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A Grammatical Sketch of Herero
(Otjiherero)

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The present Sketch of Herero Grammar is the result of the co-operation between linguists from three institutions – the University of Cologne, the School of Oriental and African Studies in London, and the University of Namibia in Windhoek.

Its history began in 1999 when Lutz Marten, then lecturer in linguistics at SOAS, and Jekura Kavari, who was at the time completing his PhD on Herero praise poetry (Kavari 2002), met at SOAS and decided to co-teach a field methods course on Herero. From this course, a working group resulted – the SOAS Herero Project – whose members had become more interested in Herero structure. We thus note here our deep gratitude to the original members of the Herero Project: Sheryl Cooke, Shih Yi Hong, Zoë Toft-Jansen, and Julia Vogel. However, by the beginning of 2001, members of the group had been dispersed over three continents. On the German side, since 1997, Wilhelm Möhlig had been teaching a series of structure courses on Herero within the framework of the Collaborative Research Centre ACACIA at the University of Cologne on 'Arid Climate, Adaption and Cultural Innovation in Africa'. From both projects draft manuscripts resulted. During the summer of 2001 Lutz Marten and Wilhelm Möhlig met and discussed a possible co-operation to produce a short grammatical description of Herero, including the work from SOAS and Möhlig's extensive data on Herero. Möhlig had been working on Herero since his first visit to Namibia in 1965 and was working on a more comprehensive description of Herero, but he willingly agreed to become involved in the project and to take the over-all responsibility of producing a Sketch. Kavari whose MA-thesis was co-supervised by Möhlig approved of this arrangement, and during two visits to Cologne from Windhoek, where, by that time, he had resumed his duties as a lecturer at the University of Namibia, the manuscript was developed, and during a final meeting of all three co-authors in December 2002 in Cologne, the final version was agreed upon.

The manuscript was word-processed by Marc Seifert and supplemented with a map drawn by Monika Feinen. It was printed with the generous support of the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG). We wish

to acknowledge and express our thanks to all those who have contributed to this truly international project and to this book and we are pleased to present it to the public in the hope that it will support and further the study and teaching of the Herero language.

Cologne, December 2002

W. J. G. M.
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List of Abbreviations

ACD	Adjective Concord	RECPERF	Recent Definite Past Perfect
APPL	Applicative	REFL	Reflexive
AUG	Augment	REL	Relative
CAUS	Causative	RELCD	Relative Concord
CL1	Class (cl.1 etc)	REMIMPV	Remote Past Imperfective
COP	Copulative / Copula		
DEM	Demonstrative		
FAC	Factitive	REMPERF	Remote Indefinite Past Perfect
FACSCD	Factitive Subject Concord		
		REP	Repetitive
FUT	Future	REV	Reversive
FV	Final Vowel	SBV	Subjunctive
IMP	Imperative	SCD	Subject Concord
INF	Infinitive	SG	Singular
NAR	Narrative	SIM	Simultaneous
NCP	Nominal Class Prefix	SPRON	Subject Pronoun
NEG	Negation	STAT	Stative
NEUT	Neutro-Passive	VB	Verbal Base
NUMCD	Numeral Concord		
OCD	Object Concord	.	morpheme boundary
OPRON	Object Pronoun	(n.)	Noun
OPT	Optative	(v.)	Verb
PASS	Passive	aˡ	up-step
PERF	Perfect Suffix -ERe	aǀ	down-step
PL	Plural	a̋	strong accent
PLUPERF	Pluperfect	'a	weak accent
POSS	Possessive Pronominal Stem	á	high tone
		à	low tone
POSSCD	Possessive Concord	a̱	mid tone
POSSCOP	Possessive Copula	ǎ	rising tone
PPOSS	Pronominal Possessive	â	falling tone
PRES	Present	h	surface high tone
PROCD	Pronominal Concord	l	surface low tone
PRON	Pronoun	m	surface mid tone
PRSV	Presentative	H	underlying high tone
RECI	Reciprocal	L	underlying low tone
RECIMPV	Recent Past Imperfective	F	underlying falling tone

1. Introduction

Herero is a Bantu language spoken in Namibia, Angola and Botswana. There are about 141,000 Herero speakers in Namibia and another 18,000 speakers in Botswana. In Namibia, Herero speakers live mainly in Kaokoland (Northwestern Namibia), in the capital of Windhoek and in Hereroland (East Central Namibia). Although the areas where Herero speakers settle are geographically incoherent, the dialectal variation is not very great. In Namibia, three dialects – Kaokoland Herero, Central Herero and Mahalapye Herero (Botswana) – can roughly be distinguished (Ohly 1999:5).

Herero is a South Western Bantu language, designated as R. 30 in Guthrie's 1948 referential classification of the Bantu languages. Other languages in zone R include Umbundu (R. 11) in Angola, the Owambo dialect cluster (R. 20) spoken in Angola and Namibia, and Yeye (R. 40) spoken in the Caprivi Strip and in Botswana. The Bantu languages are a large group of languages spoken all over Sub-Saharan Africa and include for example Zulu, Bemba, Swahili, and Lingala. They are part of the Niger-Congo languages. Like most Bantu languages, Herero has a grammatical system of several noun classes with a rich agreement morphology and a sophisticated verbal system that is governed by complex derivational and inflectional processes.

Herero is taught in Namibian schools and at the University of Namibia in Windhoek. Early grammatical descriptions include Hahn's (1857) and Brincker's (1886) grammars and dictionaries. The most up-to-date dictionary is Viljoen and Kamupingene (1983). Recent grammatical overviews over the language include Ohly 1999 and Elderkin (Forthcoming) The official spelling system (Department of National Education 1983) is disjunctive against the prosodic word structure that would suggest a more conjunctive system of writing. In this sketch, we follow the official orthography, but indicate deviations where linguistically appropriate.

According to oral traditions (Vedder 1934:132 ff), Herero speaking people originally came from the lacustrine area of Central East Africa. As a recent ethno-historical study based on language historical reconstructions implies (Möhlig 2000; 2002), the Ancient Herero, for still unknown reasons, must have left their home country at the end of the 16th century. They migrated via the Lunda corridor towards the west and, for some generations, settled in the Luimbi-Luena area in the north east of the Nyaneka kingdoms. With the

latter they shared the cattle based economy. Under the impact of the Portuguese slave raids during the 18th century, they left or rather fled from their comparatively favorable settlements into the Kaokoland, where life conditions were considerably worse. From there, some of their clans began to migrate southwards into Central Namibia, occupying an area between Owamboland in the north and Nama speaking groups in the south. During the German colonial occupation, the Herero fought the German army, but were defeated at the Waterberg in August 1904. Since independence in 1990, many Herero speakers whose parents and grandparents had moved into Botswana have returned to Namibia. Currently Herero is one of Nambia's important languages spoken by about 7 % of the total population.

Areas where Herero Dialects are spoken

2. Phonology

2.1 Vowels

SHORT VOWELS			LONG VOWELS	
i	u	ii		uu
e [ɛ]	o [ɔ]	ee [ɛ:]		oo [ɔ:]
a [ɑ]		aa [ɑ:]		

i as in **okupítá** 'to go out'
ɛ as in **okuvétà** 'to hit (a target)'
ɑ as in **màmá** 'mother'
ɔ as in **ongóró** 'zebra'
u as in **okumúná** 'to see'

i: as in **íì** 'yes'
ɛ: as in **àyéé** 'no'
ɑ: as in **okuhàámà** 'to sit down'
ɔ: as in **okuròòrò** 'rainy season'
u: as in **okuhúúrà** 'to capture'

Lexical long vowels are not frequent. Examples like **íì** and **àyée** are not ideal, as 'yes' and 'no' will often take emphasis, naturally lengthening their final vowels. Many apparent long vowels result from phonological processes: at morphemic boundaries like consonant elision or vowel coalescence.

An example for consonant elision is **oma.àndjèrò** 'giving', where there is an underlying consonant **-y-** at the beginning of the word stem after the prefix **oma-**, as shown by the infinitive of the verbal stem **oku.yàndjà**, 'to give'.

Examples for vowel coalescence are **omu.ùngùrè** 'worker' or **omi.í** 'teats', where the final vowel of the class prefixes and the initial vowels of the noun stems have the same quality.

2.2 Consonants

	bilabial	labio-dental	dental	alveolar	palatal	velar	glottal
Plosive, voiceless	p		ṭ	t		k	
Fricative, voiceless		(f)	s̱ [θ]	(s)			h
Fricative, voiced		v	z [ð]		y		
Affricate, voiceless					tj [tʃ]		
Approximant, voiced	w			(l)			
Trill, voiced				r			
Nasal, voiced	m		ṇ	n	ny [ɲ]		
Prenasal, voiced	mb [ᵐb]		nḍ [ⁿḍ]	nd [ⁿd]	ndj [ⁿdʒ]	ng [ᵑg]	

p	as in -púpá	'flow'	
ṭ	as in -ṭíṭí	'small'	
t	as in tàté	'my father'	
k	as in -kúkà	'go on a journey'	
v	as in ovivàvá	'wings'	
θ	as in -s̱òs̱à	'be smeared with fat'	
ð	as in ovizézé	'lies'	
h	as in -hàhá!	'stamp!'	
tʃ	as in -tjàtjà	'water garden'[1]	
m	as in màmá	'my mother'	
ṇ	as in omaṇìṇà	'snot'	
n	as in nànà	'pull'	
ɲ	as in enyènyò	'showing off'	
ᵐb	as in ombómbà	'hole'	
ⁿḍ	as in onḍònḍú	'river'	
ⁿd	as in ondùndú	'mountain'	
ⁿdʒ	as in ondjàndjá	'Cape sparrow'	

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[1] Some dialects have μ instead of tμ.

ŋg	as in **ongàngà**	'doctor'
r	as in **-rárà**	'sleep'
w	as in **omuwá**	'beautiful person'
y	as in **otjiyàyá**	'rubbish'

[f], [s] and [l] are only found in loanwords:

s	as in **ostórà**	'store'
f	as in **ofáràmà**	'farm'
l	as in **òskòlè**	'school'

2.3 Phonotactics and Phonological Processes

2.3.1 Syllabic Structure of Morphemes

V	**o** as in **o-mu-tí**	'tree'	
CV	**ta** or **te** in **tà-té**	'my father'	C = plosive
	mb as in **e-mbò**	'book'	C = prenasal
$C_1 C_2 V$	**twi** in **o-ku-twí**	'ear'	C_1 = plosive, C_2 = **w**
	vyu in **o-mu-vyú**	'nine'	C_1 = fricative, C_2 = **y**
	mbwa in **o-mbwá**	'dog'	C_1 = prenasal **mb**, C_2 = **w**

Consonant clusters only occur in loan words, e.g. **o-skò-lè** 'school', **o-stó-rà** 'store'.

2.3.2 Phonological Processes

Herero exhibits a number of phonological processes. The following sections deal with vowel coalescence and elision, vowel and consonant assimilation, vowel copying, vowel glides and glide to zero alternations:

(1) Vowel Coalescence and Elision

Because of the agglutinating character of the language, at the morphemic boundaries, the affixation of inflectional and derivational morphemes often leads to sequences of vowels. In such cases, preceding high vowels, i.e. **i** and **u**, lose their syllabic qualities and become homorganic glides, i.e. **i̯** and **u̯**, except when they are followed by an identical vowel. These changes are

represented in the orthography by the letters y and w, unless the first vowel is part of a nominal prefix, then i and u are retained.

i+i > ii	u+i > ʉi
e.g. omi.í	e.g. omu.ìnyò [ɔmʉiɲɔ]
'teats'	'life, breath'
i+e > ie	u+e > ʉe
e.g. omi.ézé [ɔmieðɛ]	e.g. omu.ézé [ɔmʉeðɛ]
'moons, months'	'moon, month'
i+a > ia	u+a > ʉa
e.g. omi.ápí [ɔmiapi]	e.g. omu.âtjé [ɔmʉatʃɛ]
'cloven hooves'	'child'
i+o > io	u+o > ʉo
e.g. omi.òngò [ɔmiɔŋgɔ]	e.g. oku.ókó [ɔkʉɔkɔ] [2]
'bone marrow'	'arm'
i+u > iu	u+u > uu
e.g. ovi.ùrù [ɔviuru]	e.g. omu.ùngùrè [ɔmuuŋgurɛ]
'heads'	'worker'

Before a noun stem beginning with a vowel, the class prefix otji- loses its vowel i; e.g.

    otji+ari > otjárí 'chest'.

(2) Vowel Height Harmony

Certain suffixes exhibit vowel height harmony. In such cases, the quality of the suffix vowel depends on the quality of the preceding vowel (progressive assimilation). For instance, in the applicative verbal derivation, the suffix vowel is -e-, if the vowel of the preceding syllable is e, o or a, but becomes i, if the preceding syllable has a high vowel i or u.

VERBAL BASE	APPLICATIVE
-pànɖ- 'refuse'	-pànɖ.èrà 'refuse for'
-hép- 'be in need'	-hép.érà 'need for sb.'
-híng- 'drive'	-híng.írà 'drive for'
-ròng- 'admonish'	-ròng.èrà 'admonish for'
-pùnd- 'dance'	-pùnd.írà 'dance for'

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[2] In Kaokoland this noun is pronounced as òkùwókó.

Verbs with the perfective suffix and deverbal action nouns show vowel height harmony (the suffixes are represented here as underlyingly **-ERe** and **-ERo**, where **E** is either **i** or **e**, and **R** is either **r** or **n** (nasal harmony, see subsection (6) below):

VERBAL BASE (VB)	PERFECT SUFFIX	ACTION NOUN
	–ERe	oma +VB + ERo
-pít-	mbá pítírè	omapítírò
'go out'	'I went out'	'going out'
-t̪ùk-	mbá t̪ùkìrè	omat̪ùkìrò
'shake'	'I shook'	'shaking'
-pàt-	mbá pàtèrè	omapàtèrò
'close'	'I closed'	'closing/closure'
-vét-	mbá vétèrè	omavétèrò
'hit by throwing'	'I hit'	'hitting'
-ròr-	mbá ròrèrè	omaròrèrò
'taste'	'I tasted'	'tasting'

The assimilation of the vowel is triggered by the preceding syllable, as can be seen from the following example where the perfect suffix is **-ene**, because of the immediately preceeding **-a-**:

twá t̪ùkàs̪ànènè   'we shook each other' (cf. **t̪ùkìrè** above)

(3) Vowel Copying

In some tenses (e.g. Present, Recent Past), the final vowel of some dissyllabic verb stems is copied from the preceding stem vowel:

-pítá	'go out'	má¡tú pítí	'We are going out'
-múná	'see'	má¡tú múnú	'We are seeing'
-pàtà	'close'	má¡tú pàtà	'We are closing'
-vétá	'hit'	má¡tú vétè	'We are hitting'
-rótá	'dream'	má¡tú rótó	'We are dreaming'

(4) Vowel–Glides and Glide–Zero Alternations

As noted above, high vowels may become glides when followed by another vowel (cf. above 2.1.1. Vowel Coalescence). Furthermore, in intervocalic position, glides may be completely elided by some speakers, so that juxtaposed or (surface) long vowels result:

omaàngèrò 'folding' < **-yàngà** 'fold up'

In addition, intervocalic **-r-** or **-v-** may be elided, when surrounded by the same vowel:

kárà ~ káà 'stay'   **okakàmbè okavâpá ~ okaâpá** 'white horse'

(5) Consonant Assimilation

When nouns and adjectives are constructed in class 9/10, a stem initial non-nasal consonant is substituted by its homorganic prenasal, i.e. by the prenasal that, within the articulatory sound system, comes closest to its place of articulation.

STEM INITIAL CONSONANTS	HOMORGANIC PRENASALS	EXAMPLES IN THE NASAL CLASS 9/10		
p	mb	-pé 'new'	>	ombé
t	nd	-twé 'sharp'	>	ondwé
ṭ	nḍ	-ṭíṭí 'small'	>	onḍíṭì
k	ng	-kázè 'female'	>	ongázè
tj	ndj	-tjáté 'tasty'	>	ondjáté
w	mbw	-wá 'good'	>	ombwá
v	mb	-vàngà 'to like, want'	>	ombàngò 'will'
r	nd	-ròndà 'to climb'	>	ondôndó 'step of stairs'
z [ð]	nḍ	-zèpà 'to kill'	>	onḍèpèrò 'killing'
y	ndj	-yáhá 'to wound'	>	ondjáhé 'wounded person or animal'

The stem initial vowels **i** and **u** behave like their corresponding glides **y** and **w**.

i	ndji	-ímbúrá 'sing'	>	òndjímbúrè 'singer'
u	mbu	-úká 'foresee'	>	òmbúké 'visionary'

The stem initials -g̱-, -ẖ-, -m-, -n-, -ṉ-, -ny- in the nasal class 9/10 are not prenasalised.

og̱éngó	'neck'	(not: *ong̱éngó)
oẖòngá	'point'	(not: *onẖòngá)
oményé	'springbock'	(not: *omményé)
oná	'louse'	(not: *onná)
oṉángó	'gall'	(not: *oṉṉángó)
onyángá	'onion'	(not: *onnyanga)

(6) Nasal Harmony (Assimilation)

Another process involving nasals is consonantal harmony. This occurs with suffixes that contain an -r- (such as the perfect and applicative), where the -r- becomes -n- if the preceding consonant is a nasal. Although nasal and vowel height harmony are independent processes, it appears that all suffixes, which exhibit nasal harmony, also exhibit height harmony:

VERBAL BASE	PERFECT SUFFIX	ACTION NOUN
	-ERe	oma +VB + ERo
-ṯínà- 'whine'	mbá ṯínínè 'I whined'	omaṯínínò 'whining'
-túmá- 'send'	mbá túmínè 'I sent'	omatúmínò 'sending'
-rámá- 'choke (of food)'	yá rámènè 'It (e.g. meat) choked'	omarámènò 'chocking'
-pémá- 'blow one's nose'	mbá pémènè 'I blew my nose'	omapémènò 'blowing one's nose'
-tònà- 'hit'	mbá tònènè 'I hit'	omatònènò 'hitting'

An intervening non-nasal consonant blocks the consonant harmony:

-múná- 'see'   mbá múníkìrè   'I have been seen'
(-r- is not harmonised to -n-)

-rámá- 'choke'   mbá rámíṣìrè   'I caused choking'

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Nasal harmony is also blocked by intervening prenasals:

| ròndà- | 'climb' | mbá ròndèrè | 'I climbed' |
| ròmbà- | 'plaster (vb.)' | mbá ròmbèrè | 'I plastered' |

(7) Consonant Elision

When, as a result of vowel copying, a stem final consonant –v- is found between two round vowels, i.e. **o** or **u**, the –v- is regularly elided (cf. also section (4) above):

| zúvá | 'hear | > má₁tú zúú | 'We are hearing' (not *zúvú) |
| ròvà | 'bewitch' | > má₁tú ròò | 'We are bewitching' (not *ròvò) |

2.4 Distinctive Tones

Herero is a so-called tone language. This means that different tonal phenomena may fulfil a distinctive function like vowels or consonants. At least two tonal distinctions can be identified, which we indicate here as underlying features by H for high and L for low.

Lexical and grammatical distinctions are not only marked by syllabic tones, but by suprasegmental tone patterns that expand over at least two adjacent syllables. As already Oswin Köhler (1958) found out, there are three basic tone patterns:

/LL/	-pòrà	'draw a magic line over the bridge of the nose'
/HH/	-pórá	'cool down'
/HL/	-pórà	'tear off'

Since nouns and verbs may occur in different syntactic and aspectual contexts, there is a general agreement that, including the verbal noun, the lexical citation form is identical with the subject case.

