A grammar of Komnzo

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For Nakre and Tayafe

Contents

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8 Clausal syntax

8.1 Introduction

This chapter addresses the syntax within simple clauses. In Komnzo, a large part of the argument structure is encoded in the verb morphology. This is described in §5.4, and summarised in Table 5.3. Therefore, the following description of clause types is brief for those types which have been addressed before, but more detailed for other types where the verb morphology plays a smaller role.

8.2 Constituent order

The dominant word order in Komnzo is AUV (actor undergoer verb). Recipients of ditransitives also precede the verb and follow the actor noun phrase, but there is no clear position with respect to the theme argument. Evidence for basic word order comes from the use of the recognitional demonstrative (§3.1.12.6). In example (1), the object argument is expressed first by the recognitional *bäne* 'those' and then by the noun *züm* 'centipedes'. The speaker uses the recognitional in the absolutive case in the position where the constituent normally occurs. This is a tip-of-the-tongue situation, and therefore the speaker fills in the appropriate referent after the verb. Note that there is usually a break in the intonation contour if any constituent occurs after the verb.

(1) *nzürna ŋaref **bäne** sasryoftha **züm**.*
nzürna ŋare=f bäne sa\sryofth/a züm
nzürna woman=ERG.SG RECOG.ABS SG:SBJ>3SG.MASC:IO:PST:PFV/send centipede
'The *nzürna* woman sent those ones after him … the centipedes.'
[tci20120827-03 KUT #138]

Experiencer-object constructions (§8.3.10) deviate from the basic word order. The experiencer is placed almost always before the stimulus, i.e. the undergoer comes first and the actor follows (2). This can be explained by the relative salience of the experiencer in such constructions and the fact that it almost always ranks higher in terms of animacy.

(2) *ŋatha kawakawaf bthefaf.*
ŋatha kawakawa=f b=the\faf/
dog madness=ERG MED=2|3SG:SBJ>2|3PL:OBJ:RPST:PFV/hold
'The dogs went crazy there.' (lit. 'Madness has grabbed the dogs.')
[tci20130907-02 JAA #488]

AUV word order is only a tendency in Komnzo. In fact, most clauses lack overt noun phrases for the respective constituents. The flagging of noun phrases with case allows for some flexibility in the arrangement of constituents. However, deviations from the basic word order are often pragmatically motivated. In example (3),[1] the speaker replies to a question whether a particular individual is his brother-in-law. He says 'really my brother-in-law' and then gives an explanation in the following clause, where the undergoer appears before the actor. The reversal of constituents can be explained as a strategy to focus the undergoer argument, that is *mayawa emoth* 'Mayawa sister' is focussed by fronting.

(3) *nzone ngom fof … **mayawa emoth** naf zefafa fof.*
nzone ngom fof (.) mayawa emoth naf ze\faf/a
1SG.POSS brother.in.law EMPH (.) mayawa girl 3SG.ERG SG:SBJ:PST:PFV/marry
fof
EMPH
'My brother-in-law … He married a Mayawa sister.' [tci20120814 ABB #391-392]

In example (4), both constituents follow the verb. The undergoer comes first and after a short pause the actor follows. Examples like these are rare, but frequently one of the constituents follows the verb. This can occur because the speaker wants to clarify the state of affairs or because she wants to put emphasis on the referent. There is usually a break in the intonation contour after the verb form.

(4) *keke thufnzrm ane karma kabe … naf.*
keke thu\fn/nzrm ane kar=ma kabe (.) naf
NEG SG:SBJ>2|3PL:OBJ:PST:DUR/kill DEM village=CHAR man (.) 3SG.ERG
'She did not attack those village people.' [tci20120901-01 MAK #50]

While the order of constituents is flexible to some extent, it is rarely the case that other elements follow the verb, like adverbs, TAM particles, or the negator. Komnzo supports a number of cross-linguistic generalisations found in verb final languages (Dryer 2007), for example that the possessor precedes the possessed. A second generalisation is that verb-final languages tend to have postpositions rather than prepositions. Komnzo does not have a category of adpositions, but locational nouns like *tharthar* 'side' or *mrmr* 'inside' always follow the noun whose location they specify (§3.1.7).

8.3 Clause types

8.3.1 Non-verbal clauses

Non-verbal clauses are a marginal phenomenon in Komnzo. This section describes the few types of verbless clauses. These are usually short, one or two word utterances including an element which has some verb-like semantics, for example TAM particles or property nouns.

[1] Note that the stem *fath-* means 'hold', but in a suppressed-object construction it means 'marry' (§8.3.7).

The TAM particles *kwa* FUT and *kma* POT can stand alone when they are used as commands. For example, *kma* can mean 'You have to!', and with the apprehensive clitic *=m* attached, it can mean the opposite: *kmam* 'You must not!'. In example (5), the future particle *kwa* is used in the sense of 'Wait!'. The speaker describes poison-root fishing and how they have to hold back the children from jumping into the water too early.

(5) *katakatan kwa zöbthé thrängathinzth nima "**kwa**! komnzo **kwa**!"*
kata-katan kwa zöbthé thrän\gathinz/th nima kwa
REDUP-small FUT first 2|3PL:SBJ>2|3PL:OBJ:IRR:PFV:VENT/stop QUOT wait
komnzo kwa
only wait
'First, they will hold back the small ones and say: "Wait! Just Wait!"'
[tci20110813-09 DAK #25]

Another possible type of verbless clause is with the property nouns *miyo* 'desire' and *miyatha* 'knowledge' and their antonyms *miyomär* 'aversion, dislike' and *miyamr* 'ignorance'. These words are usually used as nominal predicates with light verbs or with the copula. As a consequence, we find examples like (6), where the last clause *nzä miyamr* does not contain a verb. It is possible to insert the copula in the appropriate inflection (*worera* 1SG:SBJ:PST:IPFV/be), but often it is left out. Apart from examples like these, there are no verbless clauses in Komnzo.

(6) *fi kafar mane erera näbi ane ofe ŋarerath. mobo erera? … **nzä miyamr***
fi kafar mane e\rä/ra näbi ane ofe
but big which 2|3PL:SBJ:PST:IPFV/be one DEM disappearance
ŋa\rä/rath. mobo e\rä/ra (.) nzä miyamr
2|3PL:SBJ:PST:IPFV/do where.ALL (.) 2|3PL:SBJ:PST:IPFV/be 1SG.ABS ignorance
'As for the big dogs, they disappeared for good. Where did they go? … I (do) not know.'
[tci20111119-03 ABB #70-72]

8.3.2 Copula clauses

Copula clauses are a subtype of non-verbal predication. They are described here in a separate subsection because the copula shows a number of idiosyncrasies. First, the copula has no restricted stem. Note that this can be predicted because the main function of the restricted stem is to express the perfective aspect. Secondly, the stem of the copula is sensitive to duality: the non-dual stem is *rä*, while the dual stem is *rn*. Thirdly, the third person singular inflections are irregular (in the non-past): masculine *yé*; feminine *rä*. Table 8.1 shows the copula forms in non-past, recent past and past tense. Finally, the copula stem *rä* can be used in an ambifixing template with the meaning 'do'. This last point is discussed as part of the description of light verbs in §8.3.12.

Table 8.1: Copula inflection

	NPST	RPST	RPST:DUR	PST	PST:DUR
1SG	*worä*	*kwofrä*	*worärm*	*worera*	*kwofräm*
1DU	*nrn*	*nzfrn*	*nrnm*	*nrna*	*nzfrm*
1PL	*nrä*	*nzfrä*	*nrärm*	*nrera*	*nzfrärm*
2SG	*nrä*	*nzfrä*	*nrärm*	*nrera*	*nzfrärm*
3SG.F	*rä*	*zfrä*	*rärm*	*rera*	*zfrärm*
3SG.MASC	*yé*	*sfrä*	*yrärm*	*yara*	*sfrärm*
2|3DU	*ern*	*thfrn*	*ernm*	*erna*	*thfrnm*
2|3PL	*erä*	*thfrä*	*erärm*	*erera*	*thfrärm*

The copula takes a copula subject and a copula complement. Copula clauses may express identity between two NPs (7). They are used in presentational constructions, usually with a clitic demonstrative (8).

(7) *ni fthé miyatha zäkorake "babai zane bthan kabe yé."*
ni fthé miyatha zä\kor/ake babai zane bthan kabe
1NSG when knowledge 1PL:SBJ:PST:PFV/become uncle DEM:PROX black.magic man
\yé/
3SG.MASC:SBJ:NPST:IPFV:COP
'That was when we realised "The uncle is this sorcerer."' [tci20130901-04 RNA #45]

(8) *yorär ziyé … zikogr.*
yorär z=\yé/ (.) z=y\kogr/
yorär PROX=3SG.MASC:SBJ:NPST:IPFV/be (.) PROX=3SG.MASC:SBJ:NPST:STAT/stand
'Yorär is here. It stands here.' [tci20130907-02 JAA #450-451]

The complement may be marked with the proprietive case (§4.13) or the privative case (§4.14) to express the existence or non-existence of some entity in relation to the copula subject. The former is shown in (9), where the speaker literally says 'the village is with a name' to express that it has some reputation. The latter is shown in (10), where the speaker tells how he was looking for a creek that carried water.

