Since the spectrum of possibilities in linguistic theory construction is much broader and more variegated than students of linguistics have perhaps been led to believe, the Current Issues in Linguistic Theory (CILT) series has been established in order to provide a forum for the presentation and discussion of linguistic opinions of scholars who do not necessarily accept the prevailing mode of thought in linguistic science.

CILT is a theory-oriented series which welcomes contributions from scholars who have significant proposals to make towards the advancement of our understanding of language, its structure, functioning, and development. Current Issues in Linguistic Theory is especially designed, by offering an alternative outlet for meaningful contributions to the current linguistic debate, to furnish the community of linguists the diversity of opinion which a healthy discipline must have.
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; gender is revealed solely through the agreements it governs. Thus, the words for 'mouth' and 'grindstone' in (1) are homophones, but the demonstratives they take show them to

(1) **mik~n v:m 'this mouth' (m)  tak~n v:m '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 dzaho 'male' or dzako '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:

(2a) **bakti v:n 'the cow' (f)
(2b) **bakti v:n dzaho dzako 'the cow' (m/f)
(2c) **bakti v:n 'the cow' (m/f)
(2d) **bakti dzaho v:n 'the cow' (m)
(2e) **bakti dzako v:n 'the cow' (f)
Numerous syntactic constructions require agreements which reveal the lexical gender of a noun. These include those listed in (3):

(3)  
(a) Demonstrative:  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Masculine noun</th>
<th>Feminine noun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>náká mbɔrgù</td>
<td>táká tɔ mákù</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'that ram'</td>
<td>'that ewe'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nákán láahə</td>
<td>tákán dlɔrkiy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'this jackal'</td>
<td>'this hen'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 ghanaw, as in (4d). This root does not seem to have any other function in Miya.

(4) (a) dām (f) (pl.) dāmāmāw 'tree'
kūnkal (m) (pl.) kūnkalālaw 'cap'
tūwātuw (f) (pl.) tūwātuwālaw 'body'
zākky (f) (pl.) zākkyālaw 'stone'
dlānta (m, f) (pl.) dlāntatlāw 'lion'
mbārgū (m) (pl.) mbārgwāgālaw 'ram'
dērwēdī (m) (pl.) dērwēdyālaw 'leopard'
dūwakā dzāḥō (m) (pl.) dūwakākālaw 'stallion' 'horses'
dūwakā dzāḥū (f) 'mare'

(b) dlārkīy (f) (pl.) dlārkaw 'chicken'
tēgwār dzāḥō (m) (pl.) tēgwārālaw 'leper'
tēgwār dzāḥū (f) 'mare'
ghārūw (f) (pl.) ghārūwiy 'cow; cattle'
'iy (m) (pl.) 'iyuw 'dog' (m) 'dogs'
ātīy (f) 'bitch'

(c) sām (m) (pl.) sābā 'person'
'ām (f) (pl.) tēvām 'woman'
yāsā (m) (pl.) dāwān 'brother' 'siblings'
vākī (f) (pl.) cūw 'sister'
'āfūw (f) (pl.) cūw 'goat'

(d) gālūw dzāḥō (m) (pl.) gālūw ghānaw 'slave'
gālūw dzāḥū (f) 'slave'
kāy dzāḥō (m) (pl.) kāy ghānaw 'orphan'
kāy dzāḥū (f) 'orphan'

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
tēvām tsār = *'ām tsār 'two women' (cf. 'ām wūtā 'one woman')
dlārkaw ōfā = *dlārkīy ūfā 'four chickens'
cūwāwāw dābruūm = *cūw dābruūm 'ten goats'

