Grammatical relations in the West !Xoon dialect of Taa

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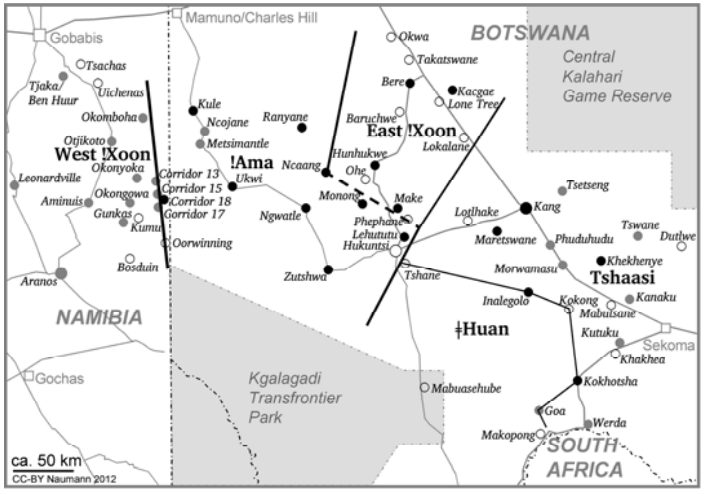
1 Preliminaries

1.1 General grammatical-relation (GR) approach

+ GR = regular, structurally determined status of a nominal constituent with respect to
a) VERBAL clause nucleus, if it is its argument = most narrow but common sense
b) VERBAL clause nucleus, irrespective of valence status = in-between sense used here
> excludes NP relations in non-verbal-predications as well as in complex NPs
> implies the presence of an independent NP, verb-integrated pronominal ≠ GR!!!
+ GRs are language-specific (Dryer 1997), if not construction-specific (Bickel 2011)
- determined by any formal properties relevant in a given language, notably but not exclusively word order, agreement, flagging, prosodic integration etc.
> GR conceptualized as to how different semantic-functional notions like verb-related semantic role, referent type, information structure, etc. are conflated into a manageable set of morphosyntactically defined form classes

1.2 The genealogical context of West !Xoon

+ variety of Taa (= Taa [taaa1242] in Glottolog, and !Xóõ [nmn] in Ethnologue)
> West !Xoon forms primary West branch, as opposed to East Taa which includes East !Xoon researched by A. Traill (cf. Naumann 2014)

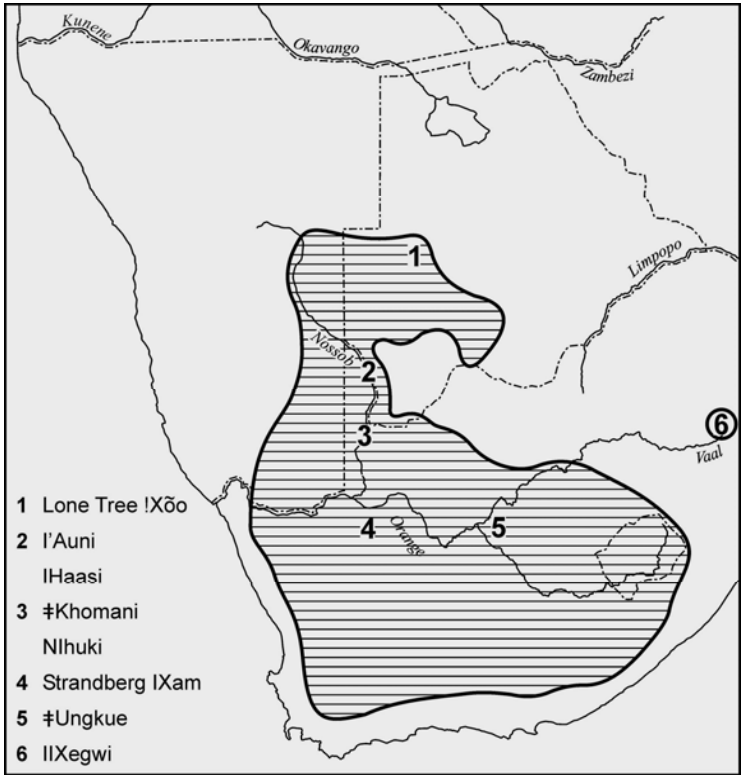


Map 1: The West !Xoon variety within the Taa language complex

+ Taa as part of the Taa-Lower Nossob branch of the Tuu family, an isolate family (classified in the past as “Southern South African Khoisan”, Greenberg 1963)
> cf. Figure 1, Map 2

