimba*	*binsimba*	*ziba*	*zinenba*
ALL	*bindo*	*binsindo*	*zido*	*zinendo*
ABL	*binda*	*binsinda*	*zida*	*zinenda*
COM	*bigissa*	*biŋgissa*	*zigisa*	*zaniŋgisa*
PRIV	*bigikuɾi*	*biŋgiskuɾi*	*zigikuɾi*	*zaniŋguɾi*
ASS	*bigir*	*biŋgis*	*zigina*	*zaniŋgina*

2.3 Cases

Humian makes use of twelve different cases to express various syntactic and semantic functions. The case markers are listed in **Table 2.8**.

We find that case markers make a distinction between animate and inanimate referents, as is the case with the locative, allative, and ablative case markers, for which there are designated formatives for animate referents, and a separate formative for inanimate referents. Only the animate case markers possess a meaningful number distinction, singular (SG) vs. plural (PL).

As Table **2.8** shows, most of the case markers employ a /s(i)/ element to indicate plural number. This is not indicated as a separate morpheme for two reasons. Firstly, it does not occur

Table 2.7. Cases in Humian

case	inanimate	animate	
		singular	plural
absolutive (ABS)		-∅	*-yo*
ergative (ERG)		*-k*	
dative (DAT)		*-gi*	*-gis*
possessive (POSS)		*-ne*	*-nis*
locative (LOC)	*-ba*	*-mba*	*-s̵imba*
allative (ALL)	*-do*	*-ndo*	*-s̵indo*
ablative (ABL)	*-da*	*-nda*	*-s̵inda*
instrumental (INS)	*-muri*	N/A	
comitative (COM)	*-sa*	*-s̵isa*	
privative (PRIV)		*-kuri*	
associative (ASS)	*-na*	*-r*	*-na*
essive (ESS)		*-yari*	

in all cases. For example, the ergative and absolutive cases instead use the marker *-yo* to indicate plural number. Secondly, its position is not fixed. For instance, it follows the dative and possessive markers, yielding *-gis* and *-nes*, but it precedes the locative, allative, and ablative case markers, yielding *-s̵imba*, *-s̵indo*, and *-s̵inda*, respectively.

The case markers attach to the rightmost element of a phrase, but have scope over the whole noun phrase. Certain cases, especially the ergative, absolutive, dative, and possessive, also have the property of 'bleeding out' onto its modifiers, with their case markers attaching not just to the head of the noun phrase, but also to its subdivisions, in what is called *Suffixaufnahme*. This is a feature exhibited by other languages in the area, such as Sumerian and Hurrian.

2.3.1 Absolutive case

The absolutive case is almost always unmarked, save for the plural number, when it is marked with the suffix *-yo*. The absolutive case encodes the single argument of intransitive verbs, or the patient argument of transitive verbs.

2.3.2 Ergative case

The ergative case marker is *-k* (SG) or *-yo* (PL). It encodes for the semantic role of agent or stimulus.

The ergative case can be used for inanimate agents that are attributed an agent-like behaviour for one reason or another. As with other case markers, there is no number distinction for inanimate referents. As such, in this case, only the marker *-k* is used. Therefore, number is not glossed for *-k* when attached to inanimate referents. Aside from these, experiencer-object constructions, where the stimuli are marked with the ergative and the experiencer the absolutive, are common in Humian. They are often used to express bodily and mental processes, usually those outside the control of the experiencer.

The ergative case can also attach to an entire clause, in conjunction with nominalisation, to create a relative clause.

2.3.3 Dative case

The dative case marker is *-gi* (SG) or *-gis* (PL). It encodes for the semantic role of (animate) recipient or goal. If attached to a place name, it usually refers to the inhabitants of said place.

2.3.4 Possessive case

The possessive case marker is *-ne* (SG) or *-nis* (PL). It marks the semantic role of possessor. The possessive case marker can induce *Suffixaufnahme*, where it appears attached to the modifiers of the head noun it attaches to. Occasionally the multiple marking collapses, such that only the leftmost element of the noun phrase is marked with the possessive case, which might seem to be an aberration at first.

