# MISING GRAMMAR

# CENTRAL INSTITUTE OF INDIAN LANCUAGES

## GRAMMAR SERIES – 17

*Series Editor*

E. ANNAMALAI

*Production*

H. L. N. BHARATHI

# MISING GRAMMAR

Bal Ram Prasad

Revised and Edited

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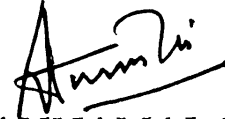
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# FOREWORD

The Central Institute of Indian Languages set up in 1969 is entrusted with the responsibility of developing Indian languages through research training and material production. The Indian languages are at various stages of development from the point of view of the extent of elaboration of their functions and they require different treatments. Development of the tribal languages of the country involves many issues of policy,implementation and academic contribution. Some of them are to be reduced to writing and most of them need codification from the point of view of standardisation, preparation of grammar, dictionary and such other linguistic materials and production of written literature.

One of the primary activities of the Institute relating to its work on tribal languages is writing a grammar. The grammar is not only the first step in the direction of codification of the language but also is a basic material for the teaching and learning of the language. It also provides materials for the typological and areal comparisons for languages and for studies of language universals.The theoretical notions about grammar have changed substantially in the recent decades and many of the notions are to be tested with data from various little-known languages. It is hoped that the grammar series of the Institute will fulfil at least partially these demands from linguists and language planners.

The grammars of various tribal languages, it is hoped, will lead to a handbook of Indian languages, which will be of great use to the students of linguistics in India. India has a long grammatical tradition and it is now absorbing the grammatical

models developed in the west. It will be a worthy goal to achieve to develop a grammatical model for the description of Indian languages derived out of both traditional and modern developments.

(E. ANNAMALAI)
Director

# PREFACE

The tribal people in India have for long lived in isolation except to be exposed for exploitation. They have not participated to their benefit in the socioeconomic development of the country. To come out of their isolation, it is necessary for them to learn the language of the majority people around them and a number of them have done so. But this bridges the communication gap only in one way and the whole burden of building up this bridge is carried by the minority group. It is necessary, however, for developing mutual understanding and good-will, to increase bidirectional communication between the tribal people and the majority people of the region. For this purpose, the majority people, especially those who come into contact with tribal people for various reasons such as civil administration, security, social service, trade, etc., should learn their language. The Grammar, which forms part of the package consisting of phonetic reader, bi- or tri- lingual dictionary and teaching manual is prepared to help them in their learning of the tribal language.

The organisation of the grammar is based on grammatical functions rather than on grammatical forms. This will help the new learner to find easily how the different functions, which he already knows and wants to express, are formalised in his language. Since this Grammar is primarily meant for pedagogical purposes, theoretical discussions and justifications for a particular analysis are kept to a minimum. The Grammar is divided generally into two broad categories of noun morphology and verb morphology. A description of adjectives follows noun morphology and a description of adverbs follows verb morphology. The chapter on syntax describes the order of the constituents at the surface level. There is also a chapter on word formation, which describes the ways in which words are formed and new concept are expressed.

Though the Grammar is primarily aimed at the language learner and the teacher, it is hoped that it will also be useful to Linguists interested typology and universals.

Data for the Grammar were collected in the field primarily from one informant by elicitation through word and sentence lists. They were then cross-checked with some other informants. The description may not be exhaustive and there might be gaps. There might be possibilties for alternative analyses. Comments and suggestions passed on to us will be useful to improve our future publications in this series.

The preliminary version of this grammar prepared by Sri Bal Ram Prasad when he left the Institute, was revisd to fill in the gaps and edited for making the press copy by his colleagues Sri G. Devi Prasada Sastry and Dr. P. T. Abraham. The data and analysis are that of Sri Bal Ram Prasad and the other two are not responsible for them. It is sad that Sri Bal Ram Prasad passed away prematurely before this grammar is published. This book will stand as a testimony for his love for the tribes.

E. ANNAMALAI

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

My thanks are also due to Miss Reeta Medak, and Miss Shanti Doley of Patirgaon and to many of their friends, whose names I do not remember now, for their enthusiasm and readiness to help me in collecting folk songs, which are perhaps one of the important sources of recording Mising culture and history. I also record my thanks to Mr. Bhrigumuni Kagyung, Secretary, 'Mising Agom Kebang', Gauhati and Mr. Indreswar Pegu, M.A., Principal, Jagrai Mukh Colleg, Majuli, who spared their time during their stay in C.I.I.L., Mysore, so that I was able to deter my own doubts at certain points.

I am thankful to the staff members of the C.I.I.L. and the Mysore University libraries.

## EDITORS' NOTE

The grammatical analysis and the prepartion of the first draft of the grammar were done by Dr. Bal Ram Prasad in 1985. Due to his leaving the Institute during this period and his sudden demise subsequently, we undertook the task of revising and editing the manuscript to make it ready for publication as a token of respect to the memory of our friend.

We thank Dr. M. S. Thirumalai, Professor - cum - Deputy Director, for his interest in hastening the publication of this book.

We acknowledge our gratitude to Mr. H. L. N. Bharati and Mr. K. Srinivasacharya of the Publication Unit for their invaluable help in getting this book ready for the Press.

We are also thankful to Mr. S. B. Biswas and the staff of the CIIL Press for seeing the book through the press.

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# INTRODUCTION

    1. The Mising or Miri language belongs to the North Assam group of the Tibeto-Burman family of languages. The term 'North Assam group, which is purely a geographical epithet, was given by George Grierson. However, Grierson himself agrees that the term does not have any linguistic explicability. The term is superfluous in the present context owing to the fact that some of the languages belonging to this group are spoken in Arunachal Pradesh, which is a separate State now. I prefer to refer to this group of languages by the name "Tani group" or "Ami group" simply because the speakers of these languages prefer to call themselves "Ami" or "Tani" (=man) and their languages "Amigom" or "Taniagom" (=human speech). Languages of this group can be divided into the following sub-groups :

<div align="center">Tani/Ami group</div>

| Dafla group | Aka group | Adi group | Mising | Mishmi group |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Nishi | Aka | Padam | | Taraon |
| Apatani | Miri Aka | Minyong | | Miju |
| Sulu | Abor Miri | Pasi | | Idu |
| | | Pangi | | |
| | | Simong | | |
| | | Asing | | |
| | | Tangam | | |
| | | Milang | | |
| | | Galong | | |
| | | Ramo | | |
| | | Bokar | | |
| | | Pailibo | | |

2. Among these groups, Adi, Aka, Dafla and Mising have striking similarities. According to Grierson, "Abor Miris and Daflas speak dialects which are so closely related that they can justly be considered as one and the same form of speech". In turn, the Dafla and the Adi groups have striking similarities. The Mishmi group differs from the Dafla and the Adi groups in many respects, yet it is not difficult to arrive at their immediate common source by applying the comparative method. The following correspondences of cognate forms are sufficient to prove it.*

| Digaru | Dafla | Mising | |
|--------|-------|--------|-----|
| m-pu | óp | uepúk | 'arrow' |
| dhoŋ | dùm | dumìt | 'hair' |
| me | ami | ami | 'man' |
| tabɔ | tab | tabi | 'snake' |
| maši | eši | asi | 'water' |

2.1 At the morphological level too, there are striking similarities. In Mishmi, the plural marker is /-loŋ/ which is similar to Mising pronoun plural marker /-lu/. Gender is natural in all these languages. Words for male and female are suffixed to distinguish gender, viz., in Aka, /-an/ and /-ani/ are suffixed to denote masculine and feminine respectively; whereas in Mising /-abɔ/ denotes masculine and /-ane/ denotes feminine gender.

There are a few instances which prove the exigency to consider that these languages must have branched off form a common parent speech.

3. Mising has eight dialects, categorized into three groups on the basis of linguistic similarities.

   (a) Oyan, Pagro and Delu
   (b) Sayang, Dambug, Somuwa and Moying
   (c) Samuguria

4. These different dialects are named after the different clans in the Mising society. Dialectal variations are noticeable

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* Data on Dafla and Digaru have been taken from LSI. Vol. III, Part I.

at the phonological and, to some extent, at the morphological level; but the speaker of one dialect easily understands the speech of the speaker of another dialect. Only Samuguria dialect differs from the rest of the dialects. It is heavily influenced by Assamese at the phonological, the morphological and the syntactic levels. A few examples given below will clear the point :

(a) At the phonological level, Samuguria has developed voiced aspirate sounds :

| Samuguria | Sayang | |
|---|---|---|
| gakhir | gakir | 'milk' |
| dekh | deŋ | 'country' |
| aphut | apût | 'foam' |
| sipary | mensaruŋ | 'fox' |
| mekhola | mekola | 'petticoat' |
| bilahi | bilai | 'tomato' |

(b) At the morphological level, the Samuguria dialect speakers freely use Assamese words. It won't be pungent to say that even in their houses they use Assamese in their daily discourse, although they follow all the Mising codes and conducts.

| Samuguria | | Sayang | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Singular | Plural | Singular | Plural |
| mekuri | mekuri-bilak | meŋkuri | meŋkur-kirede |
| 'cat' | 'cats' | 'cat' | 'cats' |
| manuh | manuh-bilak | ami | ami-kiride |
| 'man' | 'men' | man' | 'men' |

(c) At the syntactic level also Assamese influence on Samuguria is evident.

| Samuguria | Sayang | Assamese |
|---|---|---|
| nan apin de | nane apin bitoka | ma bhat de |
| mother rice give | mother rice give | mother rice give |
| 'Mother gives rice (boiled)' | | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| makbhai gise- | nokke birogidun | marbhai jayše |
| 'My brother is going' | | |

The present analysis is based mainly on the Sayang dialect and partially on the Moying dialect. These two dialects, for all practical purposes, are one and the same. Moreover, the number of speakers of these two dialects comprise more than 70 percent of the total Mising population.*

5. The Misings are mainly found in North Lakhimpur, Sibsagar and Darrang districts of Upper Assam; and in Siyang and Lohit districts of Arunachal Pradesh. According to the census report of 1961, the total population of the Mising language speakers is 136,698.

6. The Misings occupy an important place among the tribal population of Assam. They belong to the Mongoloid race. It is difficult to say how the name "Miri" was given to them. In fact, "......never a tribe known as Miri existed before", claims Dr.N.C.Pegu, "but today, whether a curse or a blessing, the word Miri has come to stay, representing constitutionally the Misings......but the history of the Miris is essentially the history of the Misings, the Minyongs, the Pasi-Padams or any other hill tribe . ..." Most probably the word Miri is derived from ami=man+iri=virtue=Miri=virtuous man or a man possessing super powers. Actually the priests of the Adi people (hillman) were called Miri and when a group of these people came down to the Assam valley, the plains people, at the first contact, came to know that the new comers follow the cult of Miri, i.e., worship of natural forces. Thus, the term "Miri" came to stay to refer to the whole tribe.

There are striking similarities between the Dafla and the Adi groups of languages and the Mising language, as has been pointed out above. On the basis of this, there is every possibility that the ancestors of all these communities belonged to same stock and, in course of time, owing to the increase of population or some other reason, some of them came down to the

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* In personal communication with Sri. B. M. Kagyung Secretary, Mising Agom Kebang.

Brahmaputra valley. Probably they came in different batches and settled on the banks of the Brahmaputra and the Subansiri rivers. "In spite of the differences that now exist among them", says N.N. Basu "the Abors, the Daflas and the Miris must have sprung from the same stock".

Most probably the first group of Adis entered the plains of upper Assam when the Sutiya kings were the rulers of Sadiya. But soon the Sutiya kingdom gave way to the Ahoms,who were the descendants of the Shan tribe, and who established themselves in upper Assam around 1228 A.D.* The Miris of upper Assam prefer to call themselves the Misings. This epithet was adopted by themselves when they settled in the new land. The word 'Mising', is a compound word, and may be derived from $ami=man+asing=water=man$ who lives near water (on the banks of rivers). From now onwards we shall refer to the tribe by this name.

It has already been pointed out that the Misings migrated to the Brahmaputra valley in successive groups. Each group occupied a distinct territory in order to differenciate itself from the other groups and adopted a distinct title. Thus, they formed different clans numbering about nine, i.e., Sayang, Oyan, Moying, Delu, Pagro, Dambut, Mirang (Samuguria). Tamar and Samuwa. The Samuwa Misings are in the Lohit district of Arunachal Pradesh. Again, eacn clan is divided into different sub-clans, i.e., Kaman, Payang, Payeng, Medak, Padum, Pamegarro, Sintey, Pegu, Padi, Doley etc.

7. Mising villages are mostly situated near river banks. The houses are built of wood and bamboo. The floor of the house is raised above the ground and is supported on wooden stumps. This is called "sanghar". Below the floor-level of each house, dwellings are made for fowls, pigs, etc. The Misings build their houses on the principle of co-operation, that is, no hired labour is employed. The houses are always built facing the river. Each village consists of twenty-thirty houses, scat-

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*Quoted by N.C. Pegu

tered over a large area. Each village has a "murong" which is jointly built by the villagers. It is the place where training in traditional and social customs is imparted to young boys and girls.

8. Joint family system is the base of the society and a single family may have more than a hundred members living under the roof of one "sanghar". The main source of living is agriculture and hunting. "Jhuming cultivation" or shifting cultivation is the common method. Apart from this, cattle rearing is becoming more and more popular among them. Ahu rice, mustard seeds, pulses and cotton are the staple crops. Their favourite diet comprises rice, fish, pork, chicken and vegetables. "Apong" (a kind of white and some times black liquor prepared from rice) is their favourite beverage. Whenever a guest visits their houses, he is entertained with "apong."

9. The structure of the society is based on the principle of equality of opportunity. In other words, the Misings are democratic. They never believed in kingship. Every village has a Kebang i.e., panchayat, which consists of the elder people of the village. This Kebang is the superme authority on the maintenance of the code of conduct which is based on the tradi_ tions and innovations for the welfare of the (tribe) people. The decision of the Kebang is final and binding. The rich and the poor are treated alike and the guilty has to bear the penalty either in the shape of physical labour or in the shape of material loss.

10. The Mising society is patriarchal, where the male dominates in every walk of life. Women have the right to work and in turn are entitled to be provided with food and shelter. They get up early at dawn, take care of household work, such as cooking, attending to children and adults and are required to work in the field shoulder to shoulder with the man. However, their services are not required for ploughing. It is unimaginable for them to be members of the Kebang.

Each woman is expected to know weaving. Those, who do not know weaving, are looked down upon and it is difficult for them to get married. The famous "Misijim", which was once known for its quality, is woven by the Mising women. The Misings usually use home-woven clothes. Women do not have the right to property. Only the son is the sole heir; or in case a son is not born and only daughters are born, the daughter may become the heir to the property.

11.  Polygamy is the accepted norm of the society, though, it is on the wane-now. Polyandry is unknown. If a woman is found commiting adultery, she is severly punished. Matrimonial relationships cannot be established between the members belonging to the same clan; for example, two families belonging to Moying clan cannot have matrimonial relationships. Thus, it is clear that in the Mising society only endogamy is prevalent. Widow remarriage is in vogue. If the husband dies, the woman can marry her husband's younger brother or her husband's cousin. In case it is not possible, she is allowed her choice outside the family members. Provision for divorce is there, but it requires the prior permission from the Kebang. Divorce may take place under the following conditions :

(a)  if both husband and wife enter into an accord willingly;

(b)  if husband remarries without the prior permission of his first wife, she has the right to divorce him; and

(c)  if it is proved that the wife committed adultery.
Marriages are made in the following way:

(1)  By selection- When the young ones attain marriageable age, they themselves may select their life partner. Usually the young boys and girls enter into love affairs in the 'Murong'. As has been pointed out above, the Murong is the place where the young ones learn their oral lessons of community culture and form a committee to help the villagers in need. This commitee of adolescents is known as "Mimbir-game". So when their love-affair reaches the climax and it becomes impossible

to keep it a secret, they announce it in public. This system of marriage is known as "kaligisunam".

(2)  Sometimes, the lovers themselves do not announce their love affairs, but it is conveyed by the mediators to their parents. In such cases the parents of both sides may contact each other and propose the marriage. This way of marriage is called "yam ne tannam".

(3)  The most common way of marriage is "midang". In such a type of marriage, only parents' wish is important. The parents of either side search for a suitable match and the girl and the boy accept their wish and will.

(4)  Another way known as "duglanam" can be compared to the "gandharva" system prevalent in ancient India among Aryans. The Mising marriage ceremony is an affair of pomp and show. Pigs and fowls are sacrificed to the gods and cooked· The relatives and the village members of both the sides are invited. The bride and the groom eat in the same dish. After that the couple seek the blessings of the elders. The participants eat, drink, sing and dance for two days. At the end, the party of the groom is sent off with offerings. The bride comes to the groom's house.

12.  Like most of the tribes, the Misings are animists. Out of fear of natural forces, they believed that due to displeasure of "uyu" spirit of the nature, ·many sufferings were caused. Thus the worship of "uyu" came into being.

### Mythology

Frist of all there was "keyum" (nothingness). The following folk song vividly describes the status of "keyum" and the emergence of this world.

mikamangai
mimang kimangai
donyi kamangai
polo kamangai
asi kamangai
among kamangai

sedimelo rulento
donyipolome
among modiyem
uming esarem
rugzi merangem
abu taniyem
nolu taniye
abutaniko omange
regi regam dolokke
koryila gidung*

Free translation of the song: There was neither man. nor animal. Neither the sun, the moon and the stars were there nor was there this earth and water on it. "Sedi" and "melo" made them all. He made the sun and the moon, he made the earth, fire and air, animals and creepers and at last he made men and women. We are men and women, the descendants of "Abutani" (the first man made by Sedibabu). We descended from "Regi-regai (Heaven).

Thus, Sedi and Melonan are the creators of this world· Abutani was created by the union of Mother Sun and Father Moon. Doying-babu was created as the God of Knowledge and Wisdom, who differenciated the speeches of different animals and gave them the senses to differenciate things, so that each object was given its respective name.

The Mising bury their dead.

The Misings do not belive in rebirth. The souls, after death, are worshipped by them. They have a belief that if the souls of the dead are displeased, calamity will befall them in the shape of illness, death of a family member or in other similar ways. Apart from this, there are many superstitions that the Misings believe in. They believe that every where, there is 'uyi' (evil spirit) which causes untold sufferings if it is not appeased with sacrifice of pigs and other animals.

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* I am indebted to Mr. Ganesh Pegu of Mayuli for this folk song.

This short description of Mising animistic religion will remain incomplete unless a few words are said about the 'Mibu'. The Mibu is the traditional priest of the Misings. He is the link between the men and the gods. He is supposed to possess supernatural powers and can foretell the will of the gods. On all religious and festive occasions, his presence is essential. The Mibus chant songs on the occasion of religious offerings to the gods, which can be compared with the "mantras" uttered by the Hindu Brahmins. These songs are called "Mibu-abang". It is said that Mibu-abang cannot be understood by the common Mising. Whatever we know about the Mising culture is through Mibuabang. It is necessary that specimens of such songs be collected and studied separately.

13.   Though the Mising are attached to their traditional way of life, culture and religion, most of them have adopted, at present, Hinduism. The whole Mising society is, at present, in a flux. They have already accepted many policies and conventions of the Hindu faith and the Hindu society. Even their modern names suggest this. Most of the Mising are followers of Shankardeo, a religious reformer during the medieval period in Assam. Some of them are devotees of the "Shakti-cult" and worship goddess Durga and lord Shiva. Those who are exposed to Hinduism are called "Bhakat". However, it is interesting that those who have been exposed to Hindusim still follow their traditional ethics with utmost sincerity. The Hindu caste system and image worship have not yet entered the arena of their religious faith. Religion-wise, the Mising community is divided almost equally into animists and followers of Hinduism·

14.   As pointed out earlier, the Mising are mainly agriculturists. They have a number of festivals connected with sowing and harvesting crops, among which 'aliai-ligang' and 'porag' are important. Aliai-ligang is their main festival. It is the festival of the sowing season. The sowing of seeds begins with the arrival of monsoon. The festival is celebrated with pomp and luxury. Men and women eat, drink and dance together. It coincides with the Assamese "bihu" festival. Porag

is celebrated after the harvest. All the arrangements for this festival are done by the Mimbir-yame (committee of young boys and girls). It is celebrated for three days. It is initiated by the Mibu after sacrifices. The whole community, old and young irrespective of sex, join together, dressed in their best to celebrate this festival.

15.   Earlier works-

The Christian missionaries were the first to write the Mising language in Roman script. Following is the list of writings on the Mising language.

1. *Abor Miri Primer* Jackman, L.W.B
                         Govt. of Assam (1908)

2.   *A Dictionary of Abor Miri language*
                         Shillong (1907)

3.   Preliminary notes on Abor Miri, Dafla consonantism
     *Bulletin of the Bihar Tribal Research Institute* Vol 1
     No 1 (1959)

4.   *Outline grammar of Sosi-yang Miri language as spoken
     by the Miris of that clan residing in the neighbourhood
     of Sadiya* Shillong (1886).

5.   *Isorkodoying* Shillong (1997)

6.   Notes on the languages spoken by various hill tribes
     inhabiting the valley of Assam *J.A.S.B*, Vol. 18 (1849)

7.   *Linguistic Survey of India*, G. A. Grierson.
                         Vol. III, Part I. (1967 RP)

Perhaps, the earliest work done on this language is J. F. Needham's grammar based on the Sayang dialect published from Shillong in 1886. Grierson's account of the language in *LSI* is based on this grammar. I could not consult this gammar. It was not available to me. I had a chance to consult *"Isorkodoying"* published from Shillong by the missionaries. It is a translation of the Bible. It was also translated into the Sayang dialect, where Assamese words are freely borrowed wherever necessary.

16. The present work is an attempt to describe the structure of the Mising language. Instead of presenting a rigorous analysis, an attempt has been made to keep the analysis simple as far as possible. In the first chapter, the phonological analysis is given. A short description of Mising phonemes and how they combine to form words has been presented. In the second chapter various grammatical categories have been dealt with. Chapter three states how Mising words are formed. Syntax is dealt with in chapter four. The main purpose of this outline grammar is pedagogic. But it is always the aim to present the analysis on scientific lines, so insights of descriptive methodology and transformational generative grammar (in the sense of Tagmemic approach) have been incorporated.

# PHONOLOGY

**1.0** The Mising language has 28 phonemes, out of which 25 are segmental phonemes and three are suprasegmental phonemes. The following is the inventory of phonemes in the language.

*Vowels*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| i | ï | u |
| | ë | |
| e | a | ɔ |

*Diphthongs*

au ɔi

*Consonants*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| p | t | k |
| b | d | g |
| m | n ñ | ŋ |
| | r | |
| | l | |
| | ts | |
| | z | |

*Frictionless continuants*

w y

*Suprasegmentals*

Rising tone, marked / ′ /
Falling tone, marked / ＼ /
Level tone, unmarked

## 1.1 Classification of vowels

There are seven vowels in the language. All of them contrast for tongue height, tongue advancement and opening of

the jaws. When the front part of the tongue is advanced, one gets /i/ and /e/, while /ï/, /ĕ/ and /a/ are produced when the central part of the tongue acts as the active articulator. The vowels /ï/ and /ĕ/ are retroflexed vowels. When the back part of the tongue or dorsum is raised, the vowels /u/ and /ɔ/ are produced. According to the tongue height in the oral cavity /i/, /ï/ and /u/ are high vowels, /ĕ/ is high mid and /a/ and /ɔ/ are low vewels. Lip rounding has not been considered here as a relevant criterion because of the simple reason that it is a redundant feature. Front and central vowel are un-rounded. Only in the production of the back vowel u/, lip rounding is noticeable.

There are two diphthongs, viz., /ɔi/ and / au/, which are phonemic in the language. Apart from these, at the phonetic level, there are a number of vowel nuclei, the quality of which is not constant. The actual phonetic nature of such sounds is that such sounds are sequences of two vowels acting jointly to occupy the peak of sonarity.

All Mising vowels are voiced and oral.

## 1.2 Classification of consonants

There are sixteen consonants in the language. The conso-nants are classified taking into account the following criteria.-

    (i)    Point of obstruction of the air-system

    (ii)   Nature of obstruction

   (iii)   Presence or absence of voicing i.e., whether the vocal cords vibrate or not.

