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Current Progress in Chadic Linguistics

Edited by Zygmunt Frajzyngier

Offprint

GENDER AND NUMBER IN MIYA*

RUSSELL G. SCHUH

University of California, Los Angeles

Miya is a West Chadic B language of the "North Bauchi" group. Like many Chadic languages, Miya preserves the Afroasiatic distinction between nouns which are lexically masculine and those which are lexically feminine. Unlike a number of West Chadic languages which preserve this distinction, Miya nouns themselves show no overt phonological or morphological correlations with lexical gender;¹ gender is revealed solely through the agreements it governs. Thus, the words for 'mouth' and 'grindstone' in (1) are homophonous, but the demonstratives they take show them to

(1) nákón vən 'this mouth' (m) tákón vən 'this grindstone' (f)

For nouns referring to humans and larger animals, particularly domestic animals, grammatical gender correlates with sex. Many such nouns have different roots for the masculine and feminine counterparts, as in (2a). Some nouns which do not differentiate masculine and feminine roots mark gender by adding the words *dzəhə* 'male' or *dzakú* 'female' as in (2b). Among words for wild animals, some can govern either gender depending on the sex of the referent (2c), but most are lexically only masculine (2d) or feminine (2e) and govern only those agreements regardless of sex of the referent:

* I did field work on Miya during 1982-83, while I was a Visiting Professor in the Department of Nigerian and African Languages at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria. This research was supported by a grant from the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research. My thanks to Sarkin Miya, Vaziya Chiroma, Haladu Soja, and the people of Miya. I would also like to thank Neil Skinner, who suggested to me that Miya would be a good place to work.

This is an offprint from:

ZYGMUNT FRAJZYNGIER (ed.)
CURRENT PROGRESS IN CHADIC LINGUISTICS
John Benjamins Publishing Co.
Amsterdam/Philadelphia
1989
(Published as Vol. 62 of the series
CURRENT ISSUES IN LINGUISTIC THEORY)
ISSN 0304-0763 / ISBN 90 272 3559 7
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- (2) (a) lày (m) 'son' wùn (f) 'daughter'
 yàsè (m) 'brother' vākì (f) 'sister'
 'íy (m) 'dog' átiy (f) 'bitch'
 mbèrgù (m) 'ram' támakú (f) 'ewe'
- b. wiyàhón dzèhè (m) 'Hausa man' wiyàhón dzàkù (f) 'Hausa woman'
 kày dzèhè (m) 'orphan' kày dzàkù (f) 'orphan'
 dùwàkè dzéhs (m) 'stallion' dùwàkè dzàkù (f) 'mare'
 témbir dzèhè (m) 'gazelle' témbir dzàkù (f) 'gazelle'
- (c) dlántə (m/f) 'lion'
 gədfānzàkwày (m/f) 'hyena'
- (d) bólónkay (m) 'baboon'
 dèrwétlí (m) 'leopard'
 mbèlà̄m (m) 'crowned crane'
 gwágum (m) 'dove'
- (e) ándazhí (f) 'hippopotamus'
 kèvèn (f) 'buffalo'
 ágár (f) 'Ruppell's griffon'
 dzàbèràkú 'guinea fowl'

Numerous syntactic constructions require agreements which reveal the lexical gender of a noun. These include those listed in (3):

- (3)
- | | <u>Masculine noun</u> | <u>Feminine noun</u> |
|--------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| (a) Demonstrative: | náká mbèrgù
'that ram' | táká támakú
'that ewe' |
| | nákón láahó
'this jackal' | tákón dlérkiy
'this hen' |

- (b) Genitive linker: mbèrgù nà Vàziyà támakú tá Vàziyà
 'Vaziya's ram' 'Vaziya's ewe'
 dzàn nà Kàshàm shím tá Kàshàm
 'Kasham's beans' 'Kasham's farm'
- (c) Adjective: mbèrgù pyóo-ná támakú pyoo-yá
 'white ram' 'white ewe'
 ndùwùl hómày-nà tsárdiy hòmày-yà
 'empty pot' 'empty space'
- (d) Personal pronoun:² sàm bè-tá sáy 'án bè-tlá sáy
 'the man came-ICP' 'the woman came
 -ICP'
 dzùwkè dà-tà sáy mùkù dà-tlà sáy
 'the kapok fell-ICP' 'the sun set-ICP'
 ('fell')
- (e) "one who has or does..." mbèrgù bá páraw ghèrùw má páraw
 'ram which 'cow which
 is slaughtered' is slaughtered'
- tìwì bá kàwàw kàbè má zèràw
 'meat which is roasted' 'gown which
 is spread'

