Five interlinearized Mambay Texts

Songs, a legend, a fable and proverbs

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Language: Mambay (ISO 639-3 language code: mcs)
Language family: Niger-Congo, Adamawa, Kebi-Benue
Principal locations where the langauge is spoken:
  Cameroon: North Province, Bénoué and Mayo-Louti Departments
  Chad: Lac-Léré Department

Author/storyteller: Oussoumanou Bouba of Kaakyo'w (Katchéo), Cameroon
Dates of recording: 2004-2006
Transcription: Oussoumanou Bouba and Erik Anonby

The texts, which are part of a larger research project on Mambay, are part of a grammatical description in the following book:

Anonby, Erik. 2011. A grammar of Mambay. Kay Williamson Educational Foundation publication series, Vol. 6. Cologne: Rüdiger Köppe.

The transcription conventions used here are explained in the book, and a complete list of abbreviations used in the book (including the texts below) is reproduced at the end of this document.

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5. Hortatory text: **nà ̥-tû'** 'Proverbs'

The texts are presented with an interlinear translation. In the first line, the Mambay text is found; morpheme boundaries are marked with hyphens. The second line gives a literal translation of each morpheme or, when relevant, its grammatical function. In the third line, an idiomatic translation is provided in italics.

1. Song: **hùrtìgóhm** 'The locust'

hùrtìgóhm mù̧ húm ˝
locust.sp.1 2SG come:PFV EXPECT
Locust, did you come …

zà'rá   kǎ' nà̧.
dance:VN   here QM
to dance here?

mù̧ húm   nà̧-kógrà ´˝
2SG come:PFV PFX-look(n.) EXPECT
You came to watch, didn't you?

mù̧ ʔùr   káà   sáà yǎŋ ˝,
2SG stand:PFV head/on:LF stone IDEO EXPECT
You stood on the stone unperturbed,

mù̧ 'náá̧   kǔm   dáá̧rʉ́.
2SG stretch:PFV neck:2SG.POSS.INAL IDEO
you stretched your neck, craning it and looking all around.

mù̧ú   tì̧̀   nà̧-bàbbá
2SG.IRR become:FUT PFX-locust.sp.2
Will you become a grasshopper

kà   mʉ́   làà   kwáà nà̧,
and.then 2SG.OPT eat:OPT grass QM
so that you can eat grass too?

2. Song: **wàḥwàḥ** 'Hubbub'

wàḥwàḥ! zèèlá lòòń mí.
hubbub lie:VN bother:PFV 1SG.OBJ
Hubbub! A lie bothered me.

zèèlì wĩ̧ lóóǹ páà dô' nà, páà dô' nà,
lie:VN:LF what? bother:VN man:LF ANAPH QM man:LF ANAPH QM
What rumour is bothering that man, that man?

tí-gérêm wá̧à̧ ɗàɗ-zí túrà kúù.
AUG-woman.PL:LF chief sow:PFV-PL millet bushland
The wives of the chief sowed millet in the fields.

bǎh [ʔàá][1] **ɗáá yá, bǎh [ʔàá]**[12] **ɗáá yá.**
rain 3:PFV.NEG succeed:PFV NEG rain 3:PFV.NEG succeed:PFV NEG
The rain did not come, the rain did not come.

gúú-zí nì̧̀ré vòró fàà sá'bà
pull.back:PFV-PL bottom:3PL.C/I.POSS.INAL to.there back/place:LF traditional.salt
They [the women] bent over at the place where the salt is

kì-gòò nà̧-rígrílè, nà̧-rígrílè.
place:PFX-prepare:VN PFX-gourd.seed PFX-gourd.seed
to roast gourd seeds, gourd seeds.

