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

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## 1. Introduction

**Zodí**, called Dott by Shimizu (78 : 13), belongs to the Southern Bauchi group of the West Chadic-B sub-branch (SBW) of Chadic (Afroasiatic). **Zodí**<sup>1</sup> is the ethnonym of a group of people living in the village of Dott, and 7 of the 11 wards ruled over by its chief. The 7 wards are : **Wakíli**, **Kuleetó**, **Galaadiima**, **Ábaar**, **Sáraári**, **Círooma**, **Áondí**. Hausa and Fulɓe are spoken in the other wards : **Káágááámá**, **Sáábóngarí**, **Góóbírááwá** and **Hárdó**. They call their language **Jéróm zodí**, the language of the Zodís. The Zodís started converting to Islam in the 60's, and are now mainly Muslims, with few Christians and Animists among them. The language borrows heavily to Hausa, both in the vocabulary (25 % of our lexical entries) and in the grammar (conjunctions, auxiliaries, topicalization particles). However, it has retained the essential of its typical SBW character.

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

Transcription system : Long vowels are indicated by double letters ; high (Hi=H) tone = **á/áá** ; low (Lo=L) tone = **a/aa** ; falling tone = **â/ââ** ; rising tone = **ǎ/ǎǎ**. We have preferred to use the IPA instead of Hausa spelling conventions to transcribe Zodí sounds. i.e. Hausa **c** is **ɕ** ; **j** is **ɟ**. However, outside the consonant chart, for the sake of legibility, we have kept the letter **y** to transcribe IPA **j**.

## 2. Phonology

### 2.1 Consonant phonemes

p	p <sup>j</sup>	t	t <sup>j</sup>	t <sup>w</sup>	ts	tʃ	k	k <sup>j</sup>	k <sup>w</sup>	ʔ
b	b <sup>j</sup>	d		d <sup>w</sup>	dz	ɕ	g	g <sup>j</sup>	g <sup>w</sup>	
ɸ	ɸ <sup>j</sup>	ɗ	ɗ <sup>j</sup>			y				
mb		nd		nd <sup>w</sup>	ndz	nɕ	nɕ <sup>w</sup>	ŋg	ŋg <sup>j</sup>	ŋg <sup>w</sup>
f	f <sup>w</sup>	s		s <sup>w</sup>		ʃ				(h)
mv		z				ʒ				
		ʈ	ʈ <sup>j</sup>	ʈ <sup>w</sup>						
M		n	n <sup>j</sup>					ŋ		
		r		r <sup>w</sup>						
		l	l <sup>j</sup>	l <sup>w</sup>						
						j				

As in Hausa, all Zodi words begin with a consonant and vowel-initial words in the transcription are preceded by a glottal stop : **a**, *at* ; **ú**, *of* ; **éti**, *fowl* = **ʔa**, **ʔú**, **ʔéti**. The voiced lateral fricative [ɸ] is absent.

/k/ has many allophones whose distribution is not clear : it is pronounced [k] in initial position, [ɣ] in intervocalic position : [bəyobárka] < bə ko bārka, [he] greeted you, lit. gave you welcome, but cf. [bukáá], after. It is pronounced x when followed by a nasal : [kǒxŋ] = kǒkŋ, arm, wing, branch ; [kaaxni] < kaak-ni, praise-pl ; cf [makaakaʔ] < ma kaak Cak, thank you (lit. we+Aor. praise Perf., Hau mun gode). It is pronounced [k], sometimes [q<sup>2</sup>] when followed by other consonants, except in the context a\_\_t where it is pronounced [x] : [kaaxti] < kaak-ti, praising. At the end of an utterance, it is pronounced [q] or [ʔ].

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

### 2.2 Vowels

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

short			long		
i		u	ii		uu
e	ə	o	ee	əə	oo
	a			aa	

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

### 2.3 Tones

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

## 3. Verbal morphology

### 3.1 Verb classes

Zodi has one and two-syllable verbs, with various tone schemes<sup>3</sup> :

<sup>2</sup> Uvular stop.

<sup>3</sup> There is 1 verb borrowed from Hausa with HHL tones : **káránta**, read.

