

relay documentation of language 19a:r  
olive 20190705

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meta

the goal of 19a:r is to a) be able to encode meaning, specifically for relay13, and b) serve as a basis for future development of 19a.

this is a really awful sketch so contact me if you need anything else.

phonology

19a:r has consonants, vowels, and tones and is written in the latin alphabet, you can pm me if you're that interested. tone carries a relatively low functional load. the tone-bearing unit is the **bisyllabic foot** which is assigned from the left of the phonological word. the tone on roots will delete the tone on affixes if necessary, though it prefers not to. here are some examples, root is **bold** and affixes are not.

underlying

surface

tí-mā

tīma (root carries first tone, there is only one foot here [ti][ma] so the foot takes first tone)

tí-mātu

tímatū (there are two feet, [[ti][ma]] and [tu])  
(note, phonetically the last vowel would be lengthened)

mā-tí

māti (same process as ex. 1)

excellent. another thing which occasionally happens is **b d g** vary with **{null} t k** when their position varies between syllable-final and not that, but that doesn't appear here at all.

ideophones do not bear any phonemic tone as they are expressive and the speaker generally has quite a bit of, i want to say "leverage" but that's certainly not the word. anyways, there's no tone on ideophones.

parts of speech, also a sort of ToC for the rest of this, syntax aside

there's verbs (intransitive and transitive), nouns, their classifiers, pronouns, ideophones, and a variety of particles that mostly deal with clause linkage.

verbs

verbs can be either intransitive (one argument, there's further subclassification but that's irrelevant here) or transitive (two) by default. they're pretty typical cross-linguistically so i'm not going to try and differentially define what a verb is. they inflect for ... there's an '**alpha**' stem, a '**beta**' stem, and a **reduced** stem (generally glossed as med for medial). the alpha stem is roughly imperfective, noting that the event described is still ongoing from some point of view. the beta stem is roughly perfective, viewing the event as complete. in clauses linked by a resultative particle the cause clause must have a beta stem. these two stems are viewed as 'full', but let's see an example:

*ɛ dí cɛu tɛ rùgìsì*

1s Cl:person boy hit\med fall\alpha-Caus

'i knocked the boy out (and that was that)'

*ɛ dí cɛu tɛ ròcsì òɛ da*

1s Cl:person boy hit\med fall\beta-Caus SS:Sim eat

'i whacked that kiddo and ate him right as that was happening'

'these are awful examples' you complain 'they illustrate nothing', but don't worry, there won't be much hinging on the difference between these two stem types in the torch.

svcs

we see in the above examples a sequence of verbs 'hit fall' that is translated as basically 'knock out' (in this context, at least). this is an example of **serial verb constructions**. in 19a:r, svcs (pronounced [sɔ̃tsəs]) are used to indicate more complex events (but take heed: they only indicate things viewed as a *single event*. other cases are covered with clause linkage covered in the syntax section.

one important constraint: all verbs in an svc must share the same 'primary' argument, hence why we need the causative in the above example - both verbs need to share *ɛ* as that. of course, only the final verb is in its **full** form (ie not **reduced**), but all verbs in an svc can take derivation.

derivation, valency-changing and whatnot

you may have noticed the causative affix *sì* in the examples. ups the valency of the verb and introduces a new argument who is the entity doing the causing, it's pretty typical in 19a:r. reduplication is a process that can occur but does not occur in the text so whatever

nouns

what is there to say about these, really. they indicate, entities and whatever. pronouns anaphorically refer to entities established in discourse. again, they're pretty typical.

classifiers

there are a lot of these. they come before nouns, and indicate various properties or whatever of it. you can always include a classifier, but not always exclude it. when an entity is being introduced into the discourse, it's basically mandatory. if you aren't referring to a concrete instance of a set of entities, it's again basically mandatory. otherwise it's not necessary but still often used. classifiers are rarer before pronouns but still sometimes included (especially in speech that makes use of honorifics and whatnot) - but! again, that's not present here. you can see an example up top. here's another one:

*tém òsɔ sě hudu běra ke fufuuuu~*

hand be\_around\alpha SS:Rel Cl:flat\_flexible fabric Prox Id:soft\_uwu\_etc

'uwu this is a soft mitten~'

ideophones

there are, again, a lot of these. they indicate, emotions, hard to quantify qualities of stuff, all that. often they contain sounds that aren't otherwise phonemic, and they can be reduplicated a lot, though their citation form is typically two instances. oh, and as mentioned they do not bear tone. there are some in the lexicon, here are some more:

byobyɔ

smooth, lumpy, and firm

aciaci

smol, cute harmless puny etc

ugugun

soggy, mushy, liable to disintegrate

crispy, crunchy, and liable to crumble

syntax? ? ? ??

fronting

clause linkage

feat. switch reference.

