CHAPTER 15

Basaá (A.43)

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1. Introduction

The Basaa [ɓasaá] language is spoken by an estimated 282,000 people (SIL, 1982, cited in Grimes 1996), with relatively minor dialect variation, in Province du Centre and Province du Littoral in southern Cameroon. Guthrie (1967-71) separates Basaa into two groups: Mbɛ́nɛ̂ A.43a, spoken in the departments of Nkam, Wouri, Sanaga-Maritime, Nyong et Kellé and Kribi, and Bakóko A.43b, spoken in the departments of Nkam and Sanaga-Maritime. The Ethnologue lists the following dialects: Bakem, Bon, Bibeng, Diboum, Log, Mpo, Mbang, Ndokama, Basso, Ndokbele, Ndokpenda, Nyamtam. The standard dialect, a form of Mbɛ́nɛ̂, is said to be spoken in the area around Pouma in Sanaga-Maritime, but has a widespread distribution in the Basaa speaking region. In addition, Basaa is spoken as a vehicular language in the Bakóko and Tunɛn areas (Breton & Fohtung 1991:21). Although quite evolved, Basaa is easily identifiable as Bantu by its lexicon as well as by its morphology, e.g. its noun class marking and verb extensions. The language is particularly noteworthy for the phonological changes it has undergone, which have in turn had a major effect on the verb stem morphology.

Among the earliest grammatical works on Basaa are Rosenhuber (1908), Scholaster (1914) and Schürle (1912). More recent extensive works dealing with Basaa phonology, grammar, and lexicon which I have consulted are Bot Ba Njock (1970), Lemb & De Gastines (1973), Janssens (1982, 1986), Dimmendaal (1988), and Bitjaa Kody (1990). A wide-ranging Basaa bibliography of over 50 items is indexed by Barreteau et al (1993:226).[1]

The sections which follow are devoted to phonology (§2), noun and noun phrase (§3), verb derivation (§4), and basic clause structure and verb inflection (§5).

2. Phonology

It is in its phonology that Basaá seems so non-Bantu-like. Diverging from "canonical" Bantu languages, Basaá allows both open and closed syllables and does not require surface syllable onsets, as exemplified in the following monosyllabic noun and verb forms:

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[1]My personal familiarity with Basaa stems mostly from a field methods course which I taught at the University of Southern California in 1983-4, followed up by additional informant work with Victor and Anne Bikai-Nyounai and Jean-Pierre Nyounai. I have benefitted from the contributions of Jose Hualdé, Mohammad I. Mohammad, and Deborah (Schlindwein) Schmidt, as well as from consultations with Marie Anne Ndongo Séméngué and Zachée Denis Bitjaa Kody. I am also grateful to Gisèle Teil-Dautrey of the Laboratoire Dynamique du Langage (Université de Lyon2 / CNRS) and my undergraduate student, Peter Wong, whose electronic lexicons of Basaa were particularly helpful to me in preparing this chapter.

CV:	sú	‘face’	V:	ú	‘night’
	pa	‘machete’			
	jɛ́	‘eat’		é	‘clear brush’
	lɔ	‘come, arrive’		ɔ	‘grow (plant)’
CVC:	kóp	‘chicken’	VC:	ɔ́mb	‘caterpillar’
	put	‘forest, bush’		on	‘island’
	lém	‘become extinguished’		áŋ	‘count, read’
	ɓɔl	‘rot’		ɔk	‘curse’
CVV:	péé	‘viper’	VV:	ɛ́ɛ́	‘tree’
	kɔɔ	‘skin’		óó	‘ear’
	hɛ́ɛ́	‘cost’		óó	‘make (sth.)’
	lɔɔ	‘pass, surpass’		ɛɛ	‘cry’

Also unexpected from a Bantu perspective, nouns need not have an overt prefix, nor are verbs required to end in a final vowel (FV) morpheme. As will be seen below, many noun class prefixes do still exist in Basaá (§3), as do verb extensions and FV morphemes (§4). We shall also see that surface onsetless syllables in lexical morphemes (e.g. noun and verb stems) always involve an abstract “ghost” consonant, corresponding to a historical consonant that has been dropped, e.g. PB *-tí > ɛ́ɛ́ ‘tree’, *-did- > ɛɛ ‘cry’ (Janssens 1982, 1986).

2.1. Vowels

Basaá distinguishes the seven vowels /i, e, ɛ, u, o, ɔ, a/, which occur long and short, and which contrast in open and closed syllables:

/i/	:	tí	‘give’	sìì	‘rub with force’	lim	‘be silent’
/e/	:	ye	‘be’ (pres.)	séé	‘rejoice’	ɓép	‘beat’
/ɛ/	:	nɛ́	‘grind’	sɛɛ	‘sow’	kɛ́p	‘tatoo’
/u/	:	tú	‘evaporate’	suu	‘tease’	kun	‘choose’
/o/	:	jo	‘bury’	soo	‘savour’	hól	‘sharpen’
/ɔ/	:	lɔ	‘come’	sɔɔ	‘be permeable’	hɔ́k	‘swim’
/a/	:	lá	‘lick’	sáá	‘spread (sth.)’	pát	‘pick’

However, as Janssens (1986:189-190) shows, the relation of these seven vowels to the seven-vowel system of Proto-Bantu (PB) is not always direct. For instance, the vowel of noun and verb stems which have lost a final *a are one degree lower than in PB:

*díbá	‘water’	>	ma≠lép	6	‘water’ (cf. lép 5 ‘rivière, ruisseau’)
*kúba	‘hen’	>	kóp	9	‘hen, rooster’
*bíngá	‘pigeon’	>	hi≠bɛŋ	19	‘pigeon’

*gumba	‘sterile female’	>	kɔm	9	‘sterility’

*dɟm-a	‘extinguish’	>	lém	‘extinguish’
*dɣt-a	‘pull’	>	ot	‘pull, draw, smoke’
*bíd-(u)-a	‘be cooked’	>	ɓɛ́l	‘be cooked’
*túm-a	‘send’	>	ɔ́m	‘send’

The vowel alternations that occur in derived verb forms, e.g. applicative límîl, udul, ɓélêl, ómôl, are discussed in §4.2.

2.2. Consonants

The Basaá consonant system is considerably more complex and requires that one distinguish stem-initial vs. other positions in the word. For this purpose we recognize the “prosodic stem” (root + suffixes) for which the following shapes are attested:

1 syllable				
CV	lá	‘lick’	nɔ	‘rain’
CVC	hól	‘sharpen’	ɓaŋ	‘make (sth.)’
2 syllables (ŏ-σ)				
CV.CV	ɓá.lɛ̂	‘lend’	he.ya	‘remove’
CV.CVC	hɔ́.ŋɔ̂l	‘remember’	no.mos	‘prolong’
2 syllables (ō-σ)				
CVC.CV	ɓám.da	‘press, squeeze’	hɔh.lɛ	‘detach’
CVC.CVC	mág.lak	‘opening’	naŋ.lak	‘lying (down)’
3 syllables				
CVC.CV.CV	háŋ.lɛ.nɛ	‘fry for / with / at’	ɓum.la.ha	‘make to knock’

As illustrated, the prosodic stem contains a maximum of three syllables, four consonants (C1, C2, C3, C4) and three vowels (V1, V2, V3). In addition, the initial syllable of bisyllabic stems may either be light or heavy, while the initial syllable of trisyllabic stems must be heavy.

Within the prosodic stem, the number of underlying consonant oppositions is progressively smaller as one passes from C1 to C2 to C3 to C4:

C1 = 22					C2 = 12			C3 = 6			C4 = 3
p	t	c	k	kw	p	t	k	p	t	k	k
	s		h			s			s		s
ɓ	l	j		gw		l			l		
		y		w			y				
m	n	ny	ŋ	ŋw	m	n	ŋ		n		n
mb	nd	nj	ŋg		mb	nd	ŋg				

The full range of 22 consonants contrast in C1 position vs. 12, 6 and 3 in each successive position.[2] In addition, while /k, s, n/ all occur as C4 in CVCCVCV stems, only /k/ appears in CVCCVC stems, e.g. máglak 'en ouvrant'.

Besides the gradual decrease in consonant oppositions, /p, t, k, s/ are realized differently according to position within the template, as follows: In C1 position, /p, t, k, s/ are realized [p, t, k, s], independent of whether there is a preceding prefix or not, e.g. class 5 li-: li≠pan 'forest', li≠tám 'fruit', li≠kuŋ 'owl', li≠saŋ 'time, occasion'. /s/ contrasts with /h/ in this position; cf. lì≠háŋ 'animal track'. On the other hand, /p, t, k/ are realized voiced when not in C1 position, and when not occurring before pause. Written "b, d, g", the voiced variants are often also spirantized to [β, r, ɣ], especially when occurring postvocalically. Thus, compare the following underlying, orthographic and phonetic representations of the following words:

Underlying	**Orthographic**	**Phonetic**	
/títkí/[3]	tídgí	tírgí	'small'
/ɓomta/	ɓomda	ɓòmdà	'trip (v.)'
/pítip/	pídîp	pírîp	'scorn'
/li≠mapka/	li≠mabga	lì≠maβga	'taking form'
/kɔkna/	kɔgna	kɔɣna	'crush each other'

This voicing (and spirantization), which is predictable once the stem-boundary (≠) is recognized, also occurs in prefixes and other grammatical morphemes, e.g. bi- (class 8), bí (general past tense), di- (class 13), di (first person plural), gá (general future tense). Exceptions which occur fall into two categories. The first consists of borrowings, e.g. dɔ́kta 'doctor', dɔ́lâ 'five francs' (< "dollar"), pásto 'paster', síta 'sister', sitâmp 'stamp, seal', hɔ́sì 'horse', pɔpɔ́ 'papaya', kakáo 'cacao'. The second category of exceptions consists of words whose two CV sequences are identical, e.g. papáy 'wing', tatâ 'my

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[2] Consistent with the historical phonology of the language, the palatal affricates /c, j/ can be analyzed at a deeper level as /ty, ly/ and the voiced labiovelars /gw, ŋw/ as /ɓy, my/. In present day Basaa the only surface C+y sequence is [hy], which some speakers simplify to [h], e.g. hyembí ~ hembí 'song'.

[3] Lemb & de Gastines (1973:471) enter this word as títígí, but indicate its realization as tídígí. Although this suggests an original initial syllable reduplication, the medial vowel of [tírgí] undergoes the syncope process discussed below. Cf. also their entries kêglɛ 'morning' for which they also provide the alternate form kêkɛla (which José Hualde recorded as [kêɣɛla] in our field methods course).

father', kɛ́kɛ́t 'edible caterpillar', sísígâ 'hiccup'. As we shall see in §3.1, nouns may undergo a diminutization process involving reduplication, which not only results in C2 [p, t, k, s], e.g. sú 'face' → hi≠súsú 'small face', but also permits underlying consonants that would not normally appear in C2 position, e.g. ŋgwɔ́ 'dog' → hi≠ŋgwɔ́ŋgwɔ 'small dog'. It should be noted that non-stem-initial /p, t, k/ are written as p, t, k when word-final, otherwise as b, d, g, e.g. níp 'steal', níb-â 'be stolen' (passive).

The above summarizes the realization of stem-internal /p, t, k, s/. When stem-final, the stops /p, t, k/ are typically realized voiceless before pause.[4] As a consequence, they are generally transcribed as voiceless whenever word-final, e.g. li≠yɛ́p 'poverty', li≠yɔ́t 'anger', li≠lɔ́k 'dancing'. However, there is variation, e.g. /mut/ 'person' can be heard as [mut˚], [mut^{h}], [mud] or even [mur]. /s/ is realized [s] as C1 and before pause, e.g. li≠sún 'red fly (sp.)', li≠kás 'corner, angle'. Elsewhere, /s/ is realized as [h], thereby neutralizing with /h/. The differential realization of /s/ as [s] vs. [h] is often seen in the derivational verb morphology, e.g. tís 'touch', tíhâ 'be touched' (passive), tíhîl 'touch for/at' (applicative), tíhɓa 'touch' (reflexive). Since only /k/ occurs finally as C4, C4 /s/ is always prevocalic and appears as [h], e.g. pinglaha 'make move', indirect causative of pingil 'move (sth.)'. Finally, researchers concur that the prenasalized consonants /mb, nd, ŋg/ are voiced, even before pause, e.g. li≠umb 'alcohol', li≠pend 'barrier', li≠sɛ́ŋg 'parasol-holder'.

