



Universiteit
Leiden
The Netherlands

A grammar of Mundabli : a Bantoid (Yemne-Kimbi) language of Cameroon

Voll, R.M.; Voll R.M.

Citation

Voll, R. M. (2017, October 26). *A grammar of Mundabli : a Bantoid (Yemne-Kimbi) language of Cameroon*. *LOT dissertation series*. LOT, Utrecht. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/56258>

Version: Not Applicable (or Unknown)

License: [Licence agreement concerning inclusion of doctoral thesis in the Institutional Repository of the University of Leiden](#)

Downloaded from: <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/56258>

Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

Cover Page



Universiteit Leiden



The handle <http://hdl.handle.net/1887/56258> holds various files of this Leiden University dissertation

Author: Voll, Rebecca

Title: A grammar of Mundabli : a Bantoid (Yemne-Kimbi) language of Cameroon

Date: 2017-10-26

CHAPTER 5

Agreement

Mundabli has an elaborate system of noun class agreement. However, agreement is basically restricted to the noun phrase. The only exception is pronouns, which agree with their antecedents in noun class. Although pronouns are not usually covered in an agreement chapter, I include them here. Pronouns are treated in more detail in Chapter 6. Possessive pronouns are only treated in the current chapter, in §5.1.2, and in Chapter 7.

As overt noun class marking, i.e. marking on the noun itself, has been widely lost (see Chapter 4) and the verb does not agree with any of its arguments, either, agreement within the noun phrase is often the only means to identify the noun class of a noun. Agreement prefixes can consist of a purely tonal prefix, a consonant accompanied by a tone, or a whole syllable. This chapter gives an overview of the different agreement patterns encountered in noun modifiers and pronominal elements.

The agreement patterns are most clearly represented by personal pronouns. Unlike noun modifiers, which always neutralize the distinction between at least two noun classes, personal pronouns reflect all existing agreement distinctions. If two noun classes are represented by the same pronoun, their agreement patterns are also the same.¹ Table 5.1 gives an overview of the attested agreement patterns illustrated by personal pronoun forms.

Noun classes are found in the first column and the personal pronouns which represent them are found in the second column. Where more than one noun class label is found in the first column, these noun classes trigger the same

¹In the current analysis nouns which are represented by the same personal pronoun but have different number values are considered to belong to different classes.

noun class	pronoun
1	wù
2	bɔ̃
3	wū
10	yī
7,7a	kī
8,8a	bī
9	yì
19	fī
18,6	mū

Table 5.1: Overview of agreement patterns, illustrated by pronouns

agreement pattern but are distinguished due to their different number values. As Table 5.1 shows, there are nine different agreement patterns. The number of noun classes is higher than nine because, apart from agreement, noun classes are also based on number distinctions. As pointed out earlier, in this adopted system, a noun class can only contain nouns of one number value (singular, plural or undefined, cf. §4.2). The remainder of this chapter contains descriptions of the different forms of agreement found in pronouns (§5.1) and nominal modifiers (§5.2-§5.4) and ends in an overview of agreement patterns and a section on gender conflict resolution.

5.1 Agreement in pronouns

Unlike noun modifiers, pronouns agree with a mix of two intertwining agreement systems. While the third person pronouns agree with the noun class of their antecedent, first and second person pronouns agree with their antecedent in person and number. This section only deals with noun class agreement in personal pronouns and possessive pronouns. Person and number agreement is treated in Chapter 6.

5.1.1 Agreement in 3rd person singular personal pronouns

Third person singular personal pronouns lack a prefix-root structure. Instead, they look like bare prefixes. Third person singular personal pronouns represent the full variety of agreement patterns. If the 3_{SG} personal pronouns of two classes are identical, then their agreement patterns are also the same.

The Class 1 and 9 non-preverbal 3_{SG} pronouns have a low tone. All other non-preverbal 3_{SG} pronouns bear a superhigh tone. Preverbal 3_{SG} pronouns differ from the non-preverbal ones only regarding their tonal patterns. The Class 1 and Class 9 preverbal pronouns also bear a low tone. However, pre-

noun class	preverbal	non-preverbal
1	wù	wù
2	bǔ	bǔ
3	wū	wú
10	yī	yǐ
7,7a	kī	kǐ
8,8a	bī	bǐ
9	yì	yì
19	fī	fǐ
18,6	mū	mú

Table 5.2: Agreement in preverbal and non-preverbal third person singular pronouns for all noun classes

verbal 3_{SG} pronouns of other classes have a mid tone, except for the Class 2 pronoun which bears a superhigh tone. A few examples of sentences containing 3_{SG} personal pronouns (both preverbal and non-preverbal) are provided in (30)-(32). The pronouns are enclosed by square brackets.

- (30) [wù] kè dī ā ɲwóm bǔ
 CL1 P3 be(b) COM CL2.children CL2;3SG.POSS

‘She had her children.’

- (31) [wū] ʃín fǐ á ɲ-ʃín
 CL3 be_full(c) pass(b) ADVLZ INF-be_full(c)

‘It was still full.’

- (32) any nín bī nín k-ó [kí], bī ká kán [kí]
 any CL7.thing 1PL want(c) CL7-REL CL7 1PL F2 have(c) CL7

‘Anything we want, we will have it.’

The tonal difference between the preverbal pronouns in (30) and in (31) reflects tonal noun class agreement, with a low tone in Class 1 and a mid tone in Class 3. The non-preverbal Class 7 pronoun in (32) bears a superhigh tone.

