

2.2 Nouns

2.2.1 Gender

There are three genders which are mostly indicated by prefixes. The prefix of a masculine noun is *e-* in the singular and *ngi-* in the plural; for the feminine noun we have *a-* (sing.) and *nga-* (pl.); for the neuter noun the prefix *i-* denotes the singular and *ngi-* the plural. The neuter also indicates the diminutive of a word; there is a tendency for small things to be in this category, thus the noun for a baby camel is *ikaal* (pl. *ngikaal* or *ngitakaala*), for a female camel *akaal* (pl. *ngakaala*), and for a male camel *ekaal* (pl. *ngikaala*).

There are, however, various exceptions to this rule. Some nouns do not show these prefixes at all, for example *titima* (May), *elel* (June), *choro* (island) or *pelele* (flamingo). There are even nouns which begin with the typical prefix of verbs, such as *akimet* (fat), *akipeyo* (meat-feast), *akibusian* (heat), *akim* (fire), *akipany* (hole), *akiyar* (life), *akimuj* (food/meal), and *akiring* (meat); on the other hand, there are verbs which begin with the female noun prefix *a-*, for example *apalanut* (to be kind), *apenere* (to be), *ainun* (to bring), *anyarit* (to call), and *anyaka* (to chew).

Other words differ regarding the gender prefix in singular and in plural, e.g. *eyaa*, pl. *tayaa* (father's sister/s), *ebui*, pl. *ngabunyet* (swelling/s), *ekatapan*, pl. *ngakatapania* (termite/s), and *ekitela*, pl. *ngatela* (language/s); if the latter has the plural *ngitela* it then means ethnical groups.

Some nouns, of which the natural gender is masculine, have, nevertheless, feminine prefixes, e.g. *Akuj* (God), *apa*, pl. *tapa* (father/s), *apaa*, pl. *tapaa* (grandfather/s) or *amai*, pl. *taamai* (uncle/s).

The words *ekile* (man), *aberu* (wife/woman) and *ikoku* (child) are used here as a guideline:

Gender	Singular	Plural
masc.	<i>ekile</i>	<i>ngikiliok</i>
fem.	<i>aberu</i>	<i>ngaberu</i>
neuter	<i>ikoku</i>	<i>ngide</i>

Some nouns exist in the singular only, for example: *akupuratanut* (ochre), *apipil* (pain), *aurus* (odour), *ayeo* (music), *edodo* (dried milk), *ekeny* (omen), *ingaino* (mutter). Other nouns, however, can only be found in the plural, such as: *ngakinyir* (perspiration), *ngakile* (milk), *ngakimul* (phlegm), *ngakipi* (water), *ngakiyo* (tears), *ngakiria* (millet), *ngakot* (blood), *ngapoko* (soup), *ngaropia* (money), *ngikujit* (dung), *ngiman* (anger), *ngakopi* (dew).

These kinds of words are marked as such in the English-Turkana vocabulary. There is no declension of nouns in the Turkana language.

2.2.2 Genitive

In Turkana there exists a kind of genitive which is formed in connection with the preposition *a* (of) or the demonstrative adjective *na* (this). A few examples may demonstrate this: *nakoku a emuron* (the daughter of a medicine-man), *ekapolon a atuba* (the headman of a boat) or *akimuj na ataparach* (food of the morning). On the other hand, where there is one term in English, such as beef, the Turkana use the genitive *akiring a aite* (lit. meat of a cow), for nest *akai a ikeny* (lit. hut of a bird) and for bullet *emal a atom* (lit. arrow of a gun); where a genitive can be found in English, the Turkana may have just one word for the term, such as *ajore* (group of men). It is noticeable that the preposition *a* and the demonstrative adjective *na* are very often joined to the second noun, especially in the plural form, such as *ngikapolok angatubai* (headmen of boats) or *ngimalis angatomian* (bullets).

