

P A R T III: S Y N T A X

Syntax is concerned with the order of words in a sentence. Two parts of a sentence have to be considered separately in Sonsorol, the phrase and the clause. A phrase is "a small group of words expressing a single notion, or entering with some degree of unity into the structure of the sentence" (Oxford English Dictionary); a clause is that part of a sentence which contains a subject and a predicate, i.e. involves a finite verb. In Sonsorol, rules of arrangement exist which apply differently to phrases and clauses. The clause is built of phrases, and the order of words depends on the elements of the phrase, and the combinations of phrases into sentences is also governed by rules.

A. PHRASES

A phrase, as defined above, may be either nominal or verbal, i.e. its nucleus may be a noun or noun-functioning word or word-group, or it may be a verb. The following subdivisions of phrase syntax are distinguishable:

- (a) Noun Phrases:
 - i. A descriptive phrase
 - ii. Conjoined phrases
 - iii. Adverbial coefficients
- (b) Verb Phrases:
 - i. Verbal particles
 - ii. Verbal adjuncts

In general, the Sonsorol sentence resembles the English sentence, except that certain elements are differently placed in the two languages. Moreover, there is no change of word order in asking a question, as there is in English; the

conjunction xale (T. xaye) is put at the beginning of the question, and the word order remains that of the statement, e.g.

xale xo bwe bwito n'imwei? I bwe bwito n'imom

Are you coming to my place? I am coming to your place
In each instance word-order is the same in the Sonsorol sentence but not in the English. There is a strong preference for coordinated as against subordinated clauses in Sonsorol, as in colloquial English, in contrast with literary English.

(a) Noun Phrases

By noun phrases is intended a phrase which does not contain a verb, but whose nucleus is a noun or noun-substitute. The principle is that a qualifying word precedes that which it qualifies.

1. Descriptive Phrases

The descriptive or adjective-functioning words precede the noun they qualify. There are certain exceptions to this statement, which will be mentioned below. So the pure adjective-functioning word precedes the noun: te'rappari maru, a big man; favadi fado, four bananas; livadi fadi, two stones; rumei sara, my drinking water; jai xapiteki, my goods. Suffixed pronouns, of course, follow the noun to which they are suffixed, but they then form one compound noun, and the word which requires a suffixed pronoun cannot as a rule be used without it. The agentive particle lei functions as a descriptive and so precedes the word to which it refers, in order to define ahead the grammatical function of that word: lei tatarai¹, evil-doers.

As against this, however, most adjective-functioning words link with the noun only by means of a verbal particle, i.e. by actually functioning grammatically as verbs, although logically functioning as descriptives or adjectives. Thus while one says 'yappari peig, a little pig, one says peig e ru'sorus, a red (=brown) pig. In such a sentence as i mwasa'ri: de_u peig e ru'sorus, I want a brown pig, it is possible to analyse the Sonsorol sentence as "I want a pig - it is brown", i.e. the one I want is brown. Most "adjectives" are thus verbalised, and only a few such as te'rappari, big, and 'yappari, small, are used descriptively before the noun. So the construction is, e.g. xo bwe yannejei pepa 'e mma_{yo}, give me a good book, where not only is the "adjective" ('good') verbalised, but the stress falls in speaking on the verbal particle. If the noun is definite, the demonstrative, such as ra, is placed after the noun and before the adjective-functioning phrase: yannejei pepa ra 'e mma_{yo}, give me the good book; i 'bwe ra mweale rai ra e ya me'taki, I am going to see my sick child. These phenomena are not uncommon in the languages of Melanesia. On this basis it is not possible to distinguish except contextually between "the pig is large" and "the large pig".

The exceptional use, as shown in the last example, is that of the demonstrative, which follows the word which it qualifies, e.g. xo bwe lawa i:g ei, cook these fish. Examples will be found s.v. demonstratives, pp.29-32.

