

- (6) Consonantal inventory virtually identical to neighbouring Themne (Kanu & Tucker 2010)
- a. Themne phonotactics remarkably different, though, in allowing codas and clusters
- (7) The coronal distinction
- a. Alveolar /t/ is most often realized as [t^s] (sometimes [t^h]~[tʃ]~[c])
- b. Dental /t̪/ is realized [t̪], never with aspiration (rarely, as [θ])
- c. Note: /d/ is never realized as [d^ʰ]
- d. Contrast found in nearby Mel languages Themne and Sherbro (not elsewhere)
- (8) /f/ in other dialects mostly corresponds /h/ in Limba-Wara Wara dialect
- a. However, note certain ideophones, e.g. **ffw** ‘all, to completion’
- b. Words of foreign origin, e.g. **mà-fúlà** ‘cow butter’
- (9) Dorsal consonants have no voicing contrast (no minimal pairs, free variation, *etc.*)
- a. /k/ most commonly pronounced [k^h], but some tokens with [g] (especially V_V)
- b. /gb/ most commonly [gb], but many tokens with [kp]
- c. Despite lack of contrast, dental /t̪/ however is never realized as voiced [ɖ]
- (10) Unusual process of postnasal devoicing of marginally contrastive /g/ in Limba-Tonko
- a. /gùt̪ɛ̀ŋ + gòŋ/ → [gùt̪ɛ̀ŋ kòŋ] ‘this dog’

1.2 Vowels

- (11) Common seven vowel system: /i e ɛ a ɔ o u/
- a. Unlike Themne, no central interior vowels /ə/ or /ʌ/
- (12) Mid vowel minimal pairs:
- a. **kónthó** ‘ram’ **kònthò** ‘hunger’
- b. **kùyélé** ‘small bird species’ **kùyèlè** ‘leg’
- (13) Vowel length distinction, but relatively rare:
- a. **bìyè** ‘two’ **bìyè** ‘take a bath’
- b. **hààtò** ‘afternoon’ **hàtì** ‘child’
- c. **yuuk-** ‘clean palm trees’ **yuk-** ‘tie’
- (14) Some long vowels derived from former intervocalic consonants:
- a. Limba-Wara Wara **pèèthì** ‘chimpanzee’
- b. Limba-Safroko/Biriwa <peti>~<peleti> ‘chimpanzee’ (Clark 1922:77)
- (15) Limba form diphthongs with glide **y** (property it shares with Themne)
- a. **kùsèpé** ‘spice tree’ **kùpèy** ‘wing’
- (16) Contrasts with diphthongs
- a. **ey** **kùpèy** ‘wing’
- b. **ay** **kàhây** ‘outside’
- c. **ɔy** **hòy** ‘rat’
- d. **oy** **kùbóy** ‘grassland’
- e. **uy** **búy** ‘gold’
- (17) Like Themne, no contrast between **ey** vs. ***ɛy**
- (18) Monophthongization: **ay** variably realized as [aj] or as [ɛ] (latter less common in L-WW)
- a. **sàríyà + -yŋ** (PL) → **sàríyèŋ** ‘commandments, laws’

(19) Static vowel harmony patterns with roots (Limba-Wara Wara)

V1	V2	i	e	ɛ	a	ɔ	o	u
i		hìrì 'dry season'	sàhínè 'soap'	bòkíyè 'potato' (n=5)	hìrikà 'waist'	kù-bíyó 'calabash' (n=4)	mà-síbò 'danger'	kù-nírú 'hairy maggot' (n=2)
e		thèlì 'house gecko'	beke 'cough'		pémpéthá 'eagle'	thehɔ 'misswallow' (n=4)	kù-pé^rróŋ 'swing' (n=2)	hù-sèkú 'neck' (n=1)
ɛ		mètì 'salt'		bà-wèthè 'witch'	gbésàŋ 'white rice'	hù-bèkô 'adam's apple'		hù-gbèrú 'corner'
a		hàtì 'child'	bàré 'climbing rope'	màrè 'groundnuts'	mà-kábà 'surprise'	màáyò 'oil'	thámpó 'maybe'	m-bápù 'camel'
ɔ		mù-yò̀nì 'mucus'		sò̀bê 'hard work'	n-thókómà 'namesake'	bà-dò̀rò 'weevil'		dò̀ókù 'duck' (n=1)
o		hòndí 'grass'	bóndólè 'processing pit'	ù-thóné 'small wound' (n=4)	m-bómpà 'leaf'		kù-thòdó 'mortar'	pònúwóy 'parboiled rice' (n=1)
u		dúníyá 'the world' (n=5)	bùré 'circumcision rite'	bà-hùrè 'sleep rice'	sùmùnà 'slipper fish'	kù-bùŋ̀ò̀bùŋ̀ó 'palmnut vulture'	n-tùtò 'gut(s)' (n=1)	hù-thúkù 'forehead'

