

Casual Conlangery Relay – Xwere Gonom

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1 Text

Kayapa hoš, otosii tlhašala ži ɖaunin hono tsonğom ži boonom dihin. Ži poaxom yekiipe, simitlhešii tlhašala na šehelemii ihagara ken goliišin ɖa'in. Siɖitlhešii sii Diagan Berige Tshaulan. Siheyii sii: Yił geen dzoyo dein! Miɖiperii deme kiige na polon, leh xen makooša kii. Ži poaxom yekiipe, ke' gāža'dlašah.

2 Vocabulary

The following part-of-speech abbreviations are used in the entries provided:

<i>adj.</i>	adjective	<i>prep.</i>	preposition
<i>adv.</i>	adverb	<i>q.</i>	quantifier
<i>conj.</i>	conjunction	<i>v.i.d.</i>	intransitive dynamic verb
<i>n.a.</i>	non-human animate noun	<i>v.i.s.</i>	intransitive stative verb
<i>n.h.</i>	human animate noun	<i>v.t.d.</i>	transitive dynamic verb
<i>n.i.</i>	inanimate noun		

Declinable forms are entered in their unmarked direct form followed by the marked inverse (= DAM) and oblique forms. Count animates are also followed by the corresponding plural forms. Verbs are entered with the uninflected stem followed by the third person inanimate singular forms of the imperfective (Ø-stem), terminative (?-stem) and optative (h-stem).

be·d, ·rige, ·rin *n.i.* eye.

boo·m, ·nga, ·nom *n.i.* hole, crevice, hollow, cavity.

diaga, -ga, -n *n.i.* riverbank, beach.

dihin, -ga, -in *adj.* small, little.

dzoyo, -ga, -m *n.i.* goal, aim, target, purpose.

ɖa', -ga, -in *n.i.* stone, rock.

ɖau·m, ·nga, ·nin *n.i.* sea, ocean.

gar-, agara, ige'ditl, igehdiš *v.i.s.* to be (copular verb).

giiš, -ige, -in *n.i.* 1 • time. 2 • tide.

kayapa giiš hoš *adv.* long ago, a long time ago. *Note:* The noun *giiš* is frequently dropped and only implied; the alternative formulations *giiš hoš kayapa* and *hoš kayapa* are also commonly found.

goliiš, -e, -in *n.i.* 1 • plant, vegetation. 2 • growth (e.g. sprout on a tuber, tumour). 3 • offshoot, offspring.

goliiš ɖa'in *n.i.* coral.

ha-, **ahara**, **ihe'itl**, **ipehiš** *v.t.d.* to say, to tell, to utter.

hono, **-ga**, **-m** *n.i.* ball, sphere.

hoš *q.* much/many, a lot of.

kayapa *adv.* already.

ken *prep.* 1 • from, away from (indicating a source). 2 • after (temporal). 3 • because of (indicating a cause). 4 • by (indicating a cause, agent, doer, author). 5 • of (indicating a constituent material). 6 • than (indicating the standard of comparison).

kiip-, **ekiipe**, **ikii'piti**, **igiihpiš** *v.i.s.* to be strong, to become strong, to get strong.

kooš-, **akooša**, **okoo'šitl**, **okoohšiš** *v.i.s.* to get happy, to become happy, to be happy.

leh *conj.* but, however, nevertheless, and yet, though, although, except.

na *prep.* 1 • to, towards (indicating a destination). 2 • up to, until. 3 • to (indicating a recipient). 4 • for (indicating a beneficiary). 5 • for (indicating a purpose).

6 • for (i.e. in exchange). 7 • of (i.e. denoting attributive possession).

per-, **epere**, **ipe'ditl**, **ipehdiš** *v.t.d.* to carry, to take, to bring, to transport.

poaxo, **-ga**, **-m** *n.i.* storm.

polo, **-ga**, **-m** *n.i.* night, night-time.

