

# DRAFT

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## A Grammar of Ayeri

 Carsten Becker, 2011.

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### Abbreviations used in glossed examples

.	compound morpheme	CONTR	contrastive	LOCF	locative focus
-	morpheme boundary	COP	copula	M	masculine
=	clitic morpheme	DAT	dative	MKR	marker
~	reduplication	DATF	dative focus	MOT	motion indicator
*	ungrammatical	F	feminine	N	neuter
?	questionable, uncertain	FOC	focus	NEG	negative
✓	acceptable, correct	GEN	genitive	s	singular
Ø	covert morpheme	GENF	genitive focus	SBJ	subjunctive
1	first person	HAB	habitative	P, PL	plural
2	second person	HON	honorative	P	patient
3	third person	IMP	imperative	PF	patient focus
A	agent	I	inanimate	PROG	progressive
AF	agent focus	IND	indefinite	PTCP	participle
AUX	auxiliary	INS	instrumental	QUAL	quality
CAU	causative	INSF	instrumental focus	QTY	quantifier
CAUF	causative focus	LOC	locative	STD	standard

If not marked otherwise, present indicative and animate gender are assumed as default.

## 1 Introduction

This is a grammar of *Ayeri*, a South-Western-Kataytanian language. **Blah.**<sup>†</sup>

This grammar is one more attempt at a thorough documentation of the rules of the language.<sup>‡</sup> In order to achieve the goal of writing a comprehensive grammar, Payne's *Describing Morphosyntax*<sup>1</sup> has been used as a reference for the general structure of this description. In the course of documentation we will focus on the common Standard Dialect (*Ayeri Vihay*) that is used in administration and literature.

### 1.1 The name of the language

The language described here is known to speakers of the language itself as well as to outsiders as *Ayeri*. The word *Ayeri* includes the word *aye*, 'people,' but can arguably be broken down to *ay-eri*, 'by my help,' as well.

### 1.2 Ethnology

...

### 1.3 Demography

...

### 1.4 Dialects

...

### 1.5 The sociolinguistic situation

#### 1.5.1 Multilingualism and language attitudes

...

#### 1.5.2 Contexts of use and language choice

...

<sup>†</sup> On a *meta-fictional* level however, this language has been born on an evening in December 2003 when I was just beginning to become interested more deeply into Linguistics. Since then it has gone through a number of metamorphoses; the current, morphologically rather stable form as described in this grammar had been arrived at by about 2008. Since then my main goal has been to further improve vocabulary and syntax.

<sup>‡</sup> Previous attempts have failed because the language was still changing, so that information became obsolete easily (cf. Becker, Carsten. "Readme.txt to Ayeri Course Book." *Tay Benung. The Ayeri Resource*. 2003-10. Sangumiray na Velinkay Agonye. 21 Oct. 2005. Web. 4 Jul. 2010. <[http://benung.nfshost.com/files/ayeri\\_course.zip](http://benung.nfshost.com/files/ayeri_course.zip)>) or just for the reason of "real life" intervening, or losing interest in the face of the sheer amount of work needed to write a grammar.

<sup>1</sup> Payne, Thomas E. *Describing Morphosyntax. A Guide for Field Linguists*. Cambridge: CUP, 1997. Print.

### 1.5.3 Viability

...

### 1.5.4 Loan words

...

## 2 Sound inventory

Ayeri's phonemic inventory with its seventeen consonants and six/eleven<sup>1</sup> vowels is moderately small, bordering on small regarding the consonants,<sup>2</sup> and average to large regarding its vowels.<sup>3</sup> Ayeri's consonant economy<sup>4</sup> has a value of 1.7 distinctive features per phoneme for consonants, and 1.13 distinctive features per phoneme for vowels: Consonants may be labial, dental, and 'posterior,' also there are stops, nasals, fricatives, affricates, approximants, flaps, and voicing, yielding ten features to differ by. Vowels differ according to height (high, mid, low) and tongue position (front, central, back), as well as length and roundedness, yielding eight features.

### 2.1 Phonotactics

#### 2.1.1 Consonant inventory

	Bilabial		Labiodental	Alveolar		Palatal	Velar		Glottal
<b>Plosives</b>	p ⟨p⟩	b ⟨b⟩		t ⟨t⟩	d ⟨d⟩		k ⟨k⟩	g ⟨g⟩	
<b>Nasals</b>		m ⟨m⟩			n ⟨n⟩		ŋ ⟨ŋ⟩		
<b>Trills</b>					r ⟨r⟩				
<b>Fricatives</b>			v ⟨v⟩	s ⟨s⟩					h ⟨h⟩
<b>Affricates</b>				tʃ ⟨tʃ⟩	dʒ ⟨dʒ⟩				
<b>Approx.</b>						j ⟨j⟩			
<b>Lat. Approx.</b>					l ⟨l⟩				

Table 1: Consonants (spelling in brackets)

In addition to the phonemes above, [w] appears marginally as well, although as an allophone of /u/. The sounds are realized as in the chart above, except that in the main dialects, /t/ and /d/ are often pronounced dentally, that is, [t̪] and [d̪]. /r/ is commonly realized as [r], while /h/ in the vicinity of back vowels is usually [x], whereas in the vicinity of front vowels it is [ç]. The combinations /kj tʃ/ and /gj dʒ/ are often palatalized to [tʃ] and [dʒ] respectively, besides phonemic occurrences. A voicing contrast only exists for

<sup>1</sup> See section 2.1.2, page 4.

<sup>2</sup> cf. Maddieson, Ian. "Consonant Inventories." *The World Atlas of Language Structures Online*. 2008. Max Planck Digital Library. Ed. Martin Haspelmath et al. 2008. Web. 30 Jul. 2010. <<http://wals.info/feature/description/1>>

<sup>3</sup> cf. Maddieson, Ian. "Vowel Quality Inventories." *The World Atlas of Language Structures Online*. 2008. Max Planck Digital Library. Ed. Martin Haspelmath et al. 2008. Web. 30 Jul. 2010. <<http://wals.info/feature/description/2>>

<sup>4</sup> cf. Clements, G. N. "Feature Economy in Sound Systems." *Phonology* 20 (2003): 287–333. Print.



stops and the affricates /tʃ dʒ/, which is not to mean, however, that the respective other half of the binary opposition [± voiced] necessarily appears as an allophone. /ŋ/ is the only consonant that does not usually appear word-initially, a notable exception is the clitic adverb *-ngas* ‘almost’.

### 2.1.2 Vowel inventory

	Front	Central	Back
Close	i, ɪ ⟨i⟩		u, ʊ ⟨u⟩
Mid	e, ɛ ⟨e⟩	ə ⟨e, ə⟩	o, ɔ ⟨o⟩
Open		a, ɑ ⟨a⟩	

Table 2: Vowels (spelling in brackets)

The diphthongs are: /aɪ a:ɪ ɛɪ ɔɪ ʊɪ/. All tense vowels may be long, except for /u/, which does not occur as a lexical long vowel.<sup>5</sup> Long vowels mostly derive from two same vowels colliding due to morphologic marking, for example:

- (1a)    *ibutaya* -ang    → *ibutayāng*  
          *trader* -A        → *trader-A*
- (1b)    *nanga-ye* -ea    → *nangayēa*  
          *house* -PL -LOC → *house-PL-LOC*

### 2.1.3 Syllable structure

The rough syllable structure of Ayeri is

- (2)        (C(w, r, j))(V(V))(m, n, ŋ, s, r, l)

Especially striking is that secondary initial consonants are narrowly restricted. Final consonants are restricted mostly to sonorants, with the exception of /s/. The secondary vowel stands for diphthongs or long vowels here, however note that only certain combinations of vowels exist as diphthongs. There is also the case of /a:ɪ/, although that is very rare (cf. Pistor). For a more detailed study of Ayeri’s syllable structure, see Pistor’s *The Syllable Structure of Ayeri’s Stems* (cf. Pistor).

<sup>5</sup> Pistor, Christian. “The Syllable Structure of Ayeri’s stems. A statistical Analysis.” *Tay Benung. The Ayeri Resource*. 2003–10. Sangumiray na Velinkay Agonye. 3. Apr. 2010. Web. 2. Jul. 2010. 4. <<http://benung.nfshost.com/files/frequency.pdf>>

### 2.1.4 Romanization

The usual transcription system used for the Latin alphabet spells every consonant as in IPA, except for /j/ and /ŋ/, which are spelled *y* and *ng* respectively. There is no orthographic distinction between lax and tense vowels as this distinction is largely allophonic (cf. Pistor 2); only length is indicated, usually by a macron, that is, a dash over the vowel letter.

- (3) Ramyu tenyayam tadoy sa Tupoygahān. Ang səna-napyon maka sempay, paronān nay cān gahāneri tenya vana, mya mirongyon niru arēn simingang.<sup>6</sup>  
 /'ram.ju ,tɛn.ja.'jam ta.'dɔɪ sa tu.'pɔɪ.ga.'ha:n || aŋ sə.na.'na.pjɔn 'ma.ka sɛm.'paɪ | ,pa.ro.'na:n nai 'tʃa:n ga.'ha:.ne.ri 'tɛn.ja 'va.na | mja mi.'rɔŋ.jɔn 'ni.ru a.'re:n ,si.miŋ.'aŋ/

In the above example, the /e/ of the prefix indicating future tense, *se-*, has been spelled *ə* to reflect actual pronunciation. Additionally, note that [w] is not usually spelled *w* – the negator *-oy* regularly changes into *-u* before a diphthong, pronounced [w]:

- (4) tang -oy -ay → tanguay  
 hear -NEG -1s → hear-NEG-1s

Another case of [w] not spelled *w* is the idiosyncratic spelling *uy* of *edaui/adaui* ‘now/then,’ which is rooted in Ayeri’s native writing system.<sup>7</sup> The spelling conventions used in this section apply to the whole document.

## 2.2 Prosody

### 2.2.1 Stress

Stress in Ayeri is irregular for the most part, however, certain rules can be applied: Syllables ending in *ŋ*, as well as syllables containing a long vowel or a diphthong are usually stressed, and no two stressed syllables may follow each other.

### 2.2.2 Intonation

#### 2.2.2.1 Simple statements

Simple statements typically have a rather flat pitch contour:

<sup>6</sup> Mills, Roger. “The Story of the Four Candles.” Trans. Carsten Becker. *Tay Benung. The Ayeri Resource*. 2003–10. Sangumiray na Velinkay Agonye. Apr. 2010. Web. 30 Jul. 2010. <[http://benung.nfshost.com/examples/text/xmp\\_candles.html](http://benung.nfshost.com/examples/text/xmp_candles.html)>

<sup>7</sup> cf. “Tahano Hikamu.” *Tay Benung. The Ayeri Resource*. 2003–10. Sangumiray na Velinkay Agonye, n.d. Web. 1 Aug. 2010. <<http://benung.nfshost.com/index.php?go=scripts&action=thn>>

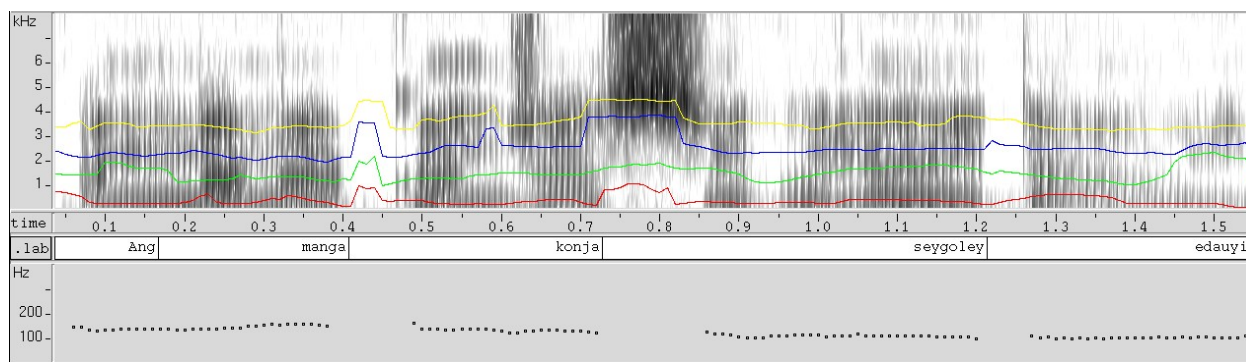


Figure 2.1: Pitch contour of a statement

As can be seen in the illustration above, the pitch contour of the sentence is approximately on a line at about 120–150 Hz, slightly falling towards the end of the sentence.

For the sake of simplicity, the sentence *Ang manga konja seygoley edaui* will serve as the basis for all charts in this section of the grammar. It breaks down as follows:

- (5) Ang manga konja seygoley edaui.  
 Ang manga kond-ya-Ø seygo-ley edaui.  
 AF PROG eat-3<sub>SM</sub>-FOC apple-P.<sub>1</sub> now  
 ‘He is eating an apple now.’

### 2.2.2.2 Questions

Questions not containing the equivalent of a *wh*-word are only marked by means of rising intonation:

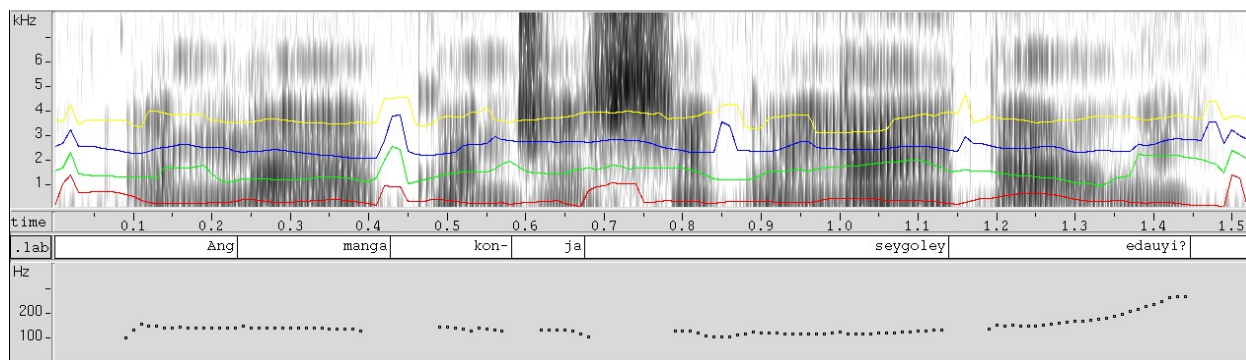


Figure 2.2: Pitch contour of a question without a query word

The raising of pitch at the end of the sentence is clearly visible here, otherwise the contour is not much different from that in Figure 2.1, in that it is rather flat as well.

