

8

THE SYNTAX OF SENTENCES

The following sections cover a number of syntactic phenomena, most of which deal in some way with multiclausal constructions. I begin by discussing complex sentences in Pondi (§8.1). The remaining sections in this chapter are organised in part by functional concerns. Here I discuss questions (§8.2), commands (§8.3), negation (§8.4), reported speech (§8.5), and conditional sentences (§8.6).

8.1 Complex sentences

Clauses may be combined to form complex (or compound) sentences. The relationship between clauses within a sentence can, generally, be one of coordination or subordination, with the former occurring only rarely in Pondi.

8.1.1 Coordination

Disjunctive coordination of clauses can be accomplished with the conjunction *o* ‘or’ (borrowed from Tok Pisin), and adversative (or consequential) coordination of clauses can be accomplished with the conjunction *mbati* ‘but, so’ (§5.8). The conjunction *akat* ‘and’ is not, however, used to coordinate two dependent clauses. Rather, to accomplish this, parataxis is used, as in the following examples, in which two clauses are juxtaposed without any coordinator or change in verbal morphology.

- (8.01) [John namal asiyĩ] [Peter yuwĩ asiyĩ]
 [John namal asi-ĩ] [Peter yuwĩ asi-ĩ]
 [name] pig hit-IPFV [name] crocodile hit-IPFV
 ‘John killed a pig [and] Peter killed a crocodile.’

- (8.02) [alkĩ nĩm luwapĩ] [nyĩ male]
 [alkĩ nĩm lu-apĩ] [nyĩ ma=ala-ĩ]
 person canoe carve-IPFV 1SG 3SG.OBJ=see-IPFV
 ‘A person carved a canoe [and] I saw him.’

- (8.03) [kanam nyĩ katil akĩ] [nyĩ ambo name tilalala]
 [kanam nyĩ katil akĩ] [nyĩ ambo name tilala-la]
 now 1SG old very 1SG NEG pig.PL seek-IRR
 ‘Now I’m very old [and] I can’t hunt pigs.’

Although Pondi does have an adversative conjunction (*mbati* ‘but’), it is nevertheless common to coordinate an adversative clause to another main clause with simple parataxis as well, as in the following examples.

- (8.04) [mĩ ayapĩ] [mĩ pisa ila]
 [mĩ a-i-apĩ] [mĩ pisa i-la]
 3SG.SUBJ PRF-come-PFV 3SG.SUBJ again come-IRR
 ‘He’s already left, [but] he’ll come again.’

- (8.05) [nyĩ kanam mun ambo nye] [nyĩ asuwatakĩ kusam amnda]
 [nyĩ kanam mun ambo nyĩ=i-ĩ] [nyĩ asuwatakĩ kusam am-nda]
 1SG now hunger NEG 1SG=hit?-IPFV 1SG later yam eat-IRR
 ‘Now I’m not hungry, [but] later I’ll want to eat yams.’

8.1.2 The functional equivalent of relative clauses

I have not found any morphosyntactically defined relative clauses in Pondi. Rather, what may be expressed with a main clause plus relative clause in some languages can be achieved in Pondi with two main clauses, which are simply juxtaposed. The relationship between the two clauses is presumably left for the hearer to deduce, as in the following examples.

- (8.06) [nanĩ apĩn njimoka wapĩ] [mĩ matuklupĩ]
 [nanĩ apĩn njimoka wa-apĩ] [mĩ ma=tukul-apĩ]
 mama fire tree burn-PFV 3SG.SUBJ 3SG.OBJ=cut-PFV
 ‘Mama burned the wood that she cut.’ (literally ‘Mama burned the wood; she [had] cut it.’)

- (8.07) [nyĩ namal asi-ĩ] [mĩ nyinjin kusam amngapĩ]
 [nyĩ namal asi-ĩ] [mĩ nyi-njin kusam am-ngapĩ]
 1SG pig hit-IPFV 3SG.SUBJ 1SG-POSS.NPL yam eat-PFV
 'I killed the pig that ate my yam.' (literally 'I killed the pig; it ate my yam.')

8.1.3 Permissive constructions

Permissive constructions in Pondi are formed in a similar fashion: the first clause contains the verb of 'letting'¹ and has as its subject the person who grants permission and as its object the person being permitted to do something; the subsequent clause has as its subject the person who is permitted to do something and a verb that encodes the action that the person is permitted to perform, as in the following examples.

- (8.08) [meyamba nanĩ kulam mol lapĩ] [mĩ kisĩm yapĩ]
 [meyamba nanĩ kulam ma=ol la-apĩ] [mĩ kisĩm i-apĩ]
 yesterday mama boy 3SG.OBJ=from put-PFV 3SG.SUBJ jungle come-PFV
 'Yesterday mama let the boy go to the jungle.' (literally 'Yesterday mama let the boy; he went to the jungle.')

