A Brief Overview Of Finongan Grammar

Word Order

The normal word order in Finongan is subject-object-verb.

	Subject		Object	Verb
(1)	*Ambip*	*te*	*kasat*	*tabaka-nga-k.*
	earthquake	SUB[3]	village	destroy-IPST-3SG

'An earthquake destroyed the village.'

When there are two or more verbs in a sentence, medial verb constructions are used before the fully inflected final verb.

(2)	*A-ndi*	*ninin*	*tenen*	*man*	*ginang*
	3-SR	1PL	POSS	language	in

	yufut-kong	*indani-nen-ta-ng*
	write-PROG	read-NSG.IRR-NSG.IFUT-3PL

'They will write and read our language.'

Additional information on medial verbs is discussed in the verb section.

Nouns

Noun plurality is marked in several ways. These are listed from most common to least common.

1. Verb affixation

(3)	*Ama*	*yupaa*	*kole*	*t-amo-t-ak*
	man	cockatoo	did	SG.OBJ-shoot-PRES.SG-3SG

'The man shot a cockatoo.'

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[3] See the list of abbreviations starting on page 22.

(4)   *Ama*   *yupaa*   *kole*   *y-amo-ka-ng*
      man   cockatoo   did   PL.OBJ-shoot-PRES.PL-3PL
      'The men shot cockatoos.'

2. Quantifiers and Numerals

(5)   *Nanak*   *ibe*   *ilambok*   *aage*   *kobo*
      child   female   two   but   one

      ko~homo-tu-gu-k.
      REDUP-die- do-DPST-3SG
      'There were two sisters but one died.'

Note: the *k* becomes *h* between vowels.

3. Suffix *-i* on the noun (optional and only used with humans)

(6)   *Nana-i*   *bisalami*   *gomo-nggu-ng.*
      child-PL   small   baptise-DPST-3PL
      'The small children were baptised.'

4. Noun repetition

(7)   *Fap*   *sabut-sabut*   *boop*   *tete*   *tenen*   *anta*
      tree   stick-stick   trap   do   purpose   for

      udi-ta-ng.
      look.for-PRES.SG-2SG
      'You must look for some sticks for the purpose of making a trap.'

Body parts, family members and several other nouns are inalienable. They require a possessive suffix. For example:

Possessor	Possessive suffix	Example	English translation
1SG	*-na*	*du-na*	'my ears'
1DU	*-nik*	*du-nik*	'our (DU) ears'
1PL	*-nin*	*du-nin*	'our (PL) ears'
2SG	*-ka*	*du-ka*	'your (SG) ears'
2DU	*-sik*	*du-sik*	'your (DU) ears'
2PL	*-sin*	*du-sin*	'your (PL) ears'
3	*-ni/-e*	*du-ni*	'his, her, their ears'

Table 1: Possessive suffixes

The main dictionary entry will use the first person plural form (e.g. *dunin*). The only exception to this rule is for the entry *uyang* 'tail' which will use the third person form *uyangi* because the first person plural form is unnatural. Occasionally, the third person possessive form is irregularly inflected. Those words will appear as additional separate entries.

Pronouns

Person	Subject	Object
1SG	*nok*	*nanin*
1DU	*nik*	*ninik*
1PL	*nin*	*ninin*
2SG	*gok*	*ganin*
2DU	*sik*	*sinik*
2PL	*sin*	*sinin*
3	*in / a*	*anin*

Table 2: Pronouns

Verbs

All fully inflected verbs in Finongan are suffixed with tense and subject

agreement markers.

	distant past	immediate past	present	irrealis	immediate future	distant future
	DPST	IPST	PRES	IRR	IFUT	DFUT
SG	*-gu*	*-nga*	*-t(a)/-y*	*-(b)e*	*-s*	*-ko*
NSG			*-(k)a*	*-nen*	*-ta*	

Table 3: Tense suffixes

The irrealis suffix is listed in the chart because it precedes all future tense suffixes.

