

CiNsenga: A Grammar Sketch Version 1.0

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1 General Information

CiNsenga is a Bantu language which appears in zone N.41 under Guthrie's (1967) classification. The ciNsenga variety under description here is spoken by the Ngoni people who, under Chief Mpzeni, occupy territory that straddles the Zambia-Malawi border around Chipata (Zambia) and Mchinji (Malawi). This variety of ciNsenga is also referred to as ciNgoni.¹

2 Grammar

2.1 Phonology

2.1.1 CiNsenga Sound System

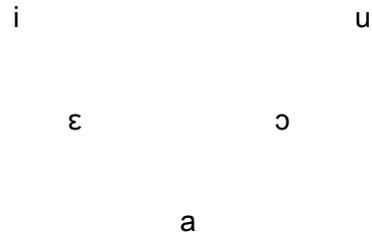
The sound system of ciNsenga comprises of twenty eight consonants (1) and five oral vowels (2). Aspiration is contrastive in this language: it distinguishes aspirated voiceless stops and affricates from their unaspirated counterparts. Vowel length is phonetically conditioned (penultimate vowels are lengthened) and is thus not phonemic.

(1) Consonants

	Bilabial	Labio-dental	Alveolar	Palato-alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Labio-velar	Glottal
Stop	p b p ^h		t d t ^h			k g k ^h		
Affricate				tʃ dʒ tʃ ^h				
Fricative		f v	s z	ʃ ʒ				h
Nasal	m		n	ɲ	ɲ	ŋ		
Approximant		ʋ			j		w	
Lateral			l					

¹ The Ngoni people originally spoke ciNgoni, a variant of Zulu, but the community has undergone shift over time heavy influence Nsenga community.

(2) Vowels



(3) Orthographic conventions

sound	grapheme	sound	grapheme	sound	grapheme
p	p	dʒ	j	ɲ	ny
p ^h	ph	f	f	ŋ	ng'
b	b	v	v	ʊ	ŵ
t	t	s	s	j	y
t ^h	th	z	z	w	w
d	d	ʃ	sh	l	l
k	k	ʒ	zh	i	i
k ^h	kh	h	h	u	u
g	g	m	m	ε	e
tʃ	c	n	n	ɔ	o
tʃ ^h	ch	ɳ	n'y	a	a

2.1.2 Tone

CiNsenga has two basic tones: High [´] and Low [`] which are complemented by a Falling tone [^]. These tones occur on vowels and are used to index lexical as well as grammatical meaning. The convention followed in marking tone for ciNsenga is to indicate High and Falling tone on the relevant vowels and to assume Low as the default tone (see also Miti 2001, 2002). Lexical functions of tone are shown in (4) and grammatical uses are shown in (5).

(4) lîni 'not'

	lini	'when'	
	mtánda	'cross'	
	mtanda	'lump of thick porridge'	
	cénze	'cicada'	
	cenze	'it was'	
(5)	níkâlye	'I will eat'	(indicative)
	nikâlye	'I should go and eat'	(subjunctive)
	tikûlya	'we are eating / we eat'	
	tĩ kulya	'whilst we are/were eating'	
	olíla	'those who are crying'	
	ólila	'they are crying'	

The distribution of tone in verbs and nouns is influenced by morphological (e.g. affixation of verbal extensions) as well as syntactic factors (e.g. phrasal formation and negation).

(6)	neútûka	'I ran'	cf. neútúkîsha	'I chased'
	mwâna	'child'	cf. mwáná wángu	'my child'
	níkafótókôze	'I will explain'	cf. sinikafotokóza	'I will not explain'

2.1.3 Syllable Structure

CiNsenega does not permit closed syllables and the syllable structure of most words is predominantly CV. Syllables consisting of a single vowel or a single nasal consonant occur word-initially and word-medially as in (7)

(7)	a-tâ-ta	'my father'
	o-nî-pa	'He is giving me'
	na-î-ka	'I have put'
	ve-ô-la	'They rotted'
	m-pú-nga	'rice'
	m-soti	'young hen'

Consonant clusters, wherein a stop (S) or fricative (F) occurs adjacent to another consonant, typically include either a nasal (N) or a glide (G) or both.