- (8.09) [meyamba tatĩ nyol lapĩ] [nyĩ kapĩ usapĩ]
 [meyamba tatĩ nyĩ=ol la-apĩ] [nyĩ kapĩ us-apĩ]
 yesterday papa 1SG=from put-PFV 1SG house build-PFV
 'Yesterday papa let me build a house.' (literally 'Yesterday papa let me; I built a house.')

For permissive constructions in future time, a conditional sentence may be used (§8.6).

I presume that causative constructions work the same way as permissive constructions in Pondi, although I do not have any examples of causative constructions.

1 The verbal meaning 'let, allow' is formed by means of the postposition *ol* 'from' and the verb *la-* 'put', literally 'put from', which also provides the verbal meaning 'leave, lose'.

8.1.4 Subordination

It is also possible to combine a main (independent) clause with one or more subordinate² (dependent) clauses. Often, there is a temporal relationship between the two clauses—namely, a sequential relationship whereby the event of the second clause follows the event of the first clause. In such sequential clauses in Pondi, the first verb (encoding the first event) receives no TAM marking and is taken to be a nonfinite verb form (or medial verb) (§4.8). If it is a verb whose stem has a sometimes-covert final *-m* (as in *asim*- ‘hit, kill’), then this *-m* is here present, as in example (8.10).

(8.10) mī namal **asim** amalī

mī	namal	asim	a-mal-ī
3SG.SUBJ	pig	hit	PRF-GO-IPFV
‘He shot the pig and left.’ (‘Having shot the pig, he left.’)			

(8.11) mī kapī **us** amalī

mī	kapī	us	a-mal-ī
3SG.SUBJ	house	build	PRF-GO-IPFV
‘He built the house and left.’ (‘Having built the house, he left.’)			

Although these constructions in Pondi in some ways resemble serial verb constructions, they are not best classified as such, since they consist of multiple clauses: each verb heads its own predicate, with its own argument structure, and each predicate can have its own object arguments. The following sentence (8.12) exemplifies how the second verb can have an object (cf. 8.11, in which the first verb has an object).

(8.12) mī **i** kapī usapī

mī	i	kapī	us-apī
3SG.SUBJ	come	house	build-PFV
‘He came and built the house.’ (‘Having come, he built the house.’)			

The medial verbs in these sentences behave in some ways like converbs, and, indeed, it is often difficult to distinguish between the two categories (Haspelmath 1995). Since it does not seem possible to include two

2 I use the term ‘subordinate’, but it may be the case that these clause types in Pondi are better described as ‘cosubordinate’ (Foley & Van Valin 1984:241–243): they resemble subordination in that they cannot stand alone and are dependent on a main clause for aspect, mood, and subject reference; they resemble coordination, however, in that they are not embedded within the main clause (or, at least, I have no evidence that they are).

overt subjects in a sentence such as (8.10), a converb-like interpretation (i.e. translated with a participle in English) is often fitting for these constructions.

The presence of TAM marking on both verbs seems to correlate with the presence of two overt subjects, as seen in the contrast in these two sentences, where (8.13) contains a nonfinite medial verb preceding the inflected finite verb and (8.14) contains two inflected finite verbs.

(8.13) mĩ i namal asi-i

mĩ	i	namal	asi-i
3SG.SUBJ	come	pig	hit-IPFV

‘Having come, he shot the pig.’

(8.14) [mĩ **amali**] [mĩ namal asi-i]

[mĩ	a-mal-i	[mĩ	namal	asi-i]
3SG.SUBJ	PRF-go-IPFV	3SG.SUBJ	pig	hit-IPFV

‘He_i left [and] he_i shot the pig.’

The first example is thus illustrative of a sort of clause chaining (involving one cosubordinate medial verb), whereas the second example shows two independent clauses joined paratactically (as described in §8.1.1). It should be noted that the phenomenon at hand does not seem to involve switch-reference: the subjects of the two clauses of (8.14) are coreferential. Instead, to indicate two different subject referents (i.e. to say that one person left and a different person shot the pig), one would use a sentence such as (8.15).

(8.15) [mĩ amali] [anda namal asi-i]

[mĩ	a-mal-i]	[anda	namal	asi-i]
3SG.SUBJ	PRF-go-IPFV	that	pig	hit-IPFV

‘He_i left [and] that [one]_j shot the pig.’

8.1.5 Simultaneous action

As mentioned in §4.9, a simultaneous temporal relationship between two clauses can be signalled by the simultaneous suffix *-e*, which affixes to the medial verb stem. The subject of the two clauses may be different, as in the examples given in §4.9. However, the subjects of the two clauses may also be the same, in which case (as opposed to what happens with sequential action, §8.1.4) it is required to repeat the subject, as in example (8.16).

- (8.16) [nyĩ kote mape] [nyĩ sewawi asiĩ]
 [nyĩ kote ma=p-e] [nyĩ sewawi asi-ĩ]
 1SG small 3SG.OBJ=be-SIM 1SG bird.PL hit-IPFV
 ‘When I was small, I used to shoot birds.’

