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A Sketch Grammar of Naami

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This paper concerns the Naami language spoken in Misaje Subdivision, Donga-Mantung Division, in the North West Region of Cameroon.
ISO 639-3 language code: [bzv].

Table of Contents

Abbreviations

Ø-	zero prefix
??	unanalyzed form
ANA	anaphoric demonstrative
1s	first person singular
2s	second person singular
3s	third person singular
1p	first person plural
2p	second person plural
3p	third person plural
AGR	agreement marker
AM	associative marker
c1	class 1
c2	class 2
c3	class 3
	etc.
c	class
COMP	complement Particle
DO	direct object
F0	future 0 (nearest future)
F1	future 1 (near future)
F2	future 2 (medial future)
F3	future 3 (far future)
IO	indirect object
LOC	locative
NEG1	negative 1
NEG2	negative 2
NOM	nominalizer
P1	past 1 (immediate past)
P2	past 2 (medial past)
P3	past 3 (remote past)
POSS	possessive adjective
PFV	perfective
IPFV	imperfective
QM	question marker
QT	quotative particle
REL	relative pronoun
SUBJ	subject
V	verb
v̀	low tone
v̄	mid tone
v́	high tone
v̂	high-low falling tone
v̌	low-high rising tone
v̏	low-mid rising tone
v̋	mid-high rising tone
VPart	verbal particle

1 Introduction

1.1 Name of the Language

Naami is a language spoken in the Misaje Subdivision, Donga-Mantung Division, North West Region of Cameroon, West Africa. The *Ethnologue* (Eberhard, David M., Gary F. Simons, and Charles D. Fennig (eds) (2020) lists the following as language name variations: Bebe, Yi be Wu. The ISO-639-3 language code is [bzv].

1.2 Genetic Affiliation

Naami has the following genetic affiliation: Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Volta-Congo, Benue-Congo, Bantoid, Southern, Beboid (Eberhard, David M., Gary F. Simons, and Charles D. Fennig 2020).

1.3 Sociolinguistic Situation

1.3.1 Demography

Naami is the language of the Bebe people who inhabit the Bebe Kette, Bebe Jatto, and Bebe Jama villages, all three located in the northwestern part of Misaje Subdivision, west of Nkambe and of the Ring Road. Naami is spoken by approximately 3550 people, although the exact number is unknown as there are reportedly sizeable clusters of people living outside the area, particularly in the South West Region.

1.3.2 Viability

Naami is spoken by young people as well as old people and is the language of choice in Bebe homes. It is also frequently used in local churches and during community events.

1.3.3 Language Attitudes

The Bebe people are positively disposed toward their language.

1.3.4 Multilingualism

A significant number of Bebe people may be fluent in Kemedzung and Sari, the neighboring language groups. However, the majority of communication among these three people groups, as witnessed in common market places, is Cameroonian Pidgin

English, which a majority of Naami speakers can speak with at least a minimum of functionality.

1.4 Corpus and Nature of the Research

The current paper is an effort to describe the basics of Naami grammar. This paper is one part of a project to provide grammar descriptions for the Beboid languages. More conventional sketch grammars for the Beboid languages Nchane, Mungong, and Kemedzung can be referred to for a more complete analysis of the various grammatical structures common to these languages. The paper should be useful in identifying what areas of the grammar are in need of further research.

Data for the research comes primarily from a number of Naami texts of various genres, as well as from elicited sentences and words collected over a period of nine years, from 2009 to 2018. The texts and other language data were collected with the help of several language consultants, most notably Mbang Emmanuel Sanda, Samuel Dodi, Comfort Yuwa, and Lawrence Guda.

Certain conventions have been observed in the paper and the reader is encouraged to take note of the following items related to the presentation of the data. Orthographic forms are generally utilized throughout, meaning that 'ch' stands for [tʃ], 'j' for [dʒ], 'y' for [j], 'hl' for [ɬ], 'sh' for [ʃ] and 'ny' for [ɲ]. The reader is directed to the *Naami Orthography Guide* (Tabah 2011) for further details.

Furthermore, tone marks in some parts of this work are used to symbolise grammatical functions rather than surface tone when grammatical ambiguity is present, such as in distinguishing gender 9/10 nouns, past tense 2 versus past tense 3, and future tense 2 versus future tense 3. In these cases, the higher of a pair is marked with the high (H) tone diacritic to distinguish it from its lower counterpart. In other sections of this work, such as the section on noun classification with gender 7/8 nouns, aspects, and hortative constructions, tone marking is used to represent phonetic tone. However, no formal attempt has been made to account for tonal perturbations.

2 Nouns and Noun Phrase Structure

The canonical structure of a noun in Naami is noun prefix + noun root. The noun prefix is the morpheme that shows either singularity or plurality while the noun root is the morpheme that carries the basic meaning of the noun. For example in the noun forms **linini** 'tongue' and **ŋənini** 'tongues', the prefixes **li-** and **ŋə-** show singularity and plurality of the noun respectively and **nini** is the noun root. The prefixes mark the noun classes and are therefore called noun class markers or class prefixes. More on noun classification is discussed in the following section.

The structure of a noun phrase (NP) in Naami is noun + modifier. Noun modifiers are words that give more information about the noun they modify. They state the quantity, quality, ownership, size or shape of a noun. Noun modifiers in Naami always follow the modified noun in an NP. A single noun can have more than one word modifying it. The noun modifiers are often preceded by the noun class concord of the noun they modify. More on this is discussed in section 2.4.

2.1 Noun Classes and Genders

Naami common nouns belong to seven distinct noun class pairings or genders. 'Noun class' refers to a system of classification in which all nouns are grouped, with the nouns of each group or class receiving an affix distinct to its class and specific grammatical concord. 'Noun gender' refers to noun class pairings, usually consisting of singular and plural forms of the same noun. The noun class designations in this work are informed by Hombert (1980:83-98), which closely follow the Bantu numbering established by Bantuists (Welmers 1973:163). One notable exception is class 25, which appears to be a creation of Hombert (1980).

Most nouns are marked by a prefix to indicate the number of the noun (i.e., singular vs. plural) and noun class. Notable exceptions are classes 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9 and 10 which are not marked by a prefix.

The number of gender 3/6 nouns is indicated by the presence or absence of labialization of the initial consonant. Below are some examples of gender 3/6 nouns.

c3	**Gloss**	**c6**	**Gloss**
ŋwini	tail	**ŋini**	tails
nwaŋ	bamboo	**naŋ**	bamboos
kpi	month	**ki**	months
gbi	rope	**gi**	ropes
gbɛŋ	root	**gɛŋ**	roots
gbu	foot	**wu**	feet

Table 1. Naami Gender 3/6 Nouns

The presence of labialization indicates singular number, while its absence indicates plural number. Labialization as a marker for Naami class 3 nouns is often realized as a labialvelar (kp or gb) onset. That is, labialization of g and k is realised as gb and kp respectively. Interestingly, there are very few cases of non-velar onsets in this gender. This shows that the gender appears to be regularizing or becoming restricted in its membership to nouns with velar initial roots. This is also common to other Beboid languages. It should be noted that the number of nouns in gender 3/6 is small as compared to other genders.

There are two groups of nouns in gender 5/6. One group includes nouns that take the ***li***- prefix for singular and the ***ŋə***- prefix for plural. The other group is made up of nouns that take a zero prefix for singular and have a subtractive stem, where the final vowel gets deleted, for plural. In cases where the deletion of the final vowel leads to nouns ending in a non-nasal consonant, these non-nasal consonants also get deleted due phonological constraints. There are only a few nouns in the ***li-/ŋə***- group. This could indicate that the language is losing these prefixes in favour of the **Ø**-/subtraction alternative. These two groups are treated as subgroups of a single gender because they share the same concord pattern. These nouns are exemplified in tables 2a and b below:

c 5	Gloss	c 6	Gloss
li-gini	vein	**ŋə-gini**	veins
li-nini	tongue	**ŋə-nini**	tongues
li-mwi	razor	**ŋə-mwi**	razors
li-bwa	rock	**ŋə-bwa**	rocks
li-ŋgoŋgo	bow	**ŋə-ŋgoŋgo**	bows
li-bi	lake	**ŋə-bi**	lakes

Table 2a. Gender 5/6 Nouns with Prefixation

c 5	Gloss	c 6	Gloss
gebi	egg	**ge**	eggs
nyɔnə	bee	**nyɔŋ**	bees
fiɔŋə	fish	**fiɔŋ**	fishes
bini	bee	**biŋ**	bees
tuni	hump of cow	**tuŋ**	humps of cow

Table 2b. Gender 5/6 Nouns with a Subtractive Stem

Following tables 1 and 2, we notice that there are three types of c6 nouns: -w-/Ø- (3/6), li-/ŋə- (5/6), and Ø-/subtractive (5/6). The following table shows this.