šehele, **-ge**, **-n**; **-d**, **-re**, **-rin** *n.a.* aquatic animal.

tlhaš-, **atlhaša**, **itlhe'šitl**, **idlehšiš** *v.i.d.* to go or travel by boat, to sail.

tlhašala, **-ga**, **-n**; **-d**, **-ra**, **-rin** *n.h.* sailor, mariner, seaman, pilot (a person who pilots a boat, works on a boat in some capacity or travels by boat).

tos-, **atosa**, **oto'sitl**, **odohsiš** *v.t.d.* to pull, to yank, to tug, to draw, to drag.

tshaula, **-ga**, **-n**; **-d**, **-ra**, **-rin** *n.h.* or *n.a.* god(dess), deity, supernatural actor.

tsongo, **-ga**, **-m** *n.i.* rope, string.

yił, **-e**, **-in** *n.i.* place, location.

ži *prep.* 1 • at, by, in, on. 2 • during. 3 • under (e.g. the sun, pressure, etc.).

- ① The only vocabulary found in the text not listed above are core grammatical items discussed in the grammar section below.

3 Grammar notes¹

3.1 Introduction and overview

Xwere Gonom [ˈxwɛɾɛ kə'nɔ̃] is strongly head-initial, exhibiting a basic VSO constituent order, prepositions and postposed adnominal modifiers. It possesses three cases and displays differential argument marking dependent on the animacy of subjects and objects. Verbs

1 The following glossing abbreviations are used: 1 = first person, 2 = second person, 3 = third person, AN = animate, ANT = anterior, COND = conditional, CONSEC = consecutive, CONT = continuative, COP = copula, CS = consanguineous, DAM = differential argument marking, DIR = direct, DU = dual, EXCL = exclusive, H = human, IMM = immediative, IMPF = imperfective, INAN = inanimate, INCL = inclusive, INV = inverse, NCS = non-consanguineous, NEG = negative, NH = non-human, OBL = oblique, OPT = optative, PF = perfective, PL = plural, PROG = progressive, REL = relative, SG = singular, SIMUL = simultaneous, TERM = terminative.

agree with their absolutive argument in person and number and are inflected for one of eleven aspects/moods. Number is a salient morphological category for animate referents only. Pronouns and verb agreement distinguish clusivity in the first person and consanguinity in the first person inclusive and second person; in the third person, there is a distinction between humans, other animates and inanimates.

3.2 Phonology

3.2.1 Phonemic inventory

There are thirty-six consonant phonemes. These are shown in Table 1 below in IPA alongside their romanisation.

	Bilabial	Dental/Alveolar		Retroflex	Palatal	Velar		Glottal
		Central	Lateral			Plain	Lab.	
Nasal	m /m/	n /n/						
Plosive	p /p/	d /t̪/		ɖ /t̪ʰ/		g /k/	gʷ /kʷ/	ʔ /ʔ/
	b /b̥/	t /t̪ʰ/		ɟ /t̪ʰʰ/		k /kʰ/	kʷ /kʷʰ/	
		th /t̪ʰh/						
Affricate		dz /ts/	dl /t̪ʰl/	dʒ /t̪ʰʃ/				
		ts /tsʰ/	tl /t̪ʰʰ/	tš /t̪ʰʃʰ/				
		tsh /tsʰh/	tlh /t̪ʰhʰ/	tšh /t̪ʰʃʰh/				
Fricative		s /s/	ɬ /t̪ʰ/	š /ʃ/		x /x/	xʷ /xʷ/	h /h/
		z /z/		ž /z̪/		ǰ /ɣ/	ǰʷ /ɣʷ/	
Approx.		r /r/	l /l/	ɽ /ɽ/	y /j/		w /w/	

Table 1: Consonant phoneme inventory

There are sixteen contrastive monophthongal combinations of quality, length and nasality. These are given in Table 2 below.

	Front	Back
High	i /ɪ/ in/im /ĩ/	
	ii /i:/ iin/iim /ĩ:/	
Mid	e /ɛ/ en/em /ẽ/	o /ɔ/ on/om /õ/
	ee /e:/ een/eem /ê:/	oo /o:/ oon/oom /ô:/
Low	a /a/ an/am /ã/	
	aa /a:/ aan/aam /ã:/	

Table 2: Monophthong inventory

In addition to these monophthongs, there are seven diphthongal qualities, all of which can occur as oral and nasal. These can be seen in Table 3.

