A grammar of Mankanya: An Atlantic language of Guinea-Bissau, Senegal and the Gambia

Gaved T.J.D.

Chapter 3 - Nouns and Nominals

3.1 Basic word classes

I will use the following criteria to define some of the basic word classes in Mankanya. These apply to complete words, and the following section will describe how these words are constructed from different stems.

Nouns can designate both concrete objects and abstract ideas, for example *katoh* “house” and *manjoonan* “truth”. A noun can be possessed. There is a nominal agreement system based on the prefix of the noun and the prefixes of most noun modifiers (a few noun modifiers are invariant). On the basis of this agreement nouns can be grouped into noun classes.

Adjectives modify nouns and the prefix of an adjective agrees with the prefix of the noun it is modifying. A word denoting a quality that is not modifying a noun will not by this definition be described as an adjective. An adjective can modify nouns of several different noun classes. For example with the adjectival root *week* “large” - *napoţ naweek* “large child”, *katoh kaweek* “large house”.

Actions or states are designated by single verbs, or by a combination of auxiliary verbs and main verbs. Only verbs can take inflectional prefixes which agree with the subject, though they can be bare stems when used in combination with auxiliaries. Verbs govern the number and types of other constituents in a clause.

Some word forms overlap these categories, in particular infinite verb forms and participles, which have some characteristics of both nouns and verbs. I will deal with these in chapter 5.

3.2 Word structure

Most words in Mankanya are multi-morphemic. Multi-morphemic words consist of a root, which may take derivational suffixes to form a stem. This stem in turn can take inflectional prefixes and suffixes.

Roots can be divided into three groups, which I will label nominal, verbal and general.

Nominal roots can only take nominal affixes, and result in words that are nouns or noun modifiers.

3.1
a.	*u-buş*	"dog"
b.	*ka-toh*	"house"
c.	*p-maŋa*	"mango fruit"
d.	*b-maŋa*	"mango tree"
e.	*ka-week*	"big (e.g house)"

A small number of roots are verbal and only take verbal inflectional affixes to become verbal words. They require a derivational suffix to become a nominal stem which can then take noun class prefixes and other nominal affixes.

3.2
	root		**verb**		**noun**	
a.	*şub*	"rain"	*u-şub*	"it rains"	*u-şub-al*	"rain"
b.	*jeenk*	"redden"	*pa-jeenk*	"it reddens"	*u-jeenk-al*	"red"

Some nominal roots can become verbal stems with the addition of a derivative suffix, however, these are not very productive.

3.3
	root		**noun**		**verb**	
a.	*week*	"big"	*u-week*	"big"	*a-week-a*	"he gets bigger"
			na-week	"elder sibling"		
b.	*naaf*	"idiot"	*na-naaf*	"idiot"	*a-naaf-a*	"he is stupid"
c.	*tiinku*	"small"	*u-tiinku*	"small"	*ba-tiink-ëţ*	"they are few"
d.	*joob*	"cold"	*u-joob*	"cold"	*u-joob-ëţ*	"it cools"

General roots either take verbal inflectional affixes to become verbal words, or nominal prefixes to become nouns or noun modifiers. With these roots there is no way of establishing whether one or other form is more basic.

3.4
	root		**verb**		**noun**	
a.	*lemp*	"work"	*a-lemp*	"he works"	*u-lemp*	"work"
b.	*kit*	"break"	*a-kit*	"he breaks"	*ka-kit*	"harvest"
c.	*kob*	"hit"	*a-kob*	"he hits"	*na-kob*	"drummer" (lit. hitter)
d.	*yeeh*	"sing"	*a-yeeh*	"he sings"	*u-yeeh*	"song"
					na-yeeh	"singer"
e.	*piiţ*	"write"	*a-piiţ*	"he writes"	*u-piiţ*	"writing"
f.	*do*	"do"	*a-do*	"he does"	*u-do*	"action"

Roots can also take derivational suffixes to create a stem before taking the affixes that make them verbal or nominal words. Like roots, a stem can

either be nominal (can only result in nouns and noun modifiers) or general (can also result in verbs). I have not found any examples of derived verbal stems (stems that can only result in verbs without further derivation).

3.5	**root**		**verb**		**noun**	
	a. *do*	"do"	*a-do*	"he does"	*u-dol-ade*	"tradition"
	b. *juk*	"learn"	*a-juk-an*	"he teaches"	*na-juk-an*	"teacher"
	c. *lemp*	"lemp" "servant"	*a-lemp-ar*	"he works for"	*na-lemp-ar*	

Verbal words will be dealt with in more detail in Chapter 4.

3.3 Noun morphology

3.3.1 Class prefixes

Common nouns are made up of a prefix and a stem, as do most noun modifiers, and these modifiers agree with the noun.