For the next example, first the agent, then the patient of the sentence has been replaced with a querying word to show its effects: Questions with querying words typically have stress on that word, as shown in the following examples:

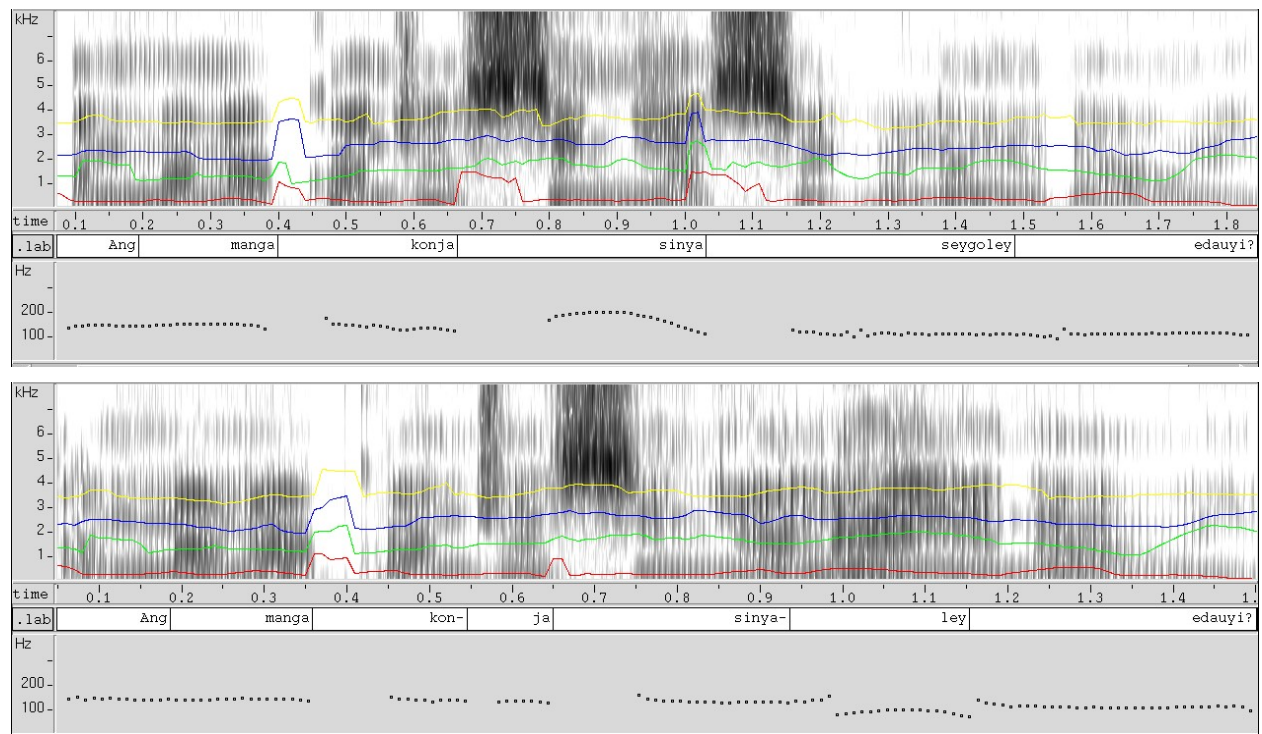


Figure 2.3: Pitch contour of a question with a querying word

We can observe in the two charts above that the question word *sinya* ‘who, which’ is higher than the rest of the tone in the sentence in the first chart, with initial stress, while – although distinctively intonated – in the second chart the word itself is not stressed as much as its case ending *-ley* – although note that this difference in word stress is regular.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> See section 2.2.1, page 5. Diphthongs are prominent carriers of stress.

### 3 Morphological typology

#### 3.1 Traditional morphological typology

Ayeri is an agglutinative language for the greatest part. This nature will be exemplified by the numerous examples of word formation below. Nonetheless, Ayeri shows traits of fusion as well, especially in the way it handles personal pronouns,<sup>1</sup> as well as some aspects of its numeral system.<sup>2</sup>

#### 3.2 Morphological processes

##### 3.2.1 Suffixation

As a largely agglutinative language, most grammatical marking in Ayeri is done by means of suffixes. These occur mainly with nouns and verbs, however, non-numeral quantifiers are enclitic as well, so that adjectives – if modified – may receive these as suffixes as well. One of the most prominent cases of suffixation is probably that of case marking on nouns, an example of which is the following:

- (6)      ayon-ang  
           man-A  
           ‘a/the man’ (as the agent of a clause)

Another prominent example of suffixation frequently occurring is that of person and person-case marking on verbs:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>(7a)      Tigel-ye ang Pila.<br/>                 swim-3<sub>SF</sub> A NAME<br/>                 ‘Pila swims.’</p> | <p>(7b)      tigel-yeng<br/>                 swim-3<sub>SF</sub>.A<br/>                 ‘she swims’</p> |
|--|---|

However, not only person can be marked on verbs by suffixes to the stem, but also mood – which means that suffixes may be stacked as well:

- (8)      tigel-asa-yeng=kay  
           swim-HAB-3<sub>SF</sub>.A=little  
           ‘she usually swims little’

The example above also shows an enclitic non-numeral quantifier attached to the verb phrase in its usual slot, on the right border of the verb phrase.

<sup>1</sup> See section 4.2, page 17.

<sup>2</sup> See section 4.4.2, page 21.

### 3.2.2 Prefixation

Prefixation is the second most common method of affixation in Ayeri. It applies mainly to verbs, but also to other parts of speech like nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, and conjunctions, although only idiomatically in the latter case. In the case of verbs, the most common prefix is one marking tense:

- (9)      mǝ-tigal-yeng  
          PST-swim-3<sub>SF</sub>.A  
          ‘she swam’

Another prefix occurring with verbs is the reflexive marker *sitang*-:

- (10a)   sitang=napa-reng  
          self=burn-3<sub>SI</sub>.A  
          ‘it self-combusticates/burns by itself’

More commonly, *sitang*- appears with pronouns, likewise to mark reflexivity:

- (10b)   Ang   silv-ay-Ø   sitang=yās.  
          AF   see-1<sub>S</sub>.FOC   self=1<sub>S</sub>.P  
          ‘I see myself.’

For nouns and adjectives there is the likening morpheme *ku*- as well:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>(11a)   ku=koya-ley<br/>            like=book-P.<sub>I</sub><br/>            ‘like a book’</p> | <p>(11b)   ku=erpu<br/>            like=numb<br/>            ‘as though it is numb’</p> |
|---|---|

For nouns and conjunctions, the only prefix attachable is that of the proclitic demonstrative articles:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>(12a)   ada=gan-ang<br/>            that=child.A<br/>            ‘that child’</p> | <p>(12b)   da=nārya<br/>            such=CONTR<br/>            ‘in spite of that’</p> |
|--|---|

Note that the demonstrative *da*- can also be attached to verbs in certain circumstances (for example *da-saha*- ‘here comes ...’), or when a demonstrative is supposed to be used with a verb. Both of these cases, however, are rather to be found in colloquial language than in written language.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>(13a)   Da=saha-ara   seyan-ang<br/>            such=come-3<sub>SI</sub>   rain-A.<sub>I</sub><br/>            ‘Here comes the rain.’</p> | <p>(13b)   Da=mǝ-nara-yāng.<br/>            such=PST-say-3<sub>SM</sub>.A<br/>            ‘He said so.’</p> |
|--|---|

### 3.2.3 Reduplication

Reduplication is only a marginal pattern. It is used for hortatives, to indicate that something is done again, and it is used to form diminutives of nouns. In the case of hortatives, the whole stem is reduplicated, including the imperative marker:

- (14) sar-u=sar-u  
REDUP~go-IMP  
'let's go'

For a repeated action, only the first syllable is reduplicated:

- (15a) na=nara-yāng  
REDUP~speak-3SM.A  
'he speaks again'

The reduplicated verb stem forms a new one, and prefixes – like tense markers – are attached to it in the regular fashion:

- (15b) sə-na=nara-yāng  
FUT-REDUP~speak-3SM.A  
'he will speak again'

Combining these two, we get:

- (16) sa=sah-u  
REDUP~go\_towards-IMP  
'let's go again'

With nouns, reduplication is used to form diminutives, that is, affectionate, endearing forms of words, compare for example English *dog/doggy*, *pig/piglet*:

- (17) veney=veney  
REDUP~dog  
'doggy'

### 3.3 Marking strategies

Ayeri is a mixed-marking language, that is, it exhibits both, cases of head- and dependent-marking. An example of dependent-marking are verbs, since person, number, and case are marked on the content verb rather than modals:

- (18a) ming nara-nang  
can speak-1P.A  
'we can speak'

Note that it is important to make a distinction between true modals and light verbs<sup>3</sup> in this case, as marking is exactly the opposite of the above in the case of light verbs: The head verb phrase is marked for person etc., while the dependent VP is marked for its own property of being a participle:

- (18b) Vacyang konjam inunley.  
 Vac-yang kond-yam inunley.  
*like-1s.A eat-PTCP fish-P.1*  
 'I like to eat fish.'

Another example of dependent-marking is nominal possession. Here, the possessor is marked rather than the possessee:

- (19) nanga na Parayan  
*house GEN NAME*  
 'Parayan's house'

The same pattern is found with prepositions as well, where the preposition itself is unmarked, while the dependent NP is marked for location:

- (20) kong nanga-ya  
*inside house-LOC*  
 'inside the house'

<sup>3</sup> See section 4.3.3, page 20.



## 4 Grammatical categories

Ayeri exhibits many of the traditional parts of speech, for example nouns, verbs, and adjectives. However, it is rather flexible with regards to zero-derivation. Thus, for example nouns may appear unchanged as adjectives and vice versa.

### 4.1 Nouns

Payne suggests several tests to determine whether a part of speech in question can be a noun at all – gerunds, or deverbal nouns, are the obvious case of doubt here. First of all, prototypical nouns can be the subjects and objects of sentences (cf. Payne 35):

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>(21a) <u>Common noun as subject:</u><br/>           Ang ning-ya <u>badan</u>-Ø apyan-as.<br/>           AF tell-3<sub>SM</sub> father-FOC joke-P<br/>           ‘Father tells a joke.’</p>         | <p>(22a) <u>Common noun as object:</u><br/>           Ang ca-yan-Ø <u>koya</u>-ley.<br/>           AF create-3<sub>P</sub>-FOC book-P<br/>           ‘They make/write a book.’</p>   |
| <p>(21b) <u>Proper noun as subject:</u><br/>           Sa maly-ye ang <u>Paravay</u> tingra-Ø.<br/>           PF sing-3<sub>SF</sub> A NAME melody-FOC<br/>           ‘Paravay sings the melody.’</p> | <p>(22b) <u>Proper noun as object:</u><br/>           Ang silv-ye Ø Maha sa <u>Mican</u>.<br/>           AF see-3<sub>SF</sub> FOC NAME P NAME<br/>           ‘Maha sees Mican.’</p> |
| <p>(21c) <u>Gerund as subject:</u><br/>           Ø <u>tuya-yam</u> palay.<br/>           COP dance-PTCP fun<br/>           ‘Dancing is fun.’</p>   | <p>(22c) <u>Gerund as object:</u><br/>           Vac-vāng <u>bin-yam</u>.<br/>           like-2<sub>s.A</sub> paint-PTCP<br/>           ‘You like painting.’</p>                     |

As the examples show, common nouns, proper nouns, and gerunds can serve as subjects and objects of sentences. A second test for noun-likeness is that prototypical nouns can take modifiers such as adjectives or possessive pronouns (cf. Payne 35):

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>(23a) <u>Common noun and adjective:</u><br/>           koya hagin<br/>           book heavy</p>    | <p>(24a) <u>Common noun and possessive:</u><br/>           koya nā<br/>           book 1<sub>s</sub>.GEN</p>         |
| <p>(23b) <u>Proper noun and adjective:</u><br/>           Ajām veno<br/>           NAME beautiful</p> | <p>(24b) <u>Proper noun and possessive:</u><br/>           Navayan nā<br/>           name 1<sub>s</sub>.GEN</p>      |
| <p>(23c) <u>Gerund and adjective:</u><br/>           lamp-yam pero<br/>           walk-PTCP slow</p>  | <p>(24c) <u>Gerund and possessive:</u><br/>           *lamp-yam yana<br/>           walk-PTCP 3<sub>SM</sub>.GEN</p> |

Common nouns and proper nouns can be modified by adjectives and possessive pronouns, however, gerunds can only be modified by adjectives. Payne's proposal for a third test of nounhood is to investigate whether a word can be pluralized, whether it can take a determiner, and whether a wide range of adjectives are supported by the word (cf. Payne 35).

(25a) Common noun and plural:

koya → ʼkoya-ye, ʼkoya=ikan

book → book-PL, book=many

(25b) Proper noun and plural:

Krui → ʼKrui-ye, ʼKrui=ikan

NAME → NAME-PL NAME=many

(25c) Gerund and plural:

gum-yam → \*gum-yam-ye, ʼgum-yam=ikan

work-PTCP → work-PTCP-PL work-PTCP=much

First limitations show here – it is questionable whether names can typically be pluralized. As shown in 25c, a gerund cannot take the normal plural marker, however, it can be modified by a non-numeral quantifier. The closest thing to a definite article in Ayeri is whether a word can be focused or not in transitive declarative statements.<sup>1</sup>

(26a) Common noun and focus:

Le laya-yang koya-Ø.

PF.i read-1s.A book-FOC

'I read the book.'

(26b) Proper noun and focus:

Ang silv-ye Ø Ajām yās.

AF see-3sf FOC NAME 3sm.P

'Ajām sees him.'

(26c) Gerund and focus:

Le vac-yāng asa-an-Ø (\*asa-yam-Ø)

PF.i like-3sm.A travel-NMLZ-FOC (travel-PTCP-FOC)

'He likes traveling.'

