Chapter 11

The complex sentence

This chapter describes complex clause structures, noting three major clause linkage types: (1) coordination, (2) clause chaining, and (3) subordination. I also describe the syntactic characteristics of focus constructions (§11.5), as focus marking and complex clause structures are inter-related.

11.1. Overview of complex clause structures

Coordination falls into symmetrical coordination (where the first clause and the second clause are conjoined by a conjunction word: §3.3.6.3) and asymmetrical coordination (where the first clause is marked by a conjunction marker; §9.2). Clause chaining consists of a series of non-finite, medial clauses, which are typically narrative converbal clauses (§6.3.2.2), terminated by a finite clause. Subordination falls into adsentential subordination (where the subordinate clause functions as a sentential adjunct), adverbial subordination (where the subordinate clause functions as a predicate adjunct), adnominal subordination (where the subordinate clause functions as an adnominal), and complementation (where the subordinate clause functions as an argument).

TABLE 11–1. Irabu clause linking types

Linking type	Subtype
Coordination	Symmetrical
	Asymmetrical
Clause chaining	
Subordination	Adsentential
	Adverbial
	Adnominal
	Complement

11.2. Coordination

Coordination links two main clauses either by a conjunction word (§3.3.6.3) or by a conjunction marker (§9.2) attached to the first clause.

11.2.1. Symmetrical coordination

In symmetrical coordination, two (or more) main clauses are linked by a free conjunction word such as *mata* 'and' (see §3.3.6.3 for a full list of conjunctions). Both clauses in the coordinate construction are fully independent, i.e. both clauses have a form that can be used independently, may be inflected for any finite form (§6.3.1), and are independently specified for speech act (declarative, interrogative, or imperative; §10.1). Also, there is an intonational break between the two clauses. Thus I insert a period '.' rather than comma ',' between the linked clauses.

(11–1) *nkjaan=na*   *budur-nagi=mai*
         old.times=TOP   dance-APPR=too
         umissi-ka-ta-m.
         interesting-VLZ-PST-RLS
         assuga,   nnama=a   mii-n-Ø=ni.
         but   now=TOP   see-NEG-NPST=CNF
         'In old days dances were fun; but now (we) don't see (dances),
         eh?'

(11–2) *buuc=cu=mai*   *ibir-tigaa*   *ibi-ru.*
         sugarcane=ACC=too   plant-CND   plant-IMP
         mata, nngi=nu   paa=mai tur-tigaa   tur-i.
         and   sweet.potato=GEN leaf=too take-CND   take-IMP
         'Plant sugarcane if you want; and take sweet potato leaves if
         you want.'

11.2.2. Asymmetrical coordination

In asymmetrical coordination, the first clause is marked by a conjunction marker. This clause is inflected for a finite form like the second, but there is a severe restriction on the finite inflection of the first clause. As summarised in TABLE 11–2 below, the restriction varies depending on the type of clitic that is attached to the clause. The clause marked by the temporal conjunction *=kja* (§9.2.1) is not a coordinate clause but an adsentential subordinate clause, and is excluded from the table below (and the verb form must be a finite unmarked form).

TABLE 11–2. Conjunction marker and finite inflection

	Unmarked		Realis		Irrealis		
	PST	NPST	PST	NPST	INT	OPT	IMP
=(ss)iba 'so'	+	-	-	-	+	-	-
=suga 'but'	+	+	-	+	-	-	-

The following examples illustrate the use of *=(ss)iba* 'so' (see §9.2.2 for the morphophonemics of this marker) with the unmarked past inflection and the irrealis intentional inflection.

(11–3) *[aur   nana-cï   jaacï=nu*
        still   seven-CLF.GENERAL   eight-CLF.GENRAL=GEN
        munu=n   azïki-i=du   pai=nkai=mai
        man=DAT   trust-NRT=FOC   field=ALL=too
        par-ta=iba],   nau=ja   h-u-da
        leave-PST=so   what=PRT   do-THM-NEG.NRT
        u-Ø-m=bjaam=mi.
        PROG-NPST-RLS=I.wonder=CNF
        '(I) have trusted (the baby) to a child of only seven or eight years old and left for the field, so I wonder if (the child) is not doing something bad.'

(11–4) *[kuma=n   nci-di=ssiba],*
        this.place=DAT   put-NPST.INT=so
        muc-i+par-i=juu=i.
        have-THM+leave-IMP=EMP=CNF
        '(I) will put (this bag) here, so take (it) away, OK?'

The following examples illustrate the use of *=suga* 'but' (See §9.2.3 for the morphophonemics of this marker) with the unmarked inflection and the realis inflection.

(11–5) *[mž-taa   u-tar=ruga],   tavkjaa=ja*
        three-CLF.HUMAN   exist-PST=but   one.person=TOP
        sïn-i-i...
        die-THM-NRT
        '(There) were three (children), but one died, and...'

(11–6) *[mmi-gama=nu   kama=n   zjaa=tti*
        sea-DIM=GEN   that.place=DAT   ONM=QT
        akaras-i+ur-Ø=ruga],
        light-THM+PROG-NPST=but
        kuri=a   kuma=nkai=mai   akaras-i-i
        3SG=TOP   this.place=ALL=too   light-THM-NRT
        ur-Ø=bjaam=mi.
        PROG-NPST=I.wonder=CNF
        '(The evil spirit) is lighting up over there beyond the sea, but this (one) is perhaps trying to light up this place too, I wonder.'