

# A Grammar of Ayeri



# A Grammar of Ayeri

DOCUMENTING A FICTIONAL LANGUAGE

*by Carsten Becker*

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*Benung. The Ayeri Language Resource*

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Ayeri is a fictional language spoken by fictional people in a fictional setting, and as such is not related to any naturally existing languages. It is thus not to be confused with *Azeri*, a Turkic language spoken in Azerbaijan and its surrounding countries. Ayeri's vocabulary is entirely *a priori*, this means, no real-world languages have been used specifically as sources of vocabulary. Ayeri is also not derived from any specific real-world language family by means of sound changes. Due to Ayeri's sound and spelling aesthetic being inspired by Austronesian languages, however, occasional overlaps with words existing in these may happen, but only accidentally so.

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⚙️ <https://github.com/carbeck/ayerigrammar/>  
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# Abbreviations

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I	First person	INT	Intensifier
2	Second person	IRR	Irrealis
3	Third person	ITER	Iterative
A	Agent	LNK	Linker
ACC	Accusative	LOC	Locative
AFF	Affirmative	LOCT	Locative topic
AGR	Agreement	M	Masculine
AGTZ	Agentizer	N	Neuter
AN	Animate	NEG	Negative
AT	Agent topic	NFUT	Near future
CAUS	Causative	NMLZ	Nominalizer
CAUT	Causative topic	NOM	Nominative
COMP	Comparative	NPST	Near past
DAT	Dative	P	Patient
DATT	Dative topic	PL	Plural
DEF	Definite	PREP	Preposition
DIM	Diminutive	PROG	Progressive
DYN	Dynamic	PRS	Present
F	Feminine	PST	Past
FUT	Future	PT	Patient topic
GEN	Genitive	PTCP	Participle
GENT	Genitive topic	REFL	Reflexive
HAB	Habitative	REL	Relative
HORT	Hortative	RFUT	Remote future
IMP	Imperative	RPST	Remote past
INAN	Inanimate	SG	Singular
INDF	Indefinite	SUBJ	Subject
INS	Instrumental	SUPL	Superlative
INST	Instrumental topic	TOP	Topic



# Preface

---

This is my latest attempt to write a grammar of Ayeri, a fictional language which I have been developing since December 2003. Getting to work on grammar writing again was triggered by a growing dissatisfaction with not having a central place of documentation, when the first thing people look for on my website is often the grammar, incomplete as well as partially inaccurate and outdated as it may be. In addition to that, there was a seminar on fictional languages at the University of Tübingen, Germany, in the summer semester of 2016 (Buch 2016). Ayeri was one of the languages that was chosen for students to explore and evaluate.

The student group who worked on Ayeri came to the conclusion that its documentation is severely lacking in the description of basic elements and assumptions, since whole chapters of the grammar had been missing to date (Boga et al. 2016: 12).<sup>1</sup> This is to say that previous attempts of writing a full-fledged grammar of Ayeri have been incomplete due to loss of enthusiasm and creeping neglect.

Although the *Ayeri Grammar* has so far been lying dormant for five years, I have written a whole number of blog articles detailing various grammatical issues (Becker 2016a: Blog). These articles have been taken into consideration here. This grammar writing attempt is thus not only a transferral to a different typesetting system, but constitutes an extension to previous formal documentation as well.

I hope that by transferring my previous grammar writing from LibreOffice to L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X, combined with using GitHub as a version control system, maintaining and editing will become faster, more transparent, and more elegant, since L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X operates on plain text files, and version control helps in keeping track of changes over time.

Carsten Becker  
Marburg, July 18, 2016

<sup>1</sup>  *Kutānas-ikan* ‘thanks a lot’ to Bella Boga, Madita Breuning, Thora Daneyko, and Martina Stama-Kirr for their hard work on making sense of my published materials in spite of information being scattered all over the place, as well as their providing me with the presentation concluding their group work.



## o Introduction

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ကိလပ်မိဝေဒကုာ်ခိဗ်ကုာ်ဃဃဒိုဝဟကုာ် မိမိကုာ် ခိုခွဲဃဒုကု။  
*Paronaya adanyāng si ming tabanoyyāng, edareng voy kotanas.*  
‘He who cannot write believes it not to be toil.’  
— Anonymous

In December 2003, the idea for a new fictional language was born, an idea that turned out to stick with me for over 10 years now.<sup>1</sup> At that time, my seventeen years old self was still fairly new to this whole making-up languages business, read things about linguistics here and there, and was not shy to ask questions about terminology (and, looking at old mails, a little impertinently teenager-like so), for example on *Conlang-L* and the *Zompist Bulletin Board*. One thing seemed to catch my interest especially: syntactic alignments other than the NOM/ACC of the few languages I was familiar with, that is, German, English, and French. Apparently this curiosity was big enough for me to grow bored with my second fictional language, Daléian (declared ‘quite complete’ after maybe half a year of work or so), and to start something new from scratch in order to put newly acquired knowledge to test.

I had read about “trigger languages” on *Conlang-L* and wanted to try my hands on making my own. I cannot remember how long it took me to come up with a first draft of an Ayeri grammar, however, I do remember having been told that a good language cannot be made in a summer. Of course, I still did not really know what I was doing then, even though I thought I had understood things and authoritatively declared “this is how it works” in my first grammar draft when things sometimes really do not work that way. But at least an interest had been whetted.

In order to illustrate the various stages from the beginnings to current Ayeri, I went through some old backups contemporary with the very early days. Here is a sentence from the oldest existing document related to it, titled “Draft of & Ideas for my 3rd Conlang”—the file’s last-changed date is December 14, 2003, though I remember having started work on Ayeri in early December. I added glossing for

<sup>1</sup> Most of the text here is taken from the blog article, “Happy 10th anniversary, Ayeri!” (Becker 2013) with some slight rephrasings and extensions.

convenience and according to what I could reconstruct from the notes. This uses vocabulary and grammatical markers just made up on the spot and for illustrative purposes; little of it actually managed to make it into actual work on Ayeri:

- (1) *Ayevhoi      agiaemaesim      coyaieliēdamavir      vhaieloyanaiye.*  
 Ay-evhoi      agia-ema-esim      coyai-el-i-eđam-avir      vhai-el-o-yaŋa-iye  
 3SG.AN-SUBJ    read-VERB-SUBJ.AN    book-NOUN-AN-INDF-P    bed-NOUN-INAN-on-LOC  
 ‘He reads a book on the bed.’

According to the grammar draft of September 5, 2004, this would have already changed to:

- (2) *Ang      layaiyain      mecoyalei      ling      \*pinamea.*  
 Ang      laya-iy-a-in      me-coya-lei      ling      \*pinam-ea  
 A.SUBJ    read-3SG.AN<sub>1</sub>-a<sub>1</sub>-SUBJ    INDF.INAN-book-P.INAN    top.of    bed-LOC  
 ‘He reads a book on the bed.’

A word for ‘bed’—𐄂𐄃𐄅 *pinam*—was only (re-)introduced on October 24, 2008, however. In the current state of Ayeri, I would translate the sentence as follows:

- (3) *Ang      layaya      koyaley      ling      pinamya.*  
 Ang      laya=ya.Ø      koya-ley      ling      pinam-ya  
 AT      read=3SG.M.TOP    book-P.INAN    top.of    bed-LOC  
 ‘He reads a book on a/the bed.’

As you can see, quite a bit of morphology got lost already early on, especially the overt part-of-speech marking (!) and animacy marking on nouns. Also, prepositions were just incorporated into a noun complex as suffixes apparently. Gender was originally only divided into animate and inanimate, but I changed that at some point because only being really familiar with European languages, it felt awkward to me not to be able to explicitly distinguish ‘he’, ‘she’, and ‘it’.

A feature that also got lost is the assignment of thematic vowels in personal pronouns to third-person referents: originally, every third-person referent newly introduced into discourse would be assigned one of /a e i o u/ to disambiguate, and there was even a morpheme to mark that the speaker wanted to dissolve the association. Constituent order was theoretically variable at first, but I preferred SVO/AVP due to familiarity with that. Later on, however, I settled on VSO/VAP. Also, I had no idea about what was called “trigger morphology” on *Conlang-L* for the longest time—essentially, this referred to the Austronesian, or Philippine, alignment. I am not claiming that I know all about it now, just that due to reading up on the topic, I have a slightly more informed understanding now. Orthography



changed as well over the years, so ⟨c⟩ in the early examples encodes the /k/ sound, not /tʃ/ as it does today; diphthongs were spelled as ⟨Vi⟩ instead of modern ⟨Vy⟩.

What was definitely beneficial for the development of Ayeri was the ever increasing amount of linguistics materials available online and my entering university (to study literature) in 2009, where I learned how to do research and also had a lot of interesting books available at the library.

One of the things people regularly compliment me on is Ayeri's script—note, however, that Tahano Hikamu was not the first one I came up with for Ayeri. Apparently, I had already been fascinated with the look of Javanese/Balinese writing early on;<sup>2</sup> Figure 0.1 shows a draft dated February 9, 2004. However, the letter shapes in this draft looked so confusingly alike that I could never memorize them. About a year later, I came up with the draft in Figure 0.2. What is titled “Another Experimental Script” there is what would later turn into Tahano Hikamu, Ayeri's ‘native’ script. According to the notes in my fictional language ring binder, the script looked much the same as today about a year from then, but things have only been mostly stable since about 2008.

An important date in the history of Ayeri was when I decided to set up an improved website for Ayeri that would include a blog. The idea was that this way, I could more freely write on whatever detail I currently interested me in Ayeri, outside of the constraints of the Grammar. Thus, *Benung. The Ayeri Language Resource* launched on March 1, 2011. Being able to write short articles, however, probably also led to neglecting work on the actual formal reference grammar, which had been lying dormant from January 2011 on. This was always on the premise that I would eventually include the information from blog articles in the grammar. However, juggling such a big document had always felt daunting, so I let laziness take the better part of me eventually as enthusiasm gradually subsided.<sup>3</sup> This renewed attempt at documentation has been started with the intention to right those wrongs.

I hope that by now it should be clear which kind of a fictional language Ayeri is: a personal, artistic language—or *artlang* in community parlance. Thus, my goal in creating Ayeri is not to propose yet another international auxiliary language, like Esperanto. It is also not my goal to make it as logical as possible, like Lojban. Neither is it my goal to engineer it towards certain underlying premises, for example, to reach a maximal amount of information density, like Ithkuil, or to get by on as few different words as possible, like Toki Pona. It is also not a ‘what-if’ language in

<sup>2</sup> Compare, for instance, the charts in Kuipers and McDermott (1996). The Wikipedia articles on either script contain a number of images depicting the scripts in use, both current and historic.

<sup>3</sup> Let me add to my defense, however, that I also worked on my B.A. thesis in 2013 and my M.A. thesis in 2016, which required several months of preparation each and thus left me largely unable to work much on Ayeri.

Figure 0.1: First design for an Ayeri script (February 9, 2004)

ba	𐀀	ma	𐀁	va	𐀂	harden consonant:  e.g. "ca": 𐀃 e.g. "pa": 𐀄
da	𐀅	na	𐀆	sa	𐀇	
ga	𐀈	nga	𐀉	ha	𐀊	
ra	𐀋	la	𐀌	ya	𐀍	

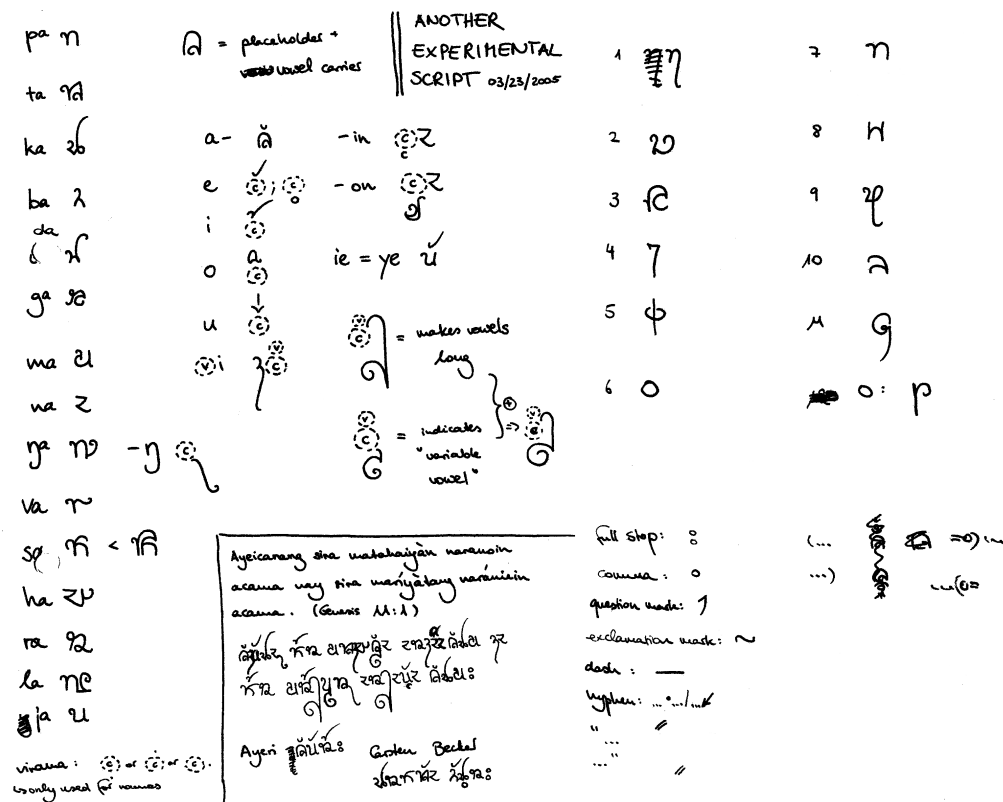
a-	𐀎	-e 2 -i 𐀏 -o- 𐀐 -u- 𐀑	ai	𐀒	var A 𐀓 var E 𐀔 var I 𐀕 var O 𐀖 var U 𐀗	mute -a of a consonant: 
e-	𐀎		e-	𐀎		
i-	𐀎		i-	𐀎		
	𐀎			𐀎		
	𐀎			𐀎		

the sense of “What could the modern language of Old Irish speakers transplanted to Australia look like?” or “Latin piped through Athabascan sound changes.”

Ayeri is rather an attempt to create an artificial language for personal enjoyment and intellectual stimulation by creating a feedback loop between reading up on linguistics and actively devising rules for a fictional language accordingly, to see how things work within the frame I created, or to try and see whether certain ideas work together at all when combined, and to better understand why they do or do not. Ayeri will only ever be as perfect as miniature models of things can be, since it has not grown organically from millenia of human interaction, and I cannot and will never know about each and every aspect of language myself, in spite of continued curiosity about these matters. Nor will it be possible for me to replicate all the fascinating twists and irregularities that natural languages normally entail. The ultimate goal in my work on Ayeri is, I suppose, to make it emulate natural languages to at least some degree of depth and complexity.

In writing this grammar, I hope that I will find a good balance between applying linguistic theory to already existing materials and ideas, and going forth to create rules for aspects of the language that have so far been neglected, often due to my not being aware of them. In my opinion, the split between being able to apply methods of linguistics to what has grown over the course of more than a decade

Figure 0.2: First draft for Tahano Hikamu (March 23, 2005)



on the one hand, and discovering and developing new aspects of the language on the other is what makes Ayer an interesting piece of “informed nonsense,” as a colleague of mine once put it.

If in the following text my (non-native) English is not always fully idiomatic, you find that I got facts, theories or analyses wrong, or not all aspects of the language or its description are equally thoroughly worked-out—which are all very likely events—I ask you to remember that this work is a one-person effort, so mistakes and errors are unavoidable. You are kindly invited to share any constructive criticism you have with me, however, to correct or improve any issues that might need correction or elaboration.



# 1 Phonology

---

This chapter will present charts depicting the phoneme inventory of Ayeri and describe the various commonly encountered allophones of both consonants and vowels. Following this, a detailed statistical analysis of the words found in a number of translated texts from 2008 to 2016 as well as dictionary entries up to July 2016 will produce insights into Ayeri’s phonotactics. Some notes on stress patterns and intonation will close the chapter.

## 1.1 Phoneme inventory

### 1.1.1 Consonants

At 17 consonants, Ayeri has a “moderately small” inventory, according to Maddieson (2013a). Figure 1.1 shows the full chart of consonant phonemes.

Regarding allophony, /tj kj/ and /dj gj/ are usually realized as [tʃ] and [dʒ], respectively, except if a homorganic nasal /n/ or /ŋ/ is preceding: for instance, ႳႳႳ *ankyū* /ʼaŋkju/ ‘really’ is realized as [ʼaŋkju], not as \*[ʼaŋtʃu] or \*[ʼantʃu]. It is important to note, however, that besides this synchronic palatalization process leading to [tʃ] and [dʒ] as *allophones*, there is also a diachronic one in parallel here—or the diachronic process is still ongoing. For example, there is no way to predict whether ႳႳႳ *cuna* ‘original, initial’, ႳႳႳ *panca* ‘finally, eventually’, and ႳႳႳ *vac-* ‘like’, or ႳႳႳ *jaraṇ* ‘pilgrimage’, ႳႳႳ *aja-* ‘play’, and ႳႳႳ *nuy-* ‘pour’ have /tj/ or /kj/, /dj/ or /gj/, respectively, unless we consider the clues given by the conservative native spellings of the respective words.<sup>1</sup> We can rather assume two sound changes, (1) tj, kj → tʃ, and (2) dj, gj → dʒ, leading to the *phonemes* /tʃ/ and /dʒ/ in the present-day language.

<sup>1</sup> Actual scribes would typically err in cases where the merger is complete, so this strategy would, in fact, be of limited use in the real world.

Figure 1.1: Consonant inventory (divergent orthography in pointed brackets)

	Bilabial		Labiodental		Alveolar		Palatal	Velar		Glottal
Plosive	p	b			t	d		k	g	
Affricate					tʃ <c>	dʒ <j>				
Nasal		m				n		ŋ <ng>		
Fricative			v		s					h
Tap/Flap						r				
Approximant						l	j <y>			

The plural marker ၵ -*ye* is commonly contracted to [dʒ] when a case suffix beginning with a vowel follows:<sup>2</sup>

- (1) a. ဘီယော့ *nyānyeaŋ* → *nyānjāŋ* [ˈnjaːndʒaŋ] ‘persons’ (person-PL-A);  
 b. နီယော့ *netuyeaŋ* → *netujāŋ* [neˈtudʒaŋ] ‘brothers’ (brother-PL-P).

The plural marker may also contract before the locative marker ၵ -*ya* and the dative marker ၵ -*yam*, basically for dissimilation:<sup>3</sup>

- (2) a. နီယော့ *nivayeya* → *nivajya* [niˈvadʒja] ‘at the eyes’ (eye-PL-LOC);  
 b. မာဗီယော့ *maviyeyam* → *mavijyam* [maˈvidʒjam] ‘to the sheep’ (sheep-PL-DAT).

Dissimilation of the sequence ၵ -*yaya* is attested in my translation of Kafka’s short story “Eine kaiserliche Botschaft,” where the relative pronoun ၵ *siyaya* appears transcribed as *siyja*:

As far as morphophonology is concerned, the relative pronoun complex *siyja* ‘in/at/on which.LOC’ is interesting in so far as it is a contraction of \**siyaya* ‘REL-LOC-LOC’ that I introduced here [...] Since this feature does not occur in previous texts, let’s assume it’s an acceptable variant. (Becker 2012: 12)

The contraction happens “only if both parts are grammatical suffixes” (12), however, so the environments this contraction may appear in are effectively limited to relative pronouns combining locative and locative, or locative and dative marking.

The word လာယော့ *lajāy* ‘student’ is special in that it is the only word with ၵ [dʒa] so far. Presumably it is derived from the verb လာယော့ *laya-* ‘read’ with the agentive suffix ၵ -*maya*, except the shortening of the suffix—with or without compensatory lengthening of the final vowel of the modified word stem—was applied irregularly, possibly via \*လာယော့ \**layāya*. The regular form လာယော့ *layamaya* means ‘reader’.

Lastly, /h/ may assimilate to its phonemic environment and is realized as [ç] before front vowels, and as [x] before back vowels in this case:

- (3) a. တာဗီ *tabi* [ˈtaçi] ‘favorable’;  
 b. ခာဗီ *babo* [ˈbaxo] ‘loud’.

While vowels become long when two identical vowels come into succession, consonants do not geminate but are treated like a single consonant:

<sup>2</sup> The customary romanization uses ⟨c⟩ and ⟨j⟩ for allophonic cases of [tʃ] and [dʒ] as well.

<sup>3</sup> -*ea* also occurs as an allomorph, so that ၵ -*ye* + -*ea* → ၵ -*yēa*.

Figure 1.2: Vowel inventory (divergent orthography in pointed brackets)

	Front	Center	Back
High	i, i: ⟨ī⟩		u, u: ⟨ū⟩
Mid	e, e: ⟨ē⟩	ə ⟨ə, e⟩	o, o: ⟨ō⟩
Low		a, a: ⟨ā⟩	

- (4) a.  $\text{ᲛᲠᲣᲚᲗ}$  *tavvāng* [ta'va:ŋ] 'you get' (get=2SG.A),  
 b.  $\text{ᲛᲠᲣᲚᲗ}$  *disyyang* [di'sjaŋ] 'I fasten' (fasten=1SG.A).

With diphthongs, the sequence /V<sub>1</sub>.j/ is treated as though it were /V<sub>j</sub>.j/, so the double /j/ simplifies to just a single /j/; however, the vowel remains lax in spite of being phonetically in an open position now:

- (5)  $\text{ᲛᲠᲣᲚᲗ}$  *tipuyya* [ti'pu.ja] 'on the grass' (grass-LOC).

### 1.1.2 Vowels

Ayeri's vowel system distinguishes five qualities, as shown in Figure 1.2; Maddieson (2013c) classifies this as "average." Length, however, is also a factor, and there are five diphthongs as well, as we will see below. At 17 : 5, the consonant–vowel ratio is 4.25, which Maddieson (2013b) again classifies as "average," although Ayeri finds itself at the upper end of the tier.

The lax vowels [ɪ ɛ ʊ] occur as allophones of their tense counterparts /i e o u/ in closed syllables, for example:

- (6) a.  $\text{ᲛᲠᲣᲚᲗ}$  *ming* [mɪŋ] 'can, be able',  
 b.  $\text{ᲛᲠᲣᲚᲗ}$  *enya* ['ɛn.ja] 'everyone',  
 c.  $\text{ᲛᲠᲣᲚᲗ}$  *agon* ['a.gɔŋ] 'outer, foreign', and  
 d.  $\text{ᲛᲠᲣᲚᲗ}$  *pakur* ['pa.kʊr] 'ill, sick'.

/ə/ occurs marginally in the tense prefixes  $\text{ᲛᲠᲣᲚᲗ}$  *kə*- 'NPST',  $\text{ᲛᲠᲣᲚᲗ}$  *mə*- 'PST',  $\text{ᲛᲠᲣᲚᲗ}$  *və*- 'RPST', as well as in the prefix  $\text{ᲛᲠᲣᲚᲗ}$  *mə*- 'some, whichever'. Otherwise, [ə] acts as an allophone of /e/ in final unstressed position, for instance, in the word  $\text{ᲛᲠᲣᲚᲗ}$  *mine* ['minə] 'affair, matter, issue'.

Ayeri also possesses a number of diphthongs, these are: /ai ei ɔi ui au/, spelled ⟨ay⟩, ⟨ey⟩, ⟨oy⟩, ⟨uy⟩, and ⟨au⟩. Furthermore, there are long equivalents of the short vowels: /i: e: a: o: u:/; in romanization, long vowels are marked with a macron ⟨̄⟩ over the letter. Long vowels are lexicalized in a few words, for example:



- (7) a.  $\text{ᠨᠢᠰᠠ}$  *nīsa* ‘wanted’,  $\text{ᠫᠤᠰᠢᠰᠠ}$  *pasīsa* ‘interesting’;  
 b.  $\text{ᠠᠷᠡᠨ}$  *arēn* ‘anyway, however’,  $\text{ᠯᠡᠷᠠ}$  *lēra* ‘whore’;  
 c.  $\text{ᠯᠠ}$  *lā* ‘tongue’,  $\text{ᠶᠠᠩ}$  *yāng* ‘he’ (he.A);  
 d.  $\text{ᠨᠣᠨ}$  *nōn* ‘will, intention’; and  
 e.  $\text{ᠪᠠᠪᠤᠠᠨ}$  *babūan* ‘barbarian’.<sup>4</sup>

Otherwise, long vowels result from two same vowels next to each other, for instance:

- (8)  $\text{ᠠᠵᠠ}$  *aja-* ‘play’ +  $\text{ᠠᠨ}$  *-an* ‘NMLZ’  $\rightarrow$   $\text{ᠠᠵᠠᠨ}$  *ajān* ‘game, play’.

Morphophonologically, long vowels also occur in double-marked relative pronouns where the agreement marker for the relative clause’s head has been omitted, for instance,  $\text{ᠰᠢᠨᠠ}$  *sinā* ‘of which, about which’, as in the following example:

- (9) *Le turayāng taman sinā ang ningay tamala vās.*  
 Le tura-yāng [taman-Ø]<sub>1</sub> si-Ø<sub>1</sub>-na ang ning=ay.Ø tamala vās  
 PT.INAN send=3SG.M.A letter-TOP REL-PT.INAN-GEN AT tell=1SG.TOP yesterday 2SG.P

‘The letter which I told you about yesterday, he sent it.’

This is to disambiguate it from the plain genitive-marked relative pronoun  $\text{ᠰᠢᠨᠠ}$  *sina* ‘which.GEN’:<sup>5</sup>

- (10) *tamanreng ledanena nā sina koronvāng*  
 taman-reng [ledan-ena nā]<sub>1</sub> si-na<sub>1</sub> koron=vāng  
 letter-A.INAN friend-GEN 1SG.GEN REL-GEN know=2SG.A

‘the letter of my friend which you know’

As pointed out in (7c), the word  $\text{ᠯᠠ}$  *lā* ‘tongue’ ends in a long vowel, so the question is what happens when a case suffix beginning with a vowel is appended. To avoid a hiat, a glide /j/ may be inserted, so both of the following renditions are possible:

<sup>4</sup> I have gone years without dictionary entries for /u:/, but it has always seemed slightly odd to me to lack a vowel in that position when all other vowels can be long. Therefore,  $\text{ᠪᠠᠪᠤᠠᠨ}$  *babūan* ‘barbarian’ and its adjective  $\text{ᠪᠠᠪᠤ}$  *babū* ‘barbarian (adj.)’ were coined as  $\text{ᠫᠠᠫᠠᠭᠠᠢ}$  *prankaye*—things ‘that you put in specifically to make things fit’, another new coining this decision resulted in. Note, however, that it should have always been possible to form words like  $\text{ᠬᠤᠪᠤ}$  *kūbo* ‘as though bitter’, from  $\text{ᠤᠪᠤ}$  *ubo* ‘bitter’ +  $\text{ᠬᠤ}$  *ku-* ‘like, as though’.

<sup>5</sup> A variant which combines the allomorphs of the relativizer and the genitive case marker in the opposite way also exists:  $\text{ᠰᠢ}$  *s-* +  $\text{ᠠᠨᠠ}$  *-ena*  $\rightarrow$   $\text{ᠰᠠᠨᠠ}$  *sena*.

- (11) a. *Aku*            *lāas!*  
           Aka-u        *lā-as*  
           swallow-IMP tongue-P  
           ‘Shut up!’  
       b. *Aku lāyas!*  
           (idem)

With diphthongs—as described above—/ɪ/ coalesces with a following /j/ to /j/, but the initial vowel will not become tense, thus:

- (12) ၵိပုၼ် *tipuyya* [ti'pu.ja] ‘on the grass’ (grass-LOC).

Moreover, /u/ is commonly realized as [w] when followed by a vowel, for example in ၵုၼ် *huākaya* ['wa:kaja] ‘frog’ or ရှိ *rua-* [rwa] ‘have to, must’. [w] may also be an allophone of /uj/, as in ၵုၼ် *adauyi* [a'dawi] ‘then’, ၵုၼ် *edaui* [e'dawi] ‘now’, or ၵုၼ် *nekuyi* ['nekwi] ‘eyebrows’. The negative suffix ၵုၼ် *-oy* is also commonly contracted to [w] before a diphthong:

- (13) ၵုၼ် *mingoyay* → *minguay* [miŋ'wai] ‘I cannot’ (can-NEG=ISG.TOP).

## 1.2 Phonotactics

For the purpose of this statistical analysis, most of the available translations into Ayeri from late 2008 to July 2016 have been used as a text corpus;<sup>6</sup> example sentences from various blog articles have also been added, as well as dictionary entries for all nouns, adjectives, adverbs, pronouns, adpositions, conjunctions, and numerals if they were not prefixes or suffixes.<sup>7</sup> Borrowings have been deleted if they could not reasonably be words in Ayeri. Altogether, the corpus comprises 5,500 words, which

<sup>6</sup> These texts are: A Medieval Neighborhood Dispute (2015), A Message from the Emperor (2012), Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (2011), The Beginning of Tolstoy’s *Anna Karenina* (2014), Conlang Christmas Card Exchange 2008/09 (2009), Conlang Holiday Card Exchange 2010/11 (2011), Conlang Relay 15 (2008), Conlang Relay 17 (2010), Conlang Relay 18 (2011), The First Two Chapters from Saint-Exupéry’s *Le Petit Prince* (2013), The Four Candles (2010), Honey Everlasting (2014), LCC4 Relay (2011), The Lord’s Prayer (2015), The North Wind and the Sun (2016), The Origin of the Wind (2009), Ozymandias (2011), Please Call Stella ... (2008), Psalm 23 (2013), The Scientific Method (2014), The Sheep and the Horses (2012), Sugar Fairies (2011), The Upside-Down Ice Skater (2009). The texts can be accessed from Becker (2016a: Examples).

<sup>7</sup> This section updates and extends a previous analysis of the phonological makeup of dictionary entries (Becker 2010). The previous study had its focus on gathering frequency statistics for word generation, however, we want to know about words generally here.

Table 1.1: Frequency of words with different numbers of syllables (n = 5500)

Segment	Count	Percentage
2 syllables	2277	41.40 %
3 syllables	1393	25.33 %
1 syllable	1201	21.84 %
4 syllables	547	9.95 %
5 syllables	74	1.35 %
6 syllables	8	0.15 %

is a very small figure for such a study, but there are only so many texts available unfortunately. Words may occur more than once.

Among the dictionary entries, verbs have notably been ignored, since verb stems alone do not constitute independent words—they are always inflected in some way, so that they may end in consonants or consonant clusters that independent words cannot end in. This also has repercussions on syllabification and stress, which depend on the inflection of the verb stem:

Figure 1.3: Syllabification of inflected verbs

Suffix	<i>ca-</i> ‘love’	<i>gum-</i> ‘work’	<i>babr-</i> ‘mumble’
- <i>ay</i> (1SG)	cá.y	gu.máy	ba.bráy
- <i>va</i> (2SG)	cá.va	gúm.va	ba.brá.va
- <i>yam</i> (PTCP)	cá.yam	gúm.yam	bá.bryam

For the purpose of gathering statistics on phonemes, the words from translated texts were converted to IPA first. Fortunately, this is rather easy as Ayer’s romanization is very straightforward. Syllable breaks have also been inserted semi-automatically.

### 1.2.1 Number of syllables per word

First, let us see how many syllables words commonly have (see Table 1.1). The higher the syllable count, the more likely it is for them to be compounds or inflected words.

Two-syllable words make up the bulk of the sample, which is not surprising since 1,072 entries (55.43 %) in the dictionary subsample are disyllabic: most of Ayer’s roots are disyllabic. Unsurprisingly, most monosyllabic words are function words like the ones cited below. In the following, I will quote a few examples for each number of syllables per word:

- (14) a. ၼာ *ang* (AT),  
 နှ *nay* ‘and’,  
 ရှိ *rua* ‘must’;
- b. ပါဏိ *datau* ‘normal’,  
 နာယ *nasay* ‘near to’;
- c. ၼာဝေၼာ *avanyāng* ‘he sinks’ (sink=3SG.M.A),  
 ၼာၼာ *tovale* ‘a cloak’ (cloak-P.INAN);
- d. ဃုၼာ *binyanveno* (corner.beautiful, a place name),  
 မိတၼာ *mitanena* ‘of the palace’ (palace-GEN);
- e. ဃာယမာ *haruyamanas* ‘a beating’ (beat-PTCP-NMLZ-P),  
 နီၼာ *sungkorankihas* ‘geography’ (science.map);
- f. နီၼာ *kaytomayanena* ‘of righteousness’ (righteous-NMLZ-GEN),  
 နီၼာ *nasimayajang-ben* ‘all followers’ (follow-AGTZ-PL-A=all).

Table 1.2 shows the frequencies of syllable types by position in a word. It is important to note here that phonemes which consist of more than one segment—affricates, diphthongs, and long vowels—have been counted as only one of C (consonant) or V (vowel), respectively. The following subsections will elaborate on which sounds the Cs and Vs correspond to. Moreover, it is important to note that medial syllables have not been further distinguished by position in the word for the sake of this analysis, so anything between the second and the fifth medial syllable is treated the same. It would furthermore be possible to calculate the frequencies of one syllable type following the other, however, no such calculations have been carried out here.

In all positions, CV is the most common syllable type, followed by CVC. With a very big margin, V is the next most common syllable type, which is also most common in initial syllables and least common in monosyllabic words. The cases with only a few attestations are the following:

- (15) a. Initial CVCC:  
 လီၼာ *linktang* /liŋk.'taŋ/ ‘they try’ (try=3PL.M.A),<sup>8</sup>  
 လီၼာ *silvnang* /silv.'naŋ/ ‘we see’ (see=1PL.A);
- b. Final CCCV:  
 မိဂရီ *migr̥yo* /'mi.gr̥jo/ ‘flourishes’ (flourish-3SG.N),  
 မိဂရီ *subr̥yo* /'su.br̥jo/ ‘ceases’ (cease-3SG.N);
- c. Single V:  
 အီ *ay* /aɪ/ ‘I’ (1SG.TOP).

The medial and final VC cases may seem like an oddity, but they are mostly due

<sup>8</sup> The verb stem is found in the dictionary as လီၼာ *linka-*, with a final *-a*, and thus is possibly an entry changed at a later point, or the example from the text (Sugar Fairies) chosen here contains an error.

Table 1.2: Frequency of syllable types per word (n = 5500)

Type	Initial		Medial		Final		Single		Total	
CV	2896	67.36 %	1974	72.02 %	2109	49.06 %	578	48.13 %	7557	60.26 %
CCV	55	1.28 %	24	0.88 %	46	1.07 %	32	2.66 %	157	1.25 %
CCCV	—	—	—	—	2	0.05 %	—	—	2	0.02 %
CVC	761	17.70 %	610	22.25 %	1902	44.24 %	298	24.81 %	3571	28.48 %
CCVC	29	0.67 %	10	0.36 %	85	1.98 %	9	0.75 %	133	1.06 %
CVCC	2	0.05 %	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	0.02 %
V	488	11.35 %	95	3.47 %	67	1.56 %	2	0.17 %	652	5.20 %
VC	68	1.58 %	28	1.02 %	88	2.05 %	282	23.48 %	466	3.72 %
Total	4299	100.00 %	2741	100.00 %	4299	100.00 %	1201	100.00 %	12540	100.00 %

to the previous syllable ending in /ŋ/, with that syllable also containing a lax vowel, which means that this syllable must be closed. An alternative explanation would be to assume that /ŋ/ is ambisyllabic, or actually /n.g ~ ŋ.g/, but realized as [ŋ]. The high number of single-syllable VC is due to *ᐱᑦ ang* ‘AT’, which alone appears 255 times in the sample (4.63% of all words, 21.23% of monosyllabic words, 90.43% of monosyllabic VC words).

### 1.2.2 Phonemic makeup of initial syllables

The statistics in the following sections have been gathered from the IPA conversions of translated texts and dictionary entries mentioned above. The transcribed words have been split into syllables and then the collected contents of each position group were written into separate plain text files, one each for:

- all initial syllables of polysyllabic words,
- all medial syllables of polysyllabic words,
- all final syllables of polysyllabic words, and
- all monosyllabic words.

Monosyllabic words are both initial and final syllables at the same time; they have been counted separately for the purpose of this analysis. Onsets, nuclei and codas have been matched by regular expressions; the command line tools *grep*, *sort*, and *uniq* were used to aggregate all occurring variants for each syllable segment as well as their absolute frequencies:<sup>9</sup>

```
(16) C = (? : t f | d ʒ | [ptkbgdmnŋvshrɭjw])
      V = (? : [ae] : ? ɪ | əʊ | [ieaou] : ? | [ɪɛʊə])
```

As we have seen above (Table 1.2), CCV syllables only make up 1.28% of initial syllables, insofar it is no surprise that consonant clusters all appear at the bottom of Table 1.3. There also seem to be combination patterns in that initial clusters exist for all plosives plus /r/, and almost all bilabials plus /j/, with the exception of /bj/, however, /nj/ is added to the group instead. Combinations with /w/ only occur for /b/, /r/, and /s/, which do not share an obvious connection. Syllables without a consonant filling the onset position are marked with ‘Ø’; these numbers correspond to the VC and VCC rows in Table 1.2.

Perhaps most striking about the nuclei of initial syllables presented in Table 1.4 is that plain vowels occur most frequently. As mentioned above, lax vowels are counted here as allophones of tense ones as their distribution is complementary and

<sup>9</sup> However, *sort* was unable to handle all IPA characters, so *sed 'y/ɛɪʊə:fʒŋ/EIŌU@:SZN/'* had to be used to compensate by transcribing everything into X-SAMPA.

Table 1.3: Frequency of onsets in initial syllables (n = 4299)

Phoneme	Frequency	Percentage
Ø	556	12.93 %
s	488	11.35 %
t	432	10.05 %
m	418	9.72 %
k	380	8.84 %
n	375	8.72 %
p	334	7.77 %
b	231	5.37 %
d	172	4.00 %
v	164	3.81 %
l	159	3.70 %
r	134	3.12 %
j	126	2.93 %
g	111	2.58 %
h	99	2.30 %
tʃ	30	0.70 %
pr	27	0.63 %
nj	27	0.63 %
kr	8	0.19 %
br	8	0.19 %
tr	6	0.14 %
dʒ	4	0.09 %
gr	3	0.07 %
w	2	0.05 %
sw	1	0.02 %
rw	1	0.02 %
pj	1	0.02 %
mj	1	0.02 %
bw	1	0.02 %

Table 1.4: Frequency of nuclei in initial syllables (n = 4299)

Phoneme	Frequency	Percentage
a	1847	42.96%
i	1011	23.52%
	<i>i</i>	18.66%
	<i>ɪ</i>	4.86%
e	705	16.40%
	<i>e</i>	12.17%
	<i>ɛ</i>	3.81%
	<i>ə</i>	0.42%
u	260	6.05%
	<i>u</i>	5.30%
	<i>ʊ</i>	0.74%
o	227	5.28%
	<i>o</i>	4.37%
	<i>ɔ</i>	0.91%
a:	109	2.54%
aɪ	88	2.05%
eɪ	40	0.93%
e:	4	0.09%
ɔɪ	3	0.07%
ʊɪ	1	0.02%
o:	1	0.02%
i:	1	0.02%
e:ɪ	1	0.02%
aʊ	1	0.02%



Table 1.5: Frequency of codas in initial syllables (n = 4299)

Phoneme	Frequency	Percentage
Ø	3441	80.04 %
n	298	6.93 %
ŋ	243	5.65 %
r	129	3.00 %
l	88	2.05 %
m	74	1.72 %
s	20	0.47 %
t	2	0.05 %
h	2	0.05 %
tʃ	1	0.02 %
ŋk	1	0.02 %
lv	1	0.02 %
k	1	0.02 %

are listed here for the sake of completeness. This is the reason why the plain vowels are presented as grouped with their allophones in this table as well as in subsequent ones. Long vowels and diphthongs find themselves below the 5% threshold, and the words with single occurrences are:

- (17) a.  *kuysān* ‘comparison’,  
 b.  *nōn* ‘will, intention’,  
 c.  *nīsa* ‘wanted’,<sup>10</sup>  
 d.  *sēyraya* ‘will overcome’ (FUT-overcome-3SG.M),  
 e.  *sautan* ‘cork’.

As the diphthong [e:i] only occurs due to allophony, it should not be counted as a phoneme for the purposes of this analysis. On the other hand, the same could be said for a lot of cases of [a:] included here—this caveat applies to all nouns derived from verbs ending in *-a* with the very common nominalizing suffix  *-an*, as exemplified in (8) above. Similarly, the 18 instances of /ə/ reported here are mostly from tense prefixes also mentioned above, for instance,  *məkoronay* ‘I knew’ (PST-know=1SG.TOP).

Initial-syllable codas (Table 1.5) are far less diverse than consonant onsets: there are only 10 attested segments in comparison to 28 for onsets (not counting empty codas of C(C)V syllables, which constitute the majority by a large margin), and the

<sup>10</sup>  *nīsa* and  *nōn* are both related to  *no* ‘want, plan’.

only two cluster attested are /ŋk/ in the word *linktang* ‘they try’ (try=3PL.M.A), and /lv/ in the word *silvnang* ‘I see’ (see=IPL.A). There only being two incidences of a CC cluster is very probably an effect of the small sample size. Furthermore, the only unvoiced single coda consonants attested are /s/, /h/, /t/, /tʃ/ and /k/, the latter two only once, /h/ twice:

- (18) a. *mehvāng* ‘you are supposed to’ (be.supposed.to=2SG.A),<sup>11</sup>  
*robtang* ‘they bite’ (bite=3SG.M.A);  
 b. *mutva* ‘you rub’ (rub=2SG.TOP),  
*patlay* ‘cousin’;  
 c. *sik-sik* ‘tits’;  
 d. *vacvāng* ‘you like’ (like=2SG.A).

### 1.2.3 Phonemic makeup of medial syllables

The onsets of medial syllables (Table 1.6) show properties very similar to those of initial syllables. The order of most common consonants may different here—for example, the most common onset is /r/, not Ø or /s/—, but there are no restrictions on consonants to appear in this position, with the exception of /ŋ/ for reasons stated above (see section 1.2.1). Regarding initial clusters, there are further attestations for plosive plus /r/ (except for /kr/). As for clusters with /j/, the only one with a bilabial is /bj/, but the set is extended to /sj/ and /kj/. For clusters with /w/, only /sw/ and /kw/ occur here, while attestations for /bw/ and /rw/ as in initial-syllable onsets are lacking. This does not mean that those combinations are not principally possible in this position, however.

As with onset consonants, vowel nuclei of medial syllables (Table 1.7) do not show significant differences compared to those of initial syllables either. /a/ is more common here, and /o/ and /u/ switch places. Instead of /e:ɪ/, there is an attestation of /u:/ (see footnote 4), for which there is more reason to be counted as a phoneme than for /e:ɪ/. The sequences /i:/ and /uɪ/ also only occur once and twice, respectively, namely in the following words:

- (19) a. *pasīsa* ‘interesting’;  
 b. *puluyley* ‘a mirror’ (mirror-P.INAN),  
*tipuyya* ‘on the grass’ (grass-LOC).

The word in (19a), *pasīsa* ‘interesting’, is rather transparently constitutes a causative derivation of the verb *pas-* ‘wonder, be curious, be interested’, essentially meaning ‘making one wonder/curious’—the causative suffix *-isa* can as well

<sup>11</sup> The dictionary entry for the verb is *mya-*, so this may be an instance of my changing a word in the dictionary with the old one staying in the text (The Four Candles).

Table 1.6: Frequency of onsets in medial syllables (n = 2741)

Phoneme	Frequency	Percentage
Ø	123	4.49 %
r	343	12.51 %
n	260	9.49 %
j	233	8.50 %
t	222	8.10 %
d	213	7.77 %
k	189	6.90 %
s	170	6.20 %
m	169	6.17 %
l	149	5.44 %
v	148	5.40 %
h	147	5.36 %
p	119	4.34 %
g	92	3.36 %
b	89	3.25 %
tʃ	20	0.73 %
dʒ	15	0.55 %
tr	11	0.40 %
dr	8	0.29 %
pr	7	0.26 %
w	6	0.22 %
sj	2	0.07 %
br	2	0.07 %
sw	1	0.04 %
kw	1	0.04 %
kj	1	0.04 %
bj	1	0.04 %

Table 1.7: Frequency of nuclei in medial syllables (n = 2741)

Phoneme	Frequency	Percentage
a	1480	53.99%
i	480	17.51%
<i>i</i>	387	14.12%
<i>ɪ</i>	93	3.39%
e	254	9.26%
<i>e</i>	206	7.52%
<i>ɛ</i>	48	1.75%
o	194	7.08%
<i>o</i>	119	4.34%
<i>ɔ</i>	75	2.74%
u	120	4.38%
<i>u</i>	101	3.68%
<i>ʊ</i>	19	0.69%
a:	110	4.01%
aɪ	51	1.86%
ɔɪ	33	1.20%
eɪ	5	0.18%
e:	5	0.18%
aʊ	5	0.18%
ʊɪ	2	0.07%
u:	1	0.04%
i:	1	0.04%

be used to derive adjectives with a causative or resultative meaning. Nonetheless it should count as a lexeme in its own right, since it possesses idiomatic meaning.

With medial-syllable codas (Table 1.8) again, sonorants and /s/ make up the largest number of consonants in this position; /t/ and /g/ only occur once each in

- (20) a.   ᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱ *pangitlan* ‘money change’,<sup>12</sup> and  
       b.   ᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱ *telugtong* ‘they survive’ (survive=3PL.N).

<sup>12</sup> The word for ‘money’ is ᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱ *pangis*, so (20a) is probably a compound, albeit not a fully transparent one. The word for ‘change’ is ᐱᐱᐱᐱ *tila-*, and there seems to be a nominalizing -ᐱᐱᐱᐱ *-an*. Ayeri allows noun-verb compounds to have a nominalized verb in the second position in spite of it being the head—noun-noun compounds mostly come in head-initial order. Possibly, what

Table 1.8: Frequency of codas in medial syllables (n = 2741)

Phoneme	Frequency	Percentage
Ø	2093	76.36 %
n	313	11.42 %
ŋ	193	7.04 %
r	48	1.75 %
m	39	1.42 %
s	32	1.17 %
l	21	0.77 %
t	1	0.04 %
g	1	0.04 %

As documented in Table 1.2 above, Ayeri very strongly favors CV syllables in medial positions, hence the high count of zero segments here.

#### 1.2.4 Phonemic makeup of final syllables

The onsets of final syllables of polysyllabic words (Table 1.9) show the greatest amount of variety, which is due to Ayeri mostly using suffixes for grammatical purposes. Hence it is no surprise that combinations with /j/ and, indeed, /j/ itself as an onset, are especially common, since /j/ is also what a number of very common suffixes start with, for example the plural marker :ṽ -ye, the locative marker :ṽ -ya, the dative and participle marker :ṽ -yam, as well as third-person animate pronoun agreement suffixes, and the various first-person and third-person animate pronominal clitics. Figure 1.3 above shows exemplarily how verbs resyllabify when suffixes are attached. Even though single-segment onsets are strongly preferred, Cr, Cw, and especially C(C)j seem to be generally permissible.<sup>13</sup>

Nuclei of final syllables (Table 1.10) do not bear striking differences to nuclei in other positions. /a:/ comes out second here due to the common nominalizer :ṽ -an, which lengthens the vowel of verb stems ending in /a/, as demonstrated in (8). /a/ is

happened at the morpheme borders is that ṽtilān underwent metathesis to \*ṽitlān to match the rhyme of pangis. \*ṽpangisitlān then underwent irregular haplology (and shortening of the nominalizing suffix) to pangitlan.

<sup>13</sup> The sequence /sj/ poses difficulty here as there are examples for /Vs.jV/ as well as for /V.sjV/, and I cannot tell for sure if there is a strict rule in operation. It seems that /V.sjV/ is more likely to occur when the second syllable is stressed, whereas /Vs.jV/ is more likely to occur when the first syllable is stressed. Ayeri's own Tahano Hikamu orthography would not show the difference either, since /sja/ is spelled ṽ either way, and there is no heeding morpheme breaks in placing the diacritic. /CsjV/ will be /C.sjV/ in any case, since Ayeri avoids final consonant clusters if possible, see Table 1.2.

Table 1.9: Frequency of onsets in final syllables (n = 4299)

Phoneme	Frequency	Percentage	Phoneme	Frequency	Percentage
Ø	155	3.61%	pr	7	0.16%
j	1101	25.61%	kj	6	0.14%
n	528	12.28%	hj	5	0.12%
r	398	9.26%	bj	5	0.12%
t	268	6.23%	tw	4	0.09%
s	244	5.68%	sw	4	0.09%
l	238	5.54%	sj	4	0.09%
k	199	4.63%	kw	3	0.07%
d	184	4.28%	kr	3	0.07%
m	154	3.58%	br	3	0.07%
v	144	3.35%	vr	2	0.05%
h	128	2.98%	rw	2	0.05%
p	115	2.68%	nw	2	0.05%
g	103	2.40%	tʃj	1	0.02%
dʒ	73	1.70%	rj	1	0.02%
b	73	1.70%	nj	1	0.02%
tʃ	52	1.21%	mw	1	0.02%
vj	26	0.60%	grj	1	0.02%
pj	22	0.51%	dv	1	0.02%
dʒj	17	0.40%	dr	1	0.02%
tr	10	0.23%	brj	1	0.02%
w	9	0.21%			

also fairly common here as it is the topic-marked first-person pronoun/pronominal clitic; for the same reason, /a:ɪ/ occurs a number of times—the vowel-lengthening rule applies here as well, so its status as a phoneme is marginal. All instances of /e:/ in the sample are from the word *arēn* ‘anyway, however’; all evidence for /i:/ is from *siri* ‘due to which’ (see section 1.1.2). The only evidence for /u:/ in the sample is from *babū* ‘barbarian (adj.)’.

The list of coda consonants in final syllables (Table 1.11) is very slightly more restrictive than even that of coda consonants in medial syllables (see Table 1.8), since the only non-sonorant attested is /k/, which only occurs in *sik-sik* ‘tits’ again, which—besides being a vulgar term, thus maybe slightly more dispositioned to allow for deviating phonotactics—looks quite like onomatopoeia, possibly for the sound of sucking.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Kroonen (2013: 489–490) identifies PGmc *\*sūgan-*, *\*sūkan-* ‘to suck’ as an iterative of PGmc

Table 1.10: Frequency of nuclei in final syllables (n = 4299)

Phoneme	Frequency	Percentage
a	2408	56.01%
a:	316	7.35%
o	411	9.56%
o	298	6.93%
ɔ	113	2.63%
i	289	6.42%
ɪ	147	3.42%
i	142	3.30%
aɪ	254	5.91%
u	207	4.82%
u	155	3.61%
ʊ	52	1.21%
e	209	4.85%
ɛ	127	2.95%
ə	81	1.88%
e	1	0.02%
eɪ	103	2.40%
ɔɪ	42	0.98%
a:ɪ	23	0.54%
ʊɪ	14	0.33%
aʊ	14	0.33%
e:	5	0.12%
i:	3	0.07%
u:	1	0.02%

Table 1.11: Frequency of codas in final syllables (n = 4299)

Phoneme	Frequency	Percentage
Ø	2224	51.73 %
n	899	20.91 %
ŋ	651	15.14 %
s	244	5.68 %
m	225	5.23 %
l	34	0.79 %
r	21	0.49 %
k	1	0.02 %

### 1.2.5 Phonemic makeup of single syllables

Onsets of single syllables (Table 1.12) appear to be the least varied category. Still, none of the basic set of consonant morphemes (see Figure 1.1) is missing—the frequency order is just completely different from the other onsets surveyed, not merely a mixture of initial and final syllables. Consonant clusters with /j/, /w/ and /r/ exist here as well. Combinations with /j/ are only present for /m/ and /n/, while /r/ again combines with plosives; /w/ combines with /n/ and /r/ at least, which we have already seen in final-syllable onsets (see Table 1.9). Whereas /mj/ has only occurred once in initial-syllable onsets so far (see Table 1.3), it occurs a few more times here, all in the word *ḡ mya* ‘be supposed to’, which is very commonly used as an unconjugatable modal particle.

A consonant onset that can only be found in monosyllables is /ŋ/,<sup>15</sup> in *ḡḡḡ -ngas* ‘almost’, a quantifier suffix that has managed to sneak in due to being marked as an adverb in the dictionary, since it can modify a verb:

- (21) *Apayeng-ngas.*  
 Apa=yeng=ngas  
 laugh=3SG.F.A=almost  
 ‘She almost laughed.’

Here, *ḡḡḡ -ngas* modifies the verb complex like any other adverb:

\**sukkōn-*, \**sugōn-* ‘to suck’ and reconstructs PIE \**souk̑-neh₂-*. However, he does not say anything about the Germanic word being onomatopoeic in origin.

<sup>15</sup> At least according to the analysis chosen here, see section 1.2.1 for an explanation.



Table 1.12: Frequency of onsets in single syllables (n = 1201)

Phoneme	Frequency	Percentage
Ø	284	23.65%
n	231	19.23%
s	147	12.24%
j	144	11.99%
k	51	4.25%
v	48	4.00%
m	46	3.83%
l	44	3.66%
t	41	3.41%
d	33	2.75%
r	26	2.16%
h	23	1.92%
mj	16	1.33%
p	13	1.08%
tʃ	9	0.75%
g	9	0.75%
nj	8	0.67%
rw	7	0.58%
b	7	0.58%
pr	5	0.42%
dʒ	3	0.25%
tr	2	0.17%
nw	1	0.08%
ŋ	1	0.08%
kr	1	0.08%
br	1	0.08%

Table 1.13: Frequency of nuclei in single syllables (n = 1201)

Phoneme	Frequency	Percentage
a	568	47.29%
aɪ	171	14.24%
a:	140	11.66%
i	113	9.41%
i	65	5.41%
ɪ	48	4.00%
e	104	8.66%
ɛ	65	5.41%
ɐ	34	2.83%
ə	5	0.42%
o	45	3.75%
ɔ	30	2.50%
o	15	1.25%
u	20	1.67%
a:ɪ	14	1.17%
ɔɪ	10	0.83%
i:	6	0.50%
eɪ	5	0.42%
uɪ	3	0.25%
o:	2	0.17%

- (22) *Apayeng baho.*  
 Apa=yeng baho  
 laugh=3SG.F.A loudly  
 ‘She laughs loudly.’

However, whereas *ခပ် baho* ‘loud’ is treated as a separate unit in terms of intonation, *ဘာနု -ngas* is unstressed and binds to what it follows:

- (23) a. *ခပ်ဘာနုဘာနု။ Apayeng-ngas.* [apa'jɛŋas];  
 b. *ခပ်ဘာနုခပ်။ Apayeng baho.* [apa'jɛŋ 'baxo].

