

North Great Bay Grammar

0. General features:

Setting

The speakers of North Great Bay (NGB) live on the warm coasts of the easternmost rim of the Great Bay, on the thin strip between the water and the vast mountain range inland. The landscape in this part of the world is arid along the coast, getting hotter as one goes south; along the northern edge, where this variety of the Kolpic languages is spoken, it ranges from warm steppe (**BSk**) to cold desert (**BWk**). Compare the cities of northern Chile - Valparaíso up to Coquimbo (roughly), or Agadir in Morocco.

Being fortuitously situated for the seaborne trade in the Great Bay area since ancient times, but with a barren hinterland, the cities of the coast have been engaged in navigation and mercantile activity since time immemorial. Often they have sought to insert themselves as middlemen into the trade routes via the Bay Islands and along the current, establishing trade routes but also frequently acting as aggressive privateers or even pirates along the seaways. Political and technological changes have seen rulers and dynasties come and go, but little about these traditions have changed - however much the naval engineering might have.

In recent times, expansion of the Vlanamer influence in the region and its assertion of control over (some of) the Bay Islands is beginning to pose a threat to the privileged middleman functions of the port towns, and mutual privateering is becoming a frequent fixture. Decisive wars over the control of the seas are likely to follow in the near future.

Vibes: Gujarat port realms, Caribbean pirates, Phoenicians

Linguistic general features

NGB is a branch of the Kolpic language family, the language family spoken since ancient times along the coast and subsequently on the eastern islands of the Great Bay. Different languages of this family are spoken along the coast, on the islands, and in the highlands, but they are closely related. The northern variety is the one described here, which is SOV, generally head-final, and has nominative-accusative alignment.

Characteristic of NGB is the complex and unpredictable stress and inflection pattern, the prevalence of open syllables in a part analytical, part agglutinating structure, and the lack of agreement throughout.

Phonology

The Romanization of NGB, with its fairly restricted inventory, is as follows:

a - e/ə <e> - f - h - i - k - l - m - n - o - p - s - ʃ <sh> - t - ts - u - ʊ <i> - v - j <y> - z - ʔ <'>

Word-final <e> is normally schwa, but read as /e/ when following a vowel in word-final position or when finally stressed. Initial or medial forms are /e/, with the exception of unstressed final syllables with the structure CeC, where it is to be read as schwa. They can therefore be Romanized with the same letter <e> (or é when stressed).

The <ts> is an affricate and counted a single consonant. The [ɫ] is usually dark [ɫ̥] after a back vowel (i, u, o).

Vowel hiatus is very widespread and accepted in NGB. Vowel sequences are always to be read as separate syllables, not as diphthongs.

Stress

Stress is a complicated and often unpredictable feature of NGB. It is nonetheless important, as meanings of words may differ *solely* by stress pattern - this is one of the notable features of the language.

The following stress pattern can be taken as default for the purpose of marking stress in the Romanization:

- Stress is on the leftmost closed syllable (syllable with coda).
- Otherwise, in disyllabic words, the stress is initial;
- Otherwise, in trisyllabic words, the stress is medial;
- Otherwise, in tetrasyllabic and longer words, the stress is second.

There are many exceptions to these rules, owing to the operation of sound changes. In all exceptions, the stress is marked on the 'irregularly' stressed vowel with an acute (á) accent.

Consonant gradation

The following consonant gradations may occur in inflection:

This gradation only occurs with verbs when an (inflected) stressed syllable begins, or historically began, with one of the 'strong' consonants: p, t, k, and sh. There the grades are as follows:

p ~ v, t ~ z/f, k ~ h, sh ~ y

1. Nouns:

1.1 Nouns in general

As in all languages, in NGB nouns are a word class denoting the most time-stable elements in the world. They can act as subjects, objects, or obliques in clauses. They inflect for number and take particles for certain cases.

1.2 Noun number

Noun number is one of the most notable features of the noun in NGB: firstly because of the unusual set of numbers (singular, paucal, plural) and secondly because it forms the only immediate (non-derivational) inflection of the noun. To add to the complexity, NGB nouns differ considerably both in regularity of number marking and the origins of their plural affixation, leading to a wide range of forms that by and large must just be learned outright.

As mentioned above, the noun appears in singular, paucal, and plural form. The dual has gone extinct historically, but preserves a few ossified forms for nouns frequently referred to in pairs (e.g. eyes, ears, hands), which are used instead of other plural numbers. In general, the previous productive role of the dual is now merged with the paucal, which is still lively and well-used. Generally, the paucal is used for about 2-5 referents, although there is a degree of pragmatic subjectivity to this.

Pragmatically, the paucal is also preferred usage for what would otherwise be plural indefinites, when not all of a type are meant. The plural will be used for gnomic cases when indefinite, but when saying "children are chasing dogs", you are (usually) really talking about *some* children chasing *some* dogs, and in NGB this means the paucal is the commonly used nominal form. The result is that the paucal appears considerably more frequently than one might expect, which has contributed to its survival.

The citation form is normally the singular. There are nonetheless a certain amount of non-count nouns that are plural by default. These either take only a singulative (transparently derived from the numeral "one") or no number marking at all.

There is greater difference between plural forms than paucal ones in terms of underlying affixation. The result is that owing to their varied origins, NGB nouns can be sorted into a number of semi-regular declinations based on their plural form. Some examples can be given below:

Noun Declination	SG	DU	PC	PL
A-1 ("animal")	oo ("owl")	-	ootsi (*-tsi)	oova (*-po)
A-2 ("animal, cons. alternation")	hiti ("rat")		histsi	hispa
B ("redupl.") (mostly humans)	mihi ("sister")	-	mihatsi	mihami (redupl.)*

Noun Declination	SG	DU	PC	PL
C-1 ("row")	neza ("mountain")	-	nezoi (*-ji)	nazoá (*-as)
C-2 ("row, hidden consonant")	shvi ("star")		shvihie	shvihá
C-3 ("row, e-ending")	inti ("house")		intinie	intine
D-1 ("stack")	fiza ("stone, pebble")	-	fizoi	fizolo (*-la)
D-2 ("stack, vowel alternation")	tale ("berry")		telasie	telasel
E ("extended") (structured or collective objects, various abstractions)	humu ("cloud")	-	humai	homeshe (-ε)
	fenke ("web")		fenkai	fenkasha
F ("default") (various, loans)	piono ("rod, staff")	-	pionai	pionava (*-wa)
G ("default, cons. mutation") (various)	mipi ("liver")	-	mivie	mivi (*-wa)
H ("irregular") (various)	tsesa ("child")	-	tsotsi	tsotso
I ("no distinction")	mutu ("heart")	-	muyi	mutu (*-wa)
Ossified Dual:	'otsa ("eye")	'otsoyo (*-ce)	?	?
Plural Only:	-	-	-	siete (*siat) "sea(s)"

* NB: the reduplication rule is old; highly derived and more novel forms tend to take a different plural, mainly a new (unstressed) reduplication pattern of the last syllable.