Since the medial verb receives no TAM suffix (only the simultaneous suffix *-e*), it can be assumed that it encodes an action in the same time as that encoded by the final verb, whether in past or present time. When, however, the simultaneous events are hypothesised to occur in future time, then the final verb needs to receive the irrealis suffix (§4.4). In such instances the simultaneous suffix is not used, but rather the conditional suffix (§4.10) is employed, as seen in example (8.17).

- (8.17) [wan ise] [an kišim masangola]
 [wan i-se] [an kišim ma=sango-la]
 2PL come-COND 1PL jungle 3SG.OBJ=walk-IRR
 ‘When you come, we’ll be walking in the jungle.’

Conditional statements are thus another form of complex sentences in Pondi. They are discussed further in §8.6.

8.1.6 Parataxis

When the speaker wishes to draw neither a conditional nor a temporal (whether simultaneous or sequential) connection between two clauses, then these clauses are simply juxtaposed paratactically. For example, a causal relationship, which may be indicated by the English subordinator *because*, would be left for the speaker to deduce, as in the following examples.

- (8.18) [meyamba ndin ambo kapĩ usapĩ] [kin lapapĩ]
 [meyamba ndin ambo kapĩ us-apĩ] [kin lap-apĩ]
 yesterday 3PL.SUBJ NEG house build-PFV rain fall-PFV
 ‘Yesterday they did not build the house; it rained.’ (e.g. ‘*because* it rained’)

- (8.19) [John Peter asingapĩ] [mĩ mokol mays ke liyĩ]
 [John Peter asi-ngapĩ] [mĩ mokol ma=is ke li-ĩ]
 [name] [name] hit-PFV 3SG.SUBJ stealth 3SG.OBJ=POSS.PL sago take-IPFV
 ‘John_i hit Peter_j; he_j stole his_i food.’ (e.g. ‘*because* he had stolen his food’)

To summarise, clauses in Pondi are often compounded paratactically. Coordination can occur without any overt conjunction (although the conjunctions *o* ‘or’ or *mbati* ‘but, so’ may optionally be used for disjunctive, adversative, or consequential coordination). Relationships such as causal or concessive relationships require no morphological or syntactic indication. Simultaneous temporal relationships between clauses, however, are indicated by the suffix *-e* on the medial verb; sequential temporal relationships between clauses are indicated by an unsuffixed medial verb; and conditional relationships between clauses are indicated by the medial suffix *-se*.

8.2 Questions

There are two basic types of questions: polar (‘yes/no’) questions and content (‘*wh-*’) questions. In polar questions, the truth value of a proposition is queried. These ‘yes/no’ questions in Pondi are morphosyntactically identical to their declarative counterparts. They differ, however, in that they contain a rising (as opposed to a falling) intonation. The following questions (spoken with different intonation) could function just as well as statements.

(8.20) ndindi kusam amngapi

ndindi	kusam	am-ngapi
dog	yam	eat-PFV

‘Did the dog eat a yam?’ (or, with falling intonation: ‘The dog ate a yam.’)

(8.21) o kisim mila

o	kisim	mal-la
2SG.SUBJ	jungle	go-IRR

‘Will you go to the jungle?’ (or, with falling intonation: ‘You will go to the jungle.’)

Negative responses to polar questions may be formed with the word *mwa* ‘no, nothing’, and may be followed by a full-answer response, as in (8.22).

(8.22) o num olala

o	num	ola-la
2SG.SUBJ	garamut	hear-IRR

‘Can you hear the *garamut* drum?’

mwa nyi ambo num olala

mwa	nyi	ambo	num	ola-la
no	1SG	NEG	garamut	hear-IRR

‘No, I cannot hear the *garamut* drum.’

When the general existence (or immediate presence) of something is being questioned, then the meaning of ‘nothing’ of this word is apparent; it follows the subject as a predicate complement, as in (8.23).

- (8.23) kamo mapĩ
 kamo ma=p-ĩ
 betel.nut 3SG.OBJ=be-IPFV
 ‘Is there any betel nut?’ (literally ‘Betel nut is there?’)
 kamo **mwa**
 kamo **mwa**
 betel.nut nothing
 ‘There is no betel nut.’ (literally ‘Betel nut [is] nothing.’)

Affirmative responses may be formed with an inflected form of the verb *mbat-* ‘work, do’ (i.e. ‘did’, ‘do/does’, or ‘will do’), without any expressed subject, as in (8.24).

- (8.24) nanĩ kusam mĩ lasiyĩ
 nanĩ kusam mĩ l-asi-ĩ
 mama yam 3SG.SUBJ DETR-hit-IPFV
 ‘Has mama boiled yams?’ (literally ‘hit’)
 mbatapĩ
 mbat-apĩ
 do-PFV
 ‘Yes.’ (literally ‘did’; i.e. ‘Yes, mama has boiled yams.’)