As with onset consonants of monosyllabic words, nuclei of this syllable type are the least diverse group again (Table 1.13). One segment that is notably absent is /au/, and the marginally phonemic /e:/ is not present either. By having /a/, /aɪ/, /a:/ at the top, monosyllabic words behave similar to final syllables of polysyllabic

Table 1.14: Frequency of codas in single syllables (n = 1201)

Phoneme	Frequency	Percentage
Ø	612	50.96%
ŋ	377	31.39%
n	105	8.74%
s	58	4.83%
m	36	3.00%
l	6	0.50%
h	4	0.33%
r	3	0.25%

words (see Table 1.10), however, the order of the most common vowels bears more similarities to that of initial and medial syllables (see Tables 1.4 and 1.7). The very uncommon /o:/ features twice in this group, namely in two instances of the word 𑜋𑜃𑜫 *nōn* ‘will, intention’.<sup>16</sup>

Like the other syllable segments of monosyllabic words, coda consonants (Table 1.14) as well show the lowest degree of variety among all the coda consonants of the various syllable classes discussed so far. The order is basically the same as that of final-syllable codas (see Table 1.11), though /ŋ/ supersedes /n/ and there is some attestation of final /h/. As noted above, the prevalence of /ŋ/ is due to the agent-topic marker 𑜇𑜃𑜫 *ang* (see section 1.2.1). /h/ only occurs in the interjections 𑜇𑜃𑜫 *ah!* and 𑜇𑜃𑜫 *āh!*, so its status as an actual phoneme in this position is marginal at best.

### 1.2.6 Cross-syllable consonant clusters

Since a table detailing every combination with its absolute and relative frequency would be too large here, Table 1.15 gives the attested combinations ordered by brackets. As can be expected, bilabials cluster mostly with bilabials (83/112 purely bilabial CC combinations = 74.11%), alveolars with alveolars (317/948 = 33.44%), and velars with velars (59/207 = 28.51%). However, at least for alveolars and velars, the score is even higher with /j/: 52.64% and 44.93%, respectively. /j/ is also the most common second consonant overall, at 47.8% of all consonant clusters; /n.j/ is the most common cluster at a total of 25.35%. Alveolars provide the highest variety of both first and second consonants, with 6 different phonemes making up 74.65% of C<sub>1</sub>, and 8 different phonemes making up 28.74% of C<sub>2</sub>.

<sup>16</sup> Ayeri used to have 𑜋𑜃𑜫 *-on* as a nominalizer beside 𑜇𑜃𑜫 *-an*, however, it was not very productive and has long fallen out of use. 𑜋𑜃𑜫 *nōn* is thus, in fact, originally a nominalization of 𑜋𑜃𑜫 *no-* ‘want, plan’.

Table 1.15: Frequency of cross-syllable consonant clusters (n = 1270)

Interval [%]	Consonant cluster
0.00 ... 0.09	g.t, h.t, h.v, k.s, l.n, lv.n, m.bj, m.d, m.dʒ, m.l, m.n, m.pr, m.r, n.dv, n.g, n.h, n.w, ŋ.dʒj, ŋ.kw, ŋ.m, ŋ.n, ŋ.rj, ŋ.t, ŋk.t, r.b, r.dʒ, r.g, r.l, r.m, r.sj, r.tʃ, r.v, s.dʒ, s.h, s.l, s.n, s.p, s.v, t.v, tʃ.v (0.08%).
0.10 ... 0.24	l.bj, m.br, m.t, n.s, ŋ.b, ŋ.h, ŋ.p, ŋ.w, r.dʒj, r.pj, s.dʒj, s.m, t.l (0.16%); l.dʒ, l.p, m.k, n.sj, ŋ.dʒ, ŋ.g, ŋ.s, r.pr (0.24%).
0.25 ... 0.49	m.v, r.s, s.r (0.31%); n.r, s.t (0.39%); m.pj, n.dʒj, r.d (0.47%).
0.50 ... 0.74	ŋ.kj, ŋ.v, r.k, r.n (0.55%); l.b, l.t, ŋ.r (0.71%).
0.75 ... 1.00	r.p, r.t (0.87%); l.vj (0.94%).
1.0 ... 2.4	m.j (1.18%); ŋ.l (1.34%); n.tʃ (1.50%); n.dʒ (2.13%); n.v (2.28%); l.j (2.36%).
2.5 ... 4.9	m.p (2.52%); s.j (2.60%); n.l (2.91%); l.v (3.15%); m.b (3.23%); ŋ.k (3.78%).
5 ... 9	n.t (5.28%); n.d (6.85%); ŋ.j (7.32%); r.j (8.98%).
10+	n.j (25.35%).

Labiodentals and glottals occur least frequently, on the other hand: There is only one cluster with /v/ as a first consonant, namely, /lv.n/ (0.08%). For /h/, there are two, which are /h.v/ and /h.t/ (0.16%). Altogether, however, there are 97 combinations in /v/ (7.64%)—most commonly /l.v/ (3.15%) and /n.v/ (2.28%)—while there are only 4 in /h/ (0.31%): /n.h/, /s.h/, and twice /ŋ.h/.

At 924 first consonants (72.76%), the nasals /m/, /n/, and /ŋ/ make up the largest group going by manner of articulation, followed by the tap /r/, which appears 175 times (13.78%) as the first consonant. For second consonants, approximants constitute the largest group at 669 combinations (52.68%), followed by 387 pairs with plosives second (30.47%).

### 1.3 Notes on prosody

#### 1.3.1 Stress

Ayeri uses dynamic accent, that is, stress is based on differences in the loudness of syllables, among others.<sup>17</sup> Which syllable is stressed depends on a mixture of which position in a word a syllable occupies and the phonemic shape of it. In fact, English, which also has phonemic stress in pairs such as *record* /'rekərd/ (noun) and

<sup>17</sup> For a discussion of terms, see Kager (2007), for instance.

Figure 1.4: Declension paradigm for Ayeri ႁႃ niva ‘eye’

	Singular		Plural	
TOP	<i>ní.va</i>	‘the eye’	<i>ni.vá.ye</i>	‘the eyes’
A	<i>ni.vǎng</i>	‘eye’	<i>ni.va.jáng</i>	‘eyes’
P	<i>ni.vás</i>	‘eye’	<i>ni.vá.jas</i>	‘eyes’
DAT	<i>ni.vá.yam</i> <sup>19</sup>	‘to the eye’	<i>ni.vá.jyam</i>	‘to the eyes’
GEN	<i>ni.vá.na</i>	‘of the eye’	<i>ni.va.yé.na</i>	‘of the eyes’
LOC	<i>ni.vá.ya</i>	‘at the eye’	<i>ni.vá.jya</i>	‘at the eyes’
CAUS	<i>ni.va.í.sa</i>	‘due to the eye’	<i>ni.va.jí.sa</i>	‘due to the eyes’
INS	<i>ni.vá.ri</i>	‘with the eye’	<i>ni.va.yé.ri</i>	‘with the eyes’

/ri'kɔrd/ (verb) that Ayeri lacks, does a similar thing (examples adapted from Halle 1998: 552):

- (24) *admire* /æd'maɪər/ — *admirable* /'ædmərəbl/ [English]  
*carnivore* /'karnɪvɔr/ — *carnivorous* /kar'nɪvərəs/  
*ignore* /ɪg'nɔr/ — *ignorant* /'ɪgnərənt/

Stress does not stay at fixed intervals in these words and they even change their sound structure a little, but there are a number of variables which can nonetheless be formally described and applied here (564–565).<sup>18</sup> To demonstrate how word stress moves around in Ayeri, the complete declension paradigm for ႁႃ *niva* ‘eye’ is presented in Figure 1.4.

It may appear that in the table above, stress is always on the penultimate syllable, which is indeed the case for most forms quoted there, but compare the superficially unmarked form ႁႃ *niva*, which is disyllabic with stress on the first (= penultimate) syllable, to the agent and patient singular forms, ႁႃႃႃ *nivāng* and ႁႃႃႃ *nivās*, respectively. These are also disyllabic, however, they are stressed on the second (= ultimate) syllable. Similarly, compare the agent and patient plural forms to each other: the agent plural form ႁႃႃႃႃ *nivajang* is trisyllabic and has its main stress on the third (= ultimate) syllable, while the equally trisyllabic patient plural form ႁႃႃႃႃ *nivajas* is stressed on the second (= penultimate) syllable again.

<sup>18</sup> Halle (1998) takes a generativist approach rather than a more modern Optimality-Theory based one like Kager (2007) does, who only deals with fixed-stress systems in this introductory article, though Halle’s article is still informative. Simplifying a lot, English essentially tries to construct trochaic feet from the right edge of the word. If the last syllable’s vowel is not light, it is skipped and stress moves to the antepenultimate syllable; this process is recursive for words with multiple feet, although some suffixes introduce irregularities in rule application.

<sup>19</sup> Final-syllable stress is possible as well, also in the plural.

It should have become clear that even though the basic form  $\tilde{n}i$  *niva* has first-syllable stress, *ni* will not necessarily carry stress across the whole paradigm. It should also have become clear that the basic algorithm to determine stressed syllables in Ayeri has something to do with counting syllables from the right edge of a word, although some complications need to be factored in. The following sections will try to describe these formally.

#### *Analysis of stress patterns in disyllabic words*

The basic foot in Ayeri is a trochee, and for the most part it does not matter whether the syllable is open or closed, or whether there are complex onsets or codas, or no onsets or codas at all:<sup>20</sup>

- (25) a.  $\acute{x}$        $\times$   
           *ba* - *ri* 'pithy, striking'
- b.  $\acute{x}$        $\times$   
           *sa* - *yan* 'hole, cave'  
           *sem* - *ba* 'comb'
- c.  $\acute{x}$        $\times$   
           *bri* - *ha* 'grace'  
           *ba* - *brya* '(he) mumbles'  
           *a* - *gu* 'chicken'

It can be deduced from words with more than two syllables that stress assignment is trochaic. Stress assignment furthermore runs from right to left, so that in a word with more than two syllables, the last two syllables form a full foot:

- (26) a.  $\times$  |  $\acute{x}$        $\times$   
           *ba* - *ha* - *lan* 'target, goal'  
           *jar* - *ma* - *ya* 'pilgrim'
- b.  $\grave{x}$        $\times$  |  $\acute{x}$        $\times$   
           *ho* - *ra* - *ma* - *ya* 'sinner'  
           *ya* - *ma* - *na* - *ti* 'causer'

In the case of (26b), the stressed syllables of the first foot bear secondary stress while those of the second foot bear primary stress. Complications, then, come in the form of syllables ending in /ŋ/, containing a long vowel, or containing a diphthong, or a combination of those features. Ayeri does not have syllables that contain a diphthong and also end in /ŋ/, though, since consonant codas after a

<sup>20</sup> In the following, a syllable will be marked by ⟨x⟩ and receives an acute accent ⟨'⟩ when carrying primary stress, a grave accent ⟨'⟩ when carrying secondary stress, and no accent when unstressed. Feet are marked by horizontal lines ⟨|⟩.

diphthong are largely avoided.<sup>21</sup> Since the presence or the absence of a certain element that is suspected to have an effect on stress assignment is a yes–no decision, we can make a matrix of binary features:

Figure 1.5: Types of heavy syllables

	[+ DIPH, – ɪ]	[– DIPH, + ɪ]	[– DIPH, – ɪ]
[+ LONG]	++	++	++
[– LONG]	+	+	–

The feature matrix above (Figure 1.5) shows the various kinds of syllable types that we will now see have a manipulative effect on trochaic stress assignment. These syllable types can be considered ‘heavy’ in that they attract stress and thus modify the regular assignment of stress to every other syllable from the right edge of a word. For the time being, we will only test their effects on disyllabic words as the most common type. As will be shown in the following example, heavy syllables in ultimate positions attract stress while quasi-regular results are produced when they are in penultimate position and the ultimate syllable is not heavy:

- (27) a.    ×            ˘  
           *ma* – *tay*    ‘summer, wet season’  
           *pa* – *dang*    ‘mind; heart, mood’  
           *ka* – *nāy*    ‘I marry’ (marry=1SG.TOP)  
           *bras* – *yāng*    ‘he bathes’ (bathe=3SG.M.A)  
           *na* – *rān*    ‘word; speech’
- b.    ˘            ×  
           *kār* – *yo*    ‘strong’  
           *key* – *nam*    ‘humans, people’  
           *kan* – *ka*    ‘mind; heart, mood’

Unfortunately, there are no disyllabic examples for the feature sets [+ LONG, – DIPH, + ɪ] and [+ LONG, + DIPH, – ɪ] in the first syllable (syllables of the type /C(C(j))V:ɪ/ or /C(C(j))Vɪɪ/). If there were, they would group with (27b).

So far, we have only looked at heavy syllables combined with regular/light ones. In the following case, however, another property of heavy syllables will become apparent: long syllables outweigh those containing a diphthong or ending in /ɪ/. They are essentially superheavy, which is why some of the fields in Figure 1.5 are marked with two plus signs. The following examples show what happens when heavy syllables are combined with other heavy syllables. Let us start by examining the various combinations possible between [– LONG, + DIPH, – ɪ] and the ele-

<sup>21</sup> It might thus be possible to alternatively analyze diphthongs in /ɪ/ as /Vj/ sequences, essentially.

ments from the [+LONG] row (28a), and the possible combinations between [−LONG, −DIPH, +η] and the [+LONG] row (28b).

- (28) a.    ×        ×  
           *bay* - *hāy* ‘I govern’ (govern=ISG.TOP)  
           *say* - *lyāng* ‘he sails’ (sail=3SG.M.A)  
           *kay* - *vān* ‘container’
- b.    ×        ×  
           *kong* - *āyn* ‘we enter’ (enter=IPL.TOP)  
           *keng* - *vāng* ‘you notice’ (notice=2SG.A)  
           *lang* - *-vā* ‘in the most tiresome way’ (tiresome=SUPL)

We can see here that these words have primary stress invariably on the last/long syllable in spite of a heavy syllable preceding in the examples in (28b). The question then is, however, what happens if we invert this order. This is more problematic than it sounds, however, as initial [+LONG, +DIPH, −η] and [+LONG, −DIPH, +η], as well as final [−LONG, +DIPH, +η] do not occur, insofar there will only be one possible combination here—the reverse pattern of *lang-vā* ‘in the most tiresome way’ from (28b) above, also compare with (27):

- (29)    ×        ×  
           *cā* - *nang* ‘love’ (love-A)

There is only one one pattern possible here, which is very little to make a point, however, other words following this syllable pattern, like *nāreng* ‘rather’, for example, behave in the same way. A long syllable has precedence over other kinds of heavy syllables, so *-nang* does not take away stress from *cā*- as one might expect from the examples in (27a). Another question is what happens if we pit elements from the [±LONG] rows against another feature combination of the same row. As above, we will start with the [−LONG] row:

- (30) a.    ×        ×  
           *bay* - *tang* ‘blood’
- b.    ×        ×  
           *pang* - *lay* ‘goddess’

In the case of examples for [+LONG] pattern combinations, we need to keep in mind again that initial [+LONG, +DIPH, −η] and [+LONG, −DIPH, +η] are not attested, so again, there will only be one possible combination of two syllables with a long vowel:

- (31)    ×        ×  
           *mā* - *sāy* ‘I traveled’ (PST-travel=ISG.TOP)



Combining two long syllables with each other will result in both being stressed, which is otherwise avoided in Ayeri, as we will see later. Moreover, the following patterns emerge if we combine each pattern with itself; the combinatorial restrictions mentioned above apply again, of course:

- (32) a.     $\acute{x}$          $\acute{x}$   
           *kay* - *vay* 'without'  
           *dang* - *reng* 'bell' (bell-A.INAN)
- b.     $\grave{x}$          $\acute{x}$   
           *bā* - *mā* 'parents, mom-and-dad'

As demonstrated in (28), the last heavy syllable will receive primary stress, except if two long syllables collide, in which case the first long syllable will receive secondary stress.

To summarize the above findings:

1. Ayeri assigns trochaic stress from the right edge of a word. A foot thus consists of two syllables, of which the first is stressed.
2. Syllables ending in /ŋ/ or ones containing a diphthong are considered heavy. They attract stress and take it away from a preceding stressed syllable if the following syllable is not stressed already.
3. Syllables containing a long vowel are considered superheavy and override both light and heavy syllables in attracting stress, since long vowels cannot be unstressed.
4. Primary stress is assigned to the last stressable syllable, or otherwise the last heavy syllable. In the rare case of two long/superheavy syllables after another, the first syllable receives secondary stress and reduces in duration.
5. Secondary stress is assigned to syllables that are eligible for word stress but which are not in the final foot.

#### *Analysis of stress patterns in trisyllabic words*

So far, we have only considered all the possible combinations of two heavy and light syllables. Doing the same for all combinations of three and more syllables would be possible, though the list of examples were to become even longer. Since the feature pair [ $\pm$  DIPH,  $\pm$   $\eta$ ] behaves the same way throughout and both features are in complementary distribution, we need not test iterations of them separately, but can subsume them under the label [ $\pm$  HEAVY]. The parameters that need testing,

Figure 1.6: Stress patterns for [+ HEAVY, – LONG] in trisyllabic words

–H –H +H	<i>prantanley</i>	×   × ×	‘question’ (question-P.INAN)
–H +H –H	<i>sarayya</i>	×   × ×	‘(he) bows’ (bow-3SG.M)
+H –H –H	<i>taykondam</i>	×   × ×	‘break (n.)’
–H +H +H	<i>ralanghay</i>	×   × ×	‘thumbnail’
+H –H +H	<i>kaybunay</i>	×   × ×	‘by the way’
+H +H –H	<i>maykongas</i>	×   × ×	‘harbor’ (harbor-P)
+H +H +H	<i>panglay-kay</i>	×   × ×	‘a few goddesses’ (goddess=few)

then, are [ $\pm$  HEAVY] in combination with [ $\pm$  LONG]. There are 4 possible outcomes for these two features, which in the case of three syllables leads us to  $(2 \times 2)^3 = 64$  theoretically possible combinations. For this reason, I want to point out just a few cases, since the general rules sketched out above still apply.

First, let us look at [+ HEAVY, – LONG] combined with [– HEAVY, – LONG] in all positions (Figure 1.6). Finding words that fit the respective permutations is not too much of a problem, especially in cases where there is only one heavy syllable.

It becomes clear from Figure 1.6 that the rules stated at the end of the previous section (p. 35) also hold in the case of trisyllabic words whose syllables alternate short syllables based on the [ $\pm$  HEAVY] feature: ကုဉ်ဒ်ဒ်ဒ် *prantanley*, ကာကုဒ်ဒ် *ralanghay*, နုဉ်ဒ်ဒ် *kaybunay*, and ကုကုဒ်ဒ် *panglay-kay* receive final-syllable stress since this is their last heavy syllable. The first syllables of နုဉ်ဒ်ဒ် *taykondam* and နုဉ်ဒ်ဒ် *maykongas*, on the other hand, lose the secondary stress they would normally be assigned as two stressed syllables after another are normally avoided; the requirement of long syllables to not be unstressed does not come into effect here. နုဉ်ဒ်ဒ် *taykondam* is also an example for the rule that even if a syllable is not heavy, the last syllable that can be assigned stress will receive primary stress.

Carrying out the same analysis as above and moving the feature [+ LONG] through the various positions, we receive the results depicted in Figure 1.7.<sup>22</sup> Since long syllables override stress of both light and heavy syllables as pointed out above (p. 35), the example words in this chart contain both of these syllable types. It was not too hard finding examples for all the slots in this case either, except that words with two long syllables in succession are rather rare. Still, only the case of three long syllables must remain unattested.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>22</sup> For more precision, modifications will be made to the symbols given in footnote 20: let a double acute (ˆˆ) denote superheavy syllables with primary stress, and a double grave (˘˘) denote superheavy syllables with secondary stress.

<sup>23</sup> It would be possible to construct a word with three long syllables if the habitative suffix -asa did not delete the vowel at the end of the verb stem if there is one. မာ့ဒ် *māsāy* ‘I traveled’ (PST-

Figure 1.7: Stress patterns for [ $\pm$  HEAVY,  $+$  LONG] in trisyllabic words

-L -L +L	<i>peraysān</i>	x   x x	‘paste’
-L +L -L	<i>raypānya</i>	x   x x	‘at the stop’ (stop-LOC)
+L -L -L	<i>nōneri</i>	x   x x	‘deliberate, intentional’
-L +L +L	<i>mə-cān-cān</i>	x   x x	‘whatever fling’ (whatever=fling)
+L -L +L	<i>sānisān</i>	x   x x	‘copula; clutch (n.)’
+L +L -L	<i>lēāyon</i>	x   x x	‘manwhore’
+L +L +L	—	—	—

Again, we can see that long syllables attract stress, in that the final syllables of ပဲရဲယံ *peraysān* and ရဲယံ *sānisān* are stressed even though the penultimate syllable is heavy on the virtue of containing a diphthong. As it is in an unstressed position and there is no requirement for the syllable to be stressed, the first syllable of ရဲယံ *raypānya* loses stress adjacent to the stressed long penultimate syllable. နီ *nōneri* and လီယံ *lēāyon* display a secondary-stressed and a primary-stressed syllable next to each other, in the first case due to the rule that long syllables must not be unstressed and နီ *-eri* forming a valid disyllabic foot that receives regular trochaic stress, and in the second case due to two long syllables next to each other, of which the first—again—must not be unstressed. မဲယံ *mə-cān-cān* is interesting insofar as the long-syllable stress rules operate on the second foot regularly, while the marker မဲ *mə-* ‘whatever’ is by default unstressed, so even if it is added to stressed monosyllabic words like ခဲ *hin* ‘box’, the foot of မဲယံ *mə-hin* ‘which box so ever’ would appear iambic, even though the syllable ခဲ *hin* itself is not heavy.

A further exception is formed by monosyllabic quantifying clitics like ခဲ *-hen* ‘all, every’ or ဂဲ *-ngas* ‘almost’. These are unstressed also when following an unstressed syllable of their host if they contain a short vowel.

### Stress in compounds

Ayeri has a number of lexicalized compound nouns that are treated as one word morphologically (33a). This is in contrast to compounds that are not as established terms, or formed ad hoc (33b):

- (33) a. *Ang bengay kardangirayya ya Litareng.*  
 Ang beng=ay.Ø kardang.iray-ya ya=Litareng  
 AT attend=ISG.TOP school.high-LOC LOC=Litareng  
 ‘I attend university in Litareng.’

travel=ISG.TOP) would then become \*မဲယံ *\*māsāsāy* ‘I used to travel’ (PST-travel-HAB=ISG.TOP) instead of the actual form မဲယံ *māsāsāy*; the verb stem is မဲ *asa-* ‘travel’.

- b. *Ang pasyye*                      *Pila sungkoranyam kibas.*  
 Ang pasy-ye                      Ø=Pila sungkoran-yam kahas  
 AT be.intersted.in-3SG.F TOP=Pila science-DAT map  
 ‘Pila is interested in geography.’

For purposes of surveying stress patterns, we will only deal with the kind in (33a), though it may be noted that when not being overtly inflected, the second kind of compound will be treated as a word as well: *နီနွံနွံယုန sungkorankibas* ‘geography’. Another kind of indivisible compound as in (33a) is one formed from reduplication, for instance, *နွံနွံနွံ kusang-kusang* ‘model’, from *နွံနွံ kusang* ‘double’. Figure 1.8 gives several examples along with their stress patterns. As a reference for the various rules in operation, consider the list above (p. 35).

The first word, *နီနီနီနီ apan-apan*, is not very noteworthy but I included it nonetheless as a reference for regular stress assignment to light syllables. The word decomposes into two feet, each of them has trochaic stress, which does not change when reduplicated. Per rule, the first syllable of the word receives secondary stress while the penultimate syllable bears primary stress. *နွံနွံနွံ kusang-kusang* is following the normal rules as well in that a heavy syllable takes stress from a light one. This does not change in reduplication.

*နီနီနီနီ depangcāti* is noteworthy since it follows the same stress pattern as *နီနီနီနီ apan-apan* in spite of consisting of one foot with a heavy second syllable (*နီနီ de-pang*) and another with a superheavy first syllable (*နီနီ cāti*). To avoid a clash, stress is not shifted to the heavy syllable in *နီနီ depang*, since it is not strictly necessary for it to be stressed:

$$(34) \quad (*dépang \rightarrow depáng) + cāti \rightarrow \left\{ \begin{array}{l} *depàng + cāti \\ dèpang + cāti \end{array} \right\}$$

In the case of *မလိင်ကရော malingkaron* again the rule operates that prohibits two stressed non-long syllables after another. Thus, even if the first component *မလိင် maling* contains a heavy syllable, stress will not move there. In *လက်ကွေ့ latunkema*, the syllable /tun/ is assimilated to [tʊŋ] before the /k/ onset of the next syllable. For one, however, this does not make it heavy, and second, even if it did, stress would stay on the first syllable of the word for the same reason as in *မလိင်ကရော malingkaron*. The same rule of stress hiatus avoidance operates in *ဆာပယီလ sapayyila*.

Besides the shortening of the second component of the compound, *မာသင်္ဂေယျာ māva-ganeng* retains the stress pattern of its constituents. Since /ma:/ is not in a final foot, it receives secondary stress. Moreover, *မာသင်္ဂေယျာ māvaganeng* and *ပိကုနာနီ ပိကုနာနီ pikunanding* both show that it is acceptable for two light syllables to follow each other.

Figure 1.8: Examples of stress patterns in compounds

Word	Pattern	Translation	Constituents					
			Word	Pattern	Translation	Word	Pattern	Translation
<i>apan-apan</i>	˘ x   ˘ x	‘extensive’	<i>apan</i>	˘ x	‘wide’	<i>apan</i>	˘ x	‘wide’
<i>depangcāti</i>	˘ x   ˘˘	‘cuckold’	<i>depang</i>	x ˘	‘fool’	<i>cāti</i>	˘˘	‘lover’
<i>kusang-kusang</i>	x ˘   x ˘	‘model’	<i>kusang</i>	x ˘	‘double’	<i>kusang</i>	x ˘	‘double’
<i>latunkema</i>	˘ x   ˘ x	‘tiger’	<i>latun</i>	˘ x	‘lion’	<i>kema</i>	˘ x	‘stripe’
<i>malingkaron</i>	˘ x   ˘ x	‘coast, seashore’	<i>maling</i>	x ˘	‘shore’	<i>karon</i>	˘ x	‘water’
<i>māvaganeng</i>	˘˘   x ˘	‘mother’s siblings’	<i>māva</i>	˘ x	‘mother’	<i>ganengan</i>	x   ˘ x	‘siblings’
<i>pikunanding</i>	˘ x   x ˘	‘mustache’	<i>piku</i>	˘ x	‘beard’	<i>nanding</i>	x ˘	‘lip’
<i>sapayyila</i>	˘ x   ˘ x	‘limbs’	<i>sapay</i>	x ˘	‘hand’	<i>yila</i>	˘ x	‘foot’

### 1.3.2 Intonation

Peterson (2015: 66) writes that if “you’re creating a language on your own and you’re the only speaker, intonation is usually not high on the list of features to focus on, but intonational flavoring is well worth it (read: crucial) when it comes to making an authentic language.” Indeed, this has so far been a rather neglected topic in my work on Ayeri. Even though I made a handful of recordings in the past, I have never considered intonation much. Yet, of course, the spoken words in those recordings do not sound like robot speech either, so there must be intonational patterns that I have been subconsciously applying.<sup>24</sup>

Since intonation contours are notoriously difficult to display in print, I will give very approximate graphs of pitch in the respective examples for each surveyed pattern. Certainly there will be other patterns as well which would require more detailed gradations, but for the time being, I will only try to briefly describe those that are most prominent.

#### *Declarative statements*

Declarative statements have a gradually falling pitch contour based around an average pitch height, not deviating considerably on both ends:

(35) 

<i>Ang</i>	<i>gibayo</i>		<i>Pintemis</i>		<i>minganeri-ben</i>	<i>yona.</i>
Ang	giha-yo	Ø	Pintemis		mingan-eri=hen	yona
AT	blow-3SG.N	TOP	North Wind		ability-INS=all	3SG.N.GEN.

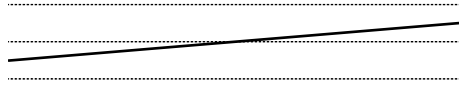
‘The North Wind blew with all of his might.’

#### *Yes-no questions*

Since Ayeri does not use a particle or word order to mark closed questions as such, intonation is used to mark the difference from a declarative statement. To achieve a strong contrast, questions exhibit gradually rising intonation:

<sup>24</sup> Whenever this happens, the fallback is likely to be a mixture of German and English, since those are the languages I am most familiar with.

(36)



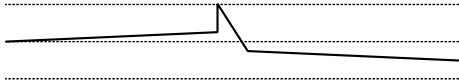
*Ang gihayo Pintemis minganeri-ben yona?*  
 Ang giha-yo Ø Pintemis mingan-eri=hen yona  
 AT blow-3SG.N TOP North Wind ability-INS=all 3SG.N.GEN.

'Did the North Wind blow with all of his might?'

### 'Wh-' questions

Unlike English, Ayeri marks open questions with an in-situ question word. Open questions are thus marked by the question word causing a sharp rise and fall in the overall contour of the question. The first half of the clause has the rising contour of a question, the second half has gradually falling pitch.

(37)



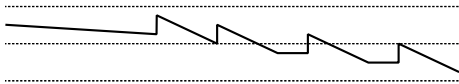
*Ang engyo mico sinya luga toya sam?*  
 Ang eng-yo mico sinya-Ø luga toya sam  
 AT be.more-3SG.N strong who-TOP among 3PL.N.LOC two

'Who was the stronger of the two?'

### Lists

List statements have the general gradual downward slope of declarative statements, but the individual items can nonetheless be marked by a pitch rise on the primary accent of each item.

(38)



*Le vacyeng seygo, disu, betay nay vasra.*  
 Le vac=yeng seygo-Ø, disu-Ø, betay-Ø nay vasra-Ø  
 PT.INAN like=3SG.F.A apple-TOP, banana-Ø, berry-Ø and nut-Ø

'She likes apples, bananas, berries and nuts.'

### Complement and relative clauses

Complement clauses are characterized by the short spike at the end of the preceding main clause followed by a short break which together signal the beginning of a new syntactic unit within the context of the current sentence, which is broadly similar to list statements. Otherwise, statements with complement clauses as well bear the overall downward-sloping contour of declarative statements if included in such.

(39)

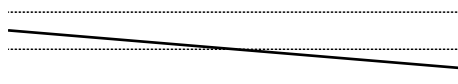


*Ang manga rantong, engyo mico sinyāng.*  
 Ang manga ran=tong, eng-yo mico sinyā-ang  
 AT PROG argue=3PL.N.A, be.more-3SG.N strong who-A

‘They were arguing who is stronger.’

Relative clauses, on the other hand, do not receive special prosodic marking, but are treated the same as other basic sentence types. They display a continuous downward slope if part of a declarative statement, or a continuous upward slope if part of a question:

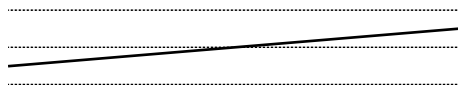
(40) a.



*Lugaya asāyāng si sitang-naykonyāng kong tova.*  
 Luga-ya asāya-ang si sitang=naykon=yāng kong tova-ya  
 pass-3SG.M traveler-A REL self=wrap=3SG.M.A inside cloak-LOC

‘A traveler passed who had wrapped himself into a cloak.’

b.



*Adareng asāyās si le ninyāng tova?*  
 Ada-reng asāya-as si le nin=yāng tova-Ø  
 that-A.INAN traveler-P REL PT.INAN wear=3SG.M.A coat-TOP

‘Is that the traveler who wore the coat?’

### Contrast

Ayeri uses a kind of topic system for highlighting constituents in a clause by morphosyntactic means, but this is still different from emphasis on semantic grounds, for example when the speaker wants to highlight a semantic difference in the same syntactic position, as in the following example, which presents a possible answer to the question posed in (40b):

(41)



*Adareng asāyās si le nin-yāng kegan.*  
 Ada-reng asāya-as si le nin=yāng kegan-Ø  
 that-A.INAN traveler-P REL PT.INAN wear=3SG.M.A hat-TOP

‘It is the traveler who wore the *hat*.’



We can see here a spike towards the end of the utterance where the word ᑭᓇᓂ *kegan* ‘hat’ is placed. This word receives extra stress for contrast with ᑭᓇ *tova* ‘coat’, which is what the other person had asked about.



## 2 Writing system

In the previous chapter, example words were given in Ayerí's script, *ṭahano hikamu*, wherever possible. Thus, it seems advisable to include a description of Ayerí's native writing system here as well. Literally, *ṭahano hikamu* means 'Round Script' (script round), which is an old formation based on the word *ṭahan-* 'write' that stuck. The current word for 'script' is *tahanan* 'writing'. *Tahano Hikamu* was originally named thus because of an earlier draft for a script that never made it very far beyond the drawing board and which was a lot more angular and boxy, see Figure 2.1—*Tahano Hikamu* was a lot more bubbly in comparison, especially early on (Figure 0.2).<sup>1</sup>

As we have seen in the previous chapter, Ayeri's prosody strongly emphasizes the syllable as a unit. Thus, it is not a surprise that Ayeri's native script, Tahano Hikamu, is an alphasyllabary similar to the Brāhmī alphabets of India and Southeast Asia (Salomon 1996; Court 1996). Scripts like these are

based on the unit of the graphic “syllable” [...], which by definition always ends with a vowel (type V, CV, CCV, etc.). Syllables consisting of a vowel only (usually at the beginning of a word or sentence) are written with the *full* or *initial vowel signs* [...]. But when, as is much more frequently the case, the syllable consists of a consonant followed by a vowel, the vowel is indicated by a diacritic sign attached to the basic sign for the consonant [...]. (Salomon 1996: 376)

For Tahano Hikamu the definition that a syllable consisting only of a vowel is written with an initial vowel sign is only true under certain circumstances, as we will see below. Moreover, Brāhmī scripts are often characterized by conjuncts of clustered consonants which may become quite large and sometimes behave in an idiosyncratic way. Consonant conjuncts like Devanāgarī त्व ⟨tva⟩ from त ⟨ta⟩ + व ⟨va⟩ or idiosyncratic conjuncts like क्ष ⟨kṣa⟩ for क ⟨ka⟩ + ष ⟨ṣa⟩ are not known in Tahano Hikamu, however. Tahano Hikamu also does not know subscript notation for consonant clusters and special diacritics marking coda consonants like in Javanese (Kuipers and McDermott 1996: 478–479). This does not mean, however,

<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, there is no documentation of the Box script surviving that I know of.

Figure 2.1: Box script and Hikamu



that final consonants are simply omitted in writing, since closed syllables are reasonably common enough in Ayeri to warrant indicating them. Thus, there is “a special mark to eliminate the vowel of the previous syllable, thereby leaving a consonant in a syllable-final position.” (Kuipers and McDermott 1996: 476) That is, a diacritic exists which marks the absence of an inherent vowel, rendering the syllable consonant-only.

Another difference from Brāhmī-family scripts is that vowel length and diphthongs in [i] are indicated by dedicated diacritics, so the long vowels are not doubled versions of their short counterparts. Like in Kharoṣṭhī—another historically important ancient script of India—initial vowels are not represented by unique graphemes but they are all written like post-consonantal vowel diacritics (Salomon 1996: 377), though in Tahano Hikamu with a character without an inherent sound value. For this reason, the character is indicated in the table below as  $\emptyset$ ; its native name is  $\text{ṛanyan}$  ‘nothing’.<sup>2</sup> Similar to a number of Brāhmī scripts, Tahano Hikamu puts diacritics not only below or above consonant bases, but also before them. This, however, is not limited to vowel graphemes as in Devanāgarī  $\text{ि}$  ⟨i⟩ or Javanese  $\text{ᮊ}$  ⟨e, é/è⟩ (Kuipers and McDermott 1996: 478).<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> I will give the native names of graphemes here, but will refer to them by their English names for clarity in the running text.

<sup>3</sup> Kuipers and McDermott (1996) do not say, but it seems that both might be related, since they are both functionally the only prepended vowel diacritics and both represent a high front sound; this is just a guess, however.

Figure 2.2: The consonant graphemes

/pa/	/ta/	/ka/	/ba/	/da/	/ga/
ᠠ	ᠲ	ᠬ	ᠪ	ᠳ	ᠭ
/ma/	/na/	/ŋa/	/va/	/sa/	/ha/
ᠮ	ᠨ	ᠨᠠ	ᠪᠠ	ᠰ	ᠬᠠ
/ra/	/la/	/ja/	/Ø/		
ᠷ	ᠯ	ᠵ	ᠯ		

## 2.1 Consonants

Tahano Hikamu is mainly based on consonant bases that are modified by diacritics. Since the vowel /a/ is so highly frequent in Ayeri, it is also the vowel that is *inherent* to every consonant grapheme if not further modified by vowel diacritics. Consonant letters are simply referred to as *pa*, *ta*, *ka*, ... Figure 1.1 displays all the main consonants. The customary collation is—similar to the IPA table—roughly grouping the letters according to their sound value by anteriority (front → back) and sonority (low → high). The script is monocameral, that is, there is no distinction between capital letters and minuscule letters as in the Latin, Greek, Cyrillic, Georgian, and Armenian alphabet. It is also written in lines from left to right.

ᠠ, which in Ayeri has no sound value but is used as a base for initial vowels, may also serve as the character for /ʔa/. What is, moreover, interesting about ᠨᠠ <nga> is that even though before, /ŋ/ was treated strictly as a coda consonant in the previous chapter, it is in fact treated as an onset consonant in writing if a vowel is following:

- (1) ᠠ + ᠨᠠᠭᠢᠰ  
 /pa/     /ŋis/  
 ᠠᠨᠠᠭᠢᠰ *pangis* /paŋ.is/ ‘money’

Tahano Hikamu knows a few ligatures. First of all, when two ᠨ <na> are in succession within a word, they will form a ligature ᠨᠠᠨᠠ <nana>:

- (2) ᠨ + ᠨ → ᠨᠠᠨᠠ  
 /na/     /na/     /nana/

This is distinct from conjuncts like in Devanāgarī et al., though, since the unmodified sound value will still be /nana/, not \*/nna/, so the inherent vowel of each ᠨ <na> is not deleted, and each ᠨ <na> retains the ability to be modified by diacritics. Tahano Hikamu also has a few ligatures of the kind you would find in Brāhmī scripts, however:

Figure 2.3: Additional consonant graphemes

/fa/	/wa/	/tsa/	/za/	/ʃa/	/ʒa/
ᄁ	ᄃ	ᄅ	ᄇ	ᄉ	ᄋ
/ɕa/	/ksa/	/kwa/	/xa/	/ɣa/	
ᄍ	ᄏ	ᄒ	ᄔ	ᄖ	

Figure 2.4: Primary vowel graphemes

	/i/	/e/	/a/	/o/	/u/	/ə/	/au/
Diaritics	ᄁ	ᄃ	(ᄅ)	ᄇ	ᄉ	ᄋ	ᄍ
Independent	ᄁ	ᄃ	ᄅ	ᄇ	ᄉ	ᄋ	ᄍ

- (3) a. ᄒ <kwa> ← ᄅ <ka> + ᄒ <va>,  
 b. ᄅ <tsa> ← ᄅ <ta> + ᄋ <sa>, and  
 c. ᄏ <ksa> ← ᄅ <ka> + ᄋ <sa>.

These conjunct letters are, however, not normally employed by Ayeri. Figure 2.3 shows all additional consonants, added to write other languages. Individual languages may adapt the sound values slightly to fit their own purposes.

## 2.2 Vowels

As mentioned above, vowels are written as diacritics that are added to consonants. In principle, every consonant has two slots for vowels, a primary one atop it, and a secondary one below it. Vowels added to consonants in the primary slot delete their inherent /a/:

- (4) ᄁ → ᄃ  
 /pa/      /pe/

Figure 2.4 gives the primary vowel signs. Of the vowel signs given there, only ᄃ <ə> is not used in Ayeri. ᄍ <au> is the only diphthong for which a dedicated grapheme exists, even though its occurrence is rather limited. The independent vowel graphemes are used at the beginning of words or inside words when there is no other way to spell the vowel, which is occasionally the case for secondary vowels. Secondary vowels are vowels that are not parts of diphthongs (even though another

Figure 2.5: Secondary vowel graphemes

/i/	/e/	/a/	/o/	/u/	/ə/	/au/

language might use them to spell diphthongs that are not covered by default), but follow the vowel of a syllable directly. They are attached underneath a consonant base, for example:

- (5)  $\text{ပ} \rightarrow \text{ပိ} \rightarrow \text{ပိး}$   
           /ja/        /je/        /jea/

In fact, the principle that every consonant base with its diacritics represents one syllable is slightly violated here, which is also the reason why secondary vowels very occasionally need to be spelled as independent vowels, for example when the secondary vowel is long, as in the word  $\text{ရူၤ}$  *ruān* ‘duty’:

- (6)  $\text{ရူ} \rightarrow \text{ရူၤ} \quad (\text{ရူၤ})$   
           /ru/        /rwa:/        /ru:a/

Example (6) uses a diacritic,  $\text{ၤ}$ , to indicate length. If  $\text{ၤ}$  is put directly under  $\text{ရူ}$  (*ru*) (the  $\text{ၤ}$  diacritic moves down where it is not in the way), the syllable will incorrectly spell /ru:a/ instead of the intended /rua:/. This is because diacritics modify consonants and primary vowels, but there is no way to modify a secondary vowel directly. Figure 2.5 gives a list of secondary vowels corresponding to that of primary vowels above. The vowels as well are just referred to by their sound value; ‘primary’ and ‘secondary’, ‘superscript’ and ‘subscript’ or ‘upper’ and ‘lower’ may be chosen to disambiguate their positions; the native names may use  $\text{အိုၤ}$  *iray* ‘high’ and  $\text{အိုၢ်}$  *eyra* ‘low’ to disambiguate, so  $\text{အိုၤ}$  *e iray* denotes the superscript ⟨e⟩ diacritic while  $\text{အိုၢ်}$  *e eyra* denotes its subscript counterpart.

As a further exception, those consonant bases with an ascender ( $\text{ခ}$  ⟨ka⟩,  $\text{င}$  ⟨da⟩,  $\text{ဃ}$  /çɑ/) move the primary vowel to the secondary slot below the consonant by default while indicating the vacancy of the primary slot at the top with a dot. This is done to avoid crossing the ascender of the consonant with a vowel diacritic:

- (7)  $\text{ခ} \rightarrow \text{ခိ} \rightarrow \text{ခိး}$   
           /ka/        /ka.i/        /ki/

If the primary vowel slot were not silenced by the  $\text{၀}$  diacritic, it could reasonably be assumed that the consonant is not losing its inherent /a/ and the vowel below

the consonant indicates a secondary vowel, spelling /CaV/. If, however, a secondary vowel is *actually* added, primary and secondary vowels will be assigned the regular primary and secondary slots, respectively, again (8a). This condition also holds true for subscript diacritics (8b).

- (8) a.  $\underset{\cdot}{\text{ḳ}} \rightarrow \underset{\cdot}{\text{ḳ}}^{\text{e}}$   
           /ki/        /ki.e/
- b.  $\underset{\cdot}{\text{ḳ}} \rightarrow \underset{\cdot}{\text{ḳ}}^{\text{ḳ}}$   
           /ki/        /ki:/

The order of secondary vowels and subscript diacritics is iconic insofar as it follows the order of sounds in the syllable. Thus, secondary vowels appear below the consonant-doubling diacritic,  $\underset{\cdot}{\text{ḳ}}$ , while they appear above the syllable-final homorganic nasal diacritic,  $\underset{\cdot}{\text{ḳ}}$ :

- (9) a.  $\underset{\cdot}{\text{ḳ}} \rightarrow \underset{\cdot}{\text{ḳ}}^{\text{ḳ}}$   
           /ppa/ → /ppea/
- b.  $\underset{\cdot}{\text{ḳ}} \rightarrow \underset{\cdot}{\text{ḳ}}^{\text{ḳ}}$   
           /peN/ → /peaN/

## 2.3 Diacritics

We have already encountered a few diacritics, though Tahano Hikamu comes with a lot more, some of which undergo non-trivial positioning and repositioning rules. As vowels are primarily expressed as superscripts, diacritics are primarily realized as subscripts, so in the following I will first describe subscript diacritics; then prepended diacritics, which Ayeri also has a number of, both as graphemes in their own right and as allographs of other subscript diacritics; and then, lastly, superscript diacritics.

### 2.3.1 Subscript diacritics

Table 2.6 shows the bottom-attaching diacritics. The ‘large diacritics’ cause the secondary slot of consonants to move down below the diacritic. ‘Small diacritics’ can attach in this place as well as secondary vowels, as does the homorganic nasal diacritic  $\underset{\cdot}{\text{ḳ}}$  in this diacritic-fraught example:



Figure 2.6: Bottom-attaching diacritics

Native name	Function	Example
Large diacritics		
𑜋 𑜏𑜃𑜫 <i>tupasati</i> 'long-maker'	Lengthens the primary vowel of the syllable	𑜏𑜃 <i>pa</i> → 𑜏𑜃𑜫 <i>pā</i>
𑜏𑜃𑜫 <i>ya eyra</i> 'low ya'	⟨ya⟩ following another consonant, also across syllables. Marks palatalization of 𑜏𑜃 ⟨ta⟩, 𑜏𑜃𑜫 ⟨da⟩, 𑜏𑜃𑜫𑜫 ⟨ka⟩, 𑜏𑜃𑜫𑜫𑜫 ⟨ga⟩ and 𑜏𑜃𑜫𑜫𑜫𑜫 ⟨ya⟩ in Ayeri.	𑜏𑜃𑜫 <i>ara</i> → 𑜏𑜃𑜫𑜫 <i>arya</i> ; 𑜏𑜃 <i>ta</i> → 𑜏𑜃𑜫 <i>ca</i>
𑜏𑜃𑜫𑜫 <i>ringaya</i> 'raiser'	Palatalizes a consonant (not used in Ayeri)	𑜏𑜃 <i>ta</i> → 𑜏𑜃𑜫𑜫 /tʰa/, /tʃa/
𑜏𑜃𑜫𑜫𑜫 <i>ulangaya</i> 'breather'	Aspiration or frication of a consonant (not used in Ayeri)	𑜏𑜃 <i>ta</i> → 𑜏𑜃𑜫𑜫𑜫 /tʰa/, /θa/
𑜏𑜃𑜫𑜫𑜫𑜫 <i>raypāya eyra</i> 'low stopper'	Glottal stop coda or glottalization of a consonant (consonant letters with ascenders; not used in Ayeri)	𑜏𑜃𑜫 <i>ka</i> → 𑜏𑜃𑜫𑜫𑜫 /kaʔ/; 𑜏𑜃𑜫𑜫 <i>da</i> → 𑜏𑜃𑜫𑜫𑜫 /dʰa/
Small diacritics		
𑜏𑜃𑜫𑜫𑜫𑜫 <i>gondaya</i> 'extinguisher'	Deletes the inherent /a/ of a consonant, e.g. in consonant clusters or closed syllables	𑜏𑜃𑜫 <i>para</i> → 𑜏𑜃𑜫𑜫 <i>pra</i> , 𑜏𑜃𑜫𑜫𑜫 <i>par</i>
𑜏𑜃𑜫𑜫𑜫𑜫 <i>vināti</i> 'nasalizer'	Indicates a homorganic nasal or nasalizes the vowel, depending on the language	𑜏𑜃𑜫𑜫 <i>pada</i> → 𑜏𑜃𑜫𑜫𑜫𑜫 <i>panda</i> /panda/ or /pāda/
𑜏𑜃𑜫𑜫𑜫𑜫𑜫𑜫 <i>kusangisāti</i> 'duplicator'	Indicates a geminated or otherwise double consonant	𑜏𑜃𑜫𑜫 <i>pala</i> → 𑜏𑜃𑜫𑜫𑜫𑜫𑜫𑜫 <i>palla</i>

Native name	Function	Example
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Figure 2.7: Obligatorily prepended diacritics

Native name	Function	Example
ၵံး lentankusang 'double-sound'	Marks a diphthong with /ɪ/	ၵံး pe → ၵံး pey
ၵံး tilamaya 'changer'	Marks raised vowels (i.e. umlaut; not used in Ayeri)	ၵံး po → ၵံး /pø/
ၵံး hiyamaya 'roller'	Marks retroflex consonants (not used in Ayeri) <sup>4</sup>	ၵံး ta → ၵံး /tʰa/

- (10)  $\text{ၵံး} + \text{ၵံး} \rightarrow \text{ၵံး}$   
 /tʃa:n/    /pu'luɪ/    /tʃa:mpu'luɪ/  
 ၵံး cāmpuluy 'heterosexual'

It also needs to be noted that diacritics like ၵံး are applied progressively to words as a whole, not stopping at morpheme and syllable boundaries, so even though *toryeng* 'she sleeps' may be composed of ၵံး: *tor*- 'sleep' + ၵံး: *-yeng* (=3SG.F.A) and syllabifies as /tor.'jeŋ/, the spelling is not \*ၵံး as one might expect, but ၵံး.

Even though the primary position for small diacritics is underneath consonants, the diacritic deleting the inherent vowel, ၵံး, very commonly also appears after a consonant letter at the end of words:

- (11)  $\text{ၵံး} \quad \text{ၵံး} \quad \text{ၵံး} \quad \text{ၵံး}$   
 Ya    nimreng    pangan    narānyena.  
 Ya    nim-reng    pangan-Ø    narān-ye-na  
 LOCT    appear=3SG.INAN.A    end-TOP    word-PL-GEN

'It appears at the end of words.'

This strategy is advantageous in that Tahano Hikamu leaves very little space between individual words: ၵံးၵံးၵံးၵံး. With the dot after the consonant, word boundaries are more visible.

### 2.3.2 Prepended diacritics

Example (10) leads us directly to the next class of diacritics—ones that are prepended to the consonant letter, either because they are simply placed there or because of allography. Let us first list those diacritics that appear in front of consonants obligatorily (Figure 2.7).

Figure 2.8: Allographically prepended diacritics

Native name	Function	Example
၁ <sup>၀</sup> ဇိကဇိအ် <i>tupasati marin</i> 'anterior long-maker'	Lengthens the primary vowel of the syllable	၁ <sup>၀</sup> <i>sya</i> → ၁ <sup>၀</sup> <i>syā</i> , ၁ <sup>၀</sup> <i>na</i> → ၁ <sup>၀</sup> <i>nā</i>
၂ <sup>၀</sup> ယအ် <i>ya marin</i> 'anterior ya'  ရိယအ် <i>ringaya</i> <i>marin</i> 'anterior raiser'	⟨ya⟩ following another consonant, also across syllables. Also used as an allograph for the palatalization proper diacritic.	၁ <sup>၀</sup> <i>na</i> → ၂ <sup>၀</sup> <i>nya</i>  ၁ <sup>၀</sup> /s <sup>h</sup> a/ → ၂ <sup>၀</sup> /s <sup>h</sup> i/
၁ <sup>၀</sup> ဇိကဇိအ် <i>ulangaya marin</i> 'anterior breather'	(Pre-)Aspiration or frication of a consonant (not used in Ayeri)	၁ <sup>၀</sup> <i>nga</i> → ၁ <sup>၀</sup> /ŋ <sup>h</sup> a/; ၁ <sup>၀</sup> <i>ta</i> → ၁ <sup>၀</sup> /t <sup>h</sup> a/

As Figure 2.7 shows, the only obligatorily prepended diacritic that Ayeri uses is the one that marks diphthongs, ၁<sup>၀</sup>. It needs to be noted here that ၁<sup>၀</sup> changes into ၂<sup>၀</sup> ⟨ya⟩ proper when a vowel follows, but stays ၁<sup>၀</sup> when a ၂<sup>၀</sup> ⟨ya⟩ follows:

- (12) a. ဘုရ် *baday* 'hero' → ဘုရ်ယ (ဘုရ်ယ) *badayang* 'the hero' (hero-A);  
b. ဇိရ် *tipuy* 'grass' → ဇိရ်ယ (ဘိရ်ယ) *tipuyya* 'in the grass' (grass-LOC).

Besides ၁<sup>၀</sup>, there are also a number of diacritics that are also obligatorily prepended to consonants, but do so as context-sensitive allographs (Figure 2.8). The selection of the variant diacritics is not random or up to the aesthetic eye of the writer (even though the device itself is certainly a matter of aesthetics), but it is governed by rules. The prepended forms listed in Figure 2.8 are thus triggered

1. when there is no stem or bowl for the regular subscript diacritic to attach to, which is the case for ၁<sup>၀</sup> ⟨na⟩, ၁<sup>၀</sup> ⟨nga⟩, ၁<sup>၀</sup> ⟨va⟩, and ၁<sup>၀</sup> ⟨wa⟩:

- (13) a. ၁<sup>၀</sup> → ၁<sup>၀</sup>  
/na/      /na:/  
b. ၁<sup>၀</sup> → ၁<sup>၀</sup>  
/ŋa/      /ŋa:/

<sup>4</sup> In a Tahano Hikamu orthography I devised for English once, ၁<sup>၀</sup> was used for /ə/, as in the NURSE vowel in American English: ၁<sup>၀</sup> *nurse*.

$$\text{c. } \underset{/va/}{\text{r}} \rightarrow \underset{/va:/}{\text{ṛ}}$$

$$\text{d. } \underset{/wa/}{\text{ṛ}} \rightarrow \underset{/wa:/}{\text{ṛṛ}}$$

2. when a large subscript diacritic would be added after another large subscript diacritic—this position can only be occupied once, so further large subscripts are prepended:

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc} (14) & & + \text{ṛ} & & + \text{ṛ} & & + \text{ṛ} & & + \text{ṛ} \\ & \text{ṛ} & \rightarrow & \text{ṛṛ} & \rightarrow & \text{ṛṛṛ} & \rightarrow & \text{ṛṛṛṛ} & \rightarrow & \text{ṛṛṛṛṛ} \\ & /ta/ & & /tʰa/ & & /tʰja/ & & /tʰji/ & & /tʰji:/ \end{array}$$

The order of diacritics follows the logic of the respective language's phoneme inventory, so if there are, for example, retroflex consonants and both dental and retroflex consonants can be aspirated, retroflexion would be marked first, then aspiration. If there is a palatalization contrast on top of this, the diacritic would be added after aspiration.

When adding large diacritics to stemless consonants, they are prepended from the beginning, as we saw in (13), and just like in (14), this principle continues:

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc} (15) & & + \text{ṛ} & & + \text{ṛ} & & + \text{ṛ} \\ & \text{ṛ} & \rightarrow & \text{ṛṛ} & \rightarrow & \text{ṛṛṛ} & \rightarrow & \text{ṛṛṛṛ} \\ & /na/ & & /nja/ & & /nja:/ & & /nja:ṛ/ \end{array}$$

3. with consonants directly following  $\text{ṛ}$  ⟨na⟩, to avoid a clash with its swash:

$$(16) \quad \underset{/na/}{\text{ṛ}} + \underset{/pa:/}{\text{ṛ}} \rightarrow \underset{/napa:/}{\text{ṛṛṛ}} \quad (* \text{ṛṛṛ})$$

An exception to this exception occurs, however, when the consonant is not directly following. In this case, no reordering happens, only  $\text{ṛ}$  ⟨na⟩ *may* reduce its swash in size to accommodate the following prepended diacritic:<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> The font I am using here is designed so that the reduced combination looks nicer, but if unreduced,  $\text{ṛ}$  ⟨na⟩'s swash is not so long as to cross the descender of  $\text{ṛ}$  either in this particular case.

$$(17) \quad \underset{/na/}{\text{န}} + \underset{/pa:/}{\text{ပါ}} \rightarrow \underset{/napa:/}{\text{နပါ}} \quad (? \text{နပါ})$$

4. in other cases where a clash of subscript diacritics needs to be avoided:

$$(18) \quad \underset{/di/}{\text{သီ}} + \underset{/pa:/}{\text{ပါ}} \rightarrow \underset{/dipa:/}{\text{သီပါ}} \quad (* \text{သီပါ})$$

Alternatively, the following solution is permissible:

$$(19) \quad \underset{/di/}{\text{သီ}} + \underset{/pa:/}{\text{ပါ}} \rightarrow \underset{/dipa:/}{\text{သီပါ}}$$

When two long syllables follow each other, as in *bāmā* ‘mom-and-dad’, one of the length diacritics should definitely be pulled to the front:

$$(20) \quad \underset{/ba:/}{\text{မိ}} + \underset{/ma:/}{\text{မိ}} \rightarrow \underset{/ba:ma:/}{\text{မိမိ}} \quad (? \text{မိမိ})$$

or:

$$\underset{/ba:/}{\text{မိ}} + \underset{/ma:/}{\text{မိ}} \rightarrow \underset{/ba:ma:/}{\text{မိမိ}}$$

### 2.3.3 Superscript diacritics

Ayeri’s standard position for diacritics is below consonants, but sometimes it is nicer to put them on top, especially for the letter န <na> due to its swash, as well as for ဂ <ga> since the space below its flag is empty otherwise, thus not providing much of a visual connection. The only diacritic that is normally attaching to the top of consonants is that for the glottal stop—we have already encountered its subscript allograph earlier. Since Ayeri’s phoneme inventory does not possess a phonemic glottal stop or glottalization, this diacritic is not used in Ayeri. The list of superscript diacritics is given in Figure 2.9.

