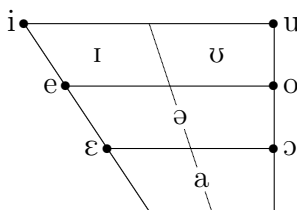


**Background:** This study presents the first analysis of agreement in Guébie, an Eastern Kru language (Niger-Congo) spoken in Gagnoa, southwest Côte d’Ivoire. The data is based on elicitation with a native speaker from September 2013 to present. I demonstrate that third person singular subject and object pronoun clitics agree with their antecedents not only in person and number, but also in vowel quality. I refer to this phenomenon descriptively as *phonological agreement*. Similar data is presented by Bing (1987) for Krahn, a Western Kru language spoken in Liberia, and one can conclude from the data in Koopman (1984) and Kaye (1982) that the phenomenon is present in Gbadi and Vata, Eastern Kru languages.

Guébie has a complex tonal system, with four contrasting level tone heights as well as a number of contour tones. Tone is marked here with the numbers 1-4, where 4 represents the highest tone and 1 the lowest. There are ten contrastive vowels in the language, as shown in (1). In monosyllabic words, all ten vowels are contrastive, and in morphologically complex words there is ATR vowel harmony spreading right from roots onto suffixes. Syllables are either CV or V, with marginal CLV.

(1) **Guébie Vowel Inventory**



Basic word order is S Aux O V, where V surfaces in second position when no AUX is present. Subject proclitics are required when there is no overt subject, and they are optional with no pragmatic consequences when there is an overt subject. Object enclitics occur when there is no overt object of a transitive verb. Both are clitics on the inflected verbal element of the clause. **I show that third person subject and object clitic agreement is *phonologically* dependent on the form of the antecedent.**

**Agreement in Guébie:** There are four surface forms of the third person singular subject and object pronoun clitics: [ɔ, e, u, ə]. Subject and object pronouns for *he, she* always surface as [ɔ<sup>3</sup>]. Subject and object pronouns for all other third person non-humans, *it*, agree in backness with the final vowel of their antecedent, surfacing as either [e, u] or [ə] as shown in the mapping in (2).

(2) **Mapping of Guébie root vowels to pronoun vowels**

Final root vowel		Pronoun clitic vowel
i, ɪ, e, ɛ	→	e
u, ʊ, o, ɔ	→	u
ə, a	→	ə

The antecedent does not have to be in the same sentence, nor does it need to be nearby within the discourse for agreement to occur. Examples are shown in (3).

(3) **Phonological agreement of pronouns with antecedents**

Noun	Gloss	Obj clitic	Gloss	Subj clitic	Gloss
a. dʒie <sup>2.2</sup>	‘a prison’	e <sup>-4</sup> ni <sup>-4</sup> e <sup>2</sup> ji <sup>3</sup>	‘I see it (a prison)’	e <sup>-3</sup> kade <sup>3.2</sup>	‘It (a prison) is big.’
b. k <sup>w</sup> ala <sup>4.2</sup>	‘a farm’	e <sup>-4</sup> ni <sup>-4</sup> ə <sup>2</sup> ji <sup>3</sup>	‘I saw it (a farm)’	ə <sup>-3</sup> kade <sup>3.2</sup>	‘It (a farm) is big.’
c. to <sup>3</sup>	‘a battle’	e <sup>-4</sup> ni <sup>-4</sup> u <sup>2</sup> ji <sup>3</sup>	‘I saw it (a battle)’	u <sup>-3</sup> kade <sup>3.2</sup>	‘It (a battle) is big.’

The Object and Subject clitic sentences could not grammatically refer to the items in their respective glosses if they were replaced by another vowel. The nouns that take a particular agreement vowel do not share any obvious semantic features.

**Agreement as phonologically determined:** I refer to the described phenomenon as phonological agreement rather than a noun class system since no single semantic class contains the nouns that take a single pronoun agreement. Additionally, the phonological agreement generalizations laid out here accurately predict the subject/object clitic forms used for loan words as in (4) and nonce words as in (5).

(4) **Phonological agreement in loan words from French/English**

- a. sukulu<sup>2.2.3</sup> kɔda.<sup>3.21</sup> e<sup>-4</sup> ni<sup>-4</sup> u<sup>2</sup> ji<sup>3</sup>  
 school exist. I see it(a school).ACC see  
 ‘There is a school. I saw it(the school).’
- b. baraʒɛ<sup>2.3.2</sup> kɔda.<sup>3.21</sup> e<sup>-4</sup> ni<sup>-4</sup> e<sup>2</sup> ji<sup>3</sup>  
 dam exist. I see it(a dam).ACC see  
 ‘There is a dam. I saw it(the dam).’

(5) **Phonological agreement in nonce words**

- a. fo<sup>2</sup> kɔda.<sup>3.21</sup> e<sup>-4</sup> ni<sup>-4</sup> u<sup>2</sup> ji<sup>3</sup>  
 Nonce-word exist. I see it(nonce-word).ACC see  
 ‘There is a NONCEWORD. I saw it(the NONCEWORD).’
- b. gbele<sup>4.3</sup> kɔda.<sup>3.21</sup> e<sup>-4</sup> ni<sup>-4</sup> e<sup>2</sup> ji<sup>3</sup>  
 Nonce-word exist. I see it(nonce-word).ACC see  
 ‘There is a NONCEWORD. I saw it(the NONCEWORD).’

The sentences in (4,5) would be judged ungrammatical with the use of any other vowel in place of the object pronoun enclitic. I have found no exceptions to this phonological rule of agreement.

As shown, pronoun-antecedent agreement in Guébie is phonologically determined. A featural analysis of this phenomenon would require that morphology and/or syntax have access to phonological information, contra Zwicky and Pullum (1983). I pursue this analysis in an ABC account in which the realization of the pronoun depends on long-distance correspondence with the antecedent.