CHAPTER TEN

CLAUSES AND SENTENCES

This chapter analyzes structures of clause and sentence in Prinmi. These include simplex and complex sentences as well as the clause-chaining sentence, one of the most common types of complex sentence in the language. This paves the way to study of other complex structures in Chapter 11.

10.1. The clause

A clause represents the simplest sentence structure. Prinmi has three types of special clause: dependent clauses, nominal clauses, and verbless clauses. Each of them will be discussed after examining the structure of clause in Prinmi.

10.1.1. The clause structure

The clause structure of Prinmi can be outlined as follows:

[Adjunct] + (Argument) + Predicate

Adjunct is optional, as can be seen from the two clauses in (10.1). The parenthesized Argument denotes possible occurrence of implicit arguments. For instance, a noun such as ‘water’, given proper discourse context, may serve as an implicit argument of the predicate in (10.1a). The number of explicit arguments is determined by the valence of a verb, as shown in (10.2), where arguments are rendered as italic. Finally in (10.3), both clauses begin with an adjunct and the Agent is covert.

10.1. a bõ^L=nô^H
cold= DUR
‘(It’s) cold.’

b pu^H ni^L bõ^L=nô^H
today cold= DUR
‘(It’s) cold today.’
10.2 a ə  \( \text{mə}^L\text{sjē}^H \)  \\
1SG know;1SG  \\
‘I know.’  \\

b ə  \( \text{ne}^L\text{be}^H\text{pʰj}^H\text{dzi}^H\text{xi}^L=\text{ʃo}^L \)  \\
1SG 2SG to news:perfect tell=OPT  \\
‘I’m going to tell you some reliable news.’

10.3 a  \( \text{mə}^L\text{to}^H\text{kʰe}^H=\text{bo}^L\text{bo}^R \)  \\
f\( \text{3ᵖ}^H\text{pu}^H=\text{ge}^L\text{n3}^L\text{-di}^L \)  \\
\( \text{final time=FRM \ DSC cock=TOP \ down-cast} \)  \\
‘Finally, (you) throw down the rooster.’

b  \( \text{nja}^H\text{n3}^H\text{dzi}^H\text{ju}^L\text{kʰe}^H\text{be}^L\text{ne}^L\text{be}^H\text{me}^H\text{ti}^L\text{tʃi}^L=\text{ʃu}^L \)  \\
\( \text{2SG=3 ear edge at 2SG to what say=IPFV} \)  \\
‘What did (the bear) say to you at your ear?’

As a verb-final language, Prinmi reserves the clause-final position for the predicate. No other constituent, argument or adjunct, may occur after the head verb in the clause. To a large extent, this also holds true for simplex sentences. Within the scope of the clause, word order is quite rigid, starting from adjunct/modifier at the onset, followed by core argument(s) and then the verb at the end. The default word order of arguments is Agent–Recipient–Theme, as seen in (10.2b).

10.1.2. Dependent clauses

In principle, two types of clause can be recognized in Prinmi: dependent clauses and independent clauses, according to whether or not a clause may function independently as a sentence. A dependent clause always occurs as part of a complex sentence and is characterized with reduced structure, incapable of taking any adjunct. When a sentence contains a temporal adverb and a dependent clause, the adverb falls outside the scope of the dependent clause. Consider the relation between the temporal \( \text{tja}^R \) ‘now’ and the dependent clause (rendered as italic) below:

10.4  \( \text{ni}^H\text{ʃo}^L\text{tja}^R\text{tʃi}^L\text{di}^H\text{di}^H=\text{nə}^L\text{tʰ3}^L\text{-daw}^H=\text{si}^H \)  \\
3PL now flood cast=DUR TLC-tired=PFV  \\
‘Having started the flood, they got tired now.’

It is clear in the \( \text{Deluge} \) story that the flood-starters return home after they finish their act of flooding. The temporal adverb must be analyzed as situated outside the dependent clause, modifying the verb