2.2.3 Personal Pronouns

1st sg.	<i>ayong</i>	I
2nd sg.	<i>iyong</i>	you
3rd sg.	<i>ngesi</i>	he/she/it
1st pl.	<i>ngoni/sua</i>	we ¹
2nd pl.	<i>esi</i>	you
3rd pl.	<i>kesi</i>	they

2.2.4 Possessive Pronouns

	masc.	fem.	neuter	
1st sg.	<i>ekang</i>	<i>akang</i>	<i>ikang</i>	mine
2nd sg.	<i>ekon</i>	<i>akon</i>	<i>'kon</i>	yours
3rd sg.	<i>ekeng</i>	<i>akeng</i>	<i>ikeng</i>	his/hers/its

¹ For the first person plural we find that *ngoni* means we (incl.) and *sua* we (excl.).

	masc.	fem.	neuter	
1st pl.	<i>ngikang</i>	<i>ngakang</i>	<i>ngikang</i>	ours
2nd pl.	<i>ngikon</i>	<i>ngakon</i>	<i>ngikon</i>	yours
3rd pl.	<i>ngikeng</i>	<i>ngakeng</i>	<i>ngikeng</i>	theirs

2.3 Adjectives

As is the case with the nouns, there is no declension of adjectives; the adjectives follow the nouns. The prefixes of the adjectives are taken from one form (both singular and plural) of the demonstrative adjective "this" *lo* (masc.), *na* (fem.) and *en* (neuter) and "these" *lu* (masc.), *nu* (fem.) and *lu* (neuter). The basic form of the adjective "good" is *ejok*. The following examples will demonstrate this: *ekile lo ajokon* (a good man), *ngikiliok lu ajokak* (good men); *aberu na ajokon* (a good wife/woman), *ngaberu nu ajokak* (good wives/women); *ikoku ni ajokon* (a good child), *ngide lu ajokak* (good children), the penultimate construction is an exception to the rule. However, the demonstrative adjective is very often joined to the adjective, i.e. *ekile loajokon*, pl. *ngikiliok luajokak*.

2.3.1 Possessive Adjectives

There is no differentiation made between the genders.

1st sg.	<i>kang</i>	my
2nd sg.	<i>kon</i>	your
3rd sg.	<i>keng</i>	his/her/its
1st pl.	<i>yok/kosi</i>	our ²
2nd pl.	<i>kus</i>	your
3rd pl.	<i>kech</i>	their

2.3.2 Demonstrative Adjectives

	masc.	fem.	neuter	
sg.	<i>lo</i>	<i>na</i>	<i>en</i>	this
pl.	<i>lu</i>	<i>nu</i>	<i>lu</i>	these
sg.	<i>ngol</i>	<i>ngin</i>	<i>ngin</i>	that
pl.	<i>ngul</i>	<i>ngun</i>	<i>ngul</i>	those
sg.	<i>ye</i>	<i>ya</i>	<i>yi</i>	that over there
pl.	<i>kwi</i>	<i>kwa</i>	<i>kwi</i>	those over there

² For the first person plural we find that *yok* means our (incl.) and *kosi* our (excl.).

Examples: *ekile ngesi lo* (this is a man); *aberu ngesi ngin* (that is a wife/woman); *ngide kesi kwi* (those are children over there).

2.4 The Conjugation of Verbs

In Turkana we distinguish two main classes of verbs: the “To-class” and the “Ki-class”. These will be discussed further under the sub-section “Imperative” (2.15).

The infinitive of the verb *akinyam* (to eat) is used here as an example; *aki*³ is the infinitive prefix, *nyam* is the stem of the verb. The various prefixes and suffixes indicate the times and persons.

2.4.1 Present and Future Tense of *akinyam* (to eat)

1st sg.	<i>anyami</i>	I eat/shall eat
2nd sg.	<i>inyami</i>	you eat/will eat
3rd sg.	<i>enyami</i>	he/she/it eats/will eat
1st pl.	<i>kinyami</i>	we eat/shall eat
2nd pl.	<i>inyamete</i>	you eat/will eat
3rd pl.	<i>enyamete</i>	they eat/will eat

2.4.2 Past Tense of *akinyam* (to eat)

The forms of the past tense are almost the same as the present and future tense except for the third person singular and plural where the prefixes are different.