Note that due to the lack of agreement, it may appear difficult to determine that the mass nouns such as *siete* are plural rather than singular. But there is one test: resumptive pronouns (and therefore also adnominal demonstratives) for mass nouns are plural, rather than singular.

1.3 Noun class

Although the above declination overview might suggest otherwise, NGB has no noun classes. This is because there is no agreement in the noun phrase based on these declinations, only variant number marking. (There is in fact little agreement in the NP at all - only determiners can agree to any extent.)

1.4 Noun case

NGB uses a combination of particles and constituent order to mark the syntactic arguments in the clause. The argument alignment in NGB is nominative-accusative throughout. That said, the application of particles and word order is somewhat complex, and needs elaboration below; whether this fully counts as case marking is arguable.

1.4.1 Nominative marking and differential subject marking

The nominative as such is not obligatorily marked. But there is a postposed nominative marker, which is used when subjects low(er) on the animacy hierarchy than the object are used as subjects of active transitive clauses. Where other (nom-acc) languages would in such cases preferentially use a passive voicing construction, in NGB active constructions are generally preferred over passive constructions; instead, low animacy subjects (including abstractions) operating on higher animacy objects are given the nominative particle *nao* (**nao*).

The speakers of NGB do not always agree on when *nao* is required, leaving some ambiguity or optionality in the case of middling animacy and similar animacy hierarchy positions between subject and object. (Where both are low, *nao* is generally not used.) Speech participants are higher animacy than third person human agents, and usually first person is considered higher than second, although *nao* may be used in first person for extra politeness or self-effacing effect.

In converb clause chains, where the same subject applies repeatedly (see 3.5.2.4), *nao* may be used on its own instead of a repetition of the subject if in the converbial clause the nominative marker would normally be expected.

1.4.2 Accusative marking and differential object marking

NGB has a postposed accusative particle *yu* (**io*), marking objects of transitive clauses.

However, a salient feature of NGB is differential object marking: not all objects are actually marked with the particle. The application of the *yu* particle combines with a degree of definiteness, so that only those objects which have *discourse specificity* are marked; more "generic", nonspecified objects are not marked. In those cases, it is the fixed constituent order (SOV) alone that shows which is the subject and which is the object. (Of course even marked objects must normally still come in object position regardless, other than when fronted for emphatic or contrastive purposes. Such fronted objects always receive *yu*.)

Specificity comes about in a number of ways: previous discourse mention (definiteness/topicality), uniqueness, possession by another definite or previously established noun, or modification by descriptors or relative clauses etc. Note that this means that

pragmatically, paucal nouns are less likely to receive the *yu* particle - their usage frequently corresponds to the English sense of "some X", which lacks specificity.

1.4.3 Oblique marking

Obliques, including datives, are marked with the postposed particle *si* (**si*). Fortunately, there's no contextual differentiation here. Even so, it is useful to describe the applications of the particle:

- Recipients and beneficiaries and other indirect objects in ditransitive constructions are marked with *si* (as with typical datives);
- As are allatives with (intransitive) verbs of motion or address (vocatives, objects of speech verbs);
- Markers of purpose or cause ("for the city!");
- Possessors/experiencers in certain experiencer verb constructions and predicate possession ("to me is pain");
- Reintroduced agents (and occasionally patients) of mediopassive forms (see 3.4.1.3);
- Nominal objects of certain experiencer verbs (see 3.7);
- Objects of certain adpositional constructions (see 9.3);
- And nonvolitional or atelic usages ("it broke on me").

2. Pronouns:

2.1 Independent pronouns - form and structure

As with nouns, NGB distinguishes number in pronouns. Theoretically the distinctions range from singular to plural including the dual and paucal forms, but these are very rare in modern speech and are largely obsolete. In older texts and declarations they may still be found, although even then they were never common. For the sake of completeness, they are listed below between parentheses. Nowadays, only the singular and plural forms are common.

NGB distinguishes clusivity in the first person plural. In the language of antiquity it also did so in the first person dual and paucal, but these forms are not listed, being long extinct.

2.2. Independent pronouns - politeness and formality

Different registers of formality are very important to NGB speakers, and distinctions are actively maintained (and enforced!) in usage. Many of the more polite pronoun forms are 'pronouns' in the sense of being used as such practically, but have transparent origins in (remnants of) formal phrases. Some, like the formal and hyperformal forms of the first person singular, are more commonly used than the root (neutral) ones in most situations.

Note that unlike in other cultures and languages, there is virtually no formality distinction dependent on gender in NGB. Neither do the personal pronouns themselves distinguish gender in any way (with the exception of the usage of *lo* "bro" and *mihi* "sis" as informal second person pronouns). Age, however, is taken into account - substantial differences in age are likely to be interpreted as substantial differences in prestige (in favor of the elder), although not as strongly so as rank or class.

The second person formalized forms largely emerged historically from pronoun avoidance, but are now more normalized as 'regular' pronouns - something perceived by the old-fashioned as a decline in moral standards.