(8)	î-mfwa	'death'	NFG
	î-mbwa	'dog'	NSG
	nkhwa-sha	'monitor lizard'	NSG
	mpha-sha	'clothes'	NS
	mphwa-yi	'despondency'	NSG
	thyo-la	'break'	SG
	gwá-za	'stab'	SG
	pyo-la	'exceed'	SG
	fwa-ka	'tobacco'	FG

2.1.3 Vowel Harmony

Verbal extensions, which are inserted between the stem and the final vowel (see section 2.4.3.1 below) consist of a VC sequence and the vowel in the extension harmonizes with the last vowel of the root with respect to the feature [\pm tense]: the two mid vowels are [-tense] whereas the rest are [+tense].² When last vowel in the root is a lax vowel the passive and applicative extensions are respectively realized as /-ew-/ and /-el-/. If the last vowel in the stem is a tense vowel these extensions surface as /-iw-/ and /-il-/. Verbs lacking a root vowel take a suffix with the vowel //.

(9)	<u>Base</u>		<u>Passive</u>		<u>Applicative</u>
	konsh-a	'ask'	konshe-w-a	'be asked'	konshel-a 'ask for'
	lemb-a	'write'	lembew-a	'be written'	lembel-a 'write for'
	timb-a	'beat'	timbiw-a	'be beaten'	timbil-a 'beat for'
	lum-a	'bite'	lumiw-a	'be bitten'	lumil-a 'bite for'
	pal-a	'scrape'	paliw-a	'be scraped'	palil-a 'scrape for'
	p-a	'give'	piw-a	'be given'	pil-a 'give for'
	fw-a	'die'	---		fwil-a 'die for'

² An alternative view suggests that this is a case of height harmony. Note, however that the low vowel and the two high vowels do not share the same height feature; yet they belong to the same set with respect to harmony.

In addition to the passive and applicative, vowel harmony also applies to the causative and stative suffixes in the same manner. The vowel of the reciprocal suffix, however, remains invariant.

2.2 Morphology

2.2.1 Affixation

CiNsenga, like other Bantu languages, is agglutinating in its morphological characteristics. The major lexical classes – viz nouns, verbs, and adjectives – consist of bound morphemes, and thus the language makes extensive use of affixation in forming words. A noun typically consists of a root and a prefix – a nominal prefix indexes number and noun class (see section 2.4.1 below for further examples).

- (10) lî-go ‘hornet’ má-go ‘hornets’
 lî-tepo ‘leaf’ má-tepo ‘leaves’

Verbal morphology is quite complex: there are five different prefixes and five different suffixes which appear on the verb complex (see section 2.4.3 below). However due to co-occurrence restrictions not all affixes can simultaneously appear on the verb.

- (11) u – sa – ka – ti – pik – ish – il – e (usakatipikishîle)
 ‘Don’t make someone cook for us’

ti – ka – ku – pik – ish – il – e – ni (tíkakúpíkishiléni)
 ‘We’ll make someone cook for you’

si – u – ka – pik – ish – il – iw – a (sukapikishilíwa)
 ‘You will not have someone get (something) cooked for you’

2.2.2 Reduplication

CiNsenga derives a number of adverbial forms by reduplication of either a whole word (12) or just the stem (13).

(12) páfúpi-páfupi 'spaced near each other'
pátóntho-pátontho 'slowly'

(13) páfúpi-fúpi 'almost'
pátóntho-tóntho 'nearly'

Reduplication is also used to derive verbs that denote repeated actions.

2.3 Basic Word Order

The basic word order in ciNsenga is SVO, but VOS word order is also permissible.

