

Proto-Coastal-Western

1. Introduction

Proto-Coastal-Western is the language ancestor of all the languages of the Coastal Western family. It is itself the daughter language of Proto-Western and is thus related to languages like Gezoro and Tjakori.

2. Sound changes from Proto-Western

2.1 Regular sound changes between Proto-Western and Proto-Coastal-Western are as follows (note that whenever PW or intermediate forms are quoted, [a] stands for a back vowel and that throughout the changes nasalisation is preserved unless explicitly stated otherwise):

- 2.1.1. Plain velar consonants became palatalised before a front vowel or [j].
- 2.1.2. [a] and [e] became [ɛ] and [ɪ] respectively when the next syllable contained [i].
- 2.1.3. [a], [e] and [i] became [o], [ø] and [y] respectively when the next syllable contained [u].
- 2.1.4. [a] also became [o] after labiovelar consonants and [w].
- 2.1.5. Plain alveolar consonants became retroflex after [o] and [u].
- 2.1.6. Progressive assimilation of retroflexion occurred wherever a retroflex consonant was followed by a plain alveolar one.
- 2.1.7. [ɛ], [ɪ], [ø] and [y] merged with [e], [i], [o] and [u] respectively.
- 2.1.8. The retroflex lateral fricative merged with [l] in coda and with [ʃ] elsewhere.
- 2.1.9. Velar, labio-velar and palatalised velar fricatives became voiceless.
- 2.1.10. Non aspirated labio-velar, palato-alveolar and palatalised velar consonants became voiced.
- 2.1.11. Palatalised velar consonants merged with palato-alveolar (occlusives became affricates in the process).
- 2.1.12. Labio-velar consonants merged with plain velar consonants and palato-alveolar consonant merged with plain alveolar consonants.
- 2.1.13. Retroflex consonants merged with plain velar consonants.
- 2.1.14. Velar affricates became simple stops.
- 2.1.15. Oral vowels became nasalised preceding nasal consonants.
- 2.1.16. Oral vowels gained a high tone while nasal vowels gained a low tone and were denasalised.
- 2.1.17. A high tone vowel became low tone if the following syllable contained a low tone (not recursive).
- 2.1.18. Occlusives became [ʔ] word-finally and when preceding a non-approximant consonant.
- 2.1.19. Fricatives became [h] word-finally and when preceding a non-approximant consonant.
- 2.1.20. [ʈ] became [l] after [ʔ] or [h].
- 2.1.21. [mj], [nj] and [ɲj] merged with [ɲ].
- 2.1.22. When following a consonant, [j]V and [w]V segments were metathesised to V[j] and V[w] respectively.
- 2.1.23. When [j] and [w] occurred in coda position they were vocalized to [i] and [u] respectively, while the preceding vowel was deleted (the tone was transferred on the vocalised approximant).
- 2.1.24. [ɮ] became [ʈ].
- 2.1.25. [l] became [ʈ] after a velar or glottal consonant.
- 2.1.26. [l] became [ʌ].

2.2 Various irregular sound changes also operated between Proto-Western and Proto-Coastal-Western. These are especially seen operating on high frequency bound morphemes. Examples include the haplology in multisyllabic affixes and the deletion of coda consonants. When low, the tone from deleted syllables was often reassociated with a following syllable or syllables; when deleted coda consonants had been voiced they often left a low tone on the preceding vowel.

3. Phonology

3.1 Consonant inventory

	Bilabial	Alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
Stop	p ^h p b	t ^h t d		k ^h k g	ʔ
Affricate		ts ^h ts ʈ			
Fricative		ʃ s z		x ɣ	h
Nasal	m	n	ɲ	ŋ	
Approximant	w	ɭ	ʎ j		

Consonants are written in IPA with the following exceptions:

- Aspiration is denoted by a subsequent <h>.
- The glottal stop is written <ʔ>.
- The lateral alveolar fricative is written <ɭ>.
- The voiced velar fricative is written <ɣ>.
- The palatal nasal is written <ɲ>.
- The velarised alveolar lateral approximant is written <ɭ>.
- The palatal lateral approximant is written <ʎ>.

3.2 Vowel inventory

	Front	Central	Back
Close	i		u
Close-mid	e		o
Open		ɐ	

Vowels are written as IPA with the exception of the open central vowel which is written as <a>.

3.3 Suprasegmentals

Each vowel has an inherent tone, either high or low. The high tone is unmarked, while the low tone is marked with a grave.

3.4 Phonotactics

Syllables have a rigid (C)CV(C) structure. The possible initial clusters were ʈl-, pʃ-, pʈ-, bʃ-, bʈ-, tʃ-, tʈ-, dʃ-, kl-, gl-, gʃ-, xl- and hl-. The possible coda consonants were -ʃ, -h, -l, and -ʃ. Consonant clusters of more than two consonants were not permissible.

3.5 Morphophonological processes

3.5.1 A frequent internal sandhi process is the so-called i-affection and u-affection, where a vowel has caused the preceding vowel to change quality during affixation.

	i-affected	u-affected
i	(i)	u

e	i	o
a	e	o
o	e	(o)

These processes are caused by a directly following etymological /j/ or /w/ as well as an /i/ or /u/ in the next syllable. The two affections can sometimes occur one after the other; e.g. <a> would be changed into <e> by following <i>, which would then be changed into <o> by a following <u>. The result is that the two processes are not completely transparent, especially in the case of prefixation, as the syllable causing i- or u-affection does not necessarily contain an <i> or a <u> – and likewise a syllable containing <i> or <u> does not always cause the expected affection. These peculiarities will be pointed out whenever they are relevant.

3.5.2 Another important process is tonal sandhi. Whenever a vowel precedes a nasal consonant as a result of affixation or other morphological processes, it becomes low-tone. Moreover, wherever a low tone vowel is suffixed to a word (or appears as the result of a nasal consonant), the preceding vowel becomes low tone too (the process is, however, not recursive).

3.5.3 Yet another frequent morphophonological process is coronal backing. This occurs where an etymological coronal consonant comes to follow a high or mid-high back vowel /o u/ as the result of morphological processes. /o/ formed from the u-affection of /a/ triggers this process but /o u/ formed from the u-affection of /e i/ do not. The coronal consonant is typically backed to a velar consonant as a result of this contact. However, the palatal lateral which is etymologically descended from a coronal lateral is also affected by this process and becomes coronal. The table below shows consonants and their backed outcomes:

Original	Backed
t	k
th	kh
d	g
ts	k
tsh	kh
dz	g
s	x
ʃ	l
ʎ	x
n	ŋ

Coda *h*, where descended from etymological *ʎ*, is also affected by this process, resulting in *l*.