Noun	**Noun class**	**Gloss**	**Noun class**	**Noun**	**Gloss**	**Gender marker type**
gbi	**c3**	rope	**c6**	**gi**	ropes	-w-/Ø- (3/6)
ŋwini	**c3**	tail	**c6**	**ŋini**	tails	-w-/Ø- (3/6)
li-gini	**c5**	vein	**c6**	**ŋə-gini**	veins	li-/ŋə- (5/6)
li-nini	**c5**	tongue	**c6**	**ŋə-nini**	tongues	li-/ŋə- (5/6)
gebi	**c5**	egg	**c6**	**ge**	eggs	Ø-/subtractive (5/6)
nyɔnə	**c5**	bee	**c6**	**nyɔŋ**	bees	Ø-/subtractive (5/6)

Table 3. Types of Class 6 Nouns

There are also two subgroups of nouns in gender 7/8. The first subgroup is made up of nouns that have a low tone ***kì***- for singular and a low tone ***bì***- for plural. The second subgroup has nouns with a zero prefix for singular and a mid tone ***bī***- for plural. The tone on the prefix might be predictable from the tone on the stem. But more investigation is needed to substantiate this hypothesis. We will refer to both subgroups as gender 7/8 nouns because they have the same concord markers. Examples of these subgroups of nouns are as follows, with phonetic tone marked:

c7 kì-	**Gloss**	**c8 bì-**	**Gloss**	**c7 Ø-**	**Gloss**	**c8 bī-**	**Gloss**
kì-kû	toad	**bì-kû**	toads	**hlɔ̂**	arrow	**bī-hlɔ̂**	arrows
kì-bɛ̀	river	**bì-bɛ̀**	rivers	**tīɛlə̀**	horn	**bī-tīɛlə̀**	horns
kì-jə̌	mouth	**bì-jə̌**	mouths	**kūlə̀**	wing	**bī-kūlə̀**	wings
kì-kû	toad	**bì-kû**	toads	**kúnà**	rat	**bī-kúnà**	rats
kì-kǔkǔ	dove	**bì-kǔkǔ**	doves	**kúnà**	rat	**bī-kúnà**	rats
kì-nyà	bracelet	**bì-nyà**	bracelets	**mɔ́**	lamp	**bī-mɔ́**	lamps

Table 4. Gender 7/8 Nouns

The distinction for gender 9/10 nouns is made solely by tone. The singular forms are marked with relative low tone and plural forms with relative high tone.

c 9	**Gloss**	**c 10**	**Gloss**
fu	axe	**fú**	axes
ja	weaver bird	**já**	weaver birds
jɔŋ	pig	**jɔ́ŋ**	pigs
bi	goat	**bí**	goats
biaŋ	palmnut	**biáŋ**	palmnuts
jɛ	porcupine	**jɛ́**	porcupines

Table 5. Gender 9/10 Nouns

The full array of noun class markers with examples are given in the table below.

c	**Sing.**	**Concord prefix**	**Example**	**Gloss**	**c**	**Plural**	**Concord prefix**	**Example**	**Gloss**
1	**Ø-**	**wi-**	**ŋkɔlɔ**	box	2	**bə-**	**bə-**	**bə-ŋkɔlɔ**	boxes
3	**-w-**	**wi-**	**nwaŋ**	bamboo	6	**Ø-**	**ŋə-**	**naŋ**	bamboo
5	**Ø-**	**li-**	**kweli**	jaw		**subtractive**		**kwe**	jaws
	li-		**li-mwi**	razor		**ŋə-**		**ŋə-mwi**	razors
7	**ki-**	**ki-**	**kì-mbā**	snail	8	**bì-**	**bi-**	**bì-mbā**	snails
	Ø-		**kwā**	tortoise		**bī-**		**bī-kwā**	tortoises
9	**#ò**	**yi-**	**jì**	hoe	10	**#ó**	**yí-**	**jí**	hoes
14	**bu-**	**bu-**	**bu-tiɛ**	cave	25	**mə-**	**mə-**	**mə-tiɛ**	caves
19	**fi-**	**fi-**	**fi-ŋka**	bottle	18a[1]	**mwi-**	**mwi-**	**mwi-ŋka**	bottles

Table 6. Naami Noun Class Markers

[1]This is what Hombert (1980) refers to as 26 for the Beboid languages.

As suggested above, Naami nouns are grouped into singular/plural pairs referred to as genders. While there is overwhelming one-to-one pairing between singular and plural classes, there is some overlap. Focusing on the class concord markers, classes 3 and 5 pair up to take their plural from class 6. The genders may be seen in the table below.

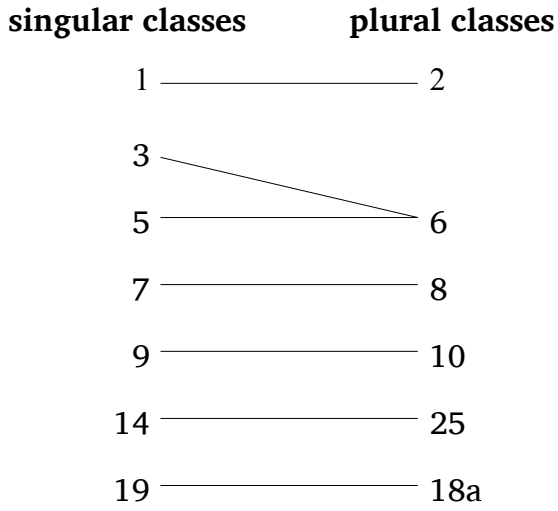

Table 7. Naami Genders

2.2 Derived Nouns

Nouns may be derived from verbs by the addition of the nominalizing prefix *N-*. When present, this prefix immediately precedes the noun root. The newly formed noun stem then will take the appropriate noun class prefix. Most derived nouns belong to gender 7/8, although they are found in other genders as well, as seen in the examples below.

1. a) *ki-**ŋ**-leki*
   c7-NOM-love
   'love'

   *b) fi-**m**-faŋ*
   c19-NOM-send
   'messenger'

c*) mwi-**m**-faŋ*
c18a-NOM-send
‘messengers’

*d) ki-**n**-hle*
c7-NOM-think
‘thought’

e) *bi-**n**-hle*
c8-NOM-think
‘thoughts’

2.3 Compound nouns

Compound nouns may be formed by joining a noun with another constituent such as an adjective, verb, or second noun. The resulting compound noun will be treated as a noun from the same noun class as the initial noun of the compound. Note that so far only nouns from class one have been observed as the initial noun in the compound noun construction.

2. a) *Ø-kpɛɛ-ŋku*
c1-woman-ancestor
‘widow’

b) *Ø-mbɛɛ-kpuni*
c1-person-visit
‘visitor’

c) *Ø-ŋwa-shɔŋ*
c1-child-sheep
‘lamb’

2.4 Noun Modifiers

A noun phrase is made up of a noun plus a modifier. Noun modifiers are words that state the quantity, shape, possession, quality, size, etc. of a noun. A relative clause can also function as a modifier because it provides more information about the noun. In Naami, noun modifiers come after the nouns they modify. Noun modifiers such as demonstratives, quantifiers, numerals, adjectives, associatives, possessives, and relative clauses are discussed below.

2.4.1 Demonstratives

Demonstratives follow the noun in the noun phrase, except in the relatively rare case that there is an accompanying possessive, in which case they follow the possessive. There are two types of demonstratives attested in Naami: anaphoric and spatial. The anaphoric demonstrative is morphologically invariable, but it is unclear at this point what the underlying forms of the spatial demonstratives are as, in some cases, differences are seen in the stems from one class to another. We establish three distinct spatial demonstratives distinguishing three degrees of distance: near the speaker (proximal), near the hearer (distal) and away from both speaker and hearer (far distal).

3. a) *Ø-kɛ* ***nu*** *Ø-kɛ* ***yɔ*** *Ø-kɛ* ***kwi***
c1-bowl c1.this c1-bowl c1.that c1-bowl c1.that (far)
'this bowl (by me)' 'that bowl (by you)' 'that bowl (far from us both)'

b) *bə-kɛ* ***bəŋ*** *bə-kɛ* ***biɛ*** *bə-kɛ* ***bə-li***
c2-bowl c2.this c2-bowl c2.that c2-bowl c2-that (far)
'these bowls' 'those bowls' 'those bowls'

c) *gebi* ***liŋ*** *gebi* ***lɛ*** *gebi* ***li-li***
c5.egg c5.this c5.egg c5.that c5.egg c5-that (far)
'this egg' 'that egg' 'that egg'

d) *ge* ***ŋəŋ*** *ge* ***ŋiɛ*** *ge* ***ŋə-li***
c6.egg c6.this c6.egg c6.that c6.egg c6-that (far)
'these eggs' 'those eggs' 'those eggs'

Another type of demonstrative may be described as anaphoric and is used with nouns that either have previously been mentioned in the discourse or those which can be accessed through common knowledge. It only has the form ***yaha*** which follows any noun irrespective of its class. Some examples are given below.

4. a) *Ø-faŋ* ***yaha*** *bə-faŋ* ***yaha***
c1-eagle this ANA c2-eagle this ANA
'this eagle (already mentioned)' 'these eagles (already mentioned)'

b) *ki-jɛ* ***yaha*** *bi-jɛ* ***yaha***
c7-basket this ANA c8-basket this ANA
'this basket (already mentioned)' 'these baskets (already mentioned)'

A second anaphoric demonstrative with the form **wo** is sometimes used with human nouns, or nonhuman nouns that are personified. The form of the anaphoric demonstrative appears to be marked with class 1 concord. The same form apparently can also be used as a distal demonstrative with class 1 nouns. More research is needed in order to understand its use and when it can or must be used.

The following table gives the demonstrative forms for each of the classes.