1 syll.	L (56%)	<b>fee</b>	turn round	H (13%)	<b>fée</b>	tell
2 syll.	HL (20%)	<b>kótír</b>	run	LL (8%)	<b>ƙakaa</b>	swallow
2 syll.	LH (6 ex.)	<b>ƙóbát</b>	stand up	HH (3ex.)	<b>súkót</b>	mix

### 3.2 Verb plurality

Verb plurality is not consistently marked in **Zodí**. Verbs and verbal nouns sometimes take a -ni suffix (with a floating Hi tone) in agreement with plural subjects or objects : **pár/páarni**, *do* ; **ci/cíni**, *eat* ; **ƙóbát/ƙóbátni**, *get up, grow up, migrate* (Hau. *tashi*).

<b>əri</b>	<b>gu</b>	<b>man</b>	<b>ƙí</b>	<b>ada</b>	<b>man</b>	<b>ci-ni</b>	<b>gálba</b>
3s	Foc	1s+Fut	eat	Pro	1pl+Fut	eat+pl	victory
<i>it's what I shall eat with</i>				<i>we will win</i>			

<b>ú</b>	<b>ƙóbát</b>	<b>ma</b>	<b>ƙóbátni</b>	<b>ú</b>	<b>lootí</b>
2sg+Aor.	grow up	1pl+Aor	migrate	of	far
<i>you grew up</i>		<i>we came from far</i>			

This suffix is incompatible with the Perfective.

### 3.3 Verbal extensions

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

original vb.	Hausa	Zodí	derived vb.	Hausa	Zodí
<i>come out</i>	fita	<b>ta</b>	<i>get out</i>	fitar (da)	<b>tár</b>
<i>get down</i>	sauka	<b>ƙí</b>	<i>take down</i>	saukar (da)	<b>ƙír</b>
<i>climb</i>	hau	<b>tswaa</b>	<i>take up</i>	hawar (da)	<b>tswár</b>
<i>hide (int.)</i>	ƙoye	<b>fun</b>	<i>hide (tr.)</i>	ƙuyar	<b>fúndər</b>
<i>get spoilt</i>	ɓata	<b>mal</b>	<i>spoil</i>	ɓatar (da)	<b>máldər</b>
<i>pour</i>	zuba	<b>ɗat</b>	<i>pour away</i>	zubar	<b>ɗátdər</b>
<i>sit</i>	zauna	<b>suk</b>	<i>sit down</i>	zaunar (da)	<b>súkdər</b>

Some verbs have the form of a causative, without any obvious original verb to be associated with : **mándər**, *sell* ; **sándər** *bring* ; **ndər**, *róddər*, *take to*.

### 3.4 Verbal nouns

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

<i>say</i>	<b>ƙet</b>	<b>ƙetti</b>
<i>put</i>	<b>wáá</b>	<b>waati</b>
<i>swallow</i>	<b>ƙakaa</b>	<b>ƙakaati</b>
<i>get up, etc.</i>	<b>ƙóbát</b>	<b>ƙóbátti</b>

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

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

<b>márabá</b>	<b>ú</b>	<b>ƙetti</b>	<b>taa</b>	<b>ƙétti</b>
greetings	with	coming	3pl.+Cont.	coming
<i>Welcome !</i>			<i>they are coming</i>	

<b>ər</b>	<b>gu</b>	<b>Tába</b>	<b>footi</b>	<b>ki</b>	<b>mu</b>	(...)
3sg.	that	already (Aux.)	telling	2sg.	Comp.	
<i>he who has already told you that (...)</i>						

dón    əɾ    si    a    fóóti    kí    mu    (...)  
 because 3sg. Cond Cont. telling 2sg. that  
*because if he is telling you that (...)*

- For two-syllable verbs, the -ti suffix does not alter the lexical tone of the verb in the continuous.

Lexical Form			Non-Continuous		Continuous	
LL	<b>bərti</b>	<i>fear</i>	LLL	<b>bərtiti</b>	LLL	<b>bərtiti</b>
LL	<b>ɗikər</b>	<i>roll</i>	LLL	<b>ɗikərti</b>	LLL	<b>ɗikərti</b>
LH	<b>bikát</b>	<i>spin</i>	LLL	<b>bikətti</b>	LHL	<b>bikátti</b>
LH	<b>dokál</b>	<i>lear</i>	LLL	<b>dokalti</b>	LHL	<b>dokátti</b>
HL	<b>fífee</b>	<i>whistle</i>	LLL	<b>fífeeti</b>	HLL	<b>fífeeti</b>
HL	<b>gjom̩ti</b>	<i>laugh</i>	LLL	<b>gjom̩ti</b>	HLL	<b>gjom̩ti</b>
HH	<b>kwákál</b>	<i>cement</i>	LLL	<b>kwakalti</b>	HHL	<b>kwákátti</b>
HH	<b>súkát</b>	<i>mix</i>	LLL	<b>sukətti</b>	HHL	<b>súkátti</b>