Taa-Lower Nossob	
Taa (DC)	West !Xoon, N|u‖’en†; ’N|oha, East !Xoon, Kakia†, ...
Lower Nossob	|’Auni†
	|Haasi†
!Ui	N‖ng, N|uu (DC)
	ǂUngkue†
	‖Xegwi†
	|Xam† (DC)

Figure 1: Classification of Tuu (cf. Güldemann 2014)



Map 2: Approximate historical distribution of Tuu (after Güldemann 2005: 13)

1.3 The areal-typological context and basic structure of West !Xoon

1.3.1 The Non-Khoe type

+ Tuu family, including Taa, is part of a robust "language type" in the Kalahari Basin called Non-Khoe (as opposed to the other Khoe-(Kwadi) type) (cf. Güldemann and Vossen 2000)

> partly marked morphosyntactic profile, including features crucial for the GR system:
  a) S V (O OTHER) clause order
  b) most verbs with maximal valence of one non-S/A participant
  c) verb serialization (mostly root type, Foley and Van Valin 1984) and verb compounding
  d) prominent flagging by a special type of default marker for most postverbal participants outside the valence of the verb, aka "multipurpose oblique (MPO)" marker, and, depending on the language, a few more semantically dedicated adpositions

> strict syntactic template of basic clause (subscript n = possible multiple occurrence):
[SUBJECT - PREDICATE.OPERATOR$_n$ - ADVERB - VERB$_n$ - OBJECT - PREP + OBLIQUE$_n$]

+ most extreme case described so far for Tsumkwe Ju|'hoan (Southeast Ju, Kx'a family) with a single multi-participant construction: **[VERB$_n$ - OBJECT - *kò* + OBLIQUE$_n$]**

(1)	SBJ	PO	V	OBJ	[PREP	OBLIQUE]
a.	*ha*	*kú*	*ǁohm-a*	*!aìhn*	*kò*	*gǀúí*
	3S	IPFV	[chop-VE$_x$	tree$_x$]	MPO	forest
b.	*ha*	*kú*	*ǁohm-a*	*gǀúí*	*kò*	*!aìhn*
	3S	IPFV	chop-VE$_x$	forest	MPO	tree$_x$

He was chopping the tree in the forest. (Dickens 2005: 39)

+ even relevant for ditransitives (rare secundative alignment due to strong animacy effect)

> no obvious ditransitive verbs including 'give' (see König and Heine 2010)

(2)	SBJ		V	OBJ	[PREP	OBLIQUE]
	dà'áma	*jàn*	*ǀ'àn*	*ha bá*	*kò*	*màrì*
	child	good	give	3S father	MPO	money

The good child gave his father money. (Dickens 2005: 40)

> MPO semantically very broad: most semantic roles except those typically expressed by the subject (agent, experiencer, force), viz. patients, all kinds of obliques and adverbials

> postverbal nominal encoding by position and flagging more sensitive to animacy (?and information structure) than to semantic roles (cf. Güldemann 2004)

1.3.2 Extensive cross-reference as a Taa-specific feature

+ morphological system of cross-reference and agreement on a wide range of hosts like copula (3), adjectives (3), some numerals (4), **transitive verbs** (4), **all prepositions**, conjunctions etc.

