

ni ɜbɪsɛ́dɪ dɜ ɜtɜmí
The Language of the Ebisédi
Reference Grammar

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1 Introduction

This is the reference grammar for the language of the Ebisédi. Although it is meant to be a reference, the chapters are intended to be tutorial-like in nature as well. The appendices will provide the concise, no-nonsense, compact reference tables for when you don't wish to wade through verbose tutorials.

1.1 Overview

1.1.1 Background

The language of the Ebisédi, also known by the anglicization *Ebisédian*, is the common language spoken by the peoples of the Ferochromon universe, during the Era of the Kingdom. Various dialects exist; in this reference grammar we document the officially-accepted one, which is the common trade language used for official, commercial, and personal purposes alike, as described by the Ebisédi grammarians.

1.1.2 The Language

The language is a *pitch-accented, inflected* language with 27 consonants and 9 basic vowels. Vowels are further differentiated by length, ‘breathing’, and nasalization.

There are three classes of words: *nouns*, *verbs*, and ‘*relatives*’¹. These are assembled into sentences, and sentences into paragraphs and other structures. Word order is relatively free, although there are conventions that are usually employed.

Nouns are inflected for *gender*, *number*, and *case*. Verbs are conjugated for *domain*, *focus*, and *aspect*. Relatives, in spite of the fact that Ebisédi grammarians consider them to be a single class of words, actually cover a rather wide range of auxilliary words, conjunctions, prepositions, and particles. As such, there are several subclasses of relatives, each with its own morphology.

Sentence structure is relatively free-form; there are no requirements for any part of speech to be present in a sentence. Verbless sentences abound;

¹Ebisédi grammarians’ terminology for the class of words that “relate nouns, verbs, and sentences to each other”. Effectively, this could be any word that cannot stand alone.

and *summaritive sentences* may comprise entirely of relatives.

1.1.3 Writing systems

There are several writing systems for the language, the most common being the abjad we will refer to simply as “the native writing”. It is called **sanokí** in Ebisédian, and consists of symbols for consonants with optional vowel diacritics. It was developed by early Ebisédian scribes, and has elaborate flourishes and ligatures.

There is another writing system called the **ĕøromokí**, which is based on color patterns. The **ĕøromokí** has very diverse uses: from storing messages on a string of colored beads, to painting meaningful color patterns on the wall, to assembling colored floor tiles in patterns that convey a message².

For our purposes, we will use a Roman orthography, invented by explorers who found passage into the Ferochromon universe. This orthography will be described in detail in the subsequent sections.

1.2 The Alphabet

In discussing the Ebisédian alphabet, we will use IPA³ to describe the corresponding pronunciations. In tables and figures, we will use IPA symbols as-is. Within running text, we will enclose IPA with [square brackets] to avoid confusion. For example, **ni 3bis3di d3 3t3mí** is pronounced [ni 3bis3:di d3 3t3mí:].

1.2.1 The Vowels

Ebisédi grammarians describe their language as possessing 27 consonants and 9 vowels. These 9 vowels are further differentiated by *vowel length*, *pitch accent*, *breathiness*, and *nasality*.

Table 1 shows the nine vowels with the closest IPA representation(s) for them. The top symbol in each cell, in bold, is the orthographic symbol for the vowel; the symbol(s) on the bottom is the IPA equivalent(s). Vowels can

²It is a great hobby amongst Ebisédi architects to write entire novels on the walls, floors, and ceilings of their buildings using **ĕøromokí**. And the Kings love the halls and corridors of their palaces colored with meaning.

³The International Phonetic Alphabet.

u	ω	y
u	ə, ɥ	y
o	ɜ	ɪ
o	ə, ə	i
ø	a	e
ɑ	a	æ, ɛ

Table 1: Vowels

be either *long*, or *short*. In the orthography, long vowels are indicated by a macron over the symbol: e. g., $\bar{\mathfrak{z}}$ (pronounced [ɔː]).

Vowels have three possible *breathings*: *smooth* vowels are pronounced with preceding a semi-vowel of the corresponding type. They are written with the smooth diacritic: e. g., $\acute{\mathfrak{u}}$ (pronounced [wu]), and $\acute{\mathfrak{a}}$ (pronounced [aa]). *Abrupt* vowels, when they are word-initial or follow another vowel, are pronounced with a preceding glottal stop. They are written without any special marks: \mathfrak{a} is pronounced [ʔa]. *Harsh* vowels are pronounced with a preceding glottal fricative. They are written with a preceding ‘h’. For example, **ho** is pronounced [ho]. Smooth vowels are always word-initial; harsh vowels may be word-initial or immediately following another vowel.

Vowels may also be *nasal*; nasal vowels are marked with a tilde: $\tilde{\mathfrak{a}}$ (pronounced [ã]). Nasal vowels are relatively rare, but it is important to distinguish them from non-nasal vowels when they do appear. Vowels next to a nasal consonant may also be nasalized when pronounced; however, they are not marked as nasal vowels.

The language is pitch-accented; high pitch is indicated by an acute accent: $\acute{\mathfrak{a}}$. Unaccented syllables have low pitch. Long accented syllables are sometimes pronounced with ‘moving pitch’: either high falling, or low rising, or even low rising to high and falling to low. The pitch accent is relative; high pitch on one syllable may be lower relative to another high pitch, depending on which syllable the speaker wishes to emphasize.

The arrangement of vowels in Table 1 was introduced by Ebisédi grammarians to help describe vowel shifts that occur during inflection. We shall see how in a later section.

1.2.2 The Consonants

Table 2 shows the 27 consonants of the language, together with their IPA equivalents.

gh	kh	ng	g	k	ḱ
ɣ	x	ŋ	g	k	k ^h
dh	th	n	d	t	ṭ
ð	θ	n	d	t	t ^h
jh	ch	-	j	c	ĉ
ʒ	ʃ	-	ɟ	tʃ	tʃ ^h
z	s	-	-	l	r
z	s	-	-	l	ɽ, r
v	f	m	b	p	ḽ
β	ɸ	m	b	p	p ^h

Table 2: Consonants

As with the vowels, Table 2 has also been arranged by Ebisédi grammarians, partly to help describe how consonants change in certain word inflections.

Limited consonant clusters exist. The allowed consonant clusters are any one of **g**, **k**, **ḱ**, **d**, **t**, **ṭ**, **b**, **p**, **ḽ** followed by either **l** or **r**. In native writing, consonant clusters appear as ligatures.

1.2.3 Alphabetic Ordering

The usual ordering of the alphabet is from the upper-left corner of each of the tables above, going right, and then starting from the left of the next row, and going to the right, etc., with vowels coming before consonants. Smooth vowels come before abrupt vowels, and harsh vowels come after. Long vowels follow short ones. Vowel nasality is disregarded.

In lexicons, the ordering employed is a per-syllable comparison; words with initial vowels always coming before words with initial consonants, and double-consonants treated as a unit, coming after the 6th column consonant of the same row as their first consonant.

1.3 Orthographic Conventions

1.3.1 Punctuation

The native script only has three kinds of delimiters: *word boundaries*, *sentence boundaries*, and *paragraph breaks*. We can indicate word boundaries with inter-word space, and paragraph breaks by formatting text into blocks. Hence, strictly speaking, we only need one punctuation mark, the period (.), to mark the end of a sentence.

However, except where stated, we will liberally use English-like punctuation in orthographic prose. Specifically, we will insert commas (,) where native speakers naturally would pause, although that is not indicated in native writing; use question marks (?) for questions, and use exclamation points (!) for emphatic sentences. Occasionally, a colon (:) or semicolon (;) may mark a sentence boundary instead of a period, where we feel it would give a better idea of the train of thought in the passage.

1.3.2 Typeface

When we employ orthographic text fragments in running text, we will use **boldface** for the orthographic text. We will also use boldface for displayed orthographic fragments, thus:

ni ʒbʊsɔ́dɪ dɜ ʒtɜmí. *The language of the people.*

In longer texts, however, we will use regular typeface so that it is easier on the eyes. As an example, we display below a little anecdote about playing children:

ni bɜʒtɜɔ́ dɜ bɪ́ɜni.
ʒmɪrɜ́nɜ ʒhɪ́ɪ ke, ʒkɜɜlɜ ʒhɪ́lɜ kɪgɜ ce, keve lɪ́s ʒhɪ́ɪ lɜ bɜʒtɜ́
re, tɔ́ma tɜ, gɪ́jɜɜ ghí? lés lóru usí. tɜmɜ. nɜ ʒhtɜ́ dɜ bɪ́ɜnɜ
taóma tɜ, usó mómurɜnɜ ebí êe, usí ʒmɪrɜ́nɜ ve. keve kɪgɪ ebɜ
ʒjumɜ́. ghú ʒjumɜ́ lés lóru? tɜmɜ. ʒhtɜ́ taóma tɜ, nɜ ʒjhɪ́dɪ́ dɜ
gɪ́jɜɜ fɜkɜ́ vɜ́s ýbú. alés, alés. tɜmɜ.

1.3.3 Stress Markings

In native writing, the accent on most words are not marked. Stress is usually only marked on emphasized words. The sample passage shown in the previous

section has full stress marking; we will include full stress marking on most examples and short passages, to help the reader identify the words. However, where we deem appropriate, we will omit stress marking from long passages.

The following is the same story from the previous section, but without stress markings except on emphasized words:

nu bɪzɜtɜ dʒ bɪlɜnu.

ʒmɪrɜnɜ jhɪlɪ ke, ʒkɜlɜ jhɪlɜ kɪgɜ ce, keve lɪs jhɪlɪ lɜ bɜzɜtɜ
re, t̂ɔma tɜ, gɪjɜl ghɪ? les lɔru ɪsɪ. tɜmɜ. nɜ jhɪtɜ dʒ bɪlɜnɜ
taɔma tɜ, ɪsɜ mɔmɪrɜnɜ ebi k̂e, ɪsɪ ʒmɪrɜnɜ ve. keve kɪgɪ ebɜ
ʒjumɜ. ghɪ ʒjumɜ les lɔru? tɜmɜ. jhɪtɜ t̂aɔma tɜ, nɜ ʒjhɪdɪlɜ dʒ
gɪjɜlɜ fɜk̂ɜ v̂ɜŝ ŷbu. alɜs, alɜs. tɜmɜ.

2 Nouns

Nouns *refer* to persons, things, abstract concepts, and static events. We say that the persons, things, concepts, and events are the *referents* of their corresponding nouns.

2.1 Noun Attributes

Nouns have three attributes: *gender*, *number*, and *case*.

2.1.1 Gender

The gender of a noun always reflects the actual, physical gender of its referent. The neuter gender is used for all inanimate things, abstract concepts, and static events. There are five noun genders:

Masculine Refers to males.

Feminine Refers to females.

Epicene Refers to either males or females. The Ebisédi are very conscious of using the proper gender at all times, especially when addressing others. The epicene is used when the speaker addresses either a mixed male and female audience or wishes to make a general statement that applies to both genders, or when the speaker is unsure of the other party's gender. It is considered to be rudely presumptuous to simply assume one gender or the other when one is unsure; one has to use the epicene. And it is equally rude to continue using the epicene when the other party's gender is beyond doubt.

Neuter Refers to mainly inanimate objects. Neuter should never be confused with epicene; the latter means “either” gender, the former means “neither”.

Double This is a rare gender that refers to things both male and female. The most common usage is in collective nouns referring to couples.⁴ Some hermaphroditic creatures are also referred to using double-gendered nouns. Other than that, this gender is relatively rarely used.

⁴A typical example being the collective noun **patuí**, “grandparents”.

2.1.2 Number

Nouns are also inflected for number. There are three possible numbers:

Singular Refers to one instance of the noun.

Plural Refers to many instances of the noun. The plural often carries an emphatic nuance. It is frequently used in an idiomatic way to mean “very” or “much”. For example, **fúktí** (singular) means “grief”, or “trauma”; plural **ʒfúktí** (plural) means “great grief”, or “intense trauma”.

Nullar Refers to the *absence* of the noun. It is much more preferred to say:

ebú fótʒ mýcumø. *I saw none-of-him (nullar)*

than to use a negation:

mýe ebú fótʒ cúumø. *I did not see him.*

2.1.3 Case

Finally, there are 5 noun cases:

Originative Marks the noun as the source, or the starting point, of an event or thing.

Receptive Marks the noun as the recipient, the destination, the target, of an event of thing.

Instrumental Marks the noun as the executive, the instrument, the means, the motivating power, that carries out or sustains an event or thing.

Conveyant Marks the noun as that which is conveyed, that which is in transit, that which is in progress, or that which is contained within a locative noun.

