Contact-induced disturbances in personal pronoun systems in the Chadic – Benue-Congo convergence zone in Central Nigeria

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Abstract:
The paper looks at personal pronoun systems in languages of the convergence zone on both sides of the borderline between Benue-Congo and Chadic. Focus is on inventories and systems, meaning the overall inter-relationship of pronoun shapes across the categories of person, number, grammatical gender and noun class (3rd person concord). The issues to be explored are (i) whether the personal pronoun systems as such provide any further indication towards the Sprachbund idea implied in Wolff & Gerhardt (1977), and (ii) whether one can identify some unusual features of or patterns within the systems, which are shared by languages on both sides of the line separating Benue-Congo and Chadic, and which are of such nature as to strengthen the hypothesis of a cross-genetic convergence zone. The answers provided are affirmative: In addition to cross-genetic borrowing of pronoun shapes, which is generally considered rare and/or at least remarkable, pronoun systems as such and across the convergence zone show at least two rather quirky disturbances of the expected pattern that can hardly be explained but by rather surprising instances of cross-language interference. These two kinds of disturbance within systems will be discussed under the headings of "category shifting" and "circumfix conjugational pattern" emergence. Given the present state of knowledge, the paper can only point out promising lines of detailed historical research: Any attempt to provide final answers would be premature at this stage.

Keywords: Benue-Congo, Chadic, exogamy practices, language convergence, language shift, Sprachbund

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1 Introduction[1]

Discussing complex issues of language contact in Central Nigeria where Benue-Congo (BC) and Chadic languages meet would, by now, create little surprise since this area has become widely accepted as a likely convergence zone in terms of a Sprachbund, even though thorough and systematic studies of contact-induced typological convergence are still lacking. This was, by no means, so when Ludwig Gerhardt and I embarked on our first joint project some 30 years ago by writing a paper on "Interferenzen zwischen Benue-Kongo- und Tschad-Sprachen" (Wolff & Gerhardt 1977; hereafter "WG 1977"). Detailed and methodologically sound studies on language contact, particularly in Africa, were still in their infancy in those days, and quite intentionally we introduced our contribution by quoting Paul Thieme (1964: 589), in order to prove him wrong on the matter in the body of our paper: "We readily borrow the Russian word sputnik but we should not dream of inflecting it, or deriving an adjective from it in the Russian way."

We know now that not only words, particularly nouns, are likely to be borrowed, but that practically everything can be borrowed from one language into another, and, in addition and since then, Ludwig and I have lost all faith in the notion of "basic" or "fundamental"

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1   I am grateful to my long-time friend and colleague Ludwig Gerhardt to whom this paper was dedicated on the occasion of his retirement from the Chair of Afrikanistik at the University of Hamburg in 2003, for valuable comments on a previous version of this paper, regarding historically plausible (even though at the time not yet reconstructible) shapes of personal pronouns in BC in general, and Plateau languages in particular, partially based on evidence from Bantu reconstructions. After the paper had been finalized for publication in 2009, I saw Kirill V. Babaev's (2008) article "Reconstructing Benue-Congo person marking I: Proto-Bantoid" which was, somewhat hastily, incorporated into the discussion. Unfortunately, two general typological studies on "Person" and "Number" with potential bearing on this paper were brought to my attention only post festum and could not be integrated; these are Michael Cysouw's PhD dissertation "The paradigmatic structure of person marking" (Nijmegen 2001), and Thomas Gehling's "'Ich', 'du' und andere. Eine sprachtypologische Studie zu den grammatischen Kategorien 'Person' und 'Numerus'" (Münster 2004). – The current shape of the paper represents the version submitted for publication in 2009.

vocabulary that would be highly or even noticeably resistant to borrowing or any kind of contact-induced change.[2]

The hypothesis about a linguistic convergence zone on and adjacent to the Central Nigeria Plateau, quite likely stretching into the Gongola Basin and possibly beyond, has gained fairly wide acceptance, as far as I see, since it was first sketched out in WG 1977. It has become a basic assumption for the extensive work that, for instance, our colleagues from Frankfurt/Main and others have been and still are conducting in the area. A historical scenario to account for the emergence of a Sprachbund has been tentatively developed in a recent paper by Jungraithmayr, Leger & Löhr (2004) [hereafter "JLL 2004"], who basically assume the following sequences of migration:

1. a westward migration of Chadic pre-Warji and pre-Saya Group speakers into a BC speaking area, followed by
2. a migration of Chadic pre-Ron-Angas Group speakers into the same area, resulting in
3. considerable language shift from BC to Chadic with subsequent substratum interferences from, possibly, pre-Tarok, pre-Jarawan Bantu, and pre-Jukunoid speakers;
4. a third wave of westward Chadic migration bringing the Tangale, Kwami, Pero, Piya and Widala into the area.

It is basically such assumed historical contacts that would be responsible for the emergence of the postulated Sprachbund. Later and quite likely, many of these languages underwent further contact-induced changes, triggered by what JLL 2004 refer to as "Jukunisation" (in the 16th/17th century), the impact of the 19th century Fulbe jihad and, even later, the still ongoing process of "Hausaisation" of the so-called Nigerian Middle Belt.

Quite recently, Daniel Nettle (1998) in his monographic description of Fyem (a BC language half surrounded by Chadic languages)

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2 At last, a recent international research project under the auspices of the Max-Planck-Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology in Leipzig throws light on the issue of constraints on borrowability of lexical items in terms of "loanword typology" (Haspelmath & Tadmor 2009a/b). Several African languages are part of that investigation, among them Hausa (Awagana & Wolff 2009a/b) and Kanuri (Löhr & Wolff 2009a/b), which both appear to form part of a hypothetical "Wider Niger-Benue-Lake Chad Sprachbund" which still deserves focussed research as a potential convergence zone of its own within Güldemann's (2008) "Macro-Sudan Belt".

has again sketched out the existence and history of a linguistic convergence zone in the area. He develops the following scenario:

> "Now it is not obvious that the Chadic influence on Fyem is substratal; there is no evidence that the present day Fyem once spoke a language like Ron or Maghavul. In fact, […] it is the other way round, […] part of the Ron-Kulere peoples once spoke an ancestor of Fyem. […] there is one important section of the Fyem community which is in perpetual language shift, and that is married women. Fyem clans are exogamous… Marriage of Fyem men to women of Ron-Kulere and other small Chadic groups has been common for generations… (Relations between Fyem and Maghavul have traditionally been hostile, but this may not have been a bar to intermarriage given the existence of local practices of marriage by abduction…)" (Nettle 1998: 87f.).