2.3. Tone

As seen in the above examples, Basaá contrasts H(igh) and L(ow) tone (Bot Ba Njock 1964, Dimmendaal 1988). H is marked by an acute accent, while L is unmarked. A syllable may be either all H or L, or may involve a fall from H to L to a rise from L to H.[5] The resulting four-way tonal opposition is found on CVC and CVV roots:

kón	'rice'	ɓɛ́ɛ́	'hole'
sɛl	'basket'	lee	'feather'
kɔ̂l	'charcoal'	túu	'shoulder'
nɔ̌p	'rain'	nyɔɔ́	'snake'

As Janssens (1986:184-186) demonstrates, these H and L tones generally correspond to PB, as seen in the following cases where PB *CVCV > CVV through the loss of the second stem consonant:

*-gudu	'leg'	>	koo	'leg'
*-bigá	'pot'	>	hi-ɓɛɛ́	'pot'
*-tátu	'three'	>	áà [áâ]	'three'

[4]When non-prepausal, and especially in normal, connected speech, non-C1 stops are typically realized voiced and continuant, e.g. corók + dínân [coróɣ rínân] 'your (pl.) stars'.

[5]Rising tones create length on the vowel on which they are realized, e.g. nyɔɔ́ 'snake', which is not transcribed on CVC syllables, e.g. nɔ̌p 'rain'.

*-pídí	‘viper’	>	péé	‘viper’

Where the final vowel is lost, the one remaining tone is identical to the first tone of the PB reconstruction:

*≠bɥmo	‘belly’	>	li≠ɓum	‘belly’
*≠dugú	‘brother’	>	lok	‘family, lineage, of the same tribe’
*≠jánà	‘child’	>	m≠ǎn	‘child’ (/m`≠án/)
*≠támbí	‘sole of foot’	>	támb	‘shoe’

The major tone rule in present-day Basaá is High Tone Spreading (HTS), by which a /H-L/ sequence becomes [H-HL] (high-falling) on the surface. The rule applies extensively to both nouns and verbs (Dimmendaal 1988:29):

/kɛ́mbɛ/	→	kɛ́mbɛ̂	‘goat’
/li≠pɛ́hɛl/	→	li≠pɛ́hɛ̂l	‘comb’
/hólol/	→	hólôl	‘ripen’
/kɛ́ŋgɛp/	→	kɛ́ŋgɛ̂p	‘get fat’

The rule also applies across a word boundary. Thus njɛ́ɛ́ ‘which’ + mut ‘person’ → njɛ́ɛ́ mût ‘which person?’. Compare also njɔk yɛm ‘my elephant’ vs. ŋgók yɛ̂m ‘my pride’.

In certain situations HTS provides a window into the underlying syllable structure of a form. This is seen particularly clearly in derived verb forms:

		passive	**applicative**
ɓép	‘beat’	ɓíbâ	ɓíbîl
kɛ́t	‘pick’	kédâ	kédêl
kóbôl	‘peel’	kóbla	kóblɛnɛ
ságâl	‘unhook’	ságla	ságlɛnɛ

As seen in the first pair of examples, when the L tone passive suffix -a or applicative suffix -Vl is added to a H tone CVC verb, the H spreads to create a HL falling tone on the suffix. As also seen, root vowels sometimes undergo a vowel raising or umlaut process (cf. §4.2). In the second pair of examples involving CVCVC verbs, the passive is again marked by -a, while in this case the applicative suffix has the shape -ɛnɛ. In neither case does the root H create a falling tone on the next vowel. (Vowel raising also does not apply.) We can account for this most straightforwardly if we assume a derivation such as the following:

			HTS		**syncope**
/kóbol-a/	‘be peeled’	→	kóbôla	→	kóbla
/ságal-a/	‘be unhooked’	→	ságâla	→	ságla

First HTS spreading applies onto the medial vowel, as shown, and then this vowel is deleted by the following syncope rule:

V → Ø / V C ___ C V

Besides its interaction with this syncope process, HTS can provide evidence for whether a long vowel should be analyzed as tauto- vs. heterosyllabic. Thus, consider the following minimal pair, whose derived forms should be compared to those seen above:

			passive		**applicative**	
sáá	/sáC/	'spread'	séâ	/séCa/	séê	/séCeC/
sáâ	/sáCaC/	'pay'	séέa	/séCCa/	sáánɛ	/sáCnE/

When the passive suffix -a is added to a H tone CVV verb, the latter undergoes vowel shortening (and vowel raising). As seen, such verbs are analyzed with a final ghost /C/, which can provide length only if it is in coda position. In addition, rather than adding /-Vl/, H tone CVV verbs typically form their applicative by changing their vowel and acquiring a HL tone. On the other hand, a CVV verb which has a HHL tonal contour keeps its length in the passive and uses the -(ɛ)nɛ allmorph of the applicative. As seen, such verbs are underlying bisyllabic with two ghost /C/'s.[6]

Note finally that contour tones often simplify when not in pre-pause position. Although there is variation, when followed by a H tone, a rising tone typically becomes L, e.g. jŏy 'name', joy jǒŋ 'your name'. Similarly, a HL falling tone may simplify to H in connected speech, e.g. tatâ 'father', tatá wĕs 'our father'. When followed by a H, a falling tone will also be simplified to H. In this case, the delinked L tone causes a downstep on the following H, e.g. n≠cêp 'branch', n≠cép ꜜwóŋ 'your branch'. There are many other contexts in which downstepped H's are produced. These all have in common that an unlinked or floating L tone is wedged between two H tones. There are two such downsteps in the following sentence:

a	bí	ꜜtí	ɓɔ́	ꜜkón	'he gave them beans'	
|	|	|	|	|		
L	H	L H	H	L	H	

The first unlinked L follows the general past marker bí, while the second is a floating L prefix on class 9 kón 'beans, rice'. This latter L shows that all nouns have a L prefix, whether it is realized segmentally or not.

[6]There is some irregularity in certain cases, and on-going change, however. Rather than sáánɛ, the input form /sáCaC-ɛnɛ/ should first become sáCCɛnɛ by syncope, and then produce *sááɛnɛ. Such an output is obtained with certain other verbs, e.g. túû 'drag' has the applicative form túúɛnɛ.

3. The Noun and Noun Phrase

As in other Bantu languages, Basaá nouns consist of a prefix + stem and condition noun class concord on agreeing elements (cf. Bot Ba Njock 1970, Dimmendal 1988). Table 1 provides an overview of noun class marking in Basaá:

	Noun Prefix		**Concord Prefix**	
Class	/ __ C	/ __ V	/ __ C	/ __ V
1(a)	N≠, Ø-	m-, ŋw-	u-[7]	w-
2	ɓa≠	ɓ-	ɓá-	ɓ-´
3	N≠	ŋ-	ú-	w-´
3a	Ø-	w-	ú-	w-´
4	miN≠	miŋ-	mí-	ŋw-´
5	li≠	j-	lí-	j-´
6	ma≠	m-	má-	m-´
7	Ø-	y-	í-	y-´
8	bi≠	gw-	bí-	gw-´
9	Ø-/N-	ny-	i-	y-
10	Ø-/N-	ny-	í-	y-´
13	di≠	c-	dí-	c-´
19	hi≠	hy-	hí-	hy-´

Table 1. Noun Class Marking in Basaá

As seen, noun and concord prefixes may be either segmental or non-segmental and may have different realizations before consonant- vs. vowel-initial roots. Before a consonant, two kinds of homorganic nasal prefix must be distinguished: class 1,3 N≠, which is moraic and tone-bearing vs. class 9/10 N-, which is non-moraic and non-tone-bearing.

3.1. Nouns

In all cases, the basic tone of noun prefixes is L (which will float if the prefix is non-segmental or non-moraic, e.g. in classes 1a, 3a, 7, 9 and 10). Examples are provided in Table 2:[8]

[7]The class 1 subject marker is, however, a-, as in many Bantu languages (cf. Table 8).

[8]I follow the following convention for marking prefixes: ≠ if the prefix does not fuse with the stem; - if it does.

	singular	**plural**	
1/2	n≠lóm	ɓa≠lóm	‘husband, male’
	ŋ≠ɔɔ	ɓa≠ɔɔ	‘enemy’
	m-ut	ɓ-ot	‘person’
	m-udaá	ɓ-odaá	‘woman’
	m-aaŋgɛ́	ɓ-ɔɔŋgɛ́	‘child’
	ŋw-aá	ɓ-aá	‘wife’
	nyámbɛ̂	ɓa≠nyámbɛ̂	‘God’
3/4	m≠pék	mi-m≠pék	‘bag’
	n≠tómbá	mi-ntómbá	‘sheep’
	ŋ≠kɔl	mi-ŋ≠kɔl	‘slave’
	n≠sɛ́m	mi-n≠sɛ́m	‘flower’
	ŋ≠ɔ́	mi-ŋ≠ɔ́	‘head’
	ŋ≠ɛ́m	mi-ŋ≠ɛ́m	‘heart’
3a/6	nyɔ́	ma≠nyɔ́	‘mouth’
	koo	ma≠koo	‘leg’
	sú	ma≠sú	‘face’
	óó	ma≠óó	‘ear’
	w-ɔ́ɔ́	m-ɔ́ɔ́	‘hand’
	w-ɛ̌m	m-ɛ̌m	‘mushroom’ (sp.)
5/6	li≠pa	ma≠pa	‘forest’
	li≠ɓum	ma≠ɓum	‘belly’
	li≠én	ma≠én	‘oil palm’
	li≠áá	ma≠áá	‘rock’
	j-ŏl	m-ŏl	‘nose’
	j-ɨ̌s	m-ɨ̌s	‘eye’
	j-alá	m-alá	‘crab’
7/8	tɔ́ŋ	bi≠tɔ́ŋ	‘horn’
	hes	bi≠hes	‘bone’
	ɛ́ɛ́	bi≠ɛ́ɛ́	‘tree’
	ɔ́mb	bi≠ɔ́mb	‘caterpillar’
	y-ɔ̌m	gw-ɔ̌m	‘thing’
	y-oó	gw-oó	‘yam’

9/10	pɛ́n	pɛ́n	‘arrow’
	tók	tók	‘spoon’
	kúl	kúl	‘tortoise’
	m-bɔm	m-bɔm	‘python’
	n-dɛ́k	n-dɛ́k	‘calabash’
	ŋ-gwɔ́	ŋ-gwɔ́	‘dog’
	sóŋ	sóŋ	‘moon, month’
	nyoy	nyoy	‘bee’
9/6	pɔ́ɔ́	ma≠pɔ́ɔ́	‘wound’
	kíŋ	ma≠kíŋ	‘neck, voice’
	m-bɔ́t	ma≠m-bɔ́t	‘cloth, clothing’
	n-dáp	ma≠n-dáp	‘house’
	ŋ-gand	ma≠ŋ-gand	‘feast’
	nyuú	ma≠nyuú	‘body’
19/13	hi≠tám	di≠tám[9]	‘kidney’
	hi≠keŋ	di≠keŋ	‘knife’
	hi≠sí	di≠sí	‘earth, ground’
	hi≠nuní	di≠nuní	‘bird’
	hi≠ee	di≠ee	‘scorpion’
	hi≠ɔŋ	di≠ɔŋ	‘flute, trumpet’
	hy-ǎy	c-ǎy	‘leaf’
	hy-oŋ	c-oŋ	‘hair’

Table 2 . Noun Class Marking on Nouns

As in other Bantu languages, most nouns occur in singular/plural pairs or “genders”, as illustrated in the table.[10] The following can be noted about the noun class pairings in the above table:

Class 1/2 nouns show a wide array of prefixal irregularity, usually involving a nasal in the singular and an implosive labial in the plural. While many members of 1/2 designate humans, many others do not. Most of these lack a nasal prefix in the singular

[9]The realization of class 13 prefixes is of some interest. First, Marie Anne Ndongo Semengue informed me (personal communication, 1981) that instead of di-, some Basaa speakers have the prefix tu- (cf. PB *tu-). Except for this, the difference in voicing has to do with whether the consonant is in the prefix or the stem. When realized as di≠, it is clearly not part of the stem, and hence must be voiced. When fused with the stem, it palatalizes and devoices to c- as a consequence of joining the stem. There is some variation in the demonstrative form tíní ~ díní ‘these’ (§3.3), indicating that the stem status is not clear. Note that this devoicing does not apply to bi- > gw- or li- > j-. It is striking how none of these changes results in merger (i.e. gw- does merge with kw-, nor does j- merge with c-).