(1) Lexical Distinctiveness

òngóró	/LHH/	'zebra'	òzòngóró	LLHH	'zebras'
òngòrò	/LLL/	'knee'	òzòngòrò	LLLL	'knees'
òngángá	/LHH/	'guinea fowl'	òzòngángá	LLHH	'guinea fowls'
òngàngà	/LLL/	'doctor'	òzòngàngà	LLLL	'doctors'
òùwé	/LLH/	'tickle'			
òùwè	/LLL/	'diamonds'			

Due to morpho-phonological or historical processes, a falling tone **F** occurs, which is often misheard and interpreted as a high tone. For instance:

òkù.hánḍúkà	/LL.HHL/	'to be naughty'
òmù.hánḍûké	/LL.HFH/	'naughty person'
òmù.ṣûpí	/LL.FH/	'short (person)'

Furthermore, within a series of distinctive high tones, the high tone level is frequently reduced by two to three semi tones. This lowering is an assimilatory process that normally occurs between two adjacent tone patterns of /HL/ – /H.../. In such cases, the second high tone is realized two to three semitones lower than the first, and all the subsequent high tones are realized at that new tone level. However, particularly in combination with monosyllabic morphemes, the lowering of the tone level also occurs between two surface high tones so that the auditory impression is that of a sequence of high – mid., e.g.

<p align="center">mé múnú [⁻ – –] 'I see' (Present Tense)</p>

These cases are triggered by morpho-phonological or historical processes, where a low tone has lost its bearer syllable, but is still apparent by the phenomenon of lowering the whole high tone level. We call this phenomenon down-step and mark it as / ₁ /. For instance:

<p align="center">má₁tú múnú   /H₁ HHH/   realized as: [⁻ – – –] 'we see'</p>

The Present Tense marker **má₁** inherently bears the distinctive tone pattern H°L[3].

(2) Grammatical Distinctiveness

Besides its function of lexical distinctiveness, tone is also used to differentiate grammatical forms, for instance tenses:

òkù.hààmà	/LL.LLL/	'to sit down'
mbá hààmènè	/H LLLL/	'I sat down' (Recent Past Perfect)
mbà hààménè	/L LHHH/ [llmmm][4]	'I sat down' (Remote Past Perfect)
òkù.vérà	/LL.HL/	'to be ill'
mbá vérèrè	/H HLL/	'I was ill' (Recent Past Perfect)
mbà₁ véréré	/L ₁HHH/ [lmmm][5]	'I was ill' (Remote Past Perfect)

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[3] Other Bantuists (cf. Schadeberg 1990, 8 f) call this phenomenon 'floating tone'.

[4] The mid tones are here the result of tone assimilation. After a distinctive low tone, the tone range (difference between high and low) is lowered. Therefore high tones appear at the surface level as mid. The surface realisation is here rendered in lower case letters: l=low, m=mid and in the orthography as a vertical accent over the vowels.

[5] In this case, an underlying low tone is suppressed at the surface, but tone assimilation still occurs. This is a case of 'down-step' and therefore marked as ₁.

Furthermore, tone is used to turn a noun into an existential predicate and also to differentiate between the predicative and attributive use of adjectives (further details see sections 3.1.2 and 3.3.2):

òkàkàmbè	/LLLL/	'horse'
ˈóɪkàkàmbè	/ˈHɪHLL/	'It is a horse.' (Presentative)
òkàkàmbè òkànénè	/LLLL LLHH/	'a big horse'(Attributive)
òkàkàmbè ˈóɪkánénέ	/LLLL ˈHɪHHH/	'The horse is big.' (Predicative)

We here call 'tonal inflection'such processes where the same lexical item, under various grammatical or syntactic conditions, adopts different tonal patterns.

2.5 Intonation

In speech realization, the distinctive and inflectional tones are embedded in other tonal and accentual phenomena that function as syntactic boundary markers or as emphatic signals. In short, Herero as a tone language has also a complex intonation. Therefore, for an external observer, it may become difficult to decide where, within the complex intonation of a sentence, the distinctive tones are hidden.

Two important features of intonation are down-drift and descent respectively ascent of the complete tonal range (= the difference between the high tone and low tone levels). There is a general tendency of down-drift at the beginning of a sentence to its end, whereas ascent and descent occur at particular positions of the syntactic chain to mark focus or syntactic boundaries. We don't indicate intonation features within this sketch. As already said, distinctive high tones preceded by a distinctive low tone undergo tonal assimilation as an effect of the general descent. We mark these cases eventually as mid tones: ā, ē, ī, ō, ū.

òvàndù (P) kàvâwá[6]	'The people are not good.'
mé ɪhóngó òvànàtjè	'I am teaching children.'

The boundaries of clauses are often – not necessarily – marked by a rising tone e.g. ǎ as in the following examples

---

6 (P)= pause

òmùndù ngú ùngùrǎ ú múná òndjámbì.
'A person who works, gets salary.'

òzòmítírì nḍé hòngǎ máↄzé tjángá ómàmbò.
'The teachers who teach, are writing books.'

2.6 Respiratory Accent

Herero, like other tone languages, uses the instrument of respiratory accent to mark word boundaries, e.g.

oku.múná	'to see'
oku.hùngírà	'to talk'

As the examples show, usually the penultimate syllable bears a main accent (marked here as doubling of the tone symbol). As Ohly (1999: 13f) also observed, Herero distinguishes between a main or "strong" accent and a secondary or "weak" accent (marked as an apostrophe in front of the accent bearing syllable). This difference is used to express emphasis, e.g.

oka.kàmbè	'a horse'
oka.kàmbě ngà	'this horse'
oka.'kàmbè ìngà	'this very horse'

In the first example, the main stress marks the boundary of the noun. This stress is shifted one syllable to the right, when a demonstrative is added. Distinct from current orthographic rules, demonstratives are clitic morphemes prosodologically incorporated into the unit of the governing noun. In the third example, the demonstrative is emphasized and therefore is given a main stress. The boundary marker accent is reduced to a secondary accent.

3. Morphology of the Noun Phrase

3.1 Nouns

Herero nouns consist of at least three morphemes: (1) an augment (see section 3.1.2), (2) a nominal prefix and (3) a stem. For example, **o.ka.kàmbè**, 'horse', consists of the augment **o-**, the class prefix **-ka-** and the nominal stem **-kàmbè**. In this sketch, for pratical reasons, we use the term Nominal Class Prefix (NCP) to denote Augment and Class Prefix as one unit.

The nominal prefixes have three different functions:

> First: they indicate number: singular, plural, mass concepts;
> Second: they mark the syntactic relationship within a sentence;
> Third: sometimes they indicate different semantic categories.

3.1.1 The Noun Classes

Herero has 20 different noun classes. The numbering of the classes in the table below follows the tradition of Bantu linguists who, at a comparative level, follow more or less the same order in arranging the noun classes (Bleek 1869, 251-279; Meinhof 1906, 5-27; Guthrie 1967, 36 f). With regard to number, most of the classes form singular-plural pairs. In the table below, the first of each pair is the singular, the second the plural.

(1) List of Noun Classes

NOMINAL CLASS PREFIX	CLASS NUMBER	EXAMPLE	
omu- ova-	1 2	omundù ovandù	'person' 'people'
Ø oo-	1a 2a	màmá oomàmá	'mother' 'mothers'
omu- omi-	3 4	omutí omití	'tree' 'trees'

e-	5	ewè	'stone'
oma-	6	omawè	'stones'
otji-	7	otjihúrò	'town'
ovi-	8	ovihúrò	'towns'
o(N)	9	ongòmbè	'cow'
ozo(N)	10	ozongòmbè	'cows'
oru-	11	oruvyó	'knife'
otu-	12	otuvyó	'knives'
oka-	13	okakàmbè	'horse'
ou-	14	oukàmbè	'horses'
ou-	19	outá	'bow'
omau-	06+19	omautá	'bows'
oku-	15a	okuràmà	'leg'
oma-	06	omaràmà	'legs'
oku-	15a	okuíyá	'thorn'
omaku-	06+15a	omakuíyá	'thorns'

Some nouns in class 11 may take the class 10 prefix as their plural marker rather than a class 12 prefix, often with a slightly different meaning:

orukákú	Cl.11	'shoe'
otukákú	Cl.12	'shoes' (different)
ozongákú	Cl.10	'shoes' (a pair)

orutáví	Cl.11	'branch'
otutáví	Cl.12	'branches'
ozondáví	Cl.10	'hanging branches'

(2) Verbal Nouns (Infinitives)

Verbal stems with the prefix **oku-** (cl.15), often called infinitives, are classified as nouns, for they show nominal characteristics in that they induce adjective agreement, genitive agreement and even trigger subject and object concords:

òkù.rárà	òkù.wá		'good sleeping'
NCP15.sleep	ACD15.good		

ókù.rárà	kwá.Júliá		'[That is] Julia's sleeping'
NCP15.sleep	POSSCD15.Julia		

òkù.rárà	má|.kú	ndjí	hìhám.ìs.à	ótjí.ùrú
NCP15.sleep	PRES.SCD15	OCD1SG	pain. cause.FV	NCP7.head

'Sleeping gives me a headache'

ókú.rárà	mé|	kú	vàngà
NCP15.sleep	PRES-SCD1SG	OCD15	like

'I like sleeping'/'Sleeping, I like it'

However, words in class 15 also show verbal characteristics, and thus could equally be analyzed as verbal infinitives or gerunds. For example, they can take an object concord:

mé	vàngà	ókù.mú.múná	
PRES-SCD1SG	like	NCp15.OCD1.see	'I like to see him/her'

And they can be negated:

òkù.há|.múná	
NCP15-INF.NEG.see	'not to see'

Both these qualities are more readily associated with verbs than with nouns so that verbal nouns can be seen to have the characteristics of both.

(3) Locative Nouns

Herero has three locative classes, in the Bantu tradition these are the classes 16, 17 and 18.

CLASS PREFIX	CLASS NUMBER	EXAMPLE	
pu	16	pondjúwó	'at/on a house'
ku	17	kondjúwó	'towards a house'
mu	18	mondjúwó	'in a house'

Normally, the locative class markers are pre-prefixed to other nouns as in the example above, where the vowel **u** is elided.

The locative classes function like prepositional phrases in languages such as English. However, there is no one to one correspondence between **ku, pu, mu** and English prepositions. Thus, **pondjúwó** can be translated as 'at the house', 'on the house', 'close to the house', and **kondjúwó** as 'towards the house', 'by the house', etc., depending on context. In general, class 16 indicates relative nearness with contact, class 17 relative distance within sight and class 18 interiority.

(4) Abstract Nouns

Like Locative Nouns, abstract nouns do not take part in the singular-plural-pairing. They belong either to class 6 or to class 19.

omanwínò	Cl.6 'drinking'	(< **-nwá** 'drink')
omatjàngèrò	Cl.6 'writing'	(< **-tjàngà** 'write')
ounéné	Cl.19 'bigness'	(< **-néné** 'big')

(5) Mass Concepts

Class 6 is also used for non-count nouns, so-called mass nouns. These have no singular forms.

omévá	'water'
omaíhí	'milk'

3.1.2 The Augment

With the exception of nouns in class 1a, where we find terms of relationship and proper names, and in the locative classes, the augment **o-** (**e-** in class 5) is an obligatory accompaniment. Although in the usual orthography it is not apparent, the prosodic shape of the augment plays an important role in so far as it marks case. Compare the following examples:

SUBJECT CASE	OBJECT CASE	PRESENTATIVE
òkàkàmbè ká vérè	mbá ꞁmúnú òkákàmbè	ᶦóꞁkákàmbè
'the horse has become ill'	'I saw a horse'	'it is a horse'
LLLL	LHLL	ᶦHꞁHLL

The use of an augment as prefixed to locative classes and in class 1a (i.e. those classes whose class prefix normally do not have an augment) turns the noun into a presentative):

pondjúwó	'at a house'	ⁱóᵢpóndjúwó	'it is at a house'
kondjúwó	'on a house'	ⁱóᵢkóndjúwó	'it is on a house'
mondjúwó	'in a house'	ⁱóᵢmóndjúwó	'it is in a house'
màmá	'my mother'	óⁱmáᵢmá	'she is my mother'

The loss of the augment in classes that normally have this morpheme indicates a vocative:

| omurúméndú | 'man' | mùrúᵢméndú! | 'Hey, man!' |

3.1.3 Markers of Syntactic Relationship (Agreement)

Within a sentence, all constituents that are grammatically dependent on a specific noun have to be constructed within the same class as this noun. For instance:

| òkà.kàmbè | òkà.títí | k.óyè | ká | vérè |
| NCP13.horse | ACD13.small | PossCD13.you | SCD13-RECIMPV | be ill |

'Your little horse has become ill'

| òù.kàmbè | òù.títí | w.óyè | wá | vérè |
| NCP14.horse | ACD14.small | PossPCD14.you | SCD14-RECIMPV | be ill |

'Your little horses have become ill'

3.1.4 The Semantic Basis of the Noun Class System

The noun class system is mainly a grammatical system, comparable to the gender nominal system of European languages such as French and German. In other words, there is not always a 'reason' for a given noun to be in one class rather than in another. Thus, the distribution of nouns in their classes is to some extent arbitrary. However, in Herero there is often some core meaning apparent, which semantically unites many members of a given class, as the following list clearly shows. And some nominal stems can be shifted from one class to another in adopting different shades of meaning according to the core meaning of the class.

(1) Core Meanings

Classes 1-2, 1a-2a

HUMAN BEINGS

omuángù (ova-)	younger sibling (same sex as speaker)
omuâtjé (ova-)	child (the plural is ovanâtjé)
omukázéndú (ova-)	woman
Omundóltjì (ova-)	German person
omundù (ova-)	person
omurúméndú, (ova-)	man
omuṭénà (ova-)	any sibling of opposite sex
ìhé (oo-)	his/her father
ìhó (oo-)	your father
màmá (oo-)	my mother
ndjàmbí (oo-)	God

Classes 3-4

PHENOMENA OF NATURE, PARTS OF THE BODY

omutí (omi-)	tree
omuzú (omi-)	baobab tree
omumbòndè (omi-)	camelthorn tree
omuṭátì (omi-)	mopani tree
omupànánà (omi-)	banana tree
omuì (omi-) [omụi]	teat, nipple
omuṇá (omi-)	lip
omunwé (omi-)	finger
omutímá (omi-)	heart
omuézé (omi-)	moon (month)
omuìnyò (omi-)	soul (life)
omuíṣè (omi-)	smoke
omurìrò (omi-)	fire

Classes 5-6

NATURAL PHENOMENA, BODY PARTS THAT ARE PAIRED OR HAVE TWO
SIDES, MONSTROUS OBJECTS OR BEINGS, LOAN WORDS, ACTIVITIES OR
STATES

ehò (ome-)	eye
ekè (oma-)	hand
ezùmò (oma-)	stomach
etámbó (oma-)	back
etákó (oma-)	buttock
eráká (oma-)	tongue/ language
eyúrú (oma-)	nose
eyûrú (oma-)	heaven /sky
eyúvá (oma-)	sun / day
ewè (oma-)	stone
ehí (oma-)	earth / soil
endù (oma-)	ugly person
emutí (oma-)	enormous tree
ekópì (oma-)	cup
eràmbè (oma-)	lamp
eímbúrìrò (oma-)	song, singing
enyándó (oma-)	happiness

Class 6

MASS CONCEPTS

omévá	water
omaíhí	milk

Classes 7-8

INANIMATE OBJECTS, PARTS OF THE BODY, GARDEN CULTIVATION,
PEJORATIVE CONCEPTS, BIG SIZE

otjiṉá (ovi-)	thing
otjiténdá (ovi-)	steel, iron
otjihàútò (ovi-)	car
otjitíhà (ovi-)	table
otjinyó (ovi-)	mouth

otjiùrú (ovi-)	head
otjivàvá (ovi-)	wing
otjihèhàmènò (ovi-)	chin
otjikúnìnò (ovi-)	garden
otjipànánà (ovi-)	banana
otjihàkáùtú (ovi-)	potato
otjihàpè (ovi-)	fruit
otjipù (ovi-)	cripple
otjikàmbè (ovi-)	old mare
otjingùndì (ovi-)	coward, weakling
otjindù (ovi-)	big person
otjiṇá (ovi-)	thing

Classes 9-10

ANIMALS, COLLECTIVE CLASS, LOAN WORDS

ohúngùrívà (ozo-)	chicken
ombùngù (ozo-)	wolf, hyena
ombwá (ozo-)	dog
onḑérá (ozo-)	bird, aeroplane
onḑú (ozo-)	sheep
ongángá (ozo-)	guinea fowl
ongéyàmà (ozo-)	lion
ongòmbè (ozo-)	cattle
ombàndá (ozo-)	cloth(ing)
ombàpírà (ozo-)	paper
ombàzé (ozo-)	foot
ongàndá (ozo-)	village
ongàngà (ozo-)	doctor
ongàrà (ozo-)	flower
ofáràmà (ozo-)	farm
okérèkà (ozo-)	church
okòmbèíṣà (ozo-)	kitchen
okòmbiútà (ozo-)	computer
ombétè (ozo-)	bed
ombòròtò (ozo-)	bread
ombútà (ozo-)	butter
onètè (ozo-)	net

Classes 11-12

LONG OBJECTS, ABSTRACT CONCEPTS

oruténdá (otu-)	railtrack
orutáví (otu-)	branch
orutjènò (otu-)	lightening, electricity
oruíhó (otu-)	window
orukákú (otu-)	shoe
orutúwó (otu-)	spoon
oruvyó (otu-)	knife
oruǥùvèrò (otu-)	love
oruihó (otu-)	taste
oruyànò (otu-)	oath

Classes 13-14

SMALL OBJECTS

okatí (ou-)	stick
okambíhí (ou-)	cat
okapì (ou-)	hare
okakàmbè (ou-)	horse
okamáùsà (ou-)	mouse (computer)

Class 15

VERBAL NOUNS

okuhòngà	to teach
okurárà	to sleep
okumúná	to see
okuhùngìrà	to speak
okuhámbúrà	to forge

Class 15a

PAIRED BODY PARTS

okutwí (oma-)	ear
okuwókó (oma-)	arm
okuràmà (oma-)	leg

Class 19

ABSTRACT NOUNS

ouátjírì	truth
ouwá	goodness
ounóngó	wisdom
But also:	
outá (omau-)	bow
ouţúkú (omau-)	night

(2) Class Shift

The semantic basis of noun classes is involved when nouns are shifted from one class to another. Morphologically, two kinds of shift can be distinguished:

> (1) the shift of a complete noun (i.e. NCP + stem) into another class so that the new noun has two NCPs (i.e. NCP+NPR+stem), where the augment of the second NCP is elided and

(2) the shift of a stem (without its original NCp) into another class.

> oruvyó 'knife' > okaruvyó 'small knife'
> oka + (o)ru + vyó
> NCP13 + NCP11 + knife

> omundù 'person' > okandù 'small person'
> omu + ndù   oka + ndù
> NCP1 + person   NCP13 + person

Shift into classes 5 and 6

A noun thus created is used in an augmentative and derogatory sense, where the derogatory aspect appears to be dominant.

embíhí	(big) ugly cat	cf. okambíhí	'cat' (CL.13)
erúméndú	(big) ugly man	cf. omurúméndú	'man' (CL.1)
emutí	(big) ugly tree	cf. omutí	'tree' (CL.3)

Note that e.mu.tí has two class prefixes (NCP5 + NPR3).

