2
Syntax

The following discussion of Saramaccan syntax begins with the clause as the smallest independent unit in the language. Following this is a discussion of the sentence, and then the phrase. The general pattern is to describe first the nuclear constituents of a given grammatical unit such as the clause, and then to show how this unit is expanded and modified into increasingly complex constructions. For example, in the case of the clause, the nuclear constituents consists of subjects, predicates, and objects. The nuclear constituents of the sentence are one or more clauses that occur in the sentence without the sentence peripheral constituents. In both the clause and the sentence, the nucleus is expanded by adding peripheral constituents. In the case of the clause, peripheral constituents consists of manner, location, time, etc. Peripheral constituents of the sentence consists of vocatives, connectors, mood markers, etc.

In the examples given after each discussion, both positive and negated examples are given as often as possible.

2.1 <u>Clause Syntax</u>

Saramaccan has two basic clause types which are distinguished on the basis of their nuclear constituents and semantics. These are **Active Clauses** and **Stative Clauses**. In this section the nuclear constituents of these clauses and their semantics are discussed first, after which the peripheral constituents are described. A discussion of combinations of clauses may be found in Section 2.1.4 & 2.2.6.

2.1.1 Active Clauses

An active clause in Saramaccan is distinguished from a stative clause in that an active clause expresses an event rather than a state. The nucleus of an active clause consists of four constituents: an optional subject (S) consisting of a noun phrase, an obligatory predicate (P) consisting of a active verb phrase, an optional indirect object (IO) consisting of a pronoun or proper name, and an optional direct object (DO) consisting of a noun phrase. The subject is usually the Agent of the clause. (See Appendix footnote for some apparent exceptions.)

(S) P (IO) (DO)

Active Clause Nucleus

The traditional categories of intransitive, transitive or ditransitive do not seem to be linguistically significant in Saramaccan. They are distinguished only on the basis of the presence or absence of the optional indirect object and direct object.

The following are examples of active clauses consisting of a predicate only. In such cases the clauses are imperative.

5. (positive)
    Ko!
    come
    Come!

6. (negative)
    Na go!
    neg go
    Don't go!

The following are examples of clauses consisting of a subject and predicate. In such cases the clauses are intransitive.

7. (positive)
    Mi nango.
    I cont[1] = go
    I am going.

8. (negative)
    De an kaba.
    they neg finished
    They are not finished.

The following are examples of clauses consisting of a subject, predicate, and direct object. In such cases the clauses are all transitive.

9. (positive indicative)
    Mi a' dii ganian.
    I have three chickens
    I have three chickens.

10. (negative indicative)
    Ja musu kii di mujëë wan.
    you = neg must kill the woman one
    You must not kill the female.

Clauses with a Direct Object but without an expressed subject become imperative.

11. (imperative)
    Tei bangi!
    take stool
    Have a seat!

The following are examples of clauses consisting of various combinations of an optional Subject, a Predicate, an Indirect Object and an optional Direct Object. In all cases the clauses are ditransitive.

12. (imperative with understood DO)
    Da mi!
    give me
    Give it to me!

13. (imperative with explicit IO and DO)
    Da mi di soni!
    give me the thing
    Give me the thing.

14. (DO implied only)
    A da Amönikömbi.
    she gave Amonikombi
    She gave it to Amonikombi.

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1   Cont indicates action in process. (See 3.6.4)

15. (negative)
    Ja bi o-ko da mi di tangi.
    you = neg past incom²-come give me the thanks
    You wouldn't have come and given me thanks.

2.1.2 Stative Clauses

Stative clauses and active clauses are distinguished on the basis of differences in their semantics and differences in their constituents. Semantically, the stative clause expresses a state rather than an event. The subject is not an agent. The nuclear constituents of the stative clause differ from the Active clause in the following ways: (1) the subject is obligatory, (2) the predicate, when expressed, consists of a copula and, (3) there is usually a complement constituent (C) consisting of a noun phrase or an adjectival phrase. There are no object constituents.

S   (P)   (C)
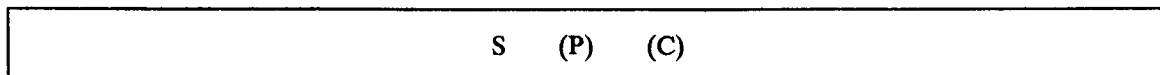
Stative Clause Nucleus

There are three distinctive sub-types of the stative clauses in Saramaccan: **Descriptive, Existential** and **Equative.**

2.1.2.1 Descriptive Clauses

A descriptive clause is distinguished semantically from other stative clauses in that it ascribes some quality to the subject, e.g., it describes how the subject looks, feels, smells, tastes or sounds. This clause type is used for answers to such questions as: How does it look? How does it feel? The complement constituent of a descriptive clause consists of an adjectival phrase (2.3.2) This clause type has no expressed predicate.

S   C
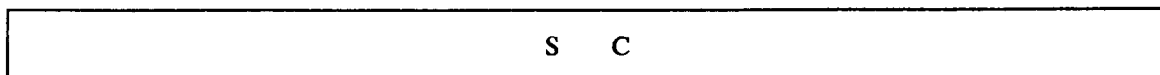
Descriptive Clause Nucleus

Some examples of descriptive clauses are as follows:

16. (positive)
    Di mujëë hanse.
    the woman pretty
    The woman is pretty.

17. (negative)
    Di mujëë an hanse.
    the woman neg pretty
    The woman is not pretty.

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2 Incom indicates an unaccomplished event. (See 3.6.3)

2.1.2.2 Existential Clauses

The existential clause is distinguished semantically from other stative clauses in that it expresses the existence or state of being of its subject. That is, it expresses the way it is rather than the way it looks, sounds etc. This clause type is used for answers to such questions as: How is it? How are you? Where are you?

18. Umfa i dë? **Mi dë.**
    how you are I am
    How are you? I'm fine.

The complement constituent of an existential clause, when expressed, consists of Locative Nouns-2 (3.1.5), Adjective-1 (3.3.5), Class Adjectives (3.3.6), Manner Words (3.6.7).[3] The predicate consists of the copula **dë** 'to be'.

S dë (C)

Existential Clause Nucleus

Some examples of simple existential clauses are as follows:

19. (positive, with adjectival complement)
    Mi dë bumbuu.
    I am well
    I am fine.

20. (positive with locative complement)
    Mi dë aki.
    I am here
    I am here.

21. (negative with reduplicated verb as complement)
    Di köfi an dë mbeimbei.
    the coffee neg is made
    The coffee is not made.

22. (positive with reduplicated adjective as complement)
    Di koosu dë baakabaaka.
    the cloth is black
    The cloth is black.

2.1.2.3 Equative Clauses

The equative clause is distinguished semantically from other stative clauses in that it gives an identification of the subject rather than its state of being, existence, or appearance. This clause type is used for answers to such questions as: Who is he? What is that?

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3   See Appendix for reduplication patterns and existential clauses.

23. Andi di dë? Hën da faka.
    what that is it is knife
    What is that? It is a knife.

The complement of an equative clause consists of a noun phrase or proper name (2.3.1). The predicate consists of the copula **da** 'to be'.

S da C

Equative Clause Nucleus

Some examples of equative clauses are as follows:

24. (positive with noun phrase as complement)
    Sambili da womi.
    Sambili is man
    Sambili is a man.

25. (negative with noun phrase as complement)
    Kato na womi.
    Kato neg. man
    Kato is not a man.

In a negated equative clause the verb **da** becomes **na**.

26. Dee sëmbë dë na Saamaka sëmbë.
    the (pl) people there are = not Saramaccan people
    Those people are not Saramaccans.

2.1.3 Peripheral Constituents

Up to this point we have discussed only the nuclear constituents of the clause. These nuclear constituents cluster around or near the predicate and are different among the various clause types and sub-types. The peripheral constituents extend from the nucleus out, usually following, but sometimes preceding. In general, the same peripheral constituents can occur with all the clause types.[4]

If all the peripheral constituents occurred together in a single clause, their normal order would be as follows (peripheral constituents in bold print):

(Setting)(Focus)(Subj.)Verb(IO)(DO)**(Range)(Manner)**
(Benefactive)(Locative)(Time)(Extent)(Clause Adverb)
(Ideophone)

Peripheral Clause Constituents

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4   For exceptions see 2.1.3.1.

The above is only a theoretical possibility. In natural texts or speech it is rare to find more than one or two of the peripheral constituents in one clause. If the speaker needs to include more information he tends to string clauses together (see 2.2.3).

The peripheral constituents will be discussed here in the order in which they occur, beginning at the nucleus and working toward the end of the clause, then starting again at the nucleus and working back toward the beginning of the clause. As each constituent is introduced, examples are given to show how it co-occurs with other constituents which have already been introduced.

2.1.3.1 Range

The first possible constituent following the nucleus of a Saramaccan clause is **Range.** This constituent expresses: (1) the limits of the range of action of the verb, (2) the purpose for an action, or (3) the content following verbs expressing desire, ability, or requests. Range usually consists of a prepositional phrase or a clause introduced by the prepositions **u/fu** 'of' or 'for.'[5] To date, no examples have been found where Range occurs in Stative clauses.[6] This might be expected from the semantics involved.