2.3 Independent pronouns - table

The table below offers a basic guide to pronoun (or "pronoun") usage in contemporary NGB speech. The levels of speech are not completely exact of course, and vary by community and context, but are given as broad indications. For convenience, these levels are split into a few loosely defined categories, which express the relation of the speaker to the addressee:

- "Informal" here refers to usage among equals who are being colloquial or informal with one another - especially lower class usage, among sailors or workers with each other, children, intimate friends and partners, etc.
- "Neutral" refers to polite but not formal usage among (presumed) equals. This is used among acquaintances, for business interactions of an everyday sort, addressing foreigners, and when uncertain. Neutral forms are also used when referring to objects in resumptive third person pronouns (which are really demonstratives anyway).
- "Formal" is polite and respectful, and indicates a recognition of the addressee's prestige. Used towards officials, officers, etc.
- "Deferential" is used to indicate humility and establish inferiority towards the addressee. Important for great differences in rank or prestige between the speaker and the addressee, where the addressee is the superior. It is also, however, sometimes used sarcastically among equals as a way of sneering or teasing (depending on the context and relationship).
- "Superior" is used much the same as the above, but with the speaker being the higher-placed individual (or presuming themselves to be so). This is dangerous to use when it is not justified - at a minimum, one can make oneself ridiculous, at worst, those can be fighting words.

Person/Gender	Pronoun	Level of speech	Notes/origin
1SG (any)	ena (<i>*ano</i>)	Neutral	An original pronoun, goes back to proto-Kolpic.
1SG (any)	hao	Deferential	"Person"

Person/Gender	Pronoun	Level of speech	Notes/origin
1PL (any)	haoho	Deferential	"Persons", pl. of the above.
1SG/1PL(EX) (any)	mishí (* <i>miɛn</i>)	Superior	Vaguely comparable to the "royal we".
2SG (any)	isa (* <i>iso</i>)	Neutral	An original pronoun, goes back to proto-Kolpic.
2SG (male)	lo	Informal	"Brother"
2SG (female)	mihi	Informal	"Sister"
2SG (any)	saka	Deferential	Clipped from <i>vasaka</i> , "lord, noble" (gender-neutral). More recent usage.
2SG (any)	tsesa	Superior	"Child". As you might expect, somewhat patronizing. Commonly used by older speakers of higher social standing.
3 (any, singular)	visí	Informal	Clipped from <i>vivisí</i> , "guest". Used informally between equals, rather colloquial. The plural clipped form <i>visisi</i> is a more rare usage.
3 (any, singular)	así	Neutral	The proximal demonstrative. Proto-Kolpic already lacked a separate third person pronoun.
3 (any, plural)	semá	Neutral	Same as above, but plural.

Naturally this overview is a considerable simplification - in reality the different politeness levels and their usages are modulated by the position and background of the speaker and hearer as well as the speaker's intentions to a degree that no simple table can capture. Moreover, it does not capture role or profession-specific terms (eg naval slang). This should nonetheless give a broad guideline of typical usage for the foreigner to the northern Great Bay region.

2.4 Pronouns and case

Pronouns take the same case particles as nouns do (see 1.4), and under the same conditions. Speech participants are always considered highly animate.

3. Verbs:

3.1 Verbs - general structure

Unlike nouns, verbs in NGB carry considerable inflection/affixation, and are agglutinative in morphology (although not necessarily very long, since there is not so much inflection to begin with). NGB is an aspect-centric language, with aspect at the core of the verbal structure.

Perhaps unexpectedly, there is *no* person indexing on the verb, so that pro drop and other strategies of that kind are not permitted. Modal forms and voicing are also primarily marked by affixation, albeit there are also auxiliary constructions. Verbs are rigidly kept in clause-final position.

3.2 Tense

NGB is tenseless in terms of basic morphology - there is no inflection for past, present, or future (or other tenses for that matter). Tense distinctions do exist semantically, but are captured in different aspectual forms and inextricably combined with them.

3.3. Aspect

The heart of NGB, as with most Kolpic languages, is aspect. Of course, each of the forms incorporates to some degree a tense element as well, making them complex combinations. The basic forms - as represented by core inflection - are:

- Imperfective (IPFV), which encapsulates past, present and future tense meanings. Past imperfectives are often preceded in the discourse by either a perfective or adverbials to situate a past (rather than nonpast) usage specifically, but this by no means obligatory;
- Narrative or neutral aspect (NTR), which functions like a 'present perfective' or 'simple present', and is used in specific discourse contexts like narration or response to commands;
- Perfective (PFV), which is primarily used for past events, taken as a single whole - also used more commonly than neutral aspect for chronicles and other formal narrative histories, especially in older material;
- Perfect (PERF), used for past events with enduring present relevance;
- Pluperfect (PLU), a more rare form used for perfects with relevance for the past (a kind of pre-perfect). This is increasingly considered archaic as a properly inflected form (rather than a periphrastic construction), and now only found in writing or very formal speech.

Out of these, the most commonly used are the imperfective, perfective, and neutral aspects. As mentioned above, the pluperfect is obsolete in regular speech, and the perfect is increasingly losing its grip also, being mostly restricted to use in specific constructions. Naturally, wider aspectual distinctions can be achieved in particular grammatical or pragmatic contexts as well.

The aspectual morphology table is as follows, giving the fundamental underlying affixes. Note, however, that many verbs are quite irregular (synchronically), and realizations do vary. Especially the perfective inflection is often hard to predict. For that reason, some example verbs are given:

Tense-Aspect	Affix	tsao (*<i>tjao</i>) "roll"	lipi (*<i>lep</i>) "eat"	ne (*<i>na</i>) "greet"	ohó (*<i>oxoh</i>) "cough"
IPFV	-ti/-zi (*- <i>ti</i>)	tsaozi	litti	nezi	ohoti
NTR	me/mo (*- <i>me</i>)	tsaomo	leme	neme	ohomo
PFV	(copy vowel, stress shift to final) (*-(<i>V</i>)s)	tsaó	lefé	na	ohohó
PERF	-útsu (*- <i>oc</i>)	tsautsu	lefutsu	nautsu	ohohútsu
PLU	-oyi (*- <i>oci</i>)	tsaoyi	levoyi	naoyi	ohoyi

Not infrequently, the perfective is quite irregular or difficult to predict. For example, it can cause vowel alternations instead, often producing a final -*u*:

hupaha "grow, cultivate" - *hopohu* "grew, cultivated"

Initial vowels may drop out due to the stress shift:

asishi "give, cede" - *sishí* "gave, ceded"

And there may be latent consonants that reappear as part of the suffix:

tisé "drink" - *tisevé* "drank"

There are a few verbs which are suppletive and fully irregular from that viewpoint, although not many. (Whether the 'regular' verbs are easy to predict or memorize for foreigners is yet another thing...)