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[1] This pronoun is absent in the song, but Oussomanou maintains that it is obligatory in normal speech; cf. 7.5.

kyéé   **ró'**   **lé**   **bè**   **lé**   **gbáh**
mother-3SG.C/I.POSS.INAL   talk:PFV   3SG.C/I.OBJ   QUOT   3SG.C/I.OPT   catch:OPT

'mářà̧ má̧   **bǒ'm-bò'msí,**
friend   with   Bo'm-Bo'msi

[She_i said] her_i mother_j / the mother_j told her_i that she_{i/j} must become friends with Bo'm-Bo'msi,

bò'msí hàhŋgí   **káálé**   **gbàrgàtàg**
Bo'msi   forget:PFV   head:3SG.C/I.POSS.INAL   IDEO

but Bo'msi lost his head completely,

yáh   **nà̧-gbáhŋgú**   **ríį́**   **fíį́[t]**[2] **fíį́[t]**
take:PFV   PFX-cultivated.hibiscus.sp.   clean.out:PFV   IDEO   IDEO

took the rich hibiscus-leaf sauce and cleaned it all out with his fingers,

yáh   **nâ̧'**   **gôm**   **síg**   **sùgú**   **kpíh.**
take:PFV   sauce:LF   vine.sp.   place:PFV   downward   IDEO

took the bitter vine-leaf sauce and put it down with a clunk.

lòòrí   **yá, lòòrí**   **yá.**
lick:PFV   NEG lick:PFV   NEG

He didn't lick it, he didn't lick it.

kwéé ˝,   **mú**   **tì̧**   **páà**   **hûr**   **tùúrì.**
Kwe   EXPECT   2SG.OPT   become:OPT   man:LF   eat.powder:VN   *boule*

Kwe, be the one who eats the dry boule.

kwéé ˝,   **mú̧ù̧**   **nî̧n**   **bèè**   **délà**   **yá,**
Kwe   EXPECT   2SG.NONPFV.NEG   eye:LF   without   mature:VN   NEG

Kwe, you are like eyes without maturity,

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[2] The final **t** of this ideophone is absent in the song, but Oussomanou maintains that it is used in normal speech.

kwéé ˝,   mú   yáh   tùúrì mú   lòòrí.
Kwe   EXPECT 2SG.OPT take.OPT *boule* 2SG.OPT lick:OPT

Kwe, take the boule *and lick it.*

3. Legend: **táwsóò yáh gwàárè** 'Tawsoo took the sickle'

lǎh má̧ yá̧á̧ káà tí-sìgró gbà̧ŋtà̧ŋ.
story 3:OPT sit/be:OPT head/on:LF AUG-land IDEO
May this story live on throughout the wide world.

ɗá̧ŋ pá̧ɗpá̧ɗ.
spread.out:OPT/PFV   IDEO
[Audience:] [May] it spread out rapidly / It spread out rapidly.

táwsóò yáh gwàárè.
Tawsoo take:PFV sickle
Tawsoo took the sickle.

táwsóò yáh gwàárè ˝, bè lè vé-lé
Tawsoo take:PFV sickle   EXPECT QUOT 3SG.C/I go:FUT-3SG.INTR

wà̧á̧ tùgló.
diminish:VN hedge
Tawsoo took the sickle, intending to go and trim the hedge.

tùgló vbíí sêhrú.
hedge cut:PFV hand:3SG.POSS.INAL
The hedge cut his hand.

kàr dágé káà ryǎh.
set:PFV mouth:3SG.C/I.POSS.INAL head/reason/on:LF cry(n.)
He opened his mouth with a cry.

ná̧-gbóglà hùr ˝, háá hé' kètí.
PFX-toad   jump:PFV EXPECT until bang:PFV sky
The toad jumped, so high that he banged into the sky.

băh húm   ̋,   nà̰-táál̀lá gyàà.
rain come:PFV EXPECT PFX-ant.sp. foam.up:PFV

The rain came, and the ants swarmed.

nà̰-vbérgà   bè   lè   sâ̰r-ná̰.
PFX-agama.lizard QUOT 3SG.C/I devour:VN-OBJ

The agama lizard intended to devour them.

nà̰-táál̀lá bè   gîi   mṵ̀ sâ̰r   ré   ʔán lâ' ná̰á̰ ̋.
PFX-ant.sp. QUOT but.then 2SG devour:VN 3PL.C/I.OBJ how? like this EXPECT

The ants said, But how could he devour them like this?

nà̰-vbérgà   bè   léè   sâ̰r   ró
PFX-agama.lizard QUOT 3SG.C/I:NONPFV.NEG devour:VN 2PL.OBJ

yá   ̋,   rò gyàà   gyáárì   ɓàgá nà̰.
NEG EXPECT 2PL foam.up:PFV foam.up:VN:LF a.little QM

