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Volume 12

A Grammar of Luwo. An anthropological approach
by Anne Storch

A Grammar of Luwo

An anthropological approach

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John Benjamins Publishing Company
Amsterdam / Philadelphia

The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of the American National Standard for Information Sciences – Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI z39.48-1984.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Storch, Anne.

A Grammar of Luwo : An anthropological approach / Anne Storch.

p. cm. (Culture and Language Use, ISSN 1879-5838 ; v. 12)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

1. Luwo language (South Sudan)--Grammar. 2. Luwo language (South Sudan)--Parts of speech. 3. Anthropological linguistics. I. Title.

PL8143.S76 2014

496'.5--dc23 2014027010

ISBN 978 90 272 0295 6 (Hb ; alk. paper)

ISBN 978 90 272 6937 9 (Eb)

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John Benjamins Publishing Co. · P.O. Box 36224 · 1020 ME Amsterdam · The Netherlands

John Benjamins North America · P.O. Box 27519 · Philadelphia PA 19118-0519 · USA

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Preface

A number of ideas in this book have begun to develop just around the beginning of my fieldwork on Luwo already in 2000, when I began to realise that there are categories and concepts in this language that wouldn't be described all that well in a "traditional" way to write a grammar, but needed a more anthropological approach. Since then, I have spent several months for fieldwork in Sudan over the years. During that time, and in the years afterwards when I was writing up what I thought I had found out about Luwo, I tried to find adequate ways of collecting, analysing and presenting data, and became increasingly interested in the possibilities of contextualising the functions of forms, their meaning and sociocultural information. Of course, there will always be better ways of doing this, and there will always be mistakes – from a wrong transcription of a vowel to a misunderstood proverb –, but in this book I present the best I myself could do for the time being. I sincerely hope that the present work encourages others to engage in research on Luwo and things related to it.

I wouldn't have been able to accomplish anything concerning my research on Luwo without the generous help of many people. First of all, I want to express my heartfelt thanks to the Luwo speakers who worked with me, taught me their language and even read the manuscript of this book: Joseph Wol Modesto, Henry Manylual, Mohammed Lino Benjamin, Albert Apai Dumo, Pierina Akeelo Zubeir and members of her family. At the University of Khartoum, all my colleagues have been extremely supportive, generous and hospitable over so many years. I'm deeply grateful to Al-Amin Abu-Manga and Abdelrahim Mugaddam for their great support and continuing interest in my work, to Leoma Gilley for helping me getting into contact with people and for sharing her ideas with me, and to Abeer Bashir and Suzan Alamin for their generosity and discussions. Tim Stirtz helped me to get into contact with people in South Sudan and I'm very grateful to him for his help. At Cologne University, I remain deeply grateful to my colleagues who not only discussed my work on Luwo with me during the different stages of writing this book, but also read an earlier version of its manuscript, commenting on virtually every page of it. I want to express my gratitude in particular to Angi Mietzner with whom simultaneous grammar-writing is totally enjoyable, and to Gerrit Dimmendaal who not only generously commented on this book, but shared with me his insights into Nilotic and everything else. Furthermore, I greatly enjoyed, and greatly benefitted from discussing various chapters of this book with Helma

Pasch, Beatrix von Heyking and Jules Jacques Coly. I thank Roger Blench for his inspiration and his many comments on this book. I remain grateful to Gunter Senft for his continuing and encouraging interest in my work. Lots of thanks are due to Friederike Lüpke for many inspiring discussions. I owe a lot of gratitude to Sasha Aikhenvald and Bob Dixon for their interest and relentless support. My warmest thanks are due to Monika Feinen who produced the maps and graphics for the present volume, to Mary Chambers who proofread the entire volume and provided highly valuable comments on every chapter, and to Larissa Fuhrman and Marvin Kumetat who greatly assisted in locating rare sources on Luwo and in preparing data files for me. I also would like to express my deeply felt gratitude to the German Research Society for generously funding my research on Western Nilotic, and Kees Vaes (John Benjamins Publishing Company) for his great assistance.

Last but not least, I'm grateful to my family for everything else.