Shift into classes 7 and 8

Nouns thus created are semantically similar to those formed by movement into classes 5 and 6. However, the shift into classes 7/8 emphasises largeness.

otjimbíhí	'big (ugly) cat'	cf. **okambíhí**	'cat' (CL.13)
otjiruvyó	'big (ugly) knife'	cf. **oruvyó**	'knife' (CL.11)
otjindù	'big (ugly) person'	cf. **omundù**	'person' (CL.1)

Note that in **otjindù/ovindù** the original class 1/2 NCP is not retained, whereas in **otjiruvyó/oviruvyó** the original class 11 NCP is partly retained.

Shift into classes 11 and 12

Nouns thus created indicate length and/or thinness in a derogatory or mocking sense:

orundù	'long/tall person'	cf. **omundù**	'person' (CL.1)
otundù	'long/tall people'		
orumbíhí	'long, thin cat'	cf. **okambíhí**	'cat' (CL.13)
otumbíhí	'long, thin cats'		

Shift into class 13/14

Nouns thus created indicate smallness.

okanyósé	'little star'	cf. **onyósé**	'star' (CL.9)
ounyósé	'little stars'	cf. **ozonyósé**	'stars' (CL.10)
okawè	'diamond', lit. little stone	cf. **ewè**	'stone' (CL.5)
ouwè	'diamonds'	cf. **omawè**	'stones' (CL.6)

Shift into class 19

In this way abstract nouns are created from adjectives.

ounéné	'bigness'	cf. **-néné**	'big'
ouwá	'goodness'	cf. **-wá**	'good'
outítí	'smallness'	cf. **-títí**	'small'

The following examples show several class shifts involving the same stem -tí:

omutí	'tree'
emutí	'(big) ugly tree'
orumutí	'tall thin tree'
otumutí	'tall thin trees'
	(not: *otumití)
okatí	'stick'
orutí	'long thin stick'
otutí	'long thin sticks'

3.1.5 Deverbative Derivations

New nouns can be formed by means of class shift, as described in the preceding paragraph, and/or by using verbal stems in combination with various derivational suffixes in specific functions. The following are the most common nominal derivations from verbal stems.

(1) Agent of Action

The suffix -e in combination with a verbal root or stem expressing an action and the prefixes of classes 1 and 2 create nouns that denote the doer of that action. The derived nouns follow the tonal patterns of the verbal stems.

-hòng.à	'teach'	>	omu.hòng.è	'preacher, pastor'
-tjíng.á	'look for'	>	omu.tjíng.é	'searcher'
-hámbúr.à	'forge'	>	omu.hámbúr.è	'blacksmith'

(2) Objects for Executing or Causing Actions

In combination with the prefixes of classes 7 and 8, verbal derivations with the suffix -e denote instruments for causing or executing the verbal action. The derived nouns follow the tonal patterns of the verbal stems.

-kònd.à	'cut off'	>	otji.kònd.è	'instrument for cutting'
-ték.á	'draw water'	>	otji.ték.é	'vessel for drawing water'
-rúngíṣ.à	'make angry'	>	otji.rúngíṣ.è	'object that makes somebody angry'

(3) Passive Agent or Patient

There is a high tone suffix -ɛ́ that, in combination with verbal roots or stems expressing a process or a human property, denotes the bearer of the property or the patient or the beneficiary of that verbal process. This suffix has an underlying °LH tonological structure. The derivation is characterized by prosodic coalescence, which occurs on the penultimate syllable. If this bears a high tone, it amalgates with the floating °L of the suffix and, at the surface level, results in a falling tone.

-hánḍúk.à	'be naughty'	>	omu.hánḍûk.ɛ́	'naughty person'
-pándjár.à	'get lost'	>	omu.pándjâr.ɛ́	'lost person'
-káh.á	'be dry, solid'	>	omu.kâh.ɛ́	'solid person'

(4) Process of Action

The low tone suffix -ò in combination with an applicative verbal stem (see section 4.1.3) and the prefix of class 6 create nouns that express the action itself. This derivation is highly productive.

-hòngèr.à	'teach sth. for sb.'	>	oma.hòngèr.ò	'teaching'
-hwíkìr.à	'lay a fire for sb.'	>	oma.hwíkìr.ò	'arson'
-ímbúrìr.à	'sing for sb.'	>	oma.ímbúrìr.ò	'singing'

Often these derivations appear in combination with the nasal class 9.

-kúmbìr.à	'pray for'	>	ongúmbìr.ò	'prayer'
-vátèr.à	'help sb.'	>	ombátèr.ò	'help, assistance'
-ìṣìr.à	'forgive sb.'	>	ondjèṣìr.ò	'forgiveness'

(5) Result of Action

When the suffix -o is combined with simple verbal roots denoting an action and put into classes 3 and 4 or class 11, the derived noun expresses the result of the action. Note that this suffix is different from the preceding one in as far as it follows the tonal structure of the verbal stem.

-ímb.à /HL/	'sing'	>	omu.ímb.ò /HL/	'trad. song'
-rót.á /HH/	'to dream'	>	oru.rót.ó /HH/	'a dream'
-yàn.à /LL/	'swear'	>	oru.yàn.ò /LL/	'oath'

(6) Instruments for Supporting an Activity

The suffix **-o** may be combined with verbal roots or stems to form nouns in classes 7-8. The derived nouns denote instruments that support the verbal activity. They follow the tonal patterns of the verbal roots or stems.

-tjàngèr.à	'write upon'	>	**otji.tjàngèr.ò**	'blackboard'
-rár.à	'sleep'	>	**otji.rár.ò**	'sleeping mat'
-hávér.à	'rest on'	>	**otji.hávér.ò**	'chair/stool'

3.1.6 Compound Nouns

Besides derivation, compounding is another mechanism of forming new words. Herero makes use of several techniques of compounding and therefore is very flexible in adapting to the necessities of modern life.

(1) Juxtaposed Compounds of Stems

Two nominal stems may be combined where, in contrast to an adjectival construction, the qualifier precedes the qualified noun. Also a verbal stem and nominal stem may be compounded by juxtaposition. The formula is either NCP + Adjective + Noun, NCP + Noun + Noun or NCP + Verb + Noun. In the case of two juxtaposed nouns belonging to different classes, the semantic aspect determines the class of the compound.

omu.kázé.ndú	'woman'	<	**-kázé**	'female'	+	**omu.ndù**	'person'
oru.téndá.tí	'iron bar'	<	**oru.téndá**	'iron'	+	**omu.tí**	'tree'
omu.vèrà.ndú	'ailing person'	<	**-vérà**	'be ill'	+	**omu.ndù**	'person'

(2) Juxtaposed Compounds at Phrase Level

Juxtaposition may also occur at the phrase level. One device is a construction with a header that is usually a verbal noun having a class prefix dependent on the meaning of the whole expression, and with a second noun in object position where the augment is elided.

oka.rúmátà.và.hóná 'small poisonous snake species'[7]

omu.kòrà.vi.zézé 'liar'   < **omu.kòrà** 'someone telling' **ovi.zézé** 'lies'

Another device of forming nominal compounds at phrase level are possessive constructions either as connexives or as nominal possessives (see section 3.2) or with the defective verb –**nà** 'to have' (cf. section 4.2.5)

Nominal Possessive Compounds

otji.twíyè.tj.òzô.ná 'thumb nail'	<	**otji.twíyè** 'cracker' tj- 'of' **ozo.ná** 'lice'
egòròmùtátì 'green mamba'	<	**ègò** 'leave' r-'of' **omutati** 'mopani tree'

Connexive Compounds

The core of such compounds is a verbal stem governing a subsequent noun in an object position.

omu.nà.vi.zézé 'liar'   < **omu.nà** 'someone with / someone who has' **ovi.zézé** 'lies'

Compounds with the defective verb -nà

omu.hí.ná|zóndùngè 'dull person'[8]

omu.hìnà.hóní 'shameless person' <   **omu.hìnà** 'someone who has not'

                                        ohóní 'shame'

---

[7] The constituents are: the class prefix 13, the verbal stem -**rúmátà** 'to bite' and the noun **òvà.hóná** 'chiefs, bosses' – verbally 'the small biting chiefs'. The noun is not an autonomous noun as can be seen by the missing augment **o-** and the absence of the usual object inflection (see section 3.1.2).

[8] The constituents are class prefix 1, the first person singular negation hí 'not' and the defective verb ná 'have' and (o)zó|ndùngè 'intelligence' in the object case.

3.1.7 Nominal Loans

A further technique to enrich the lexicon and to adapt it to the needs of modern life is borrowing from other languages. Herero has evidently used this device since pre-colonial times. The borrowed items have been integrated into the class system, adapted to the sound inventory and to a large degree also to the phonotactic structure of the language. For instance, there are many loans from Nama that, because of their perfect adaptation, are hardly recognizable as loans.

omu.hóná	'mister, chief, boss'	<	Nama **/hon-khoib**	'master'
-kávírá	'ride on a horse or oxen'	<	Nama **!gawi**	'ride'
otji.màrívà	'money'	<	Nama **marib**[8]	'money'

Loans from other Bantu languages can only be ascertained by comparative and dialectological methods Examples of an earlier period of language history are:

oru.vyó 'knife' < Portg. *fio [de ferro]* 'iron rod'
with an East African distribution[9]

The greatest impact on the lexicon occurred from the colonial languages Afrikaans and English, to a lesser degree also from German. Most of the giver words were subsumed under classes 9/10 and often the phonotactic structure of the giver languages was retained.

opénà	< Engl.	*pen*	
otílvíl	< Engl.	*TV*	'television'
opòtòrótà	< Afr.	*potlood*	'pencil'
oskólè	< Afr.	*skool*	'school'
osévà ~ ohévà	< Germ.	*Seife*	'soap'

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[8] Source: Meinhof 1910, p.131.
[9] See Möhlig 2000, pp.136f, 143

3.2 Connexives and Nominal Possession

3.2.1 Connexive Constructions

Two nouns can be coordinated within the same case slot by inserting the conjunction **nà** 'and, with' between the first and the second noun, where the vowel -a is elided when the following noun starts with **e-** and/or **o-**.

óngwè nₗómbì	'[It is about] the leopard and the hare' (title of a story)
mbáₗ múnú ònyámà nòvíkùryá vyárwè	'I [got] saw meat and other food'
twéₗ mù mùnìnè érèró nₗéréróná	'we saw him/her yesterday and the day before'
tàté nà màmá máₗvé yà mùhùkà	'my father and my mother will come tomorrow'

3.2.2 Nominal Possession

A noun can be subordinated under a head noun in a 'possessed-possessor' construction (a so-called 'genitive' construction). The possessor noun is marked by a possessive concord (POSSCD) that is in agreement with the class of the head noun as shown in the following chart.

CL	PREFIX	POSSCD[10]	EXAMPLE
1	omu-	wà	omuâtjé wòmúkázéndú 'the child of the woman'
2	ova-	và	ovanâtjé vòvárúméndú 'the children of the men'
1a	Ø	yà	ìhé yòmuâtjé 'the father of the child'
2a	oo-	yà, và	ooìná vòmúhòkò 'the mothers of the family'

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[10] The vowel **à** is elided when the following noun starts with an augment **o-** or **e-**, yet the low tone is retained.

3	omu-	wà	omutí wòtjíkúnìnò 'the tree of the garden'
4	omi-	vyà	omití vyòvíkúnìnò 'the trees of the garden'
5	e-	rà	ewè rònḍó|nḍú 'the stone of the river'
6	oma-	wà	omawè wònḍó|nḍú 'the stones of the river'
7	otji-	tjà	otjihúrò tjê|hí 'the town of the country'
8	ovi-	vyà	ovihúrò vyê|hí 'the towns of the county'
9	o(N)	yà	ongómbò yámàmá[11] 'the goat of my mother'
10	ozo(N)	zà	ozongómbò zámàmá 'the goats of my mother'
11	oru-	rwà	oruvyó rwòmíṭìrì 'the knife of the teacher'
12	otu-	twà	otuvyó twòzómíṭìrì 'the knives of the teachers'
13	oka-	kà	okakàmbè kòmúhóná 'the horse of the chief'
14	ou-	wà	ou.kàmbè wòmúhóná 'the horses of the chief'
19	ou-	wà	ou.tá wòmúzàndú 'the bow of the boy'
6+19	oma.u-	wà	omautá wòvázàndú 'the bows of the boys'

---

[11] If the following noun has no augment or class prefix (nouns of classes 1a, 2a and proper names), the full form of the possessive concord is used, yet with a high tone.

15a	oku-	kwà	okuràmà kwòtjíhávérò 'the leg of the chair
6	oma-	wà-	omaràmà wòvíhávérò 'the legs of the chairs'
15	oku-	kwà-	okuímbúrà kwòzónɖérá 'The singing of the birds'
16	pu	pà	pòṇá pòndjúwó 'a place at the house'
17	ku	kwà	kòṇá kòndjúwó 'a place towards the house'
18	mu	mwà	mòṇá mòndjúwó 'a place inside the house'

3.3 Adjectives

3.3.1 Attributive Use

Adjectives are usually used as qualifiers of a noun or absolute pronoun, but they can also stand on their own as autonomous constituents of an independent sentence. In attributive use they follow the noun qualified and do not share the prosodological marking of the noun as subjects or objects.

òtjì.ròngò òtjì.wá	'a nice dwelling place'
òvé òmù.rè...	'you (SG) tall one...'
òmù.rè wá ì	'the tall one has gone'

Genuine adjectival stems – there are fewer than in European languages – can adopt any class prefix. As qualifiers they are in formal agreement with the noun qualified.

CL	PREFIX	EXAMPLE	
1	omu-	òmù.âtjé òmù.títí	'small child'
2	ova-	òvà.nâtjé òvà.títí	'small children'
1a	Ø	màmá òmù.néné	'my big mother'
2a	oo-	òo.màmá òvà.néné	'my big mothers'

3	omu-	òmù.tí òmù.néné	'big tree'
4	omi-	òmì.tí òmì.néné	'big trees'
5	e-	è.wè è.t̪ít̪í	'small stone'
6	oma-	òmà.wè òmà.t̪ít̪í	'small stones'
7	otji-	òtjì.húrò òtjì.kúrú	'old town'
8	ovi-	òvì.húrò òvì-kúrú	'old towns'
9	o(N)	òngómbó ò.m.bâpá	'white goat'
10	ozo(N)	òzòngómbó òzò.m.bâpá	'white goats'
11	oru-	òrù.vyó òrù.t̪í	'blunt knife'
12	otu-	òtù.vyó òtù.t̪í	'blunt knives'
13	oka-	òkà.kàmbè òkà.s̪áóná	'red horse'
14	ou-	òù.kàmbè òù.s̪áóná	'red horses'
19	ou-	òù.tá òù.pé	'new bow'
6+19	oma.u-	òmà.u.tá òmà.pé	'new bows'
15a	oku-	òkù.ràmà òkù.ré	'long leg'
6	oma-	òmà.ràmà òmà.ré	'long legs'
15a	oku-	òkù.íyá òkù.twé	'sharp thorn'
6+15a	oma.ku-	òmà.ku.íyá òmà.twé	'sharp thorns'
15	oku-	òkù.ímbúrà òkù.wá	'beautiful singing'
16	pu	p.òn̪á òpà.néné	'on a big place'
17	ku	k.òn̪á òkù.néné	'at a big place'
18	mu	m.òn̪á òmù.néné	'in a big place'

Note that adjectives in classes 9/10 undergo morpho-phonological changes
of the first stem consonant.

CONSONANT	SOUND CHANGE	EXAMPLES			
p, w, v	> mb	-pé	'new'	>	òmbé
		-wá	'good'	>	òmbwá
		-vâpá	'white'	>	òmbâpá
r, t	> nd	-rè	'long'	>	òndè
		-téngá	'first'	>	òndéngá
t̪, z [ð]	> n̪d̪	-t̪ít̪í	'small'	>	òn̪d̪ít̪í
		-zèu	'difficult'	>	òn̪d̪èù

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y	>	ndj	-yâpùké	'holy'	>	òndjâpùké
k	>	ng	-kúrú	'old'	>	òngúrú

Some adjectives in English do not translate as adjective (stems) but as verbs. In these cases relative clause constructions can be used instead.

òvì.hàpé mbyá hórá
NCP8.fruit RELCD8 ripe (v.)
'ripe fruit(s)' (lit.: fruit (PL) which has ripened)

òmbwá ndjá úrwá
NCP9-dog RELCD9 tired (v.)
'tired dog' (lit.: dog that is tired)

Other adjectival concepts may be rendered as autonomous nouns in an appositional construction.

òmù.ndù òngòndí	'a poor person'
òmù.ndù è.pèndà	'a brave person'

3.3.2 Predicative Use

The adjective follows the noun so that there is no orthographical difference in comparison with the attributive use. However, the predicative sentence undergoes a tonal inflection.

(1) The class prefix of the adjective has a HL pattern.
(2) If the first syllable of the adjective stem is high, it is down-stepped.
(3) Between the head noun and the adjectival complement is a slight pause.

òzòngòmbè 'cows' + **òzònéné** 'big' > **òzòngòmbè** [P] **ózòₗnéné**
'the cows are big'
òvàndù 'people' + **òvàwá** 'good' > **òvàndù** [P] **óvàₗwá**
'the people are good'
òzòngòmbè 'cows' + **òzòndè** 'long' > **òzòngòmbè** [P] **ózòndè**
'the cows are long'

Prefixing the negative morpheme **kà-** to the nominal class prefix instead of the augment particle **o-** effects negation. The syllable following the negation

particle is always high. Otherwise the tone pattern of the positive predication is retained.

òzòngòmbè ^(P) kàzó_ǀnénέ   'The cows are not big'
òvàndù ^(P) kàvâwá   'The people are not good'
èwè ^(P) ká_ǀwá   'The stone is not good'

In class 5, the negation particle and the class prefix amalgamate: **kà** + **έ** > **ká_ǀ**. The syllable becomes high, and subsequent high tones are down-stepped.

3.3.3 Comparative and Superlative (Elative)

Comparatives are formed by the preposition **pú** following the adjective and complemented by a demonstrative or a noun as parameter of comparison.

òmuâtjé ᶦó_ǀmúnénέ pú ínyàngù   'the child is bigger than my uncle'
òkàmbíhì ᶦ6_ǀkátịtí pòmbwá   'the cat is smaller than the dog'

The preposition **pú** undergoes morpho-phonological changes under the influence of the initial vowel of the following noun (unless that vowel is **i-**):

ᶦ6_ǀmúnénέ pú Inááhàngέ   '[he/she] is bigger than Inaahange (female name)'

In Herero, there is no difference between superlatives (implying a Comparison) and elatives. A superlative or elative is achieved by reduplication of the stem.

òmùrúméndú ᶦ6_ǀmúnénènènè   'the man is the biggest'
òmùkázéndú ᶦ6_ǀmúkúrùkùrù   'the woman is the oldest'

3.4 Numerals

3.4.1 Cardinal Numbers

(1) Numbers 1 - 10

The numerical system of Herero is quinary, i.e. it is based on five. Only the numerals from one to five show class agreement. The other numerals are nouns that are syntactically used as appositions.

