

# Chapter 6

## Independent Verbal Morphology

Verb stems and cross-reference suffixes, which are found in both independent and dependent clauses, were introduced in chapter 5. In this chapter 6, we will look at verbal morphology which is specific to independent clauses; verbal morphology which is found only in dependent clauses will be discussed in chapter 7.

Independent verbs are grammatically marked for status<sup>1</sup>, tense, aspect, mood and/or polarity. In terms of verbal morphology, the most important categories are status and polarity (polarity is independent of status in Menggwa Dla), as the overall morphological structure of a verb is determined first by its status and polarity. A lot of languages have a binary realis-irrealis status distinction; Mithun (1999:173) generalises the binary status distinction as follows: ‘The realis portrays situations as actualized, as having occurred or actually occurring, knowable through direct perception. The irrealis portrays situations as purely within the realm of thought, knowable only through imagination’. In addition to realis status and irrealis status, there is also an in-between status category called ‘semi-realism’ in Menggwa Dla, which signifies that on one hand it is like irrealis in that the situation is imagined, but on the other hand it is like realis in that the speaker is conveying his/ her certainty over the realisation (positive future declarative) or non-realisation (negative future declarative) of the situation.

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<sup>1</sup> The status categories of ‘realis’ and ‘irrealis’ are often described as macro-mood categories (e.g. Palmer 2001). I reserve the term ‘mood’ for the semantically narrower traditional mood categories like ‘declarative’, ‘interrogative’ and ‘imperative’.

The following table lists the tense-aspect-mood categories associated with each of the six status-polarity combinations for ordinary verbs (for copulas, see §6.4). Positive realis and positive irrealis are indicated by zero morphs (but the tense-aspect-mood affixes for positive realis and positive irrealis moods are mutually exclusive); negative realis (§6.1.3) is conveyed by negative realis verb *boke* (class I) or *-boka* (class II); positive semi-realism (§6.2.1) is conveyed by the positive semi-realism verb *samby* or its bound form *-mby/ -mb*; negative-semi-realism (§6.2.2) is conveyed by a particle *ga*; and negative-irrealism (§6.3) is conveyed by an affix *ma-/ -ma/ -me/ -m*.

Table 6.1 Realis categories

Positive realis: $\emptyset$ (§6.1)	Negative realis: <i>boke</i> (class I)/ <i>boka</i> (class II) (§6.1.3)
Present transitional <i>-mbi</i> (§6.1.1.1) Present stative <i>-mbi</i> (§6.1.1.2) Present continuous <i>-hi</i> (§6.1.1.1-2) Past <i>-hwa</i> (§6.1.2) ‘Past with focus’ <i>-hya</i> (§6.1.2)	

Table 6.2 Semi-realism categories

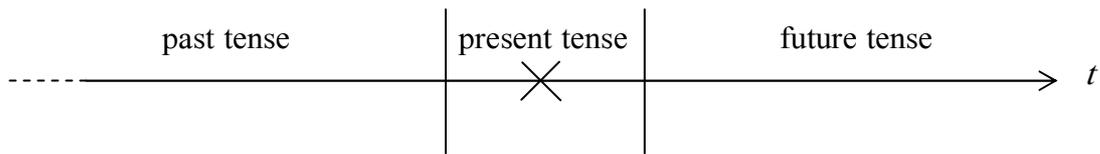
Positive semi-realism: <i>samby</i> (class I)/ <i>-mb / -mby</i> (§6.2.1,3)	Negative semi-realism: <i>ga-</i> (§6.2.2-3)

Table 6.3 Irrealis categories

<p><b>Positive irrealis:</b></p> <p><math>\emptyset</math> (§6.3)</p>	<p><b>Negative irrealis:</b></p> <p><i>ma-</i> ~ <i>-ma</i> ~ <i>-me</i> ~ <i>-m</i> (§6.3)</p>
<p>Imperative and jussive moods <i>-∅</i> (§6.3.1)</p> <p>Cautious mood <i>-we</i> ~ <i>-e</i> (§6.3.2)</p> <p>Tentative mood <i>-ni</i> (§6.3.3.1-2)</p> <p>Future interrogative mood (§6.3.3.3)</p> <p>Indirect imperative mood (§6.3.3.3)</p> <p>Counterfactual mood <i>-naho</i> (§6.3.4)</p>	<p>Prohibitive mood</p> <p><i>ma-</i> ... <i>-we</i> ~ <i>-e</i> (§6.3.2)</p>

For independent clauses, tenses always have the time of utterance ('present time')<sup>2</sup> as the point of reference; for dependent clauses, the point of reference may be the time of utterance (absolute tense) or the time of some other clause (relative tense). Three tenses are distinguished: past, present and future tense. Present tense in Menggwa Dla conveys present time or near present time. Near present time refers to immediate past time or immediate future time, in other words time which is considered by the speaker to be near the present time, typically no more than a few minutes away from the present time. Correspondingly, past tense and future tense convey non-immediate past time and non-immediate future time respectively. If the progression of time is represented by a horizontal line running from left to right, and the time of utterance by an × on the horizontal time line, this is how the tenses in Menggwa Dla dissect the time line:

<sup>2</sup> 'Time of utterance' and 'present time' here refer to the time of utterance in real time or the time of utterance of a direct quote.



Also in this chapter 6, we will look at different forms of the copula and copular sentences (§6.4). Clauses in Menggwa Dla are most usually verb final, but it is not uncommon to find a single noun phrase occupying the post-verbal position. Copulas form a special class of verbs in Menggwa Dla. Essentially, copulas have one or more class I cross-reference suffixes (§5.2.1), and they mark less status, tense, mood and polarity categories than independent verbs.

## 6.1 Realis status

Positive realis verbs are formed with a (non-future) finite verb stem (§5.1.1-2), followed by subset A cross-reference suffix(es) (except for class IIB verbs which must take class IIB suffixes regardless; §5.2.2), and finally by a tense-aspect (TA) suffix. The finite verb stem, cross-reference suffix(es) and the TA suffix form one phonological word.

FINITE VERB STEM — CROSS-REF SUFFIX(ES) — TA SUFFIX

Negative realis verbs are formed with the lexical verb in its non-finite form plus a following negative realis verb *boke* (class I) or *boka* (class II). The non-finite verb stem (§5.1.1) of the lexical verb and the negative realis verb *boke/ boka* are separate phonological words. Class I, IH and IIB lexical verbs take *boke*, while class II and III lexical verbs take *boka*. The class of cross-reference suffixes used, however, are

determined by the verb class of the negative realis verb *boke* and *boka*: *boke* is a class I verb, and *boka* is a class II verb. See §6.1.3 for more discussions on negative realis verb forms.

NON-FINITE VERB STEM       $\left. \begin{array}{l} \{boke\} \\ \{boka\} \end{array} \right\} \text{--- CROSS-REF SUFFIX(ES) --- TA SUFFIX}$

All realis categories are in past or present tense, and they are declarative and non-modal in nature. One salient feature is that most realis tense-aspect suffixes have case clitic counterparts; it is most likely that these realis tense-aspect were grammaticalised from the case clitics. Cross-linguistically it is not uncommon to have tense-aspect-mood markers grammaticalised from case markings (e.g. Blake 2001:180-131). One transparent example is from Kalaw Lagaw Ya (a dialect of the Western Torres Strait language) where practically the whole set of case suffixes are also used on verbs to indicate tense or aspect (Kennedy 1984). Aikhenvald (2005) mentions that in Manambu (a Ndu language spoken in East Sepik Province in Papua New Guinea) and a wide range of other languages in her survey that case markers are often used with dependent clauses (often at the edge of the clause) to indicate various dependent relationships. These dependent clauses may be reanalysed as independent clauses ('desubordination'), and the case markers may be reanalysed as verbal tense-aspect-mood affixes. This is also likely the path of grammaticalisation of most of the realis tense-aspect suffixes in Menggwa Dla (except *-hwa*; see below); it is likely that the relative clauses (§7.1.1) were reanalysed as independent clauses, maybe through a stage of 'obligatory' cleft constructions. Amongst the four realis tense-aspect suffixes (see table 6.4 below), *-mbi*, *-hi* and *-hya* are the ones which can be used on relative clause verbs (§7.1.1); these are also the ones which have

corresponding case clitic forms. The remaining past tense suffix *-hwa* cannot be used on any dependent verbs, and *-hwa* is also the only realise tense-aspect suffix which does not have a corresponding case clitic form. The following table lists the realis suffixes and the corresponding case clitics.

Table 6.4 Realis suffixes and corresponding case clitics

Realis suffixes	Corresponding case clitics
present transitional/ stative <i>-mbi</i> (§6.1.1)	propriative case = <i>mbi</i> (§4.5.5)
present continuous <i>-hi</i> (§6.1.1)	adessive case = <i>hi</i> ~ = <i>sehi</i> (§4.5.3)
past <i>-hwa</i> (§6.1.2)	(no corresponding case clitic)
past with focus <i>-hya</i> (§6.1.2)	ablative case = <i>hya</i> (§4.5.3)

The negative realis verb *bokal/ boke* is no doubt related to the abessive case clitic =*mboka* (§4.5.5). There are no specific interrogative forms for realis categories. See §6.1.4 on questions in realis status.

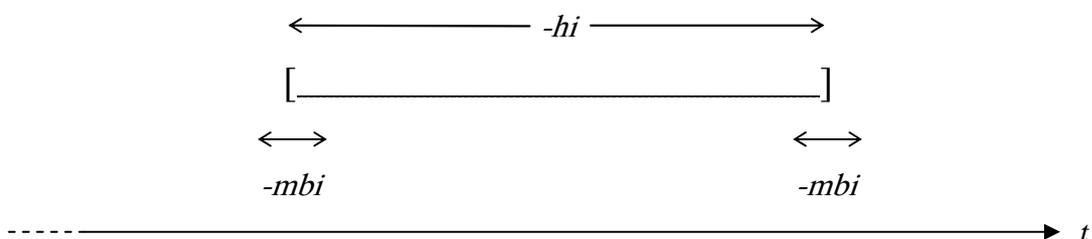
### 6.1.1 Present tense *-mbi* and *-hi*

The aspectual meaning of *-mbi* and *-hi* varies depending on whether the situation is dynamic (§6.1.1.1) or stative (§6.1.1.2). See also §7.1 on the use of *-mbi* and *-hi* in subordinate clauses, and §7.3.2 on the use of the adessive case clitic =*hi* with verbal noun phrases.

#### 6.1.1.1 Present transitional *-mbi* and present continuous *-hi* in dynamic situations

In dynamic situations, the present continuous suffix *-hi* signifies that the dynamic situation is ongoing in the present time. In other words, *-hi* signifies that

the present moment lies between the inchoation and completion point of the dynamic situation (if the situation is durative; see below for punctual situations). The present transitional suffix *-mbi* signifies that the inchoation point or the completion point of the dynamic situation is in present or near-present time. Using a left square bracket to represent the inchoation point, a right square bracket to represent the completion point, and a horizontal wavy line for the duration of a durative dynamic event, the use of present continuous *-hi* and present transitional *-mbi* is appropriate if the present moment falls within the time indicated by the arrows.



When a dynamic situation is ongoing at the present time, and the dynamic situation has just begun or is about to finish very soon (i.e. the transition point is in near present time), either *-hi* or *-mbi* can be used. Whether *-hi* or *-mbi* is used depends on whether the speaker chooses to emphasise the ongoing-ness of the situation (in which case the present continuous *-hi* would be used) or the transition in situation (in which case the present transitional *-mbi* would be used).

The semantic difference between present continuous *-hi* and present transitional *-mbi* in dynamic situations is best demonstrated by motion verbs like *hofu* (*hof-/gof-*) ‘come’ (class I) and *pi* (*pi-/po-*) ‘go’ (class I). Dynamic situations described by motion verbs usually have clearly defined inchoation and completion

points (i.e. ‘the start/ end of the journey’). For instance, in announcing one’s departure or arrival, the present transitional *-mbi* is appropriate as the time of departure or arrival is close to the time of utterance.

6-1. *pi-aha-mbi.*

go-1SG-PRES:TRNSN

‘I am going (now).’

6-2. *pater pitpit hof-u-mbi.*

Father Pitpit come-3MSG-PRES:TRNSN

‘Father Pitpit has just arrived/ is arriving very soon.’

6-3. *awe. munika hof-ehye-mbi.*

no nothing come-1DU-PRES:TRNSN

‘No, we have just come back (with) nothing.’ (N)

Example 6-1 is usually said when one is about to depart. Example 6-2 would be uttered when the speaker saw Father Pitpit approaching his intended destination, or when he has just arrived at his destination. Example 6-3, which is from a direct quote, was uttered by the author of the quote not long after the author has arrived at his house.

In describing a journey as ongoing in the present time, especially if the inception point and the completion point is not near the present time, present continuous *-hi* is used.

6-4. *kapali green river = na pi-Ø-hi.*

aeroplane Green River = ALL go-3MSG-PRES:CONT

‘The aeroplane is going to/ towards Green River.’