The other major question type—content questions—do not put forth a proposition whose truth value is queried, but rather request particular information. They do so by making use of so-called *wh*-words. In Pondi, these may better be called *aw*-words, since—with the exception of ‘who?’ and ‘whose?’—they all include a formative element *aw-* (the question word *am* ‘where?’ seems to have lost the /w/ of this formative, however, §5.7). There is no *wh*-movement in Pondi; all content questions are formed in-situ—that is, with the questioned element occurring in the same place that it would occur in an equivalent declarative sentence. Thus, *awnjin* ‘what [NPL]?’; *awse* ‘what [PL]?’; and *kĩman* ‘who(m)?’ all occur in the subject position when the questioned element is the subject of a clause, and they all occur in the object position when the questioned element is an object. Likewise, *kĩmanjin* ‘whose?’ occurs immediately before the possessed NP, just as would any possessive pronoun. The interrogative words *am* ‘where?’, *awalake* ‘when?’, *awate* ‘why?’, and *aw* ‘how?’, which behave like adverbs, occur in a typical spot for obliques within a clause, namely following the subject and preceding the object.

In each of the following examples, the question word—‘who?’ (8.25) or ‘what?’ (8.26)—occurs in the subject position of its clause.

- (8.25) **kīman** namal asi-ī
 kīman namal asi-ī
 who pig hit-IPFV
 ‘Who killed the pig?’

- (8.26) **awnjin** kusam amngapī
 aw-njin kusam am-ngapī
 Q-thing.NPL yam eat-PFV
 ‘What (animal) ate the yam?’

In each of the following examples, the question word—‘whom?’ (8.27) or ‘what?’ (8.28)—occurs in the object position of its clause.

- (8.27) alkī **kīman** asi-ī
 alkī **kīman** asi-ī
 person who hit-IPFV
 ‘Whom did the person kill?’

- (8.28) ndindi **awnjin** amngapī
 ndindi **aw-njin** am-ngapī
 dog Q-thing.NPL eat-PFV
 ‘What did the dog eat?’

Finally, the following example (8.29) shows a question word (‘what?’) functioning as a predicate complement.

- (8.29) mī **awnjin**
 mī **aw-njin**
 3SG.SUBJ Q-thing.NPL
 ‘What is it?’ (literally ‘It is what?’)

The following sentences illustrate the placement of the other (adverbial) question words—that is, following the subject and preceding the object (if present). The question word *am* ‘where?’ can inquire into directional location (i.e. ‘whither?’) (8.30), as well as static location (i.e. ‘where?’) (8.31); it can also be the object of the postposition *kī* ‘at, in, on’ (literally ‘at where?’) (8.32).

- (8.30) meyamba o **am** iyapĩ
meyamba o **am** i-apĩ
yesterday 2SG.SUBJ where come-PFV
‘Where did you go yesterday?’

- (8.31) kulawi **am** pĩ
kulawi **am** p-ĩ
boy.PL where be-IPFV
‘Where are the children?’

- (8.32) tatĩ **am** **kĩ** kusam amngapĩ
tatĩ **am** **kĩ** kusam am-ngapĩ
papa where at yam eat-PFV
‘Where did Papa eat a yam?’

In keeping with the syntactic patterning of temporal adverbs (e.g. *meyamba* ‘yesterday’, §5.5.1), the question word *awalake* ‘when?’ can occur either following (8.33) or preceding (8.34) the subject.

- (8.33) tatĩ **awalake** namal asiĩ
tatĩ **awalake** namal asi-ĩ
papa when pig hit-IPFV
‘When did papa kill the pig?’

- (8.34) **awalake** tatĩ kusam amngapĩ
awalake tatĩ kusam am-ngapĩ
when papa yam eat-PFV
‘When did Papa eat a yam?’

The adverbial question words *awate* ‘why?’ (8.35, 8.36) and *aw* ‘how?’ (8.37) behave in similar fashion.

- (8.35) John **awate** Peter asingapĩ
John **awate** Peter asi-ngapĩ
[name] why [name] hit-PFV
‘Why did John hit Peter?’

- (8.36) o **awate** meyamba kisim yapĩ
o **awate** meyamba kisim i-apĩ
2SG.SUBJ why yesterday jungle come-PFV
‘Why did you go to the jungle yesterday?’

- (8.37) nanĩ **aw** ke asi-ĩ
 nanĩ **aw** ke asi-ĩ
 mama how sago hit-IPFV
 ‘How is mama cooking the sago?’ (literally ‘hitting’)

Finally, to ask someone’s name, one uses the question word *kĩman* ‘who?’ (as opposed to, say, the question word ‘what?’). The question word constitutes the predicate complement of the subject NP ‘X’s name’, as seen in (8.38) and (8.39).

