

# **A Living Grammar Sketch of Arusa**

**Version 1.1**

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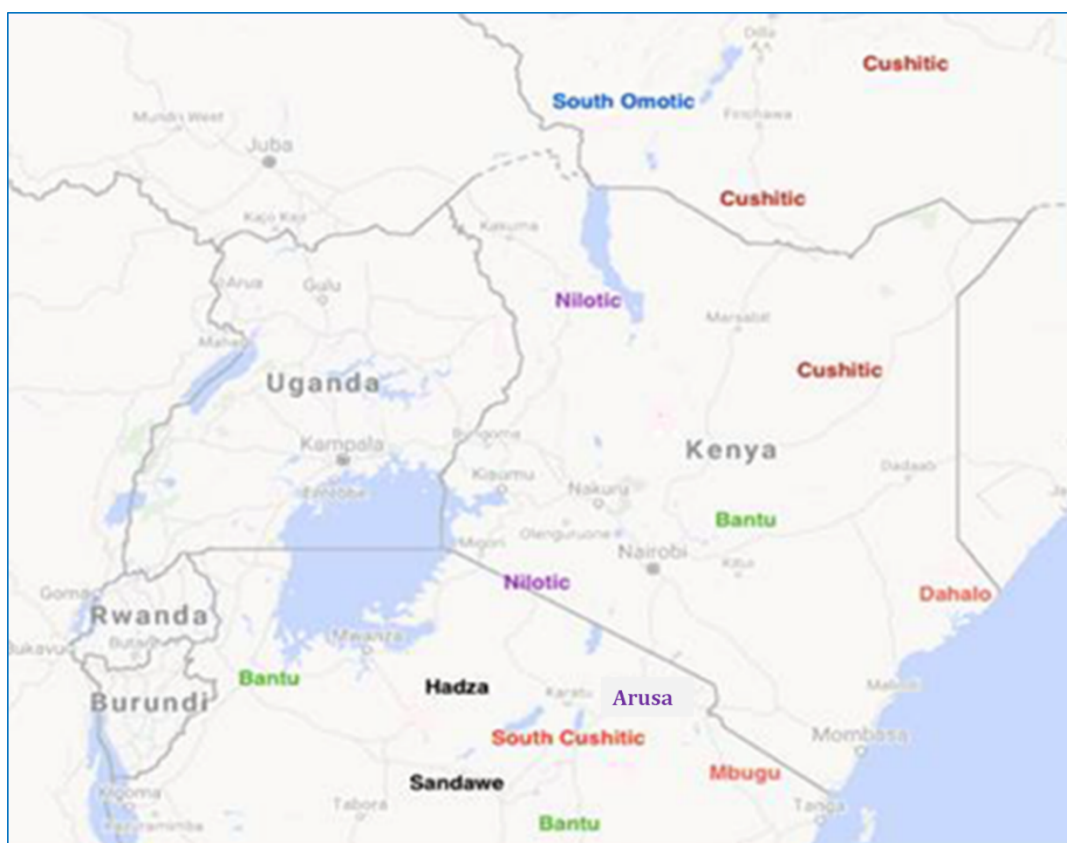
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## 1. Introduction

Arusa is a Nilotic language spoken by a Maasai ethnic group inhabiting the Arusa region in northern Tanzania close to the Mount Kilimanjaro (see Map 1 below). Arusa is a Maasai dialect, Maasai being the standard language of the broad Maasai community located in Kenya and Tanzania. Apart from Arusa, Maasai also includes Samburu, Ilchamus, Kisongo, Parakuyu, Ilkeekopokie, Purko and Ilwasingifu, as well as several other self-identified ethnic and sub-ethnic groups and their linguistic varieties (Payne 2012). Arusa is one of the three Maasai dialects spoken in Tanzania. The other two are Kisongo and Parakuyo. From a lexical perspective, Arusa exhibits up to 30% of dissimilarity with Kenyan varieties of Maasai, which underlie the standard Maasai language (Vossen 1988). However, the differences between Arusa and Standard Maasai expand beyond the lexicon and reach the core grammar, including morphology and syntax. Overall, Arusa speakers have a clear consciousness of their ethnic and linguistic distinctiveness both within the broad Tanzanian linguistic-demographic landscape and within the (East African) Maasai community.



Map 1: The position of Arusa in the East African linguistic landscape of Nilotic, Cushitic, and Bantu language

In Tanzania, the total Maasai population is approximately 800,000 persons of which only 111,000 represent the Arusa community (LOT 2009). Arusa speakers have typically lived in the Arusa region around its capital (Arusa) and in the neighbouring Meru district. However, as a result of the search for new and better pastures and more spacious farming lands, as well as recent migrations to more industrially and economically vibrant parts of Tanzania (in particular to its urban and cultural hub, Dar es Salam), Arusa speakers are currently dispersed through many other regions of the country.

Traditionally, Arusa speakers are farmers and pastoralists. This reflects their origin as the first group of Maasai speakers who came to Tanzania from Kenya in the 17<sup>th</sup> century in search of pasture (Ehret 1980; Vossen 1988). This rural character is still typical of Arusans living in the Arusa region who, to an extent, continue the traditional way of life of their ancestors. However, with the increasing migration to more urbanized and industrial parts of the country, the rural profile of the community, and thus its culture, is changing.

Most of the Maasai speakers are bilingual, speaking Arusa and Swahili – the official language of Tanzania (Levergood 1987; Karani 2013). Recently, however, multiple cases of interrupted mother-tongue transmission have also been reported as a result of economic migration to regions where other languages, particularly Swahili, predominate.

In recent decades, the national schooling system has generally been implemented in the Arusa region of Tanzania. Primary education is exclusively conveyed in Swahili, while in secondary education the only language of instruction is English. The local language – Arusa – has entirely been excluded from the Arusa schools. Moreover, the increasing modernization and centralization of various services which are all delivered in Swahili and/or English, and the constantly advancing use of these two languages in churches, shops, markets, and official meetings relegate Arusa to a secondary plan, typical of less formal situations and generally of little prestige. That is to say, Arusa is almost exclusively confined to home settings, being usually spoken in the villages outside the capital of the region. These highly limited domains of usage of the Arusa language impede an adequate transfer of the language and culture from one generation to another. As Arusa children are increasingly exposed to other languages and cultures in their daily lives, they enjoy little time practicing their mother tongue, thus failing to acquire the norms and traditions of their own community. The endangerment of the Arusa language is especially evident in a continuously growing number of cases where Arusans

migrate to other regions, particularly Dar es Salam. In such instances, the transmission of the language and its oral traditions is typically disrupted as the post-migration generation neither acquires the Arusa language nor its culture.

