WHERE ARE THE STAGE I ARTICLES?

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- The analysis of *í-* in Basaa A43a (Jenks, Makasso & Hyman 2017) vs. Eton A71 (Van de Velde 2017): definiteness vs. construct form.

Basaa (A43a)

(1) a.

mɛ	ŋ́	ꜜgwɛ́s	mût	(nú)	[a	yé	mbóm]
1SG	PR	like	1.person	1.REL	1.SBJ	COP	9.big

'I like a person that is big/important.'

b. mɛ ŋ́ ꜜgwɛ́s í-mut (nú) [a yé mbóm]

'I like the person that is big/important.'

- Van de Velde (2017) notes that the augment in Eton A71 does not express a semantic contrast, and expresses scepticism that it could express any such contrast in "neighboring languages."

When can you say that a language has definite articles?

A. As soon as it has a marker that can signal familiarity, uniqueness or any other notion that has been subsumed under definiteness

B. Only when definiteness is a grammatical category in the language, i.e. when every nominal expression is obligatorily either grammatically definite or not

"Thus the true difference between languages is not in what may or may not be expressed but in what must or must not be conveyed by the speakers." (Jakobson 1959:492 "Boas' view of grammatical meaning")

Russian

(2) Ja   napisal   prijatelju
     1SG   write:PFV:PST:SG:M   friend[M]:SG.DAT
     'I wrote a/the friend'

"The notion of grammatical meaning is best defined via the notion of obligatoriness: a meaning is grammatical in a given language if the speaker cannot choose to leave it unexpressed. Strictly speaking, of course, it is not the meaning itself which is grammatical but a set of mutually exclusive meanings, a grammatical category, to which that meaning belongs (cf. Plungian 2000:107)." (Idiatov 2008:155)

- obligatoriness necessarily implies paradigmaticity and equipollent oppositions

- A given meaning is grammatical only with respect to a particular linguistic system. It cannot be grammatical a priori, universally.

A recent workshop (Bantu 8, 2021) *Definiteness and specificity in languages with bare nouns: the case of Bantu*

"a long-standing cross-linguistic question regarding how bare nouns are interpreted: do they have a full range of interpretations as definites, indefinites, or both? The semantic aspects of this question have received more attention than the pragmatics of use, and the question is certainly underexplored for Bantu languages. (…) For Bantu languages, there are indications that a bare noun can be systematically ambiguous between definite and indefinite readings."

(Bloom Ström, van der Wal, Asiimwe & Zeller 2021)

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1WM24CGpO5TGiH0q8xkgmaPiQACLMKxdp/view

In how many ways is a simple English utterance like (3) ambiguous?

(3)   Peter gave a great talk.

Greenberg (1978) *How does a language acquire gender markers?*

Diachronic scenario for the emergence of gender markers

➢ No morphological marker (free demonstrative)

➢ definite article (Stage I)

➢ non-generic article (Stage II)

➢ class marker / nominal marker (Stage III)

DEM > Stage I > Stage II > Stage III

Stage I is only marginally attested in the Niger-Congo languages, because definiteness is rarely (never?) a grammatical category in Niger-Congo.

Many Bantu languages have Stage II ("augment") and Stage III ("class prefix") articles.

(4)   Rundi JD62 (Meeussen 1959: 71)

    ù-mùù-ntù / à-bàà-ntù   'person/s'   class 1/2

    ì-kǐì-ntù / ì-bǐì-ntù   'thing/s'   class 7/8

The augment is a Stage II article in most Bantu languages that have augments, i.e. its presence is the default situation. The conditions of its absence can be listed.

- One typical context is where nouns are not used to refer.

Zulu (S42)

(5)   umuntu > muntu 'O person!'

Bemba (M42)

(6)   uyu   u-muu-ntu   muu-puupu
      DEM$_1$ AUG-1-person   1 -thief
      'This person is a thief.'

Gusii (JE42)

(7)   obotuko 'night' > botuko 'at night'

Conversely, the augment can be used to derive referring expressions from modifying elements:

(8)   Nande JD42 (Valinande 1984: 642, 709, 714)

    a. ɔ̀-mù-kìrá ɣw-áː-yɔ   'its tail' (class 9 possessor)

    b. ɔ́-ɣw-áː-yɔ̀   'his one'

    c. ɔ̀-mù-tí mù-kúhî   'the short tree'

    d. ɔ̀-mù-kúhî   'the short one'

The conditioning for the (optional or obligatory) absence of the augment can also be syntactic, e.g. no augment on the object of negative verb forms, or on focused constituents.

