5 The noun phrase

All nominal modifiers follow the noun, the basic order being

noun - numeral - adjective - demonstrative - rel. clause

Examples

èthínɔ̀	àbîc	bɛ̀cɔ̀	'five good children'
children	five	good.PL	

rómí	àdêk	nà	bɛ́cɔ̀	nɪ̀	'these three good children'
sheep.PL	three	REL	good	PROX	

5.1 Nouns

Like all other Western Nilotic languages, Labwor lacks a noun class (or gender) system. To be sure, there is a derivational distinction *ò-/ɔ̀-* (masc.) vs. *à-* (fem.) nouns (see chapter 7), e.g.,

ò-cíén (masc.), à-cíén (fem.) 'the last born of twins',

but this distinction does not appear to be fully productive nor is it accompanied by any kind of morphological agreement.

There is also no grammaticalized marking of definiteness or indefiniteness. Indefinite referents, both specific and non-specific, may be presented by *mɔ́rɔ́* 'some' (see 5.2.2), cf. (1), most commonly with non-existent referents, as in (2):

(1)	gùɛ̀nɔ̀	mɔ́rɔ́	tíê	ɪ̀	ɔ̀t	wá.
	chicken	some	be	PREP	house	1.EX

'There is a chicken in our house.'

(2)	gín	mɔ́rɔ̀	òpé.

thing some 3.be.NEG
'There is nothing.'

Number

While it may be possible to isolate some basic principles underlying the morphophonology of at least a part of Labwor nouns, number marking is on the whole highly idiosyncratic and is best treated as a lexical property of nouns; for a detailed discussion of the number affixes, see Storch (2005b).

Labwor is described by Storch (2005a; 2005b) as a fairly unusual Southern Lwoo language in that it has "retained as many suffixes as the more conservative Northern Lwoo languages, and keeps up the tripartite number-marking patterns of Western Nilotic" (2007: 10).

This tripartite pattern, however, does not exhaust the types of nominal number marking that are distinguished in Labwor; rather, it is most of all the following classes that we found (see also Storch 2005b):

(a) The number distinction is unmarked:[5]

dèrícà (SG and PL) 'window'

tɔ́ŋ (SG and PL) 'egg'

(b) Singular and plural are distinguished by tone:

tóŋ, PL tɔ̀ŋ 'spear'

(c) The plural is derived from the singular by a suffix:

búk, PL búké 'book'

---

[55] Depending on the noun concerned, "singular" and "plural" may stand, respectively, for singulative and collective or mass.

lûth, PL lúdhí 'stick'

(d) The singular ("singulative") is derived from the plural by a suffix:

cùò, SG ècúɔ̀ 'man'

gúén, SG gùènɔ̀ 'chicken'

lé, SG lènì 'animal'

(e) Singular and plural take different suffixes:

àdèlá, PL àdêlí 'skin of a small animal'

ɔ̀tɔ̀kâ, PL òtòkê 'car'

tìèlɔ̀, PL tìèlé 'leg'

(f) Singular and plural take different prefixes (and suffixes):

àŋwàlò, PL èŋwàlé 'lame person'

àthín, PL èthínɔ̀ 'child'

òkónêì, PL ŋ́kónêì 'friend'

(g) Singular and plural are not derivable from one another in a principled way:

àwóbí, PL èwòpè 'boy'

ànyáká, PL ènyírá 'girl'

(g) can be called a class of suppletives, even if singular and plural may be phonetically similar. But there are as well classic suppletives, such as

dhákɔ́, PL món 'woman, wife'

yàth, PL yén 'tree'

This classification is a crude one; it ignores many phonetic and tonetic idiosyncrasies that are associated with number discrimination in addition. There are many nouns that are elusive to the above classification in exhibiting similarities to one of the classes distinguished even if one may hesitate to assign them to the relevant class on account of some unpredictable phonetic features. There are, however, some classes of nouns that exhibit a regular number behavior. This applies most of all to deverbal agent nouns, as in (1), and some ethnonyms (2), which both take their singular in *à-* and their plural in *è-**ɛ̀-*.