(14) Shuko á – ká – ly – é mpúnga
agr-fut-eat-fv rice
'Shuko will eat rice'

á – ká – ly – é mpúnga Shuko
agr-fut-eat-fv rice
'Shuko will eat rice'

CiNsenga is a pro-drop language, which means it allows for the subject position to remain unfilled.

(15) á – ká – ly – é mpúnga
agr-fut-eat-fv rice
'(someone) will eat rice'

The subject agreement prefix is obligatory on all tensed verbs.

(16) *Shuko ká – ly – é mpúnga
fut-eat-fv rice

'Shuko will eat rice'

- (17) *ká – ly –é mpúnga
fut-eat-fv rice
'(someone) will eat rice'

Within phrases ciNsenga follows a head first pattern with heads preceding their modifiers.

- (18) Mwáná wángu ni m-fúpí ngâko
child my is agr-short very
'My child is very short'

2.4 Parts of Speech

The lexicon of ciNsenga consists predominantly of Nouns and Verbs. Other lexical categories such as Adjectives, Adverbs, Pronouns Prepositions, and Demonstratives are more restricted.

2.4.1 CiNsenga Nouns

CiNsenga nouns belong to different classes based in part on their nominal prefixes but, more importantly, on the agreement markers which the nouns trigger on verbs, demonstratives, adjectives, and possessives. Due to shortage of space here, we will merely show the prototypical affixes associated with each noun class, plus the agreement or concord that each noun class triggers on demonstratives.

(19)	<u>Class 1</u>		<u>Class 2</u>	
	munthu	'person'	wanthu	'people'
	mwâna	'child'	wâna	'children'
	cimbwi	'hyena'	acimbwi	'hyenas'
	kolwe	'baboon'	akolwe	'baboons'
	munthu uyu	'this person'	wánthú aŵa	'these people'
	mwáná uyu	'this child'	wáná aŵa	'these children'
	cimbwi uyu	'this hyena'	acimbwi aŵa	'these hyenas'
	kolwe uyu	'this baboon'	akolwe aŵa	'these baboons'

(20)	<u>Class 3</u>		<u>Class 4</u>	
	mfúlêni	'river'	mifúlêni	'rivers'
	mkóndo	'spear'	mikóndo	'spears'
	munzi	'village'	minzi	'villages'
	mtenje	'roof'	mitenje	'roofs'
	mfúleni uwu	'this river'	mifúleni iyi	'these rivers'
	mkóndo uwu	'this spear'	mikóndo iyi	'these spears'
	munzi uwu	'this village'	minzi iyi	'these villages'
	mtenje uwu	'this roof'	mitenje iyi	'these roofs'

(21)	<u>Class 5</u>		<u>Class 6</u>
	lídolo	'knee'	mádolo 'knees'
	lindanda	'egg'	mandanda 'eggs'
	lís wazi	'whip'	más wazi 'whips'
	líwu	'word'	máwu 'words'
	lídólo ili	'this knee'	mádólo aŵa 'these knees'
	lindanda ili	'this egg'	mandanda aŵa 'these eggs'
	lís wázi ili	'this whip'	más wázi aŵa 'these whips'
	líwú ili	'this word'	máwú aŵa 'these words'

(22)	<u>Class 7</u>		<u>Class 8</u>
	cípúla	'knife'	vipúla 'knives'
	cikówo	'grasshopper'	vikówo 'grasshoppers'
	cíkumo	'finger'	víkumo 'fingers'
	cívalo	'door'	vívalo 'fingers'
	cípúlá ici	'this knife'	vipúlá ivi 'these knives'
	cikówó ici	'this grasshopper'	vikówó ivi 'these grasshoppers'
	cíkúmo ici	'this finger'	víkúmo ivi 'these fingers'
	cíválo ici	'this door'	víválo ivi 'these fingers'

(23)	<u>Class 9</u>		<u>Class 10</u>
	njóka	'snake'	njóka 'snakes'
	nyúla	'cloth'	nyúla 'cloths'
	nkhúku	'chicken'	nkhúku 'chickens'
	inzi	'fly'	inzi 'flies'
	njóká iyi	'this snake'	njóká izi 'these snakes'
	nyúlá iyi	'this cloth'	nyúlá izi 'these cloths'
	nkhúkú iyi	'this chicken'	nkhúkú izi 'these chickens'
	inzî iyi	'this fly'	inzî izi 'these flies'