3.6

katoh		**kajeenkal**		
ka-	toh	ka-	jeenk	-al
C3S	house	C3S	redden	CHG

"red house"

3.7

bañaaŋ		**baŧum**	
ba-	ñaaŋ	ba-	ŧum
C1P	person	C1P	many

"many people"

3.8

ŋpi		**ŋtëb**		**ŋi**	
ŋ-	pi	ŋ-	tëb	ŋ-	i
C2P	goat	C2P	two	C3P	DEM.PROX

"these two goats"

Verbs also take prefixes which agree with the subject noun (see section 4.2.1 for more detail).

3.9

bantohi		**baţiini**	
ba-	ntohi	ba-	ţiini
C1P	elder	C1P	speak

"The elders speak"

3.10

upi		**ufeer**	
u-	pi	u-	feer
C2S	goat	C2S	graze

"The goat grazes"

Most nouns have different prefixes for singular and plural but some also have a differentiation between an unspecified, indefinite plural, and a

counted, definite one, as shown in the examples below. The counted plural form is used when the noun is modified by a cardinal number. This three way system exists in other related languages e.g. Baïnounk (Cobbinah 2013) and I will label them “general plural” (or just “plural”) and “counted plural”. As general plurals are by far the more frequent, for simplicity of glossing they will be glossed P and counted plurals P.CNT.

3.11 **ppiiɬi** **pi**
p- piiɬi p- i
C4S pen C4P DEM.PROX
“this pen”

3.12 **ipiiɬi** **iloŋ**
i- piiɬi i- loŋ
C4P pen C4P INDEF
“some pens”

3.13 **kpiiɬi** **ktëb**
k- piiɬi k- tëb
C4P.CNT pen C4P.CNT two
“two pens”

The pattern of agreement of nouns with modifiers and verbs can be used to divide nouns stems into classes. Unlike among linguists working on Bantu languages, there is no widespread agreement amongst those working in Atlantic languages about how to number classes. For example Trifkovič (1969), Sagna (2008) and Ndao (2011) number each individual prefix, Karlik (1972) and Soukka (2000) assign a number to each singular/ plural/counted plural grouping, and others such as Segerer (2000) and Cobbinah (2013) use the phonological form of each individual prefix.

In this thesis I will label classes in the same way as as Karlik and Soukka, e.g. a noun stem which takes (and whose modifiers take) the *u-* prefix in the singular and *ŋ-* prefix in the plural will be considered class 2, with glosses C2S and C2P respectively. The numbering is my own, and is arbitrary. In this system what is important is not the form of an individual prefix, but rather the group of prefixes a particular noun stem can have. Homophonous prefixes might therefore appear in different classes. For example *p-* prefix in *pdunk* “clay pot” is considered class 4 singular because it groups with *i-* in *idunk* “clay pots” and *k-* in *kdunk ktëb* “two clay pots”, whereas *p-* in *plaak* is considered class 6 singular as it groups with *m-* in *mlaak* “stones” and *ŋ-* in *ŋlaak ŋtëb* “two stones”. This is similar to the way Bantuists use “gender” (where numbered individual classes are grouped as singular/plural pairs), or to Cobbinah's (2013) “paradigm” (where phonologically labelled individual classes are grouped as pairs or triads to create number distinctions).

A number of recent researchers have labelled classes with something reflecting a group of possible phonological forms. For example in Bijogo, Segerer's KO class includes *kɔ-*, *ko-* and *ku-* (Segerer 2000). This has advantages in languages where vowel harmony means the form of the prefix changes depending on the form of the stem, but this is not the case in Mankanya.

In my analysis classes are based on the agreement patterns of modifiers, and the noun classes represent an inflectional system, where the two or three prefixes belong to a lexical unit. Labelling a prefix with class and number reflects that.