Noun-functioning words exist in Sonsorol which belong to other categories in English. Thus pipi-as, all

of us, is lit. our-all, in which the root in Sonsorol is a noun, not an adjective. Many of the compounding prepositions already listed are syntactically to be placed here, as i bwito me wao ri imwei, 'I came from the top of my house'. The phrase me wao ri functions as a compound preposition, but wao itself is really a noun.

ii. Conjoined Phrases

This title refers to words or phrases linked by "and", and the sub-group is necessary because the translation of "and" differs according as noun (phrases) or verb (phrases) are being joined. The conjunction with nouns and noun-phrases is ma, e.g. maru ma fäivi, man and woman; uvei ma jai mane, my clothes and my money; riweisⁱ maru ma riweisⁱ fäivir, boy and girl; te'rayyari maru ma 'yappari riweisⁱ maru, a big man and a little boy. As ma also means "for", the context has to decide which meaning is required, but ambiguity in such circumstances is rarely possible.

iii. Adverbial Coefficients

Adverbial coefficients are words which are used to modify adjective-functioning words, e.g. very, much, truly, a little. In Sonsorol these follow the word or phrase qualified: 'e mmayo dewwa, (it is) very good; ie yannejei pepa 'e mmayo dewwa, 'he gave me a very good book; e da fatare raxo tæ:t^a saku, he was walking all by himself; e tai mmayo faia, it is not very good; e bwe mire demaru ŋa e tai mmayo faia, he lives one and it is not very good, e.g. it is a bad thing to live alone.

Thus in a complete noun-phrase the order of elements is:

definitive + noun + demonstrative + adj. funct. wd. + adv. coef.

jai	xapiteki	ra	'e mma _y o	faia
my	article	that	it-is-good	extremely

= my very fine article.

(b) Verb Phrases

A verb phrase is one which is built round a verb. This may involve particles placed before the verb or the adverbs added after the verb. The position of the verb itself in the sentence is a matter of the syntax of the clause, not of the phrase. There are therefore two sub-sections here:

i. verbal particles

ii. verbal adjuncts

i. Verbal Particles precede the verb. These are temporal and modal particles, and they have been fully dealt with in Part II. Their position cannot change. It should be noticed, however, that the verb "to be" of English sentences has frequently to be omitted in Sonsorol. The negative tao, tei, functions as a verbal particle and so it also precedes the verb (p.46). The same applies to a certain group of adverbial adjuncts which appear to be really verbs in nature, e.g. ra, 'again', is the verb 'to go', but if it is desired to express, e.g. 'I shall see you again', the phrase is i bwe ra yaneyo, with some stress on bwe as well as on the main verb; so, too, i bwe ra fitekⁱ, I'll do it again; di da welifanani, we'll meet again; xo towai bwe ra bwito, 'don't come again'. It is also possible to use para, but this similarly precedes, though the reason in this case is not apparent. Normally, however, such adverbial adjuncts follow the verb.

ii. Verbal Adjuncts, like the adjuncts in noun phrases, are adverbs in European reckoning, but they include words that in European reckoning are nouns. Thus, just as "go quickly" is a verbal-adjunct phrase, so is "go to Sonsorol", although in European reckoning "quickly" is an adverb and "to Sonsorol" is not. Place names follow a verb of motion immediately and without a preposition, as *i bwe ra Doṇosaru*, I'm going to Sonsorol; *xere me it~~u~~ xau bwe ra Toṇovei*? with whom are you going to Tobī? Other adverbs of place are exactly similar in use: *e mire i ya'rai*, it is over there. The interrogative adverb follows the verb as though it were a noun of place (as it actually is): *xo mir' i:a*? where do you live? exactly answering to *i mire i'ya*, I live here. Words of time are similar: *i bwito yotojet*, I came at noon; and the interrogative, *xo bwe bwito wa'ṇaet*? when will you come? or *xo bwito i'ṇaet*? when did you come? These phrases are treated as units, not as individual words, and the word-order does not vary as between statement and question, as shown in the case of the simple interrogative sentences on p.78 or pp.32-3. Even if the expressions depending on the verb is complex, the same rule holds good: *xau bwito ifi ri fitouw krok*? at what time did you come? lit. you came upon how-many clock? Very occasionally the English word-order of interrogative first is permitted, as in *wanaet xo da bwito mata ri imwei*? when are you coming to my house? Here the balance of the phrase decides the issue, but strictly it should still be *wanaet me*, using the ligative particle me which is treated below.

B. CLAUSES

Sentences in Sonsorol may be (1) simple, (2) compound, (3) complex. Simple sentences consist of one clause, compound sentences of clauses joined by coordinating conjunctions, and complex sentences of clauses joined by subordinating conjunctions.