The breath-stream is mainly modified in the oral cavity. The most important mobile organ of speech is the tongue and then the lower lips. The upper lip, the upper teeth, palate and pharynx are the passive anticulators in the mouth with which the back, centre, surface and tip of the tongue and lower lip make contact to produce different consonants. On this basis Mising consonants can be classified as follows:

bi-labial        p, b, m, w
apico-dental    t, d, n, l, r, ts, z
palatal        ñ, y

dorsal      k, g, ŋ

According to the nature of obstruction or various types of manipulations of breath stream on account of the movement of active articulators, i.e., the lower lip, different part of the tongue and the velum, the following situations are noticed:

(a) complete closure of breath stream

(b) short closure of breath stream

(c) partial closure of breath stream

(d) free escaping of breath stream

When there is complete closure of breath stream, we get those sounds which are called stops. Stops are of two types (1) oral (2) nasal.

*Oral* - When there is complete closure of breath stream accompanied by the closure of the nasal passage by the velum, we get oral stops. Oral stop are always released.

In Mising, following are oral stops-

  p   t   k

  b   d   g

*Nasal* - It is produced like an oral stop with an exception that the nasal passage is open and the air passes through the nose. In Miri /m/, /n/, /ŋ/, and /ñ/ are nasal stops.

If the closure of breath stream is short with a slur release, we get the affricate /ts/. When there is no closure at all, but the air stream goes through a narrow oral cavity, we get the sibilint /s/. If the closure is partial and the breath stream escapes through sides of the tongue, we get the lateral /l/. The trilled consonant /r/ is produced by letting the apex vibrate in the outgoing air stream.

When the passage of air stream is manipulated in such a way that no closure is made by the articulators and sounds are produced without any audible friction, the sounds /w/ and /y/ are produced. These are called frictionless continuants. Consonants can be classified also on the basis of presence or absence of vibration of vocal cords. If the vocal cords vibrate i.e.,

produce voicing, we get voiced sounds, and when vocal cords do not vibrate, the sounds produced are voiceless. In this language the following is the list of the two types of consonants thus classified.

| *Voiced* - | b | d | j | g |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | m | n | ñ | ŋ |
| | | z | | |
| | w | y | | |
| *Voiceless* - | p | t | | k |
| | | ts | | |

## 1.3  Phonemic Contrasts

### 1.3.1  Vowels

/i/     vs     /u/

| /idne/ | 'high' | /údne/ | 'heavy' |
|---|---|---|---|
| /itɔ/ | 'to do' | /utɔ/ | 'to rear' |
| /kínam/ | 'disease' | /kunam/ | 'sour taste' |
| /tinam/ | 'drinking' | /tunam/ | 'crawling' |

/i/     vs     /ï/

| /itɔ/ | 'to do' | /ï tɔ/ | 'to cut', | 'to harvest' |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| /ayinë/ | 'honest' | /ayïŋ/ | 'golden' | |

/i/     vs     /u/

| /i tɔ/ | 'to harvest | /utɔ/ | 'to rear' |
|---|---|---|---|
| /ïsaŋ/ | 'to raise head ; to | /usaŋ/ | 'the sound of |
| | look at some | | water boiling' |
| | thing' | | |
| /pïtɔ/ | 'to arrive' | /putɔ/ | 'to root out' |
| /gɔmïg/ | 'individual voice' | /gɔmug/ | 'tune' |

/i/     vs     /e/

| /itɔ/ | 'to do' | /etɔ/ | 'to defecate' |
|---|---|---|---|
| /isi/ | 'this' | /esi/ | 'urine' |
| /ami/ | 'man' | /ame/ | 'small boy' |
| /ribi/ | 'rope' | /rúbe/ | 'soil' |

5 /ï/     vs     /e/

/ïtɔ/       'to harvest'     /etɔ/       'to defecate'
/lïpɔŋ/      'neck'         /lepɔŋ/     'sole'

6 /u/     vs     /e/

/utɔ/        'to rear'      /etɔ/       'to defecate'
/áruŋ/      'hole'         /áreŋ/      'horn'
/ànu/        'new'         /ànë/       'coming'

7 /ï/     vs     /ë/

/dúmïr/     'sky'          /dúmër/    'turban'
/alï/         'festival'     /alë/        'leg'
/lïgàn/      'sour'        /lëgàn/     'for the sake of'
/pïtir/      'dry'          /pëtir/     'cage'

8 /i/     vs     /ë/

/appi/       'four'         /appë/     'egg'
/kíni/       'navel'       /kínë/     'dog'

9 /e/     vs     ⁻·/ë/

/emë/       'relationship  /ëmë/     'fire'
           between two
           wives of the
           same man'
/téma/      'unripe'      /tëma/     'don't cut'
/unne/      'fate'         /unnë/     'bright'
/ketɔ/      'to chew'     /këtɔ/     'spinning done by
                                    hand'

10 /u/     vs     /ë/

/áruŋ/      'hole'         /árën/     'horn'
/anu/        'new'         /anë/      'coming'

11 /i/     vs     /ɔ/

/itɔ/        'to do'       /ɔtɔ/       'to give birth to'
/isi/         'this'         /isɔ/       'bison'
                                 /ɔsc/       'mithun'
/pírɔ/      'sugarcane    /pɔrɔ/     'wine, black in
           -like reads'                    colour'

12  /ï/      vs      /ɔ/
    /ïtɔ/          'to harvest'      /ɔtɔ/      'to give birth to'
    /jïtɔ/         'to get wet'      /jɔtɔ/     'to carry'
    /gïtɔ/         'to go'           /gɔtɔ/     'fish hook'
    /sïtɔ/         'to cross a river'  /sɔtɔ/   'to dance'

13  /u/      vs      /ɔ/
    /utɔ/          'to rear'         /ɔtɔ/      'to give birth to'
    /usàn/         'sound of water   /ɔsàŋ/     'rearing'
                   boiling'
    /tàruŋ/        'advice'          /tárɔŋ/    'share'

14  /e/      vs      /ɔ/
    /etɔ/          'defecate'        /ɔtɔ/      'to give birth to'
    /eŋe/          'a kind of
                   vegetable'        /ɔŋɔ/      'fish'

15  /ë/      vs      /ɔ/
    /ësar/         'air              /ɔsar/     'to untie'
    /kébàŋ/        'society'         /kɔ́bàŋ/    'ladder'
    /zëtɔ/         'to shout'        /zɔ́tɔ/     'to carry on
                                                shoulder'
    /arrë/         'valley'          /arrɔ/     'truth'
    /alë/          'leg'             /alɔ/      'salt'

16  /i/      vs      /a/
    /itɔ/          'to do'           /atɔ/      'uncle'
    /iki/          'dog'             /aki/      'belly'
    /pirɔ/         'grass, reed      /parɔ/     'pumpkin'
                   (like sugar
                   cane)'
    /kàŋkin/       'introduction'    /kàŋkan/   'beauty'

17  /ï/      vs      /a/
    /ïtɔ/          'to harvest'      /atɔ/      'uncle'
    /ïlïŋ/         'strong /bold'    /alïŋ/     'neck'
    /sïtɔ/         'to cross river   /sátɔ/     'to row'
                   on foot'

18  /u/     vs      /a/
    /utɔ/           'to bring up'   /atɔ/       'uncle'
    /abùŋ/          'rivulet'       /abàŋ/      'song'
    /këbùŋ/         'rat'           /kébàŋ/     'society'
    /lunàm/         'saying'        /lanàm/     'bringing'
    /kunàm/         'sour'          /kánàm/     'looking at'

19  /e/     vs      /a/
    /etɔ/           'defecate'      /atɔ/       'uncle'
    /ketɔ/          'to chew'       /katɔ/      'to see'

20  /ë/     vs      /a/
    /tésaŋ/         'level of flood /tásaŋ/     'a kind of
                    water'                      bird'
    /méñiŋ/         'previous year' /máñiŋ/     'dream'
    /kénàm/         'spinning by    /kánam/     'looking at'
                    hand'
    /rénam/         'riding'        /ránam/     'boiling'
    /lénam/         'to keep'       /lánam/     'to bring'

21  /ɔ/     vs      /a/
    /ɔtɔ/           'to give birth to' /atɔ/    'uncle'
    /alɔŋ/          'bone'          /alaŋ/      'gravy'
    /pɔrɔ/          'wine'          /parɔ/      'pumpkin'
    /mɔtɔ/          'make'          /matɔ/      'enquire'
    /ïwɔ/           'nephew'        /ïwa/       'bamboo'

*1.3.2*  Diphthongs

1   /ɔ/     vs      /ɔi/
    /kitɔ/          'to clean liver /kɔi tɔ/    'ask to bring
                    of animals'                 down some
                                                thing'

2   /ɔ/     vs      /ɔi/
    /zɔtɔ/          'to carry on    /jɔitɔ/     'to put down'
                    shoulder'

3   /a/     vs      /au/
    /mari/          'chirping of    /mauri/     'stick used for
                    cricket'                    driving cows'

4    /ɔi̥/      x       /au/

     /kauri/        'shell'            /kɔiri/              'to make rope'

## 1.3.3  Consonants

1    /p/      vs      /d/

     /pítnàm/       'showing'          /bítnàm/             'flowing'
     /pánàm/        'getting'          /bánàm/              'roasting'
     apïŋ/          'all'              /abïŋ/               'eldest
                                                            'brother'
     /tapi/         'grass'            /tabi/               'snake'
     /tapad/        'leech'            /tabad/              'sugarcane'

2    /t/      vs      /d/

     /tuŋgëm/       'verandah'         /duŋgëm/             'a good place
                                                            to sit'
     /tɔtɔ/         'wait (imp)'       /dctɔ/               'eat (imp)'
     /gítɔ/         'go (imp)'         /gídɔ/               'go (present)

3    /k/      vs      /g/

     /kënë/         'normal taste'     /gënë/               'bent'
     /kunë/         'sour'             /gune/               'hot/ one
                                                            who
                                                            winnows'
     /migɔm/        'officer'          /mikɔm/              'cheek'

4    /p/      vs      /t/

     /rupum/        'public            /rutum/              'god,
                     opinion'                                headman'
     /pɔnám/        'to steal'         /tɔnam/              'to bring
                                                            water'

5    /p/      vs      /k/

     /pɔ́pi/         'spinning          /kɔ́pi/               'four  houses'
                     wheel'

6    /b/      vs      /g/

     /bitɔ/         'to give'          /gítɔ/               'to go'

7    /s/      x      /z/

/sɔtɔ/        'dance'        /zɔtɔ/        'carry on'
/sínë/        'coming up'    /zínë/        'hard'
/misiŋ/       'the Miri      /miziŋ/       'old man'
              people'
/asɔŋ/        'branch'       /azɔŋ/        'friend'

8    /m/      vs     /n/

/ma/          'not'          /na/          'and'
/matɔ/        'calf'         /natɔ/        'a kind of
                                           fish
/amïn/        'name'         /anïn/        'upland'

9    /m/      vs     /ŋ/

/lukam/       'way of        /lukaŋ/       'to wish to
              saying'                      say'
/alum/        'eldest son'   /ɔluŋ/        'boat'

10   /n/      vs     /ŋ/

/nɔ/          'you'          /ŋɔ/          'I'
/anïn/        'upland'       /aŋïn/        'torn out'
/lukan/       'to show'      /lukaŋ/       'wish to say'
/dun/         'am'           /duŋ/         'is (he) ?'

11   /l/      vs     /r/

/látɔ/        'bring'        /rátɔ/        'boil'
/lɔtɔ/        'to dry up in  /rɔtɔ/        'to brood'
              the sun'
/pɔ́lɔ/        'mood'         /pɔ́rɔ/        'wine'
/mili/        'a Mising      /miri/        'Mising, a
              clan'                        tribal
                                           community'
/alɔ/         'salt'         /arɔ/         'truth'

12   /y/      vs     /w/

/ayɔ/         'tongue'       /awɔ/         'son'
/ayag/        'half'         /awaŋ/        'west'

13   /w/      vs      /b/

/awaŋ/        'east'        /abaŋ/        'song'

### 1.3.4   Tone contrasts

1   level tone      x      high tone

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| /pɔtɔ/ | 'to see' | /pɔ́tɔ/ | 'to steal' |
| /sïrɔ/ | 'timber' | /sïrɔ/ | 'this morning' |
| /gimur/ | 'cotton' | /gímur/ | 'wrong deed' |
| /kunam/ | 'flute' | /kúnam/ | 'sour |
| /ala/ | 'to fry' | /ála/ | 'get in' |
| /ratɔ/ | 'to bark' | /rátɔ/ | 'to boil |

2   level tone      x      low tone

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| /ratɔ/ | 'to bark' | /ràtɔ/ | 'excitement of the testicle' |
| /datɔ/ | 'foot step' | /dàtc/ | 'to lean something against the wall' |
| /natɔ/ | 'to collect' | /nàtɔ/ | 'rooting of a pig' |

3   high tone      x      low tone

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| /rátɔ/ | 'to boil' | /ràtɔ/ | 'excitement of testicles' |
| /ála/ | 'to get in' | /àla/ | 'to whistle using fingers' |
| /tákar/ | 'panther' | /tàkar/ | 'star' |
| /dátɔ/ | 'to kick' | /dàtɔ/ | 'to lean some thing against the wall' |

## 1.4   Allophonic distribution

### 1.4.1   Vowels

1   *High front vowel /i/*

It has two allophones [i] and [I]

[i] It occurs initially and medially in high and level tones.

| | |
|---|---|
| [isi] | 'this' |
| [ignë] | 'husband' |
| [tsíkir] | 'cold' |

[pimpùt]        'foam'
[aziŋkɔ]        'baby'

[I] occurs accompanied by low tone and in final position.

[ádÌ]           'hill'
[taksÌ]         'cockroach'
[amÌk]          'eye'
[adÌn]          'flesh'
[ëÌtwaÌ]        'throw'

2   High mid front vowel /e/

It occurs in all positions

[élïŋ]          'stone'
[ditem]         'earth'
[tsédi]         'creator'
[rube]          'deaf-mute'

3   *High central retroflex vowel* /ë/. In its production, the dorsum of the tongue is raised towards velum. The tongue muscles are bunched. It is a retroflex vowel. It has only one allophone [ï] and it occurs in all positions.

[íraŋ]          'family'
[tatìg]         'toad'
[mídaŋ]         'marriage'
[tumpï]         'testicle'

4   *High mid central retroflex vowel* /ë/. The tongue is retracted and the blade is raised high in the mouth. It is a retroflex vowel. It has two allophones [ë] and [ɛ]. In high level tone [ë] occurs. [ɛ] is a mid-low front vowel, and is an accompanied by a low tone.

[ësar]          'air'
[pëkin]         'south'
[génɛ]          'autumn'
[së]            'it'
[pɛ]            'at / to'
[nɔkkɛ]         'your'

## 5 Low central vowel /a/

It has two allophones [ə] and [a]. If in the preceding syllable, [a] occurs in high or level tone, in the next syallble, [ə] occurs. If the syllable carries low tone, [ə] will occur. It also occurs in vowel nuclei.
nuclei.

| (i) | | | (ii) | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| [azən] | 'friend' | | [aləg] | 'hand' | |
| [má] | 'not' | | [pánəm] | 'getting' | |
| [yáne] | 'rotten' | | [unəm] | 'taming' | |
| [pátə] | 'to get' | | [ginam] | 'going' | |
| [lutɔka] | 'say' | | [súpək] | 'now' | |

## 6 High back vowel /u/

It has three allophones, i.e. [u], [ü] and [U]. The allophone [u] occurs only preceded or followed by /y/, /r/, /l/ and /z/ in high tone. Occurrence of [U] is confined to only vowel clusters and low tone. [ü] occurs elsewhere.

| | |
|---|---|
| [úyü] | 'tuesday' |
| [alümne] | 'solid' |
| [rúyi] | 'edge' |
| [zúne] | 'wet' |
| [usanam] | 'going up' |
| [údne] | 'high' |
| [mittUp] | 'head' |
| [mUdnam] | 'to blow' |
| [sɔUki] | 'cot' |
| [maUr] | 'cholera' |

## 7 Low back vowel /ɔ/

It has two allophones: [ɔ] and [ɔᵛ]. The allophone [ɔᵛ] occurs in vowel clusters, in syllables preceding or following consonant clusters and in the syllables which follow the syllable formed by /i/ or /u/. Elsewhere [ɔ] occurs.

| | |
|---|---|
| [ɔᵛmnam] | 'to sow' |
| [taɔᵛk] | 'size' |

| | |
|---|---|
| [bábɔʸi] | 'uncle' |
| [bïrɔʸ] | 'brother' |
| [ɔdɔlɔ] | 'then' |
| [lέkɔnE] | 'similar' |
| [ŋɔ] | 'I' |
| [dë lɔ] | 'in time' |

## 1.4.2  Consonants

### 1.4.2.1  Stops

1    /p/         voiceless bilabial stop

It has three allophones i.e.,[pʰ], [pˀ] and [p]

[pʰ]    is a slightly aspirated alternant of /p/.  It occurs in loan words.

| | |
|---|---|
| [pʰita] | 'lace' |
| [pʰura] | 'to walk' |
| [pʰɔta] | 'torn' |
| [pʰukɔn] | 'an Ahom surname' |

[p]     is the checked alternant of /p/.    It occurs finally.

| | |
|---|---|
| [zálapˀ] | 'pickpocket' |
| [pézapˀ] | 'duck' |
| [kirkɔʸp] | 'belt' |
| [mittupˀ] | 'head' |

[p]    occurs in all other envorinments

| | |
|---|---|
| [pɔrɔk] | 'cock' |
| [pɓlɔ] | 'moon' |
| [pɓpïr] | 'butterfly' |
| [apút] | 'form' |
| [jàmpÉ] | 'tomorrow' |
| [tumpi] | 'bet' |

2    /b/                        voiced bilabial stop.

It has three allophones viz, [bʰ], [bˀ] and [b] .

[bʰ|   is a slightly aspirated alternant of /b/.
It occurs in Assamese loan words.

[bʰendi]          ' lady's finger'
[bʰeti]           'foundation'
[rɔbʰa]           'pandal'

[bˀ]      is the checked alternant of /b/. It occurs finally
and in clusters and is in free distribution with [pˀ].

| [kitabˀ] | [kitapˀ] | 'book' |
| [pëzabˀ] | [pëzapˀ] | 'duck' |
| [azëbˀ] | [azëpˀ] | 'flat' |
| [agëbˀ] | [agëpˀ] | 'near' |
| [kapˀdun] | [kabˀdun] | 'is weeping' |
| [gabˀnam] | [gapˀnam] | 'fasting' |

[b]      occurs in all other environments.

[bɔtsam]          'coiling'
[bulu]            'they'
[dúbɔl]           'blanket'
[mibú]            'priest'

*3*   /t/ voiceless apico-alveolar stop
It has four allophones viz.,[tʰ,] [tˀ,] [t̪] and [t].
viz. [tʰ,] [tˀ,] [t̪] and [t]

[tʰ] aspirated.  It occurs  in  loan   words  from  Assamese.

[aŋtʰi]           'ring'
[pɔtʰar]          'field'
[pitʰibi]         'earth'

[tˀ] unreleased.  It occurs in clusters as  a first member and
in final position.

[tulapatˀ]        'paper'
[tábatˀ]          'sugarcane'
[atˀnam]          'to write'

[t] voiceless apicodental. It is in free variation with [t]
in theSayangdialectof the language.

[tulaŋ]          ∼          [tulaŋ]        'oil'

[terëŋ]          ∼          [terëŋ]        'teeth of an animal'

[napit]          ∼          [napit˺]       'knife'

**4**  /d/ voiced apicoalveolar stop. It has four positional alter]
nants i.e., [dʰ],[d˺ ], [d] and [d]

[dʰ]  is a slightly voiced aspirated apicoalveolar stop.
It occurs only in loan words.

[dʰarua]          'money-lender'
[gadʰɔ]           'ass'
[dʰuli]           'dust'

[d˺ ]  is an unreleased voiced apicoalveolar stop. Occurs
finally and is in free variation with [t˺]

[rɔd˺]           ∼          [rɔt˺]         'chariot'

[pɔskad]         ∼          [pɔskat]       'postcard

[dútiŋ]          ∼          [dútiŋ]        'place to sit'

[lágdu]          ∼          [lágdu]        'cubit'

[d]  is an apicodental sound. It is in free variation with
[d] in the Sayang dialect of the language.

[bïrduk]         ∼          [bïrduk]       'season'

[pɔrda]          ∼          [pɔrda]        'screen'

]giddiŋ]         ∼          [giddiŋ]       'spear'

[d] It occurs in all other environments
[dëtu]           'Miri surname'
[adi]            'hill'

**5**  /k/  has three allophones

[kʰ]      is a slightly aspirated voiceless velar stop. It occurs in loan words.

[kʰura]            'hoof'
[akʰɔr]            'letter'
[gakʰir]           'milk'

[k˥] is the unreleased voiceless velar stop. It occurs only in final position.

[lɔ́bak˥]          'idle'
[menzak˥]         'buffalo'
[epuk˥]           'arrow'
[kɔ́pàk˥]          'banana'

[k] voiceless velar stop. It occurs in all other environments.

[kɔ́]              'boy'
[kɛ̀daŋ]          'daughter-in-law'
[kédi]            'mango'
[akɔn]            'other'
[takum]           'locust'
[ukil ]           'pleader'

6      /g/ It has two poistional alternants i.e., [g˥] and [g] [g˥] is the unreleased voiced velar stop and occurs only in final position and is in free variation with [k˥].

[kɔ́pag˥]     ∼     [kɔ́pak˥]      'banana'
[mimag˥]     ∼     [mimak]       'war'
[lagbig˥]    ∼·    [lagbik˥]      'right'
[alag˥]      ∼     [alak˥]        'hand'

[g] voiced velar stop. It occurs elsewhere.

[gïtɔ]            'to go'
[gɔ́ktɔ]          'call (imperative)'
[gakïr]           'milk'
[agër]            'work'
[pegu]            'a Miri surname'
[agɔm]            'work'

[migɔm]            'prince'
[tsigu]            'hot water'
[lagzin]           'finger'
[migmɔ]            'face'
[liŋgum]           'neck'

### 1.4.2.2 Fricatives and affricates

This language has three fricative sounds and two affricate sounds. However allophonic distribution of these sounds involves manner overlapping.

*1 /s/*        has two allophones [s] and [ts].

[s] voiceless alveolar fricative. It occurs in word final position in low tone and in clusters.

[bakɔs]            'box'
[ɔpis]             'office'
[pɔskad]           'post card'
[bens]             'bench'
[mensaruŋ]         'fox'
[yɔ́ksa]            'knife'
[ansiŋ]            'cold'

[ts] voiceless alveolar affricate. It occurs in all other environments.

[tsagi]            'wooden pot'
[tsílɔ]            'today'
[tsírɔ]            'morning'
[tsaŋo]            'cast'
[tsíkir]           'cold'
[atsi]             'water'
[atsinaŋ]          'heart'
[dítsaŋ]           'Kartik; the eighth month of the Indian calender'

*2*  /z/    has three allophones, viz.,[j], [z] and [zʰ] .