[10]Also as in other Bantu languages, some nouns occur only in single classes, whether for semantic or other reasons, e.g. certain liquid/masses in class 6 such as ma≠ɔk ‘wine’ (~ m-ɔɔk).

and can be identified as class 1a: tolo ‘mouse’ (pl. ɓa≠tolo), ɓɔŋá ‘brain’ (pl. ɓa≠ɓɔŋá), sap ‘type of trap’ (pl. ɓa≠sap).

Class 3 nouns are marked by a homorganic moraic nasal prefix (N≠), realized as velar before a vowel, which is distinct in two ways from the non-moraic prefix (N-) found in 9/10. First, it can appear before the consonants [p, t, c, k, ɓ, s, h], while 9/10 N- appears only before [b, d, j, g]. Second, it counts as a tone-bearing unit for the purpose of HTS. Thus compare: li≠wándá lí ŋ́≠kɔl ‘friend of a slave (class 3)’ vs. li≠wándá lí m-bɔ̂m ‘friend of a python (class 9)’ (m-bɔm). The plural in class 4 is constructed by adding mi- to the singular nasal prefix.[11]

Class 3a conditions the same agreements as class 3. It differs from class 3 in its plural (class 6 vs. class 4) and its prefix. Rather than a nasal, the class 3a prefix is realized Ø before a consonant and w- before a vowel (< /u-/), which derives from PB *du- (11), *bu- (14) or *ku- (15), which are not distinguished in Basaa.[12]

Genders 3a/6, 5/6, 7/8 and 19/13 all show important prefix variants depending on whether the stem begins with a consonant or a vowel. These alternations, which are attested also in the concord system, are an important part of the phonetic history of the language and are duplicated within morphemes as well. Thus, the same li-/j- and bi-/gw- alternations seen in classes 5 and 8 are observed in verb roots such as jɛ́ ‘eat’ (< PB *≠dí-a) and gwâl ‘give birth’ (< PB *≠bi̧ad-). While vowel prefixes fuse before root vowels in several of the cited nouns, other nouns in the above table show the preconsonantal prefix forms Ø- or CV- before apparent vowel-initial roots. Thus compare class 3a w-ɔ́ɔ́ ‘hand’ vs. óó ‘ear’, class 5 j-alá ‘crab’ vs. li≠áá ‘rock’, class 7 y-ɔ̌m ‘thing’ vs. ɛ́ɛ́ ‘tree’, and class 19 hy-oŋ ‘hair’ vs. hi≠ɔŋ ‘flute’. The answer proposed by Schmidt 1994, Buckley 1997, and others is that non-fused root-initial vowels are preceded by a synchronic ghost consonant similar to the h-aspiré phenomenon in French, e.g. /li≠Cén/ ‘oil palm’ (vs. /li-ís/ ‘eye’). In general, roots which fuse with their prefix are those which reconstruct with *j and are vowel-initial in much of the Bantu area, while those which do not fuse have lost their historical initial consonant more recently, e.g. j-ɨ̌s ‘eye’ vs. li≠én ‘oil palm’, from earlier *di≠ji̧co and *di≠téndé, respectively. Note, finally, that when a prefix fuses with a H root, the result is a LH rising tone, e.g. wɨ̌p (3a) ‘theft’ (< /u-íp/). This suggests that the class 9 nouns nyɛ̌mb ‘death’, nyŏy ‘bee’, and nyɛ̌t ‘buffalo’ might be analyzed as vowel-initial with a ny`- prefix.[13]

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[11] It appears that most nouns beginning with [ŋw] in Lemb & de Gastines (1973) condition class 3 agreement and can be identified as 3a on the basis of their class 6 plural, e.g. ŋwɛ̌l ‘tail’ (pl. ma≠ŋwɛ̌l). We know, however, that this noun derives from PB 3/4 *mu≠kída), suggesting that class 3 *mu- and class 4 *mi- fell together in Basaa before a vowel, where both would be realized [ŋw]. Perhaps the exceptional 3/4 noun mim ‘cadaver’, which is invariant in the plural, points to the same merger.

[12] The one noun w-ɔ̌m/ŋw-ɔ̌m ‘garden’ (3a/4) inexplicably takes a class 4 plural rather than class 6.

[13] All vowel-initial verbs behave as if there is a ghost consonant, and the nasal prefix found in inflection takes a velar shape (as in noun class 3), e.g. li≠kɔndɔ ŋ́≠ɔ̂ ‘the banana tree has grown’ (ɔ

Classes 9 and 10 provide an additional analytical dilemma: Should the non-moraic nasal that is found in mb, nd, nj, and ŋg combinations be segmented off as a prefix, as in PB, or should it be considered part of the stem? Besides the historical argument, the major reason for considering the nasality to be a prefix is sheer numbers: Class 9 initial mb, nd, nj, ŋg vastly outnumber all other initial consonants combined.[14] However, other arguments suggest that the nasal is not a prefix, synchronically. First, Basaa has prenasalized consonants in other positions, including C2, e.g. pend 'fence in', hɔŋg 'snore', and C1 in verbs, where there is no question of prefixation, e.g. ndéŋg 'swing', njáhâ 'beg cleverly'. In addition, there are quite a few noun stems in classes other than 9 and 10 which begin with NC, e.g. li≠ndu 'palm fiber' (5/6), hi≠ŋgɔŋ 'Adam's apple'. Even if it could be shown that such nouns were shifted from class 9, there is no synchronic evidence for double prefixation, i.e. li≠n-du, hi≠ŋ-goŋ. The fact is that the nasal is not replaced by prefix substitution here, nor when class 6 ma- is added to the singular in 9/6 nouns, e.g. ma≠n-dáp 'houses'.

The same inseparability of 9/10 initial nasality is observed in the productive process of diminutivization. A noun may be diminutivized by reduplicating its stem and shifting it into 19/13. In addition, although there is considerable variation, a suffix -a is frequently added as is a H tone suffix. This produces variants such as the following in the singular (the corresponding plurals have the class 13 prefix di-):

yɛp	'buttock'	→	hi≠yɛyɛ́p	hi≠yɛyɛ̂p	hi≠yɛ̌yɛba
	(class 7)		hi≠yɛyɛ́bá	hi≠yɛyɛ́ba	hi≠yɛyɛ́ꜜbá
li≠ɓum	'belly'	→	hi≠ɓuɓúm		
	(class 5)		hi≠ɓuɓúmá	hi≠ɓuɓúmà	hi≠ɓuɓúꜜmá
n-jeé	'leopard'	→	hi≠njenjéé	hi≠njenjéꜜé	hi≠njěnjee
	(class 9)		hi≠njenjéá	hi≠njenjéꜜá	hi≠njěnjea

As seen, the prefix hi- will replace the class 5 prefix li-, but not the nasal of class 9, consistent with the position that the nasal is no longer a prefix in that class. However, there is one problem with this argumentation, which can be seen from the following additional reduplications:[15]

j-am / m-am	'thing, matter'	→	hi≠jajámá	hi≠jăjama

'grow'). However, Janssens (1982, 1986) points out that several historical vowel-initial verbs (< *j) begin with [n]: *-jɟb- > níp 'steal'; *-jɟm- > ním 'refuse'. He hypothesizes an earlier n- prefix.

[14] Out of 233 class 9 and 10 nouns in Teil-Dautrey's Basaa lexicon, 178 begin with NC, while 49 begin with an oral consonant—or, in one case of borrowing, a vowel: îs 'yeast'. An additional 6 begin with a simple nasal, which cannot be prenasalized in any case.

[15] I am grateful to Deborah Schmidt for sharing her findings on noun reduplication based on the USC field methods course in 1983-4. See also Bot Ba Njock (1970:169-170).

	(class 5/6)		di≠jajámá	di≠jăjama
			di≠mamama	di≠mămama
m-ut/ɓ-ot	'person'	→	hi≠mumúdá	hi≠mumúda
	(class 1/2)		di≠mumúdá	di≠mumúda
			di≠ɓoɓódá	di≠ɓoɓóda

Besides the tonal variants which are represented, we see a choice in the plural: The class 13 prefix can be added to either the reduplicated singular stem (jam, mut) or to the reduplicated plural stem (mam, ɓot). Although there is no difference in meaning, one can propose that di≠jajámá and di≠mumúdá are pluralized diminutives, while di≠mamámá and di≠ɓoɓódá are diminutivized plurals. The difference between Noun → Diminutive → Plural vs. Noun → Plural → Diminutive is only visible in cases where there is different fused prefix in singular and plural. What one does not obtain, however, is derivations like jam → hyam → *hyahyama, where class 19 hi- replaces the fused prefix. The observed inseparability of j-, m- etc. does not argue that they are not prefixes, only that they are more tightly bound prefixes (e.g. spelled out at stratum 1 in a lexical phonology framework). The same can therefore be said about the preconsonantal nasal in classes 9 and 10: It is a prefix spelled out at an earlier stratum than non-fused prefixes.

Basaa does not have Bantu diminutive class 12 *ka-, and has only relics of the locative classes, e.g. PB class 16 *pa > h-: hɔmá 'place' (1a/2), hɛ́ɛ́ 'where', háá 'that place'; PB class 18 *mu > mû 'in it' (Grégoire 1975; cf. Boum 1983 for a treatment of Basaa locative expressions in general).

3.2. Possessive pronouns

Table 3 presents the possessive pronouns in all 12 of the formally distinct noun classes in Basaá:[16]

[16] When occurring in isolation or initially within the noun phrase, these possessive forms take an i- prefix, which generally assimilates to [u] before rounded consonants and to the nasal of classes 4 and 6. Thus, the respective forms for 'mine' are: u-wɛm, i-ɓêm, u-wêm, ŋ-ŋwêm, i-jêm, m-mêm, i-yêm, u-gwêm, i-yɛm, i-yêm, i-hyêm, and i-cêm.

	‘mine’	‘yours sg.’	‘his/hers’	‘ours’	‘yours pl.’	‘theirs’
1	wɛm	wɔŋ	weé	wɛ̌s	nan	wɛ̌p
2	ɓɛ̂m	ɓɔ́ŋ	ɓéé	ɓɛ́s	nân	ɓáp
3	wɛ̂m	wɔ́ŋ	wéé	wɛ́s	nân	wáp
4	ŋwɛ̂m	ŋwɔ́ŋ	ŋwéé	ŋwɛ́s	mínân	ŋwáp
5	jɛ̂m	jɔ́ŋ	jéé	jɛ́s	línân	jáp
6	mɛ̂m	mɔ́ŋ	méé	mɛ́s	mánân	máp
7	yɛ̂m	yɔ́ŋ	yéé	yɛ́s	nân	yáp
8	gwɛ̂m	gwɔ́ŋ	gwéé	gwɛ́s	bínân	gwáp
9	yɛm	yɔŋ	yeé	yɛ̌s	nan	yɛ̌p
10	yɛ̂m	yɔ́ŋ	yéé	yɛ́s	nân	yáp
19	hyɛ̂m	hyɔ́ŋ	hyéé	hyɛ́s	hínân	hyáp
13	cɛ̂m	cɔ́ŋ	céé	cɛ́s	dínân	cáp

Table 3. Possessive Pronouns

As can be extracted from this table, the six pronominal stems are -ɛm, -ɔŋ, -é, -ɛ́s, -nan and -áp.[17] The concord prefixes are those found before a vowel, except before the second person plural root -nan, which begins with a consonant.[18] Classes 1 and 9 have a L tone concord which creates a LH rising tone when combining with a H pronominal root. This tonal difference is seen in such 9/10 nouns as njɔk yɛm ‘my elephant’ (class 9), vs. njɔk yɛ̂m ‘my elephants’ (class 10). The tonal distinction on possessive pronouns is neutralized, however, when a preceding noun ends in a H and HTS applies: ŋgwɔ́ yɛ̂m ‘my dog/dogs’ (class 9/10).

