

Research Note

Fundamental Dialogues in Berta/Funj (1)*

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Abstract

This study aims at providing linguistic materials of Berta/Funj (Mayu dialect), a Nilo-Saharan language spoken in the Sudan-Ethiopia borderlands. The data is formatted in the textbook form that has been developed by Akio Nakao as a way of documenting Ethiopian languages (Nakano 1995, 2006, 2008, 2009). The main body of this study will consist of about 12 lessons that include (i) dialogue text, (ii) vocabulary and (iii) grammatical/linguistic notes. This part presents the introductory parts and from lesson 1 to 4.

1 Introduction

Berta/Funj¹ is an understudied Nilo-Saharan language spoken by a total number of around 393,500 people in the Sudan-Ethiopia borderlands (Eberhard et al. 2019). This language should be of interest to linguists who are interested in the areal features of Ethiopia or more widely northeastern Africa, including the discourse configurationality and the ‘marked nominative’ case-marking (Anderson 2017). It has also importance for historians and anthropologists who are interested in the cultural contacts and the formation of local states in the ‘double periphery’ of both Sudan and Ethiopia (see, *inter alia*, Triulzi 1981 and González-Ruibal 2014).

The aim of this study is to provide basic linguistic materials in Mayu dialect of the Berta/Funj language in a textbook form similar to what Akio Nakao developed for

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¹ Berta (or Bertha) has been widely adopted in the literature, although it is regarded as a derogatory term by the speakers, who prefer the term “Funj” to refer to their link to the medieval Funj kingdom of Sennar in Sudan. This term, in turn, will raise ambiguity and confusion since many neighboring heterogeneous language groups (of, for example, Koman and Eastern Jebel branches) also uses the same ethnonym for themselves (see James 1977 for the nature of this term).

documenting Ethiopian languages, including Amharic (Nakano 1995), Tigrinya (Nakano 2006) and Awngi (Nakano 2008, 2009). This part of the study is based on the fieldwork conducted by the author in Assosa during March 2019 with the assistance by Mr. Abdunnasir Ali of the Education Bureau of the regional state (for details, see Section 2). The research was conducted in Sudanese/Benishangul Arabic.

It has been widely known that Berta consists of various dialects whose actual extent of diversity in both Sudan and Ethiopia is understudied (see, for example, Bremer 2015). The Mayu dialect, which is the main concern of this study, has been chosen as the model of the ‘standard’ language and documented by several important studies². Andersen (2017) provides for the time the clearest overview of Berta/Funj syntax. A much briefer sketch by the same author is contained in the *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica* (Andersen 2003). Susanne and Andreas Neudorf, who played a major role in standardizing the language, have edited a four-language dictionary (Berta/Funj, English, Amharic and Arabic³) represented in the orthography (SIL Ethiopia 2014). Susanne has also published at least two important grammatical studies (Neudorf 2015, 2018).

This study makes extensive reference to these studies and there could be descriptions overlapping with SIL Ethiopia (2014) and Neudorf (2015, 2018) as we share the same instructor. However, all data are (re-)collected on site by the author. In the main body of this study, references to these studies are omitted for the sake of readability.

2 Orthography and basic concepts

Under the cooperative project by the Education Bureau of the Benishangul-Gumuz National Regional State and SIL Ethiopia, there have been efforts to standardize the Berta/Funj language to ensure vernacular education, which has taken place during the last decade in Assosa (whose main achievement is the Berta dictionary, SIL Ethiopia 2014). Our instructor, Mr. Abdunnasir Ali was a member of this project and, during the following years, he has been the leading figure in Berta/Funj language education. Apart from Berta/Funj, he speaks a variant of Sudanese Arabic (named Benishangul Arabic by Nakao 2017) and Oromo (Wellegga dialect), as well as Amharic and English and to an extent Standard Arabic (*al-fuṣḥā*) as educational languages. Such multilingualism is quite common among the Berta/Funj people in the Assosa area.

² In addition, Cerulli (1947), Triulzi et al. (1976), Bender (1989), and Bremer (2015) collected some lexical and grammatical data of this dialect in comparison with several other dialects.

³ Arabic in this dictionary is basically the modern written language (*al-fuṣḥā*), but with a number of colloquial features.

The standard orthography⁴ is based on the Mayu dialect spoken around Assosa, the capital of Benishangul-Gumuz Region in western Ethiopia, which is under significant influence from Arabic (mainly Benishangul Arabic, but also from *al-fuṣḥā*, for now see Nakao 2017). This influence is one of the least studied field of Berta/Funj studies, and there is an apparent need to improve the standard in accordance with the study of the Arabic varieties used by the same speakers (see sub-sections below). Nevertheless, this study adopts the standard orthography for practical reasons; this study is not intended only to provide data for linguistic analyses, but to respect and encourage the use of this writing system that has been developed by the collaboration of the local speakers and the disciples of modern linguistics.

2.1 Vowel

Berta/Funj has a five-vowel system with phonological length: **i/ii**, **e/ee**, **a/aa**, **o/oo**, **u/uu**. The realization of long vowels is not completely stable and so written by the speakers, e.g. **eqé** [èʔé] ~ **eeqé** [è:ʔé] ‘no’, **taláta** [tálátà] ~ **talááta** [tálá:tà] ‘three’. The actual realization of vowels varies, e.g. **maré** (in a narrower description) [màré] ~ [mèré] ~ [mèré] ‘they’. Short vowels, especially **a** and **i** tend to be elided on morpheme- or word-boundaries, e.g. **ñgó gídi alfákkaya?** [ñgójídìlfákkàjá] ‘Do you have change?’, **shúllé** ‘this house’ (from **shúlí** ‘house’ + **-lé** ‘this’). Berta/Funj seems to lack diphthongs, although it allows hiatus with optional glides (e.g. **shainé** [ʃà(j)iné] ‘how’, see glides in 2.2).

The vowel length is neutralized in the word-final syllables and not distinguished in the orthography, but the underlying vowel length is retained when the word is followed by a suffix or an enclitic, e.g. **hú** ‘name’ vs. **húú-kqedqe** ‘his name’, **X ma Y** ‘X is Y’ vs. **X Y ñinéñ maane** ‘X is Y’, and **mín thá Jaabbán** ‘from Japan’ but **mín thá Jaabbáán-á** ‘(are you) from Japan?’. The word-final vowel length can, however, be retained in loanwords (mainly from Arabic); if the original word as word-final long vowel, it can realize long (e.g. **alkqanún** [àlk’ànún] ~ [àlk’ànú(:)n] ‘law’, cf. Arabic *al-qānūn*) but if the original word ends in a short vowel, it cannot (e.g. **albún** [àlbún], never *[àlbû(:)n] ‘coffee’, cf. Arabic *al-bunn*). According to our instructor, a vowel is lengthened to add an ‘emphatic’ or ‘comparative’ sense, e.g. **pqishí** ‘good, not bad’ vs. **pqiishí** ‘(very) good, nice’, **dqáñí** ‘large’ vs. **dqááñí** ‘big, great’.

⁴ As shown in the following sub-sections, this ‘orthography’ is not a rigid one. For now, it seems that, apart from the basic spelling rules, the spelling apparently varies from person to person.

2.2 Consonant

The orthography of consonants is basically phonemic, although the etymological distinction of voiceless/voiced obstruents (**k** vs. **g**, **t** vs. **d**, **s** vs. **z**) in Arabic loanwords may not be regarded phonemic from a descriptive point of view⁵. It should be noted that Berta/Funj does not have (a) a phonemic voice contrast, (b) velar vs. palatal contrast before front vowels (/i/ and /e/) and has (c) five nonpulmonic consonants. Phonetic realization of voicing contrasts of non-glottalic obstruent consonants is unstable. Impressionistically, these obstruents tend to be voiced when surrounded by vowels or a vowel and a sonorant. In the main body of this study, the orthographical realization of these sounds is shown (i.e. It does not always represent the most likely phonetic realization). The list below demonstrates attested phonetic realizations with examples.