4. Morphology

4.1 Nominal morphology

4.1.1 Proto-Coastal-Western nouns, while preserving many aspects of the Proto-Western noun, also saw several important innovations, the most striking of which was the development of a simple system of grammatical gender contrasting “animate” with “inanimate”.

The first element of the change was maybe connected with the evolution of PCW cognitive perception of the world – as they shifted toward more cannibalistic practices than their PW ancestors, “edibility” came to be strongly associated with “animacy”, and eventually, the edible/non-edible distinction made in the singular absolutive was reanalysed as animate/inanimate. This was further accented when inanimate nouns, perceived as inherently passive, lost the ergative case, becoming confined to the more patientive absolutive and construct cases.

The last peculiar development affected number: the dual came to be associated with natural animated pairs (notably twins, but by extension, any pair of brothers, father and son, or even simply members of the same patrilineage), and eventually became the plural number of animated nouns, while the original plural was carried on inanimated nouns (thus the dual disappeared as category, but its morphemes are preserved).

Thus, the resulting system distinguishes two genders (animate and inanimate), two numbers (singular and plural), and three cases (ergative, absolutive, and construct, the ergative case existing only in the animate gender). The genders, unlike those of the parent language, are associated with lexemes and not referents; various oddities where the animate/inanimate distinction does not fully explain the gender of given lexical items are remnants of the older system of referent edibility/inedibility. For example, the words for many insects are inanimate nominals (such as *dzi7i-*, “bee”) as is the word for “friend” (*gatsa-*) but the words for various body parts are animate (such as *dzehda-*, “heart”).

Sound changes have affected the regularity of the system enough for a basic system of declension, based on the thematic vowel of the noun, to appear (tone doesn't affect declension, i.e. nouns in -a- decline just like nouns in -à-).

4.1.2 Nominal declensions

The table below shows the suffixes marking case and number on nominals:

		Animate nominals	Inanimate nominals
Singular	Absolutive	-h	-Ø
	Ergative	-7i	(does not occur)
	Construct	-7u	-7u
Plural	Absolutive	-h	-7
	Ergative	-li	(does not occur)
	Construct	-lu	-gu

As expected, the construct suffixes trigger u-affection in the preceding syllable, the ergative suffixes trigger i-affection in the preceding syllable and, due to the effect of coronal backing, the animate construct plural form becomes -*xu* wherever it follows an underlying -*a*, -*o*, or -*u*. Below are tables showing the declension of example animate and inanimate nominals:

Example animate nominals

		lèzi-, “horse”	7àzè-, “woman”	glè7hà-, “game animal”	làğlawo-, “priest”	guxu-, “wolf”
Singular	Absolutive	lèzih	7àzèh	glè7hàh	làğlawoh	guxuh
	Ergative	lèzi7i	7àzì7i	glè7hè7i	làğlawe7i	guxu7i
	Construct	lèzu7u	7àzò7u	glè7hò7u	làğlawo7u	guxu7u
Plural	Absolutive	lèzih	7àzèh	glè7hàh	làğlawol	guxul
	Ergative	lèzi7i	7àzì7i	glè7hè7i	làğlawe7i	guxuxi

	Construct	lèzu <u>u</u>	ʔàzò <u>u</u>	gìè7hò <u>xu</u>	làǵlawo <u>xu</u>	gux <u>uxu</u>
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Example inanimate nominals

		tshèkhà, “earth”	dudze, “sky”	dzi7ì, “bee”	khapòkù, “forest”	ʔaǵo, “smoke”
Singular	Absolutive	tshèkhà	dudze	dzi7ì	khapòkù	ʔaǵo
	Construct	tshèkhò7u	dudzo7u	dzi7ù7u	khapòkù7u	ʔaǵo7u
Plural	Absolutive	tshèkhà7	dudze7	dzi7ì7	khapòkù7	ʔaǵo7
	Construct	tshèkhògu	dudzogu	dzi7ùgu	khapòkùgu	ʔaǵogu

4.1.3 Possession marking

Two classes of nouns are found in Proto-Coastal-Western: inalienably and alienably possessable nominal. The former type must be explicitly marked for possessor; the latter only optionally so. Both types of nominal may be marked as a possessor by appearing preceding the possessed nominal in the construct case, but inalienably possessed nominals take prefixes to agree with their possessor also.

The set of possessed prefixes agree with the possessing nominal for gender, number and person. The prefixes have three forms: a set when attaching to a nominal the first syllable of which causes i-affection; a set when attaching to a nominal the first syllable of which causes u-affection; and a default set. In fact, the i- and u-affected forms of the prefix are regularly derived from the default set by the application of the i- and u-affection rules given in 3.5.1; the forms are given for reference, however. Note also that if prefixed to a nominal beginning with a nasal consonant or with a low tone in the first syllable historically derived from a process other than tone sandhi, tone sandhi applies and lowers the tone of the vowel in the final syllable of the prefix. The prefixes are shown in the table below:

		Animate		Inanimate	
		Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
Default	First	na-	ʔìla-	na-	ʔìgo-
	Second	dze-	tìe-	dze-	ʔì7ge-
	Third	ʔe-	lè-	ʔe-	ge-
i-affected	First	ne-	ʔìlè-	ne-	ʔìge-
	Second	dzi-	tìi-	dzi-	ʔì7gi-
	Third	ʔi-	lì-	ʔi-	gi-
u-affected	First	no-	ʔìlò-	no-	ʔìgo-
	Second	dzo-	tìo-	dzo-	ʔì7go-
	Third	ʔo-	lò-	ʔo-	go-

Certain nominals have different meanings when treated as inalienably or alienably possessable. Examples include alienably possessable ʔàzè, meaning “woman”, compared with inalienably possessable -ʔàzè, meaning “wife”, and alienably possessable làǵa, meaning “guard, guide”, compared with inalienably possessable -làǵa, meaning “eye”.