1st sg.	<i>anyami</i>	I ate
2nd sg.	<i>inyami</i>	you ate
3rd sg.	<i>anyami</i>	he/she/it ate
1st pl.	<i>kinyami</i>	we ate
2nd pl.	<i>inyamete</i>	you ate
3rd pl.	<i>anyamete</i>	they ate

2.4.3 Negation

2.4.4 Present and Future Tense of *akinyam* (to eat)

The negative is formed with the prefix *ny-* (no/not):

1st sg.	<i>nyanyami</i>	I do not eat/shall not eat
2nd sg.	<i>nyinyami</i>	you do not eat/will not eat
3rd sg.	<i>nyenyami</i>	he/she/it does not eat/will not eat

³ N. B. Regarding nouns with the prefix *aki*- see 2.2.1.

1st pl.	<i>nyikinyami</i>	we do not eat/shall not eat
2nd pl.	<i>nyinyamete</i>	you do not eat/will not eat
3rd pl.	<i>nyenyamete</i>	they do not eat/will not eat

2.4.5 Past Tense

The negative is formed with the adverb *eringa* (not yet) and the personal pronouns. The negative prefix *ny-* is consequently also found:

1st sg.	<i>eringa ayong nyenyama</i>	I did not eat yet
2nd sg.	<i>eringa iyong nyenyama</i>	you did not eat yet
3rd sg.	<i>eringa ngesi nyenyama</i>	he/she/it did not eat yet
1st pl.	<i>eringa sua nyenyama</i>	we did not eat yet
2nd pl.	<i>eringa esi nyenyama</i>	you did not eat yet
3rd pl.	<i>eringa kesi nyenyama</i>	they did not eat yet

2.5 The Verb *akilot* (to go)

2.5.1 Present and Future Tense

1st sg.	<i>alosi</i>	I go/shall go
2nd sg.	<i>ilosi</i>	you go/will go
3rd sg.	<i>elosi</i>	he/she/it goes/will go
1st pl.	<i>kilosi</i>	we go/shall go
2nd pl.	<i>ilosete</i>	you go/will go
3rd pl.	<i>elosete</i>	they go/will go

2.5.2 Past Tense

1st sg.	<i>alosit</i>	I went
2nd sg.	<i>ilosit</i>	you went
3rd sg.	<i>alosit</i>	he/she/it went
1st pl.	<i>kilosit</i>	we went
2nd pl.	<i>ilosete</i>	you went
3rd pl.	<i>eloseto</i>	they went

2.12 The Auxiliary Verbs *ayakau* and *araun* (to be)

The Turkana differentiate between *ayakau* (to be in a place or town) and *araun* (to be in a particular state or position).

2.12.1 Present Tense of *ayakau*

1st sg.	<i>ayei</i>	I am
2nd sg.	<i>iyei</i>	you are
3rd sg.	<i>eyei</i>	he/she/it is
1st pl.	<i>kiyei</i>	we are
2nd pl.	<i>iyakasi</i>	you are
3rd pl.	<i>eyakasi</i>	they are

2.12.2 Future Tense

The verb *ayakau* cannot be used for forming the future tense; instead the verb *aminere* (to be present regarding a future time) must be used.

1st sg.	<i>amini</i>	I shall be
2nd sg.	<i>imini</i>	you will be
3rd sg.	<i>emini</i>	he/she/it will be
1st pl.	<i>kimini</i>	we shall be
2nd pl.	<i>iminete</i>	you will be
3rd pl.	<i>eminete</i>	they will be

2.12.3 Past Tense of *ayakau*

1st sg.	<i>ayei</i>	I was
2nd sg.	<i>iyei</i>	you were
3rd sg.	<i>ayei</i>	he/she/it was
1st pl.	<i>kiya</i>	we were
2nd pl.	<i>iyakasi</i>	you were
3rd pl.	<i>ayakasi</i>	they were

