Field Notes on Kono, a Southwestern Mande Lect of Forest Guinea

Maria Konoshenko

Electronic version
URL: http://journals.openedition.org/mandenkan/1092
DOI: 10.4000/mandenkan.1092
ISSN: 2104-371X

ElectRONIC REFERENCE

Maria Konoshenko, « Field Notes on Kono, a Southwestern Mande Lect of Forest Guinea », Mandenkan [Online], 57 | 2017, Online since 14 December 2017, connection on 23 December 2017. URL : http://journals.openedition.org/mandenkan/1092 ; DOI : 10.4000/mandenkan.1092

This text was automatically generated on 23 December 2017.
Field Notes on Kono, a Southwestern Mande Lect of Forest Guinea

Maria Konoshenko

1. Introduction

1 The Kono (knu) lect described here belongs to Southwestern Mande group. It is one of minority lects of the Republic of Guinea, not to be confused with Kono of Sierra Leone (kno, Kono-Vai group). Kono is spoken by ca. 90 000 people in Lola Prefecture located in the eastern part of Forest Guinea, bordering the Ivory Coast and Liberia.

2 Kono is a member of the Kpelle macro-language also comprising Guinean Kpelle (gkp) and Liberian Kpelle (xpe). Since their taxonomic status is somewhat controversial, I use the terms “lect”/“variety” to refer to these three language forms. However, as I demonstrate in this sketch, Kono is lexically and grammatically distinct enough to be considered a separate language. To date, no descriptions of Kono are available.

3 Though it is undoubtedly a Southwestern Mande lect, Kono has some phonological and syntactic properties shared with neighbouring Southern Mande languages, e.g., first vowel elision in CVLV structures and obligatory pronominal doubling of definite noun phrases.

4 The data presented here were collected at several sessions with two speakers of Kono, Sëni Doré (born in 1965) and Bala Bamba (born in 1956) during my field trips to the
Republic of Guinea in 2009 and 2014, where I primarily worked on Guinean Kpelle as my primary area of research. I am also very grateful to Souanan Doré and Jean Gbemou, both native speakers of Kono, as well as two anonymous reviewers for their useful comments and corrections.

Guinean Kpelle data mentioned in this paper are based on my own field materials; they pertain to the höykwelé variety of Guinean Kpelle spoken in Nzérékoré, the capital of Forest Guinea, which I assume to be the “basic” Guinean Kpelle dialect. All information concerning Liberian Kpelle is taken from Welmers (1962), Leidenfrost and McKey (2005). Other sources on Guinean and Liberian Kpelle are mentioned in the references.

The following are some general typological properties of Kono:

• There are seven oral vowels and five nasal vowels.
• There are labiovelar /kp/, /gb/, /ŋm/, labialized /kw/, /gw/, /hw/, /ŋw/ and implosive /ɓ/ consonants, among others.
• Initial consonants make up a system of morphophonemic alternations with binary contrast for sonorants and three-way contrast for obstruents.
• There is a binary H vs. L tone system with contextual mid tone, H tone spread, tone polarity, downstep and downdrift.
• Basic word order is S Aux O V X.
• There are three types of possessive constructions distinguishing between kinship terms, body parts names and free nouns.
• There is inclusive vs. exclusive distinction in person markers.
• TAM markers in the auxiliary slot inflect for person and number and generally co-occur with lexical subjects.

2. Segmental phonology

Table 1. Vowels

| Oral | Nasal |
|------|-------|
|      | Front | Central | Back rounded | Front | Central | Back rounded |
| /i/  | /u/   | /ŋ/     |
| /e/  | /o/   |         |
| /ɛ/  | /ɔ/   | /ɛ̃/    |
| /a/  |       | /ɑ̃/    |

COMMENT: WORD FINAL /ŋ/ IS TREATED AS A VOWEL BECAUSE IT CARRIES TONE.

Table 2. Consonants

| Voiceless stops | Labial | Coronal | Palatal | Velar | Labiovelar | Labialized | Glottal |
|----------------|--------|---------|---------|-------|------------|------------|--------|
|                | /p/    | /t/     | /k/     | /kp/  | /kw/       |            |        |
Voiced stops | b | d | g | gb | gw
---|---|---|---|---|---
Implosives | ɓ
Voiceless fricatives | hw | h
Voiced fricatives | ɣ
Voiced affricates | dz / z
Oral sonorants | ɾ, l | y | w
Nasal sonorants | m | n | ŋ | ŋm | ŋw

Comments: 1) [dz] and [z] are variants of the same phoneme. 2) /ŋm/, /ŋw/ and initial /ŋ/ segments only appear as a result of initial consonant alternation (2.4), they do not occur in lexical representations.

2.1. Alveolar flap /ɾ/

Kono has alveolar flap /ɾ/ occurring intervocally, represented here as r for typographic simplicity. Intervocalic /ɾ/ and /l/ are contrastive after word-initial labials, velars, labiovelars and labialized consonants, but only /ɾ/ occurs after word-initial coronal and palatal consonants. This restriction suggests that there are elements of consonant harmony, or “homoresonance” in Kono, which is also attested in Southern Mande languages (Le Saout 1979; Bearth 1992), but not in other Kpelle lects. In Liberian Kpelle, etymological contrast between /ɾ/ and /l/ is preserved after all initial consonants, and in Guinean Kpelle these two phonemes merged into /l/. Consider the series of cognates in Table 3; cf. also Table 4 below.

Table 3. Intervocalic /ɾ/ and /l/.

| Kono | Liberian Kpelle | Guinean Kpelle | Meaning |
|------|----------------|----------------|---------|
| pɛ́rɛ́ | pɛ́rɛ́ | pɛ́lɛ́ | ‘house’ |
| kɛ́rɛ́ŋ | kɛ́rɛ́ŋ | kɛ́lɛ́ŋ | ‘burn’ |
| kɛ́lɛ́ | kɛ́lɛ́ | kɛ́lɛ́ | ‘beat’ |
| kplɛ́ | kplɛ́ | kplɛ́ | ‘be dry’ |
| yɨ́rɛ́ | yɨ́lɛ́ | yɨ́lɛ́ | ‘dog’ |
| lɛ́rɛ́ | lɛ́lɛ́ | lɛ́lɛ́ | ‘good’ |
2.2. Vowel elision in stems with intervocalic /l/

In stems with intervocalic /l/ such as CVlV, CVlVŋ, CVVV etc., the first vowel is often dropped in Kono. CVl and similar structures are not attested in other Kpelle varieties but they are typical for neighbouring Southern Mande languages, e.g., Dan-Gweɛɛtaa (Vydrine & Kességbeu 2008) and Kla-Dan (Makeeva 2012). Consider the series of cognates in Table 4.

Table 4. Vowel elision in CVlV and similar structures.

| Kono | Liberian Kpelle | Guinean Kpelle | Meaning |
|------|-----------------|----------------|---------|
| Klɔ́ŋ | Klɔ́ŋ | Klɔ́ŋ | 'know' |
| kpɛ́le | kpɛ́le | kpɛ́le | 'drink' |
| Bɔ́άá | Bɔ́άá | Bɔ́άá | 'sheep' |

2.3. Vowel shortening

CV₁V₁ stems with identical vowels, as well as stem initial CV₁V₁-structures in non-monosyllabic stems are shortened in Kono; cf. Table 5.