- (24) Class 12 Class 13
- | | | | |
|-----------------|----------------|------------------|-----------------|
| kambwili | ‘hoe’ | tumbwili | ‘hoes’ |
| kátemo | ‘axe’ | tútemo | ‘axes’ |
| kakolwe | ‘small baboon’ | twakolwe | ‘small baboons’ |
| kamunthu | ‘small person’ | tuw̄anthu | ‘small people’ |
-
- | | | | | | | |
|----------|------------|---------------------|--|-----------|------------|-----------------------|
| kambwili | aka | ‘this hoe’ | | tumbwili | utu | ‘these hoes’ |
| kátémo | aka | ‘this axe’ | | tútémo | utu | ‘these axes’ |
| kakolwe | aka | ‘this small baboon’ | | twakolwe | utu | ‘these small baboons’ |
| kamunthu | aka | ‘this small person’ | | tuw̄anthu | utu | ‘these small people’ |
-
- (25) Class 14
- | | | | |
|----------------|------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| ushúngu | ‘venom’ | ushúngú uwu | ‘this venom’ |
| ulési | ‘laziness’ | ulésî uwu | ‘this laziness’ |
| ûci | ‘honey’ | úcî uwu | ‘this honey’ |
| ucâfu | ‘filth’ | ucáfú uwu | ‘this filth’ |
-
- (26) Class 15
- | | | | |
|----------------|------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| kúlila | ‘running’ | kúlila uku | ‘this running’ |
| kûlya | ‘eating’ | kúlyá uku | ‘this eating’ |
| kúlota | ‘dreaming’ | kúlóta uku | ‘this dreaming’ |
| kúzhéwa | ‘escaping’ | kúzhéwa uku | ‘this escaping’ |
-
- (27) Class 16
- | | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| pánsi | ‘on the ground’ | pánsí apa | ‘on this ground’ |
| pakwanja | ‘on the arm’ | pakwanja apa | ‘on this arm’ |
| pánja | ‘outside’ | pánjá apa | ‘(right) here outside’ |
-
- (28) Class 17
- | | | | |
|------------------|------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| kung’ânda | ‘at the house’ | kung’ândá uku | ‘at this house’ |
| kumunzi | ‘at the village’ | kumunzi uku | ‘at this village’ |
| kumûnda | ‘at the garden’ | kumúndá uku | ‘at this garden’ |

(29) Class 18

mucímuti	'in the tree'	mucímúti umu	'in this tree'
mumanja	'in the hands'	mumanja umu	'in these hands'
mucíwáya	'in the kraal'	mucíwáya umu	'in this kraal'

2.4.2 CiNsenga Pronominal Forms

There are two types of pronominal forms in ciNsenga: independent pronouns and pronominal affixes. Since ciNsenga is a pro-drop language, independent pronouns are usually dropped from sentences and are only used for emphatic reasons.

(30)	nêwo	'I / me'
	sêwo	'we / us'
	wêwo	'you' (sg)
	mwêwo	'you' (pl)
	yêve	'he / she, him / her'
	wêve	'they / them'

Pronominal affixes act as subject and object agreement markers on the verb.

