

ASPECTS OF MORPHOLOGICAL AND SYNTACTIC DIVERGENCE  
IN LANGO AND ACHOLI\*

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Lango and Acholi, two Western Nilotic languages, are mutually intelligible, sharing a high percentage of lexical items. They differ significantly in their morphology and syntax. In this paper, the following differences between the languages are discussed: Acholi uses four morphemes as verbal prefixes to modify the semantics of the verb; these are not found in Lango. Acholi uses a periphrastic construction for the future progressive, while Lango relies on tone differences. Acholi uses distinct subject prefixes for all persons in the verbal paradigm, while Lango has neutralized the plural forms. Acholi requires a marker of subordination in many situations where Lango allows a paratactic construction. Unlike Acholi, Lango has a narrative paradigm. In addition, the paper also comments on the directions of change.

1. Introduction

Lango and Acholi, two languages of Uganda, are classified as Western Nilotic in Greenberg's [1966] classification. The two languages are mutually intelligible, and a collective name, Luo, is frequently used. An estimated 89 per cent of vocabulary items are shared by the two languages [Ladefoged et al, 1972]. However, in spite of this high percentage of shared lexical items, the two languages differ significantly in their morphology and syntax.

When two languages are as close linguistically as Lango and Acholi, it is likely that the two had a common origin; historical changes would then account for synchronic differences. Alternatively, the two languages could have been

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distinct originally, converging as a result of contact and linguistic borrowings. Records indicate that the Lango people at one time spoke a language closely related to Teso and Karimojong. (These are classified as Eastern Nilotic in the Greenberg sense.) After migrating south, the Lango people adopted an Acholi-like language [Tucker 1958]. According to Tucker, the only traces of the original language are found in a few vocabulary items. Driberg [1923:28], on the other hand, writes of the two languages that "dissimilarities, moreover are chiefly to be found in innovations in the Lango language which can be traced to Hamitic sources, innovations not only in vocabulary, but also in syntax and the greater development of certain parts of speech, notably the verb". The data presented in this paper will generally support the view that the Lango group did at one time, speak a language that was closer to Acholi than it is now, and that many of the differences between the two languages are the result of historical change since that period.

An examination of some of the synchronic morphological processes in Lango supports the hypothesis that Lango was, at an earlier stage, closer to Acholi than it is now. For example, Tucker [1958] illustrates that tone sandhi in Lango is difficult to understand unless certain vowel-initial morphemes were historically, like the equivalent Acholi forms, consonant-initial (cf. Lango *atɪn*, Acholi *latɪn* 'child'). Driberg [1923] also supports this view. His description of Lango shows a number of forms that are no longer used by Lango speakers, but which are still part of the Acholi grammar. Reference to some of these forms will be made in the paper, in which I will illustrate a number of the systematic differences between Acholi and Lango and, where possible, indicate the direction of change.<sup>1</sup>

## 2. Verbal affixes

2.1 bi. One of the major areas of difference between the two languages, is the use of verbal affixes that extend the meaning of the verb. These morphemes may be shortened forms of verbs. For example, *bino* is the verb meaning 'to

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<sup>1</sup>Lango data was given by Mary Okello, Florence Monday and David Atim. Acholi data was given by Walter Otim, Charles Okelo and Ronald Ocaya. The Teso sentences were collected from Deborah Egau.

come, go' in both Lango and Acholi. In addition, a form of the verb is used to signal future tense. Example (1) shows *mino* used as a main verb; (2) shows *mino* used as a future auxiliary in Lango. In Acholi, the shortened form *bi* is the future affix and this is illustrated in (3).

- (1) a. an a -*mino* i -*paco* Lango  
 lps lps-go loc-village  
 'I came to the village'
- b. lyεc o -*mino* Acholi  
 elephant 3ps-came  
 'the elephant came'
- (2) an a -*mino* cammo Lango  
 lps lps-future eat  
 'I will eat'
- (3) an a -*bi* -*camo*<sup>2</sup> Acholi  
 lps lps-fut-eat  
 'I will eat'

Driberg [1923] discusses the use of *bi* as a variant for *mino* to mark the future in Lango, but Lango consultants invariably identify *bi* as an Acholi form. So if at one time both forms were possible, it seems that *mino* has become the only marker of future tense in Lango.

