

Data illustrating case in Mangbetu?

Robert Guy McKee, Ph.D.
SIL International – Africa Area
rob_mckee@sil.org

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Case marking systems are not made to explicitly mark *every* argument, but rather — ideally — to maximally *differentiate* between arguments in actual sentential contexts. By leaving one of two opposites in a contrast *unmarked*, the system achieves just as much — and possibly even greater — differentiation, at a greater *economy*.

A more general illustration of this principle is the tendency, in many languages, for both subjects and DO's to go morphologically unmarked. Since their position vis-à-vis the verb — i.e. word-order — is by itself a powerful case-marking device ... , it is more likely that only more oblique arguments — appearing less frequently in text — will require more explicit markings

... overt, morphological case-marking is not an automatic feature of case-coding systems. Rather, it is used economically and with discrimination, when role differentiation is required and when the semantics of the verb is not enough to predict the semantic role of nominal participants.

— Givón (1984:184–85, italics as in the original).

0. Introduction

In this paper,¹ I present data that illustrate various aspects of what I think of as case marking in Mangbetu.² Others may find the data of interest given that case has not been reported as a common feature of either Nilo-Saharan or East Central Sudanic within it.³ One reason for my own interest is some of the difficulties I've had with certain of the Meegye dialect data concerned, with Meegye the focus of the Mangbetu I've been studying off and on since late 1980. My presentation doesn't pretend to theoretical currency or sophistication: I'm an anthropologist who values attention to linguistic detail, and I welcome the comments and suggestions of colleagues who may see more clearly than I the nature of the data with which I'm dealing.

Mangbetu is a Mangbetu-Asoa subgroup language of East Central Sudanic. It's spoken mainly in areas northeast and southwest of Isiro, in northeastern Democratic Republic of Congo. Its major dialects, besides Meegye and Mangbetu proper, are Makere, Malele, Mabelu, and Mapopoi.

I begin by referring to table 1 (see the appendix, page A1), which is intended to summarize much of the system of data concerned. Note that it's in column 4 that example stems are found; that columns 3 and 5 contain what strike me as clearly case-related adpositions; that column 1 gives working labels for seven cases; and that column 6 provides example forms for which column 7 supplies contextually possible glosses. Of greatest interest, I believe, should be column 2, for its claim that what Larochette (1958) called a "déterminateur" and saw as marking absolutive nominal and verbal forms but not others "determined" instead by prepositions (1958:31–35, 87), in fact precedes these prepositions in two of the forms concerned and might indeed be seen as a feature of the system as a whole. Larochette recognized some of this difficulty himself, confusedly to me, and burying it in any case in his section on

the adverb. There he said that what we translate in French as adverbs are sometimes, morphologically, substantives preceded by their demonstrative determiner, or by both this and a locative determiner (1958:98). By my own data, this would have Mangbetu with a rather strange class of adverbial nouns that only ever function as adverbs; and though I definitely disagree with this analysis, the fact that Larochette published it is perhaps reason to suspect that there may be something of real interest here.⁴

As the remainder of my time permits, I'll treat and refer to appendix examples for the various parts of table 1 (see the handout), focusing on those that I see as of greatest interest to the question of case; I'll include reference to examples of instrument/accompaniment and oblique noun types that are possessed rather than "determined"; I'll refer to Meegye's system of independent pronouns that show case; and I'll conclude by asking whether or not what I've presented is in fact, overall, best analyzed in terms of case.

An important note concerning the appendix data: They are mostly orthographic, in part for the purpose of illustrating the case-related orthographic choices that seem to be working well enough for Meegye readers, with phonetic data included at only a few points. Where writing or not writing the [n] of Larochette's singular "déterminateur" prefix {*nÉ-*} is concerned (see below), the rule followed has been, if this [n] is normally pronounced by most speakers when the form concerned is in pause-group-initial position, then the [n] is written.

1. Larochette's (1958) absolutive noun form

In their written forms, Larochette's absolutive nouns are minimally composed of a prefix⁵ and a bare root or stem. The prefix—Larochette's "déterminateur"—has both

a singular and a plural form, which I write morphophonemically {*nɛ*-} and {*ɛ*-}, respectively (see table 1, column 2). These appear clearly to derive from the singular and plural intermediate demonstratives *nɛ* 'that' and *hɛ* 'those'.⁶ I've written them morphophonemically given that their vowel either elides obligatorily before a stem-initial non-high vowel, as in examples (1) and (2),⁷ or else harmonizes as to ATR value with whichever other initial stem vowel, as in examples (3) and (4).⁸ Larochette's absolutive nouns are one of the Meegye noun types that occurs without postposition as subject (as actor or item), direct object (as undergoer or such), and complement, as in examples (5–8).⁹ (A contrasting noun type is the inalienably possessed one of examples (1') and (3'), composed minimally of a possessive prefix and a stem.) The bare noun stems concerned are isolable as such in a number of ways, as illustrated in examples (9–12).¹⁰

Important to the recognition of the system of table 1 is the fact of the regular elision in Meegye, in other than pause-group-initial position, of the [n] of Larochette's absolutive form's singular prefix (my {*nɛ*-}) before stems beginning with either a consonant or a non-high vowel.¹¹ By my own analysis, this is accompanied by a compensatory lengthening of the form's first vowel after this [n] (always non-high) and the regular elision of whichever word-final non-high vowel of the previous word.¹² There is never such compensatory lengthening with any elision involving the comparable plurals. Examples (5'–8') show the phonetics concerned for the singulars of examples (5–8). The importance of the compensatory lengthening with the singulars will become clear in section 3, where I interpret the same kind of length at the beginning of nonpossessed instrument/accompaniment and oblique singulars as evidence of the full co-presence of the prefixes {*nɛ*-} and {*ɛ*-} historically in such forms.