## 4. Numerals

1	<b>nəm</b>	11	<b>sup-cedíí-nəm</b>
2	<b>rop</b>	12	<b>sup-cedíí-rop</b>
3	<b>maakó</b>	13	<b>sup-cedíí-maakó</b>
4	<b>wópsə</b>	20	<b>subii-rop</b>
5	<b>nantám</b>	21	<b>subii-rop- cedíí-nəm</b>
6	<b>maamak</b>	30	<b>subii-maakó</b>
7	<b>wusúr-maakó</b>	40	<b>subii-wópsə</b>
8	<b>wusúpsə</b>	50	<b>subii-nantám</b>
9	<b>natúrópsə</b>	100	<b>subii-sup</b>
10	<b>sup</b>	1000	<b>dúbúú</b>

Ordinals are made with the preposition **ú** preceding the cardinal number, which appears in the definite form, *viz* suffixed with an -i : **ú rə̀bi**, *second* ; **ú maakóy**, *third*, etc. **ú kə̀na**, **ú pá̀rkó**, *first*, is an exception. **kə̀na** is to be compared to Zaar **kə̀n**, *face, front, forward*. **pá̀rko** is borrowed from Hausa.

## 5. Nouns

### 5.1 Gender

There is no morphological gender in Zodi.

### 5.2 Plural

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

### 5.3 Possessive NP + NP constructions

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

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

<sup>4</sup> In the compound **rə̀b-ú-tfi**, the genitive link [ʔú] has lost its initial [ʔ].

(*lwáksi ú əróm gu...*, ‘angry with the thing that...’ ; *pərti sálláma ú gəḏós* ‘greeting his wife’, lit. ‘doing greeting of wife-his’) and of prepositional phrases : a *dum ú lok* ‘in front of the king’.

## 5.4 Definiteness

### 5.4.1 Definite

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

### 5.4.2 Indefinite

The indefinite determiner is **gəlêḡm** for the singular, and **ḡilêḡm** for the plural. It can be used pronominally :

**áp! áy gəlêḡm a gon!**  
 excl. excl. some at here  
*Look, there's one ! (Hau : Ap ! Ai ga wani nan !)*

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

**dii ma bən əróm gəlêḡm ndi**  
 Neg 1pl know thing some Neg  
*We don't know anything*

**bukáá mbárti ḡilêḡm**  
 after day some  
*after a few days*

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

**dii a tába patti gəlêḡm ərómi gu máálêḡm slam mbi**  
 Neg 1sg already get some thing that spoil+1sg heart Neg  
*I never got anything that made me sad (lit. spoiled my heart).*

## 5.5 Quantifiers

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

**kóono a gyamḡti.**  
 everyone Cont laughing  
*Everybody is laughing.*

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

**kóógee ḡzeni**                      **kóógee ḡzen nantami**  
 each day+def                      each day five+def  
*every year*                              *every five year*

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

**kúm əróm gu fáálóm mak ...**  
 all thing that bother+1s Perf ...  
*all the things that bothered me...*

and pronominal uses :

**miní sállá miní kírísta kúm tíḡa mááni sóḡ**  
 people+of prayer people+of Christ all 3pl+Hab gather+pl. 3pl.+pl  
*Muslims, Christians, all gather.*

## 5.6 Deictics

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

		proximal		distal	
Adverbs		<b>woní</b>	<i>here</i>	<b>wáy</b>	<i>there</i>
Determinants	sg	<b>(fáá) goní</b>	<i>this (cow)</i>	<b>(fáá) gway</b>	<i>that (cow)</i>
	pl	<b>(fáá) ḡoní</b>	<i>these (cows)</i>	<b>(fáá) ḡway</b>	<i>those (cows)</i>
Pronouns	sg	<b>goní/gon</b>	<i>this one</i>	<b>gway</b>	<i>that one</i>
	pl	<b>wúrḡoní</b>	<i>these ones</i>	<b>wúrḡway</b>	<i>those ones</i>

## 6. Adjectives

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

### 6.1 Adjectives proper

Adjectives are not uncommon in Zoḏi, and are represented beyond the class of colour terms : **fáari**, *white* ; **laari**, *red* ; **fúúḏi**, *blue* ; **zíi**, *black* ; **bari**, *big* ; **báli**, *sweet* ; **dasári**, *ugly* ; **dákáni**, *wet, unripe* ; **limí**, *deep* ; **mámbári**, *new* ; **fíndi**, *cold*. The unusual adjective **mbaa**, *big*, is found in the expression **mbaa lwaar**, *big spirits*.