Table 5. CV₁V₁ shortening.

| Kono | Liberian Kpelle | Guinean Kpelle | Meaning |
|------|-----------------|----------------|---------|
| ká | káá | káá | 'see' |
| hɛ́ | séé | hɛ́ | 'sit' |
| hwɛ́ɛ́ | feɛ́ɛ́ | hvɛ́ɛ́ɛ́ | 'two' |

2.4. Initial consonant alternation

As in other Kpelle lects, initial consonants make up a system of alternations in Kono.

| (1) | p→m/b | t→n/d | k→ŋ/g | kw→ŋw/gw | kp→ŋm/gb | hw→ŋv/v | h→ŋ/dz |
|-----|--------|--------|--------|-----------|-----------|----------|---------|
| b→m | l→n   | y→ŋ   | w→ŋw  |
This process has been morphologized for 1SG *ŋ- and 3SG *ŋ- pronominal prefixes encoding verb and postposition complements, inalienable possessors and single arguments in stative-resultative construction (6.17). 1SG and 3SG pronouns are realized as initial consonant alternation with high in 1SG or low in 3SG tone modifying lexical tone; for further details concerning tone, cf. section 3.6.

In stems with initial lexical obstruents, the nasal alternant appears in 1SG while voiced non-nasal appears in 3SG, e.g., for lexical /h/ in kọ́ŋ ‘nose’, ẹ-họ́ŋ ‘your nose’, ị́ọ́ŋ ‘my nose’, dzọ́ŋ ‘his nose’; for lexical /k/ in kọ́k ‘leg’, ẹ-kọ́k ‘your leg’, ị́ọ́k ‘my leg’, gọ́k ‘his leg’. Though this requires further phonetic investigation, in stems with initial lexical non-obstruents, /ɓ, l, y, w/, as well as those with initial lexical nasals /m, n, ɲ, ŋ/, the initial nasal is pronounced slightly longer in both 1SG and 3SG forms, with high or low tone depending on the pronoun, e.g., ẹ-le ‘your mother’ with initial lexical /l/, but ẹ-ni ‘his mother’ – ẹ-ni ‘his mother’; for lexical /ɲ/ in njì ‘breast’: ẹ-njì ‘your breast’, ịnjì ‘my breast’, ịnjì ‘her breast’.

The alternation also occurs synchronically following a word final nasal /ŋ/. In this case, the /ŋ/ is deleted and the following word appears with a nasal initial consonant, e.g., ɲìnjì kọ̀ [ɲì njì] ‘tooth’, lit. ‘teeth bone’.

3. Tone

There is a binary H vs. L contrast with occasional contextual M in Kono. The two tonal elements H and L make up five basic fixed lexical patterns or melodies: /H/, /L(H)/, /LHL/, /HL/, /L/, as shown in (2) for CVCV structures (however, longer structures, e.g., CVCVCV, have no restrictions on tone combinations).

I adopt the following conventions in this paper. Tonal melodies are given in slashes: the /H/ melody. Tonal elements comprising tonal melodies are written without brackets: H tone. Surface realizations are given in square brackets. Hyphens mark a syllable boundary in surface representations when needed, e.g., /HL/ is realized as [H-HL] on CVCV as in yìré ‘dog’.

(H) represents an underlying floating H, which always follows a linked L in an /L(H)/ melody. It is marked with haček on final vowel in the orthography: pà ‘to kill’, hìyọ ‘meat’, mòŋ ‘hear’. Phonetically, /L(H)/ is realized as low level tone; I mark it as [L°] in the surface transcription. For the sake of clarity, the conventions for /L(H)/ are represented in (3):

| Underlying | Orthographic | Surface |
|------------|--------------|---------|
| /pa/       | pà           | [pà]    | (level L) |

Field Notes on Kono, a Southwestern Mande Lect of Forest Guinea
(L) is a floating low tone that is specific for person markers encoding alienable possession – see 3.2 and 4.1. It is marked with a ` sign after the stem.

The /HL/ pattern is realized as [H-HL] on CVCV stems and as [H-L] on CVV stems.

The following tonal rules exist in Kono: downdrift (3.1), downstep (3.2), contour simplification (3.3), tonal polarity (3.4) and H spread (3.5). I discuss the propagation of prefixal high and low tones in 3.6.

### 3.1. Downdrift

Downdrift is a general phonetic phenomenon whereby every next high tone is pronounced lower after a low tone and every next low tone is pronounced lower after a high tone, e.g., Héni àà pà ÒÒ [Héni àà pà ÒÒ] ‘Héni has come here’.

### 3.2. Downstep

Downstep occurs when high tone is pronounced lower after a low tone, which in turn, is deleted. This occurs at least in three types of phonetic environments in Kono.

First, downstep takes place after a falling contour on word final syllable [-HL] in /HL/ and /LHL/ melodies; final L of the contour is then deleted; cf. contour simplification in 3.3. This is shown in (4).

(4) -HL + /H/ → [-H] + ![H]: /yi ́re ́ka/ → [yi ́re ́ka] ‘to see a dog’

This type of downstep is also attested in Guinean Kpelle (cf. Konoshenko 2014).

The second type of downstep is unique to Kono; it is attested on ClV(ŋ) stems with an elided vowel (see 2.2) and bearing lexical /H/ melody. In such stems, H tone is downstepped in alternated prefixal 3sg forms described in 2.4, e.g., for lexical klóŋ ‘know’ in (5-6):

(5) [ŋa Héni klóŋ] ‘I know Héni’.
(6) [ŋa !glóŋ] ‘I know him/her’.

There is no downstep in (5), where the verb appears in its lexical form. In (6), H tone of the verb with 3sg object prefix is downstepped. I assume that this form is underlingly / *gɔlóŋ/, which is how it is actually realized in Guinean Kpelle. The downstep occurs after the first vowel is elided.

Finally, downstep occurs after alienable possessive markers. Except for the 3sg marker with only linked L given in (7), they all bear linked H and presumably, floating (L) triggering downstep on the following noun with /H/, as in (8); cf. also 5.1.

(7) /ŋò bláá/ → [ŋò bláá] ‘his sheep’
(8) /j́ bláá/ → [j́ bláá] ‘my sheep’
3.3. Contour simplification

Contour simplification is a process whereby any word final (i.e., linked to word final syllable) falling sequence HL becomes [H] before another tone.

When word final -HL is followed by L, which may be /L/, /L(H)/ or /LHL/, its L is absorbed into the following L (9).

(9) -HL + /L/ → [H] + [L]: /yi rè kà/ → [yirè kà] 'saw a dog'

When followed by H – /H/ or /HL/, final L of the contour is deleted and the following H is downstepped (cf. 3.2). Since contours are always simplified before H or L, they only occur utterance finally or in isolation.

3.4. Tonal polarity

Tonal polarity is a property of resultative person markers (sections 4.3, 6.7). Their tone is always the opposite of the following tone, as shown in (10-11).

(10) [àà pà] 'he has come'

(11) [àá hé́] 'he sat down'

The tone of adverb nìì́ ‘yet’, used in negative resultative construction (6.8) and of the future marker këë (6.12) is the opposite of the preceding tone:

| (12) | hò́ nìì pá-nì |
|-----|-------------|
| 2SG.B.NEG yet come-STAT |

‘You have not come yet’.

| (13) | hò nìì pá-nì |
|-----|-------------|
| 3SG.B.NEG yet come-STAT |

‘(S)he has not come yet’.

