

PRAGMATIC FACTORS INFLUENCING WORD ORDER IN NANDI: A ROLE AND REFERENCE GRAMMAR APPROACH

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Abstract

This paper explores the pragmatic factors that influence word order in the Nandi language, in which word order plays an important role in encoding pragmatic functions such as focus, topicalization, contrast and emphasis. Although the syntactic structure of Nandi has been previously described, little attention has been given to how word order choices are influenced by pragmatic considerations. This study addresses this gap by investigating how word order in Nandi is influenced by pragmatic factors. The study applies Role and Reference Grammar (RRG) as a theoretical framework to examine how pragmatic factors such as focus and topic drive variations in simple clause constructions. The findings reveal that Verb Subject Object (VSO) is the dominant word order, and that the Verb Object Subject (VOS) word order and other word orders, such as Subject Object Verb (SOV), Subject Verb Object (SVO), and Object Verb Subject (OVS), are used systematically in particular pragmatic environments. The study contributes to both the descriptive understanding of Nandi syntax and the theoretical modelling of word order flexibility in VSO languages, as well as providing comparative insights for the Nilotic language family.

Keywords: word order, pragmatics, Role and Reference Grammar, Nandi, VSO word order, VOS word order.

1. INTRODUCTION

Nandi is a Southern Nilotic language spoken primarily in western Kenya (Anderson 1997; Rottland 1981). It is part of the Kalenjin language family, which is argued to have between eight and thirteen dialects (Creider & Creider 1989; Gates & Appiah 2010; van Otterloo 1979; Towett 1979). In terms of morphology (Boen 2014; Kurgat 2011), Nandi is predominantly agglutinative, with verbal morphology marking tense, aspect, mood, negation and agreement (Creider 2004; Kipsang 2019; Kurgat 2011). Like its related speech systems, such as Tugen (Jerono 2012), Nandi exhibits a flexible constituent order, but the extent and nature of this flexibility remains under-described from a pragmatic perspective.

The language is widely acknowledged as having a canonical VSO word order (Creider & Creider 1983, 1989; Jeptoo 2015; Kurgat 2011). Speakers, however, frequently produce VOS structures, along with less common patterns such as SVO and OVS. The examples of the word orders mentioned in this paragraph, namely VOS, SVO, VSO and OVS, are given in (1), (2), (3), and (4), respectively.

- (1) *Ki-itiar chepyoset boiyot* (VOS) (Matutu 2011, p. 32)
 PST-kick woman.DEF old
 'The woman kicked the man'
- (2) *A mache sot* (SVO)
 I want gourd.INDEF
 'I want a gourd' (Creider & Creider 1989, p. 81)
- (3) *Sir-ei chepyoset barwet* (VSO)
 write-PROG woman.DEF letter.DEF (Matutu 2011, p. 32)
 'The woman is writing a letter'
- (4) *Lakwet ko ker-ei Kibet* (OVS)
 child topical marker see-PROG Kibet
 'Kibet is looking at the child' (Creider & Creider 1989, p. 125)

These examples show that Nandi exhibits flexible sentence-initial constituents, where subjects, verbs, or objects can occupy the clause-initial position. Previous studies (e.g., Creider & Creider 1983, 1989; Kurgat 2011) attribute this constituent ordering to topicality. They argue that fronting of elements requires the particle *ko*, as shown in Example (4). In the absence of *ko*, a phonological pause is necessary to distinguish between the thematic (topic) and non-thematic elements. The fronting of elements results in different word orders, such as VSO and VOS, which, according to them, are syntactically unconstrained.

Although these previous accounts by Creider & Creider (1983, 1989) and Kurgat, (2011) explain most Nandi clause structures, they fail to explain the instances where *ko* appears non-topically. For example, fronted noun phrases occasionally surface without *ko* while still altering clause structure in ways unexplained by topic marking alone. Consider the example in (5).

- (5) *Nandi ini ko-ma-ki-chomchini chi ne soriin nyikobar koroni*
 Nandi this topic marker-NEG-PST-allow someone who immoral kill this land
 'In this Nandi, we will never allow an immoral person to destroy it' (Northrift News 2026)

Such an example suggests that additional pragmatic and stylistic factors may be responsible for ordering constituents.

This paper seeks to expand this explanation by investigating the pragmatic factors that influence word order in Nandi, with particular focus on the alternation between VSO and VOS structures. The analysis is framed within Role and Reference Grammar (RRG), a framework that models the interaction between syntactic structure and discourse-pragmatic functions such as topic, focus, and emphasis (van

Valin Jr. 2005; van Valin & LaPolla 1997; van Valin 1993; van Valin & LaPolla 2008). Using naturalistic and elicited data, we argue that, while topicality remains an important determinant of word order in Nandi (Creider & Creider 1983, 1989; Kurgat 2011), other factors such as focus structure, information status, and style (Lambrecht 1994) have an influence on word order in the language, as well.