Possessed elements may also acquire a possessive clitic denoting the pronominal role of the possessor. These clitics are derived from the pronouns being inflected for the possessive case, and are shown in **Table 2.8**. However, the pronominal possessives differ in some ways. The first- and second-person possessive clitics surprisingly seem to have been built on the pronoun inflected for the dative case, with an intervening element *-gV-*. There is also a dual possessive clitic series derived from pronouns inflected in the associative case, with an intervening element *-rV-*, suggesting the widespread use of the associative case as a makeshift dual. Additionally, the plural forms are built differently from a normal possessive, with a plural formant *-nek*.

Table 2.8. Possessive pronominal clitics

person and number	singular (SG)	dual (DU)	plural (PL)
1st person (1)	=*aŋgen*	=*anɨrren*	=*niŋginek*
2nd person (2)	=*aggen*	=*akɨrren*	=*kiŋginek*
3rd person animate (3.AN)	=*bane*	=*barrane*	=*bemnek*
3rd person inanimate (3.INAN)	=*zane*	=*zanane*	=*zemnek*

Possessive clitics are more prevalent in inalienably possessed nominals than alienably possessed nominals, suggesting that the clitics are mandatory for inalienable possession.

2.3.5 Locative case

The locative case marker is *-mba* (SG) or *-ꞩimba* (PL) for animate nouns, with *-ba* being used for inanimate nouns regardless of number. The locative case can be translated to English with the prepositions ‘in’, ‘at’, or ‘on’. In order to expressly convey the idea that one thing is inside another, one can use the noun *miŋomo* ‘inside, interior’. Additionally, the locative case can be used in a temporal sense, as in *uazba* ‘on that day’, *ambirayba* ‘in the morning’. It can also be used with nominalization to subordinate an event that occurs simultaneously with the main clause.

2.3.6 Allative case

The allative case marker is *-do* for inanimate referents and *-ndo* (SG) or *-ꞩindo* (PL) for animate referents. The allative can be translated as movement ‘to’ or ‘towards’ some entity, but also as movement ‘inside’ some entity.

2.3.7 Ablative case

The ablative case marker is *-da* for inanimate referents and *-nda* (SG) or *-ꞩinda* (PL) for animate referents. As with the locative and allative cases, the ablative can also be used with a temporal meaning, indicating that a certain point in time is the beginning of a time period, as in *zarida* ‘from now’, which means ‘from now on, nowadays, these days’.

2.3.8 Instrumental case

The instrumental case marker is *-muri*, and can only be used with inanimate referents. It is used for instruments, material or immaterial, used to commit an action. The instrumental case can also be used to create a resultative construction. Resultative constructions denote a state as a result of an action, and employ the instrumental case on a nominalised verb form: *bimukamuri* ‘it was with made red’ as ‘it was reddened’.

2.3.9 Comitative case

The comitative case marker is *-sa* for inanimate referents and *-ꞩisa* for animate referents. It constitutes a functional opposition with the privative case (§2.3.10), as in ‘having something’ vs. ‘not having something’. They express the roles of property (‘having some quality/object’) and

association (‘with something/someone’). Though the comitative attaches to one noun phrase and relates it semantically to another noun phrase, the two NPs do not form a single syntactic unit.

The comitative is often used with an existential verb to express a property or quality of something. The kinds of properties assigned are often atelic and of a temporary nature.

The comitative case operates on the interclausal level when attached to a nominalised verb. Unlike the instrumental case, the comitative does not form a resultative construction, though it is semantically flexible and can encode multiple relationships. It forms a relationship between the verb and the nominalised verb, one of association or simultaneity, though it can also be translated as a manner adverbial or a passive-like construction. The comitative case can also operate on the clausal level when attached to a nominalised verb, where it presupposes some kind of result as with the instrumental case, but the previous event can still be understood. Generally, the comitative case contrasts with the instrumental case as the latter emphasises the result, while the former does not.

2.3.10 Privative case

The privative case *-kuri* expresses the opposite of the comitative. It is used to indicate that a nominal lacks something, someone, or some quality. The privative usually operates at the clausal level. Similar to the comitative case, it can establish a semantic link between two noun phrases, but they do not form a single semantic constituent.

2.3.11 Associative case

The associative case is used to express associativity and accompaniment at the clausal level, or simultaneity with another event at the interclausal level. The associative case markers are *-na* for an inanimate or an animate plural referent, and *-r* for an animate singular referent. They differ from other case markers in that the number distinction is between dual *-r* and plural *-na*. This is because they encode for the number of the total set, i.e. someone in the company of one (dual) or more (plural) persons.

