

## Double negation in the Ubangian languages with particular reference to Zande

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Most Ubangian languages have double negation, with one negating element preceding or following the verb, while the other stands in clause final position. Despite this structural similarity the negative particles in the various languages are very different. In Zande, in main propositions, the first negator *nga*, follows the verb, and the second negator *te* comes at the end of the clause (1). Negation may be emphasized by the prepositional phrase *wa sa* 'like one' preceding *te*. The origin of *nga* is the homophonous copula, but that of *te* is not clear. It reminds of the Lingala negator *te*, which for historical reasons is not a likely source.

- (1) *Mi a-manga nga pai wa sa te.*  
1s.1 III-make NEG matter like one NEG  
I have done no wrong.

In subordinate clauses and in subjunctive propositions the first negator *nga* is likewise, but the second one is *ya*. The origin of this second clause final negator is likewise not known, but it is quite possible that both are "Wanderwörter".

- (2) *ko ni-ya fu-yo ka i mangi nga ni ya,*  
3m X-say for-3p SUB 3p make NEG ANAPH NEG  
he told them not to harm him,

In verbless clauses negation is indicated exclusively by the clause final marker *te*. According to the model of Jespersen's cycle it might be assumed that the initial negator *nga* was could optionally be strengthened by the second, clause final negator, *te*, which then became part of an obligatory discontinuous negation marking, and that in the finally, the initial negation marker is in the process of getting lost. One might hypothesize that eventually the negator *nga* is dropped even with verbal predicates, and that the clause final *te* become the only negator (3, 4). This step has, however, not yet been observed.

- (3) *Mi na mamu rogo gu zagino re te ka manga sunge.*  
1s.1 with chance in DEF.D world DEM NEG SUB make work  
Je n'ai pas de chance dans ce monde-ci pour travailler.

- (4) *Ono pai ti-ni te, mbiko wa mi na-gbundo-ko.*  
but matter at-ANAPH NEG because like 1s.1 II-mutilate-3m  
However, no matter, seeing that I have mutilated him.

Furthermore, the loss of the initial negation marker cannot be observed in subordinate and subjunctive clauses, i.e. *ya* is apparently never the sole negation particle. Somewhat striking are a few examples where verbs are negated by *nga*, but where there is no clause final negator (5, 6).

- (5) *a-ba-dia-yo a-ida nga i momu ku-ali wa a-kumba,*  
PL-big-wife-3p III-love NEG 3p lough DIR-up like PL-man  
Their lovers did not approve of their laughing loud like men,

- (6) *'ako na-ngbagbati gu kumba re,*  
oh II-stingy DEF.D man DEM  
Oh how stingy is that man,

*ka tu nga kina tutu-e ti-e fu gbia.'*  
 SUB dip NEG just dip.RED-INAN at-INAN for noble  
 not to draw a draught for a prince."

Given the fact that the clause final negators have had negative meaning from the very beginning, while *nga* is derived from the copula, which has a positive meaning, it appears conceivable that Jespersen's cycle does not apply to Zande, but that the clause final negators have been the initial ones which were later strengthened by the post verbal negator.

There is not yet an answer to this question, but we hope to find one which we can present at WOCAL7.

#### Abbreviations

ANAPH	anphoric pronoun
COP	copula
DEF.D	distant definite marker
DEM	demonstrative
INAN	inanimate gender
NEG	negator
PL	plural
RED	reduplication
SEQ	sequence marker
SUB	subordinator
1s.1	1 <sup>st</sup> singular pronoun or series 1
3m	3 <sup>rd</sup> masculine pronoun
3p	3 <sup>rd</sup> plural pronoun
II, III, X	TAM-categories according to Boyd