-mwè	'one'	òmùndù úmwè	'one person'
-várì	'two'	òvàndù vévárì	'two people'
-tátú	'three'	òvìn̠á vítátú	'three objects'
-né	'four'	òvìpùká víné	'four animals'
-tánò	'five'	òùkàmbè útánò	'five horses'
hámbò-úmwè	'six'	òvàkázéndú hámbò-úmwè	'six women'
hámbò-mbárì	'seven'	òvàrúméndú hámbó-mbárì	'seven men'
hámbò-ndátú	'eight'	òzòndjúwó hámbò-ndátú	'eight houses'
mùvyú	'nine'	òtùvyó mùvyú	'nine knives'
òmùròngò	'ten'	òmàpúkú òmùròngò	'ten mice'

Numerals follow the noun they quantify. The numerals from one to five require the following prefixes:

CLASS	PREFIX	NUMERAL CONCORD	EXAMPLE
1 2	omu- ova-	ú- vé- ~ vá-	òmùâtjé úmwé 'one child' òvànâtjé vévárì 'two children' òvànâtjé váné 'four children'
1a 2a	Ø oo-	ú- vé- ~ vá-	tàté úmwè 'one father' òòtàté vètátú 'three fathers' òòtàté váné 'four fathers'
3 4	omu- omi-	ú- ví-	òmùtí úmwè 'one tree' òmìtí vítátú 'three trees'
5 6	e- oma-	rí- yé- ~ yá-	èwè rímwè 'one stone' òmàwè yétánó 'five stones' òmàwè yáné 'four stones'
7 8	otji- ovi-	tjí- ví-	òtjìhúrò tjímwè 'one town' òvìhúrò vítánò 'five towns'

9	o(N)	í-	òngómbó ímwè 'one goat'
10	ozo(N)	mbárì	òzòngómbó mbárì 'two goats'
		ndátú	òzòngòmbè ndátú 'three cows'
		íné	òzòndjúwó íné 'four houses'
		ndánò	òzòmbórótò ndánò 'five loaves of bread'
11	oru-	rú-	òrùvyó rúmwè 'one knife'
12	otu-	tú-	òtùvyó tútánò 'five knives'
13	oka-	ké-	òkàkàmbè kémwè 'one horse'
14	ou-	ú-	òùkàmbè útátú 'three horses'
19	ou-	ú-	òùtá úmwè 'one bow'
6+19	oma.u-	yé- ~ yá-	òmàùtá yévárì 'two bows'
			òmàùtá yáné 'four bows'
15a	oku-	kú-	òkùràmà kúmwè 'one leg'
6	oma-	yé- ~ yá-	òmàràmà yétátú 'three legs'
			òmàràmà yáné 'four legs'
16	pu	pé- ~ pá	pòṇá pémwè 'at one place'
17	ku	kú-	kòṇá kúné 'towards four places'
18	mu	mú-	mòṇá mútátú 'in three places'

(2) Numbers above ten

The numbers 11-19 are formed according to the following pattern: 10 plus 1 for 11, 10 plus 2 for 12 etc. In such constructions numerals 1-5 still agree with the class of the quantified noun in exactly the same way as when used on their own:

òùkàmbè òmùròngò nà kémwè	'eleven horses'
òvipùká òmùròngò nà vívárì	'twelve animals'
òmàmbò òmùròngò nà yétátú	'thirteen books'
òzòngòmbè òmùròngò nà íné	'fourteen cows'
òzòngómbó òmùròngò nà ndánò	'fifteen goats'
òmàì òmùròngò nà hámbòúmwè	'sixteen eggs'
òtùvyó òmùròngò nà hámbòmbárì	'seventeen knives'
òvìháútò òmùròngò nà hámbòndátú	'eighteen motorcars'
òvàkázéndú òmùròngò nà mùvyú	'nineteen women'

Multiples of 10 up to 90 are formed with the plural of **òmùròngò** i.e.
òmìròngò (CL 4):

òmìròngò vívárì	20
òmìròngò vítátú	30
òmìròngò víné	40
òmìròngò vítánò	50
òmìròngò hámbòúmwè	60
òmìròngò hámbòmbárì	70
òmìròngò hámbòndátú	80
òmìròngò mùvyú	90

Note that the numerals from two to five agree with **òmìròngò** i.e. they take
the class 4 concord, however in the unit place they agree with the singular
class of the word quantified.

òmìtí òmìròngò vívárì nà úmwè	21 trees
òmàì òmìròngò vítátú nà rímwè	31 eggs
òùkàmbè òmìròngò hámbòúmwè nà kémwè	61 horses

The words for 'hundred', 'thousand', 'million' (and 'uncountable') are class
5 nouns and hence multiples of these sums are class 6 nouns:

ègéré	100
òmàgéré yévárì	200
èyòví	1.000
òmàyòví hámbòndátú	8.000
èngété	1.000.000
òmàngété yévárì	2.000.000
èhávàrwá	uncountable

éyòví rímwè nòmágéré mùvyú nà íné = 1904[11]

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[11] In this year, the famous battle of the Waterberg between the Germans and the
Herero took place.

(3) Numbers in Counting

When numerals are used without an overt head noun such as in counting, they are prefixed with an i-. They still show class agreement. For example:

íúmwè	one (of CL.1 items)
ívévárì	two (of CL.2 items)
ívítátú	three (of CL.4 items)

Class 9/10 agreement is used when children learn to count:

íímwè	1 (CL.9)
ímbárì	2 (CL.10)
índátú	3 (CL.10)
ííné	4 (CL.10)
índánò	5 (CL.10)

Numeral stems 1-8 become class 9/10 nouns by taking the appropriate class prefix (Note that the forms for 1 and 4 are slightly irregular). The numerals nine and ten belong to class 3/4:

òímwè	1
òmbárì	2
òndátú	3
òíné	4
òndánò	5
òhámbòúmwè	6
òhámbòmbárì	7
òhámbòndátú	8
òmùvyú	9
òmùròngò	10

óímwè ndjì	'this is a (number) one'

3.4.2 Ordinal Numbers

Ordinal numbers are formed according to the formula:
o + FACSCD + tja + numeral stem[12].

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[12] FACSCD = Factitive Subject Concord

	class prefix	+	**téngá**	first
o +	FACSCD	+	**tjávárì**	second
			tjátátú	third
			tjáíné	fourth
			tjátánò	fifth
			tjáhámbòúmwè	sixth
			tjáhámbòmbárì	seventh
			tjáhámbòndátú	eighth
			tjámùvyú	ninth
			tjámùròngò	tenth
	class prefix	+	**ṣénìnà**	last

The stems **-téngá** 'first' and **-ṣénìnà** 'last' are exceptions within this paradigm. Although verbal stems, they behave like adjectives and take the class prefixes of the head nouns quantified:

òzòngàrà òzòndéngá	'first flowers'
òmùndù òmùténgá	'the first person'
òzòngàrà òzétjàvárì	'second flowers'
òmùndù òútjàtátú	'third person'
òmùrúméndú òmùṣénìnà	'the last man'
òndjúwó.òṣénìnà	'the last house'

3.5 Pronouns

3.5.1 Absolute Pronouns and Substitutives

Genuine absolute prounouns exist only for the speaker(s) and the addressee(s), i.e. for the 1st and 2nd persons singular and plural.

		SUBJECT CASE	OBJECT CASE
1st	SG	àmì	ámí
2nd	SG	òvè	óvé
1st	PL	èṭè	éṭé
2nd	PL	èṇè	éṇé

The pro-form of the 3rd person singular (CL1 / CL1a) is represented by two pronouns: **éyé** for the subject and **yé** for the object case.

éyé ú hóngà òvánâtjé	'he/she teaches children'
òvànâtjé vé vàngà yé	'the children like him/her'

The pro-forms of the 3rd person plural, the substitutives, vary according to the class of the noun that they represent. Two paradigms have to be distinguished, one for the subject case and another for the object case.

CLASS	SUBJECT CASE	OBJECT CASE
2	òvò [òwò]	vó [wó]
2a	òvò [òwò]	vó [wó][13]
3	òwò	wó
4	òvyò	vyó
5	òrò	ró
6	òwò	wó
7	òtjò	tjó
8	òvyò	vyó
9	òyò	yó
10	òzò	zó
11	òr(w)ò	r(w)ó

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[13] In fact, the pronounciation of these morphemes differs from the established orthography.

13	òkò	kó
14	òwò	wó
15	òk(w)ò	k(w)ó
16	òpò	pó
17	òkò	kó
18	òmò	mó

The presentative is formed as follows:

ówá¡mí	'it's me'
óó¡vé	'it's you'
é¡yé	'it's him/her'
ówé¡țé	'it's us'
ówé¡ŋé	'it's you'
ó¡vó	'it's them'

It is negated by prefixing the negative particle **kà-** to the affirmative forms substituting the first vowel.

1st	SG	kàwá¡mí	'it is not me'
2nd	SG	kàó¡vé	'it is not you'
3rd	SG	ká¡yé	'it is not him'
1st	PL	kàwé¡țé	'it is not us'
2nd	PL	kàwé¡ŋé	'it is not you'
3rd	PL	ká¡vó	'it is not them'

The negation of the predicative follows two different patterns: For the first and second persons singular and plural, it is similar to the negated presentative. All other persons and classes prefix the negation particle **kà-** to the predicative qualifiers (nouns or adjectives) replacing their augments.

kàwé¡ŋé óvàhóná òvànéné.	'You are not big chiefs.'
éyé kàmúndù òmùpôré.	'He is not a calm person.'

3.5.2 Possessive Pronouns

There are two paradigms of possessive pronouns referring to personal or impersonal possessors.

(1) Personal Possessors

1st	SG	- á̠ndjé	'my'	1st	PL	-é̠tú	'our'
2nd	SG	-ó̠yé	'your'	2nd	PL	-é̠ṉú	'your'
3rd	SG	-é	'his, her'	3rd	PL	-á(v)ó	'their'

The agreement markers for persons of the classes 1 and 1a in the possessed position are **w-** for the singular and **v-** for the plural (see section 3.2.2).

òmù.ndù	**n.òmu.átjè**	**w.é**
NCP1.person	and.NCP1.child	POSSCD1.POSS1

The person and his child

è.mbò	**rá̠.ndjé**	
NCP 5.book	POSSCD5.POSS1SG	'my book'

ònd̠ú	**yá̠.ndjé**	
NCP 9- sheep	POSSCD9. POSS1SG	'my sheep'

è.mbò	**ɾ.é**	
NCP 5.book	POSSCD5.POSS1	'his book'

ònd̠ú	**y.é**	
NCP 9-sheep.	POSSCD9.POSS1	'his sheep'

è.wè	**rá.̠(v)ó**	
NCP 5.stone.	POSSCD5.POSS2	'their stone'

(2) Impersonal Possessor

If the possessor is denoted by an impersonal noun, the possessor pronouns correspond to the object forms of the substitutive (see above section 3.5.1) prefixed by a the particle **-á-**.

CLASS	CONCORD OF THE POSSESSUM	POSSESSOR PRONOUN
3	wá-	-wó
4	vyá-	-vyó

5	rá-	-ró
6	wá-	-wó
7	tjá-	-tjó
8	vyá-	-vyó
9	yá-	-yó
10	zá-	-zó
11	rwá-	-rwó
12	twá-	-twó
13	ká-	-kó
14	wá-	-wó
15	kwá-	-kwó
16	pá-	-pó
17	kwá-	-kó
18	mwá-	-mó

The personal and impersonal possessor pronouns take the pronominal agreement marker of the class of the possessum, i.e. the noun denoting the possessed person or object..

òmù.tí   n.òví.yàò   vyá.⸢wó
NCP3.tree and.NCP8.leaves   POSSCD8.POSS3
'the tree and its leaves'

òmà.ràmà wá.⸢tjó
NCP6.table POSSCD6.POSS7   'the legs of it (i.e. table)'

è.wè   rá-⸢zó
NCP5.stone POSSCD 5.POSS10   'their (e.g. mountains) stone'

òtjì.kúnìnò n.òmí.tí   vyá⸢.tjó
NCP7.garden and.NCP4.trees   POSSCD4.POSS7
'the garden and its trees'

3.5.3 Demonstratives

(1) Ordinary Demonstratives

In Herero, there are four spatial connotations with the different paradigms of demonstratives involved: (1) nearness to the speaker, (2) nearness to the addressee, and (3) relative distance from both partners of a discourse, where the choice between the two forms is optional.

CL	CLASS PREFIX	NEAR TO SPEAKER	NEAR TO ADDRESSEE OR REFERENCE	DISTANT FROM BOTH, SPEAKER AND ADDRESSEE	
		I	II	III	IV
1	omu-	ngwí	ngó	ngwíná	ngwíní
2	ova-	mbá	mbó	mbéná	mbéní
3	omu	mbwí	mbwó	mbwíná	mbwiní
4	omi-	mbí	mbyó	mbíná	mbíní
5	e-	ndí	ndó	ndíná	ndíní
6	oma-	ngá	ngó	ngéná	ngéní
7	otji-	hí (tjí)	hó (tjó)	híná (tjíná)	híní (tjíní)
8	ovi-	mbí	mbyó	mbíná	mbíní
9	o(N)-	ndjí	ndjó	ndjíná	ndjíní
10	oʐo(N)-	nḍá	nḍó	nḍéná	nḍéní
11	oru	ndwí	ndwó	ndwíná	ndwíní
12	otu-	swí/hwí (twí)	swó/hwó (twó)	swíná/hwíná (twíná)	swíní/hwíní (twíní)
13	oka-	ngá	ngó	ngéná	ngéní
14	ou-	mbwí	mbwó	mbwíná	mbwíní
19	ou-	mbwí	mbwó	mbwíná	mbwíní
15	oku-	ngwí	ngó	ngwíná	ngwíní
16	pu	mbá	mbó	mbéná	mbéní
17	ku	ngwí	ngó	ngwíná	ngwíní
18	mu	mwi	mó	mwíná	mwíní

Demonstratives normally follow the noun which they qualify. In the cases of the demonstratives I and II, the qualified noun gets a high tone on the last syllable followed by a down-step.

òmùndú₁ ngwí má₁ rárà   'this person is going to sleep'
compare: òmùndù má₁ rárà   'the person is going to sleep'

òmùndú₁ ngwí éyé ómí̧ṭìrì yàndjè.
'This person [here with me] is my teacher.'
mé₁ múnú òùkàmbè₁ mbwíná.
'I see those horses over there'

(2) Emphatic Demonstratives 'this very'

1	òmùrúméndú₁	ngúnó ngwí	'this very man'
2	òvàrúméndú₁	mbénó mbá	'these very men'
3	òmùrúngú₁	mbúnó mbwí	'this very face'
4	òmìrúngú₁	mbínó mbí	'these very faces'
5	èhóró₁	ndínó ndí	'this very milking pot'
6	òmàhóró₁	ngénó ngá	'these very milking pots'
7	òtjìhávéró₁	hínó hí (tjínó tjí)	'this very chair'
8	òvìhávéró₁	mbínó mbí	'these very chairs'
9	òngòmbé₁	ndjínó ndjí	'this very cow'
10	òzòngòmbé₁	ṇdénó ṇdá	'these very cows'
11	òrùtúwó₁	ndúnó ndwí	'this very spoon'
12	òtùtúwó₁	s̱únó s̱wí (túnó twí)	'these very spoons'
13	òkàkàmbé₁	ngénó ngá	'this very horse'
14	òùkàmbé₁	mbúnó mbwí	'these very horses'
15	òkùókó₁	ngúnó ngwí	'this very arm'
16	pòṇá₁	mbénó mbá	'on this very place'
17	kòṇá₁	ngúnó ngwí	'at this very place'
18	mòṇá₁	múnó mwí	'in this very place'

òmùndú₁ ngúnó ngwí ⌐ó₁mí̧ṭìrì yàndjè.
'This very person [here] is my teacher.'

Emphasis is also achieved by prefixing the morpheme í- to the normal demonstratives íngwí, ímbá, ímbwí, íngó, íngwíná, íngwíní etc.

òmùndù íngwí   'this very person'   emphasis

íngwí ⌐ó₁mí̧tìrì   'this is a teacher'   presentative

3.5.4 Relative Concords

The relative concords are closely related to the demonstratives. Except for classes 7, 12, 13 and 15-18, the paradigm is in fact identical with the first vowel of the emphatic demonstrative (see above).

CL.	HEAD / KEY WORD	RELATIVE CONCORD	
1	òmùrúméndú	ngú	'the person who'
2	òvàrúméndú	mbé	'the people who
3	òmùrúngú	mbú	'the face which'
4	òmìrúngú	mbí	'the faces which'
5	èhóró	ndí	'the milking pot which'
6	òmàhóró	ngé	'the milking pots which'
7	òtjìhávéró	tjí ˌtjí	'the chair which'
8	òvìhávéró	mbí	'the chairs which'
9	òngòmbè	ndjí	'the cow which'
10	òzòngòmbè	nḓé	'the cows which'
11	òrùtúwó	ndú	'the spoon which'
12	òtùtúwó	tú ˌtú	'the spoons which'
13	òkàkàmbè	kú ˌké	'the horse which'
14	òùkàmbè	mbú	'the horses which'
15	òkùókó	kú ˌkú	'the arm which'
16	pòṇá	pú ˌpé	'the place where'
17	kòṇá	kú ˌkú	'the place at/on which/where/
18	mòṇá	mú ˌmú	'the place in which'

òmùndù ngú ùngùrǎ ú múná òndjámbì.
'A person who works gets salary.'

òzòmíṭírì nḓé hòngǎ má|zé tjángá ómàmbò
'The teachers who teach are writing books.'

òmùhòngè ngú há hòngǒ má| tjángá émbò.
'The pastor who does not teach is writing a book.'

òmùrúméndú ngú má| hóngǒ wá tjángá émbò
'The man who is teaching is writing a book.'

òmùrúméndú ngú hí nákùhòngǎ wá tjàngá émbo.

'The man who is not teaching wrote a book.'

òmùtí mbwá hápá nàwǎ wá étá òvíhàpè.

'The tree that is grown well produced fruits.'

òvàndù mbé há ùngùrǎ vá ì.

'The people who do not work have gone.'

Personal Relative Concords

1st	SG	àmì ngú	'I who'
2nd	SG	òvè ngú	'you who'
3rd	SG	éyé ngú	'he/she who'
1st	PL	ètè mbú	'we who'
2nd	PL	ènè mbú	'you who'
3rd	PL	óvó mbé	'they who'

àmì ngú mbí nòvímàrívǎ mé ɾándá óvìkùryá.

'I who have money am buying (shall buy) food.'

3.5.5 Interrogatives

In OtjiHerero, Interrogatives do not constitute a word class of their own. Some of them are autonomous words without any class prefix or concord. Others follow the paradigme of pronominal concords. However, for didactic reasons, we deal with them all in one chapter.

(1) Autonomous Interrogatives

These are:

àní	'who'
tjíké?	'what?' (expected answer a verbal expression)
òtjìkéŋà[14]	'what?' (expected answer a nominal expression)
ví?	'how?'
pí?	'where?'

Examples

óóvè (y)àŋí?	'Who are you?'
(éyé) má̜ hòngò àŋí?	'Whom is he/she instructing?'
mó̜ úngúrà tjìké?	'What are you doing?'
mó̜ tjá ví?	'What are you saying?'
òtjìkéŋà tjì mó̜ múnú?	'What is it that you are seeing?'
ù rí̜ ví?	'How are you?'
òvàndù má̜vé í pí?	'Where are the people going?'
òmbùrà má̜í yá rúŋé?	'When is the rain coming?

(2) Pronominal Interrogatives

-àŋí 'who?', 'whose?'

The interrogative -àŋí is often used in the syntactic form of a predicative. Then the augment ò- and a pronominal concord are prefixed to it.

òmít̜irì òwáŋí?	'Who is the teacher?' (The answer should be a name)
éyé òwáŋí?	'Who is he/she?' (lit.: He is who?)

If the interrogative is used to ask for the possessor, the augment bears a high tone followed by a down-step.

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[14] If the expected answer is a noun in object position, the form is òtjíkéŋà.

éyé ó¡wáɲí?   'To whom does he/she belong?'
òzòngòmbè ó¡záɲí?   'Whose cattle are they?'
                          (lit.: (The cattle is whose?)

-ɲé 'which kind of...?'

The interrogative -ɲé asks for the quality or kind of somebody or something in the sense of 'which one?', 'which kind of ...?'.