- (8.38) unjin **ki** **kĩman**
 u-njin **ki** **kĩman**
 2SG-POSS.NPL name who
 ‘What’s your name?’ (literally ‘Your name [is] who?’)

- (8.39) manjin **ki** **kĩman**
 ma-njin **ki** **kĩman**
 3SG-POSS.NPL name who
 ‘What’s his name?’ (literally ‘His name [is] who?’)

8.3 Commands and requests

Commands or requests are generally formed by means of an imperative verb form, which is often identical to the bare verb stem (§4.5). Stems with covert final /-m/ retain this segment in the imperative. Verb stems ending in some consonants take a suffix *-ĩ* ‘IMP’. It is not clear whether this is ever obligatory or whether it is merely a means of aiding pronunciation or adding emphasis. It seems to occur invariably with final /l/ and sometimes, but not always, with final /n/ (i.e. it patterns with alveolar sonorants). It is also possible for imperative verb forms to take the perfect prefix *a-* (§4.6), which may add immediacy to the command. Syntactically, commands are formed in the same way as regular declarative sentences, although it is—as in English—common to leave the second person referent implied but not stated. As mentioned in §4.11, the imperative form of the verb *p-* ‘be (at)’ is irregular: *alap*. In the following pair of imperative sentences, a contrast can be seen (only in the subject pronoun) between singular (8.40) and plural (8.41). Also note that the verb *andi(m)-* ‘see’ retains its final /-m/.

(8.40) **o** nyandim

o	nyĩ=andim
2SG.SUBJ	1SG=see
'Look at me!' (addressed to one person)	

(8.41) **wan** nyandim

wan	nyĩ=andim
2PL	1SG=see
'Look at me!' (addressed to multiple people)	

The omission of the second person subject pronoun can be seen in examples (8.42) and (8.43), the second of which, (8.43), illustrates the use of the perfect prefix *a-* on the verb.

(8.42) namal nja asim

namal	nja	asim
pig	this	hit
'Hit this pig!'		

(8.43) lo **awle**

lo	a-ole
song	PRF-sing
'Sing!'	

The final *-ĩ* can be observed in the following examples.

(8.44) kamo kwandap **nyanĩ**

kamo	kwandap	nyĩ=an- ĩ
betel.nut	one	1SG=give-IMP
'Give me one betel nut!'		

(8.45) wan **amali**

wan	a-mal- ĩ
2PL	PRF-go-IMP
'Go!' (addressed to multiple people)	

In addition to imperative verb forms, it is possible to use irrealis verb forms to express commands or requests. This is unsurprising, since the irrealis mood encodes—among other things—deontic modality (i.e. 'must' or 'should'). Thus, when applied to a second person subject, the irrealis can serve the pragmatic task of issuing a command or request (i.e. 'you must do this' or 'you should do this'). This is seen in the following example.

(8.46) wan pis **numlala**

wan	pis	numla- la
2PL	leg	throw-IRR

‘Dance!’ (addressed to multiple people; literally ‘You should/must dance!’)

To soften a command (i.e. make a polite request), a conditional verb form (§4.10) may be used instead of an imperative form. This can be viewed as a conventionalised abbreviated sentence—that is, although these pseudo-imperatives are monoclausal constructions, I assume that they derive from full biclausal conditional sentences (§8.6) (e.g. something like ‘if you give me one betel nut, I will be grateful’ becomes, simply, ‘if you give me one betel nut ...’). As a conventionalised means of making polite requests, however, these conditional forms are commonly used without expressed second person subjects and also permit the perfect prefix *a-*, as in the first of the following examples.

(8.47) **ayse**

a-i-se

PRF-come-COND

‘Please come!’

(8.48) **nyandimnje**

nyɪ=andim-**se**

1SG=see-COND

‘Please look at me!’

(8.49) **mamngase**

ma=amnga-**se**

3SG.OBJ=eat-COND

‘Please eat it!’

On the presumed reanalysis of the stem *am-* ‘eat’ to *amnga-*, see §4.10.

Negative commands—that is, prohibitions—are formed with an irrealis main verb plus the auxiliary verb *ola* ‘don’t!’, which is likely, in origin, an imperative form of the verb *ola-* ‘perceive’ (§6.2.1). As with positive-polarity commands, the second person subject is optional: it occurs in (8.50), but not in (8.51).

(8.50) o minjamo katmana nja anda **ola**

o	minjamo	katmana	nja	anda	ola
2SG.SUBJ	banana	old.woman	this	give-IRR	don’t

‘Don’t give a banana to this old woman!’

(8.51) ke amnda **ola**

ke	am-nda	ola
sago	eat-IRR	don't

'Don't eat!' (literally 'eat sago')

Finally, first person imperatives (i.e. exhortations or jussives) are possible as well, although they are not formed with any imperative morphology. Rather, simply, a first person plural pronoun is used with an irrealis verb form (this can be interpreted as a deontic use of the irrealis, i.e. 'we must' or 'we should'), as in the following examples.