2.3.12 Essive case

The essive case *-yari* functions at the clausal level, and encodes for a nominal's state of being or similarity to another nominal, which can be translated to English as 'like X' or 'similar to X'. When the essive case marker is attached to a nominal that cannot literally change states, the essive case implicates the presence of an alternative state of being. This usually appears in a construction together with the irrealis mood.

3 Verbal morphology

3.1 Introduction

The verb is the most complex component of any Humian sentence, being made up of at most 14 series of affixes. These series are shown in **Table 3.1** in slots, with negative slots indicating elements occurring before the stem, and positive slots indicating elements occurring after the stem.

Table 3.1. Verbal conjugation table

<table>
<tr><td>-6</td><td>-5</td><td>-4</td><td>-3</td><td>-2</td><td>-1</td></tr>
<tr><td>proclitic</td><td>venitive
-m-</td><td>tense$_1$</td><td>valency</td><td>undergoer</td><td>valency change
-a-</td></tr>
<tr><td>+1</td><td>+2</td><td>+3</td><td>+4</td><td>+5</td><td>+6</td></tr>
<tr><td>reality</td><td>aspect$_1$</td><td rowspan="3">modal$_1$</td><td rowspan="3">tense$_2$</td><td rowspan="3">aspect$_2$</td><td rowspan="3">factivity</td></tr>
<tr><td>+7</td><td>+8</td></tr>
<tr><td>actor</td><td>andative
-o</td></tr>
</table>

3.2 Person and number

Humian verbs mark for both the actor (slot +7) and the undergoer (slot -2). The relevant affixes are shown in **Table 3.2**, and they distinguish between three persons (first-, second- and third-person) and two numbers (singular and plural), though with an animacy distinction (animate, inanimate) in the third-person singular. There are also impersonal affixes, which serve to stand

in for an actor or an undergoer that is not known or deemed unimportant, or elided, as with the antipassive voice.

Table 3.2. Personal affixes

person and number	actor (+7)		undergoer (-2)	
	singular (SG)	plural (PL)	singular (SG)	plural (PL)
1st person (1)	*-an*	*-nim*	*n-*	*ne-*
2nd person (2)	*-en*	*-kim*	*k-*	*ke-*
3rd person animate (3.AN)	*-t*	*-m*	*b-*	*be-*
3rd person inanimate (3.INAN)	-∅		*z-*	
impersonal (NPERS)	*-a*		∅-	

3.3 Valency

Various morphemes have the property to change the valency of the verb. These are the causative *-an-*, the reflexive *-uñar-*, and the antipassive *-d-*. They always occur in slot -3 with a following prefix *a-* in slot -1 that denotes a general change in valency.

The causative *-an-* increases valency and indicates that the agent caused someone or something else, which is inflected in the dative case, to do the action.

The reflexive *-uñar-* denotes the actor and the undergoer being identical. It also restricts the undergoer prefix from appearing. The antipassive *-d-* also restricts the undergoer from appearing, or forces it to appear in the dative case, but to denote the undergoer as being unimportant or irrelevant to the discussion.

3.4 Tense, aspect, and mood

3.4.1 Tense

Humian distinguishes between five tenses, which include three past tenses, the present tense, which is unmarked, and the future tense, marked by *-m*. The tense markers normally appear in slot -4 of the conjugation table, but they appear in slot +3 when a suffix appears within the range of slots +1 to +5.

3.4.1.1 Past tenses

As mentioned before, Humian distinguishes between three past tenses. These tenses are the *remote past* (REM.PST), *near past* (NEAR.PST), *immediate past* (IMM.PST). They differ in the temporal distance from the moment of speaking.

The remote past denotes a past action that occurred at least two days before the utterance. This can stretch to what would be termed the mythological past, or the past occurring in stories and legends, comparable to English ‘a long, long time ago’. It is marked by the affix *-me-*.

The near past denotes a past action that occurred the day before the utterance. It is marked by the affix *-nə-*.

The immediate past tense usually denotes a past action that occurred on the same day as the utterance. Additionally, it can also act as a general past tense, with its scope being the entire past. It is marked by the affix *-f-*.