[j]    is voiced fronto-palatal affricate.  It occurs immediately before or after the vowels /ə/ or /ɔ/.

| | |
|---|---|
| [jəti] | 'race' |
| [ajɔn] | 'friend' |
| [gɔbɔj] | 'tower' |
| [blauj] | 'blouse' |
| [jɔzibili] | 'lizard' |
| [zɔ́jaŋ] | 'twin |

[zʰ] voiced aspirated apico-dental fricative.  It occurs in loan words.

| | |
|---|---|
| [bazʰinë] | 'eunuch/ barren woman' |
| [suzʰa] | 'straight' |

[z] voiced  apico-dental fricative.  It occurs elsewhere.

| | |
|---|---|
| [zúpuaŋ] | 'herb' |
| [zínë] | 'narrow' |
| [zúnta] | 'show' |
| [zaëŋ] | 'case |
| [mëzer] | 'flame' |
| [ɔzinkc] | 'infant |
| [ëzɔ] | 'old woman |

### 1.4.2.3  *Nasals* :

*1*  /m/    is a bilabial nasal.  It  has  only one allophone [m]. It occurs in all positions.

| | |
|---|---|
| [ma] | 'not' |
| [mídïr] | 'sorrow' |
| [míbu] | 'priest' |
| [mɛ́ram] | 'oven' |
| [gɔ́mug] | 'letter' |
| [simánë] | 'immortal' |
| [mímag] | 'war' |
| [nemu] | 'lemon' |
| [tákum] | 'locust' |
| [pitam] | 'biscuit' |
| [dítëm] | 'earth' |

*2*   /n/       has two  positional variants i.e., [n] and  [ṇ]

[ṇ]   is apico-dental nasal.  It occurs with retroflex vowels /ï/ and /ë/ and in word final position.

| [ṇ ë ń] | 'lady' |
| [a ṇ ] ṇ ] | 'upland' |
| [ká ṇ ə] | 'spectator' |
| [kú ṇ ë] | 'sourness' |
| [lú ka ṇ] | 'to show' |
| [ópï ṇ] | 'lineage' |
| [ápï ⁿ] | 'food' |
| [ɔpa ṇ] | 'poor' |

[n] apico alveolar nasal occurs elsewhere.

| [nɔ] | 'you' |
| [mitɔm] | 'song' |
| [binàm] | 'to give' |
| [yɔ́pnàm] | 'to lose' |
| [lúnam] | 'to say' |

*3*   /ŋ/   has only one positional variant [ŋ]    dorsovelar nasal,occurs in all positions.

| [ŋɔ] | 'I' |
| [ŋanam] | 'to breathe deep' |
| [ŋukyum] | 'shade' |
| [ɔŋɔ] | 'fish' |
| [aŋɔni] | 'torn' |
| [àlaŋ] | 'vegetable curry' |
| [radàŋ] | 'middle' |
| [lukàŋ | 'to wish to speak' |
| [këbùŋ] | 'rat' |
| [árùŋ] | 'hole' |

*4*  /ñ/    has one positional variant  [ñ].  It is a mid-palatal nasal.  It occurs only medially.  Questions may be raised about its phonemic status, because it is in free variation with /n/.  Nevertheless, words have been found in the data where it does not vary freely.

| [pǐñi]  | ∼  | [pǐni]  | 'eight'    |
|---------|----|---------|------------|
| [rùñi]  | ∼  | [rùni]  | 'saturday' |
| [dóñi]  | ∼  | [dóni]  | 'sun'      |

The following examples establish the phonemic status of [n]

| [añɔŋ]   | 'little'                |
|----------|-------------------------|
| [añak]   | 'a kind of coarse rice' |
| [lenñiŋ] | 'door'                  |

So, it can be safely said that it is a marginal phoneme in the language, with a limited distribution.

### 1.4.2.4  *Lateral*

/l/   has only one positional variant.
It is on apicodental lateral.

| [lambë]  | 'road'        |
|----------|---------------|
| [alɔ]    | 'salt'        |
| [kíli]   | 'wooden pot'  |
| [miglu]  | 'blind'       |
| [lëkɔr]  | 'ladder step' |
| [lïdór]  | 'thunderbolt' |
| [ilë]    | 'stain'       |
| [makɔl]  | 'coal'        |

### 1.4.2.5  *Trill*

/r/   has three poistional variants i.e., [r], [R] and [ɽ] .

[r]    is apicoalveolar trill. It occurs in high and level tones in all the positions except in VCV environment.

| [rúbë]    | 'deaf'                          |
|-----------|---------------------------------|
| [rúnëbï]  | 'creator'                       |
| [rípan]   | 'to pin up after separating     |
|           | (an object )'                   |
| [yumran]  | 'small forest'                  |
| [turnàm]  | 'life'                          |
| [sagrèp]  | 'cough'                         |
| [zírniŋ]  | 'anger'                         |
| [kïzír]   | 'name of a month'               |

[R]    is an apioalveolor  flap.   It occurs finally and in  low
tone.

[pɔ́pìR]                                    'butterfly'
[mimbïR]                                   'young boy'
[nyɔ̀R]                                     'dew'
[ësaR]                                     'air'

[ṛ]    is an apico palatal  retroflex trill.   It occurs  in VCV
pattern in the speech of the speakers of Sayang dialect.

[dɔṛik]                                    'pigeon'
[pɔ́ṛɔk]                                    'hen'
[a ṛɔ]                                     'true'
[gaṛi]                                     'cart'
[kïṛiŋ]                                    'flock'

## 1.4.2.6    *Frictionless continuants*

*1*   /y/    has  only  one  allophone [y].   It is a  fronto-palatal
frictionless continuant.   It occurs initially and medially.

[yàka]                                     'black'
[yañi]                                     'father's sister'
[yilút]                                    'hornet'
[luyɔka]                                   'do not say'
[àyaŋ]                                     'affection'

*2*   /w/    has only one allhphone [w].   It is a bilabial friction-
less continuant.   It occurs only  medially.

[awàŋ]                                     'east
[sɔmuwa]                                   'Miri clan'
[awɔ]                                      'son'
[sɔwï]                                     'cow'
[bɔbuwa]                                   'dear one; a term of address
                                           towards a young boy'

## *1.4.3*  Tones

It is a well-known  fact  that in  every language differences
are found in the level of  pitch  between any given syllable and

those surrounding it. Pitch is a kind of musical tone. In some languages, varying pitch of individual syllables makes differences in meaning. In Mising also, as pointed out earlier, tones are distinctive. The language has three tones viz.,high, level and low. In high tone, the accent on the syllable concerned is a primary one, that is, the vocal cords vibrate with a higher frequency. Level tone is same as the pitch of the normal syllable, and low tone has a faint falling accent on the syllable concerned.

### 1.5.1  High tone

It occurs in all positions.

| | |
|---|---|
| [élɔ] | 'yes' |
| [ínam] | 'to do' |
| [pɔ́rɔ] | 'black wine' |
| [sátɔ] | 'to row' |
| [adí] | 'hill' |
| [také] | 'ginger' |
| [pëkï] | 'parrot' |

### 1.5.2  Low tone

It occurs in all positions.

| | |
|---|---|
| [àlag] | 'hand' |
| [ësìŋ] | 'tree' |
| [apɔ̀ŋ] | 'wine' |
| [amɔ̀ŋ] | 'soil' |
| [tarùŋ] | 'meeting' |
| [kaŋkàn] | 'beautiful' |
| [sikìr] | 'cold' |
| [anë̀] | 'mother' |
| [aññë̀] | 'twice' |

| | bilabial | apico-dental | alveolar | apico-palatal | palatal | velar | glottal |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| stop | p<br>pʰ<br>pˀ<br>b<br>bˀ<br>bˀ | t̪<br>d̪ | t<br>tʰ<br>tˀ<br>d<br>dˀ<br>dˀ | | | k<br>kʰ<br>kˀ<br>g<br>gʰ<br>gˀ | h |
| fricative | | z<br>zʰ | s | | | | |
| affricate | | ts | | | | | |
| nasal | m | n̪ | n | ñ | | ŋ | |
| lateral | | l | | | | | |
| trill | | | r | | | | |
| flap | | | R | ɾ̥ | | | |
| continuant | w | | | | y | | |

|          | Front |        | Central | Back |
|----------|-------|--------|---------|------|
|          |       | Retroflex |     |      |
| high     | i     | ï      |         | ü  u |
|          | I     |        |         | U    |
| highmid  | e     | ë      |         |      |
| mid low  | E     |        | e       | ɔ    |
| low      |       |        | a       | ɔᵛ   |

| Tone | High  | marked by   | / ´ / |
|------|-------|-------------|-------|
|      | Level | unmarked    |       |
|      | Low   | marked by   | / ` / |

## 1.11 Syllable Division

A word can be defined in Mising as the minimum unit of forms both free and bound (with some exceptions). Free forms are those, which may or may not contain bound forms (such as inflectional and derivative particles) in their constituent elements. The compounds, i.e., combinations of more than one free form, have also been treated as free forms and hence they are to be taken as words. Only those bound forms, which occur at grammatical levels higher than words such as phrase, clause and sentence, have been treated as words.

Words, when uttered, have differences in sonority from one point to the next. This is caused by voicing furnished by the vocal cords and by the amount of air coming from the lungs and of resonance produced by its passage through the organs of speech. We will define syllable as a segment of speech which contains one peak of sonority. In Mising, all the vowels, which are more sonorous than consonants, form peaks and are the nuclei of syllables. In other words, in any Mising word, there are as many syllables as there are vowels. By and large, Mising words are bisyllabic. Words having more than two syllables including compounds are derived words. A few monosyllabic words are also available, but most of them are bound

forms. If a syllable has CVC pattern, the first consonant is called onset and the second consonant occuring after vowel is called coda. If a syllable ends in a vowel, it is known as an open syllable, and if it ends in consonant, it is a closed syllable.

*1.11.1*   In Mising, the structure of an open syllable is.

±C+V

| /é/ | 'yes' |
| /má/ | 'not' |
| /ŋɔ́/ | 'I' |

*1.11.2*   The structure of closed syllable is usually

±C+V+C

| /ég/ | 'pig' |
| /ŋën/ | 'woman' |
| /pan/ | 'betel leaf' |

**Examples of syllabic patterns**

| V | /í/ | 'blood' |
| VV | /ui/ | 'spirit' |
| VC | /pë/ | 'at' |
| CVC | /dëŋ/ | 'country' |
| CVCV | /dɔtɔ/ | 'eat' |
| CVCVV | /babɔi/ | 'uncle' |
| CVV | /tëu/ | 'yet' |
| CVVC | /këig/ | 'down' |
| CVVCV | /mɔida/ | 'flour' |
|  | /kɔina/ | 'bride' |
| CVVCVC | /gɔanaŋ/ | 'ornament' |
|  | /taɔtɔk/ | 'up' |
| CVCVC | /kébuŋ/ | 'rat' |
| CVCCV | /tumpi/ | 'semen' |
| CVCCVC | /mittup/ | 'head |
| CVCCVCVV | /miglárië/ | 'blind' |
| CVCVCCV | /pɔkuklu/ | 'owl' |
| CVCVCCVC | /mëlignam/ | 'putting' |

| CVCCVCVC | /mënsaruŋ/ | 'fox' |
| CVCCVCCVC | /bɔmlatnam/ | 'bring back' |
| CVCCVCCVCVC | /bɔamlatkunam/ | 'to bring to a particular place' |
| VC | /ëg/ | 'pig' |
| VCV | /isi/ | 'this' |
| VCVC | /ïtïl | 'penis' |
| VCCV | /üdnë/ | 'high' |
| VCCVC | /ansiŋ | 'cold' |
| VCVCCV | /aziŋkɔ/ | 'child' |
| VCCVCV | /uŋkɔiɔ/ | 'where' |
| VCVCVCV | /ɔkɔlɔpë/ | 'where' |
| VCVVCV | /arainë/ | 'long' |
| VCCVV | /aŋtua/ | 'curtain' |
| VCCVCVC | /ïlmɔnam/ | 'charm |
| VCCVCCVC | /aksildum/ | 'intestine' |

## 1.6 Cluster formation

Vowels form clusters in all three positions, viz., initial, medial and final poistions of the word. Only two-vowel clusters are available. Whenever three vowels join together, there is always the insertion of a glide /y/ or /w/. Two -consonant clusters are found only in word-medial position except /w/ which does not form a cluster with any of the consonants. Only one example of a three-consonant cluster has been found in the data collected, viz., /mistri/ 'technician,' which is a loan word from Assamese.

## 1 Initial vowel clusters (phonemic)

| aë- | /aë/ | 'fruit' |
| ui- | /ui/ | 'spirit' |
| au- | /aum/ | 'three' |

## 2 Medial vowel clusters

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| -ai- | /raìkɔŋ/ | 'demọn' |
| -ia- | /yariànam/ | 'lightning' |
| -ua- | /guruaŋ/ | 'calf (part of the leg)' |
| -au- | /maur/ | 'cholera' |
| -ɔi- | /mɔida/ | 'flour' |
| -ɔa- | /gɔanàŋ/ | 'ornament' |
| | /mɔanàm/ | 'charge' |
| -aɔ- | /táɔt/ | 'top' |
| -ëi- | /këig/ | 'downward' |

## 3 Final vowel clusters

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| -ua- | /dumua/ | 'storm' |
| | /aŋtua/ | 'curtain' |
| -ɔi | /hábɔi/ | 'father's brother' |
| ɔu | /tɔ́u/ | 'cooked rice' |
| -ai | /kɔrai/ | 'pan' |
| | /bilai/ | 'tomato' |
| -ëu | /tëu/ | 'yet' |

## 4 Geminated and non-geminated consonant clusters

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | -pp- | /appïŋ/ | 'all' |
| | | /yappa/ | 'weaver' |
| 2 | -pt- | /àpta/ | 'hunting' |
| 3 | -pk- | /apkɔ/ | 'shooting range' |
| 4 | -pn- | /apnam/ | 'shooting' |
| 5 | -pd- | /kapduŋ/ | 'weeping |
| 6 | -pl- | /mɔkaplamïnam/ | 'to shut in' |
| 7 | -ps- | /napsi/ | 'mucus' |
| 8 | -py- | /dɔpyɔnam/ | 'theft' |
| 9 | -tp- | /mɔtpi/ | 'ashes' |

| 10 | -tk- | /dilatkunam/ | 'to return' |
| 11 | -tt- | /pëttaŋ/ | 'bird' |
| 12 | -tg- | /matgɔ́ŋ/ | 'movement of body' |
| 13 | -tn- | /bɔmlatnam/ | 'bringing back' |
| 14 | -tl | /mútlɔŋ/ | 'honey' |
| 15 | -ts- | /lyyitsunam/ | 'smoothness' |
| 16 | -ky- | /tàkpɔt/ | 'to sail (tr)' |
| 17 | -kt- | /pàktum/ | 'knot' |
| 18 | -kk- | /takkɔ/ | 'one division' |
| 19 | -kd- | /karbukdɔ/ | 'first day of the waxing moon' |
| 20 | -km- | /ikmagbɔ/ | 'brother-in-law' |
| 21 | -kn- | /parliknam/ | 'to burn (int)' |
| 22 | -kl- | /pɔkùklu/ | 'owl' |
| 23 | -ks- | /miksi/ | 'tears' |
| 24 | -ky- | /ŋukyum/ | 'shade' |
| 25 | -bb- | /abbuk/ | 'gun' |
| 27 | -bd- | /yubduŋ/ | 'sleep' |
| 28 | -bl- | /rëblïg/ | 'cover' |
| 29 | -bl- | /tubzàp/ | 'cover' |
| 30 | -bg- | /yabgɔ/ | 'door' |
| 31 | -by- | /kabyɔ/ | 'do not cut' |
| 32 | -dd- | /gïddiŋ/ | 'spear' |
| 33 | -dg- | /tàdgënam/ | 'to listen from afar' |
| 34 | -dn- | /mùdnam/ | 'whistling' |
| 35 | -dz- | /àdzi/ | 'short/small' |
| 36 | -gb- | /magbɔ/ | 'brother-in-law' |
| 37 | -gd- | /dagdɔ/ | 'up' |
| 38 | -gg- | /aggɔm/ | 'graveyard' |
| 39 | -gn- | /lagnë/ | 'thumb' |
| 40 | -gm- | /migmɔ/ | 'face/check' |
| 42 | -gl- | /tuglɔg/ | 'principal' |
| 42 | -gr- | /yïgrë/ | 'remuneration' |
| 43 | -gz- | /lagzin/ | 'fist, paw' |
| 44 | -gy- | /migyap/ | 'eye-brow' |

| 45 | -mp- | /dumpaŋ/ | 'pillow' |
|----|------|-----------|----------|
| 46 | -mt- | /pɔmtaŋ/ | 'big' |
| 47 | -mk- | /kɔmkïŋ/ | 'surface (of the river)' |
| 48 | -md- | /kumdaŋ/ | 'foundation' |
| 49 | -mb- | /ambïn/ | 'rice' |
| 50 | -mg- | /amgag/ | 'a handful of paddy' |
| 51 | -mm- | /yummi/ | 'sleep' |
| 52 | -mŋ- | /imŋag/ | 'wink/nap' |
| 53 | -mn- | /ramnàm/ | 'illness' |
| 54 | -ml- | /ɔkumlɔ/ | 'in house' |
| 55 | -mr- | /yúmran/ | 'deep forest' |
| 56 | -ms- | /dumsuŋ/ | 'deer' |
| 57 | -mz- | /dɔlubɔmze/ | 'big village' |
| 58 | -my- | /simyɔ/ | 'tiger' |
| 59 | -np- | /sinpama/ | 'uncovered' |
| 60 | -nt- | /zunta/ | 'shoe' |
| 61 | -nk- | /kɔnke/ | 'day before yesterday' |
| 62 | -nb- | /mɔnbane/ | 'stupid' |
| 63 | -nm- | /ginmur/ | 'Chaitra' |
| 64 | -nn- | /unnë/ | 'bright' |
| 65 | -nñ- | /kɔnñiŋ/ | 'coming year' |
| 66 | -nŋ- | /tanŋë/ | 'a kind of thread' |
| 67 | -nr- | /anrɔ/ | 'day after tomorrow' |
| 68 | -ns- | /ansiŋ/ | 'sweet' |
| 69 | -nz- | /rinzi/ | 'a kind of grass' |
| 70 | -ny- | /kamanye/ | 'nothing' |
| 71 | -ŋk- | /duŋkɔ/ | 'sitting place' |
| 72 | -ŋg- | /tuŋgeŋ/ | 'portico' |
| 73 | -ŋn- | /duŋmanë/ | 'loafer' |
| 74 | -ŋn- | /lapàŋnam/ | 'to reject' |
|    |      | /paŋnë/ | 'maid servant' |
| 75 | -ŋŋ- | /rɔŋŋam/ | 'solitary' |
| 76 | -ññ- | /aññi/ | 'two' |
| 77 | -lp- | /kalpi/ | 'creeper' |

| 78  | -lt-  | /balti/      | 'bucket'                    |
|-----|-------|--------------|-----------------------------|
| 79  | -lb-  | /kalbïn/     | 'to throw away'             |
| 80  | -ld-  | /aksildum/   | 'intestine'                 |
| 81  | -lg-  | /malgaŋ/     | 'a kind of fish'            |
| 82  | -lm-  | /ïlmɔnam/    | 'to charm'                  |
| 83  | -ln-  | /yɔ́lnam/    | 'to paint'                  |
| 84  | -ln-  | /ŋilŋam/     | 'a funny incident'          |
| 85  | -lñ-  | /ɔlñɔd/      | 'to make fire with wood'    |
| 86  | -ll-  | /ɔlluŋ/      | 'boat'                      |
| 87  | -ls-  | /dalsini/    | 'cinnamun'                  |
| 88  | -lz-  | /ŋilzɔn/     | 'source of laughter'        |
| 89  | -rp-  | /sarpïnam/   | 'trial'                     |
| 90  | -rt-  | /bɔrtukula/  | 'crane'                     |
| 91  | -rk-  | /kurkàpnam/  | 'to break'                  |
| 92  | -rb-  | /arbïyaŋ/    | 'thigh'                     |
| 93  | -rd-  | /pɔrda/      | 'curtain'                   |
| 94  | -rg-  | /durgɔ/      | 'castle'                    |
| 95  | -rn-  | /sarnë/      | 'judge'                     |
| 96  | -rñ-  | /arñiŋ/      | 'difficulty'                |
| 97  | -rŋ-  | /arŋadɔ/     | 'curvature'                 |
| 98  | -rl-  | /garliŋ/     | 'phalguna'                  |
| 99  | -rr-  | /dɔrrɔ́ŋ/   | 'backbone'                  |
| 100 | -rz-  | /dɔrzi/      | 'tailor'                    |
| 101 | -rs-  | /dërsanam/   | 'bouncing'                  |
| 102 | -ry-  | /baryin/     | 'anything flat'             |
| 103 | -sk-  | /iskul/      | 'school'                    |
| 104 | -st-  | /mastual/    | 'most'                      |
| 105 | -yy-  | /ayyïr/      | 'method of writing'         |

**Chart of Consonant clusters**

| | p | t | k | b | d | g | m | n | ŋ | ñ | l | r | s | z | w | y |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| p | + | + | + | | | | | | | + | + | | | | | + | + | | | | | | | | |
| t | + | + | + | | | | | | | + | + | | | | | + | + | + | | | | | ' |
| k | + | + | + | | | | | | | + | + | + | | | | | + | + | | | | | ' |
| b | | | | | | | + | | | + | + | + | | | | | + | + | | | | | | | ' |
| d | + | | | + | + | + | + | + | | | | | + | + | | | | | | | | | ' |
| g | | | + | | | + | + | + | + | + | | | + | + | | | | | | | | | ' |
| m | | | | | + | | | | | + | + | + | + | | | + | + | | | | | | | ' |
| n | + | + | + | | | + | + | + | + | + | | | + | + | | | | | | | ' |
| ŋ | | | | | | | | | | | | + | + | + | | | + | + | | | | | | | ' |
| ñ | + | | | | | | | | | | | | + | | | + | + | + | | | | | | | ' |
| l | + | + | + | + | | | + | + | | | | | | | + | + | | | | | | | ' |
| r | | | | | | | | | | | + | + | | | | | + | | | | | | | | | ' |
| s | + | + | + | | | | | | | + | + | | | | | + | + | | | | | | | ' |
| z | | | | | + | + | + | + | | | | | | | + | | | | | | | | | ' |
| w | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | ʔ | : | | | | | | | | | ʸ | ' |
| y | + | + | + | + | | | + | + | + | | | | | + | | | | | | | + |

# MORPHOPHONEMICS

## 1    External Sandhi

By and large, the Mising word maintains a bisyllabic structure. When two such words join together to form a pharse in a compound, the initial syllables of both the participant words are deleted.