As 26c shows, the given gerundial form cannot be focused. This is probably due to the -yam ending still being transparent as the dative ending of nouns,<sup>2</sup> which is essentially what makes gerunds not-quite noun-like. The only solution to this problem is to nominalize the verb and mark that for focus. Testing the last category (cf. Payne 35) – support for a wide range of adjectives – leads to the following results:

(27a) koya ʼtuvo, ʼkivo, ʼveno, ʼban

book red small beautiful good

(27b) Ajām ʼtuvo, ʼkivo, ʼveno, ʼban

NAME red small beautiful good

<sup>1</sup> See section 11.1, page 51.

<sup>2</sup> See section 6.4.4, page 38.

- (27c) asa-yam \*tuvo,<sup>?</sup>kivo, <sup>?</sup>veno, <sup>?</sup>ban  
 travel-PTCP red small beautiful good

Gerunds cannot be modified by arbitrary adjectives either, as exemplified in 27c. As a fourth test, Payne (35) suggests investigating whether participles can be modified by adverbs, to support assumptions about their noun- or verbliness. Ayeri does not distinguish morphologically between adverbs and adjectives, though, so the sentence

- (28) Vac-yang lamp-yam pero.  
 like-1s.A walk-PTCP slow(ly)

can mean all, *?I like slowly walking, I like walking slowly, and I like slow walking.*

In conclusion, gerunds can be subjects and objects of sentences; they can take adjectives – although the range of applicable adjectives is restricted – and other modifiers, with the notable exception of possessive pronouns; they cannot be pluralized except by non-numeral quantifiers; they cannot be marked for focus – thus they cannot be definite; and the acceptability of them being modified by descriptive adverbs cannot be determined, since Ayeri does not distinguish between them and adjectives. Again, it can be stated that gerunds are neither fully like nouns, nor are they like verbs in spite of their verbal origin. This makes their exact state regarding the part of speech they belong to not fully determinate.

#### 4.1.1 Proper nouns

Proper nouns may be formed from words existing in the language,<sup>3</sup> often supported by gender markers to disambiguate them from common nouns in the case of personal names. A noticeable morphological feature of proper nouns is that they do not take case markers in their enclitic form, that is, as suffixes, but in their free form, preceding the noun as an article. Looking at example 19 again:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>(29a) nanga na Parayan<br/>         house GEN NAME<br/>         ‘Parayan’s house’</p> <p>(29b) yan na Lanya<br/>         son GEN King<br/>         ‘son of the King’</p> | <p>(29c) Ang mitan-ay-Ø ya Nekandalam<br/>         AF live-1s.FOC LOC NAME<br/>         ‘I live in Nekandalam.’</p> |
|---|---|

Furthermore, as shown above in 25a and 27b respectively, pluralizing proper nouns seems awkward, as are certain combinations of proper nouns and adjectives.

<sup>3</sup> cf. Appendix: First names, page i, for a list of names derived from common nouns.

### 4.1.2 Count and mass nouns

Ayeri distinguishes between countable and uncountable nouns, for example:

- (30) Countable:
- |                      |                           |                      |                             |
|----------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| <i>ayon</i> ‘man’    | → <i>ayonye</i> ‘men’     | <i>naka</i> ‘plant’  | → <i>nakaye</i> ‘plants’    |
| <i>biratay</i> ‘pot’ | → <i>biratayye</i> ‘pots’ | <i>nihan</i> ‘fruit’ | → <i>nihanye</i> ‘fruit(s)’ |
- (31a) Uncountable, singular:
- |                     |                   |                      |                   |
|---------------------|-------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| <i>ahal</i> ‘sand’  | → <i>*ahalye</i>  | <i>ijān</i> ‘wealth’ | → <i>*ijānye</i>  |
| <i>denan</i> ‘fame’ | → <i>*denanye</i> | <i>keman</i> ‘east’  | → <i>*kemanye</i> |
- (31b) Uncountable, plural:
- |                            |                      |                             |                    |
|----------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| <i>ganengan</i> ‘siblings’ | → <i>*ganenganye</i> | <i>lunda</i> ‘shoes’        | → <i>*lundaye</i>  |
| <i>keynam</i> ‘people’     | → <i>*keynamye</i>   | <i>panyan</i> ‘information’ | → <i>*panyanye</i> |

Typically, materials and abstract qualities cannot be counted, and are grammatically singular. Things usually not occurring as singular items are sometimes uncountable as well and are grammatically plural. Body parts, for example, are irregular in this respect:

- (32)
- |                          |                        |                        |                        |
|--------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| <i>niva</i> ‘eye’        | → <i>nivaye</i> ‘eyes’ | <i>tinu</i> ‘arm’      | → <i>tinuye</i> ‘arms’ |
| <i>nekuyi</i> ‘eyebrows’ | → <i>*nekuyiye</i>     | <i>tiras</i> ‘breasts’ | → <i>*tirasye</i>      |
| <i>tang</i> ‘ears’       | → <i>*tangye</i>       | <i>nama</i> ‘leg’      | → <i>namaye</i> ‘legs’ |

The inherent plural of a noun also reflects on the number agreement of verbs:

- (33) Ang tang-yon ban tang-Ø nā.  
 AF hear-3NP good ears-FOC 1s.GEN  
 ‘My ears hear well.’

Where *-yon* is the agreement for third person neuter plural, triggered by *tang* ‘ears’. In order now to refer to only a single item of the pair, a genitive construction is used:

- (34a) Ø erpu tang-ena yana men.  
 COP deaf ears-GEN 3SM.GEN one  
 ‘One of his ears is deaf.’
- (34b) Ø erpu patameng tang-ya batadan-ena.  
 COP deaf right ears-LOC grandfather-GEN  
 ‘Grandfather’s right ear is deaf.’

As can be observed in example 34b, the locative agreement triggered by an adposition like *patameng* ‘right’ may override the genitive marking as seen in 34a,<sup>4</sup> where the numeral behaves like an adjective.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> See section 6.4.5, page 38.

<sup>5</sup> See section 4.4.2, page 21.

### 4.1.3 The structure of the noun word

Ayeri's noun words are of the form

(35) IND-DIM~*stem*-PL-CASE=QTY

“DET” here refers to the optional indefinite determiner prefix *me-* as in the following example:

(36a) *me-ayon*  
 IND-*man*  
 ‘some man (and I do not know which one, just any)’

This determiner must not be confused with the quantifier *-aril* in the example below:

(36b) *ayon=aril*  
*man=some*  
 ‘some men (a couple of them)’

It is important here to distinguish between both cases, as the first example refers to an unspecific man whose identity the speaker is indifferent about, while the second example refers to an undefined number of men. Both can be translated as “some” in (colloquial) English. Returning to 35, “DIM” refers to the diminutive reduplication process,<sup>6</sup> “PL” is the plural marker,<sup>7</sup> “CASE” any of the case markers,<sup>8</sup> and “QTY” refers to quantifiers.<sup>9</sup>

## 4.2 Pronouns

Ayeri has a strikingly large number of personal pronouns. This is due to the pronouns not being formed regularly from their unmarked form with the case marker in its suffixed form appended;<sup>10</sup> but rather the unmarked forms and the case marker undergo merging, which leads to a great number of seemingly independent forms – although there are patterns. Note that this section will only discuss personal pronouns. For demonstrative and relative pronouns, see sections 6.5, page 40, and 12.4, page 53, respectively.

### 4.2.1 Unmarked forms of personal pronouns

The unmarked forms of pronouns are the basis personal pronouns are generated from, and they are also used for verb agreement with the syntactic subject, by cliticizing to the verb stem as suffixes.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>6</sup> See section 3.2.3, page 11.

<sup>7</sup> See section 6.3, page 36.

<sup>8</sup> See section 6.4, page 36.

<sup>9</sup> See section 4.4, page 20.

<sup>10</sup> See section 6.4, page 36.

<sup>11</sup> See section 4.3.1, page 19.

Person	Singular	Plural
1	ay	ayn
2	va	va(n)
2 <sub>HON</sub>	vay	vay

Person	Singular	Plural
3 <sub>M</sub>	ya	yan
3 <sub>S</sub>	ye	yen
3 <sub>N</sub>	yo	yon
3 <sub>I</sub>	ara	aran

Table 3: Unmarked forms of personal pronouns

Note that both forms of second person plurals are found, irregular *va* and regular *van*. This does not have any impact on the declined forms, however, where singular and plural pronouns have the same form.

#### 4.2.2 Singular pronouns

Person	Agent	Patient	Dative	Genitive	Locative	Instrum.	Causative
1	yang	yas	yām	nā	yā	rī	sā
2	vāng	vās	vayam	vana	vaya	vari	vasa
3 <sub>M</sub>	yāng	yās	yayam	yana	yāy	yari	yasa
3 <sub>F</sub>	yeng	yes	yeyam	yena	yea	yeri	yesa
3 <sub>N</sub>	yong	yos	yoyam	yona	yoa	yori	yosa
3 <sub>I</sub>	reng	raley/rei	rayam	ran	raya	reri	rasa

Table 4: Singular pronouns

#### 4.2.3 Plural pronouns

Person	Agent	Patient	Dative	Genitive	Locative	Instrum.	Causative
1	nang	nas	nyam	nana	nyā	ni	nisa
2	vāng	vās	vayam	vana	vaya	vari	vasa
3 <sub>M</sub>	tang	tas	cam	tan	ca	ti	tis
3 <sub>F</sub>	teng	tes	teyam	ten	teya	teri	teys
3 <sub>N</sub>	tong	tos	toyam	ton	toya	tori	toys
3 <sub>I</sub>	teng	ratey	racam	ten	raca	ray	ratas

Table 5: Plural pronouns

#### 4.2.4 Honorific pronouns

Person	Agent	Patient	Dative	Genitive	Locative	Instrum.	Causative
2 <sub>HON</sub>	vayang	vayas	vayyam	vayena	vayya	vayeri	vayisa

Table 6: Honorific pronouns

Honorific pronouns were historically used to refer to honourable persons, like the king, or deities. They are not usually found in modern writing or conversation anymore, except for humorous effect.

### 4.3 Verbs

#### 4.3.1 The morphological structure of verbs

Ayeri's verbs are of the form

(37) TENSE-*stem*-MOOD-PERSON-CASE=QTY

“TENSE” is one of the tense prefixes,<sup>12</sup> “MOOD” one of the mood suffixes – note that these can be stacked –<sup>13</sup> and either simple person agreement, or a cliticized declined pronoun.<sup>14</sup> As mentioned above,<sup>15</sup> “QTY” refers to quantifiers.

Note that an epenthetic *-a-* is inserted between the verb's stem and its person agreement or cliticized personal pronoun if the word's syllable structure becomes invalid:<sup>16</sup>

(38) \*anl-vang (*bring-2s.A*) → anl-a-vang

This change is usually due to no two consonants being allowed as a syllable coda.

#### 4.3.2 Modal verbs

Modal verbs are a class of verbs in Ayeri that is handled in a different way from ordinary content verbs, in that they do not receive any modification by affixes. Instead, it is the content verb complement that is conjugated:

(39) Ang ming silv-ay-Ø vās.  
AF can see-1s.FOC 2s.P  
'I can see you.'

Other true modal verbs, beside *ming-*, are *mya-* 'shall', *rua-* 'must', and *kila-* 'may'. *Ilta-* 'need', *no-* 'want', *vaca-* 'like' are semi-modals and can also be used as content verbs:<sup>17</sup>

<sup>12</sup> See section 10.3.1, page 49.

<sup>13</sup> See section 10.3.3, page 49.

<sup>14</sup> See section 4.2, page 17, for a list of all pronouns, and section 10.5, page 49, on verb agreement.

<sup>15</sup> See section 4.1.3, page 17.

<sup>16</sup> See section 2.1.3, page 4.

<sup>17</sup> See example 18b in section 3.3, page 12. Another possible phrasing is: *Ang vaca konday inunley*. (AF like eat-1s.FOC fish-P.i) 'I like to eat fish.'

- (40a) Ang ilta int-ay-Ø kondan-ley=aril.  
 AF need buy-1s.FOC food-P.I=some  
 ‘I need to buy some food.’
- (40b) Ang ilta-ay-Ø kondan-ley.  
 AF need-1s.FOC food-P.I  
 ‘I need food.’

### 4.3.3 Light verbs

Light verbs are similar to modal verbs<sup>18</sup> in that the content verb is dependent on another verb. The distinction between both is that the light verb itself receives conjugation, while the content verb is formed like a gerund:

- (41) Eng surp-ara-Ø seyar-yam.  
 AF.I seem-3s.FOC rain-PTCP  
 ‘It seems to rain.’

These can be stacked – observe the two consecutive participles in the following example:

- (42) Sa nara-ye-Ø vac-yam tuya-yam.  
 PF say-3sf.FOC like-PTCP dance-PTCP  
 ‘She is said to like dancing.’

## 4.4 Modifiers

### 4.4.1 Descriptive adjectives

Adjectives are used in Ayeri to communicate specific properties of a noun phrase. They are words, unlike relative clauses, which exist as a type of subclause.<sup>19</sup> Adjectives can be used as predicatives and to introduce new participants into the discourse (cf. Payne 63):

- (43a) Surp-ye ang Vakās mino=ing.  
 seem-3sf A NAME happy=so  
 ‘Vakās seems so happy.’
- (43b) Ang taha-ya nanga ban=ikan.  
 AF have-3sm house good=very  
 ‘He has a very good house.’

Note that adjectives do not have any inflectional morphology, besides the ability to be modified by non-numeral quantifiers, and the two negation markers -oy and -arya:

- (44a) Ang Batadan Tavāti ledoy.  
 Ø ang Batadan Tavāti ledoy.  
 COP A TITLE NAME friendly-NEG  
 ‘Grampa Tavāti is not (being) friendly.’
- (44b) Ang Batadan Tavāti ledarya.  
 Ø ang Batadan Tavāti ledoy-arya.  
 COP A TITLE NAME friendly-NEG  
 ‘Grampa Tavāti is unfriendly.’

<sup>18</sup> See section 4.3.2, page 19.

<sup>19</sup> See section 12.4, page 53.



The two markers differ in temporal scope here: In 44a, the grandfather is not being friendly now, while in 44b, unfriendliness is a general attribute of his. Note that this second kind of negation is a pragmatic feature, and that there may be an independent word for the opposite of a quality – the obvious example:

(45) *ban* ‘good’ ↔ *niru* ‘bad’ (\**banarya*<sup>20</sup>)

The ability to receive -oy as a negation marker does not make adjectives more like verbs or more like nouns, since either part of speech can take this suffix.