As for the areal linguistic features of the postulated convergence area, the following (and possibly others that I am not aware of) have been suggested:

- heavy lexical borrowing in both directions, including so-called basic vocabulary, possibly with shared areal innovations (WG 1977, Nettle 1998);
- very similar phonological inventories and shared phonotactic constraints (WG 1977);
- levelling/neutralisation affecting verbal derivational systems in BC languages in terms of converging marking devices to exclusively encode verbal plurality of the nature that is originally associated with Chadic languages (WG 1977, Wolff & Meyer-Bahlburg 1979, Nettle 1998, Gerhardt 2002; see also Gerhardt in this volume);
- intransitive copy pronoun (ICP) constructions (WG 1977, JLL 2004);
- distribution of object pronouns relative to the verb (WG 1977);
- noun PL formation (WG 1977, Nettle 1998);
- tonal systems with 3 distinctive levels (JLL 2004);
- lexicalised nasal prefixes in Chadic (JLL 2004);
- reduction of grammatical gender in Chadic (JLL 2004);
- the pronoun systems as amalgam of Plateau-family elements, borrowed elements from Chadic, and language-specific innovations (Nettle 1998).

It is in front of this background that I will look at personal pronoun systems in languages of the convergence zone on both sides of the borderline between BC and Chadic. Focus is on inventories and sys-

tems, meaning that I shall look at the overall interrelationship of pronoun shapes across the categories of person, gender (or noun class concord), and number. As far as I am aware, this has not yet been done in any systematic way for this particular geographic area.

The main question is whether the personal pronoun systems as such provide any further indication towards the Sprachbund idea, and whether one can identify some quirks, i.e. very unusual features of or patterns within the systems, which would strengthen the hypothesis of a cross-genetic convergence zone.

5 Personal Pronoun Systems

5.1 Chadic languages in the convergence zone

There is a constantly repeated piece of traditional wisdom in African linguistics, which says that pronouns are extraordinarily stable, particularly in Afroasiatic languages:

> "And rightly so, for what linguist … could not respond to the monotonous sameness in the pronominal paradigms of Semitic, Egyptian, Berber, Cushitic, and Hausa? Even Marcel Cohen, in refusing to admit Hausa in the Afroasiatic family, had to admit that the resemblances in the pronominal systems were 'frappantes' […]" (Newman 1980: 15).

By implication, one could construe this folklore to also mean that, at least in Afroasiatic languages including Chadic, pronouns are less likely to be replaced, and their paradigms are almost resistant to drastic changes due to language contact. I will show here that this is not so in the particular language-contact area, i.e. the Chadic – Benue-Congo Convergence Zone in Central Nigeria. Furthermore, contact-induced changes in the pronoun systems are not restricted to Chadic languages in the area, but are found in neighbouring BC languages as well. Our investigation begins with Nettle's lucid yet somewhat frustrated statement on the situation in Fyem (we shall return to this language in more detail later):

> "The grammatical similarities between Fyem and its Chadic neighbours extend into the pronoun system […] there is a complex mix of genetic and areal influence. Almost the entire set of possessives is shared with Birom, which is probably genetic influence. There are many shared forms with the Ron group, particularly Fier, as well as some with Maghavul, Ngas and Hausa. These relationships must be due to borrowing […]. […] Overall, then, the pronoun system is rather typical of our pic-

ture of Fyem as a whole, a complex and mutated amalgam of Pla-
teau-family elements, borrowed elements and its own innovations."
(Nettle 1998: 86)

The following observations do not aim at providing reconstructions
of pronouns based on the comparative method. Rather, the idea is
to identify and map certain irregularities and drastic disturbances of
expected patterns, and relate these to a theory of language contact
across genetic and sub-genetic linguistic boundaries in the postulated
Chadic – Benue-Congo (C-BC) Convergence Zone. Because, by looking
at the pronoun systems in individual languages in this zone, one does
indeed observe recurring perturbations of expected patterns. These
unexpected variant or innovative forms pertain, first of all, to cog-
nate forms across linguistic boundaries, i.e. they suggest borrowing
of personal pronoun shapes, which is interesting and remarkable in
itself in view of the widespread assumption that personal pronouns
tend to be rather stable. However, and this is the most surprising part
of it, highly irritating quirky perturbations also occur across catego-
ries within the individual systems of the same language – observa-
tions that will be discussed under the heading "category shift", i.e.
substitutions across the categories of person, gender, and number.

To start with Chadic, I basically follow Blažek (1995) and Newman
(1980) with regard to reconstructed pronoun shapes within Chadic
(Table 1) and across Afroasiatic (Table 2).[3]

Note that specific contrasts in vowel quality were used to create
gender pairs (Newman 1980: 16):

> "The Chadic 2nd feminine singular pronoun differs from its masculine
> counterpart, not only in having final *-m*, which is commonly lost, but
> also in having *-i* as its vowel as opposed to the masculine *-a*, a feature
> paralleled elsewhere in Afroasiatic […]. Note, interestingly, that in
> the 3rd person, the opposite is usually the case, i.e. it is the feminine
> pronoun which has *-a* and the masculine which has the high vowel
> (either *-i* or *-u*)."

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3 Note that the original charts have been slightly rearranged to fit the contras-
tive purpose.

Table 1. Proto-Chadic personal pronoun reconstructions

| | | Newman 1980 | Blažek 1995: Proto-Chadic | | | |
| | | Chadic (Old Hausa) subject | Set A (independent) | | Set B (object/possessive) | |
		stage 1	stage 1	stage 2	stage 1	stage 2
SG	1.C	wa, ni		*ʔan-i (*ʔan-u, *ʔan-a?)	*ʔi, *[ʔ]ya	*yu
	2.M	ka	*ka(y)		*ku	
	2.F	kim	*ki(m)		*kum, *kim ?	
	3.M	ši		*si, *su ?	*sV, *ni	
	3.F	ta	*ta		*ta	
PL	1.IN	mun na	*muni		*mu(ni)	
	1.EX		*ʔyina/u < *ḥina/u ?		*(ʔyi)na/i/u	
	2.M	kun	*kuni/a			*kuni/a
	2.F	sun	*suni		*suni/*tuni	

Table 2. Proto-Afroasiatic personal pronoun reconstructions

		PAA (Newman 1980)	Newman 1980 set A (independent) stage 1	stage 2	Blažek 1995: Proto-Afroasiatic set B (object/possessive) stage 1	stage 2
SG	1.C	*i, *ni	*ʔaku	*ʔan-ʔaku	*[ʔ]ya, *ʔ/yi, *ʔ/yu	*ya, *yi, *yu
	2.M	*ka	*ta	*ʔan-ta	*ku	*ku
	2.F	*kim	*ti	*ʔan-ti	*ki	*ki
	3.M	*šu/su	*šuwa	*šu(wa)	*šu	(set A)
	3.F	*ša/sa	*šiya	*ši(ya)	*ši	(set A)
PL	1.IN	*na	*muni	*ʔan-muni	(*muni)	
	1.EX	*na	*ḥina/u	*ʔan-ḥina/u	*na/ni/nu	*na, *ni, *nu
	2.M	*kun	*tunwa	*ʔan-tumu/-tunV	*kunwa	*kumu/*kunV
	2.F	*kun	*tinya	*tinya	*kinya	*kin(n)a
	3.M	*sun	*šunwa	*šumu/šunV	*šunwa	(set A)
	3.F	*sun	*šinya	*šin(n)a	*šinya	(set A)