(9) *zane kar mane rä yfkarä rä.*
zane kar mane \rä/ yf=karä
DEM:PROX village which 3SG.F:SBJ:NPST:IPFV:COP name=PROP
\rä/
3SG.F:SBJ:NPST:IPFV:COP
'As for this village, it has a (good) reputation.' [tci20120805-01 ABB 447-448]

(10) *buyak we ttfö ane zräbrmé nimame … keke … nomär rä.*
b=wi\yak/ we ttfö ane zrä\brm/é nima=me
MED=1SG:SBJ:NPST:IPFV/walk also creek DEM 1SG:SBJ:IRR:PFV/follow like.this=INS

(.) keke (.) no=mär \rä/
(.) NEG (.) water=PRIV 3SG.F:SBJ:NPST:IPFV:COP
'I walked there, I followed another creek like this … No … (The creek) had no water.' [tci20130903-03 MKW #92-93]

Adjectives and property nouns may also be copula complements, as shown in (11) and (12), respectively. In (11), the speaker reports how his fathers were comparing their yam harvest. In example (12), the speaker talks about how as a teenager she was afraid of the anthropologist Mary Ayres when she first visited Rouku.

(11) *katakatanwä thfrä! nzenme kafar erä!*
kata-katan=wä thf\rä/ nzenme kafar e\rä/
REDUP-small=EMPH 3PL:SBJ:RPST:IPFV:COP 1NSG:POSS big 3PL:SBJ:NPST:IPFV:COP
'Their (yams) were a bit small! Our (yams) are big!' [tci20120805-01 ABB 403]

(12) *nzä wwtri kwarärm … markaianema … nafanema fof.*
nzä w-wtri kwa\rä/rm (.) markai=ane=ma (.)
1SG.ABS REDUP-fear 1SG:SBJ:PST:DUR:COP (.) outsider=POSS.SG=CHAR (.)
nafane=ma fof
3SG.POSS=CHAR EMPH
'I was a bit afraid … of the white woman … really (afraid) of her.'
[tci20130911-03 MBR #10-11]

8.3.3 Intransitive clauses

In terms of verb morphology, intransitive clauses have been described in §5.4.2. The verb inflection employs the prefixing or the middle template. Their single argument is always in the absolutive case. Two examples are given in (13) and (14).

The two prefixing verbs in (13) have no overt subject noun phrases, but the second clause contains an adjunct marked with the purposive case *karr* 'for a village' (or settlement place). In example (14), we see the middle verb *brigsi* 'return' and the subject pronoun *nzä* in the absolutive case.

(13) *ŋarsenzo **swanyakm** … karr **swanrenzrm**.*
ŋars=en=nzo swan\yak/m (.) kar=r
river=LOC=ONLY 3SG.MASC:SBJ:PST:DUR:VENT/walk (.) village=PURP
swan\re/nzrm
3SG.MASC:SBJ:PST:DUR:VENT/look.around
'He was coming along the river … he was looking for a place to settle.'
[tci20120922-09 DAK #14-15]

(14) *nzä boba fthé kanathrfa **zänbrima**.*
nzä boba fthé kanathr=fa zän\brim/a
1SG.ABS MED.ABL when kanathr=ABL SG:SBJ:PST:PFV:VENT/return
'That was when I returned from Kanathr.' [tci20120805-01 ABB #607]

8.3.4 Impersonal clauses

Impersonal clauses are expressed using the middle template of the verb, in which a person-invariant middle marker fills the prefix slot, while the suffix indexes the single argument of the predicate (§5.4.5). The indexed noun phrase, if present at all, occurs in the absolutive case. The salient feature of this clause type is that the referent of the verb indexing is impersonal, unclear or simply empty. Consider examples (15) and (16). In the first example, the speaker talks about rain-making magic, which involves a rotting mixture of meat and honey in bottles. These bottles or containers are opened and the rising odour is said to increase the rainfall. The third singular indexed by the verb form *kfäkor* refers to the changed weather conditions, and the English translation 'it was enough' exhibits the same general or impersonal meaning. The second example contains the noun *aki* 'moon', but it is unclear whether the verb really indexes this noun or whether its referent is empty. Hence, the two possible translations. During the transcription of example (16), the first translation was the preferred one in this particular context.

(15) *watikthénzo fthé kfäkor … we sgu thwäthbe woz thwärmäne.* watik-thé=nzo
enough-ADJZR=ONLY
fthé kfä\kor/ (.) we sgu thwä\thb/e woz
when 2|3SG:SBJ:ITER/become (.) also plug 1PL:SBJ>2|3PL:OBJ:ITER/put.inside bottle
thwä\rmän/e
1PL:SBJ>2|3PL:OBJ:ITER/close
'When it was enough, we put the lids back in and we closed the bottles.'
[tci20110810-01 MAB #59-62]

(16) *aki zbo kräkor.*
aki zbo krä\kor/
moon PROX.ALL 2|3SG:SBJ:IRR:PFV/become
'It became moon(light) here.' or 'The moon came up here.' [tci20120904-02 MAB #47]

Example (17) is a description of a picture as part of a stimulus task. The speaker takes on the role of a man in the picture and asks: 'What is going on?'. Again, the verb form *krewär* appears in the middle construction and indexes a third singular.

(17) *sinzo foba ynrä nima "ra krewär bobo?"*
si=nzo foba yn\rä/ nima ra
eye=ONLY DIST.ABL 3SG.MASC:SBJ:NPST:IPFV:VENT/be QUOT what(ABS)
kre\wär/ bobo
2|3SG:SBJ:IRR:PFV/happen MED.ALL
'He was just looking from over there and wondered: "What is going on there?"' [tci20111004 RMA #353]

Impersonal constructions often involve light verbs, for example *rä-* 'do' and *ko-* 'become', which take a nominal predicate, for example a noun or property noun. In these cases, the nominal predicate will be unmarked for case, like the absolutive case. Therefore, it may be difficult to decide whether (i) it is a nominal predicate and the subject

is empty, or (ii) whether the noun phrase in question is the subject indexed in the verb. Consider example (18), in which the speaker describes the location of the mythical place of origin *Kwafar*, which is located in the Arafura sea between Papua New Guinea and Australia. The verb form *ŋakonzr* 'it becomes' occurs in the relative clause, which is printed in boldface. The third singular indexed in the verb form could be *mazo* 'ocean' (lit. 'where the ocean becomes') or it could be an empty subject (lit. 'it becomes ocean').

(18) *thden rera … zane zena mane bad mane wythk* ***mazo mä ŋakonzr*** *a … australiane bad mä wythk.*
thd=en \rä/ra (.) zane zena mane bad mane
middle=Loc 3SG.F:SBJ:PST:IPFV/be (.) DEM:PROX today which ground which
w\ythk/ mazo mä ŋa\ko/nzr a (.)
3SG.F:SBJ:NPST:IPFV/come.to.end and (.) australia=POSS ground where
australia=ane bad mä w\ythk/
3SG.F:SBJ:NPST:IPFV/come.to.end
'It was in the middle … this one, where the land ends … where it becomes ocean until where Australia's land ends.' [tci20131013-01 ABB #26-30]

Weather events often have empty or impersonal subjects. This can be shown with prefixing verbs as well as middle verbs. A common way to say 'It is going to rain' is shown in (19). It is clear that *nor* 'for rain' is not indexed in the verb because it is flagged with a non-core case, the purposive case. Therefore, the reference of the third singular in the verb form is empty.

(19) *nor yé.*
no=r \yé/
rain=PURP 3SG.MASC:SBJ:NPST:IPFV/be
'It will rain.' (lit. 'It is for rain') [overheard]

Another example is the phrase *wär kwan yanor* 'it is thundering' in (20). The thunder is expressed by the ideophone *wär kwan* 'thundering noise', and all ideophones of this type are nominal compounds headed by *kwan* 'noise, sound' (§3.7). The verb *yannor* is inflected for a masculine subject, but *kwan* is feminine. Hence *wär kwan* is not the subject, and a literal translation would be: 'He shouts the thunder sound'. Again the reference of 'he' is empty.

(20) *wär kwan yanor.*
wär kwan ya\nor/
thunder 3SG.MASC:SBJ:NPST:IPFV/shout
'It is thundering.' [overheard]

Other weather or sound phenomena can be expressed by verbs in the middle template. In example (21), the verb 'start' is inflected for a 2|3SG subject, but its referent is unclear – partly because the verb does not index an object. Thus, the indexed argument could be (i) the sound of the fire ('The fire sound started'), or (ii) it could be an empty subject ('It started the fire sound').

