

The main focus of this consultation was on investigating the text, sentence, and clause structure in natural texts and how this relates to punctuation and to translation. This includes the use of subject, object, and word order, so as to give structure to the information that needs to get across (including topic, focus, and the use of pronominal elements). One of the mentioned problem areas was reported speech and speech within speech. There was also the desire to understand the significance of attitude marking particles as well as connectives. It is important to understand their meaning and the places where they are used (sometimes these may merge), since this has implications on spelling (punctuation & word breaks) as well as translation. Finally the participants brought some precise questions about certain words in their language and the rendering of English words with their words.

Clause and sentence structure

Connectives

Connectives are used to connect distinct units of speech. Conjunctions are connectives. For example, the connective “and” can combine noun phrases or clauses, as in “Paul and his brother” or “Paul went to school and his mother prepared lunch,” respectively.

If you have more than one clause, you can combine them into a sentence. When you combine clauses, at least one clause in a sentence is a main clause, which can also stand by itself. In the second example above two main clauses have been combined, “Paul went to school” and “His mother prepared lunch.” These are just two things that happened. If you change the connective, you may express a temporal relation, as “Paul went to school while his mother prepared lunch.” In this sentence the connective “while” expresses simultaneous action. The clause “while his mother prepared lunch” is a subordinate clause, since the connective is changing it in a way that it cannot stand by itself any more (either something would be missing or the meaning would be changed – in the first example there would not be a change in meaning if you would leave the “and” and say “Paul went to school. His mother prepared lunch.”) So, we have main clauses and subordinate clauses, and we have different connectives for both.

In Mitto stories there are only very few clauses without any connective. The main clauses of the story line have the connective *namá*, other main clauses are added with *na* or *ná*, and subordinate clauses have their own connectives. In the following, first the main clause connectives are introduced, then some connectives of subordinate clauses. All the examples in this chapter are taken from stories.

Main clause connectives

The connective *namá* is only used in main clauses, since it is showing the events of the story line. The tone (melody) denotes past tense. If the events are timeless (in procedural text, or if the narrator wants to point out that a certain behaviour is expected to happen unto the future), the tenseless form *namá* is used. Examples:

Goroŋa *namá* jaŋile, *namás* in dió kaŋj̄ âl wai, *namá* nyéddiŋ k̄ur̄l áláŋ ... – “So the frogs saw him, and they thought that he was dead. So they all came out from the lake to ...”
– here several main clauses follow each other and are connected with *namá*. The verbs

of the main clauses are *jagile* – “they saw”, *kaiŋ-si* – “they had”, and *kurul* – “they get/got out”. The *namá* is past tense, as well as the verb forms (only in the last one, *kurul*, the past tense and the tenseless form are the same).

Na dogólá dokkéŋa kila ál ..., *námás* gal toŋ tog'íŋ dió kisol, *námás* toŋ-sí utú kaye kí dogólân dió. – “And (for) the children who ..., they collect(ed) them in one hut and set fire on the hut with the children inside.” – This sentence is part of the historical record of a war in 1988. Somewhere in the middle of this record the event-line connective *namá* changes to *námá* and later back to *namá*. The passages with *námá* were narrating events that were happening again at the time of narration, and the narrator indicates with the tenseless connectives that their enemies would always act thike this. The verb forms in these main clauses would also get the tenseless form, though in this sentence the verbs do not differentiate tenseless from past tense. (As an aside: the subordinate relative clause *ál ...* uses the past tense form.)

The connective *na* functions like the English “and”, connecting units that are equal (either just main clauses or just subordinate clauses of one type, as well as noun phrases and the like).

Examples:

kwa kí majiraŋ *na* dogólân – “people with students *and* with (their) children” – here *na* is connecting the nouns *majira* – “students” and *dogólá* – “children”. The *-ŋ* is a case marker belonging to *kí ...ŋ* – “with”.

álân koro baa *na* goroŋa amí – “in order to (álân) drink water *and* eat frogs” – here *na* is connecting subordinate clauses (both the purpose of the preceding main clause).

Koro koom *na* loyel-si! – “(It) is leaking water *and* swelling” – here *na* is connecting two main clauses. The subject “it” is not explicitly mentioned but can be seen in the form of the verbs. Koro is the object of koom.

Unlike *na*, the connective *ná* is only used for connecting clauses. One use is for a certain subordinate clause that will be explained later. Here we deal with *ná* connecting equal units, which can either be main clauses or subordinate clauses of the same type. This connective cannot easily be translated, since there is no equivalent in English. It is connecting simultaneous actions or even actions that merge into one. Examples:

goroŋa-sí kí kíeŋ dogólân *namá* nyéddiŋ pui *ná* amí. – “and the frogs with their children, all of them were killed and eaten.” Or, “and the frogs with their children, he killed and ate all of them.” – here *ná* is connecting main clauses, two actions, the killing and the eating of frogs, that happened together.

ná asila kúul álân kuy êl *ná* riíŋó *nás* kusuŋa'ŋ káwlal. (22-3.2) – “(and) they were ready waiting for plenty of rain to come *and* that they would begin sowing.” – here *ná* is connecting subordinate clauses, the purpose (*álân ...*) of the “sitting ready” (*asila kúul*). This purpose (of their sitting, the events they were waiting for) are a good rain to come (*kuy êl ná riíŋó*) and their start of sowing (*kusuŋa'ŋ káwlal*). Those two actions would happen simultaneously, which cannot really expressed with “and” (which would be rendered with *na* instead of *ná*). (As an aside: the first *ná* in this example is again connecting main clauses, and the second *ná* is explained below.)

The previous examples show simultaneous actions in a main clause and in a subordinate clause. The following are three examples of merging clauses.

1- (from the example above) ... **kuy êl *ná* riíŋó** – “... for **plenty of rain to come**” – here *ná* is used to signify the amount of rain, connecting two clauses that basically mean the same. This kind of duplication means “a lot” or “very much”. A more literal translation may be, “rain (may) come (and) rain” or “rain (may) come raining”.

(here another example of this kind of emphasis, this time a main clause) **yé namás saí ná á kawŋiba**. – “He was the only one who survived”, literally, “and he survived (and) was not killed”

2- ..., namá **ooŋo ná jaan** namá jaan, álán – “and he **waited for a long time**, in order that” Or more literally, “and he **sat waiting** and waited in order that ...” – In this sentence the first verb *ooŋo* – “sit” is used for expressing the *long time* that he was waiting, emphasised by even using the verb *jaan* again in a clause connected with *namá*. The verb *ooŋo* – “sit” here does not really have its meaning “sit” any more, but the grammatical meaning of a durative.

In English you can say things like “They brought him from the village to town”, using prepositions for the places of origin and destination of a movement. This is not possible in Mitto. Each of the expressions (carrying someone, place from where, and place where to) need their own verb. The following examples illustrates this.

3- Asábá eŋé *ná* ittíŋ baw'íŋ karra karra paagul, téémé – “As they carried him little far from the water, Teeme” – here *ná* is connecting two actions into one, *eŋé-si*, “they carried him”, and *ittíŋ baw'íŋ karra karra paagul*, “they arrived at little far from the lake”, because they need an own verb each for carrying (someone or something) and for the destination (to (a place) little far from the water).

Jaaruŋa aw namá keéŋe ná jutá kaagul. – “The two companions went to the forest.” – here *ná* is connecting two directions, *keéŋe*, “went (from where they were)”, and *jutá kaagul*, “to the forest” (literally, “they arrived in the forest”. The location of the verb *keéŋe* is the source of movement (where from), and the location of *kaagul* is the destination (where to). Mitto does not have prepositions to express these directions.