(1) a. Non-glottalic obstruent (no voiced vs. voiceless distinction)

b [b ~ p^(h)], e.g. **baalá** [bà:lá] ~ [pà:lá] ‘small’, **abbá** [àbbá] ~ [àppá] ‘daddy’,
mbá [m̀bá ~ m̀pá] ‘one (pronoun)’.

f [f], e.g. **fáálé** [fá:lé] ‘male’.

d [d ~ t^(h)], e.g. **dîrshí** [dî:rʃí] ~ [tî:rʃí] ‘sleep’.

t has the same value as **d** but is used to write etymological Arabic /t/,
e.g. **taláta** [tálá(:)tà] ~ [tálá(:)dà] ‘three’.

th [θ ~ ð], e.g. **hatháñ** [hàθáŋ] ~ [hàðáŋ] ‘we’.

z [z ~ s], e.g. **zí** [zí:] ~ [sí:] ‘exist’.

s has the same value as **z** but is used to write etymological Arabic /s/,
e.g. **hámsa** [hámsà] ~ [hámsà] ‘five’, **tísaqa** [tísàʔà] ~ [tízàʔà] ‘nine’.

j [ʃ ~ c^(h)], e.g. **Jáina** [jáinà] ~ [cáinà] ‘China’.

sh [ʃ], e.g. **musháñ** [mùʃáŋ] ‘girl, daughter’.

g [g ~ k^(h)], e.g. **gadi** [kàdì] ~ [gàdì] ‘child’; before front vowels (**i**, **e**) [g ~ k^(h) ~ ʃ ~ c^(h)], e.g. **geedí** [gè:dí] ~ [jè:dí] ~ [cè:dí] ‘children’.

k has the same value as **g** but used to write etymological /k/, e.g. **alkitáaba** [àlgidá:bà] ~ [àljidá:bà] ~ [àlkitá:bà] ‘book’.

h [h ~ x], e.g. **haltí** [hàldí] ~ [xàldí] ‘my maternal aunt’.

⁵ These etymological distinctions are often not correctly represented, eventually making the spellings of such loanwords unstable.

b. Sonorant

m [m], e.g. **maaba** [mà:bà] ‘man’, **alyóm** [àljô(:)m] ‘day’, **mbá** [m̀bá] ‘thing’.

n [n], e.g. **nañ** [nán] ‘what’, **albún** [àlbún] ‘coffee’, **ndú** [̀ndú] ‘mouth’.

ñ [ɲ], e.g. **añ** [àn] ‘place’, **ñgó** [̀ɲgó] ‘2sg’; before front vowels (**i**, **e**) [ɲ], e.g. **ñine** [̀ɲinè] ‘3sg’. Irregular spellings are found in: **Amariñá** [àmàrìɲ(ɲ)á] ‘Amharic’, **Alfúñ** [àlfúɲ] ‘Funj (Berta)’, **ndú Álfuuñú** [̀ndúlfù:ɲú] ‘Funj (Berta) language’.

r [r], e.g. **rô** [rô:] ‘rain’, **or** [òr] ‘cloth(es)’.

l [l], e.g. **lé** [lé] ‘also, too’, **pqimpqíl** [p’imp’íl] ‘bread’.

w [w], e.g. **wáané** [wá:né] ‘where’. Not written between /o, u/ and /a/ where its realization seems optional, e.g. **ñgóá?** [̀ɲgó(w)á] ‘[Is it] you (sg.)?’, **hathúá?** [hàðú(w)á] ‘[Is it] you (pl.)?’.

y [j], e.g. **thayú** [θà(:)jú] ‘in it’, **iyú** [̀ijú] ‘belly’. Not written between /i, e/ and /a/ where its realization seems optional, e.g. **ía** [íjá] ‘okay, yes’, **asséá?** [àsséjá] ‘really?’, **shainé** [ʃà(j)iné] ‘how’.

c. Glottalic

q [ʔ] (glottal stop), e.g. **eeqé** [è:ʔé] ‘no’, **alqustáz** [àlʔùstâs] ‘professor’. Only written word-medially.

pq [p’ ~ ɓ] (ejective ~ implosive), e.g. **pqiishí** [p’i:ʃí] ‘good’, **apqúmpqúñ** [àp’úmp’úɲ] ~ [àbúmbúɲ] ‘a type of Berta/Funj drum’.

tq [tʰ] (ejective), e.g. **tqokqoló** [tʰòk’òlò] ‘new’. Arabic [tʰ] are generally borrowed as **tq**, e.g. **atqáálib** ‘student’.

dq [d̪] (implosive), e.g. **dqááñí** [d̪á:ɲí] ‘big’.

sq [(t)sʰ] (ejective), e.g. **sqawarí** [(t)sʰàwàrí] ‘beautiful’.

kq [kʰ] (ejective), e.g. **kqóla** [kʰólà] ‘to bite, eat (hard food)’; before front vowels (**i**, **e**) [c’ ~ kʰ] e.g. **kqílíñ** [c’ílíɲ ~ kʰílíɲ] ‘all’. Arabic [ɣ] and [q] are generally borrowed as **kq**, e.g. **ashúkqul** [àʃfúk’ùl] ‘job’, **alkqanún** [àlk’ànûn] ‘law’.

Gemination of a consonant is mainly limited to (mainly from Arabic) loanwords such as including the assimilated form of the Arabic definite article *al-*, e.g. **addór** [àttôr] ‘week’, **assábit** [àssábìt] ‘Saturday’, which can be written without gemination (e.g. **adór**, **asábit**; they usually phonologically remain geminated). Gemination of a

consonant written with two graphemes, such as **sh** and **tq** are not written in the orthography, e.g. **ashúkqul** [àʃʃúk'ùl] 'job' and **atqáálib** [àt't'á:lib] 'student'.

Otherwise, a geminated sonorant is formed by assimilation (via vowel elision), e.g. **gímmáñ** 'something' (from **gíñ** 'thing' + **máñ** 'some'), **gíllé** 'this thing' (from **gíñ** 'thing' + **-lé** 'this'), **fírré** 'this water' (from **fírí-lé**), **-nné** 'this is, voici' probably from **-ñ** <focus marker> + **-lé** 'this'.

In parallel with the vowel lengthening, a consonant is geminated to add an emphatic flavor, e.g. **mílañ** ~ **míllañ** 'a lot', **kqílíñ** ~ **kqíllíñ** 'all'.

2.3 Syllable and tone

The orthography marks high (ˊ), low (no marking), and falling (ˋ) phonemic tones on vowels according to the phonetic realization. It appears, in the writings by Berta/Funji speakers, the word-final high vs. falling contrast is not distinguished, and such Arabic loanwords with word-final falling tone is most often written as high, e.g. **alkqanún** for [àlk'ànú(:)n] 'law' (and vice versa, **albún** for [àlbún] 'coffee'). A few morphemes have both high and falling realizations, but always written as high, e.g. **-lí** [lí] ~ [lí(:)] '1sg', **mín** [mín] ~ [mín] 'from', **walá** [wàlá] ~ [wàlá(:)] 'not', **uqúñ** [ùʔúñ] ~ [ùʔúñ] 'meat', etc. This study adopts the style preferred by the speaker (namely use of ˊ) but notes the phonological form when they are different. In any case, the high vs. falling distinction does not have a heavy functional load.

Although tone does not bear a heavy functional load to distinguish words, it has important grammatical functions. See the following examples to find the tonal contrast of the default (absolutive) form vs. 'marked nominative (NOM)' or 'modified (MOD)'.

- (2) **borid gaga maaba** (lion chased man) 'The lion chased the man.' [S-V-O]
borid gaga máába (lion chased man.NOM) 'The man chased the lion.' [O-V-S]
- (3) **maaba pqishí** (man good) 'The man is good.' [sentence]
maabá pqishí (man.MOD good) 'the good man' [noun phrase]

An underlyingly low syllable is realized high when it is surrounded by high tones, namely when preceded by a high tone and followed by a high/falling tone, e.g. **Nafíisa** (personal name) vs. **ammá Náfíisa** 'amma Nafisa (**ammá**: a title/address term for elder woman)' (see Andersen 1993). Hereafter this phenomenon is called 'tone leveling'. This phenomenon is an opaque one affected from both underlying and surface structures.

