A Sketch Grammar of the

Nchane Language

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Abbreviations

Ø-	zero prefix		Instr	Instrument
#σ	word initial syllable		Loc	Locative
???	Unanalyzed form		N-	nasal archiphoneme prefix
(ana.)	Anaphoric demonstrative		Neg1	Negative 1
1s	first person singular		Neg2	Negative 2
2s	second person singular		Nom	Nominalizer
3s	third person singular		P1	Past 1 (immediate past)
1p	first person plural		P2	Past 2 (medial past)
2p	second person plural		P3	Past 3 (remote past)
3p	third person plural		Pos	Possessive pronoun
AGR	Agreement marker		Prog	Progressive
AM	Associative marker		QM	Question marker
c1	Class 1		QP	Quotative particle
c2	Class 2		Rel	Relative Pronoun
c3	Class 3		S	Subject
	etc.		Subj	Subject
C	Consonant		V	Verb
Cʷ	labialized consonant		V	Vowel
CL	class		Ṽ or ṽ	Nasalized vowel
Comp	Complement Particle		v̀	Low tone
Cop	copula		v̄	Mid tone
DO	Direct object		v́	High tone
F1	Future 1 (near future)		v̂	High-Low falling tone
F2	Future 2 (medial future)		ṽ	Mid-Low falling tone
Hab	Habitual aspect		v̂	High-Mid falling tone
IO	Indirect object		VPart	Verbal particle
Inf	Infinitive marker			

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1 Introduction

1.1 Name of the language

Nchane is a language spoken in the Misaje-Subdivision, Donga-Mantung Division, North West Region of Cameroon, West Africa. Dieu and Renaud (1983) in the Atlas Linquistique du Cameroun (ALCAM) list the language as: Ncane [873]. The *Ethnologue* (Gordon 2005) lists the following as language name variations: Ncane, Nchanti, Ntshanti, Cane (ISO 639-3 language code: ncr).

1.2 Genetic affiliation

Nchane has the following genetic affiliation: Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Volta-Congo, Benue-Congo, Wide Bantu, Southern, Beboid, Eastern (Gordon 2005).

1.3 Sociolinguistic situation

1.3.1 Demography

The language is spoken predominately in five villages: Nkanchi, Nfume, Chunghe, Bem and Kibbo. There are approximately 22,000 speakers of the language, although the exact number is unknown as there are reportedly sizeable clusters of people living outside the area, particularly in the Southwest Region.

1.3.2 Viability

Nchane is spoken by young people as well as old people and is the language of choice in Nchane homes. It is also frequently used in local churches and during community events.

1.3.3 Language attitudes

The Nchane people are positively disposed toward their language.

1.3.4 Multilingualism

A significant number of Nchane people may be fluent in Noni, the neighboring language group to the south. However, the majority of communication between the two people groups, as witnessed in common market places, is Cameroonian Pidgin English, which a majority of Nchane speakers can speak with at least a minimum of functionality.

1.4   Corpus and nature of the research

The current paper is an effort to describe the basics of Nchane grammar, particularly from a descriptive viewpoint. Data for the research comes primarily from a number of Nchane texts of various genres, as well as from elicited sentences and words collected over a period of four years, from 2006 to 2009, while the author was living in the village of Nfume. The texts and other language data were collected with the help of several language consultants, most notably Nji Enock Tanjong, Nfon Michael, Shey Tamfu Ephraim, Bekwa Oscar, and Emmanuel Chambang.

Certain conventions have been observed in the paper and the reader is encouraged to take note of following items related to the presentation of the data. Relative tone marking is used and no formal attempt has been made to account for tonal pertubations. Also, the data is generally presented utilizing orthographic forms. The reader is directed to the *Nchane Orthography Guide* (Boutwell and Boutwell 2008) for aid in realizing their phonetic forms.

2 Nouns and noun phrases

2.1 Types of nouns and their structures

Nchane nouns may be divided into those requiring a noun class prefix and those which do not. Thus, the Nchane noun may be represented by the following schematic.

(CL-)stem

Proper names do not require any grammatical markings and so may be considered morphologically the most basic noun type.

1. *Tátā*

In other cases, nouns normally consist of a prefix designating the noun class, followed by the stem.

2. *kì-ntá*
   c7-chair
   'chair'

2.1.1 Proper names

Proper names include those given to people, as well as to places, and require no grammatical marking. In other words, they do not take a noun class prefix. People names may be considered to belong to class 1 and utilize the appropriate pronouns and concord markers. Places are often named after the first settler of the place. As such, they possess similar characteristics of people names. Some examples are given below.

3. *Chíŋ, Kwē, Nyēnsè, Ākú, Ñkānchí, Bèm*

While the above examples are morphologically simple, in many cases proper names may possess a proverbial meaning reflecting the circumstances and/or the general sentiment experienced at the time of the child's birth. Similarly, places may be named after a common activity or feature associated with the place. In these cases, the proper names may be internally quite complex. However, these "noun phrases" have become lexicalized as proper names and are treated morphologically and syntactically as their simpler counterparts. Following are some examples along with their internal meanings.

4. *Tánjòŋ*   'father of Njoŋ'
   Bānéwɔ̄ŋmē   'it is the world that hates me'
   Jōyībwítánā   'the stream of Tana's mother'
   Fēchĭkò   'the forest of moles'

2.1.2 Derived nouns

Nchane nouns may be derived through the addition of a nominalizing prefix (Nom) to a verb. The resulting noun may be characterized by the following schematic.

CL-Nom-verb

Below is a representative example.

5. *bā-n-shìlὲ*
   c2-Nom-sit:Prog
   'meetings'

2.1.3 Compound nouns

Compound nouns may be formed by joining a noun with another constituent such as an adjective, verb, or second noun. The resulting compound noun will be treated as a noun from the same noun class as the initial noun of the compound. Note that only nouns from gender 1/2 have been observed as the initial noun in the compound noun construction. Thus, this process may be restricted to nouns belonging to this gender.

6. a) *mùŋ-kwā*
      c1:man-money
      'rich man'

   b) *mùŋ-yēyὲ*
      c1:man-teach
      'teacher'

   c) *mwā-Nyò*
      c1:child-God
      'God's son'

2.2 Functions of noun morphology

2.2.1 Derivational morphology on noun roots

Nouns may be derived from verbs by the addition of the nominalizing prefix *N-*. When present, this prefix immediately precedes the noun root. The resulting noun belongs to gender 1/2 with the necessary noun class markers added to the newly formed noun stem.

7. a) *bā-**n**-yɛ́yɛ̀*
    c2-Nom-teach
    'teachings'

    b) *Ø-**n̄**-tɔ̂*
    c1-Nom-come
    'coming'

    c) *Ø-**ŋ̄**-kásɛ̄*
    c1-Nom-return
    'returning'

    d) *bā-**m**-bɛ́mɛ̄*
    c2-Nom-believe
    'beliefs'

In a somewhat similar operation, some nouns may have their "basic" noun class markers removed and replaced with the gender 19/26 prefixes *fi/mu-* resulting in a smaller version of the original noun. This process may also involve a change in the tone of the noun root, but no predictable change has yet been accounted for.