(20) Mid-harmony constraint

- a. Mixed mid heights e/ɛ and o/ɔ: Completely banned
- b. Mixed mid heights with different backness e/ɔ and o/ɛ: Banned or rare

(21) Active mid-harmony alternations: [-ATR]...-[+ATR]→[+ATR]...-[+ATR]

- a. **bà péth-ì** → **bà péth-ì** 'don't open'
- ò peth-ò** → **ò p^éth-ò** 'it can be opened' (PASSIVE)
- b. **bà sós-ì** → **bà sós-ì** 'don't smoke'
- ò s^ós-ò** → **ò s^ós-ò** 'it can be smoked' (PASSIVE)

(22) No mid-harmony in [+ATR]...[-ATR] sequences

- a. **kóthè ò pòth-è** 'red stonegoat' (Cf. ***[...pòthe]**)

1.3 Nasals

(23) Only coda is /ŋ/ (and place-assimilated variants) – Otherwise, no codas

(24) Coda /ŋ/ with full 7-vowel contrast: Variably realized as [ŋ] or vowel nasalization

- a. **iŋ** **hìlìŋ** 'tongue'
- b. **eŋ** **ŋgbéŋ** 'bangle'
- c. **ɛŋ** **gbêŋ** 'one's day'
- d. **aŋ** **hàŋ** 'termite hill'
- e. **ɔŋ** **gbòŋkòŋ** 'the bush'
- f. **oŋ** **sòŋ** 'one's character'
- g. **uŋ** **sùŋ** 'fast' (not eating)

(25) Pre-fricative ŋ-deletion

- a. **dèth-à** **hàŋ** **háŋ** → **dèth-à hà_ háŋ**
look.at termite.hill DEF.CL5 'look at the termite hill'
- b. **dèth-à** **thà-hàŋ** **tháŋ** → **dèth-à hàŋ tháŋ**
look.at CL6-termite.hill DEF.CL6 'look at the termite hills'

- (26) Syllabic nasal is common, but essentially only as noun class marker
 a. **ŋ-gbàsí** ‘ladder’ (common)
 b. **mpàtì** ‘children’ (rare)
- (27) Variation in realization, especially before sonorants:
 a. **ŋ-hèréŋ** → [**ĩ-hèréŋ**]~[**ĩ-hèréŋ**]~[**ŋ-hèréŋ**] ‘leaf of glue tree’
 b. **ŋ-werewere** → [**ĩ-wèrèwèrè**]~[**ŋ-wèrèwèrè**] ‘leaf of the *Kuwerewere* tree’
 c. **ŋ-máŋkòró** → [**ĩ-máŋkòró**] (*[**m̩-máŋkòró**]) ‘leaf of the mango tree’
- (28) Lexically, syllabic nasal is not contrastive for tone (phonetically, surfaces low)
- (29) Grammatical tone from **kà**^H LOC preposition: Shows **ŋ-** can bear high tone, however
 a. **bà-bìŋkìŋ** ‘car’ Cf. **kà bà-bìŋkìŋ òŋ** ‘to the car’
ŋ-kàlà-ŋ ‘ropes’ **kà ŋ-kàlà-ŋ kíŋ** ‘to the ropes’
 b. **hù-gbòdó** ‘bench’ **kà hú-gbòdó ‘hán** ‘to the bench’
ŋ-gbàsí ‘ladder’ **kà ŋ-gbàsí ‘kíŋ** ‘to the ladder’