The connective **wala** functions like the English “or” for connecting positive clauses.

Examples:

Etté álán dúóŋ joo, **wala** níŋ joo nás kuu koro janí. – “Today you have to (either) go herding, *or* you will go to water the cows.” – here **wala** is connecting the clauses *álán dúóŋ joo* – “you will/have to go herding” and *joo níŋ nás kuu koro janí* – “you will go giving the cows water” as a choice of task the addressee has to do that day.

Ká ay síŋ iw yé âl niw-ii **wala** âl duó dee-ii? – “How can/will/shall I know whether he/she is a female or a male person?” – here **wala** is connecting the clauses *yé âl niw-ii* – “she is a female (I have no evidence)” and *(yé) âl duó dee-ii* – “he is a male person (I have no evidence)”, which in English are noun phrases (the copula is not repeated in English, but in Mitto). The particle *âl* is one of the attitude particles explained below, here rendered with (I have no evidence).

(note: The connectives usually draw the verbal clitics to themselves. The forms *nán* and *nân* are results of that. In the consultation the speakers said that *nán* is *ná* with the future (irrealis) marker *níŋ*, never *na*. We did not talk about *nân*. It would be the same, only with irrealis past or continuous instead of future, which is with *nîŋ*. In the stories it is glossed as “and”, which would be *na*. So, I am not sure if it is *ná* or *na* with *nîŋ*.)

(note: There is another connective, *naŋ*, used in listings like *na*. It is glossed “and also”, as it is used to complete a list.)

The particle **walá** is only used in negative clauses. It may replace *ná*, or emphasise the negation. Examples:

Yé Utodayíŋ namá kũru núŋí jáwí ná jáará jágíla namá **dirrig ooŋo walá Baw-sí ás kwăba**. – “There Utodaing saw a leopard in the tree above them, and **he kept quiet without telling Baw**. (literally: He, Utodaing, then looked up into the tree (and) saw a leopard, and he (Utodaing) sat quietly (*and*) did not tell it to Baw.)” – Here the

function of *walá* may be the same as the *ná* with two clauses of the same meaning for emphasis like in the examples 1 above.

Na ila ayé'ŋ dió *walá* kuy á riŋoba. – “In that year there was no rain *at all*.” (literally: “And inside of that year rain (kuy) did not rain (á riŋoba) *at all*.”) – The place of *walá* in the clause structure of this example is the same as other main clause connectives (*namá, ná*) would take.

The word *álbá* may be used in different ways. One is to show the beginning of a new story or a new section of a story, as in

Asi díg kí weél, *álbá* téémé appâ kuy kurrâ díg kéŋá, ná duur saa soŋá tǔ. – “Once (upon a time) in the rainy season, there was long necked hornbill who was very hungry.” – This is the beginning of a story and *álbá* is used to mark this beginning.

Other main clause connectives are *dog* (also/too) and *maray / marray* (but), which function like the English.

Subordinate clause connectives

There are three different kinds of subordinate clauses: Clauses within a noun phrase (these are relative clauses, they describe the noun), clauses that replace an obligatory constituent of another clause (like the subject or the object – these are complement clauses), and clauses that replace adverbs (adverbial clauses). Again, there are different kinds of adverbial clauses, namely temporal clauses, conditional clauses, purpose clauses, and others.

Relative clauses

There are rules where you can place the subordinate clauses. In Mitto the relative clause is placed within the noun phrase, at its end.

Na dogólá dokkéŋa **kila áł kíeŋ aala perra kiŋi ná kundie**, námás gal toŋ tog'ŋ dió kísol, – “And (for) the children **who were left (behind with) their relatives scattered**, they collect(ed) them in one hut,”, literally, “and the small children, those which their relatives were scattered (and) left them, ...” – here the relative clause *áł kíeŋ aala perra kiŋi ná kundie* is describing the demonstrative *kila*, which is an apposition to the small children *dogólá dokkéŋa*. The whole expression from *dogólá dokkéŋa* to *kundie* is the topic noun phrase for the main clause (in an English sentence it would be the subject).

ila ayé kéŋá áł gis ká waa. – “It is **the year which I told you**.” – here the expression *ila ayé áł gis ká waa* is the complement noun phrase to the copula *kéŋá*. In Mitto, long object and complement noun phrases are often interrupted by the verb, having the head noun before and the rest after the verb. Thus, relative clauses often follow the verb, since they make a noun phrase very long.

There are rules where you can place the subordinate clauses. In Mitto the relative clause is placed within the noun phrase, at its end.

ila yáa namá gal **kí ila duó áł Saába nyăŋa** kwě kaiŋ nás appâ-ii nás Ogoraŋ karíá, nás – “Now, this woman had a grown-up child with this man who had gone to the East, (a child) called Ogorang,” – here the expression *ila yáa kí ila duó áł Saába nyăŋa* (literally “this woman with this man who had gone to the east”) is the subject of the verb *kaiŋ-si* – “they have”. The topic of the sentence, *ila yáa*, “this woman”, is doubled by its pronoun *yé* for marking a new section. There is an emphasis on the second noun phrase, (*kí*) *ila duó áł Saába nyăŋa*, “(with) this man who had gone to the East”, marked with *gal* for drawing the attention of the audience before the noun

phrase, and the *-s(i)* of *kaḷiḡ-si* attached to its end. Since this noun phrase includes the relative clause *ál Saába nyǎḡa*, this attachment is to the verb *nyǎḡa*, the last word of the relative clause.

Such attachments to the end of a relative clause are not common in the stories, but occur more often in possessive constructions of Scripture, as with the case marker *'ḡ* in Romans 15:1,

Kí alá seejǎi-lé kakkíré kaḡ, in lónj álán **kila kwa alá seejǎi-lé nyokké ge'ḡ** nyukkiḡa-sí kirmel. – “We who are strong in faith, it seems that we need to endure the weaknesses (*nyukkiḡa*) of those people (*kila kwa*) who are weak in faith (*alá seejǎi-lé nyokké ge*)” – here the *kwa* (people) possess the *nyukkiḡa* (weaknesses), marked by the possessive marker *'ḡ* at the end of the complete noun phrase *kila kwa alá seejǎi-lé nyokké ge'ḡ*, (including the relative clause *alá seejǎi-lé nyokké ge*).

Complement clauses

Complement clauses are clauses that replace the core constituents (subject, object) of a clause. For example in the English sentence, “That Mother cooked fish all the time made Mary not to like it any more.” Here the subject of the verb “made” is the whole clause “That Mother cooked fish all the time”, and “the lion came closer” is the object of the verb “saw” in the sentence “He saw that the lion came closer.” These two sentences are complement clauses in English.

In Mitto we have not found any subject complement clauses. Instead of a clause the Mitto is using a verbal noun with a possessive construction, as in

Kininiḡ'ḡ wǎy tárrá ála á-iiba. – “**The killing of such things is not** difficult.” – *wǎy* is a verbal noun, and its object *kininiḡ* is put as a possessor.

There are several object complement clauses, for example in the story of *Téémé na Goronja* and *Baru'ḡ deer waar kuḡo*, respectively.

Téémé, alábá **jagila ná yeeḡ baw'ḡḡ karra karra eḡé ná bǎw waar áḡ píḡialba**, namás ... – “Hornbill (bird), when he saw that they were now far from the water and could not go back into the water quickly, then ...” – the object of the verb *jagila* (he saw) is the double clause *yeeḡ baw'ḡḡ karra karra eḡé ná bǎw waar áḡ píḡialba*. It is introduced with the connective *ná* and follows the verb.