(3)	*ú*	*qárú*	*kù*	*!xab-ù*
	2P	parents.P4	COP:4	big.P-4

Your parents are big/old. (TWb110927-0106.008)

(4)

a.	*ń*	*sí*	*n|à-í*	*ǂhàì*	*ǂ"ù-ì*
	1S	IPFV	see-1	dog.S1	one-1

I see one dog. (TWb090405-0101.001)

b.	*ń*	*sí*	*n|à-àn*	*márí*	*ǂ"ó-àn*
	1S	IPFV	see-2i>	goat.S2i	one-2i

I see one goat. (TWb090405-0101.005)

+ entails 5 speech-act-participant forms and 7 agreement classes within a complex gender system (Traill 1974, Güldemann 2000, Kießling 2008)

> prosody of a high/low tone contrast relevant for subtle distinctions within cross-reference system (as well as prepositional flagging, see §2.3)

> person and agreement class markers are grouped into two tone classes - Table 1

Person and agreement class		**Agreement suffix for following object** ('see-X> stone$_x$')	**Anaphoric pronoun suffix** ('[stone$_x$] see-IT')	**Agreement on adjective** ('stone$_x$ small-X')
Tone class I	1S	n/a	***-ńg [-ŋ́]***	***-ǹg***
	2S	n/a	***-á***	***-à***
	1P	n/a	***-í***	***-ì***
	2P	n/a	***-ú***	***-ù***
	ACL 2i	***-àn [-ã̀]***	***-án***	***-àn***
	ACL 3i	***-è***	***-é***	***-è***
Tone class II	ACL 1(ii)	***-í***	***-ì***	***-ì***
	ACL 2ii	***-án [-ã́]***	***-àn***	***-àn***
	ACL 3ii	n/a	***-è***	***-è***
	ACL 4(ii)	n/a	***-ù***	***-ù***
	ACL 5(ii)	n/a	***-ǹg [-ŋ̀]***	***-ǹg***

Table 1: Cross-reference marking and tone classes

2 GRs in West !Xoon

2.1 Encoding of GRs

(5)

Clause-initial	**PO**	**Pre-verbal**	**V**	**Post-verbal**			**“Late” post-verbal**	
è	*ă*	*qháré*	*g‖àqh-í*	*n!áqì*	*|ì*	*⊙áì*	*kê*	*n‖àhè*
3ii	PST	noon.3i	pull-1	hartebeest.S1	GEN:1	meat.S1	MPO:3i	house.S3i

He pulled the meat of the hartebeest to the house at noon. (TWb080312-0304.041)

(I) Word order
- basic: preverbal vs. postverbal position
- secondary: preverbal clause-initial vs. immediately preverbal - cf. (5): ‘he’ vs. ‘noon’
- secondary: immediately postverbal vs. “late” postverbal - cf. (5): ‘meat’ vs. ‘house’

(II) Verbal cross-reference
- single slot in 2nd mora of bimoraic transitive verb lexemes within above system, cross-referencing the first postverbal NP - cf. (5): ‘pull’ indexes ‘meat of the hartebeest’

> typologically unusual as only with non-S/A and not with S/A participant

(III) Flagging
- principal distinction between presence vs. absence of flagging (correlating with “later” postverbal vs. other GR positions) - cf. (5): ‘meat’ vs. MPO + ‘house’
- additional distinction within the set of inflected prepositions in the “late” postverbal slot which also must cross-reference their complement according to above system (see §2.2.4)

\+ preliminary analysis of formal encoding results in a set of four basic GRs

GR	**I Clause-initial**	**II Preverbal**	**III Postverbal**	**IV “Late” postverbal**
Word order (_ = GR slot)	_ (PO) (GRII) V	_ V	V _	V (GRIII) _
Verbal cross-reference	NO	NO	YES	NO
Flagging	NO	NO	NO	YES
Language-specific label	**“SUBJECT”**	**“ADVERB”**	**“OBJECT”**	**“PREPOSITIONAL”**

Table 2: Preliminary system of basic GRs in West !Xoon defined by formal encoding

> appears to be already defined sufficiently in terms of a linear template

> all postverbal NPs are marked, either by verbal cross-reference or prepositional flagging

2.2 Four basic GRs

I Subject (SBJ)

\+ typologically unremarkable in largely conflating information-structural role of topic and semantic role of S/A