ózòngòmbè zèɲé?   'What kind of cattle?'

mó| múnú òzòngòmbè zèɲé? 'Which type of cattle are you seeing?'

¹ó¡múndù ùɲé ngú¡ má múnú? 'Which type of person is he whom you are seeing?'

In certain contexts, the head noun is often not mentioned, but understood. This is, for instance, the case with rùɲé 'when?'.

   mó¡ yá (òrùvézé) rùɲé?   'When (at what time) are you coming?'

This interrogative pronoun may also be used in a predicative context to ask for a selection within a multitude of the same kind. Then it is additionally prefixed by the augment ò-. The concord gets a high tone followed by a down-step.

      òtjì.pùká   ò.tjí¡.ɲé?
      NCP7.animal   AUG.PROCD7.which?
      'which one is the animal?'   (lit.: the animal is which one?)

For comparison, the attributive use:

      ¹ó¡tjí.pùká   tjì.ɲé?
      NCP 7.animal   PROCD 7.which?
      'which type of animal is it?' (lit.: this is an animal of which type?)

The complete paradigm of the pronominal concords is as follows:

CL	PROCD	ATTRIBUTIVE PROCD-ɲé	PREDICATIVE ò-PROCD-ɲè
1	ù-	ùɲé	òú¡ɲé
2	vè-	vèɲé	òvé¡ɲè
3	ù-	ùɲé	òú¡ɲé

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4	vì-	vìɲé	òvíɲé
5	rì-	rìɲé	òríɲé
6	yè-	yèɲé	òyéɲé
7	tjì-	tjìɲé	òtjíɲé
8	vì-	vìɲé	òvíɲé
9	ì-	ìɲé	òíɲé
10	zè-	zèɲé	òzéɲé
11	rù-	rùɲé	òrúɲè
12	tù-	tùɲé	òtúɲé
13	kè-	kèɲé	òkéɲé
14	ù-	ùɲé	òúɲé
15	kù-	kùɲé	òkúɲé
16	pè-	pèɲé	òpéɲé
17	kù-	kùɲé	òkúɲé
18	mù-	mùɲé	òmúɲé

-ngápì 'how many?'

The interrogative –ngápì asks for the number of beings or objects. With the exception of class 10, it combines with the Pronominal Concords in agrement with the class of the head noun. In class 10, the prefix is zero, i.e. the form is always ngápì.

ˡóˌvándù vèngápì?
'How many people?' (Subject)

ˡóˌvándù vèngápì mbúˌ mó múnú?
'How many people are they that you are seeing?' (Subject)

òmúríʂè máˌ ríʂá ózòngòmbè ˌngápì mómàryó?
'How many cattle is the herder herding in the fields? (Object)

móˌ múnú òvàndù véngápì?[15]
'How many people are you seeing? (Object)

The Prefix í- characterizes a predicative use.

(ˡóˌvándù) ˡíˌvéngápì? 'How many people are they?'

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[15] Note the pronominal concord of -ngápì always bears a high tone in object position.

3.5.6 General Proforms

à-ʹ-hè 'whole, all'

The quantitative pronominal stem **à-ʹ-hè**, 'whole, all', is formed with the pronominal concordant to show agreement with the head noun according to the formula:

à + high tone Pronominal Concord + hè.

òmù.tímá	à.ú.hè	
NCP 3.heart	all. PROCD 3.all	'the whole heart'

(y)éríkè 'alone'

The concept of singularity in the sense of 'alone' is expressed by the pronominal stem **-(y)erike**, which has two tonal patterns, one for attributive use: **-(y)èríkè** and another for predicative use: **-(y)éríkè**. This pronoun is prefixed by the vowel **à** plus a pronominal concord that is in agreement with the class of the head noun.

ATTRIBUTIVE USE

àmì èríkè	'I alone'	èt̪è àtúyèríkè	'we alone'
òvè èríkè	'you alone'	èn̪è àmúyèríkè	'you alone'
éyé èríkè	'he/she alone'	óvó àvéyèríkè	'they alone'

REFERENT		ATTRIBUTIVE USE	
omutí	'tree'	àú.yèríkè	'it alone'
omití	'trees'	àví.yèríkè	'they alone'
ekéndé	'bottle'	àrí.yèríkè	etc.
omakéndé	'bottles'	àyé.yèríkè	
otjitjúmá	'vessel'	àtjí.yèríkè	
ovitjúmá	'vessels	àví.yèríkè	
ombwá	'dog'	àí.yèríkè	
ozombwá	'dogs'	àzé.yèríkè	
oruvézé	'time'	àrú.yèríkè	
otuvézé	'times'	àtú.yèríkè	
okatí	'stick'	àké.yèríkè	
outí	'sticks'	àú.yèríkè	

PREDICATIVE USE

òwá₁mí éríkè	'I am alone.'
òó₁vé éríkè	'You are alone.'
éyé₁ éríkè	'He/she is alone.'
òwé₁té àtúyèríkè	'We are alone.'
òwé₁ɲé àmúyèríkè	'You are alone.'
óvó àvèyèríkè	'They are alone.'
òmùtí àúyèríkè	'The tree is alone.'
vá yèndé àvèyèríkè	'They came alone.' Literally: 'They came, they were alone.'

Intensifier **-íní** 'self'

In combination with a noun or an absolute pronoun the stem **-íní** fulfils a reinforcing or intensifying function with respect to the preceding noun in the sense of 'itself, herself, himself, themselves'. The class agreement is achieved by pronominal concords, however human beings take the nominal prefix of either class 1 or class 2.

àmì	òmu.íní	'I myself'
òvè	òmu.íní	'you yourself'
éyé	òmu.íní	'he himself, she herself'
ètè	òv.éní	'we ourselves'
èɲè	òv.éní	'you yourselves'
óvó [ówó]	òv.éní	'they themselves'
ombwá	ò.íní	'the dog itself'
oẓombwá	òẓ.éní	'the dogs themselves'
orutúwó	òrw.íní	'the spoon itself'
otutúwó	òtw.íní	'the spoons themselves'

In predicative expressions **-íní** has the same meaning as the pronominal stem **(y)èríkè**.

òwá₁mí òmu.íní	'I am alone.'
òó₁vé òmu.íní	'You (SG) are alone.'
òwé₁ɲé òv.éní	'You (PL) are alone.'
òwó òúní	'It (òmùtí 'tree') is alone.'

4. Morphology of the Verb Phrase

Verbs have their own basic meanings that are expressed by the verbal roots. In Herero, verbs are usually quoted as verbal nouns in subject position, e.g. **òkù.múná** 'to see', **òkù.rárà** 'to sleep', **òkù.hòngà** 'to teach', the root, i.e. -**mún-**, -**rár-** or -**hòng-**, and the final vowel -**á** or -**à**. Verbal root and final vowel form the verbal stem. This compound unit is in so far important as it exhibits the full distinctive tone patterns. With disyllabic stems, Herero has three distinctive tone patterns (Köhler 1958: 98):

HH	**oku.kóhá**	'to wash'
HL	**oku.rísà**	'to feed, herd'
LL	**oku.zèpà**	'to kill'

Herero has only few monosyllabic stems like **òkù.rwà** 'to fight' or **òkù.ká** 'to fell (e.g. trees)'. In most cases, trisyllabic stems and stems with more syllables can etymologically be identified as derivations from mono- or disyllabic stems.

Two processes complete the meanings of all verbal expressions. These are derivation and inflection.

4.1 Verbal Derivation

With verbs, derivation operates through morphemes suffixed after the root morpheme. These suffixes, which are also called verbal extensions, change the meaning of the verbal root and possibly alter its valency, i.e. the number of nouns or pronouns that it can govern as subjects and objects.

4.1.1 Passive

The passive extension -**w**- (in some contexts -**Ew**-)[16] promotes the object of a transitive clause to subject, while the demoted subject can be expressed as oblique introduced by the preposition **i**.

Ináàhàngè	má	ĺmbúr.á	òmà.ímbúrìró	ngá
NCP1a-Inaahange	PRES-SCD1	sing-FV	NCP6.songs	DEM6

'Inaahange is singing these songs'

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[16] For the notation of **E** see section 2.3.2 (2).

òmà.ímbùrìró ngá má.ˌyé ímbúr.w.á í ˌÍnáàhàngè
NCP6.songs DEM6 PRES.SCD6 sing.PASS.FV by NCP1a-Ina...
'These songs are being sung by Inaahange'

4.1.2 Causative

The causative extension -iṣ- introduces a new subject, the 'causer', while the subject of the corresponding base verb, the 'causee', becomes the direct object:

òvà.nâtjé má.ˌvé tjàng.á ˌòmbàpírà
NCP2.children PRES.SCD2 write.FV NCP9-letter
'The children are writing a letter'

òmítìrì má.ˌí tjàng.ˌíṣ.á òvà.nâtjé
NCP9-teacher PRES.SCD9 write.CAUS.FV NCP2.children

òmbàpírà
NCP9-letter
'The teacher made the children write a letter'

4.1.3 Applicative

The applied suffix -ER- (vowel and nasal harmony) introduces prototypically an additional noun phrase into the verb's subcategorization frame.

òò.màmá má.ˌvé tjàng.á ˌòmbàpírà
NCP2a.mothers PRES.SCD2 write.FV NCP9-letter
'Our mothers are writing a letter'

òò.màmá má.ˌvé tjàng.ér.é òvà.nâtjé ˌòmbàpírà
NCP2a.mothers PRES.SCD2 write.APPL.FV NCP9-letter
                                    NCP2.children
'Our mothers are writing the children a letter'

4.1.4 Neutro-passive

The neutro-passive -Ek- extension resembles the passive in that the object is promoted to subject. However, with the neutro-passive, the former subject (i.e. the thematic agent) cannot be expressed. Semantically, the neutro-passive ascribes a stative quality to the subject.

òvà.nâtjé	vá	ʲmún.ú	é.ʲrúngà
NCP2.children	SCD5-RECIMPV	see.FV	NCP5.thief

'The children saw the thief'

è.rúngá	rá	ʲmún.ík.à
NCP5.thief	SCD5-RECIMPV	see.NEUT.FV

'The thief was seen'

not: **e.runga   ra   mun.ik.a   i Inaahange**
     NCP5.thief   RECIMPV-SCD5   see.NEUT.FV   by NCP1a-Inaah.

Intended: 'The thief was seen by Inaahange'

The agent may be expressed when the passive extension is used in addition to the neutro-passive extension:

è. rúngá	rá	mún.ík.w.á	í	ĺnááhángè
NCP5.thief	SCD5-RECIMPV	see.NEUT.PASS.FV		by NCP1a-Inaah.

'The thief was seen by Inaahange (fem. name)'

4.1.5 Repetitive and Intensive

The extensions -òròr- and -ùrùr- denote a repeated or intensive action. In some contexts, the extensions are subject to vowel and nasal harmony. The extensions are not fully productive, and often an alternative analytic construction with a simple verb stem and the adverb **rùkwáò**, 'again', is preferred.

oku.kóhá	'to wash'
oku.kóhórórà	'to wash cleanly/intensively'
oku.kóhúrúrà	'wash again'
oku.rótà	'to dream'
oku.rótóròrà or -rótúrùrà	'to dream again'
oku.tònà	'to hit'
oku.tòná rùkwáò	'to hit again'
oku.tònùrùrà	'to hit again'
oku.pémá	'to blow one's nose'
oku.pémúnúnà	'to blow one's nose again'
(*-pemonona)	

4.1.6 Reciprocal

The reciprocal extension **-áʂàn-** expresses that an action is performed by two or more agents for, to, or with each other.

tù   **mún.áʂàn.à**
FAC-SCD1PL   see.RECI.FV
'We see each other'

4.1.7 Denominal

The denominal extension **-para** or **-pa** can be used with adjectival stems to form verbs.

-néné	'big'	>	**oku.nénépàrà**	'to become big'
-rè	'long'	>	**oku.rèpàrà**	'to become long'
-ʈíʈí	'little'	>	**oku.ʈíʈípàrà**	'to become little'
-kúrú	'old'	>	**oku.kúrúpà**	'to become old'
			not ***-kúrúpàrà**	

4.1.8 Combinations of Extensions

Several extensions can be used within one verbal base. The following are illustrative examples:

Causative and Passive

òvà.nâtjé   **má.ɩvé**   **tjàng.íʂ.íw.á**   ɩ**òmbàpírà**
NCP2.children PRES.SCD2   write.CAUS.PASS.FV NCP9-letter
'The children are being made to write a letter'

òmbàpírà   **má.ɩí**   **tjàng.íʂ.íw.à**   **í**   ɩ**òvá.nâtjé**
NCP9-letter PRES.SCD9 write.CAUS.PASS.FV by NCP2.children
'The letter is being made written (by the children)'

Applicative and Reciprocal

tù   **vàng.èr.àʂàn.à**
FAC-SCD1PL   like.APPL.RECI.FV
'We like something for each other'

tù   **vàng.èr.àʂàn.èn.à**
FAC-SCD1PL   like.APPL.RECI.APPL.FV
'We like something for each other for something/somebody'

Neutro-Passive and Applicative

> **òndjáṭú**   **yá**   **mún.ík.ír.w.á**   **Nélsòn**
> NCP9-bag   SCD9-RECIMPV   see.NEUT.APPL.PASS.FV NCP1a-Nelson
> 'The bag was found for Nelson'

Applicative and Passive

> **òvà.nâtjé**   **mbá**   **vá**   **ímbúr.ír.w.á**
> NCP2.children DEM2   SCD2-RECIMPV-   sing.APPL.PASS.FV
>
> **òmá.ímbúrìró**   **í**   **Ínáàhàngè**
> NCP6.songs   by   NCP1a-Inaahange
> 'These children were sung songs to (by Inaahange)'

4.2 Verbal Inflection

4.2.1 Subject Concords

At the beginning of a verb phrase, the subjects are obligatorily marked by a concord that is in agreement with the subject. With the exception of two tenses, the factual (habitual) and the subjunctive, the subject concords amalgamate with the tense markers so that several paradigms occur.

PERS. and CL	FAC and SBV	PRES and NEAR FUT	INDEF. FUT	RECIMPV	RECPERF	REMIMPV and REMPERF
1. SG	mbì	mé₁	mé₁é	mbá	mbá₁	mbà
1. PL	tù	má₁tú	má₁átú	twá	twá₁	twà
2. SG	ù	mó₁	mó₁ó	wá	wá₁	wà
2. PL	mù	má₁mú	má₁ámú	mwá	mwá₁	mwà
1	ù	má₁	má₁á	wá	wá₁	wà
2	vè	má₁vé	má₁ávé	vá	vá₁	và
3	ù	má₁ú	má₁áú	wá	wá₁	wà
4	vì	má₁ví	má₁áví	vyá	vyá₁	vyà
5	rì	má₁rí	má₁árí	rá / ryá	rá₁ / ryá₁	rà- / ryà
6	yè	má₁yé/ má₁é	má₁áyé	yá	yá₁	yà
7	tjì	má₁tjí	má₁átjí	tjá	tjá₁	tjà
8	vì	má₁ví	má₁áví	vyá	vyá₁	vyà
9	ì	má₁í	má₁áí	yá	yá₁	yà
10	zè	má₁zé	má₁ázé	zá	zá₁	zà
11	rù	má₁rú	má₁árú	rwá	rwá₁	rwà
12	tù	má₁tú	má₁átú	twá	twá₁	twà
13	kè	má₁ké	má₁áké	ká	ká₁	kà
14	ù	má₁ú	má₁áú	wá	wá₁	wà
15	kù	má₁kú	má₁ákú	kwá	kwá₁	kwà
16	pè	má₁pé	má₁ápé	pá	pá₁	pà
17	kù	má₁kú	má₁ákú	kwá	kwá₁	kwà
18	mù	má₁mú	má₁ámú	mwá	mwá₁	mwà
19	ù	má₁ú	má₁áú	wá	wá₁	wà
6+19	yè	má₁yé	má₁áyé	yá	yá₁	yà
15a	kù	má₁kú	má₁ákú	kwá	kwá₁	kwà
6	yè	má₁yé	má₁áyé	yá	yá₁	yà
6+15a	yè	má₁yé	má₁áyé	yá	yá₁	yà

The verbal stems, depending on their basic tone patterns, undergo tonal inflection, which is characteristic for each tense. In the following, these inflectional processes will be described for each tense separately.

Furthermore, as already Köhler in his tonal analyses of Southern Sotho (1956:438) and Herero (1958:99) observed, the verbal stems change their tonal patterns depending on whether the sentence ends after the verb or whether there still follows an object or adverbial complement. The complements follow their own rules of inflection.

òkù.hòng.à	'to teach'
mé hóng.ò	'I am teaching'
mé ₁hóng.ó òvà.nátjè	'I am teaching children'
òkù.mún.á	'to see'
mé ₁mún.ú	'I see (present tense)'
mé ₁mún.ú nàwá	'I see well'

4.2.2 Object Concords and Reflexive

Personal or nominal objects may be substituted by object concords. Their tonal shape is variable in so far as it depends on the basic tonal pattern of the verb stems and on the tense in which they occur. Therefore, in the following paradigm, no tones are indicated.

PERSON CLASS	CLASS PREFIX	OBJECT CONCORD
1st SG		ndji
1st PL		tu
2nd SG		ku
2nd PL		mu
Class 1	omu-, ø	mu
Class 2	ova-, oo-	ve
Class 3	omu-	u
Class 4	omi-	vi
Class 5	e-	ri
Class 6	oma-	ye
Class 7	otji-	tji
Class 8	ovi-	vi
Class 9	o(N)-	i

Class 10	ozo(N)-	ze
Class 11	oru-	ru
Class 12	otu-	tu
Class 13	oka-	ke
Class 14	ou-	u
Class 15	oku-	ku
Class 16	pu	pe
Class 17	ku	ku
Class 18	mu	mu
Class 19	ou-	u
Class 6+19	omau-	ye
Class 15a	oku-	ku
Class 6	oma-	ye
Class 6+15a	omaku-	ye

The reflexive concord is **ri** for all classes:

> **mbì**   **rí.mún.á**
> FAC-SCD1SG   REFL.see.FV
> 'I see myself'

The object pronoun and the object concord cannot be used in the same sentence. Compare the following examples.

má.ᵢvé	**kù**	**vàngà**		**má.ᵢvé**	**vàngà**	**ᵢòvé**
PRES.SCD2	OCD2SG	like		PRES.SCD2	like	OPron2SG
'They like you (SG)'				'They like you (SG)'		

Ndòŋènò mé	**ᵢndjí**	**vàngà**		**Ndòŋènò má**	**vàngà**	**ᵢámí**
N.	SCD1 OCD1SG	like		N.	SCD1 like	OPRON1SG
'Ndoneno (male name) likes me'				'N. likes me'		

mbì	**vàngà**	**Jónà**		**mbì**	**mú**	**vángà**
FAC-SCD1SG	like	John		FAC-SCD1SG	OCD1	like
'I like John'				'I like him'		

4.2.3 The Tenses in Detail

(1) Factitive / Habitual

This tense describes an action, process or state expressed by the verb stem without a temporal, aspectual or modal relation, *quasi* like a quality of the subject. The meaning of the sentence **mbí hòngà** 'I teach' is equivalent to the predication **òwá͜mí òmíṭìrì** 'I am a teacher'. Dependent on context, it may also express a habitual verbal property (see examples below).

The affirmative Factitive consists of two elements, a subject concord and a verbal stem ending with **-a**. The first nominal object or adverb after the verb stem are subject to tonal inflection (cf. section 2.4). Object concords bear a high tone. Although in the official orthography these are written separately, they are in fact prefixes of the verbal stems and as such closely integrated into their tonal patterns. Subsequent stems with a tonal pattern of LL become HL, with a tonal pattern of LLL become HLL etc. and all stems with a high tone on the first syllable remain unchanged.