Like all Tanzanian Maasai varieties, Arusa is considered to be heavily under-researched and under-documented. There are still no literary texts written in the Arusa language. This includes texts that would document the traditions, culture, and ethological knowledge of Arusans. The only written text commonly accessible in the region is the Maasai Bible written in Standard Maasai, which is based on the Kenyan varieties. In scholarly works on Maasai, the Arusa variety has also barely been mentioned. Until recently, the only grammatical studies dedicated to Arusa were a PhD dissertation written by Levergood (1987) and a MA thesis by Laiser (2008). However, due to the documentation efforts of the authors of this grammar, our knowledge of Arusa has increased considerably, and the following aspects of the language have been described: verbal system (Karani 2013; Andrason & Karani 2017), left dislocation (Andrason & Karani 2017), applicative argument structure (Andrason & Karani 2019), conative animal calls (Andrason & Karani 2021), ideophones (Karani & Andrason 2022), and interjections (Andrason & Karani forthcoming).

## 2. Sound system of Arusa

### 2.1 Vowels

Arusa has nine vowels:

<i>i</i>	<i>asil</i> ‘filter’
<i>ɪ</i>	<i>aɪba</i> ‘hate’
<i>e</i>	<i>aperr</i> ‘lay down’
<i>ɛ</i>	<i>aɪdɛl</i> ‘cane’
<i>o</i>	<i>alo</i> ‘go’
<i>ɔ</i>	<i>abɔbɔl</i> ‘destroy’
<i>u</i>	<i>asul</i> ‘prune’
<i>ʊ</i>	<i>aŋʊtʊt</i> ‘kiss’
<i>a</i>	<i>aŋa</i> ‘eat’

The Arusa vowels are divided into two sets according to tongue root harmony. Advanced Tongue Root (ATR) indicates that the tongue root either moves back (-) or forward (+) affecting the size of the vocal cavity through which the air moves. Arusa has nine vowel phonemes: four [+ATR] vowels *e*, *i*, *o*, and *u* and four [-ATR] counterparts *ɛ*, *ɪ*, *ɔ*, and *ʊ*. The vowel *a* is neutral. The vocalic system of Arusa is captured in the table below:

		Front	Central	Back
High	[+ATR]	<b>[i]</b>		<b>[u]</b>
	[-ATR]	<b>[ɪ]</b>		<b>[ʊ]</b>
Mid	[+ATR]	<b>[e]</b>		<b>[o]</b>
	[-ATR]	<b>[ɛ]</b>		<b>[ɔ]</b>
Low			<b>[a]</b>	

Table 1: Arusa vowels

The [+ATR] and [-ATR] vowels of the same type are often spelled with the same grapheme, i.e., *i*, *u*, *e*, and *o*.

## 2.2 Consonants

Arusa contains the following consonants:

spelling	IPA	example	
b	[b]	<i>aból</i>	‘open’
c	[t̪]	<i>osínca</i>	‘machete’
d	[d]	<i>edáa</i>	‘eat’
f	[f]	<i>fumata</i>	‘up’
g	[g]	<i>agóro</i>	‘be angry’
h	[h]	<i>átáh</i>	‘bind’
j	[j]	<i>ájárr</i>	widen
k	[k]	<i>ákúrr</i>	‘dig’
l	[l]	<i>alám</i>	‘avoid’
m	[m]	<i>ámáɲ</i>	‘live’
n	[n]	<i>ánúk</i>	‘bury’
ng’	[ŋ]	<i>áɲótót</i>	‘kiss’
ny	[ɲ]	<i>áaɲít</i>	‘respect’
p	[p]	<i>áipárr</i>	‘ask’
t	[t]	<i>atum</i>	‘get’
r	[r]	<i>árúm</i>	‘peep’
r(r)	[rr]	<i>árréf</i>	‘trap’
s	[s]	<i>áisúrr</i>	‘poke’
sh	[ʃ]	<i>áifóp</i>	‘wear’
t	[t]	<i>átúm</i>	‘get’

Additionally, two semi-vowels (approximants or glides) are found in weak and strong forms:

w	[w]	<i>áwol</i>	‘answer’
w(w)	[ww]	<i>áwwúap</i>	‘snatch’
y	[j]	<i>ááyá</i>	‘feel pain’
y(y)	[jj]	<i>áyyíet</i>	‘pull’

Some consonants and glides <*r*, *y*, *w*> can be ‘strong’ which is indicated in writing with doubling the corresponding grapheme. The final <*r*> is always strong; hence, it is not doubled in a word-final position. Occasionally, the implosives [ɓ], [ɗ], [ɟ] and [ɠ] are attested, although they can also be realized as plosives. In writing, they are often represented with the graphemes <*b*>, <*d*>, <*j*> and <*g*>.

	bilabial	alveolar	postalveolar	palatal	labiovelar	velar	glottal
plosive	[p/β] [b]	[t] [d]				[k] [g]	
implosive	[ɓ]	[ɗ]				[ɠ]	
affricate			[tʃ] [dʒ]				
fricative	[f]	[s]	[ʃ] [ʒ]				[h]
nasal	[m]	[n]		[ɲ]		[ŋ]	
tap/flap		[ɾ]					
lateral		[l]					
approximant				[j]		[w]	

Table 2: Arusa consonants

Additionally, interactive lexical classes and categories, i.e., interjections, onomatopoeias, conative animal calls, tolerate additional consonantal phones: the stop [ʔ], fricatives [χ], [ʁ], and [z], implosive [ɓk], approximant [wɥ], [f] and three click sounds [ɘ], [ɛ], and [ɔ].

### 2.3 Tone

Arusa has two contrastive tones: high (H) and low (L). High tone is encoded by an acute accent over the vowel and low tone is by a grave accent over the vowel or, which is common in non-linguistic texts, the absence of any tonal diacritic.



