

Possessives as negative markers in Bantu

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- negation in Bantu languages
- possessives as negatives in Bantu: description
- (possessive) pronouns as negatives beyond Bantu: historical significance?
- how do possessives end up as negatives?
- prohibitives: forerunners or trailers

Bantu negation

clitic + [**Neg-SC-Neg**-TM1-TM2[-OC-VB-Fi]] + clitic

- Pre-initial **Neg**

a. **kha**-u-ń-khol-á

Neg-SC-TM-VB-Fi

‘You are not taking’

(P312 Shangaci)

- **kha** < *nkà (Kamba Muzenga 1981)
- unmarked main clause (Güldemann 1999)

- Post-initial **Neg**

b. u-**si**-khol-e

SC-Neg-VB-Fi

‘Do not take!’

(P312 Shangaci)

- **si** < *ti (Kamba Muzenga 1981)
- marked clause types (Güldemann 1999)

Bantu negation

Double negation: post-final **NEG2**

kà-kùpííl-éè-pó mwáàná

NEG1.1-hit-Fi-**NEG2** 3.child

‘Father has not hit the child (at all)’

(L33A, Kabange Mukala pers. com.)

Bantu negation

Double negation: clause-final **NEG2**

mè n-síí-tìn-à

I 1sg-**NEG1**-write-Fi

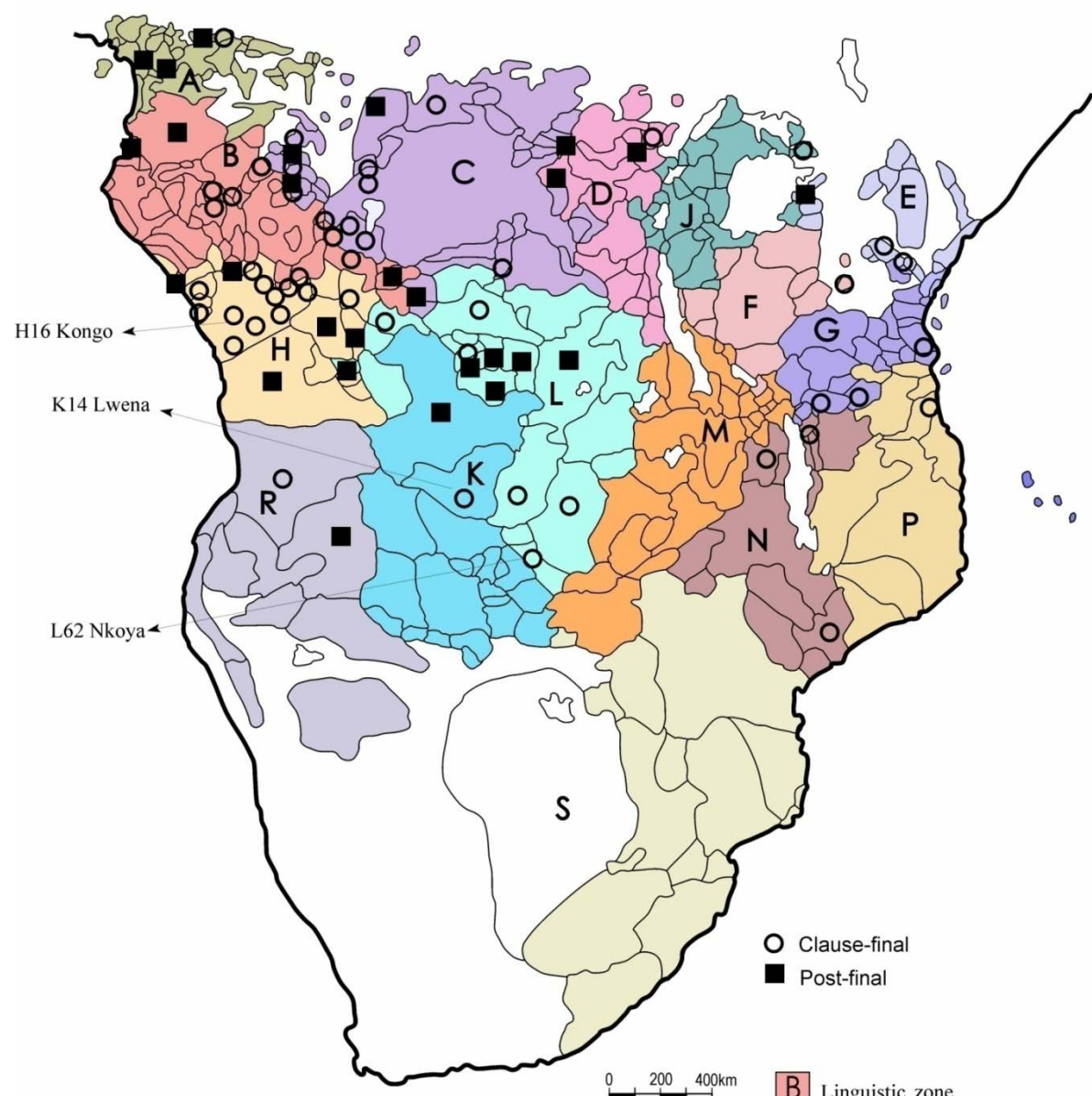
'I have not written a letter'