3.4.2 Aspect

Aspects occur in two slots in the verbal conjugation paradigm: slot +2 and slot +5. Slot +2 is allocated for perfectivity, while slot +5 is allotted for other aspects.

3.4.2.1 Perfectivity

Two *aspects of perfectivity* are distinguished in Humian; perfective and imperfective. These two appear in slot +2. The perfective is unmarked, and is the base aspect of perfectivity, indicating an action as a completed whole. The imperfective, meanwhile, is marked with *-wəw-*, and indicates that the action is still ongoing.

3.4.2.2 Other aspects

There are a large amount of aspects in Humian, which are suspected to be formerly incorporated adverbs or serialised verbs. They encompass a wide variety of concepts, and examples include *-ubbu-* 'desiderative', *-difdif-* 'anxiously', *-ʈicabɨc-* 'half-heartedly, obligatorily', *-gabar-* 'encircling', *-tirom-* 'off the mark, missed', *-toni-* 'all over', *-won-* 'attemptative', *-ciwak-* 'unsuccessful attemptative', *-ni-* 'progressive', *-heŋ-* 'immediately', and *-ʈimbaw-* 'cessative'. Two may occur at a time, and as such slot +5 is sometimes split between slot +5A and slot +5B.

3.4.3 Mood

There are two slots allotted for moods in the verbal conjugation paradigm: slot +1 and slot +3. Slot +1 is allotted for moods of reality, while slot +3 is allotted for other moods.

3.4.3.1 Moods of reality

Two main *moods of reality* are distinguished in Humian; realis and irrealis. These two appear in slot +1, right after the stem. The realis is unmarked, and is the base mood of reality, indicating the certainty that an event has happened, is happening, or will happen. The irrealis, meanwhile, is marked with *-r-*, and indicates that the action will not be an actuality, or can be an actuality though uncertain.

3.4.3.2 Other moods

The moods of reality co-occur with mood markers in slot +3, which encode for declarative, imperative, and hortative. The declarative is unmarked, and remains the basic mood. The imperative is marked with the affix *-wa-*, and signals a command or statement of obligatory nature. This may include a regular command or order, or a necessary action. The hortative *-a-*, meanwhile, though occupying the same semantic functions as the imperative, has a different distribution, with the imperative occurring with second-person actors and the hortative with other actors.

There is also the negative hortative *-wis-*, which syntactically only occurs with the present tense. Semantically, however, it is best regarded as tenseless rather than a present-tense-exclusive form. Additionally, despite being termed a 'hortative', it acts as a general prohibitive covering all actors, often in conjunction with the demonstrative interrogative *me-*.

Another mood is the factive *-a*, which occurs separately from the other moods in its own slot, slot +6. It marks semantically backgrounded or presupposed information in a discourse, and as such mainly occurs with the imperfective aspect, especially with the irrealis imperfective where its occurrence is obligatory. It is also obligatory in nominalisation, where it acts as a relativiser alongside the nominaliser *-a*, and interrogative statements, where it is a polarity marker.

3.5 Directionality

Every action has a distinct directionality in Humian, marked with the venitive *m-* and the andative *-o*. For instance, an action of taking would take the venitive, while an action of giving would take the andative. In a similar manner, an action of going would take the venitive, while an action of coming would take the andative, and so on.

4 Lexicon

ambɨray *n.* sunrise, morning.

buš *v.* to take, seize.

Cirabsɨ *n.* proper name.

damu *conj.* but, however, on the contrary.

gaggare *v.* to be big, large, great.

Ikasa *n.* proper name.

irku *n.* an absolute priest-king figure who ruled in Humian city-states, acting as the chief priest for the city's patron god while simultaneously having control over the city-state's military and diplomatic matters.

ke *conj.* so, therefore, as a result.

kuku *n.* war, clash.

kukur *v.* to attack, assault, assail.

kupaw *v.* to teach, impart knowledge.

kus *n.* month

manu *n.* riches, booty, plunder.

mu *v.* to do, create.

muŋgigi *v.* to pay tribute, reparations.

nabe *part.* they say, they said; quotative particle.

ŋarro *n.* region, country, land.

tə *v.* to exist.

u *part.* no, not; negative particle.

zari *n.* the current moment, now.