0. INTRODUCTION

The pronominal system of Guro has already been described in [Benoist 1969: 49-55] and especially in [Vydrine 2005]. However, my field studies on Guro in 2006–2008 revealed these descriptions needed considerable amendments. First of all, the phonemic structure and the tonal contour of certain pronouns needed more accurate transcribing. Second, the inventory of the pronominal series and the way they are presented had to be modified. In Vydrin’s paper, heterogeneous criteria were used to distinguish between the series. As a result, the groups of subject vs. object, focalized vs. non-focalized, basic vs. contractive, ‘nominative’ vs. ‘ergative’ pronouns end up on the same level of classification. To get a better understanding of the structure of the pronominal system and the mechanisms of its functioning, it is essential to build up the internal hierarchy of the series.

Above all, I propose to distinguish between the syntactic and the pragmatic rules of the use of pronouns. The first big distinction, based on pragmatic usage rules, lies between focalized and non-focalized pronouns. Focalized pronouns have a different segmental basis compared with non-focalized ones (apart from the 2PL pronoun). They can be used in nearly all syntactic contexts where the non-focalized pronouns occur.

The series of logophoric pronouns can then be distinguished within focalized and non-focalized pronouns. Their occurrence is regulated by the need to remove the ambiguity of reference. In the indirect speech clause, these pronouns can also replace all other series of pronouns (see below).

Second, my material shows a tremendous variability in the results of pronominal contractions in Guro. Pronouns usually contract with other pronouns and some auxiliaries situated to the right. Such contractions often coexist with non-contracted forms. In addition, multiple intermediate forms are also attested. Let us consider the following example:

\begin{verbatim}
(1)  ā̰ ká à zúlù-ló
1SG.SBJ NEG 3SG.NSBJ wash-IPF NEG
\end{verbatim}

‘I don’t wash him’.

In this phrase, besides the full sequence ā̰ ká à, the following contracted variants are attested: ā̰ ká à > ā̰ á à > aā̰ á > aā̰ á > aā̰ á > aā̰ á. Such variability has been little reported in previous publications. In this situation, it is unclear how many contracted series should be distinguished. Furthermore, certain contracted series would turn out to be highly heterogeneous: depending on the particular structure of the components, sequences can contract to different degrees. For example, in kàà à > kàà ‘1SG.INCL.SBJ + EXST’ the second component disappears altogether, in è/yè à > yàà ‘3SG.SBJ + EXST’ it stays and assimilates the preceding vowel, and in kʊ á ‘1PL.EX.SBJ + EXST’ no contraction occurs.

Nevertheless, the general rules of pronominal contraction are fairly homogeneous. There are two main types of these rules: (a) structurally conditioned; (b) structurally unconditioned. Rules of type (a) are based on the common tendencies of phonetic contraction and reduction in Guro (see [Kuznetsova 2007]). According to one of the rules, vowels first undergo regressive assimilation, and then adjacent vowels get contracted into one vowel which then tends to disappear (see the examples with the existential copula à above). Rules of type (b) are morphophonological and depend much less on the particular word structure. For example, when subject pronouns merge with 3SG.NSBJ pronoun à, there is a general rule that the second pronoun disappears and the final tone of the first pronoun becomes low: kàà à > kàà

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1 This study has been carried out in the framework of the project “Integral description of the South Mande languages: Dictionaries, grammars, glossed corpora of texts” supported by the Russian Foundation for Humanities (project 08-04-00144a).

2 It was carried out in Abidjan, Côte d’Ivoire, with two young speakers of the Zuénoula dialect of Guro, Dje Bi Zahouli Desire Etienne (b. 1968, henceforth Dje Bi or D) and Youan Bi Irie Hubert (b. 1976, henceforth Irie or I).
The focalized pronouns put their referent into the focus of contrast. They can appear in all the same contexts as the non-focalized (= ‘plain’) pronouns, with the exception of the reflexive ones: *á go ɓaabá wá ‘I came to MYSELF’. Plain pronouns, however, cannot appear in two contexts typical of the focalized pronouns: (a) the presentative context with the presentative copula lè (ɓaabá lè ‘It is me’); (b) the negative equative context (ɓaabá ká à ɓaabá –ká à yë à NEG 3SG.NSBJ with>). Four levels of contraction are found synchronically: ɓaabá ká à yë (a) > ɓaabá ƙaà (b) > ɓaabá (c) > ɓaabá (d). Thus, it may seem unnecessary to distinguish a separate negative series. However, the syntactic distribution of the forms (a–b) and the forms (c–d) does not intersect. Forms (a) and (b) with a partly different meaning can be used only in the negative equative context:

(2) ɓaabá ká à ɓaabá à yë lò 1SG.FOC NEG 3SG.NSBJ with NEG

‘I’m not him’.