An interesting case regarding adjectives is that of longer noun compounds, where the modifier is disintegrated and acts like an adjective when the word is declined:<sup>21</sup>

(46) *dadangkeyten* ‘ink pen’ → *dadangeri keyten* ‘with an ink pen’

Other examples of words being used as both nouns and adjectives may be lexicalized, for example *anang* ‘charm; charming’, *banaya* ‘malaise; ill, sick’, or *mino* ‘color; colorful’.

#### 4.4.2 Numerals

##### 4.4.2.1 Cardinal numbers

Ayeri uses a number system with unanalyzable roots for the duodecimal *kuran kivo* ‘small count’ basic numerals. The words for cardinal numbers from 0–12 are as follows:

0	ja	4	yo	8	hen
1	men	5	iri	9	veya
2	sam	6	miye	10	mal
3	kay	7	ito	11	tam

Table 7: Integer cardinal numerals

It is important to note that using numerals as modifiers of nouns suppresses the plural marker -ye:

(47) *narān-ye* → *narān kay*  
*word-PL* → *word three*  
‘words’ → ‘three words’

Fractional numerals are formed from *men* ‘one’ plus the integer divided by. Both parts of the compound undergo crasis again here, leading to irregular forms:

<sup>20</sup> Although note *banaya* ‘malaise; ill, sick.’

<sup>21</sup> Compounding is described in section 10.2, page 49.

$\frac{1}{0}$	*menja	$\frac{1}{4}$	menyo	$\frac{1}{8}$	menyen
$\frac{1}{1}$	*memen	$\frac{1}{5}$	meniri	$\frac{1}{9}$	meveya
$\frac{1}{2}$	mesam	$\frac{1}{6}$	memiye	$\frac{1}{10}$	memal
$\frac{1}{3}$	menkay	$\frac{1}{7}$	menito	$\frac{1}{11}$	mentam

Table 8: Fractional cardinal numerals

To give multiples of a fraction, the numerator is used as a modifier of the fraction word, which serves as the head of the phrase:

- (48) vadisan menkay sam  
bread third two  
'two thirds of a loaf'

Multiples of 12 are formed from *lan* 'dozen' by suffixing it to the number stem: *melan, samlan, kaylan, ..., myelan, ..., malan, tamlan*. After this follows *menang* ( $12^2 = 144 = 100_{12}$ ), first number of the *kuran nake* 'large count'. This second, auxiliary count is based on powers of 144:

$(12^2)^1$	menang	144	$(12^2)^7$	itonang	1,283,918,464,548,864
$(12^2)^2$	samang	20,736	$(12^2)^8$	henang	184,884,258,895,036,416
$(12^2)^3$	kaynang	2,985,984	$(12^2)^9$	veyanang	26,623,333,280,885,243,904
$(12^2)^4$	yonang	429,981,696	$(12^2)^{10}$	malang	3,833,759,992,447,475,122.176
$(12^2)^5$	irinang	61,917,364,224	$(12^2)^{11}$	tamang	552,061,438,912,436,417,593,344
$(12^2)^6$	myenang	8,916,100,448,256			

Table 9: Large count multipliers

In the following we will have a look at an example of a very large numeral expression, using the above chart of large numbers ( $24,AB,A5,23_{12} = 86,341,995_{10}$ , see the footnotes for calculation):

- (49a) kay-nang sam-lan=yo, sam-nang mal-lan=tam, men-nang mal-lan=iri, sam-lan=kay<sup>22</sup>  
three-gross two-dozen=four two-gross ten-dozen=eleven one-gross ten-dozen=five two-dozen=three  
'twenty-four hundred-myriad, twenty-eleven myriad twenty-five hundred, twenty-three'

As exemplified in the above example, large-count numerals serve as the heads of the numeral adverb phrase, while small-count numerals serve as modifiers. The exponent of the large count is given by the head element of the numeral compound; the suffix *-nang* indicates that this numeral is an exponent to  $12^2$ . Single-digit numerals are in themselves modifiers to numerals inflected by the multipliers *-lan* and *-sing*:

<sup>22</sup>  $86,341,995 = (12^2)^3 \times 28 + 2,734,443 \quad | \quad \Rightarrow 27 = 12^1 \times 2 + 3$   
 $\Rightarrow 2,734,443 = (12^2)^2 \times 131 + 18,027 \quad | \quad \Rightarrow 3 = 12^0 \times 3 + 0$   
 $\Rightarrow 18,027 = (12^2)^1 \times 125 + 27$

- (49b) kay-nang sam-lan=yo  
 three-gross two-dozen=four  
 ‘twenty-four hundred-myriad’

The rest of the number in 49a breaks down analogously. Another way to break down this large number – albeit less elegant – is to divide not by two-digit groups, but by four-digit ones:

- (49c) sam-nang men-nang sam-lan=yo mal-lan=tam, men-nang mal-lan=iri, sam-lan=kay<sup>23</sup>  
 two-gross one-gross two-dozen=four ten-dozen=eleven one-gross ten-dozen=five two-dozen=three  
 ‘twenty-four hundred twenty-eleven myriad, twenty-five hundred, twenty-three’

#### 4.4.2.2 Ordinal numbers

Ordinal numerals are nominalized forms of the cardinal numerals:

0	ʔjān	4	yan	8	henan
1	menan	5	iran	9	veyān
2	saman	6	miyan	10	malan
3	kayan	7	itan	11	taman

Table 10: Ordinal numerals

This extends to all other numerals as well, however *-lan* becomes *-lān* in this process, *-nang* is regularly changed to *-nangan*. Ordinal numerals govern the genitive case, hence:

- (50a) kay-an gan-ena yana (50b) samlan-an bavesang-ena yena  
 three-NMLZ child-GEN 3<sub>SM</sub>.GEN twenty-NMLZ birthday-GEN 3<sub>SF</sub>.GEN  
 ‘his third child’ ‘Her twenty-fourth birthday’

Again, as the numeral already indicates plural, the dependent NP is not marked for this category.

#### 4.4.2.3 Multiplicative numbers

Multiplicative numerals are formed from the ordinal numerals with the dative case suffix *-yam* attached: *menanyam*, *samanyam*, *kayanyam* etc. Unlike in English, this can be applied to all numbers:

- (51a) Ang mǝ-yoma-ay-Ø adaya iranyam iri.  
 AF PST-exist-1s.FOC there five\_times already

23	86,341,995	= (12 <sup>2</sup> ) <sup>2</sup>	× <b>4,163</b>	+ 18,027		18,027	= (12 <sup>2</sup> ) <sup>1</sup>	× <b>125</b>	+ 27
	⇒ 18,027	= 12 <sup>0</sup>	× <b>18,027</b>	+ 0		⇒ 27	= 12 <sup>1</sup>	× <b>2</b>	+ 3
						⇒ 3	= 12 <sup>0</sup>	× <b>3</b>	+ 0
	4163	= 12 <sup>2</sup>	× <b>28</b>	+ 131					
	⇒ 131	= 12 <sup>1</sup>	× <b>10</b>	+ 11					
	⇒ 11	= 12 <sup>0</sup>	× 11	+ 0					

‘I have been there already five times.’

- (51b) Kama-reng kay samanyam miye.  
*equal-3<sub>SL</sub>.A three twice six*  
 ‘Two times three equals six.’

Like ordinal numerals, multiplicatives are nominalized forms. Note that in 51b, in spite of working like nouns syntactically, numerals (here: *kay*, *miye*) are kept morphologically distinct: as modifiers they do not receive nominal case-marking if not nominalized for the aforementioned purposes.

#### 4.4.3 Adverbs

Adverbs are only different from adjectives in scope: While adjectives follow nouns as modifiers, adverbs follow verbs, adjectives, other adverbs, or they modify whole clauses. Like adjectives, adverbs do not receive any marking typical of either nouns or verbs; also, there is comparison of adverbs.<sup>24</sup>

##### 4.4.3.1 Manner

Adverbs of manner typically follow their heads – verbs – and describe the quality of an action, that is, how something is done:

- (52) Maly-yo ban mesay-as.  
*sing-3<sub>SN</sub> good choir-P*  
 ‘The choir sings well.’

This is the largest class of adverbs, and also the only open one.

##### 4.4.3.2 Time

Adverbs of time are used to specify when an event takes place. The constituent order for them is not fixed, so adverbs of time may appear at the beginning of a sentence, or at the end, or right after the verb.

Adverbs of time include *davano/dabas* ‘today’, *tavala* ‘long ago’, *tarela* ‘still’, *tamala* ‘yesterday, recently’, *takala* ‘a moment ago’, *tapala* ‘in a moment’, *tasela* ‘tomorrow, soon’, *tanila* ‘in a long time’, as well as *edaui* ‘now’, *adaui* ‘then’, *tajaril* ‘sometime(s)’, *tadoy* ‘never’, and *tadayen* ‘every time, always’, and also *iri* ‘already’, *iroy* ‘not yet’ and *netoy* ‘not any more’.

<sup>24</sup> See section 5.5, page 32.

#### 4.4.3.3 Direction and location

Adverbs of direction and location include *edaya* ‘here’, *adaya* ‘there’, *yāril* ‘somewhere’, *yanoy* ‘nowhere’, and *yanen* ‘everywhere’. The adverbial particle *manga* indicates motion in general, usually in connection with prepositions, however, it also appears with verbs to form the progressive aspect.<sup>25</sup>

#### 4.4.3.4 Stance

Among this group are for example *mima* ‘possibly’, *nilay* ‘probably’, *nilyang* ‘I think’, *paronyang* ‘I guess, I believe’, *surpareng* ‘it seems’, *tono* ‘certainly, surely’ and *yoming* ‘maybe, perhaps’. Adverbial phrases require complement clauses.<sup>26</sup>

#### 4.4.4 Non-numeral quantifiers

Non-numeral quantifiers convey information about either the amount of a thing or the degree of an action. They are usually clitics attaching to the word they modify as suffixes. In case of modifying an already cliticized adverb, they are written as separate words:

- (53) Ø yang pisu=ikan nama.  
COP 1s.A tired=very just  
‘I am just very tired.’

Non-numeral quantifiers include *-ani* ‘at all’, *-aril* ‘a couple of, some’, *-eng* ‘rather’, *-hen* ‘every’, *-ikan* ‘many, much, a lot; very’, *-ing* ‘so’, *-kay* ‘a few, a bit; less, little’, *-ma* ‘enough’, *-nama* ‘just, only’, *-ngas* ‘almost’, *-nyama* ‘even’, *-vā* ‘most’, *-ven* ‘pretty, quite’. There is also *ekeng* ‘overly, too much’, although this is never used as a clitic, but only as a separate word:

- (54a) Ø ada-rengmatikan ekeng.  
COP that-P.1 hot overly  
‘It is too hot.’

- (54b) Ang gin-ya-Ø ekeng nimpur-ley.  
AF drink-3s.FOC overly wine-P.1  
‘He drinks too much wine.’

As can be seen, *ekeng* may take the position of both a quantifier and a descriptive adverb, depending on context and the speaker’s intention.

Some of the affixes listed above are able to modify nouns and adjectives as well as verbs, which sets them apart from mere adverbs:

- (55a) burung=kay  
animal=few  
‘few animals’

- (55b) Seyaran-reng=kay.  
rain-3s.A=a\_little  
‘It rains a little.’

<sup>25</sup> See section 10.3.2, page 49.

<sup>26</sup> See section 12.1, page 53.

- (55c)    ban=kay  
          good=little  
          ‘not so good’

#### 4.4.5 Other modifiers

Other modifiers may be part of the realm of syntax rather than part of that of morphology and can be found in subsequent chapters of this grammar:

- **Determiners and demonstratives:** See section 6.5, page 40.
- **Possessive constructions:** See section 6.6, page 41.
- **Noun-noun, verb-noun etc. modifiers:** See section 10.2, page 49.
- **Relative clauses:** See section 12.4, page 53.

## 5 Constituent order typology

### 5.1 Main clauses

Ayeri exhibits a strong preference for VAP/VS in spite of all NPs being marked for case; consider for example:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>(56a) <u>V-S<sub>A</sub></u>:<br/>         Gum-ya ang Sān.<br/> <i>work-3<sub>SM</sub> A NAME</i><br/>         ‘Sān works.’</p> <p>(56b) <u>V-S<sub>P</sub></u>:<br/>         Binisa-ara sapa-ley.<br/> <i>dye-3<sub>SI</sub> wool-P<sub>I</sub></i><br/>         ‘Cotton wool is dyed.’</p> | <p>(56c) <u>V-A-P</u>:<br/>         Ang binisa-ye Ø Misan sapa-ley<br/> <i>AF dye-3<sub>SF</sub> FOC NAME wool-P<sub>I</sub></i><br/>         ‘Misan dyes cotton wool.’</p> |
|---|---|

However, if a relative clause modifies A, it is possible to reverse the order of A and P:

- (57a) V A RelC<sub>A</sub> P: \*Ang binisaye Misan [si məpengalyang tadayya tupas,] *sapaley*.  
 (57b) V A P RelC<sub>A</sub>: ?Ang binisaye Misan *sapaley* [sang məpengalyang tadayya tupas].  
 (57c) V P A RelC<sub>A</sub>: ✓Ang binisaye *sapaley* Misan [si məpengalyang tadayya tupas].

This also goes for when P is followed by another argument, for example a direct object or an oblique argument. Relative clauses are dealt with more elaborately in section 12.4, page 53.

### 5.2 Verb phrase

Transitive verb phrases in Ayeri typically consist of a focus marker and a verb. The focus marker is an anaphora to an argument of the verb and indicates that it is the subject of the sentence. The focus marker always leads the verb phrase:

- (58) Yam nara-yang van-Ø.  
*DATF speak-1s.A 2s.FOC*  
 ‘It is you I speak to.’

Furthermore there may be an auxiliary involved. Ayeri’s modal verbs<sup>1</sup> may be interpreted as such in that they add additional information to the content verb. The progressive marker *manga*<sup>2</sup> may be counted as an auxiliary as well and is even more prototypical in this respect than modal verbs because it only expresses a

<sup>1</sup> See section 4.3.2, page 19.