1.4 Tone

- (30) Basic H/L system: Also, contrastive rising (R), falling (F), and downstepped high (⁺H)
 a. **mètì** ‘salt’ **mètí** ‘town, settlement’
 b. **yàlà** ‘net, hammock’ **yàlà** ‘God’
 c. **kàŋkà** ‘chest’ **kàŋká** ‘there’
 d. **kù-sáŋ** ‘knowledge, skills’ **kù-sâŋ** ‘rabbit-like animal’
 e. **mà-sókó** ‘day, date’ **mâ-sòkô** ‘whole groundnut’
 f. **kù-bòrì** ‘sleeping mat’ **kù-bórí** ‘household’
 g. **hù-rìŋkì** ‘handle (of knife)’ **hù-ríŋkí** ‘fire stone’

(31) Most combinations of H and L are found (R and F rarer, but robust)

a. H	káy	‘common cold’	LF	thìyâ	‘truth’	LLF	kònthòbâ	‘big cutlass’
L	bù	‘fire’	H ⁺ H	ká⁺kéŋ	‘floor’	LH ⁺ H	hìŋká⁺rí	‘gun’
F	sûŋ	‘a fast’	RL	màáyò	‘palm oil’	HLL	háytètè	‘tarantula’
R	sǒ	‘horse’	HF	hóyâ	‘a lie’	HLH	máhànthé	‘all the time’
b. LL	gbàkù	‘chief’	c. LLL	gbèkèdà	‘stilt’	HHL	sàrákà	‘a sacrifice’
LH	mètí	‘town’	LLH	kàŋkàrà	‘box’	HHH	pémpéthá	‘hawk’
HL	bókì	‘lizard’	LHL	dòkóbò	‘palm soap’	d. LHLH	sèkèrèthé	‘pearl millet’
HH	búnkú	‘monkey’	LHH	sìmósí	‘mosquito’			<i>etc.</i>

- (32) Lexical tone on all nouns, all adverbs/ideophones, most derivational/inflectional morphs
 a. Cf. the lexically toneless: all verbs/adjectives, some functional morphemes
- (33) Complementary distribution: Downstep after H, Rising elsewhere (sometimes H, or L)
 a. **wálí kǎ** → [**wálí ká**]
 work NEG.EXIST ‘there’s no work’
 b. **kòpìrì kǎ** → [**kòpìrì kǎ**] ~ [**kòpìrì ká**]
 money NEG.EXIST ‘there’s no money’
- (34) Iterative downstepped H’s (at least in Limba-Wara Wara)
 a. **běy-ni nǎ bǎmbǎŋ** → [**bèyní ná bám bǎŋ**]
 boundary-PL FOC DEM.CL8 ‘these are boundaries’

2 Nouns

2.1 Noun classes

(35) Robust noun class system with alliterative concord (data from Berry 1958)

- a. **ṇayey ṇasəṇwunthe ṇaləhoi ṇa, ṇa thimoyii ṇa, ṇey kiṇ do**
 board six good DEF REL seek-you DEF they are here
 ‘the six good boards you are seeking are here’

(36) L-WW: 13 noun classes (i.e. distinct morphological concord patterns triggered by noun)