To achieve our objective, utterances collected for this study, which are mainly simple sentences, were categorised according to the order of their constituents. Each clause was then coded for topic status. This was to determine whether a constituent was the primary discourse topic, a secondary topic, or non-topical. Different types of focus, such as broad focus, narrow focus, contrastive focus, or cleft-like structures, were also briefly analysed. The animacy factor was also investigated to determine whether the subject and/or object under investigation was animate or inanimate. This was useful in determining whether the animacy hierarchy played a role in word order. The information status and genre were the two other items coded to establish whether they influenced word order. The items investigated were the given vs. new information and the narrative and conversational discourse.

2. METHODOLOGY

In this section, the nature and source of data are first discussed, followed by the data collection procedure and, finally, the data analysis procedure.

2.1 The nature and source of data

This study drew on a variety of sources to capture Nandi language use across diverse pragmatic settings. Spoken data were gathered from social media platforms (Facebook and YouTube videos); they consist of narrations, speeches, and conversations. Written data were extracted from published sources, including the Nandi dictionary (Creider & Creider 2001), a collection of folktales (Chesaina 1994), and a descriptive grammar (Creider & Creider 1989). To examine specific information structure phenomena, such as contrastive focus, narrow focus, and topic-comment structures, data were also elicited from native speakers, who were asked to translate or respond to prompts designed to manipulate information structure. Some sentences were drawn from the Nandi language corpus by Mbogho et al. (2024) and from field notes from a group of Nandi language researchers, who at the moment are working on some aspects of the Nandi language. The same researchers also assisted in data verification.

2.2 The data collection procedure

In collecting spoken data, we watched videos where native speakers of Nandi were either giving speeches, narrating stories, or participating in everyday conversations. We also extracted data from the Nandi language corpus, identifying simple sentences with varied sentential structures. Utterances containing the

particle *ko* were also extracted. The frequency, distribution, and contexts of the use of *ko* were then recorded.

Elicited data were obtained directly from selected participants. We used picture-description tasks, translation activities, and grammaticality-judgment tasks. Participants were asked to produce sentences or explanations based on specific questions. This method was necessary to collect language forms that might not occur frequently in natural conversations.

We also selected literature that discusses Nandi sentences and identified simple sentences with varied structures and those containing the particle *ko*. Such texts included dictionaries, descriptive grammars, and theses/dissertations.

Approximately 500 utterances/sentences were collected from the various sources, of which 100 were used in this study (see the appendices)

2.3 The data analysis procedure

In an attempt to identify word order patterns, the study classified clause types according to the order of their constituents. We were particularly interested in VSO and VOS, but other less-occurring structures such as SVO, SOV, and OVS were also briefly analysed. Instances involving fronted constituents introduced by *ko* and those without *ko* were both documented, allowing for a meaningful comparison between marked and unmarked topicalization. The analysis of *ko* vs non-*ko* elements was essential because previous studies, such as Creider (1989), have claimed that this particle can only be used to front topical elements.

3. THE NANDI WORD ORDER WITHIN THE ROLE AND REFERENCE GRAMMAR (RRG) THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Role and Reference Grammar (van Valin Jr. 2005; van Valin & LaPolla 1997, 2008; van Valin 1993) provides a theoretical framework for analysing the interaction between syntax, semantics and pragmatics without relying on transformational movement, common in generative grammar. RRG models sentences at three interconnected levels: (i) *Syntactic Representation*, which shows constituent structure and the position of arguments in a sentence, (ii) *Semantic Representation*, which captures the logical structure of the predicate and its arguments, and (iii) *Information Structure*, which encodes pragmatic roles such as topic and focus.

In RRG, word order variation often reflects differences in the pragmatic structure of the clause. Topical constituents tend to appear in pragmatically prominent positions, often clause-initially (or clause-finally in Nandi), while focal constituents may occur in specific syntactic slots associated with emphasis or contrast. Languages with high word-order flexibility, such as Nandi, may use constituent arrangement as a key strategy for aligning syntax with the speaker's communicative intent.

Throughout this paper, RRG is used to explain the interface between syntax, semantics and pragmatics in the Nandi language. Each clause is analysed according to the three layers: a) the nuclear layer, consisting of the predicate and core arguments; b) the core layer, which contains oblique arguments; and c) the clause layer, which contains the pre-core slot for topicalised or focused elements. By mapping constituent position to pragmatic role, the approach made it easier to connect VSO/VOS alternations to topicality and focus, while also accommodating less frequent, marked word orders.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results are reported in the following sub-headings: the overall distribution of Nandi word orders, the VSO vs VOS alternation, the role of focus in shaping the word order, fronting with the topical marker *ko*, and general observations about the findings.