<sup>2</sup> See section 10.3.2, page 49.

grammatical function and does not carry any meaning of its own. Thus, it cannot be used as a verb, but only as a modifier of a content verb. Auxiliaries are placed between the focus marker and the main verb:

- (59a) Ang no pa-ya Ø Kaman benenyān-ley yana.  
 AF want take-3<sub>SM</sub> FOC NAME breakfast-P.<sub>I</sub> 3<sub>SM</sub>.GEN  
 ↓ ↓ ↓  
 FOC AUX V = VP  
 ‘Kaman wants to have breakfast.’

- (59b) Ang manga konja seygoley edauyi.  
 Ang manga kond-ya seygo-ley edauyi.  
 AF PROG eat-3<sub>SM</sub> apple-P.<sub>I</sub> now  
 ↓ ↓ ↓  
 FOC AUX V = VP  
 ‘He is eating an apple now.’

Adverbs modifying verbs follow their verb head, just like adjectives follow their nouns head:

- (60) Nimp-yāng para.  
 run-3<sub>SM</sub>.A fast  
 ‘He runs fast.’

### 5.3 Noun phrase

Besides a noun or a pronoun, noun phrases may contain several different types of modifiers. Typically, all of these follow their head noun, except for the indefinite determiner prefix *me-* and the demonstrative pronouns. Another exception to this is the case marker of proper nouns,<sup>3</sup> which precedes the noun as an article, that is, a free morpheme.

Adjectives, too, follow their head noun, as can be seen below in example 61a. As for adjective order in longer chains of adjectives, there is a restriction that these must be coordinated, and that lists of coordinated adjectives greater than two are typically moved into a relative clause:

- (61a) *nanga veno* ‘beautiful house’  
 (61b) *nanga veno nay tado* ‘beautiful old house’  
 (61c) *nanga si veno, tado nay Prihaytam* ‘beautiful old Prihaytam-style house’

The relative clause can then also be used to single out a certain trait which the speaker wants to highlight:

- (61d) *nanga veno si tado nay Prihaytam* ‘beautiful house that is old and Prihaytam-style’  
 ...

Different than in English, however, there is no fixed order in which the adjectives have to appear.

<sup>3</sup> See section 4.1.1, page 15.



The order of possessive pronouns in relation to single adjectives is arbitrary. However, possessive pronouns can precede a group of adjectives, or follow it, but they can never be placed among a group of adjectives:

- (62a)    kegan nā        kāryo nay    dano  
          *hat*   1s.GEN *big*    *and*    *green*
- (62b)    kegan kāryo    nay    dano nā  
          *hat*    *big*        *and*    *green* 1s.GEN
- (62c)    \*kegan    kāryo nā        dano  
          *hat*        *big*    1s.GEN    *green*

Relative clauses are always last in a noun phrase; the relative pronoun is marked for the case of its head if there is a phrase constituent (for example an adjective or a pronoun) in between it and its head – the relative clause is in brackets, its head underlined, and the adjective separating it from its head in the main clause is in italics:

- (63a)    Adareng nangās tado [sasena ang məningay vās].  
          Ada-reng    nanga-as tado si-as-ena    ang    mə-ning-ay-Ø vās.  
          *that-A.1*    *house-P*    *old*    REL-P-GEN AF    PST-tell-1s.FOC 2s.P  
          ‘That is the old house of which I told you.’
- (63b)    \*Adareng nangās [sinā ang məningay vās] tado.  
          Ada-reng    nanga-as si-Ø-na    ang    mə-ning-ay-Ø vās    tado.  
          *that-A.1*    *house-P*    REL-P-GEN AF    PST-tell-1s.FOC 2s.P    *old*  
          ‘\*That is the house of which I told you old.’

Non-numeral quantifiers attach to anything they modify, although they do not modify possessive pronouns, indefinite determiners, relative clauses, or demonstratives. They can modify each other, however, becoming head and dependent of a nested modifier phrase.

Lastly, having a demonstrative and an indefinite determiner in one noun phrase is ungrammatical, likewise a combination of two demonstratives, or two indefinite determiners.

## 5.4 Prepositional phrase

In Ayeri, basic prepositions are expressed by the genitive,<sup>4</sup> dative,<sup>5</sup> and locative,<sup>6</sup> case markers:

- (64a)    Locational genitive:  
          Ang    ning-ay-Ø    na Tasankan.  
          AF    tell-1s.FOC    GEN NAME  
          ‘I tell of Tasankan.’
- (64b)    Locational dative:  
          Ang    nimp-ye-Ø    māva-yam    yena.  
          AF    run-3sf.FOC    mother-DAT 3sf.GEN  
          ‘She runs to her mother.’

<sup>4</sup> cf. section 6.4.3, page 37.

<sup>5</sup> cf. section 6.4.4, page 38.

<sup>6</sup> cf. section 6.4.5, page 38.

(64c) Locative without preposition:

Ya yoma-yāng nanga-Ø.

LOCF exist-3<sub>SM.A</sub> house-FOC

'He is in the house.'

Especially the locative case marker takes the inherent meaning of a verb regarding the location of its argument for granted.

In order to specify the relation between verb and noun as concerns position more elaborately, preposition words. These are derived from nouns, some even from the words for body parts. All of them govern the locative case.<sup>7</sup> In the following, there will be a list of all prepositions that Ayeri employs which can be used as independent nouns as well:

<b>agonan</b>	outside of	outside
<b>avan</b>	at the bottom of	bottom, ground
<b>dayrin</b>	to the side of	side, waist
<b>kong</b>	inside of	inside
<b>eyran</b>	below, under	sole
<b>ling</b>	above, on, on top of; while	top
<b>marin</b>	in front of	face
<b>pang</b>	behind	back
<b>terpeng</b>	among, between	middle

Table 11: Prepositions derived from nouns

Other prepositions include words which are not clearly derived from nouns, and which need to be nominalized in order to be used as nouns:

<b>kayvo</b>	with; along with
<b>kahu</b>	distant, far
<b>luga</b>	among, between; during
<b>nasay</b>	near
<b>nuveng</b>	left
<b>patameng</b>	right

Table 12: Prepositions not derived from nouns

In order for these specialized prepositions to convey motion along a path, the particle *manga*<sup>8</sup> is used:

<sup>7</sup> cf. section 3.3, page 11.

<sup>8</sup> cf. *mangān* 'movement, motion', *manga-* 'to move', *mangan* 'feeling, sentiment; dream'.

- (65a) Ya nuna-ara suran-reng manga ling nanga-Ø.  
 LOCF fly-3<sub>SI</sub> ball-A.<sub>I</sub> MOT top house-FOC  
 ‘A ball flies over the house.’

Note that this works with the plain case markers as well:

- (65b) Yam nuna-ara suran-reng manga nanga-Ø.  
 DATF fly-3<sub>SI</sub> ball-A.<sub>I</sub> MOT house-FOC  
 ‘A ball flies at the house.’

Although, according to Dryer,<sup>9</sup> verb-initial languages are likely employ prepositions, Ayeri also has a number of postpositions:

<b>mangasaha</b>	to here, towards
<b>mangasara</b>	to there, away from
<b>mararya</b>	next
<b>masahatay</b>	since
<b>nasyam</b>	according to
<b>pesan</b>	until
<b>ran</b>	against
<b>yamva</b>	instead of

Table 13: Postpositions

These postpositions also require their dependent to be marked for locative, unless the word modified is not able to be marked, as for example temporal adverbs are (as in 66b), or verb phrases (as in 66c and d):

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>(66a) bihan-ya mararya<br/>         week-LOC next<br/>         ‘next week’</p> <p>(66b) tamala pesan<br/>         yesterday until<br/>         ‘until yesterday’</p> | <p>(66c) sara-vāng masahatay<br/>         leave-2s.A since<br/>         ‘since you have left’</p> <p>(66d) cutor-yang pesan<br/>         fall_asleep-1s.A until<br/>         ‘until I fall asleep’</p> |
|---|--|

The postpositions *mangasaha* and *mangasara* must be handled with care, as their meaning changes according to whether an object follows or not:

- (67a) Ang asa-yan mangasaha/mangasara.  
 AF travel-3<sub>MP</sub> to\_here/away\_from  
 ‘They travel here/away from here.’

<sup>9</sup> cf. Dryer, Matthew. *Word Order*. 2010. Department of Linguistics, U at Buffalo. 2007. Web. 10 Aug. 2010. 4; 52.  
 <<http://wings.buffalo.edu/soc-sci/linguistics/people/faculty/dryer/dryer/DryerShopenWordOrder.pdf>>

- (67b) Ang asa-yan ya Hirapankay mangasaha/mangasara.  
 AF travel-3MP LOC NAME towards/away\_from  
 ‘They travel towards/away from Hirapankay.’

Using the dative case marker *yam* and the genitive case marker *na* instead of the locative case marker *ya* in 67b would have been possible as well. Note that for ranges, the following construction using *pesan* is common, however:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>(68a) beneno-na sirutay-ya pesan<br/>         morning-GEN evening-LOC until<br/>         ‘from morning to evening’</p> | <p>(68b) menan-ena iran-ya pesan<br/>         first-GEN fifth-LOC until<br/>         ‘from one to five’</p> |
|---|---|

## 5.5 Comparative constructions

Ayeri uses verbs to compare the quality of an argument to a standard:

- (69a) Ang eng-yo ban nanga nā, nanga-as vana.  
 AF more-3SN good house 1s.GEN house-P 2s.GEN  
 ↓ ↓ ↓  
 MKR QUAL STD  
 ‘My house is better than your house.’

The constituent order in this case is marker-quality-standard. This construction also works with verbs:

- (69b) Kama-reng surp-yam ban, da=nara-yāng.  
 like-3SI.A seem-PTCP good such=say-3SM.A  
 ‘It seems as good as he says.’

The verbs used for comparison are: *varya-* ‘to be least ...’, *il-* ‘to be less ... than ...’, *kama-* ‘to be as ... as ...’, *eng-* ‘to be more ... than ...’, *va-* ‘to be most ...’. Adverbs, on the other hand, are graded with *-eng* and *-vā* for comparative and superlative respectively:

- (70) Tigal-yāng ban=vā.  
 swim-3SM.A good-most  
 ‘He swims best.’

If an adjective is not compared to a standard, but graded nevertheless, the same construction is used:

- (71) Ø Ada-reng limu-ley ban=vā yana.  
 COP that-A.I shirt-P.I good-most 3SM.A  
 ‘It is his best shirt.’

## 5.6 Questions

Ayeri does not specially mark polar questions other than by means of prosody.<sup>10</sup> Question words in open questions replace the phrase they ask for, for example:

- (72) *Ang ilye Parānvay koyaley yam Matikan.* ‘Parānvay gives a book to Matikan.’  
 → *Ang ilya sinya koyaley yam Matikan?* ‘Who gives a book to Matikan?’  
 → *Ang ilye Parānvay sinyaley yam Matikan?* ‘What does Parānvay give to Matikan?’  
 → *Ang ilye Parānvay koyaley sinyayam?* ‘Who does Parānvay give a book to?’

Note that *sinya* ‘who, what’ is marked for case because there is no distinction in question words for the semantic core roles, that is, agent, patient, and recipient. For a discussion of question words, see section 11.3, page 51.

The words for ‘yes’ and ‘no’ are colloquially used as question tags to express the speaker’s expectation concerning the polarity of the answer in closed questions:

- (73a) *Ang gin-yon māy patas-ye-Ø rasān-ley?*  
 AF *drink-3<sub>SN</sub> yes bear-PL-FOC beer-P.<sub>I</sub>*  
 ‘Do bears drink beer [I think they do]?’
- (73b) *Ang gin-yon voy patas-ye-Ø rasān-ley?*  
 AF *drink-3<sub>SN</sub> no bear-PL-FOC beer-P.<sub>I</sub>*  
 ‘Do bears drink beer [I don’t think they do]?’

These act like descriptive adverbs and follow the verb.

## 5.7 Summary

Ayeri fulfills many of the predictions gathered through statistical analysis by Dryer (52): The order in possessive constructions is noun-genitive, that is, the possessee follows the possessed. Manner adverbs follow their heads, the same goes for adjectives and relative clauses. Auxiliary verbs precede main verbs, the copula is expected to do as well in analogy, although it is a zero morpheme. In comparative constructions, the standard not only follows the marker, but it also follows the adjective.

The differences exhibited by the language as opposed to the mentioned predictions are its handling of adpositions, question words and the way articles are handled: Ayeri mainly uses prepositions, although it possesses a share of postpositions as well. Question words are not sentence-initial, but take the position of the noun phrase they query for. Articles exist in so far as case markers precede proper nouns as expected, however, they appear as suffixes with common nouns. The inspecific determiner *mə-*, as well as

<sup>10</sup> See section 2.2.2.2, page 6.

demonstrative pronouns, precede nouns as prefixes. Taking all of the features described above into account, Ayeri is a very typical VO language.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Payne prefers to call this type “VP language” (cf. Payne 91).

## 6 Noun and noun-phrase operations

### 6.1 Compounding

Ayeri has the ability of compounding to generate new words. Consider for example:

- (74)
- |                     |                         |   |                         |   |                                     |
|---------------------|-------------------------|---|-------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|
| noun + noun:        | <i>prihino</i> ‘table’  | + | <i>gumo</i> ‘work’      | → | <i>prihingumo</i> ‘desk, workbench’ |
| noun + adjective:   | <i>kardang</i> ‘school’ | + | <i>iray</i> ‘high’      | → | <i>kardangiray</i> ‘university’     |
| verb + nominalizer: | <i>anl-</i> ‘to bring’  | + | <i>-maya</i> ‘NMLZ’     | → | <i>anlamaya</i> ‘waiter’            |
| verb + adposition:  | <i>il-</i> ‘to give’    | + | <i>agonan</i> ‘outside’ | → | <i>ilagonan</i> ‘edition’           |

Compound nouns may differ in meaning from their parts in that the meaning of the whole cannot necessarily be deduced from its parts: Consider for example *baytandevo*, which breaks down as ‘blood-head’ to mean ‘headache’, probably due to an earlier assumption that an internal injury of the head causes the pain. In other cases (for example *ilagonan* above), no individual components are nouns, although the resulting word is nevertheless a noun. Evidence of compounding is consolidated by declining a word:

- (75)
- |                    |   |  |
|--------------------|---|--|
| <i>anlamaya</i>    | → | <i>anlamaya-ang</i> (waiter-A)         |
| <i>ilagonan</i>    | → | <i>ilagonan-reng</i> (edition-A.i)     |
| <i>kardangiray</i> | → | <i>kardangiray-ya</i> (university-LOC) |

Clearly, the new word forms a single semantic unit. However, there are exceptions to this, as exemplified in 46 above:<sup>1</sup> When declining long noun-noun compounds – and long means, if the resulting word has more than three syllables – the case marker goes on the head of the compound, turning the dependent into a modifier word if both parts of the noun compound can be recognized as such and have not been modified for example by ellipsis of syllable elements. This is certainly a borderline case of compounding, as the now-modifier constituent may as well be regarded as an adjective.