(3) ɓaabá ká à ɓaabá à yë lò 1SG.FOC NEG.EQ NEG

‘It’s not me’.

Forms (c–d) in their turn are used only in phrases with finite verbs followed by a pronominal reprise, which is represented by a non-focalized pronoun:

(4) ɓaabá, ɓaabá à ɓaabá à báá lò 1SG.FOC.NEG 1SG.SBJ.ERG 3SG.NSBJ hit.PF NEG

‘It’s not me who hit him’.

On these grounds, a separate contractive negative focalized series is still distinguished. All other contractions of focalized pronouns (with the negative particle ƙaà, the article à, the reflexive pronouns, the particle é, the emphatic particle é, the word ɗé ‘own’, the comitative postposition yë) are considered optional and thus synchronic.

In addition, a series of two focalized logophoric pronouns is distinguished (Table 3). They will be considered below, together with the respective plain pronouns.

### 3. Non-focalized (‘Plain’) Pronouns

The number of plain pronominal series depends on how we answer the following questions: (1) do we distinguish autonomous subject and non-subject basic series?; (2) how do we interpret 1SG and 2SG pronouns with ɓa and ɓe stems?; (3) how many ‘high tone’ series are there in Guro? 

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3 An optional plural marker. This and other optional markers are placed in {}.

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I propose to regard the pronominal system of Guro as a small number of series plus the mechanisms of contraction. Contractive series are postulated only if at least one pronoun of the series has no non-contracted variant in synchrony. The pronominal series will be represented below, and the contractions will mainly be left outside the scope of this paper.

### 2. Focalized Pronouns

#### Table 1. Basic focalized series

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SG</th>
<th>PL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INCL</td>
<td>EX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>ɓaabá káà (gàà) à lù</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>bià</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>yià</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Table 2. Contractive negative focalized series

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SG</th>
<th>PL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INCL</td>
<td>EX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>ɓaabá &gt; ɓaabá à kóó (gààà) &gt; kóó</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>bià &gt; bià à kóóà</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>yià &gt; yià à wëòà &gt; wëòà</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Table 3. Logophoric focalized series

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SG</th>
<th>yií</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PL</td>
<td>wëò</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

‘1SG.INCL.SBJ + 3SG.NSBJ’, kóó à > kóó ‘1PL.EX.SBJ + 3SG.NSBJ’. Compare, however, a vowel change in the contraction ɗé/yë à > yë à 3SG.SBJ + 3SG.NSBJ’.
3.1. BASIC PRONOMINAL SERIES

Subject and non-subject pronouns formally differ only in 3SG. However, I prefer to distinguish two separate series due to: (a) their totally different syntactic contexts; (b) their differences in variation with other pronominal series in the same contexts.

Some context examples for subject pronouns: kà dà ‘you came’ (a subject before a non-transitive verb); i bë yi ‘you saw a man’ (a subject of a transitive verb), e tūõ ‘he is wounded’ (subject of a verb in the passive construction), ã lë, ã dâ ‘I said: “I’ll come”’ (subject preceding the direct speech marker).

Some context examples for non-subject pronouns: kʋ̄ tí ‘our father’ (a possessor before the relational noun), à lē kɔ̰́ ‘his house’ (a possessor before the possessive marker preceding a free noun), Tālã kãà dɔ̀ɔ̀ ‘Tra knows us’ (a direct object), ẹ gã̄i tâ-dɔ̍ j lë ‘he keeps money for you’ (in a postpositional phrase), à dà-li, yè ë bë yi ‘after he came, he saw a man’ (lit. ‘his coming, then he man saw’; a semantic subject before a nominalization as a secondary predication).