8. a) *kī-ndɔ̀ŋ*   →   ***fī**-ndɔ́ŋ*
    c7-neck   c19-throat
    'neck'   'throat'

    b) *nyɔ́*   →   ***mū**-nyɔ̄*
    c10:machete   c26-machete
    'machetes'   'small knives'

Nouns may also be derived from certain adjectival verbs by the simple addition of a noun class marker. The resulting noun belongs to gender 7/8 as may be seen in the examples below.

9.   a) **kī-bɛ̄fɛ́**
     c7-be.bad
     'badness/evil'

     b) **kī-láŋyɛ̄**
     c7-be.happy
     'happiness'

2.2.2 Noun classes and genders

Nchane common nouns may be described as belonging to seven distinct noun class pairings or genders. 'Noun class' refers to a system of classification in which all nouns are grouped, with the nouns of each group or class receiving an affix distinct to its class. 'Noun gender' refers to noun class pairings, usually consisting of singular and plural forms of the same noun. The noun class designations in this work follow Hombert (1980:83-98), which closely follow the Proto-Bantu numbering established by bantuists (Welmers 1973:163). Notable exceptions are classes 25, 26 and 27, which appear to be creations of Hombert.

Nouns are typically marked by a prefix to indicate the number of the noun (ie, singular vs. plural). Notable exceptions are genders 3/4 and 9/10 and class 5. The number of gender 3/4 nouns is indicated by the presence or absence of labialization of the initial consonant. The presence of labialization, historically coming from a prefix, indicates singular number, while its absence indicates plural number. The distinction for gender 9/10 nouns is made by tone. The singular forms are marked with relative low tone and plural forms with relative high tone. Class 5 nouns appear to have no affixation, but may undergo morphological alternations. While the majority of class 5 nouns maintain the full root, more than half (~55%) of polysyllabic forms undergo a deletion (complete or partial) of the final syllable of the noun root. The range of class 5 morphological alternation may be seen in the examples below.

10. a) *chɛ̄bɛ̀*   *ā-chɛ̄bɛ̀*
    c5:termite hill   c6-termite hill
    'termite hill'   'termite hills'

  b) *sōŋō*   *ā-sōŋ*
    c5:palm tree   c6-palm tree
    'palm tree'   'palm trees'

  c) *tɛ̄dē*   *ā-tā*
    c5:stone   c6-stone
    'stone'   'stones'

    The full array of noun class markers with examples are given in Table 1 below. See also Hombert (1980).

Class	Noun class marking	Example	Gloss
1	Ø-	nà	'cow'
2	ba-	bànà	'cows'
3	Cʷ-	bwɛ̄ŋ	'mosquito'
4	C-	bɛ̄ŋ	'mosquitos'
5	Ø-	gēnɛ̀	'egg'
6	a-	āgíŋ	'eggs'
7	ki-	kīyɔ̄	'elephant'
8	bi-	bīyɔ̄	'elephants'
9	#σ`	nyɔ̄	'machete'
10	#σ´	nyɔ́	'machetes'
14	bu-	būkɔ́	'ladder'
25	maN-	māŋkɔ́	'ladders'
19	fi-	fīŋkɔ̄	'cup'
26	mu(N)-	mūŋkɔ̄	'cups'
27	chi-	chīsà	'masks'

Table 1. Noun Class Markers

2.2.3 Gender system

As suggested above, Nchane nouns may normally be grouped into singular/plural pairs referred to as genders. While there is overwhelming one-to-one correspondence between singular and plural classes, there is some overlap. A very small number of plural class 8 nouns appear to pair with the singular class 19 or with the plural class 6. In both cases these nouns are rather abstract in nature. Also of note is the plural class 27 which pairs with either the singular class 3 or with the singular class 5. There appears to be a fair amount of disagreement among speakers as to which class the singular forms of class 27 nouns pairs with. The genders may be seen in the table below.
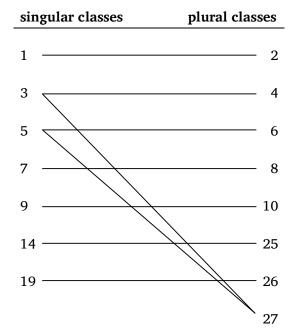
singular classes	plural classes
1	2
3	4
5	6
7	8
9	10
14	25
19	26
	27

Table 2. Nchane Genders

Most constituents that modify the noun must take a prefix that corresponds to the noun's class. There appears to be some partial collapsing of the system, with classes 1 and 3 sharing prefixes for possessive pronouns, adjectives and numerals, but not for determiners. Likewise, classes 4 and 10 share concord prefixes and classes 5 and 27 also share concord prefixes. In many cases all the modifiers of nouns take the same prefix. But where morphologically different prefixes exist, the different form is normally seen in the prefixes for determiners.

Class	Possessive Pronouns	Adjectives	Numbers	Determiners (anaphoric)	Determiners
1	wu-	wu-	u-	(w)u-	wu-
3					kfu-
2	ba-	ba-	ba-	ba-	ba-
4, 10	yi-	i-	i-	i-	che-
5	chi-	chi/i-	chi-	chi-	che-
6	aw(u)-	a-	a-	a-	ka-
7	ki-	ki-	ki-	ki-	ki-
8	bi-	bi-	bi-	bi-	bi-
9	yi-	i-	i-	i-	yi-
14	b(w)u-	bu/bwi-	bu-	bu-	b(w)u-
25	mu(ŋ)-	man-	man-	man-	ma-
19	fi-	fi-	fi-	fi-	fi-
26	m(w)u-	mun-	mun-	mun-	mun-
27	che-	chi/i-	chi-	chi-	che-

Table 3. Nchane Gender Concord Markers

2.3   The structure of the noun phrase

The Nchane noun phrase consists of a noun followed by a number of optional constituents: possessor, demonstrative, quantifier, adjective(s), relative clause(s). The following schematic illustrates the noun phrase.

noun   (possessor)   (demonstrative) (quantifier) (adjective) (relative clause)

Each of these constituents, except for relative clauses, must take a noun class concord prefix, which agrees with the modified noun. Note that relative clauses are preceded by a relative pronoun, which corresponds to the class of the head noun.

2.4 Elements in the noun phrase

2.4.1 Possessives

Possessed nouns are immediately followed by the possessive pronoun which consists of a root and a prefix corresponding to the noun's class.

11. a) *nyɔ́*　　**y-āŋ**　　　　　*nyɔ́*　　　**y-è**
　　c9:machete c9-1sPos　　　　c9:machete c9-3sPos
　　'my machete'　　　　　　　'his machete'

　b) *fī-nyɔ̄ŋē* **fí-àŋ**　　　　*fī-nyɔ̄ŋē* **fí-ì**
　　c19-pig c19-1sPos　　　　c19-pig c19-3sPos
　　'my pig'　　　　　　　　'his pig'

The full set of possessive pronouns may be seen in Table 4 below.