Locative Marks the noun as the current location where an event is taking place, or where a thing is. Idiomatically, the locative case also acts as a nominative, it marks the noun as the topic about which one discusses. When used of person(s), it may also idiomatically refer to the immediate vicinity of the person(s)⁵.

⁵cf. **ulúro** in the section on prepositions.

Noun cases are semantic rather than purely syntactic. To understand some of the more esoteric case-related constructs in the language, it is helpful to understand the mental model behind the function of noun cases. This *Noun Case Model* comes from Ebisédi philosophy, and describes the relationship of the five noun cases to each other.

One way to visualize this model is to imagine the conveyant noun, which had just come from the originative noun, currently inside the locative noun, being propelled by the instrumental noun towards the receptive noun.

2.2 First Declension Nouns

The canonical form of a noun is its *epicene singular locative* form. For nouns that only exist in one gender, its canonical form is the singular locative of that gender. This is the form from which the other forms are derived.

Ebisédian has two noun declensions. We describe in this section the first declension, which is the most common.

2.2.1 Case inflections

The case inflection of a noun happens via *vowel contouring*. Vowel contouring is the shifting of vowel values from the locative form of the noun in a particular pattern that identifies it in a particular case. Each of the five noun cases have their own distinctive vowel contouring rules.

The vowel contouring rules for each case consist of *shifting trends* and a *characteristic vowel*. The shifting trend defines a tendency for vowels in the noun to shift toward a certain vowel value, and the characteristic vowel is always the last vowel in the noun.

There is also a tendency in some noun cases to break up a long vowel in the ultima⁶ into two short vowels. The second of these short syllables then becomes the characteristic vowel, while the first shifts with the rest of the vowels according to the shifting trend of the case.

To illustrate this process, we will use a typical noun, **kórumi** (“color”), as a model noun in the following descriptions of the case inflection rules.

Locative The locative case has the characteristic vowel **ɪ**. All regular nouns as listed in the lexicon always end with **ɪ**. This is the case with our model noun, **kórumi**.

⁶Final syllable.

Originative Vowels in the noun tend to be less open. In particular, vowels appearing in the 3rd row of vowels are shifted up to the 2nd row. The characteristic vowel is \emptyset . In the case of our model noun **kórumi**, the first vowel is a 3rd row vowel; hence it shifts to the 2nd row vowel **o**. The second vowel is a 1st row vowel; it is not shifted. The last vowel is replaced by the characteristic vowel \emptyset . Hence, the originative of **kórumi** is **kórum \emptyset** .

Receptive Vowels in the noun tend to be more open: 1st row vowels are shifted downwards to the 2nd row. The characteristic vowel is **u**. In our model noun **kórumi**, the second vowel **u** is a 1st row vowel; hence it shifts to **o**. The last vowel becomes the characteristic **u**. Hence, the receptive form is **kóromu**.

Instrumental Vowels in the noun tend to be more central. Vowels in the 1st and 3rd *columns* tend toward the 2nd column. The characteristic vowel is **a**. In the case of our model noun, the first two vowels become **a** and ω . Hence, the instrumental form is **kár ω ma**.

Conveyant As with the instrumental case, 1st and 3rd column vowels tend to shift to 2nd column vowels. The characteristic vowel is **ɜ**. The conveyant case of our model noun is, therefore, **kár ω mɜ**.

2.2.2 Number Inflections

Number inflections are derived from the singular forms by attaching a *characteristic prefix* and moving and lengthening or shortening the stress syllable.

The plural number is indicated by the characteristic prefix **ɜ-**. The stress syllable shifts towards the end of the word; the new stress syllable may also be lengthened if it is a short syllable.

...

The nullar number is indicated by the characteristic prefix **mý-**.⁷ The stress is shifted to this prefix, and the original stress syllable is shortened if it was long.

...

⁷This prefix appears in many other places as a negation marker, for example, **myna** (negative subjunctive particle), **mýe** (verb negation), **mýne** (negative interrogative particle).

2.2.3 Gender Inflections

Gender inflections are indicated by the shifting and lengthening of the stress syllable, as well as *consonant contouring*. ...

2.3 Second Declension Nouns

Second declension nouns are remnants of an archaic declension that occurred in an earlier form of the language. As such, they tend to be words with more basic or primitive meanings. They are also more irregular in form.

2.3.1 Case Inflections

Second declension nouns are inflected for case in a similar way to first declension nouns. The characteristic case vowels, \emptyset , **u**, **a**, **3**, **ι**, are also used for case inflections in second declension nouns. However, unlike the first declension nouns, they tend to only exhibit vowel contouring in the conveyant or instrumental cases, or in some cases not at all. Furthermore, some case forms are special in not having a characteristic case vowel.

Table 3 shows the singular forms of an example of a second declension neuter noun, $\hat{\mathbf{k}}\acute{\emptyset}\mathbf{ι}$, “grandeur”, “greatness”.

Originative	$\hat{\mathbf{k}}\acute{\emptyset}$
Receptive	$\hat{\mathbf{k}}\bar{\emptyset}\acute{\mathbf{u}}$
Instrumental	$\hat{\mathbf{k}}\bar{\emptyset}\acute{\mathbf{a}}$
Conveyant	$\hat{\mathbf{k}}\bar{\mathbf{a}}\acute{\mathbf{3}}$
Locative	$\hat{\mathbf{k}}\acute{\emptyset}\mathbf{ι}$

Table 3: Second declension noun: $\hat{\mathbf{k}}\acute{\emptyset}\mathbf{ι}$

Notice that only the conveyant case shifts the root vowel from $\bar{\emptyset}$ to $\bar{\mathbf{a}}$. Also note the placement of stress: the noun root $\hat{\mathbf{k}}\bar{\emptyset}$ - is unstressed except in the locative and the originative. As we shall see, second declension nouns in general tend to stress noun roots only in the locative and one other case which usually has an exceptional form.

Table 4 shows the singular forms of another second declension noun, this time with a short noun root: **ch $\acute{\mathbf{y}}\mathbf{ι}$** , meaning “poison” or “acid”.

Originative	chy ^ó
Receptive	chý [́]
Instrumental	chyá
Conveyant	ch ^ω 3
Locative	chýι

Table 4: Second declension noun: **chýι**

Notice that **chýι** has an unstressed noun root in its originative, but has a stressed root in its receptive, which also is an exceptional form.

2.3.2 Number Inflections

The number inflections of second declension nouns are more regular, and are formed in a similar way to the first declension nouns.

Plural forms have the stress syllable shifted towards the last syllable; and the plural prefix **3-** is added. Similarly, nullar forms have a shortened noun root, except in the exceptional case, and have the nullar prefix **mý-** added.

Table 5 shows the plural and nullar forms of **κ̂θ̂ι**.

	Nullar	Plural
Originative	mýκ̂θ̂	3κ̂θ̂
Receptive	mýκ̂θ̂u	3κ̂θ̂ú
Instrumental	mýκ̂θ̂a	3κ̂θ̂á
Conveyant	m ^ó κ̂a3	3κ̂ā3
Locative	mýκ̂θ̂ι	3κ̂θ̂ί

Table 5: Nullar and plural forms of **κ̂θ̂ι**

We have seen how **κ̂θ̂ι** exhibits an irregular form in its singular originative. Here, we see that *all* its originative forms are irregular. This is a common trend in second declension nouns: one of the noun cases is treated specially across all three numbers. In the case of **κ̂θ̂ι**, it is the originative; in the case of **chýι**, it is the receptive.

Table 6 shows the plural and nullar forms of **chýι**. Notice that its irregular forms occur in the receptive instead of the originative.

	Nullar	Plural
Originative	mýchyø	3chȳó
Receptive	mýchȳ	3chȳ̄
Instrumental	mýchya	3chȳá
Conveyant	móchω3	3chō3
Locative	mýchyι	3chȳί

Table 6: Nullar and plural forms of **chȳι**

2.3.3 Gender Inflections

Second declension nouns do not inflect for gender.

2.4 Pronouns

2.4.1 First Person Pronouns

There are 3 different first person pronouns, one for each of the masculine, feminine, and neuter genders. There is no double-gender one. The first person pronouns are *always* singular. There is no first person plural pronoun; that function is filled by the plural intimate pronoun (see the section on intimate pronouns).

Table 7 shows the forms of the first person pronouns.

	Masculine	Feminine	Epicene	Neuter
Originative	ebó	ȳbó	obó	ιbó
Receptive	ebú	ȳbú	obú	ιbú
Instrumental	ebá	ȳbá	obá	ιbá
Conveyant	eb3	ȳb3	ob3	ιb3
Locative	ebί	ȳbί	obί	ιbί

Table 7: First person pronouns

The neuter first person pronoun is not used except by fictional characters in children’s stories.⁸ The epicene first person pronoun is used mainly when

⁸Although it is certainly possible that an as-yet unknown genderless intelligent being might refer to itself using the neuter first person pronoun.

imitating others in indirect discourse, as in the following example:

mysó tóma t3, obú cwsán3. t3m3.

Do not say, 'I am clever.'

It should never be used to refer to oneself, as that carries very negative connotations.

2.4.2 Intimate pronouns

Unlike English, there are no second or third person pronouns in the language. Rather, there are *intimate* and *distant* pronouns, which divide the world in rather different ways than the pronouns in English do.

The intimate pronouns always refer to people the speaker regards as friends, people of his inner circle, people on his side. The neuter intimate pronouns refer to the speaker's possessions, or things otherwise dear to him. In contrast, the distant pronouns refer to those regarded as outsiders, those who are not on the speaker's side. Although strictly speaking, the distant pronouns should only ever be used for strangers and outsiders, sometimes they are used on a close friend to express strong disagreement, or strong discontentment with the friendship.

The plural intimate pronoun sometimes also includes the speaker, although usually the first person pronoun is listed specifically:

ebí 3jumí *I and you (pl.), i. e., we.*

There are intimate pronouns for all five genders. The masculine, feminine, epicene, and double forms are cognate; the neuter forms come from a different root. Table 8 shows the locative forms of all the intimate pronouns.

	Singular	Plural	Nullar
Masculine	cómi	3cómı	mýcomı
Feminine	jubí	3jubí	mýjubı
Epicene	jumí	3jumí	mýjumı
Neuter	mıcí	3mıcí	mýmıci
Double	cobí	3cobí	mýcobi

Table 8: Intimate pronouns

2.4.3 Distant pronouns

The distant pronouns are used to refer to things the speaker regards as distant and foreign, whether physically or otherwise. When applied to persons, it implies that the speaker regards the persons to be outside his inner circle, to be not on his side.

The distant pronouns do not always imply enmity or distance, however; they are also the *formal pronouns* — what one would use in official statements. The intimate pronouns are deemed too personal in such contexts, and the distant pronouns are always employed.

Table 9 lists the distant pronouns for the five genders.

	Singular	Plural	Nullar
Masculine	chídı	ʒchídı	mýchıdı
Feminine	jhtı́	ʒjhtı́	mýjhtı
Epicene	jhdı́	ʒjhdı́	mýjhdı
Neuter	nacı́	ʒnacacı́	mýnacı
Double	chıtı	ʒchıtı	mýchıtı

Table 9: Distant pronouns

2.5 Proper Nouns

Proper names in the language are marked by a prefix which is inflected for gender and number. This prefix is not shifted by vowel contouring when the proper noun is inflected for case.

The proper name prefixes are shown in Table 10.

	Singular	Plural	Nullar
Masculine	e-	he-	emý-
Feminine	ý-	hy-	ýmý-
Epicene	o-	ho-	omý-
Neuter	ı-	hı-	ımý-
Double	ω-	hω-	ωmý-

Table 10: Proper Name Prefixes

Names of people are given with the masculine and feminine singular prefixes. Well-known names include:

ekásti Ekaasi, a famous King in the Era of the Kingdoms.

ýlí Ylia, the wife of Ekaasi. (The ‘a’ in the anglicization ‘Ylia’ comes from tradition; her real name does not have the ‘a’ except in the instrumental case.)

ýgomaí Ygomai, a wise, single old lady from the city of Isili.

The epicene plural prefixes are used for names of certain groups of people. For example:

holésu The Wanderers, referring to the daring, pioneering explorers in the Era of the Villages. (This name is cognate with the verb **lés**.)

hoċasaní The Experts, the highly-respected people trained in physics, philosophy, and martial arts. (Their name comes from **ċasanu**, “expertise”, referring to the mastery of one’s abilities coupled with wisdom and experience.)

The neuter prefixes are used as names of places or things. For example:

uslí Isili, the name of a city.

ukrisánu Krisani, the name of Ekaasi’s sword.

2.5.1 Nullar Proper Nouns

Just as with regular nouns, the Ebisédi prefer to use the nullar of a proper noun to indicate absence rather than to negate the sentence with **mýe**.

