Dott, aka zo i (Chadic, West-B, South-Bauchi): Grammatical notes, vocabulary and text
Bernard Caron

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Zodi, aka Dott (Chadic, West-B, South-Bauchi): Grammatical notes and vocabulary

B. CARON
Llacan*

1. Introduction

Zodi, called Dott by Shimizu (78 : 13), belongs to the Southern Bauchi group of the West Chadic-B sub-branch (SBW) of Chadic (Afroasiatic). Zodi is the ethnonym of a group of people living in the village of Dott, and 7 of the 11 wards ruled over by its chief. The 7 wards are: Wakiili, Kuleeto, Galaadiima, Babaar, Sarrari, Cirooma, oundi. Hausa and Fulɓe are spoken in the other wards: Kakagiidama, Sambilgar, Gooibiraywa and Harado. They call their language fërom zodi, the language of the Zodis. The Zodis started converting to Islam in the 60’s, and are now mainly Muslims, with few Christians and Animists among them. The language borrows heavily to Hausa, both in the vocabulary (25% of our lexical entries) and in the grammar (conjunctions, auxiliaries, topicalization particles). However, it has retained the essential of its typical SBW character.

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1 This paper is the result of 3 field trips to the village of Dott, of 3 to 4 days each, between 1998 and 2002. I want to express my deep gratitude to the Sarkin Dott, and to the Ubandoma, Ahmed A. Domas and his family. Ahmed has been an extremely patient and gifted language assistant, and has liberally given me his time and energy, driving me around on the back of his motorcycle on the paths of numerous villages, looking for mysterious Chadic languages way beyond the Zodi area. He and his family have made my stay in his compound in Dott a real pleasure. Many thanks to Ahmed’s brother, Nuhu A. Domas, for answering my unending questions.

Transcription system: Long vowels are indicated by double letters; high (Hi=H) tone = ü/ə̯ə̯; low (Lo=L) tone = a/ə̯a; falling tone = ə̯/ə̯a; rising tone = ə̯/ə̯a. We have preferred to use the IPA instead of Hausa spelling conventions to transcribe Zodi sounds. i.e. Hausa c is ç; j is dʒ. However, outside the consonant chart, for the sake of legibility, we have kept the letter y to transcribe IPA j.
2. Phonology

2.1 Consonant phonemes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consonant</th>
<th>Short</th>
<th>Long</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>p</td>
<td>pʰ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>tʰ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tʷ</td>
<td>tʷ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ts</td>
<td>ts</td>
<td>tsʰ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>k</td>
<td>kʰ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kʷ</td>
<td>kʷ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>bʰ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>d</td>
<td>dʰ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dʷ</td>
<td>dʷ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dz</td>
<td>dz</td>
<td>dzʰ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>ɡ</td>
<td>ɡʰ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gʲ</td>
<td>gʲ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gʷ</td>
<td>gʷ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>nʲ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nª</td>
<td>nª</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>fʰ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fº</td>
<td>fº</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>mʲ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mº</td>
<td>mº</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>l</td>
<td>lʰ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lº</td>
<td>lº</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As in Hausa, all Zodi words begin with a consonant and vowel-initial words in the transcription are preceded by a glottal stop: a, at; u, of; éhi, fowl = ?a, ?u, ?éhi. The voiced lateral fricative [b] is absent.

/k/ has many allophones whose distribution is not clear: it is pronounced [k] in initial position, [ŋ] in intervocalic position: [bayohárka] < ba ko bárka, [he] greeted you, lit. gave you welcome, but cf. [bukáá], after. It is pronounced x when followed by a nasal: [kox̌] = kox̌, arm, wing, branch; [kaaxni] < kaak-ni, praise-pl; cf. [makaaka?] < ma kaak Cak, thank you (lit. we+Aor, praise Perf., Hau mun gode). It is pronounced [k], sometimes [q] when followed by other consonants, except in the context a-t where it is pronounced [x]: [kaaxtí] < kaak-ti, praising. At the end of an utterance, it is pronounced [q] or [ʔ].

The tendency to labialise consonants in front of short /o/ is not as systematic as in Zaar for example: gon, here = [gwón-gón]. g, ɡ, l, r, m, n and ŋ are palatalised in front of /u/ and /e/.