One example is *oá* "go, move", which has the following inflectional stem forms:

IPFV: *iti*

NTR: *oama*

PFV: *asá*

PERF: *hutsu*

PLU: *ihoyi*

The converb forms (*oasu*, *oasi*) are more regular.

3.4 Valency operations

3.4.1.1 Mediopassive voice

As mentioned above, use of the passive is generally dispreferred in NGB, with use of a marked nominative for low animacy agents operating on high(er) animacy patients preferred instead (see 1.4.1). NGB overall prefers unmarked transitive 'readings' of verbs.

Even so, a historic passive-like inflection does exist, but it comes with an important caveat. In the evolution toward NGB it has come to operate more like a 'middle voice', incorporating semantic ranges from purely passive to close to reflexive or classic 'middles'.

This mediopassive has been lexicalized to some extent. In various cases these forms have become stative or anticausative verbs without necessarily still forming a valency-reduced opposite of an existing transitive lexical verb (although they may do both). These anticausative middles have the morphology of the mediopassive, but with fundamentally nonpassive (albeit stative) meanings.

These and the more 'middle' voice usages now predominate for many verbs over purely 'oppositional' passive interpretations. This has strengthened the marked nominative as a the preferred passive-avoiding solution for such verbs. (That said, a 'classic' passive interpretation can still be grammatical in many cases, and then acts as an emphatic marker of valency reduction, suggesting semantic passivity or powerlessness).

For this reason, this form will in this grammar be called middle voice, and glossed MID rather than passive PASS (or P) unless a purely 'oppositional' passive is intended.

3.4.1.2 Mediopassive and labile paradigms

To add to the complexity, the morphology of the middle voice differs considerably depending on the morphophonology of the verb. Using some example verbs from 3.3 above, the middle voice most often (the 'regular' form) appears as a prefix *i-* or *e-*, with the attendant semantic shifts in interpretation:

lipi "eat" - *elipi* "be eaten"

na "greet" - *ini* "be an officer"

ohó "cough" - *yohó* "to be coughed up, to be spat out"

However, there is another paradigm where the mediopassives appear (lexicalized or otherwise) as consonant gradation:

kifí "break" (tr.) - *hifí* "break, fall apart" (intr.)

tisé "drink" - *zisé* "be drunk (imbibed); be empty"

In some pairs a prefix combines with an alternation, as in *tsao* "roll" (tr.) - *iyao* "roll" (intr.). Also, only a limited set of sh-verbs actually undergo consonant gradation (this is due to historic consonant mergers); most are regularly prefixed with *i-*, and this number has increased over time. It is likely that in the future the sh-gradation will die out, at least in the spoken language.

Finally, NGB has a considerable number of labile verbs, which have the same form(s) for an active and (medio)passive reading. Usually the number of arguments will clarify which is meant, together with the differential nominative marking; context also helps. These verbs are all characterized by their irregular final stress.

miló "build, raise" - *miló* "to be built, raised"

ilí "open" (tr.) - *ilí* "open" (intr.)

fleá "cut open, wound" - *fleá* "be cut, be wounded"

3.4.1.3 Reintroducing oblique arguments in mediopassives

The omitted argument of a mediopassive construction can be reintroduced with the oblique marker *si* (see 1.4.3). In a few cases, the mediopassive is more like an antipassive (at least in the English translation), where the reintroduced "agent" is usually in English rather translated as a patient. For example the verb form *epuku* "to struggle with" has a reintroduced argument for the object of the struggling or wrestling; in NGB this is treated as if it is a passive construction with a reintroduced agent (because etymologically it is).

3.4.2 Causatives

There is a productive causative in NGB, which is fairly uniformly realized through the prefix *tso/tsu-* (**cwo-*). Besides 'physical' causation, it can have the connotation of orders given or political/military force exerted, and the causative most often appears in that context.

lipi "eat" - *tsolipi* "force to eat"

There are occasional minor alternations fitting the general declination pattern of those verbs, e.g.:

tsao "roll (*trans.*)" - *tsuyao* "make someone roll something"
hupaha "grow, cultivate (*trans.*)" - *tsuhopaha* "force to farm"

Mediopassive forms cannot be causativized; the regular transitive verb is used instead (keeping in mind NGB's strong preference for interpreting basic verbs as transitive). The exception are those verbs that only have a (medio)passive form and interpretation, e.g. some cases where the semantics of the mediopassive have deviated sufficiently far from the active form that they are often treated pragmatically, and therefore increasingly grammatically, as distinct (deponent) verbs:

ivisi "die, pass away" - *tsoevisi* "cause to die" (a kind of euphemistic way of speaking used in formal texts for executions and the like).

Since these forms are relatively recent derivations in the language, they attach to modern forms of the verb and are fairly transparent.

3.5 Nonfinite verb forms

3.5.1 Infinitives

The infinitive of the verb is the bare stem and the citation form. It takes no additional marking. It is used as a gerund, and in two ways: as an object of other verbs of the type "wanting, needing, liking" etc, and as a subject in the manner of "-ing" words in English:

tisé mipi fleama

drink(.INF) liver wound-NTR

"drinking wounds the liver" (in general)

3.5.2.1 Converbs

One striking feature of NGB, as all Kolpic languages, is its use of converbs. These are non-indexing verb forms that act 'adverbially', in the sense of conveying temporal, causal, and other framing information about the action expressed by the verb, essentially providing the same function as a subordinate or coordinating clause. They do not act as independent main verbs, however, and in NGB the subject of any converb is preferentially also the subject of the main verb.

In practice there are some exceptions to this last rule: primarily cases where the subject of the main verb is semantically or in discourse terms closely connected to the subject of the converb. For example, a switch from singular to a plural including the original singular subject, or an object of the sequential converb becoming the subject of the main verb. In longer narratives, converb chaining may also occur with different subjects when both have been well 'established' in the discourse already and it's still part of the

same narrative. In all these cases, the subject of the main verb is always also explicitly stated in its own clause, however; if need be with a resumptive pronoun.

