An Outline Sketch of Gemzek Grammar

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Contents

1 Introduction

This document is a very brief grammar sketch, intended to give an overview of the main features of Gemzek grammar.

The data has come from two sources: elicited data obtained during a workshop held in Maroua in December 2004; and data from fourteen Gemzek written texts. In all areas, features seen in elicited data were crosschecked with more natural data from the written texts to ensure that the features were not the result of literal translation from French.

Gemzek is a Chadic language spoken in the Far North Province of Cameroon. There are approximately 10,000 speakers of the language situated primarily in the canton of Serawa, Tokombere subdivision, Mayo Sava division.

Newman (1977) mentions Gemzek as a dialect of Zulgo, which is in turn described as a dialect of Mofu. Mofu is classified as Afro-Asiatic, Chadic, Biu-Mandara, A, 5. Barreteau (1984) also considered Gemzek to be a dialect of Zulgo, though he did consider Gaduwa to be a distinct language. In ALCAM (Dieu and Renaud 1983) Gemzek is classified as Afro-Asiatique, Tchadique, Centre, Centre-Ouest, Wandala-Mafa, Sud. Its ALCAM language code is [161], which it shares with Zulgo. Gemzek is classified in the *Ethnologue* (Grimes 2000) as Afro-Asiatic, Chadic, Biu-Mandara, A, A5, and its language code is GND.

Although there are many similarities between Zulgo and Gemzek, these should be considered to be distinct languages. This is reflected in the phonologies, where Gemzek has a vowel system that is substantially different from that of Zulgo (see Gravina 2003, Haller 1980). More closely related is the speech variety known as Gaduwa, which though previously regarded as a separate language (Barreteau 1984) is here considered a dialect of Gemzek. Indeed, the Gemzek language committee includes members of both dialects, and the two groups communicate together without difficulty.

Previous studies of Gemzek include *Language Survey of Gemzek [161] and Gaduwa [185]* (Brye: 2000), *Gemzek Phonology* (Gravina: 2003) and *L'orthographe de la langue Guemzek* (Gravina et al: 2005). The examples in this document follow the orthography laid down in this last document.

One of the key features of the grammar of Gemzek is the wide use of the particles *a/ya/wa* and *a/ye/wa* in its syntax. These particles have roles in the formation of prepositional phrases, directional verb forms, relative clauses and questions. In all cases they occur at the end of the syntactical unit being marked. A good knowledge of the function of these particles is essential for a clear understanding of Gemzek grammar.

The paper is structured as follows. Section one gives an introduction to the language. Section two presents a description of the verb phrase. Section three describes the elements and structure of the noun phrase. Section four describes the structure of the clause, along with clause elements not mentioned in previous sections. Section five describes the structure of certain types of complex sentence.

2 Verb Phrase

2.1 Structure of the Verb

The verb consists of a stem preceded by prefixes marking person, number, tense, aspect and mood, and followed by suffixes marking subject agreement, indirect object agreement, habitual aspect and direction.

The overall structure is as follows:

Table 1 - Verb Morphology

Person/Number	Tense	Stem	Habitual	Subject/Incompletive	Indirect object	Transitivity	Direction
na	ta		-awa	-akwa	-eŋ	di	ya
ka	a			-ama	-ak		aha
a				-um	-ay		
ta							
…				-e			

2.2 Agreement

There are only four categories of subject agreement marked on the prefix: 1s, 2, 3s and 3p. From these a total of eight person/number forms are created by the use of verb suffixes. The 1p inclusive and dual forms are created from the 2s by adding the suffixes –*akwa* and –*ama* respectively. Thus these forms are really 2 + 1p and 2 + 1s. 2p is formed with the addition of the suffix –*um*. The 1pEx form is created from 3s by the addition of the 1pEx pronoun *mər* before the verb. This form can be analyzed as 3 + 1p.

Indirect agreement is only marked on the verb for singular indirect objects.

2.3 Tense and Aspect

2.3.1 Completive and Incompletive Aspects

The primary distinction in Gemzek tense-aspect is between **completive** and **incompletive** aspect. Completive aspect denotes an event that is complete at the current discourse time, and incompletive denotes an action that is not complete at the current discourse time.

Completive aspect is the unmarked aspect. Incompletive aspect is formed form the completive by the addition of the suffix –*e*, which entails the palatalization of the verb root and prefix. However, when a subject agreement suffix is added to the verb root, this deletes the incompletive suffix, and the verb is no longer distinguishable from the completive.