Class	Person					
	1s	2s	3s	1p	2p	3p
1	wàŋ	wɔ̀	wè	wūsè	wūnà	wūbɔ̀
2	bàŋ	bɔ̀ŋ	bè	bēsà	bānà	bābɔ̀
3	wāŋ	wɔ̄	wē	wūsē	wūnē	wūbɔ̀
4	yāŋ	yɔ̄	yī	yēsē	yēnē̄	yēbɔ̀
5	chàŋ	chùŋ	chè	chèsā	chènā	chībɔ̀
6	āwāŋ	āwɔ̄	āwī	āwūsē	āwūnā	ābɔ̀
7	kàŋ	kùŋ	kè	kèsà	kènà	kēbɔ̀
8	bīàŋ	bīùŋ	bīè	bèsā	bènā	bēbɔ̀
9	yàŋ	yɔ̀	yè	yèsè	yènè	yēbɔ̀
10	yáŋ	yɔ́	yé	yésé	yénέ	yébɔ́
14	bwàŋ	bwɔ̀ŋ	bwè	bùsà	bwènà	bvūbɔ̀
25	m(w)àŋ	mɔ̀ŋ	mwè	mùsà	mùnà	mɔ̄ŋbɔ̀
19	fìàŋ	fìòŋ	fìè	fìsà	fìnà	fìbɔ̀
26	mwàŋ	mwɔ̀ŋ	mwè	mūsà	mūnà	mwūbɔ̀
27	chāŋ	chɔ̄ŋ	chē	chèsà	chènà	chēbɔ̀

Table 4. Nchane Possessive Pronouns

2.4.2 Demonstratives

Demonstratives immediately follow the noun in the noun phrase, except in the relatively rare case that there is an accompanying possessive, in which case they follow the possessive. There are three distinct stem forms, each taking concord marking related to the noun class of the noun it modifies.

The proximal demonstrative has the underlying form *ne* and the distal demonstrative has the underlying form *ge*. These two demonstratives combine with a set of noun class concord prefixes, which in some cases are morphologically unique from the "normal" concord system.

12. a) *nà*   ***wú-nē***   *Ø-nà*   ***wù-gè***
    c1:cow c1-this   c1-cow c1-that
    'this cow'   'that cow'

    b) *bà-nà*   ***bá-nē***   *bà-nà*   ***bā-gà***
    c2-cow c2-this   c2-cow c2-that
    'these cows'   'those cows'

    c) *tútú*   ***chē-nè***   *tútú*   ***chè-gè***
    c5:potato c5-this   c5:potato c5-that
    'this potato'   'that potato'

    d) *ā-tútú*   ***kā-nè***   *ā-tútú*   ***kà-gà***
    c6-potato *c6-this*   *c6-potato* *c6-that*
    'these potatos'   'those potatos'

The third demonstrative type may be described as anaphoric and is used with nouns that either have previously been mentioned in the discourse or those which can be accessed through contextual means. This second case can be seen in the example sentences below, in which the "news" in the second sentence refers to the event which took place in the first sentence.

13. *Bī-lɔ̄ŋ   bí-dɔ̀lè   jìŋ   bì Bùm   gè   lìì   à   ǹshyàŋ   yè*
c8-years c8-many back people.of.Bum P3 enter Loc c9:territory c9AM

*Ǹ̄kānyē   lē.   Lɛ̄   bā   Ǹ̄fúmè bɔ̄ yú   Ø-ǹtɔ̀ŋ **ū-yū**,*
Nkanchi.people there when people Nfume 3p hear c1-news c1-this(ana.)

bɔ̀   gè   já̄   bɔ̄ fɛ̄sɛ̀   fɛ̄   kī-jwī   lé.
3p   P3 leave 3p arrive Loc c7-boundary there
'Many years ago, the Bum people trespassed into Nkanchi territory. When the Nfume people heard this news, they left and came to the disputed area.'

The anaphoric demonstrative generally takes the "normal" noun class concord prefixes. Some examples are given below.

14. a) *gwāŋ   **wú-yú***   *gāŋ   **í-yú***
c3:hill c3-this(ana.)   c4:hill c4-this(ana.)
'this hill'   'these hills'

b) *jɔ̀   **í-yú***   *jó   **í-yú***
c9:river c9-this(ana.)   c10:river c10-this(ana.)
'this river'   'these rivers'

The following table gives the demonstrative forms for each of the classes.

Class	Proximal	Distal	Anaphoric
1	wúnē	wùgè	wúyú
2	bánē	bāgà	báyú
3	kfúnē	kfùgē	wúyú
4	chénē	chēgē	íyú
5	chénē	chègè	chíyú
6	kánē	kàgà	áyú
7	kínē	kìgè	kíyú
8	bínē	bìgè	bíyú
9	yínē	yīgē	íyú
10	chénē	chēgē	íyú
14	búnē	bùgè	búyú
25	mánē	màgè	mányú
19	fínē	fīgē	fíyú
26	múnē	mùŋgè	múnyú
27	chénē	chègè	chíyú

Table 5. Nchane Demonstratives

2.4.3 Numerals

Nchane numerals typically immediately follow the noun they modify. When used for counting, the numbers 1-5, when occuring in the one's position in numbers higher than 10, are marked with the gender 19/26 concord prefixes *fi/mun-*. This may be representative of the gender 19/26 noun 'thing', which seems to appear in *mbaŋ fiyɛ* 'twenty' or literally 'twenty thing'.

When numbers are used to modify a noun, the numbers 1-5 in the one's position always agree with the modified noun, even the single digit numbers. Also note that numbers in the hundred's position are treated as full nouns belonging to gender 3/4, and numbers in the thousand's position are treated as full nouns belonging to gender 1/2. Numbers above ten are formed through the use of *nchɔ* 'plus', joining numbers in the one's position with those in higher positions.

Table 6 below presents a partial list of Nchane cardinal numerals used for counting, along with the numerals as they appear when modifying a noun.

