nɪ ɜbɪsɜ́dɪ dʒ ɜtɜmɪ́
The Language of the Ebisédi
Reference Grammar

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1 Introduction

This is the reference grammar for the language of the Ebisédi. Although it is meant to be a reference, the chapters are intended to be tutorial-like in nature as well. The appendices will provide the concise, no-nonsense, compact reference tables for when you don't wish to wade through verbose tutorials.

1.1 Overview

1.1.1 Background

The language of the Ebisédi, also known by the anglicization *Ebisédian*, is the common language spoken by the peoples of the Ferochromon universe during the Era of the Kingdom. Various dialects exist; in this reference grammar we document the officially-accepted one, the common trade language used for official, commercial, and personal purposes alike.

1.1.2 The Language

The language is a *pitch-accented, inflected* language with 27 consonants and 9 basic vowels. Vowels are further differentiated by length, 'breathing', and nasalization.

There are three classes of words: *nouns, verbs,* and *'relatives'*[1]. These are assembled into sentences, and sentences into paragraphs and other structures. Word order is relatively free, although there are conventions that are usually employed.

Nouns are inflected for *gender*, *number*, and *case*. Verbs are conjugated for *domain*, *focus*, and *aspect*. Relatives, in spite of the fact that Ebisédi grammarians consider them to be a single class of words, actually cover a rather wide range of auxilliary words, conjunctions, prepositions, and particles. As such, there are several subclasses of relatives, each with its own morphology.

Sentence structure is relatively free-form; there are no requirements for any part of speech to be present in a sentence. Verbless sentences abound; and *summaritive sentences* may comprise entirely of relatives.

[1] Ebisédi grammarians' terminology for the class of words that "relate nouns, verbs, and sentences to each other". Effectively, this could be any word that cannot stand alone.

1.1.3 Writing systems

There are several writing systems for the language, the most common being the abjad we will refer to simply as "the native writing". It is called **sanokí** in Ebisédian, and consists of symbols for consonants with optional vowel diacritics. It was developed by early Ebisédian scribes, and has elaborate flourishes and ligatures.

There is another writing system called the **x̂øromokí**, which is based on color patterns. The **x̂øromokí** has very diverse uses: from storing messages on a string of colored beads, to painting meaningful color patterns on the wall, to assembling colored floor tiles in patterns that convey a message[2].

For our purposes, we will use a Roman orthography, invented by explorers who found passage into the Ferochromon universe. This orthography will be described in detail in the subsequent sections.

1.2 The Alphabet

In discussing the Ebisédian alphabet, we will use IPA[3] to describe the corresponding pronunciations. In tables and figures, we will use IPA symbols as-is. Within running text, we will enclose IPA with [square brackets] to avoid confusion. For example, **nɪ ɜbɪsɜ́dɪ dʒ ɜtɜmɪ́** is pronounced [ni əbisóːdi də ətəmĭː].

1.2.1 The Vowels

Ebisédi grammarians describe their language as possessing 27 consonants and 9 vowels. These 9 vowels are further differentiated by *vowel length*, *pitch accent*, *breathing*, and *nasality*.

Table 1 shows the nine vowels with the closest IPA representation(s) for them. The top symbol in each cell, in bold, is the orthographic symbol for the vowel; the symbol(s) on the bottom is the IPA equivalent(s). Vowels can be either *long*, or *short*. In the orthography, long vowels are indicated by a macron over the symbol: e. g., **ɜ̄** (pronounced [əː]).

Vowels have three possible *breathings: smooth* vowels are pronounced with preceding a semi-vowel of the corresponding type. They are written

[2]It is a great hobby amongst Ebisédi architects to write entire novels on the walls, floors, and ceilings of their buildings using **x̂øromokí**. And the Kings love the halls and corridors of their palaces colored with meaning.

[3]The International Phonetic Alphabet.

u u	**ω** ɵ, ʉ	**y** y
o o	**ɜ** ɘ, ə	**ɪ** i
ø ɑ	**a** a	**e** æ, ɛ

Table 1: Vowels

with the smooth diacritic: e. g., **ů́** (pronounced [wu]), and **ǻ** (pronounced [a͡a]). *Abrupt* vowels, when they are word-initial or follow another vowel, are pronounced with a preceding glottal stop. They are written without any special marks: **a** is pronounced [ʔa]. *Harsh* vowels are pronounced with a preceding glottal fricative. They are written with a preceding 'h'. For example, **ho** is pronounced [ho]. Smooth vowels are always word-initial; harsh vowels may be word-initial or immediately following another vowel.

Vowels may also be *nasal*; nasal vowels are marked with a tilde: **a̰** (pronounced [ã]). Nasal vowels are relatively rare, but it is important to distinguish them from non-nasal vowels when they do appear. Vowels next to a nasal consonant may also be nasalized when pronounced; however, they are not marked as nasal vowels.

The language is pitch-accented; high pitch is indicated by an acute accent: **á**. Unaccented syllables have low pitch. Long accented syllables are sometimes pronounced with 'moving pitch': either high falling, or low rising, or even low rising to high and falling to low. The pitch accent is relative; high pitch on one syllable may be lower relative to another high pitch, depending on which syllable the speaker wishes to emphasize.

The arrangement of vowels in Table 1 was introduced by Ebisédi grammarians to help describe vowel shifts that occur during inflection. We shall see how in a later section.

1.2.2 The Consonants

Table 2 shows the 27 consonants of the language, together with their IPA equivalents.

As with the vowels, Table 2 has also been arranged by Ebisédi grammarians, partly to help describe how consonants change in certain word inflec-

gh	**kh**	**ng**	**g**	**k**	**κ̂**
ɣ	x	ŋ	g	k	k^h
dh	**th**	**n**	**d**	**t**	**t̂**
ð	θ	n	d	t	t^h
jh	**ch**	**-**	**j**	**c**	**ĉ**
ʒ	ʃ	-	ʤ	ʧ	$ʧ^h$
z	**s**	**-**	**-**	**l**	**r**
z	s	-	-	l	ɽ, ɾ
v	**f**	**m**	**b**	**p**	**p̂**
β	ɸ	m	b	p	p^h

Table 2: Consonants

tions.

Limited consonant clusters exist. The allowed consonant clusters are any one of **g, k, κ̂, d, t, t̂, b, p, p̂** followed by either **l** or **r**. In native writing, consonant clusters appear as ligatures.

1.2.3 Alphabetic Ordering

The usual ordering of the alphabet is from the upper-left corner of each of the tables above, going right, and then starting from the left of the next row, and going to the right, etc., with vowels coming before consonants. Smooth vowels come before abrupt vowels, and harsh vowels come after. Long vowels follow short ones. Vowel nasality is disregarded.

In lexicons, the ordering employed is a per-syllable comparison; words with initial vowels always coming before words with initial consonants, and double-consonants treated as a unit, coming after the 6th column consonant of the same row as their first consonant.

1.3 Orthographic Conventions

1.3.1 Punctuation

The native script only has three kinds of delimiters: *word boundaries*, *sentence boundaries*, and *paragraph breaks*. We can indicate word boundaries with inter-word space, and paragraph breaks by formatting text into blocks.

Hence, strictly speaking, we only need one punctuation mark, the period (.), to mark the end of a sentence.

However, except where stated, we will liberally use English-like punctuation in orthographic prose. Specifically, we will insert commas (,) where native speakers naturally would pause, although that is not indicated in native writing; use question marks (?) for questions, and use exclamation points (!) for emphatic sentences. Occasionally, a colon (:) or semicolon (;) may mark a sentence boundary instead of a period, where we feel it would give a better idea of the train of thought in the passage.

1.3.2 Typeface

When we employ orthographic text fragments in running text, we will use **boldface** for the orthographic text. We will also use boldface for displayed orthographic fragments, thus:

> **nɪ ɜbɪsɜ́dɪ dɜ ɜtɜmɪ́.** *The language of the people.*

In longer texts, however, we will use regular typeface so that it is easier on the eyes. As an example, we display below a little anecdote about playing children:

> nɪ bɪzɜtɜǿ dɜ bɵ̋lɜnɪ.
>
> ɜmɪrɜ̋nɜ jhílɪ ke, ɜkɜlø jhílø kígɜ ce, keve lɏ̋s jhílu lø bɜzɜtɜ̋ re, ɵ̂ɷ́ma tɜ, gɵ̋jɜlɪ ghí? lés lɵ́ru ɪsí. tɜmɜ. nø jhɪtǿ dɜ bɵ̋lɜnø taɷ́ma tɜ, ɪsǿ mɷ́mɪrɜnɜ ebí ɵ̂e, ɪsí ɜmɪrɜ̋nɜ ve. keve kígɪ ebɜ́ ɜjumɜ̋. ghú ɜjumɜ̋ lés lɵ́ru? tɜmɜ. jhɪtǿ ɵ̂taɷ́ma tɜ, nø ɜjhɪdɪǿ dɜ gɵ̋jɜlø fɜɵ̂ɜ́ vɷ̄ɜ́ ẏbú. alés, alés. tɜmɜ.

1.3.3 Stress Markings

In native writing, the accent on most words are not marked. Stress is usually only marked on emphasized words. The sample passage shown in the previous section has full stress marking; we will include full stress marking on most examples and short passages, to help the reader identify the words. However, where we deem appropriate, we will omit stress marking from long passages.

The following is the same story from the previous section, but without stress markings except on emphasized words:

nɪ bɪzɜtɜø dɜ bɪ̄lɜnɪ.

ɜmɪrɜ̄nɜ jhɪlɪ ke, ɜkɜlø jhɪlø kɪgɜ ce, keve lɪ̄s jhɪlu lø bɜzɜtɜ̄ re, t̂ɷ̄ma tɜ, gɪ̄jɜlɪ ghí? les lōru ɪsí. tɜmɜ. nø jhɪtø dɜ bɪ̄lɜnø taɷma tɜ, ɪsø mɷmɪrɜnɜ ebɪ k̂e, ɪsɪ ɜmɪrɜ̄́nɜ ve. keve kɪgɪ ebɜ ɜjumɜ̄. ghu ɜjumɜ̄ les lōru? tɜmɜ. jhɪtø t̂aɷma tɜ, nø ɜjhɪdɪø dɜ gɪ̄jɜlø fɜk̂ɜ́ vɷ̄ɜ́ ẏbu. alés, alés. tɜmɜ.

2 Nouns

Nouns *refer* to persons, things, abstract concepts, and static events. We say that the persons, things, concepts, and events are the *referents* of their corresponding nouns.

2.1 Noun Attributes

Nouns have three attributes: *gender*, *number*, and *case*.

2.1.1 Gender

The gender of a noun always reflects the actual, physical gender of its referent. The neuter gender is used for all inanimate things, abstract concepts, and static events. There are five noun genders:

Masculine Refers to males.

Feminine Refers to females.

Epicene Refers to either males or females. The Ebisédi are very conscious of using the proper gender at all times, especially when addressing others. The epicene is used when the speaker addresses either a mixed male and female audience or wishes to make a general statement that applies to both genders, or when the speaker is unsure of the other party's gender. It is considered to be rudely presumptious to simply assume one gender or the other when one is unsure; one has to use the epicene. And it is equally rude to continue using the epicene when the other party's gender is beyond doubt.

Neuter Refers to mainly inanimate objects. Neuter should never be confused with epicene; the latter means "either" gender, the former means "neither".

Double This is a rare gender that refers to things both male and female. The most common usage is in collective nouns referring to couples.[4] Some hermaphroditic creatures are also referred to using double-gendered nouns. Other than that, this gender is relatively rarely used.

[4] A typical example being the collective noun **p̂atuí**, "grandparents".

2.1.2 Number

Nouns are also inflected for number. There are three possible numbers:

Singular Refers to one instance of the noun.

Plural Refers to many instances of the noun. The plural often carries an emphatic nuance. It is frequently used in an idiomatic way to mean "very" or "much". For example, **fɪk̂ḯ** (singular) means "grief", or "trauma"; plural **ɜfɪk̂ḯ** (plural) means "great grief", or "intense trauma".

Nullar Refers to the *absence* of the noun. It is much more preferred to say:

> **ebú fő̱tɜ mýcumø.** *I saw none-of-him (nullar)*

than to use a negation:

> **mýe ebú fő̱tɜ cúmø.** *I did not see him.*

2.1.3 Case

Finally, there are 5 noun cases:

Originative Marks the noun as the source, or the starting point, of an event or thing.

Receptive Marks the noun as the recipient, the destination, the target, of an event of thing.

Instrumental Marks the noun as the executive, the instrument, the means, the motivating power, that carries out or sustains an event or thing.

Conveyant Marks the noun as that which is conveyed, that which is in transit, that which is in progress, or that which is contained within a locative noun.

Locative Marks the noun as the current location where an event is taking place, or where a thing is. Idiomatically, the locative case also acts as a nominative, it marks the noun as the topic about which one discusses. When used of person(s), it may also idiomatically refer to the immediate vicinity of the person(s)[5].

[5]cf. **ılír̈o** in the section on prepositions.

Noun cases are semantic rather than purely syntactic. To understand some of the more esoteric case-related constructs in the language, it is helpful to understand the mental model behind the function of noun cases. This *Noun Case Model* comes from Ebisédi philosophy, and describes the relationship of the five noun cases to each other.

One way to visualize this model is to imagine the conveyant noun, which had just come from the originative noun, currently inside the locative noun, being propelled by the instrumental noun towards the receptive noun.

2.2 First Declension Nouns

The canonical form of a noun is its *epicene singular locative* form. For nouns that only exist in one gender, its canonical form is the singular locative of that gender. This is the form from which the other forms are derived.