(e.g. seeing the aeroplane still high up in the sky; 60I)

6-5. *afta-mba-mbo hwi = na han-yei-hi.*

bathe-POST-NOML water = ALL go.down-N1FPL-PRES:CONT

‘They are going down to the stream to bathe.’ (e.g. seeing them walking

down towards the stream; *hanu* (*han-/ gan-*) ‘go down’ class IH)

The following are a few examples of present continuous *-hi* and present transitional *-mbi* involving other dynamic situations.

6-6. *tohala nomola monani-wi-hi.*

school child sing-N1FPL-PRES:CONT

‘The school children are singing.’ (*monani* ‘sing’ class I)

6-7. *dafumbo hiningiafe<sup>3</sup> (< hiningi-afa-hi).*

who:OBJ wait-2SG-PRES:CONT

‘Who are you waiting for?’ (seeing the addressee seemingly waiting for

someone) (*hiningi* ‘wait’ class I)

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<sup>3</sup> When a present continuous suffix *-hi* is suffixed to a cross-reference suffix which ends in *a* or *e*, *a-hi* and *e-hi* are both often coalesced as *e*.

6-8. *mi = la tirati pa-hya-a-hi.*

mother = GEN letter write-1SG-3FSG:O-PRES:CONT

‘I am writing a letter for mother.’ (*pefi* (*pa-*) ‘write’ class IIB)

6-9. *kufru-aha-mpi!*

vomit-1SG-PRES:TRNSN

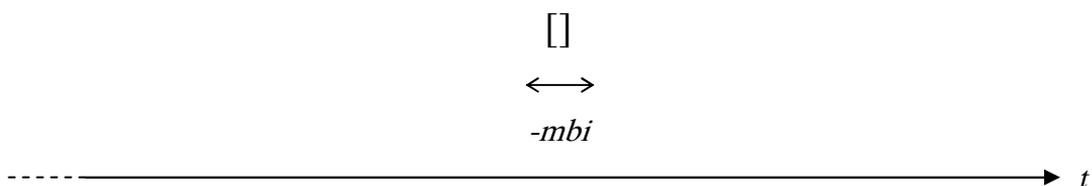
‘I am going to vomit now!’ (*kufru* ‘vomit’ class I)

6-10. radio news *humbli-aha-mpi.*

radio news listen-1SG-PRES:TRNSN

‘I am going to listen to the radio news now.’ (*humbli* ‘listen’ class I)

Punctual situations are situations of which the inchoation point is the completion point (e.g. *fēfi* (*fā-*) ‘leave’ class IIB), or the time between inchoation and completion point are perceived as insignificantly short (e.g. *amtali* ‘sneeze/ cough’ class I). Since punctual situations lack duration (i.e. ‘ongoing-ness’: significant length of time between the inchoation point and the completion point), *-hi* is not usually used. If a punctual event occurs in immediate-past or immediate-future time, the present transitional *-mpi* can be used. In the following diagram, the adjacent left and right square brackets represent a punctual situation. The use of present transitional *-mpi* is appropriate if the punctual event happened in present or near-present time.



6-11. *ai haf-wa-mbi.*

3 arrive-3FSG-PRES:TRNSN

‘She is arriving now/ has just arrived.’ (*hafu* (*haf-/ gaf-*) ‘arrive’ class I)

6-12. *yafli atimbati-wa-mbi.*

dog sneeze-3FSG-PRES:TRNSN

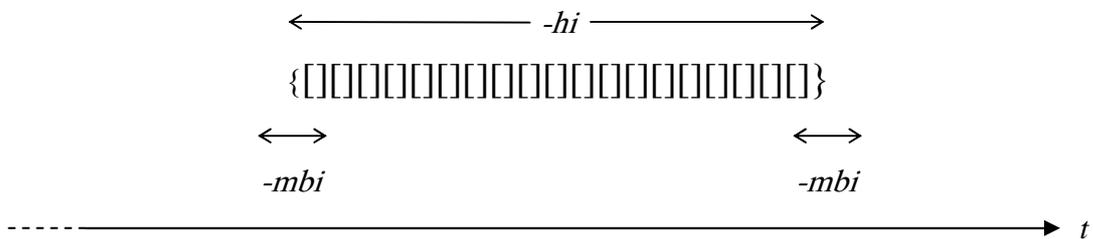
‘The dog has just sneezed.’ (*atimbati* ‘sneeze’ class I)

6-13. *pi-hya-a-mbi.*

throw-1SG-3FSG:O-PRES:TRNSN

‘I am throwing it now/ have just thrown it.’ (*pifi* (*pi-*) ‘throw’ class IIB)

However, in iterative situations, in which punctual situations occur successively, both present transitional *-mbi* and present continuous *-hi* can be used. The interactive situation is simply viewed as a single durative situation. (Each pair of square brackets represents a single instance of punctual situation.)

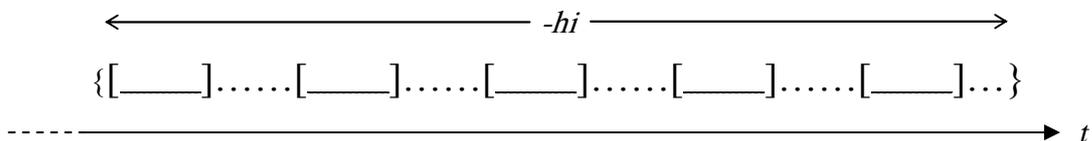


6-14. *fali potato-wa-hi.*

insect jump-3FSG-PRES:CONT

‘The insects are hopping around.’ (*potato* ‘insects jump’ class I)

Habitual situations, in which dynamic situations are repeated over a period of time, are also treated like durative situations. Present habitual situations are marked with present continuous *-hi* in independent verbs. The following diagram schematises a habitual event.



Independent clauses with *-hi* are often ambiguously indicating both a habitual and a non-habitual meaning.

6-15. *ai fofo-Ø-hi.*

3 smoke-3MSG-PRES:CONT

Habitual: ‘He smokes.’

Non-habitual: ‘He is smoking now.’ (*fofo* ‘smoke’/ ‘blow’ class I)

6-16. *hyela pupe-mbo hwi=na pi-aha-hi.*

clothe wash-NOML water=ALL go-1SG-PRES:CONT

Habitual: ‘I go to the creek to wash clothes.’

Non-habitual: ‘I am going to the creek to wash clothes.’

6-17. *hyela numu-hu-a-hi.*

clothe wear-1PL-3FSG:O-PRES:CONT

Habitual: 'We wear (Western) clothes.'

Non-habitual: 'We are wearing (Western) clothes now.'

(*numu* 'wear' class IIB)

6-18. *ye ser-i fa-hya-a-mbo, apa-aha-hi.*

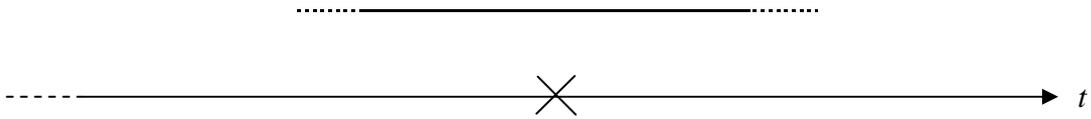
then eat-1SG COMPL-1SG-3FSG:O-DEP sleep-1SG-PRES:CONT

'Then I eat it, and then sleep.' (B)

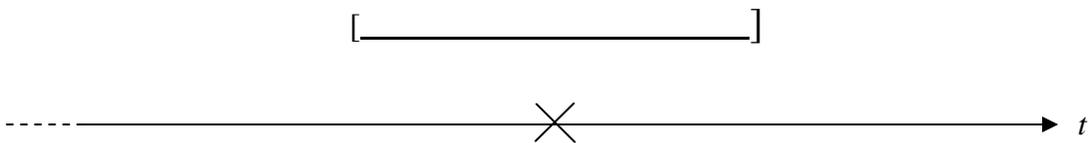
Non-habitual dynamic situations in negative polarity are stative as the situation is not occurring. See §6.1.1.2 on negative dynamic states.

#### 6.1.1.2 Present stative *-mbi* and present continuous *-hi* in non-dynamic situations

In present tense independent clauses which convey states or properties, present stative *-mbi* presents the present state/ property as not having salient inchoation and completion points, whereas present continuous *-hi* presents the present state/ property as temporally bounded. State- and property verbs marked with the present stative *-mbi* are portrayed as comparatively permanent, and states marked with the present continuous *-hi* are portrayed as comparatively temporary. Using a horizontal straight line to represent states/ properties, states/ properties marked with present stative *-mbi* can be represented by an unbound straight line running through past, present and future time (present time is marked with × on the timeline; the state may have inchoation and completion points, but the speaker is simply not emphasising them):



States marked with present continuous *-hi* can be represented by a straight line bound on the left by an inchoation point in the past and bound on the right by a completion point in the future.



Some states — including most physiological states — do not have clearly definable inchoation point and/ or completion point. They are normally marked with present stative *-mbi*.

6-19. *hufwehambi* (< *hufwe-aha-mbi*).

be.hot-1SG-PRES:STAT

‘I feel hot.’ (*hufwa* (*hufwe-*) ‘be hot’ class I)

6-20. *mi*, *gihali(=mbo) sufwa-aha-mbi*.

mother hunger(=OBJ) feel-1SG-PRES:STAT

‘Mother, I am hungry.’ (*sufwa* ‘feel’ class I; 90I)

6-21. *hambala(=mbo) kakalu-aha-mbi.*

stomach(=OBJ) ache-1SG-PRES:STAT

‘I have a stomach ache.’ (*kakalu* ‘ache’ class I)<sup>4</sup>

6-22. *safa sihi-wa-mbi.*

meat stink-3FSG-PRES:STAT

‘The piece of meat stinks.’ (*sihi* ‘stink/ give off smell’ class I)

In clauses describing meteorological situations, present stative *-mbi* is more common than present continuous *-hi*. Ultimately all meteorological situations have an inchoation point and a completion point (albeit they can be vague); *-mbi* is used because the speaker is not emphasising the inchoation and completion points.

6-23. *hwi hof-wa-mbi.*

water come-3FSG-PRES:STAT

‘It is raining.’ (*hofu* (*hof-/ gof-*) ‘come’ class I)

6-24. *efi-ya-a-mbi.*

become.dark-3SG-3FSG:O-PRES:STAT

‘It is becoming dark (evening).’ (*efifi* (*efi-*) ‘become dark’ class IIB)

Some verbs ambiguously convey both a change of state and the resulting state. States which are the result of another situation, called ‘inchoative-statives’ in

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<sup>4</sup> See §5.3.3 on the semantic roles and grammatical relations in a *kakalu* ‘ache’ clause.

Sasse (1991:36), are usually marked with present continuous *-hi* to emphasise there being a salient inchoation point to the state.

6-25. *aiahafumbo hwahwa-hi-Ø-hi.*

3SG:OBJ be.acquainted-1SG-3MSG:O-PRES:CONT

‘I know him.’ (*hwahwa* ‘be acquainted with’/ ‘know’ class II)

6-26. *ai numungwa-Ø-hi.*

3 be.dead-3MSG-PRES:CONT

‘He is dead.’ (*numungwa* ‘be dead’/ ‘die’ class I)

6-27. *ai hambala-wa-hi.*

3 be.pregnant-3FSG-PRES:CONT

‘She is pregnant.’ (*hambala* ‘be pregnant’ class I)

6-28. *hwilahi (< hwila = hi) yamo-wa-hi.*

five thumb = ADS be.time-3FSG-PRES:CONT

‘The time is five.’ (*yamo* ‘be time’ class I)

Stance verbs convey both the action and the resulted stance.

6-29. *tumbaingi wuli = mbe num-uma-hi.*

worship house = INS sit-N1MPL-PRES:CONT

‘They are sitting inside the church.’ (*numu (num-)* ‘sit’ class I; 50I)

The present stative *-mbi* is also possible with inchoative-statives. With the use of present stative *-mbi*, the speaker is simply not emphasising the inchoation point of the state. This is especially common when the subject is inanimate; the inchoation and completion points of states with inanimate subjects are usually low in discourse salience (i.e. the inchoation and completion points are ‘not worth emphasising’).

6-30. Sentani = *hi lapangani bukwa ek-wa-mbi*.

Sentani = ADS airport big exist-3FSG-PRES:STAT

‘There is a big airport in Sentani.’

(*eku (ek-)* ‘exist’ class I; Malay *lapangan* ‘field’; 80II)

6-31. *hyela kunang-wa-mbi*.

clothe be.hung.up:MASS-3FSG-PRES:STAT

‘The clothes are hung up (there).’

(*kunangu (kuna[ng/mb]-)* ‘hang up’/ ‘be hung up’ class I, mass undergoer)

6-32. *ihu kia-wa-mbi*.

mango bear.fruit-3FSG-PRES:STAT

‘The mango tree is bearing fruits.’ (*kia* ‘bear fruit’ class I; 70II)

Sometimes present stative *-mbi* is used to convey the lack of a conceivable completion point.