Table 2- Completive and Incompletive of verb *həpəɗ* **'to eat'**

	Completive	Incompletive
1s	na həpəɗ	ne həpəɗe
2s	ka həpəɗ	ke həpəɗe
3s	a həpəɗ	a həpəɗe
1pEx	mər a həpəɗ	mər a həpəɗe
1pDu	ka həpəɗama	ka həpəɗama
1pIn	ka həpəɗakwa	ka həpəɗakwa

2p	ka həpəɗum	ka həpəɗum
3p	ta həpəɗ	te həpəɗe

2.3.2 Tense

Gemzek also has a **past** tense (or perfect), and a marked **future** tense. The past tense is formed from the completive by the lengthening of the prefix vowel, or in 3s and 1pEx by the use of *aka* and *ka*. The marked future is formed from the incompletive by adding the marker *ta* (palatalized as *te*) between the prefix and the verb.

Table 3 - Past and Future Tenses of verb *həpəɗ* 'to eat'

	Past	Marked Future
1s	naa həpəɗ	na te həpəɗe
2s	kaa həpəɗ	ka te həpəɗe
3s	ka/aka həpəɗ	a te həpəɗe
1pEx	mər ka həpəɗ	mər a te həpəɗe
1pDu	kaa həpəɗama	ka ta həpəɗama
1pIn	kaa həpəɗakwa	ka ta həpəɗakwa
2p	kaa həpəɗum	ka ta həpəɗum
3p	taa həpəɗ	ta te həpəɗe

The unmarked completive form of the verb is used as the default narrative aspect. The marked past tense is used as a perfect tense, setting the marked clause as occurring before the main clause, but with continued consequences.

1)   a pər i buwa ti,   hiyiŋ   ka   wuɗahay   di   gə duk ŋgay
       3s see at front   Top squirrel 3sPas dig_up-3sIO Trans Pl thing his
       'When he looked ahead, the squirrel had dug up his things.'

It is not clear what the distinction is between the 3s forms *ka* and *aka*.

2)   Sər asa   ti, yam ka   pa biyeŋ   halaka.
       know again Top water 3sPas put this_season lots

       Kage ka   ndahaw   i biye ya   tsi ti,   aka hwasla na yam.
       if   3sPas appear-Dir at hole here Neg Top 3sAnt spoil   with water
       'Remember, it has rained a lot this year. If (your millet) has not sprouted, it has rotted with water.'

2.3.3 Progressive Aspect

The **progressive** is formed from the incompletive aspect by the addition of *ina* before the verb prefix.

3)   Ina a daw
       Prog 3s go-Dir
       'He is coming.'

4)   Ina a de   ɗaf
       Prog 3s cook-In food
       'He is coming food.'

5)   mǝr   ina a zǝme ɗaf
        We(ex) Prog 3s eat-In food
        'We are eating (food).'

2.3.4 Habitual

The **habitual** aspect is formed by the addition of the suffix *–awa*. It is not possible to determine whether the base form is completive or incompletive, since the incompletive suffix *–e* is deleted by any other suffix.

6)   Na zlawa   guzer i feneŋ a viye viye.
        1s take-Hab grass at here   at year year.
        'I cut grass here every year.'

7)   Gǝ bǝɓa   ta fǝtawa   i gǝr gǝma.
        Pl grandfather 3p farm-Hab at head mountain.
        'The ancestors used to farm on the mountain.'

8)   Dǝvar   a gǝsawa   gǝ awak.
        leopard 3s catch-Hab Pl goat
        'Leopards used to catch goats.'

2.3.5 Generic

The unmarked completive aspect is used to express generic or timeless concepts.

9)   Gǝ Wuzlam ta hǝpǝɗ kǝra.
        Pl Ouldeme 3p eat   dog
        'The Ouldeme eat dog.'

10)   Gǝ kutsom ta ndza i slǝlak.
        Pl hyrax   3p live at cave
        'Hyraxes live in caves.'

2.3.6 Pluractional

There are no pluractional, repetitive or distributive forms so far attested in Gemzek.

2.4 Voice

2.4.1 Active and Unaccusative

Gemzek verbs can be categorized as either being **active** or **unaccusative** in their unmarked form.

The particle *di* is used following unaccusative verbs to create a transitive verb from the unmarked form.

11)   Duwa   aka hǝɓ.
        Water_jar 3sAnt break
        'The water jar broke'

12)   Mǝkas aka hǝɓ **di**   duwa.
        woman 3sAnt break Trans water_jar
        'The woman broke the water jar.'

13) Zuŋgo aka pəl.
    Donkey 3sAnt untie
    'The donkey became untied.'

14) Wawa aka pəl **di** zuŋgo.
    child 3sAnt untie Trans donkey
    'The child untied the donkey.'

15) A **ndəv di** makwaza fit ti, daw ŋgay ka ndahaw tsi.
    3s finish Trans weeding all Top, millet his 3sPas appear Neg
    'When he had finished all the weeding, his millet didn't appear.'

16) Makaɓara a **ndəve** i bəra bay.
    festival 3s finish-Inacc at house_of chief
    'The festival was finishing at the chief's house.'

An intransitive verb can be formed from a transitive verb by moving the patient to the subject position and replacing the object with a body part noun such as 'head' or 'mouth'.

17) Aka gəs kəlef.
    3sAnt catch fish
    'He caught a fish.'