Word-initial syllabic nasals are phonetically realized as low (e.g. **ñgó** [ɲgó] ‘2sg’, **mbá** [ɱbá] ‘thing’, **ndu** [ɲdù] ‘mouth’; alternatively with an epenthetic vowel, e.g. **ñgó** [əɲgó] ~ [àɲgó]), except when it makes up a new syllable with a preceding high open syllable (e.g. **shainé ñgó** [ʃáinéɲgó] ‘how are you’, **mbá ndaló** [ɱbándaló] ‘whose one’). The only exception is the focus marker **m-** ~ **-ñ** (‘allegro’ variants of **ñinéñ** or **né**) which is always realized high (or adds a high tone to the preceding vowel).

Rising tone is not allowed in Berta/Funj (see Andersen 1993). When rising tone is expected as a result of word-boundary syllable repairing (resyllabification), the syllable is realized as high, e.g. **agudi** [àgùdì] ‘my brother’ + **mmaané** [m̀mà:né] ‘he is’ **agudí mmaané** [àgùdím̀mà:né] ‘He is my brother’ (not [àgùdím̀mà:né]).

When a vowel is elided, the tonal melody is generally retained, e.g. **ándí almadíiná** [ándílmàdí:ná] (neither [ándílmàdí:ná] nor [ándílmàdí:ná]) ‘which town’ (i.e. high + low → falling). However, the above principle is applied to a low + high tonal sequence, and the resulted syllable will have a high but not a rising tone, e.g. **ali álo** [àlá:lò] (not [àlá:lò]) ‘Here am I (= I’m fine as you see)’, **agudi-áthá** ~ **agudááthá** ‘my brothers’ (not **agudaáthá** [àgùdã:θá]) (see also Andersen 1993).

2.4 Case forms and basic word order

Berta/Funj typologically resembles Philippine-type languages in that the basic word order is determined according to information structure and both SVO and OVS orders are frequent. In a (non-deontic, non-subordinated) sentence, the verb is always placed in the second-initial position (V2) and the pre-verbal slot is obligatorily filled by a nominal topic (without marked) or focus (postpositionally marked by **ñinéñ**). The rest of the sentence constituents realize after the verb with a role-marking. The verbal and nominal forms are also subject to the word order. Some details with examples are to be introduced in later lessons (some to be found in part 2). See also Andersen (2017).

- (4) a. ‘**Absolutive**’ form (ABS, no marking): Citation form, pre-verbal noun (topic or focus), post-verbal object, host form of other case markers, etc. The preposition **thá/tha** plus an absolutive noun renders the instrumental meaning.
- b. ‘**Marked nominative**’ form (NOM, marked by tonal alternation): Post-verbal subject of both transitive and intransitive clauses. Before this form, the verb is (optionally) marked by the suffix **-lá** (see notes in Lesson 2).

- c. **‘Dative’** form (DAT, marked by the enclitic **-é** added to the end of the entire noun phrase): Post-verbal benefactor, recipient, purpose, etc. When no subject or object occurs after it, this enclitic (or postposition) alternates with the form **-éqí**. When the dative noun occurs pre-verbally, it takes the absolutive form and the verb is marked by the applicative suffix **-ga** (or **-galá**)⁶.
- d. **‘Genitive’** form (GEN, marked by the suffix **-ú** and/or tonal alternation): A noun modifying another noun (such as possessor or of association) takes this form. The preposition **thá/tha** plus the genitive form renders the locative meaning.
- e. **‘Modified’** form (MOD, marked by the suffix **-á** and/or tonal alternation): Any noun modified by a genitive noun, demonstrative, relative clause, etc. takes this form. The absolutive/nominative distinction appears to be neutralized when the noun is in the modified form.

- (5) a. **ndu** + **Alfúñ** → **ndú** **Álfuñ-ú**
 mouth(.ABS) Funj(.ABS) mouth.MOD Funj-GEN
 ‘mouth’ ‘Funj/Berta’ ‘Funj/Berta language’
- b. **ashúkqul** + **abúñó** → **ashúkqúlá** **ábuño**
 job(.ABS) your.father(.ABS) job.MOD your.father.GEN
 ‘job’ ‘your father’ ‘your father’s job’
- (6) a. **tha** **almádras-ú** ‘at the school’
 PREP school-GEN
- b. **thá** **hodía** ‘with a stick’
 PREP stick.ABS
- c. **tha** **alhakíim-ú-éqí** ‘to the doctor(’s)’
 PREP doctor-GEN-DAT
- (7) a. **atqáálib** **shapqúth-óó** **alqustáz** **tha** **almádras-ú.**
 student.ABS hit-PAST teacher.ABS PREP school-GEN
 ‘A student hit a teacher at the school.’
- b. **alqustáz** **shapqúth-óó** **átqaalib** **tha** **almádras-ú**
 teacher.ABS hit-PAST student.NOM PREP school-GEN
 ‘A student hit a teacher (or A teacher was hit by a student) at the school.’

⁶ Andersen (2017) gives the following alternation (transcription modified according to the orthography): **niñé kqith-a gadí-é or** (woman cut-PERF child-DAT cloth) = **gadí kqith-a-ga niñe or** (children cut-PERF-APPL woman.NOM cloth) ‘The woman cut the cloth for the child’

- c. **almádrasa shapqúth-óó átqaalib alqustáz thaayú.**
 school.ABS hit-PAST student.NOM teacher in.it
 ‘A student hit a teacher at the school. (At the school, a student hit a teacher)’

- (8) a. **náñ gi-ó alqustááz-é átqaalib?**
 what do-PAST teacher-DAT student.NOM
 ‘What did the student do to the teacher?’

- b. **náñ gi-ó átqaalib alqustááz-éqí?**
 what do-PAST student.NOM teacher-DAT
 ‘What did the student do to the teacher?’

2.5 Personal pronouns

Berta/Funj has at least seven series of personal pronouns according to grammatical relations in a sentence as summarized in Table 1 (based on SIL Ethiopia 2014: 245-262, with a few modifications). Berta/Funj has no gender or exclusive/inclusive contrast. In the orthography, some are written with the verb⁷.

Table 1. Personal pronouns

	(pre-V) indep.	subjunctiv e subject	(post-V) subject	(post-V) object	dative	genitive	genitive (for kinship terms)
1sg .	ali ~ al aa-V	áá-	V-lí [lí ~ lí:]	-gi	-ge	-ñkqo	sg. — pl. -áthá
2sg .	ñgó	ñgó V	V-ñó	ñgó	ñgó	-qa	sg. -ñó pl. -ñóathá
3sg .	ñine / Ø	(á)né V	V-né / Ø	-ne / Ø	né	-kqedq e	sg. -né pl. -néathá
1pl .	hatháñ	añ V	V-ña	hatháñ	hatháñ é	-ñkqa	sg. -ñkqa pl. -áthá
2pl .	hathú	háthú V	V-há V-thú V háthú	hathú	hathúé	-ñgáma	sg. -ñóñgama pl. -ñóathá
3pl .	maré	némaré V	V maré V-gú	maré -gú	maré -gú	-máre	sg. -némaré pl. -néathá

⁷ For the time being, their morphosyntactic status (affix or clitic) remains unclear.

‘**(Pre-Verbal) Independent Pronouns**’ are used either before the verb or in isolation. The contracted 1sg form **aa-** is only used before a verb. When there is not a (pro)noun in the pre-verbal slot, the sentence is interpreted to have a **zero** 3sg preverbal pronoun. This form cooccurs with prepositions and postpositions: **tha ali-le** ‘with me’, **alí-é(qí)** ‘to me, for me’, **ali-thi** ‘in me’, **mín ali-thi** ‘from me’, **thá hathaañ-ú** ‘among us’, **thá máré-yú** ‘among them’, etc.

‘**Subjunctive Subject Pronouns**’ are directly prefixed/pre-posed to the verb in the subjunctive mood (marked by the suffix **-a/-á**). E.g. **tqukqa áné thiña** (polenta 3SG.SBJV eat-SBJV) ‘He should eat polenta.’