At times, it may be necessary to attach both a superscript diacritic and a vowel sign above a consonant. In this case, the consonant-modifying diacritic is placed first and the vowel diacritic on top of it—this is exactly equivalent to the rule exemplified for subscript diacritics in (9).

Figure 2.9: Superscript diacritics

	Native name	Function	Example
◌̣	ḡṇḥṛṅṁ <i>gondaya ling</i> ‘upper extingisher’	Deletes inherent /a/ of consonant, e.g. in consonant clusters or closed syllables	ṽṇ <i>vāra</i> → ṽṇ <i>vra</i>
◌̤	Ṽṇṭṣṇṁ <i>vināti ling</i> ‘upper nasalizer’	Indicates a homorganic nasal or nasalizes the vowel, depending on language/context	ṇṇ <i>naka</i> → ṇṆṇ <i>nanka</i> /naŋka/ or /nāka/
◌̥	Ṷṇṅṇṱṣṇṁ <i>kusangisāti ling</i> ‘upper duplicator’	Indicates a geminated or otherwise double consonant	ṇṇ <i>pāna</i> → ṇṆṇ <i>panna</i>
◌̦	Ṛṇṇṇ <i>raypāya</i> ‘stopper’	Glottal stop coda or glottalization of a consonant (not used in Ayeri)	ṇṇ <i>tā</i> → ṇṆṇ /təʔ/ ṇṇ <i>sā</i> → ṇṆṇ /s’a/

- (21) a.  $\tilde{r} \rightarrow \tilde{r}'$   
           /vva/  $\rightarrow$  /vve/  
       b.  $\tilde{r} \rightarrow \tilde{r}'$   
           /vva/  $\rightarrow$  /vvaN/

## 2.4 Numerals

Ayeri uses a duodecimal number system, that is, a system based on the powers of 12, which is a typological rarity.<sup>6</sup> There is a digit for zero, so the system is positional, like the Hindu–Arabic digits used by the Latin alphabet. The numerals for the numbers from 1 to 12 are shown in Figure 2.10.

## 2.5 Punctuation and abbreviations

Tahano Hikamu's system of manipulating the sound of syllables is very sophisticated, so it comes as no surprise that it is also host of a large number of punctuation

<sup>6</sup> And one possibly overrepresented by fictional languages due to its rarity in natural languages.

Figure 2.10: The numerals

1 ၁	2 ၂	3 ၃	4 ၄	5 ၅	6 ၆
7 ၇	8 ၈	9 ၉	A ၁၀	B ၁၁	၁၂

Figure 2.11: Common punctuation marks

	Native name	Function	Example
။	၁ dan ‘dot’	Full stop	ဧကယော့။ <i>Sarayāng</i> . ‘He left.’
:	၁၁ dan-dan ‘little dot’	A separator for small things, like clitics and abbreviations; divides the constituents of reduplication	၁၁၁၁ <i>ada-nanga</i> ‘this house’; ဧကယော့ <i>5:pd</i> ‘5 hrs’; ၁၁၁၁ <i>dan-dan</i> ‘dot-dot, little dot’
—	၁၁၁ <i>puntān</i> ‘dash’	General sign for a longer pause, equivalent to a dash, colon, semicolon, brackets	၁၁—၁၁ <i>Yan – saru!</i> ‘Yan – go!’
၁	၁၁၁၁ <i>damprantan</i> ‘question point’	Marks questions	၁၁၁၁ <i>Manisu?</i> ‘Hello?’
၁	၁၁၁၁ <i>dambahān</i> ‘shouting point’	Marks exclamations; strong exclamations may be marked by the ၁ variant.	၁၁၁၁ <i>Manisu!</i> ‘Hello!’; ၁၁ <i>Yi!</i> ‘Urgh!’

marks. Figure 2.11 lists the ones commonly encountered, Figure 2.12 the ones not so commonly encountered.

။ (.) does not look very much like a dot or a point, but it is derived from a sign that looks like two circles stacked on top of each other, similar to : (→) (see Figure 0.2). There is no mark for a comma as such, so : (→) or – (→) cannot be used in this way. Instead of a comma, a wide word space is used to separate syntactic units. A long dash — (→) is also sometimes found at the end of paragraphs or texts to mark their end. The strong exclamation mark ၁ may appear in its exclamatory function at the end of a line, but does not necessarily indicate strong emphatic force in this case, but just an emphatic statement.

Regarding the less common marks, some of these seem like all too bland copies of modern punctuation, especially the brackets and the decimal point. Still, however, they may serve their purpose sometimes, and the brackets ၁၁၁ maybe come with



Figure 2.12: Less common punctuation marks

Native name	Function	Example
◌ <sup>◌</sup> ◌ <sub>◌</sub> <i>danarān</i> 'speaking point'	Quotation marks	နာယက 'မင်း' <i>Narayāng</i> "Manisu!" 'He says, "Hello!"
◌◌◌◌ <i>dankayvo</i> 'beside-point'	Bracketing of text	လယ်လယ်လယ် <i>bahis (larau)</i> 'a (nice) day'
◌◌◌◌ <i>dangaran</i> 'name-point'	Explicitly marks a name as such. For the closing name parenthesis, ◌◌ can be found as well.	မင်းမင်းမင်း <i>Ajān Savati</i> ; မင်းမင်းမင်း <i>Pila Lay Maran</i>
' <i>dansinday</i> 'number-point'	Marks (duo)decimal fractions	၁၇.၇၄၈၂၀ 17.45B82 '19.37482'
◌◌◌◌ <i>adrumaya</i> 'breaker'	Marks line breaks within a phrase	

the redeeming notion that they push off the text around the inclusion rather than encapsulating the inclusion within it, so the visual effect is slightly different. The name brackets ◌◌ are interesting and maybe useful insofar as many names in Ayeri are derived from common words, for example, မင်းမင်း *Ajān*, a male name, is literally 'play, game', relating to a playful character; မင်းမင်း *Migoray*, a female name, literally means 'flower'. The name brackets, then, make it unmistakeably clear that a proper noun is intended rather than a common noun. The line-breaker ' serves the purpose of marking the continuation of a clause at the end of a line either generally or where there would be ambiguity with a comma, which, as described above, is a large blank that would otherwise be invisible at the end of a line.

Two very common abbreviations are symbolic in nature, like the ampersand (&) in the Latin alphabet, and incidentally, they correspond to it in that the very common small word နှစ် *nay* 'and' may be abbreviated as နှ. Based on this, its reduplicated form နှစ်နှစ် *naynay* 'furthermore, also' may be abbreviated as နှ်.

## 2.6 Styles

Over the course of the years since Tahano Hikamu's inception, I have liked to experiment with different styles of writing, that is, I tried applying a number of different writing styles to the script to change its look and feel while still staying true to the

overall character shapes and the system behind the script. The example text I will be using to illustrate the different styles in the following is an Ayeri translation of the first article of the United Nations *Universal declaration of human rights* (Becker 2011):

*Sa vesayon keynam-ikan tiganeri nay kaytanyeri sino nay kamo.*

*Ri toraytos tenuban nay iprang, nay ang mya rankyon sitanyās ku-netu.*

[All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.

They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards each other in a spirit of brotherhood.] (United Nations 1948: Article 1)

The examples above are all using a style I call ‘book’ style since it comes close to printed letters, or also what might be conceivable as being written with quills or nibs on parchment or paper—of course, pen and paper is also what I used to make up the letters in the first place, without second thought about the limitations of the supposed original writing utensils. The ‘book’ style letters are what I consider the canonical form. Figure 2.13 shows the above article in this letter style.

Figure 2.13: Tahano Hikamu, ‘book style’

ကံပိၣ်အံၣ်ဃးၣ်ဆံၣ်ဆံၣ်ၣ် အံၣ်ဆံၣ်ၣ်ဆံၣ်ၣ် အံၣ်ဃး။  
 ဘိၣ်အံၣ်ဆံၣ်ၣ်ဆံၣ်ၣ် အံၣ်ဆံၣ်ၣ်ဆံၣ်ၣ် အံၣ်ဆံၣ်ၣ်ဆံၣ်ၣ် အံၣ်ဆံၣ်ၣ်ဆံၣ်ၣ်။

As described above, I have long found the look of the Javanese script<sup>7</sup> rather interesting and thus I tried applying the general aesthetics of what I had seen of it to Tahano Hikamu at some point. As mentioned above as well, there are no subscript letters and in Ayeri, and the number of large swirling diacritics is also rather low, so there is still definitely a difference in appearance. The ‘angular’ style is also the one that is comparable in function to our bold face or italic style letters, since it is used in captions or to highlight special text within running text. This letter style (အံၣ် binya ‘angular’) is displayed in Figure 2.14.

Figure 2.14: Tahano Hikamu, ‘angular style’

ကံပိၣ်အံၣ်ဃးၣ်ဆံၣ်ဆံၣ်ၣ် အံၣ်ဆံၣ်ၣ်ဆံၣ်ၣ် အံၣ်ဃး။  
 ဘိၣ်အံၣ်ဆံၣ်ၣ်ဆံၣ်ၣ် အံၣ်ဆံၣ်ၣ်ဆံၣ်ၣ် အံၣ်ဆံၣ်ၣ်ဆံၣ်ၣ် အံၣ်ဆံၣ်ၣ်ဆံၣ်ၣ်။

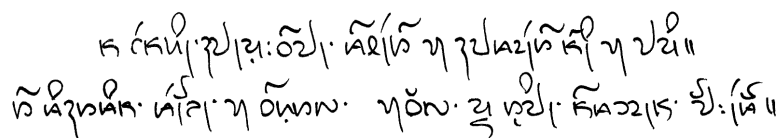
The greatest difference to the ‘book’ style is that many of the main strokes double to become a thick and a parallel thin line and the shape of ခ (na) changes to

<sup>7</sup> For examples, see Everson (2008), or *Wikipedia*.

have its swirl straightened into a simple descending line. The vowel carrier  $\text{Ⴌ}$  changes to a flattened *O*-like circle, and the bottom curl in  $\text{ᩈ}$  ⟨ta⟩ changes to a wedge. While the right side of the  $\text{ᩈ}$  ⟨sa⟩ character in the ‘book style’ consists of two strokes—a flag and a downwards bow, both independently attached to the main stem—they connect here to form an *R*-like shape.

Neatly reproducing the shapes of either the ‘book’ style or the ‘angular’ style by hand goes rather slowly, so I was wondering what daily handwriting could look like. Of course, this presupposes pen and paper again; Salomon (1996: 377) mentions that inscriptions of Brāhmī and related scripts have been found on copper plates and plates made of other metals, besides stone. Metal plates can be inscribed with metal styluses and should allow similar shapes as modern pens. Wax tablets—a staple in European literacy until the use of paper became widespread—should as well allow for relative freedom of stroke direction. Figure 2.15 shows what Tahano Hikamu might look like quickly jotted down by hand.

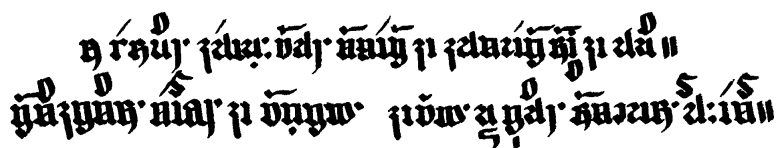
Figure 2.15: Tahano Hikamu, ‘hand style’



Many letter shapes become simplified, specifically  $\text{Ⴌ}$  ⟨ba⟩,  $\text{ᩈ}$  ⟨ga⟩,  $\text{ᩈ}$  ⟨ka⟩,  $\text{ᩈ}$  ⟨na⟩,  $\text{ᩈ}$  ⟨nga⟩, the vowel carrier  $\text{ᩈ}$ , and the vowel  $\text{ᩈ}$  ⟨i⟩. Not shown here is the vowel length diacritic,  $\text{ᩈ}$ , which is simplified to a reverse *C* shape. The abbreviation  $\text{ᩈ}$  *‘and’* is used throughout, though in a shape that is more similar to its ‘angular’ form  $\text{ᩈ}$ .  $\text{ᩈ}$  ⟨na⟩ is also taken from the ‘angular’ style  $\text{ᩈ}$ , which opens the possibility that this is actually the basic shape rather than the ‘book’ style’s  $\text{ᩈ}$ , or both are different developments from a shared ancestor.

Most recently, I also wondered what Tahano Hikamu might look like if it were adapted to European blackletter style with its characteristic broken arches. This, of course, constitutes a sharp contrast to Ayer’s usual look and feel, which made the experiment all the more interesting, though decidedly non-‘canonic’. Figure 2.16 shows what our example passage might have looked like at a time when Gothic book hands flourished.

Figure 2.16: Tahano Hikamu, ‘blackletter style’



The letter shapes from the ‘book’ style stay largely intact here, though all curves are broken up into at least two strokes, and strokes from the bottom left to the top right, which would push a quill in a way that causes ink to splatter, are avoided completely. The characters that differ most are 𑌵 ⟨ga⟩, 𑌶 ⟨ra⟩, 𑌷 ⟨nga⟩, and the vowel carrier 𑌸. 𑌹 ⟨na⟩ again appears in the ‘angular’ shape, though without its descender word-internally and in the abbreviation 𑌺 *na*y. 𑌻 ⟨ta⟩ comes with a horizontal stroke instead of a curl at the bottom; 𑌼 ⟨sa⟩ gains a descender, as does 𑌽 ⟨ra⟩. Not shown here either are changes to the ‘large’ diacritics.

## 3 Morphological typology

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The first chapter dealt with the smallest constituent parts of words—speech sounds, which ones there are, and how they assemble into valid words. Consequently, the following two chapters will be about the next step up from this: morphemes, the atoms of meaning. First we will have a more general look at which kinds of morphemes there are, and then look at them more closely by part of speech: what is their distribution, and how are morphemes put together to form inflected words? This chapter on morphological typology will first deal with general questions about Ayeri's degree of synthesis, and then will try to answer questions about the kinds of functions the various morpheme classes carry out in the language.

### 3.1 Typology

For the largest part, Ayeri is an *agglutinative* language. Comrie (1989) says of agglutinating languages that in these, typically,

a word may consist of more than one morpheme, but the boundaries between morphemes in the word are always clear-cut; moreover, a given morpheme has at least a reasonably invariant shape, so that the identification of morphemes in terms of their phonetic shape is also straightforward. [...] As is suggested by the term agglutinating (cf. Latin *gluten* 'glue'), it is as if the various affixes were just glued on one after the other (or one before the other, with prefixes). (43–44)

In Ayeri, root morphemes are modified by affixes for the purposes of inflection and derivation, and these affixes, in the form of suffixes more specifically, can be stacked, especially on verbs. Indeed, they vary little, so that they are always easily recognizable. Suffixation in Ayeri is especially prominent on verbs:

- (1) *Le kondasayāng hemaye pruyya nay napayya kayvay.*  
Le kond-asa=yāng hema-ye-Ø pruy-ya nay napay-ya kayvay  
PT.INAN eat-HAB=3SG.M.A egg-PL-TOP salt-LOC and pepper-LOC without

'He always eats his eggs without salt and pepper.'

The verb root  $\text{ḵḵ}$ : *kond-* ‘eat’ is inflected here for a habitual action with the suffix  $\text{ḵḵ}$ : *-asa*, and also carries a person-inflection clitic,  $\text{ḵḵ}$ : *-yāng*, marking a third person singular masculine agent. With the notable exception of pronouns and related person-inflection clitics, affixes tend to encode a single grammatical function. Verbs are not the only part of speech that can inflect; nouns and the relativizing conjunction can as well:

- (2) a. *Ang mətabanay tamanyeley yeyam.*  
 Ang mə-tahan=ay.Ø taman-ye-ley yeyam.  
 AT PST-write=ISG.TOP letter-PL-P.INAN 3SG.F.DAT  
 ‘I wrote letters to her.’
- b. *Le turayāng taman sinā ang ningay tamala vās.*  
 Le tura=yāng taman-Ø si-Ø-na ang ning=ay.Ø tamala vās  
 PT.INAN send=3SG.M.A letter-TOP REL-PT.INAN-GEN AT tell=ISG.TOP yesterday 2SG.P  
 ‘The letter which I told you about yesterday, he sent it.’

The principle of not conflating several grammatical functions into a single suffix can be observed in (2a) regarding the word  $\text{ḵḵ}$ : *tamanyeley* ‘letters’, in which the plural marker  $\text{ḵḵ}$ : *-ye* is distinct from the inanimate-patient case marker  $\text{ḵḵ}$ : *-ley* (the latter, however, conflates animacy and case). Strictly speaking, the pronoun  $\text{ḵḵ}$ : *yeyam* ‘to her’ is also composed, namely of the third person feminine base form  $\text{ḵḵ}$ : *ye* and the dative case marker  $\text{ḵḵ}$ : *yam*. Example (2b) is one we have already encountered before (p. 11). Here, the relative pronoun,  $\text{ḵḵ}$ : *sinā* ‘of/about which’ is inflected for genitive case, and stress on the usually unstressed last syllable suprasegmentally marks that this form is contracted from  $\text{ḵḵ}$ : *sileyena* (*si-ley-ena*, REL-P.INAN-GEN).

So far, we have concentrated on suffixes, but there are a number of prefixes as well; (2a) exhibits the past prefix  $\text{ḵḵ}$ : *mə-* (which is actually redundant in this case). There are also demonstrative prefixes on nouns, however. In the following example, the prefix  $\text{ḵḵ}$ : *eda-* ‘this-’ joins the noun  $\text{ḵḵ}$ : *peham* ‘carpet’ to indicate a specific carpet.

- (3) *Le no intoyyang eda-peham.*  
 Le no int-oy=yang eda=peham-Ø  
 PT.INAN want buy-NEG=ISG.A this=carpet-TOP  
 ‘I do not want to buy this carpet.’

Besides prefixes and suffixes, Ayeri also possesses at least one grammatical morpheme of the kind Zwicky (1977) calls a ‘bound word’. Bound words are cases where morphemes which are

always bound and always unaccented show considerable syntactic freedom, in the sense that they can be associated with words of a variety of morphosyntactic categories. Frequently, such a *bound word* is semantically associated with an entire

consituent while being phonologically attached to one word of this constituent, and ordinarily the bound word is located at the very margins of the word, standing outside even inflectional affixes. (6)

This is the case with the marker  $\text{ᄇᆞᆫ}$  *manga*, which is treated as an independent word, but can modify verbs and prepositions—heads of verb phrases (VPs) and prepositional phrases (PPs), respectively—is unstressed and appears at the margin of its modification target:

- (4) a. *Ang manga yavaya ayon bariley.*  
 Ang manga yava-ya ayon-Ø bari-ley  
 AT PROG roast-3SG.M man-TOP meat-P.INAN  
 ‘The man is roasting meat.’
- b. *Ya mətapyyāng maritay misley manga luga bari.*  
 Ya mə-tapy=yāng maritay mis-ley manga luga bari-Ø  
 LOCT PST-put=3SG.M.A before spit-P.INAN DYN between meat-TOP  
 ‘The meat, he had put a spit through it before.’

In (4a),  $\text{ᄇᆞᆫ}$  *manga* modifies the verb  $\text{ᄇᆞᆫ}$  *yava-* ‘roast’ and indicates that this is a temporarily ongoing action, like the English progressive, except not as strongly grammaticalized.<sup>1</sup> In (4b),  $\text{ᄇᆞᆫ}$  *manga* modifies the preposition, on the other hand, to indicate that it is dynamic:  $\text{ᄇᆞᆫ}$  *luga* by itself means ‘among, between’, while its dynamic form  $\text{ᄇᆞᆫ}$  *manga luga* means ‘through; during, for’.

As we have seen in the examples above, person suffixes on verbs are single morphemes that encode more than one property, for example  $\text{ᄇᆞᆫ}$  *-yeng* encodes the person features third person, feminine, singular, and agent. Personal pronouns, of which the person clitics on verbs are an instance, are the main case of fusion among agglutination in Ayeri, although some of the forms, like  $\text{ᄇᆞᆫ}$  *yeyam* ‘to her’ above, can be decomposed into root and suffix without problem.<sup>2</sup>

Perpendicular to the axis isolation–agglutination runs the axis analytic–synthetic. On the latter axis, Ayeri scores mostly as *synthetic*, since it prefers compactness over spreading a construction over several words, though it does not incorporate object noun phrases (NPs) and it is not possible to form ‘sentence-words’

<sup>1</sup> I suppose, a better parallel is the so-called *rheinische Verlaufsform* ‘Riparian progressive’ (*sein* ‘be’ + *am/beim* ‘at the’ + infinitive) in German, a construction common in the colloquial language which parallels the English progressive construction and is not yet fully grammaticalized (Eisenberg et al. 2016: 435). Speakers will thus accept both *Er lernt gerade*, literally ‘He studies right now’, and *Er ist am Lernen* ‘He is studying’.

<sup>2</sup> Originally, Ayeri’s personal pronouns were indeed agglutinative as well, so  $\text{ᄇᆞᆫ}$  *yeng* ‘she’ used to be  $\text{ᄇᆞᆫ}$  *iyegang* (*iy-e-ang*, 3SG-F-A). This also gives an explanation to Boga et al. (2016)’s observation that Ayeri’s plural pronouns are formed “[v]ielleicht sogar zu regelmäßig” ([15]; ‘possibly in an even too regular way’).

either, so it is not going so far as to be polysynthetic (Comrie 1989: 45–46). It is nonetheless theoretically possible, due to suffixation being a prominent pattern, to form foot-long words like

- (5) *da-mətahasongoyyang-ikan*  
 da=mə-taha-asa-ong-oy=yang=ikan  
 such=PST-have-HAB-IRR-NEG=ISG.A=much  
 ‘I would not much used to have had such’

Cases of analytic morphology are compound prepositions as we have seen with *ᄃᆞᆫᆫᆞᆫ manga luga* ‘through’ in (4b), but verbs as well show analytic structures not only with the progressive marker, but also with modals:

- (6) *Ming sahooyang dabas.*  
 Ming saha-oy=yang dabas  
 can come-NEG=ISG.A today  
 ‘I can’t come today.’

Most of the information the VP contains in this example is marked on the content verb, *ᄃᆞᆫᆫᆞᆫ saba-* ‘come’, except for ability, which is expressed by the particle *ᄃᆞᆫᆫᆞᆫ ming* ‘can’. *ᄃᆞᆫᆫᆞᆫ ming* is an uninflected form of the verb expressing ability and may be counted as an auxiliary verb in that the full semantic content of the VP is spread out over two verb forms, one major, one minor—this probably should not be understood as a serial verb construction, however (Aikhenvald 2006).<sup>3</sup> Consider also the following example in which *ᄃᆞᆫᆫᆞᆫ ming* is inflected like a regular verb:

- (7) *Da-mingya ang Diyan.*  
 Da=ming-ya ang=Diyan.  
 so=can-3SG.M A=Diyan  
 ‘Diyan can (do it).’

## 3.2 Morphological processes

### 3.2.1 Prefixation

Prefixes in Ayeri apply mainly to verbs, but nouns, pronouns, adjectives and conjunctions as well can appear with them, some of which may be clitics; reasons for their being clitics will be given at the appropriate cases in the sections on the various

<sup>3</sup> *ᄃᆞᆫᆫᆞᆫ manga* has, in fact, a verbal counterpart *ᄃᆞᆫᆫᆞᆫ manga-* ‘move; remove’ as well, which presumably served as the origin of both the progressive and the dynamic marker.



parts of speech. With verbs, prefixes that are most certainly ‘true’ prefixes—that is, morphemes that have been semantically bleached by grammaticalization to the point where they only express grammatical functions (Lehmann 2015: 157ff.) and which subcategorize words rather than phrases (Klavans 1985: 117)—are the tense prefixes marking both three degrees of past and future tense, for example:

- (8) *Ang səsarāyn ya Makapetang.*  
 Ang sə-sara=ayn.Ø ya=Makapetang  
 AT FUT-go=IPL.TOP LOC=Makapetang  
 ‘We will go to Makapetang.’

Here, the prefix 𐀓: *sə-* marks future tense on the verb, 𐀓𐀓: *sara-* ‘go’. The other tense prefixes are 𐀓𐀓: *kə-* (NPST), 𐀓: *mə-* (PST), 𐀓𐀓𐀓: *və-* (RPST), and 𐀓: *pa-* (NFUT) and 𐀓𐀓: *ni-* (RFUT). Besides this set of prefixes, there are also a number of proclitics that can appear with verbs, though not exclusively. These are the anaphora 𐀓: *da-* ‘thus, so, such’ and the reflexive marker 𐀓𐀓𐀓𐀓: *sitang-* ‘self’:

- (9) *Da-mingya ang Diyan.*  
 Da=ming-ya ang=Diyan.  
 so=can-3SG.M A=Diyan

‘Diyan can (do it).’

- (10) *Sitang-kecāng.*  
 Sitang=ket=yāng  
 REFL=Wash=3SG.M.A

‘He washes *himself*.’

𐀓𐀓𐀓𐀓: *sitang-* can also be used as a preverb in situations where the agent is also the instrument, so both of the following two sentences are equivalent in meaning:

- (11) a. *Sa apicāng nanga ikan sitang-yari.*  
 Sa apit=yāng nanga ikan sitang=yari  
 PT clean=3SG.A house complete REFL=3SG.M.INS

‘He cleaned the whole house by himself.’

- b. *Sa sitang-apicāng nanga ikan.*  
 Sa sitang=apit=yāng nanga ikan  
 PT REFL=clean=3SG.A house complete

(idem)

Example (11a) shows the more common application of 𐀓𐀓𐀓𐀓: *sitang-*, that is, as a reflexive modifier of pronouns. The prefix 𐀓: *da-* can as well be used with noun phrases and is part of the demonstrative set of prefixes, 𐀓: *da-* ‘such’, 𐀓𐀓: *eda-* ‘this’, and 𐀓𐀓𐀓: *ada-* ‘that’:

- (12) *eda-ganang*  
 eda=gan-ang  
 this=child-A  
 ‘this child’

The demonstrative prefixes are also used to form the demonstrative pronouns မ်ၤ *edanya* ‘this one’, မ်ၤ *adanya* ‘that one’ and မ်ၤ *danya* ‘such one’. A special case in this regard is the postposition မ်ၤ *da-nārya* ‘in spite of, despite’ where မ်ၤ *da-* combines with the conjunction ခၢၣ် *nārya* ‘but, although, except’. Originally, မ်ၤ *dikapisa* ‘respective’ is derived from မ်ၤ *da-* + မ်ၤ *ikapisa* ‘bound, dependent’, which is an example of a combination with an adjective. There is also a fixed adverbial expression using one of these prefixes, မ်ၤ *eda-tadayyam* ‘for the time being, for now’ (this=time-DAT).

Last but not least, the prefix မ်ၤ *ku-* ‘like, as though’ can be used with both adjectives and nouns (or, more precisely, phrases containing nominals):

- (13) a. *ku-koyaya*  
 ku=koya-ya  
 like=book-LOC  
 ‘like in a book’  
 b. *ku-prasi*  
 ku=prasi  
 like=sour  
 ‘as though (it were) sour’

An example of a set-phrase adverbial consisting of မ်ၤ *ku-* and a verb is မ်ၤ *ku-nasya* ‘as follows’, ခၢၣ် *nasya-* meaning ‘follow’. What is curious here is that this fossilized form is lacking person marking and is just extended with an epenthetic *-a* since *-sy* is not a permissible coda. The expected form would be \*မ်ၤ *ku-nasyareng* (like=follow=3SG.INAN.A).

Following Klavans (1985), who suggests that clitics best be defined as “affixation at the phrasal level” (117), a very common kind of prefix to the verb *phrase* are the topic markers. They are counted as parts of the VP but do not interact with it regarding stress assignment (they are always unstressed) while always being in an initial position, preceding any other preverbal elements:

- (14) a. *Ang tabanya tamanley.*  
 Ang tahan-ya taman-ley  
 AT write-3SG.M letter-P.INAN  
 ‘He writes a letter.’  
 b. *Ang mətabanya tamanley.* ‘He wrote a letter.’

- c. *Ang manga mətabanya tamanley.* ‘He was writing a letter.’  
 d. *Ang manga no mətabanya tamanley.* ‘He was wanting to write a letter.’

### 3.2.2 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, quantifiers take the shape of suffixes as well. Quantifiers, then, may modify content words almost regardless of their part of speech—noun, verb, adjective or adverb. The most pervasive examples of suffixation are certainly those of case marking on nouns and of person marking on verbs, for example:

- (15) *Sa pəharuyang va manga miday tangya vana suyareri, vimyon!*  
 Sa pə-haru=yang va.Ø manga miday tang-ya vana suyar-eri, vimyon  
 PT NFUT-beat=ISG.A 2SG.TOP DYN around ears-LOC 2SG.GEN ladle-INS, monkey!  
 ‘I’ll beat you around your ears with a ladle, you monkey!’

This example shows marking of 𐌂𐌆𐌇 *tang* ‘ears’ with the locative case suffix 𐌇𐌆𐌇 -*ya* and the marking of 𐌂𐌆𐌇 *suyar* ‘ladle’ with the instrumental case suffix 𐌆𐌆𐌇 -*eri*; the previous examples already provide instances of the exceedingly common markers for agent and patient case, 𐌂𐌆𐌇 -*ang* and 𐌂𐌆𐌇 -*as*, respectively. Besides case, nouns can also be marked for plural with the suffix 𐌇𐌆𐌇 -*ye*, and verb roots may be extended by the mood and aspect markers 𐌂𐌆𐌇 -*ong* (IRR), 𐌂𐌆𐌇 -*asa* (HAB) and 𐌂𐌆𐌇 -*oy* (NEG), the last of which is the most frequently occurring one. The mood suffixes can also be stacked, leading to the long word in (5) above. Person marking on verbs is realized as agreement suffixes or of clitic personal pronouns depending on whether an agent NP proper is present or not for the verb to agree with. In (15), a cliticized agent pronoun 𐌂𐌆𐌇 -*yāng* ‘he’ (3SG.M.A) appears.

As mentioned above, quantifiers appear as enclitics on almost any type of content word, like on the adverb 𐌂𐌆𐌇 *para* ‘fast’ in the following example:

- (16) *Tigalyeng para-ma.*  
 Tigal=yeng para=ma  
 swim=3SG.F.A fast=enough  
 ‘She swims fast enough.’

### 3.2.3 Reduplication

There are two patterns of reduplication for verbs, one with complete reduplication of the imperative form to create a hortative statement (17a), and one with partial

reduplication as a way to express that an action takes place again, that is, partial reduplication expresses a iterative, as it were (17b). The imperative iterative, then, has a hortative function as well (17c):

- (17) a. *naru-naru*  
           *naru~nara-u*  
           HORT~speak-IMP  
           ‘let us speak’
- b. *na-narayeng*  
           *na~nara=yeng*  
           ITER~speak=3SG.F.A  
           ‘she speaks again’
- c. *na-naru*  
           *na~nara-u*  
           ITER~speak-IMP  
           ‘let us speak again’

With nouns, full reduplication is used to create a diminutive form (18a), though some reduplications are also lexicalized and may use roots from other parts of speech as well to form nouns, for instance, the words in (18b–d). There are also a number of adjectives for which there exists a lexical reduplication with an intensifying meaning; (19) lists a few examples. This, however, is not a productive derivation strategy.

- (18) a. *veney* ‘dog’ → *veney-veney* ‘little dog, doggie’  
       b. *gan* ‘child’ → *gan-gan* ‘grandchild’  
       c. *kusang* ‘double (adj.)’ → *kusang-kusang* ‘model’  
       d. *veba* ‘build’ → *veba-veba* ‘tinkering’
- (19) a. *apan* ‘wide’ → *apan-apan* ‘extensive’  
       b. *kebay* ‘alone’ → *kebay-kebay* ‘all alone’  
       c. *pisu* ‘tired’ → *pisu-pisu* ‘exhausting’

#### 3.2.4 Suprasegmental modification

As written above (section 1.1.2), case agreement on a complex-marked relative pronoun can drop out under certain circumstances and is replaced by compensatory stress on the secondary case marker, which lengthens the syllable’s nucleus vowel:

- (20) ... *tamanley sinā* (\**sina*) *ang ningay tamala vās*  
 ... [taman-ley]<sub>1</sub> si-Ø<sub>1</sub>-na (\*si-na<sub>1</sub>) ang ning=ay.Ø tamala vās  
 ... letter-P.INAN REL-PT.INAN-GEN (\*REL-GEN) AT tell=ISG.TOP yesterday 2SG.P  
 ‘... the letter which (\*whose) I told you about yesterday’

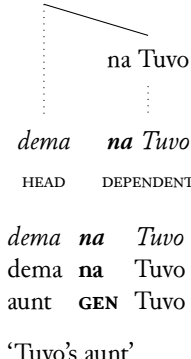
This can be reinterpreted so that vowel length/stress itself is what signifies the agreement of the relativizer with the preceding NP. Which grammatical role the relativizer’s head instantiates as an agreement controller is essentially underspecified, hence I will gloss it as -AGR in the following example instead of as full -P.INAN:

- (21) /si.lei.'ena/ → /si.'na(:)/  
 /si-lei-ena/ → /si-'-na(:)/  
 REL-P.INAN-GEN REL-AGR-GEN

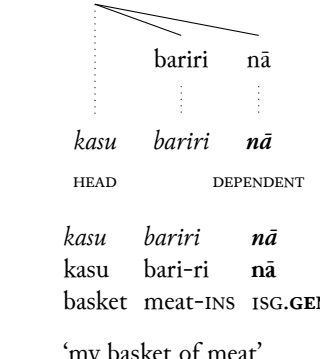
Since ɹ *na* as a light syllable cannot be stressed in word-final position under normal circumstances, it has to lengthen to ɹ̄ *nā*.

### 3.3 Marking strategies

With regards to the dichotomy head–dependent marking, Ayeri is rather thoroughly dependent marking, albeit with the exception of agreement morphology on the verb. Dependent marking is exhibited, for instance, in the expression of possessive relationships, where the dependent is marked for genitive case:

- (22) a. *dema*  


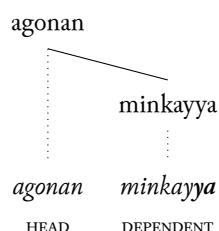
*dema* *na* *Tuvo*  
 dema *na* *Tuvo*  
 aunt GEN *Tuvo*  
 ‘Tuvo’s aunt’

b. *kasu*  


*kasu* *bariri* *nā*  
 kasu *bariri* *nā*  
 basket meat-INS ISG.GEN  
 ‘my basket of meat’

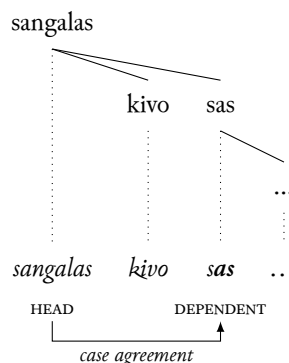
In (22a), 𐌆𐌋𐌊 *Tuvo* is grammatically in possession of her 𐌆𐌋𐌊 *dema* ‘aunt’; the possessee forms the head of the phrase while it is modified by the possessor, which receives the marking. In (22b), 𐌆𐌋𐌊 *kasu* ‘basket’ forms the head and thus also the possessee while ɹ̄ *nā* ‘my’ serves as the dependent possessor; the genitive case is, then again, marked on the dependent. A further example of dependent marking is the locative case, which is marked on the prepositional object while the preposition itself, as the head of the PP, does not receive marking:

- (23) *agonan minkayya*  
 agonan minkay-**ya**  
 outside village-LOC  
 ‘outside of the village’



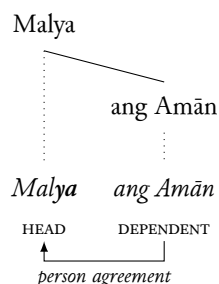
The relativizer, likewise, may agree in case with the NP in the matrix clause to which it links the relative clause. This typically happens mainly in formal language and—in terms of linear succession of words at the surface level of the clause—if the relativizer cannot be immediately adjacent to the NP which the relative clause modifies, for example, when an adjective or a possessive pronoun is following the noun:

- (24) *sangalas kivo sas ...*  
 sangal-as kivo s-**as** ...  
 room-P small REL-P ...  
 ‘the small room which ...’



The only instance of head-marking there is in Ayeri is person-marking on the verb, which manifests when the NP following the verb (agent or patient) is not pronominal and thus there is no pronoun to cliticize to the verb stem, but the verb still receives a suffix that indicates a relation with, usually, the agent NP:

- (25) *Malya ang Amān.*  
 Mal-**ya** ang=Amān  
 sing-3SG.M A=Amān  
 ‘Amān sings.’



Sentences containing more than one NP also have topic marking on the verb, so that the verb agrees with one of the NPs in topicality. This may be the NP it has person agreement with or any other NP. The topicalized NP as a dependent of the

verb is, in turn, zero-marked, so that the marking relationship for topics is bilateral and thus mixed:

- (26) *Sa manya ang Ajān Pila.*  
 Sa man-ya ang=Amān Ø=Pila  
 PT greet-3SG.M A=Ajān TOP=Pila  
 ‘Pila, Ajān greets her.’



In this example, the verb exhibits canonic agreement with the agent, *ang Ajān*, in person, gender, and number. It is additionally marked for a patient topic, *ang Pila*, and thus serves as an agreement target for two different controller NPs. The agreement relation is of a different kind for each of the two NPs, however.





## 4 Grammatical categories

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While the previous chapter was about general mechanisms of marking in Ayeri, this chapter will dive into the various parts of speech in order to define their morphology with a closer look. I will begin with nouns as the main carriers of meaning, then deal with other parts of speech that regularly feature in or in combination with the noun phrase—pronouns, adjectives, and adpositions. Following this, there will be a discussion of verbs and adverbs before moving on to numerals and conjunctions.

### 4.1 Nouns

Nouns in Ayeri have *gender* and *number* as their inherent grammatical properties. Besides common nouns, there are, of course, also proper nouns (that is, names) and nominalizations. Nouns, as the heads of NPs, are also assigned *case* by the verb, which is a third grammatical property they display. For an illustration of the declension paradigms, compare Figures 4.1–4.4.

#### 4.1.1 Gender

Grammatical gender in Ayeri consists of two tiers which are subdivided into four classes based on a mixture of semantic and ontological properties, see Figure 4.5. The animate gender refers, broadly speaking, to entities that are considered alive or are closely associated with living things, such as events, concepts, or activities executed or connected to them. The ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ subcategories are applied to humans, animals whose sex is known (for example on behalf of breeding them or keeping them as pets), and gods—basically anything that shows sexual dimorphism or is assumed to be an exponent of it as well as nouns referring to such entities in a functional way, for instance, ḅadan ‘father’ and māva ‘mother’. The remainder falls into the ‘neuter’ category—plants, for instance, body parts, or

Figure 4.1: Declension paradigm for 𐌲𐌳𐌰 *badan* ‘father’ (animate; consonantal root)

	Singular		Plural	
TOP	<i>badan</i>	‘the father’	<i>badanye</i>	‘the fathers’
A	<i>badanang</i>	‘father’	<i>badanjang</i>	‘fathers’
P	<i>badanas</i>	‘father’ (obj.)	<i>badanjas</i>	‘fathers’ (obj.)
DAT	<i>badanyam</i>	‘to the father’	<i>badanjyam</i>	‘to the fathers’
GEN	<i>badanena</i>	‘of the father’	<i>badanyena</i>	‘of the fathers’
LOC	<i>badanya</i>	‘at the father’	<i>badanjya</i>	‘at the fathers’
CAUS	<i>badanisa</i>	‘due to the father’	<i>badanjisa</i>	‘due to the fathers’
INS	<i>badaneri</i>	‘with the father’	<i>badanyeri</i>	‘with the fathers’

Figure 4.2: Declension paradigm for 𐌲𐌳𐌰 *māva* ‘mother’ (animate; vocalic root)

	Singular		Plural	
TOP	<i>māva</i>	‘the mother’	<i>māvaye</i>	‘the mothers’
A	<i>māvāng</i>	‘mother’	<i>māvajang</i>	‘mothers’
P	<i>māvās</i>	‘mother’ (obj.)	<i>māvajas</i>	‘mothers’ (obj.)
DAT	<i>māvayam</i>	‘to the mother’	<i>māvajyam</i>	‘to the mothers’
GEN	<i>māvana</i>	‘of the mother’	<i>māvayena</i>	‘of the mothers’
LOC	<i>māvaya</i>	‘at the mother’	<i>māvajya</i>	‘at the mothers’
CAUS	<i>māvaisa</i>	‘due to the mother’	<i>māvajisa</i>	‘due to the mothers’
INS	<i>māvāri</i>	‘with the mother’	<i>māvayeri</i>	‘with the mothers’

animals whose sex is unknown. The ‘inanimate’ category typically contains materials and things, such as tools. Furthermore, animals and plants change their category to inanimate as well if they serve as food. There are exceptions to either group, where elements appear in them for no obviously discernable reason. In order to illustrate, here are a few examples for each category:

- (1) a. Animate masculine:  
𐌲𐌳𐌰 *badan* ‘father’, 𐌲𐌴𐌹 *netu* ‘brother’, 𐌲𐌴𐌹𐌰 *aguyan* ‘rooster’, 𐌲𐌴𐌹𐌰 *Ajān*, 𐌲𐌴𐌹𐌰 *Latun*;
- b. Animate feminine:  
𐌲𐌳𐌰 *māva* ‘mother’, 𐌲𐌴𐌹 *kina* ‘sister’, 𐌲𐌴𐌹𐌰 *aguvay* ‘hen’, 𐌲𐌴𐌹 *Maha*, 𐌲𐌴𐌹𐌰 *Trānay*;
- c. Animate neuter:  
𐌲𐌴𐌹𐌰 *adang* ‘palm tree’, 𐌲𐌴𐌹 *bino* ‘color’, 𐌲𐌴𐌹𐌰 *ikam* ‘deer’, 𐌲𐌴𐌹𐌰 *kadān* ‘harvest’, 𐌲𐌴𐌹 *cān* ‘love’, 𐌲𐌴𐌹 *nanga* ‘house’, 𐌲𐌴𐌹 *tampu* ‘luck’, 𐌲𐌴𐌹 *yila* ‘foot’;
- d. Inanimate:  
𐌲𐌴𐌹𐌰 *abal* ‘sand’, 𐌲𐌴𐌹 *bema* ‘egg’, 𐌲𐌴𐌹𐌰 *kaban* ‘spear’, 𐌲𐌴𐌹𐌰 *melung* ‘yogurt’, 𐌲𐌴𐌹𐌰 *nusān*

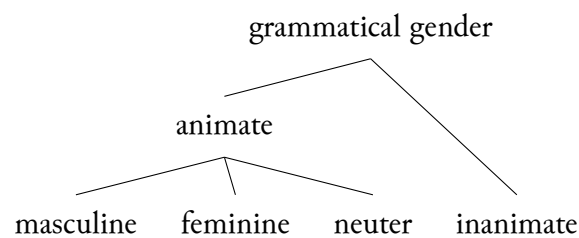
Figure 4.3: Declension paradigm for ၵၵၵ *kirin* ‘street’ (inanimate; consonantal root)

	Singular		Plural	
TOP	<i>kirin</i>	‘the street’	<i>kirinye</i>	‘the streets’
A	<i>kirinreng</i>	‘street’	<i>kirinyereng</i>	‘streets’
P	<i>kirinley</i>	‘street’ (obj.)	<i>kirinyeley</i>	‘streets’ (obj.)
DAT	<i>kirinyam</i>	‘to the street’	<i>kirinjyam</i>	‘to the streets’
GEN	<i>kirinena</i>	‘of the street’	<i>kirinyena</i>	‘of the streets’
LOC	<i>kirinya</i>	‘at the street’	<i>kirinjya</i>	‘at the streets’
CAUS	<i>kirinisa</i>	‘due to the street’	<i>kirinjisa</i>	‘due to the streets’
INS	<i>kirineri</i>	‘with the street’	<i>kirinyeri</i>	‘with the streets’

Figure 4.4: Declension paradigm for ၵၵ *pera* ‘measure’ (inanimate; vocalic root)

	Singular		Plural	
TOP	<i>pera</i>	‘the measure’	<i>peraye</i>	‘the measures’
A	<i>perareng</i>	‘measure’	<i>perayereng</i>	‘measures’
P	<i>peraley</i>	‘measure’ (obj.)	<i>perayeley</i>	‘measures’ (obj.)
DAT	<i>perayam</i>	‘to the measure’	<i>perajyam</i>	‘to the measures’
GEN	<i>perana</i>	‘of the measure’	<i>perayena</i>	‘of the measures’
LOC	<i>peraya</i>	‘at the measure’	<i>perajya</i>	‘at the measures’
CAUS	<i>peraisa</i>	‘due to the measure’	<i>perajisa</i>	‘due to the measures’
INS	<i>perari</i>	‘with the measure’	<i>perayeri</i>	‘with the measures’

Figure 4.5: Grammatical genders in Ayeri



‘damage’, ၵၵၵ *payutān* ‘mathematics’.

There are also a number of doublets like French *le livre* ‘the book’ and *la livre* ‘the pound’, for instance, ၵၵၵ *banan* (an.) ‘kindness, charity’ or ၵၵၵ *bino* (an.) ‘color’ on the one hand, and ၵၵၵ *banan* (inan.) ‘quality’ or ၵၵၵ *bino* (inan.) ‘paint’ on the other. Gender is reified by case marking as well as verb agreement; it is not

(2)	a.	<i>Ang</i>	<i>konja</i>	<i>badan</i>	<i>hemaley.</i>
		Ang	kond-ya	badan-Ø	hema-ley
				[3SG.M.AN]	[3SG.INAN]
		AT.AN	eat-3SG.M.AN	father-TOP	egg-P.INAN
		‘Father eats an egg.’			
	b.	<i>Sa</i>	<i>tombara</i>	<i>kabanreng</i>	<i>burang.</i>
		Sa	tomb-ara	kahan-reng	burang-Ø
				[3SG.INAN]	[3SG.N.AN]
		PT.AN	kill-3SG.INAN	spear-A.INAN	animal-T
		‘The animal, the spear kills it.’			

In (2b), on the other hand, we see an inanimate agent, *ႱႪႰႵ* *kaban* ‘spear’, so the verb receives the marker *ႱႪႰ* *-ara* for third person singular inanimate rather than its animate neuter counterpart *ႱႪ* *-yo*. The (non-topicalized) NP’s case marking shows that the agent of the clause is inanimate: *ႱႪႰႵ* *kaban* carries the marker *ႱႪႰ* *-reng*, which marks it as an inanimate agent. The object of the sentence, *ႱႪႰႵ* *burang* ‘animal’, is also the topic, hence topic agreement on the verb uses the marker *ႱႪ* *sa* according to the NP being animate, rather than its inanimate counterpart *ႱႪ* *le*.

Ayeri only distinguishes singular and plural in nouns, which receive plural marking; verbs, then, agree with agent NPs in number in the canonical case. Ordinarily, nouns in Ayeri are countable, however, there is also a group of uncountable nouns as well as a (small) group of nouns which are always plural. As above, I will list a few words from each group for illustration:

- (3) a. Countable nouns:

- ၼံဗျဉ်း *ajam* ‘toy’ — ၼံဗျဉ်း *ajamye* ‘toys’,  
 ပျီ *devo* ‘head’ — ပျီပျီ *devoye* ‘heads’,  
 ၼံဉ် *inun* ‘fish’ — ၼံဉ်ၼ် *inunye* ‘fish’ (pl.),  
 နဲ *netu* ‘brother’ — နဲပျီ *netuye* ‘brothers’;
- b. Uncountable nouns:  
 ၼံဗျဉ်း *abal* ‘sand’, နီ *bakay* ‘stuff’, ဂဗျဉ်း *gabān* ‘hope’, မိာ် *mingan* ‘ability’;
- c. Plurale tantum nouns:  
 နီ *burang* ‘lifestock, cattle’,<sup>1</sup> ဂဉ်း *ganengan* ‘siblings’, နီ *keynam* ‘people’, တံ *tang* ‘ears’.

Most concrete things that exist as discrete entities are countable, also, for instance, animals and livestock—fish, deer, sheep etc. are thus countable, unlike in English; pants, pliers, scissors, glasses, etc. are by default singular as well. Uncountable, on the other hand, are materials in general or abstract concepts. There are also a number of nouns which are plural by default, most notably entities which often occur in groups, but there is as well the odd word for which there seems to be no reason to be included in this group, for instance, နီ *binō* ‘paint’, and ဂဉ်း *gimbay* ‘sorrows’. A few body parts are also plurale tantum nouns, especially those which occur in pairs (နီ *niva* ‘eye’ is a notable exception).

As demonstrated in (3a), the noun plural marker is ပျီ *-ye*, which in native orthography also occurs in the variant နီ or နီ. As described above (section 1.1.1, p. 7), the plural marker may also be reduced to [dʒ] ⟨-j⟩ before case suffixes that begin with /j/ or with a vowel other than /e/, like တံ *-ang* (A) or ပျီ *-yam* (DAT):

- (4) a. ပျီ *diranang* (uncle-A) + ပျီ *-ye* (PL)  
       → ပျီ *diranjang* (uncle-PL-A),
- b. ပျီ *diranena* (uncle-GEN) + ပျီ *-ye* (PL)  
       → ပျီ *diranyena* (uncle-PL-GEN),
- c. ပျီ *diranyam* (uncle-DAT) + ပျီ *-ye* (PL)  
       → ပျီ *diranjyam* (uncle-PL-DAT).

For plurale tantum, to express a singular entity, it is always possible to use a genitive phrase like — *diranang ...-ena men* ‘one of ...’ (...-GEN one), for instance:

<sup>1</sup> Specifically in this meaning; နီ *burang* can also simply mean ‘animal’, in which case there is a plural form နီ *burangye* ‘animals’.

- (5) a. *Nupayon tangang nā.*  
 Nupa-yon tang-ang nā  
 hurt-3PL.N ears-A ISG.GEN  
 ‘My ears hurt.’
- b. *Na nupareng tang nā men.*  
 Na nupa=reng tang-Ø nā men  
 GENT hurt=3SG.INAN.A ears-TOP ISG.GEN one  
 ‘Of my ears, it hurts one.’

Number in nouns can also be manipulated by quantifiers which attach to declined nouns as suffixes. In this case, when plurality is indicated by the quantifier, the noun is not additionally marked for number; the verb, however, keeps agreeing in number:

- (6) a. *Ajayon ganjang kivo.*  
 Aja-yon gan-ye-ang kivo  
 play-3SG.N child-PL-A small  
 ‘The small children are playing.’
- b. *Ajayon ganang-ikan kivo.*  
 Aja-yon gan-ang=ikan kivo.  
 play-3SG.N child-A=many small  
 ‘Many small children are playing.’

Likewise, when nouns are modified by numerals, plurality is not normally marked again on the noun. In example (7a), we see a plural noun, *ṣṣṣ nanga* ‘house’, and in (7b) the same phrase is repeated again with plurality implied by the use of a numeral, *ṣṣṣ sam* ‘two’; the plural noun itself appears unmarked in its singular form in this case.

- (7) a. *Ang no vehya sitang-yām nangajas veno nay biro.*  
 Ang no veh=ya.Ø sitang=yām nanga-ye-as veno nay hiro  
 AT want build-3SG.M.TOP self=3SG.M.DAT house-PL-P pretty and new  
 ‘He wants to build himself pretty new houses.’
- b. *Ang no vehya sitang-yām nangās sam veno nay biro.*  
 Ang no veh=ya.Ø sitang=yām nanga-as sam veno nay hiro  
 AT want build-3SG.M.TOP self=3SG.M.DAT house-P two pretty and new  
 ‘He wants to build himself two pretty new houses.’

An exception to this is the use of words for the numeral powers, like *ṣṣṣ lan* ‘dozen’, *ṣṣṣ menang* ‘gross’, *ṣṣṣ samang* ‘myriad’, etc. in an unspecified way like ‘dozens of people’. In this case, to convey that the numeral is not to be understood

as a precise value, the modified noun will appear in the plural—even if it is a plurale tantum like ꠘꠘꠘ *keynam* ‘people’:

- (8) *Bengyon keynamjang menang.*  
 Beng-yon keynam-ye-ang menang  
 attend-3SG.N people-PL-A gross  
 ‘Hundreds of people attended.’

As we have seen in various examples above, proper nouns in Ayeri do not receive inflection for case by suffixes as common nouns do, and for the purpose of number they are treated as uncountable in Ayeri—they resist inflection by suffixation, marking their special status.<sup>2</sup> However, they can still be modified by quantifiers and quantifying suffixes; verb agreement as well can be used to indicate plurality:

- (9) a. *Sahayan cabo ekeng ang Yan.*  
 Saha-yan cabo ekeng ang=Yan  
 come-3PL.M late too A=Yan  
 ‘The Yans are coming too late.’  
 b. *Ang apatang sa Yan-ikan.*  
 Ang apa=teng sa=Yan=ikan  
 AT laugh=3PL.F.A P=Yan=all  
 ‘They laughed at (all) the Yans.’

#### 4.1.3 Case

As demonstrated in the declension tables at the beginning of this section (Figures 4.1–4.4), Ayeri’s NPs are marked for case, which is governed by the verb. Since Ayeri uses a split alignment system with some additional complications, it is not very straightforward, in my opinion, to use the classical labels of nominative (S/A) and accusative (O), or of absolutive (S/P) and ergative (O) for the first two core roles. Hence, I will be using the terms ‘agent’ and ‘patient’, which I hope brings about some more clarity, especially when discussing the mentioned complications later on.

##### *Agent*

What I call ‘agent’ here is, to quote Fillmore (2003 [1968]), “the case of the typically animate perceived instigator of the action identified by the verb” (46). Fillmore

<sup>2</sup> Many common names in Ayeri are derived from regular words in the language, so the language needs to have a way to distinguish between regular use and use as a name. For instance, the name ꠘꠘ *Yan* also means ‘boy, son’ as a common noun.

himself qualifies this definition, however, in that the “escape qualification ‘typically’ expresses my awareness that contexts which I will say require agents are sometimes occupied by ‘inanimate’ nouns like robot or ‘human institution’ nouns like nation” (Fillmore 2003 [1968]: 46, footnote 31). Payne (1997) summarizes on prototypical agents with regards to their topicality that a “less technical way of expressing this fact is to say that people identify with and like to talk about things that act, move, control events, and have power” (151).