**Example**

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ami<br>man | + | ane<br>mother | → | mine | 'goddess' |
| ariŋ<br>line | + | akɔ<br>one | → | riŋkɔ | 'one line' |
| alag<br>hand | + | atam<br>palm | → | lagtam | 'palm' |
| ami<br>man | + | ïlïn<br>countless | → | milïn | 'a big family' |
| ami<br>man | + | ïrï<br>virtue | → | mirï | 'virtuous man' |
| ami<br>man | + | kayum<br>beauty | → | miyum | 'beautiful girl' |
| ami<br>man | + | mëzïŋ<br>old age | → | mizïŋ | 'oldman' |
| agɔm<br>ward | + | lumaŋ<br>unable<br>to say | → | gɔmmaŋ | 'dumb' |
| ami<br>man | + | yɔtpag<br>elsewhere | → | mipag | 'outsider' |

## 2  Internal Sandhi

(a)  Apicodental nasal /n/ changes homorganically with the following stop :

$$n \rightarrow \begin{bmatrix} m \\ \eta \end{bmatrix} \bigg/ \begin{bmatrix} p & b \\ k & g \end{bmatrix}$$

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| kan + ka(ne) | → kaŋkane | 'beautiful' |
| sin + pa(ma) | → simpama | 'did not find' |
| mon + ba(ne) | → mombane | 'stupid' |
| akɔn + ke | → kɔŋke | 'day before yesterday' |
| pin + gɔp | → piŋgɔp | 'speedy' |

(b)  Velar stops become velar nasal when followed by apicodental nasal :

$$\begin{Bmatrix} k \\ g \end{Bmatrix} \rightarrow \eta \; / \text{-}n$$

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| alag | + në | → laŋnë | 'thumb' |
| and | formative suffix | | |
| (la)pag | + nam | → lapaŋnam | 'to reject' |
| pɔrɔk | + në | → rɔŋnë | 'hen' |
| cock | fem suffix | | |
| (më)pak | + në | → mëpaŋnë | 'one who thinks again' |

(c)  Voiceless stops become voiced when they precede suffixes beginning with voiced consonants except /n/

$$\begin{bmatrix} p \\ t \\ k \end{bmatrix} \rightarrow \begin{bmatrix} b \\ d \\ g \end{bmatrix} \bigg/ \text{-} \; [+ \text{voice}] \rightarrow \begin{bmatrix} m \\ n \\ \eta \end{bmatrix} \bigg/ \text{-} \; [+ \text{nasal}]$$

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| amik | + asi | → * miksi | → migsi | 'tears' |
| eye | water | | | |

| amik | + | ayap | → | mikyap | → | migyap | 'eye |
| eye | | cover | | | | | brow' |
| tat | + | gë (la) | → | tatgëla | → | tadgëla | 'after |
| listen | | suffix | | | | | listen- |
| | | | | | | | ing' |
| yup | + | duŋ | → | yupduŋ | → | yulbduŋ | 'is sleep- |
| sleep | | aux | | | | | ing' |
| nɑp | + | mur | → | nabmur | → | nammur | 'beard' |
| lip | | hair | | | | | |
| amik | + | azin | → | mikzin | → | migzin | 'wound |
| | | | | | | | in the |
| | | | | | | | eye' |

(d) Final /ŋ/ is deleted before formative suffixes:

$$- ŋ \longrightarrow \phi / \underline{\quad} \text{[Formative suffixes]}$$

| kebuŋ | + | de | kebudë | 'the rat' |
| rat | | article | | |
| aruŋ | + | lɔ | arulɔ | 'in the |
| hole | | loc-suffix | | hole' |
| barzɔŋ | + | ne | barzɔne | 'one who |
| skillful | | adj | | is skilled |
| climber | | suffix | | in climb- |
| | | | | ing |
| | | | | trees' |
| isiŋ | + | kiride | isikiride | 'the trees' |
| tree | | pl. suffix | the trees | |

(e) Personal pronouns taking plural suffix /-lu/ undergo vowel harmony:

$$\left\{ \begin{array}{c} ɔ \\ i \end{array} \right\} \underline{\quad} u \Big/ \underline{\quad} u$$

| ŋɔ | + | lu | ——→ | ŋulu | 'we' |
| I | | pl | | | |
| nɔ | + | lu | ——→ | nulu | 'you (pl)' |
| you | | pl | | | |
| bï | + | lu | ——→ | bulu | 'they' |
| he/she | | pl | | | |

# MORPHOLOGY

## Introduction :

Mising mophemes may be broadly classified into two groups: roots and nonroots. All the roots enter into higher morphological constructions to form a stem. The roots may be classified into four categories, i.e., nouns and noun substitutes, adjectives including numerals and classifiers, verbs and adverbs. Nonroots are forms which do not serve as bases for higher morphological constructions. These may be classified into three categories, i.e., affixes, post-positions and particles. Affixes include prefixes, infixes and suffixes and are bound forms. Particles are free forms and are not inflected. Actually, they function at levels beyond the words. These are emphatics, connectives, and interjectives. The morphological processes which are employed are affixation, juxtaposition, reduplication and compounding.

A word in Mising has been defined as *a free form plus a bound form* or *a combination of two* or *more free forms.* In Mising, the distinction between a compound word and a phrase is that a compound word can under go certain morphophonemic changes whereas a phrasal construction does not. Juxtaposed constructions may be claimed to be phrasal constructions, where, most of the time, post-positions are dropped. But never the less, such constructions function as a single unit and, hence, are to be treated as single words.

Thus the word types in Mising are as follows -

a) *Simple word* consists of a single free from or a stem.

b) *Derived word* consists of a stem and one or more affixes.

c) *Compound word* consists of two simple stems with or without affixes.

Thus the word classes in Mising which have been established on the basis of formal and functional criteria are as follows -

i)   Noun (including noun substitutes)

ii)  Adjective (including numerals and classifiers)

iii) Verb

iv)  Adverb

v)   Function words (particles)

Of these, only function words, though free forms, do not enter into higher constructions.

Nouns and noun substitutes, or pronouns, take number, gender and case suffixes and hence they are separated from other form classes. A typical formula for a noun construction in Mising would be as follows.

n = + n nc: ns ± num:nm ± g: gm ± c: cm

i.e, noun consists of a nominal free form which may or may not take overt      number, gender and case morpheme(s).

As a formal category, verbs in Mising have a more complex morphological system and are separated from other form classes as they take tense, mood and aspect suffixes. A typical formula will be as follows

$$iv/vt = +v \; nc:iv/vt \; \pm \; \begin{pmatrix} \text{tense} \\ \text{aspect} \\ \text{mood} \end{pmatrix}$$

The nuclear position of the verb is occupied by an intrasitive or transitive verb stem with or without overt tense, aspect and mood markers. Adjectives fill the functional slot of possession, partitiveness, etc. An adjective in Mising has the following type of morphological construction.

adj = + adj nc: adj s ± c●mp : {-ya/ - yapag}

An adjective consists of an adjective nucleus filled by an adjective stem and an optional comparison slot filled by /-ya/ or /-yapag/.

Adverbs fill the slot of adverbials difining location, time, etc. Apart from these, there are a few forms which fill functional slots at the syntactic level and may be termed as function words.

## 1 Noun

**1.0** Stems, which are inflected for number, gender and case are nouns. Mising nouns are not differenciated for person.

Animate nouns can take number and gender markers as well as postpositions. Human nouns and animate non-human nouns have different ways of showing gender distinction.

They fall into two classes- (a) simple and (b) derived.
*1.0.1* Simple nouns comprise forms for human, animate non-human and inanimate entities.

**Examples**

Human nouns

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| (i) | kɔ́ | boy |
| | paŋnë | maid |
| | túmbɔ | window |
| (ii) | abɔ | father |
| | b̈irɔ́ | brother |

Animate non-human nouns

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | iki | dog |
| | zëktum | buffalo |

Iñanimate nouns

| | |
|---|---|
| ëput | foam |
| adí | hill |
| áruŋ | hole |

*1.0.2* Derived nouns: These are differenciated form all others in that, they are formed by suffixing /në/, /-kɔ/ /-tad/ to the infinitive form of the verb. It may be considered as a separate class of nouns on both morphological and syntactical axes in that, on the morphological axis it can take case and, some times, number markers and, on syntactic axis, it can be the nucleus of a NP.

| *Vb stem* | *inf v:N* | *inf. N.* |
|---|---|---|
| ɔ́ | ɔ́nam | ɔ́nanë |
| to write | writing | writer |
| ɔ | ɔnam | ɔnanë |
| to bear | giving birth | birth |
| lú | lúnam | lútad |
| to say | saying | introduction |
| dú | dúnam | dúŋkɔ |
| to sit | sitting | seat, page |
| pɔ́r | pɔ́rinam | pɔ́rinë |
| to read | reading | one who reads (student) |

**1.1 Gender** is natural. Mising nouns are distinguished for two genders, viz., masculine and feminine.

*1* Human nouns are distinguished for gender either lexically or by suffixation / prefixation.

| *masc* | *fem* |
|---|---|
| milɔŋ | ane |
| man | mother |
| abɔ | nëŋ |
| father | women |
| mílɔŋtani | néŋtani |
| male human being | female human being |

| kɔ́ | kɔ́nе́ŋ |
|-----|--------|
| boy | girl |
| igmag-bɔ | ignë |
| brother-in-law | sister-in-law |
| rútum | rútum |
| master | mistress |
| bïrɔ́ | bïrɔ́më |
| brother | sister |
| págbɔ | pánŋë |
| male slave | female slave |

2   In order to distinguish gender with non-human animate class of nouns, a partial reduplication of the noun root is employed.

## Example

| Stem | *masc* | *fem* |
|------|--------|-------|
| iki | ikikibɔ or | ikikinë or |
|      | kibɔiki | kinëiki |
|      | dog | bitch |
| pɔ́rɔk | rɔ́kpɔpɔ́rɔk | rɔ́gnëpɔ́rɔk |
|      | pɔ́rɔkrɔ́kpɔ | pɔ́rɔkrɔ́gnë |
|      | cock | hen |

But some times the stems are not reduplicated and the gender distinction is maintained like human nouns.  Possibly it is a later addition.

| *masc* | *fem* |
|--------|-------|
| gure | nëngure |
| horse | mare |
| tébɔ | ténë |
| bull elephant | cow elephant |
| rébɔ | rénë |
| horse | mare |

*3*   There is no gender distinction in inanimate nouns, including all natural objects such as flora, hills, etc., and abstract ideas such as agér 'work', agɔm 'word', arɔ́ 'true', etc.

## 1.2  Number :

Mising distinguishes two numbers, i.e., singular and plural. The usual suffix taken by noun stem to form plural is kiriŋ ∼ kidiŋ. The plural marker, however, is deleted when plurality is expressed by either numerical suffixes or quantitative adjectives. When a noun is modified by a demonstrative adjective, either the demonstrative adjective or the noun takes a plural marker, but not both. Plural morpheme usually precedes demonstrative adjectives and articles.

**Examples -**

(a)           *singular*              *plural*

nën                    nënkiriŋ

woman                 women

tani                   tanikiriŋ

man                   men

kɔ́kaŋ                 kɔ́kaŋkiriŋ

child                 children

kébuŋ                 ké buŋkiriŋ

rat                   rats

ɔkum                 ɔkum kiriŋ

house                houses

(b)           sisukakɔ              sisukañ ñ ikɔ

one stag             two stags

tanikɔ               taniaŋɔkɔ

a man                five men

akëŋkɔ               akëŋ sɔumkɔ

a river              three rivers

kɔ́dë                 apïŋ kɔ́dë

the boy              all the boys

|       |        |                |
|-------|--------|----------------|
|       | ami    | amitakam       |
|       | man    | (man+all) people |
| (c)   | kɔ́si   | kɔ́kiridë       |
|       | the boy | those boys     |
|       | ɔkumdë | ɔkumkiridë     |
|       | the house | those houses  |
|       | rúbedë | rúbekiridë     |
|       | the deaf | the deaf (pl) |

In noun phrases comprising a head and a modifier, the plural marker follows the head noun.

| ayïnë | iki      | kiri dë  | 'the good dogs'  |
|-------|----------|----------|------------------|
| good  | dog      | pl the   |                  |
| zúnë  | gasɔ́r    | kiri dë  | 'the wet clothes' |
| wet   | cloth    | pl the   |                  |
| kayïnë | meŋkuri | kiri dë  | 'the ugly cats'  |
| ugly  | cat      | pl the   |                  |

## 1.3. Pronoun

*1.3.0* A pronoun is a form which substitutes a noun or noun phrase. It shows opposition in person, number, and case but not in gender. The opposition in person is indicated by different free forms. All subtypes of pronouns, except the interrogative pronouns show opposition in number. The plural morpheme for personal pronouns is/-lu/. Nonpersonal pronouns add/-bulu/ marker which is homophonous with third person plural morpheme/bulu/ 'they'.

| *sg*  | *pl*      |
|-------|-----------|
| ŋɔ    | ŋɔ-lu     |
| I     | we        |
| isi   | isi-bulu  |
| this  | these     |

*1.3.1* Personal pronouns- In Miri, personal pronouns distinguish three persons i.e., (i) first person (ii) second person and (iii) third person

## Human

|            | *sg*           | *pl*            |
|------------|----------------|-----------------|
| *1st person* | ŋɔ I         | ŋɔlu    we      |
| *2nd person* | nɔ you (seg) | nɔlu    you (pl) |
| *3rd person* | bï he/she    | bulu    they    |

All the animate non-human and inananimate nouns are substituted by third personal pronouns :

## Nonhuman animate and inanimate

|              | *sg*        | *pl*              |
|--------------|-------------|-------------------|
| *Third person* | isi   this | isi- bulu   these  |
|              | edë  that  | edë- bulu   those  |
|              | së   this  | së- bulu   these   |

*1.3.2* /awë/ is the reflexive pronoun meaning 'self'. Apart from this, all the personal pronouns function as reflexive pronouns by repeating the pronoun concerned. The first one would be in the nominative and the second one would take the case markers depending on the relationship of NP and VP. All the reflexive pronouns can be replaced by appropriate nouns in their place of occurrence.

ŋɔ      sém      awë·      ·mësuden

or

| ŋɔ | sém   | ŋɔkke | mësuduŋ       |
|----|-------|-------|---------------|
| I  | it-to | self  | think self + tense |

I am thinking about it myself

| bï | awë    | agër | gëri-ye    |
|----|--------|------|------------|
| bï | bï-kke | agër | gëri-ye    |
| he | he-of  | work | do+tense   |

### 1.3.3 Demonstrative pronouns

The particles /-isi/, -së/ and /-edë/ function as demonstrative pronouns. The particle /-së/ occurs only with the non-human nouns and the form /-dë/ occurs with both human and

non-human nouns. Perhaps the form /-dë/ at an earlier stage might have been restricted to human nouns, and gradually an extension of its distribution may have taken place. The data on hand, however, are insufficient to make a positive statement at this point. Demonstrative pronouns are of two types a) proximate b) remote

### 1.3.3.1 *Proximate*

Refers to the nominal objects which are very near to the point of reference from the speaker's point of view.

These are

|                   |                                   |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------|
| isi- this         | (with animate nouns)              |
| së- this          | (generally with inanimate nouns)  |
| isi meŋkuri kɔ    | 'This (is) a cat'                 |
| this cat one      |                                   |
| isi kɔ́wë kɔ duŋ   | 'This is a boy'                   |
| this boy one is   |                                   |
| së bulu kitab-dë  | 'these books'                     |
| these book        |                                   |

### 1.3.3.2 *Remote*

When the point of reference is far away from the speaker, the particle referring to such objects is called remote demonstrative. The remote demonstrative particle is /edë/ 'that'.

| edë  | meŋkūri | kɔ  |
|------|---------|-----|
| that | cat     | one |

that is a cat

Some times third person singular form /-bï/ 'he/she' and /-edë/ 'that' precede nouns and function as demonstrative pronouns, wherever some emphasis on the utterance is to be made from speaker's point of view. /-bï/ occurs only with human nouns and /-edë/ occurs with all nouns.

| | |
|---|---|
| rambï-kke gëmpa-de | 'the basket of Ram (and none else)' |
| Ram dem of basket dem | |
| nën-dëkke gasór-(dë) | 'the cloth of the lady' |
| lady dem of cloth dem | |
| iki-dë rá-duŋ | 'the dog barks' |
| dog dem bark + tense | |
| kitab-dë-m pɔri-tɔ | 'Read the book' |
| book dem to read tense | |

### 1.3.4 Indefinite pronouns

They are formed by suffixing /-akɔ/ 'some' to the qualitative and quantitative adjectives and demonstrative pronouns.

| azɔnë | + | akɔ | → | azɔkɔ | - little in quantity |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| së | + | akɔ ± dë | → | së kɔdë | - somebody |

### 1.3.5 Interrogative pronouns

| | |
|---|---|
| ɔkɔ | 'what' |
| sëkɔ | 'who' |
| (a) dit-kɔ | 'how much' |
| kapë | 'how' (literally 'at what') |
| kapila/na | 'why' |
| ɔkɔ-lɔ | 'where' |
| uŋkuwë | 'why' |

except /-ɔkɔ/ 'what', all other forms are derived from other pronouns or adjectives.

| së | + | ɔkɔ | sëkɔ | 'who' |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| this | | what | | |
| adit | + | ɔkɔ | (a) ditkɔ | 'how much' |
| much | | what | | |
| ɔkɔ | + | lɔ | ɔkɔ lɔ | 'where' |

### 1.3.6  Possessive pronouns

They are the pronouns with genitive case suffix /-kke/.

|          | sg |  | pl |  |
|----------|------|--------|---------|-------|
| 1st person | ŋɔ-kke | 'my' | ŋɔ-lu-kke | 'our' |
| 2nd person | nɔ-kke | 'your' | nɔ-lu-kke | 'your' |
| 3rd person | bï-kke | 'his/her' | bu-lu-kke | 'their' |

Indefinite and interrogative pronouns also take /-kke/ in the same way as personal pronouns to denote possession, but function as personal pronouns.

| akɔ-kke | 'of someone' |
|---------|--------------|
| sëkɔ-kke | 'to whom' |
| sëkɔm-kke | 'of whose' |

### 1.3.7  Adverbial pronoun

They include all the demonstrative, interrogative and indefinite pronouns.

adv. pro-base pron+pp

| idɔ-lɔ-kke | 'now' |
|------------|-------|
| ɔkɔ-lɔ | 'where' |
| supak-pe | 'at present' |
| ɔdɔ-lɔ | 'here' |

## 1.4  Case

***1.4.0.*** At the syntactic level, case establishes the relationship between a noun phrase and verb except in the case of genitive, where it expresses the relationship between two noun phrases. At the semantic level, cases ordinarily describe the role of nominals in the action performed by the verb phrase. On this basis, it can be said that, on the syntactic level, the verb plays the most important role, and is responsible for establishing the nature of its relationship with the noun phrase.

Case relations are indicated by a set of post-positions which are added to the noun phrase in order to establish the required relationship with the verb phrase. All the post-positions are either monosyllabic or bisyllabic. They are semi-bound forms in the sense that they have a meaning of their own and are merely juxtaposed to the noun phrase. The following formula will make the position of a post-position in establishing case relations of a noun phrase clear.

$$NP = \pm \underline{Det\$} \pm \underline{Qn\$} \pm \underline{Md\$} \pm \underline{HS} \pm \underline{Qn\$} \pm \underline{Dets}$$

$$\begin{Bmatrix} det \\ poss \end{Bmatrix} \quad num \quad adj \quad N \quad num \quad \begin{Bmatrix} det \\ poss \end{Bmatrix}$$

$$+ \underline{Gen} + \underline{Cm}$$
$$\quad\ genm \qquad pp$$

where -

| | |
|---|---|
| Det$ | Determiner slot |
| det | determiner |
| poss | possessive |
| Qn$ | quantifier slot |
| num | number |
| adj | adjective |
| HS | Head slot |
| N | Noun |
| Cm | case marker |
| pp | post-position |
| gen | gender |

This is, ordinarily, the formula for a Mising NP. For clarity, it can be broken into parts to show the position of the case marker added to the noun phrase.

|       | N        | +  | num    | +  | det   |                   |
|-------|----------|----|--------|----|-------|-------------------|
| (i)   | epúk     | +  | kiríŋ  | +  | dë    | = the bows        |
|       | bow      | +  | pl     | +  | dem   |                   |
| (ii)  | isiepúk  | +  | ɔkki   |    |       | =. isiepùkkɔkki   |
|       | this bow | +  | by     |    |       | = by this bow     |

$$N \quad + \quad gen \quad + \quad case$$
$$kɔ́ \quad + \quad nép \quad + \quad sɔk \quad = \text{'with the child'}$$
$$child \quad + \quad gender \quad + \quad with$$
$$N \quad + \quad gen \quad + \quad num \quad + \quad det \quad + \quad case$$
$$kɔ́ \quad + \quad nép \quad + \quad kirín \quad + \quad dë \quad + \quad kabé$$
$$= kɔ́népkirídëkabé \qquad\qquad = \text{'for the girl'}$$

Following are the cases in Mising

### 1.4.1 Nominative

It is the case of the subject. A subject may be an actor, an experiencer or an instrument pertaining to any action The case relationship ordinarily is not marked overtly.

(a) bí ɔpɔ́ sɔ́gapdup      'He is catching fish'
    he fish catch is (Actor)

(b) miglunë ami gïdɔ
    the blind man goes (Actor)

(c) pɔ apin dɔ́ dup      'I am eating food (Actor)'
    I food eat am

(d) yɔ́ksa ádinem tëktɔ      'Knife cuts meat (instrument)

In sentences with two agents as in the causative constructions, *the instigated agent is demoted to the object position and* takes the accusative case marker /-m/

1. pɔ bïm edë kitabdëm bïkkɔlɔkke bïmɔnamdɔpë lútɔ
   I him that book his form give+causative say
   'I ask him to make him take that book for him'

2. pɔbïm apin dɔmɔtagai
   I him rice eat + cau + tense/mood/aspect
   'I made him eat rice'

In recurring constructions, the subject of one of the clauses is manifested in genitive case instead of nominative and takes the case marker /-kke/.

e.g.-

ŋɔkke mëlɔke kanam kɔ́dë gïduŋ

I of yesterday seen boy the go+         'tense/mood/asp'

Literally- my yesterday seen boy
goes

'The boy (whom) I saw yesterday goes'

ŋɔkke më namë bulu gïye         'I think they will go'

I of thought they      go + future

Literally- my thought (thinking) they will go

they will go

In passive constructions, the agent takes the instrumental
marker /-kɔkki/.

isi agërsëm ram-kɔkki gërduai      'This work was done by
this work to Ram by work+past     Ram'

### 1.4.2 Accusative

It is the case of object which undergoes the action. So
this case relationship presupposes a transitive verb. It is
marked by /-ëm/.

This case relationship is expressed by all subclasses of
nouns.

1.   bï kediëm dɔ́pɔduŋ                     'He eats mango'

     he  mango+acc. tense+asp
2.   ŋɔkke mɔ́namdëm uŋkuwe ?            'What am I doing ?'

     my doing+ acc what

3.   nɔkke ɔ́myë dëm gɔ́ktɔ              'Call your daughter'
     your daughter+ acc. call+ imp

### 1.4.3 Dative

This is the case of indirect object or purpose or goal of
movement.

## 1 Dative of indirect object

The case marker is /-legabe/ for human nouns and /-kabe/ for inanimate nouns.

## 2 Dative of purpose

The human and inanimate nouns take the same marker as dative of indirect object. Complements take the case marker /-be/ and /-anka/.

| | |
|---|---|
| ŋɔ nɔmɔ ġi yalanka ludunoi | 'I told you to come' |
| I you+acc come for say+tense | |
| bï ɔŋɔ sɔgapkabe gidɔ | 'He went to catch fish' |
| he fish catch for go+tense | |
| ŋɔ isɔm legabe appi pagla | 'I looked for it every |
| I this for around see+tense | where' |

## 3 Dative as goal movement

The goal could be a simple goal marked by /-pë/ or direction marked by /-dɔpë/ when it is far away and /-sɔpë/ when it is close.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| iskul | pë | gï tɔ | | 'Go to school' |
| school | to | go+imp | | |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| nen | dë | ɔkum | pë | gï ye | 'The women will go to |
| women the | house | to | go will | the house' |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| bï | me | lɔ | agɔrpë | gi dunai | 'He went to the sea |
| he | yesterday | sea at | go past | yesterday' |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| kɔkan | kiri | de | bari-dɔpë | gï dɔ |
| child | plural the | garden towards | go+tense etc. |

'The childern go towards (up to) the garden'

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ɔkum | sɔpë | gï-tɔ | 'Go towards (up to) the |
| house | to wards | go+tense, etc | house' |

*1.4.4* Ablative

It indicates the source of action performed. It is marked by /-lɔkke/.

| iskulɔ-lɔkke | gïnaŋku | 'Come back from the |
| school from | come back | school' |

| bï ɔkum lɔkke | gïpakaŋku | 'He went away from |
| he house from | come back | the house' |

bï gauati lɔkke lakïmpurpë gïkaŋ 'He went to Lakhimpur
he Gauhati from Lakhimpur went    from Gauhati'

As far as the ablative case is concerned, this language makes a further distinction in that it is obligatory to indicate whether the movement from one place to another is on the same plane, upwards or downwards. The phenomenon is called "deixis". The deictic markers are as follows -

| lɔkke | 'level' |
| tɔkke | 'upword' |
| dɔlɔkke | 'downward' |

/tɔ/ and /dɔ/ mean *up* and *down* respectively. But the data at this juncture do not permit a conclusive analysis. Further investigations may throw more light on this. examples -

| adi | tɔkke | ëliŋ | nátɔ | 'Bring stone from (the) |
| hill | from | stone | bring | hill' |

| abuŋ dɔlɔkke | ɔŋɔ | nátɔ | 'Bring fish from the |
| river from | fish | bring | river' |

*1.4.5* Instrumental

It indicates the means through which an action is performed. It is marked by the post-position /-sɔk/. Sometimes

it is not marked overtly.

| ŋɔ | lagbike | dúdɔ | 'I eat with hand' |
|----|---------|------|-------------------|
| I | hand | eat | |

| ŋɔkke | pensɔ́k | attɔ | 'Write with my pen' |
|-------|--------|------|---------------------|
| my | pen+inst | write | |

| pï | epuksɔ́k | simyɔ dëm ɔkeduaè | 'He killed the tiger with the arrow' |
|----|---------|-------------------|--------------------------------------|
| he | arrow inst | tiger acc     kill+ past | |

### 1.4.6. Locative :

It is the case of place and time of action, sub-classified as under.

