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A grammar of Lumun : a Kordofanian language of Sudan

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Cover Page



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5. ConCORDS

In Lumun there is agreement between (pro)nouns and their modifiers, and between subjects and non-dependent TAM-forms of verbs (cf. 12.5.1). I call the morphemes expressing agreement *conCORDS*. Lumun *conCORDS* are consonantal and are prefixed to the nominal modifier or the non-dependent verb.

Agreement with common nouns is controlled by the noun class of the noun. For nouns with a \emptyset prefix, i.e. vowel-initial nouns, the *conCORD* is **w**, for nouns with prefix **kw** it is **k**. In all other cases the *conCORD* is identical with the class prefix. Nouns with the persona prefix and personal pronouns have specific *conCORDS*, which distinguish between singular and plural reference of the (pro)noun. *ConCORDS* do not bring about any tonal change.

The *conCORDS* of common nouns are presented in table 25.

Table 25 *ConCORDS* of common nouns

| <i>noun class prefix</i> | <i>conCORD</i> |
|--------------------------|----------------|
| p- | p- |
| t̥- | t̥- |
| t- | t- |
| c- | c- |
| k- | k- |
| kw- | k- |
| m- | m- |
| n- | n- |
| ɲ- | ɲ- |
| ŋ- | ŋ- |
| l- | l- |
| w- | w- |
| \emptyset | w- |

The *conCORD* of singular nouns with the persona prefix is generally **p**; in some cases, however, singular nouns with the persona prefix take

another concord. Examples of this are presented further below. For personal pronouns with singular reference the concord is always **p**.

The concord of plural nouns with the persona prefix, as well as of personal pronouns with plural reference, is always **ṭ**.

Table 26 Concords of nouns with the persona prefix

| | |
|----------|---|
| singular | p - (though not always, see further below) |
| plural | ṭ - |

Table 27 Concords of personal pronouns and pronominal clitics

| | |
|-------------------------|------------|
| singular (1, 2, 3) | p - |
| plural (12, 1A, 2A, 3A) | ṭ - |

5.1. Use of the concords

On verbs, the use of concords is restricted to the non-dependent TAM forms of main verbs and auxiliaries: Incompletives, Completives and Pasts. The Present of ‘be’ and irregular verbs, such as **C-ṣnô** ‘have’, also fall into this category. Concords further occur on modifiers, whether used as attributes or predicates or as independent forms.

In the example below, the connexive that modifies **lṣn** ‘words’ has the concord **l**; the demonstrative that modifies **pṣl** ‘person’ has the concord **p**; and the adjectival predicate has the concord **l**, agreeing with the head (**lṣn**) of the noun phrase that functions as subject to the predicate:

lṣn **l-ṣ-pṣl** **em-p-əṣé** **l-ṣpərât**
 words C-of-person DEM-C-DIST C-good

the words of that man are good (that man is saying good things)

An overview of modifiers with concords is presented in table 28. Certain quantifying modifiers, for example **appik** ‘all’, are never used with a concord. Numerals have not been included in the table, though the lower numerals take, or can take, a concord (see 10.4.1).

Table 28 Modifiers with concord

| <i>possessor pronoun</i> | <i>demonstrative</i> | <i>connexive</i> | <i>adjective</i> |
|---|--|------------------|------------------|
| C- ĩn ‘my’ | C- en ‘that’ (anaphoric) | C- ə ‘of’ | C-ADJ |
| C- ǎŋ ‘your’ | en -C- í ‘this, these’ (near speaker) | | |
| C- úŋ ‘his/her’ | en -C- ərík ‘that, those’ (near addressee) | | |
| C- ərít ‘our’ (of you (SG) and me) | en -C- əřê ‘that, those’ (away from speaker and addressee) | | |
| C- ín ‘our’ (EXCL) | | | |
| C- ənnón ‘our’ (INCL) | | | |
| C- ón ‘your (PL)’ | | | |
| C- én ‘their’ | | | |

The non-dependent verbal TAMs always have a concord. This includes the Present of ‘be’ C-**aík**. By contrast, the dependent TAMs (Dependent Incomplete and Dependent Perfective), whether of a main verb or of an auxiliary verb, never have a concord. (See the chapter on Verbal inflections for the presence or absence of the concord in verbal TAMs).

