

An abstract painting with a warm, textured background of orange, yellow, and red. A central figure, possibly a woman's face, is rendered in a darker, more defined style with some green and blue accents. The overall composition is layered and expressive.

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RAINER
VOSSEN

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AFRICAN
LANGUAGES

Edited by

RAINER VOSSEN

and

GERRIT J. DIMMENDAAL

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CHAPTER 36

BIALI

COFFI SAMBIÉNI

36.1 INTRODUCTION

BIALI is spoken in the north of the Republic of Benin, in the region of Atakora, as well as in Togo and Burkina Faso, by people who call themselves *biālībā*.¹ Biali consists of four dialectal variants in Benin: *kāpāi* spoken in Gouandé, *lāsuālī* spoken in Dassari, *piāngī* spoken in Piangou, and *mátèi* spoken in Matéri (see also Sambiéni 2005). According to Manessy's (1975) and Naden's (1989) classifications, Biali belongs to the eastern subgroup of Gur-Oti-Volta languages, which belong to the Niger-Congo phylum; see Sambiéni (1999) for additional information.

36.2 PHONOLOGY

36.2.1 Vowels

According to Sambiéni (2009: 92), Biali has five vocalic phonemes, which are shown in Table 36.1.

Table 36.1 The vowel system of Biali

	Front	Central	Back
Close	i		u
Mid	e		o
Open		a	

¹ *bīālī bā* is the plural form of *biālā-ū* 'Biali speaker'.

All five vowels of Biali are nasalized when preceding nasal consonants.²

- (1) hanfa [hãfã] ‘guinea fowl’
 pinhu [pĩhũ] ‘arrow’
 huntu [hũdu] ‘sauce’
 puom [puõm] ‘to hit’
 cendili [cẽdãlã] ‘trade’

In some cases, particularly in medial and final positions, all five vowels are likely to be reduced to schwa (Sambiéni 2012: 301–2). This vowel reduction is shown by the borrowings from French represented in Table 36.2.

Table 36.2 Vowel reduction in Biali

Vowels	French transcription	Borrowings in Biali		Gloss
a	karabin	kàràbĩnĩ	[kàràbĩnĩ]	‘rifle’
i	kapitèn	kápíténĩ	[kápéténĩ]	‘captain’
u	bruet	pùrùwētĩ	[pùrèwētĩ]	‘wheelbarrow’
o	foset	sòsíétũ	[sàsýéhũ]	‘sock’
e	s(ə)kreteR	sikèteĩ	[sigètèĩ]	‘secretary’

36.2.2 Consonants

According to Sambiéni (2009), Biali has fifteen consonants, illustrated in Table 36.3.

Table 36.3 The consonant system of Biali

	Labial	Alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
Stop	p, b	t, d	c	k	
Nasal	m	n	ɲ		
Fricative	f	s			h
Lateral		l			
Approximant	w		y		

Some consonantal phonemes have predictable variants in specific contexts. These are summarized in Table 36.4 and illustrated in example (2).

² /e/ and /o/ are realized as [ẽ] and [õ] instead of [ē] and [ō] when nasalized.

Table 36.4 Allophonic variation in Biali

Phonemes	Phonetic realization	Contexts
k	-ŋ-	in front of <i>n</i>
d	-g-, -ɣ-	in intervocalic position (depending on the dialect of the speaker)
t	-r-, -d-	in intervocalic position in front of <i>n</i>

- (2) a. *sanka* → [sangə] → [saŋə] ‘horse’
sansi → [sansɪ] ‘horses’
neka → [negə] ‘bird’
nesi → [nesɪ] ‘birds’
naaki → [naaɣɪ] ‘to want’
saki → [sayɪ] ‘hut’
saka → [sayə] ‘huts’
- b. *puudi* → [puurə] ‘to blow’
piidi → [piirə] ‘to take’
- c. *huntu* → [hundu] ‘sauce’
mintu → [mĩndu] ‘excrement’

According to N’ouéni (1983: 117), Biali contrasts three tonal heights: high tone (H), mid tone (M) and low tone (L).