Class	Ø-prefix	Pseudo-prefix	Class-prefix	DEF
CL1 (O-CL)	hàtì ‘child’		ò-pápéṇ ‘boy’	òṇ
CL2 (BE-CL)	m̀pàtì ‘children’		bì-thànthè ‘elders’	bèṇ
CL3 (KO-CL)		k̀òtò ‘body’	k̀ù-yòró ‘bush yam’	k̀òṇ
CL4 (NG-CL)		ṇàtí ‘pot scrapings’	ṇà-yòró ‘bush yams’	ṇǎṇ
CL5 (HO-CL)	pàsà ‘diarrhea’	h̀ò̀tò ‘ash’	h̀ù-ràkà ‘stone’	hǎṇ
CL6 (TH-CL)		thàbà ‘tobacco’	thà-ràkà ‘stones’	thǎṇ
CL7 (KI-CL)	yàmà ‘crowd’		ṇ-tùtò ‘intestine’	kṇ
CL8 (BA-CL)	kàràṇ ‘school’	bàrà ‘meat’	bà-wá ‘ribs’	bǎṇ
CL9 (MA-CL)		m̀ampà ‘palm wine’	m̀à-sápà ‘keys’	mǎṇ
CL10 (BU-CL)		bũy ‘gold’	b̀ù-thòṇ ‘palm fibers’	bũṇ
CL11 (U-CL)			ù-thèrì ‘art’	ũṇ
CL12 (MU-CL)			m̀ù-thòṇ ‘food’	mũṇ
CL13 (KA-CL)			k̀à-thùháṇ ‘overseas’	kà

(37) Prefixes:

- a. Singular/plural pairs, diminutive **ù-** CL11 replacement, derive nouns (V → N)

(38) Pseudo-prefixes:

- a. The initial consonant dictates the noun class (again, alliteration)
 b. No alternations: Singular/plural is formed by prefixing a class marker
 c. **k̀òtò** ‘body’ ⇒ **ṇà-k̀òtò** ‘bodies’
 d. **k̀ù-ṇàtí** ‘pot scraping’ ⇐ **ṇàtí** ‘pot scrapings’

(39) Most common genders (i.e. singular/plural pairings): Top 6 (A-F) ≈ 90%

Gender	Class(es)	n=	SG	PL	Meaning	Notes
A	1/2 (O/BE)	266	ỳóṇk̀ó	/ ỳóṇk̀ó-yṇ	‘chameleon(s)’	Default (ANIMATE)
B	8 (BA)	116	thìkà	/ thìkà-yṇ	‘wrapper(s)’	Default (INANIMATE)
C	3/4 (KO/NG)	183	k̀ù-yèṇ	/ ṇà-yèṇ	‘tree(s)’	
D	5/6 (HO/TH)	174	h̀ù-gb̀ùṇ	/ thà-gb̀ùṇ	‘knee(s)’	
E	7 (KI)	49	ṇ-gb̀àsí	/ ṇ-gb̀àsí-ṇ	‘ladder(s)’	
F	9 (MA)	51	m̀ètì	/ m̀ètì-ṇ	‘salt(s)’	
G	10 (BU)	18	b̀ù	/ b̀ù-nì	‘fire(s)’	
H	5/9 (HO/MA)	8	h̀ù-sápà	/ m̀à-sápà	‘key(s)’	
I	3/8 (KO/BA)	4	k̀ù-wá	/ bà-wá	‘rib(s)’	
J	12 (MU)	12	m̀ù-th̀ù	/ m̀ù-th̀ù-ṇ	‘garden(s)’	<i>etc.</i>

(40) Plurality: Always possible to mark overtly with **-yṇ/-iṇ/-ṇ** or **-nì** (common in ‘Atlantic’)

- a. **k̀àṇk̀ò** ‘bat’ **k̀àṇk̀ò-yṇ/k̀àṇk̀ò-nì** ‘bats’
 b. **h̀ù-bèk̀ò** ‘adam’s apple’ **thà-bèk̀ò/thà-bèk̀ò-nì** ‘adam’s app’s’

(41) Concord and agreement:

- a. Morphs may end in a L (red) vs. end in H vs. toneless
- b. Three series of agreement depending on context (α and β also seen in verb phrase)