3.3. Connective and Demonstratives

Because of their formal similarity, the connective ‘of’, which is used when the possessor is a noun, and demonstratives are considered together in Table 4:

[17] I suspect that ‘my’ might better be reconstructed as -ɛm´, since it behaves differently from ‘your sg.’.
[18] Here and elsewhere some speakers simplify the hy- of class 19 to h-, hence hɛ̂m, hɔ́ŋ etc.

	connective	'this' (n.s.)	'that' (n.h.)	'that' (far)
1	nú	núnú	nû	núú
2	ɓá	ɓáná	ɓâ	ɓáá
3	ú	únú	û	úú
4	mí	míní	mî	míí
5	lí	líní	lî	líí
6	má	máná	mâ	máá
7	í	íní	î	íí
8	bí	bíní	bî	bíí
9	i	iní	i	ií
10	í	íní	î	íí
19	hí	híní	hî	híí
13	dí	tíní	dî	díí

Table 4. Connective and Demonstratives

As in other Bantu languages, the connective is required between nouns within a genitive construction, e.g. liwándá lí kíŋɛ̂ 'the friend of the chief'. Although only class 9 has a L tone marker, i, both it and class 1 nú may be deleted, particularly in the case of class 1a nouns, e.g. hɔmá ꜜkón 'place of the rice', njɔk (i) li≠wándá 'elephant of the friend'. Whereas a possessive pronoun may either precede or follow the possessed noun, a genitive noun must follow it. In addition, if the genitive noun begins with an overt L prefix, this L will be raised to H without conditioning a downstep on a following H: liwándá lí míntómbá 'friend of sheep (pl.)'. On the other hand, if the genitive noun is prefixless and L-H, e.g. nugá 'animal', a downstep will be obtained: liwándá lí núꜜgá. The analysis is that the connective causes a prefix to be raised to H, which also applies between a verb and the following object (§5.3). This process is distinct from HTS, which may apply subsequently:

li nuga → li nuga → li nuga
H L L H H H L H H H L H

The three demonstratives show considerable resemblance to the connective, especially as concerns class 1 nú (núnú, nû, núú) and the L of class 9 i (iní, i, ií). The demonstrative 'this' (near speaker) is best analyzed as (C)V_inV_i, where the first (C)V is from the noun class and both vowels have the same quality. It is not clear whether to analyze the first (C)V as a prefix, since class 13 tíní (etc.) is realized with apparent stem-initial devoicing. The variant díní does exist, but since class 8 bíní (etc.) never devoices, a totally consistent morphological interpretation is probably not possible. The other two demonstratives mark 'that' (near hearer) and 'that' (far from both speaker and hearer'. The near hearer form may also be used as a general referential 'the one in question'.

Demonstratives may either precede or follow the noun they modify, e.g. tíní dinuní = dínuní tíní 'these birds', líí liwándá = lí!wándá líí 'that friend'.[19] These examples show two interesting facts. First, there is no HTS between preposed demonstrative + noun.[20] Second, whenever there is a postposed demonstrative, the noun class prefix acquires a H tone. Dimmendaal (1988:58) analyzes this as an underlying /í-/ which surfaces on nouns which are either prefixless or whose prefix has fused with its vowel-initial stem:

1	maaŋgɛ́	mí≠maaŋgɛ́ núnú	'this child'
2	ɓɔɔŋgɛ́	í≠ɓɔɔŋgɛ́ ɓáná	'these children'
3	ŋ≠kɔl	ŋ́≠kɔl únú	'this slave'
4	mi-ŋ≠kɔl	mí-ŋ≠kɔl míní	'these slaves'
5	li≠wándá	lí≠!wándá líní	'this friend'
6	ma≠wándá	má≠!wándá máná	'these friends'
7	sɛl	í≠sɛl íní	'this basket'
8	bi≠sɛl	bí≠sɛl bíní	'these baskets'
9	n-jɔk	ń-jɔk iní	'this elephant'
10	n-jɔk	ń-jɔk íní	'these elephants'
19	hi≠nuni	hí≠nuní híní	'this bird'
13	di≠nuní	dí≠nuní tíní	'these birds'

Table 5. H Tone Prefix on Noun + Demonstrative 'this'

As seen, this H may also cause a downstep on the noun stem. If it is left out, the result is a presentative construction: li≠wándá líní 'here's a friend', di≠nuní tíní 'here are the birds'. This determiner H tone, which we can interpret as a trace of the PB augment, is also required when a noun is relativized:[21]

di≠nuní dí bí kwɔ	'the birds fell'
dí≠nuní dí bí kwɔ	'the birds which fell'
dí≠nuní li≠wándá lí bí !tɛ́hɛ̂	'the birds (that) the friend saw'

3.4. Numerals

[19] The morpheme noó can be add to the 'far' demonstrative to give the meaning 'that/those over there', e.g. liwándá líí noó 'that friend over there', dínuní díí noó 'those birds over there'.

[20] This contrasts with preposed possessives which end H, e.g. icɔ́ŋ dí≠nuní 'your birds.'

[21] Note that one can also prepose a demonstrative, e.g. tíní dinuní dí bí kwɔ 'these birds which fell', or the connective (refential), e.g. dí dinuní dí bí kwɔ 'the birds in question which fell'. Perhaps it is this latter which provides the historical input for the H on dínuní when a demonstrative or relative clause follows.

In isolation, e.g. when counting, the numbers ‘one’ through ‘ten’ are as follows:

pɔ́k	‘one’	isámal	‘six’
ɓaa	‘two’	isâmbɔ́k	‘seven’
áâ	‘three’	jwɛm	‘eight’
n.na	‘four’ (~ ina ?)	ɓoó	‘nine’
itan	‘five’	jŏm	‘ten’

Of these, only the numerals ‘one’ through ‘seven’ take noun class agreements, as seen in Table 6:

	1/2	**3/4**	**5/6**	**7/8**	**9/10**	**19/13**
‘1’	wàdá	wádá	jádá	yádá	yadá	hyádá
‘2’	ɓáa	mímáa	máa	bíɓáa	íɓáa	díɓáa
‘3’	ɓáâ	máâ	máâ	bíáâ	íáâ	díáâ
‘4’	ɓánâ	mínâ	mánâ	bínâ	ínâ	dínâ
‘5’	ɓátân	míntân	mátân	bítân	ítân	dítân
‘6’	ɓásámal	mísámal	másámal	bísámal	ísámal	dísámal
‘7’	ɓásâmbɔ́k	mísâmbɔ́k	másâmbɔ́k	bísâmbɔ́k	ísâmbɔ́k	dísâmbɔ́k

Table 6. Noun class concord on Numerals ‘1’ - ‘7’

Here we also observe that the root for ‘one’ is -ádá rather than pɔ́k. These numerals follow the noun they modify, e.g. mut wadá ‘one person’, di≠nuní dínâ ‘four birds’. The numeral jŏm ‘ten’ is a noun that belongs to class 5. It may be used either after the noun (as in the case of other numerals), e.g. ma≠wándá jŏm ‘ten friends’, or may be preposed, in which case the connective lí is required, e.g. jom lí máwándá. Both jŏm and its class 6 plural mŏm are used in combination with ‘1’ through ‘9’ to form compound numerals, e.g. jŏm ni ɓoó ‘19’. If the numeral following ni ‘and, with’ is ‘1’ through ‘7’, it will agree with the noun, e.g. ɓot jŏm ni wadá ‘11 people’. Decades are formed by multiples of mŏm ‘tens’, e.g. mom máà (~ moomáa) ‘twenty’ (lit. tens + two). Higher basic numbers include mbógôl ‘100’ and hi≠kóó ‘1000’ (pl. di≠kóo).

3.5. Adjectives

As in most Bantu languages (and many other African languages), adjectives are characterized by nominal morphology in Basaá and will be referred to as “adjectival nouns”. As such, they themselves have inherent gender and belong to one of six noun class pairings. Illustrations of the six adjectival noun genders are seen in Table 7.

1	n≠lám	‘beautiful’	n≠lám mut	‘beautiful person’
2	ɓa≠lám		ɓa≠lám ɓá ɓôt	‘beautiful people’
3	m≠ɓóŋgó	‘long, tall’	m≠ɓóŋgó mût	‘tall person’
4	mi-m≠ɓóŋgó		mi-m≠ɓóŋgó mí ɓôt	‘tall people’
5	li≠kɛ́ŋgɛ́	‘clever’	li≠kɛ́ŋgɛ́ lí mût	‘clever person’
6	ma≠kɛ́ŋgɛ́		ma≠kɛ́ŋgɛ́ má ɓôt	‘clever people’
7	lɔ́ŋgɛ̂	‘good’	lɔ́ŋgɛ́ ǃmût	‘good person’
8	bi≠lɔ́ŋgɛ̂		bi≠lɔ́ŋgɛ́ ǃbí ɓôt	‘good people’
9	m-búk	‘mute’	m-búk mut	‘mute person’
10	m-búk		m-búk ɓôt	‘mute people’
19	hi≠yɛ́bâ	‘poor’	hi≠yɛ́bá ǃhí mût	‘poor person’
13	di≠yɛ́bâ		di≠yɛ́bá ǃdí ɓôt	‘poor people’

Table 7. Adjectival Nouns

As seen, the noun class of the adjectival noun conditions the appropriate connective morpheme.[22] Unlike the genitive construction, an adjective + noun must agree in number, hence *hi≠yɛ́bá ǃhí ɓôt, *di≠yɛ́bá ǃdí mût. Class 1/2 adjectival nouns show an interesting pecularity (with some variation). While they participate in the above connective construction, they may also follow the noun, in which case they acquire a L tone prefix agreeing with the preceding noun: n≠tídgí hi≠nuní = hi≠nuní hi≠tídgí ‘small bird’, ɓa≠tídgí ɓá dí≠nuní = di≠nuní di≠tídgí ‘small birds’.[23] These postposed forms can be identified as “adjectives” even though almost all of them are either derived from or related to adjectival nouns in class 1/2. When the adjectival noun precedes, a remarkable fact is that other modifiers that are present must agree with it, rather than the modified noun: mí≠n-langá mí dí≠nuní míní (*tíní) ‘these black birds’, mi≠n-langá mí dí≠nuní ŋwɛ̂m ‘my black birds’ (*cɛ̂m). The same is true when such modifiers precede the adjectival noun: míní mi≠n-langá mí dí≠nuní, ŋwɛ̂m mi≠n-langá mí dí≠nuní (cf. §3.7).

Adjectival nouns appear to be numerous in Basaa.[24] In some cases the adjectival noun may independently exist as a noun of quality, e.g. li≠kéngɛ̂ ‘intelligence’, lɔ́ŋgɛ̂

[22] The one morphological difference with the genitive construction (noun + connective + noun) is that the class 9 connective marker i may not appear between an adjective and noun.

[23] For some speakers postposition is preferred in all cases except where the modified noun is itself 1/2 (or is human), although this seems to depend on the specific adjectival noun.

[24] I have thus far collected 77 adjectival nouns, distributed into noun class pairings as follows: 1/2 (7), 3/4 (23), 5/6 (6), 7/8 (27), 9/10 (7), 19/13 (7). Several of the 3/4 adjectival nouns are derived from verbs via the -ak suffix, e.g. ŋ≠abâk / mi-ŋ≠abâk ‘long’ (< ap ‘be long’), m≠ɓándɓak / mi-m≠ɓándɓak ‘curved’ (< m.ɓandap ‘bend (oneself)’)

'goodness'. The corresponding phrases in Table 7 may thus have once meant '(an) intelligence of person', '(a) goodness of person' etc. There also are a few cases where the modifying noun appears as the second member of the connective construction. In this case it is invariable: mud wĭm 'greedy person', pl. ɓot ɓá wím (lit. people of greed), nugá má≠hóŋ 'fat(ty) animal', pl. bi≠nugá bí má≠hóŋ (lit. animals of fats; cf. sg. li≠hóŋ 'animal fat').