6-33. *ye sini=mbe pe-u-mbi rani.*

then sky=INS be.gone-3MSG-PRES:STAT that

‘(The moon) went into the sky and stayed there (ever since).’

(*pe* ‘be gone’ class I; A)

In Menggwa Dla, dynamic situations in negative polarity are treated like stative situations. Like other states, the present continuous *-hi* is used to convey that the negative state is temporary, and the present stative *-mbi* is used to convey that the negative state is permanent or the inchoation and completion points are not salient. See §6.1.3 for negative realis verb forms.

6-34. *seru boke-aha-hi.*

eat NEG:R-1SG-PRES:CONT

‘I have not eaten yet.’/ ‘I am not eating now.’

(*seru* (*ser-* *det-*) ‘eat’ class IH; *-aha* class IA)

6-35. *uti seru boke-wa-mbi.*

prawn eat NEG:R-3FSG-PRES:STAT

‘She does not eat prawns.’

6-36. *ai fofo boke-wa-hi.*

3 smoke NEG:R-3FSG-PRES:CONT

‘She is not smoking currently.’ (*fofo* ‘smoke’/ ‘blow’ class I)

6-37. *ai fofo boke-wa-mbi.*

3 smoke NEG:R-3FSG-PRES:STAT

‘She does not smoke.’

### 6.1.2 Past tense *-hwa* and past tense with focus *-hya*

Past tense in Menggwa Dla signifies non-immediate past time.<sup>5</sup> Both *-hwa* and *-hya* mark past tense, and neither are specified for aspectual information. The difference between *-hwa* and *-hya* is that *-hwa* only marks past tense, whereas *-hya* also indicates that a constituent in the clause or the whole clause is focused. We will see some examples of the semantically less marked *-hwa* first.

6-38. *tikyewi ap-ehye-hwa.*

small sleep-1DU-PAST

‘We slept a little bit.’ (*apu (ap-)* ‘sleep’ class I; N)

6-39. *kapali imbu na-Ø-pa-hwa.*

tree.kangaroos two shoot-3SG-N1DU:O-PAST

‘S/he shot two tree kangaroos.’ (*nefi (na-)* ‘shoot’ class II)

6-40. *mi = lofo klo-hya-a-hwa.*

mother = COM separate-1SG-3FSG:O-PAST

‘I parted with my mother.’ (*klo (klo-)* ‘separate’ class IIb)

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<sup>5</sup> Immediate past time is conveyed by present tense. See §6.1.

6-41. *hamani* tiga puluh ribu *sa-ninga-wa-hwa*.

yesterday three ten thousand give-1SG-3SG:O-PAST

‘Yesterday I gave him/ her thirty thousand (rupiah).’

(*sefi* (*sa-/ da-*) ‘give’ class III)

The past tense with focus suffix *-hya* signifies that a constituent of the clause or the whole clause is in focus. The focused constituent most usually represents new information. The function of *-hya* can be clearly demonstrated in content questions and answers to content questions; *-hya* is used in such clauses because there is always a focused constituent which seeks or provides new information. It is also grammatical for content questions and answers to be marked with *-hwa* instead of *-hya*; *-hwa* is simply indifferent to — rather than negating — the fact that something is focused in the clause. Nevertheless, *-hya* is much more common with content questions, and answers to content questions are also nearly always marked with *-hya*. See also §6.1.4 for the formation of interrogative sentences.

6-42. a. *nahombo fa-wa-hya?*

why leave-2SG-PAST

‘Why did you leave?’ (*fefi* (*fa-*) ‘leave’ class IIB)

b. *bapli kakalu-aha-hya*.

head ache-1SG-PAST:FOC

‘(Because) I had a headache.’ (*kakalu* ‘ache’ class I)

6-43. a. *nunɔni numungwa-Ø-hwa?*

when die-3MSG-PAST

‘When did he die?’ (*numungwa* ‘die’ class I)

b. *saftu simbu numungwa-Ø-hya.*

Saturday morning die-3MSG-PAST:FOC

‘He died on Saturday morning.’

On the other hand, past tense with focus *-hya* tends not to be used in polarity questions and answers to polarity questions as there is no focused constituents. Polarity questions are mostly answered simply with *ini* ‘yes’ or *awe* ‘no’ (§3.2.9). However, if a finite past tense verb is used in the answer, the verb is most usually marked with *-hwa*.

6-44. a. *hihiri-mbo homba-i-Ø-hwa?*

steal-NOML see-N1SG-3MSG:O-PAST

‘Did you see him stealing?’ (*hihiri* ‘steal’ class I; *homba* ‘see’ class II)

b. *ini homba-i-Ø-hwa.*            [? *homba-i-Ø-hya*]

yes see-N1SG-3MSG:O-PAST

‘Yes, I saw him (stealing).’

Of course *-hya* is not only used in answers; *-hya* is also often found in narrative clauses. When a piece of new information is presented, it is normal for the verb to be marked with *-hya* if the sentence is in past tense.

6-45. Vanimo haus sik = *mbe nung-wa-hya*.

Vanimo house sick = INS stand-3FSG-PAST:FOC

‘She was born in Vanimo hospital.’

(*nungu* (*numb-* ~ *nung-*) ‘stand’ class I)

6-46. *awe gwa yohwefa ulua hwi numami aya*

no but 1PL:GEN fat liquid above father

*saku-ya-a-hya akani = mbe*.

put-3SG-3FSG:O-PAST:FOC there = INS

‘Nothing really, father put our oil up in there.’

(*sakufi* (*saku-*) ‘put into container’ class IIB; A)<sup>6</sup>

A general way of indicating that the whole clause is in focus is using an auxiliary copula (*-hya* can only be used in past tense). See §6.4.3 for more discussions and examples (and also reasons why a sentence like the following is not considered a cleft construction).

6-47. *marini-aha-hi no!*

urinate-1SG-PRES:CONT COP:3FSG

‘I am urinating!’ (*marini* ‘urinate’ class I)

(e.g. uttered when urinating in the bush while someone is approaching)

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<sup>6</sup> See §5.4 on post-verbal noun phrases.

### 6.1.3 Negative realis verb *boke* and *boka*

A negative realis independent clause is formed by the lexical verb in its non-finite form (§5.1.1) followed by a negative realis verb *boke* (class I) or *boka* (class II). Whether *boke* or *boka* is used depends on the verb class membership (§5.2) of the lexical verb: for class I, IH and IIB lexical verbs, *boke* (class I) is used; for class II and III lexical verbs, *boka* (class II) is used. Class IH, IIB and III lexical verbs have mismatching classes of cross-reference suffixes between positive and negative realis verb forms: in positive realis, the finite lexical verb stem itself controls the class membership of the cross-reference suffixes; in negative realis, it is the negative realis verb *boke* (class I) or *boka* (class II) which controls the membership of the cross-reference suffixes. The following table summarises the class of cross-reference suffix used in positive realis verb form versus negative realis verb form.

Table 6.5 Cross-reference suffixes in positive/ negative realis independent verbs

verb class of verb stem/ verb lexeme:	I	IH	IIB	II	III
cross-referencing in positive realis:	IA	IHA	IIB	IIA	IIIA
negative realis verb:		<i>boke</i>		<i>boka</i>	
cross-referencing in negative realis:		IA		IIA	

The negative realis verbs *boke* and *boka* are not used as independent verbs. The negative realis verb always take subset A cross-referencing (§5.2). Other than independent verbs, the negative realis verb *boke/ boka* is also used in realis subordinate clause verbs (§7.1) and disjoint-referential chain clause verbs (§7.2.1). Coreferential chain clause verbs (§7.2.1) and non-finite chain clause verbs (§7.3.1)

cannot be in negative polarity, while verbal noun phrases (§7.3.2) are negated by an abessive case clitic =*mboka* (§4.5.5.)

Also notice that due to the *a*-deletion rule and the vowel degemination rule (§2.3), the initial segment of cross-reference suffixes which begin with *a* or *e* would be deleted by the preceding *a* or *e* segment at the end of *boke* or *boka*, e.g. *boke-aha* (NEG:R-1SG) > *bokeha*, *boke-efa* (NEG:R-1PL) > *bokefa*, *boka-Ø-a* (NEG:R-N1SG-3FSG:O) > *boka*. The following are examples of positive and negative realis verb forms formed from class I lexical verb lexemes.

Class I lexical verbs:

6-48. *ek-wa-hwa*.

exist-3FSG-PAST

‘It was here.’ (*eku* (*ek-*) ‘exist’ (non-human) class I; *-wa* class IA)

6-49. *eku boke-wa-hwa*.

exist NEG:R-3FSG-PAST

‘It was not here.’ (*-wa* class IA)

6-50. *sumblufu afta-aha-hwa*.

afternoon bathe-1SG-PAST

‘I washed myself this afternoon.’

(*afta* (*afta-*) ‘bathe oneself’ class I; *-aha* class IA)



Class IIB lexical verbs (notice the change in the cross-reference suffixes):

6-56. *klohyahwa* (< *klo-hya-a-hwa*).

separate-1SG-3FSG:O-PAST

‘I separated it.’ (*klo* ‘separate’ class IIB; *-hya-a* class IIB)

6-57. *klo bokehahwa* (< *boke-aha-hwa*).

separate NEG:R-1SG -PAST

‘I did not separate it.’ (*-aha* class IA)

6-58. *hafafnyahwa* (< *hafaf-nya-a-hwa*).

go.across-N1DU-3FSG:O-PAST

‘The two of them went across.’

(*hafu* (*haf(a(f))- / gaf(a(f)-*) ‘go across’ class IIB; *-nya-a* class IIB)

6-59. *hafu bokefahwa* (< *boke-afa-hwa*).

go.across NEG:R-N1MDU-PAST

‘The two men did not go across.’ (*-afa* class IA)

6-60. *hafu bokefyehwa* (< *boke-efye-hwa*).

go.across NEG:R-N1FDU-PAST

‘The two people did not go across.’<sup>7</sup> (*-efye* class IA)

The following are realis examples formed from class II and class III verb lexemes; class II and class III verb stems take the *boka* negative realis verb. The

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<sup>7</sup> Possible human referents of a feminine dual reference are two women or a women plus a man. See §4.1 for the semantics of grammatical gender in Dla.

class III verb lexeme *sefi* (*sa-/ da-*) has a special negative realis verb form *sekon*  
(which is then followed by *boka*).

Class II lexical verbs:

6-61. *klikli-Ø-a-hwa*.

scratch-N1SG-3FSG:O-PAST

‘S/he scratched.’ (*klikli* ‘scratch’ class II, *-Ø-a* class IIA)

6-62. *klikli bokahwa* (< *boka-Ø-a-hwa*).

scratch NEG:R-N1SG-3FSG:O-PAST

‘S/he did not scratch.’ (*-Ø-a* class IIA)

6-63. *ingufu-hi-Ø-hwa*.

attack-1SG-3MSG:O-PAST

‘I attacked him.’ (*ingufu* ‘attack’ class II; *-hi-Ø* class IIA)

6-64. *ingufu boka-hi-Ø-hwa*.

attack NEG:R-1SG-3MSG:O-PAST

‘I did not attack him.’ (*-hi-Ø* class IIA)

Class III lexical verbs:

6-65. *sa-ka-wa-hwa*.

give-3SG-3SG:O-PAST

‘S/he gave (it) to him/her.’ (*sefi* (*sa-/ da-*) ‘give’ class III; *-ka-wa* class IIIA)

6-66. *sekoni boka-i-Ø-hwa.*

give:NEG:R NEG:R-3MSG-3MSG:O-PAST

‘He did not give (it) to him.’ (-*i-Ø* class IIA; 50I)

6-67. *sekoni boka-ya-Ø-hwa.*

give:NEG:R NEG:R-3FSG-3MSG:O-PAST

‘She did not give (it) to him.’ (-*ya-Ø* class IIA)

6-68. *sekoni boka-Ø-a-hwa.*

give:NEG:R NEG:R-3SG-3FSG:O-PAST

‘S/he did not give (it) to her.’ (-*Ø-a* class IIA)

Another important point concerning the negative realis verb form is that in the eastern villages of Menggau and Wahai, but not in western villages of Wanggurinda and Menggwai, there is a trend of the negative irrealis suffix (*ma-/ -ma/ -me/ -m*; §6.3) being used to indicate negative realis.<sup>8</sup> These innovative negative realis verb forms are formed by the positive realis verb form (e.g. example 6-70) affixed by a negative irrealis affix, which now also indicates negative realis (e.g. example 6-69b, compare this with the conservative negative realis form 6-69a). Example 6-71 demonstrates a negative irrealis verb form.

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<sup>8</sup> While the negative semi-real verb form remains unchanged: the negative semi-real verb particle *ga* plus followed by a (future) finite verb stem plus subset A cross-reference suffix(es) (§6.2.2).