5.1.2 Agreement in possessive pronouns

Just like personal pronouns, possessive pronouns belong to two intertwining agreement systems, agreeing with their antecedent (the possessor) in person and number, and with the modified noun (the possessee) in noun class. Table 5.3 gives an overview of all possessive pronouns. Only human possessors are considered.

noun class	my	your (SG)	his/her	our	your (PL)	their
1	ŋgĩ	wā	wū	wī	wēn	bǔ
2	mĩŋ	bá	bǔ	bĩ	bēn	bǔ
3	ŋgĩ	wá	wú	wĩ	wēn	bǔ
7,7a	ŋkĩŋ	ká	kĩ	kĩ	kēn	bǔ
8,8a	mĩŋ	bá	bĩ	bĩ	bēn	bǔ
9	ŋgĩ	yā	yī	yī	yēn	bǔ
10	ŋgĩ	yá	yĩ	yĩ	yēn	bǔ
19	mfiŋ	fá	fĩ	fĩ	fēn	bǔ
18,6	mĩŋ	má	mú	mĩ	mēn	bǔ

Table 5.3: Agreement in possessive pronouns

Possessive pronouns can be subdivided into four groups which mark agreement in different ways. The first (and most atypical group) is represented by the third person plural (or Class 2) possessive pronoun **bǔ** ‘their’. As shown in the last column of Table 5.3, this pronoun always has the same shape **bǔ**, just like English ‘their’. It does not agree with the modified noun (i.e., the possessee). The second group contains possessive pronouns whose stem consists only of a vowel, namely the first person plural possessive pronoun with the stems form **-i**, the second person singular possessive pronoun with the stems form **-a** and the second person plural possessive pronoun with the stems form **-en** (see Table 5.3). These vowel-initial stems take consonantal prefixes which may come with their own tone.

In these possessive pronouns whose stem consists only of a vowel, Class 1 and Class 9 pronouns can only be distinguished from Class 3 and Class 10 pronouns by their different tonal realizations. All possessive pronouns bear a mid tone when they modify a noun of Class 1 or Class 9, whereas in all other cases they bear a superhigh tone, as e.g. the second person singular possessive pronouns for Class 1 and 3 **wā** (Class 1) vs. **wá** (Class 3) and for Class 9 and 10 **yā** (Class 9) vs. **yá** (Class 10).

The third group is represented by third person singular possessive pronouns. They lack a prefix-root structure and look as if they consisted only of agreement prefixes, just like third person personal pronouns. The tone is mid for Class 1 and 9 possesseees and superhigh for all others; see Table 5.3.

Examples (33)-(36) show the use of 3_{SG}/CL1 possessive pronouns. The Class 1 and Class 9 possessive pronouns in (33) and (35) bear a mid tone, and the Class 7 and Class 18 possessive pronouns in (34) and (36) bear a superhigh tone. The possessive phrase in the examples is enclosed by square brackets.

- (33) wù tsē dā [wān wū] b̄
 CL1 search(a) see(a) CL1.child CL1;3SG.POSS FRUST
 ‘She did not find her child.’
- (34) wù gí ʃi [tē kí] gb̄
 CL1 put(b) go_down(a) CL7/8.walking_stick CL7;3SG.POSS CL3.house
 sē
 house_front.LOC
 ‘Then she left her traveling stick in front of the door.’
- (35) ká ʃē ʃi wù, wù gān dā [tʃɔm
 COND want(a) go_down(a) CL1 CL1 go(a) see(a) CL9.co-wife
 yī]
 CL9;3SG.POSS
 ‘When she had just come down/she was about to come down, she went to see her co-wife.’
- (36) yē [mán mú] dí t̄l̄à mwóm
 COMP CL18/19.name CL18;3SG.POSS be(b) T. M.
 ‘[and the daughter said:] his name is Tela Mwom.’

Finally, the fourth and last group is constituted by first person singular possessive pronouns. Whereas tonally they behave just like regular possessive pronouns, with a mid tone in Class 1 and 9 and a superhigh tone in all other classes, their segmental agreement marking is rather special. Their structure is not simply decomposable into prefix and stem. Instead, they all start in a nasal, or a nasal consonant sequence and some end in a velar nasal (see Table 5.4).

noun class	1sg pronoun	prefixes
1,9	ŋḡ	w̄-, ȳ-
2,8,8a,18,6	m̄íŋ	b-, b-, m-
3,10	ŋḡí	w-, y-
7,7a	ŋk̄íŋ	k-
19	m̄f̄íŋ	f-

Table 5.4: Agreement in 1sg possessive pronouns

In the first person singular possessive pronoun, some of the agreement distinctions found in other constructions are neutralized. Only five forms of the first person singular possessive pronoun are distinguished (see Table 5.4), instead of nine as in other pronouns. A few rules can be extracted which govern the realization of the first person singular possessive pronoun as compared to

the other possessive pronouns: for all noun classes whose agreement prefix starts in a glide (**w** or **y**), the segmental form is **ŋgĩ**, as in (37). Thus, the possessive pronouns for Class 1 and Class 9 **ŋgĩ** and those for Class 3 and Class 10 **ŋgĩ** are identical, with the first (Class 1/9) differing from the second (Class 3/10) only regarding its tonal realization. Thus, the tonal pattern is the same as in other possessive pronouns. For all noun classes whose agreement prefix otherwise starts with a labial stop (**b-** or **m-**), namely Class 2, 8, 8a, 18 and 6, the form of the pronoun is **mĩŋ**, as in (38). For Class 7 and 7a, whose agreement prefix otherwise starts with **k**, the form is **ŋkĩŋ**, as in (39), and for Class 19, whose agreement prefix starts with **f**, the form is **mfĩŋ**. The possessive phrase in the examples is enclosed in square brackets.

- (37) ní, [ɲwám ŋgĩ] dǐ f-án
 CL1.mother, CL1/2.husband CL1;1SG.POSS be(b) PROX-here

‘Mother, my husband is here.’

- (38) tũ ndè [ŋgĩ mĩŋ] yē
 scoop(b) who CL6.water CL6;1SG.POSS QUOT.Q

‘Who has carried my water?’

- (39) f-ś fɪn d̩ n̩ [kpín ŋkĩŋ] f̩
 PROX-DET here be(b) SUBORD CL7/8.story CL7;1SG.POSS pass(b)
 f-ś
 LOC-REL

‘This is where my story ends.’

A different construction is attested for the noun **wān** ‘child’. Rather than the expected **wān ŋgĩ**, it is more common to find the head-final construction **mĩ wān**, in which the noun **wān** ‘child’ is simply juxtaposed to the non-preverbal form of the first person singular pronoun **mĩ**. This construction is only attested with the noun **wān** ‘child’. Postpositional phrases involving derived postpositions, such as **wú dzáé** ‘in his/her mouth’ present a similar construction. They seem to be related to possessive phrases and often involve part-whole relations. Like the exceptional possessive construction **mĩ wān**, these constructions are head-final. However, note that pronouns generally bear a high tone when headed by a postposition. For more on postpositions, see §10.2.2.