‘**(Post-Verbal) Subject Pronouns**’ are directly suffixed to the verb (plus a TAM marker) and ‘**(Post-Verbal) Object Pronouns**’ are to the verb or the subject pronoun, and they function as subject/object pronouns (e.g. **maa-né** ‘he is’, **shapqúthóo-gi** ‘he hit me’). The morpheme **-gú** may rather be an obscure number marker that may appear both after a verb or a noun to indicate the plurality of the subject noun.

‘**Dative Pronouns**’ are suffixed either to the verb or the post-verbal subject/object pronoun. When the dative pronoun is not followed by a noun, it takes additional morpheme **-qí** (e.g. **-géqí** ‘to me’, **daa-géqí** ‘give me’).

‘**Genitive Pronouns**’ functions as possessive pronouns when they are encliticized to a noun (other than kinship terms for one’s born family) in the modified form, e.g. **shúli-qa** ‘your house’ (**shúli** ‘house’) and **attámána-kqedqe** ‘its price’ (**attáman** ‘price’). The genitive pronoun can be suffixed to a modifier (adjective, relative clause, etc.), e.g. **maabá ágarraañí-ñkqo** ‘my teacher’ (lit. ‘my man who teaches’, also paraphrased as **maabá ágarraañ-gi**, lit. ‘man who teaches me’, cf. **maabá ágarraañí** ‘teacher’ from **maaba** ‘man’ and **ágarraaña** ‘teach’).

‘**Genitive Pronouns for Kinship Terms**’ function in the similar way, but always used with a kinship term for the born family, such as ‘father’, ‘mother’, ‘brother’, ‘sister’, ‘grandfather’, and ‘grandmother’. The unmarked form represents 1sg ‘my’, e.g. **agudi** ‘my brother’ but **agudíño** ‘your brother’. Note however that ‘father’ and ‘mother’ have the suppletive 1sg form: **abbá** ‘my father’ vs. **abúño, abúné** ‘your father, his/her father’ and **ammá** ‘my mother’ vs. **didíño, didíné** ‘your mother, his/her mother’ (**abbá** and **ammá** are also used as terms of respectful address or title to elders).

Abbreviations

1, 2, 3	person	n.	noun
ABS	absolutive case	NOM	nominative case
adj.	adjective	nsuf.	nominal suffix
adv.	adverb	num.	numeral
APPL	applicative	PAST	past tense
Ar.	Arabic loanword	PERF	perfect tense-aspect
circp.	circumposition	phr.	phrase, consisting of more than two lexemes
DAT	dative case		
dem.	demonstrative (subtype of determiner)	pl./PL pron.	plural pronoun
det.	(other) determiner	ptcl.	particle
GEN	genitive case	SBJV	subjunctive
intj.	interjection	sg./SG	singular
intr.	interrogative word	vi.	intransitive verb
IPFV	imperfective aspect	vt.	transitive verb
MOD	modified form (noun)	vsuf.	verbal suffix

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Lesson 1 / Addárs dqukqúnúñ

Dialogue 1

- (1-1) - **Ñgó mín tha Addis Ábabayá?**
- Are you from Addis Ababa?
- **Eeqé, ali walá mín tha Addis Ábaba, ali mín tha Asóosa.**
- No, I am not from Addis Ababa, I am from Assosa.
- (1-2) - **Mín wáané ñgó? Mín thá Jaabbáaná?**
- Where are you from? From Japan?
- **Híñ, mín thá Jaabbán ñinéñ maalí.**
- Yes, I am from Japan.
- **Thá Jaabbán wáané añ?**
- Where in Japan?
- **Mín thá Tókió.**
- From Tokyo.
- (1-3) - **Ali maabá gárraaqí ñinéñ maalí. U ñgó?**
- I am a student. And you?
- **Lé ali atqáalib ñinéñ maalí.**
- I am also a student.
- (1-4) - **Ñgó maabá gárraaqí wala maabá shákqalí ñinéñ maañóá?**
- Are you a student or a worker?
- **Maabá shákqalí mmaalí.**
- I am a worker.
- (1-5) - **Maalésh, ñgó maabá thá Ítobia ñinéñ maañóá,
wala mbá tha Assuudaanú?**
- Excuse me, are you Ethiopian or Sudanese?
- **Maabá thá Ítobia ñinéñ maalí.**
- I am Ethiopian.

- (1-6) - **Lé ñgó mín thá Tókió ñinéñ maañóá?**
- Are you from Tokyo, too?
- **Eeqé, mín thá Ósáka.**
- No, from Osaka.
- (1-7) - **Lé ñine maabá gárraaqí ñinéñ maanéá?**
- Is he a student, too?
- **Walá maabá gárraaqí, maabá ágarraañí ñinéñ maané.**
- He is not a student; he is a teacher.
- (1-8) - **Assalám alékum, ańiné ñgó?**
- Hello, how are you?
- **Waalékum salám, ali álo.**
- Hello, I'm fine.
- **Ñine abbá mmaané. U ñine amamá mmaané.**
- He is my father. And she is my mother.
- **Ñgó ádôqí ma pqishíá? Márhab.**
- Have you arrived well? Welcome.
- **Íá, pqishí. Shúkran.**
- Yes, well. Thank you.
- (1-9) - **Húúñkqo Abdunnásir mmaané [àbdùnná:sìrímà:né].**
U mbáqa shíñ shainé maané?
- My name is Abdunnasir. And what is your name?
- **Húúñkqo Téijiró mmaané [téidzìrómà:né].**
- My name is Teijiro.
- (1-10) - **Ashúkqúlá ábuño náñ maané?**
- What is your father's job?
- **Alhakím mmaané [àlhàkí:mímmà:né].**
Ammá shíñ alqustáz mmaané [àl?ùstá:zímà:né].
- He is a doctor. And my mother is a teacher.

Vocabulary 1

(1-1)	thá / tha	prep.	at, in, with, etc. The allomorph tha occurs before low-toned a , e.g. tha Afríka ‘in Africa’, cf. thá Tókió ‘at Tokyo’. As a result of HLH → HHH tone leveling, nouns such as Itóbia ‘Ethiopia’ and Eríttria ‘Eritrea’ becomes thá Ítóbia ‘in Ethiopia’ and thá Éríttria ‘in Eritrea’.
	mín thá / tha	prep.	from (cf. Ar. <i>min</i> ‘from’)
	-á / -yá	ptcl.	<yes/no question marker> The allomorph -yá occurs before /a/, e.g. tha Adis Ábaba-yá ‘at Addis Ababa?’, cf. mín thá Jaabbáán-á? ‘from Japan?’, ñgóá ‘(Is it) you?’.
	eeqé [è:ʔé] ~ [è:ʔê]	intj.	no
	walá	ptcl.	<negative marker> (perhaps Ar.)
(1-2)	wááné	intr.	where
	mín wááné	intr.	from where (cf. Ar. <i>min</i> ‘from’)
	hííñ	intj.	yes
	ñinéñ, m- [ɪ́]	ptcl.	<focus marker> It does not seem to have the assertive ‘focal’ sense when it occurs in the copula sentence.
	ma / maa- [mà] ~ [mà:]	vi.	<copula> (‘be’)
	... ñinéñ maalí [mà:lí(:)] ~ [mà:lí]	phr.	I am
	añ	n.	place
(1-3)	maaba	n.	man, person
	gárra, gárraa-	vt.	read, study (Ar.)
	maabá gárraaqí	n.	student (lit. man who studies)
	u	conj.	and (Ar.)
	lé	adv.	also
	atqáálib [àt't'á:lib]	n.	student (Ar.)