1 *Simple locative*-marked with /-lɔ/

| tani | ɔkum-lɔ | duŋ | 'The man is at home' |
|------|---------|-----|----------------------|
| man | home in at | is | |

2 *Inessive*

It expresses the existence of a thing with special reference to internalization and is marked by/- arade/ or /-aralɔ/.

| gëmpa | ara lɔ | murukʌŋ | duŋ |
|-------|--------|---------|-----|
| basket | inside | money | is |

'The money is inside the basket'

| ŋɔkke | aina-rade | mëdisagdirë |
|-------|-----------|-------------|
| my | heart inside | grief + tense mood/asp |

'There is grief inside my heart'

## 3  *Ellative*

It indicates movement outwards and is marked by /-aralɔ+ -kke/

| bi | ɔkum | aralɔkke | gïyëduŋ |
|----|------|----------|---------|
| he | house | inside from | come back is |

'He comes out of the house'

### 1.4.7  Commitative :

It indicates the person or object associated with the subject in the performance of the action. It is marked by /-lɔŋɔ/ or /-kɔlɔ/.

| nɔkkelɔŋɔ | ŋɔ | gïyë | 'I shall go with you' |
|-----------|-----|------|----------------------|
| your with | I | go+future | |

| ŋc | bïkkekɔ́tɔ | dɔ́ dɔ | 'I eat with him' |
|-----|-----------|-------|------------------|
| I | his | with eat | |

### 1.4.8.  Genitive :

It denotes possession or inter-nominal relationship. Accordingly, genitive can be divided into two sub classes-

### 1  *Possessive*

It expresses possession of a thing and is marked by /-kke/. The same marker is used with all subclasses of nouns. However, nonhuman animate and inanimate nouns suffix /-kke/ after the substantive particle /-dë/.

| isi | guredɔ-kke | gɔraki | 'This (is the) owner of |
|-----|-----------|--------|-------------------------|
| this | horse of | owner | the horse' |

| dóñipə́lɔ-kke | awë | dë | | 'The son of the sun |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| sun moon of | son | the | | and the moon' |
| neŋkke | sari | isi | duŋ | 'The saree of the |
| women of | saree | here | is | woman is here' |

## 2 Partitive:

It indicates the relationship of a particular object with another object. The relationship·is more or less fixed. In other words, the possession of the object is decided by natural factors such as kinship, relations, body parts, talent, etc.

Noun takes pronominal suffixes before the case marker. For human nouns, pronominal form /-bï/ and, for non human nouns, /-dë/ are added to the noun before the case marker /-kke/, i.e.,

$$N + \begin{Bmatrix} bï \\ dë \end{Bmatrix} + \text{-kke}$$

| páyeŋ-bï-kke | awë | 'the son of Payeng' |
|---|---|---|
| payeng p.gen | son | |
| neŋ-bï-kke | mittup | '(the) head of a woman' |
| women p.gen | head | |
| idi-dë-kke | amik | 'eye of the dog' |
| dog p.gen | eye | |

However, when the governed noun precedes the governing noun, the case marker is dropped.

## 1.5. Classifiers

The language makes use of classifiers for denoting the semantic class of the noun. The semantic criteria are a) the physical characteristics of the object, b) utility and c) shape in the desending order of dominance.

(1) Human nouns do not take a classifier.

(2) For animals, the classifier is /adɔr/. To denote plurality, the form /-ak/ always comes after the classifier.

| idi | adɔrkɔ | 'one dog' |
|-----|--------|-----------|
| idi | dárñikɔ | 'two dogs' |
| idi | dárumkɔ | 'three dogs' |

(3) Terrestrial entities like soil, field etc., take the classifier /aluŋ/

| amɔŋ | aluŋkɔ | 'one field' |
|------|--------|-------------|
| amɔŋ | luŋikɔ | 'two fields' |

(4) Utensils take the classifier /ézuŋ/

| apɔŋ | ézuŋkɔ | 'a cup of wine' |
|------|--------|-----------------|

(5) Nouns denoting flat abjects take the classifier /abɔ́r/

| kitab | abɔ́rkɔ | 'one book' |
|-------|---------|------------|
| kitab | bárñikɔ | 'two books' |
| kitab | bárumkɔ | 'three books' |

(6) Nouns denoting rectangular objects take the classifier /atàk/.

| tɔktà | atàk | 'one cot' |
|-------|------|-----------|
| tɔktà | tagñikɔ | 'two cots' |
| tɔktà | tagumkɔ | 'three cots' |

(7) Nouns denoting long objects take the classifier /asɔŋ/

| epùk | asɔŋkɔ | 'one arrow' |
|------|--------|-------------|
| epùk | sɔŋpïkɔ | 'four arrows' |
| epùk | sɔŋckɔ | 'five arrows' |

(8) Nouns denoting tall objects take the classifier /amiŋ/

| kédi | amïŋkɔ | 'one mango tree' |
|------|--------|------------------|
| kédi | miŋikɔ | 'two mango trees' |

(9) Nouns denoting other objects like fish, insects, body parts, months, creepers etc take the classifier /apir/

| ɔŋɔ | apirkɔ | 'one fish' |
| ɔŋɔ | pirñikɔ | 'two fish' |
| pɔ́lɔ | apirkɔ | 'one month' |
| amik | pirñikɔ | 'two eyes' |

There are two morphonemic rules which operate in the addition of classifiers to nouns. The first morphophonemic rule deletes the initial vowel of the classifier when a numeral follows. The second morphophonemic rule changes /ɔ/ in the classifier to /a/. The status of the 'morpheme' /kɔ/ at the end of the construction is uncertain. However another morpho-phonemie rule can be posited which deletes /kɔ/ after another /k/.

| dɔ́luŋ ami | 'village man' |
| adi tani | 'hill man' |

The possibility of the existance of more classifiers cannot be ruled out, but more data will be necessary to come to any conclusion.

## 2 Adjective

**2.0** Adjectives occupy modifying slots in the noun phrase and can either precede or follow the noun. Adjectives do not take person, number and gender suffixes. Functionally, adjectives are of two types - a) adjectives and b) adjectivals. In terms of privileges of occurrence at the levels beyond a word, adjectivals are functionally adjectives, but categorically refer to other grammatical classes. These include demonstrative and indefinite adjectivals and behave like other adjectives in higher constructions. When an adjective takes a post-position, it functions as either a noun or an adverb.

Following are the characteristics of adjectives.

   i)   Adjectives are both free and derived.

   ii)   Adjectivals are only derived.

   iii)   Adjectives are not inflected for gender and number.

**Examples -**

*Free forms -*

| | |
|---|---|
| apïŋ | 'all' |
| isi | 'this' |
| árɔ | ·'truth' |
| bɔtt | 'great' |

*Derived forms-*

miglúnέ       blink
(amid eye,    alúmnë round)
aipë     good
(ainam   virtue, pë at)

**2.1**   Following is the chart which shows classes and subclasses of adjective.
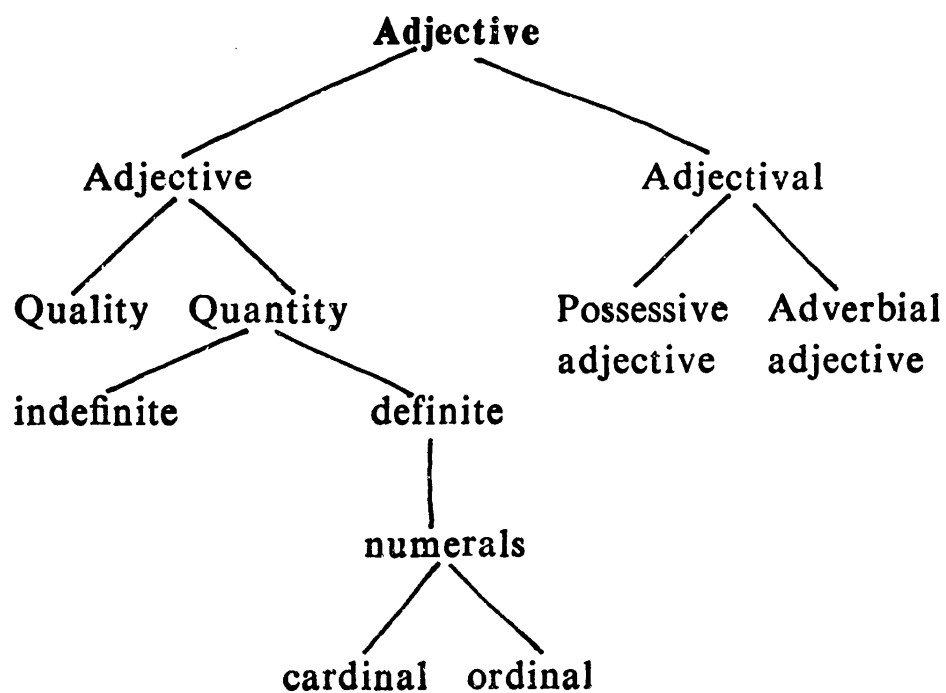
Examples -

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| azónë | dólun | | | 'small village' |
| small | village | | | |
| bï | ut dàk | | | 'he is tall' |
| he | tall is | | | |
| kó | dë | rúbë | dàk | 'the boy is deaf' |
| boy | the | deaf | is | |
| ainë | kɔ | dë | | 'the good boy' |
| good | boy | the | | |
| battá në | | ami | | 'great man' |
| great | | man | | |
| kém në | mukkan | kiridë | | 'the dark clouds' |
| dark | cloud | pl | | |
| zëgënë | annë | dë | | 'the green leaf' |
| green | leaf | the | | |
| kànkaë | dólun | kɔ | | 'one beautiful |
| beautiful | village | one | | village' |

## 2.2 Adjectives of quantity :

They denote measurement and stand for the responses to the questions 'how much' and 'how many'. When a phrase has both qualitative and quantitative adjectives, the qualitative adjective precedes the noun and the quantitative follows the noun.

Examples :

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| kànkanë | ami | anñidɔ | 'two beautiful men' |
| beautiful | man | two | |
| zëgënë | annë | azɔnë | 'few green leaves' |
| green | leaf | few | |

There are two types of quantitative adjectives -

(a) indefinite     (b) definite

*2.2.1* **Indefinite**

Attributes of measurement which cannot be counted because of either their unbroken nature or the impossibility of determining exact number form the indefinite adjectives.

**Example -**    akɔn          'someone'
            azɔnë         'few'
            dékɔ          'many/much'

*2.2.2* **Definite**

Definite quantity of a thing is always expressed in units. These discrete quantities are adjectives of quantity. The cardinal numbers from one to ten, however, do not enter into construction with the qualified noun, but through the particles which are known as classifiers or numerical definitives and denote the nature of the object enumerated. The classifier numeral combination invariably follows the noun qualified.

**Example -**    eki adɔ́rkɔ       'one dog'
            kitab darñikɔ     'two books'

**2.3  Numerals :**

Numerals form a subclass of definite adjectives. The numerals from one to ten are stem forms and from eleven onwards are formed by compounding the base forms from one to ten. There are two types of numerals viz.,

(a) cardinals        (b) ordinals

*2.3.1* **Cardinals**

There are, in total, five processes of formation of cardinal numerals.

(a)  Base forms

    ákɔ          'one'
    ánñi         'two'
    áum          'three'
    áppi         'four'

| | |
|---|---|
| áŋɔ | 'five' |
| áppëŋ | 'six' |
| kïnïd | 'seven' |
| píñi | 'eight' |
| iñiŋ | 'ten' |
| lïŋkɔ | 'hundred' |

**(b)  Subtraction**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| pɔnaŋ | 'nine' | (10-1=9) |

**(c)  Addition**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| iñiŋkɔlaŋákɔ | 'eleven' | (10+1) |
| iñiŋkɔlaŋánñi | 'twelve' | (10+2) |
| iñiŋkɔlaŋáum | 'thirteen' | (10+3) |

**(d)  Multiplication**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| iñiŋánñikɔ | 'twenty' | (10×2) |
| iñiŋáumkɔ | 'thirty' | (10×3) |
| iñiŋáppikɔ | 'forty' | (10×4) |
| lïñiŋkɔ | 'thousand' | (100×10) |

**(e)  Multiplication & addition**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| iñiŋánñi (laŋ) ákɔ | 'twentyone' | (10×2+1) |
| iniŋánñi (laŋ) ánñikɔ | 'twentytwo' | (10×2+2) |

*2.3.2*  Ordinal numerals :

Ordinals denote  position  in  a  numerical  series.  These
are of two types- (a) fractions (b) non-fractionals

**2.3.2.1**  *Fractions :*

Fractional ordinals are formed by adding /-tàki/ 'to divide'
or 'to share'.  All fractional ordinals are compound forms.

**Examples :**

| tàkpï dɔákɔ | | 'one fourth' | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| (tàki + | ápï + | dë + | ákɔ) | |
| share + | four + | ten + | the | |

(literal meaning - share one into four parts)

tàkekɔ                      'half'

(literally, share one into two)

tàkpïdɔktagum         'three fourth'
(tàki   + ápï   + dë   + ákɔ   + tàki   + áum)
share   + four   + the   + one   + share   + three)
(share one into four (and) take three)

There is anotherway of expressing the fractions.

tàgñikɔ              'half'
(táki   + áñikɔ)
tàgumkɔ            'one third'

(tàki   + áum   + ákɔ)
(share     three     one)
tàkpïkɔ            'one fourth'
tàŋɔkɔ            'one fifth'

(tàki   + áŋɔ   + ákɔ)
(share     five     one)

For expressing a whole number and a part of it, the words compound.

eg.  ákɔlatàkekɔ         'one and a half'
    (ákɔ   + la   + tàkï   + ákɔ)
    one     and     share     one)
    ákɔlatàkpïdɔkákɔ         'one and one fourth'
    áññitàŋɔdɔtàgumkɔ         'two and three fifth'
    (áññi   + tàki   + áŋɔ   + dë   + tàki   + áum   + ákɔ)
    two     share     five     the     share     three     one

## 2.3.4.1 *Non-fractionals :-*

These denote position in a numerical series and are obtained by adding the suffix/-nanë/ to the cardinal numerals. Ordinal for one takes only /-në/ as suffix, but subsequent ordinals are formed by suffixing the whole suffix.

**Examples -**

| | |
|---|---|
| ákɔnë | 'first' |
| áumnanë | 'third' |
| áppïnanë | 'fourth' |

However, in Majuli area, an alternative form /-pɔ́në/ is also used to form ordinals.

**Examples -**

| | |
|---|---|
| ákpɔ́në | 'first' |
| áŋɔpɔ́në | 'fifth' |

All the adjectivals are adjectivesof quality.

## 2.4 Comparison

There are three degress of comparison: (a) positive (b) comparative (c) superlative

*2.4.1* Positive is not overtly marked.

*2.4.2* Comparative is expressed by adding the comparative suffix /-ya/ to the adjective and the comparative particle /pënam/ to the sentence.

**Example -**

pos -  ɔkumdë   bɔftanë   kɔ
       house art.  big        one
       a big house

ŋɔ́kke  ɔkumale  nɔkke  ɔkum   dëm   pënam
my     house    your   house  acc.  than
bɔtteyadàk
big comp. is

My house is bigger than your house.
(Incidentally the compared noun is in the accusative case).

ŋɔkke  nëŋdë  nɔkke  nëŋdë  lɔkke  kàŋkanë    dak
my     wife   your   wife   comp.  beautiful  is

My wife is more beautiful than your wife.

(N.B. when /lɔkke/ is used as comparing particle, the suffix /-ya/ becomes optional, as seen in the above example)

*2.4.3*  Superlative

Superlative is expressed by

1)  suffixing /-yapag/ to the adjective.

ŋɔ lu-kke  ɔkumë gayi-yapag dak  'Our house is the
I  pl.gen.  house  big  comp.  is  biggest'
isɔr      bɔtte-yapaɡ      dak          'God is the greatest'
God      great comp.      is
së        ayi-yapag        dak          'It is the best'
it        good comp.        is

2)  The expression /apïlɔk/.

bï        apïlɔk    amidë m    ayinë  'He is the best of all'
he        comp.      man  acc.  good
Miri de  apïlɔk empë nam kinnanë  'The Miris are the
Miri      all from tɔ  than clever    most clever'

### 3 Adverbs

An adverb is a form which fills temporal, manner, place and purpose slots in clause level constructions i.e., adverbs of time, adverbs of manner, adverbs of place and adverbs of purpose.

**Example -**

**3.1  Adverb of time :**      base form + post position
supàk (pë)          'now'
ɔdɔ́pë              'till this moment'
mëlɔ              'yesterday'
ɔdɔkë              'then'
aginsëm            'always'
lɔ́dim              'daily'
yámpë              'tomorrow'
silɔ              'today'

## 3.2 Adverb of manner :

It denotes the mode of the action performed by the verb. Adjectives serve as the base form and post-positions are added to form manner adverbs.

| arɔ́ | + | pë | arɔ́pë | 'truly' |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| truth | | pp | | |
| pësɔ | + | pë | pësɔpë | 'terribly' |
| terrible | | pp | | |

Some times the stem is re-duplicated before the postposition is added.

| asɔ asɔ | + | pë | asɔasɔpë | 'slowly' |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| slow slow | | pp | | |
| zëna zëna | + | pë | zënazënapë | 'loudly' |
| loud loud | | pp | | |

## 3.3 Adverb of purpose :

| dëpila | 'so' |
|---|---|
| kapi kanë | 'because' |
| kapë legabe | 'for what' |

## 3.4 Adverb of place :

Adverbs of place are-of two types- (a) base adverbs and (b) derived adverbs. Examples of base adverbs are

| kë ig | 'downward' |
|---|---|
| táleŋ | 'upward' |
| tɔk | 'up' |

Derived adverbs are locative case nominals; some examples are -

| ɔkɔ - | lɔ | 'where' |
|---|---|---|
| ɔkɔ - | lɔ | 'there' |
| isɔ - | pë | 'here' |
| dɔ - | lɔkke | 'from there' |

Adverbs can also be grouped according to their structure into a) simple, b) derived, and c) compound.

## 3.5  Simple Adverbs :

A simple adverb consists of a single root morpheme.

| | |
|---|---|
| lśdum | 'daily' |
| tálën | 'upward' |
| súpak | 'now' |

## 3.6  Derived Adverbs :

A derived adverb consists of a root plus suffix(es). The most frequently used suffixes are /-pë/ /-lɔ/ and /-na/. On syntactic axis, any of the modal case suffixes may be added to form derived adverbs.

Formula may be as follows -

$$\text{Adv} = \underline{\text{Advnc}} + \underline{\text{mod}}$$
$$\left\{ \begin{array}{c} \text{N/NS} \\ \text{Adv} \\ \text{adj} \\ \text{verb} \end{array} \right\} \qquad \text{PP}$$

(Nuclear slot is filled by a form class other than a post-position and modifying slot is filled by a post-position).

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| ara+lɔ | aralɔ | 'inside' |
| súpak+pë | súpakpë | 'just now' |
| ɔdɔ+lɔ | ɔdɔlɔ | 'than' |
| edë+dë+ ɔlśpë | edë dɔlśpë | 'until' |
| mënam+dɔkke | | 'afterwards' |
| edë+lɔ | dëlɔ | 'in time' |

## 3.7.  Compound Adverbs :

A compound adverb has a multiple-root composition. Two base forms join together to form compound adverbs.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| silɔ | mëlɔ | 'now a days' |
| today | tomorrow | |

táléŋkëig        'up and· down'
lëkɔlëkɔ         'sometimes'

## 4 Verb

*4.0.1*   Mising verb system consists of verb forms built upon verb stems. Any stem, which can take the regular formative elements like tense, aspect and mood, is a verb stem. The Mising verb stems are either transitive or intransitive. Transitive stems occur with object(s) and intransitives without.

*4.0.2*  Verb stem construction

A stem level construction is a   verb root with one or more optional morphemes.

Vstem  =  VR  ±  VR /  ±  AF
where

VR        verb-root
AF        affix

It gives the following types of verbs :-

(a)   One root stem with affixation
(b)   Complex stem with more than one derivational suffix
(c)   Compound stem  with two roots with/without derivational affixes.

## 4.1  Verbroot :

When  all  the  affixes are  dropped, what remains is a root. Root may be either transitive or intransitive -

*Transitive*                    *Instransitive*
ká    'to see'                gï    'to go'
mɔ́   'to make'               yùp  'to sleep'
dɔ́   'to eat'                tú    'to crawl'

## 4.2  Citation form :

The citation  form  of a verb is formed by adding the suffix

/-nam/ to the root, which, when placed before a noun, performs the function of an adjective.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| gï-nam | 'to go' | pá-nam | 'to get' |
| só-nam | 'to pull' | yól-nam | 'to mould' |
| ká-nam | 'to see' | súk-nam | 'to spit' |
| kó-nam | 'to sell' | là-nam | 'to bring' |
| lú-nam | 'speak' | lé-nam | 'to kick' |
| tïg-nam | 'to strike' | yùb-nam | 'to sleep' |

## 4.3 One root stem :

It is formed with a root plus affix -

| Transitive | | Intransitive | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ká-tɔ | 'sees' | gí-tɔ | 'goes' |
| mó-duŋ | 'does' | yùb-dak | 'slept' |

## 4.4 Complex stem :

When the root take a verbal classifier to indicate different semantic classes, the stem form is a complex one.

V  =   VR + classifier + affix

| | |
|---|---|
| gí-ya-nam | 'to visit' |
| gí-lat-nam | 'to come back' |
| só-sa-nam | 'to lift up' |
| bí-pak-nam | 'to overflow' |

(Behaviour of verbal classifiers will be dealt with in detail in section 4.9)

## 4.5 Compound stem :

When two roots join together, compound stems are formed -

V = root+root+ affix

| | |
|---|---|
| kínam+mɔ́nam | kínmɔ́nam |
| disease+to do | 'to wound' |
| dɔ́nam+tínam | dɔ́tínam |
| to eat+to drink | 'to feast' |
| kinam+mɔ́nam | kinmɔ́nam |
| to know to do | 'to explain' |
| mɔ́nam+ayïnam | mɔ́yïnam |
| to make to please | 'to decorate' |
| asi pit+zërnam | |
| water put throw | 'to sprinkle' |

## 4.6 Causatives :

In all cases, whether a stem is transitive or intrasitive, to form causatives, the verb stem /mɔ́/ 'to do' is added to the root.

| | |
|---|---|
| dɔ́ nam | dɔ́mɔ́nam |
| 'to eat' | 'to feed' |
| rá nam | rámɔ́nam |
| 'to bark' | 'to cause to bark' |
| kínam | kínmɔ́nam |
| 'to wound' | 'to cause to wound' |
| gínam | gímɔ́nam |
| 'to go' | 'to cause to go' |
| pènam | pèmɔ́nam |
| 'to weave' | 'to cause to weave' |
| yɔ́lnam | yɔ́lmɔ́nam |
| 'to mould' | ·'to cause to mould' |
| gigɔ́nam | gigɔ́mɔ́nam |
| 'to wander' | 'to cause to wander' |

## 4.7  Reciprocals :

Reciprocals are formed by suffixing /-bɔ/ to the root.

| | |
|---|---|
| sɔ́nam | sɔ́bɔnam |
| 'to pull' | 'to help each other to pull' |
| sɔnam | sɔbɔnam |
| 'to dance' | 'to dance with each other' |
| dɔ́nam | dɔ́bɔnam |
| 'to eat' | 'to eat together' |
| mɔkénam | mɔkébɔnam |
| 'to kill' | 'to kill together' |

## 4.8  Reflexives :

The reflexive base of the verb is formed by suffixing /-su/ to the verb root. The verb thus formed indicates an action of which the subject or agent and object are coreferential. In Mising, verbs with reflexive bases are only used with reflexive pronouns.

| | |
|---|---|
| gër nam | gër su nam |
| 'to work' | 'to work oneself' |
| ték nam | ték su nam |
| 'to cut' | 'to cut oneself' |
| mé liknam | mélik su nam |
| 'to put' | 'to put oneself' |
| më nam | më su nam |
| 'to think' | 'to think for oneself' |
| rá nam | rá su nam |
| 'to bark' | 'to bark at oneself' |
| mɔ́ tum nam | mɔ́ tum su nam |
| 'to defend' | 'to defend oneself' |

*Use in sentences :*

| agër-dëm | nɔ | (awë) | gër su tɔ | 'Do the work |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| work acc | you | (self) | do self tense | yourself' |

| bu-lu | gí | su ye | 'They will go by |
| they | go | self tense | themselves' |
| iki | dë | rasu kaŋ | 'The dog barked |
| dog | the | bark self tense | at itself' |

## 4.9 Verb classifiers :

Like nouns, verb stems also take a number of classifers. Verb classifiers are a set of bound forms which are added to the bare root of the verb. These classifiers are added only to the motion verbs. On this basis, we can divide verbs into two classes -

a) Motion verbs - which take verb. classifiers.

b) Static verbs - which do not take verb classifiers.