In nonpossessed nouns of these latter two types (instrument/accompaniment and oblique), such co-presence underlines for me the need for a more insightful label for {*né-*} and {*é-*} than Larochette's 'absolutive', perhaps one having to do with a case system generally.¹³

2. Goal and scope forms

Goal and scope forms are of minimal interest to me here, since they're marked as such by postpositions rather than prefixes. For goal, these postpositions are *ko* for singulars and *kála* for plurals (see examples (13–16)); while for scope, they are *ándroí* for singulars and *ányoí* for plurals (see examples (17–19)). For both, the head noun form is often the same as that treated in the previous section—i.e., the same as Larochette's absolutive.¹⁴

3. Instrument/accompaniment and oblique forms

Instrument/accompaniment and oblique forms (see examples (20–27) and (28–34), respectively), by contrast with the forms treated previously, are generally marked as such by prefixes.¹⁵ There are possessed and nonpossessed noun types for each. For the nonpossessed, I'm currently writing the prefixes {*ano-*} and {*ato-*}, respectively,¹⁶ with the high tone of their orthographic forms' initial syllable deduced to be that of the preceding prefixes {*né-*} and {*é-*} (see again in table 1). The [n] of the singular {*né-*} has not elided in Makere data I've collected (see examples (47–50) on page A11); nor has it elided in two of Larochette's adverb examples (misinterpreted oblique nouns, I would say) for Mangbetu proper (viz., what he wrote and glossed as

nóbúlobú *le matin* and notúne *aujourd'hui*, 1958:100).¹⁷ In Meegye, by contrast, the singular's only remaining sign is the compensatory lengthening, where this occurs in non-initial position in the pause group, that betrays the fact that its [n] has elided (see especially the contrast between examples (25) and (26), in which the orthographic form of the singular and plural nouns is the same). For the possessed forms, it appears that they only occur with inalienably possessed stems, as is the case in example (27) for the instrument/accompaniment¹⁸ and examples (31–34) for the oblique. There are two possessed types for the oblique (as evident from examples (31–34)), just one type for the instrument/accompaniment. The order of constituents is the same—viz., possessive-case-stem—in the instrument/accompaniment and oblique types of examples (27) and (33–34); it is case-possessive-stem in the oblique type of examples (31–32). (See in figure 1, on page A8 of the appendix, concerning the former oblique type.)

For lack of time, I'll but note in passing the use of postpositions to mark some instrument/accompaniment forms (see again examples (20–24)); I'll do the same concerning the range of subdialectal variants of the instrument/accompaniment and oblique forms (see some of them in the examples concerned); and I'll skip completely some other matters. For the moment, suffice it to say that the evidence for word-level, morphological case marking in Meegye appears strongest to me here with the instrument/accompaniment and oblique forms, including by the fact and structure of their possessed noun types.

4. Manner forms (the adverb word type)

By my own analysis, Meegye has an adverb word type composed minimally of a prefix and a stem. Interestingly for the present paper, the prefix looks to me, as it did

also to Larochette, to be the same singular {*nɛ-*} as that of the case system's other forms.¹⁹ There is no elision of its [n] in Makere (see examples (51–52)), nor in Mangbetu proper according to Larochette's category 'c)' examples of the word type concerned (1958:99–100); while in Meegye, although there are some subdialects where the [n] is pronounced at least occasionally, it has elided otherwise, to the same extent as in the instrument/accompaniment and oblique forms and with the same conditioned compensatory vowel lengthening (see examples 35–38, with 35–37 from the same extended text by the same Meegye Maango speaker). I won't speculate here as to why this adverb type appears never to take the plural prefix {*ɛ-*} (which, were it to occur, would never see any compensatory vowel lengthening before it); I'll only note that I don't believe I've ever seen an example,²⁰ and state what appears to me the obvious—viz., that manner forms, which can describe a variety of aspects of all manner of actions and states (e.g., punctiliar, durative, repetitive) may not be as easily characterized as the other, noun forms in terms of singular versus plural.²¹ What surprises me here, as I believe it did also Larochette, is that both nouns and adverbs would or might conceivably be marked by the same prefix. I recognize that my analysis may be wrong, but perhaps Mangbetu is just different here.

5. Independent pronoun sets that show case

Meegye has eight sets of independent pronouns (see appendix pages A9–A10). A number of these show unambiguously for each member concerned one of the cases of table 1—viz., the goal, the instrument/accompaniment, the oblique, and the scope.²² While such pronoun evidence may not be strong by itself, it may be good

supporting evidence for what should be recognized as a kind of case system in Mangbetu.

6. Conclusion

In introducing the presentation of their linguistic material on the non-Bantu languages of northeastern Africa, Tucker and Bryan (1966) warned concerning case that, "Case is only recognized here if it is indicated by some change in the form of the word shape or Stem, change in tone, presence or absence of Affixes. Mere position in the sentence is not a criterion for Case" (1966:14). They then continued that,

In many languages it is difficult to distinguish Case Affixes from Postpositions, which can also express different kinds of relationships. ... In MORU-MA'DI there are many Postpositions but no Case forms.

Tonal criteria can also be misleading here. ... In many languages not enough research has been done for an authoritative statement to be made.