2.2 Vowels

Zodi has a six-vowel system, all of them except for /a/ occurring short and long, with no nasals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vowel</th>
<th>Short</th>
<th>Long</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i</td>
<td>i</td>
<td>uu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>u</td>
<td>u</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e</td>
<td>ɛ</td>
<td>ɛɛ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>ɑɑ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>aa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pending a deeper phonological analysis, we have chosen to account for diphthongs as a sequence vowel+glide: aw; ay; oy; uy; ay. These sequences don’t appear in the stock Zodi lexicon. They occur only in loan-words from Hausa, or result from suffixation with -i(i) morphemes.

2.3 Tones

Zodi has two levels of tone (Hi, Lo), plus a rising tone (Lo-Hi) and a falling tone (Hi-Lo).

3. Verbal morphology

3.1 Verb classes

Zodi has one and two-syllable verbs, with various tone schemes:

2 Uvular stop.
3 There is 1 verb borrowed from Hausa with HHL tones: káránta, read.
3.2 Verb plurality

Verb plurality is not consistently marked in Zodi. Verbs and verbal nouns sometimes take a -ni suffix (with a floating Hi tone) in agreement with plural subjects or objects: pör/pörni, do; ci/cini, eat; tōbā/tōbānti, get up, grow up, migrate (Hau. tashi).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Syll.</th>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Tone</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>tōbā</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>stand up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>tōbānti</td>
<td>HH</td>
<td>mix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>tōbānti</td>
<td>LL</td>
<td>swallow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>tōbā</td>
<td>HL</td>
<td>run</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>tōbānti</td>
<td>HH</td>
<td>mix</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This suffix is incompatible with the Perfective.

3.3 Verbal extensions

One verbal extension was identified, elicited with Hausa grade 5 ‘causative’ verbs. It is fairly common in the small corpus we used. The form is -r with a Hi tone suffixed to CV verbs, and -dar with a Hi-Lo tone scheme suffixed to CVC verbs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original vb.</th>
<th>Hausa</th>
<th>Zodi</th>
<th>Derived vb.</th>
<th>Hausa</th>
<th>Zodi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>come out</td>
<td>fita</td>
<td>tär</td>
<td>fitar (da)</td>
<td>tär</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>get down</td>
<td>sauka</td>
<td>jī</td>
<td>saukar (da)</td>
<td>jīr</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>climb</td>
<td>hau</td>
<td>tswaa</td>
<td>hawar (da)</td>
<td>tswär</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hide (int.)</td>
<td>ßoye</td>
<td>fun</td>
<td>ßuyar</td>
<td>fündar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>get spoil</td>
<td>ßata</td>
<td>mal</td>
<td>ßatar (da)</td>
<td>máldar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pour</td>
<td>zuba</td>
<td>ḡat</td>
<td>zubar</td>
<td>ḡādar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sit</td>
<td>zauna</td>
<td>suk</td>
<td>zaunar (da)</td>
<td>sükdar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some verbs have the form of a causative, without any obvious original verb to be associated with: mándar, sell; sündar bring; ndăr, rōddar, take to.

3.4 Verbal nouns

There exists two type of Verbal Nouns (VN) in Zodi. They both have -ti suffixes but they differ by their tones. The VN appearing in non-Continuous constructions have Lo tones:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original vb.</th>
<th>Derived vb.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>say</td>
<td>ḡet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>put</td>
<td>waáí</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>swallow</td>
<td>takaai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>get up, etc.</td>
<td>tōbāti</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the Continuous, the tones depend on the number of syllables of the verb.

For one syllable verbs, the Verbal Noun takes a Hi tone on the first syllable. Compare the following examples contrasting continuous and non-continuous uses of the verbal nouns.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original vb.</th>
<th>Derived vb.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>márabá ú</td>
<td>ḡetti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>greetings</td>
<td>3pl. + Cont.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with coming</td>
<td>coming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welcome!</td>
<td>they are coming</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ar gu Tā́ba    footí kí  mu (…)
3sg. that already (Aux.) telling 2sg. Comp.
he who has already told you that (…)
• For two-syllable verbs, the -ti suffix does not alter the lexical tone of the verb in the continuous.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lexical Form</th>
<th>Non-Continuous</th>
<th>Continuous</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LL bārti</td>
<td>LLL bārtiti</td>
<td>LLL bārti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LH bikāt</td>
<td>LLL bikatti</td>
<td>LHL bikāti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LH dokāl</td>
<td>LLL dokālti</td>
<td>LHL dokālti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HH fīfe</td>
<td>LLL fīfeti</td>
<td>HLL fīfeti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HH gjōmīti</td>
<td>LLL gjōmītiti</td>
<td>HLL gjōmītiti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HH kwākāl</td>
<td>LLL kwakālti</td>
<td>HHL kwākālti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HH sūkāt</td>
<td>LLL sukātti</td>
<td>HHL sūkātti</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Numerals