Ebisédian has two noun declensions. We describe in this section the first declension, which is the most common.

2.2.1 Case inflections

The case inflection of a noun happens via *vowel contouring*. Vowel contouring is the shifting of vowel values from the locative form of the noun in a particular pattern that identifies it in a particular case. Each of the five noun cases have their own distinctive vowel contouring rules.

The vowel contouring rules for each case consist of *shifting trends* and a *characteristic vowel*. The shifting trend defines a tendency for vowels in the noun to shift toward a certain vowel value, and the characteristic vowel is always the last vowel in the noun.

There is also a tendency in some noun cases to break up a long vowel in the ultima[6] into two short vowels. The second of these short syllables then becomes the characteristic vowel, while the first shifts with the rest of the vowels according to the shifting trend of the case.

To illustrate this process, we will use a typical noun, **kǿrumɪ** ("color"), as a model noun in the following descriptions of the case inflection rules.

Locative The locative case has the characteristic vowel **ɪ**. All regular nouns as listed in the lexicon always end with **ɪ**. This is the case with our model noun, **kǿrumɪ**.

[6]Final syllable.

Originative Vowels in the noun tend to be less open. In particular, vowels appearing in the 3rd row of vowels are shifted up to the 2nd row. The characteristic vowel is **ø**. In the case of our model noun **kǿrumɪ**, the first vowel is a 3rd row vowel; hence it shifts to the 2nd row vowel **o**. The second vowel is a 1st row vowel; it is not shifted. The last vowel is replaced by the characterestic vowel **ø**. Hence, the originative of **kǿrumɪ** is **kórumø**.

Receptive Vowels in the noun tend to be more open: 1st row vowels are shifted downwards to the 2nd row. The characteristic vowel is **u**. In our model noun **kǿrumɪ**, the second vowel **u** is a 1st row vowel; hence it shifts to **o**. The last vowel becomes the characteristic **u**. Hence, the receptive form is **kǿromu**.

Instrumental Vowels in the noun tend to be more central. Vowels in the 1st and 3rd *columns* tend toward the 2nd column. The characteristic vowel is **a**. In the case of our model noun, the first two vowels become **a** and **ω**. Hence, the instrumental form is **kárωma**.

Conveyant As with the instrumental case, 1st and 3rd column vowels tend to shift to 2nd column vowels. The characteristic vowel is **ɜ**. The conveyant case of our model noun is, therefore, **kárωmɜ**.

2.2.2 Number Inflections

Number inflections are derived from the singular forms by attaching a *characteristic prefix* and moving and lengthening or shortening the stress syllable.

The plural number is indicated by the characteristic prefix **ɜ-**. The stress syllable shifts towards the end of the word; the new stress syllable may also be lengthened if it is a short syllable.

...

The nullar number is indicated by the characteristic prefix **mý-**.[7] The stress is shifted to this prefix, and the original stress syllable is shortened if it was long.

...

[7]This prefix appears in many other places as a negation marker, for example, **myna** (negative subjunctive particle), **mýe** (verb negation), **mýne** (negative interrogative particle).

2.2.3 Gender Inflections

Gender inflections are indicated by the shifting and lengthening of the stress syllable, as well as *consonant contouring*. ...

2.3 Second Declension Nouns

Second declension nouns are remnants of an archaic declension that occurred in an earlier form of the language. As such, they tend to be words with more basic or primitive meanings. They are also more irregular in form.

2.3.1 Case Inflections

Second declension nouns are inflected for case in a similar way to first declension nouns. The characteristic case vowels, **ø**, **u**, **a**, **ɜ**, **ı**, are also used for case inflections in second declension nouns. However, unlike the first declension nouns, they tend to only exhibit vowel contouring in the conveyant or instrumental cases, or in some cases not at all. Furthermore, some case forms are special in not having a characteristic case vowel.

Table 3 shows the singular forms of an example of a second declension neuter noun, **x̂ḱǿı**, "grandeur", "greatness".

Originative	x̂ḱǿ
Receptive	x̂ḱø̄ú
Instrumental	x̂ḱø̄á
Conveyant	x̂ḱā́ɜ
Locative	x̂ḱǿı

Table 3: Second declension noun: **x̂ḱǿı**

Notice that only the conveyant case shifts the root vowel from **ø̄** to **ā**. Also note the placement of stress: the noun root **x̂ḱø̄-** is unstressed except in the locative and the originative. As we shall see, second declension nouns in general tend to stress noun roots only in the locative and one other case which usually has an exceptional form.

Table 4 shows the singular forms of another second declension noun, this time with a short noun root: **chýı**, meaning "poison" or "acid".

Originative	chyǿ
Receptive	chȳ
Instrumental	chyá
Conveyant	chω3́
Locative	chýι

Table 4: Second declension noun: **chýι**

Notice that **chyí** has an unstressed noun root in its originative, but has a stressed root in its receptive, which also is an exceptional form.

2.3.2 Number Inflections

The number inflections of second declension nouns are more regular, and are formed in a similar way to the first declension nouns.

Plural forms have the stress syllable shifted towards the last syllable; and the plural prefix **з-** is added. Similarly, nullar forms have a shortened noun root, except in the exceptional case, and have the nullar prefix **мý-** added.

Table 5 shows the plural and nullar forms of **к̂ǿ́ι**.

	Nullar	**Plural**
Originative	mýк̂ø̄	з́к̂ǿ́
Receptive	mýк̂øu	зк̂ø̄ú
Instrumental	mýк̂øa	зк̂ø̄á
Conveyant	mώк̂a3	зк̂ā3́
Locative	mýк̂øι	зк̂ø̄ί

Table 5: Nullar and plural forms of **к̂ǿ́ι**

We have seen how **к̂ǿ́ι** exhibits an irregular form in its singular originative. Here, we see that *all* its originative forms are irregular. This is a common trend in second declension nouns: one of the noun cases is treated specially across all three numbers. In the case of **к̂ǿ́ι**, it is the originative; in the case of **chýι**, it is the receptive.

Table 6 shows the plural and nullar forms of **chýι**. Notice that its irregular forms occur in the receptive instead of the originative.

	Nullar	Plural
Originative	mýchyø	ɜchȳǿ
Receptive	mýchȳ	ɜchȳ́
Instrumental	mýchya	ɜchȳá
Conveyant	mώchωɜ	ɜchω̄ɜ́
Locative	mýchyɪ	ɜchȳí

Table 6: Nullar and plural forms of **chýɪ**

2.3.3 Gender Inflections

Second declension nouns do not inflect for gender.

2.4 Pronouns

2.4.1 First Person Pronouns

There are 3 different first person pronouns, one for each of the masculine, feminine, and neuter genders. There is no double-gender one. The first person pronouns are *always* singular. There is no first person plural pronoun; that function is filled by the plural intimate pronoun (see the section on intimate pronouns).

Table 7 shows the forms of the first person pronouns.

	Masculine	Feminine	Epicene	Neuter
Originative	ebǿ	ẏbǿ	obǿ	ɪbǿ
Receptive	ebú	ẏbú	obú	ɪbú
Instrumental	ebá	ẏbá	obá	ɪbá
Conveyant	ebɜ́	ẏbɜ́	obɜ́	ɪbɜ́
Locative	ebí	ẏbí	obí	ɪbí

Table 7: First person pronouns

The neuter first person pronoun is not used except by fictional characters in children's stories.[8] The epicene first person pronoun is used mainly when

[8]Although it is certainly possible that an as-yet unknown genderless intelligent being might refer to itself using the neuter first person pronoun.

imitating others in indirect discourse, as in the following example:

> **mysó tŵma tɜ, obú cωsánɜ. tɜmɜ.**
> *Do not say, 'I am clever.'*

It should never be used to refer to oneself, as that carries very negative connotations.

2.4.2 Intimate pronouns

Unlike English, there are no second or third person pronouns in the language. Rather, there are *intimate* and *distant* pronouns, which divide the world in rather different ways than the pronouns in English do.

The intimate pronouns always refer to people the speaker regards as friends, people of his inner circle, people on his side. The neuter intimate pronouns refer to the speaker's possessions, or things otherwise dear to him. In contrast, the distant pronouns refer to those regarded as outsiders, those who are not on the speaker's side. Although strictly speaking, the distant pronouns should only ever be used for strangers and outsiders, sometimes they are used on a close friend to express strong disagreement, or strong discontentment with the friendship.

The plural intimate pronoun sometimes also includes the speaker, although usually the first person pronoun is listed specifically:

> **ebí ɜjumí** *I and you (pl.),* i. e., *we.*

There are intimate pronouns for all five genders. The masculine, feminine, epicene, and double forms are cognate; the neuter forms come from a different root. Table 8 shows the locative forms of all the intimate pronouns.

	Singular	**Plural**	**Nullar**
Masculine	cómɪ	ɜcómɪ	mýcomɪ
Feminine	jubí	ɜjubī́	mýjubɪ
Epicene	jumí	ɜjumī́	mýjumɪ
Neuter	mɪcí	ɜmɪcī́	mýmɪcɪ
Double	cobí	ɜcobī́	mýcobɪ

Table 8: Intimate pronouns

2.4.3 Distant pronouns

The distant pronouns are used to refer to things the speaker regards as distant and foreign, whether physically or otherwise. When applied to persons, it implies that the speaker regards the persons to be outside his inner circle, to be not on his side.

The distant pronouns do not always imply enmity or distance, however; they are also the *formal pronouns* — what one would use in official statements. The intimate pronouns are deemed too personal in such contexts, and the distant pronouns are always employed.

Table 9 lists the distant pronouns for the five genders.

	Singular	**Plural**	**Nullar**
Masculine	chídɪ	ɜchídɪ	mýchɪdɪ
Feminine	jhɪtí	ɜjhɪtī́	mýjhɪtɪ
Epicene	jhɪdí	ɜjhɪdī́	mýjhɪdɪ
Neuter	nací	ɜnacaí	mýnacɪ
Double	chítɪ	ɜchī́tɪ	mýchɪtɪ

Table 9: Distant pronouns

2.5 Proper Nouns

Proper names in the language are marked by a prefix which is inflected for gender and number. This prefix is not shifted by vowel contouring when the proper noun is inflected for case.

The proper name prefixes are shown in Table 10.

	Singular	**Plural**	**Nullar**
Masculine	e-	he-	emý-
Feminine	ẏ-	hy-	ẏmý-
Epicene	o-	ho-	omý-
Neuter	ɪ-	hɪ-	ɪmý-
Double	ω-	hω-	ωmý-

Table 10: Proper Name Prefixes

Names of people are given with the masculine and feminine singular prefixes. Well-known names include:

ekásɪ Ekaasi, a famous King in the Era of the Kingdoms.

ýlí Ylia, the wife of Ekaasi. (The 'a' in the anglicization 'Ylia' comes from tradition; her real name does not have the 'a' except in the instrumental case.)

ýgomaí Ygomai, a wise, single old lady from the city of Isili.

The epicene plural prefixes are used for names of certain groups of people. For example:

holésɪ The Wanderers, referring to the daring, pioneering explorers in the Era of the Villages. (This name is cognate with the verb **lés**.)

hoĸasaní The Experts, the highly-respected people trained in physics, philosophy, and martial arts. (Their name comes from **ĸasánɪ**, "expertise", referring to the mastery of one's abilities coupled with wisdom and experience.)

The neuter prefixes are used as names of places or things. For example:

ɪsɪlí Isili, the name of a city.

ɪkrɪsánɪ Krisani, the name of Ekaasi's sword.

2.5.1 Nullar Proper Nouns

Just as with regular nouns, the Ebisédi prefer to use the nullar of a proper noun to indicate absence rather than to negate the sentence with **mýe**.

For example:

> **bɜtɜ́ lýs jhúlɪ ĸe, fɷ́tɜ jhɪtú ýmýgomɜø ve.**
> *The mother went in to the room, but did not see Ygomai (or, saw that Ygomai was not there).*

Literally, the second phrase means "she saw Ms. No-Ygomai". Although anglicized names like 'Ygomai' are based on the singular form of the name, one should not be surprised to encounter the nullar equivalents, which have the **-mý-** infix. Also note the shift of the stress syllable to this **-mý-** infix.

As another example — although it is correct to say things such as:

mýe ekáɜɜ julír. *Ekaasi is not in the house.* Literally, *It is not true that Ekaasi is in the house.*

the Ebisédi would much rather say:

emýkāɜɜ julír. *No-Ekaasi is in the house.*

2.5.2 Noun apposition

Noun apposition is when two nouns are placed side-by-side to indicate that they in fact refer to the same thing. Noun apposition is indicated by prefixing the *second* noun with a proper name prefix that matches the gender and number of the first noun.

For example:

eɛ̂kánɜ ebɜ̄́lɜnɜ. *Ekani the boy.*

Whereas if the prefix is omitted, it would refer to *another*[9] boy:

eɛ̂kánɜ bɜ̄́lɜnɜ. *Ekani and the boy (another boy).*

A common idiom is to use a pronoun for the second word. If the pronoun is an intimate pronoun, it expresses affection with the speaker:

ỳlḯ ỳjubí. *Ylia, the dear.* Or, *Ylia, my dear.*

If the pronoun is a distant pronoun, it expresses distance or coldness with the speaker:

ỳlḯ ỳjhɪtí. *Ylia, that woman.* Or, *Ylia, that (female) stranger.*

This idiom is commonly used to express one's feeling towards the other party. In the former case, the speaker regards Ylia as someone distant, whereas in the latter case, the speaker regards her as someone close.