18) Kəlef aka gas ba.
    fish 3sAnt catch body
    'The fish was caught.'

19) na tsuhoɓ ba a yam - "baktisma".
    1s soak body at water baptism
    'I was baptized.'

2.4.2 Impersonal Voice

The impersonal voice is marked in Gemzek by the use of the third person plural.

20) Ta kəleŋ di awak.
    3p steal-1sIO Trans goat
    'My goat was stolen.'

21) Ta vəleŋ gwedere.
    3p give-1sIO debt
    'I was given a loan.'

22) Ta təvay a malamər ga.
    3p hit-3sIO to brother my
    'My brother was hit.'

2.4.3 Reciprocal Voice

Reciprocal verb forms are created by the use of the noun 'body' as the grammatical object of the verb. In some cases this word is pluralized, possible to avoid confusion with reflexive voice (see 2.4.4).

23)   Gə gwaŋgwazl ta kəɗ **ba**.
        Pl cock   3p hit body
        'The cocks were fighting each other.'

24)   Ta ɗəfəla gə **ba**.
        3p talk   Pl body
        'They talked to each other.'

25)   Ta sər   gə **ba**.
        3p know Pl body
        'They know each other.'

2.4.4 Reflexive Voice

Reflexive voice is also formed using the noun 'body' as the grammatical object of the verb.

26)   A kəɗ malamər ŋgay.
        3s hit brother   his
        'He hit his brother.'

27)   A kəɗ **ba**.
        3s hit   body
        'He hit himself.'

28)   A gwaɗay a masla ŋgay.
        3s say-3sIO to friend his
        'He said to his friend.'

29)   A gwaɗ a **ba**.
        3s say   to body
        'He said to himself.'

2.4.5 Causative Voice

There is no productive causative construction in Gemzek.

2.4.6 Directional Voice

In Gemzek there is another valency changing construction that allows a verb to take a destination complement. This I shall refer to as directional voice. It is marked by the addition of the suffix *–aw* to the verb. The default sense is that the motion is towards the speaker or the centre of interest.

When the verb is marked with *–aw*, the noun phrases denoting the destination and the direct object affected by the motion are both followed by the particle *ya*, with its variants *a* and *wa*. (See also section 4.2.) This also applies to the transitivizing particle *di*.

30)   Bay ka **ndəslaw** a fineŋ **a**.
        chief 3s arrive-Dir to here here
        'The chief arrived here.'

31)   Na **səkəmaw** sla **ya**.
       1s buy-Dir   cow here
       'I bought a cow (and brought it home).'

32)   Ka **daw**   di   **ya** a ma   **ya**.
       2s go-Dir Trans here to house here
       'You bring it to the house.'

33)   Ta **paw**   di   **ya** mər **a**   a bəra   **ya**   ɗəf tsoy.
       3p put-Dir Trans here us(ex) here at outside here many done
       'They put many of us outside.'

If the directional suffix is required on a verb along with the habitual suffix –*awa*, the form of the directional suffix becomes –*ya*.

34)   A **səkəmawaya** gə sla **ya**.
       3s buy-Hab-Dir Pl cow here
       'He habitually buys and brings home cows.'

If the direction is towards a different accessible destination, the particle *aha* 'to there' follows the verb. There is no directional marking on the verb itself or on any other clause element.

35)   Na slər **aha** kəla ga a təv kurom.
       1s send to_there child my at place your
       'I sent my child to your house.'

2.5 Mood

2.5.1 Imperative
The imperative is formed from the root of the verb without any subject-aspect prefix.

36)   **Vəleŋ**   yam !
       give-1sIO water
       'Give me water!'

37)   **Məyak** di !
       leave   Trans
       'Leave (it)!'

38)   **Zəmakwa** !
       eat-1pInc
       'Let's eat! (more than two people)'

39)   **Zəmama** !
       eat-1pDual
       'Let's eat! (two people)'

40)   **Ndzum** ɗikɗik !
       sit-2p   silent
       'Be quiet!'

The imperative of the verb 'to go' changes stem for the 1p forms.

41)   da   go (s)
        tama   let's go (dual)
        takwa let's go (inc)
        dum   go (pl)

The imperative for 'to come' is formed from the verb *da* 'to go' with the directional suffix –*ara*. This suffix is not used elsewhere in Gemzek.

42)   dara   come (s)
        dumara   come (pl)

2.5.2 Subjunctive

The subjunctive in Gemzek is almost identical in form to the indicative, except in the third person singular, where the subject-aspect prefix *a-* is replace by *ma-*

43)   Ma   daw !
        3sSbj go-Dir
        'Let him come!'

44)   A daw.
        3s go-Dir
        'He came.'

45)   Mbulom ma   vəlak   zay !
        God   3sSbj give-2sIO peace
        'May God give you peace!'

46)   Ka   de   a ma   ataŋa bəse
        2sSbj go-In to house that   quickly
        'You must home quickly!'