3.6. The Pronominal System

Table 8 presents the major different forms of pronouns in Basaa (cf. Bot Ba Njock 1970:255).

	subject	**independent**	**emphatic**	**'... too'**
1st pers. sg.	mɛ	mɛ	mɛn	mɛk
1st pers. pl.	di	ɓěs	ɓes ɓɔ́n	ɓes ɓɔ̂k
2nd pers. sg.	u	wɛ	wɛ̌n	wɛk
2nd pers. pl.	ni	ɓee	ɓee ɓɔ́n	ɓee ɓɔ̂k
class 1	a	nyɛ́	nyɛ́n	nyɛ̂k
class 2.	ɓá	ɓɔ́	ɓɔ́n	ɓɔ̂k
class 3	ú	wɔ́	wɔ́n	wɔ̂k
class 4	mí	ŋwɔ́	ŋwɔ́n	ŋwɔ̂k
class 5	lí	jɔ́	jɔ́n	jɔ̂k
class 6	má	mɔ́	mɔ́n	mɔ̂k
class 7	í	yɔ́	yɔ́n	yɔ̂k
class 8	bí	gwɔ́	gwɔ́n	gwɔ̂k
class 9	i	yɔ	yɔ̌n	yɔk
class 10	í	yɔ́	yɔ́n	yɔ̂k
class 19	hí	hyɔ́	hyɔ́n	hyɔ̂k
class 13	dí	cɔ́	cɔ́n	cɔ̂k

Table 8. Simplex Pronouns

Subject pronouns precede the verb, while the independent pronouns are used for all other argument positions, including object (§5). As seen, the independent pronouns of classes other than class 1 end in -ɔ́. Emphatic pronouns are formed by suffixing -n to the independent pronouns, e.g. mĕn 'it's me', gwɔ́n 'it's them (cl. 4)'. The last column shows the recent development of a set of pronouns having the meaning 'too'. Bot Ba Njock (1970:252) shows that these derive from a fuller form involving the independent pronoun + ki 'also', e.g. mɛ ki ~ mɛk 'me too', ɓɔ̂k ~ ɓɔ́ kî 'them too'. In addition to the forms in Table 8, a reflexive form is possible by adding mɛdɛ́ to the independent pronoun, nyɛ́ mɛdɛ́ 'himself', mɔ́ mɛdɛ́ 'themselves' (cl. 6). The first and second person

singular independent pronouns acquire a H tone: mɛ́ mɛdɛ́ ‘myself’, wɛ́ mɛdɛ́ ‘yourself’. As in the independent and ‘too’ forms, the third person plural pronoun follows the first and second person plural pronouns: ɓes ɓɔ́ mɛdɛ́ ‘ourselves’, ɓee ɓɔ́ mɛdɛ́ ‘yourselves.’

In addition, conjoined and compound pronouns are exemplified in Table 9.[25]

	me	**you sg.**	**him/her**	**we**	**you pl.**	**them**
me	mɛ ni mɛ	mɛ ni wɛ ɓěs na wɛ	mɛ ni nyɛ́ ɓěs na nyɛ́	ɓěs ni ɓěs	mɛ ni ɓeé ɓěs na ɓeé	mɛ ni ɓɔ́ ɓěs na ɓɔ́
you sg.	mɛ ni wɛ ɓěs na wɛ	wɛ ni wɛ	wɛ ni nyɛ́ ɓeé na nyɛ́	ɓěs ni wɛ	ɓeé ni ɓeé	wɛ ni ɓɔ́ ɓeé na ɓɔ́
him/her	mɛ ni nyɛ́ ɓěs na nyɛ́	wɛ ni nyɛ́ ɓeé na nyɛ́	ɓɔ́ na nyɛ́	ɓěs ni nyɛ́ ɓěs na nyɛ́	ɓeé ni nyɛ́	nyɛ́ ni ɓɔ́
we	ɓěs ni ɓěs	ɓěs ni wɛ	ɓěs ni nyɛ́	ɓěs ni ɓěs	ɓěs ni ɓeé ɓěs na ɓeé	ɓěs ni ɓɔ́ ɓěs na ɓɔ́
you pl.	mɛ ni ɓeé ɓěs na ɓeé	ɓeé ni ɓeé	ɓeé ni nyɛ́	ɓěs ni ɓeé ɓěs na ɓeé	ɓeé ni ɓeé	ɓeé ni ɓɔ́ ɓeé na ɓɔ́
them	mɛ ni ɓɔ́ ɓěs na ɓɔ́	wɛ ni ɓɔ́ ɓeé na ɓɔ́	ɓɔ́ ni nyɛ́	ɓěs ni ɓɔ́	ɓeé ni ɓɔ́ ɓeé na ɓɔ́	ɓɔ́ ni ɓɔ́ ɓɔ́ na ɓɔ́

Table 9. Complex Pronouns

There are potentially two ways to combine pronouns. The first is to conjoin them with the conjunction ni ‘with, and’, which is also used with nouns: mɛ ni nyɛ́ ‘me and him’, ŋgwɔ́ ni nyɔ́ ‘a dog and a snake.’ In this case, both conjuncts are interpreted independently. The second process derives what we might define as compound pronouns. In this case a plural pronoun is followed by the marker na, which indicates that the second conjunct is included in the first: ɓěs na nyɛ́ ‘me and him’ (literally, ‘we including him’).[26] Whereas the first conjunct marks person, the second conjunct is interpreted independently.[27] The major constraint that determines the order of the two

[25]These forms were provided to me by Marie-Anne Ndongo-Séméngué (née Boum) in 1977. I have not been able to check if ɓeé na ɓɔ́ can also mean ‘you pl. including them’ and ɓɔ́ na ɓɔ́ can mean ‘them including them’, as I have extrapolated in the table. Some of the forms cited have special uses, e.g. di mɨ́≠ɓɛmná ɓés ni ɓěs ‘we are waiting for one another’.

[26]Lemb & de Gastines (1973) write na as a suffix, e.g. ɓěsna nyɛ́, which one might want to identify with the reciprocal/comitative verb suffix -n-a, e.g. lɔ ‘come’, lɔna ‘come with/bring’. I prefer to write it separately, in part because HTS does not apply to it. Note, however, that it can be optionally deleted, e.g. ɓěs nyɛ́.

[27]This contrasts with systems in the Grassfields Bantu area, e.g. Bamileke-Bangangte (Voorhoeve 1967), Aghem (Hyman 1979:53-4) and Noni (Hyman 1981:17), where the second conjunct marks dual vs.

conjuncts in both conjoined and compound pronouns has to do with person: 1st 2nd 3rd.

3.7. Noun phrase structure

Noun phrase structure in Basaá is highly complex and subtle. Ignoring the various uses of the connective for the moment, the remaining noun modifiers show considerable variation in their ordering. Possessives and demonstratives may either follow or precede the noun: dinuní cêm/i≠cêm dinuní 'my birds', dínuní tíní/tíní dinuní 'these birds'. When a possessive pronoun precedes, it takes an i- prefix (cf. note 16). When a demonstrative follows, the prefix of the first word of the noun phrase receives a H tone. When used together, one may precede and the other follow, both may precede, or both may follow. The following variants all mean 'these birds of mine':

í!cêm dinúni tíní	tíní dinuní cêm
tínî cêm dinuní[28]	í!cêm tíní dinuní
dínuní cêm tíní	*dínuní tíní cêm

As seen, the only combination which is ruled out is when a demonstrative is followed by a possessive. Other modifiers such as adjectives and numerals, which must occur postnominally, are freely ordered with respect to possessives, but also precede a demonstrative, which generally occurs last among postposed modifiers. The following variants all mean 'these five black birds of mine':

dínuní cêm dihíndí dítân tíní	cf.	*dínuní tíní cêm dihíndí dítân
dínuní cêm dítân dihíndí tíni		*dínuní tíní dihíndí cêm dítân
dínuní dihíndí cêm dítân tíní		*dínuní cêm tíní dihíndí dítân
dínuní dihíndí dítân cêm tíní		*dínuní cêm tíní dítân dihíndí
dínuní dítân cêm dihíndí tíní		etc.
dínuní dítân dihíndí cêm tíní		

The starred forms on the right are all ungrammatical because of the non-final placement of tíní 'these'.[29]

In general, genitive nouns show the same flexibility as possessives, except that they cannot be preposed to the noun:

dinuní dí máwándá dihíndí 'the friends' black birds'

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plural. Hence, we-including-them can mean 'me and them', 'we and him', or 'we and them' in such languages, whereas in Basaa, apparently, it has only the last meaning.

[28] Note that the L of the initial i- of icêm is realized on the preceding demonstrative: tíní → tínî.

[29] While only one order is possible when both the demonstrative and numeral follow the noun, viz. dínuní dítân tíní 'these five birds' (*dínuní tíní dítân), some speakers appear to tolerate the order numeral+demonstrative when occurring finally in more complex noun phrases, e.g. dínuní cêm dihíndí tíní dítân 'these five black birds of mine'.

dinuní dihíndí dí máwándá

dinuní dí máwándá dítân ‘the friends’ five birds’
dinuní dítân dí máwándá

dínuní dí máwándá tíní ‘these birds of the friends’
*dínuní tíní dí máwándá
tíní dinuní dí máwándá

As seen in the last set, a genitive noun may not follow a demonstrative, which must occur last or be preposed to the noun.

In addition to the above, the adjective, numeral or demonstrative may modify the genitive noun:

dinuní dí máwándá mɛ̂m ‘the birds of my children’
dinuní dî mɛ̂m mawándá

dínuní dí má!wándá máná ‘the birds of these friends’
dínuní dí máná mawándá

dinuní dí máwándá matídgí ‘the small friends’ birds’

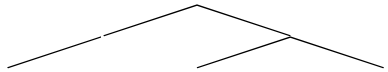
dinuní dí máwándá mátân ‘the children’s five birds’

Circumstances permitting, each noun may be modified simultaneously:

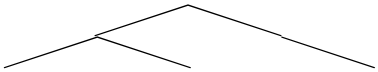
tíní dinuní dí máwándá mɛ̂m ‘these birds of my friends’
tíní dinuní dî mɛ̂m mawándá
dínuní dí máwándá mɛ̂m tíní
dínuní dî mɛ̂m mawándá tíní

bifóto gwéé bí máwándá mɛ̂m ‘his photographs of my friends’
bifóto gwéé bî mɛ̂m mawándá
ugwéé bífóto bí máwándá mɛ̂m
ugwéé bífótó bí mɛ̂m mawándá

ln addition, as in most other languages, Basaa allows genitive recursion involving both bracketings shown below:



dinuní dí máwándá má ɓɔ́ɔ́ŋgɛ
‘the birds of the friends of the children’



bifóto bí dínuní bí máwándá
‘the friends’ photographs of birds’

These clearly provide for even greater complexity when further modification of any or all of the nouns is involved.

Similar—but not quite identical—variations are found when the connective involves one or more adjectival noun. Except with a postposed adjective, where there is variation, agreement is with the adjectival noun rather than with the internal noun:

minlaŋgá mí dínuní ŋwêm	'my black birds'	(*cêm)
ŋŋwêm minlaŋgá mí dínuní		
minlaŋgá ŋwêm mí dínuní		
mínlaŋgá mí dínuní míní	'these black birds'	(*tíní)
míní minlaŋgá mí dínuní		
minlaŋgá mí dínuní mítân	'five black birds'	(*dítân)
BUT:		
minlaŋgá mí dínuní ditídgí	'black little birds'	(~ mitídgí)

Curiously, unless occurring adjacent to it, when there is more than one adjectival noun, agreement is preferentially with the closest rather than topmost one:

bilɔ́ŋgɛ́ bí mínlaŋgá mí dínuní míní	'these good black birds'	(?bíní, *tíní)
bilɔ́ŋgɛ́ bí mínlaŋgá mí dínuní ŋwêm	'my good black birds'	(*gwêm, *cêm)
bilɔ́ŋgɛ́ gwêm bí minlaŋgá mí dínuní		
gwêm bilɔ́ŋgɛ́ bí minlaŋgá mí dínuní		

Attempts to place modifiers in other positions, e.g. preposed possessives, result in other interpretations:

bilɔ́ŋgɛ́ bî ŋwêm mínlaŋgá mí dínuní	'the good ones of my black birds'
bilɔ́ŋgɛ́ bí mínlaŋgá mî cêm dínuní	'the good black ones of my birds'

What this shows is that adjectival nouns, like all other modifiers, can appear with a null head, e.g. icêm 'mine', tíní 'these', dîtídgí 'the small ones', dítân 'five (of them)'.

Finally, care should be taken to distinguish noun phrases from the presentative construction, which is formed with a (null head) demonstrative, but without the H prefix required in a noun phrase: li≠wándá jêm líní 'here's my friend' (cf. lí≠ꜜwándá jêm líní 'this friend of mine'), di≠nuní di≠híndí dí≠tân tíní 'here are the five black birds' (cf. dí≠nuní di≠híndí dí≠tân tíní 'these five black birds').