Although Miya does not overtly mark nouns for gender, it does have morphological processes marking pluralization. Potentially, any noun may be pluralized morphologically. Without going into details, we may group nouns into four types according to the plural morphology they take. The largest group includes those which use a productive process which adds -a-C-aw, where C is the final consonant of

the noun stem. These are illustrated in (4a). A second group adds the suffix *-aw* (or, for a couple of nouns, *-uw* or *-iy*) to the stem without reduplication, as illustrated in (4b). A third group, (4c) has suppletive plural roots or completely irregular forms. Finally, some nouns, particularly a number of those which use the gender marking words for "male" and "female" above in (2b), use the noun stem plus a word *ghənaw*, as in (4d). This root does not seem to have any other function in Miya.

(4)	(a)	dəm (f)	(pl.) dēmámáw	'tree'	
		kúnkul (m)	(pl.) kúnkulálàw	'cap'	
		tùwàtúw (f)	(pl.) tùwàtúwáwàw	'body'	
		zàkiy (f)	(pl.) zàkiyáyàw	'stone'	
		dlóntə (m, f)	(pl.) dlóntatàw	'lion'	
		mbərgù (m)	(pl.) mbərgwágwàw	'ram'	
		dèrwétlí (m)	(pl.) dèrwátlyátlyàw	'leopard'	
		dùwàkə dzəhó (m)	(pl.) dùwàkákàw	'stallion'	'horses'
		dùwàkə dzàkù (f)		'mare'	
	(b)	dlórkíy (f)	(pl.) dlórkaw	'chicken'	
		təgwàr dzəhə (m)	(pl.) təgwàráw	'leper'	
		təgwàr dzàkù (f)			
		ghèrùw (f)	(pl.) ghèrùwīy	'cow; cattle'	
		'íy (m)	(pl.) 'íyúw	'dog' (m)	'dogs'
		átíy (f)		'bitch'	
	(c)	səm (m)	(pl.) səbə	'person'	
		'ám (f)	(pl.) təvàm	'woman'	
		yàsə (m)	(pl.) dàwàn	'brother'	'siblings'
		vákì (f)		'sister'	
		'áfúw (f)	(pl.) cùw	'goat'	
	(d)	gàlúw dzəhə (m)	(pl.) gàlúw ghənàw	'slave'	
		gàlúw dzàkù (f)			
		kày dzəhə (m)	(pl.) kày ghənàw	'orphan'	

kày dzàkù (f)
 témbir dzəhə (m) (pl.) témbir ghənàw 'gazelle'
 témbir dzàkù (f)

In addition to the lexical distinction between masculine and feminine nouns, Miya has a second lexical distinction, which I will refer to as "animate" vs. "inanimate". The [+animate] class includes all humans, most, if not all, domestic animals and fowl, and some large wild animals. The [-animate] class includes all inanimate objects and flora and most non-domestic fauna. I did not carefully check the "animacy" of items in the grey area of large wild animals, and I suspect there may be some variability, but, for example, 'monkey' and 'python' and [-animate] whereas 'gazelle' and 'roan antelope' are [+animate].

The lexical animacy distinction shows up in the way it interacts with gender and number agreement. First, let us consider number. As I noted above, any noun in Miya can be morphologically marked for plurality. In phrases which are semantically plural, [+animate] nouns must be marked for plurality; for [-animate] nouns, plural marking is optional. These facts are most evident in phrases containing nouns modified by numbers greater than 1, where, unlike many Chadic languages, Miya does not allow animate nouns to have a morphological singular form:

(5)	(a)	Animate nouns	
		təvàm tsór ≠ *'ám tsór	'two women'
		(cf. 'ám wútə 'one woman')	
		dlórkaw fədfə ≠ *dlórkíy fədfə	'four chickens'
		cùwàwáw dórbitím ³ ≠ *'áfúw dórbitím	'ten goats'
	(b)	Inanimate nouns	
		zàkiy vātłə = zàkiyáyàw vātłə	'five stones'
		kàm máahə = kàmámáw màahə	'six houses'
		kùsàm vātłə = kùsàmámàw vātłə	'five mice'

The second, more interesting, correlate of the animacy distinction involves gender agreement. As we say in (3), singular nouns require agreement with lexical gender in a number of syntactic environments. When nouns are plural, however, the situation is different. Plural [+animate] nouns require plural agreements in these environments. There is no gender distinction in the plural, so for these nouns the lexical gender distinction is neutralized, just as it is neutralized morphologically (cf. some of the nouns in (4) where a gender distinction in the singular has no plural counterpart). For [-animate] nouns, on the other hand, agreement is always with lexical gender, whether or not the noun is morphologically plural. In (6), the morphologically plural [+animate] nouns in the lefthand column show plural agreements, whereas the [-animate] nouns on the right, though morphologically plural, show the lexical gender agreements. The corresponding singular noun with its gender is given in brackets following each example.

