

Chuukese (aka Trukese) is a Trukic language, spoken by about 20,000 speakers in Chuuk, the largest state of the FSM in Micronesia (Spencer 1996; Lynch 1998). Many European languages, such as French, Russian, etc., utilize plural number to express politeness (*Vous*_[you.PL] *êtes*_[be.2PL] *loyal*_[loyal.SG] 'You (a single polite addressee) are loyal.'). This research on Chuukese agreement and phi-features, based on my own data collection from native speakers, finds that Chuukese also possesses polite plurals as well.¹ This paper illustrates and analyzes the agreement patterns including the case of polite plurals in Chuukese.

Chuukese verbs mark person and number for their subjects and objects (1).² The first person plural is divided into inclusive (including and addressee) versus exclusive (excluding any addressee), as given in (2).

I find that all three person features in Chuukese employ a different number feature from their usual meaning for politeness. As shown in (3), any linguistic entity with a plural phi-feature can have a polite interpretation towards a single individual. I argue that pronouns and subject/object markings in Chuukese possess formal number features, and hence the predicates agree syntactically with their agreement triggers. However, the ones in plural have an ambiguous meaning of an aggregate vs. a single polite referent.

I also discusses the differences between subject markings and object markings on verbs. Interestingly, an object argument of transitive verbs is not required to be overt, unlike a subject argument. The referent of the unexpressed object is understood from its discourse context or its referent is indefinite and non-specific (1d). I explain this discrepancy between subject and object arguments by the optional incorporated object arguments embedded in the lexical entries of the transitive verbs.

Chuukese is a pro-drop language, and independent pronouns are used only with an emphasis. I suggest that Chuukese subject and object markings behave similarly to Chicheŵa discussed in Bresnan and Mchombo (1987) in that the subject markings (SM) are obligatory, whereas the object markings (OM) are not, as shown in (1); when the OM occurs, there cannot be another nominal or pronominal object (see (1f-f')). I apply Bresnan and Mchombo's (1987) analysis to Chuukese that the SMs can be either an agreement marker or the grammatical subject argument itself, whereas the OMs are always a grammatical object argument when they appear, which explains ungrammaticality of the sentence in (1f').

(1) a. (Kich) si-sani kangit. (cf. *Kich sani kangit.)
 1PL.INCL SM.1.INCL.PL-like mango
 'We (including an addressee) like mangoes.'

b. (En) ke-sani kangit. (cf. *En sani kangit.)
 2SG SM.2SG-like mango
 'You (SG) like mangoes.'

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² Although the given examples are spelled out by native speakers, some people might not agree with how they are transcribed here since Chuukese orthography is still in debate.

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c. (Ii) / John e-sani kangit. (cf. *Ii sani kangit. or *John sani kangit.)
 3SG / John SM.3SG-like mango.
 'She or he / John likes mangoes.'

d. (Ir) re-sani kangit. (cf. *Ir sani kangit.)
 3PL SM.3PL-like mango
 'They like mangoes.'

e. (Ngang) u-san-uk.
 1SG SM.1SG-like-OM.2SG
 'I like you.'

e'. (Ngang) u-sani-r
 1PL SM.1SG-like-OM.3PL
 'I like them.'

f. (Ngang) u-sani John me Mary.
 1SG SM.1SG-like J. and M.
 'I like John and Mary.'

f'. *(Ngang) u-sani-r John me Mary.
 1SG SM.1SG-like-OM.3PL J. and M.

(2) a. Independent pronouns (Subject or Object)

	SG	PL	
1	ngang	Inclusive	kich
		Exclusive	am
2	en	ami	
3	ii	ir	

b. Subject makings

	SG	PL	
1	u/uwa-	Inclusive	si/sa-
		Exclusive	ai/aiwa-
2	ke/ka-	ou/ouwa-	
3	e/a-	re/ra-	

c. Object markings

	SG	PL	
1	-ei	Inclusive	-kich
		Exclusive	-kem
2	-uk	-kemi	
3	-∅	-(i)r	

d. Possessive suffixes

	SG	PL	
1	-ei	Inclusive	-ach
		Exclusive	-em
2	-om	-emi	
3	-an	-er	

(3) a. (**Am**) ai-pwe anisi John
 1PL.EXCL SM.1EXCL.PL/1.SG.POLITE-will help John
 'We[EXCL] will help John.' or 'I[POLITE] will help John.'

b. John e-pwe anisi-**kemi**
 John SM.3SG-will help-OM.2PL/2SG.POLITE
 'John will help you[PL].' or 'John will help you[SG.POLITE].'

c. Nouch tokter re-pwe anisi John
 1PL.INCL.POSS doctor SM.3PL/3SG.POLITE-will help John
 'The doctor [POLITE] or doctors will help John.'

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