

# Miscellaneous Moro Grammar

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This document describes aspects of Moro Grammar that I, or the group have investigated but not yet written up. It also includes items that have cropped up, but which have not been thoroughly investigated. Just about everything in this document will need checking and/or further investigation. The ordering of topics is from those which have been investigated to those which are little more than observations that I, or the group, have made.

## Adjectives

We investigated how comparatives and superlatives are formed in Moro. Moro has comparatives and something which corresponds to a superlative, but which is not used the way superlatives are used in English. In Moro superlatives mean, for example, very, very big. (Is there a better word to describe them?). We will give a few examples of comparatives and superlatives here. A complete list of my data will be found in appendix A.

### Formation of Compound Adjectives

There are many compound adjectives in Moro. I have not managed to investigate how these are formed, or what the different parts are. I suspect that the first part is an adjective, because of the way compound adjectives behave (see below). In some cases the second part is a noun, but I don't know whether this is always the case.

#### Examples:

gaṅəra	good	gaicia	bad
gaṅəraṅaiyo	beautiful	gaiciaṅaiyo	ugly
gaṅəranano	happy	gaicianano	sad
gaṭṅaw	wet	(ṅaw: water)	
gaṭṅawandr	stony, rocky	(ṅwandr: stones)	
gerṅəñwa	slow	gwaiñia	many
gerṅəmano	powerless	gwaiñiaṅəñwa	fast
gerṅəfən	blunt	gwaiñiaṅəmano	powerful
		gwaiñiaṅəfən	sharp
gəfia	weak	gəfialia	cheap
gaicia	bad	gaicilia	expensive
gakəro	broken	gakəriano	angry
gofa	easily defeated	gofano	weak
gofa	easily defeated	gofaṅəno	smooth, easy
gabwa	warm	gabwaṅəno	lazy
gabəṭa	brave	gabəṭaṅəno	difficult
game	good	gamaṅəno	big, huge
gore	red	goriaṅəno	orange

## Comparatives

Comparatives of simple adjectives are formed by adding '-tu' to the end of the adjective, and changing the last vowel to 'ə'. If the adjective already ends in 'tu', the vowel before the 'tu' is changed to 'ə'.

### Examples:

gabeco	gabecətu	white
game	gamətu	good
gaməlo	gamələtu	cold
ginia	giniətu	heavy
garəwaɬu	garəwətu	thin

Comparatives of compound adjectives are formed by forming the comparative from the first part of the adjective and then adding the second part. I am not sure whether there should be a word break between the two resulting parts or not.

### Examples:

gaɲəraɲaiyo	=	gaɲəra + ɲaiyo	gaɲərətu ɲaiyo	ugly
gakəriano	=	gakəro + ano	gakərəɬiano	angry
gamenano	=	game + nano	gamətu nano	happy
gaɲəraɲorrwa	=	gaɲəra + ɲorrwa	gaɲərətu ɲorrwa	generous

## Superlatives

There seem to be several ways of deriving the superlative form from an adjective. The main mechanisms are to repeat one or two syllables within the word, or to double a consonant or a vowel. Sometimes, in addition to these, the final vowel changes or '-d' is added to the end of the word. As for comparatives, superlatives of compound adjectives are formed by making the superlative for the first part and then tacking the rest on the end.

Note that I have not had time to fully investigate the formation of superlatives or their use.

### Examples:

gabeco	gabecəbəcə	white
gede	gedəde	green
gafalo	gaffalo	low
gapa	gapaped	light

## Usage

The best examples I have of how to use comparatives in Moro are two stories, and these will be found in appendix B, but first I will give a simple example.

Note that there is more than one way of saying 'older' and 'oldest'

This man is old	and he is older than his brothers	but that man is the oldest of all
Maje igi goɬra man this old	na igei goɬra gəməɲaɬo lorəba and that old more than his brother	om gakəl goɬra tətəl gəməɲaɬo lorəba but that old most more than others
	guɬrətu lorəba older than his brothers	om gakəl guɬrətu lorəba tətəl but that older than others most
	goɬra nəlorəba old from brothers	goɬra tətəl nəlorəba pred old most from others all
	goɬra elorəba old among brothers	goɬra tətəl elorəba pred old most among others all

## Object Case Markers

Unlike most, if not all of the other languages in the Heiban group, Moro does not have object case markers.

## Verbs

Moro verbs change in several different ways depending on the tense and aspect. There are three tenses, past, present and future, and these are characterised by vowel suffixes which are added to the end of the root. These changes will not be described here as they have been described elsewhere. The other kinds of changes which can happen to verbs fall into three categories: those which change the root and, in effect, make a new verb; prefixes which are attached before the concord agreement marker; and suffixes which are appended to the end of the verb and which remove the tense marker. The first two methods seem to indicate some kind of aspect, but I am not sure what the last method does. Note that the "new" verbs formed by the first method behave exactly as the original verbs, except that the root can't be changed in the same way twice. We will deal with each of these in turn.