Noun class	L-tone	Tonal contrast			No tonal contrast		
	N-PREFIX	DEF	DEM (GEN)	AGR- α (ADJ/REL/POSS-LONG)	AGR- β (NUM/QUANT)	AGR- γ (COMPND/POSS-SHORT)	PRONOUN
1 (O)	ò-	òŋ	wěŋ	ò	u	o	unde (OBJ=meŋ)
2 (BE)	bì-	bèŋ	bèmbèŋ	bè	bi	be	binde
3 (KO)	kù-	kòŋ	kòŋkòyŋ	kò	ku	ko	kuŋ
4 (NG)	ŋà-	ŋǎŋ	ŋǎŋǎŋ	ŋǎ	ŋa	ŋa	ŋayŋ
5 (HO)	hù-	hǎŋ	hòhòyŋ	hò	hu	ho	huŋ
6 (TH)	thà-	thǎŋ	thǎnthǎŋ	thǎ	tha	tha	thayŋ
7 (KI)	ḡ-	kǐŋ	kǐŋkǐŋ	kǐ	ki	ki	kiŋ
8 (BA)	bà-	bǎŋ	bǎmbǎŋ	bǎ	ba	ba	bayŋ
9 (MA)	mà-	mǎŋ	mǎmǎŋ	mǎ	ma	ma	mayŋ
10 (BU)	bù-	bǔŋ	bǔmbǔŋ	bǔ	bu	bu	buŋ
11 (U)	ù-	ǔŋ	ǔǔŋ	ǔ	u	u	uŋ
12 (MU)	mù-	mǔŋ	mǔmǔŋ	mǔ	mu	mu	muŋ
13 (KA)	kà-	kà	kàŋkáyŋ	kà	ka	ka	kayŋ

2.2 Word order

(42) Fairly strict head-initial order within the noun phrase

- a. **màmpà** **mà** **pòròthò-yŋ**
palm.wine AGR.CL9 white.man-PL ‘English rum’
- b. **mù-thòŋ** **mù** **kâ-ntú**
CL12-food AGR.CL12 POSS-our ‘our food’
- c. **bàhù-yŋ** **bè** **bòlòy bèmbèŋ**
goat-PL AGR.CL2 black DEM.CL2 ‘these black goats’
- d. **bàhù-yŋ** **bèmbèŋ** **hòmá**
goat-PL DEM.CL2 all ‘all these goats’
- e. **bàrà bá** **úndè** **dèthì báj**
meat AGR.CL8 PRON.CL1 look DEF.CL8
‘the meat that he is looking for’

(43) Default position for numerals is before adjectives (Cf. Greenberg’s 1963 Universal 20)

- a. Given order: [N] [NUM] [ADJ]
- b. Accepted when prompted: [N] [ADJ] [NUM]
- c. Ex. Given: [bìyà] [**kòðhì**] [**bè yòhòy**] ‘ten fine people’
Accepted: [bìyà] [**bè yòhòy**] [**kòðhì**] ‘ten fine people’

3 Verbs

3.1 Verb roots and stems

(44) Most verb roots are monosyllabic, some disyllabic – No lexical tone contrast on roots

- a. If roots are without inflectional or derivational morphology, they surface with an epenthetic final vowel if they violate Limba phonotactics

(45) Multisyllabic verb stems formed through derivational suffixation (very Bantu-like)

CV roots (exhaustive list)	CVC roots	CVCV+ roots
a. ni ‘do’	c. yay- → yay ‘beg’	f. silu- → sili ‘think’
thi ‘call’	boy- → boy ‘buy’	g. beke- → beke ‘cough’
du ‘go (somewhere)’	dow- → doy ‘labor’	biye- → biye ‘bathe’
dee ‘belch’	d. keŋ- → keŋ ‘fly’	sələ- → sələ ‘adore’
kə ‘stand’	pon- → poŋ ‘cook’	dəŋə- → dəŋə ‘sit’
mə ‘come’	kam- → kaŋ ‘dance’	thehə- → thehə ‘misswallow’
ŋə ‘lie down’	e. boh- → boh-i ‘seize’	h. huduŋ- → huduŋ ‘blow’
thə ‘enter’	soyt- → soyt-i ‘bark’	sikith- → sikith-i ‘take’
b. ya ‘look’ (DEFECTIVE)	kut- → kut-u ‘see’	diŋit- → diŋit-i ‘rush’
sa ‘come’ (DEFECTIVE)		

(46) Verbal derivational suffixation (as summarized by Conteh 2017)