Cologne, May 2014

List of abbreviations

-	morpheme boundary
=	boundary between clitics
A	agent
AC	anticausative
AP	antipassive
ASS	associative
C	consonant
CA	concomitant agent
CASE	case marker
CAUS	causative
COLL	collective
COMP	complementiser
COND	conditional
CONJ	conjunction
COP	copula
DEF	definite
DEM	demonstrative
DENOM	denominal
DEV	deverbal
DIM	diminutive
DTR	detransitivised
DUR	durative
ERG	ergative
EX, EXCL	exclusive
EXT	extended
FEM	feminine
FOC	focus
FUT	future
IA	itive-altrilocal
IDEO	ideophone
IF	imperfective-future
IMP	imperative
INCL	inclusive
INDEF	indefinite
INSTR	instrumental
INTERJ	interjection
INVIS	invisible
IP	interrogative pronoun
IPFV	imperfective
ITR	intransitive
LIM	limited
LOC	locative
MASC	masculine
MOD	modified
N	nasal
N.EVID	non-evidential/not first-hand information
NAME	name, proper noun
NEG	negation
O	object
Ø	zero morpheme
O_{DIR}	direct object
P	patient
PFV	perfective
PL	plural
POSS	possessive
PREP	preposition
PST	past
QM	question marker
REL	relativiser
S	subject
SC	subordinating conjunction
SG	singular
SGV	singulative
SIM	similative
SMELL	smell term

SPEC	specified
TOPONYM	place name, toponym
TR	transitive
unspec	unspecified
V	ventive
V	vowel
VEN	ventive
VIS	visible
VN	verbal noun

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

> Words bounce. Words, if you let them, will do what they want to do and what they have to do.
> (Carson 1999: 3)

Upon entering new experiences in a new language, as when we set out to study or learn or describe a language, the ways of words, where they begin and end and how they go together to make meaning, seems to be something we can never fully grasp, and always fail to master completely; therefore, we may want to see that new language as something exotic and strange. A way of dealing with this experience of language as a kind of flowing, blurred thing is to create paradigms and sets of rules to make it manageable. There are different ways of writing about a language like this, and in an ideal case we have in the end something like a guidebook through its winding ways, looking at it as from above and providing the needed abstractions in order to separate words and constructions from each other. However, skilled speakers will know all kinds of shortcuts, detours (to make it more interesting), and may constantly change direction as they become distracted by other things, and so our abstractions will not account for such ways of using the language. Then there are all the other ways of speaking, forms of the language we don't think of when we produce our datasets and lists; these come into play, too, when we realize that our abstraction, our map-like view of the language, doesn't help all that much to make sense of utterances and texts.

This book is a grammar of Luwo, a Western Nilotic language of South Sudan. Luwo, like most languages spoken in Africa, has been explored to some extent in the contexts of Western scholarship and missionary linguistics. Apart from pedagogical materials used in schools and alphabetization classes, there are no metalinguistic texts produced by its speakers, and no frameworks that would make an integration of their linguistic thinking into established Western discourses feasible. This is a pity, as a less formalistic and more open approach to such a language would make its structures and its speakers' deviations from the plan much easier to understand for linguists and other outsiders. However, one can, while learning and exploring the language, try to take into account the insights provided by speakers as part of their linguistic expertise, and see a grammar, or any

descriptive contribution, as a kind of starting point for explorations into the ways words bounce and do the things they do.

This needs to include sociolinguistic and anthropological linguistic work, in order to document and explain how the language is actually used, and by whom and when it is spoken. For instance, Luwo is used by multilingual, dynamic communities of practice as one language among others that form individual and flexible repertoires. It is a language that serves as a means of expressing the Self, as a medium of art and self-actualization, and sometimes as a medium of writing. It is spoken in the home and in public spaces, by fairly large numbers of people who identify themselves as Luwo and as members of all kinds of other groups. Ways of speaking, in the sense of speech registers and politeness strategies, sociolects, and so on, are rather dynamic in the way they change, or rather are changed by the speakers themselves.

In order to provide insights into these dynamic and diverse realities of Luwo, this book contains both a concise description and analysis of the linguistic features and structures of Luwo, and an approach to the anthropological linguistics of this language. The latter is presented in the form of separate chapters on possession, number, experiencer constructions, spatial orientation, perception and cognition. In all sections of this study, sociolinguistic information is provided wherever this is useful and possible, detailed information on the semantics of grammatical features and constructions is given, and discussions of theory-oriented approaches to various linguistic features of Luwo are presented. Luwo is not studied here using one single approach, but rather within a framework that is intended to provide insights and data on various possible ways of presenting knowledge on this language.

The present chapter contains a detailed discussion of the current state of description and documentation of Luwo and its closer relatives, thereby providing a critical evaluation of missionary linguistics and colonial contributions to this field in African Studies and Linguistics. It also presents information on the social history of Luwo, its location and speaker community. This will provide a basis for the following chapters in which basic linguistic information, semantic analyses and anthropological linguistic approaches alike are provided.

1.1 Location and linguistic affiliation

Luwo (also referred to as Dhe Luwo and Jur) is a Western Nilotic language of South Sudan, spoken in and around the town of Wau in Western Bahr el-Ghazal.