(6) Animates with plural agreement Inanimates with gender agreement

(a) Demonstratives:

níykín dzahú [jifà-nà m]	nákón viyáyuwáwàw [viyáyúw m]
'these men'	'these fireplaces'
níykín tèvàm ['ám f]	tákón tlórkayáyàw [tlórkay f]
'these women'	'these calabashes'

(b) Genitive linkers:

dzáfè niy tlón [jifà-nà m]	ndùwùlálàw nà Vàziyà [ndùwùl m]
'their husbands'	'Vaziya's pots'
tómákwiy niy Vàziyà [tómakú f]	kàkòráràw tà Vàziyà [kàkòr f]
'Vaziya's sheep'	'Vaziya's shoes'

(c) Adjectives:

sèbè mbíy-níy [sèm m]	ndùwùlálàw mbíy-ná [ndùwùl m]
'red people, Europeans'	'red pots'
dlórkaw mbiy-níy [dlórkay f]	tàkèámámàw mbíy-yá [tàkèm f]
'red chickens'	'red chairs'

(d) Personal pronouns:

sèbè ghàr-tlèn sáy [sèm m]	zháwáwaw bàl-tá sáy [zháw m]
'the people grew old'	'the ropes broke'
cùw dzàr-tlón sáy ['áfuw f]	
'the goats scattered'	

(e) "one that has/does...":

sèbè sóbá búwá-tlèn [sèm m]	ndùwùlálàw bá rəfə [ndùwùl m]
'people who came'	'pots which have sauce (in them)'
ghèrùwiy sóbá pəráw [ghèrùw f]	dáangángàw má biy [dáangə f]
'cows which are slaughtered'	'pots which have water (in them)'

So far, the discussion has assumed that every noun is either lexically marked as masculine or as feminine. We have seen, however, that there are three agreement types, viz. masculine, feminine, and plural. Might there then be nominal roots which are lexically plural, always requiring plural agreement? The answer is yes. We saw a few in (4c) which have suppletive singular counterparts, e.g., cùw 'goats' which is the plural counterpart of the unrelated root 'áfuw, and there are others not listed there. The

plurals in (4c) are all in the [+animate] category. Since [-animate] nouns call for agreement in lexical gender, whether they are morphologically pluralized or not, we would expect not to find any lexically plural [-animate] nouns. However, there are three lexically [-animate] nouns which are also lexically plural rather than masculine or feminine. These are the most canonical of [-animate] nouns, viz. kutə and ham both meaning 'thing' and maa 'what?', their interrogative counterpart. Ham is used only in conjunction with ba 'one that has/does...'⁴ kutə is the noun meaning 'thing' elsewhere. The examples in (7) show these words in constructions marked for plural agreement. (The only environment in which such agreement can be seen for maa 'what?' is where maa is subject of an intransitive verb and takes ICP agreement; maa obviously cannot appear in any of the other construction types which call for gender or number agreement.)

(7) (a) Demonstrative:

níykín kútá	'this thing'
níykín hám ba taw	'this food' (this thing-for-eating)

(b) Genitive linker:

kùtə nìywàn	'my thing'
kùtə nìyà tsàkèn	'wild animal' (thing of bush)

(c) Adjective:

kùtə hómày-nìy	'empty thing'
hám ba tá tyámatyáma-níy	'smelly food'

(d) Personal pronoun:

máa fáarà-tlón	à?	'what happened?'
what happen-ICP Q-marker		

hám ba fáarà-tlón 'the thing that happened'

In summary, [+animate] nouns require morphology and agreements commensurate with their real world gender and number. In the singular, [+animate] nouns all have referents with distinct male and female sexes which correlate with masculine and feminine lexical gender; they are all count nouns, thus permitting plural reference. When reference is plural, the gender dichotomy is neutralized morphologically and, in some cases, semantically (words like 'ram' can be pluralized yet retain exclusively masculine reference, of course).