Note that the order of noun-noun compounds is usually head-dependent, however there may be idiomatic expressions where the order is reversed, for example:

- (76) *vinim* ‘forest’ + *ayon* ‘man’ → *vinimayon* ‘monkey’ (\**ayonvinim*)

Compounds involving other parts of speech may be irregular as well, however in noun-verb compounds with a nominalizing *-an*, the nominalized verb is usually last.

### 6.2 Denominalization

Denominalization is rather uncommon in Ayeri, instead, nominalization occurs. As shown in section 4.4.1, page 20, there are adjectives which do not differ in their surface form from nouns, however those are rare in comparison.

<sup>1</sup> cf. section 4.4.1, page 21.

### 6.3 Number

As described in the sections on countability of nouns,<sup>2</sup> numerals,<sup>3</sup> and non-numeral quantifiers,<sup>4</sup> plurals are not marked on nouns if a modifier indicates number already. Otherwise, nouns are regularly pluralized by means of the suffix *-ye*. A distinction between singular and plural is mandatory for all countable nouns.

### 6.4 Case

Core cases in Ayeri are most conveniently described according to their semantic function rather than their syntactic function. Thus, the terms “agent” and “patient” will be used here instead of “nominative,” “accusative,” or “ergative” and “absolutive.”<sup>5</sup>

#### 6.4.1 Agent

The agent is used to mark the acting entity of a sentence. Consider the following example:

- (77a) Mal-yo mesay-ang.  
*sing-3PN choir-A*  
 ‘The choir sings.’

If the agent noun phrase consists of a name, the case marker is not appended to the noun, but precedes it in its free form:

- (77b) Nara-ya ang Veyadan.  
*speak-3SM A NAME*  
 ‘Veyadan speaks.’

The examples above present the forms of the animate agent marker – that is, *-ang* and *ang* –, but there is an inanimate form as well, marking inanimate entities:

- (78a) Ya sara-ara beson-reng maykong-Ø.  
*LOCF leave-3SI ship-A.I harbor-FOC*  
 ‘A ship leaves the harbor.’

The free form of the inanimate agent marker is *eng* (Assuming that the name of the ship in 78a is *Vipin Maka*):

- (78b) Sara-ara eng Vipin Maka.  
*leave-3SI A.I name*  
 ‘The *Vipin Maka* leaves.’

<sup>2</sup> See section 4.1.2, page 16.

<sup>3</sup> See section 4.4.2, page 21, especially examples 47, 48, and 50a and b.

<sup>4</sup> See section 4.4.4, page 25, especially examples 53 and 55a.

<sup>5</sup> cf. especially example 80, page 37.



### 6.4.2 Patient

The patient typically marks the entity of a sentence that is acted on, or experiences a change of state by the action. The marker of animate patients is *-as*, its free form is *sa*:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>(79a) Ang mapa-ye-Ø nanga-as.<br/>         AF point_at-3<sub>SF</sub>.FOC house-P.<br/>         ‘She points at a house.’</p> | <p>(79b) Ang mapa-ye-Ø sa Anangko.<br/>         AF point_at-3<sub>SF</sub>.FOC P<sub>NAME</sub>.<br/>         ‘She points at Anangko.’</p> |
|---|--|

The inanimate forms of the patient marker are *-ley* and *le*:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>(79c) Ang pa-ay-Ø benenyān-ley nā.<br/>         AF take-1<sub>S</sub>.FOC breakfast-P.<sub>I</sub> 1<sub>S</sub>.GEN<br/>         ‘I have my breakfast.’</p> | <p>(79d) Ang silv-ya-Ø le Vipin Maka.<br/>         AF see-3<sub>SM</sub>.FOC P<sub>NAME</sub><br/>         ‘He sees the <i>Vipin Maka</i>.’</p> |
|---|---|

The patient is also used in intransitive sentences when the only object of the sentence is acted on, rather than acting itself, thus forming a passive:

- (80) Ers-ara kondan-ley.  
 cook-3<sub>SI</sub> food-P.<sub>I</sub>  
 ‘Food is cooked.’

In ditransitive sentences, the thing given is also marked as a patient:

- (81) Ang il-ay-Ø koya-ley yeyam.  
 AF give-1<sub>S</sub>.FOC book-P.<sub>I</sub> 3<sub>SF</sub>.DAT  
 ‘I give her a book.’

A nominal predicate is marked as a patient in case it is a noun phrase as well:

- (82) Ø ada-reng dadang-ley nā.  
 COP that-A.<sub>I</sub> pen-P.<sub>I</sub> 1<sub>S</sub>.GEN  
 ‘That is my pen.’

### 6.4.3 Dative

The dative is the third of Ayeri’s three core cases along with agent and patient, and marks the recipient of things – however, not the experiencer, which is also marked as an agent. It is typically found in ditransitive constructions, the marker is *-yam* in its suffixed form, and *yam* as a free morpheme:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>(83a) Ang il-ay-Ø koya-ley togan-yam.<br/>         AF give-1<sub>S</sub>.FOC book-P.<sub>I</sub> mail.DAT<br/>         ‘I give a book to the mail.’</p> | <p>(83b) Ang il-ay-Ø koya-ley yam Kandan.<br/>         AF give-1<sub>S</sub>.FOC book-P.<sub>I</sub> DAT<sub>NAME</sub><br/>         ‘I give Kandan a book.’</p> |
|--|--|

The dative marker is also found to be marking the complements of light verbs<sup>6</sup> as well as gerunds.<sup>7</sup> There is no animacy distinction in the dative case, as this distinction only exists in the agent and patient cases.

#### 6.4.4 Genitive

The genitive case marks possessors as well as origin. It is marked by the suffix *-na*, *na* is its free form:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>(84a)    ledon netu-na<br/> <i>friend brother-GEN</i><br/> ‘the friend of the brother’</p> | <p>(84b)    ibang na Niyas<br/> <i>field    GEN NAME</i><br/> ‘Niyas’s field’</p> |
|---|---|

The suffix *-na* has an allomorph *-ena* which is used when the word the suffix is attached to ends in a consonant:

- (84c)    dileng    ajān-ena  
*rule    game-GEN*  
‘the rule of the game’

In the case of a “locational” genitive, the case may also mark origin:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>(85a)    Na    gara-yāng    hinang-Ø.<br/> GENF <i>call-1s.A</i>    <i>south-FOC</i><br/> ‘I call from the south.’</p> | <p>(85b)    Yāng na Yanajān.<br/> 1s.A    GEN NAME<br/> ‘I am of Yanajān.’ (i.e. from the Yanajān family)</p> |
|---|---|

#### 6.4.5 Locative

The locative case marks location. It may appear as the case an adposition governs as well as a “locational” locative, where the deixis semantically inherent to a verb is assumed without further specification.<sup>8</sup> The locative marker is *-ya*, or *ya* in its free form:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>(86a)    Ang    kong-ay-Ø    nanga-ya.<br/> AF    <i>enter-1s.FOC house-LOC</i><br/> ‘I enter the house.’</p> | <p>(86b)    Ang    baha-ye-Ø    ya Pahayan.<br/> AF    <i>shout-3sf.FOC    LOC NAME</i><br/> ‘She shouts at Pahayan.’</p> |
|--|---|

The suffix *-ya* has an allomorph *-ea* which is used when the word the suffix is attached to ends in *-e*. This is especially the case with the plural marker *-ye*:

<sup>6</sup> See section 4.3.3, page 20.

<sup>7</sup> See section 4.1, page 13.

<sup>8</sup> See section 5.4, page 29, and especially example 64c.

- (86c) kong rivanyēa  
kong rivan-ye-ea  
*inside mountain-PL-LOC*  
‘inside the mountains’

Under certain circumstances, the locative may also be a combination of genitive and locative proper, as exemplified in example 34*b* earlier:

- (34*b*) Ø erpu patameng tang-ya batadan-ena.  
COP *deaf right* ear-LOC grandfather-GEN  
‘Grandfather’s right ear is deaf.’

In this case, an inherent meaning ‘right of’ may be assumed from the adposition, as the following is ungrammatical, especially since *nuveng* and *patameng* are not among the prepositions derived from nouns:

- (87) \*Ø erpu patameng-ya tang-ena batadan-ena.  
... *right-LOC* ears-GEN ...

#### 6.4.6 Instrumental

The instrumental is used to indicate the entity of a sentence by means of which, or by help of which an action is carried out. The instrumental marker is *-ri*, its free form is *ri*. The post-consonantal form of the suffix is *-eri*:

- (88a) Ang vis-tang seygo-ye-ley tihang-ye-ri tan.  
AF *cut-3PM.A apple-PL-P.I knife-PL-INS 3P.GEN*  
‘They cut apples with their knives.’
- (88*b*) Ang ling-ya-Ø mehir-as ri Kadijān.  
AF *climb\_up-3s.FOC tree-P INS NAME*  
‘He climbs up on the tree with Kadijān’s help.’
- (88c) Ang tav-ya-Ø gino nimpur-eri.  
AF *become-3SM.FOC drunk wine-INS*  
‘He became drunk on wine.’

#### 6.4.7 Causative

The causative marks due to what or whom something happens, or who makes someone do something. It is marked on a noun phrase by *-isa*, or *sā* respectively:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>(89a) Ang rua sara-ayn-Ø seyan-isa.<br/> AF <i>must leave-1P.FOC rain-CAU</i><br/> ‘We had to leave due to rain.’</p> | <p>(89b) Sā no sip-vāng adanya-Ø.<br/> CAUF <i>want cry-2s.A that-FOC</i><br/> ‘It makes you want to cry.’</p> |
|--|--|

- (89c) Sā nimp-vāng hakas-ley yan.  
CAUF run-2s.A mile-P.I 3PM.FOC  
'They make you run a mile.'

- (89d) Sā apa-yang petān-Ø yana.  
CAUF laugh-1s.A folly-FOC 3SM.GEN  
'I laugh due to his folly.'

Note that the causative is also used for constructions in which the agent prompts something to be done to him- or herself:

- (90) Sā vis-ay-Ø mitrang-as nā.  
CAUF cut-1s.FOC hair-P 1s.GEN  
'I have my hair cut.'

The causative marker is also found with verbs: It is often used as an intensifier (for example, *bin-* 'to paint', *binisa-* 'to dye'; *kac-* 'to pull, to draw', *kacisa-* 'to grab') or to derive verbs from adjectives (for example, *tiru* 'dry', *tirisa-* 'to dry'; *apan* 'wide', *apanisa-* 'to extend').<sup>9</sup>

## 6.5 Articles, determiners, demonstratives

Noun phrases do not commonly have articles as such in Ayeri, that is, a morpheme preceding or following a noun phrase to show its definiteness. Instead, the focus marker of the verb takes this role:

- (91a) Ang silv-ay-Ø mehir-as.  
AF see-1s.FOC tree-P  
'As for me, I see a tree.'

- (91b) Sa silv-yang mehir-Ø.  
PF see-1s.A tree-FOC  
'As for the tree, I see it.'

The tree in 91b must have already been introduced into discourse so that it is clear which tree is referred to.

Another way of referring to things are demonstratives. In Ayeri, these are clitic prefixes: *da-* 'such', *eda-* 'this', *ada-* 'that'. Note that *ada(nya)-* also often serves as a replacement for the third person singular pronoun:

- (92) \*Reng tuvo.  
Adareng tuvo.  
'It is red.'

Yet another morpheme qualifying as a kind of demonstrative is *me-*, the indefinite determiner prefix, which is roughly translatable as "some" in the sense of not caring about which one exactly:

- (93) Ya mā-saha-nang me-minkay-ya rivan-ye-Ø.  
LOCF PST-come-1P.A IND-village-LOC mountain-PL-FOC  
'We went to some village in the mountains.'

<sup>9</sup> cf. section ..., page ...

## 6.6 Possessors

Ayeri does not make a distinction between alienable and inalienable possession. Thus, for example, it is not possible to say \**Ang ketay sapayyeley* to mean ‘I wash my hands’ or \**Ang prantay netuas* to mean ‘I ask my brother.’ Instead, possession always needs to be indicated: *Ang ketay sapayyeley nā*; *Ang prantay netuas nā*.

As noted in section 3.3, page 11, and section 5.7, page 33, possessors always follow possesseees:

(94a)	sapay	nā	(94b)	sapay	na Trānay
	<i>hand</i>	1s.GEN		<i>hand</i>	GEN NAME
	↓	↓		↓	↓
	POSSESSEE	POSSESSOR		POSSESSEE	POSSESSOR
	‘my hand’			‘Trānay’s hand’	

As demonstrated in the two examples above, possesseees do not morphologically agree with possessors.

## 6.7 Diminution

As previously stated,<sup>10</sup> reduplication is used to form diminutives, that is, affectionate, endearing forms of words:

(95)	veney=veney
	REDUP~ <i>dog</i>
	‘doggy’

Otherwise, the words for ‘big’ and ‘small’ are used: *kāryo* and *kivo*, respectively.

<sup>10</sup> See section 3.2.3, page 11.

## 7 Predicate nominals and related constructions

### 7.1 Predicate nominals

Ayeri uses juxtaposition of two noun phrases for predicate nominals for both cases, inclusion and equation:

(96a) Ø yāng sobaya-as.  
COP 3<sub>SM.A</sub> teacher-P  
'He is/was a teacher'

(96b) Ø yāng badan-as nā.  
COP 3<sub>SM.A</sub> father-P 1s.GEN  
'He is/was my father.'