(31)	<u>Subject</u>		<u>Object</u>
	ni	ni	'I / me'
	ti	ti	'we / us'
	u	ku	'you' (sg)
	mu	--	'you (pl)' ³
	a	mu	'he/she, him/her'
	wá	wá	'they / them'

(32)	níkakônshe	'I will ask'
	ákanikônshe	'He will ask me '

³ A discontinuous morpheme ku-----ni functions as an object agreement marker for second person plural, as in akakukonsheni 'He will ask you (pl)'

úkakônshe	'You (sg) will ask'
ákakukonshe	'He will ask you (sg)'
múkakônshe	'You (pl) will ask'
wakônshe	'They have asked'
tawakonsha	'We have asked them '

2.4.3 CiNsenga Verbs

The most dominant feature of the ciNsenga verb is the capacity of the root to take on enough affixes such that the verb alone can function as a complete sentence. The affixes include the relative (REL), subject (SUBJ), the negative (NEG), the tense (TNS), the object (OBJ) the reflexive (REFLX), the causative (CAUS), the applicative (APPL), the passive (PASS), the reciprocal (RECIP), the final vowel (FV) the stative (ST), and the honorific (HON). The combination of the various morphemes is subject to certain co-occurrence restrictions. Morpheme order is fixed, except that the relative ordering of the negative and subject morphemes is dependent on the mood of the sentence. The following templates show the relative ordering of the morphemes in the verb complex.

(33) Indicative mood

NEG	SUBJ	TNS	OBJ/ REFLX	ROOT	CAUS	APPL	PASS/ RECIP/ STAT	FV	HON
si	ti	ka	ku	fundul	ish	il		a	ni

si-ti-ka-ku-fundul-ish-il-á-ni 'We will not have (something) skinned for you'

(34) Subjunctive mood

SUBJ	NEG	TNS	OBJ/ REFLX	ROOT	CAUS	APPL	PASS/ RECIP/ STAT	FV	HON
ti	sa	ka	ku	fundul	ish	il		e	ni

ti-sa-ka-ku-fundul-ish-il-é-ni 'We should not have (something) skinned for you'

(35) Relativization of non-subject argument

REL	SUBJ	TNS	OBJ/ REFLX	ROOT	CAUS	APPL	PASS/ RECIP/ STAT	FV	HON
ca	ti ⁴	e	ku	fundul	ish	il		a	ni

Cá-t-e-ku-fundul-ish-il-á-ni 'Which we had (someone) skin for you'

Certain affixes are subject to co-occurrence restrictions: the REL and NEG affixes are mutually exclusive; and in the same way, if the OBJ/REFLX slot is filled then the PASS/RECIP/STAT slot cannot be filled.

2.4.3.1 Verb Extensions

CiNseng verb extensions are formed by adding affixes to the right of the root, and these have the effect of changing the argument structure of the verb by either transitivity or detransitivizing the verb. All the extensions have a VC structure and are inserted between the root and the final vowel. The choice of the affix vowel in the extensions is determined by vowel harmony (see section 2.1.3 above). The final vowel surfaces as /a/ or /e/ depending on, inter alia, tense, mood, and negation.

(36) Transitivity extensions:

causative	-ish /-esh	w-a	'fall'	w-ish-a	'cause to fall'
applicative	-il / -el	fw-a	'die'	fw-il-a	'die for'

(37) Detransitivizing extensions

passive	-iw /-ew	lumul-a	'wean'	lumul-iw-a	'be weaned'
reciprocal	-an	timb-a	'beat'	timb-an-a	'beat each other'
stative	-ik / -ek	pik-a	'cook'	pik-ik-a	'be cooked'

⁴ Note that the vowel /i/ deletes when it is followed by another vowel.

2.4.3.2 Tense/Aspect

The basic tense/aspect system of ciNsenga distinguishes between hodiernal and non-hodiernal events: thus the past is split into a hodiernal and non-hodiernal past and the future is split into a hodiernal and non-hodiernal future. The non-hodiernal past is marked by /-e-⁵/; the hodiernal past is marked by /-a-/, the non-hodiernal future is marked by /-ka-/, and the hodiernal future is marked by a discontinuous morpheme /-⁵-____-e/.

(38) n – e – mêt – a ‘I shaved’ (non-hodiernal past)
agr-past-shave-fv

(39) n – a – mêt – a ‘I shaved’ (hodiernal past)
agr-past-shave-fv

(40) ní – ka – mêt – e ‘I will shave’ (non-hodiernal future)
agr-fut-shave-fv

(41) ní – ∅ – met – e ‘I will shave’ (hodiernal future)
agr-fut-shave-fv

Habitual and progressive expressed by the infinitive /-ku-/ (often reduced to /-u-/ or /-o-/) in combination with the past form of the copula (see below) or the future morpheme.