	Front	Back
High	ia /i̯a/ ian/iam /ĩã/	
Mid	ei /e̯i/ ein/eim /ẽĩ/	oi /o̯i/ oin/oim /õĩ/
	eu /e̯u/ eun/eum /ẽũ/	oa /o̯a/ oan/oam /õã/
Low	ai /a̯i/ ain/aim /ãĩ/	
	au /a̯u/ aun/aum /ãũ/	

Table 3: Diphthong inventory

3.2.2 Stress

Stress is weight sensitive and anchored towards the right edge of the word: a final syllable is stressed if it is heavy (i.e. contains a diphthong, long vowel, nasal vowel or coda consonant), otherwise stress is penultimate.

3.2.3 Vowel assimilations

Let /i, e, o, a/ be cover symbols for all high front, mid front, back rounded and low vowels respectively.² In what is essentially a form of vowel harmony, lexically-specific instances of /i/ and /a/ assimilate to the quality of neighbouring vowels. Ignoring any intervening consonants, assimilable /i/ becomes /o/ when adjacent to rounded vowels and assimilable /a/ becomes /e/ when adjacent to front vowels. Such alternations can be found in many affixes as well as in a certain number of roots. In addition to this, certain instances of /i/ may not trigger the assimilation of /a/ to /e/. This assimilation is responsible for alternations in the vowels of affixes marking categories such as case (§3.3.2), number (§3.3.3), agreement (§3.4.1) and aspect (§3.4.2).

3.2.4 Laryngeal dissimilation

Aspiration, inclusive of /h/, is a powerful feature in Xwere Gonom phonology and its presence results in the neutralisation of certain contrasts in the syllable it is found in as well as directly adjacent syllables. This may result in active alternations (especially in verb conjugations; see §3.4), some of which are more motivated than others from a synchronic point of view (for example, /x/ acts as both a trigger and target of laryngeal dissimilation, as if it were aspirated even though it is not).

Laryngeal dissimilation causes the following neutralisations. It proceeds first regressively from the right-most instance of an aspirate or /h/ and then progressively.

² At least for our purposes here, the first vowel in a diphthong should be understood as the element that determines its primary features.

- | | | | | | |
|----------------------------|---|------|----------------------------|---|-------------------|
| (1) a. /b/ | → | [p] | f. /tʂ', tʂ ^h / | → | [tʂ] |
| b. /t̥', t̥ ^h / | → | [t̥] | g. /x/ | → | [k] |
| c. /ts', ts ^h / | → | [ts] | h. /x ^w / | → | [k ^w] |
| d. /tʰ', tʰ ^h / | → | [tʰ] | i. /h/ | → | [∅] or [p] |
| e. /t', t ^h / | → | [t] | | | |

3.3 Nouns and pronouns

3.3.1 Humanness and animacy

Animacy is important in Xwere Gonom for whether a noun is able to be pluralised, what role the core cases indicate and also for determining agreement with pronouns and on verbs. Humanness is distinguished on both pronouns and verbs. Neither inanimate nominals nor inanimate verb forms show any marking for number.

3.3.2 Case

Xwere Gonom possesses three grammatical cases: direct, inverse (= differential argument marking) and oblique.³ The direct is morphologically unmarked whereas the inverse is marked by the suffix *-ga/-ge/-ige/-oga/-iga/-a/-e* and the oblique by the suffix *-n/-m/-in/-om*.

The language displays an integrated system of both differential object and subject marking according to an argument's animacy. The unmarked direct is used on the subject of verbs with the exception that inanimate subjects of both transitive and unergative verbs (i.e. intransitive verbs whose sole argument is agent-like) take the marked inverse. The direct is also used on the objects of transitive verbs if inanimate whereas animate objects are marked with the inverse. This is illustrated by the following examples:

- (2) Saradzoxa taž.
3.H.run.PROG woman
'The woman is running.'
- (3) Itelii taž ɖa'.
3.INAN.throw.PF woman rock
'The woman threw the rock.'
- (4) Soɖogii taž.
3.H.fall.PF woman
'The woman fell.'
- (5) Oɖogii ɖa'.
3.INAN.fall.PF rock
'The rock fell.'