(21) *fi mni zürnane u kwan zethkäfako.*
fi mni zürn=ane u kwan ze\thkäf/ako
but fire smoke=POSS.SG roaring.sound SG:SBJ:PST:PFV:AND/start
'but the fire smoke's sound started (rumbling).' [tci20120827-03 KUT #186-187]

8.3.5 'Passive' clauses

Passives meanings are expressed in two ways: (i) by a verb in the middle template which indexes a patient role; the indexed noun phrase occurs in the absolutive case (§5.4.5), or (ii) by a resultative construction, in which a nominalised verb is flagged with the instrumental case (§4.10). Note that both are not dedicated passive constructions. Instead, they should be understood as constructions which can express passive-like semantics.

Example (22) shows both constructions. The first two clauses are in a temporal relationship to the last clause, which is signalled by *fthé* 'when'. This is not a subordinate relationship because *fthé* can also be used in independent clauses with the meaning of 'that was when'. In the first clause, the single argument of the verb is *bad* 'ground, earth'. This can be translated either as an reflexive/impersonal 'the earth created (itself)' or as a passive 'the earth was created'. In the second clause, matters are clear because the verb is in a transitive template which shows actor agreement with 'father' (ERG) and undergoer agreement with 'earth' (ABS), thus: 'the father created the earth'. The last clause is a resultative construction. The nominalised verb *rifthzsi* 'hiding' takes the instrumental case ('with hiding'), which is best translated as a passive ('was hidden').

(22) ***bad fthé ŋafiyokwa*** *…* *ŋafyf fthé bad wäfiyokwa …* ***kidn ane rifthzsime zfrärm.***
bad fthé ŋa\fiyok/wa (.) ŋafe=f fthé bad
earth when SG:SBJ:PST:IPFV/make (.) father=ERG.SG when earth
wä\fiyok/wa (.) kidn ane rifthz-si=me
2|3SG:SBJ>3SG.F:OBJ:PST:IPFV/make (.) eternal fire DEM hide-NMLZ=INS
zf\rä/rm
3SG.F:SBJ:PST:DUR/be
'When the earth was made … when God made the earth … that eternal fire was hidden.' [tci20120909-06 KAB #61-63]

8.3.6 Reflexive and reciprocal clauses

Formally, reflexive/reciprocal clauses are encoded by (i) the verb form in the middle template and (ii) the argument noun phrase in the absolutive case. Ditransitives show exceptional grammatical behaviour in that the argument may be in the absolutive or ergative case. There is no distinction between reflexives and reciprocals other than the fact that singulars do not allow a reciprocal reading. Below I will describe how reflexive/reciprocals differ from intransitive and impersonal clause on the one hand, and from suppressed-object constructions on the other. This topic is also addressed in the description of the middle template (§5.4.5).

In example (23) the speaker talks about a ritual which chases away evil spirits. This rather gruesome ritual involves young men shooting at each other with blunt arrows. In the last clause of the example the noun phrase *kabe* 'man' is in the absolutive case and the verb employs the middle template and indexes one argument (2|3PL). The verb *rusi* 'shoot' has rather clear transitive semantics. Consequently, it invites a reciprocal interpretation in the middle template.

(23) *kabe kwaruthrmth frkkarä.*
kabe kwa\ru/thrmth frk=karä
man(ABS) 2|3PL:SBJ:PST:DUR/shoot blood=PROP
'The people were shooting at each other (until) they were bleeding.' [tci20150906-10 ABB #414]

In most cases only secondary information disambiguates between intransitive, impersonal and reflexive/reciprocal interpretations. By secondary information, I mean (i) context, (ii) grammatical devices which are not used solely for reflexive/reciprocal constructions, (iii) statistical tendencies of individual verbs. I will address these in turn. First, context is probably the most important, and it is evident that an example like (23) is usually preceded or followed by a description which disambiguates the state of affairs. Secondly, speakers may choose to repeat the absolutive noun phrase to make clear that the intended reading should be a reciprocal one. Consider example (24), which concludes a headhunting story. The pronoun *fi* occurs twice. Additionally, the utterance was accompanied by appropriate gestures to clarify the intended reciprocal meaning. The pronoun *fi* is marked with the exclusive enclitic *=nzo*. The repetition and the exclusive enclitic are secondary strategies which are not solely used to mark reflexive/reciprocal meanings. Note that the exclusive enclitic *=nzo* shows cognates in other Yam languages. In Nen, there is a set of reflexive/reciprocal pronouns which all end in *nzo*, for example *benzo* 2SG (Evans 2015b: 1072). In Komnzo, the exclusive clitic expresses the meaning of 'only' without reflexive/reciprocal semantics.

(24) *ni woga tüfrmäre nrä … bänema nzenme thden ane fof kwakwirm … woga **finzo finzo** kwafnzrmth.*
ni woga tüfr=märe n\rä/ (.) bäne=ma nzenme
1NSG man plenty=PRIV 1PL:SBJ:NPST:IPFV/be (.) DEM:MED=CHAR 1NSG.POSS
thd=en ane fof kwa\kwir/m (.) woga fi=nzo fi=nzo
middle=LOC DEM EMPH 2|3SG:SBJ:PST:DUR/run (.) man 3.ABS=ONLY 3.ABS=ONLY
kwa\fn/nzrmth
2|3PL:SBJ:PST:DUR/kill
'We are not many … because this was going on in our middle … The people, this (group) and that (group) were killing each other.' [tci20111107-01 MAK #157-158]

Although stems may alternate between different morphological templates there is a statistical tendency for a particular stem to occur in a particular template. For example, typically transitive meanings (*rusi* 'shoot', *zan* 'hit, kill', *marasi* 'see') occur most of the time in the ambifixing transitive template. If such stems occur in a middle template,

it invites a reflexive/reciprocal reading rather than an impersonal or intransitive one. We will see in the following section that the middle template can also be used for the suppressed-object construction (§8.3.7). However, in the suppressed-object construction the noun phrase indexed in the verb form is marked for ergative case and not absolutive. On the other hand, stems which occur in the middle template most of the time (*maikasi* 'wash', *bringsi* 'return') should be analysed as reflexiva tanta (Geniušienė 1987), even though they may occur in the ambifixing transitive template ('wash someone', 'bring back someone'). Hence, there is a statistical tendency for stems to occur in a particular template, which helps to disambiguate between an impersonal or reflexive/reciprocal reading.

Next, I want to set reflexive/reciprocals apart from what I call the suppressed-object construction (§8.3.7). The state of affairs in reflexive/reciprocals is such that the actor and patient can be exchanged. In Komnzo, both are expressed by one noun phrase which occurs in the absolutive case. Herein lies the formal difference from the suppressed-object construction. If the noun phrase *kabe* 'people' in example (23) was in the ergative case – for example *kabe=yé* (man=ERG.NSG) – the sentence would mean 'they were shooting (at sth.)'. This is the suppressed-object construction, which I describe in the following section (§8.3.7). Note that the verb form *kwaruthrmth* remains the same, only the case marking changes.

For ditransitive verbs, the case marking is less fixed, and the argument noun phrase can appear in the absolutive as well as ergative case, both with a reflexive/reciprocal meaning. In example (25), the verb form *ŋarinth* indexes only the subject (2|3DU), while the prefix slot is filled with the middle marker. The subject argument appears in the ergative (*nafa*). A suppressed-object reading is not possible with ditransitive verbs. Note that the argument could also occur in the absolutive case (*fi*). This would create a clause with two absolutive noun phrases. Hence, the choice between ergative and abolutive seems to be dependent on the kinds of referents. In (25), both noun phrases are animate, and the use of the ergative case avoids confusion between agent ('they') and theme ('sisters').

(25) *emoth nafa ŋarinth fof.*
emoth nafa ŋa\ri/nth fof
girl 3NSG.ERG 2|3DU:SBJ:NPST:IPFV/give EMPH
'They give each other sisters.' [tci20120805-01 ABB #158]

At this stage, it is impossible to investigate this topic further, because (i) noun phrases are frequently omitted and (ii) as I have argued in §5.4.6, except for a few verbs (*yarisi* 'give', *trikasi* 'tell', *fänzsi* 'show') all ditransitive verbs are derived.

8.3.7 Suppressed-object clauses

Suppressed-object clauses employ the middle template of the verb. The argument indexed in the verb is treated like an actor by the case system, i.e. it is flagged with the ergative case. The object may be overtly expressed with a noun phrase, but it is suppressed from indexation in the verb form.