-nwá /H/	'drink'
àrúhè[17] mbì nwá òmákàyá	'I usually smoke (literally: drink tobacco).'
hòngà /LL/	'teach'
mbì hòngà òvánàtjè mòskólè	[as my profession] 'I teach children at school.'
mbì vé hóngà móskólè	'I [usually] teach them at school'.
-tòòrà /LLL/	'pick up'
mbì tòòrà òmáwè	'I usually pick up stones.'
mbì yè tóòrà	'I usually pick them up.'
-kúná /HH/	'grow tr.'
mbì kúná òvíhàpè	'I grow fruits (in the sense that I am a gardener).'
mbì ví kúná	'I [usually] grow them.'
-húkúrà /HHL/	'undress'
mbì húkúrà óhémà	'I usually take off my shirt.'
mbì í húkúrà	'I usually take it off.'

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[17] The adverb **àrúhè** 'usually, always' may be added to emphasize the habitual aspect of the action.

The negative Factitive is formed by the particle **ká-** with a subsequent subject concord: **kátù, kávè, kárù** etc. Only for the 1ˢᵗ person singular, the negative concord is **hí**. In many verb stems, the final vowel is assimilated to the vowel of the preceding syllable (vowel copying).

àrúhè hí nú òmákàyá	'I usually don't smoke.'
kátù hóngò òvànátjè	'We don't teach children.' [as our profession]
kávè nú òmákàyá	'They don't smoke.'

(2) Present Progressive, Near Future

The tense describes an action or process that, at the time of speaking, is either in progress or will start immediately. With verbs that express a state or position, this tense has the inchoative reading of 'getting into a state or position'. The tense is formed by the element **má₁-** and a high tone subject concord that is stepped down, for instance **má₁tú** '1ˢᵗ person plural'. The concords of the singular personal pronouns amalgamate into one syllable

$$\text{má}_| + \text{é} > \text{mé}_|$$
$$\text{má}_| + \text{ú} > \text{mó}_|$$
$$\text{má}_| + \text{á} > \text{má}_|$$

Basic Tone Pattern	Without Complement	With Complement	With Object Concord
-hòngà 'teach' LL	**má₁tú hóngò** → HL	**má₁tú hòngó òvànâtjé** → LH	**má₁tú vè hóngò** → HL
-kóhá 'wash' HH	**mé₁ kóhó** → HH	**mé₁ kòhó óhémà** → LH	**mé₁ ì kóhó** → HH
-rísà 'feed' HL	**má₁vé rísá** → HH	**má₁vé rìsá òzòngòmbè** → LH	**má₁vé zè rísá** → HH
-ùngùrà 'work' LLL	**má₁tú ùngùrà** → LHH	**má₁tú ùngùrá òviùngùrà** → LHH	**má₁tú vì úngúrá** → HHH
-húkúrà 'undress' HHL	**má₁tú húkúrá** → HHH	**má₁tú húkúrá ózòhémà** → HHH	**má₁tú zè húkúrá** → HHH

In many dissyllabic verbs, the final vowel is assimilated to the vowel of the preceding syllable (vowel copying). Object concords bear a low tone, and the first syllable of the following verb stem is always high.

The Present tense is negated with the negative subject concord **kàtú, kàvé, kàzé** etc. and the verbal noun (infinitive) that is attached with **nà-**.

kàtú nàkúhòngà	'We are not teaching'
kàtú nàkúhòngá òvànâtjé	'We are not teaching children'
kàtú nàkúvé͏hóngà	'We are not teaching them'

(3) Indefinite Future

This tense describes a verbal event in an indefinite or remote future. Statements of this kind are considered to be vague and uncertain.

The Indefinite Future is formed by a morpheme **máà-** to which the subject concords are attached. Similar to the Present, the concords of the singular personal pronouns amalgamate:

$$\text{máà} + \text{é} > \text{mé͏é}$$
$$\text{máà} + \text{ú} > \text{mó͏ó}$$
$$\text{máà} + \text{á} > \text{má͏á}$$

BASIC TONE PATTERN	WITHOUT COMPLEMENT	WITH COMPLEMENT	WITH OBJECT CONCORD
-hòngà 'teach' LL	**máàtú hóngò** → HL	**máàtú hòngó òvànâtjé** → LH	**máàtú vè hóngò** → HL
-kóhá 'wash' HH	**máàtú kóhó** → HH	**máàtú kóhó óhémà** → HH	**máàtú ì kóhó** → HH
-rísà 'feed' HL	**máàtú rísá** → HH	**máàtú rísá òzòngòmbè** → HH	**máàtú zè rísá** → HH
-ùngùrà 'work' LLL	**máàtú ùngúrá** → LHH	**máàtú ùngùrà òviùngùrà** → LHH	**máàtú vì úngúrá** → HHH
-húkúrà 'undress' HHL	**máàtú húkúrá** → HHH	**máàtú húkúrá òzóhémà** → HHH	**máàtú zè húkúrá** → HHH

The final vowel is assimilated to the preceding syllable (vowel copying). The tonal behaviour corresponds to the Present Tense.

The negation is formed by prefixing the negation particle **kà** to the subject concords. The negation particle for the 1st person singular is **hì**.

kàmáàtú hóngò	'We shall not teach'
kàmáàtú hòngó òvànâtjè	'We shall not teach children'
kàmáàtú vè hóngò	'We shall not teach them'
hìmé∤é kóhó òhémà	'I shall not wash the shirt'

(4) Recent Past Imperfective

The tense describes verbal events that happened within the period of speaking (usually within the same day). Depending on the semantic type of verb (action, progress, position, inchoative etc.) the effects or consequences still last at the time of speaking.

Examples:

twá∤ rí.	'We have [recently] eaten.'
	[Sense: we are satisfied.]
á∤ rárà	'He has [just] gone to sleep.'
	[Sense: you can't disturb him now.]
mbá∤ t̪ízà òmúvèrè.	'I have taken hold of the sick person.'
	[Sense: the situation is still lasting at the
	time of speaking.]

The Recent Past is formed by a high tone morpheme **-á∤** that merges with the preceding subject concords to one syllable: **mbá∤**, **wá∤** etc. This tense marker has the underlying tone pattern of H°L. At the surface, only the high tone is realized, however the suppressed low tone (the so-called floating low tone) causes a down-step of the subsequent syllables.

In combination with an object concord, the morpheme **-á∤** is substituted by its allomorph **-é∤**.

With many verbs, the final vowel is assimilated to the quality of the preceding syllable (vowel assimilation).

Object concords bear a low tone and the first syllable of the following verb stem is always high.

BASIC TONE PATTERN	WITHOUT COMPLEMENT	WITH COMPLEMENT	WITH OBJECT CONCORD
-hòngà 'teach' LL	mbá hóngò → HL	mbá hòngó óvánàtjè → LH	mbé vè hóngò → HL
-kóhá 'wash' HH	mbáǀ kóhó → HH	mbáǀ kóhó óhémà → HH	mbé ì kóhó → HH
-rísà 'feed' HL	mbáǀ rísá → HH	mbáǀ rísá òzóngòmbè → HH	mbé zè rísá → HH
-ùngùrà 'work' LLL	mbáǀ ùngùrà → LHH	mbáǀ ùngùrà òviùngùrà → LHH	mbé vì úngúrà → HHH
-húkúrá 'undress' HHL	mbáǀ húkúrá → HHH	mbáǀ húkúrá òzóhémà → HHH	mbé zè húkúrá → HHH

Negation is formed by the negative particle **kà-** in combination with a subject concord and a high tone on the first syllable of the verbal stem. In the 1st person singular the negative subject concord is expressed by the particle **hì**.

The final vowel is substituted by the suffix **-Ere**. **-E-** stands for a series of allomorphs. If the vowel of the preceding syllable is **-i-** or **-u-**, it is realized as **-i-**. In all other cases, it is realized as **-e-**. The **-R-** is realized as **-n-** if the consonant of the preceding syllable is a nasal, in all other cases it is realised as **-r-** (cf. section 2.3.2 (2)).

kàtú hóngèrè	'We recently did not teach.'
hì rírè	'I recently did not eat.'
kàvé múníné	'They did not yet see.'

All tenses with the suffix **-ERe** form the passive by inserting the passive morpheme **-w-** between **-ER-** and **-e**.

kàtú hóngèrwé   'We have not been taught recently.'

(5) Remote Past Imperfective

The tense describes an event that occurred before the day of speaking without emphasizing its beginning, progression or end. The Remote Past Imperfective differs from the Recent Past Imperfective by the low tone of its tense morpheme -à and its permanent final vowel -à. In combination with object concords, the tense marker -à is substituted by its allomorph -è.

Basic Tone Pattern	Without Complement	With Complement	With Object Concord
-hòngà 'teach' LL	mbà hóngà → HL	mbà hóngà òvánàtjè → HL	mbè vé hòngà → (H) LH
-kóhá 'wash' HH	mbà kóhà → HL	mbà kóhà óhémà → HL	mbè í kóhà → (H) HL
ríʂà 'feed' HL	mbà ríʂà → HL	mbà ríʂà òzóngòmbè → HL	mbè zé ríʂà → (H) HL
-ùngùrà 'work' LLL	mbà ùngúrà → LH₁H	mbà ùngúrà óviúngùrà → LH₁H	mbè ví₁ ùngúrà → (H₁) LHL
-húkúrà 'undress' HHL	mbà húkúrà → HHL	mbà húkúrà óhèmà → HHL	mbè í húkúrà → (H) HHL

Negation is formed by the negative particle kà- in combination with a subject concord and the substitution of the final vowel by the suffix ÉRé. The allomorphic representation of -ÉRé is the same as in the Recent Past Imperfective (see section 4). However the tonal pattern is different. The negative particle for the 1st person singular is hì.

    kàtú hòngéré   'we did not teach long ago'.
    hì kóhéré   'I did not wash long ago'.

(6) Recent Definite Past Perfect

The tense describes verbal events that happened not long before the time of speaking (e.g. the day before yesterday, last week). In comparison with the Recent Past Imperfective (see no. 4 above), the time of reference is extended

into the past as far as the exact memory of the speaker reaches. However, the main difference is that, at the time of speaking, the verbal event is considered complete. Depending on the semantic type of the verbal stem – for instance with inchoative verbs – the consequences may still last.

The tense is formed by the morpheme -á and a tonal sequence of HH that spreads over the first syllable of the subsequent verbal stem. The final vowel is substituted by the suffix -ÈRè. As described under section 4, -ÈRè stands for a series of allomorphs.

If an object concord is added between the tense marker and the verbal stem, the tonal sequence including the first syllable of the verbal stem is HLH, where the low tone of the object concord, because of tonal assimilation, is pronounced at a mid tone level.

BASIC TONE PATTERN	WITHOUT COMPLEMENT	WITH COMPLEMENT	WITH OBJECT CONCORD
-hòngà 'teach' LL	mbá hóngèrè → HLL	mbá hòngèrè òvánàtjè → LLL	mbé vè hóngèrè → (L) HLL
-múná 'see' HH	mbá múnìnè → HLL	mbá múnìnè òkágìnò → HLL	mbé kè múnìnè → (L) HLL
-rígà 'feed' HL	twá rígìrè → HLL	twá rígìrè òzóngòmbè → HLL	twé zè rígìrè → (L) HLL
-ùngùrà 'work' LLL	mbá úngùrìrè → HLLL	mbá úngùrìrè òviúngùrà → HLLL	mbé vì úngùrìrè → (L) HLLL
-húkírà 'undress' HHL	mbá húkúrìrè → HHLL	mbá húkúrìrè òzóhèmà → HHLL	mbé zè húkúrìrè → (L) HHLL

Prefixing the negative particle kà- to the subject concords of the affirmative Recent Perfect forms the negative. As in all other tenses, the negative marker for the 1st person singular is hì.

hìmbá hóngèrè	'I did not teach.'
hìmbá hòngèrè òvànátjè	'I did not teach children.'

hìmbé vè hóngèrè	'I did not teach them.'
kàtwá rísìrè	'We did not feed.'
kàtwá rísìrè òzòngòmbè	'We did not feed cattle.'
kàtwé zè rísìrè	'We did not feed them.'

(7) Remote Indefinite Past Perfect

The tense describes events that happened long time before the day of speaking and which are considered to be complete as far as the beginning, the progress or the end are concerned.

The Remote Indefinite Past Perfect is formed by a low tone morpheme -à and a suffix -ÉRÉ that is subject to the same morpho-phonological rules as described for the preceding tenses (see section 4).

BASIC TONE PATTERN	WITHOUT COMPLEMENT	WITH COMPLEMENT	WITH OBJECT CONCORD
-hòngà 'teach' LL	mbà hòngéré → LHH	mbà hòngéré òvánàtjè → LHH	mbè vé hòngéré → (H) LHH
-múná 'see' HH	twà múníné → HHH	twà múníné òkàsìnò → HHH	twè ké múníné → (H) HHH
-rísà 'feed' HL	mbà rísíré → HHH	mbà rísíré òzóngòmbè → HHH	mbè zé rísíré → (H) HHH
-ùngùrà 'work' LLL	mbà ùngúríré → LHHH	mbà ùngúríré òviúngùrà → LHHH	mbè ví ùngúríré → (H) HHHH
-húkúrá 'undress' HHL	mbà húkúríré → HHHH	mbà húkúríré òhémà → HHHH	mbè í húkúríré → HHHH

Negation is formed by the prefix kà-, in the first person singular by hì-. The negative particle is pronounced at a medium tone level: hìmbá, kàtwá, etc. Examples:

hìmbá hòngéré	'I never taught.'
hìmbá hòngéré òvánàtjè	'I never taught children.'

hìmbé vè hòngéré	'I never taught them.'	
kàtwá múníné	'We never saw.'	
(kàtú is also possible)		
kàtwá múníné òkáṣìnò	'We never saw a donkey.'	
(kàtú is also possible)		
kàtwé kè múníné	'We never saw them.'	
(kàtú is also possible)		

(8) Imperative

The Imperative expresses a direct order towards an addressee or several addressees to execute the action contained in the verb stem. The person who utters the order wants it to be understood as binding.

There are two forms, one for the singular and one for the plural. Since the Imperative is basically deictic, a subject concord is missing.

BASIC TONE PATTERN	WITHOUT COMPLEMENT	WITH COMPLEMENT	WITH OBJECT CONCORD
LL	hòngá! 'teach' hòngéyè!	hòngá òvànàtjè hòngéyè òvànàtjè	vé hòngà! vé hòngéyè!
HH	kóhà! 'wash' kóhéyè!	kóhá òhémà kóhéyé òhémà	í kóhà! í kóhéyè!
HL	ríṣà! 'feed' ríṣéyè	ríṣá òzòngòmbè ríṣéyè òzòngòmbè	zé ríṣà! zé ríṣéyè!
LLL	ùngúrà! 'work' ùngúréyè!	ùngúrà òvjùngùrà ùngúréyé òviùngùrà	ví ùngúrà! ví ùngúréyè!
HHL	húkúrà! 'undress' húkúréyè!	húkúrà òhémà húkúréyè òhémà	í húkúrà! í húkúréyè!

Note: The **y** of the Imperative plural is usually not pronounced.

The negation is formed by **ó** for the singular and **ámù** for the plural. Verbal stems that are subject to final vowel assimilation show this feature in the negated imperative.

BASIC TONE PATTERN	WITHOUT COMPLEMENT	WITH COMPLEMENT	WITH OBJECT CONCORD
LL	ó hòngò 'teach' ámù hòngò	ó hòngò òvànàtjè ámù hòngò òvànàtjè	ó vè hòngò ámú vè hòngò
HH	ó kóhó 'wash' ámù kóhó	ó kóhó óhémà ámù kóhó ózóhémà	ó ì kóhó ámù zè kóhó

(9) Optative (Hortative)

This tense expresses a strong wish, an admonition or obligation to execute the action of the verbal stem. This form is syntactically and semantically dependent on a verbal form expressed in the main sentence.

The Optative is formed by the morpheme **ngà-** combined with a subject concord: **ngàtú, ngàvé, ngàké** etc. The final vowel of the verbal stem is always **-e**. In the personal pronouns singulars, there are special forms:

1st SG	hì ~ ngè[18]	ngà+è
2nd SG	ngò	ngà+ò
3rd SG	ngà	ngà+à

ngàtú úngùrè òvjùngùrà!
'Let us do the work!'

ngàtú vì úngúrè!
'Let us do it!'

òmítìrì yá ràèrè òváhòngwà kùtjà ngàvé nánè òngòzè.
'The teacher told the students that they should pull the rope.'

òmítìrì yé ndjí ràèrè kùtjà hì ví úngúrè
'The teacher told me that I should do it.'

The Optative is negated by a morpheme **á-** followed by a down step, which is prefixed to the subject concords so that these are realized at a medium tone level: **á|tú, á|mú, á|vé** etc. For the personal pronouns singular exist special forms

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[18] This is an older form, nowadays only used by older speakers.

1st SG   è|
2nd SG   ó|
3rd SG   á|

The final vowel of the verbal stem is always -a.

á|tú ùngùrá òviùngùrà!
'Let us not do the work!'

òmítjìrì yé ndjí |ràéré kútjà é vì úngúrá
'The teacher told me that I should not do it.'

(10) Subjunctive

The Subjunctive is formed by a subject concord and by the final vowel -e.
The first syllable of the verbal stem is high for all verbs irrespective of their
basic tone pattern.

BASIC TONE PATTERN	WITHOUT COMPLEMENT	WITH COMPLEMENT	WITH OBJECT CONCORD
-hòngà 'teach' LL	mbí hóngè → HL	mbí| hóngé òvànátjè → HL	mbí vè hóngè → HL
-múná 'see' HH	mbí múnè → HL	mbí múné òkásìnò → HL	mbí kè múnè → HL
-rísà 'feed' HL	mbí rísè → HL	mbí rísé ózòngòmbè → HL	mbí zè rísè → HL
-ùngùrà 'work' LLL	mbí úngùrè → HLL	mbí úngùré òviúngùrà → HLL	mbí vì úngúrè → HHL
-húkúrà 'undress' HHL	mbí húkúrè → HHL	mbí húkúrè óhémá → HHL	mbí ì húkùrè → HHL

òmítjìrì yá ràéré òváhòngwá kùtjà vé kóhé òzòmbàndà.
'The teacher told the students that they should wash the clothes.'

Except for the deictic application of an order, the Subjunctive follows a main verb to which it is subordinated. It expresses a mode of saying that the event is not or not yet real, but intended or planned. Subjunctive phrases are often headed by the conjunction **kùtjà** 'so that, in order that, whether'. However note that subordinate object sentences initiated by **kùtjà** are not expressed in the Subjunctive mode, e.g.

<div align="center">

kàtú nàkú₍tjíwá kùtjà vá hùpù tjìrì
'We do not know whether they really survived.'

</div>

The Subjunctive is negated by placing the particle **à-** before the subject concord followed by the negation particle **há**, or **hé** before object concords: **àtú há, àvé há, àké há** etc. The final vowel is subject to vowel harmony. For the personal pronouns singular there are special forms:

<div align="center">

1ˢᵗ SG	**è há**
2ⁿᵈ SG	**ò há**
3ʳᵈ SG	**à há**

</div>

...**kùtjà è há hòngó**	'so that I shall not teach'
...**kùtjà è há hóngó òvànàtjè**	'so that I shall not teach children'
...**kùtjà è hé vè hòngò**	'so that I shall not teach them'
...**kùtjà àtú há rígá**	'so that we shall not feed'
...**kùtjà àtú há rígá òzòngòmbè**	'so that we shall not feed cows'
...**kùtjà àtú hé zè rìgà**	'so that we shall not feed them'

(11) Simultaneous

This tense subordinates one event under another event taking place at the same time. The meaning is typically rendered in English by a temporal subordinate clause introduced by the conjunction 'while'.