Class	**Sg**	**Example**	**Pl**	**Example**	**English**	**Count Pl**	**Example (two …)**
1a	*a-*	*ayin* *abuk*	*ba-*	*bayin* *babuk*	husband child	=	*bayin batëb* *babuk batëb*
1	*na-*	*napoţ* *nalët*	*ba-*	*bapoţ* *balët*	child(ren) tailor(s)	=	*bapoţ batëb* *balët batëb*
2	*u-*	*ubuş* *ujah*	*ŋ-*	*ŋbuş* *ŋjah*	dog(s) star(s)	=	*ŋbuş ŋtëb* *ŋjah ŋtëb*
3	*ka-*	*kañen* *katoh*	*i-*	*iñen* *itoh*	hand(s) house(s)	=	*iñen itëb* *itoh itëb*
4	*p(a)-*	*pdunk* *paŧenda*	*i-*	*idunk* *iŧenda*	pot(s) cloth(s)	*k-*	*kdunk ktëb* *kŧenda ktëb*
5	*b(a)-*	*blaañ* *batani*	*i-*	*ilaañ* *itani*	wrap(s) flock(s)	*k-*	*klaañ ktëb* *ktani ktëb*
6	*p-*	*pmaŋa* *plaak*	*m-*	*mmaŋa* *mlaak*	mango(s) stone(s)	*ŋ-*	*ŋmaŋa ŋtëb* *ŋlaak ŋtëb*
7	*b-*	*bmaŋa* *bkem*	*m-*	*mmaŋa* *mkem*	mango tree(s) oil palm(s)	*ŋ-*	*ŋmaŋa ŋtëb* *ŋkem ŋtëb*
8			*m(a)(n)-*	*mnlilan* *meel*	joy water		
9	*d-*	*dko* *skoola*	*i-*	*iko* *iskoola*	place(s) school(s)	*k-*	*kskoola ktëb*
10	*n-*	*nñiiŋ* *nkow*			little hyena little head		

Table 3.1: Noun Classes

Table 3.1 above summarises the noun prefixes. Modifier prefixes are not identical, there is a summary in table 3.9 at the end of this chapter and I describe them in later chapters. Each class has the possibility of up to three prefixes for the different number values: singular, plural, counted plural. Classes 1, 2 and 3 do not differentiate between general and counted plurals. Classes 4 and 5 (which have singular prefixes *p(a)-* and *b(a)-*) have the same

general plural and the counted general plural). Classes 6 and 7 (which have singular prefixes *p-* and *b-*) also share the same general plural and the same counted plural. Class 8 which includes mass and abstract nouns only has one number value and hence one prefix, which I have assigned to the general plural column. Class 10 (diminutive) only has a singular number value.

The class 1a singular prefix *a-* is used with a small number of kinship nouns. It is considered a subclass of class 1, as noun modifier agreement and verb subject agreement is identical to those nouns that take the main class 1 singular prefix *na-*.

Singular prefixes in class 4 and 5 can have forms consisting of a singular consonant, (*p-* or *b-*) or forms with consonant followed by *a* (*pa-* or *ba-*). There seems to be no phonological or semantic rule as to which is used, though forms with *a* are less frequent. These forms are not considered a different class as the agreement pattern is the same as the simple consonant only forms. For example compare 3.14 and 3.15 below.

3.14 **blaañ** **bweek**
b- laañ b- week
c5s wrap c5s big
"big wrap"

3.15 **batani** **bweek**
ba- tani b- week
c5s herd c5s big
"large herd"

Similarly a small number of class 8 nouns take the form *man-* instead of *mn-*. Class 8 nouns roots that begin with a vowel, or *n*, take the prefix *m-*, otherwise prefixes *mn-* or *man-* are used.

3.16 a. *mn-lilan* "joy"
b. *mn-dëm* "greatness"
c. *mn-jooţan* "sadness"
c. *man-joonan* "truth"
d. *man-ţaaf* "anxiety"
d. *m-eel* "water"

There is no singular/plural/uncountable plural distinction in class 8. I have lined up the class 8 prefix with plurals, as it is possible to use *m-* to indicate many multiple small things, e.g *plaak* "stone" (which is class 4 *ilaak* "stones", *klaak ktëb* "two stones") can be used with the *m-* prefix to become *mlaak* "gravel", and in this way it is similar to the class 6 and 7 plural *m-*.

Certain stems can be used with prefixes from more than one class. For example *ben* can be class 7 *bben* "rhun palm", class 6 *pben* "fruit of the rhun

palm" or class 5 *kaben* "rhun palm branch". The extreme case of this is *ko* which has a broad meaning of "thing", the type of thing being indicated by the class prefix, for example *ŋko* "animals", *bko* "tree", *dko* "place". This will be discussed further below.

The class 10 *n-* is a diminutive prefix that is fairly infrequent. It is found with a small number of stems where the non-diminuitive noun is in a different class.

3.17	**Noun**		**Class**	**Diminutive**	
	a. *u-ñiiŋ*	"hyena"	3	*n-ñiiŋ*	"little hyena"
	b. *ka-hoţ*	"foot"	4	*n-hoţ*	"little foot"
	c. *b-kow*	"head"	6	*n-kow*	"little head"

There is no stem that combines only with *n-*, and it can only have singular number. It does trigger agreement in noun modifiers and verbs that is different to other classes. This might be evidence for the idea of two different singular prefixes that parallel the two different plural prefixes (uncounted and counted) that are found in some classes. Counter-evidence is that the use of this prefix is restricted to a very small number of stems.