- (3) *búúkā* ‘dog’
būūkā ‘goat’
bùúkā ‘kind of fetish’

Biali has three types of syllable structures:

- Monosyllabic items with V and CV structures that appear especially with pronouns and particles:

- (4) *ā* ‘you (SG)’
ù ‘he, she, it’
ī ‘you (PL)’
pá, pà ‘particle marking negation’
dā ‘particle marking coordination’

- Disyllabic items with VCV, CVV and CVCV structures:

- (5) *àlā* ‘here’
àlī ‘this’
lōú ‘wood’
lēí ‘woods’
bārú ‘river’
tēbū ‘baobab’

- Trisyllabic items with CVCVCV and CVCVV structures:

- (6) b́aríkā ‘box’
 kálábū ‘loincloth’
 ḿarāū ‘smith’
 ḿarībā ‘smiths’

36.3 THE NOUN PHRASE

36.3.1 Noun classes

The nominal lexical stock of Biali is divided into eight genders and fifteen noun classes. Each gender is represented with underlying class markers, as described in Sambiéni (2008).

- (7) Gender I (*u/ba*)

SG			PL		
lā-ū	[lā-ū]	‘man’	lā-bā	[lā-bā]	‘men’
pūāhā-ū	[pūāhā-ū]	‘woman’	pūō-bā	[pūō-bā]	‘women’
mámárā-ū	[mámárā-ū]	‘smith’	mámárā-bā	[mámárā-bā]	‘smiths’
cāārā-ū	[cāārā-ū]	‘hunter’	cāārā-bā	[cāārā-bā]	‘hunters’

- (8) Gender II (*hú/hi*)

SG			PL		
lō-hú	[lō-ú]	‘wood’	lē-hí	[lē-í]	‘woods’
cō-hú	[cō-ú]	‘path’	cē-hí	[cē-í]	‘paths’
hwá-b-hú	[hwá-b-ú]	‘bone’	hwá-b-hí	[hwá-b-í]	‘bones’
hàn-k-hú	[hàn-g-ú]	‘stem’	hàn-k-hí	[hàn-g-í]	‘stems’
pā-hú	[pā-hú]	‘swamp’	pā-hí	[pā-hí]	‘swamps’
bà-hú	[bà-hú]	‘branch’	bà-hí	[bà-hí]	‘branches’

- (9) Gender III (*fa/hi*)

SG			PL		
nā-fā	[nā-fā]	‘ox’	nā-hí	[nā-hí]	‘oxen’
wō-fā	[wō-fā]	‘snake’	wō-hí	[wō-hí]	‘snakes’
cì-fā	[cì-fā]	‘bee’	cì-hí	[cì-í]	‘bees’
sí-fā	[sí-fā]	‘navel’	sí-hí	[sí-í]	‘navels’

- (10) Gender IV (*li/ha*)

SG			PL		
kúndí-lí	[kúndí-í]	‘meat’	kúndí-há	[kúnd-á]	‘meat’
tō-lí	[tō-í]	‘ear’	tō-hā	[tō-ā]	‘ears’
tūn-ní	[tūn-í]	‘bean’	tūn-hā	[tūn-ā]	‘beans’
cīin-ní	[cīin-í]	‘knot’	cīin-hā	[cīin-ā]	‘knots’

(11) Gender V (*bu/na*)

SG		PL	
cēē-bū	[cēē-bū]	‘soap’	cēē-nā [cēē-nā] ‘soaps’
tīē-bū	[tyē-bū]	‘bow’	tīē-na [tyē-nā] ‘bows’
nēē-bū	[nēē-bū]	‘net’	nēē-nā [nēē-nā] ‘nets’
tīī-bū	[tīī-bū]	‘medicine’	tīī-nā [tīī-nā] ‘medicine’

(12) Gender VI (*hu/tu*)