For example:

b3t3́ l3́s jh3́l k3́e, f3́t3́ jh3́t3́ úm3́y3́gom3́0 ve.

The mother went in to the room, but did not see Ygomai (or, saw that Ygomai was not there).

Literally, the second phrase means “she saw Ms. No-Ygomai”. Although anglicized names like ‘Ygomai’ are based on the singular form of the name, one should not be surprised to encounter the nullar equivalents, which have the **-mý-** infix. Also note the shift of the stress syllable to this **-mý-** infix.

As another example — although it is correct to say things such as:

mýe ekás3 julír. *Ekaasi is not in the house. Literally, It is not true that Ekaasi is in the house.*

the Ebisédi would much rather say:

emýkās3 julír. *No-Ekaasi is in the house.*

2.5.2 Noun apposition

Noun apposition is when two nouns are placed side-by-side to indicate that they in fact refer to the same thing. Noun apposition is indicated by prefixing the *second* noun with a proper name prefix that matches the gender and number of the first noun.

For example:

eĕán3 ebǎl3n3. *Ekani the boy.*

Whereas if the prefix is omitted, it would refer to *another*⁹ boy:

eĕán3 bǎl3n3. *Ekani and the boy (another boy).*

A common idiom is to use a pronoun for the second word. If the pronoun is an intimate pronoun, it expresses affection with the speaker:

ýlí ýjubí. *Ylia, the dear. Or, Ylia, my dear.*

If the pronoun is a distant pronoun, it expresses distance or coldness with the speaker:

ýlí ýjhití. *Ylia, that woman. Or, Ylia, that (female) stranger.*

This idiom is commonly used to express one's feeling towards the other party. In the former case, the speaker regards Ylia as someone distant, whereas in the latter case, the speaker regards her as someone close.

Note that when the appositioned noun has a modifying clause, the proper name prefix attaches to the subordinating particle instead. For example:

ekáni eni ɔsán3 du bǎl3n3. *Ekani, the intelligent boy.*

⁹This is because of *implicit conjunction*. The nominal conjunction **zo** is usually only used explicitly for emphasis.

2.6 Noun Association

Noun association is a feature of the language used for disambiguating what nouns or pronouns refer to. It is similar in function to the English “former” and “latter”, or “the first” and “the second”.

There are three *associative prefixes*, namely, **ku-**, **cu-**, and **ro-**.¹⁰ When used with plural or nullar nouns, they come *between* the plural or nullar prefix and the noun itself. For example, **kichídi** becomes **ɜkichídi** in the plural, and **mýkichídi** in the nullar.

These prefixes can be attached to any noun to “mark” the noun. When a pronoun appears later that refers to this noun, the same prefix will be attached to the pronoun, thus “associating” the pronoun with the noun. This makes it possible to have the pronouns refer unambiguously to different nouns of the same gender and number.

For example, if one were talking about two women, one could mark them with the prefixes **ku-** and **cu-**, respectively. Then later, to refer to the first woman, one uses **kujhítí**; to refer to the second, one uses **cujhítí**. One could even say:

kujhítɜ́ kujhítɜ́ lýt. *She and she went.*

The first “she” refers to the first woman, and the second “she” refers to the second. This sentence would be ambiguous in English; but it is perfectly clear in Ebisédian.

One can also use the associative prefixes to indicate another instance of the same noun: for example, if one were discussing a **mangí**,¹¹ one could say **cumangí** to mean “another horse”, and henceforth say **kumangí** to refer to the first. Of course, one could always say **aro mangí** to explicitly mean “another horse”; but the advantage of using the associative prefix is that later, one can then easily refer to it using **cujhídi**. In the former case, it would be unclear which horse **jhídi** refers to.

The conventional order for using the associative prefixes is to use **ku-** first, and then **cu-** and **ro-**, in that order. As a result, sometimes **ku-** is understood to mean “the former” or “the one before”, and **cu-** “the second” or “the one

¹⁰It is not a coincidence that these prefixes look very much like the words for the fundamental colors red, green, and blue. This is another instance of the deeply-rooted color symbolism in Ebisédi culture.

¹¹A horse-like creature, usually translated as “horse”, but actually refers to a low, slender, hexapedal creature, usually the black variety.

here”, and **ro-** “the third” or “the one there”. One can sometimes get away with omitting the associative prefix on the noun itself, while using it on the corresponding pronoun.

3 Verbs

3.1 Verbs versus Gerunds

Ebisédian verbs specifically refer only to *events*. That is, to *changes* or *happenings*, but not to a steady state of things. A steady state of things would not be described using a verb; rather, a gerund or equivalent noun would be used instead.

3.2 Verb Attributes

Verbs have three attributes: *domain*, *focus*, and *aspect*. Unlike English, Ebisédian verbs do not have tense. There are tense markers (see *temporal nouns*), but usually, any tense markings are omitted except where necessary to disambiguate what one means.

3.2.1 Verb Domains

The domain of a verb specifies what kind of event it describes; the domain wherein it operates.

A *physical* verb describes physical events.

An *introvertive* verb describes mainly psychological events¹².

An *abstract* verb describes a group of events considered to be a unit (for example, **c3r3ta**, “to plan”, or “to prepare”, is an abstract verb, planning being considered as comprising of many actions — thinking, contacting people, gathering together to discuss, etc. — that are considered part of one abstract action).

3.2.2 Verb Focii

The focus of a verb describes the purposefulness of the event, as perceived by the speaker.

The *incidental* focus describes an event in isolation, without reference to its purposefulness.

The *deliberative* focus describes events that happen for a reason, actions that are done toward a goal. It could indicate that the person performing

¹²In Expert jargon, some non-psychological events may also be described using introvertive verbs. In common usage, however, introvertive verbs mostly describe psychological events.

the action did it deliberately, or it could indicate that the event happened in a meaningful or symbolically significant way.

The *consequential* focus describes events that happen as a result of other events. A common idiom involves the verb **táma**, “to speak”. The consequential forms of this verb often mean “to answer”, or “to speak in response to an event”, the implication being that answering someone is simply speaking as a result of the other party’s speaking.

3.2.3 Verb Aspects

The *aspect* of a verb describes the progress or completion of the event.

The *inceptive* aspect describes an event which is about to happen, or which has begun to happen. The inceptive also functions sometimes as an *imperative*, as in, “start doing this now!”.

The *progressive* aspect describes an event which is in progress. Note that usually, the Ebisédi consider events to be complete units even if they have not completed at the time; events are anticipated to be complete. When the progressive aspect is used, it often means that the event was interrupted, or that something else happened while the event was in progress.

The *perfective* aspect describes an event which is complete. Although it may not yet have completed at the time, the Ebisédi nevertheless will refer to it with the perfective aspect unless it is expected not to reach completion. This is the aspect that will most often occur in the language.

3.3 Verb Inflections

For the purposes of illustration, we will employ the multi-domain verb **táma** “to speak”, “to say”, as an example of a typical verb, to show how it conjugates for the various verb attributes.

3.3.1 Physical Verbs

Physical verb conjugations are formed by modifications on the *physical stem* of the verb. In our example, the physical stem is **táma**, which is the incidental inceptive form of the verb. This is the canonical form which appears in a lexicon.

Physical verbs conjugate for aspect in the following manner:

1. The inceptive form of a physical verb usually has a 3rd row vowel on the stress syllable. Our example verb, **táma**, illustrates this. (This is not always true for all verbs, however.) The other two aspects are derived from this form.
2. The progressive aspect is formed by the *reduplication* of the stress syllable and the shifting of its vowel to a 2nd row vowel. For our example verb, its incidental progressive form is **tʌtáma**.
3. The perfective aspect is formed by the *lengthening* of the stress syllable and the shifting of its vowel to a 1st row vowel. Hence, **táma** becomes **tóma** in the perfective.

Verb focus is indicated by a characteristic *focus vowel*. The focus vowel for the deliberative focus is **u**, and the focus vowel for the consequential focus is **a**. The incidental focus is normally unmarked, and has no associated focus vowel.

The focus vowel appears on the syllable *immediately preceding* the stress syllable. For verbs with a stress on the initial syllable, if the vowel is short (after applying the domain and aspect conjugations), then the focus vowel is added as a prefix to the verb; if the vowel is long, it is split into two short vowels with the focus vowel replacing the first.

For example, here are the deliberative forms of **táma**: **utáma** (inceptive), **tutáma** (progressive), **tuóma** (perfective). Similarly, its consequential forms are **atáma**, **tatáma**, **taóma**, respectively.

3.3.2 Introvertive Verbs

The introvertive domain is marked by a different aspect conjugation, applied to the *introvertive stem* of the verb. For multi-domain verbs, the introvertive stem is derived from its physical stem by *consonant softening*. However, the precise consonant softening that occurs is unpredictable. Vowel shifts are frequent but irregular, and extra syllables may appear in the introvertive stem that does not occur in the physical stem. Hence, the introvertive stems of verbs have to be learned on a case-by-case basis.

In our example, the introvertive stem of **táma** is **dámu**, “to think”, “to speak to oneself”.

Introvertive aspect conjugations are as follows:

1. In the inceptive aspect, the syllable *immediately following* the stress syllable (usually the ultima) always has **ɪ** as its vowel. The introvertive stem as given in a lexicon will already be in this form.
2. In the progressive aspect, both the stress syllable and the one following it have the vowel **ɜ**. In our example, **dámɪ** becomes **dámɜ**.
3. In the perfective aspect, the vowel on the stress syllable is **ɪ** and the vowel on the following syllable is **y**. In our example, **dámɪ** becomes **dímɪy**.

Focus is marked on introvertive verbs using the same rules as physical verbs. Hence, the deliberative forms of **dámɪ** are: **udámɪ**, **udámɜ**, and **udímɪy**, respectively.

3.3.3 Abstract Verbs

The abstract domain is also marked by a different aspect conjugation, on the *abstract stem* of the verb. The abstract stem of a multi-domain verb usually derives from the physical stem by shifting vowels to be more open. However, the exact derivation is often unpredictable. Thus, abstract verb stems need to be learned on a case-by-case basis as well.

The abstract stem of our example verb **táma** is **tóme**. It refers to the conveying of an impression through the little actions that are done. For example, an otherwise lazy husband's diligent performing of house chores and frequent gifts to his wife *bespeaks* (**tóme**) his love for her.

The aspect conjugations of abstract verbs are as follows:

1. In the inceptive aspect, the vowel on the syllable following the stress syllable is always **e**. Hence, the abstract inceptive of **táma** is **tóme**.
2. The progressive aspect is formed from the inceptive by prefixing with **ɜ-**, and shifting the vowel on the stress syllable to **e**, and the vowel on the subsequent syllable to **ɜ**. In the case of our example verb, this produces **ɜtémɜ**.
3. The perfective aspect is formed from the inceptive by *shifting* the stress syllable to the next syllable, *splitting* the vowel and *replacing* it with **úe**. For our example verb, it becomes **tómúe**.

Focus on abstract verbs is indicated by *prefixing* the focus vowel on the verb, replacing the **ɜ-** in progressive forms. Hence, the deliberative forms of the abstract verb **tóme** are **utóme**, **utémɜ**, and **utómúe**. The consequential forms are formed analogously.

4 Basic Sentence Structures

In this section, we shall cover the basic sentence structures in the language.

4.1 The Nominator Sentence

The *nominator sentence* is the simplest sentence in the language. It consists of a single noun or noun-phrase in the locative case. The purpose of the nominator sentence is to set the topic for subsequent discourse by drawing attention to the noun.

The nominator sentence occurs most prominently at the beginning of a passage, where it functions as a title. Examples include:

nɪ bɪzɪtʒó dʒ bɪlɪnɪ. *The woman's son.*

nɪ ɪsló dʒ ýgomaí. *Ygomai of Isili.*

nɪ ʔanʒ dø ekási. *The Majestic Ekasi.*

Each of the above titles can also be translated with a preceding word, “about”, e. g., “About the woman’s son”, since that is the function of the nominator sentence: to set the topic of discourse.

Besides titles, nominator sentences occur quite frequently. The Ebisédi love a topic-comments structure in speech and prose alike. A particular topic, or object of interest, is introduced by a nominator sentence, and then followed by a series of comments related to the topic. The back-referencing relative **kɪɪ** is often used to refer back to the nominated subject.

4.2 Simple Stative Sentences

When describing an unchanging state of things, verbal sentences are not used; instead, *stative sentences* are used. Stative sentences consists solely of nouns, and possibly relatives, with the various noun cases indicating a static relationship between the nouns.

The meaning of stative sentences tend to be very idiomatic; hence, one needs not only to understand the connotations behind each of the noun cases, but also to be familiar with common idioms that are used. It is useful to keep the Noun Case Model¹³ in mind when analysing stative sentences.