For comparison, here is a table that shows the relationship between the classes I use in this thesis and those used by Trifkovič (1969). Note that Trifkovič does not assign a class to *d-* because she considers it rare. Though it is true that it is only found on one noun, it is used as an agreement prefix with many others. She also does not describe the *n-* diminutive prefix.

Class	**Sing.**	**Class in Trifkovič**	**Plural**	**Class in Trifkovič**
1a	*a-*	1a	*ba-*	6
1	*na-*	1	*ba-*	6
2	*u-*	2	*ŋ-*	7
3	*ka-*	3	*i-*	8
4	*p(a)-*	4	*i-*	8
5	*b(a)-*	5	*i-*	8
6	*p-*	4	*m-*	9
7	*b-*	5	*m-*	9
8			*m(a)(n)-*	10
9	*d-*	-	*i-*	-
10	*n-*	-		

Table 3.2: Comparison of class numbers with Trifkovič

3.3.1.1 Noun class semantics

The semantics of a noun word are determined from the semantics of the stem and the prefix. This is clear from the fact that the number of the noun

is determined by the prefix. But equally, as noted above, certain roots and stems can be used with different prefixes to denote different things. For example the root *ben* has semantics related to the rhun palm, but by itself its meaning is schematic, and we could label it RHUN PALM (using the semantic convention of capital letters). It is only in combination with the class 7 prefix *b-* it becomes *bben* "rhun palm tree", with the class 6 prefix *p-* *pben* "fruit of the rhun palm" or class 3 prefix *ka- kaben* "rhun palm branch". Cobbinah (2013) and Watson (2014) describe similar construction of meaning in two related languages Baïnounk Gubëeher and Jola Kujireray.

Though the noun prefix contributes meaning to the noun, a prefix's semantic content is not clearly defined. For example not all nouns with a *ka-* prefix are branches, or parts, or long and thin. Equally while many nouns with a *u-* prefix are animals, there is also a group of *u-* prefix nouns that relate to languages. Class 6 *p-* which is predominately fruit also contains words like *pliik* "well" and *ppaw* "log".

The stem *ko* – loosely defined as THING, combines with the widest range of prefixes.

3.18	a. *u-ko*	thing (class 2 singular)
	b. *ŋ-ko*	animals (class 2 plural)
	c. *ka-ko*	container (class 3 singular)
	d. *p-ko*	small object, e.g. a bead or a stick (class 4 singular)
	e. *i-ko*	things (class 4 or 5 plural)
	f. *b-ko*	tree (class 7 singular)
	g. *mn-ko*	fruit, trees (class 6 or 7 plural)
	h. *d-ko*	place (class 9 singular)

There are some semantic correlates with the different noun classes which I will discuss below, but there are also many exceptions, for example body parts can be found in classes 2, 3, 4, and 5. Kihm notes a similar situation in in Manjaku (Kihm 2005).

Class 1a a-/ba- There are a very small number of nouns found in this subclass. They are all human, and restricted to kinship terms.

3.19	a. *a-yin*	cousin
	b. *a-har*	wife

Class 1 na-/ba- Nouns that take these prefixes are all human.

A large group of nouns in this class are formed with general stems with the meaning of "one who does" an action, or "one who is" a state.

3.20	a. *na-kob*	drummer (lit:hitter) c.f. *pkob* to hit
	b. *na-ʈupar*	spokesman c.f. *pʈupar* to speak for

c. *na-poţ* child c.f. *ppoţ* to be small

When combined with a stem indicating an ethnic or family group, the resulting meaning is a member of that group.

3.21 a. *na-hula* a Mankanya
b. *na-laaƚ* a Balanta
c. *na-diiŋal* a member of the Dingal family

This group also includes three common nouns where the prefixes behave irregularly: *ñaaţ* "woman", *ñiinţ* "man", *ñaaŋ* "person". See section 3.3.1.2 for more detail.

Class 2 u-/ŋ- The majority of nouns in this class are non-human animates e.g. animals, fish, bird, reptiles and spirits.

3.22 a. *u-buş* dog
b. *u-laar* spider
c. *u-pi* goat
d. *u-tapal* catfish
e. *u-nƚaayi* spirit

The class also includes some inanimates, for example:

3.23 a. *u-bel* shield
b. *u-fët* compound
c. *u-ţup* word, speech

When *u-* is combined with an ethnic stem, the meaning of the resulting noun is the language or dialect of that group. This meaning may have developed by extension from *u-ţup* "word, speech" (3.23c above), or perhaps they were originally modifiers of *u-ţup*.