47)   Ka   lambaɗakwa gər   ga !
        1pSbj repair-1pInc   head house
        'We must repair the roof!'

2.5.3 Modal Obligation

There is a modal particle *ta* which is placed between the subject-aspect prefix and the verb. This particle marks obligation. This is identical with the future tense marker (see section 2.3.2), though further studies are required to determine if the tone is different.

48)   Ka ta   tuwa tsi !
        2s must cry   Neg
        'You must not cry!'

49)   Ka tə   yakwa   bə   tsi !
        1p must tire-1pInc body Neg
        'We must not get tired.'

2.6 Subordinated Verb Forms

Subordinated verbs are formed in Gemzek by adding the prefix *ma-* to the verb, and either the suffix *–a* or *–e*. Where the suffix *–e* is used, the palatalization of the suffix spreads onto the verb.

The uses of the subordinated verb form are described in the appropriate sections (Verbal nouns, section 3.10; Verbal adjectives, section 3.6; Adverbial constructions, section 4.2.4; Verbal subordinate clauses 5.1).

The difference in function between the suffixes *–a* and *–e* is extremely unclear, as can be seen in the following pair of examples.

50)   həbe hus ahar **maɗəsa** daw dayaŋ.
        wait-In until time Sub-cut millet first
        'Wait until millet-cutting time.'

51)   Həba hus a zovo,   kage tsi ahar **meɗəse** daw.
        wait until to harvest if   Neg time Sub-cut millet.
        'Wait until harvest, if not millet cutting time.'

3 Noun Phrase

3.1 The Structure of the Noun Phrase

The structure of the noun phrase in Gemzek can be represented as follows.

Plural Noun Possessor   Demonstrative   Determiner   Quantifier

52)   gə duk ataŋa ye   fit
        Pl thing that   Det all
        'All those things'

53)   kəver geleke ataŋa
        liver   monkey that
        'That monkey's liver' (GC005)

3.2 Plural

Plurals are formed in Gemzek by the placing the particle *gə* before the noun.

54)   kəra   'dog'   gə kəra   'dogs'
        dərezl dok 'tree'   gə dərezl dok   'trees'
        pəlaɗ   'rock'   gə pəlaɗ   'rocks'
        awura   'granary'   gə awura   'granaries'

3.3 Demonstratives

Gemzek has a large set of demonstrative adjectives.

55)   mendzukwer aseneŋ   'this chicken (here)'
        mendzukwer asəkay   'this chicken (here)'
        mendzukwer asaŋa   'this chicken (nearby)'

        mendzukwer atəkay   'that chicken (far)'
        mendzukwer ataɗeŋ   'that chicken (far)'
        mendzukwer ataŋa   'that chicken (as opposed to another chicken)'

3.4 Numbers and Quantities

Numerals in Gemzek follow the noun.

56)   Na səkam gə mendzukwer **sulo**.
        1s buy   Pl chicken   two
        'I bought two chickens.'

Partitives are expressed using the prepositional phrase *I luwaŋ ... ya* 'from among'. The numeral functions as a noun in these structures.

57)   Gə **sulo** ŋa i luwaŋ gə mendzukwer a   ta mat.
        Pl two Adj at middle Pl chicken   away 3p die
        'Two from among the chickens died.'

58)   Gə mendzukwer ta mət i luwaŋ a   ya **sulo**.
        Pl chicken   3p die at middle Det away two.
        'Two of the chickens died.'

Ordinals precede the noun. For numbers greater than one they are formed by prefixing the numeral with *ma-*.

59)   Ɗəvats ka   gas **malahhalah** mendzukwer.
        illness 3sPas hold first   chicken
        'The first chicken was ill.'

60)   Magamak aka   həpaɗ **masulo** mendzukwer.
        cat   3sAnt eat   second chicken
        'A wild cat ate the second chicken.'

Quantifiers, like numerals, follow the noun.

61)   Na ŋgatay   a gə awak **halaka** i luma.
        1s see-3sIO at Pl goat   many   at market.
        'I saw many goats at market.'

62)   Na ŋgatay   a gə awak tsəɗakwa i luma.
        1s see-3sIO at Pl goat   few   at market.
        'I saw few goats at market.'

3.5 Attributes

In Gemzek, adjectives can occur either before or after the noun. When they occur after the noun, they are followed by the particle *ŋa*.

63)   Kər   **ŋgwal** mburo.
        you(s) good   person
        'You are a good person.'

64) …nda gə **batsah** gə mburo tay   a   fit
      with Pl big   Pl person their Det all
      'with all their big men'

65) Na gay   sʉse   a Mbulom **batsah ŋa**.
      1s do-3sIO thanks to God   big   Adj
      'I give thanks to the great God.'

66) Mamər kəram   a wez kəver geleke   a kəla ŋgay **gudər   ŋa**.
      mother crocodile 3s ask   liver   monkey at child her   youngest Adj
      'The crocodile's mother asked for a monkey's liver from her youngest child.'