	Numeral	Gender 1/2 ('cow___')
1	mémà	*ná ūmūmwā̀*
2	fɛ̄	*bànà bāfé*
3	tɛ̀dē	*bànà bātēdé*
4	nɛ̀	*bānā bánê*
5	tɛ̀ŋ	*bānā bátêŋ*
6	būsɔ̄	*bànà búsɔ̄*
7	būsɔ̄shwê	*bànà búsɔ̄shwɛ̀*
8	nyā̀	*bānā nyā̀*
9	bvùgê	*bānā bvùgê*
10	yúfɛ̀	*bànà yúfɛ̀*
11	yúfɛ̀ ǹchɔ̀ fīmímìà	*bànà yúfɛ̄ ñchɔ̄ ūmūmwā̀*
12	yúfɛ̀ ǹchɔ̀ mūnfé	*bànà yúfɛ̀ ǹchɔ̀ bāfé*
13	yúfɛ̀ ǹchɔ̀ mūntédé	*bànà yúfɛ̀ ǹchɔ̀ bàtēdé*
14	yúfɛ̀ ǹchɔ̀ mūnê	*bànà yúfɛ̄ ñchɔ̄ bánê*
15	yúfɛ̀ ǹchɔ̀ mūntêŋ	*bànà yúfɛ̄ ñchɔ̄ bátêŋ*
16	yúfɛ̀ ǹchɔ̀ bùsɔ̄	*bànà yúfɛ̀ ǹchɔ̀ būsɔ́*
17	yúfɛ̀ ǹchɔ̀ bùsɔ̄shwê	*bànà yúfɛ̄ ñchɔ̄ búsɔ́hwɛ̀*
18	yúfɛ̄ ñchɔ̄ nyā̀	*bànà yúfɛ̄ ñchɔ̄ nyā̀*
19	yúfɛ̄ ñchɔ̄ bvūgê	*bànà yúfɛ̄ ñchɔ̄ bvūgē*
20	m̄bāŋ fíyɛ́	*bànà m̄bāŋ fíyɛ́*
21	m̄bāŋ fíyɛ́ ǹchɔ̀ fīmímìà	*bànà m̄bāŋ fíyɛ́ ǹchɔ̀ ùmùmwà*
22	m̄bāŋ fíyɛ́ ǹchɔ̀ mùnfɛ̄ŋ	*bànà m̄báŋ fíyɛ́ ǹchɔ̀ bāfé*
100	gwíí	*bànà gwíí*
101	gwíí bɛ́ fīyɛ̄ fīmímìà	*bànà gwíí ñchɔ̄ ūmūmwā̀*
200	gífé	*bànà gîfɛ̄*
1000	ǹchūgè	*bānā ñchúgè*
2000	bànchùgè bāfé	*bànà bànchùgè bāfé*

Table 6. Nchane Numerals

In some cases, the roots of cardinal numerals undergo morphological changes related to the vowels of the noun class prefix. This process is illustrated in the examples below.

15. a) *Ø-ná*   *ū-mūmwâ*   *bà-nà*   *bā-fέ*
     c1:cow   c1-one   c2-cow   c2-two
     'one cow'   'two cows'

    b) *fī-nyí*   *fī-mímìà*   *mū-nyî*   *mùn-fɛ̄*
     c19-bird c19-one   c26-bird c26-two
     'one bird'   'two birds'

    c) *bí*   *ī-mīmìà*   *bí*   *ī-fíɛ́*
     c9-goat c9-one   c10-goat c10-two
     'one goat'   'two goats'

2.4.4 Quantifiers

Nchane quantifiers immediately follow the modified noun and take a prefix corresponding to the noun's class.

16. a) *bī-tē*   *bī-chīī*
     c8:tree c8-all
     'all trees'

    b) *mwɛ̀ŋ*   *mūn-chīī*
     c26:thing c26-all
     'all things'

17. a) *bā-mì̄*   *bá-míí*
     c2-people c2-some
     'some people'

    b) *àsòŋ*   *á-múùŋ*
     c6-palm trees c6-some
     'some palm trees'

18. a) *bī-tē*   *bí-dùlē*
     c8-tree c8-many
     'many trees'

    b) *bā-mì̄*   *bá-dùlē*
     c2-people c2-many
     'many people'

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In certain contexts, these quantifiers can give slightly different senses than the basic one. The example below shows how *chii* 'all' can be used with some singular nouns to indicate the entirety of the modified noun.

19. *kī-tē*   ***kī-chīī***
    c7-tree   c7-all
    'the whole tree'

Below we see *–mi* 'some' modifying a singular noun and giving a discriminating sense.

20. *sōŋō*   ***chí-mûŋ***
    c5:palm tree   c5-some
    'one of the palm trees'

The following table provides a summary of the Nchane quantifiers.

Class	'all'	'some'¹	'many'²
1	wùchìì	wúmūŋ	-
2	bàchìì	bámīŋ	bádūlé
3	wùchìì	wúmūŋ	-
4	ìchìì	īmìŋ	ídùlē
5	chīchìì	chímīŋ	-
6	àchìì	āmùŋ	ádùlē
7	kìchìì	kīmìŋ	-
8	bìchìì	bīmìŋ	bídùlē
9	ìchìì	īmìŋ	-
10	ìchìì	īmìŋ	ídùlē
14	bùchìì	būmùŋ	-
25	mānchìì	māmùŋ	mándùlē
19	fìchìì	fīmìŋ	-
26	mūnchìì	mūmùŋ	múndùlē
27	chīchìì	chīmìŋ	chídùlē

Table 7. Nchane Quantifiers

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¹Note that the partative quantifier *mii* 'some', undergoes morphological changes in some cases, presumably due to vowel harmony.

² Some singular nouns may be modified by the quantifier *–dule* 'many' resulting in a plural sense. At this time, it is unclear as to the meaning and use of this construction.

2.4.5 Adjectives

While more research on the Nchane adjective needs to be conducted, it appears that there are only a few true adjectives in Nchane. Adjectives follow the modified noun and are marked with a prefix that corresponds to the modified noun's class.

21. a) *ŋwâ*   ***wú-fwāāŋ***
    c1:book c1-new
    'new book'

  b) *ñjū*   ***yé-yùfɛ̄***
    c10:clothes c10-warm
    'warm clothes'

  c) *bū-jú̄*   ***bū-dɛ̀mɛ̀***
    c14-place c14-flat
    'place flat'

2.4.6 Relative clauses

Relative clauses follow the modified noun and are marked by a relative pronoun. The relative pronouns agree in class with the head noun.

22. a) *Bɔ̄ bé bɔ̀ chōŋ jì   [yì   mɛ̄   kɛ̄   gù.]*
    3p P1 3p steal c9:hoe c9Rel 1s Inf buy
    'They stole the hoe that I bought.'

  b) *Gvúnɛ̄   lē fī-yɛ̀   [fī   bà chù-lē   ŋgū   yū].*
    c5:chaff be c19-thing c19Rel c2 ignite-Prog c9:fire with
    'The chaff is something that people use to light fires with.'

  c) *Sōŋō   nyá-á   bì bɛ̀ bì-ŋkà̀ŋ   bí   ā-sōŋ   [bì   bā   jí].*
    c5:palm tree give-Prog 1p with c8-beetle c8AM c6-palm tree c8Rel c2   eat
    'The palm tree gives us palm beetles that people eat'

3 Verbs and Verb Phrases

3.1 Verbs and their structures

Nchane verbs are rather simple in their morphology. They may occur with subject agreement marking and progressive aspect.

23. *Tō!*
    come
    'Come!'

24. Ŋ̄-gē̄-nὲ.
    1s-go-Prog
    'I am going.'

The Nchane verb may be illustrated by the following schematic.

(AGR-)stem(-Prog)

3.2 Functions of verb morphology

3.2.1 Derivational morphology

No affix for deriving Nchane verbs has been identified. However, some nouns may be used as verbs normally by simply removing any noun class affix.

25. a) *Bì gέ yē̄ŋ chī-mbíáŋ ch-ē lē.*
    2p P3 see c27-lie c27-3pPos there
    'We discovered (lit. saw) his lies.'

    b) *Wù gέ **mbīāŋ** chī-mbíáŋ.*
    3s P3 lie c27-lie
    'He told (lit. lied) lies.'

Some of these verbs must occur with the progressive marker as seen in the below example where the noun *jisɛ* 'eye' when used as a verb is found with the progressive suffix.