Table 4. Basic subject series

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SG</th>
<th>PL</th>
<th>INCL</th>
<th>EX</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>̣</td>
<td>kàà (gàà)</td>
<td>kã̄</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>i</td>
<td>kã̄</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>ë (&gt; yë)</td>
<td>wò (&gt; ð D)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5. Basic non-subject series

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SG</th>
<th>PL</th>
<th>INCL</th>
<th>EX</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>̣</td>
<td>kàà (gàà)</td>
<td>kã̄</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>i</td>
<td>kã̄</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>ã</td>
<td>wò (&gt; ð D)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.2. PRONOUNS bã and bè / ñè

In Guro, there are subject pronouns bã and bè / ñè whose stems are different from those of the respective basic subject pronouns. J.-P. Benoist considered bã a variant of the pronoun ̣, and bè – a result of the contraction of pronouns i + ã [Benoist 1969: 52–53]. Vydrin treated these forms as ergative pronouns, for, according to his data, they could be used only with transitive verbs [Vydrin 2005: 100]. Although bã is indeed more current with transitive verbs and ̣ – with intransitive ones, my data show that bã can also be used with intransitive verbs and in all other contexts proper to the pronoun ̣, with the exception of the subject function in the passive construction. We can probably recognize a higher semantic ‘agentivity’ of bã. However, this situation can be regarded rather as a tendency to the ergativity of bã, but this pronoun can hardly be recognized as a true ergative pronoun. It is thus called ‘ergative’ in this paper tentatively.

As for the pronouns bè and ñè, my data show that they always appear as equivalents to the combination of the basic 2SG i or a high-tone 2SG ̣ pronoun (correspondingly) + ã. This ã can be: (1) a 3SG non-subject pronoun; (2) a definite article (that has obviously emerged out of the 3SG non-subject pronoun); (3) a contraction of the 3SG non-subject pronoun and the definite article. The combinations *i ã and *í ã are not used at all, and bè / ñè fill these gaps. They cannot be considered as contractive forms for they cannot be derived from the combinations *i ã and *í ã through regular morphophonological rules.

The article ã in Guro serves as a marker of the ‘old’ information known to the speaker and sometimes to the listener. Not only can a subject or an object be known, but also the action itself. Therefore, the article can be used also before pronouns (the basic subject and the reflexive ones):

(5) bã ̣ i bãlãá
1SG.SBJ ART 2SG.NSBJ hit.PF
‘I hit you (finally; as it had been planned).’

(6) bã ̣ bãlãá
1SG.SBJ ART 1SG.REFL son hit.PF
‘I hit my son (finally; as it had been planned).’

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4 The 3SG phonetic allomorph ye often precedes a word-initial vowel. The 3PL allomorph o appears in Dje Bi’s speech after a vowel (in all positions except for sentence-initial).
In 2SG, bè will always stay for *ì à in such cases, e.g. bè (= *ì à) ɓāläää ‘you hit me (as you had planned)’.

Thus, bè and bē always render the meaning of *ì à and *ì à combinations and cannot be regarded as ergative. A pronoun bā and its high-tonal correlate ḅ (see below) thus do not enter the same series with bè and bē pronouns.

4. ‘HIGH-TONAL’ PRONOMINAL SERIES AND THEIR RELATIONS TO THE PARTICLE é

4.1. PARTICLE é IN GURO

There is a particle é whose semantics is presumably modal, as it precedes a verb in imperfective form (rendering habitual, future and all kinds of epistemic modality), in imperative, prohibitive and in the subordinate clauses depending on the necessity and optativity constructions. However, in cases where variants both with é and without it are possible, there are no visible modifications of meaning. Phrases with é are generally perceived by speakers as better constructed. It thus seems that the main function of é is a constitutive one.

This particle is used only after the basic subject pronouns (and the focalized and logophoric ones in the same functions). It doesn’t occur before the negative copula kà and the existential copula à. Pronouns bè and bē do not occur with é either, as it occupies the position between the subject and the object.

In Guro, there exists a problem of distinguishing between synchronic and diachronic pronominal contractions with é. Three types of context will be discussed further: a) a reflexive context; b) an imperative-optative context; c) an imperfective context. Compare also high-tonal logophoric pronouns.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 6. Reflexive series (‘high-tonal’ series I)</th>
<th>Table 7. Imperative-optative series (‘high-tonal’ series II)</th>
<th>Table 8. Logophoric series</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SG</strong></td>
<td><strong>PL</strong></td>
<td><strong>SG</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>INCL</strong></td>
<td><strong>EX</strong></td>
<td><strong>INCL</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>à</td>
<td>kàà (gàà)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>í</td>
<td>kà</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>é ( slur &gt; )</td>
<td>wó ( slur &gt; D)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2. REFLEXIVE CONTEXT (A ‘HIGH-TONAL’ SERIES I).