4.1 The overall distribution of Nandi word orders

The data reveal that VSO and VOS are the most frequent word orders in Nandi, together accounting for approximately 75% of all the 100 sentences used in the analysis. Less common word orders, namely SVO, SOV, and OVS, occur in specific contexts. These structures are used to mark contrastive focus, topicality and narrow focus. Table 1 summarises the observed distribution. Although 100 simple sentences were analysed, a 500-sentence corpus (also containing simple sentences) from all the sources was used to test their frequency. It should be noted that a Nandi sentence can have more than one word order.

Table 1: Frequency of Nandi word orders in a 500-sentence corpus

Word Order	Frequency	%	Typical Context
VSO	290	44.5%	Unmarked declaratives, broad focus
VOS	110	30.5%	Narrow focus on object, topicalised subject
SVO	70	14%	Contrastive subject focus, emphasis
SOV	30	11%	Contrastive object focus, narrative foregrounding

4.2 The VSO vs VOS alternation

In unmarked declaratives where both the subject and the object are animate, speakers are more likely to use the VSO word order. This can be seen in the following Nandi sentence:

- (6) *Ki- al Kibet tetā* (VSO)
 PST buy Kibet COW.DEF
 ‘Kibet bought a cow’

The structure in (6) is the default structure when the focus is the entire sentence. This structure may be altered if the focus of the sentence shifts to a particular constituent, for instance, when the focus is on the object as seen in (7) below:

- (7) *Ki- al teta Kibet* (VOS)
 PST buy cow.DEF Kibet
 ‘Kibet bought a cow’

A sentence such as (7) is used in highly marked contexts and answers the question, ‘*what did Kibet buy?*’. When a declarative sentence has an animate subject and an inanimate object, we expect the structure seen in (8), rather than that in (9):

- (8) *Ki- but kirgit ng’otwet* (VSO)
 PST destroy bull.DEF fence.DEF
 ‘The bull broke the fence’.

- (9) *Ki- but ng’otwet kirgit* (VOS)
 PST destroy fence.DEF bull.DEF
 ‘The bull broke the fence’.

The preference for VOS structure over VSO structure, when referring to primary discourse topics, greatly aligns with Creider & Creider’s (1989: 162) observation that VSO and VOS word patterns in Nandi are not freely interchangeable but correlate with topicality. The examples are also consistent with Dimmendaal’s (2007) observation that while scrambling is permissible, in Nandi, pragmatic principles govern the resulting word order. It can also be observed from the examples that although the alternations seem to be syntactically unconstrained, other pragmatic factors, such as context (Slioussar 2011), focus (Lambrecht 1994), and animacy hierarchy (Imamura 2019; Thuilier et al. 2021), play a role in determining word order in Nandi.

4.3 The role of focus in shaping word order in Nandi

The RRG framework allows for pre-slot elements to be analysed under the pre-slot framework. These are the elements that appear before the nucleus (verb). The nucleus is the part of the clause that contains the predicate (usually the verb) and expresses the core event or state (van Valin 2005: 1197). If we apply this analysis to Nandi sentences, one notices that the VOS pattern is a result of narrow focus. This is because the verb precedes the object, which in turn receives prosodic prominence. Contrastive subject focus, on the other hand, attracts SVO, as the subject is fronted into the pre-core slot for emphasis. Sentence focus, also, broad focus, on the other hand, generates a VSO structure, reflecting an unmarked baseline, as can be seen in the examples below:

- (10) *Ki- al-e Kibet mbara-ni* (VSO)
 PST buy-PROG Kibet land-this
 ‘Kibet bought this land’
 (sentence focus)
- (11) *Ki- al-e mbara-ni Kibet* (VOS)
 PST buy-PROG land-this Kibet
 ‘Kibet bought this land’
 (narrow focus on object)
- (12) *Kibet ne ki- al-e mbara-ni* (SVO)
 Kibet who PST buy- PROG land-this
 ‘It was Kibet who bought this land’
 (contrastive focus on subject)
- (13) *Mbara-ni ne ki- al-e Kibet* (SVO)
 Land-this which PST buy-PROG Kibet
 ‘It was this land that Kibet bought’
 (contrastive focus on object)

4.4 Fronting with the topical marker *ko*

While discussing topicalization in Nandi, Creider (1989: 162) observes that unmarked topicalization happens when the topic NP is in word-final position. The marked topicalization, on the other hand, happens when the topic NP is raised to the subject position and immediately followed by the particle *ko*.