- a. **thəm-** (>[**thəŋ**]) ‘eat’
- b. **thəm-əŋ** ‘feed someone’
- c. **thəm-ina** ‘be fed by someone’
- d. **thəm-ita** ‘have your food eaten by others’
- e. **thəm-əti** ‘eat uninvited, eat someone’s food, to cheat’
- f. **thom-eke** ‘eat in secret’
- g. **thəm-in-əkə** ‘feed oneself’
- h. **thəm-ande** ‘feed on each other’
- i. **thəm-in-ande** ‘feed one another’
- j. **thom-it-eke** ‘eat slowly alone’
- k. **thom-e** ‘eat with hand/spoon’
- l. **thom-o** ‘be eaten’

(47) Derivational suffixes (or pseudo-suffixes) can introduce tone into stem domain

Tone pattern	Morphology	Clause (no overt segmental inflection or grammatical tone)
a. No tone	i.	yì à thə tìndé ‘you enter too much’
		yì à kàŋ tìndé ‘you dance too much’
	ii. EPEN	yì à yèl-i tìndé ‘you throw too much’
		yì à yùmb-ù tìndé ‘you wait too much’
b. No tone	i. RECIP -ande	yì à bìy-àndè tìndé ‘you enter too much’
	ii. PASS -o	yì à dèth-ò tìndé ‘you are being watched too much’
	iii. REFL -əkə	yì à tùt-əkə tìndé ‘you carry on the head too much’
c. Final high	i. DERIV -kì^H	yì à yəŋ-kì tín^Hdé ‘you lock too much’
	ii. DERIV -ní	yì à sìsì-ní tín^Hdé ‘you repair too much’
	iii. DERIV -éké	yì à tèŋk-éké tín^Hdé ‘you return too much’
d. Mixed	i. PSEUDO -e	yì à bìyè tìndé ‘you bathe too much’
		yì à nìnè tín^Hdé ‘you sleep too much’
	ii. DERIV -Vŋ	yì à yəs-əŋ tìndé ‘you push too much’
		yì à bèr-èŋ tín^Hdé ‘you cry too much’

3.2 Verb inflection

- (48) Aspect/mood/polarity: Inflectional material on (or around) verb stem
- (49) Tense: Temporal markers which anchor the verb’s situation in time

- (50) Inflection on the verb root **deth-** ‘look’ (isolation: [**dethi**])
- ① Affixes on stem, mostly final vowels (those in parentheses are epenthetic)
 - ② Grammatical tone on stem + final vowel
 - ③ Particles around the verbal word
 - ④ The presence or absence of the AGR- α series of subject agreement

	SBJ AGR	Affixes/particles					Stem tones	Inflection	Translation
		④	③	①	②	①			
a.	-			dèth	-à		L	IMPERATIVE	‘Look!’
	-			déth	-à		HL	HORTATIVE	‘Let’s look’
	-	bà		déth	(-i)		HL	PROHIBITIVE	‘Don’t look’
b.	AGR- α			déth	(-i)		HL	UNTIMED	‘...can look’/‘...will look’
	AGR- α	kà		déth	-à		HL	CONTINUOUS	‘...be looking’
	AGR- α	bà		dèth	-à		L	DESIDERATIVE	‘...want to look’
	-			déth	-í/-é		H	COMPLETIVE	‘...(have) looked’
	-			dèth	-i/-è		L	(alternative)	
c.	-	sá		déth	(-i)		HL	NEGATIVE.UNTIM	‘...can’t look’/‘...won’t look’
	-	thá		déth	(-i)		HL	NEGATIVE.COMP	‘...did not look’
	-			déth	-é	tá	H	NEGATIVE.INCEP	‘...have not looked (yet)’
	-			déth	-è	tà	HL	(alternative)	
d.	-		à-	dèth	(-i)		L	A-INFINITIVE	‘...to look’
	AGR- α		hù-	déth	-à		HL	HU-INFINITIVE	‘...to look’