When we were talking about main clause connectives, we introduced *ná* as a connective for equal units. The *ná* in the middle of the complement clause is such a connective. However, the first *ná* in this example is different. It is a subordinate connective used for complement clauses, and these clauses are following the verb, as in the example. The following is another example of a complement clause.

... namaḡ **sḡḡ tiiḡ ná s dééḡ bari éla**. – “... until he would accept to bring his gun / that he brings his gun.” – the object of the verb *tiiḡ* (he accept) is the clause *dééḡ bari éla-si* (“he brings/brought his gun”). It is again introduced with the connective *ná* and follows the verb.

The same kind of construction is not only used for replacing the object of a verb (what the Hornbill saw in the above sentence), but also for replacing the location of a movement verb as in the following examples.

(ná) **keéḡé ná kḡeḡ ráyḡtá kusunol**. – “(and) they went to sow their fields.” – here the “place” where they went is the sowing of their fields, and in the following example the “place” where he went is the complaining to the king.

namá **nyǎḡa ná ábu-lé daḡimiḡ piá**. – “so he went complaining to the king.” – again the “place” where he went was the “complaining to the king”.

(Examples for

The complement (object or place) can also be represented with a demonstrative before the verb and a *ná*-clause following the verb. Examples:

Solónja namá ***in kawŋie ná duó bi duó*** abá jutá kummé ***bâŋ kiriwe***. – “Then the Arabs turned to killing every person whom they found in the forest.” Or (more literally), “Then the Arabs turned to *this that they were (just) killing every person* whom they found in the forest.” – *kawŋie* is a movement verb (changing the direction of a movement to another destination), and its direction “to” is represented by the demonstrative *in* (this) with the complement clause *ná duó bi duó bâŋ kiriwe*. In this clause the relative clause *abá jutá kummé* (whom they found in the forest) is embedded.

(Innálanj namá) deer ***it poi ná baru'ŋ kwa nyét ... bâŋ nyét mađila-lé káwi, luul na tóo ná sŋj ráytá kaane***. – (literally) “(This way) the war fell/dropped on *this that all people ... stayed continuously in the lowlands, guarding the fields day and night.*” – Literally, the war (*deer*) is falling or dropping on “this” (*it*), and “this” is specified in the *ná*-clause (here marked bold). The whole construction is describing the kind of war, how it became.

((Examples for replacing the complement of a copula with a complement clause may be in the stories of *Zarrig* (16-1.5) and *Póté kí Mirikindí* (8.4), respectively.

Ari lá kee ná innân pttó jaŋ? – “Is there something you are intensely looking at?” – If *ál* instead of *ná* would be used, it would be a relative clause “Is there a thing that/which you are looking at intensely”.

Yé namá in jáwí, “Kin kúŋj kŋj ge ná ulmeli.” – “He then answered, ‘These are my eyes shining.’” – I do not have a translation of this sentence, this translation is my guess, and it needs speakers to look at the context, what is really said here.))

A similar structure is used with speech act verbs¹. A speech can be treated as the object, like in – “(... ná) “*yaan kwă*.” ((...), he said, “Fine.”). This form is only used for short speech. Reported speech usually has the demonstrative *in* before the speech act verb and the speech following it, as in the following examples. In these examples the speech act verb is underlined, the demonstrative bold underlined, and the speech bold.

Namás ***in kwă***, “***Álán Sudân'ŋj ábakuri jaa***” – “Then he said that he shall appoint a leader in Sudan.” Or “Then he said, ‘***I will appoint a leader in Sudan.***’” –

Kééŋ aala namá ***in kŋŋŋl***, “***Kaa kee ná lóŋiti?***” – “So her family asked (her), ‘***What are you seeing?***’” –

Naŋ-si dog ***in kiwé*** ***Zarrig'ŋj belé ál see kéŋá***. – “And they also learned (that) ***Zarrig's words were the truth.***” –

The difference of reported speech to complement clauses is the lack of the connective *ná*. The report marker *ál* may be used instead, as in the last example. It is described in another chapter below.

For future or irrealis (something that has not happened), *álán* can be used instead of *ná* (in complement clauses) or *ál* (in speech). The following gives one example each, respectively.

(ná) ***kawriŋie álán dééŋ belé kelammía***, – “(and) they refused to listen to his words.” (literally “they refused that they would listen to his words”) – here the connective *álán* is used, because the listening did not happen.

¹ Speech act verbs are verbs like “say”, “reply”, “ask”, “think”, “shout”, etc., which introduce any kind of speech or thought.

(ná) in *kwă*, “**álán jutá oo.**” – “(and) he said, ‘**I shall go to the bush.**’ ” – here the connective *álán* is used, because the action of the speech is future for the speaker (though it is past for the narrator of the story).

Adverbial clauses

Adverbial clauses are clauses that replace adverbs. For example in the English sentence, “When Peter left the house, he forgot his keys.” the clause “When Peter left the house” gives the time for the main clause “He forgot his keys.” You could replace it with the adverb “yesterday”, as in “Yesterday Peter forgot his keys.”

Likewise the Mitto has adverbial clauses, and the connective tells which kind it is. For example, the “when” in English marks a temporal clause, because it tells the time. The following are the Mitto connectives for adverbial clauses that are glossed in the Fieldworks file, and also the relative clause connective *ăl* is included in the list. The list is in alphabetical order.

Since the connectives often take the verbal clitics, they may occur in different forms (for example, *abá* may have the forms *abái* (*abá+gi*), *abáis* (*abá+gi+si*), or *abás* (*abá+si*), and *álán* may have the forms *áílán* (*álán+gi*), *áisán* (*álán+gi+si*), or *ásán* (*álán+si*), and *álân* is like *álán* with past continuous tone, also *áílân*, *áisân*, and *ásân*). The verbal clitic for future (or anything that has not happened, irrealis) is *nín*, and it is included in *álán*.

abá.....if, when

adid.....while

ăl (*ála*).....that/which/who (rel.) (the future form *ălán* is simplified as either *álán* or *alán*, and with the past continuous / irrealis form *alân*)

âl (*ála*).....report (this becomes *álán* for future and *álân* for past continuous / irrealis), takes the place of a connective, but its meaning is more like the attitude markers, which are explained in a separate chapter. Thus, though it is mentioned here, it is explained in the attitude marker section.

álán.....to / in order to (purpose) or the above (rel./report +FUT)

ălbá (*albá*, *alábá*)....when

ăl mîn.....as soon as, by the time, when (start of action), since (other spelling (not correct) is *ălmîn*)

amá / *amán* / *amín* / *ammán* / *ammín* / *annaŋ* / *annîn* if, when (like *abá*)

ati.....if

idííŋ, *idííŋ*....because

mîn (*mŋ*)....from, since, from that time

As can be seen from the meaning of these connectives, *adid*, *ălbá*, *ăl mîn*, and *mîn* introduce temporal clauses, *abá* and *amá* / *amán* / *amín* / *ammán* / *ammín* / *annaŋ* / *annîn* are used for conditional clauses and temporal (not entirely conditional), *ati* introduces conditional clauses, purpose clauses are introduced with *álán*, and reason with *idííŋ* / *idííŋ*.

Clause structure in isolated sentences & linguistic terminology

In order to explain the terminology and show some basic differences between English and Mitto, we put the following English sentences and their translation, each with linguistic names:

The first three sentences show the word order in a one-clause sentence with simple topic-comment structure (these are the most common clauses – they are used if there is no special focus on anything). The topic names what you are talking about and the comment is what you are saying about the topic. These are sentences in isolation, and the following description applies to such simple sentences only. When you join sentences in a text, additional rules apply, which make the matter more complex.