It is possible that the adjectives that precede the noun are in fact functioning as nouns, and that the structure is an associative structure, though since associative structures in Gemzek have no overt marking this is impossible to prove. This type of associative structure used for attribution does occur, albeit rarely, in the neighbouring languages Merey and Mbuko, where associative structures are overtly marked.

3.6 Verbal Adjectives

Subordinated verbs can be used as verbal adjectives. In this case they are followed by the adjectivizer *ŋa*.

67) Kəzlam ilek ti,   **mesəkeme** ŋa   ti,   nda dəbu
      calabash one Top Sub-buy   Adj Top with thousand
      'One measure sold for 1,000 cfa.'

68) Hiyeŋ ka   wudahay di   gə duk ŋgay, daw **masləla**   ŋa tsi.
      squirrel 3sPas digup-3sIO Trans Pl thing his   millet Sub-germinate Adj Neg
      'The squirrel dug up his things, but the millet (was) not germinated.'

69) Ta pər a ga   tay ataŋa ti,   **mambəzla** ŋa.
      3p see at house their this   Top Sub-destroy Adj
      'They saw their houses (were) destroyed.'

3.7 Relative Clauses

In Gemzek the relative clause is marked by the relativizer *ase/asi* at the beginning, and is closed by the determiner *a*, or its variants *ye* following a non-back vowel and *wa* following a back vowel or the word *bə* 'head'. The head is not repeated in the relative clause. No special form of the verb is used.

70) Kəla kəram   a dzala a duk **ase** mama ŋgay a wez **a**.
      child crocodile 3s think at thing Rel mother his   3s ask   Det
      'The young crocodile thought about the thing that his mother had asked.'

71) I təv   **ase** ina a vele   **ye**.
      at place Rel Prog 3s run-In Det
      'At the place to which he was running.'

72) Asəkay metsəhe **asi** iye na vəle   a dəm malamar ga **ye**.
    here   wisdom   Rel me 1s give-In at girl   brother   my Det
    'Here is the advice that I am giving to my niece.'

The relative clause may take the form of a verbless clause (see section 4.3), though since the head is omitted, the relative clause may consist of just a single element.

73) Agəra   mandzibra **asi** mbokom **a**   ti, ka   nas.
    because world   Rel today   Det Top 3sPas spoil.
    'Because the world which (it is) today is spoilt.'

74) Sule   **asi** i kər **a**   ti, a sle   tsi.
    money Rel at you Det Top 3s suffice-In Neg
    'The money which (it is) yours is not enough.'

3.8 Associative Construction

Associative constructions are formed by the juxtaposition of the two nouns.

75) gər wawa   (head child)   'a child's head'
     gutel pəles   (tail horse)   'a horse's tail'
     gə sek kəra   (Pl leg dog)   'a dog's legs'
     kəla kunok ga   (child uncle my)   'the child of my uncle'
     tsir məkas ga   (grandfather wife my)   'my wife's grandfather'
     gər gəma   (head mountain)   'the summit of a mountain'
     kəra bay   (dog chief)   'the chief's dog'
     wedem malamər ga   (sickle brother my)   'my brother's sickle'
     ga bay   (house chief)   'a chief's palace'

3.9 Pronouns

The following table presents the main pronouns in Gemzek.

Table 4 - Pronouns

	Emphatic Subject	Direct Object	Indirect Object	Possessive adjective	Possessive pronoun
1s	iye	iye	-eŋ	ga	i ga
2s	kər	kar	-ak	yak	i yak
3s	ŋgat	ŋgat	-ay	ŋgay	i ŋgay
1ex	mər	mar	a mar	mar	i mar
1d	ma	ma	a may	ma	i ma
1inc	ko	ko	a kway	ko	i ko
2p	kurom	kurom	a kurom	kurom	i kurom
3p	tay	tay	a tay	tay	i tay

The indirect object pronouns are verbal suffixes in the singular, but separate phrasal elements in the plural.

3.10 Verbal Nouns

The verbal noun in Gemzek is formed by adding the suffix *–e* and the prefix *ma-* to the verb stem. The palatalization of the suffix spreads across the stem and the prefix.

Table 5 – Formation of Infinitives

stem	noun	gloss
sa	mese	drinking
tsaraka	metsereke	hearing
vak	meveke	grilling
zur	mezʉre	admiring

The verbal noun can form the head or complement of an associative construction.

76) **Mendze** ga na wawa ŋa.
Sub-sit my with child Adj
'My childhood.'

77) I dəba **megəzle** daw a
at back Sub-thresh millet away
'After the millet-threshing'

78) Ahar **meɗəse** daw
time Sub-cut millet
'At millet-cutting (harvest) time'

79) Ta gərve na **mevete** tsətsœk i makaɓara sla.
3p dance-In with Sub-blow flute at festival cow
'They are dancing with flute-blowing at the festival of the cow.'