Examples are given in (14) and (15) below:

- (14) *Lakwet ko kiripartet* (SVO)
 ‘The child watched the lamb’
- (15) *Artet ko kirip lakwet* (OVS)
 ‘The child watched the lamb’
 (Creider & Creider 1989: 162)

The examples show that topic NPs can be fronted but only with the use of the topical marker *ko*. While this is true, we found that not all NPs can be fronted freely without affecting the grammaticality of the sentence. Fronting is less problematic when an NP is a single constituent as opposed to when it is a clause or a longer NP. Consider the following examples drawn from Creider & Creider (1989):

- (16) *Ki rip lakwetartet* (VSO)
 PST watch child lamb
 ‘The child watched the lamb’ (Answer to ‘Who watched the lamb?’)
- (17) *Ki ripartet lakwet* (VOS)
 PST watch lamb child
 ‘The child watched the lamb’ (Answer to ‘What did the child watch?’)
 (Creider & Creider 1989: 162)

In these examples, a topic NP can be raised to the subject position without affecting the grammaticality of the sentence. Now, consider the following examples, where longer NPs are fronted:

- (18) *Ortinwek che o-bun-e che samisen ko chekwok*
 Roads.DEF which 2.PL-ride in PROG bad.PL topic marker yours-PL
 ‘The bad roads that you use are your own’
 (African Stream 2022)

- (19) *Serkali nenyo ko kimiit ngalek-ap security*
 Government our topic marker strengthen issues-of security
 ‘Our government should strengthen security issues’

In (18), the full NP *Ortinwek che o-bun-e che samisen* can be shifted back to its canonical position without compromising grammaticality, though this structure is not the most pragmatically preferred. The example also shows that fronting in Nandi is possible when an NP is longer and phonologically heavy, a process evident in languages like Japanese (Imamura 2019). Additionally, it shows that fronting phonologically heavy NPs not only serves to highlight salient information, but also to facilitate processing efficiency, a strategy seen in languages such as Finnish (Kaiser & Trueswell 2004). By contrast, in (19), the phrase *serkali nenyo* ‘our government’ cannot be moved to its base position without rendering the sentence ungrammatical, as evidenced by (20) below:

- (20) **Kimiit ngalek-ap security serkali nenyo*
 Strengthen issues-of security government our
 ‘Our government should strengthen security issues’

The ungrammaticality observed in (20) arises from the fact that when the topical NP *serkali nenyo* ‘our government’ is moved from the subject position to its derived position, it leaves the sentence without an overt syntactic subject, thus violating subjecthood. So, to restore the grammaticality of the sentence, an explicit subject must be introduced.

4.5 Fronting without the topical marker *ko*

While the particle *ko* was found to license the fronting of an NP, our textual and corpus analysis found evidence of NP fronting without the use of the topical marker. Consider the sentences below:

- (21) *Luget age tugul ke-metochin kamuktaind-et* (OVS)
 Fight another all PST-leave God-DEF
 ‘Leave any fight to God’

- (22) *Nyalilda ke- istoe kakiletagei* (OVS)
 Poverty PST eradicate hard work
 ‘Poverty is eradicated through hard work’

In these examples, the topic NPs *luget age tugul* and *nyalilda* appear preverbally despite the absence of the topic marker *ko*. This demonstrates that fronting can occur independently of overt topic marking. If we hypothesised that these NPs were displaced from their default clause-final position, we would predict that moving them to their base position should preserve grammaticality. Crucially, this prediction is proved right by the ungrammaticality of sentences (23) and (24) below:

- (23) **Ke-metochin kamuktaindet luget age tugul* (VSO)
 PST-Leave God-DEF war another all
 ‘Any fight is left to God’

- (24) **Ke- istoe kakiletagei nyalilda* (VSO)
 PST eradicate hard work poverty
 ‘Poverty is eradicated through hard work’

The ungrammaticality of (23) and (24) suggests that not all topical NPs can be fronted from their original position without altering the morphological structure of the verb. The inability of the NPs to move freely indicates that topicality alone cannot account for Nandi’s word-order variation. Instead, this restriction points to a broader discourse-driven flexibility in word order, particularly the role of focus. In these examples, the two NPs *luget age tugul* and *nyalilda* function as focused elements rather than topical elements. Thus, while topical elements can be fronted, focused elements cannot be moved in the same way. We thus posit that fronting in Nandi may occur without the topical marker *ko* when an element is in focus, appears in stylistic narrative openings, or during urgent conversational corrections and repairs. This indicates that, in addition to topicality, factors such as style, focus, and discourse context can override the expected marking conventions.

