

Person-number agreement with complementizers in Mande.

Morphosyntactic agreement is rarely found in the Mande languages, which sets them radically apart from the majority of the other language families generally held to constitute the Niger-Congo phylum. Usually, only rather trivial agreement in number (often reserved to controllers on the higher end of the animacy hierarchy) can be found with third person pronouns. At the same time, several Mande languages show a kind of agreement which is typologically less common and more interesting, viz. person-number agreement on complementizers with a controller in the main clause. Remarkably, the controller is not always the subject of the main clause. Thus, in (1) the use of the first person agreement marker *n-* on the complementizer *kò* in Jula of Odienné is triggered by the 1SG pronoun *n̄* marked by a complex postposition *nyà-nà* and not the 3SG subject pronoun *á*.

- (1) *á yè n̄ nyà-nà n-kò Sěkù tè shón*
3SG be 1SG eye-at 1-that PROP NEG agree

‘I have the feeling (lit.: it is at my eyes) that Sekou will not accept’ (Braconnier 1987-88:50).

Both diachronically and synchronically, the primary use of such complementizers is to introduce reported discourse, i.e. the quote. Therefore, they can conventionally be referred to as quotative complementizers. A variety of etymologically unrelated agreeing quotative complementizers is found in Mande. In my talk I will provide an overview of the structural properties of the quotative complementizer paradigms found in Mande. I will also examine the possible diachronic sources of these complementizers and of the person-number agreement marking found with them.

References

Braconnier, Cassian. 1987-88. *Kò/nkò* à Samatiguila. *Mandenkan* 14-15. 47-58.