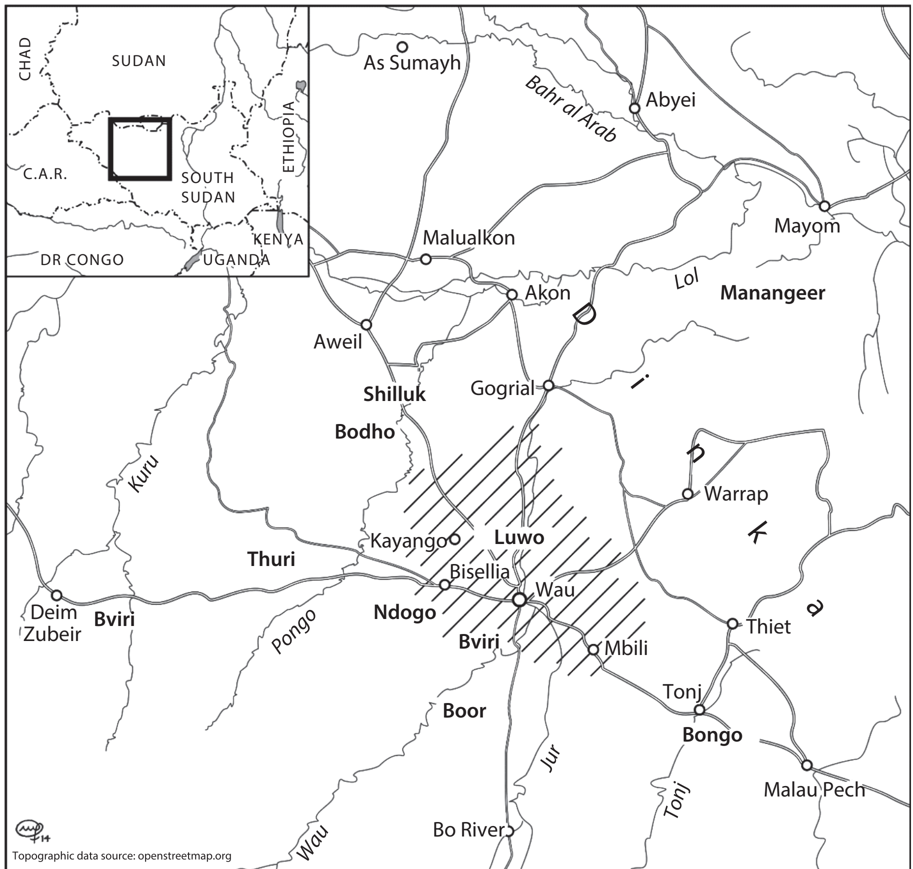
A census conducted in 1983 gives a figure of 80,000 speakers (Lewis et al. 2014), but this is a doubtful number. Most, if not all, speakers of Luwo are multilingual, and many have left their home areas as a consequence of the war and violent conflict that have affected the region in the past decades. Relocation to the villages wasn't always possible after the Sudanese secession in July 2011, and currently ongoing conflicts may contribute to further fragmentations of former communities. As a result, Luwo is not exclusively spoken in Southern Sudan, but is also used by diaspora communities in neighbouring countries, Europe and North America. Moreover, many of those who would identify themselves as Luwo do not actually speak the language, while other people, who would rather claim Dinka, Thuri, Ndogo or Bongo identities, do speak Luwo on a regular basis. The actual number of speakers may therefore be well above 80,000, or may have dropped below this in the course of the societal and political changes in Sudan. For a description of multilingualism and repertoires, refer to §16.1.

Principal Luwo settlements in Bahr el-Ghazal are Mbili and Kayango, which are also identified by speakers as the main dialect areas. There are a number of villages located between Mbili and Tonj, among them Boo, where the people who contributed to the present volume come from. Networking with other communities, trade, and educational and professional mobility seem to have reached far beyond these rural settlements. Luwo is not, therefore, a language of a small-scale rural community, but has also been present in towns and cities since the beginning of the 19th century. Significant communities have also existed in Khartoum and Omdurman throughout the 20th century, in particular in its last decades when speakers of various Nilotic languages resided there as displaced people and war refugees.

The core area of Luwo and contiguous languages is illustrated on Map 1.[1]

Luwo is one of several Western Nilotic languages spoken in the region. Its closest relatives in terms of their genetic classification are the Northern Lwoo languages Thuri, Shilluk and Boor, as well as Anywa and Päri, which are, however, spoken further away. Other Western Nilotic languages, albeit not of the Lwoo branch, spoken in the area are two Dinka varieties, namely Agar and Rek. For other contact languages, refer to §16.1 and §16.4.

1. It needs to be kept in mind that these languages are spoken in areas that have been severely damaged by civil war during the last 40 to 50 years. Since the map is based on my own as well as older sources, such as Santandrea (1946), it only shows the approximate location of these communities.