Examples of how word ordering is determined by narrative structure are provided in (25) and (26) below. The examples are extracted from speeches made by the former Vice President (current President) and the former Nandi Hills Member of Parliament.

- (25) (a) *O-ngen winchit o-le nee?*
 You-PL. know winch you-PL. say what
 ‘Do you know what a winch is?’

- (b) *Winchit ko no ngus-u chito ne ka-ko-sakwan eng saos*
 Winch topic marker that pull-VEN. someone who TNS-3PL-stuck in mud

‘A winch is a (machine) that pulls someone stuck in the mud.’
(Kipkemoi 2023)

(26) (a) *Ko-mi ng’ania, o-ngen ng’ania?*
3PL.COP somebody you. PL. somebody
‘There is someone, do you know that someone?’

(b) *Ng’ania eng Kalenjin ko chi ne mo ki-mwoe kaina*
Someone in Kalenjin topic marker someone who NEG PST-say name. INDEF.
‘In Kalenjin, someone is that person you cannot mention their name’
(Kaplóng Huduma Cyber 2020)

In examples (25) and (26), the narrators use the default VSO word order because this is the first time a referent is being introduced. In the second part of the narrative (b), the noun phrases *winchit* and *Ng’ania eng Kalenjin* are fronted since they do not convey new information, as their referents have already been established.

4.6 General observations about the findings

The findings indicate that word order in Nandi is not strictly determined by syntax but is, instead, a flexible resource shaped by animacy hierarchy, focus type, processing load, narrative structure, and speaker’s stylistic preferences. The findings further show that while VSO is the default structure, VOS emerges when the object holds topical or focal prominence, and rarer orders serve marked communicative purposes. The findings from this study reinforce the idea that word order in Nandi is a discourse-pragmatic phenomenon rather than a fixed syntactic template.

While the VSO order appears as the baseline, the high frequency of VOS and the presence of other rarer orders show that Nandi speakers actively manipulate constituent order to meet specific communicative goals. These findings are well explained using the RRG framework.

According to the RRG framework, the verb and its argument can be restructured to suit different communication needs. The pre-core slot is available for constituent fronting to encode contrastive focus or topic reactivation, while clause-final position often serves as a natural focus domain. The observed VSO-VOS alternation maps neatly onto this. As seen in the examples provided, VSO aligns with broad focus, where no constituent needs special prominence. VOS, on the contrary, occurs when the object is in narrow focus or holds topical primacy, allowing it to occupy the post-verbal, clause-final focal position. The data support the claim made in RRG (e.g. by van Valin Jr. 2005 and van Valin 1993) that constituent ordering is shaped by the interaction of the syntax-semantics interface with discourse-pragmatic structure, not just by syntactic rules. In other words, topicality alone cannot fully account for the ordering patterns observed in Nandi.

The occurrence of fronted NPs without the topical marker *ko* suggests the influence of stylistic and pragmatic factors in determining word order in the language.

5. IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH ON SOUTHERN NILOTIC LANGUAGES

Cross-linguistic work has often treated free word order languages as having a limited set of pragmatic conditioning factors (Karimi 2008; Lambrecht 1994; Payne 2010). The Nandi data show that more than one factor can play a role in shaping word orders. The word order in Nandi can be said to be shaped by information structure, in particular topic and focus, stylistic considerations, animacy hierarchy, and narrative structuring. Some of these findings corroborate previous observations on Kalenjin languages (Creider & Creider 1989; Dimmendaal 2007) but go further by systematically mapping word order variation onto the syntactic-pragmatic interface that characterises RRG.

The foregoing perspectives on word order flexibility in Nandi may require a new analytical approach. Future research could explore how Nandi children acquire and process the diverse patterns of word order, ideally using experimental methods. A systematic comparison with other Southern Nilotic languages to determine whether the same factors govern word order could also be undertaken.

6. CONCLUSION

This study has examined word order variation in Nandi with a focus on the pragmatic factors influencing the alternation between VSO and VOS patterns, as well as the occurrence of less frequent patterns such as SVO and OVS. The analysis, framed within Role and Reference Grammar (RRG), shows that word order in Nandi is not rigidly determined by syntax, but emerges from the interplay of information structure, stylistic register, animacy hierarchy, and narrative structuring. The baseline VSO order is pragmatically unmarked, typically used when no specific constituent needs focus prominence. By contrast, VOS often signals narrow focus on the object or a discourse strategy that privileges the object's salience. Less frequent patterns appear to serve marked functions, including contrastive topicalization or narrative foregrounding. By linking the Nandi patterns to the flexible clause structure model allowed by RRG, the study contributes to the broader discussion of pragmatically-driven word order variation in free word order languages. It also highlights the need for multi-factorial accounts of word order choice.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: A sample of Nandi sentences from corpora