Note that when the appositioned noun has a modifying clause, the proper name prefix attaches to the subordinating particle instead. For example:

ekánɪ enɪ cωsánɜ du bű́lɜnɪ. *Ekani, the intelligent boy.*

[9]This is because of *implicit conjunction*. The nominal conjunction **zo** is usually only used explicitly for emphasis.

2.6 Noun Association

Noun association is a feature of the language used for disambiguating what nouns or pronouns refer to. It is similar in function to the English "former" and "latter", or "the first" and "the second".

There are three *associative prefixes*, namely, **kɪ-**, **cu-**, and **ro-**.[10] When used with plural or nullar nouns, they come *between* the plural or nullar prefix and the noun itself. For example, **kɪchídɪ** becomes **ɜkɪchídɪ** in the plural, and **mýkɪchɪdɪ** in the nullar.

These prefixes can be attached to any noun to "mark" the noun. When a pronoun appears later that refers to this noun, the same prefix will be attached to the pronoun, thus "associating" the pronoun with the noun. This makes it possible to have the pronouns refer unambiguously to different nouns of the same gender and number.

For example, if one were talking about two women, one could mark them with the prefixes **kɪ-** and **cu-**, respectively. Then later, to refer to the first woman, one uses **kɪjhɪtí**; to refer to the second, one uses **cujhɪtí**. One could even say:

> **kɪjhɜtɜ́ cujhɜtɜ́ lýs.** *She and she went.*

The first "she" refers to the first woman, and the second "she" refers to the second. This sentence would be ambiguous in English; but it is perfectly clear in Ebisédian.

One can also use the associative prefixes to indicate another instance of the same noun: for example, if one were discussing a **mangí**,[11] one could say **cumangí** to mean "another horse", and henceforth say **kɪmangí** to refer to the first. Of course, one could always say **aro mangí** to explicitly mean "another horse"; but the advantage of using the associative prefix is that later, one can then easily refer to it using **cujhɪdí**. In the former case, it would be unclear which horse **jhɪdí** refers to.

The conventional order for using the associative prefixes is to use **kɪ-** first, and then **cu-** and **ro-**, in that order. As a result, sometimes **kɪ-** is understood to mean "the former" or "the one before", and **cu-** "the second" or "the one

[10] It is not a coincidence that these prefixes look very much like the words for the fundamental colors red, green, and blue. This is another instance of the deeply-rooted color symbolism in Ebisédi culture.

[11] A horse-like creature, usually translated as "horse", but actually refers to a low, slender, hexapedal creature, usually the black variety.

here", and **ro-** "the third" or "the one there". One can sometimes get away with omitting the associative prefix on the noun itself, while using it on the corresponding pronoun.

3 Verbs

3.1 Verbs versus Gerunds

Ebisédian verbs specifically refer only to *events*. That is, to *changes* or *happenings*, but not to a steady state of things. A steady state of things would not be described using a verb; rather, a gerund or equivalent noun would be used instead.

3.2 Verb Attributes

Verbs have three attributes: *domain*, *focus*, and *aspect*. Unlike English, Ebisédian verbs do not have tense. There are tense markers (see *temporal nouns*), but usually, any tense markings are omitted except where necessary to disambiguate what one means.

3.2.1 Verb Domains

The domain of a verb specifies what kind of event it describes; the domain wherein it operates.

A *physical* verb describes physical events.

An *introvertive* verb describes mainly psychological events[12].

An *abstract* verb describes a group of events considered to be a unit (for example, **cɜrə́ta**, "to plan", or "to prepare", is an abstract verb, planning being considered as comprising of many actions — thinking, contacting people, gathering together to discuss, etc. — that are considered part of one abstract action).

3.2.2 Verb Focii

The focus of a verb describes the purposefulness of the event, as perceived by the speaker.

The *incidental* focus describes an event in isolation, without reference to its purposefulness.

The *deliberative* focus describes events that happen for a reason, actions that are done toward a goal. It could indicate that the person performing

[12]In Expert jargon, some non-psychological events may also be described using introvertive verbs. In common usage, however, introvertive verbs mostly describe psychological events.

the action did it deliberately, or it could indicate that the event happened in a meaningful or symbolically significant way.

The *consequential* focus describes events that happen as a result of other events. A common idiom involves the verb **táma**, "to speak". The consequential forms of this verb often mean "to answer", or "to speak in response to an event", the implication being that answering someone is simply speaking as a result of the other party's speaking.

3.2.3 Verb Aspects

The *aspect* of a verb describes the progress or completion of the event.

The *inceptive* aspect describes an event which is about to happen, or which has begun to happen. The inceptive also functions sometimes as an *imperative*, as in, "start doing this now!".

The *progressive* aspect describes an event which is in progress. Note that usually, the Ebisédi consider events to be complete units even if they have not completed at the time; events are anticipated to be complete. When the progressive aspect is used, it often means that the event was interrupted, or that something else happened while the event was in progress.

The *perfective* aspect describes an event which is complete. Although it may not yet have completed at the time, the Ebisédi nevertheless will refer to it with the perfective aspect unless it is expected not to reach completion. This is the aspect that will most often occur in the language.

3.3 Verb Inflections

For the purposes of illustration, we will employ the multi-domain verb **táma** "to speak", "to say", as an example of a typical verb, to show how it conjugates for the various verb attributes.

3.3.1 Physical Verbs

Physical verb conjugations are formed by modifications on the *physical stem* of the verb. In our example, the physical stem is **táma**, which is the incidental inceptive form of the verb. This is the canonical form which appears in a lexicon.

Physical verbs conjugate for aspect in the following manner:

1. The inceptive form of a physical verb usually has a 3rd row vowel on the stress syllable. Our example verb, **táma**, illustrates this. (This is not always true for all verbs, however.) The other two aspects are derived from this form.

2. The progressive aspect is formed by the *reduplication* of the stress syllable and the shifting of its vowel to a 2nd row vowel. For our example verb, its incidental progressive form is **tɜtɜ́ma**.

3. The perfective aspect is formed by the *lengthening* of the stress syllable and the shifting of its vowel to a 1st row vowel. Hence, **táma** becomes **tɷ́ma** in the perfective.

Verb focus is indicated by a characteristic *focus vowel*. The focus vowel for the deliberative focus is **u**, and the focus vowel for the consequential focus is **a**. The incidental focus is normally unmarked, and has no associated focus vowel.

The focus vowel appears on the syllable *immediately preceding* the stress syllable. For verbs with a stress on the initial syllable, if the vowel is short (after applying the domain and aspect conjugations), then the focus vowel is added as a prefix to the verb; if the vowel is long, it is split into two short vowels with the focus vowel replacing the first.

For example, here are the deliberative forms of **táma**: **utáma** (inceptive), **tutɜ́ma** (progressive), **tuɷ́ma** (perfective). Similarly, its consequential forms are **atáma**, **tatɜ́ma**, **taɷ́ma**, respectively.

3.3.2 Introvertive Verbs

The introvertive domain is marked by a different aspect conjugation, applied to the *introvertive stem* of the verb. For multi-domain verbs, the introvertive stem is derived from its physical stem by *consonant softening*. However, the precise consonant softening that occurs is unpredictable. Vowel shifts are frequent but irregular, and extra syllables may appear in the introvertive stem that does not occur in the physical stem. Hence, the introvertive stems of verbs have to be learned on a case-by-case basis.

In our example, the introvertive stem of **táma** is **dámɪ**, "to think", "to speak to oneself".

Introvertive aspect conjugations are as follows:

1. In the inceptive aspect, the syllable *immediately following* the stress syllable (usually the ultima) always has **ɪ** as its vowel. The introvertive stem as given in a lexicon will already be in this form.

2. In the progressive aspect, both the stress syllable and the one following it have the vowel **ɜ**. In our example, **dámɪ** becomes **dɜ́mɜ**.

3. In the perfective aspect, the vowel on the stress syllable is **ɪ** and the vowel on the following syllable is **y**. In our example, **dámɪ** becomes **dímy**.

Focus is marked on introvertive verbs using the same rules as physical verbs. Hence, the deliberative forms of **dámɪ** are: **udámɪ**, **udɜ́mɜ**, and **udímy**, respectively.

3.3.3 Abstract Verbs

The abstract domain is also marked by a different aspect conjugation, on the *abstract stem* of the verb. The abstract stem of a multi-domain verb usually derives from the physical stem by shifting vowels to be more open. However, the exact derivation is often unpredictable. Thus, abstract verb stems need to be learned on a case-by-case basis as well.

The abstract stem of our example verb **táma** is **tǿme**. It refers to the conveying of an impression through the little actions that are done. For example, an otherwise lazy husband's diligent performing of house chores and frequent gifts to his wife *bespeaks* (**tǿme**) his love for her.

The aspect conjugations of abstract verbs are as follows:

1. In the inceptive aspect, the vowel on the syllable following the stress syllable is always **e**. Hence, the abstract inceptive of **táma** is **tǿme**.

2. The progressive aspect is formed from the inceptive by prefixing with **ɜ-**, and shifting the vowel on the stress syllable to **e**, and the vowel on the subsequent syllable to **ɜ**. In the case of our example verb, this produces **ɜtémɜ**.

3. The perfective aspect is formed from the inceptive by *shifting* the stress syllable to the next syllable, *splitting* the vowel and *replacing* it with **úe**. For our example verb, it becomes **tǿmúe**.

Focus on abstract verbs is indicated by *prefixing* the focus vowel on the verb, replacing the **ɜ-** in progressive forms. Hence, the deliberative forms of the abstract verb **tøme** are **utǿme**, **utémɜ**, and **utømúe**. The consequential forms are formed analogously.

4 Basic Sentence Structures

In this section, we shall cover the basic sentence structures in the language.

4.1 The Nominator Sentence

The *nominator sentence* is the simplest sentence in the language. It consists of a single noun or noun-phrase in the locative case. The purpose of the nominator sentence is to set the topic for subsequent discourse by drawing attention to the noun.

The nominator sentence occurs most prominently at the beginning of a passage, where it functions as a title. Examples include:

nι bιzɜtɜǿ dɜ bῑ́lɜnι. *The woman's son.*

nι ιsιlǿ dɜ y̔gomaί. *Ygomai of Isili.*

nι p̂anɜ̄́ dø ekā́sι. *The Majestic Ekasi.*

Each of the above titles can also be translated with a preceding word, "about", e. g., "About the woman's son", since that is the function of the nominator sentence: to set the topic of discourse.

Besides titles, nominator sentences occur quite frequently. The Ebisédi love a topic-comments structure in speech and prose alike. A particular topic, or object of interest, is introduced by a nominator sentence, and then followed by a series of comments related to the topic. The back-referencing relative **kιlι** is often used to refer back to the nominated subject.

4.2 Simple Stative Sentences

When describing an unchanging state of things, verbal sentences are not used; instead, *stative sentences* are used. Stative sentences consists solely of nouns, and possibly relatives, with the various noun cases indicating a static relationship between the nouns.

The meaning of stative sentences tend to be very idiomatic; hence, one needs not only to understand the connotations behind each of the noun cases, but also to be familiar with common idioms that are used. It is useful to keep the Noun Case Model[13] in mind when analysing stative sentences.

[13]See section 2.1.3.

4.2.1 Common Idioms

The following list describes some common combinations of noun cases in a stative sentence, and what they mean.

- Locative and conveyant: containment. When a stative sentence comprises of a locative noun and a conveyant noun, it is a statement of containment. The conveyant noun is that which is contained by the locative noun. This containment can be anything from physical containment to possessing feelings within one's heart to abstract belonging (such as "Red is a color", or "Red is among the class of things designated 'color'."). Examples include:

  ɜjhɪlʒ̋ julír. *Many rooms are in the house.*

  fɜx̂ʒ́ ebí. *Anguish is in me.*

  kʒ́ kǿrumɪ. *Red is a color.*

- Originative and conveyant: origin, or expression. Depending on which of the nouns are persons and which are things, a stative sentence of this form can mean any of the following:

  1. If both nouns refer to people, it is an idiom for describing a parent-child relationship. The originative noun is the parent, and the conveyant noun is the child. For example:

     bʒ̋lɜnɜ bɪzɜtɜǿ. *The boy is the woman's [son].*

     Depending on context, however, this may also just mean that the conveyant noun was sent by the originative noun. For example:

     pʒ̋zɜdɜ ekʒ̋sø. *The man is [sent] from Ekaasi.*

  2. If the originative noun is a place and the conveyant noun is a person, then it is stating the person's place of origin. For example:

     ɪsɪlǿ ẏgɜmʒ̋. *Ygomai is from Isili.*

  3. If the originative noun is a person, and the conveyant noun is an *expressive attribute*, it is an attributive statement. For example:

     mɪlɜdɜǿ dɜmɜl. *The girl is pretty.* Literally, *The girl [expresses] prettiness.*

Not all attributes can be described this way; some attributes are better described using other constructions.

- Conveyant and receptive: possession. For example:

  kácɜ ýbú. *The red flower is mine (fem.).* Literally, *the red flower is unto me.*

  If both nouns refer to persons, it may idiomatically refer to romantic relationship:

  jωbɜ́ ebú. *She is unto me.* I. e., *She is my significant other.*

This is by no means a comprehensive list of possible combinations and meanings. The student of the language is hereby advised to study native texts and interpret stative sentences using the noun case model described above. Nevertheless, in the next section, we will cover another set of common idioms that will be useful.

4.2.2 Adjectival Attributes

There is no single form for adjectival statements, unlike English. Instead, there are a few groups of adjectives which are treated differently.

