

The pronominal system of South-Bauchi West Chadic languages

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South Bauchi West (SBW) languages form a group of 26 lects out of the 37 listed in Shimizu 1978's survey of Southern Bauchi Chadic languages. Except for short wordlists, and for Schneeberg, 1971 & 1974 on Zaar, the work on these generally dying languages is still scarce.

This first paper devoted to the comparative morphology of South Bauchi West (SBW) is based on a list of personal pronouns in 14 languages (Zaar, Guus, Boto, Zodi, Zumbul, Baraza, Lushi, Chari, Tulai, Polci, Dir, Nyamzak, Zaranda, Buli). SBW pronominal marks have been reconstructed and compared to Proto-West-Chadic pronouns (PCW, Newman & Schuh 74).

1. Syntactic functions

Syntactic functions in Chadic are originally marked by word order, sometimes reinforced by particles. As a consequence, personal marks in Chadic and SBW in particular show few syntactic variants. The existence of a specific paradigm will be the criteria of the pertinence of a syntactic function for personal marks.

1.1. *Independent pronouns*

Their function is that of topic, and term in an identification relation. See an example of identification in Zaar :

nə	myááni ¹
be	1S.INDEP
<i>It's me.</i>	

and an example of topic in Zodi :

èrì	à	wóm-tì	wát
3S.INDEP	3S.ICOMPL	feel-ing	hunger
<i>He feels hungry</i>			

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¹ Zaar and Gùùs (Sigidi) have 3 tone levels ; the other languages have 2. Hi is marked with an acute accent ; Lo with a grave ; Mid is left unmarked. List of abbreviations : AOR, Aorist ; COMP, Complementizer ; COMPL, Completive ; DAT, Dative ; GEN, genitive ; H, Hi tone ; ICOMPL, Incomplete ; ICP, Intransitive Copy Pronoun ; INDEP, independent ; INFL, Inflexion ; L, Lo tone ; P, plural ; PCW, Proto-Chadic West ; S, singular ; SBW, South-Bauchi West ; SUBJ, Subjunctive ; TAM, Tense-Aspect-Mood.

1.2. Subject

1.2.1. Non-verbal predicates

Non-verbal predicates are used to attribute a quality, locate, express possession, etc. Pronominal subjects of such predicates belong to a specific paradigm. See the expression of possession in Zaar :

mì	tó	mààʃín
1P	with	motorbike
<i>we have a motorbike</i>		

1.2.2. Verbal predicates

Pronominal subjects of verbal predicates are fused with TAM markers into an inflection. The INFL can be either a clitic or a word preceding the verb. In SBW, at least one paradigm of these subject+TAM, called the Aorist, has a zero TAM morpheme, leaving only the bare subject pronoun. See an example in Guus.

mà	mbwaa	jààkí.
1P.AOR	shoot	bird
<i>We shot a bird.</i>		

In the comparison, we will use the Ø TAM (Aorist or Completive, depending on the language) to exemplify subject pronouns.

1.3. Intransitive Copy Pronouns

They are personal pronouns suffixed to intransitive verbs, marking the agreement with the subject of the verb. They are not common in SBW. See an example in Luri :

à	yát	mə	mə	rígà-mì
3S.AOR	want	COMP	1P.AOR	leave-1P.ICP
<i>He wants us to leave</i>				

1.4. Direct Object

Direct object pronouns generally behave like suffixes, as can be seen from Zaar phonological processes : 2s /k/ > [ɣ] /V_V ; the L tone of the verb spreads on to the direct object :

á	vər-kə	[vər-ɣə]
3S.AOR	give-2s	
<i>he gave (it) to you</i>		

1.5. Dative

1.5.1. SBW

Contrary to Hausa, there is no specific paradigm for Dative in SBW. Direct object pronouns are used with a dative particle at the end of the sentence. Ex : Zaar **món** :

tə	mán	fi-mí	zùkn	món
3S.SUBJ	come	do.1P	medicine	DAT
[...] in order for him to come and do magic for us				

1.6. Genitive

Genitive pronouns have two structures in SBW, corresponding to two structures of the nominal genitive construction : the ‘heavy’ structure <N Genitive link N> and the ‘light’ structure <N N>. In Zaar for example, the light structure keeps the trace of the Genitive link (**kə/gə**) in the form of a floating tone that attaches to the preceding noun :

heavy
kot **ké** **nóno**
 calabash of milk
calabash of milk

light
kót **ńóno**
 calabash.of milk

The corresponding genitive pronouns are :

heavy
bèndà **g-wàà**
 pot of-2S
your pot

light
bèndà **wàà**
 pot 2S.GEN

The heavy structure (Genitive link-Pro) forms the independent genitive pronoun : **gwàà** = ‘yours’.

2. Morphology

SBW languages have lost the gender, inclusive/exclusive and dual marks characteristic of Afro-Asiatic (AA) languages.