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>nām</td>
<td>sup-cedīi-nām</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>rop</td>
<td>sup-cedīi-rop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>maakō</td>
<td>sup-cedīi-maakō</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>wōpsa</td>
<td>subii-rop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>nantām</td>
<td>subii-rop- cedīi-nām</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>maamak</td>
<td>subii-maakō</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>wusūr-maakā</td>
<td>subii-wōpsa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>wusūpsa</td>
<td>subii-nantām</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>natūrōpsa</td>
<td>subii-sup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>sup</td>
<td>1000 dūhūū</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ordinals are made with the preposition ú preceding the cardinal number, which appears in the definite form, viz suffixed with an -t: ú rōfi, second; ú maakāy, third, etc. ú kana, ú pārkō, first, is an exception. kana is to be compared to Zaar kên, face, front, forward. pārkō is borrowed from Hausa.

5. Nouns

5.1 Gender

There is no morphological gender in Zodi.

5.2 Plural

In nouns, plurals are rare, lexical, and limited to humans: women (mwāti, sg. masl), children (mēér, sg. wun). men (min) for example, is a collective noun. However, in the nominal system, plurality is marked in the indefinite, in deictics and relative pronouns.

5.3 Possessive NP + NP constructions

Possessive constructions in Zodi use the genitive link ú: lōk ú zodi ‘king of Dot’; bàn ú bas ú wun, ‘(the) house of (the) father of (the) girl’.

The genitive link ú is polyfunctional. Its use is not limited to possession, but expresses a more abstract link between two notions. It is used also for adjectival constructions(cf. infra XXX) and composition (qom ú zii ‘iron’, lit. ‘metal of black’; qom ú laari ‘copper’, lit. ‘metal of red’; peedi ú bari ‘sunlight’, lit. ‘sun of white’; ḥar ú bari ‘moonlight’, lit. ‘moon of white’; rāb-ú-qī ‘food’, lit. ‘thing of food’⁴). It is used to introduce complements of nominal predicates

⁴ In the compound rāb-ú-qī, the genitive link [ʔu] has lost its initial [ʔ].
(twáksi ú arám gu..., ‘angry with the thing that...’; parti sálláma ú gádós ‘greeting his wife’, lit. ‘doing greeting of wife-his’) and of prepositional phrases: a dum ú lok ‘in front of the king’.

5.4 Definiteness

5.4.1 Definite

The -i suffix in Zodi expresses a low level of definiteness and can be interpreted as a mark of individuation.

5.4.2 Indefinite

The indefinite determiner is galám for the singular, and djilém for the plural. It can be used pronominally:

áp! aya galâm a gon!

excl. excl. some at here

Look, there’s one! (Hau : Ap! Ai ga wani nan!)

When used as a determinant, it can occur on the right of the noun:

díi ma bón arám galám ndí

Neg 1pl know thing some Neg

We don’t know anything

bukúá mbérti djilém

after day some

after a few days

or on the left. In this case, its becomes MH and it is followed by the definite (-i) form of the noun:

díi a tába patúi galám arámi gu máálém slam mbi

Neg 1sg already get some thing that spoil+1sg heart Neg

I never got anything that made me sad (lit. spoil my heart).

5.5 Quantifiers

The distributive quantifiers are kóóno (pro.), everybody; kóógee (det.), each/every (for a thing).

kóóno a gyamláti.

everyone Cont laughing

Everybody is laughing.

The determinant kóógee is followed by a noun phrase with the -i definite suffix:

kóógee ḥen

each day+def

every year

kóógee ḥen nantami

each day five+def

every five year

The global quantifier kúm, all, has both adjectival uses:

kúm arám gu fáálém mak ...

all thing that bother+1s Perf ...

all the things that bothered me...

and pronominal uses:

miní sálla miní kírísta kúm tida máání sóy

people+of prayer people+of Christ all 3pl+Hab gather+pl. 3pl.+pl

Muslims, Christiants, all gather.
5.6 Deictics

Zodi uses proximal and distal deictics. Pronouns and determinants are sensitive to number.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>proximal</th>
<th>distal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adverbs</td>
<td>woní</td>
<td>here</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determinants sg</td>
<td>(táá) goni</td>
<td>this (cow)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pl</td>
<td>(táá) góni</td>
<td>these (cows)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pronouns</td>
<td>goni/gon</td>
<td>this one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pl</td>
<td>wúrɛduñi</td>
<td>these ones</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. Adjectives

Although there are a certain number of verbs with a stative meaning, the adjectival function is relatively well developed in Zodi, with adjectives proper and participles.