### 6.2 Participles

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

<b>fan</b>	heat up	<b>faní</b>	hot
<b>dzu</b>	fill	<b>dzūyni</b>	full
<b>kút</b>	circle	<b>kūtni</b>	round
<b>kóγən</b>	be dry	<b>koráni</b>	dry
<b>mása</b>	be narrow	<b>masāyni</b>	narrow
<b>ndərəŋ</b>	get old	<b>ndərəŋi</b>	old
<b>γγyóó</b>	ripen	<b>γγyōyni</b>	ripe
<b>pusáŋ</b>	remain	<b>pusáŋi</b>	left over
<b>ros</b>	rot	<b>rosíni</b>	rotten

Some participles cannot be linked to a verb : **fopláŋi**, *void* ; **ndzoŋi**, *sour* ; **ŋgwakáni**, *crooked* ; **soorí**, *evil, mad* ; **sokí**, [swoγəy], *honest*.

### 6.3 Adjectival constructions

#### 6.3.1 Attributive adjectives

The paratactic construction uses the Noun + Adjective : **leemú báli**, *an orange* (lit. *lemon sweet*) ; **fáá fári**, *a black cow* (lit. *cow black*)

The analytic construction uses the genitive link **ú** and the word order Noun + **ú** + Adjective : **es ú bari/gabi**, ‘elder/younger brother’, lit. ‘brother of old/young’ ; **fáawarí ú maní**, ‘good advice’, lit. ‘advice of good’ ; **sər ú tami**, ‘good song’, lit. ‘song of nice’.

**ma dal faŋlaa ú limi**  
I+Aor cross river of deep  
*I crossed a deep river.*

#### 6.3.2 Predicative adjectives

Predicative adjectives use the non-verbal predicate **ni**<sup>5</sup> (‘be’) with the order Noun + Adjective + **ni** :

<sup>5</sup> This word is pronounced [ni] in sentence-final position and [nə] elsewhere.

**yàáŋ goní dasóŋ ni**  
 man this ugly be  
*This man is ugly.*

The negative uses the particle **ndí** :

**łáy ɔ̄ŋir ni ndi, bóri ni**  
 cow+def black be Neg. white be  
*The cow is not black, it is white.*

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

**łáy níí zii pədí níí bari**  
 cow+def be+of black tree+def be+of big  
*the cow is black the tree is big*

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

**ko ko níí ílimí too amamá ma fá ...**  
 2sg 2sg be+of knowledge well but 1pl Top ...  
*You, you are educated, well but as for us...*

## 6.4 Participle constructions

### 6.4.1 Attributive participles

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

**mándərəm kokón bréedi ya?**  
 give+me dry bread Perf  
*Give me some dry bread !*

### 6.4.2 Predicative participles

In the affirmative, predicative participles use the non-verbal predicate **ni** only, without genitive link, and the word order Noun + Participle + **ni**. The negation uses the Negative Perfect of the corresponding verb. (cf. 8.2.3)

**bréedi ni kokóni bréedi ɔ̄ii kókən ndi**  
 bread+def be dry bread+def Neg dry Neg  
*the bread is dry the bread is not dry*

## 7. Pronominal paradigms

### 7.1 Subject pronouns

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

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

#### 7.1.1 Basic TAM's

	Aorist	Future	Continuous
1sg.	<b>a</b>	<b>máá</b>	<b>ám</b>
2sg.	<b>ú</b>	<b>kíí</b>	<b>kyáà</b>
3sg.	<b>Ø</b>	<b>Ø</b>	<b>tyáà</b>
1pl	<b>ma</b>	<b>man</b>	<b>maa</b>
2pl	<b>ko</b>	<b>kon</b>	<b>kwaa</b>
3pl	<b>tí</b>	<b>tín</b>	<b>taa</b>

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

The Future often appears with **-ni** suffixed to the verb :