4. Verb derivation

As illustrated in §2.2, the Basaa verb stem consists of a maximum of three syllables (Bitjaa-Kody 1990:162) and exhibits the follows shapes (where C can be null): CV, CVC,

CVCV, CVCVC, CVCCV, CVCCVC, CVCCVCV. Also Basaa has a surface opposition between long and short vowels (§2.1), these do not correspond to the distinction in PB. Rather, there is clear evidence that long vowels more recently derive from *VC sequences. The following vowel length alternations show that they still function as /VC/ within the synchronic phonology:

ɛɛ	'cry, weep for'	→	ea	'be wept for'	(< PB *-did-)
ɓuu	'chase (away)'	→	ɓua	'be chased'	(? < PB *-bʉ̀im-)
sáá	'scatter'	→	séâ	'be scattered'	(? < PB *-cán-)

Monosyllabic CVV verbs lose their length when a vowel suffix follows, here passive -a. Since Basaa has been argued to have ghost consonants (Schmidt 1994, Buckley 1997), we can informally represent these roots as /CɛC/, /ɓuC/ and /sáC/, and their passives as CeCa, ɓuCa, and séCâ. What we see then is that the ghost C contributes vowel length only if it is in the coda of the syllable, not if it is syllabified as an onset. We also explain why verbs such as sáá 'scatter' are single tone-bearing units, realized H rather than with a fall to L.

4.1. Verb stems[30]

The morphological structure of the Basaa verb stem is as follows:

Verb root + (extensions) + (final vowel)

A verb stem may be monomorphemic or may include one or two derivational suffixes (extensions). Unlike most other Bantu languages, it need not end in a final vowel (FV) morpheme. There are at most three V positions. While all seven vowels occur as V1, the following generalizations characterize vowel shapes in V2 and V3 positions:

First, only the three vowels -i, -ɛ, -a occur as the FV of bi- and trisyllabic stems, and -i occurs only in CVC-i stems:

ɓúgî	'break (intr.)'	---		---	
jélɛ̂	'surpass'	ɓóblɛ	'touch'	sɛglɛnɛ	'sort for'
ɓɔma	'meet'	nɔ́lna	'kill e.o.'	címbaha	'make sneeze'

CV verbs do not take a FV synchronically.[31]

Second, V1 and V2 must be identical in CVCVC stems:

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[30] This section is based to large extent on the 3,682 verb forms that Peter Wong transferred from Lemb & de Gastines (1973) as part of the Comparative Bantu On-Line Dictionary project, supported in part by National Science Foundation Grant #SBR96-16330. Earlier studies on Basaa verb extensions include Voorhoeve (1980), Janssens (1986), Dimmendaal (1988), Bitjaa-Kody (1990), and Hyman (1990, 2000).

[31] Diachronically, however, verbs such as jé 'eat' and kwɔ 'fall' most likely derive from lí-a and ku-a, respectively (cf. PB *dí-a, *gu-a).

/i/ :	tiŋil	'detach'	limik	'being quiet'
/e/ :	sebel	'call'	ɓébek	'beating'
/ɛ/ :	lɛgɛl	'transmit'	kɛ́bɛ̂k	'tatooing'
/u/ :	núhûl	'stay up/awake'	kunuk	'choosing'
/o/ :	lóhôl	'skin'	hólôk	'sharpening'
/ɔ/ :	bɔgɔl	'dislodge'	hɔ́gɔ̂k	'swimming'
/a/ :	bágâl	'separate'	pádâk	'picking'

Third, V2 and V3 must be identical in CVCCVCV stems, as in the following applicative and reciprocal forms of the above CVCVl verbs:

/i/ :	tiŋlɛnɛ	'detach for/at'	tiŋlana	'detach each other'
/e/ :	seblɛnɛ	'call for/at'	seblana	'call each other'
/ɛ/ :	lɛglɛnɛ	'transmit for/at'	lɛglana	'transmit to each other'
/u/ :	núhlɛnɛ	'stay up for/at'	núhlana	'stay up at each other's'
/o/ :	lóhlɛnɛ	'skin for/at'	lóhlaha	'skin each other'
/ɔ/ :	bɔglɛnɛ	'dislodge for/at'	bɔglana	'dislodge each other'
/a/ :	báglɛnɛ	'separate for/at'	báglana	'separate each other'

Finally, the only CVCCVC verbs end in -ak, the allomorph of the imperfective suffix used with CVCVC verb bases:

/i/ :	tiŋlak	'detaching'
/e/ :	seblak	'calling'
/ɛ/ :	lɛglak	'transmitting'
/u/ :	núhlak	'staying up/awake'
/o/ :	lóhlak	'skinning'
/ɔ/ :	bɔglak	'dislodging'
/a/ :	báglak	'separating'

As discussed in §2.2, there are fewer consonants possible in each successive C slot within Basaa verb stems. The attested C3 consonants are /p, t, k, s, l, n/, while the C4 consonants consist solely of /k, s, n/. Only /k/ occurs as stem-final C4.

4.2. Extensions

The above and other distributional properties of consonants and vowels can best be examined by means of the derivational suffixes or verb extensions found in Basaa and summarized in Table 10.[32]

After CV(C) radical **Later in verb stem**

[32] Most of the data cited in this section come directly from Lemb & de Gastines (1973). For more discussion of verb extensions, their introduction as well as Bitjaa-Kody (1990).

reversive	¨-l, -l	---
reflexive	-b [p], -b-a, -ɓ-a	---
causative	¨-s	---
indirect causative	¨-h-a /¨-s-a/	¨-h-a /¨-s-a/
applicative	¨-l	-n-ɛ
reciprocal	-n-a	-n-a
passive	¨-a, ¨-b-a	-a, -n-a
habitual	-a	---
stative	¨-í	---
imperfective	-g [k]	-ag [ak]

Table 10. Verb Extensions and Their Allomorphs

As seen, some suffixes appear only after monosyllabic CV or CVC verb roots, while others have special allomorphs when the verb base is longer.[33] The symbol ¨ indicates a height umlaut that occurs with certain suffixes. In its most general form, the vowels /e, o/ raise to [i, u], /ɛ, a/ raise to [e] and /ɔ/ raises to [o] (Voorhoeve 1980, Schmidt 1996, Mutaka & Bitjaa Kody, in press). The causative and applicative suffixes show this raising in Table 11.

		causative ('make ...')	**applicative ('... for/with/at')**
lim	'be silent'	limis	limil
ɓép	'beat'	ɓíbîs	ɓíbîl
kɛ́p	'tatoo'	kébês	kébêl
kun	'choose'	kúnûs	kúnûl
hól	'sharpen'	húlûs	húlûl
ɓɔl	'rot'	ɓólôs	ɓólôl
pát	'pick off'	pédês	pédêl

Table 11 .Vowel Raising with Causative ¨-s and Applicative ¨-l

Among the suffixes in Table 10, the least productive is the reversive, which is responsible for verb pairs such as the following: ték 'lay (sth.) flat', tégêl 'remove (sth.) lying flat'; lɔ́ŋ 'cork, block', lɔ́ŋɔ̂l 'uncork, unblock'; ɓamb 'spread (in sun) to dry', ɓambal 'remove from heat'. In contradistinction with applicative ¨-l, only the mid vowels /e, o/ undergo raising with the reversive (Janssens 1986), e.g. kwes 'lock', kwihil 'unlock'; teŋ 'attach', tiŋil 'detach'.

The reflexive suffix has three allomorphs which can attach only to monosyllabic verb bases. CV verbs take the allomorph -ba, e.g. hó 'cover', hóbâ 'cover oneself'; sɔ 'purify', sɔba 'purify oneself'. A small number of CVC verbs use the allomorph -b

[33]This will typically mean when the verb base is bisyllabic. If a verb already contains three syllables, no further extension can be added, since that would surpass the maximum size of the prosodic stem.

which devoices to [p] before pause, e.g. teŋ ‘attach’, teŋep ‘attach oneself’; hót ‘bend’, hódôp ‘bend oneself’. As seen, a V2 identical to V1 is required for syllabification.[34] Most CVC verbs, however, take the reflexive suffix -ɓ-a, e.g. nun ‘look at’, nunɓa ‘look at oneself’; pɛ́k ‘fan’, pɛ́gɓa ‘fan oneself’. In addition four CVCɛ verbs have also been found to allow a -ɓ-a reversive suffix: anɛ ‘to order’, anɓa ‘to order oneself’; kwiyɛ ‘light (fire)’, kwiyɓa ‘light itself’; pudɛ ‘fall on’, pudɓa ‘get oneself mixed up in something stupid’; núyê ‘heat up’, núyɓa ‘be heated up’. The postconsonantal allomorph -ɓ-a provides additional evidence that CVV verbs are underlyingly CVC: hɔɔ ‘smear, coat’, hɔɔɓa ‘smear oneself’; kwɛɛ ‘circumcize’, kwɛɛɓa ‘get oneself circumcized’.

The (direct) causative suffix ¨-s, which was illustrated with CVC verb roots in Table 11, can be added directly to CV verbs, e.g. jɛ́ ‘eat’, jês ‘make eat, feed’; lá ‘lick’, lês ‘make lick’, nɔ́ ‘rain’, nôs ‘make rain’. CVV verbs also take ¨-s, e.g. wáá ‘be tired’, wéês ‘make tired’, where the latter’s tones indicate a wéCês structure. The indirect causative suffix ¨-h-a may also be added to monosyllabic verb bases, e.g. cé ‘destroy’, cíhâ ‘make destroy’; han ‘be proud’, hanha ‘make proud’; lɔɔ ‘surpass’, lɔɔha ‘exagerate, overflow’. In case the verb base is bisyllabic, only the indirect causative may be used: cáŋgâp ‘be dishonest’, céŋgɓaha ‘make dishonest’; jóŋôp ‘be silly’, júŋɓaha ‘make silly’; nɔ́mɔ̂l ‘quarrel’, nómlaha ‘make quarrel’. As seen, the umlaut effect of ¨-ha goes right through the epenthetic [a] of -aha onto the root vowel. The following sentences illustrate the semantic difference between the two causative forms, both based on the verb ɓɛ́t ‘go up, climb’:

mɛ m≠ɓédés m-bɛ́gɛ hi≠koá	‘I carried the baggages up the hill’
mɛ m≠ɓédhá ɓɔ́ŋgɛ́ hi≠koá	‘I made the children go up the hill’

In the first sentence, direct causation requires that I physically carry the baggages, which is not the case with indirect causation in the second sentence, where it is not possible to substitute mbɛgɛ ‘baggages’ for ɓɔ́ŋgɛ́ ‘children’. Note, finally, that the same formal suffix ¨-h-a may instead provide an aspectual connotation of simultaneity, e.g. mɛmlɛ ‘contemplate’, memlaha ‘contemplate at the same time’; gwâl ‘give birth’, gwélha ‘give birth at the same time’.

As in other Bantu languages, the applicative is used to mark dative objects, manner, location and time (Lemb & de Gastines 1973:37). The ¨-l allomorph, which was illustrated on CVC verbs in Table 11 also occurs on CV verb bases: jɛ́ ‘eat’, jêl ‘eat for / with / at’; jo ‘bury’, jul ‘bury for / with / at’. CVV verbs, on the other hand, typically undergo vowel raising without the final -l: hɔ́ɔ́ ‘smear’, hóô ‘smear for / with / at’; káá ‘plead’, kéê ‘plead for / with / at’. This suggests the derived structure kéCêC, where the -l

[34] A number of verbs with “adjectival meanings” also end in [Vp], presumably cognate with PB *-p-, e.g. hɔ́ŋɔ̂p ‘be silly, stupid’, lóhôp ‘be brave’, yɛ́ŋgêp ‘be lazy’.

has “assimilated” to the ghost consonant of the root. A similar assimilation is found when the verb base has the shape CVy: nɔy ‘rest’ noyoy ‘rest for / at’; ɓáy ‘be sour’, ɓéyêy ‘be sour for / at’. Bisyllabic bases show one of the realizations of the (non-umlauting) -n-ɛ allomorph: anɛ ‘order’, annɛ ‘order for’, ɓégês ‘praise’, ɓéghɛnɛ ‘praise for / at’; hóyâ ‘forget’, hóyna ‘forget for / at’. When added to a verbs of the shapes CVlVl and CVCVV, the resulting outputs are CVVlnɛ and CVVCnɛ: hólôl ‘ripen’, hóólnɛ ‘ripen for / at’; ɓɛgɛɛ ‘carry’, ɓɛɛgnɛ ‘carry for / at’.[35]

The reciprocal suffix -n-a may be added to mono- or bisyllabic verbs: cé ‘destroy’, cénâ ‘destroy each other’; kɛk ‘hurt’, kɛgna ‘hurt each other’; pɔhɔl ‘choose’, pɔhlana ‘choose each other’; témbɛ́ɛ ‘lie’, tɛ́ɛ́mbana ‘lie to each other’. It may also have an associative or comitative meaning, e.g. hɔ́k ‘swim’, hɔ́gna ‘swim with’; jop ‘enter’, jobna ‘enter with’.