(1-4)	wala	conj.	or (Ar.)
	shákqala	vi.	work (Ar.)
	maabá shákqalí	n.	worker (lit. man who works)
	... ñinéñ maañó	phr.	you are
	mmaalí [ɾm̀m̀à:lí(:)]	phr.	I am (= ñinéñ maalí)
(1-5)	maalésh [m̀à:lê(:)ʃ]	intj.	excuse me, pardon, sorry (Ar.)
	Ítobia [ít(j)ópìà]	n.	Ethiopia
	maabá thá / tha ...	phr.	person who is from ...
	maabá thá Ítobia	phr.	Ethiopian (person)
	mbá [m̀b̀á]	n.	<indefinite pronoun>
			This morpheme is always followed by some modifiers/determiners.
	Assuudán [àsù:dâ(:)n]	n.	Sudan (Ar; genitive: Ássuudaanú)
	maabá thá Ássuudaanú	phr.	Sudanese
(1-7)	... ñinéñ maané	phr.	(he/she/it) is
	ágarraaña	vt.	teach (caus. of gárra ‘read, study’)
	maabá ágarraañí	phr.	teacher (lit. man who teaches)
			The noun maaba ‘man’ (pl. maabí) is used as the head of agent nouns.
(1-8)	assalám alékum	phr.	peace be upon you, Islamic greeting (Ar.)
	[àsàlá(:)m àlé(:)kùm]		
	waalékum salám	phr.	peace be upon you, too (reply to above; Ar.)
	[wà(:)lé(:)kùm sàlá(:)m]		
	añiné, shainé	intr.	how
	álo	ptcl.	look, here at you (cf. -lo ‘this’)
			Presentative predicate, cf. ále ‘(look,) here is’ and áthí ‘(look,) there is’.
	ali álo [àli álò] ~ [àlá:lò]	phr.	I am fine. (lit. I am at you.)
	abbá	n.	my father
	ammá	n.	my mother
	mmaané [ɾm̀m̀à:né]	phr.	he/she/it is ... (= ñinéñ maané)

	adô	vt.	come
	ñgó ádôqí	phr.	you came
	ma	vi.	as, being (prepositional use of the copula)
	pqishi, pqiishi	vi.	good
	... pqishí (pqiishí)	phr.	... is good
	ma pqishí	adv.	well
	ía	intj.	yes, okay
	shúkran	intj.	thank you (Ar.)
(1-9)	hú, húú-	n.	name
	húúñkqo	phr.	my name
	mbáqa	phr.	yours
	shíñ	adv.	also, then
	sháiné	intr.	what (in ‘What is your name?’)
			‘What is your name?’ can be expressed in Berta/Funj as ‘What (náñ) is your name?’, ‘Who (ndá) is your name?’, ‘How (sháiné) is your name?’.
(1-10)	ashúkqul [ǎʃʃúk’ùl]	n.	job (Ar.)
	abúñó	n.	your father (GEN. ábuño)
	ashúkqúlá ábuño	phr.	your father’s job
	náñ	intr.	what
	alhakím [àlhàkî(:)m]	n.	doctor (Ar.)
	alqustáz [àlʔùstâ(:)z]	n.	teacher (Ar.)

Notes 1

a. Copula constructions

Berta/Funj has a copula **ma** (**maa-**) ‘be’. A copula sentence has two possible word orders, as shown with the equivalents of ‘X is Y’ (X, Y = noun (phrase)). The former construction is used when X represents the new information, while the latter one (with an appropriate post-verbal subject pronoun agreeing with X) is used when Y represents the new information. Hereafter the new information is shown in *italic*.

- (1-a) - X is Y.
- **X ma Y. (X = new information)**
- **X Y ñinéñ maa-né. or X Y mmaa-né. (Y = new information)**
(The post-verbal subject marker **-né** agrees with the subject as in the following case where **-lí** 'I' is used)
- (1-b) - I am the chief.
- **Ali ma agúr.**
- I am *a chief*.
- **(Ali) agúr ñinéñ maalí. or (Ali) agúr mmaalí [àgúrímà:lí].**
- (1-c) - Are you the doctor?
- **Ñgó ma addoktóóra? (addoktór [àddòktô(:)r] 'doctor')**
- Are you *a doctor*?
- **Addoktór ñinéñ maañóá?**
- (1-d) - Q. Who (= **ndá**) is the doctor?
- **Ndá ma addoktór?**
- A. It am *I*.
- **Ali ñinéñ maané.**
- Q. Who is the chief?
- **Ndá ma agúr?**
- A (1). *My father* is the chief.
- **Abbá ñinéñ ma agúr.**
- A (2). *Abba Mustafa* is the chief.
- **Abbá Mustqáfa mma agúr.**

When 'Y' is an interrogative word (e.g. **ndá** 'who', **shainé** 'how'), the focus marker is unnecessary (usually not used).

- (1-e) - Who is he?
- **Ndá maané?**
- What is your name?
- **Húúqa shainé maané?**
- Where are they from?
- **Mín wáané ma méré [mà:méré]?**

In some fixed expressions, **maa-** + **pronoun** can be omitted.

- (1-f) - How are you?
- **Añiné ñgó?**
- Who is this? (**mbálé** ‘this one’)
- **Ndá mbálé?**
- Q. Where are you from?
- **Ñgó mín wááné? / Mín wááné ñgó?**
- A. I am from Assosa.
- **Ali mín tha Asóósa.**

b. Pronoun *mbá* ‘one’

Mbá is a multifunctional light pronoun equivalent to English ‘one’, always followed by a determiner (such as genitive pronouns and demonstratives) or a modifier; it also functions as a relative clause marker.

- (1-g) **mbá-ñkqo** ‘mine’
mbá-qa ‘yours’
mbá-lé ‘this (one)’
mbá-ñgúnun ‘several things, something (pl.)’
mbá sqúllá Kamál ‘(the one) who is called Kamal’ (see Lesson 2)
maabá thá Jaabbán wala mbá thá Jáina ‘Japanese or Chinese (lit. Japanese person or Chinese one)’
maabá (mbá) áđôqí ‘the person who came’ (**adôqí** ‘came’)

Lesson 2 / Addárs holóñóniñ

Dialogue 2

- (2-1) - **Ndá maané?**
- Who is he?
- **Ñine ma maabá ágarrañiñkqo mbá sqúllá Kamál** [kàmâ(:)l].
- He is my teacher whose name is Kamal.
- (2-2) - **Náñ sqúllá húúkqedqe?**
- What is her name?
- **Ammá Náfiisa Áadam ñinéñ sqúlláne.**
- Her name is *amma* (Mrs.) Nafisa Adam.
- **Náñ maané?**
- What is she?
- **Maabá ágarraañi mmaané.**
- She is a teacher.
- (2-3) - **Náñ sqúlláne mbalé?**
- What is this called?
- **Buuñú ñinéñ sqúlláne.**
- It is called a hyena.
- (2-4) - **Náñ zúqí ma alfatqúr?**
- What do you have (literally ‘What is there’) for breakfast?
- **Arrakqíf u misqé húúhúlú ñinéñ zúqí.**
- There are bread and eggs.
- (2-5) - **Mín ándí almadíiná** [ándílmàdí:ná] **maañó?**
- Which city are you from?
- **Ali mín tha Addamazín** [àddàmàzî(:)n]. **U ñgó?**
- I am from Damazin. And you?
- **Mín tha Gúba.**
- I am from Guba.

- (2-6) - **Tha alfásílú maabí gárraaqí kámmu zííqí?**
- How many students are there in the class?
- **Geedí fáálé talatín u geedí míhílé ishirín ñinéñ holí.**
- There are 30 boys and 20 girls.
- (2-7) - **Geedí kámmu gídíñó?**
- How many children do you have?
- **Boñgóri holóñóníñ u musháñi taláta ñinéñ gídílí.**
- I have two sons and three daughters.
- (2-8) - **Kámmu attámánákqedqe?**
- How much is the price (lit. its price)?
- **Áshara riál.**
- 10 birrs.
- (2-9) - **Bábáñóathá u agudíñóathá kámmu gídíñó?**
- How many sisters and brothers do you have?
- **Ali gídi bábáthá táláta u agudááthá árbaqa.**
- I have three sisters and four brothers.
- **Há, gídíñó mílañ. Ñgó nimir kámmu maañó thá máréyú?**
- Oh you have many. Which sibling are you among them?
- **Nimir hámsa ñinéñ maalí thá máréyú.**
- I am the fifth among them.

Vocabulary 2

(2-1)	ndá	intr.	who
	mbá	pron.	<relative pronoun>
	squlá	vt.	call
	-lá	vsuf.	<sentence structure marker>
	sqúllá	phr.	is/am/are called, one calls
	mbá sqúllá	phr.	who is called
(2-2)	ammá	n.	my mother, Mrs.
	... ñinéñ sqúlláne	phr.	she/he/it is called ...