¹³See section 2.1.3.

4.2.1 Common Idioms

The following list describes some common combinations of noun cases in a stative sentence, and what they mean.

- Locative and conveyant: containment. When a stative sentence comprises of a locative noun and a conveyant noun, it is a statement of containment. The conveyant noun is that which is contained by the locative noun. This containment can be anything from physical containment to possessing feelings within one's heart to abstract belonging (such as "Red is a color", or "Red is among the class of things designated 'color'."). Examples include:

ɜjɥlɛ́ juɥr. *Many rooms are in the house.*

fɜkɛ́ ebí. *Anguish is in me.*

kɛ́ kɔ́rumɩ. *Red is a color.*

- Originative and conveyant: origin, or expression. Depending on which of the nouns are persons and which are things, a stative sentence of this form can mean any of the following:

1. If both nouns refer to people, it is an idiom for describing a parent-child relationship. The originative noun is the parent, and the conveyant noun is the child. For example:

bɛ́lɛnɜ́ buɜtɜɔ́. *The boy is the woman's [son].*

Depending on context, however, this may also just mean that the conveyant noun was sent by the originative noun. For example:

pɛ́ɜɜdɜ́ ekɛ́sɔ́. *The man is [sent] from Ekaasi.*

2. If the originative noun is a place and the conveyant noun is a person, then it is stating the person's place of origin. For example:

ɩɩlɔ́ ýgɜmɛ́. *Ygomai is from Isili.*

3. If the originative noun is a person, and the conveyant noun is an expressive attribute, it is an attributive statement. For example:

mɩɩɜdɜ́ dɜmɜl. *The girl is pretty. Literally, The girl [expresses] prettiness.*

Not all attributes can be described this way; some attributes are better described using other constructions.

- Conveyant and receptive: possession. For example:

kác3 ýbú. *The red flower is mine (fem.). Literally, the red flower is unto me.*

If both nouns refer to persons, it may idiomatically refer to romantic relationship:

jǝb3 ebú. *She is unto me. I. e., She is my significant other.*

This is by no means a comprehensive list of possible combinations and meanings. The student of the language is hereby advised to study native texts and interpret stative sentences using the noun case model described above. Nevertheless, in the next section, we will cover another set of common idioms that will be useful.

4.2.2 Adjectival Attributes

There is no single form for adjectival statements, unlike English. Instead, there are a few groups of adjectives which are treated differently.

The basic idea is that some attributes are *expressive*, some are *inherent*, and others are simply *received*.

Expressive attributes are expressed using an originative-conveyant construct, which has already been described in the previous section. Expressive attributes include appearances, such as beauty, majesty, eloquence, ugliness, etc.. The attribute is placed in the conveyant case, and the person expressing the attribute is placed in the originative. For example:

âán3 ek3sǝ. *Ekaasi is majestic. Literally, Ekaasi shows forth majesty.*

Inherent attributes are considered to be contained within oneself; hence, a locative-conveyant construct is used. For example:

gár3b3 ýgomaí. *Ygomai is experienced. Literally, Experience is in Ygomai.*

Received attributes are an idiosyncratic category which is more or less arbitrary. Physical dimensions, for example, are received attributes; hence one would say:

thát̄́ ýgomaú. *Ygomai is tall. Literally, [There is] height unto Ygomai.*

Similarly with **miví** (“small”):

m3v3 bí3nu. *The boy is small [in stature]. Literally, Smallness is unto the boy.*

Sometimes, subtle nuances can be obtained by stating an attribute in a different way than usual. For example, one can be subtly sarcastic with statements like:

jubó d3m3l êe, cujubí d3m3l ve.
You [look] pretty, but she is pretty [inside]

I. e., the speaker is implying that the first woman only has skin-deep beauty whereas the other is inherently beautiful inside (the first **d3m3l** is put with the originative as an expressive attribute, but the second is put alongside the locative, as an inherent attribute).

4.3 Verbal Sentences

Verbal sentences are used to describe events, changes in state. Structurally speaking, verbal sentences are simply stative sentences with the addition of one or more verbs.

Unlike many other languages, there is not the concept of ‘subject’ and ‘object’; rather, the noun cases in a verbal sentence are determined by the Noun Case Model explained in section 2.1.3.

4.3.1 Role of the Originative

The originative case is used for points of origin. This may or may not be what the English speaker would consider the main ‘subject’.

For example, in verbs of motion such as **lés**, “to move” or “to go”, the originative noun is the originating point of movement, and the thing that actually undergoes the motion is put into the conveyant case. Hence, one would say:

julór ĺ̥s eb́. *I came from the house.*

However, with the verb **fátɜ**, “to see”, the originative noun is actually the thing seen. The Ebisédi consider seeing to be the receiving of sight, hence the seer is in the *receptive* case. Hence: **jhutó fótɜ ebú** means “I see her” rather than “she sees me”. Sometimes, the sight itself is put in the conveyant case:

jhutó fótɜ dɜm̥l ebú. *I see that she is pretty. Literally, From her appears prettiness to me.*

In other verbs, like **gɜbáre** “to strike with force”, “to clobber”, the originative noun *is* source of the action:

ghɜngó gɜbóre nu jhutú dɜ m̥ngú.
The Ghangí struck her horse.

In such verbs, the blow is thought to start from the originative noun and end at the thing being struck. Hence, the originative is used for the striker, and the receptive for the thing struck.

4.3.2 Role of the Receptive

The receptive case is used for the destination point, or the recipient, of the event. This may or may not be what the English speaker might consider the ‘object’; for example, the seer is in the receptive case with verbs like **fátɜ**, but the receptive case marks the recipient of a gift in verbs like **béjh**, “to give”.

In verbs of motion, the receptive noun is the destination of the motion. For example:

ĺ̥s eb́ lóru. *I went to the countryside.*

4.3.3 Role of the Instrumental

In verbal sentences, the instrumental case is used mainly for adverbs, although it can also describe the means by which the event happens. With some verbs, the instrumental can also be the agent of the action.

A common adverb is **lɜrɜá**, “quickly”; “hastily”. For example:

lɜrɜá ĺ̥s eb́ julór. *I quickly went out of the house.*

In the following sentence, the instrumental noun **mangá** is the *means of transportation*:

lýs ebá mangá lóru. *I rode on the Mangi into the countryside.*

With the verb **béjh**, “to give”, the instrumental case is used for the deliverer of gift, if it is a different person from the giver. For example:

ekásø býjh zlymoón bílɔna ýluú.
Ekaasi sent the boy with some flowers to Ylia. Literally, Ekaasi gave flowers by the boy to Ylia.

The noun that performs the action in some verbs are put into the instrumental case as well:

púzɔda kalúng mangí tǎruø.
The man dragged the Mangi out from the woods.

Here, the man is regarded to be that which sustains the dragging action, hence he is put in the instrumental case.

4.3.4 Role of the Conveyant

The conveyant case is used for that which is in motion, that which is transmitted or conveyed by the verb.

With verbs of motion, the things in motion or the things set in motion are always placed in the conveyant. For example,

zhangá kalúng mǎrɔnɔ tǎrū.
The Ghangí's dragged the boy into the woods.

The boy is that which is moved, hence he is put in the conveyant case.

With the verb **béjh**, “to give”, the conveyant noun is the gift, since it is considered to be that which moved from the giver to the recipient.

4.3.5 Role of the Locative

The locative noun in a verbal sentence specifies the location where the event occurred. This could be a spatial or temporal location.

Examples:

jhíli bílɜnø tóma biteú. *In the room (spatial location), the boy spoke to the mother.*

isóli chídø lýs lóru. *In the past (temporal location), he went the countryside.*

With some verbs, the locative case has the additional idiomatic nominative meaning. For example:

pídø tóma mangí ɜmírɜnu.
The father talked to the children about Mangi.

Sometimes, this additional use of the locative may cause ambiguities — for example, in **chídø tóma jhíli**, is he talking *about* the room, or is he talking *in* the room? To resolve these ambiguities, the convention is to put the location of the event at the front of the sentence, and put the topic of discussion after the verb. Alternatively, one could insert a preposition to clarify that the room is where he is talking:

chídø tóma ɛúro jhíli. *He is talking inside the room.*

4.4 Summaritive Sentences

...

4.5 The Back-referencing Particle, **kɛli**

The *back-referencing particle*, **kɛli**, is a *dually-inflected* word that refers to a noun in the previous sentence. The first vowel inflects for the case of the noun being referred to in the previous sentence; and the second vowel inflects for the case of its function in the current sentence.

It is also inflected for number to agree with the noun being referenced; the plural is marked by the plural prefix **ɜ-**, and the nullar is marked by the nullar prefix **y-**.

For example, the following excerpt is the first 4 lines from a poem about Ygomai of Isili:

nu usuló dɜ ɛ́gomai.
kɛlø dɜmɜl ke,
kɛli gárɜbɜ ce,
kɛlu thótɜ re,
...

The first line is the nominator sentence, bringing the reader’s attention to Ygomai of Isili.

In the second line, **ku** refers back to the locative noun of the previous sentence, the subject Ygomai, and functions as an originative. Hence, its meaning is equivalent to:

ýgom3ó d3m3l ke.¹⁵ *Ygomai [shows forth] beauty.*

In the next two lines, **ku** is again used to refer back to the subject, Ygomai, each time with a different case function, according to the needs of each statement: “She is experienced, / her [stature] is tall.”

Making statements that use different case functions about the subject is greatly liked by the Ebisédi. They love how it describes the subject from different angles.

4.6 The Reflexive Particle, **sul**

The *reflexive particle*, **sul**, refers to another noun that occurs in the same sentence. It is used for constructing reflexive sentences.

It is *doubly-inflected* for case, just like **ku**. The case of the noun being referred to is marked on **su-**, by replacing the vowel with the characteristic vowel of the noun case. The case inflection on **-lu** indicates the case function of **sul**.

It is also inflected for number, and should agree with the number of the noun being referenced. The plural is marked by the plural prefix **3-**, and the nullar is marked by the nullar prefix **y-**.

For example:

púz3dø tóma sølu. *The man talked to himself.*

Here, the **ø** in **sølu** marks the originative case, which refers back to the originative noun, **púz3dø**. The **u** on **sølu** marks the receptive case, and indicates the function of the reflexive particle as a receptive noun.

Here is another example that shows the flexibility of **sul**:

chídø søla býjh mang3 ekásu.
He himself presented the Mangi to Ekasi.

¹⁵See section 6, on correlatives, for an explanation of **ke**, **ce**, and **re**.

Here, **søla** is used to give the pronoun **chídø** an additional case function. The originative noun used with **béjh** marks the giver of the gift, and the instrumental noun marks the presenter of the gift. Here, “he” is acting both as the giver, and the one who delivered to gift.

5 Complex Sentence Structures

This section discusses how simple sentences can be combined with each other to form more complex sentence structures.

5.1 Subordinate Clauses

Subordinate clauses are used for modifying nouns. The particles **nt** and **dt** are used for creating subordinate clauses.

5.1.1 Subordinating particles, **nt** and **dt**

The *subordinating particle* **nt** introduces a subordinate clause. It is inflected for number and case, and agrees with the number and case of the noun being modified. Table 11 shows the forms of **nt**.

	Singular	Plural	Nullar
Originative	n∅	3n∅	yn∅
Receptive	nu	3nu	ynu
Instrumental	na	3na	yna
Conveyant	n3	3n3	yn3
Locative	nt	3nt	ynt

Table 11: Inflections of **nt**

The subordinate clause is terminated by the particle **dt**, which immediately precedes the noun being modified by the clause. **dt** is inflected for case, and indicates the *case function* of the noun within the subordinate clause¹⁶. Table 12 shows the forms of **dt**.

5.1.2 Constructing the subordinate clause

For example, consider the following two sentences:

1. **bw3 m3ng3.** *The horse is black.*
2. **mang3 egr3chu.** *The horse is Egrashu's.*

¹⁶Similar to the function of the English “who”, “whom”, “whose”.

Originative	dø
Receptive	du
Instrumental	da
Conveyant	d3
Locative	dt

Table 12: Inflections of dt

We can subordinate the second sentence to the first thus:

bω3 nø egráchu d3 m3ngó. *Egrashu's horse is black.*

Or, vice versa:

n3 bω3 dø mang3 egráchu. *The black horse is Egrashu's.*

Notice that the noun cases in the subordinate clauses are unchanged from the corresponding complete sentence. This is also true of verbs: in subordinate clauses, verbs retain their domain, focus, and aspect. For example, if we have the following simple sentences:

1. **b3l3n3 lýs lóru.** *The boy went outside.*
2. **bíl3nu fót3 t3drø.** *The boy saw a tree.*

We can form subordinate clauses as follows:

1. **n3 fót3 t3drø du b3l3n3 lýs lóru.**
The boy who saw the tree went outside.
2. **nu lýs lóru d3 býl3nu fót3 t3drø.**
The boy who went outside saw the tree.