\+ positionally defined, also in opposition to fronted initial NP for term focus and theticity

(6)

tuu	*k*[*u*	*si*	*qoye*]	(as opposed to simple: *tuu si qoye*)
people.4	THET:4	IPFV	dance.initiation:3	

The people dance the initiation dance. [involving topic shift] (TWa040429-0101.057)

II Adverb (ADV)

\+ semantically restricted to expressions of manner, time and location

\+ GR status only to the extent that filler of syntactic position is nominal

> not universal because of other typical fillers, e.g., true adverbs, locative deictics (nominal fillers identifiable by morphology and possible alternative postverbal occurrence)

(7)

ě	*kàhǹg*	*sí*	*⊙áǹn*
3ii	here	IPFV	sleep

He is sleeping here. (TWb090405-0111.016)

III Object (OBJ)

\+ triggered by inherently transitive verbs (as opposed to intransitive and other verb types)

> first in sequence of postverbal constituents before all prepositional NPs of GRIV

\+ verbal cross-reference can be true agreement of a GRIII Object, as in (8)a., or anaphoric pronominalization without a GR, as in (8)b./c.

(8)

a.

ǂhàí	*sí*	***sá'y-è***	***táà***	Canonical agreement
dog.S1:DEF	IPFV	bite-3i$_x$	person.S3i$_x$	

The dog bites the person. (TWb090405-0104.004)

b.

⊙qáqè	*ńń,*	*ǂhàì*	*kă*	***sá'y-é***	Non-GR anaphoric O pronominalization
child.S3i$_x$	ID	dog.S1	FUT	bite-3i$_x$	

It's a child, a/the dog will bite it. (TWb090405-0104.014)

c.

ǂhàí	*sí*	***sá'y-è***	*⊙áà*	Non-GR anaphoric POSSR pronominalization
dog.S1:DEF	IPFV	bite-3ii$_x$	offspring.S3i$_y$	

The dog bites his$_x$ child$_y$. (TWb090405-0104.007)

+ object encoding in verb serialization only relevant for last verb, non-final transitive verb occurs in default form (which varies unpredictably across different verb lexemes)

(9)

a. *á sí* ***sá'y-í*** *⊙âì*
2S IPFV bite-1 meat.S1
You bite the meat (off). (TWb090405-0104.002)

b. *á sí* ***sá'í*** ***qx'ú-í*** *⊙âì*
2S IPFV bite take.off.S-1 meat.S1
You bite the meat off. (TWb090405-0104.003)

IV Prepositional (PREP)

+ prepositionally flagged NPs represent in fact a set of GR (sub)types which is internally structured (see §2.3)

No.	Form	Label	Gloss
1	*/''M*	Comitative	COM
2	*kuM*	Similative	SIML
3	*n|M*	Dative	DAT
4	*sM*	External object	EXO
5	*kM*	Transitive	TRA
6	*kM*	Multi-purpose oblique	MPO

Table 3: List of prepositions

2.3 The prepositional complex

2.3.1 Six different prepositionals

2.3.1.1 Comitative (COM)

+ semantically specific reference to association with a state-of-affairs in a wider sense
> predominantly comitative, instrumental, etc.

(10) *ě sí sâì /''è 'n\áǹg*
3ii IPFV come COM:3ii spouse.3i
He comes with his wife. (TWb090405-0105.003)

(11) *ě sí sâà /''ĭ tàhò kí g‖áú-sí /âì kì*
3ii IPFV go COM:1 path.S1 I.REL:1 straight-ADV stay F.REL:1
She is going on ("with") the path which is straight. (TWb090405-0114.020)

+ also used for NP coordination causing occasional potential syntactic ambiguity between [[V OBJ] [COM NP]] vs. [V [NP COM NP]]

2.3.1.2 Similative (SIML)

+ single inherently "prepositional" verb *náà* 'appear, look like' with obligatory similative:

(12) *kùhmí 'n‖àqhàn náà kùí !óǹ*
cattle.1:DEF be.fat appear SIML:1 eland.S1
The cow is as fat as an eland. (TWb080325-0108.014)

+ otherwise triggered by specific semantic reference to similarity, manner etc.