(H11, Nsayi 1984 : 155)

mùkáándá kò

3.letter NEG2

Bantu negation



Possessives as negatives in Bantu

Lengola D12 (Sibatu ikamanya 1977)

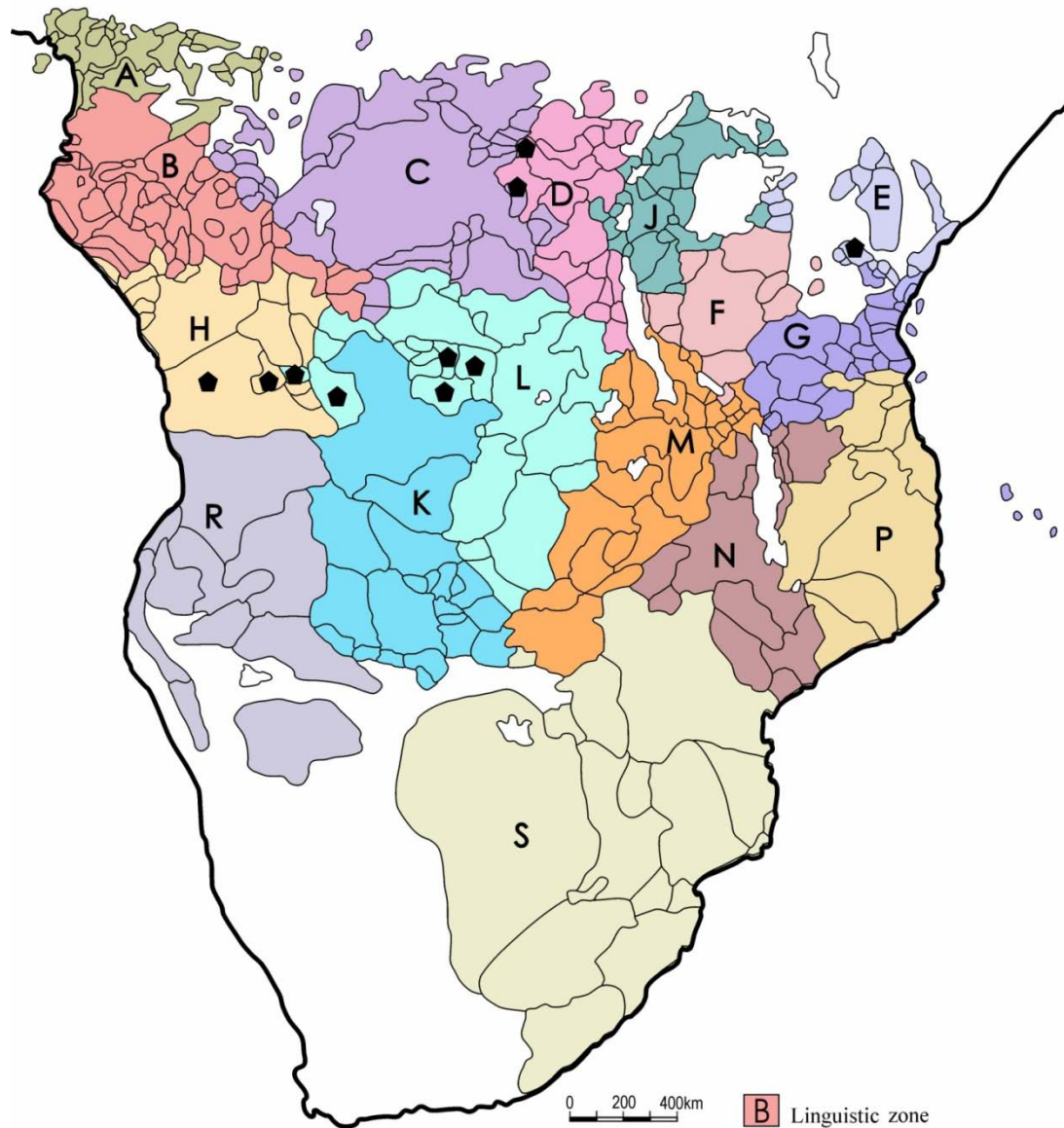
sílimáni	'I have not worked'
súlimáyi	'you have not worked'
sálimésé	'he has not worked'
túlimású	'we have not worked'
núlimánú	'you (pl) ...'
bálimábó	'they ...'