6-69. a. Conservative negative realis:

*wamla aflambli seru boke-aha-hwa.*

betel.nut many eat NEG:R-1SG-PAST

‘I did not chew (‘eat’) a lot of betel nut.’ (-*aha* class I)

b. Innovative negative realis:

*wamla aflambli ma-ser-ihahwa.*

betel.nut many NEG:R-eat-1SG-PAST

‘I did not chew (‘eat’) a lot of betel nut.’ (-*ihahwa* class IH)

Positive realis:

6-70. *wamla aflambli ser-ihahwa.*

betel.nut many eat-1SG-PAST

‘I chewed (‘ate’) a lot of betel nut.’

Negative irrealis:

6-71. *wamla aflambli ma-ser-i-nahohwa.*

betel.nut many NEG:IR-eat-1SG-CNTR

‘I would not have chewed (‘eaten’) a lot of betel nut.’ (-*i* class IHB)

#### 6.1.4 Questions in realis status

Except for copulas (§6.4), there are no verb forms which indicate interrogative mood specifically. Polarity questions are only distinguished from their statement counterparts by intonation: statements usually end in low pitch, whereas questions end in a high pitch (§2.4.2).

6-72. *sunḡwaniáfè (< sunḡwani-afa-hi)?*

sick-2SG-PRES:CONT

‘Are you sick?’ (*sunḡwani* ‘sick’ class I)

6-73. *hufwe-efà-mbi?      gihalfi-efà-mbi?*

be.hot-2SG-PRES:STAT    be.cold-2SG-PRES:STAT

‘Are you feeling hot? Are you feeling cold?’

(*hufwa* (*hufwe-*) ‘be hot’ class I; *gihalfi* ‘be cold’ class I)

6-74. Rupiah *han-wa-mbi?*

Rupiah go.down-3FSG-PRES:TRANSN

‘Has the (exchange rate of) Rupiah gone down?’

(*hanu* (*han-/ gan-*) ‘go down’ class IH)

6-75. *tumbaḡgi = mbo pi-wi-hwa?*

worship = OBJ    go-N1FPL-PAST

‘Did they go to mass?’ (*pi* (*pi-/ po-*) ‘go’ class I)

Polarity questions may have the question tag *o awe* ‘or not’. However, the positive counterpart of *o ini* ‘or yes’ is not found, presumably because *ini* cannot function as a predicate on its own, unlike *awe* (§3.2.9).

6-76. *gihalfi sufwa-afa-mbi      o awe?*

hunger feel-2SG-PRES:STAT or not

‘Are you hungry or not?’ (*sufwa* ‘feel’ class I)

A realis polar question can also carry a realis interrogative copula *be* (§6.4.1), either in its finite form (*b-/ be-*; example 6-77) or non-finite form (*be*; example 6-78).

6-77. *fɔfɔ-afá-hi*                      *befu* (< *be-afu*)?  
smoke-2SG-PRES:CONT                      COP:INTRG-2SG  
'Do you smoke?' (*fɔfɔ* 'smoke'/ 'blow' class I; 70II)

6-78. *ap-u-hi*                      *be?*  
sleep-3MSG-PRES:CONT COP:INTRG  
'Is he sleeping?' (*apu* (*ap-*) 'sleep' class I)

There are no special syntactic rules governing the question word(s) in content questions; word order is rather free in Menggwa Dla in general (§5.4).

6-79. *ai ga = na*                      *pi-wa-hwa?*  
3    where = ALL    go-3FSG-PAST  
'Where did she go?'

6-80. *dahfumbo = lofɔ hwafo-afá-hi?*  
who:OBJ = COM    talk-2SG-PRES:CONT  
'With whom are you talking?' (*hwafo* 'talk' class I)

6-81. *kapali = mbe    tupam nuṅni    sa-hi-a                    hahof-yei-hwa?*  
 aeroplane = INS thing    how.much carry-N1FPL-3FSG:O go.up-N1FPL-PAST  
 ‘How much stuff did they take onto the aeroplane?’  
 (*sefi* (*sa-*) ‘carry’ class II, *hahofu* (*hah(o(f))-/ gak(o(f))-* ‘go up’ class IH)

We have seen above that realis polar questions may carry a present interrogative copula. Realis content questions may also carry a copula, but a present declarative copula is used instead. The copula used can be either finite (example 6-82) or non-finite (example 6-83).

6-82. *nahombo tutuafe (< tutu-afa-hi)                    ny-afu?*  
 why                                    ask-2SG-PRES:CONT    COP:PRES-2SG  
 ‘Why are you asking?’ (*tutu* ‘ask’ class I; 80I)

6-83. *ga = nambo pi-afa-hya                    nu?*  
 where = ALL go-2SG-PAST:FOC COP:PRES  
 ‘Where did you go?’

See also §6.4 on other copular questions.

## 6.2 Semi-realism status

Semi-realism status encompasses only one tense-mood category — future declarative (other future categories are irrealis; §6.3). Future declarative verbs of positive and negative polarities have markedly different morphological forms: positive semi-realism verbs are characterised by a serialised ‘positive semi-realism verb’

*samby* (class I) (§6.2.1), whereas negative semi-realistic verbs have a negative semi-realistic particle *ga* (§6.2.2). Finite verb stems are used for semi-realistic verb forms (§5.1.1), and if the lexical verb lexeme makes a distinction between future versus non-future finite verb stems (§5.1.2), the future form must be used. The form of the positive semi-realistic verb varies greatly depending on the person-number-gender features of the subject, and it is difficult to give a general morphological template of positive semi-realistic verbs. In some cases the positive semi-realistic verb forms a separate phonological word from the lexical verb, and in other cases the positive semi-realistic verb forms a phonological word together with the lexical verb (see §6.2.1). On the other hand, negative semi-realistic verbs are morphologically simple in comparison. Negative semi-realistic verb forms begin with a negative semi-realistic particle *ga* and then followed by a (future) finite verb stem (§5.1.1-2) together with its cross-reference suffix(es). The cross-reference suffixes used in negative semi-realistic verb forms are always class A suffixes (§5.2). The negative semi-realistic particle *ga* is a separate phonological word.

*ga* (FUTURE) FINITE VERB STEM — CLASS A CROSS-REF SUFFIX(ES)

The following verbs exemplify realistic versus semi-realistic, and positive versus negative verb forms of the verb lexeme *hofu* (*hof-/gof-*) ‘come’ (class I).

6-84. *hof-efa-hwa.*

come-1PL-PAST

‘We came.’ (*-efa* class IA)

6-85. *hofu boke-efa-hwa.*

come NEG:R-1PL-PAST

‘We did not come.’

<p>6-86. <i>gof-efu</i>      <i>samby-efu</i>.</p> <p>come:FUT-1PL POS:SMR-1PL</p> <p>‘We will come.’ (-a class IB)</p>	<p>6-87. <i>ga</i>      <i>gof-efa</i>.</p> <p>NEG:SMR come:FUT-1PL</p> <p>‘I will not come.’</p>
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The functional differences between semi-realis verbs and other future verb forms will be discussed in §6.2.3.

### 6.2.1 Forms of positive semi-realis verbs

Semi-realis verbs usually come in the form of a lexical verb serialised with the positive semi-realis verb *samby* (class I) (which is not used as a lexical verb).

The lexical verb usually has a (future) finite verb stem (§5.1.1-2) and takes a:

- class IB/ IBH cross-reference suffix for class I/ IH verbs;
- class IIB SUBJ plus class IIB OBJ suffix for class IIB verbs;
- class IIA SUBJ plus class IIB OBJ suffix for class II verbs; and
- class III SUBJ plus class IIIB OBJ suffix for class III verbs.

The positive semi-realis verb usually comes in the form of *samby* taking its own class IB cross-reference suffix. The following is an example formed from *yarifi* (*yari-*) ‘stir sago’ (class IIB).

<p>6-88. <i>yari-nya-a</i>      <i>samby-efi</i>.</p> <p>stir.sago-N1DU-3FSG:O POS:SMR-N1FDU</p> <p>‘The two of them will stir sago.’ (-<i>nya-a</i> class IIB, -<i>efi</i> class IB)</p>
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The following table demonstrates the positive semi-realis verb *samby* and its class IB cross-reference suffixes. The positive semi-realis verb *samby* is usually a

morphologically free word (both the lexical verb and *samby* have their own stress domain; §2.4.1), except when the subject is: a) 1SG, in which case the positive semi-realis verb stem becomes *-mby*, and the grammatical verb becomes morphologically bound to the preceding lexical verb (and *-mby* belongs to the stress domain of the lexical verb, i.e. *-mby* does not receive a primary stress); b) 3MSG, 3FSG or N1MPL, in which case the positive semi-realis verb stem becomes *-mb*, the grammatical verb becomes morphologically bound to the preceding lexical verb (*-mb* also belongs to the stress domain of the lexical verb), and the morphological structure of the grammatical verb itself is quite irregular.

Table 6.6 Positive semi-realis verb stem and its cross-reference affix(es)

		1	N1	
			2	3
SG	M	<i>-mby-a</i>	<i>samby-afu</i>	<i>-ah-u-<u>mb</u>-i</i>
	F			<i>-ah-o-<u>mb</u>-e</i>
DU	M	<i>samby-ehi</i>	<i>samby-afani</i>	
	F			<i>samby-efi</i>
PL	M	<i>samby-efu</i>	<i>-ah-u-<u>mb</u>-imu</i>	
	F			<i>samby-ei</i>

The class IB cross-reference suffixes are repeated below for comparison.

Table 6.7 Class IB cross-reference suffixes (repeated from table 5.5 in §5.2.1)

SUBJ→	1SG	1DU	1PL	2SG	3MSG	3FSG	N1MDU	N1FDU	N1MPL	N1FPL
V_	<i>-a</i>	<i>-ehi</i>	<i>-efu</i>	<i>-afu</i>	<i>-u</i>	<i>-o</i>	<i>-afani</i>	<i>-efi</i>	<i>-mu</i>	<i>-wi</i>
C_									<i>-umu</i>	<i>-ei</i>

### 6.2.1.1 Class I/ IH positive semi-realis verbs

The cross-reference suffix which a class I/ IH lexical verb stem takes is a usual class IB/ IHB cross-reference suffix, except that:

- when the subject is 3SG, the cross-reference suffix is *-a* (class I)/ *-ya* (class IH) (these irregular cross-reference suffixes do not mark gender distinctions) instead of the regular class IB/ IHB cross-reference suffixes of *-u* (3MSG) and *-o* (3FSG); and
- when the subject is N1MPL, the cross-reference suffix is *-uma* (for both class I and class IH) instead of the regular class IB/ IHB cross-reference suffix *-umu*.

When the subject is first person non-singular, the cross-reference suffix (class IB: *-ehi* (1DU), *-efu* (1PL)); class IHB: *-yehi* (1DU), *-yefu* (1PL)) can be contracted with the following positive semi-realis verb root *samby*: *-(y)ehi samby* and *-(y)efu samby* becomes *-(y)emby* (-1NSG:POS:SMR). For class I verbs of which the finite verb stem (§5.2.1) ends in a vowel, a *-l* ligature has to be inserted between the lexical main verb stem and its cross-reference suffix.<sup>9</sup>

We will first look at a few examples of positive future declarative verbs with consonant-ending class I/IH lexical verb stems.

6-89. *ap-a-mby-a*.

sleep-1SG-POS:SMR-1SG

‘I will sleep.’ (*apu* (*ap-*) ‘sleep’ class I)

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<sup>9</sup> Class IH verbs all have consonant ending finite verb stems (§5.2.1).

6-90. *numbahombe.*

*numb-a-ah-o-mb-e*

stand:3SG-3-F-POS:SMR-F-3SG

‘She will stand.’ (*nunḡu* (*numb-~nunḡ-*) ‘stand’ class I)

6-91. *gof-afani*            *samby-afani.*

come:FUT-N1MDU POS:SMR-N1MDU

‘The two men will come.’ (*hofu* (*hof-/gof-*) ‘come’ class I)

6-92. *dam-efu*        *samby-efu*    ~ *dam-emby-efu.*

take:FUT-1PL POS:SMR-1PL ~ take:FUT-1NSG:POS:SMR-1PL

‘We will take (it).’ (*semi* (*semi-/dam-*) ‘take’ class I)

6-93. *detyahumbi.*

*det-ya-ah-u-mb-i*

eat:FUT-3SG-3-M-POS:SMR-M

‘He will eat.’ (*seru* (*ser-/det-*) ‘eat’ class IH)

6-94. *gan-yehi*            *sambi-ehi.*    ~ *gan-yemby-ehi.*

go.down:FUT-1DU POS:SMR-1DU ~ go.down:FUT-1NSG:POS:SMR-1DU

‘The two of us will go down.’ (*hanu* (*han-/gan-*) ‘go down’ class IH)

The following are examples of class I verbs with vowel-ending finite verb stems (§5.2.1). Note the *-/*ligature.