Thus, both progressive and regressive polarity is attested in Kono.

3.5. H spread

Linked H tone of /H/ spreads on the following /L/ melody, which becomes [HL], as shown in (14). The domain of this rule is a syntactic constituent: verb phrase, noun phrase and postpositional phrase.

(14) /H/ + /L/ → [H] + [HL]: /bláá kà/ → [bláá kà] ‘saw a sheep’

However, there is no expected change after floating (H) in /L(H)/:

(15) /L(H)/ + /L/ → [L] + [L]: /wòlò tò/ → [wòlò tò] ‘sang a song’
H tone, either linked in /H/ or floating in /L(H)/, also affects the immediately following /L(H)/ melody, though only in the verb phrase. In this case, the tone of the verb becomes higher than flat low, but lower than high. I label it “contextual mid-tone”:

(16) /H/ + /L(H)/ → [H] + [M]: /ɓláá hëɣè/ → [ɓláá hëɣè] ‘to take a sheep’

(17) /L(H)/ + /L(H)/ → [L] + [M]: /wo ̀ lo ̌ to ̌ / → [wo ̀ lo ̌ to ̄ ] ‘to sing a song’

3.6. Surface realization of 1sg and 3sg tone prefixes

1sg person prefix is marked by consonant alternation and prefixal high tone (cf. 2.4). Prefixal high tone is born by initial nasal alternant and also spreads on stem, partly replacing its tone. Prefixal H spreads vacuously on stems with initial H: kɔ́ɣɔ́ ‘leg’ – [ŋɔ́ɣɔ́] ‘my leg’. All /L/ stems and nouns with lexical /L(H)/ switch to /HL/: jiamá ‘blood’ – [jiamá] ‘my blood’. Verbs with lexical /L(H)/ receive contextual M. Interestingly, resultative person markers, which undergo tonal polarization (3.4), are realized with H in this case: for wàá ‘wash’ [áá ́jwàá] ‘he washed me’, similar to [áá ́jwàá˚] ‘he washed him (self)’. Thus, resultative markers ignore prefixal tone and polarize against the stem tone, which functions similarly to phonological L.

3sg person prefix is marked by consonant alternation and prefixal low tone (cf. 2.4). For stems with initial lexical non-obstruents /ɓ, l, y, w/ and nasals, prefixal low tone is realized on initial nasal alternant in 3sg form. Stems with initial lexical obstruents have non-nasal alternants in 3sg form; cf. 2.4. Prefixal low tone spreads vacuously on stems with initial L, e.g., jiamá ‘blood’ – [jiamá˚] ‘his/her blood’ and it changes lexical /H/ to /L (H)/: kɔ́ɣɔ́ ‘leg’ – [gɔ́ɣɔ́˚] ‘his/her leg’. However, ClV stems with /H/ patterns are downstepped in this case (cf. 3.2).

3.7. Morphologically assigned tones as input to surface rules

Tonal rules apply on lexical tones as well as on morphologically assigned tones. For example, in (17) above, the verb tɔ́ ‘fall’ has lexical /L(H)/ melody. In (15) the verb is assigned a replacive /L/ tonal morpheme, completely overriding lexical tones in past construction (see section 6 on basic TAM constructions). Both lexical and – in specific constructions – grammatical melodies serve as input or underlying structure in the case of phonological operations discussed in this section. In the following, I mark underlying tones in language examples, except for forms with 1sg and 3sg prefixes and those few cases where I am unsure about underlying tones.

4. Person markers

There are several morphosyntactic types of person markers in Kono: strong pronouns (4.1), person indexes (4.2), predicative (4.3), possessive (4.4), locative (4.5) and conjunctive (4.6) person markers. The general property of all these types is the difference between exclusive and inclusive forms, which is also characteristic of Guinean Kpelle but is not attested in Liberian Kpelle.
4.1. Strong pronouns

Strong (free, emphatic) pronouns are the only type of person markers in Kono that can be regarded as pronouns sensu stricto. They are used in focus constructions, with copulas and as second conjuncts in noun phrase coordination (5.6).

Table 6. Strong pronouns.

| 1sg | 2sg | 3sg | 1pl.excl | 1pl.incl | 2pl | 3pl |
|-----|-----|-----|----------|----------|-----|-----|
| ɲá  | ɓ́i | ɓ́e | ya       | ŋɔ́wa    | ƙá́ | dɔ́wá |

4.2. Person indexes

Person indexes encode verb and postposition complements, inalienable possessors and single arguments in stative-resultative construction (cf. 6.17); 1SG and 3SG markers are realized as initial consonant alternation with high and low tone, respectively (cf. 2.4, 3.6). They do not co-occur with full noun phrases in the same syntactic position, except for possessive construction with kinship terms (5.1), or in cases when the noun phrase has a definite marker (5.4), or the noun phrase is encoded by person index with quantifier hénɛ ‘all’ (5.5), or when there are conjoint noun phrases (5.6).

Table 7. Person indexes.

| 1sg  | 2sg  | 3sg  | 1pl.excl | 1pl.incl | 2pl | 3pl |
|------|------|------|----------|----------|-----|-----|
| (ʃ́y-) | ɓ́-   | (ʃ́y-) | ná́-      | gá́-      | ƙá- | dá́- |

4.3. Predicative person markers

Predicative person markers, often called subject pronouns, are portmanteau forms encoding person-number and TAM meanings. Historically, they appeared as a result of fusion between person markers with auxiliaries or predicative markers. Crucially, most such markers co-occur with subject noun phrases in the same clause; they function as local agreement markers if there is an overt subject noun phrase (18) and as anaphoric markers without an overt subject (19). Therefore, I label them predicative person markers rather than subject pronouns.

(18)  Gɔ́pu 3SG.RES come
‘Gopu has come’.

(19) Aa pà.

3SG.RES come

‘(S)he has come’.

In all TAM constructions where they appear, basic negative person markers do not co-
occur with full lexical 3SG subjects containing no definiteness marker. In (20), a default negative marker is used that is underlyingly toneless; in (21), a basic negative person marker is used after a lexical subject with definiteness marker -ki. In (22), basic negative person marker is used anaphorically.

(20) Hénì ho é-klɔŋ.

Hénì NEG 2SG-know

‘Hénì doesn’t know you’.

(21) Lóhó-ki hò Hénì klɔŋ.

child-DEF 3SG.NEG Hénì know

‘The child doesn’t know Hénì’.

(22) Hò é-klɔŋ.

3SG.NEG 2SG-know

‘(S)he doesn’t know you’.

The difference between the uninflected default marker and 3SG marker is that the tone of the former is spread from the subject (cf. 23-24), while the latter always surfaces with low tone. Thus, the default negative marker is inherently toneless in Kono (cf. hò in Guinean Kpelle, fe in Liberian Kpelle).

(23) Pèpee [hò] Hénì klɔŋ.

Pepee NEG Hénì know

‘Pepee doesn’t know Hénì’.
Basic negative person markers are used with overt subjects in 3pl (25), as well as with singular noun phrases bearing a definite marker as shown above (5.4), noun phrases encoded by person index with quantifier hēnē ‘all’ (5.5) and conjoint noun phrases (5.6).