(8.52) an ke **amnda**

an	ke	am- nda
1PL	sago	eat-IRR

'Let's eat!' (literally 'eat sago')

(8.53) an kisim **mīla**

an	kisim	mal- la
1PL	jungle	go-IRR

'Let's go to the jungle!'

(8.54) an kapī **mawsila**

an	kapī	ma=us- la
1PL	house	3SG.OBJ=build-IRR

'Let's build a house!'

Negative exhortations are formed in a similar fashion. They are simply negated by the negator *ambo* 'no, not', as in the following examples.

(8.55) an **ambo** ke **amnda**

an	ambo	ke	am- nda
1PL	NEG	sago	eat-IRR

'Let's not eat!' (literally 'eat sago')

(8.56) an **ambo** kisim **mīla**

an	ambo	kisim	mal- la
1PL	NEG	jungle	go-IRR

'Let's not go to the jungle!'

The immediate future auxiliary verb *te* 'be about to' may be used in exhortations (§6.2.1).

8.4 Negation

Negative declarative sentences in Pondi are formed with the negator word *ambo* ‘NEG’ (‘no, not’) (§5.6), which comes (invariably, it seems) immediately after the subject of the clause whose proposition it is negating. That is, in intransitive clauses, it occurs between the subject and the verb; in transitive clauses, it comes between the subject and the object; and in sentences with postnominal obliques (such as adverbs or postpositional phrases), it comes after the subject and before the oblique. Sentences with negative polarity contain propositions concerning events or states that are contrary to perceived reality. Nevertheless, although negated clauses deny the truth of the propositions they contain, these sentences need not be marked morphologically as irrealis. Indeed, negative sentences may reflect the same basic three-way TAM distinction as seen in positive sentences, as illustrated by the following examples: (8.57) has an imperfective-marked verb, (8.58) has a perfective-marked verb, and (8.59) has an irrealis-marked verb.

- (8.57) nyi **ambo** kišim alimbam sangoyi
 nyi **ambo** kišim alimbam sango-ĩ
 1SG NEG jungle big walk-IPFV
 ‘I don’t walk in the big jungle.’

- (8.58) meyamba wan **ambo** njimoka oliyapi
 meyamba wan **ambo** njimoka oli-apĩ
 yesterday 2PL NEG tree cut-PFV
 ‘You didn’t cut the tree yesterday.’

- (8.59) kimbĩlo anale **ambo** minjame ndamnda
 kimbĩlo anale **ambo** minjame ndĩ=am-nda
 tomorrow woman.PL NEG banana.PL 3PL.OBJ=eat-IRR
 ‘The women won’t eat bananas tomorrow.’

The following sentences illustrate the immediately post-subject placement of *ambo* ‘NEG’ (‘no, not’) in sentences with (other) post-subject adverbial or oblique elements, whether a temporal adverb (8.60), a postpositional phrase (8.61), or an oblique NP (8.62).

- (8.60) wan **ambo** kimbĩlo njimoka oliya
 wan **ambo** kimbĩlo njimoka oli-ya
 2PL NEG tomorrow tree cut-IRR
 ‘You won’t cut the tree tomorrow.’

- (8.61) nyĩ **ambo** mawn mĩla
 nyĩ **ambo** ma=un mal-la
 1SG NEG 3SG.OBJ=with go-IRR
 ‘I won’t go with him.’

- (8.62) o **ambo** kamo nyĩmwatĩ
 o **ambo** kamo nyĩ=mwas-ĩ
 2SG.SUBJ NEG betel.nut 1SG=show-IPFV
 ‘You haven’t shown me the betel nut.’

Constructions that negate predicate nominals work the same way: the negator *ambo* ‘NEG’ (‘no, not’) immediately follows the subject, as shown in examples (8.63) and (8.64).

- (8.63) unjin nĩmotĩ **ambo** nyinjin nĩmotĩ
 u-njin nĩmotĩ **ambo** nyi-njin nĩmotĩ
 2SG-POSS.NPL friend NEG 1SG-POSS.NPL friend
 ‘Your friend is not my friend.’

- (8.64) tatĩ **ambo** kote
 tatĩ **ambo** kote
 papa NEG small
 ‘Papa is not small.’

Negative existential constructions tend not to use *ambo* ‘NEG’, but rather are formed more idiomatically with the word *mwa* ‘no, nothing’, stating in effect that the referent in question ‘is nothing’, as in example (8.65).

- (8.65) kanam minjamo **mwa**
 kanam minjamo **mwa**
 now banana nothing
 ‘There are no bananas now.’ (literally ‘Now banana [is] nothing.’)

Negative possessive constructions function similarly, as shown in example (8.66).

- (8.66) ndĩn andakĩ ke **mwa**
 ndĩn andakĩ ke **mwa**
 3PL.SUBJ there sago nothing
 ‘Those people there don’t have food.’ (literally ‘Their sago [= food] there [is] nothing.’)