Class	this/these	that/those	that/those(far)	that/those anaphoric
1	nu	yɔ/wo	kwi	yaha/wo
2	bəŋ	biɛ	bəli	yaha
3	wu	wɛ	wili	yaha
5	lɨŋ	lɛ	lili	yaha
6	ŋəŋ	ŋiɛ	ŋəli	yaha
7	kɨŋ	kiɛ	kili	yaha
8	biŋ	biɛ	bili	yaha
9	ni	yɛ	yili	yaha
10	yɨŋ	yɛ́	yili	yaha
14	bu	bwɛ	buli	yaha
19	fɨŋ	fiɛ	fili	yaha
18a	mu	miɛ	muli	yaha
25	məŋ	mə	məli	yaha

Table 8. Naami Demonstratives

2.4.2 Quantifiers

Naami quantifiers follow the modified noun and take a prefix corresponding to the noun's class. Only very few quantifiers are attested in Naami. These are: ***nhliŋ*** 'all', ***ŋaŋkə*** 'many', and ***di*** 'some'.

5. a) *bi-kwu* ***bi-nhliŋ***
   c8-tiger c8-all
   'all tigers'

   b) *mwi-ŋka* ***mu-nhliŋ***
   c18a-bottle c18a-all
   'all bottles'

6. a) *bə-tuntunu* ***bə-di***
   c2-lions c2-some
   ‘some lions’

   b) *ŋə-nini* ***ŋə-di***
   c6-tongues c6-some
   ‘some tongues’

7. a) *bi-kwu* ***bi-ŋaŋkə***
   c8-tiger c8-many
   ‘many tigers’

   b) *bə-tuntunu* ***bə-ŋaŋkə***
   c2-lion c2-many
   ‘many lions’

In certain contexts, these quantifiers can give slightly different senses than the basic one. The example below shows how ***nhliŋ*** ‘all’ can be used with some singular nouns to indicate the entirety of the modified noun when it is used with singular nouns.

8. *tiɛ* ***ki-nhliŋ***
   c7.tree c7-all
   ‘the whole tree’

Below we see ***di*** ‘some’ modifying a singular noun and giving a discriminating sense.

9. *gebi* ***li-di***
   c5.egg c5-some
   ‘one of the eggs’

The following table provides a summary of the Naami quantifiers.

Class	‘all’	‘some’	‘many’
1	wu-nhliŋ	wu-di	wu-ŋaŋkə
2	bə-nhliŋ	bə-di	bə-ŋaŋkə
3	wu-nhliŋ	wu-di	wu-ŋaŋkə
5	li-nhliŋ	li-di	li-ŋaŋkə
6	ŋə-nhliŋ	ŋə-di	ŋə-ŋaŋkə
7	ki-nhliŋ	ki-di	ki-ŋaŋkə
8	bi-nhliŋ	bi-di	bi-ŋaŋkə
9	yi-nhliŋ	yi-di	yi-ŋaŋkə
10	yi-nhliŋ	yi-di	yi-ŋaŋkə
14	bu-nhliŋ	bu-di	bu-ŋaŋkə
19	fi-nhliŋ	fi-di	fi-ŋaŋkə
18a	mu-nhliŋ	mu-di	mu-ŋaŋkə
25	mə-nhliŋ	mə-di	mə-ŋaŋkə

Table 9. Naami Quantifiers

2.4.3 Numerals

Naami numerals follow the noun they modify. When numbers are used to modify a noun, the numbers 1-5 agree with nouns of certain genders, but not of others. Also note that the numbers 2-5 are marked with gender 7/8 concord when not modifying a noun. The numbers 7 and 9 are derived from 8 and 10 respectively, adding the word ***fuma***. That is, 7 is ***fuma nyaŋ***, 8 is ***nyaŋ,*** 9 is ***fuma yufi*** and 10 is ***yufi***. Numbers in the hundred’s position are full nouns belonging to gender 3/6, and numbers in the thousand’s position are full nouns belonging to gender 1/2. Numbers in the one's position are joined to numbers in the ten's position with the word **nchɔ** 'plus'.

In some cases, the roots of cardinal numerals undergo morphological changes related to the vowels of the noun class prefix, as has been observed in other Beboid languages. For instance, we can observe two basic phonological changes related to the vowels [i] and [u] (or [w]). In example 10a below, we can guess that what is causing the different forms for 'one' is the [i] of c9 'yi-' (which might be altering the root vowel) and the [w] of c3 'wu-' (which is probably causing labialization). Similarly,

c10 'yi' effects a palatalization of the initial consonant, which is seen in other Beboid languages. c18a has more complicated things happening that are not understood at this time. However, it is not always clear what the basic forms of the numbers are. Only the numbers one to five are subject to these changes as illustrated in the examples below.

10. a) *bi* ***mi*** *gbi* ***mwe***
c9.goat c9.one c3.rope c3.one
'one goat' 'one rope'

b) *fú* ***shɔ*** *mwi-mbi* ***mwi-ntɔŋ***
c10.axe c10.three c18a-colanut c18a-three
'three axes' 'three colanuts'

c) *fú* ***na*** *mwi-mbɛ* ***mwi-nwani***
c10.axe c10.four c18a-knife c18a-four
'four axes' 'four knives'

The table below shows these variations in numbers 1-5 for all the noun genders.

Noun Genders	**mwi** (1)	**bifwe (2)**	**bitɔ (3)**	**binwa (4)**	**bitiŋ (5)**
½	mwi	bə-fwe	bə-tɔ	bə-nwa	bə-tiŋ
3/6	mwe	fwe	tɔ	na	tiŋ
5/6	mwe	fwe	tɔ	na	tiŋ
7/8	mwi	bi-fwe	bi-tɔ	bi-nwa	bi-tiŋ
9/10	mi	fie	shɔ	na	tiŋ
14/25	mwe	mə-fwe	mə-tɔ	mə-nwa	mə-tiŋ
19/18a	fi-mwi	mwi-mfweŋ	mwi-ntɔŋ	mwi-nwani	mwi-ntini

Table 10. Changes in Numbers 1-5

Table 11 below presents a partial list of Naami cardinal numerals used for counting, along with the numerals as they appear when modifying a noun.

	Numeral	**Gender 1/2 (‘cow___’)**	**Gender 19/18a (**‘cola nut__’**)**
1	mwi	*naŋ mwi*	*fi-mbi fi-mwi*
2	bifwe	*bə-naŋ bə-fwe*	*mwi-mbi mwi-mfweŋ*
3	bitɔ	*bə-naŋ bə-tɔ*	*mwi-mbi mwi-ntɔŋ*
4	binwa	*bə-naŋ bə-nwa*	*mwi-mbi mwi-nwani*
5	bitiŋ	*bə-naŋ bə-tiŋ*	*mwi-mbi mwi-ntini*
6	buhlɔ	*bə-naŋ buhlɔo*	*mwi-mbi buhlɔ*
7	fuma nyaŋ	*bə-naŋ fuma nyaŋ*	*mwi-mbi fuma nyaŋ*
8	nyaŋ	*bə-naŋ nyaŋ*	*mwi-mbi nyaŋ*
9	fuma yufi	*bə-naŋ fuma yufi*	*mwi-mbi fuma yufi*
10	yufi	*bə-naŋ yufi*	*mwi-mbi yufi*
11	yufi nchɔ mwi	*bə-naŋ yufi nchɔ mwi*	*mwi-mbi yufi nchɔ fimwi*
12	yufi nchɔ bifwe	*bə-naŋ yufi nchɔ bə-fwe*	*mwi-mbi yufi nchɔ mwi-mfweŋ*
13	yufi nchɔ bitɔ	*bə-naŋ yufi nchɔ bə-tɔ*	*mwi-mbi yufi nchɔ mwi-ntɔŋ*
14	yufi nchɔ binwa	*bə-naŋ yufi nchɔ bə-nwa*	*mwi-mbi yufi nchɔ mwi-nwani*
15	yufi nchɔ bitiŋ	*bə-naŋ yufi nchɔ bə-tiŋ*	*mwi-mbi yufi nchɔ mwi-ntini*
16	yufi nchɔ buhlɔ	*bə-naŋ yufi nchɔ buhlɔ*	*mwi-mbi yufi nchɔ buhlɔ*
17	yufi nchɔ fuma nyaŋ	*bə-naŋ yufi nchɔ fuma nyaŋ*	*mwi-mbi yufi nchɔ fuma nyaŋ*
18	yufi nchɔ nyaŋ	*bə-naŋ yufi nchɔ nyaŋ*	*mwi-mbi yufi nchɔ nyaŋ*
19	yufi nchɔ fuma yufi	*bə-naŋ yufi nchɔ fuma yufi*	*mwi-mbi yufi nchɔ fuma yufi*
20	mbwɛ fie	*bə-naŋ mbwɛ fie*	*mwi-mbi mbwɛŋ fie*
21	mbwɛ fie nchɔ mwi	*bə-naŋ mbwɛ fie nchɔ mwi*	*mwi-mbi mbwɛŋ fie nchɔ fi-mwi*
22	mbwɛ fie nchɔ bifwe	*bə-naŋ mbwɛ fie nchɔ bə-fwe*	*mwi-mbi mbwɛŋ fie nchɔ mwi-mfweŋ*
100	gbi	*bə-naŋ gbi*	*mwi-mbi gbi*
101	gbi bi-mwi	*bə-naŋ gbi bə-mwi*	*mwi-mbi gbi bə fi-mwi*
200	gi fwe	*bə-naŋ gi fwe*	*mwi-mbi gi fwe*
1000	nchuku	*bə-naŋ nchuku*	*mwi-mbi nchuku*
2000	bə-nchuku bəfwe	*bə-naŋ bə-nchuku bə-fwe*	*mwi-mbi bə-nchuku bə-fwe*

Table 11. Naami Numerals

2.4.4 Adjectives

Naami has a variety of ways of expressing attributes. The use of adjectives is one way. Adjectives follow the modified noun and are marked with a concord marker that corresponds to the modified noun’s class. Most likely, Naami has very few true

adjectives. More research needs to be done in order to know what true adjectives are in Naami and the forms they take. Below are examples of adjectives.