Only the main verb takes the full tense-aspect information; converbs can nonetheless take their own objects.

NGB has two converb forms in frequent usage, which are achieved by suffixes on the verb stem. They precede the main verb, and converb clauses are often fronted altogether in the sentence (although maintaining an SOV structure internally, like relative clauses do). Existential and other copula constructions (see 6.2 below and onward) avoid the usage of converbs, but regular verbs readily use them for clause chaining (see 3.5.2.4) even where English would not do so.

3.5.2.2 Sequential converb

Meaning both "after, since" and "because" (depending on context), this converb - probably related to an incorporated word meaning "then" - is formed by the suffix *-su* or *-só* (**saw*), although the realizations vary somewhat in particular paradigms. Using the same example verbs as before:

tsao "roll" - *tsaosó* "after rolling"
lipi "eat" - *lissu* "after eating"
ne "greet" - *nasó* "after greeting"
ohó "cough" - *ohosu* "after coughing"

It is possible to combine this converb form with the mediopassive form of a verb, which in English is more easily translated participially:

kifi "break" - *kifensu* "after breaking" -- *hifi* "break" - *hifensu* "after having broken"

And the same with the labile verbs:

milosu "after building" - *milosu* "after having been built"

3.5.2.3 Simultaneous converb

This converb type is subordinating, rather than coordinating, in function and indicates an activity undertaken by the subject *while* doing the main verb. This form has its origins in a very old defunct participial form (as with the other Kolpic languages), which has further reduced in morphology. It is achieved with the suffix *-Ci* (*-*Ci* < *redup.* + *hi*), where the consonant is a little unpredictable - sometimes a 'copy' consonant, sometimes an alternation, and *-hi* following stems ending on an open syllable. To take the same examples again:

tsao "roll" - *tsaohi* "while rolling"
lipi "eat" - *lipvi* "while eating"

ne "greet" - *nehi* "while greeting"
ohó "cough" - *ohohi* "while coughing"

As with the other converb, it can be applied to the mediopassive:

kifi "break" - *kifenni* "while breaking" -- *hifi* "break" - *hifenni* "while being broken"

And with the labile verbs:

miłovi "while building" - *miłovi* "while being built"

3.5.2.4 Converb clause chaining

The sequential converb can also be used in clause chains, where series of verbs in sequential converb form will be used to coordinate with a single explicit main verb (and the same subject). As with other converb constructions, such chained converbs can still each take their own objects. This can lead to a sequence of many "mini-clauses" after another, all in converbal form. This is somewhat like "and then... and then... and then...", but is an accepted manner of speech in NGB and related languages, and pragmatically preferred to a sequence of shorter sentences involving the same subject.

3.6 Mood

Modal forms are complex in NGB, and combine affixation with fixed periphrastic constructions. The most important modal forms are described here, though they do not exhaust all possible combinations.

3.6.1 Direct imperatives

Imperative-type constructions (commands and instructions) come in various kinds in NGB. Which one is used primarily depends on the relationship of social status between the instructor and instructee. Direct morphological imperatives (see below) are only accepted between someone seen as superior in rank or prestige and someone below; otherwise, it would be experienced as rude and aggressive.

The morphological imperative is formed by the suffix *-hai*; unusually, there is a remnant of number agreement, with imperatives addressed to multiple addressees (regardless of paucal or plural quantity) instead taking the suffix *-hizi*. This latter form is quite formal and elevated, however, and now has a somewhat optional status. For example:

tsao "roll" - *tsaohai/tsaohizi* "roll!"
lipi "eat" - *lipahai/lipahizi* "eat!"

Mediopassives can also be expressed in the imperative, usually with lexical specificity:

ini "be an officer" - *inahai* "be an officer!" (a speech act confirming an appointment or promotion)

This is not commonly used for purely 'oppositional' passive meanings - one would not readily say "be broken!" or somesuch.

Among equals, a periphrastic construction is preferred: "good if..." **tbd forms** See Conditionals (3.6.3).

3.6.2 *Speaker-centered imperatives*

This is a different type of imperative that specifically implies the addressee is to go elsewhere and fulfill the command for the benefit of the speaker, or on the speaker's authorization (or both). This is typically used in the context of formal hierarchical relations, i.e. in the sense of orders or instructions. One could compare it to English "get me.." or "fetch..."; it is similarly most often (as a matter of pragmatics) used with verbs like "send", "get", "take", etc.

It is formed by a prefix, rather than a suffix, which is realized as *nu-/no-* (**nos*), with attendant regular stress changes:

'*eya* "get, take" - *no'aya* "go get me"
míló "build" - *nomílu* "go build for me"

There is no number distinction. It is glossed as IMP.SC.

3.6.3 *Conditionals*

The conditional corresponds roughly to English "if" or "when" (in the sense of a potential "when"), or also "provided that, as long as". It is marked by the suffix *-ne/ní* (**nan*). This combines with the aspectual marking (see 3.3) in an agglutinating manner, and the meanings are tense-aspect distinguished. To use once more *lipi* "eat" as example in a second person context:

- *isa lettiní* "if/when you eat". The imperfective is the most common combination with the conditional, and does much of the same as this construction does in English. As with the imperfective in general, the discourse context determines the timeframe; the default assumption is a future orientation, i.e. strictly "when you will be eating" (probably more felicitously rendered in English as "when you eat"). In an explicitly past discourse orientation, it can mean "if you were eating" (e.g. "then I won't interrupt").

- *isa lemene* "if you eat/if one eats". Used more gnominically, for general statements, wisdom, etc.

- *isa lefene* "if you eat/ate". Default orientation is past. Primarily has a counterfactual or at least skeptical usage - "if only you did X, then Y would not happen", and similar.

- *isa lefutsne* "if you have eaten". Oriented towards present consequence (as with the perfect in general) - "if you have eaten, we can go".

- *isa levojiní* "if you had eaten". Now very rare and probably obsolete - used as a past counterfactual in a past context in older texts. Colloquially replaced by *lefene*.