(9)   Ganda JE15 (Hyman & Katamba 1993: 228)

    a. y-à-gúl-ìr-à   à-bá-ànà   è-bí-tábó

       SP$_1$-PST-buy-APPL-FV   AUG-2-child   AUG-8-book

       'He bought the children books.'

    b. y-à-gúl-ìr-à   bá-ànà   è-bí-tábó

       SP$_1$-PST-buy-APPL-FV   2-child   AUG-8-book

       'He bought THE CHILDREN books.'

(10)   Bemba M42 (Givón 2001)

a. a-a-som-ene   i-ci-tabo

SP$_1$-PST-read-PFV   AUG-7-book

'She read a/the book.'

b. *a-a-som-ene ci-tabo

*'She read a book (not a specific one).'

c. a-a-fwaay-ile   u-ku-soma   i-ci-tabo

SP$_1$-PST-want-PFV   AUG-15-read   AUG-7-book

'She wanted to read a/the book' (a specific book)

d. a-a-fwaay-ile   u-ku-soma   ci-tabo

SP$_1$-PST-want-PFV   AUG-15-read   7-book

'She wanted a book to read (any book).'

However, the augment has been analysed as a Stage I article, i.e. a marker of definiteness, in a very small number of Bantu languages, including Shingazidja (G44a), Dzamba (C322) and Orungu (B11b).

(11)   Shingazidja G44a (Patin 2017)

    a. ɲ-umɓá

        9-house

        'house'

    b. ye＝ɲ-umɓá

        AUG.9＝9-house

        'the house'

(12)   Shingazidja G44a (Patin 2017)

    a.   ze = m-ɓu̲ɗa   zí-nu   /   *m-ɓu̲ɗa zínu

       AUG.10 = 10-stick   10-DEM

       'these sticks'

    b. zi-nu   m-ɓú̲ɗa   /   *zinu ze = mɓú̲ɗa

       10-DEM   10-stick

       'these sticks'

Elsewhere, the augment is syntactically optional, and not used to signal specificity. In (13b) it appears to signal familiarity.

(13)   Shingazidja G44a (Patin 2017)

    a. ŋg-u-s<u>o</u>mo ʃ-ịyó,   *Lemizeˤr<u>á</u>b*

        IPFV-1-read 7-book *Les Misérables*

        'She reads a book, Les misérables.'

    b. ŋg-u-s<u>o</u>mw é=ʃ-ịyó,   *Lemizeˤr<u>á</u>b*

        IPFV-1-read AUG.7=7-book *Les Misérables*

        'She reads the book, Les misérables.'

Patin (2017) also gives an example of an augment allowing for situation-dependent covarying readings, showing that it can be used to signal uniqueness (Schwarz 2009, Dawson & Jenks 2023:114).

(14)   Shingazidja G44a (Patin 2017)

harimwá haina m-djí   tsi-woˈnw   é=fundi

inside   each   3-village 1.PER-see   AUG.1=1.teacher

'In every village, I met the imam.'

Three remarks regarding such exceptional examples of Stage I articles in the Bantu languages:

1) no textual evidence of their obligatory use with nominal expressions that are definite from a semantic-pragmatic point of view

2) evidence for their recent emergence

3) unexpected restrictions

It is unlikely that contemporary augments are all reflexes of a Proto-Bantu augment. Rather, there is evidence for cycles of erosion and renewal.

Shingazidja G44a (Patin 2017)

CV- augment in classes 5, 7, 8, 10, 15-18

long allomorphs in classes 5, 7 & 10

(15)   ze = ndóvu ~ (y)eze = ndóvu 'the elephants [cl. 10]'

Long allomorphs tend to appear in contexts where the augment is typically retained in the Bantu languages, suggesting that the "long allomorph" is a stacked form and the short (V= / CV=) allomorph the result of the reduction of a stacked form.

(16) Shingazidja G44a (Patin 2017)

e=ma-g<u>o</u>ndzí   n'=ezé=m-ɓ<u>e</u>

AUG.6=6-sheep and=AUG.10=10-cattle

'the sheep and the cows'

Also, the stacked form is sometimes used to signal emphasis or contrastivity.

(17) Shingazidja G44a (Patin 2017)

hawonó yele＝páha 'he saw THE CAT (not the rat)'

This is reminiscent of Nyakyusa, which has two paradigms of augments, a V- and a CV- paradigm.