In English the verb always comes between the subject and the object, the subject is the topic, and the comment starts with the verb. If the patient (usually the object) becomes the topic that you want to talk about, a passive construction is used to make it the subject.

In Mitto the verb comes at the end of the clause. As in English, the topic comes first, but the patient never becomes the subject. In Mitto, if the patient becomes the topic, only the word order is changed and the patient can be identified by the object marker.

Paul	gave	his brother John	a new book	(sentence / clause)
agent	(verb)	recipient	patient	(role, meaning of structure)
subject	(verb)	2nd object	1st object	(grammatical function in clause)
noun	verb	noun phrase	noun phrase	(grammatical category)
topic	<	comment	>	(information structure)

Pául	dééŋ bára	Yáaye-sí	dombore	íní	(sentence / clause)
agent	recipient		patient	(verb)	(role, meaning of structure)
subject	marked object		object	(verb)	(grammatical function in clause)
noun	noun phrase (obj.)		noun	verb	(grammatical category)
topic	<	comment	>		(information structure)

Paul	went	to the garden	yesterday	(sentence / clause)
agent		location (direction)	time	(role, meaning)
subject		adjunct	adjunct	(grammatical function in clause)
noun	verb	prepositional phrase	adverb	(grammatical category)
topic	<	comment	>	(information structure)

Pául	kaní	dáári	nyanga	(sentence / clause)
agent	time	location	(verb, direction)	(role, meaning)
subject	adjunct	locative		(grammatical function in clause)
noun	adverb	noun (loc.)	verb	(grammatical category)
topic	<	comment	>	(information structure)

The snake	was killed	by Paul	(sentence / clause)	
patient	(verb)	agent	(role, meaning)	
subject	(verb)	oblique	(grammatical function in clause)	
noun	verb	prepositional phrase	(grammatical category)	
topic	<	comment	>	(information structure)

núúm-sí	Pául	pui	(sentence / clause)	
patient	agent	(verb)	(role, meaning)	
marked object	subject	(verb)	(grammatical function in clause)	
noun (obj.)	noun	verb	(grammatical category)	
topic	<	comment	>	(information structure)

The following is an example of two clauses joined to a sentence. In both languages you have a continued topic, and *the topic is not mentioned again in the second clause (elipsis)*, but in English this has to be the subject, while in Mitto it is the object in the first and the subject in the second clause.

The snake was hit by Paul and bit John. (sentence)
 patient (verb, pass.) agent (con.) (verb) patient (role, meaning)
 subject (verb) prep. phrase (con.) (verb) object (grammatical function)
 topic < comment > < comment > (information structure)

núúm-sí Pául taan namá Yáaye-sí essa. (sentence / clause)
 patient agent (verb) (con.) recipient (verb) (role, meaning of structure)
 object subject (verb) (con.) object (verb) (grammatical function)
 topic < comment > < comment > (information structure)

The following is another example of two clauses joined to a sentence, this time the topic not continued. If the second clause has a different topic from the first, in English the topic follows the connective while in Mitto it precedes the connective. Further, the object in the second clause needs to be mentioned with a pronoun in English, while in Mitto there must not be a pronoun, if it is the same patient.

Paul hit the snake, and John killed it. (sentence)
 agent (verb) patient (con.) agent (verb) patient (role, meaning)
 subject (verb) object (con.) subject (verb) object (grammatical function)
 topic < comment > topic < comment > (information structure)

Pául núúm taan, Yáaye namá pui. (sentence / clause)
 agent patient (verb) agent (con.) (verb) (role, meaning of structure)
 subject object (verb) subject (con.) (verb) (grammatical function)
 topic < comment > < comment > (information structure)

In the previous sentences you have topic-comment structure, a topic what you talk about and a comment what you say about the topic. Now you may like to answer a specific question, as “Who killed the snake?” In the answer sentence the part which answers this question is the focus. If you want to put emphasis on the focus, you can use a construction like the following. This construction is very similar in both languages, as the focus is fronted with the copula. Only, in English the topic is put into a relative clause, while in Mitto it is a simultaneous clause (like “It is/was John (and) he killed the snake”). This construction is called cleft construction.

It was John who killed the snake. (sentence)
 agent (con.) (verb) patient (role, meaning)
 complement (con.) (verb) object (grammatical function)
 focus < topic > (information structure)

Yáaye -ii ná núúm pui. (sentence / clause)
 agent (con.) patient (verb) (role, meaning of structure)
 complement (con.) object (verb) (grammatical function)
 focus < topic > (information structure)

You can also express focus without cleft construction. In English speaking this is usually done by emphasis, and an exclamation mark may point that out in writing. Here are some examples from the Mitto (still, texts translated from isolated English sentences). The basic sentence is “Paul heard the story from/of John.” The clitic -si/-s belongs to the verb “hear”. The placement of this clitic is significant for the information structure.

Pául Yáaye-lés aldí kelamí. (sentence / clause)
 agent author patient (verb) (role, meaning of structure)
 subject locative object (verb) (grammatical function)

topic	<	comment	>	(information structure)
Pául		Yáaye'η-si aldí		kelamí.
agent		patient		(verb)
subject		object (possessive construction)		(verb)
topic	<	comment	>	(information structure)

(answer the question “What happened to Paul”. The clitic is attached to the first word of the comment.)

Yáaye'η aldí		Pául-si		kelamí.	(sentence / clause)
patient		agent		(verb)	(role, meaning of structure)
object		subject		(verb)	(grammatical function)
topic	<	comment	>		(information structure)

(answers the question “What happened to John’s story”. The clitic is again attached to the first word of the comment.)

Pául	in aldí-sí	Yáaye'η-si	úúη	kelamí.	(sentence / clause)
agent	patient	possessor		(verb)	(role, meaning of structure)
subject	object	(possessive noun)		(verb)	(grammatical function)
		< focus >			(information structure)

(answers the question “Whose story did Paul hear?” (Who is the owner?) – Pául in aldí-sí kiiη-si úúη kelamí? The clitic is attached to the focus.)

Pául	ila aldí-sí	Yáaye-lés		kelamí.	(sentence / clause)
agent	patient	author		(verb)	(role, meaning of structure)
subject	object	locative		(verb)	(grammatical function)
		< focus >			(information structure)

(answers the question “From whom did Paul hear the/this story?” (Who is the narrator?) – Pául ila aldí-sí kii-lés kelamí? The clitic is again attached to the focus.)

Yáaye'η úúη-ii ná		Pául	in aldí	kelamí.	(sentence / clause)
facilitator	(con.)	agent	patient	(verb)	(role, meaning of structure)
complement	(con.)	subject	object	(verb)	(grammatical function)
focus	<	topic	>		(information structure)

(John was the facilitator that Paul could hear the story. He may or may not be the narrator.)

The following examples show how the place of the clitic changes with the focus (in English done with emphasis through intonation):

Pául-si Yáaye-lé ila aldí kelamí. (*Paul* heard the story from John)
< focus >

Pául **Yáaye-lés** ila aldí kelamí. (Paul heard the story from *John*)
< focus >

Pául Yáaye-lé **ila aldís** kelamí. (Paul heard *this story* from John)
< focus >

Pául Yáaye-lé ila aldí **kel-si amí.** (Paul *heard* the story from John)
< focus > (He did not *read* the story, but *heard* it)

If you add connectives like *namá*, the variety of clause structures get restricted. The moving of the focus by different placement of the verbal clitics is not possible, because the connective *namá* is drawing it to itself (topic-comment structure – only the cleft construction is still possible). Nevertheless, there is no such restriction with attitude markers. A very common marker to draw the attention of the audience is *gal*. The following shows the placement of *gal* in the above sentences. If these sentences are compared with the above ones, it can be seen that, except in the cleft construction, the *gal* is taking the clitic and is placed before the word that is carrying the clitic in the sentences above.