Conditionals can only be combined with main clause verbs that are in the imperfective (NGB's most unmarked aspect) or, when combined with neutral conditionals, neutral aspect. They are fronted in the sentence, coming before the main clause.

3.7 *Experiencer verbs with nominal objects*

A small, closed set of experiencer verbs ("want", "need", "know", "love" etc) do not behave like a canonical transitive verb when having a nominal object argument. Instead, they take two variant forms, described below.

3.7.1 *"Want" experiencer constructions*

Experiencer verb clauses with verbs of the type involving wanting, needing, desiring etc behave like regular transitive clauses, except that the nominal object of the clause is marked as an oblique. I.e., they take the oblique particle *si* (see 1.4.3). By way of illustration:

ena nao lo si 'ashilti

1SG.NTR NOM 2SG.M.INFR OBL love-IPFV

"I love you (*male*)" (with a somewhat uncertain tone pragmatically - the speaker isn't sure how the other person will react...)

3.7.2 *"Know" experiencer constructions*

...

4. **Modifiers and determiners:**

4.1 *True adjectives*

NGB has a closed set of 'true adjectives' inherited from Proto-Kolpic, whereas all other basic attributive modifiers act like stative verbs. This set of true adjectives is not that small, however - it contains about two dozen words that behave morphosyntactically more like nouns than like verbs. The distinction rests in the verbal inflection that stative verbs allow (see section 3) but true adjectives do not. Additionally there is (in many cases) their placement in the constituent order - true adjectives always precede their noun, whereas NGB is fairly strictly SOV in normal declarative clauses.

True adjectives show no agreement, as only determiners can agree in the NP in NGB. They act essentially as separate lexical items.

Because of the head-final nature of NN compounds, however, it can be difficult in some cases to distinguish an adjective-noun sequence from a compound. Intonation (stress) and morphological effects on compounds can help.

The most straightforward form of the true adjective is a direct juxtaposition:

iliki milehova
good dog-PL
"good dogs"

4.2 Stative verbs (attributive verbs)

Most attribution is verblike in nature, and inflects for the most part as regular action verbs do. This usage constitutes a predicative use of the attributive verb. For example:

siete lisomo
sea(s) blue.green-NTR
"the sea is/the seas are aquamarine"

For the adnominal usage, the word order is not fixed, but one distinction is the absence of verbal marking. Moreover, a postposed participle *su* (*so) is required, which is derived from a light verb (probably going back to a possessive meaning) giving it a quasi-participial attributive meaning:

<i>lisa su siete</i>	or	<i>siete lisa su</i>
blue.green ATTR sea(s)		sea(s) blue.green ATTR
"the aquamarine sea(s)"		"the aquamarine sea(s)"

Historically, only the latter order is found. But in contemporary NGB there is an increasing unmarked preference for the former, possibly under the influence of the proper adjectives, so that the latter has become more emphatic or contrastive by nature.

The particle also helps distinguish a regular attributive form from a more fixed compound, as of course does stress and the attendant phonological shifts. For example:

<i>uku su imi</i>	vs	<i>ukimi</i>
red ATTR wood		redwood
"red wood"		"redwood"

If there are multiple stative verbs to be attributed to the noun, only one *su* is needed, and the order is determined pragmatically. It is possible to combine these with the conjunction *yi* for clarity, but it is not grammatically required.

4.3 Comparison

4.3.1 Comparatives

With regular stative verbs, comparatives ("A is Xer than B") are formed by use of the comparative marker *utu*, which links the two elements. To illustrate:

fopo flifí utu shulama

rabbit frog COMP be.white-NTR

"a rabbit is whiter than a frog"

4.4 Articles

NGB has no articles. Indefiniteness is usually indicated for non-singular nouns by using a paucal form (see 1.2). For singular nouns, the default assumption is, if anything, indefinite; definiteness can be indicated by usage of a demonstrative (see 4.5). This is strongly favored in the case of recurring human or highly animate actors in a discourse context, but more optional when speaking of objects and the like.

Definiteness can also interact with the tense-aspect system, in that use of the neutral aspect can indicate a gnomic meaning when combined with an indefinite subject ("the elephant (in general) is a large beast"). Generally context, however, disambiguates well enough.

4.5 Demonstratives

In NGB, there are two levels of demonstrative: near and far. Neither form agrees with anything except number, in accordance with the general dislike of agreement in NGB. The plural forms are primarily used for resumptive pronominal usage, although they can be used adnominally also. Demonstratives, when used adnominally, come after the nouns they apply to.

The near form is *así* (**asem*) in the singular, and *semá* in the plural:

fenke así

web DEM.PROX

"this web"

The far form is *shvele* (**ɛwal*) and *shvalele* in the plural:

pelaná shvalele

tree.PL DEM.DIST.PL

"those trees"

5. Possession:

5.1 *Alienable direct possession*

Direct alienable possession is formed by juxtaposition, in the order possessor-possessee, with a resumptive proximal demonstrative (probably historically doing duty as a repeat third person pronoun). For example:

vasaka así ve'a
lord POSS fish
"a noble's fish"

This form has been extended by analogy even to the older forms for speech participants (and certainly applies also to modern 'pronouns' that are really nominal forms):

ena así flifitsi
1SG.NTR POSS frog-PC
"my few frogs"

This does not cause confusion with demonstrative usage of *así*, as it is simply repeated (perhaps comparable to "that that" in English, and similarly stylistically disfavored):

mileha así así fiza
dog DEM.PROX POSS stone
"this dog's stone"

It can however be confused with definiteness usage of *así*, which is common and also postposed after the noun. Syntax and context disambiguate the two, especially in whether two nouns ('connected' in a possessive relationship) take up a single syntactic slot, in which case it is a possessive construction, or just the one noun with *así*, in which case it is a definiteness marking.

Ambiguity is nonetheless grammatically always possible, e.g.:

vasaka así ve'a tsuzi

can be interpreted as "a lord's fish is pushing" or "the lord (previously mentioned in discourse) is pushing a fish". Discourse context will generally make this clear, and disambiguating addition of case particles (see 1.4) is always an option if really needed.