The lizard said, [How could it be that] he would not devour them? Did they only swarm a little swarming?

bè   réè   gyàà   yá, băh húm   húmgì
QUOT 3PL.C/I:NONPFV.NEG foam.up:FUT NEG rain come:PFV come:VN:LF

ɓàgá nà̰   ̋.
a.little QM   EXPECT

They said, [How could it be that] they will not swarm? Did the rain only come a little coming?

băh bè   léè   húm   yá, ná̰-gbóglà hè'   kètí
rain QUOT 3SG.C/I:NONPFV.NEG come:FUT NEG PFX-toad   bang:VN sky

hè'-nḭ̀   ɓàgá nà̰.
bang:VN-OBJ:LF a.little QM

The rain said, [How could it be that] it will not come? Was the toad only banging the sky a little banging?

ná̰-gbóglà bè léè hé' yá, táwsóò sàh
PFX-toad QUOT 3SG.C/I:NONPFV.NEG bang:FUT NEG Tawsoo rip:VN

rèh ɓàgá nà̰ ˝.
cry(n.):LF a.little QM EXPECT

The toad said, [How could it be that] he will not bang [into the sky]? Was Tawsoo only letting loose a little cry?

táwsóò bè léè sàh yá,
Tawsoo QUOT 3SG.C/I:NONPFV.NEG rip:FUT NEG

tùgló vbíí lé vbìì-nḭ̀ ɓàgá nà̰
hedge cut:PFV 3SG.C/I.OBJ cut:VN-OBJ:LF a.little QM

Tawsoo said, [How could it be that] he will not let loose [a cry]? Did the hedge only cut him a little cutting?

tùgló bè léè vbíí-ḿ yá,
hedge QUOT 3SG.C/I:NONPFV.NEG cut:FUT-2SG.OBJ NEG

mṵ̀ wàà̰ lé wàà̰-nḭ̀ ɓàgá nà̰ ˝.
2SG diminish:VN 3SG.C/I.OBJ diminish:VN-OBJ:LF a.little QM EXPECT

The hedge said, [How could it be that] it will not cut him? Was Tawsoo only trimming him a little trimming?

táwsóò bè léè wáá̰-ḿ yá, lé
Tawsoo QUOT 3SG.C/I:NONPFV.NEG diminish:FUT-2SG.OBJ NEG 3SG.C/I.OPT

wǎr dâg tí-ʔázè
leave:OPT mouth/door:LF AUG-member.of.**ʔàzgárà**:3SG.C/I.POSS.INAL

vòŋ nà̰ ˝.
open QM EXPECT

Tawsoo said, [How could it be that] he will not trim it? Must he leave his mother-in-law's door open?

bè tí-ʔázàm   pàg   wíí̧
QUOT AUG-member.of.**ʔàzgárà**:2SG.POSS.INAL make:VN what?

yâg-ám   nà̧,
to-2SG.POSS.INAL QM

[The hedge] said, what does his mother-in-law do for him?

bè   tí-ʔázè   kòò   ví̧nà̧
QUOT AUG-member.of.**ʔàzgárà**:3SG.C/I.POSS.INAL bear:PFV woman

yâg lé.
to   3SG.C/I.OBJ

He said, His mother-in-law gave birth to a wife [woman] for him.

ví̧nà̧   pàg   wíí̧   yâg-ám   nà̧,
woman make:VN what? to-2SG.POSS.INAL QM

… And what does the wife do for him?

ví̧nà̧   kòò   ví̧nà̧   yâg lé.
woman bear:PFV woman to   3SG.C/I.OBJ

… The wife [woman] gave birth to a girl [woman] for him.

ɓígà pàg   wíí̧   yâg-ám   nà̧?
child make:VN what? to-2SG.POSS.INAL QM

… And what does the child do for him?

ɓígà nì̧̀   mí̧rà̧,   nà̧-kùró   lêg-ná̧,
child defecate:VN excrement PFX-vulture suck:VN-OBJ

… The child keeps the vultures happy (lit. *the child craps, and the vultures suck it up*).