(18) Nyakyusa M31 (Bastian Persohn, p.c.)

ʊ-mu-ndʊ   'the person'

ʊ-mu-ndʊ ʊ-jʊ   'this person'

jʊ-mu-ndʊ   'the very person'

In languages where the augment has been analyzed as a Stage I article:

- No evidence is available for their obligatory use in definite NPs

- They appear to be recent innovations

- They do not behave as the marker of a grammatical feature value

(19)   Shingazidja G44a (Patin 2017)

   a. ha-wono   n-dóvu

       1.PER-see   9/10-elephant

       'He saw an elephant/elephants.'

   b. ha-wonó   ze = !n-dóvu

       1.PER-see   AUG.10 = 10-elephant

       'He saw (the) elephants.'

There always appear to be contexts where definiteness distinctions are canceled, for instance:

- in Dzamba (C322), a relativised NP has to be augmented

- also in Dzamba (C322), modifiers are nominalized by means of the augment and such nominalizations do not allow definiteness distinctions, e.g. 'the big one' versus 'a big one'

- in Orungu (B11b), N1 and N2 in a genitive construction have to be either both definite or both indefinite.

- **Is definiteness as a feature needed elsewhere in the grammar?**

  Doke (1997:299) on object indexation in Zulu: "There are cases when the substantival object is expressed and the objectival concord may be expressed or not. In the former case the nearest approach to the significance of the definite article in Zulu is conveyed."

(20)   Zulu (S42)

  a. Ngi-bon-a   u-mu-ntu.
      1S-see-FV   AUG-1-person
      'I see a person.'

  b. Ngi-ya-m-bon-a   u-mu-ntu.
      1S-DJ-1.OM-see-FV   AUG-1-person
      'I see the person.'

Zeller (2021), after applying a number of tests concludes: "Object-marked NPs in Zulu are neither obligatorily definite nor obligatorily specific."

Zulu (S42)

(21) U-John   u-dl-a   i-aphula,
      AUG-1a.John   1.SM-eat-FV   AUG-5.apple

      futhi u-Mary   u-dl-a   i-aphula.
      and   AUG-1a.Mary   1.SM-eat-FV   AUG-5.apple

      'John is eating an apple, and Mary is eating an apple.' (different apples)

(22) U-John   u-ya-li-dl-a   i-aphula,
      AUG-1a.John   1.SM-DJ-5.OM-eat-FV   AUG-5.apple

      futhi u-Mary   u-ya-li-dl-a   i-aphula.
      and   AUG-1a.Mary   1.SM-DJ-5.OM-eat-FV   AUG-5.apple

      'John is eating an apple, and Mary is eating an apple.' (different apples)

Interim conclusion re Bantu:

- Evidence for the emergence of new determiners of demonstrative origin ("augments");

- Huge potential for the emergence of definite articles, Stage I in Greenberg's scenario;

- But this never clearly materializes, Stage I appears to be skipped (after perhaps being briefly played with);

