Deẽreẽ
Grammar of a fantasy constructed language

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Contents

Introduction

(1) **Fãssa mosoi'a**.
/'fã.s:a mo.'soi.a/

fãssa   mosoi-'a
wizard cat-3S

'The cat is a wizard'

In example 1, we see that blah blah blah...

fig:glossing abbreviations

Chapter 1

Phonology

Phonology regards the phonemes incorporated into the language, consonants or vowels, and their use in syllables and words.

1.1 Consonants

Point of articulation	Bilabial	Labiodental	Alveolar	Postalveolar	Velar	Uvular
Nasal	m		n			
Plosive	p b		t d		k g	
Fricative		f v	s z	ʃ ʒ		ʁ
Lateral approximant			l			

Table 1.1 – Consonants in Deẽreẽ

1.1.1 Romanization

Romanization is done with the IPA symbols, that is, the ones in table 1.1, except for ʃ, ʒ and ʁ, which are written respectively as *sh*, *zh* and *r*. Pronunciation of these three letters is:

sh as in English '*sh*eep'

zh as in English 'vi*si*on'

r as in French 'F*r*ance'

1.1.2 Consonant pairs

The combinations of consonants allowed are the following: **pr**, **br**, **tr**, **dr**, **kr**, **gr**. Other will occur due to phonotactics, but no other beginning in a plosive.

1.2 Vowels

The nine vowels are as described (IPA and orthography) in table 1.2.

	Front	Back
Closed	/i/, /y/	/u/
Mid	/e/, /ɛ̃/, /ə/	/o/
Open	/a/	/ɑ̃/

Table 1.2 – Vowels in Deẽreẽ

IPA	/i/	/y/	/u/	/e/	/ɛ̃/	/ə/	/o/	/a/	/ɑ̃/
Romanization	\<i\>	\<ü\>	\<u\>	\<e\>	\<ẽ\>	\<ë\>	\<o\>	\<a\>	\<ã\>

Table 1.3 – Vowels orthography

1.2.1 Romanization

As for consonants, we use IPA symbols, except for the a few exceptions. See table 1.3.

1.2.2 Allowed diphthongs

Allowed diphthongs are only the following: /ii, ai, ɛ̃i, əi, oi/.

1.3 Syllables

The syllable structure is given below (onset-nucleus-coda):

onset can be any single consonant, or *pr, br, tr, dr, kr, gr*;

nucleus can be any vowel or diphthong;

coda can be *\<l\>, \<r\> or \<s\>*, but only if nucleus is not a diphthong.

1.4 Stress

Stress in words is on the **last syllable** when the word ends in a *consonant or diphthong*, and on the **second-to-last syllable** when the word ends in a *single vowel*.

For example:

zhal-bra-ki [ʒal.ˈbʁa.ki] (beer)

a-shoi [a.ˈʃoi] (temple)

lë-lü [ˈlə.ly] (big)

tra-sa-ta [tʁa.ˈsa.ta] (to give)

Chapter 2

Morphology

This chapter, morphology, aims to describe *what the words look like.* This means describing the nouns, adjectives, adverbs, verbs in their basic forms. Details though will be about person suffixes, Deĕreẽ's equivalent for articles.

2.1 Gender

Deĕreẽ has three genders: Human, marked *H*, Magic, marked *M*, and Common, marked *C*. Every word has a gender, whatever its grammatical nature (part of speech) might be: nouns have gender, but verbs have gender too, as well as adjectives. Words that are not nouns do not just agree in gender (if they do), but has their own intrinsic categories.

2.1.1 Formation

To determine the gender of a word, you have to look at its last vowel (whether or not it ends in a vowel). The rules are in table .

Human	e	ẽ	u
Magic	a	o	ã
Common	ü	ë	i

Table 2.1 – Vowels in the Deĕreẽ genders (H:e/ẽ/u, M:a/o/ã, C:ü/ë/i)

For example:

zhalbarki beer, ending in *i*, is of *Common* gender

drete to go, ending in *e*, is of *Human* gender

magra soul, ending in *a*, is of *Magic* gender

2.1.2 Human

The **Human** gender regroups everything that is a non-magic person, a human made thing or skill. Example words are: zeẽi, city, torete, to speak, murtef, door, kueste, noble.