3.24 a. *u-wuuh* the dialect of Ko (the *bawuuh*)
b. *u-laaƚ* the Balanta language
c. *u-mbaabu* a European language (Europeans are *ba-mbaabu*)

The *u-* prefix can also be used with the singular of certain words normally found in class 5 or class 7, to give the sense of augmentative.

3.25

	Noun		**Class**	**Augmentative**	
a.	*b-laañ*	"wrap"	5	*u-laañ*	"big wrap"

Class 3 ka-/i- Most nouns that take this prefix cannot be easily grouped. However, with certain words, these prefixes have a meaning of a "small part of" something.

3.26 a. *ka-kën* palm leaf (c.f. *pkën* "oil palm")
b. *ka-mpoban* fragments of a bottle (c.f. *umpoban* "bottle")

c. *ka-mul* stick of wood (c.f. *bmul* “dry tree”)

Class 4 p(a)-/i- There are no obvious groupings in this class.

Class 5 b(a)-/i- There are no obvious groupings in this class

Class 6 p-/m- The most significant group in this class is fruit (in the most general sense).

3.27 a. *p-bën* rhun palm fruit (c.f. *bbën* “rhun palm”)
b. *p-maŋa* mango (c.f. *bmaŋa* “mango tree”)
c. *p-maanan* grain of rice (c.f. *umaanan* “rice”)

Some researchers, for example Cobbinah (2013) and Watson (2014) have suggested that the semantic motivation for the equivalent of this class in related languages is things that are “round” or “with spherical diameter”. Though seems to apply to many members beyond fruit, it is difficult to see why that is salient to some nouns in this class, e.g. a grain of rice.

Class 7 b-/m- The nouns in this class are almost entirely trees and plants.

3.28 a. *b-bën* rhun palm
b. *b-maŋa* mango tree
c. *b-liik* peanut plant
d. *b-joşar* bean plant

There is clearly a relationship between these two classes, but it is not possible to determine which might be the basic class. Considering that *p-ko* means “small object” and *b-ko* means “tree”, a strong possibility is that *b-* is the basic class. The use of *p-* then gives the sense “small thing” when combined with a tree-like stem X, to give a meaning “small thing from X” or in other words “fruit of tree X”.

However, the *b-* prefix has a derivative augmentative function with certain nouns.

3.29

	Noun		**Class**	**Augmentative**	
a.	*na-poţ*	“child”	2	*b-poţ*	“big child”
b.	*ka-hoţ*	“house”	3	*b-toh*	“big house”

This could be an argument that the p- form is the basic class and the use of b- gives the sense “big version of fruit X”, i.e. “the X tree”.

The phenomenon of noun prefix alternation on the same noun stem to distinguish between fruit and trees is very common in Atlantic languages (Creissels and Lüpke Forthcoming).

Class 8 m(a)(n)- This class contains liquids and other uncountables:

3.30	a. *meel*	water
	b. *mn-tow*	milk
	c. *m-niir*	fat

By extension this prefix can also be used with some stems found in other classes to derive a liquid or uncountable meaning.

3.31	a. *m-nob*	honey (c.f. *unob* “bee”)
	b. *mn-laak*	gravel (c.f. *plaak* “stone”)

It also contains abstract concepts:

3.32	a. *mn-lilan*	happiness
	b. *mn-tit*	intelligence
	c. *man-jooan*	truth

Class 9 d- Only one noun has the prefix *d-*, *dko* “place”. However, the *d-* prefix is used for noun agreement and *da-* for verb agreement with almost all recently borrowed nouns (even if the nouns themselves don't have a prefix), proper nouns which signify places, and time nouns.

3.33	a. *kaara d-i nul*	his face
	b. *pekadu d-i baka*	their sin
	c. *dmass da-kmbiiŋ*	Sunday that is coming
	d. *faan da-wo di Naşibaţi*	tomorrow belongs to God

Class 10 n- As noted above this is a diminutive prefix.

3.3.1.2 Irregularities

A small number of nouns are irregular.

There are 3 nouns which have class 1 agreement, but where the noun prefixes are different to the agreement prefixes:

3.34	a. *ñaaţ/baaţ*	woman/women
	b. *ñiinţ/biinţ*	man/men
	c. *ñaaŋ/bañaaŋ*	person/people

In example 3.34a and b the stems unusually start with a vowel - *aaţ* “female” and *iinţ* “male” and the prefixes are *ñ-* and *b-* instead of *na-* and *ba-*. In 3.34c the singular seems to follow the same pattern where *na-* has been replace by *ñ-*, presumably before the now non-existent stem *aaŋ*. However, in the plural the whole singular form has become reinterpreted as the stem *ñaaŋ*, and the prefix is the normal class 1 plural *ba-*.

There are some other nouns where it seems that a prefix has been dropped, and agreement is alliterative.