4.1.4 Classifiers

Proto-Coastal-Western retains the “classifier” affixes of Proto-Western as bound classifier-pronouns. These have various, disparate uses which are dealt with in the appropriate sections of the grammar below. All nine of Proto-Western's classifiers are retained (although with somewhat shifted meanings) in Proto-Coastal-Western and a new morpheme is found: *-jatha-*, etymologically a truncated form of *jathapa*, “garden”. With the development of gender into a lexically specified category, the majority of the classifier affixes have gained gender specification.

All of the classifier affixes may be affected by *i-* and *u-*affection and by tone sandhi as expected based on the environment in which they are found. Additionally, some trigger these processes on preceding syllables. The forms, their glosses, their gender specification, any morphonological processes that they trigger and then numbers used to refer to them in abbreviations are found in the table below:

Affix	Gender	Triggers	Gloss	Number
-dze-	unspecified	-	soft foodstuffs	I
-ğû-	inanimate	u-affection, tone sandhi	sticklike or long nominals	II
-jatha-	inanimate	i-affection	limited planes; buildings	III
-je-	inanimate	i-affection	liquid, incorporeal or gaseous nominals	IV
-hdzi-	unspecified	i-affection	granular masses	V
-ta-	animate	-	solid, non-human nominals	VI
-tsa-	inanimate	-	solid spherical or irregularly shaped nominals	VII
-tshu-	inanimate	i-affection, u-affection	soft non-foodstuffs	VIII
-wo-	unspecified	u-affection	beings capable of speech	IX
-zi-	inanimate	i-affection	intangible or abstract nominals; unlimited plane	X

Note that the *h* of the granular masses classifier *-hdzi-* is etymologically derived from *l* and so becomes *l* under the influence of coronal backing.

4.1.5 Independent Pronouns

4.1.5.1 Personal pronouns

The personal pronouns of Proto-Western are preserved in Proto-Coastal-Western; they refer only to interlocutors. As interlocutors cannot typically be inanimate, no gender distinction is made in the personal pronouns and the etymological plural form survives as a distributive plural. The pronouns distinguish person, number and case, and are normal (albeit somewhat irregular) nominals, always taking full word stress. They are found in the table below:

		Absolutive	Ergative	Construct
First	Singular	na	ne7i	no7u
	Plural	nah	neli	noxu
	Distributive	sa	se7i	so7u
Second	Singular	ta	te7i	to7u
	Plural	tah	tefi	toxu
	Distributive	ta7	tegi	togu

4.1.5.2 Phoric-demonstrative pronouns

The phoric-demonstrative pronouns of Proto-Coastal-Western are best described in terms of template morphology. The template of the phoric-demonstrative pronoun is as follows:

DEMONSTRATIVE PRONOUN, PHORIC PRONOUN	classifier suffix	number and case agreement suffix
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Of the demonstrative and phoric pronouns, at least one must be present; one of each type may co-occur, but not more than one of a single type. The classifier suffix and case/number agreement suffix are mandatory. When both are present, the order of the demonstrative and phoric pronoun morphemes within their slot is variable; in the most common order the demonstrative precedes the phoric pronoun, but this order may be reversed for emphasis (this phenomenon of variable ordering of bound morphemes is extremely rare but is attested elsewhere). For details of the meanings of these morphemes, see the syntax section and semantics.

The number and case agreement suffixes are the same as those found on regular nominals (4.1.2), and is selected to agree with the referent nominal. The classifier suffix is selected from the classifiers (4.1.4). The demonstrative and phoric pronoun morphemes are shown in the tables below:

-ja-	anaphoric pronoun
-gi-	cataphoric pronoun

-dze-	this, near me
-da-	that, near you
-tshe-	that, visible over there
-tha-	that, neither visible nor near an interlocutor

All of these morphemes may be subject to morphophonological processes as appropriate according to their environment. Additionally, the cataphoric pronoun causes i-affection on a preceding syllable.

4.1.6 Numerals and quantifiers

Cardinal numerals and non-numeral quantifiers take mandatory classifier suffixes to agree with their nominal referent. Ordinal numerals take optional classifier suffixes when standing independently but may not when standing as a part of a cardinal (see below). Like its parent, Proto-Coastal-Western uses a base eight system of numerals. The quantifiers may be found in the lexicon; the numerals are as follows:

	Cardinal	Ordinal
1	tago-	tagogu
2	zi-	zudu
3	nolku-	nolkugu
4	mètsa-	mètsogu
5	7uga-	7ugogu
6	mìdзи-	mìdzudu
7	nełzi-	nełzudu
10	ňağo-	ňağogu

Multiples of 10 are formed using the appropriate ordinal preceding *ňağo-*. Other numbers are co-ordinated.

4.2 Verbal morphology

4.2.1 Evidentiality

The eight evidentials of Proto-Western collapse into six in Proto-Coastal-Western and the marking of evidentiality becomes mandatory. The evidentials are suffixes attaching directly to the verbal stem. The forms of the evidentials, the morphophonological processes which they trigger and their etymologies are shown in the table below:

Evidential	Morpheme	Processes	Etymology
Direct participation	-ja-	i-affection	PW visual sensory -ya-
Visual sensory	-dzi-	i-affection	PW aural sensory -dži-
Non-visual sensory	-łzi-	i-affection	PW certain hearsay -łši-
Inferred	-łu-	u-affection	PW inferred from physical evidence -lułki- (note irregular haplology: the regularly descended form would have been *-łu7dzi-)
Assumed	-ge-		PW inferred from past experience -k ^w e-
Hearsay	-bà-	tone sandhi	PW doubted hearsay -bã-

4.2.2 Participant reference

Proto-Coastal-Western verbs take mandatory concord markers, agreeing with their absolutive and ergative arguments. The order of these markers has changed compared with that found in Proto-Western. Where one or both markers are interlocutors (that is, are first or second person), the absolutive participant agreement marker precedes the ergative agreement marker, directly following the evidential. Where both are third person, the ergative marker precedes the absolutive. First and second persons are marked with the following markers:

	Absolutive	Ergative
First person	-na	-ne
Second person	-tha	-tshe
Second person (impolite)	-thà	-tshè

The second person impolite form descends from the PCW plural form which, in other cases, evolved into the inanimate plural; as such it is used to imply the stupidity or inferiority of the listener, or to accord them sub-human status.

Third person absolutive arguments are marked using the classifier suffixes. Animate singular third person ergative arguments are marked with the suffix -ge-, an irregularly reduced form of older *-ge7i-, while animate plural third person ergative arguments are marked with the suffix -geli-.

