

## FOCUS IN THE RENDILLE CLAUSE

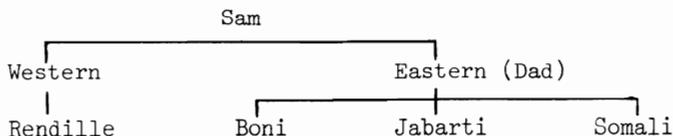
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In the following study an attempt is made to analyze focus structure in the Rendille Clause. Focus structure is described in Halliday's terminology [Halliday 1967, 1970]. In Rendille there are two focus markers, here called *+predicate focus marker* and *-predicate focus marker*, from now on *+pfm* and *-pfm*. In the information unit, most often the clause, a focus marker is obligatory; secondly there is only one focus marker allowed in the information unit, either a *+pfm* or a *-pfm*. The *+pfm á*, prefixed to the predicate, has, besides bringing into focus the predicate, a second function in that it realizes the unmarked focus, appropriate to the first information unit in a discourse. Taken out of its context, *á* is ambiguous. The *-pfm é*, suffixed to a noun or nounphrase in focus, appears to have developed from a relative clause construction, but is no longer considered such by the native speakers. Phonological, syntactic and semantic arguments are presented to support this hypothesis.

### 1. Introduction

The Rendille language is spoken by approximately 15,000 nomadic people who inhabit the southern part of Marsabit District in Northern Kenya. The Rendille rely on camel economy, supplemented by small stock. After several years of severe drought goats and sheep are nowadays valuable cash providers, which enable their owners to buy additional food stuffs like maize meal.

According to Heine [1976] Rendille belongs to the Sam group of Cushitic languages, which forms a sub family of the Afroasiatic (Erythraic) language family. The Sam languages which form the eastern sub-group of Omo-Tana, a sub-group of Lowland East Cushitic are sub-classified in the following way [Heine 1976]:



Previously published materials on Rendille consist only of some very brief notes by Fleming [1964] and a grammatical sketch by Heine [1975/76].<sup>1</sup>

The present article is based on a M.A. thesis submitted to the University of Nairobi in 1977 [Oomen 1977a].<sup>2</sup>

In the introduction of the present article a few aspects of Rendille phonology and morphology will be presented, aspects that were previously unknown or incompletely given and that are relevant to the following discussion of focus structure. Since phonology falls outside the concern of this study, the phonemic inventory of Rendille, presented to serve as a key to the transcription used in the examples, is given without comment except for one phonological rule whose discovery facilitated the analysis of focus structure and related problems.

### 1.1. Phonemic inventory.

#### Consonants

	Bil. Labio-	Dent.	Alv.	Post-	Pal.	Vel.	Phar. or
	dental			alv.			Glottal
Plosives vl.		t			c <sup>3</sup>		
vd.	b	d			j <sup>3</sup>		
emph.				ɟ		k, ɡ	
Fricative vl.	f		s				h
vd.							
emph.						x	ħ
Resonant nas.	m		n		ny		
lat.			l				
trill			r				
Semivowel	w				y	w̥	

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<sup>1</sup>I would like to acknowledge the encouraging help I received from Prof. Bernd Heine who supervised my M.A. thesis. I am also grateful to Dr. R. Hudson for stimulating discussions we had during his short visit to Nairobi.

<sup>2</sup>I am most grateful to Mr. Bernard Barchuma Arbele from Korr who was my principal informant.

<sup>3</sup>The affricates ts and dz seem to be common allophones of c and j.

## Vowels

High	i	u
Mid	e	o
Low	a	

length of vowels and consonants is important but is not considered here. Consonant phonemes with a dot underneath could be called "emphatic". since they appear to be similar to Arabic emphatic consonants in that they colour adjacent vowels. Their main characteristic seems to be pharyngeal stricture caused by retraction of the tongue root and a simultaneous raising of the larynx. The emphatic consonant phonemes may be described as having the feature -ATR [Stewart 1967], while the different vowel qualities which are encountered may be characterized by + or - ATR. The rule proposed to account for the different vowel qualities is as follows [Oomen 1977b]:

$$\begin{bmatrix} -\text{Cons} \\ +\text{Voc} \end{bmatrix} \rightarrow [\alpha\text{ATR}] / \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \begin{bmatrix} +\text{Cons} \\ -\text{Voc} \\ \alpha\text{ATR} \end{bmatrix} \quad - \\ - \quad \begin{bmatrix} +\text{Cons} \\ -\text{Voc} \\ \alpha\text{ATR} \end{bmatrix} \end{array} \right\}$$

In the following discussion vowel allophones caused by an adjacent -ATR consonant will not be indicated. In cases where the influence of an adjacent -ATR consonant has a neutralizing effect on the vowel of a grammatical morpheme, this will be indicated in a footnote.

1.2. Tone and stress.<sup>4</sup> It is assumed here that tone plays an important role in Rendille. It appears that stress is a concomitant feature of high tone only. A syllable that has high tone + stress is here called "prominent".<sup>5</sup> A prominent syllable is also longer than a non-prominent one.

The two phenomena tone and stress must be distinguished, however,

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<sup>4</sup>Further investigation on the question of tone and stress is being undertaken. The following remarks must be considered preliminary.

<sup>5</sup>See Tucker and Bryan [1966:499] for tone and stress in other Cushitic languages.

since high tone appears to be fixed and lexically relevant, while stress although always a concomitant feature of high tone, may move from one high tone syllable to another high tone syllable, depending on syntactic environment. Examples (prominent syllable is underlined):

- (1) ínàm            'boy'  
 ínankí dèr       'the tall boy'  
 ínám áyímì       'the boy has come'  
 ínámé yimi       'the *boy* has come' (item in focus is in italics)

Tone is one of the means to indicate gender (masculine and feminine) and number (singular and plural). Examples:

- (2) gender: nyíràx       'young male camel'       wòr 'news' (masc)  
                   nyíráx       'young female camel'       wór 'well' (fem)
- (3) number: wáràb       'big male sheep'  
                   waráb       'big male sheep (pl)'

On the syntactic level it appears that relative clause markers and focus markers a.o. have in all cases high tone + stress, i.e. prominence which is thought to influence the pitch of the surrounding syllables. This influence is however not indicated in the present study. In the present paper tone will be indicated as follows:

High: 1) +stress:    ˉ  
           2) -stress:    ˘  
 Mid:    unmarked  
 Low:    ˋ

### 1.3. The sentence.

1.3.1. Word order. The predominant word order of sentence constituents in Rendille is Subject - Object - Verb.

- (4) maxábal ínám ájáhè                            'the elder has beaten the boy'  
       elder    boy    has beaten
- ínámè wel ádíxtè                            'the girl has washed the child'  
       girl    child    has washed

The indirect object precedes the direct object.