Table 3. Circumfix conjugational pattern in Berber and Semitic

		Pre-Berber		>>	Proto-Berber	Semitic
		Imperfect	Perfect		Mixed System	Imperfect
SG	1.C	*ʔa-	*-ku		*ʔa-...-a	*ʔa-
	2.M	*ta-	*ta-		*ta-...-ad	*ti-
	2.F	*ta-	*ti-		*ta-...-ad	*ti-...-ī
	3.M	*ya-	*-(aʔ)		*ya-	*yi-
	3.F	*ta-	*-at	*ta-...-at	*ta-	*yi-/ti-
PL	1.C	*na-	*(-na)		*na-	*ni-
	2.M	*ta-	*tumu	*ta-...-tam	*ta-...-am	*ti-...-ū
	2.F	*ta-	*-tum-at	*ta-...-tamat	*ta-...-mat	*ti-...-ā/-na
	3.M	*ya-	*-an	*ya-...-an	*-an	*yi-...-ū
	3.F	*ya-	*-nat	*ya-...-nat	*-nat	*yi-/*ti-...-ā/-na

Also, a peculiarity of subject marking with verbs deserves attention that is not reflected in Blažek's and Newman's charts. Some languages in Afroasiatic show circumfixed or ambifixed person marking in verbal conjugation, for instance Berber and Semitic languages, which appears to have occasional reflexes in Chadic. Cf. Blažek's (1995) Berber and Semitic charts (Table 3).

One notes, further, the intrusion of originally demonstrative elements into the pronoun system, replacing the original 3rd person pronouns. Blažek (1995) identifies the following demonstrative elements across some families within Afroasiatic:

*t-   > feminine (with reflexes in Chadic and Berber)

*n-   SG.M, possibly PL, in Chadic (with reflexes also in East & South Cushitic, Egyptian)

*k-   gender-neutral or masculine (with reflexes in Chadic, South Omotic)[4]

For Chadic, at least two more elements can be added (cf. Schuh 1983 for the whole set of early Chadic determiners): *y-, *d-.

Note, further, three general Chadic innovations, possibly on the PC level:

- substitution of the *t*-paradigm of the 2nd person pronouns (Blažek's set A of PAA) by the *k*-paradigm;[5]
- generalisation of the demonstrative $t + V$ for 3SG.F pronoun;
- introduction of the demonstrative $n + V$ for 3SG non-feminine pronoun (probably at later stages, other demonstratives were introduced in the same way, creating 3SG pronoun shapes of the structures $y + V, k + V, d + V$).

Looking at some of the better documented Chadic languages in the convergence area, one observes some irritating deviations from the Proto-Chadic, not to say Proto-Afroasiatic, pattern.

1. The Ron Group languages (Jungraithmayr 1970), for instance, have suffered from a breakdown of distinctions, on the segmental level, pertaining to person, number and gender. The system has been rebuilt based on phonetic rather than phonemic distinction

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4   Whereas Schuh (1983) treats *k- as gender-neutral in early Chadic, Blažek (1995) views it as masculine in early Afroasiatic.

5   Possible exceptions to this general substitution can be found in the Tera group where *t + V is retained in 2nd person (cf. footnote 20).

and, most of all, tonal contrast. Looking at the cases of the Fyer and Sha varieties in some detail (Tables 4 and 5), one notices that the distinction between 1SG/PL and 2SG/PL, for instance, broke down and was repaired by re-designating 2SG segmental material *ká/kú* to 1PL.[6] Gender and number distinction in 3SG was reorganised in Fyer (introducing a new morpheme *mí/mú* that was likely borrowed from BC). Gender and number distinction in 3SG was given up in Sha in favour of the marked ex-feminine *ti*. Number distinction in 3rd person was shifted to tone in Sha, as in 1SG and 1PL.EXCL. Furthermore, Fyer underwent a surprising borrowing of circumfix conjugation from BC in its 1PL.EXCL, just like Sha quite likely borrowed 3SG subject marking *a-* from BC and generalised it across the number distinction, albeit creating a tonal contrast for number.

2. A similar picture emerges in Guruntum, a language of the Saya Group (Haruna 2003) (Table 6). Again, like in the Ron Group, distinctions between 1SG/PL and 2SG/PL broke down and were repaired, very much in the same way, by re-designating 2SG segmental material to 1PL, but creating tonal differences. I also assume shift from 1PL.EXCL to 1SG, as in Ron-Sha. Likewise as in Ron, gender and number distinction in 3SG was given up in favour of the marked feminine, and again number distinction was shifted to tone. Furthermore, borrowing from Hausa cannot be excluded for the subjunctive 1SG, and contact with BC languages may be responsible for the shape of the independent pronoun 1SG.

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6 This is the first instance to be discussed of assumed category shift of pronouns. The discussion is based exclusively on linguistic form of the pronouns. No clear motivation for the apparent or assumed categorical shift can be identified at this time. One possible line of explanation would follow the suggestion that, at some historical stage, inclusive and dual pronouns were "compound pronouns" (such as one still finds in Grassfields and Bantu A languages) which, for whatever reasons, underwent simplification with the unmotivated drop of one of the compounded elements (Roland Kießling, p.c.). A more pragmatically oriented explanation would make incomplete language learning responsible (on the part of exogamous women, cf. scenario description in the introduction of this paper) ensuing 'confusion' of the pronouns of self-reference (1st person) and for the addressee (2nd person). I consider it significant that such confusion involves the participant pronouns, hardly the reference pronouns of the 3rd person (as in Ninzam, cf. below, which would provide a counter-example).

Table 4. Personal pronoun systems in Ron (Fyer)

		Ron-Fyer		
		SG	PL	Observations
1	EXCL		'i/yi…nyí	cf. Izere/Zarek (BC): circumfix marking
1	INCL	'i/yi	ká	re-designation from < *ka 2SG.M, < *ku(n) 2PL.C
1	DU		kú	
2	M	'á/yá < *ka	'ú/wú < *ku?	
2	F	shí < *ki		
3	M	mí/mí	sí/sú	mí/mí: BC noun class concord marking?
3	F	tí		

Table 5. Personal pronoun systems in Ron (Sha)

		SG	PL	Ron-Sha Observations
1	EXCL	nì	ní	copying 1PL.EXCL *ni into 1SG, with subsequent number neutralisation + tonal re-distinction
	INCL		gyá	re-designation from: *kya < *ka 2SG.M ?
	DU		gí	re-designation from: *ki(m) 2SG.F ?
2	M	yí < *kya < *ka	kə́	
	F	cí < *kyi < *ki		
3	M	'a, (ti)	'á	cf. BC language pattern 3SG a-; innovative tonal distinction (cf. 1st person) language-internal gender neutralisation
	F	'a, (ti)		