The basic idea is that some attributes are *expressive*, some are *inherent*, and others are simply *received*.

Expressive attributes are expressed using an originative-conveyant construct, which has already been described in the previous section. Expressive attributes include appearances, such as beauty, majesty, eloquence, ugliness, etc.. The attribute is placed in the conveyant case, and the person expressing the attribute is placed in the originative. For example:

p̂ánɜ̄ ekɜ́sø. *Ekaasi is majestic.* Literally, *Ekaasi shows forth majesty.*

Inherent attributes are considered to be contained within oneself; hence, a locative-conveyant construct is used. For example:

gárɜbɜ ýgomaí. *Ygomai is experienced.* Literally, *Experience is in Ygomai.*

Received attributes are an idiosyncratic category which is more or less arbitrary. Physical dimensions, for example, are received attributes; hence one would say:

> **thátɜ̄ ý́gomaú.** *Ygomai is tall.* Literally, *[There is] height unto Ygomai.*

Similarly with **mɪví** ("small"):

> **mɜvɜ́ bű́lɜnu.** *The boy is small [in stature].* Literally, *Smallness is unto the boy.*

Sometimes, subtle nuances can be obtained by stating an attribute in a different way than usual. For example, one can be subtly sarcastic with statements like:

> **jubǿ dɜmɜ́l ɦ̂e, cujubí dɜmɜ́l ve.**
> *You [look] pretty, but she is pretty [inside]*

I. e., the speaker is implying that the first woman only has skin-deep beauty whereas the other is inherently beautiful inside (the first **dɜmɜ́l** is put with the originative as an expressive attribute, but the second is put alongside the locative, as an inherent attribute).

4.3 Verbal Sentences

Verbal sentences are used to describe events, changes in state. Structurally speaking, verbal sentences are simply stative sentences with the addition of one or more verbs.

Unlike many other languages, there is not the concept of 'subject' and 'object'; rather, the noun cases in a verbal sentence are determined by the Noun Case Model explained in section 2.1.3.

4.3.1 Role of the Originative

The originative case is used for points of origin. This may or may not be what the English speaker would consider the main 'subject'.

For example, in verbs of motion such as **lés**, "to move" or "to go", the originative noun is the originating point of movement, and the thing that actually undergoes the motion is put into the conveyant case. Hence, one would say:

julǿr lý̋s ebɜ́. *I came from the house.*

However, with the verb **fátɜ**, "to see", the originative noun is actually the thing seen. The Ebisédi consider seeing to be the receiving of sight, hence the seer is in the *receptive* case. Hence: **jhɪtǿ fŵtɜ ebú** means "I see her" rather than "she sees me". Sometimes, the sight itself is put in the conveyant case:

jhɪtǿ fŵtɜ dɜmɜ́l ebú. *I see that she is pretty.* Literally, *From her appears prettiness to me.*

In other verbs, like **gɜbáre** "to strike with force", "to clobber", the originative noun *is* source of the action:

ghɜngǿ gɜbŵre nu jhɪtú dɜ mɜngú.
The Ghangi struck her horse.

In such verbs, the blow is thought to start from the originative noun and end at the thing being struck. Hence, the originative is used for the striker, and the receptive for the thing struck.

4.3.2 Role of the Receptive

The receptive case is used for the destination point, or the recipient, of the event. This may or may not be what the English speaker might consider the 'object'; for example, the seer is in the receptive case with verbs like **fátɜ,** but the receptive case marks the recipient of a gift in verbs like **béjh**, "to give".

In verbs of motion, the receptive noun is the destination of the motion. For example:

lý̋s ebɜ́ lő̋ru. *I went to the countryside.*

4.3.3 Role of the Instrumental

In verbal sentences, the instrumental case is used mainly for adverbs, although it can also describe the means by which the event happens. With some verbs, the instrumental can also be the agent of the action.

A common adverb is **lɜrɜ́**, "quickly"; "hastily". For example:

lɜrɜ́ lý̋s ebɜ́ julǿr. *I quickly went out of the house.*

In the following sentence, the instrumental noun **mangá** is the *means of transportation:*

lýs ebɜ́ mangá lőru. *I rode on the Mangi into the countryside.*

With the verb **béjh**, "to give", the instrumental case is used for the deliverer of gift, if it is a different person from the giver. For example:

ekɜ́sø býjh ɜlymoɜn bűlɜna ýlú.
Ekaasi sent the boy with some flowers to Ylia. Literally, *Ekaasi gave flowers by the boy to Ylia.*

The noun that performs the action in some verbs are put into the instrumental case as well:

pízɜda kalűng mangí tɜ́ruø.
The man dragged the Mangi out from the woods.

Here, the man is regarded to be that which sustains the dragging action, hence he is put in the instrumental case.

4.3.4 Role of the Conveyant

The conveyant case is used for that which is in motion, that which is transmitted or conveyed by the verb.

With verbs of motion, the things in motion or the things set in motion are always placed in the conveyant. For example,

ɜghangá kalűng mɜrɜ́nɜ tárū.
The Ghangi's dragged the boy into the woods.

The boy is that which is moved, hence he is put in the conveyant case.

With the verb **béjh**, "to give", the conveyant noun is the gift, since it is considered to be that which moved from the giver to the recipient.

4.3.5 Role of the Locative

The locative noun in a verbal sentence specifies the location where the event occurred. This could be a spatial or temporal location.

Examples:

jhílɪ bűlɜnø tőma bɪteú. *In the room (spatial location), the boy spoke to the mother.*

ɪsøɪ chídø lýs lőru. *In the past (temporal location), he went the countryside.*

With some verbs, the locative case has the additional idiomatic nominative meaning. For example:

pídø tőma mangí ɜmɪrɜ̄nu.
The father talked to the children about Mangi.

Sometimes, this additional use of the locative may cause ambiguities — for example, in **chídø tőma jhílɪ**, is he talking *about* the room, or is he talking *in* the room? To resolve these ambiguities, the convention is to put the location of the event at the front of the sentence, and put the topic of discussion after the verb. Alternatively, one could insert a preposition to clarify that the room is where he is talking:

chídø tőma ɪcúro jhílɪ. *He is talking* inside *the room.*

4.4 Summaritive Sentences

...

4.5 The Back-referencing Particle, kɪlɪ

The *back-referencing particle*, **kɪlɪ**, is a *dually-inflected* word that refers to a noun in the previous sentence. The first vowel inflects for the case of the noun being referred to in the previous sentence; and the second vowel inflects for the case of its function in the current sentence.

It is also inflected for number to agree with the noun being referenced; the plural is marked by the plural prefix **ɜ-**, and the nullar is marked by the nullar prefix **y-**.

For example, the following excerpt is the first 4 lines from a poem about Ygomai of Isili:

nɪ ɪsɪlǿ dɜ ẏ́gomaɪ.
kɪlø dɜmɜ́l ke,
kɪlɪ gárɜbɜ ce,
kɪlu thǿtɜ̄ re,
...

The first line is the nominator sentence, bringing the reader's attention to Ygomai of Isili.

In the second line, **kɪlø** refers back to the locative noun of the previous sentence, the subject Ygomai, and functions as an originative. Hence, its meaning is equivalent to:

ý́gomɜǿ dɜmɜ́l ke.[15] *Ygomai [shows forth] beauty.*

In the next two lines, **kɪlɪ** is again used to refer back to the subject, Ygomai, each time with a different case function, according to the needs of each statement: "She is experienced, / her [stature] is tall."

Making statements that use different case functions about the subject is greatly liked by the Ebisédi. They love how it describes the subject from different angles.

4.6 The Reflexive Particle, sɪlɪ

The *reflexive particle*, **sɪlɪ**, refers to another noun that occurs in the same sentence. It is used for constructing reflexive sentences.

It is *doubly-inflected* for case, just like **kɪlɪ**. The case of the noun being referred to is marked on **sɪ-**, by replacing the vowel with the characteristic vowel of the noun case. The case inflection on **-lɪ** indicates the case function of **sɪlɪ**.

It is also inflected for number, and should agree with the number of the noun being referenced. The plural is marked by the plural prefix **ɜ-**, and the nullar is marked by the nullar prefix **y-**.

For example:

pɪ́́zɜdø tɷ́́ma sølu. *The man talked to himself.*

Here, the **ø** in **sølu** marks the originative case, which refers back to the originative noun, **pɪ́́zɜdø**. The **u** on **sølu** marks the receptive case, and indicates the function of the reflexive particle as a receptive noun.

Here is another example that shows the flexibility of **sɪlɪ**:

chídø søla bý́́jh mangɜ́ ekā́́su.
He himself presented the Mangi to Ekasi.

[15] See section 6, on correlatives, for an explanation of **ke**, **ce**, and **re**.

Here, **søla** is used to give the pronoun **chídø** an additional case function. The originative noun used with **béjh** marks the giver of the gift, and the instrumental noun marks the presenter of the gift. Here, "he" is acting both as the giver, and the one who delivered to gift.

5 Complex Sentence Structures

This section discusses how simple sentences can be combined with each other to form more complex sentence structures.

5.1 Subordinate Clauses

Subordinate clauses are used for modifying nouns. The particles **nɪ** and **dɪ** are used for creating subordinate clauses.

5.1.1 Subordinating particles, nɪ and dɪ

The *subordinating particle* **nɪ** introduces a subordinate clause. It is inflected for number and case, and agrees with the number and case of the noun being modified. Table 11 shows the forms of **nɪ**.

	Singular	**Plural**	**Nullar**
Originative	nø	ɜnø	ynø
Receptive	nu	ɜnu	ynu
Instrumental	na	ɜna	yna
Conveyant	nɜ	ɜnɜ	ynɜ
Locative	nɪ	ɜnɪ	ynɪ

Table 11: Inflections of **nɪ**

The subordinate clause is terminated by the particle **dɪ**, which immediately precedes the noun being modified by the clause. **dɪ** is inflected for case, and indicates the *case function* of the noun within the subordinate clause[16]. Table 12 shows the forms of **dɪ**.

5.1.2 Constructing the subordinate clause

For example, consider the following two sentences:

1. **bωɜ́ mɜngǿ.** *The horse is black.*
2. **mangɜ́ egrā́chu.** *The horse is Egrashu's.*

[16]Similar to the function of the English "who", "whom", "whose".

Originative	dø
Receptive	du
Instrumental	da
Conveyant	dɜ
Locative	dɩ

Table 12: Inflections of dɩ

We can subordinate the second sentence to the first thus:

bωɜ́ nø egrā́chu dɜ mɜngǿ. *Egrashu's horse is black.*

Or, vice versa:

nɜ bωɜ́ dø mangɜ́ egrā́chu. *The black horse is Egrashu's.*

Notice that the noun cases in the subordinate clauses are unchanged from the corresponding complete sentence. This is also true of verbs: in subordinate clauses, verbs retain their domain, focus, and aspect. For example, if we have the following simple sentences:

1. **bɜ̄́lɜnɜ lȳ́s lṓru.** *The boy went outside.*

2. **bɩ̄́lɜnu fω̄́tɜ tɜ̄́drø.** *The boy saw a tree.*

We can form subordinate clauses as follows:

1. **nɜ fω̄́tɜ tɜ̄́drø du bɜ̄́lɜnɜ lȳ́s lṓru.**
   The boy who saw the tree went outside.

2. **nu lȳ́s lṓru dɜ bɩ̄́lɜnu fω̄́tɜ tɜ̄́drø.**
   The boy who went outside saw the tree.

5.1.3 Substantive clauses

Substantive clauses are subordinate clauses which modify an implicit noun. The analogous construction in English would be noun phrases like "the rich" or "the brave", which may be thought as "the rich *ones*" and "the brave *ones*" except that the modified noun has been elided.

	Singular	Plural	Nullar
Originative	døn	ɜdøn	ydøn
Receptive	dun	ɜdun	ydun
Instrumental	dan	ɜdan	ydan
Conveyant	dɜn	ɜdɜn	ydɜn
Locative	dın	ɜdın	ydın

Table 13: Inflections of **dın**

Substantive clauses are built the same way as regular subordinate clauses, except that the *substantive subclause terminator*, **dın**, is used in place of **dı** and the modified noun. Table 13 shows the inflections of **dın**.

Note that unlike **dı**, **dın** is fully inflected for number as well as case. Here are some examples of substantive clauses:

ɜnı thɜrɜx̂ásı dɜ ɜgurā́kı ɜnı x̂árasɜ ɜdun.
The guards in the palace are the brave (ones).

okró ɜnɜ kȷulír dɜ ɜjhılʒ́ ɜnɜ cujulír ɜdɜn.
There are more rooms in the first house than in the second.

uro mangí nı pʹ́zɜdø zotʹ́ dun.
This is the horse which the man looked at.

5.2 Sentence Adjoinment

Sentence adjoinment is a way of chaining several sentences together into one. Subordinate clauses express an idea which is less important, or subordinate, to the idea in the main sentence. Adjoined sentences express ideas which are of *equal* importance and priority.

5.2.1 Anticipatory case particle, lı

The *anticipatory case particle*, **lı**, is inflected for case just like **dı**. It precedes the last noun in a sentence to mark an adjoinment with the next sentence. The noun or noun-phrase marked this way is called a *linking noun*, or a *linking noun-phrase*. The linking noun is common to *both* sentences; its normal case inflection marks its function in the preceding sentence, and the

case inflection on the particle **lɪ** marks its function in the *next* sentence. Because it immediately precedes the linking noun, it is said to *anticipate* the function of the noun in the next sentence.

Table 14 shows the forms of **lɪ**.

