

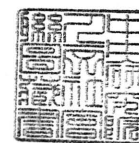


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Volume 3
Men-Ser

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	Yuè: Cantonese	Hakka: Méizhōu	Gàn: Nánchāng	Mín: Xiàmén	Wú: Sūzhōu	Xiāng: Shuāngfēng
葉 *-p (yè 'leaf')	jip 4b	iap 4b	iet 4a / iet 4b	iap 4b / iʔ 4b	jiʔ 4b	e 3a /ia 3a
發 *-t (fā 'emit')	fat 4a-long	fat 4a / pət 4a	fat 4a	huat 4a / puʔ 4a	fəʔ 4a	xua 1b
穀 *-k (gǔ 'grain')	kok 4a-short	kuk 4a	kuk 4a	kək 4a	koʔ 4a	kəu 1b

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Mai Yun

Rukai (Tona) Language

1. GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The Rukai (with a population of 12,000) forms one of the 16 → Austronesian ethnic groups of Táiwan and live in the south of Táiwan. In recent years, some have migrated and formed new communities in areas occupied by Páiwān 排灣 and Southern → Mǐn 閩 speakers; in 2009, the devastating Morakot typhoon erased entire Rukai villages.

Six mutually unintelligible dialects are distinguished, each dialect corresponding to the name of a village/community: Tanan spoken in the east in Taitung County (Táidōngxiàn

台東縣), Budai and Labuan in the south in Pingtung County (Píngdōngxiàn 屏東縣), Maga, Mantaوران and Tona in the north in Kaohsiung City (Gāoxióngshì 高雄市).

The ethnic name *qukai*—from which *Rukai* is derived—first designated the dialects spoken in Pingtung and Taitung counties (Budai, Labuan and Tanan) but it was later used to refer also to the dialects of the “lower three villages” (Maga, Mantaوران and Tona). Ferrell (1969) and Shelley (1978) have questioned the validity of this linguistic family and viewed Maga and Tona on the one hand and Mantaوران on the other as distinct languages. However, three types of evidence, phonological, lexical and morphosyntactic, demonstrate the validity of Rukai as a linguistic group (see Zeitoun 2003, in preparation). The relationships between Rukai and other Formosan languages remain moot. Rukai is viewed as closer to Páiwān (Ferrell 1969, Ho 1983), subgrouping with Tsouic (Tsuchida 1976), or forming one of the primary Proto-Austronesian (PAN) offshoots (Blust 1999, Ross 2009).

The present paper is concerned with a brief grammatical description of Tona Rukai, as it has not received as much attention as other Rukai dialects. The earliest written documents on Tona date back to Ogawa and Asai (1935:364–393), who provide a brief grammatical description and nine short texts (1935:380–389). Tsuchida (1976) and Li (1977, 1996) offer lexical comparative data as a basis for reconstruction and subgrouping while Li (1997), May H. Wang (2003, 2005) and Pei-shou Wang (2005) focus on aspects of morpho-syntax. Important work on other Rukai dialects includes the grammars on Tanan by Li (1973) and on Mantaوران by Zeitoun (2007).



Map 1. Geographical distribution of the Rukai dialects (Drawn by Lin Chih-hsien).

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE LANGUAGE

2.1 Phonology

2.1.1 Consonants

The phonemic inventory of Tona includes seven-teen consonants /p, t, k, ʔ, b, d, g, θ, s, v, ð, ts, m, n, ŋ, l/ and two glides /w, j/. The contrast between high vowels and glides is easily perceived in certain minimal pairs, e.g., *ʔjakaj* [ʔjá.kaj] ‘there is/are’ vs. *ʔjakail* [ʔjá.ká.i] ‘(it’s) here!’. Though Tona preserves the Proto-Rukai (PR) inventory fairly consistently, it has lost the trill /r/ and the retroflex /lɾ/. Compare PR *rigi ‘horse’ > Tona *igi*, PR *lima ‘five’ > Tona *ima*. There are at least two Japanese loan phonemes, /z/ and /h/, e.g., *zikanə* ‘time’, *hikoki* ‘plane’. There is no restriction in the distribution of consonants but they appear only in word-initial and -medial position as all words end in an open syllable (Li 1973, Tsuchida 1976 and Hsin 2000). The last vowel of the word might be an echo vowel as in *dikili* ‘to kneel’, an etymological word-final vowel as in *qosa* ‘two’ < PAN *duSa or a vowel occurring at the end of a

word as a result of the loss of a final consonant. There are no consonant clusters.