3 For all I care, you can use other labels – e.g. genitive for oblique – if these ones irk you.

- (6) Saṭhana taž liinge.
3.H.see.IMPF woman man.DAM
'The woman sees the man.'
- (7) Odžotii ɖa'ga koom.
3.INAN.hit.PF rock.DAM house
'The rock hit the house.'

The oblique has a variety of uses. Firstly, it is used to mark modifiers in phrasal noun–noun compounds:

- | | |
|---|--|
| (8) liin gondom
man fishing_rod.OBL
'fisherman, angler' | (9) ɖoom gii'in
bridge crystal.OBL
'rainbow' |
|---|--|

Oblique pronouns are used as possessive pronouns in all possessive relationships and bare full nouns are used in the oblique with inalienable adnominal possession (see also §3.3.5).

- | | |
|--|---|
| (10) ǵwama dein
mother 1SG.OBL
'my mother' | (11) ǵwama xaanin
mother girl.OBL
'the girl's mother' |
|--|---|

The complements of prepositions are also marked with the oblique:

- (12) ži de'nin
at shade.OBL
'in the shade'

The oblique is used in the adverbialisation of adjectives and nouns:

- (13) Sadzoxa wiinin taž.
3.H.run.IMPF good.OBL woman
'The woman runs well.'

It is also used without a preposition to mark certain inherently locative nouns to express a static location, origin of motion or goal of motion. If desired, this may be disambiguated by use of a preposition. This is illustrated with *daǵ* 'home' below.

- (14) Saṛaḍiiga liin (na) daǵin.
3.H.come.PROG man to home.OBL
'The man is coming home.'

Certain nouns with temporal meanings, such as *zii* 'dawn' below, behave in a similar manner:

- (15) Gaarazomaan hau (ži) zii'in.
 2SG.CS.sleep.CONT 2SG.CS at dawn.OBL
 'You were still asleep at dawn.'

The heads of noun phrases denoting a physical or temporal measurement also take the oblique in order to express distances or durations.

- (16) Saradzoxa gihsaanin hoš liin.
 3.H.run.PROG hour.OBL many man
 'The man ran for many days.'

3.3.3 *Number*

Animate nouns distinguish singular and plural whereas inanimate nouns are invariant with respect to number. Plurality is marked by the suffix *-d/-ad/-ed*, which becomes *-r/-ar/-er* when a case suffix is added. Nouns do not generally take overt plural marking when used with numerals or plural-like quantifiers.

3.3.4 *Personal pronouns*

Personal pronouns distinguish first, second and third persons. Third person pronouns distinguish human, non-human animate and inanimate. All pronouns but the third person inanimate display number distinctions. This is singular–plural for third person animate and second person, with a singular–dual–plural distinction in the first person only. In the second person, there are different terms for blood relations and other people, termed consanguineous and non-consanguineous. Finally, in the first person dual and plural, there exists aclusivity distinction. The full declension of all personal pronouns is provided in Table 4.

3.3.5 *Adnominal possession*

Possessors follow possessees. Oblique pronouns are used as possessive adjectives. To be used as possessors of alienable possessees, nouns occur in a prepositional phrase headed by *na* 'to'. However, with inalienable possessees (e.g. body parts, kinship terms), no preposition is required and a bare possessor in the oblique is used.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>(17) a. ġwen dein
 hand 1SG.OBL
 'my hand'</p> | <p>b. ġwen liinin
 hand man.OBL
 'the man's hand'</p> |
| <p>(18) a. toan dein
 fishhook 1SG.OBL
 'my fishhook'</p> | <p>b. toan na liinin
 fishhook to man.OBL
 'the man's fishhook'</p> |

	DIR	INV	OBL
1SG	deme	dege	dein
1DU.INCL.CS	yan	yanga	yamin
1DU.INCL.NCS	ğan	ğanga	ğamin
1PL.EXCL	išiid	išiire	išiirin
1PL.INCL.CS	yah	yahga	yahin
1PL.INCL.NCS	ğah	ğahga	ğahin
2SG.CS	hau	hauga	haum
2SG.NCS	kii	kiige	kiin
2PL.CS	gayad	gayara	gayarin
2PL.NCS	kiid	kiire	kiirin
3SG.H	sii	siige	siin
3SG.NH.AN	hen	henge	henin
3.INAN	žen	ženge	ženin
3PL.H	siid	siire	siirin
3PL.NH.AN	hened	henere	henerin