Neutral person markers (6.15) have the same rules of co-occurrence with lexical subjects. Existential person markers, which are used in non-verbal predication, e.g., for localization, as well as in affirmative progressive verbal construction (6.9), do not co-occur with full noun phrases in subject position (27-28), except for noun phrases with definite markers (5.4), noun phrases encoded by person index with quantifier hēnē ‘all’ (5.5) and conjoint noun phrases (5.6).

Neutral person markers (6.15) have the same rules of co-occurrence with lexical subjects. Existential person markers, which are used in non-verbal predication, e.g., for localization, as well as in affirmative progressive verbal construction (6.9), do not co-occur with full noun phrases in subject position (27-28), except for noun phrases with definite markers (5.4), noun phrases encoded by person index with quantifier hēnē ‘all’ (5.5) and conjoint noun phrases (5.6).

Neutral person markers (6.15) have the same rules of co-occurrence with lexical subjects. Existential person markers, which are used in non-verbal predication, e.g., for localization, as well as in affirmative progressive verbal construction (6.9), do not co-occur with full noun phrases in subject position (27-28), except for noun phrases with definite markers (5.4), noun phrases encoded by person index with quantifier hēnē ‘all’ (5.5) and conjoint noun phrases (5.6).
markers and nà with high tone person markers (cf. table 8). However, only the nà marker is used in negative progressive construction (6.10).

A full paradigm of predicative person markers in Kono is given in table 8.

Table 8. Predicative person markers.

| Series | 1sg | 2sg | 3sg | 1pl excl | 1pl incl | 2pl | 3pl |
|--------|-----|-----|-----|----------|----------|-----|-----|
| **Affirmative** | gò | ĝi | è | mò | gò | kà | dò |
| II. Resultative | sàa | sàa | sàa | sàa | sàa | sàa | sàa |
| III. Existential | dàkà | dàkà | gò | mòdà | mòdà | kànà | dòkà |
| IV. Future | ñìgrè | ñìgrè | wò | mòkà | mòkà | kàkà | dòkà |
| V. Imperative | — | ñò | — | gò | kà | ñò | kà | dò |
| VI. Neutral | ñìgrè | ñìgrè | kà | mòdà | mòdà | kàkà | dòkà |
| **Negative** | mòkà | kà | hò | mòhò | mòhò | kàhò | dòhò |
| VII. Prohibitive | mòhò | kà | hò | mòhò | mòhò | kàhò | dòhò |
| VIII. Conditional | ñìkà | ñìkà | kà | mòwàkà | mòwàkà | kàkà | dòkà |

The main affirmative and negative TAM constructions with predicative person markers are described in section 6.

4.4. Possessive person markers

Possessive person markers are used in alienable possessive construction. They function as deictic/anaphoric markers and co-occur with full noun phrases in the possessor position (cf. 5.1).

Table 9. Possessive person markers.

| 1sg | 2sg | 3sg | 1pl excl | 1pl incl | 2pl | 3pl |
|-----|-----|-----|----------|----------|-----|-----|
| ñì | wà | ñì | mò | ñì | ñì | ñì |

4.5. Locative person markers

Locative person markers are fused with the locative postposition ma ‘on’. They function as deictic/anaphoric markers (30, 32) and co-occur with lexical complements, with some restrictions (29, 31).
Similarly to basic negative markers discussed in 4.3, locative person markers do not co-occur with singular full noun complements, except for noun phrases with definite markers (5.4), noun phrases encoded by person index with quantifier hɛni ‘all’ (5.5) and conjoint noun phrases (5.6). A “default” uninflected form of the postposition is used following singular complements (29). Locative markers are optionally used with plural nouns as complements (31).

(29) Pepee wɔɔ̃ ká Hɛni ma.
    Pepee love be Hɛni on

'Hɛni loves Pepee'.

(30) Pepee wɔɔ̃ ká mà.
    Pepee love be 3SG.on

'(S)he loves Pepee'.

(31) Pepee wɔɔ̃ ká lɛɛpɛɛ-gàà mà / dùmá.
    Pepee love be child.PL-PL on / 3PL.on

'Children love Pepee'.

(32) Pepee wɔɔ̃ ká dùmá.
    Pepee love be 3PL.on

'They love Pepee'.

As with basic negative predicative and neutral person markers, the difference between the 3sg locative marker and the uninflected “default” marker is that the former always has low tone as in (33), while the tone of the latter is spread from the complement (cf. 34-35). Thus, mà is lexically toneless in Kono (cf. Bà in Guinean Kpelle, mà in Liberian Kpelle).

(33) Baa lëlà lɔɔ̀rò-ki [mà].
    2SG.RES forget child-DEF 3SG.on

'You forgot the child'.
2SG.RES forget Pepee on

“You forgot Pepee’.

2SG.RES forget Hɛnɪ on

“You forgot Hɛnɪ’.

A full paradigm of locative person markers is given in Table 10.

|          | 1SG | 2SG | 3SG | 1PL.EXCL | 1PL.INCL | 2PL | 3PL |
|----------|-----|-----|-----|----------|----------|-----|-----|
| ɓaa      | má  | ɓi  | ê  | ma       | nu̲      | ma  | du  |

**4.6. Conjunctive person markers**

Conjunctive person markers are used for noun phrase conjunction (see 5.6).

|          | 1SG+3 | 1PL+3 | 1+2  | 2+3  | 3+3  |
|----------|-------|-------|------|------|------|
| na       | nwà   | gwà   | kà   | dà   |

**5. Noun phrase**

The order of nominal modifiers in the noun phrase is as follows:

(36) Possessor NP – possessed NP – attributive modifier – numeral/plural marker – demonstrative – definiteness marker

**5.1. Possessive constructions**

As in many other Mande languages, nouns are classified into two major groups in Kono: free and relational; the latter group comprises kinship terms and body part names. The difference between free and relational nouns is two-fold. First, relational nouns are almost always used with a possessor. Second, relational and free nouns are used with
different series of person markers encoding possessor, so-called person indexes (4.2) and possessive markers (4.4) respectively.

Inalienable possession markers used with relational nouns are person indexes that also encode verb and postposition complements, as well as single arguments in stative-resultative construction (6.17). 1SG and 3SG meanings are encoded by consonant alternation with high and low prefixal tones, respectively (cf. 2.4, 3.6).

Within relational nouns, there is a syntactic distinction between kinship terms and body part names in possessive constructions: person markers co-occur with possessors of kinship terms, but not of body part names. This yields three types of possessive constructions in Kono, given below for the nouns ɓláá ‘sheep’, lié ‘mother’ and kóχó ‘leg’.

Table 12. Possessive constructions.

| Anaphoric possessor | Lexical possessor |
|---------------------|------------------|
| **Alienable (with free nouns)** | | |
| ɓ́la | ɓ́la ‘his/her sheep’ | Hɛ́ni ɓ́la ‘Hɛ́ni’s sheep’ |
| dúa | dúa ‘their sheep’ | léépló̍ duá ‘children’s sheep’ |
| **Inalienable (with kinship terms)** | | |
| ɓ́ | ɓ́ ‘his/her mother’ | Hɛ́ni ɓ́ ‘Hɛ́ni’s mother’ |
| dʊ́le | dʊ́le ‘their mother’ | léépló̍ dule ‘children’s mother’ |
| **Inalienable (with body part names)** | | |
| gado | ɗ́yó ‘his/her leg’ | Hɛ́ni kóχó ‘Hɛ́ni’s leg’ |
| dʊ́kóχó | dʊ́kóχó ‘their legs’ | léépló̍ kóχó ‘children’s legs’ |

In non-anchoring possessive constructions, the head noun is marked with /L/ melody:

(37) maáŋ kɔɔ

rice | bone

‘rice grain’

5.2. Plural marking

There are two plural markers in Kono: -nĩ for kinship terms and usually -ŋaa for other nouns (however, cf. (41) with -nĩ marking ɲɔɔ ‘bird’).