Note that in (2), *mino* is inflected with the subject agreement prefix, *a*, and is followed by the infinitive verb *cammo*. Similarly, in Acholi, *bi* is prefixed with the subject agreement morpheme, *a*, and is followed by a verb stem which is equivalent to the infinitive verb. No adverbial may intervene between *mino* and *cammo* in (2), nor between *bi* and *camo* in (3). So the (a) versions of (4) and (5) are acceptable, but the (b) versions are not, because an adverbial intervenes between the future morpheme and the main verb.

- (4) a. dako *mino* teddo ruḡo daḡ Lango  
 woman future cook meat also  
 'the woman will cook meat also'
- b. \*dako *mino* daḡ teddo ruḡo

<sup>2</sup>In Lango, the infinitive has a geminate consonant whereas in Acholi, the consonant length seems to be variable.

- (5) a. an a -bi tum bene Acholi  
 lps lps-future finish also  
 'I will finish also'
- b. \*an a-bi bene tum

2.2 be. Another shortened verb form used as an affix in Acholi is *be*, from *bedo* 'to stay, be, sit'. Crazzolara [1955:138] gives *be* in free variation with *e* as a continuous marker. An example from Crazzolara is given in (6).

- (6) kòt dòŋ ò -(b)-ècwéè Acholi  
 rain now 3ps-is -falling  
 'it is now raining'

The *be* form is still used in Acholi, although not commonly for the continuous aspect. However, Lango speakers do not use *be*; they recognize it as an Acholi form. But note sentence (7) from Driberg [1923:300].

- (7) pacho maido lokacha tum jo -wa gi -be -gero Acholi  
 village rel visible-demons. distant people-lpp 3pp-are-build  
 'the village which is visible yonder our men are building'

Driberg [1923:320-1] claims that the present tense in Lango was constructed with *be*. "This tense was in origin a composite tense formed in conjunction with the indefinite tense of the verb *bedo* (to sit, to be), and indicates an action definitely in the present time." He explains that *bedo* is "absorbed" into the following infinitive (i.e. *bedo* > *be* + infinitive), but not usually with monosyllabic verbs.

If Driberg's data is taken as an accurate representation of Lango early in the century, then the *be*-form has been lost. Today, the continuity of an action in Lango is marked by other means. Compare the habitual aspect in (8) with the progressive aspect in (9). The major difference between the two is in the tone patterns. Although the stems show variation, the stem in (8) is also used for the past paradigm, while the stem in (9) is also used for the transitive infinitive, and the future paradigm.

- |           |                  |       |                  |       |
|-----------|------------------|-------|------------------|-------|
| (8) àtámó | 'I think'        | òtámó | 'we think'       | Lango |
| ìtámó     | 'you (sg) think' | òtámó | 'you (pl) think' |       |
| támó      | 'he/she thinks'  | òtámó | 'they think'     |       |



Lango relies on tone distinctions (together with stem alternations) to show progressive aspect.<sup>4</sup>

The origin of the progressive morpheme *ka* appears to be the locative morpheme *ka*. Both have low tone.<sup>5</sup> A parallel can be drawn with the development of the progressive aspect in its early stages. Not only has the locative been adopted in Acholi for progressive constructions, but it also seems to be the source for the *a* prefix on the third person singular in Lango progressive paradigms (see (9)). All other prefixes are predictable, given the other paradigms in the language, but the third person singular affix varies across paradigms. In the habitual, third singular verbs have no prefix, in the past, they have *o* as the prefix,<sup>6</sup> but in the progressive, *a* is used.

It is plausible that *à* is adopted from the Acholi *kà* with loss of the initial consonant. The Acholi prefix *la* is *a* in Lango. Similarly, Acholi *pa*, the alienable genitive morpheme, is equivalent to Lango *a*. In addition, Acholi *ma*, the relative marker, has an equivalent as Lango *a*. Examples are given in (15).<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Both Lango and Acholi are tone languages. The present (habitual) paradigm in Lango is distinguished from the past by tone. Similarly, in Acholi, the present and past paradigms are distinguished by tone. So, *acamo* will mean 'I ate' or 'I eat' depending on tone:

*àcámò* 'I ate'

*àcámó* 'I eat'

Lango

For the progressive paradigm, the high tone from the subject pronoun has been copied onto the verbal affix, and the verb stem retains the low low pattern found in the infinitive, as in the following: *án ákwànnò* (*kwànnò* 'to read') 'I am reading'.