1. The Simple Sentence

Word-order in the simple sentence is normally the same as in English: subject-predicate, or subject-verb-object. Each part of the sentence may be extended by means of its appropriate adjuncts, which are placed as already described above. In a sentence whose verb is intransitive, the order is thus:

Subject	Predicate
jālimat <u>e</u> bwito	the man came
riweis <u>e</u> madil	the child is asleep

If the verb is transitive, the order is:

Subject	Predicate	Object
jālimat <u>e</u> γanojo	raura	the man sees his child
i γasausa	i:g	I ate the fish

In a number of instances, however, the verb precedes the subject, but only if the subject is a noun, not a pronoun:

<u>e</u> mire i:a jamu pigipigi?	where is your ball?
<u>e</u> γa net u kubwara	his foot is swollen
<u>e</u> γa me taki ubwar	he has a pain in his stomach
<u>e</u> jayaxalawlaw a i:g ^e ra	the fish is blue
<u>e</u> Kamis sirigit	the tree is tall
<u>e</u> da bwiriano <u>sensei</u>	the teacher has come in

It is not necessary to place the verb first, however, in Sonsorol, as it very often is, for instance, in Samoan or Maori. The usage remains an alternative, and it is not possible to state what factors will decide a native to use this method of expression.

i. The Verb "To be" (See also pp.39-40)

The verb "to be" is frequently not expressed in Sonsorol; only the verbal pronoun is used, e.g. na:n jälimat^a ri Donosaru, I am from Sonsorol; riweisⁱ fäivi rere ie jälimat^a r'i:a? Where is that girl from? If, however, the reference is to actual existence in a place, the verb used is wola: e wola demaru piris mata n'im, there is a dog in front of the house; e tai wola vitigyö rani'm, there is no meat in the house. Sometimes for people, mire is used but not of necessity so: tarañinarowa na e mire demaru marerap ma demaru wururap, once upon a time there were an old man and an old woman - as contrasted with ifi ri mo tarañinarowa na e wola demaru lei mmayo, once upon a time there was a good man... The verb wola applies also to the "idea of "have", for which there is no single word: e wola kiei, I have a mat, lit. there is my mat; e tai wola wai, I have no canoe, lit. there is not my canoe; e wola ioloi, there or it is with me, I have it, I have some.

ii. Word-Order in the Sentence

In the simple sentence the final word-order, when both noun and verb phrases are combined, and each is expanded as far as possible, is:

definitive + noun + demonstrative (= subject) +
 verbal pronoun + negative + verb + verb adjunct
 (= predicate) + object (with same elements as subject).

Example: pipie ri jălimat ra le tai weli lannei jai
 xapiteki na i mori puŋarau, "All the people did not
 find to-day the goods which I had lost".

2. Compound Sentences

A compound sentence is one that consists of more than one clause, joined by coordinating conjunctions such as "and", "or". Whereas a noun-phrase requires ma for "and", a compound sentence, or two verb phrases, requires na. This na, however, is by no means always to be translated by "and" in English, but its uses are much wider and the translation often seems very elastic. Some examples are given of the different uses of na.

1. na = "and", joining verbs: ie e da xadi deu e da
 ɣarije piris, na piris e da puluje fatare ba
 sauruwar, he took one and gave it to the dog
 and the dog followed him as his companion; e
 mmaɣo dewwa na di m^wasa'ri: ɣasausa, they are
 very good and we like to eat (them); babai e
 mori mas na e sujɔba di bwe ɣasausa, the
 papayas have ripened and we can now eat them;
 weti na e bwedi u:t^a, wait and the rain (will)
 stop, i.e. wait until the rain stops.

2. na introduces a clause, some previous event being known and understood, so that no English translation is possible: delari na Momotaro
e da ɣauje... one day (it happened and)

Momotaro said to him (from a translation of a widely known Japanese story - see Part IV). The combination of a time-expression with this seemingly redundant na is very common: wanaet na xo bwe sujø? when (and) you will be able? nimariei na ie e xamataŋataŋ^a ri yanerago, in the morning he will rise early (lit. it is morning and...); fitouw xaiaŋ na xo kamasu? how many fowls (are there and) you have (them)? fitouw krok na e da bweŋi su'ku:ru? at what time does school finish? degetiu krok na e da tweŋi su'ku:ru; school finishes at ten o'clock; wanaet na e da wegito? when will he return? na rau ri itøu? whose child is he? (of someone already spoken of: na links with an implied previous statement).