### 3. Morphosyntax

#### 3.1 Nouns

Nouns are composed of prefixes, roots, and suffixes. Prefixes indicate number and gender (typically called masculine and feminine). Number prefixes are feminine *e/ε* and masculine *o/ɔ* for singular and *i/ɪ* for plural — with the appropriate member of the pair determined by tongue root harmony. Gender prefixes are *n* for feminine and *l* for masculine. Suffixes carry information about number, both singular and plural; their distribution is highly complex and will not be discussed here

##### 3.1.1 Prefixes

Masculine

singular	plural	
<i>ɔ-l-kímoji-noi</i>	<i>ɪ-l-kímoji-k</i>	‘finger’
<i>ɔ-l-áyio-ni</i>	<i>ɪ-l-áyio-k</i>	‘boy’
<i>ɔ-l-ókira</i>	<i>ɪ-l-ókirr</i>	‘star’
<i>ɔ-l-pápit-ai</i>	<i>ɪ-l-pápit</i>	‘hair’
<i>ɔ-l-túala</i>	<i>ɪ-l-túala-n</i>	‘bell’
<i>ɔ-l-ále</i>	<i>ɪ-l-ále-ta</i>	‘cattle kraal’
<i>ɔ-l-márei</i>	<i>ɪ-l-márei-ta</i>	‘family’
<i>ɔ-l-áras-i</i>	<i>ɪ-l-áras</i>	‘rib’
<i>o-l-bálélo</i>	<i>i-l-bálélo-n</i>	‘lamb’
<i>o-l-borói</i>	<i>ɪ-l-borók</i>	‘rock’
<i>o-l-goríet</i>	<i>i-l-goríet-a</i>	‘corridor’

feminine

singular	plural	
<i>ε-n-da-a</i>	<i>ɪ-n-dá-ikin</i>	‘food’
<i>ε-n-kórrɔma</i>	<i>ɪ-n-kórrɔma-n</i>	‘farm’
<i>ε-n-kéra-i</i>	<i>ɪ-n-kéra</i>	‘child’
<i>e-n-dúát-a</i>	<i>i-n-dúát</i>	‘view’

<i>e-n-dujét</i>	<i>i-n-dújéta</i>	‘knife’
<i>e-n-kutóto</i>	<i>i-n-kutót</i>	‘the corner in the house’

If the root begins with *b*, the gender prefix in the feminine is *m*-:

singular	plural	
<i>ε-m-bát-a</i>	<i>ι-m-bát</i>	‘side’

If the root begins with a nasal (*m* and *n*) as well as *l* or *s*, the feminine gender prefix is absent. The gender of the noun is still evident from the number prefixes which are different for masculine and feminine nouns:

singular	plural	
<i>ε-mówu-o</i>	<i>ι-mówu-arak</i>	‘horn’
<i>ε-náif-o</i>	<i>ι-náif-i</i>	‘alcohol’
<i>ε-lúkuj-a</i>	<i>ι-lúkuj</i>	‘head’
<i>ε-sáani</i>	<i>ι-sáani-ni</i>	‘plate’

In the case where the noun is preceded by a demonstrative, interrogative and indefinite pronoun, and the vocative morpheme, the prefix is imbedded in those modifiers:

feminine		masculine	
<i>ena ηoroyíoni</i>	‘this woman’	<i>ele ayíoni</i>	‘this boy’
<i>kuna tóyie</i>	‘these girls’	<i>kulo ayíok</i>	‘these boys’
<i>kaa ito</i>	‘which girl’	<i>kalo ayóni</i>	‘which boy?’
<i>ngulie tóyie</i>	‘other girls’	<i>kulie ayíok</i>	‘other boys’
<i>ná tásat</i>	‘woman!’	<i>lé páyian</i>	‘o, old man!’

A numeral modifier follows the noun. The gender prefix then appears both on the numeral and the noun.

<i>enkáji nábo</i>	‘one house’	<i>olóijóni obó</i>	‘one bull’
<i>inkóliil áre</i>	‘two antelopes’	<i>ilárroi ááre</i>	‘two buffalos’

In addition to encoding masculine and feminine, gender prefixes may be used to express diminutive and augmentative nuances. The augmentative *l* (masculine) appears with entities that are perceived as huge, strong, and ugly. The diminutive *n* (feminine) is used with entities that are perceived as small, weak, and nice-looking.

### 3.1.2 Noun phrases

Nouns – or nominal heads – can be modified by several elements. Demonstratives precede a noun:

- (1)
- |    |                |                 |
|----|----------------|-----------------|
| a. | <i>e-l-de</i>  | <i>páyian</i>   |
|    | 3SG-M-that     | man             |
|    |                | ‘That man’      |
| b. | <i>e-n-da</i>  | <i>tásat</i>    |
|    | 3SG-F-that     | woman           |
|    |                | ‘That woman’    |
| c. | <i>ku-l-do</i> | <i>páyian-i</i> |
|    | 3PL-M-that     | man-PL          |
|    |                | ‘Those men’     |
| d. | <i>ku-n-da</i> | <i>tásat-i</i>  |
|    | 3PL-F-that     | woman-PL        |
|    |                | ‘Those women’   |

In contrast, adjectives follow the noun:

- (2)
- |  |                   |              |
|--|-------------------|--------------|
|  | <i>o-l-páyian</i> | <i>móruo</i> |
|  | SG-M-man          | old          |
|  |                   | ‘An old man’ |

In case a noun is midwived by a series of elements, in accordance with the rules explained above, the demonstrative precedes, while the adjective follows the nominal head. If two adjectives modify a noun, adjectives denoting size precede those indicating color.