11. a) *ki-ŋwaati* ***ki-tənə***
c7-book c7-small
'small book'

b) *cháŋ* ***yí-wu***
c10.house c10-white
'white houses'

c) *bu-die* ***bu-ŋkuntaŋ***
c14-bridge c14-big
'big bridge'

Below is a list of agreement prefixes for adjectives.

Noun Class	**Agreement Prefix**	**Noun Class**	**Agreement Prefix**
1	wi-	2	bə-
3	wi-	6	ŋə-
5	li-		
7	ki-	8	bi-
9	yi-	10	yi-
14	bu-	25	mə-
19	fi-	18a	mi-

Table 12. Agreement Prefixes for Adjectives

2.4.5 Associative Noun Phrases

The associative noun phrase in Naami has the structure 'N1 AM N2'. A number of semantic relationships may be communicated through associating two nouns to each other. The two nouns are "joined" together using an associative marker, which

agrees with the noun class of N1 in the construction. When two nouns are associated, N2 does not lose its class prefix. This is illustrated in the following examples.

12. a) *ki-ntɯ* ***ki*** *mwi-nyinni*
c7-flock c7.AM c18a-bird
'flock (of birds)'

b) *li-nini* ***li*** *yɔ*
c5-tongue c5.AM c9.snake
'fang (of snake)'

c) *gbɛŋ* ***wi*** *Ø-tiɛ*
c3.root c3.AM c7-tree
'tree root'

d) *wɛɛ* ***ki*** *Ø-lɔkɔ*
c7.farm c7.AM c1-cassava
'cassava farm'

e) *sháŋ* ***yi*** *Ø-bilika*
c10.seed c10.AM c1-pawpaw
'pawpaw seeds'

f) bɔni ***bə*** *shɔŋ*
c2.child c2.AM c9.sheep
'lambs'

g) *Ø-gə* ***ki*** *ki-jɛ*
c7-tooth c7.AM c7-elephant
'elephant's tusk'

h) *Ø-kulə* ***ki*** *fi-nyini*
c7-wing c7.AM c19-bird
'wing of bird'

The table below presents a list of associative markers for the various noun classes:

Noun Class	Associative Marker	Noun Class	Associative Marker
1	wi	2	bə
3	wi	6	ŋə
5	li		
7	ki	8	bi
9	yi	10	yi
14	bu	25	mu
19	fi	18a	mwi

Table 13. Naami Associative Markers

2.4.6 Possessives

Possessed nouns are immediately followed by a possessive adjective whose initial consonant is a concord element indicating the noun class of the possessed noun. A possessive adjective also indicates person and number of the modified noun, as shown below.

13. a) *Ø-naŋ* ***ŋgwəŋ*** *Ø-naŋ* ***wi***
c1-cow c1.1sPOSS c1-cow c1.3sPOSS
'my cow' 'his cow'

b) *ki-bwa* ***kɨŋ*** *ki-bwa* ***ki***
c7-bag c7.1sPOSS c7-bag c7.3sPOSS
'my bag' 'his bag'

The full set of possessive adjectives may be seen in the table below.

Class	Person					
	1s	2s	3s	1p	2p	3p
1	**ŋgwəŋ**	**wa**	**wi**	**ya**	**weŋ**	**bə**
2	**bəŋ**	**bo**	**bi**	**biaa**	**bieŋ**	**bəbə**
3	**wuŋ**	**wo**	**wi**	**wa**	**weŋ**	**wibə**
5	**lɨŋ**	**lo**	**li**	**lia**	**leŋ**	**libə**
6	**ŋəŋ**	**ŋo**	**ŋi**	**ŋia**	**ŋieŋ**	**ŋəbə**
7	**kɨŋ**	**ko**	**ki**	**kia**	**kieŋ**	**kibə**
8	**bɨŋ**	**bo**	**bi**	**bia**	**bieŋ**	**bibə**
9	**njəŋ**	**wa**	**yi**	**ya**	**yeŋ**	**bə**
10	**yɨŋ**	**yo**	**yi**	**ya**	**yeŋ**	**yibə**
14	**buŋ**	**bo**	**bi**	**bwa**	**bweŋ**	**bubə**
19	**fɨŋ**	**fo**	**fi**	**fia**	**fieŋ**	**fibə**
18a	**muŋ**	**mo**	**mwi**	**mwa**	**mweŋ**	**mwibə**
25	**məŋ**	**mo**	**mi**	**mia**	**mweŋ**	**məbə**

Table 14. Naami Possessive Adjectives

2.4.7 Relative Clauses

Relative clauses follow the modified noun and their beginning is marked by a relative pronoun. The relative pronouns agree in class with the head noun. Both subject and object noun phrases can be modified by relative clauses.

14. *Ø-Mbɛɛ* ***[nu*** ***Ø-kpɛ*** ***má*** ***kpe]*** *wo* *ma* *bo* *fəŋ.*
c1-person c1.REL c1-woman P3 die c1.ANA P2 come.PFV here
'The man whose wife died came here.'

15. *I* *ma* *nə* *bi-eŋ* *bi-nhliŋ* ***[bi*** ***i*** ***ma*** ***kənə]*** *bə* *mi.*
3s P2 give.PFV c8-thing c8-all c8.REL 3s P2 have LOC 1s
'He gave all the things that he had to me'

3 Naami Verbs and Verb Phrases

3.1 The Naami Verb

Naami verbs are rather simple in their morphology. They may occur with a subject agreement prefix, an extension, and the Perfective marker. Verbs are also classified into three tone classes: H tone verbs, Mid tone verbs, and Low tone verbs. These tone classes sometimes influence the morphology. The Naami verb has the structure: AGR + Verb root + extension + PFV.

16. *I* *tu-la* *fu.*
    3s touch-PFV c9.axe
    'He touched an axe.'

17. *ŋ-lɔ-hi-na* *wu.*
    1sAGR-be.afraid-CAUS-PFV 3s
    'I frightened him.'

3.1.1 Subject Agreement

Subject agreement in Naami is realized as a homorganic nasal prefix on the verb, tense particle and negation particle, indicating first person singular agreement. Note that unlike some other Beboid languages (Nchane for example), subject agreement is not observed for subjects other than first person singular.

18. ***M**-má* ***n**-yaa* ***ŋ**-gə-na* *bə* *shi* *kə.*
    1sAGR-P3 1sAGR-NEG2 1sAGR-go-PFV LOC c9.market NEG1
    'I did not go to the market.'

19. ***ŋ**-yɔɔ* *bə* *wu* *lə* ***n**-hə* ***ŋ**-kə*
    1sAGR-say to 3s COMP 1sAGR-P1 1sAGR-NEG1

    ***m**-fəə* *ki-bwa* *kə.*
    1sAGR-make.PFV c7-bag NEG1
    'I told him that I did not make a bag.'

3.1.2 Causatives

Causative constructions in Naami are formed by adding the causative suffix ***-hi(ŋ)*** to the "main" verb. This extension allows for an additional argument, which functions as the subject of the causative clause. The previous subject constituent now appears as the object. This can be seen in the examples below.

20. a) *Gbi* *we* *bwo.*
c3.rope c3.this low
'The rope is low.'

b) Ø-Nyaŋ *wo* *ma* *bwo-**hiŋ**-na* *gbi* *we.*
c1-child c1.that P2 lower-CAUS-PFV c3.rope c3.this
'The child lowered the rope.'

21. a) *ŋ-lɔ.*
1sAGR-afraid
'I am afraid.'

b) *I* *má* *lɔ-**hiŋ**-na* *mi.*
3s P3 afraid-CAUS-PFV 1s
'He frightened me.'

In Naami, some verbs have the causative suffix always present. You cannot use these verbs without it, but you can see the causative sense in the verb, as below.

Verb	**Gloss**
bihiŋ	disturb
kɔhiŋ	bring up (a child)
dohiŋ	dress
shwahiŋ	cut open

Table 15. Verbs with obligatory causatives

The table below presents some examples of other verbs and their causative counterparts.