Map 1. Location of Luwo

As a Western Nilotic language, Luwo is a member of the Nilotic sub-family of Nilo-Saharan. The Lwoo languages form one of the three branches within Western Nilotic, showing much coherence both in terms of the lexicon and grammatical properties. The group is occasionally also referred to as Luo or Lwo, but since these are also the names of single languages (Dholuo of Kenya and Tanzania, and Chopi of Uganda, respectively), the rather widely accepted term Lwoo is used here for the whole branch. Lwoo languages are spoken in Sudan, Ethiopia, Uganda, Kongo, Kenya and Tanzania, and divide into a Northern and a Southern branch, whereby lexicostatistical and typological criteria account for the sub-classification.

The other two branches of Western Nilotic are Burun and Dinka-Nuer. The following figure illustrates the genetic relations of Luwo within Nilotic:

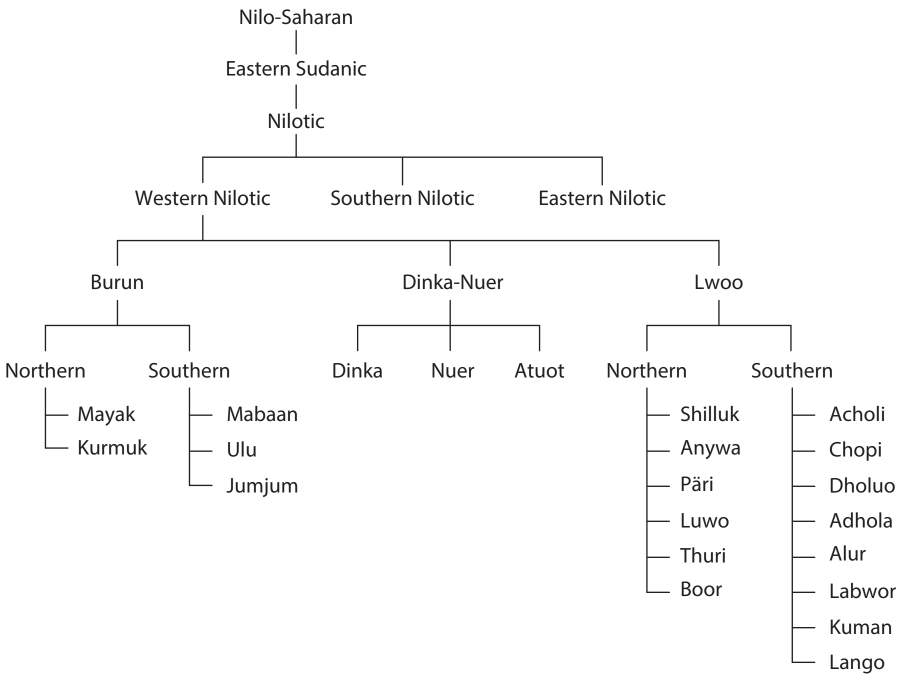


Figure 1. Classification of Western Nilotic (Bender 2000; Köhler 1955; Rottland 1981)

Rottland (1981), following Köhler's classificational model, also mentions the three Northern Lwoo languages Bodho-Dembo, Manangeer and Chol. According to my own investigations, none of these three languages is widely spoken anymore (see Storch 2005a for a survey). The Manangeer have largely been assimilated by the Dinka and now speak Dinka, and the Bodho-Dembo and Chol apparently speak Luwo.

1.1.1 Historical situation

The present geographical situation of the Lwoo languages, and the patterns of multilingual practices in the Luwo-speaking area in Bahr el-Ghazal, are both the result of vast and permanent migrations, which appear to have begun in the medieval period, if not earlier. As far as available data on climate events and local history suggest, migration started as a reaction to environmental change and the resulting scarcity of resources (Ehret, Coffman & Fliegelman 1974; Storch 2003, 2005a, 2006; Lüpke & Storch 2013). The most interesting source for a reconstruction of the history of these macro-events and their social consequences is probably the documentation of the Nile floods in the Nilometer of Rawda ("Roda")

in Cairo. Even in the Pharaonic era, the annual Nile floods were measured with the help of Nilometers, which were located along the Nile and were crucial for calculating the levy of taxes to be paid by the farmers – the higher the Nile flood, the higher were tax payments. While most Nilometers vanished with the decline of Ptolemaic Egypt, the one on Rawda continued to be used by the Arab caliphs, who by then resided in al-Fustat (Old Cairo). The Rawda Nilometer that is visible today is largely a construction of the ninth century, built after an older building collapsed following a particularly high flood. The documentation of annual Nile floods goes back to such incidents, and this flood data becomes extremely relevant for the history of Luwo and related languages from the eleventh to the thirteenth century. This period, which parallels a phase of extreme climate events in medieval Europe, is characterized by climate anomalies that were felt both in Egypt and further to the south and east (Eltahir & Wang 1999; Hassan 1981 & 2007; Herring 1979). Both geoarchaeological data and archive materials tell us that there were several decades of drought in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. These were punctuated by extreme and sudden floods. Hassan (2007: 101) remarks: "The transition from one state to the other was characterized by incidents of low, high or a succession of both low and high extreme floods. The cluster of extreme floods was detrimental causing famines and economic disasters that are unmatched over the last 2000 years". This caused famines that were a trauma remembered by future generations:

> According to Taqi el-Dine Al-Maqrizi (1365–1441), one of Egypt's most distinguished historians […], low floods and famine during the 10th century (962–967) forced people to eat dogs and cats until there was a shortage of dogs. As conditions worsened, people ate each other. (Hassan 2007: 103)

Two thirds of the population within the caliphate died of starvation and from epidemics caused by the polluted water that remained after the wells dried up and the Nile was reduced to a smelly creek.

The devastating droughts of Cairo can be directly linked to lengthy droughts at the Nile's headwaters, where the ancestors of the present speakers of Lwoo languages had lived. Basically organizing themselves as small-scale communities, they might have coped with the ongoing climate change for some time, but as farmers, fishermen and cattle herders, they would soon have depended on finding new areas in which they could settle. In his study on the history of the Acholi, Atkinson (1999) makes the interesting observation that oral histories of Lwoo-speaking groups permit a reconstruction of the time span of their southward migrations within the frame suggested by geoarchaeological research on Egypt (Hassan 2007). Hence, a connection between the precisely documented climate change in the northern Nile valley and the beginning of the diversification of the Lwoo group is likely.

This is not to say that Luwo, Shilluk, Anywa and so on got where they are today during the drought periods of the twelfth century, but this period in history is likely to mark the beginning of the formation of these communities and the Lwoo varieties they speak. A peculiar characteristic of the Northern Lwoo-speaking groups is that they all share a mythological story of their past. This story, usually referred to as the tale of Nyikang, is told in Shilluk (Westermann 1912; Evans Pritchard 1948), Anywa (for a full text see Reh 1996), Boor (Heyking 2013), and Luwo.[2] The story is about three brothers – called *ɲìkáŋ*, *d̪ɪ̀mɔ̤̀* and *àcóol* in Luwo – who, after their ancestors had migrated from the south, quarrelled about one of their children, who had taken a bead from his cousin and swallowed it. As the bead had to be returned to its owner, the belly of the child was cut open in order to retrieve it. After this happened, the conflict became unbearable, and the three brothers separated. Everybody went his own way, and while *ɲìkáŋ* became the forefather of the Shilluk and *àcóol* became the ancestor of the Acoli, *d̪ɪ̀mɔ̤̀* became the ancestor of the Luwo and Thuri. The three groups no longer shared a close relationship, and began to live with people of other origins. The story can be read as a testimony of how communal identities are created on the basis of disaster; one could go as far as to say that linguistic and cultural diversification have their roots in such historical phenomena, where a community loses practically its entire material basis and is forced to leave its homelands.

However, as far as historical research suggests, migrations took place over centuries. Reh (2002) reports how some of the Southern Lwoo groups developed strategies such as intermarrying with local groups, which is reflected in the historical semantics of the courting vocabulary. Her observation that the verb 'court' derives from an older root 'speak a foreign language' is a good indication that wives could have come from communities other than Lwoo. Examples provided by Reh (2002: 587) are:

(1.1)	Shilluk	d̪um, d̪umo	'to speak a strange language; to interpret'
		od̪umi	'interpreter'
	Anywa	d̪ʊ́ʊ́m	'to speak a foreign language'
	Acholi	dòòm	'foreign language, metaphor'
		làdoom	'interpreter'
	Lango	dumo	'to speak a foreign language, to interpret'
	Dholuo	d̪ʊm	'to speak in a foreign language'
	Alur	d̪ʊ̀mɔ̀	'to speak a language; to ask in marriage'
		d̪ʊ̀míɾɪ	'to speak fluently; to court, to seek each other as marriage partners'

2. Speakers of Thuri and Päri claim to have this story as well, and it is widely attested for Acholi.

Such practices also suggest that, at the time of the Western Nilotic expansions into Bantu-speaking and Eastern Sudanic areas, Lwoo-speaking, small-scale communities were exogamous, dynamic communities employing multilingual practices on a daily basis. The onward migrations, as described by Atkinson (1999), are also characterized by frequent split-offs of sub-groups, and emigration away from political centres. This process, described by Kopytoff (1987), is the principle of conflict resolution on the African Frontier: once a group had lost out in a competition over power or resources, it was better to leave and found a new polity or settlement elsewhere. Such newly established settlements would only then acquire power if new adherents could be attracted to settle among the first-comers. Kopytoff describes this process as a constant production of frontiersmen and new frontiers. Communities would always fall apart again, and settling among a group remained a preliminary solution.