The passive suffix has four allmorphs. The umlauting allomorphs ¨-b-a and ¨-a are used after CV and CVC / CVV verb bases, respectively: cé ‘destroy’, cíbâ ‘be destroyed’; ɓɔŋ ‘do’, ɓoŋa ‘be done’, -sɛɛ ‘plant’, -sea ‘be planted’. The non-umlauting allomorph -a is used on longer verb bases, e.g. sagal ‘undo’, sagla ‘be undone’; hɛŋɛl ‘change’, hɛŋla ‘be changed’; kóbôl ‘peel’, kóbla ‘be peeled’. Finally, the allomorph -n-a seems to be used with (direct or indirect) causative bases: jês ‘feed’ (< jɛ́ ‘eat’), jésna ‘be fed’; ɓédha ‘cause to go up’ (< ɓɛ́t ‘go up’), ɓédhana ‘be caused to go up’. It is possible that this -n- is related to the applicative or comitative extension.

The habitual extension is -a: nɔ́l ‘kill’, nɔ́lâ ‘kill habitually’; nógôl ‘obey’, nógla ‘obey habitually’; yagal ‘beg’, yagla ‘beg habitually’. It appears that the -n-a suffix also can be used with habitual meaning (e.g. with vowel-final verb bases): jo ‘bury’, jona ‘bury habitually’; lɛ́ɛ́gɛ ‘receive’, lɛ́ɛ́gana ‘receive habitually’.

The stative suffix ¨-í is restricted to CVC-í verb stems: kwes ‘lock’, kwihí ‘be locked’; pak ‘occupy’, pegí ‘be occupied’. When the base already ends in -i, one sometimes observes only a tonal change in the stative: héndî ‘place crookedly’, héndí ‘be crooked’; niŋi ‘lay’, niŋí ‘be lying’. Other bisyllabic bases replace their V2(C) by í in the stative, e.g. núŋgɛ̂ ‘set (trap)’, núŋgí ‘be set (trap)’; koyop ‘become red’, kuyí ‘be red’.

The last suffix to be discussed is the imperfective, which has the allomorph -g ([-k] before pause), when added to monosyllabic bases: cé ‘destroy’, cêk ‘destroying’; ɔɔ ‘hate’, ɔɔk ‘hating’, ɓép ‘beat’, ɓébêk ‘beating’. Longer bases take the allomorph -ak: tiŋil ‘detach’, tiŋlak ‘detaching’; ɓégês ‘praise’, ɓéghak ‘praising’; ɓínî ‘bend back’, ɓínâk

[35] In the case of CVCVl verbs, where the applicative form is expected to be CVClɛnɛ, a shortened CVClɛ form is also attested, e.g. luhul ‘chase away’ → luhlɛnɛ ~ luhlɛ.

'bending back'. In different tenses this suffix acquires imperfective meanings such as durative, progressive, iterative, and habitual (Bitjaa-Kody 1990:414-5). It is also frequently used in deverbal nominals, e.g. ɓép 'beat', li≠ɓébêk 'way of beating'; lok 'deceive', li≠logok 'way of deceiving'.

While the above represents the general situation, there are small numbers of exceptions for many of the suffixes. Thus, the applicative and causative forms of kɛ 'go' are kil and kis, not the expected *kel and *kes. In addition, not every extension can be used on every verb root, nor is the meaning always compositional. Finally, there are possibilities for combining two suffixes, as long as one does not exceed the three-syllable maximum for prosodic stems. The extension sequences in Table 12 are reported by Lemb & de Gastines for the verb teŋ 'attach':

(29) Illustration via /teŋ/ 'attacher' (Lemb & de Gastines 1973)

	basic	**applicative**	**causative**	**ind. caus.**	**reciprocal**	**passive**
root	teŋ	tiŋ-il	tiŋ-is	tiŋ-h-a	teŋ-n-a	tiŋ-a
reversive	tiŋ-il	tiŋ-l-ɛn-ɛ	---	tiŋ-l-ah-a	tiŋ-l-an-a	tiŋ-l-a
reflexive	teŋ-eb	teŋ-ɓ-ɛn-ɛ	---	teŋ-ɓ-ah-a[36]	teŋ-ɓ-an-a	teŋ-ɓ-a
stative	tiŋ-í	tiŋ-n-ɛ́	---	---	---	---
habitual	teŋ-a	---	---	---	---	---

Table 12. Extension Combinations Reported by Lemb & de Gastines (1973:35)

In addition, three other combinations have also been found on forms within the dictionary itself:

	input	**causative**	**applicative**	**reciprocal**
causative	tomb-os	---	tomb-h-ɛn-ɛ	tomb-h-an-a
applicative	bemb-el	---	---	bemb-l-an-a

tɔmb	'be soft, tired'	bamb	'spread (sth.) out'
tombos	'soften, make tired'	bembel	'spread for / at'
tombhɛnɛ	'soften for / with'	bemblana	'spread for each other'

A small number of verb stems involve two instances of the same suffix, where one changes the meaning in unpredictable ways, e.g. kap 'share, distribute' → kebel 'feed' → keblɛnɛ 'feed for / with / at' (root+appl+appl); teŋ 'attach' → tiŋha 'make attach' → tiŋhaha 'hold / delay someone'.

[36]The expected form is tiŋ-ɓ-ah-a. teŋ is one of 3 verbs found whose reflexive+indirect causative form does not umlaut (vs. 61 in the corpus which do).

The following schema accounts for the linear ordering of consonants observed in Basaa verb stems: Root C's {b, l} s [h] n g. In addition, examples cited above show that the FV -a overrides -ɛ, which in turn overrides -i, e.g. ɓɛŋgɛ 'look at', ɓɛŋgna 'look at each other'; niŋí 'be lying (e.g. in bed)', niŋné 'be lying at/on'

The same generalizations cover deverbal nominals which are discussed by Bot Ba Njock (1970) and Lemb & de Gastines (1973). These can be based on simple verb bases or extended ones. Thus, from the verb ɓɔŋ 'do', one can derive m≠ɓɔŋ /ɓa≠ɓɔŋ 'doer(s)', and from its applicative ɓoŋol 'do for/with/at', one derives m≠ɓoŋol/ɓa≠ɓoŋol 'servant(s)'. While deverbal nouns in class 1 express agentives, those in class 3 mark the state or situation of an action, e.g. kap 'share' → ŋ≠kabak 'that which has just been shared'; keba 'be shared' (passive) → ŋ≠kěbak 'that which was shared some time ago'; kabna 'share with' (associative) → ŋ≠kăbnaga 'that which has been shared with/among'. Besides the temporal nuances indicated by Lemb & de Gastines (1973:46), the imperfective suffix -g is also present as it is in class 5 deverbal nouns which describe the manner of action: gwɛl 'catch, hold' → li≠gwɛlɛk 'manner of catching, holding'; gwɛlɓa 'cling' (reflexive) → li≠gwɛlɓaga 'manner of clinging'. Verbs can also be nominalized as instruments in (prefixless) class 9, e.g. gwɛl 'catch, hold' → gwelél 'handle by which one grabs an object', ɓomol 'knock against, nail' → ɓomlɛ́né 'object used to nail with'. As seen, instrumental nouns require an applicative extension and a H suffixal tone.

Finally, although Basaa has no overtly marked infinitive, Dimmendaal (1988:65) hypothesizes that the class 3 verbal agreement that verbal nouns condition derives from PB class 15 *ku, e.g. ɓat ú≠yé ǃlóŋgê 'to question is good'.

5. Basic clause structure

Although Basaa has maintained much of the original Bantu morphology, its clause structure shows a drift towards analytic marking of grammatical relations and inflection.

5.1. Word order

The basic word order in Basaa is Subject - Aux - Verb - Object - Adjunct:

li≠wándá jêm lí mí≠ ǃɓéná jɛ́ bí≠jɛ́k í ǃndáp
friend my SP PRES do-often eat food in house
'my friend often eats food in the house'

As also seen in this example, the subject pronouns in Table 8 are required for subject agreement, as in Bantu generally, although there is no evidence that such markers are prefixed to the auxiliary or verb that follows. In fact, although the nasal marking present tense in this example is typically written as a prefix, it too could be analyzed as a

proclitic and written as a separate syntactic element. In short, Basaa lacks the Bantu prefixal system on verbs.

The independent pronouns in Table 8 are used in to express non-subject arguments, including object. They follow the verb in all cases: a bí nuŋúl lí≠tám ‘he sold a fruit’; a bí nuŋúl jɔ́ ‘he sold it.’ The direct object precedes any overtly marked prepositional phrase or other adjunct, e.g. a m≠púhlɛ́ mɛ̂ í ǃmbús ‘he surprised me from behind’; malêt a ḿ≠ǃɓíbíl ɓá≠údú ni ŋ≠ɔ́ŋ ‘the teacher is beating the students with a rattan stick.’

5.2. Grammatical relations

As in other Bantu languages, the major issue concerning grammatical relations is the analysis of object properties. Only a few unextended verbs can take two objects, e.g. tí ‘give’: mɛ n≠tí ɓɔ́ŋgɛ́ bijɛ́k ‘I gave the children food’. The reverse word order, ?mɛ n≠tí bíjɛ́k ɓɔŋgɛ́ , is dispreferred and gives the impression of meaning ‘I gave the children to the food’. Either or both of the two objects can be pronominalized. When both are pronominalized, the recipient must precede the patient: mɛ n≠tí ɓɔ́ gwɔ́ ‘I gave them it’ (*mɛ n≠tí gwɔ́ ɓɔ́). Again, only one order is possible when only the recipient is pronominalized: mɛ n≠tí ɓɔ́ bijɛ́k ‘I gave them food’ (*mɛ n≠tí bíjɛ́k ɓɔ́). On the other hand, the patient can be pronominalized in situ, mɛ n≠tí ɓɔ́ŋgɛ́ gwɔ́ ‘I gave the children it’, in which case ‘the children’ is old information, or it can be pronominalized right after the verb, mɛ n≠tí gwɔ́ ɓɔŋgɛ́ ‘I gave it to the children’, in which case ‘the children’ is new information.

A natural interpretation of these facts is that the recipient is the “primary” object, and that proximity to the verb is one criterion for such status. As seen, the tendency for a pronoun to precede a noun, motivated by discourse considerations, may cause a minor conflict, thereby producing both orders just seen.

Besides word order, the second criterion is that the primary object can become the subject of the corresponding passive, whereas the secondary object cannot: ɓɔŋgɛ́ ɓá ń≠tíbá bíjɛ́k ‘the children were given food’; *bijɛ́k bí ń≠tíbá ɓɔ́ŋgɛ́ ‘the food was given (to) the children’. Sentences involving the applicative form of the verb lámb ‘cook’ show the same word order facts as with the verb tí ‘give’ (Hyman & Duranti 1982):

mɛ n≠lémbél ɓɔ́ŋgɛ́ bijɛ́k	‘I cooked the children food’
?mɛ n≠lémbél bíjɛ́k ɓɔŋgɛ́	
mɛ n≠lémbél ɓɔ́ gwɔ́	‘I cooked them it’
*mɛ n≠lémbél gwɔ́ ɓɔ́	
mɛ n≠lémbél ɓɔ́ bijɛ́k	‘I cooked them food’
*mɛ n≠lémbél bijɛ́kɓɔ́	

mɛ n≠lémbél ɓɔ́ŋgɛ́ gwɔ́ ‘I cooked the children it’
mɛ n≠lémbél gwɔ́ ɓɔ́ŋgɛ́ ‘I cooked it (for) the children’

It would thus seem that the benefactive is the primary object. However, unlike tí ‘give’, it is only the patient that can become the subject of the corresponding passive in an applicative construction:[37]

bijɛ́k bí ń≠lémbná ɓɔ́ŋgɛ́ ‘the food was cooked for the children’
*ɓɔŋgɛ́ ɓá ń≠lémbná bíjɛ́k

However, given the shape of the applicative suffix in these examples, namely -n-, it would seem that they have the underlying structure of an applicativized passive, where this allomorph is chosen because the input base to applicativization is bisyllabic (lémb-â ‘be cooked’). The expected form, lembla, is not accepted by all speakers, although when it is accepted, the syntax appears to be reversed:[38]

ɓɔŋgɛ́ ɓá ń≠lémblá bíjɛ́k ‘the children were cooked food’
*bijɛ́k bí ń≠lémblá ɓɔ́ŋgɛ́

It may be, therefore that the two verbs have the following two different morphosyntactic structures and hence different syntactic properties as per the “mirror principle” (Baker 1988).