I describe in §5.4.5 how almost all transitive verbs can enter into the suppressed-object construction for semantic as well as pragmatic reasons. For example, most of the time, the referents of suppressed-objects rank low in the animacy hierarchy (Silverstein 1976). In example (26), the speaker searches for her shoes and complains that her friend has been wearing them. We only know about the object of *rgsi* 'wear' from the previous context since it is not expressed as a noun phrase, nor is the object indexed in the verb form. The semantics of *rgsi* renders a reflexive reading ('she wears herself') nonsensical. Additionally, the fact that the subject is in the ergative case (*naf*) rules out the reflexive/reciprocal interpretation. This is important because the verb form is identical between reflexive/reciprocals and the suppressed-object construction.

(26) *ebar zfthnzo! naf rar ŋargwrm?*
ebar zfth=nzo naf ra=r ŋa\rg/wrm
head base=ONLY 3SG.ERG what=PURP SG:SBJ:RPST:DUR/wear
'Thickhead! Why was she wearing (the flipflops)?' [tci20130901-04 RNA #173]

Objects can be suppressed for pragmatic reasons, often in addition to their low rank on the animacy hierarchy. That is because the suppression of the object has the pragmatic effect of focussing the subject. Example (27) is taken from a text about food taboos. This topic came up while talking about a very old woman, whose old age was ascribed to her respecting all food taboos. In the example, the speaker shifts the topic from the old woman to those people who did not respect food taboos. This shift of topic is achieved by (i) a fronted relative clause and (ii) the suppressed-object construction. As in the previous example, we only know about the object of *rirksi* 'respect, avoid' from the preceding context.

(27) *fi mafa keke kwarirkwrmth … watik tekmär esufakwa.*
fi mafa keke kwarirkwrmth … watik tekmär
but who.NSG.ERG NEG 2|3PL:SBJ:PST:DUR/respect (.) then duration=PRIV
esufakwa
2|3PL:SBJ:PST:IPFV/grow.old
'But those who did not respect (the food taboos) … well, they grew old quickly.' [tci20120922-26 DAK #26-27]

Although the object is suppressed from indexation in the verb form, it may occur as a noun phrase in the clause. In example (28), the speaker talks about garden magic and people who steal the soil from other people's gardens. In the relative clause, the object *bad* 'ground' is suppressed from indexation in the verb, yet it appears as a noun phrase. The subject is indexed in the verb suffix and the corresponding noun phrase, the relative pronoun *mafa*, is in the ergative case.

(28) *nä kabenzo nnzä wawa gamokarä erä bad mafa ŋakarkwrth.*
nä kabe=nzo nnzä wawa gamo=karä e\rä/ bad
INDF man=ONLY perhaps yam spell=PROP 2|3PL:SBJ:NPST:IPFV/be ground

mafa ŋa\kark/wrth
who.ERG.NSG 2|3PL:SBJ:NPST:IPFV/take
'Perhaps only other people, who take the soil away, have yam magic.'
[tci20130822-08 JAA #42]

The suppressed-object may also be a relative clause, as in example (29), which is taken from a picture stimulus task.

(29) *emothf ŋatrikwr monme zffnzr.*
emoth=f ŋa\trik/wr mon=me zf\fn/nzr
girl=ERG.SG 2|3SG:SBJ:NPST:IPFV/tell how=INS 2|3SG:SBJ>3SG.F:OBJ:RPST:IPFV/hit
'The girl tells (the story of) how he hit her.' [tci20120925 MAE #102]

There are a few verbs which always occur in the suppressed-object construction. A few examples are: *yonasi* 'drink', *fathasi* 'marry', *frzsi* 'fish/net (poison-root)', *naf-* 'talk, speak' and *karksi* 'pull'.[2] With other verbs there is only a statistical tendency to enter this construction. For example, *yarizsi* 'hear' occurs 104 times in the corpus; 25 times the object is indexed and 79 times it is suppressed. In other words, in only about a quarter of all tokens of *yarizsi* does the verb mean 'hear X'. In the other three quarters of tokens of *yarizsi*, it means 'hear (sth.)'. In (30), we see an example of *yarizsi* and *rfnaksi* 'taste' in the suppressed-object construction. The speaker explains how the news of the beginning yam harvest spread from East to West, from village to village.

(30) *watik, we masu karé kwekaristh "oh, nafa z zärfnth!"*
watik, we masu karé kwe\karis/th oh nafa z
then also masu village=ERG.NSG 2|3PL:SBJ:ITER/hear oh 2|3NSG.ERG ALR
zä\rfn/th
2|3PL:SBJ:RPST:PFV/taste
'Then the Masu people always heard (the other village): "Oh, they have already tasted (the yams)!"'
[tci20131013-01 ABB #363]

8.3.8 Transitive clauses

This section deals with prototypical transitive clauses, which are transitive in their verb morphology, i.e. they are built from the ambifixing transitive template, as well as their noun phrase syntax, i.e. the actor argument is flagged with the ergative and the undergoer argument is in the absolutive. Therefore, suppressed-object constructions (§8.3.7) can be described as non-prototypical transitive clauses because (i) the verb appears in the middle template, and (ii) the object noun phrase is frequently omitted. However, noun phrases can generally be dropped in all clause types. The ambifixing verb template is described in §5.4.6. An example of a transitive clause is given in (31).

[2] The stem *karksi* can occur in a transitive template with the meaning 'take'. If it occurs in a suppressed-object construction, it means 'pull'. I analyse these as two different lexical items, because there is a difference in the semantics as well as the combinatorics of the stem.

(31) *nzürna ŋaref bäne ŋad yrtmakwa.*
nzürna ŋare=f bäne ŋad y\rtmak/wa
spirit woman=ERG.SG DEM:MED string(ABS) SG:SBJ>3SG.MASC:OBJ:PST:IPFV/cut
'The *nzürna* woman cut that string.' [tci20120827-03 KUT #142]

8.3.9 Ditransitive clauses

Ditransitive clauses employ the same template as transitive clauses. However, the valency changing prefix *a-* shifts the reference of the verb prefix from the direct object to the indirect object. The corresponding noun phrase appears in dative case. This is described in §5.4.6. Note that the *a-* prefix may increase as well as decrease the valency of a verb, hence, the label "valency changing prefix" (§5.4.2).

Example (32) shows the verbs *trikasi* 'tell' and *fänzsi* 'show'. The recipient arguments are flagged for dative case and the respective arguments are indexed in the two verbs.

(32) *nzone* ***ŋafyn bäin*** *ane trikasi* ***yatrikwath*** *…* ***nzunwä*** *ŋafyf bäif* ***zwafäsa****.*
nzone ŋafe=n bäi=n ane trika-si
1SG.POSS father=DAT.SG bäi=DAT.SG DEM tell-NMLZ
ya\trik/wath (.) nzun=wä ŋafe=f bäi=f
2|3PL:SBJ>3SG.MASC:IO:PST:IPFV/tell (.) 1SG.DAT=EMPH father=ERG.SG bäi=ERG.SG
zwa\fäs/a
2|3SG:SBJ>1SG:IO:PST:PFV/show
'They told that story to my father Bäi … and father Bäi showed (it) to me.'
[tci20110802 ABB #18-20]

Ditransitive clauses may also contain cognate objects, as in (32) *trikasi yatrikwath* 'they told him the story'. Another example is *yathugsi* 'trick (v)', which often occurs with *gaso* 'trick, lie'.

In §5.4.6, I argued that ditransitive should be recognised as a category even though most ditransitive verbs are derived from transitives by (i) adding the valency change prefix *a-*, which (ii) changes the reference of the verb prefix to an indirect object (goal, recipient, beneficiary) and (iii) putting the respective argument noun phrase in dative case. The same strategy can be used to raise possessors in the cross-referencing of the verb. In example (33) it is the possessor (*nzone* 'my' 1SG), which is indexed in the verb, and not the possessed (*miyo* 'desire/wish' 3SG.F).

(33) ***nzone miyo*** *kwa* ***wabthakwr****.*
nzone miyo kwa wo-a-bthak-w-r-∅
1SG.POSS desire FUT 1SG.α-VC-finish.EXT-LK-2|3SG
2|3SG:SBJ>1SG:IO:NPST:IPFV/finish
'You will fulfil my wish.' [tci20130823-06 CAM #23]

The ditransitive pattern is very productive and almost all transitive verbs can enter this construction. Most verbs retain their transitive semantics, but can index a beneficiary of the event. For example, in (34), the verb *fsisi* 'count' in the clause takes the object 'yam suckers'. The ditransitive pattern only adds a beneficiary which is indexed in the verb.