Verb	**Gloss**	**Causative**	**Gloss**
di	call	**dihiŋ**	cause to call
lɔ	fight	**lɔhiŋ**	cause to fight
koŋ	chase	**kohiŋ**	cause to chase
biŋ	climb	**bihiŋ**	cause to climb
ka	take over	**kahiŋ**	cause to take over
ji	jump	**jihiŋ**	cause to jump

Table 16. Naami Causatives

3.1.3 Aspect

The primary aspectual distinction made in Naami is between the perfective and imperfective. The perfective aspect views a verbal action as complete or a whole while the imperfective aspect describes an ongoing or continuous action of a verb which could be in the past, present or future tenses. Naami aspect is different from other Beboid languages (Noni, Nchane, Mungong, Kemedzung, Chung, and Sari) in that the perfective aspect in Naami is marked either by a verbal suffix or a verbal tone change while the imperfective is unmarked. The reverse is true for other Beboid languages in which it is rather the imperfective aspect that is marked with a verbal suffix while the perfective is unmarked. This is a unique grammatical feature that makes Naami different from the rest of the Beboid languages and so aspectual marking in Naami would require further investigation.

The following Naami examples with **fwɔɔ** *borrow,* show aspectual distinctions made in Naami.

22. *I* *mā* *fwɔɔ-**la*** *kikuŋ.*
3s P2 borrow-PFV c7-horse
'He borrowed a horse.' (perfective)

23. *I* *mā* *fwɔɔ* *kikuŋ.*
3s P2 borrow c7-horse
'He was borrowing a horse.' (imperfective)

3.1.3.1 Perfective Aspect

The perfective (PFV) morpheme in Naami is a suffix whose underlying form is still unknown to us at this time. This suffix has different realizations depending on the phonological structure of the verb. Below are its different realizations in CV, CVN, and CVCV verb roots.

CV verbs

Verbs with a CV syllable structure have three different realizations of the PFV; they are realized as CV-la, CV̀, and CG-ɛ̀. Perfective in verbs with CV structure where the tone is other than H is marked with the suffix -la, which surfaces with a low tone. Examples of such verbs are **wɛ́→wɛ̄-là** *build,* **bī→bī-là** *ask*, **nū́→nū-là** *soak*, **lɛ̌→lɛ̀-là** th*row*, and **dǐ→dì-là** *bury*. The following set of data shows PFV marking of the verb **nā** *chew*:

24. *I* *má* *na-**la*** *bəlɔkɔ.*
3s P3 chew-PFV c2-cassava
'She chewed cassava.' (last week)

25. *I* *ma* *na-l**a*** *bəlɔkɔ.*
3s P2 chew-PFV c2-cassava
'She chewed cassava.' (a few days ago)

26. *I* *hə* *na-**la*** *bəlɔkɔ.*
3s P1 chew-PFV c2-cassava
'She chewed cassava.' (a few hours ago)

27. *I* *na-**la*** *bəlɔkɔ.*
3s chew-PFV c2-cassava
'She chewed cassava.' (just now)

Perfective in CV verbs where the tone is H (CV́) is realized as a tone change from H to LM (CV̌). Examples of these verbs are **ná→ nǎ** *give*, **hlé→ hlɛ̌** *want*, and **tɔ́→ tɔ̌** *pierce*. The following constructions show PFV marking of the verb **tɔ́** *pierce.*

28. *I* *má* **tɔ̌** *bəŋgɔlɔ.*
3s P3 pierce.PFV c2-seed
'She pierced the seeds.' (last week)

29. *I* *ma* **tɔ̌** *bəŋgɔlɔ.*
3s P2 pierce.PFV c2-seed
'She pierced the seeds.' (a few days ago)

30. *I* *hə* **tɔ̌** *bəŋgɔlɔ.*
3s P1 pierce.PFV c2-seed
'She pierced the seeds.' (a few hours ago)

31. *I* **tɔ̌** *bəŋgɔlɔ.*
3s pierce.PFV c2-seed
'She pierced the seeds.' (just now)

When the vowel of the verb root is the +high vowel /i/, then Perfective is marked by the suffix -ɛ̌, while the root vowel is realized as a glide. Glide formation is not strange here because it is a common phonological process in Naami (see Tabah 2011) whereby in a CVV syllable structure, if the first V is /i/ or /u/, a glide (Cy or Cw) is formed. The tone of the Perfective form in this case is LM just as it is with the other H-tone CV verbs. The following are examples of PFV marking of the verb **dí** *eat.* Note that the Naami practical orthography represents palatalized consonants as Ci, a convention which is followed throughout this paper.

32. I má *di-ɛ* bəlɔkɔ.
3s P3 eat-PFV c2-cassava
'She ate cassava.' (last week)

33. *I* *ma* *di-ɛ* *bəlɔkɔ.*
3s P2 eat-PFV c2-cassava
'She ate cassava.' (a few days ago)

34. *I* *hə* *di-ɛ* *bəlɔkɔ.*
3s P1 eat-PFV c2-cassava
'She ate cassava.' (a few hours ago)

35. *I* *di-ɛ* *bəlɔkɔ.*
3s eat-PFV c2-cassava
'She ate cassava.' (just now)

CVN verbs

Perfective in verbs with a CVN (closed syllable) structure is marked with the suffix –na. Examples of CVN verbs are **nɪ̄ŋ** → **nɪ̄ŋ-ná** *bite*, **tāŋ**→**tāŋ-ná** *buy*, and **chɪ̀ŋ**→ **chɪ̀ŋ -nà** *curse*. Sometimes the final root consonant is elided and when this happens, CVN-na will be realized as CV-na (e.g., **tāŋ-ná** can be pronounced as **tā-ná**). The following set of data shows PFV marking of **mɔ̀ŋ** *taste*.

36. *I* *má* *mɔŋ-na* *bəlɔkɔ.*
3s P3 taste-PFV c2-cassava
'She tasted cassava.' (last week)

37. *I* *ma* *mɔŋ-na* *bəlɔkɔ.*
3s P2 taste-PFV c2-cassava
'She tasted cassava.' (a few days ago)

38. *I* *hə* *mɔŋ-na* *bəlɔkɔ.*
3s P1 taste-PFV c2-cassava
'She tasted cassava.' (a few hours ago)

39. *I* *mɔŋ-na* *bəlɔkɔ.*
3s taste-PFV c2-cassava
'She tasted cassava.' (just now)

CVCV verbs

CVCV verbs are realized in the PFV as CVC-a. When the PFV allomorph **-a** is suffixed to verb roots with a CVCV structure, the final root vowel is lost leaving the PFV verb form with a CVC-a structure. Examples of such CVCV verbs becoming CVC-a

include: **mùkú→mùk-ā** *soften*, **bàlə́→bàl-ā** *follow*, **kānə́→kān-à** *have*, **bēmì→bēm-à** *accept*, and **wōmə̀→wōm-à** *squat*. The following are examples of constructions in the PFV aspect with the verb **lēkí** *like*.

40. *I* *má* *lek-a* *bəlɔkɔ.*
3s P3 like-PFV c2-cassava
'She liked cassava.' (last week)

41. *I* *ma* *lek-a* *bəlɔkɔ.*
3s P2 like-PFV c2-cassava
'She liked cassava.' (a few days ago)

42. *I* *hə* lek-a *bəlɔkɔ.*
3s P1 like-PFV c2-cassava
'She liked cassava.' (a few hours ago)

43. *I* *lek-a* *bəlɔkɔ.*
3s like-PFV c2-cassava
'She liked cassava.' (just now)

3.1.3.2 Imperfective Aspect

Unlike other languages of the Beboid family (Noni, Nchane, Mungong, Kemedzung, Chung, and Sari) in which imperfective (IPFV) aspect is marked by a segmental verbal suffix, IPFV aspect in Naami is unmarked. That is, there is no segmental suffix nor tone changes when expressing IPFV aspect in Naami. There is a grammatical particle **yu**, that occurs in the tense slot before the verb when the construction is in the present tense. The function of this particle is however still unknown to us at this time. Further investigation is therefore needed to determine the exact grammatical function of this particle. There is also another grammatical particle **ye** which occurs in future IPFVs. This particle occurs after the tense particle in all future (F1, F2, F3) IPFV constructions. Further research is also recommended in order to know the true function of this particle. The following are examples of Naami constructions with IPFV aspect.

44. *I* *má* *na* *bəlɔkɔ.*
3s P3 chew c2-cassava
'She was chewing cassava.' (last week)

45. *I* *ma* *na* *bəlɔkɔ.*
3s P2 chew c2-cassava
'She was chewing cassava.' (a few days ago)

46. *I* *hə* *na* *bəlɔkɔ.*
3s P1 chew c2-cassava
'She was chewing cassava.' (a few hours ago)

47. *I* *na* *bəlɔkɔ.*
3s chew c2-cassava
'She was chewing cassava.' (just now)

48. *I* *yu* *na* *bəlɔkɔ.*
3s ?? chew c2-cassava
'She is chewing cassava.'

49. *I* *ya* *ye* *na* *bəlɔkɔ.*
3s F2 ?? chew c2-cassava
'She will be chewing cassava.' (tomorrow or next week)

3.2 The Naami Verb Phrase

The Naami verb phrase consists of at least one verb. The order of obligatory and optional elements of the verb phrase are summarized in the chart below:

VPart	NEG2	Verb

In a verb phrase, the verb may be preceded by a verbal particle indicating tense. Also preceding the verb may be a negative marker (NEG), which appears to negate more of the action rather than the object. This is shown in the examples below.

50. *Bə* ***[ma*** ***fəə]*** *ki-bwa.*
3p P2 make.PFV c7-bag
'They made a bag.'