6-95. *numungwa-l-ei samby-ei.*

die-LIG-3FPL POS:SMR-3FPL

‘They will die.’ (*numungwa* ‘die’ class I)

6-96. *po-l-afu samby-afu.*

go:FUT-LIG-2SG POS:SMR-2SG

‘You will go.’ (*pi (pi-/ po-)* ‘go’ class I)

6-97. *hwafolahumbi.*

*hwafō-l-a-ah-u-mb-i*

talk-LIG-3SG-3-M-POS:SMR-3SG

‘He will talk.’ (*hwafō* ‘talk’ class I)

#### 6.2.1.2 Class IIB/ II/ III positive semi-realis verbs

For class IIB lexical verb stems, class IIB subject and class IIB object suffixes are used (class IIB verb stems can only take class IIB cross-reference suffixes; §5.2.2). For class II lexical verb stems (§5.2.2), a class IIA subject suffix and a class IIB object suffix are used. For class III lexical verb stems, a class III subject suffix and a class IIIB object suffix are used (there is no subset A/B distinction for class III subject cross-reference suffixes; §5.2.3).

For first person dual (1DU) and plural (1PL) subjects only, the positive semi-realis verb stem (§6.2.1) can freely alternate between *samby* (morphologically free)

and *-mby* (bound to the preceding lexical verb). The following are examples of positive semi-realised verbs with class IIB, II or III lexical verb stems:

Class IIB verbs:

6-98. *ka-nya-pu*                      *samby-afani*.

break-N1DU-N1DU:O POS:SMR-N1MDU

‘The two of you/ them broke the two things.’

(*kefi* (*ka-*) ‘break something’ class IIB; *-nya-pu* class IIB)

6-99. *gafa-hu-a*                      *samby-efu*.

go.across:FUT-1PL-3FSG:O POS:SMR-1PL

‘We will go across.’

(*hafu* (*haf(a(f))*)/ *gaf(a(f))*)- ‘go across/ pass’ class IIB; *-hu-a* class IIB)

Class II verbs:

6-100. *na-Ø-i-ah-u-mb-i*.

shoot-N1SG-1SG:O-3-M-POS:SMR-3MSG

‘He will shoot me.’ (*nefi* (*na-*) ‘shoot’ class II; *-Ø* class IIA, *-i* class IIB)

6-101. *hoho-ha-ni-mby-a*.

tell-1SG-2SG:O-POS:SMR-1SG

‘I will tell you (SG).’ (*hoho* ‘tell’ class II; *-ha* class IIA, *-ni* class IIB)

Class III verb stems:

6-102. *da-ka-i-ah-o-mb-e.*

give:FUT-3SG-1SG:O-3-F-POS:SMR-3FSG

‘She will give (it) to me.’ (*sefi* (*sa-/ da-*) ‘give’ class III; *-ka* III, *-i* IIIB)

6-103. *da-niŋgi-ni*                      *samby-ei.*

give:FUT-N1FPL-2SG:O POS:SMR-N1FPL

‘They will give (it) to you.’ (*-niŋgi* class III, *-ni* class IIIB)

## 6.2.2 Forms of negative semi-realised verbs

A negative semi-realised verb is formed by a negative semi-realised particle *ga* followed by a (future) finite verb stem (§5.1.1), and then suffixed by subset A cross-reference suffixes (§5.2), again with the exception that class IIB verb stems must take class IIB cross-reference suffixes (§5.2.2).

6-104. *ga*                      *namb-aha.*

NEG:SMR hang.up-1SG

‘I will not hang (it) up.’ (*nangu* (*namb--nang-*) ‘hang up’ class I; *-aha* class IA)

6-105. *ga*                      *det-yefa.*

NEG:SMR eat:FUT-1PL

‘We will not eat.’ (*seru* (*ser-/ det-*) ‘eat’ class IH; *-yefa* class IHA)

6-106. *ga numu-ya-a.*

NEG:SMR wear-3SG-3FSG:O

‘S/he will not wear (it).’ (*numu* ‘wear’ class IIB; *-ya-a* class IIB)

6-107. *ga wamblwa-Ø-nya.*

NEG:SMR force-N1SG-2SG:O

‘S/he will not force you.’ (*wamblwa* ‘force’ class II; *-Ø-nya* class IIA)

6-108. *ga da-ŋgi-mua.*

NEG:SMR give:FUT-N1FPL-1NSG:O

‘They will not give (it) to us.’

(*sefi* (*sa-/ da-*) ‘give’ class III; *-ŋgi-mua* class IIIA)

When the verb stem is a vowel-ending class I verb stem (§5.2.1), an *-l* ligature is placed between the verb stem and the class IA cross-reference suffix, unless the subject is third person masculine singular (3MSG), in which case the cross-reference suffix is *-Ø* and the *-l* ligature is not used. The following are a few examples of negative semi-realis verb forms with vowel-ending class I verb stems.

6-109. *ga sungwani-l-wa.*

NEG:SMR be.sick-LIG-3FSG

‘She will not be sick.’ (*sungwani* ‘be sick’ class I; *-wa* class IA)

6-110. *ga sungwani-Ø.*

NEG:SMR be.sick-3MSG

‘He will not be sick.’ (-Ø class IA)

6-111. *ga mome-l-efye.*

NEG:SMR be.together-LIG-N1FDU

‘They two will not be together.’ (*mome* ‘be together’ class I; *-efye* class IA)

6-112. *ga sumbu-l-uma.*

NEG:SMR laugh-LIG-N1MPL

‘They will not laugh.’ (*sumbu* ‘laugh’ class I; *-uma* class IA)

6-113. *ga numungwa-l-ei.*

NEG:SMR die-LIG-N1FPL

‘They will not die.’ (*numungwa* ‘die’ class I; *-ei* class IA)

### 6.2.3 Functions of semi-realis verbs

Verbs in semi-realis status are statements which convey the speaker’s absolute certainty that a proposition will hold in the future, and that the speaker is committed to the truth value of the proposition. Semi-realis sentences cannot be used as questions; future tense questions are in irrealis mood (§6.3). The following are a few examples of clauses with verbs in semi-realis status.

6-114. *kyambe sihafa wuli=na po-l-a-mby-a.*

tomorrow 2SG:GEN house = ALL go:FUT-LIG-1SG-POS:SMR-1SG

‘I will (certainly) go to your house tomorrow.’ (*pi* (*pi-/ po-*) ‘go’ class I; 60II)

6-115. *sihafumbo =lofo ilo-na-a samby-efi.*

2:OBJ = COM work-N1DU-3FSG:O POS:SMR-N1FDU

‘The two of them will (certainly) work with you.’ (*ilo* ‘work’ class II; 50I)

6-116. *hihiri =mbo ga homba-Ø-ya.*

steal = DEP NEG:SMR see-N1SG-1SG:O

‘[S/he/ (?) you] will (certainly) not see me stealing (it).’

(*homba* ‘see’ class II; 80II)

Other than using positive semi-realis verb forms, another common strategy of conveying positive future declarative meaning is using a posterior verbal noun (§7.3.2) plus an optional present copula (§6.4). In the following example, *pi-mba-Ø* (go-POST-NOML) is a posterior verbal noun.

6-117. *kyambe sihafa wuli pi-mba-Ø no.*

tomorrow 2SG:GEN house go-POST-NOML COP:3FSG

*lit.* ‘There will be going to your house.’ (*pi* (*pi-/ po-*) ‘go’ class I)

The pragmatic difference between semi-realis verbs and posterior verbal nouns is that with semi-realis verbs, the speaker is conveying his or her certainty that the situation will occur in the future, whereas with posterior verbal nouns, the

speaker is conveying his or her belief that the situation will occur, but is not committed to the truth value of the proposition. For instance, the speaker in example 6-114 above (semi-realised verb) and the speaker in example 6-117 above (posterior verbal noun) both believe that s/he will go to the addressee's house the day after the time of utterance. If the speaker of example 6-114 fails to go to the addressee's house for whatever reason, the speaker is likely to be considered a liar. On the other hand, if the speaker of example 6-117 fails to go to the addressee's house, the speaker is unlikely to be considered a liar since the speaker has not committed to the realisation of the proposition.

Posterior verbal nouns do not convey uncertainty; to convey uncertainty, a tentative mood verb would be used (§6.3.3.1-2).

6-118. *kyambe sihafa wuli=na po-m-a-ni.*

tomorrow 2SG:GEN house = ALL go:FUT-NEG:IR-1SG-TENT

'Maybe I will go to your house tomorrow.' (-a class IB)

### 6.3 Irrealis status

The following are the irrealis categories found in independent verbs; the irrealis tense-mood suffixes are in paradigmatic opposition (this excludes the *ma-* prefix used in prohibitive mood which is a negative irrealis prefix; see below):

- Imperative and jussive moods  $-\emptyset$  (§6.3.1);
- Cautious mood  $-e \sim -we$  (§6.3.2);
- Prohibitive mood  $ma-\dots-e \sim -we$  (§6.3.2);

- Tentative mood *-ni* (§6.3.3.1-2);
- Future interrogative mood *-ni* (§6.3.3.3); and
- Counterfactual mood *-nahō* (§6.3.4).

There is no affix marking positive irrealis specifically. The positive irrealis verb forms have the following morphological structure (the prohibitive mood verbs are never in positive polarity):

FINITE VERB STEM — CROSS REF SUFFIX(ES) — TM SUFFIX

Formally, the negative irrealis verbs differ from the positive irrealis verbs by having an extra negative irrealis affix which is affixed to the verb stem. The negative realis affix has the form of *ma-*, *-ma*, *-me* or *-m*. The negative realis affix is always *ma-* when affixed to non-finite verb stems (§5.1.1). For finite verb stems, the regular allomorphy of the negative irrealis affix is as follows:

- *-ma* is suffixed to class IIB, class II or class III verb stems.
- *ma-* is prefixed to consonant ending class I or class IH verb stems;
- *-me* is suffixed to vowel ending class I verb stems, except that when the following class IB cross-reference suffix begins with *a*, the negative irrealis suffix becomes *-m*.

Nevertheless, there are verb lexemes with irregular negative irrealis affixes, e.g. *sihefī* (*siha-*) ‘remove cooked food from fire’ (class IIB) has a negative irrealis infix *[ma]*: *si[ma]ha-*. Except for verb lexemes which have irregular negative

irrealis affix and/ or irregular disjoint-referential affix (§7.2.1), the negative irrealis affix is formally identical with the disjoint-referential affix, except that *-m* is not used in disjoint-referential chain verbs as they always take subset A cross-reference suffixes.

### 6.3.1 Imperative and jussive moods

‘Imperative’ and ‘jussive’ are simply terminologies given to different parts of the same imperative-jussive paradigm. In Menggwa Dla, imperative mood conveys command, exhortation, invitation or permission towards second person subject referent(s), whereas jussive mood conveys command, exhortation, invitation or permission towards first or third person referent(s). Imperative-jussive verbs are formed with a finite verb stem, followed by a set of cross-reference suffixes (see below) and then followed by a zero imperative-jussive suffix.

For verb lexemes which have a future versus non-future finite verb stem distinction (§5.1.2), a tense distinction of present versus future is possible in their imperative-jussive forms. Present tense in Menggwa Dla conveys present time, immediate past time and immediate future time, whereas future tense conveys non-immediate future time (§6). Present imperative-jussive conveys that the speaker wishes that the content of the command/ exhortation/ invitation/ permission be fulfilled immediately after the time of utterance, whereas future imperative-jussive conveys that the speaker wishes that the content of the command/ exhortation/ invitation/ permission be fulfilled sometime in the future but not immediately.

Future imperative-jussive verbs have a future finite verb stem, subset A cross-reference suffix(es) and a zero imperative-jussive suffix, except for class IIB verbs which must take class IIB cross-reference suffixes (§5.2.2). Present imperative-jussive verbs have a non-future finite verb stem instead, and the cross-reference suffixes involved are similar to those of positive semi-realis verbs (§6.2.1) and other irrealis categories like tentative and counterfactual moods (§6.3.3-4):

- class IB/ IHB cross-reference suffix(es) for class I/ IH verb stems;
- class IIB subject plus class IIB object suffixes for class IIB verb stems;
- class IIA subject plus class IIB object suffixes for class II verb stems; and
- class III subject plus class IIB object suffixes for class III verb stems.

The following are a few examples of imperative-jussive verbs.<sup>10</sup>

Present imperative:

Future imperative:

6-119. *hof-afu-Ø!*

6-120. *gof-afa-Ø!*

come-2SG-IMP

come:FUT-2SG-IMP

‘Come (now)!’

‘Come (later)!’

(*hofu* (*hof-/ gof*) ‘come’ class I; *-afu* class IB, *-afa* class IA)

6-121. *ser-yefi-Ø!*

6-122. *det-yefye-Ø!*

eat-N1FDU-IMP

eat:FUT-N1FDU-IMP

‘You two eat (now)!’

‘You two eat (later)!’

(*seru* (*ser-/ det-*) ‘eat’ class IH; *-yefi* class IB, *-yefye* class IA)

<sup>10</sup> There are no examples of class II verbs in this subsection as no class II verbs make a distinction of future versus non-future finite verb stems.