(Mbogho et al., 2024) <https://doi.org/10.5281/ZENODO.13355021>

1. *Chito nechorsei ko mache kerat* 'Anyone who steals should be imprisoned.'
2. *Nitok ko kikoiim kabwatutikab piik* 'This has disturbed many people.'
3. *Kibet ko lobotintet ne kararan ochei* 'Kibet is an excellent athlete'
4. *Amitwogik che lolong ko kochin borto lolong'iet* 'Warm food keeps your body warm.'
5. *Kingopata Kasarta kitigin ko wechikei* 'After a while, he left'
6. *Kasarta ne kararan nebo kesisishet ko petushek che mami ropta* 'Dry season is the best time to harvest.'
7. *Kimeto ko tyenindet ne tinyei tuget ne kararan mising* 'Kimeto is a singer with a sweet voice.'
8. *Petut age tugul ak inye ko petut ap boiboiyet* 'Everyday with you is a day of happiness.'
9. *Chamiet ko nebo kamangut missing eng sabet* 'Love is the most important thing in life.'
10. *Katikonyenyu ko imande kotukomukaskei* 'My advice is for you to leave while it is still possible.'
11. *Chamiet nebo kapchii ko u lapkeyet* 'A family's love is like a light.'
12. *Chomyeng'ung' kou lapkeyet ne unyei tuindap ng'wonindo* 'Your love is like a light that takes away darkness.'
13. *Jehovah ko lapkeyet ab sobondanyu* 'God is the light of my soul.'
14. *Komoswek che ter chebo emenyo kotinye pek che rotu kongete tulwet* 'Many regions of our country have water that flows from the mountain.'
15. *Tumeitab EACC ko borie namet ab asoya* 'The EACC is responsible for fighting corruption'
16. *Asoya ko ngalyo ne ibu ngemet eng kokwet* 'Corruption is something that brings destruction to a community.'
17. *Eng' petushek chok ko kingering kolset ab minutik ab kasari* 'During our times, we didn't have a lot of crops as today.'
18. *Kabwatutik chemiach kokonu borotet eng boishonik* 'Good thinking brings prosperity at work.'
19. *Logoek ak beek ko kororon eng borto* 'Fruits and water are good for the body.'
20. *Betut age tugul ko kasarta nelel nebo kinetkei ak keet* 'Any day is a new day to learn and grow.'
21. *Lakwetap sukul komache toretet* 'A student needs to be supported.'
22. *Tiemutik ko boroindo ne iboru ngomnotengung* 'Temptations are a test of your intelligence.'
23. *Eng' ne tai ko kikinyoru eng' Wuhan, China arawetab disemba, eng' kenyitab elfutoeng' taman ak sokol* 'It was first discovered in Wuhan, China in December 2019.'

24. *Musong'natet eng mung'aret ko bo kamanut* 'Technology in business is very crucial.'
25. *Taunetab mung'aret komache chepkondok eng chang'indo* 'Starting a business requires a large sum of money'
26. *Mpiretab keldo ko urerieet ne naat eng ng'ony komugul* 'Football is such as a widely known sport.'
27. *Tyendo ko kerichot ap muguleldo* 'A song is the medicine to the soul'
28. *Nebo somok ko ketaret kabatik kwalda kesutik* 'Third, is to help the farmers sell their produce.'
29. *Emet ne kikotestai ko netinye teksosiek che chang* 'An advanced nation is the with adequate housing.'
30. *Amitwogik chi ko anyiny missing* 'His food is quite delicious.'

Appendix II: A sample of Nandi sentences from YouTube videos

1. **Speaker A:** *Ara as kayan eng betutab rani akochi Augustine Arap Kisorio korokto. Korokto notok ko rungut ne ngelyeptab Nandi* 'Now, I accept this day to give Augustine Kisorio the leadership mace. This mace is the voice of Nandi.'
Moderator: *Baas, nerubei ko kikochi kipkalyang'it* 'OK, now what follows is for him to be given a flywhisk'
https://youtu.be/IV4DHM-c_7Y?si=TA3HrksLG7tO0E82
2. *Kito agenge ne makaat eng yu ko kibandok* 'One thing that is needed here is the voters' card.'
<https://www.youtube.com/live/PnT7zVPfTDE?si=laS8qSbxlo-f41sz>
3. *Ng'alek chekakitinye eng' yu ko ng'alek chebo kibagenge* 'The things we have here are about the unity.'
4. *Ng'olyot ne mi nekokakekas kelen kingpin komakiyoni ngolyondonotok* 'That talk that was going around about the kingpin will not be accepted by us.'
https://youtu.be/s_genMmUcvc?si=nkb0fbawywPeH1wB
5. *Kirwogin eng Nandi ko kandoin age tugul* 'Any leader in Nandi is an arbiter.'
6. *Kiit ne kamache amwa netai ko kamache ale bororioneb Nandi ngekonin ng'echeret irib tugukab bororiet* 'What I wanted to start with is that in the Nandi community, when you are given a leadership role, you must protect community's property.'
7. *Ngomeche kesopche ko kemwa iman* 'If you want us to prosper, we must speak the truth.'
<https://www.youtube.com/live/L4k8iw16Spk?si=QiYWZTVBijGpu7aT>