Furthermore, the relational nouns **nĩ** ‘mother’, **tĩ** ‘father’ and **wān nĩ** ‘sibling’ have special stem forms which entail possessive meaning and person. For a more detailed description of the exceptional possessive constructions listed here with examples, see §7.2.1.3 and §10.2.2.1.

5.2 Agreement in demonstratives and determiners

The demonstratives **-én** PROXIMAL and **-ó** DISTAL take consonantal agreement prefixes. In addition to the consonant, the prefix may bear a tone which affects the tone of the stem it is attached to. Table 5.5 shows agreement in demonstratives.

noun class	prefix	PROXIMAL	DISTAL
1	w̃-	wēn	wō
2	b-	bén	bó
3	w-	wén	wó
10	y-	yén	yó
7,7a	k-	kén	kó
8,8a	b-	bén	bó
9	ỳ-	yēn	yō
19	f-	fén	fó
18,6	m-	mén	mó

Table 5.5: Consonantal agreement in demonstratives

The consonantal agreement prefix is found in the second column. The low tone on the Class 1 and Class 9 prefixes does not represent an actual low tone, as the change from a high tone to a mid tone cannot be accounted for by the presence of a low tone. Instead, it is meant to signify that the demonstratives for Class 1 and 9 are relatively lower than those for the other classes. In fact, Class 1 and 9 demonstratives bear a mid tone, whereas demonstratives of all other (agreement) classes are realized with a high tone.

Examples of the proximal demonstrative **-én** ‘this’ are found in (40)-(43). The Class 1 demonstrative in (40) has a mid tone. All the others have a high tone.

- (40) [wān w-ēn], dǐ wà nō à lē w-ō nō
 CL1.child CL1-DEM.PROX be(b) 2SG SUBORD 2SG make(a) CL1-REL as
 mī wān w-ō lē f-án gbō
 1SG CL1.child CL1-DET get_lost(a).IPFV PROX-here CL3.house
 kún
 behind_house.LOC

‘Child, you are the one who made my [other] child get lost here behind the house.’

- (41) [dō w-én] dǐ ná áná
 CL3a.beans CL3a-DEM.PROX be(b) as like_that

‘As this bean is like this, [...]’

- (42) à dǐ yó ĩ [dʒɔ̄ b-én] mī
 2SG F1 go_up(c) LOC CL8a.bridge CL8a-DEM.PROX in

‘You will go up on this bridge.’

- (43) [kwé b-én] ñà t-án sé
 CL7/8.rat CL8-DEM.PROX boast(a) DIST-here CL3/7a.attic
 t-ání, n = dǐ lá kpí mé [kwé
 DIST-this_way 1SG = F1 make(a) die(b) finish(a) CL7/8.rat
 b-én] t-án sé ō
 CL8-DEM.PROX DIST-here CL3/7a.attic EMPH

‘These rats which are showing off [up] there in the attic, I will kill all of them!’

It is rare to find examples in which the distal demonstrative (also used as determiner) clearly has a deictic meaning, as in (44) and (45). In (44), the demonstrative follows the possessive pronoun **wū**. Again, the Class 1 determiner in (44) bears a mid tone while the Class 7 determiner in (45) bears a high tone.

- (44) wān kpé w-ɔ̄ gān mū mǎ wù, wù
 CL1.child CL1.woman CL1-DET go(a) take(a) finish(a) CL1 CL1
 bǎŋ dzá [nsōŋ wū w-ɔ̄]
 lock(b) CL7.mouth CL1.friend CL1;3SG.POSS CL1-DEM.DIST

‘The woman went and closed the mouth of her friend.’

- (45) dʒũ nō bǐ kè lǎ kpī y-ɔ̄ [tō
 CL9.goat SUBORD CL2 P3 make(a) die(b) CL9-REL CL7/8.day
 k-ɔ̄] ŋgɔ̄ kè bān áná búbúbúbú
 CL7-DEM.DIST upon P3 be_white(b) like_that IDEO

◊‘The goat which they killed on that day was completely white.’

5.3 Agreement in adjectivals

Adjectivals include a small closed group of adjectives (cf. §7.1.4 for details) and other noun modifiers which are formally similar to them, such as non-numeral quantifiers and the interrogatives **mwān** ‘which’ and **-māŋ** ‘how many’. Adjectivals take purely tonal agreement prefixes for Class 1 and 9 and syllabic agreement prefixes for all other classes. In fact, in Mundabli it is only in adjectivals that the distinction between Class 9 and 10 is not purely tonal.²

²In most other Yemne-Kimbi languages, the distinction between Class 9 and 10 is purely tonal. Ngun, Abar and Ajumbu, in which the prefixes have different vowel qualities form an exception (Good, p.c.)

While the syllabic prefixes (i.e. prefixes other than Class 1 and 9) are segmentally identical for all adjectivals, the tone may vary across different modifiers. While most adjectival prefixes bear a mid tone (pattern A), high tone and low tone prefixes are restricted to the interrogatives **-mìŋ** ‘how many’ and **mwān** ‘which’, respectively, see Table 5.6.

noun class	adjectives and ‘all’, ‘many’, ‘a few’, ‘any’, ‘other’	-mìŋ ‘how many’	mwān ‘which’
1	`-	`-	`-
2	bā-	bá-	bà-
3	wū-	wú-	wù-
7,7a	kī-	kí-	kì-
8,8a	bī-	bí-	bì-
9	`-	`-	`-
10	yī-	yí-	yì-
19	fī-	fí-	fì-
18,6	mūN-	múN-	mùN-

Table 5.6: Agreement prefixes in adjectivals, three different tone patterns: mid, high and low

The low tones given for Class 1 and 9 in Table 5.6 and in the following tables do not exactly represent low tone prefixes. While some tonal stem changes, such as the realization of the high tone stem **fyíŋ** ‘new’ as **fyíŋ** with a rising tone following the tonal prefixes (see §5.3.1), can be accounted for by the presence of a low tone prefix,³ for others, such as the realization of **lō** ‘all’ as **lō** when it modifies a Class 1 or Class 9 noun (see §5.3.2), there is no simple explanation. Mid tones are usually not influenced by preceding low tones. Thus, a low tone in the purely tonal prefixes in Table 5.6 is meant to show that the stems are generally realized with a relatively lower tone than those modifying nouns of other classes.