Table 6. Personal pronoun system in Guruntum

		Guruntum		
		SG	**PL**	**Observations**
1	EXCL	*yĭm,* *ìŋ* (subj), *ni* (obj), *-ŋa*	*kàŋ,* *kèŋ,* *-gə̀ŋ*	SG: INDEP *yĭm* < Proto-Bantoid **me?* subjunctive *ìŋ* < Hausa *ʼìn?* object *ni* re-designation of 1PL.EX **ni* into 1SG? PL: re-designation of 2SG.F.INDEP *kàŋ/kàŋ/gàŋ* + L tone into 1PL.C?
	INCL			
	DU			
2	M	*kau* < *ka* + **ku,* *kə,* *-gu, -gì*	*kàu,* *kà,*	re-designation from 2SG *kau/kə* + L tone into 2PL? copying *gu, gì* from SG into PL
	F	*kaŋ* < *ka* + **kim,* *ìŋ* < **kim,* *gu* (obj), *-gə̀ŋ*	*-gu, -gì*	partial gender neutralisation in SG object *gu*
3	M	*-sì* (poss)	*ka-shì* < *ka* + **si, shì*	gender neutralisation in 3SG in favour of marked F pronoun *ti* with exception of generalised *-sì* for possessive; re-designation of *ti* + L tone into PL for subjunctive
	F	*kadi* < *ka* + **ti* *ti*	*tì* (subj)	

3. Another West Chadic language of the Saya Group has been described to some extent under the name Guus (aka Sigidi) by Caron (2001). Interestingly, at least as far as subject pronouns preceding the verb are concerned, Guus has streamlined its system to a neat tonal parallelism across the 10 conjugational paradigms of the TAM system, with the corresponding SG and PL pronouns being identical in segmental shape, the only difference is tonal: M tone in the SG, L tone in the PL, cf. the "aorist" paradigm for illustration (Table 7); there is no more gender distinction, nor one of inclusive or exclusive.

Table 7. Personal pronouns in Guus

	SG	PL
1	*m-a*	*m-à*
2	*k-a*	*k-à*
3	*tʃ-a < *ti-a*	*tʃ-à < *tì-a*

The shape of the 1st person pronoun, by its bilabial nasal, allows for two different hypotheses: (a) PL origin and category shift into SG, (b) borrowing from BC (SG). The shape of the 2nd person pronoun corresponds to the expected Chadic SG and was likely copied into PL. The palatalisation part of the 3rd person pronoun can be explained as resulting from the reconstructable form **ti* with high front vowel (cf. Ron and Guruntum above), this is corroborated from the object pronoun shape *tə*. The original masculine pronoun with the shape SG **sV ~ *ʃi* / PL **sVn* can still be found in the genitive constructions *gwàa-ʃí / -àa-s* and *gwàa-gə́-san / -àa-gə́-sàn* (Caron 2001: 11).[7]

4. Two other Chadic languages in the convergence area on which there is some recent documentation, i.e. Goemai (Hellwig 2003) and Mupun (Frajzyngier 1993), show nothing of the above person, number and gender re-shuffling. However, for them it appears to be the 3rd person that has undergone some – quite likely contact-induced – change in the expected Chadic pattern. Goemai 3SG.C (no gender distinction) has generalised the original demonstrative *ni*

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7   In another publication Caron (2006) documents the pronominal systems of a total of eight Zaar languages (including Guus) of the Saya group which provide more variation on the same theme.

(independent set). Mupun also has no genuine 3rd person pronouns, according to Frajzyngier (1993).[8] This is only partially true, at least traces of a full pronominal system of a very Chadic nature can be found in the system, for instance, with reflexives (1993: 119). Interestingly however, the deictic morphemes used for 3SG maintain the ancient vocalic contrast between M- and F-forms: *wù(r)* for M, and *wà(r)* for F (note that the form *wu(ri)* reappears as PL pronoun in two of the Zaar languages presented in Caron (2006: 99f), namely Dir and Nyamzak/Langas). The PL morpheme *mo* eventually deserves explanation from a language contact scenario and should be compared to Goemai *mûep* which also looks distinctly non-Chadic.

2.2   Benue-Congo languages in the convergence zone

To the best of my knowledge, no comparably comprehensive account like that of Blažek for Chadic and Afroasiatic pronouns is available for Niger-Congo or even Benue-Congo or the Plateau language family.[9] However, looking at the scattered evidence from languages like Kagoro, Kaje, Iregwe, Koro, Izere/Zarek, Kwoi, Birom (Gerhardt 1967/68, WG 1977), Ninzam (Hoerner 1980), Gong (Hagen 1988) and particularly Fyem (Nettle 1998) that were at my disposal when preparing this paper, a fairly homogeneous picture emerges with regard to the pronoun systems within Plateau.

   First of all, there is no gender distinction nor one of inclusive-exclusive or even dual in these languages (see also Babaev 2008: 161, for Proto-Bantoid as not possessing these distinctions). Without

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8   "In Mupun there are no third person deictic pronouns referring to humans. There are two conditions that allow the use of third person pronouns. The SG and PL pronouns may be used if their referents have been mentioned previously in discourse. The third person PL pronoun mo may be used also without any antecedent, but in such case it is a marker of the indefinite human agent…" (Frajzyngier 1993: 84).

9   This situation has drastically changed since the publication of Babaev (2008). Ludwig Gerhardt (p.c.) had already drawn my attention to the following reconstructions for PL pronouns in Bantu, at least, based on the works of Dempwolff, Meeussen, and Schadeberg: 1PL *tu* ~ *tʊ* (Dempwolff *ti / tî / tu / tû*); 2PL *mu* ~ *mʊ* (Dempwolff *mu/mû*). These reconstructions are confirmed in Babaev (2008). Closer to the geographic area of investigation, the Jarawan Bantu languages, again according to Gerhardt (p.c.), tend to have 1PL *su* (cf. Babaev's reconstruction **(bè)c(u)e)*, 2PL *wun* (to be compared with Babaev's **(bè)n(u)e)*.

claiming any comparative value in terms of reconstruction, the following chart (Table 8) appears to reflect some basic shapes of personal pronouns across Plateau (Western, Central and South-Eastern groups, according to the classification by Gerhardt 1989) that have been found in the available sources:

Table 8. Prototypical personal pronoun shapes in BC languages of the Plateau area

	SG	PL
1	MI (I)N ~ NUŋ (I)ŋGA NJE	NYI ~ NE NTA ZI / ZA ~ NZHI ZƏT / ZHIT
2	U / WU ~ UWA ~ WA WAN ~ NWAN / MWAN ŋU	NYU
3	MA ~ A ɣA ~ ŋA KU / KA ~ GU / GWA ~ (U)WA	BA ~ Bɔ MBA BAR ~ MBAR

This can now be compared to the reconstructions by Babaev (2008: 160f) for Proto-Bantoid as a whole (Table 9a), and non-Bantu Bantoid in particular (Table 9b):

Table 9a. Proto-Bantoid (incl. Bantu) pronominal paradigm ("locutors" only)

	Prefixed (subject)	Independent (non-subject)
1SG	*ɲi-	*(à)me
2SG	*ʊ̀-	*(à)we
1PL	*tʊ̀-	*(bè)c(u)e
2PL	*mʊ-	*(bè)n(u)e

Table 9b. Proto-"Other" Bantoid (excl. Bantu) pronominal paradigm
("locutors" only)

	Subject	**Non-subject**
1SG	*me-, *n-*	*àm(e)*
2SG	*o*	*we*
1PL	*(bè)c(u)e*	*(bè)c(u)e*
2PL	*(bè)n(u)e*	*(bè)n(u)e*

Babaev's reconstructions allow the following approximations with
the abstracted "basic shapes" listed in Table 8 which help to identify
potential candidates of contact-induced substitutions (cf. Table 9c).