(1) à-lùɔ̀kɔ̀, PL è-lùɔ̀kɔ̀ 'someone who washes' cf. lùɔ̀kɔ̀ 'to wash'

à-tèdò, PL è-tèdò 'cook' cf. tèdò 'to cook'

à-túô, PL è-túô 'sick person' cf. tùò 'to be sick'

(2) à-kúmám, PL è-kúmám 'Teso or Kumam person'

à-lɔ̂k, PL è-lɔ́k 'Karimojong person'

(also: è-lókí)

à-thérɛ́, PL è-thérɛ́ 'Lango person'

For generalizations on the meanings of number forms, see Storch (2005a; 2005b).

5.2 Modifiers

5.2.1 Demonstratives

Demonstrative attributes are placed at the end of a noun phrase. The following demonstrative categories are distinguished:

	Form	*Meaning*	*Gloss*
a	nìɪ	proximal	PROX
b	nón, PL nón-ú	(a) near hearer	HEA
		(b) mentioned earlier	
c	cà	distal	DIST

The categories (a) and (b) may be shortened, resulting in the compensatory lengthening of the preceding vowel (see 2.2).

Examples

a	yáth nìɪ *or* yá:dh-ɪ, PL yén nîɪ *or* yé:n-î	'this tree (here)'
	lûth nîɪ, PL lúdhî nîɪ	'this stick'
b	yáth nón *or* yá:dh-ó, PL yén nón-ú	'that tree (near you, or mentioned earlier)'

dhók nón bɛ̀r. *or* dhó:g-ó bɛ̀r.

cows HEA be.good

'Those cows are good.'

c yáth cà, PL yén câ 'that tree (far away)'

lɛ́p ˈdhíáŋ câ 'that cow tongue'

Pronouns

Demonstrative pronouns have participant status; three types are distinguished, consisting of the root elements *má-*, *gɪ-*, and *ká-* plus a demonstrative attribute:

	Deictic		*Thing*		*Place*	
a	mán	'this is'	gí-nì	'this one'	kány	'here'
b	má-nón	'that is'	gì-nón	'that one'	ká-nón	'there'
c	má-cá	'that is'			ká-cá	'there (far away)'

Examples

mán òbèdò mé màdhò càk.

PRON.PROX 3.be.PFV PREP drink.INF milk

'This is for drinking milk.'

ɛ́n òŋèò má- cá.

3.SG 3.know.PFV PRON- DIST

'He knows that one.'

àmító bèdò ká- nón.

1.SG.want.IMV be.INF LOC- HEA

'I want to be there (near you).'

5.2.2 Numerals and quantifiers

Numerals and most quantifiers differ from adjectives in following their head noun without any formal linkage.

5.2.2.1 Numerals

Cardinal numerals follow their head noun and remain tonally stable, e.g.,

ànɛ̂nɔ̀	ɛ̀thínɔ̀	àdêk.
1.SG.see.IMV	children	three

'I see three children.'

As the above example indicates, head nouns must be used in the plural (or collective) form when taking a numeral other than 'one' as their attribute.

The following is a list of cardinal numerals:

àcíêl	1	àpâr àcíêl	11, etc.
àríò	2	pìr àríò	20
àdêk	3	pìr àdêk	30, etc.
àŋwɛ̂n	4	mîá àcíêl	100
àbîc	5	míá àríò	200, etc.
àbícìèl	6	élìp àcíêl	1000
àbírɔ́	7	élìp àpâr	10,000
àbôrò	8	élìp míá	100,000
àbúŋwɛ́n	9	míliòn àcíêl	1,000,000
àpâr	10		

Example

élìp	àcíêl	kɪ	míá	àŋwɛ̂n	kɪ	pìr	àdêk	wì	àbîc
1000	1	and	100	4	and	10.PL	3	on.top	5

'1435'

Note that *pìr* is the plural of àpâr '10', while neither *míá* '100' nor *élìp* '1000' have separate plural forms. As the example above illustrates, higher numerals are added with the comitative preposition *kɪ̀* 'with', while lower numerals within a decade are added with *wì* ('on top').