51. ***[M-má*** ***n-yaa*** ***ŋ-gəŋ-na]*** *bə* *shi* *kə.*
1sAGR-P3 1sAGR-NEG2 1sAGR-go-PFV LOC c9.market NEG1
'I did not go to the market.'

52. *Shɔŋ* ***[nə]*** *Ø-tuntuni* *ki-tuŋ* *bə* *ki-bwa.*
c9.sheep give c1-lion c7-honey LOC c7-bag
'The sheep gave the lion honey in a bag.'

53. *Shɔŋ* ***[má*** ***yaa*** ***nə]*** *Ø-tuntuni* *ki-tuŋ* *bə* *ki-bwa* *kə.*
c9.sheep P3 NEG2 give c1-lion c7-honey LOC c7-bag NEG1
'The sheep did not give the lion honey in a bag.'

3.2.1 Tense

Tense is an expression of the time of an event or situation in a language. Naami has two categories of tenses: the past and the future tenses. These are discussed in the subsequent sections.

There is also a bare or tenseless form of the verb which can be interpreted as immediate past tense, present tense, or future tense, with context indicating which interpretation is appropriate. The following examples illustrate this.

54. a) *I* *tu* *Ø-naŋ.*
3s touch c1-cow
'He touched the cow.' (just now or not specified)

b) *I* *jwa* *bu-niɛŋ.*
3s cook c14-food
'She cooked food.' (just now or recently)

55. *I* *jwa* *bu-niɛŋ* *bu-tu* *bu-hiŋ.*
3s cook c14-food c14-day c14-every
'She cooks food every day.'

56. *I* *yu* *jwa* *bu-niɛŋ.*
3S ?? cook c14-food
'She is cooking food.'

57. *Hlanda* *wɛ* *ki-chaŋ.*
Hlanda build c7-hut
'Hlanda will build a hut.'

3.2.1.1 The Past Tenses

The past tenses other than the immediate past, are signaled by the presence of a tense particle occurring in the position before the verb. Events that occurred between several minutes and several hours ago are indicated through the particle ***hi*** (P1). This is shown in the following perfective examples with the verbs ***la*** (to lose), ***nɨŋ*** (to bite), ***leki*** (to love), and ***kalə*** (to cut).

58. a) *Guda* ***hi*** *la-la* *ki-bwa.*
Guda P1 lose-PFV c7-bag
'Guda lost the bag.' (a few hours ago)

b) *Bwi* ***hi*** *nɨŋ-na* *ki-kuŋ.*
c9.dog P1 bite-PFV c7-horse
'The dog bit a horse.' (a few hours ago)

c) *Bo* ***hi*** *lek-a* *bə-ŋkawi* *biaa.*
1p P1 love-PFV c2-elder c2.1pPOSS
'We loved our elders.' (a few hours ago)

d) *Bo* ***hi*** *kal-a* *tiɛ.*
1p P1 cut-PFV c7.tree
'We cut the tree.' (a few hours ago)

Events that occurred one to three days ago are indicated by the particle ***mā*** (P2).

59. a) *Guda* ***ma*** *la-la* *ki-bwa.*
Guda P2 lose-PFV c7-bag
'Guda lost the bag.' (a few days ago)

b) *Bwi* ***ma*** *nɨn-a* *ki-kuŋ.*
c9.dog P2 bite-PFV c7-horse
'The dog bit a horse.' (a few days ago)

c) *Bo* ***ma*** *lek-a* *bə-ŋkawi* *biaa.*
1p P2 love-PFV c2-elder c2.1pPOSS
'We loved our elders.' (a few days ago)

d) *Bo* ***ma*** *kal-a* *tiɛ.*
1p P2 cut-PFV c7.tree
'We cut the tree.' (a few days ago)

Events that occurred four days or more ago are indicated by the presence of ***má*** (P3). Note that the difference between the P3 and P2 markers is only at the level of tone. While the P2 marker has a mid tone, the P3 marker has a high tone.

60. a) *Guda* ***má*** *la-la* *ki-bwa.*
Guda P3 lose-PFV c7-bag
'Guda lost the bag.' (last week)

b) *Bwi* ***má*** *nɨn-a* *ki-kuŋ.*
c9.dog P3 bite-PFV c7-horse
'The dog bit a horse.' (last week)

c) *Bo* ***má*** *lek-a* *bə-ŋkawi* *biaa.*
1p P3 love-PFV c2-elder c2.1pPOSS
'We loved our elders.' (last week)

d) *Bo* ***má*** *kal-a* *tiɛ.*
1p P3 cut-PFV c7.tree
'We cut the tree.' (last week)

3.2.1.2 The Future Tenses

An event that will occur very shortly is indicated by the particle ***mə*** (F1).

61. *Hlanda* ***mə*** *wɛ* *ki-chaŋ.*
Hlanda F1 build c7-hut
'Hlanda will build a hut.' (later today)

An event that will occur in one to three days is indicated by the particle ***ya*** (F2).

62. *Dodi* ***ya*** *bo.*
Dodi F2 come
'Dodi will come.' (tomorrow or next week)

An event that will occur in four or more days is indicated by the particle y**á** (F3). Like P2 and P3, the difference between F2 and F3 is at the level of tone on the tense markers because they share a common segmental form ***ya.***

63. *Dodi* ***yá*** *bo.*
Dodi F3 come
'Dodi will come.' (in two or more weeks)

The table below provides a summary of the Naami tense forms.

Tense	**Example (*kili* to keep)**				**Gloss**	**Time Description**
P3	*I*	*má*	*kil-a*	*ki-bwa*	'She kept the bag.'	more than a few days ago
	3s	P3	keep-PFV	c7-bag		
P2	*I*	*ma*	*kil-a*	*ki-bwa*	'She kept the bag.'	yesterday or a few days ago
	3s	P2	keep-PFV	c7-bag		
P1	*I*	*hi*	*kil-a*	*ki-bwa*	'She kept the bag.'	earlier today
	3s	P1	keep-PFV	c7-bag		
F0	*I*		*kili*	*ki-bwa*	'She will keep the bag.'	very soon
	3s		keep	c7-bag		
F1	*I*	*mə*	*kili*	*ki-bwa*	'She will keep the bag.'	later today
	3s	F1	keep	c7-bag		
F2	*I*	*ya*	*kili*	*ki-bwa*	'She will keep the bag.'	tomorrow or next week
	3s	F2	keep	c7-bag		
F3	*I*	*yá*	*kili*	*ki-bwa*	'She will keep the bag.'	two or more weeks
	3s	F3	keep	c7-bag		

Table 17. Naami Tense Forms

It is important to note that all the past and future tense markers in Naami occur in the same pre-verbal position in the verb phrase as shown in the examples above.

3.3 Negation

Negation in Naami involves the negative markers ***kə*** (NEG1) and ***yaa*** (NEG2). The first negative marker ***kə*** (NEG1), occurs twice with tenseless verb constructions and in P1 constructions. It is used in sentences to express actions or events that habitually do not occur. NEG1 can be found preceding the verb and also in clause final position.

64. I hi ***kə*** *fəə* *ki-bwa* ***kə.***
3s P1 NEG1 make.PFV c7-bag NEG1
'He didn't make a bag.'

65. a) *Bə-ne* *bie* *kee* *bɔni.*
c2-people c2.those teach c2.children
'Those people teach children.'

b) *Bə-ne* *bie* ***kə*** *kee* *bɔni* ***kə.***
c2-people c2.those NEG1 teach c2.children NEG1
'Those people do not teach children.'

c) *I* *wii* *gbo.*
3s wash c3.skin
'He washes his body.'

d) *I* ***kə*** *wii* *gbo* ***kə.***
3s NEG1 wash c3.skin NEG1
'He does not wash himself.'

The second negative marker ***yaa*** (NEG2) is used with NEG1 to express a one-time action or event that did not happen in the medial past (P2) and the remote past (P3).

66. a) *I* *ma* ***yaa*** *wii* *gbo* ***kə.***
3s P2 NEG2 wash c3.skin NEG1.
'He did not wash himself.'

b) *Bəne* *bie* *má* ***yaa*** *kee-la* *bɔni* ***kə.***
c2.People c2.those P3 NEG2 teach-PFV c2.child NEG1
'Those people did not teach children.'

3.4 Serial Verb Constructions

Serial verb constructions are constructions in which two verbs occur one after the other. In this type of construction, the two verbs have the same subject and act together to communicate a single, complex action. Serial verb constructions in Naami are not well understood at this time and require further research.

67. a) *Ki-kwu* ***bo*** ***bənə*** *bə* *shɔŋ.*
c7-tiger come meet with c9.sheep
'The tiger met the sheep.'

b) *Ki-kwu* ***kwo*** ***jə*** *Ø-ŋwa-shɔŋ* *mwi* *ki* *gəŋ* *kwələ.*
c7-tiger catch take c1-child-sheep c1.one it go home
'The tiger caught one of the lambs and went home with it.'

3.5 Reciprocal and Reflexive

Reciprocal relationships can be expressed through the use of the phrase ***go ŋə*** immediately after the verb.

68. a) *I* *má* *kə-la* *wu.*
3s P3 know-PFV 3s
'She knew him.'

b) *Bə* *má* *kə-la* ***go ŋə*** *bə.*
3p P3 know-PFV RECIP 3p
'They knew each other.'