Agents in Ayeri frequently embody the properties quoted by both Fillmore and Payne in this regard, including Fillmore’s caveat. However, importantly, ‘agent’ in Ayeri is a macrorole that may be applied to, for instance, instruments, experiencers, and less typical actors as well, specifically, in absence of more prototypical candidates for agenthood in a sentence. It thus comes very close to a nominative, except that it does not need to be locus of the sentence’s topic—although agents very typically are topics, as Payne (1997: 151) goes on to note.<sup>3</sup> Thus, the first NP after the verb in all of the following examples is treated as an agent; the agent is marked by the suffix *-ang* for animate referents and the suffix *-reng* for inanimate referents; names and verbal topic agreement are marked by *ang* and *eng*, respectively:

- (10) a. *Ang tinkaya Yan kunangley.*  
 Ang tink-a-ya Ø=Yan kunang-ley  
 AT open-3SG.M TOP=Yan door-P.INAN  
 ‘Yan opens the door.’
- b. *Le tinkaya ayonang kunang.*  
 Le tink-a-ya ayon-ang kunang-Ø  
 PT open-3SG.M man-A door-TOP  
 ‘The door is opened by a/the man’,  
 or: ‘The door, a/the man opens it.’
- c. *Eng tinkāra tinkay kunangley.*  
 Eng tink-a-ara tinkay-Ø kunang-ley  
 AT.INAN open-3SG.INAN key-TOP door-P.INAN  
 ‘The key opens the door.’
- d. *Tinkāra kunangreng.*  
 Tink-a-ara kunang-reng  
 open-3SG.INAN door-A.INAN  
 ‘The door opens.’

<sup>3</sup> This is the main reason I spoke of ‘complications’ above: Ayeri’s notion of ‘subject’ is somewhat problematic due to topicalization, which is why I try to avoid complicating terminology by using ‘nominative’ for agent topics and ‘ergative’ for agent non-topics, and ‘accusative’ for patient non-topics and ‘absolutive’ for patient topics, respectively.



- e. *Sā tinkaya ang Yan kunangley yan.*  
*Sā tinka-ya ang=Yan kunang-ley yan.Ø*  
 CAUT open-3SG.M A=Yan door-P.INAN 3SG.M.TOP  
 ‘They make Yan open a/the door’,  
 or: ‘Because of them, Yan opens the door.’

In predicative constructions, the constituent which a quality is assigned to or about which a judgement is made is also assigned the agent case:

- (11) a. *Tado tinkayreng.*  
*Tado tinkay-reng*  
 old key-A.INAN  
 ‘The key is old.’  
 b. *Ang Yan nimpayās ban.*  
*Ang=Yan nimpaya-as ban*  
*A=Yan runner-P good*  
 ‘Yan is a good runner.’

With regards to constituents’ roles in ditransitive verb frames, donors are represented by agents in Ayeri as well, since they are the origin of whatever is conceptually passed on to the recipient party:

- (12) *Le ilya ang Yan tinkay yam Cānlay.*  
*Le il-ya ang=Yan tinkay-Ø yam=Cānlay*  
 PT give-3SG.M A=Yan key-TOP DAT=Cānlay  
 ‘The key, Yan gives it to Cānlay.’

#### Patient

Patients are less of a definitional problem than agents, since in transitive sentences, they are very typically undergoers, that is, the constituent that is acted on, affected, or produced by the action expressed by the verb. The patient case is thus the one assigned by default to direct objects—but also to predicative nominals. In ditransitive sentences, the theme is represented by the patient. Animate patients are marked by 𑀓𑀲 -as, inanimate ones by 𑀓𑀲 -ley; for names and verbal topic agreement, the markers are 𑀓 sa and 𑀓 le, respectively:

- (13) a. *Ang silvye Briha sa Taryan.*  
*Ang silv-ye Ø=Briha sa=Taryan*  
 AT see-3SG.F TOP=Briha P=Taryan  
 ‘Briha sees Taryan.’

- b. *Sa manye ang Briha Taryan.*  
 Sa man-ye ang=Briha Ø=Taryan  
 PT greet-3SG.F A=Briha TOP=Taryan  
 ‘Taryan is greeted by Briha’,  
 or: ‘Taryan, Briha greets him.’
- (14) a. *Ang rimaye Briha kunangley.*  
 Ang rima-ye Ø=Briha kunang-ley  
 AT close-3SG.F TOP=Briha door-P.INAN  
 ‘Briha closes a/the door.’
- b. *Le rimaye ang Briha kunang.*  
 Le rima-ye ang=Briha kunang-Ø  
 PT.INAN close-3SG.F A=Briha door-TOP  
 ‘The door is closed by Briha’,  
 or: ‘The door, Briha closes it.’
- (15) *Ang ilya Taryan koyaley yam Kandan.*  
 Ang il-ya Ø=Taryan koya-ley yam=Kandan  
 AT give-3SG.M TOP=Taryan book-P.INAN DAT=Kandan  
 ‘Taryan gives Kandan a book.’

As the translations of the examples above show, topicalizing the patient can be used to create an effect similar to English’s passive voice, except that the patient will not become marked by the agent case for logical reasons—this is a notable difference from the nominative. Even if the agent NP is omitted, the patient NP will not be changed to the agent case, since that would reverse the direction of action:

- (16) *Manya sa Taryan. ≠ Manya ang Taryan.*  
 Man-ya sa=Taryan Man-ya ang=Taryan  
 greet-3SG.M P=Taryan greet-3SG.M A=Taryan  
 ‘Taryan is greeted.’ ≠ ‘Taryan greets.’

This example shows that the case of the NP will not change, however, the verb will: it now agrees with the next argument in line, the patient NP. It will not do so, however, if the order of arguments is just scrambled, as exemplified by (17). This is to say that the verb does not simply agree with whichever NP follows it, even if it can be assumed that verb agreement in Ayeri developed along similar lines in-world, which will become especially apparent in the discussion of pronouns.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Mismatches in agreement in connection to scrambling such as exemplified by (17b) are to be expected, however, since the brain can only handle so much information between the controller and the target of an agreement relationship. Corbett (2006), notes that with regards

- (17) a. *Sa manye Taryan ang Briha.*  
 Sa man-ye Ø=Taryan ang=Briha  
 PT greet-3SG.F TOP=Taryan A=Briha  
↑  
person agreement  
 ‘Taryan is greeted by Briha’,  
 or: ‘Taryan, Briha greets him.’
- b. \**Sa manya Taryan ang Briha.*  
 Sa man-ya Ø=Taryan ang=Briha  
 PT greet-3SG.M TOP=Taryan A=Briha  
↑  
\*person agreement

Besides being the default case for direct objects, the patient case is also assigned to predicative nominals, by analogy with transitive sentences and in spite of the likening nature of the construction:

- (18) *Ang Yan nimpayās ban.*  
 Ang=Yan nimpaya-as ban  
 A=Yan runner-P good  
 ‘Yan is a good runner.’

#### Dative

The most typical use of the dative is for the recipient NP in a ditransitive clause; as such, it may be a recipient proper or the entity to whose benefit the action is carried out. A number of transitive verbs also use the dative for their object, for example, when it is the target of address. The dative can furthermore be used to mark movement toward a place. The case suffix for datives is ꠘꠗ -yam for both animate and inanimate entities. Names and verbal topic agreement are marked equally by ꠘꠗ yam. Verbs do not exhibit person agreement with dative NPs, since experiencers are treated as agents.

- (19) a. *Ang ilya Taryan koyaley ayonyam.*  
 Ang il-ya Ø=Taryan koy-a-ley ayon-yam  
 AT give-3SG.M TOP=Taryan book-P.INAN man-DAT  
 ‘Taryan gives a book to the man.’

to agreement in NP conjuncts, “distant agreement is rare, and that agreement with the nearest noun phrase or agreement with all (resolution) is much more common” (62). If there were an extensive corpus of texts written by Ayeri speakers, it might be interesting to gather statistics on the number of words between target and controller in relation to the prevalence of agreement mismatches.

- b. *Ang ilya Taryan koyaley yam Kandan.*  
 Ang il-ya Ø=Taryan koyale-ley yam=Kandan  
 AT give-3SG.M TOP Taryan book-P.INAN

‘Taryan gives Kandan a book.’

- c. *Yam ilya ang Taryan koyaley ayon.*  
 Yam il-ya ang=Taryan koyale-ley ayon-Ø  
 DATT give-3SG.M A=Taryan book-P.INAN man-TOP

‘The man is given a book by Taryan’,  
 or: ‘The man, Taryan gives him a book.’

The three examples in (19) show the regular use of the dative as the case the recipient of the theme appears in. What distinguishes Ayeri from a pure split-S language is that all constituents can serve as topics, not just agents and patients with regards to their function as syntactic subjects. Thus, it is also possible for dative NPs to appear as topics—person agreement is unaffected by this, though. The following example shows the addressee of a speech act in the dative case; the message is treated as the theme which is passed on:

- (20) *Ang ningye māva ninganas ganyam yena.*  
 Ang ning-ye māva-Ø ningan-as gan-yam yena  
 AT tell-3SG.F mother-TOP story-P child-DAT 3SG.F.GEN

‘The mother tells her child a story.’

As mentioned above, the dative can also take on an allative meaning insofar as it marks the target of a motion, as displayed in (21a). As an extension of this means, the adpositional object may as well appear in the dative, since Ayeri cannot distinguish, for instance, ‘up’ from ‘to the top of’ with just the preposition, in this case *ṛṅṛ* *ling* ‘on top of’. With the adpositional object in the locative case (see below), the phrase in (21b) would imply that the man were literally going to the top of the temple, that is, possibly ending up on its roof.

- (21) a. *Ang nimpye lay māvayam yena.*  
 Ang nimp-ye lay-Ø māva-yam yena  
 AT run-3SG.F girl-TOP mother-DAT 3SG.F.GEN
- b. *Ang saraya ayon manga ling natrangyam.*  
 Ang sara-ya ayon-Ø manga ling natrang-yam  
 AT go-3SG.M man-TOP DYN top temple-DAT

‘The girl runs to her mother.’

‘The man goes up to the temple.’

*Genitive*

The genitive is used to mark possessors; attributive genitives follow the possessee. It can also be used for ablative meanings, that is, to mark the place from which a motion originates, in analogy to the dative's allative use. The genitive is marked on common nouns with the suffix :᳚ -*na*. If a noun stem ends in a consonant, the marker becomes :᳚᳚ -*ena*, compare Figures 4.1–4.4 above. Names and verbal topic agreement are marked by ᳚ *na*. There is no animacy distinction in the genitive case.

- (22) a. *Pakur ledanang netuna nā.*  
 Pakur ledan-ang netu-na nā  
 sick friend-A brother-GEN ISG.GEN  
 'My brother's friend is sick.'
- b. *Kopo dilengyereng ajānena.*  
 Kopo dileng-ye-reng ajān-ena  
 difficult rule-PL-A.INAN game-GEN  
 'The rules of the game are difficult.'
- c. *Ang nakasyo tamo ibangya na Niyas.*  
 Ang nakas-yo tamo-Ø ibang-ya na=Niyas  
 AT grow-3SG.N wheat-TOP field-LOC GEN=Niyas  
 'There is wheat growing on Niyas's field.'
- d. *Na nakasyo tamoang ibangya Niyas.*  
 Na nakas-yo tamo-ang ibang-ya Ø=Niyas  
 GENT grow-3SG.N wheat-A field-LOC TOP=Niyas  
 'Regarding Niyas, there is wheat growing on his field.'

Futhermore, Ayeri does not make a distinction between alienable and inalienable possession, so that typically inalienable things such as body parts, relatives and family members, or personal items and tools are all treated as described above. Consider the following example for illustration:

- (23) *Ang puntaye māva nā mitrangas yena sembari yena.*  
 Ang punta-ye māva-Ø nā mitrang-as yena semba-ri yena  
 AT brush-3SG.F mother-TOP ISG.GEN hair-P 3SG.F.GEN comb-INS 3SG.F.GEN  
 'My mother is brushing her hair with her comb.'

The above examples show the regular use of the genitive as a marker of possession. The following examples, on the other hand, show the genitive in its ablative function, first without qualification by a preposition, then with the preposition ᳚᳚ *avan* 'at the bottom of', which together with the genitive assumes the meaning 'down from':

- (24) a. *Ang sabaya Vetayan rimanena.*  
 Ang saha-ya Ø=Vetayan riman-ena  
 AT come-3SG.M TOP=Vetayan city-GEN  
 ‘Vetayan comes from the city.’
- b. *Sabu manga avan mehirena, Niva!*  
 Saha-u manga avan mehir-ena, Niva  
 come-IMP DYN at.bottom tree-GEN, Niva  
 ‘Come down from the tree, Niva!’

### Locative

The locative marks basic locations, often the default that is associated with a verb. It is also the case in which adpositional objects normally appear, besides the special cases using the dative and the genitive mentioned above. Common nouns are marked by *-ya*;<sup>5</sup> names and verbal topic agreement use the marker *u ya*. There is no difference made between animate and inanimate referents in the locative.

- (25) a. *Ang nedraya paray binya.*  
 Ang nedra-ya paray-Ø hin-ya  
 AT sit-3SG.M cat-TOP box-LOC  
 ‘The cat sits in the box.’
- b. *Ang naraya Ajān ya Kaman.*  
 Ang nara-ya Ø=Ajān ya=Kaman  
 AT speak-3SG.M TOP=Ajān LOC=Kaman  
 ‘Ajān speaks to Kaman.’
- c. *Ya mica ang Kaman Visamhinang.*  
 Ya mit-ya ang=Kaman Ø=Visamhinang  
 LOCT live-3SG.M A=Kaman TOP=Visamhinang  
 ‘Kaman lives in Visamhinang’,  
 or: ‘Visamhinang is where Kaman lives.’

The example sentences in (25) show locative NPs that are not further specified by adpositions so that the correct interpretation may be dependent on context and the experience of the addressee. Example (25a) is an instance of this circumstance, insofar as experience tells that cats like to sit inside boxes, so further specifying the position with the preposition *kong* ‘inside’ would be emphasizing that the cat is not sitting just anywhere, but really *inside* the box as opposed to on top of it, for instance. The following example has the cat sitting on top of the box:

<sup>5</sup> Older texts still exhibit an allomorph *-ea*, used especially in combination with the plural suffix *-u*, giving *-yea*. The modern language uses *-ya*.

- (26) *Ang nedraya paray ling binya.*  
 Ang nedra-ya paray-Ø ling hin-ya  
 AT sit-3SG.M cat-TOP on.top box-LOC  
 ‘The cat sits on the box.’

Ayeri also has a number of postpositions, which do not change marking on the adpositional object, however:

- (27) *Ang mican edaya tenyanya tan pesan.*  
 Ang mit-yan edaya tenyan-ya tan pesan  
 AT live-3PL.M here death-LOC 3PL.M.GEN until  
 ‘They lived here until their death.’

### Causative

The causative marks the cause or causer of an action, the instigator or the reason on behalf of which an agent is acting. It is thus similar to the agent case, though it does not replace it in Ayeri; verbs do not exhibit person agreement with causers even though their action logically supersedes or precedes that of the agent in the embedded event. Dixon (2000) writes that a “causer refers to someone or something (which can be an event or state) that initiates or controls the activity. This is the defining property of the syntactic–semantic function A (transitive subject)” (30). According to Comrie (1989: 176), the causee—the agent of the event controlled by the causer—normally takes the highest place in the hierarchy of syntactic constituents that is not already filled, in this case, by the causer. This observation, however, is complicated by Ayeri’s more or less semantics-based case marking as well as topicalization. In the following, I will give examples of nominal marking for cause as before; a discussion of the morphosyntax of Ayeri’s morphological causative constructions will be deferred to the section on valency-increasing operations.

Causers or causes are marked by *isa* for common nouns; names and verbal topic agreement use the marker *sā*. As stated above, verbs do not agree with causers even though they have agent-like semantics. There is no animacy distinction in the marking of causers.

- (28) a. *Ang rua sarāyn seyaranisa.*  
 Ang rua sara=ayn.Ø seyaran-isa  
 AT must leave=IPL.TOP rain-CAUS  
 ‘We had to leave due to the rain.’  
 b. *Ang yomāy edaya sā Apican.*  
 Ang yoma=ay.Ø edaya sā=Apican  
 AT be=ISG.TOP here CAUS=Apican  
 ‘I am here because of Apican.’

- c. *Sā nimpvāng bakasley yan.*  
*Sā nimp=vāng hakas-ley yan.Ø*  
 CAUT run=2SG.A mile-P.INAN 3PL.M.TOP  
 ‘You run a mile because of them’,  
 or: ‘Due to them, you run a mile’,  
 or: ‘They make you run a mile.’

Regarding the typological oddities mentioned above, example (28c) shows what happens in Ayeri with regards to the marking of causers. Essentially, the causer topic was grammaticalized to express a causation relationship.

#### Instrumental

The instrumental marks the means by which an action is carried out by an agent. This can be a tool as well as an animate being by whose help the action is brought about. The instrumental thus, in effect, marks secondary agents; verbs, however, never show person agreement with instrumental NPs. Common nouns are marked by *-ri* when ending in a vowel and with *-eri* when ending in a consonant; names and verbal topic agreement are marked by *ri*. With nouns ending in *-e*, as well as the plural marker *-ye*, there is variation regarding whether *-ri* or *-eri* is used, so that in the case of the plural marker both *-yeri* and *-yēri* occur. In passive-like constructions, it is not grammatical to reintroduce the agent as an instrumental; the agent simply remains in the clause in this case, though as a non-topic constituent.

- (29) a. *Ang visye Pila seygoley tibangeri yena.*  
*Ang vis-ye Ø=Pila seygo-ley tihang-eri yena.*  
 AT cut-3SG.F TOP=Pila apple-P.INAN knife-INS 3SG.F.GEN  
 ‘Pila cuts an apple with her knife.’
- b. *Ang liboyya-ma badan nibanyeri (nibanyēri).*  
*Ang liha-oy-ya=ma badan-Ø nihan-ye-ri (nihan-ye-eri)*  
 AT earn-NEG-3SG.M=enough father-TOP nihan-PL-INS (nihan-PL-INS)  
 ‘Father did not earn enough with his fruits.’
- c. *Ang lingya Mindan mehiras ri Kadijān.*  
*Ang ling-ya Ø=Mindan mehir-as ri=Kadijān.*  
 AT climb.up-3SG.M TOP=Mindan tree-P INS=Kadijān  
 ‘Mindan climbs a tree with Kadijān’s help.’
- d. *Ri tavya gino ang Kan nimpur.*  
*Ri tav-ya gino ang=Kan nimpur-Ø*  
 INST become-3SG.M drunk A=Kan wine-TOP  
 ‘Kan becomes drunk on the wine’,  
 or: ‘The wine, Kan becomes drunk on it.’



The instrumental may also be used for comitative meanings where the instrumental NP describes an attribute of its antecedent, for example:

- (30) *Ang pegayo sinyā kasuley bariri nā?*  
 Ang pega-yo sinyā-Ø kasu-ley bari-ri nā  
 AT steal-3SG.N who-TOP basket-P.INAN meat-INS 1SG.GEN  
 ‘Who stole my basket of meat?’

In this case, *bari* is marked as an instrumental since it is an attribute of sorts to *kasu*: the instrumental NP describes what its antecedent contains or entails more specifically: it is a basket *with* meat in it. Note, however, that this comitative use of the instrumental is different from mere accompaniment. Thus, it is not possible to say

- (31) \**Ang sabaya Ajān ri Pila.*  
 Ang saha-ya Ø=Ajān ri=Pila  
 AT come-3SG.M TOP=Ajān INS=Pila

to express ‘Ajān comes (together) with Pila’. The sentence in (31) would instead imply that Pila helps Ajān to come, for example, because he has a sprained ankle and thus needs support to go places. To express accompaniment, instead, the preposition *kayvo* ‘with, along, beside’ has to be used; the prepositional object appears in the locative case:

- (32) *Ang sabaya Ajān kayvo ya Pila.*  
 Ang saha-ya Ø=Ajān kayvo ya=Pila  
 AT come-3SG.M TOP=Ajān with LOC=Pila  
 ‘Ajān comes (together) with Pila.’

Theoretically, it should be possible as well to use the instrumental together with prepositions for some kind of prolocative meaning. The adposition would indicate the place *by way of* a motion is happening:

- (33) *Ang pukay manga luga labaneri.*  
 Ang puk=ay.Ø manga luga lahan-eri  
 AT jump=1SG.TOP DYN top fence-INS  
 ‘I jump over the fence.’

This use of the instrumental is unattested in previous translations into Ayeri, however, but could be considered a stylistic alternative—in the case of the example above, to a construction with the word for ‘over’, *eyrarya*:

- (34) *Ang pukay manga eyrarya labanya.*  
 Ang puk=ay.Ø manga eyrarya lahan-ya  
 AT jump=ISG.TOP DYN over fence-LOC  
 ‘I jump over the fence.’

A more literal translation of ၼၢၢၢၢၢၢၢၢၢ *manga luga labaneri* is ‘by way of the top of the fence’, though without the verbosity of the English translation, as both ways to express the circumstance are about equally long in Ayeri.

#### Case-unmarked nouns

Case endings are applied to nouns in Ayeri only if the word is actually in a syntactic context where case can be applied. Thus, the unmarked form is the citation form, not the one declined for agent. This is the case when addressing people—one might speak of an unmarked vocative:

- (35) a. *Raypu, petāya!*  
 Raypa-u, petāya  
 stop-IMP, idiot  
 ‘Stop it, you idiot!’  
 b. *Sabu edaya, Diras!*  
 Saha-u edaya, Diras  
 come-IMP here, Diras  
 ‘Come here, Diras!’

Imperative forms have underlying second-person agents, so both the ‘idiot’ in (35a) and Diras in (35b) would be the implied agents of their sentences, yet neither the noun nor the name are marked by the agent markers ၼၢၢ -*ang* and ၼၢၢ *ang*, respectively. Another case where nouns are not necessarily marked for case is attested in translations for the prefix ၼၢၢ *ku-* ‘like, as though’ when the phrase acts as an adverb or an object complement:

- (36) a. ... *nay ang mya rankyon sitanyās ku-netu.*  
 ... *nay ang mya rank=yon.Ø sitanya-as ku=netu*  
 ... and AT be.supposed.to treat=3PL.N.TOP each.other-P like=brother  
 ‘... and they shall treat each other like brothers.’<sup>6</sup> (Becker 2011)  
 b. ... *ang nunaya ku-vipin ...*  
 ... *ang nuna=ya.Ø ku=vipin ...*  
 ... AT fly=3SG.M.TOP like=bird ...  
 ‘... he (would) fly like a bird ...’ (Becker 2012: 14)

Strikingly, in example (36a),  $\text{netu}$  ‘brother’ in  $\text{ku-netu}$  ‘like brothers’ is not even inflected for plural; its placement after the object is likely an effect of translation: adverbs have a strong tendency to appear right after the verb, and a position immediately to the right of the verb is attested for adjectival object predicates as well. In (36b), on the other hand,  $\text{ku-vipin}$  ‘like a bird’ is feasibly interpretable as an adverb, since it follows the verb and acts as a modifier to it, not as a complement.

Nouns may also be unmarked if they act as modifiers in a compound and the head is marked for the NP’s case and number, for instance:

- (37) *ralanyeri mapang*  
 ralan-ye-ri mapang  
 nail-PL-INS finger  
 ‘with the fingernails’

And lastly and probably most importantly, nouns appear superficially unmarked if topicalized, since the topic marker is  $-\emptyset$ :

- (38) *Saru-nama, ang nupoyya veney aruno vās.*  
 Sar-u=nama, ang nupa-oy-ya veney- $\emptyset$  aruno vās  
 go-IMP=just, AT hurt-NEG-3SG.M dog-TOP brown 2SG.P  
 ‘Just go, the brown dog won’t hurt you.’

#### 4.1.4 Prefixes on nouns

All of the nominal morphology we have so far dealt with in this section was suffixing. As mentioned in the previous section already (p. 67), however, there are also a number of prefixes that can be applied to nouns. I have just given two examples of the prefix  $\text{ku-}$  ‘like, as though’ above, but  $\text{ku-}$  applies not only to nouns themselves. In fact, it rather attaches to whole NPs, which makes it a clitic according to Klavans (1985: 117), and a special clitic in Zwicky’s terminology, since no corresponding full form exists in its place, comparable to the English possessive clitic *’s*, for instance (Zwicky 1977: 3, 13; 1985: 295; Zwicky and Pullum 1983: 510). To cite from the Ayeri translation of Kafka’s short story “Eine kaiserliche Botschaft” again:

<sup>6</sup> The original English text this was translated from has “and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood” (United Nations 1948: Article 1).

- (39) ... *saylingyāng kovaro naynay, ku-ranyāng palung.*  
 ... sayling=yāng kovaro naynay, ku=ranya-ang palung  
 ... progress=3SG.M.A easy also, like=nobody-A else

‘... he also got on easily, like nobody else.’

(Becker 2012: 12)

In this example, we can see  $\text{ku-}$  attaching to a properly inflected NP adjunct. The NP is case-marked for agent since it can be understood to refer to the verb  $\text{sayling-}$  ‘progress’ in the main clause, insofar  $\text{ranyāng palung}$  ‘nobody else’ can replace  $\text{-yāng}$  ‘he’ in the main clause.

Besides  $\text{ku-}$ , there are also the demonstrative prefixes  $\text{da-}$  ‘such’,  $\text{eda-}$  ‘this’, and  $\text{ada-}$  ‘that’, which have already been mentioned in the previous section as well. The demonstrative prefixes undergo coalescence with nouns beginning with  $a-$ , that is, they form phonological words with their hosts for all means and purposes. The demonstrative prefixes are special clitics as well, since no contemporary free form exists.

- (40) a. *da-nanga kāryo*  
 da=nanga kāryo  
 such=house big  
 ‘such a big house’  
 b. *edāyon nake*  
 eda=ayon nake  
 this=man tall  
 ‘this tall man’  
 c. *ada-envan alingo*  
 ada=envan alingo  
 that=woman clever  
 ‘that clever woman’

Moreover, there is a prefix  $\text{mə-}$  in complementary distribution with the demonstrative prefixes, which adds a meaning along the lines of ‘just any’, ‘whatsoever’, ‘some’ to the noun. Note that this prefix is distinct from the morpheme indicating an inspecific quantity,  $\text{-aril}$  ‘some’.

- (41) a. *Ang lampyo mə-veney kayvo kirinya.*  
 Ang lamp-yo mə=veney-Ø kayvo kirin-ya  
 AT walk-3SG.N some=dog-TOP along street-LOC  
 ‘Some dog is walking along the street.’  
 b. *Ang noyan mēntānley pegamayayam.*  
 Ang no=yan mə=entān-ley pegamaya-yam  
 AT want=3SG.M.TOP some=punishment-P.INAN thief-DAT  
 ‘They demanded some kind of punishment for the thief.’

Table 4.1: Compounds in the Ayeri dictionary (Becker 2016a) and their classification (n = 130)

Type	Harmonic		Disharmonic		Total	
Endocentric (N + N)	67	51.54%	2	1.54%	69	53.08%
Endocentric (N + Adj)	18	13.85%	4	3.08%	22	16.92%
Synthetic (V + N)	16	12.31%	4	3.08%	20	15.38%
Coordinative (N + N)	9	6.92%	—	—	9	6.92%
Exocentric (N + N)	1	0.77%	3	2.31%	4	3.08%
Unclear	6	4.62%	—	—	6	4.62%
Total	117	90.00%	13	10.00%	130	100%

#### 4.1.5 Compounding

With regards to the classification of compounds, Bauer (2001) gives some helpful typological guidelines. Besides the compound types recognized by Sanskrit grammarians—endocentric (*tatpuruṣa*), coordinative (*dvandva*), adjectival-endocentric (*karmadhāraya*), and exocentric (*bahuvrīhi*)—he also adds synthetic compounds, which Sanskrit did not have (697). Overall, he finds that determinative, or endocentric, compounds are the most common ones in the languages of the world (697), especially if the head refers to a location or source of sorts (702).

Gaeta (2008), then, adds to Bauer’s research, based on a larger sample of grammars surveyed, that compounds for the largest part correlate with the constituent order of the language, both regarding the order of verb and object and that of noun and genitive (129–133). Mismatches in headedness occur, but appear to constitute the minority of cases and may often be explained through historical changes in syntax; he discerns for one that “morphology is not autonomous from syntax” (135), and that secondly, “[s]yntax seems to be the motor of change, which may be then reflected in compounds” (135), and that thirdly, lexical conservatism causes atavisms to linger on, reflecting the syntax of earlier stages of the language (138–139).

For the purpose of gaining at least a little insight into which types of compounds Ayeri allows—besides endocentric compounds—I conducted a small (non-exhaustive) survey based on 130 compounds from the Ayeri dictionary (Becker 2016a: Dictionary); Table 4.1 shows the various compound classes and the number of words for each. ‘Harmonic’ and ‘disharmonic’, respectively, refer to the order of elements; the order is ‘harmonic’ if it is following the normal constituent order of the language and ‘disharmonic’ if it is at odds with it (Gaeta 2008).

Unsurprisingly, the largest number of compound nouns in the sample were endocentric compounds of the regular kind, which means that, just like genitive attributes follow nouns, noun compounds are headed left. Especially compounds with adjectives are interesting insofar as this is also the normal order for free ad-

jectives, so to illustrate, some tests will be necessary to show that these adjectives form a unit with the head noun and are unable to undergo comparison, for instance. Synthetic compounds exist in Ayeri and produce nouns. These are compounds in which “the modifying element in the compound is (usually) interpreted as an argument of the verb from which the head is derived” (Bauer 2001: 701). There are also a number of coordinative compounds; this group, however, is lexicalized and not productive. Exocentric compounds constitute the minority of the sample. In the following I will give examples for each type.

It needs to be noted that unlike Germanic languages, Ayeri does not allow compounds of arbitrary length to be strung together, like in the following ridiculous but no less real example from (former) German legislation (see, for instance, *Süddeutsche Zeitung* 2013):

- (42) *Rindfleischetikettierungsüberwachungsaufgabenübertragungsgesetz* [German]  
 Rind-fleisch-etikettierung-s-überwachung-s-aufgabe-n-übertragung-s-gesetz  
 cow-meat-labeling-LNK-surveillance-LNK-duty-LNK-delegation-LNK-law  
 ‘Law on the delegation of duties in the surveillance of beef labeling’

In stark contrast, Ayeri allows only two elements in compounds. Furthermore, this section on compounds is located within the section on nouns because Ayeri almost only possesses compounds involving nouns, and the majority of these also results in a noun.

#### *Endocentric compounds*

To start with the largest group, endocentric/*tatpuruṣa* compounds, the bulk of these compounds combines two nouns, one of which is the head which is modified by a dependent noun. As Ayeri exhibits a rather strict head-first word order, it comes as no surprise, according to Gaeta (2008), that most of these compounds follow this order strictly: the second noun modifies the first, which is opposite of how English, for instance, typically operates:

- (43) a. *betaynimpur* ‘grape’ ← *betay* ‘berry’ + *nimpur* ‘wine’  
 b. *karirayan* ‘vertigo’ ← *kar* ‘fear’ + *irayan* ‘height’<sup>7</sup>  
 c. *pikunanding* ‘mustache’ ← *piku* ‘beard’ + *nanding* ‘lips’  
 d. *tapayperin* ‘sunblind’ ← *tapay* ‘screen’ + *perin* ‘sun’

The example words in (43) show that the relationships between the modifier and the head are various: a grape is a berry *used* to make wine from (compare

<sup>7</sup> *irayan*, however, is a transparent nominalization of *iray* ‘high’.

Bauer 2001: 702); vertigo is the fear *of* height; a mustache is a beard *located* over the lips (702); and a sunblind is a screen *against* the sun. Bauer (2001) mentions that “there may be special morphophonemic processes which apply between the elements of compounds”, such as “phonological merger[s] between the elements of the compound” (695). This also occasionally happens in Ayeri, as the next few example words show:

- (44) a. ၼာၼာၼ် *avararan* ‘wetland’  
 ← ၼာၼ် *avan* ‘ground’ + ၼာၼ် *raro* ‘wet’ + ၼ် *-an* (NMLZ)
- b. မိမိမိမိ *mehimitrang* ‘fiber tree’  
 ← မိမိ *mehir* ‘tree’ + မိမိ *mitrang* ‘hair, fiber’
- c. နိဂ်းနိဂ်း *ningampinam* ‘bedtime story’  
 ← နိဂ်း *ningan* ‘story’ + နိဂ်း *pinam* ‘bed’
- d. ပါဠိမိမိ *padilamican* ‘gravitational force’  
 ← ပါဠိ *padilan* ‘attraction’ + မိမိ *mican* ‘force, power’

There is a modicum of alteration happening in all of the heads of the example words in (44), mostly nasals assimilating to the stop or nasal which the modifier begins with (/n/ + /p/ → /mp/, /n/ + /m/ → /m/), though ၼာၼာၼ် *avararan* and မိမိမိမိ *mehimitrang* even delete whole coda segments. Bauer (2001: 703) notes that very commonly, genitive and plural markers may form linking elements, though he also gives examples of languages which allow other case markers on the modifying element in languages with head-right order; individual languages may allow even more case inflection. However, this appears not to happen in Ayeri. The only element that comes up time and again in between the two halves of compounds is the nominalizer ၼ် *-an*, which signifies that the head is being formed by a nominalized root, such as in ပါဠိမိမိ *padilamican*, where ပါဠိ *padilan* ‘attraction’ is a nominalization of ပါဠိ *padil-* ‘attract’, or in နိဂ်းနိဂ်း *ningampinam*, where နိဂ်း *ningan* ‘story’ is derived from the verb နိဂ်း *ning-* ‘tell’. However, since Ayeri is head-first and possessive phrases are dependent marking, genitive or other case marking would be expected on the second element, not the first. Case marking on a compound, however, does not inflect just the modifier, but the whole NP:

- (45) *Ang ningya sipikanena koyabahisena.*  
*Ang ning-ya sipik-an-ena koyabahis-ena*  
 AT talk-3SG.M.TOP keep-NMLZ-GEN book.day-GEN  
 ‘He talks about keeping a journal.’

နိဂ်းနိဂ်း *koyabahisena* in this example is not to be interpreted as ‘book of day(s)’ but as ‘of a day-book’. Inflection between the parts of a compound can happen nonetheless, though. In compounds which are formed ad hoc or which are otherwise transparent in their composition (‘loose’ compounds), inflection often is de-

ferred to the noun head noun instead of the edge of the compound as a whole; the modifier is treated as an adjunct in this case, and stays uninflected:

- (46) *Sa trayeng tipin ralanyeri mapang yena.*  
 Sa tra=yeng tipin-Ø ralan-ye-ri mapang yena  
 PT scratch=3SG.F.A itch-TOP nail-PL-INS finger 3SG.F.GEN

‘The itch, she scratches it with her fingernails.’

Besides noun modifiers, there are also compounds where the modifier is an adjective. In classical Sanskrit terminology, this type is called *karmadhāraya* (Bauer 2001: 698–699).<sup>8</sup> Examples in Ayeri include:

- (47) a. *ခဲကပ်ဉ်ကုာ် kardangiray* ‘university’ ← *ခဲကပ်ကုာ် kardang* ‘school’ + *ဉ်ကုာ် iray* ‘high’  
 b. *မာရဉ်ဟရိ marashari* ‘witticism’ ← *မာရဉ် maras* ‘phrase’ + *ဟရိ hari* ‘pithy’  
 c. *ဆိလ်ဉ်ကုာ် silvanikan* ‘overview’ ← *ဆိလ်ဉ် silvan* ‘view’ + *ဉ်ကုာ် ikan* ‘whole’  
 d. *ဝိပိမာကရိယာ vipimakārya* ‘crow’ ← *ဝိပိမာ vipin* ‘bird’ + *မာကရိယာ makārya* ‘black’

In all of these cases, the adjective forms a unified lexeme with the head noun, hence it is not comparable, for example:

- (48) a. *\*kardangiray-eng kardangiray-vā*  
*kardang-iray=eng kardang-iray=vā*  
*school-high=COMP school-high=SUPL*  
 ‘\*higher-school’ ‘\*highest-school’  
 b. *\*marashari-eng \*marashari-vā*  
*maras-hari=eng maras-hari=vā*  
*phrase-pithy=COMP phrase-pithy=SUPL*  
 ‘\*pithier-phrase’ ‘\*pithiest-phrase’

In fact, it is possible to form *ခဲကပ်ဉ်ကုာ် kardangiray vā* and *မာရဉ်ဟရိ marasari vā*, but they mean ‘most universities’ and ‘most witticisms’, respectively; *ဉ်ကုာ် -eng* ‘rather’ as a quantifier does not combine with nouns. Since the meaning composed from noun–adjective compounds is often idiomatic, they also cannot be divided as shown above in (46), since a *ခဲကပ်ဉ်ကုာ် kardangiray* ‘university’ is not a *ခဲကပ်ကုာ် kardang* ‘school’ which is *ဉ်ကုာ် iray* ‘high’ in the literal sense, but a school of the highest tier. *ခဲကပ်ဉ်ကုာ်ကုာ် kardangena iray* (school-GEN high), then, can only be interpreted in the literal sense, ‘of the high school’, but not as ‘of the university’, which thus can only be *ခဲကပ်ဉ်ကုာ်ကုာ် kardangirayena*.

<sup>8</sup> Bauer also mentions that appositional compounds like *maid-servant*, *woman doctor* and *fighter-bomber* are counted in this category (Bauer 2001: 699). Ayeri, however, does not possess such formations in particular.



In the sample, there were also a few compounds I categorized as noun–noun combinations, which look as though they violate head-first order. All of these involve ၵိၵ်ႈ *sitang* ‘self’ as a modifier:

- (49) a. ၵိၵ်ႈၵိၵ်ႈ *sitanglentan* ‘vowel’  
 ← ၵိၵ်ႈ *sitang* ‘self’ + ၵိၵ်ႈ *lentan* ‘sound’
- b. ၵိၵ်ႈၵိၵ်ႈ *sitangparonān* ‘self-confidence’  
 ← ၵိၵ်ႈ *sitang* ‘self’ + ၵိၵ်ႈ *paronān* ‘faith’
- c. ၵိၵ်ႈၵိၵ်ႈ *sitangtenyan* ‘suicide’  
 ← ၵိၵ်ႈ *sitang* ‘self’ + ၵိၵ်ႈ *tenyan* ‘death’

ၵိၵ်ႈ *sitang* does not exist as a noun by itself in Ayeri, the word for ‘self’ is its nominalization ၵိၵ်ႈ *sitangan*. Nonetheless, it looks like it could have plausibly been a noun once. However, this noun may have been grammaticalized into a reflexive morpheme of a more general kind, which in turn birthed the form ၵိၵ်ႈ *sitangan* as a renovation.<sup>9</sup> The reflexive ၵိၵ်ႈ *sitang* is used—as we have seen in the previous chapter—as a prefix, so there are two ways to interpret these formations: first, ၵိၵ်ႈ *sitang* may be the reflexive prefix here and thus the compound follows the normal syntactic order; or second, the order of elements is reversed and thus may reflect an earlier stage of Ayeri where ၵိၵ်ႈ *sitang* was still a noun and modifiers could still appear in front of their heads, at least optionally so (Gaeta 2008: 133–137).

There are a number of genuinely reversed endocentric compounds as well, however, in which the modifier comes first and the head last. Since there are only a few of these, I will give all of them in the following example:

- (50) a. ၵိၵ်ႈ *baripata* ‘ground meat’  
 ← ၵိၵ်ႈ *bari* ‘meat’ + ၵိၵ်ႈ *pata* ‘mash’
- b. ၵိၵ်ႈ *kayvolentan* ‘consonant’  
 ← ၵိၵ်ႈ *kayvo* ‘with’ + ၵိၵ်ႈ *lentan* ‘sound’
- c. ၵိၵ်ႈ *māvaganeng* ‘mother’s siblings’  
 ← ၵိၵ်ႈ *māva* ‘mother’ + ၵိၵ်ႈ *ganeng* ‘siblings’

<sup>9</sup> A little bit of language history would certainly simplify things here and lend them credence. Let us simply assume that ၵိၵ်ႈ *sitang* used to be a noun meaning something like ‘self’ at a previous stage of Ayeri and was repurposed as a reflexive prefix. Lehmann (2015) quotes a few examples of what he calls ‘autophoric’ nouns that came to be used as reflexive pronouns in their respective language: “Typical examples are Sanskrit *tan* ‘body, person’ and *ātmán* ‘breath, soul’, Buginese *elena* ‘body’, Okinawan *dūna* ‘body’, !Xu *l’esi* ‘body’, Basque *burua* ‘head’, Abkhaz *a-xə* ‘the head’. In their respective languages, all these nouns are translation equivalents of English *self*” (45–46). Thus, it would not be out of line at all to assume such a grammaticalization path for Ayeri as well.

- d.  $\text{မလိခ်း}$  *matinanding* ‘labia’  
←  $\text{မလိခ်း}$  *matikan* ‘hot’ +  $\text{ခ်း}$  *nanding* ‘lips’
- e.  $\text{မိယာဝါ}$  *muyavirang* ‘brass’  
←  $\text{မိယ}$  *muya* ‘false’ +  $\text{ဝါ}$  *avirang* ‘gold’
- f.  $\text{တိနိယာ}$  *tonisaytang* ‘self-assured’  
←  $\text{တိနိ}$  *tonisa* ‘assured’ +  $\text{ယာ}$  *sitangan* ‘self’

Given the discussion of  $\text{ယာ}$  *sitang* above, one word among the examples above that is not too clear is  $\text{တိနိယာ}$  *tonisaytang*, which appears to contain a deviant form of either  $\text{ယာ}$  *sitang* or  $\text{ယာ}$  *sitangan*, which is preceded by the adjective  $\text{တိနိ}$  *tonisa* ‘assured, ascertained’.

All of the previously mentioned compounds involving nominal elements formed nouns, though, there are also a few denominal compounds in the sample. This process is not productive, however, and interestingly, only noun–adjective combinations appear in this group:

- (51) a.  $\text{မိရပ်ပလွယ်}$  *mirampaluy* ‘otherwise’  
←  $\text{မိရပ်}$  *miran* ‘way’ +  $\text{ပလွယ်}$  *palung* ‘different’
- b.  $\text{ပာသဗာယာ}$  *padabanya* ‘insane’  
←  $\text{ပာသ}$  *padang* ‘mind’ +  $\text{ဗာယာ}$  *banaya* ‘sick’
- c.  $\text{တင်ကရိသ}$  *tenkarisa*- ‘be frightened to death’  
←  $\text{တင်}$  *ten* ‘life’ +  $\text{ကရိသ}$  *karisa* ‘frightened’

$\text{မိရပ်ပလွယ်}$  *mirampaluy* is an adverb, the modifier probably a mangling of  $\text{ပလွယ်}$  *palung*;  $\text{ပာသဗာယာ}$  *padabanya* is an adjective meaning ‘insane’ rather than the expected ‘insanity’ (instead:  $\text{ပာသဗာယာ}$  *padabanyān*); and  $\text{တင်ကရိသ}$  *tenkarisa*- acts as a verb, possibly from conversion or reinterpretation, since the suffix  $\text{ရိသ}$  *-isa* also forms morphological causatives of a number of verbs. Besides these irregularities, there is also at least one noun compound which uses a postposition as an adjectival modifier:

- (52)  $\text{လိလိယာ}$  *silvankayvay* ‘blindness’ ←  $\text{လိလိ}$  *silvan* ‘sight’ +  $\text{ယာ}$  *kayvay* ‘without’

This compound must be derived from the phrase  $\text{လိလိယာ}$  *silvanya kayvay* ‘without sight’ (see-NMLZ-LOC without), though here as well, the word roots are simply juxtaposed, as noted above is the common way to form compounds in Ayeri.

#### Synthetic compounds

According to Bauer (2001), (semi-)synthetic compounds, or verbal(-nexus) compounds, are compounds that have “been variously defined as being based on word-groups or syntactic constructions (Botha 1984: 2), or as compounds whose head elements are derived from verbs (Lieber 1994: 3607)” (Bauer 2001: 701). Examples of this type in English would include *truck-driver*, *peace-keeping*, and *home-made*. He

mentions also that synthetic compounds have been mainly discussed with regards to Germanic languages, but that according to Lieber (1994: 3608), the phenomenon is much more widespread. Ayeri possesses compounds like this as well, and the regular case again follows the constituent order, here that of verbs and nouns: Ayeri is a VO language, and thus the verb as the head of the compound is usually found on the left side with its nominal modifier following it (Gaeta 2008: 129–133):

- (53) a. ၼံၼ်ၼ်ၼ် *anlāgonan* ‘pronunciation’  
 ← ၼံၼ်ၼ်: *anl-* ‘bring’ + ၼံၼ်ၼ် *agonan* ‘outside’  
 b. ညာနီၼ် *napakaron* ‘acid’  
 ← ညာ: *nap-* ‘burn’ + နီၼ် *karon* ‘water’  
 c. ညာနီၼ် *napaperin* ‘sunburn’  
 ← ညာ: *nap-* ‘burn’ + နီၼ် *perin* ‘sun’  
 d. ၼံၼ်ၼ် *telbasasān* ‘waysign’  
 ← ၼံၼ်ၼ်: *telba-* ‘show’ + ၼံၼ်ၼ် *sasān* ‘way’

The relations between the verb and the noun are various again, that is, the nominal modifier is not simply the direct object of the verb: to pronounce something means to bring it *to* the outside; a sunburn is a burn *caused by* the sun; and a waysign shows the way (နီၼ် *sasān* is the object here). Even though နီၼ် *karon* may serve as an agent (or a causer) of the burning effect of acid (similarly for ညာနီၼ် *napaperin* ‘sunburn’), the verb-first order is justified here as well, since verbs always go first in Ayeri sentences, and any other NPs, whether actor or undergoer, are following.

Just as with endocentric compounds, there are a number of seeming exceptions to the verb-first order of synthetic compounds as well. These are just as far and few between, however, and whether they should all be counted as noun–verb combinations is also questionable as they appear to all be formed with nominalized verbs. The verbal element may thus be only indirectly verbal for the purposes of compounding. If interpreted as noun–noun combinations, the nominal first element would reasonably form the head again for some of the below example words.

- (54) a. ၼံၼ်ၼ် *maripuntayam* ‘spread’  
 ← ၼံၼ်ၼ် *marin* ‘surface’ + ၼံၼ်ၼ် *punta-* ‘stroke’ + ၼံၼ်ၼ် *-yam* (DAT)  
 b. ၼံၼ်ၼ် *sasanlekān* ‘labyrinth’  
 ← ၼံၼ်ၼ် *sasān* ‘way’ + ၼံၼ်ၼ် *leka-* ‘guess’ + ၼံၼ်ၼ် *-an* (NMLZ)  
 c. ၼံၼ်ၼ် *selangnunān* ‘plane’  
 ← ၼံၼ်ၼ် *selang* ‘machine’ + ၼံၼ်ၼ် *nuna-* ‘fly’ + ၼံၼ်ၼ် *-an* (NMLZ)  
 d. ၼံၼ်ၼ် *sinturān* ‘radio’  
 ← ၼံၼ်ၼ် *sinto* ‘wave’ + ၼံၼ်ၼ် *tura-* ‘send’ + ၼံၼ်ၼ် *-an* (NMLZ)

ၼံၼ်ၼ် *maripuntayam* is special in that it contains the dative suffix ၼံၼ်ၼ် *-yam* which is lexicalized as part of the word: something made or intended for spread-

ing on a surface. A few more such verbal derivations can be found, though not compounds, among others:

- (55) a.  $\text{အဝ်းၤ}$  *grenyam* ‘extremity’ ←  $\text{အဝ်း}$  *gren-* ‘reach out’  
 b.  $\text{လွဲၤအပၤ}$  *lugayam* ‘password’ ←  $\text{လွဲၤ}$  *luga-* ‘go through’  
 c.  $\text{ဆယပၤ}$  *sahayam* ‘future’ ←  $\text{ဆယ}$  *saha-* ‘come’

There is also  $\text{မာရိပုၤ}$  *maripunta-* ‘spread over’ as the verb corresponding to  $\text{မာရိပုၤအပၤ}$  *maripuntayam*, though its meaning is less specific. Here as well, however, the verbal part is last instead of first. For the other example words (54b–d), an interpretation of the second part as a deverbal noun is possible: a labyrinth as a way or path which requires guessing, a plane a machine for flight, and radio as a sending of waves. In the latter case,  $\text{ဆိၤတုၤရ်}$  *sinturān*, however, the head is still on the wrong side even if one interprets all of the above examples as noun–noun compounds with a deverbal element.

#### Coordinative compounds

Coordinative compounds are a very small group among the sample drawn from the dictionary, and not a very productive one. Bauer (2001) defines this class as having “two or more words in a coordinate relationship, such that the entity denoted is the totality of the entities denoted by each of the elements” (699). He cautions that they are very easy to confuse with appositional (also *karmadhāraya*) compounds in that both types of compound allow inserting an *and* between both elements. The following nominal coordinative compounds are included in the dictionary sample:

- (56) a.  $\text{မာမၤ}$  *bāmā* ‘mom-and-dad’  
 ←  $\text{မာမၤ}$  *bā(bā)* ‘dad’ +  $\text{မာမၤ}$  *mā(mā)* ‘mom’  
 b.  $\text{ပုၤရ်ၤအပၤ}$  *pruynapay* ‘seasoning’  
 ←  $\text{ပုၤရ်ၤ}$  *pruy* ‘salt’ +  $\text{အပၤ}$  *napay* ‘pepper’  
 c.  $\text{ဆယပုၤ}$  *sapayyila* ‘hands-and-feet’  
 ←  $\text{ဆယ}$  *sapay* ‘hand’ +  $\text{ပုၤ}$  *yila* ‘foot’  
 d.  $\text{ဆိၤတုၤရ်}$  *simileno* ‘horizon’  
 ←  $\text{ဆိၤတုၤရ်}$  *simil* ‘country’ +  $\text{တုၤရ်}$  *leno* ‘sky’  
 e.  $\text{ဆိၤတုၤရ်ၤ}$  *sitemrugon* ‘thunderstorm’  
 ←  $\text{ဆိၤတုၤရ်}$  *sitem* ‘lightning’ +  $\text{တုၤရ်ၤ}$  *rugon* ‘thunder’  
 f.  $\text{ဝဲၤကမၤ}$  *vekamdekey* ‘dishes’  
 ←  $\text{ဝဲၤကမၤ}$  *vekam* ‘plate’ +  $\text{ဝဲၤကမၤ}$  *dekey* ‘fork’

None of the two elements recognizably forms the head in these examples, but both elements are typical exponents of the thing the compound signifies. Bauer (2001: 699) mentions that coordinative adjective compounds are rare, or at least

rarely documented in the grammars he surveyed. In the sample I took, only the following compound is included, which forms a noun from the combination of two adjectives, insofar it is relevant to this section even though the component parts are not nouns:

- (57) မန့်မန့် *makagisu* ‘twilight’ ← *maka* ‘light’ + *gisu* ‘dark’

The sample also includes the following two words, however, which are neither made up from nouns, nor do they form a noun in combination. Instead, they are technically verbs combining to form directional adverbs and have been exceptionally included here for completeness:

- (58) a. မာဂဆာ *mangasaba* ‘towards’ ← *manga-* ‘move’ + *saba-* ‘come’  
 b. မာဂဆာ *mangasara* ‘away’ ← *manga-* ‘move’ + *sara-* ‘go’

#### Exocentric compounds

In exocentric compounds, the modifier is not a hyponym of its head (700), which means that the modifier is not describing a property that more closely determines its head. So while a *dog kennel* is a type of kennel made for dogs, the head of an *egghead* is neither for eggs, nor containing eggs, nor made of eggs; instead, it refers to an egg-shaped skull metaphorically. And while a *bluecollar* may wear a blue shirt professionally, the referent it signifies is not a type of collar, but the relationship is metonymical in that the blue collar is part of the guise of the signified entity as a whole. The sample from the Ayeri dictionary contains a few compounds of this kind as well, though again, it is not a very productive group:

- (59) a. မာၤၤၤၤ *avanyonang* ‘artery’  
 ← မာၤၤ *avan* ‘bottom, down’ + ပၤၤၤၤ *yonang* ‘stream’  
 b. ဃာၤၤၤၤ *baytandevo* ‘headache’  
 ← ဃာၤၤၤ *baytang* ‘blood’ + ပၤၤၤ *devo* ‘head’  
 c. လၢၤၤၤၤ *linyonang* ‘vein’  
 ← လၢၤၤ *ling* ‘top, up’ + ပၤၤၤၤ *yonang* ‘steam’  
 d. နံၤၤၤၤ *sindaynanga* ‘address’  
 ← နံၤၤၤ *sinday* ‘number’ + နၢၤၤ *nanga* ‘house’

What is striking here is that only one out of four examples shows the expected head-left order: နံၤၤၤၤ *sindaynanga*. The other three examples all have the head component on the right side, preceded by a modifier. However, what all of these have in common, is that they are only metaphorically or metonymically describing the thing they signify: veins and arteries are not literally streams going

up or down (they are a kind of stream flowing in different directions, however, so these are probably on the borderline between exocentric and endocentric); a headache is related to the head, but has not directly to do with being made of or containing blood (the rationale behind this being a superstition that you have too much blood in your head, which is said to cause the pain); and a house number may be part of an address, but is in a *pars pro toto* relationship to it.

#### *A few mysterious cases*

The following words from my sample were either undeterminable as to their composition due to parts of the word not being clear regarding one of their constituent parts, either because I tweaked the constituent so much as to not be readily recognizable anymore, or because I forgot to make an entry in the dictionary, or even deleted or changed that. The words in question are the following:

- (60) a. ခဏ္ဍာန်စဉ် *batangiman* ‘mosquito’ ← ခဏ္ဍာန် *baytang* ‘blood’ + ?  
 b. ချီလ်ဘီလ် *kirinalang* ‘avenue’ ← ချီလ် *kirin* ‘street’ + ?  
 c. နှိပ်ခဏ္ဍာန် *ningambakar* ‘telltale’ ← နှိပ် *ningan* ‘story’ + ?  
 d. ရာဂယေယု *ragayesuy* ‘grid’ ← ရာဂ *ragan* ‘line’ + ?  
 e. ဖရောမိန် *teraymino* ‘melancholic’ ← ? + ဖရို *mino* ‘happy’  
 f. ဖရောမိန် *vetaysano* ‘fare’ ← ? + ဖရို *sasān* (earlier ဖရို *sasano*) ‘way’

For all of the components represented by a question mark, there is no corresponding dictionary entry. At least in ခဏ္ဍာန်စဉ် *baytangiman*, the \*ဖရို *\*iman* part looks as though it could be a noun due to the ဖရို *-an* nominalizer suffix. \*ဖရို *\*teray* in ဖရောမိန် *teraymino* might also be an adjective supposed to mean ‘sad’ (which would make it an adjectival coordinative compound), although the dictionary entry for that is ဖရို *giday*. Even though parts of all these words are unclear, they all seem to follow the correct syntactic order, judging by those parts that are identifiable. And even in the case of ဖရောမိန် *vetaysano*, which is missing the first part, it can be reasonably assumed that the identifiable part, \*ဖရို *\*sano*, is the modifier, and \*ဖရို *vetay* may have once been intended to mean ‘money’ or ‘fee’ or something along these lines.