**tin      tén-ni      ɬáá**  
 3pl+Fut touch-ni cow  
*They will touch the cow.*

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

**a      ndák-ni      ʃim      ú      ɓani**  
 1s+Aor like-ni food of hot  
*I like hot food.*

**ʃim      goní      ɓan-ni      sooséé**  
 food this hot-ni really  
*This food is too hot.*

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

**súkǎí      Ø      lwáksi      ú      ərám      gu      mbakáŋ      a      párti.**  
 rabbit Aor. get angry of thing Comp he-goat Cont. doing  
*Rabbit got angry about what He-goat was doing.*

**mbakáŋ      níí      tá-ni**  
 he-goat Fut enter-ni  
*He-goat will enter.*

## 7.1.2 Derived TAM's

### 7.1.2.1 Perfect

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

**min      Ø      tá      [hah]**  
 people Aor come out Perf  
*people came out*

**ti      féé      sárkín-yááki      [yah]**  
 they-Aor tell (traditional title) Perf  
*they told the war chief*

/K/ is realised [x] when followed by a nasal (generally the negative particle **ndi**) :

**baa      sáy      min      Ø      pór      maan̄ti      [yax]      ndi.**  
 Neg until people Aor do war Perf Neg  
*it doesn't mean that people make war*

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

**in      yaan      si      Ø      kap      paq<sup>6</sup>      too      [...]**  
 if one that Aor take Perf well [...]  
*if one agrees, well [...]*

### 7.1.2.2 Habitual

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

**yaan      ɗa      rəs      a      maan̄ti      ú      tóó      mat      ndi**  
 one Hab go at war of hand empty Neg  
*People don't go to war empty-handed (Hau. «akan koyar da yara harbi »)*

**ɗa** can also appear with the Future :

**súyáy      gu      tin      ɗa      pór      aɗa**  
 like this that 3p-Fut Hab do again  
*that's the way they will go on doing (Hau. «haka ne za su yi ta yi»)*

<sup>6</sup> When utterance final, the [q] can be replaced by the glottal stop [ʔ].

**ɗa** is related to the adverb **adfa**, *again*<sup>7</sup>. This adverb often appears redundantly with the Habitual, as in the example above.

## 7.2 Other pronouns

	Object pronouns	Possessive pronouns	Nominal Predication	ICP	Independent pronouns
1sg.	-(ó)m	gin	ám	H	ám
2sg.	kí	gee	kí	-kí	kí
3sg.	əri	gəs	əri	-tí	əri
1pl	ma	gəm	ma	-ma	ma
2pl	ko	gəŋ	ko	-ko	ko
3pl	səŋ	gəsəŋ	səŋ	-səŋ	səŋ

Comments :

- 3 kinship terms (**baa**, *husband* ; **kon**, *son* ; **ʔénsi**, *mother's brother*) have a special genitive paradigm :

	Possessive pronouns	<i>uncle</i>	<i>husband</i>
1sg.	-nǐí	ʔenǐí	baanǐí
2sg.	-nǐŋgee	ʔenǐŋgee	baanǐŋgee
3sg.	-nǐs	ʔenǐs	baanǐs
1pl	-nǐma	ʔenǐma	baanǐma
2pl	-nǐŋgəŋ	ʔenǐŋgəŋ	baanǐŋgəŋ
3pl	-nǐsəŋ	ʔenǐsəŋ	baanǐsəŋ

- ICP's are suffixed to the verb, with frequent consonant assimilation. The 1<sup>st</sup> person singular is marked by a Hi tone on the last syllable of the verb.  
NB : the 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular -tí which, with the Continuous **tyàá**, is the only survival of the common Chadic personal mark, under the form of the feminine pronoun. Elsewhere, the 3<sup>rd</sup> person mark is replaced by the word **əri**, which is to be compared to the word **ərám**, *thing*.
- The Dative does not have a specific paradigm, but is only marked in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person by a -íí suffixed to the verb. It replaces the Direct Object 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular pronoun **əri**, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural pronoun **səŋ**, becomes Lo :

Perfect	sg	tə súndəríí yaʔ	<i>they brought (it) to him</i>
	pl.	tə súndəríí səŋ ɲaʔ	<i>they brought (it) to them</i>
Continuous	sg	taa súndərtíí	<i>they are bringing (it) to him</i>
	pl	taa súndərtíí səŋ	<i>they are bringing (it) to them</i>
Future	sg	tən súndərníí	<i>they will bring (it) to him</i>
	pl	tən súndərníí səŋ	<i>they will bring (it) to them</i>