4.2.3 Floating verbal morphemes

Various bound morphemes may be found marked on the verb in Proto-Coastal-Western that do not fit into the above categories. These include the mirative markers -pù- and -7u-, marking doubt and surety respectively, as well as bound adverbs and speech-act particles. The speech-act particles are a small, closed class of affixes, comprising the negatives -je and -7ihma, and the interrogative -ǵi. The most typical position for these morphemes was finally, following both evidentiality and participant reference; however, they can also occur directly following the evidential. This position was especially typical of the mirative markers.

5. Syntax

The syntax of Proto-Coastal-Western has many of the same head-final features of its parent plus, you know, some changes innit.

5.1 Basic phrase structure

5.1.1 The verb phrase (VP)

The Proto-Coastal-Western VP is head final: the head is an inflected verb. Intransitive and monotransitive verbs may take a single complement NP which takes the absolutive case. Ditransitive verbs may take two such complements. Complements precede the head V; the direct object of a ditransitive verb comes closer to the verb than its other complement. Note that the morphological marking for the single argument of an intransitive verb and the absolutive argument of a transitive verb may be the only reference to these arguments: the NPs may be omitted (Proto-Coastal-Western is Pro-drop). However, the second (recipient) complement of ditransitive verb may not be omitted.

Additionally, any VP may take an additional adjunct: this may be a PP, an adverbial phrase or an adverb. In Proto-Western, adjuncts followed the verb; however, with the evolution of the heavy constituent postposing rule (see 5.5.1) and in light of the fact that adjuncts very often are heavy constituents, this position has been reinterpreted as derived. In Proto-Coastal-Western the adjunct precedes verbal complements.

Below are found examples of VPs. In the first example the verb is intransitive and stands alone as a VP; in the second example it is monotransitive and takes a single ergative complement; in the third example it is ditransitive and takes both an ergative and a construct case argument.

Zedzijana.
zedze -ja -na
run -DIR -1ST
“I ran.”

Gel'ah khakholziwo, jàmogu ɫa7.
gel'a -h khakho -ɫzi -wo jàma -gu ɫa7
child -ABS laugh -NVIS -IX sun -CON under
“The child laughs in the sunlight.”

Tshejòhxù tshìñathejatsane.
tshejòhxù -Ø tshìñatha -ja -tsa -ne
wall -ABS build -DIR -VII -1ERG
“I am building a wall.”

Tshi nafah 7oblùxah 7èdagedze.
tshi na- ɫa -h 7e- blùxa -h 7èda -ge -dze
yesterday 1- husband -ABS 3- meat -ABS give -3.ERG -I
“He gave my husband its meat yesterday.”

5.1.2 The noun phrase (NP)

The NP consists of a head nominal and any number of modifiers. Modifiers generally precede the head nominal, with a few exceptions. Defective matronymics formed with the suffix *-ǵiwogagawo* followed the head nominal. By association with these, certain honorifics, morphologically nominals in the construct case, were also able to follow the

head nominal: *phugo7u*, “chief”; *bèdzàno7xuwogajo7u*, “(my) relative”; *me7ludu7u*, “warrior”; *ǵùgogu7u*, “prosperous person, rich person”; and *pèl'ogu7u*, “fat person”.

Examples of well formed NPs are shown below:

noxu thaja
noxu thaja
1.PL.CON milk
“our milk”

nèmìna
na- mìnà
1- mother
“my mother”

7àzò7u 7i'fa
7àzè -7u 7i- fa
woman -CON 3- husband
“the woman's husband”

làǵlawo bèdzàno7xuwogajo7u
làǵlawo bèdzàno7xuwogajo7u
priest relative
“rhe priest, my relative”

5.1.3 The adpositional phrase (PP)

Adpositional phrases consist of a head adposition and complement NP. The headedness of PPs is lexically specified: the majority of adpositions are postpositions, forming head-final PPs, but two adpositions are prepositions, forming head-initial PPs. These adpositions are *gòdu*, “on top of”, and *zuwo*, “through, into the middle of”; they are transparently related to nominals meaning “head” and “guts” respectively. The NP complement of a PP takes the construct case.

toxu dzìdzìpàtògù7u me7
toxu dzìdzi- pàtògù -7u me7
2.PL.CON straight- road -CON by_means_of
“by means of you people's straight road”

gòdu làǵlawo7u
gòdu làǵlawo -7u
on_top_of priest -CON
“on top of the priest”

5.1.4 The clause (S)

The clause from a mandatory VP and, where the head V of the VP is monotransitive or ditransitive, an optional ergative NP. Two possible orders of VP and NP within the clause are found. In the older, more basic ordering the NP precedes the VP; this remains the more common ordering. However, an innovation of using relative clauses as standalone utterances to give special emphasis to a specific participant in combination with an innovation allowing

these relative clauses to omit their cataphoric pronoun lead to the reinterpretation of these relative clauses as head-initial clauses. They are, however, non-basic and are dealt with in the transformations section (5.5.4).

Below are found examples of clauses:

Legi7i mòğuh la7pologeta, woki.

legi -7i mòğuh -h la7pa -lu -ge -ta woki
 boy -ERG sheep -ABS.PL steal -INF -3.ERG -VI day_after_tomorrow
 “The day after tomorrow the boy will try to steal your sheep.”

To7u dħukuko7u thùṅè7i nà7àzèh wolkàbàgowo!

to7u dħukuka -7u thùṅà -7i na- 7àzè -h wolka -bà -ge -wo
 2.SN.CON family -CON headman -ERG 1- wife -ABS hit -REP -3.ERG -IX
 “The headman of your family hit my wife!”

5.2 Embedded clauses

5.2.1 Complement clauses

Complement clauses contain a head NP, which is a pronoun formed with the anaphoric morpheme and the intangible classifier *-ja-zi-*, and a VP. The VP precedes this head pronoun. The pronoun is marked as absolutive; it is usually marked as singular, but may be marked as plural to indicate that the VP describes a repetitive or habitual event. Thus the two forms taken by the pronoun are *jezi* and *jezi7*. Note that as the pronoun takes the intangible classifier it must be marked as inanimate and so cannot take ergative case; thus complement clauses may not stand as ergative arguments. They may, however, stand as the absolutive arguments of verbs or as the construct case arguments of adpositions.