2.1.3 Magic

The **Magic** gender represents everything that is of magic or mystical nature. This thus heavily depends on the culture. In the setting of Deĕreẽ, the Kingdom of Reosal, magic, shortly explained, is the soul, present in everyone, and in many animals (eltol), natural elements, and some objects as well. Nouns designating people with magical abilities, like fãssa, wizard, are also of this gender.

Abilities of the mind (sojmata, to think) also fall into this category.

2.1.4 Common

What is **Common** is not necessarily unimportant. An example is traütü, to know. However, kretül, mole, and a lot of other words, are **Common**. This gender roughly regroups what doesn't fall into the other two categories, that is, what is not specific to humans or what isn't magical.

2.2 Number

Number in Deĕreẽ is simply singular (*SI*) and plural (*PL*). As gender is marked with the last vowel of a given word, number is marked with the last consonant.

2.2.1 Formation

Singular	-l	-n	-p	-t	-k	-f	-s	-sh	*-vowel*
Plural	-r	-m	-b	-d	-g	-v	-z	-zh	-r

Table 2.2 – Number (singular and plural) formation

For example, magra, magrar; aal; aar; sün (metal), süm, zërsh (pig), zërzh.

2.2.2 Meaning and agreement

Nouns

The meanings of singular and plural for nouns are as expected: singular means that the thing is present once, plural that it is present several times: zheo, fairy, zheor, fairies.

As for uncountable nouns, singular means 'some stuff', while plural means 'several kinds of the stuff'. This also is quite an expected behavior: lojshë, history, some part of history; lojshër, histories, or geni, milk, some milk; genir, several kinds of milk.

2.2.3 Verbs

Verbs agree in number with the agent. See chapter Conjugation on page 8 for more detail.

2.2.4 Adverbs and adjectives

These do not agree, as is explained in chapter Syntax (page 9).

2.3 Person suffixes

Person suffixes in Deĕreẽ are suffixes that can be added to different kinds of words, notably nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, or postpositions. Their purpose is to precise which person the word refers to. The language uses six grammatical persons, the usual ones:

1.SI I, speaker

2.SI singular you (thou), whom is spoken to

3.SI he/she/it, neither speaker nor person being spoken to

1.PL we, several people including the speaker

2.PL plural you, several people including the one(s) spoken to

3.PL they, several people neither speaking nor being spoken to

2.3.1 Form and agreement

Person suffixes have to agree with what they *refer to*. This is very important because, the word they refer to is not always the word on which they are. They decline in *number*, *person*, and *gender*. Their basic forms, preceded by an apostrophe, are listed in table .

Gender	Human		Magic	Common
	Female/neuter	Male		
1.SI	'esh	'ẽish	'ash	'üsh
2.SI	'el	'ẽil	'al	'ül
3.SI	'e	'ẽi	'a	'ü
1.PL	'ezh	'ẽizh	'azh	'üzh
2.PL	'er	'ẽir	'ar	'ür
3.PL	'er	'ẽir	'ar	'ür

Table 2.3 – Person suffixes in their basic form

We have to notice there is no difference between **2.PL** and **3.PL**. The difference is thus done with context understanding.

2.3.2 Definite

The definite article, that is, the equivalent of *the*, is formed simply by applying the person suffix after the noun, in their basic form from table . For example see (2), with mosoj, cat.

(2)   a.   mosoj'a
          cat(MAG)-3.SI.MAG

          'the cat'

      b.   mosoj'ash
          cat(MAG)-1.SI.MAG

          'I, the cat'

      c.   mosojr'ar
          cat(MAG)-2.PL.MAG

          'you, cats'

As we see in this example (2), the person suffixes add meaning to the words in a short, efficient way. They are also used with verbs, as in *dret'ēil*, I go. Details on conjugation are however in a separated chapter.

2.3.3 Indefinite

Indefinite articles express the idea that the speaker doesn't know *which* thing they are speaking about, but *a* thing. Its form in Deēreē is a separate word, not a suffix. This word is *et*, which declines as described in table .

Gender	Human		Magic	Common
	Female/neuter	Male		
1.SI	etesh	etēish	et'ash	et'üsh
2.SI	etel	etēil	et'al	et'ül
3.SI	et	ēit	eat	eüt
1.PL	etezh	etēizh	et'azh	et'üzh
2.PL	eter	etēir	et'ar	et'ür
3.PL	ed	ēid	ead	eüd

Table 2.4 – Indefinite article *et* and its declensions

The position of the indefinite article is still after the noun it describes. See example 3.