The Simultaneous is formed by the morpheme **àmá-** which is followed by a down-stepped subject concord: **àmá₍tú** (1pl), **àmá₍vé** (cl:2), **àmá₍ké** (cl:13) etc. The final vowel is subject to vowel harmony (vowel copying). In the singular personal pronouns, there are special forms:

<div align="center">

1ˢᵗ SG	**àmé**
2ⁿᵈ SG	**àmó**
3ʳᵈ SG	**àmá**

</div>

<div align="center">

òvàùngùrè má₍vé ímbúrá àmá₍vé ùngùrà.
'The workers are singing, while they are working.'

</div>

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òvàyèndá vé yéré àmá₁tú kòhó ózòmbàndà.
'When the guests arrived, we were washing clothes.'

òvàríṣé mávè ìmbùrà àmá₁vé ríṣé òzòngòmbè.
'The herdsmen are going to sing, while they are herding cows.'

The negation of the Simultaneous is initiated by the simultaneous morpheme **à-** combined with a high tone subject concord. This is followed by the negative particle **hí**. The verb stem is attached as a verbal noun (infinitive) by a connexive construction. In the singular personal pronouns, there are the following irregular forms:

1st SG	àmbí hí
2nd SG	àú hí
3rd SG	è hí

òvàyèndá vé yèré àmbí hí nàkùkòhá òzòmbàndà.
'The guests arrived while I had not yet washed the clothes.'
òvàùngùrè má₁vé ìmbùrà àvé hí nàkùùngùrà.
'The workers are singing and not working.'

(12) Narrative (Subsecutive)

The Narrative expresses events that follow a first event in the sense of 'and then'. It is formed by the connexive morpheme **n(u)**, the narrative morpheme **á-** in combination with the subject concord, e.g. **átú, ávé, áké** etc. The final vowel is subject to assimilation. In the singular personal pronouns, the subject concords are as follows:

1st SG	é ~ né	nú é
2nd SG	ó ~ nó	nú ó
3rd SG	á ~ ná	nú á

mbé₁ yá, è múnú, è tàárà.
'I came, I saw, I won.'

òvànâtjé mávé ùngùrà návé púndù. (...nú ávé púndù)
'The children are working and then are going to dance.'

òmíṭíri yá hòngó òvánàtjè náí tjàngá òmbápìrà. (...nú áí...)
'The teacher taught the children and then wrote a letter.'

The Subsecutive is negated by the particle **há** which has its slot after the subject concord.

òmíṭíri yá hòngó òvánàtjè náí há tjàngà òmbàpírà.
'The teacher taught the children and then did not write a letter.'

(13) Pluperfect

With relation to the tense of the main clause, the Pluperfect describes an event in the subordinate clause that had already been completed before. With respect to the time of speaking, the Pluperfect can also refer to future events.

This tense is formed by two morphemes **a** that are in tonal contrast with the subject concord sandwiched in between: **à.tw.á** or optionally **á.tw.à**. When the subject concord is followed by an object concord, the second morpheme **-a** is substituted by **-e**. The final vowel of the verb stem is subject to assimilation.

vé yà, àtwá mànà òviùngùrà vyétú
'When they arrived, we had already finished our work.'

má₁vé yà, àtwá mànà òviùngùrà vyétú
'When they arrive, we shall have finished our work'

4.2.4 Ka-movendi Constructions

In all tenses, a morpheme **kà-** may be used to express a movement away from the speaker's place to another location where the event expressed in the verb stem takes place even in tenses that are subject to final vowel assimilation, the final vowel is **-a**. Only in the affirmative mode of the imperative, the final vowel is **-e**.

tú kàhòngà òvánàtjè mòskólè
'We usually go and teach children at school.'

kàvé nàkúkárigá ózòngòmbè
'They are not going to herd cattle.'

kàrárè!   'Go and sleep!'
ámù kàrárà!   'Do not go and sleep!'

4.2.5 The Defective Verbs rì and nà

In combination with a subject concord the defective verb rì expresses the concepts of 'to be' in the sense of existence and of 'to be in a place'. It may be combined with the Factitive, the four Past tenses, the Simultaneous and the Pluperfect. In its tonal inflection, it follows the rules described for low tone verbs in these tenses.

òvìkùryá mbí ví rì náwà	'This food is good.'
òvàrìṣè vé₁ rì mòkùtì	'The herdsmen are in the field.'
òvàrìṣè và rí mókùtì	'The heardsmen have been in the field' (not long time ago)

The verb rì is negated by the usual negative particle kà-. This is prefixed to the subject concords.

òvìkùryá mbí kàví rì nàwǎ	'This food is not good'

In combination with a subject concord the defective verb nà expresses the concept of 'to have' in both senses, material possession and quality. The vowel may be elided. Then the remaining consonant n- is connected with the following noun and then becomes identical with the connexive (see 3.2 above).

mbí nà òrúvyò òrùpè	'I have a new knife.'
òndjòù í nòmáṣà	'An elephant has strength.'

For statements in the past, a combination of both rì and n(à) has to be used.

mbá₁ rí nòrúvyò òrùpè	'I had a new knife today.'
òndjòù yá₁ rí nòmáṣà	'The elephant had strength today.'

Negation is achieved by prefixing the negative particle kà to the subject concords. The subject concord of the 1st person singular is replaced by the allomorph hì.

hì nórúvyò òrùpè	'I do not have a new knife.'
òndjòù kàí nòmáṣà	'The elephant has no strength.'
òndjòù kàyá rí nòmáṣà	'The elephant had no strength.'

5. Syntax

5.1 Copula and Existential Sentences

The presentative and predicative forms of nouns and adjectives (with an intitial high tone, or with the augment in class 1a and the locative classes, see 3.1, above) are used to express existential and cleft sentences:

òmu.âtjé
NCP1.child
'a child'

ˈóₗmu.ₗátjé
NCP1.child
'It is a child'

màmá	wá	rárá
NCP1a.mother	SCD1-RECIMPV	sleep

'My mother has fallen asleep'

ò.ˈmáₗmà	ngwá	rárá
AUG.NCP1a-mother	RELCD1-RECIMPV	sleep

'It is my mother who has fallen asleep'

òò.màmá	vá	rárá
NCP2a.mother	SCD2-RECIMPV	sleep

'My mothers have fallen asleep/are sleeping'

ˈóₗò.màmá	mbá	rárá
NCP2a.mother	RELCD2-RECIMPV	sleep

'It is my mothers who fell asleep'

When the head noun is modified by an adjective, either the noun or the modifier may appear in the predicative form, but not both:

ómu.ₗátjé	òmù.ₗnéné
NCP1.child	ACD1.big

'It is a big child'

òmu.âtjé	ˈóₗmú.néné
NCP1.child	ACD1.big

'The child is big'

íngwí   ˈóₗmu.ₗátjé, íngwí   ˈóₗmù.néné
DEM1   NCP1.child   DEM1   ACD1.big
'This one is a child,   that one is an adult'

Negative predication can be expressed by substituting augment **o-** by the negative prefix **ka-**:

òmà.yò   ˈóₗmà.vápà
NCP6.teeth   ACD6.white
'Teeth are white'

òmà.yò   kà.ˈmáₗ.vápà
NCP6.teeth   NEG.ACD6.white
'Teeth are not white'

Existential predication in tenses other than the present is formed by employing the copula verbs **ri**, 'be' and **kara**, 'stay, remain':

Jèkúrá   ˈóₗmíʈìrì
NCP1a-Jekura   NCP9-teacher
'Jekura is a teacher'

Jèkúrá   wà   rí   ˈóₗmíʈìrì
NCP1a-Jekura   SCD1-REMIMPV   be   NCP9-teacher
'Jekura was a teacher'

Jèkúrá   máₗ   r.írè   òmíʈìrì
NCP1a-Jekura   PRES-SCD1   be.APPL   NCP9-teacher
'Jekura is going to be a teacher'

Jèkúrá   máà   r.ìrě   òmíʈìrì
NCP1a-Jekura   FUT-SCD1   be.APPL   NCP9-teacher
'Jekura will become a teacher (one day)'

Jèkúrá   ù   kárà   ˈóₗmíʈìrì
NCP1a-Jekura   FAC-SCD1   stay   NCP9-teacher
'Jekura has been a teacher'

The possessive copula **na** is used with the subject concord of the Factitive/Habitual (see 4.2.1 above):

ú   ₗná   òˈmúₗ.tímá   òmù.wǎ
FAC-SCD1   POSSCOP-have   NCP3.heart   ACD3.good
'She/he has a good heart'

The possessive copula is often contracted with the following augment:

àmì	mbì	ˡn.έ₁.nyándó
I	FAC-SCD1SG	POSSCOP-have.NCP5.happiness

'I am happy' (lit.: I am with happiness)

p.òndjúwó	pέ	ˡn.ó₁mbépérà
NCP16.NCP9-house	FACSCD16	POSSCOP-have.NCP9-cold

'At the house it's cold' (lit.: At the house is with coldness)

èṭè	kà.tú	ˡn.έ₁.nyándó
we	NEG.FAC-SCD1PL	POSSCOP-have.NCP5.happiness

'We are not happy' (lit.: We are not with happiness)

5.2 Questions

Polar questions can be formed by a rising intonation and shifting the strong accent to the last syllable:

Mó₁	ndjí	mǔnú.	(statement)
PRES-SCD2SG	OCD1SG	see	

'You are seeing me'

Mó₁	ndjí	mǔnǔ?	(question)
PRES-SCD2SG	OCD1SG	see	

'Are you seeing me?'

Constituent questions can be formed by substituting an interrogative pronoun for the questioned constituent. Interrogative pronouns are formed with the Pronominal Concord (cf. 3.5.5) and -ŋě or, if the expected answer is a verbal expression, with the particle tjíkě.

òmíṭírí	ˡyá	₁múnú	ù.ŋě?
NCP9-teacher	SCD9-RECIMPV	see	PROCD1.who

'Whom did the teacher see?'

òmíṭírí	yá	múnú	òvá.₁nátjé	rù.ŋě?
NCP9-teacher		see	NCP9.children	PRONCD11.when
	SCD9-RECIMPV			

'When did the teacher see the children?'

Inááhàngè	má₁	múnú	tjíkě?
NCP1a-Inaahange	PRES-SCD1	see	what

'What does Inaahange see?'

For some questions, enclitic interrogative particles are placed immediately after the verb:

wé	mù	múnú	ˌpí?	/ˌvî?
SCD2SG-RECIMPV	OCD1	see	where	/how

'Where/How did you see him/her?'

Overt object noun phrases often precede the verb and are marked by an OCD:

òmíṭírí	òvà.nâtjé	ˡyé	vè	múnú	ˌví?
NCP9-teacher	NCP2.children	OCD2	see	how	
		RECIMPV SCD9			

'The children, how did the teacher see them?'

òmíṭírí	òvà.nâtjé	ˡyé	vè	múnù	rù.ŋë́?
NCP9-teacher	NCP9.children	OCD2	see	OCD11.when	
		RECIMPV-SCD9			

'The children, when did the teacher see them?'

While questioned objects and adjuncts can be left *in situ*, subjects are usually questioned by using a cleft construction and a interrogative pronoun with an augment:

Ò.ú.ŋè	ngù	ryá	òmbòrótò?
AUG.SCD1.who	FAC-RELCD1	eat	NCP9-bread

'Who eats the bread?' (lit.: Who is the one who eats bread?)

Interrogative pronouns can be used adverbially to form selective questions:

Òmiṭìrì	ò.í.ŋè	ndjá	múnú	Òkà.hándjǎ?
NCP9-teacher		which	RELCD9-RECIMPV	NCP13.place name
		AUG.FAC-SCD9	see	

'Which is the teacher who saw Okahandja?'

5.3 Valency Changing Syntax

5.3.1 Double Complements of Applicative Constructions

The applicative extension introduces an additional complement into the subcategorization frame of the base verb. The new, applied complement is *thematically restricted*. It can introduce a benefaciary or a reason, in which case it follows the verb directly.

> má₁vé   térék.ér.è   ₁òvà.nâtjé   òmbòrótò (benefactive)
> PRES-SCD2 cook.APPL.FV NCP2.children NCP9-bread
> 'They are cooking bread for the children'

> má₁vé   térék.ér.é   òndjàrà   òmbòrótò (reason)
> PRES-SCD2 cook.APPL.FV NCP9-hunger NCP9-bread
> 'They are cooking bread because of hunger'

If the new complement is a locative, it may follow the verb directly or preferably follow the first complement.

> má₁vé   tjàng.ér.é   òmbàpírà   m.òndjúwó (locative)
> PRES-SCD2 write.APPL.FV NCP9-letter NCP18.NCP9-house
> 'They are writing a letter in the house'

On the other hand, instruments are introduced by non-applied verbs and with the use of the preposition **na**:

> má₁vé   tjàng.á òmbàpírà   n.òpénà (instrument)
> PRES-SCD2 write.FV NCP9-letter with.NCP9-pen
> 'They are writing a letter with a pen'

The two objects of an applicative construction are *symmetrical* in that both objects can be pronominalized by an Object Concord and both may be promoted to the subject position by passivisation:

> má₁vé   tjàng.ér.é   òvà.nâtjé   òmbàpírà
> PRES-SCD2 write.APPL.FV   NCP2.children NCP9-letter
> 'They are writing a letter to the children'

> má₁vé   vè   tjáng. ér.é   òmbàpírà
> PRES-SCD2 OCD2   write.APPL.FV   NCP9-letter
> 'They are writing them a letter'

> má₁vé   ì   tjáng. ér.é   òvà.nâtjé
> PRES-SCD2 OCD9   write.APPL.FV   NCP2.children
> 'They are writing it to the children'

òvà.nâtjé |má|vé   tjàng.ér.w.á   òmbàpírà
NCP2.children   PRES-SCD2   write.APPL.PASS.FV   NCP9-letter
'The children are being written a letter'

òmbàpírà   má|í   tjàng.ér.w.á   òvà.nâtjé
NCP9-letter   PRES-SCD9   write.APPL.PASS.FV   NCP2.children
'The letter is being written for the children'

When both objects are expressed by overt noun phrases, the animate noun phrase usually precedes the non-animate one:

má.|vé |tjàng.ér.é |òvà.nâtjé |òmbàpírà
PRES.SCD2   write.APPL.FV NCL2.children NCL:9-letter

5.3.2 Locative Inversion

A number of predicates can be used in locative inversion structures, where a locative phrase is syntactically encoded as a subject as can be seen from the verb agreements. The logical subject is placed after the verb and is tonologically marked as a Presentative (cf. section 3.1.2). Compare the non-inverted first example with the locative inversion in the third.

è.rúngá   rá   hìtí |m.ón|djúwó
NCP5.thief   SCD5-RECIMPV   enter   NCP18.NCP9-house
'The thief entered the house'

è.rúngá   rá   hìtí |mó
NCP5.thief   SCD5-RECIMPV   enter   OPRON18
'The thief entered it (into it)'

m.òndjúwó   mwá| hìtí |é|.rùngà
NCP18.NCP9-house   SCD18-RECIMPV   enter   NCP5.thief
'The thief entered the house'

The logical subject cannot be omitted. It has at least to be represented by a pro-form[19].

not: *m.ondjuwo   mwa   hiti
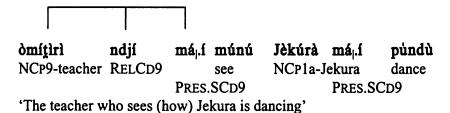
but: m.òndjúwó   mwá   hìtí   rò
      NCP18.NCP9-house   SCD18-RECIMPV   enter   OPRON5
      'He/she entered the house'

---

[19] Its syntactic status as subject is also proved by the fact that it cannot be expressed by an object concord: *m.ondjuwo mwe ri hiti.
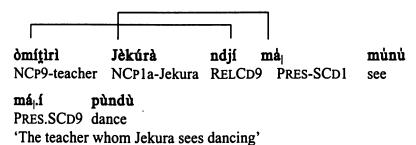
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5.4 Relative Clauses

Relative clauses are formed with the Relative Concords (see 3.5.4 above). The Relative Concord agrees with the head of the relative clause so that in subject relatives, both the Relative Concord and the Subject Concord refer to the same noun:

òmɪ̀ʈɪ̀rɪ̀	ndjɪ́	má₍.í múnú	Jèkúrà	má₍.í	pùndù
NCP9-teacher	RELCD9	see	NCP1a-Jekura		dance
		PRES.SCD9		PRES.SCD9	

'The teacher who sees (how) Jekura is dancing'

In object relatives, on the other hand, the Relative Concord agrees with the object, while the Subject Concord of the relative clause agrees with its subject:

òmɪ̀ʈɪ̀rɪ̀	Jèkúrà	ndjɪ́	má₍	mùnù
NCP9-teacher	NCP1a-Jekura	RELCD9	PRES-SCD1	see

má₍.í	pùndù
PRES.SCD9	dance

'The teacher whom Jekura sees dancing'

Note that, in the above sentence, the relative clause subject intervenes between the head and the Relative Concord.

6. Texts

Text 1[20]

(1)
Ó|mú.rúméndú	¹ngwá ₁		pèndúkà
PRSV-NCP1.man	RELCD1-REMIMPV		resurrect

(1)   [This is] the man who resurrected.

(2)
Pà	rí	òmú.rúmèndŭ
SCD16-REMIMPV	be	NCP1.man

wà	t̪.íré	₁ná	péndúkà.
SCD1-REMPERF	die.PERF	and-NAR-SCD1	resurrect

(2)   There was a man, he had died and resurrected.

(3)
N.èyé	wà	rí	n.ómu.âtjé
and.SPRON1	SCD1-REMIMPV	be	with.NCP1.child

òmù.zàndŭ,	nù	¹íngwí	₁wè
NCP1.male	and	DEM1	SCD1-REMPERF

(y).éré	òkú.yámb.èr.à.
come.PERF	NCP15.sacrifice.APPL.FV

(3)   He had a son (male child), and this one came to sacrifice for [him].

(4)
Nù	¹íngwí	òmù.rúméndú	₁wè
and	DEM1	NCP1.man	SCD1-REMPERF

(y).éré	m.ó₁ndjúwó	y.òmú.zàndŭ
come.PERF	NCP18.NCP9-house	POSSCD9.NCP1.son

w.è	à	rí	òú.t̪ùkù -	n.ómù.zàndú
POSSCD1.POSS1	NAR-SCD1	be	NCP19.night	and.NCP1.son

wà	rár.éré	m.órù.pàndà.
SCD1-REMPERF	sleep.PERF	NCP18.NCP11.open air

(4)   And this man came into the house of his son – it was night time – and the son had gone to sleep outside the house.

---

[20] Source: Brincker 1886, p.335

(5)

Nù	ìhé	wà	tj.éré
and	NCP1a-his-father	SCD1-REMPERF	say.PERF

k.òmù.twá:	"pèndúkà,	hòhíz.ír.á
NCP17.NCP.servant	IMP-wake up	IMP-lit.APPL.FV

òmu.âtjé	ómù.rìrò,	ó	t̪ùnú	‚k.è.támbó."
NCP1.child	NCP3.fire	NEG-SCD2SG	touch	NCP17.NCP5.back

(5) And his father said to the servant: "Wake up, lit a fire for the child, don't touch at the back."