2.1.2 Vowels

Tona has preserved the vocalic system found in PAN /i, ə, a, o/. Vowels can appear alone or in clusters, cf. *aganə* ‘grandchild’ vs. *agaa* ‘above’. When they appear in clusters, they are composed of a sequence of two (more rarely, of three) vowels which constitute geminates, e.g., *masopii* ‘old’, or clusters of two different vowels, e.g., *maʔaogəʔigi* ‘scattered around disorderedly’.

2.1.3 Syllable and stress

The basic syllable structure can be represented by (C)V, e.g., *ali* [a.li] ‘female friend’. The onset is optional and there is no coda (with the exception of the glides /w/ and /j/). The minimal syllable consists of just a vowel, and the maximal syllable structures are CVV or CVG (where G stands for a glide). I follow Li (1997) in treating stress as non-phonemic. It usually falls on the penultimate syllable.

2.1.4 Phonotactics

Morphophonemic alternations (vowel deletion, glide/fricative alternation, glide formation, the vocalic change from *a/o* to *i* and haplology) in Tona result from the affixation or cliticization of a morpheme in a word.

Deletion of (non-)identical vowels is triggered by prefixation (1) or suffixation (2), whereby only echo vowels, as in (2a) where /ə/ is an echo of stem vowel /a/, get deleted.

1. a. -ini 'his/her' ~ -l-ini
but b. valakə 'child' ~ la-valakə
'their' (l(a)- 'plural')
'children'
2. a. kanə 'eat' ~ kwan-a! 'Eat!'
but b. tsabo 'wrap' ~ tsabo-a! 'Wrap!'

Words ending with /w/ undergo a glide/fricative alternation *w>ɣ* when the base is suffixed with a morpheme starting with /a/. This process applies both to verbs in imperative form (3a) and in nouns in oblique case (3b).

3. a. w-a-sinaw ~ sinav-a! 'Wash
'wash (clothes)' (clothes)!'
 - b. takanaw ~ takanav-anə 'Takanaw
'Takanaw' (Obl)'

When /i/ and /o/ are contiguous to the low vowel /a/, they are realized as glides.

4. a. ti-abaj ~ tj-a-(a)baj 'make a cake'
b. mo-ɖamaə ~ mw-a-ɖamaə 'have one's
menstruation'

A change from /a, o/ to /i/ is usually induced by cliticization.

5. a. tatava 'father' ~ tatavi=namia
'my father' (lit. 'our father')
 - b. takaŋo 'grandmother' ~ takaŋi=mosoa
'your grandmother'

Haplology is rare but occurs in cases where cliticization takes place.

6. titini=nianə ~ titi=nianə
'his/her mother' 'his/her mother' Li (1997:122)

2.2 Morphology

In terms of morphological typology, Tona can be characterized as a synthetic-agglutinative language, i.e., many words in a clause tend to be composed of a series of morphemes that can be easily identified.

Tona is not the most conservative dialect among Rukai and it has not preserved any unusual archaic features. However, one atypical morphological innovation which departs from most other Formosan languages and the Rukai dialects in particular is the replacement of *pa-ka-* in causativized stative verbs (< *pa-* 'Caus', *ka-* 'Stative') by *pa-ti-* (< *ti-* 'make'), e.g., *ma-gi?imotso* 'angry' vs. *pa-ti-gi?imotso* 'make angry', a trait shared also by Maga, its closest relative. Two other morpho-syntactic features distinguish Tona (and Maga) from the rest of the other Rukai dialects: (i) the morpho-syntactic contrast between alienable vs. inalienable possessive—the former is marked by the oblique case and the latter by the genitive case, e.g., *valak-ili* 'my child' (< *-ili* '1S.Gen') vs. *tatavi=namia* 'my father' (< *=namia* '1PE.Obl') and (ii) the development of a full set of nominative prefixes to express volitionality/modality, cf. *ku-siaəkə* 'I want to sleep' vs. *no-siaəkə mi=kakə* 'I will sleep' (*no...* 'mi' 'will', =*kakə* '1S.Nom').