80) A say ti, ga **mehəne** makər, ga **mepe** duk ilek...
he_wants Top house Sub-sleep three house Sub-put thing one
'He want three sleeping huts, one store hut…'

81) gə ɓəzla **mege** sariya
Pl person Sub-do judgement
'judges'

4 The Clause

4.1 The Structure of the Clause

Gemzek is a SVO language, with indirect objects and adverbial phrases following.

4.2 Clause Elements

4.2.1 Prepositional Phrases

In Gemzek prepositions precede the noun.

82) A pa daw **a** awura.
3s put millet at granary
'He put the millet in the granary.'

83) A da **a** luma **na** məkas ŋgay.
3s go to market with wife his
'He went to market with his wife.'

The preposition *i … ya* 'from' consists of two parts: the preposition *i* and the modifier *ya* which follows the noun phrase. This modifier has three forms: *ya* following a non-back vowel; *wa* following a back vowel; and *a* following a consonant.

84)   A maw **i Marwa ya**.
        3s return-Dir at Maroua from
        'He returned from Maroua.'

85)   Arav a   da **i gə mburo wa**   kweleŋ.
        chest 3s go at Pl person away entirely
        'Everyone was worried.' (FA010)

86)   Gə Gemzek ta daha   ti,   **i Dzeɓe ya**,   ada **i Muyaŋ a**.
        Pl Gemzek 3p go-here Top at Jebe   away and at Muyang away
        'The Gemzek came from Jebe and from Muyang.'

More complex prepositions are formed using body parts or other nouns in an associative construction.

87)   i huɗ   (at belly)   'inside'
        i dəba   (at back)   'behind'
        i tsaka   (at side)   'beside'
        i magar   (at middle)   'in the middle of'
        i luwaŋ   (at middle)   'among'
        i gər   (at head)   'above'
        i bə   (at body)   'under'

88)   Gwaŋgwazl a ndza **a gər   galak**.
        cock   3s sit   at head hangar
        'The cock sat on top of the hangar.'

4.2.2 Adverbs of Manner

Adverbs of manner may occur either clause finally, or in the focused clause-initial position.

89)   A pə di   ba   a mevele **yaɗaɗa** hus   a magar duluv.
        3s put Trans body at Inf-run-Inf on_water as_far_as at middle lake

        Tsam   ti, **səlamama** ina pəts di   geleke a yam.
        Immediate Top drown   Prog enter Trans monkey at water
        'He started to run across the water as far as the middle of the lake. Suddenly the monkey was drowning in the water.'

Most manner adverbs take the form of ideophones. These have distinct phonological forms. In the above example the two ideophones have a reduplicated final syllable. This syllable may be repeated as many times as the speaker wishes. The adverb *səlamama* in the example is derived from the verb *səlama* 'to drown'.

4.2.3 Adverbial Phrases

The structure: **with + N + adjectivizer** is used to form adverbial phrases from nouns.

90) Na da a ga   Mbulom **na takaza ŋa**.
     1s go to house God   with fear   Adj
     'I went to church fearfully.'

4.2.4 Adverbial Subordinate Clauses

Adverbial subordinate clauses are formed using *na* 'with' and the subordinated form of the verb.

91) Gǝ mburo kweleŋ ta gǝrve   **na mevete tsǝtsœk** i makaɓara sla.
     Pl person all   3p dance-In with Sub-blow flute   at festival   cow.
     'Everyone danced and played flutes at the cow festival.'

92) Tsam   ti, a zǝŋgal ba **na makǝɗa sla** hǝzza.
     immediate Top 3s follow body with Sub-kill cow numerous
     'Then it continued with the killing of many cows.'

4.3 Clause Types

4.3.1 Negative Clauses

Negative clauses are formed by placing the particle *tsi* at the end of the clause.

93) A say mefǝte   tsi.
     3s want Sub-cultivate Neg
     'He didn't want to farm.'

94) Ka ta lakay   a mbǝra tsi.
     2s Fut insult-3sIO to person Neg
     'You will not insult anyone.'

4.3.2 Existential Clauses

Existential clauses use the pseudo-verb *ayiŋ* 'to exist'.

95) Wele   ŋa **ayiŋ**, ay i Matal
     person Adj exist he at Matal
     'There was a man from Matal.'

96) Vǝdam kurum **ayiŋ** tsi.
     ground your(pl) exist Neg
     'You do not have any land'

4.3.3 Equative Clauses

Gemzek has a verb *na* 'to be', which can be used in equative clauses.

97) Ɗaf a viye ŋa ataŋa ti, a **ne**   slo   fetete.
     food at year Adj that   Top 3s be-In meat Id
     'That year food was (as rare as) meat.'

98) Ka ta **ne** mala mendewele tsi
    2s must be-In person lie   Neg
    'You must not be a liar.'

In many cases equative clauses are verbless, with no copula.