ɓîg	vínà̗	yáh	rù'gó	″,	bè	lè
child:LF	woman	take:PFV	clay.water.jar	EXPECT	QUOT	3SG.C/I

vé-lé	dâg	byàá,	kpùr	'mà̗hlé
go:FUT-3SG.INTR	mouth/edge:LF	water	bump:PFV	foot:3SG.C/I.POSS.INAL

tí-kpéhpèhw.
AUG-IDEO

The girl took the clay water jar, intending to go the the water's edge, and bumped her foot throwing her right off balance.

rù'gó	hùg-lé,	hàn	dágé	bè
clay.water.jar	break:PFV-3SG.INTR	put.back:PFV	mouth:3SG.C/I.POSS.INAL	QUOT

The clay water jar shattered, and she let out a groan, saying:

sų́'nì̗,	mì̗	yà̗à̗	kà'	wá̗à̗	zàhmbà,	mì̗
damn!	1SG	stay/be:PFV	area.outside.gate:LF	chief	IDEO	1SG

háá	má̗	sàlá	kpàhwwà.
come.back:PFV	with	cowrie.shell	IDEO

"Damn! I was outside the chief's gate all beautifully ornamented, and I came back with the tinkling of cowrie shells."

ɓîg	támbúúrà	″,	ʔóó	ɓîg	lóólà	″,
child:LF	pigeon	EXPECT	braid:PFV	child:LF	rope	EXPECT

ʔóó	ɓîg	lóólà	kàrwàhz	″.
braid:PFV	child:LF	rope	IDEO	RES

The little pigeon, it braided a little rope, it braided a little rope abruptly and desperately …

kàvbâ̰w ˝,	lăh	mú	túú	kááɲ́	gá,
the.end	EXPECT	story	2SG:OPT	partake:OPT	head:1SG.POSS.INAL	NEG.OPT

mú	túú	káà	tâw	gbòòrò ˝.
2SG:OPT	partake:OPT	head:LF	Taw(:LF)	bald	EXPECT

The end! … Tale, don't take [any hair] from my head; take it from Taw's bald head / take it from Bald Taw's head …

4. Fable: **kágà má̧ líbà** 'The chicken and the guineafowl'

Ɂîg   nàá̧ pá-lé   ″,   kágà   ″,   dúú
thing:LF REL happen:PFV-3SG.INTR EXPECT chicken EXPECT 3SG.EMPH

tì̧   zòògì fíí, líbà   ″,   dú   zòògì kúù.
become:PFV bird:LF home guineafowl EXPECT 3SG.INDEP bird:LF bushland
This is how it happened that the chicken, he became a domestic bird, and the guineafowl, [became] a wild bird.

ɓà' ɓà' má̧kìnàá̧ sí-kètí   ɓó'   kètí   má tí-sìgró
PAST PAST while   PFX-God throw/create:PFV heaven with PFX-earth

″,   nà̧mzá   ″,   gâ̧h   Ɂéré   má̧ nà̧-pùgpùgá.
EXPECT animal:PL EXPECT dwelling:LF 3PL.C/I.POSS with humankind
Long ago when God created heaven and earth, the animals, their dwelling was with humankind.

gyàà̧rì̧ bîn   ″,   ná̧h-zí   kááré   vòró
ones:LF certain EXPECT take.out:PFV-PL head:3PL.C/I.POSS.INAL to.there

kúù   ″,   mû̧n tì̧-zí   nà̧mzì   kúù.
bushland EXPECT then become:PFV-PL animal:PL:LF bushland
Certain ones departed for the bush, and then became wild animals.

tìì   nàá̧ pèè-zì-ré   fíí ″,
COLL:HEAD REL be.limited:PFV-PL-3PL.INTR home EXPECT

nà̧ yâ̧h-zí dùgú bàh   nà̧mzì   fíí.
1&2 call:VN-PL 3PL.OBJ QUOT.REP animal:PL:LF home
Those confined to habitations, we call "domestic animals."

tìì   má̧ gì̧hgá   lă̧ŋ   ˝,   pá-lé   lâ'
COLL:HEAD with pinion.feather also EXPECT happen:PFV-3SG.INTR like

dòógbúù.
again

And for those with feathers, this happened similarly.