Originative	lø
Receptive	lu
Instrumental	la
Conveyant	lɜ
Locative	lɪ

Table 14: Inflections of lɪ

5.2.2 Adjoining Sentences

As an example, consider the following sequence of events:

1. **pǐzɜdø fŏtɜ bɪzɜtaú.** *The man was seen by the woman.*
2. **bɜzɜtɜ̄ laýs lŏru.** *The woman went outside.*

We can adjoin these sentences thus:

> **pǐzɜdø fŏtɜ lɜ bɪzɜtɜ̄ laýs lŏru.**
> *The man was seen by the woman, who [then] went outside.*

More than two sentences can be adjoined this way, by arranging the linking nouns so that they always appear at either end of the sentences. However, sentence adjoinment should not be over-used, as it can quickly become very confusing.

5.3 Quoted Discourse

Quoted discourse is a way of nominalizing a sentence or an entire passage, so that it acts as a single argument to the verb of a main sentence.

5.3.1 Quotational Particles, tι and tιmι

The *quotational particles* **tι** and **tιmι** introduce and terminate, respectively, a subordinate passage. They are most frequently encountered in quoted discourse in conjunction with the verb **táma**, “to speak”.

These two particles are inflected for case in the containing sentence. The particle **tιmι** is inflected as though it were two words, **tι** and **mι**. Hence, its forms are **tømø**, **tumu**, **tama**, **tɜmɜ**, **tιmι**. The case of **tι** must, obviously, match the case of **tιmι**.

Between **tι** and **tιmι** is the quoted discourse itself. In native scripts, there is no punctuation after **tι**; however, we will add a comma after **tι** in our orthography, to make it easier to scan. The last word in the quoted discourse before **tιmι** is always punctuated as an end-of-sentence; however, the following **tιmι** is still part of the host sentence.

Here is an example:

> **bιtɜǿ tuώma bῐ́lɜnu tɜ, øro mýe chɜ́dɜ lȳ́s tā́rū. ɜghangɜ̄́ tā́ruι. tɜmɜ.**
> *The mother said to the boy, ‘Do not go into the woods. The Ghangi are in the woods.’*

Note that **tɜ** and **tɜmɜ** are inflected for the conveyant case, because the two complete sentences in between comprise what the woman said to the boy. (That which is spoken is placed in the conveyant case for the verb **táma**.)

Note that although there are two complete sentences quoted, technically everything between **tɜ** and **tɜmɜ** is a single conveyant noun-phrase in the main sentence. Hence, although it is more conventional to place quoted discourse as the last thing in the main sentence, it is not wrong to say things like the following:

> **jhιtǿ tώ̄ma tɜ lés y̔bú ιsί tɜmɜ bῐ́lɜnu.**
> *She said, ‘come to me now!’ to the boy.*

This is also the reason that any correlative particles attached to the main sentence will come *after* the closing **tιmι** if it is the last word. For example:

> **lȳ́s fɜ̄́nɜ jhίlu k̂e, k̂ώ̄ma chίdø tɜ, ymaί! ghί jωbɜ́? tɜmɜ ve.**
> *The student went into the room, and shouted, ‘Mother! Where are you?’.*

5.3.2 Long Quotes

If the quoted discourse is long, the compound particle **tɪmɪtɪ** may be used as what is effectively a paragraph break in the quoted discourse. **tɪmɪtɪ** is inflected exactly as though it were composed of the two words **tɪmɪ** and **tɪ**.

This can also be used for multiple quotations, which may not have been spoken at the same time. For example:

> **ɪsǿɪ ý́mɜǿ tǿ̃ma ebú tɜ, ǿsó mý́e lés chɜ́dɜ tā́rū. tɜmɜtɜ, usó lés chɜ́dɜ nu p̂atǘ dɜ jolúr. tɜmɜ.**
> *Mother used to say to me, 'I do not want you to go to the woods'; and, 'I'd rather you go to [your] grandparents' house.'*

Here, the two things that the narrator's mother said may be two different things that she said at different times, and he is merely recounting of both of them at this point in the narrative.

5.3.3 Subordinate Sentences

The particles **tɪ** and **tɪmɪ** are not restricted to only delimiting quoted discourse. It can also be used to subordinate entire sentences.

For example:

> **fǿ̃tɜ jhɪtú tɜ, chídǿ nɜnójɜ cujhɪtu. tɜmɜ k̂e, keve vátɪ jhɪtú tɜ, mý́e chídǿ mājɜ́ jhɪtú. tɜmɜ ve.**
> *She saw him flirt with [another] woman, and she began to realize that it is not true that he loves her.*

In the first sentence, the event that she saw, that he was flirting with someone else, is subordinated using **tɪ** and **tɪmɪ** to be the argument to the main verb, **fǿ̃tɜ**. Recall that the verb **fǿ̃tɜ** takes a conveyant noun as the thing seen. Similarly, in the second sentence, what she began to realize is subordinated as an argument to the verb **vátɪ**.

This use of **tɪ** and **tɪmɪ** can be used for constructing explanatory clauses as well. For example:

> **tǿ ɪsǿɪ ɜghɜngǿ khebǿ̃rɜ nu chɜ́dɜ dǿ bɪteú tǿmǿ kǿ̃kɜ lǿ chɜ́dɜ kuýkh ɜnu chídu fǿ̃tɜ dǿ ɜghangú.**
> *The fact that the Ghangis killed his mother caused him to harm all the Ghangis that he saw.*

The originative clause enclosed by **tǿ** and **tǿmǿ** acts as the argument to the verb **kǿ̃kɜ**, "to cause".

6 Correlatives

The Ebisédi like to state things in parallel. Rather than saying something like "I will do A, and then I will do B, and then I will do C", they prefer to state A, B, and C using a correlative construct. A correlative construct is similar to the "on the one hand . . . , on the other hand" dichotomy in English, except that it is used much more frequently, and it has a triple counterpart (the trichotomy) as well.

Correlatives can describe *correspondence:*

> **cómı gárɜbɜ ĥe, cωsánɜ ve.**
> *He is* both *experienced and intelligent.*

Or show *contrast:*

> **cómı p̂ánɜ̄ ĥe, jhıtí mýdɜmɜl ve.**
> *He is majestic,* but *she is ugly*

Or describe a *series of events:*

> **fώtɜ jhıtú cómø ĥe, luýs jhıtɜ́ lő́ru ve.**
> *She saw him, and she went outside.* Or, *Seeing him, she went outside.*

In fact, the Ebisédi like correlative constructs so much that they would structure their speech and prose — and even their train of thought — around groups of two or three ideas, just so they can use correlatives.

6.1 Dichotomies

The dichotomy correlative particles are **ĥe** and **ve**, in that order. These particles appear at the *end* of the sentence they modify.

For example:

> **chídı, kılu fώtɜ jhıtǿ ĥe, kılø tuώma tɜ, ghǿ jωbɜ? tɜmɜ ve.**
> *He, seeing her on the one hand, said to her, 'Where are you from?', on the other hand.*

Notice that the second correlative particle **ve** appears *after* the discourse terminator **tɜmɜ**.

Topic-comments constructs such as in this example are a favorite place to use correlatives.

6.2 Trichotomies

The trichotomy correlative particles are **ke**,[17] **ce**, and **re**, in that order. These particles appear at the end of the sentences they modify.

The Ebisédi love to describe actions in triplets, with an emphasis on the last one. For example:

> **lȳ́s ekā́sз lṓru ke, fῶ́tз chíd u khɜ́ngø ce, keve uκ̂íra jȳ́re chída kasзpánз re.**
> *Ekaasi went outside, saw a Khangi*[19]*, and drew [his] sword.*

Notice the use of **keve** in the third sentence for emphasis. This is a favorite usage, to put a bang at the end of a group of three.

The Ebisédi also love describing things with triple angles. For example:

> **ekā́sɩ. kɩlu thátɜ̄ ke. kɩlɩ gárзbз ce. kɩlø p̂ánɜ̄ re.**
> *Ekaasi, he is great in stature, he is experienced, and he is majestic.*

[17] Note the unaspirated **k**, not to be confused with the dichotomy correlative particle **κ̂e**, which has the aspirated **κ̂**.

[19] A male Ghangi.

7 Conjunctions

Conjunctions are words used to join sentences.

7.1 keve

The conjunction **keve** is used to indicate *sequence*. It is mostly translated as “and”, although it has a stronger cause-and-effect connotation than the English conjunction. Sometimes it is translated “and so”.

Some examples:

> **fω̄́tз jobú pĭ́zзdø keve luý̆s jhзtз́ lŏ́ru.**
> *She saw the man and went outside.*

Here, **keve** may also be translated as “and so”, or “so”. This is the normal usage of **keve**, where it carries a strong sense of cause and effect.

> **ιsǿ mώmзrзnз ebί́ k̂e, зmιrз̄́nз ve. keve kί́gι ebз́ зjumз̄́.**
> *From the beginning, there were no children around me; now there are many children. So, they and I are [having] fun.*

Here, **keve** is translated as “so”.

Note that when describing two parallel or unrelated events, the correlatives are preferred over **keve**. In the following example, **keve** gives a sense of sequence, and implies that the boy’s going outside is somehow caused by Niri’s talking with her mother:

> **y̔nιrιǿ tω̄́ma bιteú keve bз̄́lзnз ly̆́s lŏ́ru.**
> *Niri talked with [her] mother and [so] the boy went outside.*

It would be better to employ a correlative construct, if these two events are parallel:

> **y̔nιrιǿ tω̄́ma bιteú k̂e, bз̄́lзnз ly̆́s lŏ́ru ve.**
> *Niri was talking with [her] mother, and the boy went outside.*

This eliminates the possibility of the misunderstanding that the boy’s going may be a result of Niri’s talking with her mother.

7.2 mɪk̂á

The conjunction **mɪk̂á**, often translated "but", "however", or "nevertheless", is used to draw contrast with the preceding prose. It may be understood as, "having said all this, on the other hand ...". It is mainly used to introduce a new, contrasting section in the prose.

Usually, **mɪk̂á** is reserved for longer sections of prose; for shorter constructions the correlative constructs are preferred. Therefore, contrasts between single statements are often expressed using correlatives:

> **cómu thǿtɜ̄ k̂e, jhɪtú mɪví ve.**
> *He is tall but she is short (small).*

But when constrasting longer sections, **mɪk̂á** is used, as in the following example:

> **mangí, kɪlu lɜrɜ-ɜ́ ke, kɪlɪ kɜt̂á́ ce, kɪlø kakacá kɜk̂ójure ve. mɪk̂á ɜgh ɜngǿ ɜkesɪpaná́ khejő́re jh ɜdɜ́.**
> *The Mangi, it was fast, it was mighty, it was kicking wildly. But the Ghangis (still) killed it with [their] swords.*

Here, **mɪk̂á** has the effect of "in spite of all this".

7.3 mɪrő

The conjunction **mɪrő** means "meanwhile, in another place". It describes an event parallel with what had just transpired. Like **mɪk̂a**, it is usually applied to longer sections of prose.

Although correlatives could also be used to describe parallel events, **mɪrő** is used for conjoining larger sections of text. It can be used when correlatives are already being used in the sections being conjoined. For example:

> **ɜbɜ́lɜnɜ lő́rɪ ke, ɜkɜlɜ ɜkɜgɜ́ ce, ɜkɜlɜ lɜlís mő́ju re. mɪrő́ mɪlɜdaí, kɪlɜ jhílɪ ke, kɪlɪ mýt̂alɜn ce, kɪlø fɜk̂ɜlýrɜ re.**
> *The boys were outside, and they were very excited, and they were on the way to the city. Meanwhile, the girl, she was in the room, and she was joyless, and she wept.*

7.4 mιĉί

The conjunction **mιĉί** means "therefore", "consequently", "as a result". It describes the final consequence, or consummation, of the preceding prose. It carries more emphasis than **keve**; and so is usually used to conclude longer passages.

The following passage is an example of how **mιĉί** can be used to give a sense of conclusion.

tø mώpзzзdз jhιtú tømø kώ̄kз ẏ̔gomз̄́ lȳ́s nu esánu dз jolúr k̂e; kзlø tώ̄ma chίdu nι jhιtί dз fзk̂з́.	*The fact that she did not have a man drove Ygomai to go to the house of Esani and tell him of her woes.*
esánι erosánι ve. kιlø taώma jhιtú tз, mysó fιk̂ί jωbз́. aro bιzзtaί: kιlu pз̄́zзdз; keve kιlз kίgι k̂e. oro bιzзtaί: kιlu pз̄́zзdз; keve kιlз mý-kιgι ve. ana cujhιtú mýpзzзdз keve jιna cujhзtз́ t̂álιn. mιĉί tώ̄ma ebǿ tз, ana pз̄́zзdз jobú, keve øsó t̂álιn jωbз́ k̂e. ana mýpзzзdз jobú, keve øsó t̂álιn ve. tзmз. tзmз.	*Esani the Wise replied, "May you not be in woe. One woman may have a man, and she is happy; but another woman, she may have a man, but she is not happy. If she did not have a man, probably she would be happy.* Therefore, *I say, 'If you have a man, be content; and if you have no man, [also] be content.' "*

In the opening sentence, **tι** and **tιmι** are used to indicate cause. The particle **mysó** in the second paragraph is a colloquial contraction of **mýe** and **øsó**.

7.5 kreme

The conjunction **kreme** usually appears isolated in its own sentence. It introduces an explanation or elaboration of something that was introduced previously. It can roughly be taken to mean "here are the details", "here's the deal", or "it is as follows".