A brief description of motion verbs and their classifiers follows.

1) There are a set of classifiers which indicate the direction of the action performed by the agent. These classifiers are-

a) linear movement indicated by /-kɔ/;

| gí nam | 'to go' | gí kɔ nam | 'to cross' |
| kɔŋnam | 'to move' | kɔŋ kɔ nam | 'to cross over' |

b) upward movement indicators marked by /-sá /,

| sɔ́ nam | 'to lift' | sɔ́ sá nam | 'to lift up' |
| rë nam | 'to pull' | rë sá nam | 'to pull up' |
| gí nam | 'to go' | gí sá nam | 'to climb up' |
| súm nam | 'to jump' | súm sá nam | 'to jump up' |

c) return or backward movement indicated by /-lat/ and /-ya/ (The suffix /-lat/ indicates general movement, /-ya/ indicates specific movement);

| bi nam | 'to give' | bi lat nam | 'to give back, return' |
| gí nam | 'to go' | gí lat nam | 'to come back' |

bɔ́m nam    'to bring'    bɔ́m lat nam    'to bring back'
gí nam      'to go'       gí ya nam    . 'to come back'
dúg nam     'to run'      dúg ya nam     'to run back to, to
                                          fall back to'

**d)** suffix /-ye/ is added to indicate movement away from the source;

dúg nam     'to run'    dúg ye nam    'to run away'
gí nam      'to go'     gí ye nam     'to go away'

**e)** suffix /-len/ indicates forward movement away from the source, but the distance is always proximate;

gí nam      'to go'     gí len nam    'to a head'
dúg nam     'to run'    dúg len nam   'to run ahead'

**f)** suffix /-pak/ indicates movement away from the source, but the direction is uncertain (in many cases it gives the meaning similar to English verbs such as *take out* etc;

sɔ́ nam    'to pull'      sɔ́ pàk nam   'to pull out'
kɔ́ dam    'to sell'      kɔ́ pàk nam   'to sell out'
bɔ́m nam   'to bring'     bɔ́m pàk nam  'take out, take away'
gí nam     'to go'        gí pàk nam    'to go out'
yɔk nam    'to be near'   yɔk pàk nam   'to be out/ to be away'

**g)** to indicate that the action is performed with somebody else, the suffix /-min/ is added to the root;

dúg nam     'to run'    dúg min nam 'to run together or to
                                     run with/after'
gí nam      'to go      gí min nam   'to go with'
mɔké nam    'to kill    mɔké min nam 'to kill with/to kill
                                      together'

**h)** to indicate the purpose of the action the suffix /-lik/ is added to the root (it expresses a similar sense as in English verbs - *plead for*, etc.);

gí nam      'to go'     gí lik nam    'to go for/to guide'

lu nam       'to say'     lu·lik bi nam   'to say for/to insist'
lu bi nam    'to explain' lu lik bi nam   'to explain for/ to
                                             plead for'
yɔ́g nam      'to catch'   yɔ́g lik nam     'to catch for'

i) to reduce the intensity of the action, the suffix /-sɔ/ is added to the root;

gí nam       'to go'      gí sɔ nam       'to go slow'
dɔ́ nam       'to eat'     dɔ́ sɔ nam       'to eat slowly/less'

j) when the action of the verb is to be negated, the suffix /-sek/ is added to the root (it gives the a meaning similar to the English prefixes /un-/ or /dis-/ in the verbs *undo, disbelieve* etc.

lu̱ nam       'to say'     lu̱ sek nam      'not to answer to'
gi̱ nam       'to go'      gi̱ sek nam      'to ignore'

## 4.10. Auxiliary verb :

The auxiliary form is /-duŋ/. It functions as a copula. It has a suppletive form /-dak/. In sentences where it occurs alone, it functions as a main verb.

së-ɔkum-lɔ  duŋ              'That is in the house'
that house in is

But, when accompained by a main verb, it acts as the tense and aspect marker. It takes different suffixes to mark tense and aspects.

## 4.11 Tense :

Tense is the grammatical category that indicates the point of time at which the action takes place. In Mising, the tense markers indicate (a) the point of time at which the action of the main verb takes place, present, past and future tenses and (b) the mode of the action of the main verb. Personal concord is marked in non-past tenses.

*4.11.1*  Present tense :

The point of time referred to is the present. The main
verb takes /-dɔ/ or /-dak/ to indicate present tense. /-dak/ is
added to the verb when the subject is either second or third
person and /-dɔ/ can be used with any person.

| ŋɔ | nɔ-m | kấ-dɔ | | | 'I see you' |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I | you | to | see | pr,t | |
| ŋɔlu | nɔ-m | | kấ-dɔ | | 'We see you' |
| we | you | to | see pr t | | |
| kɔ́-dë | nɔ-m | | kấ-dɔ /-dak | | 'The childern see |
| child the | you | to | see | pr-t, | you' |
| kɔ́-kiri-dë | | nɔ-m | | kấ-dɔ | 'The children see |
| child pl. the | | you | to | see pr t | you' |
| | | | | dak | |
| bu-lu | nɔ-m | | kấ-dɔ /-dak | | 'They see you' |
| they | you | to | see | pr t | |
| nɔ | bï-m | | kấ-dɔ /-dak | | 'you see him/her' |
| you | he/she to | | see | pr t | |
| nɔ-lu | bï-m | | kấ-dɔ /-dak | | 'you (pl) see him/ |
| you(pl) | he to | | see | pr t | her' |
| | she | | | | |

| isiŋ-amiŋ-dɔkke | annë-kiridë | ɔtɔk-dɔ | 'The leaves |
|---|---|---|---|
| tree | from  leaf  pl. | fall pr.t. | fall form the |
| | | | tree' |

*4.11.2*  Past tense :

It indicates the location of an action or an event in past
time, that is, the event has already taken place at the time of
the speech act. The past tense has two subcategories, viz.,
immediate past and remote past.

1) *Immediate past :* The marker is /-ŋka/.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| ŋɔ | ká-ŋka | 'I saw' |
| I | see-past | |
| nɔ | ká-ŋka | 'You saw' |
| you | see-past | |
| bï | ká-ŋka | 'He saw' |
| he she | see-past | |
| bulu | gí-laŋka | 'They went' |
| they | go-past | |

2) *Remote past :*

It indicates that the action took place long back. The marker /-bɔ/ it added to the immediate past base /-ŋka/.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| ŋɔ | ká-ŋka-bɔ | 'We saw (long ago)' |
| I | see    past | |
| nɔ | ká-ŋka-bɔ | 'You saw (long ago)' |
| you | see    past | |
| bï | ká-ŋka-bɔ | 'He/she saw (long ago)' |
| he/she | see    past | |
| bulu | ká-ŋka-bɔ | 'They saw (long ago)' |
| they | see    past | |

An alternative form /-tɔ-bɔ/ is also used sometimes to indicate remote past. The suffix /-tɔ/ is the marker of imperative and /-bɔ/ is added to it.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| ŋɔ-lu | ká-tɔ-bɔ | 'We saw (long ago)' |
| we | see    past | |
| ŋɔ-lu | dɔ́-tɔ-bɔ | 'We ate (long ago)' |
| we | eat-past | |
| nɔ | dɔ́-tɔ-bɔ | 'You (pl) saw (long ago)' |
| you | eat    past | |

| bï       | ka-tɔ-bɔ      | 'He/she saw (long ago)' |
|----------|---------------|-------------------------|
| he/she   | see      past |                         |
| bulu     | dɔ́-tɔ-bɔ      | 'They ate (long ago)'   |
| they     | eat      past |                         |

### 4.11.3   Future tense

It indicate that the action will take place in time yet to come. It has two sub-classes - (a) simple future (b) specified future.

### 1)   *Simple future* :

For first and third person, the marker is /-ye/, and for second person, the marker is /-laŋ/.

| ŋɔ       | nɔm      | ká-ye       |              | 'I shall see you'   |
|----------|----------|-------------|--------------|---------------------|
| I        | you      | see fut     |              |                     |
| bï       | nɔm      | ká-ye       |              | 'He will see you'   |
| he       | you      | see fut     |              |                     |
| ŋɔ lu    | appinem  | dɔ-ye       |              | 'We shall eat food' |
| we       | food     | eat fut     |              |                     |
| bulu     | kitabdëm | nɔm         | bi-ye        | 'They will give a   |
| they     | book     | you         | give fut     | book to you'        |
| menkuridë |         | dugi-ye     |              | 'The cat will run'  |
| the cat  |          | run fut .   |              |                     |
| iki      | dë       | yùbi-ye     |              | 'The dog will sleep' |
| the      | dog      | sleep fut   |              |                     |
| nɔ       | dɔ-laŋ   |             |              | 'You will eat'      |
| you      | eat fut  |             |              |                     |
| nɔlu     | gï-laŋ   |             |              | 'You (pl) will go'  |
| you (pl) | go fut   |             |              |                     |

### 2)   Specified *future* :

It indicates that the action will take place either in immdiate future or at a future point of time which is specified. It is marked by /-pye-/.

| ŋɔ | dɔ́-pye | | 'I am about to eat' |
| I | eat fut | | |
| ŋɔ | gí-pye | | 'I am about to go' |
| I | go fut | | |
| ŋɔkke | abu | gí-pye | 'My father will go (at a time |
| my | father | go fut | specified)' |

## 4.12 Aspect :

Any action indicated by a verb has its own temporal distribution contour. The different distributional contours with reference to time are called aspects. There are three aspects in Mising viz., repetitive, durative and perfective.

### 4.12.1 Repetitive aspect :

The language shows a three-way opposition in tense with reference to repetitive viz., past, present and future.

### a) *Present repetitive:*

The verb expresses that the act is repeated with reference to the present time. The verb takes /-dɔ/ as the repetitive marker.

| ŋɔ | tɔlɔ́pë | gï-dɔ | | | 'I go there' |
| I | there | go asp +t | | | |
| bï | phutbɔl | keli-dɔ̃ | | | 'He plays foot |
| he | football | play asp.+t | | | ball' |
| bï | kitab-kiridëm | bɔmlatɔ̃ | | | 'He brings |
| he | books | to | bring t | + | books' |
| | | | | asp | |

### b) *Past repetitive*

It indicates that the action was repeated in the past time. Actually, the adverb of time indicates habituallity. The verb takes /-ai/ to express repetition. However the tense marking is still present (i.e., dak).

verbroot + -dak + -ai

| lɔdisëm | ŋɔ | azinëm dɔ́-dag-ai | 'I ate meat |
|---------|----|------------------|-------------|
| daily | I | meat eat aux past | every day' |
| bï | sɔ́pë sɔ́pë keli-dag-ai | | 'He used to |
| he | slowly | play aux past | play slowly' |

c) *Future repetitive*

It expresses the recurrent happening of the action in future time. It is marked by /-yepë/.

| bï | lɔdisëm | dɔ́-yepë | | 'He will eat every |
|----|---------|----------|---------|---------------------|
| he | daily | eat ι | +aspect | day' |
| ŋɔ | lɔdisëm | gï-yepë | | 'I will go every day' |
| I | daily | go ι | +aspect | |

*4.12.2* Durative :

Durative or progressive aspect indicates that the action expressed by the verb is in progress. The durative aspect is optionally marked by /-til/ which follows the verbroot. The durative aspect shows a three way apposition in tense viz., present, past and future. The tenses are marked only by the auxiliary verb taking the appropriate tense forms. The durative aspect has two sub-classes- (1) simple durative and (2) definite durative.

1  *Simple present durative*

VR ± til + duŋ

| bï | kap-duŋ | | 'He is weepinp' |
|----|---------|------|-----------------|
| he | weep | t  +asp | |
| bï | kap-til-duŋ | | 'He is weeping' |
| he | weep | t___+asp | |
| ŋɔ | iskul | gitil-duŋ | 'I am going to school' |
| I | school | go asp tʳ | |
| bï | yub-til-duŋ | | 'He is sleeping' |
| he | sleep | asp t | |

## 2 *Definite present durative*

verbroot ± ti + la + -duŋ

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| bï | kap-til-la-duŋ | 'He is (surely) weeping' |
| he | weep asp t | |

## 3 *Simple past durative*

verb root + {dak} + ai
　　　　　　　{duŋ}

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| bï | kap-ti-duŋ-ai/dag-ai | 'He was weeping or |
| he | weep asp t | He had been weeping' |
| ŋɔ | yub-ti-duŋ-ai/dag-ai | 'I was sleeping or |
| I | sleep asp t | I had been sleeping' |

## 4 *Definite past durative*

verb stem + ti + la + -duŋ + ai

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| nɔ | dɔ́-ti-la-duŋ-ai | 'You surely had been |
| you | eat asp t | eating' |
| bï | ɔŋɔ sɔ́gàp-ti-la-duŋ-ai | 'He had been catching |
| he | fish catch asp t | fish· |

## 5 *Simple future durative*

verb root ± ṭi + du + ye/ laŋ

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| bï | dug-ti-du -ye | 'He will be running' |
| he | run asp t | |
| nɔ | gakk-ti-du -laŋ | 'you will be erring' |
| yau | mistake asp t | |

## 6 *Definite future durative*

verb root ± -ti +- la +- du +- ye/laŋ

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| meŋkuridë | dugtil(a)-du-ye | 'Surely, the cat will |
| the cat | run asp t | be running' |

nɔ        gí-sa-til(a)-du-laŋ                    'Surely, you will be
you      go up      asp      t           climbing'
dɔpyɔdë̈ yɔ̀k-pák-til(a)-duye        'Surely, the thief will
the thief disappear      asp      t    be disappearing'

### 4.12.3  Perfective :

It indicates that the action has already been completed
.It shows a two way apposition for time.

### 1)  Present perfective :

The marking is optionally by the suffix /-t/ ∿ /-tak/. The
order of occurrence is often the verb root before the tense
marker.

ŋɔ        apinë̈m        dɔ́-to/-tak-bɔ        'I have eaten food'
I          food            eat t
bï         pɔ́në̈dë̈m        ká-tak-bɔ             'He has been a thief'
he        thief            asp t
bu-lu    murukɔnë̈m lá-tak-bɔ              'They have brought
they     money          bring asp t        money'
ŋɔ        iskul            gí-ka-bɔ               'I have gone to school'
I          school          go t        +asp

### 2)  Past perfective :

It takes /-tuŋ (duŋ)/ as perfective marker and past tense
marker /-abɔ/.

### (1)  VR  +  -tuŋ  +  abɔ

ŋɔ        apinë̈-m        dɔ́-tuŋ-abɔ      'I had eaten food'
I          food            eat asp t
bi         pɔnë̈dë̈m        ká-duŋ-abɔ      'He had seen the thief'
he        thief            see      asp t.

(2) To express remote perfective, the verb takes the following shape.

VR + tak + abɔ

| ŋɔ | apinëm | dɔ́-ta-gabɔ | 'I had eaten food (long back)' |
| I | food | eat asp t | |
| | | | |
| agerë | ger -ta-gabɔ | | 'Labourer had worked (long back)' |
| labourer | work t +asp | | |
| | | | |
| bï | kɔ́dëm | ká-ta-gabɔ | 'He had seen the boy' |
| he | boy | see t +asp | |

## 4.13 Mood :

Mood expresses the attitude of the speaker to the action or state denoted by the verb: real, intended, demanded or desired.

For purposes of description, words here include verb modalites as well.

### 4.13.1 Declarative :

The action of the verb indicates a factual statement. It occurs with all the tenses. There is no special marker for this mood.

neŋ-dë dumït tuk-su-duŋ
woman the hair comb self t
'The woman is combing her hair herself'
mïbu-ë kɔ́kaŋ-kiri-dëm -dɔ́bɔ-dagai
priest the child pl. to feed t
'The priest was feeding the children'
bï arig-lɔ-pe gí-ye
he farm towards go t
'He will go towards the farm'

*4.13.2* Imperative :

It indicates commands, instructions or requests. The subject of the imperative, which must be in the second person, is optional.

*1.  Simple imperative :*

It shows a two way opposition viz., motion verbs take /-kaŋ/ or /-naŋ/ as imperative marker when the action is directed towards the speaker, and when the action is directed away from the speaker, the marker is either /-kaŋ-ku/ or /-laŋ-ku/. The stative verbs take /-tɔ-ka/ to mark imperative mood, the second syllable /-ka/ is optional.

*Motion verbs*

      i)   VR  +  -kaŋ  -naŋ

      ii)  VR  +  -kaŋ  -naŋ -ku

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| iskul-pë | gí-kaŋ | 'Go to school' |
| school  towards | go imp | |
| iskul-dɔk̇ke | gí-kaŋ | 'Go from the school |
| school  from | go imp | |
| iskul-lɔkke | gíyá-laŋ-ku | 'Come from the |
| school  from | go imp | school' |
| kitabdëm | bɔ́m-lát-naŋ-ku | 'Bring back the |
| book | bring back imp | books' |
| ɔkum gí-naŋ la gíyá-lat-naŋ-ku | | 'Go home and come |
| home  go imp  and come back imp | | back' |

*Stative verbs*

      VR  +  tɔ  +  ka

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| dú | tɔ(ka) | | 'Sit down' |
| agɔm | kɔ | lú-tɔ(ka) | 'Say something' |
| word | one | speak  imp | |
| (nɔ) | isim | lása-tɔ(ka) | 'Lift it up' |
| (you) | this | bring up imp | |

| isim | gàgáp-tɔ(ka) | 'Hold it' |
|------|-------------|-----------|
| this | hold imp | |
| apin | dɔ́-tɔ(ka) | 'Eat food' |
| food | eat imp | |

2. *Polite imperative :*

It expresses request. It takes /-pen/ after /-tɔ/.

VR  +  -tɔ  +  -pen

| apinë | dɔ́tɔ-pen | 'Please take the food' |
|-------|----------|------------------------|
| food | eat+tense imp | |
| galùkgásɔr | bɔ́m-tɔ-pen | 'Please bring the dress' |
| dress | bring t imp | |
| isɔpë | gí-tɔ-pen | 'Please come here' |
| here | come t imp | |
| asi | bɔ́mlat-ku-pen | 'Please bring back water' |
| water | bring back imp | |

*4.13.3* Command :

It specifies the necessity and obligation for the action to be performed. Depending on the obligation, three types of commands can be distinguished.

*1. Instruction*

VR  +  tɔ-ika

| ká-tɔ-ika | 'See it (because it is |
|-----------|------------------------|
| see t mood | essential)' |
| pɔri-tɔ-ika | 'Read it (it is necessary)' |
| read t imp | |
| bï leŋkaŋ-tɔ-ika | 'He must appear (it is |
| he appear t mood | wanted )' |

*2. Injunction*

i)  VR  +  tɔ-ruŋ (present)

ii)  VR  +  pye-ruŋ (future)

iii)  VR  +  ka-ruŋ (past)

| nɔ | apinëm | dctɔ-ruŋ | | 'You must eat rice' |
| you | food | eat t | mood | |
| nɔ | gi | pye-ruŋ | | 'You (will) must go' |
| nɔ | dɔ́-ka-ruŋ | | | 'You had to eat' |
| you | eat t | mood | | |
| bï | gi-pye-ruŋ | | | 'He (will) must go' |
| he | go mood | | | |
| bulu | ká-tɔ-ruŋ | | | 'They have to see |
| they | see mood+t | | | (necessarily)' |

Due to the influence of Assamese, the form /-lage/ 'has to be' has also gained currency to express obligatory injunction.

VR + pë + lagi + ye-pë

| bï | ager | gërpë-lagiyepë | 'He must do the work' |
| he | work | do    mood | |

## 3. Feasibility :

It expresses the necessity ot the action to be performed as an opinion.

VR + pp + ayiye

| bï | ruti | mɔ-pe-ayiye | 'She should bake the |
| she | bread | baking should | bread' |
| ŋɔ | gíyan-kumɔlɔ-ayiye | | 'I should come back' |
| I | come back should | | |

## 4.13.4 Desiderative mood :

It is used to express desire or wish. The marker for this mood is /-li/ which precedes the tense marker.

VR + li + tense

| ŋɔ | adi-taa-pe | rë-sa-li-duŋ |
| I | hill up to | climb up wish t |
| 'I wish to climb the hill' | | |

azɔn-ë     murukɔŋ      bi-lat-li-dag-ai
friend     the money    give back wish t
'A friend wished to return money'

### 4.13.5  Permission :

It is marked by /-mɔte/ which follows the verb- The object always remain in accusative case.

| bï-m | gï-mɔte | 'Let him go' |
|------|---------|--------------|
| him | go mood' | |
| ŋɔm  azin | dɔ́-mɔte | 'Let me eat meat' |
| me    meat | eat mood | |
| bu-lu-m | së-m   gër-mɔte | 'Let them do that' |
| them | that    do mood | |

### 4.13.6  Potential mood :

The action of the verb indicates that the result of the action is sure to come into existence. The mood marker is /-la/ which follows the verb root and precedes the tense marker It occurs in all the three tenses.

VR  +  -la  +  tense.

| bï | apine-m | dɔ-la-dak | 'He can eat food' |
|----|---------|-----------|-------------------|
| he | food  acc | eat mood pr t | |
| bï | apinë-m | dɔ-la-dag-ai | 'He could eat rice' |
| he | rice | eat mood t | |
| bulu | ɔŋɔ | sɔ́gap-la-dɔ | 'They can catch fish' |
| they | fish | catch mood t | |
| ŋɔ | gï-la-dag-ai | | 'I could go' |
| I | go  mood tense | | |
| bï | yub-ladu -pye | | 'He could go' |
| he | sleep  mood t | | |
| nɔ | yub-la-du-laŋ | | 'You would sleep' |
| you | sleep mood t | | |

*4.13.7*  Probability  mood :

When  the  action  indicated  by  the  verb  is  not  sure  to  take place,  and  there  is  only  the  likelihood  that  it  will  yield  result, the verb  is  said  to  be  in the  probability mood.  Probability mood is  marked  by /-pë/.  Potential  mood  marker /-la  precedes the future  tense  marker  and  /-pë/  follows  it.

VR  +  -la  +  -ye  +  pë

| bï | apin | dó-la-ye-pë | | 'He might eat |
|----|------|-------------|---|---------------|
| he | food | eat | mood | food' |
| nɔ | isiŋ-dë-m | kerra-ye-pë | | 'You might cut |
| you | tree the acc | cut | mood | the tree' |
| ŋɔ | gï-ya-la-ye-pë | | | 'I might come' |
| I | come back | mood | | |

## 4.14  Interrogative :

Interrogative  has  two  sub-classes.