Ordinal numerals do not seem to be a well established category but may be formed using the purpose preposition *mɛ́* as a linker followed by the cardinal numeral:

àthín mɛ́	àcíêl	'the first child'
àthín mɛ́	àríò	'the second child'
àthín mɛ́	àgíkí	'the last child'

Example

án	ɛ́nɛ́	mɛ́	àríò.
1.SG	FOC	PREP	2

'I am the second (child)'.

To form distributive numerals, the reduplicated cardinal numeral is preceded by the locative marker *kà-*:

gín	óbìnò	k-	àcíêl- àcíêl.
gín	óbìnò	k-	àríò- àríò.
3.PL	3.come.PFV	LOC-	1/2- 1/2

'They came one by one/two by two.'

When used pronominally rather than attributively, a generic noun serving as a classifier tends to be used:

wán	jó	àdêk	ècíémó.

1.EX people 3 1.PL.eat. IMV.AP
'The three of us (will) eat.'

For arithmetic operations, *mɛ̀t kà* is used for addition and *kùàny* 'take away' for subtraction, while the equation marker is provided by either of the verbs *bèdò* 'be' or *bìnò* 'come (to)':

àríò mɛ̀t k-áríò béd(ó) àŋwɛ̂n. '2 plus 2 is 4'.

or àríò mɛ̀t k-áríò bín(ó) àŋwɛ̂n.

àŋwɛ̂n kùàny àríò bín(ó) àríò. '4 minus 2 is 2'.

5.2.2.2 Quantifiers

The following quantifiers appear in our data:

kɪ́ᵗbɛ́c 'all'

kɪ́ᵗdúcú, dúcú 'all'

mɔ́kɔ́ 'a few'

mɔ́rɔ́ 'some'

nɔ́nɔ̀k 'be few'

pôl 'be many'

The quantifiers *pôl* and *nɔ́nɔ̀k* resemble adjectives (see 5.2.3) and verbs (4.1) in being linked to the preceding noun with the relativizer *nà*. *mɔ́ɾ́ɔ́* is used with both singular and plural referents, e.g.,

àmító yàth mɔ́rɔ́. 'I want some tree'.

àmító yén mɔ́rɔ́. 'I want some trees'.

mɔ́kɔ́ is preferred over *mɔ́rɔ́* when the relevant quantity is singled out as part of a whole, e.g.,

àmító dhòk mɔ́kɔ́.

1.SG.want.IMV cows a.few
'I want some (out of those many) cows'.

Examples

ùdì kɪ́ˈbɛ́c 'all houses'

ònù kɪ́ˈbɛ́c 'all of us'

yén kɪ̂ˈdúcú 'all trees'

or yén dúcú

wán ɛ̀mító bèdò nà pôl.

1.EX 1.PL.want.IMV be.INF REL be.many
'We want to be many'.

ònù bá ɛ́nɔ̀nɔ̀k.

1.IN NEG 1.PL.be.few
'We are not few'.

5.2.3 Adjectives

The following is a list of common adjectives (or adjectival verbs):

ácàn, PL ɛ́càn	'poor'
bɛ̀r, PL bécò	'good'
bôr, PL bócò	'long, tall'
cíêk, PL cíɛ́kɔ̀	'short'
cɔ́l, PL cɔ́l, cɔ́lɛ̀	'black'
dît, PL dît, dítò	'big'
dɔ́ŋɔ̀, PL dît, dítò	'big'
kwâr	'red'
níên	'new'
râc, PL récò	'bad'
târ	'white'
thúɔ̂nɛ̀	'big'
(tí)tídí, PL títìné, thínò	'small'

Examples

àthín nà râc	'a bad child'
ɛ̀thínɔ̀ nà récò	'bad children'

Adjectives share the following properties with verbs:

(a) They require a relative construction in order to modify nouns, cf. the following examples:

pì bèr. 'Water is good.'

pì nà bèr 'good water'

(b) They can form nominalizations, and
(c) like stative verbs they can only be used in the imperfective aspect.