5.2 *Inalienable direct possession*

Inalienable possession concerns possession of inherent objects (like body parts), as well as kin terms and permanent attributes and qualities (this includes long-lasting relations, like geographical features). This is achieved by simple juxtaposition, without the pseudo-resumptive demonstrative:

lo yi

2SG.M.INFR hand

"your hand (*male informal addressee*)"

5.3 Predicate possession

The predicate form of possession in NGB combines the oblique case marker with a copular type verb, *eze* (roughly "exist"), as follows:

mihi si tsesa eze

2SG.F.INFR OBL child COP

"you have a child (*female informal addressee*)" (lit: "to sister, a child exists")

6. Adpositions and predication:

6.1 Basic adpositions and case marking

Adpositions in NGB are uniformly postpositional, i.e. come after the noun to which they refer. As such, they are not easy to fully distinguish from the case marking particles (see 1.4 above), as they fulfill many similar functions in locative, relational, and adverbial usages.

Nonetheless, a few distinctions can be made. Firstly, in some situations the use of the case markers is obligatory, whereas an adpositional phrase can always be dropped without this making the rest of the clause ungrammatical.

Secondly, it is possible to stack postpositions with the oblique marker *si*. In such cases, *si* always comes first and the postpositions after.

For example, both of these are grammatical:

vasaka mileha hao si sishí

lord dog 1SG.DFR OBL give.PFV

"the noble gave me (*deferential*) a dog"

vasaka mileha hao si ne sishí

lord dog 1SG.DFR OBL for give.PFV

"the noble gave *me* (*deferential*) a dog"

The latter is more emphatic, i.e. it was specifically for me.

6.2 Existential predication

As with predicate possessives (see 5.3), existential predicates rely on the copular verb *eze*. This leads to a straightforward construction:

shulu su pelaná eze

white ATTR tree.PL COP

"there are white trees/white trees exist"

This form is also used for meanings like "live, dwell", when indicating someone's place of residence etc.

6.3 Locative predication

The locative predicative construction works much the same way:

shulu su pelaná umavai ha eze

white ATTR tree.PL land.PC in COP

"in some lands there are white trees"

6.4 Modifier predication

This is achieved through the use of stative or modifier verbs; see 4.2.

6.5 Nominal/equative predication

The standard form of nominal predication is a zero copula. This does not cause confusion with the inalienable possessive construction (see 5.2), partially for semantic and contextual reasons, and partially because the zero copula construction lacks a main verb at the end, and the possessive construction does not. For example:

hao (hao) fopo yu pilihizi

1SG.DFR (1SG.DFR) rabbit ACC see-IPFV

"1 (*deferential*) see my rabbit"

hao fopo

1SG.DFR rabbit

"I (*deferential*) am a rabbit"

6.6 Tense-aspect inflection of the copula

The existential copula *eze* can be inflected for tense-aspect, but only to the degree that there is a past tense form (not otherwise aspectually differentiated): *afé*. This is now essentially a highly irregular, almost suppletive form, although it probably originates in an old perfective.

Nominal predication cannot be inflected for T/A/M; the zero copula juxtaposition is to be interpreted for temporality according to context, or by use of adverbs.

7. Negation and clause structure:

7.1 Basic negation of regular clauses

Basic negation of declarative clauses is achieved by means of a special negative verb *oí*. Like the existential copula, it has only two forms (besides the extremely rare nonfinite form): the imperfective *oezi* and the irregular perfective form *aná*. These forms act as main verbs with a nonfinite complement clause (see Infinitives under 3.5.1 and Clausal Structures *q.v.*). Lit.: "It is not that X do"

7.2 Negation of predicates

The same construction is applied to the predicate clauses (see 6.2-6.5 above). The original predicate clause is attached as a complement clause to the negatory verb.

7.3 Negation of the zero copula

For the zero copula (see 6.5), much the same applies; the zero copula is still zero but the construction is a complement to the negatory verb. This does mean that in the negated form, unlike the positive form, one can morphologically distinguish past and present tense (at least sometimes, in the sense that the perfective is likely to be used for past usage here, unless prior discourse context suggests otherwise).

7.4 Complement clauses

Complement clauses are structured as clauses in their own right but act as complements of other (main) verbs. This applies particularly to experiencer verbs (see, like, know, etc), but also to the negation verb (see 7.1 above). Insofar as another clause, rather than a nominal object, is the argument of an experiencer clause, the special structure of the latter is not so relevant (see 3.7).

Due to the strictly verb-final structure of NGB, the complement clause of a main verb is wedged as an argument between the subject of the matrix clause and the main (or matrix) verb. Similarly, the complement clause itself has a verb-final structure. In this sense, the argument simply takes the slot where normally the object of a transitive clause would go in NGB. The verb of the argument is in the infinitival mood.

To give an example:

ena fuhava yu shvalele ive yilutsu

1SG.NTR elephant-PL ACC DEM.DIST.PL pierce.INF want.PERF

"I had wanted to stab those elephants..."

Besides infinitives, imperatives can be nonfinite verbal complements of matrix clauses too:

ena nao imavai no'aya yilti

1SG.NTR NOM wood.PC SPC.IMP-get want.IPFV

"I want (you to) fetch me some lumber"

Increasingly there is a colloquial tendency to front complement clauses entirely, so that the structure shifts to a kind of quasi-OSV (if the complement is seen as the object argument of the main verb, as NGB tends to treat it). This is not formally accepted or written, however.

7.5 Relative clauses

In NGB, the relative clause comes before the noun. In the case of subject relativization (see below), this can mean the sentence starts with the relative clause, creating a rare case where any kind of verb inflection appears up front.

Note that the verb of the relative clause itself still takes tense-aspect marking, and this can be (and often is) distinct from the tense-aspect marking of the main verb of the whole sentence. Where English would use past participials with present relevance, NGB marks the verb of the relative clause in the perfect aspect. All other forms, including English present or future participials (rare as such meanings are pragmatically), take the imperfective. Due to the decline of the perfect, in colloquial speech sometimes the perfective is used instead, but grammarians consider this incorrect.