With the exception of နှိပ်ခဏ္ဍာန် *ningambakar*, all of the mystery words were entered into the dictionary in 2006. Digging through old archives and translations, I could determine at least that \*ခဏ္ဍာန် *\*bakar* was once intended to mean ‘lie’, and \*ဖရို *\*teray* was indeed meant to mean ‘sad’.

#### 4.1.6 Reduplication

Wiltshire and Marantz (2000) write that it has been suggested that reduplication serves an iconic function, “with the repetition of phonological material indicating

a repetition or intensity in the semantics” (561), so with regards to nouns it mainly serves to indicate plurality of various kinds. However, they find that in fact, reduplication serves all kinds of functions, also ones without iconic meanings, and mention Agta, an Austronesian language of the Philippines, which uses reduplication to form diminutives (Healey 1960: 6–9). As we have seen in section 3.2.3 above, so does Ayeri, and it is justified in doing so since there is real-world evidence for this use of reduplication. Examples for diminutive reduplication in Ayeri include:

- (61) a. ႁႃႃႃ *limu* ‘shirt’ → ႁႃႃႃႁႃႃႃ *limu-limu* ‘little shirt’  
 b. ႁႃႃ *nanga* ‘house’ → ႁႃႃႁႃႃ *nanga-nanga* ‘little house’  
 c. ႁႃႃ *sapay* ‘hand’ → ႁႃႃႁႃႃ *sapay-sapay* ‘little hand’  
 d. ႁႃႃ *veney* ‘dog’ → ႁႃႃႁႃႃ *veney-veney* ‘little dog’

Diminutive reduplication involves full stem reduplication in Ayeri. Besides the productive use of reduplication for diminutive marking, there are a number of diminutive formations which have been lexicalized, such as in the following examples:

- (62) a. ႁႃႃ *agu* ‘chicken’ → ႁႃႃႁႃႃ *agu-agu* ‘chick’  
 b. ႁႃႃ *gan* ‘child’ → ႁႃႃႁႃႃ *gan-gan* ‘grandchild’  
 c. ႁႃႃ *pasing* ‘tube’ → ႁႃႃႁႃႃ *pasing-pasing* ‘straw’  
 d. ႁႃႃ *poyu* ‘cheek; bacon’ → ႁႃႃႁႃႃ *poyu-poyu* ‘butt’

There are also at least two documented cases where the reduplicated root is not a noun, but the reduplication results in a noun:

- (63) a. ႁႃႃ *kusang* ‘double (adj.)’ → ႁႃႃႁႃႃ *kusang-kusang* ‘model’  
 b. ႁႃႃ *veb-* ‘build’ → ႁႃႃႁႃႃ *veba-veba* ‘tinkering’

Reduplicated nouns behave like regular nouns with regards to inflection, that is, they receive prefixes and suffixes just like the simplexes from which they are derived:

- (64) *Puco mino veney-veneyang.*  
 Puk-yo mino veney~veney-ang  
 jump-3SG.N happily DIM~dog-A  
 ‘The little dog is jumping happily.’

In this example, the reduplicated noun ႁႃႃႁႃႃ *veney-veney* is marked as an agent in that the agent suffix ႁႃႃ *-ang* is appended to the noun as a unit *after* reduplicating the noun stem. In other words, the following formation in which the root is reduplicated along with its declension suffix is ungrammatical for the purpose of forming a diminutive:

- (65) \*<sup>ṽ</sup>ṽṽṽṽṽṽ \*veneyang-veneyang

Likewise, the reduplicated form is not treated in the way an endocentric compound would be, so case and plural marking cannot be appended to the first element:

- (66) \*<sup>ṽ</sup>ṽṽṽṽṽṽ \*veneyang veney

While ordinary nouns undergo full reduplication to form a diminutive, in compounds, only the head is reduplicated, unless the compound is strongly lexicalized or has an idiomatic meaning going beyond that of its components. The following example shows the simple case of a transparent endocentric compound:

- (67) *Ya yomayo mehir-mehirang seygo veno kay pang nanga nana.*  
 Ya yoma-yo mehir~mehir-ang seygo veno kay pang nanga-Ø nana  
 LOCT be-3SG.N DIM~tree-A apple pretty three back house-TOP IPL.GEN

‘There are three pretty little apple trees behind our house.’

In this example, being endearing or otherwise small is treated as a property of the head, <sup>ṽ</sup>ṽṽṽ *mehir* ‘tree’, not of the whole compound <sup>ṽ</sup>ṽṽṽṽṽṽ *mehirseygo* ‘apple tree’, or the dependent, <sup>ṽ</sup>ṽṽ *seygo* ‘apple’—after all, an apple tree which is small is rather a small tree with apples on it than a tree with small apples. The avoidance of the fully reduplicated form <sup>ṽ</sup>ṽṽṽṽṽṽṽṽṽ *mehirseygo-mehirseygo* is probably related to the notion of economy of expression.

#### 4.1.7 Nominalization

Some accidental ways of deriving nouns have been mentioned above, for instance, some reduplicated non-nominal roots like <sup>ṽ</sup>ṽṽṽ *kusang* ‘double’ or <sup>ṽ</sup>ṽṽ *veha-* ‘build’ may form nouns. However, Ayeri also has some dedicated morphology to derive nouns from other parts of speech. The most common and highly productive way to derive a noun, is the suffix <sup>ṽ</sup>ṽṽ *-an*. The examples in (68) illustrate some derivations from verbs, and (69) shows derivations from adjectives to nouns. As <sup>ṽ</sup>ṽṽṽ *kuban* ‘oar’ shows, the nominalization may have an idiomatic meaning.

- (68) a. <sup>ṽ</sup>ṽṽṽṽṽṽ *balang-* ‘search (v.)’ → <sup>ṽ</sup>ṽṽṽṽṽṽ *balangan* ‘search (n.)’  
 b. <sup>ṽ</sup>ṽṽṽ *kub-* ‘row’ → <sup>ṽ</sup>ṽṽṽṽṽṽ *kuban* ‘oar’  
 c. <sup>ṽ</sup>ṽṽṽ *rig-* ‘draw’ → <sup>ṽ</sup>ṽṽṽṽṽṽ *rigan* ‘drawing’  
 d. <sup>ṽ</sup>ṽṽṽ *veh-* ‘build’ → <sup>ṽ</sup>ṽṽṽṽṽṽ *vehan* ‘building’



- (69) a. ၵိၵ်ႉ *apitu* ‘pure’ → ၵိၵ်ႉ *apituan* ‘purity’  
 b. ၵိၵ်ႉ *gira* ‘urgent’ → ၵိၵ်ႉ *girān* ‘hurry’  
 c. ၵိၵ်ႉ *pakis* ‘serious’ → ၵိၵ်ႉ *pakistan* ‘seriousness’  
 d. ၵိၵ်ႉ *vapa* ‘skillful’ → ၵိၵ်ႉ *vapan* ‘skill’

Occasionally, it may even happen that a noun is derived from a noun with a related but sometimes more basic meaning using the nominalizer ၵိၵ်ႉ *-an*. This process, however, is not productive, so compared to deverbalization and deadjectivization, examples of this derivation strategy are few.

- (70) a. ၵိၵ်ႉ *ajam* ‘toy’ → ၵိၵ်ႉ *ajaman* ‘game’  
 b. ၵိၵ်ႉ *kelang* ‘chain’ → ၵိၵ်ႉ *kelangan* ‘connection’  
 c. ၵိၵ်ႉ *nanga* ‘house’ → ၵိၵ်ႉ *nangan* ‘household’  
 d. ၵိၵ်ႉ *ten* ‘life’ → ၵိၵ်ႉ *tenan* ‘soul’

There are also some apparent nominalizations in ၵိၵ်ႉ *-am* and ၵိၵ်ႉ *-ang*, although these are irregular and non-productive:

- (71) a. ၵိၵ်ႉ *aja-* ‘play’ → ၵိၵ်ႉ *ajam* ‘toy’  
 b. ၵိၵ်ႉ *gin-* ‘drink’ → ၵိၵ်ႉ *ginam* ‘glass’  
 c. ၵိၵ်ႉ *mik-* ‘poison (v.)’ → ၵိၵ်ႉ *mikam* ‘poison (n.), venom’  
 d. ၵိၵ်ႉ *nuna-* ‘fly’ → ၵိၵ်ႉ *nunam* ‘feather’
- (72) a. ၵိၵ်ႉ *bayha-* ‘rule’ → ၵိၵ်ႉ *bayhang* ‘government’  
 b. ၵိၵ်ႉ *bapa* ‘remaining’ → ၵိၵ်ႉ *bapang* ‘remainder’  
 c. ၵိၵ်ႉ *kada-* ‘collect’ → ၵိၵ်ႉ *kadang* ‘committee; alliance’  
 d. ၵိၵ်ႉ *mima* ‘possible’ → ၵိၵ်ႉ *mimang* ‘access’

Agentive nouns can be formed from regular nouns with the suffix ၵိၵ်ႉ *-maya*, compare the examples in (73). An epenthetic /a/ may be introduced to break up consonant clusters that would otherwise be either difficult to pronounce or violating phonotactics. When the stem of the word the agentive suffix is attached to ends in a consonant or /Ca/, it is also often found fused with the root, sometimes with the first /a/ of *-Caya* lengthened, see (74). Specifically feminine agentive nouns can be derived with the related suffix ၵိၵ်ႉ *-vaya*; two examples are given in (75).

- (73) a. ၵိၵ်ႉ *anl-* ‘bring’ → ၵိၵ်ႉ *anlamaya* ‘waiter’  
 b. ၵိၵ်ႉ *hora* ‘sin’ → ၵိၵ်ႉ *horamaya* ‘sinner’  
 c. ၵိၵ်ႉ *nasy-* ‘follow’ → ၵိၵ်ႉ *nasyamaya* ‘follower’  
 d. ၵိၵ်ႉ *teba-* ‘bake’ → ၵိၵ်ႉ *tebamaya* ‘baker’

- (74) a. ᐱᐸ: *asa*- ‘travel’ → ᐱᐸᐅᐅ *asāya* ‘traveler’  
 b. ᐱᐸᐸᐸ: *ibut*- ‘trade’ → ᐱᐸᐸᐅᐅ *ibutaya* ‘trader, merchant’  
 c. ᐱᐸᐸ: *lant*- ‘lead’ → ᐱᐸᐅᐅ *lantaya* ‘leader; driver’  
 d. ᐱᐸᐸ: *tang*- ‘listen’ → ᐱᐸᐅᐅ *tangaya* ‘listener’
- (75) a. ᐱᐸᐅ *gan* ‘child’ → ᐱᐸᐅᐅ *ganvaya* ‘governess’  
 b. ᐱᐸᐅᐅ *lanya* ‘king’ → ᐱᐸᐅᐅ *lanvaya* ‘queen’

Besides these, there is also a derivative suffix for makers of things, ᐱᐸᐸ -*ati* (contracting to /atʃ/ -*ac* before a vowel), though this is not too productive, and sometimes irregular, as ᐸᐸᐅᐅᐅ *sirtangati* ‘youth’ shows:

- (76) a. ᐸᐸᐸᐸ *gindi* ‘poem’ → ᐸᐸᐸᐸ *gindati* ‘poet’  
 b. ᐸᐸᐅᐅᐅ *sirtang* ‘young’ → ᐸᐸᐅᐅᐅ *sirtangati* ‘youth’  
 c. ᐅᐅᐅᐅ: *tahan*- ‘write’ → ᐅᐅᐅᐅᐸ *tahanati* ‘scribe’  
 d. ᐸᐸᐅᐅ *vehim* ‘piece of clothing’ → ᐸᐸᐅᐅᐸ *vehimati* ‘tailor’

A few instances also exist where a tool of sorts is derived with a suffix ᐸᐸᐅᐅᐅ -*(e)ryan*, which is related to the instrumental suffix ᐸᐸᐸ -*eri* in combination with the nominalizer ᐱᐸᐸ -*an*:

- (77) a. ᐸᐸᐅ: *gur*- ‘turn’ → ᐸᐸᐅᐅᐅ *guryan* ‘coil, cylinder’  
 b. ᐸᐸᐸ: *mis*- ‘behave’ → ᐸᐸᐅᐅᐅ *miseryan* ‘method, strategy’  
 c. ᐅᐅᐅ: *nap*- ‘burn’ → ᐅᐅᐅᐅᐅ *naperyan* ‘tinder’  
 d. ᐅᐅᐅ: *pra*- ‘glitter, gleam’ → ᐅᐅᐅᐅᐅ *praryan* ‘spark’

While ᐱᐸᐸ -*an* derives nouns from verbs to produce nouns that act as such in every way, it may sometimes be preferable to refer to the action as such by a noun, compare in English:

- (78) a. Manhattan is famous for its tall **buildings**.  
 b. **Building** a house is an expensive endeavor.

In (78a), *building* is simply a noun derived from the verb *build*. It acts as a noun in every way, for example, it can serve as a subject and object, it can be pluralized, it can take determiners, and can be modified by adjectives. The form of *building* in (78b), however, is a gerund, and as such underlies the restriction that it cannot be pluralized (Payne 1997: 35). As we have seen at the beginning of this section on nominalization, Ayeri can derive ᐸᐸᐅᐅ *vehan* ‘building, construction’ from the verb ᐸᐸᐅ: *veb*- ‘build’, which acts like every other common noun, much like in the English example in (78a):

- (79) a. *Lesāra sirimang vebānreng tado.*  
 Lesa-ara sirimang vehān-reng tado  
 collapse-3SG.INAN about.to building-A.INAN old  
 ‘The old building is about to collapse.’
- b. *Le vacyang eda-vehān.*  
 Le vac=yang eda=vehān-Ø  
 PT.INAN like=1SG.A this=building-TOP  
 ‘This building, I like it.’
- c. *Ang latayo bayhang vebānyeley yona.*  
 Ang lata-yo bayhang-Ø vehān-ye-ley yona  
 AT sell-3SG.N government-TOP building-PL-P.INAN 3SG.N.GEN  
 ‘The government is selling its buildings.’
- d. *Le ming kuysāran vebān-kay dirasyam ran.*  
 Le ming kuysa-aran vehān-Ø=kay diras-yam ran  
 PT.INAN can compare-3PL.INAN building-TOP=few splendor-DAT 3SG.INAN.GEN  
 ‘Few buildings can compare to its splendor.’

The above examples condense several properties into one for illustration. Thus, (79a) shows that *vehān* can serve as basically a subject of a clause, and that it can as well be modified by an adjective—the choice of adjectives is not subject to any distributional restrictions other than those imposed by the semantic frame of HOUSE. In the next example, (79b), *vehān* serves as the object of the clause and is being determined by the demonstrative prefix *eda-* ‘this’. The third example, (79c), shows *vehān* both pluralized and modified by a possessive pronoun, *yona* ‘of it’. And finally, in (79d) we see *vehān* quantified by the suffix *-kay* ‘few’.

Similar to the English example in (78b), Ayeri can also derive nouns from the participle of a verb describing the action as such—a gerund. For an example, I will again draw on the Ayeri translation of Kafka’s short story “Eine kaiserliche Botschaft” (Becker 2012: 2, 14):

- (80) ... *nay ang pətangongva ankyu haruyamanas nanang megayena*  
 ... *nay ang pə-tang-ong=va.Ø ankyu haru-yam-an-as nanang mega-ye-na*  
 ... and AT NFUT-hear-IRR=2SG.TOP truly beat-PTCP-NMLZ-P great fist-PL-GEN  
*yana kunangya vana.*  
*yana kunang-ya vana*  
 3SG.M.GEN door-LOC 2SG.GEN

‘... and you would indeed hear his magnificent beating at your door very soon.’

A more literal translation of this sentence would be ‘The distinguishing of China and Arizona, I knew it at first sight’, so the whole passage  $\text{na}^{\text{N}}\text{na}^{\text{N}}\text{a}^{\text{N}}\text{a}^{\text{N}} - \text{na}^{\text{N}}\text{na}^{\text{N}}\text{a}^{\text{N}}\text{a}^{\text{N}}$  *palungya-man ... na Bayokivo* forms the topic of the sentence here, headed by the gerund  $\text{na}^{\text{N}}\text{na}^{\text{N}}\text{a}^{\text{N}}\text{a}^{\text{N}}$  *palungyaman* ‘distinguishing’. According to the old rule obliquely quoted in the comment to the passage in (80), this should not be possible. As said before, though, usage has changed.

A rule we can gather from the above example from Saint-Exupéry is that gerunds are treated as animate nouns. Since they are impersonal, they trigger neuter agreement on verbs. They can also be the objects of sentences. The passage in (80) furthermore illustrates that gerunds can be modified by The following example shows a gerund used as an agent—basically a subject—as well (Becker 2014):

- (83) *Dilayamanang*            *kalamena*   *babalanas*   *ayonena*   ...  
 Dila-yam-an-ang        kalam-ena   bahalan-as   ayon-ena   ...  
 find.out-PTCP-NMLZ-A   truth-GEN   goal-P        man-GEN   ...  
 ‘(If) finding out the truth is the goal of the man ...’

What all the passages on gerunds quoted before show is that gerunds in Ayeri do not behave like transitive verbs as in English. Thus, what would be the object of the former verb appears in the genitive case in Ayeri. As in English, however, gerunds in Ayeri cannot be pluralized:

- (84) \**Noyo*        *vehayamanjang*            *nangayena*.  
 Noyo        veba-yam-an-ye-ang        nanga-ye-na  
 expensive   build-PTCP-NMLZ-PL-A   house-PL-GEN  
 ‘\*The buildings of houses are expensive.’

It is possible, however, to quantify gerunds insofar as the quantifier does not imply countable quantities of the action. Moreover, it is possible for gerunds to be modified by possessors. The following two sentences exemplify this use:

- (85) *Ang*   *lugayan*                            *delacamanas-ikan*            *kayanya*   *pang*.  
 Ang   luga=yan.Ø                            delak-yam-an-as=ikan        kayan-ya   pang  
 AT   go.through=3PL.M.TOP   suffer-PTCP-NMLZ-P=much   war-LOC   after  
 ‘They went through a lot of suffering after the war.’
- (86) *Krico*            *malyyamanang*            *muya*   *tan*.  
 Krit-yo            maly-yam-an-ang        muya   tan  
 annoy-3SG.N   sing-PTCP-NMLZ-A   wrong   3PL.M.GEN  
 ‘Their off singing is annoying.’

## 4.2 Pronouns

Ayeri possesses different kinds of pronouns in the sense that there is a closed class of words which contains anaphora of various types—personal pronouns, demonstrative pronouns, interrogative pronouns, relative pronouns, as well as reflexive and reciprocal expressions. Each class of pronouns will be discussed in the following.

Figure 4.6: Personal pronouns

Person	TOP	A	P	DAT	GEN	LOC	CAUS	INS
1SG	ay	yang	yas	yām	nā	yā	sā	rī
2SG	va	vāng	vās	vayam	vana	vaya	vasa	vari
3SG.M	ya	yāng	yās	yayam	yana	yāy	yasa	yari
3SG.F	ye	yeng	yes	yeyam	yena	yea	yesa	yeri
3SG.N	yo	yong	yos	yoyam	yona	yoa	yosa	yor
3SG.INAN	ra	reng	rey	rayam	ran	raya	rasa	rari
1PL	ayn	nang	nas	nyam	nana	nyā	nisa	ni
2PL	va	vāng	vās	vayam	vana	vaya	vasa	vari
3PL.M	yan	tang	tas	cam	tan	ca	tis	ti
3PL.F	yen	teng	tes	teyam	ten	teya	tēs	teri
3PL.N	yon	tong	tos	toyam	ton	toya	tōs	tori
3PL.INAN	ran	teng	tey	racam	ten	raca	ratas	ray

#### 4.2.1 Personal pronouns

As Figure 4.6 shows, Ayeri possesses quite a large number of personal pronouns with little syncretism between the different paradigm slots overall (the second person is a notable exception); there are also no gaps in the paradigm. Ayeri's personal pronouns reflect the grammatical features also found in nouns, that is, number, gender, and case, and person is added to that. The individual forms range from completely fused to fully transparent even within the same case paradigm, for instance,  $\text{yā}$  *yām* '(to/for) me' (1SG.DAT) on the one hand, and  $\text{yayam}$  '(to/for) him' (transparently 3SG.M-DAT) on the other. Originally, all pronouns have been regular formations based on the respective unmarked pronominal element listed in the TOP column of Figure 4.6 declined by adding a case suffix (see section 4.1.3). Use has caused many of these formations to contract and erode as grammaticalization progressed:

- (87) a. *ayang* → *yāng*  
 ay-ang      yāng  
 1SG-A      1SG.A
- b. *iyatena* → *tan*  
 iy-a-t-ena      tan  
 3SG-M-PL-GEN      3SG.M.GEN<sup>11</sup>

The plural series used to be derived by adding 𐌲𐌶 -*n* or, in the third person, 𐌲𐌶𐌴 -*t-* to the pronoun stem, which can still be easily observed in the unmarked pronouns as well as in the alternation between 𐌶𐌴 *y-* and 𐌲𐌶𐌴 *t-* in the third person pronouns. The same goes for the gender-marking thematic vowel in the animate third person pronouns, which has been retained as a distinctive feature even in the non-core pronouns despite sometimes heavy modifications. A further interesting property of Ayeri is that synchronically, singular and plural are distinguished, except for the second person, where the forms are the same, basically like in English. Lehmann (2015) explains, however, that this is not an unusual route for languages to take:

New pronouns, especially for the second person singular, are often obtained by shifting pronouns around in the paradigm, especially by substituting marked forms for unmarked ones. This explains, for instance, the use of [...] English *you* for the second person singular (42)

The second person singular subject pronoun of English used to be *thou*, cognate to German *du*, which can still be found in Shakespeare, for instance. Something along the lines of English *you* as a second person plural pronoun replacing second person singular *thou* by way of a deferential singular use of a plural pronoun (OED 2016: *you*, pron., adj., and n.) may have happened in Ayeri as well.

The personal pronouns are used in just the same way as their full-NP counterparts would be, also in the non-core cases:

- (88) a. *Sa barya ang Paradan tandās kaleri.*  
           Sa har-ya ang=Paradan tanda-as kal-eri  
           AT beat-3SG.M A=Paradan fly-P rag-INS  
           ‘Paradan beats the fly with a rag.’
- b. *Sa baryāng tandās kaleri.*  
           Sa har=yāng tanda-as kal-eri  
           AT beat=3SG.M.A fly-P rag-INS  
           ‘He beats the fly with a rag.’
- c. *Sa barya ang Paradan yos kaleri.*  
           Sa har-ya ang=Paradan yos kal-eri  
           AT beat-3SG.M A=Paradan 3SG.N.P rag-INS  
           ‘Paradan beats it with a rag.’
- d. *Sa barya ang Paradan tandās rari.*  
           Sa har-ya ang=Paradan tanda-as rari  
           AT beat-3SG.M A=Paradan fly-P 3SG.INAN.INS  
           ‘Paradan beats the fly with it.’

<sup>11</sup> Strictly speaking, this could as well be glossed as *t<a>n* (3SG.GEN<M>). I chose to gloss the pronoun in the above way, however, in order to not overly complicate things.

In the above set of examples, (88a) shows a sentence with full NPs, with the agent, *ṣṣṣṣṣ ang Paradan* replaced by the third person singular masculine agent pronoun *ṣṣṣ yāng* in (88b); in (88c) the patient, *ṣṣṣ tandās*, is replaced with the third person singular neuter patient pronoun *ṣṣṣ yos*; in (88d), lastly, the instrument, *ṣṣṣ kaleri* is replaced with the third person singular inanimate instrumental pronoun *ṣṣṣ rari*. Furthermore, complex NPs are in complementary distribution, that is, an NP which contains an adjective is wholly replaced by an NP containing a personal pronoun:

- (89) a. *Ang ninye vehimley veno.*  
 Ang nin=ye.Ø vehim-ley veno  
 A wear=3SG.F.TOP dress-P.INAN beautiful  
 ‘She wears a beautiful dress.’
- b. \**Ang ninye adaley veno.*  
 Ang nin=ye.Ø ada-ley veno  
 A wear=3SG.F.TOP that-P.INAN beautiful  
 ‘\*She wears a beautiful it.’
- c. *Ang ninye adaley.*  
 Ang nin=ye.Ø ada-ley  
 A wear=3SG.F.TOP that-P.INAN  
 ‘She wears it.’

Comparing the example sentences in (88) with the TOP column in Figure 4.6 an important property of personal pronouns becomes apparent. That is, the ‘unmarked’ (or rather, zero-marked) pronoun forms are also the ones showing as verb agreement. An important difference in this respect, however, is that the third person singular inanimate verb agreement marker is not *-ra*, but *-ara*. The following two examples illustrate the parallel more clearly—observe the person marking on the verb in (90) and the corresponding object pronouns in (91):

- (90) a. *Sa manya ang Ajān Pila.*  
 Sa man-ya ang=Ajān Ø=Pila  
 PT greet-3SG.M A=Ajān TOP=Pila  
 ‘Pila, Ajān greets her.’
- b. *Sa manye ang Pila Ajān.*  
 Sa man-ye ang=Pila Ø=Ajān  
 PT greet-3SG.F A=Pila TOP=Ajān  
 ‘Ajān, she greets him.’



- (91) a. *Sa manye ang Pila ya.*  
 Sa man-ye ang=Pila ya.Ø  
 PT greet-3SG.F A=Pila 3SG.M.TOP  
 ‘Pila greets him.’
- b. *Sa manya ang Ajān ye.*  
 Sa man-ya ang=Ajān ye.Ø  
 PT greet-3SG.M A=Ajān 3SG.F.TOP  
 ‘Ajān greets her.’

Another important property of both pronouns and verbs is that agent pronouns (and patient pronouns under certain circumstances) replace person agreement by cliticizing to the verb stem. As person agreement morphology is a domain of verbs, it will be dealt with in more detail in the chapter on verbs proper. The following example illustrates the mainly relevant process, however:

- (92) a. *Sa manya ang Ajān Pila.*  
 Sa man-ya ang=Ajān Ø=Pila  
 PT greet-3SG.M A=Ajān TOP=Pila  
 ‘Pila, Ajān greets her.’
- b. *Sa manyāng Pila.*  
 Sa man=yāng Ø=Pila  
 PT greet=3SG.M.A TOP=Pila  
 ‘Pila, he greets her.’

Possessive pronouns are special compared to regular personal pronouns in that they can act as both personal pronouns proper and possessive adjectives, depending on context. The main case for the pronouns listed above in the genitive column of Figure 4.6 is that of possessive adjectives, which means that unlike personal pronouns, they are not necessarily in complementary distribution with nominal NPs, compare (89). Instead, they may be used as modifiers like, or alongside, adjectives, as (93) shows.

- (93) *nangaya ledō nā*  
 nanga-ya ledō nā  
 house-LOC blue ISG.GEN  
 ‘in my blue house’

Yet, however, possessives do not fully share the properties of adjectives, namely, they cannot be compared (\**ṣṣṣṣ* \**nā-eng* ‘\*myer’, \**ṣṣṣṣ* \**nā-vā* ‘\*myside’). Fronting them in actual pronominal fashion is possible, for instance, in predicative statements like the one in (94a). Alternatively, a phrasal construction with *ṣṣṣṣ* *vilyang*- ‘belong’ as indicated in (94b) may be used.

Figure 4.7: Demonstrative pronouns

Case	Proximal	Distal	Indefinite
TOP	edanya	adanya	danya
A	edanyāng	adanyāng	<i>danyāng</i>
A.INAN	edareng, <i>edanyareng</i>	adareng, adanyareng	<i>danyareng</i>
P	edanyās	adanyās	danyās
P.INAN	edaley	<i>adaley</i>	danyaley
DAT	<i>edayam</i>	adayam	<i>danyayam</i>
GEN	edanyana	adanyana	danyana
LOC	<i>edanyaya</i>	adanyaya	<i>danyaya</i>
CAUS	<i>edanyasa</i>	<i>adanyasa</i>	<i>danyasa</i>
INS	<i>edanyari</i>	<i>adanyari</i>	<i>danyari</i>

- (94) a. *Nā ada-nangāng.*  
 Nā ada=nanga-ang  
 1SG.GEN that=house-A  
 ‘That house is mine.’
- b. *Ang vilyangyo ada-nanga yas.*  
 Ang vilyang-yo ada=nanga-Ø yas  
 AT belong-3SG.N that=house-TOP 1SG.P  
 ‘That house belongs to me.’

#### 4.2.2 Demonstrative pronouns

Demonstrative pronouns in Ayeri are formed with the demonstrative prefixes:  $\text{ada-}$  ‘this’ (proximal),  $\text{ada-}$  ‘that’ (distal), and  $\text{da-}$  ‘such’ (indefinite). These are combined with a morpheme  $\text{nya}$ , which is related to the word for ‘person’,  $\text{nyān}$ . Figure 4.7 gives the declined forms for all of them. Those forms attested in the corpus gathered from dictionary entries and example texts also used for the syllable structure analyses in section 1.2 appear in upright type, those that should be grammatical as well otherwise are given in italic type. The corpus is very small, but the prevalence of some forms is possibly reflecting varying degrees of grammaticalization at least to some extent. Table 4.2 gives the token frequencies of the various attested forms.

Of all the cases, the agent demonstratives have the highest token frequency at a combined 52.53%, especially the distal pronouns are very frequent in the sample. Moreover, the distal inanimate agent demonstrative occurs twice as often as its an-

Table 4.2: Token frequencies of attested demonstrative pronouns

Pronoun	Gloss	Absolute	Relative
<i>edanya</i>	this.TOP	1	1.69%
<i>adanya</i>	that.TOP	9	15.25%
<i>danya</i>	such.TOP	1	1.69%
<i>edanyāng</i>	this.A	4	6.78%
<i>adanyāng</i>	that.A	8	13.56%
<i>edareng</i>	this.A.INAN	3	5.08%
<i>adareng</i>	that.A.INAN	15	25.42%
<i>adanyareng</i>	that.A.INAN	1	1.69%
<i>edanyās</i>	this.P	1	1.69%
<i>adanyās</i>	that.P	2	3.39%
<i>danyās</i>	such.P	2	3.39%
<i>edaley</i>	this.P.INAN	2	3.39%
<i>danyaley</i>	such.P.INAN	2	3.39%
<i>adayam</i>	that.DAT	3	5.08%
<i>edanyana</i>	this.GEN	1	1.69%
<i>adanyana</i>	that.GEN	2	3.39%
<i>danyana</i>	such.GEN	1	1.69%
<i>adanyaya</i>	that.LOC	1	1.69%
Total		59	100%

imate counterpart, the shortened form *adareng* ‘that (one)’ being far more current than the full form *adanyareng*. Interestingly, the shortened form *edareng* ‘this one’ is also the only one attested for the inanimate proximate agent; similarly, the only dative demonstrative attested once is shortened as well: *adayam* ‘(to/for) that’. For non-core cases, only ‘long’ demonstratives are attested, albeit sparingly so.

Regarding the variation between ‘long’ and ‘short’ forms, it is not surprising that those demonstratives with a high frequency of use are eroded in some way: it seems that Ayeri prefers them to stay trisyllabic, which is achieved by dropping the *nya* part.<sup>12</sup> A further reason for dropping the *nya* part especially in the inanimate demonstratives may be that it is perceived as a marker of animacy—it has been noted above already that it is related to the word *nyān* ‘person’. Both

<sup>12</sup> According to the so-called Zipf’s law, word length and token frequency correlate in that the most frequently used words in a language also tend to be the shortest (Zipf 1935: 25–27).

factors, high frequency and semantic mismatch, may thus promote contraction.

Still, the question for the reason for the high frequency especially of ᐃᐃᐃᐃ *adareng* remains open. It may be explained by looking at a few typical examples of this word in context, however.

- (95) a. *Nay ang nelyo-ikan sungkorankibas, adareng tono.*  
 Nay ang nel-yo=ikan sungkorankihas, ada-reng tono  
 and AT help-3SG.N=much geography, that-A.INAN certain  
 ‘And geography, that’s for sure, helped me a lot.’ (Becker 2015 [2013]: 13)
- b. *Adareng merambay-ikan, le sundalvāng sasān vana ...*  
 Ada-reng merambay=ikan, le sundal=vāng sasān-Ø vana ...  
 that-A.INAN useful=very, PT.INAN lose=2SG.A way-TOP 2SG.GEN ...  
 ‘It’s very useful if you get lost [...]’ (14)
- c. *Adareng danyaley segasena boa tinka.*  
 Ada-reng danya-ley segas-ena boa tinka  
 that-A.INAN such-P.INAN snake-GEN boa closed  
 ‘The one of the closed boa snake.’<sup>13</sup> (22)

In all of the example sentences in (95), ᐃᐃᐃᐃ *adareng* ‘that (one)’ serves as a dummy pronoun together with a predicative adjective or NP, which is the main reason why it occurs so frequently. This is to say, Ayeri prefers the demonstrative pronoun ᐃᐃᐃᐃ *adareng* as the dummy agent in predicative contexts over the personal pronoun ᐃᐃᐃ *reng* ‘it’. Otherwise, however, demonstrative pronouns work regularly as deictic anaphora: ‘this’, ‘that’, and ‘such (a)’, except that as nominal elements they are declined for case—but not for number or animacy, which is a notable difference between demonstrative pronouns and personal pronouns:

- (96) a. *Ang vehya Ajān nangās.*  
 Ang veh-ya Ø=Ajān nanga-as  
 AT build-3SG.M TOP=Ajān house-P  
 ‘Ajān builds a house.’
- b. *Nangās? Sa vehyāng may danya.*  
 Nanga-as? Sa veh=yāng may danya-Ø  
 house-P? PT build=3SG.M.A AFF such-TOP  
 ‘A house? He builds one indeed.’

<sup>13</sup> More literal translations of this sentence are ‘That is the one of the closed boa snake’ or ‘That is one of a closed boa snake’.

- (97) a. *Sā hasuyeng eda-migorayye.*  
*Sā hasu=yeng eda=migoray-ye-Ø*  
 CAUT sneeze=3SG.F.A this=flower-PL-TOP  
 ‘These flowers make her sneeze.’
- b. *Ang tipinyon nivaye yena adanyari naynay.*  
*Ang tipin-yon niva-ye-Ø yena adanya-ri naynay*  
 AT itch-3PL.N eye-PL-TOP 3SG.F.GEN that-CAUS as.well  
 ‘Her eyes are itching due to that/them/those [the flowers] as well.’

As mentioned in the previous chapter (p. 67), the prefix ɬ: *da-* ‘such, so’ can combine with a range of syntactic phrase types, but most notably NPs, to serve as an indefinite demonstrative:

- (98) *Adareng da-dipakanas.*  
*Adareng da=dipakan-as*  
 that-A.INAN such=pity-P  
 ‘That is such a pity.’

ɬ: *da-* can be used to express English ‘one’ in the sense of a deictic anaphora as well. Thus, to express ‘the X one’, if X is an adjective, it is strictly speaking necessary to use the full demonstrative pronoun, ɬ<sub>2</sub> *danya*, since adjectives do not decline, and Ayeri largely avoids undeclined NPs:<sup>14</sup>

- (99) a. *Silvyo danyāng kivo ku-mino-ing.*  
*Silv-yo danya-ang kivo ku=mino=ing*  
 look-3SG.N such-A little like=happy=so  
 ‘The little one looks so happy.’
- b. *Sa noyang danya tuvo.*  
*Sa no=yang danya-Ø tuvo*  
 PT want=1SG.A such-TOP red  
 ‘I want the red one.’

In language less formal than in (99b), it is also possible to abbreviate ɬ<sub>2</sub> *danya* to the prefixed form ɬ: *da-*, which may be complemented by adjectives and possessive pronouns alike (compare the discussion in ??). The adjective or pronoun basically forms a complex anaphora, then, which in most circumstances can be marked for case and topic like any other nominal element, as demonstrated in (100).

<sup>14</sup> See section 4.1.3 above for examples of situations where nouns regularly do not exhibit case marking.

Figure 4.8: Interrogative pronouns

Pronoun	Literal meaning	Idiomatic meaning
နိၤ <i>sinya</i>	which one (၁၃၃ၤ <i>nyān</i> ‘person’)	‘who’, ‘what’, ‘which’
နိၤနိၤ <i>sikan</i>	how much (နိၤနိၤ <i>ikan</i> ‘much’)	‘how much’, ‘how many’
နိၤနိၤ <i>sikay</i>	with what (နိၤနိၤ <i>kayvo</i> ‘with’)	‘how’ (tool, circumstance)
နိၤနိၤ <i>simin</i>	which way (နိၤနိၤ <i>miran</i> ‘way’)	‘how’ (way, procedure)
နိၤနိၤ <i>sitaday</i>	which time (နိၤနိၤ <i>taday</i> ‘time’)	‘when’
နိၤနိၤ <i>siyan</i>	which place (နိၤနိၤ <i>yano</i> ‘place’)	‘where’

- (100) *Sa noyang da-tuvo.*  
 Sa no=yang da=tuvo.Ø  
 PT want=1SG.A such=red.TOP  
 ‘I want the red one.’

### 4.2.3 Interrogative pronouns

The interinterrogative pronouns are all formed with *နိ si*, combined with a lexical element or a case marker; *နိ si* is also related to the relativizer *နိ si*. The interrogative pronouns are listed in Figure 4.8.

A property which all interrogative pronouns share is that they are placed *in situ*. That is, they appear in the same position as the phrase they stand in for, so there will not be movement of the question word to the front as in English. Additionally, impersonal interrogative pronouns cannot be topicalized since they also do not inflect for case, which preempts the difference between zero-marked topicalized and overtly case-marked untopicalized forms.

- (101) a. *Sa petigavāng inun sikan?*  
 Sa petiga=vāng inun-Ø sikan  
 PT catch=2SG.A fish-TOP how.much  
 ‘How much fish did you catch?’  
 b. *Sa-sahavāng sitaday?*  
 Sa~saha=vāng sitaday  
 ITER~come=2SG.A when  
 ‘When will you return?’

In the table on interrogative pronouns above, *နိၤ sinya* ‘who, what, which’ is separated from the other pronouns because it behaves differently. Namely, it can be declined for all cases according to the syntactic or semantic role of the NP it

<sup>16</sup> This may be shortened to just *ꨀꩌꨁꩃꨆꨣꩂ sinyāng adaya?* ‘who (is) there?’ (who-A there).

- b. *Ang prantoyva sinyaisa?*  
 Ang prant-oy=va.Ø sinyaisa  
 AT ask-NEG=2SG.TOP what-CAUS  
 ‘Why (= because of what) did you not ask?’

While there is no dedicated ‘why’, Ayeri distinguishes between two kinds of ‘how’: *ḥḥḥ simin* asks about the way by which—or the circumstances under which—an action is carried out, whereas *ḥḥḥ sikay* asks for the means or tools used to carry out an action:

- (104) a. *Le tiyavāng vadisān simin?*  
 Le tiya=vāng vadisān-Ø simin  
 PT.INAN make=2SG.A bread-TOP how  
 ‘How do you make bread?’
- b. *Le peralvāng sagan sikay?*  
 Le peral=vāng sagan-Ø sikay  
 PT.INAN grind=2SG.A flour-TOP how  
 ‘How do you grind flour?’

The correct answer to the question in (104a) needs to treat the process of making bread, since *ḥḥḥ simin* asks about the way; a correct answer to the question in (104b), on the other hand, will likely mention grinding utensils, like a mill or a pestle. Even though Ayeri possesses an instrumental case which can be used in a comitative way, note the conflation of that and the preposition of accompaniment, *ḥḥḥ kayvo*, in this case (see section 4.1.3).

Comparing Tables 4.8 and 4.9, it may strike the reader’s eye that there are two possibilities to express ‘where’—lexical *ḥḥḥ siyan* and synthetic *ḥḥḥ sinyaya*. It is important to note, however, that these are not strictly interchangeable, even though some variation is to be expected. While *ḥḥḥ siyan* refers to *places* in general, the *ḥḥḥ sinyaya* series refers to *entities* both animate and inanimate more specifically:

- (105) a. *Saravāng siyan?* — *Ya Sikatay.*  
 Sara=vāng siyan — Ya=Sikatay  
 go=2SG.A where — LOC=Sikatay  
 ‘“Where are you going?”—“To Sikatay.”’
- b. *Ya divvāng sinyaya?* — *Ya Haki.*  
 Ya div=vāng sinyaya-Ø — Ya=Haki  
 LOCT stay=2SG.A who-TOP — LOC=Haki  
 ‘“Where are you staying?”—“At Haki’s”’



#### 4.2.4 Indefinite pronouns

Haspelmath (1997: 56) notes how descriptions of languages often do not document indefinite pronouns—whether they simply do not exist in this language or whether they escaped the author’s attention remains unknown in these cases. It may thus be duly noted here that Ayeri does indeed possess indefinite pronouns.<sup>17</sup> In order to classify languages, Haspelmath generalizes the map displayed in Figure 4.10 based on a sample of 100 languages from all continents, although he notes that this sample has a European bias due to the availability of data (2). Languages typically form contiguous areas on the map, even though they may carve it up quite differently, and with overlaps between the different semantic groupings 1–9.

An interesting question that Haspelmath poses towards the end of his book is whether there are any correlations between word order typology and the preference for generic nouns (‘person’, ‘thing’, ‘place’, ‘time’, ‘manner’) or, for instance, interrogative-based systems (239–241). While from Haspelmath’s concluding statistics it looks as though there is a slight preference of languages with which Ayeri shares basic typological traits—such as verb-initial, verb-object, and noun-genitive word order, also having prepositions—for basing indefinite pronouns on generic nouns, Haspelmath concedes that these seeming correlations are skewed by areal effects, “because indefinite pronouns have a strongly areal distribution” (241).<sup>18</sup> He still presumes, however, that word-order typology may have an effect on the formation of indefinites insofar as it correlates with grammaticalization more generally (239).

Haspelmath mentions generic nouns, and these can be combined with the quantifying expressions ‘every’, ‘any’, ‘some’, and ‘none’ into an array like the one presented in Figure 4.11. Ayeri does not distinguish ‘every’ from ‘any’ as English does; there is also no distinction in polarity (affirmative versus negative) the way English has it:

- (106) a. \*I don’t know something about this.  
b. I don’t know anything about this.

<sup>17</sup> As it is a fictional language, the value of this assertion to linguistic typology remains doubtful, however.

<sup>18</sup> The map in *WALS*, Haspelmath (2013), suggests areal clusters at least for generic-noun based systems in Africa and Southeast Asia. *WALS* classifies 194 out of 326 languages (60%) as possessing interrogative-based indefinite pronouns to date, with evidence for this type quoted for all continents except Africa. The next smaller group, generic-noun based, falls behind at 85 data points (26%). The curious lack of evidence for the interrogative type in Africa despite its being the most frequent one in the set on all other continents may be due to the unavailability of data. Crossreferencing the *WALS* data for constituent-order with the map on indefinite-pronoun systems did not yield a result which obviously suggested a correlation.

Figure 4.10: The implicational map for indefinite pronoun functions (Haspelmath 1997: 4)

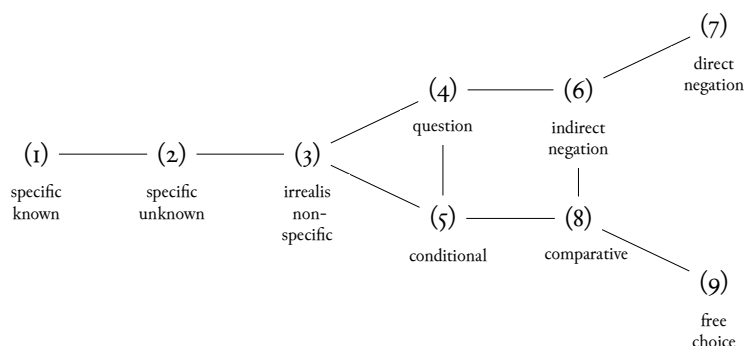


Figure 4.11: Indefinite pronouns

	every	some	none
PERSON	enya	arilinya	ranya
THING	enya	arilinya, arilya	ranya
PLACE	yanen	yāril	yanoy
TIME	tadayen	tajaril; metay	tadoy; jānyam
MANNER	arēn	miranaril	are moy
REASON	—	yāril	—

Likewise, Ayeri does not distinguish between animate and inanimate indefinite referents—the same pronouns are used for either, although the shortening of *arilinya*, *arilya*, can only be used for inanimates, similar to the distinction in the demonstrative pronouns between *adanyāng* ‘that one’ (that.one-A) and *adareng* ‘that one’ (that.one-A.INAN; see section 4.2.2). Two further features stand out, however.

Firstly, most of the pronouns in the chart have a lexical part—Ayeri’s indefinite pronouns are based on generic nouns. Thus, the pronouns referring to people and things all have the *-nya* element in common, which we also find in the interrogative and demonstrative pronouns, and which also appears in the word *nyān* ‘person’. In the same way, the pronouns related to the notion of place have a *ya-* or *yan-* part, which we also find in *yano* ‘place’.<sup>19</sup> In a regular continuation of this pattern, the indefinite pronouns of time all have an element related to *taday* ‘time’ in common, which is obscured somewhat by palatalization in *tajaril*. The exception to this series, then, is *jānyam*, which is the multiplicative

<sup>19</sup> *yano* itself is an old nominalization and very likely related as a morpheme to the locative suffix *-ya*.

numeral formed from  $\text{ja}$  ‘zero’, thus means ‘zero times’ or ‘not once’ rather than ‘never’, although it can also be used emphatically for the latter. The series of manner pronouns is an absolute exception in that it must be a residue from an older layer of grammaticalization since  $\text{are-}$  is not a recognizable morpheme in the modern language.<sup>20</sup>  $\text{miranaril}$  is a regular formation of  $\text{miran}$  ‘way, manner’ combined with the quantifier (!) for indefinite amounts,  $\text{-aril}$  ‘some’.

This observation leads to the second regular feature, that is, affixes as modifiers to generic nouns. The ‘every’ series regularly features the morpheme  $\text{en}$ , either prefixed or suffixed, which is related to the quantifier  $\text{-ben}$  ‘every, all, each’ and can presumably be found even on  $\text{arēn}$  in spite of its obscure lexical base. In the same manner, the series related to inspecific generic-noun referents is marked by the affix  $\text{aril}$  which, as we have just seen above, is otherwise used to refer to inspecific quantities, for instance,  $\text{vadisān-aril}$  ‘some bread’ (bread=some). In the case of  $\text{miranaril}$ , the suffix seems somewhat of an odd choice, since manner is not a quantifiable variable in the same way people, things, locations or moments are. Possibly, it is chosen rather in analogy with the other pronouns in this series than on semantic grounds. In any event,  $\text{metay}$  has the semantically more ‘proper’  $\text{me-}$  prefix, relating it to absolute inspecificity.<sup>21</sup> This alternation is employed to distinguish between the meaning of ‘sometime’, that is, occurring once an unspecified point in time, and  $\text{tajaril}$  ‘sometimes’, which refers to repeated occurrence at inspecific times. The alternation between  $\text{miranaril}$  and regularly derived  $\text{mə-miran}$  can be leveraged to express a specificity difference as well. While the former suggests that an action is carried out or an event is happening by means of a specific, though unknown procedure, the latter suggests just any possible procedure. Lastly, the negative series is regularly marked by the negative suffix  $\text{-oy}$ , which also occurs with adjectives and verbs (see sections 4.3.2 and 4.5.4). An outlier in this series is the person/thing-related indefinite pronoun,  $\text{ranya}$ . The etymologic connections of the  $\text{ra}$  part are not presently known, perhaps the postposition  $\text{ran}$  ‘against’ is related.

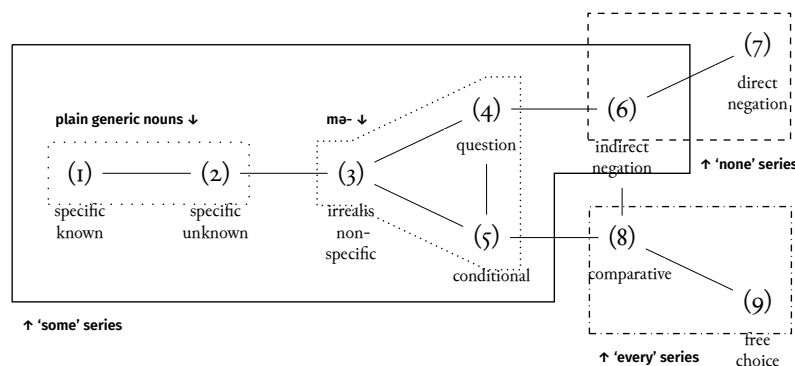
The chart in Figure 4.11 only tells half the truth by not giving any information on use contexts for the individual forms, so how do they fit in with the chart from Haspelmath (1997) quoted at the beginning of this section? Regarding the functions of indefinite pronouns annotated to the numbers on the map, he gives the following examples, which, however, mostly only give one example for either the ‘person’ or ‘thing’ category at a time. It is up to the reader to generalize from this (2–3):<sup>22</sup>

<sup>20</sup> I probably made this up as I was going, many years ago, and without considering systematic implications, as I was unaware of them at the time.

<sup>21</sup> Compare German *irgendjemand* and French *n’importe qui* ‘no matter who’.

<sup>22</sup> These appear here reordered according to numerical order. The book lists them according to

Figure 4.12: Map of indefinite pronoun functions in Ayeri



- (107)
1. specific, known to the speaker:  
*Somebody called while you were away: guess who!*
  2. specific, unknown to the speaker:  
*I heard something, but I couldn't tell what kind of sound it was.*
  3. non-specific, irrealis:  
*Please try somewhere else.*
  4. polar question:  
*Did anybody tell you anything about it?*
  5. conditional protasis:  
*If you see anything, tell me immediately.*
  6. indirect negation:  
*I don't think that anybody knows the answer.*
  7. direct negation:  
*Nobody knows the answer.*
  8. standard of comparison:  
*In Freiburg the weather is nicer than anywhere in Germany.*
  9. free choice:  
*Anybody can solve this simple problem.*

As we have seen in Figure 4.11 above, Ayeri does not make a difference between 'every' and 'any', which is why the 'some' series can be applied to all of (1)–(5); it can also be used for indirect negation (6). The pronouns from the 'none' column, then, are used to express direct negation (7). Since double negation—that is, agreement in negation between verbs and indefinite pronouns for purposes of emphasis rather than double negation in the strictly logical sense—is possible, the 'none' series may also be employed for indirect negation (6). Moreover, Ayeri uses the 'every' series

their logical order as tracing the map, the enumeration somewhat confusingly tied in with the running enumeration of examples.

for both standard of comparison (8) and free choice (9). Besides this, absolute-indefinite 𐄢 *me-* can be used for (3)–(6) in combination with a (generic) noun to attach to. It needs to be noted that only the indefinite pronouns with person or thing reference (those including 𐄢 *nya*) decline; they can also be topicalized. The other indefinites, relating to place, time and manner, are indeclinable and also cannot be topics for this reason. For the ‘specific’ categories (1) and (2) it is furthermore possible to use the plain generic nouns, 𐄢𐄢 *nyān* ‘person’, 𐄢𐄢𐄢 *linya* ‘thing’, 𐄢𐄢𐄢 *yano* ‘place’, 𐄢𐄢𐄢 *taday* ‘time’, 𐄢𐄢𐄢 *miran* ‘way’, however. Figure 4.12 shows the groupings for Ayeri; (108) gives examples of all types.

(108) 1. specific, known to the speaker:

- a. *Ang sabaya arilinya, leku, sinyāng adaley!*  
 Ang saha-ya arilinya-Ø lek-u sinyā-ang ada-ley  
 AT come-3SG.M someone-TOP, guess-IMP who-A that-P.INAN  
 ‘Someone came, guess who it is!’
- b. *Le ilta ningyang linya vayam.*  
 Le ilta ning=yang linya-Ø vayam  
 PT.INAN need tell=1SG.A thing-TOP 2SG.DAT  
 ‘I need to tell you something.’

2. specific, unknown to the speaker:

- a. *Ang pegaya arilinya pangisley nā.*  
 Ang pega-ya arilinya-Ø pangis-ley nā  
 AT steal-3SG.M someone-TOP money-P.INAN 1SG.GEN  
 ‘Someone stole my money.’
- b. *Ang saratang yano ya agon.*  
 Ang sara=tang yano-ya agon  
 AT go=3PL.M.A place-LOC foreign  
 ‘They are going somewhere foreign.’

3. non-specific, irrealis:

- a. *Pinyan, prantu yāril palung.*  
 Pinyan prant-u yāril palung  
 Please ask-IMP somewhere different  
 ‘Please ask somewhere else.’
- b. *Le ilta miranang adanya mā-miraneri palung.*  
 Le ilta mira=nang adanya-Ø mā=miran-eri palung  
 PT.INAN need do=1SG.A that.one-TOP some=way-INS different  
 ‘We need to do that in some other way.’

4. polar question:

- a. *Ang koronva arilinyaley edanyana?*  
 Ang koron=va.Ø arilinya-ley edanya-na  
 AT know=2SG.TOP something-P.INAN this.one-GEN

‘Do you know anything about this?’

- b. *Yomaya mǎ-nyānang si ang vaca mirongya edanyaley?*  
 Yoma-ya mǎ=nyān-ang si ang vaca mira-ong=ya.Ø edanya-ley  
 exist-3SG.M some=person-A REL AT like do-IRR=3SG.M.TOP this-P.INAN

‘Is there *anyone* who would like to do this?’

5. conditional protasis:

- a. *Ang ming pengalayn sitanyās yāril, adareng pray-ven.*  
 Ang ming pengal=ayn.Ø sitanya-as yāril ada-reng pray=ven  
 AT can meet-IPL.TOP each.other-P somewhere that-A.INAN great=pretty

‘If we can meet somewhere that would be pretty great.’

- b. *Sa na-naravāng mǎ-lentan, ang haray vās!*  
 Sa na~nara=vāng mǎ=lentan-Ø ang har=ay.Ø vās  
 PT ITER~say=2SG.A some=sound-TOP AT punch-1SG.TOP 2SG.P

‘You make any more sound, I’m gonna punch you!’

6. indirect negation:

- a. *Paronoyyang, ang no tabaya arilinya adaley.*  
 Paron-oy=yang ang no taha-ya arilinya-Ø ada-ley  
 believe-NEG=1SG.A AT want have-3SG.M anyone-TOP that-P.INAN

‘I don’t think anyone wants to have that.’

- b. *Paronoyyang, le ming sungvāng adanya yanoy.*  
 Paron-oy=yang le ming sung=vāng adanya-Ø yanoy  
 believe-NEG=1SG.A PT.INAN can find=2SG.A that.one=TOP nowhere

‘I don’t think you can find that *anywhere*.’

7. direct negation:

- a. *Ang koronya ranya guratanley.*  
 Ang koron-ya ranya-Ø guratan-ley  
 AT know-3SG.M nobody-TOP answer-P.INAN

‘Nobody knows the answer.’

- b. *Le ming sungvāng adanya yanoy.*  
 Le ming sung=vāng adanya-Ø yanoy  
 PT.INAN can find=2SG.A that.one=TOP nowhere

‘You can’t find that anywhere.’