Adjectivals can be used attributively, directly modifying a noun, or they can be used predicatively, in which case they are preceded by a copula which is usually omitted in the present tense. However, adjectives are attested in a third construction which is actually very common. Adjectivals can occur within adverbial phrases, in which case they are preceded by the adverbializer **ǎ**. An example is (46).

³A superhigh is commonly realized as low-high rising when preceded by a low tone, see §3.4.2

- (46) m̀ò w-ēn n̄ō ẁù l̄ē w-̄ō [ndzóm
 CL1.man CL1-DEM.PROX SUBORD CL1 do(a).IPFV CL1-REL CL8.things
 bī-dzónǵ á b̀ì-dz̀wè] b́í b́é
 CL8-good ADVLZ CL8-many exit(b) Abar

◊‘This man, who has done so many good things, is from Abar.’

In the following sections, adjectivals with obligatory mid tone prefixes are dealt with first, followed by adjectivals with non-obligatory mid tone prefixes and the prefix-less modifier **d̄o** which can be roughly translated as ‘a certain’. Then interrogatives with high and low tone prefixes are dealt with.

5.3.1 Agreement in adjectives

There is a small and closed group of adjectives which describe property concepts (most property concepts are expressed by verbs). Table 5.7 contains a non-exhaustive list of adjectives. See §7.1.4 for a more detailed treatment of adjectives.

adjective	gloss
tsín̄	‘big, great, important’
dzǔ	‘short’
dz̄ín̄	‘long’, ‘tall’
fyín̄	‘new’
kú	‘old’
dzónǵ	‘good’
bō	‘bad’
bán	‘white’, ‘clear’
yíl	‘black’
wól	‘beige’
ɲwā	‘multi-coloured’
tsám	‘dirty’
nt̄j̄im	‘thick (for fluids)’

Table 5.7: List of adjectives (not exhaustive)

Adjectives can be used attributively (directly modifying a noun) and predicatively (with a copula which is commonly omitted in the present tense). In addition, they are commonly attested in adverbial phrases, preceded by the adverbializer **á**. In all these constructions, adjectives take a low tone prefix when they modify a noun of Class 1 or 9 and a syllabic prefix with a mid tone for all other classes. An example of an underived adjective is the word **-fyín̄** ‘new’, see Table 5.8. Like other adjectives, it takes either a low tone prefix (Class 1 and 9) or a syllabic prefix with a mid tone (all other classes).

noun class	prefix	example	gloss
1	`-	ŋkǒŋ fyǐŋ	‘a new chief’
2	bā-	ŋkǒŋ bāfyǐŋ	‘new chiefs’
3	wū-	kpān wūfyǐŋ	‘a new tree’
7,7a	kī-	nǐŋ kīfyǐŋ	‘a new thing’
8,8a	bī-	ndzóm bīfyǐŋ	‘new things’
9	`-	dzǐ fyǐŋ	‘a new dog’
10	yī-	tswān yīfyǐŋ	‘new trees’
19	fī-	mwǐn fīfyǐŋ	‘a new cat’
18,6	mūN-	mbí mūmfyǐŋ	‘new palmwine’

Table 5.8: Agreement prefixes and tonal alternation in adjectives, illustrated by the adjective *-fyǐŋ* ‘new’.

Examples of adjectives in context are given in (47)-(51). In certain cases, the low tone prefix causes the adjective root to take on a low-high rising tone,⁴ as in (48) and (51).

- (47) bā fǎ dzē kò [nǐŋ kī-bō]
 IMPERS PROHIB say(b) even CL7.thing CL7-bad

‘They shouldn’t even say anything bad.’

- (48) nsōŋ wū dzé wú lā yē wà, à dǐ
 CL1.friend CL1;3SG.POSS say(b) CL1PP DAT COMP 2SG, 2SG be(b)
 [kpé bǒ]
 CL1.woman CL1.bad

‘Her friend said to her: you are a bad woman!’

- (49) ndzān dǐ [mbē bā-bō] ō
 Mundabli be(b) CL2.people CL2-bad EMPH

‘The Mundabli are bad people!’

- (50) [dzō y-én yī-fyǐŋ] y-ó
 CL10.house CL10-DEM.PROX CL10-new CL10-DET

◊‘these new houses’

- (51) [dzǐ ŋgī fyǐŋ] y-ō
 CL9.dog CL9;1SG.POSS CL9.new CL9-DET

◊‘my new dog’

⁴The change from superhigh to low-high rising can be explained by a regular process in which a low tone spreads right onto a following superhigh syllable, causing a rise on that syllable, see §3.4.2. However, I do not have an explanation for the change from a mid to a rising tone, as in *bō* ‘bad’ in (48).

The tone of the adjectives **bō** ‘bad’ and **fyĩŋ** ‘new’ is rising in (48) and (51) where they modify a Class 1 and a Class 9 noun, respectively. When the adjective modifies a noun of any other class, it bears a different tone: a mid tone for **bō** ‘bad’ and a superhigh tone for **fyĩŋ** ‘new’. While the change of a superhigh to a rising tone following a low tone is a regular process, the change from mid to rising is not.