Pronouns and Adjectives may also show Case ... (ibid.).

Later, in their chapter on the Moru-Mangbetu languages (equivalent to East Central Sudanic), the entire section on case stated more briefly and categorically that, "There is no inflection for Case" (1966:41).

More recently, Givón (1984) has insisted that, "Case-marking devices obviously include word-order" (1984:136, note 1), he calls word order "by itself a powerful case-marking device" (1984:184), and he shows at least as much interest in what he calls "case-coding systems" as "overt, morphological case-marking" (1984:185).²³ Thus, the question with which I conclude my paper is, Can one make an adequate case for case in Mangbetu by a combination of (1) word order/position in the clause, (2) a number of case-marking prefixes and postpositions, and (3) a number of related pronoun sets that show case? While I believe it still true that not enough relevant re-

search has been done for an authoritative statement to be made (most of the subgroup's languages and major dialects have still hardly been studied at all grammatically), I believe the answer obviously 'yes', especially in light of the many more data available today than were there for Tucker and Bryan. I've attempted to at least mention some of the most relevant of these additional data in my paper. To me, the sum of the data show what I can only guess to describe as a kind of hybrid system, with its most overt, morphological case-marking concerned with the instrument/accompaniment and the oblique.²⁴ Word order, which I've not treated explicitly for lack of time, is highly important, but less rigid for the cases with overt morphological marking. The prefixes {*né-*} and {*é-*} I would guess at this point to have been added in relation to marking (1) each and every one of the system's cases, and (2) number (singular vs. plural) within that system, with the partial exception of manner, then later to have begun to elide in Meegye, Mangbetu, and perhaps certain other dialects. (In Meegye, their elision appears to have started with the instrument/accompaniment and the oblique, to have continued with the manner, and to be threatening to continue with the remaining forms.) Hopefully the picture will become clearer through further research on and attention to the various Mangbetu dialects, the other Mangbetu subgroup languages (viz., Lombi and Asoa), and unrelated languages that have influenced the historical development of Mangbetu.²⁵ For the moment, I look forward to what insights I can gain from any of your comments and questions.

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Notes

¹ Research for the present paper was conducted in the context of a SIL-assisted language/translation project sponsored by the CECCA/16 church of the Church of Christ in Congo. I hereby thank my many Congolese friends and acquaintances who have helped me from as far back as October 1980 with data and other assistance relating to the paper. I thank especially each of the following for providing the texts and other data from which I've selected the bulk of the paper's examples (my apologies for the several incomplete names): Pastors *Ambembere*, *Abóhi bhu ne*, *Abhule kabwá nótú bha ódhyo* Victor Colin, and *Dongolí bha Ka nádú bhó* (all of CECCA at the time of my work with them, with the first three not yet pastors at that point); *Ámu ka bhó Lúka* and Gabriel (two of our domestics at different points during the 1980s); and Idrissa Mamadou Philémon (a new IST-Bunia graduate, from CECCA's Nala District) and *Amúbwó mombé Polí* Philippe (currently a medical student at Goma, from CECCA's Egbita District).

² Thus, I am concerned with what Givón (1984:135–85) among others refers to as syntactic case marking, not with the kind of underlying case that is the focus of Longacre (1976:23–37) among others.

³ For East Central Sudanic (in their terms, Moru-Mangbetu), see Tucker and Bryan's (1966) terse summary judgment, "There is no inflection for Case" (1966:41), to which I refer again in my conclusion.

⁴ Prior to what he says about the adverb in Mangbetu, the sum of the most relevant material from Larochette (1958) reads as follows:

Ces particules démonstratives [which Larochette wrote *né* and *é* (1958:65)] dont nous reparlerons plus loin sont utilisées devant le radical pour marquer les formes nominales et verbales absolutives (substantifs et infinitifs) ... (1958:31).

Le déterminateur *ne-* n'est pas utilisé lorsque le nom est suffisamment déterminé.

C'est le cas :

...

4) lorsque le nom est précédé des prépositions *ú* ou *te* qui font fonction de déterminateur (1958:33).

Nous avons déjà dit plus haut que le déterminatif [sic] *ne-* qui précède le substantif peut être remplacé par la préposition *te-* [sic] en Mangbetu et par *uó-* [sic] en Medje ... (1958:87).

⁵ What I call prefixes here and represent morphophonemically as {*né-*} and {*é-*} are in fact, I believe, proclitics—i.e., grammatically independent words that are phonologically dependent on whatever following. Larochette (1958) wrote them as prefixes, having analyzed them as demonstrative particles (see in the first quote of note 4 above); Vekens (1928) wrote them as separate words, having analyzed them as articles (1928:11–12, 19–20); I have written them as prefixes, but analyze them at least somewhat differently from either of these two—as derived from, versus as a different use of, the demonstratives *né* 'that' and *hé* 'those'.

⁶ Orthographic 'h' in Mangbetu represents the glottal stop phoneme /ʔ/. See Lyons (1977:646–47) concerning what appeared to him "general semantic and syntactic connexions" among demonstrative pronouns (*né* and *hé* in Meegye can function at least very similarly), definite articles (see in note 5 above concerning the fact that Vekens (1928) analyzed Larochette's absolute prefixes as articles), and third-person pronouns (see Meegye's third-person actor/item and undergoer/COS pronoun forms on the appendix's page A9). See also the appendix's page A12 for some second hand data, from what may be a previously unreported Mangbetu subgroup speech form from about fifteen kilometers north of Kisangani, that appear to have *-né* and *-hé* as suffixes or postclitics, with the glottal of the plural said definitely still pronounced as such.