As will be described in chapter 12, complex verbs (whether consisting of one or more verbal words) are built up of more than one verbal stem. Each composing verbal part occurs with or without concord, determined by its being a non-dependent or a dependent form. The verbal complex in the example below is built up of two Completives (an auxiliary and a main verb), which both have a concord:

m-p-əká.t **p-əkəťáccə.t**
 1-C-be:COMPL C-watch:COMPL

I had watched

The first verb in the next example (‘say’) is in Dependent Incomplete TAM and therefore has no concord. The second verb contains an Itive auxiliary in Incomplete TAM and a main verb in Dependent Incomplete TAM. The concord therefore only occurs on the Itive auxiliary, not on the main verb:

a-pari **p-ârəkkəṭa** **ɪɛ.kat** **itti**
 CONJ-wife C-of.Arəkkəṭa said:DEPPRFV that

k-kw-á.ṭ-óné **appentína**
 3-C-IT:INCOMPL-grind:DEPINCOMPL groundnuts

the wife of Arəkkəṭa said that he must go and grind the groundnuts (i.e. told him to go and grind the groundnuts) (fr. written story)

The subject of a non-dependent verb, whether a noun (phrase), a free pronoun or a pronominal proclitic, always occurs in the same clause. Therefore, a concord never occurs without its lexical or pronominal subject being present in the same clause.

5.2. Concords of singular nouns with the persona prefix

Singular nouns with the persona prefix **ɔ-** typically have **p**-concord, but not always. With some modifiers they take concord as if they were common nouns, i.e., as if they lacked the persona prefix. Some details follow here (see also: Smits 2012: 97-98).

Singular kinship terms, except birth names, take **p**-concord:

ɔ-ŋappá **p-ɔnnón**
 PERS-my_father C-POSS12A

our(INCL) father (i.e. father of me and other people who are not my siblings)

Singular birth names (table 23) do not take **p**-concord on a modifying possessor pronoun. Instead, the concord is determined by the initial segment of the noun without the persona prefix **ɔ-**:

ɔ-nenní n-m ‘my Nenni’ (second child, which is a girl)
ɔ-céccé c-m ‘my Cécce’ (third child, which is a girl)

The same goes for other personal names such as nicknames based on common nouns (first example below) and for nouns with the persona prefix that are based on a common noun that refers to a human being (second example below):

ɔ-kərʒl k-m ‘my Tortoise’ (Tortoise as a nick name)

ɔ-kəllán k-m ‘my old woman’ (typically refers to the wife)

Likewise, the concord on the connexive **C-ɔ** ‘of’ is **p** in case of singular kinship terms (first example below), but is determined by the initial segment of the noun without the prefix in case of a personal name (second example):

ɔ-nnán p-ɔ-mɛttimɛtti ‘the mother of *Mɛttimɛtti*’

ɔ-lótti l-ɔ-maɽari ‘*Lótti* (son) of *Maɽari*’

With personal names from other languages that start with a non-indigenous sound or with a sound that does not occur word-initially in Lumun, the concord **ŋ** is used on the connexive that forms part of the longer name (the name in the example below starts with [j]):

ɔ-cón ŋ-ɔ-cákkır ‘John (son) of Shakir’

In such cases **ŋ** may be a remnant of the phrase ***ŋokul ŋɔ** ‘child of’, with ***ŋokul** as an earlier form of the current **okul** ‘child’. Historical presence of the noun class prefix **ŋ** on ‘child’ is suggested by the plural **ɲokul** ‘children’. Moreover, semantically the noun class prefix **ŋ** would fit well on ‘child’, since the pair **ŋ/p** contains several nouns with the semantic notion of being small.