26. a) *Jīsɛ́   ch-ē   gɛ̀ bē yè kwà   lē   bāāŋ.*
        c5:eye c5-3sPos P3 be on c3:money there very.much
        'His eye was very much on money.'

    b) *Wū jē-ŋɛ́   kwâ.*
        3s   look-Prog c3:money
        'He is looking at (lit. eyeing) the money.'

3.2.2 Tense and aspect morphology

The bare form of a verb may be considered as having an immediate past sense, but generally not asserting how long ago.

27. a) *Bī yú   nâ.*
        1p kill   c1:cow
        'We killed the cow.' (just now or recently)

    b) *Wū kɛ̀ŋ   bú-lāāŋ.*
        3s   cook   c14-food
        'She cooked food.'

The addition of the progressive suffix renders a present continuative sense.

28. *Wū kɛ̄-nɛ́   bū-lààŋ.*
     3s   cook-Prog c14-food
     'She is cooking food.'

The progressive aspect suffix is morphologically complex and has the following forms: -nɛ, -ŋɛ, -lɛ, -VV. Hyman (1981) reports that Noni, a neighboring language, also has a number of progressive aspect forms that generally arise from phonological conditioning. While some phonological conditioning can be observed in the Nchane progressive aspect suffix set, the form for many of the verbs is unpredictable. Below we present the verb types that can be predicted phonologically. The verbs are presented in the infinitive form, which is preceded by the infinitive marker *kɛ*, followed by the verbs in the present progressive form. And finally we offer examples of the irregular forms.

When the radical ends with a nasalized vowel (CṼ), the progressive suffix is realized as *–nɛ*:

ké kɛ̃̀	'to cook'	*kēnɛ́*	'be cooking'
ké yã̀	'to vomit'	*yánɛ̀*	'be vomiting'

Radicals ending with the alveolar nasal *(CVn)* also take *–nɛ* for the progressive:

ké bīn	'to dance'	*bīnɛ́*	'be dancing'

Verbs ending with the velar nasal (CVŋ) are marked with either *–nɛ* or *–ŋɛ* in their progressive form. It is unclear at this point if it is possible to predict which form will be used with which verb.

ké sòŋ	'to beat'	*sōŋɛ́*	'be beating'
ké tōŋ	'to burn'	*tōnɛ́*	'be burning (st)'

Verbs with non-nasalized open syllables (CV) are marked for progressive aspect with *–lɛ* or vowel lengthening, depending on the tone pattern. When the radical possesses a contour tone *-lɛ* will be used. When the tone is level then the vowel will be lengthened[3].

ké bĩ	'to ask'	*bīlɛ́*	'be asking'
ké bì	'to follow'	*bíí*	'be following'
ké chū̃	'to light a fire'	*chūlɛ́*	'be lighting a fire'
ké jù	'to fight'	*júú*	'be fighting'

There is a relatively small number of verbs that may be inherently progressive. Their infinitive form appears to be the same as their progressive form.

ké kēŋ̀ɛ	'to be having'	*kéŋɛ́*	'be having'
ké jēŋ̀ɛ	'to be looking'	*jēŋɛ́*	'be looking'

---

[3] Verb roots that receive a lengthened vowel for progressive may also receive an accompanying high tone. More research needs to be done to confirm this.

The following examples show irregular forms in which the progressive suffix is not predictable.

ké tɛ̌	'to call'	*tɛ̄ŋɛ́*	'be calling'
ké bɔ̀	'to descend'	*bɔ̄gɛ́*	'be descending'
ké lɛ̀ŋ	'to work'	*lɛ́mɛ̄*	'be working'

The progressive suffix in the following examples takes the form of *–dɛ*. This is likely a variety of *–lɛ,* as some speakers prefer to use *–lɛ* with these verbs. But it should be noted that only a small subset of verbs taking *–lɛ* display the *–dɛ* variety as an option.

ké fwɛ̀	'to burn'	*fwɛ̀dɛ̄*	'be burning'
ké kɔ̀	'to catch'	*kɔ̀dɛ̄*	'be catching'

3.3   The structure of the verb phrase

The Nchane verb phrase consists of at least one verb. Preceding the verb may be a verbal particle indicating tense or aspect, which may be preceded by a subject agreement marker, but only in first singular person. Also preceding the verb may be a second subject agreement marker[4] and a negative marker (Neg2). Following the verb may be one or more of the following: primary negative marker (Neg1), indirect object, direct object, locative phrase, adverb, final negative marker (Neg1).

29. *Wū [gɛ̄   bááŋ kɛ̄ŋ gɛ́   mɛ́ bū-lāāŋ chēgé chēgé gɛ̄].*
    3s   P3   Neg2 cook Neg1 1s   c14-food quick   quick   Neg1
    'He did not cook food for me very quickly.'

The order of these constituents are summarized in the chart below.

Subj clitic	VPart	Subj clitic	Neg2	Verb	Neg1	IO	DO	LOC	Adverb	Neg1

---

[4] The second subject agreement marker generally occurs when there is a verbal particle present.

3.4 Elements in the verb phrase

3.4.1 Verbal particles

3.4.1.1 Tense

Tense is primarily indicated through the use of various verbal particles. Events that occurred between several minutes and several hours ago are indicated through the particle *bi* (P1), which may come from the verb 'to follow'.

30. a) *Kɨ̄bbó* **bí** *wū-bɛ̀ŋ*   *fwē.*
     Kibbo P1 3s-climb   ahead
     'Kibbo went ahead.'

   b) *Bì* **bí** *bī-bɔ̀ŋ*   *bì-nfùnɛ̀.*
     1p P1 1p-plant c8-maize
     'We planted maize.'

Events that occurred one to three days ago are indicated by the particle *chi* (P2).

31. a) *Chɨ̄lá* **chí** *wū-gù*   *nyàŋ.*
     Chila P2 3s-buy   c9:meat
     'Chila bought meat.'

   b) Jàŋ   **chí** í-tō.
     c9:rain P2   c9-come
     'The rain came.'

Events that occurred four days or more ago are indicated by the presence of *gɛ* (P3), which comes from the verb 'to go'. Note that with P3, there is generally no subject agreement marker preceding the main verb as occurs with the other tenses.

32. a) *Bì* **gɛ̄** *jí* *Ø-bèlèkāŋ.*
     1p P3 eat c1-papaya
     'We ate papaya.'

   b) *Bá-mí*   *bá*   *Ńchánē* **gɛ́** *tō*   *wɔ̀ŋ*   *wù*   *Tíkālē* *lē.*
     c2-person c2AM Nchane P3 come c3:tribe c3AM Tikari there
     'The Nchane people came from the Tikari tribe.'

An event that will occur very shortly is indicated by the particle *le* (F1).

33. a) *Áŋkāŋ* **lé** *wū-kāsὲ.*
    Ankang F1 3s-return
    'Akang will return.'

  b) *Bɔ̄* **lé** *bɔ̄-gū* *fī-mbì*
    3p F1 3p-buy c19-cola.nut
    'They will buy a cola nut.'