8. standard of comparison:

Figure 4.13: Relative pronouns

Case	Pronoun	Pronoun with secondary inflection				
		DAT	GEN	LOC	CAUS	INS
Ø	si	siyām	sinā	siyā	sisā	sirī
A	sang	sangyam	sangena	sangya	sangisa	sangeri
A.INAN	sireng	sirengyam	sirengena	sirengya	sirengisa	sirengeri
P	sas	sasyam	sasena	sasya	sasisa	saseri
P.INAN	siley	sileyyam	sileyena	sileyya	sileyisa	sileyeri
DAT	siyam	siyamyam	siyamena	siyamyā	siyamisa	siyameri
GEN	sina/sena	sinayam	sinana	sinaya	sinaisa	sinari
LOC	siya	siyayam	siyana	siyaya	siyaisa	siyari
CAUS	sisā	sisayam	sisana	sisaya	sisaisa	sisari
INS	seri	seriyam	serina	seriya	serīsa	seriri

- a. *Sa engyeng larau enya palung.*  
 Sa eng=yeng larau enya-Ø palung  
 PT be.more=3SG.F.A nice anyone different

‘She is nicer than anyone else.’

- b. *Ang engyo ban eda-riman yanen palung.*  
 Ang eng-yo ban eda=riman-Ø yanen palung  
 AT be.more=3SG.N good this=city-TOP anywhere different

‘This city is better than anywhere else.’

9. free choice:

- a. *Ang ming guraca enya eda-prantanley.*  
 Ang ming gurat-ya enya-Ø eda=prantan-ley  
 AT can answer=3SG.M anyone-TOP this=question-P.INAN

‘Anyone can answer this question.’

- b. *Epayeng tadayen si sa pinyaya ye ang Tapan.*  
 Epa=yeng tadayen si sa pinya-ya ye ang=Tapan  
 refuse=3SG.F.A everytime REL PT ask=3SG.M 3SG.F.TOP A=Tapan

‘She refused everytime Tapan asked her.’

#### 4.2.5 Relative pronouns

As has been described before, Ayeri connects relative clauses to main clauses with the relativizer ꞑ *si*. This relativizer can be declined for case in accordance to the

Table 4.3: Token frequencies of attested complex relative pronouns

Pronoun	Gloss	Absolute
<i>siyā</i>	REL.Ø.LOC	7
<i>sirī</i>	REL.Ø.INS	3
<i>sinā</i>	REL.Ø.GEN	1
<i>siyām</i>	REL.Ø.DAT	1
Total		12

relative clause's head in the matrix clause. The respective forms can be gathered from Figure 4.13 (column 'Pronoun').

- (109) a. *Eryyo tarela natrangās si tado.*  
 Ery-yo tarela natranga-as si tado  
 use-3SG.N still temple-P REL old  
 'The temple, which is old, is still being used.'
- b. *Edanyāng ayonas sirtang sas ang sihabaya mondoas nana.*  
 Edanya-ang ayon-as sirtang si-as ang sihaba=ya mondo-as nana  
 this-A man-P young REL-P ang tend=3SG.M.TOP garden-P IPL.GEN  
 'This is the young man who tends our garden.'

As explained in section 3.3, if the relativizer is immediately following its lexical head, only the base form *si* is used, which is illustrated in (109a). Here, the head of the relative clause is *natrangās* 'the temple', which is immediately followed by the relative clause. If word material is intervening, however, which is the case in (109b), the relative pronoun may be inflected to agree in case with its antecedent in more formal language for referential clarity: *sas* agrees in case with *ayonas* two words over to the left. Relative pronouns do not agree in number with their heads, though, and in gender only insofar as it is relevant to nominal case inflection, that is, agents and patients are distinguished for animacy.

A special property of the relative pronoun is that it can be declined for its role in the relative clause as well to express more complex relationships between the main clause and the relative clause. The respective forms can be found in the columns titled 'Pronoun with secondary inflection' in Figure 4.13. The token frequency of the actually occurring complex relative pronouns in the very small corpus gathered from example texts and dictionary entries (see section 1.2) is given in Table 4.3.

Compared to the unmarked relativizer *si*, which occurs 50 times in the sample (all relative pronouns from Figure 4.13 occur 80 times in total), the complex relative pronouns have a very low frequency. This is not surprising, since 'for whom', 'by which', etc. are quite specialized expressions. It also seems that those forms un-



marked for their antecedent are preferred, since those are the only ones attested—the sample is really much too small to make actually meaningful judgements here, however. Examples of complex relative pronouns are:

- (110) a. *Le vacyang koya yana sileyya ang layāy adanyana.*  
 Le vac=yang koya-Ø yana si-ley-ya ang laya=ay.Ø adanya-na  
 PT.INAN like=ISG.A book-TOP 3SG.M.GEN REL-P.INAN-LOC A read=ISG.TOP that-GEN  
 ‘I like his book in which I read about it.’
- b. *Ya saratang yano siyām sarasatang.*  
 Ya sara=tang yano-Ø si-Ø-yām sara-asa=tang  
 LOCT go=3PL.M.A place-TOP REL-LOC-DAT go-HAB=3PL.M.A  
 ‘They went to the place to which they always went.’

It needs to be pointed out that a complex relative pronoun cannot form the topic of the relative clause even though it is marked for case according to the relative clause’s syntactic domain. Furthermore, the relative pronoun cannot receive inflection for an agent or a patient of the embedded clause. The following examples illustrate these points:

- (111) \**Mica edaya sobayāng si (ʔsī) na ibayang koyaley.*  
 Mit-ya edaya sobaya-ang si-Ø-Ø na iha=yang koya-ley  
 live-3SG.M here teacher-A REL-A-TOP GENT borrow=ISG.A book-P.INAN  
 ‘Here lives the teacher from whom I borrowed a book.’
- (112) \**Mica edaya sobayāng sāng le sobya payutān yām.*  
 Mit-ya edaya sobaya-ang si-Ø-ang le sob-ya payutān-Ø yām  
 live-3SG.M here teacher-A REL-A-A PT.INAN teach-3SG.M math-TOP ISG.DAT  
 ‘Here lives the teacher who taught me math.’
- (113) \**Mica edaya sobayāng sās ya kradasayang kardang.*  
 Mit-ya edaya sobaya-ang si-Ø-as ya krad-asa=yang kardang-Ø  
 live-3SG.M here teacher-A REL-A-P LOCT hate-HAB=ISG.A school-TOP  
 ‘Here lives the teacher whom I used to hate in school.’

Example (111) displays a sentence in which the relative pronoun relative clause: *na* as a genitive topic is supposed to refer to ungrammatically forms the controller of topic agreement on the verb in the *ḡayn* *sobayāng* in the matrix clause by way of the relativizer *ḡ si* which would then necessarily carry a zero-morpheme topic marker. There is no resumptive pronoun in the relative clause, so the relative pronoun itself forms the anaphora in the relative clause referring to the relativized argument of the matrix clause. This is not possible.

In example (112), the relative pronoun \*ṣṛ \*sāng carries no overt case agreement as it directly follows its antecedent (\*ṣṛṣṛ \*sangang otherwise) but the long vowel shows that it is declined as the agent of the relative clause; the verb agrees using ṣṛ -ya accordingly. There is no resumptive agent pronoun, so the relative pronoun would stand in for the agent NP that would be necessary if the relative clause were an independent sentence. The use of the relative pronoun as an agent-NP replacement in this sentence is equally ungrammatical, though, and so is the agreement between verb and declined relative pronoun.

Similarly, in (113), the relative pronoun carries case marking for the patient of the relative clause, since the agent of the matrix clause serves as the patient NP of the embedded clause. This is not grammatical either.

Altogether, it seems that in Ayeri, core arguments of intransitive and transitive clauses—agents and patients—cannot precede the embedded verb of a relative clause; the verb firmly forms the head of the embedded clause in this regard. The relative pronoun also cannot receive secondary marking for agents and patients and stand in directly as the agent and patient NP of the relative clause, respectively. It is interesting in this regard that Ayeri *does* allow this for recipients, however, maybe since by their nature as goals they carry something of a locative connotation (compare (110b)) and are thus less tightly integrated with verbs, occupying a middle ground between core arguments and adverbials like the locative proper.<sup>23</sup>

#### 4.2.6 Reflexives and reciprocals

As mentioned previously, Ayeri forms its reflexives with the prefix ṣṛṣṛ: *sitang-* in combination with a personal pronoun, compare (114). If the agent of the action is the same as the reflexive patient—that is, the agent acts on itself—the reflexive prefix can also migrate onto the verb instead, which is demonstrated in (115).

- (114) *Ang silvye sitang=yes puluyya.*  
 Ang silv=ye.Ø sitang=yes puluy-ya  
 AT see=3SG.F.TOP self=3SG.F.P mirror-LOC

‘She sees herself in the mirror.’

- (115) *Ang sitang-silvye puluyya.*  
 Ang sitang=silv=ye.Ø puluy-ya  
 AT self=see=3SG.F.TOP mirror-LOC

‘She sees herself in the mirror.’

<sup>23</sup> This would be interesting to explore in terms of grammaticalization, as it is very possible that this behavior reflects a stage of the language before ṣṛ -yam had been grammaticalized as the dative marker. In this respect, it would as well be necessary to explore whether the similarity between the dative marker ṣṛ -yam and the locative marker ṣṛ -ya is indeed etymological or merely incidental.

Doing the same with a non-patient pronoun does not work, however, so the sentence in (115) with the reflexive  $\text{ႱႱႱ}$ : *sitang* marked on the verb is not equivalent to the following one, in which  $\text{ႱႱႱ}$ : *sitang*- appears together with a personal pronoun in the locative case, even though here as well, the agent and the locative pronoun refer to the same entity:

- (116) *Ang silvye sitang-yea puluyya.*  
 Ang silv=ye.Ø sitang=yea puluy-ya  
 AT look=3SG.F.TOP self=3SG.F.LOC mirror-LOC  
 ‘She looks at herself in the mirror.’

It may be noted furthermore that the genitive/possessive pronoun series conveys the meaning of ‘one’s own’, which is completely regular in meaning (‘of X-self’), however:

- (117) *Le no eryongyang pakay sitang-nā.*  
 Le no ery-ong=yang pakay-Ø sitang=nā  
 PT.INAN want use-IRR=1SG.A umbrella-TOP self=1SG.GEN  
 ‘I’d like to use my own umbrella.’

Besides reflexive pronouns, Ayeri also has a reciprocal pronoun,  $\text{ႱႱႱႱ}$  *sitanya* ‘each other’. This pronoun acts the same as other pronouns and can be inflected according to its function in the clause:

- (118) a. *Ang narayan Ajān nay Pila sitanyaya.*  
 Ang nara-yan Ø=Ajān nay Ø=Pila sitanya-ya  
 AT talk-3PL.M TOP=Ajān and TOP=Pila each.other-LOC  
 ‘Ajān and Pila talk to each other.’  
 b. *Sa ming tangtang sitanya.*  
 Sa ming tang=tang sitanya-Ø  
 PT can hear=3PL.M.A each.other-TOP  
 ‘They can hear each other.’

### 4.3 Adjectives

Adjectives are one of the parts of speech in Ayeri which do not inflect for any of the grammatical properties of their heads, that is, there is no agreement relation between adjectives and nominal heads. They do inflect for comparison under certain circumstances, however, and can also take various affixes that modify the meaning of the adjective stem.

### 4.3.1 Comparison

In cases where a comparee is left unexpressed or the patient forms the standard of comparison, Ayeri uses clitic suffixes on adjectives. The suffixes involved are ၵၢ -*eng* (COMP) and ၵၢ -*vā* (SUPL):

- (119) a. *Yeng ganyena men si alingo-eng.*  
 Yeng gan-ye-na men si alingo=eng  
 3SG.F.A child-PL-GEN one REL clever=COMP  
 ‘She is one of the more clever children.’
- b. *Ang tavya Diyan tingracas ban-eng na Maha.*  
 Ang tav-ya Ø=Diyan tingrati-as ban=eng na=Maha  
 AT become-3SG.M TOP=Diyan musician-P good=COMP GEN=Maha  
 ‘Diyan became a better musician than Maha.’
- c. *Garatang, yāng pokamayās para-vā.*  
 Gara=tang, yāng pokamaya-as para=vā  
 name=3PL.M.A, 3SG.M.A shooter-P fast=SUPL  
 ‘They named him the fastest shooter.’

In (119a) the comparee is missing, while in (119b), the quality under comparison, ၵၢ ၵၢ *tingracas ban-eng* ‘a better musician’, is a patient NP; the standard, ၵၢ *Maha*, is expressed by an adverbial genitive NP. The example in (119c) similarly expresses an absolute without giving a group of entities to draw from. In all these cases, it is, however, also possible to use a more complex analytic construction using verbs which will be covered at a later point.

### 4.3.2 Negation

Adjectives in Ayeri can be negated in two ways: categorially with ၵၢ -*arya*, and pragmatically with ၵၢ -*oy*. These correspond to English *un-*, and *in-*, *il-*, *ir-* etc. for categorial negation, and to *not* for pragmatic negation. ၵၢ -*oy* absorbs the vowel of the root it is attached to if said root ends in a vowel.

- (120) *Telbaya miseryanang ku-ardārya.*  
 Telba-ya miseryan-ang ku=arda-arya  
 show-3SG.M method-A like=suitable-NEG  
 ‘The method proved unsuitable.’
- (121) *Pakoy eda-yanoreng.*  
 Paka-oy eda=yano-reng  
 safe-NEG this=place-A.INAN  
 ‘This place is not safe.’

Example (120) displays an adjective which carries the categorial negation marker :ဆ် -*arya*; the adjective in (121) carries the simple, pragmatic negation marker :အို -*oy*. Which one to use is up to the speaker, since both negate the described property. The categorial marker puts an emphasis more on expressing a general opposite, while the pragmatic marker simply negates, so that it is not necessarily implied that the negative state persists. The place that is ကုန် *pakoy* ‘not safe’ now is not necessarily ကုန် *pakārya* ‘unsafe’ in general, but simply not safe in the context of the here and now of the utterance.

Besides *ad hoc* derivation of categorial negatives with :ဆ် -*arya*, there are also a few lexicalized instances. These have an idiomatic meaning and the negator or the word itself may be irregularly reduced. Examples are, among others:

- (122) a. ခု *ban* ‘good’ → ခု *banaya* ‘ill, sick’  
 b. ကွန် *kovaro* ‘easy’ → ကွန် *kovarya* ‘awkward’  
 c. ခိမ် *sirimang* ‘straight’ → ခိမ် *sirimaya* ‘passive’

#### 4.3.3 Adjectivization

Adjectives in Ayeri are very commonly zero derivations, that is, there is rather free conversion between nouns and adjectives,<sup>24</sup> for instance:

- (123) a. ခိမ် *Ayeri* ‘Ayeri’ ~ ခိမ် *Ayeri* ‘Ayeri’  
 b. ခိမ် *disa* ‘soap, lye’ ~ ခိမ် *disa* ‘soapy, alkaline’  
 c. ခိမ် *gino* ‘drink’ ~ ခိမ် *gino* ‘drunk’  
 d. ကုန် *pahamay* ‘danger’ ~ ကုန် *pahamay* ‘dangerous’  
 e. ခိမ် *sempay* ‘peace’ ~ ခိမ် *sempay* ‘peaceful’

Adjectives can also be derived from verbs with the causative suffix :ဆ် -*isa*, which often corresponds to adjectives derived from the past participle form—the meaning is often, but not necessarily, relating to an achieved state. The suffix may change the last vowel to ခိ *u* or drop it; a specific pattern to these changes is not recognizable. The derivations may be idiomatic occasionally, as some derivations in the example below show.

- (124) a. ကွန် *kelang-* ‘connect’ → ကွန် *kelangisu* ‘connected, related’  
 b. ကွန် *palung-* ‘distinguish’ → ကွန် *palungisa* ‘various’  
 c. ခိမ် *sundala-* ‘lose’ → ခိမ် *sundalisu* ‘lost’  
 d. ခိမ် *taban-* ‘write’ → ခိမ် *tabanis* ‘literary’  
 e. ခိမ် *vesa-* ‘give birth’ → ခိမ် *vesisa* ‘native’

<sup>24</sup> Adjectives and split-off modifiers in noun–noun compounds are thus similar at least superficially.

There are also at least two words where an *-isa* adjective is derived not from a verb, but a word of a different part of speech—in this case, a noun, and another adjective:

- (125) a. *ṣṣin* ‘luck’ → *ṣṣinisa* ‘lucky’  
 b. *iray* ‘high’ → *irayisu* ‘exalting’

#### 4.3.4 Other affixes

As with nouns, other affixes which can be attached to adjectives as clitic hosts, are the prefix *ku-*, expressing semblance, as well as quantifying and grading suffixes, of which the suffixes used to express comparative and superlative are, essentially, a grammaticalized variety, since *-eng* can also be used like ‘rather’.

- (126) *Paray-parayang ku-pikisu*  
*Paray~paray-ang ku=pikisu*  
 DIM~cat-A like=scared

‘The kitten is like scared.’

- (127) *Eda-prikanreng napay-eng*  
*Eda=prikan-reng napay=eng*  
 this=soup-A.INAN spicy=rather

‘This soup is rather spicy.’

## 4.4 Adpositions

Adpositions are another part of speech in Ayeri whose stem itself does not inflect. Ayeri’s most basic adpositions are derived from relational nouns, which is likely the reason why Ayeri mostly employs prepositions, with postpositions and ambipositions being less important placement patterns (Hagège 2010: 110–111; Lehmann 2015: 81 ff.). Adpositions in their most basic use trigger locative marking on the governed NP, the prepositional object; for allative and ablative meanings, the prepositional object may also appear in the dative and the genitive case, respectively, as described in section 4.1.3.<sup>25</sup> The cognitive metaphor ‘time equals space’ with the future conceptualized as lying ahead and the past behind also holds in Ayeri, so that some of the words describing locations also double to describe temporal relations.

Figure 4.14: Prepositions (simple)

	Preposition	Etymology (or related to)
ᐱᐱᐱᐱ	<i>agonan</i>	outside
ᐱᐱᐱ	<i>avan</i>	bottom, ground
ᐱᐱᐱᐱ	<i>eyran</i>	under, below
ᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱ	<i>eyrarya</i>	over
ᐱᐱᐱᐱ	<i>kayvo</i>	with, beside <sup>26</sup>
ᐱᐱᐱ	<i>kong</i>	inside, within
ᐱᐱᐱ	<i>ling</i>	on
ᐱᐱᐱ	<i>luga</i>	among, between
ᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱ	<i>mangasaba</i>	towards, in + time
ᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱ	<i>mangasara</i>	away
ᐱᐱᐱᐱ	<i>marin</i>	front, on (walls etc.)
ᐱᐱᐱᐱ	<i>miday</i>	around
ᐱᐱᐱ	<i>nasay</i>	near, close
ᐱᐱᐱᐱ	<i>nuveng</i>	left
ᐱᐱᐱ	<i>pang</i>	behind, ago
ᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱ	<i>patameng</i>	right
ᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱ	<i>agonan</i>	‘outside’
ᐱᐱᐱᐱ	<i>avan</i>	‘ground, bottom; soil’
ᐱᐱᐱᐱ	<i>eyran</i>	‘sole’
ᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱ	<i>eyran</i>	‘sole’ + ᐱᐱᐱᐱ - <i>arya</i> (NEG)
ᐱᐱᐱᐱ	<i>kayv-</i>	‘accompany’
ᐱᐱᐱᐱ	<i>kong</i>	‘inside’
ᐱᐱᐱᐱ	<i>ling</i>	‘top’
ᐱᐱᐱᐱ	<i>luga-</i>	‘pass, penetrate’
ᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱ	<i>manga saba-</i>	‘coming’
ᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱ	<i>manga sara-</i>	‘going’
ᐱᐱᐱᐱ	<i>marin</i>	‘face, surface’
ᐱᐱᐱᐱ	<i>miday-</i>	‘surround’
ᐱᐱᐱᐱ	<i>nasay</i>	‘proximity’
ᐱᐱᐱᐱ	<i>nuho</i>	‘liver’
ᐱᐱᐱᐱ	<i>pang</i>	‘back’
ᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱ	<i>patam</i>	‘heart’

#### 4.4.1 Prepositions

Figure 4.14 gives all the words in Ayeri which may be used as prepositions. As mentioned above, most of these are derived transparently from nouns, so they have probably been grammaticalized relatively recently—their non-preposition meaning is still transparent, they are still phonologically rather complex, and some of them are even polysyllabic in spite of not being composed and covering rather basic meanings.<sup>27</sup> Since these nouns have ceased to function as common nouns, however, it is

<sup>25</sup> Even a prolativ use together with the instrumental is thinkable.

<sup>26</sup> There is also a preposition ᐱᐱᐱᐱ *dayrin* ‘side’ listed in the dictionary, however, this has never seen much use. Instead, ᐱᐱᐱᐱ *kayvo* has come to cover ‘beside, to the side of’ as well.

<sup>27</sup> Unsurprisingly, Hagège (2010: 129) references Zipf regarding speech economy and token frequency. According to Lehmann (2015: 134–141), the phonological integrity of morphemic units reduces as grammaticalization is progressing (with token frequency increasing due to increasing obligatoriness). Bybee and Hopper (2001) see the reason for phonological reduction of highly frequent phonological material “in the automatization of neuro-motor sequences [...]”. Such reductions are systematic across speakers; that is, they do not represent ‘sloppy’ or ‘lazy’ speech” (11). Hence, for example, English’s most basic prepositions are extremely short and simple words, for instance, *of*, *at*, *in*, which derive from the slightly more complex PIE forms *\*h<sub>2</sub>ep-ó*, *\*h<sub>2</sub>ed*, *\*h<sub>1</sub>en(-i)*, respectively (Kroonen 2013: 1, 39, 269). Since adpositions frequently grammaticalize into case markers, it may be assumed that the phonologically much more sim-

<sup>28</sup> The corresponding sentence with a preposition is Ⴓၿၵၼၾၴၤၶၢၽၺၸၪၮၦၷ Le yomareng kanka ling rivanya ‘There is snow on top of the mountain’ (PT.INAN exist=3SG.INAN.A SNOW-TOP top mountain-LOC).



- (133) *Ang mitasaye pang-ikan mandayya tado.*  
 Ang mit-asa=ye.Ø pang=ikan manday-ya tado  
 AT live-HAB=3SG.F.TOP back=much forum-LOC old  
 ‘She used to live way behind the old forum.’

Figure 4.15: Prepositions (dynamic)

Preposition	<i>manga</i> + PREP
ᄇᄇᄇᄇ <i>agonan</i> ‘outside’	out
ᄇᄇᄇᄇ <i>avan</i> ‘at bottom’	to the bottom; <i>with</i> DAT/GEN: down to/from
ᄇᄇᄇᄇ <i>eyran</i> ‘under’	under
ᄇᄇᄇᄇ <i>eyrarya</i> ‘over’	across, over
ᄇᄇᄇᄇ <i>kayvo</i> ‘with, beside’	along
ᄇᄇᄇᄇ <i>kong</i> ‘inside’	into
ᄇᄇᄇᄇ <i>ling</i> ‘on top’	onto, while; <i>with</i> DAT/GEN: up to/from
ᄇᄇᄇᄇ <i>luga</i> ‘between’	through, during, for + <i>time</i>
ᄇᄇᄇᄇ <i>marin</i> ‘in front’	to the front
ᄇᄇᄇᄇ <i>miday</i> ‘around’	circling around
ᄇᄇᄇᄇ <i>nasay</i> ‘near’	into the near
ᄇᄇᄇᄇ <i>nuveng</i> ‘left’	to the left
ᄇᄇᄇᄇ <i>pang</i> ‘behind’	behind, to the back
ᄇᄇᄇᄇ <i>patameng</i> ‘right’	to the right

As demonstrated before, another quasi-inflection adpositions in Ayeri can carry is the dynamic marker ᄇᄇᄇᄇ *manga* (see section 3.1). While most of the prepositions in Figure 4.14 have a static meaning, ᄇᄇᄇᄇ *manga* indicates a motion in the direction of the respective location, thus ᄇᄇᄇᄇ *kong* ‘inside’ becomes ᄇᄇᄇᄇᄇᄇᄇ *manga kong* ‘into’, for instance. Figure 4.15 repeats the table of prepositions above for the most part and gives the respective dynamic meanings. The prepositions ᄇᄇᄇᄇᄇᄇ *mangasaba* and ᄇᄇᄇᄇᄇᄇ *mangasara* are missing from this list and appear in the previous table instead, even though they express motion rather than position, because they are only used in this base form and cannot be prefixed by ᄇᄇᄇᄇ *manga*, which they already contain. Note, however, that ᄇᄇᄇᄇᄇᄇ *mangasaba* and ᄇᄇᄇᄇᄇᄇ *mangasara* are not synonymous to an adjunct in the dative and the genitive case, respectively. Rather, the prepositions add a more deliberate or literal meaning:

- (134) a. *Ang nimpay kardangyam.*  
 Ang nimp=ay.Ø kardang-yam  
 AT run=ISG.TOP school-DAT  
 ‘I’m running to (a/the) school.’  
 (e.g. for class, or just up to the building)
- b. *Ang nimpay mangasaba kardangya.*  
 Ang nimp=ay.Ø mangasaha kardang-ya  
 AT run=ISG.TOP towards school-LOC  
 ‘I’m running towards (a/the) school.’  
 (up to the building)

- (135) a. *Ang lampay kardangena.*  
 Ang walk=ay.Ø kardang-ena  
 AT walk=ISG.TOP school-GEN  
 ‘I’m walking from (a/the) school.’  
 (e.g. home, or somewhere else from there)
- b. *Ang lampay mangasara kardangya.*  
 Ang lamp=ay.Ø mangasara kardang-ya  
 AT walk=ISG.TOP away school-LOC  
 ‘I’m walking away from (a/the) school.’  
 (away from the building)

Also note that while Germanic languages like English make frequent use of set expressions which combine a verb with a preposition, such as *run away*, *go by*, *raise up*, *track down*, sometimes with rather idiomatic meanings, this pattern does not occur as frequently in Ayeri. Some exceptions are:

- (136) a. ႁႏႱႱႱႱ *il- mangasara* ‘surrender’ (give away),  
 b. ႁႏႱႱႱႱ *lant- mangasara* ‘distract’ (lead away),  
 c. ႁႏႱႱႱႱ *nimp- mangasara* ‘escape’ (run away),  
 d. ႁႏႱႱႱႱ *tapy- dayrin* ‘save (valuable assets)’ (put aside),  
 e. ႁႏႱႱႱႱ *tapy- miday* ‘put on’ (put around),  
 f. ႁႏႱႱႱႱ *tura- mangasaba* ‘forward’ (send towards).

These verbs do not govern a prepositional object in the locative case in their idiomatic meaning, as displayed by the next example, in which ႁႏႱႱႱႱ *batangiman* and ႁႏႱႱႱႱ *sa Ajān* do neither serve as arguments of ႁႏႱႱႱႱ *lanco* or ႁႏႱႱႱႱ *mangasara*, but of the phrasal verb ႁႏႱႱႱႱ *lant- mangasara*.<sup>29</sup>

- (137) *Ang lanco mangasara batangiman sa Ajān.*  
 Ang lant-yo mangasara batangiman-Ø sa=Ajān  
 AT lead-3SG.N away mosquito-TOP P=Ajān  
 ‘The mosquito distracted Ajān.’

Very often, where the verb expression in English contains a preposition, there is a separate verb in Ayeri, or the same verb is used in Ayeri for both the plain English verb and the one extended by a preposition:

<sup>29</sup> Colloquially, ႁႏႱႱႱႱ *mangasaba* and ႁႏႱႱႱႱ *mangasara* may be shortened to just ႁႏႱႱ *saba* and ႁႏႱႱ *sara*, respectively.

- (138) a. ၵၢ်ပၼ်: *apand*- ‘descend, climb down’,  
 b. ၵၢ်သိ: *dila* ‘figure out, find out’,  
 c. ၵၢ်တၢ်: *ling*- ‘ascend, mount, climb up’,  
 d. ၵၢ်နွဲ: *naga*- ‘watch after’,  
 e. ၵၢ်ပု: *pah*- ‘remove, take away’,  
 f. ၵၢ်ဃ်: *subr*- ‘cease, give up’.
- (139) a. ၵၢ်: *ka*- ‘throw (away)’,  
 b. ၵၢ်သိ: *mat*- ‘warm (up)’,  
 c. ၵၢ်နွဲ: *sikl*- ‘rip (up)’.

In cases where the preposition does not have a prepositional object otherwise, its double nature as a noun comes to the fore in that the preposition word will be treated like a noun if it is denominal and carries the appropriate case marker itself:

- (140) a. *Ang sabayan manga pang nangaya.*  
 Ang saha=yan.Ø manga pang nanga-ya  
 AT go=3PL.TOP DYN back house-LOC  
 ‘They go behind the house.’
- b. *Ang sabayan pangyam.*  
 Ang saha=yan.Ø pangyam  
 AT go=3PL.TOP back-DAT  
 ‘They go behind (it),’  
 or: ‘They go to the back.’

#### 4.4.2 Postpositions

While Ayeri mainly uses prepositions—which is by far the most common order for VO languages (Dryer 2013)—it also uses a number of postpositions, which are given in Figure 4.16. As can be read from the figure, postpositions do not usually have a nominal origin but are derived either from other prepositions, from adverbial phrases, or even from an adjective in the case of ၵၢ်ရယူ *rayu*. The etymologies of ၵၢ်ပၼ် *pesan* and ၵၢ်ယၢ် *yamva* are unclear to date.

The postposition ၵၢ် *pang* is special in that it also exist as a preposition meaning ‘behind, in the back of’, though as a postposition it acquires the related but slightly different meaning ‘beyond, after, past’. It might thus be better treated as a homonym to the preposition rather than as an ambiposition (Hagège 2010: 115). Example (141a) illustrates a use of ၵၢ် *pang* as a preposition, (141b) one of ၵၢ် *pang* as a postposition. This is in contrast to typical ambipositions like German *wegen*

Figure 4.16: Postpositions

Postposition		Etymology (or related to)
𑂔𑂗𑂢𑂰 <i>da-nārya</i>	despite, in spite of	𑂔: <i>da</i> - ‘such’ + 𑂗𑂢𑂰 <i>nārya</i> ‘but’
𑂔𑂗𑂢𑂰 <i>kayvay</i>	without	𑂔𑂗𑂢𑂰 <i>kayvo</i> ‘with’ + 𑂗𑂢𑂰 - <i>oy</i> (NEG)
𑂔𑂗𑂢𑂰 <i>masabatay</i>	since	𑂔: <i>mə</i> - (PST) + 𑂗𑂢𑂰 <i>saba</i> - ‘come’ + 𑂔𑂗𑂢𑂰 <i>taday</i> ‘time’
𑂔𑂗𑂢𑂰 <i>nasyam</i>	according to	𑂔𑂗𑂢𑂰 <i>nasyyam</i> ‘following’
𑂔𑂗𑂢𑂰 <i>pang</i>	beyond, after, past	𑂔𑂗𑂢𑂰 <i>pang</i> ‘back’
𑂔𑂗𑂢𑂰 <i>pesan</i>	until	—
𑂔𑂗𑂢𑂰 <i>ran</i>	against	𑂔𑂗𑂢𑂰 <i>ran</i> ‘from it’
𑂔𑂗𑂢𑂰 <i>rayu</i>	diagonally across	𑂔𑂗𑂢𑂰 <i>rayu</i> ‘slanted, oblique, skewed’
𑂔𑂗𑂢𑂰 <i>yamva</i>	instead of	—

‘because of, due to’ in (142), which has the same meaning in either position and the position variant is just a matter of style.

- (141) a. *Sa lancāng pel manga pang penungya.*  
 Sa lant=yāng pel-Ø manga pang penung-ya  
 PT lead=3SG.M.A horse-TOP DYN back barn-LOC  
 ‘The horse, he leads it behind the stable.’
- b. *Lesyo pelang si sã nimp̄yong penungya pang yan.*  
 Les-yo pel-ang si sã nimp=yong penung-ya pang yan.Ø  
 fall-3SG.N horse-A REL CAUT run=3SG.N.A stable-LOC back 3PL.TOP  
 ‘The horse they raced past the barn fell.’

- (142) a. *wegen des schlechten Wetters* [German]  
*wegen des schlecht-en Wetter-s*  
 because.of DEF.GEN.N.SG bad-GEN.N.SG weather-GEN  
 ‘because of the bad weather’
- b. *des schlechten Wetters wegen*  
*des schlecht-en Wetter-s wegen*  
 DEF.GEN.N.SG bad-GEN.N.SG weather-GEN because.of  
 (idem)

Besides the difference in placement, the morphological properties of postpositions are the same as those of prepositions. That is, where postpositions are derived from nouns at all, they do not receive case and number marking and cannot themselves be modified by adjectives or relative clauses. Generally, it is possible for them to be hosts of quantifier clitics where semantics permit it.

Figure 4.17: Adpositions with temporal meaning

Adposition	Spatial meaning	Temporal meaning
Prepositions		
ꠘꠦꠦꠦ <i>kong</i>	inside	within
ꠘꠦꠦꠦ <i>ling</i>	on top of	while
ꠘꠦꠦꠦ <i>marin</i>	in front of	before
ꠘꠦꠦꠦ <i>manga luga</i>	through	during
ꠘꠦꠦꠦ <i>mangasaba</i>	towards	in + <i>time</i>
ꠘꠦꠦꠦ <i>pang</i>	behind	ago
Postpositions		
ꠘꠦꠦꠦ <i>masabatay</i>	—	since
ꠘꠦꠦꠦ <i>pesan</i>	—	until
ꠘꠦꠦꠦ <i>pang</i>	beyond, after	after, past

#### 4.4.3 Adpositions and time

It has been mentioned above that location also serves as the conceptual metaphor for expressing temporal relationships. Notably the prepositions ꠘꠦꠦꠦ *kong* ‘inside’, ꠘꠦꠦꠦ *ling* ‘on’, ꠘꠦꠦꠦ *marin* ‘in front of’, ꠘꠦꠦꠦ *manga luga* ‘through’, ꠘꠦꠦꠦ *mangasaba* ‘towards’, and ꠘꠦꠦꠦ *pang* ‘behind’ come to mind as doubling for ‘within’, ‘while’, ‘before’, ‘during’, ‘in + *time*’, and ‘ago’, respectively (also see Figure 4.17). Since postpositions are not primarily derived from nouns, there are dedicated forms for expressing temporal relationships, namely, ꠘꠦꠦꠦ *masabatay* ‘since’, ꠘꠦꠦꠦ *pesan* ‘until’, and as the only form with a double function, ꠘꠦꠦꠦ *pang* ‘after, past’.

- (143) a. *Miranang kong bibanya sam.*  
 Mira=nang kong bihan-ya sam  
 do=IPL.A inside week-LOC two  
 ‘We will do it within two weeks.’
- b. *Girenjang mangasaba pidimya-kay.*  
 Girend=yang mangasaha pidim-ya=kay  
 arrive=3SG.M.A towards hour-LOC=few  
 ‘He will arrive in a few hours.’
- c. *Layaye-ikan ang Pila ling yeng pakur.*  
 Laya-ye=ikan ang=Pila ling yeng pakur  
 read-3SG.F=much A=Pila on 3SG.F.A sick  
 ‘Pila read a lot while she was sick.’

Of the examples above, the use of ႁႏႱ *kong* in (143a) is probably still closest to a local preposition in that the time span is conceptualized as a container, or the distance between two points. The use of ႁႏႱႱ *mangasaba* in (143b), on the other hand, is more idiomatic. While the prepositions in these two examples each govern an NP, example (143c) shows that it is also possible for prepositions expressing a temporal relationship to govern a subclause. This ability is even more prominent with temporal postpositions in that all of the words listed above can govern either an NP or a clause, for instance, ႁႏႱႱ *masabatay*:

- (144) a. *Ang manga hangya lakayperinya masabatay.*  
 Ang manga hang=ya.Ø lakayperin-ya masahatay  
 AT PROG stay=3SG.M.TOP solstice-LOC since  
 He has been staying since the solstice.
- b. *Yeng giday sarayāng masabatay.*  
 Yeng giday sara=yāng masahatay  
 3SG.F.A sad leave=3SG.M.A since  
 ‘She has been sad since he left.’

## 4.5 Verbs

Besides nouns, verbs constitute the other main part of speech in Ayeri which carries inflections. Verbs show person and number agreement, but may also inflect for tense, aspect, mood, and modality as grammatical categories of the verb itself. Personal pronouns may furthermore cliticize to the verb stem, and the verb phrase is also often marked with a clitic indicating the topic of the sentence and the topic NP’s role in Ayeri’s case system, which can be interpreted as a second agreement relation. Further clitics may indicate reflexive actions, likeness, logical connection, as well as degree and measure. Verbs are thus probably the most versatile part of speech on the one hand, but also the one with the heaviest workload on the other. The following sections will dissect the morphology of verbs category by category. Since cliticization is a phrase-level process (Klavans 1985), it will only be touched on briefly here. Because verbs inhabit a central position in syntax and exhibit agreement morphology, it will be necessary in this section to merge syntax and morphology on occasion in order to describe morphosyntactic effects.

### 4.5.1 Person–number marking

As described in section 3.3, Ayeri conjugates its main verbs, canonically in agreement with the agent NP, and verb conjugation as such is extremely pervasive. The basic

Figure 4.18: Conjugation paradigm for ၵၵၵ: *sob*- ‘learn, teach’ (monoconsonantal root)

Person	Singular		Plural	
1SG	<i>sobay</i>	‘I learn’	<i>sobayn</i>	‘we learn’
2SG	<i>sobva</i>	‘you learn’	<i>sobva</i>	‘you learn’
3SG.M	<i>sobya</i>	‘he learns’	<i>sobyan</i>	‘they learn’
3SG.F	<i>sobye</i>	‘she learns’	<i>sobyen</i>	‘they learn’
3SG.N	<i>sobyō</i>	‘it learns’	<i>sobyon</i>	‘they learn’
3SG.INAN	<i>sobara</i>	‘it learns’	<i>sobaran</i>	‘they learn’
IMP	<i>sobu!</i>	‘learn!’		
HORT	<i>sobu-sobu!</i>	‘let’s learn!’		
ITER	<i>so-sob-</i>	‘learn again, relearn’		
PTCP	<i>sobyam</i>	‘learning’		

Figure 4.19: Conjugation paradigm for ၵၵၵ: *anl*- ‘bring’ (biconsonantal root)

Person	Singular		Plural	
1SG	<i>anlay</i>	‘I bring’	<i>anlayn</i>	‘we bring’
2SG	<i>anlava</i>	‘you bring’	<i>anlava</i>	‘you bring’
3SG.M	<i>anlya</i>	‘he brings’	<i>anlyan</i>	‘they bring’
3SG.F	<i>anlye</i>	‘she brings’	<i>anlyen</i>	‘they bring’
3SG.N	<i>anlyō</i>	‘it brings’	<i>anlyon</i>	‘they bring’
3SG.INAN	<i>anlara</i>	‘it brings’	<i>anlaran</i>	‘they bring’
IMP	<i>anlu!</i>	‘bring!’		
HORT	<i>anlu-anlu!</i>	‘let’s bring!’		
ITER	<i>an-anl-</i>	‘bring again, bring back’		
PTCP	<i>anlyam</i>	‘bringing’		

conjugation paradigms are given in Figures 4.18–4.20.<sup>30</sup> Agreement causes verbs to reflect grammatical categories of nominal entities, thus, verbs show agreement in person (1, 2, 3) and number (SG, PL); third persons are again differentiated by gender (M, F, N, INAN; compare section 4.1.1). The conjugation suffixes are basically the same as the topic-marked (thus superficially unmarked) personal pronouns (see section 4.2.1).

Regarding person–number inflection, verbs may be divided into three classes: monoconsonantal, biconsonantal, and vocalic stems. As discussed in section 1.2,

<sup>30</sup> Due to the agglutinating structure of Ayerí it makes little sense to list the whole paradigm of verb inflection for all possible affix combinations here, as the table would become unreasonably large. Instead, the various sections below will contain examples of use for all affixes.



Figure 4.20: Conjugation paradigm for 𐌵𐌶: *no-* ‘want’ (vocalic root)

Person	Singular		Plural	
1SG	<i>noay</i>	‘I want’	<i>noayn</i>	‘we want’
2SG	<i>nova</i>	‘you want’	<i>nova</i>	‘you want’
3SG.M	<i>noya</i>	‘he wants’	<i>noyan</i>	‘they want’
3SG.F	<i>noye</i>	‘she wants’	<i>noyen</i>	‘they want’
3SG.N	<i>noyo</i>	‘it wants’	<i>noyon</i>	‘they want’
3SG.INAN	<i>noara</i>	‘it wants’	<i>noaran</i>	‘they want’
IMP	<i>nu!</i>	‘want!’		
HORT	<i>nu-nu!</i>	‘let’s want!’		
ITER	<i>no-no-</i>	‘want again’		
PTCP	<i>noyam</i>	‘wanting’		

Ayeri restricts the number of successive non-glide consonants to two, which has repercussions in the second person, since the conjugation suffix there is 𐌶 *-va*. Monoconsonantal roots are unaffected by this restriction, however, hence the conjugation suffixes can simply be appended as they are; this is illustrated with the verb 𐌵𐌶: *sob-* ‘teach, learn’ in Figure 4.18. Verb stems ending in dental and velar plosives will naturally undergo palatalization in the third person animate, so for instance, the third person singular masculine of the verb 𐌵𐌶: *gurat-* ‘answer’ is 𐌵𐌶: *guraca* ‘(he) answers’, and the third person feminine plural of 𐌵𐌶: *abag-* ‘roam, wander’ is 𐌵𐌶: *abajen* ‘(they) roam, (they) wander’. Verbs whose stem ends in an affricate are treated as monoconsonantal roots as well, since the affricate occupies one consonant phoneme segment. Thus, the second person of 𐌵𐌶: *ic-* ‘glide, slide’ is not \*𐌵𐌶: *\*icava*, but 𐌵𐌶: *icva* ‘you glide, you slide’.

Since /v/ is neither a vowel nor a glide, as present in the non-second person suffixes, an epenthetic *-a-* is inserted between the stem and the second-person suffix for verbs whose stem ends in *-CC*.<sup>31</sup> This is illustrated in Figure 4.19 for the verb 𐌵𐌶: *anl-* ‘bring’. The second person conjugation of this verb is not \*𐌵𐌶: *\*anlva*, since the cluster *-nlv-* is illegal, but 𐌵𐌶: *anlava*. Since Ayeri treats two successive instances of the same consonant as a single segment—there is no gemination—verbs like 𐌵𐌶: *silv-* ‘see’ conjugate like monoconsonantal roots with regards to consonant clusters. That is, the second person of 𐌵𐌶: *silv-* is not \*𐌵𐌶: *\*silvava*, as one might expect, but 𐌵𐌶: *silvva*. A further exception to this are verbs ending in *-Cs*, since *-Cs-C-* is commonly resyllabified as *-C-sC-* (see chapter 1, footnote 13). Thus, the second-person form of 𐌵𐌶: *kars-* ‘freeze’ is not \*𐌵𐌶: *\*karsava* as expected, but 𐌵𐌶: *karsva*.

<sup>31</sup> A root is understood here as the uninflected verb morpheme, for instance, 𐌵𐌶: *anl-*, 𐌵𐌶: *ic-*, 𐌵𐌶: *no-*, or 𐌵𐌶: *sob-*. A stem may contain inflections and further inflectional affixes attach to it.

*karsva* ‘you freeze’.

Lastly, verb stems may end in a vowel, most commonly *-a*. In these cases as well, the conjugation suffixes may simply be appended to the stem. The conjugation of this class is illustrated in Figure 4.20 with the verb 𐌶𐌵 *no* ‘want’. Verb stems ending in *-a* undergo the regular vowel lengthening process for the first person suffixes, hence, the first person singular conjugation of 𐌶𐌵 *apa-* ‘laugh’ is 𐌶𐌵𐌶𐌵 *apāy* ‘I laugh’. Verb stems ending in a diphthong in /ɪ/ are essentially treated as a hybrid of monoconsonantal and vocalic stems, since the diphthong’s final /ɪ/ is treated as /j/ before a vowel: 𐌶𐌵𐌶𐌵 *palayay* ‘I rejoice’, 𐌶𐌵𐌶𐌵𐌶𐌵 *palayva* ‘you rejoice’.

As mentioned above, the person marking on verbs is essentially the same as the topic-marked personal pronouns. This has further ramifications for person-marking on verbs, however, insofar as—again, canonically—even fully case-marked agent pronouns may act as person marking by means of cliticization. Thus, any person-marking on verbs except third-person agreement is, in fact, a topicalized pronoun clitic not only by diachronic origin. Unlike English, Ayeri does not use agent pronouns in addition to person agreement on verbs. Consider these two example sentences in English:

- (145) a. *John greets Mary.* [English]  
           John greet-s Mary  
           John greet-3SG.PRS Mary
- b. *He greets Mary.*  
           He greet-s Mary  
           3SG.M greet-3SG.PRS Mary

In these examples, the verb has an agreement suffix *-s* which indicates third person singular, present tense, whether the subject of the sentence is a noun (*John*) or a pronoun (*he*), which acts as a free morpheme in English. Now consider the Ayeri equivalents of these two examples, on the other hand:<sup>32</sup>

- (146) a. *Ang manya Ajān sa Pila.*  
           Ang man-ya Ø=Ajān sa=Pila  
           AT greet-3SG.M TOP=Ajān[3SG.M] P=Pila[3SG.F]  
           ‘Ajān greets Pila.’
- b. *Ang manya sa Pila.*  
           Ang man=ya.Ø sa=Pila  
           AT greet=3SG.M.TOP P=Pila[3SG.F]  
           ‘He greets Pila.’

<sup>32</sup> Most of the following account is taken nearly verbatim from a previously published blog article, Becker (2016b). Some of the Ayeri examples used in the following come from a list of samples I provided for a bachelor’s thesis at the University of Kent in March 2016, in private conversation, on request.

It is probably uncontroversial to analyze  $\text{ɔ}$  -*ya* in (146a) as person agreement:  $\text{ႰႰႰ}$  *Ajān* is a male name in Ayeri while  $\text{ႰႰႰ}$  *Pila* is a feminine one; the verb inflects for a masculine third person, which tells us that it agrees with the one doing the greeting, *Ajān*. *Ajān* is also who this is about, which is shown on the verb by marking for an agent topic. In the second case, there is only anaphoric reference to *Ajān*, so you might say that the agent NP is left out. Very broadly thus, the verb marking here seems to be like in Spanish, where you can drop the subject pronoun:

- (147) a. *Juan saluda a María.* [Spanish]  
           Juan salud-a a María  
           John greet-3SG ACC Mary  
           ‘John greets Mary.’  
       b. *Saluda a María.*  
           Salud-a a María  
           greet-3SG ACC Mary  
           ‘He greets Mary.’

Example (146b) probably does not seem conspicuous either, except that there is also topic marking for an agent there, the controller of which I have so far assumed to be the person inflection on the verb, in analogy with examples like the following:

- (148) *Lampyāng.*  
       Lamp=yāng  
       walk=3SG.M.A  
       ‘He walks.’

This raises the question whether in Ayeri, there is dropping of an agent pronoun involved at all, which is why the person suffix in (146b) was glossed as =*ya.Ø* (=3SG.M.TOP) rather than just as -*ya* (-3SG.M). In turn, this question leads us to consider another characteristic of Ayeri, namely that the topic morpheme on noun phrases is zero. That is, the absence of overt case marking on a nominal element indicates that it is a topic; the verb in turn marks the case of the topicalized NP with a (case) particle preceding it. Pronouns as well show up in their unmarked form when topicalized, which is why I am hesitant to analyze the pronoun in (149b) as a clitic on the VP rather than an independent morpheme:<sup>33</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Also, perhaps a little untypically, topic NPs in Ayeri are not usually pulled to the front of the phrase (at least not in the written language; see Lehmann 2015: 120–122), so topic-marked pronouns stay in-situ. Which NP constitutes the topic of the phrase is marked on the verb right at the head of the clause. How and whether this can be justified in terms of grammatical weight (see, for instance, Wasow 1997: 95–98) remains to be seen.

- (149) a. *Sa manya ang Ajān Pila.*  
 Sa man-ya ang=Ajān Ø=Pila  
 PT greet-3SG.M A=Ajān TOP=Pila  
 'It's Pila that Ajān greets.'
- b. *Sa manyāng ye.*  
 Sa man=yāng ye.Ø  
 PT greet=3SG.M.A 3SG.F.TOP  
 'It's her that he greets.'

What is remarkable, then, is that *ye* (3SG.F.TOP) is the very same form that appears as an agreement morpheme on the verb, just like *-ya* (3SG.M) in various examples above (also compare the examples in section 4.2.1):

- (150) *Ang purivaye yāy.*  
 Ang puriva=ye.Ø yāy  
 AT smile=3SG.F.TOP 3SG.M.LOC  
 'She smiles at him.'

This also holds for all other personal pronouns. Moreover, *yāng* as seen in examples (148) and (149b) may also be used as a free pronoun in equative statements with predicate nominals, as well as other such case-marked personal forms:

- (151) a. *Yeng mino.*  
 Yeng mino  
 3SG.F.A happy  
 'She is happy.'
- b. *Yāng naynay.*  
 Yāng naynay.  
 3SG.M.A too  
 'He is, too.'

As for case-marked person suffixes on verbs, the assumption so far has been that they are essentially clitics, especially since the following marking strategy is the grammatical one in absence of an agent NP:

- (152) a. *Manye sa Pila.*  
 Man-ye sa=Pila  
 greet-3SG.F P=Pila  
 'Pila is being greeted.'
- b. *Manyes.*  
 Man=yes.  
 greet=3SG.F.P  
 'She is being greeted.'

The verb here agrees with the patient—or is it that person agreement suffixes on verbs are generally clitics in Ayeri, even where they do not involve case marking? There seems to be a gradient here between what looks like regular verb agreement with the agent on the one hand, and agent or patient pronouns just stacked onto the verb stem on the other hand. For an overview, compare Figure 4.21. In this figure, especially the middle, transitional category is interesting in that what looks like verb agreement superficially can still govern topicalization marking, which is indicated in column II by an index ‘I’. Note that this behavior only occurs in transitive contexts; there is no topic marking on the verb if the verb only has a single NP dependent. Also consider that for example (b) in the type III transitive cell the question is, whether this should not better be analyzed as AT ...-3SG.M.TOP ...-TOP ...-P, with co-indexing of the topic on the person inflection of the verb, making it structurally closer to type II.

As for personal pronouns fused with the verb stem like in the first column, Corbett points out that

In terms of syntax, pronominal affixes are arguments of the verb; a verb with its pronominal affixes constitutes a full sentence, and additional noun phrases are optional. If pronominal affixes are the primary arguments, then they agree in the way that anaphoric pronouns agree [...] In terms of morphology, pronominal affixes are bound to the verb; typically they are obligatory [...]. (Corbett 2006: 99–100)

This seems to be exactly what is going on for instance in (148) and (152b), where the verb forms a complete sentence. It needs to be pointed out that Corbett includes an example from Tuscarora, a native American polysynthetic language, in relation to the above quotation. Ayeri should not be considered polysynthetic, however, since its verbs generally do not exhibit relations with multiple NPs, at least as far as person and number agreement is involved (Comrie 1989: 45–46).<sup>34</sup>

Taking everything written above so far into account, it looks much as though Ayeri is in the process of grammaticalizing personal pronouns into person agreement (Lehmann 2015: 42–45; Gelderen 2011: 493–497). Corbett (2006: 76–77) illustrates an early stage of such a process:

- (153) a. *Ke móe ke=fue.* (\**Ke móe fue.*) [Skou]  
           3SG.M fish 3SG.M=see.3SG.M  
           ‘He saw a fish.’

<sup>34</sup> The topic NP marked on the verb may be a different from the one with which the verb agrees in person and number, so technically, Ayeri verbs *may* agree with more than one NP in a very limited way (compare section 3.3). Still, I would not analyze this as polypersonal agreement, since there is only canonical verb agreement with one constituent, that is, the agent NP. Topic marking should, in my opinion, be viewed as a separate agreement relation, as pointed out in the quoted section above.

Figure 4.21: Verb inflection types in Ayeri

	Type I: Clitic pronouns	Type II: Transitional	Type III: Verb agreement
Inflectional categories	Person Number Case	Person Number Case/Topic	Person Number
Examples (intransitive)	...=yāng ...=3SG.M.A	—	...-ya <sub>1</sub> ...-ang <sub>1</sub> ...-3SG.M ...-A
Examples (transitive)	sa <sub>1</sub> ...=yāng ...-Ø <sub>1</sub> PT ...=3SG.M.A ...-TOP	ang <sub>1</sub> ...=ya.Ø <sub>1</sub> ...-as AT ...=3SG.M.TOP ...-P	a. ang <sub>1</sub> ...-ya <sub>1</sub> ...-Ø <sub>1</sub> ...-as AT ...-3SG.M ...-TOP ...-P  b. a <sub>1</sub> ...-ya <sub>2</sub> ...-ang <sub>2</sub> ...-Ø <sub>1</sub> PT ...-3SG.M ...-A ...-TOP

- b. *Pe móe pe=fu.* (*\*Pe móe fu.*)  
 3SG.F fish 3SG.F=see.3SG.F  
 ‘She saw a fish.’

What Gelderen calls the *subject cycle*, the “oft-noted cline expressing that pronouns can be reanalyzed as clitics and agreement markers” (Gelderen 2011: 493) applies here, and as well in Ayeri. However, while she continues to say that in “many languages, the agreement affix resembles the emphatic pronoun and derives from it” (494), Ayeri does at least in part the opposite and uses the case-unmarked, unstressed form of personal pronouns for what resembles verb agreement most closely. This, however, should not be too controversial either, considering that, for instance, semantic bleaching and phonetic erosion go hand in hand with grammaticalization (Lehmann 2015: 136–137; Gelderen 2011: 497).

As pointed out above in (152), Ayeri usually exhibits verbs as agreeing with agents and occasionally patients, not topics as such. This may be a little counterintuitive since the relation between topics and subjects is close, but is possibly due to the fact that the unmarked word order is VAP. This means that agent NPs usually follow the verb, and it strikes me as not too unnatural to have an agreement relation between the verb and the closest NP also when non-conjoined NPs are involved (Corbett 2006: 180). This conveniently explains why verbs can agree with patients as well if the agent NP is absent. Taking into account that the grammaticalization process is still ongoing so that there is still some relative freedom in how morphemes may be used if a paradigm has not yet fully settled (Lehmann 2015: 148–150) also makes this seem less strange. Verbs simply become agreement targets of the closest semantically plausible nominal constituent. Ayeri seems to be shifting from topics to subjects, and as a consequence the bond between agents and verbs is strengthened due to their usual adjacency; developing verb agreement with agents may be seen as symptomatic of this change.<sup>35</sup>

Signs so far point towards Ayeri’s person agreement in fact being more likely enclitic pronominal affixes, even what I had been thinking of as person agreement before (that is, suffixes on the verb that only encode person and number, but not case). The question is, then, how this might be corroborated. Corbett offers a typology here, see Figure 4.22. According to this typology, a pronominal affix is

<sup>35</sup> When translating things in Ayeri, I find myself very often using agent topics, which may be because I am used to subjects proper. Supposing that this is also what Ayeri prefers in-universe, it would make sense to assume the usual grammaticalization path by which topics become subjects, thereby also leading to subject-verb agreement by means of resumptive pronouns referring back to left-dislocated topics (Lehmann 2015: 121–122; Gelderen 2011: 499–500). Lehmann (2015: 120) gives colloquial French *Jean, je l’ai vu hier* ‘John, I saw him yesterday’ as an example here: the object clitic *l’* (← *le* ‘him’) may well develop into an agreement affix (also see Gelderen (2011: 498) on a dialect of Spanish in which, she argues, this has happened).