⁷ The Meegye vowel system's non-high vowels are /e, ɛ, a, o, ɔ/. Unless otherwise indicated, the paper's data are from my own fieldnotes or recorded natural texts, they are from the Meegye dialect, and they are written according to a slightly revised form of the Mangbetu language project orthography of McKee (2002).

⁸ Meegye has a nine-vowel system in which the +ATR vowels are represented in the orthography as ‘i, u, e, o’, the -ATR vowels as ‘i, ɛ, a, ʊ, ɔ’.

⁹ See Pike and Pike’s (1977) chapter 3, especially pages 39–43, for a sense of my uses of subject, actor, item, undergoer, complement, and other slot and role labels. I am not, for better or for worse, as concerned with labels (or theory) at this point as I may need to become.

¹⁰ See Larochette (1958:33–34) for his noting of various such examples in which his “déterminateur” is omitted, with the Meegye ones at the top of page 34 the only ones concerning which I believe him mistaken (see in the second paragraph of the present paper’s section 1 concerning the elision of [n] from the {né-} prefix).

¹¹ I have what I believe still a relatively minute number of taped examples of this [n] being omitted even in pause-group-initial position. To me this suggests that, while elision of this [n] too has started in Meegye, it has not yet proceeded very far.

¹² Such elision of □□□ is a somewhat more general phenomenon in Meegye that Nelson (1996) treats under the heading “[e]lision of [n] in light syllables” and as involving regressive vowel assimilation (1996:30–31, 8–9). In this regard, Larochette (1958) thought that one of the cases where his “déterminateur” was not used was “en Medje, lorsque le nom est ‘précédé d’un verbe dont il est le complément d’objet’” (1958:34). He was mistaken here, I would say, as evidenced by data such as the pause-group-initial undergoer noun form of example (8). His view led him to often write Meegye noun complements of verbs together in the same word with these verbs (see again on page 34 for at least three examples). His explanation in an earlier context was that, “En Medje surtout, où les compléments nominaux s’agglutinent avec le verbe, le mot tend à s’identifier avec la phrase : káúśópiámedru < ká-ú-śópi-ámedru on fait le toit” (1958:12).

¹³ My own label for them has changed more than once through the years, having been ‘nonoblique’ at one point (e.g., in McKee 1995) and most recently ‘absolute’ (e.g., in McKee 2006).

¹⁴ The total of my natural text examples for scope, not including pronominal ones, I can probably count on the fingers of one hand; such examples are simply rare in my experience as compared with any of the others. (See on page A10 for the scope pronoun set, whose members are more common in my natural texts.)

¹⁵ While I agree with Nelson’s (1996) basic analysis of proclisis for the joining of the instrument/accompaniment preposition to the stem in the nonpossessed form here (1996:32–33), I obviously also disagree with his missing the joining of the prefixes {né-} and {é-} as well.

¹⁶ Writing the prefixes morphophonemically concerns again vowel elision before following non-high vowels and ATR harmony if the vowel of the prefix does not elide, as with the vowels of {né-} and {é-} as described in the first paragraph of section 1.

¹⁷ By my own analysis, these forms would be/derive from {né-} + {atɔ-} (OBL) + *bhúlobhú* ‘morning’ and {né-} + {atɔ-} (OBL) + *túne* ‘today’, respectively. See below in note 18 concerning Larochette’s (1958) analysis of them as adverbs.

¹⁸ Larochette (1958) appears to include at least one example of such a possessed instrument/accompaniment noun—viz., what he explains, writes, and glosses as follows: “On trouve [la particule non-différenciative] -o employé comme préposition immédiatement devant le radical : ... ándro’bé’be (< ándra-ɔ-’bé’be) avec-mon-paquet” (1958:87).

¹⁹ Larochette (1958) said that Mangbetu (including Meegye) had no adverbial morphology, but then, as I read him, quibbled right away by explaining the structures of two word types that obviously struck him as adverbs (1958:98–100). One of these types—his letter/category ‘c)’ (“des substantifs précédés de leur déterminateur démonstratif,” 1958:98)—is what I analyze in the present paper’s section 4 as an adverb word type; one example (among several) that I would confirm as an adverb from my own data he wrote and glossed as “*nenzé parfaitement, entièrement*” (1958:99). The other kind—his letter/category ‘d)’ (“des substantifs précédés à la fois d’un déterminateur locatif et d’un déterminateur démonstratif,” 1958:98)—includes two items (out of just five total) that I analyze rather as oblique nouns (see above in note 17).

²⁰ Larochette’s (1958) letter/category ‘c)’ examples include only ones with the singular prefix (1958:99–100).

²¹ The manner forms are those I’ve had the least opportunity to investigate with native speakers in case-related regards. If their stems are or can be substantives, as Larochette maintained, I’m curious to know

if they can ever be plural, have their plural be with a different tone pattern than their singular, be modified by adjectival forms, be the head of a relative clause, be possessed, etc., as can most other Mangbetu substantives in my experience; or, if not, what good reason there can be to think of them as substantives.

²² See Larochette (1958:84–86) for a differing analysis, at certain points, of some of the same pronoun material.

²³ I'm assuming that Givón (1984) is neither alone nor dated in these regards; it's just that I don't know the literature well enough to cite other such sources without further library study.

