

Dogon adpositions

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Dogon adpositions are almost exclusively **postpositions** rather than prepositions. The only preposition-like particles are those with senses like ‘until, all the way to’ and ‘since, from (a time)’, and these are regional terms or local borrowings.

Typically there are from one to five primary postpositions, for example ‘dative’, ‘locative’, ‘instrumental’, and ‘purposive’. These are complemented by composite spatial postpositions of the English *in front of X*, *in back of X* types, with an old possessed noun followed by the basic spatial postposition.

In most Dogon languages there is no distinction between static location (‘in, at, on’), allative (‘to’), and ablative (‘from’) in PPs. Allative and ablative senses are expressed by motion verbs (‘go’, ‘come’, ‘enter’, and ‘exit’), which may be chained to other verbs. So ‘run [from X]’ is expressed as ‘X exit run’.

primary postpositions (except purposive)

Several Dogon languages have primary postpositions of the general oblique type, including some combination of dative, instrumental, and/or locative functions. Yanda Dom distinguishes a basic locative ‘in/at/on X’ from a nonproximate locative ‘over in/at/on X’. Tommo So also has two locatives that may have a similar distinction

Postpositions whose tones are variable are shown here without tone markings. “v” is a variable vowel. “Instrumental” sometimes includes comitative ‘with, in the company of (sb)’, and in some languages it is also the ‘and’ conjunction, usually repeatable (‘X with, Y (with)’ = ‘X and Y’). McPherson uses clitic boundary = for Tommo So but this probably does not indicate a difference vis-à-vis other languages.

(1) Dative, (primary) locative, and instrumental postpositions

<i>language</i>	<i>dative</i>	<i>locative</i>	<i>instrumental</i>
eastern			
Toro Tegu	<i>de</i>	<i>kù</i>	<i>sĩ:</i>
	(<i>de</i> sometimes allative ‘to’)		
Jamsay <i>le</i>	<i>le</i> , final L-tone	<i>le</i>	
Ben Tey	<i>mâ:</i>	<i>wo</i>	<i>nây</i>
Bankan Tey	<i>bâ:</i> ~ <i>bà</i>	<i>wo</i> , <i>ni</i>	<i>nâŋ</i>
Nanga <i>bay</i>	<i>gv</i> ~ <i>ŋv</i>	<i>yàŋà</i>	
Tommo So	= <i>le</i> , = <i>nɛ</i>	= <i>baa</i> , = <i>nɛ</i>	= <i>le</i>
Donno So	<i>lè</i>	<i>rà:</i> , <i>nè</i>	<i>lè</i>

Togo Kan	<i>nì ~ -n̂</i>	<i>final L-tone</i>	<i>bè</i>
Yorno So	<i>le</i>	<i>nè</i>	<i>le</i>
Tomo Kan	<i>ló, wá</i>	<i>wá</i>	<i>ló</i>
northwestern			
Dogul Dom	??	<i>ndá, lâ:/râ:, ní</i>	??
Tiranige	[=object]	<i>ɲà, yà, g̀ì</i>	<i>yà</i>
Najamba	[=object]	<i>ma</i>	<i>ma</i>
Tebul Ure	[=object]	<i>nè/rè</i>	<i>ni:</i>
Yanda Dom	<i>bèr^{n̂}à</i>	<i>nà, bà</i>	<i>mi</i>
southwestern			
Bunoge	[=object]	<i>mbà ~ à</i>	<i>ndò</i>
Mombo	??		
Ampari	??		
Penange	[=object]	<i>ba, ɲ ~ w^{n̂}</i>	<i>ni</i>

Some Dogon languages have a **tonal locative** involving a floating L-tone that docks on the preceding noun (or noun-adjective combination). This is the productive locative in Togo Kan (where common nouns otherwise normally end in a H-tone), and there are a number of examples in Jamsay although there it is not fully productive (it would be inaudible after a noun ending in a L-tone). Many spatial postpositions with /HL/ tone melodies in these and other languages may have originated as tonal locatives, i.e. as composite postpositions of the [[my back] Loc] ‘behind me’ type. However, this is synchronically transparent only if the original noun or adjective still occurs in a final-H-tone form. Moreover, in several languages {HL} is also the basic possessor-controlled tone overlay. In such languages, for a spatial postposition of the type *X ĆC̀C̀* derived from a noun **ĆC̀C̀*, the falling tone could be attributed either to a segmentally deleted L-toned primary locative postposition (**X ĆC̀C̀ C̀*) that left only its tone behind, or to the overlay controlled by the possessor X (**X^{HL}ĆC̀C̀*), or jointly to both.

Togo Kan has not only a tonal locative, but also a phonologically identical tonal definite (discourse-definite ‘the’) and a tonal topic marker (‘as for’). Probably these reflect different L-toned **C̀* morphemes whose segments have disappeared.

purposive postpositions

If there is a purposive postposition (‘for’) distinct from dative in a language, it is given below. In most languages it may also be used in causal function (‘because of’). In some languages the purposive postposition ‘for’ is related to the verb ‘say’, i.e. it derives from (or may still be thought of as) a serialized ‘say’ clause (‘saying/thinking “honey” I went there’ = ‘I went there for [to get] honey’).

(2) Purposive postpositions and ‘say’ verb

<i>language</i>	<i>purposive</i>	<i>‘say’ (conjugatable verb)</i>
eastern		
Toro Tegu	<i>de</i>	<i>gá</i>
Jamsay	<i>jè</i>	<i>jè</i> (perfective)
Ben Tey	<i>gìní ~ gǐn, déngèy</i>	<i>gìní ~ gǐn</i>
Bankan Tey	??	<i>gùn</i>
Nanga	<i>dèrⁿí</i>	<i>kíyé</i>
Tommo So	<i>= diye</i>	<i>gè</i>
Donno So	dative <i>lè</i> plus <i>jă:</i>	<i>gě:</i> ‘say’, cf. <i>jă:</i> ‘take’
Togo Kan	<i>gê:, gî, gà</i>	<i>gí, pórù</i>
Yorno So	<i>dè: ~ dèy</i>	<i>gě</i> (perfective <i>gì</i>)
Tomo Kan	<i>ndé</i>	<i>fúlí</i>
northwestern		
Dogul Dom	??	<i>pòlé</i>
Tiranige	<i>dàgá</i>	<i>gúnú</i>
Najamba	<i>nèn</i>	<i>gìné</i>
Tebul Ure	<i>dùgò</i>	<i>gǐn/jǐn, órú</i>
Yanda Dom	<i>dàn, -ŋ</i>	<i>gǔn</i>
southwestern		
Bunoge	<i>dà</i>	<i>ʔúnè</i>
Mombo	<i>dó:</i>	<i>gúné</i>
Ampari	<i>ndó</i>	<i>né, pórò</i>
Penange	<i>námù ~ nâmm</i>	<i>né</i>

The ‘say’ verb is related in some (other) languages to the ‘like, similar to’ postposition-like particle.