27. (range as limiting the action of the verb)
    Mi paka di womi feifi kolu **u di boto nöö.**
    I pay the man five guilders for the boat only
    I paid sf5 for the boat alone.

28. (range as purpose phrase)
    I go teki ën **fii mujëë.**
    you go take her for = your wife
    You went and took her for your wife.

29. (range following request or content of indirect quote)
    A taa **fii go.**
    she said for = you go
    She said for you to go.

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5   See 3.7.3 (1) 'fu' for fu-pronoun contractions as seen in examples 28 – 30.
6   One possible exception is the construction represented in the example below:
        Sambili, hën fu heepi mi.
        Sambili, he for help me
        Sambili is the one who is suppose to/must help me.
    In this example the verb to be is not expressed. It should therefore be classed as a Stative Clause. But since it does not describe how the subject looks, feels, smells, etc., it does not match Descriptive Stative Clauses semantically. Perhaps it is a fourth subtype of the Stative Clauses.

30. (range following verb of desire)
    Di mii an kë fii sindo.
    the child neg want for=you sit
    The child doesn't want you to sit down.

2.1.3.2 Manner

Following Range is the **Manner** constituent.[7] This usually consists of a phrase introduced by **kuma** 'like, as', a manner word (3.6.7), a phrase introduced by **ku** 'and, with' (accompaniment and instrument) or a relative clause introduced by the relative pronoun **fa** 'how' (2.1.4).

In the beginning of the analysis, the clauses with **ku-** phrases seemed to fall into three separate categories: Manner, Association, and Instrument. But since these three do not co-occur and since the objects of **ku** are so similar, the three are here analyzed as one category. As to how the hearers know if Manner, Association, or Instrument is meant seems to depend on the word class of the main verb (3.5).

31. (manner consisting of manner word)
    Waka bunu!
    walk well
    Have a good trip!

32. (manner consisting of manner phrase)
    Mi du ën ku taanga.
    I do it with strength
    I did it, but it was difficult.

33. (manner consisting of instrument phrase)
    Mi koti ën ku faka.
    I cut it with knife
    I cut it with a knife.

34. (manner consisting of association phrase)
    Mi fan ku ën.
    I talk with him
    I talked with him.

35. (manner consisting of **kuma** phrase)
    A ta-fan kuma womi.
    he cont-talk like man
    He talks like a man.

---

7   The analysis of the manner constituent leaves many questions. Are range and manner actually two distinct constituents? Semantically they seem very different. On the other hand I have no examples of their co-occurrence except in a clause in which they are separated by other constituents.

Ku taanga mi dëën di möni **u di boto.**
with difficulty I gave=him the money for the boat
He was reluctant to take the money for the boat.

All attempts to combine Range and Manner in a juxtaposed position were rejected by the language assistant. For instance, the following example was unacceptable.

*I teki ën **fii mujëë ku taanga.**
you took her for=you wife with difficulty
You took her for your wife by the hardest.

36. (manner with stative clause)
    Ma bi dë **ku wojo.**
    I = neg past be with eyes
    I was not awake.

2.1.3.3 Benefactive

The **Benefactive** constituent follows Manner. This constituent spells out the one who receives the outcome of the action. It may be to his advantage or disadvantage. The benefactive constituent is not the same as the indirect or direct object of a clause.

37. (benefactive co-occurring with DO)
    Sidonu manu mbei di boto **da mi.**
    Sidonu husband made the boat for me
    Sidonu's husband made the boat for me.

38. (benefactive co-occurring with IO and DO)
    I da de gaantangi **da mi.**
    you give them big = thanks for me
    You thanked them heartily for me.

The benefactive usually occurs as a prepositional phrase introduced by the proposition **da** 'for' followed by a pronoun, proper name, or a noun phrase. Phrases such as **fu di womi** 'for the man' (see example 94) can either be considered to be instances of the benefactive or, because of the preposition, might be considered to be range.

39. (benefactive co-occurring with manner)
    Mi o-fan ku ën **da i.**
    I incom-talk with him for you
    I will talk to him for you.

40. (benefactive co-occurring with range)
    Mi o-paka u di wosu **da i.**
    I incom-pay for the house for you
    I will pay for the house for you.

41. (benefactive in negated clause)
    De an o-kumutu aki **da i.**
    they neg incom-leave here for you
    They are not going to leave here for you.

42. (benefactive in stative clause)
    A wai **da Bandja.**
    she happy for Bandja
    She is happy because of what Bandja did./because of what someone did for Bandja.

2.1.3.4 Locative

Immediately following manner is the **Locative** constituent. It expresses the location where an action takes place or in which a state exists. The locative constituent usually consists of a Location Noun-2 (3.1.5) or a prepositional phrase introduced by the preposition **a** 'at, to, on, toward'.

43. (locative in imperative clause)
   Ko **aki**!
   come here
   Come here!

44. (locative with DO and benefactive)
   U manda wan buka da i **aki**.
   we sent one message to you here
   We sent a message to you here.

45. (locative in negated clause)
   De an go **a libasë**.
   they neg go to upriver
   They didn't go upriver.

46. (locative in descriptive-stative clause)
   Sëmbë hia **a di kamian**.
   people a lot in the place
   There were a lot of people there.

47. (locative in equative-stative clause)
   Hiko nöö da tëmbëma **a di kõndë aki**.
   Hiko only is carpenter in the village here
   Hiko is the only carpenter in this village.

2.1.3.5 Time

The unmarked position for **Time** occurs immediately following Locative. All information concerning the time of an action or state occurs in this position. The time constituent is usually manifested as: (1) a time word, (2) a noun phrase with a Time Noun (3.1.7), or (3) a prepositional phrase introduced by the preposition **a** 'at, to, toward, on'.

48. (time in imperative clause)
   Ko **nounou**.
   come now
   Come now.

49. (time with locative)
   De o-suti goni na Akisamaun **sapate**.
   they incom-shoot guns in Akisamaun evening
   They are going to shoot guns in Akisamaun this evening.

50. (time with manner)
   Dee mii ta-du ën ku di bali **tide**.
   the (pl) child cont-do it with the ball today
   Those children are really playing with the ball today.

51. (time in negated clause)
   Ma o-go **a di feeda**.
   I = neg incom-go Friday
   I am not going Friday.

52. (time in stative clause)
Mi suwaki **tide.**
I sick today
I am sick today.

2.1.3.6 Extent

The **Extent** constituent immediately follows Time and expresses the quantity or extent of the action or state. That is, an action continues until it is finished or until the agent gives up, etc. Extent occurs as a prepositional phrase or clause which is usually introduced by the preposition **te** 'until, to the extent.'[8]

53. (extent in imperative clause)
Wooko **te i kaba.**
work until you finish
Work until you are finished.

54. (extent and understood DO)
Mi jabi **te mi wei.**
I open until I tired
I tried opening (it) but couldn't.

55. (extent and DO)
Mi jabi di döö **te mi wei.**
I open the door until I tired
I tried opening the door but couldn't.

56. (extent and locative)
De mbei faja a di sitonu liba **te a kendi.**
they make fire on the stone top until it hot
They build a fire on the stone (and let it burn there) until the stone was hot.

57. (extent in stative clause)
Di mujëë hanse **te na soni.**
the woman pretty until not something
The woman is very pretty.

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8 The vowel in **te** can be lengthened to indicate longer periods of time or distance, and for extensions of other adverbial functions.

58. (extent in negated intransitive clause)
Dee sëmbë an o-ko **te aki**.
those people neg incom-come until here
Those people are not going to come all the way over here.

In addition there may be another type Extent phrase introduced by **fu/u** (see 3.7.3 (3) and example 145).[9]

2.1.3.7 Clause Adverb

Saramaccan clauses frequently end with a modifier, here labeled **'Clause Adverb'**. Although it would be possible to view them as modifying the verb, and therefore could be considered part of the verb phrase, they are analyzed here as clause-level constituents. This is done on the basis of their position in the clause: except for ideophones, they always occur at the end of the clause rather than with the verb phrase in the nucleus of the clause. Clause adverbs consists of words classed as Clause Adverbs (3.6.8).

59. (in clause with subject and predicate only)
De go **kaa**.
they go already
They have already gone.

60. (in clause with full nucleus)
I lei mi wan köni **tuu**.
you taught me one clever true
You really did teach me something clever.

61. (with time constituent)
Di juu dë de ta-biinga
the hour there they cont-worked = at = it

fu teni a fö daka **kaa**.
for ten and four days already

By that time they had been working at it for 14 days already.

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9 Extent phrases and clauses are frequently transition phrases between episodes in a narrative (see Rountree 1982, Glock and Levinsohn 1982). As such, they do not seem to belong exclusively to either of the clauses they are separating (neither grammatically nor phonologically). For example, in the following excerpt from a story about fish poisoning, Tee tjika wan pisi 'until enough one while' makes the transition between Episode 1, the catching of the poisoned fish, and Episode 2, the trip back and arrival at the village:

De ta-dööngö poi.
they cont-drunk excessively
They were (progressively) becoming drunk.