- Arguably, because there is no target for the development of a Stage I article: definiteness is not a grammatical category in the Bantu languages.
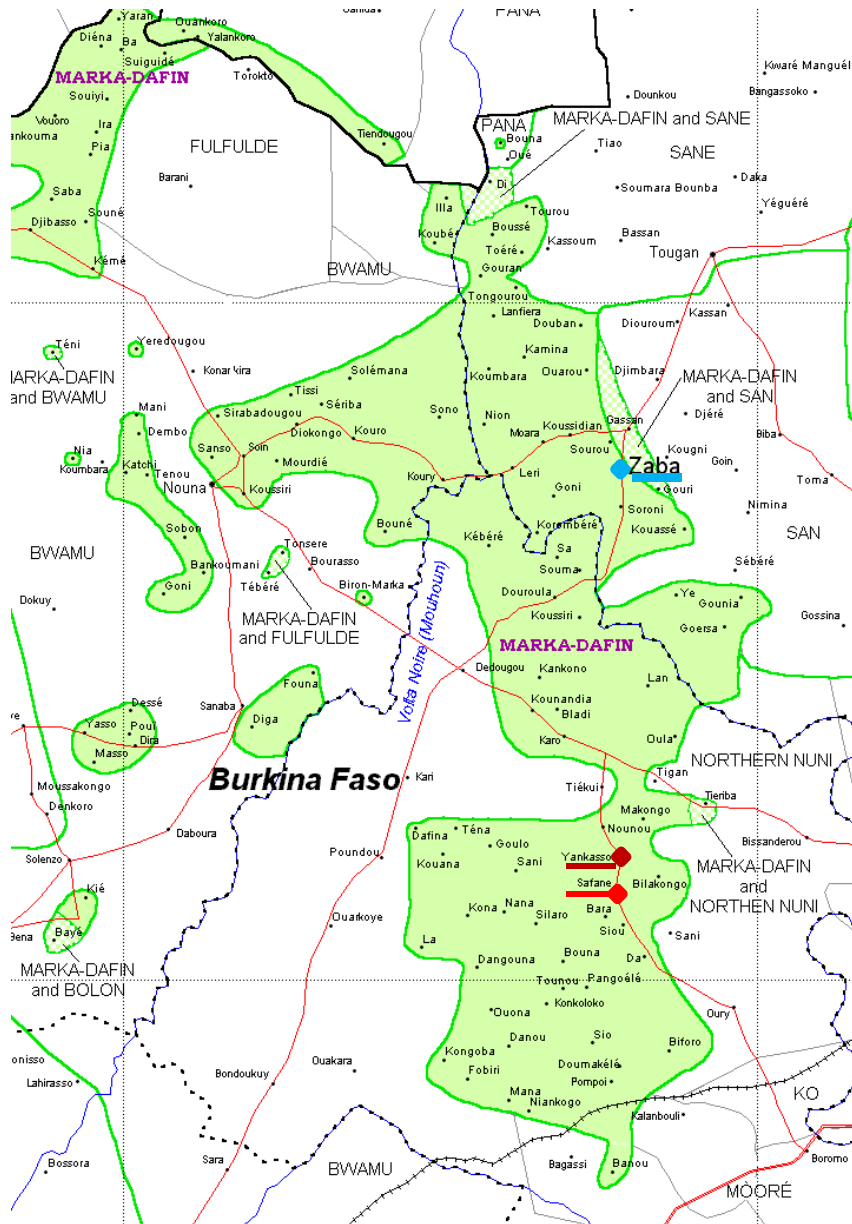
- Mande > Western Mande > Central Mande > Manding > Eastern Manding > Marka (aka Marka-Dafin)

Manding
- Manding (West)
- Bolon (East)
- Marka-Dafin (East)
- North-Eastern (East)
- South-Eastern (East)
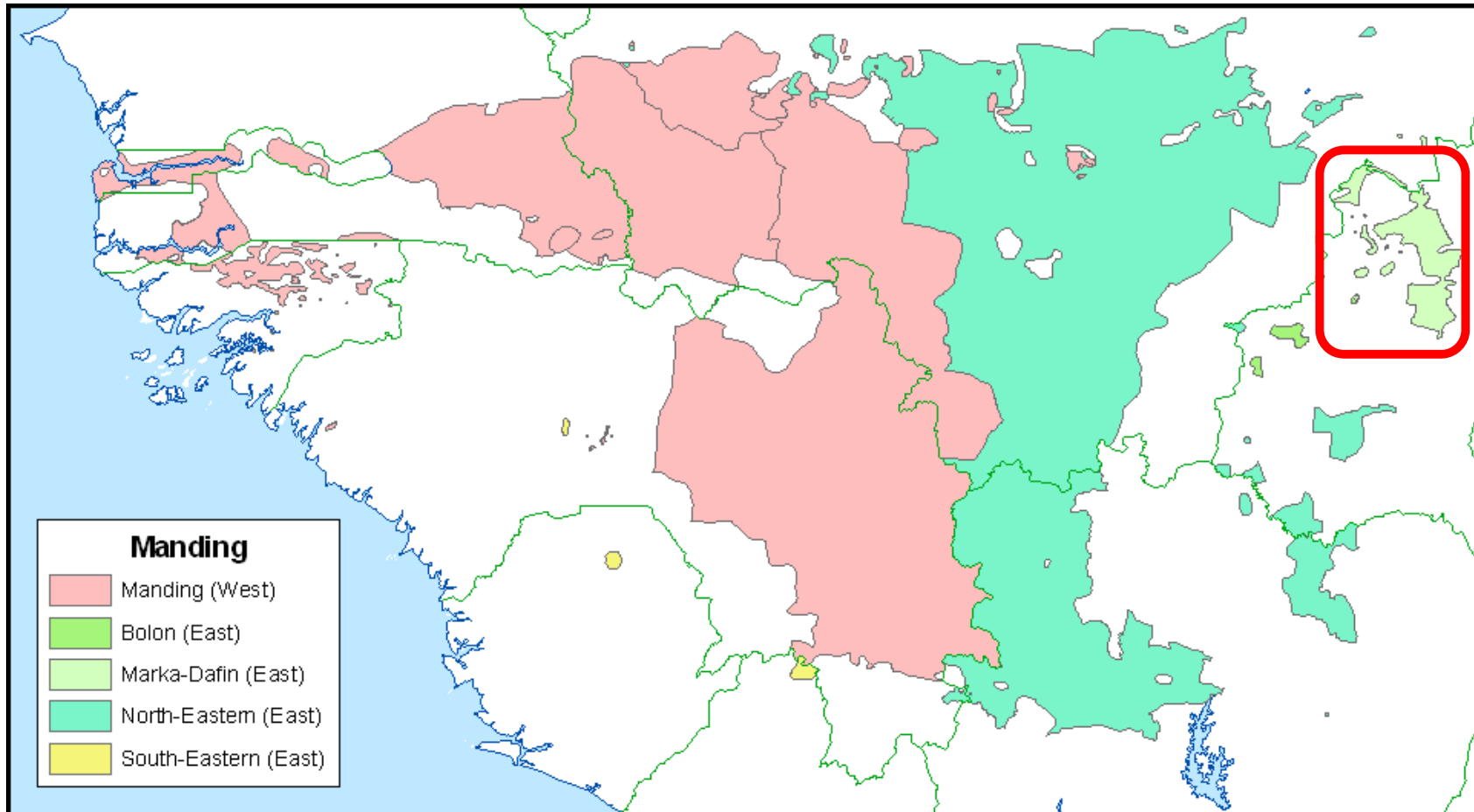
- **Marka of Zaba (MZ)**: Prost (1977), Diallo (1988)