### Changes to the Root

So far, I have found three things that change the root. I can not describe any of them because I do not have enough data, so I will just give examples.

#### Repetitive aspect:

Most, if not all verbs have a repetitive form which either involves a prefix or repetition of the first syllable in the root:

arəndə	divide	akarəndə	divide many times
əndu	catch	akəndu	catch many times
kaiyo	tie	gakaiyo	tie many times
naico	give	nanaico	give many times
ŋalo	yawn	ŋaŋalo	yawn many times
so	eat	saso	eat many times
mədo	marry	mamədo	marry many times
ɪtu	fall	irtu	fall many times

#### Dispersal aspect?

Add '-tu' to the end of the verb. I am not sure what this does.

ɪtu	fall	ɪtətu	fall around?
irtu	fall many times	irtətu	fall around many times? (used for scattering simsim)
aʃa	speak	aʃtu	speak to (many people?)

#### Passive mood

I have evidence that this changes the root because the change is before the tense marker.

laʃo	weed	laʃənu	be weeded
raico	pour	raicənu?	be poured?

## Verb Prefixes

### Simultaneous aspect?

This is characterised by 'ta-' added to the verb before the concord agreement. It can take any tense. It indicates that the action is taking place at the same time as the previous action. In narrative texts, it may also indicate that the action is outside the main narrative of the story. Angelo is not happy with this theory, but I have proposed it because actions which are happening at the same time as a previous action in the story seem to be marked with present tense.

### Narrative / Sequential

This is characterised by 'nə-' inserted before the concord agreement marker (which loses its initial vowel). However this behaves differently to an aspect in that the verb concord and tense markers are always future. In texts it indicates that an action happened after the previous action, and often a whole series of verbs is given with no explicit subject or object other than concord agreement for the subject and a pronoun buried in the verb for the object.

Note that there are some abbreviations for the prefix combined with the concord agreement:

nə + lə = lɪdə  
nə + rə = ndrə  
nə + nə = nə

The full forms are acceptable, but are used only by children and people who are learning the language.

### Conditional?

The group brought something that looks like a conditional or a subjunctive to my attention. They wanted to know what it was. It involves the prefix 'na-' added to the verb before the concord agreement. I only have examples with the verb in future tense. I don't know whether other tenses are possible, or whether it is similar to narrative in this respect.

Ŋina ŋidi aŋɔsɛ aicɛba.  
dog will eat food

The dog will eat food.

Aɕa aicɛba gɛfo, ŋina ŋidi naŋɔsɛ  
If food is dog will eat

If there is food, the dog will eat it.

Ŋina ŋidi naŋɔsɛ aicɛba ndɔ gɛfo  
Dog will eat food if is

The dog would eat food if there was any.

### Verbs Suffixes

There seem to be a number of suffixes which can be added to verbs, and which remove the tense marker. Past and present tenses are then given by tone (high for past; low for present). Future tense takes mid tone, but is also marked in other ways. These suffixes are (I do not know what they all mean)

-ano inside

-alo

-nano

-anoŋ down

Note that verbs can also be formed from adjectives using the first three, at least of these suffixes:

gaŋɔranano	=	gaŋɔra (good) + nano	be happy
gaicianano	=	gaicia (bad) + nano	be sad
geɕiano	=	geɕia (bent) + ano	be untrustworthy

### More Notes on Verbs

#### Use of Narrative and Other Tenses in Stories

With the help of seven versions of the same story written in six different dialects, I have come up with a theory of how Moro combines narrative with past, present and future in a simple story. Note that Moro tenses do not work in an absolute fashion, but relative to each other.

**Past:** This is used at the start of the story to set it in the past, and then subsequently to introduce a new topic, or phase of the story. It is used especially after a word like 'when'. It is also used in a descriptive situation to describe something that was before the action and still is. Note that if an action is introduced in past tense, all actions which happen at the same time are also in past tense.

**Present:** This is mostly used to indicate an that an action is happening at the same time as the previous action. It can also be used after the word for 'when', but in this case it probably means 'while'. The present tense is used in a descriptive situation to describe a new situation, which did not exist before.

**Future:** I don't have many examples of this, but it seems to be used to express intention to do something.

Note that the use of narrative and past depends on the perspective of the story teller. If the story teller perceives the action to break into several phases, the past tense will be used at the beginning of every phase; but if everything seems to be sequential, the past tense will only be used for a new situation, which is not sequential to the rest of the story, but only to the current part.

## Miscellaneous

### Word Order

The basic word order for a Moro clause is SVO.

In the noun phrase, modifiers come after the noun. However it does not always appear after the noun. In a clause it can be displaced to the end of the clause, and in a postposition phrase, it can be displaced to the place after the postposition. This is for emphasis.