Free and bound morphemes differ in terms of phonotactic and morphological properties. Lexical morphemes are usually disyllabic, trisyllabic or quadrisyllabic. They bear stress (e.g., *livásə* 'knife') and can undergo various morphological processes, most commonly affixation, e.g., *sy-a-livásə* 'carry a knife' (< *si-* 'wear, carry', *a-* 'Real') and reduplication, as in *livalivásə* 'small knife (toy)'. Grammatical morphemes are usually monosyllabic or disyllabic. The affixation or reduplication of grammatical morphemes is highly unproductive and takes place under very restricted conditions. Certain prefixes can be reduplicated, cf. *ti-a-ta?oanana* 'build a hut' > *?aji-ta-ti-ta?oanana* 'build a hut oneself'. Other types of affixes, clitics and function words never are.

Prefixes, suffixes and circumfixes are three types of productive affixes in Tona though prefixes significantly outnumber the two other types of affixes. There is only one infix <*w*>

'Subjunctive', e.g., *k<w>an-a!* 'Eat!' which can appear also word-initially if there is no onset, e.g., *w-agi-s-a!* 'Delimit (the field)!'. Affixes occur on different word classes, mostly verbs, nouns and numerals. It has been reported that in some languages identical prefix forms appear on serialized verbs (Nojima 1996, Tsuchida 2000, Blust 2003, Adelaar 2004) but such "prefix harmony" is not found in Tona.

Reduplication applies more productively to verbs than to nouns. Reduplication of numerals is usually triggered by prefixation, e.g., *?ajo-ɖa-ɖosa* 'two (human beings)' (< *?ajo-* 'a number of', *ɖa-* 'Ca-reduplication'). *Ca*-reduplication (Blust 1998) is reported to be extremely productive in a fairly high number of Formosan languages. In Tona, it is always triggered by prefixation, e.g., *?aji-ɖa-ɖə?ə* 'hang oneself' (< *?aji-* 'Ref'), *ma-tsa-tsabi* 'make war' (< *ma-Ca-* 'Rec'). More productive types of reduplication include CV-, CGV-, CVCV- or CVCV- reduplication, e.g., *saka-so-swi?ana* 'other groups' (< *saka-* 'external, alien', *swi?ana* 'group'), *pa-ti-swi-swi?ana* '(change) groups' (< *pa-* 'Caus', *ti-* 'make'), *di-dida?ana* 'valley' (*dida?ana* 'ground'), *vala-valakə* 'children', *w-a-lijo-lijo* 'be shining; keep on shining'. Noun reduplication usually triggers plurality and that of verbs a progressive, repetitive or habitual meaning.

Instances of triplication are found, whereby the base is reduplicated twice in a unitary process, e.g., *?asa-do-do-doo-anə* '(who) is capable' (< *?asa...* *-anə* 'AgtNmz', *doo* 'can'), *ma?aka-tso-tsoaw-ŋa* 'all the persons' (< *ma?aka...* *-ŋa* 'all', *tsoaw* 'person').

Compounding has never been reported in Tona Rukai, and I have no data that attests the existence of such a morphological process.

2.4 Syntax

2.4.1 Sentence

2.4.1.1 Basic "unmarked" word order and more "marked" orders

Two types of sentences are commonly distinguished: the first is nominal (7a) and the second verbal (7b). In both types of sentences, nominal

and verbal predicates occur in initial-position and are followed by nominal complements. Both nouns and verbs constitute the head of these nominal/verbal clauses, since there are neither copulas nor auxiliary verbs.

7. a. *?asa-alo-alop-anə* kini.
AGTNMZ-RED-hunt-AGTNMZ 3S.NOM
'He is a hunter.'
- b. *w-a-sititi=(na)koa* ki takanaw.
ACT-REAL-beat=1S.OBL NOM Takanaw
'Takanaw beat me.'
8. a. *ma-dalamə=kakə=mosoa*.
STAT.FIN-like/love=1S.NOM=2S.OBL
'I like/love you.'
- b. **ma-dalamə=mosoa=kakə*.
STAT.FIN-like/love=2S.OBL=1S.NOM

Temporal adjuncts can appear in clause-initial as topics or clause-final position (9a–b). Temporal expressions referring to frequency must be treated as verbs rather than nouns because of their position in the sentence and the fact that they attract pronouns (9c).

9. a. *a-kosi?a* (a)m-wa=kakə
TOP-yesterday DYN.FIN-go=1S.NOM
ɖakəalə *ɖ<w>apolə*.
river <SUBJ>-fish
'Yesterday I went to the river to fish.'
- b. *la sipi* *koɖaj* *palaŋ-iɖa*
then dream that spouse-3S.GEN
koɖaj masojo...
that night
'That night, his wife made a dream...'
- c. *pava?ijana=koso* ?akamolə.
everyday=2S.NOM work
'You work every day.'