3.35	*pkëş/këş*	eye/eyes
	këş ki nan	your eyes (eyes of you)

The noun *meeţ* “room” has a plural *imeeţ* but has class 9 agreement in the singular (*d-*)

3.36`	*meeţ/imeeţ*	room/rooms
	meeţ di ajug katoh	the room of the head of the household

Note that *meeţ* is also a locative modifier meaning “inside” (see section 6.2.2).

I have found a couple of other nouns that have unusual patterns.

3.37	a. *mntim/itum*	mouth/mouths
	b. *udolade/idolade*	custom/customs

3.3.1.3 Proper noun marker

In animal based folk stories the names of certain central animals have the prefix *ţ-* instead of the normal prefix for animals *u-*. This has the effect of creating a proper noun. This is comparable to, in English, “Hare ate the rice” as opposed to “the hare”, or “a hare”.

	Common Noun		**Proper Noun**
3.38 a.	*u-ñiiŋ*	“hyena”	*ţ-ñiiŋu* “Hyena”
b.	*u-maalu*	“hare”	*ţ-maalu* “Hare”

The resulting noun causes agreement either with *u-* like its unmodified form, or sometimes *a-* as if the character was a human. This is a stylistic variation depending on the narrator. Because of the variability of its agreement and limited use I have not analysed it as a class prefix.

3.3.2 Special cases

3.3.2.1 Proper Nouns

Proper nouns do not take prefixes (though some proper nouns contain fossilised prefixes). They trigger semantic agreement so human names cause verbs and modifiers to agree like class 1 nouns (*na-/ba-*). Names of places cause agreement as if they were class 9 nouns (*d-/i-*).

3.3.2.2 Borrowed words

Like all languages in contact with others, Mankanya has borrowed words from other languages, notably from Upper Guinea Creole which for many years was the language of wider communication in the Mankanya area.

Some borrowed words have been absorbed into a noun class based on semantics – for example the mango (first recorded in West Africa in 1824) is found in class 6 *p-maŋa* “mango fruit” and class 7 *b-maŋa* “mango tree” like other fruits and their trees.

Other words have developed agreement based on sound similarities. For example *dmaas* “dimanche/Sunday” (borrowed from French) takes agreement with *d-* prefixes (however, this is also a semantic fit as a time word). The word *ŋriŧia* “church(es)” (borrowed from Upper Guinea Creole *igrisia*) takes agreement with *ŋ-* prefixes, even in the singular. It might be expected that this word would take agreement with *i-* prefixes, but a possible explanation is that [i] followed by the cluster [gr] has been reinterpreted as [ig] followed by [r] (as [gr] is not an acceptable stem initial cluster in Mankanya) and in turn [ig] > [ŋ].

Other borrowed words do not start with anything that looks like a class prefix, e.g. *skoola* “school”, *rosadi* “shrine”, *kaara* “face”, *pekadu* “sin”. Noun modifiers for the these words take the prefix *d-* “class 10”. For example *skoola dnuura* “the good school”, *rosadi dweek* “the big shrine”. In the plural these words take *i-* – *iskoola inuura* “the good schools”, *ikaara* “faces”.

3.3.3 Possessor suffixes

There is a paradigm of suffixes which is used for possession of a small number of nouns, mainly kinship terms, when the possessor is animate. The paradigm is incomplete and there no suffixes for 1st singular, 1st plural exclusive, or 3rd person plural. In these cases an independent pronoun must be used. For those nouns which do not use the suffixes, independent pronouns are also used but in a more complex syntactic structure (see section 7.3.4.2 Alienable Genitive Construction).

Person/ number	**Suffix**	**Example**	**English translation**	**Pronoun**
Singular:				
1st		*a-buk naan* *ba-buk naan*	my child my children	*naan*
2nd	*-u*	*ka-toh-u* *i-toh-u*	your (sg) house your (sg) houses	*nu*
3rd	*-ul*	*a-har-ul* *ba-har-ul*	his/her wife his/her wives	*nul*
Plural:				
1st inc	*-un*	*a-nin-un* *ba-nin-un*	our mother our mothers	*nun*
1st exc		*a-nin nja* *ba-nin nja*	our mother our mothers	*nja*
2nd	*-an*	*a-şin-an* *ba-şin-an*	your (pl) father your (pl) fathers	*nan*
3rd		*a-ţa baka* *ba-ţa baka*	their younger sibling their younger siblings	*baka*

Table 3.3: Possessor suffixes

3.3.4 Derivational suffixes

There are two derivational suffixes that can be used with a nominal stem (that is a stem that can be used in either nouns or adjectives), neither of which are very productive. Both have the same function, to change a nominal stem into a verbal one.