- (51) Temporal markers

- yàn** **ndò** **mésúwé** **ndè** → [**ándò** **mésúwé** **ndè**]
I AGR.PART skinny **before** ‘I was skinny’
- yàn** **ténkéké** **hèñ** → [**àn** **ténkéké** **‘hèñ**]
I return\CMPL **yesterday** ‘I returned yesterday’
- Siyá** **ò** **hè** **kònthò** → [**Siyá** **ò** **hè** **kònthò**]
Siya AGR.CL1 **today** hunger
‘Siya was hungry’ (but no longer)
- Siyá** **ò** **sé** **pòñ** **sísá** → [**Siyá** **ò** **sé** **pòñ** **sísá**]
Siya AGR.CL1 **soon** cook\UNT rice
‘Siya will cook rice (soon)’

3.3 Word order

- (52) Default [SUBJECT] [VERB] [OBJECT] word order

- Left dislocation of noun (phrase) for focus (with focus marker **nǎ** FOC)
- Eliminates otherwise obligatory agreement
- Siyá** **ò** **kà** **pónà** **sísá**
Siya AGR.CL1 CONT cook\CONT rice
‘Siya is cooking rice’
- sísá** **nǎ** **Siyá** **—** **kà** **pónà**
rice FOC Siya CONT cook\CONT
‘It is rice that Siya is cooking’

- (53) Contexts which maintain [SUB][VERB] word order: UNTIMED, CONTINUOUS with **kà**

- (54) Cf. obligatory [SUB][VERB/PART]→[VERB/PART][SUB] inversion in out-of-focus contexts
- a. COMPLETIVE (-e COMP), all NEGATIVE (**sá** NEG.UNT, **thá** NEG.COMP, **ta** NEG.INCEP), with various particles (e.g. **thùŋ** ‘still’) and auxiliaries (e.g. **thoy** ‘know how’)
- (55) Obligatory inversion
- a. Completive (DEFAULT, ‘ALL-FOCUS’):
- | | | | | |
|------|------|------|---|-----------------------------|
| S | V | O | ← | Obligatory <u>S-V</u> order |
| Sìyá | póné | sìsá | | ‘Siya cooked rice’ |
- b. Completive (OBJECT-FOCUS):
- | | | | | | |
|------|-----|------|------|---|-------------------------------|
| O | FOC | V | S | ← | Obligatory <u>V-S</u> order |
| sìsá | nà | póné | Sìyá | | ‘It is rice that Siya cooked’ |
- c. Negative completive (DEFAULT, ‘ALL-FOCUS’):
- | | | | | | |
|------|-----|------|------|---|--------------------------------|
| S | NEG | V | O | ← | Obligatory <u>S-PART</u> order |
| Sìyá | thá | pônŋ | sìsá | | ‘Siya did not cook rice’ |
- d. Negative completive (OBJECT-FOCUS):
- | | | | | | | |
|------|-----|-----|------|------|---|------------------------------------|
| O | FOC | NEG | S | V | ← | Obligatory <u>PART-S</u> order |
| sìsá | ‘ná | thà | Sìyá | pônŋ | | ‘Rice is what Siya did not cooked’ |

4 Big picture

- (56) Phonologically:
- a. Limba phonology is most akin to neighboring Themne, even in Limba-Wara Wara which lacks most of the Themne borrowings of the southern dialects
- b. Limba is tonal (both lexical and grammatical tone), like languages of ‘Southern Atlantic’, unlike languages in ‘Northern Atlantic’
- c. Limba has mid-vowel harmony, like Mande languages more generally
- (57) Morpho-syntactically:
- a. Limba has a robust noun class system, like many “Atlantic” languages (Creissels *to appear*)
- b. Limba has strongly head-initial word order, unlike Mande entirely
- (58) Vocabulary:
- a. Numerous palm tree-related and rice-related vocabulary
- b. Limba has almost no Mande loanwords (exceptions: religion, family, domesticated animals, instruments, various *Wanderwörter*)
- (59) All of this speaks to their relative isolation and ‘deep rural strategy’ (Fanthorpe 1998), reflected in their conservative Niger-Congo grammar

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