5.1.3 Substantive clauses

Substantive clauses are subordinate clauses which modify an implicit noun. The analogous construction in English would be noun phrases like “the rich” or “the brave”, which may be thought as “the rich *ones*” and “the brave *ones*” except that the modified noun has been elided.

	Singular	Plural	Nullar
Originative	døṅ	3døṅ	ydøṅ
Receptive	dun	3dun	ydun
Instrumental	dan	3dan	ydan
Conveyant	d3n	3d3n	yd3n
Locative	dun	3dun	ydun

Table 13: Inflections of **dun**

Substantive clauses are built the same way as regular subordinate clauses, except that the *substantive subclause terminator*, **dun**, is used in place of **du** and the modified noun. Table 13 shows the inflections of **dun**.

Note that unlike **du**, **dun** is fully inflected for number as well as case. Here are some examples of substantive clauses:

3ni th3r3kâsi d3 3gurâki 3ni kâras3 3dun.

The guards in the palace are the brave (ones).

okró 3n3 kujulír d3 3jhu3 3n3 kujulír 3d3n.

There are more rooms in the first house than in the second.

uro mangí nu pí3dø zotó dun.

This is the horse which the man looked at.

5.2 Sentence Adjoinment

Sentence adjoinment is a way of chaining several sentences together into one. Subordinate clauses express an idea which is less important, or subordinate, to the idea in the main sentence. Adjoined sentences express ideas which are of *equal* importance and priority.

5.2.1 Anticipatory case particle, **lu**

The *anticipatory case particle*, **lu**, is inflected for case just like **du**. It precedes the last noun in a sentence to mark an adjoinment with the next sentence. The noun or noun-phrase marked this way is called a *linking noun*, or a *linking noun-phrase*. The linking noun is common to *both* sentences; its normal case inflection marks its function in the preceding sentence, and the

case inflection on the particle **lu** marks its function in the *next* sentence. Because it immediately precedes the linking noun, it is said to *anticipate* the function of the noun in the next sentence.

Table 14 shows the forms of **lu**.

Originative	l∅
Receptive	lu
Instrumental	la
Conveyant	lɜ
Locative	li

Table 14: Inflections of **lu**

5.2.2 Adjoining Sentences

As an example, consider the following sequence of events:

1. **píʒɜd∅ fótɜ bɜʒtaú.** *The man was seen by the woman.*
2. **bɜʒtɜ́ laýs lóru.** *The woman went outside.*

We can adjoin these sentences thus:

píʒɜd∅ fótɜ lɜ bɜʒtɜ́ laýs lóru.
The man was seen by the woman, who [then] went outside.

More than two sentences can be adjoined this way, by arranging the linking nouns so that they always appear at either end of the sentences. However, sentence adjoinment should not be over-used, as it can quickly become very confusing.

5.3 Quoted Discourse

Quoted discourse is a way of nominalizing a sentence or an entire passage, so that it acts as a single argument to the verb of a main sentence.

5.3.1 Quotational Particles, **tɪ** and **tɪmɪ**

The *quotational particles* **tɪ** and **tɪmɪ** introduce and terminate, respectively, a subordinate passage. They are most frequently encountered in quoted discourse in conjunction with the verb **táma**, “to speak”.

These two particles are inflected for case in the containing sentence. The particle **tɪmɪ** is inflected as though it were two words, **tɪ** and **mɪ**. Hence, its forms are **tømø**, **tumu**, **tama**, **tɜmɜ**, **tɪmɪ**. The case of **tɪ** must, obviously, match the case of **tɪmɪ**.

Between **tɪ** and **tɪmɪ** is the quoted discourse itself. In native scripts, there is no punctuation after **tɪ**; however, we will add a comma after **tɪ** in our orthography, to make it easier to scan. The last word in the quoted discourse before **tɪmɪ** is always punctuated as an end-of-sentence; however, the following **tɪmɪ** is still part of the host sentence.

Here is an example:

**bitʒó tuóma bílɜnu tɜ, øro mýe chɜdɜ lýs tárū. ɜghangɜ
tárū. tɜmɜ.**

The mother said to the boy, ‘Do not go into the woods. The Ghangí are in the woods.’

Note that **tɜ** and **tɜmɜ** are inflected for the conveyant case, because the two complete sentences in between comprise what the woman said to the boy. (That which is spoken is placed in the conveyant case for the verb **táma**.)

Note that although there are two complete sentences quoted, technically everything between **tɜ** and **tɜmɜ** is a single conveyant noun-phrase in the main sentence. Hence, although it is more conventional to place quoted discourse as the last thing in the main sentence, it is not wrong to say things like the following:

jhítø tóma tɜ lés ýbú ísí tɜmɜ bílɜnu.

She said, ‘come to me now!’ to the boy.

This is also the reason that any correlative particles attached to the main sentence will come *after* the closing **tɪmɪ** if it is the last word. For example:

**lýs fɜnɜ jhílu êe, kóma chídø tɜ, ymaí! ghí jøbɜ? tɜmɜ
ve.**

The student went into the room, and shouted, ‘Mother! Where are you?’

5.3.2 Long Quotes

If the quoted discourse is long, the compound particle **tumti** may be used as what is effectively a paragraph break in the quoted discourse. **tumti** is inflected exactly as though it were composed of the two words **tumi** and **ti**.

This can also be used for multiple quotations, which may not have been spoken at the same time. For example:

**isóí ým3ó tóma ebú t3, øsó myé lés ch3d3 tárū. t3m3t3,
usó lés ch3d3 nu patú d3 jolúr. t3m3.**

*Mother used to say to me, ‘I do not want you to go to the woods’;
and, ‘I’d rather you go to [your] grandparents’ house.’*

Here, the two things that the narrator’s mother said may be two different things that she said at different times, and he is merely recounting of both of them at this point in the narrative.

5.3.3 Subordinate Sentences

The particles **ti** and **tumi** are not restricted to only delimiting quoted discourse. It can also be used to subordinate entire sentences.

For example:

**fóts3 jhitú t3, chídø n3nó33 kujhtu. t3m3 êe, keve váti
jhitú t3, myé chídø m3j3 jhitú. t3m3 ve.**

*She saw him flirt with [another] woman, and she began to realize
that it is not true that he loves her.*

In the first sentence, the event that she saw, that he was flirting with someone else, is subordinated using **ti** and **tumi** to be the argument to the main verb, **fóts3**. Recall that the verb **fóts3** takes a conveyant noun as the thing seen. Similarly, in the second sentence, what she began to realize is subordinated as an argument to the verb **váti**.

This use of **ti** and **tumi** can be used for constructing explanatory clauses as well. For example:

**tø isóí 3gh3ngó khebór3 nu ch3d3 dø biteú tømø kók3 lø
ch3d3 kuýkh 3nu chídu fóts3 dø 3ghangú.**

*The fact that the Ghangis killed his mother caused him to harm
all the Ghangis that he saw.*

The originative clause enclosed by **tø** and **tømø** acts as the argument to the verb **kók3**, “to cause”.

6 Correlatives

The Ebisédi like to state things in parallel. Rather than saying something like “I will do A, and then I will do B, and then I will do C”, they prefer to state A, B, and C using a correlative construct. A correlative construct is similar to the “on the one hand . . . , on the other hand” dichotomy in English, except that it is used much more frequently, and it has a triple counterpart (the trichotomy) as well.

Correlatives can describe *correspondence*:

cómɪ gárʒbʒ êe, cwsánʒ ve.
He is both experienced and intelligent.

Or show *contrast*:

cómɪ pán̄ êe, jhití mýdʒmʒl ve.
He is majestic, but she is ugly

Or describe a *series of events*:

fótʒ jhitú cómø êe, luýs jhitʒ lóru ve.
She saw him, and she went outside. Or, Seeing him, she went outside.

In fact, the Ebisédi like correlative constructs so much that they would structure their speech and prose — and even their train of thought — around groups of two or three ideas, just so they can use correlatives.

6.1 Dichotomies

The dichotomy correlative particles are **êe** and **ve**, in that order. These particles appear at the *end* of the sentence they modify.

For example:

chídɪ, kɪlu fótʒ jhitó êe, kulø tuóma tʒ, ghó jwɔbʒ? tʒmʒ ve.
He, seeing her on the one hand, said to her, ‘Where are you from?’, on the other hand.

Notice that the second correlative particle **ve** appears *after* the discourse terminator **tʒmʒ**.

Topic-comments constructs such as in this example are a favorite place to use correlatives.

6.2 Trichotomies

The trichotomy correlative particles are **ke**,¹⁷ **ce**, and **re**, in that order. These particles appear at the end of the sentences they modify.

The Ebisédi love to describe actions in triplets, with an emphasis on the last one. For example:

**lýs ekásɜ lóru ke, fótɜ chídu khángø ce, keve ukítra jýre
chída kasɜpánɜ re.**

Ekaasi went outside, saw a Khangí¹⁹, and drew [his] sword.

Notice the use of **keve** in the third sentence for emphasis. This is a favorite usage, to put a bang at the end of a group of three.

The Ebisédi also love describing things with triple angles. For example:

ekási. kulu thátɜ ke. kulu gárɜbɜ ce. kulø pánɜ re.

Ekaasi, he is great in stature, he is experienced, and he is majestic.

¹⁷Note the unaspirated **k**, not to be confused with the dichotomy correlative particle **ke**, which has the aspirated **ḱ**.

¹⁹A male Ghangi.

7 Conjunctions

Conjunctions are words used to join sentences.

7.1 **keve**

The conjunction **keve** is used to indicate *sequence*. It is mostly translated as “and”, although it has a stronger cause-and-effect connotation than the English conjunction. Sometimes it is translated “and so”.

Some examples:

fóʔɜ́ jobú púʔɜ́dø keve luýs jhɜ́tɜ́ lóru.

She saw the man and went outside.

Here, **keve** may also be translated as “and so”, or “so”. This is the normal usage of **keve**, where it carries a strong sense of cause and effect.

isó mómɜ́rɜ́nɜ́ ebí ke, ɜ́mɜ́rɜ́nɜ́ ve. keve kíɣɜ́ ebɜ́ ɜ́jumɜ́.

From the beginning, there were no children around me; now there are many children. So, they and I are [having] fun.

Here, **keve** is translated as “so”.

Note that when describing two parallel or unrelated events, the correlatives are preferred over **keve**. In the following example, **keve** gives a sense of sequence, and implies that the boy’s going outside is somehow caused by Niri’s talking with her mother:

ýnɜ́rɜ́ó tóma bɜ́teú keve bɜ́lɜ́nɜ́ lýs lóru.

Niri talked with [her] mother and [so] the boy went outside.

It would be better to employ a correlative construct, if these two events are parallel:

ýnɜ́rɜ́ó tóma bɜ́teú ke, bɜ́lɜ́nɜ́ lýs lóru ve.

Niri was talking with [her] mother, and the boy went outside.

This eliminates the possibility of the misunderstanding that the boy’s going may be a result of Niri’s talking with her mother.

7.2 mĩká

The conjunction **mĩká**, often translated “but”, “however”, or “nevertheless”, is used to draw contrast with the preceding prose. It may be understood as, “having said all this, on the other hand ...”. It is mainly used to introduce a new, contrasting section in the prose.

Usually, **mĩká** is reserved for longer sections of prose; for shorter constructions the correlative constructs are preferred. Therefore, contrasts between single statements are often expressed using correlatives:

cómu thót̄ ke, jhitú miví ve.

He is tall but she is short (small).

But when contrasting longer sections, **mĩká** is used, as in the following example:

mangí, kulu l̄r̄z̄ ke, kulu k̄t̄á ce, kulø kakacá k̄k̄ójure ve. mĩká zgh̄nḡ zkesipaná khejóre jh̄d̄.

The Mangi, it was fast, it was mighty, it was kicking wildly. But the Ghangis (still) killed it with [their] swords.

Here, **mĩká** has the effect of “in spite of all this”.

7.3 muró

The conjunction **muró** means “meanwhile, in another place”. It describes an event parallel with what had just transpired. Like **mĩka**, it is usually applied to longer sections of prose.

Although correlatives could also be used to describe parallel events, **muró** is used for conjoining larger sections of text. It can be used when correlatives are already being used in the sections being conjoined. For example:

z̄b̄l̄zn̄ l̄or̄ ke, z̄k̄z̄l̄ z̄k̄z̄ḡ ce, z̄k̄z̄l̄ l̄z̄l̄s m̄ój̄u re. muró m̄l̄z̄daí, kul̄ j̄h̄l̄ ke, kul̄ m̄ȳtal̄zn̄ ce, kulø f̄z̄k̄z̄l̄yr̄z̄ re.