Below are found examples of utterances containing complement clauses:

Phuge7i 7edzèhdzah jàsahpolugedze jezi nòbujezine.

phuga -7i 7e- dzèhdza -h jàsahpa -lu -ge -dze ja- -zi- -Ø nòbu -ja -zi -ne
 chief -ERG 3- heart -ABS eat -INF -3.ERG -I ANA- -X- -ABS think -DIR -X -1ERG
 “I think that the chief ate his heart.”

Jadame7li7u 7o7ujadzala7 lġahpejoğùṅe jezi7 dzijjezine.

jada- me7li -7u 7e- 7ujadzala -7 lġahpa -ja -ğù -ne ja- -zi- -7 dzije -ja -zi -ne
 old- bear -CON 3- wound -ABS.PL heal -DIR -II -1ERG ANA- -X- -ABS.PL want -DIR -X -1ERG
 “I want to heal the old bear's wounds.”

5.2.2 Relative clauses

A relative clause, which modifies a nominal, is a clause one of the arguments of which must be a cataphoric pronoun agreeing with its antecedent for classifier and number. A second relative clause formation, in which the cataphoric pronoun could be omitted, has been reinterpreted as a type of head-initial main clause and is dealt with in the transformations section (5.5.4).

gitah wodzedzàbàtatshe guxu

gi- -ta -h wodzedza -bà -ta -tshe guxu
 CATA- -VI -ABS kill -REP -VI -2ERG wolf
 “the wolf that I heard that you killed”

guwe7i sabajedzithage le7i sa gidzedzeh 7èdejagedze wopha

gi- -wo-7i sabaja -dzi -tha -ge Ia -7i sa gi- -dze- -dze -h 7èda -ja -ge -dze wopha
 CATA- -IX -ERG fight -VIS -2 -3.ERG man -ERG 1.DIS.ABS CATA--this- -I -ABS give -DIR -3.ERG-I beans
 “these beans that the man who I saw fight you gave each of us”

5.2.3 Adverbial clauses

The adverbial clauses of Proto-Western were PPs taking a nominalised verb object, itself governing a subordinate NP. This type of adverbial clause has all but disappeared: it remains in a handful of fossilised phrases, but is no longer productive. A new construction has arisen on the model of complement clauses: the verb phrase is formed as normal, but the S is headed by an NP containing an anaphoric, intangible pronoun marked for construct case. This S is then the object of the adposition. Examples are found below:

Me7lih ġogu7lawo7ogugitane, dzi7ikha 7ùkalpedzagedze jezu7u sà7.
 me7li -h ġogu7lawo7ogu -dzi -ta -ne dzi7ikha -Ø 7ùkalpa -dzi -ge -dze ja- -zi- -7u sà7
 bear -ABS escape_from -DIR -VI -1ERG honey -ABS eat -VIS -3.ERG-I ANA- -X- -CON while
 “We sneaked away from the bear while it was eating honey.”

Je7ogukha jezu7u guku zedze7ogùbèdzagòġù.
 je7ogu -tha ja -zi- -7u guku zedze7ogùbèdza -ge -ġù
 leave -2ABS ANA- -X- -CON after steal -3.ERG-II
 “He'll steal it (a sticklike object) after you leave.”

5.3 Non-verbal predicates

5.3.1 Nominal predicates

Of Proto-Western's two nominal predicate constructions, Proto-Coastal-Western has retained only one. The predicate nominal construction uses a zero copula; both nominals appear in the absolutive case. The construction found in Proto-Western in which one nominal in the construction took a stative verbalising suffix has shifted in meaning from indicating group or class membership to indicating similarity. The form of this verbalising suffix in Proto-Coastal-Western is *-7aja* (note, however, that the final vowel of the suffix changes to match the etymological final vowel of the root). Examples are found below:

7àzèh łaġlawoh.
 7àzè -h łaġlawo -h
 woman -ABS priest -ABS
 “The woman is a priest.”

7àzèh łaġlawo7ajedzuwo.
 7àzè -h łaġlawo -7aja -dzi -wo
 woman -ABS priest -VERBALISER -VIS -IX
 “The woman is like a priest.”

5.3.2 Adpositional predicates

Adpositional predicates are a recently innovated structure in Proto-Coastal-Western. They were innovated on the model of suffixed nominal predicates using the suffix *-7aja*. This suffix is added to the adposition; the phrase is otherwise identical to a normal PP. The prepositions are not found in these constructions. Examples are found below:

Guxuh toxu tuko7u ġu7ajel'zita.
 guxu -h toxu tuka -7u ġu -7aja -I'zi -ta

wolf -ABS 2.PL.CON house -CON outside -VERBALISER -NVIS -VI

“The wolf is outside your house.”

Jàso7u 7ihma7ajejana.

jàsa -7u 7ihma -7aja -ja -na

food -CON without -VERBALISER -DIR -I

“I don't have any food (lit. I am without food).”

5.4 Sentential particles

Proto-Western's speech-act particles have been reanalysed as bound morphemes, usually found within the verbal complex; however, discourse particles and indeclinable adverbs still do occur as free morphemes (although adverbs may also be incorporated into the verb).

5.4.1 Discourse particles

Discourse particles are a closed lexical class of indeclinable particles that has partially merged with the co-ordinator class of Proto-Western. It contains only seven members. These are: *du7*, “therefore, in that case”; *dze7*, “however”; *phà*, “then, next”; *su*, “or”; *tsah*, “also, and”; *tsatsa*, “because”; and *tshidzi*, “instead”. They occur directly following the head of the first phrase of the clause (most typically the ergative NP). Examples are found below:

Nah tshidzi jème7ihtsejana.

nah tshidzi jèma -7ihtsa -ja -na

1.PL.ABS instead ROW -forwards -DIR -I

“Instead, we rowed onwards.”

Mu tsatsa neǵlàǵlàmah 7ùkalpa7ugedze!

mu tsatsa neǵlàǵlàma -h 7ùkalpa -ge -7u -ge -dze

because completely mushrooms -ABS eat -ASS -surety -3.ERG -I

“Because I know from experience that he will eat all the mushrooms!”