5.3.2 The quantifier -lō ‘all’

Like the other adjectivals described so far, the quantifier **-lō** ‘all’ (also ‘every’ or ‘whole’) takes a tonal agreement prefix for Class 1 and 9 and a mid tone syllabic prefix for all other classes, see Table 5.9. See §5.3 for reasons why I refer to quantifiers as adjectivals.

noun class	prefix	example	gloss
1	`-	mò lō	‘a whole person’
2	bā-	mbē bālō	‘all people’
3	wū-	kpān wūlō	‘a whole tree’
10	yī-	tswān yīlō	‘all trees’
7,7a	kī-	yĩŋ kīlō	‘a egg’
8,8a	bī-	yĩŋ bīlō	‘all eggs’
9	`-	dʒù lō	‘a whole goat’
19	fī-	mwĩn fīlō	‘a whole cat’
18,6	mūN-	mbí mūnlō	‘the whole palmwine’

Table 5.9: Agreement prefixes and tonal alternation in the quantifier **-lō** ‘all’

As Table 5.9 shows, the root **lō**, which otherwise bears a mid tone, has a low-high rising tone when it modifies a Class 1 or a Class 9 noun. Unlike the change from superhigh to rising, the change from a mid tone to a rising tone is not a regular process and cannot be accounted for by the presence of a preceding low tone.

- (52) tō bī-lō à mwē mě m-mwè
 CL7/8.day CL8-all 2SG grieve(a) only INF-grieve(a)

‘Every day you are only sad.’

In fact, this and other modifiers are rarely attested directly modifying a noun. More frequently, they are preceded by the particle **ǎ** which generally precedes adverbial phrases. In this case, they do not belong to the same noun phrase as the noun; however, they still agree with it in noun class. The use of an adverbial phrase suggests some degree of definiteness. An example is (53).

- (53) bō kǎ ɲwán bí ndzān lō nǒ bō *feed*
 CL2 F2 beg(b) 1PL Mundabli DAT SUBORD CL2 feed
 [tóm swóm á bī-lō]
 CL7/8.oil_palm_area CL7/8.palm ADVLZ CL8-all

‘And they will be begging things from us, the Mundabli, because they [the Mundabli] will feed all the people in this oil palm area.’

5.3.3 The quantifier -dʒwē ‘a lot of’

Just like **lō** ‘all’, the quantifier **-dʒwē** ‘a lot of’ (also ‘much’ or ‘many’) takes a tonal agreement prefix for Class 1 and 9 and a mid tone syllabic prefix for all other classes, see Table 5.10.

noun class	prefix	example	gloss
1	`-	ɲgōm dʒwē	‘a lot of plantain’
2	bā-	tʃē bādʒwē	‘many women’
3	wū-	kpē wūdʒwē	‘a lot of pot’
7,7a	kī-	mō kīdʒwē	‘a lot of liver’
8,8a	bī-	bò bīdʒwē	‘many bags’
9	`-	dʒǔ dʒwē	‘a lot of meat’
10	yī-	tswān yīdʒwē	‘many trees’
19	fī-	ntʃē fīdʒwē	‘a lot of clay pot’
18,6	mūN-	ɲkā mūndʒwē	‘a lot of corn beer’

Table 5.10: Agreement prefixes and tonal alternation in the quantifier **-dʒwē** ‘a lot of’

As Table 5.10 shows, the root **dʒwē**, which otherwise bears a mid tone, has a low-high rising tone when it modifies a Class 1 or a Class 9 noun (just like **lō** ‘all’). As pointed out in §5.3.2, the change from a mid tone to a rising tone is not a regular process and an explanation why this change is attested with several adjectivals has yet to be found. Examples of the use of **dʒwē** are given in (54), (55) and (56).

- (54) wù kwē jú ā [mù-dántʃén
 CL1 return_from_bush(c) come(b) COM CL18-Dantshen_berry
 mūɲ-dʒwē]
 CL18-many

‘She came home with lots of little Dantshen berries.’

- (57) ká wù dzɣè kě ɲām b-ɔ́ wù là, kě kì-mán
COND CL1 cook(a) even CL8a.fufu CL8a-DET CL1PP DAT even CL7-what
dō, ká wù yí wù yí wù yí, wù mū
remain(b) COND CL1 eat(b) CL1 eat(b) CL1 eat(b) CL1 take(a)
ʃú [nsóm mū-ɲtʃín m-ɔ́], wù fě gàn
come(b) CL19.crumb CL19-small CL19-DET CL1 give(b) go(a)
ɲwóm b-ɔ́ lā
CL2.children CL2-DET DAT

‘When she cooks, even fufu, for herself, even whatever [small thing] remains, when she eats, she eats and eats, she takes [only] small crumbs and gives them to the children.’

- (58) gâm kú n̄ wū dǐ w-ɔ́ [kwě á
Wum village.LOC SUBORD CL1 be(b) CL1-REL CL3/7a.village ADVLZ
fi-ɲtʃín], kī ā tʃɪŋ w̄
CL18-small CL7 NEG be_far(a) NEG

◊‘Wum, which is a small town, it is not far.’⁶

5.3.5 The nominal modifier -dzú ‘other’, ‘certain’

In elicitation, forms with and without segmental agreement prefixes were provided for **dzú** ‘other’, ‘certain’ (also ‘some’). However, in unelicited examples, **dzú** generally takes an agreement prefix. The pattern is the same as for other adjectivals, with a purely tonal (low-tone) prefix for Class 1 and 9 and syllabic mid-tone prefixes for the other classes. Whereas in Class 1 and 9, the stem bears a mid tone, for the other classes, it bears a high tone, whether the prefix is present or not; see Table 5.12.

noun class	prefix	example	gloss
1	`-	ɲgōm dzū	‘a certain/ another plantain’
2	bā-	ɲgōm (bā)dzú	‘certain/ other plantains’
3	wū-	kpē (wū)dzú	‘a certain/ another pot’
10	yī-	tsē (yī)dzú	‘certain/ other pots’
7,7a	kī-	yīŋʃī (kī)dzú	‘certain/ other eggs’
8,8a	bī-	mó (bī)dzú	‘certain/ other livers’
9	`-	sò dzū	‘certain/ other meat’
19	fī-	mwĩn (fī)dzú	‘a certain/ another clay pot’
18,6	mūN-	mwĩn (mūn)dzú	‘certain/ other cats’

Table 5.12: Agreement prefixes on the modifier **-dzú** ‘certain’, ‘other’

⁶The language spoken in Wum is Aghem. The name Aghem is also sometimes used to refer to the town.