(8) *ku-gu-t*
go-DPST-1SG
'I went'

(9) *ku-nga-t*
go-IPST-1SG
'I went (recently)'

(10) *ku-y-et*
go-PRES.SG-1SG
'I go'

(11) *ku-e-s-et*
go-IRR.SG-IFUT.SG-1SG
'I will go (soon)'

(12) *ku-nen-ta-mon*
go-IRR.NSG-IFUT.NSG-1PL
'we will go (soon)'

(13) *ku-nen-ko-mon*
go-IRR.NSG-DFUT-1PL
'we will go'

	SG	DU	PL
1	*-(e)t*	*-mok*	*-mon*
2	*-(a)ng*		*-(a)ng*
3	*-(a)k*	*-(a)ng*	

Table 4: Subject-agreement suffixes

(14) *bonga-t*
'I came'

(15) *bonga-ng*
'you (SG/PL)/they came'

(16) *bonga-k*
'he/she/it came'

(17) *bonga-mok*
'we (DU)/you (DU) came'

(18) *bonga-mon*
'we (PL) came'

In certain cases, the 3SG suffix may be omitted. When the tense marker ends with a vowel and the 3SG suffix is followed by the suffix *-e* 'PFV'[4], the last two suffixes may be omitted.

The following two sentences are both acceptable and have the same meaning.

(19) *A   det-ge   kuu   te-beng   fat*
    it   remove-SS.DT   go   do-SG.IRR   be

tu-gu-h-e
do-DPST-3SG-PFV
'He removed it and tried to run away.'

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[4] This is an early analysis of this morpheme and may change with further study.

(20)   *A*   *det-ge*   *kuu*   *te-beng*   *fat*
        it   remove-SS.DT   go   do-SG.IRR   be

       tu-gu
       do-DPST[3SG-PFV]
       'He removed it and tried to run away.'

Hortative and obligative suffixes replace both the tense and subject agreement suffixes on the final verb.

	Suffix	Example	English translation
DU	*-da/-la*	*te-la*	'let's both do'
PL	*-na*	*te-na*	'let's do'

Table 5: Hortative suffixes

	Suffix	Example	English translation
1SG	*-taba*	*ku-taba*	'I must go'
2SG	*-teng*	*ku-teng*	'you (SG) go!'
2DU	*-tun/-bun*	*ku-tun*	'you (DU) go!'
2PL	*-tut/-but*	*ku-tut*	'you (PL) go!'
3SG	*-tebe*	*ku-tebe*	'he must go'

Table 6: Obligative suffixes

When there are two or more verbs in a sentence, all but the final verb are minimally inflected.

Suffix	Example	English translation
-ge	*ku-ge*	'(he) went and'
-nga / -la	*ku-nga*	'(he) goes and'
-ngale	*ku-ngale*	'(he) goes and (she)...'
-tele	*ku-tele*	'while going'
-kaning	*ku-haning*	'was gone'
-kong	*ku-hong*	'going'
-tik	*ku-tik*	'lest (he) go'

Table 7: Medial verb affixes

Other affixes may occur depending on the type of verb and the context. A few of these affixes are explained in the next sections.

Irrealis

One set of suffixes indicate irrealis. These are similar to the irrealis markers used with future tense but also include a form that indicates duality. These irrealis verbs may appear either as a medial or final verb. When they appear as a final verb, no additional tense or subject marking is included.

Suffix	Gloss
-beng	'SG.IRR'
-deng	'DU.IRR'
-neng	'PL.IRR'

Table 8: Irrealis suffixes

This can indicate desire, intention or purpose.

(21) *Noo   man bingam kalefe nanak kobo ye-beng.*
      1SG.SR talk story short small one say-SG.IRR
      'I want to tell a short story.'

The irrealis suffix is also used with negative commands.

(22) *Bobon   it   golong anengge bee-sele-ngale*
      chicken house inside do.not   put-disperse-DS

      bo-neng.
      come-PL.IRR
      'Don't let the chickens come in the house.'

It is also used to express events that almost happened, are being attempted or might happen.