- (3) a. *ele páyian sápuK orók*  
 this man big black  
 ‘This big black man’
- b. *ena itó róngai náádo náńókíe*  
 this girl slim tall white  
 ‘This slim tall white girl’

The presence of more than three adjectival modifiers is rare. If four or more adjectives are to modify a noun, all of them but the first one are introduced by a relativizer, e.g., *na-* in the feminine:

- (4) *ena itó róngai ná-ádo ná-ńókíe ná-ífópo esupéta*  
 this girl slim that-tall that.white that-wear sweater  
 ‘This slim tall white girl in a sweater’

### 3.2 Pronominals

#### 3.2.1 Personal pronouns

The morphology of personal pronouns realizes only number and person features. In other words, personal pronouns do not distinguish between masculine and feminine. The personal pronouns may refer to both the object and subject of the verb.

	singular		plural	
1 <sup>st</sup>	<i>nanu</i>	I	<i>iyook</i>	we
2 <sup>nd</sup>	<i>iyie</i>	you	<i>intai</i>	you
3 <sup>rd</sup>	<i>ije</i>	s/he	<i>nince</i>	they

Table 3: Personal pronouns

### 3.2.2 Reflexive pronouns

Arusa has a few reflexive pronouns, which in most cases, are used for focal purposes. These pronouns are *kewón* and *opeŋ* in the singular and *ate* and *oopeŋ* in the plural:

- (5) a. *e-tu-mun-o*            *Lósai kewón*  
 3-PFV-pinch-PFV    Losai    himself  
 ‘Losai pinched himself’
- b. *e-isúj-á*            *iláyiook*            *ate*  
 3-wash-PFV    PL.boy            themselves  
 ‘The boys washed themselves’
- c. *e-isúj-a*            *oláyioni*            *opeŋ*  
 3-wash-IPFV    boy            himself  
 ‘The boy is washing himself’
- d. *e-isúj-a*            *iláyiook*            *oopeŋ*  
 3-wash-IPFV boys            PL.themselves  
 ‘The boys are washing themselves’

### 3.2.3 Reciprocal pronouns

Two reflexive pronouns, i.e., *ate* and *oopeŋ*, may also have a reciprocal interpretation similar to ‘each other’ in English:

- (6) *epórr* *mkéra*            *áte*  
 3-love child.PL            each other  
 ‘Children love each other’

### 3.2.4 Interrogative pronouns

An interrogative pronoun for things is *noo* ‘what’. Like many interrogative pronouns, *noo* tends to be preceded by the general question word *kV*. However, interrogative pronouns can also occur without the question word *kV*.

- (7)            *ká-nóó*            *í-tá-dúá?*  
                  Q-what            2-PFV-see  
                  ‘What did you see?’

An interrogative for persons ‘who’ is inflected for gender and number. The masculine forms are *aiηai* in the singular and *(ai)looηai* in the plural. The feminine forms are *(ai)ηai* in the singular and *(ai)nooηai* in the plural.

- (8)            *ke-lóo-ηái*    *o-etúo*            *ááη?*  
                  Q-MPL-who    REL-3.come.PFV    home  
                  ‘Who came home/which men came home?’

Interrogative pronouns or adjectives with the meaning of ‘which’ is only compatible with non-animate referents. Its forms are *k-alo* (ms.sg.), *k-aa* (fm.sg), and *ka-kua* (plural of both genders).

- (9)            *k-álo*    *mulángo*    *ó-ikéno?*  
                  Q-which door            REL-closed  
                  ‘Which door is closed?’

Two different series of possessive interrogatives similar to ‘whose’ are found. One series is *e ηai* (feminine) and *le ηai* (masculine). The other series is *oleηai* (ms.sg) and *ilkuleηai* (ms.pl) and *eneηai* (fm.sg) and *inkuneηai* (fm.pl).

- (10)            *í-nkúne-ηái*    *kúná*    *tóyíe?*  
                  2-F-whose    these    girls  
                  ‘Whose girls are these?’

The remaining interrogatives are *kaηoo* ‘why’, *kaji* ‘where’, and *kanu* ‘when’.

### 3.2.5 Indefinite pronouns

One series of indefinite pronouns with the meaning ‘another, other(s), (some) more’ are inflected in gender and number: in the masculine *ɔlikai* (sg) and *(il)kolikai* (pl) and in the feminine *enkai* (sg) and *mkolɛ* (pl). There is also a special locative indefinite pronoun used with places: *ai* (sg.) and *kulie/kaa* (pl). The pronoun meaning ‘somebody’ also has two inflected forms: *ɔtaani* (ms) and *endaani* (fm). However, gender morphemes are regularly absent when nominal modifiers such as demonstratives precede indefinite pronouns. For example, *ɔtaani* ‘somebody’ is *ɛɛ taani* ‘this somebody’.

There is also a group of indefinite pronouns that are not affected in gender and number: *pooki* ‘every, all’ *hoo* ‘any’, *toki* ‘anything’, *pooki ηai* ‘anybody, everybody’, and *ηania* ‘somebody’.

### 3.2.6 Demonstratives

With regard to spatial demonstratives, three dimensions can be distinguished: distal, medial, and proximal demonstratives. Distal demonstratives indicate entities that are distant from the speaker, e.g., *elde* ‘that’ (ms.sg.); proximal demonstratives refer to the entities closer to the speaker, e.g., *ele* ‘this’ (ms.sg.); medial deixis refer to entities closer to the addressee (e.g., *ilo* ‘this, that’ (ms.sg.)). The table below presents the gender and number inflection of the three demonstrative series:

	Proximal		Medial		Distal	
	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
Masculine	<i>ele</i>	<i>kulo</i>	<i>ilo</i>	<i>lolo</i>	<i>elde</i>	<i>kuldo</i>
Feminine	<i>ena</i>	<i>kuna</i>	<i>ina</i>	<i>nona</i>	<i>enda</i>	<i>kunda</i>

Table 4: Demonstrative pronouns

### 3.2.7 Possessives

Possessive phrases express a semantic relationship of possession of something by somebody or some entity. They express ownership or a closer relationship that binds two entities together: the (pro)noun denoting the possessor and the (pro)noun denoting the possessee.