<sup>5</sup>*ká* (high tone) is interpreted as 'when' or 'if'.

<sup>6</sup>*o* varies with *ε*. Generally *o* is used as the 3rd person singular prefix. However *ε* may be used to indicate same-subject in a complement clause. For more discussion, see Bavin [1981].

<sup>7</sup>Driberg makes this point also (page 280).

(15)	Acholi		Lango
a.	latɪn (la + tɪn 'small')	'child'	atɪn
b.	laworo (la + woro 'night')	'yesterday'	aworo
c.	gwok pa dako dog gen. woman	'woman's dog'	gwok a dako dog gen. woman
d.	ɔt pa laco house gen. man	'man's house'	ɔt a ɪco house gen. man
e.	dako ma o -tedo woman rel. 3ps-cooked		dako amɛ o -tedo woman rel. 3ps-cooked (ma + mɛ 'for' > amɛ)
		'the woman who cooked'	

Another morpheme in Lango that corresponds to an Acholi consonant-initial morpheme is *i* 'with' (Acholi *ki* 'with'), as the following sentences illustrate.

(16)	a.	an a -tye i -ɔt lps lps-be with-house 'I have a house'	Lango
	b.	an a -tye ki ɔt lps lps-be with house 'I have a house'	Acholi

The fact that only the 3rd singular adopted *a* indicates that the habitual form was the basis for the progressive.<sup>8</sup> The other persons already had prefixes, but with a  $\emptyset$  affix the third singular would be 'available' to take a new prefix. Other subject prefixes, *a* for 1st person singular, and *i* for second person singular, have developed from free morphemes. They are shortened forms of the pronouns *an* 'I' and *(y)in* 'you' which have become

<sup>8</sup>Tucker and Bryan [1966:427] show the prefix *a* for 3rd singular and 3rd plural in Lango. An explanation is that 3rd plural subjects are frequently followed by the singular form.

affixed to the verb.<sup>9</sup>

2.3 ci. A third verbal affix, common in Acholi, is *ci* from *cito* 'to go'. Both Crazzolara [1955] and Malandra [1955] discuss the use of *ci* in Acholi. Examples (17) and (18) illustrate that *cito* is still used as a verb in Acholi, and that *ci* is used as an affix to show the semantic extension of other verbs. In fact, the use of *ci* + infinitive is common in Acholi, but *ci* is not used in Lango, nor have I found any evidence for it in an earlier period.

(17) *gu -cito* Acholi  
       3pp-went  
       'they went'

(18) a. *gu -kwalo*  
       3pp-stole  
       'they stole'  
       b. *gu -ci-kwalo*  
       3pp-ci-steal  
       'they went and stole'

2.4 ki. A verbal affix that is used frequently in Acholi is *ki*. However, it does not appear to be derived from a verb stem. Generally *ki* as a free morpheme is interpreted as 'with' (as in (19)), but when it is used as a verb affix, it gives a stative quality to the verb. In addition, the state is interpreted to be the result of some activity. So, in (20), the harvest is in a ready state because the harvesting has been done. Similarly, in (21), the food is in a state resulting from the activity of cooking.

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<sup>9</sup>In Acholi, all subject prefixes except third singular are shortened pronoun forms that have become affixed to the verb.

<u>Pronouns</u>	>	<u>Affixes</u>	
an	>	a	1ps
(y)in	>	i	2ps
ɛn	>	ɛ	(but o is generally used) 3ps
wan	>	wa	1pp
(w)un	>	wu	2pp
gɪn	>	gɪ	(or gu from gɪ + o) 3pp

In Lango, the third singular prefix is *o*, and also all plural forms are *o*. We can tell the loss of distinct plural prefixes is recent since Driberg cites them (see Bavin [1981]).

- (19) (an) a -nwan-ne ki kidi ma latin o -yuyu Acholi  
 lps lps-hit -reflexive with stone rel. child 3ps-threw  
 'I got hit with a stone that the child threw'
- (20) kac ki-kayo(laworo)  
 harvest harvested  
 'the harvest is ready/was ready (yesterday)'
- (21) dek onogo ki-tedo pi -re  
 food past cook for-3ps  
 'the food was cooked for him'

Both Lango and Acholi have several strategies for showing resulting states. The first is the use of the intransitive verb stem with the patient as subject. This construction is illustrated (from Lango) in sentences (22) and (23). The transitive versions are given in the (a) sentences. Although the verb always carries the past tone pattern, it can represent a present state.