6.1 Adjectives proper

Adjectives are not uncommon in Zodi, and are represented beyond the class of colour terms: bóri, white; harí, red; juúdî, blue; zíi, black; barí, big; boli, sweet; dasári, ugly; dokáni, wet, unripe; limí, deep; mámbari, new; jíndî, cold. The unusual adjective mbáa, big, is found in the expression mbáa lwaar, big spirits.

6.2 Participles

Participles are derived from verbs with the suffix -(n)ì—often pronounced -(n)ay—and a MH(M) tone scheme:

<p>| | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ban</td>
<td>heat up</td>
<td>baní</td>
<td>hot</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dzu</td>
<td>fill</td>
<td>dzùnyì</td>
<td>full</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kút</td>
<td>circle</td>
<td>kùnti</td>
<td>round</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kóyìn</td>
<td>be dry</td>
<td>korìni</td>
<td>dry</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>màsa</td>
<td>be narrow</td>
<td>masányì</td>
<td>narrow</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ndóraì</td>
<td>get old</td>
<td>ndóraìni</td>
<td>old</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ngyòù</td>
<td>ripen</td>
<td>ngyòùnyì</td>
<td>ripe</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pusáì</td>
<td>remain</td>
<td>pusáìni</td>
<td>left over</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ros</td>
<td>rot</td>
<td>rosìni</td>
<td>rotten</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some participles cannot be linked to a verb: fopláñì, void; ndzoñì, sour; ngwáñì, crooked; soorí, evil, mad; sokì, [swoyóyì], honest.

6.3 Adjectival constructions

6.3.1 Attributive adjectives

The paratactic construction uses the Noun + Adjective: leemú balì, an orange (lit. lemon sweet); táá barí, a black cow (lit. cow black).


<p>| | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ma</td>
<td>dal</td>
<td>táálaa</td>
<td>ú</td>
<td>limí</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1+</td>
<td>Aor</td>
<td>cross</td>
<td>river</td>
<td>of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I crossed a deep river.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.3.2 Predicative adjectives

Predicative adjectives use the non-verbal predicate ni⁵ (‘be’) with the order Noun + Adjective + ni:

---

⁵ This word is pronounced [ni] in sentence-final position and [na] elsewhere.
This man is ugly.

The negative uses the particle ndi:

\[ \text{táy dər ni ndi, bőrni} \]

The cow is not black, it is white.

Another construction uses natuur, which is a contraction of ni ('be') and the genitive link ñú ('of'), with the order Noun + natuur + Adjective:

\[ \text{táy natuur zii pədi natuur bari} \]

This same construction is used when the predicate is a quality expressed by a noun:

\[ \text{ko ko natuur jîmî too ammáa ma fá ...} \]

You, you are educated, well but as for us...

6.4 Participle constructions

6.4.1 Attributive participles

There exists only a paratactic construction, with the order Participle + Noun, using the short form of the participle.

\[ \text{mándarəm kokón brédi ya?} \]

Give me some dry bread!

6.4.2 Predicative participles

In the affirmative, predicative participles use the non-verbal predicate no only, without genitive link, and the word order Noun + Participle + ni. The negation uses the Negative Perfect of the corresponding verb. (cf. 8.2.3)

\[ \text{brédi ni kokóni brédi dəi kókan ndi} \]

the bread is dry the bread is not dry

7. Pronominal paradigms

7.1 Subject pronouns

There are three basic paradigms: Aorist, Continuous and Future.

Other aspects (Perfect, Habitual) are marked by particles combined with the Aorist pronouns.

7.1.1 Basic TAM's

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Aorist</th>
<th>Future</th>
<th>Continuous</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1sg.</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>máá</td>
<td>ám</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2sg.</td>
<td>ñi</td>
<td>kíi</td>
<td>kyáa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3sg.</td>
<td>Ø</td>
<td>Ø</td>
<td>tyáa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1pl</td>
<td>ma</td>
<td>man</td>
<td>maa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2pl</td>
<td>ko</td>
<td>kon</td>
<td>kwaa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3pl</td>
<td>ti</td>
<td>tin</td>
<td>taa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the Continuous, the verb is replaced by a Verbal Noun (cf. § 3.4).