Topicalized NPs/clauses are preceded by the prefix *a-* and (usually) followed by the topic marker *ka* which delimits the topic from the rest of the clause/main sentence:

10. a. *a-kini coaw ka i-kamani*
TOP-this man TOP NEG-STAT.NFIN:be
tatavi=namia
father=1PE.OBL
'That person is not my father.'

2.4.1.2 Voice, mood and aspect

Tona exhibit an active/passive voice system. In the active voice (realis), dynamic verbs are marked by *w-* (11a); stative verbs are marked by *ma-*. Dynamic and stative transitive verbs can undergo agentive passivization (cf. *kj-*) (11b). Non-agentive passivization is marked by *ʔj-* (11c).

11. a. *w-a-silapə=kakə*
ACT-REAL-look for=1S.NOM
maʔaka-koa-ŋa.
all-thing-all
'I am looking for everything.'
b. *kj-a-silapə=koso na coaw.*
PASS-REAL-look.for=2S.NOM OBL person
'Someone is looking for you.'
c. *ʔj-a-silapə-ŋa (*na coaw)*
PASS-REAL-look for-already *OBL person
makasi i-okono=kinamə.
but NEG-find=1PE.NOM
Lit.: 'It was looked for but we did not find it.'

Tense has not been grammaticalized in Tona, which exhibits, rather, a basic distinction between realis and irrealis moods. Mood closely interacts with voice and aspect. These notions are expressed through morphological and/or lexical means.

Realis is usually unmarked on verbs, cf. *w-a-lapo* 'raise/raised', *w-a-tamasə* 'leave/left'. The temporal frame (past or present) of a clause/sentence depends on the occurrence of additional aspectual morphemes, e.g., *maka-...* (*-ŋa*) 'had...already' (< *maka-* 'finish', *-ŋa* 'already', *-la* 'still' (12a) or temporal adjuncts (12b)).

12. a. *la kanəə la ʔinonoə, ko*
then eat:EMPH then sit:EMPH when

- maka-kan-iŋa-ŋa la paowa*
finish-eat-3S.GEN-already then put
ŋitso mata-talitsogoro
smoking.pipe REC-face to face
maŋjiŋii.
REC:smile
'Then they sat and ate and when they had finished, they took their pipe and smiled at each other.'
'Someone is looking for you.'
b. *ko-miasiiʔanə la silapə na bəkəʔə*
Past-day after then find OBL.pig
θa-koŋadavaŋə la okono.
people-Tona then find
'The day after, they went to look for a (white and black) pig and they found it.'

Irrealis, on the other hand, is overtly marked, cf. *no-...* *mi* 'will' (13a), *ni-* 'Cntrfct' (13b).

13. a. *tsəŋəl-a! no-ʔiəvəsə mi=koso.*
see-IMP IRR-fall IRR=2S.NOM
'Be careful! You are going to fall.'
b. *ni-doo=koso ʔaŋi-da-doʔo.*
CNTRFCT-can=2S.NOM REFL-RED-cook
'You should be able to cook by yourself.'

Progressive, iterative and habitual aspects are encoded through reduplication.

14. *ʔjakaj balatə doʔo-doʔo.*
be.at outside RED-cook
'She is cooking outside.'

Affirmative imperative verbs are marked by the suffix *-a*. Imperative verb forms are marked as subjunctive and verbs containing a vowel /a/ in the first syllable are infixed with <w> 'Subj' as in *k<w>an-a!* 'Eat!' vs. *ʔoŋol-a!* 'Drink!'. Negative imperative verbs are formed by the occurrence of *aŋi* 'Prohibitive' preceding the verb in its bare form, cf. *aŋi kanə!* 'Don't eat!' vs. *aŋiʔoŋolo!*

2.4.1.3 Predicates

Though both nouns and verbs can function as predicates, bare nouns cannot co-occur with aspectual or mood markers unless they are dynamicized (15a') or stativized (15b').

15. a. *əŋaj/*əŋaj-ŋa kini.*
sand/sand-already this
'This is sand.'
a'. *m̄w-a-əŋaj-ŋa ka didaʔanə.*
ACT-REAL-sand-already NOM ground
'The ground was full of sand.'
b. *baobao/*i-baobao-la kini.*
young.woman/*NEG-woman-yet this
'This is a young woman.'
b'. *i-ka-baobao-la kini.*
NEG-STAT.NFIN-young.woman-yet this
'This is not a young woman yet.'