(34) *nä efothen … **wawa tafo yafsinzake** … **babuan**.*
nä efoth=en (.) wawa tafo yafsinzake (.)
INDF day=LOC (.) yam sucker 1PL:SBJ>3SG.MASC:IO:PST:IPFV/count (.)
babua=n
babua=DAT.SG
'Some day … we counted yam suckers for him … for Babua.'
[tci20120814 ABB #165-167]

As I pointed out in §5.4.4, prefixing verbs (intransitives) can enter the same pattern, in which a beneficiary or raised possessor, in dative and possessive case respectively, is indexed in the verb form. Example (35) is taken from a recording where two speakers discuss the content of a picture card. The prefixing verb *-thn* 'be lying' in the example does not index the objects that are lying on the ground, but the possessor instead.

(35) *ra kwa nm bäne **wäthn**? … **nafane** nainai?*
ra kwa nm bäne wä\thn/ (.) nafane nainai
what FUT maybe DEM:MED 3SG.F:IO:NPST:IPFV/be.lying (.) 3SG.POSS sweet.potato
'What (of hers) might be lying there? … her sweet potatoes?' [tci20111004 RMA #108]

8.3.10 Experiencer-object constructions

Experiencer-object constructions express bodily, mental and emotional processes ('get sunburned', 'shiver in fear', 'be angry'). These are framed as transitive clauses in which the stimulus acts on the experiencer. Constructions of this type have been examined by Pawley et al. for Kalam (2000) showing that experiencer-objects as well as experiencer-subjects are found in the semantic domain of bodily and mental processes.[3] Komnzo confirms their findings. In terms of their morpho-syntax, experiencer-object constructions are characterised by the following criteria: (i) the stimulus argument appears in the ergative, (ii) the stimulus is indexed by a default 3SG in the verb suffix, (iii) the experiencer occurs in the absolutive case, and (iv) the word order is UAV (undergoer actor verb).

Consider the two ways of expressing a feeling of hunger in the elicited examples in (36). In (36a) the experiencer is the subject of the copula clause, but in (36b) it is the object of the verb *rmatksi* 'cut'. In the latter the feeling of hunger is portrayed as somewhat stronger. Note that the choice of verb is not entirely fixed. One can replace *rmatksi* 'cut' with a light verb, for example *rä-* 'do' ('hunger does me'), or with the phasal verb *bthaksi* 'finish' ('hunger finishes me'), thereby changing the degree or intensity of the experienced feeling. Thus, the experiencer-object construction is one possible way to express mental and bodily processes.

[3] Note that the notion of experiencer is slightly extended here to include bodily processes in addition to mental or emotional ones.

(36) a. *nzä frasi worä*
nzä frasi wo\rä/
1SG.ABS hunger 1SG:SBJ:NPST:IPFV/be
'I am hungry.'

b. *nzä frasif wortmakwr*
nzä frasi=f wo\rtmak/wr
1SG.ABS hunger=ERG. 2|3SG:SBJ>1SG:OBJ:NPST:IPFV/cut
'I am hungry. / I am starving.' (Lit: 'Hunger cuts me.')

Examples like (36a) were given to me in elicitation, when asking 'How do I say 'I am hungry?'. I first encountered experiencer-object constructions in more natural situations, for example in overhearing conversations or when translating recordings. Komnzo speakers explicitly regard experiencer-object constructions as more original and creative language. Therefore, it seems natural that these were rarely offered in the context of elicitation. Experiencer-object constructions portray a situation in much more colourful terms. They often evoke some kind of emotional reaction (laughter or sympathy) from the audience, as in (37), where a woman describes what happened to her as a small child when she was hiding in a tree from a pig.

(37) *nzä* ***wthf*** *warfo bä* ***kwräbth***.
nzä wth=f warfo bä kwrä\bth/
1SG.ABS faeces=ERG above MED 2|3SG:SBJ>1SG:OBJ:IRR:PFV/finish
'I really had to take a dump there on top (of the tree).' (Lit: 'Excretions finish me.') [tci20150919-05 LNA #117]

Experiencer-object constructions express bodily and mental processes, and it is this internal stimulus which 'acts' on the experiencer. Two text examples were given in the description of the ergative case (§4.5) and are repeated here as (38) and (39).

(38) ***nokuyé*** *fthé* ***sabtha***.
noku=yé fthé sa\bth/a
anger=ERG.NSG when 2|3SG:SBJ>3SG.MASC:PST:PFV/finish
'That is when he got really angry.' (lit. 'Anger finished him.')
[tci20120909-06 KAB #39]

(39) ***wtrif*** *z* ***zwefaf***.
wtri=f z zwe\faf/
fear=ERG ALR 2|3SG:SBJ>1SG:OBJ:RPST:PFV/hold
'I am already scared.' (lit. 'Fear holds me.') [tci20130901-04 RNA #164]

The stimulus noun phrase can be modified, for example with a nominal compound. In example (40) the stimulus *miyo* 'desire' is modified by two elements yielding *kabe zan miyo* 'desire to kill people'. This example is repeated from the discussion of complex heads in §7.5.3.

(40) *baf fthé* ***sräbth*** *nima …* ***kabe zan miyof****.*
baf fthé srä\bth/ nima (.) kabe
RECOG.ERG.SG when 2|3SG:SBJ>3SG.MASC:OBJ:IRR:PFV/finish like.this (.) man
zan miyo=f
hitting desire=ERG
'That is when this overcomes him … the bloodlust for people.' (lit. 'People killing desire finishes him.') [tci20130903-04 RNA #84-85]

Experiencer-object constructions differ in their basic word order from other clauses in that the experiencer, the object, comes first. This can be explained by the special semantics of the experiencer-object construction, in which the most salient element is the experiencer. However, most of the examples in this section do not include an overt noun phrase. One example from the corpus is given in (41). Note that the speaker corrects himself in this example. He first uses the absolutive (*frfr*) 'shiver', but then repeats the same noun in the ergative (*frfré*).

(41) ***nge fäth*** *frfr a* ***frfré*** *n* ***safum****.*
nge fäth frfr a frfr=é n sa\fum/
child DIM shiver ah shiver=ERG.NSG IMN 2|3SG:SBJ>3SG.MASC:OBJ:RPST:PFV/pull
'The small child was almost shivering' (lit. 'The shivers were about to pull him.') [tci20130901-04 YUK #26]

Note that in (41) and (38), the noun phrase is marked with the non-singular ergative (*=é*), while the verb indexes a singular actor. All other examples in the corpus employ the singular ergative (*=f*). In fact, these are the only examples in the corpus, where an inanimate referent receives a non-singular ergative. Note that there is no number distinction for inanimate referent for all case enclitics. We can draw two conlcusions from this observation. First, experiencer object construction give the stimulus are somewhat elevated status of animacy, i.e. the stimulus is portrayed as being animate. Secondly, the fact that the verb inflection is singular, rather than plural, is evidence for the limited grammatical behaviour of property nouns. Property nouns do not trigger agreement in the verb and the only construction in which property nouns show quasi-agreement is the experiencer-object construction. I call this "quasi-agreement" because it is default 2|3SG in the suffix (§3.1.4).

The second domain of experiencer-object constructions is that of bodily processes, as in (41). A few more examples of this type are given in (42-45).

(42) *zä zf fthé* ***thkarf yafiyokwa*** *ziyé.*
zä zf fthé thkar=f ya\fiyok/wa
PROX IMM when hardness=ERG 2|3SG:SBJ>3SG.MASC:OBJ:PST:IPFV/make
z=\yé/
PROX=3SG.MASC:NPST:IPFV/be
'That is when it got stuck right here.' (lit. 'Hardness made it.')
[tci20120922-09 DAK #18]

(43) ***nzä sukufa zürnf wortmakwr***.
nzä sukufa zürn=f wo\rtmak/wr kwan=en
1SG.ABS tobacco smoke=ERG 2|3SG:SBJ>1SG:OBJ:NPST:IPFV/cut throat=LOC
'The tobacco is very strong.' (lit. 'Tobacco smoke cuts me.') [overheard]

(44) ***nzrmf wortmakwr*** *kwanen*.
nzrm=f wo\rtmak/wr kwan=en
bitterness=ERG 2|3SG:SBJ>1SG:OBJ:NPST:IPFV/cut throat=LOC
'It is very sour.' (lit. 'Bitterness cuts me.') [overheard]

(45) *watik nzfrä …* ***efothf nfariwr***.
watik nzf\rä/ (.) efoth=f n\fari/wr
enough 1PL:SBJ:RPST:IPFV/be (.) sun=ERG 2|3SG:SBJ>1PL:OBJ:NPST:IPFV/dry
'We have done enough … We are burning in the sun.' (lit. 'The sun dries us.') [tci20111119-03 ABB #200]

8.3.11 Cognate and pseudo-cognate object constructions

Cognate objects are a common phenomenon in Komnzo. Examples (46-48) contain a nominalised verb and an inflected verb. In all three examples, the nominalisation and the inflected verb form are of the same lexeme. Hence, (46) translates literally as 'I tell them the telling'. The inflected verb indexes the indirect object (2|3PL) and as with other ditransitive verbs, *trikasi* is the direct object of the verb.