Nevertheless, we follow Noonan (1992: 103-5) in his analysis of Lango in treating them as a category distinct from verb since unlike verbs

(d) they have an individual lexical tone,
(e) they lack infinitives and subjunctives, and
(f) many of them have suppletive number forms, i.e. the plural form
cannot be predicted on the basis of the singular form, and vice versa.

ácàn 'poor' differs from other adjectives in being used without the relativizer *nà*:

dhá ácàn, PL món écàn 'poor woman'.

The quantifiers *pôl* 'be many' and *nónɔ̀k* 'be few' also behave like adjectives in that they take the relativizer *nà* to be used as nominal attributes (see 5.2.2).

To express aspectual distinctions with adjectives, the copular verb *bèdò* 'be' tends to be used:

kwâr. 'It is red.'

tíê kà bèdò nà kwâr. 'It is becoming red.'

tíê kà òbèdò nà kwâr. 'It has become red.'

The copula *bèdò* requires an adjectival complement to be treated as an adverb, that is, to be introduced by *nà*:

án	bá	àmító	bèdò	nà	tídí.
1.SG	NEG	1.SG.want.IMV	be.INF	REL	small

'I don't want to be small.'

5.2.4 Attributive possession

Like with other nominal modifiers, attributive possessive modifiers follow their head noun. There is a basic distinction between alienable and inalienable possession. The former is expressed by placing the particle *ká*, which most probably derives from 'place of' (Storch 2004: 372), between the possessee and the possessor noun phrase, while in inalienable possession there is no linking element between the two:

Alienable			*Inalienable*	
ɔ̀t	kà	dhákɔ́	ɔ̀t	dhákɔ́
house	POSS	woman	house	woman
'house of a woman'			'women's house (where men have no access)'	

Inalienable nouns are most of all body parts, parts of wholes, kinship terms, and things that are observed to regularly occur together:

wì	dhìaŋ	'head of a cow'
head	cow	

píén	dhìaŋ	'cow hide'
hide	cow	

tɔ́ŋ	gúɛ́nɔ̀	'chicken egg'
egg	chicken	

Nominal compounding

There does not appear to be a clear-cut boundary between inalienable possession and modifying nominal compounding: Both are marked by the juxtaposition of a head and its modifier. Thus, the following examples can be analyzed as instances of both attributive possession and of compounding:

wì	ɔ̀t	'roof of a house'
head	house	
wàŋ	ɔ̂t	'window'
eye	house	
dél	wàŋ	'eyelid'
skin	eye	
tɔ́ŋ	wâŋ	'eye, eyeball'
egg	eye	

Pronominal possession

The morphophonology of attributive pronominal possession is a complex matter and requires further research (see the detailed discussion on Lango in Noonan 1992: 77-83). The following example illustrates the basic paradigm:

1.SG	ɔ̀d-á	'my house'

2.SG ɔ̀d-í

3.SG ɔ̀d-ɛ̀

1.EX ɔ̀d wá

1.IN ɔ̀d ónù

2.PL ɔ̀d wú

3.PL ɔ̀d gí

There is a second set of person markers which has a prefixed nasal element in the singular and in many cases is associated with alienable rather than inalienable possession; cf. the following examples:

	rìŋɔ̀ ná	'my meat'
vs.	rìŋɔ̀ kòm-á	'my flesh' (lit.: 'meat of my body')
	wì-á	'my head'

We will say that there is an "inalienable" and an "alienable" set of possessive person markers, which are:

	"Inalienable"	"Alienable"
1.SG	-á	ná
2.SG	-í	ní
3.SG	-ɛ̀	mɛ́(rɛ́)
1.EX	wá	wá
1.IN	ónù	ónù
2.PL	wú	wú

3.PL	Gĭ	gĭ

However, the nasal prefix is not restricted to alienable concepts, as the following examples may illustrate:

dhákɔ́ ˈná 'my wife'

wɔ́lɔ́ ˈná 'my cough'

àthín mèrɛ̂ 'his child'

Possessive pronouns

Possessive pronouns are formed by postposing the "inalienable" set of person markers to the prepositional root *mɛ́g-* (before suffixes) or *mɛ́-* (elsewhere):

1.SG mɛ́g-á 'mine'

2.SG mɛ́g-í 'yours'

1.SG mɛ́g-é 'his, hers'

1.EX mɛ́ wá 'ours'

1.IN mɛ́ ónù 'ours'

2.PL mɛ́ wú 'yours'

3.PL mɛ́ gí 'theirs'

Example

àthín òbèdò mɛ́g- á.

child 3.be.PFV PREP- 1.SG
'The child is mine.'

5.2.5 Relative clauses

Relative clauses are introduced by the particle *nà* and occupy as a rule the last position in a noun phrase. We will return to them in section 10.2.

5.3 Pronouns and person markers

We mentioned demonstrative-based pronouns in section 5.2.1, and interrogative pronouns will be the subject of section 9.3.2. In the present section our concern is with personal deixis, that is, with person markers irrespective of whether they involve independent words, clitics, or affixes.

5.3.1 Person markers

Table 1 gives an overview of the different paradigms of person markers that need to be distinguished. For further distinctions, see chapter 4.

Table 1. Paradigms of person markers.

	Independent	Dependent		Possessive	
		Subject	Object	"Inalienable"	"Alienable"
1.SG	án	a-	-á	-á	ná
2.SG	în	ɪ/i-	-í	-í	ní
3.SG	én	ø		-è	mɛ́(nɛ́)
1.EX	wán	ɛ/e-, wɛ-	wá	wá	wá
1.IN	ónú	ɛ/e-	ónú	ónù	ónù
2.PL	wún, wú'nú	ɪ/i-	wú	wú	wú
3.PL	gín, gɪ̀nɪ́	ø	gí	gí	gí

The third person singular pronoun *én* is strictly a human pronoun, that is, it may not be used to refer to non-human animates or inanimate items. Thus, (1) is correct if it refers to a person but not to some animal. The same does not apply to the third person plural pronoun *gí* in (2), which is not restricted to human referents.

(1) *ànɛ̂nɔ́ ɛ́n 'I see it (i.e. *gúók* 'the dog').'

(2) ànɛ̂nɔ́ gí 'I see them (i.e. *gùòŋmì* 'the dogs').'

Nevertheless, *ɛ́n* occurs as a cataphoric pronoun for propositional contents:

ɛ́n	râc	rùɔ̂k	bà	ɔ́kɔ́nyɔ́	àthín	mɛ̀rɛ̂.
3.SG	be.bad	very	NEG	3.help.PFV	child	his

'It is very bad that he didn't help his child.'

Instead of the exclusive first person plural prefix *ɛ/e-* there is occasionally the form *wɛ-*, which is presumably a contraction of *wán* + *ɛ/e-*.

The inclusive pronoun *ònù*

Labwor is somewhat unusual for a Western Nilotic language in having a distinction between an exclusive (EX) and an inclusive personal pronoun (IN), where the former excludes and the latter includes the hearer, e.g.,

ɛ́n ɔ́nɛ̀nɔ́ wá. 'He has seen us (but not you).'

ɛ́n ɔ́nɛ̀nɔ́ ónú. 'He has seen us (including you).'