- **Marka of Yankasso (MY)**: Diallo (1988)

- **Marka of Safane (MS)**: Jenks & Konate (2022)

- All Manding languages have a general determiner clitic ("article") postposed to the noun, viz. N=ART.

  - Bambara: $=^{\mathrm{L}}$

  - Maninka of Kita: $=^{\mathrm{L}}$ ~ rarely $=$ ò

  - Mandinka: $=$ ò (with conditioned allomorphs $=^{\mathrm{L}}$, $=^{\mathrm{L}}$ŋ)

  - Marka: $=^{\mathrm{L}}$V́, $=^{\mathrm{L}}$ó

- The plural clitic follows the article.

- They also have a number of other less general pre- and postposed determiners.

- Nouns can also appear in their bare form without any determiner.

- The article is usually referred to as a "definite" article in descriptions.

- However, more detailed descriptions make it clear that it is rather a default determiner, that is a Stage II article.

- A contrast between the presence and the absence of the article is only possible in a few contexts.

- It is easier to describe the few contexts where it can be absent rather than the other way around.

- In isolation, nouns are normally cited with the article.

- ## Maninka of Kita (Creissels 2009)

Le marqueur de défini s'oppose en principe à son absence, mais cette opposition n'est possible que sous certaines conditions, et il s'agit typiquement d'un cas où c'est l'absence d'une marque morphologique, et non pas sa présence, qui est sémantiquement marquée. La manifestation la plus évidente de ce fait est que les noms ne peuvent être cités en isolation que pourvus de la marque du défini.

Dans une phrase assertive positive, en l'absence de toute intention emphatique, les constituants nominaux comportent ordinairement la marque du défini, sans que cela implique quoi que ce soit quant à l'identifiabilité de leur référent.

(23) Ǹ   dí   yírì   (*yírî)   tìgè
      1SG   PFV   tree＝ART   tree   cut
      'I cut a/the tree'

- The two primary contexts where the presence of the article can contrast with its absence are negation and polar questions

(24a) Ǹ   mán   **yírì**   tìgɛ̀
      1SG   PFV   tree = ART   cut
      'I didn't cut the tree'

(24b) Ǹ   mán   **yírî**   tìgɛ̀
      1SG   PFV   tree   cut
      'I didn't cut a tree'

(25a) **Jí**   ꜜyé   ꜜyán   wà
      water = ART   COP   here   PQ
      'Is the water here?'

(25b) **Jí**   yé   ꜜyán   wà
      water   COP   here   PQ
      'Is there water here?'

- The article is absent (or optional, depending on the language) in some constructions and with some types of nouns:

  - "suspended" qualification: 'They have **a woman** there, (and) she is beautiful'.