An event that will occur in one to three days is indicated by the particle *bu* (F2), which when used as a main verb means 'to arrive at', and precedes the F1 particle *le*. Note that the verb *la* in 34a indicates that the subject is going somewhere with a goal or purpose in mind.

34. a) *Chīlá* **bū** *lé* *wū-lā* *kὲŋ.*
    Chila F2 F1 3s-go c4:firewood
    'Chila will go for firewood.'

  b) *Bī* **bú** *lé* *bí-sɛ́ɛ́* *bī.*
    3p F2 F1 3p-slaughter c9:goat
    'We will slaughter the goat.'

Table 8 below provides a summary of the Nchane tense forms.

Tense	Example	Gloss
P1	Wù **bí** wù-jī bù-lāāŋ. 3s P1 3s-eat c14-food	She has eaten food. (some hours ago)
P2	Wù **chí** wù-jī bù-lāāŋ. 3s P2 3s-eat c14-food	She has eaten food. (yesterday or some days ago)
P3	Wù **gé** jí bū-lāàŋ. 3s P3 eat c14-food	She has eaten food. (more than several days ago)
F1	Wù **lé** wū-jī bū-lāàŋ. 3s F1 3s-eat c14-food	She will eat food. (shortly)
F2	Wù **bū** lé wú-jí bū-lāàŋ. 3s F2 F1 3s-eat c14-food	She will eat food. (tomorrow or next week)

Table 8. Nchane Tense Forms

3.4.1.2 Aspect

Habitual aspect is expressed through the use of the verbal particle *to* (Hab), which means 'to come' when used as the main verb.

35. *Tàtá* **tō** *wù-gù-lὲ* *nyàŋ*.
    Tata Hab 3s-buy-Prog c9:meat
    'Tata always buys meat.'

Note that progressive aspect, which was treated above, is expressed through the addition of the suffix *–nɛ*. We know of no other aspects in Nchane, although others may exist.

3.4.2 Verb phrase level negation

Negation in Nchane involves the negative markers *gɛ* (Neg1) and *baaŋ* (Neg2). When the first negative marker occurs alone with the bare form of the verb (ie, immediate past), it is found at the end of the phrase and gives a negative state sense.

36. a) *Wū múúŋ lɔ̂*
    3s drink:Prog ???
    'He drinks.'

   b) *Wū múúŋ gɛ̄.*
    3s drink:Prog NEG1
    'He does not drink.' (eg, alcohol)

This marker is often found twice in the same phrase bracketing the negated constituent, be it a nominal object or a complement clause.

37. a) *Wū ké wɔ̂.*
    3s know 2s
    'He knows you.'

   b) *Wù ké [gɛ̄ wɔ̀ gɛ̄].*
    3s know Neg1 2s Neg1
    'He does not know you.'

38. a) *Wù ké lɛ̄ bà má yɛ̄.*
     3s know how c2 build:Prog c10:houses
     'He knows how to build houses.' (lit. 'how they build houses.')

   b) *Wù ké [gɛ̄ lɛ̄ bā má yɛ̄ gɛ̀].*
      3s know Neg1 how c2 build:Prog c10:houses Neg1
      'He does not know how to build houses.'

The first negative marker may also occur alone at the end of the phrase in a sentence with a past tense marker. In this case, it implies that the negative aspect was true in the past but is not true in the present.

39. a) *Wù chí múúŋ gɛ̄.*
     3s P2 drink:Prog Neg1
     'He should be now drinking.'

In the above example, the speaker expresses knowledge that the subject was not drinking several days earlier (possibly due to an illness or some other physical difficulty), but now there is the expectation that the subject is able to drink.

The Neg1 marker may also be used with the second negative marker *baaŋ* (Neg2). It is often used in past tense, relating an action or event that did not happen.

40. a) *Wù gɛ̄ **bááŋ** múŋ gɛ̄ Ø-ŋkāŋ gɛ̀.*
     3s P3 Neg2 drink Neg1 beer Neg1
     'He did not drink the beer.'

   b) *Ñsáŋ yê yī gɛ̄ **bááŋ** yɛ́yɛ̄ gɛ̄ fí-yɛ̄ fí-mí gɛ̀.*
      c10:friend c10-poss c10 P3 Neg2 learn Neg1 c19-thing c19-any Neg1
      'The friends did not learn anything from that act.'

3.4.3 Adverbs

Adverbs normally follow the direct object if present, otherwise they follow the verb.

41. *Wù kɛ̄-ŋé   kwà   chūlè.*
    3s   have-Prog c3:money strong
    'He handles money well.'

Many adverbs may be reduplicated to express emphasis or intensity.

42. a) *Wū gɛ́ gɛ̀ŋ ā jô   chègé chègē.*
       3s P3 go to c9:water quick quick
       'He went very quickly to the stream.'

    b) *Wū gɛ̄ jɛ̄nyé   wɛ̀   wɛ̄ɛ̀.*
       3s P3 walk:Prog slow slow
       'He was walking very slowly.'

Some adverbs are formed from verbs and may also involve reduplication.

43. *Bɔ́ gɛ́ jā   lɛ̄gɛ̀ lɛ̄gɛ̀ bɔ̄ lí   à   Bûm.*
    3p P3 leave run   run   3p enter Loc Bum
    'They left immediately for Bum.'

3.4.4 Complements

Complements are introduced by *lɛ* (Comp). This particle follows verbs of cognition or desire such as "to think", "to know", "to see", or "to want".

44. a) *Bī kwājí   lɛ̄   [kī-lɔ̄ŋ kí-tɔ̄lē   bí nù   kē bī búsɛ́*
       1p think:Prog Comp c7-year c7-coming 1p Cop Inf 1p publish

       á-jī   à   Ø-ŋwà wū   N̄chānè].
       c6-eye c6AM c1-book c1AM Nchane
       'We think that in the coming year we are to publish the Nchane alphabet.'

    b) *Ǹ̄-gɔ̀-né   lɛ̄   [wɔ́ lā jɛ̄gē à   mɛ̄nē   à   jō   gè].'*
       1s-want-Prog Comp 2s go visit Loc my.place Loc c9:water ???
       'I want you go visit me in the water.'

When it occurs with other kinds of verbs, it serves to introduce the purpose or goal of the verb.

45. *Mɛ́ ŋ-gɛ́ ñ-dú mùŋ wú gɛ́ chì-dē lē*
    1s 1s-P3 1s-say c1:person c1Rel P3 drive-Prog there

    lɛ̀ wú fɛ̄ Ø-àfyɔ̂ŋ wú bɔ́sɛ́ fɛ̀ kū ɛ̀ kū
    Comp 3s make c1-airplane 3s descend:Prog Loc ground Loc ground

    lɛ̄ [mɛ́ n-yɛ́sɛ́ bɔ̀ŋ bà-ŋ lē fɛ̄ mɛ̄nɛ].
    Comp 1s 1s-greet c2:child c2-1sPos ??? Loc my.place
    'I asked the pilot to descend so that I could greet my children at my compound.'