The boys were outside, and they were very excited, and they were on the way to the city. Meanwhile, the girl, she was in the room, and she was joyless, and she wept.

7.4 miĉí

The conjunction **miĉí** means “therefore”, “consequently”, “as a result”. It describes the final consequence, or consummation, of the preceding prose. It carries more emphasis than **keve**; and so is usually used to conclude longer passages.

The following passage is an example of how **miĉí** can be used to give a sense of conclusion.

tŕ mŕp3z3d3 jhutu tŕmŕ kŕk3 ýgom3
lýs nu esánu d3 jolúr êe; k3lŕ tŕma
chídu n jhití d3 f3k3.

esánt erosánt ve. kilŕ taŕma jhitú
t3, mysŕ fúkí jŕb3. aro biz3taí:
kulu p3z3d3; keve kul3 kígt êe. oro
biz3taí: kulu p3z3d3; keve kul3 mý-
kígt ve. ana cujhitú mýp3z3d3 keve
juna cujh3t3 řálu. miĉí tŕma ebŕ
t3, ana p3z3d3 jobú, keve ŕsŕ řálu
jŕb3 êe. ana mýp3z3d3 jobú, keve
ŕsŕ řálu ve. t3m3. t3m3.

*The fact that she did not have a man
drove Ygomai to go to the house of
Esani and tell him of her woes.*

*Esani the Wise replied, “May you not
be in woe. One woman may have a
man, and she is happy; but another
woman, she may have a man, but she
is not happy. If she did not have a
man, probably she would be happy.
Therefore, I say, ‘If you have a man,
be content; and if you have no man,
[also] be content.’ ”*

In the opening sentence, **ti** and **tumi** are used to indicate cause. The particle **mysŕ** in the second paragraph is a colloquial contraction of **mýe** and **ŕsŕ**.

7.5 kreme

The conjunction **kreme** usually appears isolated in its own sentence. It introduces an explanation or elaboration of something that was introduced previously. It can roughly be taken to mean “here are the details”, “here’s the deal”, or “it is as follows”.

One common use of **kreme** is in relaying a message from another party:

lýs eb3 nŕ pán3 dŕ ek3sŕ êe. chídŕ
kalých eb3 zrot3m3 cómu ve.

kreme. agrŕjhe 3nu chídu d3 zb-
s3d3. k3lt pŕŕŕ 3guráki pŕŕŕ hoĉasaní
pŕŕŕ 3chunári ke. keve ulés 3jh3d3
th3r3kásu ce. hong3ŕ táce re.

*I came from the Majestic Ekasi. He
sent me to you with these words.*

*Namely, prepare your people: all the
guards, all the Experts, and all the
foot-soldiers; and let them go to the
Palace, [to] defend against the ene-
mies.*

7.6 ure

Another conjunction related to **kreme** is **ure**. Like **kreme**, **ure** usually appears alone in its own sentence. It is cognate with **úre**, an emphatic particle meaning “really” or “truly”.

As a conjunction, **ure** introduces a formal statement, usually a list of items, such as the terms of a contract, the items of an official document, the findings of evidence in a law court, or the final judgment pronounced by the judge.

The excerpt below is taken from a notice in a guest house in the city of Isilí:

ťálzn nu lesá d3 jhúú ke. øsó n	<i>Greetings to you, sojourner. May</i>
jh3d3 úri na pójau 3ťal3n 3kíg3 ce.	<i>there be joy and fun during your stay</i>
usó víty jhúú 3rot3m3 re.	<i>here. Please observe the following.</i>
ure. výtjhú n cutuú d3 reojhú ke.	<i>Namely: the waste room is the third</i>
l3r3jhú n rotuú d3 deojhú ce. mysó	<i>room on the southwest, and the wash-</i>
lalóch výtjhú re.	<i>ing room is the fourth on the south-</i>
	<i>east. Please do not wash in the waste</i>
	<i>room. . . .</i>

(A few points worthy of note here: in the first sentence, the guest is addressed as **nu lesá d3 jhúú**, “you who are journeying”. Modified pronouns like this one are a common idiom in formal Ebisédian. In the second sentence, the gerund **pójau**, “your stopping” is idiomatic for “your stay”, the idea being that the guest house is but a temporary stop-over.)

7.7 óre

The conjunction **óre** indicates *subsequence*. It means “next”, “then”, or “furthermore”. It is used to indicate that the speaker is moving on to the next item in the list of things being discussed.

The following classroom excerpt shows how **óre** is used.

tóma b3zt3ó t3 m3cí júci. usí táma	<i>The woman said, “This is a chair.</i>
m3c3. t3m3. keve taóma 3m3r3nø t3	<i>Now say this.” And the children said,</i>
júci. t3m3 ke. tóma b3zt3ó t3 óre.	<i>“chair”. The woman said, “Next. . .</i>
júç. júcu. júca. júc3. júci. t3m3.	<i>[the five forms of the word ‘chair’].”</i>
keve taóma 3m3r3nø uro 3t3m3 ve.	<i>And the children said these words.</i>

Here, the consequential verb **taóma** has the sense of “to repeat after”.

8 Demonstratives & Prepositions

In this section, we will take a look at demonstratives and prepositions. Both are *prepositional relatives*: they govern the noun that immediately follows them, and cannot, in their prepositional forms, occur in isolation.

8.1 Demonstratives

There are three demonstratives in the language:

uro “This”, “this one”. Refers to the particular instance of the noun being discussed. For example:

uro bisádti *This person, i. e., This person that we are talking about.*

oro “The next”, “the next one”. Refers to the next instance in sequence of the noun being discussed. For example:

oro bisádti *The next person, i. e., the one coming after the person we were just talking about.*

Usually, **oro** implies a sequence of some sort. A common phrase is:

oro usóu *After this time; and then; afterwards.*

aro “The other”, “another”. Refers to a *different* instance of the noun being discussed. For example:

aro bisádti *Another person; the other person.*

Unlike the case with **oro**, no sequence is implied here.

These demonstratives act like prepositional particles — they appear before the word they modify.

8.2 Prepositions

The language has a rich system of prepositions, describing various different relationships with a noun.

Prepositions are trisyllabic. The first syllable, which is always a vowel, is a *directional prefix*. The second syllable is a *locator* describing a location

relative to the noun being modified. The third syllable is the prepositional suffix **-ro**. The directional prefix describes a direction relative to the location described by the locator.

For example, consider the preposition **uķíro**. The directional prefix **u-** means “towards” or “into”. The locator **-ķí-** refers to the location “above” the noun being modified. Hence, **uķíro** means “upwards” or “ascending”. For example:

lýs uķíro rúcø *Rise up from the bed.*

There is a subtle but important difference between **uķíro** and another preposition, **abúro**. The prefix **-a** means “away from”, or “coming from”. The locator **-bú-** refers to the point “beneath”, “below”, or “underneath” the modified noun. Hence, **abúro** also means “upwards”, but it is upwards *towards* the modified noun, as opposed to **uķíro**, which is upwards *away from* the modified noun. Therefore, while one would say **uķíro rúcø** to describe rising from a bed, one would say **abúro tǎdrø** to describe climbing up a tree — since one would be climbing *into* the tree, not above it. However, if a bird flew into the sky from the tree, one would indeed say:

uķíro tǎdrø *Upwards from the tree.*

8.2.1 Directional prefixes

There are three directional prefixes in prepositions.

u- “Towards”, “directed at”. This is directed at the location indicated by the locator; it could mean *away from* the modified noun when the locator refers to a point outside of the modified noun.

u- “Located at”. That is, located at the location indicated by the locator. For example:

uķíro tǎdrø *Above the tree; remaining at the point above the tree.*

utáro julír *At a distance from the house.*

ulíro mǒju *Around the city; in the suburbs of the city.*

a- “Away from”. That is, away from the location indicated by the locator; this could mean “approaching” the modified noun when that location is a point outside the noun. Hence:

abúro *Upwards into, i. e., moving away from the point below the noun, but towards the noun itself.*

acúro *Coming out of.*

8.2.2 Locators

There are five locators in prepositions.

-kí- “Above”, “on top of”. Refers to the point above the modified noun.

-cú- Refers to the noun itself. Hence, **ucúro** means “into”, and **acúro** means “coming out of”.

-lí- Refers to the immediate vicinity of the noun. **ulíro** means “away from” the modified noun, but still remaining in its vicinity; whereas **utáro** means completely moving away from the noun. **alíro** means “into” or “onto” the noun from its immediate surroundings; it carries the sense of enveloping or engulfing. **ilíro** means “near” or “around”; it is also idiomatic for “together with”.

-tá- Refers to a point far away from the noun. Hence:

utáro *Away from.*

atáro *Approaching (from a distance).*

-bú- Refers to the point underneath, or below, the noun. Hence:

ubúro *Falling downwards from.*

abúro *Approaching from below.*

8.2.3 Prepositional Nouns

Prepositions can be nominalized by replacing the final vowel with the characteristic vowel of one of the noun cases. For example:

utáru *Being at a distance.*

ulíru *Being in the vicinity.*

The most useful form of a nominalized preposition is the instrumental case, where it functions as an adverb. Examples:

u^híra l^hys rú^hø. *Arise from the bed. Literally, Move upwards from the bed.*

ubúra zot^hó *Look downwards.*

9 Interrogative Constructs

Questions and other interrogative constructs are indicated by the presence of *interrogative markers*. The interrogative noun **ghí** and the interrogative verb **ghé** are used to ask ‘*what*’ questions — questions where the speaker inquires for an answer.²⁰ On the other hand, *confirmative questions* — yes/no questions, are asked using the interrogative particle **áne**.

9.1 Interrogative Noun, ghí

The interrogative noun **ghí** means “what” or “which”. It is used as a placeholder for the unknown noun being inquired about. It is inflected as a regular neuter noun. Its presence in a sentence marks that sentence as a question. Although the native script does not change the punctuation of the sentence in this case, we will alert the reader by changing the period at the end of the sentence to a question mark.

Here are some usage examples:

ısóı ghí? *What time is it?*

This is a common phrase to ask for the time. Be aware, however, that this is context-dependent; if one were discussing some news, for example, **ısóı ghí?** can also be used to inquire “when did this happen?”

chídı nı ghó d3 bıl3nı? *Whose son is he? Literally, He is the from-whom boy?*

The receptive **ghú** is often used idiomatically to mean “why” (derived from “unto what”, which is the meaning of the receptive case). When used this way, **ghú** is usually placed at the beginning of the sentence, to distinguish it from normal usage. For example:

ch3d3 lýs ghú? *Where is he going?*

ghú ch3d3 lýs lóru? *Why is he going outside? Or, He is going outside unto what?*

²⁰To the Ebisédi, ‘who’, ‘when’, ‘why’, and ‘how’ questions are the same as ‘what’ questions. ‘Who’ is equivalent to ‘what person’; ‘when’ is ‘what time’; ‘why’ is ‘for what cause’; ‘how’ is ‘by what means’, etc..

9.2 Personal Interrogatives

The interrogative **ghí** can be inflected for gender explicitly by prefixing any of the five proper noun prefixes. When prefixed this way, except for the neuter proper noun prefix, **ghí** becomes a *personal interrogative*, “who”. When prefixed with the neuter proper noun prefix **ı-**, it explicitly asks for an inanimate answer.

For example, compare the following:

gh3 jh1l? *What is in that room? (could be either a person or a thing)*

ogh3 jh1l? *Who (epi.) is in that room?*

ugh3 jh1l? *What is in that room? (can only be an inanimate object)*

egh3 jh1l? *Who (masc.) is in that room? Literally, Mr.-who is in that room?*

yh3 jh1l? *Who (fem.) is in that room? Literally, Ms.-who is in that room?*

9.3 Interrogative Verb, ghé

The interrogative verb **ghé** is the placeholder for the unknown verb being inquired about.

For example:

ghé jh1l? *What happened in the room?*

The expected answer is a verb, possibly with clarifying nouns, for example:

3ml3d3ó k3krós jh1l. *The girls [were] writing/drawing in the room.*

Note that the answer is expected to fit the case of the nouns in the question. For example, if the question is:

f1nø ghé? *What did the (male) student do?*

Then the answer is expected to involve **f1nø** in the originative case. Therefore, a (grammatically) correct answer might be:

f̑nu m3chúje. *The student was dreaming.*

But the following answer is grammatically incorrect because **f̑nu** is in the wrong case:

f̑nu f̑ót3 f̑d3ó. *The student saw the (female) student*

This is important, because when answering questions, nouns are often omitted. If we answer with a verb that takes nouns in a different case than was asked in the question, it may become ambiguous, or even meaningless.