## 8. Syntax

### 8.1 Verbless sentences

#### 8.1.1 Identification

Identification is expressed either with a zero predicate :

**ʃin gin Ø múúsá zeyláání.**  
 name 1s.poss Equ Musa Zailani  
*My name is Musa Zailani.*

or with the non-verbal predicates **ni** or **səŋ** :

<sup>7</sup> The relation with the polysemic **adfa** of location is not clear (cf XXX)

**kí ni lok ú zodi.**  
 2s Equ king of Zodi  
*You are the King of Dott.*

**Dáwda Múúsá sɛŋ lok zodi.**  
 Dauda Musa Equ king Zodi  
*Dauda Musa is the King of Dott.*

### 8.1.2 Location

Location typically uses the non-verbal **ni** and prepositional phrases beginning with **a**, at : **a bə(t)**, *on top of* ; **a gəs**, *under* ; **a dalón**, *across* ; **a káá**, *behind* ; **a dum**, **a kənaa**, *in front* ; **aasi**, *inside* ; **a ndóŋ**, *outside* ; **a bií**, *near*, etc.

**kwálbá naa (<ni+a) bət téébur**  
 cup (<be+at) top table  
*The cup is on the table*

### 8.1.3 Existence, location & possession

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

Existence :

**ee yanzú ada**  
 yes Yanzu Loc  
*Yes, there's Yanzu*

**súkti ú dəfor ládabí ada**  
 staying of formerly respect Loc  
*In older days, there was respect.*

Location :

**ám a bən rəp gu ám ada**  
 1sg 1sg know place Rel 1sg Loc  
*(only) I know where I am*

Possession :

**ám ada ú 'yerám wúrɕu [...]**  
 1sg Loc of friend Rel+pl. [...]  
*I have friends who [...]*

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

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

## 8.2 Negation

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

### 8.2.1 Non-verbal sentence

**ye minés maní si ada ndi maní si doŋ sɔŋi**  
 see people+3s. how many Foc Loc Neg how many Foc return 3pl.  
*He saw how many of his people were not there, how many had come back.*

### 8.2.2 Verbal sentence

**ú bən yaan ɗa rəs a maŋti ú tóo mat ndi**  
 2sg+Aor know one Hab go at war with hand empty Neg  
*One doesn't go to war empty-handed.*

### 8.2.3 Perfect

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

**dii ti pat gálba a bət ma ndi**  
Neg 3pl.+Aor get victory at top 1pl. Neg  
*They have not overcome us.*

### 8.2.4 Hausa loanwords

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

**baa ni bəki ú bari ndi**  
Neg Ident. Festival of big Neg  
*It is not a big festival.*

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

**dón káda mini kən ərám gəsəŋ ndi**  
because Neg people+def take thing 3sg.+Poss Neg  
*So that people don't take his things.*

## 8.3 Focus

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

Non-focused sentence :

**wúni wu ŋgin asi gaa**  
child+def. pour milk into calabash  
*The girl poured milk into a calabash.*

Focused subject

**ni wún si wu ŋgin asi gaa**  
Ident. child Foc pour milk into calabash  
*It's the girl that poured milk into the calabash.*

Focused object

**ni ŋgin gu wúni wu asə gaa**  
Ident. milk Rel child+def. Pou into calabash  
r

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

Focused circumstantial

**ni asi gaa gu wúni wu ŋgin ada**  
Ident. into calabash Rel child+def. pour milk Pro  
*It's into the calabash that the girl poured milk.*

## 8.4 Question

### 8.4.1 Yes/no questions

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

**(kóó) ú pər mákárántá hak?**  
(or) 2s.+Aor do school Perf  
*Did you go to school ?*

---

<sup>8</sup> **gu** is also the relative complementiser (cf. *infra*).

When the sentence is not in the Perfect, **aa** or **ee** is added to the last word :

**kí aḏa ú 'yerómaa**  
2sg. Poss of friend+Quest  
*Did you have friends ?*

**koḏa bəni wurbi, waato sadáàkèè?**  
2pl.+Hab. Give+pl. money that is dowry+Quest  
*Did you use to give money, that is a dowry ?*

#### 8.4.2 Wh- questions

**Zoḏi** questions words are : **nen**, *what* ; **noo**, *who* ; **gee**, *which one* ; **geegoy** (< **gee+goo**, 'day' + **def.**), *when (lit. which day)* ; **maní**, *how many* ; **nómi**, *how* ; **shép nin / sherám nin**, *why*. The same falling intoneme is used with Wh questions and yes/no questions. Questions words appear either *in situ*, or in a focus construction.