One common use of **kreme** is in relaying a message from another party:

lȳ́s ebз́ nø p̂ánз̄ dø ekз̄́sø k̂e. chίdø kalȳ́ch ebз зrotзmз̄́ cómu ve.	*I came from the Majestic Ekasi. He sent me to you with these words.*
kreme. agrǿjhe зnu chίdu dз зbι-sз̄́dз. kзlι p̂a̰o зgurā́kι p̂a̰o hok̂asanί̄ p̂a̰o зchιnā́rι ke. keve ulés зjhзdз̄́ thзrзk̂ásu ce. hongзǿ táce re.	Namely, *prepare your people: all the guards, all the Experts, and all the foot-soldiers; and let them go to the Palace, [to] defend against the enemies.*

7.6 ɪre

Another conjunction related to **kreme** is **ɪre**. Like **kreme**, **ɪre** usually appears alone in its own sentence. It is cognate with **íre**, an emphatic particle meaning "really" or "truly".

As a conjunction, **ɪre** introduces a formal statement, usually a list of items, such as the terms of a contract, the items of an official document, the findings of evidence in a law court, or the final judgment pronounced by the judge.

The excerpt below is taken from a notice in a guest house in the city of Isilí:

t̂álɜn nu lesā̀ dɜ jhɪdú ke. øsó nɪ jhɜdɜ́ ű̀rɪ na pójaɪ ɜt̂alɜ̄n ɜkígɜ ce. usó víty jhɪdú ɜrotɜmɜ̄́ re.	*Greetings to you, sojourner. May there be joy and fun during your stay here. Please observe the following.*
ɪre. vӳ́jhɪlɪ nɪ cutuí dɜ reojhílɪ ke. lɜrɜjhílɪ nɪ rotuí dɜ deojhílɪ ce. mysó lalő̀ch vӳ́jhɪlɪ re.	Namely: *the waste room is the third room on the southwest, and the washing room is the fourth on the southeast. Please do not wash in the waste room. ...*

(A few points worthy of note here: in the first sentence, the guest is addressed as **nu lesā dɜ jhɪdú**, "you who are journeying". Modified pronouns like this one are a common idiom in formal Ebisédian. In the second sentence, the gerund **pøjaɪ**, "your stopping" is idiomatic for "your stay", the idea being that the guest house is but a temporary stop-over.)

7.7 óre

The conjunction **óre** indicates *subsequence*. It means "next", "then", or "furthermore". It is used to indicate that the speaker is moving on to the next item in the list of things being discussed.

The following classroom excerpt shows how **óre** is used.

tő̀ma bɪzɜtɜǿ tɜ mɪcí júcɪ. ɪsí táma mɜcɜ́. tɜmɜ. keve taώma ɜmɪrɜ̄́nø tɜ júcɪ. tɜmɜ ĥe. tő̀ma bɪzɜtɜǿ tɜ óre. júcø. jócu. jώca. jώcɜ. júcɪ. tɜmɜ. keve taώma ɜmɪrɜ̄́nø uro ɜtɜmɜ̄ ve.	*The woman said, "This is a chair. Now say this." And the children said, "chair". The woman said, "Next. ... [the five forms of the word 'chair']." And the children said these words.*

Here, the consequential verb **taώma** has the sense of "to repeat after".

8 Demonstratives & Prepositions

In this section, we will take a look at demonstratives and prepositions. Both are *prepositional relatives*: they govern the noun that immediately follows them, and cannot, in their prepositional forms, occur in isolation.

8.1 Demonstratives

There are three demonstratives in the language:

uro "This", "this one". Refers to the particular instance of the noun being discussed. For example:

> **uro bɪsɜ́dɪ** *This person,* i. e., *This person that we are talking about.*

oro "The next", "the next one". Refers to the next instance in sequence of the noun being discussed. For example:

> **oro bɪsɜ́dɪ** *The next person,* i. e., *the one coming after the person we were just talking about.*

Usually, **oro** implies a sequence of some sort. A common phrase is:

> **oro ɪsóɪ** *After this time; and then; afterwards.*

aro "The other", "another". Refers to a *different* instance of the noun being discussed. For example:

> **aro bɪsɜ́dɪ** *Another person; the other person.*

Unlike the case with **oro**, no sequence is implied here.

These demonstratives act like prepositional particles — they appear before the word they modify.

8.2 Prepositions

The language has a rich system of prepositions, describing various different relationships with a noun.

Prepositions are trisyllabic. The first syllable, which is always a vowel, is a *directional prefix*. The second syllable is a *locator* describing a location

relative to the noun being modified. The third syllable is the prepositional suffix **-ro**. The directional prefix describes a direction relative to the location described by the locator.

For example, consider the preposition **uʞ́íro**. The directional prefix **u-** means "towards" or "into". The locator **-ʞ́í-** refers to the location "above" the noun being modified. Hence, **uʞ́íro** means "upwards" or "ascending". For example:

lý̋s uʞ́íro rű́cø *Rise up from the bed.*

There is a subtle but important difference betwen **uʞ́íro** and another preposition, **abúro**. The prefix **-a** means "away from", or "coming from". The locator **-bú-** refers to the point "beneath", "below", or "underneath" the modified noun. Hence, **abúro** also means "upwards", but it is upwards *towards* the modified noun, as opposed to **uʞ́íro**, which is upwards *away from* the modified noun. Therefore, while one would say **uʞ́íro rű́cø** to describe rising from a bed, one would say **abúro tā́dru** to describe climbing up a tree — since one would be climbing *into* the tree, not above it. However, if a bird flew into the sky from the tree, one would indeed say:

uʞ́íro tɜ́drø *Upwards from the tree.*

8.2.1 Directional prefixes

There are three directional prefixes in prepositions.

u- "Towards", "directed at". This is directed at the location indicated by the locator; it could mean *away from* the modified noun when the locator refers to a point outside of the modified noun.

ɪ- "Located at". That is, located at the location indicated by the locator. For example:

ɪʞ́íro tā́drɪ *Above the tree; remaining at the point above the tree.*

ɪtáro julír *At a distance from the house.*

ɪlíro mő́jɪ *Around the city; in the suburbs of the city.*

a- "Away from". That is, away from the location indicated by the locator; this could mean "approaching" the modified noun when that location is a point outside the noun. Hence:

> **abúro** *Upwards into,* i. e., *moving away from the point below the noun, but towards the noun itself.*
>
> **acúro** *Coming out of.*

8.2.2 Locators

There are five locators in prepositions.

-ƙí- "Above", "on top of". Refers to the point above the modified noun.

-cú- Refers to the noun itself. Hence, **ucúro** means "into", and **acúro** means "coming out of".

-lí- Refers to the immediate vicinity of the noun. **ulíro** means "away from" the modified noun, but still remaining in its vicinity; whereas **utáro** means completely moving away from the noun. **alíro** means "into" or "onto" the noun from its immediate surroundings; it carries the sense of enveloping or engulfing. **ılíro** means "near" or "around"; it is also idiomatic for "together with".

-tá- Refers to a point far away from the noun. Hence:

> **utáro** *Away from.*
>
> **atáro** *Approaching (from a distance).*

-bú- Refers to the point underneath, or below, the noun. Hence:

> **ubúro** *Falling downwards from.*
>
> **abúro** *Approaching from below.*

8.2.3 Prepositional Nouns

Prepositions can be nominalized by replacing the final vowel with the characteristic vowel of one of the noun cases. For example:

ɩtárɩ *Being at a distance.*

ɩlírɩ *Being in the vicinity.*

The most useful form of a nominalized preposition is the instrumental case, where it functions as an adverb. Examples:

uƙíra lýs rűcø. *Arise from the bed.* Literally, *Move upwards from the bed.*

ubúra zotώ́ *Look downwards.*

9 Interrogative Constructs

Questions and other interrogative constructs are indicated by the presence of *interrogative markers*. The interrogative noun **ghí** and the interrogative verb **ghé** are used to ask *'what' questions*—questions where the speaker inquires for an answer.[20] On the other hand, *confirmative questions*—yes/no questions, are asked using the interrogative particle **áne**.

9.1 Interrogative Noun, ghí

The interrogative noun **ghí** means "what" or "which". It is used as a placeholder for the unknown noun being inquired about. It is inflected as a regular neuter noun. Its presence in a sentence marks that sentence as a question. Although the native script does not change the punctuation of the sentence in this case, we will alert the reader by changing the period at the end of the sentence to a question mark.

Here are some usage examples:

ɪsóɪ ghí? *What time is it?*

This is a common phrase to ask for the time. Be aware, however, that this is context-dependent; if one were discussing some news, for example, **ɪsóɪ ghí?** can also be used to inquire "when did this happen?"

chídɪ nɪ ghǿ dɜ bű̀lɜnɪ? *Whose son is he?* Literally, *He is the from-whom boy?*

The receptive **ghú** is often used to mean "why" ("unto what"). When used this way, **ghú** is usually placed at the beginning of the sentence, to distinguish it from normal usage. For example:

chɜ́dɜ lý̋s ghú? *Where is he going?*

ghú chɜ́dɜ lý̋s lő̀ru? *Why is he going outside?* Or, *He is going outside unto what?*

In a similar vein, the originative **ghǿ** is often used in the sense of "what caused this?" For example:

[20] To the Ebisédi, 'who', 'when', 'why', and 'how' questions are the same as 'what' questions. 'Who' is equivalent to 'what person'; 'when' is 'what time'; 'why' is 'for what cause'; 'how' is 'by what means', etc..

ghǿ tu jhɜtɜ́ lýs lőru tumu?
What caused her to go outside?

Note here that the second clause, **jhɜtɜ́ lýs lőru** is placed in a receptive subordinate clause so as to prevent the misunderstanding of the question to mean "from whence did she go outside?".

9.2 Personal Interrogatives

The interrogative **ghí** can be inflected for gender explicitly by prefixing any of the five proper noun prefixes. When prefixed this way, except for the neuter proper noun prefix, **ghí** becomes a *personal interrogative*, "who". When prefixed with the neuter proper noun prefix **ɪ-**, it explicitly asks for an inanimate answer.

For example, compare the following:

ghɜ́ jhílɪ? *What is in that room? (could be either a person or a thing)*

oghɜ́ jhílɪ? *Who (epi.) is in that room?*

ɪghɜ́ jhílɪ? *What is in that room? (can only be an inanimate object)*

eghɜ́ jhílɪ? *Who (masc.) is in that room?* Literally, *Mr.-who is in that room?*

ýghɜ́ jhílɪ? *Who (fem.) is in that room?* Literally, *Ms.-who is in that room?*

9.3 Interrogative Verb, ghé

The interrogative verb **ghé** is the placeholder for the unknown verb being inquired about.

For example:

ghé jhílɪ? *What happened in the room?*

The expected answer is a verb, possibly with clarifying nouns, for example:

ɜmɪlɜdɜǿ kɜ̂krós jhílɪ. *The girls [were] writing/drawing in the room.*

Note that the answer is expected to fit the case of the nouns in the question. For example, if the question is:

fı́nø ghé? *What did the (male) student do?*

Then the answer is expected to involve **fı́nø** in the originative case. Therefore, a (grammatically) correct answer might be:

fı́nø mɜchű́je. *The student was dreaming.*

But the following answer is grammatically incorrect because **fı́nu** is in the wrong case:

fı́nu fŵtɜ fıdɜǿ. *The student saw the (female) student*

This is important, because when answering questions, nouns are often omitted. If we answer with a verb that takes nouns in a different case than was asked in the question, it may become ambiguous, or even meaningless.

An exception to this is when the locative case is used in the question. This is the correct way to ask a question with **ghé** when you do not know what case the nouns will be, in the answer. For example:

fı́nı ghé? *What about the student?*

It is valid to answer this question with a verb that takes **fı́nı** in any case.[21]

9.4 Confirmative Questions

Confirmative questions are questions where the speaker asks for confirmation of a particular statement. Confirmative questions involve the use of the interrogative particles **áne**, **jı́ne**, and **mý̀ne**.

9.4.1 Interrogative Particle, áne

The interrogative particle **áne** marks a sentence as a confirmative question. It may be understood as "Is this true: ...?", or, "Is this so, that ...?" One may answer, **jı́e**, "yes", "it is so"; or **mý̀e**, "no", "it is not so".

For example:

[21] However, some pedantic Ebisédi grammarians would insist that one answer this way: **fı́nı, kılı ...** with **kılı** inflected as appropriate for the particular answer given. Most Ebisédi consider this unnecessary, though.

áne bɜ̄lɜnɜ lý̄s ló̄ru? *Did the boy really go outside?*

jíe lý̄s ló̄ru. *Yes, [he] went outside.*

mýe lý̄s ló̄ru. *No, [he] did not go outside.*

áne is also called the *neutral interrogative particle*, because it does not load the question with either an expected 'yes' answer or a 'no' answer.

9.4.2 Loaded Questions

The other two interrogative particles also function like **áne** except that they load the question with an expected answer.

The *positive interrogative particle*, **jíne**, marks a sentence as a question to which the speaker expects the answer "yes". For example:

jíne cúmø mɜ̄jɜ́ bɪteú? *You love [your] mother, don't you?*

The *negative interrogative particle*, **mýne**, marks a sentence as a question to which the speaker expects the answer "no". For example:

mýne chídø kɣ́̄kh jhɪtú? *You didn't harm her, did you?*

The three interrogative particles **áne**, **jíne**, and **mýne** are cognate with the three subjunctive particles, **ana**, **jɪna**, and **myna**. One should note the lack of accent on the latter, and the difference in the final vowels.