(23) *Kole   ma~ma   te-beng   ta-nga-l-e.*
      done   fall-REDUP   do-SG.IRR   do-IPST-1SG-PFV
      'I almost fell (but didn't).'

Suffixes indicating an optional benefactor or recipient come immediately after the stem. The suffix is always followed by *-mi* 'benefactive marker'.

BEN	Suffix	Example	English translation
-----	----	*bofo-t-ak*	'she sews'
1SG	*-na*	*bofo-na-mi-t-ak*	'she sews for me'
1NSG	*-ni/-di*	*bofo-ni-mi-t-ak*	'she sews for us'
2SG	*-ga*	*bofong-ga-mi-t-ak*[5]	'she sews for you (SG)'
2DU	*-si*	*bofo-si-mi-t-ak*	'she sews for you (DU)'
2PL	*-sa*	*bofo-sa-mi-t-ak*	'she sews for you (PL)'
3SG	*-nga*	*bofo-nga-mi-t-ak*	'she sews for him'
3NSG	*-i*	*bofo-i-mi-t-ak*	'she sews for them'

Table 9: Benefactive markings

Ditransitive verbs (V$_D$) require the recipient information. This follows the same paradigm as above.

Recipient	Suffix	Example	English translation
1SG	*(-na)*	*na-mi-t-ak*[6]	'he gives me'
1NSG	*-ni*	*na-ni-mi-t-ak*	'he gives us'
2SG	*-ga*	*nang-ga-mi-t-ak*	'he gives you (SG)'
2DU	*-si*	*na-si-mi-t-ak*	'he gives you (DU)'
2PL	*-sa*	*na-sa-mi-t-ak*	'he gives you (PL)'
3SG	*-nga*	*na-nga-mi-t-ak*	'he gives her'
3NSG	*-i*	*na-i-mi-t-ak*	'he gives them'

Table 10: Recipient markings

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[5] A nasal or continuant in a syllable onset followed by a syllable beginning with a stop makes that stop prenasalised. This only occurs across morphemes.

[6] Since *na* is both the word 'give' and the first person singular recipient marker, one of these is usually omitted.

(24) *Ama   tabamii   bili-nga   kuyak-ngi   ta*
man   bow   take-ss.IT   brother-3SG to

na-nga-mi-t-ak
give-3SG-BEN-PRES-3SG
'The man takes the bow and gives it to his brother.'

Transitive verbs

Bound transitive verbs (VTB) have a required prefix which indicates the
person and number of the object. In this dictionary, the main entry of a
bound transitive verb will use the 1NSG prefix *ni-*. The exception is *ut* 'hit
one' which cannot take a non-singular object.

Object	Prefix	Example	English translation
1SG	*na-/ne-*	*ne-lefet-s-ak*	'he is passing me'
1NSG	*ni-*	*ni-lefet-s-ak*	'he is passing us'
2SG	*ga-/ge-*	*ge-lefet-s-ak*	'he is passing you (SG)'
2DU	*sa-*	*sa-lefet-s-ak*	'he is passing you (DU)'
2PL	*se-/si-*	*si-lefet-s-ak*	'he is passing you (PL)'
3SG	*a-*	*a-lefet-s-ak*	'he is passing it'
3NSG	*i-*	*i-lefet-s-ak*	'he is passing them'

Table 11: Bound transitive verb prefixes

Some other transitive verbs require a different prefix which indicates the
number of the object. These verbs are referred to as transitive 2 verbs
(VT2). Occasionally, a speaker may choose to use the non-third person VTB
prefixes to clarify the object. In this dictionary, the main entry of a
transitive 2 verb will use the 3SG prefix *t-*.

Object	Prefix	Example	English translation
3SG	*t-*	*t-aalo -t-ak*	'he lifts it'
3NSG	*s-, y-*	*s-aalo-t-ak*	'he lifts them'

Table 12: Transitive 2 verb prefixes

Several regular transitive verbs have distinct stems for singular and non-
singular object agreement. These verbs also form compounds with other
verbs.