5.4.2 Adverbs

Adverbs are an open class of indeclinable particles. Various monomorphemic adverbs are found, but they are also productively derived from words of other classes using derivational morphology. Like adverbial clauses and PPs, adverbs occupy the adjunct slot of the VP (preceding verbal complements but following any ergative NP); they may also be found incorporated onto the verb, in which case they may follow the evidential but more commonly follow the personal marking. Examples are found below:

Zedzotsu phitagel'e7i khapa thòbugedzigòǵù.

zedzotsu phita- gela -7i khapa -Ø thòbuga -dzi -ge -ǵù

quickly weak- child -SN.ERG tree -ABS chop_down -VIS -3.ERG -II

“The weak child felled the tree quickly.”

Khakhoku thowolu tupi khaja7ajàbèjathomu.

khakhoku tha- -wo- -tu tupi -Ø khaja7aja -bà -jatha -mu

amusingly that- -IX- -PL.CON house -ABS burn -REP -III -completely

“Amusingly, their house burnt down.”

5.5 Transformations

5.5.1 Heavy constituent postposing

Certain constituents considered “heavy” may be moved from their basic position to clause final position. This process only applies to constituents acting as verbal adjuncts, complement clauses and relative clauses: NPs may never be postposed by this rule, and nor may PPs that aren't verbal adjuncts. It is difficult to define exactly what can and cannot count as heavy: a minimum of two words and four syllables appears to be required, but exact rules cannot be determined. The longer a constituent, the more likely it is to undergo postposing; however, leaving even an extremely long constituent in situ remains grammatical and, in the case of verbal adjuncts, postposing even constituents shorter than the aforementioned minimum length appears to be grammatical (although in both cases unnatural). Examples are found below:

Pławojana mòxuǵelʹudu7u no7u.
pławo -ja -na mòxu-ǵelʹudu -7u no7u
walk -DIR -1 wide- mountain -SN.CON up_towards
“We are walking to the wide mountain.”

Le7i bèdzedzagedze guwoh weta7ihtsowone.
Ia -7i bèdza -dzi -ge -dze gi- -wo- -h weta7ihtsa -wo -ne
man -SN.ERG have -VIS -3.ERG -I CATA- -IX- -SN.ABS meet -IX -1ERG
“The man who I met has the food.”

5.5.2 Valence adjusting operations

Proto-Coastal-Western verbal valence is stricter than in its parent: where in Proto-Western reference to an ergative argument could simply be omitted altogether to emphasise an absolutive argument, Proto-Coastal-Western has innovated a morphological passive. This is formed using the suffix *-zè7aje*, derived from a combination of the Proto-Western derivational suffixes *-yě*, which typically derived the location of the action of a verb, and the stative verbaliser *-ʔajV*. Omitting reference to the ergative argument of a transitive verb is ungrammatical in Proto-Coastal-Western.

To reduce the valence of a transitive verb, its patient may be morphologically incorporated into it. This is a highly productive derivational operation compounding the verb and nominal. Unlike those of its parent, these compounds in Proto-Coastal-Western are head final: the verb follows the noun.

Examples of these valence adjusting operations are found below:

Mòǵuh jàsahpàzè7ajofʹuka.
mòǵu -h jàsahpa -zè7aje -fʹu -ta
sheep -ABS eat -PAS -INF -VI
“The sheep must have been eaten.”

Nokhùṅàh mòǵùjàsahpoluwo.
na- thùṅà -h mòǵu- jàsahpa -fʹu -wo
1- father -ABS sheep- eat -INF -IX
“My father must have eaten the sheep (lit. My father must have sheep-eaten).”

5.5.3 Topicalisation

In Proto-Coastal-Western, verbs and NPs may be left-dislocated for emphasis. In each case a pro-form is left behind in situ. For NPs this proform is an anaphoric pronoun agreeing with the NP for case, number, animacy and classifier;

for verbs it is the pro-verb *tha*, meaning “do”, which takes the same inflections as the fronted verb. NPs may be fronted from: subject position; from within the main VP; and from within PPs. As they are effectively a type of NP, complement clauses may be fronted anywhere that a normal NP could. NPs may not be fronted from within embedded clauses. Verbs may be fronted from within the main VP, but not from within embedded clauses. Examples are found below:

Phugo7u thi7pih, jowoh thùgùbàgowopù.

phuga -7u thi7pi -h, ja- -wo- -h thùgu -bà -ge -wo -pù
 chief -SN.CON daughter -ABS, ANA- -IX- -ABS have_sex_with -REP -3.ERG -IX -DUB
 “The chief's daughter, that's who he apparently had sex with (but I doubt it).”

Khapòkù7u, jezu7u gè7dzi pławo7ogudzuwo.

khapòkù -7u, ja- -zi- -7u gè7dzi pławo7ogu -dzi -wo
 forest -SN.CON, ANA- -X- -SN.CON towards walk_away -VIS -IX
 “The forest, that's where she left for.”

Goguludzètshìdzi7ge jezi7, jezi7 tholudzètshè.

gogu -fù -dze -tshè -dzi7ge ja- -zi- -7, ja- -zi- -7 tha -fù -dze -tshè
 cook -INF -I -2ERG.IMP -repetitively ANA- -X- -PL.ABS, ANA- -X- -PL.ABS do -INF -I -2ERG.IMP
 “Kept on cooking it, that's what you did (you idiot).”

5.5.4 Ergative postposing

Ergative arguments may also be emphasised by being postposed to clause final position. In this construction, the headedness of the clause is reversed – the VP and all of its internal arguments precede the ergative NP. As mentioned above, this construction is etymologically derived from using a relative construction alone (or, arguably, with a zero-copula) to give special emphasis to a participant. When it became grammatical to omit the cataphoric pronoun from these standalone relative clauses, they were reinterpreted as head-initial main clauses. An example is found below:

Ji7ihtsedzuwo, dzuphugoju7i!

ji7ihtsa -dzi -wo, dzuphugoju -7i
 come -VIS -IX, fisherman -SN.ERG
 “The fisherman is coming!”

5.6 Negatives

Negatives are formed using the negative speech-act particles *-je-* and *-7ihma-*. These are roughly synonymous: *-je-* is the older form, but *-7ihma-* is gaining ground against it especially when marked on the verb due to the ambiguity between it, classifier IV, and the *i*-affected form of the direct evidential. To negate the entire clause, these act as suffixes, coming in final position within the verbal complex or (less commonly) following the evidential. To negate a specific constituent, they are prefixed to the head of that constituent. Examples are found below:

Pławedzuwe7ihma noxu 7àma jèdzu7u dze.

pławo -dzi -wo -7ihma noxu 7àma jèdzi -7u dze
 walk -VIS -IX -NEG 1.PL.CON with river -SN.CON to
 “He didn't go with us to the river.”