(13) *e si tana (ka)kui*[1] *Peter*
3ii IPFV talk SIML:3ii PN.3ii
He speaks/talks like Peter.

2.3.1.3 Dative (DAT)

+ single prepositional verb *tàqhǹ* 'recover' with obligatory dative:

(14) *n!hhúún-àqà /óà sí qàqí ǎ g!q'àǹ, xàtà é* ***tàqhǹ n\éè***
old.S3i-father.S3i recently IPFV be.sick.Sand be.weak but 3i recover DAT:3i
The old man was sick and weak, but he is recovered. (TWb080411-0114.003)

+ otherwise tied to cooccurrence with other GRs and marks also productively benefactives, malefactives, and other goal-like participants
- object-dative combination as default for transfer expressions
> no obvious simple ditransitive verbs including a genuine 'give' (cf. Güldemann 2007)

(15) *è ă ‖hóá /ú-í 'n⊙âì n\áǹg*
3ii PST NEG grab.S-1 wood.S1 DAT:1S
He did not give the stick to me. [lit.: get the stick for/to him; get him the stick] (TWb090405-0116.009)

+ originates historically in a transitive verb *n\aM* 'give' (Güldemann 2007)

2.3.1.4 External object (EXO)

+ relevant for a closed class of so far less than 10 prepositional verbs
> NP semantically object-like:
- human: *n⊙hhàí sM* 'ask' (+ for sth. *kM*), *ǂáí sM* 'call', *‖''úìn sM* 'hate'
- non-human: *dzòhàn sM* 'cook', *sín‖árú sM* 'roast', *sí!ǂánà sM* 'divide', *n!''úú sM* 'close'
- alternating with TRA *kM*: *g‖qòqbú-g‖qòqbú sM* 'shake', dialectally *g‖qx'árú sM* 'scratch'

[1] The alternation between *kuM* and *kakuM* seems to be free and remains unclear.

+ controversial status as an independent GR because *sM*:
  - originates in a transitive verb *sáM* 'get', as in (16), which is still transparent for speakers
  - behaves occasionally as a phonetically long bimoraic verb, as in (17)

> alternatively: lexicalized verb compound with canonical GRIII Object (cf. (9)b.)

(16) *á ă sá-í pénn*
2S PST get-1 pen.S1
You have got a pen. (TWb080312-0201.096)

(17) *ń ǂ"úìn sá-è qóyè ǀì ʘáì*
1S hate EXO/get-3i ostrich.S3i GEN:1 meat.S1
I hate/don't like the meat of the ostrich. (TWb090405-0107.006)

> predominant phonetic shortness as principal criterion for already viewing *sM* as a GR-defining preposition but realistically presumably on the threshold of grammaticalization

2.3.1.5 Transitive (TRA)

+ occurs with a second but larger class of prepositional verbs

(18) *ń sí n|ámí kê !"óyè*
1S IPFV throw TR:3i stone.S3i
I throw a stone. (TWb040519-0301.252)

+ also used productively for transitivization of intransitives, among them recurrent loans, e.g., Khoekhoe *|'ùrù* 'forget', *kúrù* 'make', *|hháú|hháú* 'collect'

(19) *ǔ sí ǂáǹ kí !qàhè*
4 IPFV talk TRA:1 hunt.1
They talk about the hunt (TWb090405-0113.002)

+ also with clausal constituents after *ǂ"àùn* 'must', *n!únì* 'want', *|àqǹ* 'love', etc.