9.4.3 Confirmative Questions with ɪro

The *emphatic nominal preposition,* **ɪro**, is used to bring special attention to a particular word in a sentence. For example, compare

lý̄s bɜ̄lɜnɜ jolúr. *The boy went to the house.*

lý̄s ɪro bɜ̄lɜnɜ jolúr. *It was the boy who went to the house.*

lý̄s bɜ̄lɜnɜ ɪro jolúr. *It was the house that the boy went to.*

When combined with an interrogative particle, **ɪro** marks out the noun being queried about. For example:

áne ɪro bɜ̄lɜnɜ lý̄s jolúr? *Was it the boy who went to the house?*

áne ɪro jolúr lý̄s bɜ̄lɜnɜ? *Was it to the house that the boy went?*

9.4.4 Answering Questions

So far, we've seen how questions are answered with **jíe** in the affirmative, and **mýe** in the negative. These are answers to questions of fact. However, there is another class of questions to which the appropriate answer is neither **jíe** nor **mýe**. These are the *requests,* which are also formed using the interrogative particles **áne**, **jíne**, and **mýne**. In answering a request, one uses **øsó** and **mysó** instead. This topic is discussed in greater detail in section 10.1.4.

9.5 Numerical Interrogatives

Numerical interrogatives are questions that involve numbers. They are based on the 2nd-declension *numerical interrogative noun*, **gheí**, which can be prefixed or suffixed just like a numerical noun.

9.5.1 Cardinal Interrogatives

Cardinal interrogatives ask *how many* or *how much* there are of something. Cardinal interrogatives are formed by prefixing the numerical interrogative **gheí** with the radix form of the noun being queried about.

For example:

pı́zɜdogheı julír? *How many men are in the house?*

ɜmɜrɜ́noghez lýs óru? *How many children came here?*

9.5.2 Ordinal Interrogatives

Ordinal interrogatives inquire about the *ordinal position* of a particular noun. It corresponds with the English "which". Ordinal interrogatives are formed by prefixing the noun with the radix **gheo-**.

For example:

chídı gheopı́zɜdı? *Which man is he?* I. e., *Which position is he?*

10 Optatives & Subjunctives

Most sentences in the language are *indicative* statements or questions — that is, they deal with factual things and events. Indicative statements state facts, and indicative questions inquire about facts. There are also imperative statements — we have seen that the inceptive aspect of verbs often serve this function.

In this section, we take a look at hypothetical statements: preferences and hypotheses. Wishes are indicated by the *optative particles*; and hypotheses are marked by the *subjunctive particles*. These particles can be combined with the interrogative particles to form questions of preference and hypotheses.

10.1 Optatives

There are three optative markers in the language. All three mark a statement as a statement of *preference*, rather than a statement of fact.

Optative particles are placed at the beginning of a sentence.

10.1.1 The Weak Optative Particle

The *weak optative particle*, **usó**, is used when the speaker wishes to politely state his or her preferences, without any assertiveness. This is often used in gentle pleadings.

For example:

epaí, usó lýs ebɜ́ lőru. *Father, I would prefer to go outside.* I. e., *I prefer to go outside but I will stay inside if you want me to.*

usó mýe kékh ɣ́bú! *Please don't hurt me (fem.)!*

10.1.2 The Regular Optative Particle

The *regular optative particle*, **osó**, is the most frequently used optative particle. It is the one normally used to express one's wishes.

For example:

osó lýs ebɜ́ lőru. *I wish I went outside.* Or, *I wish I could go outside.*

osó chɜ́dɜ lýs ɣ́bǿ. *I wish he would go away from me.*

10.1.3 The Strong Optative Particle

The *strong optative particle*, **øsó**, marks a statement of the speaker's opinion or request. In the latter case, it carries a connotation that compliance is expected. Hence, it may be thought of as a hortative, and is used in exhortations and demands.

Examples:

øsó ý̒gɜmɜ̋ lý̋s pı̋du ısǿı. *I think Ygomai [should have] gone to [her] father.*

øsó laýs chɜ́dɜ jhı́lø ısı́. *I suggest you leave the room now.*

The use of **øsó** here is not quite as strong as an imperative using the inceptive verb:

alés chɜ́dɜ jhı́lø ısı́! *Leave the room now!*

øsó does not always carry a demanding tone, however. It is frequently used in encouragements as well, for example:

øsó mýfıʁ̂ı jωbɜ́. *May you (fem.) not be in anguish.* I. e., *Don't be sad.*

Using **osó** in this context would be wavering; and using **usó** would be unsure and not much of an encouragement at all.

Another use of **øsó** is to decline, firmly and assertively. For example:

øsó mýe lý̋s ebɜ mő̋jı. *No, I do not want to go to the city.*

If **usó** were used instead, the effect would be weaker:

usó mýe lý̋s ebɜ mő̋jı. *I would rather not go to the city (but I will if you insist).*

Similarly, **osó** would have a wavering tone:

osó mýe lý̋s ebɜ mő̋jı. *I wish I didn't have to go to the city.*

10.1.4 Answering Requests

The strong optative particle **øsó** is also used to answer a request in the affirmative. For example:

> **jhɪtǿ píly tɜ usó chídø mɪlǿe ý́bú. tɜmɜ. keve taώma chídø tɜ øsó. tɜmɜ.**
> *She requested of him, 'Please help me.' And so he answered, 'I will.'*

Here, **osǿ** means "I ought to", "I am obliged to", "your request is my obligation". It is the customary way for the Ebisédi to answer a request in the affirmative. It is inappropriate to answer **jíe** here, because **jíe** means "this is so", and is only appropriate in answers to questions of fact. In answering a request, **øsó** is always used.

A request is answered in the negative by **mysó**, which is a contraction of **mý́e** and **øsó**. For example:

> **jhɪtǿ píly tɜ usó chídø mɪlǿe ý́bú. tɜmɜ ĸ̂e. taώma chídø tɜ mysó. tɜmɜ ve.**
> *She requested of him, 'Please help me.' But he answered, 'I will not.'*

mysó here is to be understood as "I am not obliged to", or "I cannot (ought not)". This is the correct way to decline a request. As with the affirmative, it is inappropriate to answer with **mý́e** alone, because **mý́e** is only appropriate in answers to questions of fact.

10.2 Subjunctives

Subjunctives mark a statement as a *hypothesis* or a *conjecture* as opposed to a fact. As with the optative, there are three subjunctive markers in the language. They are also placed at the front of the sentence.

ana is the *neutral subjunctive particle*. This is the subjunctive marker normally used. It introduces a hypothetical statement.

jɪna is the *positive subjunctive particle*. This particle, although it also introduces a hypothetical statement, leans towards the statement being true. It indicates the bias of the speaker.

myna is the *negative subjunctive particle.* It is the opposite of **jɪna**; it introduces a hypothetical statement that the speaker is inclined to think is false.

The main use of subjunctive particles is in constructing conditional statements, as described in the following section.

10.3 Conditional Statements

With optatives and subjunctives, one can construct conditional statements, the analogues of the English if-then statements.

10.3.1 Basic Conditional Statements

A *basic conditional statement* is introduced by one of the three subjunctive particles. It is of the form **ana** ... **keve** .... The *antecedent* appears between **ana** and **keve**; the *consequent* appears after **keve**.

The other two subjunctive particles may be used in place of **ana**, to load the statement either way. The following examples illustrate the different nuances that one can obtain by using the different subjunctive particles:

> **ana mɜ̄jɜ́ ɣ̀mɜǿ ɣ̀bú, keve bɣ̋̀jh ɣ̀bú kacɜ́.**
> *If Mother loves me, [she] will give me a flower.*

> **jɪna mɜ̄jɜ́ ɣ̀mɜǿ ɣ̀bú, keve bɣ̋̀jh ɣ̀bú kacɜ́.**
> *If Mother loves me (and I know she does), then [she] will give me a flower.*

> **myna mɜ̄jɜ́ ɣ̀mɜǿ ɣ̀bú, keve bɣ̋̀jh ɣ̀bú kacɜ́.**
> *If Mother loves me (but I think she doesn't), then [she] would give me a flower.*

10.3.2 Hypothetical Conditional Statements

A *hypothetical conditional statement* is one where the consequent is conjectural. This is indicated by having a subjunctive particle in *both* the antecedent and the consequent.

For example:

ana lý́s jhɜtɜ́ lő́ru, keve ana fŵtɜ jhɪtú cúmø.
If she had gone outside, she might have seen him.

ana lý́s jhɜtɜ́ lő́ru, keve jɪna fŵtɜ jhɪtú cúmø.
If she had gone outside, she probably would have seen him.

ana lý́s jhɜtɜ́ lő́ru, keve myna fŵtɜ jhɪtú cúmø.
If she had gone outside, she probably would not have seen him.

As with the basic conditional statement, we may substitute **ana** in the antecedent with any of the other two subjunctive particles. For example:

jɪna lý́s jhɜtɜ́ lő́ru, keve ana fŵtɜ jhɪtú cúmø.
If she did go outside (I think she did), then she might have seen him.

myna lý́s jhɜtɜ́ lő́ru, keve jɪna fŵtɜ jhɪtú cúmø.
If she had gone outside (I think she didn't), she would probably have seen him.

11 Gerunds

As mentioned before, Ebisédian verbs describe events and changes rather than a continuous state of things. For the latter, gerunds are employed instead.

11.1 Forming gerunds from verbs

Gerunds behave exactly like nouns. They may also be participial in meaning. Gerunds may be formed from any verb by suffixing the incidental inceptive form of the verb with the *gerundive suffix*, **-ā**, and then inflecting it like a noun.

For example, the gerund form of **lés** is **lesaí**, and has the case forms: **lɪsɜǿ**, **lesaú**, **lesā́**, **lasɜ́**, **lesaí**.

11.2 Participles: instrumental gerunds

The instrumental case of a gerund acts as a participle of the verb it is derived from. For example:

nɪ lesā́ dɜ pɵ́zɜdɪ. *The walking man.*

It also acts as the equivalent of a 'stative verb'. Example:

bɜ́lɜnɜ mɜlɜdaɜ́ kégā. *The boy and the girl were playing.*

Note that the use of a gerund/participle here is the correct usage; it is not correct to use the progressive verb **kɜkígɜ** here because we are describing a continuous, unchanging state of things.

When a gerund is used in this manner, the cases of the other nouns are often the same as when the corresponding verb is used. For example:

chídø taǿma jhɪtú. *He spoke to her.*

chídø támā jhɪtú. *He was speaking with her.*

12 Numbers

The Ebisédian numbering and counting system is based on a set of *basic numbers* and a series of *triads*.

12.1 Quantity versus Entity

Before we discuss the number words, it is necessary to note that Ebisédian distinguishes between the *quantity* denoted by a number, and the *abstract mathematical entity* representing that number. The former is a noun inflected for number as appropriate to the quantity ("zero" is nullar; "one" is singular; everything else is plural); the latter is a *neuter singular* noun which may appear in the plural and nullar forms to indicate the multiplicity or absence of the mathematical entity.

Hence, there are two distinct nouns for each number: one for denoting the quantity, and the other for denoting the abstract mathematical entity representing that quantity.

12.2 Basic Numbers

Table 15 shows the basic numbers. The radix shows the combinatorial unit used to derive compound number words.

Value	Quantity	Entity	Radix
0	ýı	ıveí	-
1	keí	ıkeí	ke-
2	ɜjeí	ıjeí	je-
3	ɜreí	ıreí	re-
4	ɜdeí	ıdeí	de-
5	ɜp̂eí	ıp̂eí	p̂e-
6	ɜseí	ıseí	se-
7	ɜt̂eí	ıt̂eí	t̂e-
8	ɜĉeí	ıĉeí	ĉe-
9	ɜk̂ḗı	ık̂ḗı	k̂ē-

Table 15: Basic Numbers

The 'quantity' forms are used when referring to numerical quantities; the 'entity' forms are used in mathematical contexts when discussing numerical entities.

Note that except where stated otherwise, all number nouns are 2nd declension nouns; they retain their radix vowel in all case inflections.

Note also that all quantity nouns larger than 1 are *plural* nouns, and always carry the plural prefix **ɜ-** except in their radix form.

12.3 Counting with Triads

The basic numbers are quite limited in range. They are augmented by a system of *numerical triads* based on the powers of 3.

A *numerical triad* is a numerical unit representing a power of 3. These triads can be combined with the basic numbers to represent multiples of a power of 3. They are arranged in a sequence of increasing magnitude.

12.3.1 The Triads

The first numerical triad is **kekréɩ**. It refers to a group of 3, and is numerically equivalent to **ɜreí**. It can be suffixed with one of the basic nouns to multiply its value.

For example, **kekrékeɩ** is equivalent to 3×1, and therefore is identical in value to **kekréɩ** and **ɜreí**. The next multiple, **ɜkekréjeɩ** is equivalent to 3×2, which has a value of 6. Hence, it has the same value as **ɜseí**. Similarly, **ɜkekréreɩ** has the value $3 \times 3 = 9$, which is equal to **ɜx̂ḗɩ**. Next, **ɜkekrédeɩ** has the value $3 \times 4 = 12$; and then **ɜkekrép̂eɩ** has the value $3 \times 5 = 15$.

Note that the triad and its multiple by one are *singular* nouns, and do not have the plural prefix **ɜ-**; the higher multiples are *plural* nouns, and hence *always* carry the plural prefix.[22]

The second numerical triad is **jekréɩ**. It has the base value of $3^2 = 9$. Therefore, its first multiple, **jekrékeɩ**, has the value $3^2 \times 1 = 9$; its second multiple, **ɜjekréjeɩ**, has the value $3^2 \times 2 = 18$; its third multiple, **ɜjekréreɩ**, has the value $3^3 \times 3 = 27$.

