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Coordination

Section 11

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Coordination

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- 1 The default way to conjoin constituents A and B in Beng is the construction *A n̄ B lō*, literally ‘A together with B’. This construction conjoins noun phrases (102b), adjective phrases, as well as adverbial constituents. Verbs and verb phrases never conjoin in Beng, so that the meaning of corresponding constructions of European languages has to be expressed via clause combination of one kind or another (102c). Clause-level conjunction in its turn has to be expressed via juxtaposition of sentences, or, alternatively, as temporal subordination (see 13.5). Such differentiation of conjunction patterns by the syntactic category of the conjunction is common in languages of Sub-Saharan Africa (Haspelmath 2005b), which is the biggest area with a systematic contrast between nominal and verbal coordination.

The first conjunct in a coordinate NP is doubled by pronouns of the existential series, the second by the non-subject series.

- 2 Disjunction, in contrast to conjunction, does not distinguish sharply between nominal and sentential domains; NPs, postpositional phrases, and full sentences are disjoined with the same marker (102b,c). The disjunctive coordinator is structurally a conditional clause *à lé é n̄*, literally ‘if it is not’, which can undergo shortening to *àlén̄*. So Beng has a remarkably compositional semantics of its disjunction, as indeed, Boolean disjunction in logic ($A \text{ or } B$) is equivalent to a combination of a negation and an implication ($\text{not } A \Rightarrow B$). Sometimes one uses the alternate disjunction *n̄ñēē* (104e). Extraposition of the second disjunct with the disjunction marker (104e) is common (though never found with overt conjunction), and perhaps could be analyzed as sentential disjunction under ellipsis; more inquiry into the structure of such sentences is needed.

Examples in (102) illustrate uses of conjunction and disjunction. (102a) presents a coordinate structure with a *wh*-element:

(102a)	[M̄]	n̄	dé	lō]	f̄ē	ká	gūā	kā	wlá	wē	fl̄q̄	n̄á?
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	2SG	and	who	with	Rel	2PL:PST+	stay	2PL	house	there	today	TOP
	‘Who did you stay with at home today?’ (literally ‘You and who that you stayed at your house today?’).											

(102b)	ŋ̃	tɔ́	lɛ̃	ŋ̃	dē	n̄	ŋ̃
	1SG	name	DEF	1SG	father	and	1SG

dā	lō	ɲɛ̃	ŋā	kà	ē.
mother	with	FOC	3PL:PST+3	put:L	FOC
‘My name, it was my father and my mother who gave it to me’ (literally: ‘it was my father and my mother who put it’).					

(102c)	Wà	bèsé	è	yéwò	[glɛ̃	lè	lò]
	2SG:HAB+3	machete	DEF	sharpen:L	rock	DEF	on

à	lé-ŋ̃	[klàwá	à	lō].
3SG:PST-	COP:L:NEG-if.not	whetstone	DEF	with
‘She sharpens her machete on the rock or with the whetstone’.				

(102d)	ŋó	sròbɛ́	à	lé	é	n̄	ŋó	gū̀	wlá	n̄.
	1SG:ST+	leave	3SG:PST-	COP:L	NEG	if.not	1SG:ST+	stay	house	here
	‘I will either leave or I will stay at home’.									

(102e)	m̄-ó	wápló	klɛ̃	n̄ŋɛ̃	m̄nú?
	2SG-ST+	fufu	Post	or	rice
	‘Would you like fufu or rice?’ (lit. ‘Are you after fufu or rice?’)				

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