2.4.1.4 Question formation

Yes-no questions are formed through the occurrence of *nia* 'Qst' to which is attached a genitive pronoun.

16. *w-a-biitsiŋi nia-soʔ*
ACT-REAL-hear QST-2S.GEN
'Did you hear?'

The majority of *wh*-interrogative words are nouns or constitute derived nominals. They usually occur in sentence-initial position and may be followed by a case marker.

17. a. *nani-(i)ni ko w-a-baʔaj*
who-3S.GEN NOM ACT-REAL-give
mosoa na paioʔ
2S.OBL OBL money
'Who gave you money?'
b. *pia-ni na valak-isoʔ*
how.many-3S.GEN NOM child-2S.GEN
'How many children do you have?'

2.4.1.5 Negation

Four types of negation can be distinguished in Tona Rukai: (i) predicative negation is marked by the prefixation of *i-* to the bare verb stem, e.g., *i-kanə* 'do/did not eat'; (ii) existential negation (negation of the existence of a (non-)possessed element) is expressed by *kaʔoa*; (iii) imperative negation is indicated by *aŋi*; (iv) modal negation is rendered by *-ia*, e.g., *kan-ia* 'will not eat'.

2.4.1.6 Existential sentences

Affirmative existential, possessive and locative clauses are all headed by the same verb, *ʔjakaj*

'exist, be at' (<ʔi- 'at', *a-* 'Real', *kaj* 'this'). Negative existential and possessive clauses are headed by *kaʔoa* 'not exist'. In locative clauses, the verb is negated by *i-*, as in *i-ʔikaj* 'not be at'. While the verb introduces the subject in existential and possessive clauses, it subcategorizes a location in locative clauses.

18. a. *tsigianə daʔanə ka ʔjakaj/kaʔoa*
next.to house TOP exist/not exist
ka ʔanato.
NOM tree
'There is a tree/there is no tree next to the house.'
b. *ʔjakaj/kaʔoa valak-ili.*
exist/not.exist child-1S.GEN
'I have child(ren)/I have no child.'
c. *ʔjakaj/i-ʔjakaj balatə titina.*
be.at outside mother
'(The) mother is/is not outside.'

The prefix *ʔj-* followed by the realis marker *a-* also serves as a base to derive possessive predicates, cf. *ʔjaili* 'mine', *ʔjaiso* 'yours', *ʔjaini* 'his/hers', as in *ʔjaili kini vəŋəaj* 'These flowers are mine' vs. *vəŋəaj-(i)li kini* 'These are my flowers'.

2.4.1.7 Complex sentences

Temporal and hypothetical clauses are complex sentences formed by a nominalized clause as its subordinate clause and a main clause headed by a finite verb. The topic marker *ka* usually follows the subordinate clause. Temporal clauses are introduced by (a) *ko* 'when (realis)' or *sana-* 'as soon as' and hypothetical clauses by (a) *no* 'if'. Temporal anteriority is usually expressed in the subordinate clause through the occurrence of *maka-...* *-ŋa* 'finish...or *-ŋa* 'already'.

19. *ako maka-kan-ili-ŋa na doʔo*
when finish-eat-1S.GEN-already OBL rice
ka ʔabəə=kakə.
TOP leave=1S.NOM
'When I had finished eating, I left.'

Clauses are coordinated by the coordinator *si* (which also coordinates NPs and VPs) followed by the conjunction *la*. The verb that follows is always in its bare form.

20. *si la davatsə si la wa-ŋa*
and then leave and then go-already
ʔaŋi-taloqo.
cross-bridge
'They left and crossed the bridge.'

2.4.2 Noun and noun phrase

Nouns are not distinguished in terms of gender and plurality is usually not overtly marked, though kinship terms and proper nouns can be prefixed by *la-* 'plural'. Collectivity is marked by *maʔaka-...-ŋa* 'all', e.g., *maʔaka-koa-ŋa* 'all the things'.