3. na = if; see below under "Complex clauses": na:ŋ i 'bwe tai weliyo, na i 'bwe ra mata n'imwei, if I do not see you I'll go home. Actually na does not mean "if", but instead of saying 'if you give me the money, I will go with you', the native prefers to say, 'you will give me the money and I will go with you', or as in the above example, 'I shall not see you and I shall go home'. Coordination is preferred to subordination. Ba (see below, p.89) may be used similarly: variei dea ba i bwe sauriwomu, give me one and I will be your companion.

4. na = when: di yasausa babai na e mori mas, we eat papayas when they are ripe; e mori mas na e

musosoguyetipara, it is ripe when the inside is soft.

5. na = or: e pwe'sepwes^e na e rusasa? is it white or black? xo m^Wasa'ri: wa sirigit tila e rusasaa na e jaxaya'wayawa? do you want red or blue flowers? Occasionally xale is used in this sense: xale xo lawelawe xale e bo u:t^a lannei? do you think it will rain to-day? Di bwe ra na e tai mmayo? ought we to go or not? (lit. we shall go and it will not be good?).

A very important conjunctival element is the word me, to be distinguished from the preposition me already treated. Me has many uses, but all share the quality of linking clauses in various sentences. Hence me can be called a Ligative Particle. It is found widely used in Ponape, but seems to have missed Truk and Ulithi. The chief uses of me in Sonsorol are the following:

1. It serves as a kind of neuter relative pronoun; e kura me e da monayo me mena e tosu bwito, he knows what has happened already and what is to come. This usage may take the form of turning a preposition into a conjunction: ifi ri me xo bwe yane me jai wadi, xo da xadato, if you find my knife, bring it to me. Ifi ri = for; ifi ri me = in case that; also uni me = if, both referring to the future, Cf. also, e sujenara pipie ri faulumir ifi ri me e m^Wasa'ri:, he can do anything if he wishes. Referring to future time also, e we me is used for 'if': e we me xo bwe rox, na:n^u mo i bwe rox, if you go I shall go too; but the root meaning of e we is 'as', and this can be retained: ie e we me tamai, he is like a father to me, as my father.

2. Me shows purpose or cause: e tai wola pepa me i bwe yapawɔ, there is no book for me to read, a book that I may read; e tai wola me i bwe iteit' pepa rani rumu er, there is no place for me to put books in this room; e tai yapɔwɔ me i bwe farufɔru, I have no time to write; e tɛ:ta yapɔwɔ me di bwe madil, it is too early for us to go to bed; i lawe me i 'bwe ra Toɔveɪ, I think I'll go to Tobi.
3. Me links a pronoun subject to its predicate, throwing some degree of emphasis on the pronoun: iere me e ya m^Wasa'ri: this is what he wants; itɔ me e 'bwe ra Donɔsara? who is to go to Sonsorol? who is it that is going to Sonsorol?
4. Me provides a link between predicate and subject when the predicate precedes the subject: me'ta me xo bwe faul? what are you going to do? Me'ta me xo ya m^Wasa'ri? what is it you want? Dios me'ta me e bwo suje ba e bwe faul? What is God able to do? In these cases there is always the possibility of supplying 'is it that...' in the English.
5. Me links a verb to its object in certain cases: xo yane me jai wadi? Na'weri, i tai yane me jamu wadi: Have you seen my knife? No, I haven't seen your knife; xanaɔarɪei me jamu pepa, show me your book; xo bayabawɔ me jai pensil? can you see my pencil? ie suje ba i bwe faraje me itei? I can write my name; i bwe vadɔ me pɔluɔm, I will wear your hat. Nearly all these examples involve verbs "to see", but the construction, whose scope is not yet determined, is not entirely limited to these.

6. Me serves as a reference particle with certain adverbial phrases: me i'gera, now; me'ta me, why? as me'ta me le dødøl? why do they say...? i'ra me..., it is all right that...