An exception to this is when the locative case is used in the question. This is the correct way to ask a question with **ghé** when you do not know what case the nouns will be, in the answer. For example:

f̑nu ghé? *What about the student?*

It is valid to answer this question with a verb that takes **f̑nu** in any case.²¹

9.4 Confirmative Questions

Confirmative questions are questions where the speaker asks for confirmation of a particular statement. Confirmative questions involve the use of the interrogative particles **áne**, **jíne**, and **mýne**.

9.4.1 Interrogative Particle, **áne**

The interrogative particle **áne** marks a sentence as a confirmative question. It may be understood as “Is this true: ...?”, or, “Is this so, that ...?” One may answer, **jíte**, “yes”, “it is so”; or **mýe**, “no”, “it is not so”.

For example:

áne b̑l̑n3 l̑s l̑ru? *Did the boy really go outside?*

jíte l̑s l̑ru. *Yes, [he] went outside.*

mýe l̑s l̑ru. *No, [he] did not go outside.*

áne is also called the *neutral interrogative particle*, because it does not load the question with either an expected ‘yes’ answer or a ‘no’ answer.

²¹Although some pedantic Ebisédi grammarians would insist that one answer this way: **f̑nu, kul̑ ...** with **kul̑** inflected as appropriate for the particular answer given. Most Ebisédi consider this unnecessary, though.

9.4.2 Loaded Questions

The other two interrogative particles also function like **áne** except that they load the question with an expected answer.

The *positive interrogative particle*, **jíne**, marks a sentence as a question to which the speaker expects the answer “yes”. For example:

jíne cúmø mǽjǽ bteú? *You love [your] mother, don't you?*

The *negative interrogative particle*, **mýne**, marks a sentence as a question to which the speaker expects the answer “no”. For example:

mýne chídø kýkh jhtú? *You didn't harm her, did you?*

The three interrogative particles **áne**, **jíne**, and **mýne** are cognate with the three subjunctive particles, **ana**, **juna**, and **myna**. One should note the lack of accent on the latter, and the difference in the final vowels.

9.4.3 Confirmative Questions with **uro**

The *emphatic nominal preposition*, **uro**, is used to bring special attention to a particular word in a sentence. For example, compare

lýs bǽlǽnǽ jolúr. *The boy went to the house.*

lýs uro bǽlǽnǽ jolúr. *It was the boy who went to the house.*

lýs bǽlǽnǽ uro jolúr. *It was the house that the boy went to.*

When combined with an interrogative particle, **uro** marks out the noun being queried about. For example:

áne uro bǽlǽnǽ lýs jolúr? *Was it the boy who went to the house?*

áne uro jolúr lýs bǽlǽnǽ? *Was it to the house that the boy went?*

9.5 Numerical Interrogatives

Numerical interrogatives are questions that involve numbers. They are based on the 2nd-declension *numerical interrogative noun*, **gheí**, which can be prefixed or suffixed just like a numerical noun.

9.5.1 Cardinal Interrogatives

Cardinal interrogatives ask *how many* or *how much* there are of something. Cardinal interrogatives are formed by prefixing the numerical interrogative **gheí** with the radix form of the noun being queried about.

For example:

píʒʒdogheɪ julír? *How many men are in the house?*

ʒmʒrʒnoghez lʒs óru? *How many children came here?*

9.5.2 Ordinal Interrogatives

Ordinal interrogatives inquire about the *ordinal position* of a particular noun. It corresponds with the English “which”. Ordinal interrogatives are formed by prefixing the noun with the radix **gheo-**.

For example:

chídt gheopíʒʒdt? *Which man is he? I. e., Which position is he?*

10 Optatives & Subjunctives

Most sentences in the language are *indicative* statements or questions — that is, they deal with factual things and events. Indicative statements state facts, and indicative questions inquire about facts. There are also imperative statements — we have seen that the inceptive aspect of verbs often serve this function.

In this section, we take a look at hypothetical statements: preferences and hypotheses. Wishes are indicated by the *optative particles*; and hypotheses are marked by the *subjunctive particles*. These particles can be combined with the interrogative particles to form questions of preference and hypotheses.

10.1 Optatives

There are three optative markers in the language. All three mark a statement as a statement of *preference*, rather than a statement of fact.

Optative particles are placed at the beginning of a sentence.

10.1.1 The Weak Optative Particle

The *weak optative particle*, **usó**, is used when the speaker wishes to politely state his or her preferences, without any assertiveness. This is often used in gentle pleadings.

For example:

epaí, usó lýs eb3 lóru. *Father, I would prefer to go outside.*
I. e., *I prefer to go outside but I will stay inside if you want me to.*

usó mýe kékh ýbú! *Please don't hurt me (fem.)!*

10.1.2 The Regular Optative Particle

The *regular optative particle*, **osó**, is the most frequently used optative particle. It is the one normally used to express one's wishes.

For example:

osó lýs eb3 lóru. *I wish I went outside. Or, I wish I could go outside.*

osó ch3d3 lýs ýbó. *I wish he would go away from me.*

10.1.3 The Strong Optative Particle

The *strong optative particle*, **osó**, marks a statement of the speaker's opinion or request. In the latter case, it carries a connotation that compliance is expected. Hence, it may be thought of as a hortative, and is used in exhortations and demands.

Examples:

osó ýg3m3 lýs pídu isó. *I think Ygomai [should have] gone to [her] father.*

osó lays ch3d3 jhílø isí. *I suggest you leave the room now.*

The use of **osó** here is not quite as strong as an imperative using the inceptive verb:

alés ch3d3 jhílø isí! *Leave the room now!*

osó does not always carry a demanding tone, however. It is frequently used in encouragements as well, for example:

osó mýfúku jwb3. *May you (fem.) not be in anguish. I. e., Don't be sad.*

Using **osó** in this context would be wavering; and using **usó** would be unsure and not much of an encouragement at all.

Another use of **osó** is to decline, firmly and assertively. For example:

osó mýe lýs eb3 móju. *No, I do not want to go to the city.*

If **usó** were used instead, the effect would be weaker:

usó mýe lýs eb3 móju. *I would rather not go to the city (but I will if you insist).*

Similarly, **osó** would have a wavering tone:

osó mýe lýs eb3 móju. *I wish I didn't have to go to the city.*

10.1.4 Answering Requests

The strong optative particle **øsó** is also used to answer a request in the affirmative. For example:

jhtó píly t3 usó chídø mløe ýbú. t3m3. keve taóma chídø t3 øsó. t3m3.

She requested of him, ‘Please help me.’ And so he answered, ‘I will.’

Here, **osó** means “I ought to”, “I am obliged to”, “your request is my obligation”. It is the customary way for the Ebisédi to answer a request in the affirmative. It is inappropriate to answer **jíe** here, because **jíe** means “this is so”, and is only appropriate in answers to questions of fact. In answering a request, **øsó** is always used.

A request is answered in the negative by **mysó**, which is a contraction of **mýe** and **øsó**. For example:

jhtó píly t3 usó chídø mløe ýbú. t3m3 êe. taóma chídø t3 mysó. t3m3 ve.

She requested of him, ‘Please help me.’ But he answered, ‘I will not.’

mysó here is to be understood as “I am not obliged to”, or “I cannot (ought not)”. This is the correct way to decline a request. As with affirmative, it is inappropriate to answer with **mýe** alone, because **mýe** is only appropriate in answers to questions of fact.

10.2 Subjunctives

Subjunctives mark a statement as a *hypothesis* or a *conjecture* as opposed to a fact. As with the optative, there are three subjunctive markers in the language. They are also placed at the front of the sentence.

ana is the *neutral subjunctive particle*. This is the subjunctive marker normally used. It introduces a hypothetical statement.

juna is the *positive subjunctive particle*. This particle, although it also introduces a hypothetical statement, leans towards the statement being true. It indicates the bias of the speaker.

myna is the *negative subjunctive particle*. It is the opposite of **juna**; it introduces a hypothetical statement that the speaker is inclined to think is false.

The main use of subjunctive particles is in constructing conditional statements, as described in the following section.

10.3 Conditional Statements

With optatives and subjunctives, one can construct conditional statements, the analogues of the English if-then statements.

10.3.1 Basic Conditional Statements

A *basic conditional statement* is introduced by one of the three subjunctive particles. It is of the form **ana** . . . **keve** The *antecedent* appears between **ana** and **keve**; the *consequent* appears after **keve**.

The other two subjunctive particles may be used in place of **ana**, to load the statement either way. The following examples illustrate the different nuances that one can obtain by using the different subjunctive particles:

ana m̄j̄j̄́ ́m̄j̄́ ́b̄j̄́, keve b̄j̄́h ́b̄j̄́ kac̄́.

If Mother loves me, [she] will give me a flower.

juna m̄j̄j̄́ ́m̄j̄́ ́b̄j̄́, keve b̄j̄́h ́b̄j̄́ kac̄́.

If Mother loves me (and I know she does), then [she] will give me a flower.

myna m̄j̄j̄́ ́m̄j̄́ ́b̄j̄́, keve b̄j̄́h ́b̄j̄́ kac̄́.

If Mother loves me (but I think she doesn't), then [she] would give me a flower.

10.3.2 Hypothetical Conditional Statements

A *hypothetical conditional statement* is one where the consequent is conjectural. This is indicated by having a subjunctive particle in *both* the antecedent and the consequent.

For example:

ana lýs jh3t3 lóru, keve ana f3t3 jhitú cúmq.

If she had gone outside, she might have seen him.

ana lýs jh3t3 lóru, keve juna f3t3 jhitú cúmq.

If she had gone outside, she probably would have seen him.

ana lýs jh3t3 lóru, keve myna f3t3 jhitú cúmq.

If she had gone outside, she probably would not have seen him.

As with the basic conditional statement, we may substitute **ana** in the antecedent with any of the other two subjunctive particles. For example:

juna lýs jh3t3 lóru, keve ana f3t3 jhitú cúmq.

If she did go outside (I think she did), then she might have seen him.

myna lýs jh3t3 lóru, keve juna f3t3 jhitú cúmq.

If she had gone outside (I think she didn't), she would probably have seen him.

11 Gerunds

As mentioned before, Ebisédian verbs describe events and changes rather than a continuous state of things. For the latter, gerunds are employed instead.

11.1 Forming gerunds from verbs

Gerunds behave exactly like nouns. They may also be participial in meaning. Gerunds may be formed from any verb by suffixing the incidental inceptive form of the verb with the *gerundive suffix*, *-ā*, and then inflecting it like a noun.

For example, the gerund form of *lés* is *lesaí*, and has the case forms: *ls3ó*, *lesaú*, *lesā*, *las3*, *lesaí*.

11.2 Participles: instrumental gerunds

The instrumental case of a gerund acts as a participle of the verb it is derived from. For example:

ni lesā d3 pí3di. *The walking man.*

It also acts as the equivalent of a ‘stative verb’. Example:

b3l3n3 m3l3da3 k3gā. *The boy and the girl were playing.*

Note that the use of a gerund/participle here is the correct usage; it is not correct to use the progressive verb *k3kíg3* here because we are describing a continuous, unchanging state of things.

When a gerund is used in this manner, the cases of the other nouns are often the same as when the corresponding verb is used. For example:

chídø taóma jhútú. *He spoke to her.*

chídø támā jhútú. *He was speaking with her.*

12 Numbers

The Ebisédian numbering and counting system is based on a set of *basic numbers* and a series of *triads*.

12.1 Quantity versus Entity

Before we discuss the number words, it is necessary to note that Ebisédian distinguishes between the *quantity* denoted by a number, and the *abstract mathematical entity* representing that number. The former is a noun inflected for number as appropriate to the quantity (“zero” is nullar; “one” is singular; everything else is plural); the latter is a *neuter singular* noun which may appear in the plural and nullar forms to indicate the multiplicity or absence of the mathematical entity.

Hence, there are two distinct nouns for each number: one for denoting the quantity, and the other for denoting the abstract mathematical entity representing that quantity.

12.2 Basic Numbers

Table 15 shows the basic numbers. The radix shows the combinatorial unit used to derive compound number words.

Value	Quantity	Entity	Radix
0	ýı	ıveí	-
1	keí	ıkeí	ke-
2	zjeí	ıjeí	je-
3	zreí	ıreí	re-
4	zdeí	ıdeí	de-
5	zpeí	ıpeí	pe-
6	zseí	ıseí	se-
7	zteí	ıteí	te-
8	zceí	ıceí	ce-
9	zkéı	ıkéı	kē-

Table 15: Basic Numbers

The ‘quantity’ forms are used when referring to numerical quantities; the ‘entity’ forms are used in mathematical contexts when discussing numerical entities.