Ɂì-ná̧á̧   ˝,   ná̧   lá'-zí   Ɂîg   nà̧á̧
HEAD-this EXPECT 1&2:OPT hear:OPT-PL thing:LF REL

pá-lé   ˝,   kà   kágà   má̧   pèè-lé
happen:PFV-3SG.INTR EXPECT and.then chicken 3:OPT be.limited:OPT-3SG.INTR

fíí.
home

This thing, let's listen to the thing that happened, whereby the chicken was confined to habitations.

rò'   ná̧á̧ Ɂèr   Ɂîn   líbà   má̧ kágà,
word:LF this get.up:PFV body/at:LF guineafowl with chicken

dùgzí   ɓàrgúú zòògì sá̧à̧   kwérè:
3PL.INDEP both   bird:LF inside fence

This issue arose for the guineafowl and the chicken, both of them birds in captivity:

kà   Ɂù'-lé   vâg   vérgà   ˝,   nà̧-pùgpùgá
when arrive:PFV-3SG.INTR go:VN:LF travel(ler) EXPECT PFX-humankind

gbàh   kágà   lâ'   Ɂîg   nì̧ì̧   séh   káà
catch:VN chicken like thing:LF bottom:LF hand(adv.) head/reason:LF

pàg   mà̧à̧rá̧.
make:VN:LF gift

When it has come about to go on a trip, people take a chicken as something in hand to give as a gift.

kà   vérgà   hûm-lé   ˝,   dŭg   gbàh   kágà,
when   travel(ler) come:PERF-3SG.INTR   EXPECT   3GEN   catch:VN   chicken

káá   gòó-na̗   yâg-rú.
head/reason:LF   prepare:VN-OBJ   to-3SG.OBJ

When a traveller has come, they catch the chicken to cook it for him.

pàrà   rò'   ʔéé   kyàg   ʔîn   kágà   rè.
goodness! word   3SG.C/I.POSS   hurt:VN   body/self:LF   chicken   TOPIC

Goodness! This issue pains the chicken himself …

gêh-náa̗   ˝,   tŏg   ɓáɗgì-zí   làábá   má̗   líbà,
day:LF-this   EXPECT   be   peck.around:VN-PL   eat:VN   with   evening

mṵ̂n   kágà   ˝,   ró'   líbà   bè
come:PFV:to.here   chicken   EXPECT   talk:PFV   guineafowl   QUOT

One day, when they were pecking food in the evening, the chicken came along, and he said to the guineafowl:

'má̗r   ʔi̗í,   mú   lá'   ʔîg   kyàg   dígní̗.
friend:LF   1SG.POSS   2SG.OPT   hear:OPT   thing:LF   hurt:VN   liver:1SG.POSS.INAL

"My friend, listen to what is distressing me.

kà   na̗-pùgá   vé-lé   vérgà   ˝,   ʔà   gbàh
when   PFX-person   go:FUT-3SG.INTR   travel(ler)   EXPECT   3:IMPFV   catch:VN

mi̗   ˝,   mi̗í   dòógbâhŋ.
1SG.OBJ   EXPECT   1SG:EMPH   always

When a person is about to go travelling, he catches me, always me.

kà   vérgà   hûm-lé   hîn   ʔĩndú,
when travel(ler) come:PERF-3SG.INTR to.here body/at:3SG.POSS.INAL

ʔà   gbàh   mį̄   ˝,   káà   pàg   ná'rà̰
3:IMPFV catch:VN   1SG.OBJ EXPECT head/reason:LF make:VN   sauce

yâg-rú.
to-3SG.OBJ

When a traveller_i has come here to his_j place, he_j catches me, in order to make sauce for him_i.

rógò   ˝,   má̰ rúgà   pímpím, mḭ̀į̄ gòg-nį̄   ˝,
tomorrow EXPECT with morning very.early 1SG:IRR fly:FUT-1SG.INTR EXPECT

mḭ̀į̄ ví-nį̄   kúù.
1SG:IRR go:FUT-1SG.INTR bushland

Tomorrow, early in the morning, I will fly, and I will go to the bush."

líbà   gìì   bè   ʔàànyéé ˝,   lâ' ʔì-dô'   ˝,
guineafowl answer:PFV QUOT indeed! EXPECT like HEAD:ANAPH EXPECT