Table 4: Personal pronoun declensions

3.3.6 Evaluative morphology

Evaluative morphology on nouns is moderately common in the language, the two commonest and most productive such suffixes are the augmentative *-zaan* and diminutive *-mii*:

- (19) a. ɖa' 'rock, stone'
 b. ɖa'zaan 'large rock, boulder'
 c. ɖa'mii 'little stone, pebble'

3.4 Verbs

3.4.1 Verb agreement

Verbs agree with their absolutive argument, i.e. the subject of intransitive verbs and the direct object of transitive verbs. This is marked by a combination of prefixation and suffixation, summarised in Table 5.

Note that the /h/ of the third person non-human animate prefix is deleted if the next consonant in the word is /h/ or an aspirate, resulting in syncretism with the inanimate. Similarly, the /h/ in the suffix of some plural forms may lead to laryngeal dissimilation of a preceding consonant (see §3.2.4).

	SG	DU	PL
1(EXCL)	d-	iš-/oš- -n	iš-/oš- -d
1INCL.CS	—	y- -n	y- -h
1INCL.NCS	—	ǰ- -n	ǰ- -h
2.CS	ga/ge-	—	aga-/ege- -h
2.NCS	m-	—	am-/em- -h
3.H	s-	—	s- -d
3.NH.AN	h-	—	h- -d
3.INAN	∅-	—	∅-

Table 5: Verb agreement affixes

3.4.2 Tense-aspect-mood

Aspect and mood are conflated into a single morphological category (hereafter referred to simply as “aspect”) and there is no morphological tense marking.⁴ Verbs are inflected for eleven aspects and overt marking for one cannot co-occur with another. These eleven aspects can be divided into nine realis and two irrealis aspects, with realis aspects further subdivided into four imperfective and five perfective aspects:

- (20) a. Realis:
- i. Imperfective:
imperfective, progressive, continuative, simultaneous
 - ii. Perfective:
perfective, terminative, immediative, anterior, consecutive
- b. Irrealis:
conditional, optative

These are marked on the verb by a combination of stem gradation, prefixation and suffixation. Verb stems have three grades: plain (∅), glottalised (ʔ) and aspirated (h). As one would expect, the ∅-grade of a verb stem is simply the verb stem without any additional special modifications. The laryngeal ʔ- and h-grades are formed by right-edge-orientated infixation of coda /ʔ, h/ in consonant-final stems and by a simple /ʔ, h/ suffix in vowel-final stems. The addition of these laryngeal segments, especially /h/, may lead to alterations to the laryngeal features of consonants in the stem (see §3.2.4). The full range of different combinations of exponents for each aspect is summarised below in Table 6.

The imperfective presents an action or state as being temporally unbounded and, typically, as habitual, though this form can be used with stative verbs to express the progressive. The progressive describes an action or state as being performed or holding at a given moment in time, be that present, past or future. The continuative is similar to the progressive but focuses on the continuity in time of that action or state in question, especially

⁴ At least, matrix verbs do not display tense, though certain aspects arguably express pure/strict relative tense with dependent verbs.

	Prefix	Stem grade	Suffix
IMPF	a-/e-	∅	-a/-e/-ra/-re
PROG	ara-/ere-	∅	-a/-e/-ra/-re
CONT	a-/e-	∅	-aan/-een/-raan/-reen
SIMUL	a-/e-	ʔ	-iǵwa/-oǵwa/-iǵwe/-ǵwa/-ǵwe
PF	i-/o-	∅	-ii/-yii
TERM	i-/o-	ʔ	-itl
IMM	i-/o-	ʔ	-in
ANT	i-/o-	ʔ	-inen
CONSEC	i-/o-	ʔ	-ian
COND	a-/e-	∅	-iza/-oza/-ize/-za/-ze
OPT	i-/o-	h	-iš/-š

Table 6: Summary of inflection for aspect

when contrasted with the flux of other events in the discourse (i.e. very roughly having the meaning ‘still’). The continuative can also be used to present an event as continuing for an unexpectedly long or excessive amount of time. The simultaneous expresses that an action or state overlaps with another. The duration of the action/state described by the simultaneous typically fully encompasses the other action/state; its may temporally even extend beyond it but this is not crucial to the way an event is presented using the simultaneous. With stative verbs especially, the simultaneous may be used in roles fulfilled by manner adverbs in other languages.

