Explaining clause-final negation in northern sub-Saharan Africa
synchrony vs. history

Macro-Sudan belt (Güldemann 2008)
- Macro-Sudan is a linguistic macro-area that runs across “a broad sub-Saharan belt from the western end of the continent to the escarpment of the Ethiopian Plateau in the east” and that must have been shaped “by geographical factors which have been relevant for a sufficiently long time period”.
- Macro-Sudan is defined by 6 linguistic features:
  • logophoricity markers
  • labio-velar consonants
  • labial flaps
  • ATR vowel harmony
  • S-O-Aux-V-X
  • V-O-Neg

V-O-Neg order in central Africa (Dryer 2009)
- phenomenon: SVNegO & SVONeg (usually, Neg is clause-final, viz. SVOXNeg):
  Lingala (Bantu C36d; DRCongo; Meewisse 1998-90)
  (1) nakokí kokenda na ndáko na yé té
  1SG.can.PRS INF .go.FV PREP house PREP 3SG NEG
  ‘I cannot go to her house’

Clause-final negation as an areal feature in Northern sub-Saharan Africa
- CF negation has recently been suggested as an areal feature in NSSA
  - Dryer (2009): Central Africa
  - Güldemann (2008): Macro-Sudan belt

Macro-Sudan belt (Güldemann 2008)
- The macro-area has a concentric structure defined by the number of features and the frequency of their occurrence within a given family.
  • “hotbed” (“virtually all features and mostly in a regular fashion”): Benue-Congo (excluding Narrow Bantu), Adamawa-Ubangi, Bongo-Bagirmi, Mora-Mangbetu (central around CAR)
  • “core” (“at least three properties with intermediate or high frequency”): Gur, Kra, Kwa, Mende
  • “periphery”: Ijoid, Songhay, Dogon, Atlantic
  • outliers / receptive neighbours (“the features are mostly atypical for them; but they occur recurrently in member languages which border on the area”): Chadic, Nilotic and Narrow Bantu

V-O-Neg order in central Africa (Dryer 2009)
- a typologically unusual property
  • common in central Africa and in a pocket on and near New Guinea
  • presumably, an areal phenomenon (certain branches of Niger-Congo, Nilo-Saharan, and Afro-Asiatic)
**V-O-Neg order in central Africa (Dryer 2009)**

- Negative markers are clause-final because they are somehow "pragmatic" rather than "semantic".

  "One factor that may be relevant is that negative morphemes, though they are traditionally viewed as being semantic rather than pragmatic, since they (allegedly) simply change the truth value of the proposition expressed by the clause, are perhaps better viewed as indicating a particular kind of speech act, one of denying."  
  (Dryer 2009:339)

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**What I argue...**

- Dryer’s coverage and analysis of data can be improved in a way that would increase its relevance for the macro-areality hypotheses involving the languages of northern sub-Saharan Africa, such as the Macro-Sudan areality hypothesis.

  A more adequate (diachronic) account of this typologically unusual syntactic distribution of negative markers can be offered.

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**Reducing variation...**

- Certain *reductionism* in Dryer’s analysis and coverage of data: "typological classification generally involves [reducing variation by] drawing arbitrary lines in what is really a typological continuum" (2009:316).

  - only Neg words
  - only Neg words in declarative verbal clauses
  - only obligatory Neg words
  - only obligatory Neg words that are obligatory in all declarative verbal constructions.

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**The truth is in the details, though...**

"a theory of why languages are the way they are is fundamentally a theory of language change..." (Dryer 2006)

- change is typically *gradual*

- *synchronic diversity* is a direct reflection of the gradualness of change.

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**Excluding OV...**

Bokoburu ("Brea") (Mande; Nigeria; Wedekind 1972:60)

(1) \( \text{boko bura ye en=ex=go} \)

3PL-SSF saddle the scorpion=to=NEG

"One does not tie a saddle to a scorpion."