Watching out for re-designation of pronominal material across
persons and number, six Plateau languages show striking cases of a
comparable breakdown of system plus seemingly floppy repair strat-
egies as were seen in some Chadic languages of the convergence zone.

1. Izere/Zarek (Central group; see Table 10) appears to have tri-
   pled its pronoun shape inventory by borrowing pronoun forms
   based on the Chadic-origin determiners *ka/ku* (and, maybe less
   likely, *ti/tu* or even *ni*), and/or possibly borrowing and general-
   ising the 1PL.EXCL pronoun *ni* of Chadic provenance. Further,
   Zarek appears to have also borrowed a pre-Chadic looking cir-
   cumfixed conjugation type for both subject and object marking,
   unless one wants to identify these with so-called ICP construc-
   tions.[10] The morphological material *yir-/-ir* and *yin-/-in* still lack
   plausible historical explanation, unless one can relate *yin-/-in* to
   the Plateau proto type pronoun *NYI* of 1PL, and assume a shift

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   10 "Intransitive Copy Pronouns" (ICP) are recapitulative pronouns that become
suffixed, first of all, to intransitive verbs; they match the pre-verbal subject pro-
nouns in person/number/gender, but not in shape. This special set of personal
pronouns was first discovered (and named "ICP") in West Chadic languages. Rela-
tionship with ICP constructions that are, however, cross-genetically virulent in the
whole geographic area (and which were, at the time, considered to be of Chad-
ic origin) was the explanation suggested in WG 1977. I am much more hesitant
now as regards this simple explanation, particularly since in Zarek this has noth-
ing to do with intransitivity of verbs. Circumfixed conjugation patterns, including
ICPs, may indeed be a genuine and vintage areal feature of this particular conver-
gence zone, unless it proves to be a rather ancient feature of (some part of) BC.

from there into 2PL marking.[11] The 1PL form *yir-/-ir* could at least partly be derived from reconstructable **tʊ̀-* (Babaev 2008) since Zarek */r/* in final position reflects historical **t* (hypothesis owed to Gerhardt, p.c.).[12] With regard to the emergence of circumfix conjugation in general, however, independent language-internal motivation is probably the less likely hypothesis than the assumption of language contact with Chadic or even pre-Chadic languages.[13]

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11 The comparison with Babaev's (2008) reconstructions poses some problems of diachronic plausibility: Firstly, any approximation of forms found in the Plateau languages with Proto-Bantoid **tʊ̀-* conflicts with the observation that non-Bantu Bantoid is reconstructed differently as **(bè)c(u)e* for 1PL. One is probably to assume that somehow the **-cue* part of the reconstruction links up with the **tʊ̀-* known from Bantu (which would be something to explain for more recent Bantu-internal development rather than for the non-Bantu Bantoid languages of the Plateau). Further, the *(y)in* part of the disjunctive pronoun shape could somehow reflect the **-n(u)e* sequence of Proto-Bantoid **(bè)n(u)e* for 2PL, yet without making this hypothesis a stronger case.

12 Note that deriving *yir-* and the suffixed elements *-ir* from older forms containing original **ti* as found in Bantu reconstructions, still cannot explain the triple pre-verbal forms *yir-*, *ti-*, and *ni-*.

13 Cf. Table 3 for early Afroasiatic (i.e. pre-Chadic) circumfix patterns that may have served as a model.

Table 9c. Approximations between pronoun shapes found in selected BC Plateau languages and the Proto-Bantoid reconstructions by Babaev (2008)

	BC Plateau basic shapes	"Other Bantoid"		"Bantu"	
		Subject	Non-subject	subject	Non-subject
1SG	MI (I)N ~ NUŋ (I)ŋGA NJE	*me-, *n-	*àm(e)	*ɲi-	*(à)me
2SG	U/WU ~ UWA ~ WA WAN ~ NWAN / MWAN ŋU	*o	*we	*ʊ̀-	*(à)we
3SG	MA ~ A γA ~ ŋA KU/KA ~ GU/GWA ~ (U)WA	Noun class concord			
1PL	NYI ~ NE NTA ZI/ZA ~ NZHI ZəT / ZHIT	*(bè)c(u)e	*(bè)c(u)e	*tʊ̀-	*(bè)c(u)e
2PL	NYU	*(bè)n(u)e	*(bè)n(u)e	*mʊ-	*(bè)n(u)e
3PL	BA ~ Bɔ MBA BAR ~ MBAR	Noun class concord			

Table 10. Personal pronouns in Zarek

		Izere/Zarek	
	SG	PL	Observations
1	*mi* ~ *ti* ~ *ni*	*yir ... ir < *yit...it?* *ti ... (y)ir < *ti...it?* *ni ... (y)ir < *ni...it?*	Alternative hypotheses: *ti – ta – tu* < Chadic demonstrative *tV-* series; *ka – ku* < Chadic demonstra- tive *kV-* series; *ni* < Chadic demonstrative *nV*-series, or: Chadic 1PL.EX;
2	*wan* ~ *ta* ~ *ka*	*yin ... in* *ta ... (y)in* *ka ... (y)in*	
3	*wu* ~ *tu* ~ *ku*	*ba* *ta ... ba* *ka ... ba*	origin of circumfixed conjuga- tion pattern still unsolved

2. Closely related Kagoro and Iregwe within the Central group of Plateau have innovated (along with another language, Kaje) a pronoun for 1PL, based on a voiced alveolar fricative: *zə ~ zət* (Kagoro), *nzhi* (Iregwe), *za ~ zi ~ zhi* (Kaje) (Table 11). Whether the initial alveolar fricative has anything to do with **c* of the **(bè) c(u)e* reconstructed for Proto-Bantoid (Babaev 2008) is a possibi- lity, unless the latter is reflected in the final *t* of the Kagoro form *zət* (according to Gerhardt [p.c.], Iregwe only allows open sylla- bles so that there can be no trace of this final *t* anyway) which would still leave the initial *z* unaccounted for. As counter-intuitive as it sounds, one cannot dismiss the hypothesis that the original pronoun of the shape *NYI* became re-designated to 2 PL and has replaced the *NYU*-shaped original form. The 1SG pronoun *n-* could be both an etymological reflex of the Proto-Bantoid variant **n-* or a loan from Chadic. Note that the exclusively tonal distinction between 3SG and 3PL *à* vs. *á* has parallels in Chadic.