Negative commands (i.e. prohibitions)—which use a special auxiliary verb *ola* ‘don’t!’ (‘PROH’)—and negative exhortations or negative jussives—which are formed with *ambo* ‘no, not’ (‘NEG’) and an irrealis verb form—are discussed in §8.3.

8.5 Reported speech

In Pondi, indirect discourse is encoded with multiclausal constructions. The first clause has as its subject the speaker of the reported utterance and a verb of speaking as its verb; the second clause consists of the reinterpreted content of the utterance.

Two important verbs of speaking in Pondi are *ya(w(i))*- ‘talk’ and *sa- ~ kī-* ‘tell’. Both of these verbs are irregular, the first in that there is much variation in the ending on the stem depending on the TAM suffix, and the second in that there is suppletion in the basic stem.³ The basic paradigms for these verbs are as follows (Table 8.1), with parentheses indicating the verb stem underlying each inflected form.

Table 8.1. Paradigms for verbs of speaking.

Gloss	Verb stems	Imperfective	Perfective	Irrealis
‘talk’	<i>ya(w(i))-</i>	<i>yawiyī</i> (<i>yawi-</i>)	<i>yapī</i> (<i>ya-</i>)	<i>yawla</i> (<i>yaw-</i>)
‘tell’	<i>sa- ~ kī-</i>	<i>se</i> (<i>sa-</i>)	Ø	<i>kīla</i> (<i>kī-</i>)

The verb *ya(w(i))*- ‘talk’ can be used in intransitive monoclausal constructions to refer to the act of talking or speaking itself, without any sense of reported speech, as in the following examples.

(8.67) *kanam nanī yawiyī*

kanam *nanī* ***yawi-****ī*
now *mama* *talk-IPFV*
 ‘Mama is talking now.’

(8.68) *kimbīlo nyī yawla*

kimbīlo *nyī* ***yaw-****la*
tomorrow *1SG* *talk-IRR*
 ‘I’ll talk tomorrow.’

3 Furthermore, as is the case for several other verbs (which may be called deponent), this verb *sa- ~ kī-* ‘tell’ has no morphologically distinctive perfective form; rather the imperfective form is used to encode perfective aspect as well.

In an alternative construction, this verb takes as an object the noun *ple* ‘speech, story, talk’. First, it can be shown how this word can function on its own as a rather normal (although abstract) noun in Pondi, as in these two sentences: in the first (8.69) it functions as part of an object NP; in the second (8.70) it is part of a subject NP.

- (8.69) kanam nyĩ nanĩ njin **ple** mawle
 kanam nyĩ nanĩ njin **ple** ma=ola-ĩ
 now 1SG mama POSS.NPL speech 3SG.OBJ=hear-IPFV
 ‘Now I’m listening to mama’s speech.’

- (8.70) wanjin **ple** atamate
 wan-njin **ple** atamate
 2PL-POSS.NPL speech bad
 ‘Your speech is bad.’ (i.e. ‘What you are saying is wrong.’)

In (8.71) and (8.72), however, this noun is the object of the verb *ya(w(i))*-‘talk’ (literally ‘talk speech’ or ‘talk talk’).

- (8.71) meyanga John **ple yapĩ**
 meyanga John **ple** **ya-apĩ**
 yesterday John speech talk-PFV
 ‘John talked yesterday.’

- (8.72) tatĩ ke ame **ple yapĩ**
 tatĩ ke am-e **ple** **ya-apĩ**
 papa sago eat-SIM speech talk-PFV
 ‘Papa ate and talked (at the same time).’ (literally ‘ate sago’)

The verb *sa- ~ kĩ-* ‘tell’, on the other hand, often functions in transitive constructions. Here, the person being addressed is the object of the verb, as in (8.73).

- (8.73) Peter **ukĩla**
 Peter u=**kĩ**-la
 [name] 2SG.OBJ=tell-IRR
 ‘Peter will tell you.’

The verb *sa- ~ kĩ-* ‘tell’ can occur in multiclausal constructions encoding reported speech, as in the following sentences.

- (8.74) [meyanga John **nyīse**] [mī mīla]
 [meyanga John nyī=**sa-i**] [mī mal-la]
 yesterday [name] 1SG=tell-PFV 3SG.SUBJ go-IRR
 ‘Yesterday John told me he would go.’ (literally ‘Yesterday John told me;
 he will go.’)

- (8.75) [nyī **mase**] [nyī mapīla]
 [nyī ma=**sa-i**] [nyī ma=p-la]
 1SG 3SG.OBJ=tell-IPFV 1SG 3SG.OBJ=be-IRR
 ‘I told him I would stay.’ (literally ‘I told him; I will stay.’)