Reflexive pronouns in Guro are non-subject pronouns coreferent to the subject and sometimes to the object, cf. (7):

(7) é fe këlè é tìli yà
3SG.SBJ thing make.PF 3SG.REFL dirt with
‘1. He produced the thing being (himself) dirty. 2. He produced the thing that was dirty’.

Their origin is unclear as they do not have any non-contracted variants in synchrony. Vydrin mentions the variation of 1 and 2 SG and PL reflexive pronouns with the basic non-subject ones. However, my materials manifest no such variation for all but 1PL.INCL pronoun (the kàà (gàà) variant is a bit more frequent). In this sense, there are no grounds to consider kàà (gàà) a basic non-subject pronoun here (cf. with imperative series below).

Reflexive pronouns can fulfil the same syntactic functions as basic non-subject pronouns apart from the function of a direct object. They can be used only as attributes in the object phrase:

(8) {à} à bò tìtió
1SG.SBJ 1SG.REFL self wound.PF
‘I wounded myself’.

4.2. IMPERATIVE-OPTATIVE CONTEXT (A ‘HIGH-TONAL’ SERIES II).

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5 More frequent variants in this and further tables are marked in bold.
Imperative-optative pronouns are used in the clauses rendering deontic modality: direct or indirect order or interdiction, wishes, necessity. Vydrin unifies reflexive and imperative pronouns into one ‘high-tonal’ series on the basis of their formal identity. However, there is a difference in the 1PL.INCL pronoun. In the imperative context, this pronoun always looks like **kàà (gàà)**. A **kàá (gàá)** variant in this context is unambiguously understood as a focalized pronoun. It was said that in the reflexive context **kàá (gàá)** variant was, on the contrary, more frequent, and focalized pronouns are not used in this context at all. On the basis of this formal difference, I consider reflexive and imperative-optative pronouns two different series.

A subject function is typical for the imperative-optative pronouns. Because of this, they have different paradigmatic features compared to the reflexive pronouns. The 1SG pronoun varies with the high-tonal ergative **ɓa** pronoun. The 1 and 2PL pronouns show regular variation with the combination of a basic subject pronoun + **é** particle. Such variation is however impossible in the context of a direct order. This series has presumably emerged from the contraction of basic subject pronouns with **é** particle, but synchronically it cannot be considered contractive. Context examples for the imperative-optative pronouns:

(9) **tē kā ~ kā ē D** gō lē lō**
**PRHB 2PL.IMP ~ 2PL.SBJ PRT depart field NEG**
‘Don’t go to the field (to several people)’.

(10) **è lē kō ~ kō ē D** dā**
3SG.SBJ CIT 1PL.EX.SBJ for 1PL.EX.IMP ~ 1PL.EX.SBJ PRT come**
‘He tells us to come’.

(11) **è kā lē kāō ~ kāö ē D** sāá bêt lō**
3SG.SBJ NEG that 1PL.INCL.IMP ~ 1PL.INCL.SBJ PRT rice eat NEG**
‘We shouldn’t eat rice’.

4.3. IMPERFECTIVE CONTEXT

Imperfective context implies that a pronoun is used before a positive imperfective form of a verb, e.g. **ā ~ āg wùyā-g <1SG.IPF get.up-IPF> ‘I get up; I’ll get up’**. Pronouns occurring here are obvious recent contractions with the particle **é**. Contracted forms widely vary with non-contracted ones here like in case of true synchronic contractions. Though a separate contractive series should nevertheless be postulated, as in 1 and 2 SG the ‘full’ forms *gā ć* and *i ē* do not occur.

Table 9. Contractive imperfective series

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SG</th>
<th>PL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>INCL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>āg / bāg &gt; ā / bāg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>i ć*D &gt; ć</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>ėć (yěć)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Also basic subject pronouns occur in this context but in a very limited number of cases. They are possible and even preferred only before the basic non-subject pronouns ā, ī, ě, the reflexive pronouns ā, ī, ě and the article ā. In the 2SG, ɓē is used for *ć* ā.