Nouns which are [-animate], on the other hand, govern agreement on a strictly lexical basis: lexically masculine or feminine nouns take the corresponding agreements regardless of referential number and regardless of sex in the case of animals which are [-animate] (cf. 'mouse' in (5b)); lexically plural inanimates take plural agreements even where the referent is semantically singular.⁵

Within Chadic, the Miya gender system is unusual in a number of ways.⁶ West Chadic gender systems have tended to evolve in one of two directions. One direction has been to retain an active gender system, but to develop a phonological and/or morphological means of overtly marking gender so that the gender of a noun is usually evident from its citation form. This is the case for Hausa, Bade, Ron-Fyer, and Warji (cf. fn. 1). The other, more frequent direction, has been to lose gender as a lexical distinction for nouns (though remnants of the gender system may remain in other functions or as apparently non-functional variation). This has been the case for most of West Chadic A (Hausa and the Ron languages being the exceptions), for Ngizim (though it is linguistically very close to Bade), and for many languages outside West Chadic.

Miya retains an active gender system, yet there are no morphological or phonological cues on the nouns themselves as to their gender. Indeed Miya has gone in the opposite direction from those languages where a gender/number agreement system has given way to a simple singular/plural distinction. In Miya, the largest class of nouns, the [-animate] class, requires agreement with underlying, lexical gender rather than morphological or semantic number.

NOTES

- 1) Among West Chadic languages which do have overt phonological or morphological correlates with gender, see Newman (1979) for Hausa, Schuh (1977) for Bade, ungraithmayr(1970) for Ron-Fyer, and Jungraithmayr (1967) for Warji. Paul Newman, in unpublished field notes, confirms Jungraithmayr's rather tentative suggestion that a Warji suffix *-na* marks a noun as masculine and *-ay* as feminine. The fact that Warji marks nouns for lexical gender is particularly interesting, since both Warji and Miya are North Bauchi languages and are quite closely related, even within that group.
- 2) The personal pronouns illustrating agreement are Intransitive Copy Pronouns (ICP), which are pronominal clitics added to intransitive verbs and which reflect person, number, and gender of the subject. It is difficult to find textual examples of personal pronouns of other types referring to non-human nouns, since Miya prefers \emptyset -anaphora in these cases. However, pronominal reference to non-human nouns is not ungrammatical, e.g., *mén tsàa tìy Káshám* 'I gave it to Kasham', where *tìy* 'it' refers to money, known from previous context.
- 3) *Cùwàwáw* is the morphologically pluralized form of *cùw* 'goats', which itself is a lexical plural. The regular morphological plural is so productive that it can be added to any nominal stem. When added to a noun which is lexically plural, such as *cùw*, it is usually translated as a "plural of abundance", e.g., 'a very large number of X'. In the phrase here, '10' may qualify as a "larger than average" number.
- 4) Though agreements with *ham ba ...* are plural, *ba* is the masculine singular member of the 'one that has/does...' set! Probably the best solution is to take *ham ba* as a lexical unit which is [+plural].
- 5) We have been considering two main kinds of [-animate] nouns, lexically plural (of which there are only three) and count nouns. Count nouns need not be lexically specified for number, since they can have either singular or plural referents. Corresponding to lexically plural nouns, however, there is a class of lexically singular nouns, viz. mass nouns. Though lexical singularity has no syntactic consequences that I know of in Miya, it does have consequences for semantic interpretation. A morphologically pluralized, lexically singular noun will mean something like "many kinds of...", "many instances of...", as opposed to simple plurality for count nouns. Though lexical singularity is largely predictable from the meaning of the noun, this is not entirely the case. For example, 'seed(s)' and 'drum(s)' are lexically singular. Note the following interpretations of morphologically pluralized, but lexically singular nouns:

<i>gùtsàr</i>	'mucous'	<i>gùtsàràràw</i>	'mucous of many people'
<i>gàràbè</i>	'rib(s)'	<i>gàràbábàw</i>	'ribs of many people'
<i>tàl</i>	'beer'	<i>tàláláw</i>	'beer being cooked by many people'
<i>gààngàm</i>	'drums(s)'	<i>gààngàmámàw</i>	'many types of drums'
- 6) Most of the Ron languages seem to be similar to Miya in this respect, revealing gender mainly through agreement phenomena (Jungraithmayr 1970).

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