- (22) a. atin -ni o -toro yat Lango  
 child-dem. 3ps-broke stick  
 'this child broke the stick'
- b. yat o -tor  
 stick 3ps-broke  
 'the stick is/was broken' (intransitive)
- (23) a. a -yeco bogo -na  
 1ps-tore clothes-lps  
 'I tore my clothes'
- b. bogo o -yec  
 clothes 3ps-tore  
 'my clothes are/were torn' (intransitive)

A second strategy employed by both languages to show resulting states is the use of the reflexive verb form (Lango examples).

- (24) a. dako o -tedo (dek) Lango  
 woman 3ps-cooked (food)  
 'the woman cooked (the food)'
- b. dek o -ted -de  
 food 3ps-cooked-refl.  
 'the food is cooked'
- (25) a. a -yito yat  
 lps-climbed tree  
 'I climbed the tree'
- b. yat o -yit -te  
 tree 3ps-climbed-refl.  
 'the tree is climbed'

Not all verbs in Lango nor in Acholi have intransitive forms. The verbs listed in (26), from Lango, illustrate that there is no clear reason why some verbs do allow the intransitive stems; it is not predictable either from the semantics of the verb, or the phonology. Most verbs in the language have a geminate consonant and final *o* in the transitive stem; others end in a *yo* syllable. However, both types do have intransitive stems for some of the verbs and not for others. In addition, some activities allow intransitive stems while similar activities do not. This fact is made clear if the verbs in (26) are compared with those in (27)—those that do not have distinct intransitive stems.

(26)	Transitive		Intransitive	
	two·yo	'to dry'	two·	Lango
	yecco	'to tear'	yec	
	two·yo	'to make sick'	two·	
	ollo	'to tire, bore'	ɔl	
	ɔny·o	'to spill'	ɔny	
	to·ro	'to break'	tor	
	mukku	'to break'	muk	
	mollo	'to float'	mɔl	
	lallo	'to sieve'	lal	
	cammo	'to eat'	cam	
(27)	go·yo	'to beat'		
	nyammo	'to chew'		
	ge·ro	'to build'		
	dokko	'to become'		
	lwɔŋŋo	'to call'		
	gu·ro	'to surround'		
	kwa·yo	'to ask for'		
	we·yo	'to sweep'		
	ye·kko	'to sieve'		
	cwallo	'to send'		
	koddo	'to blow (wind)'		
	ketto	'to put'		
	baŋŋo	'to eat (porridge, etc.)'		

Some verbs that show states by means of the reflexive verb form are given below in (28).<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup>In Lango, *rɛ* is added to a stem with a final alveolar consonant. The *r* assimilates to the stem-final consonant. Otherwise, *erɛ* is added. The short form *rɛ* is used in Acholi.

(28)	Transitive		Reflexive	
	gommo	'to bend'	gommere	Lango
	tenno	'to heat up'	tenne	
	cekko	'to prepare'	cekkere	
	ceggo	'to close'	ceggere	
	lillo	'to remove husks from grain'	lille	
	kwo-ro	'to sieve'	kwo-re	
	pyetto	'to winnow'	pyette	

Acholi also uses the intransitive or reflexive verb forms to indicate states resulting from a completed action, but unlike Lango, Acholi also uses the *ki* verb affix. This is productive, whereas the other two strategies are restricted to certain verbs.

We can hypothesize that *ki* is a variant of *gu*, the third person plural prefix in Acholi. Crazzolaro indicates that *ki* and *gu* are interchangeable. But any notion of agentivity has now been lost from *ki*-affixed verbs. One version of (20) is given in (29), while (30) has a different interpretation. Only in (30) is the verb interpreted as active; that is, somebody did something (*gu* may be specific or not). Of interest in the *ki*-forms is the use of the transitive stem.