Pául	<i>gal-si</i>	Yáaye-lé	aldí	kelamí.	(Paul heard the/a story from John.)
topic	<	comment	>		
Pául	<i>gal-si</i>	Yáaye'ŋ	aldí	kelamí.	(Paul heard John's story.)
topic	<	comment	>		
Yáaye'ŋ aldí	<i>gal-si</i>	Pául	kelamí.		(John's story was heard by Paul.)
topic	<	comment	>		
Pául in aldí-sí	<i>gal-si</i>	Yáaye'ŋ	úúŋ	kelamí.	(Paul heard the story of <i>John</i> . (owner))
	<	focus	>		
Pául ila aldí-sí	<i>gal-si</i>	Yáaye-lé	kelamí.		(Paul heard the story from <i>John</i> . (narrator))
	<	focus	>		
Yáaye'ŋ úúŋ-ii	nás	Pául	<i>gal</i>	in aldí	kelamí. (It was <i>John</i> whose story Paul heard.)
focus	<	topic	>		
<i>gal-si</i> Pául	Yáaye-lé	ila aldí	kelamí.		(<i>Paul</i> heard the story from John)
< focus >					
Pául	<i>gal-si</i>	Yáaye-lé	ila aldí	kelamí.	(Paul heard the story from <i>John</i>)
	< focus >				
Pául	Yáaye-lé	<i>gal-si</i>	ila aldí	kelamí.	(Paul heard <i>this story</i> from John)
		< focus >			
Pául	Yáaye-lé	ila aldí	<i>gal-si</i>	kelamí.	(Paul <i>heard</i> the story from John)
			< focus >		

Clause and sentence structure in natural text

In natural stories² there is hardly any clause without a connective, since the main clauses of the story line have the connective *namá*, other main clauses are added with *na* or *ná*, and subordinate clauses have their own connectives. As was explained with examples above, the connective *na* functions like the English “and”, connecting units that are equal (either just main clauses or just subordinate clauses of one type, as well as noun phrases and the like). The connective *ná* cannot easily be translated. It is connecting simultaneous actions or even actions that merge into one, as explained above. The connective *namá* is showing the events of the story line. The tone shows past tense. If the events are timeless (in procedural text, or if the narrator wants to point out that a certain behaviour is expected to happen unto the future), the tenseless form *namá* is used.

² The texts in Fieldworks are all either dialogues or narrative (stories), and one or two procedural. We do not have expository or hortatory texts yet, which we would need to investigate about structures that would be similar to Romans.

In order to see the structure of clauses and sentences, we took printed stories and used colour pencils to mark certain words according to their categories. We underlined the verbs in light blue and circled all the clitics of the verbs with the same colour. For the nouns we used a colour coding for the characters of the story (the protagonist, the antagonist, and each important character got his/her own colour, then there was a colour for “other” and a colour for “location”), like in the picture below. We used these colours with an underline under each noun phrase referring to the respective character. Since each verb in Mitto has a reference to the subject and to the object, we used the colours of the participants to mark which is which: the subject reference was circled on the verb (in the particular colour of the participant) while the object reference was marked with a bar above the verb. Further, the subordinate clauses were coloured with a triangle around the connective and an underline under the clause. Different colours were used for different types of clauses (for example light green for purpose clauses, “in order to ...”). The main clause connectives just got a triangle of their colour (without underline).

The following picture shows an example of a coloured natural text. The main characters in this story are the *téémé* (“hornbill”, dark green) and the *goroŋa* (“frogs”, red).

he was dead.

3.1 *Goroŋa* *namá* *jagile* , *namás* *in* *díó* *kajj* *âl*
 frogs then+PST 3pl (things) saw and then+app (pst) this inside 3pl are/have that (report)

wai , *namá* *nyéddij* *kural* *áláj* *bawe* *nás* *karra*
 3sg died then+PST all (of) 3pl.went out to/in order to 3pl (things) carry CON+app far/away

jiol , *ásáj* *á* *máájúlaba*
 3pl (things) go in order to not (things) smell not

When the frogs saw him, they thought that he was dead. They all came out from the lake to take him far from the water to keep away the bad smell of the dead.

3.2 *Asá* *bá* *eŋé* *ná* *ittij* *baw'ij* *karra* *karra* *paagul*
 as+app just 3pl (things) went verb conn a bit/little of lake far/away far/away 3pl (things) reach

As they carried him little far from the water,

3.3 *téémé* *namá* *kájf* *dokkéŋa* *dijâ* *paálf* *ná* *lóó*
 hornbill (bird) then+PST eyes small.pl some 3sg open to place/invironment

pilinyipilinyij *law*
 action of opening the eyes 3sg look (ipfv)

Teeme opened very small eyes to see how far they have gone.

make action out of 2

not included in action

In this section of the story, the *goroŋa* are the topic of the first sentence 3.1. Thus, the noun *goroŋa* is placed before the first connective *namá*. The *namá* is showing that this first clause of the paragraph is a main clause that belongs to the story line. In the rest of the sentence the *goroŋa* are not explicitly mentioned any more, but referred to by the 3rd person plural forms of the verbs. Only in the third main clause the quantifier *nyéddij* – “all” is used to refer to them. (Remember, every clause with *namá* is a main clause of the story line.) There are three subordinate clauses in this sentence, *âl wai* (“that he died” is a kind of speech what the frogs said to themselves), *áláj bawe nás karra jiol* – “to carry him far away” is the purpose for all the frogs to come out, and *ásáj á máájúlaba* – “in order that he would not smell” is the purpose (within the purpose clause) why the frogs want to carry him away.

The second sentence, 3.2 to 3.3, starts with a subordinate clause, a temporal clause with the connective *alábá* – “as” (the verb *eŋé* needs a *-si* for the meaning “carry”, and *alábá* plus *-si* becomes *asábá*). The topic of this subordinate clause are still the *goroŋa*, and the continued topic from the preceding sentence is only referred to in the 3rd person plural verb form, as is a

general rule for continued topic. However, the topic of the clause changes for the main clause to *téémé*. Therefore, *téémé* has to precede the main clause connective *namá*. This is a pattern, if the subordinate clause precedes the main clause. If the topic of the main clause is different from the preceding clause and from the preceding sentence, it is put before the main clause connective *namá*. The Mitto agreed to mark the break between the subordinate clause and the main clause with a comma in such combinations.

Here is the sentence with the correct spelling and punctuation, the connectives in **bold** and the verbs *italic*:

Asábá ené ná ittíŋ baw'íŋ karra karra *paagul*, *téémé namá* kúŋí dokkéŋa diŋâ *paalí ná* lóó pilinypilinyiŋ *law*.

Both, the subordinate (temporal) and the main clause, have two parts each. These parts are connected with *ná*. So, we have two clauses combined into one adverbial subordinate clause and two clauses combined into one main clause. In the first the connective *ná* combines the two verbs *ené-si* and *paagul* into one action “carry (him) to”. The second *ná* combines two simultaneous actions in the main clause, represented by the clauses *kúŋí dokkéŋa diŋâ paalí* “he opened his eyes a very little bit” and *lóó pilinypilinyiŋ law* “he peeped at the environment” (literally: “looked peeping”). The simultaneous actions in the main clause have a connotation of purpose, that Teeme opened his eyes a bit in order to see the environment, yet they also point out the secrecy, that the opening of the eyes was just very little (expressed by *kúŋí dokkéŋa* (small eyes) in the first and by the ideophone *pilinypilinyiŋ* (way of peeping) in the second clause). This way of saying the same thing twice, with different wording, is putting an emphasis as was explained above (in the chapter about the connectives). The Mitto do not want to put a comma in front of these *ná*.