The Future often appears with -ni suffixed to the verb:
They will touch the cow.

However, the same suffix can appear with other tenses, such as the Aorist used with stative verbs:

They will touch the cow.

I like hot food.

This food is too hot.

With a nominal subject, the aspect morpheme appears alone: zero (Ø) for the Aorist, a for the Continuous and ní for the Future.

Rabbit got angry about what He-goat was doing.

He-goat will enter.

7.1.2 Derived TAM’s

7.1.2.1 Perfect

The Perfect is a combination of the Aorist + CaK at the end of the Verb Phrase. The initial /C/ of the particle assimilates to the preceding consonant or becomes [h] when following a vowel. If the initial C of the particle has assimilated to a nasal, a lateral, a semi-vowel, or [h], the utterance-final /K/ is realised [h].

people come out

they told the war chief

It is realised [q] when followed by any other consonant or when utterance final:

if one agrees, well [...]  

7.1.2.2 Habitual

The habitual is marked by da inserted between the Aorist subject pronouns and the verb.

People don’t go to war empty-handed (Hau. «akan koyar da yara harbi»)

da can also appear with the Future:

that's the way they will go on doing (Hau. «haka ne za su yi ta yis»)

6 When utterance final, the [q] can be replaced by the glottal stop [ʔ].
da is related to the adverb afa, again⁷. This adverb often appears redundantly with the Habitual, as in the example above.

### 7.2 Other pronouns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Object pronouns</th>
<th>Possessive pronouns</th>
<th>Nominal Predications</th>
<th>ICP</th>
<th>Independent pronouns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1sg. -ðám</td>
<td>gin</td>
<td>ám</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>ám</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2sg. kí</td>
<td>gee</td>
<td>kí</td>
<td>-kí</td>
<td>kí</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3sg. ari</td>
<td>gas</td>
<td>ari</td>
<td>-tí</td>
<td>ari</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1pl ma</td>
<td>góm</td>
<td>ma</td>
<td>-ma</td>
<td>ma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2pl ko</td>
<td>gə́n</td>
<td>ko</td>
<td>-ko</td>
<td>ko</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3pl sáŋ</td>
<td>gə́sáŋ</td>
<td>sáŋ</td>
<td>-sáŋ</td>
<td>sáŋ</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comments:

• 3 kinship terms (baa, husband; kon, son; tjęnsi, mother’s brother) have a special genitive paradigm:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possessive pronouns</th>
<th>uncle</th>
<th>husband</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1sg. -ðúů</td>
<td>tjęnúů</td>
<td>baaniű</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2sg. -ðíngẹe</td>
<td>tjęnįngẹe</td>
<td>baaniŋẹe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3sg. -ðós</td>
<td>tjęnós</td>
<td>baanós</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1pl -ðísmá</td>
<td>tjęnńsmá</td>
<td>baanńsmá</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2pl -ðíngẹŋn</td>
<td>tjęnįngẹŋn</td>
<td>baanńŋẹŋn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3pl -ðíssáŋ</td>
<td>tjęnįssáŋ</td>
<td>baanńssáŋ</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• ICP’s are suffixed to the verb, with frequent consonant assimilation. The 1st person singular is marked by a Hi tone on the last syllable of the verb.

NB: the 3rd person singular -tí which, with the Continuous tỳáa, is the only survival of the common Chadic personal mark, under the form of the feminine pronoun. Elsewhere, the 3rd person mark is replaced by the word ari, which is to be compared to the word arám, thing.