'má̰ɾ ʔį́į̄.
friend 1SG.POSS

The guineafowl replied, "Indeed! So be it (lit. *Like that), my friend.*

gḭ̂   ˝,   kà mṵ̀ zŏn-nò̰m,   gḭ̂   mį́į̄   ˝,
but.then EXPECT when 2SG.S leave:PERF-2SG.INTR but.then 1SG:EMPH EXPECT

mḭ̀į̄ yá̰á̰   má̰ víínà̰,
1SG.FUT stay:FUT with who?:QM

But then … when you have left, but then what about me? Who will I stay with?

kà   sí-kètí gìi̗-lé   rógò   má̗ líbà   ˝
when/if PFX-God consent:PFV-3SG.INTR tomorrow with evening EXPECT

mìi̗   gòg-ní̗.
1SG:IRR fly:FUT-1SG.INTR

If God has consented, tomorrow evening … I will fly."

kágà bè   káà   ʔîg   kín   mù̗ yà̗h yî̗h
chicken QUOT head/reason:LF thing:LF which? 2SG.S call:VN name:LF

sí-kètí sá̗à̗ nà ˝.
PFX-God inside QM EXPECT

The chicken said, "For what reason are you calling the name of God into this?

sí-kètí gìi̗-lé   má̗ gìi̗   yá mìi̗   gòg-ní̗
PFX-God consent:PFV-3SG.INTR with accept:PFV NEG 1SG:IRR fly:FUT-1SG.INTR

rógò   má̗ rúgà.
tomorrow with morning

Whether God has consented or not, I will fly tomorrow morning."

nìi̗   rúgà pá-lé   kágà ɗúú gìi̗hgìlé
bottom:LF morning happen:PFV-3SG.INTR chicken hit:PI wing:3SG.C/I.POSS.INAL

˝,   gìi̗h ʔílé   bè   lè   gógrà ˝,
EXPECT strive:PFV body/self:3SG.C/I.POSS.INAL QUOT 3SG.C/I fly:VN EXPECT

pèè-lé   káá   kwérè ˝   kàgzàg.
be.limited:PFV-3SG.INTR head/on:LF fence EXPECT IDEO

When the first light came, the chicken [kaga] flapped his wings, made a great effort intending to fly, but petered out on top of the fence … with a flop [kagzag].

má̠ rúgà ̋, nà̠-pùgzá lùg-zí, kó-zì-rú bè
with morning EXPECT PFX-person:PL go.out:PFV-PL see:PFV-PL-3SG.OBJ QUOT

ʔáhyyáà, ʔì-ná̠á̠ kágà yóò ̋, ʔì-ná̠á̠ kágà
oh.dear! HEAD-this chicken indeed:EMPH EXPECT HEAD-this chicken

yóò.
indeed:EMPH

In the morning, the people went out and saw him [and they said], "Oh dear! This is the chicken, this is the chicken."

gbă̆h-zì-rú ̋, hă̆n-zì-rú hîn sá̠à̠ kwérè.
catch:PFV-PL-3SG.OBJ EXPECT put.back:PFV-PL-3SG.OBJ to.here inside fence

They caught him, and put him back here inside the fence.

gyâh hàg-lé ̋, líbà rô'-rú bè
sun break:PFV-3SG.INTR EXPECT guineafowl say:PFV-3SG.OBJ QUOT

'má̠r ʔí̠í̠, líbà yáh-rì káálé
friend 1SG.POSS evening take:PERF-PERF head:3SG.C/I.POSS.INAL

hîn ̋, kà sí-kètí gìì-lé
to.here EXPECT when/if PFX-God consent:PFV-3SG.INTR

mì̠í̠ gòg-ní̠ vòró kúù rè.
1SG:IRR fly:FUT-1SG.INTR to.there bushland TOPIC

When the sunlight had diminished, the guineafowl said to him, "My friend, evening has joined us here … if God has consented I will fly out to the bush …"

líbà	pá-lé	˝,	líbà	ʔì-zòògá	ʔìn
evening	happen:PFV-3SG.INTR	EXPECT	guineafowl	HEAD-bird	lift:PFV