SG		PL	
sān-hū	[sān-hū]	‘car’	sān-tū [sān-dū] ‘cars’
kúnkún-hū	[kúnkún-hū]	‘cotton’	kúnkún-tū [kúnkún-dū] ‘cotton’
múó-hū	[mwó-hū]	‘grass’	múó-tū [mwō-rū] ‘grasses’
kù-hū	[kù-hū]	‘field’	kù-tū [kù-rū] ‘fields’
sē-hū	[sē-hū]	‘mat’	sā-tū [sā-tū] ‘mats’
fēē-hū	[fēē-hū]	‘leaf’	fiā-tū [fyà-tū] ‘leaves’

(13) Gender VII (*ka/si*)

SG		PL	
bíi-kā	[bíi-gā]	‘child’	bíi-sí [bíi-sí] ‘children’
nē-kā	[nē-gā]	‘bird’	nē-sí [nē-sí] ‘birds’
búú-kā	[búú-γā]	‘dog’	búú-sí [búú-sí] ‘dogs’
kū-kā	[kū-γā]	‘chicken’	kū-sí [kū-sí] ‘chickens’
lāpí-kā	[lāpá-kā]	‘boy’	lāpí-sí [lāpá-sí] ‘boys’
sēbí-kā	[sēbá-kā]	‘girl’	sēbí-sí [sēbá-sí] ‘girls’

(14) Gender VIII (*m*)

níi-m	[níi-m]	‘water’
túó-m	[twó-m]	‘sand’
làā-m	[làā-m]	‘drink’
síi-m	[síi-m]	‘cold’

36.3.2 Nominal derivation

With the nominal class markers *-u*, *-hú*, *-li*, *-ha*, *-bu*, *-hu*, *-tu*, *-ka*, *-si*, *-m*, two types of derivation are possible: nouns from verbs and nouns from other nouns.

36.3.2.1 Nouns from verbs

Biali offers considerable possibilities for deriving nouns from verbs by adding class markers to the root of the verb.

(15) a.	bá cāārī	[bá cāārē]	‘to hunt’	cāārā-ū	‘hunter’
	bá cēndī	[bá cēndā]	‘to trade’	cēndā-ū	‘trader’
	b. bá múórí	[bá mwórá]	‘to swell up’	múór-hú [mwór-ú]	‘swelling’
	bá pārí	[bá pārá]	‘to plait’	pār-hú [pār-ú]	‘plaited rope’

c.	bá cíná	[bá cíná]	‘to tie’	cín-nī	[cín-ī]	‘knot’
	bá tōúká	[bá tōūyá]	‘to load’	tōúkí-lī	[tōūy-ī]	‘load’
d.	bá nàkìsì	[bá nàyèsè]	‘to compete with’	nàkìs-hā	[nàyès-ā]	‘rivalries’
	bá dùòndì	[bá dwòndì]	‘to praise’	dùònd-hā	[dwònd-ā]	‘praises’
e.	bá pá	[bá pá]	‘to give’	pā-bū	[pā-bū]	‘donation’
	bá yīsá	[bá yīsá]	‘to ban’	yī-bū	[yī-bū]	‘banning’
f.	bá kùndì	[bá kùndè]	‘to baptize’	kùndì-hū	[kùndè-hū]	‘baptism’
	bá sòú	[bá sòú]	‘to pray to’	sò-hū	[sò-hū]	‘prayer’
g.	bá bári	[bá bārè]	‘to dress’	bá-tū	[bá-tū]	‘clothes’
	bá hùrn	[bá hùrn]	‘to quarrel’	hùn-tū	[hùn-du]	‘quarrel’
h.	bá císīm	[bá císēm]	‘to sneeze’	císīm-kā	[císēm-kā]	‘sneeze’
	bá hósì	[bá hósè]	‘to bark’	hósì-kā	[hósè-kā]	‘barking’
i.	bá súbíkì	[bá súbèkè]	‘to become heavy’	súbí-sí	[súbè-sí]	‘heaviness’
	bá yíndì	[bá yíndè]	‘to become stupid’	yíndì-sí	[yíndè-sí]	‘stupidity’
j.	bá fùsì	[bá fùsè]	‘to breathe’	fùsì-rn	[fùsè-m]	‘breath’
	bá lāāsì	[bá lāāsè]	‘to laugh’	lāāsì-m	[lāāsè-m]	‘laugh’

36.3.2.2 Nouns from nouns

Biali also has various strategies for deriving nouns from other nouns by replacing the respective class markers.