Possessive pronouns are inflected in person, gender, and number depending on the properties of the possessee and possessor.

feminine singular possessee:

possessor		
	sg	pl
1 <sup>st</sup>	<i>ai</i> 'my'	<i>aŋ</i> 'our'
2 <sup>nd</sup>	<i>ino</i> 'your'	<i>iji</i> 'your'
3 <sup>rd</sup>	<i>eje</i> 'his/her'	<i>ence</i> 'their'

masculine singular possessee:

possessor		
	sg	pl
1 <sup>st</sup>	<i>lai</i> 'my'	<i>laŋ</i> 'our'
2 <sup>nd</sup>	<i>lino</i> 'your'	<i>liji</i> 'your'
3 <sup>rd</sup>	<i>leje</i> 'his/her'	<i>lence</i> 'their'

feminine plural possessee:

possessor		
	sg	pl
1 <sup>st</sup>	<i>ainei</i> 'my'	'our'
2 <sup>nd</sup>	<i>inono</i> 'your'	'your'
3 <sup>rd</sup>	<i>ejena</i> 'his/her'	'their'



masculine plural possessee:

possessor		
	sg	pl
1 <sup>st</sup>	<i>lainei</i> ‘my’	‘our’
2 <sup>nd</sup>	<i>linono</i> ‘your’	‘your’
3 <sup>rd</sup>	<i>lepēna</i> ‘his/her’	‘their’

Table 5: Possessive pronouns

### 3.3 Numerals

Numerals are expressed in a decimal system. These numerals are employed for counting and for indicating quantity, frequency and number. The numerals for 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, and 9 have separate forms for masculine and feminine.

	masculine	feminine
1	<i>o-bo</i>	<i>na-bo</i>
2	<i>aare</i>	<i>are</i>
3	<i>o-kuni</i>	<i>uni</i>
4	<i>o-oŋuan</i>	<i>oŋuan</i>
5	<i>imiet</i>	
6	<i>ile</i>	
7	<i>o-opifana</i>	<i>naapifana</i>
8	<i>isiet</i>	
9	<i>o-oudo</i>	<i>na-audo</i>
10	<i>tomon</i>	

Table 6: Cardinal numerals 1-10

Tens:

10	<i>tomon</i>
20	<i>tikitam</i>
30	<i>tomoni uni</i>
40	<i>artam</i>
50	<i>onom</i>
60	<i>ntomoni ile</i>
70	<i>ntomoni naapishana</i>
80	<i>ntomoni isiet</i>
90	<i>ntomoni naaudo</i>

Hundreds:

100	<i>iip</i>
200	<i>iip are</i>
300	<i>iip uni</i>
400	<i>iip ojuan</i>
500	<i>iip imiet</i>
600	<i>iip ile</i>
700	<i>iip naapishana</i>
800	<i>iip isiet</i>
900	<i>iip naaudo</i>

Thousands:

1000	<i>iip tomon</i>
2000	<i>iip tomon kat are</i>
3000	<i>iip tomon kat uni</i>
4000	<i>iip tomon kat ojuan</i>
5000	<i>iip tomon kat imiet</i>
6000	<i>iip tomon kat ile</i>
7000	<i>iip tomon kat naapifana</i>
8000	<i>iip tomon kat isiet</i>
9000	<i>iip tomon kat naaudo</i>
100000	<i>iip tomon kat tomon or iip tomon katitin iip tomon</i>

### 3.4 Adverbials

In Arusa, adverbs can modify adjectives, verbs, other adverbs, and clauses. Adverbs denote degree, manner, time, place, and frequency, and often provide additional information about the action, event, situation, or state denoted by the verb. Adverbs can appear in various positions in a clause, both postverbal, i.e., clause medial (10.a) or final (10.b), and preverbal, i.e., clause-initial (10.c).

- (10) a. *elo yíeyio táisére aaŋ*  
 3-go my.mother tomorrow home  
 ‘My mother will go home tomorrow’
- b. *elo yíeyio aaŋ taisere*  
 3-go my.mother home tomorrow  
 ‘My mother will go home tomorrow’
- c. *taisere e-lo yíeyio aaŋ*  
 tomorrow 3-go my.mother home  
 ‘My mother will go home tomorrow’

Contrary to the relatively free position of most adverbs, some may only appear in a postverbal position as, for examples, in *ekuēt naleŋ* ‘he runs fast’, *eloito akiŋi* ‘he is walking slowly’.

The following are some of the most common adverbs in Arusa:

Adverbs of time:

<i>ade</i>	‘later’
<i>wuaade</i>	‘often’
<i>tenakata</i>	‘now’
<i>naaji</i>	‘now’
<i>ofi</i>	‘usually’
<i>dúó</i>	‘a while ago’
<i>ŋólé</i>	‘yesterday’
<i>naari</i>	‘few days ago’
<i>apa</i>	‘past’

<i>kutwa</i>	‘always’
<i>wuade</i>	‘usually’
<i>nkatitin</i>	‘occasionally’

Adverbs of place:

<i>ene</i>	‘here’
<i>ende</i>	‘there’
<i>aatua</i>	‘inside’
<i>oorion</i>	‘behind’
<i>boo</i>	‘outside’
<i>kop</i>	‘below’
<i>fumata</i>	‘above’
<i>bata</i>	‘side’
<i>keperr</i>	‘above’

Adverbs of manner

<i>akijni</i>	‘slowly’
<i>rreerree</i>	‘quickly’
<i>sidai</i>	‘nicely’
<i>efipa</i>	‘happily’
<i>egoro</i>	‘sadly’
<i>sarrsarr</i>	‘quickly’

Adverbs of degree:

<i>naleŋ</i>	‘very, much’
<i>tukul</i>	‘completely’
<i>pooki</i>	‘(at) all’
<i>piu</i>	‘(at) all’

Many adverbs, especially those of place, draw on nominal stems that can occur with or without a preposition to express a modifying (adverbial) function. In such cases, these words do not exhibit gender prefixes.

### 3.5 Adjectives

Adjectives are modifiers of nouns that can express attributes related to size, shape, age, colour, origin, material, and quality, among others. Adjectives are only inflected for number, which is encoded though prefixes. Other features, e.g., gender, are expressed by other modifiers. Examples of singular and plural adjectives in Arusa are provided below:

singular	plural	
<i>ronkai</i>	<i>ronkeni</i>	‘thin’
<i>sapuk</i>	<i>sapuki</i>	‘fat’
<i>rufa</i>	<i>rufa</i>	‘thick’
<i>dapaf</i>	<i>dapafi</i>	‘wide’
<i>dukun</i>	<i>dukuni</i>	‘short’
<i>kiti</i>	<i>kutiti</i>	‘small’
<i>kitok</i>	<i>kituak</i>	‘big’
<i>orok</i>	<i>oorok</i>	‘black’
<i>keri</i>	<i>keriin</i>	‘white spotted’
<i>kuruoni</i>	<i>kuruoni</i>	‘silver’
<i>odo</i>	<i>oodo</i>	‘red’
<i>sidai</i>	<i>sidan</i>	‘good’
<i>moda</i>	<i>oomoda</i>	‘foolish’
<i>ɔlmaima</i>	<i>ilmaima</i>	‘insane’
<i>moruo</i>	<i>moruak</i>	‘old’
<i>kijini</i>	<i>kutiti</i>	‘small’
<i>ɲerriɲer</i>	<i>ɲerriɲeri</i>	‘young’
<i>botor</i>	<i>botoro</i>	‘old’
<i>musana</i>	<i>musan</i>	‘old’
<i>ɲejuk</i>	<i>ɲejuko</i>	‘new’