- (5) an maxábállè gólol ásíçè 'I have given food to the elders'  
 I elders food have given

Adverbs and adverbial phrases precede the verb.

- (6) us celé yimi 'he came yesterday'  
 he yesterday came  
 us Korré káyimi 'he came from Korr'  
 he Korr from-came

Qualifiers follow the noun and are introduced by a gender sensitive particle k- (masc sing), h- (masc pl), or t- (fem sing and pl).<sup>6</sup>

- (7) hantí wèn 'big woven container'  
 woven container big  
 galí dáxàn 'white camels' (k → ø/ l \_\_\_)  
 camels white  
 albehí inno Korr kágarre, áyímì 'the girls we saw in Korr have come'  
 girls we Korr in saw have come

Note however the following possible constructions:

- (8) bèy áficedà 'edge of lake'  
 lake its edge  
 kùl wórisa káyenna 'container we are talking about'  
 container its news we are talking about

as variants of afí bèy and worí kùl respectively.

1.3.2. Permutation of word order. OSV order has also been observed.

In this case there is a pause after the fronted object.

- (9) inám, maxábal ájáhè 'the elder has beaten the girl'  
 (verbal concord is with maxábal, i.e. masc)

It is assumed here that in (9) inám 'girl' is thematized by fronting. The preferred translation was found to be 'the girl has been beaten by the elder' and not 'the elder has beaten the girl'.

Passivization is a well known means of thematizing the object in English. In Rendille there are other means of thematizing the object if

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<sup>6</sup>Each gender sensitive particle, further on in this study called "relative clause marker", has a set of allomorphs depending on preceding final consonant or vowel of the noun to which it is attached. See Oomen [1977a] for more details.

the agent is not mentioned, namely by a verbal prefix *la-* .

- (10) *inám á|ájáhè* 'the girl was beaten'

Instances were observed where the predicate is fronted. This appears to be possible only if no more than one sentence constituent other than the predicate is present. There is a pause after the fronted predicate and the latter must have the predicate focus marker.

- (11) *áyélà, ínàm* 'the boy is doing it'  
 as a variant of *inám áyé|à*  
*áyélà, sáhtà* 'he will do it tomorrow'  
 as a variant of *sáhta áyé|à*

but cf.

\**yela, ínàm*  
 \**yela, sáhtà*

It appears then that in Rendille permutation of word order is a means of thematizing very much the same as Halliday [1967] indicates for English.

- (12) *gà|, sígir migasané, sugubé tígis* 'disease did not kill the camels disease did-not-kill thirst killed camels, thirst did'  
 (note that the conversation is about camels)

Consider in this context *bèy áficedà* as a variant of *af| bèy* , where *bèy* is fronted, presumably because *bèy* is the theme.

Permutation of word order is certainly a feature different from Focus, which we shall see below is an obligatory feature of the Rendille clause and involves morphological and tonal changes.

1.3.3. Case.<sup>7</sup> Greenberg [1966:96] states as his Universal 41: "If in a language the verb follows both the nominal subject and the nominal object as the dominant order, the language almost always has a case system." In Rendille the dominant order is SOV. The absolute form of the noun in both genders is the accusative.

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<sup>7</sup>For comparison see Heine [1975/76] and Oomen [1977a]. The adnominal genitive case is not considered here. In a restricted number of cases the genitive case is overtly marked by *-t* suffixed to the possessor-noun.

- (13) us dágàh ásáè 'he has thrown the stone' (dágàh masc)  
 an dafár áxábà 'I have cloth' (dafár fem)  
 cimbír á'yégìs 'the bird was killed' (cimbír fem)

The nominative is only marked in the feminine gender and only on the noun unaccompanied by qualifiers; qualifiers are unmarked for case. This marker -è is suffixed to subjects of both transitive and intransitive verbs. It therefore appears to be a surface subject marker.

- (14) maxabálè gólo! ásógátè 'the woman has bought food'  
 (maxabá! 'woman')  
 inámè íntané kajirta 'the girl is here' (inám 'girl')

The transitivity relations [Halliday 1967:38-81] or case relations [Fillmore 1970] of agent and goal are realized by a variety of means in Rendille:

- by word order
- by subject-predicate agreement of gender and number
- by nominal suffix in a restricted use
- by verbal prefix. Many other cases are also expressed in the last mentioned way. For example

- (15) Source, ká-: ínamKorré káyimi 'the boy came from Korr'  
 Manner, í- : sagóh íyimi? 'how did he come?'

#### 1.4. The noun phrase.

1.4.1. Noun classes.<sup>8</sup> A classification is proposed that is based on gender and concomitant tone pattern in the singular. In the majority of Rendille nouns there is polarity of gender and number. This classification can predict the type of plural formation that is correct. A considerable number of Rendille nouns, however, have only a singular form.

Class 1. Class 1 contains all the nouns which have masculine gender in the singular and show the tone pattern high-low, which tone pattern can be reduced or extended according to the number of syllables into:

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<sup>8</sup>The following information is not to be considered complete. Further investigation is needed.

high-falling: ˘, high-low: ˘˘, mid-high-low: -˘˘, and mid-mid-high-low: --˘˘.

For class 1 a sub-classification is made as follows:

Class 1a. Class 1a contains all masculine nouns (high-falling tone pattern) which are monosyllabic. These nouns do not have the usual polarity of gender and number, but are masculine in singular and plural. There are a number of nouns in this sub-class that have singular forms only.

(17) jìd 'meat'      jìt 'road'      kùl 'container' òr 'male camel'  
 singular form only: gàl 'camels'      hòl 'impala'

Class 1b. Class 1b contains the masculine nouns which have more than one syllable. They accordingly have high-low, mid-high-low or mid-mid-high-low tone pattern.