  - N + V compounds: *mùsù hùdù* 'marry a woman'

  - "idiomatic [possessed] subjects", viz. [Possessor + **N**], where N is a body part, or [Possessor + **N**] with some quality verbs.

  (26) Ǹ   **túlú**   y=á   là   (27) À   **mɔ̀gɔ̀-lá**   kà   dì
       1SG ear   COP=3SG at   3SG person-at QUAL be.pleasant
       'I hear it' (lit.: 'My ear is at it')   'He is kind to people'

  - Vocatives (nouns used as terms of address)
  - Some kinship terms

▪ The absence of the article in the constructions where it should normally be present can be used as a way to mark emphasis

(28a) Í   dí   ná   dí-mán   ꜜtóbî
       2SG   PFV sauce be.pleasant-NMLZ = ART   cook
       'You have made a good sauce'

(28b) Í   dí   ná   dí-mán   tóbî
       2SG   PFV sauce be.pleasant-NMLZ   cook
       'You have made a really good sauce'

- Prost (1977), Diallo (1988) and Jenks & Konate (2022) all describe the Marka determiner as a definite article.

  - The definite meaning of the article is illustrated with elicited examples.

  (29a) bá=⸜ó   tí   yán   wà
         goat=ART COP.NEG here   NEG
         'The goat is not here.'

  (29b) bá   tí   yán   wà
         goat COP.NEG here   NEG
         'There isn't a goat here.'

- The Marka article seems to be used somewhat differently than elsewhere in Manding

  - In isolation, nouns are spontaneously cited without the article in MY and either with or without the article in MZ (Diallo 1988:145, 351)

  - A contrast between the presence and absence of the article is possible in more contexts.

(30)   múrú   mù
        knife   COP
        '[A: What is it? B:] It's **a** knife.' (MY: Diallo 1988:352)

        Mandinka

(31)   mùsó＝ò   lè   mù
        woman＝ART   FOC   COP
        'It's **a** woman' (Creissels & Sambou 2013:460)

(32) Áá ká tà fóó bɔ̀. [Áá tàà ʃìè ró,] áá ká fóó=⁺ó bɔ̀
3PL PFV go field start   3PL PFV field=ART start
'They (=Hyena and Hare) went to start **a field**. [So when they arrived,]
they started **this field**.' (MY: Diallo 1988:II-74)

(33) Áá dó ká sɔ́sɔ́ dón. Áá ní sɔ́sɔ́=⁺ɔ́ dón,
3PL then PFV bean plant 3PL PFV bean=ART plant

bìɛ̀ káà sɔ́sɔ́=⁺ɔ́ ká dèn
each POSS bean=ART PFV bring.fruit
'Then they (=Hyena and Hare) planted **beans**. They planted **those beans**,
(and) **the beans** of each produced' (MY: Diallo 1988:II-74)

- But we also find similar idiosyncrasies with respect to the use of the article in Marka as elsewhere in Manding.

  - (Some) kinship terms and body parts seem to be used without the article

(34a) án   bà   (34b) ǹ   sén
       1PL   mother   1SG   foot
       'our mother'   'my foot' (MY: Diallo 1988:373)

(35)   á   dà = ó
        3SG   mouth = ART
        'its (of the house) door' (MY: Diallo 1988:II-96)

- But we also find similar idiosyncrasies with respect to the use of the article in Marka as elsewhere in Manding.

  - Animal characters in stories can be used with or without the article (but more commonly without, like proper names), as opposed to other characters, such as 'woman', 'girl', 'hunter', 'spirit', etc. Compare Creissels (2013:183) on Mandinka.

(36) ǹ   n(í) á   blá súrá=⁺ó   á   nì yáá rà
      1SG PFV 3SG put monkey=ART   3SG and lion at
      '[It has stayed so.] I have put it (=the story) down about **Monkey** and **Lion**.' (MY: Diallo 1988:II-69)

(37) … sùŋùù dɔ́   rà. Sùŋùù=ú á   bà…
      girl   some at   girl=ART 3SG mother
      '[The story will be] about **some girl**. The mother of **the girl**…' (MY: Diallo 1988:II-82)

- And there is the same tendency to overuse the form with the article in Marka as elsewhere in Manding.

  - "Statistiquement, c'est la forme qui présente une grande occurrence dans les textes" (MZ: Diallo 1988:146)

- However, in texts there are various examples where neither the analysis in terms of a "Stage II" article nor the analysis in terms of definiteness would make any sense.