Table 11. Personal pronouns in Kagoro and Iregwe

		Kagoro/Gworok	
	SG	PL	Observations
1	*n-, núŋ*	*zə ~ zət*	SG: **n(V)* reflects either the Proto-Ban- toid variant **n-* (Babaev 2008) or is a loan from Chadic

2	*á, nwan*	*nyí ~ nyín*	PL: re-designation of 1PL *nyi* (ultimately from Chadic or reflex of Proto-Bantoid *(bè)n(u)e* ?)[14]
3	*à, gu, gwa*	*á, ba*	copying 3SG into PL: *a* + H tone

	Iregwe/Rigwe		
	SG	PL	Observations
1	*nje*	*nzhi*	SG: **nCV* may or may not reflect the Proto-Bantoid variant **n-* (Babaev 2008)
2	*na, mwan*	*nyi*	re-designation of 1PL *nyi* ?[15]
3	*ku ~ u ~o*	*a, mbe*	copying ex 3SG *a* into PL; replacing 3SG **a-* by *ku*-series

3. Western group Gong (Kagoma; Hagen 1988) and Ninzam (Hoerner 1980) also show some irregularities in their pronoun systems (Tables 12 and 13). Gong appears to have borrowed from Chadic the 1PL.EXCL **nV* which functions as 1PL, with the original shape of the 1PL now functioning as 2PL – like in Kagoro and Iregwe of the Central group.[16]

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14 The shape NYI ~ NE for 1PL would have to be considered a possible loan (from Chadic), since Babaev's (2008) reconstruction **(bè)c(u)e* for Proto-Bantoid provides little reason to consider the two to be cognates. However, with considerable effort one might be able to relate the NYI ~ NE shapes to Babaev's (2008) reconstruction **(bè)n(u)e* for 2PL presupposing yet another category shift (from 2PL to 1PL) as in other instances reported in this paper.

15 The less spectacular assumption would, of course, be to relate the pronoun shape *nyi* to reconstructed **(bè)n(u)e* (Babaev2008) giving the "basic shape" of Plateau 2PL pronouns NYU. Homophony with "basic shape" NYI for 1PL would be no issue here, nor for Gworok above, since Rigwe and Gworok have developed highly idiosyncratic forms for 1PL: Rigwe *nzhi*, Gworok *zə ~ zət*.

16 Roland Kießling (p.c.) suggests a plausible step-by-step development which would explain the motivation for the categorial shift: The former Gong 1PL, in the light of interference from Chadic, was reanalysed as 1PL.INCL (in contrast with borrowed 1PL.EXCL), thereby creating a Chadic type system with 1PL.EXCL/INCL distinction. Semantic narrowing of 1PL.INCL to the 2nd person component and suppression of the 1st person component later dissolved the INCL/EXCL distinction and made the language return to a BC type of system again – under maintenance of the contact-induced 1PL > 2PL category shift. This plausible hypothesis, however, would presuppose earlier BC-Chadic bilingualism and would be reminiscent of the scenario described for Fyem above.

Table 12. Personal pronouns in Gong

	Gong/Kagoma		
	SG	PL	Observations
1	*mi*	*ne*	PL: < Chadic 1PL.EXCL *nV*?[17]
2	*ŋu*	*nyi*	PL: re-designation of 1PL *nyi*?[18]
3	*a ~ ŋa*	*bɔ ~ mbɔ*	

Ninzam has innovated its set of PL pronouns in a rather idiosyncratic way: There is a new 1SG form which has no direct correspondent in any of the languages I have been able to look at. It either adds *ta* to the nasal of the 1PL (cf. Fyem below), or the shape of the pronoun corresponds to PB *t + V* with added prenasalisation. Ninzam again appears to copy 3PL material into 2PL. Unique in our sample so far, Ninzam has rebuilt its 2PL *(i)mba* on the model of the 3PL *ba* (adding prenasalisation as it is also known from Gong and Fyem). Finally, it allows 3PL *ba* to be phonologically enlarged by both prenasalisation (like in Gong, and possibly in all of its PL pronoun shapes) and/or addition of final *r*.

Table 13. Personal pronouns in Ninzam

	Ninzam		
	SG	PL	Observations
1	*(i)ŋga*	*(i)nta*	innovative forms in both SG & PL (unless related to Bantu *ngu* POSS and *tʊ̀*, acc. to Gerhardt p.c.) SG – cf. Guruntum *-iŋ* (subjunctive), *-ŋa* (POSS) PL – cf. also Fyem *moti*, Birom *wot*

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17 Given Babaev's (2008) Proto-Bantoid reconstructions, one cannot exclude an explanation for the origin of the 1PL pronoun shape *ne* which would be based on category shift from singular to plural (Babaev reconstructs both *me-* and *n-* for 1SG).

18 See fn 15.

| 2 | *uwa ~ wa ~ u* | *(i)mba* | 2PL built in analogy to 3PL and prenasalisation as found in Gong and Fyem |
| 3 | *a ~ uwa* *ma* *ku* | *aba ~ ba* *bar ~* *mbar* | innovative enlargement of 3PL by final consonant *-r* |

4. The last Plateau language to be looked at in some detail is Fyem (Nettle 1998), from the Southeastern group. In this language, the situation is extremely messy.

In the first set of pronouns (independent, object and two series of possessive; Table 14), there is again the mutual transfer of pronoun shapes between 1st person and 2nd person, in Fyem, however, both in SG and PL. Independent 1SG *mé* corresponds to the 2SG possessives *-mé/ná-me*.

In the PL, only the emphatic possessive retains the original pronoun in *ná-mun*, whereas the original 1PL independent, object and short possessive pronouns occur in 2PL *múni, -mún, -mún*. Clearly, this pronoun shape reflects the Chadic 1PL.INCL **muni*.

Vice versa, it is only the emphatic possessive *ná-mot* of 2PL that retains its original (?) function, whereas the other forms are now found in 1PL in the shapes *móti, -té, -mót*. (Note that the pronoun shape *mot/moti/(mo)te* for 2PL is innovative and reminds one of the Ninzam innovation of its 1PL *(i)nta*.)[19]

Further innovations are the velar nasal base of the 1SG object and possessive forms, which again reminds one of Ninzam *(i)ŋga*, which ultimately could reflect borrowing from Chadic, cf. Guruntum 1SG possessive *-ŋa*. Also, a bilabial nasal base for 3SG has not been encountered in any of the other Plateau languages that I have looked at, so it is considered innovative here. Presently, I have no explanation as to the origin of the object pronoun *-ii*. Since all these are originally BC noun class languages, however, both *mo* and *-ii* could be reflexes of noun class concord elements.

The second set of Fyem pronouns are the preverbal subject markers, one sub-set for the PRF and the IMPV aspect paradigm

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19 Little clarity if any comes from Babaev's (2008) reconstructions: The bilabial nasal /*m*/ clearly indicates 1SG, the alveolar /*t*/ could be related to reconstructed **c* in 1PL.

each (Table 15). Quite surprisingly, these sub-sets look like representing a Chadic language, with the likely exception of 3SG *á* (which, however, can also be found in Chadic languages) and 2SG *wú*. Interestingly, quite different historical strata may be involved here: Present-day Hausa could be responsible for the two forms of the 1SG: *náa* corresponds directly to the Hausa PRF form *náa*, and *ín* corresponds to the Hausa CONTINUOUS pronoun *ín (nàa)*. Using *ti* in 2nd person, both in SG and PL, in particular with a disjunctive (circumfix) element *-n* in the PL form, resembles the pre-Chadic pattern of Afroasiatic (cf. Berber, Semitic; cf. Table 3 above) and has reflexes in Ron and, across the genetic borderline, in Zarek, which both have circumfix marking albeit for 1PL.[20] IMPV 2PL *wún* corresponds to a Chadic pattern insofar, as **-n* is quite regularly added to the SG pronoun to form PL: *wú + n,* the fact notwithstanding that *wú* as such is most likely of BC stock. 3SG PRF *taa* is a reflex of PC 3SG.F and corresponds in segmental shape to the Hausa PRF form *táa*.