Teee tjika wan pisi.
until enough one while
This went on for awhile.

Nöö di boto fuu lai ku fisi pöö!
then the boat of=us load the fish full
Then our boat was loaded down with the fish!

62. (with locative in negated clause)
    Ma o-ko aki **möön**.
    I = neg incom-come here anymore
    I'm not going to come here anymore.

2.1.3.8 Ideophones

Ideophones play an important part in the Saramaccan language. They are used heavily to describe how things look, sound, smell, feel, or taste (see 3.6.12). Ideophones occur as the last constituent of the clause they modify.

63. (stative-existential clause)
    Di uwii dë nëën hedi **gùdjùù** sö.
    the hair there on = her head bushy so
    She has a lot of hair.

64. (sound description)
    Mi ta-jei **kwéikwéikwéikwéi**.
    I cont-heard kweikweikweikwei
    I heard: kweikweikweikwei.

65. (odor description)
    Di soni ta-tingi **váán**.
    the thing cont-stinks strongly
    The thing stinks terribly.

66. (touch sensation)
    A dë kötökötö **jòöò** sö.
    it is cold very so
    It is very cold.

67. (taste)
    A suti **néminémi**.
    it sweet very
    It is very sweet

68. (action specifier or extent)
    Di gansë ta-fëëbë **djùdjùdjùdjù**.
    the pot cont-boil rolling
    The pot is at a rolling boil.

69. (action specifier)
    Mi koti ën **vélén**.
    I cut it in = two
    I cut it completely in two.

70. (action specifier)
    Mi koti ën **vîo**.
    I cut it partially
    I gave it a cut.

71. (appearance in stative-descriptive clause)
    A weti **fáán**.
    it white very
    It is snowy white.

72. (action specifier or extent)
    De kaba kééé.
    they finished completely
    They finished completely.

Ideophones often occur alone, replacing parts of, or even entire, clauses.

73. Andi pasa ku ën?
    what happened with it
    What happened to it?

    Sííííí dùbùù píí.
    slide sink = in = deep = water still
    It slid down the bank, fell into the water, and disappeared.

74. Sapatë, Kókókó, Kpêên, Gàà!,
    evening, knock knock knock, creak, bite

    Bigidi! Píí
    fall = over still

    That evening there was a knock at the door, the door creaked open..there was a sudden strike..a thud..then stillness.

2.1.3.9 Focus

The **Focus** position refers to the position immediately preceding the subject constituent. Focus is analyzed as a position rather than a constituent because it is the location to which other constituents of the clause may be copied or moved when the speaker wishes to emphasize them for various reasons such as topicalization, contrast, or specification. The only constituents which do not seem to occur here are the clause adverbs and ideophones.

In the examples below, the constituents being emphasized occur in the Focus position at the beginning of the clause. Their usual positions are indicated by 'Ø'.

75. (locative)
    A Tukusi wë de nango Ø.
    to Tukusi emph they cont = go Ø
    It was to Tukusi that they are going.

76. (manner)
    Ku ën de bi ta-tapa di baaku Ø.
    with it they past cont-cover the hole Ø
    That's what they used to cover the hole.

77. (time)
    A di feifidaka di pasa mi bigi wooko Ø.
    on the Tuesday which passed I began work Ø
    It was last Tuesday that I began work.

Obligatory constituents such as the Predicate or Complement in stative clauses are copied rather than moved into Focus position. In the examples below notice that the constituent being emphasized occurs both in the Focus position and its usual position.

78. (verb)
Wooko mi ta-**wooko**.
work I cont-work
I am really working hard.

79. (complement)
Suti nöö a **suti** sö.
sweet only it sweet so
Hmmm, it is delicious.

In addition to constituents being moved to the front of the Clause for emphasis as stated above, peripheral constituents can also be fronted to the first position following the nucleus, apparently for milder emphasis. In the following example the Time constituent is moved to the position immediately following the nucleus rather than it's usual position after location.

80. Di womi duumi **hii di ndeti** ku di mbeti
the man sleep all the night with the animal

nëën amaka Ø pii.
in = his hammock Ø still

The man slept soundly all night with the animal in his hammock.

2.1.4 Embedded Clauses

Embedded clauses refer to clauses which are part of, or embedded in, phrases or larger matrix clauses. When they are used to specify or replace a noun they are introduced by a relative pronoun. This relative pronoun indicates the grammatical role the noun being specified plays in the embedded clause.

81. (relative clause as subject specifier)
Di womi **di ta-wooko aki**, hën da mi ën.
the man who cont-work here, he give me it
The man who works here gave it to me.

82. (relative clause as subject specifier)
Di oto **di u da aki** a dë wan wasiköi.
the story which we give here it is a warning
The story we told here is a warning.

83. (relative clause as benefactive specifier)
Tjëën go da di womi **di ta-wooko dë**.
carry = it go to the man who cont-work there
Carry it to the man who works there.

84. (relative clause as locative)
De go **ka de bi diki di baaku**.
they went where they past dug the hole
They went to where they had dug the hole.

85. (relative clause as time specifier)
    Di juu **te de** ta-waka möön...
    the hour when they cont-walk again
    Whenever they are traveling again...

Clauses which occur as the Range and Extent constituents are introduced by the prepositions that are the usual introductory words for those constituents.

86. (range introduced with **fu** 'for')[10]
    Ambë sabi **fu tja boto go a dan liba**?
    who knows for carry boat go to rapids top
    Who knows how to take a boat up a rapids?

87. (extent introduced with **te** 'until')
    U fika dë **te dee oto wan ko a u**.
    we remained there until the(pl) other one came to us
    We remained there until the others came to us.

88. (embedded clause as direct object)
    De si **di fisi go a liba wata**.
    they see the fish go to top water
    They saw the fish go to the top of the water.

89. (embedded clause as direct object)
    Ma lo' **fa i ta-du ën**.
    I = neg love how you cont-do it
    I don't like the way you do/are doing it.

Embedded clauses occur as the direct object of verbs which imply speech or cognition (e.g. say, think, or know). In such cases they are introduced by the speech introducer **taa** 'say, that', unless **taa** already occurs as the main verb.

90. Mi sabi **taa ja o-ganjan mi**.
    I know that you = neg incom-deceive me
    I know that you will not deceive me.

91. Di womi **taa an o-go**.
    the man said he = neg incom-go
    The man said he is not going.

2.2 Sentence Syntax

Up to this point in the syntax section we have discussed only the clause. We first discussed the constituent structure of the clause and then the modifications and combinations of that structure, including various forms of embedding.

This section discusses the next structure above the clause level, the **sentence**. A sentence can be (1) a **Simple Sentence** consisting of a clause with or without the addition of sentence peripheral constituents, (2) a **Sequence Sentence**, or (3) a **Clause Chain Sentence**. The latter two consist of combinations of clauses with or without sentence peripheral constituents. The three basic sentence types

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10 Also see Example 106.

will be discussed first, after which the peripheral constituents will be described. The section closes with a discussion of complex combinations of clauses and sentences.

2.2.1 Simple Sentences

The **Simple Sentence** is distinguished from the Sequence and Clause Chain sentences on the grounds that it consists of a single clause (Cl) with or without other clauses embedded within it (see Section 2.1.4). The basic pattern of the Simple Sentence without peripheral constituents may be represented as follows:

```
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│                          C l                             │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
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<div align="center">Simple Sentence Nucleus</div>

92. (single clause without embedded clauses or peripheral constituents)
    Mi nango a lio.
    I cont = go to river
    I am going to the river.

93. (single clause with embedding in range constituent)
    Ma sa' faandimbei[11] de go ala.
    I = neg know why they go there
    I don't know why they went over there.

2.2.2 Sequence Sentences

The **Sequence Sentence** is distinguished from the Simple and Clause Chain Sentences on the grounds that it consists of two or more clauses each with at least its own subject and verb. These clauses within the sequence sentence may share peripheral constituents if they are not separated by an optional **connector** (c) such as in the first example below. The basic pattern of the Sequence Sentence may be represented as follows:

```
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│              (c) Cl (c) Cl (c) (Cl) (c) (Cl)             │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```

<div align="center">Sequence Sentence Nucleus</div>

Each example below includes a formula of the constituents in the example. The clauses in the formulas are separated by a period.

---

11   See example 144.

94. (a series of clauses without connectors, SVO.SVO.SVO.SVOR, sharing a range constituent)

Mi tei wan ufangi, mi tei wan aseesente,
I took a machete I took a special=cloth

mi tei wan puu koosu,
I took a fitted cloth

mi tei wan gangaa baka hangisa fu di womi.
I took a neck back scarf for the man

I took a machete, a shoulder cloth, a fitted cloth and a neck scarf for the man.

95. (a series of clauses, cSV.cSVO.cSVL.cSVO, separated by connectors and not sharing any peripheral constituent)

Tee di womi de kai Dagili ta-pasa
when the man they call Dagili cont-pass,

nöö i o-tapa di woto
then you incom-stop the bus,

nöö i subi a di woto
then you get=in into the bus,

nöö i o-paka wan dusu.
then you incom-pay one thousand

When a fellow by the name of Dagili comes along, stop him, get on the bus, and pay him 1000 (francs).