Ɖəbarɪda nano doŋra                      Near a big river  
river      near big

Na leda ləŋərracəde nano lwaifia                      Many people gathered around him.  
And people gathered\_him near many

### Concord Agreement

Like all the other Heiban group languages, Moro has concord agreement on verbs, articles and adjectives which agree with the relevant noun. Concord agreement can also be attached to a following noun and in this case it indicates a relationship between the two nouns.

ɛpundr ɛŋaw                      The boat on the water  
boat                      water

ŋəwujənu ŋəmaje                      A parable about a man  
parable                      man

### Prepositions and Postpositions

Moro has both prepositions and postpositions. In all my examples, prepositions attach to nouns, normally the first noun of the preposition phrase, but occasionally to the noun before the preposition phrase.

Gənəŋu nəŋənti lɛpundr. (i- ɛpundr)                      He entered the boat.  
He      entered in boat      in boat

ŋənŋa      nəwujənu      (-ŋa = with)  
talk-with parables

### Negation

I have not looked at negation at all, but I have noticed that if a verb is negated, its form changes in that, even if it isn't in the future tense, it acquires a future tense concord agreement marker.

### Place

Given the name of a place, it is easy to name the people of that place:

Tofəgella                      place  
oʈofəgella                      person from the place  
ləʈofəgella                      people from the place

### Subordinate Clauses

In subordinate clauses, and after some words, like 'if', the first vowel of the verb changes to 'ə'.

Eda gafo gandra.                      The person was sleeping.  
Person was sleeping

Igafidu eða igi gəfo gandra.                      I found the person who was sleeping.  
I found person who was sleeping



gerɲəñwa  
geɾe  
geɾiaŋəno  
gɛfia  
gɛfiɫia  
ginia  
giruwano  
giɾɛʃiano  
gobəla  
gofa  
gofano  
gofaŋəno  
goliano  
gore  
goriaŋəno  
goɾɛʃano  
goɾra  
gubwa  
gudu  
gwaiñanəfən  
gwaiñanəmano  
gwaiñanəñwa  
gwaiñasiano

gwaiñia  
gwaiya  
gwaiyasi  
gwala  
gwondəto

giraɾtu ɲəñwa  
giɾɛʃu  
giɾɛʃu aŋəno  
gɛfəʃu  
gɛfəʃu ilia  
ginəʃu  
giruwəʃu ano  
giɾɛʃəʃu ano  
gubələʃu  
gufəʃu  
gufəʃu ano  
gufəʃu aŋəno  
guləʃu ano  
gurəʃu  
gurəʃu aŋəno  
guɾɛʃəʃu ano  
guɾɛʃəʃu  
gubwəʃu  
gudəʃu  
gwaiñəʃu ɲəfən  
gwaiñəʃu ɲəmano  
gwaiñəʃu ɲəñwa  
gwaiñəʃu siano

gwaiñəʃu  
gwaiyəʃu  
gwaiyəʃu isi  
gwaləʃu  
gwundəcəʃu

gerərrenəñwa  
geɾɛte  
geɾɛte aŋəno  
gɛfiɫiɫid  
gɛfiɫiɫiɫilia  
ginianiɫ  
giruwano  
giɾɛʃiano  
gobələbələdɛd  
gofafɛd  
gofafɛdano  
gofafɛdaŋəno  
goliatai ano  
gorɛtaŋ  
gorɛtaŋaŋəno  
goɾɛʃano  
goɾra  
gubwapiɫ  
gududɛdi  
gwaiñatəl ɲəfən  
gwaiñatəl ɲəmano  
gwaiñatəl ɲəñwa  
gwaiñatəl siano

gwaiñatəl  
gwaiyəsɛd  
gwaiyəsɛd isi  
gwalatai  
gwondəto ndɛdwe

slow  
bitter  
withdrawn  
weak  
cheap  
heavy  
discourage  
foolish  
short  
easily defeated  
weak  
smooth, easy  
deep  
red  
orange  
bent  
big, old  
hot  
dry  
sharp  
powerful  
fast  
indecisive, many-faced, keeps  
changing mind  
many  
hard  
serrated  
long, tall  
strong, difficult

## Appendix B: Stories to Illustrate how Moro does Comparatives

### ḡēmīa herd of cattle

Lomanəḡ igabəḡo nəḡēmīa oro nəḡōpədaide ləmmīala ləməḡ ləḡəjin ləfo iriaya nəḡēmīa com.  
One day I went herd and I met with boys with some three have cows with herd also  
One day I went to herd cattle and I met three boys who were also herding cows.