(b) Inanimate nouns
zākky vātālā = zākkyāwāw vātālā 'five stones'
kām māhā = kāmāmāw māhā 'six houses'
kūsām vātālā = kūsāmāmāw vātālā '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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(6)</th>
<th>Animate with plural agreement</th>
<th>Inanimate with gender agreement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a)</td>
<td>Demonstratives:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>nûykîn dzahû [jîfâ-nà m]</td>
<td>nákûn viyáywáwáw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>'these men'</td>
<td>'these fireplaces'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>nûykîn tâvâm ['âm f]</td>
<td>tâkûn târKayâyâw [târKay f]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>'these women'</td>
<td>'these calabashes'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b)</td>
<td>Genitive linkers:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>dzâfâ nîy tlûn [jîfâ-nà m]</td>
<td>ndûwûlalâw nà Vâziyâ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>'their husbands'</td>
<td>'Vaziya's pots'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>tômâkîwi yîy Vâziyâ [tômâkî f]</td>
<td>kâkârâraw tâ Vâziyâ [kâkâr f]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>'Vaziya's sheep'</td>
<td>'Vaziya's shoes'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(c) Adjectives:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>sâbâ mbûnyÎy [sàm m]</th>
<th>ndûwûlalâw mbûny-nà</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>'red people, Europeans'</td>
<td>'red pots'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dlûrkàw mbûnyîf [dlûrkiy f]</td>
<td>tâkûnâmàw mbûny-yà [tâkûn f]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'red chickens'</td>
<td>'red chairs'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(d) Personal pronouns:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>sâbâ ghûr-tlûn sày [sàm m]</th>
<th>zhàwàwaw bâl-tá sày [zhàw m]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>'the people grew old'</td>
<td>'the ropes broke'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cûw dzûr-tlûn sày ['afuw f]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'the goats scattered'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>sâbâ sâbâ bùwà-tlûn [sàm m]</th>
<th>ndûwûlalâw bû rafà [ndûwûl m]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>'people who came'</td>
<td>'pots which have sauce (in them)'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ghûrûwûyî sâbà pàràw [ghûrûw f]</td>
<td>dûnàngàwàw mä byî [dûnàngà f]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'cows which are slaughtered'</td>
<td>'pots which have water (in them)'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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., cûw 'goats' which is the plural counterpart of the unrelated root 'afuw, 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. kutó and ham both meaning 'thing' and maa 'what?', their interrogative counterpart. Ham is used only in conjunction with ba 'one that has/does...'; kutó 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:

núyín kutó 'this thing'
núyín ham ba taw 'this food' (this thing-for-eating)

(b) Genitive linker:

kutó niywañ 'my thing'
kutó niyá tsákón 'wild animal' (thing of bush)

(c) Adjective:

kutó hámáy-nya 'empty thing'
hám ba tá tyámátyáma-nya 'smelly food'

(d) Personal pronoun:

máa fáárà-tnón ? 'what happened?'
what happen-ICP Q-marker

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, Jungraithmayr (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 0-anaphora in these cases. However, pronominal reference to non-human nouns is not ungrammatical, e.g., mən ə₃ lə Kəshəm ‘I gave it to Kasham’, where lə ‘it’ refers to money, known from previous context.

3) Cəwəwəw is the morphologically pluralized form of cəw ‘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 cəw, 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Noun</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>şułgər</td>
<td>‘mucous’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>şułbəraw</td>
<td>‘mucous of many people’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ɡərbəbə</td>
<td>‘rib(s)’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ɡərbəbəw</td>
<td>‘ribs of many people’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ɡələ</td>
<td>‘beer’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ɡəlbəw</td>
<td>‘beer being cooked by many people’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ɡənəwɨm</td>
<td>‘drums(s)’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ɡənəwɨmaw</td>
<td>‘many types of drums’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6) Most of the Ron languages seem to be similar to Miya in this respect, revealing gender mainly through agreement phenomena (Jungraithmayr 1970).

REFERENCES

Jungraithmayr, Herrmann. 1967. "Specimens of the Pa’a ("Afa") and Warja Languages with Notes on the Tribes of Ningi Chiefdom (Bauchi Province, Northern Nigeria)". Afrika und Ubersee 50.194-205.


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