Note that except where stated otherwise, all number nouns are 2nd declension nouns; they retain their radix vowel in all case inflections.

Note also that all quantity nouns larger than 1 are *plural* nouns, and always carry the plural prefix **3-** except in their radix form.

12.3 Counting with Triads

The basic numbers are quite limited in range. They are augmented by a system of *numerical triads* based on the powers of 3.

A *numerical triad* is a numerical unit representing a power of 3. These triads can be combined with the basic numbers to represent multiples of a power of 3. They are arranged in a sequence of increasing magnitude.

12.3.1 The Triads

The first numerical triad is **kekréu**. It refers to a group of 3, and is numerically equivalent to **3reí**. It can be suffixed with one of the basic nouns to multiply its value.

For example, **kekrékeu** is equivalent to 3×1 , and therefore is identical in value to **kekréu** and **3reí**. The next multiple, **3kekréjeu** is equivalent to 3×2 , which has a value of 6. Hence, it has the same value as **3seí**. Similarly, **3kekréreu** has the value $3 \times 3 = 9$, which is equal to **3kéu**. Next, **3kekrédeu** has the value $3 \times 4 = 12$; and then **3kekrépeu** has the value $3 \times 5 = 15$.

Note that the triad and its multiple by one are *singular* nouns, and do not have the plural prefix **3-**; the higher multiples are *plural* nouns, and hence *always* carry the plural prefix.²²

The second numerical triad is **jekréu**. It has the base value of $3^2 = 9$. Therefore, its first multiple, **jekrékeu**, has the value $3^2 \times 1 = 9$; its second multiple, **3jekréjeu**, has the value $3^2 \times 2 = 18$; its third multiple, **3jekréreu**, has the value $3^3 \times 3 = 27$.

The third numerical triad is **rekréu**, and has the base value $3^3 = 27$. Some of its multiples include **3rekréreu**, with a value of $3^3 \times 3 = 81$; **3rekrépeu**, with a value of $3^3 \times 5 = 135$, etc..

²²This seemingly odd convention comes from the historical usage of **kekreí**, which used to be a collective noun meaning “a handful”, or “a group”.

The fourth numerical triad is **dekrét**, with a value of $3^4 = 81$.

12.3.2 General Form of a Triad

The general pattern for forming a triad multiple is a prefix, derived from the radix of a basic number, followed by the triad infix **-kré-**, and suffixed with a multiplicative factor, also derived from the radix of a basic number. The suffix **-ket** is usually dropped, since multiplying by one does not change the value of the number. The plural prefix **ɜ-** is always present when the multiplicative factor is > 1 .

Table 16 shows a list of triads with their base values.

Triad	Radix	Base value
kekrét	kekré-	3
jekrét	jekré-	9
rekrét	rekré-	27
dekrét	dekré-	81
ḡekrét	ḡekré-	243
sekrét	sekré-	729
ṡekrét	ṡekré-	2187
ḥekrét	ḥekré-	6561
ḱḱekret	ḱḱekre-	19683

Table 16: The Numerical Triads

12.3.3 Approximate Values

Although we have given precise values for triads in table 16, the Ebisédi usually use them in an approximate manner, especially the later triads in the series. The precise values are used in mathematical contexts, when one wishes to indicate precise numbers; however, in general use, they are approximate. Hence, **ḥekrét** would mean, in the context of English, “around 6,500”; and **ɜḥekréjei** would mean “around 13,000”.

One should keep this in mind when translating the larger numerical triads. For example, it would be misleading to render **ɜbɜsḱdosekrei** as “729 people”, unless the passage is clearly indicating that precise number. A better translation might be “about 700 people”.

jekrereomırǎnı. *The 27th child.*

Note, in this last example, that again, the meaning is approximate. It indicates the position of the child is being somewhere in the third group of 9 children. The actual position could be the 26th place or the 28th place.

Ordinals may be combined with cardinals. For instance, if we are talking about multiple types of ‘first horses’, we would say:

3keomangı. *Many first-horses.*

If we were talking about 5 men who claim to be ‘second’, we could say:

3jeopıǎzdopei. *Five second-men.*

We could even emphasize that only *one* ‘first woman’ is here, as opposed to many ‘first women’:

keobıztókeı. *One first-woman.*

Note that the presence of the plural prefix **3-** depends on the *cardinality* of the noun, but not on its *ordinality*.

12.5 Additive Numbers

Number words may also be combined with each other *additively*. This allows for a more accurate specification of numbers that fall between two multiples of the closest numerical triad.

12.5.1 Additive Combinations

The additive combination of numbers is done by prefixing the larger number with the radix of the smaller followed by the *additive infix*, **-3-**. For example, to express the number 10, one could add 1 to 9: **3ke3jekréı** (**ke3-**, 1, added to **jekréı**, $3^2 = 9$). One could also add 4 to 6: **3de3kekréjeı** ($4+3^1 \times 2 = 10$).

The prefix need not be a basic number. For example, to precisely indicate 99, one could say **3jekreje3dekréı** ($3^2 \times 2 + 3^4 = 99$). There may also be multiple prefixes, although prefixes of smaller magnitudes should always precede prefixes of larger magnitudes. For example, to indicate 100, one could add 1 to 99: **3ke3jekreje3dekréı** ($1 + 3^2 \times 2 + 3^4 = 100$).

12.5.2 Combinatorial Constraints

Because of the large number of possible ways to represent a single number, the following conventions are adopted for additive numbers:

1. Basic numbers should not be additively combined with each other. For example, numbers like **zjezpeí** are illegal; **zteí** should be used instead in this case. The same holds for multiples of the same triad: **zkekrezjekréi** ($3^1 + 3^2$) is allowed, but **zkekrezjekredeí** is not, because it combines two multiples of **kekréi**.
2. As a corollary of the previous rule, there can only be *one* basic number in an additive compound.
3. When there are multiple additive prefixes, the basic number prefix always appear first; prefixes for triad multiples appear in the order of the triad. For example, **zkezkekrezjekréi** is $1 + 3^1 + 3^2 = 13$. Note that **kekrez-** appears before **jekréi** because **jekréi** is later in the series of triads. Hence, it is *incorrect* to say **zkezjekrezkekréi**.
4. The previous rule holds even if the multiple of a smaller triad is numerically greater than the multiple of a larger triad following it. For example, **zjekrepezezrekréi** is a correct construction, even though **jekrepez-** has a value of $3^2 \times 5 = 45$ which is greater than the value of **rekréi**, 27. Generally, however, cases like this should be avoided, since they can be potentially confusing.

Note that all additive numbers, in their quantity-noun form, carry the plural prefix **z-**, because they are always > 1 .

12.5.3 Additive Cardinals & Ordinals

Obviously, additive numbers can also be used for cardinals and ordinals. Here are some examples:

zbizstokezjekréi. *Ten women.* I. e., $1 + 3^2$ women.

zjultrojekrejezezrekréi. *Forty-five houses.* I. e., $3^2 \times 2 + 3^3$ houses.

jezkekredeofíni. *The 14th male student.* I. e., *The $(2 + 3 \times 4)$ 'th male student.*

rezrekreomagaí. *The 30th female Mangi. I. e., The $(3+3^3)$ 'th female horse.*

12.6 Large Numbers

12.6.1 The Large Triads

The system of basic numbers and the 9 basic triads described in the previous sections constitute the numerical vocabulary of the common, lay people among the Ebisédi. Mathematicians, on the other hand, have found the need to represent much larger numbers than this system would allow. Hence, they have introduced a series of *large triads*, that work in a similar manner to the 9 triads.

The first large triad is **ketráú**, which has the same base value as the 9th triad, **kékrei**, 19683. This large triad can be multiplied not only by the basic numbers, but also by multiples of the basic triads. For example, **zketrájekrei** has the base value $3^9 \times 3^2 = 177,147$; and **zketrápekrejéi** has the base value $3^9 \times 3^5 \times 2 = 9,565,938$. Because the value of **ketráú** is still not that large, it is slowly becoming adopted by the common people.

The second large triad is **jetráú**, which has a base value of 3^{18} , which is in excess of 387 million. In general, the n th large triad has a base value of 3^{9n} , where n can be either a base number, or a multiple of a basic triad. Hence, for example, **jekretráú** has a value of 3^{81} , and **pekretráú** has a base value of 3^{729} .

These large triads may also be additively combined with other numbers in a similar manner to the basic triads.

Because of the difficulty of comprehending the enormous magnitudes of all except the first of these large triads, the second and subsequent large triads are only ever used by mathematicians. They may not even be understood to be numerical words by the common people.

12.6.2 Infinity

Another commonly-used numerical term is **pérokrei**, “infinity”. It derives from **pérum**, “universe”; hence, it is the ‘Universal Triad’. The idea is that it is large enough to encompass the universe.

In common parlance, this word refers to any number larger than what can be described using the common system of basic triads, or simply any number

that the speaker regards as uncountably large. Thus, one may occasionally hear things such as:

збуśдoперокрєз лóри. *There are countlessly many people in the country.*

It does not literally mean that there are infinite people in the country; merely that the number of people is beyond the speaker's ability to count.

Mathematically, however, this word refers to an actual infinite quantity.

13 Comparatives & Superlatives

13.1 Comparatives

There are two basic comparatives: **okró** and **omó**. Both are prepositions meaning “more” and “less”, respectively.

Examples:

øsó okró 3m3ng3 ebú. *I want more horses!*

ana mór3sana kók3; keve omó tál3n jobú.
If [you] act unwisely, you (fem.) will have less peace.

A common construction is **okró zokró**, which is a contraction of **okró zo okró**, meaning “more and more”; gradually increasing.

na b3z3t3ø d3 3t3m3á kók3 okró zokró 3gafán3 chídu.
The woman’s words caused him to be more and more angry.

Literally, “the woman’s words are causing more and more anger to him.”

The parallel construction is **omó zomó**, a contraction of **omó zo omó**, meaning “less and less”; gradually decreasing.

t3t3ce 3goráku êe. keve omó zomó 3jh3d3 ve.
As the guards defended (against attackers), there were less and less of them.

13.2 Direct Comparisons

So far, our examples show comparatives and superlatives used in indirect comparisons. Now we consider direct comparisons such as ‘there is more of X than Y’. In such comparisons, the noun phrases being compared are always in the conveyant case.

For example:

okró 3b3l3n3 omó 3m3l3da3.
There are more boys than girls.

Literally, it reads “more boys, less girls.” Similarly:

omó 3bwan3 okró 3ghang3.
There are more Byonis than Ghangis.

Which is literally, “less Byonis, more Ghangi.” The second comparative particle may be omitted in such constructs:

okró ʒbʒlɔnɔ ʒmɔlɔdaʒ. *There are more boys than girls.*

For more complex comparisons, the comparison may be split across multiple sentences:

okró ʒjɔlɔr kɔmóju êe. omó cumóju ve.
There are more houses in this city than in that city.

Alternatively, one may use relative clauses for the comparison:

okró ʒnɔ kɔmóju dɔ ʒjɔlɔr ʒnɔ cumóju dɔʒn.
There are more of the houses which are in the first city, than those which are in the second city.

13.3 Superlatives

The prepositions **êékro** and **ôimo** means “the most” and “the least”, respectively.

uro chɔsɔd êékro fɔkɔ́ êe. *This disease indeed causes the most grief.*

ôimo hɔɔ nɔ chídɔ dɔ kákɔ́.
His actions were the least surprising.

There is also another pair of superlatives that indicate excessiveness: **chár** means “too many” or “too much”; whereas **su** means “not enough of”.

chár agháɔ julír êe. lýs ebɔ́ lóru ve.
It smells excessively bad in the house; I am going outside.

su goráku tóce ʒghɔngɔ́. ɔsó ʒjɔmɔ́ alés usí.
There are not enough guards to defend against the Ghangis; let's leave now!

An alternative way of expressing superlative meaning is to repeat a noun in its singular and plural form:

bachɔ́ ʒbachɔ́ chídu. *Thanks and thanks again to you.*

Literally, “thank and thanks to you”. Analogous to the English expressions of the form “heap upon heap” or “woe upon woe”.

13.4 Equatives

The preposition **osáo** is an *equative*: it indicates equality between two quantities, or, if used in a non-comparative context, it means “just the right amount of”.

For example:

3b3l3n3 osáo 3mul3da3. *There are as many girls as there are boys.*

osáo jh3l3 julír. *There are just the right number of rooms in the house.*

13.5 Verbal Comparatives

The comparative prepositions like **okró** and **omó** may also be used with verbs.

...

Examples:

okró táma. *Speak more; tell us more.*

omó táma. *Speak less; please be brief.*