7.5.1 Subject relativization

For subjects, it is formed by a preposed gap construction - which can include a converb:

lipvi kienútsu kivi ukehezi

eat-SIM.CONV fall.PERF man be.red-IPFV

"the man who fell while eating blushes" (or: "the man, having fallen while eating, blushes")

7.5.2 Object relativization

For objects, the construction is much the same. The preposed relative clause begins at the object slot - in other words, the main verb subject still precedes it:

utsa fleahútsu mileha anufi

woman (P)-wound-PERF dog bear-PFV

"the woman carried the wounded dog"

(technically also valid: "the woman carried/carries the dog that (was) wounded", due to *fleá* being a labile verb - see 3.4.1.2)

Note that regular converb constructions cannot cover such cases, since subject and timeframe of the converbs in a clause chain must always be identical with the final main verb (see 3.5.2.4).

8. Questions and interrogatives:

...

9. Idiomatic constructions:

9.1. *As X as... so X that... as X as possible...*

There are several varieties of this construction, all of which involve the particle *shu* (a grammaticalization from *shve'a*, "reach, extend"). For the basic case where one says "X is/has/does as much Z as Y" and so forth, *shu* can be inserted after the comparand:

nosó así neza shu ehozi
cloak DEM.PROX mountain as.much be.cold-IPFV
"this cloak is as cold as a mountain"

When the argument is not a noun, but a complement clause, it is interpreted as "so X that...":

oo así isa evezi shu momo
owl DEM.PROX 2SG.NTR laugh-IPFV so.much be.strong-NTR
"this owl is so strong (that) you will laugh"

In the above construction, as described in 7.4 the complement clause is sometimes fronted entirely (e.g. *isa evezi shu oo así momo*); grammarians frown upon this, but it is colloquially accepted.

Finally, there is a version where *shu* appears without any additional argument. In this case, it is implicitly interpreted as "as X as possible":

shvihá shulama shu
star-PL be.bright-NTR as.much.as.possible
"the stars are as bright as possible"

Pragmatically, depending on context, this can also be used to mean "too much" - somewhat like Latin comparatives.

9.2 *The more... the more*

Constructions of the type "the more X, the more Y" rely on the conditional (see 3.6.3) combined with *shu* (see above). They may involve the use of the dummy indefinite pronoun *nima* as well:

nima vivisamení nima pilihimi shu
one travel-NTR-COND one see-NTR the.more
"the more one travels, the more one sees"

9.3 Like...

Like, in the sense of "seeming as, in the manner of", is expressed in a complex adpositional construction. The noun takes the oblique marker *si*, followed by the relevant postposition *mutu*:

así fopo si mutu sleti
3SG rabbit OBL like run.IPFV
"he is running like a rabbit"

99. Derivations and compounds:

X.1 Verb > noun

X.1.1 Agentive derivations

X.1.1.1 "Doer" derivation

The first agentive deverbalizer is one that derives non-professional *nomen agentis* forms from action verbs and from instruments or tools in use (flute > flautist). This can take some different morphological forms, going back to a suffix (-*em, relating to "arm"). In NGB, this is often (though not always) realized as the stress-shifting suffix -í:

miló "build" - *milaví* "builder, architect"
vivisi "travel" - *vivisí* "traveller, guest"

X.1.1.2 Animal "doers"

In animal name compounds, the same verb-noun structure is common, but with the suffix -ya (*fjo, from an obsolete word probably meaning "animal, creature"). For example:

ive "stab, pierce" - *ivaya* "scorpion"
lipi "eat" - *lipiya* "animal" (this is the modern term)

It can also be used as a noun-noun compound head, however:

fenke "web" - *fenkaya* "spider"

X.1.2 Undergoer object derivation ("thing that is or can be Xed")

Many objects that are defined by an action that is customarily performed on them or for which they are specifically made or suited have this derivational suffix, which usually surfaces as some form of *-ó* (**-ow*, deriving ultimately from **omwa* "land, surface"). This can often induce considerable morphological changes. For example:

anó "carry, wear" - *nosó* "cloak, robe, overcoat"

X.1.3 "Instance" derivation (singulatives or results of verbs)

There are various of these; one common one is *-tso/-tsa* (**-tsa* < "child"). It can also be a diminutive or singulative (though unproductively, only in historic use) in N>N derivation. These can usually be pluralized in the same paradigm as *tsesa*, due to the origins of the grammaticalization.

Another common derivational suffix is *-Cets* (**-ca*), from a word for "path". This is mostly used for abstract states or conditions, a bit like "-ness" or "-ity".

X.2 Noun > Adj

X.2.1: "-ly" forms

General adjectivization in the sense of "having the characteristics of the noun or element", like English *-ly*, is productively formed with *-ma* (**-mo*, "heart"). Generally these derived forms are treated as stative verbs, but a few older, determinerlike instances are treated as true adjectives. Sometimes this is also used to create adverbs instead, usually with zero derivation from an adjectival form.

X.3 Noun > Verb

X.3.1 "-ify" forms

- A general verbalizer, relating to adding or using a tool, material, or substance, especially when on another object or substance, can be formed with *-Ca* (**wo*), from **ewom* "cover":

teshe "fire" - *teshama* "burn, light on fire"

tseke "sea salt" - *tseka* "(marinade in) brine"

X.4 Verb > Verb

X.4.1 Un-

There is a prefix indicating reversal, undoing, or negation of a verb, often with semantically shifted meanings, that is frequent in the language but no longer fully productive (due to its irregular realization). This can take the form of *kam-*, *hen-*, *hem-* and other semi-irregular prefixes (ultimately from a shortening of **kamo*, "back").

Significant and/or semantically deviant forms are listed separately in the lexicon as with all derivations.

X.4.2 Stativization

The same construction as in X.2.1 can be used to derive adjectives directly from verbs, akin to English "-ous" and the like. Essentially this converts the verb to a stative verb reflecting the property of having or doing the verb, which can then be preposed to a noun like a regular stative verb.

X.X Special Compounds:

- "-ward" or "in the direction of" is unproductively formed as a compound by means of the head-final element *-ta* (**at*), from "face". For example in the cardinal compass directions: *ehoata* "North", *intinata* "South" etc.