(18) ínàm 'boy'      áràm 'husband'      dúlbè 'roofmat'      yábàr 'string'  
 maxábàl 'elder'      xorojébsì 'very large snake'  
 singular form only: álbè 'girls'      tùmày 'male sheep or goats that  
 have just been castrated'

Class 2. Class 2 contains the nouns that have feminine gender in the singular and which show the tone pattern mid-high, which can be reduced or extended according to the number of syllables as follows:

mid-rising: ˘, mid-high: -˘, mid-mid-high: --˘.

For class 2 no sub classification is needed.

(19) abár 'mother'      ilím 'tear'      úl 'stick'      mandán 'twin'  
 lóh 'leg'      dowohó 'jackal'  
 singular form only: íy 'sheep'      ríy 'goats'

1.4.2. Plural formation. Class 1a members form their plural by reduplication. This reduplication has three characteristics.

- (1) it does not affect the initial consonant
- (2) the reduplicated syllable has prominence
- (3) the vowel of the reduplicated syllable is always a

(20) jìt - jítát      kùl - kulál      òr - orár      (cf. (17) above)

Class 1b members have a plural suffix -è (after vowel -inyè is found, after consonant this consonant seems to be geminated). The syllable preceding è has prominence.

(21) áràm - arámmè dúlbè - dulbínyè yábàr - yabárrè (cf. (18) above)

Class 2 members have a plural suffix -ó (after vowel -yó is found).

(22) abár - arbó úl - uló dowohó - dowohoyó (cf. (19) above)

Exceptions to these rules are nouns that change their tonal pattern to make their plural:

(23) dúfàn 'camel kept for slaughtering' pl. dufán  
kélèh 'big male goat' pl. keléh

and those nouns where natural sex seems to override grammatical gender:

(24) hélèm (and not expected helém) 'male sheep' pl. helmó  
fólàs (and not expected folás) 'castrated camel' pl. folasó

1.4.3. Dependent categories. All qualifiers of the noun except the numeral<sup>9</sup> are introduced by a gender sensitive relative clause marker, kí or kíye for masculine singular, hí<sup>10</sup> or híye for masculine plural, and tí or tíye for feminine singular or plural.

kíye, híye and tíye are presumably derived from kí+e, hí+e and tí+e respectively, -e being a subjunctive form of the copula, found only in subordinate clauses.

kí and kíye, hí and híye, tí and tíye appear to be in free variation.

(25) minkí gòb } 'the house of the settlement' (mìn 'house (masc)')  
minkíye gòb }  
minkà 'this house' (ki + a (demonstrative) → ka)  
minkò 'a house' (ki + o (indefinite) → ko)  
inántí(ye) xanan, ádéfsátè 'the girl who was ill has recovered'  
(inám 'girl (fem)')

Note however that the numeral is not introduced by a gender sensitive marker:

(26) ínam afàr 'four boys'

<sup>9</sup>Compare this situation with Somali, where the numeral precedes the noun. In Rendille tuman 'all' behaves in this respect like a cardinal number.

<sup>10</sup>Phonetically, hí is hé (see 1.1).

1.4.4. Adjective. A classification can be made, based upon the absence or presence of the copula *yahe* (3 pers sing) in the affirmative present (non-perfect) and upon the presence of either the negative marker *-me* (suffixed), which occurs also after nouns, or the negative marker *ma-* (prefixed), which is a verbal negative marker. The copula is present in different forms in both classes in other than the unmarked present to serve as a mere locus for the marking of tense, mood and aspect.<sup>11</sup> Class 1 will be exemplified by *bur* 'big' (for persons: 'rather too big'). The noun used to illustrate corresponding behaviour will be *mwalim* 'teacher'. Class 2 will be exemplified by *der* 'tall'. The verb used to illustrate corresponding behaviour will be *doon* 'want'.

(27)	Adjective	Noun
Class 1: aff.	<i>ínam ábur</i> 'the <u>b</u> oy is big'	<i>ínam ámwali<u>m</u></i> 'the <u>b</u> oy is a teacher'
neg.	<i>ínam bur<u>m</u>è</i> 'the boy <u>i</u> s not big'	<i>ínam mwali<u>m</u>è</i> 'the boy is not a teacher'
	Adjective	Verb
Class 2: aff.	<i>ínam áder yehe (a→e/ <u>h</u>)</i> 'the <u>b</u> oy is tall'	<i>ínam ádoona</i> 'the boy <u>w</u> ants'
neg.	<i>ínam máder</i> 'the <u>b</u> oy is not tall'	<i>ínam mádoono</i> 'the <u>b</u> oy does not want'

The numerals belong to class 1, which fact strengthens our hypothesis that the adjectives of class 1 are in fact nouns.

1.4.5. Personal pronoun. Personal pronouns and likewise pronominal adjectives and demonstratives have two paradigms. One could be characterized by the feature *-FOCUS*, the other by the feature *+FOCUS*. Examples will be given in the course of the discussion of the main part of this study on Focus. For complete paradigms, see Appendix I.

1.5. The verb.<sup>12</sup> Rendille verbs are best arranged into two classes:

Class 1: prefix conjugation. Bound subject pronouns are prefixed to the verb stem. The bound subject pronouns for this class are:

<sup>11</sup>For more details see Oomen [1977a: 28].

<sup>12</sup>For more details see Oomen [1977a: 26-33].

sing. 1	∅	pl. 1	n
2	†	2	†- -Vn
3	y (masc)	3	y- -Vn (masc)
	† (fem)		† (fem) <sup>13</sup>

Prefix verbs form a minority of Rendille verbs (only thirteen have been found up until now). They belong to the basic vocabulary. Tense/mood distinctions are expressed by vowel alternations in the stem, namely a/i and a/u. They sometimes have irregular and incomplete paradigms. In this class there seems to be no specific form for the subjunctive, the mood that is used in subordinate clauses. There are distinct optative forms. See Appendix I for a complete list of verbs found taking the prefix conjugation.