Examples (59)-(61) are taken from natural texts. When **dzú** modifies a Class 1 noun, it takes on a mid tone, as in (59). For classes other than Class 1 or 9, the stem takes a mid-tone syllabic prefix and retains its high stem tone, as in (60) and (61).

- (59) [kpé dzū] kə dī fīn
 CL1.woman CL1.certain P3 be(b) there

‘There once was a woman.’

- (60) ntsǒŋkwín w-ḡ ywó gàn nìm ʃi [kpān wū-dzú]
 CL1/2.owl CL2-DET run(c) go(a) sit(a) go_down(a) CL3.tree CL3-other
 wḡ
 on

‘The owl went and sat down on another tree.’

- (61) [dzḡ yī-dzú y-ḡ] kə bḡ m-bḡ,
 CL10.houses CL10-other CL10-DET P3 burn(b) INF-burn(b)
 y-én tá kwà dí ŋ-kwà
 CL10-DEM.PROX VER.FOC break(a) be(b) INF-break(a)

‘The other houses burnt down, these ones broke.’

5.3.6 The nominal modifier -**dḡm** ‘some’

Just like for **dzú**, forms with and without agreement prefixes were also given in elicitation for **-dḡm** ‘some’ (also ‘other’ or ‘any’); see Table 5.13.

noun class	prefix	example	gloss
1	`-	ŋgḡm dḡm	‘some/ any plantain’
2	bḡ-	ŋgḡm (bḡ)dḡm	‘some/ any plantains’
3	wū-	kpḡ (wū)dḡm	‘some/ any pot’
7,7a	kī-	yīŋʃi (kī)dḡm	‘some/ any eggs’
8,8a	bī-	mḡ (bī)dḡm	‘some/ any livers’
9	`-	sḡ dḡm	‘some/ any meat’
10	yī-	tsḡ (yī)dḡm	‘some/ any pots’
19	fī-	mwīn (fī)dḡm	‘some/ any clay pot’
18	mūN-	mwīn (mūn)dḡm	‘some/ any cats’

Table 5.13: Agreement prefixes on **-dḡm** ‘some’, ‘any’, ‘other’

When an agreement prefix is present, it takes the most common form of adjectival agreement with a zero (or tonal) prefix for Class 1 and 9 and a mid-tone syllabic prefix for the other classes. The tone of **dḡm** is always high, even in Class 1 and 9. Thus, it behaves like **-ntʃín** ‘small’ which also retains its tone,

no matter which noun it modifies. However, spontaneous text examples generally do not show agreement, see (62) and (63). If **dòm** did show agreement, the form would be **ki-dòm** in both examples, but it doesn't.

- (62) [tō dòm] lā bǒ yē n-dzŭŋ, bǒ ā
 CL7/8.day some DAT CL2 start(a) INF-quarrel(c) CL2 COM
neighbour wū
 CL1.neighbour CL1;3SG.POSS

'One day they started quarrelling, she and her neighbour.'

- (63) n = sén bú má à, fǒ dĩ [níŋ dóm] à fǒ *plan*
 1SG = then ask(b) CS.QUOT Q, P1 be(b) CL7.thing some 2SG P1 plan
 ā
 QUOT.Q

'I then asked [him]: Is it something that you planned?'

5.3.7 The nominal modifier **dó** 'certain'

The adjective-like **dó** 'certain', although similar in usage and meaning to **-dzú** and **-dòm**, does not agree with the noun it modifies, see e.g. (64). It simply consists of the stem **dó** which never changes and does not take an agreement prefix. If **dó** did show agreement, the expected form in (64) would be **ki-dó**, but this is ungrammatical.

- (64) n = lyǎ ná f-án, n = dā wú wō yē
 1SG = go_to_bush(a).IPFV AS PROX-here 1SG=F1;NEG hear(b) NEG COMP
 bēn fǒ mù jǔ kpē tsyě w-ēn
 CL2PL P1 take(a) come(b) CL3.pot CL1.father.2POSS CL3-DEM.PROX
 w-ś wú-kwě w-ś yē bēn lā [níŋ dó] tʃín
 CL3-that CL3-home CL3-that COMP 2PL do(a) CL7.thing certain there
 mī
 in

'As I am going to the bush, I don't want to hear [when I come back] that you have taken your father's traditional pot in order to do something in it.'

5.3.8 The interrogative quantifier **-mìŋ** 'how much', 'how many'

In elicitation, the interrogative quantifier **-mìŋ** 'how much'/'how many' was often given without an agreement prefix. However, in unelicited text examples, it usually takes an agreement marker. When it modifies a Class 1 or a

Class 9 noun, **mìŋ** takes a zero (or tonal) prefix. For all other classes, the prefix is syllabic and bears a high tone (not a mid tone, like in the adjectivals treated so far). It is unclear whether there is a tonal prefix in Class 1 and 9 or not because the prefix has no effect on the tone of the root **mìŋ**.

Examples (65) and (66) show how **mìŋ** agrees with Class 2 and Class 7a, respectively. I have not found any unelicited example in which **mìŋ** is used attributively.

- (65) á?ǎ, mbē dʒwē bǎ kpá f-án, wù bōŋ yē
 INTERJ CL2.people many CL2 abound(b?) PROX-here CL1 call(a) COMP
 dī [bó-mìŋ]
 be(b) CL2-how_many

‘People, too many of them - she is saying that [they] are how many?’

- (66) bě gān yīŋ-ŋī k-ó, kī dǐ
 count(a) go(a) CL3/7a.egg-CL9/10.chicken CL7a-DET CL7a be(b)
 [kí-mìŋ]
 CL7a-how_many

◊‘Count those eggs! How many are they?’

5.3.9 The selective interrogative **mwān** ‘which’

The selective interrogative **-mwān** ‘which’ takes a zero (or tonal) prefix in Class 1 and 9, and a syllabic prefix with a low tone in all other classes. It is unclear whether there is a tonal prefix in Class 1 and 9 or not. The prefix has no effect on the tone of the root **-mwān**. It is unusual to have a low tone on agreement prefixes for noun classes other than Class 1 and 9.