Nouns and noun phrases are usually preceded by a case marker, which indicates whether the noun is a common noun (Nom/Obl *na*, *ko*, or *ka*) or a personal noun (Nom *ki*). Oblique personal nouns are, on the other hand, suffixed by Obl *-anə*. A case marker precedes coordinated common and personal nouns marked as nominative, e.g., *w-a-tsəŋələ nakoa ki ipolo si takanaw* 'Ipolo and Takanaw see/saw me'. In the oblique case, the two coordinated nouns must both be suffixed by *-anə* if they are personal nouns, cf. *w-a-tsəŋələ=kakə ipol-anə si takanaw-anə* 'I see/saw Ipolo and Takanaw'; two common nouns are preceded by a case marker, the structure being the same as those marked as nominative *w-a-tsəŋələ=kakə na aŋo si ŋiao* 'I saw a dog and a cat'.

Demonstratives display distinctions in visibility and distance. Demonstrative are of two kinds. Those that have been grammaticalized and refer to a third person participant—as free pronouns, they are marked for case but not for plurality, cf. *kini* '3S.Nom (+Vis)', and *kiəa* '3S.Nom (-Vis)'—and those that precede the head noun with case forms and ±common noun distinctions

blurred. Some of these demonstratives also serve to refer to both space and time, cf. *nakaj* 'here' vs. *nakaj-la* 'now(adays)'. Nominal complements follow the head noun. Possessives are marked twice, with a genitive pronoun occurring on the head and the possessor being preceded by *ki*, cf. *daʔanə-ni ki takanaw* 'Takanaw's house'. Verbal complements precede the head noun. The ligature *ka* might occur between the modifier and the head, e.g., *mabokaʔa (ka) mabotiʔi ka ŋiao* 'the blind yellow cat'. There is no distinction whatsoever between nominalization and relativization.

They are four sets of personal pronouns further divided into subsets: nominative (one subset is prefixed and the other cliticized to the verb), oblique, genitive and topic. Pronouns are marked for case, cf. *k(i)-* in the nominative, *-anə* in the oblique. Lacking are third person pronouns, a gap compensated for by the grammaticalization of demonstrative pronouns. There is also a set of impersonal pronouns, cf. *=kimadə* 'Nom', *=modoa* 'Obl', *-imadə* 'Gen'.

2.4.3 Verb and verb phrase

Besides the distinction between dynamic and stative verbs mentioned above, verbs also include denominal verbs, locative verbs and motion verbs. Denominal verbs (e.g., *kopiŋi* 'clothes' ~ *ti-kopiŋi* 'make clothes') usually share the same morphological features as dynamic verbs. Locative verbs include *ʔjakaj* 'exist, be at', *ʔjanono* 'sit down', *ʔjabaivi* 'stay at home' etc. They are marked with the realis *a-* when they occur as matrix verbs, cf. *ʔjanono* 'sit down' vs. *ʔinono* 'sit down (bare form)'; there is no alternation in the subjunctive, cf. *ʔinono* 'sit down'. Locative verbs

Pronouns		Personal			Impersonal		
Number	Case	Topic	Nominative	Oblique	Genitive	Nominative	Oblique Genitive
1S		akakə	ko-	=kakə	-nakoa	-ili	
2S		akoso	si-	=koso	=mosoa	-iso	
1PI		akita	ta-	=kita	=mitia	-ita	
1PE		akinamə	namə-	=kinamə	=namia	-inamə	
2PE		akomo	mo-	=komo	=moanə	-imo	
3S/P	+Vis	akini	ni-	kini	=nianə	-ini	
	-Vis	akiqə		kiqə	=qianə	-iqə	

can undergo imperativization and causativization, cf. *ʔinono-a* 'sit down!' and *pa-ʔinono* 'make...sit'; they cannot be passivized unless first causativized, cf. *kj-a-pa-ʔinono/*kj-a-ʔinono* 'be made to sit'.

In verb serialization, the second verb is marked as subjunctive, cf. *m-wa k<w>anə!* 'Go eat!'.

Comparatives are expressed through the prefixation to the stative verb of *mai-*, e.g., *mai-kadalama* 'like/love more'. Superlatives are formed through the reduplication of the verb along with the suffixation of the superlative *-ŋa*, *ma-dala-dalama-ŋa* 'like/love most'.

2.4.4 Prepositions and adverbs

What would be treated as prepositions in other languages are actually verbs, cf. *ʔjakaj* 'exist, be at', *pasilikaj* 'come from', *wakala* 'arrive', *sjakaj* 'use' ('with'), *kjakaj* 'do for'. They occur in clause-initial position as main/finite verbs or in medial position as embedded/subjunctive verbs. Manner adverbs are also verbs and appear sentence initially or after another verb.

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