ʔílé	bè	sí-kètí,	yáh	'màḥlé
body/self:3SG.C/I.POSS.INAL	QUOT	PFX-God	take:PFV	foot:3SG.C/I.POSS.INAL

sà'	sà',	gòg-lé	˝,	vbír̀r̀r̀r̀r̀r̀r̀,	kàn-lé
IDEO	IDEO	fly:PFV-3SG.INTR	EXPECT	IDEO	pass:PFV-3SG.INTR

kpúz	lì'.
far.away	definitively

Evening [liba] came, and the guineafowl [liba] which is a bird lifted himself saying "God," slowly and jerkily pulled each of his legs up, flew … with a great whirr and went far away forever.

kágà	kàgzàg	tḭ̀	zòògì	fíí,	líbà	˝	zòògì
chicken	IDEO	become:PFV	bird:LF	home	guineafowl	EXPECT	bird:LF

kúù.
bushland

So Flop the Chicken [kaga kagzag] became a domestic bird, and the guineafowl a wild bird.

ʔígà	kpá'	˝,	mú	yǎ̰ḥ	yḭ̀h	sí-kètí,
thing	all	EXPECT	2SG:OPT	call:OPT	name:LF	PFX-God

ʔàá	pá-lé	yâg-ám.
3:IRR	happen:FUT-3SG.INTR	to-2SG.OBJ

For everything, call the name of God, and it will happen for you.

5. nà̰-tû’ ‘Proverbs’

twǎh ɓèè ká̰à̰ nà ˝.
snake bite:VN stick QM EXPECT

Does a snake bite the stick?

explanation: A snake doesn’t bite the stick, but rather the person holding the stick. In the same way, one should not attack a messenger for bringing bad news.

nà̰-táál̀lá ɓò’ páà zèèlá tùm.
PFX-ant.sp. throw:VN man:LF lie:VN forward

The ant throws the rumour-monger in front.

explanation: Like the ant that returns to the colony with a report about food and is obliged to lead the way back to the food, a person who makes a claim will have to prove it.

nà̰-ká̰hrḭ̀ páà kómnà̰ rǔrà̰ nḭ̀ gàmbù.
PFX-fruit.sp.:LF man:LF hunger ripen:VN bottom:LF bag

The fruit of a hungry man ripens at the bottom of his bag.

explanation: A hungry person carefully watches over his or her food supply.

kágà ˝ bè vyàh tûr? sṵ́mṵ̀ ˝ sé’ hìg
chicken EXPECT QUOT winnow:VN millet:LF night EXPECT must give:VN

sṵ́gò.
ear

The chicken says, “[Is someone] winnowing night millet? [One] must listen carefully.”

explanation: Like a chicken that listens carefully for the sound of food at night, people should be alert for unseen things that might benefit them.

kà   mù̧ híí-rì   nį́nù̧ yâg páà   bîn   ˝
when 2SG give:PERF-PERF eye   to   man:LF other EXPECT

ʔà   ʔà̧à̧-ḿ   kòg   kyǎ'.
3:IMPFV surpass:VN-2SG.OBJ see:VN place/situation

When you have given your eyes to another man, his view surpasses yours.

explanation: People exaggerate what they actually see.

nà̧-mų́ù̧rì̧ sų́mù̧ té'là   má̧ héélà   nà̧ ˝.
PFX-jinn:LF night   walk:VN with whistling QM EXPECT

Does the night jinn whistle when it walks?

explanation: If someone is doing something wrong, he or she will do it stealthily.

sígò   ˝   hì̧í̧   ɗùù   byàá nį̂n   bà̧ḣá̧à̧
crocodile EXPECT 3:NONPFV.NEG hit:VN water eye/in.presence.of:LF ibis.sp.