(16)	a.	yàbì-lī	[yàbì-ī]	‘penis’	yàb-hú	[yàb-ú]	‘very small penis’
		tà-lī	[tà-lè]	‘leg’	tà-l-hú	[tà-l-ú]	‘very small leg’
	b.	tín-nī	[tín-ī]	‘groundnut’	tín-hū	[tín-hū]	‘plant of groundnut’
		nùò-lī	[nwò-ī]	‘yam’	nùò-hū	[nwò-hū]	‘plant of yam’
		sān-kā	[sān-gā]	‘horse’	sān-hū	[sān-hū]	‘vehicle (big horse)’
	c.	kàlá-bū	[kàlá-bū]	‘loincloth’	kàlá-kā	[kàlá-yā]	‘small loincloth’
		mīāti-lī	[myāti-ī]	‘teacher’	mīāti-kā	[myātè-kā]	‘small teacher’
	d.	sābì-kā	[sābè-kā]	‘ <i>Lannea</i> ³	sābì-rn	[sābè-m]	‘fruit of <i>Lannea</i> ’
		hānrī-kā	[hānrè-kā]	‘ <i>Vitex</i> ⁴	hānrī-rn	[hānrè-m]	‘fruit of <i>Vitex</i> ’
		lāpí-kā	[lāpè-kā]	‘boy’	lāpí-m	[lāpè-m]	‘small boy’

36.3.2.3 Derivation by noun reduplication

In addition to affixation, reduplication is used as a word formation strategy in Biali.

(17)	sān-nī	‘time’	sān-nī sān-nī	‘a long time’
	bàn-nī	‘distance’	bàn-nī bàn-nī	‘a long way’
	biēn-nī	‘year’	biēn-nī biēn-nī	‘a long time (many years)’

³ Scientific name of a tree.

⁴ Scientific name of a tree.

36.3.3 Nominal compounding

Nominal compounding in Biali is characterized by the use of two or more lexemes expanded with class markers. The compound noun retains only the class marker of the last noun. There are two types of compound nouns: completive nouns and qualifying nouns:

Completive nouns:

- (18) tè-kā ‘foot’ + bí-lī ‘child’ → tè-bí-lī ‘toe’
 nā-fā ‘ox’ + lā-ū ‘male’ + tēē-kā ‘non-castrated’
 → nà-lā-tēē-kā ‘bull’
 pùē-ū ‘father’ + pūāhā-ū ‘woman’ + tà-ū ‘sister’ + bí-kā ‘child’
 → pùē-pū-tà-bí-kā ‘cousin’

Qualifying nouns:

- (19) lā-ū ‘man’ + bà-tū ‘cheeks’ → lā-bà-tū ‘man with big cheeks’
 yūō-lī ‘head’ + siīb-hú ‘blackness’ → yūō-siīb-hú ‘bad luck’

36.3.4 Noun phrases

There are two ways of constructing noun phrases with morphologically related markers: conjoining noun phrases using *da*, and noun phrases expressing an alternative (‘or’) using *ní da*.

- (20) a. pùē-ū da bí-kā bà nūām hīdā-cēdā.
 father-CL and child-CL PA be person-one
 ‘The father and the child are one person.’
 b. ā pāá bō-lī ní dá tā-bū āá?
 2SG go party-CL ALT1 ALT2 war-CL INTG
 ‘Are you going to party or to war?’

36.3.5 Nominal qualifiers

Adjectives do not exist in Biali as an independent grammatical category. In the case of nominal qualification, adjectives are derived from stative verbs by taking the class marker of the noun they are qualifying (see Table 36.5); this is only possible when they have an attributive function. If the verb has a predicative function, there is no gender agreement. However, the demonstrative and interrogative adjectives have a lexical base to which the class markers are assigned (see Tables 36.6 and 36.7).

36.3.6 Pronouns

36.3.6.1 Allocutive pronouns

The allocutive pronouns represent persons taking part in the speech act.