- (8.76) [Peter **nyīse**] [nanī ke likapī]
 [Peter nyī=**sa-i**] [nanī ke lik-apī]
 [name] 1SG=tell-IPFV mama sago prepare-PFV
 ‘Peter told me that Mama prepared sago.’ (literally ‘Peter told me; mama
 prepared sago.’)

When encoding reported speech without mention of any particular person being addressed, the verb *sa-* – *kī-* ‘tell’ is also used, only without any object. Instead, in the object slot, the form *mbi* occurs. I have only found it here, and do not know its exact meaning or etymology (although it could be related to Ulwa *mbi* ‘here’). Perhaps—alternatively—the form *mbisa-* should be simply left unanalysed as a verb meaning ‘say’. Such constructions are exemplified in examples (8.77) and (8.78).

- (8.77) [Peter **mbise**] [nanī ke likapī]
 [Peter **mbi=sa-i**] [nanī ke lik-apī]
 [name] ?=tell-IPFV mama sago prepare-PFV
 ‘Peter said that mama prepared sago.’

- (8.78) [Peter **mbise**] [mī minjamo amngapī]
 [Peter **mbi=sa-i**] [mī minjamo am-ngapī]
 [name] ?=tell-IPFV 3SG.SUBJ banana eat-PFV
 ‘Peter said that he ate a banana.’

8.6 Conditional sentences

Conditional sentences express hypothetical situations and their presumed results. In Pondi, conditional statements are formed with two clauses, the first (the protasis) expressing the condition, and the second (the apodosis) expressing the consequence. The verb in the protasis contains the conditional suffix *-se* (§4.10), and the verb in the apodosis is marked as irrealis. My data are limited, but it seems that the verb in the protasis (perhaps best thought of as a medial verb), does not inflect in any way for tense, aspect, or mood and that the verb in the apodosis (or the final verb) is always marked as irrealis, again regardless of any TAM distinctions anywhere in the statement: thus there would be no morphosyntactic distinction made among present, past, and future time, nor among implicative, predictive, and counterfactual conditional statements, as illustrated by the following conditional sentences.

(8.79) kin **lapise** nyi kapī **pīla**

kin	lap- se	nyi	kapī	p- la
rain	fall-COND	1SG	house	be-IRR

‘If it rains, I will stay home.’⁴

(8.80) kin ambo **lapise** nyi kisim **mīla**

kin	ambo	lap- se	nyi	kisim	mal- la
rain	NEG	fall-COND	1SG	jungle	go-IRR

‘If it does not rain, I will go to the jungle.’

(8.81) iye ke ateyamate **amngase** mī kulal n **lala**

iyē	ke	ateyamate	amnga- se	mī	kulal	n	la- la
girl	sago	bad.PL	eat-COND	3SG.SUBJ	vomit	OBL	put-IRR

‘If the girl ate bad food, she will vomit.’⁵

As mentioned in §8.3, conditional verb forms may also be used (in monoclausal constructions) to form polite commands or requests.

4 Other possible translations of this sentence include the following: 1) ‘If it is raining, I will stay home.’; 2) ‘If/when it rains, I stay home.’; 3) ‘If it were raining, I would be staying home.’; 4) ‘If it had rained, I would have stayed home.’

5 This example is anomalous in that the oblique marker (generally a proclitic *=n*) occurs here without any pronoun or determiner as a host (see §7.3). Note that the verb glossed as ‘put’—when it has an explicit object—takes as its object a destination or goal argument, not a theme; theme roles (like ‘vomit’ in the present example) are encoded as oblique arguments, so the presence here of *n* is not so strange syntactically, only morphologically, since there is no determiner to host it.

Simultaneous events hypothesised to occur in future time are encoded as conditional statements as well (see example 8.17).

Permissive constructions in future time can also be encoded as conditional statements. In such instances, the verb of ‘letting’ (§8.1.3) is marked as conditional, and the verb in the following clause is marked as irrealis, as in the following example.

- (8.82) kimbīlo tatī wol **lase** o kapī **usila**
 kimbīlo tatī u=ol la-**se** o kapī us-**la**
 tomorrow papa 2SG.OBJ=from put-COND 2SG.SUBJ house build-IRR
 ‘Tomorrow papa will let you build a house.’ (literally ‘If tomorrow papa lets you, you will build a house.’)

Finally, it may be possible, as an alternative, to express conditional notions as two clauses with irrealis-marked verbs juxtaposed paratactically, as in the following example.

- (8.83) o yakus **ningasina**⁶ o mol **lala**
 o yakus ningasi-**la** o ma=ol la-**la**
 2SG.SUBJ machete throw-IRR 2SG.SUBJ 3SG.OBJ=from put-IRR
 ‘If you throw a machete, you will lose it.’ (perhaps literally something like ‘You might throw a machete; you might lose it.’)

I do not know whether such constructions can be used only for implicative conditionals or can be used more widely.

6 Here we see an example of the occasional free variation between [l] and [n]; this form is elsewhere pronounced [ningasila].

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