**Toward reconstructing noun classification in Longuda**

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1 Introduction

1.1 The Longuda language

+ spoken in Northeast Nigeria, constitutes one of 14 primary units of the Adamawa pool of Niger-Congo (Güldemann 2018), all other more detailed classifications premature
- consists of 5 or 6 dialects > language complex > Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nyuwar</td>
<td>Gwaanda</td>
<td>Nya Gwanda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jessu</td>
<td>Deele</td>
<td>Nya Dele</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wala</td>
<td>Wala</td>
<td>Nya Guyuwa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guyuk</td>
<td>Guyuk</td>
<td>Nya Guyuwa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banjiram</td>
<td>Cerii</td>
<td>Nya Ceriya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>?</td>
<td>Koola</td>
<td>Nya Tariya</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Longuda dialects

+ basic typological characteristics relevant for discussion:
- ATR vowel harmony, albeit reduced to different degrees (Kleinewillinghöfer 1996)
- largely head-initial syntax in clause and noun phrase
- noun classification system with both class agreement (as the basis of gender in terms of Corbett 1991) and adnominal class marking by means of suffixes
> restricted description so far:
- Jungraithmayr (1968/69); nominal suffixes and three contexts of agreement for Gwanda
- Kleinewillinghöfer (1996): nominal forms and some agreement in a cross-dialectal survey
+ goal of our current work: synchronic and diachronic assessment of noun classification system in terms of both agreement—gender and nominal form system
> reconstruction of nominal forms based initially on 80-word-list for nearly all varieties
+ present data base:
  a) U. Kleinewillinghöfer: word lists on most dialects with diverse coverage, examples with agreement information only on Guyuk > core of our presentation (our annotation)
  b) diverse data from publications: Meek (1931), Jungraithmayr (1968/69), Newman (1976), Newman and Newman (1977a, b) > examples cited accordingly

1.2 Methodology

+ theoretical and analytical framework based on Corbett (1991, 2006) and amended by Güldemann (2000), and particularly Güldemann and Fiedler (2019):
- gender = classification of nouns reflected by agreement on other words
- FOUR analytical concepts for gender systems that involve not only marking on the agreement target but also on the noun as the agreement controller/trigger:
  a) AGREEMENT (= AGR) CLASS (identified by Arabic number):
    = class of concrete nominal forms established on account of identical behavior across all agreement contexts - overt reflex of gender but conflated with other features
  b) GENDER (CLASS):
    = class of nouns or nominal bases in the lexicon with the same agreement behavior - abstracted from other agreement features, notably number
  c) NOMINAL FORM (= NF) CLASS (identified by abstract upper-case form):
    = class of concrete nominal forms established on account of identical properties in morphophonological form, which often determines agreement behavior
  d) DERIFICATION (CLASS):
    = class of nouns or nominal bases in the lexicon established on account of identical morphological variation triggered by inflectional and derivational features

+ stereotype of Niger-Congo noun classification: one-to-one mapping between nominal form (NF) class and agreement (AGR) class, also including formal alliteration
> captured by the idealized but problematic philological “noun class” concept

(1)a. "canonical" Niger-Congo class marking
(1)b. two different NF classes trigger the same AGR class
(1)c. the same NF class triggers two different AGR classes
> situations in (1)b. and (1)c. are recurrent across Niger-Congo, contrary to the traditional "noun class" approach
> necessary strict separation of agreement—gender on the one hand and nominal form on the other, even though Longuda turns out to be seemingly simple in this respect
2 Gender and nominal morphology in Guyuk

2.1 Agreement and gender

2.1.1 Agreement classes overview

+ agreement classes represented in Table 2 by exponents of typical agreement contexts
- classes involve a thematic consonant or vowel that fuses with different grammatical elements
- incomplete due to lack of data on other known agreement targets, e.g. possessives in (5)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGR</th>
<th>Exponent</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>NUM</th>
<th>OBJ.REL</th>
<th>SBJ.REL</th>
<th>ADJ</th>
<th>SBJ</th>
<th>OBJ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>SG</td>
<td>nai-</td>
<td>in</td>
<td>-i</td>
<td>-ya</td>
<td>-a</td>
<td>-i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>PL</td>
<td>nab-</td>
<td>ob</td>
<td>-ba</td>
<td>-ba</td>
<td>-ba</td>
<td>-ba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>U</td>
<td>TN, SG</td>
<td>nau-</td>
<td>un</td>
<td>-wa</td>
<td>-a</td>
<td>-i</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>TN, PL</td>
<td>naha-anhe</td>
<td>anha</td>
<td>-ha</td>
<td>-ba</td>
<td>-ba</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>TN, SG</td>
<td>nai-</td>
<td>al</td>
<td>-la</td>
<td>-a</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>TN, PL</td>
<td>na(a)-</td>
<td>an</td>
<td>-[?]a</td>
<td>-a</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>TN, SG</td>
<td>nak-</td>
<td>anki</td>
<td>-ka</td>
<td>-a</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>TN, PL</td>
<td>na(a)-</td>
<td>ant</td>
<td>-ta</td>
<td>-a</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>TN, PL</td>
<td>na(a)-</td>
<td>am</td>
<td>-ma</td>
<td>-a</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Agreement classes in Guyuk