Appendix III: A sample of Nandi sentences from Facebook videos

1. *Achek Nandiek ko boisiekchook ko kimeny Uasin Gishu* 'Our Nandi elders lived in Uasin Gishu.'
<https://www.facebook.com/share/v/1L8aS45qMz/>
2. *Ng'echeretab governor nebo Nandi komokany kitang'e kelel* 'Let us not joke with the Nandi governor's seat.'
<https://www.facebook.com/share/v/1SfGXikhSx/>

3. *Kito ne muhimu ko kibagenge* ‘The most important thing is to be united.’
<https://www.facebook.com/share/v/1BGL2VDBzw/>
4. *Nandi ini komakichomchini chi ne soriin nyikobar koroni. Kiribe koroni kabisa. Kiribe koroni ngot kosob amu ngomakirib koroni komakitinye kiy ne kikochini lagokchok.* ‘We will not allow a malicious person to destroy Nandi. We will guard this land until it prospers because if we don’t do so our children will have nothing to inherit.’
<https://www.facebook.com/share/v/19Mg2aH2jh/>
5. *Kipyego akine, tonon o Kipyego. Akure Kipyego, governor nenyu amu kamet nekisiche ko bomuru. Alen tom komwoun chi. Eeh boyot Arap Yego marehemu eng Sochoi ko Arap Yego ketupche ko lemenyin ak koon* ‘Kipyego, too, stand up Kipyego. I call our governor Kipyego because his mom is my sister-in-law. It looks like no one has told you. The deceased elder, Yego in Sochoi is my relative and married from the same family as your father.’
6. *Kong’ete keny eng Kenya komugul ko boisietab boisie koriib bitateetab bororiet. Kaburwo council of elders komagaat koribindetab bitenyo* ‘Since the onset of Kenya, the elders were guardians of communities. Consequently, Kaburwo council of elders are the guardians of our culture.’
7. *Emetab rani ko kikowalak* ‘The world of today has changed.’
8. *Kokiboisiek komanyolu keeku chetobendoi kityo* ‘As elders, we will not be bystanders’
9. *Achame akimiit ale kokwetab kaburwo kong’etee kong’etu koite komaswek tugul* ‘I wanted to emphasize that Kaburwo council of elders have since the beginning reach all corners (of the community)’.
10. *Chi nematinye boror ko machi* ‘Whoever does not have a community is not a human.’
11. *Eng barnotikchok chebo bororienyo nebo Nandi, amwae ale okweket ko che kitiekei eng bororienyo* ‘To our Nandi youths, you are the ones the community leans on.’
12. *Utotietab boisie ak kimnatetab barnotik konyolu kobois eng kibagenge* ‘The elders’ wisdom and the youth’s energy need to be combined.’
13. *Kwonyik ak manong’otoik, kandoinatet komakindochi kityo* ‘Ladies and gentlemen, leadership is not just about leading.’
14. *Aran anyun chotok tutigin, ko ng’olyot ne kakonu ko kalyet* ‘For the little I have said, I leave you with the words of peace.’
[\(https://www.facebook.com/share/v/19VbkRFFEE/\)](https://www.facebook.com/share/v/19VbkRFFEE/)
15. *Eng familia ko koitwech nyasutoni bo aibu* ‘Humiliation has befallen us as a family’
16. *Amu keng’ololi kouni ko chaang lagok cheung’otin* ‘As we talk, there are many children who are in hiding’
<https://www.facebook.com/share/v/1L9ENSJ3y4/>
17. *Eng bororienyo kobounotet ne kitononot ne kikwerie Kalenjji* ‘In Kalenjji, strong leadership was the pillar that steered the community.’