(38) cíé=ù   ní ɲɔ́   bɛ́ɛn ʒúʃi bɛ́
      man=PL PFV each.other meet   chief at
      'The men gathered at the chief's place' (MY: Diallo 1988:380)

(39) kàrù ó kàrù, á yè tà á mósó=ꜜó   bɛ́
      month DIST month 3SG IPFV go 3SG woman=ART   at
      'Every month, he goes to his wife.' (MY: Diallo 1988:357)

- Although this may have something to the noun being a locative argument (which would not be unheard of Stage II articles)

(40) áá   ká   wà   sò   lɔ́
3PL PFV leave house build
'They left to build **a house** [in order to put a woman inside and all the food she would need to stay there until the end of the rainy season, so that they can see whether by then she gives birth while being there all alone or she does not give birth.]'

áá   ká   ná   cὲ   sò   sɔ́
3PL PFV come gather.together house in
'[They went through all the villages. They looked for all kinds of food.] They came to put it in **the house**.'

dà   tì   á   rà wà, sò   kún   ká   búrî
mouth COP.NEG 3SG at NEG house head PFV cover
'It didn't have a door. They roofed **the house** (lit.: **The head** of **the house** was covered.' (MY: Diallo 1988:II-94)

(41) ... áá ká pèèrè áà ɲɔ́=ꜜɔ́ má
3PL PFV enjoy 3PL.POSS millet=ART on
'[…when they went] to enjoy their **millet** (lit.: '**the millet** of them')'

ɲɔ́ tì bɔ́ɔ́n sɔ́ (w)à
millet COP.NEG granary in NEG
'**the millet** was not in **the granary**.' ~ 'there was **no millet** in **the granary**.'

yáá kó mí mù pɔ́ɲà yè
lion QUOT DEM COP lie as
'**Lion** said that it can't be true (lit.: 'This is **a lie**').'

ɲɔ́=ꜜɔ́ tì bɔ́ɔ́n sɔ́?
millet=ART COP.NEG granary in
'**The millet** is not in **the granary**?' (MY: Diallo 1988:II-115)

(42) **téé** yè è lɔ́, lɔ́ ék!
sun IPFV 3SG.REFL stand stand IDEO
'**The sun** stops moving, stops moving *ék*!'

sàn yè ó pín, pín yúrúlúlú!
sky IPFV 3SG.REFL blacken blacken IDEO
'**The sky** gets dark, gets dark *yúrúlúlú*!'

kábá **sàn** yè ó pín, pín yérélélé!
firmament sky IPFV 3SG.REFL blacken blacken IDEO
'The firmament of **the sky** gets dark, gets dark *yérélélé*!'

sɔ̀=ɔ́ ká pín sà!
sky=**ART** PFV blacken then
'**The sky** got dark!' (MY: Diallo 1988:II-88)

- The article in Marka seems to be evolving from some kind of optional determiner (having primarily something to do with specificity) to a Stage II article (default determiner) without going through Stage I (definite determiner).

- Although Jenks & Konate (2022) analyze the Marka determiner as a "plain" (i.e. unique) definite, it looks like definiteness is not a grammatical feature in Marka of which the article would be the marker.

(43) Basaa A43a (Jenks, Makasso & Hyman 2017)

a. mɛ ɲ́ ꜜgwɛ́s mût   (nú) [a   yé mbóm]
    1SG PR like   1.person 1.REL 1.SBJ COP 9.big
    'I like a person that is big/important.'

b. mɛ ɲ́ ꜜgwɛ́s í-mut (nú) [a yé mbóm]
    'I like the person that is big/important.'

➔ A **construct form** signalling that **an anchoring modifier** follows (versus a merely classifying or qualifying one)

(44) Fang Ntumu A75a (Van de Velde 2017)

a. mòtá   mə́⁺béɲ   mə́⁺fə́
    |mə̀-tá mə́-bɛ̌ɲ   mə̀-fə́|
    6-pile   PP$_6$-two   PP$_6$-other
    'Two other piles.'

b. mòtá   mə́⁺fə́   mə́⁺béɲ
    6-pile   PP$_6$-other   PP$_6$-two

c. mə́tá   mə́⁺béɲ   mə́⁺fə́
    |^H-mə̀-tá   mə́-bɛ̌ɲ   mə̀-fə́|
    AUG-6-pile   PP$_6$-two   PP$_6$-other
    'The two other piles.'