Pławojana jèdzu7u jedze.

pławo -ja -na jèdzi -7u je- dze

walk -DIR -1 river -SN.CON NEG- to
 “It isn't to the river that we're going.”

5.7 Non-declarative speech acts

5.7.1 Interrogatives

Interrogatives are formed using the speech-act particle *-ǵi-* (note that *-ǵi-* is etymologically derived from *ǵej* and so does not cause i-affection). Following the model of the negatives, this particle may be suffixed to the verb to form a yes-no question concerning the entire clause, or may be prefixed to the head of a given constituent phrase to form a yes-no question concerning this specific constituent. Wh-questions are formed by prefixing the interrogative particle to a cataphoric pronoun; no wh-movement occurs. Verbs in sentences containing the interrogative particle are unmarked for evidentiality. Examples of interrogatives are found below:

Tshi guxuh khulpatatshiǵi?
 tshi guxu -h khulpa -ta -tshe -ǵi
 yesterday wolf -ABS catch -VI -2ERG -INT
 “Did you catch the wolf yesterday?”

Tshi ǵitshowo7i guxuh khulpageta?
 tshi ǵi- -tshe- -wo -7i guxu -h khulpa -ge -ta
 yesterday INT- -that- -IX -SN.ERG wolf -ABS catch -3.ERG -VI
 “Was it him who caught the wolf yesterday?”

Tshi du7 ǵijatah khulpatatshe te7i?
 tshi du7 ǵi- -ja- -ta- -h khulpa -ta -tshe te7i
 yesterday then INT- -ANA- -VI- -ABS catch -VI -2ERG 2.SN.ERG
 “What did *you* catch yesterday then?”

5.7.2 Optatives and invocations

There is no specific grammaticalised way of expressing wishes in Proto-Coastal-Western but certain somewhat idiomatic constructions are very common. One such is using the noun *dzijela*, “wishes”, with a complement clause in a nominal predicate construction. Although not marked explicitly, it is taken that these are the speaker's wishes being stated. An example is found below:

Pławo7ogudzitshà jezi dzijela.
 pławo7ogu -dzi -tshà ja- -zi- -Ø dzijela -Ø
 walk_away -VIS -2IMP ANA- -X- -SN.ABS wishes -SN.ABS
 “I wish you'd go away.”

6. Semantics

6.1 Meanings of nominal categories

6.1.1 Number

The singular and plural numbers are relatively straightforward; the singular is the unmarked form and is found in situations where number is indeterminable and on collection nominals. The distributive number is also found marked on the personal pronouns. This number is used to describe a group of multiple individuals who are distinct and vary according to some important property or category. Thus it may be used to denote a group of individuals of different ages, sexes, families, etc. In the second person it is also used to include to denote a group containing one or more non-participants (i.e. third person referents) as well as one or more second person participants.

6.1.2 Classifiers

The meanings of the various classifiers are relatively straightforwardly evident from their descriptions in 4.1.4; only a couple of clarifications are necessary. The limited and unlimited plane evidentials are used for thin or effectively two-dimensional flat surfaces. The unlimited plane evidential is used where *for the practical purposes of the speakers*, the plane is unbounded: it is, for example, used for large landmasses, territories and areas. The limited plane evidential is used for obviously bounded planes, ranging from small items such as leaves to larger items such as gardens. The limited plane is used by extension for buildings and settlements.

Classifier IX, “beings capable of speech”, is used primarily for human referents. It is, however, also found in stories referring to animate gods, spirits and the like. It is also used for all birds, who, in Proto-Coastal-Western myth, are able to talk.

6.1.3 Phoric pronouns

Generally, the anaphoric pronoun is used for a referent that has either already been identified by the speaker or which the listener should be able to identify on the basis of inference, experience or general knowledge. The cataphoric pronoun is used for a referent that has not yet been identified and which the listener cannot be expected to identify, but which may be identified later in the discourse. Thus they may be compared to a definite-indefinite distinction.

6.2 Meanings of verbal categories

6.2.1 Evidentials

The direct evidential states that the speaker was directly involved in the event described by the verb. This usually means that the speaker is also one of the arguments of the verb, but sometimes this may not be the case. For example, where the verb describes an individual taking part in an expedition or activity in which the speaker also took part. Contrastively, sometimes the direct evidential will not be used even though the speaker is one of the arguments of the verb. This usage implies a distancing and a lack of control or a lack of immediate, physical participation on the part of the speaker.

The visual sensory and non-visual sensory evidentials are used when the speaker directly experienced the event described by the verb. The non-visual sensory implies that the speaker did not see the event; however, the visual sensory does not imply that the speaker didn't also experience the event with non-visual senses.

The inferred and assumed evidentials are both used where the speaker has no direct experience of the event. The inferred evidential is used where the speaker has past or present evidence, typically physical evidence, of the event. The assumed evidential on the other hand is used where the speaker assumes the event on the basis of general knowledge, knowledge of the habits of others, knowledge of natural cycles, or unevidenced intuition.

The hearsay or reported evidential is used where the speaker has been told of the event by another individual. Notably, the reported evidential is found throughout traditional storytelling (with the exception of within direct speech).

6.2.2 Miratives

The two mirative markers give further information about the attitude of the speaker concerning the information communicated by the clause in which they are found. The surety marker denotes that the speaker is especially sure of the validity of the information: it is often used in conjunction with the assumed, inferred and reported evidentials, or in other contexts where the reliability of the information might be put into doubt. The dubitative evidential denotes the opposite: it denotes that the speaker regards the information in the clause as unlikely, doubtful or untrue.

7. Sample texts

7.1 The horse and the sheep

Ĝejo7u gòdu lèzi7i mòĝuh dzeldàbàgeta. 7àzi7i tagoguka mòĝu7u thula besàbàgotshu, gefe7i zuduka mòĝuh ĝla7tàbàgeta, fe7i nolkuguka mòĝuh wodzedzàbàgeta. Mètsoguka mòĝuh gogùzè7ajèbàta, wulu khajo7u tabe.

Lèzi7i mòĝuh gizi dzedzibàgizi: 7uja7ajejata, jàmaja7efi du7 mòĝuh thathedzigełita jezu7u me7.