(2-3)	-lé	dem.	this (suffixed to a ‘modified’ noun form)
	mbále	pron.	this one
	buuñú	n.	hyena
(2-4)	zí	vi.	be, exist
	-qí	vsuf.	<sentence structure marker>
	ma	prep.	as, being (a prepositional use of the copula)
	alfatqúr [àlfât’û(:)r]	n.	breakfast (Ar.)
	arrakqíf [àrràk’î(:)f]	n.	loaf, bread (Ar.)
	misqé	n.	bird, fowl, chicken
	húúhúlú	n.	egg
	misqé húúhúlú	n.	chicken egg
(2-5)	ándí ...	intr.	which ... (followed by a modified form) e.g. ándí maabá ‘which man’
	almadína	n.	toun, city (Ar.)
(2-6)	alfásil	n.	class (Ar.)
	tha alfásilú	phr.	in the class
	-í	nsuf.	<plural marker>
	maabí	n.pl.	men, people (sg. maaba)
	maabí gárraaqí	phr.	students
	kámmu	intr.	how many, how much (perhaps Ar.)
	geedí	n.pl.	children (sg. gadi)
	fáálé	adj.pl.	male (sg. idelé)
	talatín [tálátí(:)n]	num.	thirty (Ar.)
	míhílé	adj.pl.	female (sg. niñelé)
	ishirín [îʃirí(:)n]	num.	twenty (Ar.)
	holi	vi.pl.	be, exist (plural subject)
(2-7)	gídi	vt.	have The form of subject marker depends on the word order (cf. X gídí-lí = ali gídi X).
	boñgóri	n.pl.	boy, son (sg. boñgór)
	holóñóníñ	num.	two
	musháñi	n.pl.	girl, daughter (sg. musháñ)
	taláta [tálá(:)tà]	num.	three (Ar.)

(2-8)	attáman	n.	price (Ar.)
	áshara	num.	ten (Ar.)
	riál [rijâ(:)l]	n.	<i>birr</i> (Ar.)
			Berta/Funj prefer Sudanese Arabic terms to Ethiopian equivalents. For example, as one Ethiopian birr almost equaled to the old Sudanese <i>riyal</i> (= now 0.1 Sudanese <i>pound</i>), one birr is called ‘one riyal’ and ten <i>birr</i> is called ‘one <i>pound</i> (jiné [jinê(:)])’.
(2-9)	bába-	n.	sister
			Always marked by the genitive pronoun for kinship terms (e.g. -ñóathá ‘your ...-s’) in which the grammatical number is encoded.
	agudi-	n.	brother (same as above)
	agudiáthá ~ agudááthá	phr.	my brothers
	árbaqa	num.	four (Ar.)
	há [há:]	intj.	oh
	mílañ, míllañ	adv.	a lot, much, many.
	nimir ...	phr.	number ..., -th (Ar.)
	thá ...-yú	circp.	within, among, inside (-yú from iyú ‘belly’)
	thá máréyú	phr.	among them
	[máréjjú] ~ [máré:jú]		
	hámsa	num.	five (Ar.)

Notes 2

a. TAM markers

The tense-aspect-modality of a verb is marked with a verbal suffix, such as **-óó/-ó** <past, PAST>, **-a/-á** <perfect, PERF>, **-a/-á** (different from ‘perfect’) <subjunctive, SBJV> and **-i/-í/-Ø**, which has the <imperfective, IPFV> (present, future, progressive, stative, etc.) function. In this study, stative verbs are listed with **-i/-í/-Ø** and active verbs are listed with the perfect **-a/-á**.

Details will be introduced with examples in later lessons in the next part.

b. Verbal suffix -lá

The word order (of the main clauses) in Berta/Funj is determined on information structure (and modality). The verb occupies the second position in the sentence and it is preceded by a topic (or a focus, see below), which represents *old information* in the sentence, while other sentence constituents follows the verb.

When a subject noun (nominative form) follows it, the verb can be marked by the suffix **-lá**, which encodes that *no subject occurs before the verb*. The use of this marker is optional when the verb is followed by a noun in ‘marked nominative’ form, but it is necessary when not (i.e. when it lacks a subject to convey the impersonal/passive sense, or when it is followed by a noun which lack the marked nominative form, such as proper nouns).

(2-a) - The student hit a/the teacher. (**atqáálib** ‘student’, **alqustáz** ‘teacher’)

- **atqáálib shapqúthóó alqustáz.**

- A/the student hit the teacher. / The teacher was hit by a/the student.

- **alqustáz shapqúthóó(lá) átqaalib.**

(2-b) - Hasan hit *Ali*. (Hasan = topic / old information)

- **Hásan shapqúthóó Áli.**

- *Hasan* hit *Ali*. / *Ali* was hit by *Hasan*. (*Ali* = topic / old information)

- **Áli shapqúthóólá Hásan.**

(2-c) - Hasan was hit. (**shapqúth-óó** ‘hit’)

- **Hásan shapqúthóó-lá.**

- What are you called? (**sqúllá** from **squl-í-lá** ‘is called’)

- **Náñ sqúllá ñgó?**

c. Verbal suffix -qí

In contrast to **-lá**, the suffix **-qí** encodes that *no subject or object occurs after the verb*. This suffix are fused with the TAM marker and the non-past **-i/-í/-Ø** plus **-qí** always becomes **-í**, such as in **pishí** (not **pish-i-qí**) ‘... is/are good’, **holí** (not **hol-i-qí**) ‘there are ...’ and **shákalí** (not **shákqal-i-qí**) ‘... work(s)’.

(2-d) - Q. Where are you?

- **Wáané zííńó?**

- A. I am at home.

- **Ali zííqí thaayú.**

(2-e) - Hasan hit.

- **Hásan shapqúthóóqí.**

- Arsenal is strong (**bádqí** ‘strong’).

- **Arsenál bádqíqí.**

(2-f) - We work on Friday. (**yoom ajjúma** ‘Friday’)

- **Yoom ajjúma shákqaliña / Yoom ajjúma hatháñ shákqalí.**

- I am well. (**busqikqe** ‘body’)

- **Busqikqéñkqo pqiishí.** (lit. My body is well.)

- **Ali pqiishi búsqikqe.** (lit. As for me, the body is well.)

d. Forcus marker *ñinéñ*

Focused noun new information, such as an answer to the content-interrogative word (‘what’, ‘who’, ‘where’, etc.) is marked by a postpositional particle **ñinéñ** (or **né** or **-ñ**) and placed before the verb. This particle is also used when the whole sentence is focused (as an answer to ‘What happened?’), but not when the verb is focused (as an answer to ‘What did X do?’).

(2-g) - Q. Who hit the teacher? (**ndá** ‘who’)

- **Ndá shápqúthóó alqustáz?**

- A. *The student* hit the teacher. / It is *the student* who hit the teacher.

- **Atqáálib ñinéñ shápqúthóó alqustáz.**

- Q. What happened? (lit. What is there?)

- **Náñ zíqí?**

- A. *The student hit the teacher.* (sentence = focus)

- **Atqáálib ñinéñ shápqúthóó alqustáz.**

- Q. What did the student do (to the teacher)?

- **Náñ gió átqaalib (alqustáázéqí)?**

- A. The student *hit* the teacher.

- **Atqáálib shapqúthóó alqustáz.**

- (2-h) - Q. What is the person called? (i.e. What is this person's name?)
- **Náñ sqúllá maabáλέ?**
- A. She is called *amma* Nafisa.
- **Ammá Náñísa ñinéñ sqúlláne.**
- Q. What are you called? (i.e. What is your name?)
- **Náñ sqúllá ñgó?**
- A. I am called Ali.
- **Áli ñinéñ sqúllági.**
- Q. Where is your father?
- **Wááne zí ábuño?**
- A. My father is *at home*. (lit. It is in the house that my father is.)
- **Thaayú ñinéñ zílá abbá. / Abbá thaayú ñinéñ zíné.**
- My father is at home. (without focusing)
- **Abbá zíqí thaayú.**

Lesson 3 / Addárs talááta

Dialogue 3

(3-1) - **Anqíznaak, shúlí mbá ájjawaabú ithigi aañi tháléa?**

- Excuse me, is there a post office near here?