Figure 4.22: The syntax and morphology of pronominal affixes (Corbett 2006: 101)

SYNTAX:	non-argument	argument	
LINGUISTIC ELEMENT:	‘pure’ agreement marker	pronominal affix	free pronoun
MORPHOLOGY:	inflectional form		free form

syntactically an argument of the verb but has the morphology of an inflectional form. If we compare this to the gradient given in table 1 above, it becomes evident that type I definitely fulfills these criteria, and type II does so as well, in fact, in that there is no agent NP that could serve as a controller if the verb inflection in type II were ‘merely’ a agreement target. The inflection in type III, on the other hand, appears to have all hallmarks of agreement in that there is a controller NP that triggers it, with the verb serving as an agreement target. Moreover, the person marking on the verb is not a syntactic argument of the verb. As example (152a) shows, however, marking of type III permits the verb to mark more than one case role, which makes it slightly atypical, although verbs can only carry a single instance of person marking (Corbett 2006: 103). Regarding referentiality, the person suffixes on the verb in table 1, columns I and II are independent means of referring to discourse participants mentioned earlier, whereas the person suffix in III needs support from an NP in the same clause as a source of morphological features to share:

- (154) a. *Ajān ... Ang manya sa Pila.*  
           *Ajān ... Ang man=ya.Ø sa=Pila*  
           *Ajān ... AT greet=3SG.M.TOP P=Pila*  
           ‘Ajān ... He greets Pila.’
- b. *Ajān ... Sa manyāng Pila.*  
           *Ajān ... Sa man=yāng Ø=Pila*  
           *Ajān ... PT greet=3SG.M.A TOP=Pila*  
           ‘Ajān ... It’s Pila that he greets.’
- c. \**Ajān ... Manya sa Pila.*  
           *Ajān ... Man-ya sa=Pila*  
           *Ajān ... greet-3SG.M P=Pila*

Since person marking of the type I and II is *referential*, as shown in example (154a) and (154b), it can be counted as a cliticized pronoun (103). Pronouns in Ayeri can also refer to non-people—there are both a ‘neuter’ gender for non-people considered living (or being closely associated with living things), and an ‘inanimate’ gender for the whole rest of things (compare section 4.1.1). Since mere agreement



as in type III needs support from an NP within the verb's scope, though, it does not have *descriptive/lexical content* of its own. That is, it *only* serves a grammatical function (104), not strictly as an anaphora. As for Corbett's *balance of information* criterion, Figure 4.21 also highlights differences in what information is provided by the person marking. Nouns in Ayeri inherently bear information on person, number, and gender, and all three types of person inflection on verbs share these features. However, there are no extra grammatical features indicated by the first two inflection types that are not expressed by noun phrases, although under a very close understanding of Corbett, the following example (155) may still qualify as person-marking on the verb realizing a grammatical feature shared with an NP that is not openly expressed by the NP. He writes that in the world's languages, this frequently is number (105). This, however, does not apply to Ayeri because the only time verbs display number not expressed overtly by inflection on a noun is in agreement like in type III (a):<sup>36</sup>

- (155) *Ang sabayan ayon kay kong nangginoya.*  
 Ang saha-yan ayon-Ø kay kong nanggino-ya  
 AT come-3PL.M man-TOP three into tavern-LOC

'Three men come into a pub.'

As shown above, verb marking of the types I and II is independent as a reference, so there is *unirepresentation* of the marked NP. In contrast, verb marking of type III requires a controlling NP in the same clause to share grammatical features with, so that there is *multirepresentation* typical of canonical agreement (106). Note that unirepresentation as outlined here is probably different from pro-drop, as in this case I would expect sentences like (154c) to be grammatical (107). A further property that hinges on types I and II being independent pronouns glued to verbs as clitics is that they are not coreferential with another NP of the same grammatical relation, but are in complementary distribution, as commonly assumed with pronominals (108). Hence, either of these two examples is ungrammatical:

- (156) a. \**Lampyāng ang Ajān.*  
 Lamp=yāng ang=Ajān  
 walk=3SG.M.A A=Ajān  
 b. \**Ang lampyāng Ajān.*  
 Ang lamp=yāng Ø=Ajān  
 AT walk=3SG.M.A TOP=Ajān

<sup>36</sup> From a Lexical-Functional Grammar point of view, the number feature of *kay* in (155) coalesces with the semantic features provided by *ayon* in the maximal projection; agreement is thus with the whole agent NP rather than just with *ayon* as the NP's categorial head.

However, verb agreement with a free pronoun is also not possible even though it might be expected according to (Corbett 2006: 109)—also compare example (145b) above. Instead, the agent pronoun replaces any possible person agreement on the verb:

- (157) a. *Lampyāng.*  
 Lamp-yāng  
 walk=3SG.M  
 ‘He walks.’
- b. \**Lampya yāng.*  
 Lamp-ya yāng  
 walk-3SG.M 3SG.M.A

In conclusion, we may assert that Ayeri appears to be in the process of grammaticalizing pronouns as verb inflections, however, how far this grammaticalization process has progressed is dependent on syntactic context. Ayeri displays a full gamut from personal pronouns (usually agents) glued to verbs as clitics to agreement with coreferential NPs that is transparently derived from these personal pronouns. With the latter, the complication arises that coreferential pronoun NPs are not allowed as agreement controllers as one might expect, but only properly nominal NPs. Slight oddities with regards to Austronesian alignment—Ayeri’s actors bear more similarities to subjects than expected, but still without fully conflating the two notions—can possibly be explained by a strengthening of the verb-agent relationship pointed out as a grammaticalization process in this article as well. Information on agreement with committee nouns and coordinated NPs with incongruent agreement features can be found in the section on VPs.

#### 4.5.2 Tense

Tense in Ayeri is often not explicitly marked, but has to be inferred from context. However, where marked, Ayeri distinguishes past and future as referring to past and future events, respectively. Both past and future tenses come with three degrees each: near, recent/impending, and remote. Ayeri’s distinguishing three degrees of both past and future time is a little unusual with regards to typology according to the survey conducted by Dahl (1985: 127). The decision for which subtier of the past and the future to use is up to pragmatics, that is, there are no definitive and clear-cut lines. The near-time markers are most commonly used for immediate scope, that is, things which have just happened or will happen in a moment. The recent/impending-time markers may then be used for anything else which does not qualify as remote, that is, a long time into the past or the future from the point of view of the speaker.

Dahl (1985: 117) further notes that among the languages in the surveyed sample, past tenses are mostly marked by suffixes, the marking of this category being extremely common in addition. Ayeri may thus be a little unusual crosslinguistically again by exclusively using prefixes for tense marking. This makes sense, however, if we assume that historically, the tense prefixes once were auxiliary verbs. Ayeri applies head-first word order to subordinating verbs, as we will see further below, so these prefixes may just have begun to *procliticize* instead of slipping into a position behind their head (that is, Wackernagel's position).

Of the triad tense–aspect–mood this section will only cover basic uses of the marked tense categories, followed by a discussion of complex tense combinations such as past-in-future. The subsequent section 4.5.3 will provide more insight into the morphological marking of aspectual categories; section 4.5.4 deals with the morphology of mood marking in Ayeri.

#### *Present tense*

Verbs in Ayeri are unmarked for present tense, as it is the normal mode of speaking. Besides being used to comment or report on current events, the present tense is also used to make statements of general truth:

- (158) *Sa arapyo            tabanyamanang    koyana    nogalam-ikan.*  
       Sa arap-yo        tahanyaman-ang    koya-na    nogalam-Ø=ikan  
       PT    require-3SG.N    writing-A        book-GEN    patience-TOP=much

‘Writing a book requires much patience.’

Moreover, Ayeri does not strictly mark its verbs for past tense in narrative discourses—verbs may thus appear as though with a present-time reference in spite of recounting past events, whether historical or fictional. See the next subsection on the past tense.

#### *Past tense*

The past tense indicates actions in the past if not further modified. The three degrees of past tense are marked with 𑀓: *kə-* (near/immediate), 𑀔: *mə-* (recent), and 𑀕: *və-* (remote), which attach right in front of a verb root. In spite of the customary spelling of the past tense prefixes with ⟨ə⟩, which reflects pronunciation, they have an underlying /a/ vowel in this place. This means that the vowel of the tense prefixes coalesces with a following /a/ to form a long vowel (see section 1.1.2), which is demonstrated in example (159b) below:

- (159) a. *Ang kəsilyay yes motonya.*  
 Ang kə-silv=ay.Ø yes moton-ya  
 AT NPST-see=ISG.TOP 3SG.F.P store-LOC  
 ‘I’ve just seen her at the store.’
- b. *Le mādruyāng ikan biratay.*  
 Le mə-adru=yāng ikan biratay-Ø  
 PT.INAN PST-break=3SG.M.A wholly pot-TOP  
 ‘The pot, he completely broke it.’
- c. *Vəmittang edaya.*  
 Və-mit=tang edaya  
 RPST-live=3PL.M.A here  
 ‘They lived here (a long time ago)’

Note that the recent and the remote past tense are not generally marked if the past context is clear, for instance, when a past context has already been established in discourse. This may also happen explicitly by using a time adverbial such as *ṭamala* ‘yesterday’ or *ṭamala 100 ṭamala* *pericanya menang pang* ‘a hundred years ago’. In the presence of an explicit time adverbial, redundant tense marking is also dropped subsequently:

- (160) *Ang kondayn kadanya terpasānley bihanya sarisa.*  
 Ang kond=ayn.Ø kadanya terpasān-ley bihan-ya sarisa  
 AT eat=IPL.TOP together lunch-P.INAN week-LOC previous  
 ‘We had lunch together last week.’

The reference to a past time frame is explicitly given in this example by the adverbial phrase *ṭamala 100 ṭamala* *bihanya sarisa* ‘last week’, hence the verb appears here simply as *ṭamala kondayn*, rather than with redundant past-tense marking as *ṭamala məkondayn*. Since past tense is often underspecified in Ayeri, the language also does not employ epic past forms in narrative contexts like English, among others, commonly does:

- (161) The sky above the port was the color of television, tuned to a dead channel.  
 (Gibson 1995 [1984]: 9)

This quote is, of course, the first sentence of Gibson’s novel *Neuromancer*, which never mentions any definite dates, but is clearly set in a future world, maybe somewhere around the middle of the twenty-first century. Yet, however, Gibson recounts events which are logically happening in an imagined future as having already happened in the past: he uses the past tense as a convention of storytelling. What Ayeri, then, does in contrast to English is to basically treat stories as though happening

in the present; adverbials referring to past time may, again, set up the correct time frame if required. Ayeri is in good company here, since according to Dahl “[m]ore common than marking narrative contexts [...] is not marking them—quite a considerable number of languages use unmarked verb forms in narrative contexts” (Dahl 1985: 113). This, however, is yet different from a narrative present, that is, the use of present tense within a past context, which languages like English may use in narrative contexts to increase the feeling of immediacy and thus raise suspense. The following example from an Ayeri translation of the well-known Aesopian fable, ‘The North Wind and the Sun’ (compare Aesop 2007), illustrates Ayeri’s non-marking of tense on verbs in narrative contexts:

- (162) *Ang manga ranyon adauyi Pintemis nay Perin, engyo*  
 Ang manga ran-yon adauyi Ø=Pintemis nay Ø=Perin, eng-yo  
 AT PROG argue-3PL.N then TOP=North Wind and TOP=Sun, be.more-3SG.N  
*mico sinyāng luga toya, lingya si lugaya asāyāng si*  
 mico sinyā-ang luga toya, ling-ya si luga-ya asāya-ang si  
 strong who-A among 3PL.N.LOC, while-LOC REL pass-3SG.M traveler-A REL  
*sitang-naykonyāng kong tova ya mato.*  
 sitang=naykon=yāng kong tova-ya mato.  
 self=wrap=3SG.M.A inside cloak-LOC warm.

‘The North Wind and the Sun were then arguing which among them is stronger, all the while a traveler passed by who had wrapped himself in a warm cloak.’

#### Future tense

Future tense marks explicit references to future time in Ayeri, that is, “someone’s plans, intentions or obligations” (Dahl 1985: 103), as well as predictions. The future prefixes behave analogously to the ones indicating past tense: *n*: *pə-* indicates immediate/near future (NFUT), *ṣ*: *sə-* indicates impending future (FUT), and *ṣ̣*: *ni-* indicates remote future (RFUT). Underlying the reduced vowels in *n*: *pə-* and *ṣ*: *sə-* are /a/ and /e/, respectively, so that these prefixes cause adjacent vowels of the same type to lengthen as usual; the same, of course, applies to *ṣ̣*: *ni-* regarding /i/. The following examples show the future tense markers in context:

- (163) a. *Pəsahayang!*  
 Pə-saha=yang  
 NFUT-come=1SG.A  
 ‘I’m coming (in a moment)!’  
 b. *Ang səkarsayn kankaya.*  
 Ang sə-kars=ayn.Ø kanka-ya  
 AT FUT-freeze=1SG.TOP snow-LOC  
 ‘We will freeze in the snow.’

- c. *Paronatang, nisa-sahaya dibakayāng.*  
 Parona=tang ni-sa~saha-ya dihakaya-ang  
 believe=3PL.M.A RFUT-ITER~come-3SG.M prophet-A  
 ‘They believe that the prophet will return (one day).’

Like the past tense, the future is often not explicitly marked if the time frame is clear from context or has been clarified with such adverbials as *tasela* ‘tomorrow’, *mangasaha pericanya* ‘in a year’, or *metay* ‘sometime’:

- (164) *Ang raypāy vaya bibanya mararya.*  
 Ang raypa=ay.Ø vaya bihan-ya mararya  
 AT stop=1SG.TOP 2SG.LOC week-LOC next  
 ‘I’m stopping by you next week.’

It is possible here to explicitly mark the verb for future tense as well, for example, to make a promise, or to otherwise emphasize that the future condition will come to pass:

- (165) *Səsidejang tasela, diran.*  
 Sə-sideg=yang tasela diran  
 FUT-repair=1SG.A tomorrow uncle  
 ‘I will repair it tomorrow, uncle.’

### Past in past

So far, we have only dealt with tense marking from the point of view of the present. However, it is also possible to refer to an event which precedes another event in the past. Ayeri makes little use of auxiliary verbs, and thus the regular morphological and pragmatic means of tense marking have to cover this relation as well. In order to indicate pre-past events, it is customary to explicitly mark the verb for past time in Ayeri, in difference to the common lack of morphological marking for plain past tense. However, as it is possible for the *ə: mə-* prefix to be used to refer to ‘regular’ past events from a present point of view as well, context again has to provide the information that the frame of reference is past in this case, rather than the speaker’s present.

- (166) CONTEXT: Ajān’s past travels  
*Ya məsaraya iri maritay ang Ajān Tasankan*  
 Ya ma-sara-ya iri maritay ang=Ajān Ø=Tasankan  
 LOCT PST-go-3SG.M already before A=Ajān TOP=Tasankan  
 ‘Tasankan, Ajān had already gone there before.’

The above example is essentially ambiguous as to the reference point. The explicit tense marking draws attention to the fact that the event definitely lies in the past and the adverbs underline this fact. Instead of reading the sentence as referring to a pre-past event, it is equally possible to read it from a present-time point of view as ‘Ajān has already gone to Tasankan before’, although under these circumstances, it would be more common to leave the *æ*: *mə*- out, as described in section 4.5.2:

(167) CONTEXT: Ajān’s current traveling plans

*Ya saraya iri maritay ang Ajān Tasankan*  
*Ya sara-ya iri maritay ang=Ajān Ø=Tasankan*  
 LOCT go-3SG.M already before A=Ajān TOP=Tasankan

‘Tasankan, Ajān already went there before.’

Likewise, it is possible to make plans in the past with the intention of them coming to fruition only later, possibly at a point before the current time or even further in the future. The English idiom to express this time relation is ‘was going to’; in Ayeri, the relation cannot be expressed by morphological means, but only by lexical ones. Thus, *no*- ‘want; plan to’ must be used, together with explicit past marking. Since *no*- is a modal particle (see section 4.5.5), inflection is placed on the content verb.

(168) CONTEXT: Ajān’s having gone to Tasankan

*Ang no mēinca tosangyeley biro yam Pila.*  
*Ang no ma-int=ya tosang-ye-ley hiro yam=Pila*  
 AT want PST-buy=3SG.M.TOP earring-PL-P.INAN new DAT=Pila

‘He had planned to buy new earrings for Pila.’

The time relation expressed here is, thus, essentially that of a pre-past event again, since the planning of the action of buying took place before the time of going to Tasankan.

#### *Past in future*

Of course, it is also possible to refer to future actions or events which will already have happened before a point further in the future. From the point of view of the later event, the closer event will thus already lie in the past, forming its pre-requisite. As with future-in-past, there is no way in Ayeri to mark this relation morphologically, but lexical means have to be used, that is, first and foremost the adverb *iri* ‘already’, which indicates that an action has been completed in the past. As with other future actions, the time frame must be inferred from context if

it is not indicated explicitly by temporal adverbs or future-tense marking (compare section 4.5.2).

(169) CONTEXT: Ajān's traveling to Tasankan

<i>Ang girenja</i>	<i>iri</i>	<i>nilay</i>	<i>sirutayya</i>	<i>tamala</i>	<i>pesan.</i>
Ang girend=ya.Ø	iri	nilay	sirutay-ya	tamala	pesan
AT arrive=3SG.M.TOP	already	probably	evening-LOC	tomorrow	before

'He will probably already (have) arrive(d) before tomorrow evening.'

Strictly speaking, the above example does not make it explicit whether Ajān *will arrive* before evening or *will have arrived*. In order to indicate that the action is all but complete, the cessative adverb *mayisa* 'be done; ready' may be added:

(170) *Girenjāng mayisa iri.*  
 Girend=yāng mayisa iri  
 arrive=3SG.M.A be.done already

'He already has arrived', or: 'He will already have arrived.'

### 4.5.3 Aspect

Aspectually unmarked verb forms indicate general statements, which may be completed or ongoing, depending on the meaning of the verb itself. Ayeri seems not to make strict formal distinctions with regards to either, perfectivity or lexical aspect. It needs to be noted, however, that at least to date, it is not entirely clear how Ayeri fares with regards to conceptualizing perfectivity, which Dahl (1985: 76) in reference to Comrie (1976: 16) characterizes as being based on the conceptualization of actions or events as bounded or otherwise limited wholes, versus a lack of closure. Dahl also notes that "it seems rather to be a typical situation that even in individual languages, we cannot choose one member of the opposition [perfective-imperfective] as being clearly unmarked" (Dahl 1985: 69). He further argues that

The difficulty of deciding which member of the opposition is marked and which is unmarked is connected with the tendency for PFV:IPFV to be realized not by affixation or by periphrastic constructions but rather by less straightforward morphological processes. (73)

In other words: it is a difficult category to assess, in spite of being "often taken to be 'the' category of aspect" (69), mostly since languages often do not reify it by straightforward means. In Ayeri, the most tangible way of expressing completeness of an action is to use adverbs like *mayisa* 'ready, done', *iri* 'already', *ikan* 'completely, wholly' (also as an adjective); a quantifier like *-ben* 'all'; verbs like *samir-* 'finish', *panga-* 'end', and *raypa-* 'stop'; or an indefinite pronoun like *enya* 'everything, everybody':



- (171) *Le kondjeng enya.*  
 Le kond=yeng enya-Ø  
 PT.INAN eat=3SG.F.A everything  
 ‘She ate everything.’ or: ‘She ate it all up.’

Apart from the more general dilemma of determining how perfectivity is expressed in detail, Ayeri marks verbs openly by morphological means to indicate progressive, habitual, and iterative actions—by their nature all conceptualizing actions as being composed of a series of two or more related actions of the same kind, though not necessarily implying a strong semantic connection to the past. The following sections will discuss each of these categories.

#### Progressive

In order to indicate an ongoing action explicitly, Ayeri employs the marker *manga*, which we have already seen with dynamic prepositions above (section 4.4.1). This marker is a bound morpheme within the verb phrase and precedes the verb word:

- (172) *Ang manga ilye karonas nakajyam.*  
 Ang manga il=ye.Ø karon-as naka-ye-yam  
 AT PROG give=3SG.F.TOP water-P plant-PL-DAT  
 ‘She is giving water to the plants.’

Going by the data presented by Dahl (1985: 91), Ayeri is typologically unremarkable in marking progressive aspect with a periphrastic construction, although it is remarkable in possessing morphological progressive marking at all—it only occurs in 27% of the languages in Dahl’s sample. Typical of progressives, this form of the verb is not limited to present contexts in Ayeri as exemplified in (172) above. Instead, it is possible to also use the progressive in past (173a) and future (173b) contexts, the latter being probably less typical, though:

- (173) a. *Ang manga gumya Ajān tadayya si ya kongaye ang Pila*  
 Ang manga gum-ya Ø=Ajān taday-ya si ya konga-ye ang=Pila  
 AT PROG work-3SG TOP=Ajān time-LOC REL LOCT enter-3SG.F A=Pila  
*gumanga tamala.*  
 gumanga-Ø tamala  
 workshop-TOP yesterday  
 ‘Ajān was working when Pila entered the workshop yesterday.’

- 'I will be running home when when the festival starts tomorrow.'

*Habitual*

Unlike the few instances of habitual marking in Dahl's survey (Dahl 1985: 96), Ayeri possesses a suffix for marking habitual actions on the verb:  $\text{ᐱᓐᓐ}$  *-asa*, where the first *-a* replaces the terminal vowel of a verb stem if present, compare example (174b) below. The habitual aspect in Ayeri stresses that an action is carried out as a habit, that is, not just a few times, but with regular frequency. Essentially, verbs marked with the habitual in Ayeri can be translated by adding the adverb *usually* in English (97). The habitual aspect is not restricted to present actions or absolute statements like the one in (174a), but can also be used in past contexts to express that something *used to* be done in the past as, again, in (174b). While the contexts are probably very few, there are no restrictions about using the habitual also in contexts relating to future actions which are predicted to be carried out habitually. The following sentences illustrate typical contexts in which the habitual may be used:

- (174) a. *Le kondasayāng hemaye pruyya nay napayya kayvay.*  
 Le kond-asa=yāng hema-ye-Ø pruy-ya nay napay-ya kayvay  
 PT.INAN eat-HAB=3SG.M.A egg-PL-TOP salt-LOC and pepper-LOC without  
 ‘He always eats his eggs without salt and pepper.’
- b. *Ang ajasāyn ranisungas tadayya si yāng ganas.*  
 Ang aja-asa=ayn.Ø ranisung-as taday-ya si yāng gan-as  
 AT play-HAB=IPL.TOP hide.and.seek-P time-LOC REL ISG.A child-P  
 ‘We used to play hide-and-seek when I was a child.’

Importantly, the verb root with habitual marking forms a new verb stem to which affixes may be attached. This is relevant to mood suffixes, which follow aspectual marking.

#### Iterative

The iterative aspect marks actions that are repeated at least once by reduplication. The equivalent in English is to use the adverb *again* or the prefix *re-*. Iterative reduplication in Ayeri is only partial, in that only the initial CV- or VC- of a verb root is repeated—there are no verb roots which consist of only a single consonant or vowel. Complications begin, however, if the verb root starts with a consonant cluster (not unusual), or a diphthong (rare). In the case of an initial consonant cluster, the cluster is simplified to only include the first consonant; for initial diphthongs, there is no necessity to include the first available consonant, since the secondary vowel of a diphthong can by itself act as a semivowel to make up for the vowel hiatus.

- (175) a.  $\text{ḱḱḱḱ}$  *kuta*- ‘thank’ →  $\text{ḱḱḱḱ}$  *ku-kuta*- ‘thank again’  
 b.  $\text{ḱḱḱḱ}$  *amang*- ‘happen’ →  $\text{ḱḱḱḱ}$  *am-amang*- ‘happen again’  
 c.  $\text{ḱḱḱḱ}$  *prant*- ‘ask’ →  $\text{ḱḱḱḱ}$  *pa-prant*- ‘ask again’  
 d.  $\text{ḱḱḱḱ}$  *ayrin*- ‘set’ →  $\text{ḱḱḱḱ}$  *ay-ayrin*- ‘set again’

The reduplicated stem works as a new stem for other prefixes, that is, no morphological material can go between the reduplicated part and the lexical stem proper; the following example also shows that there is, again, no restriction on the iterative aspect with regards to tense:

- (176) *Məku-kutayāng.* (\**Ku-məkutayāng*)  
 Mə-ku~kuta=yāng  
 PST-ITER~thank=3SG.M.A  
 ‘He thanked again.’

Iterative reduplication is lexicalized at least in one verb, *sa-saba-* ‘return’. Besides the meaning of ‘again’, iterative reduplication may also indicate the meaning ‘back’, for instance in the following example:

- (177) *Ta-tapyu adaley!*  
 Ta~tapy-u ada-ley  
 ITER~put-IMP that-P.INAN  
 ‘Put that back!’

In addition to a simple iterative meaning, a frequentative meaning like ‘walk around’, ‘cry all the time’, or ‘keep asking’ can be achieved by combining the iterative and progressive aspects, that is, the verb is both modified by *manga* for progressive aspect and partial initial reduplication for iterative aspect:

- (178) a. *Ang manga la-lampay saba-sara manga luga babisya-hen.*  
 Ang manga la~lamp-ay.Ø saha-sara manga luga bahis-ya=hen  
 AT PROG ITER~walk=ISG.TOP back.and.forth DYN while day-LOC=all  
 ‘I was walking around back and forth all day long.’
- b. *Ang manga si-sipye kimay sirutayya.*  
 Ang manga si~sip-ye kimay.Ø sirutay-ya  
 AT PROG ITER~cry-3SG.F baby.TOP night-LOC  
 ‘The baby, she is crying all the time at night.’
- c. *Manga pa-prantu!*  
 Manga pa~prant-u  
 PROG ITER~ask-IMP  
 ‘Keep asking!’

#### Lexically marked aspectual categories

Besides using morphological means, Ayeri expresses some aspectual categories by way of lexical items, that is, verbs and adverbs. The relevant words in this respect are the adverbs *sirimang* ‘about to’ (prospective) and *mayisa* ‘ready; be done’ (cessative), as well as the verb *cun-* ‘begin, start’ (inchoative):

- (179) *Saratang sirimang.*  
 Sara=tang sirimang  
 leave=3PL.M.A about.to  
 ‘They are about to leave.’

- (180) *Konjang mayisa.*  
 Kond=yang mayisa  
 eat=1SG.A be.done  
 'I am done eating.'

- (181) *Pəcunreng seyaryam.*  
 Pə-cun=reng seyar-yam  
 NFUT-begin=3SG.INAN.A rain-PTCP  
 'It is going to start raining any moment.'

Prospective *ᄒᆞᆫᄇᆞᆫ sirimang* (179) and cessative *ᄇᆞᆫ mayisa* (180) are expressed by adverbs which are regularly following verbs as their heads. They precede other adverbs due to a higher amount of semantic bondedness, by tendency, than other descriptive adverbs. For this reason, as well as for expressing grammatical function rather than lexical meaning with the original meaning still transparent, they appear to be on the verge of grammaticalization. In contrast, inchoative *ᄇᆞᆫ cun-* (181) is expressed by a periphrastic verb construction, that is, *ᄇᆞᆫ cun-* requires a content-verb VP as a complement rather than an NP. The content/main verb appears in a non-finite form marked by *-yam*, which will be described below.

#### 4.5.4 Mood

Besides various aspects, Ayeri also marks mood other than realis: irrealis, imperative, hortative, and negative. These are also expressed by suffixes on the verb and typically follow aspectual marking where it is expressed by a suffix, that is, the habitative suffix *-asa*. The following subsections will discuss each of the modal categories expressed by suffixes; modal verbs proper will be discussed in section 4.5.5.

##### *Irrealis*

Irrealis marking in Ayeri is indicated by the suffix *-ong* and marks that an action is thought of as hypothetical by the speaker, whether he or she expects it to be fulfilled or not:

- (182) *Sahongvāng edaya, ming silvongvāng sitang-vāri.*  
 Saha-ong=vāng edaya, ming silv-ong=vāng sitang=vāri  
 come-IRR=2SG.A here, can see-IRR=2SG.A REFL=2SG.INS  
 'If you came/had come here, you could see/have seen it yourself.'

As (182) shows, irrealis marking is especially prominent in conditional clauses which express a hypothetical cause and effect. Both condition/protasis and consequence/apodosis are marked with the irrealis suffix in this case. The example

sentence also shows that, again, the initial vowel of the suffix replaces the last vowel of the verb stem, if there is one, so that  $\text{ၵၵၵ}$ : *saba-* becomes  $\text{ၵၵၵၵ}$ : *sahong-*, to which further mood suffixes may be added, and finally, person marking.

The same suffix,  $\text{ၵၵၵ}$  *-ong*, is also used in other contexts expressing inactual events, for instance, in reported speech, or complement clauses expressing a wish about the actualization of a hypothetical event:

- (183) *Narayeng, ang menongye demās yena.*  
 Nara=yeng ang menu-ong=ye.Ø dema-as yena  
 say=3SG.F.A AT visit-IRR=3SG.F.TOP aunt-P 3SG.F.GEN  
 ‘She said she were visiting her aunt.’

- (184) *Hanuyang, koronongyang maritay.*  
 Hanu=yang koron-ong=yang maritay  
 wish=1SG.A know-IRR=1SG.A before  
 ‘I wish I had known this before.’

Irrealis marking does not, however, appear in contexts that express requirements on or wishes about a third person’s actions, that is, typical subjunctive contexts; the verb in the complement clause rather appears in the indicative in these contexts. To add a sense of expectation of compliance about the action, the modal  $\text{ၵၵ}$  *mya* ‘be supposed to’ may be added, see section 4.5.5.

- (185) a. *\*Arapnang, sa garongyāng hatay.*  
 Arap=nang sa gara-ong=yāng hatay-Ø  
 require=1PL.A PT call-IRR=3SG.M.A police-TOP  
 b. *Arapnang, sa (mya) garayāng hatay.*  
 Arap=nang sa (mya) gara=yāng hatay-Ø  
 require=1PL.A PT (be.supposed.to) call=3SG.M.A police-TOP  
 ‘We require that he call the police.’

### Negative

The negative mood is used to negate verbs, which is separate from irrealis marking: negation of verbs is marked by the suffix  $\text{ၵၵၵ}$  *-oy*, which has an allomorph *-u* before diphthongs in romanization and also in pronunciation. The Tahano Hikamu spelling is more conservative here and keeps the spelling  $\text{ၵၵၵ}$  *<-oyay>* for */-uay/* (*-NEG=1SG.TOP*). Like the irrealis suffix, the negative suffix deletes the last vowel of the verb stem if present, which is exemplified in (186b) besides this example showing the *-u* allomorph. Moreover, example (186c) shows that negative marking usually follows irrealis marking when suffixes are stacked:  $\text{ၵၵၵ}$  *-ong* +  $\text{ၵၵၵ}$  *-oy* →  $\text{ၵၵၵၵ}$  *-ongoy*.

- (186) a. *Ang silvoyyan nasiyamanas tan.*  
 Ang silv-oy=yan.Ø nasi-yam-an-as tan  
 AT see-NEG=3PL.M.TOP approach-PTCP-NMLZ-P 3PL.M.GEN  
 ‘They did not see them approaching.’
- b. *Ang peguay kalam adaley!*  
 Ang pega-oy=ay.Ø kalam ada-ley  
 AT steal-NEG=1SG.TOP honestly that-P.INAN  
 ‘I didn’t steal it, honestly!’
- c. *Ang tendongoyva sarayam adaya.*  
 Ang tend-ong-oy=va.Ø sara-yam adaya  
 AT dare-IRR-NEG=2SG.TOP go-PTCP there  
 ‘You would not dare to go there.’

If negated verbs appear together with negative indefinite pronouns (compare section 4.2.4), multiple negatives do not cancel each other out, but amplify the negation instead. This is to say that Ayeri allows for multiple negation as a means to emphasize the impossibility of something.

- (187) *Le gamaroyya tadoy ranyāng adanya.*  
 Le gamar-oy-ya tadoy ranyāng adanya-Ø  
 PT.INAN manage-NEG-3SG.M never nobody-A that-TOP  
 ‘Nobody ever managed that’,  
 literally: ‘Nobody never didn’t manage that.’

### Imperative

The imperative mood is used to mark orders to an unspecified second person, that is, imperative verbs do not require an overt second person agent; if an addressee is included, it is oblique and unmarked for case, see section 4.1.3. Moreover, no distinction is made between singular and plural second-person addressees, so that the marker is 𐀓 -u in either case. Like the other mood suffixes, the vowel of the imperative suffix replaces the vowel of the verb stem if there is one.

- (188) a. *Giru māy!*  
 gira-u māy  
 hurry-IMP INT  
 ‘Hurry up!’
- b. *Tangu yām, Yan!*  
 Tang-u yām Yan  
 listen-IMP 1SG.DAT Yan  
 ‘Listen to me, Yan!’

- c. *Tangu yām, ledanye nā!*  
 Tang-u yām ledan-ye nā  
 listen-IMP ISG.DAT friend ISG.GEN  
 ‘Listen to me, my friends!’

It is important to note that the imperative paradigm is defective; imperative verbs behave essentially as infinite forms in that they do not exhibit any agreement in person, number, gender, and topic, and also cannot act as hosts for clitic personal pronouns. Imperative verbs may be marked for negative and hortative, however. Hence, for instance, (189) is grammatical, while the examples in (190) are not.

- (189) *Saroyu yas!*  
 Sara-oy-u yas!  
 leave-NEG-IMP ISG.P  
 ‘Don’t leave me!’

- (190) a. \**Ya sa-sabu nanga!*  
 Ya sa~saha-u nanga-Ø  
 LOCT ITER~go-IMP house-TOP  
 ‘Go back to the house!’  
 b. \**Sa sutamuya kohanya tasela!*  
 Sa sutam-u=ya.Ø kohan-ya tasela  
 PT hang-IMP=3SG.M.TOP sunrise-LOC tomorrow  
 ‘May he be hanged tomorrow at sunrise!’

Example (189) simply expresses a negative command, which is unproblematic in terms of logic, since commands may be issued to act in a certain way, or to forgo this action. Example (190a) shows the imperative verb as preceded by a locative topic marker, which is not logically impossible, but unacceptable by convention. Example (190b) takes this one step further in displaying a cliticized object pronoun in the fashion of morphological passives (compare section 4.5.1, page 150).

### Hortative

The hortative is a special kind of imperative which addresses a group including the speaker. Its implied referent is thus first-person plural. Again, it is not necessary to mark the verb for the addressee here. As the hortative is related in meaning to the imperative, the verb also uses the imperative inflection with ၵိ -u, but it is fully reduplicated in addition to mark the difference. As regards agreement morphology, the same restrictions as those of imperatives apply.



Figure 4.23: Modal verbs and particles

Category	Verb	Particle	Translation
ABILITY	ṣṣṣ: <i>ming-</i>	ṣṣṣ <i>ming</i>	‘be able to, can’
DESIRE, INTENTION	ṣṣṣ: <i>vac-</i>	ṣṣṣ <i>vaca</i>	‘like to’
	ṣṣṣ: <i>no-</i>	ṣṣṣ <i>no</i>	‘want to’
PERMISSION	ṣṣṣ: <i>kila-</i>	ṣṣṣ <i>kila</i>	‘be allowed to, may’
REQUIREMENT	ṣṣṣ: <i>ilta-</i>	ṣṣṣ <i>ilta</i>	‘need to’
OBLIGATION	ṣṣṣ: <i>mya-</i>	ṣṣṣ <i>mya</i>	‘be supposed to, shall’
	ṣṣṣ: <i>rua-</i>	ṣṣṣ <i>rua</i>	‘have to, must’
CONTINUATION	ṣṣṣ: <i>div-</i>	ṣṣṣ <i>diva</i>	‘stay, remain’

- (191) a. *Sahu!*  
 Saha-u  
 go-IMP  
 ‘Go!’
- b. *Sahu-sahu umangya!*  
 Sahu~saha-u umang-ya  
 HORT~go-IMP beach-LOC  
 ‘Let’s go to the beach!’

#### 4.5.5 Modal verbs

Modal verbs in Ayeri express the notions of ability, desire, permission, requirement, obligation, and also of continuation, as indicated by Figure 4.23. They can generally act as both fully inflectable intransitive verbs, as well as invariable bound morphemes which occur in combination with fully inflected content verbs:

- (192) a. *Rua babavāng baho, ang bihanoyya mirampaluy nas.*  
*Rua baha=vāng baho, ang bihan-oy=ya.Ø mirampaluy nas*  
 must shout=2SG.A loudly, AT understand-NEG=3SG.M.TOP otherwise IPL.P  
 ‘You have to shout loudly, otherwise he does not understand us.’
- b. *Ruasanang.*  
*Rua-asa=nang*  
 must-HAB=IPL.A  
 ‘We usually have to.’

As (192a) shows, the modal does not inflect in combination with another verb; it rather acts similarly to a prefix, like the progressive marker  $\text{māṅ}$  *manga*, which is also presumably deverbal (compare section 3.1, footnote 3). In difference to  $\text{māṅ}$  *manga*, which as a preverbal element only serves a grammatical function, the semantic component of the modals is still prevalent, as is shown by (192b), where  $\text{rua}$  *rua-* appears in its function as an intransitive verb with the same meaning of strong obligation as in (192a), though it carries regular person and aspect inflection here. Inflecting the modal in the context of cooccurrence with a content verb is, however, considered unacceptable:

- (193) \**Ruavāṅ babayam baho.*  
           Rua=vāṅ   baha-yam   baho  
           must=2SG.AT   shout-PTCP   loudly  
           ‘You have to shout loudly.’

Regarding example (192b) and its ability to inflect, Ayeri also has a verb that generally means ‘do’, namely,  $\text{mira}$  *mira-*. However, it is not common to use this as a dummy verb to carry the inflection instead of the modal verb either. While such a construction is not ungrammatical *per se*, it is simply not the preferred way to express intransitive modal verbs:

- (194) ?*Rua mirasanang.*  
           Rua   mira-asa=nang  
           must   do-HAB=IPL.A  
           ‘We usually have to.’

While most of the verbs listed in Figure 4.23 should look reasonable to English speakers, Ayeri uses two verbs for modal particles which may seem odd:  $\text{vaca}$  *vaca* ‘like to’, to express taking pleasure in doing something, and  $\text{diva}$  *diva* ‘stay, remain’, to express that the action is being prolonged.<sup>37</sup> The latter verb thus also has an aspectual component to its meaning.

- (195) a. *Ang vacay betayley.*  
           Ang vac=ay.Ø   betay-ley  
           AT   like=1SG.TOP   berry-P.INAN  
           ‘I like berries.’  
       b. *Ang vaca konday betayley.*  
           Ang vaca kond=ay.Ø   betay-ley  
           AT   like   eat=1SG.TOP   berry-P.INAN  
           ‘I like to eat berries.’

<sup>37</sup> The verb stems indeed end in a consonant while the modal particles need an epenthetic *-a* to form permissible words.

- (196) a. *Ang divay rangya nā tasela.*  
 Ang div=ay.Ø rang-ya nā tasela  
 AT stay=1SG.TOP home-LOC 1SG.GEN  
 ‘I will stay home tomorrow.’
- b. *Ang diva bengya ku-danyās kebak.*  
 Ang diva beng=ya.Ø ku=danya-as kebak  
 AT stay stand=3SG.M.TOP like=one-P alone  
 ‘He remained standing as the only one.’

The fact that modal particles in Ayeri retain their verbal semantics in spite of shedding verb morphology is probably even more obvious from the above examples (195) and (196), which show the alternation between full-verb use (a) and modal use (b) for both  $\text{r}_{\text{g}}$  *vac-* and  $\text{r}_{\text{g}}$  *div-*. In comparison to the other modal verbs in Figure 4.23, these two verbs in particular also stand out by virtue of their roots ending in a consonant instead of a vowel like in the other cases. This suggests that they may have been grammaticalized as modal verbs only relatively recently, and there appears to be variation at least for  $\text{r}_{\text{g}}$  *vac-*, for instance:

- (197) ... *yam vacongyang ilisayam eda-koyās gan* ...  
 ... *yam vac-ong-yang ilisa-yam eda=koya-as gan-Ø* ...  
 DATT like-IRR-1SG.A dedicate-PTCP this=book-P child-TOP  
 ‘... I would like to dedicate this book to the child ...’ (Becker 2015 [2013]: 1, 8)

Moreover, as illustrated previously in (185b),  $\text{g}$  *mya* ‘be supposed to, shall’ can be used to express indirect commands where English may use the subjunctive mood; essentially the function of this modal particle is that of the jussive mood. For convenience, the above example will be repeated here:

- (198) *Arapnang, sa (mya) garayāng batay.*  
 Arap=nang sa (mya) gara=yāng hatay-Ø  
 require=1PL.A PT (be.supposed.to) call=3SG.M.A police-TOP  
 ‘We require that he call the police.’

In addition to this use,  $\text{g}$  *mya* is also used in commands to third persons, whether direct or indirect. English may use *shall* here as an equivalent.

- (199) a. *Ningu cam, mya saratang.*  
 Ning-u cam, mya sara=tang  
 tell-IMP 3PL.M.DAT shall leave=3PL.M.A  
 ‘Tell them to leave.’

- b. *Mya vehara nekanley.*  
 Mya veh-ara nekan-ley  
 shall build-3SG.INAN bridge-P.INAN  
 ‘A bridge shall be built.’
- c. *Mya yomāra makangreng.*  
 Mya yoma-ara makang-reng  
 shall exist-3SG.INAN light-A.INAN  
 ‘Let there be light.’

#### 4.5.6 Participle

Besides the imperative—and, by extension, the hortative—Ayeri also possesses another infinite form called the participle. This form is marked by appending *-yam* to the verb root. The participle is generally the form of verbal complements of intransitive subordinating verbs other than modal verbs (compare section 4.5.5). For instance, *ᶤᶤ* *cun-* ‘begin’ or *ᶤᶤᶤ* *manang-* ‘avoid’ both allow complementation with another verb:

- (200) a. *Cunyo makayam perinang.*  
 Cun-yo maka-yam perin-ang  
 begin-3SG.N shine-PTCP sun-A  
 ‘The sun began to shine.’
- b. *Manangyeng pengalyam badanas saha yena.*  
 Manang=yeng pengal-yam badan-as saha yena  
 avoid=3SG.F.A meet-PTCP father-P in.law 3SG.F.GEN  
 ‘She avoids to meet her father-in-law.’

Since subordinated verbs may be transitive like in (200b), the problem of center-embedding arises when the agent NP of the subordinating verb is not simply a cliticized pronoun (see section 4.5.1), since arguments of the subordinating verb follow the embedded clause as in (200a):

- (201) a. <sup>?</sup>*Ang pinyaya [konjam inunas] Yan sa Pila.*  
 Ang pinya-ya kond-yam inun-as Ø=Yan sa=Pila  
 AT ask-3SG.M eat-PTCP fish-P TOP=Yan P=  
 ‘Yan asks Pila to eat the fish.’
- b. <sup>??</sup>*Ang pinyaya [ilyam koyaley ledanyam yana] Yan sa Pila.*  
 Ang pinya-ya il-yam koya-ley ledan-yam yana Ø=Yan sa=Pila  
 AT ask-3SG.M give-PTCP book-P.INAN friend-DAT 3SG.M.GEN TOP=Yan P=Pila  
 ‘Yan asks Pila to give the book to his friend.’

In order to avoid too much complexity at the expense of ease of composition on the speaker's side, and intelligibility on the listener's, it is much preferable to express the embedded clause as a complement clause instead.<sup>38</sup> The particle  $\downarrow$  *da-* may be added to the formerly subordinating verb in order to signal that a complement clause is following.

- (202) a. *Ang da-pinyaya Yan sa Pila, [le konjeng inun].*  
 Ang da=pinya-ya Ø=Yan sa=Pila le kond=yeng inun-Ø  
 AT such=ask-3SG.M TOP Yan P Pila PT.INAN  
 'Yan asks Pila to eat the fish.'
- b. *Ang da-pinyaya Yan sa Pila, [le ilyeng koya ledanyam yana].*  
 Ang da=pinya-ya Ø=Yan sa=Pila, le il=yeng koya-Ø ledan-yam  
 AT such=ask-3SG.M TOP=Yan P=Pila, PT.INAN give-3SG.F book-TOP friend-DAT  
 yana  
 3SG.M.GEN  
 'Yan asks Pila to give the book to his friend.'

#### 4.5.7 Other affixes

In the section on noun morphology we have already encountered a number of clitic prefixes that may attach to noun heads (see section 4.1.4), and some of these can also attach to verbs. Furthermore, verbs may also be modified by certain adverbial quantifier clitics. The latter are dealt with in more detail in the section on adverbs; only a few relevant examples will be given here.

##### Prefixes

We have already encountered the prefix  $\downarrow$  *da-* 'so, such' in the previous section, as well as in the section on noun prefixes (see sections 4.1.4 and 4.5.6). With nouns,  $\downarrow$

<sup>38</sup> The German linguist Otto Behaghel (1854–1936) coined a number of laws—albeit with German in focus—three of which are relevant to information flow: "Das oberste Gesetz ist dieses, daß das geistig eng Zusammengehörige auch eng zusammengestellt wird." (Behaghel 1932: 4) ['The supreme law is such that the mentally closely related is also arranged in close proximity.']—"Ein zweites machtvolleres Gesetz verlangt, daß das Wichtigere später steht als das Unwichtige, dasjenige, was zuletzt noch im Ohr klingen soll." (4) ['A second powerful law demands that more important information appear at a later point than what is less important: the which is supposed lastly to resonate in the listener's ear.']—"Gesetz der wachsenden Glieder [...]; es besagt, daß von zwei Gliedern, soweit möglich, das kürzere vorausgeht, das längere nachsteht." (6) ['Law of the growing constituents [...]; it signifies that of two constituents, if possible, the shorter one precedes, the longer one follows.'] Also compare Wasow (1997) on the cooperation between speaker and listener in the face of syntactically complex, 'heavy' constituents.

*da-* ‘such’ patterns as a demonstrative with the deictic prefixes  $\text{ᑯᑦ}$  *eda-* ‘this’ and  $\text{ᑯᑦ}$  *ada-* ‘that’. Distinguishing between near and far is not possible with verbs,<sup>39</sup> but pointing out that something is happening ‘in this way’, ‘so’ is still possible, hence  $\text{ᑯᑦ}$  *da-* is also applicable to verbs.  $\text{ᑯᑦ}$  *da-* can thus act essentially as a pro-verb. As a clitic, it leans on the verb, preceding all other inflectional prefixes, that is, any tense prefixes that may possibly precede the verb root.

- (203) a. *Da-mingya ang Diyan.*  
 Da=ming-ya ang=Diyan.  
 so=can-3SG.M A=Diyan  
 ‘Diyan can (do it).’  
 b. *Ang da-məpinyaya Yan sa Pila.*  
 Ang da=mə-pinya-ya Ø=Yan sa=Pila  
 AT such=PST-ask-3SG.M TOP=Yan P=Pila  
 ‘Yan asked Pila to (do so).’

Another possible use of the prefix  $\text{ᑯᑦ}$  *da-* with verbs is related to the colloquial abbreviation of  $\text{ᑯᑦ}$  *danya* ‘such one’ as described in section 4.2.2, where the demonstrative part,  $\text{ᑯᑦ}$  *da-* may be split off the pronoun and attached in front of the adjective directly to express ‘the ADJ one’. This practice has possibly been extended to verbs in analogy to the use just illustrated in (203). Example (100) from the mentioned section is repeated here for the reader’s convenience:

- (204) *Sa noyang da-tuvo.*  
 Sa no=yang da=tuvo.Ø  
 PT want=1SG.A such=red.TOP  
 ‘I want the red one.’

When  $\text{ᑯᑦ}$  *da-* is used as an abbreviation for  $\text{ᑯᑦ}$  *danyās* (such.one-P) or  $\text{ᑯᑦ}$  *danyaley* (such.one-P.INAN), as in the following example, it may also appear prefixed to the verb:

- (205) *Mya da-vehoyyāng.*  
 Mya da=veh-oy=yāng  
 supposed.to one=build-NEG=3SG.M  
 ‘He is not supposed to build one.’

As mentioned above,  $\text{ᑯᑦ}$  *da-* can also be used in an expletive way, to express ‘in this way’ or ‘like that’. It does not encode an anaphoric relation in this case, but merely serves as a discourse particle to highlight the action.

<sup>39</sup> Unless you distinguish between actions performed in the speaker’s proximity versus ones that are performed at a distance. Ayeri, however, does not make such a distinction.

- (206) a. *Da-sabāra seyaneneng.*  
 Da=saha-ara seyan-en-g  
 thus=come-3SG.INAN rain-A.INAN  
 ‘Here comes the rain.’
- b. *Le no da-subroyya ang Hasanjan tiga kaytan yana.*  
 Le no da=subr-oy-ya ang=Hasanjan tiga kaytan-Ø yana  
 PT want there=give.up-NEG-3SG.M A=Hasanjan honorable right-TOP 3SG.M.GEN  
 ‘Mr. Hasanjan did not want to cease his right just there.’

Besides  $\text{da-}$ , verbs may also take the  $\text{ku-}$  ‘like’ prefix, which we have already seen with both nouns and adjectives (compare sections 4.1.4 and 4.3.4). The English translation in context may rather be ‘as though’ than ‘like’ here, but the function is the same: expressing likeness and resemblance.

- (207) *Misyeng, ang ku-tangoyye yās.*  
 Mis=yeng, ang ku=tang-oy=ye.Ø yās  
 act=3SG.F.A AT like=hear-NEG=3SG.F.TOP 3SG.M.P  
 ‘She acts as though she does not hear him.’

As previously described (compare section 4.2.6),  $\text{sitang}$  ‘self’, the reflexive prefix, can appear as a prefix on verbs as well. This may be the case when the patient/undergoer of a transitive sentence signifies the same entity as the actor. Example (115) is repeated here for convenience:

- (208) *Ang sitang-silvye puluyya.*  
 Ang sitang=silv=ye.Ø puluy-ya  
 AT self=see=3SG.F.TOP mirror-LOC  
 ‘She sees herself in the mirror.’

The image of the agent in the mirror is that of the agent herself, so she is seeing her own reflection. Both agent and patient thus reference the same person, which means that instead of using the reflexive object pronoun  $\text{sitang-yes}$  ‘herself’ (self=3SG.F.P), it is possible to drop the pronoun and to place the reflexive prefix on the verb instead.

### Suffixes

Besides taking clitic prefixes, verbs may also take clitic suffixes, namely, adverbial suffixes denoting degree, such as  $\text{-ani}$  ‘not at all’,  $\text{-eng}$  ‘rather’,  $\text{-ikan}$  ‘much’,  $\text{-ikoy}$  ‘not much’,  $\text{-kay}$  ‘a little’,  $\text{-nama}$  ‘just, only, merely’,  $\text{-ngas}$  ‘almost’, and  $\text{-nyama}$  ‘even’. Some of these overlap with quantifiers applicable to nouns, and all of them are also applicable to adjectives. As enclitics, these suffixes lean on the inflected verb:

- (209) a. *Ang rua apaya-kay Latun adanyaya.*  
 Ang rua apa-ya=kay Ø=Latun adanya-ya  
 AT must laugh=3SG.M=a.little TOP=Latun that.one-LOC  
 ‘Latun had to laugh a little at that.’
- b. *Ya no narayang-nama va.*  
 Ya no nara=yang=nama va.Ø  
 LOCT want speak=1SG.A=just 2SG.TOP  
 ‘It is you I just want to talk to.’

## 4.6 Adverbs

Adverbs in Ayeri are the counterparts of adjectives with regards to modification of verbs and phrases. Like adjectives, they do not display agreement, though attributive adverbs may take suffixes for comparison (‘run *faster*’, ‘climb *better*’). Adverbs may equally be modified by the usual degree suffixes. Generally, there is no rigid distinction between adverbs and adjectives, so the latter may easily be used as the former. The following subsections will discuss the different kinds of adverbs and their possible uses as modifiers.

### 4.6.1 Attributive adverbs

Attributive adverbs are words expressing the manner in which an action is carried out, or the circumstances of an event. Like adjectives, adverbs follow their heads, that is, verbs. If near-grammaticalized adverbs are involved, namely, adverbs whose function predominates over their semantic content, attributive adverbs follow these. This case is illustrated in (210a), where the attributive adjective *ban* ‘good’ follows the more functional adverb *iri* ‘already’. In (210b), on the other hand, the descriptive adjective *cabo* ‘late’ can directly follow the verb. Further adverbs may follow in decreasing order of semantic relation to their head. With regards to grammaticalization, Lehmann (2015: 157 ff.) speaks of *bondedness* or *Fügungsenge* (‘closeness of construction’): the closer the bond between two juxtaposed terms is, the higher is its degree of grammaticalization. This explains why *iri* must follow the verb in (210a) while descriptive adverbs less central to the verb’s meaning typically follow with increasing optionality.

- (210) a. *Ri rija iri ban ang Tapan palān yena.*  
 Ri rig-ya iri ban ang=Tapan palān-Ø yena  
 INST draw-3SG.M already well A Tapan age-TOP  
 ‘For her age, Tapan already draws well.’



- b. *Sahasaya*            *cabo* *ang Niyas.*  
 Saha-asa-ya        cabo ang=Niyas  
 come-HAB-3SG.M late A=Niyas  
 ‘Niyas is usually late.’

#### Comparison of adverbs

Since actions are usually gradable in the way they are carried out, it is possible to compare adverbs in the same way as adjectives. Here, however, only the particle-based strategy described in section 4.3.1 can be used.

- (211) a. *Ang rije*            *ban-eng*        *Sipra*        *na Tapan.*  
 Ang rig-ye        ban=eng        Ø=Sipra        na=Tapan  
 AT draw-3SG.F good=COMP TOP=Sipra GEN=Tapan  
 ‘Sipra draws better than Tapan.’
- b. *Rije*            *ban-vā*        *ang Nava.*  
 Rig-ye        ban=vā        ang=Nava  
 draw-3SG.F good=SUPL A=Nava  
 ‘Nava draws best.’

In order to form the comparative (211a), the suffix *-eng* is appended to the adverb; the superlative (211b) carries the suffix *-vā* as a marker.

#### *Māy and voy*

The discourse particles *māy* ‘yes’ and *voy* ‘no’ can also appear as adverbs, though since they act mainly as functional morphemes here, it is not possible for them to undergo comparison in spite of their attributive use. While *māy* ‘yes’ and *voy* ‘no’ normally express affirmative and negative responses as answers to closed questions, *māy*, for one, can be used adverbially as an intensifier (212). In a similar way, *voy* can be used for negative intensification (213). The negative intensifier replaces negation on the verb in this case, though the verb may still be negated as well for very forceful negation.

- (212) a. *Nay le*            *konja*        *māy epang*        *ang Kaji*        *nernan*        *barina*        *sebu!*  
 Nay le        kond-ya        māy epang        ang=Kaji        nernan-Ø        bari-na        sebu  
 And PT.INAN eat-3SG.M INT then A=Kaji piece-TOP meat-GEN rotten  
 ‘And then Kaji totally ate the piece of rotten meat!’
- b. *Yāng*        *māy karomayās*        *nārya.*  
 Yāng        māy karomaya-as        nārya  
 3SG.M.A INT doctor-P        though  
 ‘He is a doctor, though.’