Tagoka mòĝuh lèzih gizi dzedzibàgizi: Zijejatshena jezi dzijijezine. 7uja7ajejana, gitah zedzedzotsudzita lèzih phapha7tazè7ajidzùĝù jàsahpazè7ajidzita tsa jezu7u me7. Jàmaja7efi to7u ĝogoku thatholugełizi jezi dzeldolugełizi7ihma. Wetù7nà ge dzeldolugełizi. Jàmaja7oxu tsah jathadajah ta.

Jezi zijàbèzige jezi guku lèzih zedze7ogùbàta, taga7lo7u zuwo.

Ĝejo7u gòdu lèzi7i mòĝuh dzeldàbàgeta.

ĝeje -7u gòdu lèzi -7i mòĝu -h dzelda -bà -ge -ta
hill -SN.CON on HORSE -SN.ERG sheep -ABS see -REP -3.SN.ERG -VI
“A horse on a hill saw some sheep.”

7àzi7i tagoguka mòĝu7u thula besàbàgotshu,

7àzè -7i tagogu -ta mòĝu -7u thula -Ø besa -bà -ge -tshu
woman -SN.ERG first -VI sheep -SN.CON wool -SN.ABS cut -rep -3.SN.ERG -VIII
“A woman was cutting away the wool of the first sheep,”

gefe7i zuduka mòĝuh ĝla7tàbàgeta,

gefa -7i zudu -ta mòĝu -h ĝla7ta -bà -ge -ta
child -SN.ERG second -VI sheep -ABS milk -REP -3.SN.ERG -VI
“a child was milking the second sheep,”

fe7i nolkuguka mòĝuh wodzedzàbàgeta.

fa -7i nolkugu -ta mòĝu -h wodzedza -bà -ge -ta
man -SN.ERG third -VI sheep -ABS kill -rep -3.SN.ERG -VI
“a man was slaughtering a third sheep.”

Mètsoguka mòĝuh gogùzè7ajèbàta, wulu khajo7u tabe.

mètsogu -ta mòĝu -h gogu -zè7aje -bà -ta, wo- -tu khaja -7u tabe
fourth -VI sheep -ABS cook -PAS -REP -VI, IX- -PL.CON fire -SN.CON on
“On their fire, a fourth sheep was being cooked.”

Lèzi7i mòĝuh gizi dzedzibàgizi:

lèzi -7i mòĝu -h gi- -zi- -Ø dzedzi -bà -ge -zi
horse -SN.ERG sheep -ABS CATA- -X- -SN.ABS say -REP -3.SN.ERG -X
“The horse said this to a sheep:”

7uja7ajejata, jàmaja7efi du7 mòĝuh thathedzigełita jezu7u me7.

7uja7aja -ja -ta, jàmaja7a -li du7 mòĝu -h thatha -dzi -geli -ta ja- -zi- -7u me7
be_in_pain -DIR -VI, human -PL.ERG thus sheep -ABS use -VIS -3.PL.ERG -VI ANA- -X- -SN.CON by_means_of

“It pains me to see humans using sheep like this.”

Tagoka mòğuh lèzih gizi dzedzibàgizi:

tago -ta mòğuh -h lèzi -h gi- -zi- -Ø dzedzi -bà -ge -zi
one -VI sheep -ERG horse -ABS CATA- -X- -SN.ABS say -rep -3.SN.ERG -X
“One sheep said this to the horse.”

Zijejatshena jezi dzijijezine.

zija -ja -tshe -na ja- -zi- -Ø dzije -ja -zi -ne
hear -DIR -2.ERG -1.ABS ANA- -X- -SN.ABS want -DIR -X -1.ERG
“I want you to listen to me.”

7uja7ajejana, gitah zedzedezdotsudzita lèzih phapha7tazè7ajidzùgù jàsahpazè7ajidzita tsa jezu7u me7.

7uja7aja -ja -na, gi- -ta- -h zedze -zedzotsu -dzi -ta
be_in_pain -DIR -1.ABS, CATA- -VI- -ABS run -quickly -VIS -VI
lèzi -h phapha7ta -zè7aje -dzi -gù jàsahpa -zè7aje -dzi -ta tsa ja- -zi- -7u me7
horse -ABS shoot -PAS -VIS -II eat -PAS -VIS -VI and ANA- -X- -CON by_means_of
“It pains me to see the horse who runs swiftly being shot and eaten.”

Jàmaja7eli to7u goguku thatholugefizi jezi dzeɸdolugefizi7ihma.

jàmaja7a -li to7u gogu -tu -Ø thatha -ɸu -gefi -zi ja- -zi- -Ø dzeɸda -ɸu -gefi -zi
human -PL.ERG 2.CON quick -NOM -SN.ABS use -INF -3.PL.ERG -X ANA- -X- -ABS know -INF -3.PL.ERG -X
-7ihma
-NEG

“Humans do not know how to use your swiftness.”

Wetù7nà ge dzeɸdolugefizi.

wetù7nà ge dzeɸda -ɸu -gefi -zi
next_year but know -INF -3.PL.ERG -X
“But next year they will know.”

Jàmaja7oxu phà tsah jathadajah ta.

jàmaja7a -ɸu phà tsah jathadaja -h ta
human -PL.CON then also slave -ABS 2.SN.ABS
“Then you too will be the slave of the humans!”

Jezi zijàbèzige jezi guku lèzih zedze7ogùbàta, taga7lo7u zuwo.

ja- -zi- -Ø zija -bà -zi -ge ja- -zi- -Ø guku lèzi -h zedze7ogu -bà -ta, taga7le -7u
ANA- -X- -ABS hear -REP -X -3.SN.ERG ANA- -X- -ABS after horse -ABS run_away -REP -VI, plain -SN.CON
zuwo
into
“Having heard this, the horse fled into the plain.”

“A horse on a hill saw some sheep. A woman was cutting away the wool of the first sheep, a child was milking the second sheep, a man was slaughtering a third sheep. On their fire, a fourth sheep was being cooked.

The horse said this to a sheep: It pains me to see humans using sheep like this.

One sheep said this to the horse: I want you to listen to me. It pains me to see the horse who runs swiftly being shot and eaten. Humans do not know how to use your swiftness. But next year they will know. Then you too will be the slave of the humans!

Having heard this, the horse fled into the plain.”