(38) é-leỳè-nĩ ‘your elder siblings’; yir̥-ŋaa ‘dogs’; woł̥-ŋaa ‘songs’

Some human nouns have irregular plural forms; these are given in Table 13.

Table 13. Irregular plural forms.

| Singular form | Plural form | Meaning |
|---------------|-------------|---------|
| nũ / nĩ | nũaã | ‘person’ |
Irregular plural forms may be reinforced by a regular plural marker: lééplégà-nàa 'children'.

5.3. Demonstratives

yà 'this', yàmèỳ 'that'

5.4. Definiteness marker

Definiteness is marked by the definite article -kì or sometimes -gyì after vowels and -ì after word final -ŋ:

(39) yà 'river' – yà-kì 'the river'; márà́y 'a friend of mine' – márà́-ì 'my friend' (selected among friends of other people).

NPs with a -kì marker are always followed by resumptive pronouns, regardless of their syntactic position, i.e., direct objects, possessors of body part names, postposition complements and single arguments in stative-resultative construction (6.17; cf. section 4 on the distribution of person markers in Kono). This is illustrated for direct object position in (40-42):

(40) Ɓò ̀ŋɔ̀ɔ̌ kpà-kì gbè!
      2SG.JMP    bird-DEF 3SG\hunt

'Hunt the bird!'

(41) Ɓò ̀ŋɔ̀ɔ̌ kpà-ni-kì dà-kpè!
      2SG.JMP    bird-PL-DEF 3PL-hunt

'Hunt the birds!'

(42) Ɓò ̀ŋɔ̀ɔ̌ kpè / * gbè!

"Hunt a bird!"

In (40-41), a definite noun phrase in direct object position is doubled by 3SG (40) and 3PL (41) person prefixes. This is not possible for indefinite noun phrases as shown in (42).

Obligatory doubling of definite noun phrases is a very interesting syntactic property of Kono, which is not attested in other Kpelle varieties. However, it occurs in neighbouring Southern Mande languages, e.g., Dan-Gwëɛɛ (Vydrine & Kességbeu 2008:70-71).

5.5. Quantifying expressions

I have collected the following quantifying words, represented here with their surface tones: hɛnɛ ‘all’, tɔnɔ ‘one’, hwɛrɛ ‘two’, hɛbɔ ‘three’, nɔnɔ ‘four’, lɔɔli ‘five’, mɛɲɔ ‘six’, mɛhɛrɛ ‘seven’, mɛhɔbɔ ‘eight’, mɛnɔnɔ ‘nine’, pɔ ‘ten’.

When there is quantifier hɛnɛ ‘all’, person indexes, but not lexical noun phrases, are doubled by resumptive pronominals, regardless of their syntactic position, e.g., direct objects (43-44):

(43) ŋ̲̃di-hɛnɛ di-kã Lɔrɔɔ̃.
1SG.B 3PL-all 3PL-see\L. Lola

'I saw them all in Lola'.

(44) ŋ̲̃mãrɔɔ̃ hɛnɛ kã Lɔrɔɔ̃.
1SG.B 1SG\friend.PL all see\L. Lola

'I saw all my friends in Lola'.

5.6. Noun phrase conjunction

Noun phrase conjunction is encoded by conjunctive person markers (cf. section 4.6 for the full paradigm).

Noun phrases are conjoined with an inclusory strategy (Haspelmath 2007:33) following a 1>2>3 person hierarchy. The conjoint participant higher in the hierarchy is encoded by a conjunctive person marker, while the participant lower in the hierarchy is expressed by a full noun phrase (45) or a strong pronoun (46) following the person marker.

(45) Nɔ Hɛnĩ mũ pã.
1SG\3 Hɛnĩ 1EXCL.B come\L.
121 'I and Hɛni came'.

| (46) | Nù | yà | ðó | pà. |
|------|----|----|----|-----|
| 1SG+3 | 3SG.AUT | FOC | come\L |

122 'I and he came'.

First person exclusive markers distinguish between two and more than two participants, cf. (45) and (47).

| (47) | Nwà | Hɛnì | nù | pà. |
|------|-----|------|----|-----|
| 1PL+3 | Hɛnì | 1EXCL.B | come\L |

124 'we and Hɛnì came', but "'I and Hɛnì came'.

Other conjunctive person forms are ambiguous as to whether there are two or more participants:

| (48) | Dù | Hɛnì | dù | pà. |
|------|----|------|----|-----|
| 3+3 | Hɛnì | 3PL.B | come\L |

126 'He and Hɛnì came' (2) or 'They and Hɛnì came' (>2)

Two full noun phrases are conjoined by dà (47).

| (49) | Yąràmɔ | dà | Hɛnì | dù | pà. |
|------|--------|----|------|----|-----|
| Yaramɔ | 3+3 | Hɛnì | 3PL.B | come\L |

128 'Yaramɔ and Hɛnì came'.

All examples discussed here may also have a comitative interpretation, whereby the second participant is interpreted as accompanying the first one, e.g., 'Yaramɔ and Hɛnì came' or 'Yaramɔ came with Hɛnì' (in 49).

Similarly to noun phrases with definite markers (5.4) and person indexes with the quantifier hɛné 'all' (5.5), conjoint noun phrases are always doubled by person markers, regardless of their syntactic position, e.g., direct objects:

| (50) | Đá | [dà | Hɛnì] | dà-à. |
|------|----|-------|------|
| 1SG.B | 3+3 | Hɛnì | 3PL-see\L |
6. Verb phrase

The basic word order is (S) Aux O V X. Verb phrase consists of two essential elements in Kono: Aux, which may be realized as a predicative person marker (4.3) or as an uninflected predicative marker, e.g., after a lexical subject in negative constructions (57), and V, the verb. When there is no lexical subject, Aux is always realized as a predicative person marker. In what follows, I only provide special comments for those constructions that pattern differently with and without a lexical subject, (cf. 4.3), but they are by default the same. In transitive constructions, there is also a direct object before the verb. A third argument in ditransitive construction is encoded by a postpositional phrase following the verb.11

In various TAM constructions, the verb can have either lexical tone or low melody marked as /L/, which completely replaces lexical tone. In other constructions, the verb appears with lexical tone and a suffix. In this section, the basic Kono TAM constructions are described; each affirmative construction type is followed by its negative counterpart.

6.1. Affirmative stative

Affirmative stative: basic affirmative person markers + verb with lexical tone

(51)  Márápáá du  é-kłóŋ.
1SG\friend.pl  3PL.B  2SG-know

'My friends know you'.

6.2. Negative stative

Negative stative: basic negative person markers + verb with lexical tone (default negative marker ho after lexical subject)

(52)  Mó  Yarámɔ́  kłóŋ.
1SG.B.NEG  Yaramɔ́  know

'I don’t know Yaramɔ́'.