(46) *nze ane* ***trik****asi ä****trik****wé*.
nze ane trik-si ä\trik/wé
1SG.ERG DEM tell-NMLZ 1SG:SBJ>2|3PL:IO:NPST:IPFV/tell
'I tell them the story.' (lit. 'I tell them the telling.') [tci20111119-03 ABB #161]

There is an analytical problem with verbs which occur in the middle template. Example (48) translates literally as 'He laughs the laughter' or as 'He laughter-laughs'. The middle template used in (47) and (48) only indexes the subject argument, not the object. Because of this, it cannot be determined whether the nominalisations *maikasi* 'washing' and *borsi* 'laughing' function as objects or whether they function predicatively. We will see below that a predicative function is a possible analysis in some cases. From this perspective, cognate objects and predicative nominals in light verb constructions can be portrayed as contiguous phenomena. Light verb constructions are described in the following section (§8.3.12).

(47) ***maik****asi bä ŋa****mayuk****wro*.
maik-si bä ŋa\maik/wro
wash-NMLZ MED SG:SBJ:NPST:IPFV:AND/wash
'I will wash there.' (lit. 'I washing-wash.') [tci20130823-06 STK #53]

(48) ***bor**si ŋa**bor**wr.*
borsi ŋa\bor/wr
laugh-NMLZ 2|3SG:SBJ:NPST:IPFV/laugh
'He laughs.' (lit. 'He laughs the laughing.') [tci20111004 TSA #128]

A second problem is that many verbs lack regular nominalisations, which are formed with the suffix *-si*. These verbs use a common noun, as in example (49). The adjective *kwosi* 'dead' functions adverbially and adds the meaning of a deep sleep. The noun *etfth* 'sleep', however, is semantically fully included in the meaning of the verb *rug-* 'sleep', just as the regular nominalisation *borsi* 'laugh' is included in the stem of the inflected verb in (48). As a consequence, *etfth* is optional and the sentence would be grammatical without it. Note that the same is true of examples (46-48).

(49) *fi **etfth** kwosi sfrugrm.*
fi etfth kwosi sf\rugr/m
3.ABS sleep dead 3SG.MASC:SBJ:PST:DUR/sleep
'He was sleeping soundly.' (lit. 'He was dead sleep sleeping.')
[tci20120904-02 MAB #98]

For want of a better term, I label examples like (49) 'pseudo-cognate object' constructions. They are unlike cognate objects because the verb stem and the nominal element are formally not related. Other examples are *rnzür-* 'dance, sing' and *wath* 'dance (n), song' and *-nor* 'shout, emit sound' and *kwan* 'shout (n)'. Although the verb stem and the noun are not cognate, distributional evidence shows that they stand in the same relationship as an inflected verb and the corresponding regular nominalisation with *-si*. For example, the phasal verb *bthaksi* 'finish' takes the noun *wath* 'dance (n), song' to mean 'finish singing'. This is because there is no regular nominalisation available for the verb *rnzür-* 'dance, sing'.

The noun in these constructions is not always redundant. For example, it can be modified as the head of a compound, thereby modifying the predicate. In (50), the noun *etfth* 'sleep' occurs in a compound modified by *efoth* 'day' indicating that the speaker was sleeping during the day.

(50) ***efoth etfth** kwofrugrm e zizi.*
efoth etfth kwof\rugr/m e zizi
day sleep 1SG:SBJ:PST:DUR/sleep until afternoon
'I was sleeping during the day until the afternoon.' (lit. 'I was day-sleep sleeping.')
[tci20111119-03 ABB #31]

This kind of predicate modification is developed to varying degrees. The best example is the intransitive verb *nor-* 'shout, emit a sound', which again lacks an infinitive and instead *kwan* 'shout (n), call' is used. Hence, *kwan yanor* 'He shouts the shout' or 'He emits the shout' is a common expression. The relatively large set of ideophones (§3.7) enter into compounds of the type ideophone + *kwan*, as in *sö kwan* 'sound of wallabies grunting' or *nzam kwan* 'the sound of smacking one's lips'. Most auditory sensations are

expressed in this construction with the verb *nor-*. In example (51), the gurgling sound of a headhunter's victim is described.

(51) *grr kwannzo fobo zwanorm.*
grr kwan=nzo fobo zwa\nor/m
rasping.sound shout=ONLY DIST.ALL 3SG.F:SBJ:PST:DUR/shout
'She was just gurgling.' (lit. 'She was shouting/emitting only the rasping sound.')
[tci20111119-01 ABB #154]

Example (52) comes from a hunting trip, where I was instructed to imitate the sound of a jumping wallaby (*bübü kwan*) by hitting the ground with a thick stick.

(52) *bübü kwan gnanoré!*
bübü kwan gna\nor/é
thumping.sound shout 2SG:SBJ:IMP:IPFV/shout
'You must beat the ground!' (lit. 'You must shout/emit the thumping sound.')
[overheard]

Lastly, the verb can be modified by using a different noun. This is a marginal pattern, and I can give only two examples. Instead of *kwan*, one can use the noun *frk* 'blood' with the verb *nor-* 'shout' to express that someone is bleeding, as in example (53), which comes from the description of a picture card.

(53) *ŋare frk neba komnzo wänor.*
ŋare frk neba komnzo wä\nor/
woman blood opposite only 3SG.F:SBJ:NPST:IPFV/shout
'The woman is only bleeding on the other side.' [tci20111004 RMA #402]

The second example is the noun *wanzo* 'dream' which can be used with *rug-* 'sleep' (instead of *etfth* 'sleep (n)'). In example (54), the speaker talks about the mythological significance of the bird of paradise, when it appears in one's dream.

(54) *… ythamama wanzo fthé nzrarugr.*
(.) ythama=ma wanzo fthé nzra\rugr/
(.) bird.of.paradise=CHAR dream when 2|3SG:SBJ:IRR:IPFV/sleep
'… when you are dreaming of the bird of paradise.' [tci20120817-02 ABB #29]

There are a handful of (intransitive) verbs for which pseudo-cognate constructions are possible, even though there is a regular nominalisation with *-si* available. For example, *bznsi* 'work (v.i.)' can occur together with *znsä* 'work (n)'. Another example is *mthizsi* 'suffer', which can occur with *zi* 'pain', as in example (55).

(55) *zi swathizrm … ekri zi … kofä ysma.*
zi swa\thi/zrm (.) ekri zi (.) kofä ys=ma
pain 3SG.MASC:SBJ:PST:DUR/suffer (.) flesh pain (.) fish thorn=CHAR
'He was in pain … body pain … from the fish spike.' [tci20100905 ABB #91-93]

We have seen above that cognate and pseudo-cognate constructions are similar to light verb constructions in that a nominal element contributes to the meaning of the predicate. They are markedly different in the degree of modification, because light verbs are much more general in their semantics (*rä-* 'do', *fiyoksi* 'make', *ko-* 'become'). It might be best to view this as a cline: at one end of the spectrum we have cognate object constructions, where the nominalisation of the verb occurs together with the same verb, as in examples (46-48). On the other end of the spectrum we have light verb constructions, where the nominal element not only carries most of the meaning of the predicate, but it always differs formally from the verb. Light verbs are described in the next section.

8.3.12 Light verb constructions

There are number of light verbs in Komnzo. These are *rä-* 'do', *ko-* 'become', *fiyoksi* 'make' and the two phasal verbs *thkäfsi* 'start' and *bthaksi* 'finish'. The first two are interesting from a lexical perspective. The light verb *rä-* is build from the same stem as the copula. In a prefixing template this stem means 'be', but in an ambifixing template it means 'do'. The second stem *ko-* only occurs in ambifixing templates, where it can mean 'speak' or 'become'. Although these are only statistical tendencies, in the middle template *ko-* usually means 'become', whereas in a transitive template it usually means 'speak'.

The light verb 'do' is usually used in the middle template indexing only the subject argument. A very frequent collocation is with *fam* 'thought', thus, literally: 'do thoughts' means 'think'. Examples (56) and (57) are taken from a picture stimulus task. Note that *fam* is not indexed in the verb form, even if the light verb indexes an object. In (57), *fam* functions predicatively, and a literal translation of 'He thinks of her' is 'He thought-does her'.