²⁴ See, in this regard, Givón (1984) where he notes

... the tendency, in many languages, for both subjects and DO's to go morphologically unmarked. Since their position vis-à-vis the verb — i.e. word-order — is by itself a powerful case-marking device ... , it is more likely that only more oblique arguments — appearing less frequently in text — will require more explicit markings ... (1984:184).

²⁵ See especially McMaster (1988), but also such as Ehret et al. (1974), Vansina (1990a, 1990b), and McKee (forthcoming), concerning historical contacts that afforded opportunities for significant borrowing between the proto-group(s) ancestral to the Mangbetu and some number of unrelated others over the last millenium and more.

Appendix: Data illustrating case in Mangbetu?

Table 1: Elements of a reconstructed¹ system for Mangbetu

1 Case(?)	2 ?	3 Role- related prefix	4 Example stems	5 Role- related post- position	6 Example case forms	7 Possible glosses
Actor/item	<div>{né-}</div> <div>{é-}</div>		<i>masí</i> <i>masí</i>		<i>némasí</i> <i>émasí</i>	man men
Undergoer/ characteristic- of-subject						
Goal			<i>ayá</i> <i>aya</i>	<i>ko</i> <i>kála</i>	<i>náyá né ko</i> <i>áya hé kála</i>	to that mother to those mothers
Instrument/ accompaniment		{ <i>ano-</i> }	<i>andrɔ</i> <i>andrɔ́</i>	<i>ro</i> <i>kórɔ</i>	<i>ánandrɔ né ro</i> <i>ánandrɔ́ hé kórɔ</i>	with that woman with those women
Oblique		{ <i>ato-</i> }	<i>ɔdhyɔ</i> <i>ɔdhyɔ́</i>	(?) ²	<i>átɔdhyɔ né</i> <i>átɔ́dhyɔ́ hé</i>	on that subject on those subjects
Scope			<i>ombí</i> <i>ombi</i>	<i>ándrɔɪ</i> <i>ányɔɪ</i>	<i>nómbí né ándrɔɪ</i> <i>ómbi hé ányɔɪ</i>	for that person for those people
Manner	{ <i>né-</i> }		<i>pélé</i>		<i>épélé</i>	without realizing

¹ I've named the table as containing elements of a *reconstructed* system for Mangbetu, since parts of Meegy's present system have clearly changed—e.g., by the elision of certain consonants—from whatever their earlier forms. Thus, for example, what are written *ko* and *kála* for goal in column 5 are invariably pronounced [ò] and [álà] in Meegy, with elided [k] betraying its former presence by continuing to block elision of whichever immediately preceding non-high vowel in the same pause group.

² I looked through dozens of pages of natural text for examples to illustrate *to* and *kótɔ* as postpositions in this oblique/5 cell of table 1, without success. My sense/recollection is that they do fit here following one or more oblique head forms (e.g., a proper name?), but I've left them out until I can locate text examples.

Larochette's (1958) absolutive noun form (versus possessive')

(1)	{ <i>nÉ-</i> }	+	<i>andrɔ</i> woman	→ <i>nándrɔ</i>	'woman; wife'
	{ <i>É-</i> }	+	<i>andrɔ́</i> women	→ <i>ándrɔ́</i>	'women; wives'
(1')	{ <i>ándre-</i> }	+	<i>andrɔ</i>	→ <i>ándrandrɔ</i>	'his wife'
(2)	{ <i>nÉ-</i> }	+	<i>ombí</i> person	→ <i>nómbí</i>	'person'
	{ <i>É-</i> }	+	<i>ombi</i> people	→ <i>ómbi</i>	'people'
(3)	{ <i>nÉ-</i> }	+	<i>masí</i> man	→ <i>némasí</i>	'man; husband'
	{ <i>É-</i> }	+	<i>masí</i> men	→ <i>émasí</i>	'men; husbands'
(3')	{ <i>ándre-</i> }	+	<i>masí</i>	→ <i>ándremasí</i>	'her husband'
(4)	{ <i>nÉ-</i> }	+	<i>dhu</i> thing	→ <i>nédhu</i>	'thing'

Actor/item and undergoer/COS examples (nouns)

bold underline = pause-group-initial position → *no* elision of the [n] of {né-}

normal underline = pause-group-medial position → elision of the [n] of {né-},
with the associated compensatory lengthening

- (5) ... , nétatála, ín'a nérí biti, ...
... , S?:snake, 3SEMP'3S:be:PNP S?:animal bad, ...
'... , the/a snake, it's a bad animal, ...'
- (5') ... , [nétatálà|íně:ríbiti], ...
- (6) Némasí bhu nándrò, bhe káágia nye.
S?:man and S?:woman, DM 3P:marry:PNP 3SRFLX
'A man and a woman, they marry each other.'
- (6') [némàsíbùă:ndrò], ...
- (7) ... , bha í némasí né éiza í nándrò.
... , LR right_here S?:man that 3S:remove:PNP EP S?:woman
'... , therefore that man divorces the wife.'
- (7') ... , [ɓàfê:màsíné:ízáìă:ndrò].
- (8) ... , bh'aábá, nétatála.
... , DM'3S:meet:PNP:PV, S?:snake
'... , and he met, a snake.'
- (8') ... , [ɓá:bá|nétatálà].