6.3. Affirmative past

Affirmative past: basic affirmative person markers + verb with /L/
6.4. Negative past

Negative past: basic negative person markers + verb with /L/ (default negative marker ho after lexical subject)

1) Basic affirmative person markers + verb with -à suffix.

'The child falls all the time'.

2) Basic affirmative person markers + kèà + verb with -nì suffix.

'Hèni often comes here'.

6.6. Negative habitual

1) Basic negative person markers + verb with -à suffix (default negative marker ho after lexical subject).

'My friends used to know you'.

'I didn’t know Yaramò'.

6.5. Affirmative habitual

142 1) Basic affirmative person markers + verb with -à suffix.

‘The child falls all the time’.

2) Basic affirmative person markers + kèà + verb with -nì suffix.

‘Hèni often comes here’.
147 'Hëni doesn’t fall’.

148 2) Basic negative person markers + këâ + verb with -nî suffix (default negative marker ho after lexical subject).

| (58)  | Hëni  | ho  | këâ  | bâ  | më-nî  | yèrè  | hënë. |
|-------|-------|-----|------|-----|---------|-------|-------|
| Hëni  | NEG   | HAB | rice | eat-STAT | day | all |

149 'Hëni doesn’t eat rice every day’.

150 The semantic differences between the two pairs of affirmative and symmetric negative constructions require further clarification. Both constructions can be used with the adverbia| present:ues modifier yèrè hënë ‘every day’.

151 However, my consultant Bala Bamba indicated that in the first construction, the situation tends to be interpreted as generic, while the second construction refers to a sequence of regular concrete situations. This interpretation can be corroborated by the following examples:

| (59) | Lêéplëg | dûhô | tô-à. |
|------|---------|------|-------|
| child.PL | 3PL.NEG | fall-HAB |

152 'Children don’t fall’.

| (60) | Lêéplëg | dûhô | këâ | tô-nî. |
|------|---------|------|-----|-------|
| child.PL | 3PL.NEG | HAB | fall-STAT |

153 'Children don’t often fall’.

154 Thus (59) means that the situation doesn’t take place at all, while (60) means that it occurs sometimes.

6.7. Affirmative resultative

155 **Affirmative resultative**: resultative person markers + verb with lexical tone.

| (61) | É-lëyë-ni | daa | pà, | dûkà | kófì |
|------|-----------|-----|-----|------|-----|
| 2sg-younger.sibling-PL | 3PL.RES | come | 3PL.EXI | yard.LOC |
‘Your younger siblings have come, they are in the yard’.

### 6.8. Negative resultative

**Negative resultative**: basic negative person markers + verb with -nî suffix (default negative marker ho after lexical subject).

\[
\begin{array}{|c|c|c|}
\hline
\text{(62)} & \text{Mó} & \text{nî} \quad \text{pá-nî}. \\
\text{1SG.NEG} & \text{yet} & \text{come-STAT} \\
\hline
\end{array}
\]

‘I have not come yet’.

### 6.9. Affirmative progressive

**Affirmative progressive**: existential person markers + verb with -nî suffix (default marker ká after lexical subject (cf. 27, 69).

\[
\begin{array}{|c|c|c|}
\hline
\text{(63)} & \text{Nnà} & \text{wôlô} \quad \text{tô-nî}. \\
\text{1SG.EXI} & \text{song} & \text{throw-STAT} \\
\hline
\end{array}
\]

‘I am singing a song’.

### 6.10. Negative progressive

**Negative progressive**: basic negative person markers + nà + verb with -nî suffix (default negative marker ho after lexical subject).

\[
\begin{array}{|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
\text{(64)} & \text{Mó} & \text{nà} & \text{wôlô} \quad \text{tô-nî}. \\
\text{1SG.NEG} & \text{be} & \text{song} & \text{throw-STAT} \\
\hline
\end{array}
\]

‘I am not singing a song’.

### 6.11. Affirmative future

**Affirmative future**: future person markers + pá + verb with lexical tone.

\[
\begin{array}{|c|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
\text{(65)} & \text{Hɛnî} & \text{wɛč} & \text{pá} & \text{klo} & \text{kɛ} \quad \text{tináá}. \\
\text{Hɛnî} & \text{3SG.FUT} & \text{come} & \text{work} & \text{do} & \text{tomorrow} \\
\hline
\end{array}
\]
'Hešni will work tomorrow'.

As in many other languages, the verb pá 'come' is grammaticalized into a future marker, though it is still also used as a lexical item.

6.12. Negative future

Negative future: basic negative person markers + këe + pá + verb with lexical tone (default negative marker ho after lexical subject).

(66) Mó këe pá wàáχɔɔ tɛɛ e-pɔ́.  
1SG.B.NEG FUT come money give 2SG-to

'I will not give you money'.

6.13. Imperative

Imperative: imperative person markers + verb with lexical tone.

(67) Kà pál  
2PL.IMP come

'You (pl.) come!'

Note that there may be no person marker in 2SG: (Ɓò) pál 'Come!'

6.14. Prohibitive

Prohibitive: prohibitive person markers + verb with /L/.

(68) Hàá pà.  
3SG.PROH come\L

'Let him not come'.

6.15. Neutral

Neutral: neutral person markers + verb with /L/ (default marker kè after lexical subject).

(69) Héni kà hi-e-ni, Yàràmɔ ke wòlɔ tò.  
Hešni be walk-STAT Yaramɔ NEUT song throw\L
Hən is walking, and Yaramɔ is singing a song.

When there is a full noun phrase in the subject position, a predicative marker appears in its default, lexically toneless form. Its surface tone is spread from the subject. When there is no lexical subject, the 3SG anaphoric marker kɛ̀ with low tone is used (cf. basic negative person markers (4.3) with similar distribution).

This construction is used in non-initial predication to encode simultaneous actions for processes and subsequent situations for single events.

6.16. Conditional

Conditional: conditional person markers + verb with /L/.

If my elder siblings come, I will give them a sheep.

Unfortunately, I have not checked negative conditional construction.

6.17. Stative-resultative

Stative-resultative: person index + verb with vocalic suffix + bó.

This construction has non-nominative argument alignment and is characteristic of South-Western Mande languages. There is no predicative marker after the lexical subject and the anaphoric subject is encoded by person indexes, which are otherwise used in various non-subject positions including direct objects (4.2).

The verb appears with a vocalic suffix and a predicative particle bó. The form of vocalic suffix depends on the final vowel of the verb; however, my data are not sufficient for providing a complete description here. I have only checked qualitative verbs that receive a stative interpretation in this construction. In other Kpelle varieties, dynamic verbs are also used in this construction with a resultative interpretation. For this reason, I tentatively also labelled it “stative-resultative” in Kono.

Note that verbs with a vocalic suffix can also be used attributively:

'Hən is beautiful'.

Note that verbs with a vocalic suffix can also be used attributively:
Stative-resultative construction has two negative counterparts in Kono, both with nominative alignment. The first is negative resultative (cf. 6.8 and (73) below).

(73) Hɛ́ni ho lɛ́rɛ́-nì.
Hɛ́ni NEG be.beautiful-STAT

‘Hɛ́ni is not beautiful’.

The second negative construction is formed with nà copula and à preposition. The verb takes a person index co-referent with the subject and the vocalic suffix:

(74) Hɛ́ni ho nà à nö́lɛ́rɛ́-ɛ́.
Hɛ́ni NEG be PREP 3SG\be.beautiful-STAT

‘Hɛ́ni is not beautiful’.