For example, in the following example, the use of the inclusive pronoun is ruled out for pragmatic reasons, since the hearer is obviously excluded:

kúr	ícíém	kɔ́d	ˈwá!
NEG.IMP	2.eat.AP	PREP	1.EX

'Don't eat with us!'

Note that the distinction inclusive vs. exclusive is restricted to independent pronouns, i.e., it does not occur with subject prefixes.

The inclusive pronoun *jɔ̀*

But there is also a second inclusive first person plural pronoun *jɔ̀* 'we (including you)'. Evidence from closely related Western Nilotic languages clearly suggests that this is a grammaticalized form of the noun *jɔ̀* 'people', and as the comparative evidence on grammaticalization shows (see Heine and Kuteva 2002), a similar process has occurred in a number of genetically unrelated languages across the world (cf. e.g. Portuguese *a gente* 'we', literally 'the people'). What is noteworthy about the Labwor pronoun is that it is very weakly grammaticalized, meaning that (a) it is never used as a subject pronoun and (b) only occasionally as an object pronoun, as in (1), and (c) only with a limited number of head nouns as a possessive attribute, as in (2). Furthermore, there is considerable variation among speakers as to whether its use is allowed or disallowed.

(1) én ɔ́nɛ̀nɔ̀ jɔ (*or* ónú).

3.SG see.PFV.3.SG people
'He has seen us (including you).'

(2) ɛ̀thínɔ̀ jɔ

children people
'our children (including yours)'

In the paradigms of person markers presented we are ignoring *jɔ̀* on account of its limited productivity.

Switch vs. non-switch reference

In complement clauses where the main clause takes an utterance or cognition verb there is a distinction between a logophoric and an anaphoric form depending on whether the subject of the main clause and of the complement clause have different (DS) or the same referents (SS). In the former case, the ordinary subject pronouns are used while in the latter case there is a

special inflectional construction whose third person prefixal exponent is *ɛ/e-* in the following examples (see Noonan 1992: 225-6 for a similar distinction in Lango):

món	òkòbò	ní	bìnô	gɨ̀mí.		DS
women	3.say.PFV	COMPL	come	3.PL		
'The women said that they (not themselves) would come.'						

món	òkòbò	ní	è-	bìnô	gɨ̀mí.	SS
women	3.say.PFV	COMPL	3.SS-	come	3.PL	
'The women said that they (themselves) would come.'						

5.3.2 Reflexives and reciprocals

Both reflexive and reciprocal functions are expressed by the verbal suffix *-ɛ̀r·ɛ̂* (or *-ɛ*) which is a dominant [-ATR] suffix (see 2.2) inflected for person:

(án) à-nɛ̂nɔ̀ 'I see (him)'

vs.

(án) à-nɛ̀n-à-r-â 'I see myself'

(ín) ì-nɛ̀n-ì-r-î 'you see yourself'

(ɛ́n) ó-nɛ̀n-è-r-ɛ̂ 'she/he sees herself/himself', etc.

òkélò	lúɔ́kɔ́	bɔ̀ŋ.	'Okelo washes clothes.'
Okelo	wash.IMV	clothes	

vs.

òkélò	lúɔ́k-	ɛ̀rɛ̀.	'Okelo washes himself.'
Okelo	wash-REFL		

As in nearly one third of the languages of the world, the category forms a continuum of the following kind (see Heine and Miyashita 2008):

(a) With singular subject referents it denotes reflexivity only, cf. (1).
(b) With plural referents it is usually ambiguous between its reflexive and reciprocal uses (2).
(c) With symmetric verbs, such as 'kiss' or 'meet', and some other verbs the category can only express reciprocity (3):

(1) ɛ́n ónɛ̀k- ɛ̀rɛ̂.
3.SG 3.kill.PFV- REFL
'He killed himself.'

(2) gín ónɛ̀k- ɛ̀rɛ̂.
3.PL 3.kill.PFV- REFL
a 'They killed themselves.'
b 'They killed each other.'