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20 The only Chadic language that I am aware of that uses *tV* in the 2nd person is Central Chadic Tera (Newman 1970: 36; Tera has a linguistic history that links it with the West Chadic Bole group, cf. Newman 1969/70). Intriguingly, the *tV-* element also occurs in 1PL, cf.

1SG		1PL	*témə*
2SG	*tó*	2PL	*túnu*

I would like to add a caveat here: The occurrence of **tV-* and **kV-/*nV-* particularly as first part of compound structures could always reflect a gender-sensitive linker (originally referring back to a preceding noun, usually in possessive constructions). One cannot exclude the possibility that the "linker" is the only part that survives apocopation of the original pronoun part of a complex bi-morphemic construction of the type linker + pronoun.

Table 14. Personal pronouns in Fyem – set I

			Fyem: Pronoun set I	
	Function	SG	PL	Observations
1	INDEP	*mé*	*móti*	innovative PL form, but cf. Ninzam *(i)nta*
	Object	*-uŋ / -iŋ*	*-té*	innovative SG form – but cf. Ninzam *(i)ŋga*; cf. Guruntum *-iŋ* (SUBJ); innovative PL form – but cf. Ninzam *(i)nta*
	POSS	*-naŋ*	*-mót*	innovative SG form, but cf. Ninzam *(i)ŋga* – cf. Guruntum *-ŋa* (POSS); innovative PL form, but cf. Ninzam *(i)nta*
	EMPH POSS	*ná-ŋ*	*ná-mun*	innovative SG form, but cf. Ninzam *(i)ŋga* – cf. Guruntum *-ŋa* (POSS); PL < Chadic 1PL.INCL *muni*
2	INDEP	*wéé*	*míni*	PL < Chadic 1PL.INCL *muni*
	Object	*-o*	*-mín*	PL < Chadic 1PL.INCL *muni*
	POSS	*-mé*	*-mún*	SG: re-designation < 1SG *mé?* PL < Chadic 1PL.INCL *muni*
	EMPH POSS	*ná-me*	*ná-mot*	SG: re-designation from 1SG *mé?*
3	INDEP	*mái ~ méi*	*béi* [*ᵐbéi*]	SG innovation (former Ncl concord marker *maʔ?*)
	Object	*-ii*	*bá* [*ᵐbá*]	SG innovation (former Ncl concord marker?)
	POSS	*-mó*	*-ba*	SG innovation (former Ncl concord marker *muʔ?*)
	EMPH POSS	*ná-mó*	*ná-ba*	SG innovation (former Ncl concord marker *muʔ?*)

With regard to number marking by exclusively tonal contrast, the 3rd person follows the pattern known from languages of the Saya group of Chadic. The most salient observation pertains again to a shift of forms from 2nd person to 1st person, i.e. PRF *ti / ti…n* has corresponding segmental forms in 1st person PRF and IMPV involving tonal contrast again: *tí / tík*. Another Chadic feature could be seen in the parallel formation of the IMPV 1PL and 3PL pronoun shapes *tí-k* and *tá-k* which look like the PRF pronoun plus added *-k*. This is reminiscent of the two paradigms of the Hausa PRF in which one paradigm is marked by adding **-k(a)* to the simple pronoun, cf. the PL forms *mu-kà, ku-kà, su-kà.*

Table 15. Personal pronouns in Fyem – set II

		PRF	IMPV	observations

		Fyem: Pronoun set II – preverbal (subject)		
		PRF	IMPV	observations
SG	1	*náá*	ín	cf. Hausa *náa* PRF, *ín (nàa)* CONTINUOUS
	2	*ti*	*wú*	**tV* < pre-Chadic 2nd person?
	3	*taa*	*á*	**ta* < (Proto-)Chadic 3SG.F *taa*; cf. Hausa PRF 3SG.F *táa*
PL	1	*tí*	*tík*	re-designation of 2nd person *ti/tí-k*; cf. Hausa *mu-kà*
	2	*ti … n*	*wún*	**tV* < pre-Chadic 2nd person; circumfix marking **tV…nV* < pre-Chadic 2nd person; *wú+n* < Chadic pattern of PRON pluralisation, cf. Hausa *ku-n*
	3	*táa*	*ták*	for tonal contrast *taa : táa* cf. Chadic Saya (Zaar) Group; for *tá-k* cf. Hausa *su-kà*

5 Summary and Conclusion

At least five types of contact-induced processes of language change have affected the pronoun systems in the convergence zone. These five processes can all be illustrated with examples from Fyem (Table 16):

Table 16. Types of contact-induced changes affecting personal pronouns

	Processes	Illustrations: Fyem
1.	substitution *in situ* so-to-speak by borrowed pronouns	*taa* < Hausa *táa*, *ín* < Hausa *ín*
2.	substitution of pronoun(s) plus analogical restructuring affecting other pronouns (involving sub-morphemic components)	*tí-k / tá-k* – cf. Hausa/Chadic *-kà*, *ta-a* – cf. Hausa PRF I, *wu-n* – cf. Chadic INDEP PL PRON
3.	re-designation of function with regard to person, gender, number, involving genetically acquired pronouns	*mé* 1SG > *-mé* 3SG POSS, *ná-mot* 2PL POSS > *móti/ mót/-té* 1PL
4.	re-designation of function involving borrowed pronouns	*ti* 2SG > *tí* 1PL, *ná-mun* 1PL POSS > *múni/-mún* 2PL
5.	borrowing of coding strategies/ formative patterns within the system, either involving genetically acquired or borrowed pronouns	tonal marking *ti*… : *tí*, *taa* : *táa*; PL marking by circumfix *ti* > *ti…n*

The most quirky feature is that of shifting pronoun shapes across the categories of person and number (less relevant: gender). In most examples these category shifts are accompanied by establishing tonal contrasts (mostly H tone for PL, as opposed to non-H for SG, or simple tonal polarity).[21] Clearly, each individual case alone would raise serious doubts about the assumption of diachronic category shift. It is the massive occurrence of this phenomenon in this area that gives

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21 This observation could be particularly interesting with regard to the theory of tonogenesis in Chadic since it would provide a functional explanation why an originally non-tonal Chadic language should go tonal in parts of its grammar (in addition to attributing this solely to a stable geographic and possibly also culturally relevant neighbourhood, in terms of stable exogamy patterns, with tone languages of BC genetic affiliation). Note, however, that the implied BC origin of tonal distinctions between SG and PL pronouns (particularly 3rd person) is more of an assumption based on "expert intuition" than being based on established diachronic evidence. (For tonogenesis theory in Chadic see Wolff 1983, 1987)

weight to the assumption – unless a more plausible explanation can be advanced. Cf. Table 17 for a summary of category shifts.