6-123. *sama-wa-a-Ø!*

cook-2SG-3FSG:O-IMP

‘Cook it (now)!’

(*samefi* (*sama-/ dama-*) ‘cook’ class IIB; *-wa-a* class IIB)

6-124. *dama-wa-a-Ø!*

cook:FUT-2SG-3FSG:O-IMP

‘Cook it (later)!’

Present/ future jussives:

6-125. *yowala wuli [hahof-u-Ø / gakof-u-Ø].*

1SG:GEN house [go.up-3MSG-JUS / go.up:FUT-3MSG-JUS]

‘He should go into my house (now/ later).’

(*hahofu* (*hah- ~ hahof* *gak- ~ gakof-*) ‘go up’ class IH; *-u* class IHA/ IHB)

6-126. *yafli wi [sa-ningu-u-Ø / da-ningu-wa].*

dog child [give-1PL-3SG:O-JUS / give:FUT-1PL-3SG:O-JUS]

‘Let us give him/her the puppy (now/ later).’

(*sefi* (*sa-/ da-*) ‘give’ class III; *-ningu-u* class IIIB, *ningu-wa* class IIIA)

For verb lexemes which do not have a future versus non-future distinction for their finite verb stems (which is the case with most verb lexemes), no tense distinction is made for their imperative-jussive verb forms. These verb lexemes form their imperative-jussive verb forms like the present tense imperative-jussive verb forms described in the previous paragraph (with class IB/ IHB/ IIB SUBJ + IIB OBJ/ IIA SUBJ + IIB OBJ/ III SUBJ + IIIB OBJ cross-referencing; see above).

Functionally, the unmarked interpretation of these imperative/ jussive verbs is also the present tense/ immediate future time interpretation, i.e. that the speaker wishes

that the content of the command/ exhortation/ invitation/ permission be fulfilled immediately.

6-127. *dukwa-hi-a-Ø!*

wake.up-N1FPL-3FSG:O-IMP

‘All of you wake up (now)!’ (*dukwefi* (*dukwa-*) ‘wake up’ class IIB; 60I)

6-128. *yowala nitufu hwatu-afu-Ø!*

1SG:GEN lime search-2SG-IMP

‘Search for my lime (now)!’/ ‘Find some lime for me (now)!’

(*hwatu* ‘search’ class I; *-afu* class IB)

6-129. *hai fofo-wa-a-Ø!*

fire blow-2SG-3FSG:O-IMP

‘Light the fire!’

(*fofo* ‘blow’ class IIB; *-wa-a* class IIB; 50I)

6-130. *hupla imbu bi-na-pu-Ø!*

container two hold-N1DU-N1DU:O-IMP

‘You two hold the two pots!’

(*bi* ‘hold’ class II; *-na* class IIA, *-pu* class IIB; 70I)

6-131. *homba-Ø-i-Ø!*

see-N1SG-1SG:O-IMP

‘Look at me!’ (*homba* ‘see/ look’ class II; *-Ø* class IIA, *-i* class IIB)

6-132. *afta-efu-Ø!*

bathe-1PL-JUS

‘Let us bathe (now).’ (*afta* ‘bathe’ class I; *-efu* class IB)

A non-immediate future interpretation can be lexically specified by the temporal word *sunḡu* ‘later’ (§3.2.8).

6-133. *sunḡu afta-efu-Ø.*

later bathe-1PL-JUS

‘Let us bathe later.’

All class II verb stems end in a vowel (§5.2.2). When a class II verb stem is followed by the class II suffixes of *-Ø-a* (-N1SG-3FSG:O), a lot of speakers — older speakers in particular — prefer to have an *-l* ligature between the verb stem and the cross-reference suffixes (especially when the verb stem also ends with *a*).

6-134. *fa-l-Ø-a-Ø!*

pick.betel.nut-LIG-N1SG-3FSG:O-IMP

‘You pick betel nut!’

(*fā* ‘pick betel nut’ class II; *-Ø* class IIA, *-a* class IIB)

6-135. *homba-l-Ø-a-Ø!*

see-LIG-N1SG-3FSG:O-IMP

‘Look!’ (*homba* ‘see/ look’ class II)

6-136. *pupe(-l)-Ø-a-Ø!*

wash(-LIG)-N1SG-3FSG:O-IMP

‘Wash it!’ (*pupe* ‘wash’ class II)

Commands or exhortations conveyed by the imperative-jussive mood outlined in this subsection are not necessarily viewed as direct or rude, but a polite and less direct form of command/ exhortation/ invitation/ permission can be conveyed using tentative mood in future tense. See §6.3.3.2.

### 6.3.2 Prohibitive and cautious moods

By using the cautious mood verb form, the speaker is advising the addressee (sometimes the speaker him/herself) to be cautious of or refrain from some situation, usually because the fulfilment of that situation would potentially have adverse effect on someone. Cautious mood verb forms are non-finite; there is no cross-referencing on the verb. Cautious verb form is formed by a non-finite verb stem followed by a cautious suffix: *-e* if the non-finite verb stem ends in *i* or *a*, *-we* if the non-finite verb stem ends in *e*, *o* or *u* (non-finite verb stems always ends in a vowel; §5.1.1).

Prohibitive mood is the semantic negative counterpart of imperative-jussive mood (§6.3.1). Prohibitive verb forms are non-finite as well; they do not carry any cross-reference suffixes. Prohibitive verbs are formed by prefixing a negative irrealis prefix *ma-* (§6) and suffixing a cautious mood suffix *-e ~ -we* (see above) to a non-finite verb stem.

6-137. *akani ma-nuᅅgu-we!*            *hofahi-e.*

there NEG:IR-stand-CAUT      fall-CAUT

‘Do not stand there! Lest (you) fall.’

(*nuᅅgu* (*numb-/nuᅅg-*) ‘stand’ class I, *hofahi* ‘fell/ trip over’ class IIB; 70II)

6-138. *ma-feᅇi-e!*

NEG:IR-leave-CAUT

‘Do not leave!’/ ‘Let us/ me not leave.’ (*feᅇi* (*fâ-*) ‘leave’ class IIB)

6-139. *ma-seru-we!*            *tite no.*

IR:NEG-eat-CAUT      bad COP:3FSG

‘Do not eat (that)! It is bad.’

In addition, *we* on itself is an interjection (§3.2.9) which can be translated as ‘watch out!’ or ‘be careful!’.

6-140. *we!*            *akwani yafu-kyau-we.*

watch.out      snake      tooth-bite-CAUT

‘Watch out! Be careful of the snake biting.’

(*kyau* ‘bite’ class I)

### 6.3.3 Tentative mood and questions in future tense

Tentative mood conveys that the proposition is considered to be a possible outcome or possible conclusion by the speaker, comparable with the use of the English modal verb *may* when it is used in an epistemic sense to convey uncertainty.

The formation of tentative mood verb forms differ between non-future tenses (§6.3.3.1) and future tense (§6.3.3.2). In future tense, tentative mood verb forms also function as questions or indirect requests.

### 6.3.3.1 Non-future tentative mood

Positive non-future tentative mood verb forms consist of a non-future finite verb stem (§5.1.2), followed by subset A cross-reference suffix(es) (except for class IIB verbs which must always take class IIB cross-reference suffixes; §5.2.2), and finally by a tentative *-ni*. Negative forms have a negative irrealis affix *ma-/ -ma/ -me/ -m/* (§6.3) affixed to the non-future finite verb stem (§5.1.2).

6-141. *yafli sihafa iplwa ser-yefye-ni.*

dog 2SG:GEN fish eat-N1FDU-TENT

‘Maybe the dogs ate/ is eating your fish.’

(*seru* (*ser-/ det-*) ‘eat’ class IH; *-yefye* class IH)

6-142. *nyewi tu popo-Ø-a-ni.*

people egg take.egg:MASS-N1SG-3FSG:O-TENT

‘Maybe someone took/ is taking the eggs.’

(*popo* ‘take eggs from nest’ class II, mass undergoer; *-Ø-a* class IIA)

6-143. *fā-ya-a-ni.*

leave-3SG-3FSG:O-TENT

‘Maybe s/he has just left.’

(*fēfi* (*fā-*) ‘leave’ class IIB; *-ya-a* class IIB)

6-144. *hwahwamayani*.

a. *hwahwa-ma-Ø-ya-ni*.

know-NEG:IR-N1SG-1SG:O-TENT

‘Maybe s/he/you does not know me.’

b. *hwahwa-ma-ya-Ø-ni*.

know-NEG:IR-N1FSG-3MSG:O-TENT

‘Maybe she/you does not know him.’

(*numu (num-)* ‘sit’ class I; *-Ø-ya, -ya-Ø* class IIA)<sup>11</sup>

Another strategy to convey tentativeness is having a realis clause followed by a tentative copula (§6.4.1). The following is an example.

6-145. *akana num-u-hi meni*.

there sit-3MSG-PRES:CONT COP:TENT

‘Maybe he is there.’ (*numu (num-)* ‘sit’ class I; *-u* class IA)

### 6.3.3.2 Future tentative mood

Future tentative mood verbs always carry a negative irrealis affix; there is no positive formal counterpart. Even though all future tentative mood verbs have a negative irrealis affix, the speaker is not biased towards the positive or negative outcome by using a future tentative verb. Future tentative verb forms are formed by a future finite verb stem, a negative irrealis affix (§6), a set of cross-reference suffixes, and optionally a tentative suffix *-ni*. The sets of cross-referencing used are

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<sup>11</sup> The speaker cannot remember which the intended interpretation was. Without context this sentence remains ambiguous. Also see the paradigm of class IIA cross-reference suffixes in §5.2.2.

similar to those of positive semi-realis verbs (§6.2.1) and other irrealis categories like present imperative-jussive (§6.3.1) and counterfactual moods (§6.3.4):

- class IB/ IHB cross-reference suffix(es) for class I and IH verb stems;
- class IIB subject plus class IIB object suffixes for class IIB verb stems;
- class IIA subject plus class IIB object suffixes for class II verb stems; and
- class III subject plus class IIIB object suffixes for class III verb stems.

6-146. *kyambe ma-gof-a(-ni)*.

tomorrow NEG:IR-come:FUT-1SG(-TENT)

‘I may come tomorrow.’

(*hofu* (*hof-/gof-*) ‘come’ class I; *-a* class IB)

6-147. *homba-ma-na-ni-ni*.

see-NEG:IR-N1DU-2SG:O-TENT

‘Maybe the two of them will see you.’

(*homba* ‘see’ class II; *-na* class IIA, *-ni* class IIB)

6-148. *yohwefa tirati pa-ma-ya-a-ni*.

1PL:GEN letter write-NEG:IR-3SG-3FSG:O-TENT

‘Maybe s/he will write the letter for us.’

(*pefi* (*pa-*) ‘write’ class IIB; *-ya-a* class IIB)

6-149. *wanu aflambli ma-sa-mbu-mu(-ni).*

money plenty NEG:IR-give-N1MPL-1NSG(-TENT)

‘Maybe they will give us lots of money.’

(*sefi* (*sa-* / *da-*) ‘give’ class III; *-mbu* class III, *-mu* class IIIB)

### 6.3.3.3 Questions in future tense

Future tentative mood verb forms can also be used for questions in future tense. We have seen that future declaratives are expressed by semi-realis verb forms (§6.2). Future interrogatives, however, must be in irrealis status. The future tentative verb form is used for both content questions (question word questions) and polarity questions (yes-no questions). The following are some examples of content questions in future tense.

6-150. *dani =hya =na ga =na po-ma-afu?*

here = ABL = TOP where = ALL go:FUT-NEG:IR-2SG

‘From here where will you go?’ (*pi* (*pi-* / *po-*) ‘go’ class I; *-afu* class IB)

6-151. *nahombo kaha-ma-wa-a?*

why chop-NEG:IR-2SG-3FSG:O

‘Why will you chop it down?’

(*kahefi* (*kaha-*) ‘chop standing things’ class IIB; *-wa-a* class IIB)

6-152. *nungwi bli-ma-ha-a?*

how.many buy-NEG:IR-1SG-3FSG:O

‘How many should I buy?’ (*bli* ‘buy’ class II; *-ha* class IIA, *-a* class IIB)

The following are some examples of polarity questions in future tense.

6-153. *yoambo hiniŋgi-m-afa?*

1SG:OBJ wait-NEG:IR-N1MDU

‘Will they wait for me?’ (*hiniŋgi* ‘wait’ class I; *-afa* class IB)

6-154. *amani mome-m-a?*

can be.together-NEG:IR-1SG

‘Can I be together (with you)?’ (*mome* ‘be together’ class I; *-a* class IB; 80I)

An extension of this interrogative function is that future tentative clauses in the form of polarity questions also convey indirect commands or exhortations in the right contexts (mainly when the subject is the addressee). Commands and exhortations expressed by future tentative verb forms are less direct and more polite than commands or exhortations expressed by imperative verb forms (§6.3.1).