Possessives as negatives in Bantu

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Possessives as negatives in Bantu



Possessives as negatives in Bantu

- position
- agreement
- grammaticalized
- use frequency

Possessives as negatives in Bantu

- position: IAV
- agreement: agreement with SC > 3sg
- grammaticalized: optional >
conventional > grammaticalized
- use frequency: standard (but Kongo lgs)

Possessives as negatives **beyond** Bantu

1. Grassfields Bantu: Momo (& Ngemba)

□ Metta (Mihás 2009)

mò **kà** bèré-m η-gòb ‘I don’t have chickens’

w-ò **kà** ber-í η-gòb ‘she does not have chickens’

□ Ngie (Watters 2003)

wē-è **kī** kōm-ō má bəiù ‘he did not hit the dog’

Possessives as negatives **beyond** Bantu

1. Grassfields Bantu: Momo (& Ngemba)

□ Ngamambo (Asongwed 1980)

mà w-é **kû** ma dzugʌ m ‘I am not eating’

mbein mb-é **kù** mbà dzùgʌ wén

‘you (pl) are not eating’

Possessives as negatives **beyond** Bantu

2. Jukunoid

□ Kuteb (Koops 2010, Anyanwu 2012)

àwū kìm-wū cwúcwò bē

3sg fat-3sg again NEG

‘he’s not fat anymore’

Possessives as negatives **beyond** Bantu

3. Adamawa Ubangi

□Ma (Tucker & Bryan 1966, Dryer 2009)

tá-mú-dǎ su kúsa nyò ‘I do not eat rat’

ta-kɔ-dá su kusa ani ‘she does not eat rat’

Historical depth?