In the case of the second structure, one can think of first deriving the passive lemb-a and then “interfixing” the applicative -n- between lemb- and -a.[39]

A similar complication is found when we applicativize the verb tí ‘give’, to create the following sequence of three unmarked objects:

mɛ n≠tínɛ́ múdaá ɓɔŋgɛ́ bijɛ́k
I gave/app woman children food
‘I gave the food to the children for the woman’

[37] The agent of the passive can be expressed by means of the preposition ni, e.g. ni maŋgɛ́ ‘by a child’.
[38] I would like to thank Marie Anne Ndongo-Séméngué, Zachée Denis Bitjaa-Kody and Ngessimo Mutaka for emails from Cameroon discussing these phenomena, which clearly require—and merit—further research.
[39] The -ɛ of applicative -n-ɛ is overriden by the -a of the passive. For more discussion of “interfixing” of this sort, see Hyman (1994).

Recall that only the recipient could be the subject of simple passive of 'give' (tíbâ). In this more complex case, either the patient or the recipient can become the subject of the corresponding passive, but not the benefactive introduced by the applicative:

ɓɔŋgɛ́ ɓá ń≠tíbná múdaá bijɛ́k 'the children were given food for the woman'
bijɛ́k bí ń≠tíbná múdaá ɓɔŋgɛ́ 'food was given the children for the woman'
*mudaá a n≠tíbná ɓɔŋgɛ́ bijɛ́k 'for the woman were the children given food'
(OK if it means 'the woman was given food for the children')

In this case note that the -n- of the applicative occurs between the two parts of the passive extension -b-a. Again, the analysis is that tíbna is an applicativized passive, not the more widespread Bantu passivized applicative.

In terms of Bresnan and Moshi's (1990) dichotomy, Basaa appears to be an "asymmetric" object language in that one argument claims primary object status as judged by the word order and passive tests. However, some of its properties are still unexpected. As seen in the following Basaa has widespread optional possessor raising which carries the nuance that the possessor is affected by the action:

mɛ n≠jɛ́ nú!gá (i) maŋgɛ́ 'I ate the child's meat' child = [-affected]
I ate meat (of) child
mɛ n≠jɛ́ máŋgɛ́ nugá 'I ate the child's meat' child = [+affected]

The first sentence is passivized as expected, with the full possessive noun phrase as subject:

nugá (i) maŋgɛ́ í ń≠jébá 'the child's meat was eaten'

With possessor raising, Basaa quite differently from other Bantu languages allows only the possessed object to become the subject of the corresponding passive:

nugá í n≠jébá maŋgɛ́ 'the child's meat was eaten' (lit. meat was eaten child)
*maŋgɛ́ a n≠jébá nú!gá (*child was eaten meat)

On the other hand, either or both nouns can be prominalized in situ:

mɛ n≠jɛ́ nyɛ́ nugá 'I ate his meat' (lit. I ate him meat)
mɛ n≠jɛ́ maŋgɛ́ yɔ́ 'I ate the child's [meat]' (lit. I ate the child it) (*yɔ́ maŋgɛ́)
mɛ n≠jɛ́ nyɛ́ yɔ́ 'I ate his' (lit. I ate him it)

Possessor raising potentially allows for multiple unmarked noun phrases in sequence:

mɛ m≠ɓók [múdaá [man [wɔ́ 'I broke the arm of child of the woman'
(lit. I broke the woman the child the arm)

Given the discourse-dependence of the different options, it is not surprising that whether one does possessor raising or not depends to a large extent on the context and the nature of the participants, e.g. whether first, second or third person.

Finally, a brief note that certain oblique objects may be introduced by ni 'with, and', sometimes as an option to the verb extension -n-a, e.g. lɔná maŋgɛ́ 'bring the child' (< lɔ 'come'), lɔ́ ni maŋgɛ́ 'come with/bring the child'. Locatives are typically introduced by í, e.g. í ꜜndáp 'in the house' (Boum 1983).

5.3. Verb inflection

As mentioned, Basaa lacks the Bantu system of verb prefixation and most tense, aspect, mood and polarity distinctions are expressed by means of clitics and particles, as well as newly grammaticalized auxiliaries.

The basic tense system is identified and exemplified in Table 13.[40]

Tense/Marking	Affirmative	Negative	Main Uses
P1 / N≠ H- /	a n≠jɛ́ a n≠lɔ̂	a n≠jɛ́ ꜜɓé a n≠lɔ́ ꜜɓé	today past tense
P2 / pí L- /	a bí ꜜjɛ́ a bí lɔ	a bí ꜜjɛ́ ꜜɓé a bí lɔ ɓé	general past tense, e.g. yesterday or earlier
P3 / -H /	a jɛ́ a lɔ́	a jɛ́ ꜜɓé a lɔ́ ꜜɓé	pluperfect; distant past
Narrative / H- /	a jɛ́ a lɔ̂	a jɛ́ ꜜɓé a lɔ́ ꜜɓé	consecutive or unspecified past
Present / Ń≠L- /	a ń≠ꜜjɛ́ a ń≠lɔ	a ń≠ꜜjɛ́ ꜜɓé a ń≠lɔ ɓé	present; habitual; near 'about to' future
F1 / (k)á L- ... -H /	a gá ꜜjɛ́ a gá lɔ́[41]	a gá ꜜjɛ́ ꜜɓé a gá lɔ́ ꜜɓé	general future, e.g. tomorrow, some days
F2 / a /	aa jɛ́ aa lɔ	aa jɛ́ ꜜɓé aa lɔ ɓé	distant or unspecified future
Future Perfect / H≠L- ... -H /	á ꜜjɛ́ á lɔ́	á ꜜjɛ́ ꜜɓé á lɔ́ ꜜɓé	future perfect or consecutive; conditional 'if'

[40] Tables 13-15 are presented essentially as produced by José Hualde in 1984, including his examples. It is essentially identical to the findings of Bitjaa Kody (1990) who presents the most extensive treatment of Basaa tense/aspect that I have been able to consult.

[41] Recall from note 5 that vowel length is indicated in the case of rising tones.

Subjunctive /H≠ ... -H/	á jɛ́	a jɛ́ ɓáꜜŋ́	subjunctive/hortative; future consecutive
	á lɔ́ꜜɔ́	a lɔ ɓáꜜŋ́	
Imperative /-H/; pl. /-ná/	jɛ́ (pl. jɛ́ná)	u/ni jɛ́ ɓáꜜŋ́	commands
	lɔ́ɔ́ (pl. lɔná)	u/ni lɔ ɓáꜜŋ́	

Table 13. Verb Tenses + Subjunctive & Imperative

As seen, Basaa distinguishes three degrees of past and two degrees of future tense. The different verb tenses, subjunctive and imperative in Table 13 are presented in the perfective, whose formation (including tones) is exemplified by the verbs jɛ́ 'eat' and lɔ 'come'. As seen, the verb stem may acquire a prefixal or suffixal tone, which may form a contour with the verb tone or condition downstep. The segmental marking of these forms precede the verb as particles or proclitics, except for the negative particle, which immediately follows the verb and precedes any object, e.g. a gá ꜜjɛ́ ꜜɓé bijɛ́k 'he will not eat food'.[42] The plural imperative is formed by a suffix -ná, which, however, is optional in the negative: ni jɛ́(ná) ɓáꜜŋ́ 'don't (pl.) eat!'. The corresponding imperfective can be formed by suffixing -g/-ag to the verb base in any tense.[43] This suffix is also found in what Bitjaa Kody (1990:451) identifies as the persistive: a ngí jɛ̂k 'he is still eating', a ngí lɔ̂k 'he is still coming'. He also reports a perfect/linger construction marked by /´ma/ (?< mal 'finish'): a máꜜjɛ́ 'he has already eaten', a má lɔ 'he has already come'.

In addition to the tones which are involved in forming the tenses in Table 13, there is a dichotomy with respect to the tone on a noun object that immediately follows the verb. In most tenses, a H appears between the two that will be realized on the V2 and V3 of the verb, if available, as well as on the noun prefix, e.g. a bí nuŋul 'he sold', a bí nuŋúl bí≠sɛl 'he sold baskets' (< bi≠sɛl). In the P3, future perfect, subjunctive and imperative, the L prefix of such a noun is not affected, e.g. nuNúl bi≠sɛl 'sell baskets!' These latter tenses are exactly those which have a floating H that causes a L CV verb to lengthen, e.g. á lɔ́ɔ́ 'he will have come'. Perhaps these acquire a HL rather than H floating tone.

As illustrated in Table 14, three different forms of the copula are used to form the progressive aspect:

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[42] Given the widespread origin of future markers, it is tempting to derive F2 /ká`/, which can also be analyzed as /´ka/, from a historical source involving the verb kɛ 'go'. The change of *k > g is, of course, conditioned by the fact that the F2 marker is not a stem (nor is the P2 marker bí, analyzeable as either /pî`/ or /´pi/.

[43] Neither the imperative plural suffix -ná nor the imperfective suffix -g/-ag may be added to a verb base if the result would be to exceed three syllables (Zachée Denis Bitjaa Kody, personal communication).

	Affirmative	Negative	
Present Prog /H-ye/	a yé ꜜjɛ́ a yé lɔ	a ye ɓé ꜜjɛ́ a ye ɓé lɔ	'he is (not) eating/ coming'
P2 Prog /ɓé/	a ɓé jɛ́ a ɓé lɔ̂	a ɓé ɓé jɛ́ a ɓé ɓé lɔ̂	'he was (not) eating' (e.g. yesterday)
P3 Prog /ɓá/	a ɓá jɛ́ a ɓá lɔ̂	a ɓá ɓé jɛ́ a ɓá ɓé lɔ̂	'he was (not) eating/ coming' (long time ago)

Table 14. Progressive Aspect

The copula /ye/ may be replaced by /ta/ in the negative forms: a ta ɓé ꜜjɛ́ 'he is not eating', a ta ɓé lɔ 'he is not coming'. The forms /ɓé, ɓá/ are derived from ɓá 'be'. The negative marker ɓé always follows ye or ta. Although it follows the progressive markers, ɓé, ɓá in Table 14, ɓé may alternatively follow the main verb: a ɓé jɛ́ ꜜɓé, a ɓé lɔ́ ꜜɓé, a ɓá jɛ́ ꜜɓé, a ɓá lɔ́ ꜜɓé. This may show the changing status of copular ɓé and ɓá from main verb to auxiliary. In other periphrastic constructions, the negative must follow the auxiliary verb, as in Table 15.

	Affirmative	Negative	
Pres Perfect = P1 + tip 'finish'	a n≠típ ꜜjɛ́ a n≠típ lɔ	a n≠típ ꜜɓé jɛ́ a n≠típ ꜜɓé lɔ̂	'he has (not) just eaten/ come'
Pres Hab = Pres + ɓena 'do often'	a ḿ≠ꜜɓéná jɛ́ a ḿ≠ꜜɓéná lɔ̂	a ḿ≠ꜜɓéná ɓé jɛ́ a ḿ≠ꜜɓéná ɓé lɔ̂	'he (doesn't) often eats/ comes'
Past Hab = P3 + ɓena 'do often'	a ɓé ɓéna jɛ́ a ɓé ɓéna lɔ	a ɓé ɓéna ɓéé jɛ́ a ɓé ɓéna ɓéé lɔ̂	'he (didn't) used to eat/ come'

Table 15. Other Periphrastic Forms

Other auxiliary verbs are treated in Bitjaa Kody (1990).

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