Other conjunctions of importance are:

1. Ba = that, as, because: i døl^u ba ya itena, I say that it is so; e døl^u ba e bwe ra Pannøu, he says he will go to Palau; xawje ba e bwe bwito waradu, tell him to come to-morrow; i lonolono ba e ya metaki, I hear that he is sick; tød^u ba e bwito? is it true that he is coming? E fanje ba e ya metaki, he has run away because he is sick. The verb "to be able" is rendered by e suje ba..., used impersonally, 'it is possible that', and there are many variations on this theme in use: e suje ba i bwe wautu pigipigi, I can hit the ball. Suje can also be used as a full verb with personal subject: peig e suje ba e bwe fatare, the pig can walk. With m^wasa'ri:, want, like, ba is put in if the meaning is 'want to', i.e. i m^wasa'ri: ba i kakam, I want to play; it is omitted if the meaning is 'like': di m^wasa'ri: yasausa fado, we like to eat bananas.

Ba combines with the next particle to be treated, na to form ba na, because: i m^wasa'ri: je ba na e mmayo, I like him (it) because he (it) is good; and the ligative me may be superadded: tipas e taitei dewwa na ilefis, ba na me tip jarⁱ podus, the spirit is the more important part of us, because the spirit owns the body (Catechism); Dios e ri'kirikⁱ tam:u ba na me e yane: tipe ri jälimat, God forgives (overlooks) sin because He knows men's hearts (Catechism).

2. Na, which also means 'that', but appears to denote object or purpose rather than cause. It is this word which combines with ba above. Owing to the confusion of n and ŋ in the Catechism, examples from this source must be used with circumspection. Examples of na are: i mWasa'ri: na i 'bwe ra, I want to go; mena e kura na ie e mWasa'ri: ba e bwe yatowa'di: deu fara:u jari Dios, whoever knows that he wants to break one of God's laws (Catechism); i fanjenj na e bo ppour uvei, I am afraid of dirtying my clothes; xo towai mariegi na xo bwe xatoje fäviye, don't forget to chop some wood. The primary use of the word, however, is not as a conjunction but as a definitive, referring back to something already said: e bwe bweni fiteki na, me'ta i da faul? (when) is finished work that (aforesaid), what shall I do? Thence it comes into use as a neuter relative pronoun: i kura na i bwe fiteki, I know what I am doing. In this sense then na becomes practically interchangeable with the ligative me, so that, e.g. itou na = itou me, as in 'itou na e kura rama e?' Who understands this language? itou na e tip^e muik? who is the avaricious man? (Catechism); itou ilefil na e bwito fada rani Pur? which of them (was it) that was born on Pul? This use seems to apply only to persons, and no examples are to hand of e.g. me'ta ni'far na, but only me'ta ni'far me = why?

The word itself is apparently part of the demonstrative mena, menna, already dealt with (p.29), as shown in the Catechism answer to the question about avaricious man: e 'muik^e me na e muikakir mane ma xapiteki ri jälimat, the avaricious man is the one who

desires other people's money or goods. The compound mena, menna, then also acquires conjunctival force: mena e bwe tai wola masumosi i'ya, when I have done my business here (I'll go back); ifi ri mena e ya kapanaki:s, whenever he tries us.

These are the simple ligative words used in joining the parts of a compound sentence. Sometimes between two verbs no link at all is supplied: i mWasa'ri: yasausa i:γ, I like eating fish; di da tai xamatanatan^a raxo, if we don't hurry up and go; xo bwe ra lawe xaram, go (and) cook your food; xo mWasa'ri: kakam xo da γadi pigipigi ma wamou ra? do you want to play if you get a bat and ball? i bwito fiteki, I have come to work; lo kura tiwe:re ri mmayo ma tama:u, they know (how) to choose good and evil; xale di bwe wodø ra su'ku:ru? shall we all go to school together (lit. accompany to go); xo bwito feita? what have you come to do? These are practically all purpose expressions.

3. Complex Sentences

These can be treated very briefly, because Sonsorol prefers to use coordinate rather than subordinate clauses. There are, however, a few that can be called subordinating conjunctions, such as uni, uni me, if, which has been mentioned already (p.87). This refers to the future, while e we me generally refers to the past, as in the example given on p.87. As introducing an impossible condition, examples are: e we me e bo wola mane, na:η^u me na i i bwe rox, if there were (= I had) money, I would go too; e we tai u:t^a rarowa, na i bwe rox, if it had not rained yesterday I would have gone. Even here na is added though to the English idea it is now necessary, in the second clause. Usually, however, na is used alone.