(2) Numerical phrase
a. zi-ki na-ki-kal ‘one snake’
   snake-KL7 NUM-7-one
b. nyu-li na-l-kal ‘one eye’
eye-LL5 NUM-5-one
c. nyi-i na-b-sir ‘two persons’
person-B.2 NUM-2-two

(3) Subject relative clause
a. na dwi cau-thi gn-tha kanna
   1SG see leg-TL8 REL-8 be.broken
   ‘I see the legs which are broken.’
b. na dwam thi-ki an-ka mwar mwarka
   1SG see tree-KL7 REL-7 become.big big-7
   ‘I have seen the tree which has grown big.’

(4) Object relative clause
a. cau-the a-thi na dwa …
   leg-TL8 REL-8 1SG see
   ‘The legs that I have seen, …’
b. thi-ki an-ke na dwa …
   tree-KL7 REL-7 1SG see
   ‘The tree that I have seen, …’

(5) Possessive phrase
a. zin-de nyi-li ‘my name’
   name-LL5 1SG-5
b. chiba-u nyi-we ‘my slave’
   slave-U.3 1SG-3
c. so nyu-we ‘my house’
   house.3 1SG-3
   (Meek 1931(2): 363-4)

2.2.2 Gender system

+ preliminary gender system of Guyuk based on available word list > Figure 1

- 9 AGR classes that are not all dedicated to single values of number (all but AGR1, 2, ?6 used for transnumeral nouns!) and gender (AGR7 in at least two genders)
- 5 class-pair genders for count nouns in convergent system (= number confflation toward one value: singular AGR7 with at least two plural counterparts)
> more plural than singular forms contradict Greenberg’s (1963) universal 37 (cf. Plank and Schellinger 1997)
- preliminary findings on gender semantics: 1/2 human; 3/4 (kinship), animal, staple food; 5/6 animal, non-typical human, body part, fruit; 7/8 tree; 8 abstract; 9 liquid, mass
2.2 Nominal morphology

+ in line with typical Niger-Congo systems, agreement-based gender system is closely matched in the nominal morphology, which is exclusively suffixing

> one-to-one relation between agreement (AGR) and nominal form (NF) classes according to Kleinewillinghöfer (p.c.) with alliteration regarding thematic element > Table 3

- pending question of ∅-marked nouns like proper names, loans etc.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>T-form</th>
<th>A-form</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>AGR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-I</td>
<td>-YA</td>
<td>mwa-i</td>
<td>mwa-ya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-BE</td>
<td>-BA (-ba, -be)</td>
<td>mwau-be</td>
<td>mwau-ba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-U</td>
<td>-WA (-wa, -a, -we)</td>
<td>lara-u</td>
<td>lara-wa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-HE</td>
<td>-HA (-ha, -he)</td>
<td>lara-he</td>
<td>lara-ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-LI</td>
<td>-LA (-la, -da, (-ra), -le)</td>
<td>kwanyi-l(i)</td>
<td>kwanyi-le</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-A</td>
<td>-TA (-a, -wa, -ya)</td>
<td>ma-a</td>
<td>ma-'a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-KI</td>
<td>-KA (-ka, -ke)</td>
<td>zi-ki</td>
<td>zi-ka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-TI</td>
<td>-TA</td>
<td>zi-thi</td>
<td>zi-tha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-M</td>
<td>-MA</td>
<td>thwaki-m</td>
<td>thwaki-ma</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Nominal form classes with two different exponents in Guyuk

- major observation: more than one NF exponent - T-form vs. A-form vs. ∅ form:
  - ∅-form present in the data but rare > see below
  - for T(thematic element)-form vs. A-form see (6) and (7) where:
    (a) with A-form as citation form
    (b) with A-form as definite subject
    (c) with T-form in construction with an attributive adjective

(6)a. lara-wa ‘elephant’
  b. lara-wa-u ha mwar-wa ‘the elephant is big’
     elephant-WA.3-DEF COP big-3
  c. lara-u mwar-wa ‘the big elephant’
     elephant-U.3 big-3

(7)a. swi-la ‘heart’
  b. swi-la-u ha mwar-la ‘the heart is big’
     heart-LA.5-DEF COP big-5
  c. swi-l mwar-la ‘the big heart’
     heart-L.5 big-5

+ traditionally, (NF) classes of Longuda are presented by the A-form while the T-form is described as a reduced form:

An attributive adjective follows the noun which it is supposed to qualify. The concord marking element is suffixed to the adjective; the class element appears in its full shape. On the other hand, the preceding noun loses its class marker either completely or at least the vocalic part of it; … (Jungraithmayr 1968/69: 176; see also Newman and Newman 1976b)

- very unlikely scenario as the T-form preserves class distinctions by means of CV vs. V and in particular between different thematic vowels that are very likely to be inherited from an earlier Niger-Congo stage while the A-form neutralizes them

> A-form is derived from the T-form by adding a final element -a

+ complex distribution of the two NF types:
  a) derived A-form with final -a on nouns:
    - in isolation as citation form > (6)a./(7)a.
    - extended by determiners like the definite marker and demonstrative > (6)b./(7)b.
  - as predicate nominal > (8)
  - in associative construction > (9)
b) short T-form in the majority of grammatical contexts, notably on nouns:
  - extended by numeral (2), relative clause (3)/(4), possessive (5), adjective (6)c./(7)c.
  - as complement of adposition > (10)
  - in negative non-verbal predication > (11)
  - before several clausal markers (Newman and Newman 1977b: 60) > (12)
  c) ∅-form on nouns:
    - as compound head > (13)
    - others?