96. (series of clauses with connectors, cSVExt.cSVO)[12]
Hën u dë te wan pisi hën u jei mötë.
then we were until a while then we heard motor
Then after a while, we heard a motor.

Although it could be argued that the above examples consist of two or three separate sentences rather than a single one, they are phonologically single units. There is no final intonation drop until the end of the series of clauses.

2.2.3 Clause Chain Sentences

The **Clause chain sentence** is distinguished from Simple and Sequence Sentences in that it consists of two or more clauses chained together without connectors and sharing the same Subject. They are analyzed as clauses rather than a series of verbs or predicates because each clause may have constituents other than the predicate and these are not shared by the other clauses in the sentence.[13] For example,

---

12 The reason for the occurrence of the connector hën in Example 96 and not in Examples 94,95 has to do with the function of hën. It marks the next step in the narrative in accomplished time. (see Rountree 1982)

13 It is possible that Saramaccan also has serial verbs. In that case several verbs are used to describe one action.
Example: De ta bai kai olo.
They cont-yell call olo
They are yelling.

in Example 97 below, there are two clauses. The first clause consists of a Subject, Predicate, Direct Object and a Benefactive. The second clause shares the Subject with the first clause (it is not repeated) but begins with a Predicate, then Indirect Object and Direct Object. Notice that in each clause the constituents follow their normal order.

97. (SVOB.VIO)
Mi tei wan kuja ku wan hangu kujëë da di womi,
I took a gourd and a sort spoon for the man

di tata sisa fëën, dëën tangi.
the father sister of=him give=her/him thanks

I took a gourd and a spoon to the man's aunt to show him thanks.

98. (SVO.VL)
Amönikömbi hën bi tei di womi tjako aki.
Amonikombi she past take the man bring here
Amonikombi is the one who got the man and brought him here.

99. (SVOL.VMCa or I)
Wan tatai tei mi a di futu tuwë ku baka holoo.
one vine took me by the foot threw with back plop
A vine caught my foot and threw me on my back, PLOP.

100. (SVC.V.VO.VM.VB(SV))
A dë nöö ta-waka ta-taki sösö
he was only cont-walk cont-talk nonsense

ta-fan hia ta-lontu da hangi ta-kii.
cont-speak alot cont-around for hunger cont-kill

He just walked around talking a lot of nonsense and not getting enough to eat.

101. (SVL.VLT.VL.VO.V)
Dee baka mii ko fika aki ko ta-kumutu aki
the (pl) back child come remain here come cont-leave here

wan kodo daka go a Tukusi go koti alisi toona ko.
one single day go to Tukusi go cut rice return come

These descendants (of those people) living today can leave here, go to Tukusi, cut rice, and come back all in one day.

102. (SdaC.VB)
Di womi da kabiteni ta-wooko da Gaama.
the man is captain cont-work for granman
The man is a captain who works for the Granman.

103. (SC.VO.VL)
Di mujëë hanso ta-bisi koosu ta-ko aki.
the woman pretty cont-wear clothes cont-come here
The woman is pretty. She dresses up and comes here.

2.2.4 Peripheral Sentence Constituents

The peripheral constituents of the sentence are those constituents which occur in the sentence in addition to the clauses themselves and their peripheral constituents. They are distinguished from the peripheral constituents of the clause in that they occur only once in the sentence regardless of the number of clauses, and in that they occur outside the peripheral constituents of the clause. This will become clearer as the peripheral constituents are individually discussed below. If all the peripheral constituents occurred together in a single sentence (which never happens) their normal order would be as follows:

(Interjection) (Connector) (Vocatives) (Interrogative) (Response)
(Sentence Nucleus) (Mood Marker)

Sentence Peripheral Constituents

2.2.4.1 Interjection

The **Interjection (Ij)** refers to the word **wẽ** 'well' which may occur alone or at the beginning of a sentence. It is usually glossed 'well' for lack of a better English equivalent. It is labeled 'Interjection' here but in fact has several functions, all of which have by no means been determined.[14] The following illustrate some of the Interjection's functions:

(1) Cover a pause.

104. De taa, "Wẽ, aaa baa, wẽ, soni."
   they said "Well aaa brother well something"
   They said, "Well, uh, well, there is something (wrong)!"

(2) Express surprise or pleasure.

105. Mi feni wan njunjun japo tide.
   I obtained a new dress today
   I got a new dress today.

   Wẽẽẽ.
   weeelll
   Hey, nice!

---

14   See Rountree and Glock 1982.

(3) Mark new or background discourse information or mark the speaker's opinion, (these two func-
tions are not always easy to distinguish as can be seen in Example 106 below.)

106. De taa fu de hasuwa.
they said for them to=wrestle

Wɛ̄ Sujeti na nɛ̈ngë.
well Sujeti neg Negro

They decided to wrestle. And you know Sujeti, he's as tough as they come.

Sujeti taa,"Di sɛ̈mbë di o-ko a mi,"
Sujeti said "The person who incom-come to me"

mi o-tuwë i.
I incom-throw you

Sujeti said,"Anybody who comes to me is going to get thrown (to the ground)."

(4) Add politeness to the comment.

107. Wɛ̄, mi kë, ma masikuma mi sa tja i go.
well I want but I=neg=see=as I can carry you go
Well, I want to, but I don't think I can take you.

The function of wɛ̄ in the next example is not clear. It seems to introduce a new aspect of an old topic.
(The connector nöö indicates that an old topic is being continued.)

108. Wɛ̄, nöö, Mii, fa un bi o-go a boto dɛ̈
well cont=topic Child as you (pl) past incom-go in boat there

nöö un bi disa u ku di hogi mbeti
cont=topic you-pl past leave us with the fierce animal

a tela nö?
on shore no

Well now, Honey, about you two getting into the boat, were you really going to leave us and
the jaguar on the shore?

Aaa, ma bi o-a' köni fɛ̈ën. Wɛ̄,
aaa I=neg past incom-have know=how for=it well

biga mi fɛ̈ëë.
because I was=afraid

Who knows? I couldn't help it, I was scared to death.

2.2.4.2 Connectors

Connectors (c) occur between clauses as links to connect units on all levels of the language. They connect clauses to clauses, sentences to sentences, paragraphs to paragraphs, sentences to paragraphs and sections etc. to indicate the semantic relationships between them.[15] These syntactic units may be joined by a simple connector (Examples 109, 110), pairs of connectors (Example 112) or sets of connectors (Examples 111, 117). The specific function of each connector is discussed briefly in Section 3.8.[16] In the following set of examples the connector in focus is in boldface. The following examples do not cover all the possible relationships between clauses in the language, nor do they include the connections above the clause level. They do include all the major connectors. Some of the relationships indicated with connectors are as follows:

(1) Chronological sequence in accomplished time, (a single occurrence).

109. U dë te wan pisi **hën** u jei mötë.
    we were until one time then we heard motor
    After a while we heard a motor.

(2) Chronological sequence in unaccomplished time, (a single occurrence).

110. I o-go a di wosu **nöö** i o-si wan sëmbë.
    you incom-go in the house then you incom-see a person
    Go into the house and you will see someone.

(3) Chronological sequence in accomplished time, (repeated occurrence).

111. **Te** a ko **nöö** a ta-fika
    when he comes then he cont-remain

    nëën mujëë köndë.
    in = his wife village

    When he comes, he stays in his wife's village.

---

15   Connectors are not the only means in Saramaccan of signaling the relationships between propositions. For example, simple juxtaposition is used to indicate certain relationships as can be seen in Example 94.

16   See also Grimes and Glock 1972, Rountree 1982, Glock 1982, and Rountree and Glock 1982.

(4) Chronological sequence in accomplished time marked by **hën** occurring simultaneously with the logical sequence marker **nöö**. In Example 112 **nöö** may be tracing the discourse theme.[17]

    112. **Nöö hën** de tuwë tuu a kiiki.
           theme then they threw all to creek
           Then they went on all the way to the creek.

           Nöö hën Afalanti bebe wata te a kaba.
           theme then Afalanti drank water until he finished
           Then Afalanti drank his fill of water.

           Nöö hën Sujeti tei di goni lailai.
           theme then Sujeti took the gun loaded
           Then Sujeti took the loaded gun.

(5) Counter-expectation.

    113. A ta-nasi **ma** an ta-pai.
           it cont-grows but neg cont-produce
           It grows, but it doesn't produce.

(6) Contrast.

    114. Mi bi ta-bai ën, **ma** ma ta-bai ën möön.
           I pt cont-warned him but I = neg cont-warn him anymore
           I used to warn him, but I don't bother anymore.

(7) Condition-consequence/reason-result in accomplished time (single occurrence).

    115. **Di** mi go a lio, mi si i.
           When/because I went to river I saw you
           When I went to the river I saw you.

(8) Condition-consequence/reason-result in accomplished time (repeated occurrence).