- |      |                 |                           |        |
|------|-----------------|---------------------------|--------|
| (29) | <i>ki</i> -kayo | kac                       | Acholi |
|      |                 | harvested harvest         |        |
|      |                 | 'the harvest is ready'    |        |
| (30) | <i>gu</i> -kayo | kac                       |        |
|      |                 | 3ps-harvested harvest     |        |
|      |                 | 'they did the harvesting' |        |

### 3. Discourse Structure

In the above sections, it has been illustrated that Acholi uses affixes reduced from full verbs (*ci* from *cito*, and *bi* from *bino*). Lango also makes extensive use of a one-syllable morpheme, *te*, which may have developed from a two-syllable verb. Driberg [1923:325] gives *teko/toko* as the narrative affix, the variation is "for no other reason than euphony".<sup>11</sup> Driberg

<sup>11</sup>The *e/o* alternation may be quite unrelated to the *ε/o* alternation for third singular prefixes, but it is worth noting. Since Driberg does not mark distinctions between the retracted vowel *ε* and the non-retracted *e*, *teko* may have been *tεko*.

also illustrates that the narrative morpheme was used in a shortened form—*te/to* .

From Driberg [1923:325]:

- (31) a. en ka atɪn obedo etekodon'o  
'and the child stayed and grew up'  
b. eto apwo okobo dyere baŋ kich  
'and the hare severed his friendship from the bee'

The origin of *teko/toko* is not discussed. However, *tyekko* means 'to complete' and could be the source of the narrative particle which is now *te* . This is used to link up predicates in a discourse sequence, and the best interpretation for it is 'and then'; *te* follows the habitual paradigm for subject prefixes and tone. That is, no prefix occurs for third person singular,<sup>1 2</sup> and *te* has a high tone; for all other persons, the subject prefixes are used, and the tone pattern follows the habitual paradigm (e.g. *òtɛ́* 'they then'); *te* is followed by the verb stem (transitive, intransitive, or reflexive) and since no item may intervene between *te* and the verb stem, I propose that *te* is a verbal affix, and that the narrative verb form with *te* forms a separate paradigm in the language.

As illustrated in the following examples, the time reference for the narrative sequence is determined by context. In (32-33) the discourse describes hunting in the Lango district. The habitual aspect is established at the beginning, and is carried over to the verbs following *te* . However, in (34) the discourse is a discussion of what happened in the past. The time reference

<sup>1 2</sup> In the habitual third singular, no prefix is used. However, I have recorded the *ε* prefix on *te* for third singular forms but only in the context of traditional folk tales. Since *ε* is the 'old form' for third singular, the *εtε* form is, presumably, part of the ritual connected with the telling of folk tales. Presently, *ε* has a restricted use—as the non-switch reference form, meaning the subject has the same referent as that of the preceding clause.

ká ε -dokoro dyɛl ε -tε -dwoggo i -kwac ε -tε -wεkko kwac  
when 3ps-took over goat 3ps-NAR-return loc-leopard 3ps-NAR-take leopard  
i -dog kulu ε -tε -  
loc-mouth river 3ps-NAR-  
'when he had ferried the goat, he returned to the leopard and took him  
to the mouth of the river and then--'

is established early; the subsequent verb is then interpreted as being in the past.

- (32) ká dɔŋ ò -yánó le· -nɪ o -tɛ -pokko Lango  
 when now 3pp-skin(habitual) animals-dem. 3pp-NAR-divide(infin.)  
 'when the animals are skinned, they are divided'
- (33) o -diko con o -mako tɔŋ -ŋi kede gwɔk-ki i bɔ· me  
 3pp-get up early 3pp-carry spear-3pp with dog -3pp with net in order  
 cikko le· o -tɛ -wot i -bɔŋ kan amɛ le· bedo iye  
 trap(Inf.) animals 3pp-NAR-go loc-forest place rel. animals stay loc  
 'they get up early; with their spears, dogs and net to trap the animals,  
 they go to the forest, where the animals live'
- (34) onwɔŋo a -ya i -paco i -diki con i-kin cawa acel  
 past lps-left loc-village loc-morning early about hour one  
 a -tɛ -yikere me wot i -school<sup>13</sup>  
 lps-NAR-prepare self for to leave loc-school  
 'early in the morning, about seven, I got ready to go to school'

In the discourse selections given above, *tɛ* is used to link predicates in a narrative sequence. There seems to be no limit to the number of *tɛ*-linked verbs, once a topic is established. Once a new topic is introduced, or when background information is added, a new sequence is begun.