Bare noun stem examples

- (9) Ka i ombí.
NEG EP person
'There's no one present.'
(bare sg. stem *ombí* 'person')
- (10) ñe, kabwá nógí andró.
3SEMP, NEG:DP 3SJ:marry woman
'He (for his part), he didn't marry a wife.'
(bare sg. stem *andró* 'woman')
- (11) aama ombí
we people
'we people'
(bare pl. stem *ombí* 'people')
- (12) Tatála ɔia ne bhó, ...
Snake 3S:ask:PNP him DC, ...
'Snake asked him, ...'
(bare sg. stem *tatála* 'snake')

Goal and scope examples

- (13) ... e kóga nó ógí nándro ko.
 ... DM 3P:buy:PNP with _them P?:clothes S?:woman SG
 ‘... and they buy with them (viz., those monies) clothes for the wife.’
- (14) ... kóge ka ándronzi magyánéhe kála.
 ... 3P:buy NEG 3SPOSS(S):death his-‘uncles’ PG
 ‘... they won’t pay his death to his uncles.’
- (15) ... e máhébwə, náyá i ma bha ne né ko néməkandá.
 ... DM 1S:write:DP, S?:mother SPD 1P:be:PNP and her SID SG S?:letter
 ‘... and I wrote, the woman I’m with a letter.’
- (16) ... bhe kááa néngwángwe mapanéhe kála.
 ... DM 3P:give:PNP S?:child its-‘fathers’ PG
 ‘... and they give (chickens) to the (deceased) child’s fathers.’
- (17) ... bhe kódhá ándrandro ándroi ú bhánye, ...
 ... DM 3P:send:PNP:PV 3SPOSS(S):woman SSC there village-their, ...
 ‘... they sent after/for his wife to her (group’s) village, ...’
- (18) Máángəpwə ómbi hé ányoi nédhu.
 1S:PPRF:kill P?:people those PSC S?:thing
 ‘I’ve broken those people’s thing.’
- (19) Máángəpwə nédhu ómbi hé ányoi.
 1S:PPRF:kill S?:thing P?:people those PSC
 ‘I’ve broken something belonging to those people.’

Instrument/accompaniment examples

- (20) ... bh'ébandí kóswebá ne ónogúndu, ...
 ... DM'P?:bandits 3P:shoot:IP him S?:I/A:gun, ...
 '... (then) the bandits shot him with a gun, ...'
- (21) ... bhe máóbá ú óteipwə, ónəmaséte ro.
 ... DM 1S:go:IP there S?:OBL:field, S?:I/A:machete SI/A
 '... and I went to the field, with a machete.'
- (22) ... bhó nyəbhə náángélégýó, ónobríki kórə.
 ... DC 3PSSJ:build S?:church, P?:I/A:bricks PI/A
 '... for them to build a church, with bricks.'
- (23) ... múnzía sí ánamógo ro.
 ... 2S:die:PNP FOC S?:I/A:ANA:sickness SI/A
 '... you will die of that very sickness.'
- (24) ... e kóópúa ɸ, ányerí bhəgína, íkó ro.
 ... DM 3P:arrive:PNP:PV right_there, 3PPOSS(P):number eight, Sun SI/A
 '... and they became there, eight in number, with Sun (having joined them).'
- (25) Ma zá ánemási ! (line from a Meegye Christian song³)
- (25') [màzánèməsí]
 1P:be:PNP here P?:I/A:men
 'There are men upon us!' (more lit., 'We're here with men!')
- (26) Ma zá ánemási ! (orthographically identical to (25) in Meegye)
- (26') [màzá:nèməsí]
 1P:be:PNP here S?:I/A:man
 'We're here with a man!'
- (27) ... sí mǐngagbá nétatála anúóté né, ...
 ... because 2S:PPRF:take S?:snake 2SPOSS(P):I/A:hands SID, ...
 '... because if you take a snake with your hands, ...'

³ The song in question, composed locally, has Delilah calling out to Samson about the Philistines being upon them (see Judges 16:4–22). On May 11, 2004, in three different rooms one after the other independently, I had three men read me the song line of example (25), and each did so with no extra length to the initial vowel of *ánemasí* 'with men'. When I then asked them to read it as if there were only one man present with Samson and Delilah, each did so without hesitation in the manner of example (26).

Oblique examples

- (28) Má ú mádrwá, átoðhyo i, Kílindá bha né.
 ... , [átòd'òì], ...
 1S:be:PNP there 1S:tell:PNP, S?:OBL:affair SPD, Kilinda village SID
 'I am telling, about the affair[,] of Kilinda.'
- (29) Bhe átoðhyo i bhó ... ku amáge ándronzi né, ...
 [bã:tòd'òìbó] ...
 DM S?:OBL:affair SPD DC ... AUX 1PJ:buy 3SPOSS(S):death SID, ...
 'As to the matter of our needing to compensate his death, ...'
- (30) ... e kókúábá ómapú si bhánye né.
 ... DM 3P:go_home(distrib.):IP P?:OBL:places PPD village-their SID
 '... and they went home to their respective places.'
- (31) ... bh'atá tándreño, ...
 ... DM'3S:administer_drops:PNP:PV OBL:3SPOSS(S):eye, ...
 '... and he put drops (of that medicine) in his eye, ...'
- (32) ... bh'atá tánenjo.
 ... DM'3S:administer_drops:PNP:PV OBL:3SPOSS(P):eyes
 '... and he put drops (of that medicine) in his eyes.'
- (33a) ... mĩngetú bhelé andrúóónzó bha ú ándrótodru,
 ... 2S:PPRF:put NEGIMP 2SPOSS(S):leg LR there 3SPOSS(S):OBL:head,
 '... don't put your foot there on its head,
- (33b) mĩngoké nóto bhelé, ...
 2S:PPRF:climb on_it NEGIMP, ...
 'don't step on it, ...'
- (34) ... bh'atébá néo ánótño, ...
 ... DM'3S:administer_drops:IP S?:medicine 3SPOSS(P):OBL:eyes
 '... and he put drops of a medicine in her eyes, ...'