Table 36.5 Qualifying adjectives in Biali

Stative verbs	Gloss	Adjectives	Gloss
bá n̄ púóà	'to be white'	hīdī-púóà-ū hīdī-púó-bā	'white person' 'white persons'
bá n̄ mīēsī	'to be slender'	lō-mīēs-hú lō-mīēs-hí	'slender timber' 'slender timbers'
bá n̄ sūōs	'to be red'	nà-sūōsī-fā nà-sūōs-hí	'red ox' 'red oxen'
bá n̄ sībī	'to be black'	n̄n-sībī-lī n̄n-sīb-hā	'black tooth' 'black teeth'
bá n̄ tōū	'to be big'	tēētōtō-bū tūōntōtō-hā	'big baobab' 'big baobabs'
bá n̄ lāākī	'to be wide'	dūān-lāākī-hū dūān-lāākī-tū	'wide room' 'wide rooms'
bá n̄ sūlī	'to be beautiful'	bīí-sūlī-kā bīí-sūlī-sí	'beautiful child' 'beautiful children'
bá n̄ léēsī	'to be clean'	nīí-léēsī-m	'clean water'

Table 36.6 Demonstrative adjectives

Gender	Demonstrative adjectives		Gloss
	SG	PL	
I	à-kwē	à-bā	'this, that (SG)' 'those (PL)'
II	à-hú	à-hí	
III	à-fā	à-hí	
IV	à-lī	à-há	
V	à-bū	à-há	
VI	à-hū	à-tū	
VII	à-kā	à-sí	
VIII	à-mum		'this, that, these those'

Table 36.7 Interrogative adjectives in Biali

Gender	Interrogative adjectives		Gloss
	SG	PL	
I	wētī	mám-bā-tī	'which'
II	mán-hú-tī	mán-hí-tī	
III	mán-fā-tī	mán-hí-tī	
IV	mán-nī-tī	mán-há-tī	
V	mán-bū-tī	mán-há-tī	
VI	mán-hū-tī	mán-tū-tī	
VII	mán-kā-tī	mán-sí-tī	
VIII	mám-mum-tī		

- (21) \bar{n} 'I' $\bar{t}\bar{i}$ 'we'
 \bar{a} 'you (SG)' \bar{i} 'you (PL)'

36.3.6.2 Substitutive pronouns

The substitutive pronouns act as substitutes for nouns; there are fifteen possible substitutive pronouns, corresponding to the fifteen noun classes of Biali (see Table 36.8).

Table 36.8 Substitutive pronouns in Biali

Gender	Substitutive pronouns		Gloss
	SG	PL	
I	\bar{u}	$\bar{b}\bar{a}$	'he, she, it / they'
II	$\bar{h}\bar{u}$	$\bar{h}\bar{i}$	
III	$\bar{f}\bar{a}$	$\bar{h}\bar{i}$	
IV	$\bar{l}\bar{i}$	$\bar{h}\bar{a}$	
V	$\bar{b}\bar{u}$	$\bar{n}\bar{a}$	
VI	$\bar{h}\bar{u}$	$\bar{t}\bar{u}$	
VII	$\bar{k}\bar{a}$	$\bar{s}\bar{i}$	
VIII		\bar{m}	'he, she, it'

36.3.6.3 Interrogative pronouns

Formally the interrogative pronouns are the same as the interrogative adjectives presented in Table 36.7.

36.3.7 Numerals

In Biali, all the numerals from one to ten are simple constituents. This is also the case for 100, 1,000, 1,000,000, and 1,000,000,000. The numerals 10, 100, 1,000, 1,000,000, and 1,000,000,000 take the class markers in the same way as nouns.