2.1. Zaranda

	Aor	Object	Independent	Nom. Pred.	Genitive	ICP
1s	à	-éŋ	ámì	ámí	yíí(ní)	-nè
2s	kè	kí	kíí	kí	wáà/wáágì	-k
3s	tè	tí	tíí	tí	wáàs/wáásì	-t
1p	mè	mí	míí	mì	yìinóŋ	-mè
2p	kè Vb-ní	kíŋ	kìníí	kì	wààkóŋ	-nóŋkìn
3p	sè	sí	síí	sì	wààséŋ	-sè

2.2. Dir

	Compl	Object	Independent	Nom. Pred.	Genitive
1s	à H	-óm	ám	ám	-(y)èní
2s	kè H	-(úú)Ø	kó	kó	-è
3s	yàà H	té	yàx	yàx	-ès
1p	mù L	mé	mì	mì	-gèèmí
2p	kè L- -nè	-(úú)n	kèn	kèn	-èní
3p	wù H	-úúr	wúrí	wúr	-èzóni

2.3. Nyamzak (Langas)

	Compl	Object	Independent	Nom. Pred.	Genitive
1s	à	-èn/-ìim	ám	àm	-gè
2s	kè	kè/gè	kóŋ	kè	-gèŋ
3s	yáá	tè/dè	yáx	yáx	-gès

1p	mè H-	mìì	mìì	mì	-gè mí
2p	gè H-	gèn	gèn	gèn	-gèn
3p	wù	wùr	wúr	wùr	-gèzán

2.4. *Chaari (Danche)*

	Aor	Object	Independent	Genitive
1s	má	-àm	ám	-ííni
2s	ká	kà	kí	-wáágè
3s	tá	tà	jí	(?)
1p	mà	myèè	mèè	-wòòkàn
2p	kà	kyèè	kèè	-yèèkèn
3p	tà	fyèè	jàè	-wòòsèn

2.5. *Bàráázà (Baraza)*

	Compl	Object	Independent	Nom. Pred.	Genitive
1s	á	-ám	ám	ám	-kíní
2s	ká	ká	ká	ká	-gè
3s	yèè	yèè	yèè	yèè	-kííyè
1p	mù	mà	mà	mà	-gèm
2p	kù	kò	kò	kò	-gèn
3p	kì	kéé	kèè	kì	-kèè

2.6. *Zodí (Dott)*

	Compl	Object	Independent	Nom. Pred.	Genitive	ICP
1s	à	-(é)m	ám	ám	gìn	H
2s	ú	kí	kí	kí	gèè	-kí
3s	Ø	èrì	èrì	èrì	gès	-tí
1p	mà	mà	mà	mà	gèm	-mà
2p	kò	kò	kò	kò	gèṅ	-kò
3p	tì	séṅ	séṅ	séṅ	gèséṅ	-séṅ

- 3 kinship terms (**baa**, *husband* ; **kon**, *son* ; **ṭénsi**, *mother's brother*) have a special genitive paradigm :

	Genitive	uncle	husband
1s	-níí	ʈʈɛníí	bààníí
2s	-níŋgee	ʈʈɛníŋgèè	bààníŋgèè
3s	-nós	ʈʈɛnós	bàànós
1p	-nóma	ʈʈɛnómà	bàànómà
2p	-nóŋgən	ʈʈɛnóŋgèŋ	bàànóŋgèŋ
3p	-nósəŋ	ʈʈɛnəsəŋ	bàànəsəŋ

- ICP's are suffixed to the verb, with frequent consonant assimilation. The 1st person singular is marked by a Hi tone on the last syllable of the verb.
NB : the 3rd person singular **-tí** which, with the Continuous **tyáá**, is the only survival of the common Chadic personal mark, under the form of the feminine pronoun. Elsewhere, the 3rd person mark is replaced by the word **əri**, which is to be compared to the word **əróm**, *thing*.

2.7. Gùùs (Sigidi)

	Aor	Object	Genitive	Independent
1s	ma	-(ə)m	gùgè / -gè	ɲááni
2s	ka	kə	gwààgí / -ààgè	kyááni
3s	ʈa	tə	gwààjí / -ààs	ʈjááni
1p	mà	mé	gwàámmí / -ààgmè	ɲàané
2p	kà	kən	gwààgəni / -ààgən	kyàané
3p	ʈà	ʈán	gwààgəsən / -ààgəsən	ʈjàané

- The singular object pronouns have a Mid tone which assimilates to any preceding Lo tone. There is no specific marking of the Dative.

2.8. Zaar (Saya)

	Aorist	Object	Independent	Genitive	Nom. Pred.
1s	mə	-əm	myááni	-(g)ədn	mí
2s	kə	-kə	kyááni	-(g)wàà	kí
3s	á	-tə	yááni	-(g)wòs	ʈí
1p	mə	-mí	myààní	-(g)wòbm	mí
2p	kə	-kí	kyààní	-(g)wààn	kí
3p	tə	-jí	yààjí	-(g)wààsən	ʈí

3. Conclusion

The weakening of the pronominal vowels (generally to the central vowel **i/ə**) has built a system that has eroded and realigned to the point that (i) the segmental exponents of persons

are the same in the plural and the singular ; (ii) the exponent of number is expressed by specific elements : a change of tone, a change of vowel, a –N suffixed to the pronoun or addition of a suffix to the verb.

If we reconstruct SBW pronouns and compare them to Proto-West-Chadic pronouns (PCW) as reconstructed in Newman and Schuh 1974, the main feature to be observed is that SBW pronouns do away with the plural dimension :

	PCW		SBW
1s	*ni	1	*n/m
2s	*ka (m), *ki (f)	2	*k
3s	*si (m), *ta (f)	3	*t/*s
1p	*mu		
2p	*ku		
3p	*su		

Zaar and Guus independent pronouns are characterized by extensive suffixes : **-aani** (s) ; **-aane/-aashi** (pl).

The AA feminine mark ***t** has become the general common mark for the 3s. ***s** is only observed for 3s in the genitive. 3s **yaa/yee** (Dir, Nyamzak, Baraza) could be either an innovation (cf. Dir **əri** < **ərəm**, ‘thing’) or a retention of AA 3sm ***y**, opposed to 3sf ***t**.

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