d. *mə́tá mə́⁺fə́ mə́⁺béɲ

(45) Bemba M42 (Kasonde 2009: 167)

a. à-báá-ntù   bà-kúlú   bà-bìĺi

AUG$_2$-2-person   2-big   2-two

'the two big men'

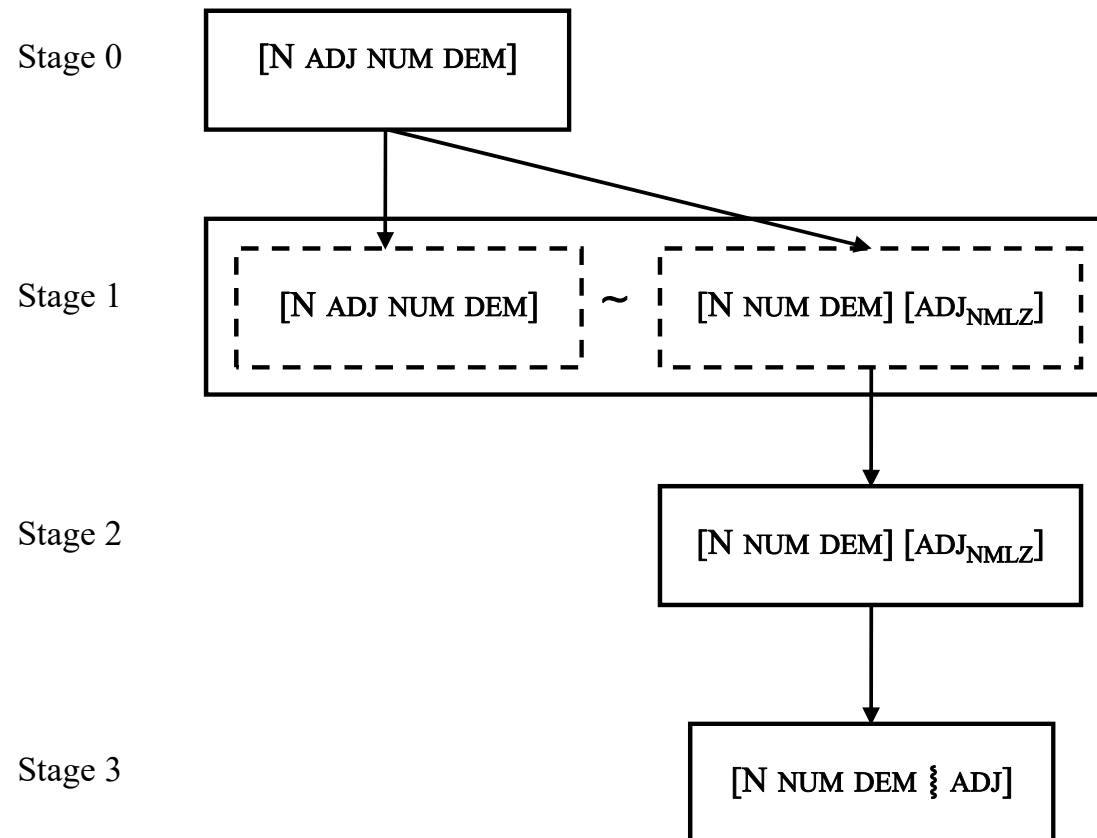b. à-báá-ntù   bà-bìĺi   á-bà-kúlú

AUG$_2$-2-person   2-two   AUG$_2$-2-big

'the two big men' (lit. 'the two men, the big ones')

c. *à-báá-ntù bà-bìĺi bà-kúlú

Does signaling the status of modifiers as merely descriptive versus discourse-referential drive the AMAR mechanism? (Van de Velde 2021)

Stage 0	[N ADJ NUM DEM]
Stage 1	[N ADJ NUM DEM] ~ [N NUM DEM] [ADJ$_{NMLZ}$]
Stage 2	[N NUM DEM] [ADJ$_{NMLZ}$]
Stage 3	[N NUM DEM ⁞ ADJ]

- We find few (very few?, no?) uncontroversial examples of definite articles in the Niger-Congo languages, because definiteness is not typically a grammatical feature in Niger-Congo.

- A feature definiteness would canonically involve the obligatory classification of all nominal expressions as either plus or minus definite.

- Instead we find:

  - optionality in the use of determiners with definite NPs in discourse;

  - syntactic contexts where the distinction is neutralized (e.g. genitive constructions);

  - syntactic restrictions on where the alleged distinction applies.

Analyzing the functions and uses of determiners remains a challenge.

The story ends here…

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