Class 2: Suffix conjugation. Bound subject pronouns are suffixed to the verb stem. There are no vowel alternations in the verb stem, the suffix vowel, however, changes according to tense/mood distinctions, namely a/e. This class contains the vast majority of Rendille verbs and is highly regular. The bound subject pronouns for this class are:

sing. 1	∅	pl. 1	n
2	†	2	†- -Vn
3	∅ (masc)	3	∅ -Vn (masc)
	† (fem)		† (fem)

For class 2 a subclassification can be made into 2a and 2b, characterized among other things by different negative present tense suffixes, respectively -o and -i. For class 2b another subclassification can be made, characterized by a different form for the affirmative imperative, ending in respectively -o and -so. Members of class 2 have distinct forms for the subjunctive, i.e. the same forms as for the negative present minus the prefixed negative marker ma-.

## 2. Focus in the Rendille Clause

2.1. Some general notes on focus structure. Focus structure is described in Halliday's terminology [Halliday 1967, 1970]. Halliday sees language in terms of its use. An act of speech is seen as a simultaneous selection

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<sup>13</sup>The 3 pers pl feminine has the same form as the 3 pers sing feminine.

from among a large number of interrelated options. The system of available options is the grammar of the language. Any one clause is built up of a combination of structures deriving from the three functions of language to which correspond divisions in the grammar [Halliday 1970: 141-42].

2.1.1. Transitivity, mood, and theme. Halliday then regards the English clause as the domain of three main areas of syntactic choice [Halliday 1967:199]. These are:

- Transitivity: This is the set of options relating to cognitive content.
- Mood: This represents the organization of participants in speech situations.
- Theme: This is concerned with the information structure of the clause.<sup>14</sup>

The present discussion will be mainly concerned with a set of options in the Theme structure of the clause, namely the information options. These involve discussing information units and information focus [Halliday 1967:200-11].<sup>15</sup>

2.1.2. Information unit, clause, and information focus. According to Halliday any text in spoken English is organized into what may be called information units. A clause may contain two information units, it may be a single information unit, or it may itself be part of an information unit which includes other clauses. The unmarked option occurs when the

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<sup>14</sup>Note that Halliday uses the term Theme also for a particular role in the distribution of information in the clause as a message, besides the notion just mentioned. I have briefly discussed some aspects of the Theme Rheme options in Rendille under 1.3.2.

<sup>15</sup>Evidently Halliday's approach is based on English, but there are many parallels, which may indicate that his model can be applied to other languages than English. That information focus in English is realized by the use of phonological prominence, referred to by Halliday as "tonicity", but in Rendille by focus markers, which incidentally always have high tone + stress, does not affect the model; they are low-level language specific differences.

clause contains one information unit. Note that a clause includes the clauses which are embedded within it.

It appears that in Rendille there is only one focal point possible in one information unit, the rest being non-focal (for exceptions to this statement, see 2.1.4. and (30)). The information focus falls on one constituent of the information unit. This one constituent which receives the information focus represents the new element in the message.

2.1.3. "Given" versus "new". We can say that the system of information focus assigns to the information unit (in our case the Rendille clause) a structure in terms of the two functions, "given" and "new". "Given" is presupposed knowledge by both speaker and hearer, "new" is non-derivable information. "New" is not only factually new, it may imply contrast with what has been said before. As is well known, given units are often represented anaphorically, by reference, substitution or ellipsis.

2.1.4. "Unmarked" versus "marked" focus. "Unmarked" focus is the form appropriate to the first information unit in a discourse. In other words, where the focus is unmarked, its domain may be the whole of the information unit, here the clause, i.e. the whole clause represents new information. The structure is not "given-new", but simply "new". Where the focus is marked, however, it may assign prominence to any constituent of the clause, the remaining being non-focal: there is a "given-new" structure.

2.2. Focus markers in Rendille. Rendille appears to have two focus markers.

1) + predicate focus marker (from now on called +pfm), realized by á-prefixed to the predicate.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>For comparison see Bell [1953:25], Hetzron [1965:118] and others on Somali indicators waa and baa, which appear to have a function similar to Rendille á and é. An apparent correspondence ba was found in Rendille. Examples: yele túmamba átimi 'all the boys *came*' (túmàn 'all'); ébà 'nobody' (et (man) + ba), mélba 'nowhere' (mél (place) + ba). Contrarily to -pfm é, ba can occur simultaneously with +pfm á and also on nouns in isolation, i.e. without a predicate.

- (28) ínam áyimi 'the boy *came*'  
 díri ákulel 'the pot is *hot*'

2) - predicate focus marker (from now on called -pfm), realized by -é suffixed to any other constituent of the clause, but to not more than one in the information unit, i.e. in the unmarked case the clause.

- (29) ínamé yimi 'the *boy* came'  
 maxábàl ínamé jahe 'the elder beat the *boy*'  
 maxábàl intusé kajira 'the elder is *there*'  
 hanuhí burenyé kajibte 'she put a lot of milk'

It seems that in Rendille the +pfm has a second function, namely it realises the unmarked focus appropriate to the first information unit in a discourse.<sup>17</sup>

- (30) ínam áyimi 'the boy *came*', is a felicitous answer to the question: What happened? There is no given component in this message. The message contains all new information.  
 ínamé yimi 'the *boy* came', however, is not a correct answer to: What happened? It is the correct answer to: Who came? or: Did the girl come?  
 ínam áyimi 'the boy *came*', is as well the correct answer to: What did the boy do? or: Did the boy go away?

Taken out of its context, a sentence like ínam áyimi is ambiguous.

2.3. Distribution of focus markers. In the Rendille clause a focus marker is obligatory, except for those cases where the information unit consists of more than one clause. Secondly, in the Rendille clause there is only one focus marker at a time, either a +pfm or a -pfm.

- (31) ínam áyimì 'the boy *came*'  
 \*ínam yimi<sup>18</sup> (no focus marker)

<sup>17</sup>Compare with a.o. Givón [1975:185]: "It is normally assumed for the 'neutral' sentence pattern of a language, that the predicate phrase contains the new information or asserted portion, while the subject phrase contains the new information or asserted portion, while the subject is the topic or presupposed portion with respect to which the assertion is being made."

<sup>18</sup>Starred forms indicate ungrammatical forms.

(31) cont.