The narrative morpheme in Lango has no equivalent in Acholi. In Acholi, the conjunction *ci* is used to express a number of concepts including 'and', 'but', 'while', and 'then'. However, *ci* does not have the narrative properties of *tɛ*. As in sentence (35), the verb following *ci* is inflected, while *ci* never is.

- (35) ka moko -nɪ o -two ci i -keto i -agulu i -onyo Acholi  
 when flour-dem. 3ps-dry then 2ps-put loc-pot 2ps-pour  
 iye pi· ci i -weko ri· nino aryo onyo adek  
 on water then 2ps-leave last days two or three  
 'when the flour is dry, put it in the pot, pour on water, and leave  
 it for two or three days'

<sup>13</sup>onwɔŋo, inflected for past tense, is used in this invariant form as an adverbial to indicate past time. It may be followed by a progressive or habitual verb form (onwɔŋo in Lango = onɔŋo in Acholi). nɔwɔŋo is also used in the sense of 'to find'.

In a comparison of discourse styles,<sup>14</sup> I find that Lango requires more information than Acholi to be determined from the context. One reason for this is the lack of distinct subject prefixes for Lango plural forms. All three persons use *o* which is the same as the third singular form in the past paradigm. Acholi, on the other hand, uses the distinct shortened pronoun prefixes in the plural forms. These were used in Lango, but have now been lost (see footnote 9). Driberg cites the old forms, and my Lango consultants are aware of them as older forms. Although tone patterns may keep the third singular and the plural forms distinct (three low tones for the singular form if there is no overt subject), the Lango plural forms are identical.

(36)	Lango	Acholi	
	àcámò	acamo	'I ate'
	ìcámò	icamo	'you ate'
	òcámò	ocamo	'he/she/it ate'
	òcámò	wacamo	'we ate'
	òcámò	(w)ucamo	'you ate'
	òcámò	gicamo	'they ate'

A second relevant feature in Lango is the neutralization of tense/aspect in the *te*-verb-forms. As explained above, the time frame is established at the beginning of a stretch of discourse.

While there are strategies in Lango to omit redundant information, that information is recoverable. If an ambiguous situation arises, the pronoun subject or noun subject can be added. So, *ocamo* can be *wan ocamo* 'we ate', *wun ocamo* 'you ate', *gin ocamo* 'they ate' or noun + *ocamo* (e.g. *dako ocamo* 'the woman ate'). Potential ambiguity arising from two third person participants can be removed by the use of the same subject prefix *ε* in place of *o*. Similarly, tense/aspect interpretations can be reinforced by adverbials such as *ɔkɔ* 'completion', or *aworo* 'yesterday'.

In contrast, Acholi provides more information with verb morphology. In (35), each verb is prefixed with an unambiguous subject-agreement morpheme. However, in the following Lango example, the subjects of each verb must be determined from context.

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<sup>14</sup>I have analyzed a variety of discourse styles in both Lango and Acholi. These include conversation, process, explanation and folk tales.

- (37) gɪn o -rego o -tɛ -bidɔ i pi o -tɛ -yikko piŋ Lango  
 3pp 3pp-grind 3pp-NAR-soak in water 3pp-NAR-bury in ground  
 tɛ -iwo ka o -iwo tic me nyobbo kɔŋ tɛ -cakkɛrɛ  
 (it)NAR -dries when 3ps-dried work for brew beer (it)NAR-is begin-refl.  
 'they grind it (millet) and soak it in water and bury it, and it dries.  
 when it is dry the work of brewing beer is begun'

Since the Lango verb carries less information (morphologically) than the Acholi verb, in terms of subject agreement and tense markers in *tɛ* sequences of discourse, it is not surprising that the same property applies to other aspects of the verb—for example, verbal affixes to show extensions of the semantics of the verb. So the tendency in Acholi toward adding information onto the verb, a tendency that is even more noticeable now than in previous descriptions, is not productive in Lango. The languages are, then, following different patterns of change. While Lango is levelling some verbal morphology, Acholi is adding.

#### 4. Parataxis

A final comparison will be made to illustrate syntactic differences between the two languages. Lango and Acholi both make use of parataxis, the combining of clauses with no marker of subordination or coordination. In (38), from Lango, both verbs are inflected with subject prefixes, as are the verbs in (39) from Acholi.