(75) Nìe-nì dúhò nà à dú-lɛ́rɛ́-ɛ́.
elder.sibling-PL 3PL.NEG be PREP 3PL\be.beautiful-STAT

‘My elder siblings are not beautiful’.

I encountered some tonal alternations on the verb in both negative constructions and therefore, they require further investigation.

Basic TAM constructions in Kono are summarized in Table 14 below.

| Table 14. Basic TAM constructions. |
|-----------------------------------|
| Affirmative stative               | Basic affirmative person markers + verb with lexical tone |
| Negative stative                  | Basic negative person markers + verb with lexical tone    |
| Affirmative past                  | Basic affirmative person markers + verb with /L/          |
| Negative past                     | Basic negative person markers + verb with /L/             |
| Affirmative habitual              | 1) Basic affirmative person markers + verb with -à suffix |
|                                   | 2) Basic affirmative person markers + kɛ̀à + verb with -nì suffix |
| Negative habitual                 | 1) Basic negative person markers + verb with -à suffix   |
|                                   | 2) Basic negative person markers + kɛ̀à + verb with -nì suffix |
| Affirmative resultative           | Resultative person markers + verb with lexical tone      |
### 6.18. Comparison of TAM systems in three Kpelle varieties

As shown in 6.9, a special existential person series is used in progressive construction in Kono. This series has an extraordinarily mixed paradigm, incorporating person markers fused with two different predicators, na and kà; cf. series III in Table 8.

In Liberian Kpelle there are two progressive constructions. In the first, a special non-past series of person markers is used, which also occurs in the future and habitual construction (76). In the second one, a non-nominative subject is used with kà existential predicator, cognate to kà in Kono (77). In both constructions, the verb appears in the infinitive form with -i suffix.

#### LIBERIAN KPELLE

| (76) | nga | pà:i | 1sg.NONPST | come-INF |
| (77) | nga | pà:i | 1sg:be | come-INF |

*I am coming*. 

| Negative resultative | Basic negative person markers + verb with -ni suffix |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| Affirmative progressive | Existential person markers + verb with -ni suffix |
| Negative progressive | Basic negative person markers + nà + verb with -ni suffix |
| Affirmative future | Future person markers + pà + verb with lexical tone |
| Negative future | Basic negative person markers + kà + verb with lexical tone |
| Imperative | Imperative person markers + verb with lexical tone |
| Prohibitive | Prohibitive person markers + verb with /L/ |
| Neutral | Neutral person markers + verb with /L/ |
| Conditional | Conditional person markers + verb with /L/ |
| Affirmative stative-resultative | Person index + verb with vocalic suffix + bò |
| Negative stative-resultative | Basic negative person markers + nà copula + à + person index + verb with vocalic suffix |
’I am coming’ (Leidenfrost & McKey 2005:67).

In Guinean Kpelle there is only one affirmative progressive construction, identical to the second progressive construction in Liberian Kpelle (78). Note that in transitive predications, both anaphoric subject and object are encoded by non-nominative person indexes (79).

GUINEAN KPELLE

(78) Gaá pá-ì.  
1SG\be come-INF

’I am coming’.

(79) Gaá dëyë-ì.  
1SG\be 3SG\cut-INF

’I am cutting it’.

Future person markers, presumably fused with the verb kë ‘do’, form a separate series in Kono (6.11). No such series is attested in other Kpelle varieties. In both Liberian and Guinean Kpelle, future construction is derived from progressive construction by adding the infinitive form of the verb pà ‘come’.

LIBERIAN KPELLE

(80) Đā pà-ì pà-ì.  
1SG.NONPST come-INF come-INF

’I will come’.

(81) Đgään pà-ì dā kírì-ì.  
1SG\be come-INF 3SG\some look_for-INF

’I will look for some’ (Leidenfrost & McKey 2005:69).

GUINEAN KPELLE

(82) Gaá pà-ì Pëpëë tólì-ì.  
1SG\be come-INF Pepee call-INF
'I will call Pepe'.

Another salient feature contrasting Kono with the other Kpelle varieties is the lack of affirmative and negative habitual (or non-past) person markers.

To sum up, the Kono TAM system differs considerably from TAM systems in Liberian and Guinean Kpelle.

7. Greetings

(83) Ɓàncúŋú? – ‘Good morning!’ Lit. ‘You (sg.) have woken up?’, addressing a single person.

(84) Ẹ̀ yí kpìɛ́? – ‘Good morning!’ Lit. ‘You (sg.) have slept well?’, addressing a single person.

(85) Kàncúŋú? – ‘Good morning!’ Lit. ‘You (pl.) have woken up?’, addressing more than one person.

(86) Kà yí kpìɛ́? – ‘Good morning!’ Lit. ‘You (pl.) have slept well?’, addressing more than one person.

(87) Ẹ̀ túgáñ – ‘Good afternoon!’, addressing a single person.

(88) Ká túgáñ – ‘Good afternoon!’, addressing more than one person.

(89) Ẹ̀ túyó kpìɛ́? – ‘Good afternoon!’ Lit. ‘You (sg.) have spent the day well?’, addressing a single person.

(90) Ká túyó kpìɛ́? – ‘Good afternoon!’ Lit. ‘You (pl.) have spent the day well?’, addressing more than one person.

(91) Ẹ̀ mánámá é hèyéñ – ‘Thank you!’, addressing a single person.

(92) Ká mánámá ká hèyéñ – ‘Thank you!’, addressing more than one person.

8. Swadesh lists for Kono, Guinean Kpelle and Liberian Kpelle

In this section, 100-word Swadesh lists for the three Kpelle varieties are provided\. When the lexemes are etymologically identical in the three idioms, they are given in plain type. Lexemes that are identical in Guinean Kpelle and Kono, but are distinct from those in Liberian Kpelle, are given in italic. Lexemes that are identical in Liberian Kpelle and Kono, as opposed to those in Guinean Kpelle, are given in bold. When a Kono lexeme is different from a lexeme common for Guinea and Liberian Kpelle, it is underlined. When the three varieties have three distinct forms, they are given in bold italic.
When analysing the data, I largely followed recommendations in Kassian et al. (2010), also discussed in Vydrin (2013). The results of pairwise cognate comparisons of the Kpelle varieties are given in Table 16.

Table 16. Pairwise cognate comparisons.

|          | Kono | Liberian Kpelle |
|----------|------|----------------|
| Guinean Kpelle | 90   | 94             |
| Kono     | 89   |                |

As shown in Table 16, Kono is the most divergent variety, sharing 90% of cognates with Guinean Kpelle and 89% with Liberian Kpelle. Such discrepancy parallels some specific grammatical properties attested in Kono, which are discussed in sections 5 and 6. Hence, though it is not the goal of this sketch to suggest an appropriate taxonomic label, Kono may be considered a separate language, at least on linguistic grounds.

Abbreviations

- AUT – free pronoun
- B – basic person markers
- COND – conditional person marker
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bearth, Thomas. 1992. La pertinence latente. A propos du traitement des liquides et de la nasalisation dans les langues dites « sans consonnes nasales ». *Verbum* 15: 4, pp. 203-218.

Casthelain Jules. 1952. *La langue guerzé: Grammaire et dictionnaire*. (Mémoires de l’Institut français d’Afrique noire, 20). Dakar : I.F.A.N.