* <u>í</u> namé <u>áy</u> ímì	(two focus markers)
ínamé yimi	'the <i>boy</i> came'
ínámè <u>át</u> ímì	'the <i>girl</i> came' (è is feminine surface subject marker)
*ínámè timi	(no focus marker)
* <u>í</u> namé <u>át</u> ímì	(two focus markers)
ínámé timi	'the <i>girl</i> came'
maxábállè <u>át</u> imi	'the <i>elders</i> came' (è is plural marker class 1b)
*maxábállè timi	(no focus marker)
*maxábállé <u>át</u> imi	(two focus markers)
maxábállé timi	'the <i>elders</i> came'
maxábal ínam <u>áj</u> ánè	'the <i>elder</i> beat the <i>boy</i> '
*maxábal ínam jahe	(no focus marker)
*maxábalé <u>í</u> namé <u>á</u> jahe	(two focus markers)
*maxábalé <u>í</u> namé <u>á</u> jahe	(three focus markers)
maxábalé ínam jahe	'the <i>elder</i> beat the <i>boy</i> '
maxábal <u>í</u> namé <u>á</u> jahe	'the <i>elder</i> beat the <i>boy</i> '

If there is only a predicate in the declarative sentence without accompanying noun phrase or noun phrases, the predicate must have the +pfm.

(32) áyimi 'he *came*'

\*yimi (given component of the message is omitted)

This is predictable, since áyimi contains the new information and so has focus.

The -pfm must precede the predicate. As the predicate normally is in sentence final position, this implies that a noun or noun phrase without an accompanying predicate, i.e. where the predicate is omitted because it contains the given component of the message, cannot have the focus marker. It however has focus.

(33) ayó yimi 'Who came?' can have two possible answers:

ínamé yimi 'the *boy* came'ínám 'the *boy*'\*ínamé

Note that the predicate is not always in sentence final position. This is the case when the predicate is fronted for Thematization.<sup>19</sup>

(34) áyimi, ínam 'he has *come*, the boy'

It is assumed that in this case we have two information units (note pause after áyimi) each with its focus. Áyimi has the +pfm, while ínam by itself has focus but this focus is not expressed by a -pfm (see above). Here we find an interaction of the Theme and Information options.

#### 2.4. Realizations of the focus markers.

2.4.1. Realizations of the +pfm. If the +pfm is prefixed directly to a verb stem beginning with a vowel, the á is elided but its high tone + prominence remains on the initial vowel of the verb stem.

(35) álbe írtè 'the girls *went*' (ird 'go')  
 an úrdà 'I *am* sleeping' (urd 'sleep')

For the sake of clarity the examples will be restricted to simple declarative affirmative sentences containing only a subject and a predicate. Question and negation will be dealt with below.

	focus on predicate	focus on subject	
verbal pr. Class 1	ínam <u>áyámìt</u>	ínam <u>é</u> yamit	'the boy comes'
verbal pr. Class 2	an <u>ágírdámà</u> gogág <u>ánúhàn</u> komboró <u>ájébìn</u>	an <u>í</u> girdama gogág <u>é</u> nuha <sup>20</sup> kombó <u>ró</u> jebe <sup>20</sup>	'I play' 'the camel skins smell' 'the stools broke'
nominal pr. with noun	Naliyon <u>ámwalímù</u>	Naliyon <u>é</u> mwalime (u + e (copula) → e)	'Naliyon is a teacher'
nominal pr. with class 1 adjective	díri <u>ábùr</u>	dír <u>í</u> bure	'the pot is big'
nominal pr. with class 2 adjective	ínam <u>ádér yéhè</u>	ínam <u>é</u> der	'the boy is tall'

<sup>19</sup>See 1.3.2.

<sup>20</sup>3 pers sing is used instead of the normal concord 3 pers pl. The 2 pers pl however is not homonymous with the corresponding singular in the same context. I think therefore that one cannot speak of a restrictive paradigm as Andrzejewski has for Somali or of an impoverished conjugation [Hetzron 1974:275].

2.4.2. Realizations of the -pfm. Here we have to distinguish between realizations which are phonologically conditioned and realizations which are morphologically conditioned.

2.4.2.1. Phonologically conditioned realizations. The relevant conditions are the following:

- the -pfm suffixed to a noun which ends in a consonant is é :

(37) ínamé yimi 'the *boy* came'

- the -pfm suffixed to a noun which ends in a high tone vowel has  $\emptyset$  realization:

(38) an komboró arge 'I saw the *stools*' (komboró 'stools')  
ico celé yimatín 'they came *yesterday*' (celé 'yesterday')

- the -pfm suffixed to a noun which ends in a low tone vowel deletes but the high tone of é is left behind on the final low tone vowel of the preceding noun:

(39) an ildáwá sogade 'I bought *medicine*' (ildáwà 'medicine')  
kolósó yamít 'perhaps he will come' (kolósò 'perhaps')

Note that there are several very similar suffixes in Rendille, which differ however in tone and/or different allomorphic behavior in vowel environment. The essence is that -è (feminine surface subject marker) disappears altogether, -è (one of the plural markers) is realized as -nye after vowel, -e (copula) remains while the preceding vowel disappears, and -é (-pfm) deletes, but its high tone is left behind on the final vowel of the noun in focus.

2.4.2.2. Morphologically conditioned realizations. The relevant conditions are the following:

- the -pfm realizes as nyé after the copula -e (-e is a subjunctive form, i.e. occurs in subordinate clauses only).

(40) ínankí bure 'the boy who is big' (bur + e, copula)  
ínankí burényé yimi 'the *big* boy came' (focus on bure)

- the -pfm realizes as nyé after the negative of the copula -me. mé (raised tone) was found as well.

- (41) abártáha ? 'is it your mother?'  
 mélè, abártéymé 'no, it is not my mother'  
 abártéymenyé, abártáhà 'it is not my mother, it is your mother'  
 kané dona, kúsmenyé 'I want this one, not that one'

- the -pfm realizes as né after nouns followed by the demonstrative  
 -a 'this, these'.<sup>21</sup>

- (42) hertà 'these warriors'  
 hertané timi 'these warriors came'  
 íntà 'here'  
 us intané kajira 'he is here'  
 mántà 'today'  
 us mantané yamit 'he will come today'

2.4.2.3. Different types of subject noun phrases exemplified. Eight possible noun phrases in subject position will be considered, with the focus on the subject version on the left-side and the focus on the predicate version on the right-hand side. Note that the +pfm realizes also unmarked focus.