These social practices, in combination with a climate-driven need to relocate, must have been important motivations for people to remain flexible and culturally open. As can be seen in (§16.1.1), an extreme form of openness towards others is indeed one of the most conspicuous features of Luwo sociocultural praxis and ideology. Moreover, this picture of the history of Lwoo-speaking groups provides a rather convincing argument for why their large-scale expansions occurred within a relatively short time span, and why Lwoo languages appear to be lexically quite homogenous[3] (Reh 1985; Heusing 2004) and at the same time are so diverse typologically (Storch 2005a). The migrations and social interactions within the African Frontier have not only resulted in the rise of new languages, such as the Southern Lwoo languages Alur, Labwor, Adhola, Kumam and Lango, but also in the creation of diversified repertoires used by different people in different locations. These repertoires are a feature of different contact scenarios (see §16.4 for contact in Luwo), and the respectively shared linguistic practices within the different communities have resulted in Labwor developing a morphology heavily influenced by Teso-Turkana languages (Storch 2005b), Boor resembling Ubangi languages (Heyking 2013; Storch 2003), Alur converging to Central Sudanic, and so on.

What is striking, however, is that all the Southern Lwoo languages (which are assumed to have developed through migrations and expansions out of the northern homelands of Lwoo) share certain morphological features that are not found in most Northern Lwoo languages. These include the presence of derived locative nouns that are marked with a prefix *pa-*, paired prefixed singular-plural genders on derived nouns, and the absence of two markers for general singulars (*-no, -do*).

3. So that some scholars have suggested classifying them as dialects of a single language (Reh 2002).

These three features of the nominal system are found in Southern Lwoo; in the north, they are only present in Luwo, Thuri and Boor (see Storch 2005a for a documentation). While Boor is likely to be a more recent development (Storch 2007; Heyking 2013, and below), Luwo and Thuri are better-established languages of the Northern Lwoo branch. Although this is not fully verifiable, it is very likely that the Luwo-Thuri cluster represents a kind of linguistic junction, from which the great Southern Luwo expansions took off, perhaps along the Jur River into the Nile valley and Great Lakes region. Luwo has, at some time in its history, innovated a particular set of nominal derivation strategies, while Anywa, Shilluk and Päri remained more conservative in this respect.[4] The distribution of place names and locatives with *pa-* suggests that, if Luwo was the starting point of this morphological innovation, the ancestors of the present Southern Lwoo languages were split-offs of this language.

Today, in the Acholi-speaking regions, as well as the more southerly Lwoo areas of Central Uganda and Western Kenya, numerous toponyms with *pa-* are found, and Alur, Lango, Acoli, and Adhola also have locatives with *pa-*. Examples are:

(1.2) *pa-ábúr*
LOC-antelope.SP
'place of the antelope-clan' (Luwo; toponym)

pà-ráà
LOC-hippo
'hippo-clan area' (Acholi; toponym)

latin pa-co
child LOC-people
'Small Home' (Lango; name of a restaurant along Kampala-Jinja road)

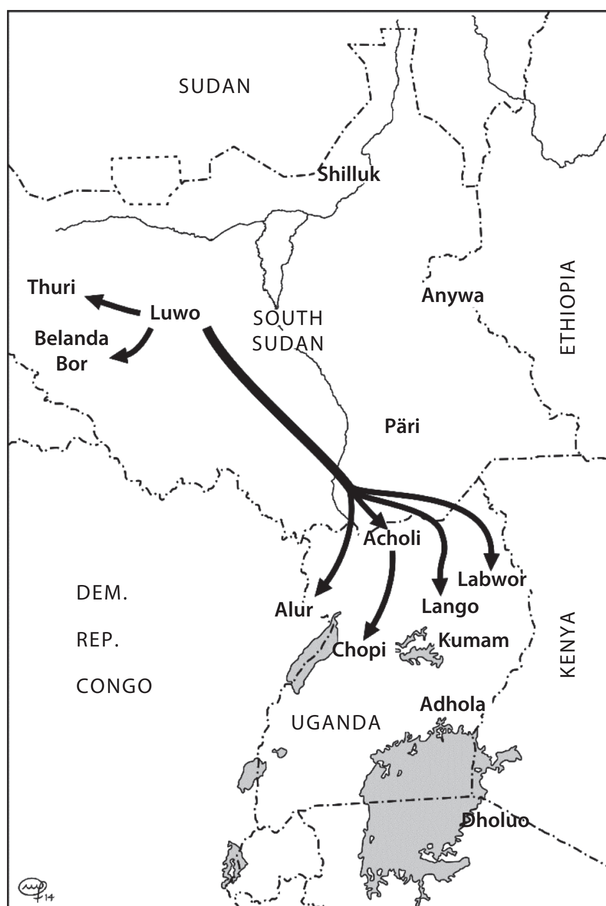
The second above-mentioned feature, paired prefixed genders, is a very significant property of Southern Lwoo languages, which has been attributed to language contact with Bantu (Dimmendaal 2001; see §16.4 for a detailed discussion). Although Anywa, Päri and Shilluk also use prefixes for derivation, there are no singular-plural pairings of prefixes, as grammaticalization of head nouns has not reached a stage where both number-marked forms, singular and plural, of the underlying noun are used as prefixes. But in Luwo and Thuri (where it has been reduced), prefixing of grammaticalized nouns does occur. The prefixed secondary nouns inflect for number, which is indicated by the prefix, not necessarily the suffix. Thus, the

