

12.2 Word order

The typical word order of a Rigwe sentence is SVO;

ɔvú ʔɪ́ɔ́ minsɛ̀
dog bit cat
the dog bit the cat

However, where the object is a pronoun, the order changes to SOV;

ɔvú ʔgí ʔɪ́ɔ́
dog him bit
the dog bit him

With double object constructions, the structure is S+IndO+V+DO;

ndʒé ʔgí ʔʃɛ́ ʔʃánɲè
I him slaughtered ram
I slaughtered a ram for him

This word order also applies when the direct object is a pronoun, although in this case it is a bound morpheme joined to the verb;

ndʒé ʔgí ʔʃɛ́ɲ
I him slaughtered it
I slaughtered it for him

Verbal auxiliaries are placed before the verb. Thus SAuxVO;

ɔvú ʃí ʔɪ́ɔ́ minsɛ̀
dog will bite cat

Adverbs always follow the verb;

ɔvú ʔɪ́ɔ́ minsɛ̀ ɛ́ jàɲ
dog bit cat much

Determiners always follow the noun;

ɔvú ɲna
dog the

ɔvú nê
dog this

However, they are always the final element in the noun phrase following any qualifiers;

ɔvú ɸí ɲna
dog black the

Adjectives divide into those that precede and those that follow the noun. Only those that precede the noun show agreement in number. Thus;

Rigwe syntax
NOM+ADJ

táǵo mí a new shirt
rè táǵo mí new shirts

This also applies to numerals;

rè táǵo ^[2]wêṢṢè two shirts

ADJ+NOM

When the qualifier follows the nominal it is invariable;

ṅne kúnǵú short person
ṅne kúnǵú short people

12.3 Negation

12.3.1 Negation of declarative sentences

Negation is typically expressed through the verb rather than qualifying a noun. Thus, 'I have no bananas' will be expressed 'I don't have bananas any'. The most common formula for negation is *kò ... wé* where negation brackets the entire clause. *kò* appears to be a substitute pronoun in such sentences. If the subject is a third person pronoun, the negation

The initial *kò* is marked for tense/aspect as follows (Table 1);

Table 1. Allomorphs of *kò*

Allomorph	Aspect
kó	perfective
kò	habitual
kóó	imperfective plural
kòó	imperfective singular

The formula is thus NEG+SVO+NEG;

Examples of *kó* perfective;

kó ɔvú ɛrɔ́ minsè wé
Neg dog bit cat Neg
the dog didn't bite the cat

Contrast with 'the dog bit the cat'

Examples of *kò* habitual

kò cé wé
not-he farm not
He doesn't farm

Contrast with 'he farms'

Rigwe syntax

What would

you don't farm?

I don't farm

be?

kòó singular imperfective

kòó ʔcé á lá nê wé
not-he farm in season this not
He has not farmed this season

The imperfective sense of kòó is illustrated by the insertion of ò 'yet' after the first negative;

kòó ò ʔcé á lá nê wé
not-he yet farm in season this not
He has not farmed yet this season.

Example with a proper noun

kóó plural imperfective

Example of the plural imperfective

kóó ʔcé á lá nê wé
not-they farm in season this not
They have not farmed this season.

Example with a proper noun

An identical form is used for the habitual;

kóó cé wé
not-they farm not
They don't farm.

To intensify negation, the particle *ré(é)* is used. Further emphasis can be introduced by the cognate object construction;

kò ré(é) cé kaâ wé
not-he foc. + intens. farm v. farm n. not
He never farms

Negation can also be intensified using the bracketing construction kò...kó(ó). In the third person singular and plural, the pronoun following the first negative is assimilated.

Why is the second ó in brackets?

kò ñdžé bí kó(ó) jàńcá wé
not I have neg. + intens. anything not
I have nothing at all

Rigwe syntax

kò ɲʷé bí kó(ó) jàńcá wé
not you have neg. + intens. anything not
You have nothing at all

kò ñzǐ bí kó(ó) jàńcá wé
not we have intens. anything not
We have nothing at all

kò ní bí kó(ó) jàńcá wé
not you pl. have intens. anything not
You pl. have nothing at all

Why is this mid-tone?

kò + à assimilates to kò

kò bí kó(ó) jàńcá wé
not-he has intens. anything not
He has nothing at all

kò + á assimilates to kóó.

kóó bí kó(ó) jàńcá wé
not-they have intens. anything not
They have nothing at all

Completive aspect

kò ńdzé (g)ì bí kó(ó) jàńcá wé
not I compl. have intens. anything not
I had nothing at all