The third numerical triad is **rekréɩ**, and has the base value $3^3 = 27$. Some of its multiples include **ɜrekréreɩ**, with a value of $3^3 \times 3 = 81$; **ɜrekrép̂eɩ**, with a value of $3^3 \times 5 = 135$, etc..

[22] This seemingly odd convention comes from the historical usage of **kekreí**, which used to be a collective noun meaning "a handful", or "a group".

The fourth numerical triad is **dekréɪ**, with a value of $3^4 = 81$.

12.3.2 General Form of a Triad

The general pattern for forming a triad multiple is a prefix, derived from the radix of a basic number, followed by the triad infix **-kré-**, and suffixed with a multiplicative factor, also derived from the radix of a basic number. The suffix **-keɪ** is usually dropped, since multiplying by one does not change the value of the number. The plural prefix **ɜ-** is always present when the multiplicative factor is > 1.

Table 16 shows a list of triads with their base values.

Triad	Radix	Base value
kekréɪ	kekré-	3
jekréɪ	jekré-	9
rekréɪ	rekré-	27
dekréɪ	dekré-	81
p̂ekréɪ	p̂ekré-	243
sekréɪ	sekré-	729
t̂ekréɪ	t̂ekré-	2187
ĉekréɪ	ĉekré-	6561
ĸ̂ḱkreɪ	ĸ̂ḱkre-	19683

Table 16: The Numerical Triads

12.3.3 Approximate Values

Although we have given precise values for triads in table 16, the Ebisédi usually use them in an approximate manner, especially the later triads in the series. The precise values are used in mathematical contexts, when one wishes to indicate precise numbers; however, in general use, they are approximate. Hence, **ĉekréɪ** would mean, in the context of English, "around 6,500"; and **ɜĉekréjeɪ** would mean "around 13,000".

One should keep this in mind when translating the larger numerical triads. For example, it would be misleading to render **ɜbɪsɜ́dosekreɪ** as "729 people", unless the passage is clearly indicating that precise number. A better translation might be "about 700 people".

12.4 Ordinals & Cardinals

Cardinals, or cardinal numbers, are numbers that count how many objects there are in a set. Ordinals, or ordinal numbers, are numbers indicating which noun from an ordered sequence is being referred to.

12.4.1 Cardinals

Cardinals are formed by prefixing the appropriate number word with the radix of the noun being counted. Any plural prefix on the number word is dropped, since it would already appear on the noun radix.

For example, **ɜbɪsʒ́dôpeɪ**, formed from the radix **ɜbɪsʒ́do** and the suffix **-p̂eí**, means "five people". Note that the resultant noun must be plural, because it is five in number, hence the plural prefix **ɜ-** must be present.

Other examples:

ɜmangójeɪ. *Two Mangi.*

ɜp̂ímodeɪ. *Four pinks.* Or, *four shades of pink.*

ɜfɪdeókekrep̂eɪ. *15 female students.* Or, *5 groups of 3 female students.*

Note in the last example that not all 5 groups may have precisely 3 students, and that the total number need not be precisely 15 unless dictated by the context.

12.4.2 Ordinals

Ordinals are formed by prefixing the radix of a number word to the noun being modified. Any plural prefix on the number word is dropped, unless one is referring to multiple instances of the ordinal.

For example, **jeopʏ́zɜdɪ**, formed from **jeo-**, radix of **jeí**, and **-pʏ́zɜdɪ**, means "the second man".

Other examples:

seojulír. *The sixth house.*

t̂eotā́drɪ. *The seventh tree.*

kekrereotɜmí. *The 9th word.*

jekrereomɪr̃ɜnɪ. *The 27th child.*

Note, in this last example, that again, the meaning is approximate. It indicates the position of the child is being somewhere in the third group of 9 children. The actual position could be the 26th place or the 28th place.

Ordinals may be combined with cardinals. For instance, if we are talking about multiple types of 'first horses', we would say:

ɜkeomangí. *Many first-horses.*

If we were talking about 5 men who claim to be 'second', we could say:

ɜjeopɪ́zɜdôpeɪ. *Five second-men.*

We could even emphasize that only *one* 'first woman' is here, as opposed to many 'first women':

keobɪzɜtókeɪ. *One first-woman.*

Note that the presence of the plural prefix **ɜ-** depends on the *cardinality* of the noun, but not on its *ordinality*.

12.5 Additive Numbers

Number words may also be combined with each other *additively*. This allows for a more accurate specification of numbers that fall between two multiples of the closest numerical triad.

12.5.1 Additive Combinations

The additive combination of numbers is done by prefixing the larger number with the radix of the smaller followed by the *additive infix*, **-ɜ-**. For example, to express the number 10, one could add 1 to 9: **ɜkeɜjekréɪ** (**keɜ-**, 1, added to **jekréɪ**, $3^2 = 9$). One could also add 4 to 6: **ɜdeɜkekréjeɪ** ($4+3^1\times2 = 10$).

The prefix need not be a basic number. For example, to precisely indicate 99, one could say **ɜjekrejeɜdekréɪ** ($3^2 \times 2 + 3^4 = 99$). There may also be multiple prefixes, although prefixes of smaller magnitudes should always precede prefixes of larger magnitudes. For example, to indicate 100, one could add 1 to 99: **ɜkeɜjekrejeɜdekréɪ** ($1 + 3^2 \times 2 + 3^4 = 100$).

12.5.2 Combinatorial Constraints

Because of the large number of possible ways to represent a single number, the following conventions are adopted for additive numbers:

1. Basic numbers should not be additively combined with each other. For example, numbers like **зjeзp̂eí** are illegal; **зt̂eí** should be used instead in this case. The same holds for multiples of the same triad: **зkekreзjekréı** ($3^1 + 3^2$) is allowed, but **зkekrejeзkekredeí** is not, because it combines two multiples of **kekréı**.

2. As a corollary of the previous rule, there can only be *one* basic number in an additive compound.

3. When there are multiple additive prefixes, the basic number prefix always appear first; prefixes for triad multiples appear in the order of the triad. For example, **зkeзkekreзjekréı** is $1 + 3^1 + 3^2 = 13$. Note that **kekreз-** appears before **jekréı** because **jekréı** is later in the series of triads. Hence, it is *incorrect* to say **зkeзjekreзkekréı**.

4. The previous rule holds even if the multiple of a smaller triad is numerically greater than the multiple of a larger triad following it. For example, **зjekrep̂eзrekréı** is a correct construction, even though **jekrep̂eз-** has a value of $3^2 \times 5 = 45$ which is greater than the value of **rekréı**, 27. Generally, however, cases like this should be avoided, since they can be potentially confusing.

Note that all additive numbers, in their quantity-noun form, carry the plural prefix **з-**, because they are always > 1.

12.5.3 Additive Cardinals & Ordinals

Obviously, additive numbers can also be used for cardinals and ordinals. Here are some examples:

зbızзtokeзjekréı. *Ten women.* I. e., $1 + 3^2$ *women.*

зjulırojekrejeзrekréı. *Forty-five houses.* I. e., $3^2 \times 2 + 3^3$ *houses.*

jeзkekredeof́nı. *The 14th male student.* I. e., *The* $(2 + 3 \times 4)$*'th male student.*

reɜrekreomagaí. *The 30th female Mangi.* I. e., *The* $(3+3^3)$*'th female horse.*

12.6 Large Numbers

12.6.1 The Large Triads

The system of basic numbers and the 9 basic triads described in the previous sections constitute the numerical vocabulary of the common, lay people among the Ebisédi. Mathematicians, on the other hand, have found the need to represent much larger numbers that this system would allow. Hence, they have introduced a series of *large triads*, that work in a similar manner to the 9 triads.

The first large triad is **ket̂rā́ɪ**, which has the same base value as the 9th triad, **ĸ́ékreɪ**, 19683. This large triad can be multiplied not only by the basic numbers, but also by multiples of the basic triads. For example, **ɜket̂rājekréɪ** has the base value $3^9 \times 3^2 = 177,147$; and **ɜket̂rāp̂ekrejeí** has the base value $3^9 \times 3^5 \times 2 = 9,565,938$. Because the value of **ket̂rā́ɪ** is still not that large, it is slowly becoming adopted by the common people.

The second large triad is **jet̂rā́ɪ**, which has a base value of 3^{18}, which is in excess of 387 million. In general, the nth large triad has a base value of 3^{9n}, where n can be either a base number, or a multiple of a basic triad. Hence, for example, **jekret̂rā́ɪ** has a value of 3^{81}, and **p̂ekreret̂rā́ɪ** has a base value of 3^{729}.

These large triads may also be additively combined with other numbers in a similar manner to the basic triads.

Because of the difficulty of comprehending the enormous magnitudes of all except the first of these large triads, the second and subsequent large triads are only ever used by mathematicians. They may not even be understood to be numerical words by the common people.

12.6.2 Infinity

Another commonly-used numerical term is **p̂érokreɪ**, "infinity". It derives from **p̂érɪm**, "universe"; hence, it is the 'Universal Triad'. The idea is that it is large enough to encompass the universe.

In common parlance, this word refers to any number larger than what can be described using the common system of basic triads, or simply any number

that the speaker regards as uncountably large. Thus, one may occasionally hear things such as:

ɜbɪsɜ́dopêrokreɜ lő́rɪ. *There are countlessly many people in the country.*

It does not literally mean that there are infinite people in the country; merely that the number of people is beyond the speaker's ability to count.

Mathematically, however, this word refers to an actual infinite quantity.

13 Comparatives & Superlatives

13.1 Comparatives

There are two basic comparatives: **okró** and **omó**. Both are prepositions meaning "more" and "less", respectively.

Examples:

> **øsó okró ɜmɜngɜ́ ebú.** *I want more horses!*

> **ana mώrɜsana kώ́kɜ; keve omó t̂álɜn jobú.**
> *If [you] act unwisely, you (fem.) will have less peace.*

A common construction is **okró zokró**, which is a contraction of **okró zo okró**, meaning "more and more"; gradually increasing.

> **na bɪzɜtsǿ dɜ ɜtɜmɜá kώ́kɜ okró zokró ɜgafánɜ chídu.**
> *The woman's words caused him to be more and more angry.*

Literally, "the woman's words are causing more and more anger to him."

The parallel construction is **omó zomó**, a contraction of **omó zo omó**, meaning "less and less"; gradually decreasing.

> **tɜtɜ́ce ɜgoráku k̂e. keve omó zomó ɜjhɜdɜ́ ve.**
> *As the guards defended (against attackers), there were less and less of them.*

13.2 Direct Comparisons

So far, our examples show comparatives and superlatives used in indirect comparisons. Now we consider direct comparisons such as 'there is more of X than Y'. In such comparisons, the noun phrases being compared are always in the conveyant case.

For example:

> **okró ɜbɜ̄́lɜnɜ omó ɜmɜlɜdaɜ́.**
> *There are more boys than girls.*

Literally, it reads "more boys, less girls." Similarly:

> **omó ɜbωanɜ́ okró ɜghangɜ́.**
> *There are more Byonis than Ghangis.*

Which is literally, "less Byonis, more Ghangi." The second comparative particle may be omitted in such constructs:

okró ɜbɜ́lɜnɜ ɜmɜlɜdaɜ́. *There are more boys than girls.*

For more complex comparisons, the comparison may be split across multiple sentences:

okró ɜjɷlɜ́r kɪmɔ́jɪ ɾ̂e. omó cumɔ́jɪ ve.
There are more houses in this city than in that city.

Alternatively, one may use relative clauses for the comparison:

okró ɜnɜ kɪmɔ́jɪ dɜ ɜjɷlɜ́r ɜnɜ cumɔ́jɪ dɜ-ɜn.
There are more of the houses which are in the first city, than those which are in the second city.

13.3 Superlatives

The prepositions **ɾ̂kékro** and **p̂ímo** means "the most" and "the least", respectively.

uro chɜsǿd ɾ̂kékro fɜɾ̂kɜ́ p̂e. *This disease indeed causes the most grief.*

p̂ímo hą̃́ɜ nø chídø dɜ kákɜ̄.
His actions were the least surprising.

There is also another pair of superlatives that indicate excessiveness: **chą̃́r** means "too many" or "too much"; whereas **su** means "not enough of".

chą̃́r aghaɜ́ julír ɾ̂e. lɣ́s ebɜ́ lɔ̋ru ve.
It smells excessively bad in the house; I am going outside.

su goráku tɷ̋ce ɜghɜngɜǿ. øsó ɜjɷmɜ́ alés ɪsí.
There are not enough guards to defend against the Ghangis; let's leave now!

An alternative way of expressing superlative meaning is to repeat a noun in its singular and plural form:

bachɜ́ ɜbachɜ́ chídu. *Thanks and thanks again to you.*

Literally, "thank and thanks to you". Analogous to the English expressions of the form "heap upon heap" or "woe upon woe".

13.4 Equatives

The preposition **osáo** is an *equative:* it indicates equality between two quantities, or, if used in a non-comparative context, it means "just the right amount of".

For example:

ɜbɜ́lɜnɜ osáo ɜmʊlɜdaɜ́. *There are as many girls as there are boys.*

osáo jhɜlɜ́ julír. *There are just the right number of rooms in the house.*

13.5 Verbal Comparatives

The comparative prepositions like **okró** and **omó** may also be used with verbs.

...

Examples:

okró táma. *Speak more; tell us more.*

omó táma. *Speak less; please be brief.*