2.12.4 Present Tense of *araun*

1st sg.	<i>arai</i>	I am
2nd sg.	<i>irai</i>	you are
3rd sg.	<i>erai</i>	he/she/it is
1st pl.	<i>kirai</i>	we are
2nd pl.	<i>irakasi</i>	you are
3rd pl.	<i>erakasi</i>	they are

2.12.5 Future Tense of *araun*

1st sg.	<i>arauni</i>	I shall be
2nd sg.	<i>irauni</i>	you will be
3rd sg.	<i>erauni</i>	he/she/it will be
1st pl.	<i>kirauni</i>	we shall be
2nd pl.	<i>iraunete</i>	you will be
3rd pl.	<i>eraunete</i>	they will be

2.12.6 Past Tense of *araun*

1st sg.	<i>arai</i>	I was
2nd sg.	<i>irai</i>	you were
3rd sg.	<i>arai</i>	he/she/it was
1st pl.	<i>kirakasi</i>	we were
2nd pl.	<i>irakasi</i>	you were
3rd pl.	<i>arakasi</i>	they were

2.13 The Auxiliary Verb *temokino* (must) in Connection with the Verb *akilot* (to go) and the Personal Pronouns

2.13.1 Present Tense

1st sg.	<i>itemokino ayong alosi</i>	I must go
2nd sg.	<i>itemokino iyong ilosi</i>	you must go
3rd sg.	<i>itemokino ngesi elosi</i>	he/she/it must go
1st pl.	<i>itemokino sua kilosi</i>	we must go
2nd pl.	<i>itemokino esi ilosete</i>	you must go
3rd pl.	<i>itemokino kesi elosete</i>	they must go

2.13.2 Future Tense

It is noteworthy that for the future tense *temokino* cannot be used, instead the past tense of *akicham* (to agree) is used; *achamakina* is regarded as the passive voice, but regarding the meaning it is a kind of medial form expressing an obligation.

1st sg.	<i>achamakina ayong alosi</i>	I shall have to go
2nd sg.	<i>ichamakina iyong ilosi</i>	you will have to go
3rd sg.	<i>echamakina ngesi elosi</i>	he/she/it will have to go
1st pl.	<i>kichamakina sua kilosi</i>	we shall have to go
2nd pl.	<i>ichamakina esi ilosete</i>	you will have to go
3rd pl.	<i>echamakina kesi elosete</i>	they will have to go

2.13.3 Past Tense

1st sg.	<i>etemokino ayong alosit</i>	I had to go
2nd sg.	<i>etemokino iyong ilosit</i>	you had to go
3rd sg.	<i>etemokino ngesi elosit</i>	he/she/it had to go
1st pl.	<i>etemokino sua kilosit</i>	we had to go
2nd pl.	<i>etemokino esi ilosito</i>	you had to go
3rd pl.	<i>etemokino kesi elosito</i>	they had to go

2.14 The Passive Voice

2.14.1 The Passive Voice of the Verb *ademar* (to rob) and its Formal Relationship Compared to the Active Voice

2.14.2 Present Tense

1st sg.	<i>ademi</i>	I rob
2nd sg.	<i>idemi</i>	you rob
3rd sg.	<i>edemi</i>	he/she/it robs
1st pl.	<i>kidemi</i>	we rob
2nd pl.	<i>idemete</i>	you rob
3rd pl.	<i>edemete</i>	they rob
1st sg.	<i>kademio</i>	I am being robbed
2nd sg.	<i>kidemio</i>	you are being robbed
3rd sg.	<i>edemio</i>	he/she/it is being robbed
1st pl.	<i>kidemio</i>	we are being robbed
2nd pl.	<i>ikidemio</i>	you are being robbed
3rd pl.	<i>edemio</i>	they are being robbed

2.14.3 Future Tense

1st sg.	<i>ademari</i>	I shall rob
2nd sg.	<i>idemari</i>	you will rob
3rd sg.	<i>edemari</i>	he/she/it will rob
1st pl.	<i>kidemari</i>	we shall rob
2nd pl.	<i>idemarete</i>	you will rob
3rd pl.	<i>edemarete</i>	they will rob
1st sg.	<i>kademario</i>	I shall be robbed
2nd sg.	<i>kidemario</i>	you will be robbed
3rd sg.	<i>edemario</i>	he/she/it will be robbed