- (43) simple noun  
 ínamé yimi 'the boy came'      ínam áyímì 'the boy came'  
 maxábálé bun karisa 'the woman is cooking coffee'      maxabálè bun ákárísà 'the woman is going to cook coffee'<sup>22</sup>

- (44) pronoun  
 átiné bahási tigasìn 'you (pl) killed the lion'      átìn bahási átígásìn 'you killed the lion'

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<sup>21</sup>Another possibility of analysis is not to consider né an allomorph of é, but to assume another stem to which it is attached: an instead of a. Heine [1976] has a Proto-Sam demonstrative root \*-an besides \*-a, both having the meaning of being near. In present day Rendille we find a nominal demonstrative kàn 'this one'. It is therefore possible to assume that the n has disappeared in the adjectival demonstrative, but surfaces again in the focus form.

<sup>22</sup>See 2.5.1 for difference in aspect.

- (45) noun + demonstrative  
 etusé mìn gube                      étùs min ágúbè  
 'that man burnt the house'        'that man *burnt* the house'
- (46) noun + possessor noun  
 úrubí biceté ínta kajira              úrubí bicet ínta ákájírà  
 'the calabash of *water* is here'    'the calabash of *water* is here'
- (47) noun + pronominal possessive  
 abaháya gàl mala                      abahèy gal ámálà  
 'my father is milking the camels'    'my father is going to *milk* the camels'<sup>22</sup>
- (48) noun + adjective  
 etí hertí deré buje                      etí hertí der ábújè  
 'the *tall* warrior died'                'the tall warrior *died*'
- (49) noun + relative clause  
 etí hertí cele yimié, buje              etí hertí cele yimi, ábújè  
 'the *warrior* who came                  'the warrior who came yesterday *died*'  
 yesterday died'
- (Note that in the sentence on the left hand side the -pfm is attached to the last constituent of the relative clause, which is always the predicate.)

## 2.5. Interaction of Tense/Aspect, Mood and Focus.

2.5.1. Tense/Aspect. As in many other languages there is no sharp distinction between Tense and Aspect in Rendille.

- (50) áyamiṭ                      { 'he comes'  
   'he is coming'  
   'he will come' }
- (51) áyimi                        { 'he came'  
   'he has come' }

Adverbs and verbal affixes may be used to express further distinctions of Tense and Aspect. It appears that Focus structure can interfere, but this needs further investigation.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>It may be that á functions not only as a focus marker, i.e. brings the action into focus, but also as an aspect marker. Secondly, if the predicate contains an object, one can ask: Is the entire verb phrase asserted, i.e. in focus, or only the complement?

- (52) us min ádísda 'he will build a house' (this means 'he will marry')  
 us miné disda 'he is building a house' (with no further implications)  
 an tóilà rié mala 'I am milking the goats now'  
 an sáhtà ri ámala 'I shall milk the goats tomorrow'

2.5.2. Tense/Aspect and Mood. The following data have been taken from a class 2a verb, where there is no interference of phonological environment. All other verbs show the same pattern (underlined affixes are relevant to the present discussion).

(53)	<u>Affirmative</u>	<u>Negative</u>	
	<u>Imperative</u>		
S	girdam 'dance!'	<u>á</u> girdamin	
Pl	girdama	<u>á</u> girdamina	
	<u>Indicative</u>		
Pres/Fut	<u>á</u> girdama (1 pers)	<u>má</u> girdamo (1 pers)	
Past/Perf	<u>á</u> girdame (1 pers)	<u>má</u> girdamin (invariable)	
	<u>Subjunctive</u>		
Pres/Fut	girdamo (1 pers)	<u>i</u> girdamin (invariable)	
Past/Perf	girdame (1 pers)	<u>i</u> girdamin (invariable)	

The following observations can be made:

- The Imperative Singular (aff.) has the form of the verb stem. The Imperative (neg.) has á- prefixed, presumably to distinguish it from subjunctive forms which show the same suffix -in .
- The indicative forms have either á- (aff.) or má- (neg.). Má is presumably me+á . Suffixes -a and -e are found in the affirmative, markers respectively of Pres/Future and Past/Perfect; in the negative we find -o and -in , which are in absence of má- subjunctive suffixes. (-o aff. and -in neg.)
- The subjunctive forms show absence of á- and má-. The negative marker is i-.

2.5.3. Indicative and Subjunctive. Lyons [1968:312] says, "The traditional term 'subjunctive' is revealing: it comes from the Latin translation of the Greek word for 'subordinating' and shows that for the traditional grammarian the subjunctive was the mood of subordination par excellence. The question arises now whether this subjunctive is correctly

described as a mood. More generally: what is the connection between mood and subordination? etc."

For Rendille it seems to be the case that:

- The subjunctive suffixes occur in main sentences accompanied by á- and má only.

- (54) ágirdamin 'do not dance'  
xoro águbno 'let us burn firewood'  
ásogatani 'let us buy'  
mágirdamo 'I do not dance'  
mágirdamin 'I did not dance'  
ínam mwalimu méheynan 'the boy was not a teacher' (ma → me/\_\_\_h)

- The subjunctive occurs in main sentences without á- or má- after a subject noun or noun phrase in focus. It will be shown however that these main clauses are in fact main clauses with an embedded reduced relative clause (see 2.6 below). In these cases the negative marker is i-, which is an indicator of subordinate clauses.

- (55) ínamé yimi 'the boy came' \*ínamé áyimi  
ínamé ígirdamin 'the boy did not dance' \*ínamé mágirdamin

- The subjunctive occurs in subordinate clauses (only relative clauses are considered here, but it may be that in Rendille subordinate clauses are relative clauses marked by a relative clause marker) without á- or má- only. The fact that á- and má- (+pfm) do not occur in subordinate clauses, is in agreement with the fact that the predicate of a restricted relative clause, which always contains presupposed knowledge, cannot be new information.