The perfective, in contrast to the imperfective, presents an action or change of state as lacking internal temporal structure. With stative verbs this often expresses an inchoative meaning. The perfective is also sometimes used as an imperative. The terminative expresses the end point of an action or state, which may be before or after some event in the discourse. The immediative is similar to the terminative but serves to stress the temporal proximity of events. The anterior is used to situate the entirety of one action or state as preceding another. This is often used in a similar function to the (plu)perfect in other languages. The consecutive, conversely, is used to situate one event after another. Actions or states may be described by the anterior and consecutive regardless of their relation to the moment of speech.

The most prototypical use of the conditional is to mark the antecedent, but not the consequent, in sentences expressing that some event or state is contingent on another. The optative is used to express hopes, wishes, desires and so on. Alongside the perfective, it is also functions as an imperative and (co)hortative.

3.4.3 Verbal negation

Verbs are negated with a pre-verbal particle. This is most often *xen*, as in the example below.

- (21) Xen eziže taž dił.
 NEG 3.INAN.eat.IMPF woman meat
 ‘The woman doesn’t eat meat.’

However, there also exists a range of additional specialised negators, shown in Table 7.

Form	Use
dliği	“ <i>Non iam</i> ” negator: something that was the case prior to the reference time no longer holds, i.e. ‘no more, no longer’.
dzih	Irrealis negator: used with the conditional and optative in declarative clauses, also used with other aspects used in irrealis contexts.
ke’	Prohibitive negator: used to negate both optative and conditional imperatives; sometimes also used to express other negative deontic meanings such as general prohibition outside of imperative contexts.
maan	assertive future-time negator: forcefully denies the possibility of something happening after the reference time, also used with perfective imperatives for added force.
te’	<i>Nondum</i> negator: expresses that something has yet to occur prior to the reference time, i.e. ‘not yet’.
tšorom	Avertive negator: expresses that an event was expected to happen but did not.
žein	Frustrative negator: expresses that an event happened but was not successful or did not have the expected result.

Table 7: Specialised pre-verbal negators

3.4.4 Associated motion

Associated motion is the marking on a verb of a direction of motion involved in the commission of an action. This is marked on verbs by prefixes, of which there are four: cislocative, translocative, circumlocative and praeterlocative. These prefixes attached directly to the verb stem before any agreement or aspect marking. The forms and functions of the associated motion markers are summarised in Table 8.

	Prefix	Use
CIS	đi-/đo-/đ-	motion towards the deictic centre
TRANS	mi-/mo-/m-	motion away from the deictic centre
CIRCUM	ža’-/že’-	motion generally proximal to or around the deictic centre
PREATER	xwaa-/kwaa-	motion past but proximal to the deictic centre

Table 8: Forms and functions of associated motion prefixes

The marking of associated motion is typically considered mandatory on verbs of motion but optional on other verbs. The use of associated motion prefixes may be used in uses beyond those expressing literal movement, especially with verbs whose semantics do not easily lend themselves to this. For example, the cislocative may be used to indicate affectedness on the part of the verb's absolutive argument with change-of-state verbs or even verbs of cognition.

3.5 Property concepts

Property concepts are expressed by three different lexical categories: true adjectives, stative verbs and nouns. There exists only a very small set of true adjectives, which occur post-nominally when used attributively and may also be used predicatively either with an overt copula or simply in apposition with an intonational break between subject and complement. Examples include *gaun* 'new', *žei* 'bad' and *tšođ* 'empty'. The use of true adjectives is illustrated in below with the last of these.