(20)

a. *ě |àqǹ kâ g|óán*
3ii love TRA:2i egg.P2i
She likes eggs. (TWb090405-0102.015)

b. *ě |àqǹ ká áàn-sà*
3ii love TRA:2ii eat-NOM.2ii
She likes to eat. (TWb090405-0102.013)

c. *ě |àqǹ kéè sí á-àn g|óán kéè*
3ii love TRA:3ii IPFV eat-2iegg.S2i COMP
She likes to eat eggs. (TWb090405-0102.016)

2.3.1.6 Multi-purpose oblique (MPO)

+ as opposed to the areal trend, semantically more restricted to truly peripheral roles like, e.g., location (21), time (22), event quantity (23)

> restricted semantic overlap with other prepositions (instrument in (25) instead of COM)

(21) *!ómà-kê ǂárí kê !Q'áè*
eland.P2ii-P be.much MPO:3i GN.3i
Elands are numerous in !Q'ae. (TWb080411-0111.010)

(22) *ě |á-í tróǹk sóè kì tshâì kà'ǂkì*
3ii stay.at -1 prison.S1 inside.S2ii MPO:1 day.S1 DEM.PROX:1
... He is now ("this day/today") in prison. (TWb080411-0108.003)

(23) *ě ă gqhórá kê n|úm̀-sé*
3ii PST vomit MPO:3i two-ABSTR.3i
He has vomited two times. (TWb090405-0112.013)

2.3.2 Internal structuring

2.3.2.1 Transitive vs. multi-purpose oblique

+ segmentally unitary pattern [VERB *kM* NP] diverse according to verb valence and resulting GR status of complement

	Verb + *kM* pattern	**Semantics**	**Trans. example with *kM***	**Intrans. example without *kM***
1	Lexicalized transitive	inherent object	*n|ámí kM* 'throw'	does not exist
2	Lexicalized alternation	± object	*!áú kM* 'leave'	*!áù* 'remain'
3	Productive alternation	possible object	*n|àqnì kM* 'sneak up'	*n|àqnì* 'sneak'
4	Ad-hoc MPO addition	no object		

Table 4: Verb patterns with *kM* flagging

+ subtle prosodic difference in tone class II between patterns 1-3 vs. 4

> crucial argument for distinguishing transitive *kM* and multi-purpose oblique *kM*

(24)

a. *ʘqàqé sí xóá **kí** hòspítâl*
child.S3i:DEF IPFV write TRA:1 hospital.S1
The child is drawing the hospital. (TWb080829-0101.007)

b. *ʘqàqé sí xóá **kì** hòspítâl sóè*
child.S3i:DEF IPFV write MPO:1 hospital.S1 inside.S2ii
The child is drawing in the hospital. (TWb080829-0101.006)

(25) *è ă |q'úǹn* ***kí*** *táfèl* ***kì*** *!xáí* *kí* *dzqx'ànì kì*
3ii PST wipe TRA:1 table.S1 MPO:1 clothing.S1 I.REL:1 be.wet F.REL:1
She wiped the table with a wet cloth. (TWb090405-0116.046)

Person and agreement class		**Transitive (TRA)**		**Multi-purpose oblique (MPO)**	
		Agreement	**Anaphoric**	**Agreement**	**Anaphoric**
Tone class I	1S	n/a	*k(á)ńg*	n/a	*k(á)ńg*
	2S	n/a	*k(á)á*	n/a	*k(á)á*
	1P	n/a	*k(í)í*	n/a	*k(í)í*
	2P	n/a	*k(ú)ú*	n/a	*k(ú)ú*
	ACL 2i	*kâ* [kā]	*k(á)á(n)*	*kâ* [kā]	*k(á)á(n)*
	ACL 3i	*kê* [kē]	*k(é)é*	*kê* [kē]	*k(é)é*
Tone class II	ACL 1(ii)	***kí***	*k(iJì*	***kì***	*k(iJì*
	ACL 2ii	***ká***	*k(aJà(n)*	***kà***	*k(aJà(n)*
	ACL 3ii	***(kí)***	*k(eJè*	***(kì)***	*k(eJè*
	ACL 4(ii)	***(kí)***	*k(uJù*	***(kì)***	*k(uJù*
	ACL 5(ii)	n/a	*k(aJǹg*	n/a	*k(aJǹg*

Table 5: Tonal differentiation between inflected TRA and MPO marker

\+ TRA is best viewed as an earlier MPO constituent shifted to a verb argument, and thus aligned with normal OBJ and EXO in terms of a) semantic profile, b) tonal behavior, and c) syntactic position (see also §2.3.2.2)