*4.14.1*  Confirmative :

When  the  information  is  given  and  confirmation  is  sought, it is the  confirmative  type.  It  takes  the  question  marker /-n/ or /-a/ and /-i/.  /-a/ occurs  with the suffix /-ye/,  /i/ with the suffix/pye/ and /-n/ everywhere.

| nɔ | gï-dɔ-n ? | | 'Do you go' |
|----|-----------|---|-------------|
| you | go t  int | | |
| nɔ | gï-la -dɔ-n ? | | 'Can you go ?' |
| you | go mood t  int | | |
| bï | gï-ka-bɔ-n ? | | 'Has he gone ?' |
| he | go t  int | | |
| bï | gï-li-ka-bɔ-n ? | | 'Does he want to go ?' |
| he | go mood t  int | | |
| bulu | ɔlɔpë dú-n ? | | 'Are they there ?' |
| they | there t  int | | |

| bï | bá-su-dú-n ? | 'Does he swim by |
|---|---|---|
| he | swim self t    int | himself?' |
| ŋɔ | ɔlɔpë gi-la-daga-n ? | 'Could you go there ?' |
| you | there go mood t    int | |
| bï | bi-ye-n ? | 'Will he give ?' |
| he | give t    int | |
| bï | bi-la-ye-n ? | 'Can he give ?' |
| he | give mood int | |
| ŋɔ | yubi-ye-a ? | 'Shall I sleep ?' |
| I | sleep t    int | |
| nɔ | yub-laŋ-a ? | 'Would you sleep ?' |
| you | sleep t    int | |
| nɔ | edëm mɔpen-yepë-i | 'Would you (be able) to |
| you | this break prob int | break it ?' |

### 4.14.2 Elicitation type :

An affirmative- sentence is transformed into an interrogative by placing the interrogative particle at the end of the sentence and replacing the noun phrase about which information is sought, with the appropriate interrogative pronoun.

| edë | kápine | agere-n ? | 'What type of work is |
|---|---|---|---|
| that | what type | work int | this ?' |
| sëk | bi-ye-a/n ? | | 'Who will give ?' |
| who | give t | int | |
| nɔ | ɔkɔ -lɔ | dú-dɔ-n ? | 'Why did you go ?' |
| you | where | live t    int | |
| miglúnë | kápila | gi-ye-a/n ? | 'Why will the blind go ?' |
| the blind | why | go t    int | |
| ŋɔ | kapë | lu-pye-i ? | 'How shall I speak ?' |
| I | how | speak t    int | |
| bï | së-kɔ-n ? | | 'Who is he ?' |
| he | what int | | |
| edë | uŋkue-n ? | | 'What is that ?' |
| that | what int | | |

edë      sëkɔm      gure-n ?          'Whose horse is that' ?
that     whom       horse int

*4.14.3* Tag-Question :

In tag questions /-laŋ/ is the interrogative marker. How-
ever, the marker /-ne/, which is borrowed from Assamese, is
also used, but its use is restricted to the second person future
tense.

bï       ayine      ayi-laŋ ?
he       good       good int
(He      (is) good, is (he) good ?)
'He is good, isn't he' ?
bï       edëm       íka-ílaŋ ?
he       this       do t
(He did it, did (he) do ?)
'He did it, didn'tʧhe' ?
bulu     mëlo       gíka gí-laŋ
they     yesterday go t      go int
'They went yesterday, didn't they' ?
nɔ       gí-laŋ     gí-ye-ne ?
you      go tense   go ι      int
'You will go, won't you' ?

Second person future marker /laŋ/ and the tag question
marker /-laŋ/ are homophonous. Only future tense tag-ques-
tions take a tense marker. Sometimes, in negative tag-questions,
/-ge/ replaces /-ye/ in the future tense.

*Examlpe -*

nɔ       yúbi-ye     yúbi-ye/ge-ma-ne ?
you      will sleep, won't you ?

**4.15  Negative :**

The language has two negative markers viz., /-ma/ and

/-yɔ/. /-yɔ/ is negative marker used for imperative sentences and /-ma/ is used elsewhere.

### 4.15.1 Negative marker /-ma/

(a) To negate declarative sentence in present tense the tense marker is optionally deleted and a negative marker is added.

| ŋɔ | kin-ma | 'I do not see' |
|---|---|---|
| I | see neg | |
| bï | gí-tɔ-ma | 'He does not go' |
| he | go t    neg | |
| agergernëdë | ger-t(ɔ)-ma | 'The labourer does |
| labourer | do t    neg | not work' |

However, in embedded constructions, the deletion of tense marker is not permitted.

| ŋɔ | ager | ger | kapë | më-ma-dak |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| I | work | do | pp | think neg t |

'I do not intend to work'

| bulu | ɔŋɔ | sɔ́gàp | kapë | gí-madɔ |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| they | fish | catch | pp | go neg t |

'They do not go to catch fish'

### 4.15.2 Past tanse marker is optional when the sentence is negated.

bï    islm  gér-(ka)-ma
he    this  do t       neg
'He did not do this'
bulu  yub-(ka)-ma
They  did  not sleep.

### 4.15.3 Future Negative :

(i)   VR + Neg + ye
(ii)  VR + ye + Neg

| bï | sɔ́-ma-ye | 'She will not dance' |
|---|---|---|
| he | dance neg t | |
| bulu | gí-ye-ma | 'They will not go' |
| they | go  t      neg | |
| ŋc | gér-ma-ye | 'I shall not work' |
| I | do neg t | |

**4.15.4  Perfective Negative :**

    VR + tɔ + Neg + bɔ
         da

| ŋɔ | gí-tɔ-ma-bɔ | 'I have not gone' |
|---|---|---|
| I | go  t      neg asp | |
| miglune | ká - ka - mabɔ | 'The blind had not |
| the blind | see  t        neg | seen' |

**4.15.5  Durative Negative :**

    VR + ma +
$$\begin{Bmatrix} \text{-ŋ} \\ \text{-duŋ} \\ \text{-pye} \\ \text{-duŋai} \\ \text{-ŋai} \end{Bmatrix}$$

| ŋɔ | gí-ma-ŋ    gï-ma-duŋ | 'I am not going' |
|---|---|---|
| I | go neg asp | |
| ŋc | gí-ma-ŋai gï-ma-duŋai | 'I was not going' |
| I | go neg asp | |
| ŋɔ | gí-ma-pye | 'I shall not be going' |
| I | go-neg-asp | |
| bï | gérmaŋ | 'He is not working' |
| he | work neg asp | |
| bï | asi  lá-ma ŋai | 'He was not |
| he | water bring neg | bringing water' |

### 4.15.6 Potential Negative :

The tense marker is optionally deleted.

| ŋɔ | sé | agersém | gerra-tɔ-ma | | 'I cannot do |
|----|----|---------|-------------|-----|--------------|
| I | this | work | do mood t | neg | this work' |
| bï | apin | dɔla-ma-ŋai | | | 'He could |
| he | food | eat mood neg t | | | not eat food |
| bï | apin | dɔ-la-ma-ye | | | 'He will not |
| he | food | eat mood neg tm | | | be able to eat food' |

### 4.15.7 Injunctive Negative

| bï | ager | ger-me-pye-lagiyepë | 'He must |
|----|------|---------------------|----------|
| he | work | do neg t mood | not do the work' |
| bï | ruti | mɔ-ma-pye-ayiye | 'He, should |
| he | bread | do neg t mood | not bake the bread' |
| bï | pɔritɔ-ma-ida | | 'He should |
| he | read neg mood | | not read' |

### 4.15.8 Negative Infinitive :

VR + Neg + -nam + dë

| ŋɔ-kke | gï-ma-nam-dë | ë së-gï-maye | 'He won't |
|--------|--------------|-------------|-----------|
| my | not going | will not come | come (if) I don't go' |
| bï-kke | gï-ma-nam-dëa | | 'It is true |
| his | go neg inf true | | that he is not going' |

### 4.15.9 Negative Imperative :

In imperative sentences, /-yɔ/ is negative marker. When negative is added, the tense marker is obligatorily deleted. Imperative marker /-da/ is optionally deleted.

VR + y ± ka

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| lú-yɔ-(ka) | | 'Do not say' |
| say neg imp | | |
| sém | dɔ́-yɔ-(ka) | 'Do not eat this' |
| this | eat neg imp | |
| isim | lása-yɔ-(ka) | 'Do not lift it up' |
| this | lift up neg imp | |
| isɔ́pë | gi-yɔ-pen | 'Please do not come |
| here | go neg imp | here' |

*4.15.10* Interrogative Negative :

The negative particle is preceded by the interrogative
particle /-n/, /-a/ and /-i/. In probability mood, in interroga-
tive negative sentences, /-zi/ is added as the probability inter-
rogative particle.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| nɔ | unkue | gï-tɔ-ma-n ? | | |
| you | why | go t | neg int | |
| 'Why didn't you go' ? | | | | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ŋɔ | ger-tɔ-ma-n ? | | |
| I | do t | neg int | |
| Don't I work ?' | | | |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| nɔ | unkue | gï-sa-ma-ŋa-n | | |
| you | why | go up neg t | int | |
| 'Why are you not climbing up' ? | | | | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| abu | gï-ma-ye-a ? | | |
| father | go neg t | int | |
| 'Won't father go' ? | | | |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ŋɔ | ɔlɔ́pë | gï-lama-ye-zi | | |
| I | there | go neg mood-t | int | |
| 'May I not go there' ? | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| bï | edi-lɔ | gï-ma-ye-zi | | ŋɔ kin-ma-n | |
| he | when | come neg t | int | I know neg int | |
| 'Don't I know when he would come' ? | | | | | |

kitabkɔ bï ɔkɔlɔ më-tad-zi ŋɔ kin-ma-n

book     he   where keep int    I    know   neg inṭ

'I do not know where he keeps his book'

## 5 Word Formation

**5.0** Word level constructions are morphological, i.e., the way in which the morphemes are put together. In Mising, it is done by inflection and derivation. The noun derivation is through 1) **affixation** - affixes are bound forms and they occur only with free forms; 2) **reduplication** - the process of repetition of the whole or a part of the base; 3) **suppletion** in which the entire base is replaced by another base, e.g., copula/-duŋ/ to be replaced by/-dak/; and 4)**compounding**. Free forms can occur alone and are capable of conveying complete meaning. Bound forms have some meaning, which is manifested only when they occur with some other free form(s). On the basis of the privileges of bound forms combining with free forms and various permutations and combinations of free forms, the following word types can be posited.

(a) *Simple word* - It is a free form and enters into syntactic constructions alone.

(b) *Derived word* - It consists of a free form and a suffix.

(c) *Compound word* - It consists of two or more free forms with or without suffixes.

## 5.1 Derivation

In Mising, only the outer layer of formative-elements define the major form classes. Derivational suffixes occur in the word-final position, and are capable of changing the form class and distinguishing different form classes. By suffixing the derivative suffix /-ne/ to the verb root, the form class of noun and adjective can be derived; only by looking at the slots in which such a derived form occurs, one could state whether a derived form is a noun or an adjective- nouns can also be derived form the verbs by suffixing /-tad/, /-ŋkɔ/ / ... /-nam/. A brief discussion of these fol ...

(a) Nouns from verb stems can be derived by adding the appropriate suffixes i.e., /-ne/, /-tad/, /ŋkɔ/ and /-nam/. The suffix /-ne/ is adjectival, suffixes /-tad/, /-ŋkɔ/ refer to abstract nouns and material nouns respectively; while /-nam/ derives action nouns.

VR  +  -ne     =  Derived Noun
         -tad
         -ŋkɔ
         -pɔ
         -nam

(i) Suffix /-ne/ derives a noun/adjective combination. The class membership depends upon the syntactic behaviour.

| *Verbroot* | | *Noun/Adjective* | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ɔ́ | 'to give birth' | ɔ́(na)-ne | 'birth' |
| kɔ́ | 'to sell' | kɔ́-ne | 'seller' |
| gág | 'to call' | gág-ne | 'invitee' |
| gǐ | 'go' | gǐ-ne | 'one who goes' |
| pɔ́ri | 'read' | pɔ́ri-ne | 'student' |
| mɔ́ka | 'kill' | mɔ́ke-ne | 'dead' |
| sɔ́ | 'dance' | sɔ́-ne | 'dancer' |

(ii) Suffixes /-ta/, /-ŋkɔ/ and /-nam/ derive only nouns.

| VR | | Noun | |
|---|---|---|---|
| lú | 'say' | lú-tad | 'speech' |
| yǐ | 'do' | yǐ-tad | 'duty' |
| du | 'sit' | du-ŋkɔ | 'place to keep things, page' |
| sɔ́ | 'dance' | sɔ́-ŋkɔ | 'place to dance' |
| pá | 'to get' | pá-ŋkɔ | 'object to be received' |

| yɔ́l | 'to paint; to mould' | yɔ́l-nam | 'painting; moulding' |
| pḛ́t | 'to weave' | pḛ́t-nam | 'weaving' |
| rḛ̀k | 'to beat' | rḛ̀g-nam | 'beating' |
| tí | 'to drink' | tï-nam | 'drinking' |
| gé | 'to wear' | gé-nam | 'wearing' |
| tïg | 'to write; to paint' | tïg-nam | 'writing; painting' |

**(iii)** Suffixes /në/ and /pɔ/ derive adjectives/nouns from other form classes:

$$VR \quad +\begin{Bmatrix} \text{-në} \\ \text{-pɔ} \end{Bmatrix}$$

| VR | | Adjectives | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| bí | 'bring' | bí-në | 'full' |
| tëbèg | 'weigh' | tëbèg-në | 'heavy' |
| gú | 'made hot' | gú-në | 'hot' |
| kin | 'to know' | kin-në | 'learned' |
| tí | 'to drink' | tí-në | 'sweet' |
| du | 'sit' | du-pɔ | 'good place to sit' |
| | | | |
| arëm | 'pot' | arëm-në | 'wealthy' |
| dɔ́mum | 'storm' | dɔ́mum-në | 'stormy' |
| alum | 'solid' | alum-në | 'solidness' |
| mig-lu | 'blind' | mig-lu-në | 'blindness' |
| tàke | 'ginger' | take-në | 'gingerlike' |

**(iv)** Adverbs are formed by suffixing different *adverbial case markers*. (Please refer to the section on adverb)

Chart of derivational suffixes

| Stemclass | Noun | | Verb | Adj | Adv |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Noun | | | | në | pë |
| | | | | | lɔ |
| 2. Verb | në; | tad;. ŋkɔ | | në | |
| | | nam | | | pɔ |
| 3. Adjective | | | | | pë |

## 5.2. Compound :

Compound stems are those consisting of more than one roots. Roots are monomorphemic forms which carry the basic meaning of the words. Stems of more than one roots are reduced to a single root at the compounding or co-ordinate layer of word formation. The simplest level of compounding is joining of two roots, where any of the major classes may serve as the initial element. Thus a compound construction consists, potentially, of two or more core morphemes of which at least two members must be free morphemes.

*Noun Compound formation*

In Mising, all the noun forms are based on natural classification of objects such as, man, animal, tree, sky, etc.

The most important object of each class has a word which is invariably added to denote the objects of the same class.

(a) *ami*   *'man'*   *as the NC*
    core  +  core  +  coreN
    NC        NP        NPN

(NC = Noun common to the class
NP = Noun denoting the particular object
core N = Any number)

ami  +  adïr   =   midir   'body/mind'
man        flesh

| ami  | + | attùk | | = | mi-ttùk | 'head' |
|------|---|-------|---|---|---------|--------|
| man  |   | top   | | |         |        |
| ami  | + | aig   | | = | amig    | 'eye' |
| man  |   | sight | | |         |        |
| ami  | + | aiyàp | | = | migyàp  | 'eye-brow' |
| man  |   | cover | | |         |        |
| ami  | + | arëm  | | = | mirëm   | 'rich man' |
| mam  |   | pot   | | |         |        |
| ami  | + | aig   | + asi | = miksi | | 'tears' |
| man  |   | sight | water | |        |        |
| ami  | + | agɔm  | | = | migɔm   | 'prince, officer' |
| man  |   | articulation | | |    |        |

**(b)** *agɔm*     *'articulation/expression'   as NC*

| agɔm | + tamug | = gɔmug | 'sound' |
|------|---------|---------|---------|
| expression | part | | |
| agɔm | + amig | = gɔmig | 'individual style of |
| expression | part | | speech' |
| agɔm | + abuk | = gɔmbuk | 'letter' · |
| expression | one small | | |
|      | share | | |
| agɔm | + álàb | = gɔmlab | 'sonorous sound' |
| expression | bird | | |

**(c)** Apart form such nominal constructions, two or more morphemes denoting different objects also combine to form compound nouns.

| kɔ́l | + ɔllun | = kɔ́lɔllun |
|------|---------|------------|
| machine | boat | ferry |
| pɔ́rɔk | + awë | = pɔ́rɔkawë |
| cock | child | chicken |
| kedi | + isiŋ | = kediisiŋ |
| mango | tree | mango tree |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| migɔɱ | + ɔkum | = migɔmɔkum |
| prince | house | palace |
| tukku | + kìnam | = tukkukìnam |
| head | pain | headache |
| am | + abug | = ambug |
| rice | flat | flattened rice |
| nё | + milbɔn | = nёmilbɔn |
| feminine | masculine | man and woman |
| ayïn | + murukɔŋ | = ayïnmurukɔŋ |
| gold | silver | silver and gold |
| amɔŋ | + asi | = amɔŋasi |
| soil | water | earth and water |
| apɔŋ | + apin | = apɔŋapin |
| wine | rice | rice and wine |
| galùk | + gasɔr | = galùkgasɔr |
| shirt | cloth | dress |
| atɔ | + ayɔ | = atɔayɔ |
| grand | grand | grand parents |
| mother | father | |

(d)  *Adj + N = N*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| gúne | + árёm | = gúneárёm |
| hot | pot | hot plate |
| kinne | + ami | = kinneami |
| wise | man | wiseman |
| bɔttane | + ёliŋ | = bɔttanёliŋ |
| big | stone | rock |

*Verbal Compound -*

It can be derived basically by three means, viz., a verb can combine with a noun, another verb or an adverb.

**(a)  N + Vb**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| agër | + bitɔ | = | agërbitɔ |
| work | give | | serve |
| ayïpë | + mëtɔ | = | ayïpëmetɔ |
| goodness | think | | love |
| sagï | + gítɔ | = | sagïgítɔ |
| difficulty | go | | sigh |
| alë | + bitulɔ+to | = | lëbitultɔ |
| leg | bring down | | kneel down |

**(b)  Vb + Vb**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| dɔ́tɔ | + titɔ | = | dɔ́tɔtitɔ |
| eat | drink | | eat and drink |
| lútɔ | + bitɔ | = | lúbitɔ |
| say | give | | plead/describe |
| mëtɔ | + pátɔ | = | mëpåtɔ |
| think | get | | remember |

**(c)  V + Adv**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| gí | + sà(tɔ) | = | gísà(tɔ) |
| go | up | | go up |
| mɔ́ | + pàk | = | mɔ́pàk (+tɔ) |
| make | away | | do away |
| tëk | + li pë | = | tëklik (+tɔ) |
| cut | wish | | wished to cut |

*Adjectival Compound*

An adjective compound can be formed can be formed by joining two adjectives, or an adverb and an adjective.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| azzɔnë | + ayïnë | little and good |
| little | good | |
| délɔ | + kànë = délkànë | |
| in time | seer | one what perceives in right time |

Compounds of more than two words have been found in the language. The resulting compound is either a verb or a noun.

*N + N + V*

| galùk | + | gàsɔr | + | mɔ́nam | = | galúkgàsɔrmɔnam |
|-------|---|-------|---|-------|---|-----------------|
| shirt |   | cloth |   | made  |   | to dress        |

*N + Adj + N*

| arig  | + | mɔ́ne | + | ame | 'farmer'  |
|-------|---|-------|---|-----|-----------|
| field |   | doer  |   | man |           |
| mimag | + | mɔ́ne | + | ami | 'soldier' |
| war   |   | doer  |   | man |           |

*Adv + V*

| asɔ asɔ pë lúnam |           | 'to whisper' |
|------------------|-----------|--------------|
| slowing          | saying    |              |

## 5.3  Echo word formation

Such words compound with nouns which analogically keep some pace with the nature of the sounds produced in the meaningful word. The echo words do not have their own meaning and these words are used to complete the utterance, and, at the same time, indicate "some thing like that '.

| ɔnɔ       | ɔpum  | fish and 'something like that' |
|-----------|-------|--------------------------------|
| fish      |       |                                |
| ɔyïŋ      | ɔge   | vegetable and 'some thing like that" |
| vegetable |       |                                |
| apin      | tapin | rice and " some thing like that" |

## 5.4  Onomatopoeia : These are imitations of natural sounds made by animals or objects

| gër — gër | sound produced by cart when it is moving |
|-----------|------------------------------------------|

| | |
|---|---|
| guruŋ guraŋ | sound produced when some house-hold work is being done. |
| kur — kur | uttered to remove dogs |
| kamë a kam | used to shout at pigs |
| durr — durr | uttered to alert snakes |
| sa — sa — sa | expression of satisfaction |

# SYNTAX

**1.1** In Mising, a morpheme is the lowest level of grammatical hierarchy. The occurrence of each and every morpheme in syntatic structures is determined by the form class to which it belongs and by the function which it performs. Thus, there is a correlation between form and function. Any complete utterance, when divided on functional basis, gives rise to, at successive levels, suffixes, words, phrase(s) and clause(s). It indicates a system of grammatical hierarchy which is arranged at systematic levels. These levels are -morphemes, works, phrase(s), clause(s) and sentences. The study of the arrangement of morphemes into words, words into phrases, phrases into clauses and clauses into sentences is the subject matter of syntax.

Thus, the syntactic structure can be represented as follows.
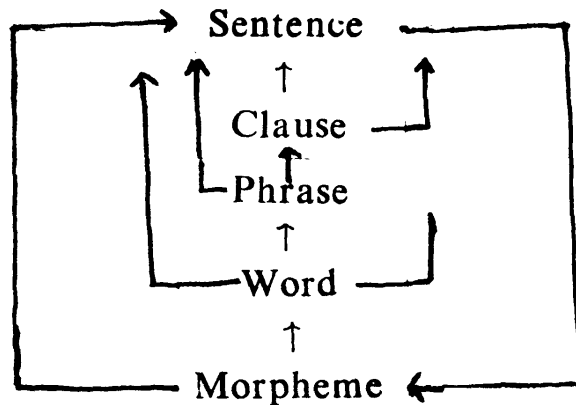


A single word in Misng may constitute a sentence. Words enter into morphological process(es) to form a phrase. Phrases form clauses and clauses form sentences. A single clause can also be a full sentence. Some times a verb phrase alone acts as a clause or a sentence.

## 1.2. Phrase level construction*

Words combine into phrases, thus the constitutents of phrase

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* Word level construction has already been dealt with in the previous chapter.

level constructions are words. Phrases do not have predicate
tagmemes. A Mising phrase is a close-knit group of words. While
analysing it, relators are to be separated from words, if any,
and then head and modifying morph(eme)s are identified.
Phrases serve nominal, adjectival, adverbial and verbal functions
at clause level.

On formal basis, there are two types of phrases -

(1)  exocentric    (2)  endocentric.

*1.2.1.*  Exocentric

It is also known as a relator axis phrase. In such cons-
tructions, none of the constituents of phrase is either head or
sub-ordinate. Constituents have equal status. Function words
known as relators serve as the second constituent of the cons-
truction. In Mising, relators are always post positions or free
words which are adverbs. These relators are of two types.

(a)  Adverbial relators    (b)  Adjectival relators.

1.2.1.1  *Adverbial relator axis phrase:*

Adverbial relators are either bound relators or free relators.
Bound relators are post positions.
*Bound relators-*

      pë - at
      lɔ - in
      kelɔkke - from/by
      kɔkki - by
      kɔ́lɔkke - through
      sɔk - with the help of/ by means of

*Free relators-*

      këig - down
      anyïn - near
      dépila - go
      émna - like this
      mapï - without

These adverbial relators functionally refer to place, time and manner.

(1)  Temporal relator axis phrase.

| gí-di-lɔ | in time |
| pëdɔŋmɔpë | before |
| gɔntalë-dudɔ | after an hour |
| idi-lɔ -kkegónta | since how many hours. |

(2)  Manner selector axis phrase -

| sëmapï | without chin |
| lambësɔk | by road |
| payenbï-kke-empë | like paying |

(3)  Place relator axis phrase

| ɔkum-lɔ | in the house |
| adi-tɔkke | from the hill |

**1.2.1.2   *Adjectival relator axis phrase:***

Such phrases function as adjectives. Genitive case markers act as relators.

| bï rɔrambi-kke | Ram' s  brother |
| maglakemabɔbi | Mangalon' s  brother |

*1.2.2.*   Endocentric  constructions :

In such constructions, at least one of the constitutents is the head.  The whole phrase has the  same  function  as the  head word.  Such phrases have two  subgroups -

(i) Multiple head phrase (ii)  Single head phrase.