In the first sentence of the example above, the subordinate clauses follow their main clauses, while in the second sentence the subordinate clause precedes the main clause. These are the two placement options for adverbial clauses in Mitto. The other subordinate clause types, relative clauses and complement clauses, are part of the main clause, relative clauses even within their noun phrase. The placement of relative clauses and complement clauses has already been discussed in the section about their connectives. Now the structure of the different types of clauses regarding the placement of a topic shall be explained. As we have seen in the previous chapter, this topic is commonly represented by the subject in English.

Structure of main clauses

In a Mitto (narrative) text, the topic of the story is given at the beginning of the story, the topic of a paragraph at the beginning of a paragraph, and the topic of a sentence at the beginning of a sentence. A continued topic does not need to be repeated, even across paragraph breaks. Examples:

Beginning of a story:

Ayé 1988, deer kénéá Poora'ŋ barú, solónŋa'ŋ táas kí Pooraŋ. – “In 1988 there was fighting between the Fur and the Arabs.” (literally: “In the year 1988 there was fighting/war in the Fur country, between of the Arabs with the Fur.”) – This is the beginning of the report about a true event, a report about this war in 1988.

Tóórig bá duó kénéá nás duónyáa ila nyáŋa asá duó kénéá ná wai. – “Once upon a time there was a man who married a woman who has had a husband before who had died.” (literally: “Just long time ago there was a man (that) married that woman who was having a man

(that) died.”) This is the beginning of a story about a man and his wife who would not forget her former husband (the man the protagonist, the wife the antagonist). There are two complement clauses in this sentence: *duó nás duónyáa ila nyǎŋa* (a man married that wife) and *duó ná wai* (the man (has) died). The first is the complement of the first ... *kéŋá*, “there was ...”. The second is the object of the clause *asá ... kéŋá*, “who had ...”. The topic (subject) of these complement clauses precedes the verb, the complement clause connective is *ná*.

Tóoríg elle díg-le álbá wuon piédwŋo díg kéŋá ná sŋ elle'ŋ léwá duon pii. – “Once upon a time in one village, the shepherd who was looking after the goats of the village was a liar.” This is the beginning of a story about a village and the shepherd of that village who was making fun of people by lying. The main characters of this story are the villagers and their shepherd. The villagers are introduced indirectly, referred to as “(in) the village” while the shepherd is introduced with the copula *kéŋá*. As opposed to the previous story introduction, in this one the shepherd is the subject in *wuon piédwŋo díg kéŋá* – “the shepherd was some liar”, and really the subject is *wuon ná sŋ elle'ŋ léwá duon pii* – “the shepherd (that) was looking after the goats of the village”. The connective *álbá* is often used at the beginning of stories, and sometimes at the beginning of new sections, to point to something new.

Beginning of a paragraph (connectives marked bold):

Yé Bain Adda **namá**is in kwǎ “....” – “**Then** our elder Brother Adda said to us, “....” This is the beginning of the action after the introduction in a story. The topic (subject) *Bain Adda* (elder Brother Adda) is preceded by its pronoun *yé*, both preceding the connective *namá*. This is a common feature used at a kind of turning point of a story.

Asidíg **albá** kuro ná duón dúítienj **namás** kí Baw káítie. – “One day, **as** he was going to herd the animals, he met Baw on the way.” This paragraph has a continued topic to the preceding paragraph, the main character of the story. Especially if this is the main character of a story, he does not need to be mentioned again, but is referred to by the verb form only. The adverb *asidíg* (one day) is frequently used for the beginning of a new paragraph. The connective *albá* is a different form of the same word *alábá* – “when, as” which was used in the *Téémé-Goroŋa* story above, introducing a temporal adverbial clause.

A subordinate temporal clause with *álbá* (*alábá* / *albá*) is very common at the beginning of a new paragraph, as well as adverbs like *asidíg* or *lia* (later). In the example above the subordinate clause and the adverb are both used at the same time, but more often only one of them shows up.

Beginning of a sentence:

Kíen rǎytá **namá** gal kila gé ǎl púgo díbe *kaŋ*, **namás** koróná díen lóo *búlé*, **ná** dió buda *pie ná amme na duyeli*. – “Their farms *were* those which *are* at the foot of the mountain, and the monkeys *found* their place, *played* in them, *ate* and *broke* them.” (Here, for showing the structure, the topic(s) are shown underlined, the connectives **bold**, and the verbs *cursive*.)

This is a sentence about “their fields”. Thus, the topic *kíen rǎytá* (their fields/farms) is put before the first connective *namá*. It is the topic of the whole sentence, in some of the clauses occurring as the object (in Mitto not explicitly mentioned), one time referred to as possessive pronoun, *díen lóo* – “their place”. The second *namá* introduces several actions the monkeys were doing with the fields. In this second part the subject changes from

“fields” to “monkeys”, but the sub-topic *koróná* (monkeys) is following *namá* instead of preceding it, because *kíeŋ rǎytá* still remain the topic this sentence is about.

Again, as with the beginning of a paragraph, a continued topic is not mentioned again at the beginning of a sentence. If a pronoun is used, it means a change of topic. Examples (marking of topic(s), connectives and verbs as above – not all connectives are marked here):

In **namá** *iladio kéŋá alá kǐ déeŋ tón kǐo álán dóŋá kaní, namá kóónó ná gorre kaw ná yé kee náis kona pii.* – “This was in that time **when** we visited him in his house (lit.: went to his house to greet him), and (while) we were talking, he entertained us with songs / we were talking while he entertained us with songs.” (In Mitto there is no subordinate “while” clause, but two simultaneous actions combined with *ná*.) The topic of this sentence is *in* – “this”, which refers to the previous sentence, the event that the author was told a certain story. This sentence gives the setting, in which this story was told. “That time” (*iladio*) was a certain year pointed out in the preceding sentence.

There are two sub-topics (subjects in English) in this sentence, *kǐ* (we) and *yé* (he). The main topic, *in* (this), is preceding its connective *namá*, while the others are following the connective (*alá kǐ ...* and *ná yé ...*). Both pronouns, “we” and “ye” are put in the first clause when they are subject, and after that referred to by the verb forms only. The pronoun *yé* is used for marking the change of sub-topic (contrast, the two simultaneous actions have a different subject).

Utodayín **namá** *in jáwí, “...?” Baw namá in jáwí, “...” Yé namás tǐna yaan̄ âl tullé-ii.* – “Then Utodaying said, ‘...?’ Then Baw said, ‘...’ Then he (Utodaying) accepted the idea.” – Here the topic (subject) is going back and forth between Utodaying and Baw. Thus, when it goes to Utodaying again, the pronoun “he” is used.

Adverbial clauses preceding their main clause

The most common subordinate clause preceding a main clause is the temporal clause with *ǎlbá* (*alábá*, ...) – “when”. Other subordinate clauses like the conditional clause with *abá* or the purpose clause with *álán* may also precede the main clause. All these adverbial clauses can as well follow the main clause. Especially the purpose clause is more frequent following the main clause.

If there is a subordinate clause combined with a main clause, they either have the same topic or they have a different topic. Further, the topic can continue from the preceding sentence or be a different one. This gives the following options for combinations if the subordinate clause precede the main clause (again the topics are shown underlined, the relevant connectives **bold**, and the verbs *ursive*). The main clause connective *namá*, could be translated with “then”, but leaving it in the following examples renders it better in English.