• The Dative does not have a specific paradigm, but is only marked in the 3rd person by a -tí suffixed to the verb. It replaces the Direct Object 3rd person singular pronoun ari, and the 3rd person plural pronoun sáŋ, becomes Lo:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perfect sg</th>
<th>to súndaríaŋ yá?</th>
<th>they brought (it) to him</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>pl</td>
<td>to súndaríaŋ sáŋ yá?</td>
<td>they brought (it) to them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuous sg</td>
<td>taa súndaríaŋ</td>
<td>they are bringing (it) to him</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pl</td>
<td>taa súndaríaŋ sáŋ</td>
<td>they are bringing (it) to them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future sg</td>
<td>tən súndaríaŋ</td>
<td>they will bring (it) to him</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pl</td>
<td>tən súndaríaŋ sáŋ</td>
<td>they will bring (it) to them</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 8. Syntax

#### 8.1 Verbless sentences

#### 8.1.1 Identification

Identification is expressed either with a zero predicate:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ñin</th>
<th>gin</th>
<th>Ø</th>
<th>múúsá</th>
<th>zeylàání.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>name</td>
<td>1s.poss</td>
<td>Equ</td>
<td>Musa</td>
<td>Zailani</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

My name is Musa Zailani.

or with the non-verbal predicates ni or sáŋ:

---

⁷ The relation with the polysemic afa of location is not clear (cf XXX)
You are the King of Dott.

Dauda Musa is the King of Dott.

8.1.2 Location

Location typically uses the non-verbal ni and prepositional phrases beginning with a, at: a bon(t), on top of; a gas, under; a dalšn, across; a ká, behind; a dum, a kanaa, in front; aasi, inside; a ndaŋ, outside; a bii, near, etc.

The cup is on the table

8.1.3 Existence, location & possession

The non-verbal predicate ada is highly polysemic. From a basic locative meaning, depending on the semantic properties of the NP’s it is associated with, it will express existence, location or possession:

Existence:

ee yanzú ada
yes Yanzu Loc

Yes, there’s Yanzu

staying of formerly respect Loc

In older days, there was respect.

Location:

ám a ban rap gu ám ada
1sg 1sg know place Rel 1sg Loc

(only) I know where I am

Possession:

ám ada ú 'yerâm wúrdgu [...] 1sg Loc of friend Rel+pl.
I have friends who [...] 

tí ada ú wúni galám 3pl Loc of young some
they have a small (one)

lok ada ú vee ndi king Loc of tail Neg
the king doesn’t have a tail

8.2 Negation

Negation is marked by the particle ndi/mbi at the end of the phrase or the sentence.

8.2.1 Non-verbal sentence

He saw how many of his people were not there, how many had come back.

8.2.2 Verbal sentence

One doesn’t go to war empty-handed.
8.2.3 Perfect

In the Perfect, the discontinuous negation dii ... ndi replaces the Affirmative Perfect mark Cak.

\[
dii \ ti \ pat \ gálba \ a \ bót \ ma \ ndi
\]

Neg 3pl.+Aor get victory at top 1pl. Neg

*They have not overcome us.*

8.2.4 Hausa loanwords

The negative marker baa (borrowed from Hausa) is often used at the beginning of negative phrases and sentences.

\[
baa \ ni \ bákí \ ú \ bari \ ndi
\]

Neg Ident. Festival of big Neg

*It is not a big festival.*

In the same way, kada is borrowed from Hausa for the negation of the subjunctive uses of the Aorist:

\[
dón \ káda \ mini \ kən \ oróm \ gasəŋ \ ndi
\]

because Neg people+def take thing 3sg.+Poss Neg

*So that people don't take his things.*

8.3 Focus

The focused element is fronted, preceded by the identification predicate ni, and followed by the topic particles si for subjects and gu\(^8\) for other functions. With circumstantial complements (place, time, manner, cause) there appears the resumptive location particle aka.

Non-focused sentence:

\[
wúni \ wu \ ṉgin \ asi \ gaa
\]

child+def. pour milk into calabash

*The girl poured milk into a calabash.*

Focused subject

\[
ni \ wúni \ si \ wu \ ṉgin \ asi \ gaa
\]

Ident. child Foc pour milk into calabash

*It's the girl that poured milk into the calabash.*

Focused object

\[
ni \ ṉgin \ gu \ wúni \ wu \ asa \ gaa
\]

Ident. milk Rel child+def. Pou into calabash

*It’s milk that the girl poured into the calabash.*

Focused circumstantial

\[
ni \ asì \ gaa \ gu \ wúni \ wu \ ṉgin \ ada
\]

Ident. into calabash Rel child+def. pour milk Pro

*It's into the calabash that the girl poured milk.*

8.4 Question

8.4.1 Yes/no questions

Yes/No questions have the same syntactic structure as declarative sentences. They are characterised by a falling intoneme at the end of the sentence, which is perceived only when the sentences finishes with a Hi tone, and a lengthening of final vowels.

\[
(kóó) \ ú \ pár \ mákárántá \ hak?
\]

(or) 2s.+Aor do school Perf

*Did you go to school?*

\(^{8}\) gu is also the relative complementiser (cf. infra).
When the sentence is not in the Perfect, "aa" or "ee" is added to the last word:

\[
\text{kí } \text{ada ú 'yerímaa}
\]

2sg. Poss of friend+Quest

Did you have friends?

\[
\text{koda } \text{bani wurbi, waato sadákké?}
\]

2pl.+Hab. Give+pl. money that is dowry+Quest

Did you give money, that is a dowry?