<i>bor</i>	<i>boraa</i>	‘polite’
<i>bukoi</i>	<i>bukoin</i>	‘brown’
<i>jokie</i>	<i>jokioo</i>	‘brown’
<i>buluu</i>	<i>buluuni</i>	‘blue’
<i>sambu</i>	<i>sambui</i>	‘silver spotted’
<i>torrono</i>	<i>torrok</i>	‘bad’
<i>suuji</i>	<i>suuj</i>	‘useless (of a person)’
<i>kuret</i>	<i>kureti</i>	‘coward’

### 3.6 Prepositions

Prepositions relate nouns or noun phrases. Some prepositions in Arusa, e.g., *tV*, which expresses time, place, provenance, and association or dissociation of things, modify their vowel depending on the word they introduce. The rule for the vowel change is governed by [ $\pm$ ATR] vowel harmony. The vowels *e/ε* or *i/I* appear when preceding words that begin with front vowels or the central vowel *a*. In contrast, *o/ɔ* or *u/ʊ* are used when preceding words that begin with back vowels.

- (11) a. *ti alo enkáji*  
‘at home, in the house’
- b. *to olápa liare*  
‘in the month of February’
- c. *te nábokási*  
‘on Monday’

It is possible to distinguish several semantic types of prepositions, e.g., locative, directive, instrumental, and associative.

Many adverbials can be used as prepositions expressing location in space: *ti atua* ‘at, in’, *fumata* ‘on, above’, *te* ‘at’, *alaj* ‘across’, *aman* ‘around’, *kurum* ‘behind’, *kop* ‘below’ ‘under, beneath’, *aabori* ‘down’, *aatua* ‘inside, underneath’, *keperr* ‘over’, and *oorioŋ* ‘outside’.

- (11) a. *e-ifir-ita enkérai ti atua enkáji*  
 3-cry-PROG child inside house  
 ‘The child is crying inside the house’
- b. *e-irura embúra te kop e émésa*  
 3-sleep cat at under of table  
 ‘The cat is laying under the table’

Several prepositions of an adverbial origin – also those mentioned above – indicate direction: *ngalo* ‘towards, through’, *aatua* ‘into’, *alan* ‘across’, *bata* ‘along’, *aalo* ‘by’, *aabori* ‘down’, *aalo* ‘near, off, out’, and *fumata* ‘up’, ‘on top of’, ‘at the top’.

- (12) *e-fomo olpáyian ngalo olkéjɔ*  
 3-go.PFV man towards river  
 ‘The man walked towards/down the river’

Some spatial prepositions in Arusa occur in a combination. That is, two adjacent prepositions are used to express a locative or directive idea. The common combinations are: *te fumata* ‘at up/above’, *te kop e* ‘of under of’, and *ti atua* ‘at in’:

- (13) *e-fet Nai enkáji te fumata oldóino*  
 3-build Nai house at up hill  
 ‘Nai will build the house up the hill’

Prepositions also introduce the indirect agent. In the following example, the indirect agent *isikéri* ‘police’ is headed by the preposition *to*:

- (14) *e-igum Lárry olapúrroni to isikéri*  
 3-catch Larry thief with police  
 ‘Larry will catch the thief with (the help of) the police’

Prepositions can introduce nouns denoting that function as instruments, tools, or means, for example, *to olbasi* ‘by bus’, *to olfunguo* ‘with key’, *te empira* ‘with a rubber’, and *te enkéene* ‘with the rope’ below:

- (15) *e-teen-a*      *aldía* *te*      *enkééne*  
 3-tie-PF      dog    with    rope  
 ‘He tied the dog with a rope’

Associative prepositions denote association of one element with another. They often denote possession, belonging, or ownership relationship among the arguments in a clause. The associative prepositions include *o* (16.a), *e* (16.b), and *IV* (16.c):

- (16) a. *e-te-yier-ak-i*                      *inkiriŋ* *o*      *layíok*  
 3-PFV-cook-DAT-IMP      meat    of      boys  
 ‘The meat of the boys has been cooked’
- b. *e-yeŋ-i*                      *enkíne* *e*      *nkérai*  
 3-slaughter-IMP      goat    of      child  
 ‘The child’s goat will slaughtered’
- c. *etwa*                      *aldíŋóni*      *lo*      *alpáyian*  
 3-die.PFV      bull              of      old.man  
 ‘The old man’s bull has died’

Prepositional phrases, i.e., nouns introduced by a preposition, may virtually occur in all positions in a clause: clause-initial, clause-medial, and clause-final position.

### 3.7 Conjunctions

Conjunctions connect clauses (hence, their other name, ‘connectors’). Usually, coordinating (‘and’), contrastive (‘but’), and disjunctive (‘or’) connectors that relate phrases rather than clauses are also classified as conjunctions.

Coordination can be expressed through two construction types: *o* and *n* coordination. The conjunction *o* coordinates non-clausal constituent, i.e., nouns (17.a-b), demonstratives, (17.c-d), prepositional phrases (17.e-f), and adverbials (17.g):

- (17) a. *endító o enkérai*  
 ‘the girl and the child’



- b. *Maiko o Larry*  
‘Michael and Larry’
- c. *ena o ina*  
‘this and that’
- d. *ene o ende*  
‘here and there’
- e. *te mújini o te fule*  
‘in town and at school’
- f. *te atua o te orioŋ*  
‘inside and outside’
- g. *taata o taisere*  
‘today and tomorrow’

The conjunction *n* coordinates clauses:

- (18) *e-tu-urori*      *enkáyioni*      *n-édúmu*      *ŋótoje*  
3-PFV-fall down      boy      and-pick up      his.mother  
‘The boy fell down and his mother picked him up’

Other conjunctions attested in Arusa are *ore* (*p*) ‘if, when’, *pee* ‘so that, in order’, *taa* ‘and so’, *anaa* ‘or’, *amu* ‘because’, *arahu* ‘or’, *naa* ‘and’, *ncere* ‘that’, *araki*, *afu* ‘or’, and *taa* ‘now that’.