3.4.5 Valence changing operations

3.4.5.1 Causatives

Causative constructions are accomplished by moving the subject to the object position along with the "main" verb, adding a subject and replacing the main verb with the verb *fɛ* 'to make'.

46. a) *Mwá gɛ́ lè.*
       c1:child P3 sleep
       'The child slept.'

    b) *Bwî gɛ́ **fɛ̄** mwá lê.*
       c1:mother P3 make c1:child sleep
       'The mother made the child to sleep.'

47. a) *Mɛ́ ŋ-gɛ́ yú yɔ̀.*
       1s 1s-P3 kill c9:snake
       'I killed a snake.'

    b) *Wù gɛ̄ **fɛ̀** mɛ̄ ñ-yú yɔ̀.*
       3s P3 make 1s 1s-kill c9:snake
       'He made me to kill a snake.'

4 Clauses

4.1 Basic clause types and their structures[5]

4.1.1 Declarative clauses

Nchane declarative clauses are basic with no special morphosyntactic markings.

48. a) *Ῑ̄ŋ-kɔ̄-dɛ́   bíɛ́ŋ.*
    1s-catch-Prog   c10:fish
    'I am catching fishes.'

   b) *Chīlā gē   tò   bɛ́   bī*
    Chila P3   come with c10:goat
    'Chila brought the goats.'

4.1.2 Predicate adjectives

Many Nchane adjectives may serve a predicate function. In the following examples, the verb position is filled by an adjective that expresses a particular state or quality.

49. a) *Mùŋ   láŋéyɛ̄.*
    c1:man   happy
    'The man is happy.'

   b) *Wú kùgē.*
    3s   big
    'He is big.'

   c) *Ǹ-tɛ́mɛ̄.*
    1s-strong
    'I am well.'

---

[5] It has been observed that a lengthened vowel in the verb may give a hortative sense. However, this remains to be confirmed.

29

4.1.3 Imperative clauses

Imperative clauses generally lack a constituent in the subject slot when the subject is singular. The second person plural pronoun *bɛŋ* precedes the verb when the subject is plural.[6]

50. a) *Nyá mɛ́ kì-ntã̀.*
    give 1s c7-chair
    'Give me a chair.'

   b) *Gɛ̄lɛ́ Ø-nà à kí-tàŋ lē.*
    put c1-cow Loc c7-fence there
    'Put the cow inside the fence.'

   c) *Bɛ́ŋ jò shì yí-nē.*
    2p take c9:chicken c9-this
    'You (pl) take this chicken.'

4.1.4 Interrogative Clauses

There are two main types of Nchane interrogative clauses: yes-no questions and content questions. Each are treated separately below.

4.1.4.1 Y/N Questions

Yes/no questions are differentiated from their declarative counterparts by the presence of a floating low tone clitic. This floating low tone is often realized as a falling tone on the final syllable of the clause.

51. a) *Wɔ̄ jí-í Ø-bèlèkā̄ŋ.*
    2s eat-Prog c1-papaya
    'You are eating papaya.'

   b) *Wɔ̄ jí-í Ø-bèlèkã̀ŋ?*
    2s eat-Prog c1-papaya:QM
    'Are you eating papaya?'

---

[6] There may be a high tone on the end of imperative verbs when the subject is singular. More research is needed to confirm this.

4.1.4.2 Content questions

Content questions are formed by the addition of some question word or phrase, which normally occurs at the end of the phrase. The word *la* 'what' is quite productive and combines with other words and phrases to provide a number of semantic concepts including time and purpose.

When *la* is used without any other question morphemes it gives the basic sense of 'what'. There is some flexibility with word order as the question marker may appear at the beginning or at the end of the phrase. However, the question particle appearing at the end of the phrase appears to be preferred.

52. a) *Fĭ-nē   lē   lā?*
    c19-this   be   what
    'What is this?'

    b) *Lē   lā   fĭ-nè?*
    be   what c19-this
    'What is this?'

53. ***Lá***   *fí   yí   wɔ̄?*
    what c19 pain 2s
    'What (thing) pains you?' (or 'What are you sick from?')

When the *la* is used in conjunction with a time word, then the question conveyed is "when".

54. *Ø-Ŋ̄fòn   tó   **ségé   lá**?*
    c1-chief come time what
    'When will the chief come?' (lit. 'The chief comes at what time?')

55. *Ø-Ŋ̄fòn   tó   jú   chí   **lá**?*
    c1-chief come c5:day c5:AM(?) what
    'When will the chief come?' (lit. 'The chief comes on what day?')

Why questions are formed by *njɛ* 'reason' followed by *la.*

56. *Wɔ̄ báá́ŋ jō   kɔ̄-dɛ̄   gɛ̄   **ñjɛ̄   lā**?*
    2s   Neg3 c9:water carry-Prog Neg1 reason what
    'Why have you not carried water?' (lit. 'For what reason have you not carried water?')

Who and whose is expressed by the use of *yɛ*.

57. *Wū-nè   lē   yɛ̀?*
    c1-this   be   who
    'Who is this?'

58. *Wū-nē   lē   mwā   yɛ̀?*
    c1-this   be   c1:child   who
    'Whose child is this?'

Where is expressed by the use of the word *fɔnɛ*.

59. Wɔ̀ *gē-nɛ́   fɔ̄nɛ̂?*
    2s   go-Prog   where
    'Where are you going?'

60. *Chí   j-ɔ̀ŋ   lé   fɔ̄nɛ̂?*
    c1-father c1-your   be   where
    'Where is your father?'

The quantity of countable items is expressed through the use of *mɛ*, which takes the class prefix of the item in question.

61. *Wɔ̀ lē   bɛ́   bɔ̀ŋ   bà-mɛ̀?*
    2s   be   with   c2:child   c2-how.many
    'How many children do you have?'

62. *Lē   bì-gè   bì-mɛ̂?*
    be   c8-teeth   c8-how.many
    'How much does it cost?'

The quantity of mass nouns is expressed through the word *nɛɛ* 'how'.

63. a) *Wɔ̀ kāmɛ́ Ø-ŋkāŋ   nɛ̄ɛ̀?*
    2s   have   c1-beer   how
    'How much beer are you having?'

    b) *Jò   lé   ī-shē   nɛ̄ɛ̀   ā   shīāŋ   lé?*
    C9:water   be   c9-amount   how   Loc   c9:pot   there
    'How much water is remaining in the pot?'

4.2 Functions of elements in the clause

4.2.1 Grammatical relations

Nchane grammatical relations are largely differentiated by word order. Subjects of intransitive as well as transitive sentences precede the verb. Objects follow the verb, with indirect objects occurring first and the direct object occuring last.

64. a) Intransitive sentence

    S   V
    Mwá   gɛ́   lè.
    c1:child P3 sleep
    'The child slept.'

  b) Transitive sentence

    S   V   DO
    Wù gɛ́   nyā kwā̀.
    3s   P3 give c3:money
    'He gave money.'

  c) Ditransitive sentence

    S   V   IO   DO
    Wù gɛ́ nyā mwà,   kwà.
    3s   P3 give c1:child c3:money
    'He gave money to the child.'

The following schematic provides a summary of Nchane word order.