The tone on the completive kò follows the same pattern as the incomplete aspect.

kò + à assimilates to kòó

kòó (g)ì bì kó(ó) jàńcá wé
not-he compl. had intens. anything not
He had nothing at all

kò + á assimilates to kóó.

kóó (g)ì bí kó(ó) jàńcá wé
not-they compl. had intens. anything not
They had nothing at all

The expression *kó ts'êts'ê* lit. 'not little-little' can be added to any sentence to emphasis negativity.

give example sentence

12.3.2 Imperative Negation

Imperative negation also brackets the sentence but the morpheme *dè* replaces *kò*. This can be applied to second and third persons in declarative speech;

dè *ŋwɛ* *né* *wé*
Not you go not
Don't you sg. go!

dè *rè* *né* *wé*
Not him go not
Don't let him go!

For the first person pronoun this construction is only possible within reported speech;

à *he* '*dè* *ŋ* *né* *wé*'
He says 'Not I go not'
He says, 'I should not go'.

Does the tone on *dè* change in past or perfective constructions?

The pronominal paradigm changes to one similar to that for reported speech (*Table 2*). However, [*ŋ*] is the first person pronoun rather than [*ndzɛ*].

Table 2. Rigwe pronouns in negative reported speech

	Singular	Plural
1 st	<i>ŋ</i>	<i>ñɜi</i>
2 nd	<i>ŋ^wɛ</i>	<i>ɲi</i>
3 rd	<i>rè</i>	<i>re</i>

First person plural;

à *he* *dè* *ñɜi* *né* *wé*
He says, 'Not we go not'
He says, 'We should not go.'

Second person;

à *he* *dè* *ŋ^wɛ* *né* *wé*
He says, 'Not you sg. go not'
He says, 'Don't go.'

à *he* *dè* *ɲi* *né* *wé*
He says, 'Not you pl. go not'
He says, 'You should not go.'

Third person;

à *he* '*dè* *rè* *né* *wé*
He says, 'Not he go not'
He says, 'He should not go.'

à *he* *dè* *re* *né* *wé*
He says, 'Not they go not'
He says, 'They should not go.'

Rigwe syntax

Emphatic imperative negation is created by placing the particle *jĩ* before the negative command;

à he, 'jĩ dè ĩ né wé
He says, 'Not (stressed) I go not
He says, 'I should **not** go.'

12.3.3 Double Negation

Double negative constructions are possible in Rigwe, using the same bracketing expression, except that the second element is *..wò*. The examples show typical sentences using double negatives, with the paired morphemes colour-coded.

kò ñdzé he ne ɲʷé he kò ñdzé cé wé wò jé
not I say to you sg. say not I farm not not INT?
Did I not tell you that I don't farm?

kò ñdzé he ne ɲʷé he kò cé wé wò jé?
not I say to you say not-he farm not not INT?
Did I not tell you that he doesn't farm?

kò ñdzé ɣí tĩ ĩ he kò ɲʷé cé wé wò jé
not I him told say not you farm not not INT?
Did I not tell him that you don't farm?

kò ñdzé he ne ɲʷé he kò cé wé wò jé?
not I say to you say not-they farm not not INT?
Did I not tell you that they don't farm?

kò ʔbé ñdzé ru he kò ɲʷé ɲé wé wò
not father my aware say not you go not not
My father is not aware that you have not gone.

kò ʔbé ñdzé ru he kò ñdzé ɲé wé wò
not father my aware say not I go not not
My father is not aware that I have not gone.

kò ʔbé ñdzé ru he kò(ó) [àá] ɲé wé wò
not father my be aware say not he go not not
My father is not aware that he has not gone.

In normal speech, the final *wé wò* can be reduced to *éé*;

wé+wò → *wé éé*

12.4 Focus

12.4.1 Pronoun focus

Pronouns are typically focused with the formula;

PRON *è/à* PRON

This formula is invariant in respect of tense/aspect. è is used for the first and second persons and à for the third person. Pronouns are repeated (with tone-lowering on initial nasals in two-syllable forms), except for the third person singular, which takes a distinctive second element (Table 3);

	Singular	Plural
1st p.	ndʒé... ndʒé	ṅǝí... ṅǝí
2nd p.	ḡʷé... ḡʷé	ǝí... ǝí
3rd p.	ḡú...à	m̃bé... m̃bé

ɲɔ́ʒé è ɲɔ́ʒé he ne ní he ɲi né
 I FOC I say to you say you go
 I am telling you to go

ḡú à à he ne jí he jì né
 He FOC he say to you say you go
He is telling you to go