    116. **Di** i bisi koosu
           because you wear Saramaccan = skirt

           nöö i ko djei Saamaka mujëë.
           then you come = to resemble Saramaccan woman

           Since you wear Saramaccan clothes, you look like a Saramaccan woman.

(9) Condition-consequence in accomplished time (single occurrence).

    117. **Di** i dou a lio **hën** i lai boto.
           When/because you arrive at river then you load boat
           When you got to the river you loaded the boat.

---

17 The idea labeled 'theme' in example 112 is actually the apparent purpose of the discourse. The speaker was trying to prove that Afalanti was innocent in the accident that occurred with the loaded gun.

(10) Condition-consequence in unaccomplished time (single occurrence).

118. **Ee** i go na Ameeka köndë ma o-si i möön.
If you go to America country I = neg cont-see you anymore
If you go to America, I won't see you anymore.

(11) Condition-consequence in hypothetical situation.

119. **Ee** fou fatu **nöö** a faja joo si ën.
If bird fat then in fire you = incom see it
If a bird is fat, it will be evident when it is roasting on the fire.

(12) Result-reason sequence.

120. De ta-wai **fu di** a fujai.
They cont-happy for because he had = a = birthday
They are happy because it is his birthday.

(13) (Reason-) result sequence (the reason clause is not shown here).

121. **Fëën mbei** mi tan sö longi
for = it make I stay so long
That's why I waited so long.

(14) Result-reason (the reason is more or less the grounds for the action).

122. Mi tuwëën a kapëë **biga** an bunu.
I threw = it in bushes because neg good
I threw it away because it is no good.

(15) Proposal-reason or grounds for making the proposal.

123. Ja musu mbei taa i da leon
you = neg must make that you are lion

biga i ta-fan kuma makaku.
because you cont = talk like monkey

Don't pretend you are a lion. (We know better) because you talk like a monkey.

(16) Topic-comment.

124. Fa mi ko fan ku unu aki
as I come talk with you = pl here

nöö un musu jei nöömö.
then you must hear for = sure

Now, concerning this talk we've had, you really must not disregard it.

(17) Proposal-grounds for the proposed action.

125. Ja musu paka fëën. **Nda** ja bi sabi.
you = neg must pay for = it inasmuch as you = neg pt know
You don't have to pay, inasmuch as you didn't know.

2.2.4.3 Vocatives

Vocatives are used frequently in Saramaccan and may occur at the beginning or the end of a sentence, though at the beginning is more common. When a Vocative occurs in its usual place at the beginning of the sentence it may be preceded only by an Interjection or a Negator. When it occurs at the end, nothing follows it.

126. **Afalanti**, tja mi go.
     Afalanti, carry me go
     Afalanti, go with me.

127. Wë, **Mati**, umfa woo du?
     well friend how we=incom do
     Well, Friend, what are we going to do?

128. Ja o-tja mi go nö, **Womi**?
     you-neg incom-carry me go no, man
     Aren't you going to go with me, Man?

In certain situations when a speaker is excited or tense he may use a vocative to begin and end almost every sentence as in the next example.

129. **Womi**, ma lo' fa i ta-naki di bali, **Womi**.
     man I=neg like how you cont-hit the ball man
     Man I don't like the way you are hitting the ball.

2.2.4.4 Response

The term 'Response' is used to refer to the words **nönö** 'no' and **aai** 'yes' (see 3.6.11). The Response occurs either just before or just after the Vocative, if there is a Vocative.

130. **Nönö**, ma a' tati.
     no I=neg have pounder/pestle
     No, I don't have a pestle.

131. **Aai**, Womi, di mujëë hanse.
     yes man the woman pretty
     Yes, Man, the woman is pretty.

2.2.4.5 Mood Marker

Mood Markers occur at the end of the sentence and mark it as Interrogative or Emphatic (see 3.6.10).

132. (positive question)
     A sa kë fufuuma **nö**?
     it can want thief no
     Could it be a thief?

133. (negative question)
     Ja o-tja mi go **nö**?
     you=neg incom-carry mi go no
     Aren't you going to go with me?

134. (positive emphatic)
    Mi lobi di soni aki e!
    I love the thing here hear
    I really like this!

135. (negative emphatic)
    Na panjan soni, mi taki!
    neg grab something I said
    Don't touch anything, I said!!

136. (positive emphatic)
    Dee sëmbë ta-mbei di wosu tuu seel.
    the (pl) people cont-make the house true self
    Those people really are building the house.

2.2.5 Question Word Interrogatives

There are two types of questions in Saramaccan: (1) those which are indicated by the mood marker nö (e.g. Example 145) and (2) those which begin with a question word. The basic question marker is un. It occurs alone as in Examples 137, 138 and in combination with other words such as in Example 140.[18]

137. Un daka i ko?
    which day you come
    When did you come?

138. Un buku disi?
    which book this
    What book is this?

139. Un di u de u mi tei?
    which the of them for me take
    Which one should I take?

140. Unsë i nango?
    where you cont = go
    Where are you going?

141. Umfa i du ën?
    how you do it
    How did you do it?

Ambë 'who' is apparently derived from un bë 'which family.'

142. Ambë di dë?
    who the there
    Who is that?

---

143. **Ambë** tei di boto u mi?
    who take the boat of me
    Who took my boat?

"Why" questions have a different question word: **faandimbei (fu-andi-mbei)** "for what made" or "why".

144. **Faandimbei** ja tjëën ko?
    why you = neg carry = it come
   Why didn't you bring it?

2.2.6 Complex Constructions

   The clause and sentence examples chosen for this paper have been more or less straightforward in order to clearly illustrate certain points. However, in actual language use, clauses and sentences can become very complex as the following examples illustrate.[19]

145. Fu di ten di mi bi kai i fii ko a mi,
    from the time when I past call you for = you come to me,

    nöö awaa i dou nö?
    (c) now you arrive quest = mk

    I have been calling you a long time, why are you just now getting here?

   In the preceding example, the construction **fii ko a mi** 'for = you to come to me' is a Purpose clause introduced by the preposition **fu** 'for, from, of'. It gives the purpose for the speaker's calling the hearer. It is embedded in the Relative clause **di mi bi kai i** 'when I (started) calling you'. This Relative clause is embedded in the Time Phrase **fu di ten..** 'from the time..' This phrase with its embedded clauses is connected to the clause **awaa i dou nö?** 'now you arrive?' by the logical connector **nöö**.[20]
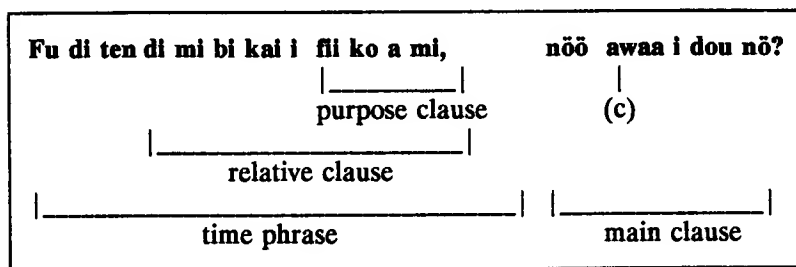
   Clauses may have their constituents separated for reasons other than emphasis as discussed in 2.1.3.9. For instance, in Example 146 the DO of the first clause **di kasaba** 'the cassava' is the Subject of the third clause **'ta-luku i'** 'looking/waiting for you'. The sentence gives the following information:

   (1) They have finished roasting the cassava.
   (2) They put it aside for you.
   (3) It (the cassava) is waiting for you to come get it.

In Saramaccan this information is in one Clause Chain Sentence consisting of three clauses.

---

19   See 3.7.3 (1) 'fu' for **fu**-pronoun combinations.
20   See also Section 3.8.3.

146. De   kaba u jasa   di kasaba   këë
     they   finished of roasting the cassava   completely
     S   P   DO   I
     Clause 1

     buta   dë   ta-luku   i.
     put   there   cont-look you
     P   L   P   DO
     Clause 2   Clause 3

They finished roasting the cassava and put it aside for you. It is waiting for you to come get it.

Notice that the Subject of the third clause **di kasaba** 'the cassava' is separated from the rest of the clause (ta-luku i 'looking for you') by all of the second clause and one constituent of the first clause (kaba u jasa 'finished of roasting').

2.3 Phrase Syntax

There are two major phrase types in Saramaccan, the **Noun Phrase** and the **Verb Phrase.** In addition there are also Adjective Phrases, Prepositional Phrases, and Comparison Phrases. In the following pages the Noun Phrase is described first, then the Adjective Phrase, the Prepositional Phrase, the Comparison Phrase, finally the Verb Phrase.

2.3.1 Noun Phrase

The Noun Phrase occurs in a clause as the Subject, Indirect Object, and/or Direct Object. It also occurs as Object of the preposition in a Prepositional Phrase.

The basic structure of a Noun Phrase can be represented as follows:

(COL) (ART) (NUM) (ADJ2) (ADJ1) (CLAS)
NOUN
(POSS) (EMP) (Q) (SPEC)

Noun Phrase Constituents

Examples of noun phrases demonstrating some of the many possible constituent combinations may be found in Chart 1.

