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Personal Pronoun Morphology

Section 5

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Personal Pronoun Morphology

Section 5

Denis Paperno

- The structure of personal pronouns in Beng was thoroughly described in (Paperno 2005). Here we reproduce pronoun paradigms with minimal comments on the usage of pronoun series.

Table 3. Paradigms of personal pronouns

Series		Singular			Plural			
		1	2	3	1	2	3	
non-subject		ḡ	mḡ	à	ḡḡ	kā	ḡò	Predicative marker with a singular subject NP
possessive		mḡ	mḡpḡ	àpḡ	ḡḡpḡ // ḡmḡ	kāpḡ	ḡòpḡ	
reflexive		ḡ drḡ	mḡ drḡ	à drḡ	ḡḡ drḡ	kā drḡ	ḡò drḡ	
focus (independent)		mḡḡ	mḡḡ	àḡḡ // àḡḡ	ḡḡḡḡḡ // ḡḡḡḡḡ	kāḡḡḡ // kāyḡḡ	ḡòḡḡḡ // ḡòyḡḡ	
existential		mḡḡ	mḡ	ò	ḡḡ	kā	ḡò	∅
preterite	+	ḡ, mḡ*	mḡ	ó, é	ḡḡ	ká	ḡó	
	-, -3	mḡ	mḡ	wă	ḡḡ	kă	ḡă	
	+3	mḡ	mḡ	ă	ḡḡă	kă	ḡă	
conditional		ḡ, mḡ*	mḡ	ô, ê	ḡḡ	kâ	ḡô	

	+3	<i>mâ</i>		<i>wâ, â</i>			<i>ɲâ</i>	
	-, -3	(= habitual)						
habitual	+	<i>ɲ, mâ*</i>	<i>mî</i>	<i>ò, è</i>	<i>àɲ, ɲɲ</i>	<i>Kà</i>	<i>ɲò</i>	
	-, +3, -3	<i>mà</i>		<i>wà, à</i>			<i>ɲà</i>	
stative	+	<i>ɲó</i>	<i>mîó// mî</i>	<i>òó// ò</i>	<i>àɲó</i>	<i>kāó// kâ</i>	<i>ɲòó// ɲǒ</i>	<i>ó</i>
	-	<i>ɲā</i>	<i>mîā // mîwā</i>	<i>wāā</i>	<i>àɲā // àɲwā</i>	<i>kāā // kāwā</i>	<i>ɲāā // ɲòwā</i>	<i>wā</i>
	+3	<i>ɲâ</i>	<i>mîâ</i>	<i>ââ</i>	<i>àɲâ</i>	<i>kāâ</i>	<i>ɲââ</i>	<i>â</i>
	-3	<i>ɲā̃</i>	<i>mîā̃</i>	<i>wāā̃</i>	<i>àɲā̃</i>	<i>kāā̃</i>	<i>ɲāā̃</i>	<i>wā̃</i>

Notes on the table: + marks “affirmative non-contracted forms”; - marks “negative non-contracted forms”; +3 marks “affirmative forms contracted with a 3SG object pronoun”; -3 marks “negative forms contracted with a 3SG object pronoun”. More on contraction with a 3SG personal pronoun see below.

- The non-subject series has the widest range of usages, including the direct object position, the object of postposition, and the prenominal possessor. The possessive series is used as an adnominal possessor or headlessly and puts additional emphasis on the possessor (‘as for MY ...’, ‘it is HIS ...’, ‘our thing’). The focus series is used practically in all contexts where a noun phrase can be used, marking, in contrast to the regular subject or non-subject series, certain contrastive emphasis on the pronominal referent. I also recognize a distinct reflexive series, despite the fact that reflexive pronouns transparently consist of the non-subject pronouns followed by marker *drɛ̀*, which the consultants perceive as a separate word. The reason for such an interpretation is that *drɛ̀* shows no morphosyntactic autonomy. It cannot change its position, be separated from its pronominal element, or attach to anything other than personal pronouns. Reflexive pronouns of Beng are exact functional counterparts of reflexive pronouns in European languages.
- The remaining series are used in the subject position, distributed according to tense, aspect, modality, and polarity values (see Chapter 12 and especially section 12.1.3). Besides this, pronouns of the existential series have a special usage as the first conjunct in a coordinate NP with *A nɛ̀ B lō* marking.

5.1. On the allomorphy of the 1SG subject pronoun

- The table above contains 1st person singular forms marked with an asterisk (*). These special 1SG forms have the stem *mɛ̀* (instead of *ɲ*), and are used whenever the subject pronoun is followed by another personal pronoun (of non-subject or reflexive series) of 1SG, 2SG, 3SG, or 3PL:

(11)	<i>Mǎ</i>	<i>ḡ</i>	<i>drà</i>	<i>yè.</i>
	1SG:PST+	1SG	RFL	see:L
	'I saw myself'.			

(12)	<i>Mǎ</i>	<i>mḡ</i>	<i>yè.</i>
	1SG:PST+	2SG	see:L
	'I saw you'.		

(13)	<i>Mǎ</i>	<i>à</i>	<i>yè.</i>
	1SG:PST+	3SG	see:L
	'I saw him'.		

(14)	<i>ḡ</i>	<i>ḡḡ</i>	<i>yè.</i>
	1SG:PST+	1PL	see:L
	'I saw us'.		