6-155. *bya ma-dom-afu.*

coconut NEG:IR-drink:FUT-2SG

‘Please drink the coconut.’

(*simi* (*simi-/ dom-*) ‘drink’ class I; *-afu* class IB)

6-156. *sea =hi ma-num-afu.*

chair = ADS NEG:IR-sit-2SG

‘Please sit on the chair.’

(*numu (num-)* ‘sit’ class I; *-afu* class IB)

### 6.3.4 Counterfactual mood

Counterfactual mood conveys that the polarity of the proposition is opposite to what has actually occurred. Counterfactual verb forms have a non-future finite verb, a counterfactual suffix *-naho* at the end of the verb, and cross-reference suffix(es) in between:

- class IB/ IHB cross-reference suffix(es) for class I and IH verb stems;
- class IIB subject plus class IIB object suffixes for class IIB verb stems;
- class IIA subject plus class IIB object suffixes for class II verb stems; and
- class III subject plus class IIIB object suffixes for class III verb stems.

The following are examples of the *-naho* counterfactual mood verb.

Counterfactual clauses often cooccur with hypothetical protases, which come in the form of chain clauses (demonstrated in examples 6-157 to 6-159 below); see also §7.2.3 on hypothetical protases.

6-157. *hwahwa-Ø-a-mbona, rani ma-ser-i-naho.*

know-CR-1SG-DEP DEM NEG:IR-eat-1SG-CNTR

‘If I knew, I would not have eaten that.’

(*hwahwa* ‘know’ class I, *seru (ser-/ det-)* ‘eat’ class IH;

*-a* class IB, *-i* class IHB)

6-158. *hwahwa-Ø-a-mbona, numu-hya-a-naho.*

know-CR-1SG-DEP      wear-1SG-3FSG:O-CNTR

‘If I have known, I would have worn it.’

(*numu* ‘wear’ class IIB, *-hya-a* class IB)

6-159. *rani amani ilo-ma-Ø-a-mbo,                      homba-ha-a-naho.*

DEM good work-DR-N1SG-3FSG:O-DEP see-1SG-3FSG:O-CNTR

‘If you have done it well, I would have seen it.’

(*ilo* ‘work’ class II, *homba* ‘see’ class II;

*-Ø-a* class IIA, *-ha* class IIA, *-a* class IB)

6-160. *hihifu-me-o-naho.*

be.happy-NEG:IR-3FSG-CNTR

‘She would not have been happy.’ (*hihifu* ‘be happy’ class I, *-o* class IB)

6-161. *yafli wi sa-ninga-ni-naho                      gwa,*

dog child give-1SG-2SG:O-CNTR but

[*ga = nambo pi-wi-hya*]                      *hwahwa boke-aha-hi.*

[where = ALL go-N1FPL-PAST] know      NEG:R-1SG-PRES:CONT

‘I would give you the puppies, but I do not know where they have gone.’

(*sefi* (*sa-/ da-*) ‘give’ class III, *pi* (*pi-/ po-*) ‘go’ class I, *hwahwa* ‘know’ class

I; *-ninga* class III, *-ni* class IIIB, *-wi* class IA, *-aha* class IA)

## 6.4 Copulas and independent copular clauses

The forms of different copulas are introduced in §6.4.1. Different kinds of independent copular clauses are introduced in §6.4.2. Copulas can also be used as an auxiliary verb which indicates that the whole clause is focused; see §6.4.3.

### 6.4.1 Copulas

Copula is a special class of verb in Menggwa Dla. Like other verbs, copulas also have finite forms which carry cross-referencing and non-finite forms which do not. However, as the main verb of a clause, finite copulas only head independent clauses (§6), and the non-finite copulas only head non-finite chain clauses (§7.3.2) (copulas are not used as the main verb of subordinate clauses (§7.1) and chain clauses (§7.2); see also §6.4.3 on auxiliary copulas). Moreover, finite copulas mark less tense-aspect-mood categories than ordinary verbs, and the way tense-aspect-mood-polarity categories are expressed in copulas is also mostly different from those in ordinary verbs (§6.1-3). The following table summarises the copulas in Menggwa Dla; the copulas are introduced in the listed order in the rest of this section.

Table 6.8 Copulas in Menggwa Dla

Non-finite form	Finite form
	present tense <i>ny- x / nV- x</i>
positive declarative <i>nu</i>	past tense <i>Ø- x -hwa</i>
	future tense <i>l- x -samby- x</i>
negative declarative <i>me</i>	future tense <i>ga ... l- x</i>
	non-future tense <i>m(e)- x</i>
future interrogative <i>me</i>	<i>m(e)- x</i>
tentitive <i>meni</i>	<i>m(e)- x -ni</i>
non-future interrogative <i>be</i>	<i>b(e)- x</i>
'where' interrogative <i>ke</i>	<i>k(e)- x</i>
'who' interrogative <i>de</i>	<i>d(e)- x</i>

Most copulas carry class IB cross-referencing, while some carry class IA cross-referencing (§5.2.1). Repeated below are the forms of class IA and class IB cross-reference suffixes.

Table 6.9 Class IA cross-reference suffixes

	1	2	3
SG M			<i>-Ø/ -u</i>
SG F	<i>-aha</i>	<i>-afa</i>	
DU M			<i>-afa</i>
DU F	<i>-ehye</i>		<i>-efye</i>
PL M		<i>-ma/ -uma</i>	
PL F	<i>-efa</i>		<i>-wi/ -ei</i>

(V\_: Ø, ma, wi / C\_: u, uma, ei)

Table 6.10 Class IB cross-reference suffixes

	1	2	3
SG M			<i>-u</i>
SG F	<i>-a</i>	<i>-afu</i>	
DU M			<i>-afani</i>
DU F	<i>-ehi</i>		<i>-efi</i>
PL M		<i>-mu/ -umu</i>	
PL F	<i>-efu</i>		<i>-wi/ -ei</i>

(V\_: mu, wi / C\_: umu, ei)

The non-finite form of the positive declarative copula is *nu*. Finite forms of the positive declarative copula distinguish three tenses: present, past and future. The present tense copula conveys timeless states — states which hold in the present and extend indefinitely in the past and in the future (unless qualified lexically to be temporally bounded). The past tense copula conveys states which hold in the past but no longer hold in the present. The future tense copula conveys the speaker’s confidence in the actual holding of the state in future time.

Finite forms of the positive present declarative copula have class IB cross-reference suffixes. The finite stem of the positive present declarative copula is *ny-*, except when the subject is third person singular (3SG) or non-first person plural (N1PL), the stem is *nV-* where *V* is a copy of following vowel. (Through vowel degemination rule (§2.3), *nu-u* (3MSG) and *no-o* (3FSG) become *nu* and *no* respectively.)

Table 6.11 Positive present declarative copulas

		1	2	3
SG	M			<i>nu-u</i>
	F	<i>ny-a</i>	<i>ny-afu</i>	<i>no-o</i>
DU	M		<i>ny-afani</i>	
	F	<i>ny-ehi</i>	<i>ny-efi</i>	
PL	M		<i>nu-mu</i>	
	F	<i>ny-efu</i>	<i>ni-wi</i>	

6-162. *yo=na Helen ny-a.*

1 =TOP Helen COP:PRES-1SG

‘I am Helen.’

Positive past declarative copulas are formed with what is formally a class IA cross-reference suffix suffixed with a past tense suffix *-hwa* (§6.1.2).

Table 6.12 Positive past declarative copulas

		1	2	3
SG	M			<i>Ø-hwa</i>
	F	<i>aha-hwa</i>	<i>afa-hwa</i>	<i>wa-hwa</i>
DU	M		<i>afa-hwa</i>	
	F	<i>ehye-hwa</i>	<i>efye-hwa</i>	
PL	M		<i>ma-hwa</i>	
	F	<i>efa-hwa</i>	<i>wi-hwa</i>	

6-163. *ai tite wi Ø-hwa.*

3 bad child 3MSG-PAST

‘He was a small child.’

6-164. *dani=na misin bukwa wo-hwa.*

this =TOP mission.station big 3FSG-PAST

‘This was a big mission station.’

Positive future declarative copulas have the same forms as the morphs which follow a class I lexical verb stem in a semi-realis verb form. See §6.2.1.

Table 6.13 Positive future declarative copulas

		1	2	3
SG	M	<i>l-a-mby-a</i>	<i>l-afu samby-afu</i>	<i>l-a-ah-u-mb-i</i>
	F			<i>l-a-ah-o-mb-e</i>
DU	M	<i>l-e(hi sa)mby-ehi</i>	<i>l-afani samby-afani</i>	
	F		<i>l-efi samby-efi</i>	
PL	M	<i>l-e(fu sa)mby-efu</i>	<i>l-uma-ah-u-mb-imu</i>	
	F		<i>l-ei samby-ei</i>	

(*lehi sambyehi* (1DU) and *lefu sambyefu* (1PL) can be contracted to *lembyehi* (1DU) and *lembyefu* (1PL) respectively.)

6-165. *yo amani glu l-a-mby-a.*

1 good teacher LIG-1SG-POS:SMR-1SG

‘I will be a good teacher.’

Negative future declarative copulas are formed like negative semi-realis verbs (§6.2.2): the predicate nominal is preceded by a negative semi-realis particle *ga* and followed by an /ligature which is suffixed with a class IA cross-reference suffix. The exception is that when the subject is third person masculine singular (3MSG), the cross-reference suffix is  $\emptyset$  and the /ligature is not used.

Table 6.14 Negative future declarative copulas

		1	2	3
SG	M			<i>ga ... Ø</i>
	F	<i>ga ... l-aha</i>	<i>ga ... l-afa</i>	<i>ga ... l-wa</i>
DU	M		<i>ga ... l-afa</i>	
	F	<i>ga ... l-ehye</i>	<i>ga ... l-efye</i>	
PL	M		<i>ga ... l-uma</i>	
	F	<i>ga ... l-efa</i>	<i>ga ... l-ei</i>	

6-166. *yo ga amani glu l-aha.*

1 NEG:SMR good teacher LIG-1SG

‘I will not be a good teacher.’

6-167. *ga tite nesi Ø.*

NEG:SMR bad nurse 3MSG

‘He will not be a bad nurse.’

The non-finite form of the negative declarative copula is *me*. Finite forms of the negative declarative copula distinguish two tenses: non-future and future.

Negative non-future copulas and the future interrogative copulas have the same forms (e.g. both have the non-finite form *me*). This unification suggest that with copulas, negativity is semantically subordinate to the status of irrealis, unlike other verbs where negativity is independent from status (§6.1; §6.2; §6.3). Negative non-future/ future interrogative copulas have a class IB cross-reference suffix, except

that when the subject is first person singular (1SG), the class IA suffix of *-aha* is used instead (some younger speakers pronounce this suffix as *-aya*). The negative non-future/ future interrogative copula stem is *me*, except when the following cross-reference suffix begins with *a*, then the copula stem is *m*. This allomorphy is identical with that of the negative irrealis affix (§6.3).

Table 6.15 Negative non-future declarative/ future interrogative copulas

		1	2	3
SG	M	<i>m-aha</i>	<i>m-afu</i>	<i>me-u</i>
	F			<i>me-o</i>
DU	M	<i>me-ehi</i>	<i>m-afani</i>	
	F		<i>me-efi</i>	
PL	M	<i>me-efu</i>	<i>me-mu</i>	
	F		<i>me-wi</i>	

6-168. *amani glu m-aha.*  
 good teacher NEG:IR-1SG  
 ‘I am/was not a good teacher.’

6-169. *amani glu m-aha?*  
 good teacher NEG:IR-1SG  
 ‘Will I be a good teacher?’

The tentative copula is formed by the *me* copula — either the non-finite or finite forms — suffixed with the tentative suffix *-ni* (§6.3.3). The tentative copula does not mark tense.

6-170. *amani glu m-aha-ni.*

good teacher NEG:IR-1SG-TENT

‘Maybe I was/ am/ will be a good teacher.’

6-171. *me-ni.*

NEG:IR-TENT

‘Maybe.’

There are three other sets of copulas similar in form with *me* — the non-future interrogative copula *be*, the ‘where’ interrogative copula *ke* and the ‘who’ interrogative copula *de*. The only formal difference is that the initial consonants are *b*, *k* and *d* respectively instead of *m*. The ‘where’ interrogative copula is only used when accompanied by *ga* ‘where’, and the ‘who’ interrogative copula is only used when accompanied by *da* ‘who’.

Table 6.16 Non-future interrogative copulas

		1	2	3
SG	M	<i>b-aha</i>	<i>b-afu</i>	<i>be-u</i>
	F			<i>be-o</i>
DU	M		<i>b-afani</i>	
	F	<i>be-ehi</i>	<i>be-efi</i>	
PL	M		<i>be-mu</i>	
	F	<i>be-efu</i>	<i>be-wi</i>	

6-172. *amani glu b-aha?*

good teacher NFUT:INTRG:COP-1SG

‘Am/ was I a good teacher?’