(6)

Nù	wà	g̱è̱g̱émán.éné	òmú.g̱ùkǒ	ná
and	SCD1-REMPERF	desire.PERF	NCP1.lady	and-NAR-SCD1

tjà:	"wà	kúpà	òmú.wá	w.òzómbàzè
say	SCD1-REMIMPV	marry	ACD1.nice	POSSCD1.NCP9-feet

òù.t̪ít̪ì	n.òmà.kè	òmà.tárázù	n.òmù.wá
ACD14.small	and.NCP6.hand	ACD6.soft	and.ACD3.nice

òmù.g̱èkǎ."
NCP3.standing

(6) And he had desired a woman and said: "He married a beautiful [lady] with small feet and soft hands and a nice stature."

(7)

Nù	índínó	árìrè	tjá	nù	òzòndjúpá
and	today	then	NAR-SCD1	drink-FV	NCP10-calabash

k.ótjì.nyó	ná	ì.
NCP17.NCP7.mouth	and-NAR-SCD1	go

(7) And then he drank from calabashes to his mouth and went away.

(8)

Nù	òmù.húká	óngàndá	yà	tàúr.íré,
and	NCP3.morning	NCP9-home	SCD9-REMPERF	flee.PERF

n.éyè	wà	tj.érè:	"àríkàn.éyé,
and.SPRON1	SCD1-REMPERF	say.PERF	please.IMP-PL

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kútír.èyè   òngútírwá   yá.ndjè   ǀnú
harness.IMP-PL   NCP9-riding ox   POSSCD9.POSS1SG   and

mú   yénd.è."
SCD2PL-SBV   go.SBV

(8)   And the next morning [the people of] the homestead fled, and he said: "Please, harness my riding ox and you may go."

(9)   Nú   và   kút.ír.íré   ótjá   tjíngá   á   hèè.
     and   tie.APPL.PERF   as   like   NAR-SCD1   say
       SCD2-REMPERF

(9)   And they harnessed [it] for [him] as he said.

(10)   Nú   íṣwí   ótù.̣tjíndǒ   twà
       and   DEM12   NCP12.migration party   SCD12-REMPERF

.íré,   n.éyé   wà   rònd.éré   k.é.tàmbó
go.PERF   and.SPRON   climb.PERF   NCP17.NCP5.back
               SCD1-REMPERF

r.òngómbè,   è.ná   rá.yó   rà   rí
       NCP5.name   SCD5-REMIMPV   be
POSSCD5.NCP9-ox   POSSCD5.POSS9

Múkòtòtjóndjò.
Mukototjondjo

(10)   And this migration party they went, and he climbed on the back of the ox, its name was Mukototjondjo.

(11)   Nú   òngútîrwá   yà   ǀhùk.íré,   n.éyé
       and   NCP9-riding ox   SCD9-REMPERF   throw.PERF   and.SPRON1

wà   ǀtj.éré: "òngútîrwá   yá
SCD1-REMPERF   say.PERF   NCP9-riding ox   SCD9-RECIMPV

zémb.ì   àrè!"
forget.FV   oh

(11)   And the riding ox threw [him] off, and he said: "What, did he forget [me]!"

(12)   Nú   wà   kávír.íré   rúkwàò   ǀp.è.támbó,
       and   SCD1-REMPERF   ride.PERF   again   NCP16.NCP5.back

nú   yà   w.ìs̲.írė   rúkwàò, n.éyé
and   SCD9-REMPERF   fall.CAUS.PERF   again   and.SPRON1

wà   t̲.írė,   n.ôngútîrwá
SCD1-REMPERF   die-PERF   and.NCP9-riding ox

yà   téz.éré   ǫ̀tú.tjìndŏ.
SCD9-REMPERF   follow.PERF   NCP12.migration party

(11)   And he rode again on the back, and it threw [him] off again,
        and he died, and the riding ox followed the migration party.

(12)   N.ôngútîrwá   yà   kóh.ér.w.é
        and.NCP9-riding ox   SCD9-REMIMPV   wash.APPL.PASS.FV

        n.ónd̲ú   ònd̲òrózù.
        with.NCP9-sheep   ACD9-black

(12)   And the riding ox has been washed with a black sheep.

Text 2[21]

(1) Óngèàmă   ɲ.ómbùngú   ɲ.ómbándjè
PRSV-NCP9-lion   and.NCP9-hyena   and.NCP9-jackal

(1)   [This is] Lion and Hyena and Jackal

(2) Òngéàmá   n.ómbùngú   n.ómbándjé   vyà
NCP9-lion   and.NCP9-hyena   and.NCP9-jackal   SCD8-REMPERF

     káyév.éré   pá.mwě   n.óvyó   vyà
     hunt.PERF   NCP16.together   and.SPRON8   SCD8-REMPERF

     zèp.éré   óngòrǒ.
     kill.PERF   NCP9-zebra

(2)   Lion and hyena and jackal hunted together and they killed zebra.

(3) N.óngéàmà   àí   tjà: "éṭé   àtúyètátú
and.NCP9-lion   NAR-SCD9 say   SPRON1PL   all-three

     twá   zèp.á   òtjí.pùkà   hí;
     SCD1PL-RECIMPV   kill.FV   NCP7.animal   DEM7;

     n.ómbùngú   ngà   rír.è   ndjí   má.í
     and.NCP9-hyena   OPT-SCD1   be-APPL.FV   DEM9   PRES-SCD

     tù   ˌháṇ.én.è   òngórò."
     OCD1PL   divide.APPL.FV   NCP9-zebra

(3)   And lion said: "we all three together killed this animal; and hyena he should be the one who divides the zebra for us."

(4) N.ómbùngú   yè   í   ˌhàṇ.én.è
and.NCP9-hyena   SCD9-REMIMPV   OCD9   divide.APPL.FV

     m.ótú.mbèmbèrà   ˌtù.tátú.
     NCP18.NCP12-parts   NUMCD12.three

(4)   And hyena devided it in three parts.

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[21] Adaptation from *Embo rokulesa* 1952, p.18f. Compare also: Dammann 1987, p.23ff.

(5) N.áí   tjà   k.òngéàmà: "rí.vàng.ér.á
     and.NAR-SCD9   say   NCP17.NCP9-lion   REFL.want.APPL.FV

     pò   rù.mwè."
     OPRON16   NCP11.one

(5) And he said to lion: "there, choose one."

(6) N.óngéàmà   tjí   yà   ⸜múnà   ótù.mbèbérà
     and.NCP9-lion   when   SCD9-REMIMPV   see   NCP12.parts

     kùtjà tú ṭá   pá.mwè,   yà
     that   SCD12-FAC equal   NCP16.together   SCD9-REMIMPV

     ṭ.ómà.zèngè   n.àí   vètè   ⸜òmbúngú,
     die-of.NCP6.anger   and.NAR-SCD9   hit   NCP9-hyena,

     n.ómbùngú   òpù yà   pìhúk.ír.à.
     and.NCP9-hyena   then SCD9-REMIMPV   dislocate.APPL.FV

(6) And when lion saw, that all parts where equal, he died of anger and hit hyena, then he [hyena] became dislocated.

(7) Ózòmbùngú   òpú   má.zè   zú   òkù.ṭéndúnà.
     NCP10-hyena   why   PRES.SCD10   come-FV   NCP15.limp

(7) This is why hyenas came to limp.

7. List of Words

This list contains 206 words following the standard word list proposed by Morris Swadesh. The number of 206, rather than 200 results from the fact that there are 6 items which are included in Swadesh's 100 word list which are not included in the standard 200 word list. The list here is taken from Trask (1996).

7.1 English - Herero

all	à-´-hè	breast	èvérè
and	nà (between two nouns)	breathe	òkùg̱ùvànà (v.) òmùg̱ùvànò (derived noun)
	nú (between two sentences)	burn	òkùpyá (v.) òmàpírò (derived noun)
animal	òtjìpùká	child	òmʉâtjé
ashes	òmùtwé /òmìtwé	claw	ònyárá
at	pú	cloud	òtjìkámbá
back	ètàmbò	cold	òmbépérà (weather)
bad	-ví		òtjìndjùmbà (illness)
bark (n.)	òmùhùvá (of tree)		
~ (v.)	òkùùkírà (of dog)	come, to	òkùyà
because	mèná ròkútjà, óróndù		òmè(y)èrò (derived noun)
belly	èzùmò	count, to	òkùvàrà
big	-néné	cut, to	òkùkòndà
bird	òngérá	day	èyúvá
bite	òkùrúmátà (v.)	die, to	òkùt̠á
	òmàrúmátèrò (derived noun)	dig, to	òkùg̱á
black	-zórózù (for things) alt. zóózù	dirty	òndòvá
		dog	òmbwá
	-zóróndù (for people)	drink, to	òkùnwá
		dry, to be	-kúkútú
blood	òmbìnd̠ú	dull (blunt)	-t̠í
blow, to	òkùtònà (some on beat)	dust	òrùùmá
		ear	òkùtwí
bone	èt̠úpá	earth	èhí

English	Herero	English	Herero
eat, to	òkùryá		òkùtòòrà (pick up)
egg	èì	horn	ònyá
eye	èhò	how	ví
fall, to	òkùwà	hunt, to	òkùyèvà
far	kókùrè (ná)	husband	òmùrúméndú
fat/grease	òmàzé		(cf. man/male)
father	tàté	I	ámì
fear (v.)	òkùtírà	ice	óélşà
feather	èìnyá	if	tjí
few	tjìvá (cf. some)	in	mú-
fight, to	òkùrwà		(CL 18 nominal
fire	òmùrìrò		concord)
fish	òhì/èhúndjù	kill, to	òkùzèpà
five	-tánò	knee	òngòrò
float	òtjìtèndèzè	know, to	òkùtjíwá
flow, to	òkùpúpá	lake	è(w)ó
flower	òngàrà	laugh	òkùyòrà
fly (v.)	òkùtúkà	leaf	òtjìyàò / èşó
fog	òmbùndù	left (side)	kòmàmùhó
foot	òmbàzé	leg	òkùràmà
four	-né	lie (recline), to	òkùràngàvàrà
freeze, to	òkùtárárà	live, to	òkùhùpà
fruit	òtjìhàpè	liver	èhúrí
full, to be	òkùùrà	long	-rè
give, to	òkùyàndjà	louse	òná
good	-wá	man/male	òmùrúméndú
grass	èhòzú	many	-íngí
green	-ngìríne	meat/flesh	ònyàmà
guts	òùrà	moon, month	òmụézé
hair	òzòndjíşé	mother	màmá
hand	èké	mountain	òndùndú
he	éyé (also 'she')	mouth	òtjìnyó
head	òtjìùrù	name (n.)	èná
hear, to	òkùzúvá	narrow	-kwàņí
heart	òmùtímá	near	pòpézú (ná)
heavy	-zèù	neck	òşéngó
here	ìmbá	new	-pé
hit, to	òkùtònà	night	òùţúkú
hold/take, to	òkùtízà (hold)	nose	èúrú
	òkùkámbúrà	not	kákò
	(catch/take),	old	-kúrú

one	-mwé	some (cf. few)	tjìvà
other	-rwé	spit, to	òkùtjèká ómàté
person	òmùndù		(lit.: to eject/shoot
play, to	òkùnyándá		saliva)
pull, to	òkùnànà	split, to	òkùhàŋà
push, to	òkùúndúrà	squeeze, to	òkùkámá
rain (n.)	òmbúrá (cf. year)	stab/pierce, to	òkùtwérà
red	-sérándú	stand, to	òkùkúrámà
right (correct)	òkù̧órà	star	ònyó̧é
right (side)	kòmànéné	stick	òkàtí
river	òmùròngá /	stone	èwè
	òndòndú	straight	-sèmbá
road	òndjìrà	suck, to	òkùnyámá
root	òmùzè	sun	èyúvá (cf. day)
rope	òngòzé	swell, to	òkù̧úrá
rotten, to be	òkùwòrà	swim, to	òkùyóvá /
round	-pùtùpútú		òkùtjàárà (central)
rub, to	òkùhwá	tail	òmùtjírá
salt	òmòngwá	that	depends on class
sand	èhéké	there	ímbó
say, to	òkùtjà	they	óvó [ówó]
scratch, to	òkùpèrà	thick	-tìndì
sea	òkùvàrè /	thin	-rámbí (people)
	òmùròngá		–pèpú (flat)
see	òkùmúná	think, to	òkùrípùrà
seed	òndwì	this	depends on class
sew, to	òkùyátátà	thou	èŋè
sharp	-twé	three	-tátú
short	-sûpí	throw, to	òkùùmbà
sing, to	òkùìmbúrà	tie, to	òkùkútá
sit, to	òkùhààmà	tongue	èráká
skin	òmùkóvá	tooth	èyò
sky	èyúrù	tree	òmùtí
sleep, to	òkùrárà	turn, to	òkùtánáúrà
small	-ţíţí	two	-várì
smell, to	òkù̧úkà	vomit, to	òkùkúngá
smoke	òmùísé	walk, to	òkùwóndjá
smooth	-hèzé	warmth	òùpyú
snake	ònyóká	wash, to	òkùkóhá
snow	òmàkèndè	water	òmévá
	wómbèpérà	we	èţè

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wet	-tárázù	wing	òtjìvàvá
what	tjíké	wipe, to	òkùyékà
when	rùŋé	with	nà (cf. and)
where	pí	woman	òmùkázéndú
white	-vápá	woods	òzòngúŋé
who	-ŋé	worm	ètìvà
wide	-pàpí	ye	òvè
wife	òmùkázéndú	year	òmbúrá
	(cf. woman)	yellow	-ngàrà
wind	òmbépó		

7.2 Herero - English

à-'-hè	all	kákò	not
ámì	I	-kámá	squeeze
èg̲ó	leaf	-kámbúrà	catch/take
è(w)ó	lake	-kóhá	wash
èŋè	thou	kókùrè ná	far
èt̲è	we	kòmàmùhó	left (side)
èt̲úpá	bone	kòmànéné	right (side)
èhéké	sand	-kòndà	cut (v.)
èhí	earth	kúkútú	dry
èhò	eye	-kúngá	vomit
èhòzú	grass	-kúrámà	stand
èhúndjù	fish	kúrú	old
èhúrí	liver	-kútá	tie
èì	egg	kwàn̲í	narrow
èìnyá	feather	màmá	mother
èké	hand	mèná ròkútjá	because
èná	name	mú-	in
èráká	tongue	(CL 18 nominal	
ètàmbò	back	concord)	
ètìvà	worm	-múná	see
èúrú	nose	-mwé	one
èvérè	breast	nà (between two	and, with
èwè	stone	nouns)	
éyé	he (also 'she')	-nànà	pull
èyò	tooth	n̲é	who
èyúrù	sky	-né	four
èyúvá	day	-néné	big
èyúvá (cf. day)	sun	-ngàrà	yellow
èzùmò	belly	-ngìrínè	green
-hàn̲à	split	nú	and
-hààmà	sit	(between two	
hèzé	smooth	sentences)	
-hùpà	live	-núkà	smell (v.)
-hwá	rub	-nwá	drink
ìmbá	here	-nyámá	suck
ímbó	there	-nyándá	play
-ímbúrà	sing	òg̲éngó	neck
íné	four	óèìg̲à	ice
íngí	many	òhì	fish

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òkàtí	stick	òndjìrà	road
òkùràmà	leg	òndòvá	dirty
òkùtwí	ear	òndùndú	mountain
òkùvàrè	sea	òndwì	seed
òmàkèndè	snow	òngòrò	knee
wómbèpérà		òngòzé	rope
òmàzé	fat/grease	ònyá	horn
òmbàzé	foot	ònyàmà	meat/flesh
òmbépérà	cold (weather)	ònyárá	claw
òmbépó	wind	ònyóǧé	star
òmbìnḍú	blood	ònyóká	snake
òmbùndù	fog	óróndù	because
òmbúrá	year	òrùùmá	dust
òmbúrá (cf. year)	rain	òtjìùrù	head
òmbwá	dog	òtjìhàpè	fruit
òmévá	water	òtjìkámbá	cloud
omitwe	ashes	òtjìndjùmbà	cold (illness)
òmụâtjé	child	òtjìnyó	mouth
òmòngwá	salt	òtjìpùká	animal
òmuézé	moon, month	òtjìtèndèzè	float
òmùhùvá	bark (of tree)	òtjìvàvá	wing
òmùísé	smoke	òtjìyàò	leaf
òmùkázéndú	woman	òùṭúkú	night
òmùkázéndú	wife	òùpyú	warm
(cf. woman)		òùrà	guts
òmùkóvá	skin	òvè	ye
òmùndù	person	óvó	they
òmùrìrò	fire	ówó	they
òmùròngá	sea/river	òzòndjíǧé	hair
òmùrúméndú	man/male	òzòngúṇé	woods
òmùrúméndú	husband	pàpí	wide
(cf. man/male)		pé	new
òmùtí	tree	pèpú	thin (flat)
òmùtímá	heart	-pèrà	scratch
òmùtjírá	tail	pí	where
òmùtwé	ashes	pòpézú ná	near
òmùzè	root	pú	at
ònḍérá	bird	-púpá	flow
ònḍònḍú	river	pùtùpútú	round
òná	louse	-pyá (v.)	burn
ònàrà	flower	òmàpírò	

(derived noun)		tjìvà	some
rámbí	thin (people)	tjìvá (cf. some)	few
-ràngàvàrà	lie (recline)	-tjíwá	know
-rárà	sleep	-tònà	hit
rè	long	-tònà	blow (v.)
-rípúrà	think	(some on beat)	
rùŋé	when	-tòòrà	pick up
-rúmátà (v.)	bite	-túkà	fly (v.)
òmàrúmátèrò		twé	sharp
(derived noun)		-twérà	stab/pierce
-rwà	fight (v.)	-ùkírà	bark (of dog)
rwé	other	-ùmbà	throw
-ryá	eat	-úndúrà	push
-ʂá	dig	-úrà	full
sèmbá	straight	vápá	white
sérándú	red	-vàrà	count
-ʂórà	right (correct)	várì	two
sûpí	short	ví	how
-ʂúrá	swell	ví	bad
-ʂùvànà (v.)	breathe	wá	good
òmùʂùvànò		-wà	fall (v.)
-ʈá	die	-wóndjá	walk
-tánáúrà	turn	-wòrà	rotten
tánò	five	-yà (v.)	come
-tárárà	freeze	òmè(y)èrò	
tárázù	wet	(derived noun)	
tàté	father	-yàndjà	give
tátú	three	-yátátà	sew
ʈí	dull (blunt)	-yékà	wipe
ʈíʈí	small	-yèvà	hunt
tìndì	thick	-yòrà	laugh
-tírà	fear (v.)	-yóvá	swim
-tízà	hold	-zèpà	kill
-tjà	say	zèù	heavy
-tjààrà (central)	swim	zóózù	black
(cf. -yóvá)			(for things)
-tjèká ómàté	spit (lit.: to	zóróndú	black
	eject/shoot		(for people)
	saliva)	zórózù	black
tjí	if		(for things)
tjíké	what	-zúvá	hear

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7.3 Some Useful Phrases

Kórà?	How are you? (Greeting)
Kóré(y)è?	How are you (PL)? (Greeting to many)
Nàwá.	Fine. (Answer to **Kórà?**)
Ètè tù rí náwà.	We are fine.
Àmì mbì rí náwà.	I am fine.
Kór(a) òvé?	And how are you?
Ndángì.	Thank you. (loanword from Afrikaans)
Ókùhèpà.	Thank you.
kándù kándjè!	My dear fellow!
Kàtjírwé nàwà	Goodbye. (in the morning)
Kàúháré nàwà	Goodbye. (in the afternoon)
Kàtòkérwé nàwà	Goodbye. (in the evening)
Kàráré nàwâ	Goodnight. (lit. May you sleep well!)

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