Reflexive relationships on the other hand are expressed using the word ***gbo*** (which means body) immediately after the verb.

69. *Wə* *hi* *bia-na* ***gbo*** *wo.*
2s P1 wound-PFV c3.body c3.2sPOSS
'You wounded yourself.'

3.6 Directionals

Directional information is usually expressed through the basic meaning of the verb. Our focus in this section is therefore more on semantics rather than syntax. In the example below, the direction of the action is toward and the centre of reference is the location 'home'.

70. *Ki-kwu ma giŋ-na kwələ.*
c7-tiger P2 go-PFV home
'Tiger went home.'

Other "directional" verbs in Naami are given in the table below:

Verb	**Gloss**	**Direction**	**Centre of Reference**
biŋ	ascend	UP, AWAY	location
bwɔ	descend	DOWN, AWAY	location
bo	come	TOWARD	speaker
fwɛ	arrive	AT	location
fɛtɛlɛ	blow away	FROM	location
kpa	drag	AWAY, TOWARD	speaker
kɔhi	drive away	AWAY, FROM	location
fɨmə	drop	IN, FROM	location
lɛ	enter	IN	location
fu	exit	OUT	location
gɨŋ	go	AWAY	speaker

Table 18. Naami Directional Verbs

4 Clauses

4.1 Basic Order of Clause Elements

Naami grammatical relations are largely differentiated by word order, which is basically subject-verb-object (SVO). Subjects of intransitive as well as transitive sentences precede the verb. Objects follow the verb, with indirect objects occurring first and direct objects occurring last, giving an S V IO DO structure. The order of these elements in a clause are summarized in the chart below:

SUBJ	Verb	IO	DO	LOC	Adverb

The following examples show where elements normally occur in a clause:

71. *Ki-chɔ* *kɨŋ* *má* *kpee.*
c7-calf c7.1sPOSS P3 die.PFV
'My calf died.' (S V)

72. *Ø-Nyo* *wo* *kənə* *ki-bwa.*
c1-man c1.that have c7-bag
'The man has a bag.' (S V O)

73. *I* *má* *yaa* *fee* *ki-bwa* *kə.*
3s P3 NEG2 make.PFV c7-bag NEG1
'He did not make a bag.' (S V O)

74. *Mbaŋ* *ya* *kə* *nə* *wu* *ki-tuŋ* *ə* *ki-ŋgə* *kə.*
Mbaŋ F2 NEG1 give 3s c7-honey LOC c7-calabash NEG1
'Mbaŋ will not give him honey in a calabash.' (S V IO DO)

4.2 Declarative Clauses

Naami declarative clauses are basic with no special markings. The sections below present active and non-active clauses, with special attention given to different semantic categories of expression.

4.2.1 Active Clauses

Active clauses may express action. This is illustrated in the examples below.

75. a) *Ki-kwu kwo jə Ø-ŋwa-shɔŋ mwi.*
c7-tiger catch take c1-child-sheep c1.one
'The tiger caught and took one of the lambs.'

b) *I má kpee-la fi-wulə fie.*
3s P3 break-PFV c19-window c19.this
'She broke this window.'

The example below shows an active clause expressing an action in progress.

76. *Bə yu kwi gɨŋ.*
3p ?? harvest c6.maize
'They are harvesting maize.'

Active clauses may also express movement, as shown in the below example.

77. *I má gəŋ-na kwələ.*
3s P3 go-PFV home
'He went home.'

4.2.2 Non-active Clauses

There are a number of different types of non-active clauses, which are illustrated in the examples below.

78. Stative
Ki-ŋwaati kɨŋ ki-fɔ.
c7-book c7.this c7-new
'This book is new.'

79. Attributive
Shi yi yi.
c9.fowl c9 black
'The fowl is black.'

80. Equative

Mi *n-duŋ* *Ø-ŋkɨŋ.*
1s 1sAGR-be c1-chief
'I am a chief.'

81. Possessive

Wu *kənə* *muŋgeni.*
3s have c6.power
'He has power.'

82. Locative

Ø-Tili *má* *biŋ-na* *ə* *ki-kuŋ* *kɨŋ.*
c1-father.3sPOSS P3 climb-PFV LOC c7-horse c7.this
'Her father climbed on the horse.'

4.3 Agent Suppression

The agent of a clause can be suppressed by one of two methods. The first way to suppress the agent is by removing the agent and moving the patient to the subject position. This method is seen in the example below.

83. *Bi-kwa* *bie* *kiwii.*
c8-dish c8.this wash
'Those dishes are washed.'

A second way to suppress the agent is by using the indefinite pronoun ***bə***, which is the same as the third person plural pronoun. Context indicates whether this pronoun refers to specific people or no one in particular.

84. *Bə* *yii* *fi-bɛ* *ə* *ki-bwa* *mə.*
3p put.PFV c19-knife LOC c7-bag LOC
'Someone put the knife in a bag.' or 'They put the knife in a bag.'

4.4 Interrogative Clauses

There are two main types of Naami interrogative clauses: yes-no questions and content questions. Each are treated separately below.

4.4.1 Yes/No Questions

Yes/no questions are differentiated from their declarative counterparts by the presence of a question clitic ***-a*** which is added at clause final position.

85. a) *Wə yu jaa.*
2s ?? walk
'You are walking.'

b) *Wə yu jaa **a?***
2s ?? walk QM
'Are you walking?'

86. a) *Wə gəŋ niŋ nimi li-di.*
2s go work c5.work c5-different
'You want to do a different job.'

b) *Wə gəŋ niŋ nimi li-di **a?***
2s go work c5.work c5-different QM
'Do you want to do a different job?'

4.4.2 Content Questions

Content questions are also called information questions. In Naami, content questions are formed by replacing a word or phrase in a clause that the speaker does not know with a question word. Question words in Naami can replace a noun phrase, a verb phrase, an adverbial, a quantifier or a request about the reasons for something. Many question words in Naami occur clause finally and some combine with the question particle **lə**, to ask for specific contents. These question words include: **nyənə** 'who/whom', **laha**+**lə** 'what', **ləhiŋ**+**lə** 'what', **ləhiŋ** 'how/how much', **ŋwɛhiŋ** 'when', **fəhiŋ** 'where', **mwɛhiŋ** 'how much', **laha** 'why'. Many of the question words have an element in them which surfaces as **hiŋ**. Further investigation is needed to discover its grammatical function in relation to content questions.

4.4.2.1 Who Questions

Content questions that seek the identity of a person are formed using the question word **nyənə** which can be interpreted as 'who', 'whose' or 'whom'.

87. *Wə bənə bə **ɲyənə?***
2s meet with who
'With whom did you meet?'

88. *Fə **ɲyənə** fɨŋ?*
make who c19.this
'Who made this?'

4.4.2.2 What Questions

Content questions that ask how something is called are formed by the addition of a clause-final question particle. This clause-final question particle ***lə*** combines with the word ***laha*** 'what' to ask about specific content.

89. *Bə chee fieŋ fɨŋ lə **laha** lə?*
3p call c19-thing c19.this be what QM
'What is this called?'

4.4.2.3 Verb Phrase Questions

Content questions that ask what action someone or something did are formed by the addition of a clause-final question particle. This clause-final question particle ***lə*** combines with the word ***ləhɨŋ,*** which can still be glossed as 'what', to ask about specific content.

90. *Wə fə **ləhɨŋ** lə?*
2s do how QM
'What are you going to do?'

4.4.2.4 Adverbial Questions

Some question words request information about time, location and place. 'When' is expressed by the use of a time word in conjunction with ***ŋwɛhɨŋ***.

91. *Mə lə bwii bwɔɔ **ŋwɛhɨŋ?***
?? F1 reach time when
'When will he arrive?'

'Where' is expressed by the use of the word ***fəhɨŋ***.

92. *ŋgwiŋ* *mie* *lə* ***fəhɨŋ?***
c18a.water c18a.that be where
'Where is the water?'

93. *Ø-Nwa* *lə* ***fəhɨŋ?***
c1-husband be where
'Where is your husband?'

4.4.2.5 Quantity Questions

There are some question words that request the quantity of something. The quantity of countable items is inquired about through the use of **mwɛhɨŋ**, which takes the class prefix of the item in question.

94. *Wə* *kənə* *bɔni* ***bə-mwɛhɨŋ?***
2s have c2.child c2-how.many
'How many children do you have?'

The quantity of mass nouns is expressed through the word ***ləhiŋ***.

95. *Wɔ* *kənə* *mɛŋ* ***ləhɨŋ?***
2s have c18a.oil how.much
'How much oil do you have?'

4.4.2.6 Reason Questions

Content questions that ask for 'why' are formed using the question word ***laha***.

96. *Wə* *de* ***laha?***
2s cry why
'Why are you crying?'

4.4.3 Tag Questions

Tag questions are formed using a second clause with a dummy subject. Note that the "tag" and the statement are always polar, that is, the statement and the tag are always opposites.

97. a) *Bu-niɛŋ buŋ kə shi kə, ə li?*
c14-fufu c14.this NEG1 hot NEG1, it is?
'This fufu is not hot, is it?'

b) *Bu-niɛŋ buŋ shi, kə ə li kə?*
c14-fufu c14.this hot, NEG1 it is NEG1
'This fufu is hot, isn't it?'