Also the concord on the copular verb (with or without restrictor) that introduces a relative clause takes the concord that goes with the name without **ɔ**-prefix:

| | | | |
|----------------|--------------|---------------------|------------|
| ɔ-kukkó | í-k-á | m-p-ɔcórɔt.é | tít |
| PERS-Kukku | RES-C-COP | 1-C-meet:COMPL | in:ABS |

Kukku, whom I met with in the way, ...

On the other hand, the concord on a verb expressing agreement with a singular personal name is **p**, as it is with other kinship terms:

ɔ-íáia p-aá.t ‘my mother has come’

ɔ-kakká p-aát ‘Kakka has come’

However, a common noun that denotes a human being and that is used with the persona prefix takes agreement with the class of the noun without persona prefix:

ɔ-kəllán k-aá.t ‘the old woman has come’

5.3. Concords of plural nouns with the persona prefix

Plurals of nouns with the *ɔ*-prefix always induce the concord *ɬ*. For example:

ɔ-kakká-n ɬaát ‘Kakka and her companions have come’

ɔ-kəllán-ɔn ɬaát ‘the old woman and her companions have come’

5.4. Agreement with coordinated nouns

It seems that coordinated nouns as subjects tend to be avoided in natural language. It is nevertheless possible to make such constructions, particularly with nouns with animate reference, and especially with nouns with the persona prefix. Coordinated nouns with this prefix induce *ɬ*-concord:

ɔ-kokkú ana ɔ-kakká ɬ-ɔpərɔt
PERS-Kokku and PERS-Kakka C-good

Kokku and Kakka are fine

This also works for coordinated common nouns referring to humans, though not without some hesitation:

kəllán ana úkul ɬ-ɔpərɔt
old_woman and child C-good

the old woman and the child are fine

With regard to coordinated singular animals and inanimates there was some confusion. *ɬ*-concord was sometimes preferred (implicitly agreeing with *ɔkɪn* ‘they’, particularly in the case of animals), but agreement with the noun closest to the predicate was considered more or less acceptable as well, as was the concord *w*-, implicitly

agreeing with **arəpu** ‘things’. In the examples below all options are given a question mark.

im̩it **ána** **c̩im̩anter̩i** **?t̩-óp̩ər̩t / ?c-óp̩ər̩t / ?w-óp̩ər̩t**
 goat and hedgehog C-good / c-good / c-good

the goat and the hedgehog are fine

kəret **ána** **cuccú** **?t̩-ɔ̩ɽ̩ě / ?c-ɔ̩ɽ̩ě / ?w-ɔ̩ɽ̩ě**
 cloth and bead C-red / C-red

the cloth and the necklace are red

In case of two nouns belonging to the same singular noun class, agreement with the plural of that same noun class was not an option:

***compúraŋ** **ána** **c̩im̩anter̩i** **m-óp̩ər̩t**
 monkey(sp.) and hedgehog C-good

the monkey and the hedgehog are fine

In case of coordination of a singular and a plural (or vice-versa) belonging to the same class, it was considered possible, though not without hesitation, to have agreement with the plural noun. The option is given a question mark:

mumpúraŋ **ána** **c̩im̩anter̩i** **?m-óp̩ər̩t**
 monkeys(sp.) and hedgehog C-good

the monkeys and the hedgehog are fine

Coordinated plurals belonging to the same class take the concord corresponding with that class:

mumpúraŋ **ána** **m̩im̩anter̩i** **m-óp̩ər̩t**
 monkeys(sp.) and hedgehogs C-good

the monkeys and the hedgehogs are fine

When both nouns were plural but belonged to different classes agreement with the plural closest to the modifier/predicate was considered the most acceptable option:

əlla **ana** **lɔk** **l-ɔnnón**
 cats and dogs C-POSS12A
 our cats and dogs / the cats and dogs are ours

lɔk **ána** **əlla** **w-ɔnnón**
 dogs and cats C-POSS12A
 our dogs and cats / the dogs and cats are ours