The main clause and the subordinate clause have the same topic, and it is continued from the sentence before.

Albá *jutá nyǎŋa, namá búló ná kaan̄ na kurtá kaŋŋ, namá* – “**When** he went to the bush, he found grain and sesame there.” (lit.: “When he had gone / went to the bush, he found that there was grain and sesame”) – Here the topic is not mentioned, but only referred to in the verb forms (*nyǎŋa* and *búló*), since it is continued from the sentence before.

The main clause and the subordinate clause have the same topic, and it is different from the sentence before.

Kwa **albá** *keéŋe*, **namá** innála *kummé*. – “**When** the people *went* (to those places), *they found it* like that (as they had been told).” – Since the topic of the sentence (both clauses) in this example differs from the preceding one, it is put at the beginning of the sentence before the first connective *albá*.

The topic of the subordinate clause is continued from the sentence before and the main clause has a different topic.

Asábá *ené* ná ittíŋ baw'íŋ karra karra *paagul*, téémé **namá** kúŋí dokkéŋa diŋâ *paalí* ná lóo *pilinypilinyiŋ law*. – “**As** they *carried him* a bit far from the lake, Teeme *opened* his eyes a very little bit, *peeping* at the environment.” – Here the topic of the main clause (*téémé*) is put before the main clause connective *namá*, since it differs from the preceding one, while the subordinate clause has a continued topic.

The topic of the subordinate clause is different from the sentence before but the main clause has the topic of the preceding sentence again.

Álbás kwa kíeŋ kuu na kamala'ŋ *jurrúŋ'íŋ kawle*, yeen *íde* **namás** kwa'ŋ deer'íŋ *kawle*. – “**When** the people *started chasing* away their cows and camels, they *began* to fight the people.” – Here “they” refers to the enemy of “the people”. They were the topic in the preceding clause. Thus, the topic *kwa* – “people” of the subordinate clause is put **after** the connective, while the topic of the preceding clause is re-inforced with the pronoun *yeen* – “they” before the main clause connective *namá*.

The topic of the subordinate clause is different from the sentence before and again different from the main clause.

Kúú **álbá** *nyét sakkáe* ná Bís-sí *jaalíŋi* ná kíeŋ toŋa *kárie*, díeŋ *örnəŋ* **namá** *iso* elelíŋ. – “**After** the rats all *ran, escaped* the cat, and *entered* into their houses/holes, their leader *gathered them* the following morning.” – The topic (subject) of the preceding sentence was the cat. In this sentence it is “the rats” in the subordinate clause and “their leader” in the main clause. Here the topic of the subordinate clause precedes its connective *álbá*, and the topic of the main clause also precedes its connective *namá*.

Punctuation rule: If a subordinate clause precedes its main clause, the two clauses are separated by a comma.

Adverbial clauses following their main clause

As said before, the adverbial clauses can precede or follow the main clause. If the subordinate clause follows the main clause, this gives the following options for combinations (again the topics are shown underlined, the relevant connectives **bold**, and the verbs *cursive*).

The main clause and the subordinate clause have the same topic, and it is continued from the sentence before.

Así díŋ **namá** *âl-si sába'ŋ barú* soŋá *kíiríŋóle*, **namaŋ** *âl weél* *jáapa*. – “One time they *delayed* very much in the country of the east, **until** they *missed* the rainy season.” – As with a subordinated clause preceding the main clause, the topic is not mentioned here, but only referred to in the verb forms (*kíiríŋóle* and *jáapa*), since it is continued from the sentence before.

The main clause and the subordinate clause have the same topic, and it is different from the sentence before.

Koró namá jaíl ásáŋ kééŋ bârŋa-sí bóóyé, – “The monkey ran in order to reach his brothers,” – Since the topic of the sentence (both clauses) in this example differs from the preceding one, it is put at the beginning of the sentence before the first connective *namá*, like when the subordinate clause precedes the main clause.

The topic of the main clause is continued from the sentence before and the subordinate clause has a different topic.

.... – “....” – Here

The topic of the main clause is different from the sentence before and again different from the subordinate clause.

.... – “....” – Here

Punctuation rule: Usually no comma is used, if a subordinate clause follows its main clause, since typically the subordinate clause connective directly follows the verb of the main clause. Only if there is a word between the verb of the main clause and the connective of the subordinate clause, the two clauses are separated by a comma.

abá.....if, when

adid.....while

ǎl (alá).....that/which/who (rel.) (the future form ǎláŋ is simplified as either ǎláŋ or aláŋ, and with the past continuous / irrealis form ǎláŋ)

âl (ála).....report (this becomes ǎláŋ for future and ǎláŋ for past continuous / irrealis), takes the place of a connective, but its meaning is more like the attitude markers, which are explained in a separate chapter. Thus, though it is mentioned here, it is explained in the attitude marker section.

ǎláŋ.....to / in order to (purpose) or the above (rel./report +FUT)

ǎlbá (albá, alábá).....when

ǎl míŋ.....as soon as, by the time, when (start of action), since (other spelling (not correct) is ǎlmíŋ)

amá / amánŋ / amínŋ / ammánŋ / ammínŋ / annaŋ / annîŋ if, when (like abá)

ati.....if

idííŋ, idííŋ....because

míŋ (míŋ)....from, since, from that time

Complement clauses

Complement clauses always follow the main clause. The complement connective is *ná*. In the stories we have observed three types:

- The clause replaces the object and the topic (subject) of the complement clause follows the complement clause connective.
- The clause replaces the object and the topic of the clause precedes the verb of the main clause.
- The clause replaces the subject of an equation clause (with copula).

Examples (the topic of the complement clause is underlined, its connective marked **bold**, and the verbs *cursive*):

The clause replaces the object and the topic of the clause follows the complement clause connective.

..., namá *law* **ná** m̄uurú *kee* ná paaru'ŋ írí *uŋi*. – “..., and *she saw that a lion was sleeping* on the leather.” – The topic of the complement clause can not directly precede its connective. Anything that would precede its connective takes the place of the object in the main clause, as in the examples below.

The clause replaces the object and the topic of the clause precedes the verb of the main clause.

..., ná s̄iŋ solóna-sí *nyíŋti* **n̄ŋ** Poora-sí *kanane*. – “(and he) used to *support that the Arabs would hate* the Fur.” – The topic *solóna* of the complement clause *solóna n̄ŋ Poora-sí kanane* gets the object marker *-sí*, because the *solóna* are the antagonist of the story. If the object is less significant, it is unmarked. The connective *n̄ŋ* is a combination of *ná* and the past habitual marker *n̄ŋ*.

(Also the sentence above could be put ..., namá m̄uurú *law* **ná** *kee* ná paaru'ŋ írí *uŋi*.)

The complement clause replaces the subject of an equation clause (with copula). When we introduced the structure at the beginning of a story above, we had an example from the story “Pié na Băja” (Lie and Mocking) for a complement clause being the subject of an equation clause.

Tóorig elle díg-le álbá wuon piédunjo díg *kéŋá* **ná** s̄iŋ elle'ŋ léwá duon *p̄ii*. – “Once upon a time in one village, the shepherd who was looking after the goats of the village was a liar.” As was explained there, the subject of *kéŋá* in this sentence is *wuon (ná) s̄iŋ elle'ŋ léwá duon p̄ii* – “the shepherd (that) was looking after the goats of the village”, the complement of this *kéŋá* is *piédunjo díg*. If *ál* instead of *ná* would be used, the clause following the verb would be a relative clause (as in the English translation). A clause with *ná* for the subject (not a relative clause) is only possible with the copula. If another verb is used, the *ná*-clause after the verb refers to the object (thoroughly³ checked with Bariwarig after the discourse WS).