Examples of the use of **mwān** are given in (67)–(69). Example (67) shows the lack of a segmental prefix when **mwān** modifies a Class 9 noun. Examples (68) and (69) show the low-toned prefix attested in noun classes other than Class 1 and 9.

- (67) dǐ [sìŋ mwān y-ó] à lē y-ó ŋgó
 beb CL9.knife CL9.which CL9-DET 2SG do(a).IPFV CL9-REL upon

◊‘Which knife do you use?’ (lit.: It is which knife that you do [it] with?)

- (68) [ǎŋ yì-mwān y-ó]
 CL10.sand CL10-which CL10-DET

◊‘Which sand?’

- (69) [fō wù-mwān w-ó]
 CL3.head CL3-which CL3-DET

◊‘Which head?’

In elicitation, **m̄mwān** was given as an alternative form which can be used for all noun classes. This form does not agree with the noun class of the modified noun.

5.4 Agreement in numerals

When they modify a noun, numerals from one to nine⁷ take syllabic agreement prefixes, which are nearly identical in shape with the third person personal pronouns; see Table 5.14.

noun class	prefix
1	wù-
2	bǔ-
3	wú-
7,7a	kí-
8,8a	bí-
9	yì-
10	yí-
19	fí-
18,6	mú(N)-

Table 5.14: Numeral agreement prefixes

The agreement prefixes for Class 1 and 9 bear a low tone, while all others bear a superhigh tone. The root **mwó** ‘one’ bears a low tone in Class 1 and 9 and a high tone in all other noun classes. Table 5.15 contains an overview of the numerals ‘one’ to ‘four’ in all noun classes.

noun class	prefix	‘one’	‘two’	‘three’	‘four’
1	wù-	wù-mwò	–	–	–
2	bǔ-/bó-	–	bǔ-fyé	bǔ-tó	bó-ndē
3	wú-	wú-mwó	–	–	–
7,7a	kí-	kí-mó	kí-fyé	kí-tó	kí-ndē
8	bí-	–	bí-fyé	bí-tó	bí-ndē
9	yì-	yì-mwò	–	–	–
10	yí-	–	yí-fyé	yí-tó	yí-ndē
19	fí-	fí-mwó	–	–	–
18	mú(N)-	–	múm-fyé	mún-tó	mú-ndē

Table 5.15: Noun class agreement in numerals

⁷For more on numerals including higher numerals, see §7.1.5.

As Table 5.15 shows, the Class 10 prefix causes palatalization of root-initial **f** and **t**.⁸ The shape of the root for ‘two’ changes from **-fyĕ** to **-fyĕ̃**, as in **yí̃fyĕ̃** and shape of the root for ‘three’ changes from **-tĕ** to **-tsĕ̃**. The numeral prefix is the only agreement prefix which such a process is attested for, although the Class 3/10 stem alternation must have a similar origin.⁹ This morphophonological process is treated in detail in §3.3.3.

When the numeral modifies a noun of Class 7 or 7a a root-change is also attested. In this case, the numeral root **mwo** ‘one’ is realized as **mɔ̃**. As pharyngealization is a by-product of the historical loss of a final velar (or glottal) stop, I suspect that the root-change in the numeral for ‘one’ may be due to the influence of a former Class 7 (or 7a) suffix **-k** on the numeral root (cf. §3.3.4).

Example (70) contains instances of two different numbers and noun classes: **wù-mwò** ‘one’ (CL1) and **bǔ-fyĕ̃** ‘two’ (CL2). The tone of the Class 1 (and 9, see (71)) prefix is lower, as is generally the case. Example (71) also contains two examples of numerals modifying nouns. The first, **yì-mwò** ‘one’ shows the low tone typical for Class 9, the second example, **bǔ-tĕ̃** shows an unexpected tone on the prefix. While we would expect a superhigh tone, the tone on the prefix is rising. This rise may be caused by a low tone on the preceding noun **mbĕ** ‘people’, which is realized **mbĕ̃** in isolation.

- (70) bǔ kə dī [bǔ-fyĕ̃], [wān mənō wù-mwò] āmì [wān
CL2 P3 be(b) CL2-two CL1.child CL1.man CL1-one and CL1.child
kpé wù-mwò]
CL1.woman CL1-one

‘They were two, one boy and one girl.’

- (71) [sī yì-mwò] áná [mbĕ bǔ-tĕ̃] bí ǃ
CL9/10.day CL9-one like_that CL2.people CL2-three exit(b) pass(b)
gàn
go(a)

‘On one day like that, three people die.’

⁸**f** is realized as **ɟ** and **t** changes to **ts** after the Class 10 prefix **yí̃**. This process does not exactly fit the common pattern of palatalization. However, it is unclear what determines the precise consonant alternations.

⁹Palatalization is also attested in the few irregular Gender 3/10 nominal roots which show initial consonant mutation (see §3.3.2 and §4.3.6). However, the prefixes that must have originally caused palatalization in those Class 10 nouns which have their singular in Class 3, have disappeared.

5.5 Overview of agreement patterns

This section summarizes the previous sections, giving an overview of agreement patterns and the similarities and differences between them. Table 5.16 gives an overview of the regular agreement patterns, using examples from different types of noun modifiers.

noun class	adjectives (here: 'new')	demonstratives (here: distal)	numerals (here: 'one' and 'two')	indep. pronouns (here: preverbal form)	3SG.POSS pronouns
1	fyǎŋ	wō	wùmwwò	wù	wū
2	bǎfyǎŋ	bó	bǎfyé	bǒ	bǒ
3	wūfyǎŋ	wó	wúmwwó	wū	wú
7,7a	kǐfyǎŋ	kó	kímó	kǐ	kǐ
8,8a	bǐfyǎŋ	bó	bǐfyé	bǐ	bǐ
9	fyǎŋ	yō	yìmwò	yì	yì
10	yǐfyǎŋ	yó	yǐŋyé	yǐ	yǐ
19	fǐfyǎŋ	fó	fímwwó	fǐ	fǐ
18,6	mūmfyǎŋ	mó	múmfwé	mū	mú

Table 5.16: Overview of agreement patterns, including prefixes and tonal changes, exemplified by different types of noun modifiers

Adjectives and numerals take syllabic agreement prefixes, but they differ in several respects. First of all, adjectives have no segmental prefixes for Class 1 and 9. Instead, the stem tone is commonly lower when the adjective agrees with a Class 1 or a Class 9 noun. Whether this is due to a low tone prefix is still unclear (see discussion below). The same agreement pattern is attested with other adjectivals, such as the quantifiers **-lō** 'all', **-dʒwē** 'a lot of'. However, there is no simple explanation for the tonal alternations attested in other adjectivals.