Haspelmath, Martin. 2007. Coordination. In: Shopen, Timothy (ed.). *Language typology and syntactic description, vol. II: Complex constructions*. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 1-51.

Kassian Alexei, Starostin George, Dybo Anna & Chernov Vasily. 2010. The Swadesh wordlist. An attempt at semantic specification. *Journal of Language Relationship* 4, pp. 46-89.

Konoshenko Maria. 2008. Tonal systems in three dialects of the Kpelle language. *Mandenkan* 44, pp. 21-42.

Konoshenko Maria. 2010. Indirect object marking in Kpelle: Dative pronominals and postpositional agreement. In: Konstantin Pozdniakov, Valentin Vydrin, Alexander Zheltov (eds.).
NOTES

1. This paper is written with financial support from the Russian Humanitarian Science Foundation, project 14-04-00488 “Language contact in Africa”.

2. In Liberian and Guinean Kpelle, these alternations also mark definiteness, but there is no such marker in Kono; cf. 5.4.

3. Alternants for obstruents are always the same for 1SG and 3SG prefixes in Guinean Kpelle and, as such, these forms are only differentiated by tone, e.g., é-huíŋ̱ ‘your nose’, zíŋ̱ ‘my nose’, zíŋ̱ ‘his nose’; é-kóɔ́ɔ́ ‘your leg’, gɔ́ɔ́ ‘my leg’, gɔ́ɔ́ ‘his leg’. However, in Liberian Kpelle, a nasal appears with an alternated consonant in 1SG form yielding a three-way contrast. The difference may be represented as C₁ for lexical consonant, NC₁ for 1SG, C₁ with low tone for alternated consonant, e.g., i-hví ‘your nose’, níŋ̱ ‘my nose’, zíŋ̱ ‘his nose’; i-kóɔ́ɔ́ ‘your leg’, níŋ̱ ‘my leg’, gɔ́ɔ́ ‘his leg’.

4. Other nasals – /ŋm/, /nv/ and word initial /ŋ/ – are never lexical; they only occur as a result of the alternation.

5. Surprisingly, CLV(ŋ) stems behave differently as opposed to stems with no elision such as kéréŋ̱ ‘burn’: prefixal low tone is spread on its entire stem yielding /L(H)/ melody: [náa géréŋ̱] ‘I have
burnt it’, rather than the expected [gérẹ́ŋ]. I have no explanation for this discrepancy at present.

6. This process is not usually labelled “contour simplification”, but I mention it here because it is functionally similar to the previous one, i.e., L absorption

7. Verbs in (14) and (15) get underlying /L/ in Affirmative Past construction – cf. 3.7, 6.3.

8. What seems to happen here is L plateauing between two floating (H) tones, so the resulting tone is contextual M. The same tonal change yielding a contextual mid tone is attested in tɔŋɔ́ŋaako dialect of Guinean Kpelle described in (Konoshenko 2008). In hɔ́ŋkɔ́lɛ́ dialect, which I later chose as representative of Guinean Kpelle and described in (Konoshenko 2014), /L(H)/ changes to /H/ in such environment.

9. The term “prefixal” is etymologically rather than synchronically adequate because there are no segmentable pre-stem markers in 1SG and 3SG, but they can be reconstructed as 1SG *ŋ- and 3SG *ŋ(-) prefixes. However, I use this term because H in 1SG and L in 3SG spread from the left word boundary and do not replace the stem tone completely, in contrast with the replacive /L/ pattern (cf. 3.7).

10. I am not sure about the underlying tones of these markers, which may have surface forms [-nì] / [-nì] and [-ŋاعة] / [-ŋاعة]. More data are needed to discover how tonal rules work in these cases. Surface tones are represented in (38).

11. As demonstrated in Konoshenko (2014), postpositional phrases are clause adjuncts in Guinean Kpelle and are therefore outside verb phrases. I assume this to also be the case in Kono, though I have not applied relevant tests to check whether this is true.

12. This construction is labelled “neutral” in Kono by analogy with an identical construction in Guinean Kpelle. In Guinean Kpelle, the “neutral” construction is opposed to so-called “consecutive” construction. While the latter is only used to mark subsequent but not simultaneous events, the former can be used for both types of events; hence, it is labelled “neutral”.

13. For the sake of uniformity, I have modified the orthography in Liberian Kpelle data taken from Leidenfrost & McKey (2005).

ABSTRACTS

Kono (knu) is a Southwestern Mande lect of the Republic of Guinea, not to be confused with Kono of Sierra Leone (kno, Kono-Vai group). It is a member of the Kpelle macro-language together with Guinean Kpelle (gkp) and Liberian Kpelle (xpe). This paper is a brief description of Kono based on the author’s field notes collected in the Republic of Guinea in 2009 and 2014. I discuss segmental and tonal phonology of Kono as well as its basic morphology and grammatical constructions. 100-word Swadesh lists for Kono, Guinean and Liberian Kpelle are also provided. As I demonstrate in this sketch, Kono is lexically and grammatically distinct enough to be considered a separate language. Some phonological and grammatical phenomena in Kono, e.g. consonant harmony, first vowel elision in CVLV structures and obligatory pronominal doubling of definite noun phrases, suggest that, unlike other Kpelle lects, Kono has undergone a strong contact influence from Southern Mande.

Kono (knu) est un parler mandé-sud-ouest de la République de Guinée, à ne pas confondre avec le kono de la Sierra Leone (kno, groupe Kono-Vai). Il est membre de la macro-langue kpelle
conjointement avec le guéré (kpelle de la Guinée, gkp) et le kpelle du Libéria (xpe). Cet article est une brève description de Kono sur la base des notes de terrain de l'auteur recueillies dans la République de Guinée en 2009 et 2014. Je décrit la phonologie segmentale et tonale de kono ainsi que sa morphologie de base et des constructions grammaticales. Des listes Swadesh de 100 mots sont aussi données pour le kono, le guéré et le kpelle du Libéria. Comme je le démontre dans cette esquisse, le kono est lexicalement et grammaticalement assez différent pour être considéré comme une langue indépendante. Certains phénomènes phonologiques et grammaticaux en kono, par exemple, l'harmonie consonantique, l'élosion de la première voyelle dans les structures CVLV et le doublement pronominal obligatoire des syntagmes nominaux définis, suggèrent que, contrairement à d'autres parler kpelle, le kono a subi une forte influence des langues mandé-sud.

На идиоме коно (knu) говорят в Республике Гвинея, он относится к юго-западной группе манде, в отличие от коно (kno) из Сьерра Леоне (группа коно-ваи). Коно входит в макроязык кпелле вместе с гвинейским кпелле (gkp) и либерийским кпелле (xpe). Статья представляет собой краткое описание идиома коно на основе полевых материалов автора, собранных в Республике Гвинея в 2009 и 2014 гг. В статье даны сведения о сегментной фонологии и тональных правилах, базовой морфологии, основных грамматических конструкциях коно. Также приведены стословные списки сводеша для коно, гвинейского и либерийского кпелле. Показано, что лексические и грамматические коно достаточно сильно отличается от других идиомов кпелле и может считаться отдельным языком. Более того, некоторые фонологические и грамматические особенности коно, например, консонантная гармония, элision первого гласного в структурах CVLV и обязательное местоименное дублирование определенных именных групп, позволяют предположить, что, в отличие от других идиомов кпелле, коно подвергался значительному контактному влиянию со стороны южных