Relative clauses

When relative clauses were explained above, it was shown that they are placed inside the noun phrase. According to its nature, the noun which the relative clause is describing is the topic of the relative clause. This noun can be any noun, subject, object, place, or time. If it is a time or place, the relative pronoun can be translated with “when” or “where”, respectively, instead of “who” or “what”, as in the following examples.

Áíla in-lé *jabí* **ál** kwa s̄ibuŋa *kawe*. – “Put me in that (ear) **where** people *have* celebrations.” – Here the relative clause is describing the noun of a location, *in díló-le* (“in this ear” – this phrase was used in the preceding sentence, here shortened to *in-lé*); the location is marked with the locative *-lé*. If the noun phrase is split by the verb like here, the case marker for the use in the main clause goes to the part before the verb (not split the noun phrase would be *in ál kwa s̄ibuŋa kawe-lé* or *in díló ál kwa s̄ibuŋa kawe-lé*).

... *kawítia* kí *taa* **ál** kaan na taa'ŋ ótáná nyét *iŋi*. – “... *drive* (their animals into their fields) in the harvest time **when** the sorghum and other things of harvesting *were* all ripe.” – Here

³ We used the sentence *wuon m̄uurú law ná s̄iŋ elle'ŋ léwá duon p̄ii* and tried different variations; still in all cases, the meaning changed that it was not the shepherd, but the lion looking for the goats of the village.

the noun described by the relative clause is *taa*, “(first part of) dry season” or “season of harvesting”. It is used with the case marker *kí* “with”. Noun phrases with *kí* may follow the verb like here, so that it is not split, but the whole noun phrase including the relative clause follows the verb.

In both of these examples the subject of the relative clause is different from the head noun and, thus, not the topic. It is a kind of sub-topic and following the connective of the relative clause. Here one more example:

Yé bain Adda namás in kwă “âl *ila ayé kénéá* **ăl** *gis ká waa*.” – “There Brother Adda said, ‘It was that year which I (*ká*) told you.’ ” – In this example the noun phrase *ila ayé ăl gis ká waa* is the complement of *kénéá*.

Punctuation rule: Relative clauses are not separated by a comma (no comma used around them), except if they are at the beginning of a sentence (belonging its topic).

Example for a relative clause belonging to the topic at the beginning of a sentence:

Ila duó ăl tónj kuro, namás in kwă “Ábakuri ăl ila-ii ná tónj dió kee.” – “That person who came out of the house (then) told them, ‘The king is in the house.’ ” – In this example the relative clause *ăl tónj kuro* belongs to the topic at the beginning of the clause, *Ila duó ăl tónj kuro*. Therefore it is separated with a comma (before *namá*).

Attitude markers and onomotopoea

Attitude markers and onomotopoea⁴ are two word classes that are very important in the Mitto language. The work of attitude markers is often done by inflection on the verb in other languages, and ideophones increase the lexical variety of words. For example, in a sentence above the onomotopoea *pilinyipilinyij* (“opening the eyes very little”) changed the meaning of the verb *lq̄w* – “he looked (at)” to “he peeped (at)” in the phrase *pilinyipilinyij lq̄w*. Likewise, the Mitto language is relatively poor in lexical words to express abstract nouns like “love”. It needs onomotopoea and proverbs to increase the options for expressing such concepts and “the context” becomes quite important for the exact meaning.

Attitude markers

Some languages of this region express evidence and mirativity on their verb forms. Evidence is a grammatical feature to specify where the information comes from, that is, if the speaker has seen it (eye witness), heard it (ear witness), found traces, or was told by a reliable source, or if it is a mere rumour, for example. There are different levels of evidence in different languages, and Mitto has the differentiation of “heard it (ear witness)” from “not witnessed” (see below). Mirativity is a grammatical feature to specify the expectedness of a situation.

The attitude markers are especially important in the Mitto language, because they express the interaction with the audience, they tell the audience the relevance of what they hear. If the attitude markers are not used, if there is no interaction with the audience, they stop listening, since the words do not concern the audience.

... (for some meanings see whiteboard photos)

⁴ Ideophones are a part of onomotopoea – they refer to sounds, while onomotopoea refer to any senses.

Spelling / Punctuation:

Speech

All speech shall be marked with high commas (") around the speech, a comma (,) before the speech, and the first word of the speech and the first word after the speech is written with a capital letter, as in the following examples.

Utodayíŋ namá in jáwí, “Na naa kaa níŋ káa ná táári á kawba?” Baw namá in jáwí, “...” – “So Utodaying asked, ‘So what shall we do since we are not working?’ Baw answered, ‘...’” – *jáwí* just means “say”. Still, this is a dialogue with question and answer.

Namá ál míŋ kaíŋ píe bá síŋ páárúá-sí in beléŋ, “Ál páárúá asúd-ii”. Ila belé páárúá-sí walá tullé ás eŋaba. – “Since they were living together, Hare used to say that Tortoise was lazy.” – In this example the speech is indirect speech. In Mitto it is still marked with high commas like direct speech, since it is not always easy to differentiate direct from indirect speech, and there is no connective like “that” in Mitto. The report marker *ál* is something different. It is used in direct as well as indirect reported speech and is placed in the clause like the connective *namá*.

If there is speech within speech, double high commas “...” and single high commas ‘...’ are used alternatively (“... ‘... “... ‘...’ ” ...’ ...”).

Commas with clauses

There is no comma between *ná* and the preceding verb, if *ná* immediately follows the verb. If there are other words between the verb and *ná*, a comma is put between the clauses.

(Examples)

Ná does not usually occur at the beginning of a sentence and it is, thus, not written with a capital N, except after a speech, as in the following example (05-3.1/3.2).

Yé Bain Adda namáís in kwă, "ál dírríŋiŋ bôŋ nás kin kona kel bâm lia námáís bawa kaáŋ-si risíŋá." **Ná** dŋó bain ooŋo ná kona jáná. – “There our elder brother Adda said to us, “keep silent to listen to this (following) song, and afterwards you should tell me what it is about.” He began (to sing) the song.” – In this example, if you would not have a long speech, you could say *Yé Bain Adda namáís “dírríŋiŋ bôŋ” kwă, ná ooŋo ná kona jáná*.

But if the speech is long, it needs to follow the verb *kwă* and the *ná* gets a capital letter.

If a sentence would become too long, it can be divided by using ; as in the following example (22-5.7 to 5.10).

Indálaŋ namá nyěŋe ná jaílo, namá mŋurúŋá-sí írí kurol, áŋgírá-sí na mŋurúŋá-sí, jááráŋá-sí, maareŋa-sí, boola-sí, piraŋa-sí, namá karába nyét-sí írí kurol; **ná** suur tabŋŋ jíŋie ná nyěŋe nás elleŋa írí ŋŋie; **ná** Zural-sí, na Pedura-sí, na Tígiliw-sí, Síŋgítá-sí soor ínie ná tabŋ suŋo’ŋ barŋ jáwíe; **ná** nyěŋe ná jaíla, ná barŋ kurol, ná á wáŋŋeba namaŋ ettê. – “....”
–

If *abá* is at the beginning of a sentence (before the main clause), the same rule apply as with *álbá* (comma before the main clause). If *abá* is following its main clause, it follows the rule as *ná* above. >>> the rules for commas around subordinate clauses shall be copied from the text above.