Demonstratives, with their vowel-initial roots, take segmental agreement prefixes. As with the other nominal modifiers, the stem tone is generally lower when a demonstrative modifies a noun of Class 1 or Class 9, than when it modifies a noun of another noun class. Finally, both personal and possessive pronouns consist of an agreement prefix only. In their preverbal form, the pronouns for Class 1 and 9 bear a low tone, while the others bear a mid tone, except for the 3_{PL} or Class 2 pronoun which bears a superhigh tone. In non-preverbal position, the 3_{PL}/Class 2 pronoun has the same tone as the other non-Class 1/9 pronouns. Possessive pronouns bear a mid tone for Class 1 and 9 and a superhigh tone for all other classes.

Most of the tonal stem alternations between nominal modifiers of Class 1 and 9 nouns on the one hand, and nouns of other classes on the other, cannot be accounted for by the effect of tonal prefixes. Given the existence of a general process called ‘Low tone spread’ (see §3.4.2), which changes a superhigh to a low-high rising tone after a low tone, the stem change from underlying *fyĩŋ* ‘new’ to *fyĩŋ* could be accounted for by the existence of a low tone prefix for Class 1 and 9. However, the change from high to mid, as attested in the quantifier *-ntʃĩŋ* ‘few’ (see §5.3.4) and in demonstratives, is not a regular process. Neither is the change from mid to rising, as attested in the quantifiers *-lō* ‘all’ and *-dʒwē* ‘a lot of’ (see §5.3.2 and 5.3.3, respectively). For the other modifiers, the tonal opposition between Class 1 and 9 and the other noun classes cannot simply be accounted for by the existence of tonal prefixes, either. Thus, neither the change from mid to low in personal pronouns nor the change from superhigh to mid in possessive pronouns can be accounted for at this point.

5.6 Gender conflict resolution

Gender conflict arises when two nominals belonging to different genders (or noun class pairings) are conjoined, so that the resulting NP triggers agreement. Different languages use different strategies to resolve this problem. As agreement in Mundabli is restricted to the noun phrase, gender conflict can only arise within the noun phrase, as well.

In principle, there are two possible cases in which gender conflict could arise in Mundabli: (a) when a noun modifier modifies a conjunction of nominals belonging to different genders or (b) when a conjunction of nominals belonging to different genders is represented by a pronoun. In fact, I have not found a single example of a modifier modifying a conjunction of nouns or noun phrases of different genders. Instead each member of the conjunction tends to have its own modifier.

However, it is possible for conjunctions of nouns of different genders to be represented by a single pronoun, even though this is rarely the case in spontaneous speech. Therefore, this discussion will be restricted to gender-conflict in pronouns.

In a (symmetrical) conjunction of nominals, two nominals are connected with the conjunction *āmì* (see (72) and (73)). In these and the following examples, the conjunction is surrounded by square brackets.

- (72) bʃ kà dī bʃ-fyē, [wān m̀n̄ wù-mwò āmì wān
 CL2 P3 be(b) CL2-two CL1.child CL1.man CL1-one and CL1.child
 kpé wù-mwò]
 CL1.woman CL1-one

‘They were two - one boy and one girl.’

- (73) wù dzé ááá, yē m = búŋ [mf̃ ŋgī
 CL1 say(b) INTERJ COMP 1SG = pick(b) CL1/2.slave CL1;1SG.POSS
 kpé āmì mf̃ ŋgī m̃ñ]̃
 CL1.female and CL1/2.slave CL1;1SG.POSS CL1.male

‘She said: Wow! I have picked my slave boy and my slave girl.’

However, when two nominals of different genders are involved, a comitative construction is preferred, with the second nominal occurring within a comitative phrase headed by the comitative marker *ā* ‘with’, as in (74).

- (74) [s̃ y-̃ ā nām b-̃]
 CL9.meat CL9-DET COM CL8a.fufu CL8a-DET

◊‘the meat with the fufu’

The use of the comitative construction is more appropriate than the symmetrical construction when referring to nouns of different genders. Whereas Maho (1999: 114) lists the comitative construction as one means to avoid gender conflict by avoiding a conjunction, in Mundabli the use of the comitative construction does not resolve gender conflict. While, in this asymmetrical construction, the first nominal forms the head of the whole noun phrase, agreement is not (always) with the head noun, as shown in (75) where a Class 2 (or 3PL) pronoun represents the conjunction of a Class 1 and a Class 9 noun.

Instead, the choice of a pronoun representing a comitative construction depends on animacy. When nouns referring to humans and non-human animates are conjoined, they are represented by a Class 2 pronoun; see (75). Conjunctions of humans and non-animates are not attested in spontaneous speech.

- (75) [m̃ ā dzũ y-̃], m = f̃ d̃ b̃ l̃
 CL1.man COM CL9.goat CL9-DET 1SG = P1 see(a) CL2PP DAT

◊‘The man with the goat, I saw them.’

Comitative constructions involving two (or more) nouns referring to inanimate objects are usually represented by a Class 8 pronoun, as shown in (76).

- (76) a. s̃ y-̃ ā nām b-̃, n = d̃ yí b̃
 CL9.meat CL9-DET COM CL8a.fufu CL8a-DET 1SG = F1 eat(b) CL8

◊‘The meat with the fufu, I will eat them.’

- b. s̃ y-̃ ā l̃k̃ b-̃, n = d̃ yí
 CL9.meat CL9-DET COM CL8a.cassava CL8a-DET 1SG = F1 eat(b)
 b̃
 CL8

◊‘The meat with the cassava, I will eat them.’