(56) *wati, ane fof yamnzr* ***fam ŋarär****.*
wati ane fof ya\m/nzr fam ŋa\rä/r
then DEM EMPH 3SG.MASC:SBJ:NPST:IPFV/sit thought 2|3SG:SBJ:NPST:IPFV/do
'Okay, this one is sitting. He is thinking.' [tci20111004 RMA #133]

(57) ***zane emoth fam wrär*** *anema yatrikwr nafan.*
zane emoth fam w\rä/r ane=ma
DEM:PROX girl thought 2|3SG:SBJ>3SG.F:OBJ:NPST:IPFV/do DEM=CHAR
ya\trik/wr nafan
2|3SG:SBJ>3SG.MASC:IO:NPST:IPFV/tell 3SG.DAT
'He thinks of that girl and he tells him about her.' [tci20111004 RMA #52]

This is a general feature of light verbs. They require a nominal element which functions predicatively. Hence, we find predicative nominals in both intransitive (56) and transitive structures (57). In these examples, the predicative nominal was the noun *fam*, but very often property nouns are used for this function, especially property nouns with more event-oriented semantics. In example (58), the speaker remarks that his dogs have disappeared. The meaning of disappearing is expressed by the property noun *ofe* 'absent/absence'.

(58) *fi kafar mane erera näbi ane* ***ofe ŋarerath****.*
fi kafar mane e\rä/ra näbi ane ofe ŋa\rä/rath.
but big which 2|3PL:SBJ:PST:IPFV/be one DEM absent 2|3PL:SBJ:PST:IPFV/do
'But the big (dogs), they disappeared for good.' [tci20111119-03 ABB #70]

The light verb *ko-* 'become' shows similar behaviour. It can appear with nominals as in (59) with the adjective *kafar* 'big'. But often 'become' occurs with property nouns which function predicatively. In (60), the property noun *wefwef* 'excited/excitement' contributes most of the meaning of the event.

(59) *wati fi zena ngemär …* ***kafar z zäkor****.*
wati fi zena nge=mär (.) kafar z zä\kor/
then 3.ABS today child=PRIV (.) big ALR SG:SBJ:RPST:PFV/become
'Well, today she has become already old without (having) children.'
[tci20120814 ABB #214-215]

(60) *"Daddy skri, bun ane fof yé. be ane sawob!" watik skri ane* ***wefwefnzo kräkor****.*
daddy skri bun ane fof \yé/ be ane
father skri 2SG.DAT DEM EMPH 3SG.MASC:NPST:IPFV/be 2SG.ERG DEM
sa\wob/ watik skri ane wefwef=nzo
2SG:SBJ>3SG.MASC:IMP:PFV/eat then skri DEM excited=ONLY
krä\kor/
2|3SG:SBJ:IRR:PFV/become
"'Daddy Skri, this one is for you. You eat this one!" Well, Skri got excited.'
[tci20120922-25 ALK #24-25]

The light verb 'become' together with the property noun *miyatha* 'knowledge' is used to express coming into the state of knowing something, literally 'become knowledge(able)'. In example (61) a man, who fell off a coconut palm in an attempt to steal palm wine, is badly insulted. The imperative *miyatha käkor* can be translated as both 'you know it!' or 'you feel it!'.

(61) *fof nrä!* ***miyatha käkor****! buŋame zakiyar!*
fof n\rä/ miyatha kä\kor/
EMPH 2SG:SBJ:NPST:IPFV/be knowledgeable 2SG:SBJ:IMP:PFV/become
bu-ŋame za\kiyar/
2SG.POSS-mother 2SG:SBJ>3SG.F:IMP:PFV/copulate
'It is you! You feel it now! Fuck your mother!' [tci20120904-01 MAB #95]

Example (62) is about the *tütü* bird (Pheasant Coucal), who used to be the custodian of fire before people knew about it. In the example, they find out about the bird's secret. Note that the light verb 'become' indexes the *tütü* bird (3SG.F). Thus, the predicative nominal *miyatha* 'knowledgeable' in the light verb construction can be used with an intransitive (61) or transitive sense (62).

(62) *nä kayé … **miyatha wkonzath**. “oh budben mni rä fof.”*
nä kayé (.) miyatha w\ko/nzath oh
INDF yesterday (.) knowledgeable 2|3PL:SBJ>3SG.F:OBJ:PST:IPFV/become oh
budben mni \rä/ fof
2SG.LOC fire 3SG.F:SBJ:NPST:IPFV/be EMPH
‘One day … they found out about her. “Oh, so the fire is really with you.”’
[tci20131008 KAB #10-11]

The verb *fiyoksi* ‘make’ can occur as a prototypical transitive verb without the “semantic assistance” of a predicative nominal. However, it commonly occurs as a light verb. In example (63), we find two occurences of *fiyoksi*. The first token indexes *zrin* ‘problem, burden’ (3SG.F) as its object argument, and *fiyoksi* can be translated as ‘create’. The second token of *fiyoksi* indexes the subject. In the latter, the predicative nominal *durua* ‘help’ contributes most of the semantic content of the predicate.

(63) *nzä nima “bone zrin rä bone nagayf **ane zrin zwafiyokwr** keke kwa monme **durua ŋafiyokwre**”*
nzä nima bone zrin \rä/ bone nagay=f
1SG.ABS QUOT 2SG.POSS problem 3SG.F:SBJ:NPST:IPFV/be 2SG.POSS child=ERG.SG
ane zrin zwa\fiyok/wr keke kwa mon=me durua
DEM problem 2|3SG:SBJ>3SG.F:OBJ:RPST:IPFV/make NEG FUT how=INS help
ŋa\fiyok/wre
1PL:SBJ:NPST:IPFV/make
‘I said: “This is your problem. Your child has created this problem. We will not help.”’
[tci20120922-24 STK #22]

Analogous to the other light verbs, *fiyoksi* can be used in a transitive structure. In example (64), an infamous sorcerer is annoyed by a few other men. The main semantic contribution to the event comes from the property noun *thythy* ‘nuisance’, while the object indexed in the light verb is the sorcerer (3SG.MASC).

(64) *wati **thythy** zä zf **swafiyokwrmth**.*
wati thythy zä zf swa\fiyok/wrmth
then nuisance PROX IMM 2|3PL:SBJ>3SG.MASC:OBJ:PST:DUR/make
‘Then, they were annoying him here.’
[tci20131013ß02 ABB #59]

The two phasal verbs usually take nominalised verbs as their complements (§9.3.1), but they can also be supplemented by property nouns with more event-oriented semantics. Hence, they exhibit the same double life as full verbs and light verbs as *fiyoksi*. Two examples of *thkäfsi* ‘start’ functioning as a light verb are given below. In (65), a man is trying to enter the house in which two children are hiding. The phasal verb indexes the two children, while the semantic content of the event comes solely from the property noun *zirkn* ‘persistence’.

(65) *wati zänfrefa yanyak* ***nagayé*** *kma n* ***zirkn thrathkäf*** *…* ***zirkn****.*
wati zän\fref/a yan\yak/ nagayé kma
then SG:SBJ:PST:PFV/come.up 3SG.MASC:SBJ:NPST:IPFV:VENT/walk children POT
n zirkn thra\thkäf/ (.) zirkn
IMN persistence 2|3SG:SBJ>2|3DU:OBJ:IRR:PFV/start (.) persistence
'Then, he came up from the river, he walked. He was about to start hassling the two children … hassling (them).' [tci20100905 ABB #111]

In example (66), a malevolent spirit is trying to persuade a man to stay the night in her house. Again, the property noun *garamgaram* 'sweet-talk' expresses most of the semantics of the event.

(66) ***garamgaram*** *srethkäf.*
garamgaram sre\thkäf/
sweet.talk 2|3SG:SBJ>3SG.MASC:OBJ:IRR:PFV/start
'She started sweet-talking him.' [tci20120901-01 MAK #88]

As I have shown above, light verbs (*rä-* 'do', *ko-* 'become', *fiyoksi* 'make', *thkäfsi* 'start' and *bthaksi* 'finish') require semantic assistance from nominal predicates. However, nominal predicates can be found with other verbs, i.e. full verbs. In the following examples, the concepts of 'being concentrated' (67) and 'being locked in' (68) are expressed by the property nouns *mogu* 'concentration' and *ttw* 'inertia', respectively. Both meanings could be expressed with light verbs, for example (67) could be expressed as *mogu ŋaräré* 'I am concentrating' (lit. 'I am concentration-doing'). The two examples employ full verbs instead, which should be understood as a more idiosyncratic way of speaking.

(67) *biskar mnifnzo* ***mogu kwofkämgwrm***
biskar mni=f=nzo mogu kwof\kämg/wrm
cassava fire=ERG=ONLY concentration 2|3SG:SBJ>1SG:OBJ:PST:DUR/block
'Cooking the cassava took all my attention. (lit. 'Cassava cooking concentration blocked me.')' [tci20111119-03 ABB #79]

(68) ***ttw zwermänth****. wati fobo thufnzrmth*
ttw zwe\rmän/th wati fobo
inertia 2|3PL:SBJ>3SG.F:OBJ:ITER/close then DIST.ALL
thu\fn/nzrmth
2|3PL:SBJ>2|3PL:OBJ:PST:DUR/kill
'They always closed off (the village). Then, they were killing them.'
[tci20120818 ABB #46-47]

I point out in §3.2 that verbs are considered to be a closed word class in Komnzo. Part of the argumentation is based on the observation that loanwords, which are verbs in the donor language, commonly end up as property nouns in a light verb construction. One such example was shown in (63) with the property noun *durua* 'help', which is a transitive verb in Motu (Turner-Lister & Clark 1935: 61). Below, two examples with

English loans are given. In (69), the verb *fiyoksi* indexes the object *zokwasi* 'words' (2|3PL), while the loanword *senis* 'change' expresses most of the semantics (lit. 'I will not change-make the words'). In (70), the middle verb *rä-* 'do' is supplemented by the English loan *zek* 'check' (lit. 'I check-do for water').

