**Mystery language exercise** LING-242/ANT-285

Here are some sample sentences from ‘Language X.’ I have provided an IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet) transcription and a full‑sentence English translation of each example.

1. di kwɛli paa They killed a leopard.
2. ku kaali ka We saw a snake.
3. di nɛni ka belei su They saw a woman on the road.
4. e naloŋ ka belei su He saw a man on the road.
5. ku nɛni toli We called a woman.
6. ku naloŋ ka bɛlɛi mu We saw a man in the house.
7. di kwɛli ka They saw a leopard.
8. naloŋ e pa A man came.
9. nɛni e naloŋ toli A woman called a man.
10. di naloŋ ka bɛlɛi mu They saw a man in the house.
11. ku ŋwɛni ta ka We saw a bird’s nest
12. di nɛni a mɔlɔŋ ŋuma They stole the woman’s (raw) rice.
13. di kwɛli loŋ paa They killed a young leopard.
14. i ŋgiwai lokwa You (sg.) beat the dog.
15. ŋa tɛ ŋaloŋ tɔnɔ ja I bought one egg.
16. di nuai toli They called the people.
17. nuai di pa The people came.
18. ka li ndɔwɔi su You (pl.) went into the bush.
19. ŋa ɣila tɔnɔ ka I saw one dog.
20. ku lia We forgot.
21. jala e naloŋ njiŋ A lion bit a man.
22. nuai di lɔ k͡pele The people drank palm-wine.
23. e wulɔ tama ja She bought much oil.
24. naloŋ tɔnɔ e pu One man ran.
25. di ŋa sɛŋkau ŋuma They stole my money.
26. di ku wɛli They wanted us.
27. ku wulu tɔnɔ te We cut one tree.
28. nuai di ba mɛ The people ate rice.
29. ku kwɛli ka ŋgolai su We saw a leopard in the highland.
30. nuai di njai k͡pele The people drank the water.
31. nɛni e sua ja The woman bought meat.
32. ŋa i wɛli I wanted you (sg).
33. Suppose this was the only surviving document in this language. Do your best to answer the following questions based on this document only. For each answer, cite specific examples that support your claim. Don’t worry if you’re not sure about some of the grammatical terms used here – ask Dr. Pak or a fellow student.
    1. What’s the **basic order** **of subject, verb and object** in this language?
    2. Does the verb in this language change its form to indicate **tense** (e.g. past, future)?
    3. Does the verb change its form to agree with the **subject** (i.e., Are verbs conjugated)? How does the language compare to English in this respect?
    4. How many **pronouns** does this language have? Present the pronouns in a chart. To what extent do the pronouns in this language correspond to English pronouns?
    5. Do nouns and pronouns change in form depending on whether they’re used as subjects or objects (i.e. does this language distinguish **case**)? Do you know of any other languages where this happens? (Does it happen in English?)
34. Which of your answers above do you feel the most confident about? Which do you feel the least confident about? Why?
35. Now suppose you discover a surviving speaker of this language. What questions could you ask this speaker that would help you answer some of the questions above that you were unsure about? **Be as specific as you can**.