

Clause final negation and double negation in Northwest Kainji

Rebecca Paterson

LLACAN-CNRS and SIL International

Jespersen cycles (van der Auwera et al. (forthc.)) have been proposed as explanations for the occurrence of double negation (DN) cross-linguistically. Beyer (2009, Volta River Basin languages), Dryer (2009, central Africa), and Idiatov (2018, northern sub-Saharan Africa) discuss contact phenomena as explanation for the proliferation of clause-final negation (CFN) markers for SVO languages in these regions. Although Kainji is a major branch of Benue-Congo and geographically central to these regions, Kainji languages are not well documented (McGill and Blench 2012), and therefore their diverse data cannot have been taken into account.

Based on three closely related Northwest Kainji languages (Ūt-Hun/Duka [uth], C'Lela/Dakkakanci [dri], and Ūt-Ma'in [gel]), I propose two distinct patterns of negation for Proto-Northwest Kainji:

CLAUSE-FINAL NEGATION: SVONeg

DOUBLE NEGATION: SNegVONeg

Further, I propose that the “original” Northwest Kainji construction is CF and that DN is the secondary development. By investigating the detailed negation patterns of these closely related languages, we can see a diachronic explanation for the development of DN.

Dryer (2009: 317) describes Ūt-Hun as SVONeg, having only CFN, marked by the clause-final *á*. However, Miestamo (2005:99) notes that Ūt-Hun negative constructions also involve a high-tone preverbal element and a pronoun subject must be from a particular pronoun set.

- (1) Ūt-Hun (as in Dryer (2009:317) from Bendor-Samuel et al. (1973))

kó ēēr ār-gààn dé hár wár ò ān-ká zūr yo á
 even arrow CM-one it touch body CM that lion CM.DEF NEG
 ‘not even one arrow touched that lions body.’
 lit: ‘even one arrow didn’t touch that lion’s body’

C'Lela displays only DN; although the form of the marker is dependent on the TAM designation of the clause.

- (2) C'Lela/Dakkakanci (Dettweiler 2015:116)

ú-tà-h^wá=ʔò dá
 3S-NOT.HAVE-kill=3S not
 ‘He did not kill him.’

- (3) C'Lela/Dakkakanci (Dettweiler 2015:117)

ʔá-nán-gá=:nò íf-hùbù dá.
 NOT-1P.IN.ICM-MARRY=3P.OBJ CM-co-wives not
 ‘Our people do not practice polygamy.’

Ūt-Ma'in demonstrates both CFN and DN: a distinction that crucially depends on whether or not the TAM designation of the clause requires the use of the preverbal negative copula, *zá*. The negative copula is required for negative progressive and negative future constructions, and crucially the main semantic verb is in a nominalized verb phrase (Paterson 2019b). This results in

the DN pattern – the preverbal negative copula in addition to the CFN marker. All other TAM designations use the CFN marker only.

- (4) Ut-Ma'in: DN (Paterson 2019a: 174)
 wáʔ-é=rò z̄ ̄m=zá m-há=dà...
 child-C1=3SG.POSS say 1SG.SUBJ=NEG 6B-go=NEG
 ‘His child said “I am not going”...’
- (5) Ut-Ma'in: CFN (Paterson 2019a: 109)
 r̄-̄ já:g b̄ ʔ-tʃàn=dà
 god-C3 give-PST 2SG C6-feather=NEG
 ‘creator did not give you feathers’

I propose that Ut-Ma'in is the most conservative language of the three Northwest Kainji languages since it maintains the two distinct patterns. C'Lela uses only DN and Ut-Hun may either be interpreted to have only CFN or only DN, if the preverbal tonal and pronoun change is taken into account.

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