(69) ***zokwasi*** *ke kwa* ***senis thräfiyothé****.*
zokwasi keke kwa senis thrä\fiyoth/é
words NEG FUT change 1SG:SBJ>2|3PL:OBJ:IRR:PFV/make
'I will not change my promise.' [tci20121019-04 ABB #226]

(70) *kränrsöfthé mäbri ttfö …* ***nor*** *bobo* ***zek kräré*** *… keke*
kräⁿ\rsöfth/é mäbri ttfö (.) no=r bobo zek
1SG:SBJ:IRR:PFV/descend mäbri creek (.) water=PURP MED.ALL check
krä\r/é (.) keke
1SG:SBJ:IRR:PFV/do (.) NEG
'I went down to the creek in Mäbri to check for water, but no (water).'
[tci20130903-03 MKW #146-147]

For situations of language contact, Heine and Kuteva describe how minor patterns in a language can become major patterns (2005: 44). It is clear that light verb constructions are not a minor pattern in Komnzo. However, it seems evident that with more (verb) loans entering the language, light verb constructions will become even more widely used.

8.4 Questions

Content questions in Komnzo are formed by replacing the respective noun phrase with an interrogative. Word order may or may not be changed for pragmatic purposes. As content questions are always pragmatically motivated, the element which is asked about is automatically focussed. Therefore, the interrogative is often found in fronted position, but fronting is not part of question formation. Example (71) shows an example with the interrogative *ra* 'what'.

(71) *nafafis zräs "be ranzo kayé thwanfiyokwr?"*
nafa-fis zrä\s/ be ra=nzo kayé
3.POSS-husband 2|3SG:SBJ>3SG.F:OBJ:IRR:PFV/ask 2SG.ERG what=ONLY yesterday
thwan\fiyok/wr
2|3SG:SBJ>2|3PL:OBJ:RPST:IPFV:VENT/make
'Her husband asked her: "Just what have you done to them yesterday?"'
[tci20120901-01 MAK #163]

Example (72) shows an example where the interrogative occurs inside a complex noun phrase 'whose sister'. Note that the noun phrase which contains the interrogative has been fronted for pragmatic reasons. This is an example of a rhetorical question, because it came up in a discussion about the type of punitive actions one would launch against one's brothers-in-law.

(72) *"mafane emoth be zufnzrm?" nima fof skonzé*
maf=ane emoth be zu\fn/nzrm nima fof
who=POSS sister 2SG.ERG 2|3SG:SBJ>3SG.F:OBJ:PST:DUR/hit QUOT EMPH
s\ko/nzé
2SG:SBJ>3SG.MASC:OBJ:IMP:IPFV/speak
"'Whose sister were you beating?" that is what you must say to him.'
[tci20120805-01 ABB #219]

Polar questions are often structurally identical to indicative statements but they have a rising intonation contour, as in (73) and (74). Additionally the iamitive particle *z* 'already' can be used even though the verb is in the non-past (73).

(73) *zbär bä zagrwä ämnzro. z wanrizrth?*
zbär bä zagr=wä ä\m/nzro z
night 2.ABS far=EMPH 2|3PL:SBJ:NPST:IPFV:AND/sit ALR
wan\riz/rth
2|3PL:SBJ>1SG.IO:NPST:IPFV:VENT/hear
'You are sitting far away. Can you hear me?' (lit. 'You hear my (words) already?')
[tci20121019-04 SKK #9]

(74) *ane wri kambeyé kma n yrärth "kwa kräznobe?" naf ekonzr "keke"*
ane wri kambe=yé kma n y\rä/rth
DEM intoxication man=ERG.NSG POT IMN 2|3PL:SBJ>3SG.MASC:OBJ:NPST:IPFV/do
kwa krä\znob/e naf e\ko/nzr keke
FUT 1PL:SBJ:IRR:PFV/drink 3SG.ERG 2|3SG:SBJ>2|3PL:OBJ:NPST:IPFV/speak NEG
'These drunkards are trying (to convince him): "Will we drink?" He says to them "No"'
[tci20111004 RMA #509]

Alternative questions are formed by a disjunctive coordination with *o* 'or'. In (75), the alternatives are expressed by two clauses, and in (76) by two noun phrases.

(75) *fam kwarärmth "kwa ywokrakwr o kwa ŋabrüzr?"*
fam kwa\rä/rmth kwa y\wokrak/wr o kwa
thought 2|3PL:SBJ:PST:DUR/do FUT 3SG.MASC:SBJ:NPST:IPFV/float or FUT
ŋa\brüz/r
2|3SG:SBJ:NPST:IPFV/submerge
'They were thinking: "Will it float or will it sink?"'
[tci20120929-02 SIK #31]

(76) *zokwasi fefeme natrikwé o markai zokwasime?*
zokwasi fefe=me na\trik/wé o markai zokwasi=me
language real=INS 1SG:SBJ>2SG:IO:NPST:IPFV/tell or white man language=INS
'Will I tell you (the story) in Komnzo or in English?' (lit. '... in the real language or the white man's language?')
[tci20120901-01 MAK #1]

Question tags like *o keke* 'or not' can be added, which also receive a rising intonation.

(77) *kwa nm weto worär o keke?*
kwa nm weto wo\rä/r o keke
FUT maybe joy 2|3SG:SBJ>1SG:OBJ:NPST:IPFV/do or NEG
'Maybe he will be happy towards me or not?' [tci20111004 RMA #477]

8.5 Negation

At the clause level, negation is expressed periphrastically with the negator *keke* in preverbal position, as in example (78). See §3.4.1 for more information on *keke* and its variant *kyo*.

(78) *nafanme emoth keke kränrit nzedbo.*
nafanme emoth keke krän\rit/ nzedbo
3PL.POSS girl NEG 2|3SG:SBJ:IRR:PFV:VENT/cross.over 1NSG.ALL
'They will not exchange sisters with us.' [tci20120814 ABB #319]

One exception is the prohibitive construction (§6.3.2). This construction consists of the potential particle *kma*, the apprehensive clitic *m=*, and the verb in the imperative. The apprehensive clitic may attach either to the verb or to the potential particle. This construction is best translated into English as 'must not' as can be seen in example (79). Note that the negator cannot be included in this construction.

(79) *nznäbrimath "bä kmam thiyaké! kafarnzo ni nyak!".*
nznä\brim/ath bä kma=m thi\yak/é
2|3PL:SBJ>1PL:OBJ:PST:PFV/return 2.ABS POT=APPR 2PL:SBJ:IMP:IPFV/walk
kafar=nzo ni n\yak/
big=ONLY 1NSG 1PL:SBJ:NPST:IPFV/walk
'They brought us back and said: "You must not go! Only us big ones will go."'
[tci20120904-02 MAB #232-233]

Negation at the level of the constituent can be expressed in a number of ways. The word *matak* 'nothing' is used to express non-existence, usually in a copula clause. This is shown in example (80) where a man takes notice that he is alone in the village. *Matak* can also be used in a non-verb predication, for example *nge matak* '(there were) no children'. Alternatively, any noun phrase can be negated by using the privative case marker *=mär*. This is described in §4.14.

(80) *kabe matak erä nima z bramöwä kwafarkwrth.*
kabe matak e\rä/ nima z bramöwä
people nothing 2|3PL:SBJ:NPST:IPFV:COP like.this ALR all
kwa\fark/wrth
2|3PL:SBJ:RPST:IPFV/set.off
'There are no people (here). All of them have already left.' [tci20120901-01 MAK #77]

Negative indefinites expressing ‘none whatsoever’ or ‘nothing at all’ are constructed by adding the negator *keke* to a noun phrase that includes the indefinite marker *nä*. For example, *nä kabe* means ‘some man’ or ‘someone’, but *kabe nä keke* means ‘nobody at all’. Note that the indefinite is always postposed in this construction. The same can be achieved by adding *nä* to an interrogative, as in (81). I describe this topic in more detail in §3.1.11.

(81) *keke kwa ra nä zränzinth.*
keke kwa ra nä zrän\zin/th
NEG FUT what INDF 2|3PL:SBJ>3SG.F:IO:IRR:PFV:VENT/put.down
‘They will leave nothing for her.’ [tci20131004 RMA #9]

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