"Inclusion" refers to the predicate nominal being included in a group here. "He" is identified as an element of a group of people called "teachers" (cf. Payne 114). Payne (114) furthermore notes that it is not unusual for languages not to make a distinction between these two. The copula has been glossed in such constructions as a covert morpheme in earlier examples as well because full sentences without a verb are not usually found in the language. The positioning of this covert morpheme at the head of the clause is due to Ayeri's constituent order.<sup>1</sup> Due to there not being an overt copula morpheme, there is no tense, mood, or focus marking in these constructions. These are to be deduced from context, or by means of additional adverbs. For predicate adjectives, the same construction is used:

(97) Ø ang Yan pakur tamala.  
COP A name sick yesterday  
'Yan was sick yesterday.'

### 7.2 Existentials and Predicative locatives

For existentials and predicate locatives, Ayeri uses its existential verb *yoma-*:

(98a) Ya yoma-ara koya-reng prihino-ya.  
LOC exist-3<sub>SI</sub> book-A.1 table-LOC  
'There is a book on the table.'

(98b) \*Eng yoma-ara koya-Ø yayam.  
AF.1 exist-3<sub>SI</sub> book-FOC 3<sub>SM.DAT</sub>  
'The book is for him.'

The example 98b is ungrammatical in its context, as using *yoma-* would mean the book exists for the recipient, rather than the recipient simply being supposed to receive the book later. Note that the use of *yoma-* in locative constructions is restricted to *presentative* use of locatives. This means, the phrase "She was with me yesterday." is not realized as the following:

(99a) \*Ang yoma-ye-Ø kayvo yā tamala.  
AF exist-3<sub>SF</sub>.FOC with 1s.LOC yesterday  
'She was with me yesterday.'

But instead, it is expressed in this way, without an existential verb (the same goes for example 98b above):

<sup>1</sup> See section 5.1, page 27.

- (99b) Ø yeng kayvoyā tamala.  
 COP 3<sub>SF</sub>.A with 1<sub>S</sub>.LOC yesterday  
 ‘She was with me yesterday.’

Likewise, to express the simple fact that a book lies on the table, the construction without *yoma-* is used:

- (100) Ø Koya-reng prihino-ya.  
 COP book-A.1 table-LOC  
 ‘The book is on the table.’

However, *yoma-* is used in a presentative clause like this:

- (101) Ya yoma-yo vipin-ang kong sangal-Ø nā.  
 LOCF exist-3<sub>SN</sub> bird-A inside room-FOC 1<sub>S</sub>.GEN  
 ‘There is a bird in my room.’

Although a preposition is used here, the bird is specifically presented in this sentence, and thus introduced into discourse, which is also why it is unfocussed in the example above and thus indefinite. In so far, example 101 mirrors 98a in structure, except that it is extended by a preposition.

### 7.3 Possessive clauses

In order to express ownership of something, Ayeri uses the verb *taha-* ‘to have.’ This verb is not special from other ordinary verbs as discussed in section 4.3.1, page 19:

- (102) Ang taha-ay-Ø ijan-ley=ma.  
 AF have-1<sub>S</sub>.FOC money-P.1=enough  
 ‘I have enough money.’

In order to express that the speaker has something with him- or herself, a locative pronoun is used:

- (103a) Ang taha-ay-Ø ijan-ley=ma yā.  
 AF have-1<sub>S</sub>.FOC money-P.1=enough 1<sub>S</sub>.LOC  
 ‘I have enough money with me.’

Another grammatically permissible way to say this is to use a predicative construction:

- (103b) Ø Ijan-reng=ma yā.  
 COP money-A.1=enough 1<sub>S</sub>.LOC  
 lit. ‘There is enough money on me.’

The construction in the above example is mostly found in speech rather than in literary contexts.

## 8 Syntactic typology

Ayeri is basically a language with a nominative-accusative alignment. This means that the only argument of an intransitive sentence is marked the same way as the agent of a transitive sentence, while the patient of a transitive sentence is marked in a different way:

- (104a) Sara-ya ang Baykan.  
 leave-3<sub>SM</sub> A NAME  
 ↓  
 S<sub>A</sub>  
 ‘Baykan leaves.’
- (104b) Ang harisa-ya Ø Baykan kunang-ley.  
 AF hit-3<sub>SM</sub> FOC NAME door-P.<sub>I</sub>  
 └──────────┘ ↓ ↓  
 A P  
 ‘Baykan hits a door.’

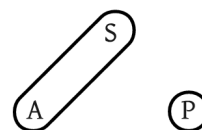


Figure 8.1: Nominative-accusative alignment

The verb can be observed to agree with the agent in the examples above,<sup>1</sup> while both the only argument of the intransitive clause in 104a as well as the agent of the transitive clause in 104b receive the same case marker: *ang*.

However, there is also a possibility in Ayeri to mark the only argument of an intransitive sentence as a patient in order to indicate that the entity is acted on by an unmentioned agent – a passive. Note that this kind of construction is marked, however:

- (105a) Harisa-ya sa Pulan.  
 hit-3<sub>SM</sub> P NAME  
 ↓  
 S<sub>P</sub>  
 ‘Pulan is hit.’

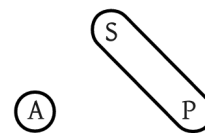


Figure 8.2: Ergative-absolutive alignment

In this case, the verb agrees with the patient of the sentence. An agent would be expressed by marking it as a causative – an oblique argument, essentially keeping the sentence intransitive:

- (105b) Sa harisa-ya Ø Pulan yelang-isa.  
 PF hit-3<sub>SM</sub> FOC NAME stone-CAU  
 └──────────┘ ↓ ↓  
 S<sub>P</sub> O  
 ‘Pulan is hit by a stone.’

Morphologically marking the semantic agent (*yelang*) in 105b above as a syntactic agent (yielding *yelangang* without the verb agreeing with this argument) is not grammatical, since patients (*Pulan*, with the verb agreeing with this argument) cannot be the referents of person marking on verbs in transitive clauses – if

<sup>1</sup> If it agreed with the patient, the ending on the verb would be inanimate at least.



there were both an agent and a patient argument in the clause, it would be transitive, since both are core arguments. However, note that the agent of transitive clauses may be replaced by a causative as well under certain circumstances, keeping it essentially transitive, compare examples 89b and 90 in section 6.4.7, page 40. The verb agrees with the causative argument in this case.

A handful of verbs, such as *il-* ‘to give’ may take three arguments: They are ditransitive. Ditransitive clauses are handled in the way illustrated below:

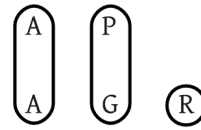
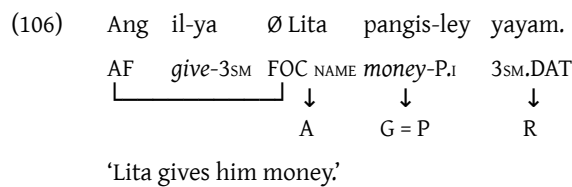


Figure 8.3: Handling of ditransitive sentences

The thing given (G) is marked as a patient (P) in ditransitive clauses, while the recipient (R) receives the dative marker.

## **9 Voice and valence adjusting operations**

### **9.1 Valence increasing operations**

### **9.2 Valence decreasing operations**

## **10 Other verb and verb-phrase operations**

### **10.1 Nominalization**

### **10.2 Compounding**

### **10.3 Tense, aspect, and mode**

#### **10.3.1 Tense**

#### **10.3.2 Aspect**

#### **10.3.3 Mode**

### **10.4 Location and direction encoding**

### **10.5 Participant reference**

### **10.6 Evidentiality, validationality, and mirativity**

### **10.7 Miscellaneous**

## 11 Pragmatically marked structures

### 11.1 Focus, contrast, and topicalization

### 11.2 Negation

### 11.3 Non-declarative speech acts

## **12 Clause combinations**

### **12.1 Complement clauses**

### **12.2 Adverbial clauses**

### **12.3 Clause chaining**

### **12.4 Relative clauses**

### **12.5 Coordination**

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## A Appendix: First names

### A.1 Masculine names

Ajan, Ajān, Akan, Alingo, Alinko, Amān, Apan, Apapan, Apinisa, Apican, Apitisu, Aruno, Ayondan, Bahisang, Bakatayan, Banan, Banvāyon, Bayasino, Bayhan, Bayhikāryo, Bayhilan, Bayhipangal, Baykan, Paypang, Bihān, Canya, Casukolun, Denan, Diyan, Diyatan, Dugamang, Gahān, Gebisyan, Gin, Gindati, Gumkay, Hadakāryo, Hinvo, Hiro, Idampisa, Idampyam, Ikan, Ilompangal, Itingayon, Kadijān, Kadisvati, Kagan, Kaman, Kan, Kaytomay, Kolumakang, Kolun, Kruiy, Kruiyan, Kruiyikan, Kuysāryan, Lakay, Lantān, Lantaya, Lanyan, Lanyapangal, Latun, Layrivan, Ledo, Lesayivako, Linko, Lingvā, Lingyam, Lita, Lugamakang, Mahān, Makalano, Makampangal, Makang, Makārya, Makāryān, Malimaya, Mangan, Mangān, Mangyan, Maran, Marandan, Maranko, Maripuntayan, Matikan, Matikisu, Mavahang, Mayaran, Metāhang, Metida, Mican, Mico, Mikadan, Mingperoy, Mingrenoy, Míngtiga, Miromān, Nahampadang, Nahang, Nahangbahis, Nahangduga, Nahangkāryo, Nahangrivan, Nahangsirutay, Nakauran, Nake, Naraban, Nibān, Nilyaman, Niyas, Pakay, Palungyan, Pangal, Paymayam, Peran, Pilisvarya, Pinyān, Prano, Pulan, Puntayan, Radanan, Rivahang, Sān, Sedan, Semapayis, Sempay, Sikatān, Sikomban, Silvaban, Simileno, Sinisu, Sirimang, Sirtaneng, Sirtang, Sopan, Suhing, Sungkoran, Taboy, Taboyan, Tahacān, Tang, Tapan, Taranan, Taryan, Tavisāya, Telbān, Telbisu, Tenan, Tendan, Tenyam, Tiganisuyam, Tikim, Tipal, Togas, Toryan, Tukong, Ulang, Ven, Vey, Veykan, Vipin, Virang, Vituran, Yan, Yivakan, Yivako, Yonang.

### A.2 Feminine names

Agivay, Ajām, Alinglay, Anang, Apinisa, Apitu, Apituay, Apitvay, Avan, Bahay, Bayhimavay, Bayhimbay, Bayhimvay, Bamis, Biling, Binisa, Briha, Dembay, Devisarang, Diras, Ditavay, Diyavay, Gada, Gebisan, Gimbakay, Gindi, Hanuan, Hanvan, Hevenkivo, Ibamigray, Ijān, Ikangkan, Imaskay, Inun, Kadisati, Kadisu, Kadisuati, Karkavay, Karon, Karonis, Kemisa, Koronān, Kovaro, Kumang, Lanvaya, Lenomagisu, Linglay, Lito, Lompangal, Lugamakang, Magaya, Maha, Makangati, Makangisa, Malingtaraley, Malino, Malivaya, Mangavaya, Matikisa, Migoray, Mingdruya, Míngtunyam, Misan, Nahamavay, Nahambay, Nahamvay, Narano, Nilan, Ninlay, Niva, Notahān, Nukovay, Nupārya, Padahang, Padamban, Padangban, Palay, Pangalmican, Panglay, Pasono, Petiginun, Pila, Pin, Pisamavay, Pisambay, Pisamvay, Pisārya, Pituay, Pitvay, Pralambalay, Primakay, Saylan, Sempayis, Sikatānang, Sikatāti, Sikatu, Sikavay, Sikongban, Silva, Silvan, Sinlay, Sinovay, Sirtampel, Sirutahang, Sitampangra, Tadayen, Tahakaron, Tamaye, Taniva, Taranisu, Tasintān, Tavinim, Tavisay, Tayvinim, Tempalay, Tentupas, Teping, Tiysisuan, Tiysisvan, Trānay, Tunan, Tunanisu, Tupoy, Tuvo, Tuvomakay, Vakas, Vala, Vamuayam, Vamvayam, Vapa, Vesareka, Vesipangal, Veyikan, Vomay, Yirado.

### A.3 Gender-neutral names

Anang, Banvā, Cān, Cāsu, Caysu, Cisu, Dikun, Halingan, Hogo, Kongisu, Leno, Lingen, Maka, Makāti, Manting, Migaran, Ming, Natran, Nava, Nebamperin, Nilyam, Pangoy, Pangra, Para, Parān, Paso, Perin, Perisu, Piha, Pralan, Reta, Silnilan, Sutay, Tahi, Taran, Tenyārya, Tibeno, Toran, Venno, Veta.



## B Appendix: Surnames

People commonly have surnames only in larger communities. These are usually occupational, patronymic, derived from nicknames, or from localities.

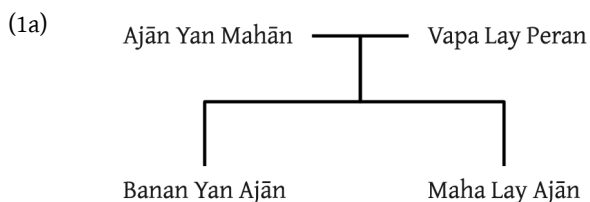
### B.1 Occupational names (examples)

Bimaya (painter)	Lundāti (shoemaker)	Tagaya (judge)
Binisaya (dyer)	Nangāti (house builder)	Tahanaya (scribe)
Dahapaya (counsellor)	Napamaya (salesman)	Tebamaya (baker)
Dayungati (taylor)	Penaya (soldier)	Tusaya (weaver)
Ibutaya (merchant)	Perabimaya (miller)	Vehamaya (builder)
Ijanati (coiner)	Savāti (wright)	Viharaya (shepherd)
Kimban (hunter)	Singati (smith)	Vitaya (wall painter)
Latamaya (salesman)	Tagāti (judge)	Yetang (farmer)

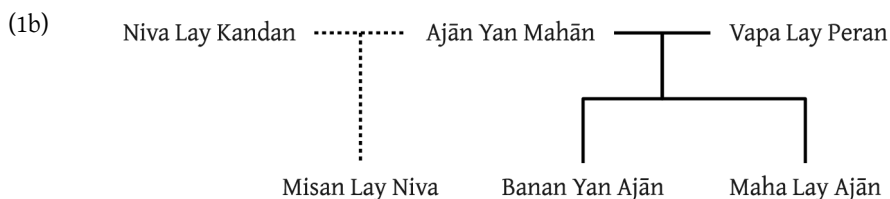
Note that *-maya* is often shortened to *-may*, or that long names may be contracted, for example *Perabimaya* may appear shortened to *Perambay*. In the case of *-maya* following a *Ca* syllable, the *-ma* part is usually dropped completely, for example *-samaya* → *-saya*. The derivational ending *-ati* ‘maker of something’ may be dropped completely. Surnames derived from typical tools of trade appear as well. For girls and women, *-maya* takes its female form, *-vaya*, with the same shortening habits.