(3)   a.   eltol   eat
          bird(MAG) 3.SI.MAG.INDEF

          'a bird'

      b.   shil   et'ül
          worm(COM) 2.SI.COM.INDEF

          'You worm!'

2.3.4 Demonstrative

Without a pretty table this time; demonstrative articles are used to designate a specific object out of a group, as a transition from indefinite to definite. The English equivalent are *this* and *that*.

These are of two types: proximal and distal.

Proximal demonstrative

The word proximal means *close*, so a proximal demonstrative is an article designating a thing close to the speaker (*this*). In Deēreē, it is formed with the definite suffixes preceded with the letter *m*.

(4)   mosoj'ma
      cat(MAG)-3.SI.PDEM

      this cat

Distal demonstrative

As proximal means close, distal means *remote*. It is so the equivalent of *that*. It is made in the language with the definite suffixes preceded with *asm*. It is the occasion here to introduce the word senü, fish.

(5) senü'asmü
fish(COM)-3.SI.PDEM
that fish

2.3.5 Genitive

It is useful to repeat that the person suffixe on a word do *not* necessarily refers to this word, and agrees with what it refers to. In this part, we'll describe how person suffixes can express the notion of property, or a general link between two objects.

Its shape is very simple: prefix the suffix with the letter *R* (*'e* becomes *'re*). It is always used to refer to the *owner* in a property relationship.

Object to object relationship

This is like a genitive word case. A word with a *'re* suffix is the owner of the following word; it works like an adjective.

(6) adal'rẽil   āblẽi'e
old-2.SI.GEN bread-3.SI
your bread, old man

Owner derived from context

Another case of use exists, where the owner is not explicitly given. A genitive personal suffix can be used on a word alone, not being used as a qualifier. This means the object is owned by the person the suffix agrees with.

(7) todel'resh
mother-1.SI.GEN
my mother

2.4 Adjectives

Normally, before. Exceptionally, after, but just the one, and with 3SG suffix.

2.4.1 Comparatives

(8) samas'a nal   lëlü ãsta'a
lake-3SG through big ocean-3SG
The ocean is bigger than the lake.

(9) zhas'ra   fil   mok'a
water(M)-3SG.GEN transparent(C) ghost(M)-3SG
The ghost is transparent as water.

Chapter 3

Derivational Morphology

The name 'derivational morphology' refers to all the mechanisms of word derivation, that is, how to make a word out of another. These rules apply to several kinds of words, and are hereafter grouped by part of speech they derive.

3.1 Noun derivations

3.2 Verb derivations

1t1 –> 2lf: tool, that with which X is done
trasata: to give –> trasãlf: generosity

1t1 –> 31n: result, that which X does
torete: to say –> toruen: speech

Chapter 4

Conjugation

Verbs.

Chapter 5

Syntax

5.1 Noun phrase

Deēreē is a **head-final** language. This means that in most cases if not all, the modifier words or clauses will come *before* the modified item. This is true of noun-adjective order.

(10) lif zhok-'a
      red blood-3S

      'The red blood'

(11) aso   kal eat
      good eye 3S.INDF

      'a good eye'

5.2 Sentence

This section will discuss the ordering of parts of a sentence, and the morphemes needed for certain specific constructions, such as subclauses. Let us define a few notations first: **V** for Verb, **O** for the Objects of the verb, both direct and indirect, and **S** for Subject of the verb.

5.2.1 Primary order

The basic sentence word order is **OVS**.

(12) **Ãdiir ead trasat shükẽ'e**
      /ã.ʼdiiʁ e.ʼad tʁa.ʼsat ʼshy.kɛ̃.e/

      ãdiir   ead   trasat shükẽ-'e
      flower 3S.INDF give   man-3S

      'The man gives flowers.'

(13) **Mog'ar parat naiës'rel**
      /ˈmɔg.ar pa.ʼʁat nai.ʼəs.ʁɛl/

      mog-'ar   parat naiës-'rel
      ghost.PL-3PL toFear child-2SG.GEN

      Your child fears the ghosts.

5.2.2 Secondary order

The secondary order of words, is secondary by rank. It is fairly often used, but only in particular constructs that will be treated below.