- <https://www.facebook.com/share/v/1DG2hvmgGg/>
18. *Nguni amitei Kamaruso dip. Dipini kokitau community ak county government nebo Nandi... Kararan kokakiboisie dipit amu toreti ng'alekab kerebesiik... Ko kerebesiet ngosu teta kotile ngalekab chego.* 'Right now, I am in Kamaruso cattle dip. This cattle dip was built by the community and the county government of Nandi... It is good to use a cattle dip because it helps eradicate ticks... when a tick bites a cow, it reduces the cow's milk production
<https://www.facebook.com/share/r/1BxJDtPAR3/>
 19. *Gaai ko biik che setu chematinye kiy* 'This is a young, growing family with no reliable source of income.'
<https://www.facebook.com/share/v/1RHbsSST5w/>
 20. *Sandra Jeptoo ko kipsomaniat nekosomani sukulitab kipture* 'Sandra Jeptoo was a student at Kipture'
<https://www.facebook.com/share/v/1E7MRnuG7h/>
 21. *Anendet asi amitei rani taon ini ko Mandago* 'Mandago is the reason why I am in this town.'
<https://www.facebook.com/share/r/18x798PEww/>
 22. *Kapkirwok nebo borot ak sabeet ko mobo tangoi* 'The council that decides on matters prosperity must be taken seriously'
<https://www.facebook.com/share/v/1P55fvvroc/>
 23. *Ka rani ko kamakobetut nekimwoe siasa* 'Today was not the day to talk about politics'
<https://www.facebook.com/share/r/1EXrN4wZCU/>
 24. *Eng boisionik, ko ane achame boisionik*
<https://www.facebook.com/share/r/14npfG61Yz7/>

Appendix IV: A sample of Nandi sentences from written sources

A. Data from Chesaina (1994)

1. *Ki eng keny ko kimi chi ne kikibananiat* (p. 29) 'Long ago, there was a poor man.'
2. *Eng' kasari, werichotok tisap ko bororiosiek tisap chebo Kalenjin* (p. 29) 'Today, those seven sons are the seven sub-tribes of Kalenjin.'
3. *Eng' keny ko kimengisie tiong'ik tugul eng ng'ony eng' boiboiyet* (p. 31) 'Long ago, all animals used to live together happily.'
4. *Kou notok ko kiyamyo ketik* (p. 32) 'That is how the trees withered'
5. *Kiwo anyun nyiritiet akoi gotab Cheptalel. Kingoititoi ko kima komi gaa Cheptalel* (p. 32) 'The chameleon went up to heaven. On arrival, God was not there.'
6. *Eng keny ko kimi chito age ne kikikuren Barkebo* (p. 34) 'Long ago, there was a man called Barkebo.'
7. *Kimi araraita ne kinegiten ole kinegiten ole okete tuga. Eng araraitok kikikuren Poi ko kimi kirkitab ndoroket* (p. 34) 'There was a desert near the place where cows were grazing. In that desert, called Poi, was a bull belonging to Ndoroket.'

B. Data from Creider & Creider (1989)

1. *Kirip ingokiet lakwet* (163) 'The child watched the chicken'
2. *Apwati ale ng'eta* 'I think he is a boy' (122)
3. *Kibet ko kerey lakwet* (125) 'Kibet is looking at the child'
4. *Chepyoset ko ruei* (125) 'The woman is sleeping'
5. *Amache tuga chebo Kibet* (138) 'I want Kibet's cattle'

C. Data from Creider & Creider (2001)

1. *Kalugui artet cheluguit* (57) 'The python swallowed the sheep'
2. *Kwerie chematiret lakwet* (58) 'The child is wheeling the hoop toy'
3. *Sirei chemosireitet lakwet* (61) 'The child passes over the high jump bar'
4. *Kalany ketit cheplanget* (65) 'The leopard climbed the tree'
5. *Karuse karit ketit ipkolobuldo* (180) 'He crashed the car into the tree until it was dented'

Appendix V: A sample of elicited data

1. *Ng'eno ko kandoindet ne naat eng Narok* 'Ng'eno is a well-known leader in Narok.'
2. *Inendet akane ko kiagenge* 'He and I are one.'
3. *Kapkirwok nebo borot ak sabet* 'Kenya is country of full of peace.'
4. *Koroninyo ko emetap ropta* 'This is a land of rain.'
5. *Mienwogik che chang koibu suteetab imbaret* 'A lot of diseases are caused by chemical pesticides.'
6. *Taprandich ko kwondo ne chulaat* 'Taprandich is a straightforward woman.'
7. *Chi age tugul ne menyee Nandi kobai tany* 'Anyone who lives in Nandi should rear a cow.'
8. *Koroitab korona ko kaimutiet ne o eng biik* 'Coronavirus is a big challenge to people.'
9. *Keliban rabishekab sukul koboisietab sikiik tugul* 'The payment of fee is the responsibility of all parents.'
10. *Tiemutik koain inai kimnateng'ung ne bo orit* 'Challenges make you discover your inner strength.'

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