4.5 Mood

4.5.1 Imperative

Imperative clauses generally lack a constituent in the subject slot when the subject is singular. The second person plural pronoun ***bəŋ*** precedes the verb when the subject is plural.

98. a) *Nə mi ki-ŋka.*
give 1s c7-chair
'Give me a chair.'

b) *Chi Ø-naŋ ə Ø-mbaŋ lə.*
put c1-cow LOC c1-fence LOC
'Put the cow inside the fence.'

c) *Bəŋ bo yaŋ.*
2p come here
'You(pl) come here.'

4.5.2 Hortative

Hortative clauses are formed by the addition of a high tone to the verb. A low tone on the verb is raised to a mid, a mid tone is raised to a high, and a high tone stays high. This is shown in the following examples.

99. a) *I* *hlè* *Ø-gɨŋ.*
3s winnow c6-maize
'He winnows maize.'

b) *I* *hlē* *Ø-gɨŋ.*
3s winnow.HORT c6-maize
'He should winnow maize.'

100. a) *I* *hlē* *bə-mboda.*
3s slice c2-potato
'He slices potatoes.'

b) *I* *hlé* *bə-mboda.*
3s slice.HORT c2-potato
'He should slice potatoes.'

101. a) *I* *hlé* *fi-mbi.*
3s want c19-kolanut
'He wants a kolanut.'

b) *I* *hlé* *fi-mbi.*
3s want.HORT c19-kolanut
'He should want a kolanut.'

4.6 Coordinating Clauses

4.6.1 Coupling

Coupling is accomplished most often by simple juxtaposition.

102. *Ø-Tuntunu* *bo* *ke* *ki-kwu.*
c1-lion come wait c7-tiger
'The lion came and waited for the tiger.'

4.6.2 Alternating

Alternating relationships are expressed by the use of the conjunction ***ləkə***.

103. *Wə gəŋ ə Ø-shukuu **ləkə** wə gəŋ ə Ø-wɛ.*
2s go LOC c1-school or 2s go LOC c1-farm
'You can go to school or you go to the farm.'

4.6.3 Contrasting

The discontinuous conjunction ***kwaa…na*** is used to form a contrasting relationship.

104. *Pita gəŋ-na ə Ø-shukuu **kwaa** wu **na** kə*
Peter go-PFV LOC c1-school but 3s but NEG1

lanə fi-eŋ kə.
learn.PFV c19-thing NEG1
'Peter went to school, but did not learn anything.'

4.7 Adverbial Elements

Adverbial elements are adverbial clauses or adverbial phrases which serve as optional elements in a clause. They provide additional information such as time, location, purpose, reason, and conditional.

4.7.1 Time

There are a number of 'time' words that may be used to express time, including words such as ***lə*** and ***bwɔɔ***, which can be glossed as 'after' and 'time' respectively indicating sequential time. Note that in the examples below, time is expressed through the use of an adverbial clause.

105. a) ***[Lə ki wo Ø-tuntunu duŋ həmə],*** *ki ŋɔɔni yulaha*
after it hear c1-lion be there it rest.PFV because

Ø-tuntunu ka bə ki-kiɛ.
c1-lion surpass 3p c7-all
'When it (the tiger) heard that the lion was there, it hesitated because it knew the lion was stronger than (lit. surpassing) all animals.'

b) ***[Ø-Bwɔɔ nu Ø-mbɛɛ kpe]***, *Pɔɔ gəŋ həmə kpe Ø-nte.*
c1-time c1.REL c1-person die Paul go there die c1-place
'When someone died, Paul went to the funeral.'

Simple time words and other time phrases occur phrase finally.

106. *I má gəŋ-na niŋ-na bə Ø-ŋyo ju* ***bi-goŋ bi-fwe.***
3s P3 go-PFV work-PFV with c1-man c1.some c8-year c8-two
'He went and worked for a certain man for two years.'

4.7.2 Location

Location information is usually given through the use of the locative particles **ə** and **tiŋ**. The co-occurrence of these locative particles is however uncertain at this point. More research is needed to investigate this.

107. *Shɔŋ ye ye baha* ***ə*** ***Ø-mbaŋ*** *wo* ***tiŋ.***
c9.sheep c9.that is near LOC c1-fence c1.that LOC
'The sheep is near the fence.'

108. *Fi-nyini fie fie* ***ə*** *tiɛ* ***tiŋ.***
c19-bird c19.that is LOC c7.tree LOC
'The bird is in the tree.'

4.7.3 Purpose

Purpose is given using the particle ***bə***. The purpose clause always follows the main clause.

109. *I gəŋ-na Ø-bweena* ***bə*** *gəŋ je Ø-kwe*
3s go-PFV c1-village PURP go take c1-wife
'He went to the village to get a wife.'

110. *I biŋ-na ə tiɛ go* ***bə*** *kwi bə-maŋgolo*
3s climb-PFV LOC c7.tree LOC PURP harvest c2-mango
'He climbed a tree to harvest mangoes.'

4.7.4 Reason

Reason information is given using the word ***yulaha,*** which is sometimes followed by the complementizer ***lə***. The reason clause always follows the main clause.

111. *I má di-ɛ bu-niɛŋ **yulaha** I má I wo jəbulə.*
3s P3 eat-PFV c14-food reason 3s P3 3s hear hunger
'He ate the food because he was hungry.'

112. *Bə koŋ-na wu **yulaha** lə I má fu chee.*
3pl drive-PFV 3s reason COMP 3s P3 smell.PFV odor
'They drove him away because he had a bad odor.'

4.7.5 Conditional

Conditional information is expressed using an if-then construction. Each clause of the sentence begins with the particle **ə**, with the first clause being the condition that should be met before the event or action in the second clause will be realized.

113. ***ə*** ***Ø-***mbɛɛ waa lə I kwo jii wə fidiɛɛ
if c1-man want COMP 3s catch kill 2s now

ə wə fə ləhɨŋ?
then 2s do what
'If one wants to kill you now, what will you do?'

4.8 Complements

4.8.1 Verbs of Cognition and Desire

Complements are introduced by ***lə*** (COMP). This particle follows verbs of cognition or desire such as "to think", "to know", "to see", or "to want".

114. *a) Ø-Maani wo kələ **lə** Ø-nyaŋ wo kpee.*
c1-mother c1.that know COMP c1-child c1.that die
'The mother knows that the child died.'

b) *I* *kəl-a* *weeŋ* ***lə*** *Ø-tili* *nə* *wu* *bə* *Ø-nyaŋ* *nu.*
3s know-PFV clear COMP c1-father.3sPOSS give 3s to c1-child c1.this
'She knew clearly that her father would give her to this boy.'

c) *Wə* *yɔɔ-la* *lə* *wə* *kiɛɛ* ***lə*** *wə* *she* *bieŋ*
2s say-PFV COMP 2s want.PFV COMP 2s leave c8-thing

biŋ *wə* *gəŋ* *niŋ* *nimi* *lidi* *lə?*
c8-1sPOSS 2s go work c5.work c5-different QM
'You said you wanted to leave my things and work elsewhere?'

4.8.2 Quoted Speech

Quoted speech is introduced using the complementizer particle ***lə***. This particle occurs with verbs like ***yɔɔ*** 'to say' and ***chuu*** 'to reply' and immediately precedes the quoted clause or clauses. Below are examples of direct speech.

115. *I* *má* *yɔɔ-la* *bə* *Ø-tili* ***lə,*** *" Ø-Ta* *mi* *n-yu*
3s P3 say-PFV to c1-father.3sPOSS COMP c1-father 1s 1sAGR-??

ŋ-*kiɛɛ* *lə* *ŋ-gəŋ* *niŋ* *nimi".*
1sAGR-want COMP 1sAGR-go work c5.work
'He told his father, "Father, I want to go and work."'

116. *Ø-Nyaani* *má* *chuu-la* ***lə,*** *"Ee* *Ø-ta,* *mi* *n-yu*
c1-son P3 reply-PFV COMP, yes c1-father 1s 1sAGR-??

ŋ-*kiɛɛ* *lə* *ŋ-gəŋ* *n-niŋ* *nimi".*
1sAGR-want COMP 1sAGR-go 1sAGR-work c5.work
'The son replied, "Yes father, I want to go and work."'

This same quote particle is used in indirect speech as well, as illustrated below.

117. *I* *yɔɔ* ***lə*** *Ø-tili* *jii-la* *wu.*
3s say COMP c1-father.3sPOSS kill-PFV 3s
'She said that her father had killed her.'

Sometimes, the speech verb can be left out altogether. This happens when the quote is one of a series of quotes that look more or less like a drama. More research needs to be done to understand when this omission is allowed or even mandatory.

118. *Shɔŋ* ***lə*** *“Fə fi-eŋ fie wə duŋ wə fə*
c9.sheep COMP do c19-thing c19.this 2s be 2s do

duka bə mi.”
all to 1s
‘The sheep (said), “Do whatever you want to me.”’

5 Conclusion

Like most languages, the grammar of Naami is quite complex. As such, the goal of this paper has been to provide a preliminary study of the basics of the grammar. Many interesting elements remain unaddressed, while still others have been treated here with a cursory examination. For example, clause combining operations need further analysis, as do clause level particles. However, the richness of the Naami language may be seen from this introductory research.

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