(42) kúsenga ‘to beg’

(43) n – ú – seng – a ‘I am begging’ or ‘I (habitually) beg’
agr-inf-eat-fv

(44) n – e – nz – ó - seng - a ‘I was begging’
agr-past-be inf-eat-fv

⁵ In other dialects this morpheme is realized as /-i-/ (see Miti, 2001)

- (45) ní – k – ó – sénga – a 'I will be begging'
agr-fut-inf-beg-fv

2.4.3.3 The Copula

CiNsenga has three different forms of the copula for the present tense – viz: ni, li, and wá. The copula ni takes no inflections and is used before individual level predicates whereas li and wá take on inflections and are typically used before stage level predicates. CiNsenga has one form of the copula for the past tense, and another form for the future.

- (46) CiNsenga copula forms

Present tense	Past tense	Future tense
li	-nze	wé
ni		
wá		

- (47) Matiya a – li pa-mtenje Matiya a – kú – wá pá-mtenje
agr-be cl.16-roof agr-inf-be cl.16-roof
'Matiya is on the roof' 'Matiya is usually on the roof'
- (48) Matiya ∅ - e – nze pa-mtenje Matiya á – ká – wé pa-mtenje
agr-past-be cl.16-roof agr-fut-be cl.16-roof
'Matiya was on the roof' 'Matiya will be on the roof'
- (49) Matiya ni mlúmé wá Tombi Matiya á – ká – wé mlúmé wá Tombi
be husband of agr-fut-be husband of
'Matiya is Tombi's husband' 'Matiya will be Tombi's husband'
- (50) Matiya ∅ - e – nze mlúmé wá Tombi
agr-past-be husband of
'Matiya was Tombi's husband'

2.4.4 CiNsenga Adverbials

Adverbs in ciNsenga exhibit different morphological characteristics: some are basic (51) whereas others are derived from nouns (52) and reduplication (53).

- | | | |
|------|-----------------|----------------------|
| (51) | ngâko | 'much' |
| | lóm̄ba | 'now' |
| | sóti | 'again' |
| | | |
| (52) | mwa'ulesi | 'in a lazy manner' |
| | mwa-moyo | 'in a lively manner' |
| | mwa-mphamvu | 'energetically' |
| | | |
| (53) | m'mángú-m'mangu | 'hurriedly' |
| | Pátóntho-tóntho | 'nearly' |

2.4.5 CiNsenga Prepositions

CiNsenga has a very limited number of prepositions few prepositions as spatial concepts are conveyed by nouns or and directional verbs. One preposition is -a 'of' which occurs in possessive phrases and gets inflected with an appropriate noun class prefix marker. The other preposition is na 'with' or 'by'.

- | | | | | |
|------|-------------------|----------------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| (54) | líso o | l-á | njovu | 'an elephant's eye' |
| | cl.5-eye | cl.5-of | elephant | |
| | | | | |
| (55) | nyúlá | y-á | muzha | 'the slave's cloth' |
| | cl.9-cloth | cl.9-of | slave | |
| | | | | |
| (56) | cákúlyá | c-á | nkhúmba | 'pig's food' |
| | cl.7-food | cl.7-of | pig | |
| | | | | |
| (57) | Pomba | w – a – y – a | ná Mumbi | |
| | | agr-past-go-fv | with | |
| | | | 'Pomba went with Mumbi' | |

Selina w – a – lum – iw – a na njoka
 agr-past-bite-pass-fv by snake
 'Selina was bitten by a snake'

2.4.6 CiNsenga Ideophones

Ideophones describe manner of action, intensity of sound, or color. They sometimes function independently as predicates or are used to modify other predicates.