Manner examples (adverb words)

- (35) ... , tá angópì Azapanè étrú !
 ... , until 3S:UCOMP:catch Azapanè S?:tightly
 ‘... , until he caught and seized hold of Azapanè really tightly!’
- (36a) ... sí abwə aáŋgeíbí yáhéngwə,
 ... because 3S:be:DP 3S:PPRF:finish their-brother,
 ‘... because he had finished off their brother,
- (36b) ánandra kórɔ bhu ándrandrɔ, éda !
 3SPOSS(P):children PI/A and 3SPOSS(S):woman, S?:completely
 ‘together with his children and his wife, completely!’
- (37) ... bh’opyá nó Ookondó ándredru, névhó ! v́hó ! v́hó ! v́hó !, ...
 ... DM’3S:strike:PNP:PV with_it Leopard 3SPOSS(S):head S?:bam!, etc., ...
 ‘... and he struck Leopard’s head with it, bam! bam! bam! bam!, ...’
- (38) Bhe nédi né a n’ɔnzá ... áneze éúrúrrr ! né, ...
 DM S?:feces that 3S:be:PNP SID’3S:vomit:PNP:PV P?:I/A:flies S?:whirr!, ...
 ‘Then that excrement issued forth (from the path into the open area of the compound) ... with flies whirring, ...’ (more lit., ‘having issued forth’)

ándrótodru ‘on its head’ (cp. *ándredru* ‘its head’)

{ *ándre-* } 3SPOSS(S) *óto-* OBL *dru* ‘head’

ánótɔŋɔ ‘in her eyes’ (cp. *áneŋɔ* ‘her eyes’)

{ *áne-* } 3SPOSS(P) *ótɔ-* OBL *ŋɔ* ‘eyes’

Figure 1: Constituent order of one of the possessed oblique noun types

Meegye's eight independent pronoun sets⁴

Pre-predicate
(emphatic) actor/item
pronouns

Singular

Plural

1st person

ímá

aama

2nd person

ímí

aamí

3rd person

íne

íhe

- (39) *ímí* Tatála nyá ú múa ze ? 'You[,] Snake[,] where are you going?'

Post-predicate
(emphatic) actor/item
pronouns

Singular

Plural

1st person

má

aama

2nd person

mí

aamí

3rd person

ne

he

- (40) Mékúnga *má* mío íséélé ! 'I came back home before you!'

Undergoer/COS
pronouns

Singular

Plural

1st person

ma

aama

2nd person

mi

aamí

3rd person

ne

he

- (41) Má ú mánga má *mí* ! 'It's I calling you!'

Reflexive
pronouns

Singular

Plural

1st person

ndra

ε

2nd person

ndru

ki

3rd person

ndre

nye

- (42) Ékáwa káángetá *nye*. 'The coffee has spilled.' (lit., 'coffee they-have-spilled themselves')

⁴ See McKee (2002: 56–59) for further examples and concerning all variant pronoun forms.

Meegye's eight independent pronoun sets, cont.

Goal pronouns	Singular	Plural
1st person	<i>mú</i>	<i>mala</i>
2nd person	<i>míó</i>	<i>[mǎlǎ]</i> <i>nyala</i>
3rd person	<i>nó</i>	<i>[nǎlǎ]</i> <i>kála</i> <i>[álǎ]</i>

- (43) Odhya *nó* bhó « Mbáé ! » 'He said *to him*, "Friend!"'

Oblique pronouns	Singular	Plural
1st person	<i>máto</i>	<i>aamóto</i>
2nd person	<i>míto</i>	<i>aanyóto</i>
3rd person	<i>nóto</i>	<i>kóto</i> <i>[ótò]</i>
impersonal	<i>to</i>	

- (44) Aángetá *máto* bhelé drí ! 'May he not die *on me* right here!'

Instrument/ accompaniment pronouns	Singular	Plural
1st person	<i>máro</i>	<i>aamóro</i>
2nd person	<i>míro</i>	<i>aanyóro</i>
3rd person	<i>nóro</i>	<i>kóro</i> [órò]
impersonal	<i>nó</i>	

- (45) Óúbáá ká *míro* ! 'You're crazy!' (lit., 'crazies they-are *you-with*')'

Scope pronouns	Singular	Plural
1st person	<i>ndráí</i>	<i>óroí</i>
2nd person	<i>ndrúú</i>	<i>kiro</i>
3rd person	<i>ndrói</i>	<i>nyóí</i>

- (46) Máángopwú *ndrói* nédhu. 'I've taken something *from him*.'

Data from Mangbetu's Makere dialect⁵

- (47) ɔ́gónɡa néwo né nároombi ro.⁶
 3S:chop:PP S?:tree that S?:I/A:ax SI/A
 'He chopped that tree with an ax.'
- (48) Ekúnga ánombi akíé kórɔ.
 3S:come:PP P?:I/A:people others PI/A
 'He came along with some other people.'
- (49) Kéngábɔwɛ nátaabhó.
 3P:get_up:DP S?:OBL:late_afternoon
 'They got up in the late afternoon.'
- (50) Nápa né odonga néngwángwɛ né náɔkíre ro.⁷
 S?:father that 3S:beat:PP S?:child that S?:I/A:stick SI/A
 'That father beat that child with a stick.'
- (51) Aángoyó ndrái népélé.
 3S:PPRF:go SSC S?:without_realizing
 'He has gone without my realizing it.'
- (52) Aángonyɔ néda.
 3S:PPRF:eat S?:completely
 'He has eaten (it) completely.'