**1.2.2.1   *Multiple head phrase:***

Such phrases have more  than  one  head word.  The head may be a single word or sub-ordinate phrase.  Thus, either a single word or a group of words or a  word with post positions which is the  point of  focus  is  the  head constitutent and other member(s) is(are) the  attribute(s) to the head.  Multiple head phrases are of two types  (a) Co-ordinate phrase  (b) Oppositive phrase.

(a) Co-ordinate phrase

A limited set of function words called connectors can join multiple head phrases. Some times there may be no overt connector.

(i)   Co-ordinate noun phrase

dóñi - pólɔ                    sun (and) moon

ayïn - murukɔŋ                gold (and) silver.

sibekɔ        laŋ        sɔrmɔnkɔ

monkey        and        crocodile

ŋɔ   bámɔla   nɔ

I      or        you

ŋɔkkeawë   laŋ   bï-kkɔ   më

my son       and   his        daughter

ɔkumlɔ   bámɔla   iskulepë

in           or        at school

the

house

(either) in the house or at school

(ii)  Co-ordinate verb phrase

dópëtipë  to eat (and) drink.

gïmayub - mayepë

(neither) going (nor) sleeping.

(iii)  Adjective co-ordinate phrase

When two or more adjectives conjoin and have the same referent, the construction is a coordinate adjective phrase.

akúnë   sɔlenë   amidë   gï-dɔ

red        pale       men        go tense

red and pale men go.

kinnanë        laŋ        kaŋ-kanë

wise              and        beautiful

wise and beautiful

It won't be out of place to mention that adjective co-ordinate phrases are always the attributes to the noun phrase. When a noun is added to an adjective phrase,the resultant construction becomes a noun phrase. Following constructions are NPs. .

akúne sɔlenë amidë

red and pale men

kinnanë kaŋkanë yamë

wise and beautiful girl.

Co-ordinate constructions are always open constructions Such constructions can be expanded indefinitely depending upon the speaker's ability and memory. In such cases, conjunction may occur only before the last unit.

dëkɔ    kámanë    ɔ́rïne    génë

enough dry            deep    crooked

deep, dry and crooked enough

kɔsanë    zégënë    laŋ    kúnë    kedi

bitter    green    and    sour    mango

bitter and sour green mango

Now we are in a position to formulate such phrases. When there are heads, the formula for co-ordinate phrase is as follows-

$$\underline{H1} \pm \underline{C} + \underline{H2}$$

$$\left\{\begin{matrix}\text{Noun}\\\text{Verb}\\\text{Adj}\end{matrix}\right\} \pm \text{Adjunct} \qquad \begin{matrix}\text{laŋ}\\\text{bamɔla}\end{matrix} \qquad \left\{\begin{matrix}\text{Noun}\\\text{Verb}\\\text{Adj}\end{matrix}\right\} \pm \text{Adjunct}$$

When there are more than two heads -

$$\underline{H1} + \underline{H2} +...+ \underline{C} + \underline{Hn}$$

$$\text{Adjunct} + \left\{\begin{matrix}\text{Noun}\\\text{Verb}\\\text{Adj}\end{matrix}\right\} \quad \text{Adjunct} \pm \left\{\begin{matrix}\text{Noun}\\\text{Verb}\\\text{Adj}\end{matrix}\right\} \quad \begin{matrix}\text{laŋ}\\\text{bamɔla}\end{matrix}\left\{\begin{matrix}\text{Noun}\\\text{Verb}\\\text{Adj}\end{matrix}\right\}$$

(b) Oppositive Phrase - These are phrase level constructions where two and only two words occur. One of these denotes the item and other one is in opposition to it or rather it is its referent. Such phrases are noun phrases.

Oppos-itve phrase -

Item_____ +→ Referent_____

$\left\{\begin{array}{l}\text{Noun}\\\text{Pro}\end{array}\right\}$ ± Adjunct   $\left\{\begin{array}{l}\text{Noun}\\\text{Pro}\end{array}\right\}$   ± Adjunct

ŋɔlu    misinë

we      mising

we, the Mising.

ŋɔ-lu    misinë    dóñipɔ́lɔkë    kumtadë

we      Mising  sun moon  of  children descendents

We Misings, descendants of Sun and Moon.

payeŋ    mirëm    kɔ

payeng  rich man  one

Payeng, a rich man.

### 1.2.2.2   *Single Head Phrase*

*Head-Modifier phrase* - In such. phrasal constructions,one word is always a head word and others modify the head word. It is also endocentric and is known as *sub-ordinate phrasal construction*. It is also known as *single head-modifier phrase*.

**(1)   *Noun head-modifier phrase:***

In such noun phrase constructions, the head word is always a noun and adjectives or  adjective subclasses occur as modifiers to the noun. Sometimes noun alone can occur as a phrase. But when modifier(s) occur(s) the noun always follows modifier.

$$\text{NP} \rightarrow \underbrace{\left\{\begin{array}{l}\text{Noun}\\\text{Pro}\end{array}\right\}\left\{\begin{array}{l}\text{Dem Adj}\\\text{Poss PP}\\\text{Qual.Adj}\end{array}\right\}}_{\text{Mod}} + \underbrace{\text{Noun}}_{\text{H}} \pm \underbrace{\text{Num}}_{\text{Mod}}$$
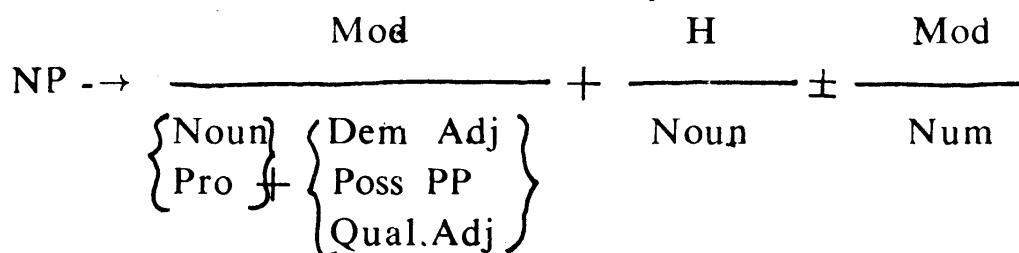
where

Mod - modifier

Dem. Adj  - demonstrative adjective

Pro- - Pronoun

Poss. PP - Possessive post-position

Num  · numeral

Qual  Adj  - adjective of quality

H - head

sé-bulu meŋkuri-kirïdë                    those cats.
that   pl   cat        pl.

isi    kitabdë                             this book
this   book

bïkke  azɔnë                               his friend.
his    friend

ŋɔ-lu-kke  bïrɔ                            our sister
we   PP    sister

sórmɔdɔkke  nëdë                           wife of the crocodile
crocodile  of  lady the

ami    appi-kɔ                             four men
man    four

ɔŋc   apïr-kɔ                              four fish
fish   four

ayánë   migɔm                             kind officer
kind    officer

bɔttanë   ami                             great man
great     man

alumnë  dïtem                              round earth
round     earth

## (2) *Adjective head-modifier phrase-*

Adjectives with case markers and suffixes of **degree of com-**
parison can intensify another adjective.

$$
\text{Adj P} \quad \frac{\text{int}}{\text{Adj.} \pm \begin{cases} \text{-kke} \\ \text{-ya} \\ \text{-yapag} \\ \text{pë} \end{cases}} + \frac{\text{H}}{\text{Adj}}
$$
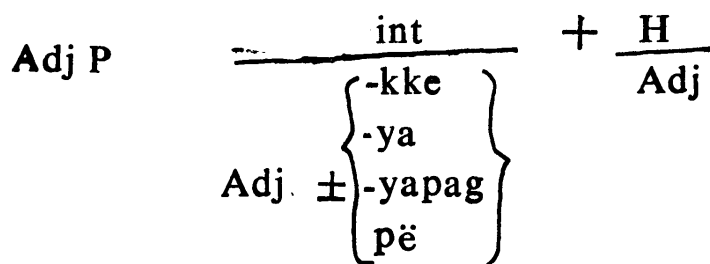
| óriṅë    muga                      | **deep brown**      |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|
| deep      brown                   |                     |

| bɔ́tte-ya      kaŋ-kanë            | **more beautiful**  |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|
| big      comp  beautiful          |                     |

| airupë    dɔ́pɔ-në                 | **good taste**      |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|
| good at    taste                  |                     |

| bɔ́tte-ya-pagnë    zëgënë          | **deep green**      |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|
| great+comparison green            |                     |

(3)  Verb Head-modifier Phrase :  A word denoting an action alone can occur as a verb phrase. Here,  by word is meant root plus tense suffix, causative or reflexive suffix. Such verb phrases can stand alone as a sentence i.e., verb in imperative mood. Apart from this, a verb phrase may take an auxilliary, a negative particle, an adjective, an adverb and a noun. This is the maximum potential of a verb phrase. Thus a VP may have the following types of formation.

(i)  VR   +   <u>Tense</u>  +   <u>asp</u>

$$\left\{ \begin{matrix} \text{present} \\ \text{past} \\ \text{future} \end{matrix} \right\} \quad \left\{ \begin{matrix} \text{durative} \\ \text{perfective} \end{matrix} \right\}$$

| gï+duŋ              | gïduŋ       | is going       |
|---------------------|-------------|----------------|
| gï+duŋ+ai           | gïduŋal     | was going      |
| gï+la+duŋ+ye        | gïladuye    | will be going  |

(ii)  ± NP1 ± NP2 + VR + suffix

| ŋɔ  bïm  ká-dɔ       |
|----------------------|
| I    him   see t     |

Here "bïm ká-dɔ" is a verb phrase.  Similarly a  VP  may have two NPs.

| bïm    kitab    kɔ    bi-dɔ        | **gave him a book**  |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------|
| him    book    a    give tɪ       |                      |

(iii)  + Adj P + VR + suffix(es)

ayïpë   më-dagai                    (some one) thought well.
well    think  tense


(iv)   Adv P + VR +suffix(es)

kɔlɔpë  gí   ye                     Where will (you) go ?
where   go   tense


(v)    VR + suffix +·Neg.

gí  kaŋ-ku-ma                       Do not come back.
go  mood    not


### 1.3.  Clause level Construction :

Clause level constructions are higher than phrase level.
Phrases combine into the larger structure of clause. A clause
conveys a complete message. In simple sentence construction,
clauses and sentences coincide entirely, but there is a basic differ-
ence between a clause and a sentence. Sometimes, a verb phrase,
say, having only one word, stands as a complete sentence, while
a clause is a combination of phrases and, hence, it does not
possess this ·characteristic. A clause must have a subject and
only one predicate. The predicate may be a finite verb phrase,
indicating time, purpose, location of event and manner of the
action indicated by VP.

Clauses are of two types -

(a)  Independent clause

(b)  Dependent clause/Subordinate clause

*1.3.1.* Independent clause : Such a clause can stand alone as a
major sentence. The independent clause has three subgroups-

(i)  VP containing one or two NPs.

ŋɔ  rutë  kɔm  dɔ́-duŋ              I am eating bread.
I   bread  to    eat t   +Asp

nɔkkeawëdë    bu-lum    kitabdëm bi-duŋ

your son       them      book to   give+t

subject        NP1       NP2

Your son is giving them a book.


(ii)  VP without NP

ŋɔ  gí-dɔ                                        I go.

I    go t

sub    VP

ŋɔ  arigɔ-lɔpë  gí-dɔ                         I go to field.

I    field at     go t

sub  adjunct location


(iii)  Copulative clause :

If only a copula verb occurs in the clause and conveys comlete meaning, it is known as a copulative clause.

bï  isi-lɔ  luŋ                    He is here.

he   here   copula

sub location

sidë  iki  aumkɔ  duŋ          There are three dogs.

there dog three    copula

location


*1.3.2.*  Subordinate clause :

A subordinate clause is that which cannot stand alone as a major sentence. Such clauses need relators to be embedded within an independent clause. When the relator is removed, a subordinate clause may become an independent clause.

In Mising, subordinate clauses are mainly sequential clauses. Such a type of clause is either adverbial or adjectival.

ŋɔkke  mëlɔkke  kánamkɔ

my        yesterday  seen  boy

lit. "yesterday my seen boy"

The boy whom I saw yesterday

bï-kke  yubtɔmamëm    ŋɔ  isɔpë  duyë

his        sleeping  to      I    here    sit t

lit. "his not sleeping to I here will sit."

Till he sleeps, I will sit here.

apin  dódɔm      agɔm  lúyɔ  ka

food  eat  to      wǫrd  say neg· imp

lit. "food eating to do not speak"

While eatjng food, do not speak.

bïkke  gimɔnamdë  arɔ

His      coming          is true


### 1.3.2.1  *Subordinate clause with relators:*

bï  ayinë  amikɔ  dëmpila  ŋɔ  bïm  ayipë  medak

he  good    man a  so            I    him  good    think

He (is) a good man, so I like him.

mastɔr  dë  gï-ma-ye  ëmna  bïlú  da-ga-i

teacher the  go not tense like  he      say t        +mood

'The teacher won't.go likę this', he said.

sëkɔm  ŋɔ  sɔgàp  duŋai

whom    I    catch    past

Whom I caught.

ɔdɔkke  yublaŋ

now        sleep

Now sleep.

gïgëla        ɔdɔkke      yublaŋ

having gone  now          sleep

Having gone, then sleep

kɔdë      kabduŋ  teu  bu-lu  apɔŋ  bï-ma-ye

child the  weeping  yet  they    wine  give neg t

The child is weeping, yet they won't give (him) wine.

ŋɔkke  gɔ́gnë  amidë  gíyadak

my     called  man    went

lit. "my called man went"

The man whom I called went away.

## 1.4  Sentence level

A Mising sentence is an isolated utterence together with its own characteristic intonation pattern. A sentense wihout its intonation pattern is a base sentense. A base sentence in Mising is simple, affirmative, declarative and active. Other syntactic constructions are derived from the base sentence. Thus a base sentence serves as the input and, after applying various transformational rules, such as negative transformation, interrogative transformation, etc., we get output strings. The usual pattern of the base sentence in Mising is -

subject + object + verb

A sentence in Mising is basically of two types i.e., major sentence and minor sentence.

*1.4.1.* Major sentence: Sentences which are well formed are major sentences. A major sentence has the following basic structure -

Base- An independent clause forms the base of a major sentence. In Mising, a verb is the only obligatory form to constitute a sentence, but such a sentence won't be called a major sentence. Therefore, suject and object forms are also nuclear to form a major sentence. So, for a major sentence, subject, object and verb are nuclear functional forms, while temporals, locationals, etc., are optional. In other words, the minimum requirement for a major sentene is NP + VP.

Major sentences are of three types - (1) Simple (2) Complex 3) Compound.

1.4.1.1 *Simple sentence:* A sentence consisting of one and only one independent clause is a simple sentence. A simple statement-type active affirmative sentence is the example of a simple sentence. All transformations of such a sentence, which do not require embedding, are also simple sentences.

|        | Statement        | Question       | Command          |
|--------|------------------|----------------|------------------|
| Intr - | bi gïdɔ́         | bïgídɔ-n       | gí-tɔ            |
|        | he goes          | does he go     | go               |
| Tr -   | ŋɔ rutiëm dɔ́duŋ | ŋɔ ruti dɔ́du-ŋ | rutikɔ dɔ́-tɔk  |
|        | I bread eat do   | I bread eat    | bread eat        |

In this way, we get $3 \times 2 = 6$ types of simple sentences, each in turn, with negative and interrogative negative sentences along with tense differenciation. Thus the whole matrix stands to 54 types of simple sentences. Here we can add the sentences of copulative clause of $3 \times 3 \times 3 = 27$ types, leading the total number to $54 + 27 = 81$.

1.4.1.2 *Compound sentence:* The sentences which have more than one indipendent clause are compound sentences. The two independent clauses are conjoined by connectors.

$$\underline{\text{base}} \pm \underline{\quad C \quad} + \underline{\text{base2}} \,,$$
$$\text{i cl}_1 \quad \left\{ \begin{array}{c} \text{naŋ} \\ \text{laŋ} \\ \text{bámɔlɔ} \end{array} \right\} \quad \text{i cl}_2$$

lekkɔlɔ  sïbekɔ  duŋai  naŋ  sɔ́rmɔŋkɔ  duŋai

once      monkey  one was and  crocodile  .one was

Once, there was a monkey and there was a crocodile

bim    gɔ́ktɔ  laŋ  neyadëm  nápàktɔ

him    call    and  grass    remove

Call him and remove the grass.

Simple one-word imperative can combine with a statement type of sentence without a connector.

dútɔ   ŋɔ   nɔm   apinëm   bi-duŋ

sit    I    you   food     give t

Sit, I am giving you food.

1.4.1.3 *Complex sentence:* A complex sentence contains one indipendent clause and at least one dependent clause. In a complex sentence, the subordinate clause invariably precedes the principal clause, except where free relators occur. The subordinate clause serves as a relator clause. An overt relator may not be used.

Subordinate clauses may be either adjectival, adverbial or conditional.

**(1)** Complex sentence with adjectival clause :

Adjectival clauses either have participial form of the verb or the verb takes the adjective derivative element /në/

bulu-kke   mɔ̈-namɛ̈   bí-dɔk

they poss   thinking    go+t

lit. "their thinking, he went"

They think that he went.

gïya-në̈   amidë   sé kɔn

goer      man     where int

Where is the man who (was) going?

**(2)** Complex sentence with sub-ordinate adverbial clause :

bï   ayanë̈   amikɔ   dë́pila   ŋɔ bïm   yimapë   më̈dag

he   bad      man     so        I him    dislike  think

He is a bad man, so I think I dislike him.

bï-migɔm   ŋɔë̈m   nakindɔ

I know that he is a prince.

**(3)** Complex sentence with probability clause :

ŋɔ   ayila   dúmilɔ   yampɛ   gïyayë̈

I    better  sit prob  yesterday go+t

If I were well, I would have come yesteday.

ŋɔkke  nëdë  gípimilɔ          ŋɔ  nítɔm  mɔ́-ye

my     wife   come back prob  I    song   do t

If my wife comes, I will sing.

ŋɔ  dú-milɔ  agerdëm  gér  la-ye

If I sit, the work will be done.

### 1.4.2. Minor sentence:

**(a)** Elliptical sentence - when the clause structure is incomplete i.e., some of the grammatical categories are omitted, such a sentence is known as an elliptical sentence. Usually subject deletion takes place in answer to a question.

Q.    bï  ɔkɔlɔ  gí-ye-n

      he   where go t    int

      Where did he go ?

Ans.  baridɔpë

      to the garden.

      nɔkke  á minë  uŋkuen

      your      name  what int

      What is your name ?

      rita  medɔk  aminë

      (my) name (is) Rita Medok.

**(b)** In a compound sentence consisting of two principal clauses, the verb is usually deleted in the second clause. Such sentences having a single verb are treated as minor sentences with a complete base.

ɔkumlɔ  gíkaŋ  má-mɔlɔ  iskulpë

house in  go+imp     or     school+loc

Go into the house or to the school.

Minor sentences, according to the function which they perform, are mainly of three types. A brief discussion follows:-

**(1)** Additve - Only at discourse level do such sentences occur as the second part of a full sentence, and add some meaning to the

statement already made in a full sentence as a result of second thought. Such sentences may sometimes consist of a full clause and obligatory sequence marking. In such conditions, it is a sequential sentence with complete base. But, sometimes, it may have only one word or phrase:

base   +   addition

$\left\{ \begin{array}{c} \text{phrase} \\ \text{clause} \end{array} \right\}$      phrase

bï ɔdɔ́lɔ gí - ye - mëlɔke

he there go t, yesterday

He went there yesterday.

ŋɔ kɔlezlɔ pɔ́riduŋ magulipë

I college read+asp in majuli

I study in the college at Majuli.

The phrases- "mëtɔkë" and "majulipë" are added to the eariler statements made by way of giving some additional information as a result of second thought. Ordinarily these phrasess hould have come before the VP, as, in Mising, a verb closes a sentence. Since something is added after the VP, it is considered as anotherclause and treated as a minor sentence.

(2) Response sentence - such incomplete sentences are used as responses in conventional situations and are short forms of a reply to a question or an echo form. Echo form sentences consist of a single utterance, such as /ɔ/ 'yes'. Such sentences are elliptical sentences and consist of a word or phrase.

| Question | bï gí-yen ? |
| --- | --- |
| | will he go ? |
| Response | ma    Not |
| Question | bulu edi-lɔgí-ye-n ? |
| | When will they go ? |
| Response | sílɔ    Today |

Here "ma" and "sílɔ" are responses which can be regarded as minor sentences. The full response from is

bïgí-ye-ma
He won't go.
bu-lu sílɔ gí-ye
They will go today.

## (3) Exclamatory sentence

An exclamatory sentence sometimes combines with any sentence as a peripheral exclamatory form, but when it occurs in isolation, it is a minor sentence.

bú-bú 'ah, ah'
kúrkúr 'come, come' (for animal)
sa-sa 'welldone'
yá-yá 'well done'

# APPENDIX

## rankɔpkke la sibëkke dɔyiŋe

rankɔp   la(n)   sibe-bi        abire   bini
tortise   and     monkey the   friend   both
lɔnkɔnëm   appaiyëm   dɔkapo   gika
day one to   fruit   to     eat to     went
sibe-bi          buriae   tale dɔ   re   saṅkan.
monkey the   tree   up    to    climb up past
bï aedɔnab gela      sinebi   dugkanka bïyɔgsadëm me pankab
he fruit to eat after monkɔy the went away he sword to left.

rankɔb-bi   dadapɛ   resankan:   sibekke   yɔgsadëm
tortoise the with difficulty clımbed up monkey's sword to
langëla   rankɔbbi   keïgpe   kängela   ludunai-bë   le
get after   tortoise   downward seeing after said under the
dumsumëm   tɔmiɔl   tɔgab   mamɔl   bële
deer to      standing   kill   otherwise under
sirabëm       tɔmïl   tɔgabyeneya ?   bagëmpe
wild pig to   standing kill-what        under to
tɔdnëm   dumsudem   tɔgap dunai      dumsudɔkke
being to   deer to        killed dropping  deer the off

asigdɛ kɔkki   rankɔbbi   dum-dum-kɔ   sɔt   dum-dum-dɔ-kke
skin the by      tortoise the drum     one make drum the of
ara   bɔ   yiludɛm   ilig-daggai
in        hornet to   put
dumdumdëm   kala   sibɛbi      lɛkman   ninka(n).
drum        to   seeing   monkey the   beat        wished
rankɔb-bi   lutɔ   "abira!   isin taletɔ   mantɔ
tortoise the   said   friend      tree above   drum
bɔtte   pe   mannan"   sibɛbi      resankange   la   lutɔ
great to   beat         monkey the group tense after said
"ŋɔ   manye-ne?"
I   beat   what

rankɔb-bi   ludak-   "abira !   tɔlɔg   gampe
tortise the said   friend            up      more to
sibe-bi         rela  rela    tui-pe   re sanka(n)
menkey the   slowly slowly  peak to  went up
bïdɔ        dum-dum-dëm  mandakɔ  sibebi        dum-dum dëm
he then  drum      to         beat     monkey the  drum       to
man-su-daggai.  yilude  dele la  bïm  pe  paglendak
beat self was     tear   after   his  bite  fell downi

# The Story Of The Monkey And The Tortoise

## (Free translation in English)

The monkey and the tortise were friends. One day both of them went to eat fruits. The monkey climbed the tree. He ate fruits. He threw the skins for the tortoise. Having eaten the fruits, the monkey went away, but he left his sword (on the tree).

With great difficulty, the tortise climbed the tree. Lifting the monkey's sword, he looked below and said- "Should I kill the wild pig standing under the tree?". He dropped (the sword) on the deer and killed it. With the skin of the deer he made a drum. Inside the drum, he put some hornets.

Seeing the drum, the monkey wanted to beat it. The tortise said, "Friend, beat the drum on the tree. Beat it hard." The monkey, climbing the tree, asked, "Shall I beat (it) ?" The tortise said "Please climb higher."

The monkey climbed to the top of the tree. Now (he) beat the drum and broke it. The hornets came out and stung him. He fell down.

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