All other contractions of plain pronouns in subject function are considered synchronic: with the existential copula ā, the non-subject basic pronouns, the negative copula kā, the reflexive pronouns, the article ā, the comitative postposition yō, the prohibitive copula tē.

5. LOGOPHORIC PRONOUNS

Vydrin claimed the high-tonal pronouns are used in the logophoric function. According to my data, special series of two basic logophoric pronouns and two focalized logophoric pronouns should be distinguished (see Tables 3 and 8). The basic logophoric pronouns are homonymic to the 3SG and PL pronouns of both ‘high-tonal’ series. However, their focalized correlates carry other tones than 3SG and PL focalized pronouns (cf. Tables 1 and 3). Logophoric pronouns are used in subordinate clauses rendering the indirect speech. They are coreferent to the speaker if
the latter has the 2 or 3SG or PL referent, as in all these cases semantic ambiguity would be possible, cf. e.g. in 3SG (12–13):

(12) \( \text{èi} \ \text{lē} \ ‘\text{èē} \ dā-ā’ \)

2PL.SBJ CIT 3SG.IPF come.IPF

‘He, says: “He comes” (=he, says he’ll come’).

(13) \( \text{èi} \ \text{lē} \ ‘\text{ē} \ dā-ā’ \)

2PL.SBJ CIT LOG.PL come.IPF

‘He, says he’ll come’.

In the indirect speech, the basic logophoric pronouns can replace the pronouns of all series, both subject and non-subject ones, and all their contractions. They cannot co-occur with the particle \( \text{ē} \) (though focalized logophoric pronouns can have an optional \( \text{ē} \) in the imperfective context). For example:

(14) \( \text{kāi} \ \text{lē} \ ‘kā (<kā kā) \kак̄ē;kā} \ bī \ bālā-ā’ \)

2PL.SBJ CIT (<2PL.IPF 2PL.REFL) ~ 2PL.IPF PRT 2PL.REFL son hit-IPF

‘You, say: “You’ll hit your son” (=you say we’ll hit our son’).

(15) \( \text{kāi} \ \text{lē} \ ‘\text{wō} (<\text{wō}, \text{wō}) bī \ bālā-ā’ \)

2PL.SBJ CIT (<LOG.PL LOG.PL) son hit-IPF

‘You, say you’ll hit your son’.

6. CONCLUSION

The following system of Guro personal pronouns is thus proposed in this paper:

A. **Focalized series**: 1.1. Basic focalized series; 1.2. Contractive negative focalized series; 2. Focalized logophoric series.

B. **Non-focalized (‘plain’) series**: 1.1. Basic subject series + ergative 1SG pronoun \( \text{ɓā} \); 1.2. Basic non-subject series; 1.3. Reflexive series; 1.4. Imperative-optative series + ergative high-tone 1SG pronoun \( \text{ɓā} \); 1.5. Contractive imperfective series + imperfective ergative 1SG pronoun \( \text{ɓā} \sim \text{ɓā} \); 2. Pronouns \( \text{ɓē} \) and \( \text{ɓē} \) replacing the non-existing *\( \text{i} \) à and *\( \text{i} \) à combinations. 3. Logophoric series.

In addition to the pronominal series there are mechanisms of pronominal contraction not discussed here. These mechanisms produce numerous synchronic contractive forms.

**List of Abbreviations**

1 – 1st person \( \text{EXST} \) – existential \( \text{PF} \) – perfective
2 – 2nd person \( \text{FOC} \) – focalized \( \text{PL} \) – plural
3 – 3rd person \( \text{IMP} \) – imperative \( \text{PRHB} \) – prohibitive
\( \text{ART} \) – article \( \text{INCL} \) – inclusive \( \text{PRT} \) – particle
\( \text{CIT} \) – citation marker \( \text{IPF} \) – imperfective \( \text{REFL} \) – reflexive
\( \text{EQ} \) – equative \( \text{LOG} \) – logophoric \( \text{SBJ} \) – subject
\( \text{ERG} \) – ergative \( \text{NEG} \) – negative \( \text{SG} \) – singular
\( \text{EX} \) – exclusive \( \text{NSBJ} \) – non-subject

**References**