- (213) a. *Le vacyo voy veneyang kondan.*  
 Le vac-yo voy veney-ang kondan-Ø  
 PT.INAN like-3SG.N INT.NEG dog-A food-TOP  
 ‘The food, the dog did not like it at all.’
- b. *Adareng voy bahisley niru.*  
 Ada-reng voy bahis-ley niru  
 that-A.INAN INT.NEG day-P.INAN bad  
 ‘That is no a bad day at all.’

Besides this use, both ꠘꠗ *māy* and ꠘꠗꠘ *voy* can also be used in tag questions, to reflect the expectation of a person asking with regards to the answer:

- (214) a. *Sa konjon māy patasjang keynam?*  
 Sa kond-yon māy patas-ye-ang keynam-Ø  
 PT eat-3PL.N AFF bear-PL-A people-TOP  
 ‘People, bears eat them, don’t they?’
- b. *Sa ginyon voy patasjang nimpur?*  
 Sa gin-yon voy patas-ye-ang nimpur-Ø  
 PT drink-3PL.N NEG bear-PL-A wine-TOP  
 ‘Wine, bears don’t drink it, do they?’

Example (214a) poses the question with the expectation of an affirmative answer. This is indicated by using the affirmative particle ꠘꠗ *māy* after the verb. Example (214b), on the other hand, indicates that the asker has doubts about the issue in question and expects his or her opposite to decline. The negative particle ꠘꠗꠘ *voy* is placed in adverb position after the verb accordingly.

#### 4.6.2 Degree and quantity

While attributive adverbs follow their heads as independent words, the most common adverbs expressing degree and quantity (quantifiers) do not only follow verbs, nouns, adpositions, adjectives, or other adverbs, but they cliticize on them, that is, they are dependent morphemes. The word stem—a lexical head which is usually inflected except in the case of adjectives—serves as the host for the clitic in all these cases. Examples of degree and quantifier suffixes and how they interact with different parts of speech were already given in all the relevant sections; an example from each section is repeated here for convenience. As we will see below, there are common grading and quantifying adverbs which behave like regular adverbs as well. It is possible to combine both the suffixed and the free kinds with other adverbs as long as those adverbs permit modification with regards to degree and/or quantity.

Purely functional adverbs like *iroy* ‘not yet’ or *sirimang* ‘about to’ may allow degree adverbs to modify them at least.

- (215) a. With a noun (6b):

*Ajayon ganang-ikan kivo.*  
Aja-yon gan-ang=ikan kivo.  
play-3SG.N child-A=many small

‘Many small children are playing.’

- b. With an adjective (127):

*Eda-prikanreng napay-eng*  
Eda=prikan-reng napay=eng  
this=soup-A.INAN spicy=rather

‘This soup is rather spicy.’

- c. With an adposition (133):

*Ang mitasaye pang-ikan mandayya tado.*  
Ang mit-asa=ye.Ø pang=ikan manday-ya tado  
AT live-HAB=3SG.F.TOP back=much forum-LOC old

‘She used to live way behind the old forum.’

- d. With a verb (209a):

*Ang rua apaya-kay Latun adanyaya.*  
Ang rua apa-ya=kay Ø=Latun adanya-ya  
AT must laugh=3SG.M=a.little TOP=Latun that.one-LOC

‘Latun had to laugh a little at that.’

A number of quantifier adverbs can be used to express both quantity and degree, especially prominent in this regard is *-ikan*, which comprises all of ‘many’, ‘much’ and ‘very’, as displayed in examples (215a) and (215c), where in the former case it appears as a quantifier of a countable entity (*ganang-ikan* ‘many children’) and in the latter case as a degree adverb (*pang-ikan* ‘way behind’). The complete set of degree and quantifier suffixes is listed in Figure 4.24. Note that not all suffixes have both a grading and a quantifying meaning.

Grading and quantifying expressions which deviate from the pattern of cliticization and instead are used as independent words are, most notably: *diring* ‘several’, *ekeng* ‘over-, overly, too’, *hengas* ‘almost all’, *ikan-ikan* ‘altogether, totally’, *ikanvānya* ‘at most, by and large’, *kagan* ‘excessively, far too’, *menikaneng* ‘another (one more)’, *miday* ‘approximately’, *palung* ‘another (a different kind)’, *regandey* ‘bit by bit, gradually’, *varyānya* ‘at least’. Besides, adjectives denoting a degree, like *ipan* ‘drastic, extreme, radical’ can of course also be used as adverbial modifiers. Since adverbs do

Figure 4.24: Adverbial degree and quantifier suffixes

Suffix	Degree	Quantity
ႁႃႉ - <i>ani</i>	not at all	none at all
ႁႃႉႃ - <i>aril</i>		some
ႁႃႉ - <i>eng</i>	rather, more	more
ႁႃႉ - <i>hen</i>	completely	all, every, each
ႁႃႉ - <i>ikan</i>	much, very	many, much
ႁႃႉ - <i>ikoy</i>	not very, less	not many, not much
ႁႃႉ - <i>ing</i>	so	
ႁႃႉ - <i>kay</i>	a bit, little	few
ႁႃႉ - <i>ma</i>	enough	enough
ႁႃႉ - <i>mas</i>	some kind of	
ႁႃႉ - <i>nama</i>	just, merely	just, only
ႁႃႉ - <i>ngas</i>	almost	
ႁႃႉ - <i>nyama</i>	even	
ႁႃႉ - <i>vā</i>	most	most
ႁႃႉ - <i>ven</i>	pretty, quite	

not inflect, the conversion happens without the need to explicitly mark it. ႁႃႉ *ipan* can thus also be used to mean ‘extremely’:

- (216) Yang valuy ipan, sa silvyang va.  
 Yang valuy ipan, sa silv=yang va.Ø  
 ISG.A glad extremely PT see=ISG.A 2SG.TOP  
 ‘I’m extremely glad to see you.’

#### 4.6.3 Sentence adverbs

Ayeri allows adverbs to modify sentences, for instance, to express the stance of the speaker, to concede an argument, or simply to structure an argumentative chain.

##### Stance adverbs

Adverbs indicating the stance of the speaker towards an assertion or a statement are, for instance: ႁႃႉ *ankyū* ‘really’, ႁႃႉ *cuyam* ‘actually, indeed, in fact’, ႁႃႉ *kalam* ‘honestly’, ႁႃႉ *kuban* ‘fortunately’, ႁႃႉ *kuniru* ‘unfortunately’, ႁႃႉ *nilay* ‘probably’, ႁႃႉ *yoming* ‘maybe, perhaps’. These adverbs are usually placed after the verb like any other attributive adverb, even though their scope is over the whole clause. It is also possible to place them towards the end of the clause they are used in, however. Example (217) gives an example of either position.

- (217) a. *Ang ming bengya kuban Tipal vahamya bavesangena nā.*  
 Ang ming beng-ya kuban Ø=Tipal vaham-ya bavesang-ena nā  
 AT can attend-3SG.M fortunately TOP=Tipal party-LOC birthday-GEN 1SG.GEN  
 ‘Fortunately, Tipal can attend my birthday party.’
- b. *Sahayāng cabo-kay nilay nārya.*  
 Saha=yāng cabo=kay nilay nārya  
 come=3SG.M late=a.little probably though  
 ‘He will probably come a little late, though.’

#### Discourse-structuring adverbs

Ayeri does not have a great number of concessive adverbs, that is, ᐱᐱᐱ *arēn* ‘however, anyway’ and ᐱᐱᐱ *nārya* ‘although, though; nevertheless’ do most, if not all the work. Like adverbs expressing stance, they may follow the verb or be placed at the end of the clause. Example (217b) above already shows an example of ᐱᐱᐱ *nārya* being used as a sentence adverb. With regards to this word, it is important to note that ᐱᐱᐱ *nārya* may also be used as a general contrastive conjunction which can mostly be translated as ‘but’. In this sense, its placement in a clause creates a slight difference in grammar, though not a great one in meaning, as illustrated by example (218) below.<sup>40</sup>

- (218) a. *Garayang, nārya guraca ranyāng.*  
 Gara=yang, nārya gurat-ya ranya-ang  
 call=1SG.A, but answer-3SG.M nobody-A  
 ‘I called, but nobody answered.’
- b. *Garayang, guraca nārya ranyāng.*  
 Gara=yang gurat-ya nārya ranya-ang  
 call=1SG.A, answer-3SG.M although nobody-A  
 ‘I called, although nobody answered.’

Besides the two adverbs mentioned above, there is also ᐱᐱᐱ *da-nārya* ‘even though, in spite of, despite’ as a postposition with a contrastive meaning (see section 4.4.2). As an adposition it accepts either a noun phrase or a complement phrase (CP) as a complement. In the latter case, which is shown in (219b), there is no locative case agreement of the whole CP with the postposition, since there is no fitting agreement target to attach it to.

<sup>40</sup> Possibly it is easier not to distinguish between conjunction and adverb at all in this case and instead to treat ᐱᐱᐱ *nārya* as an adverb with a general contrastive meaning which can exceptionally be found at the beginning of a clause as well.

- (219) a. *Ya precang nanga yena* [<sup>PP</sup> [<sup>NP</sup> *sarānya yena* ] *da-nārya*].  
 Ya pret=yang nanga-Ø yena sarān-ya yena da-nārya  
 LOCT knock=ISG.A house-TOP 3SG.F.GEN absence-LOC 3SG.F.GEN in.spite  
 ‘I knocked at her house in spite of her absence.’
- b. *Precang* [<sup>PP</sup> [<sup>CP</sup> *ang yomoyye rangya yena* ] *da-nārya* ].  
 Pret=yang ang yoma-oy=ye.Ø rang-ya yena da-nārya  
 knock=ISG.A AT exist-NEG=3SG.F.TOP home-LOC 3SG.F.GEN even.though  
 ‘I knocked, even though she wasn’t at home.’

Further adverbs which are commonly used as adverbial expressions and which may appear in the presentation of arguments include: *deramyam* ‘after all’, *kaybunay* ‘by the way’, *ku-nasya* ‘as follows’, *menanya* ‘on the one hand’, *mirampaluy* ‘otherwise’, *nāreng* ‘rather’, *aynay* ‘(and) also, moreover, furthermore’, *palunganya* ‘on the other hand’, *panca* ‘finally, eventually, in the end’, *pinyan* ‘please’, *subing* ‘naturally, of course’. It should be apparent by the complexity and relative length of some of these words that they are fossilized expressions, for instance, *deramyam* ‘after all’ transparently derives from *deram* ‘matter of fact’ declined for dative case (*yam*, see section 4.1.3); *ku-nasya* is derived from a phrase literally meaning ‘as (it) follows’; and *palunganya* ‘on the other hand’ literally means ‘in difference’, from *palungan* ‘difference, distinction’. Of the list given above, it may be noted that *pinyan* ‘please’ (from *pinya-* ‘ask’) is often found at the beginning of polite requests:

- (220) *Pinyan, sahu kongya!*  
 Pinyan saha-u kong-ya  
 please come-IMP inside-LOC  
 ‘Please come inside!’

### Conjunctive adverbs

The term ‘conjunctive adverb’ here refers to sentence adverbs which have the distribution of a conjunction. Whereas sentence adverbs are normally placed either after the verb or at the end of a clause, these words are usually found as introducing clauses as they connect two otherwise independent statements to show their relation to each other. Their meaning extends that of the ‘pure’, logical conjunctions *nay* ‘and’ and *soyang* ‘or’, however.<sup>41</sup> Part of this small class of words are the

<sup>41</sup> Logical ‘not’ is usually expressed by a negative suffix on the adjective or the verb, compare sections 4.3.2 and 4.5.4, respectively. For conjunctions proper, see section 4.8.

expressions ခါး *bata* ‘if, whether’,<sup>42</sup> ခါး *kada* ‘then, thus’, ခါးခါး *kada-kada* ‘so that ... again’, ခါးခါး *kadāre* ‘so that’, နှင်း *naynay* ‘moreover, furthermore’, နှင်း *nāreng* ‘(but) rather’, နှင်း *nāroy* ‘but not’, နှင်း *nārya* ‘but, except that, though, yet’, နှင်း *sining* ‘that is’, and နှင်း *yanoyam* ‘because, for, since’.

- (221) a. *Le rimasayang kunang sirutayya, kadāre ming toryang*  
 Le rima-asa=yang kunang-Ø sirutay-ya kadāre ming tor=yang  
 PT.INAN shut-HAB=ISG.A door-TOP night-LOC so.that can sleep=ISG.A  
*ban-eng.*  
 ban=eng  
 good=COMP

‘I usually close the door at night so that I can sleep better.’

- b. *Ilta toryeng, nārya da-kilisoyyon nilanjang yena.*  
 Ilta tor=yeng nārya da=kilis-oy-yon nilan-ye-ang yena  
 need sleep=3SG.F.A but so=allow-NEG-3PL.N thought-PL-A 3SG.F.GEN

‘She needed to sleep, but her thoughts did not allow her to.’

- c. *Ang ming hangoyya Yan padangas, yanoyam yāng pisu.*  
 Ang ming hang-oy-ya Ø=Yan padang-as yanoyam yāng pisu  
 AT can keep-NEG-3SG.M TOP=Yan mind-P because 3SG.M.A tired

‘Yan cannot concentrate because he is tired.’

Regarding (221b), it needs to be pointed out that နှင်း *nārya* can also be used as a regular adverb. In those cases it is considered to have less contrastive force, however: postposed နှင်း *nārya* is best translated as ‘though, although’ (compare section 4.6.3).

Since verbs can be negated and reduplicated for grammatical purposes, the adverbs ခါးခါး *kada-kada* ‘so that ... again’ and နှင်း *nāroy* ‘but not’ are mostly used with predicative adjectives, since predicative statements lack a verb to apply verb morphology to. These two conjunctive adverbs thus can convey the most important distinctions otherwise expressed by the verb as a substitute. This ability, however, is not a productive grammatical process, but specific to ခါးခါး *kada-kada* and နှင်း *nāroy*, respectively.

- (222) a. *Rua nibaya ang Pulan, kada-kada yāng sapin tadayya kivo.*  
 Rua niba-ya ang=Pulan kada~kada yāng sapin taday-ya kivo  
 Must rest-3SG.M A Pulan ITER~so.that 3SG.M.A healthy time-LOC

‘Pulan must rest so that he will be healthy again very soon.’

<sup>42</sup> Conditional protasis and apodosis are usually unmarked in Ayeri, however, it may still be desirable occasionally to use a particle to indicate them explicitly.

Figure 4.25: Demonstratives relating to adverbial categories

Category	Proximal		Distal	
PLACE	<i>edaya</i>	‘here’	<i>adaya</i>	‘there’
TIME	<i>edauyi</i>	‘now’	<i>adaui</i>	‘then’
MANNER	<i>edāre</i>	‘hereby’	<i>adāre</i>	‘thereby’
REASON	<i>edayam</i>	‘herefore’	<i>adayam</i>	‘therefore’

- b. *Yang temisena cuyam, nāroy yang petau.*  
 Yang temis-ena cuyam nāroy yang petau  
 ISG.A north-GEN indeed but.not ISG.A stupid

‘I may be from the north, but I am not stupid.’

As described above (compare section 4.5.3), partial reduplication of the verb expresses iterative aspect, which in Ayeri is used to mean ‘X again’ and ‘X back’, depending on context. The reduplicated form *kada-kada* as displayed in (222a) is irregular in its formation if we assume that it is formed from *kadāre* ‘so that’; the regular outcome with iterative reduplication applied would be *\*ka-kadāre*. As a conjunction, however, it is relatively frequent, so it does not seem odd that it has assumed a phonologically more simple, yet distinct form (compare, for instance, Bybee and Hopper 2001: 11–12). The conjunctive adverb in (222b) exhibits likewise a slightly irregular formation if we consider that it is essentially the negated form of *nārya* ‘but’; the regular outcome would have been *\*nāryoy*, which underwent simplification to *nāroy*, presumably as well due to its relatively high token frequency.

#### 4.6.4 Demonstrative adverbs

Besides demonstrative pronouns like *adanya* ‘that (one)’ (see section 4.2.2), and indefinite pronouns like *yāril* ‘for some reason; somewhere’ (see section 4.2.4), Ayeri also possesses demonstrative pronouns for the adverbial categories place, time, manner, and reason. The full paradigm is given in Figure 4.25. Compared to the paradigm for demonstrative pronouns relating to persons or things, the paradigm of adverbial demonstratives is incomplete in that forms with *da-* ‘such’ are unattested. Thus, instead of the hypothetical form with *da-*, a full-NP adverbial with a generic noun has to be used: *\*daya* → *da-yanoya* ‘in such a place’ (such=place-LOC). Adverbial demonstratives are, like pronouns, in complementary distribution with full NPs, since they are pro-forms. Thus, using them as modifiers to NPs as in (223a) is not possible, while using simple demonstrative *eda-* ‘this’ together with



a noun as in (223b) or using  $\text{ᑭᑭᑭ}$  *edayā* ‘here’ as a pro-form fully replacing the NP  $\text{ᑭᑭᑭᑭᑭ}$  *eda-nangaya* ‘in this house’ as in (223c) is generally unproblematic.

- (223) a. \**Ang mice Pada nangaya edaya.*  
           Ang mit-ye Ø=Pada nanga-ya edaya  
           AT live-3SG.F TOP=Pada house-LOC here
- b. *Ang mice Pada eda-nangaya.*  
       Ang mit-ye Ø=Pada eda=nanga-ya  
       AT live-3SG.F TOP=Pada this=house-LOC
- ‘Pada lives in this house.’
- c. *Mice ang Pada edaya.*  
      Mit-ye ang=Pada edaya  
      live-3SG.F A=Pada here
- ‘Pada lives here.’

## 4.7 Numerals

The vast majority of the 196 sampled languages in Comrie (2013) either counts in tens or employs a mixed vigesimal-decimal system, while only five languages in the sample use a different base than 10. Ayeri uses a duodecimal system and is thus very untypical compared to real-world languages in using a number base other than 10—none of the languages in Comrie (2013)’s sample are listed as duodecimal.<sup>43</sup> Ayeri’s number words are mostly semantic primes, that is, their meanings cannot be readily recognized as derived from body parts (Dixon 2012: 74) or from internal arithmetic like 9 as ‘ten lacking one’, for instance. The numerals  $\text{ᑭᑭ}$  *kay* ‘three’,  $\text{ᑭᑭᑭ}$  *iri* ‘five’, and  $\text{ᑭᑭᑭᑭ}$  *ben* ‘eight’ may be an exception: as a quantifying adverb,  $\text{ᑭᑭ}$  *kay*

<sup>43</sup> I chose to use 12 as a numerical base because I simply wanted to toy with it. Also, I originally conceived of Ayeri speakers as humanoid but not necessarily human, which meant that they would not need to have evolved to have five fingers on each hand—for an earlier fictional language of mine, Daléian, I used an octal system reasoning that speakers would only have four digits. In any case, a duodecimal system could work reasonably well with human hands if you counted not only the fingers, but also the hands themselves. Finger-counting in Ayeri’s duodecimal system would probably be similar to counting in the senary system of Nen described in Evans (2009) (as quoted in Dixon 2012): “In counting, Nen speakers ‘first count off the five fingers with a finger of their other hand, and then on the sixth they place their counting finger on the inside of the wrist’” (73–74). Even though duodecimal numeral systems only occur rarely in natural languages, they are not entirely unheard of. Thus, for instance, Cain and Gair (2000) report that in Maldivian, the “decade plus numeral system is currently in fashion, but with some remnants of an older system as well. The numeral *fas dolas* ‘60’ (lit., ‘five twelves’) comes from a duodecimal system that has all but disappeared in the Maldives. This number system was used for special purposes such as counting coconuts.” (21).

Figure 4.26: Basic cardinal numerals

Numeral	Word	Numeral	Word
0	ᄒᆞᆫ <i>ja</i>	6	ᄒᆞᆫ <i>miye</i>
1	ᄒᆞᆫ <i>men</i>	7	ᄒᆞᆫ <i>ito</i>
2	ᄒᆞᆫ <i>sam</i>	8	ᄒᆞᆫ <i>ben</i>
3	ᄒᆞᆫ <i>kay</i>	9	ᄒᆞᆫ <i>veya</i>
4	ᄒᆞᆫ <i>yo</i>	A	ᄒᆞᆫ <i>mal</i>
5	ᄒᆞᆫ <i>iri</i>	B	ᄒᆞᆫ <i>tam</i>

means ‘a little, few’; ᄒᆞᆫ *iri* means ‘already’, which might refer to the fact that a full hand has been counted off; and ᄒᆞᆫ *ben* also means ‘all’. Ayeri moreover appears extremely sophisticated as far as the upper limit of counting systems is concerned in possessing a way of forming large numerals by a theoretically open-ended, recursive process.

#### 4.7.1 Cardinal numerals

Since people and concrete things are usually present in a countable manner, I want to comment on how countable entities are handled with regards to numerals. After this, a discussion of how to express fractional amounts will follow.

##### Integers

Cardinal numerals work much like adjectives in that they modify nouns. As modifiers, they are placed after nouns. The full table of cardinal numerals from  $0 \times 12^\circ$  (0) to  $11 \times 12^\circ$  (B) is given in Figure 4.26.<sup>44</sup> An example of simple modification by a numeral is given in (224):

- (224) *Ang tenyaya pang bihanya yo soyang miye.*  
 Ang tenya=ya pang bihan-ya yo soyang miye  
 AT die=3SG.M.TOP ago week-LOC four or six  
 ‘He died four or six weeks ago.’

In this example, the numeral ᄒᆞᆫ *yo* ‘four’ modifies the noun ᄒᆞᆫ *bihan* ‘week’. Notably, however, plural marking is missing on the noun, since the notion of plurality is provided by the numeral itself; the numeral is thus normally sufficient to mark the whole NP as plural.

<sup>44</sup> For the sake of typographic simplicity, A and B will henceforth be used to mean  $10 \times 12^\circ$  and  $11 \times 12^\circ$ , respectively. An index ‘10’ after a figure indicates base 10, while an index ‘12’ indicates base 12.

Figure 4.27: Numerals for factors of 12

Numeral	Word	Numeral	Word
		60	မိယင်္ဂ် <i>miyelan</i>
10	မင်္ဂ် <i>menlan</i>	70	မိယင်္ဂ် <i>itolan</i>
20	မင်္ဂ် <i>samlan</i>	80	မင်္ဂ် <i>benlan</i>
30	မင်္ဂ် <i>kaylan</i>	90	မင်္ဂ် <i>veyalan</i>
40	မင်္ဂ် <i>yolan</i>	၁၀	မင်္ဂ် <i>mallan</i>
50	မင်္ဂ် <i>irilan</i>	၁၀	မင်္ဂ် <i>tamlan</i>

Multiples of  $12^1$  between 10 and ၁၀ are formed by appending the suffix င် *-lan* to the numbers from ၀ to ၁၀, which are given in Figure 4.27. These numerals themselves act as heads for forming compounds with lower numerals to fill in the  $12^0$  numerals 11, 12, 13, ..., 21, 22, 23, etc. Thus, one counts on from မင်္ဂ် *menlan* ‘dozen’ in the following way:

- (225) a. မင်္ဂ်မင်္ဂ် *menlan-men* (11),  
 မင်္ဂ်မင်္ဂ် *menlan-sam* (12),  
 မင်္ဂ်မင်္ဂ် *menlan-kay* (13),  
 etc.
- b. မင်္ဂ်မင်္ဂ် *samlan-men* (21),  
 မင်္ဂ်မင်္ဂ် *samlan-sam* (22),  
 မင်္ဂ်မင်္ဂ် *samlan-kay* (23),  
 etc.
- c. မင်္ဂ်မင်္ဂ် *tamlan-men* (၁၁),  
 မင်္ဂ်မင်္ဂ် *tamlan-sam* (၁၂),  
 မင်္ဂ်မင်္ဂ် *tamlan-kay* (၁၃),  
 etc.

In order to form yet higher numbers, the suffix င် *-nang* is appended to numerals: မင်္ဂ် *menang* (← မင်္ဂ် *men* ‘1’ + င် *-nang*), မင်္ဂ် *samang* ‘2’ (← မင်္ဂ် *sam* + င် *-nang*), မင်္ဂ် *kaynang* (← မင်္ဂ် *kay* ‘3’ + င် *-nang*), etc. While မင်္ဂ် *menang* is used for 100, higher forms in the *nang* series each multiply the numeral from which they are derived by the factor of a duodecimal myriad (=  $20736_{10}$ ). Thus, we get the following series:

- (226) မင်္ဂ် *samang*  $12^{(2-1) \times 4} = 12^4$  myriad  
 မင်္ဂ် *kaynang*  $12^{(3-1) \times 4} = 12^8$  myriad myriads  
 မင်္ဂ် *yonang*  $12^{(4-1) \times 4} = 12^{12}$  myriad myriad myriads  
 မင်္ဂ် *irinang*  $12^{(5-1) \times 4} = 12^{16}$  myriad myriad myriad myriads  
 etc.

The numeral which the *nang* series word is based on essentially indicates the number of myriad groups, thus, 1-*nang* maximally contains BBBB; 2-*nang* maximally contains BBBB BBBB; 3-*nang* maximally contains BBBB BBBB BBBB, etc. Furthermore, the *nang* series words serve as unit words, and thus can be modified by numerals again, for instance:

- (227) a. *menang sam veyalan-kay*  
           100    2    90    3  
            $293_{12} = 399_{10}$
- b. *samang benlan-miye menang sam veyalan-kay*  
      10000   80    6    100    2    90    3  
       $86\ 0293_{12} = 2\ 115\ 471_{10}$

In (227a), *sam* modifies *menang* to indicate that there are two sets of  $100_{12}$ . Likewise, in (227b), *samang* is modified by *benlan-miye* to mean  $86_{12}$  times  $10\ 000_{12}$ . Unit words like *menang*, *samang*, etc. may also be used as (inanimate) nouns, so it is possible to speak of *menangye* ‘hundreds’. To express ‘hundreds of people’, however, the head of the genitive NP is pluralized exceptionally, even if it is a plurale tantum:

- (228) a. *Ang bengyon keynam menang kanānya desay iray.*  
           Ang beng-yon   keynam-Ø   menang   kanān-ya   desay iray  
           AT   attend-3PL.N   people-TOP   hundred   wedding-LOC   royal  
           ‘A hundred people attended the royal wedding.’
- b. *Ang bengyon keynamye menang kanānya desay iray.*  
           Ang beng-yon   keynam-ye-Ø   menang   kanān-ya   desay iray  
           AT   attend-3PL.N   people-PL-TOP   hundred   wedding-LOC   royal  
           ‘Hundreds of people attended the royal wedding.’

In (228), *keynam* is morphologically a singular form referring semantically to a multitude. It is usually treated as a plurale tantum in that it triggers plural agreement in spite of being morphologically singular, which is illustrated in (228a). In (228b), the word still receives otherwise redundant plural marking to express the difference in meaning from (228a).

In order to indicate that myriad groups have been skipped, the conjunction *ṛṇay* ‘and’ is used to avoid confusion, as shown in (229), or simply to avoid having two single-digit numerals following each other, as illustrated by (230).

Figure 4.28: Simple fractions from  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{1}{8}$ 

Numeral	Word	Numeral	Word
$\frac{1}{2}$	မာမေ <i>mesam</i>	$\frac{1}{7}$	မာၼ်းမိ <i>menito</i>
$\frac{1}{3}$	မာၼ်း <i>menkay</i>	$\frac{1}{8}$	မာၼ်းၼ်း <i>menyen</i>
$\frac{1}{4}$	မာၼ်းၼ်း <i>menyo</i>	$\frac{1}{9}$	မာၼ်းၼ်းပ <i>menveya</i>
$\frac{1}{5}$	မာၼ်းၼ်း <i>meniri</i>	$\frac{1}{A}$	မာၼ်းမာ <i>memal</i>
$\frac{1}{6}$	မာၼ်းပ <i>memiye</i>	$\frac{1}{B}$	မာၼ်းမာ <i>mentam</i>

- (229) a. *samang menang men henlan-miye*  
 1 0000 100 1 80 6  
 $186\ 0000_{12} = 5\ 101\ 056_{10}$
- b. *samang menang men nay henlan-miye*  
 1 0000 100 1 and 80 6  
 $100\ 0086_{12} = 2\ 986\ 086_{10}$

- (230) a. <sup>2</sup>*menang mal ito*  
 100 A 7
- b. *menang mal nay ito*  
 100 A and 7  
 $A07_{12} = 1\ 447_{10}$

### Fractions

So far, we have explored only integers, that is, whole numbers. Since things can often be divided up into smaller sections as well, this section is going to deal with how to express fractional amounts. The main way to express common fractions like  $\frac{1}{2}$ ,  $\frac{1}{3}$ ,  $\frac{1}{4}$ , etc. is to prepend မာၼ်း *men* ‘one’ to the denominator; the full paradigm for  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{1}{8}$  is given in Figure 4.28. Note that a number of these fractions have slightly irregular forms due to assimilation in consonant clusters. In order to introduce a numerator, the fraction numeral is used as a unit word which is modified by a regular cardinal numeral, as (231) shows.

- (231) a. *Ang ilca Yan vadisānley mesam.*  
 Ang ilt-ya Ø=Yan vadisān-ley mesam  
 AT buy-3SG.M TOP=Yan bread-P.INAN half  
 ‘Yan bought half a loaf of bread.’

- b. *Ang ilce Mali sikanley menyo kay kipunena.*  
 Ang ilt-ye Ø=Mali sikan-ley menyo kay kipunena  
 AT buy-3SG.M TOP=Mali pound-P.INAN fourth three cheese-GEN  
 ‘Mali bought a three-quarter pound of cheese.’

In order to express compound numerals, མེན་ *men-* may still be added to the denominator head word, for instance

- (232) *memallan-ben*  
 men-mallan-hen  
 $1/10 \times 12^1 + 8$   
 $\frac{1}{18_{12}} = \frac{1}{128_{10}}$

However, this may become confusing if numerators are used, so

- (233) ? *memenang ito menlan-yo kay*  
 men-menang ito menlan-yo kay  
 $1/12^2 \quad 7 \quad 1 \times 12^1 + 4 \quad 3$   
 $\frac{3}{714_{12}} = \frac{3}{1024_{10}}$

would be expressed less ambiguously as

- (234) *menangan ito menlan-yo nernanyena kay*  
 menang-an ito menlan-yo nernan-ye-na kay  
 $12^2$ -NMLZ  $7 \quad 1 \times 12^1 + 4$  part-PL-GEN  $3$   
 ‘three of the 1024th part’

using the ordinal form of the denominator.

#### 4.7.2 Ordinal numerals

Ordinal numerals are formed by nominalization from cardinal numerals. This may be another slightly odd strategy, however, it is in fact attested in Classical Tibetan, according to Chung, Hill, and Sung (2014), in reference to Beyer (1992):

The suffix *-pa* forms a noun from another noun, meaning ‘associated with N’ (e.g. *rta* ‘horse,’ *rta-pa* ‘horseman,’ *yi-ge* ‘letter,’ *yi-ge-pa* ‘one who holds a letter of office,’ cf. Beyer 1992: 117). When suffixed to ordinal numbers this suffix forms ordinals (e.g. *gsum* ‘three,’ *gsum-pa* ‘third’; *bcu* ‘ten,’ *bcu-pa* ‘tenth’). (Chung, Hill, and Sung 2014: 626)

Unfortunately, neither Chung, Hill, and Sung (2014) nor Beyer (1992) say whether Classical Tibetan treats these derived forms as nouns or as numerals, or whether it makes that distinction at all. In Ayer, ordinals are firmly treated as noun-like nominal elements due to the derivational suffix མེན་ *-an* (compare section 4.1.7).

Figure 4.29: Basic ordinal numerals

Numeral	Word	Numeral	Word
0th	ᄒᄒᄒ <i>jān</i>	6th	ᄒᄒᄒ <i>miyan</i>
1st	ᄒᄒᄒ <i>menan</i>	7th	ᄒᄒᄒ <i>itan</i>
2nd	ᄒᄒᄒ <i>saman</i>	8th	ᄒᄒᄒ <i>henan</i>
3rd	ᄒᄒᄒ <i>kayan</i>	9th	ᄒᄒᄒ <i>veyān</i>
4th	ᄒᄒᄒ <i>yan</i>	10th	ᄒᄒᄒ <i>malan</i>
5th	ᄒᄒᄒ <i>iran</i>	11th	ᄒᄒᄒ <i>taman</i>

Since nominals are the heads of NPs, this also means that the ordinal numeral forms the head of the NP it occurs in, instead of modifying the entity being counted like an ordinal numeral does. This is illustrated in (235) below. The paradigm for the ordinal numerals from 0 to 11 can be found in Figure 4.29.

- (235) a. *Ang Mabān menanas.*  
 Ang=Mahān menan-as  
 A=Mahān first-P  
 ‘Mahan is the first.’
- b. *Ang Mabān menanas si girenjāng.*  
 Ang=Mahān menan-as si girend=yāng  
 A=Mahān first-P REL arrive=3SG.M.A  
 ‘Mahān is the first to arrive.’
- c. *Ang girenja Mabān babalanya ku-menan diyan*  
 Ang girend-ya Ø=Mahān bahalan-ya ku=menan diyan  
 A arrive-3SG.M TOP=Mahān finish-LOC like=first worthy  
 ‘Mahān arrives at the finish as a worthy first.’
- d. *Ang tavya Mabān menanas ganyena yana.*  
 Ang tav-ya Ø=Mahān menan-as gan-ye-na yana  
 AT get-3SG.M TOP=Mahān first-P child-PL-GEN 3SG.M.GEN  
 ‘Mahān gets his first child’,  
 literally: ‘Mahān gets the first of his children.’

As (235a) shows, the ordinal may serve as an anaphora meaning ‘the *n*th (one)’. In these cases, animacy is determined by the word the ordinal references, as far as case marking and person agreement are concerned. Since ordinals are treated as nominals, they can also be modified by both a relative clause, as (235b) shows, and an adjective, as shown in (235c). In order to include an entity whose rank in a series is given, the counted entity appears as a genitive attribute, which is illustrated by (235d).

(236) a. *Adareng kaylan-miyanley babisyena pericanena.*  
 Ada-reng kaylan-miye-an-ley bahis-ye-na perican-ena  
 that-A.INAN 3 × I2<sup>1</sup> + 6-NMLZ-P.INAN day-PL-GEN year-GEN

b. *Adareng menanganley kaylan-miye bahisyena pericanena.*  
 Ada-reng menang-an-ley kaylan-miye bahis-ye-na perican-ena  
 that-A.INAN 12<sup>2</sup>-NMLZ-P.INAN 3 × 12<sup>1</sup> + 6 day-PL-GEN year-GEN

In (236a), the whole numeral  $\text{ꠘꠞꠦꠘꠦ} \text{ kaylan-miye}$  is nominalized and inflected for case, yielding  $\text{ꠘꠞꠦꠘꠦꠘꠦ} \text{ kaylan-miyanley}$ . This is analogous to such nouns as  $\text{ꠘꠞꠦꠘꠦ} \text{ betaynimpur}$  ‘grape’ (literally ‘wine-berry’), which inflects as a single unit—a ‘tight’ compound. In (236b), on the other hand, only the first unit word,  $\text{ꠘꠞꠦ} \text{ menang}$  is nominalized and inflected, yielding  $\text{ꠘꠞꠦꠘꠦ} \text{ menanganley}$  with  $\text{ꠘꠞꠦꠘꠦ} \text{ kaylan-miye}$  following it uninflected. This is analogous to  $\text{ꠘꠞꠦꠘꠦ} \text{ ralamapang}$  ‘fingernail’ which is transparently made up of  $\text{ꠘꠞꠦ} \text{ ralan}$  ‘nail’ and  $\text{ꠘꠞꠦ} \text{ mapang}$  ‘finger’ and for which only the first constituent inflects, for instance,  $\text{ꠘꠞꠦꠘꠦ} \text{ ralanya mapang}$  ‘of the fingernails’ (nail-PL-GEN finger)—a ‘loose’ compound.

Whereas ordinals are derived from cardinal numerals by nominalization, multiplicative numerals are derived from ordinals (compare Figure 4.29) in turn by putting them in the dative case: the suffix  $\text{yam}$  is added to the ordinal form of the numeral. The resulting multiplicative numeral can thus be used as an adverbial meaning ‘for the  $n$ th time’, or as an adverb meaning ‘ $n$  times’. Context helps to disambiguate between the two, as well as temporal adverbs like  $\text{iri}$  ‘already’.

- (237) a. *Linkaya iri ang Anang kayanyam.*  
 Linka-ya iri ang=Anang kayanyam  
 try-3SG.M already A=Anang third-DAT

<sup>45</sup> More specifically,  $a \times 12^1 + b$  with  $\{a, b \in \mathbf{Z} \mid 0 < a, b < 12^1\}$ .



- b. *Linkaya iri kayanyam ang Anang.*  
 Linka-ya iri kayanyam ang=Anang  
 try-3SG.M already third.time A=Anang  
 ‘Anang already tried it three times.’

Compound multiplicative numerals are treated analogously to ordinals, that is, for composite numerals smaller than  $12^2$ , the derivational marking is placed at the end of the composite numeral. Conversely, for composite numerals of orders of magnitude above  $12^1$ , the head of the phrase receives all the marking that makes it a multiplicative numeral while the rest trails uninflected as a modifier:

- (238) a. *kaylan-tamanyam*  
 kay-lan-tam-an-yam  
 $3 \times 12^1 + 11$ -NMLZ-DAT  
 ‘3B (= 47<sub>10</sub>) times’  
 b. *menanganyam men samlan-kay*  
 menang-an-yam men sam-lan-kay  
 $12^2$ -NMLZ-DAT 1  $2 \times 12^1 + 3$   
 ‘123 (= 171<sub>10</sub>) times’

#### 4.7.4 Distributive numerals

Distributive numerals are formed in the same way as multiplicative numerals, that is, as a derivation of the respective ordinal numeral, which itself has the form of a nominalized cardinal numeral (compare Figure 4.29). The derivative affix in this case is the instrumental marker, *-eri* (compare section 4.1.3). Distributive numerals refer to groups of  $n$ , as example (239) shows.

- (239) *Ang sarayon burangjang kong besonya samaneri.*  
 Ang sara-yon burang-ye-yang kong beson-ya sam-an-eri  
 AT go-3PL.N animal-PL-A inside ship-LOC two-NMLZ-INS  
 ‘The animals went inside the ship two by two.’

The formation of composite numerals mirrors that of multiplicative numerals, in that composite numerals below  $12^1$  are treated as single units whereas composite numerals of orders of magnitude larger than  $12^1$  mark only the head word while the remainder of the phrase follows as an uninflected modifier.

- (240) a. *benlan-yaneri*  
 hen-lan-yo-an-eri  
 $8 \times 12^1 + 4\text{-NMLZ-INS}$   
 ‘84 by 84 (= 100<sub>10</sub>)’
- b. *menanganeri miye tamlan-yo*  
 menang-an-eri miye tam-lan-yo  
 $12^2\text{-NMLZ-INS}$  6  $11 \times 12^1 + 4$   
 ‘6B4 by 6B4 (= 1 000<sub>10</sub>)’

#### 4.7.5 Number ranges

Ranges of cardinal numbers may be viewed as conceptually similar to stretches of way, hence they are predestined to be expressed by prepositional phrases, or in Ayeri, by any of the cases which can be used for locative purposes (dative, genitive, locative). However, Ayeri treats cardinal numerals more like adjectives than nouns, so using means of case marking is not possible. On the other hand, it should not be a problem, though, to use adpositions since these take both NPs and CPs as complements. Thus, an adjective should not be problematic as a complement either, since it is embedded in an NP. As an adjective, however, the numeral in the PP is not marked for locative case, since adjectives do not inflect for nominal categories (compare section 4.3). Ranges of cardinal numbers may hence be expressed using the postposition *pesan* ‘(up) until’. When counting starts at *men* ‘one’, this numeral may be dropped, like in English ‘count to ten’ instead of ‘count from one to ten’.

- (241) *Kurye ang Pila (men) tam pesan.*  
 Kur-ye ang=Pila (men) tam pesan  
 count-3SG.F A=Pila (1) B until  
 ‘Pila counts from 1 to B (= 1 ... 11<sub>10</sub>).’

Since ordinal numerals are treated as nouns, they may receive case marking. This means that, in contrast to cardinal numerals, it is possible to express a range using a combination of the genitive and the dative case, or again *pesan* with its prepositional object in the locative case. Examples for this are given in (242).

- (242) a. *Ang gumasaya samanena pidimyena da-malanyam.*  
 Ang gum-asa=ya saman-ena bahis-ye-na da=malan-yam  
 AT work-HAB=3SG.M.TOP second-GEN hour-PL-GEN such=tenth-DAT  
 ‘He usually works from the second hour to the tenth.’

- b. *Ang yomaya Magay diyan edaya benanena babisyena*  
 Ang yoma-ya Ø=Magay diyan edaya henan-ena bahis-ye-na  
 AT exist-3SG.M TOP=Magay worthy here eighth-GEN day-PL-GEN  
*da-menlananya pesan.*  
 da=menlanan-ya pesan  
 such=dozenth-LOC until

‘Mr. Magay is here from the eighth to the dozenth day.’

ᐱᐅᐱᐱ *samanena* ‘from the first’ in (242a) and ᐱᐅᐱᐱ *benanena* ‘from the eighth’ in (242b) use the genitive case marker ᐱᐅᐱᐱ -*ena* (compare section 4.1.3) to indicate the starting point. ᐱᐅᐱᐱ *da-malanyam* ‘to the tenth one’ and ᐱᐅᐱᐱ *da-menlanya pesan* ‘up until the dozenth one’ indicate the end points. Since ᐱᐅᐱᐱ *menlan* in (242b) is embedded in a PP headed by the postposition ᐱᐅᐱᐱ *pesan*, it appears in the locative case instead of the dative case like ᐱᐅᐱᐱ *malan* in (242a).

## 4.8 Conjunctions

It was already described how conjunctive adverbs work as conjunction-like sentence adverbs in section 4.6.3. This section is about the ‘purely logical’ conjunctions ᐱᐅᐱᐱ *nay* ‘and’ and ᐱᐅᐱᐱ *soyang* ‘or’, as well as their combination with ᐱᐅᐱᐱ *kamo* ‘equal(ly)’ to form correlative conjunctions.

### 4.8.1 Simple conjunction and disjunction

Coordination is commonly achieved by the conjunction ᐱᐅᐱᐱ *nay* ‘and’. It is placed in between the conjuncts, and works on all syntactic levels. Namely, it may coordinate lexical heads, as well as phrases, and whole clauses.

- (243) a. [<sup>AP</sup>[<sup>A</sup>*Taran*] *nay* [<sup>A</sup>*saco*]] *nangāng*.  
           Taran    *nay*    saco    nanga-ang  
           quiet    and    cool    house-A  
           ‘The house is quiet and cool.’
- b. *Ajayan*    [<sup>NP</sup>*yanang*] *nay* [<sup>NP</sup>*layang*].  
      Aja-yan       yan-ang   *nay*   lay-ang  
      play-3PL.M   boy-A     and   girl-A  
      ‘The boy and the girl are playing.’
- c. [<sup>S</sup>*Nāng pisu*] *nay* [<sup>S</sup>*tapannang*].  
      Nāng   pisu   *nay*   tapan-nang  
      IPL.A   tired   and   be.thirsty-IPL.A  
      ‘We are tired and are thirsty.’

The example sentences in (243) are ordered by increasing level of coordination: (243a) combines two adjective-phrase (AP) heads, *ṭaran* ‘quiet’ and *saco* ‘cool’, which together make up the predicative AP that is equated to *nangāng* ‘a/the house’. In (243b), then, two agent NPs, *yanang* ‘a/the boy’ and *layang* ‘a/the girl’, together form the subject of the verb *ajayan* ‘play’. Lastly, (243c) shows two main clauses coordinated, that is, *nāng pisu* ‘we are tired’ on the one hand, and *tapannang* ‘we are thirsty’ on the other.

Just as *ṭay* expresses *conjunction*, *soyang* ‘or’ expresses *disjunction*. It is equally placed between two disjuncts and equally works at all levels—lexical heads, phrases, and clauses. Inclusive and exclusive ‘or’ are not formally distinguished in Ayeri by the disjunction *soyang* alone, so context is necessary to contrast between them. Alternatively, a construction akin to English ‘either ... or’ may be used to make the distinction explicit (see section 4.8.2).

- (244) a. *Pasyyang, yāng* [<sup>AP</sup>[<sup>A</sup>*mino*] *soyang* [<sup>A</sup>*giday*]].  
 Pasy=yang yāng mino soyang giday  
 wonder=1SG.A 3SG.M.A happy or sad  
 ‘I wonder whether he is happy or sad.’
- b. *Le no ginvāng* [<sup>NP</sup>*karon*] *soyang* [<sup>NP</sup>*gali*]?  
 Le no gin=vāng karon-Ø soyang gali-Ø  
 PT.INAN want drink=2SG.A water-TOP or juice-TOP  
 ‘Do you want to drink water or juice?’
- c. [<sup>S</sup>*Beratu edauyi*] *soyang* [<sup>S</sup>*sa-sabu rangya*]!  
 berata-u edauyi soyang sa~saha-u rang-ya  
 decide-IMP now or return-IMP home-LOC  
 ‘Decide now or go home!’

As above, (244) shows different syntactic contexts for *soyang*. In (244a), it puts two adjectives, *mino* ‘happy’ and *giday* ‘sad’ into opposition as phrasal heads making up a predicative AP. Then, in (244b), the choice is between two NPs, *le ... karon* ‘water’ and *le ... gali* ‘juice’, which jointly form the object of *ginvāng* ‘you drink’. Lastly, in (244c), two main clauses are in opposition—either disjunct forms a complete sentence on its own.

#### 4.8.2 Complex conjunction and disjunction

English has a number of correlative conjunctions, that is, conjunctions made up of multiple parts which work together as one expression. Among these are, notably, *as ... as*, *both ... and*, *either ... or*, *neither ... nor*, *rather ... than*, and *the ... the*. Ayeri uses the adverb *kamo* ‘equally, same’ together with a conjunction for many of these.

ꨀꨣꨣꨣꨣ *kamo ... nay* ‘equally ... and’ is equivalent to ‘both ... and’: the correlative construction emphasizes that two options are equal to each other. Syntactically, resulting sentences are equal to those presented in (243). ꨀꨣꨣ *sano* ‘both’ may be used as a synonym to ꨀꨣꨣ *kamo* as well here.

- (245) *Ang vacay kamo piyuley nay obanley.*  
 Ang vac=ay.Ø kamo piyu-ley nay oban-ley  
 AT like=ISG.TOP equally grain-P.INAN and bean-P.INAN

‘I like both grains and beans.’

Alternatively, it is possible to use a construction with ꨀꨣꨣ *naynay* ‘(and) also’:

- (246) *Ang vacay piyuley, obanley naynay.*  
 Ang vac=ay.Ø piyu-ley oban-ley naynay  
 AT like=ISG.TOP grain-P.INAN bean-P.INAN also

‘I like grains and also beans.’

The example in (245) may be translated more literally as ‘I like grains and beans equally’, with two NPs in alternation, both being objects of a transitive verb, ꨀꨣꨣ *vac* ‘like’. With predicative adjectives, the verb ꨀꨣꨣ *kama-* ‘(be) equal’ may be used:

- (247) *Ang kamayan mabo nay giday.*  
 Ang kama=yan.Ø mabo nay giday  
 AT be.equal=3PL.M.TOP hungry and thirsty

‘They are both hungry and thirsty.’

ꨀꨣꨣ *kama-* is one of Ayeri’s copular verbs used to express equality between two properties of its subject. The literal meaning of (247) is thus, roughly, ‘They are as hungry as they are thirsty’. The construction slightly differs from that used to do comparison of NPs, however, in that the conjunction ꨀꨣꨣ *nay* is placed between both predicative terms here. In order to express literal ‘be ... as ... as’, thus, the conjunction is dropped:

- (248) *Kamareng matikan helanas agonanya.*  
 kama=reng matikan helan-as agonan-ya  
 be.equal=3SG.INAN.A hot oven-P outside-LOC

‘It’s as hot as an oven outside.’

ꨀꨣꨣꨣꨣ *kamo ... nay* is used to express ‘the ... the’, that is, a proportional or antiproportional relationship between two amounts, sizes, or properties; using ꨀꨣꨣ *sano* ‘both’ here is judged less fitting. In order to express a relationship of equal increase/decrease in this way, conjuncts are additionally marked with the comparative suffix ꨀꨣꨣꨣꨣ *-eng* ‘more, rather’ or its opposite, ꨀꨣꨣꨣꨣꨣ *-ikoy* ‘less’:

- ‘The taller they get, the more they eat.’

‘Ajān does it either this month or next.’

- ‘They are either hungry or otherwise angry.’

- ‘Sipra has neither a brother nor a sister.’

- ‘I am neither a girl nor beautiful.’

46 Interestingly, it looks as though I slightly plagiarized English here in idea, albeit unwittingly: the etymology of *either* is given as being from Old English *ǣghwæðer*, *ǣgðer*, from Germanic *\*aiwon* ‘always’ + *\*gihwāþaro-z* ‘each of two’, cf. OED (2016: *either*, adj. (and pron.) and adv. (and conj.)). On the other hand, the collective wisdom of the internet’s fictional-language community holds that one cannot truly innovate grammatical structures; there will always be a natural language which evolved a given construction before, and possibly with more complications involved. This situation is referred to as ‘ANADEW’, an acronym for ‘a nat[ural] lang[uage] already does even worse’.

## A Names

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### A.1 Given names

#### A.1.1 Masculine names

အဲဗျဲ *Ajan*  
အဲဗျဲ *Ajān*  
အဲဗဲ *Akan*  
အဲဗျဲ *Amān*  
အဲဗဲ *Apan*  
အဲဗဲ *Apican*  
အဲဗဲ *Banan*  
အဲဗဲ *Bayhan*  
အဲဗဲ *Baykan*  
အဲဗဲ *Bihān*  
အဲဗဲ *Canya*  
အဲဗဲ *Denan*  
အဲဗဲ *Diyan*  
အဲဗဲ *Gahān*  
အဲဗဲ *Hanuan*  
အဲဗဲ *Hanvan*  
အဲဗဲ *Hinvo*  
အဲဗဲ *Hiro*  
အဲဗဲ *Ijān*  
အဲဗဲ *Ikan*  
အဲဗဲ *Kadijan*  
အဲဗဲ *Kagan*  
အဲဗဲ *Kaman*  
အဲဗဲ *Kan*  
အဲဗဲ *Kolun*  
အဲဗဲ *Krui*

အဲဗဲ *Kruyan*  
အဲဗဲ *Lantān*  
အဲဗဲ *Lanyan*  
အဲဗဲ *Latun*  
အဲဗဲ *Ledo*  
အဲဗဲ *Linko*  
အဲဗဲ *Lita*  
အဲဗဲ *Mahān*  
အဲဗဲ *Makang*  
အဲဗဲ *Mangan*  
အဲဗဲ *Mangān*  
အဲဗဲ *Mangyan*  
အဲဗဲ *Maran*  
အဲဗဲ *Mican*  
အဲဗဲ *Mico*  
အဲဗဲ *Nabang*  
အဲဗဲ *Nibān*  
အဲဗဲ *Niyas*  
အဲဗဲ *Pangal*  
အဲဗဲ *Peran*  
အဲဗဲ *Pinyān*  
အဲဗဲ *Pralan*  
အဲဗဲ *Prano*  
အဲဗဲ *Pulan*  
အဲဗဲ *Saylan*  
အဲဗဲ *Sān*

အဲဗဲ *Sedan*  
အဲဗဲ *Sirtang*  
အဲဗဲ *Sopan*  
အဲဗဲ *Suhing*  
အဲဗဲ *Taboy*  
အဲဗဲ *Tang*  
အဲဗဲ *Tapan*  
အဲဗဲ *Taryan*  
အဲဗဲ *Telbān*  
အဲဗဲ *Tenan*  
အဲဗဲ *Tendan*  
အဲဗဲ *Tenyam*  
အဲဗဲ *Tikim*  
အဲဗဲ *Tipal*  
အဲဗဲ *Togas*  
အဲဗဲ *Toryan*  
အဲဗဲ *Tukong*  
အဲဗဲ *Ulang*  
အဲဗဲ *Ven*  
အဲဗဲ *Vey*  
အဲဗဲ *Veykan*  
အဲဗဲ *Vipin*  
အဲဗဲ *Virang*  
အဲဗဲ *Yan*  
အဲဗဲ *Yonang*

**A.1.2 Feminine names**

ឆ័រ Agivay  
 ឆ័រ Anang  
 ឆ័រ Apitu  
 ឆ័រ Apituay  
 ឆ័រ Apitvay  
 ឆ័រ Avan  
 ឆ័រ Babay  
 ឆ័រ Bamis  
 ឆ័រ Biling  
 ឆ័រ Binis  
 ឆ័រ Briha  
 ឆ័រ Caysu  
 ឆ័រ Dembay  
 ឆ័រ Diras  
 ឆ័រ Dita  
 ឆ័រ Diya  
 ឆ័រ Gada  
 ឆ័រ Gindi  
 ឆ័រ Gumkay  
 ឆ័រ Kadisu

ឆ័រ Karon  
 ឆ័រ Kemis  
 ឆ័រ Kumang  
 ឆ័រ Linglay  
 ឆ័រ Lito  
 ឆ័រ Magaya  
 ឆ័រ Maha  
 ឆ័រ Mali  
 ឆ័រ Malivay  
 ឆ័រ Mangavay  
 ឆ័រ Migray  
 ឆ័រ Misan  
 ឆ័រ Nilan  
 ឆ័រ Ninlay  
 ឆ័រ Niva  
 ឆ័រ Pada  
 ឆ័រ Pakay  
 ឆ័រ Palay  
 ឆ័រ Panglay  
 ឆ័រ Paso

ឆ័រ Pila  
 ឆ័រ Pin  
 ឆ័រ Pituyay  
 ឆ័រ Sempay  
 ឆ័រ Sikavay  
 ឆ័រ Silva  
 ឆ័រ Silvan  
 ឆ័រ Sinlay  
 ឆ័រ Sinvay  
 ឆ័រ Sipra  
 ឆ័រ Tamay  
 ឆ័រ Taniva  
 ឆ័រ Tavisay  
 ឆ័រ Teping  
 ឆ័រ Trānay  
 ឆ័រ Tunan  
 ឆ័រ Tuvo  
 ឆ័រ Vala  
 ឆ័រ Vapa  
 ឆ័រ Vomay

**A.1.3 Gender-neutral names**

ឆ័រ Anang  
 ឆ័រ Banvā  
 ឆ័រ Cān  
 ឆ័រ Cisu  
 ឆ័រ Dikun  
 ឆ័រ Leno  
 ឆ័រ Maka  
 ឆ័រ Manting  
 ឆ័រ Ming

ឆ័រ Natran  
 ឆ័រ Nava  
 ឆ័រ Nilyam  
 ឆ័រ Pangra  
 ឆ័រ Para  
 ឆ័រ Parān  
 ឆ័រ Perin  
 ឆ័រ Piba  
 ឆ័រ Pralan

ឆ័រ Pray  
 ឆ័រ Sutay  
 ឆ័រ Tabi  
 ឆ័រ Taran  
 ឆ័រ Toran  
 ឆ័រ Tupoy  
 ឆ័រ Veno  
 ឆ័រ Veta



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