##### 8.4.2.1 *In situ* constructions

**təmti ú nəs sáá ú bas gee fot təmti ?**  
pleasure of mother with of father which one exceed pleasure  
*Between a mother's joy and a father's, which one is the best?*

**máti gee manî ?**  
wife 2s.+Poss how many  
*how many wives do you have ?*

**ú wómni nómi goo gu ti [...] ?**  
2s.+Aor feel+Pl. how day that 3pl.+Aor  
*how did you feel the day that they [...] ?*

**wún koni yépmi máásai ayo ?**  
child boy buy+Pl. pancake+def. where  
*Where did the boy buy the pancake ?*

##### 8.4.2.2 Focus construction

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

##### 8.4.2.2.1 Subject

**gyee si fot təmtî ?**  
which one Foc exceed pleasure+Quest  
*Which one is the best ?*

**manî si mós kî ?**  
how many Foc die 2sg+Quest  
*How many [children] did you lose ? (lit. died [on] you)*

##### 8.4.2.2.2 Object

**nèn gu wún koni cî ?**  
what Rel child boy eat+Quest  
*What did the child eat?*

##### 8.4.2.2.3 Circumstantial

**geegwey / ayo / nómi / shyáp nin gu yep máása aḏay / aḏaw ?**  
when / where / how / why Rel buy pancake **aḏa**+def. / **aḏa** + Quest  
*When / where / how / why did he buy pancake ?*

**noo gu ko fot súkti ko kóóḏaw ?**  
who Rel 2sg. exceed staying 2sg. 2sg.+**aḏa**+Quest  
*Who did you most stay with?*

## 8.5 Complex sentences

### 8.5.1 Relative clauses

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

**too sáy kon wúni pi əróm gu a ndákəti**  
well then child boy+def. do thing Rel. Cont. wanting

*Well, then the child did what he wanted.*

**sáy mée mə́ wúrdɔ̀ ti pat máni**  
then children girl Rel.+pl. 3pl.+Aor take men+def.

**ɗi ti doŋ sɔ́ŋ ɣak ndi**  
Neg 3pl.+Aor return 3pl. Perf. Neg

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

### 8.5.2 Subordination

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

Except for the 1<sup>st</sup> person singular, the condition (generally with a temporal meaning) is marked by **si**<sup>9</sup> appearing between the subject and the verb of the protasis. The verb is generally in the Perfect, more rarely in the Continuous.

**sán si ɗoo sɔ́ŋ ɣak, to [...]**  
3pl. Foc follow 3pl Perf well [...]

*If they follow them, then [...]*

**sáy goo si sloo wak, [...]**  
then day Foc cut Perf [...]

*Then, if the day breaks, [...]*

**lok si suk kak, sáy [...]**  
king Foc sit down Perf then [...]

*If the king sits down, then [...]*

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

**ín bəki fwak-fwak si tʃet tak**  
if festival fwak-fwak Foc arrive Perf

**a bət ɗen ɗok-pərsi, to [...]**  
at top day ɗok-pərsi, well [...]

*If the fwak-fwak festival falls on the day of the ɗok-pərsi festival, then [...]*

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

**ámaa pat min nak a bət maŋti, sáy [...]**  
1sg+Cond find people Perf at top fight then [...]

*If I find people fighting, then [...]*

The protasis can also be a non-verbal clause.

**ín baa ni ɗen fwak-fwak ndi, to sáy [...]**  
if Neg it is day fwak-fwak Neg well then [...]

*If it is not the day of fwak-fwak, well, then [...]*

---

<sup>9</sup> It is difficult not to relate this **si** to the Focus marker. This poses an interesting problem for general linguistics which, since Haiman, tends to consider conditionals as topics.

Counterfactuals are introduced by the **səŋ** particle :

**səŋ**    **yàání**            **dīi**   **pat**   **karaatú**   **ndi**   **áy**    [...]   
Count. People+anaph. Neg get education Neg excl. [...]   
*If people hadn't got any education, well [...]*

## 9. References

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