     Subject   Verb   Indirect Object   Direct Object

4.2.2 Adverbial elements

Simple time words and other adverbial phrases are typically phrase final.

65. a) *Wɔ̄ ché wɔ̄-tɔ̄ fánē [Būākɔ̄sē].*
    3s P2 3s-come here Buakɔse
    'He came here on Buakɔse[7].'

  b) *Wɔ̀ ché wɔ̄-tɔ̀ fánē [fɔ̄shɛ̄-ŋ̀gùfɛ̀].*
    3s P2 3s-come here two.days.ago
    'He came here two days ago.'

The example below shows the adverbial phrase in a postposition clause with *ye* 'in' as its head.

66. *Bá-mî bā-nɛ̂ bá-fwê gē bí bɔ́ fūnè à Ø-àfyɔ́ŋ lē*
    c2-person c2-four c2-first P3 ??? 3p fly by c1-airplane ???

    kɛ̀-gɛ̀ Mìsājé bɔ̄ gɛ̄ŋ Ákwētó bɔ̄ kásē bɔ̄ tú Mìsàjē
    start-Prog Misaje 3p go Akweto 3p come.back 3p return Misaje

    [yē bī-bɔ́ bī jú lé m̀báŋnyē ǹchɔ̀ bī-tɛ̀ŋ].
    in c8-arm c8AM c9:watch ??? forty plus c8-five
    'The four persons flew from Misaje town, to Akweto, and back to Misaje in 45 minutes.

More complex adverbials often precede the main clause. These generally relate the action in the main clause to a different action in the adverbial clause. The two adverbial words *taŋ* 'time' and *lɛ* 'while' are productive.

67. a) *[Táŋ wū bí nōŋ ā jɔ̀], bī jī-ŋē kī-shúshɛ̄.*
    time c1Rel 1p throw Loc c9:water 2p watch-Prog c7-float
    'When we threw it (the hook) into the water, we watched the float.'

  b) *[Táŋ wū bā sòŋ], bá gɛ̂ jò yō.*
    time c1Rel 2p pound 2p put c9:water inside
    'After they pound (the palm nuts), they pour water (on them).'

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[7] Buakɔse is a day of the week in the Nchane eight-day week system.

68. a) *[Lɛ̀   yí jènyè   ā   jɔ̃],*   yī yɛ́ cháŋ   yī jī mū-ntâŋ
       while c9 move:Prog Loc c9:water c9 see c9:monkey c9 eat c26-fruit

   yī   kī-tē   lē.
   c9AM c7-tree there
   'While he was moving in the water, he saw a monkey eating fruit in a tree.'

   b) *[Lɛ̄   bɔ́ gē bí Fēwɔ̃̀ŋ],* mūŋ   gē nyá Ø-ñtāŋ   fɛ̄   wū lé gɛ̄ŋ
      while 3p P3 be Fewong c1:man P3 give c1-thought where 3s F1 go

   wū lɛ̄ŋ   mwɛ̄   fɔ̃.
   3s cultivate c3:farm Loc
   'While they were at Fewong, each person thought of where he would go to cultivate a
   garden.'

   Other time words expressing concepts like 'day' and 'week' are followed by *le* 'there'.

69. a) *[Yɛ́ kì-mā   kí-fwè lè],*   bá gɛ́ yɛ̄yɛ̀   kɔ̃nɛ̀ bà-nchɛ̀.*
       in c7-week c7-first there 3p P3 teach about c2-laws
       'The first week, they taught about the laws.'

   b) *[Jū   chí-fwé chī   mɛ̄ ŋ-gē ñ-lā bīɛ́ŋ   lɛ̄],*
      c9:day c9-first   c9Rel 1s   1s-P3 1s-go c10:fish there

   ñsàŋ   yà-ŋ   wū gɛ̀ jò   mɛ̀.
   c9:friend c9-1sPos 3s P3 take 1s
   'The first time(day) that I went fishing, my friend took me.'

4.2.3 Clause level particles

4.2.3.1 Conjunctions

   Coordination of clauses is most often done by simple juxtaposition.

70. *Ńcháné gɛ́ jɛ̄mè jɛ̄   í-mímīà bɔ̃ gí-í   mwɛ̄ŋ   nómàà.*
    Nchane P3 speak c9:language c9-one 3p do-Prog c26:thing same
    'The Nchane people spoke the same language and were doing the same things.'

However, in some cases the conjunction *bɛ* 'and/with', which is most often seen joining two or more nouns, may join two clauses.

71. *Wù ké   lē bā má yɛ̄   **bɛ̄** lɛ̀ wū lɛ̀ŋ mwɛ̀   nɛ̀.*
    3s   know how 3p build c10:house and how 3s work c3:farm ???
    'He knows how to build houses and how to work the farm.'

Coordination of clauses may also be accomplished through the use of *gɛ* 'or'.

72. *Ké mùŋ   kɛ̄ŋɛ̀ sōŋō   tānlɛ̀   nyūŋ   bū-shɛ̀,*
    Inf c1:man have c5:palm be:able Cop(Past) c14-inheritance

    *fí-yɛ́   fī   mùŋ   yēlɛ́, **gɛ́** fì-yɛ̀   fī   mùŋ   gū   bɛ̄ kwà.*
    c19-thing C19Rel c1:man plant or c19-thing c19Rel c1:man buy with c3:money
    'One can own palm trees from inheritance, plant his own or buy an estate with money.'

73. *Chē   táŋ   lɛ̀ bā kfùŋ bā jī **gɛ̄** bā lā wāāŋ   yū.*
    c10:kernals always ??? 3p crack 3p eat or 3p go c5:market Instr
    'Kernels can be cracked and eaten or taken to the market.'

4.2.3.2 Quotative Particles

Quoted speech may be introduced using the quotative particle *lɛ* (QP). This particle occurs with verbs like *du* 'to say' and *chu* 'to reply' and immediately precedes the quoted clause or clauses. It is related to the complementizer.

74. *Yì dú **lɛ̄,** "Ǹfòn   gɔ̀-né   lɛ̄   wū jí shīɛ̄ŋ   y-ɔ̄."*
    c9 say QP c1:chief want-Prog Comp 2s eat c9:heart c9-2sPos
    He (monkey) said this, "The chief wants to eat your heart."

75. *Áblàhām chū   **lɛ̀,** "Músɛ̀ bɛ́ bā-mì bā   Ø-n-fɛ̀jɛ̀*
    Abraham reply QP Moses and c2-man c2AM c1-Nom-preach

    bɔ̄ fɛ̀jé   bɔ̀ lɛ̄."
    3p preach:Prog 3p there
    'Abraham responded, "Moses and the prophets are teaching them."'

5 Conclusion

Like most languages, the grammar of Nchane is quite complex. As such, the goal of this paper has been to provide only a preliminary study of the basics of the grammar. Many interesting elements remain unadressed entirely, while still others have been treated here with a cursory examination. For example, clause combining operations need further analysis, as do clause level particles. The subject of deictics has not been formally mentioned and the role of tone in Nchane grammar remains to be fully researched. However, the richness of the Nchane language may be seen from this introductory research.

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