About as quirky as the cross-category pronoun shifting is the occurrence and distribution of circumfix conjugational patterns – if one leaves the special case of ICP conjugations aside, to which there may (or may not) be an ultimate relationship of yet unclear nature. Quite likely, a category shift is involved at the same time, i.e. from 1PL to 2PL, if one can identify the pronoun shapes containing *(y)in as originally of 1PL origin; cf. summarising Table 18.

If one is willing to assume a pre-Chadic origin of circumfix conjugation, then this might point towards the existence of a rather ancient Sprachbund or convergence zone across the present-day Chadic–Benue-Congo genetic borderline.[22] This would be in accordance with long-standing "expert intuitions" (cf. Carl Hoffmann's [1970] eye-opening little article on "Ancient Benue-Congo loans in Chadic?", the title of which one would want to rectify by replacing the question mark by an exclamation mark.) Later, Gerhardt (1983, following up on WG 1977) has shown that and how borrowed lexical items have entered the proto-language reconstructions for the language groups involved.

The exact delineation of the particular convergence zone within the "Macro-Sudan Belt" (Güldemann 2008) still remains to be worked out, this is a task for future research which requires cooperation of Benue-Congoists and Chadicists, and possibly Saharanists and even Songhay specialists – depending on how far east and west one wants to look. In terms of lexical interference, some answers emanate from the SAHELIA/MARIAMA project of our colleague Robert Nicolaï, and from the international Loanword Typology project at the Max Planck Institute in Leipzig (Haspelmath & Tadmor 2009a/b), in which Africanists from Leipzig have taken part.

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22 Traces of the AA pattern of circumfix person marking can be found across Chadic, usually hidden behind so-called "plural verb stems" with a nasal ending, and certain imperative PL forms (cf. Newman 1990, Wolff 2011).

Table 17. Category shift of personal pronoun shapes

Category	Direction of shift	Language	Genetic affiliation	Examples
NUMBER	SG = > PL	Guruntum	Chadic: Saya group	2nd person *kau/ka/gu/gù* = > *kàu/kà/gu/gù*; 3rd person *ti* = > *tí*
	PL = > SG	Guruntum Ron-Sha	Chadic: Saya group Chadic: Ron group	1st person (*ni*) = > *ni* 1st person *ní* = > *nì*
PERSON	1SG = > 3SG	Fyem	BC: Plateau-SE	INDEP *mé* = > POSS *-mé/ná-me*
	1PL = > 2PL	Gworok Rigwe Gong Fyem	BC: Plateau-C-2 BC: Plateau-C-2 BC: Plateau-W-1 BC: Plateau-SE	} *nyi* (originally 1PL)[23] EMPH POSS *ná-mun* = > *múni/mún*
	2PL = > 1PL	Fyer Fyem	CH: Ron group BC: Plateau-SE	**ku* = [*wú*~*'ú*] = > *kú* EMPH POSS *ná-mot* = > *móti/ mót/-té*
	3PL = > 2PL	Ninzam	BC: Plateau-West-2	*ba* = > *(i)mba*
PERSON & NUMBER	2SG = > 1PL	Fyer Sha Fyem	Chadic: Ron group Chadic: Ron group BC: Plateau-SE	*ka* = > *ká* M. *ka* = > *gyá*, F. *ki* = > *gí* *ti* = > *tí*
	2SG.F = > 1PL	Guruntum	Chadic: Saya group	*kaŋ/gəŋ* = > *kàŋ/gəŋ*

23 See fn 15.

Table 18. Distribution of circumfix conjugational pattern

	Examples			Language	Genetic affiliation
1PL	'*i/yi_ nyí* *yir _ ir*	*ti _ (y)ir*	*ni _ (y)ir*	Fyer Zarek	CH: Ron group BC: Plateau-C2
2PL	*yin _ in*	*ta _ (y)in* *ti _ n*	*ka _ (y)* *in*	Zarek Fyem	BC: Plateau-C2 BC: Plateau-SE
3PL	*ba*	*ta _ ba*	*ka _ ba*	Zarek	BC: Plateau-C2

From the vantage point of the study of pronoun systems, at least the following language groups or individual languages within Chadic are tentatively viewed as forming part of the "Chadic-Benue-Congo Convergence Zone" (classification by Newman 1990, but arranged according to tentatively assumed contact intensity/geographic distance):

> I. West Chadic
>> A. Sub-branch West-A
>>> 1. Ron group
>>> 2. Angas group
>>> 3. Bole group
>>> 4. Hausa (as the most recent lingua franca in the area);
>> B. Sub-branch West-B
>>> 1. Saya group (ex Southern Bauchi)
>>> 2. Warji group (ex Northern Bauchi)
> II. Central Chadic (ex Biu-Mandara)
>> A. Subbranch BM-A
>>> 1. Tera group
>>> 2. Bura group (?)

Figure 1. Tentative list of Chadic language groups which form part of the Chadic – Benue-Congo Convergence Zone in Central Nigeria

As for the Benue-Congo languages which are most likely part of this convergence zone, evidence has been found from the following groups and subgroups of the "Platoid" languages as classified by Gerhardt (1989: 364f):

1.Plateau
    B. Western group
        1. Northwestern subgroup
            a. Koro cluster: Koro
            b. Jaba cluster: Gong (Kagoma)
        2. Southwestern subgroup
            a. Cluster A: Ninzam
    C. Central group
        2. South-Central subgroup
            a. Rigwe (Iregwe)
            b. Zarek cluster: Izere/Zarek
            c. Jju (Kaje)
            d. Katab cluster: Gworok
            (Kagoro)
    D. Southeastern group
        1. Fyem

Figure 2. Tentative (minimal) list of Plateau languages which form part of the Chadic – Benue-Congo Convergence Zone in Central Nigeria

These lists of language groups are based on the observations referred to in this and previous papers, plus the following West Chadic languages which have not been touched on in this article:

1. the distribution of 3PL *MU ~ MO* not only in the Angas group, but also in the Bole group (cf. Blažek 1995: 43);
2. the distribution of 1SG *MI(nV)* in the Warji and Saya groups and, possibly, even Bura group (cf. Blažek 1995: 40).

Abbreviations

AA	Afroasiatic (languages)	F	feminine (gender)
BC	Benue-Congo (languages)	IPFV	imperfective
C	Central group (Plateau languages)	IN(CL)	inclusive
		INDEP	independent (pronoun)
C	common gender	M	masculine (gender)
CH	Chadic (languages)	Ncl	noun class
DU	dual	PAA	Proto-Afroasiatic
EX(CL)	exclusive	PB	Proto-Bantu

PC	Proto-Chadic	SE	Southeastern group (Plateau languages)
PL	plural		
POSS	possessive (pronoun)	SG	singular
PRF	perfect	W	Western group (Plateau languages)
PRON	pronoun		

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