- (56) ínankí ínta kajiro, áxanan yehe 'the boy who is here is ill'  
\*ákajiro  
\*ákajira  
ínankí masin ídonin, íntané kajira 'the boy who does/did not want to finish, is here'  
\*mádonin  
ínankí mwalimu éheynan, áyimi 'the boy who was not a teacher came'  
(i → e/\_\_\_h)  
\*ehenet (a → e/\_\_\_h)

(56) cont.

an atihí masiso dona 'I want you to finish' (verb stem masi)

\*ámasiso

\*ámasisa

Note that after verbs like *arg* 'see' and *agard* 'know', two constructions are possible:

(57) an árga maxabálè íreta 'I see the woman going' (two main clauses, each with +pfm)

an maxabásí irati árga 'I see the woman going' (main clause with embedded rel. cl.)

#### 2.5.4. Interrogative.

2.5.4.1. Yes/no questions. Occurrences of the -pfm are found as well as occurrences of the +pfm, but only one at a time.

(58) Naliyoné yimi? 'did Naliyon come?'

(59) Naliyon áyímí? 'did Naliyon come?'

2.5.4.2. Wh questions. In Wh questions the +pfm is ungrammatical. This is explained by assuming that Wh words have built-in focus (cf. Hetzron [1965:118; 1969:31-33, 74]). Note that they always have prominence.

(60) ayó yimi?	'who came?'	*ayo áyimi?
mìn ciróh masata?	'when will the house be finished?'	*ámasata
yeie sagóh ifiride	'how did the boys escape?'	*ífiride
kùl mé?	'where is the container?'	*áme
améh hagica?	'what is he doing?'	*áhagica
ínankóh iderneynan?	'which boy is not tall?'	(note subj. form)

After Wh words we find the same constructions as after -pfm and as in rel. clauses, i.e. we find verb forms which have characteristic subjunctive markers.

2.5.5. Negation. We have seen that negative verb forms share with subjunctive verb forms the same suffixes (one exception is the subjunctive Past/Perfect). Imperative (neg.) and Indicative (neg.) have, however, á and má respectively prefixed, while subjunctive (neg.) has í prefixed.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>24</sup>Note that in Rendille the words for 'yes' and 'no' are respectively *áa* and *mélè* (me+la).

As with Focus the scope of assertion is relevant, likewise with negation the scope of negation is relevant. There are for example two ways to say 'I do not want any thing' in Rendille:

- (61) an walah mádono (statement, unmarked focus)  
 (62) walah an dono mélè (felicitous answer to the question: 'what do you want?', note subj. form dono)

Further investigation on the matter is needed.

2.6. An attempt to derive the -pfm from the relative clause marker + copula e. This amounts to saying that the -pfm is in fact a cleft sentence construction but not regarded as such any longer by the native speakers of the language. One may assume that restructuring has taken place. Such a restructuring hypothesis is strengthened by the fact that there is one odd verb form occurring after a subject nominal in focus, which has characteristics of both indicative and subjunctive, i.e. a form of class 2 verbs.

- (63) ínamé girdama 'the boy is dancing'  
 ayó girdama? 'who is dancing?'

but

- (64) ínankí girdamo 'the boy who is dancing'

Girdama is a subjunctive form in so far as it has not á prefixed, but it is not a subjunctive form in so far as it has the indicative ending -a and not the subjunctive ending -o .

2.6.1. Phonological argument. We have kíye , híye , and tíye in free variation with kí , hí , and tí (see 1.4.3). It is proposed here that kíye , híye , and tíye are realizations of underlying kí + e , hí + e , and tí + e respectively, e being subjunctive present of the copula. At some time kíye , híye , and tíye must have lost their gender marking, which is not essential to the meaning; also í was lost before the copula, but its prominence remained. The hypothetical process of the loss of í is made plausible by the existence of a similar still productive process:

- (65) Naliyoné mwalime 'Naliyon is the teacher' (mwalímu + e , copula)

The foregoing hypothesis would explain the prominence of the -pfm. Hence the following development may be assumed:

$$(66) \left\{ \begin{array}{l} k\underline{i}ye \\ h\underline{i}ye \\ t\underline{i}ye \end{array} \right\} \rightarrow \underline{i}ye \rightarrow \underline{e}$$

2.6.2. Syntactic arguments. We have seen under (56), (55) and (60) that we find identical clause structures following relative clause markers, subject nominals in focus and Wh words, except for a form like *girdama* (see 2.6). Also, we mention once again that the -pfm cannot occur on a noun in isolation (see (33)). This restriction is in agreement with our hypothesis that the -pfm is derived from a relative clause marker, i.e. something must follow.

2.6.3. Semantic argument. Restrictive relative clauses contain presupposed knowledge, i.e. knowledge shared by speaker and hearer. Constructions following a nominal in focus also contain presupposed knowledge. In Rendille non-restrictive relative clauses appear to be expressed by main clauses juxtaposed to other main clauses. Coordination need not be overtly expressed (see (57)).

2.7. Beyond the clause. It was mentioned before that an information unit may include more than one clause (see 2.1.2). This is precisely what is the case where a clause apparently contains no focus marker at all.<sup>25</sup>

(67) *inámè timiyé, ínam gudubte* 'the girl came and beat the boy'

(Although there are two clauses, there is one information unit with one -pfm attached to the last constituent of the first clause. The clause thus, if in focus, has the -pfm attached to the last constituent which is the predicate; here, *timiyé*. In the second clause, *ínam gudubte*, there is no other focus marker.)

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<sup>25</sup>Another particle, *la*, was found, which apparently draws attention to a new topic. Example: *inámè adi xabté, adila kirte, babe* 'the girl was looking after the goats, then the goats started to run and got lost'. (*adi* 'goats') Cf. also *mélé* 'no'.

## 2.8. Why two focus markers and not simply cleft sentence constructions?

I would like to adhere to the focus structure analysis as outlined above and not treat cleft sentence constructions and verbal prefix á as two unrelated phenomena for the following reasons:

- á is not a mere verbal prefix, which perhaps indicates aspect (see 2.5.1), since it is obligatory when the predicate is not accompanied by a noun or noun phrase and in that case may indicate different aspects. The predicate contains then the new information, the presupposed part of the message being omitted. In cases where the predicate is accompanied by noun phrases, it is still obligatory if there is no -pfm attached to any of the latter.