The first is *-a.*

3.39

stem		**noun or adjective**		**verb**
a. *week*	"big"	*u-week*	"big"	*a-week-a* "to get bigger"
		na-week	"elder sibling"	
b. *naaf*	"idiot"	*na-naaf*	"idiot"	*a-naaf-a* "to be stupid"

The second is *-ëţ.* This is mostly used with nominal stems with a primarily property meaning.

3.40

stem		**noun or adjective**		**verb**
a. *tiinku*	"small"	*u-tiinku*	"small"	*ba-tiink-ëţ* "they are few"
b. *kuul*	"blind"	*na-kuul*	"blind person"	*a-kuul-ëţ* "he is blind"
c. *kow*	"head"	*na-kow*	"clairvoyant"	*a-kow-ëţ* "he has extraordinary knowledge"
		b-kow	"head"	

3.4 Compound Nouns

Compound nouns are a combination of a noun and a noun. Both nouns take their normal prefixes, but verbs and adjectives agree with the class of the first noun.

3.41 a. *uyoor-bapoţ* – praying mantis — *u-yoor* – something that swallows; *ba-poţ* – children

b. *ubuş-kajaagal* – jackal — *u-buş* – dog; *ka-jaagal* – bush

c. *kaduŋ-ubopal* – toadstool — *ka-duŋ* – umbrella; *u-bopal* – frog

d. *naţup-kaɬaaki* – liar — *na-ţup* – speaker; *ka-ɬaaki* – falsehood

3.5 Pronouns

There is a set of independent subject pronouns shown in the table below. Notice that non human pronouns are prefixed with the noun class prefix of the noun being replaced. Most simple sentences only use the verbal agreement prefix if a subject noun phrase is not present.

Person	**Singular**	**Plural**
1st	*nji*	*nja (incl)* *un (excl)*
2nd	*iwi*	*an*
Class		
1	*ul*	*bukal*
2	*wul*	*ŋul*
3	*kul*	*yul*
4	*pul*	*yul*
5	*bul*	*yul*
6	*pul*	*mul*
7	*bul*	*mul*
8		*mul*
9	*dul*	*yul*
10	*nul* (unattested)	

Table 3.4: Independent subject pronouns

There is a possible 1st person plural distinction between inclusive *nja* (including the addressee(s)) and exclusive *un* (excluding the addressee(s)).

This distinction is becoming obsolete, and many people just the use the two words synonymously.

There is a set of independent object pronouns. Singular human objects, and 1st and 2nd plural objects are normally verbal pronominal suffixes. See section 4.2.7 Object Suffixes and section 7.7.1.2 Object pronouns. These suffixes are not agreement features as there is no verb/object agreement in Mankanya.

Table 3.5 shows the independent object pronouns. For 1st person plural exclusive, both 2nd person forms and class 1 singular a pronominal verbal suffix is used and these are shown in brackets. Like the subject pronouns the non-human pronouns are prefixed with the noun class prefix of the noun being replaced.

Person	**Singular**	**Plural**
1st	*naan*	*nja (incl)* *(-un) (excl)*
2nd	*(-u)*	*(-an)*
Class		
1	*(-a)*	*baka*
2	*wa*	*ŋa*
3	*ka*	*ya*
4	*pa*	*ya*
5	*ba*	*ya*
6	*pa*	*ma*
7	*ba*	*ma*
8		*ma*
9	*da*	*ya*
10	*na* (unattested)	

Table 3.5: Independent object pronouns

There is no morphological distinction made between direct and indirect objects, and the same pronouns or suffixes are used in both situations:

3.42 **Ŧukma** **akob** **baka**
ŧukma a- kob baka
Thukma C1S hit C1S
“Thukma hit them”

3.43 **Ŧukma** **aţen** **baka** **kamişa**
ŧukma a- ţen baka ka- mişa
Thukma C1S give_(as_present) C1S C3S shirt
“Thukma gives a shirt to them”

As noted in section 3.3.3 above there are independent pronouns used with most nouns to express genitive relations like possession. Their use is illustrated in examples 3.44 and 3.45 but they will be discussed in more detail in section 7.3.4.2 Alienable Genitive Construction. The pronouns are listed in Table 3.6 below. The variants starting with *ŧ-* are used by some, mainly older, speakers.