It should be pointed out that even though there are eleven possible Noun Phrase constituents listed in Chart 1, it is rare to find more than three before the noun or two after in any one phrase. Example 163 is theoretically possible but the language assistant was not comfortable with it. Of all the constituents given on the chart only the Noun (or pronoun) is obligatory.

2.3.1.1 Collective

The constituent labeled **Collective (COL)** is represented by the word **hii** 'all'. When it occurs it precedes everything else in the Noun Phrase. See Examples 148, 149, 155, 158, 160, 166 and 176, on Chart 1.

CHART 1

	COL	ART	NUM	ADJ2	ADJ1	CLAS	NOUN	POSS	EMP	QUA	SPEC
147.							SĚMBĚ 'person'				
148.	HII 'all'						SĚMBĚ 'person'				
149.	HII 'all'	DEE 'the' (pl)					SĚMBĚ 'person'				
150.		DI 'the'					WOMI 'man'				
151.		DEE 'the' (pl)	DII three				WOMI 'man'				
152.				OTO 'other'			SĚMBĚ 'person'				
153.			TU two	OTO 'other'			SĚMBĚ 'person'				
154.		DI 'the'	WAN 'one'	KODO 'single'			WOMI 'man'				
155.	HII 'all'	DEE 'the'		OTO 'other'			SĚMBĚ 'person'				
156.		DI 'the'			HANSE 'pretty'		MUJĚE 'woman'				
157.		DEE 'the'		OTO 'other'	PIKI 'little'		MII 'children'				
158.	HII 'all'	DEE 'the'			GAAN 'big'		BOTO 'boat'				
159.	HII 'all'					SAAMAKA 'saramaccan'	SĚMBĚ 'person'				

CHART 1 (continued)

	COL	ART	NUM	ADJ2	ADJ1	CLAS	NOUN	POSS	EMP	QUA	SPEC
160.	HII 'all'	DEE 'the'				OLANSI 'Dutch'	SÈMBĚ 'person'				
161.			WAN 'one'	KODO 'single'		DJUGA 'Djuka'	SÈMBĚ 'person'				
162.		DI 'the'			LANGA 'long'	PĚNDĚ 'colored'	BÒSÓÓKÒ 'sweater'				
163.		DI 'the'	WAN 'one'	KODO 'single'	LANGA 'long'	PĚNDĚ 'colored'	BÒSÓÓKÒ 'sweater'				
164.		DI 'the'			HANSE 'pretty'	SAAMAKA 'saramaka'	MUJĚĚ 'woman'				
165.		MI 'my'					MUJĚĚ 'woman'				
166.	HII 'all'	MI 'my'					SINKII 'body'				
167.		MI 'my'			HANSE 'pretty'		MUJĚĚ 'woman'				
168.		DI 'the'					MUJĚĚ 'woman'	U MI 'of me'			
169.		DI 'the'			HANSE 'pretty'		MUJĚĚ 'woman'	U MI 'of me'			
170.		DI 'the'			HANSE 'pretty'		MUJĚĚ 'woman'	U MI 'of me'	SEEI 'self'		
171.		DI 'the'					MUJĚĚ 'woman'	U MI 'of me'		U GODO 'of Godo'	
172.		DI 'the'					MUJĚĚ 'woman'	U MI 'of me'	SEEI 'self'	U GODO 'of Godo'	

CHART 1 (continued)

	COL	ART	NUM	ADJ2	ADJ1	CLAS	NOUN	POSS	EMP	QUA	SPEC
173.		DI 'the'					MUJĚĚ 'woman'	U MI 'of me'			AKI 'here'
174.		DEE 'the' (pl)					MUJĚĚ 'woman'	U MI 'of me'		U GODO 'of Godo'	TUU 'all'
175.		DI 'the'					BOTO 'boat'				DI I SI DĚ 'which you see there'
176.	HII 'all'	DEE 'the'					MII 'children'			U 7 JAA 'of 7 years'	
177.		WAN 'a'					SONI 'thing'				DE TA-KAI SAPATI 'they cont-call sapati'
178.							MI 'I'		SEEI 'self'		
179.							DE 'they'				TUU 'all'
180.							UNU 'you'(pl)			FU KAMPU 'of Kampu'	
181.							DI 'which'				DE TA-KAI SAPATI 'they cont-call sapati'
182.							DI 'which'	U MI 'of me'		U KAMPU 'of Kampu'	
183.							DI 'which'			U TU 'of 2'	

CHART 1

Free Translations

147. person
148. all people
149. all those/the(pl) people
150. the man
151. those/the(pl) three men
152. other people
153. two other people
154. the one single man/the only man
155. all those/the(pl) people
156. the pretty woman
157. those/the(pl) other little children
158. all those/the(pl) big boats
159. those/the(pl) Saramaccan people
160. all those/the(pl) Dutch people
161. one single Djuka person (just one)
162. the long colored sweater
163. the one single long colored sweater (the only one)
164. the pretty Saramaccan woman
165. my wife

166. my whole body
167. my pretty wife
168. my wife
169. my pretty wife
170. my pretty wife!
171. my wife from Godo
172. my wife from Godo herself!
173. my wife here
174. all my wives from Godo
175. the boat (which) you see there
176. all those/the(pl) seven year old children
177. a thing called 'sapati'
178. I myself
179. all of them
180. you(pl) from Kampu
181. which they call 'sapati'
182. mine from Kampu
183. the second one

2.3.1.2 Article

The constituent labeled **Article (ART)** consists of the definite articles **di** 'the (singular)' and **dee** 'the (plural)', possessive pronouns, and the indefinite articles **wan** 'a' and **wanlŏ** 'some'. See Sections 3.2.2 & 3.3.2, as well as almost all the examples on Chart 1 for illustrations. The article position is a marked position for possessive pronouns in that it seems to emphasize the ownership by the person indicated. See Examples 165–167 below on the Chart 1 as well as the discussion of the Possessive constituent.

2.3.1.3 Number

The constituent labeled **Number (NUM)** consists of ordinal numbers such as one, two, three, etc. It does not include cardinal numbers such as first, second, etc. See Examples 151, 153, 154, 161, and 163 on Chart 1.

2.3.1.4 Adjective 2

The constituent labeled **Adjective 2 (ADJ2)** contains words such as 'other' and 'single' see Section 3.3.4. It is considered a part of the Noun Phrase rather than a part of the Adjective Phrase which occurs in the Adjective 1 position because ADJ2 modifies the head of the Noun Phrase, the Noun, rather than the head of the Adjective Phrase, the Adjective. See Examples 152-155, 157, 161, and 163 on Chart 1

2.3.1.5 Adjective 1

The constituent labeled **Adjective 1 (ADJ1)** is manifested as an Adjective Phrase (see Sections 2.3.2 & 3.3.5). In the examples on Chart 1, Adjective 1 consists of a single word, the head of the Adjective Phrase only. See Examples 156-158, 162-164, 167, 169, and 170.

2.3.1.6 Class Adjectives

The constituent labeled **Class Adjectives (CLAS)** consists of nationalities, and other class labels such as 'colored', 'calico', etc. (Section 3.3.6). See Examples 159-164 on Chart 1.

2.3.1.7 Noun

The **Noun (NOUN)** is the head of the Noun Phrase and is its only obligatory constituent. See Sections 3.1.1-3.1.4, 3.1.7, 3.2.1 & 3.2.8 for examples of words which occur in this position

Pronouns may replace the Noun in the Noun Phrase. However, none of the constituents which occur preceding the Noun can co-occur with a Pronoun, only those which follow (see 3.2.1, 3.2.2, & 3.2.5).

2.3.1.8 Possessive

The constituent labeled **Possessive (POSS)** is represented by the preposition **u/fu** plus a Noun Phrase. See Examples 168-174 on Chart 1. This is the usual manner for showing possession (as opposed to using a possessive pronoun as a article).

2.3.1.9 Emphasizer

The constituent labeled **Emphasizer (EMP)** consists of the word **seel** 'self, same' (see Section 3.2.6). **Seel** functions as an emphasizer on other levels of discourse such as the word, and clause as well. It is

considered a part of the Noun Phrase when it occurs in this position and is emphasizing the entire Noun Phrase. See Examples 170 and 172 on Chart 1.

2.3.1.10 Qualifier

The constituent labeled **Qualifier (Q)** consists of a prepositional phrase with the preposition **fu/u** 'from' plus a Noun Phrase. See Examples 171, 172, and 174 on Chart 1.

2.3.1.11 Specifier

The constituent labeled **Specifier (SPEC)** may occur as (1) a relative clause introduced by a relative pronoun (Example 175 on Chart 1), (2) a specifying word such as **aki** 'here' or **nöö** 'only'. See Section 3.2.7 and Examples 173, 174, & 179.