Singular object verb	Non-singular object verb	Gloss
kamat	*bee*	'put', 'leave'
bili	*baa*	'take'
balambu	*baambu*	'throw'

Table 13: Singular and non-singular verbs

The bound transitive verb meaning 'hit' also has a separate stem for singular and non-singular object agreement.

	SG	NSG
1	*n-ut*	*nin-dofo*
2	*g-ut*	*sa-dofo*
3	*ut*	*dofo*

Table 14: Hit words

A few transitive verb stems are completely irregular. The object marker and the stem are fused together. All of these are listed as separate entries in the dictionary because there is no clear main verb form. They are listed in the chart below for quick reference. The left-hand column indicates the person and number of the object.

	'see'	'bite'
1SG	*nambo(ngan)*	*ne*
1DU	*nimbi*	*niani*
1PL	*nimbingan*	*niani*
2SG	*gabo*	*ge*
2DU	*sabongan*	*sasi*
2PL	*sibingan*	*sasi*
3SG	*kangan*	*sibi*
3NSG	*yabo/ibangan*	*yai*

Table 15: Irregular transitive verbs

(25) *Noo   sap   kot   but   kot   yabongan-t-et*
      1SG.SR dog   and   pig   and   see.3NSG-PRES.SG-1SG
      'I see dogs and pigs.'

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(26) *Kamokbeng   te   nok   nambo-ge   fop*
kind.of.rat   SUB   1SG   see.1SG-SS.DT   tree

ginang   olongka-gu-k.
on   go.up-DPST-3SG
'The rat saw me and went up a tree.'

Most transitive verbs may optionally compound with the irregularly inflected verb 'see'. In these cases, the stem of the main verb occurs first and is immediately followed by the inflected 'see' stem. This appears grammatically as a compound verb. However, the 'see' verb is bleached of semantic content and has only grammatical meaning. It simply serves to indicate the person and number of the object.

Object person	'See' verb	V-see compounds	English translation
1SG	*nambo(ngan)*	*bili-nambo-t-ak*	'it takes me'
1DU	*nimbi*	*baa-nimbi-t-ak*	'it takes us (DU)'
1PL	*nimbingan*	*baa-nimbingan-t-ak*	'it takes us'
2SG	*gabo*	*biling-gabo-t-ak*	'it takes you (SG)'
2DU	*sabongan*	*baa-sabongan-t-ak*	'it takes you (DU)'
2PL	*sibingan*	*baa-sibingan-t-ak*	'it takes you (PL)'
3SG	*ngan/ngambo*	*bili-ngambo-t-ak*	'it takes her'
3NSG	*yabo*	*baa-yabo-t-ak*	'it takes them'

Table 16: 'See' verbs as direct object markers

(27) *Kasat   tanga-ni   te   baa-nimbi-ge*
village   leader-3SG.POSS   SUB   take.PL-1DU.OBJ-SS.DT

it   ginang   ni-fa-gu-ng-e.
house   to   1PL.OBJ-leave-DPST-3PL-PFV
'The village leaders took us to a house and left us.'

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Reduplication

In some instances, especially commands, verbs are partially reduplicated. Usually the first syllable of the verb is repeated. If the repeated syllable has a long vowel, the reduplicated syllable will occur first with a short vowel. Some examples are shown in the chart below. Because these command forms do not require affixation, these are the preferable forms for the dictionary entries. Note: Verb stems with more than two syllables are not reduplicated and are shown in the dictionary in their standard form without affixation.

Stem	Citation or reduplicated form	Gloss
kamat	*kakamat*	'put one'
bo	*bobo*	'come'
det	*dedet*	'remove'
ofo	*ofofo*	'descend'
baa	*babaa*	'take PL'

Table 17: Regularly reduplicated verbs

Some of the more irregular examples are listed below for reference.

Stem	Citation or reduplicated form	Gloss
kose	*kohose*	'save'
sumun	*sunsumun*	'put between'
dase	*dasese*	'fill'
ali	*alili*	'scratch'
maat	*mapmaat*	'sit'
ku	*kuu*	'go'

Table 18: Irregularly reduplicated verbs