Possessives as negative markers in Bantu

Maud Devos
Royal Museum for Central Africa
maud.devos@africamuseum.be
• 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)
  b. kha < *nkà (Kamba Muzenga 1981)
- Post-initial Neg
  a. u-si-khol-e
     SC-Neg-VB-Fi
     ‘Do not take!’
     (P312 Shangaci)
  b. si < *ti (Kamba Muzenga 1981)
- unmarked main clause
  (Güldemann 1999)
- marked clause types
  (Güldemann 1999)
Bantu negation

Double negation: post-final **NEG2**

$kà$-$kù$pííl-ée-$pó$  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 \textbf{NEG2}

\textit{mè n-síí-tìn-à mùkáándá kò}

\textit{I 1sg-NEG1-write-Fi 3.letter \underline{NEG2}}

‘I have not written a letter’

\textit{(H11, Nsayi 1984 : 155)}
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
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- 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 (Mihas 2009)
  mò kà bère-m ñ-gòb ‘I don’t have chickens’
  w-ò kà ber-í ñ-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 ṁ ‘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-dă su kúsa nyɔ̀ ‘I do not eat rat’

ta-kɔ-da su kusa ani ‘she does not eat rat’
Historical depth?

• no


• independent developments & contact-induced grammaticalization
Bantu
• NEG1
D13 Mituku
• NEG1

a-tú-bỳnd-á bantu
‘we are not taking people’
(Stappers 1973)

French
• NEG1

ne

• NEG1 + NEG2
ne ... pas

• NEG2
pas

Bantu
• NEG2

D12 Lengola
• NEG1 + NEG2

túlimású
‘we have not worked’

D12 Lengola
• NEG2

súlimáyi
‘you have not worked’
Jespersen Cycles

French
- NEG1
  - ne
- NEG1 + NEG2
  - ne ... pas
- NEG2
  - pas

Bantu
- NEG1
  - D13 Mituku
  - •
- 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: \( \text{NEG}1 + X = \) 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 $X = \text{minimizer, generalizer, negative answer particle, old negative marker, completive, partitive, inchoative, discourse marker}$ (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-ɛi ‘he turns’
  wá-tímból-ak-ɛ-ánde ‘he really turns’ (Spa 1973)

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

  Ngamambo GB
  ‘casual speech’? (Asongwed 1980)
Possessives as X and NEG2

- uses of locative possessives

Kanincin L53A

ki-naa-búl-áaŋ 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-măn-a kuámi ‘as for me, I am finished’ (Beembe H11, Nsayi 1984)

- contrastive focus
  
  ē-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