2.3.2 Adjective Phrase

The **Adjective Phrase** occurs as the Adj1 constituent of the Noun Phrase. It has three constituents: Adverb 1 (Adv1), Adverb 2 (Adv2), and Adjective (Adj). Adverb 1 consists of the word **möön** 'more'. Adverb 2 consists of such words as **kooko** 'yellow', **hia** 'a lot', **langa** 'long', etc. (3.3.5) The Adjective consists of words from the same word class as Adv.2 (3.3.4) and such words as **womi** 'man', **mujëë** 'woman', etc. (See 3.1.1)

```
(Adv1)   (Adv2)   Adj
```

Adjective Phrase Constituents

184. Di **möön gaan hanse** mujëë u di köndë...
     the more great pretty woman in the village...
     The prettiest woman in the village...

185. Wan **pondi pau** tompi bi dë a pasi bandja.
     one rotten tree stump pt. be at path side
     A rotten tree stump was there beside the path.

186. U go a di **gaan faaka** pau.
     we went to the big flag tree/post
     We went to the main shrine.

2.3.3 Prepositional Phrase

A Prepositional Phrase in Saramaccan consists of a preposition plus a Noun Phrase. Prepositional phrases occur as the Range, Manner, Location, Time or Benefactive constituents of the clause, and sometimes embedded within a Noun Phrase.

```
Prep   NP
```

Prepositional Phrase Structure

The external distribution of the prepositional phrase limits both the choice of the preposition used and of the word class of the Noun head of the Noun Phrase. For example, the Range constituent of a

clause may consist of a Prepositional Phrase or Purpose clause introduced by **fu/u** 'of, for' (Section 2.1.3.1). The Noun in the Noun Phrase is a Quantifiable or Non-quantifiable noun or Proper Name (Sections 3.1.1-3.1.3).

187. Mi paka **u di boto** nöö.
     I paid for the boat only.
     I paid for the boat only.

When Manner occurs as a Prepositional Phrase it is either (1) a phrase introduced by **kuma** 'like, as' plus a Noun Phrase (e.g. Example 35) or (2) a phrase introduced by **ku** 'and, with' plus a Noun Phrase. In both cases the head of the Noun Phrase is a Quanifiable Noun, a Non-quanifiable Noun or a Proper Name. (See Section 2.1.3.2 & 3.1.1-3.1.3)

188. De koti ën **ku ufangi**.
     they cut it with machete
     They cut it with a machete.

The Benefactive constituent usually occurs as a Prepositional Phrase introduced by the preposition **da** 'for.' Occasionally a Prepositional Phrase introduced by the preposition **fu/u** 'for' may be considered the Benefactive (Section 2.1.3.3). In either case the Noun in the Noun Phrase is a Quanifiable Noun, a Proper Name, and occasionally a Non-quanifiable Noun. (See Section 3.1.1- 3.1.3).

189. Mi wai **da di womi**.
     I happy for the man
     I am happy with/about the man.

When Locative occurs as a Prepositional Phrase, the preposition is **na/a** 'to, towards, at' and the Noun in the Noun Phrase is a Quanifiable Noun, a Proper Name or a Locative Noun-1. (See Sections 3.1.1, 3.1.3 & 3.1.4).[21]

190. Mi nango **a wosu**.
     I cont = go to house
     I am going home.

When a speaker wishes to make a locative more specific, he adds a Locative Specifier (3.1.6) as the Specifier constituent in the Noun Phrase.

191. A dë **a wosu dendu**.
     he is in house inside
     He is inside the house.

192. De butëën **a di tafa liba**.
     they put = it on the table top
     They put it on (top of) the table.

When the Time constituent of a clause occurs as a Prepositional Phrase, the preposition is usually a 'to, toward, at.' and the Noun in the Noun Phrase is a Time Noun (3.1.7). Sometimes **fu** and **te** phrases occur together forming a 'from..til' construction (see Sections 2.1.3.5, and 3.7 & 3.8).

---

21 Also see 2.1.3.4

193. Mi si ën **a di feifidaka.**
I saw him on the Tuesday
I saw him on Tuesday.

194. Fu di tuwalufu juu te kisi fa u dë aki, nöö wan kaba eti nö, Miii?
from the twelve hour til catch as we are here, conn. you(pl) finished yet no, child
(You have been doing this) from twelve o'clock until now and you are still not finished, poor
thing?

2.3.4 Comparative Phrase

A **Comparative Phrase** consists of the word **möön** 'more' plus the point of comparison such as
'pretty','fast', 'many','hot' etc. This is followed by a repetition of the word **möön** 'more' and then the
second item in the comparison. The comparison phrase occurs following the verb in Active clauses and
following the complement in Stative clauses.

195. Di manda aki abi
the basket here has

möön hia awaa möön di dë.
more a lot palmfruit more that there

This basket has more fruit in it than that one.

196. Di womi aki ta-kule
the man here cont-run

möön hesi möön dee otowan tuu.
more fast more the(pl) others all

This man runs faster than any of the others.

möön	COMPAREE	möön	STANDARD

Comparative Phrase Formula

2.3.4.1 Combinations

As on the clause level, the above phrase types combine by linking and embedding other phrases or
clauses to form increasingly complex constructions.

197. (NP linked with **ku** 'and, with')[22]
I mama ku i tata
your mother and your father
your father and mother/your parents

---

22   See Section 3.8.1

198. (NP.ku.NP.ku.NP.NP.NP)
     Mi ku Dofia ku de Pagai, di otowan, di Basi
     I and Dofia and the(pl) Pagai the other one the Basi
     I, Dofia, Pagai, and also the other one, Basi...

In the following example (199) the clause **fii ko a mi** 'for you to come to me' is a purpose clause embedded in the relative clause **di mi bi kai i fii ko a mi** 'when I started calling you for you to come to me' Both clauses are embedded in the Prep. Phrase which begins with **fu** 'from.'

199. fu di ten di mi bi kai i fii ko a mi
     from the time which I past call you for-you come to me
     From the time I (started) calling you to come to me...

2.3.5 Verb Phrase

The most general structure of the Saramaccan **Verb Phrase** may be represented as follows:

(Neg) (Tense)
(Modal/Aspect-1) (Modal/Aspect-2) (Action modifier)
Verb
(Verb modifier) [D.O.] (Specifier/Directional)

Saramaccan Verb Phrase

The following example is a Verb Phrase in a simple Active clause:

200. | | **Tense** | **Modal/Aspect-1** | **Verb** |
|---|---|---|---|
| (mi) | bi | o- | go. |
| (I) | past | incom- | go |

I was going to go.

A modification of this basic Verb Phrase occurs in Existential Clauses. These may be represented as follows:

(Negative) (Tense)
(Modal/Aspect-1) (Modal/Aspect-2) (Action modifier)
d**ë̠**

Existential Clause Verb Phrase

The following is a Verb Phrase in a simple Existential clause.

201. | | **Subject/Negative** | **Modal/Aspect-1** | **d**ë̠ |
|---|---|---|---|
| (Amanjan) | ma | o- | dë̠ (aki). |
| (tomorrow) | I-neg | incom- | be (here/available) |

Tomorrow I will not be here/available.

In Descriptive Clauses there is no overt verb, but the optional constituents of the Verb Phrase which precede the Verb may become modifiers of the Complement constituent of the Descriptive Clause. These constructions may be represented as follows:

```
                    (Neg) (Tense)
(Modal/Aspect-1) (Modal/Aspect-2) (Action Modifier)
                    Complement
```

Descriptive Clause Verb Phrase

The following example shows the constituents of the Verb Phrase in a Descriptive clause.

202.   **Modal/Aspect-2**   **Complement**
Di mujëë   ta-   hanse
the woman   cont-   pretty
The woman is becoming pretty

Notice that when the Complement of the Descriptive Clause is modified by constituents of the Verb Phrase the complement may be grouped with transitive/intransitive state action verbs (3.5.5). These express an action that is the initiation of a continuing state rather than an action in process as such (e.g.: is becoming pretty vs. is walking.)[23]

None of the Verb Phrase constituents occur in the Equative Clause except the verb **da** 'to be' (see Example 203) or it's negative form **na** (see examples 23, 206).[24]

203. Jajo da wan tëmbëma.
Jajo is a carpenter
Jajo is a carpenter.

The following paragraphs briefly discuss the various constituents of the verb phrase.

2.3.5.1 Negative

Negative (Neg) is an optional constituent. It is usually found as **an** 'neg', but has an allomorph **na** which occurs in imperatives (see Example 205). In equative clauses the neg. plus da = na (see Example 206). Furthermore, when the subject of a negative clause (other than an Imperative or Equative Clause) is a pronoun (other than the 3rd person plural), **an** combines with the pronoun (see Section 3.2.5 and Example 207).

204. (active clause)
Di womi **an** go.
the man neg go.
The man didn't go.

205. (active imperative)
Na go!
neg go!
Don't go!

---

23   See 3.5.5
24   In some contexts the negative **na** 'to be' combines with the pronoun **ën** 'third singular' to form **nëën** 'not her/him/it'.

206. (equative clause)
    Mi **na** womi.
    I am = not man.
    I am not a man.

207. (active clause with pronoun subject)
    Ma o-go.
    I = neg incom-go
    I am not going.