- (19) *e-mir pápa*      *enkórrma*      *pee*      *e-ijaju*      *engárrim*  
3-sell my.father farm      so.that 3-buy      car  
‘My father will sell the farm so that he buys a car’

A sequence of two conjunctions can co-occur in a clause. In many cases, *ore*, *p* and *n* are compatible:

- (20) *ore*      *pí-túm*      *impésai*      *ní-fét*      *enkáji*  
when when-get      money      ni-build      house  
‘When you get money, you build a house’

## 4. Verbs

### 4.1 Verbal morphology

There are two main morphological classes of verbs: Class I and Class II.

The majority of verbs belong to Class I. These verbs have stems that start with consonants or vowels except for *i/i* and *e/ε*. The following verbs belong to Class I:

consonant verbs

<i>a-korrd</i>	‘scratch’
<i>a-dol</i>	‘see’
<i>a-lilitu</i>	‘search’
<i>a-mut</i>	‘finish’
<i>a-sir</i>	‘write’
<i>a-rif</i>	‘divide’
<i>a-tum</i>	‘get’

vowel verbs

<i>a-ohoki</i>	‘call’
<i>a-ɔk</i>	‘drink’
<i>a-ɔt</i>	‘point’

Class II contains verbs that begin with the vowel *i/i* or *e/ε*:

*i/i*-verbs

<i>isiije</i>	‘sour’
<i>ɪnɔ</i>	‘wake up’
<i>igeru</i>	‘start’
<i>irraga</i>	‘sleep’
<i>isika</i>	‘escape’

*e/ε*-verbs

<i>εk</i>	‘weigh down’
<i>εl</i>	‘smear’
<i>εp</i>	‘cover’
<i>εkeɲa</i>	‘struggle’

**4.2 Person and number in verbs**

Arusa verbs are inflected for person and number. The person-number categories are encoded by means of prefixes: *a* and *ki/ki* in 1<sup>st</sup> person singular and plural (21.a-b); *i/i* in 2<sup>nd</sup> person singular and plural (21.c-d), and *e/ε* in 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular and plural (21.e-f). Additionally, in 2<sup>nd</sup> person plural, the root stem is reduplicated (21.d). 3<sup>rd</sup> singular and plural have identical verb forms and their disambiguation is achieved through contexts (e.g., noun subjects).

- (21) a. *a-lo*            *kanisa*            *ade*  
 1SG-go            church            later  
 I will go to church later
- b. *ki-wuo*            *kanisa*            *ade*  
 1PL-go            church            later  
 We will go to church later
- c. *i-lo*                *kanisa*            *ade*  
 2SG-go            church            later  
 You will go to church later
- d. *i-wuowuo*        *kanisa*            *ade*  
 2PL-go            church            later  
 You will go to church later
- e. *e-lo*                *kanisa*            *ade*  
 3SG-go            church            later  
 She will go to church later
- f. *e-wuo*              *kanisa*            *ade*  
 3PL go             church            later  
 They will go to church later

### 4.3 Tense and aspect

There are two main tense-aspect forms in Arusa: perfective and imperfective.

Class I verbs take the prefix *tV-* in the perfective form in addition to suffixes such as *a*, *-e* and *-o* (22.a). Class II verbs do not take the prefix *tV-* but only exploit suffixes (22.b-d). With verbs that end in *aa* and *ai*, the suffixes *yie* and *yio* are employed.

- (22) a. *a-ta-lep-o*                      *enkíteŋ*  
 1SG-PFV-milk-PFV cow  
 ‘I have milked the cow’
- b. *e-irrag-a*                      *enkérai*  
 3-sleep-PFV child  
 ‘The child has slept’
- c. *e-isuj-e*                      *Meri*  
 3-wash-PFV Mary  
 ‘Mary washed herself’
- d. *e-iken-o*                      *Meri*    *ɔlmólángo*  
 3-close-PFV Mary door  
 ‘Mary closed the door’

In addition, a group of morphologically irregular verbs expresses the perfective aspect by suppletion. For example, the imperfective *ee* ‘he will die’ has its perfective counterpart *etwa* ‘he died’.

In contrast to the perfective, the imperfective has no specific morpheme, except for the imperfective suffixes *-i*, *-u*, and *-yu*, which occur with a few verbs.

- (23) a. *e-ipirr-i*                      *enkérai*                      *aaji*  
 3-run-IPFV child house  
 ‘The child will run inside’
- b. *e-re-u*                      *Lóleku engárim*                      *ene*  
 3-drive-IPFV Loleku car here  
 ‘Loleku will drive his car to this place’

- c. *e-pio-yu*      *Lóleku enkééne*  
 3-make-IPFV Loleku rope  
 ‘Loleku will make a rope’

In many cases, the imperfect has a zero-morpheme encoding:

- (24) a. *a-ta-lep-o*              *enkíteŋ*                      (perfective)  
 1SG-PFV-milk-PFV cow  
 ‘I milked the cow’
- b. *a-lep*    *enkíteŋ*                      (imperfective)  
 3-milk cow  
 I (will) milk the cow

For Class II verbs, the perfective and imperfective often differ with regard to the tonal pattern of the root. In the imperfective, the second syllable bears a high tone, while in the perfective the same syllable takes a low tone:

- (25) a. *e-ilèp-ìe*      *sírkale*      *impésai*      *e*      *fúle*    (imperfective)  
 3-raise-CAUS government money of school  
 ‘The government will raise the tuition fee’
- b. *e-ilèp-ìe*      *sírkale*      *impésai*      *e*      *fúle*    (perfective)  
 3-raise-CAUS government money of school  
 ‘The government raised the tuition fee’

The morphological differences between Class I and II verbs are also found in the imperative. Accordingly, Class I verbs take the prefix *tV* while Class II verbs do not:

- (26) a. *ti-kíŋa*              *ɔlpáeki*  
 IMPR-peel corn  
 ‘Peel the corn’
- b. *i-epo*              *ilpáek*  
 IMPR-cover corn  
 ‘Cover the corn’