(8) Predicative nominal
ni na Baturo-wa
1SG COP European-WA.3
‘I am a European.’ (Meek 1931(2): 364)

(9) Associative construction
a. cau-kalara-wa
   leg-KA.7 elephant-WA.3
   ‘the leg of the elephant’

b. nyu-la zi-ka
   eye-LA.5 snake-KA.7
   ‘the eye of the snake’
Locative construction
a. a thu-m ye-u
   PREP blood-M.9 in-DEF
   ‘in the blood’

b. a ku-ki ra
   PREP fire-KI.7 on
   ‘on the fire’

(11) Negative equation/identification (Newman 1976: 58)
a. na ma-m ga
   NEG water-M.9 NEG
   ‘it isn’t water.’

b. na mwa-l ga
   NEG woman-I.1 NEG
   ‘she’s not a girl.’

(12) na ninggo-bo kwand-i di, ...
1SG give-3PL chief-I.1 if
   ‘If I give them to the chief, ...’ (Newman 1976: 43)

(13) Compound
zwa jujwa-la
child.1 dog-LA.5
   ‘the small dog’ (diminutive also marked by final -la (class 5) instead of lexical -wa (3))

+ variation between T- and A-form also concerns agreement targets!!! > Table 2:
   predominant T-form vs. A-form on adjective, subject relative, and possessive pronoun

3 Summary
+ central findings:
  a) A-form represents a secondary set of class markers
     - A-form may (have) be(en) a marker with NP scope that became lexicalized in citation and,
       yet later, in some grammatical contexts
  b) T-form reflects original class markers with a CV or V shape
     - preserves thematic elements that are more typical for Niger-Congo classes
  c) ∅-form may represent a yet earlier stage rather than some form of affix deletion

+ assumption of original T-form informs the reconstruction of lexical items, e.g., nouns of
  class 5~LI with stem changes in the plural of class 6~A (especially Guyuk and Ceri)

Table 4: Stem alternations in nouns containing NF -LI and NF -A
- vowel alternation can be explained by assuming either regressive stem assimilation or metathesis within class suffix:

\[
\begin{align*}
&\text{SG} & & \text{PL} \\
&{^*}\text{TU-LI-(A)} & > & {^*}\text{tu-li-(a)} & > & \text{twi-l-(a)} \\
&{^*}\text{TU-LI-(A)} & > & {^*}\text{tu-il-(a)} & > & \text{twi-l-(a)} \\
&{^*}\text{TU-A-(A)} & > & {^*}\text{tu-a-(a)} & > & \text{tw-a'-a} \\
\end{align*}
\]

> singular stem may have expanded into plural:

\[
{^*}\text{twi-l-(a)} (\text{SG}) > {^*}\text{twi-a-(a)} (\text{PL}) > {^*}\text{twi-y-(a)} (\text{PL})
\]

+ assumption of original T-form informs the reconstruction of class inventory, e.g., nouns of singular k-class that could represent a neutralization of *ka vs. *ku vs. *ki,

explaining the multiple plural marking in t-, a-, and m-class forming 2-3 genders (and the exception to Greenberg’s universal 37)

a) modern ka/ta from *ka/*ti: tree class in Longuda and Benue-Congo (de Wolf 1971: 53ff)
b) modern ka/a from *ku/*a: lexical “exception” of ‘arm/hand’ in Koola, Wala and Guyuk may be a Niger-Congo - cf. Benue-Congo (de Wolf 1971: 53ff):

(14) ‘arm/ hand’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Wala</th>
<th>Guyuk</th>
<th>Gwaanda</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ná-ká</td>
<td>na-ka</td>
<td>ná-ká</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ná-ʔa</td>
<td>na-a</td>
<td>ná-ʔa</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ná-tá</td>
<td>ná-tá</td>
<td>ná-tá</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Abbreviations

ADJ adjective, AGR agreement (class), ASS associative linker, ATR advanced tongue root, C consonant, COP copula, DEF definite, DEM demonstrative, DET determinant, EMPH emphatic, NEG negation, NF nominal form (class), NUM numeral, OBJ object, PL plural, PREP preposition, PRO pronoun, PST past, REL relative marker, SBJ subject, SG singular, TN transnumeral, V vowel; Arabic number = agreement class; if followed by SG/PL = person

References


Kleinewillinghöfer, Ulrich. no date. Field notes.


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