### B.2 Patronymic names (examples)

Patronyms may be formed by taking the name of the father as a surname, or by pre- or suffixing it with *yan* ‘son’, *lay* ‘daughter’, *gan* ‘child’, or the genitive marker *na/-e)na*:

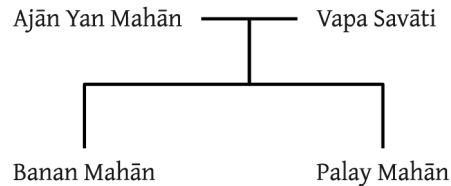


In the case of the father being unknown, or the child having been received illegitimately, the name of the mother is passed on:

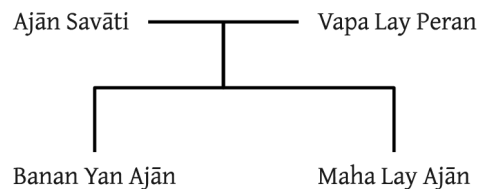


For mixed surname strategies, the local standard is preferred for naming the children: The father's patronym may become a surname in places where family names are preferred, or the family name of the father is dropped in favor of a patronym in places where patronyms are preferred:

(2a) Family names preferred:



(2b) Patronyms preferred:



All examples above contain *Yan* or *Lay*, however this may be dropped as well where it is obvious: *Ajān Yan Mahān* may be *Ajān Mahān*, *Maha Lay Ajān* may be *Maha Ajān*. In patronymic regions addressing each other by first name is preferred.

### B.3 Surnames from Nicknames (examples)

Surnames may be derived from nicknames, for example *kāryo* ‘big’, *kivo* ‘small’, *nake* ‘tall’, *silvaryu* ‘blind’ etc. Surnames derived from tools – for example *Haru* ‘hammer’, *Dadang* ‘pen’, *Tihang* ‘knife’ – may be counted in this category as well.

### B.4 Surnames from Localities (examples)

Surnames deriving from places – such as *Mehir* ‘tree’, *Yonang* ‘stream’, or *Aysu* ‘valley’ – are common especially in rural areas with small communities, which is the normal case, to distinguish two or more people with the same first name. For example *Bihān* who lives near the market (*ren*) is *Bihān Ren*, while *Bihān* who lives by the bridge (*nekan*) is *Bihān Nekan*. If *Tipal* from the village of *Pramidano* moves to the significantly larger city of *Mingkāryo* where there is another person with his name, he may consider calling himself *Tipal Pramidano*.

## C Appendix: Swadesh List

1	I	-ay	35	thin	pakray
2	you (sg.)	-va	36	woman	envan
3	he	-ya	37	man (adult male)	ayon
4	we	-ayn	38	Man (human being)	keynam
5	you (pl.)	-va(n)	39	child	gan
6	they	-yan	40	wife	envan
7	this	eda-	41	husband	ayon
8	that	ada-	42	mother	māva
9	here	edaya	43	father	badan
10	there	adaya	44	animal	burang
11	who	sinya	45	fish	inun
12	what	sinya	46	bird	vipin
13	where	siyan	47	dog	veney
14	when	sitaday	48	louse	dasu
15	how	sikay, simin	49	snake	segas
16	not	-oy-	50	worm	lima
17	all	-hen	51	tree	mehir
18	many	-ikan	52	forest	vinim
19	some	-aril	53	stick	batey
20	few	-kay	54	fruit	nihan
21	other	palung	55	seed	tibin
22	one	men	56	leaf	baloy
23	two	sam	57	root	berem
24	three	kay	58	bark (of a tree)	santa
25	four	yo	59	flower	migoray
26	five	iri	60	grass	tipuy
27	big	kāryo	61	rope	kan
28	long	tupas	62	skin	yutan
29	wide	apan	63	meat	bari
30	thick	pakir	64	blood	baytang
31	heavy	hagin	65	bone	daram
32	small	kivo	66	fat (n.)	lapung
33	short	bata, kivo (time)	67	egg	hema
34	narrow	mihu	68	horn	hapi

69	<b>tail</b>	sitram	104	<b>to think</b>	nil-
70	<b>feather</b>	nunam	105	<b>to smell</b>	verya-
71	<b>hair</b>	mitrang	106	<b>to fear</b>	kar-
72	<b>head</b>	devo	107	<b>to sleep</b>	tor-
73	<b>ear</b>	tang	108	<b>to live</b>	ten-
74	<b>eye</b>	niva	109	<b>to die</b>	tenya-
75	<b>nose</b>	vina	110	<b>to kill</b>	tomba-
76	<b>mouth</b>	banta	111	<b>to fight</b>	pen-
77	<b>tooth</b>	sapey	112	<b>to hunt</b>	kimb-
78	<b>tongue (organ)</b>	lā	113	<b>to hit</b>	harisa-
79	<b>finger nail</b>	ralamapang	114	<b>to cut</b>	vis-
80	<b>foot</b>	yila	115	<b>to split</b>	mesam-
81	<b>leg</b>	nama	116	<b>to stab</b>	sik-
82	<b>knee</b>	sirayila	117	<b>to scratch</b>	tra- (v.)
83	<b>hand</b>	sapay	118	<b>to dig</b>	tirak-
84	<b>wing</b>	navur	119	<b>to swim</b>	tigal-
85	<b>belly</b>	peynam	120	<b>to fly</b>	nuna-
86	<b>guts</b>	kongey	121	<b>to walk</b>	lamp-
87	<b>neck</b>	pasing	122	<b>to come</b>	saha-
88	<b>back</b>	pang	123	<b>to lie (as in bed)</b>	hema-
89	<b>breast</b>	tiras	124	<b>to sit</b>	nedr-
90	<b>heart</b>	patam	125	<b>to stand</b>	beng-
91	<b>liver</b>	nuho	126	<b>to turn (itr.)</b>	gur-
92	<b>to drink</b>	gin-	127	<b>to fall</b>	lesa-
93	<b>to eat</b>	kond-	128	<b>to give</b>	il-
94	<b>to bite</b>	roh-	129	<b>to hold</b>	hang-
95	<b>to suck</b>	mas-	130	<b>to squeeze</b>	pasta-
96	<b>to spit</b>	sic-	131	<b>to rub</b>	mut-
97	<b>to vomit</b>	banteb-	132	<b>to wash</b>	ket-
98	<b>to blow</b>	giha-	133	<b>to wipe</b>	gonda-
99	<b>breathe</b>	ulang-	134	<b>to pull</b>	kac-
100	<b>to laugh</b>	apa-	135	<b>to push</b>	pehinka-
101	<b>to see</b>	silv-	136	<b>to throw</b>	ka-
102	<b>to hear</b>	tang-	137	<b>to tie</b>	nasa-
103	<b>to know</b>	koron-	138	<b>to sew</b>	tibin-

139	<b>to count</b>	kur-	174	<b>yellow</b>	piha
140	<b>to say</b>	nara-	175	<b>white</b>	maka
141	<b>to sing</b>	nely-	176	<b>black</b>	makārya
142	<b>to play</b>	aja-, dap-	177	<b>night</b>	sirutay
143	<b>to float</b>	savit-	178	<b>day</b>	bahis
144	<b>to flow</b>	metida-	179	<b>year</b>	perican
145	<b>to freeze</b>	kars-	180	<b>warm</b>	mato
146	<b>to swell</b>	nit-	181	<b>cold</b>	satiko
147	<b>sun</b>	perin	182	<b>full</b>	deng
148	<b>moon</b>	kolun	183	<b>new</b>	hiro
149	<b>star</b>	siru	184	<b>old</b>	tado
150	<b>water</b>	karon	185	<b>good</b>	ban
151	<b>rain</b>	seyaran	186	<b>bad</b>	nerau, niru
152	<b>river</b>	nongon	187	<b>rotten</b>	sebu
154	<b>lake</b>	kodan	188	<b>dirty</b>	idas
154	<b>sea</b>	karon	189	<b>straight</b>	sirimang
155	<b>salt</b>	pruy	190	<b>round</b>	hikamu
156	<b>stone</b>	yelang	191	<b>sharp (as a knife)</b>	kang
157	<b>sand</b>	ahal	192	<b>dull (as a knife)</b>	nahi
158	<b>dust</b>	metāhal	193	<b>smooth</b>	pray
159	<b>earth</b>	avan	194	<b>wet</b>	raro
160	<b>cloud</b>	kutun	195	<b>dry</b>	tiru
161	<b>fog</b>	runoy	196	<b>correct</b>	kayto
162	<b>sky</b>	leno	197	<b>near</b>	nasay
163	<b>wind</b>	pin	198	<b>far</b>	kahu
164	<b>snow</b>	kanka	199	<b>right</b>	patameng
165	<b>ice</b>	karsang	200	<b>left</b>	nuveng
166	<b>smoke</b>	runu-	201	<b>at</b>	-ya
167	<b>fire</b>	tupoy	202	<b>in</b>	-ya
168	<b>ash</b>	napisān	203	<b>with</b>	kayvo
169	<b>to burn</b>	nap-	204	<b>and</b>	nay
170	<b>road</b>	sasano	205	<b>if</b>	bata
171	<b>mountain</b>	rivan	206	<b>because</b>	yanoyam
172	<b>red</b>	tuvo	207	<b>name</b>	garan
173	<b>green</b>	dano			

## D Epilogue, or why I did this

This section is supposed to cover why I actually did this – writing a grammar in scientific tone about a language that does not even exist in reality, and – worse – do statistical analyses on it in order to write the grammar as a pseudo-scientific document. Constructing languages is certainly a rare hobby, and maybe a slightly eccentric, and people have asked me about it before on several occasions.

Let me start with an anecdote: When I was a child, maybe five or six years old, I remember I sometimes wanted to know why words mean what they mean, or how they came to mean that. The usual answer from my father was, “Well, get yourself an etymologic dictionary!” Of course, I didn’t yet know what that is, but as it seems, words have always been fascinating to me in some way. It is not unusual, but I could read before primary school and could write more than my name. Of course, my spelling was horrible until I learned to spell in school. And while I was not yet working on artificial languages as a twelve year-old I would sometimes, just for fun, invent cyphers of the Latin alphabet. The signs were often so complicated, however, that I never stuck with them. I am not aware of any sheets with tables of letters having survived to this day.

In fifth grade I started learning English at school, and while learning grammar and vocabulary by rote was certainly not a task I enjoyed, I did not have too much trouble learning the language textbook unit by textbook unit. When I was in ninth grade, I wanted to read the Lord of the Rings in English; it seemed a daring experiment to me at that time. Of course I did not make it through all three volumes in English, however, again I must have been somehow fascinated by the detail Tolkien put into the various languages in the book especially. I was not into the whole Fantasy Epic Thing with its Dwarves and Elves and Hobbits and adventure and wars etc., but I learned Tengwar (the writing of Tolkien’s Elves), read things about Quenya and Sindarin (two languages featured throughout the work) here and there on the internet and was shocked to learn that at least Quenya had a full-blown grammar. Grammar! It was something awfully dreadful teachers torture their pupils with. By way of Helge Fauskanger’s *Ardalambion*<sup>1</sup> I got to Mark Rosenfelder’s *Language Construction Kit*<sup>2</sup> in the end, which I nevertheless gave a try, just for fun. After all, making up your own rules cannot be as bad as learning preexisting ones, by definition! And thus I created my first constructed language with the little knowledge of German, English, and French grammar I had acquired in school, and I was bound to basically reproduce that. Eventually I gave up on this first attempt after a couple of months and started a new project, which was doomed to die only a couple of months later as well, suffering from similar problems. However, I had also got in touch with the *Zompist Bulletin Board* forum<sup>3</sup> and

<sup>1</sup> Fauskanger, Helge K. *Ardalambion. Of the Tongues of Arda, the Invented World of J. R. R. Tolkien*. 22 Dec. 2009. Helge K. Fauskanger, n.d. Web. 12 Aug. 2010. <<http://folk.uib.no/hnohf/>>

<sup>2</sup> Rosenfelder, Mark. “The Language Construction Kit.” *The Metaverse*. 2010. Mark Rosenfelder. 1996–2010. Web. 12 Aug. 2010. <<http://www.zompist.com/kit.html>>

<sup>3</sup> Rosenfelder, Mark et al. *Zompist Bboard. Formerly d.b.a. Virtual Verduria Message Board*. 2005. Spinnwebe, n.d. Web. 12 Aug. 2010. <<http://www.spinnoff.com/zbb>>

the *Conlang Mailing List*<sup>4</sup> in the meantime, where I met people who actually knew things about linguistics, or even studied it. This encouraged me to start reading linguistic papers to educate myself a little more in this area. Not formally, but as a layman, and rather unsystematic, admittedly. Only reading papers is rather dry, however, so in order to try out ideas which seemed interesting, I used language construction as a playground: Ayeri was essentially born from this knowledge hunt.

Certainly, aesthetics is another aspect of why people create artificial languages – not necessarily in order to facilitate worldwide communication through international auxiliary languages like Esperanto, but as a form of self-expression, or art. Indeed, people have compared language-making to the fact that some people draw or paint, while others compose or make music, and yet others put a lot of attention to detail in their building of airplane, car, ship, or train models. For me on the other hand, it was words and grammar that have replaced tinkering with Lego bricks at some point in time, and I was an avid Lego-tinkerer.

From this description of how I got to create Ayeri it may seem to the reader as though I had continuously worked on my language for years, but that is not the case. Instead, much work on this project has been done in fits, as time allowed. As I see it, any good work takes its time and effort, since you grow with your project, learn from mistakes, refine things, and revise things. Thus, as time goes by, a vivid complexity may arise in spite of its artificial, rational origin.

<sup>4</sup> Theiling, Henrik et al. *The Conlang Mailinglist*. 1998–2010. Brown U, n.d. Web. 12 Aug. 2010. <<http://listserv.brown.edu/archive/-conlang.html>>