- (58) nga! 'falling on one's bum with a thud'
 bi! 'very dark'
 phyuu! 'quality of being red'
 phwítítítí! 'at full speed running away from something'
 bilobilo! 'walking alone in the dark'

Ideophones typically occur after a verb form.

- (59) Juve w – a – w – a kuti nga!
 Agr-past-fall-fv thus ID
 'Juve fell on his bum with a thud'

- (60) T – a – on – a Mary a – li phwítítítí!
 agr-past-see-fv agr-be ID
 'We saw Mary at full speed running away from something'

2.4.7 Clause Structure

Both mono-clausal and multi-clausal sentences occur in ciNsenga. A clause typically consists of one verb, but clauses with two verbs also occur (see (63)).

2.4.7.1 Simple sentences

- (61) Khuzwayo w – a – mw – a mânzi
agr-past-drink-fv water
'Khuzwayo drank water'
- (62) Shuko ni m-fupi
cop agr-short
'Shuko is short'
- (63) Nêwó n – a – cit – a ku – mu – pay – il – a nkhuku Shuko
I agr-past-do-fv inf-him-kill-appl-fv chicken
'I (actually) killed the chicken for Shuko'

2.4.7.2 Compound sentences

- (64) Tombi efwiká máilo koma anyina akaliye muone
'Tombi arrived yesterday but her mother has not yet seen her'

2.4.7.3 Embedded Clauses

- (65) Sewo t – u – samb – a kuti ti – on – án – é na asimbi
we agr-prog-bathe-fv so.that agr-see-recip-fv with girls
'We are having a bath so that we meet with girls'
- (66) Khuzwayo w – a – ti – uz – a kuti ti – ká – wél – é mailo
agr-past-us-tell-fv that we-fut-come-fv- tomorrow
'Khuzwayo told us that we should come tomorrow'
- (67) Ti – samb – e m'manja ti – ly – é mátanga
we-bathe-fv in-hands we-eat-fv pumpkins'
'We should wash (our) hands (so that) we eat pumpkins'

2.4.7.4 Interrogative sentences

Yes/no questions in ciNsenga are formed by a rising intonation at the end of a sentence.

- (68) Mwáná w – á – ly – á?
child agr-past-eat-fv
'Did the child eat?'

Wh-questions are generally formed with the question word in-situ.

- (69) Khuzwayo w – á – páy – á cinji?
agr-past-kill-fv what
'What did Khuzwayo kill?'

- (70) Shuko w – á – ón - á wani?
agr-past-see-fv who
'Who did Shuko see?'

When the subject is questioned, a focus marker /ni-/ 'it is' prefixed to the wh-prase.

- (71) Nî-wani w-á-páy-á koswe
Foc-who agr-past-kill rat
'Who killed the rat?'

When a non-subject wh-expression is fronted, it too is prefixed with the focus /ni-/ and simultaneously, the verb is prefixed with a focus particle that agrees with the noun class of the fronted wh-expression.

- (72) Ni-cinji cá – w – á – páy – á Khuzwayo
Foc-what foc-agr-past-kill-fv
'What did Khuzwayo kill?'

2.4.7.5 Relative clauses

In ciNsenga relativization of a non-subject constituent has noticeable consequences on both the verbal morphology and the syntax of the clause. Morphologically, a prefix that agrees with the relativized NP in noun class appears on the verb and, syntactically, the verb precedes the subject NP in word order.

(73) Lítángá I-améné lá- w -á – pík – á Tombi ni li-weme
pumpkin agr-which rel-agr-past-cook-fv cop agr-nice
'The pumpkin which Tombi cooked is nice'

(74) *Lítángá I-améné w -á – pík – á Tombi ni li-weme
pumpkin agr-which agr-pst-cook-fv cop agr-nice
'The pumpkin which Tombi cooked is nice'

(75) *Lítángá I-améné Tombi lá-w -á – pík – á ni li-weme
pumpkin agr-which rel-agr-past-cook-fv cop agr-nice
'The pumpkin which Tombi cooked is nice'

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