- (22) $\bar{c}\bar{a}\bar{d}\bar{a}\bar{m}$ 'one' $\bar{h}\bar{a}\bar{d}\bar{u}\bar{a}\bar{m}$ 'six'
 $\bar{d}\bar{i}\bar{a}$ 'two' $\bar{p}\bar{i}\bar{l}\bar{e}\bar{i}$ 'seven'
 $\bar{t}\bar{a}\bar{a}\bar{d}\bar{i}$ 'three' $\bar{n}\bar{e}\bar{i}$ 'eight'
 $\bar{n}\bar{a}\bar{a}\bar{s}\bar{i}$ 'four' $\bar{w}\bar{a}\bar{i}$ 'nine'
 $\bar{n}\bar{u}\bar{m}$ 'five' $\bar{p}\bar{u}\bar{i}\bar{k}\bar{a}$ 'ten'
 $\bar{k}\bar{o}\bar{k}\bar{a}$ 'hundred' $\bar{t}\bar{u}\bar{s}\bar{i}\bar{l}\bar{i}$ 'thousand'
 $\bar{t}\bar{u}\bar{s}\bar{i}\bar{c}\bar{a}\bar{n}\bar{n}\bar{i}$ 'million' $\bar{t}\bar{u}\bar{s}\bar{i}\bar{b}\bar{a}\bar{m}$ 'billion'

Coordinated numeral phrases are characterized by the use of the coordination marker $\bar{d}\bar{a}$ followed by \bar{n} :

- (23) púi-kā dā n cādām ‘eleven’
 púi-kā dā n tāādī ‘thirteen’
 púi-kā dā n wái ‘nineteen’

Multiplication is used in order to express decimals:

- (24) púi-sí díà ‘twenty’
 púi-sí tāādī ‘thirty’
 kō-sí díà ‘two hundred’
 kō-sí piléí ‘seven hundred’
 tús-hā púi-kā ‘ten thousand’

The tens and hundreds apart, the other numerals are expressed by the combination of a completive numeral phrase coordinated with another numeral.

- (25) púi-sí díà dā n wái ‘twenty-nine’
 púi-sí wái dā n nùm ‘ninety-five’
 kō-sí wái dā n wái ‘nine hundred nine’

36.4 THE VERB

36.4.1 Verbal derivation

Inchoative and factitive verbs can be derived from stative verbs, as illustrated in Table 36.9. Inchoative verbs are marked with *-k-*; the factitive combines the inchoative form with the factitive marker *-a*.

Table 36.9 Verbal derivation in Biali

Stative verbs	Inchoative verbs	Factitive verbs	Gloss ¹
bá n tì	bá tì-k-ì	bá tì-k-á	‘to be hot’
bá n súbí-ì	bá súbí-k-ì	bá súbí-k-á	‘to be heavy’
bá n tōū	bá tōū-k-ì	bá tōū-k-á	‘to be fat’
bá n bíárí	bá bíárí-k-ì	bá bíárí-k-á	‘to be short’

¹ The meanings here are those of the stative verbs from which the inchoative and factitive forms are derived.

36.4.2 Aspect

The aspectual system of Biali expresses a binary opposition: perfective vs. imperfective. The perfective is distinguished from the imperfective through formal markers or through tonal

markers. In the first case, the perfective is marked either with *-a* or with *-i*. The two perfective markers are substituted for *-u* in imperfective forms. In the second case, the opposition between the perfective vs. imperfective is expressed through tonal differences.

36.4.2.1 Formal markers

(26) Perfective

- a. ù hūb-á nā-fā.
 3SG tie-PFV ox-CL
 ‘He/she has tied the ox.’
- b. ù sānd-í kúé-sí.
 3SG give.birth.to-PFV twin-CL
 ‘She has given birth to twins.’

(27) Imperfective

- a. ù hūb-ū nā-fā.
 3SG tie-IPFV ox-CL
 ‘He/she ties the ox.’
- b. ù sānn-ú kúé-sí.
 3SG give.birth.to-IPFV twin-CL
 ‘She gives birth to twins.’

36.4.2.2 Tone markers

(28) Perfective

- a. wō-fā níim kū-bíí-m.
 snake-CL swallow:PFV chicken-child-CL
 ‘The snake has swallowed the chick.’
- b. ù yīm kúnd-há.
 3SG fry:PFV meat-CL
 ‘He/she has fried meat.’