- **Hííñ, ithigi shúlí dqááñíthíqi.**

- Yes, it is near that big building.

(3-2) - **Hássa thalé maabí gárraaqí kámmu holí?**

- How many students are here now?

- **Maabí gárraaqí holí na míhíle sítta u na fáále sábaqa.**

- There are six female and seven male students.

(3-3) - **Albún zíqíá?**

- Do you have coffee?

- **Hííñ, albún zíqí, lakín assúkkar ñinéñ shaarí.**

- Yes, we have, but we don't have sugar.

(3-4) - **Nafíisa, wáané zí dídiño?**

- Nafisa, where is your mother?

- **Thaayú ñinéñ zíné.**

- She is in the house.

(3-5) - **Shúlí algrayóñgáma thoñór wáané maané?**

- Where (in which area) is your school?

- **Thoñór thá Góndíl, mín thalé ithigi aañi.**

- In the Gondil area, close to here.

(3-6) - **Ábbo, abúño u didiño wáané holi mارة shókqóñ?**

- Abbo, where is your father and mother now?

- **Shókqóñ tha assúúgú ñinéñ holi mارة, yáába.**

- Now they are in the market, Mr.

Vocabulary 3

(3-1)	anqíznak [ànʔíznàk]	intj.	excuse me, pardon me (Ar.)
	shúli	n.	house (MOD. shúlí ~ shúl)
	ajjawáb [àjjàwâ(:)b]	n.	letter (correspondence, Ar.)
	shúlí mbá ájjawaabú	n.	post office
	ithigi ...-qi	vi.	be (exist) near ... -qi (allomorph: -i) is a (perhaps reflexive) particle which is often found as a fixed argument of a collocational verb.
	añ	n.	place
	ithigi aañi	phr.	... is close, near e.g. Hatháñ ithigi aañi thále. / Thále ñinēñ ithigiña aañi. ‘We are close here.’
	thále	adv.	here
	dqááni, dqáni	vi.	big, large
	-thí	dem.	that
(3-2)	hássa	adv.	now (Ar.)
	na	prep.	(no English equivalent) Somewhat similar to ‘in’ in ‘be shot in the head’, ‘of’ in ‘deprive him of money’, etc.
	sítta	num.	six (Ar.)
	sábaqa	num.	seven (Ar.)
(3-3)	albún	n.	coffee (Ar.)
	assúkkar	n.	sugar (Ar.)
	shaari	vi.	unexist, lack, there is no
(3-4)	didíño	n.	your mother (NOM. dídíño)
	thaayú	adv.	at home Often written thayú.
(3-5)	algiráya	n.	study, schooling (Ar., GEN. algirayó)
	shúlí algirayó	n.	school
	thoñor	n.	road, area (MOD. thoñór)

(3-6)	abúñó	n.	your father
	shókqóñ	adv.	now
	assúg [àssû(:)g]	n.	market (Ar.)
	yáába	n.	Mr. (address to an elder man, Ar.)

Notes 3

a. Arabic loanwords and numerals

Mayu dialect of Berta/Funj has many loanwords from Arabic due to its long-standing contact with Arabic. It seems that Benishangul Arabic words are almost freely borrowed and even code-switching (switching of languages within a single utterance) is common. As such, there are many synonyms, e.g. **maabá ágarraañí** ('man who teaches') vs. **alqustáz** (Ar.) 'teacher', **shókqóñ** vs. **hássa** (Ar.) 'now', **abbá** vs. **yáába** 'Mr. (address term for elders)'. Arabic nouns are usually borrowed with the definite article (*al-*).

As for cardinal numerals, all but '1' and '2' are Arabic loanwords. When they modify a noun, numerals generally are postposed. However, some expressions prefer the Arabic word order, i.e. numeral-noun.

(3-a)	1	dqukqúnúñ	11	hidáshar	10	áshara
	2	holóñóníñ	12	itnáshar	20	ishirín [ɪʃiri(:)n]
	3	talá(á)ta	13	talattáshar	30	talatín [tâlâtî(:)n]
	4	arbaqa	14	arbatáshar	40	arbaqín [àrbàʔî(:)n]
	5	hámsa	15	hamistáshar	50	hamsín [hàmsî(:)n]
	6	sítta	16	sittáshar	60	sittín [sittî(:)n]
	7	sábaqa	17	sabaqatáshar	70	sabaqín [sàbàʔî(:)n]
	8	tamánia	18	tamantáshar	80	tamanín [tàmànî(:)n]
	9	tísaqa	19	tisaqatáshar	90	tisaqín [tìsàʔî(:)n]

- (3-c) **musháñi taláta** 'three girls'
jiné dqukqúnúñ 'ten birr' (lit. 'one Sudanese pound')
áshara riál 'ten birr' (Arabic word order)
taláta yôm 'three days' (Arabic word order)

b. Modifiers and determiners

When a noun is modified by a numeral (cardinal or ordinal) or a very few adjectives (e.g. **baalá** ‘small’), the form of the noun does not change. When modified by another type of modifiers, the noun takes the ‘modified form’ (usually marked by -á or the word-final high tone, such as **alkubá(á)yá** from **alkubá(á)ya** ‘cup’, **albúná** from **albún** ‘coffee’, and **thoñór** from **thoñor** ‘road, area’).

- (3-d) **alkubááya baalá** ‘a/the small cup’
alkubááya alqáwal ‘the first cup’
alkubááya dqukqúnúñ ‘one cup’
- (3-e) **alkubááyá tqokqoló** ‘a/the new cup’ (adjective)
alkubááyá pqiishí ‘a/the good cup’
alkubááyá lé ‘this cup’
alkubaayáñkqo ‘my cup’

Berta/Funj has a three-term demonstrative system whose determiner/attributive forms are suffixed to the noun or the modifier after the noun. The medial form is used for someone/something closer to the addressee, while the distal form is for someone/something far from both the addresser and the addressee. The plural forms are formed by adding the plural marker **-gú**, **-légú** ‘these’, **-logú** ‘those’, **-thígú** ‘those’, such as in **alkitáábálégú** ‘these books’.

- | | | | |
|-------|--------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| (3-f) | determiner | pronoun | |
| | -lé ‘this’ | mbále ‘this, this one’ | proximal demonstrative |
| | -lo ‘that’ | mbálo ‘that, that one’ | medial demonstrative |
| | -thí ‘that’ | mbáthí ‘that one’ | distal demonstrative |

- (3-g) **alkubááyá dqááñí-lo** ‘that large cup’
musháñá sqawarí-thí ‘that beautiful girl’

Lesson 4 / Addárs árbaqa

Dialogue 4

- (4-1) - **Gíllé tha ndú Álfuuñú nãñ sqúlláne?**
- What does this called in Berta/Funj?
- **Assabbúúra ñinéñ sqúlláne.**
- It is called *assabbuura* ('blackboard').
- (4-2) - **Shúlíqa dqááñiá?**
- Is your house big?
- **Eeqé, dqúguri míllañ.**
- No, it is very small.
- (4-3) - **Almadíiná tha Asóosa dqáñiá?**
- Is Assosa town large?
- **Hííñ, tha alqikqlímá thá Benishangúl [bènjfàŋgûl]-Gúmúzú, almadíiná dqááñi mìn thá máréyú kqílíñ.**
- Yes, in the Benishangul-Gumuz Region, the town is the biggest.
- (4-4) - **Ñine alhakíimá pqiishí ñinéñ maanéá?**
- Is he a good doctor?
- **Hííñ, alhakíimá pqiishí míllañ ñinéñ maané.**
- Yes, he is a very good doctor.
- (4-5) - **Addukkááná pqiishí u (mbá) dqodqoñondiñi wáané holi méré?**
- Where are good and large shops?
- **Thá Suug Assábítú ñinéñ holi méré.**
- They are in the Saturday market.
- (4-6) - **Maabá lé ndá maané? Didíñóá?**
- Who is that person? Your mother?
- **Eeqé, haltí ñinéñ maané.**
- No, she is my (maternal) aunt.