99) ŋgat mala mandzay   ahəm eklesiya kiga ndottidzo wa.
    he   man Sub-sit-3sIO mouth church like elder   Det
    'He was an elder in the church.'

100) hoho i ɗəma ilek ilek.
    fruit at inside one one
    'There were a few fruit on it.'

101) Iye ilek i bəra kunok ga i ga   Mbulom.
    me one at home uncle my at house God
    'I was the only one at my uncle's house to go to church.'

5 Complex Sentences

5.1 Subordinated Clauses

5.1.1 Verbal Subordinate Clauses

Certain verbs take as their complements subordinate clauses.

102) Ka sak   **mede**.
    you_want Sub-go
    'You want to go.'

103) Na sər   **mede** i gər yam a   tsi.
    1s know Sub-go at head water away Neg
    'I don't know how to swim.'

In some cases the subordinate clause functions as the indirect object of the verb.

104) Ta daslay a **mekəlehe**.
    3p begin   at Sub-hoe
    'They began to hoe.'

105) Ka ta   mum   a **mege** guvol mba tsi dze.
    2   must return-2p at Sub-do war   still Neg before
    'You must not do battle any more.'

106) Gaduwa a pə ba   a **metuwe** aha.
    Gaduwa 3s put body at Sub-cry   there
    'Gaduwa began to cry.'

When the subordinated verb carries a suffix, the final *–e* of the verb is deleted, along with the palatalization it causes.

107) Halaka tə sle   a **mapəlaw** i dœdœn a   tsi.
       many   3p suffice-In at Sub-untie-Dir at enclosure away Neg
       'Many weren't able to leave the enclosure.'

108) Vəliŋ   dala **magay**   di   makasl a dəm ŋa,
       give-1sIO money Sub-do-3sIO Trans fiancée at girl   Adj
       'Give me money to get engaged.'

5.2 Coordinated Clauses

5.2.1 Reason Clauses

Reason clauses are signaled by the co-ordinating conjunction *agəra* 'because'.

109) A pə ba a mehəzle ga   wawa ŋa,
       3s put body at Sub-build house child Adj

       agəra   asi mər   a ɗama duk məsler fit.
       because Rel we(ex) 3s count thing work   all
       'He decided to build a small house because we counted the things needed for the job.'

The conjunction *agəra* 'because' – along with other conjunctions such as *kiga* 'like', *ada* 'so that' – can take a relative clause as a complement. The topic marker *ti* may follow the relativizer *ase* with the effect of marking the following material for focus.

110) Inehe na ge   makolkondo, **agəra   ase** tsir   ga ayiŋ tsi **ye**.
       almost 1s do-In outside   because Rel father my exist Neg Det.
       'I almost ended up uneducated because I had no father.'

5.2.2 Purpose Clauses

Purpose clauses are marked with the conjunction *ada* 'so that'. This conjunction requires the verb to be in the subjunctive mood.

111) Na yah   tuvoro **ada**   asi ti   na   da a lekwel a.
       1s look_for path   so_that Rel Top 1sSbj go to school Det
       'I looked for a way to go to school.'

5.2.3 Other Clause Types

112) Daw ŋgay ka   ndahaw   i biye ya, **kiga** hiyiŋ   a gwaɗay **a**, tsi.
       millet his   3sPas appear-Dir at hole away like squirrel 3s say-3sIO Det Neg
       'His millet had not appeared from the hole as the squirrel had said it would.'

113) Lele ase ti   na de   a lekwel ŋgumna   ye.
       good Rel Top 1s go-In to school government Det
       'It is good that I go to the government school.'

5.3 Topicalization

The topic marker in Gemzek is *ti*.

114) Tsam **ti**, geleke a gas bazlam kəla kəram
immediately Top monkey 3s catch mouth child crocodile
'Straightaway the monkey grabbed the young crocodile's mouth.'

115) Mburo ka da aha ka waza **ti**, ta vakay mendzekwer.
person 3sPas go there 3sPas preach Top 3p grill-3sIO chicken
'When someone went and preached there, they cooked him chicken.'

5.4 Questions

5.4.1 Polar Questions

Polar questions are formed by placing the particle *a/ye* or *beye* at the end of the sentence.

116) Ka sər tsir ga **ye** ?
2 know father my Det
'Do you know my father?'

117) Ka ndzahrum lele **beye** ?
2 sleep-2p well Q
'Did you (pl) sleep well?'

5.4.2 Content Questions

Content questions are formed by replacing the appropriate element with a question word. If the question word does not come at the end of the clause, the particle *a/ye* is placed at the end of the sentence.

118) **Weke** a kəl kər **a** ?
who 3s rob you Det
'Who robbed you?'

119) Ka ŋgatay a **me** ?
2 see-3sIO at what
'What have you seen?'

120) Ka da a **ŋga** ?
2 go at where
'Where are you going?'

121) **Agəra me** ka daw **a** ?
because what 2 go-Dir Det
'Why have you come?'