3.44 **upi** **wi** **naan**
u- pi w- i naan
C2S goat C2S GEN C1S
"my goat"

3.45 **upi** **wi** **baka**
u- pi w- i baka
C2S goat C2S GEN C1S
"their goat"

Person	**Singular**	**Plural**
1st	*naan* (or *ŧaan)*	*ŋja (incl)* *nun* (or *ŧun) (excl)*
2nd	*nu* (or *ŧu)*	*nan* (or *ŧan)*
Class		
1	*nul* (or *ŧul)*	*baka* (or *bakan)*
2	*wa*	*ŋa*
3	*ka*	*ya*
4	*pa*	*ya*
5	*ba*	*ya*
6	*pa*	*ma*
7	*ba*	*ma*
8		*ma*
9	*da*	*ya*
10	*na* (unattested)	

Table 3.6: Genitive Pronouns

Tables 3.7 and 3.8 summarise all the pronouns. Also included for comparison are the object pronominal forms used with the selectional suffix *-uŋ* described in the next chapter.

Singular				
Person	**Subject**	**Object**	**Object suffix with -uŋ**	**Genitive**
1st	*nji*	*naan*	*-aan*	*naan* (or *ŧaan)*
2nd	*iwi*	*-u*	*-i*	*nu* (or *ŧu)*
Class				
1	*ul*	*-a*	*-ul*	*nul* (or *ŧul)*
2	*wul*	*wa*	*wa*	*wa*
3	*kul*	*ka*	*ka*	*ka*
4	*pul*	*pa*	*pa*	*pa*
5	*bul*	*ba*	*ba*	*ba*
6	*pul*	*pa*	*pa*	*pa*
7	*bul*	*ba*	*ba*	*ba*
8				
9	*dul*	*da*	*da*	*da*
10	*nul* (unattested)	*na* (unattested)	*na* (unattested)	*na* (unattested)

Table 3.7: All singular pronouns and pronominal suffixes

Plural				
Person	**Subject**	**Object**		**Genitive**
1st	*nja (incl)* *un (excl)*	*nja (incl)* *-un (excl)*	*nja (incl)* *un (excl)*	*nja (incl)* *nun* (or *ŧun) (excl)*
2nd	*an*	*-an*	*-an*	*nan* (or *ŧan)*
Class				
1	*bukal*	*baka*	*baka*	*baka* (or *bakan)*
2	*ŋul*	*ŋa*	*ŋa*	*ŋa*
3	*yul*	*ya*	*ya*	*ya*
4	*yul*	*ya*	*ya*	*ya*
5	*yul*	*ya*	*ya*	*ya*
6	*mul*	*ma*	*ma*	*ma*
7	*mul*	*ma*	*ma*	*ma*
8	*mul*	*ma*	*ma*	*ma*
9	*yul*	*ya*	*ya*	*ya*
10				

Table 3.8: All plural pronouns and pronominal suffixes

3.6 Summary of agreement prefixes

In the following chapters I will describe the subject agreement on verbs and the three different paradigms of agreement prefixes on noun modifiers. The following table summarises these along with the noun prefixes.

Class		Noun	Adj	Dem	Gen	Verb
1a	Sing	*a-*	*na-*	*Ø-*	*Ø-*	*a-*
1	Sing	*na-*				
	Plural	*ba-*	*ba-*	*bak-/bik-/ buk-*	*bak-/bik-/ buk-*	*ba-*
	Count					
2	Sing	*u-*	*u-*	*u-*	*w-*	*wa-*
	Plural	*ŋ-*	*ŋ-*	*ŋ-*	*ŋ-*	*ŋa-*
	Count					
3	Sing	*ka-*	*ka-*	*ka-*	*k-*	*ka-*
	Plural	*i-*	*i-*	*i-*	*y-*	*i-*
	Count					
4	Sing	*p(a)-*	*p-*	*p-*	*p-*	*pa-*
	Plural	*i-*	*i-*	*i-*	*y-*	*i-*
	Count	*k-*	*k-*	*k-*	*k-*	*ka-*
5	Sing	*b(a)-*	*b-*	*b-*	*b-*	*ba-*
	Plural	*i-*	*i-*	*i-*	*y-*	*i-*
	Count	*k-*	*k-*	*k-*	*k-*	*ka-*
6	Sing	*p-*	*p-*	*p-*	*p-*	*pa-*
	Plural	*m-*	*m-*	*m-*	*m-*	*maN-*
	Count	*ŋ-*	*ŋ-*	*ŋ-*	*ŋ-*	*ŋa-*
7	Sing	*b-*	*b-*	*b-*	*b-*	*ba-*
	Plural	*m-*	*m-*	*m-*	*m-*	*maN-*
	Count	*ŋ-*	*ŋ-*	*ŋ-*	*ŋ-*	*ŋa-*
8		*m(a)(n)-*	*mn-*	*m-*	*m-*	*maN-*
9	Sing	*d-*	*d-*	*d-*	*d-*	*da-*
	Plural	*i-*	*i-*	*i-*	*y-*	*i-*
10		*n-*				*na-*

Table 3.9: Summary of agreement prefixes