This word order is verb-first. So it can be either **VOS**, if the subject **S** is not attached to the verb in the form of a pronoun suffix. It gives *V O S*. If the subject *is* a pronoun suffix on the verb, then the word order can be noted **VSO** : *V'S O*. In this latter case, the subject being attached to the verb, we can say that there is no fully described subject, and write this word order as **V('S)O(S)**. The chosen notation will be **VOS**.

Clauses in this order can still have adverbial modifiers come before the verb.

5.3   Subclauses: *sep/sap/süp*

Subclauses use the secondary word order, **VOS**, and an additionnal morpheme, *sep/sap/süp*, depending on gender (resp. Human, Magic, Common).

Its construction will be described below, depeding on whether the subclause is nominalized or not, that is whether it acts as a noun or qualifies a noun.

5.3.1   Subclause as a noun

Subclauses may be used as nominal constructions, in which case they may include a subject, and an object if required by the verb.

We see in example 14 that there is gender agreement, between the subclause particle *sep* and the verb in the clause, *assete*, meaning, 'to light'.

(14)   **Asset milzhër'ü Nosh'a sep küt'esh**.
/as.'sɛt mil.'ʒər.y 'noʃ.a sɛp 'kyt.eʃ/

    asset   milzhër-'ü Nosh-'a   sep   küt-'esh
    toLight(H) forest-3S   Moon-3S SUBC(H) see-1S

    'I see that the Moon lights the forest.'

In example 15, the clause is used as a noun and followed by the benefactive postposition *ol*. Once again, there is agreement between *sep* and the verb *dekete*, 'to write'.

(15)   **Deke sep ol trasat'esh**.
/dɛ.'kɛ sɛp 'ɔl tʁa.'sat.ɛʃ/

    deke   sep   ol trasat-'esh
    write(H).3S SUBC(H) to give-1S

    'I give to the person who writes.'

5.3.2   Subclause as a qualifier

Whenever a subclause qualifies a noun, the verb inside the subclause takes the qualified noun either as its subject or its object, direct or indirect.

In all three cases (subject, direct object, indirect object), what is missing in the subclause will be identified by a pronoun in the *vocative* case (*le/la/lü*).

This vocative pronoun will be inside the subclause (between the verb and *sep/sap/süp*) in the first two cases, and directly after, on a postposition, in the case of an indirect object.

When the subclause is **missing subject**, a subject is placed on the verb in the subclause, as a vocative pronoun suffix. Both this pronoun and the subclause particle agree in gender with what the subject actually is, in the case of example (16), *Nosh'a*, 'the Moon'.

(16)   **Asset'la sap Nosh'a küt'esh**.
/as.'sɛt.la sap 'nɔʃ.a 'kyt.ɛʃ/

    asset-'la   ezh sap   Nosh-'a   küt-'esh
    toLight-3S(M).VOC 1PL SUBC(M) Moon(M)-3S(M) see-1S

    'I see the moon that lights us.'

The **direct object** is missing in example 17. A vocative placeholder is used within the subclause where an object would be. The vocative pronoun *lü* as well as the subclause particle *süp* agree in gender with the actual object, located after the subclause, *ãdiil'ü*, 'the flower'.

(17)   **Trasat'e lü süp ãdiil'ü küt'esh**.
/tʁa.'sat.e ly syp ã.'diil.y 'kyt.ɛʃ/

    trasat-'e lü   süp   ãdiil-'ü   küt-'esh
    give-3S   3S(C).VOC SUBC(C) flower(C)-3S(C) see-1S

'I see the flower s/he gives.'

In the case of an indirect object missing from the subclause (example 18), the agreement is still the same: both *sap* and the vocative *'la* agree with the actual indirect object, *sãs'a*. However, the vocative is not within the subclause, but on the postposition *after* the subclause particle.

(18) **Aüt eltol'a sap ëi'la sãs'a küt'esh**.
      /a.ʼyt ɛl.ʼtol.a sap ʼəi.la ʼsãs.a ʼkyt.ɛʃ/

      aüt   eltol-ʼa sap   ëi-ʼla   sãs-ʼa   küt-ʼesh
      come bird-3S SUBC(M) from-3S(M).VOC tree(M)-3S(M) see-1S

      'I see the tree from which the bird comes.'

Glossary

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