1st pl.	<i>kidemario</i>	we shall be robbed
2nd pl.	<i>ikidemario</i>	you will be robbed
3rd pl.	<i>edemario</i>	they will be robbed

2.14.4 Past Tense

1st sg.	<i>ademarit</i>	I robbed
2nd sg.	<i>idemarit</i>	you robbed
3rd sg.	<i>edemarit</i>	he/she/it robbed
1st pl.	<i>kidemarit</i>	we robbed
2nd pl.	<i>idemarito</i>	you robbed
3rd pl.	<i>edemarito</i>	they robbed
1st sg.	<i>akademaritai</i>	I was robbed
2nd sg.	<i>ikidemaritai</i>	you were robbed
3rd sg.	<i>edemaritai</i>	he/she/it was robbed
1st pl.	<i>kidemaritai</i>	we were robbed
2nd pl.	<i>ikidemaritai</i>	you were robbed
3rd pl.	<i>edemaritai</i>	they were robbed

2.15 Imperative

The classification of the two main classes of verbs is based on the prefixes used in the imperative positive; the imperative prefixes are *to-* and *ki-* in both singular and plural. The plural imperatives end either in *a* or *o*, depending on whether the stem vowel is open or closed.

2.15.1 Imperative Positive

Infinitive	Singular	Plural	
<i>akidet</i>	<i>kidet</i>	<i>kideta</i>	beat!
<i>akingit</i>	<i>kingit</i>	<i>kingita</i>	ask!
<i>akinyam</i>	<i>tonyam</i>	<i>tonyama</i>	eat!
<i>akingol</i>	<i>tongol</i>	<i>tongola</i>	slaughter!

2.15.2 Imperative Negative

In the imperative negative the prefix of the infinitive is replaced by the negative prefix *ny-*; thus we find:

Infinitive	Singular	Plural	
<i>akilot</i>	<i>nyilot</i>	<i>nyiloto</i>	do not go!
<i>akimat</i>	<i>nyimat</i>	<i>nyimata</i>	do not drink!
<i>ainakin</i>	<i>nyinak</i>	<i>nyinakis</i>	do not give!
<i>akingarakin</i>	<i>nyingararak</i>	<i>nyingarakis</i>	do not help!

2.16 The Sentence

The basic word order of the sentence is usually verb - subject - object; thus the word order of the sentence is as follows (the interlinear translations have been placed directly under the Turkana words):

iyokiyete ngikiliok ngatuk
herd men cattle

The men herd the cattle.

elepete ngaberu ngibaren
milk women animals

The women milk the animals.

ingarakinito ngide akiyok ngibaren a tapakech
help boys herd animals of fathers their

The boys help to herd their fathers' animals.

ingarakinito ngapesur taitokech a ngawiyei
help girls mothers their in the households

The girls help their mothers in the households.

aremo Ngiturkana ngatuk a Ngiupe
raid the Turkana cattle of the Pokot

The Turkana raid the cattle of the Pokot.

eminasi ngikiliok ka ngaberu etaba
like men and women tobacco

Men and women like tobacco.

alosit ekile Kakuma etingit ekicholong keng ka akwara
went man to Kakuma having headrest his and spear

A man went to Kakuma and took his headrest and spear with him.

alose *te aberu ka ngide keng ngaren Kalokol tanang*
 went woman with children her from Kalokol to
Lodwar
 Lodwar

A woman went with her children from Kalokol to Lodwar.

atwani ekile tomura ngide keng
 died man was buried children his

A man died and was buried by his children.

eusit ekile nakoku a emuron aloyanat
 married man daughter of a medicine-man famous

A man married a daughter of a famous medicine-man.

GÜNTER BEST

Culture and Language of the Turkana
NW Kenya

HEIDELBERG 1983

CARL WINTER · UNIVERSITÄTSVERLAG