ɲ́zí è ɲ́zí he ne jí he ɲi né
 We FOC we say to you say you go
We are telling you to go

ndʒé è ndʒé ε he ne ní he ɲi né
I FOC I COMP say to you say you go
I told you to go

ɲɔ́zɛ̀ è ɲɔ́zɛ̀ ʃĩ he ne ní he ɲi né
 I FOC I near FUT say to you say you go
 I will tell you to go

For nouns referring to persons, the ordinary subject pronoun is repeated after the determiner. Thus in the example below;

ʔbé ñnà à he ne ɲú he rɛ né
 Father DET he say to him say him go
 Father told him to go

Daniel we should have the unfocused sentence here

$$\bar{n}n\bar{a} + a \rightarrow \bar{n}na \square$$

7

Rigwe syntax

We need a plural subject example such as;

Our grandfathers told us to behave

Focus on proper names

For proper name, the determiner can be omitted, but otherwise the pronoun is the same.

Pítà à he ne ɲú he rɛ né
Peter he say to him say him go
Peter told him to go

Noun focus strategy I

The focus particle for ordinary nouns is $\acute{V}\acute{V}$, which has two allomorphs, according to the final vowel of the noun it follows;

àá follows -u, -e, -ɔ
èè follows -ɛ

Where àá becomes ϵ , if the tone of the final ϵ is low, then the two identical vowels coalesce. Where the final ϵ is different in tone, a glide on the final ϵ of the noun is produced. Where a noun has a final -e, then the à becomes -e and the tones either merge or produce a glide. It is possible to delete the downstepped g- of the object pronoun in casual speech.

Final -u

ɔvú àá a ¹gí pìè
dog FOC PAST it caught
a dog caught it

In casual speech, the focus particle àá can assimilate to ú, and the object pronoun can be deleted, leaving only the downstep;

ɔvú ¹ú pìè
dog FOC caught
a dog caught it

Final -e shows concord with àá, in contrast to -ɛ;

ɲmgbàátsié [à]á ¹[g]í kpè
stone FOC him hit
a stone hit him

In casual speech, the low tone à is assimilated and the final -e then has a falling tone;

ɲmgbàátsiê á ¹í kpè
stone FOC him hit
a stone hit him

Final ɔ shows concord with àá;

ùúɯɔ àá ¹[g]í te
wasp FOC him stung

Rigwe syntax

In casual speech, the first à of àá is dropped and the final -á is assimilated to ɔ, although it does become nasalised;

ùúʌǎǎ́ ɪ́ te
wasp him stung
a wasp stung him

Final -ɛ

mínsɛ́ [ɛ́]é ɪ́ [g][í] pɪɛ́
cat FOC it catch
a cat catches it

The first ɛ of the focus particle can be deleted in casual speech. Where the final -ɛ of the noun is low tone, the two low-tone sequences of ɛ merge. The resultant sentence is as follows;

mínsɛ́é ɪ́ pɪɛ́
cat-FOC it catch
a cat catches it

Where the final ɛ is high tone, it is assimilated in casual speech, resulting in a falling tone on the first ɛ. Thus'

ritʃɛ́ [ɛ́]é ɪ́ [g][í] kpɛ́
charcoal FOC him falls
charcoal fell on him

results in;

ritʃɛ́é ɪ́ kpɛ́
charcoal him fell
charcoal fell on him

Noun focus strategy II

An alternative focus strategy is to front a clause with a copula and bracket the whole with the subject pronoun and its emphatic counterpart. For any focused noun beginning with a nasal, the low or extra-low becomes high.

à ní ɲmgbàátsié ɲú ɪ́ [g][í] kpɛ́
it is stone **it** him hit
it was a stone that hit him

For nouns beginning with a consonant or a short vowel, the tone does not change;

tʃɛ́ tree

à ní tʃɛ́ ɲú ɪ́ [g][í] pɪɛ́
it is tree **it** him fell
it was a tree that fell on him

For any noun beginning with a long vowel and low tone, the tone of the whole word changes to mid;

Rigwe syntax
àátá granary

à ní aata ηú '[g][í] n̄e
it is granary it him fell
it was a granary that fell on him

Miscellanea

à ʃĩ [â] ní εε?
it is [in] that way INT
Is that is how it is?

jóòwé, ηʷé he ηʷé kpè wê kpèé ηʷê
Well! You say you fall just fall you
Well! Since you say you characteristically fall down, fall down then!

An idiomatic expression used by older people to chastise children or to criticize a girl practising prostitution.

Imperfect subjunctive

ndʒé ri tʃê ʋa ñtʃe
I would like go river
I would have liked to go to the river