Table 6.17 ‘Where’ interrogative copulas

		1	2	3
SG	M	<i>k-aha</i>	<i>k-afu</i>	<i>ke-u</i>
	F			<i>ke-o</i>
DU	M		<i>k-afani</i>	
	F	<i>ke-ehi</i>	<i>ke-efi</i>	
PL	M		<i>ke-mu</i>	
	F	<i>ke-efu</i>	<i>ke-wi</i>	

6-173. *amani glu ga ke-o?*

good teacher where where:COP-3FSG

‘Where is the/ a good teacher?’

Table 6.18 ‘Who’ interrogative copulas

		1	2	3
SG	M	<i>d-aha</i>	<i>d-afu</i>	<i>de-u</i>
	F			<i>de-o</i>
DU	M		<i>d-afani</i>	
	F	<i>de-ehi</i>	<i>de-efi</i>	
PL	M		<i>de-mu</i>	
	F	<i>de-efu</i>	<i>de-wi</i>	

6-174. *da de-u?*

who who:COP-3MSG

‘Who is he?’

6-175. *amani glu da de-o?*

good teacher who who:COP-3FSG

‘Who is the/ a good teacher?’

#### 6.4.2 Independent copular clauses

Predicates are not always verbal; nominals and pronominals can also form predicates. Copulas are placed after predicate nominals and predicate pronominals to provide subject cross-referencing, tense, aspect, mood and/or polarity information, as nominals do not provide this grammatical information and pronominals provide cross-referencing information at most. The main usages of copulas are: a) to equate the predicate (pro)nominal with the subject (pro)nominal (equative usage); and b) to

indicate that the referent(s) of the subject (pro)nominal is/ are properly included in the set of referents of the predicate (pro)nominal (proper-inclusion usage). In equative and proper-inclusion copular clauses, predicate nominals are not case-marked, and predicate pronouns are in their citation forms. Equative and proper-inclusion copular clauses are introduced in §6.4.2.1. There are also other copula clauses where the predicate (pro)nominal is case marked; they are introduced in §6.4.2.2-5.

Unlike English where existential clauses are usually copular (e.g. *There was a haunted house in the forest*), existential clauses in Menggwa Dla are usually verbal: the verb *eku* (*ek-*) ‘exist’ (class I) is used for non-living things, while *nungu* (*nu[ŋg/mb]-*) ‘stand’ (class I) and *numu* (*num-*) ‘sit’ (class I) are used for living things (whether *nungu* ‘stand’ or *numu* ‘sit’ is used depends on their usual stance).

6-176. *tamako ek-wa-mbi.*

axe      exist-3FSG-PRES:STAT

‘There is an axe (there).’

6-177. *Arso =hi    tite yani aflambli num-uma-mbi.*

Arso=ADS    bad man many      sit-3MPL-PRES:STAT

‘In Arso there are many bad men.’

6-178. *akani bani nomo nung-wa-mbi.*

there sago tree stand-3FSG-PRES:STAT

‘There are sago palms there.’

Copulas are also used in subordinate clauses (§7.1), non-finite chain clauses (§7.3.1) and verbal noun phrases (§7.3.2), but not in chain clauses (§7.2). This section covers copular usage with independent clauses; see the relevant sections on the usage of copulas with dependent clauses.

#### 6.4.2.1 Equative and proper-inclusion copular clauses

In an equative copular clause, the subject (pro)nominal and the predicate (pro)nominal are both semantically definite, and the two references share exactly the same referents. Because of this, the subject and the predicate (pro)nominal in equative copular sentences are — by definition — interchangeable with no semantic differences.

6-179. a. *dani = na yowala mi no.*

this = TOP 1SG:GEN mother COP:3FSG

‘This is my mother.’

b. *yowala mi = na dani no.*

‘My mother is this (person).’

6-180. a. *ai = na stesen meneja Ø-hwa.*

3 = TOP station manager 3MSG-PAST

‘He was the new station manager.’

b. *stesen meneja =na ai Ø-hwa.*

‘The station manager was he.’

6-181. a. *dani hwi =na humlali no.*

this water =TOP Humlali COP:3MSG

‘This stream is Humlali.’

b. *humlali =na dani hwi no.*

‘Humlali is this stream.’

In a proper-inclusion copular clause, the referents of the predicate nominal properly includes the referents of the subject (pro)nominal. In a proper-inclusion copular clause, the predicate nominal is indefinite in meaning, and thus the predicate cannot be a pronominal. Also because of this, the subject and the predicate nominals cannot be interchanged.

6-182. *yo =na nesi l-a-mby-a.*

1 =TOP nurse LIG-1SG-POS:SMR-1SG

‘I will be a nurse.’

6-183. *ai =amba numbala newi ny-afani.*

3 =too black people COP-N1MDU

‘They are black people too.’

6-184. *dani wuli =na ayamu wuli no.*

this house = TOP chicken house COP:3FSG

‘This hut is a chicken coop.’

As seen in the examples above and in §4.3, simplex noun phrases (one which only contain an unmodified head noun and one which is not a proper name) are not specified for definiteness, and so copular sentences with a simplex noun phrase are often ambiguously equative and proper-inclusion in nature. For instance:

6-185. *ai =na Utai =la patulu nu.*

3 = TOP Utai = ABL priest COP:3MSG

a. ‘He is the priest from Utai.’ (equative)

b. ‘He is a priest from Utai.’ (proper-inclusion)

Subjects of copula clauses do not have to be expressed by nominals or pronominals; they can be expressed simply by verbal cross-referencing (§5.3.2).

6-186. *yowala bofuna ny-efi.*

1SG:GEN parent COP-N1EDU

‘They are my parents.’

6-187. *tohalwa be-wa.*

school COP:NEG:NFUT-3FSG

‘(This) is not a school.’

Adjectives (§3.1.2) require a copula when they are used predicatively (except when the sentence is positive declarative; see example 6-192 below).

6-188. *sihafa gwafu =na mayana be.*

2SG:GEN village = TOP far COP:INTRG

‘Is your village far away?’

6-189. *dani gwafu =na getali no.*

this village = TOP long COP:3FSG

‘This village is long.’

6-190. *sihafa computer =na tikyawi no ke!*

2SG:GEN computer = TOP small COP3FSG EXCLM

‘Your computer is small!’

Positive present declarative copulas are often ellipted.

6-191. *yo =na Greg (nya).*

1 = TOP Greg (1SG:COP:PRES)

‘I am Greg.’

6-192. *dani =na amani (no) .*

this = TOP good (3SG:COP:PRES)

‘This is good.’

In copular questions, either declaratives or interrogative copulas can be used (§6.4.1). Copular questions with declarative copulas usually have rising or high level intonation (§4.2.2).

6-193. Hilari [ny-afu / b-afu]?

Hilari [COP:PRES-2SG / COP:INTRG-2SG]

‘Are you Hilari?’

#### 6.4.2.2 Proprietary possessive and abessive non-possessive copular clauses

Menggwa Dla does not have verbs which mean ‘to have’ or ‘to possess’. To indicate possession at the clause level, one strategy is using a copular clause with the possessum in proprietary case (§4.5.5) as the predicate and the possessor as the subject.

6-194. ai=na wanu=mbi nu.

3 = TOP money = PROP COP:3MSG

‘He has (lots of) money.’

6-195. amungwamba=na hwalfehi imbu=mbi Ø-hwa.

village.head = TOP woman two = PROP 3MSG-PAST

‘The village head had two wives.’

The negative counterpart is formed by the possessum in abessive case (§4.5.5), and the copula still in positive polarity.

6-196. refugee=na TB=mbi (wi-hwa) gwa ufati=mboka efa-hwa.

refugee = TOP TB = PROP (N1FPL-PAST) but medicine = ABSS 1PL-PAST

‘The refugees had tuberculosis, but we did not have medicine.’

6-197. *ai=na wi=mboka nu.*

3 = TOP child = ABSS COP:3MSG

‘He does not have a child.’

6-198. *ai=na yulu=mboka no.*

3 = TOP leg = ABSS COP:3FSG

‘She does not have leg(s).’

#### 6.4.2.3 Genitive possessive and genitive beneficial copular clauses

Another strategy to indicate possession at the clause level is using a copular clause with the possessor in genitive case (§4.5.2) as the predicate and the possessum as the subject. As the genitive case marks both possessor and beneficiary, these genitive copular clauses can ambiguously indicate both possessive and beneficial meanings.

6-199. *tirati=na yowala no.*

letter = TOP 1SG:GEN COP:3FSG

‘The letter is mine/ for me.’

6-200. *buku=na sihei (no).*

book = TOP 2FPL:GEN (COP:3FSG)

‘The book is yours/ for you.’

6-201. *rani kapali = na      Garamut = la    Ø-hwa.*

that aeroplane = TOP Garamut = GEN 3MSG-PAST

‘That aeroplane belonged to Garamut.’

The negative counterpart is formed by the copula in negative polarity.

6-202. *dani hofo = na    yohwefa m-efu.*

this land = TOP 1PL:GEN NEG:COP-1PL

‘This land is not ours.’

6-203. *dani ilo = na    petwa yani = la    me-o.*

this work = TOP old man = GEN NEG:COP-1PL

‘This job is not the old man’s.’

#### 6.4.2.4 Locative copular clauses

Copular clauses can be formed with the predicate (pro)nominal in one of the four local cases: inessive case = *mbe*, adessive case = *hi* / = *sehi*, allative case = *na(mbo)* and ablative case = *hya* (§4.5.3). Inessive copular clauses signify ‘be in’, ‘be going in’ or ‘be coming out of’; adessive copular clauses signify ‘be at’; allative copular clauses signify ‘be going to’; and ablative copular clauses signify ‘be coming from’.

6-204. *mi = la      rumu = mbe no.*

mother = GEN room = INS COP:3FSG

‘It is in mother’s room.’

6-205. *Syatan =na ehala sufwa =mbe nu.*

Satan = TOP 3SG:GEN liver = INS COP:3MSG

‘Satan is inside his soul.’

6-206. *saftu =hi no.*

Saturday = ADS COP:3FSG

‘It is on Saturday.’

6-207. *ai Humberto =sehi no.*

3 Humberto = ADS COP:3FSG

‘She is at (e.g. sitting next to) Humberto.’

6-208. *yo =na Aitape =nambo ny-a.*

1 = TOP Aitape = ALL COP-1SG

‘I am (going) to Aitape.’

6-209. *Meri =na Biak =na lahombe.*

Meri = TOP Biak = ALL COP:FUT:3FSG

‘Meri will be (going) to Biak.’

6-210. *ai Buka =hya nu.*

3 Buka = ABL COP:3MSG

‘He is (coming) from Buka.’

6-211. *dani muli sungwani =na Jayapura =hya no.*

this citrus sickness = TOP Jayapura = ABL COP:3MSG

‘This citrus sickness comes from Jayapura (area).’

#### 6.4.2.5 Instrumental and comitative copular clauses

Predicate nominals are sometimes in allative-instrumental or comitative cases (§4.5.3-4). Instrumental copular clauses signify ‘be done with’ and comitative copular clauses signify ‘be together with’.

6-212. *dani =na tumahi =nambo no.*

this = TOP axe = ALL COP:3FSG

‘This is (done) with an axe.’

6-213. *Susan =na hwila =lofo no.*

Susan = TOP mother = COM COP:3FSG

‘Susan is with (her) mother.’

#### 6.4.3 Copulas as auxiliary verbs

Copulas can function as auxiliary verbs which indicate that the whole clause is focused. The auxiliary copula follows the main verb immediately. The following is an example.

6-214. *numami ra =mbe pe boke-wa-hya no.*

above DEM = INS be.gone NEG:R-3FSG-PAST:FOC COP:3FSG

‘It has not gone up there.’ (A)

Formally, a sentence like the example above looks like a cleft construction, where *numami rambe pe bokewahya* is a zero-headed relative clause (§7.1.1.3) and the copula is the main verb of the clause. Nevertheless, clauses with auxiliary copulas are not cleft constructions, as the verb which precedes the auxiliary copula is often in a form which cannot be a relative clause verb. For instance, in the second clause below, the main verb *piwahi* ‘she is going’ has a present continuous suffix *-hi* (§6.1.1); relative clause verbs cannot take *-hi* (§7.1.1), and hence *piwahi* is not a relative clause.

6-215. *rani amni baya tupam nyawi hihiri fa-Ø-ya-a-Ø,*

DEM garden side thing person steal COMPL-CR-3SG-3FSG:O-DEP

*pi-wa-hi no.*

go-3FSG-PRES:CONT COP:3FSG

‘Someone has stolen things from the garden and is going.’ (A)

Auxiliary copulas which are used in chain clauses (§7.2) have an invariant non-finite chain verb form *nu-mbo* (COP-DEP).

6-216. *ra=nambo rani hwi fri-Ø-mu-mbo nu-mbo,*

DEM=ALL DEM water get.rid-CR-3MPL-DEP COP-DEP

‘They used that to get rid of the water, and...’ (A)