- (22) a. *Ĝodžo tšođ.*
 canoe empty
 'The empty canoe./'The canoe is empty.'⁵
- b. *Agara ĝodžo tšođ.*
 3.INAN.COP.IMPF canoe empty
 'The canoe is empty.'

The remainder of property concepts are expressed by stative verbs or nouns. To be used attributively, stative verbs must be relativised (see §3.7.2). When used predicatively they simply behave as normal stative verbs. This is exemplified with *xoš-* 'to be dry' below.

- (23) a. *Tlama yaxoša.*
 cloth REL.3.INAN.be_dry.IMPF
 'The dry cloth.'
- b. *Axoša tlama.*
 3.INAN.be_dry.IMPF cloth
 'The cloth is dry.'

Lastly, nouns which express property concepts occur either as bare post-nominal oblique modifiers or in a following modifying prepositional phrase when used attributively. To be used attributively, a dummy head noun such as *žod* 'thing' is used as the subject and complement occurs either in apposition or in a copular clause, similar to true adjectives. This is illustrated using the noun *dožaa* 'black colour' by the following examples.

5 As noted above, the attributive and predicative uses have different intonation but this is not reflected in the romanised transcription here.

No.	Form	Use
1	geen	Generic but typically closely proximal to the speaker or otherwise proximal in the discourse but not appropriately covered by other terms.
2	giyi	Upriver from the speaker, particularly when not proximal to the speaker; otherwise agnostic w.r.t. to location relative to the water.
3	bala	Downriver from the speaker, particularly when not proximal to the speaker; otherwise agnostic w.r.t. to location relative to the water.
4	džiri	On the same side of the river as the speaker but most often not closely proximal to them.
5	dzorom	On the opposite side of the river to the speaker.
6	go'	In the river, on the surface of the water or on an island in the river, especially when vaguely proximal to the speaker.

Table 9: Deictic terms

- (24) a. *Ḍa'mii dožaan.*
 pebble black.OBL
 'The black pebble./'The pebble is black.'
- b. *Agara Ḍa'mii dožaan.*
 3.INAN.COP.IMPF pebble black.OBL
 'The pebble is black.'

3.6 Deixis

Deixis is sensitive to location relative to the main river running through the territory where the language is spoken with respect to the speaker (or alternatively the deictic centre of the discourse in narratives excluding both speaker and addressee). There are six deictic terms in the language, given in Table 9.

These terms overlap to a certain extent and the choice is often governed by the immediate context in which the deictic term is used as well as position relative to the river and speaker.

Deictic terms may be used as postnominal demonstratives, demonstrative pronouns and as location adverbs; however, though it is possible to use them on their own as pronouns or adverbs, they also often occur as a modifier alongside a generic head noun, e.g. *liin* 'man', *žod* 'thing' or *yił* 'place'.

3.7 Clausal syntax

3.7.1 Constituent order

The basic constituent order in an intransitive clause is VS:

- (25) *Sarazoma taž.*
 3.H.sleep.PROG woman

‘The woman is sleeping.’

In a (mono)transitive clause, the basic constituent order is VSO:

- (26) Abola ðiin šom.
 3.INAN.drink.IMPf man milk
 ‘The man drinks milk.’

However, word order is moderately flexible and constituents may be moved around in order to help convey the information structure of an utterance. There is even limited tolerance of discontinuous noun phrases.

3.7.2 *Relative clauses*

Relative clauses are formed by adding the prefix *i-/o-/y-* to an already conjugated verb. The clause in which this verb is found then acts as a post-nominal modifier. The slot that the modified noun would occupy in the relative clause is left blank, though the relativised verb nevertheless agrees as if the head noun is the omitted absolutive argument of the relative clause. This is illustrated by the examples below.

- | | | | | | | | | | |
|------|----|------------------|------|---------|--|----|-------------------------|----------------|-------|
| (27) | a. | Siṭhanii | deme | liinge. | | b. | Ẹiin | isiṭhanii | deme. |
| | | 3.H.see.PF | 1SG | man.DAM | | | man | REL.3.H.see.PF | 1SG |
| | | ‘I saw the man.’ | | | | | ‘The man (whom) I saw.’ | | |