"The reasons for restricting attention to VO languages in this paper derive from the fact that it is VO languages in Africa, rather than OV languages, which exhibit a cross-linguistically typical pattern and a clear areal pattern within Africa [...] VNeg languages among OV are widely scattered as a minority type in most parts of the world, and are not especially common in Africa." (Dryer 2009:314-315)
From the perspective of the Macro-Sudan areality hypothesis, there is a problem of logical incompatibility between the two syntactic features used, V-O-Neg and S-(Aux)-O-V-X. 

"Although this [= Bokobaru] is not VONeg, it is like VONeg in that the negative occurs at the end of the clause following postverbal elements. It differs from VONeg only in that the postverbal elements it follows are adverbial elements rather than objects."

(Dryer 2009:314-315)

A diachronic account

- Postverbal, and especially, clause-final negative markers irrespective of the order of V and O (and of the presence of other preverbal negative markers).
- A straightforward diachronic account
  - Why post-V Neg? Because...
  - Why clause-final Neg? Because...
  - Why post-O Neg? Because?...

- Although, framed this way, the feature is less restrictive, typologically it is still rather remarkable (as cross-linguistically, negatives “tend to precede the verb”, Dryer 1988, 2009) and thus is a good candidate for being an area-specific feature.

- Being inclusive with respect to the OV languages from the eastern part of the MS belt as well, it becomes a better general MS feature.

In Tura, “[particules diicto-modales] expriment en général des nuances affectives qui porte sur le contenu de la proposition... appartiennent au style de conversation, où elle sont très courantes. Par contre, elles ne se rencontrent guère dans les récits”

(Bearth 1971:239)

In Wobé, “[particules conversationnelles] signalent plutôt des faits relatifs à la situation de communication, par exemple à l’attitude du locuteur face à son propre énoncé ou face à celui d’interlocuteur”

(Egner 1989:225)

A diachronic account

- It is these (inter)subjective markers that are “pragmatic” not the negative markers they may sometimes develop into.
- Prominent presence of segmental (inter)subjective markers with clausal scope and syntactically oriented to the clause as a whole can be considered as a conversational strategy characteristic of this area.

A diachronic account

- Occurrence of multiple negative exponence (double, sometimes triple and even quadruple) within a clause.
- Such negative markers are apparently relatively easy borrows, unlike negators in other parts of the world but like discourse markers, focus particles and phrasal adverbs (cf. Matras 2009).
Bantu

Devos & van der Auwera (forthcoming)

- minimizers (from "a bit", "a little"), (in commands) politeness/impatience markers (originally, often from locative pronouns "there")
- contrastive focus markers with clausal scope (originally, often from possessive pronouns)
- adverbs with negative semantics ("in vain", "for free")
- negative answer particle ("no", "by no means")

Krongo (Kadugli; Sudan)

Reh (1985:376)

- CF negative é is "probably the emphasis particle é"

Pana (Gur; Burkina Faso & Mali)

Beyer (2009:207-209)

- CF negative marker ý (absent in questions and subordinate clauses) is "the same element" as focus/identification/"all-new-utterance" marker ý.

Dzuun (Mande; Burkina Faso)

Solomiac (2007)

- There is a variety of CF negative particles, in combination with a pre-V negative auxiliary-like markers. The most common and the most neutral in its semantics CF negative marker is wàlà.

Godié (Kru; Côte d’Ivoire)

Marchese (1986:204-206)

- mò post-V "just" & post-V negative which is still optional in some constructions

- diachronically, negative markers appear to be rather unstable in this area
- negative markers can (and apparently, in some language groups, tend to) change; their syntactic position and degree of bonding over time
- between pre- and post-V domains, the shift always appears to occur in one direction, viz. from post-V to pre-V, and within the post-V domain, mostly from non-immediately post-V slot (frequency, CF) to immediately post-V slot
- the specificity of negation patterns observed in NSSA is largely a direct reflection of the specific pre-existent conditions and historical processes sketched here