- no
- recent innovation in Bantu (Güldemann 1996, 2008, 2011, Nurse 2008): “arising from the functionally motivated process of negation reinforcement”
- independent developments & contact-induced grammaticalization

French

• NEG1

ne

• NEG1 + NEG2

ne ... pas

• NEG2

pas

a-tú-bynd-á bantu
'we are not taking people'
(Stappers 1973)

Bantu

• NEG1

D13 Mituku

•

súlimáyi
'you have not worked'

• NEG1 + NEG2

D12 Lengola

túlimású
'we have not worked'

• NEG2

D12 Lengola

Jespersen Cycles

French

- NEG1

ne

- NEG1 + NEG2

ne ... pas

- NEG2

pas

Bantu

- NEG1

D13 Mituku

•

NEG1 + X

- NEG1 + NEG2

D12 Lengola

- NEG2

D12 Lengola

Jespersen Cycles: X?

□ phonological strengthening (Meillet 1912, Jespersen 1917)

The history of negative expressions in various languages makes us witness the following curious fluctuation: **the original negative adverb is first weakened, then found insufficient and therefore strengthened**, generally through some additional word, and this in turn may be felt as the negative proper and may then in course of time be subject to the same development as the original word.

(Jespersen 1917: 4)

Jespersen Cycles: X?

□ pragmatic strengthening: NEG1 + X =
emphatic negation, and X typically is a
minimizer (“même pas un pas”) or a
generalizer (“pas du tout”)

Jespersen Cycles: X?

□ need to reconsider nature of pragmatic strengthening: Schwenter 2006: denial of salient discourse old proposition

Jespersen Cycles: X?

□ so X = minimizer, generalizer, negative answer particle, old negative marker, completive, partitive, inchoative, discourse marker (Creissels 2006, van der Auwera 2009, 2010, Schwenter 2006)

Possessives as X and NEG2

□ Enya D14

Negative verbal forms are often followed by possessive stems. For sure, these possessive stems express some kind of emphasis. (Spa 1973)

□ Kongo H16b

kizeyi ami nsamu wau ko
'I do not know this story'
= combined emphatic
pronoun (Laman 1912)

Possessives as X and NEG2

□ uses of possessives

Enya D14: 'an idea of intensity'
wá-tímból-ak-εi 'he turns'
wá-tímból-ak-ε-ánde 'he really turns'
(Spa 1973)

Ngamambo GB
'casual speech'?
(Asongwed 1980)

Kimbundu H21: 'emphatic
conjugation'
cf. aller vs s'en aller
(Chatelain 1889/90)

Possessives as X and NEG2

- uses of locative possessives

Kanincin L53A

ki-naa-búl-áán **pend** kwáám mwáan

'I have not at all hit the child'

Possessives as X and NEG2

- ❑ 'at his, ... place'

twa-y-el-a gw-andi 'we went to his place'

(Mbaganyi L22, Mutuakakenga 1985)

- ❑ contrastive focus on subject 'as for him, ...'

me mua-mǎn-a kuámi 'as for me, I am finished' (Beembe

H11, Nsayi 1984)

- ❑ contrastive focus

ŋ-kum-iní kwámo 'I arrived! (I thought I never would)'

(Ntandu H16g, Mfulani 1963)

Possessives as X and NEG2

❑ so: from some kind of focus to negative marker?

❑ cross-linguistic support: König & Vezzosi 2008

describe common path from possessive adjective to intensifier

Shangaci P31

atthú w-áawe t'

aampa

'the very people are

these' (POSS 3sg)

Prohibitives in Kongo languages

□ Laari H16f

ku-twá-andi

mw-áana

NEG1.2SG-hit-POSS.3SG 1-child

‘don’t hit the child!’

Prohibitives in Kongo languages

- ❑ forerunners?
- ❑ other path: grammaticalized politeness marker?

-possessives used in combination with directives in Kongo lgs (Laman 1912, Brusciotto): archaic with imperatives, 3SG grammaticalized with prohibitives, politeness?

Conclusion

- possessives as negative markers in Bantu:
 - description: IAV, from agreement with SC to 3sg, from optional to obligatory, standard negation
- recent innovation
- contrastive focus > negative marker?
- different path for prohibitives in Kongo languages
- optional elements!

Selected references

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