#### 4.4 Verb extensions

The semantic (meaning) and/or syntactic (argument structure) properties of the verbal root can be modified by means of affixes, so-called ‘extensions’: causative, dative, motion away and motion towards, middle, neuter, inchoative, instrumental, impersonal, reciprocal, antipassive, and reflexive. All such affixes are subject to the vowel harmony rules. The table below summarizes the most common affixes used in the respective extensions:

causative	dative	motion away	motion toward
<i>i(n)tV</i>	<i>aki / oki</i>	<i>aa / ai</i>	<i>u</i>
<i>ie</i>	<i>aka / oko</i>	<i>oo / oi</i>	<i>ua</i>
<i>iyē</i>	<i>iki / iki</i>	<i>ayie / aya / oyo /</i>	<i>uo</i>
	<i>ikia / ikio</i>	<i>oyie</i>	
		<i>yie / itie</i>	

middle	neuter	inchoative	instrumental
<i>a / e / o</i>		<i>u</i>	<i>ie / re</i>
<i>ai</i>	<i>no</i>	<i>i</i>	<i>yie</i>
<i>zero</i>	<i>je</i>	<i>ua</i>	<i>fe / te</i>
		<i>uo</i>	<i>ye</i>

impersonal	reciprocal	antipassive	reflexive
<i>i / ni / ri</i>	<i>a / o</i>	<i>ifo</i>	<i>ri</i>
<i>aki / oki</i>	<i>ro</i>	<i>iho</i>	<i>re</i>
<i>tai / toi</i>	<i>no</i>	<i>ife</i>	<i>ro</i>
		<i>ihe</i>	

Table 7: Verbal extensions

**Causative**

- (27) *e-ita-do-iki*            *enkíjiko*            *aatua entóo*  
 3-CAUS-drop-DAT spoon            inside bucket  
 ‘He will drop a spoon into the bucket’

**Dative**

- (28) *e-raŋ-aki*            *intóyie ilómon*  
 3-sing-DAT girls            guests  
 ‘The girls will sing for the guests’

**Motion Away**

- (29) a. *e-or-oo*            *endító ɔltáka*            *kioni*  
 3-sweep-MA girl            garbage            backyard  
 ‘The girl will sweep the dirt away to/towards the backyard’
- b. *e-ta-naŋ-ayie*            *enkérai*            *empíra*  
 3-PFV-throw-MA child            ball  
 ‘The child threw a ball away’

**Middle**

- (30) *e-yier ena*            *móti*            *endáá*  
 3-cook this            pot            food  
 ‘This pot cooks food’

**Inchoative**

- (31) *e-rok-u*            *emóti*  
 3-black-INCH pot  
 ‘The pot will become black’

### Instrumental

- (32) *a-sul-ie*                      *ɔsínca*                      *ɔlcáni*  
1SG-prune-INST      machete                      tree  
'I use the machete to prune the tree'

### Impersonal

- (33) *e-fet-i*                      *esíta*  
3-build-PASS wall  
'The wall is going to be built'

### Reciprocal

- (34) *e-nor-a*      *olpáyian oo*      *endásat*  
3-love-REC man      with      woman  
'The man and the woman love each other'

### Antipassive

- (35) *e-dol-ifo*                      *enkíteŋ*  
3-see-APAS      cow  
'The cow sees'

### Reflexive

- (36) *e-tumo-re*                      *olpáyian endásat*  
3-meet-REF      man                      woman  
'The man will meet the woman'



## 5. Syntax

### 5.1 Word order

The word order in unmarked, or predicate focus, clauses in Arusa is VSO. The verb occupies a clause-initial position; it is followed by the subject argument and next the object argument; other adjuncts appear in a clause-final position:

- (37)        *e-fomo*        *ε-n-tító*        *ε-η-kórruma*        *ηϷε*  
               3-go.PFV        SG-F-girl.NOM        SG-F-field.ACC        yesterday  
               ‘The girl went to the field yesterday’

However, the position of an adverbial element varies greatly in Arusa clauses. As explained in the section dedicated to adverbials, adverbial adjuncts may occur in a clause-initial (38.a), clause-medial (38.b), and clause-final position (37).

- (38) a.        *ηϷε*        *e-fomo*        *ε-n-tító*        *ε-η-kórruma*  
               yesterday        3-go.PFV        SG-F-girl.NOM        SG-F-field.ACC  
               ‘The girl went to the field yesterday’
- b.        *e-tu-tur-o*        *ηϷε*        *endásat*        *ε-η-kórruma*  
               3-PFV-plough-PFV        yesterday        woman        field  
               ‘The woman ploughed her field yesterday’

A noun phrase (a subject or object argument) can be topicalized. In such cases, it is fronted to a clause-initial position (39.a). SVO word order is also possible when the subject is left-dislocated (39.b).

- (39) a.        *ε-η-kórruma*        *e-fomo*        *ε-n-tító*  
               SG-F-field.ACC        3-go.PFV        SG-F.girl.NOM  
               ‘It is in the field where the girl went’
- b.        *e-ntító,*        *e-fomo*        *ε-η-kórruma*  
               SG-F.girl        3-go.PFV        SG-F-field.ACC  
               ‘The girl, she went to the field’

Furthermore, although SO order predominates, OS word order is sometimes also found constituting a marked clause-structure counterpart:

- (40)            *e-fomo*            *ε-η-kórruma*            *ε-n-títo*  
                 3-go.PFV    3.SG-F-field.ACC            SG-F-girl.NOM  
                 ‘The girl went to the field’

## 5.2 Negation

There are three negation strategies in Arusa: *m(V-)*, *aa*, and *-itu*.

The negative morpheme *m(V-)* is compatible with most lexical classes and thus co-occurs with verbs, adverbs, adjectives, and nouns. It tends to be cliticized to the word it negates although it can also appear in isolation. With verbs, *m(V-)* negates only the imperfective aspect.

- (41)            *m-elo*    *enkíteη boo*  
                 NEG-go cow    out  
                 ‘The cow will not go outside’

In contrast, the negative morpheme *itu* is restricted to predicates only and its scope spans the entire clause. In other words, *itu* negates the whole event denoted by the verb:

- (42)            *e-itu*    *e-lo*    *enkíteη boo*  
                 3-NEG 3-go    cow    out  
                 The cow did not go outside

To say ‘no’, one can use *a’a*, *oime*, and *itu*.

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