2.3.2.2 Arguments vs. obliques

\+ major distinction between possible and impossible cooccurrence of prepositionals
\> TRA, EXO and non-flagged OBJ are all in complementary distribution with each other, defining a unitary slot that correlates semantically with argument status

\+ fixed order between “arguments” and other prepositional “obliques”: {OBJ, EXO, TRA} before {DAT, COM, SIML, MPO}

2.3.2.3 Relative order of obliques

\+ oblique complex also with more articulated internal structure
\- DAT before {COM, SIML, MPO}
\- SIML flexible with respect to COM, MPO in elicitation
\- MPO overall last in the prepositional complex
\> only attested exceptions in elicitation with SIML

\> COM before MPO; apparently impossible inversion due to effect of animacy hierarchy, although conceivable by European standards

(26) *ě sí sáà |''è ʘqáqè kê n‖àhè !xáè*
3ii IPFV go COM:3i child.S3i MPO:3i house.S3i big.S:3i
She goes with the child to the big house. (TWb090405-0105.007-11)

3 Summary

\+ refined system of GRs which still has four basic GRs
\- aligns somewhat unexpectedly two argument prepositionals (EXO, TRA) with the non-flagged OBJ as opposed to the four oblique prepositionals (DAT, COM, SIML, MPO)
\- lexicalized GRs privileged over other slots, irrespective of the canonical syntactic sequence

GRI		GRII		GRIII	GRIV
Clause-initial		Pre-verbal		Post-verbal	“Late” post-verbal
[**SUBJECT**	PO	**ADVERB**	V	**OBJECT**	**OBLIQUE**]
				$\textbf{\textit{OBJ}}_{\text{LEX}}$	$\textbf{\textit{SIML}}_{(+\text{LEX})}$
				$\textbf{\textit{EXO}}_{\text{LEX}}$	$\textbf{\textit{DAT}}_{(+\text{LEX})}$ ***COM***
				$\textbf{\textit{TRA}}_{+\text{LEX}}$	***MPO***

Figure 2: Revised system of four basic grammatical relations

\+ West !Xoon as an “extreme” variant of the areal theme established by Non-Khoe
\> (retained) canonical Non-Khoe features:
- highly fixed linear syntactic template (despite greater semantic specificity)
- patient-like participants not conveyed by a unitary morphosyntactic strategy: non-flagged OBJ vs. prepositional EXO and TRA
- assignment to linear template steered to a considerable extent by animacy (cf. COM-MPO restriction in §2.3.2.3), needs more systematic confirmation by discourse analysis

\> (innovative) non-canonical Non-Khoe features:
- elaborate preposition set (particularly vis-à-vis opposite Ju extreme with single MPO)
- semantic elaboration and specificity due to increased flagging inventory
- important exceptions to the generality of the animacy hierarchy with DAT and SIML
- stricter separation of argument vs. oblique in typologically expected direction

Abbreviations

1/2/3/4/5 Agreement class or, if immediately followed by S/P, person; i/ii Tone class A Agent (as primary transitive argument), ABSTR Abstract, ACL Agreement class, ADV Adverb, COM Comitative, COMP Complementizer, COP Copula, DAT Dative, DEF Definite, DC Dialect cluster, DEM Demonstrative, EXO External object, F.REL Final relative, FUT Future, GEN Genitive, GN Geographical name, ID Identificational, INF Infinitive, IPFV Imperfective, I.REL Initial relative, LEX Lexicalization, M Mora (vowel or nasal segment), MPO Multi-purpose oblique, NEG Negative, NOM Nominalization, NP Noun phrase, O object (as second transitive argument), OBJ Object (as GR), OBLIG Obligation, P Plural, PN Proper name, PO Predicate operator, POSSR Possessor, PREP Preposition, PROX Proximal, PST Past, S Singular, S subject (as single intransitive argument), SBJ subject (as GR), SIML Similative, THET Theticity, TRA Transitive, V Verb

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