(3) ɛ̀rʊ̀àt- ɛ̀rɛ̂.
1.PL.meet- REFL
'We met (each other).'

In addition to this inflectional expression for reciprocity there is also a lexical form, namely *ŋàt-àcíêl-àcíêl* ('person-one-one'), which is introduced by a preposition (1) or the "alienable" possessive marker *kà* (2):

(1) gín fió pɪ ŋàt-àcíêl-àcíêl.
3.PL work.IMV PREP RECI
'They work for each other.'

(2) gín márɔ̀ àcúló kà ŋàt-àcíêl-àcíêl.

3.PL like.IMV beads POSS RECI
'They like each other's beads.'

Intensifier

Frequently, the reflexive marker is accompanied by an intensifier, whose use tends to highlight the role of the subject referent. There are three different particles that serve as intensifiers in specific contexts:

(a) kɛ́kɛ́n 'alone, only'

gín mâr- ɛ́ kɛ́kɛ́n gɪ.

or gín mâr- ɛ́ kɛ̀ŋ gɪ.

3.PL like- REFL only 3.PL.POSS
'They like *themselves* (or *each other*).'

(b) kɛ́né 'alone'

ɛ́n ónɛ̀k- èrɛ̂.

or ɛ́n ónɛ̀k- èrɛ̂ kɛ́né.

3.SG 3.kill.PFV- REFL alone
'He (himself) killed himself.'

(c) kɪ̀ kóm 'with body'

án kí kóm- à ɛ́né àyâbɔ̀ dhɔ́gɔ́là.

1.SG PREP body- 1.SG FOC 1.SG.open.IMV door
'It is I myself who opens the door.'

gín kí kôm ˈgɪ́.

3.PL PREP body 3.PL.POSS
'They are the ones.'

5.3.3 "Middle voice"

In addition to its reflexive and reciprocal functions, the verbal suffix *-ɛ̀rɛ̂* is also used as an anticausative or "middle voice" marker, where the underlying patient has the function of a subject and the agent remains unexpressed:

àyâbɔ̀ ˈdhɔ́gɔ́là. 'I open the door.'

1.SG.open.IMV door

vs.

dhɔ́gɔ́là ɔ̀yàb- ɛ̀rɛ̂. 'The door has been opened.'

door 3.open.PFV- REFL

lɛ́p thùr òŋɛ̀- rɛ̂.

Labwor.language 3.know.PFV- REFL
'The Labwor language is known.'

In many of its uses, the "middle voice" has a potential meaning ('can be done/can happen'), e.g.,

pîŋ tíê kà púɔ̂dh.

ground PROG be.slippery
'The ground is slippery.'

vs.

pîŋ púɔ̂dh- ɛ̀rɛ̂.

ground be.slippery- REFL

'The ground can be slippery (therefore be aware!).'

As the above example shows, the suffix *-ɛ̀rɛ̂* is not restricted to transitive verbs; cf. also the following example:

ɛ́n túô 'he is sick'

vs.

ɛ́n tíê kà tùɔ̀- rɛ̂.

3.SG PROG be.sick.INF- REFL

'He's becoming sick.'

6 The adverbial phrase

Adverbial phrases consist either of a combination of a preposition plus noun (6.1) or an adverb (6.2). The former is preferentially placed clause-finally while adverbs are highly variable in their placement. There is some freedom in the placement of prepositional phrases relative to each other:

gín ɔ́cìdhɔ̀ bóth- ɛ́ k- ɔ́tɔ̀kà.

3.PL 3.go.PFV PREP- 3.SG.POSS PREP- car

or

gín ɔ́cìdhɔ̀ k- ɔ́tɔ̀kà bóth- ɛ́.

3.PL 3.go.PFV PREP- car PREP- 3.SG.POSS

'They went to him with a car.'

6.1 Prepositions

We will distinguish loosely between primary and complex prepositions.

6.1.1 Primary prepositions