- (38) atɪn o -nɛn-a a -jɛŋɛrɛ i -kɔr ɔt  
 child 3ps-saw-lps lps-lean-refl. loc-side house  
 'the child saw me lean against the house' (the child saw me—I leaned  
 against the house)
- (39) latɪn o-nɛn-a a-jɛŋɛrɛ i-kɔr ɔt  
 'the child saw me lean against the house'

In both languages, overt nominal subjects are optional, so both clauses in (38) can stand as independent sentences; similarly, both clauses in (39) can stand as independent sentences. Yet the two clauses do represent one sentence since an overt nominal subject is *not* allowed in the second clause; only a subject prefix is allowed on the second verb. Another restriction is that both clauses are asserted to be true in these serial-like constructions (see Noonan and Bavin, [1981].)

Although both languages use the paratactic construction, Lango makes more

use of it than does Acholi. For the following Lango examples, paratactic constructions are used. However, similar utterances in Acholi are not found with parataxis. The equivalent Acholi versions of the Lango sentences, given in (b), require a subordinate clause.

- (40) a. a -tiyo tic a -tye i -cente Lango  
 lps-work work lps-be with-money  
 'I work so I have money'
- b. a -tye ki cente piŋo a -tiyo Acholi  
 lps-am with money because lps-work  
 'I have money because I work'
- (41) a. loca o -poyo o -cego dogola Lango  
 man 3ps-remember 3ps-close door  
 'the man remembered; he closed the door'
- b. laco wi -ε o -po ka -cego dogola Acholi  
 man head-3ps 3ps-remember prog-close door  
 'the man remembered closing the door' (he did it)

##### 5. Conclusion

A comparison of Lango and Acholi shows that there are similarities other than in just vocabulary items. In particular, the languages share a common word order (SVO)<sup>15</sup> and similar syntactic constructions. In comparison, Teso (Eastern Nilotic) shows a different ordering; for example, when a tense auxiliary is used, it comes in initial position. Other differences are noted in agreement patterns (cf. (36) above).

- (42) a. a -nyamit eoŋ Teso  
 lps-ate lps  
 'I ate'
- b. i -nyamit ijo  
 2ps-ate 2ps  
 'you ate'
- c. i -nyamit-os yesi  
 3p-ate -pl 3pp  
 'they ate'
- d. a-bu ikɔku (ko)-any oberu  
 past child agr -saw woman  
 'the child saw the woman'

<sup>15</sup>Although topicalization is allowed, particularly in Lango, giving an OSV order.

It has been demonstrated that while Lango and Acholi are closely related systems, there are significant differences. Lango is syntactically more conservative than Acholi in that paratactic constructions are used extensively, while Acholi generally requires markers of subordination or coordination to convey similar information.

However, Lango has made radical changes in subject agreement morphemes. With the loss of distinct forms for the plural affixes, there is a reliance on context to identify the actor/experiencer arguments in the clause. In stretches of discourse linked with the *te* construction a topic-comment pattern is established and, again, there is a reliance on context for determining 'who did what'. In comparison, Acholi uses inflected verbs throughout, and clauses are linked with a conjunction. So the morphology signals relations in the clause, and across clauses.

Another difference in verb morphology is seen in the Acholi use of affixes to extend the meaning of the verb stem. One of these, *ki*, indicates a resulting state. Lango, in comparison, conveys a stative meaning only with intransitive and reflexive verb forms.

Both Lango and Acholi are tone languages. However, while Lango uses a distinct tone pattern to mark continuous aspect, Acholi has developed a periphrastic construction with the locative *ka*. Generally, then, Acholi uses more morphology than Lango for signalling semantic information.

Undoubtedly, Lango and Acholi were more similar at one time than they are now. The differences discussed in this paper cannot be all explained on the basis of different origins for the two languages since it has been shown that comparatively recent innovations have been made. What is of most interest is that the two languages are diverging.

In conclusion, my Acholi informants claim to speak Luo, and they claim that the Lango people also speak Luo. However, my Lango informants claim to speak Lango. Here is an example of the separatist function of language, with the Lango claiming they speak a separate language. Whether this attitude has had much effect on the Acholi-Lango language split is not known, but it is certainly a potential influencing factor.

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