Ummīa igi ḡəḡurra irīa nəḡīḡwa ḡoḡra na igi ḡəfo dəḡədalo ḡoḡra ḡəməḡḡaḡo orəba ḡakəl.  
Boy who standing cows in front big and who was beside big more than other that.  
The who was standing in front of the cows was bigger than the boy who was standing beside the cows.

Om igi ḡəfo irīa ndurḡu ḡoḡra tətəl ḡəməḡḡaḡo lorəba pred.  
But who was cows behind big most more than others all  
But the boy who was behind the cows was the biggest of all.

Ləmmīa lafo ḡəḡraḡa erəḡ.  
Boys had sticks with in hands  
The boys had sticks in their hands.

Ummīa igi ḡənḡīḡwa, ḡəfo ləḡrala lwala na igi ḡomən, ḡəfo ləḡrala lwaləḡu orəba ḡakəl.  
Boy who the first had stick with long and who another had stick with longer than other that  
The first boy had a long stick, and the next boy had a longer stick.

Om igi ḡəndurḡu, nəḡəḡeḡe ləḡrala lwala tətəl ləməḡḡaḡo lorəba lakəl pred.  
But who the last had with stick with long most more than others that all  
But the last boy had the longest stick.

Iriya yerḡo ḡəndriano ḡəḡəjin ḡədəwo.  
Cows had oxen among three fat  
There were three fat oxen among the cows.

ḡəndri inḡi ḡəmənwa ḡədəwo na inḡi ḡədəbəḡwe ḡədəwo ḡəməḡḡaḡo orəba igi ḡəmənwa.  
Ox which black fat and which white and black fat more than other which black  
The black ox was fat and the black and white ox was fatter than the black one.

Om ḡəndri inḡi ḡore ḡəḡ-ləməḡu ḡədəwo tətəl ḡəməḡḡaḡo lorəba pred.  
But ox which red with no horns fat most more than others all  
But the red ox with no horns was the fattest of all.

### Yēuria Camels

Ləmu leḡo ləməḡ labwertḡo yēuria yerḡəjin.  
Arabs came some rode on camels three  
Some Arabs came riding on three camels.

dēuria dənəḡ dābəcaḡəno dəmaḡəno, na nədərini ḡiwaria netam ḡiḡəraḡaiyo,  
camel one yellow huge and hung necklace on neck beautiful  
One huge yellow camel had a beautiful necklace hanging on its neck.



na dëuria idi damən doriaņəno damaņəno dəmənīaņo orəba igei  
and camel which another coloured red huge more than other that  
And another camel which was red, was bigger than the first one

na nədərini fiwaria netam fiņəraņaiyo fiəmənīaņo orəba iñi fiədëuria dənëifiwa.  
And hung necklace on neck beautiful more than other which for camel first  
and had a more beautiful necklace on its neck.

Orn dëuria idi dōwmən dəmənwaņəno damaņəno tətəl dəmənīaņo lorəba ndəm  
but camel which another black / grey huge most more than others two  
But the other camel which was black, was bigger than the two others

na nədərini fiwaria netam fiņəraņaiyo tətəl fiəmənīaņo lorəba.  
and hung necklace on neck beautiful most more than others  
and the necklace on its neck was more beautiful than the others.

Ĕmu igi gabwərțu dëuria idi dəbəcəaņəno gafo ereniaga nano gwala gəbərano gətaņa,  
Arab who rode on camel which yellow had shirt with near long wide dirty  
The arab who was riding the yellow camel had a long, wide and dirty shirt on,

na igi gabwərțu dëuria idi doriaņəno nəņəfe ereniaga nano com  
and who rode on camel which red had shirt with near also  
And the arab riding on the red camel also had a shirt on

gwala gəbərano gətaņa gəmənīaņo orəba gëmu gakəl  
long wide dirty more than other arab that  
and his shirt was longer, wider, and dirtier than that of the other arab.

Orn Ĕmu igi gabwərțo dëuria dəmənwaņəno nəņəfete ereniaga gwala gəbərano gətaņa tətəl gəmənīaņo  
but arab who rode on camel black / grey had shirt with long wide dirty most more than  
But the arab who rode on the black camel had a shirt which was the longest, widest and dirtiest of them

lorəba lakəl pred  
others that all  
all.

Dëuria idi dəbəcəaņəno dapo lanđe ldërwa lwaifiņa linia  
camel which yellow carried loads on back many heavy  
The yellow camel carried many heavy loads on its back,

na idi doriaņəno nədape lanđe lwaifiņa linia ləmənīaņo lanđe lədëuria idei.  
and which red carried loads many heavy more than loads for camel that  
and the red camel carried heavier loads than the first camel.

Orn dëuria idi dəmənwaņəno nədape lanđe lwaifiņa linia tətəl ləmənīaņo lanđe leyëuria yakəl ițəm.  
but camel which black / grey carried loads many heavy most more than loads for camels those two.  
But the black camel carried heavier loads than the other two.