ɓàtì yá.
two NEG

The crocodile, it doesn't stir the water near an ibis twice.

explanation: Like a bird that has been frightened by a crocodile's attack on another
    bird, a watchful person cannot be overtaken by danger.

páà   nà̧á̧ nų́-lé   kááḿ   dâg tômná̧ ˝
man:LF REL sleep:PFV-3SG.INTR head/on:2SG.POSS.INAL first   EXPECT

ʔà   kpûg   kááḿ   tùm.
3:IMPFV wake.up:VN   head/on:2SG.POSS.INAL   forward

The man who is asleep ahead of you, he wakes up before you.

explanation: A person that prepares early has an advantage over those who do not.

dǔg   **hì̧**   **nàh**   **kpáá̧vìrá**   **káà**
3GEN   3:NONPFV.NEG   take.out:VN   bulb.plant.sp.:LF   head/on:LF

páŋnì̧   **ʔéé**   **téɗé**   **yá.**
site:LF   3SG.C/I.POSS   all   NEG

One doesn't take out all the plant bulbs from where they are situated.

explanation: People should look after what they may need in the future.

páà   **nà̧á̧** **lá'-rì**   **káà**   **nà̧-tú'zì**
man:LF   REL   understand:PERF-PERF   head/meaning:LF   PFX-proverb:PL:LF

ná̧á̧   ˝   **ʔàà** **sóg**   **ʔî̧g**   **nà̧á̧** **mì̧** **sǒg-nà̧**   **nì̧ì̧**
this   EXPECT   3:IRR   send:FUT   thing:LF   REL   1SG   send:VN-OBJ   bottom/for:LF

ɓêl   **rógò.**
child:PL:LF   tomorrow

The person that has understood the meaning of these proverbs will pass on what I pass on for the children of tomorrow.

explanation: A wise person will teach his or her wisdom to the next generation.

Abbreviations and symbols

from Anonby (2011:xviii-xxi)

adj.	adjective
adv.	adverb
al.	alienable
ANAPH	anaphoric demonstrative
ATTRIB	attributive copula
AUG	augmentative
borr.	borrowing
C	consonant
C/I	co-referential/impersonal
CAUS	causative
Cd	coda
CL1	class 1
COLL	collective
COREF/coref.	co-referential
dem.	demonstrative
DU	dual
EMPH	emphasis
EXCL/excl.	exclusive
EXPECT	expectation marker
F_0	fundamental frequency
Fr.	French
Fulf.	Fulfulde
FUT	future
GEN	generic
H	high (tone); laryngeal
h	pharyngealization
HEAD	syntactic head

Hz	Hertz
i	identical participant reference
IDEO	ideophone
IMPERS/impers.	impersonal
IMPFV	imperfective
INAL/inal.	inalienable
INCL/incl.	inclusive
INDEP	independent pronoun
INTR/intr.	intransitive
IRR	irrealis
j	non-identical (switch) participant reference
L	low (tone); Type 2 sonorant
lex.	lexically determined
LF	linked form
lit.	literally
N	nasal consonant; Type 1 sonorant
n.	noun
NEG	negative, negation
NONPFV	non-perfective
NUM	numeral prefix
O	onset; obstruent; object
OBJ	object
OPT	optative
ORD	ordinal
PERF	perfect
PFV	perfective
PFX	prefix
PL/pl.	plural
PLUPERF	pluperfect
pn.	pronoun
POSS	possessive
Pred.	predicate
QM	question-marking particle
QUOT	quotation marker
R	rhyme; Type 3 sonorant
re.	regarding

REAL	realis
REL	relativizer
REP	reported speech
S	subject
SG/sg.	singular
sp.	species
TAM	tense/aspect/mood
TOPIC	topicalization and related functions
tr.	transitive
TRS	tone register shift
V	vowel; oral vowel; verb
Ṽ	nasalized vowel
v.	verb
VN/v.n.	verbal noun
VV	long vowel
w/	with
X	segment (C or V)
α	exhibiting a specific value
μ	mora
σ	syllable
Ø	zero pronoun
1	first person
1&2	first-and-second person
2	second person
3	third person
*	ungrammatical or unattested structure
[ ]	phonetic transcription; boundary
/	either/or; phonological transcription
.	syllable boundary (used to distinguish a **g** + **b** sequence from unitary **gb**); separator between words glossing a single morpheme
:	separator between glosses of fused morphemes
-	morpheme boundary
+	morpheme boundary
=	stem-clitic boundary
±	optional

~	free variation / allomorphic alternation
↓	non-automatic downstep
´	high tone/pitch
`	low tone/pitch
^	falling tone/pitch
ˉ	mid pitch
ˇ	rising tone/pitch
˝	expectation marker
'	preglottalization
’	glottalization (vowels)
.	nasalization