*nì dí pau tâyi ryò oti*

3s Cl:person father hit\beta DS:Res die\alpha

'he[i] hit his father[j] and (as a result) he[j] died'

*nì dí pau tâyi gîm oti*

3s Cl:person father hit\beta SS:Res die\alpha

nominal linkage

is separate from clause linkage, see the lexicon entry *a* for the only bit of this relevant for you. to compare to english, 19a:r doesn't use the same and/or/etc in 'plants and meat' vs 'i eat plants and i hate meat'

what constitutes a clause, or whatever

most of the time utterances have a verb, but this isn't always necessary. see for example the example sentence in the classifiers section, where there's only a verb in the relativized

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text to be translated:

sâe sê dí cêu nì èbbo hyu nì bé bêshi *aurauraur*<cowering>. at nì hudu béra hâsa *moyuoyu*<rubbing hands together>. [longer prosodic break] nì médu sê ûê pau ámoh iyugê *hiiiii*<imitating roar>. ryò nì ọr kok háyi *byubyu*<imitating sobbing, fear>. at èbbo bânú kok mēa *trrrrrrr* cúe ù yàisì *şopşopşop*. ûê pau cêu ọr myâ háyi *hiii*<roar>, yà cêu ù háyiháyi *cackckck*<rubbing arm skin>.

if you want it in a nicer-looking approximation of the native syllabary (this isn't needed but i felt like it):

sae se di ceu ni ebebo huyu ni be beshi :aurauraur:. ata ni hudu bera hasa :mohuohu:. ni medu se ue pau amoho iyuge :hiiiii:. royo ni oro koko hayi :buyubuyu:. at ebebo batanu koko mea :tururururu: cue u yaisi :soyoposoyoposoyopo:. ue pau ceu or maya hayi :hiii:, ya ceu u hayihayi :cacikicikiki:.

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necessary lexicon, according to english alphabetical order (tones are ordered V V V V  $\tilde{V}$  V):

**entry** type. definition, definition

verbs (v.i. intransitive, v.t. transitive) are listed as **stem\_α** / **stem\_β** /

**stem\_reduced**, though in most cases only the one relevant type is listed

**a** p. nominal conjunction particle: omitted when the conjunctees are seen as less close. this is a proclitic attaching to the beginning of the following nominal

**at** p. DS sequential

**auraur** id. fear of the supernatural, sacred spaces that feel “off”, etc

**bânú** n. sky, a sky deity, emptiness

- / - / bé v.t. be at

bêshi / - / - v.t. be distant from

běra n. cloth, clothing, fabrics, flag

**byubyu** id. panicked sobbing

**cackck** covered in some sticky liquid

cẹu n. small boy, son, servant/messenger

cúe cl. things related to the earth (hills, ground, fields, roots sometimes...)

dí cl. person, generally someone who is not hostile and not family

èbbo cl. a deity, celestial body, clouds, etc

hâsa / háyi / - v.t. hold, other impermanent but more physical associations

**hii** id. beastly rage

**hudu** cl. flexible, flat materials such as leaves, paper, etc

**hyu** n. the sun, also refers to a specific deity associated with the sun

íyur/ iyugê / - v.i. be hot, sweaty, enraged

**kok** n. body, the bulk of something (not a corpse)

médu / - / - v.t. be in

mẹa v.t. open something, discover

móh n. mother, woman, less often wife

mọγuọγu id. warm, cozy, safe

myâ v.t. see something, notice a detail

nì p.n. 3rd person singular animate pronoun

- / - / ọr v.t. go to, run (and other intentional movement), wait

ryò p. DS resultative (*cause clause* ryò *effect clause*)

sâe / - / - v.i. be small

sẽ p. SS relativizer

šopšop id. squelching mud

**trr** id. heavy raindrops

ûẹ cl. people considered part of one's family (usage varies significantly by lect)

ũ n. dirt, ground, shit (not when used as fertilizer however)

**pau** n. father, man, less often husband, in older usage a close associate (eg. a stonecarver's

assistant). note the initial p which is otherwise not phonemic except in ideophones  
yà p. DS simultaneous  
yài / - / yà v.i. be wet, soaked, inundated with some liquid