- (4-7) - **Alkitáábálégú mbá ndaló ma máré** [mà:máré]?
- Whose are these books?
- **Dqukqúnúñ mbáñkqo ñinéñ maané.**
 Lakín mbáñgúnuñ mbá Halímá ñinéñ maané.
- One of them is mine. But the others are Halima's.
- (4-8) - **Tha alfásílú thálé boñgóri u musháñi kámmu holí?**
- How many boys and girls are there in the class?
- **Bongóri ishirín u musháñi ásharáñ holí.**
- There are twenty boys and ten girls.
- (4-9) - **Ábdu, agudíñoóathá u bábáñoóathá kámmu gídíño?**
- Abdu, how many brothers and sisters do you have?
- **Ali gídi bábááthá hólóñoñíñ, lakín walá ali gídi agudi. U ñgó, Hálíma?**
- I have two sisters, but I have no brother. And you, Halima?
- **Walá ali gídi agudi wala bába.**
- I have no brother or sister.
- (4-10) - **Marulé mbá ndaló maané? Mbáqayá, Hálíma?**
- Whose is this cat? Is it yours, Halima?
- **Walá mbáñkqo ñinéñ maané. Mbá áhaapquñkqó mmaané.**
- It is not mine. It is my friend's.
- (4-11) - **Náñ ma shúli dqááñíthí?**
- What is that big building?
- **Albánká dqááñí madi hú mbá Álqitobíonno.**
- That is the National Bank of Ethiopia
 (lit. the main bank whose name is 'Ethiopia's').
- (4-12) - **Musháñá sqawaríthí ndá maané?**
- Who is that beautiful girl?
- **Ándí musháñá sqawaríthí? Mbá squriñi wala mbá dqúguri?**
- Which do you mean is 'that beautiful girl'? (lit. Which 'that beautiful girl'?)
 The tall one or the short one?
- **Mbá dqúguri.**
- The short one.
- **Ñine bábá mmaané. Shúkran.**
- She is my sister. Thank you.

Vocabulary 4

(4-1)	gĩñ	n.	thing
	gĩllé	phr.	this one
	ndu	n.	mouth, language (MOD. ndú)
	Alfúñ	n.	Berta/Funj (Ar.)
	ndú Álfuuñú [ɲdúlfù:ɲú]	phr.	Berta/Funj language
	assabbúúra	n.	blackboard (Ar.)
(4-2)	dqúguri	vi.	small, short
(4-3)	almadíina	n.	town, city (Ar.; MOD. almadíiná)
	alqikqlím [àlʔik'lí(:)m]	n.	region (Ar.) Cf. the term <i>'iqḷīm</i> , the Sudanese equivalent to Amharic <i>kəlləl</i> .
	kqílíñ, kqíllíñ	adv.	all
(4-5)	addukkán	n.	shop, store (Ar.)
	dqo(dqo)ñondiñi	vi.pl.	large (sg. dqááñi)
	Suug Assábit	n.	Saturday Market (Ar.) Assosa has three open market squares called Monday, Friday and Saturday Markets after the market day. Saturday Market is the largest one and opened on Saturday and Wednesday.
(4-6)	maabále	phr.	that person
	haltí	n.	my maternal aunt (Ar.) cf. haltíño 'your maternal aunt'
(4-7)	alkitáába	n.	book (Ar.)
	-gú	nsuf.	<plural marker>
	-légú	dem.	these
	ndaló	intr.	whose
	dqukqúnúñ	num.	one
	-ñgúnuñ	det.pl.	some, other (sg. mánáñ)

(4-8)	-ñ	ptcl.	<focus marker> = ñinéñ I.e. ásharáñ = áshara ñinéñ
(4-10)	ahaapqu áhaapquñkqó	n. phr.	friend of my friend (GEN. of ahaapquñkqo)
(4-11)	albánka madi madi hú mbá Álqitobió -nno	n. vt. phr. phr. ptcl.	bank (Ar.) know be known (as) Ethiopia's, Ethiopian that is, it is (presentative)
(4-12)	sqawari squriñi	vi. vi.	beautiful tall, long

Notes 4

a. The 'allegro' form of the focus particle

The focus marker **ñinéñ** is reduced to a nasal consonant in 'allegro' form, which is written as **m-** before the copula **ma / maa-** (i.e. **mma, mmaa-**) but elsewhere it is written as **-ñ** and attached to the preceding morpheme. There is also the form **né**, which seems to be an archaic form. When **-ñ** or **m-** is preceded by a consonant, the epenthetic vowel **í** is inserted.

- (4-a) - It is a goat (**mia** 'goat').
 - **Mia ñinéñ maané. / Miá mmaané. / Mia né maané.**
 - I ate *polenta* (**tqukqa** 'polenta, dough-like porridge', **thiñ-óó** 'ate').
 - **Tqukqa ñinéñ thiñóólí. / Tqukqañ thiñóólí. / Tqukqa né thiñóólí.**
- (4-b) - I am the chief.
 - **Agúr mmaalí** [àgúrímà:lí].
 - The student hit the teacher.
 - **Atqáálibiñ shápqúthóó alqustáz.**

b. Predicative demonstrative

Berta/Funj has a set of identificational predicative demonstratives, **-nné** ‘this is’, **-nno** ‘that (medial) is’ and **-nthí** ‘that (distal) is’, which contrast with presentative predicative demonstratives (**ále** ‘look, here is’, **álo** ‘look, (t)here at you is’, **áthí** ‘look over there, there is’, as in **ali álo** ‘I am here at you’, introduced in Lesson 1). These make up a sentence with a noun although they are written as one word. The identificational predicative demonstratives function seemingly as a sort of sentence focus marker when attached to the end of a sentence.

(4-c) **Mbáñkqónno.** ‘That is mine.’

Mbáñkqónné. ‘This is mine.’

Mbáñkqónnéá? ‘Is this mine?’

Walá mbáñkqónné. ‘This is not mine.’

(4-d) - Are there any news? (lit. What, which is new, exists?, **tqokqoló** ‘new’)

- **Náñ zíqí mbá tqokqoló?**

- Ali came.

- **Áli adôqínné.**

c. Plural marking

Berta/Funj has a complex system of number marking. Pronouns and demonstratives have plural forms. A few nouns, adjectives and verbs have the special plural form while others do not. The commonest plural suffix for nouns is **-í** but it is not very productive. Arabic plural forms (e.g. **atqáálib** ‘student’ vs. **atálaba** [àt’t’álàbà] ‘students’) are also freely used. Associative plural is formed by **-áthá**, such as **Álíáthá** ‘Ali and his people’ and **ndálátha** ‘who (pl.)’ (cf. **ndá** ‘who’).

(4-e)	singular	plural	
	maaba	maabí	‘man, person’
	gadi	geedí	‘child’
	musháñ	musháñi	‘girl, daughter’
	niñé	míhi	‘woman’
	idelé	fáálé	‘male’
	niñelé	míhílé	‘female’
	dááñi	dqoñondiñi	‘large’
	zí	holi	‘exist’
	ada	záá	‘go’

The plurality is shown at least once in a sentence, but it is not necessary to make the plurality agreement.

- (4-f) - How many students are there in the class?
- **Tha alfásílú maabí gárraaqí kámmu zíqí / holí?**
- We are *here*.
- **Thále ñinéñ zíña / holiña.**
- Who (pl.) are going (**záá** ‘go (pl.)’)?
- **Ndá zááqí? / Ndáláthá zááqí?**

In addition, there is an obscure plural marker (an enclitic) **-gú** which can appear in various post-verbal positions of the sentence (even after the object noun) to indicate the plurality of a noun in the sentence.

- (4-g) - those large cups
- **alkubáya dqoñondí-lo-gú**
- inside those large cups (**tha ...-yú** ‘inside’)
- **tha alkubáya dqoñondílo-gú-yú / tha alkubáya dqoñondílo-yú-gú**
- (4-h) - The students beat the teacher (**fió** ‘beat (PAST)’).
- **Atqálaba foó alqustáz-gú.**
- Chinese people eat pork (**kqóli** ‘bite, eat (something hard)’).
- **Maabí thá Jáina kqóli húthúru-gú.**