(29) Imperfective

- a. wō-fā níim kū-bíí-m.
 snake-CL swallow:IPFV chicken-child-CL
 ‘The snake is swallowing the chick.’
- b. ù yīm kúnd-há.
 3SG fry:PFV meat-CL
 ‘He/she is frying meat.’

36.4.3 Tense

In terms of grammatical tense, only the past and the future are marked through middle and high tones.⁵ On the segmental level the forms are identical.

⁵ Metrical tense markers also exist but they are not considered here.

- (30) a. \dot{u} tíim yùākīsī-bā.
3SG help poor-CL
'He/she helps the poor.'
- b. \dot{u} yí tíim yùākīsī-bā.
3SG FUT help poor-CL
'He/she will help the poor.'
- c. \dot{u} yī tíim yùākīsī-bā.
3SG PST help poor-CL
'He/she has helped the poor.'

36.4.4 Mood

In Biali, only the infinitive and the imperative or hortative are formally marked as modal categories. The infinitive is marked with *bá* and the imperative (Table 36.10) with *-ni*. In the case of the hortative, the use of the 1PL is necessary.

- (31) $bá$ sándí 'to give birth' $bá$ písá 'to bed (sb.)'
 $bá$ tūtí 'to share' $bá$ hūbá 'to tie (sb., sth.)'
 $bá$ pùàti 'to dance' $bá$ cinná 'to tie up'

Table 36.10 Imperative/hortative in Biali

Imperative	Hortative	Gloss	
2PL	1PL	Imperative	Hortative
máání-nī	tí máání-nī	'Come!'	'Let's come!'
tēi-nī	tí tēi-nī	'Go!'	'Let's go!'
yísi-nī	tí yísi-nī	'Get up!'	'Let's get up!'

36.4.5 Negation

The negative particle *pa* bears two different tones: low tone in the declarative negative sentence and high tone in the imperative negative sentence.

- (32) a. \bar{a} pá písí yákā.
2SG NEG go.to.bed today
'You haven't gone to bed today.'
- b. \bar{a} pá písí yáka!
2SG NEG go.to.bed today
'Don't go to bed today!'

36.4.6 Focalization

The focus marker *lè* serves as both a nominal and a verbal focus marker. Verbs marked for focus receive a progressive reading.

- (33) a. *bíi-kā lè.*
 child-CL FOC
 ‘That is the child.’
m bíi-kā lè.
 1SG child-CL FOC
 ‘That is my child.’
- b. *m pāá lè.*
 1SG go FOC
 ‘I’m going.’
m sūūm lè.
 1SG swim FOC
 ‘I’m swimming.’

36.4.7 Adverbs

Adverbs in Biali are invariable words expressing semantic notions like place, time, manner, and quantity (Table 36.11).

Table 36.11 Adverbs in Biali

Adverbs		Gloss	Adverbs		Gloss	
Place	<i>ɲānnī</i>	‘there’	Manner	<i>tùòmtùòm</i>	‘quickly’	
	<i>àlā</i>	‘here’		<i>pímpím</i>	‘knowingly’	
	<i>àhām</i>	‘over there’			<i>yùākīyùāki</i>	‘smoothly, gently, etc.’
	<i>túmū</i>	‘outside’				
	<i>dīshú</i>	‘in front of’				
	<i>bàmbànnī</i>	‘far’				
Time	<i>sānnī</i>	‘when’	Quantity	<i>kùànkùākā</i>	‘not much, very’	
	<i>sīnnī</i>	‘yesterday’		<i>púómpúóm</i>	‘a lot, much, many’	
	<i>yāndālī</i>	‘before yesterday’		<i>tūātī</i>	‘how much’	

36.5 Conclusion

This chapter entitled BIALI, is a grammatical structure sketch of the Biali language. It is written in a global context of quest for descriptions of African Languages. The sketch takes into account the phonological, nominal and verbal systems. The phonological system succinctly presents the vowel, consonant, tonal and syllabic systems. The nominal system addresses nominal classification, nominal derivation, nominal compounding, Noun phrases, qualifiers, pronouns and numerals. The verbal system focuses on verbal derivation, aspect, tense, mood, negation, focalization and on adverbs.

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