4. They construct locatives by means of *ka*(*r*)- or *wot-*, which are grammaticalisations of 'place of', while Dinka-Nuer and Burun do not exhibit any locative prefixes at all.

technique of using the singular and plural forms of an underlying, grammaticalized noun in derivation and number marking is already found in Luwo and Thuri, and is therefore not an innovation of Southern Lwoo languages through contact with Bantu.

Finally, the absence of *-NO* and *-DO* general singular markers is a very distinctive feature of the noun morphology in Luwo, Thuri and Belanda Bor. While Shilluk, Anywa and Päri still exhibit a relatively large variety of singular suffixes, the other three members of Northern Lwoo do not. Precisely these suffixes are also missing in Southern Lwoo, which I claim is the result of the retention of the underlying Luwo system.

A possible scenario of the historical expansions (based on Storch 2005a and Ogot 1996) is presented in Map 2:



Map 2. A scenario of the Lwoo expansions

The sociohistorical context of Luwo itself can be understood with the help of other historical sources as well, which are, besides oral history and linguistic data, written documents produced by missionaries, travelers, ethnographers and colonial administrators. Western sources on the Luwo area probably begin with missionary work. One important motivation for this was without doubt the intensification of the slave-trade in Egypt and Sudan under the rule of the Ottoman Empire. Particularly with the arrival of the Comboni Fathers, an Italian congregation based in Verona, who operated first in the slave markets of Cairo and then ran stations in the Sudan, with the plan to "regenerate Africa by means of Africans" (Pierli et al. 1998: 11), missionary presence in Southern Sudan became significant. This resulted in the extensive linguistic documentation of a number of Lwoo languages (e.g. Crazzolara 1950–54; Santandrea 1946; see also §1.2 below). With the establishment of mission stations, schools and welfare projects for liberated slaves, Luwo became a local *lingua franca* around the settlement of Wau (which by then was one of the more important slave-traders camps in Bahr el-Ghazal (Burr & Collins 1994)). Luwo was used in schools operated by the Comboni Fathers and served as a medium of alphabetization in the early 20th century.

Subsequently, ethnographic and linguistic research was conducted by scholars such as Evans-Pritchard and Tucker (commissioned by the colonial administration), and in the first half of the 20th century a number of insightful compilations of historical data and in-depth studies alike were produced. They reveal that the migrations of the 19th and early 20th centuries, which had to do with attempts to escape from slave-raiders, resulted in other split-offs and again new languages, like Boor (Storch 2003). According to local accounts, interpreted by Tucker (1931: 50), the Luwo settled around Aweil, where they lived with other groups. Slave raids later caused a large group of them to break away and migrate southwards, where they settled west of the Dinka country. The Dinka pejoratively called them *jùur* (SG *júr*) 'strangers', and refused to let them settle among them or to intermarry with them. The Luwo were, rather, taken as slaves by the Dinka, who regarded them not only as inferior since they had no cattle, but also seem to have depended on them as blacksmiths. Tucker claims that some Luwo-speaking groups eventually came under the rule of Dinka chiefs and partly assimilated to the Dinka. He further states, about the relationships between these communities (op. cit.: 50):

> The Jur are excellent iron-workers, and still supply the Dinka with spears, where the two races meet. Although still regarded as the inferior race, they intermarry to a certain extent with the Dinka, the woman taking the nationality of her husband; there is also a fair amount of assimilation of Dinka customs (e.g. the tribal marking of boys' heads). They answer readily to the name of 'Jur' (the name no longer carrying with it its former insult), but among themselves they are still the *Jo Luo*.