(15)	<i>ḡ</i>	<i>kā</i>	<i>yè.</i>
	1SG:PST+	2PL	see:L
	'I saw you (plural)'.		

(16)	<i>Mǎ</i>	<i>ḡò</i>	<i>yè.</i>
	1SG:PST+	3PL	see:L
	'I saw them'.		

- 5 In those kinds of contexts the regular form with the stem *ḡ* is also marginally possible (*ḡ ḡdrà yè* etc.); acceptability judgments vary.
- 6 Note that the pronoun that triggers the selection of the 1SG stem *mǎ* is not always a direct object. It can also be in the possessor position of a direct object:

(17)	<i>Mǎ</i>	<i>ḡ</i>	<i>wlá</i>	<i>lè</i>	<i>wà</i>
	1SG:PST+	1SG	house	DEF	break:L

	'I broke my house'.
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- 7 The distribution of η vs. $m\grave{a}$ can be considered to be a manifestation of the contrastive strategy for coding core participants (along with the doubtlessly dominant accusative strategy of Beng), see (Vydrin 2006). However, there are more serious reasons for such an analysis in the case of Guro than in the case of Beng, because in Beng the choice of the 1SG form is fully determined by the morphological context and can be described as allomorphy¹.

5.2. Contraction with 3SG object pronoun

- 8 The 3SG object pronoun can contract with the preceding subject pronouns forming portemanteaus, e.g.:

(18)	$M\grave{a}$	$p\bar{e}!$	(<	$m\grave{a}$	$\grave{a}$	$p\bar{e}$)
	1SG:HAB+3	say		1SG:HAB+	3SG	say
	'Let me say it!'					

(19)	$M\grave{i}$	$p\bar{e}!$	(<	$m\grave{i}$	$\grave{a}$	$p\bar{e}$)
	2SG:HAB+3	say		2SG:HAB+	3SG	say
	'Let you say it!'					

(20)	$\eta\text{-}\acute{a}$	$p\bar{e}$.	(<	$\eta\text{-}\acute{o}$	$\acute{a}$	$p\bar{e}$)
	1SG-ST+3	say		1SG-ST+	3SG	say
	'I will say it'.					

- 9 The portemanteau forms are not obligatory. Non-contracted alternatives are also acceptable, although infrequent.
- 10 Since contracted forms are not fully transparent, Table 3 lists them as distinct pronoun series (PST+3, PST-3, HAB+3 etc., where “3” stands for “contracted with a 3SG pronoun”).

5.3. Subject series of pronouns

- 11 Information on the usage of subject pronoun series depending on clause type, tense, aspect, modality, and polarity (TAMP), is for reasons of brevity given in Tables 4 and 5 below. For sentential examples for each clause type, as well as for the full TAMP paradigm of a sentence, see Chapter 12.

Table 4. Subject pronoun usage in verbal sentences

construction	polarity :	affirmative	negative
preterite	PST+		PST-
perfect			
imperative/optative	HAB+		HAB- = CND-
habitual			
conditional	CND+		
future, progressive, stative	ST+		ST-

Table 5. Subject Pronouns in Non-Verbal Clauses

clause type polarity:	affirmative	negative
adverbial	ST+	ST-
adjectival	HAB+ or ST+ ²	
existential	EX+	EX-

5.4. Stative pronouns with verbs *tá*, *nŭ*

- ¹² Beng exhibits relics of an affirmative stative predicative marker alternative to *ó*. It is used instead of *ó* with just two verbs. Before the verb *nŭ* ‘to come’, the stative marker can have the form *yé*, as in *mŭ yénŭ* ‘you (singular) will come’, *mŭ yénŭðló* ‘you (singular) are coming’, etc. The verb *nŭ* ‘to come’ is also compatible with the regular stative marker *ó*, as in *mŭó nŭ*, *mŭó nŭðló*. The verb *tá* ‘to go’ fuses with the preceding stative marker into *yrá* (<**yé tá* instead of **ó tá*). Compare: *mŭ yrá* ‘you (singular) will go’, *mŭ yrááló* ‘you (singular) are going’. Before the verbs *tá* ‘to go’ and *nŭ* ‘to come’, the final *ŋ* of first person pronouns fuses with the initial /y/ of the stative marker: *ɲrá* (< *ŋ yrá*) ‘I will go’, *ḡɲénŭ* (< *ḡŋ yénŭ*) ‘we will come’.

NOTES

1. The “ergative” pronouns in Guro are triggered not just by morphological but also by semantic factors, including the referential status of the direct object, an independently known ergativity/accusativity factor. See (Vydrin 2006) for more detail.
 2. Sentences with predicative adjectives show both stative and habitual subject pronouns. The choice of the pronoun series depends on the adjective in question. Some adjectives require the stative series, others require the habitual series, several (e.g. *jàlí* ‘stupid’) show variation. The choice of series might be related to the semantic distinction of temporary vs. permanent property denoted by the adjective; one could identify this distinction with the individual vs. stage-level classification of predicates by (Carlson 1977). This hypothesis has not been thoroughly tested but some examples are suggestive (individual-level *gēŋ* ‘beautiful’ requires a habitual pronoun, stage-level *fōŋvōŋ* ‘shaded’, *gblūŋ* ‘cloudy’, a stative one). If the distinction were driven by a semantic contrast of this kind, this could motivate the neutralization of the distinction under negation – indeed, when absence of a property is asserted, the temporary vs. permanent status of the absent property is irrelevant.
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