2.3.5.2 Tense

The **Tense** constituent is optional and occurs as **bi** 'past'. For a discussion of the functions of **bi** see Section 3.6.2.[25]

208. (active clause)
    Ma **bi** o-go, ma...
    I = neg past incom-go, but...
    I was not going to go, but...

209. (descriptive clause)
    Mi **bi** njönku.
    I past young
    I was young.

210. (existential clause)
    A **bi** dë ma...
    he pt. be but...
    He was or was there, but...

---

25   Also see Examples 15 and 98.

Chart 2

	subj	tense	mod/ aspl	mod/ asp2	verb	translation
1.	A				waka	He walked.
2.	A			ta	waka	He is walking.
3.	A		o		waka	He will walk.
4.	A	bi			waka	He did walk.
5.	A			sa	waka	He can walk or he may walk.
6.	A		o	ta	waka	He will walk (cont. or habitually)
7.	A		o	sa ta	waka	He will be able to walk (cont. or hab.)*
8.	A			sa ta	waka	He is able to walk. (cont. or hab.)*
9.	A	bi	o		waka	He was going to walk.
10.	A	bi		sa	waka	He could have walked.
11.	A	bi		ta	waka	He was walking or he used to walk.
12.	A	bi	o	sa	waka	He could have walked.
13.	A	bi	o	sa ta	waka	He could have walked. (cont. or hab.)
14.	A	bi		sa ta	waka	He used to be able to walk.*

*7, 8, 13, 14 seldom occur; the **sa ta** combinations are especially rare.

Tense and Mode/Aspect in the Verb Phrase

2.3.5.3 Modal/Aspect-1

The **Modal/Aspect-1** constituent is optional and occurs as either **musu** 'must' (indicates obligation or intention) or the aspect particle **o** (indicates an unaccomplished action or not yet realized state).[26]

211. (active clause with **musu** (obligatory))
Mi **musu** go.
I must go
I must go.

212. (active clause with **musu** (intention))
Lanti da unu dee wëti fuun musu sa libi bunu.
the government give you=pl the=pl law for=you=pl must can/may live well
The government gave you those laws so that you will be able to live well.

213. (active clause with **o**)
Mi **o**-go.
I incom-go
I am going. (going to go)

214. (descriptive clause with **o**)
Di baafu **o**-suti.
the soup incom-sweet
The soup is going to be delicious.

---

26 See also Section 3.6.3 and Examples 10 and 15.

215. (descriptive clause with **musu**)
Di wooko **musu** taanga.
the work must hard
That work must be hard.

2.3.5.4 Modal/Aspect-2

The **Modal/Aspect-2** constituent is optional and occurs as either the modal **sa** 'may, might, can' which indicates possibility or ability, or as the progressive particle **ta** which indicates an action in process.[27] Occasionally **sa** and **ta** occur together. When they do, **sa** always precedes **ta**.

216. (active clause with **sa**)
I **sa** go.
you can/may go
You may go.

217. (active clause with **ta**)
Di womi **ta**-waka.
the man cont-walk
The man is walking.

218. (descriptive clause with **sa**)
A **sa** hanse.
it may pretty
It will be/may be pretty (later on or to someone else).

219. (existential clause with **ta**)
Aki mi **ta**-dë.
here I cont-be
This is where I live.

2.3.5.5 Action Modifier

The **Action Modifier** constituent is optional and is manifested such words as **ko** 'come', **go** 'go', **seti** 'began', 'start' (3.6.5) which indicate the initiation, beginning, repeat, or movement of the Agent of a clause.[28]

220. (active clause)
De an **seti** wooko eti.
they neg begin work yet
They haven't begun to work yet.

221. (active clause)
De **ko** njan ku mi aki.
they came ate with me here
They came and ate with me here.

---

27   See also Section 3.6.4 and Examples 107, 120, and 132.
28   See also Examples 28 and 116.

222. (descriptive clause)
Di mii **bigi** hanse awaa.
the child begin pretty now
Now the child is beginning to become pretty.

223. (existential clause)
Dee sëmbë **ko** dë fëëëfëëë.
the(pl) people come be afraid
The/Those people became afraid.

2.3.5.6 Verb

The **Verb** constituent is obligatory. See Section 3.5 for examples of words which occur as verbs. The word classes represented there include all the active and stative verbs in the language.

2.3.5.7 Verb Modifier

A **Verb Modifier** is optional, and if present, consists of an ideophone[29] immediately following the verb it modifies.

224. De kaba **këë** u jasa di kasaba.
they finished completely of roasting the cassava
They completely finished roasting the cassava.

225. Hën takumbeti hopo **lubalubaluba**
then jaguar got = up (movement of big animal)

denda go a dendu wosu naandë.
entered go in inside house there.

Jaguar got up and padded into the inner room of the house.

2.3.5.8 Verb Specifier

A **Verb Specifier** is optional and if present occurs as a Prepositional Phrase consisting of either the preposition **fu/u** 'of, for' or **a** 'to, at, toward, on' plus another verb. The Direct Object may occur between the main verb and Verb Specifier.

226. (active clause with **u** phrase)
De kaba di kasaba **u jasa**.
they finished the cassava to roast
They finished roasting the cassava.

227. (active clause with **a** phrase)
De tei mi **a wooko**.
they took me to work
They hired me.

---

228. (active clause with **u** phrase plus range constituent)
A di ten dë ufö i seti
at the time there before you began

u paka fu dee njanjan.
to pay for the (pl) food

Not until then did you begin to pay for that food.

The analysis at this point is again tentative. The Verb Phrase constituent, Verb Specifier, and clause constituent Range are quite similar semantically and grammatically. On the other hand, they do not seem to be the same (e.g. Example 228).

In considering the question of whether Range and Verb Specifier are different, I did not find an answer to my original question, but I uncovered another problem: In a set of 4 clauses, three were acceptable and for some unknown reason, the fourth was not. The following three examples are the acceptable clauses (or clause strings?). Language assistants can give no difference in the three except focus. They are given below with the questions to which they are responses.

229. (In this example the roasting is in focus.)
Umfa de du? De ta jasa nö?
how they do they cont roast no
What are they doing? Are they roasting (the cassava?)

De kaba u jasa di kasaba këë.
they finished of roasting the cassava completely
They have finished roasting the cassava.

230. (In this example the casava is in focus.)
Ee mi go, mi sa kisi di kasaba u jasa möön nö?
if I go I can catch the cassava of roasting more no
If I go, will I still get there in time for the cassava roasting?

Nönö, mujëë,
no, lady,
No, Lady,

de kaba di kasaba u jasa këë.
they finished the cassava of roasting completely
They have finished roasting the cassava.

231. (In this example the completeness of the job is in focus.)
Umfa i du, i dou nö?
how you do, you arrive no?
What happened, did you get there in time?

Nönö, ma dou.
no, I = neg arrive
No I didn't make it in time.

De kaba këë u jasa di kasaba.
they finished completely of roasting the cassava
They had finished roasting the cassava (before I got there).

However the following clause is not acceptable.

232. *De kaba këë di kasaba u jasa.
    they finished completely the cassava of roasting
    They have finished roasting the cassava.

A suggestion for the reason why this last example is not acceptable is that the constituent **këë** is a clause modifier, and is therefore not acceptable in the verb phrase as in this last example (232). It is acceptable in the example before that (231) because this construction is actually two clauses, the main clause **De kaba këë** and a dependent clause **u jasa di kasaba**. In this case, **këë** occurs clause final after the main clause.

2.3.5.9 Direction

The **Direction** constituent is optional and occurs as **ko** 'come' or **go** 'go' which indicates the direction of the action i.e. toward or away from the speaker.[30]

233. (active imperative)
    Tja di soni **go** ee!
    take the thing carry go hear!
    Take the thing away!

The Direct Object may come between the main verb and the Direction. It could be argued that the direction constituent should therefore be a constituent of the Clause rather than the Verb Phrase, but it seems to be semantically connected more closely to the verb than to the clause i.e. **tja** = 'carry' but tja go = 'take away' and tja ko = 'bring'.

234. (positive)
    Mi manda di buka **go**.
    I sent the message go
    I sent the message.

235. (negative)
    Ma o-sa tja i **go**.
    I = neg incom can carry you go
    I am not going to be able to go with you (or take you).

Direction is distinguished from Clause Adverb in that Direction's position in the clause is not restricted to the last or next to the last position as clause adverb is.[31] For example, in the following example the Direction **go** 'go' occurs before the clause constituent Benefactive.[32] Clause Adverbs occur only after Benefactives.

236. De tei dee soni túu manda go
    they took the(pl) things true sent go

    da dee sëmbë ala.
    to those people over there

    They took everything and sent it to those people over there.

It is possible that Direction as illustrated by **go** in the above example is actually the main verb of a third clause in this sentence (where the first clause is **De tei dee soni túu**, the second is **manda**) rather than the Direction of the verb **manda** 'send' of the second clause.

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30 See also Section 3.6.6.
31 See Section 2.1.3.7.
32 See Section 2.1.3.3.

SARAMACCAN
GRAMMAR SKETCH

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Paramaribo