Contemporary Luwo speakers would not confirm Tucker's statement about readily answering to the name Jur (see §16.2), but consistently call themselves Luwo.

Tucker also reports that the Thuri (or 'Shatt', as he also calls them) split from the Luwo during that time and settled west of them, where they basically lived from hunting and farming. Other groups who split off from the Luwo were the Manangeer, who largely became assimilated by the Dinka and now speak Dinka (author's field data), and the Demo or Dembo, who reportedly speak Luwo. The Boor are the fourth group of closely related Northern Lwoo-speaking communities to have emigrated from the Luwo only around the 19th century. Evans-Pritchard (1931: 42) suggests that there were several waves of southward migrations and that the last groups to reach the Boor area met the refugees that had fled from the violent Zande expansions in central Africa (Evans-Pritchard 1931). The Luwo themselves – in spite of their association with other groups during their earlier migrations – remained a comparatively large group. Identity formation as an ethnic entity, however, may not have taken place before the separation of the various groups (Thuri, Boor, Bodho, Manangeer), a consequence of social pressure playing a role. This led to a tendency to close-knit societies and also to a preference for endogamy:

> The Jur, on the whole, like to marry in their own tribe: intermarrying between the eastern and the western Jur goes on, but it is not common, With regard to the eastern Jur, once (say from 1890 to 1920) a good few of them used to take Belanda, Bongo and even Zande women as second or third wives, but at present this custom is being dropped off. (Santandrea 1945: 240)

Wheeler (1997) describes the establishment of ethnic identities and imagined boundaries between them as a result of crisis, war, slavery and social pressure during the 19th as well as much of the 20th century (when violent conflict also led to cases of martyrdom and far-reaching Christianization movements). Contemporary Luwo-speaking communities are ascribed Luwo identities, which they can also use as symbolic capital for the establishment of political power, fund-raising, and so on. Current standardization tendencies, the establishment of Luwo as a language used in the classroom in South Sudan, and the creation of a Luwo New Testament (in 2003) go in line with such processes of sociopolitical consolidation.

1.2 Research history and documentation

1.2.1 Missionary linguistics

Luwo is rather poorly studied, despite the fact that its social and linguistic history is of some importance to the historical and sociolinguistic evaluation of Lwoo

as a whole. However, many of the available sources are of relatively high quality, providing an interesting view into the language history of the past century, as well as the typological properties of Luwo. First of all, there are two monographs, one being Ghawi (1925), which contains a short description of the phoneme inventory, the basic morphological structures and the syntax of Luwo.[5] The basic descriptions and analyses are in principle those that are also presented in other early sources on Luwo, but as far as the quality of the material is concerned, there seem to be a number of shortcomings. Ghawi only spent a short time in Bahr el-Ghazal, and his transcription and analysis of Luwo is rather inadequate. It is likely that this small volume of only 42 pages was written as a language guide to the area, rather than as a scholarly contribution. It seems as if both the authors of such volumes and their consultants were interested in making the language under study simple and its structures transparent, rather than describing it in its complex entirety; this was a strategy that fairly often resulted in simplified representations (Irvine 2008).

The second monograph is a sketchy grammar by the Comboni Father P. Stefano Santandrea.[6] His *Grammatichetta Giur* (1946) contains two slightly disparate parts, namely one with "elementary findings" (*nozioni elementari*), and another one with "notes on the constructions of Jur and miscellaneous items" (*note sulla costruzione jur e varie*). The first part uses Ghawi's book as a blueprint and presents rich data and clear, transparent analyses of the phonology and orthography, and of what Santandrea identifies as nouns, adjectives, pronouns, verbs, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions and interjections. The entire description is organized very much like a classical Latin grammar, corresponding to standard practice of missionary linguistics of the period. Consequently, state verbs are treated as adjectives, aspect forms as tenses, and so on. But Santandrea was obviously able to obtain deep insights into Luwo, and seems to have been quite knowledgeable about the language; he therefore presents excellent data, and very useful analyses of idiomatic language and some discourse features of Luwo. The second part is a bit difficult to use, as it unsystematically assembles sections on various features, such as phonological variation and verb paradigms. It does, however, contain large passages of Luwo texts. Today, this collection of materials serves as an insightful

5. The volume is difficult to find, but was finally retrieved by Don Killian, who was so kind as to make his copy available to me.

6. 1904–1990. Born in Imola, Santandrea joined the Comboni Mission at Verona in 1927. He was sent to Wau in the Sudan in 1928 and remained there until 1936, and then stayed in Dem Zubeir until 1955 (Contran 1991). His many contributions to the history, languages and cultures of the Bahr el-Ghazal belong to the Comboni Mission's most prolific contributions to African Studies.