

Leng Syntax

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About the island

- Leng spoken in the island of Leng, south of Yi Ti
- Conquered by Yi Ti many centuries ago
- People in the north descended from the Yi Ti, while the Lengii in the south are native to the island
- Many forests and jungles, and the people built underground cities
- Large number of loan words from Yi Ti into Leng.

About nominal morphology

- Three “genders”: Earth, Water, Fire. [Nouns in their root form do not have any differentiation based on gender. Gender determines how the word is declined]
- Three numbers: Singular, Paucal, Plural
- Eight noun cases: Nominative, Accusative, Instrumental, Dative, Ablative, Genitive, Locative, Vocative [Based off Sanskrit]

Basic syntax-y stuff

- Leng is a null-subject language. Clause does not need to have a subject
- In fact, a single verb can form a sentence. Agglutination can also result in such one-word sentences

E.g.

jaɜapa

I see it

jaɜagævijjanka

Apparently, he will see it

Word order

- All words orders are allowed
- SOV word order is most common
- Non-SOV word orders give pragmatic effects. They are used to indicate different connotations.

Word order

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Ti frumi:muk batuti

You eat the fruit

(you-NOM fruit-ACC 2SG-eat)

Ti batuti frumi:muk

You definitely eat the fruit /
I'm gonna make you eat the
fruit

Intransitive sentences

iftakijjan

It fell

if - indicates past tense [one]

takijjan - 3SG-fall

Intransitive sentences

pa ipaji sopipa

I sleep peacefully

1SG-NOM peace-ADV 1SG-sleep

Intransitive sentences

Pa gamælif gænippa

I am coming home

1SG-NOM home-DAT 1SG-come-CONT

Transitive sentences

tʃipawi ʃleljulu gada:n panak palijjan

The quick man grabbed the big ball

quick-ADJ man-NOM big-ADJ ball-ACC 3SG-grab-PST

Transitive sentences

gada:n hizzæyu i:f frumi:muk itʃipawi batuwwan

The big dog eats a fruit quickly

big-ADJ dog-NOM one-ADJ fruit-ACC quick-ADV 3SG-eat

Transitive sentences

Tiyam farwevu irami fæhiju sagævijjan

Your son will be praised highly

2SG-GEN son-NOM high-ADV praise(root) 3SG-be-FUT

Headedness

- Sentences are always head-final
- The head verb of a relative clause will be modified to be in its relative form
- This is done by adding the suffix -ar, which is the root form of the word **ar**, which means “to do”.
- Apart from this, the verb of a relative clauses will not show any special conjugation

Relative clauses

Relative clause modifying subject:

wanflejam yamælhít sopijjar fleljulu izan sa:n

The man who sleeps in his house is good

3SG-GEN-DIST house-LOC sleep-REL man-NOM good-ADV 3SG-be

Relative clauses

Relative clause modifying object:

ʃleljulu wanʃlejam igada:n sa:r yamælhɪt sopijjan

The man sleeps in his house which is big

man-NOM 3SG-GEN big-ADV 3SG-be house-LOC 3SG-sleep

Passivization

- Certain verbs, such as “to know”, “to understand”, and “to be able to do”, have the ability to be passivized

E.g. **sabi** - to know

Passivization

Active sentence:

Pa xeddi:nuk sabipa

1SG-NOM life-ACC 1SG-understand

Passive sentence:

Pajif xeddi:nuk sabiwan

I understand life 1SG-DAT life-ACC
understand-PASS

Passivization

- Passivization converts verb to zero valency
- Sometimes, in colloquial speech, the object will lose its case in the above sentence, making it look like a subject
- However, the verb is still not conjugated
- These verbs words are far more commonly found in their passivized form than in their active form

Causativization

- Regular causativization, same as discussed in class
- The original verb is changed to its infinitive form, and modifies the verb “put” (**kæmi**), which takes on conjugation

ʃleljulu roka:n

The man speaks

man-NOM 3SG-speak

xayɣazu ʃleljuluk roka kæmijjan

The soldier makes the man speak

soldier-NOM man-ACC speak-INF 3SG-put

Yes/No questions

- 2 ways:

an ti flapjɛluk flixati?

Do you love water?

what-Q you-NOM water-ACC 2SG-love

ti flapjɛluk flixati, ax?

You love water, no?

you-NOM water-ACC 2SG-love no-Q

Wh- questions

- Basic word: **an**, “what”
- “Who” = “what” + “person” = **an + flɛljulu = anfle**
- “Where” = “what” + “place” = **an + pitjɔʒu = anpit**

ti wanpit flapjɛluk flixati

You put the water there

2SG-NOM there-ADV water-ACC 2SG-put

ti anpit flapjɛluk flixati?

Where did you put the water?

2SG-NOM where-Q water-ACC 2SG-put

Negation

- Two types of negation for verbs, weak and strong
- “I am not going to watch the game” vs. “I do not watch games in general”
- Weak negation: Add the word **ax**, meaning “no” as a suffix to the verb

Pa yamælif gænippa

I am coming home

1SG-NOM home-DAT 1SG-come-CONT

Pa yamælif gænippa:x

I am not coming home

1SG-NOM home-DAT 1SG-come-CONT-NEG

Negation

- Strong negation: Add “to do” + “not”, which is **ar + ax = arax**

Pa γamælif gænippa

I am coming home

1SG-NOM home-DAT 1SG-come-CONT

Pa γamælif gænipa:rax

I do not come home / I do not plan on coming home / I am not going to come home

1SG-NOM home-DAT

1SG-come-NEG(strong)

The end

Thank you!