8.4.2 Wh- questions

\[\text{Zodi} \] questions words are: \text{nën}, \text{what}; \text{noo}, \text{who}; \text{gee}, \text{which one}; \text{geegoy} \text{ (< gee+goo, 'day'+def.), when (lit. which day)} ; \text{mani, how many} ; \text{nómi, how}; \text{shép nin / sheróm nin, why}. \text{The same falling intoneme is used with Wh questions and yes/no questions. Questions words appear either in situ, or in a focus construction.}

8.4.2.1 \text{In situ constructions}

\[
\text{tamtí ú nás sáá ú bas gee fot tamtí?}
\]

pleasure of mother with of father which one exceed pleasure

Between a mother's joy and a father's, which one is the best?

\[
\text{máti gee manú?}
\]

wife 2s.+Poss how many

how many wives do you have?

\[
\text{ú wónmi námi goo gu ti [...] ?}
\]

2s.+Aor feel+Pl. how day that 3pl.+Aor

how did you feel the day that they [...]?

\[
\text{wún koní yépni máásaí ayo?}
\]

child boy buy+Pl. pancake+def. where

Where did the boy buy the pancake?

8.4.2.2 \text{Focus construction}

In the focus construction, the question word comes first in the sentence, followed by the focus markers: \text{si} to question subjects, and \text{gu} to question the other syntactic functions. Circumstantial complements are characterised by the resumptive pronominal mark \text{ada}, followed by either the definite suffix -\text{i} or the question mark -\text{oo}

8.4.2.2.1 \text{Subject}

\[
\text{gyee si fot tamtuí?}
\]

which one Foc exceed pleasure+Quest

Which one is the best?

\[
\text{manú si más kíí?}
\]

how many Foc die 2sg+Quest

How many [children] did you lose? (lit. died [on] you)

8.4.2.2.2 \text{Object}

\[
\text{nén gu wún koní ciú?}
\]

what Rel child boy eat+Quest

What did the child eat?

8.4.2.2.3 \text{Circumstancials}

\[
\text{geegwey / ayo / námi / shyáp nin gu yep máásaí aday / adaw?}
\]

when / where / how / why Rel buy pancake aday+def. / adaw+Quest

When / where / how / why did he buy pancake?

\[
\text{noo gu ko fot súktí ko kóódaw?}
\]

who Rel 2sg. exceed staying 2sg. 2sg.+\text{ada}+Quest

Who did you most stay with?
8.5 Complex sentences

8.5.1 Relative clauses

The relative pronouns are gu for singular and würđu for plural pivot nouns.

Well, then the child did what he wanted.

Then, the girls who had found a husband did not return.

8.5.2 Subordination

Subordination can be unmarked, with subordinate clauses as a mere topic interpreted as a condition, cause or temporal clause according to the context. Conjunctions can be either of Zodi origin (gu / sūgü, when ; ncee gu, before ; bukáá, after ; shep, because, so that ; koógu, although) or borrowed from Hausa (say, then ; kafín, before ; tun, since ; don, because, so that). We will just illustrate this with conditionals.

Except for the 1st person singular, the condition (generally with a temporal meaning) is marked by sī² appearing between the subject and the verb of the protasis. The verb is generally in the Perfect, more rarely in the Continuous.

In, borrowed from Hausa, is often added to the beginning of the protasis.

If the verb of the protasis is in the 1st person singular, the condition is expressed by a specific form of subject pronoun : ámaa :

ámaa pat min nak a bät maaŋti, sāy [...] 1sg+Cond find people Perf at top fight then [...] If I find people fighting, then [...] The protasis can also be a non-verbal clause.

If it is not the day of fwak-fwak, well, then [...]
Counterfactuals are introduced by the saŋ particle:

saŋ yááni díi pat karaatu ndí áy [...]

Count. People+anaph. Neg get education Neg excl. [...]

*If people hadn’t got any education, well [*]...*

9. References