- é and á are in complimentary distribution in the information unit.

- é is no longer considered a relative clause indicator by the native speakers, which is suggested by the absence of *ki*, *hi*, and *ti*, and by ambiguous forms such as *girdama* (see (63)). *Girdama* represents the class of verbs to which the great majority of Rendille verbs belong.

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Personal Pronouns

-Focus	+Focus	
an(ì)	aní	'I'
at(ì)	atí	'you' (sg.)
us(ù)	usú	'he'
icè	icé	'she'
nàh	nahé	'we' (exclusive)
innò	innó	'we' (inclusive)
atìn	atiné	'you' (pl.)
icò	icó	'they'

Pronominal Adjectives

-Focus	+Focus	
-èy	-áyà	'my'
-àh	-áhà	'your' (sg.)
-ìs	-ísà	'his'
-icè	-icédà	'her'
-enyò	-ányà	'our' (exclusive)
-èn	-éna	'our' (inclusive)
-ìn	-ínnà	'your' (pl.)
-icò	-icódà	'their'

Verb Affixes for Suffix Conjugation

sing.	1	∅	pl.	1	-n
	2	-t		2	+ -Vn
	3	∅ (masc.)		3	∅ -Vn (masc.)
		-t (fem.)			-t (fem.)

Verb Affixes for Prefix Conjugation

sing.	1	∅	pl.	1	n-
	2	t-		2	t- -Vn
	3	y- (masc.)		3	y- -Vn (masc.)
		t- (fem.)			t- (fem.)

Verbs Taking the Prefix Conjugation

a/i alternation in the stem:

amit	'I come'	imi	'I came'
arid	'I run'	irid	'I ran'
agis	'I kill'	igis	'I killed'
asil	'I lay down'	isil	'I lay down'
yal	'it is' (existence)	yil	'it was' (not of living things)
ehe (a→e/_h)	'I am'	ehe (i→e/_h)	'I was'
ateh	'I become'	iteh	'I became'

a/u alternation to the stem:

abhub	'I drink'	ubhub	'I drank'
aḥam	'I eat'	uḥam	'I ate'
abud	'I can'	ubud	'I was able'
amut	'I die'	umuy	'I died'

Past form only:

idaḥ	'I said'
an idóḥ idaḥ	'what have I done to ...?' (approximate meaning)

Short illustrative text, giving examples of Focus in context.\*

- Title: maxabal-le-ti wor-i gal-i for her dah-r-o.  
 elder -pl-who news-of camels-of camelcamp warriors ask-3p.s.masc. subj.
- 1 atin min-k-óh jid ka-t-umh-en?  
 you-pl house-which meat in-you-eat-pl.(past)
- 2 nah Lariyon-é min-k-is jid ka-n-uhum.  
 we Lariyon-(-pfm) house-his meat in-we-eat(past)
- 3 cirin-k-óh min-k-is ira-t-en?  
 time-when house-his go-you-pl.(past)
- 4 geleb or geleb-é ira-n-e.  
 eveningtime or eveningtime-(-pfm) go-we(past)
- 5 ayó in-t-as ka-agar-t-en?  
 who place-there in-see-you-pl.(past)
- 6 Naliyon icow Konynan-é ka-agar-n-e.  
 Naliyon and Koynan-(-pfm) in-see-we-past
- 7 in-t-óh ka-y-ima-t-en?  
 place-where from-they-come-they-past
- 8 for-é ka-y-ima-t-en.  
 camelcamp-(-pfm) from-they-come-they-past
- 9 gal goy-t-is anabeyona?  
 camels inside-their are they all right (idiom)
- 10 anabeyon.  
 they are all right (idiom)
- 11 in-t-óh y-al?  
 place-where 3p.s.masc. (camels)-stay(non-past)
- 12 llaut-é y-al?  
 llaut-(-pfm) 3p.s.masc.-stay
- 13 gal dig á-ka-xaba-n-on-a?  
 camels blood (+pfm)-from-have-they-particle-question  
 ( on indicates that the elders know the warriors have blood, otherwise they could not survive, but want to make sure)
- 14 aa, á-ka-xab-an.  
 yes, (+pfm)-from-have-they(non-past)

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\*Tone/stress is not marked except on the focus markers. Morphological segmentation is marked by hyphens.

- 15 guram á-xab-a?  
migration (+pfm)-have-3p.s.masc.(camels)
- 16 me-le, yax á-jir-a.  
no, grazing (+pfm)-be-3p.s.masc.
- 17 gal yax á-ka-darg-a?  
camels grazing (+pfm)-with-be satisfied-3p.s.masc.(camels)(non-past)
- 18 aa, á-ka-darg-a.  
yes, (+pfm)-with-be satisfied-3p.s.masc.(non-past)
- 19 ged-óh aron-a?  
time-how long stay without water-3p.s.masc.(camels)  
(The elders ask this question to test the truth of the warriors' statement. If the grazing is indeed good, the camels can stay without water for 12 days. If it is bad, for 6 days only.)
- 20 iben tomon icow kow-é, lama-ka wor ka-tol-a,  
days ten and one(-pfm) two-particle well place-stand-3p.s.masc.(camels)
- 21 in-t-óh y-abhub?  
place-where 3p.s.masc.-drink(non-past)
- 22 Ngurunet-é y-abhub.  
Ngurunet(-pfm) 3p.s.masc.-drink(non-past)

### Translation

Title: Story about elders who ask two warriors about the camels in the camelcamp

- 1 At which house did you eat meat?
- 2 We ate meat at Laryon's house.
- 3 When did you go to Laryon's house?
- 4 We went at eveningtime.
- 5 Who did you see there?
- 6 We saw Naliyon and Koynan.
- 7 Where did they come from?
- 8 They came from the camelcamp.
- 9 How are the camels?
- 10 They are all right.
- 11 Where are they staying?
- 12 They are staying at Ilaut.
- 13 Do they get enough blood from the camels?
- 14 Yes, they get.

- 15 Do the camels move?  
16 No, there is grazing.  
17 Are the camels satisfied with the grazing?  
18 Yes, they are.  
19 How long do they stay without water?  
20 Eleven days, on the twelfth day they stand at the well and drink.  
21 Where do they drink?  
22 They drink at Ngurunet.



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