5.5 Conditionals

5.5.1 Generic Conditionals

Generic conditionals, that is conditionals that are true over all time, are not overtly marked. The condition is topicalized with the topic marker *ti*.

122) Ka fəte na gədaŋ ti, baram a həɓe.
2 cultivate-In with force Top hoe 3s break-In
'If you cultivate with force the hoe will break.'

123) Yam ka pa ti, na ndze i ma.
water 3sPas put Top 1s sit-In at house
'If it rains, I will stay at home.'

124) Mər ka ləma na Davit ti, mər a ge mahəmba.
we(ex) 3sPas meet with David Top, we(ex) 3s do-In conversation
'If I meet David, we will chat.'

5.5.2 Specific Conditionals

Specific conditionals, that is conditionals applying to one particular occasion, are marked with the conjunction *kage* 'if' (derived from the verb 'to do', meaning literally 'it does').

125) **Kage** yam ina pə ti, na ndze i ma.
if water Prog put Top 1s sit-In at house
'If it is raining, I will stay at home.'

126) **Kage** ka yah ti kəver duŋgway ti, ka məma, na ta zlakaw di ya.
if 2 seek Top liver that Top, 1p return-1pDuel 1s Fut take-2sIO-Dir Tr here.
'If you are looking for that liver, we will return, I will bring you it.'

127) **Kage** ka ndahaw i biye ya tsi ti, aka hwasla na yam.
if 3sPas appear-Dir at hole here Neg Top 3sAnt rot with water
'If it hasn't appeared out of the hole, it must have rotted with water.'

5.5.3 Hypothetical Conditionals

Hypothetical conditionals, that is conditionals where the condition is presented as unlikely, are marked with the conjunction *mege* (which is also a form of the verb 'to do', in this case the infinitive), and the adverb *bəbay* 'even' is placed before the topic marker.

128) **Mege** na dzə di sule ga kweleŋ **bəbay** ti, na səkəme pəles.
if 1s lose Trans money my entire even Top 1s buy-In horse
'Even if I (have to) spend all my money, I will buy a horse.'

129) **Mege** ka vəlay dəbu kuro **bəbay** ti, a nuwe.
if 2s give-3sIO thousand ten even Top 3s refuse-In
'Even if you give him 10,000 cfa, he will refuse.'

130) **Mege** Gaduwa a yeŋ i luwaŋ gə Gemzek **bəbay** ti,
if Gaduwa 3s exist at middle Pl Gemzek even Top

huya mbokom ti bazlam Gemzek asi a mbəɗe bə wa.
still today Top word Gemzek Rel 3s turn-In body Det
'Even if a person from Gaduwa is amongst the Gemzek, still today the Gemzek language is spoken.

The same relationship is also expressed by placing the particle *ku* 'even' before the conjunction. This particle is borrowed from the Fulfulde *koo*. The adverb *tekeɗe* 'even' may also be used.

131) **Ku mege** ka vəlay   sule mbolo kuro **tekede** ti, a nuwe.
    even if   2s give-3sIO money thousand ten even Top 3s refuse-In
    'Even if you give him 10,000 cfa, he will refuse.'

132) **Ku mege** yam aka pa ti, na de a mahaya gər.
    even if   water 3sPas put Top 1s go-In to gather head
    'Even if it rains, I will go to the meeting.'

5.5.4 Counterfactual Conditionals

Counterfactual conditionals, where the condition is never true, are marked with the conjunction *ase*, which is also used as a relativizer (see section 2.5.3).

133) **Ase** mər a ləma na Davit i luma ya   ti, na vəlay   sule.
    if   we(ex) 3s meet with David at market here Top 1s give-3sIO money
    'If I had met David at the market, I would have given him money.'

5.5.5 Negative Conditionals

Negative conditionals are expressed using the conjunction *ase* along with either the adverb *tsə* or *ələk*. In example 135 below the condition is expressed in the form of a relative clause that has as its head *ələk*.

134) **Ase**   yam ina pe   **tsə** ti, na de a mahaya bə gər.
    unless water Prog put-In ?   Top, 1s go-In to gather body head
    'Unless it rains, I will go to the meeting.'

135) **Ələk** **ase**   yam a te pe   ye ti, na de a mahaya gər.
    before unless water 3s Fut put-In Det Top 1s go-In to gather head
    'Unless it rains, I will go to the meeting.'

6 Abbreviations

1pEx   First person plural exclusive
1pInc First person plural inclusive
1pDual First person plural dual
3s   Third person singular
Adj   Adjectivizer
Ant   Anterior
Det   Determiner
Dir   Directional
Fut   Future
Hab   Habitual
In   Incompletive
IO   Indirect object
Neg   Negative
Pas   Past
Pl   Plural
Prog   Progressive
Q   Question
Rel   Relativizer
Sbj   Subjunctive
Sub   Subordinate
Top   Topic

Trans Transitivizer

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