⁵ My source for these data was a friend from *collectivité* Makere II who had lived and worked for some years among Meegye dialect speakers in *collectivité* Ndei. His given name was *Nyi ka bha tá Mbólí*, though he went by the nickname *Ívo*. I collected the data July 12, 2003, at Egbita.

⁶ Also, *nánoombi ro*.

⁷ Also, *náɔkíre ro*.

Data from a possibly unreported Mangbetu speech form⁸

gloss	Meegye sg.	Meegye pl.	Kimanga sg.	Kimanga pl.
(53) man	<i>némasí</i>	<i>émasí</i>	<i>síné</i>	<i>síhé</i>
(54) woman	<i>nándro</i>	<i>ándro</i>	(informant couldn't remember, but he said this item was something entirely different from the Meegye)	
(55) house	<i>négyó</i>		<i>gyóné</i>	
(56) village	<i>nébha</i>		<i>bhané</i>	
(57) pig	<i>néegó</i>	<i>éegó</i>	<i>góné</i>	<i>góhé</i>

⁸ I was provided these data unsolicited the evening of February 23, 2000, at the Protestant mission at Gamba (on the outskirts of Isiro). My source was a Pastor Nzila of CECCA/16's Egbita district, a Meegye and native speaker of Meegye whom I'd known since the early 1980s and with whom I'd done some months of language project work in 1986. The data had come to his attention through market contact with speakers of the speech form concerned at Mbakana, in the Malele-Makere area. He called the speakers Manga and their speech form Kimanga; he said there was a *groupement* of them fifteen kilometers north of Kisangani on the Banalia road; he said they came infrequently to Mbakana (140 kilometers from their home, by his estimate); he could not recall hearing what greeting forms they used. I've recorded the data here just as I did in my data notebook the same evening I was given them, in Mangbetu orthographic form, and thus with 'h' representing glottal stop (a phoneme presumably also in Kimanga) and 'bh' an imploded 'b'. In response to my questioning it, Pastor Nzila insisted the glottal stop was there in the suffix of the Kimanga data.

After Pastor Nzila had left me that evening, I found a village called Mabruki on a 1950 map of the Stanleyville area, located just north of Stanleyville on the Banalia road. I thought of the fact that 'br' is one of the ways people have tried through the years to write Mangetu and Meegye's bilabial trills. When I later showed this map location to Pastor Nzila, he was enthusiastic that this must be they (the Manga). Another Meegye-speaking friend, Pastor *Abhule Kabwú nótu bha odhyo* Victor Colin, thought Mabruki to be a deformation of Mambwugi, which is a subgroup name from the Nangazizi area and elsewhere.

In a November 2003 conversation with some Meegye-speaking clerics at Ngeli (on the outskirts of Isiro), there was mention of a Mba language from near Kisangani—which I took to be the same as Pastor Nzila's Kimanga—as a Mangbetu speech form. This appears to confuse matters and may make Pastor Nzila's data suspect, since SIL's *Ethnologue* has Mba (also known as Kimanga, etc.) as an Adamawa-Ubangian language.

Abbreviations:

1S	first person, singular
1P	first person, plural
2S	second person, singular
3S	third person, singular
3P	third person, plural
ANA	anaphoric
AUX	auxiliary
DC	discourse conjunction
DM	developmental marker
DP	distal past
EMP	emphatic (subject pronoun)
EP	evidential particle
FOC	focus
G	goal postposition, whether S(ingular)___ or P(lural)___
I/A	instrument/accompaniment prefix; instrument/accompaniment postposition, whether S(ingular)___ or P(lural)___
IMP	imperative
IP	intermediate past
J	subjunctive
LR	locative relator
NEG	negative
OBL	oblique prefix
(P)	plural (object of possession)
P	plural
P?	plural ... prefix (a label more insightful than absolutive?)
POSS	possessive
PP	proximate past
PPD	plural proximate demonstrative
PPRF	proximate perfect
PNP	proximate nonpast
PV	perfective
RFLX	reflexive
(S)	singular (object of possession)
S	singular
S?	singular ... prefix (a label more insightful than absolutive?)
SID	singular intermediate demonstrative (glossed 'that' in normal demonstrative use)
SPD	singular proximate demonstrative (glossed 'this' in normal demonstrative use)
SC	scope postposition, whether S(ingular)___ or P(lural)___
SS	same subject (as that of the main verb)
UCOMP	unmarked (as to precise tense) completive

Current outline:

0. Introduction
1. Larochette's (1958) absolutive noun form
2. Goal and scope forms
3. Instrument/accompaniment and oblique forms
4. Manner forms (the adverb word type)
5. Independent pronoun sets that show case
6. Conclusion

Possible revision:

0. Introduction
1. Tucker and Bryan (1966): "No inflection for case in Moru-Mangbetu languages"
2. Larochette's (1958) absolutive noun form
3. Goal and scope forms
4. Instrument/accompaniment and oblique forms
5. Manner forms (the adverb word type)
6. Independent pronoun sets that show case
7. Conclusion: A kind of hybrid case-coding system in Mangbetu